

LANDMARK WEST!

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Subject: Pressure Mounts on LPC to Hold Hearings

Increasing Pressure on Landmarks Commission to Hold Public Hearings

In the City Council and in the court of public opinion, pressure is mounting on the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to hold public hearings on the buildings that matter most to New Yorkers.

Yesterday, **NY City Council Member Bill Perkins introduced a "Landmarks Hearing" bill** (Intro 705) to help ensure that historic buildings and districts that earn support from a majority of council members for consideration or that meet the eligibility criteria for the NY State Register of Historic Places receive fair, open, democratic designation hearings before the LPC. (**See below to learn how you can help get this law passed**, and visit the New York City Council's website to read the text of Intro 705: http://www.nycouncil.info/issues/intros_act.cfm?intro=Int%200705%2D2005.) The intent of the "Landmarks Hearing" bill is to stem the tide of worthy buildings that are overlooked for hearings by the LPC without explanation to the public. Cases in point include **St. Thomas the Apostle Church** in Harlem, the **Grand Concourse** in the Bronx, the **Richmond Hill** district in Queens, and the (now sadly lost) **Dorothy Day Cottage** in Staten Island.

Meanwhile, expert support continues to grow for the LPC to hold a public hearing on **2 Columbus Circle**, reports David W. Dunlap in today's *New York Times* ("For 2 Columbus Circle, a Growing Fan Club," 8/18/05, pB3, link to article below). No less an authority than **Vincent Scully**, the Sterling professor emeritus of art history at Yale University and one of the world's most esteemed scholars of 20-century American architecture, wrote an August 14 letter to LPC Chair Robert B. Tierney (who has claimed taking an undergraduate course with Scully 40 years ago as his principal architectural education). Scully instructs his former student, "**Something rather wonderful has occurred, by which [2 Columbus Circle], rarely anyone's favorite building in the past, is looking better every day. Its own integrity, its uniqueness, the indomitable determination to make a point that produced it, are come to the fore and are powerfully affecting the way we see it.**" The full text of the letter is available on LW's website at http://www.landmarkwest.org/advocacy/ad_02/ScullytoTierney050814.pdf

Link to David Dunlap's *New York Times* article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/18/nyregion/18blocks.html>

As further evidence of "the redemptive power that the passage of time holds for once-ugly ducklings," Dunlap also cites the newly expressed support of **several former landmarks commissioners (William E. Davis, Sarah Bradford Landau, Stephen M. Raphael and Mildred F. Schmertz)**, who recently called on Tierney to schedule a hearing for 2 Columbus Circle, joining **Gene A. Norman** and **Beverly Moss Spatt** (both former chairs) and **Anthony M. Tung**, whose support has been on record for nearly a year. Former commissioner **Jack Freeman** also supports a hearing, and **former LPC Chair David F.M. Todd** has stated his hope that a hearing would "strengthen the Landmarks Law."

2 Columbus Circle is just one prominent example of the LPC's lack of responsiveness to the public and the need for immediate action to remedy this threat to our city's heritage. **HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

1) Contact your local council member(s) urging them to sign on as a co-sponsor of Intro 705, the "Landmarks Hearing" bill. A list of council members, their districts and contact information is available at www.nycouncil.info.

2) Join "Citizens for a Responsive Landmarks Law," the coalition in formation to advocate for Intro 705. Reply to this email with permission to use your and/or your organization's name in connection with this initiative

3) Email/call/fax Mayor Bloomberg. Urge him to **break the wall of silence** and call for a public hearing for 2 Columbus Circle today! Email: go to <http://www.nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html> and type your message in the space provided. Phone: 212-788-3000, Fax: (212) 788-2460. We appreciate receiving blind copies of your letters - please send to landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org.