

CONCRETE CONTRACTOR INDICTED FOR IGNORING 102 PROJECTS

One of Testwell's many strikes. PHOTO: ROOFLIXOR

We Don't Testwell

At one point in time, the name Testwell Laboratories was probably an accurate moniker, but now it just seems like a bad joke. On October 30, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau indicted the company and seven of its operators on a litany of racketeering charges for not testing at all. According to the indictment, the firm, which is one of the city's busiest concrete testing companies, did not perform work it had filed—and billed—for on 102 projects, including some of the city's most significant and recognizable, both under construction and long-complete.

Department of Buildings said they have investigated some of the buildings and intend to do so for all, but the buildings do not appear to be in danger of falling down, though the concrete used could have a shorter lifetime than it otherwise would. "These charges are serious," Morgenthau told the Associated Press. "But these actions endangered lives of people, and that makes them doubly serious." (Calls to the company and its attorney were not returned.)

The indictment includes a full list of the projects affected by Testwell, which, from a design perspective, is dizzying. Most notable is the Freedom Tower, **continued on page 8**

Both Morgenthau's office and the

WITH HEAVY HEART, LPC VOTES FOR O'TOOLE'S DEMOLITION



THE HARDEST CHOICE

The only thing gloomier than the weather on October 28 were the members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission as they decided on the fate of Albert C. Ledner's iconic O'Toole building, which St. Vincent's Hospital hopes to demolish and replace with a new 300-foot-tall hospital facility.

"This is the most distressing challenge to the landmarks law that I have witnessed since the Grand Central case in the 1970s," commissioner Roberta Brandes-Gratz said. Fred Bland, the commission's newest member, said he awoke at 3:30 that morning, unable to sleep, and stood out in the rain at dawn for one last look at O'Toole. He had hoped it would help his "highly frustrating" decision between **continued on page 5**



BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK GETS PHASE 1 FUNDING

PIER'S A GO

A bright spot opened in the state's dreary economic-development outlook on October 22 when the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation authorized funds to start construction on the waterfront project's first phase of development on a pier in Brooklyn Heights. The board ok'd a \$47 million construction contract for the space just south of the developed pier beside the **continued on page 10**

GREEN XL
THE BEST NEW IDEAS IN SUSTAINABILITY ARE THE BIGGEST. PLUS LEARNING FROM 4 TIMES SQUARE. PAGES 30-35

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NYPL'S NEW ARCHITECT UNVEILS GALLERY ON BOWERY

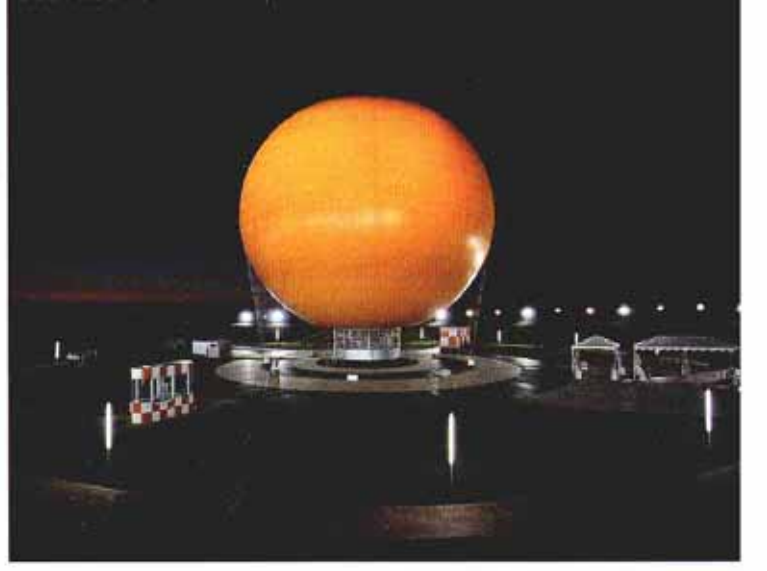


FOSTER OLD, FOSTER NEW

Barely a week after it was announced that Foster + Partners would be designing a new \$250 million circulation library to be housed within the halls (and under the Rose Reading Room) of Carrere & Hastings' New York Public Library on 5th Avenue, a quieter project, but one with more impact on the street, was unveiled: the Sperone Westwater Gallery on the Bowery.

The transformation **continued on page 5**

ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK IS READY FOR TAKEOFF. SEE PAGE 30



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ARTSCHWAGER FACADE FRONTS NEW CHELSEA GALLERY



POUL OBER

STREET SMART ART

The West 29th Street block between 10th and 11th avenues is one of those scruffy mixed industrial blocks that used to be so typical in Chelsea but are becoming a rarity everywhere in Manhattan. It is still predominantly a street of garages and small manufacturing shops, but the new David Nolan Gallery fits deftly into this landscape without succumbing to the artiness that typifies so much in Chelsea. David Nolan asked Markus Dochantschi of studioMDA, who worked with Zaha Hadid on the Cincinnati Art Center, to design the gallery. Nolan originally wanted the first floor of the storefront

gallery to feature a single large, pivoting window but that turned out to be too expensive. He then turned to the artist Richard Artschwager who had designed the facade for the Georg Kargl Box gallery in Vienna in 2005. Artschwager suggested various options, ultimately creating a facade that is not unlike his art, which has long been concerned with architectural issues of design, space, and materiality.

The four-story black and gray building features two tall and slender windows and adjoining doors outlined with Artschwager's signature mid-cadmium (or sign painter) yellow frames. Above the windows and doors are slender transoms of mirrored glass, reflecting the streetscape, the viewer, and—for the time being—the sky across the street above a row of one-story buildings.

The Artschwager facade, like his artwork, features modest and ordinary materials that slide effortlessly into their ordinary context while slyly framing the interior gallery, which is smartly designed by studioMDA. The long, windowless interior has a ceiling of metal flooring material and a floor of smooth concrete that could be a ceiling. They both point to a single back wall widow. Like Artschwager in his own work, Dochantschi inverts materials in a way that questions what is high and low art and architecture.

Artschwager has said of his work that it is meant to be "a garlic sliver into a joint of mutton," which could just as well apply to this project, which is not only intelligently modest but smart. If you visit the space, look for Artschwager's lozenge-shaped "blps," which he has placed around the gallery in odd corners to highlight its ordinary materiality and space.

WILLIAM MENKING