

**NATIONAL
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Rescue the USS Monitor Sites in Brooklyn, N.Y.



Photo taken from the Bushwick Inlet, where the Monitor was launched in 1862, shows the Consolidated Freightway Trucking Terminal, where it was built. In the background.

Credit: Janice Lauletta-Weinmann

Nov. 5, 2002

Dear Preservation 911,

Please help save the *USS Monitor's* launch and construction sites in Brooklyn, N.Y. We are facing an opportunity that cannot be lost: an opportunity to establish a home for the Greenpoint Monitor Museum on the location where the *USS Monitor* was built by Continental Iron Works and launched in 1862.

This opportunity involves two adjacent sites. The first site, where Continental Iron Works was located, is owned by Consolidated Freightways. This September, the company went bankrupt and laid off 15,000 people. The Consolidated Freightways terminal site is located on the East River at Quay and West Streets in Greenpoint, Brooklyn and is adjacent to the Bushwick Inlet. On Nov. 12, this site can be lost, as it will be sold under bankruptcy proceedings. The cost of the entire site would be approximately \$12 million to \$15 million.

The second site, where the *USS Monitor* was launched, is owned by Motiva Enterprises. In 1997, the Greenpoint Monitor Museum convinced Motiva Enterprises that the site has historic significance and would be appropriate for a park, museum, and education center. The museum put a deposit on it from 1997 to 2001 to protect the property while the company underwent a series of mergers. To protect the site, the museum did not advertise or commence fundraising during this period. The full cost of this site would be approximately \$700,000.

Our museum is attempting to rescue both sites, as the *USS Monitor* was launched along the border of both and built on the Consolidated Freightways site. If we cannot rescue the entire Consolidated Freightways site, we at

<http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/911/rescue-the-uss-monitor-sites.html>

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least hope to obtain the portion of the historic site along the East River and Quay Street, where it can hopefully join this site with the Bushwick Inlet site. That would provide enough space for the museum and education center, the *USS Monitor* Park, and safe docking facilities for boats.

The Greenpoint Monitor Museum, chartered by New York State on April 24, 1996, is an education corporation. The museum is an official member of the University of the State of New York. On December 16, 1998 the museum received its Federal 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status.

The museum is working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which oversees the *USS Monitor* Sanctuary and recently recovered the *USS Monitor's* turret. Members of the museum were invited by NOAA to participate in its Expedition 2001 to recover the engine and Expedition 2002 to recover the turret. Artifacts from the *USS Monitor* will be given to us for display when we establish the museum on the site where the *USS Monitor* was built in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. NOAA is on the museum's advisory panel and has asked the Greenpoint Monitor Museum to attempt to save these sites. They would like the museum to tell the story of John Ericsson and the construction of the *USS Monitor* from the historic sites in Greenpoint where it was built and launched.

The museum is presently operating without a home, visiting New York City school children through its traveling "road show." We also sponsor annual water parades in honor of the *USS Monitor* and its crew to commemorate the departure of the ship from New York Harbor on its way to the famous Civil War Battle of the Ironclads on March 9, 1862. It is our goal to someday connect the New York City waterfront museums by ferry.

Please learn more about the museum by [visiting our Web site](#).

Sincerely,

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[E-mail the writer](#) with advice, comments, or commiseration.

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