

March 5, 2006

Dear LMDC Families Advisory Council:

Thank you for your continuing involvement in the LMDC Families Advisory Council. The FAC has been integral to the Memorial planning process from the beginning – even before a Memorial design had been selected. Where opinions have differed and evolved among FAC members, the LMDC has had the difficult task of sorting them out, taking practical considerations into account, and making the best decisions possible. With your input, the LMDC continues to work toward creating a Memorial worthy of the memories of those we lost on September 11th.

For those who were able to attend the most recent FAC meeting, we were glad that Jim Kallstrom, who is overseeing the security team at the World Trade Center site, was able to join us and address your concerns regarding Memorial security. At that last FAC meeting and in conversations since, some of you have asked us for a considered response to various questions you have raised. In that spirit, I offer comments in this letter regarding the following issues: what changes were made to the original plans to reflect the FAC's concerns; why the Memorial Museum is located below grade; why some infrastructure must be located within the footprints to support the Memorial; why the footprints area at bedrock includes contemplative rooms; and whether a large artifact will be included above grade. The design with which we are moving forward is largely a result of the basic principles laid out by family members and developed during the planning, environmental, and historic preservation review processes, in which family members were active participants.

Changes Made in Response to Family Comments

The Memorial design itself reflects all “specific elements” articulated by the FAC in the early Memorial planning process – including common meeting areas, a private families’ area and restricted access ways, large circulation and green spaces, and provisions for unidentified remains. The design in its very essence recognizes and represents the footprints as important features, in a Memorial that reaches from bedrock to infinity, to memorialize both what existed before and as a result of September 11th. Appropriately, it is a physically large and symbolically powerful Memorial. It will be one of the most significant memorials ever created.

The original master site plan called for substructure within the footprints such as truck ramps and a bus garage. In response to FAC members’ requests, and with direction from Governor Pataki, the LMDC worked with the Port Authority, Silverstein Properties, the City, and the MTA to reconfigure the entire substructure. To aid in accomplishing this change, the LMDC purchased and is now deconstructing 130 Liberty Street (the Deutsche Bank building) to ensure open space for the Memorial quadrant and the

relocation of non-Memorial-related infrastructure off this quadrant (such as security facilities, a bus terminal, and truck ramps). The utility program has also been moved out of the footprints and the bathtub, and the Liberty Street ramp entry has been moved to the south side of Liberty Street, keeping the Memorial free of obstructions.

Some of the additional changes to the Memorial quadrant at family members' requests have included: the dedication of approximately half of the original 16-acre site to the Memorial quadrant in an expansion from the Memorial's original 4.5-acre allotment; the relocation of the central chiller plant, allowing for access between the footprints; the relocation of unsightly vent shafts from the plaza; the inclusion of more trees on the plaza in order to fully surround the south footprint; special family member access directly to the Memorial Museum from the Memorial; and the enabling of a flat plane for the Memorial quadrant as was Michael Arad's vision – through changes such as the elimination of the potential hump on Greenwich Street.

In a major programming change to the plan, the Snohetta building will now serve as a visitor orientation center and will house programming that complements the Museum. The inclusion of September 11th-related programming in the building is in direct response to family members' advocacy for an above-ground Museum presence. Specific programming decisions will be determined through a process coordinated by the newly appointed Memorial Museum Director, Alice Greenwald. The Snohetta building has also been reduced in size in response to concerns by some that it appeared to loom over and crowd the Memorial.

Location of the Memorial Museum Below Grade

Throughout the process, well before the selection of a Memorial design, the LMDC has received input from family members expressing the idea that the power and authenticity of the site below grade would add to the visitor's experience. The authenticity of this site, particularly the bedrock area, was suggested by the Coalition of 9/11 Families and others to be one of the most important and sacred elements of the visitor experience.

Michael Arad and Peter Walker's design statement included the Museum in its below grade location. They stated: "The entrance to the underground interpretive center [now called the Memorial Museum] is located at bedrock. Here visitors could view many preserved artifacts from the twin towers: twisted steel beams, a crushed fire truck, and personal effects. The underground interpretive center would contain exhibition areas as well as lecture halls and a research library. In contrast with the public mandate of the underground interpretive center is the very private nature of the room for unidentified remains."

For several years, family members have suggested and supported the location of the museum below-grade. For example, in correspondence to the LMDC on July 24, 2003, a FAC member explained that, "We've consulted with engineers and have offered the idea of creating an underground memorial museum, which can be the necessary support infrastructure and would allow for access to and preservation of the bedrock footprints."

The “Coalition of 9/11 Families World Trade Center Memorial Criteria” issued in the summer of 2003 also included a statement that the designers should “include a memorial museum to September 11th within the area encased by the slurry walls.” True to Daniel Libeskind’s vision in the master plan, the location below grade provides the only authentic access to the slurry wall, a significant remnant, as supported by the Section 106 consulting process. A Section 106 consulting party who is also a FAC member has noted that “many people are interested in the slurry wall as being identified as a historic resource, not just the Coalition.”

The LMDC held a public comment period in June 2004 on the draft recommendations for the Memorial Museum, which included a description of the Museum’s location below grade, as well as images outlining, highlighting, and labeling where the Museum would be located below grade. The comment form was sent to the LMDC’s family database, consisting of over 5,000 family members. Approximately 400 forms were completed and returned by family members, with only one mention of a concern about the location below grade.

Family members have committed significant time to serving as members of LMDC’s advisory groups. The LMDC presented the concepts for the Memorial Museum below grade at nine Families Advisory Council meetings in April, May, June, and August 2004, and January, April, June, August, and October 2005. Family members have also been integral to the Memorial Center Advisory Committee (MCAC) and Section 106 processes, where the museum’s location and configuration have been presented.

Again, the main point is that the below-ground Museum – located in such an authentic and powerful space – will create an appropriately moving and significant experience for visitors. With the addition of September 11th programming in the Snohetta building, we now have the opportunity to create both above- and below-ground experiences. They are not mutually exclusive. Together, the two facilities will tell the story of September 11th in a unified way that captures the tragedy and triumph, horror and heroism of the day.

Inclusion of Contemplative Rooms within the Footprints

We understand that some family members would prefer the footprints at bedrock remain totally clear of structures of any kind. However, other families have voiced contrasting opinions. For example, at a Memorial Symposium Speakers Series meeting in 2002, a FAC member noted, “I wasn’t sure if you thought that the Governor said nothing at all should be there. I don’t think so.... My feeling right now, and I think I can speak for some of the families, is that yes, we’ll preserve the integrity of the footprints, but please do not think that we don’t want to put something on the footprints that’s going to be a wonderful tribute to the area, to the people that were lost, to history a hundred years from now.”

The LMDC has worked diligently to interpret differing families' wishes on this point. What emerged from the international competition for the Memorial in January 2004 was Michael Arad's design, which from the beginning included quiet, contemplative spaces on the footprints. Arad has stated that these rooms belong on the footprints because they are considered by many to be the most sacred space of the site.

Following the release of the design, meetings were held to further discuss and refine families' goals and priorities for the Memorial. Those meetings, such as one at the offices of Davis Brody Bond in August 2004, included discussions about exactly what should be on the footprints. They focused on creating a "Bedrock Room" (now more frequently referred to as the "Contemplation Room") in the north footprint for the unidentified remains. Family members' dialogue around this point focused not on whether there should be rooms on the footprints but on whether these rooms should be open to the public. At this meeting, FAC members also asked that the Family Room be relocated next to the Bedrock Room. That request has been accommodated.

In response to requests to ensure the south footprint be a significant space as well, with the north footprint already containing the Contemplation Room, our Memorial design team has proposed for the south footprint a quiet and contemplative room for individual, personal tributes to your loved ones – where every life lost can be expressed in a distinct and unique way – sometimes referred to preliminarily as a "library of memory." This room is still only in its conceptual stage, and will be further defined and programmed as our museum curatorial process progresses under the guidance of the Memorial Museum Director.

Necessary Infrastructure within the Footprints

The LMDC has also consistently explained, from the earliest discussions about the Memorial design, that some infrastructure related to the operation of the Memorial (including the tanks for the waterfalls) would be located in the footprints. For example, the pump and tank rooms located in each footprint directly serve the waterfalls, which are located directly above the bedrock level of each footprint. The current location of these rooms in the footprints enables the waterfalls to utilize gravity drainage for the return, thus minimizing piping and pump capacity. The infrastructure related to a Memorial of this size is extraordinarily complex and intricate, and the design team has taken great measures to maintain the visions and wishes of family members while also facilitating the operation of a safe and secure Memorial.

In fact, the design team was able to relocate some of the infrastructure, such as the central chiller plant, away from the footprints to make space between them accessible. These changes and others are notable when comparing drawings in late 2004 to those in late 2005.

Location of Large Artifacts Above Grade

In response to comments from FAC members regarding key artifacts, I asked you at the last meeting whether placing the Sphere at ground level would be a positive development. There seemed to be consensus in favor of this idea. As a result of such input, the LMDC is investigating the possibility of a site for the Sphere on the Memorial Plaza (perhaps near its original location at the WTC site). As we mentioned in the last meeting, we are also looking for possible ways for the tridents of the original Towers to be included in the facilities that make up the Memorial complex.

In closing, let me reiterate that from the development of Memorial guidelines to the selection of the Memorial design, from the beginning of the process to today, the Families Advisory Council has been an integral part of the Memorial and Memorial Museum development process. We appreciate all of your efforts. While we understand that, as is inevitable in a process of this complexity, some of you may still disagree with choices that have been made, those choices were made in good faith – with thorough and thoughtful consideration of all feedback received during the nearly three-year design process.

Our work on the Memorial and Memorial Museum is both inspiring and humbling. The LMDC staff is working hard to fulfill the mission of creating a Memorial that honors your loss and your loved ones. We thank you for the invaluable suggestions you have offered along the way, shaping both the process and the design. And we very much appreciate your continued involvement as construction begins and as we work to further fine-tune the design.

Very truly yours,

Stefan Pryor
President