



Greenwich  
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Historic  
Preservation

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**TESTIMONY OF THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY**  
**FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Regarding**  
**Department of Transportation Design for**  
**Gansevoort Street / 9th Avenue Public Spaces**  
**January 13, 2009**

Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation is generally supportive of pedestrianization of public spaces, and in concept we support the creation of such spaces in the Meatpacking District. However, we do question the historic and aesthetic appropriateness of some aspects of the current design, especially as it relates to the surrounding neighborhood, and find they leave vast room for improvement. We recognize that while making decisions regarding the design, it is essential to first consider traffic and pedestrian safety issues. As we are certain that others will weigh in on this aspect, we will remain focused on aesthetic and historic preservation-related issues.

Our main objection to the current design is that -- at least below 14th Street -- the objects themselves are a random and visually chaotic assortment with no connection to the neighborhood character or the cobblestones. In general, we would like to see the objects used to create the pedestrian spaces be as simple and consistent as possible. We suggest objects such as planters or bollards to demarcate between pedestrian and vehicular areas.

Moreover, the pattern of spaces themselves is similarly random and fails to reflect or relate to the street pattern, the cobblestones, or to the neighborhood aesthetic. Much like the objects within them, the size and shape of the pedestrian spaces should be kept simple and consistent. Wherever possible, the shape of the spaces should follow and reflect the contours of the existing street pattern.

Furthermore, the tape strips that have been placed on the cobblestones are inappropriate. As the tape often peels off, they look even shoddier. We think that the integrity of the cobblestones must be respected and the tape strips removed.

Finally, as they are integral to the aesthetic of the neighborhood, we strongly urge that all designs should go thru the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Art Commission processes for approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.