



# THE ANTHEMION

Spring 2003

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

## Gansevoort Market Historic District Finally Gets its Day!

**O**n March 18, after a heated two and a half year effort by GVSHP's Save Gansevoort Market project, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on our Gansevoort Market historic district! Over 100 people, including building owners, businesses, elected officials, preservationists, community leaders, and scores of residents came to show support for the proposed designation. We are told it was one of the largest turnouts ever in support of a proposed historic district. If enacted, the Gansevoort Market historic district would be the first (though hopefully not the last) expansion of historic district protections in Greenwich Village since 1969!

The proposed district was not voted on by the Commission at this hearing (districts are rarely voted on at a first hearing), so we will be lobbying the Commission to vote as soon as possible. If approved, the



Seven to Save announcement (front, l. to r.: Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman, Save Gansevoort Market Co-Chair Florent Morellet, Preservation League of NY State President Scott Heyl)

district must then be approved by the City Planning Commission and the City Council. In anticipation of this, we have already met with the City Planning Commission Chair, and, with the support and assistance of City Council Member

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## Advancing an Agenda To Stop Institutional Overdevelopment

**C**hanging the way the City regulates "community facilities" - allowing hospitals and universities to build substantially larger than any other buildings around them, for instance - has long been on GVSHP's agenda. Catalyzed by the debacle of the NYU Kimmel Center

on Washington Square South, however, GVSHP has generated a plan calling for specific changes to the zoning code to end this abuse, helped form a citywide coalition to advocate for reform of the city's community facility regulations, and has begun lobbying and meeting with the citywide officials who will ultimately determine if these outdated regulations stay or go.

Following the September publication of our "After the Kimmel Center" report on zoning reform and neighborhood preservation (view it on our website at <http://www.preserve.org/gvshp/kimmel1.htm> or call the GVSHP office for a copy), in October GVSHP co-organized and hosted the first meeting of the Citywide Coalition for Community Facility Reform, consisting of over 50 groups from across

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Council Member Christine Quinn addressing forum about proposed GVSHP community facility reforms.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

2003 is shaping up to be a year of incredible challenges, and some substantial victories, for GVSHP and our preservation efforts. We are tantalizingly close to achieving historic district designation for Gansevoort Market, but the very real danger of grossly inappropriate development looms closer than ever. Our membership numbers have increased substantially in the last year, as has participation in our lobbying campaigns and our programs, but increasingly tough economic times mean some members may find it harder to provide GVSHP with the membership support the organization needs to keep its advocacy efforts moving forward. Similarly, new foundation and government funding sources have been tapped, but those sources may quickly run dry due to shrinking budgets. As always, though, an incredibly dedicated pool of members, business supporters, trustees, and volunteers allows the Society to accomplish much of what we need to, and to find new resources and support to tap into for our efforts.

The immediate future holds some exciting prospects, however, and some very important new developments. Following our most successful Benefit/House Tour ever last year, the Society has put together what promises to be a stunning tour this year titled "The Way We Live Now," featuring unique historic homes which celebrate preservation, re-use, and design innovation (see inside article). We have an interesting and thought-provoking array of programs planned for the spring, following programs such as our very well-attended lecture on the Native American origins of Cooper Square this past March. Through compiling a substantial amount of research and documentation, we are also moving forward on proposing and advancing individual landmark and historic district nominations in the South and East Village. And as a new NYU President has stressed improving preservation and community relations efforts by the University, we have responded by being active and vocal participants in his new "town hall" meetings to ensure these issues are heard, (and have encouraged our members to do the same). We have also made our strong concerns known about a proposed new Cooper

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Union development on the Astor Place parking lot, and about even the possibility of any NYU development that could endanger the MacDougal Street federal rowhouses and Provincetown Playhouse just north of 3rd Street. We maintain a watchful eye on all of these.

Undoubtedly, there will be no shortage of further challenges throughout this year. However, I am confident that the Society, and its members, will continue to rise to the occasion. But for now, we should celebrate our very considerable successes, and plan for the future.

As always, if you would like to help the Society or get more involved, there are many ways to do so. Volunteer at the office. Hold a fundraising event. Invite a Society representative to come speak to your block, building, or civic association. Make a donation of books, equipment, or services to the Society, or connect us to someone who would like to. As doing a lot with a little is our credo here at GVSHP, we try to make the best use of every generous offer of assistance we receive.

*Andrew Berma*



## Meat Market Hi-Rise Stopped (For Now)

After a pitched battle lasting almost 2 years, in March the plan for a 32-story, 450 foot tall luxury residential hi-rise in the Meatpacking district, at 848 Washington Street, was defeated. This grossly inappropriate tower would have not only destroyed the scale and feel of our proposed historic district, but inevitably resulted in the meat and other long-standing businesses being forced out of the neighborhood, due to the inherent conflicts which would result between residential uses and these loud (and in many cases odorous) businesses being located right next door to one another.

At the final hearing before the Board of Standards and Appeals on the variance request for this residential tower (zoning prohibits residential uses in the Gansevoort Meat Market), over 100 people, many of them GVSHP and Save Gansevoort Market members and supporters, turned out to express ardent opposition to the plan. We were also joined by State Senator Tom Duane, City Council Member Christine Quinn, and representatives of the Borough President, Congress Member Nadler, Assembly Member Glick, the Historic Districts Council, and many other neighborhood, preservation, merchant and business groups. Hundreds of letters were also sent to the BSA by our members, and at our request, groups as far-ranging as the Flower Market Association and Heritage of Pride lobbied against the plan. M1-5, an association of neighborhood residents and businesses opposing the plan, and Save Gansevoort



*Save Gansevoort Market Co-Chair Jo Hamilton testifies at variance hearing for high rise.*

Market Co-Chairs Florent Morellet and Jo Hamilton, deserve special credit for their critical role organizing and maintaining the sustained, successful campaign.

Due to the overwhelming opposition, just a few days before the scheduled March 25 decision date, the applicant withdrew his variance request, apparently expecting defeat. The developer has since stated that if he cannot develop a residential building, he will pursue an "as-of-right" hotel development. GVSHP/SGM has lobbied the City to change the zoning of the area to exclude hotel development, and, unfortunately, the site was one of several west of Washington Street proposed for inclusion in the historic district by GVSHP/SGM but which was left out by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. We will continue to closely monitor this and any other sites in the area for inappropriate development plans.

## GVSHP Launches "Preservation Watch" Program

Did you know that cuts to City agencies like the Landmarks Preservation Commission mean that there are so few inspectors that they can only examine critical work if they receive complaints suggesting improper work may be taking place? GVSHP members and neighborhood residents have always played a critical role in GVSHP's preservation work, but some recent events have proved just how critical our members'

eyes and ears can be, especially in circumstances like these.

In January, the GVSHP office was informed by a vigilant neighbor that Con Ed was doing work on Gansevoort Street resulting in the destruction of dozens of historic Belgian block paving stones ("cobblestones"). GVSHP immediately demanded Con Ed halt the work and repair the damage, and called upon the

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**GVSHP Launches Preservation Watch Program**

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City, which issued the permit allowing the work, to step in to address the problem. Both Con Ed and the City admitted the work had been done improperly, and had repairs made to the remaining stones. Prompted by this, GVSHP proposed a change in the City's regulations governing how repairs on streets with historic paving stones are done, which has since been supported by many of our local elected officials, with legislation to address this problem being proposed at the City Council.

Last fall, a GVSHP member brought to our attention work at 305 West 11th Street, which resulted in this building and neighboring 311 West 11th Street having to be evacuated, with prominent cracks forming in the facades of the buildings. GVSHP called on the owner to make necessary structural repairs as soon as possible, and pushed the City to demand action be taken when weeks had gone by and inclement weather meant that a lack of structural shoring up of the buildings gave rise to fears of further damage or collapse. Though the situation is far from over, some long-delayed shoring up and repairs have begun, and GVSHP will continue to closely monitor the situation.

Without the vigilance of neighbors and concerned residents, GVSHP might not have been brought into these situations, and proper repairs and responses might never happen. That is why we are launching our "Preservation Watch" program. Landmarks violations which go unreported and are not repaired can cause permanent damage to the integrity of a historic structure. Now, with a few simple clicks of your mouse, you can go to our website, at [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org), and by clicking on "Reporting Landmarks Violations," you



*Gansevoort Street cobblestones before inappropriate work (l.), and after (r.)*

can get the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the violations officer at the Landmarks Preservation Commission for reporting possible violations, or connect directly to the LPC Complaint form which can be sent directly to LPC. Additionally, we have also now posted directly on our website maps of all current and pending historic districts in Greenwich Village, the East Village, and Noho, with street addresses, so you can tell if a building is located within a historic district and therefore regulated by LPC.

If you cannot access our website, you can also always report any possible violations to our office at 212/475-9585 x38 (and in fact, we encourage you to forward any complaints to LPC to our office as well so we can follow up and help ensure they are addressed). If you think work may be in violation of landmarks law, look to see if there is a permit posted from the Landmarks Preservation Commission for the work being done (it should be right next to the Buildings Department permit). You can also call the GVSHP office or the LPC to ask if work you are seeing may be in violation, although it can only be determined for sure once an LPC inspector has visited.

Announcements of this new program have gone to all GVSHP members, local block associations and community boards, elected officials, and local papers. Please help spread the word, to support this effort to preserve the special historic character of our neighborhoods.

**SPECIAL THANK YOU TO FUNDERS AND DONORS**

In these very difficult economic times, the extreme magnanimity of generous individuals, foundations, grantors, and government officials have made a tremendous difference in allowing the Society to continue its advocacy, education, and programming work.

Among government officials, we would like to thank **City Council Member Christine Quinn, Council Member Margarita Lopez, the Manhattan Delegation of the City Council, State Senator Martin Connor, Council Member Alan Gerson, and State Senator Tom Duane** for their invaluable assistance in securing and providing grants.

We would also like to thank the **New York Community Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the T.G. White Fund and NYU** for their generous grant support, and **Oppenheimer Capital and Allianz PCS** for their donations of office equipment.

Lastly, but certainly not least, we would like to thank our GVSHP patrons, **Alexander Kaplen, Margaret Kaplen, and the Kaplen Foundation; Andrew Paul; James Wilentz and Robin Maxwell; Fred Wistow and the Oppenheimer Funds Legacy Program; Sarah O'Neil and Barry Munger and the Kite Key Foundation; Elizabeth Gilmore; Jonathan Russo and Deborah Grayson; F. Anthony Zunino and Sally Auer; Frank and Mary Ann Arisman; Arbie Thalacker and Deborah Garrett; Penelope Bareau; David Burger; Jonathan Greenburg and Elizabeth Ely; William and Jo Hamilton; Arthur Levin; Ruth and Kevin McCoy; Mark Nelkin and the Vanguard Charitable Endowment; James Stewart Polshek and Polshek Partnership; Elinor Ratner; Alan G. Straus and Katherine Schoonover; Kenneth and Katherine Snelson and the Jewish Communal Fund; Judith and John Jay Stonehill; Henry Van Ameringen and the Van Ameringen Foundation; and Jean Claude van Itallie and the van Itallie Foundation.**

**NEW LANDMARKS CHAIR ROBERT TIERNEY**

GVSHP was delighted that among his first acts on the Landmarks Preservation Commission, newly appointed Chair Robert Tierney attended the LPC's community meeting regarding the proposed Gansevoort historic district in December, and met with GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman, GVSHP Board President F. Anthony Zunino, and Save Gansevoort Market Co-Chair Jo Hamilton in January. The new Chair is a long-time Village resident with a clear love of Greenwich Village, and has certainly made himself open and available to GVSHP and our issues. We look forward to a productive and hopefully close working relationship with the new Chair, who certainly made a very good impression by making the calendaring of hearings on the proposed Gansevoort Market historic district, as well as the Noho East Historic district, among his first official acts (gratitude must also go out to outgoing LPC Chair Sherida Paulsen, who worked very hard on these two proposals as well).

When we met with the new Chair in January, we raised several issues that we wished him to consider. They included:

- ◆ Designation of the proposed Gansevoort Market historic district as soon as possible
- ◆ Expanding historic district protections in the Far West Village and along the Greenwich Village waterfront
- ◆ Working with GVSHP and local advocates as we develop a proposal and provide documentation for a South Village historic district, and ensuring that no historic buildings, including federal rowhouses at 125-131 MacDougal Street and the neighboring Provincetown Playhouse, are lost while the proposal is being developed
- ◆ Working with GVSHP and local advocates to expand protections for the myriad historic resources in the East Village
- ◆ Re-establishing, as quickly as possible, the task force consisting of the LPC Chair and staff and advocates from Community Board #2 (Greenwich Village, Soho, Noho) to advance landmarking proposals
- ◆ Working with GVSHP to help change Department of Transportation regulations which inhibit the restoration of historic stoops removed as a result of street widenings, and to improve regulations which too frequently allow the destruction of historic cobblestones

GVSHP will continue to pursue all of these issues throughout the year.

**Join the Society/Order GVSHP Gifts**

New membership benefits include a 28 page self-guided walking tour booklet of Gansevoort Market; invitations to attend our many lectures, symposia, discussion series and walking tours; 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 to protect the Village by making 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.

**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  
 **\$25 Gift Membership - Special Offer for Current Members to give!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**I am a member and would like to give a gift membership to my friend (name above):**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I am already a member, but would like to make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (please give name above).

**Order GVSHP Gifts**

- I would like to order a copy of *Discovering Greenwich Village* (12 page activity book for children ages 7-12) \$3.00 plus \$0.60 shipping
- I would like to order a copy of *The Greenwich Village Waterfront, An Historic Study* (46 page booklet with an overview of Greenwich Village waterfront history) \$5.00 plus \$0.60 shipping
- I would like to order a 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
- I would like to order a Save Gansevoort Market T-shirt (white t-shirt with red Save Gansevoort Market logo on front) \$15.00 plus \$2.50 shipping
- I would like to order a set of Greenwich Village notecards (eight cards and envelopes featuring images from GVSHP's photograph archive) \$8.00 plus \$1.00 shipping
- I would like to order a Greenwich Village Waterfront Poster (a full color 16x24" poster featuring photographs of architectural details from waterfront buildings) \$5.00 plus \$2.00 shipping
- I would like to order a copy of the Save Gansevoort Market self-guided walking tour (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](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org)



# GVSHP Programs

For all programs, please RSVP to [lfitzpatrick@gvshp.org](mailto:lfitzpatrick@gvshp.org), or call 212-475-9585 x39

## April 19th, 1:00 PM, Walking Tour with Arthur Marks

*Astor Place: 17th Century Country to 21st Century City*

**\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members. Reservations required.**

**For meeting place, please call 212-475-9585 x39**

Starting at St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, the oldest church site in New York City, the tour will explore the Renwick Triangle, James Fennimore Cooper's home, and St. Mark's Place. We will view Cooper Square, the Joseph Papp Public Theater, La Grange Terrace, the Old Merchant's House, Grace Church, and the sites of the Yiddish Theater.

## May 4th, 2:00 PM

*Fifth Annual Benefit and Tour of Village Homes*

Tickets start at \$75

**For information, please call 212-475-9585 x39**

Each year, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation offers a rare opportunity to view noteworthy homes in the Village. This year's tour, entitled *The Way We Live Now*, covers an area extending from University Place and 11th Street to West 13th Street near the Gansevoort Market. If you would like to receive an invitation to the tour, please call 212-475-9585 x39, or email [lfitzpatrick@gvshp.org](mailto:lfitzpatrick@gvshp.org), or go to [www.preserve.org/gvshp/tour.htm](http://www.preserve.org/gvshp/tour.htm), for a printable version of the invitation.

## May 17th, 1:00 PM,

**Walking Tour with David Carter and Bill Morgan**

*The Beats on the Lower East Side*

**\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members. Reservations required.**

**For meeting place, please call 212-475-9585 x39**

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 Ginsberg's essays, and David Carter, editor of *Spontaneous Mind*, Ginsberg's interviews.

## May 28th, 6:30 PM, Lecture with John Kriskiewicz

*Modernism in Greenwich Village*

**Free to All. Reservations required.**

**Jefferson Market Library, 425 6th Avenue**

John Kriskiewicz of the Modern Architecture Working Group will take us through the unique contributions Greenwich Village made to the modern movement in architecture. While renowned throughout the world for its carefully preserved 19th and early 20th century architecture, Greenwich Village was (and is) home to several modern masterpieces, and more than a few notable practitioners of the modern movement, wielding influence far beyond the neighborhood's borders. See how urban renewal, institutional development, and apartment house design transformed the Village, and how the Village in turn transformed the world.

## BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR

On Sunday, May 4th, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation will hold its Annual Benefit and Spring House Tour. This year's tour, entitled *The Way We Live Now*, focuses on historic homes that have been thoughtfully adapted for the 21st century. The sites chosen this year all feature a contemporary re-evaluation, and, in many cases, a thorough redesign, of traditional Village living spaces. Included on the tour is an 1830s Greek revival row house that, while carefully preserving its classic proportions and architectural details, now serves as a gallery for Buddhist and Hindu iconographic painting and sculpture. Also included on the tour is a former commercial building on the edge of the Meatpacking district that has been dramatically converted for residential use, a restored double-width townhouse never before opened to the public, and a 19th century townhouse on Bedford Street with a guest house in the shell of a tiny former gas station. Although original architectural elements remain in almost all of the homes, each owner has taken a unique approach to the structure's renovation.

The house tour not only provides an opportunity to get a rare glimpse at some of the Village's most distinctive homes and celebrate the Village's special architectural and cultural legacy; as our major annual fundraiser, the house tour also provides a means to support the Society's efforts, and introduce new friends to the Society's work. See program listings for contact and pricing information.



One of several impressive homes on the Society's 5th Annual Spring House Tour.

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**GVSHP**  
GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

232 East 11th Street New York, NY 10003  
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## Gansevoort Market Historic District Finally Gets its Day!

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Christine Quinn, met and toured the area with the chairs of the relevant City Council committees which will vote on the plan. We will notify our members about the next stage of this effort, and how you can help.

This long-awaited hearing came with no time to spare. While the proposed district leaves out the westernmost blocks of the neighborhood (which GVSHP urged be included, but which the City took out of our proposed district pending a final resolution on the future use of the High Line, which runs through those blocks), the district the LPC has agreed to hear covers all or part of 13 blocks extending from the east side of Hudson Street to the west side of Washington Street, from Horatio Street to 15th Street. Designation will protect this

area from inappropriate development and demolitions, and ensure that future changes are compatible with the special history, scale, and character of this area.

Getting to this point was a Herculean effort, with much assistance along the way. In November our cause was certainly bolstered when the Preservation League of NY State named Gansevoort Market to their annual "Seven to Save" list, the seven most important endangered historic sites in New York State. Additionally, a steady flow of letters, postcards and e-mails from our members in support of designation, and big turnouts at key hearings and events, have helped make this a effort a success. We can all take great pride in what we have achieved so far, and what we hope will soon be accomplished.

## Advancing an Agenda To Stop Institutional Overdevelopment

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the five boroughs who have come together to achieve reform of the city's community facility regulations. In January, GVSHP was joined by Community Boards 2 & 3 in holding a community forum, attended by over 100 people, on the need for reform of community facility regulations. All three City Council Members from the Village and East Village participated, as did Assembly Member Deborah Glick, and representatives of several other elected officials attended as well.

GVSHP's call for reform of these regulations has gained the support of Community Boards 2 & 3, most of the elected officials in attendance at the forum pledged their support for some or all of our proposed changes to the zoning code, and our proposal is being heard by the Manhattan Borough Board, a body consisting of all of

Manhattan's Community Boards and Council Members, and the Borough President. Additionally, under GVSHP's coordination, the Citywide Coalition for Community Facility Reform has developed a general call for reform which is being circulated to community boards and organizations throughout the city, and the Coalition has met with high-ranking city officials to lobby for the implementation of reforms and will continue to meet with and lobby city officials.

Working towards long-range reform of this and other outdated zoning regulations that allow the destruction of the character of our neighborhoods will continue to be a priority for GVSHP in the coming year. If you would like to be more involved in this effort, please contact us at [gvshp@gvshp.org](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org) or at 212/475-9585 x38.

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