

DAILY NEWS

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Landmarking's blasted

Lollipop, Harlem in jeopardy

AUTHOR TOM WOLFE wants New Yorkers to know the city Landmarks Preservation Commission is a bunch of spineless bureaucrats — and he held a press conference yesterday to say so. Then he went in to tell the City Council.

BY LORE CROGHAN
DAILY NEWS BUSINESS WRITER

Wolfe lampooned the commission's refusal to consider the Lollipop building at 2 Columbus Circle for landmark protection. He said the city — which is selling the building — has given the word to the commission to pretend the property's invisible.

And he's only one of many who think the commission has become a tool of big money and big developers — from midtown to mid-Harlem.

"When anyone asks about 2 Columbus Circle, the commissioners dive under their desks," the author of "The Bonfire of the Vanities" said on the steps of City Hall, dressed in his signature white suit, with a navy-blue cape to ward off the chill.

Manhattan's borough board voted to sell Lollipop to the Museum of Arts & Design, which plans to remove the facade.

Throughout its 40-year history, the building has been fiercely derided by critics for its odd look. Others defend it with equal ferocity.

Yesterday, Landmarks Commission chairman Bob Tierney defended the agency without singling out any property.

"I've never seen a more committed, skilled group of people in government in my life," Tierney told the City Council.

But Wolfe has been campaigning to save 2 Columbus Circle. He told the Daily News that driving his efforts is his admiration for the building's architect, Edward Durell Stone — who defied architectural trends of his day.

"Stone was trying to show a way out of Modernism — which was so consti-

pated," said Wolfe, whose latest novel, "I Am Charlotte Simmons," comes out in three weeks.

The hearing — held by the council's landmarks subcommittee — drew an overflow crowd of angry preservationists. About 50 were allowed to stay in the hearing room at 250 Broadway. The rest were sent to a nearby cafeteria to wait.

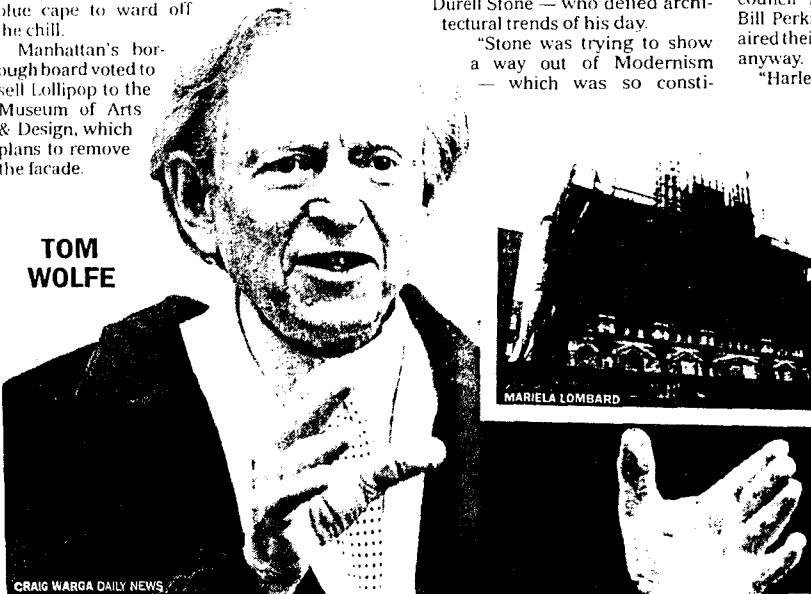
When Councilwoman Margarita Lopez (D-Manhattan) arrived, 100 people were already in the building lobby, waiting to be allowed upstairs. "Obviously, the number of people who are here indicates there is a problem with landmarking," she said.

Subcommittee chairman Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) warned that the testimony could only be about the administrative practices of the landmarks commission — which is short-staffed and gets 200 landmarking applications each year. But even fellow council members such as Bill Perkins (D-Manhattan) aired their specific concerns anyway.

"Harlem is a com-

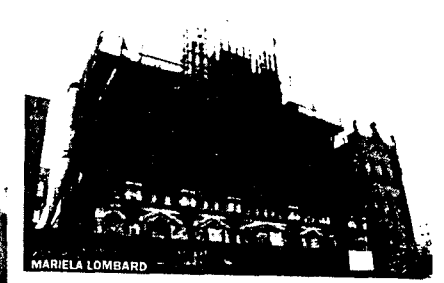
munity going through a lot of changes — maybe the whole district is a landmark," said Perkins. "We don't want there to be a wholesale bulldozing of property — like St. Thomas."

A famous church in the neighborhood, St. Thomas the Apostle, is slated for demolition — and has never had a landmarking hearing.



TOM WOLFE

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MARIELA LOMBARD



MICHAEL DABIN

Author Wolfe says Landmarks Commission should protect Lollipop building in Harlem's St. Thomas the Apostle may be demolished with no hearing.