



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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September 30, 2009

Hon. Michael Bloomberg
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Request to change C6-1 zone in the Far West Village, Manhattan

Dear Mayor Bloomberg,

I write to call to your attention a long-standing request that the Department of City Planning initiate a rezoning of the 6-block C6-1 zone in the Far West Village.

This request was first made by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) and other community groups and leaders a year and a half ago (see attached). Over the last 18 months we have been joined by hundreds of neighborhood residents and dozens of local community groups who have been working with us to urge the Department of City Planning to take such action

A year later, lacking any response from City Planning, in April of this year GVSHP and allied community groups held a Town Hall meeting attended by over 150 residents where virtually unanimous support for the requested rezoning was expressed. Following this, Community Board 2 passed a resolution in support of the requested rezoning. More recently, local elected officials representing the area wrote to City Planning Chair Amanda Burden to express their support for this requested rezoning.

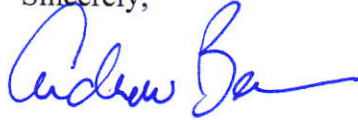
Unfortunately however, in all this time, there has been no progress, or even a response to our letters or phone calls, from City Planning.

Too much time has elapsed already which would allow inappropriate development to take place or begin here. The current zoning encourages out-of-scale development, and gives large incentives for commercial and community facility development in spite of the predominantly residential character of this neighborhood.

In 2005, City Planning agreed to a request from GVSHP and other community groups to rezone much of the adjoining blocks in a similar manner to what we are requesting now. At the time, however, they chose not to include these blocks, saying that economic realities would confine new construction to lower-density residential development, and therefore inclusion of these blocks was not necessary. Unfortunately, this has turned out not to be the case.

I urge you not to allow more time to go by without action on this matter or even so much as a response by City Planning. The Far West Village community is deeply united in its desire to see this zoning change implemented to help preserve the treasured character of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman", with a stylized, flowing script.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

April 17, 2008

Hon. Amanda Burden
Chair, New York City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: C6-1 Zone in the Far West Village, Manhattan

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New York, New York 10003

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George Vellonakis
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Dear Chair Burden:

I write to ask the Department of City Planning to consider a change in zoning for the C6-1 district in the Far West Village, which lies between Greenwich and Washington Streets, between West 12th and West 10th Streets, covering all or part of six city blocks.

The zoning is somewhat anomalous for this area, and we believe encourages and allows out-of-context and otherwise undesirable development. The zoning has no contextual controls and allows up to 6 FAR for commercial development, and 6.5 for community facility. All of the zone is either on narrow mid-blocks or faces Washington or Greenwich Streets, which are themselves relatively narrow, modestly-scaled streets. Additionally, the zoning on the opposite sides of both Greenwich and Washington from this zone is C1-6A, R-6, or C1-6, which for the most part only allows a much more appropriate and modest scale of development. As you know, a base FAR of 6.5 can easily allow a 10-story building (or higher with air rights added in), which we do not believe is an appropriate scale for these narrow streets in the historic Far West Village.

Additionally, unlike most of the other nearby zoning districts, the C6-1 zone greatly favors commercial or community facility development over residential development. While we have no objection to commercial or community facility uses as a part of the mix of the neighborhood, we fear that this heavy weighting in the zoning towards such uses will encourage only this kind of development, which is not reflective of the largely residential but somewhat mixed-use nature of this neighborhood. By contrast, other surrounding zones, including those which the City Planning Commission approved in the area as part of the 2005 rezoning, allow commercial uses but at a more modest FAR. A zoning district such as the C1-6A zone adopted across Washington Street in 2005, which allows a maximum FAR of 4 and which has contextual height caps of 65 and 80 feet, would seem much more appropriate to guide development in this area.

The need for such appropriate guidance is more than theoretical. There are several 'soft sites' in this zoning district and we have recently witnessed two rather large new development proposals move ahead in recent weeks. One was a hotel, and the other was a mixed use building, both of which exploited the higher allowable density for commercial and community facility uses to achieve a height much greater than we and many neighbors believed appropriate for their sites, and incorporating some uses about which there are great concerns by many neighbors (it should be noted that one development, at 145 Perry Street, was approved with a

modest reduction in size by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, while the second at 685 Washington Street is still awaiting approval).

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation is working with the Greenwich Village Community Task Force and other local community groups and neighbors to reach out to the Community Board and local elected officials to seek their support for and participation in this effort. I hope that the Department of City Planning will be willing to work with us to see such a change realized in order to help protect and maintain the character of this very special part of New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director



DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
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October 27, 2008

Hon. Amanda Burden
Director, NYC Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Urgent Need for Rezoning in South Village, Far West Village,
and Hudson Square**

Dear Director Burden:

I write to call to your attention several disturbingly out-of-context and completely inappropriate developments being pursued in the South Village, Far West Village, and Hudson Square, and to again urge the Department of City Planning (DCP) to pursue zoning changes the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) has long requested in order to preserve the scale and character of these neighborhoods.

76 Sullivan Street/140 Sixth Avenue in the South Village. Plans have been filed for an 18-story hotel on this narrow triangular plot of land bounded by Sixth Avenue and Broome Street. The remainder of this block of Sullivan Street is uniformly 1 to 6 story buildings, including several 3-story early 19th century houses, two of which are landmarked. This site also lies within an area which has been proposed for historic district designation by GVSHP – a proposal which has very strong support from the surrounding community, and which is being reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Unfortunately the M1-5 zoning for the site does not provide any height caps or contextual requirements, and encourages many uses which are notably out-of-character for the surrounding neighborhood. Several years ago, GVSHP requested that the Department consider a contextual rezoning for this area to preserve and reinforce the built character of this predominantly residential neighborhood, and we have reiterated that request several times over the years to DCP. This latest completely inappropriate building plan points to the ever-more urgent need for the Department to take up this long-standing request and seek changes to the zoning for this area as soon as possible.

68-74 Charlton Street, M1-6 Zone. Plans have been filed for a 36-story hotel at this site – a shockingly inappropriate scale for this location in Hudson Square, just a half block outside of the diminutively-scaled Charlton-King-VanDam Historic District. A building of this scale would even tower over the 15-20 story loft buildings which are currently, for the most part, the largest buildings in this area. This site lies within the M1-6 zone, of which GVSHP has been asking DCP to change the zoning since at least 2006. As you know, this zone allows an enormous density of development and has absolutely no height limits whatsoever, resulting in other extremely objectionable developments like the Trump SoHo 'Condo-Hotel.' I understand from recent meetings that the Department is not currently contemplating a zoning change for this area, but is

entertaining a potential zoning change application from Trinity Real Estate, an area developer/property owner. This neighborhood needs a zoning change as soon as possible, and I again urge DCP to take up this issue to ensure that the height and scale of allowable development in this area is reduced immediately.

C6-1 Zone in the Far West Village. Six months ago, GVSHP wrote to you to urge the Department to consider revising the zoning for the C6-1 district in the Far West Village, which lies between Greenwich and Washington Streets, between West 12th and West 10th Street, covering all or part of six city blocks (see attached letter). This anomalous zoning district for this area allows out-of-context and otherwise undesirable development. The C6-1 zone has no height limits or contextual controls, and includes significant bonuses for commercial and community facility development as compared to residential uses. Several out-of-scale developments have been proposed for this district in recent months utilizing the commercial and community facility bulk differential, and there are several more 'soft-sites' in this district where further development could take place (a list of which have been provided to the Department). GVSHP and many in this community are very concerned about such possibilities, and we have requested that the Department consider revisions to this zoning district to prevent such inappropriate incursions. Unfortunately, the Department has not responded to the original letter on this matter, and several phone calls and e-mails to the Department's Manhattan Office on this topic have not been returned. Given the strong level of community concern about this issue, I hope that DCP will in fact be willing to work with us and other concerned neighbors about this problem stemming from the existing zoning.

The planned developments cited in this letter have the potential to irreversibly change the character of these neighborhoods. Earlier this year the Department approved, with modifications, a developer-requested rezoning roughly in the middle of the three zoning districts discussed in this letter. I hope that the Department will give equal, if not greater, consideration to the long-standing requests of these local communities to change the zoning in these areas, in order to preserve the vital character of these neighborhoods.

I look forward to hearing back regarding the assistance we seek from the Department.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
City Council Zoning Subcommittee Chair Tony Avella
Community Board #2



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June 4, 2009

Hon. Amanda Burden
Director, NYC Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Requested Rezoning of C6-1 Zone in Far West Village

Dear Director Burden:

I write to inquire regarding the status of the Department's consideration of the request by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) and numerous community groups to propose changing the C6-1 zone in the Far West Village. We have requested that the Department propose changing the zoning to more appropriately limit the size and height of allowable development in the area, and to reduce or eliminate the bonus for commercial and community facility development.

As you know, GVSHP and other community groups first wrote to you about this in April, 2008 (letter attached). A year later, on April 6, 2009, GVSHP and several community groups held a community forum on the need to change the C6-1 zone in the Far West Village. Over 150 people attended and expressed strong support for our proposal to change the zoning, following which the Department received hundreds of letters from the public asking that this zoning be changed, and more than 300 people signed an on-line petition (attached) and another 300+ people signed a paper petition also urging that the zoning be changed.

Two months later, we anxiously await an answer from the Department about its willingness to consider such a zoning change, which we believe should happen as soon as possible. As per documentation that has been sent to the Department by GVSHP, there are as many as a dozen potential soft sites in this small zoning district. We and many neighbors and community groups are anxious to ensure that should any development take place in this area, it conforms to the scale and character of the neighborhood, which the current zoning does not require.

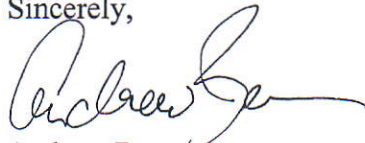
As you know, in 2005 when GVSHP was involved with pursuing what eventually became the rezoning of the Far West Village, we asked the Department to consider changing the zoning for this area, because the zoning potentially allowed out-of-scale and inappropriate development. At the time we were told that the Department did not see a need to change this zoning, as Landmarks Preservation Commission review would ensure the appropriate scale of new development, and the zoning bonus for commercial and community facility development was unlikely to be utilized since residential development was so much more desirable in this area.

Circumstances have changed considerably since 2005, and experience has now shown that developers will utilize the zoning bonus for commercial development in this area by building hotels, and Landmarks Preservation Commission review of proposed developments alone is not sufficient to ensure appropriate size and scale.

I thus strongly hope that the Department of City Planning will now expeditiously consider this request to propose changing the C6-1 zone in the Far West Village, which has such broad community support, before we face the specter of further inappropriate development in this area.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Berman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Community Board #2, Manhattan
Greenwich Village Community Task Force
Greenwich Village Block Associations
Charles St. Block Association
Jane St. Block Association
Perry St. Block Association
Perry St. Crusaders
135 Perry St. Owners' Corporation
131 Perry St. Apt. Corporation
Washington West 11th St. Owners' Corporation
Waverly Bank 11th Street Neighbors
West Village Committee
Federation to Preserve the Greenwich Village Waterfront & Great Port
Horatio Block Association
Far West 10th Street Block Association
Carmin Street Block Association
Washing. Sq.-Lower Fifth Avenue Community Association
West 12th Street Block Association