



cc: ADX
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Vicki Weiner
Executive Director

March 14, 2000

Jennifer J. Raab, Chairman
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
100 Old Slip
New York, NY 10005

Dear Chairman Raab,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Historic Districts Council to request that you consider designating 2 Columbus Circle as an individual landmark, and to urge you to calendar it for a public hearing this spring.

2 Columbus Circle was designed in 1965 as the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art by Edward Durell Stone, and has been referred to as a “marble confection” and “Stone’s reaction against the steel and glass box architecture of the 1960s.” With its concave marble façade – a response to its location on the famed traffic circle – and lollipop-like street level concourse, the building has inspired spirited debate about urban design. Architectural historians and preservationists who are concerned about 20th Century buildings point out that while its quirky appearance may not appeal to all, it is difficult to refute the significance of 2 Columbus Circle: it is a major work by one of America’s leading architects, designed for a prominent client and in every way contextual to its a highly significant site.

Given to the City of New York in the 1970s, 2 Columbus Circle most recently housed the Department of Cultural Affairs, but for over a year the building has been for sale. A major cultural institution, the Dahesh Museum, demonstrated serious interest in purchasing the building and preserving its original use as an art museum, and we wrote to the Mayor in November of 1998 in support of Museum’s proposed plans. As the city has just put out a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of this prominent site, we fear that the building is in imminent danger.

It is for this reason that the Historic Districts Council appeals to the Commission to consider 2 Columbus Circle as an individual landmark as soon as possible. We understand that there is a great deal of support among civic leaders and members of the community for the landmarking of this bold and unique building, and we very much hope you will soon calendar it for a public hearing. The residents of New York City, and many future generations, will benefit from your actions.

If you have any questions regarding the Historic Districts Council's opinion in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vicki Weiner".

Vicki Weiner
Executive Director

cc: Frank Sanchis, Municipal Art Society
Peg Breen, New York Landmarks Conservancy
Olive Freud, Committee for Environmentally Sound Development
NYS Senator Tom Duane
NYS Assembly member Richard N. Gottfried
NYC Council member Christine Quinn