

LANDMARK WEST!

From: "LANDMARK WEST!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2004 6:17 PM
Subject: City Approves Sale of 2 Columbus Circle

Dog-Day Decision Debacle: Manhattan Borough Board Votes to Sell 2 Columbus Circle

Let's start with the good news. Back in June, we set a summer goal to reach **1,000 names on the list of people urging the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission to schedule a public hearing for 2 Columbus Circle**. Last week, we surpassed that goal! Notably, **Council Member Bill Perkins*** signed on in support of a Landmarks hearing, and his representative at yesterday's Manhattan Borough Board meeting tried to persuade the Board to postpone its vote on the sale of the building until such a hearing could be scheduled, or at least until after Labor Day, when more New Yorkers could participate in the Board's decision-making process.

Now, let's face the bad news. The Manhattan Borough Board voted to approve the sale of 2 Columbus Circle to the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), meaning that plans to destroy the building are closer than ever to becoming a reality.

Even worse, Borough President C. Virginia Fields's refusal to postpone the Board's vote suggests the low value placed on public participation in the review process. Disregarding the objections of over 100 individuals who signed on to a letter protesting the scheduling of this meeting in the "dog days" of summer, days before the arrival of the Republican National Convention, when many New Yorkers have longstanding plans to be away, the Board plowed ahead...so recklessly that it appears **they failed to comply with the State Open Meetings Law**. Most Board members sent staff proxies - indeed, Fields herself was not even there - with marching orders to follow the lead of Council Member Gale Brewer, in whose district 2 Columbus Circle is located and who announced her support for the Museum's destructive plans earlier this month. A pre-formulated resolution in favor of the sale was passed with no amendments. It was, sadly, business as usual.

Is the Lollipop Building licked? Not on your life. There has been no final decision on the lawsuit LWI and others filed to halt the sale, and the City has committed enough missteps to justify more legal action. Stay tuned...

*Other elected officials who signed on to support a public Landmarks hearing include: NYS Senator Tom Duane, NYS Assemblyman Scott Stringer, and former NYC Council Member Ronnie Eldridge. Only Council Member Perkins has a vote on the Manhattan Borough Board.