

## 2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE

Whatever one thinks of 2 Columbus Circle, the distinctive building designed by Edward Durell Stone that sits like an oversized wedding cake adjacent to the old New York Coliseum site, all can agree that the last thing midtown needs is another condominium project. Yet the city is eager to see the building converted, or even ripped down to make way for more luxury apartments. Preservationists are correct to assert that the building merits a better fate.

The building, with its distinctive portholes, has been vacant for two years, and the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission has been unwilling to confer landmark status on the structure. Originally built to house the art collection of Huntington Hartford, heir to the A.&P. supermarket fortune, the city's Economic Development Corporation has been soliciting bids from developers interested in turning the site into a residential building.

Dedicated New Yorkers such as author Tom Wolfe and architect Robert Stern are joining with some local politicians to demand that the building be preserved. Mr. Wolfe said the building is "one of the few candles lit in the dark ages of New York architecture, which are from the 1950's to the present day." But former Mayor Ed Koch, among others, has denounced the building as ugly.

It is, to be sure, a distinctive building, and the thought of it being ripped down to make room for just another residence is, in Mr. Stern's word, "preposterous." There certainly is no other building like it in Manhattan, reason enough to deem it a landmark of sorts. Surely the site can be put to profitable use in its current form. Like it or not, there's no ignoring 2 Columbus Circle. And isn't that what New York architecture is all about?