

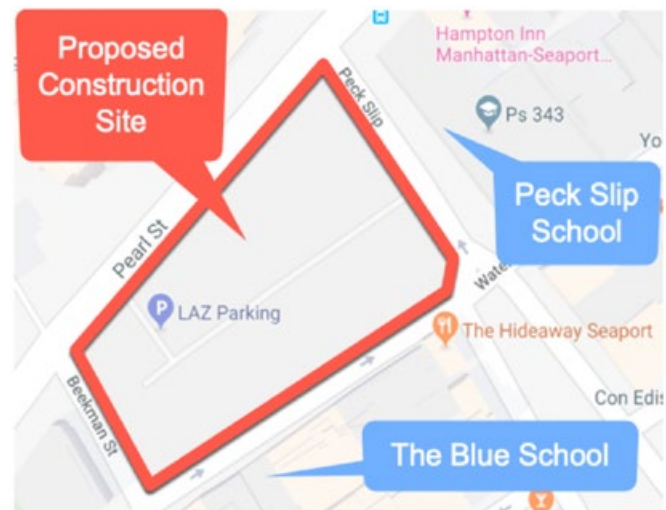
Children First

NEW YORK CITY

CHILDREN FIRST is a grassroots movement led by concerned parents opposed to the unchecked development of 250 Water Street, which lies within the Historic South Street Seaport District. With lead, mercury and other harmful toxins present in the soil at 250 Water Street, any potential construction poses a serious health risk to our young children attending school nearby. Because of the underground presence of hazardous materials, no formal architectural plans submitted, and a developer with a proven history of misleading the public, *we believe it is time to put Children First.*

The Toxic Threat of 250 Water Street

Situated in the oldest neighborhood in New York City, 250 Water Street was previously the site of three mercury thermometer factories, a mercury warehouse, a chemical company and a gasoline service station over the years. The children of Peck Slip School and Blue School, some as young as two years old, play and are dismissed every day in the streets directly adjacent to the lot. Based on site soil samples taken in 2015, we know that mercury, lead, and other hazardous materials are present underground. Many of these hazardous materials are known toxins that could threaten the health of our children. Even miniscule exposure to these toxins can have lifelong developmental effects on children.



The doors and windows to both elementary schools are fewer than 20 feet from the proposed construction site.

Facts about Mercury:

- The mercury level on the potential construction site is 120 parts per million
- Mercury is a known neurotoxin, highly volatile and can easily travel in the air we breathe
- One pinhead of elemental mercury can cause irreparable brain damage to a small child

Despite the presence of mercury and other hazardous materials, the lot is currently safe and poses no health risk as long as the contaminants are sealed underground.

Potential Development at 250 Water Street

The developer, Howard Hughes Corporation (HHC), took ownership of 250 Water Street for \$180 million in mid-2018. While they have not shared any formal plans with the public, it is understood that they intend to develop the lot into a residential tower as high as 70 stories tall. This is at odds with the community's hard-fought efforts to keep zoning laws for buildings at a maximum height of 120 feet—or about 12 stories—to preserve the historical integrity of the district.

Society bears a moral obligation to protect children at school

HHC has applied for a Brownfield Application with the state to clean up the site before development begins, but we believe HHC's remediation plans are purely profit-driven: they want to clean up the site as quickly and as cheaply as possible. By beginning the remediation process prior to the approval of their eventual development plans, HHC could place our neighborhood unnecessarily at risk by spreading toxic chemicals through dust and air. It also puts pressure on our community to accept a much taller development at 250 Water Street than zoning regulations allow. It is the responsibility of the city, state and our community to put the safety of our children over the profits of developers.

Representatives from HHC have been dishonest at best and subversive at worst:

- HHC openly downplayed the potential dangers of elemental mercury.
- HHC's engineering firm, Langan, misrepresented their experience cleaning up sites with elemental mercury in close proximity to schools.
- None of HHC's soil samples were taken from the sites of the former thermometer factories—sites that likely have the greatest concentration of toxins.
- HHC intentionally used the Chief Leader as their paper of choice to provide notice to the public, knowing that it would not reach the full community.
- HHC's state-required notification of local stakeholders to the Brownfield program failed to reach a nearby preschool, an elder care facility, an elementary school and the management office of 4,500 residents at Southbridge Towers.

This is not how a transparent, community partnership begins!

Children First has the following demands:

- We demand that no remediation or construction begins until there are approved plans for the development
- We demand more rigorous tests by an independent third party on the proposed construction sites—
We do not trust HHC to protect our families
- We demand that any proposed project stand no taller than 120 feet—the maximum height zoned for the Historic Seaport District
- We demand a seat at the table for all discussions and 100% transparency—no more behind closed door negotiations