



MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE

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Kyle Merker, *Chair*

Kathy Kinsella, *District Manager*

May 9, 2003

Hon. Amanda Burden  
Commissioner  
City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
Room 2E  
New York, NY 10007

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
2003 MAY 13 PM 1:17  
DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

RE: ULURP application # C 030392 PPM – application for disposition of city owned property at 2 Columbus Circle to Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (formerly American Craft Museum)

Dear Commissioner Burden:

At the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Community Board Five on Thursday, May 8, 2003, the Board passed the following resolution with a vote of 18 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstention:

WHEREAS, the 9-story building located at 2 Columbus Circle, which is owned by the City of New York, was originally designed in the mid-1960s by Edward Durrell Stone to house Huntington Hartford's Gallery of Modern Art, most recently held the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, has been vacant since 1998, and is now in a state of disrepair; and

WHEREAS, the City has proposed to convey the property to The Museum of Arts and Design (the "Museum") for use as galleries, classrooms and offices for the Museum and a public restaurant on the top floor, and this disposition will allow the Museum to triple its current space from 18,000 square feet to 54,000 square feet; and

WHEREAS, the proposed uses of the Building will benefit the City by encouraging tourism, providing arts and design education to students, and promoting works of contemporary artists and designers, and such uses will have a less adverse impact on the immediate neighborhood than other proposed uses of the property, such as an hotel, and the City's Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding as lead agency under CEQR has determined that the disposition will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Museum has not yet formulated specific solutions to concerns of the community regarding loading and unloading of school buses and exhibits at the site, the design of the sidewalks and street lamps on all sides of the property, the availability for public use of the auditorium in the basement of the building, and the design of exterior signage, but the Museum's representatives appear to share the concerns of the community and have offered to work with the community in these matters; and

WHEREAS, the financial terms of the disposition between the City and the Museum have not been finalized and remain subject to further review by this board; and

WHEREAS, the design of the building has been highly controversial since the building first opened, having been praised by some persons and disparaged by others; and

WHEREAS, the Landmarks Preservation Commission ("Landmarks") in 1996 and again in 2002 declined to consider the building for designation as a landmark, and this Board in 2002 voted against recommending that Landmarks calendar the building for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Museum's proposed renovations will not change the shape and massing of the existing building, except to extend the ground floor out to the building line, thus maintaining certain of the building's iconic qualities and its relationship to Columbus Circle; and

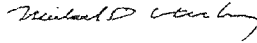
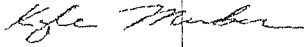
May 12, 2003

WHEREAS, the proposed changes to the exterior facade will add a large number of windows to a basically windowless original design, and a new exterior sheathing of terra cotta panels that will allow natural light to enter the building and will open views of the interior spaces to the street; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes are a sensitive adaptation and re-use of the original design which will provide an enhanced presence for the building on Columbus Circle; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that Community Board Five approves the disposition of 2 Columbus Circle to The Museum of Arts and Design, on the understanding that: (i) the financial terms of the disposition remain subject to the review of this Board; and (ii) the Museum will consult with this Board and other community groups with regard to issues of loading and unloading of buses and exhibits, sidewalk and street lamp design, exterior signage, and the availability of the basement auditorium for public use.

Sincerely,



Kyle Merker

Michael Utevsky

Chair

Chair, Land Use & Zoning

cc: Hon. C. Virginia Fields  
Hon. Gale Brewer  
Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission  
Kristi Knecht, Dept. of Citywide Administration Services  
Manhattan Community Board 4  
Manhattan Community Board 7  
Suri Kasirer, President, Kasirer Consulting  
Laurie Beckelman, Museum of Arts and Design