

**APRIL 17, 2012**

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO 89 SOUTH STREET IN THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Good morning Chair Tierney and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy's Public Policy Committee has reviewed the plan presented by the Howard Hughes Corporation for a new building at the South Street Seaport.

The proposal has two key components: demolition of the existing Pier 17 building and construction of a new one in its place. On the first issue, the Committee found the demolition acceptable. The existing Pier 17 pavilion was carefully designed, and built with the approval of this Commission. However, it is not original to the Seaport, and we found that the new design is also appropriate.

The Committee considered the plan, height, massing, and design of the proposal. While the Seaport Historic District is composed of rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century low-scale masonry buildings, the FDR creates a natural dividing point, and the opportunity for a different type of building on the piers. The proposed new building is of a height and scale similar to the existing pavilion, which had been found appropriate. Modern materials, including glass and metal, echo industrial antecedents and create an acceptable contrast with the historic brick buildings. The use of large operable doors will allow for expanded views of the East River and Brooklyn Bridge. And we hope that additional open space at the roof will remedy a failing of the existing structure, which was originally intended to have extensive spaces open to the public.

While the developers have assured us that there are no plans for large-scale advertising along the façade, we hope that the Commission will be very specific about the regulation of signage to prevent any signs from blocking or overwhelming the architecture.

The Landmarks Conservancy was founded in 1973, the same year that the South Street Seaport Development Plan was commissioned. We supported that plan; we have given grants, loans, and technical assistance to projects at the Seaport; and we have spoken in favor of the historic district designation and the extension designation. The Conservancy recognizes the need for a successful revitalization project at the Seaport. This fresh and inventive design will be an appropriate addition to a district that features some of New York's earliest history, and the proposed open space will be an asset for a contemporary neighborhood with a rapidly growing population. Therefore, we support the proposal for this building, which should complement the unique sense of place that draws people to the South Street Seaport.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.