



AIA New York Chapter

The Founding Chapter of
The American Institute of Architects

18 November 2003

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
City of New York
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street
New York, New York 10036
Dear Commissioner Tierney:

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects strongly supports the Morgan Library project being presented today by Beyer Blinder Belle Architects along with the Renzo Piano Building Workshop. Our previous testimony to the Landmarks Preservation Commission on the subject of the Morgan renovation and addition noted and appreciated three critical design features, not significantly changed in this application:

- the enhanced street presence created on Madison Avenue by the relocated entrance
- the appropriate use of new materials to differentiate original and added building fabric, and
- the sensitively-scaled pavilion-like nature of the additional above-ground space, co-joined with the insertion of the major new area below-grade.

The most recent changes to the design were reviewed and accepted by the policy board of the AIA New York Chapter, on behalf of our 3,200 architect and public members. We suggest that the changes, as presented by the project design team, are appropriate and acceptable improvements to the prior conceptual design.

Specifically we agree that the change in scale of grid between masonry and glazed walls, as it is currently rendered, helps to better define building material relationships. We also feel that the newly symmetrical arrangement of glazed façade elements framing the freestanding “cube” pavilion on the south façade is an improvement. We also accept the enclosure of the cantilevered space at the entrance on the west side of the building as a minor change not central to the overall perception of the building. Lastly, we accept the rationale behind the structural continuity and integrity of roof framing and resultant simplification of massing in the central portion of the building, especially in the context of limited street visibility from most possible vantage points.

To conclude, helping to preserve the character and integrity of both museum and streetscape in a changing context is a difficult task that the design and planning team has achieved. We urge approval of this revised application.

Yours truly,

George H. Miller, FAIA
President

Rick Bell, FAIA
Executive Director