



Figure 10.1
Aerial photograph of the WTC
site and surrounding area
immediately after the attack
on September 11, 2001.

2002). Stations for three subway lines and the PATH train linking New York and New Jersey were levelled. These had carried thousands of workers daily to and from the New York City boroughs, New Jersey and Connecticut to the WTC area. The tragic September 11 attack damaged in varying degrees the physical, economic, and social fabric of Lower Manhattan (Figure 10.2). This provided an opportunity to reconsider how we build and live in New York City.

Civic response after the disaster

The US mainland had never been attacked before. The anguish and trauma resulting from the event engendered an intense

Figure 10.2
Assessment of the extent and type of damage. An area of 2 miles was affected.



citizen response. Civic organizations voluntarily banded together to formulate public policies that could restore normal living and working conditions in the area and guide the rebuilding. Some had been lobbying for many years for specific city and regional improvements, such as mass transit, housing, parks and public spaces, waterfront development, economic and social justice, and good urban design.

Organized by the author¹ and Susan Szenasy,² Rebuild Downtown Our Town (R.Dot) was formed immediately after September 11 to give the Lower Manhattan community a civic voice. R.Dot comprises Lower Manhattan residents, business people and business associations, community advocates, artists, colleges, and academic and design professionals, as well as city officials and public appointees. These participants meet regularly to discuss, research, and develop a collective vision that can shape the new downtown. Through its member groups, R.Dot represents the voices of thousands of people who have been directly affected by the destruction of the WTC. Known as the 'Voice of Lower Manhattan,' it works collaboratively with other major civic groups in New York City, and local, state, and federal government representatives. R.Dot, along with 80 other organizations, formed the umbrella group, the Civic Alliance to