

AD

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

JULY 2, 2003

ROLL CALL:

CHAIR BURDEN	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER KNUCKLES	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER BATTAGLIA	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER CANTOR	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER CAVALUZZI	ABSENT
COMMISSIONER EADDY	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER GARVIN	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER GOL	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER KUI	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER MEROLO	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER PHILLIPS	PRESENT
CHAIRMAN ROSE:	PRESENT
COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS	PRESENT

BOROUGH OF MANHATAN, CD5, CAL. NO. 14.
C 030392 PPM

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION FOR THE
DISPOSITION OF ONE (1) CITY-OWNED PROPERTY
LOCATED AT 2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE, PURSUANT TO
ZONING.

Arts and Design, the former Huntington Hartford Museum, is that the architecture of this building really needs to be very strong, very iconic, holding a full block in terms of its prominence and in terms of its distinction in a location in this circle of Columbus Circle which has very dominant buildings and a huge new structure, the AOL Time-Warner Center and, therefore, architectural challenge was enormous.

The Museum of Arts and Design retained Brad Cloefeld (phonetic) who has come up with a design which is not only compelling, interesting, really holds that edge of the Circle in an extraordinary way while letting in light and air, but keeping the building form in an arresting manner that will really serve to enhance the Circle, but at the same time provide a venue for showing art and attracting the public, and really engaging the entire city in this circle. And the prominence of this architectural piece is really enormous and Mr. Cloefeld and the design have really come to meet that challenge.

And in the context of these concerns,

building's current decrepit state, leads me to conclude that the proposed disposition to the Museum of Arts and Design will bring about a reuse and occupancy that will ultimately benefit, and I believe, improve, what is still a very unique location in the city.

I vote yes.

MADAM SECRETARY: Commissioner Battaglia.

COMMISSIONER BATTAGLIA: I want to first thank Chairperson Burden for setting design standards that not only enhance the entire City, but in this case enhance Columbus Circle.

I agree with both the comments of the Chair and the Vice Chair and having heard the sentiments of some community residents to retain the original facade, especially of those of the family members of those involved in the original design.

I took another look at the building as it stands. In consideration of the extent of disrepair to the interior as well as the exterior of the building and the new design which, while retaining the original (inaudible)

Circle. We have been struggling with land use, building occupancy, bulk, massings, street walls, everything. The first of the new buildings to go into place was the AOL Time-Warner Center. We have designated as a landmark the apartment house on the eastern side, a very important building in the history of New York's residential construction. We have put into place a new design for Columbus Circle which will be completed, hopefully, soon. This is the last piece of that reconstruction. I believe that it will be the cornerstone of that reconstruction and probably the single most beautiful thing that will be on that Circle. So it is with great delight that I vote yes.

MADAM SECRETARY: Commissioner Gol.

COMMISSIONER GOL: I have to compliment the department and the Chair for working so hard (inaudible) this important position on Columbus Circle. It's something that I think is very important and it's the fabric of New York City, which is the cultural (inaudible). And having taken the time to look through the material and listening to the

this structure which plays such an important role in the context of Columbus Circle. Now that we have a very competent and appropriate use for this structure and it's been identified and extensive design work has been done, we're now asked to approve a transaction that eliminates the possibility of an adaptive reuse that could salvage the architectural merits of this structure. The merit of landmarking is not a jurisdiction of this body, but I do urge that this department recommend some hearing from a sister agency to encourage and also to encourage a compromise and one of my fellow commissioners has talked about this extensively in terms of modifying the design.

I realize that it's very important to remove this eyesore that is now under City ownership and to complete the rebuilding of the Circle that is currently being worked on by both City forces with the DLT and Parks rebuilding of Columbus Circle and AOL Time-Warner. So I, therefore, vote a reluctant yes to the disposition of the property.

MADAM SECRETARY: Commissioner Rose.

COMMISSIONER ROSE: I believe the

purpose and given all the resources and assets that it has from an access and location respect, hopefully the design will turn out to be as attractive and once built as it looks in the predevelopment process. But the real challenge is not going to be the physical building that gets built, but it's the use, the ability to fulfill its mission as a cultural and artistic center and to function as that. And I'm delighted that this is going to happen within a time frame that's consistent with the completion of the Circle as a whole. I vote yes.

MADAM SECRETARY: Commissioner Williams.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: A very different view from Commissioner Rose's. I believe that the Edward Durell Stone building at number 2 Columbus Circle is a perfect place for the Museum of Arts and Design. However, the overwhelming concern of the people who testified before us and the concern of hundreds more cannot and should not be taken lightly or ignored. After all, aren't museums about preservation and display of people's work? So