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SEVEN PRESERVATION GROUPS APPEAL TO MAYOR FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE

On Monday, July 11, 2005, seven major preservation organizations sent a letter to Mayor Michael Bloomberg asking him to support a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing on 2 Columbus Circle. The groups range from city-wide to national and international organizations.

The organizations are: the New York/Tri-State Chapter of DOCOMOMO; the Historic Districts Council; the Municipal Art Society; the National Trust for Historic Preservation; the New York Landmarks Conservancy; the Preservation League of New York State; and the World Monuments Fund.

The organizations cited the prominent architects, scholars, newspapers, and groups who support a hearing on Edward Durrell Stone's important, but controversial, 1964 structure.

"We regret that the debate over this controversy has become so prolonged and embittered," the letter stated. "We believe it would be beneficial for all parties if the Commission would act to resolve this matter once and for all..."

Several of the groups began asking for a Landmarks hearing in 1999. Both appreciation of 2 Columbus Circle's design and requests for a fair and impartial hearing have grown substantially since that time.

Most recently, Bernadette Castro, New York State Parks Commissioner and State Historic Preservation Officer has stated that 2 Columbus Circle "does appear to meet the criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places." A state review board could vote on listing the building this September.

The organizations believe that the significant number of established groups and individuals seeking a hearing, as well as a growing recognition of the need to consider landmarking more recent buildings, should enable the Landmarks Commission to reconsider its earlier decision against a hearing and schedule one now.

The seven preservation organizations find it hard to understand why a building with such significant and widespread support is not worthy of a fair and impartial landmarks hearing before its exterior features are gone forever.

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