

David M. Childs of SOM, an expert on office building design. Working independently of Libeskind and with Guy Nordeson, Childs produced a number of designs including a 2000-foot high tower. He was, however, forced by Pataki to adopt part of Libeskind's ideas. The Freedom tower design is now considerably 'fatter' than in the original garden-filled design. The resulting collaboration seems to have been reasonably well received. The tower is now essentially a generic 70-storey office building in plan, 1500 feet in height with a 276-foot mast above it.

After all the law suits over insurance payments brought by Larry A. Silverstein who acquired a 99-year lease of the site only 6 months before the towers were destroyed, the jurisdictional battles, and international design competitions – a messy process (although not atypically so) – a final design seems to have emerged. There is a street-bounded complex of:

- 1 the Freedom Tower to replace the World Trade Center towers on the New York Skyline;
- 2 a multi-tiered train station;
- 3 a public park and memorial to the victims of the 2001 attack.

In addition, four adjacent city blocks have been allocated to office towers. This design opens up the site to views of the Hudson River and the Winter Garden of Battery Park City. Unlike Battery Park City it is designed as a series of architectural objects in space in opposition to the existing street-building pattern of New York City.

What kind of urban design is this new development? Is it an urban design at all? The THINK proposal was clearly an all-of-a-piece design. The Studio Libeskind design is partly an all-of-a-piece urban design with

some components being designed by others and independently plugged in. It can also be considered to be a scheme plugged into an existing urban fabric with transportation routes linking the site to subway and suburban train routes, ferries and the southern tip of Manhattan. The idea of what was once an overall urban design scheme seems to be getting broken down into fragments. Thus in some ways, it is a design in which the components are being built separately according to the Studio Libeskind master plan but subject only to standard New York building codes.

How much the design will change between now and the date of completion is open to conjecture. The present design is considerably different to Libeskind's winning scheme of February 2003. The design guidelines submitted by Libeskind and urban designer Gary Hack in November 2003 have had little binding power as the four major clients have not been able to agree on them. Thus the Memorial, the Freedom Tower, the PATH Terminal, etc. are proceeding in their own ways bound only by the new streets and blocks created as part of the scheme. The desire not to be another collaborative design like Rockefeller Center, as popular as that urban place is, will certainly be fulfilled.

Major references

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