

# Yale University

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14 August 2005

Robert B. Tierney  
Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission  
City of New York  
1 Centre Street, 9th floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr. Tierney:

I urge you to hold a full public hearing to debate the issues raised by the proposed remodelling of 2 Columbus Circle.

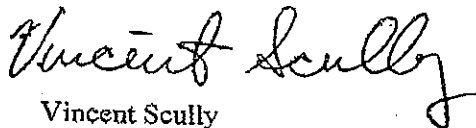
It has become apparent that the fate of this building is now of consuming interest not only to New Yorkers but also to architects, planners, and public organizations throughout the world. It has united critics of every persuasion many of whom have hitherto disagreed violently with one another on every occasion. This has happened, I think, because some fundamental questions about cities, architecture, preservation, and the relation of the past to the future have somehow all come together here. A basic urban nerve has been touched, moving the whole debate far beyond questions of taste and ideology toward an emerging principle of historical memory and of what cannot lightly be discarded if a city is to retain its vitality and survive.

This opportunity to debate these issues publicly is too good to lose. Your commission will be universally seen as serving the public good by making it possible, and I urge you to do so.

Another result of the present concern should also be noted. As more and more people have been led to look at Stone's building again and to consider it afresh in relation to its surroundings and to what is proposed for it, something rather wonderful has occurred, by which the building, rarely anyone's favorite in the past, is looking better every day. Its own integrity, its uniqueness, the indomitable determination to make a point that produced it, are coming to the fore and are powerfully affecting the way we see it. It is in fact becoming the icon it never was, one about which the city now cares a great deal. It is that very awareness of the life in forms which has united the critics, and all that, too, is too important to throw away.

Thank you for your consideration, and with all personal best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



Vincent Scully  
Sterling Professor Emeritus of the History of Art, Yale University  
Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Miami

cc: Stephen F. Byrns, Joan Gerner, Roberta Gratz, Christopher Moore, Richard Olcott, Thomas Pike, Jan Pokorny, Elizabeth Ryan, Vicki March Suna, Pablo Vengococha