



the ANTHEMION, *newsletter of the*

Winter 2012

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Fighting NYU's Massive Expansion Proposal

Plan Begins Public Review and Approval Process

In January GVSHP and more than 50 community groups from the Village, East Village, SoHo, NoHo, and Chelsea joined together to stage a Town Hall meeting on NYU's massive 20 year Village expansion plan and how to fight it. An overflow crowd of nearly 500 heard about the public review process for a scheme which, if approved, would add nearly 2.5 mil. sq. ft. of space—the equivalent of the Empire State Building—to the blocks south of Washington Square, by gutting long-standing neighborhood zoning protections, open space preservation requirements, and urban renewal deed restrictions, and turning over public green space to the university. Many NYU faculty, students, and alumni were among those voicing opposition to the plan.

NYU's plan would have a devastating impact on the immediate area, shoehorning massive buildings into what is now open space, eliminating parks, playgrounds, and dog runs, and vastly increasing shadows, crowds and traffic. But NYU's plan would also dramatically tip the balance of neighborhood character, transforming a diverse community of varying peoples, businesses, and institutions, into one increasingly dominated by a single entity—the

equivalent of a company town. But NYU's ever-growing presence would also continue to transform areas many blocks away from their facilities as well, as attendees at the Town Hall recounted how increasing number of students have shifted the rental market, nightlife scene, and small business environment in the East Village, Lower East Side, SoHo, and the West Village. Perhaps most disturbingly, the changes NYU is seeking would set precedents that undo the foundation of zoning and land use rules that protect neighborhoods throughout the city from overdevelopment.

In a best case scenario, NYU's plan is also only a 20-year stop-gap measure, meant to satisfy the university's projected needs through 2031. Even if NYU stuck to its growth projections—a dubious prospect, given the university's record—they would be back in 20 years calling for additional construction and zoning changes to accommodate their needs.

That is why GVSHP has been urging NYU and the city to consider the Financial District as an alternative for the university's growth. A neighborhood with practically limitless growth potential and a mere 5 minute train ride and walking distance from Washington



GVSHP Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman explaining NYU's massive building proposal at standing-room only Town Hall

Square, there such development would be contextual and welcomed by neighborhood leaders, some of whom came to our Town Hall to show support. If NYU can build campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, surely they can locate some facilities two subway stops away.

Whether or not NYU's plan moves ahead will be decided by this summer. GVSHP is calling on the Community Board, the Borough President, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council—especially key players Councilmember Margaret Chin, who represents the area, and Speaker Christine Quinn, whose district is adjacent—to vote against the plan in its entirety. See gvshp.org/nyu.

Rudin St. Vincent's Condo Plan Undergoes Public Review

City Council Approvals Still Needed for Proposal

Rudin Management is seeking public zoning approvals for a plan to develop the St. Vincent's East Campus—eight buildings east of 7th Avenue, between 11th and 12th Streets—into an enormous market rate condo development. Four of the older hospital buildings would be re-used and converted, while the other four would be demolished and replaced with new construction—an enormous new building on 7th Avenue taller than the existing Coleman Building, mid-rise buildings (about 11 stories) on 11th and 12th Streets, and a row of new townhouses on 11th Street. In a separate but related action, the former O'Toole Building on 7th Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets would be converted into an emergency care center by North Shore/LIJ.

Though the plan received the necessary approvals from the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the City Planning Commission, it cannot move ahead unless it also receives approval from the City Council. That is because the site was rezoned in 1979 specifically to allow development of new hospital buildings on the site at a much larger scale than would normally be allowed. Rudin is asking that almost all of the bulk given specifically to the hospital now be given over to them to allow the conversion of the hospital buildings to condos, and to add these new, large-scale structures (Rudin originally asked that all the hospital bulk be given to them, but after the Landmarks Preservation Commission required modest reductions in the size of the buildings, they had to scale back the request; GVSHP had called for even greater reductions).

GVSHP has a fundamental problem with this proposition. We found the proposed Rudin condo buildings too large and objected to the demolition of the historic Reiss Pavilion on 12th Street. But we also found the notion of giving a private, for-profit development essentially the same special privileges and considerations given to a hospital to allow it to provide a needed public service deeply troubling. This would not only be wrong for the St. Vincent's site; it would set a dangerous precedent which would have enormous consequences for our neighborhoods, and others throughout the city.

The Village, East Village, and NoHo are literally chock full of schools, medical facilities, colleges, and museums which are given such special zoning considerations by the City to build larger than normally allowable because of the community benefit they provide. If developers are allowed to reap the benefit of these special considerations for use for their own private, for-profit developments, it would open a Pandora's box that would dramatically transform our neighborhoods. It would provide a financial incentive for these institutions to "cash out" on their properties, and afford private, for-profit developers an avenue for building larger than normally allowable and to access privileges and special considerations which are supposed to be reserved for facilities which serve the community.

Borough President Scott Stringer voted in favor of the Rudin plan, with some minor suggested modifications. The City Planning Commission also voted to approve the plan, with very minor modifications. Now the plan goes to the City Council, where its fate will be decided, as City Council approval is needed for the required zoning changes. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, who represents the area, will be the key player in deciding how and if the Rudin plan is allowed to proceed.

To find out more about the plan's details, status, or how to weigh in on it, see gvshp.org/stv.



Rudin is seeking zoning changes to allow current St. Vincent's Hospital buildings to be replaced with large new condo towers.

Chelsea Market: UPDATE

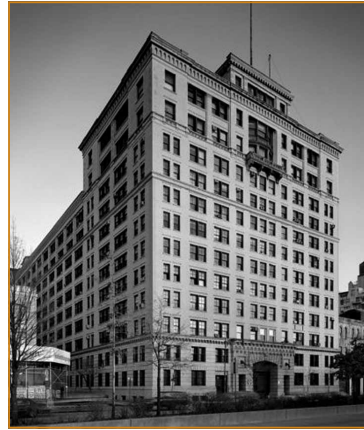
GVSHP is working with a coalition of community groups to oppose a plan by the new owners of Chelsea Market, Jamestown Properties, to upzone the complex by 50% to allow the addition of a huge commercial office block atop the 10th Avenue end of the complex, and a hotel at the 9th Avenue end.

GVSHP has long been an advocate for preserving Chelsea Market, an iconic, historic complex built in stages by the Nabisco Company in the early 20th century. We included it in our proposed Gansevoort Market Historic District in 2001 (which the City, inexplicably, excluded from the district they designated in 2003, after initially encouraging us to include it in our proposal), and made it a key piece of our proposed State and National Register of Historic Places Gansevoort Market District, which was approved in 2007 (the state and federal designations provide financial and tax incentives for preserving Chelsea Market, but only the city designation could have outright prohibited the proposed additions).

The current zoning does not allow any additions to the already very large complex, and any changes must be approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council. After releasing initial designs for the additions which looked like a spaceship landed atop the complex, Jamestown unveiled new designs with different materials and a lower overall height. But this merely redistributed the same amount of bulk slightly differently over the site, and the proposed additions were still highly visible over the complex, from the High Line, and to the south in the Meatpacking District. They would

also generate a good deal of traffic and further commercialize a largely residential area.

The formal rezoning application is slated to be filed in late February, beginning a year long public review and approval process. The final say will likely fall to the City Council and Speaker Christine Quinn, in whose district it lies. See gvshp.org/chmkt.



l., rendering of original Chelsea Market addition design; r., Westbeth (Barry Munger)

Far West Village: UPDATE

In October, the City finally landmarked the entire Westbeth complex, something GVSHP had been fighting for since 2003 and which the City first promised in 2005. Landmark designation not only honors the complex's history as the Bell Telephone Labs (where the vacuum tube and transatlantic telephone were invented and parts of the first "talkie" produced), but as a pioneering example of adaptive re-use and subsidized artists housing, designed by young and then-unknown architect Richard Meier.

With JM Kaplan Fund support, GVSHP conducted and published oral histories with

key players involved in the founding of Westbeth, including Richard Meier, and commissioned a report documenting the history and significance of the complex which became the basis for our successful 2009 nomination of Westbeth to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Both helped lead to the City finally considering the complex for landmark designation in 2010. See gvshp.org/westbeth.

While the City finally came through on long-overdue promised landmark designation of Westbeth, they refused to honor their 2005 pledge to landmark three other sites in the Far West Village—370 & 372 West 11th Street, and Charles Lane. These were part of a package of eight individual sites and two districts in the Far West Village the City promised to landmark in response to the campaign to Save the Far West Village, made publicly on the eve of the 2005 Mayoral elections. When GVSHP brought plans to radically alter 370 West 11th Street to the City's attention, urging them to finally honor their 2005 pledge, they refused, claiming no such promise had been made, even though it had been widely reported on in the media and elsewhere. See gvshp.org/fwv.

At 145 Perry Street (at Washington St.), revised plans were presented for a residential development on the site, following our successful efforts to get the site rezoned. Plans for a hotel had to be abandoned and the project's size slightly reduced due to the rezoning. While GVSHP and neighbors were pleased with the change in use and size, the new design was still quite lacking. After significant lobbying, the new design was rejected by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. It's now up to the developer to consider further revisions. See gvshp.org/145perry.

East Village Landmarking Progress and Setbacks

Historic District Plans Advance But Many Sites Still Being Lost

Modest landmarking protections for some parts of the East Village were finally enacted in January, while the City has also allowed a growing number of historic sites in the neighborhood to fall victim to the wrecking ball.

This past June, the City calendared, or began the official process of considering, landmark designation for two districts in the East Village. At the urging of GVSHP and allied groups, the proposed districts were expanded to include key historic sites originally excluded, including the Russian Orthodox Cathedral, the former Magistrates Court (now Anthology Film Archives) and several early 19th century houses on East 2nd Street, and the architecturally distinguished tenement housing the Pyramid Club at 101 Avenue A. However, after initially promising to hold hearings on the proposed districts and move ahead with designation by September, the City delayed and delayed. In the meantime, a mid-19th century townhouse on East 6th Street, and an early 19th century house and a rare late-19th century model tenement on East 2nd Street, all in the proposed historic districts, were altered or destroyed without the City acting to prevent it.

In addition to monitoring for possible destruction within the proposed historic districts, GVSHP also kept a close eye out for potential losses of significant historic sites outside of the proposed districts. Though the two proposed East Village Historic Districts only cover a small area, the City promised to look at the remainder of the neighborhood for potential historic district designations after



l., 316 East 3rd Street, which the City refused to landmark; r., 315 East 10th Street, which the City did not move quickly enough to protect.

considering these first two areas. GVSHP vowed, however, to monitor for threats to any significant endangered site in the neighborhood and call upon the City to intervene with landmark designation to save it.

This is exactly what happened with a series of rare, surviving early 19th century houses in the Far East Village, between Avenues C and D. In these easternmost blocks, little from the earliest era of the East Village's development survives. This area was once the center of the busy early 19th century "Dry Dock" shipbuilding neighborhood.

It was on these blocks that GVSHP spotted threats to five houses, at 326 & 328 East 4th Street and 285, 287, and 316 East 3rd Street, each of which were the first structures to ever stand on their sites, and each of which had remarkable histories and architectural details intact. We brought each of these threats to the City's attention and called for them to protect the buildings with landmark designation. Inexplicably, in each case, they refused to even consider landmark designation, in spite

of the fact that several were of comparable age and detail to those the City had landmarked elsewhere. Additionally, some of the houses were ruled eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and in at least one case the City itself had previously stated in a published report that the building was "eligible for landmark designation"! As a result, all five of these houses have succumbed, or almost undoubtedly will succumb, to the wrecking ball.

In one rare case, however, we were actually able to get the City to act. At 315 East 10th Street, in the proposed East 10th Street Historic District, GVSHP notified the City that a new owner was seeking permits to alter and build atop an 1847 house, part of an almost entirely intact row of structures along Tompkins Square North. GVSHP and fellow community groups urged the City to act by moving ahead with the proposed landmark designation of the district, and the City agreed, holding an emergency hearing January 17th and voting unanimously to landmark the district at the same time.

Unfortunately however, due to a lack of coordination between city agencies, building permits were issued for 315 East 10th Street an hour before the landmarks hearing and vote, and thus the designation did not protect it from the developer's plans. We use this tragedy to call upon the City to move ahead more swiftly with protecting the remainder of the East Village's fragile and endangered history. See gvsdp.org/ev.

Hudson Square Rezoning Plan Falls Short of Mark

Modest Improvements Come With Missed Opportunities and Broken Promises

As we go to press, a proposal by Trinity Realty to rezone Hudson Square inches towards the start of the public review and approval process. Current zoning for the area is woefully inadequate, allowing the development of 450 foot tall buildings. While GVSHP has long called for this area to be rezoned to better protect its character, the Trinity proposal does not necessarily deliver on the solution the community needs or was promised by the City.

In 2006, with the support of City Council Speaker Quinn and Borough President Stringer, the city approved the Trump SoHo Condo-Hotel, a woefully inappropriate high-rise in the heart of Hudson Square. Recognizing that the City can only stop a project, no matter how odious, if it violates the law, GVSHP and many community groups pointed out that a “condo-hotel” appeared to violate zoning prohibitions on residential or residential hotel development in this area. The City and the Speaker disagreed, however, and the project was allowed to proceed, which has been an eyesore ever since.

However, at the time, both the City and Speaker promised that new zoning would be proposed to address the issue of excessively large development in the area, as well as allowing ‘condo-hotels’ in areas such as these. Rather than the City proposing a rezoning in consultation with the affected communities, however, the City allowed Trinity Realty, a major property owner and developer in the area, to pursue a rezoning application.

Unfortunately the plan presented by Trinity in early 2011 did nothing to address the condo-hotel issue, and proposed only small changes regarding the excessively large development allowed by the current zoning. In fact, in most parts of Hudson Square the Trinity proposal does not reduce the size of allowable development. It does, however, propose some height limits, but in most areas they would be as high as 320 or even 430 feet—significantly taller than virtually any building in the area except the Trump

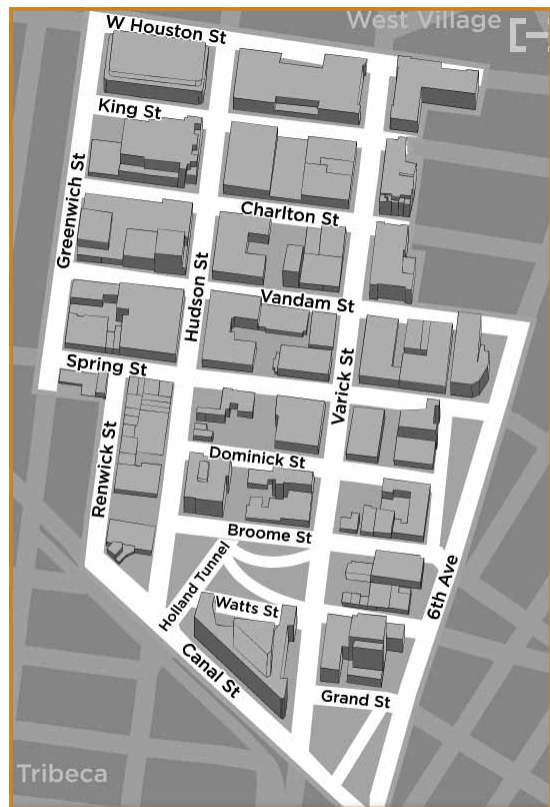
SoHo, and we believe still much too tall.

The proposed rezoning would have some positive aspects—some limits on new hotel development, and some incentives for preserving some smaller buildings. But the proposal does not go nearly far enough, nor deliver on promises made in the wake of the approval of the Trump project.

Additionally, the proposed Hudson Square rezoning would increase development pressure upon the adjacent proposed South Village Historic District east of Sixth Avenue. This is an area the City promised to consider for landmark designation after they designated the first third of our proposed South Village Historic District in early 2010, but they are yet to follow through on this promise. Thus if the Trinity Hudson Square Rezoning is approved as is without the South Village landmark designation moving ahead, it would not only endanger this fragile, low-rise historic area, but we would yet again see a developer-requested change in city regulations for the area approved, while a community-requested change that would protect neighborhood character is ignored.

Once formally submitted, the plan must undergo a series of environmental reviews before then coming before the Community Board, Borough President, City Planning Commission, and City Council for public hearings and votes. The plan is expected to be submitted in early 2012.

GVSHP will be fighting for changes to the plan to better protect neighborhood character, preserve the adjacent South Village, and fulfill long-overdue promises made to the community in the wake of the approval of the Trump SoHo Condo-Hotel. See gvshp.org/hudsq.





GVSHP opposed these proposed additions to the Puck Building, which were rejected by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Puck Building Additions

GVSHP opposed plans by developer Jared Kushner to add an intrusive and highly visible penthouse addition to this singularly beloved and iconic New York landmark. The proposed addition would not only have marred the view of the building, but been visible for blocks around. The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) rejected four successively smaller versions of the plan. On the fifth try, however, the LPC approved a dramatically reduced version. Only time will tell if the much less visible addition will be worthy of this treasured landmark. See gvshp.org/puck.

43 MacDougal Street

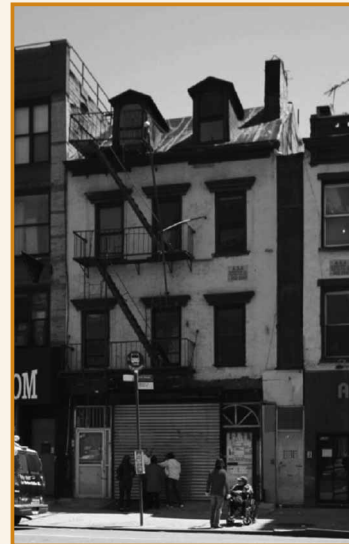
GVSHP continues to advocate for restoration of this long-derelict 1846 rowhouse in the Charlton-King-VanDam Historic District. Over the years we have pushed the City to levy fines against the owner, pursue legal action, and make repairs to ensure that the building does not deteriorate to the point of no return. After years of frustration with both the City and the owner, we have some good news to report. The building has finally been sold, and there are very preliminary indications that

the new owner will seek to restore the building. However, there is a long way to go. GVSHP will continue to closely monitor the situation, and hold the owner and the City's feet to the fire to ensure this lovely landmark is restored as it should be, and as the law requires. See gvshp.org/43macd.

135 Bowery De-Landmarked

This fall the City Council stripped landmark status from 135 Bowery, an 1817 federal-style rowhouse. GVSHP

had joined a broad coalition of community and preservation groups in calling for this historic building's preservation, one of the oldest on the Bowery. We were greatly disappointed when the City Council, at the direction of local Councilmember Margaret Chin, decided to overturn the designation bestowed upon the house by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Sadly, this reflects a growing trend in recent years, whereby the City Council has chosen to undo several landmark designations. One bright note: local Councilmember Rosie Mendez opposed this action, and voted to uphold the landmark designation, as she has in several other recent cases. See gvshp.org/135b.



1817 house at 135 Bowery.

Save St. Mark's Books!

GVSHP joined many local groups and elected officials in rallying to the defense of St. Mark's Bookstore, one of our city's oldest and most respected independent bookstores. Changing technology and the economic downturn have been tough on St. Mark's, as well as many other bookstores, and they were finding it difficult to cover their rent to their landlord, Cooper Union. GVSHP has a long-standing commitment to small businesses and independent bookstores in our neighborhoods, and particularly to St. Mark's Books, a 2007 GVSHP "Village Award" winner. We joined many in writing to Cooper Union urging them to

come to an agreement with St. Mark's which would allow them to stay, and urged New Yorkers to patronize the store to support their survival. We are incredibly pleased that increased patronage along with a new agreement with Cooper Union will allow St. Mark's to remain in their 3rd Avenue home.

Arbie Thalacker, 1935-2012

GVSHP notes with sadness the death of Arbie Thalacker, a trustee of the Society since 1993 and President of the Board from 2009 to 2011.

Arbie loved the Village dearly, which he made his home for more than twenty years. His absence will be felt profoundly by all at GVSHP, but his legacy and personal warmth and wisdom will be remembered with great joy and gratitude.

From the Director

2012 may well turn out to be “The Year of the ULURP.” This acronym stands for the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, and it is the public review and approval process for rezonings in New York City. We are currently facing four huge ones –NYU, St. Vincent’s/Rudin, Hudson Square, and Chelsea Market. This may be some kind of record for “the most ULURP’s at once” in one community, and each has the potential for an enormous impact.



At the same time, we struggle to get the City to consider community-requested land use actions, such as landmark designations in the South, East, and Far West Village, and much-needed zoning changes in the South Village. Unfortunately, as usual, the changes the big institutions and developers want move pretty quickly, while the ones called for by neighborhood preservationists seem to take a back seat.

But GVSHP is up to the task. We’re meeting each of these proposed rezonings head on, fighting to stop them when appropriate and make changes to them when needed. And we’re certainly not giving the City any breaks on their unfulfilled promises to follow through on landmark designations in the Far West and South Village; in fact, our efforts in that regard are merely amping up.

It’s going to be a busy year—I hope you’ll join us!



Acknowledgements

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

We also wish to acknowledge the generous support of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Councilmember Rosie Mendez through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer through the Department of Education.

GVSHP Bulletin Board

Save the Date—GVSHP’s Annual Benefit House Tour will be Sunday, May 6; see gvshp.org/benefit.

Want to help the cause? Volunteer for GVSHP, or host a ‘friendraiser’—a free event introducing friends and neighbors to GVSHP—go to gvshp.org/volunteer or [/fundraiser](http://gvshp.org/fundraiser).

Curious about landmarks applications in your neighborhood? Check out GVSHP’s landmarks applications webpage, the only one of its kind in the city. You can view any application requiring public approvals for landmarked buildings in the Village, East Village, or NoHo, find out the status of the public hearing and approval process, and how you can affect the decision, at 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.

Follow us on twitter, friend us on facebook, watch us on Flickr or YouTube, or join our e-mail list—links are at gvshp.org.

Planned Giving—Make a legacy gift to GVSHP. Contact 212/475-9585 x39.

Board of Trustees

<i>President</i> Art Levin	<i>Vice Presidents</i> Linda Yowell Leslie Mason	<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i> Katherine Schoonover
Mary Ann Arisman	Justine Leguizamo	Allan G. Sperling
John Bacon	Ruth McCoy	Judith Stonehill
Penelope Barea	Vals Osborne	Fred Wistow
Kate Bostock Shefferman	Andrew S. Paul	F. Antony Zunino, III
Elizabeth Ely	Cynthia Penney	
Cassie Glover	Robert Rogers	
	Jonathan Russo	

Staff

<i>Executive Director</i> Andrew Berman	<i>Director of Preservation and Research</i> Amanda Davis	<i>Director of Administration</i> Drew Durniak
<i>Senior Director of Operations</i> Sheryl Woodruff	<i>Director of East Village and Special Projects</i> Andito Lloyd	<i>Program and Administrative Associate</i> Dana Schulz

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
www.gvshp.org (212) 475-9585