

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NEW YORK CIVIC GROUP IS
SWEET ON LOLLIPOP BUILDING**

**HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL URGES CITY TO PRESERVE
2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE**

**H.D.C. WILL PRESENT A GINGERBREAD MODEL TO THE DAHESH MUSEUM
TO SUPPORT THE MUSEUM'S BID TO PURCHASE THE BUILDING**

WHEN: Friday, January 15, 1999 at 11 a.m.

WHERE: The Dahesh Museum, 601 Fifth Avenue, between 48th & 49th Streets, 2nd floor

WHAT: The Historic Districts Council (H.D.C.) will present a gingerbread model of 2 Columbus Circle to the Dahesh Museum to demonstrate the importance of preserving the building. The ceremony will express H.D.C.'s support for the Museum's effort to purchase the building from the City and preserve it as its new home. H.D.C. will give the model to Dr. J. David Farmer, Dahesh Museum Director, on Friday, January 15, 1999 at 11 am at the Museum's current facility at 601 Fifth Avenue. In attendance will be representatives of H.D.C., the Municipal Art Society of New York, and the World Monuments Fund.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: a gingerbread house that Ada Louise Huxtable would enjoy; preservationists from the City's noted civic groups; Dahesh Museum director; and Victorian exhibition as a backdrop.

WHY: H.D.C., New York City's non-profit advocate for historic preservation, thinks the Dahesh Museum, which presents and interprets 19th and early 20th century art in the Academic tradition, is the perfect resident for modernist architect Edward Durell Stone's quirky building.

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The playful gingerbread model, created by the Municipal Art Society staff as an entry to the December gingerbread house competition held by the World Monuments Fund, captures the off-beat sensibility of this most unusual of New York City signature buildings.

Built as the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art, the 1965 building was designed by noted architect Edward Durell Stone. With its concave marble façade, uniquely detailed edges, and lollipop-like street level concourse, the building has been called a “marble confection” and a “controversial reaction to the glass and steel boxes of the 1960s.” It was purchased by the Gulf and Western company and given to the City of New York in the 1970s, and most recently housed the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. Siting Stone’s prominence as an architect, as well as the building’s unique appearance and contextual response to its location, H.D.C. has called upon the City’s Landmarks Preservation Commission to landmark the building; however this proposal was rejected.

As the building is currently for sale, its future is in doubt. The City is reported to be considering several proposals, among them a bid by developer Donald Trump to demolish the building and erect a hotel on the site. H.D.C. supports saving the building by selling it to the Dahesh, which will preserve and reuse it as a museum. “The City should not allow this unique gem to be demolished or altered,” says H.D.C. Executive Director Vicki Weiner. “The Dahesh Museum wants to restore the building to its original use as an art gallery. We think it makes sense for the City to accept this proposal from a cultural institution that wants to preserve both an impressive structure and a civic use for a prominent site.”

The Historic Districts Council purchased the gingerbread model during the World Monuments Fund’s gingerbread house competition and silent auction held in December. The Museum plans to display the gingerbread model of what will hopefully become its new home through February.

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