

Topics

Crumbling Patrimony

Mr. Trump's Jackhammer

If some of New York City's developers are eager to win a stupendous new unpopularity prize, they are going about it in just the right way. The trophy, in the form of an unnecessarily large building, could be called a Donald, or a Harry. Just as Harry Helmsley announced plans to build on his private park in Tudor City, Donald Trump had the idea of smashing the sculptures on the facade of the Bonwit Teller building that he is demolishing to make way for a new tower. Most unfairly, the sculptures were ruined even though they had been conditionally promised to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mr. Trump may assume that esthetic vandalism soon vanishes from civic memory. But what he has destroyed with the sculptures is the public image he was building with his new Fifth Avenue skyscraper. His act was

a memorable version of cash flow calculations outweighing public sensibilities. True, it would have cost more to save the sculptures than to destroy them, but in a \$100-million project one would have thought that the difference was affordable. The Metropolitan, at first amused by the builder's rejection of its estimate of the sculptures' worth, is now merely incredulous that no one asked how they might have been removed before the jackhammers struck.

Yet whether Mr. Trump acted out of fiscal miscalculation or civic lapse is now beside the point. The city has lost an important work of art and many New Yorkers are simply outraged. Obviously, big buildings do not make big human beings. Nor do big deals make art experts. Evidently, New York needs to make salvation of this kind of landmark mandatory and stop expecting that its developers will be good citizens and good sports.

Days Beyond Father's

Dear old dad richly deserves the after shave and the paisley-patterned neckties bestowed upon him by offspring susceptible to the adroit merchandising of every Father's Day. Father is an endangered species.

The proportion of households headed by married couples has dropped from 75 to 65 percent since 1940 and may be barely over 50 percent by 1990. And even among these couples, father won't necessarily be the traditional authority, or even a father.

The evolving American household may or may not be a desirable social phenomenon. But from a marketing vantage, the proliferating variety of family structures may even become a commercial gusher. Every Sunday could be *somebody's* day: Live-In Boyfriend Day, Stepdaddy Day, Trial Wife Day, Joint Custodians' Day, Gay Spouse Day . . .