

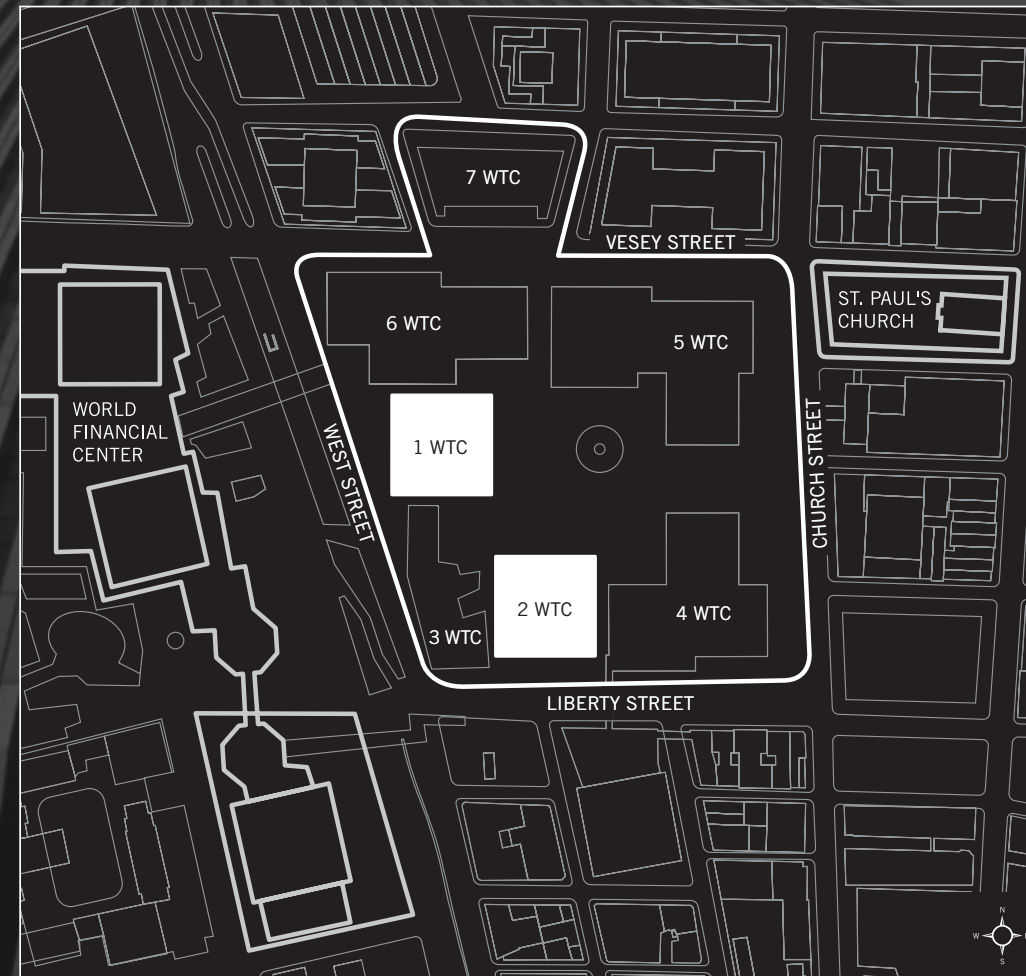
# The WTC Site



Superblock is the term of the 1960s used to describe the radical redesign of the old street pattern on the site of the World Trade Center. Fourteen city blocks were combined into a single parcel and streets were eliminated to create a zone free of vehicles. Surrounding streets were widened threefold. The almost-square site was extended on the north to include two blocks for an electrical substation which in the 1980s was incorporated into the 7 WTC building.

Set off from the dense collage of buildings of the surrounding city, the World Trade Center organized around an elevated central plaza entered from Church Street. Architect Minoru Yamasaki called the great open space “a paved garden” and compared it to grand civic plazas of Europe such as the Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy.

The 5-acre public plaza functioned successfully as an area for public events or lunchtime seating, including concerts and other performances that were well attended day and evening. The granite paved plaza also served as a podium that dramatized the soaring verticals of the Twin Towers. From the plaza, visitors entered the towers at the mezzanine level while from the city streets or the retail concourse, they would enter the main lobby.



Most pedestrian activity at the WTC took place under the plaza in the concourse, known as The Mall at the WTC. This retail concourse also interconnected the PATH and subways, the various buildings and the perimeter streets. The Mall at

the WTC (approximately 427,000 square feet with 80 stores) had become one of the most successful shopping centers in the United States.