

LANDMARK WEST!

From: "LANDMARK WEST!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>
Sent: Friday, October 08, 2004 2:01 PM
Attach: Norman_Letter.pdf
Subject: Former Landmarks Chair Urges Hearing for 2 Columbus Circle

FORMER LANDMARKS CHAIR URGES HEARING FOR 2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE

"Don't let the 'Owners Opposition' issue become a standard in determining when to hold a Designation Hearing," wrote Gene A. Norman, architect and former Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), in a September 30, 2004, letter to current LPC Chair Robert B. Tierney. (A full copy of Mr. Norman's letter is attached.)

Citing his personal policy of not speaking out on Landmarks issues unless **"prompted by a desire to prevent the Commission...from bringing harm to itself or to the Landmarks Law,"** Mr. Norman reminded Tierney that a public hearing would not compel the Commission to actually designate the building. In his words, "A Designation Hearing is a means of collecting information, it allows interested or knowledgeable members of the public an opportunity to speak for *or* against designation, it allows an owner to voice their concerns and most of all, it permits the full Commission membership, assisted by the LPC staff with preliminary research, to weigh the merits of the building after hearing all sides, and then reach a decision."

"A hearing *may* still result in demolition, but the Commission will have done a great service to the entire landmark designation process by its examination and by acting on the merits..." Hear, hear!

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Mr. Norman sent his message to Tierney (with a copy to Mayor Bloomberg) in the same week as the *NY Times* published an article in which architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff linked the LPC's refusal to hold a public hearing with the Bloomberg administration's \$2 million incentive to the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) to complete its 2 Columbus Circle overhaul by 2007.

How very cozy. It appears Bloomberg and MAD want to limit participation in the future of 2 Columbus Circle to only a select few. Is this democracy? Not in our book. What it is, is irresponsible. It will damage the building and the Landmarks Law. It does a disservice to the people of New York. New Yorkers and their landmarks deserve better.