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Sent: Monday, July 08, 2002 8:49 AM
Subject: Real Estate Weekly, July 3 2002

Cause for concern? See the end of the article.

"Columbus Circle Building Goes to Museum"
by Elaine Misonzhnik

The AOL/Time Warner Center is getting a new neighbor - the American Craft Museum is moving next door to 2 Columbus Circle, in what city officials view as a further improvement of the area. Last week the museum, which hasn't had a permanent home before, was named by the Economic Development Corporation as the new owner of 2 Columbus Circle, a 15-story, class "B" office building on W. 58th Street. Vacant for almost four years, the building is most famous for its controversial facade - a windowless, marble construction supported by lollipop shaped columns. The Craft Museum plans to use the space for both cultural and educational purposes. According to Holly Hotchner, director, there have been discussions about using several floors for exhibition space and one floor for public-friendly artists studios, in addition to a restaurant on the upper level and a 3,000-SF retail store. The museum would also like to partner with other cultural institutions to organize lectures, shows, and discussions in the building's large auditorium. "This museum will be four or five times as big as our current space, so we want to give our visitors a fully educational and pleasurable experience," Hotchner says. "We are going to expand our retail store, which is a wonderful destination for original art, and we will probably return the top floor to restaurant use. It has wonderful views and it really works best as a restaurant." Although the sale price was not disclosed, according to published reports the museum paid somewhere between \$15 million and \$20 million for the building. It plans to spend another \$30 million on the improvements. Hotchner thinks that the museum's proximity to AOL/Time Warner Center, which will house CNN studios, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and a large shopping mall, will offer tourists a full taste of the city. "We believe we will be a wonderful compliment to them," she says. "They have Jazz at Lincoln Center, so they have the audio component and we will be a visual center complement." The museum's cultural context was what actually sealed the deal for the city, despite a more generous offer from the Trump Organization. Donald Trump wanted to tear down the old 2 Columbus Circle building and use the site to build a hotel. When the city declined the offer because "Columbus Circle already has two hotels," Trump called the decision "a total waste of a great asset." There's an unspoken agreement, however, between the museum and the city, that the building's current facade is coming off. "There is going to be a renovation of the building and the city was in favor of replacing the facade," said Janel Patterson, a spokesperson for the EDC. As to the rejection of the Trump proposal, she said it just didn't fit the overall picture. "We think the museum will be a compliment to the area. It will be designed to fit in with

its architectural surroundings and the cultural use of the center was preferable to the hotel."

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