

NYU back to drawing board with controversial tower

By Roland

New York University will withdraw its application for a fourth tower on the landmarked Silver Towers site, instead seeking a tower to replace the nearby Morton Williams supermarket.

The abrupt reversal came after a colleague of architect I.M. Pei, who designed Silver Towers, wrote to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in opposition to the proposal.

"In principle, and without regard to the specifics of its design, a fourth tower is profoundly destructive of the landmarked entity," Henry Cobb, a founding partner with Pei

Cobb Freed and Partners, wrote on behalf of Pei.

Cobb also wrote that the new tower would block the Pablo Picasso-designed Bust of Sylvette, a large statue in the center of the complex, and that a building on the Morton Williams site would be preferable.

NYU had approached Pei in 2008, and he did not express opposition to the project at the time.

"Clearly, he had a change of heart since that conversation," said NYU spokesman John Beckman.

Beckman said that the school would have preferred that the re-

versal had occurred earlier in the process, but that Pei's opinion gave the school "clarity" in its expansion plans, which include three other buildings, for the two superblocks immediately south of Washington Square Park.

The school will still move forward with a massive Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which is expected to begin in the fall of 2011, incorporating a proposal for a tower slightly west of Silver Towers.

As part of the review, the school is seeking to lift deed restrictions that prevent development in the area.

NYU expects to work with the same design team, including Grimshaw Architects, in designing the new building on the corner of Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place, said Beckman.

That building's footprint would be larger than the 400-foot fourth tower design, but it would have a smaller height and remain around 225,000 s/f.

The school is still keeping the option open to use the building as faculty housing and a hotel.

Residents of Greenwich Village have fiercely opposed any development in the area, and show no sign of

relenting because of the shift in location. "We will continue to strongly oppose NYU's massive overdevelopment plans in our neighborhood," said Andrew Berman, executive director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, in a statement.

But David Gruber, chair of Community Board 2's Arts and Institutions Committee, who has worked with NYU for years, said that he would wait until the school unveiled the specifics of the new tower before deciding on its merits.

"It's a first step in a long process," said Gruber.

Laundry king Ron Garfunkel leading by example

In a world where most CEOs are singularly focused on their company's bottom line, Ron Garfunkel, president and CEO of SDI Laundry Solutions, sees things differently.

"Giving back to the community is not a choice for us; it's part of our corporate responsibility, like providing health care to our employees and trying to reduce our carbon footprint," says Garfunkel.

A family owned and operated business, SDI has been providing laundry machines and operating laundry facilities in residential

and commercial properties throughout the metropolitan area since 1952.

From luxury high-rises to hospitals, supportive and affordable housing to universities, SDI helps property owners and managers provide a valued amenity to their residents while also generating a guaranteed revenue stream.

But their commitment to service extends beyond their customers to the community as a whole.

Garfunkel has supported dozens of community causes for decades, and the firm has

been honored time and again not only for direct monetary donations and volunteering with these community groups, but for their commitment to employing individuals with disabilities in many areas of their business.

"Each year, we honor organizations and individuals who give much of their lives for the benefit of others," says Stanley Silverstein, executive director of the Institutes of Applied Human Dynamics (IAHD), an organization that provides services to those with developmental disabilities. "Under the leadership of

Ron Garfunkel, SDI actively supports many not-for-profit organizations with which it does business. SDI also employs individuals with special needs and continually works to create projects for them within their organization."

Last year, the firm was selected by the NY State Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) to receive a Regional award for their contribution in furthering em-

ployment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Bridge, Inc., a non-profit organization that helps those with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and homelessness, has also benefited from SDI's expertise and altruism.

Founded in 1952 as Coin-A-Wash by Ron's father, B. Julian Garfunkel and his wife Edith, SDI has grown from a small business serving 20 apartment houses to an award-winning



laundry room design and management company supporting more than 20,000 washers and dryers in thousands of buildings throughout the tri-state area.

Shortly after graduating from Lafayette College, Ron joined the firm full-time in 1967. Since then he has overseen SDI's support of dozens of non-profit organizations, including the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), North Shore Child & Family Guidance, Daytop Village, Ronald McDonald House, and dozens of other non-profit and supportive organizations.

In the 1970s, Ron took over from his father and changed the company name to Service Directions, to emphasize their commitment to service. In the new century, the firm is known as SDI Laundry Solutions, as they move away from coin-operated systems and turn to new high-tech solutions to doing laundry.

These range from installing "green" machines to using Smart Card technology that allows end users to add money to their card by using a credit card machine on site, calling a toll-free number, or logging on to the company website at SDILaundrySolutions.com.

"For SDI," says Garfunkel, "Using Smart Cards is not just a way to make doing laundry

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New York's building community paid tribute to industry greats, Stuart E. Graham, chairman of Skanska USA Inc., and STV group president Milo E. Rivero at the NYBC annual gala. Pictured above l-r are: chairman Peter A. Marchetto, honorees Stuart E. Graham and Milo Rivero, and New York Jets owner Woody Johnson who served as chairman of the Industry Recognition Dinner. For a full report, see Page B9.

Durst inks 51,000 s/f lease with global finance firm at 675 Third

The Durst Organization announced that global financial software firm SS & C Technologies Inc. has signed a ten-year renewal and expansion at 675 Third Avenue.

The tenant, who currently occupies 25,000 s/f in the building, will now occupy 51,000 s/f.

A team of Colliers International brokers led by Michael T. Cohen, president of the Tri-State Region, and vice chairman Leon Manoff, exclusively represented SS & C Technologies on the ten-year transaction. Tom Bow, senior vice president, and assistant vice president John Grotto, represented their own

firm, The Durst Organization, which owns and manages the property. The new lease commences in December.

With the signing of the 51,000 s/f transaction, SS & C Technologies will occupy approximately 15% of the building's total office space on five contiguous floors.

"We're very pleased that SS & C Technologies has reinforced their presence within 675 Third Avenue," said Grotto. "Working closely with the tenant's brokers from Colliers International, this transaction really came together efficiently and resulted in a mutually-satisfying outcome for all parties."

Only 20,000 s/f of space remains available for lease in the building. A limited number of smaller units ranging from 2,800 to 8,500 s/f also are available.

"SS & C Technologies was determined to grow their Manhattan office without having to relocate into a new building and thereby undertake the financial and logistical challenges of a move," said Michael T. Cohen of Colliers International. "Having their new and expanded offices in the same building will allow SS & C Technologies to focus all of their energies on creating new technology for the financial services industry."



Israel Bonds paid a farewell honor to Reuven Spiegel, the new International Head of Israel Discount Bank, and also honored Peter Rosenthal, President of Rosenthal & Rosenthal, Inc., at a huge Testimonial Dinner in New York this week at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. More than 900 people attended and over \$14 million was raised in bonds sales. Israel Bonds president and CEO, Joshua Matza, praised Spiegel for expanding the business and presence of IDB in the U.S. during his tenure as CEO here and wished him well in his new position. He will be based in Tel Aviv. Also lauded was Rosenthal who received the Israel bonds IMRE J. Rosenthal Achievement Award, named for his grandfather, the founder of the firm. IDB U.S. announced a purchase of \$5 million at the event. Photo by Steve Friedman