



# THE ANTHEMION

Fall 2002

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

## “After the Kimmel Center”: Tackling Zoning and Institutional Development

**C**onstruction of the Kimmel Center on Washington Square South was a particularly sad sight when it became clear that this huge new building, opposed by GVSHP and many in the community, would forever block the view south along Fifth Avenue through Washington Square Arch. The building, considered “as-of-right” under current law, provided a case study in how our zoning system often fails to protect our neighborhoods.

GVSHP chose not to take the situation lying down. In the spring, we held a forum and panel discussion bringing together preservationists, planners, government officials and community leaders -- and attended by nearly 200 people -- to shed light on the flaws in the current system, and try to identify possible solutions. Following the forum and a summer of  
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*Our ‘After the Kimmel Center’ panel included (l. to r.) Chris Collins, Deputy Director, City Council Land Use Division; Richard Barth, Manhattan Director, NYC Department of City Planning; Doris Diether, Community Board #2; Alex Herrera, NY Landmarks Conservancy; Frank E. Sanchis, Executive Director, Municipal Art Society; and Council Member Alan Gerson. The panel was moderated by GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman (r.).*

## Gansevoort Market Proposal Comes Down to the Wire

**O**ur Save Gansevoort Market effort started the year with a commitment by LPC Chair Sherida Pauslen to take action on our proposal for historic district designation by the latter half of 2002. As we go to press, the Commission has agreed to review our proposal, submitted in September, and we hope to have a hearing on the proposal calendared shortly thereafter. Support for our campaign has continued to grow over the past several months, with a strong endorsement coming recently from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and more than 5,000 postcards sent from individuals to the City in support of designation of the district. A 28-page self-guided Gansevoort Market Walking Tour booklet, promoting the area’s history and the need for its preservation, was distributed to preservationists, government officials, community

leaders, and supporters (to get a copy, call or e-mail us, or drop by our office).

This progress is critical because of the speed with which development projects are moving forward in the district. While the local community board was working with the city to turn the parking lot site at Hudson and 13th Streets into a staging area for water tunnel construction (thus reserving the possibility of the site’s eventual conversion to park use, and preventing development there in the near future), the owner has moved ahead with a plan to construct a 14-story, aluminum-clad hotel on the lot. We are working with our local elected officials and Community Board to see if the city acted appropriately in forging this site for the staging area, thus allowing the development. The proposed 400-foot tall luxury apartment tower at  
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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Drawing to a close on my first year as GVSHP’s Executive Director, it is a little hard to believe how much has happened since January 1, and how much still needs to be done.

We began the year with a promise from the Landmarks Preservation Commission to act upon our proposal for a Gansevoort Market Historic District by year’s end. As we have submitted our final research to the LPC, they are currently looking at our proposal and, we hope, will be calendaring it for a hearing soon thereafter. This summer, we secured a determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the Gansevoort Market area, the first new area of Greenwich Village to qualify in over a generation. And while this success bodes well for our efforts, these next few months will certainly be crucial in deciding whether or not New York City historic district designation is extended to this area, the first such extension in Greenwich Village since 1969. GVSHP also took a lead role in response to proposals by PATH and Cooper Union for projects which, we believe, would have significant impacts upon our neighborhood’s most precious resources. Even with some hopeful signs, however, the fate of both projects remains up in the air, and will undoubtedly require further attention and energy from the Society, in the fall and beyond. And while we were saddened to see the new Kimmel Center rising on Washington Square South, GVSHP will be working with community groups and elected officials in the coming months on improving conditions in Washington Square Park, and are presenting recommendations for zoning changes to prevent more Kimmel Centers from happening in the future.

GVSHP has been able to rise to meet these new challenges, and grown to address these new demands placed upon our community. This past spring our children’s education program had its highest enrollment ever, but fortunately GVSHP has been able to identify some new and very generous sources of support to meet the new demand. And while we must face critical issues threatening areas in the South and East Village, we are also working with new local groups to do so, building coalitions and tapping new sources for participation in our  
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# GVSHHP Weighs in on Preservation Legislation

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organization. And even as GVSHHP has taken on city, state, and national issues of importance to our local preservation efforts (see *Preservation Legislation* article), we have at the same time been building partnerships -- and support for our local efforts - with city, state and national organizations, many of whom have played a critical role in our Save Gansevoort Market efforts.

At the same time, GVSHHP must continue to provide excellent programming for our members, and all whom appreciate the Village and the cause of preservation. This spring, lectures and presentations by James Sanders and Susan Tunick, about the history of film and terra cotta in Greenwich Village (respectively), filled Jefferson Market library to capacity. I hope that this Fall's events around the Stonewall Riots, the Beat Poets, Walt Whitman, and other elements of Greenwich Village's literary and artistic heritage will similarly capture the public's imagination and honor the history which we hold so dear.

Just pondering this "To Do" list for the coming months is somewhat exhausting. At the same time, uncertainty about Mayor Bloomberg's plans for the Landmarks Preservation Commission leaves a question mark over many of our plans and expectations. However, extension of historic district protections to the Far West Village and other unprotected areas of the Village seems closer to our grasp than it ever has.

Regardless of these challenges, I find myself constantly re-energized by our organization's most precious resource - our members. With all that we have had to take on this past year, and all that I know we will in the coming months, I have been extremely heartened by the show of support, participation, and energy from our members. GVSHHP's members have been turning out in record numbers to our programs and our fundraisers, making calls and sending postcards in response to our "Preservation Alerts," and donating their skills, time, and resources to the organization and our efforts. If you are interested in volunteering or in getting more involved, or if there is a preservation issue you would like us to be aware of, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail us. GVSHHP members are our organization's eyes and ears, our muscle and heart. It is that support and participation which guides us in what we do, and which makes it possible for us to do it.

I look forward to that relationship -- and that commitment - continuing to grow in the coming year.



Andrew Berma

**G**VSHP took a lead role this spring and summer on several key legislative battles with far-reaching ramifications for preservation and land-marking efforts.

This year's City budget once again cut funding to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, which has already been slashed considerably since the early 1990's. While the LPC does much with little, their enforcement and research departments have shrunk considerably, and their survey department is now defunct. Without these resources, the LPC can neither implement enforcement measures nor pursue new designations with the speed and vigor one would ideally hope to see. Additionally, the city budget proposed imposing for the first time ever fees for property owners to receive permits for work from the LPC. This unfairly penalizes compliant historic property owners for obeying landmarks law, and will, we fear, only increase violations. The irony is that this measure has been proposed as a revenue generator for the City, while the additional bureaucracy, increased violations, and compromised integrity of historic districts will undoubtedly only end up costing the City much more than the fees bring in.

In response to a GVSHHP action alert, Society members flooded City Hall with letters and postcards opposed to these plans. GVSHHP testified before the City Council against the proposals, and at our request many of our local elected officials, including Assembly Member Deborah Glick and State Senator Tom Duane, lobbied the Mayor on these matters as well. While the City's looming budget deficit ultimately convinced the Council to approve the LPC budget cut, the cut

approved was, at least, one of the smallest for any city agency. Also, while the City remained committed to pursuing the fees for LPC permits, they have since held back from implementing the system pending a more thorough public review, promising to consider impacts upon compliance and small property owners before moving forward. This will allow GVSHHP and our members further opportunity to comment should any plan materialize, and we will keep you informed of any such developments.

GVSHHP also lobbied our State leaders in support of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Act, a bill which would have provided tax credits for qualified rehabilitation expenditures made with respect to historic homes. All of the Village's state legislators expressed support for the bill, which as we went to press had passed the Senate but not the Assembly. GVSHHP also joined the campaign in support of increased funding for the Federal Historic Preservation Fund, which supports programs at the state, federal, and local level in support of historic preservation efforts. Particularly critical is the funding for our State Historic Preservation Office, which is charged with identifying sites and areas for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places, and for monitoring and evaluating any proposed changes to these districts utilizing state or federal funds (the Greenwich Village and Stonewall districts are already listed on the Register, while the Gansevoort Market district has recently been deemed eligible for it; see *PATH* and *Gansevoort* articles). At press time the House had approved the funding increase measure, but the Senate had not.

## Spread the word about GVSHHP, and build support for our efforts.

If you are involved with any civic, community or social groups, and would like GVSHHP to come to speak to them about our work, please call or e-mail our office to arrange it. GVSHHP welcomes the opportunity to meet and work with interested organizations and individuals.

## Upcoming GVSHP Programs

Tuesday, September 24th, 7:00 p.m.

Book Reading with David Carter

*The Stonewall Riots*

Free to all. Reservations required. Call 212/475-9585.

The Gay Community Center, 208 West 13th Street.

Author David Carter will give the first public reading from *Stonewall*, his history of the Stonewall Riots, to be published next year by St. Martin's Press. The book is the result of ten years of research, during which Carter researched archives from San Francisco to Amsterdam, interviewed witnesses, and cross-checked era documents. A question and answer period will follow the book reading.

Saturday, October 5th, 1:00 p.m.

Walking Tour with Arthur Marks

*Walt Whitman's Greenwich Village*

\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members.

For reservations and meeting place, call 212/475-9585.

Walt Whitman, the great poet of 19th Century America, lived in Brooklyn during the first part of his life, but spent much time in Manhattan in the years before the Civil War. This tour follows the same path Whitman often took as he traversed the city. The tour will start at the site of Pfaff's Oyster House, once a literary haunt, and meander through Greenwich Village, one of the neighborhoods Whitman visited. Architectural historian and raconteur Arthur Marks leads this literary tour.

Thursday, October 24th, 7:00 p.m.

Book Reading and Slide Show with Judith Stonehill

*The Exhilarating Proximity of Artists, Writers, Bohemians, and Blithe Spirits in Greenwich Village*

Free to all. Reservations required. Call 212/475-9585.

The Pen and Brush Club, 16 East 10th Street.

Join Judith Stonehill, past president of GVSHP and author of the new book *Greenwich Village: A Guide to America's Legendary Left Bank*, as she reads selections from and expands on the stories in her book about the Village's extraordinary heritage of artists, writers, and rebels during the century between the 1850s and the 1950s. An accompanying slide show offers the chance to view rare photographs of Greenwich Village's creative past.

Saturday, October 26th, 1:00 p.m.

Walking tour with Lynn Funk

*Gansevoort Market: An Insider's Walking Tour*

Co-sponsored with the Museum of the City of New York.

For prices, reservations and meeting place, call 212/475-9585.

Architect Lynn Funk will lead this insider's tour of the Gansevoort Market Neighborhood highlighting the evolution of industry in Manhattan's West Village, from a busy port to a surface transportation hub. Some of the buildings highlighted in the tour are the 1903 Colliers Magazine printing plant, the antebellum Herring Safe & Lock Co., and the pier house where Titanic survivors came into port. Included in the tour will be several neighborhood art and craft studios.

Saturday, November 2nd, 1:00 p.m.

Walking Tour with Arthur Marks

*Lights, Camera, Greenwich Village*

\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members.

For reservations and meeting place, call 212/475-9585.

"You Ought to be in Pictures," and you will, on this tour of film sites in Greenwich Village. You'll learn why Manhattan is known as "Hollywood on the Hudson," and why so many movie notables have chosen to make so many movies in Greenwich Village. You'll see the sites of many cinematic scenes and learn how they were created. Join architectural historian and raconteur Arthur Marks for the sites, and the insights.

Saturday, November 16th, 1:00 p.m.

Walking Tour with David Carter and Bill Morgan

*The Beats on the Lower East Side*

\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members.

For reservations and meeting place, call 212/475-9585.

The Beats were an association of poets, novelists and musicians who, starting in the 1940's, sought a new way to see the world. Their quest for this new vision laid the groundwork for the cultural and artistic innovations of the 1960's. From early in their careers, the Beats lived and worked on the Lower East Side, and this tour will take you to the key locations associated with them. The tour will be led by two colleagues of Allen Ginsberg, Bill Morgan, Ginsberg's archivist and editor of *Deliberate Prose*, a collection of Ginsberg's essays, and David Carter, editor of *Spontaneous Mind*, Ginsberg's interviews.

For additional information on any of GVSHP's upcoming programs, please call 212/475-9585 or go to our website at [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org).

## PATH Battle Continues

This spring the Port Authority announced a plan to build new entrances/exits for its Christopher Street and 9th Street PATH stations. Unfortunately, the two new locations were slated for Christopher Street at Waverly Place and at Bedford Street, narrow side streets with fragile 19th century structures of tremendous historic significance. Additionally, the proposed locations are in the Greenwich Village and Stonewall Historic Districts, areas listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These locations are therefore entitled to a high degree of protection and a full review of the impact on their historic integrity of any project using State or Federal funds.

GVSHP immediately questioned the appropriateness of the plan, and, along with a coalition of neighborhood groups, brought these historic and preservation concerns to every level of government, from the Mayor and Governor to the federal agencies partly funding the project. The objections clearly had an impact, as work has been halted on the project and the application for federal funding of the program is in limbo after federal agencies expressed strong concerns about the appropriateness of the project and its impact. With this crippling (if not decisive) blow, the Port Authority has announced that they are looking at "alter-



GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman addresses the large crowd braving the elements at a protest against the PATH plan. The protest was organized by Congressmember Nadler, State Senator Duane, Assembly Member Glick (r.), and City Council Member Quinn (l).

natives" to the announced plans and "going back to the beginning point" to review their original proposal.

GVSHP sits on a task force charged with reviewing any new plans put forth by the Port Authority. We will push to ensure that no plan goes forward without first addressing concerns about impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, and will be vigilant to help ensure that any future work done in association with the project does not damage existing buildings.

## South and East Village: Unprotected, but Worthy

Left out when Greenwich Village was designated an historic district in 1969 was the South Village and most of the East Village. These areas, generally south of West 4th Street between Seventh Avenue South and LaGuardia Place, and east of Third Avenue (respectively), contain some of the Village's and New York's finest and oldest federal and early 19th century rowhouses, and a stunning array of 19th and early 20th century tenements. Long overlooked by historians and architectural preservationists, these tenements tell a fascinating story of immigrant life and struggle and the evolution of working class housing, as well as often including carefully wrought, intricate architectural detail. These areas are also rich in more recent cultural history, serving as the center of New York's folk revival of the 50's and 60's, as well other

artistic and literary movements which grew out of the beatnik and hippie movements.

Both areas also face threats to their preservation. Institutional development along Washington Square South, Astor Place and Third Avenue, as well as an increasing amount of private development, threatens to eat away at these neighborhoods' character and integrity. Additionally, insensitive renovations can unnecessarily eliminate irreplaceable ornament and detailing. Without historic district protections, architectural details and whole buildings which make an important contribution to area's historic fabric can be lost, while what replaces them may bear little relationship to their surroundings.

The Society has made it a priority to protect these important areas. Working

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## GRANTS PROVIDE CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR SOCIETY PROGRAMS

GVSHP received crucial commitments of support this year to continue and expand our preservation programs. Included in the city's 2003 Budget, passed in June, was a \$10,000 grant for GVSHP secured by Council Member Christine Quinn, and a \$2,500 grant secured by Council Member Alan Gerson. New York State's 2003 budget, passed in May, included a \$3,000 grant for GVSHP secured by State Senator Martin Connor, and a \$2,500 grant secured by State Senator Tom Duane. We are incredibly grateful to each of them, not only for their funding support, but for the support they provide for our work throughout the year. Noted designer Marc Jacobs made GVSHP the beneficiary of a \$5000 grant earlier this year which will substantially aid our outreach and advocacy efforts. The New York State Council on the Arts and the Kaplen Foundation each made substantial grants to our Save Gansevoort Market Project, allowing it to vigorously carry on its advocacy efforts throughout the coming year.

Additionally, the Manhattan delegation of the City Council secured a \$5,000 grant, and the T.G. White Fund, administered by NYU, dispensed a \$1,500 grant, for our Children's Education program. This funding is especially critical now, as our Children's Education program had its most popular semester ever, with over 500 students participating in the program. As we continue to try to provide more children and adults with education and programming opportunities dealing with history and historic preservation, and as the advocacy and preservation needs in our neighborhoods continue to grow, this support is critical to ensuring that GVSHP can fulfill its mission of promoting neighborhood preservation and protecting the special architectural and cultural heritage of the Village.

## HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE -- VOLUNTEER FOR GVSHP

GVSHHP depends upon dedicated volunteers to help make the work we do possible. If you are interested in volunteering your time, for anything from research to a few hours of envelope stuffing, please call 212-475-9585. We promise to make good use of your time.

Thank You!

## SAVE GANSEVOORT MARKET POSTCARDS

Please be sure to send in your postcards to Mayor Bloomberg and the Landmarks Preservation Commission in support of designating the Gansevoort Market Historic District. If you don't have one or would like more (for yourself, or to distribute to friends and neighbors), please call or e-mail us.

### \* GOOD NEWS! \*

As we go to press, we have been informed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission that the application to demolish the one-story building at 20 Greenwich Avenue and replace it with an inappropriately scaled six-story building has been withdrawn. The project, which faced enormous opposition, would have loomed over the Jefferson Market Garden and the neighboring three-story houses of West 10th Street and Patchin Place. A happy outcome, showing the voice of preservation can be heard!

## Gansevoort Market Proposal Comes Down to the Wire

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848 Washington Street (at 13th Street) is scheduled for a new hearing before the City in October. These and other additions, alterations, and development projects proposed and ongoing in Gansevoort speak to the urgent need to put historic district designations in place, so that any future changes in the neighborhood are compatible with the existing built environment.

In another critical development, in July the Gansevoort Market district was, at our request, deemed eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places. The determination of eligibility cited Gansevoort's historic and architectural significance, bolstering our case for district designation with the city. The finding of eligibility also now mandates a review process for any projects using State or Federal money in the district to ensure that they do not have a negative impact upon the historic character of the area. It is also the critical next step toward securing a listing for the district on the National Register, which provides tax breaks and other incentives to commercial property owners to maintain the historic character of their buildings. We are proud to report that this is also *the first new area of Greenwich Village to be determined eligible for listing on the National Register in over a generation.*

Our Save Gansevoort Market project spent much of the spring and summer gathering research and documentation about the district's unique history as a cen-



*Our Save Gansevoort Market Task Force kicked off our campaign calling for immediate designation of the Gansevoort Market district at Bastille Day in the Meat Market in July. SGM Executive Committee Member Lynne Funk (center) was joined by dozens of GVSHP members and SGM supporters, including State Senator Tom Duane, to distribute literature and postcards to the receptive crowd gathered for the day's festivities.*

ter of industry and transportation, which will be presented to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office to further our case for designation. Additionally, the Task Force has been in conversation with the Department of City Planning and the Department of Business Services about preserving the unique mix of uses and businesses in the district. It is our hope to preserve not just the shells of Gansevoort's buildings, but its character and feeling, and we hope to work with these other agencies to help maintain the balance of industry and commerce, work and play which currently characterizes the neighborhood.

## South and East Village Unprotected, but Worthy

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with local community groups such as the South Village Landmarking Alliance and the Coalition to Save the East Village, with citywide preservation organizations such as the Historic Districts Council and the Landmarks Conservancy, and with participation from institutions such as NYU, GVSHP has spent much of the summer gathering data and documentation about undesignated areas of these two neighborhoods.

Extending protections to the South and East Village will be critical not only to their future, but to the future of preservation in New York City as well. In the first generation of the preservation movement, areas such as these were often overlooked; working-class structures without pretense or many amenities were, in spite of their

architectural value and historic importance, usually not included in historic districts, and efforts to preserve them were often discouraged. But these structures and areas have proven remarkably resilient, and a vital part of our heritage and history. It is therefore critical that this important slice of our city's landscape be preserved.

With the assistance of several students and interns, we have been conducting site surveys of many of these blocks, cataloguing historic resources and evaluating the condition of buildings, with an eye toward recommending worthy buildings and areas for landmark designation. GVSHP programming over the coming year will also seek to highlight the value, history, and architecture of these areas.

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*The GVSHP office can be reached at  
212-475-9585 or at [gvshp@gvshp.org](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org)*

Editor: Judith Stonehill

Contributors: Andrew Berman  
and Heather Skilton

Layout: Susan De Vries

## "After the Kimmel:" Zoning and Institutional Development

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research and data collection, GVSHP has formulated an 8-point plan for reform of the zoning system to better protect our neighborhoods and their most precious resources from inappropriate development. We have identified critical flaws in the current system - including overly generous bonuses for "community facilities," lack of required master planning for large institutions, a lack of controls on development around parks, and a lack of appropriate zoning around landmark districts - and recommended solutions. This plan appeared in a report we published this fall, which will form a cornerstone of our advocacy agenda in the coming year. GVSHP is sharing our findings with other community and preservation organizations, and our community boards, elected officials, and City leaders responsible for our zoning code. We will strongly advocate for reform which incorporates the ideas we will be presenting, in the hope of improving the regulation of the built environment in our neighborhoods.

Many of these issues came to the fore again this summer in the East Village when GVSHP weighed in on the proposed Cooper Union large scale development

plan. The plan included a very large upzoning in the area, including a zoning change that would create development potential above the landmark Cooper Union Foundation building. GVSHP advocated for retention of the existing scale of the neighborhood and preserving the roadbed of historic Stuyvesant Street, which is currently all but forgotten under the plaza of Cooper Union's Engineering Building on Astor Place. A large turnout from GVSHP, its members, and many other concerned individuals at the City Planning Commission hearing made a strong impression upon Commissioners. After much debate, however, the Commission narrowly approved the plan, but reduced the size of the project. It now goes to the City Council for approval.

GVSHHP also agreed to participate and assist in an effort by Community Board #3 to consider re-zoning the area from 2nd to 4th Avenues in the East Village, with an eye toward reinforcing the existing residential character of the neighborhood. We hope to work with the Community Board to ensure that the current built environment is respected and protected.

Keep in touch with GVSHP,  
and up to date on preservation issues, via the web!:

E-mail us at [gvshp@gvshp.org](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org), and visit our website at [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org).  
Our website is updated regularly to let you know the latest with GVSHP's  
advocacy and programming efforts, and how you can be a part of them.

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# GVSHHP

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
232 East 11th Street New York, NY 10003  
212 475-9585