



Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation

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**TESTIMONY OF THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY**  
**FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**  
**IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED REZONING**  
**OF ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL EAST CAMPUS**

**March 6, 2012**

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Andrew Berman, and I am the Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. GVSHP is the largest membership organization in Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, and works to preserve the history and character of our neighborhoods.

We strongly urge you to vote no on the proposed rezoning application. The proposal would upzone the site to give Rudin Management almost all the additional bulk and special zoning considerations granted to St. Vincent's Hospital in 1979 for the development of new hospital buildings. In this case, however, the additional bulk and special zoning considerations would go toward enabling the construction of 450 private, luxury condos and high-end retail space.

No matter how you slice it, no matter how many side agreements are attached to it, no matter how nice a park may come with it, this is simply wrong – it's wrong for this site, it's wrong for this neighborhood, and it's wrong for New York City. Special zoning considerations granted for a facility which served such a necessary public service as a hospital should never be passed along for a development which provides no such similar public service, as would essentially be done in this case. I hope the City Council will understand and defend this important principle, which if undone could have huge ramifications for future development in our neighborhood and our city.

Aside from these fundamental issues, I must point out that the proposed condo development would also be inappropriately large and out of scale for the neighborhood, and result in the unnecessary and undesirable demolition of the Reiss building on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. There is no support in this neighborhood for this demolition or this scale of development.

Finally, should the triangle park be developed, and I will stress again here that we do NOT believe that the currently proposed rezoning should be approved, there are certain principles we believe must be respected. We believe that this should be a green neighborhood park welcoming to all types of users, with open entrances on each corner. We believe that there should be assurances that any park will be publicly accessible and adequately maintained in perpetuity. And we also feel that any park design can and should integrate elements which mark and commemorate the impact of the AIDS epidemic upon this community and this city, and the important role that St. Vincent's Hospital and the Greenwich Village community played in response to that epidemic. We believe these two goals can and should be compatible, especially if the process for arriving at a final design is one which is public and involves community participation.

I know that this is not an easy application for you to consider, and that no doubt there is tremendous pull from powerful real estate interests and politicians to approve it. But I hope you will do what is right not only for our neighborhood but for New York City as a whole, and vote no on this proposed rezoning.