

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Regarding the Plaza Hotel Interiors, 768 Fifth Avenue  
June 7, 2005**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

LW! wholeheartedly supports this designation. The Plaza Hotel is a legendary hotel with exceptional interiors significant for both their architecture and their history. I can think of very few New York City interior spaces that deserve the protection and stewardship of this agency more.

As you all know, LW! is also deeply supportive of the public hearing process and the Commission's mandate to provide an opportunity for informed testimony on all sides of any issue, to review the facts with clear eyes, and to make a determination on the merits.

But that's not what today is about. Mayor Bloomberg has already spoken and given his blessing. The Landmarks Commission's consideration of this matter is a rubber stamp, nothing more. We know it, and you know it.

If the result is good – the Plaza's interiors undoubtedly merit designation – does it matter if the process stinks? Unquestionably, yes, it does matter to those of us committed to the idea that landmarks preservation should be a fair, independent, far-sighted process with the unique purpose of protecting architectural, historical and cultural resources that are vital to our city.

For forty years, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has been the keeper of that flame. But the Commission's apparent willingness to let other forces make their decisions for them – 2 Columbus Circle, St. Thomas's Church, the Crawford Clothes building, St. John the Divine, to name just a few – suggests that the flame may have turned into smoke and mirrors.

It is our profound hope that this is not the case.

I have a handout that I would like distributed to each of the commissioners right now. Believe me, it will not distract them. It is precisely on point and much more compelling than anything that I will say. It is a *New York Times* article dated May 27, 2005, as well as excerpts from email communications between the Museum of Arts and Design and the chair of this commission, plainly in collusion with the museum's plan to deface 2 Columbus Circle and undermining any possibility that this building could get fair consideration for landmark status.

A timeline of email correspondence is attached. The full record of LW's lawsuit is posted on our website: ([http://www.landmarkwest.org/advocacy/ad\\_02/2columbuscircle.html](http://www.landmarkwest.org/advocacy/ad_02/2columbuscircle.html)).

Not only do backstairs communications like these jeopardize the future of 2 Columbus Circle and other buildings inexplicably overlooked by this Commission; they cast a deep shadow of doubt on the honesty and integrity of the Commission itself. The people of New York deserve better.