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HEADLINE: 'LOLLIPOP' FANS LICKED IN COURT

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BODY:

A judge kicked the sticks out from under Columbus Circle's "Lollipop" yesterday, tossing two lawsuits that sought to prevent the city from selling the controversial building to the Museum of Arts & Design.

State Supreme Court Justice Michael Stallman threw out the suits by preservationist groups led by Landmark West, which oppose the museum's plan to replace architect Edward Durell Stone's marble facade with a new face of terra cotta and glass.

The rulings clear the way for the long-delayed sale of the funky, decayed structure on the circle's south rim and its conversion into the museum's new home.

The vacant building is considered an eyesore by some and a masterpiece by others. The museum wants to move its collection there from cramped galleries in a Midtown office building. It has a contract to buy it from the city for \$17 million, but the suits held up the deal.

The Lollipop is not a designated city landmark and enjoys no protection from changes.

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