



# THE ANTHEMION

Fall/Winter 2003 The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation www.gvshp.org

## Victory At Last -- Gansevoort Market Historic District Designated!

**O**n September 9<sup>th</sup> GVSHP's Save Gansevoort Market project scored an incredible victory, when the Gansevoort Market Historic District was designated New York City's 81st historic district, and the first new historic district in Greenwich Village or the East Village since 1969!

The district includes 104 buildings and covers all or parts of 11 blocks between 15th and Horatio Streets, east of Hudson Street to West Street (see map p. 3). While not including all areas we had urged be included in the district, it does include the heart of the Meatpacking district and an incredible array of warehouses, lofts, market buildings, and converted stables. Designation of this area means that the historic architectural features and human scale, the distinctive metal awnings, the brick facades, and even the street patterns and cobblestones will be protected from



*(l. to r.) Save Gansevoort Market Co-Chairs and founders Jo Hamilton and Florent Morellet, LPC Chair Robert Tierney, and GVSHP/SGM Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman following the unanimous vote in favor of designation.*

inappropriate changes.

And while Gansevoort embodies an incredibly important slice of New York's history and has its own gritty beauty, there is no denying that this designation extends the notion of historic preservation into

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## Seeking Protection for Thirteen Incredible Survivors

**R**emarkably, about three hundred Federal rowhouses still survive in Lower Manhattan. Built between the 1790's and the early 1830's in a newly created "American" architectural style, they were meant to visually reflect the identity of the young, emerging democracy. Some



*Three federal rowhouses at 127-131 MacDougal Street, among the 13 proposed for designation.*

are in pristine condition, while others have been altered almost beyond recognition. Many are protected by individual landmark designation or as part of historic districts, but more than half of the houses have no protection at all, and these unique historic structures could be lost at any time.

That is why the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Endangered Building Initiative (EBI) have called upon the city to begin the process of designating and protecting these structures by compiling a list of thirteen outstanding surviving, unprotected examples. The thirteen which have been chosen represent our federal rowhouse's geographical diversity (they are located near Wall Street, on the

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

An incredible victory like the Gansevoort Market Historic District designation fills me with great pride in the achievements of a membership-based organization like GVSHP, and in the commitment of our members, whose support, participation, and activism helped make these achievements possible.

For me, it also inspires two big questions – how did we succeed where so many thought there was no chance of success, and where do we go from here?

The full story of Save Gansevoort Market's success is too long to tell here, as is the list of all those who deserve thanks for making it possible (much of that will have to wait for a victory party to follow the approval of the district by the City Planning Commission and the City Council). But there are a few highlights that, while by no means telling the whole story, I would like to take note of.

The first is Jo Hamilton and Florent Morellet. Not only would this campaign not have been a success without them, it would not have even existed. As the co-founders and co-chairs of our Save Gansevoort Market project, Jo and Florent put together an unconventional and unstoppable coalition which was a key to the campaign's success. They not only created a great movement, they continued to steer it through at-times choppy waters to bring home the prized goal – historic district designation. They truly serve as model citizen-activists, and it is efforts like theirs which enabled us to preserve this wonderful neighborhood.

I must also recognize the pioneering work of former GVSHP Executive Director Regina Kellerman. Her research documenting the historic resources in Gansevoort and along the entire Village waterfront, and her consistent advocacy for these areas, laid the groundwork for much of what we were able to accomplish. Former GVSHP Executive Director Kim Kearns helped establish GVSHP's Save Gansevoort Market project, and former interim Executive Director Sue Radmer shepherded it along through critical stages, and has played (and continues to play) a key role in compiling the research for nomination of the district.

Support in Albany helped us at crucial stages

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as well. In 2002, the Preservation League of NY State named Gansevoort one of New York State's "Seven to Save," adding critical fuel to the fire of our campaign. In 2001, Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of NY State and the NY State Council on the Arts provided funding for the architectural and historic survey report we commissioned which served as a basis for the proposed Gansevoort Market historic district, and was a key tool in our efforts.

And City Council Member Christine Quinn and State Senator Tom Duane put tremendous support behind the Gansevoort Market effort from day one, and never flagged in providing assistance and advocacy at every turn in the campaign.

All these factors, and so many more, made this a success. And what of future successes? There is still much more to do, to which GVSHP can now devote its attention.

We must work to prevent inappropriate development in the undesignated areas of Gansevoort Market. We must convince the City to extend landmark designations and consider zoning changes to address the ever-increasing overdevelopment of the Greenwich Village waterfront. We must thoroughly research and document the history and architecture of the South Village to make the best case possible for designation of a new historic district there, as well as build a coalition to help fight for it.

We must analyze and document the historic resources of the East Village, identify the key features which comprise its unique architectural and cultural identity, and work for their preservation. We must identify individual buildings of historic importance, like the 13 federal rowhouses, and advocate for their protection before they are lost. And we must be vigilant to ensure that our existing designated buildings are not threatened by faulty work or neighboring construction, and that proposals for new buildings, or alterations to existing buildings, in our designated historic districts truly fit the existing historic character.

We have accomplished a tremendous amount this year, and we have a lot more to do. Fortunately these recent successes will provide some valuable lessons to guide and inspire us through the challenges ahead.

*Andrew Berna*

## Back to School for GVSHP's Children's Education Program

**F**all means back to school, including GVSHP's children's education program *History and Historic Preservation*, now entering its fourteenth year. This past year was one of tremendous growth for the program - reaching over 1,200 students in public and independent schools throughout the city -- double the number of students in 2002, and triple the number in 2001.

Students in the program learn the value of historic preservation, are taught a deeper understanding of the history of the City, and gain an appreciation of the meaning of the landmarks, historic structures, and streetscapes found around them. A crafts project, a field trip, and an in-class slide presentation enrich the children's experience and relate to the standards-based New York City curriculum on New York City history.

This year, we expanded the curriculum to include first and second grades in addition to the established third through sixth grade curriculum. Also, this year we partnered for the first time with the Grace Opportunity (GO) Project to offer our program free to about 150 at-risk students from Lower East Side schools facing academic challenges in their traditional school setting. New York 1 News, WFUV Radio, and The Villager all featured stories about the program and its reach.

Dramatic growth in demand for the program has brought both joy and challenges. As budget cuts have led to fewer and fewer arts-based programs in City schools, requests for GVSHP's program have soared. However, budget cuts have impacted on us as well; this year, some government and foundation grants to the



*Crafts projects form a cornerstone of GVSHP's Children's Education Program.*

program were cut. This, in spite of the fact that the added number of grades and students has meant significantly increased costs for GVSHP to run the program. However, we are aggressively pursuing new sources of funding, and hope that this, combined with strong member support, will allow us to continue to meet every request for participation in the program.

GVSHP's Children's Education program was able to operate this year due to generous support from the Manhattan Delegation of the City Council, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, Max Lubin, and the NYU TG White Fund, as well as from general operating support from Council Member Christine Quinn, State Senator Tom Duane, State Senator Martin Connor, Council Member Alan Gerson, the Kaplen Foundation, and the New York Community Trust.

For more information, go to [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org), and click on "Education." □

### GVSHP Leads Growing Zoning Reform

GVSHP's efforts to affect regulations regarding "community facilities" - those zoning laws which allow institutions like universities to build multiple buildings larger than normally allowed with no restrictions on concentration - has gained momentum. Several months ago, GVSHP co-founded the Citywide Coalition for Community Facility Reform, which now has over 125 organizations from across the city supporting its mission to reform these laws. Community Boards across the city have also joined us in calling for reform. Earlier in the year we met with City Council Zoning Chair Tony Avella, who promised to introduce legislation to begin the reform process. A bill was introduced late in the summer, which we are reviewing for its implications. We expect the effort to heat up in the coming months as this and hopefully other pieces of legislative reform move forward.

In order for this coalition to be successful, we need committed people willing to dedicate time and energy to this effort. If you would like to become more involved in this effort, or just find out more, e-mail [CCCFR@gvshp.org](mailto:CCCFR@gvshp.org), or call 212/475-9585 x38. □

# Neighborhood Preservation Roundup

This year has been extremely busy for GVSHP, with many important issues coming to the fore. The following is a summary of just some of what GVSHP has been doing in terms of neighborhood preservation:

● **Hudson Square Rezoning:**

GVSHP joined many groups in urging that a proposed rezoning of the area west of Hudson Street between Barrow and Clarkson Streets, which might allow out-of-scale residential development, be put on hold. It was part of a proposed rezoning that also included an area between Spring and Canal Streets. This northern section was ultimately removed from the rezoning plan.

● **East Village:** GVSHP is conducting a broad survey of, and conducting historic research upon, buildings throughout the area. Our goal is to catalogue the area's rich historic and architectural resources, with an eye towards creating a possible future document or report, and to advocate for preservation of the area's rich resources.

● **744 Greenwich Street:**

GVSHP worked with the architect of this proposed new building in the Greenwich Village Historic District to make the design more appropriate to its unique Far West Village context. Significant changes were made bringing the design more in character with its surroundings.

● **Noho East Historic District:**

GVSHP urged designation of this district at the east end of Bleecker street, as well as of other remaining undesignated areas of the originally proposed Noho Historic District. Noho East was designated, while the remaining areas are still pending action.

● **Bauman Brothers Building, 22 East 14th Street:**

GVSHP urged designation of this unique cast-iron loft building just west of Union Square, as well as consideration of other undesignated cast iron and loft buildings along the 14th Street and Broadway corridors. The building was designated.

● **Downzoning 14th Street between 7th and 9th Avenues:**

GVSHP urged the downzoning of this

area to ensure any future development is compatible with the 4 and 5 story brownstones which characterize much of the street, and the adjacent Gansevoort Market district. No action has yet been taken.

● **Lifting of Restrictive Declaration on south side of Gansevoort Street:**

GVSHP opposed a request to the City to lift an agreement restricting uses in several properties between Washington and Greenwich to meatpacking and other industrial uses. While GVSHP is not totally opposed to any other uses locating there, the applicant provided little proof that they could not find conforming uses, and asked that the entire set of restrictions be lifted, rather than only those needed. The City Planning Commission approved lifting the restrictions which will now go to the City Council for approval.

● **Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Building:**

GVSHP supported landmark designation of this historic building at 23 Washington Place (at Greene Street) which is now an NYU academic building, and urged that other similar loft buildings in the area be considered as well. Designation of the building was approved.

● **Preserving the High Line:**

GVSHP testified before the Federal Surface Transportation Board in favor of a plan to preserve the High Line and have it re-used as a public elevated park. The City is currently moving forward with plans to preserve the High Line and adapt it to park use.

● **Preservation Watch:**

GVSHP's program to facilitate timely reporting of serious landmark violations has received, forwarded, and followed up on reports from dozens of residents, resulting in numerous LPC inspections, several violations issued, and a few illegal conditions being corrected. □

## Victory At Last -- Gansevoort Market Historic District Designated!

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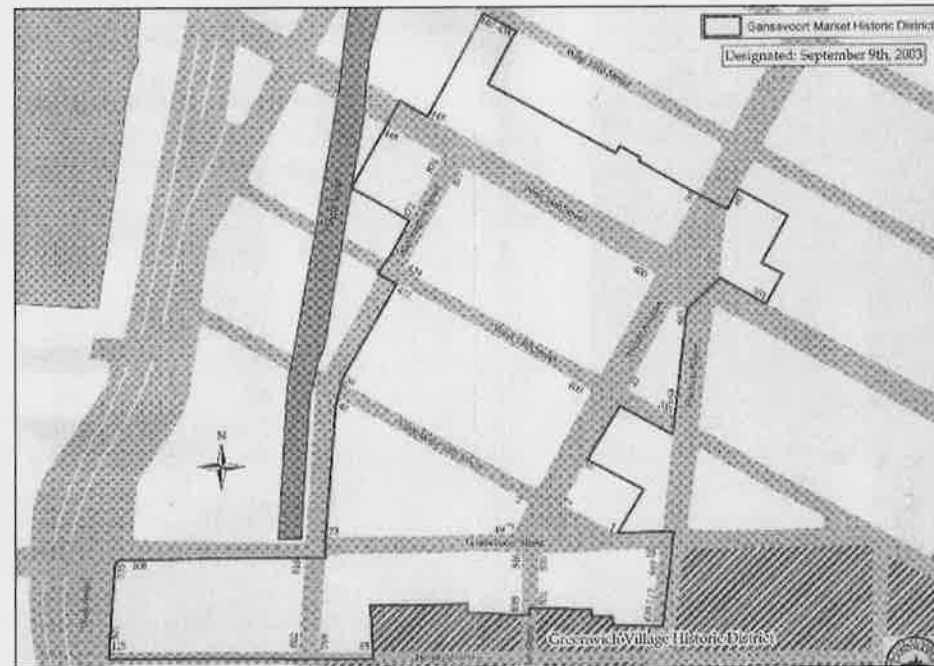
some exciting and long-neglected new territory. The Gansevoort designation shows that industrial architecture, simple utilitarian buildings, structures altered over time and heterogeneous neighborhoods need no longer be left behind by preservation.

Similarly, the Save Gansevoort Market campaign certainly broke new ground. Founded in 2000 by GVSHP Board member Jo Hamilton and meat market restaurateur Florent Morellet, their coalition grew to include business people, property owners, unions, workers, residents, meatpackers, bar and club owners, community leaders, elected officials, and preservationists from across the city, state, and country.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the thousands of people who contributed time, energy, and money to this cause made it uniquely successful - the constant flow of letters, postcards, and e-mails to City officials, and the support for Save Gansevoort Market, kept the campaign going and the City listening. Indeed, the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Administration's support for designation was a most welcome outcome of this grassroots campaign. □

But there is still much work to be done - while the designation took effect on September 9<sup>th</sup>, it must still be reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council (dates not yet set, but we will keep you posted). Also, three key blocks west of Washington Street were removed from the district, including the site of the proposed 450 ft.-tall tower at 848 Washington Street (whose developers claim they are now pursuing building an as-of-right hotel, rather than the residence we stopped at the BSA), and we must fight to protect these areas as well.

Several buildings also affected some last minute changes just prior to designation, the legality of which are in question and which we are investigating. Now that designation is in place, given the lack of staffing at the LPC, we will all have to work hard to ensure that its terms are complied with and enforced. Lastly, we are continuing to seek listing of our entire proposed Gansevoort Market Historic District (including those areas not currently designated by the City) on the State and National Register of Historic Places. □



While not including all areas we had proposed, the designated Gansevoort Market Historic District is one of the city's largest new historic districts.

# Join the Society

**New membership benefits** include a 28 page self-guided walking tour booklet of Gansevoort Market; invitations to our many lectures, programs and walking tours (in many cases at a reduced rate or free); free access to the Society's research sources; regular issues of our newsletter; and a free six-month subscription to The Villager newspaper.

**Most importantly, your support will help make GVSHP a more effective preservation leader.** The Society also invites members to give gift memberships to your friends or neighbors for only \$25 (that's half price!). Please use the form below, and we will send a lovely gift packet, informing them of your thoughtful gift.

**Give at the \$100 level or above** and you'll receive a free set of Greenwich Village notecards. **Give at the \$500 level or above** and you'll receive an invitation to a special thank you event at a unique historic Village location.

YES! I would like to support the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and its preservation efforts.

- \$1,000 Patron
- \$250 Sustainer
- \$75 Family/Dual
- \$500 Sponsor
- \$100 Contributor
- \$50 Basic/Individual
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- \$25 Gift Membership - Special Offer for Current Members to give!**  
(put recipient's name below)

I am already a member, but would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (please give name below).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Order GVSHP Gifts

(put name and address above if different than appears on check.)

- Discovering Greenwich Village* (12 page activity book for children ages 7 - 12) \$3.00 plus \$0.60 shipping
- The Greenwich Village Waterfront, An Historic Study* (46 page booklet with an overview of Greenwich Village waterfront history) \$5.00 plus \$0.60 shipping
- Greenwich Village T-shirt (white t-shirt with green lettering in medium, large and extra large. GVSHP logo on front, list of famous Village residents on back.) \$15.00 plus \$2.50 shipping
- Save Gansevoort Market T-shirt (white t-shirt with red Save Gansevoort Market logo on front) \$15.00 plus \$2.50 shipping
- Set of Greenwich Village notecards (eight cards and envelopes featuring images from GVSHP's photograph archive) \$8.00 plus \$1.00 shipping
- Greenwich Village Waterfront Poster (a full color 16x24" poster featuring photographs of architectural details from waterfront buildings) \$5.00 plus \$2.00 shipping
- Save Gansevoort Market 28-page walking tour booklet (free plus \$0.60 shipping charge)

Please return this form with your check to:  
The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

232 East 11th Street New York, NY 10003 (212)475-9585 gvshp@gvshp.org

## Landmarked - But Still Under Threat

Landmarking is supposed to ensure the protection of historic structures; sometimes, however, they can face the threat of destruction or serious damage anyway. Two recent examples in our area illustrate this disturbing phenomenon.

The James Brown House, home of the Ear Inn at 326 Spring Street, was built in 1817 and designated a landmark in 1969. Once located at the shoreline of Manhattan as part of a row of waterfront merchant's



The James Brown House in 1973. Photo courtesy of *Ear Inn Visions*. Odyssey Publications/Spring St. Books and W.W. Norton Inc.

houses, this house is the lone survivor. Believed to have been built by a prominent freed black slave and Revolutionary War soldier, the house embodies many layers of New York's social and architectural history. In August, GVSHP held a program at the house consisting of a tour of the rarely seen upstairs and a lecture by the author of a newly published book about the Ear Inn's fascinating history, *Ear\*Inn\*Visions*.

Construction scheduled to begin next door on a high-rise tower, however, could result in a tragic end to this story. The fragile house, which survived so many changes in the continually evolving Hudson Square neighborhood, might easily, without appropriate care and consideration from the developer, be damaged or destroyed by the work. Special measures will need to be taken to ensure that demoli-

tion and construction next door to the Ear Inn does not undermine its foundation, lot line walls, or structural integrity.

GVSHP is working closely with the house's owner, who is fiercely devoted to this historic structure, to make certain that this landmark is in fact preserved. GVSHP has asked the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Department of Buildings to take an active role in working with the developer and the James Brown House's owner to ensure that measures are taken to prevent any damage or undermining of structural integrity during construction and demolition work (for more info, go to [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org) and click on "James Brown House/Ear Inn").

An even more immediate threat faces three 1830's rowhouses in the Greenwich Village Historic District at 305-311 West 11th Street/755-57 Greenwich Street. In October of last year, serious structural work without a permit was performed by the owner of two of the buildings at 305-307 West 11th Street which apparently resulted in the undermining of a party wall with neighboring 311 West 11th Street, forcing the evacuation of all three buildings including that of the unsuspecting family in 311. While GVSHP immediately called in the City to inspect the site and take action, since then the response on the part of the owner responsible for the work, and the City, has been lethargic at best. In the days and weeks that followed the near-collapse of the buildings, cracks appeared in the buildings' facades, bricks fell, and walls visibly buckled. The houses were left open to the elements during some of the heaviest rains and snows in recent memory, and pipes which could have been drained were left to freeze and burst. Only after vigorous lobbying by GVSHP and our elected officials did the City get the responsible owner to install exterior shoring to prevent a collapse of the buildings.

In addition to this measure, GVSHP strongly urged the City to require that

repairs be made immediately, to prevent further deterioration of the properties and any further loss of the historic fabric of the buildings, or that the City go in and make the repairs themselves and bill the responsible owner. Though we had regularly been given assurances by both the City and the property owner's representatives that full repairs were imminent, 11 months later, in spite of plans for repairs having been filed, the buildings continue to deteriorate and necessary repairs have not been done. The City has refused to perform or require immediate repair work. And, amazingly, the property owner responsible for the damage has only received \$500 in fines from the City!

GVSHP has been joined by Council Member Quinn, Assembly Member Glick, and State Senator Duane in asking that the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Department of Buildings to meet with us to address why these buildings have been allowed to deteriorate for so long, to hope-



755-57 Greenwich Street/311 W. 11th Street-- 11 months later, still no sign of repairs or restoration.

fully prevent such situations from ever occurring again, and to formulate a plan for these houses' restoration. GVSHP wants to ensure that restoration not involve erecting new structures mimicking these landmarked structures; instead we seek to have the original fabric of the buildings remain in place, and the original appearance of the houses restored using the original materials. □

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Text: Andrew Berman  
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## Seeking Protection for Thirteen Incredible Survivors

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Lower East Side, in Hudson Square, and in the South, East, Central and West Village) and chronological diversity (ca. 1800 to 1832), and range from conspicuously grand to quite modest.

In the mid-1990's, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation began the process of documenting all of these incredible survivors, with an eye toward seeing them designated and preserved (this initial study was funded by Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts). The study was continued and its work greatly expanded by historian and former GVSHP staffer Susan DeVries. While the study resulted in a few of these structures being designated landmarks by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the bulk were never acted upon by the Commission.

Of the thirteen houses, four are near the World Trade Center site, and after having

survived the disaster of September 11th, face the threat of demolition due to redevelopment plans for Lower Manhattan. Others, such as three houses at 127-131 MacDougal Street (at West 3rd Street), remain vulnerable to institutional or private development due to their prime location near Washington Square Park, and their formation of a large potential development parcel.

State Senator Tom Duane, Assembly Member Deborah Glick, and Council Members Christine Quinn, Alan Gerson, and Margarita Lopez have all joined in asking that these houses be designated. If you would like to support designation of these thirteen wonderful federal survivors, please send a brief note to Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney, One Centre Street 9th floor, NY NY 10007, fax 212/669-7797, or [rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov), and send a copy to GVSHP. For more information, visit our website at [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org), or call our office. □

## Expanding GVSHP's Resource Library

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to GVSHP member Tom Meyer, who generously donated a large collection of books and a framed historic map of Greenwich Village to our library and archives, in memory of a past GVSHP president, Richard Barnett.

The collection will greatly supplement our existing library of books about the history and architecture of the Village and New York City. Open to all GVSHP members, researchers, and students, the library may

be visited by appointment.

The Society's library is often used for research on Greenwich Village and beyond, from the 19th century diaries of George Templeton Strong to the newest edition of the AIA Guide, from *The Gangs of New York* to Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*.

If you have books you would like to donate to the Society, please contact the office at 212-475-9585. We would be happy to speak with you about potential additions to our growing library. □



**GVSHHP**  
GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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