

Recycled Tweed

One can hardly look for a bright side to New York's current fiscal crisis, but there are unexpected consolation prizes. One assumes Mayor Beame's common-sense directive to city agencies to repair and renovate the offices they have now rather than build new ones will be acted on first at home—at City Hall.

This should logically be the end of the abortive plan to demolish the Tweed Courthouse and build a replacement. Surely the order to use existing structures supports remodeling and reuse of this city landmark, which is so ideally located for overflow executive offices. Bulldozing that political house of ill-repute is an unpopular idea with New Yorkers anyway, who have been rediscovering its not inconsiderable architectural merits.

Perhaps if the old courthouse were a more virtuous building, native cynics would love it less. But its mixture of esthetic strengths and historic chicanery seems to suit the city well. With some creative recycling it is good for another century of the arts of architecture and political accommodation.