by Gotham Gazette Staff
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## The Freedom Tower

On December 19, Governor George Pataki announced plans for a 1,776 foot tall Freedom Tower to rise at Ground Zero.

The design capped months of leaks to the press and battle between architects that began last Feburary when the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation selected Daniel Libeskind's design to guide the rebuilding at Ground Zero. It called for the 1,776 foot tower, the tallest building in the world, and a space for a memorial to be sunk 30 feet below street level, exposing a section of the "slurry wall" that kept the Hudson from flooding the area after the collapse of the Twin Towers. But Larry Silverstein, who holds the lease on the site, criticized the plan, saying it did not have enough office space and would cost too much to build. He chose his own architect, David Childs, to work with Libeskind on the Freedom Tower. This decision set off a collaboration that quickly turned rocky, with the two men reportedly refusing to talk to one another in the final days before the design for the building was released.

## The Memorial Designs

In November, after months of secret deliberations, a 13-member jury selected eight designs as finalists in the competition for a Ground Zero memorial. Those chosen from 5,201 entries featured a dizzying array of devices for remembering the dead, including hanging candles, engraved walls, beams of light, waterfalls, prairies, trees and photographs. They have not been accepted warmly by the public. With no design emerging as a clear favorite with the public, the jury is expected to make a selection early in 2004, though it is not certain whether they will select a winner, pick several finalists, or present something that has been altered significantly.

## Moving Downtown

New York State and New York City announced plans for a downtown transportation hub that would include easy access to nine subway lines and the PATH train. Spanish architect Santiago

Calatrava, known for designing train stations in Europe, will design the $2 billion transportation terminal at the World Trade Center site.

**Back in Business**

Gradually services that were knocked out in the September 11 attacks are being restored to the area. For example, in November, the World Trade Center PATH station reopened. But the new $23 million station is only temporary: Eventually, PATH service will be incorporated into the planned downtown transportation hub. And Con Edison began rebuilding two power substations destroyed on 9/11. It expects them to begin providing electricity to lower Manhattan by next summer.

**Health Issues**

Concerns over air quality at Ground Zero immediately following the attacks heightened in August when the inspector general of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a report saying that the White House influenced the agency to tell New Yorkers that the air at Ground Zero was fine -- even before the agency had fully monitored the air quality. Soon after , the city health department announced plans for a comprehensive survey to follow the health of those people most directly exposed to the World Trade Center collapse and subsequent clean-up efforts. City health officials say that the registry was not launched in response to the recent accusations

**Two Years After**

New York marked the second anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center with a fairly low-key observance aimed primarily at the families of those who died. At the site, children related to the victims read all 2,792 names.