

Arlene:

June 4, 2005

Your recent personal and, I think, vindictive, attack on Suzanne requires a response.

It is clear to me that any position on 2 Columbus Circle taken by your friends which is in opposition to yours is seen by you as a personal betrayal. For you, as for all true believers, there is only right and wrong – and as an effective zealot for preservation, you have no tolerance for opposing views.

You gained access to Suzanne's personal e-mails forwarding your public newsletter, and you found it intolerable that she could have wished Laurie "good luck". This, despite the fact that Suzanne has taken no public position on 2 CC.

As for me, you and I had a long discussion at the beginning of this odyssey, during which we expressed opposing points of view on the future of 2 Columbus Circle. That you could not convert me led you, I believe, to think that my position was based on my personal friendship and loyalty to Laurie. I consider your lack of respect for my intellectual position insulting.

Just to reiterate and summarize my personal viewpoint: I believe 2 Columbus Circle is a mausoleum, a lifeless building that now has the possibility of a vital and extended life. That the massing will not change, and that the proposed museum use is a natural program fit, is of paramount importance. That Stone's "folly" will be lost is not a problem for me. He did some good buildings, a few great ones, and more than a few that we can afford to lose.

Your recent attack on Bob Tierney is a thinly disguised attack on the Landmark Commission. The Commission, and at least three Administrations and Chairpersons, have seen fit not to elevate 2 Columbus for landmarking. In my view that judgment is precisely the Commission's responsibility; it is not the role of outside special interest groups, although they certainly have the right to make their views known.

Finally, I hope you will have second thoughts about your mean-spirited intent to excoriate Suzanne by alerting the preservation community to her alleged sins, although I doubt that she would lose many friends if you did. And I can't help but see some humor in your remark that Suzanne is the "Deep Throat" of the Preservation Movement (keep in mind that the returns are not yet in as to whether Mark Felt was a hero or villain).

Barring an apology to Suzanne from you (which is not expected) I will be happy to maintain the policy, initiated by you, of not consorting with the enemy.

Rolf