



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Press contact: Emily Nemens, AIA New York  
212.358.6126, [enemens@aiany.org](mailto:enemens@aiany.org)  
Scott Frank, AIA National Headquarters  
202.626.7467, [sfrank@aia.org](mailto:sfrank@aia.org)

---

# CONTEXT \ CONTRAST

**New Architecture  
in Historic Districts  
1967–2009**

*An exhibition exploring the role and realization of new architecture in urban historic districts—examples from New York relevant to cities around the country—will open on Thursday, February 4, 2010, at the American Institute of Architects' National Headquarters in Washington, DC.*

**NEW YORK CITY, January 27** –*Context\Contrast: New Architecture in Historic Districts, 1967-2009* investigates how new buildings and historic districts have learned to coexist in the country's most culturally and architecturally diverse city. *Context\Contrast*, which will be on view from February 4 until April 28, 2010, was organized by the **American Institute of Architects New York Chapter**, the **NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission**, and the **Center for Architecture Foundation**, in partnership with the **New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation**. The exhibition was on view at the Center for Architecture in New York City from October 2009 to January 2010 before travelling to Washington, DC and will be on view at AIA's National Headquarters at 1735 New York Avenue, N.W. through April 28, 2010.

The 1965 Landmarks Law laid the groundwork for preserving the city's architectural history. In that year, Brooklyn Heights became New York City's first historic district; ninety-nine more districts have since been designated as neighborhoods which should be preserved as cultural assets to the city. But the intent of designating neighborhoods has never been to freeze them. How can neighborhoods evolve while maintaining their historical and architectural character and integrity? NYC Landmarks Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney said that question "is what makes proposals for new buildings in historic districts so challenging, difficult and enthralling for the Commission."

Whether contrasting with the celebrated structures around them, cloning the features of their neighbors, or finding some intermediary between traditional modes and contemporary trends, new architecture in historic districts requires nuance and sensitivity. These design efforts must go through an extensive LPC review process and public hearings, then be deemed "appropriate" for the district. *Context\Contrast* considers the history of architectural "appropriateness," new architecture and historic neighborhoods. "The debate about how historic neighborhoods can accommodate new architecture has sparked heated debate in communities of all sizes," said George Miller, FAIA, 2010 President of the American Institute of Architects. "I am excited for our nation's architectural and political leaders to see how New York has successfully addressed this ever-present issue. We can all learn from *Context\Contrast's* examples."

The exhibition in Washington documents the cityscapes of three historic districts: Brooklyn Heights, SoHo, and South Street Seaport. Original photographs show the many ways new

buildings have woven themselves into the fabric of their districts—one residential, one waterfront, and one retail neighborhood—through their character, scale and texture. “The Landmarks Preservation Foundation is pleased to support an exhibition that promotes its goal of educational outreach about preservation and architectural history,” said Christina Davis, Chair of the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation. “But *Context\Contrast* equally emphasizes new architecture” explained Anthony Schirripa, FAIA, the 2010 President of AIA New York. “As an organization committed to both historic preservation and architectural innovation, I am glad that the our exhibition, which explores how New York’s architectural history and its future have learned to share the same city blocks, will travel to Washington. Hopefully, New York’s experiences can inform the District’s—and the nation’s—conversations about issues of architectural preservation and innovation.”

### **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

Please contact Emily Nemens at [enemens@aiany.org](mailto:enemens@aiany.org) or 212-358-6126 or Scott Frank at 202-626-7467 or [sfrank@aia.org](mailto:sfrank@aia.org). Exhibition images, press tours, and interviews for *Context\Contrast* will be available for members of the press.

### **EXHIBITION ON VIEW**

*Context\Contrast* will be on view from February 4 to April 28, 2010. AIA’s National Headquarters are located at 1735 New York Avenue, N.W. between 17<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. and 18<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. in the District of Columbia. The galleries at AIA’s National Headquarters are open 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

### **EXHIBITION CREDITS**

**Curator:** Rachel Carley

**Exhibition Design:** Moorhead & Moorhead

**Graphic Design:** PS New York

**Photography:** Elizabeth Felicella

Exhibition and related programs are organized by AIANY, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Center for Architecture Foundation in Partnership with the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation.

**Underwritten by:** New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation



#### **About the American Institute of Architects**

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the AIA has been the leading professional membership association for licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners since 1857. With nearly 300 state and local chapters, the AIA serves as the voice of the architecture profession and the resource for our members in service to society. We carry out our goal through advocacy, information, and community. For more information on AIA, please visit [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)



#### **About the AIA New York Chapter**

AIA New York is oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects, with more than 4,600 practicing architects, allied professionals, students and community members. AIANY is dedicated to three goals: design excellence, public outreach and professional development, and towards these aims, AIANY runs the Center for Architecture, a storefront exhibition space in Greenwich Village, sponsors public programs, publishes a magazine, and works with its charitable affiliate, the Center for Architecture Foundation, to provide scholarship and educational opportunities. For more information on AIANY, please visit [www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org).



### **About the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for identifying and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. The agency consists of eleven Commissioners and a full-time staff of more than sixty. Since its founding in 1965 the agency has designated more than 25,000 buildings, including 1,235 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 96 historic districts in all five boroughs. In the past five years the LPC has processed more than 46,000 applications for work on designated properties, including 78 applications for new buildings.



### **About the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation**

The New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 1980. The Foundation's mission is to promote activities of the Landmarks Preservation Commission as well as to provide funds for educational outreach programs. In recent years, the Foundation has presented public forums and funded education programs in schools about historic preservation. In addition, the LPF sponsors the Bronze Plaque, Historic District Markers and Brown Street Sign program to denote historic districts. The Foundation's benefit, "Lunch at a Landmark" is held each year at a different city landmark. The LPF also funded the publication of the fourth edition of *Guide to New York City Landmarks*.