



American Planning Association  
**New York Metro Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**APA New York Metro Chapter**  
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City Planning Commission  
New York, New York

November 29, 2011

**Re: CD2, RUDIN WEST VILLAGE – No. 8 – Comments for Public Record  
Land Use Consideration: HIV-AIDS Memorial Park and Education Center**

Members of the City Planning Commission:

The New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association is a professional, educational, and advocacy organization representing over 1,300 practicing planners and policy makers in New York City and its surrounding suburbs. We are part of a national association with a membership of 41,000 professionals and students who are engaged in programs and projects related to the physical, social and economic environment. In our role as a professional advocacy organization, we offer insights and recommendations on policy matters affecting issues such as housing, transportation and the environment.

New York Metro Chapter is respectfully submitting its support toward a Memorial to the incipient and ongoing fight against HIV-AIDS in New York City to include the current Village Green and the rest of the triangle site across from St. Vincent's Hospital. St. Vincent's was one of the first hospitals in the country to recognize, treat, and support people with HIV and AIDS, in addition to being one of the oldest hospitals in New York City. Had St. Vincent's remained operative, the facility had the potential to become a landmark because of its historically significant, humane treatment of people with HIV and AIDS during the early years of the crisis and beyond. For these reasons and as future uses of the St. Vincent's site are being considered, the Chapter believes that the triangle site is an appropriate location to create a public HIV-AIDS Memorial and educational center within the Greenwich Village neighborhood.

It is time to honor and acknowledge the impact the HIV-AIDS pandemic has had on the people of New York and around the world. Along with other groups, the Chapter supports the following for an HIV-AIDS Memorial and dedicated public open space at the St. Vincent's triangle site because:

- This site was the geographic ground zero of the New York City epidemic, and should be designed as an attractive public space to respectfully honor and celebrate the over 100,000 people whose lives were lost to AIDS, those who continue living with HIV-AIDS, and to cherish the community's heroic response to the crisis;

- As a beautiful public park, the City will have a living memorial honoring this history in a neighborhood grossly underserved by public open space;
- Design opportunities for a new memorial park are unlimited – as such, a design competition is a proven mechanism for generating thoughtful concepts and bringing deserving topics through historic commemoration into the realm of civic dialogue;
- Memorial features dedicated to the HIV-AIDS crisis should be integral to the park's overall landscape design, conducive to maximizing the open space value to the community and not simply a monument in the park's corner;
- The 10,000 square foot basement at the site provides an opportunity to be redesigned as a public education learning center to exhibit and teach the facts and history of the disease's impacts to current and future generations – an opportunity to be a living and working memorial;
- The stories of survivors from the early days of the crisis, and the indelible memories that many people still carry are closely associated with this particular location; and
- Preservation of the site as public open space should be optimized as much more than solely a generic park – by linking an educational program and memorial design to this space, the new place should recognize the history that was made within this neighborhood, and its message should pervade as an important legacy to the City for generations to come.

Thank you for allowing the Chapter's testimony into the public record.