

LANDMARK WEST!

From: "LANDMARK WEST!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2004 4:55 PM
Subject: 2 Columbus Circle: City Poised to Approve Sale

August Dog Days Sneak Attack: City Set to Decide on Sale of 2 Columbus Circle

After a year of unexplained delays, the City is poised to give final approval to the sale of **2 Columbus Circle**. On August 24, at 8:30 AM, the Manhattan Borough Board will convene to authorize a plan that will utterly destroy Edward Durell Stone's original 1964 design, which leading preservationists at the city, state, and national levels all agree deserves at least an open, public hearing to determine its merits for landmark status. To date, **over 1000 individuals and organizations** have signed on to urge the NYC Landmarks Commission to schedule this hearing. Our pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

2 Columbus Circle deserves the chance for survival that a fair and due process is supposed to provide. The message we've received - loud and clear - has been, "Due process be damned!"

If this sounds extreme, just remember - common NYC political wisdom has it that scheduling a hearing on a major public issue during the last week of August is a **deliberate effort to avoid meaningful public participation**. Many community supporters of preserving 2 Columbus Circle are not able to attend Tuesday's meeting (the second to last week before Labor Day, the week before the Republican Convention takes over NYC). Those of us who are in town feel strongly that we should not dignify this farcical meeting with our presence. Therefore, we plan to send down a single spokesperson to read the statement below. As one of the 1000 advocates for 2 Columbus Circle to receive the due process it deserves, please email us and let us know that you would like to co-sign this statement.

In unity, there's strength! **Please contact us immediately:** landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org or 212-496-8110.

Many thanks for your continued support of this landmark effort!

We, the undersigned, formally protest the scheduling of a Borough Board meeting to review the proposed sale of 2 Columbus Circle for August 24, 2004, and request that it be rescheduled to a date in September.

It is common New York political wisdom that to schedule a public matter in late August (in the absence of a real emergency) is a deliberate effort to avoid meaningful public participation. It is particularly outrageous in this instance since neither the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) nor the City has moved this process forward in the full year since the City Planning Commission's vote on July 2, 2003. Indeed, on February 27, 2004, counsel for the City informed the Supreme Court for the State of New York that the Borough Board was expected to act in May 2004.

In view of the foregoing, this sudden rush to judgment is unseemly at best – and highly suspicious at worst. 2 Columbus Circle deserves the chance for survival that a fair and due process is supposed to provide.

- When the nation's premier preservation organization, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, names 2 Columbus Circle to its list of America's "Most Endangered Historic Places;"
- When the Preservation League of New York State includes 2 Columbus Circle on its "Seven to Save" list;
- When every major preservation group in New York City aligns in support of a public hearing before the Landmarks Preservation Commission to determine 2 Columbus Circle's merits for official Landmark status;
- When distinguished architect and Dean of the Yale School of Architecture Robert A.M. Stern,

New York Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp, artists Chuck Close and LeRoy Neiman and Françoise Gilot-Salk and Milton Glaser, New York notables such as Tom Wolfe and Joan K. Davidson, not to mention more than 1,000 other signatories (see attached document entitled "The Silent Majority"), United States Congressman Jerold Nadler and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane, and Assembly Member Scott Stringer and other local elected officials have all called for a public Landmarks hearing to give 2 Columbus Circle fair and due process (see enclosed copy of February 21, 2002, letter).

To ignore this public outcry is reprehensible. Furthermore, because of the irresponsible timing of the Borough Board's meeting and the fact that, as of Wednesday, August 18, only four business days in advance, notice of this meeting has not appeared in the City Record, many supporters of preserving 2 Columbus Circle are not able to attend. Such cavalier treatment of the important role of public participation is a violation of the spirit of good government and must not be tolerated.

Please reconsider your determination to press forward in this cynical manner.

Respectfully,