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The New York Post

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HEADLINE: 2 COLUMBUS SAVED - BUT LANDMARK BUILDING WILL LOOK DIFFERENT

BYLINE: LOIS WEISS

BODY:

Two Columbus Circle has been saved - sort of.

The tiny American Craft Museum will make its home at the former Huntington Hartford Museum - saving it from Donald Trump's wrecking ball.

But the Edward Durrell Stone-designed tower won't stay as is. Its signature lollipop cutouts and poorly-preserved white marble faade will likely be dumped and a transparent skin will be crafted for the nine-story structure.

The Post first reported the American Craft Museum, now located at 40 W. 53rd St., would be chosen back in May and today, the Bloomberg administration is making that official.

Holly Hotchner, the director of the museum said they would be spending \$30 million on both the renovations and the payment to the city. That has already been raised privately through the museum's board of directors, she said, who include long-time arts supporter Nannette Laitman; crafts investor Barbara S. Tober; former chairman of Liz Claiborne, Jerome Chazen; and stock market guru, Seth Glickenhau.

Hotchner is the daughter of author A.E. Hotchner who is actively involved with his actor friend Paul Newman's many charity works. The museum has been the recipient of some of their grants in the past, Hotchner said.

The exact amount of the city's take won't be revealed until a formal contract of sale has been negotiated.

Eleven groups made proposals to the city in response to a March 2000 request. Those were eventually winnowed down to the museum, a hotel use from Donald J. Trump, and the Dahesh Museum. The museum expressed its disappointment but said they were glad it was going to another administration.

Trump said the Giuliani administration had advised him in December that the building was his, but last night, the Bloomberg administration gave him the bad news.

He told The Post he was glad to hear the faade would be changed, but not thrilled with the use.

"I don't care about me or not, because it is a very small project, but a terrible waste of a really wonderful site," said Trump.

Andrew Alper, president of the Economic Development Corp. said they felt a cultural use would enhance the neighborhood more than another hotel.

As for not preserving 2 Columbus as many preservationists have advocated, Alper said, "The city concluded that replacing the faade would enhance the building's use. There are amazing views of [Central] Park. By making the skin more transparent, it will enhance Columbus Circle."

Landmarks Commissioner **Sherida Paulsen** was unaware of the planned changes to the faade and would not comment on that. But she said, "I'm delighted its gone to a cultural institution."

GRAPHIC: EYESORE? \$30M facelift. [color]

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