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Dear Rolf:

How quaint, -- indeed, chivalrous -- for you to come to the defense of Suzanne. A bit less Arthurian, perhaps, is your omission of traditional courtesies (Dear _____; Very truly yours) -- or is that just the modernist eschewing the extraneous? More troubling is your discourtesy in sending copies of your letter around town without the standard "cc" notation on the original to me.

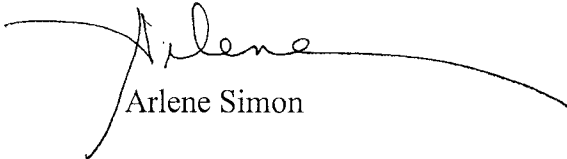
Re substance:

1. As to the charge that I am a "true believer", for whom there is "only right and wrong". Guilty as charged. As to my being "an effective zealot for preservation -- my tombstone could say worse.
2. I "gained access to Suzanne's personal e-mail". You make me sound like the computer hacker of the year. As you know, "access" was provided by the Freedom of Information Act to the Landmark Preservation Commission files. Suzanne's "personal e-mails" had all been forwarded dutifully to Chairman Tierney -- all just a casual personal troika?
3. Suzanne's "neutrality". Forwarding Joyce Purnick's critical article to Laurie (on thence to Chairman Tierney) with the comment: "We thought that you should be very pleased with the article. . . . a big "whew"!"-- Neutral? Not in my book.
4. My 'lack of respect for [your] intellectual position'? Granted. When Suzanne called -- specifically on your behalf -- to express concern about the fate of the Empire Hotel, because of the view from your new apartment, I realized that nimbyism affects even those who believe their motives are intellectually pure. (And, yes, I believe that personal friendships also play a motivational role.)
5. The merits of Two Columbus Circle? Surely, professionals can and do differ. But is there any legitimate basis to deny a hearing? After the truly unprecedented outpouring of support by the pillars of the preservation community? (Most of which has come during the incumbent Chairman's term). If your "intellectual position" is sound, have you no confidence it could withstand professional scrutiny?
6. "Deep Throat". Do you really believe that "the returns are not yet in as to whether Mark Felt was a hero or villain"? I guess here, too, my zealotry gets in the way.

Watergate was a desperately and despicably anti-democratic act. Woodward/Bernstein, with Felt's help, forced a cynical, skeptical public, and a stonewalling government, to come to grips with it. I have no trouble with my moral compass on that one. Do I think Suzanne is the equivalent of Mark Felt? Give me a break.

Finally, as to friendship, betrayal, and consorting with the enemy -- We obviously have different levels of expectation regarding the actions of friends. I expect you will not understand the deep shock I received when reviewing the constant stream of e-mails in Chairman Tierney's mailbox, faithfully originated by Suzanne, over a protracted period of time, reporting assiduously on every step taken by Landmark West! It may not have been the crime of the century, but it said something profound to me about Suzanne's "loyalty" and friendship priorities. She chose Laurie, and a destroyed Two Columbus Circle, and a Landmarks Preservation Commission hiding in a bunker. She had every right to do so. She could have let me know.

Very truly yours,



Arlene Simon

cc. Kent Barwick
Laurie Beckelman
Joan K. Davidson
Susan Henshaw Jones
Brenda Levin
Henry Ng
Margot Wellington
Anthony C. Wood