

LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

TO: Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
CC: Manhattan Borough Board
DATE: August 19, 2004
RE: 2 Columbus Circle, Scheduled Borough Board Meeting, August 24, 2004

We, the undersigned, formally protest the scheduling of a Borough Board meeting to review the proposed sale of 2 Columbus Circle for Tuesday, 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. Two 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 three full business days in advance, notice of this meeting had 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,

**Landmark West! • National Trust for Historic Preservation • Preservation League of New York State •
Historic Districts Council • DOCOMOMO US • DOCOMOMO New York / Tri-State • Women's City
Club of New York • Modern Architecture Working Group • Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side •
Friends of Terra Cotta • Historic Neighborhood Enhancement Alliance • Park Slope Civic Council •
Queens Historical Society**

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