

March 23, 2005

Governor George E. Pataki  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Pataki,

On behalf of New York New Visions and the Civic Alliance steering committee, and at the request of the American Planning Association, New York Metro Chapter, we strongly urge you to assure the preservation and restoration of the staircase on the north side of the World Trade Center site near the intersection of Greenwich and Vesey Streets, the only remnant of the World Trade Center complex remaining above ground.

The World Trade Center Survivors' Network has issued the attached statement relating this stair to their evacuation and survival on 9/11. As a group, the survivors should have a significant voice in the recovery process. It is time that we all start to hear and acknowledge the more than 20,000 people who escaped the attacks on the WTC. To do so is not only a befitting commemoration of their ordeals and traumas; it would be an affirmation that many more of us had their lives changed forever that day. The survivors' stories are the poignant counterpoint to the tragic loss of life that day, and their proposed designation of the stairs as the Survivors' Staircase creates a fitting prominence in contrast with the memorial design Reflecting Absence.

The Section 106 process listed the stairs as potentially significant, from the beginning. Thus, the survivors' proposal is not a new element to the design process. It does, however, underscore the need for these artifacts to be listed in the LMDC Programmatic Agreement. The Survivors' Network has set forth additional documentation of that one historic element's significance, and in doing so, underscored the importance of preserving it, dedicating it to the survivors, and incorporating it in the plan. We have examined the location of the staircase and determined it does not interfere with potential building core design.

We have been concerned with the historic preservation aspects of rebuilding the World Trade Center site—and revitalizing downtown Manhattan—since shortly after the 9/11 tragedy. We have sought to involve the public and influence decision makers about areas of the rebuilding challenge in which we as planners and designers could share our expertise. Therefore we ask that you direct and guide the LMDC, MTA and the Port Authority to:

1. Amend the redevelopment plan to dedicate the stairs to the WTC Survivors.
2. Take all action necessary to preserve the remnants in place, protecting and stabilizing them from further deterioration.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of various options for public and semi-public treatment of the stairs, preservation as-is and restoration to functional stair-escalator.
4. Develop design alternatives that would incorporate the stairs where they are in the design of the public and private spaces.

Your support for the proposal to designate the Survivors' Stairway would acknowledge the survivors' needs, a major constituency that deserves a continuing role in the remembrance of 9/11 and the rebuilding process.

Sincerely,

Marcie Kesner, Ernest Hutton and Jordan Gruzen  
Co-Chairs  
New York New Visions

Robert D. Yaro  
Chair  
Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York

cc: John Whitehead, Chairman, LMDC  
Kevin Rampe, President, LMDC  
Irene Chang, LMDC  
Tim Stickelman, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey