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# Activists ask: WWJD?

## Villagers wage Jane Jacobs' battle against St. Vincent's high-rise plan

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**GREENWICH VILLAGE.** WWJD? For Villagers, that's "What Would Jane Do?" as in Jane Jacobs. The activist, famous for observing the street life of this neighborhood, died almost two years ago.

Testifying at yesterday's Landmarks Preservation Hearing to discuss a joint proposal by St. Vincent's Hospital and the Rudin family for new high-rises, many residents believed they were carrying the torch for Jacobs, a self-taught urban planning spe-

cialist who famously fought Robert Moses' plans to barrel through the Village with a Lower Manhattan expressway. "I feel like I'm in a bad movie and I'm watching the demolishing of the best city in the world," said resident Alison Rosa.

St. Vincent's would raze the modernist O'Toole building on Seventh Avenue and West 12th Street and replace it with a 329-foot-tall, high-tech teaching hospital. Eight other buildings on Seventh Avenue would be torn down for a 265-foot-tall condo and other residential buildings.

Andrew Berman, of the



A Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation mockup.

Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, said Jacobs would be "horrified."

"She spoke of how universities and hospitals often had a special kind of

hubris reflected in the fact that they often thought it was OK to destroy a neighborhood to suit their needs," he said. "The luxury condo/hospital monolith plan seems antithetical to

### Largest landmark

If approved, the two towers would be the largest buildings in any of the city's 91 historic districts over the 43 years of the landmarks law.

everything Jane Jacobs fought for."

Not everyone agreed.

"We're building the first all-green, all digital, wireless, paperless hospital," said Renard Manley, who works for the hospital. "It would be the equivalent of going from a ride on a bicycle to a ride on a space ship."