

## **The Daily Telegraph**

September 10, 2009

Circulation 871,598

*The Daily Telegraph* is a daily newspaper in London. It has a circulation of 871,598.

### **New Yorkers angry over delays in rebuilding World Trade Centre site**

There is growing anger in New York over the sluggish pace of rebuilding at the World Trade Centre site as Barack Obama leads America today in commemorating the eighth anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks.

By Tom Leonard in New York  
Published: 5:06PM BST 10 Sep 2009

Six and a half years after ambitious and highly symbolic designs were unveiled for the devastated 16-acre site in lower Manhattan, a combination of political wrangling, financial rows, engineering complications and the economic downturn have meant there is little to show for all the talk of standing up to terrorism.

Only one of the five towers planned for the Ground Zero site has broken ground. The frame for the 1,776-foot so-called Freedom Tower is now several stories high but, humiliatingly for some, the landmark building has been renamed One World Trade Centre to make it more marketable to clients.

With New York facing a glut of office space, there is no firm date for the planned three office towers while the fifth building – a performing arts centre – has received neither a finished design nor financing.

Even the memorial to the 2,752 people who died after al-Qaeda hijackers flew two passenger jets into the Twin Towers has been dogged by delays.

Larry Silverstein, the site's developer has gone to an arbitrator to renegotiate his lease with the Port Authority, which owns the land, after months of negotiations.

Janno Lieber, who runs the project for Silverstein Properties, said further delays to the office towers "would really be a stain on New York's reputation and image".

Many fellow New Yorkers appear to agree. A poll last month by Quinnipiac University found that two thirds of local people think even the memorial – let alone any of the towers – will not be ready in time for the 10th anniversary in 2011.

A quarter of those polled said they felt "ashamed" by the slow progress – the highest number to give that answer since the question was first asked in 2006.

"We're getting fed up with the continual lack of progress at Ground Zero. And we think it's important that there be some signs of movement this year," said Maurice Carroll, director of the university's polling insititute.

Sheldon Silver, the speaker of the New York Assembly, whose district includes Ground Zero, said the terrorists targeted America's business capital.

"We committed eight years ago that we were going to rebuild bigger and better than ever. If we're not going to do that, then we're sending a terrible message," he said.

"It has become increasingly clear that New Yorkers should be embarrassed by the debacle that is represented by the failure of government officials to have successfully rebuilt Ground Zero," said Barry LePatner, a New York construction lawyer.

"Unfortunately, the only conclusion that can be drawn from a careful study of their actions at this important site is an attitude that the public be damned."

But Chris Ward, executive director of the Port Authority, insisted work is now progressing, with around 1,000 workers on the site each day.

Employing some of the flowery language that surrounded the birth of the project, he said the site was no longer a "pit" but now a "sense of rebirth".

Mr Obama will mark the anniversary with a visit to the Pentagon, also targeted by the hijackers, where he will tour a memorial completed last year.