



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES TWO HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

“Both the Greenwich Village Extension and the Weehawken Street Historic District exhibit the great architecture and rich culture that make the Village so special,” said Robert B. Tierney, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *“I am particularly proud to designate these districts and honor the memory of Jane Jacobs who fought so hard to protect this important part of New York City.”*

Greenwich Village Historic District Extension

The Greenwich Village Historic District Extension consists of forty-five buildings that represent several phases of construction spanning nearly two centuries of development along Greenwich Village’s Hudson River waterfront. The architecture illustrates the area’s long history as a place of dwelling, industry and commerce and is a rare surviving example of this once typical development pattern on Manhattan’s west side waterfront. Seven buildings in the extension date from the first period of development c. 1819-1853, when Greenwich Village began to grow as people moved to the area to escape the crowding and epidemics of lower Manhattan. These buildings were constructed as residences including the c. 1819 vernacular row house at 132 Charles Street, the 1834 Federal style residence at 131 Charles Street, and the 1829 Federal style row of houses at 651-655 Washington Street.



131 Charles Street

At the turn of the century, as the Hudson River surpassed the East River as the primary artery for maritime commerce, and the Gansevoort and Chelsea Piers were constructed, West Street north of Christopher Street became the busiest section of New York’s commercial waterfront. The area of the Historic District Extension became the locus for a number of large storage warehouses, as well as transportation-related commerce and firms associated with food products.

In 1961, Jane Jacobs, who lived in the vicinity of the Historic District Extension rallied neighborhood residents to oppose Mayor Robert Wagner’s plan to have the twelve blocks bounded by West, Christopher, Hudson and West 11th Streets, and another two blocks along West Street south of Christopher Street declared an urban renewal site. The neighbors’ success, along with the publication of Jacobs’ influential book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, that same year, established her as a renowned critic of urbanism.

Today, the buildings in the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension represent a thriving neighborhood that is a distinctive part of the history and character of Greenwich Village and New York City.

Weehawken Street Historic District

The picturesque enclave of fourteen buildings and the street plan that together comprise the Weehawken Street Historic District represents several phases of construction spanning a century of development along Greenwich Village's Hudson River waterfront from 1830 to 1938. The land within the historic district was once part of the site of the Newgate State Prison (1796-97), until it was closed and the City of New York plotted and sold the land in 1829. The City at that time planned to build a public market there, and reserved the block bounded by West Street, Christopher Street, Amos (later West 10th) Street, and the newly created block-long Weehawken Street.



396-397 West Street

The Greenwich (unofficially "Weehawken") Market house, not built until 1834, was a wooden open shed structure with wide overhanging eaves, a building type that was the most common for markets in the United States in the 19th century. Never successful, the market was abandoned in 1844 and the property, including separate sections of the market house, was disposed of by the City in 1848. No. 393-393 West Street, almost certainly a surviving portion of that market house, was purchased by boatbuilder George M. Munson and adapted and enclosed for his business. It was, as well, the location until 1867 of the earliest documented liquors/saloon business in the historic district, a dominant commercial activity here.

The opening of a pier at the end of Christopher Street (1828), re-instituting ferry service to Hoboken, the adaptation of part of the old prison for use as a brewery by Nash, Beadleton & Co., and the construction of the Hudson River Railroad along West Street, helped to spur commercial activity in this vicinity. After the Civil War, as New York flourished as the commercial and financial center of the country, several tenements and factories were built in the area that still survive today. Among them include No. 177 Christopher Street, a 4-story, neo-Grec style factory constructed for marine coppersmiths, H.C. & J.H. Calkin, and the 3-story, neo-Renaissance Holland Hotel at 396-397 West Street. Commissioned by restaurateur/saloon operator Albert A. Adler, the building is a rare-surviving Hudson River waterfront hotel.

Today, the Weehawken Street Historic District is a unique, narrow, one-block street with a distinct sense of place. The district represents a rare-surviving example of the once-typical mixed-use development pattern along Manhattan's west side waterfront.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency responsible for designating and regulating New York City's landmarks. To date, the Commission has designated 1,132 individual landmarks, 105 interior landmarks, 9 scenic landmarks, and 85 historic districts.