



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

South Village Named One of “Seven to Save” Historic Sites

Endangered Neighborhood Makes State List, But NYC Still Refuses to Landmark

GVSHP nominated the South Village to the Preservation League of NY State’s “Seven to Save” list, their bi-annual compilation of the seven most endangered, historically significant sites throughout the State.

According to the League, they selected the South Village based upon its “wealth of architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites associated with the immigrant experience, bohemian and artistic achievements and counter-cultural movements.” The League has long supported GVSHP’s preservation efforts in the South Village, including supplying funding, along with the NYS Council on the Arts, for GVSHP’s 90-page 2006 report “The South Village: A Proposal for Historic District Designation.”

Like GVSHP, the League decried the loss of important historic sites over the years in the South Village, such as the Provincetown Playhouse and Apartments, the Tunnel Garage, the Poe House, and the 1862 rowhouse at 178 Bleecker Street, as well as

the impending demolition and alteration of the Children’s Aid Society’s buildings on Sullivan Street, including an 1881 structure designed by Central Park architect Calvert Vaux. But like GVSHP, the League’s Seven to Save designation also acknowledged that the South Village remains one of the most important historic neighborhoods in New York. The



Preservation League’s Jay DiLorenzo (l.) and GVSHP Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman (r.) at Seven to Save Announcement, with the recently demolished 178 Bleecker Street behind.

South Village contains sites as diverse as the oldest extant Italian-American church, the house where Louisa May Alcott lived and, some scholars contend, wrote “Little Women,” the coffeehouse where cappuccino was

introduced to America, and the site where Bob Dylan wrote “Blown’ In the Wind.” Amazingly, none of these sites are protected by landmark status by the City. Activists called for this area to be landmarked in the 1960’s, but its remarkable collection of well-preserved tenements, cafes, theaters, and churches were not considered worthy of

preservation at the time. After NYU’s demolition of the Poe and Judson Houses, GVSHP revived that push in 2002, and in 2006 submitted our proposal for landmark designation, complete with a historic documentation of the history of every one of 750 buildings in the district. In 2010, the city designated the first third of the proposed district, west of 6th Avenue, but in spite of promises to move ahead swiftly with the remainder, has thus far refused to act.

In addition to the League, GVSHP has gotten support from fellow preservation groups, community organizations, and local elected officials to push the City to move ahead with landmark designation. Following on the “Seven to Save” announcement, GVSHP will be launching new campaigns to call upon the City to keep its promise and protect the South Village. See gvshp.org/sv.

NYU Expansion Plan Challenged, City Council to Have Final Say

GVSHP, NYU Faculty, and Residents Urge Rejection of Massive Proposal

NYU's massive proposed Village expansion plan is headed towards the City Council, which has the final say in the public review and approval process. NYU is seeking to overturn neighborhood zoning protections, gut open space preservation requirements, take over public land, and extinguish urban renewal deed restrictions to build 2.5 million sq. ft. of space – the equivalent of the Empire State Building – on the blocks south of Washington Square.

GVSHP has formed a coalition with NYU's faculty, students, and workers who have been organizing to fight the plan. We have also been working closely with local leaders and merchants and citywide preservationists, and have helped rally community groups from across Manhattan to oppose the plan.

But we've done more than just mobilize thousands to protest NYU's proposal. GVSHP commissioned a study by an independent consultant to look at the impact of the NYU plan, and compare it to the impact if NYU were to locate its expansion in other parts of the city. They found the plan would have relatively little positive economic impact in the Village, but had the potential for serious negative economic, environmental, and quality-of-life impacts due to the university's plan to build extensively underground and to try to shoehorn new buildings between existing residential buildings, on open space never intended for

development. By contrast, the study found that were NYU to locate its new facilities in the Financial District, Downtown Brooklyn, or Long Island City, the local economic benefits would be comparatively greater, the potential environmental impacts much less, and the opportunity for long-term growth and adaptive re-use of existing buildings considerably greater.

GVSHP also performed its own studies to challenge the bases of NYU's claims for the need for this destructive approach. GVSHP cited schools and cities across the country that have worked together to locate satellite campuses to accommodate growth so that

were spread out over areas requiring a 30 minute walk or more, roughly the equivalent of the walk from Washington Square to the Financial District, and considerably more time than the quick subway ride from the Village to Downtown Brooklyn or Long Island City.

Additionally, we documented how NYU has eliminated or warehoused hundreds of faculty housing units on the very blocks they are now seeking to change zoning rules in order to allow the construction of more faculty housing, among other things. Finally, we pointed out that NYU is seeking to build a 1,000 bed freshman dorm not to accommodate new students, but simply to move students

currently housed on 23rd Street into the Village.

Unfortunately, not everyone was swayed by these arguments. Borough President Stringer not only approved the NYU plan, but did so after refusing to hold a public hearing on it, based upon minor modifications to the plan which NYU was not obligated to abide by. Mayor Bloomberg came out unequivocally in favor of the plan. As we go to press, the City Planning Commission, the majority of whose members are appointed by the Mayor, appears poised to approve the plan in whole or part.



GVSHP organized a City Hall press conference of NYU faculty and students and community groups from across Manhattan opposing the NYU plan.

residential neighborhoods are not overwhelmed and city neighborhoods targeted for growth could benefit. Harvard, Yale, and Brown, among others, have all taken this approach. We also looked at the distances between facilities at schools across the country – large and small, public and private, urban and rural. We found in nearly all that facilities

As expected, this brings the final vote to the City Council. There, local Councilmember Margaret Chin and Council Speaker Quinn will largely determine the outcome. GVSHP will be working hard with our coalition to convince them and their colleagues that this plan is not only wrong for the Village, but for the city, and for NYU. See gvshp.org/nyu.

Preservation Progress to Report From the East Village

One Site Landmarked, One Small District Preserved, and Another Soon to be Heard

On May 15th the city finally landmarked 128 East 13th Street, a building GVSHP had fought for six years to save. Through ongoing monitoring of every building and demolition application in our neighborhoods, in 2006 GVSHP discovered a plan to demolish this building and replace it with a new condo. From our ongoing research on the history of every building in the East Village, we were able to argue for the urgent need to preserve this building.

GVSHPS's research showed 128 East 13th Street began life as the Van Tassell and Kearney Horse Auction Mart, a place where the Vanderbilts and Belmonts, among other prominent families, came to buy polo ponies and show horses. A once-common building type in New York, this appeared to be the only surviving horse auction mart structure left in the city. But our research also found that during World War II the building was used as an assembly-line training center for women, the proverbial home of Rosie the Riveter. And from 1978 to 2005, it was the studio of world renowned artist Frank Stella. Its evolution in many ways perfectly mirrored the arc of downtown's dramatic development in the 20th century.

GVSHPS immediately shared this information with the Landmarks Preservation Commission

(LPC) and called for an emergency hearing. The LPC agreed, and demolition of the building was prevented. But they also hesitated for six long years to follow through on landmark designation. While the building appeared safe – Peridance Studio took over a long term lease for the building, and it was placed on the State and National Registers of Historic



After a six year effort, 128 E. 13th Street (l.) was landmarked; the building's history inspired GVSHP's campaign logo (r.)



Places – GVSHP's goal remained to see the building landmarked to ensure its permanent preservation. After countless letters and years of lobbying, this spring the LPC finally acted.

More good news came in January with the designation of the East 10th Street historic district, the first new historic district in the East Village since 1969, and only its second ever. Here too the LPC held an emergency hearing in response to GVSHP's notifying them of a plan to alter a centerpiece of the proposed district, an 1847 house at 315 E. 10th Street. We were thrilled that the LPC voted to approve

the district the same day as the emergency hearing. However, we were deeply disappointed that a lack of coordination between the LPC and the Department of Buildings allowed alteration permits for 315 E. 10th Street to be issued mere minutes before the LPC vote, in spite of our making both agencies aware of the impending conflict.

There does appear to be a happy ending to this story, however. The LPC and the owner seem to have worked out an agreement by which the new addition to the building is relatively modest and inobtrusive, thus preserving the basic integrity of the district.

We hope, and are working to see, more progress soon. A much larger new proposed historic district, which GVSHP and allied groups successfully pushed the LPC to expand, is to be heard

by the LPC on June 26th. GVSHP is calling for a vote as soon as possible, as several buildings in the proposed district, running between 7th and 2nd Streets, Avenue A and the Bowery, have already been altered or destroyed. The district includes many buildings GVSHP has long worked to landmark, including Congregation Mezritch, the East Village's last operating tenement synagogue; 101 Avenue A, the home of the Pyramid Club; East 6th Street's Community Synagogue; and the Russian Orthodox Cathedral at 59 E. 2nd Street. Special thanks to Councilmember Rosie Mendez for assistance on all these efforts. See gvshp.org/ev.

West Side Rezoning Have a Huge Impact

Big Changes from the West Village, to Hudson Square, to Chelsea Market

In 2005 and 2010, GVSHP was able to lead the charge for successful rezonings in the Far West Village, between Horatio and Barrow Streets, to reduce the size of allowable new development and reinforce the neighborhood's residential character. We were also able to help block or reduce developer-requested rezonings on Sullivan Street and around Clarkson and Leroy Streets. But several other developer-requested rezonings on the West Side have either been approved or are seeking approval, with big potential consequences.

Starting from the north, Jamestown Properties is seeking to upzone **Chelsea Market** to allow the construction atop the complex of a large office tower on 10th Avenue and a hotel tower on 9th Avenue. GVSHP has long fought for the preservation of Chelsea Market; while the city refused to include it in the Gansevoort Market Historic District we proposed and which was designated in 2003, we were able to get it in the State and National Registers Historic Districts we successfully proposed in 2007. Unfortunately, while city designation requires preservation, state and federal designation only encourages it.



Proposed office tower addition to Chelsea Market.

Nevertheless, GVSHP feels strongly that the historic Chelsea Market complex, an iconic and beloved landmark of adaptive re-use, should not

be built atop, and there is no need to change the zoning merely to increase a developer's already handsome profits. We are calling upon the Borough President, City Planning Commission, and City Council to vote no on the rezoning. See gvshp.org/chmkt.

At **St. Vincent's Hospital**, the City Council approved a massive rezoning to allow condo development on the site over the objections of GVSHP and many others. This site was rezoned in 1979 to allow the construction of extra-large hospital buildings, with the rationale that such public amenities deserve special zoning considerations. The condo developer, however, asked that the site be upzoned for residential development, so that nearly all of those special considerations could be retained. GVSHP objected, not only

because it was wrong for this site, but because of the dangerous precedent we believe such an approval sets. See gvshp.org/stv.

Controversy arose on the site of the former **Whitehall Storage Warehouse** between 10th, Charles, West and Washington Streets. The site was carved out of the downzoning of the area GVSHP secured in

2005, and then rezoned by the City and City Council to allow construction of a 15-story

residential building. However, the approval was supposedly conditioned upon preserving and building atop the existing warehouse building, a handsome 1930's structure GVSHP had proposed be included in the expanded landmark district we helped secure in 2006 (it was carved

out of this district by the City as well). But by early this year virtually the entire structure was demolished, with only a tiny piece of the original concrete frame preserved. When GVSHP brought this seemingly blatant violation of the City Council and City Planning approvals to their attention, we were told somewhat incredibly that this qualified as "preservation." No violations were issued, and the project was allowed to proceed.



All that remains of the Whitehall Storage Warehouse; is this "Preservation"?

Finally, GVSHP and local groups held a Town Hall meeting in March regarding a proposal to rezone **Hudson Square** (most of the area west of 6th Avenue, Houston to Canal Streets). While we have long called for a change of zoning in the area (which allows 450 ft. tall buildings, like the Trump SoHo), we have some concerns about the current draft rezoning plan put forward by developer Trinity Realty. Coming out of the Town Hall, we had two main recommendations: lower the proposed height and bulk limits (now as high as 320 or 430 feet – taller than anything in the area except Trump), and insist that if the city moves forward with this plan, it must also move forward with landmarking the adjacent South Village, which will no doubt be impacted by the increased development in Hudson Square. As we go to print, the rezoning proposal has not yet been finalized or filed. See gvshp.org/hudsq.

The Latest Happenings from GVSHP

New Programs and Events Keep You in Touch with the Society

Historic Plaque Program

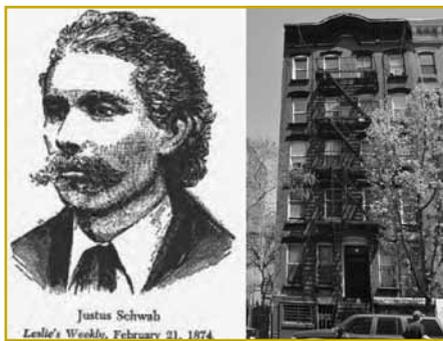
– In May GVSHP launched our new historic marker program in partnership with the Two Boots Foundation. Historic plaques are a great way to highlight the incredible history of our neighborhoods, and sites connected to the critical people and events that shaped our culture.

Appropriately enough, our first marker was placed on First Street at #50 East, the former site of the Justus Schwab Saloon. Schwab was a radical labor organizer whose saloon in the ground floor of the building in which he lived was an epicenter of political and social agitation on the Lower East Side in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Close associates Emma Goldman and Samuel Gompers both wrote about the critical role Schwab's saloon played in the life of the city at the time, and the New York Times reported that his funeral in 1900, with a public procession through the East Village's streets, brought together nearly every radical and activist in New York City at the time.

Our inaugural plaque unveiling was accompanied by a community celebration with music, food, and drink, courtesy of Two Boots. We look forward to continuing the program throughout the Village, East Village, and NoHo. See gvshp.org/plaque.

Continuing Education Program – GVSHP

now runs a program which allows brokers and realtors to earn credits they need toward their state licenses. The program focuses on historic preservation, housing, and development in New York City, with a particular



Justus Schwab (l.), 50 E. 1st Street (r.)

focus on the Village and East Village. Spread over three days, the program brings together a variety of experts in these fields and aims to provide this important community with information and resources about our city's built

environment and its preservation.

The program was so popular when introduced in 2011 that it filled to capacity before it could even be advertised publicly. When repeated in 2012, it also filled up very quickly. We hope to continue the program and respond to the great demand for continuing professional education about our neighborhood's development and preservation.

Marking the Titanic

Centennial – 2012 was the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, an event which took place hundreds of miles away, but with very important Village connections. Survivors of the disaster were brought to Pier 54 at Little West 12th Street, where they were taken to recover at the American Seaman's Friend

Society Sailors' Home at Jane and West Street. GVSHP kicked off the Titanic Centennial memorial season with an immensely popular program at the Jane Hotel (the former Seamen's Friend Society Home) with Charles A. Haas and John P. Eaton, co-founders of the Titanic International Society and authors of *Titanic: Triumph and Tragedy* and *Titanic: Destination Disaster*. Attendees not only got to view rare images and hear little-known stories of the disaster and rescue, but to see the incredible ballroom of the Jane where so much history took place. See gvshp.org/titanic. GVSHP's Brokers Partnership presented this and our continuing ed program.

Members-Only and Village Artists Program

– GVSHP conducts about 50 programs a year, almost all of which are free, on a variety of topics regarding the architectural and cultural history of our neighborhoods. As demand for our programs has continued to increase, we have begun a new "members only" series – special limited capacity programs for GVSHP

members with access to sites or speakers not generally available to the public. Our first in May on "Julius" and the Gay Rights Movement," with a walking tour and visit to the oldest gay bar in New York (and site of one of the first gay rights protests in 1966), was extremely popular.

Another popular new series, open to the general public, has been *Artists and the Village* in cooperation with the New School. Lectures have featured Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock, and upcoming programs will feature Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. See gvshp.org/programs for a full calendar.



Titanic Centennial program in the incredible Jane Hotel ballroom.

27 East 4th Street

GVSHHP has serious concerns about this proposal for a 9-story hotel abutting the Merchant's House Museum in the NoHo Historic District. The Merchant's House is one of our city's most significant preserved early 19th century homes, and an interior and exterior NYC landmark. Construction next door, if done without appropriate precautions, could have devastating consequences, including irreversible damage or even collapse. Beyond these structural safety issues, we also object to the proposed new building's design, including the midtown-style large dark plate glass windows and the potential for the building's height and scale to overwhelm the historic house next door. GVSHHP is working closely with the museum and neighbors to respond to this plan, and urging city agencies, including the Parks Department which owns the house, to work together to ensure the museum's continued safety and integrity.

10 Bond Street

New building applications in the NoHo Historic District have been plentiful of late, as the city will typically allow the demolition of non-descript or utilitarian structures in historic



Original (l.) and approved (r.) designs for new building at 10 Bond Street.



districts. But their replacements' design must relate well to the historic character of the neighborhood, and that's where GVSHHP, and the public, can have an impact. In this case, GVSHHP called for changes to the original design by noted architect Annabelle Selldorf, which we felt had an unrelieved horizontality that was out of character for NoHo. We called for more vertical elements and more solid material to break up the strip-ribbon windows, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission agreed. We believe the changes they required in the new design make it much more in keeping with NoHo's historic character.

47 West 8th Street

GVSHHP has long taken issue with this unwelcome addition to West 8th Street, an unpermitted alteration which included fake ivy and a pseudo-Mediterranean perma-stone front. While added years ago, it has taken a considerable time to get these illegal additions removed, as the owner has sought to legalize these elements



Illegal fake ivy and perma-stone on 47 West 8th Street.

even though ample evidence indicated they were added with full knowledge they lacked required landmarks approvals. GVSHHP helped get the violations issued, and urged the city to reject the legalization applications. We are happy to report they have; the fake ivy

has been removed, and the applicant will be required to remove the perma-stone as well. GVSHHP will continue to monitor the site until all the illegal additions are removed.

Reiss Bldg., 144 W. 12th Street

GVSHHP has long argued for the preservation of the Reiss Building, and against its replacement with an ungainly new condo development, as proposed by Rudin Management (in fact, GVSHHP argued against Rudin's entire St. Vincent's rezoning proposal). While the City Council ultimately granted the rezoning, they did announce that "preservation" of Reiss would be part of the new development. Aesthetically, the new design utilizing the façade of the existing

building was a vast improvement over the proposed condo replacement. However, much as GVSHHP suspected, the plan involves demolition of all of the building behind the façade. Additionally, the approvals by the City Council

do not actually require that even the façade be preserved, and in some similar cases developers have simply demolished the entire façade and reconstructed a facsimile of it. Thus while GVSHHP is pleased with the aesthetic improvement in the plan, we have questioned whether "preservation" of the Reiss Building is truly required or will actually take place.

More information on all these and many other items can be found on our landmarks application webpage, gvshp.org/lpc.

From the Director

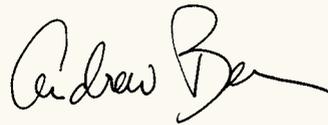
Spring brings many wonderful things for GVSHP, not the least of which is our Annual Awards. This community-wide gathering, which has gotten bigger every year, provides a fantastic opportunity to honor just a few of the incredible people, places, and institutions that make the Village, East Village, and NoHo special. This year we are proud to recognize City Councilmember Rosie Mendez, community activist Marilyn Appleberg, Little Red Schoolhouse, Arturo's Restaurant, 6th and B Community Garden, Foods of New York Tours, the Lower East Side History Project, and the renovation of the Bleecker Street Sitting Area. This is just one small way for us to give back to those who have contributed so much to our communities.



Spring also finds a big jump in the demand for our Children's Education Program, the first of its kind in New York City. Each year, GVSHP brings children from across New York City to our neighborhoods, using our multi-layered built environment as a living classroom in which children learn how history can be found –and preserved – in the world around them.

No doubt this spring and summer will also bring a few rallies, demonstrations, and press conferences, as we come down to the wire on decisions about big new construction plans by NYU and Chelsea Market, and push the City to move ahead with promised landmark protections in the South and East Village.

I hope to see you there.



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We also wish to acknowledge the generous support of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Councilmember Rosie Mendez through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer through the Department of Education.

GVSHP Bulletin Board

Want to help the cause? Volunteer for GVSHP, or host a 'friendraiser' – a free event introducing friends and neighbors to GVSHP – go to gvshp.org/volunteer or gvshp.org/fundraiser.

Curious about landmarks applications in your neighborhood? Check out GVSHP's landmarks applications webpage, the only one of its kind in the city. You can view any application requiring public approvals for landmarked buildings in the Village, East Village, or NoHo, find out the status of the public hearing and approval process, and how you can affect the decision, at gvshp.org/lpc.

Visit GVSHP's Blog, Off the Grid, for fun and fascinating glimpses into our neighborhoods' hidden history, eye-catching architecture, and colorful characters – gvshp.org/blog.

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