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### Comment -- Architecture: Save the Columbus Circle Two

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#### Abstract (Article Summary)

Built in 1959 for A&P heir Huntington Hartford as the Gallery of Modern Art (by which he meant its opposite, 19th century academic painting), it has gone through several reincarnations, among them service as the city's Convention and Visitors' Bureau and headquarters of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Since the structure doesn't enjoy landmarks protection, any purchaser is free to level it and start afresh.

#### Full Text (299 words)

Copyright Dow Jones & Company Inc Mar 8, 2000

#### Save the Columbus Circle Two

Two Columbus Circle is back in play. The Edward Durrell Stone building, long an object of ridicule to New Yorkers, was put up for sale yesterday by the city of New York, its owner since 1980.

Built in 1959 for A&P heir Huntington Hartford as the Gallery of Modern Art (by which he meant its opposite, 19th century academic painting), it has gone through several reincarnations, among them service as the city's Convention and Visitors' Bureau and headquarters of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Since the structure doesn't enjoy landmarks protection, any purchaser is free to level it and start afresh.

We say, leave it standing. By now, it has acquired a certain kitsch allure. Besides, how much worse can this "eyesore" be than any of the buildings likely to replace it or its neighbor, the New York Coliseum?

One obvious drawback for any future tenant is the near-total absence of windows. Only businesses with no need for daylight need apply: health clubs, casinos, brothels or museums.

In fact, the Dahesh Museum would be the perfect choice. An oasis for all lovers of 19th-century French academic painting, the Dahesh (currently located on Fifth Avenue) was one of the bidders on the building a few years back. But, along with Donald Trump, it failed to come in high enough, and the city turned it down.

Let the folks from Dahesh try again, this time reaching deeper into their pockets. The museum's collection of retro kitsch art -- works by Bouguereau, Gerome, Rosa Bonheur and their ilk -- perfectly matches the building's architecture. Indeed, relocating the Dahesh to 2 Columbus Circle would not only return the building to its roots, it would give a nice twist to the dictum "form follows function."