

**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NEW YORK CHAPTER
POSITION STATEMENT ON GOVERNORS ISLAND**

Presented at City Council Hearing, April 9, 2002, by Suzanne Wertz, AIA

The American Institute of Architects New York Chapter, a member of the Governors Island Group, has been a long-time advocate for the public benefit during the Governors Island disposition and redevelopment process. We commend the City Council for their involvement in the destiny of the island. Our goal has been the return of Governors Island to the City and State of New York for the communal benefit and public access.

The Chapter supports the concept of City University being the primary user of the island. We also offer the following recommendations that reflect our professional interests in architecture, urban design, and preservation.

The City Council should support and facilitate a long-range plan for the island that ensures:

Ownership of the island by a Governors Island authority, a City/State public benefit corporation, whose sole responsibility would be to ensure the protection of the island and the public interest throughout the development process and in perpetuity.

That the City University is a user, not the redevelopment authority or owner of the island, as the University's primary mission is education, not the management of a public historic, environmental, recreational, and marine resource.

Full public access to the Island, including water-based mass transportation. Alternative modes of transportation within the island should be encouraged and private gasoline-powered vehicles and parking should be prohibited.

Identification, stabilization and preservation of worthy historic elements, particularly in the northern historic district where any development should be aesthetically appropriate and functionally compatible.

Encouragement and control of certain other uses compatible with education in order to generate revenues to support the island. These could include:

Hospitality, conference, tourism, educational, and park uses in the northern historic district; and

Open space, recreational, cultural, environmental, and marine uses in the southern district.

The design of any new facilities should be of the highest quality, encouraging creative solutions that:

Balance the best of innovative modern design with the historic context; and

Skillfully integrate new facilities with the island's green space and waterfront.

The City/State entity, with the Council's assistance, should develop the master plan, land use, and bulk controls for the long term and immediately undertake preservation of the valuable and rapidly deteriorating historic and natural resources of the Island.