



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Inside This Issue

- 2 South Village Landmark Plan Picks Up Steam
- 3 East Village Protections Advance
- 4 Facing NYU's Long-Range Plans
- 5 Trump Decision Puts West Side in Jeopardy
- 7 In Brief

GVSHP Responds to Big New St. Vincent's Plans

*Condo/Hospital Project Would Be
Village's Largest in 50 Years*

This fall, St. Vincent's hospital announced plans to partner with the Rudin Family to completely redevelop all of their sites on three city blocks on both sides of 7th Avenue between 11th and 13th Streets. The plan would move St. Vincent's medical facilities entirely out of their seven buildings east of 7th Avenue and relocate most of them into a new, 330 ft. tall hospital on the current site of St. Vincent's O'Toole building, on the west side of 7th Avenue. Rudin would then demolish all the hospital buildings on the east side of 7th Avenue and replace them with up to 500 units of luxury housing—a 265 ft. tall apartment block along the avenue which steps down into the midblock; two rows of rowhouses on 11th and 12 Streets; and a new 11-story apartment building on 12th Street.

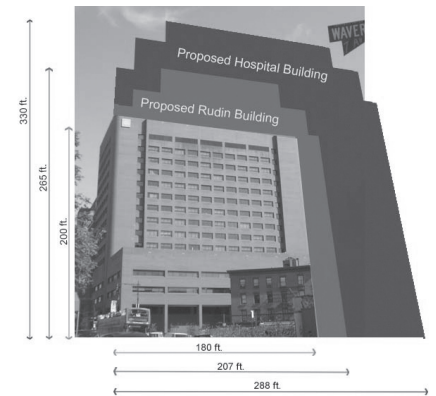
The new hospital and the 7th Avenue apartment

block—each about a half-million square feet of above ground space—would be two of the largest buildings ever built in Greenwich Village. St. Vincent's would also demolish every one of its hospital buildings, even those which are as much as 85 years old, despite their being in the Greenwich Village Historic District, which is supposed to preserve all but the newest, most out-of-context, or historically insignificant buildings. Additionally, while St. Vincent's has offered to make the "Triangle" site they own (bounded by Greenwich and 7th Avenues and 12th Street) greener and more publicly accessible as they promised to do years ago, they have not yet committed to any concrete plan to do so.

While this proposal could potentially have enormously far-reaching consequences, it also has to go through several rounds of public hearings, and must be approved by three different bodies—the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council—before it can move ahead. This means its ultimate fate is yet to be determined, and the public has the opportunity to affect the outcome. As we go to press, the application for the proposal has not yet been filed, and therefore the official approval process has not yet begun.

GVSHP is calling for several substantial changes to be made to the plan. We believe that rather than demolishing all the current

structures east of 7th Avenue, those which are historic and were built in context with the neighborhood must be preserved, as per the provisions of the Greenwich Village Historic District. Demolition of all these buildings would set a dangerous precedent for allowing future demolitions not only within the Greenwich Village Historic Districts, but in historic districts citywide. We are urging that the size of the Rudin's enormous planned residential tower be substantially reduced. We are also asking that the size and height of the hospital



St. Vincent's current Coleman building, with the relative sizes of the new proposed condo and hospital buildings.

building be reduced, by locating some of the facilities planned for that site underground or east of 7th Avenue on one of the sites slated to be sold off to Rudin. Finally, we are pushing St. Vincent's to formulate a concrete plan for

renovation of the Triangle and its green space acceptable to the community, rather than simply replying upon their word that they will do so.

GVSHP is also pushing the MTA to reconsider its emergency fan ventilation plant project for Mulry Square, adjacent to the hospital, which like the new hospital/condo project will entail years of construction and traffic and environmental impacts.

To find out more about the St. Vincent's project and how to help, go to www.gvshp.org/StVincents.htm; to find out more about the MTA project and how to help, go to www.gvshp.org/ventilationplant.htm

South Village Landmark Plan Picks Up Steam

But Threats to Historic Neighborhood Are Growing Too

GVSHP's proposal for landmark designation of the South Village continues to pick up support from elected officials, local business leaders and community groups, preservation organizations, and Italian-American organizations. It has also continued to attract positive media attention and widespread support among Village residents. At the same time, however, threats to the neighborhood's historic buildings and character have grown.

Supporters of the proposed designation now include City Council Speaker Quinn, Borough President Stringer, State Senators Duane and Connor, Assemblymember Glick, City Councilmember Gerson, and City Councilmember Tony Avella of Queens, the Chair of the Council's Italian-American Caucus. The National Trust for Historic Preservation,

Preservation League of NY State, Municipal Art Society, Historic Districts Council, and nearly every block association and civic organization in the area, as well as many of the South Village's most prominent merchants, have also joined us in urging the City to adopt our landmarking proposal for the South Village.

In addition, the Advisory Board GVSHP formed to guide this project now consists of more than forty community leaders. To help shine light on the South Village's special history, on Columbus Day GVSHP released a 90-page report, "The Italians of the South Village," by social historian Mary Elizabeth Brown, which carefully documented the origins and evolution of this defining community in the South Village. The report was funded by the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

GVSHP also held a Town Hall meeting on our efforts to secure landmark designation for the South Village in early December. More than a hundred neighborhood residents showed up to learn about our progress and find out how they can help. Community Board #2 co-sponsored the forum. We also launched an on-line educational program about the neighborhood's incredible history called "The South Village: History Lives Here," highlighting points of interest in the neighborhood's social, cultural, and architectural history. And we continue our children's and adult educational programs which focus on the South Village's immigrant history.

The South Village remains an incredible collection of 19th and early 20th century architecture, with cultural, social, and ecclesiastical institutions connected to the neighborhood's proud history of immigrant struggle, cultural innovation, and political ferment. But that history is increasingly threatened by demolitions and inappropriate



Columbus Day event celebrating the release of GVSHP's "Italians of the South Village" report; State Senator Tom Duane is speaking.

new development, which are consuming a growing number of the neighborhood's historic buildings. In 2003, over GVSHP's objections, the City allowed demolition of the historic Circle in the Square Theater on Bleecker Street, and its replacement with a large new apartment tower which got a zoning bonus because the developer claimed it would include a "community facility"—a dormitory for the Dalton School. However GVSHP claimed that the premise for the bonus was false—that Dalton, a 'day' school, does not house students—and that other aspects of the building violate zoning rules. Dalton then withdrew from the building, and GVSHP is urging the City to revoke the building's certificate of occupancy and force the development to conform to the neighborhood's zoning limits.

To find out more about the South Village or help push for landmark designation, go to www.gvshp.org/southvillage.htm

East Village Landmark & Zoning Protections Advance

But City Still Resists Many Needed Measures

GVSHP has been part of a coalition working to rezone the East Village to protect the neighborhood's scale and character, and prevent the kind of out-of-scale development rapidly proliferating in the area, especially dorms and hotels. That coalition has included Councilmember Rosie Mendez, Borough President Stringer, Community Board 3, the East Village Community Coalition, and other community groups.

Our collective efforts have resulted in the City putting forward a rezoning plan for the East Village that would for the first time ever impose height limits and eliminate the current bonus for dormitory and hotel development in the neighborhood. But GVSHP and our allies pushed for further changes, which resulted in tighter restrictions on development on sidestreets in the City's plan.

Now the rezoning plan is going through the required environmental review, which may result in further changes. However, an important change the City has refused to consider is the inclusion of the 3rd and 4th Avenue and Bowery corridors, which GVSHP has long called for. These areas have some of the worst zoning in the entire East Village, with huge bonuses for hotel and dorm development and no height limits, as evidenced by the 26-story NYU mega-dorm rising on East 12th Street and the new 23-story hotel on Bowery and 5th Street. These developments

completely shatter the scale and character of these neighborhoods.

In response, GVSHP has been working with Borough President Stringer, Councilmember Mendez, and Community Board 3 to lead an effort to formulate a community-initiated rezoning plan for these streets the City has refused to protect. The City Charter allows communities to file rezoning plans if the City refuses to do so, but it is an expensive and lengthy process which still ultimately depends upon approval by the City. This effort has been making slow but steady progress, but still has a way to go. The Community Board adopted



Webster Hall in the East Village, which GVSHP researched and proposed for landmark designation.

GVSHP's recommendations for a rezoning of the 3rd and 4th Avenue corridors, and we are currently working on formulating a plan for the Bowery.

GVSHP and others preservation groups have also identified historic sites to be considered for landmark designation as part of the environmental review for the proposed East Village rezoning. In fact, GVSHP has been researching the history of every building in the East Village in order to paint a clear picture of the neighborhood's historic resources and better advocate for their preservation, much as we did in the South Village. This effort has already borne some fruit; in October the City held a hearing on landmarking Webster Hall, a site GVSHP proposed for landmark designation, along with five other East Village sites of which GVSHP also supported the designation. We also submitted a detailed nomination for landmark designation of 101 Avenue A, an unusually architecturally distinctive tenement which housed a German social hall in the neighborhood's immigrant heyday; that hall eventually became the Pyramid Club.

Another East Village site GVSHP has fought to protect is 128 East 13th Street, a one-time horse auction mart and World War II women's assembly-line training school which served as the studio of artist Frank Stella for nearly 30 years. When GVSHP uncovered a plan to demolish the building, we urged the Landmarks Preservation Commission to immediately landmark the property, which resulted in a hearing and a "standstill agreement" between the City and the owner preventing any demolition or alteration of the building. This agreement stands through 2008. As positive signs continue to emerge that the building will be preserved, GVSHP continues to push

for final approval of landmark designation to ensure permanent preservation of the building.

For more information or to help, go to www.gvshp.org/stann.htm

Facing NYU's Long-Range Building Plans

Continued Growth and Satellite Campuses Are Both Possibilities for University

NYU is without a doubt the 800 lb. gorilla of development in the Village, East Village, and NoHo. No single entity has had as profound an impact upon the landscape of our neighborhoods as this one single institution, which occupies more than 100 buildings and 11 million square feet of space in and around our neighborhood. That's bigger than the entire downtowns of several major cities in the United States. In the last 25 years, NYU's growth has been almost unabated, with no long-term plan. That growth has changed the scale and character of much of our neighborhood, and has consumed several of our most precious historic landmarks.

That's why starting in 2002, GVSHP began pushing NYU to engage in long-range planning, and to work with the City to locate satellite campuses outside of our neighborhoods in order to absorb any future growth by the University. When neither the City nor NYU listened, we engaged in a neighborhood-wide campaign to push for this kind of planning, gaining the support of eight other neighborhood groups, both local community boards, and Borough President Stringer and Councilmember Mendez.

There are signs this persistence may finally be paying off. Earlier this year, NYU began a 25-

year planning process, and began participation in a "Community Working Group" convened by Borough President Stringer, through which they have begun to share information with the public about their long-term growth needs. Perhaps more importantly, NYU has begun working with the City to examine locations for possible satellite campuses and other farther afield locations for their facilities, which has already resulted in the university locating a graduate student dorm in Downtown Brooklyn. Much as we had long urged, NYU is



NYU's 26-story mega-dorm under construction on East 12th Street. The university's projected growth over the next 25 years is the equivalent of thirty-four more of these.

examining the possibility of new locations such as Governor's Island, the Financial District, Downtown Brooklyn, and Long Island City.

But these are only very small initial steps in the right direction; what the ultimate results of NYU's planning process and its new community engagement will be upon our neighborhood remains to be seen. Aside from NYU's long history of breaking commitments to the public, there are many other causes for caution and concern. Part of NYU's 25

year planning process has been to estimate their expected growth over this time period. NYU says during that time they anticipate an increase of 5,500 students—five times the entire student population of nearby Cooper Union—and six million square feet of space—a 40% increase over their current size and the equivalent of thirty-four more of the 26-story mega-dorms they recently constructed on East 12th Street. President Sexton has said that about half of that space will be located elsewhere, but half will need to go around their main campus—still a staggering and, we would say, completely unacceptable amount of growth in our neighborhood. In fact, GVSHP has insisted that NYU should explore all possible ways to remain within their existing building envelope and footprint in the Village, East Village, and NoHo by seeking locations outside of our neighborhoods for their future growth.

We are paying especially close attention to the University's plans for the supermarket site at Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place, and the former Tower Video site at Lafayette and 4th Street, which NYU has acquired with the intention of developing. We are also closely monitoring the university's plans for 700 undergraduate dorm beds it says it will be moving from their current location in the Financial District into our neighborhood.

For more information, go to www.gvshp.org/NYUexpansion.htm

Trump Decision Puts West Side in Jeopardy

City Defends Developer in Court, Ignores Promised Zoning Changes

This summer, the City finally formally approved the 45-story Trump "Condo-Hotel" at Spring and Varick Streets, over the protests of scores of neighborhood and business groups citywide, dozens of elected officials, and literally thousands of residents who were involved in this campaign. GVSHP led a coalition of community groups which fought against this project and the City's approval, arguing that it violated our zoning protections by allowing a "condo-hotel" where neither residences nor residential hotels are allowed by law.

The City's decision to allow this development has terrible ramifications not just for this site but for any other neighborhood with similar "light manufacturing" zoning, including much of Hudson Square, SoHo, NoHo, Tribeca, the Far West Village below Morton Street, the Meatpacking District, West Chelsea, and the Flatiron District. In allowing this development,

the City has in essence changed the zoning for any light manufacturing zone to allow high-rise residences and residential hotels, where they were previously prohibited. A change in zoning such as this is supposed to require a full zoning change process, which allows the public to have a say, requires an analysis of environmental impacts, and must be approved, modified, or disapproved by a vote of our elected and appointed officials, such as the City Council. With this decision, the City allowed Trump—and any future developer considering a similar project—to completely sidestep this process.

GVSHP is responding to this terrible decision in three ways. First, we are supporting a legal challenge being put forth by the SoHo Alliance, which is now making its way through the system. Second we are urging that the area where the Trump project will be built be rezoned to prohibit further development of this kind of outrageous scale. And finally, we are calling for the zoning text to be explicitly changed to prohibit "condo-hotels" like Trump's in areas where they were always understood to be prohibited.

Unfortunately, neither the Department of City Planning nor the City Council—the two bodies which must approve zoning changes—have



GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman and City Councilmember Tony Avella protesting the City's decision to approve the Trump Condo-Hotel.

taken any action to either change the zoning text to prohibit more of these kinds of condo-hotels where they do not belong, or to change the zoning specifically for the area where the Trump development is located. GVSHP and a coalition of neighborhood and citywide groups continue to push them to do so, however. And, unfortunately, the City is actually spending taxpayer dollars to defend Trump and his development in court against the community-initiated lawsuit.

To find out more or how you can help, go to www.gvshp.org/trump.htm

From the Director

There's never really a quiet time for GVSHP. But the last several months have been particularly packed with issues of enormously broad implications, and the coming months promise to be even more so. Several precedent-setting decisions that will leave a lasting imprint upon our neighborhoods loom on the horizon—the shape of a 25-year campus plan by NYU; expansion plans by the New School; the outcome of a lawsuit challenging the City's approval of the Trump 'Condo-Hotel'; redevelopment plans by St. Vincent's Hospital; the fate of Pier 40; proposals for long-overdue historic districts in the South Village and NoHo; and plans for a sweeping 114-block contextual rezoning of the East Village. Collectively, these decisions will likely have a larger and more lasting impact upon Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo than any made in well over a generation.

That's why GVSHP must continue to take a strong leadership role on all of these fronts. While the challenges we face have grown exponentially, fortunately so too has our organization, due to the strong and growing support of our members. With this continued solid backing, I am confident we will be able to meet these challenges head on, and ensure the bright future we desire for our neighborhoods



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Want to help make GVSHP's 10th Annual Benefit House Tour possible, and receive complimentary admission to the tour?

If you're available Sunday, May 4, become a docent—contact docents@gvshp.org or (212) 475-9585 x39.

Would you like to spread the word about GVSHP, and help us build a stronger preservation organization?

Host a "friendraiser," inviting friends and neighbors to come hear from GVSHP representatives who will discuss our programs and latest initiatives, and how to get involved or help. To find out more or arrange one, contact gvshp@gvshp.org or (212) 475-9585 x32, or go to www.gvshp.org/fundraising.htm

Acknowledgements

GRANTS

GVSHP gratefully acknowledges the following for grants supporting our work over the last year: The Kaplen Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Felicia Fund.

We wish to acknowledge the generous support of the following elected officials: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer through the Department of Education, Councilmember Rosie Mendez through the Department of Youth and Community Development, and State Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymember Deborah Glick for securing funds through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

IN-KIND DONORS

We also acknowledge those who have generously provided donations, services, and space in-kind: Jennifer Bartlett, Bowne of Detroit, Roy Campolongo, The Caring Community, The Cherry Lane Theatre, Florence Prime Meat Market, Frederick Wildman and Sons, Ltd. and Mark Trujillo, Gourmet Garage, Alexander Kaplen, Jefferson Market Library, Judson Memorial Church, Murray's Cheese, Out of the Kitchen, Salviati, Shearman & Sterling, LLP., the Stephan Weiss Foundation and Graham Graham, Third Street Music School, Two Boots and Phil Hartman, and Wine & Food Associates and Rory Callahan.

New School 14th & 5th Building Plan Revealed

This fall the New School revealed details on their plans for a large new development on the corner of 14th Street and 5th Avenue, replacing their current 3-story facility. The planned new building would rise 17 stories straight up without setbacks to a height of 265 feet, plus mechanicals. GVSHP has let the New School know that we have concerns about the proposed glassy design, as well as the size of the building, which is partly the result of air rights they acquired from neighboring sites, and we intend to continue to push for changes to address such concerns. But the New School must secure approval for several zoning waivers for the current plan to move ahead. See www.gvshp.org/NewSchool.htm

*in
brief*

More Federal Houses Protected

In July two more of the thirteen federal-era (1790-1835) houses GVSHP and the NY Landmarks Conservancy proposed for landmarking were designated by the city. 486 and 488 Greenwich Street (nr. Spring Street) joined 127, 129, and 129 MacDougal Street and 4 St. Mark's Place (landmarked in 2004) and 67 Greenwich Street (2005), the other five of the "13" which have been landmarked. 94, 94 ½, and 96 Greenwich Street were heard but not yet landmarked in early 2007, and 7 Leroy Street, 57 Sullivan Street, and 2 Oliver Street have not yet been heard. See www.gvshp.org/federalrowhouses.htm

Pier 40 "Vegas-on-the-Hudson" Plan in Limbo

This summer GVSHP joined other community groups in turning out in record numbers for a public hearing to oppose plans by the Related Companies to develop a huge entertainment complex dubbed "Vegas-on-the-Hudson" on Pier 40 (at Clarkson Street). This fall we led a letter-writing campaign to the new Chair of the Hudson River Park Trust (which ultimately decides the fate of Pier 40) urging her not to approve this plan. The decision is on hold—for now—as the Trust allows a community coalition called the Pier 40 Partnership to put together a proposal for renovating the pier without massive commercial development. See www.gvshp.org/Pier40.htm

City Council Roundup

GVSHP and a citywide coalition of preservation groups successfully lobbied the Council for the second year in a row to increase the budget for the Landmarks Preservation Commission, a measure spearheaded by Councilmember Jessica Lappin. And GVSHP strongly supported a bill by Councilmember Mendez to prevent the destruction of landmarked buildings due to "grandfathered" building or demolition permits. GVSHP also strongly supported a bill by Councilmember Tony Avella to reduce the zoning bonus currently afforded for the construction of dorms and other similar "community facilities."

Billboard Battles Continue

GVSHP has established an illegal billboard tracking and monitoring system to report and seek the removal of these signs throughout our neighborhood. Though we face an enforcement and adjudication system that is extremely lax in its response to illegal billboards, we have succeeded in getting billboards removed in the Meatpacking District, the East Village, and Noho, and in getting violations issued against dozens more throughout the Village. But many, many more remain. Call or e-mail us to report an illegal billboard; see www.gvshp.org/GansvBlbd.htm



108 Avenue B, one of several locations from which GVSHP was able to get illegal billboards removed; many more remain, however.

Support Preservation: Join GVSHP

Your support makes GVSHP a more effective preservation leader. Contribute \$100 or more, and receive a set of Greenwich Village notecards. Contribute \$500 or more, and receive an invitation to a special event at a unique Village location.

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