

## **LANDMARK WEST!**

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**From:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**To:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2003 4:59 PM  
**Subject:** 2 Columbus Circle: A Momentous Week Ahead

### **2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE: A Momentous Week Ahead**

**New York Times ad** (Metro Section, 6/13/03, p. B4) listing the 12 leading preservation organizations who have already called for a landmark designation hearing for 2 Columbus Circle

**Channel 2 news** (to air tonight, 6/16/03, at 6:00PM) covering community efforts to preserve 2 Columbus Circle

**New York City Planning Commission** to hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 18** to review plans that would essentially erase Edward Durell Stone's original design for 2 Columbus Circle, which opened as the Gallery of Modern Art in 1964. It is estimated that the hearing will begin around **10:15 AM** at **22 Reade Street** (Reade Street runs east-west parallel to Chambers Street, just north of City Hall). Please let us know if you plan to attend, and we will sign you up to speak. This is a **critical** (and possibly final) opportunity to make your voice heard and to ensure that the City conducts a **meaningful** review of all of the issues surrounding this important site. (See below for information about sending written statements to public officials.)

**Paul Goldberger kicks off an on-line forum** today (6/16/03) on 2 Columbus Circle at [www.collectorsworld.org](http://www.collectorsworld.org). In his opening comments, Goldberger writes:

"Let me begin by saying what this forum is not. It has not been initiated to review, or to pass judgment on, the [Brad Cloepfil/Allied Works Architecture] proposal to renovate 2 Columbus Circle as a new home for the Museum of Arts and Design that is now before the City Planning Commission....[T]he real goal of this forum is broader - to step back, and to try to get to the underlying issues that have made the future of this building such a troubling and difficult issue...The problem of 2 Columbus Circle raises important questions about postwar landmarks and their increasing role in the area of historic preservation; about cultural facilities and their expansion; about public property and appropriate means of maintaining it or disposing of it; and about neighborhoods and their relationship to iconic structures..."

Already, there is an exciting exchange taking place between Goldberger and panelist **Witold Rybczynski**. Other panelists include MoMA curator **Terence Riley**; architects **Michael Sorkin, John Kaliski, and Diane Lewis**; historian **Thomas Mellins**; and design critic **Karrie Jacobs**. We **urge you to join us** in this discussion by logging on to [www.collectorsworld.org](http://www.collectorsworld.org), signing up to become part of the CollectorsWorld community, and posting your own remarks to be considered for inclusion in the ongoing conversation, which runs through July 2.

There is **no substitute** for your presence at Wednesday's public hearing, but if you absolutely cannot attend the hearing, please send copies of your testimony to the officials listed below (and please send copies to us at [landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org](mailto:landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org)):

### **ESSENTIAL TO CONTACT**

Hon. Amanda M. Burden, Chair  
 New York City Planning Commission  
 22 Reade Street  
 New York, NY 10007  
 (do not e-mail) F: 212-720-3219

Hon. Gale A. Brewer, City Council Member  
 2374 Broadway  
 New York, NY 10024  
 F: 212-513-7717  
[gale.brewer@council.nyc.ny.us](mailto:gale.brewer@council.nyc.ny.us)

Hon. Robert B. Tierney, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th Fl.  
New York, NY 10007  
F: 212-669-7955  
[rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov)

Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007  
F: 212-788-2460  
<http://nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html>

Hon. Bernadette Castro  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
Agency Bldg. 1, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12238  
F: 518-474-1365  
[bernadette.castro@oprhp.state.ny.us](mailto:bernadette.castro@oprhp.state.ny.us)

**ALSO IMPORTANT:**

C. Virginia Fields - Manhattan Borough President  
1 Centre Street, 19<sup>th</sup> Fl., NYC 10007  
[bp@manhattanbp.org](mailto:bp@manhattanbp.org)  
F: 212-669-4306

Richard Gottfried - New York State Assemblyman  
250 Broadway, Rm. 2232, NYC 10007  
[gottfr@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:gottfr@assembly.state.ny.us)  
F: 212-312-1494

Scott Stringer - New York State Assemblyman  
230 West 72nd Street, NYC 10023  
[strings@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:strings@assembly.state.ny.us)  
F: 212-873-6520

Tom Duane - New York State Senator  
494 Eighth Avenue, Ste. 503, NYC 10001  
[duane@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:duane@senate.state.ny.us)  
F: 212-564-1003

Eric Schneiderman - New York State Senator  
1841 Broadway, Rm. 608, NYC 10023  
[schneiderman@schneiderman.org](mailto:schneiderman@schneiderman.org)  
F: 212-397-3201

Christine Quinn - City Council Member  
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206, NYC 10001  
[quinn@council.nyc.ny.us](mailto:quinn@council.nyc.ny.us)  
F: 212-564-7347

Jerrold Nadler - U.S. Congress Member  
201 Varick Street, Suite 669 NYC 10014  
[jerrold.nadler@mail.house.gov](mailto:jerrold.nadler@mail.house.gov)  
F: 212-367-7356

Carolyn Maloney - U.S. Congress Member

1651 3rd Avenue Suite 311 NYC 10128  
F: (212) 860-0704  
[cmaloney@hr.house.gov](mailto:cmaloney@hr.house.gov)

Eva Moskowitz - City Council Member  
420 Lexington Avenue (Suite 1710) NYC 10017  
Fax: (212) 818-0706  
[moskowitz@council.nyc.ny.us](mailto:moskowitz@council.nyc.ny.us)

## **LANDMARK WEST!**

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**From:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**To:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 21, 2003 11:45 AM  
**Subject:** 2 Columbus Circle - Watching and Waiting

The alarm sounded. And you came. To all who wrote letters and attended Wednesday's City Planning Commission hearing regarding **2 Columbus Circle**, thank you. We mean it.

Over 30 speakers lined up to testify about the importance of Edward Durell Stone's original 1964 design, urging the Planning Commission to call for a public hearing before the Landmarks Preservation Commission. (Incomprehensibly - despite years of preservation advocacy - this has never happened.) In his testimony, writer **Tom Wolfe** cut to the chase, telling the Commissioners that they should be "afire with curiosity" about why 2 Columbus Circle has never been formally considered for landmark status. It is indeed a mystery. And one that should not be left to rest - or, worse, to politics! It's up to all New Yorkers who care about this building and, perhaps more importantly, **fair and due process**, to make sure this signature work by one of America's pre-eminent Modernist architects has "its day in court."

In a letter to City Planning Commission Chair Amanda Burden, the National Trust for Historic Preservation wrote that to dispose of a building before determining its historical and architectural significance is "premature." (The Commission has not yet taken a vote, but must do so shortly.)

Love it or hate it, 2 Columbus Circle is a significant part of New York's Modern architectural legacy. The City's inexcusable failure to recognize this significance means the building's unique identity may soon be morphed (much like the identity of its potential new occupant, the Museum of Arts and Design - see "Trading Baskets for Plastics," NY Times, 6/19/03). Marble to mesh, anyone?

2 Columbus Circle already has a powerful identity. It should be embraced, not erased.

Now is the time to write to **Landmarks Chair Robert B. Tierney** (with a copy to Landmark West! [landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org](mailto:landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org), F: 212-875-0209). Remind him that leading preservation organizations (see growing list, below) have united in calling for a public hearing, not to mention the hundreds of individuals who have written as well. What more will it take?

Hon. Robert B. Tierney  
 Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
 1 Centre Street, 9th Floor  
 New York, NY 10007  
[rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov)  
 F: 212-669-7955

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The following is a partial list of organizations and elected officials that have expressed their support for preserving 2 Columbus Circle, or at least holding a hearing before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC):

### **Organizations:**

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
 Preservation League for New York State  
 DOCOMOMO US  
 DOCOMOMO US-New York/Tri-State Chapter  
 Municipal Art Society  
 New York Landmarks Conservancy  
 Historic Districts Council  
 Fine Arts Federation  
 LANDMARK WEST!  
 Modern Architectural Working Group

Committee for Environmentally Sound Development  
New York Artists Equity Association  
Clinton Special District  
Coalition for Livable Westside  
Committee for Post War Architecture

**Elected Officials:**

US Congressman Jerrold Nadler  
US Congressman Carolyn Maloney  
NYS Senator Eric Schneiderman  
NYS Senator Thomas Duane  
NYS Assemblymember Richard Gottfried  
NYS Assemblymember Scott Stringer  
NYC Councilmember Christine Quinn  
NYC Councilmember Eva Moskowitz  
NYC Councilmember Gale Brewer

## LANDMARK WEST!

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**From:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**To:** "Landmark West!" <landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 10, 2003 11:47 AM  
**Subject:** 2 Columbus Circle update

Last Wednesday (July 2) marked the end of two critical discussions regarding the future of 2 Columbus Circle. But that doesn't mean efforts to save this 1960s modern icon have run their course. Preservationists have been calling for the building's preservation since 1995 - and we're just getting warmed up.

### City Planning Commission

The City Planning Commission (CPC) voted to approve the transfer of Edward Durell Stone's 1964 building to the Museum of Arts and Design, whose planned alterations to the facade and interior will erase Stone's world-renowned design for the site. Although the CPC's vote was unanimous, two commissioners couched their votes as "reluctant," questioning why the Landmarks Preservation Commission (the municipal agency charged with protecting New York's cultural heritage) had never held a public hearing to consider the building's historic significance. "Why would anyone think of destroying such a building?" asked Commissioner Dolly Williams, responding to what she recognized as the "overwhelming concern of speakers" at the June 18, 2003, CPC public hearing. "It should be a landmark," she continued. Indeed.

Unfortunately, the Landmarks Commission has not taken up the mantle. Others have noticed - in a July 8 *Newsday* article, NYC historian Jeffrey Kroessler writes: **"Despite the pleas of historians, preservationists and architects, the commission has pointedly refused to hold a hearing to consider 2 Columbus Circle, Edward Durell Stone's controversial 1965 museum (originally the Gallery of Modern Art). Few believed that this commission would have actually designated it, but three successive chairs have demonstrated a reluctance to let the process take its course."**

### On-Line Panel Discussion

"Is the tradeoff worth it?" With this key question, Paul Goldberger concluded the 2 Columbus Circle on-line forum at [www.collectorsworld.org](http://www.collectorsworld.org). In the minds of many historians, preservationists and architects, the answer is resoundingly "no." And not necessarily because the Museum's planned replacement of E.D. Stone's building would be bad (it appears not to be), but because the original design is simply irreplaceable. (Note: "Protecting the Irreplaceable" is the motto of America's leading preservation advocate, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has taken a strong stand for preserving 2 Columbus Circle.)

The forum transcript will remain on the CollectorsWorld website. Check it out. It concentrates into one uniquely fresh, frank exchange a full range of ideas about why 2 Columbus Circle should - or shouldn't - be preserved. Exactly the kind of discussion one would expect to take place at a public hearing before the Landmarks Commission. **What more will it take for 2 Columbus Circle to receive its official "day in court"?**