



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

South Village Phase I Landmarked!

*Historic Victory for 1/3 of neighborhood,
But Rest Remains in Limbo*

On June 22 the city voted to approve the first phase of GVSHP's proposed South Village Historic District, adding 12 blocks and 235 buildings to the existing Greenwich Village Historic District. **This is the largest expansion of landmark protections in Greenwich Village since 1969, and makes the Greenwich Village Historic District far and away the largest in New York City!**

This is a tremendous victory, and comes on the heels of many years of efforts by the Society and a broad coalition of residents, businesses, community leaders, preservationists, and elected officials. As a result of this long-overdue designation, streetscapes and buildings along Bleecker, Carmine, Jones, Cornelia, Morton, Downing, Bedford, Leroy, and West 4th Streets will be preserved, and the special immigrant history, cultural innovation, and modest but charming architecture of this section of the South Village has been recognized and honored by the City. This includes 233-237 Bleecker Street (at Carmine Street), a wooden

building believed to have inspired Edward Hopper's painting "Early Sunday Morning;" several former stables on Downing, Cornelia, and Jones Streets; Our Lady of Pompei Church on Carmine Street; dozens of early 19th century houses on Leroy, Bleecker, Carmine, and Bedford Streets; and literally scores of well-preserved tenements in every conceivable style and configuration.

As we celebrate this tremendous victory, however, we must also focus our attention on the remaining two-thirds of the South Village which we have also proposed for landmark designation, and which the city has neither taken action on nor given any commitment as to when it will. During the several years we

have been asking for landmark designation of the South Village, we have lost some of its most significant buildings without any action by the city, including the Provincetown Playhouse and Apartments, the Circle in the Square Theater, the Sullivan Street Playhouse, the Tunnel Garage, and the 1861 house at 178 Bleecker Street. We must push the city not only to move on these remaining blocks between 6th Avenue and LaGuardia Place/West Broadway, but we must insist they do so quickly before more of the neighborhood is lost.

That is why immediately following the landmarking vote, GVSHP wrote to the Landmarks Preservation Chair thanking him for the vote but urging that he move ahead with the remaining

two-thirds of the South Village as soon as possible. We also launched a letter-writing campaign to that effect, and held a public celebration and strategy meeting to rally the community for the remainder of this fight. Borough President Stringer, Congressman Nadler, State Senator Duane, Councilmember Chin, and Assemblymember Glick have also joined in this call for quick action on the remainder of the South Village.

For more information or to help, see gvshp.org/sv.



Bleecker Street between Jones Street and Seventh Avenue South (l.)—now landmarked



NYU Releases 20 Year Expansion Plan

University's Growth Rate Would Double, But Only If Given Public Approvals

NYU has released its 20 year expansion plan, called 'NYU 2031,' to overwhelmingly negative reviews in the affected neighborhoods of the Village, NoHo, and the East Village. Several hundred people have already turned out for public informational meetings about the plan, where opposition was virtually unanimous.

NYU's proposal would add 1.5 million square feet. of space to several blocks south and east of Washington Square Park, another 1.5 million square feet of space to unspecified locations throughout the Village, East Village, and NoHo, and 3 million square feet of space in satellite locations on Governor's Island, Downtown Brooklyn, and the East Side medical corridor. This would double NYU's rate of growth in our neighborhoods as compared to the last several decades. To give these numbers context, NYU's recently-constructed 26-story 'mega-dorm' on East 12th Street – the tallest building in the East Village – is just 175,000 sq. ft., thus making their proposed addition of 3 million square feet to our neighborhoods the equivalent of 17 more of these enormous structures.

The 1.5 million square feet NYU wishes to add to the blocks south and east of Washington Square would require many layers of public approvals, and thus their fate is still to be

determined. NYU is seeking to change the zoning for these nine blocks from residential to commercial, change the zoning to lift the current requirements for preserving open space, get the city to give them several pieces of public land on Bleecker, Mercer and West 3rd Streets and LaGuardia Place (some of which are currently occupied by public parks), and get the city to lift deed restrictions attached to formerly publicly-owned land which prohibit any new construction until 2021.

Votes by the Borough President, the City Council, the City Planning Commission, and Community Board #2 will determine whether or not NYU is allowed to move ahead with these plans, which include a 38-story hotel on Bleecker Street – the tallest building ever constructed in the Village – and several other massive structures in the surrounding blocks. The hotel plan must also overcome the high hurdle of approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, since it is within the I.M. Pei-designed Silver Towers complex, for which GVSHP secured landmark status in 2008.

GVSHP and other community groups met with NYU for four years under the auspices of Borough President Stringer to discuss formulation of their plan, culminating in the issuing of a set of recommendations this spring which, among other things, called upon the university to pursue satellite locations such as the Financial District for their massive new construction rather than further oversaturate our neighborhoods. At the same time, Financial District community leaders publicly called upon NYU to consider their neighborhood for their development plans, saying they would be welcome there. However, after the report was issued and community groups criticized NYU for ignoring its recommendations, the Borough President abruptly suspended the Task Force, over GVSHP's and other community groups' objections.

GVSHP and community groups will however continue to push for changes to the plan and rejection of zoning and landmarks approvals which would negatively impact our neighborhoods. See gvshp.org/nyu.



(l.) NYU is seeking to add 1.5 mil. sq. ft. of space to the within their 'core' area (inner line) and another 1.5 mil. sq. ft. within the broader 'neighborhood' (outer line). (r.) GVSHP Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman and community groups rally before NYU Open House on 20-year expansion plan (credit: Andrew Schwalm for WSVTA).

Spotlight On: The West Village

Westbeth: With a grant from the J.M. Kaplan Fund, over the past three years GVSHP compiled a complete history of the groundbreaking conversion of the old Bell Telephone Labs on the Greenwich Village waterfront into a first of its kind artists' housing complex known as Westbeth. This history, which included interviews with luminaries involved with the Westbeth conversion including Richard Meier and Merce Cunningham (available on our website at gvshp.org/wbinterviews),

became the basis for our successful nomination of the complex for the State and National Register of Historic Places in 2009. The listing not only recognizes Westbeth's unique significance in the history of artists' housing, but offers the possibility of grants and loans for restoration of the complex.



Westbeth, currently under consideration for landmark status (photo by Barry Munger).

The register listing also helped lead to a long-overdue hearing earlier this year on possible New York City landmark designation of Westbeth -- promised by the city to GVSHP and others in 2005, but never acted upon. Unlike State and National Register listing, which for the most part offers incentives for preservation, city landmark designation actually requires and regulates preservation of the structure. There was an outpouring of support for the proposed landmark designation, including from the residents and board of the complex. We hope to see a final vote soon. See gvshp.org/wb.

Far West Village Rezoning: Since early 2008, GVSHP and community groups have pressed for a change to an outdated 6-block 'C6-1' zoning district between Washington, Greenwich, West 10th and West 12th Streets in the Far West Village. The zoning grants bonuses for dorm and hotel construction, and allows too great a scale of development for the area. After more than a year of agitation, in 2009 first Community Board #2, then local elected officials, and finally the city agreed to support our requested rezoning.



C6-1' zone in the Far West Village, now being rezoned.

The roughly six month approval process for the rezoning began this June, after several delays. GVSHP is pushing the city to move as quickly as possible, as at least two developers may start projects under the old, less restrictive zoning, slipping in before the new provisions take effect. See gvshp.org/fwvz.

St. Vincent's Hospital: Earlier this year, in a stunning turn of events, St. Vincent's Hospital closed its doors for good, ending 170 years of service. While GVSHP's mission focuses us primarily on development and preservation issues, we are keenly aware of the importance of the health care services St. Vincent's has offered for generations. Many have asked how we got to this point, and where do we go from here?

There are no simple answers to these questions. But published reports and interviews with former St. Vincent's administrators seem to make clear that the St. Vincent's/Rudin plan for a massive and costly new hospital (which would have only in small part been paid for by a proposed condo-development real estate deal) was never truly financially viable, and would have only increased St. Vincent's crippling debt, which is what ultimately undermined the hospital.

While community leaders work on health care alternatives to replace St. Vincent's, GVSHP will continue to closely monitor and respond to plans for the site. The hardship ruling by the city to allow the demolition of the O'Toole Building cannot be used by anyone other than St. Vincent's, and thus is no longer valid. However, the landmarks approvals for demolition and new construction on the site of four hospital buildings east of 7th Avenue for new condos are generally considered transferable, and in theory could still be used. But the necessary zoning approvals for changing the site to residential use and for constructing the new buildings were never granted, thus making any development or change in use on the site currently impossible. Additionally, no movement is expected before St. Vincent's bankruptcy proceedings are completed. For more information and updates, see gvshp.org/stv.

Spotlight On: The East Village

3rd/4th Avenue Corridor

Rezoning: For the last several years, GVSHP has worked with neighbors, Councilmember Rosie Mendez, and Community Board 3 to change the zoning for the blocks bounded by 3rd and 4th Avenues, 9th and 13th Streets. The zoning has no height limits and offers large bonuses for hotel and dorm development, resulting in the construction of several enormous NYU dorms.



NYU's Alumni Hall Dorm on 3rd Avenue; under the new zoning, such buildings could no longer be built.

After initially refusing to consider such a rezoning, in 2009 the city relented, and agreed to a somewhat watered-down version of what we had been calling for. While not as restrictive as we would have liked, the proposed new rezoning would impose height limits for the first time, and eliminate the current incentive for dorm and hotel development. An agreement between Councilmember Mendez and City Planning also resulted in the inclusion of an incentive for creating and preserving affordable housing. The rezoning is now going through the public review and approval process, and should take effect by the end of this year. See gvshp.org/3&4.

Congregation Mezritch

Synagogue: GVSHP and the East Village Community Coalition (EVCC) have been fighting to preserve this temple at 415 E. 6th Street, the last operating 'tenement synagogue' in the East Village. In 2008 we were joined



Mezritch Synagogue (l.) and the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Vrgin Protection (r.); photos by Barry Munger.

by local Jewish groups and some congregants in protesting a plan to demolish the building to make way for a new condo, which would have included space for the congregation as well. The developer then dropped the plan, but the city has thus far not been willing to move ahead with our call to landmark the property in spite of its unique historic and architectural significance. However, as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure

its preservation, earlier this year GVSHP was able to get the building determined eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places, not only recognizing its importance but offering the possibility of grants and loans for its upkeep and restoration. See gvshp.org/mzr.

Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection

Synagogue: GVSHP and EVCC have also been fighting to ensure the preservation of this stately edifice erected in 1891 as the Olivet Memorial Church, which over the years



has served many of the East Village's immigrant communities, including Germans, Hungarians, and Italians. In 2008 we were alerted to a plan to erect an 8-story condo over the church, and immediately called upon the city to save the structure through landmark designation, providing considerable historic research about its architectural and social significance. A rezoning of the area which GVSHP helped fight for, combined with the economic downturn, helped sink the condo plan. Then early this year the city held a hearing on the proposed landmark designation, which Councilmember Mendez also supported. The city has not yet made a decision, but we are continuing to build support for designation. See gvshp.org/roc.

GVSHP is also in the final stages of a four-year **project to research and document the history of every building in the East Village.**

With an army of interns and volunteers, GVSHP has been scouring city records and other sources to establish the origins and evolution of all 2,500 buildings in this rich historic neighborhood. We've already uncovered some interesting surprises, including an unusually large number of early 19th century structures in a neighborhood not generally thought of as

developing until the latter half of the 19th century. This research has already proven invaluable in our efforts to preserve the East Village's Mezritch Synagogue and Russian Orthodox Cathedral (see above), and when completed will assist us in formulating comprehensive proposals for historic district and landmark designations throughout the East Village. This research is being funded in part by Preserve NY, a grant program of the Preservation League of NY and the NYS Council on the Arts. See gvshp.org/rs.

What's New at GVSHP.org

Landmarks Application Webpage: GVSHP has launched a first-of-its-kind webpage providing information about every single landmarks application requiring a public hearing in Greenwich Village, the East Village, NoHo, and the Meatpacking District. With this tool, you can find out about any proposal to alter, add to, or demolish an existing building which is landmarked or located within a designated historic district in these neighborhoods before any decisions are made about the application. The webpage provides images, descriptions, and historic information about the existing building and the proposed changes; lets you know where the application is in the public hearing and approval process; how you can contact the local community board (which will issue an advisory opinion on the proposal) and the Landmarks Preservation Commission (which will decide whether or not to approve the proposal) about the application before they make a decision; how to testify at these bodies' public hearings on the proposals; and what the ultimate outcome is for the application.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission holds public hearings and reviews such applications twice every month except August and December. Each hearing typically includes at least a half dozen applications for changes to landmarked properties in the Village, NoHo, East Village and Meatpacking District, which contain more landmarked structures than any other part of the city. These proposed changes – which can range from new signs on storefronts to replacing doors and windows on a house to rooftop additions to demolishing an existing structure and replacing it with a new one – can have a profound effect upon the character and fabric of our neighborhoods. GVSHP is proud to provide the only resource like this in New York City which allows you to

find out about each and every one of these proposals, weigh in on the public approval process, and find out the result. See gvshp.org/lpc.

Hopper and the Village: As part of our ongoing investigation into the history of buildings in our neighborhood, GVSHP has made some fascinating discoveries regarding sites noted artist and Village resident Edward Hopper painted over the years. Through painstaking research, we have been able to demonstrate how 233-237 Bleecker Street (at Carmine Street), recently landmarked as part of our South Village Historic District Phase I,



233-237 Bleecker Street, now landmarked, believed to be the inspiration for Edward Hopper's "Early Sunday Morning."

was likely the inspiration for Hopper's iconic painting "Early Sunday Morning." GVSHP's research also documented how the diner depicted in the noted painting "Nighthawks" could never have existed at the corner of Greenwich Avenue and 7th Avenue South, in spite of persistent rumors and unsubstantiated assertions to that effect, but might have existed at one of several other sites along Greenwich Avenue. See gvshp.org/hop.



GVSHP's Annual Awards filled the house at the landmarked Tishman Auditorium at The New School (photo by Bob Estremera).

Annual Village Awards and Meeting: This year is GVSHP's 30th anniversary and the 20th anniversary of our annual Village Awards, thus making our 2010 Annual Meeting held in June particularly special and eventful. This year we were joined by nearly five hundred friends and members at the landmarked Tishman Auditorium at The New School. Like every year, we gave awards to the people, businesses, and institutions which make the Village, East Village, and NoHo so special, and reviewed our work and accomplishments of the last year. However, this year, in addition to having a particularly notable roster of awardees, we also paid tribute to twenty years of past awardees, and reviewed the Society's growth and accomplishments over the last thirty years. To view pictures of the event, find out more about the awardees, or review the presentation of thirty years of GVSHP's accomplishments, see gvshp.org/annl.

Kid's Ed: The first of its kind in New York City, GVSHP's Children's Education program reaches 1,500 students a year throughout the five boroughs. To meet increasing demand, the program has expanded in recent years with new curricula and new materials. To find out more about the program and how you can enroll your class, go to gvshp.org/kids.

New School New Building

This spring, The New School unveiled designs for a significantly scaled-back and redesigned new building on 5th Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets. The original building plan was over 300 feet tall (making it the tallest in the Village), had no setbacks to preserve light and air, required special exemptions from zoning requirements, involved huge air rights transfers, and featured an all-glass façade and multi-colored projecting lights. GVSHp and many neighbors urged changes to all these aspects of the project. The design presented this spring was significantly reduced in size and height, maintained setbacks to preserve some light and air to surrounding buildings and streets, obeyed the existing zoning, dropped most of the air rights transfers, and eliminated the all-glass façade and projecting lights. Because the site is not within a landmarked area and no longer requires zoning exemptions, the project requires no further public reviews or approval to move ahead. Construction is expected to begin later this year. See gvshp.org/ns.

Sullivan Street Rezoning

GVSHp joined many neighbors and community groups in opposing a developer-requested rezoning of a portion of Sullivan Street between Spring and Broome Streets. While the requested change was minor, it could have had big implications. The developer sought to extend a 'commercial overlay' from Spring Street down this block, allowing certain kinds of commercial uses on the lower floors of buildings. But while many buildings on the block already had commercial uses on the lower floors through 'grandfathering' of pre-existing uses, changing the zoning would have allowed much larger

commercial spaces; potentially made it easier for developers to build larger buildings on these blocks; and possibly been used as a precedent for similar rezonings on the many other nearby

South Village streets with similar conditions. GVSHp felt strongly that the current balance of small-scale buildings and modestly-sized mom and pop shops on these side streets was too precious to risk. Early this year the proposed rezoning was withdrawn in the face of strong opposition. See gvshp.org/sul.

Fire Patrol #2, 84 West 3rd Street

GVSHp has long crusaded to preserve this 1906 Beaux Arts structure between Thompson and Sullivan Streets, especially since its owners, the Board of Fire Underwriters and Insurers, announced they were closing it and selling the building in 2006. GVSHp immediately requested the city consider landmark designation of the property, submitting documentation showing this 200 year old private institution (which is separate from and pre-dates the FDNY) had roots going back to Benjamin Franklin. While the city refused to act, earlier this year GVSHp was able to get the State to find the building eligible for the State and National Register of



Fire Patrol House #2, 84 W. 3rd Street, with detail.

Historic Places, which offers loans, grants, and tax breaks for the preservation and restoration of historic properties, but does not mandate preservation like city landmarking. Fortunately a new owner, who is renovating the property for residential use, promised to preserve and restore the building's façade and respect its remarkable history. See gvshp.org/fp.

Illegal Billboards

GVSHp continues to take aim at illegal billboards in our neighborhood. Earlier this year, the Society was successful in seeking the removal of two enormous and blatantly illegal billboards erected around the Equinox Gym building at Greenwich Avenue and West 12th Streets. In April, we helped get an illegal 3-story billboard which covered over a 10-year old community mural on Avenue A overlooking a school yard removed. And this summer GVSHp successfully pushed for removal of a 4-story illegal billboard on St. Mark's Place and 1st Avenue. For more information or to report an illegal billboard, see gvshp.org/blbd.

43 MacDougal Street Progress

This spring, years of pressure upon the city and a negligent owner finally resulted in some tangible progress on restoring this derelict, 1846 landmarked house at King Street. In 2009 GVSHp got city agencies to make some repairs to this property and to threaten legal action against the owner for allowing conditions to deteriorate so badly. Then a few months ago the owner finally began removing years worth of accumulated garbage from the building, and repaired and sealed its roof, which had been left open, allowing rain and snow to slowly destroy the interior. GVSHp continues to push for full restoration of the property. See gvshp.org/43.

in
brief

From the Director

As our 30th anniversary year, 2010 is a time of celebrations for GVSHP. In June we were joined by hundreds of our members and friends to salute the people, places, and institutions which make our neighborhood so special, and to mark thirty years of growth and accomplishments by the organization at our Annual Meeting and Village Awards. This fall we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary with a special fundraiser with Malcolm Gladwell, and with an artists' loft tour of Westbeth. Additionally, many of our supporters have generously been holding 'fundraisers' for the organization, introducing their friends and neighbors to GVSHP's critical preservation and education work (see 'Bulletin Board').



But the most important way we can mark this year's milestone is by continuing to fulfill our mission to educate about, document, and preserve the special architectural and cultural heritage of the Village, East Village, and NoHo. Fortunately we're already off to a strong start, with the long-overdue landmark designation of the first third of our proposed South Village Historic District, and rezonings moving ahead in the West and East Villages to preserve community character and prevent out-of-scale development. We are also expanding our children's education program, and making valuable new resources available to the public on-line, like new preservation pioneer oral histories, and our first-of-its-kind landmarks application webpage. And under GVSHP's leadership the debate around NYU's expansion in our neighborhood has changed completely, with an emphasis on ending oversaturation and finding alternative sites and satellite campuses – which is more important now than ever, as the university begins the process of seeking approval for a massive 20 year growth plan.

In this challenging economic climate, GVSHP must be smarter than ever about how to move forward with our agenda. As we celebrate, educate, and advocate, I hope you'll join us!

Acknowledgements

GVSHP gratefully acknowledges the following for grants supporting our work: The Kaplen Foundation; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

We wish to acknowledge the generous support of: State Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymember Deborah Glick through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer through the Department of Education; and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Councilmember Rosie Mendez through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

GVSHIP Bulletin Board

GVSHIP's fall benefit will feature Malcolm Gladwell on September 28. For more information, see www.gvshp.org/gladwell.

Save the Date! Join GVSHP for an artists' loft tour at Westbeth Center for the Arts, Sunday, November 14. Check gvshp.org/events for more details.

Host a 'fundraiser' for GVSHP! Invite friends and neighbors to a casual event in your home to hear from the Society about the work we do, and to answer questions and listen to concerns. See gvshp.org/fr or contact gvshp@gvshp.org.

Planned Giving: Make a Legacy Gift to GVSHP. By investing in GVSHP's future, you ensure that our education and preservation work will thrive for decades to come. Give through your will, a gift of stock, or retirement funds. We welcome the opportunity to work with you and your advisors to develop a Planned Gift best suited to your needs. Contact 212/475-9585 x39 or gvshp@gvshp.org.

Board of Trustees

President

Arbie Thalacker

Vice Presidents

Arthur Levin
Linda Yowell

Secretary/Treasurer

Katherine Schoonover

Mary Ann Arisman

John Bacon

Penelope Bateau

Kate Bostock Shefferman

Elizabeth Ely

Cassie Glover

Leslie Mason

Ruth McCoy

Florent Morellet

Vals Osborne

Andrew Paul

Cynthia Penney

Robert Rogers

Jonathan Russo

Judith Stonehill

Fred Wistow

F. Anthony Zunino, III

Staff

Executive Director

Andrew Berman

Senior Director of
Operations

Sheryl Woodruff

Director of
Preservation
and Research

Elizabeth Solomon

Director of
Administration
Drew Durniak

Program and
Administrative Associate

Corey Fabian
Borenstein

Support Preservation: Join GVSHP

Your support makes GVSHP a more effective preservation leader. Contribute \$500 or more, and receive an invitation to a special thank you event at a unique Village location.

Yes! I support the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and its preservation work.

- \$5,000 Founder
- \$2,500 Benefactor
- \$1,000 Patron
- \$500 Sponsor
- \$250 Sustainer
- \$100 Contributor
- \$75 Family/Dual
- \$50 Individual
- Other \$
- \$25 Gift Membership:
Special offer for members!
Please put recipient's name at right.
- I am already a member
and want to
contribute \$
- Please send information about
how I may include GVSHP in my will
or estate planning.

For credit cards go to: www.gvshp.org/membership

Name

Street

City State ZIP

Phone

Email

Member Name

(FOR GIFT MEMBERSHIPS ONLY.)

GVSHP is a 501(c)(3) non profit. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Return this form with your check to: Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003.

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003

(212) 475-9585

www.gvshp.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT NO. 3509