



Brooklyn Navy Yard Historical Center plans completed

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Plans for the Brooklyn Navy Yard Historical Center, which will be housed in the United States Marine Corps commandant's residence, built in 1857 and now known as Building 92 have been completed.

Once renovated and expanded, with a modern structure attached to the rear of the building, the 25,000 s/f facility will house a new center that will celebrate the Navy Yard's past, present and future and will provide community meeting space and office facilities for the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment (BCUE).

Renovation of Building 92 will include construction of a modern building behind the current structure, and will achieve LEED status as designated by the United States Green Building Council.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard is currently undergoing its largest expansion since World War II. While it is important to continue the transformation of the Navy Yard into one of the most successful urban industrial parks in America, it also is essential that we remember its rich and historic past. This new "green" facility will celebrate the Yard's history as well as its continued development as a national model for sustainable industrial parks. It will also continue the Navy Yards role as a good neighbor to the surrounding communities by providing local meeting space.

The New York City Council committed \$10 million towards the \$15 million project. The remaining \$5 million in funding will be jointly raised through public-private partnerships. The current building was designed by Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter - part of the team that designed the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. An RFP for design of this project will be issued this week. The historical center will open in early 2010.

The Brooklyn Historical Society has been enlisted to serve in an advisory capacity for the development of an exhibit for the historical center and associated educational programs. BNYDC also established an advisory committee to develop a program for the historical center - comprised of historians, curators, exhibition designers and representatives from the Yard's surrounding communities - which will work closely with the Navy Yard to design the exhibit. The exhibition is envisioned as having a robust multi-media component including both on-site and web accessible elements.

BNYDC's archive has preserved 35,000 architectural plans and is in the process of digitizing another 17,000 images from the National Archives that will supplement the content development for the exhibit. BNYDC is also partnering with a local author, Jennifer Egan, to develop an oral history through interviews with women who worked at the Navy Yard during WWII. This will be the first of a number of oral history projects that will be accessible both on-line and on site at the historical center. As a part of its efforts to involve the local community in this project, BNYDC will work with a group of freshman students at Benjamin Banneker Academy to provide input on exhibition, building design and construction issues while gaining invaluable real world experience. Lead private funding for the

exhibition has been committed by the Independence Community Foundation (ICF).

Michael Bloomberg is mayor of New York, N.Y.

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