



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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New York, New York 10005

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May 21, 2010

Adrienne Taub
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
via e-mail to adrienne.taub@nyct.com

Re: Proposed Emergency Ventilation Structure at Mulry Square

Dear Ms. Taub:

I write to you regarding the latest proposal for the MTA/NYC Transit's Emergency Ventilation Structure at Mulry Square, about which the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) has great concerns.

In a letter of July 2009, we had made the following comments in response to three earlier designs:

- 1) The primary façade should be constructed of be real, red brick;
- 2) The design should avoid utilizing a screen of red bricks over a grey masonry façade;
- 3) The fenestration should relate to its surroundings, but needn't directly imitate them;
- 4) The public space at the corner should be designed as a welcoming gathering space;
- 5) The MTA should engage an outside design consultant in the project

Upon seeing the latest proposal, we are disturbed that none of these comments have been considered. There remains a secondary brick façade suspended over a grey masonry building, and there has been no attempt made to create a friendly public space at the corner. The windows are direct imitations of those around them, yet appear ghost-like without glass panels. Additionally, no outside consultant has been engaged, as we had suggested would help resolve some of these design issues.

GVSHP has consistently maintained that the structure should be located underground and/or at an alternative location. We have so far been given no explanation as to why these options have not been considered, and continue to urge the MTA to consider them. However, if the MTA does move forward with above-ground construction on Mulry Square, as it seems committed to doing, we would like to ensure that whatever is built is appropriate for this very prominent location at the convergence of two highly-trafficked avenues and several smaller streets in the heart of the Greenwich Village Historic District.

I have attached our letter of July 2009, which you may review to understand our concerns in greater depth. GVSHP has been responsive to the MTA's request for community comment, but I am disappointed that our concerns have been ignored. I strongly urge the MTA to revisit the proposal to incorporate these critical elements into the design.

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: New York State Historic Preservation Office
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
NYC Design Review Commission
Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Community Board #2
Greenwich Village Block Associations
Mulry Angle/West 11th Street Block Association



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July 10, 2009

Adrienne Taub
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
via e-mail to adrienne.taub@nyc.com

**Re: Comments on Proposed Emergency Ventilation Structure at
Mulry Square**

Dear Ms. Taub:

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) has reviewed the MTA/NYC Transit's materials illustrating the three options it is proposing for an Emergency Ventilation Structure at Mulry Square. GVSHP has expressed serious concerns to the MTA/NYC Transit in the past about these plans, and we continue to have deep reservations about what has been presented.

I must reiterate that no clear rationale has yet been presented as to why this structure must be built at this particular location, which is not only surrounded by sensitive historic resources, but is adjacent to the massive planned St. Vincent's/Rudin development, construction and demolition for which is likely to take years and will overlap with the construction of the planned Emergency Ventilation Plant. In terms of a location and its potential negative impact, it would seem that few poorer choices could have been made.

The MTA's last presentation of possibilities for construction of an Emergency Ventilation Plant included several options which would place the structure entirely underground. However, the MTA's newest presentation only includes three above-ground possibilities. Little rationale has been provided as to why the below-ground possibilities have been eliminated, other than perhaps the convenience of the MTA.

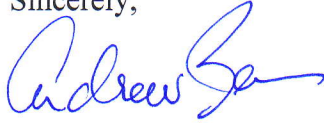
The proposed designs for the new above-ground Emergency Ventilation Plant structure are extremely disappointing at best, especially as they relate to integration of the 9-11 Memorial Tiles. Without getting into the details of the relative drawbacks of each particular design proposal, I instead suggest that the MTA consider doing here what it has done with other projects across the city, which is engage an outside design consultant. Hopefully such additional expertise would help the MTA to better engage and address the design issues with the structure, the 9-11 Tiles, the site, and its context.

Finally, it must also be noted that the tiny amount of open space which any of these plans leave for the public is extremely disappointing. The public was lead to believe that as mitigation for this project, the MTA would create a meaningful

and usable public open space on the site. However, the dimensions of the site proposed to be dedicated to public use are minimal, and seem hardly usable.

I strongly urge the MTA to consider and respond to these issues before making any decisions regarding the location of and design for the Emergency Ventilation Plant structure.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: New York State Historic Preservation Office
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July 16, 2009

Adrienne Taub
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
via e-mail to adrienne.taub@nyct.com

**Re: Additional Comments on Proposed Emergency Ventilation
Structure at Mulry Square**

Dear Ms. Taub:

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) would like to offer some additional comments regarding the MTA/NYC Transit's plans and designs for an Emergency Ventilation Structure at Mulry Square.

While we strongly believe that other sites and other approaches, such as locating the plant entirely underground, must be considered, we feel strongly that the MTA must also consider certain factors if it does move ahead with an above-ground structure at this location.

First, we cannot stress strongly enough how critical this site and this corner is. Mulry Square is where the rectilinear street grid of Manhattan gives way to the irregular street pattern of Greenwich Village. Additionally, this corner is at or near the intersection of two wide avenues and several smaller streets, and thus whatever is built there will be quite prominent and highly visible within this most historic of New York City's neighborhoods. The MTA must consider this context when considering any design for this site. In this vein, we also strongly urge that the MTA not use a standard design for this location, but one crafted specifically to respond to the site's particular conditions and context.

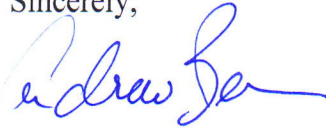
If the MTA is to use a brick motif for the exterior of the structure, we think it is critical that it be real brick, and we think that a reddish brick would be vastly preferable. We were concerned that the two options presented were for a grey masonry building and for the same building with a screen of red bricks surrounding it to make it "contextual." If such a building is to be built, we feel it would be vastly preferable to actually construct its façade of red brick. In this same vein, we feel it is important that the fenestration of any new structure relate to its surroundings, but needn't directly imitate them.

Finally, we feel that the relationship between the building and the 'public' space at the corner, as modest as it is, is extremely important. This will in many ways be the face of the building as seen by the public, and as it presents itself to the surrounding streetscape. None of the proposed designs currently emphasize this

view or this relationship, and we feel it needs to be more strongly stressed and better articulated.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and hope the MTA will seriously consider these comments as it contemplates moving ahead with this project.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

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