

THE CULTURAL CENTER

at the World Trade Center site

“Rising Above”

SNØHETTA

The World Trade Center site carries with it the weight of its history and the hope for the future. Rising above this hallowed ground, the new Cultural Center presents a new sense of vitality in honor of those that have perished or been affected by the disasters of the past here. With this in mind we at Snøhetta strive toward a design that infuses with its surroundings, one that seems inevitable with its surroundings and its context. Connected to the new city streets of Greenwich and Fulton, the building will allow the Memorial to remain protected as the city grows around them. In this way we strive to unite the worlds of the past, present and future at this unique location in New York and the world.

Rising upward from the vast plane of the Memorial grounds, the new Cultural Center will be lifted above the canopy of trees surrounding it. Gentle sloping wooden ramps will lead the visitor visually and physically upward. As the body of the building rises upward; a protected outdoor plaza is formed beneath it. The open space underneath the building creates a spiritual window that frames perceptions to and from the Memorial and the city.

Captured by a unique outdoor reflecting atrium, abundant natural **light** connects the covered plaza to the sky above. Light filters through the building allowing the sun to engage with the ramps, plaza and underground concourses. This light weaves all of the aspects of this important place together in a lively and welcoming atmosphere. At night the light from the underground World Trade Center Transportation Hub mezzanine will illuminate the Plaza, creating a dramatic setting throughout the evening.

Intended to be intimately **connected to street life**, the Center is organized horizontally, a tradition uncommon in New York City. It is efficiently designed to provide a unique low profile, respectful of the Memorial and a counterpoint to the otherwise dominant vertical backdrop of the downtown skyline. From its rooftop garden, the Cultural Center will offer a unique perspective of the Memorial Plaza creating a place of contemplation, observation and confirmation.

In addition to the important character of the roof the façade at the underside of the building, the new Cultural Center will be wrapped in a pattern of glass prisms integrated into its wooden surface. As light passes through these prisms, this **ephemeral** façade will change throughout the day and seasons. Each visitor will experience the building through his or her own vantage point. Like the changing patterns of light and shadow found amidst the leaves of a tree, the building's presence conforms to each person's changing relationship to it.

As time passes so will perceptions of this place **change**. The design incorporates time into its essence. It does not dictate, but rather enhances individual sensitivity, moment-by-moment, throughout the seasons, year-to-year. It is a companion, a mosaic of memories and anticipation, its natural materials, components and expression constantly evolving. Its softness and subtle character will act as a backdrop to the Memorial Plaza as well as an inviting symbol for the area for many generations to come.