

Honorable Robert Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

October 23, 2007

Dear Chair Tierney,

On behalf of the American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter, and its more than 4,000 architect and public members, we would like to express our support for the Dermot Company and Rogers Marvel proposed redevelopment of the Battery Maritime Building.

The re-visioning of this building as a mixed-use, lively, historic space is very exciting. The recent investment of the New York City Economic Development Corporation in the beautiful renovation of the exterior façade, as well as growing utilization of the ferry and other transit uses housed in and around the building, demand a creative repurposing of this building and this area of the Manhattan waterfront. The proposed design accomplishes this, and seems to meet many of the challenges posed by the site and the historic structure.

We applaud the proposed widening of the sidewalks, as pedestrian traffic in that area has long been ignored. This, and the additional windows and openings on the west side of the building, will greatly enhance the building's openness to the street. This should be the beginning and not the end of improving streetscape around the Battery Maritime Building, as visitors on foot must be accommodated and welcomed by this project. We also feel that there is a great need for uses that will engage the growing residential community in Lower Manhattan, and hope that the "specialty foods venue," as well as the rooftop bar and restaurant, can be geared partially towards them.

The modest amount of rooms in the hotel and the relatively small mass added to the top of the building were crucial to our support. We hope that the architects and developers will continue to develop the design so that the additions do not interfere with or overwhelm the beauty and color of the exterior façade, especially when viewing the building from the water.

We urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to approve this proposal, and look forward to continuing to be a part of the public review and design process.

Sincerely,



Joan Blumenfeld, FAIA, IIDA
2007 President, AIA New York Chapter



Fredric Bell, FAIA
Executive Director