A Point of Theory

We missed a good slam which was duly bid and made at the other table in our match. These were the hands from Round 2.

♠	A Q 6 2	♠	8 5
♥	K 4 3 2	♥	Q J
♦	K	♦	A Q J 9 2
♣	A 10 7 6	♣	K Q J 3

West	**East**
–	1♦
1♥	2♣
2♠	3♠
3NT	Pass

Obviously, you would like to play in 6♣ – it would be nice to be able to play it from the West hand to protect the spade position but slam is still good if played by East. My question to you is who should have done more?

It seems that the answer is dependent on the meaning of East's 3♠ raise of the game-forcing fourth-suit bid. Does 3♠ promise extra values, in which case West is worth 4♣ rather than 3NT, or is 3♠ what you would bid whenever you didn't have any more descriptive bid you wanted to make. For example, what should East's third bid be holding something like:

♠	8 5
♥	7 6
♦	A J 6 5 3
♣	A K 4 2

If 3♠ promises extras, then this example presumably has to bid 3♦ over 2♠. If 3♠ merely denies any more descriptive bid and does not necessarily promise extras, then this hand bids 3♠ over 2♠. And perhaps if 3♠ did not promise anything above a minimum opening then it is East who needs to do more at his next turn and go on over West's 3NT.

So, does your partnership know whether this raise of fourth suit shows extras or is merely a non-committal bid with something like the 12 HCP example above?