



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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January 12, 2007

Hon. Patricia Lancaster
Commissioner, New York City Department of Buildings
280 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Lancaster:

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) is greatly concerned about the proliferation of illegal billboards and other outdoor advertisements in our neighborhood and the fact that many have remained up for long periods of time with little enforcement action by the City. We were pleased to read in the *New York Times* that the Department of Buildings is increasing enforcement on the City's billboard and signage regulations, particularly as they pertain to sidewalk construction sheds. The removal of these illegal signs will go a long way in ensuring that our streetscapes are not overwhelmed by the illegal advertisements that take away from the character of our neighborhoods.

While GVSHP is grateful that this first step is being taken by the Department, we urge you to do more to ensure that illegal billboards and signs are removed everywhere, not just on sidewalk construction sheds. Over the past few years, GVSHP has noticed a marked increase in illegal billboards and signs in the Greenwich Village, East Village, and Gansevoort Market neighborhoods. We have frequently issued complaints through 311 whenever we notice a new, illegal billboard or sign, but we have often found that the inspection, when it has occurred, has rarely resulted in the removal of the illegal billboard. DOB's enforcement of the regulations for sidewalk shed signage is a start, but more needs to be done to remove the other types of illegal billboards. In addition, the City's signage regulations for sidewalk sheds clearly states that the signs for on-premises establishments cannot exceed 200 square feet. We ask that the Department enforce these regulations as well.

The following signs have all been previously reported through 311, but still remain illegally in place. This is far from being a complete list of illegal signs in the Greenwich Village, East Village, and Gansevoort Market neighborhoods. Nonetheless, their removal would help send a message that the City will not tolerate signage that disregards the legal regulations.

Greenwich Village:

- 328 Bleecker Street, a billboard that has been in place since 2004. The property is within the Greenwich Village Historic District.
- 11 Waverly Place, an advertisement on a sidewalk shed. The property is within the Greenwich Village Historic District.
- 208 West 11th Street, a billboard that has been in place for over four months. The property is within the Greenwich Village Historic District.
- 59 Greenwich Avenue, a billboard. This property is within the Greenwich Village Historic District.
- 108 Seventh Avenue South, two billboards on the building, one on top of the building and one on the side. This property is within the Greenwich Village Historic District.

Gansevoort Market

- 7 Ninth Avenue, a billboard on the Little West 12th Street side of the building. The property is located with the Gansevoort Market Historic District, and this sign was previously discussed in our letter to DOB on November 1, 2006.
- 675 Hudson Street, a billboard facing south on the building's roof. The property is located with the Gansevoort Market Historic District, and this sign was previously discussed in our letter to DOB on November 1, 2006.
- 807 Washington Street, a billboard on the north façade of the building. The property is located with the Gansevoort Market Historic District, and this sign was previously discussed in our letter to DOB on November 1, 2006.
- 350 West 14th Street, a billboard on the west façade of the building. This sign was previously discussed in our letter to DOB on November 1, 2006.
- 447 West 14th Street, a billboard on the east façade of the building. This sign was previously discussed in our letter to DOB on November 1, 2006.
- 453 West 13th Street, a billboard covering the second and third stories of the building. This sign was just reported through 311 on January 12, 2007.

East Village:

- 64 Third Avenue, a billboard that has been in place for over five months on the East 11th Street façade of the building.
- 76 Third Avenue, a billboard that has been in place for over three months on the north façade of the building, overlooking a parking lot.
- 111 Third Avenue, a billboard on the north façade of the building.

I ask that the Department inspect these locations immediately, issue violations, and seek the removal of the illegal signage so that the owner of these properties do not continue to reap income from illegal signs and billboards.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Council Member Rosie Mendez
Council Member James Oddo
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
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Community Board 3
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