

Art History C3982y

The Shape of New York: Reconstructing Lower Manhattan

Spring 2003

Thursday 9-10:50 a.m.

934 Schermerhorn

Professor Hilary Ballon

826 Schermerhorn; 854-8940

E-mail: hmb3@columbia.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9-11 & by appt.

Our subject is the process of city building; our focus is Lower Manhattan. At this extraordinary moment in the life of New York City, a ground swell of interest in Ground Zero has moved urban planning and design from the domain of experts into the glare of public scrutiny and headline news. The public, or rather a variety of publics, has claimed a role in the planning process and insisted on its stake in Ground Zero, although what role New Yorkers will be able to play going forward remains unclear. Our primary tasks this semester are to understand the multiple factors that shape the rebuilding process, study the historical context of redevelopment in New York City, and evaluate the impact of urban planning and design on city life. Along the way, I hope your judgment of the competing visions of Lower Manhattan grows sharper and your appreciation of the complexity of urban life and design is substantially enriched.

The seminar will follow three parallel tracks: current events, historical case studies, and urban theories and criticism. In following current events, I expect you to stay informed by reading *The New York Times* daily (if you don't already have this essential reading habit). Key events will take place this semester, including the selection by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) of one or two finalists among the seven architectural teams. Our discussions of contemporary events will include several guest speakers, who will share their perspective on the redevelopment process. Of course, this is not the first time a large-scale redevelopment has been undertaken in New York. We will analyze several earlier projects, including the World Trade Center, Battery Park City, Roosevelt Island, and Times Square, and evaluate their success, based in part on site visits. To join our preoccupation with Ground Zero to broader debates about the future of the city, urban planning and design, we will also read a variety of theoretical and sociological writings that pose questions about the limitations of master plans, the impact of urban design on metropolitan life, the nature of urban experience, and historical memory in the city fabric.

Your participation in robust discussion is the most important requirement for this seminar. In lieu of the standard research paper, you will write a series of personal responses forming a New York album, described below, and participate in two collective projects to be discussed in the first class and defined in part by your ideas and interests. The first project involves developing a vehicle for the university community to respond to the designs for Ground Zero. Intense public interest has been a vital aspect of the redevelopment process, and we might find a way to register the views on campus and to connect Columbia to this important undertaking. The second project entails the

preparation of detailed historical profiles of Lower Manhattan at five moments in time (1800, 1875, 1930, 1960, and 2000) in order to chart the evolution of the area. We will map our findings in digital form with the help of Juliet Chou, a talented web designer in the Media Center for Art History, Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Our findings will contribute to a pioneering website now under construction and designed by Ms. Chou that we have called Reconstructing Lower Manhattan.

Written Requirements: Your New York album will consist of four short commentaries, each about three pages, on any aspect relating to the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. For example, you might write about each and any of the schemes now on view at the World Financial Center, proposed uses at the site, transportation planning, the memorial, the politics of redevelopment, the LMDC's planning process, etc. This assignment invites you to think critically about selected issues. The four topics may be entirely different or follow a particular theme. At least two of the essays are due before spring break. If you prefer to create a New York album with film, photography, drawing, digital analysis or other media, I am open to your suggestions. Please consult with me.

Readings: Unless otherwise indicated, readings are available on **Shelf 359** in the Graduate Reading Room. Please do not remove books or articles for lengthy periods of time and always return them to the seminar shelf. For your convenience I have ordered the following books at Labyrinth Books, but you are under no obligation to purchase them; they are also available on our seminar shelf.

Books Ordered at Labyrinth Books (Full bibliographical information in weekly syllabus.)
Gillespie, Angus Kress. *Twin Towers*. New Brunswick, 2002.
Gordon, David. *Battery Park City*. Amsterdam, 1997.
Reichl, Alexander. *Reconstructing Times Square*. Lawrence, Kansas, 1999.
Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City*. Princeton, 2001.
Willis, Carol, editor. *The Lower Manhattan Plan*. N.Y., 2002.

Useful Websites

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation: www.renewnyc.org
New York New Visions: www.newyorknewvisions.org
NYC Dept. of City Planning: www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/home.html
Imagine New York (Municipal Art Society): www.imaginenewyork.org
Lower Manhattan Public Information Campaign: www.lowermanhattan.info
Citizens Union: www.gothamgazette.com/rebuilding_nyc

Weekly Syllabus

1. January 23

Introduction. Planning and Organizing of the Group Projects.

2. January 30

Future Visions: The Design Proposals for the World Trade Center Site and Mayor Bloomberg's "Vision for Lower Manhattan"

View: *Rebuilding. A Study Exhibition of World Trade Center Site Proposals, Commentaries Responses*, at the Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue, open Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Images at www.renewnyc.org.)

World Trade Center site design proposals at the Winter Garden, World Financial Center, West Street between Vesey and Liberty Streets, open daily 7 a.m.-11 p.m.

Mayor Bloomberg's "Vision for Lower Manhattan": www.lowermanhattan.info

3. February 6

Planning Lower Manhattan, 1960s

Read: Willis, Carol, editor. *The Lower Manhattan Plan. The 1966 Vision for Downtown New York. A Reprint of the 1966 Report by the New York City Planning Commission*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press/The Skyscraper Museum, 2002.

4. February 13

The Memorial at Ground Zero

Guest: Marian Imperatore, Civic Alliance, chair Memorial Working Group

Read: *Draft Memorial Mission Statement and Memorial Program* (www.renewnyc.org).

Daniel Libeskind, Leon Wieseltier, Sherwin Nuland. *Monument and Memory*, The Columbia Seminar on Art in Society, September 2002. (Videotape and text available.)

5. February 20

The World Trade Center

Read: Gillespie, Angus Kress. *Twin Towers. The Life of New York City's World Trade Center*, rev. ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002 (orig. pub. 1999).

6. February 27

Digital Project: Presentation of Work in Progress

7. March 6

History in the Urban Landscape

Read: Boyer, M. Christine. *The City of Collective Memory. Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994. Part 2 and Epilogue.

Violich, Francis. *The Bridge to Dalmatia. A Search for the Meaning of Place*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. Chaps. 1 & 7.

8. March 13

Battery Park

Guest: Robert Campbell, architectural critic

Read: Gordon, David. *Battery Park City. Politics and Planning on the New York Waterfront*. Amsterdam, 1997.

Site Visit: Battery Park

Spring Break

9. March 27

Directing Future Growth: Centralize or Decentralize?

Read: Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City. New York, London, Tokyo*, 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. Chaps. 2, 5, 10 & Epilogue.

Paaswell, Robert. "A Time for Transportation Strategy," in Michael Sorkin and Sharon Zukin, eds., *After the World Trade Center. Rethinking New York City*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2002. Chap. 16.

Sorkin, Michael. "The Center Cannot Hold," in *After the World Trade Center*. Chap. 18.

Bender, Thomas. "The New Metropolitanism," *The Unfinished City. New York and the Metropolitan Idea*. N.Y.: The New Press, 2002. Chap. 13.

10. April 3

Roosevelt Island

Site Visit: Roosevelt Island (Aerial Tramway Station, 2nd Ave. at 59th St.)

Read: Ivan Steen, "New Town in the city: Edward J. Logue and His Vision for Roosevelt Island," minutes of lecture, City Seminar, December 9, 2002.

Land Use and the Public Realm in Lower Manhattan

Guest: Donald Shillingburg, architect, participant in Public Realm Study for the LMDC

Read: Koolhaas, Rem, and Mau, Bruce. "The Generic City," *S, M, L, XL*. New York, 1995, pp. 1239-1267. (Avery Reserves)

Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: 1977. Chaps. 1 & 13.
(Photocopies on shelf)

11. April 10

Times Square

Guest: James Traub

Read: Reichl, Alexander. *Reconstructing Times Square. Politics and Culture in Urban Development*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Chaps. 4-7.

Further Reading: Sagalyn, Lynne B. *Times Square Roulette. Remaking the City Icon*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 2001.

12. April 14, Monday, 7-9PM, Dinner will be served

Digital Project: Presentation of Work in Progress

13. April 17

Real Estate Dynamics

Guest: Philip E. Aarons, Millennium Partners

This class will take place at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 2 West Street, Battery Park. (Meet at Bway and 116th St. at 8:15. a.m.)

14. May 1

Digital Project: Final Presentations and Conclusion