



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

South Village Landmark Victory!

*Phase II of GVSHP's Proposed District
Protects Hundreds of Buildings,
Layers of History*

On December 17th, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated Phase II of GVSHP's proposed South Village Historic District. This new landmark district covers nearly two-hundred fifty buildings on thirteen vulnerable blocks south of Washington Square which GVSHP fought years to protect, and is the largest single expansion of landmark protections in Greenwich Village since 1969.

The new landmark district includes some remarkable 19th and early 20th century architecture, from rowhouses to tenements, reform housing to beautiful civic and institutional buildings, as well as a treasure trove of sites connected to immigrant and counter-cultural history.

In 2010, the City designated Phase I of GVSHP's proposed South Village Historic District. When the City first proposed their version of Phase II of our district in the Spring of 2013, it initially excluded key sites including two low-rise NYU buildings on Washington Square South, one of which, Vanderbilt Hall, could have been replaced by a 300 ft. tall dorm. After a campaign waged by GVSHP, these buildings were added

to the district, and are now landmarked. Unfortunately, the City ultimately refused to include a row of houses on Houston Street between MacDougal and Sullivan Streets, but did landmark more than 85% of what we proposed.

The battle to protect the South Village is far from over, however. The City has still not

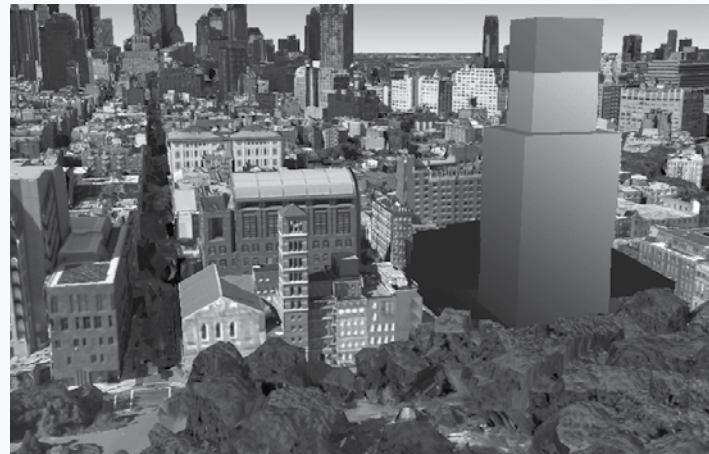


Former Mill's House No. 1 at 160 Bleeker Street in the new South Village Historic District (l.); image of what NYU could have built on Vanderbilt Hall site if not for landmark designation (r.).

taken action on Phase III of our proposed district, the area south of Houston Street, and we will aggressively push for protections for this area. We also intend to pursue a zoning change for the entire South Village, which would limit the allowable height of new development, encourage the preservation of existing buildings, and eliminate the current

bonus granted for dorm and university development in the neighborhood. Such a rezoning would help protect non-landmarked areas and strengthen protections for landmarked ones.

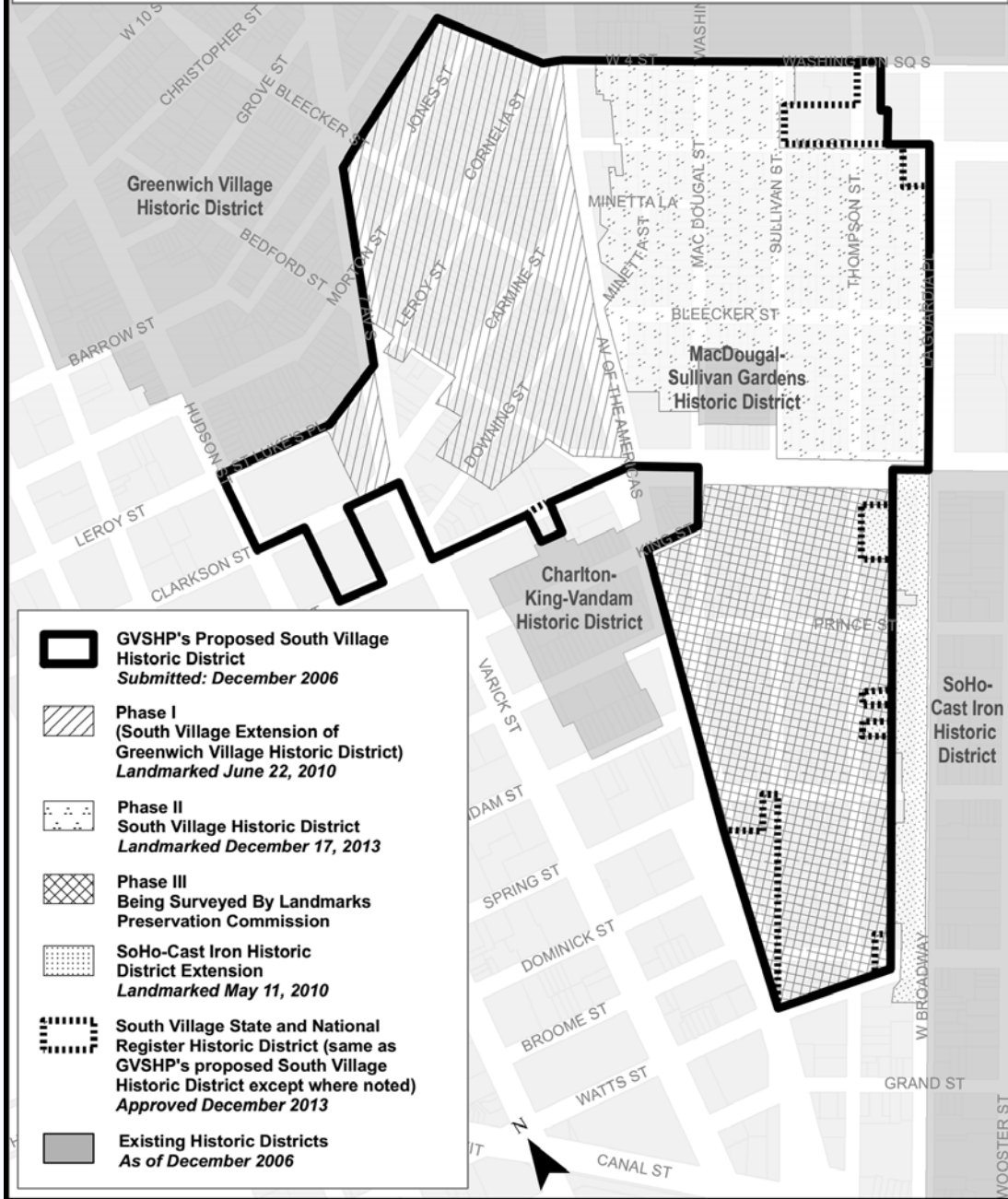
In December, New York State approved GVSHP's nomination of the entire South Village for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This provides tax breaks and



other financial assistance for preservation and restoration of historic properties, and protects against State or Federal actions or use of state or federal funds in ways that could be harmful to the historic character of the area.

[South Village Map continued next page ▶](#)

Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation Progress on Proposed South Village Historic District





Pier 40's hundreds of thousands of square feet of air rights is a likely target for transfer, and the 3-block long St. John's Building behind it has been discussed as a potential receiving site.

State OK's Hudson River Park Air Rights Sales

Legislation Could Allow Much Larger Development Near Waterfront

Last summer, with little notice or public discussion, the State passed legislation sponsored by Assemblymembers Deborah Glick and Dick Gottfried, and approved by Village State Senators Hoylman and Squadron, for the first time allowing "air rights" from the Hudson River Park to be sold for use and development one block inland from the park, with money from the sale going to the park.

The new provision has the potential to unleash literally millions of square feet of additional development upon the far West Side, from Chambers Street to 59th Street. Proponents of the legislation say it will require a public review and approval process before the air rights can be transferred and

used; however, this is the same process which brought us the NYU Expansion Plan, the Chelsea Market upzoning, and the St. Vincent's/Rudin condo development.

There are still many unanswered questions about the legislation, including exactly where the air rights can be used and how many air rights the park has. But there is one thing all sides agree upon—the legislation makes this new source of funding for the park dependent upon changing the zoning in our neighborhood to increase the size of allowable development.

For this reason, GVSHP raised strong concerns about the air rights provision from the beginning, and has worked hard to seek answers to unanswered questions and to educate the public about this plan and the potential dangers it presents. In November, we organized a Town Hall on the issue along with about twenty other West Side groups, which was attended by over 250 people.

GVSHP has also been putting forward alternatives to upzoning our neighborhood to allow bigger development as the sole means for generating revenue for the park. For example, GVSHP has raised the possibility of air rights sales being coupled with downzonings, so that the transfer of air rights would not increase the allowable size of development in our neighborhood (in other words, the allowable size of development on sites are reduced, and the only way to get back up to the previously allowable size of development is to purchase air rights).

We have also urged that a mechanism be explored whereby the park could receive revenue from all new development in areas adjacent to the park—different from the air rights transfer, which only generates revenue from increasing the allowable size of development. This would provide a larger base of potential revenue for the park while at the same time eliminating the need for increasing the size of development to generate revenue for the park.

The State legislation was approved with little consultation with the public and seemingly little true understanding of its potential implications or impact. As the long process now moves ahead for crafting mechanisms for using and limiting air rights, GVSHP is committed to ensuring that the public is educated about the process and intimately involved in shaping the outcome. We also intend to work hard to ensure that our neighborhood is protected from the vast potential for overdevelopment which this air rights provision creates.

See gvshp.org/airrights for more information.

GVSHP Investigation Exposes City's Trump SoHo Deception

Officials Repeatedly Ignored Rules Designed to Prevent Illegal Uses

From the first announcement of building plans in 2006, GVSHP contended that the Trump SoHo 'Condo-Hotel' violated local zoning restrictions, and therefore should not have been allowed to be built by the City. Strict rules where the Trump SoHo is located prohibited residential or residential hotel construction, which this oversized development clearly was.

However, the City and several of our elected officials, including then-City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and then-Borough President Scott Stringer, insisted that the Trump SoHo was allowable under the zoning, and the City could not block its construction.

Their argument was that even though this new 'condo-hotel' hybrid presented ample opportunity for violating zoning restrictions, special safeguards would be put in place to ensure that any rules-breaking would be caught. An elaborate system of electronic monitoring was supposed to be set up to track all occupants to ensure no one used the units for an illegal "residential" purpose by staying in them longer than the legally-allowable time. The development was then supposed to submit annual audits from an outside, independent firm showing that luxurious suites which individuals purchased and owned were not being used as residences. Both Quinn and Stringer participated in drafting these rules.

However, after the Trump SoHo was built in 2010 (over our and many other's objections, and despite a lawsuit which

the City fought in court), GVSHP discovered that various city records had begun to categorize the Trump SoHo as a "residence," in blatant violation of what the City promised and what the law allowed. We therefore reached out to the City, Speaker Quinn, and Borough President Stringer about the status of these audits which were supposed to catch and prevent any illegal residential uses at the Trump SoHo. We repeatedly received no response.

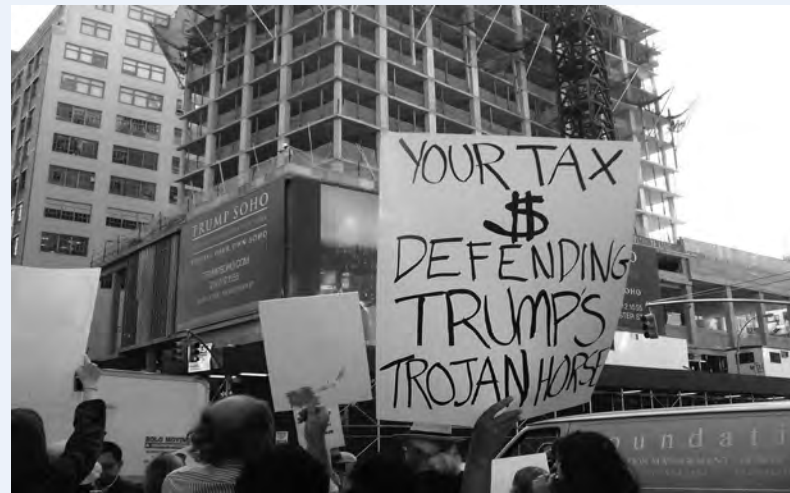
So we then filed a Freedom of Information request, which government officials are required by law to respond to. Only through this did we then discover that in its years of operation, the Trump SoHo had never submitted a single audit to the City regarding the occupancy of its units, as required under the agreement which allowed it to be built. Perhaps even more shockingly, neither the City nor any of the elected officials involved in drafting the agreement had ever asked Trump SoHo to submit a single audit, and no violations had ever been issued for the failure to submit the audits, as provided under the terms of the agreement.

GVSHP went public with the information,

exposing the hypocrisy and the failure to enforce the agreement and the law which City officials claimed was the basis upon which they allowed this horribly inappropriate development to proceed. In response the City claimed it would now ask the Trump SoHo to submit the required audits—albeit several years after the fact!

Under prior officials it was virtually impossible to get an answer about the Trump SoHo without filing a Freedom of Information request, so it is unclear if any enforcement action has yet been taken. We are hopeful that under the new administration and new elected officials, we will be able to get answers regarding this development's compliance with the law, and appropriate enforcement action as needed will be taken. Perhaps more importantly, we are committed to using the Trump SoHo's example to fight against further future inappropriate developments, and proof that vague promises to enforce the law after the fact are not sufficient reason to allow projects such as these to move ahead.

See gvshp.org/trump.



From the beginning, GVSHP contended that the Trump SoHo (l.) would violate zoning restrictions. (r.) A demonstration organized by GVSHP while the Trump SoHo was under construction; our concerns turned out to be well-founded.

Combatting Real Estate Board's Attacks on Landmarking

GVSHP Rebuts Industry's Misinformation Campaign

For much of the past year, the leadership of the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) has been waging an attack on landmarking in New York City. Through well-funded P.R. campaigns and lobbying efforts, they have tried to paint landmarking in New York as a “broken” and out-of-control process which does little more than freeze in place vacant lots and gas stations.

At the same time, REBNY has been pushing hard for legislative changes that would significantly hamstring the Landmarks Preservation Commission and advocates, making landmark designations rarer, harder to achieve, and slower to be approved. They have also issued a series of spurious reports, claiming that landmarking stifles economic development while making neighborhoods less diverse and unaffordable to all but the wealthy.

GVSHP has been pushing back against these attacks on a variety of fronts.

In October, GVSHP organized affordable housing advocates from across the city as well as landmarks advocates from neighborhoods including Harlem and Bedford Stuyvesant for a press conference in front of REBNY's Midtown headquarters. Participants refuted the claims of REBNY's reports purporting

that landmarking made New York City neighborhoods unaffordable and less diverse, pointing out that landmarking can help to preserve and protect affordable housing and help long-standing neighborhood residents and small businesses stay in their homes. Advocates also pointed out REBNY's hypocrisy, given that they historically promoted policies which lead to the elimination of thousands of units of affordable housing throughout New York.



Leading Affordable Housing Advocates and GVSHP demonstrate in front of REBNY headquarters (l.); GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman speaks to REBNY members (r.)



GVSHP also published a series of op-eds in local and citywide publications refuting REBNY's claims regarding affordability, and talking about how landmarking can be a helpful component of an overall strategy to preserve the scale, architectural character, and socioeconomic diversity of our neighborhoods.

We also reached out directly to REBNY members, many of whom do not necessarily agree with the anti-landmarks stance of the organization's leadership, and are in many cases strong supporters of GVSHP

and preservation efforts generally. GVSHP did this through our continuing education program, which offers classes required for real estate professionals to maintain their accreditation. Through the program, we reached scores of real estate professionals (and REBNY members) who do business in our neighborhood, making sure they were armed with accurate information about the value and benefits of historic preservation.

And GVSHP took the argument directly to REBNY in November when GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman spoke to REBNY members at a panel discussion at their headquarters about the value of historic preservation and landmark designation in promoting economic development and stabilizing neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods across the city, from the South Bronx to Staten Island, Crown Heights to Jackson Heights, have sought and secured landmark designation to help

maintain the neighborhood character they hold dear. And one need look no further than landmarked neighborhoods such as SoHo, the Meatpacking District, the Flatiron District, or many others to see that landmark designation has a far from stifling effect upon economic development.

GVSHP will continue to highlight the truths about historic preservation as we continue to push back against efforts to undermine landmarking.

See gvshp.org/rebny for more information.

East Village Preservation Roundup

*Focus on: Small Businesses, Landmarks,
and Contextual Development*

While GVSHP has been able to help expand historic district protections in the East Village tenfold in recent years with the new East Village and East 10th Street Historic Districts, there's no shortage of additional work to do in the neighborhood:



Town and Village Synagogue

Town and Village Synagogue, 334

East 14th Street When this 150 year old synagogue was put on the market in late 2013, GVSHP immediately swung into action to try to help ensure this historic structure was not lost. A former German Baptist and then Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, this East Village survivor was first “calendared” for landmark designation nearly fifty years ago, in 1966—one of the first structures to be considered for landmark designation after passage of New York’s landmarks law in 1965. For reasons no one seems to recall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) never voted on landmarking the building, and it has sat in “landmarks limbo” ever since.

Because the building remains “calendared” for consideration for landmark designation decades later, no demolition or alteration permits can be granted without the LPC being notified and given forty days to act on landmark designation. GVSHP immediately brought the possible sale of the building to the LPC’s attention, which then quickly scheduled the synagogue for a new hearing on landmark designation as we requested.

Following negotiations between the LPC and the synagogue, the hearing will now take place sometime in early 2014. The Commission’s swift action shows they are serious and willing to take steps to ensure the synagogue is not lost without consideration of its landmark potential. GVSHP has also reached out to the synagogue’s leadership, who were very receptive to a conversation about how we might assist them with efforts to preserve the building, and how their space needs could be compatible with landmark designation.

GVSHP will stay in closely in touch with both the LPC and the synagogue to help ensure that the proposed landmark designation gets its day in court, and the building’s rich history is recognized.

Old P.S. 64, 605 E. 9th Street GVSHP and a coalition of neighborhood groups and

elected officials met with the President of Cooper Union to express our extreme concern about the school’s plan to lease space in a giant dorm proposed for this landmarked structure. We believe that the building should be returned to a true community use, which it served for nearly a century, and that the plan violates restrictions on dorm uses which we and many others fought hard to secure. The plan is currently in a holding pattern, but we are working closely with our allies in the community to carefully monitor the situation, and challenge any plan which moves ahead that we believe violates the law.

Protecting Small Businesses GVSHP is working to hold the line on chain stores in the East Village—seeking to support homegrown culture, design and commerce, while limiting homogenizing influences, in order to retain the neighborhood’s authentic character. Along with our friends at the East Village Community Coalition, we have formed a Retail Diversity Working Group to explore ways to strengthen local businesses and discourage the spread of national chain stores. “Formula retail zoning” is a key tool that has been successfully adopted in other cities which we believe could work in New York, limiting the number and size of chain stores in certain locations.

See gvshp.org/ev for more information.



Due to the 2008 and 2010 contextual rezonings in the East Village which GVSHP fought hard to secure, new development in the neighborhood is required to match the size and scale of the surrounding neighborhood. This new development on 2nd Avenue between 9th and 10th Streets matches the heights of surrounding buildings, whereas development which pre-dated the rezonings frequently shattered the scale of the surrounding buildings and neighborhood context.

NYU Lawsuit Update

GVSHP, NYU Faculty, and dozens of community groups filed a lawsuit to overturn the City and State's approvals of NYU's massive twenty-year expansion plan.

Hundreds showed up at our court hearings to support our suit, former City Commissioners filed affidavits in support, and celebrities such as Matthew Broderick and Padma Lakshmi appeared in the courtroom to back our cause.

The case is now under consideration by the judge with

UPDATE: CLICK HERE FOR INFO

See gvshp.org/nyu for more information and updates.

San Remo Café Historic Plaque

This June GVSHP and the Two Boots Foundation placed an historic marker at 93 MacDougal Street near Bleecker, the site of the San Remo Café. In its post-war heyday, the San Remo was a meeting place for an unparalleled array of figures from the Beat movement, the New York School of poets and painters, and The Living Theater. Regulars included Allen Ginsberg, Dylan Thomas, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Miles Davis, Frank O'Hara, Judith Malina, Jackson Pollock, James Baldwin, and Gore Vidal, several of whom first met here. Many immortalized the San Remo in their writings.

in
brief

More than seventy-five former patrons of the San Remo, including musician David Amram, members of the family that owned the San Remo, and neighborhood residents gathered for the unveiling and celebration.

See gvshp.org/plaque.

Progress at 43 MacDougal Street

GVSHP and neighbors have been pressuring the City and the owner of this landmarked 1846 house for nearly a decade to restore the decaying and dangerously deteriorating building. After years of fits and starts, in recent weeks there has finally been some tangible progress. A new owner has stabilized the building and removed massive amounts of debris from the interior. The structure has been shored and some exterior repair work has begun.

There's still a long way to go before this neighborhood eyesore and safety hazard is fully restored. GVSHP will continue to press the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the new owner until this historic building



A crowd gathered for the unveiling of the plaque at the site of the former San Remo Café at 93 MacDougal Street; former patron and renowned musician David Amram speaks.



Some repair work has finally begun on the abused and neglected landmarked house at 43 MacDougal Street.

is restored to an appropriate condition.

See gvshp.org/43macd.

Outreach to the New Mayor

Immediately upon his election, GVSHP wrote to Mayor-elect de Blasio about some longstanding concerns regarding the Landmarks Preservation Commission. We urged him to appoint a chair of the Commission who is a trained historic preservationist, which has not been the case for some time, and we urged him to appoint a structural engineer to the Commission

to deal with the increasingly common proposals for excavation work that has the potential to threaten or undermine neighboring historic properties. We also plan to forward the Mayor and new LPC Chief a study we conducted showing the impact of delays in the landmarking process over the last twelve years, and recommending changes to better protect historic buildings.

See gvshp.org/deblasio.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT GVSHP

KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST FROM THE SOCIETY

BOOK IT!



This April, GVSHP, in collaboration with Rizzoli International Publications, will publish **GREENWICH VILLAGE STORIES** -- a collection of personal reminiscences about the Village and East Village by more than sixty great artists, musicians, writers, directors, designers, restaurateurs, and other neighborhood habitués. Contributors include Lou Reed, Malcolm Gladwell, Hettie Jones, Simon Doonan, and Karen Finley, among many others. Each generously contributed their time and talent to this wonderful project, proceeds from which will support GVSHP's education and advocacy work. **GREENWICH VILLAGE STORIES** will be for sale this spring, and GVSHP will be presenting programming around the book with some of its many brilliant authors. Go to gvshp.org/gvstories for updates and information.

TOUR TIME



GVSHP will present its **Benefit House Tour and Reception on Sunday, May 4th**. This annual fundraiser presents a wonderful opportunity to see some of the most surprising and spectacular interiors in our neighborhood, and this year will focus on the South and West Village. The tour is always followed by a delightful reception at an exclusive space. Go to gvshp.org/benefit for more information or to purchase tickets when available.

STICK TO THE PROGRAM



Each year, GVSHP presents approximately fifty **lectures, walking tours, book talks, panel discussions, film screenings, and other programs** about the magnificent architectural and cultural heritage of our neighborhoods. In 2014, programming will focus on food markets and greenmarkets, the ethnic history of our neighborhoods, cafés of the Beat era, historic houses of worship, and past and present preservation campaigns, among many other topics. Most of our programs are free and open to the public, while a few exclusive events and insiders' tours are reserved for GVSHP members. See gvshp.org/events for the latest program schedule.

Photo: GVSHP members were treated to an exclusive preview showing of the Coen Bros. film "Inside Llewyn Davis," with a talk and Q&A with the location director.

KIDDING AROUND



Spring is when our **Children's Education Program** kicks into high gear, teaching over a thousand students from schools throughout New York City. This first-of-its-kind program teaches elementary and middle school students how history can be found—and preserved—in the cityscapes and built environment around them, using the Village as an example. The three-session program starts in the classroom, then brings children to the Village for a field trip, and concludes with an in-classroom craft project reinforcing what they have seen and learned. Children are taught about immigration history, how evolving technology shaped buildings and people's lives, and how our city transformed from farmland to dense urban environment. See gvshp.org/kidsed for more information.

From the Director

At the end of the Bloomberg Administration, GVSHP released a report entitled *Ten Years, A Thousand Buildings Landmarked, One Hundred Blocks Rezoned*, illustrating a decade of our preservation progress in the Village, East Village, and NoHo (see it at gvshp.org/10). In spite of an incredibly challenging climate for preservation, it's wonderful to see just how much of our neighborhood we have been able to protect over the last ten years. And of course the designation of the South Village Historic District has added hundreds of buildings, over a dozen blocks, and many incredibly rich layers of history to the "saved" column.



But we still have a lot of work to do. Large swaths of the South and East Village, Greenwich Village waterfront, and even most of the University Place, Broadway, and 14th Street corridors still lack landmark protections. Bad zoning still encourages inappropriate development in much of our neighborhood, and the new Hudson River Park air rights provision creates major new potential obstacles to protecting our waterfront from oversized development.

But GVSHP pushes ahead, and makes progress, every day. To keep ahead of the curve, we monitor construction and demolition permit applications for all six thousand buildings in our neighborhood on a daily basis, as well as all applications for changes to our more than three thousand landmarked properties. Each year we hold more than fifty programs to share and celebrate the special history of our neighborhood with the public, teach more than a thousand children about history and the built environment through our children's education program, and educate scores of real estate professionals about the value of historic preservation with our continuing education classes.

A new administration and new players at City Hall will create some exciting new opportunities for further preservation progress, as well as some new challenges. I look forward to working together to realize the possibilities that lie ahead—I hope you do too!

Acknowledgements

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We also wish to acknowledge the support of City Council Members Rosie Mendez and Margaret Chin, and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

GVSHP Bulletin Board

Join our e-mail list for alerts and updates on important preservation and development issues—e-mail gvshp@gvshp.org.

Help the cause by volunteering. Assist us at events, programs, or in the office; or lend us your special skill or home for an event. Go to gvshp.org/volunteer to sign up or to find out more.

Want to know about landmarks applications in your neighborhood? Visit our landmarks applications webpage, the only one of its kind in the city. You can view any application in the Village, East Village, Meatpacking District or NoHo for any proposed change to a landmarked building that requires a public hearing. You can find out when the hearings and votes will take place, how you can weigh in and affect the outcome, and sign up for alerts about the status of the application—see gvshp.org/lpc.

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

Planned Giving—make a legacy gift to GVSHP. Call **212/475-9585 x39**.

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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.

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