

Columbia University

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PLANNING AND PRESERVATION

400 AVERY HALL

August 18, 2004

C. Virginia Fields, President
Borough of Manhattan
The Municipal Building
One Centre Street,
New York, New York 10007

re: 2 Columbus Circle

Dear President Fields,

I urge you to approve the proposed sale of 2 Columbus Circle.

This transaction offers the saddest of New York buildings the chance to become the museum it has struggled to be since it was delivered years ago. The architecture of the building indeed has some historic interest, notably as an early manifestation of the turn to populist conservatism that has done so much to bring the United States to its current pass. But like all architecture of any interest, it needs to live. Historic preservation, that is, is not about sacred shrines and temples. It's about the art of architecture, growing and changing as it always does over time to bring its lessons home to us.

Let's give 2 Columbus Circle another chance, this time to be both what it was and what it could be. Let's look forward at last to all that it can do for Columbus Circle and for all of us.

Very truly yours,


Paul Spencer Byard

Director, Historic Preservation Program