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**The City**

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**LETTERS**

**Philip Johnson's Firm  
Defends a SoHo Design**

To the Editor:

Re "Philip Johnson Joins Other Architects in the Cross Hairs" (Jan. 28): Even the finest design isn't always embraced by all New Yorkers. And, considering the city's diverse population, it's not surprising that differences of opinion exist.

The proposed design that Mr. Johnson has created for the western edge of SoHo is extremely sensitive to the contextual neighborhood setting and to the special needs of the adjacent landmark James Brown House, home to the time-honored Ear Inn tavern. The development team will make every effort to restore the physical integrity of that structure so it can remain a source of conviviality for future generations.

Mr. Johnson has always taken great pride in the artistic qualities of his designs. In this instance, he was motivated by sculptural forms and used them to create a functional work of art. Not surprisingly, the

project received high praise from the architecture critic of The New York Times, Herbert Muschamp, who recently referred to the building as a "habitable sculpture."

We at Philip Johnson/Alan Ritchie Architects are enamored of this wonderful edge of lower Manhattan. Mr. Johnson emphasizes that his design pays tribute to the area's innovative heritage and feels confident that the proposed structure is destined to be a downtown landmark.

ALAN RITCHIE  
Principal,  
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