



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

VICTORY—South Village Landmarking to Move Ahead!

*Phase II To Be Approved By December,
Includes Additional Sites GVSHP Fought For*

The Society scored two major preservation victories this spring. In March, our advocacy led to a commitment by the City to hear and vote upon “phase II” of our proposed South Village Historic District before the end of the year. In May, we helped secure expansion of the proposed district to include an additional thirteen buildings we fought hard to protect, including a row of ten 1840’s houses adjacent to MacDougal Sullivan Gardens, and two low-rise, contextual NYU buildings which, without landmark protections, could be replaced by a 300 ft. tall tower.

GVSHP has been fighting for more than ten years to get the entire South Village landmarked. One of the most historically rich parts of New York City, the South Village’s charming low-rise architecture tells the story of decades of immigrant struggle and success, as well as unparalleled literary, musical, and cultural invention and innovation.

But that legacy has been threatened by real estate development and encroachments by NYU, and in recent years we have seen more and more of the neighborhood’s distinctive and historic character lost to demolitions and alterations.

GVSHP has waged a concerted advocacy campaign to landmark this area, including



The corner of Minetta Lane and MacDougal Street, within the new proposed South Village Historic District.

phone, e-mail, and letter-writing campaigns targeting city officials, demonstrations and press conferences, a video campaign, and endorsements from local, state, and national groups for our landmark proposal. To help bolster our argument for landmark

designation, GVSHP documented the history of every one of more than 750 buildings in the proposed historic district, and commissioned an 82-page report by noted historian Andrew Dolkart arguing for the significance of the area and the merits of designation.

In 2010, the City finally landmarked “phase I” of our proposed district, most of the area north of Houston Street and west of Sixth Avenue.

Though they promised to follow closely with a second phase, they continuously failed to act, even as building after building in the proposed district was threatened or destroyed.

Then in 2011 the City agreed to consider a developer’s proposal to rezone the neighboring Hudson Square district to allow increased development in that area. This meant the City was ignoring its commitment to consider the community-requested landmark designation of the South Village while moving ahead with a developer’s proposal for increased development next door. GVSHP was quick to point out the inequity, and

that the Hudson Square rezoning would also greatly increase development pressure upon the South Village, accelerating its destruction if no landmark protections were offered.

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Hudson Square Rezoning Approved By City, City Council

*Plan Mostly Benefits Developers,
Doesn't Deliver on Trump SoHo Promises*

Earlier this year, the Hudson Square Rezoning was approved by Borough President Stringer, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council. While the rezoning deal included some commitments to extend landmark protections in the South Village which GVSHP fought hard to achieve (see story p.1), the rezoning itself was a mixed bag which mostly benefitted developers, and failed to deliver fully upon promises by city officials to prevent overdevelopment of the area in the wake of their approval of the Trump SoHo “Condo-Hotel.”

In 2006, GVSHP opposed construction of the Trump SoHo in Hudson Square. While the area’s zoning allowed new development of the enormous size and height of the planned tower, it prohibited new residential or ‘residential hotel’ construction, which the “condo-hotel” hybrid clearly was. GVSHP fought vociferously against the project, but ultimately it was given permits by the City, with the support of City Council Speaker Quinn and Borough President Stringer. They argued that the development was allowed by the zoning because it was a “transient” or traditional hotel, in which guests did not live there but rather stayed for limited periods of time. They were unconvinced by Trump’s own ads proclaiming the development a “residence.”



Map of Hudson Square Rezoning boundaries.

Instead, they promised to support a rezoning of the area to prevent further similar development, and to ‘clarify’ the zoning so definitions of hotels, residences, and residential hotels would be updated and improved.

Unfortunately, the Hudson Square Rezoning these officials approved, which was supposed to deliver on these promises, included no such clarifications. And while it contained some improvements in the zoning for the area, it fell far short of what was promised, and made some problems worse.

The rezoning for the first time allows residential development in Hudson Square.

While GVSHP does not oppose residential uses in Hudson Square, due to the extreme desirability and profitability of residential development in Manhattan, this new allowance necessarily means significantly increased development in an area already suffering from some of the worst traffic in the region, and a glaring lack of infrastructure such as recreational space. GVSHP argued that if incredibly lucrative



The rezoning failed to deliver on promises to prevent more Trump SoHo’s.

residential development were to be introduced in the area, the height and size of allowable new development should be significantly decreased and kept in context with the neighborhood.

While the new zoning did include some new height restrictions, it also explicitly authorized a new Trump SoHo-sized development at Duarte Square at the southern end of Hudson Square. And while the new height limits were lower than what was allowed under the old zoning, at as high as 290 feet, they were still significantly higher

than most of the handsome loft buildings which characterize the area, which seldom exceed about 200 feet in height.

Adding insult to injury, while city officials for years disputed our argument that the Trump SoHo was a residential development and therefore illegal, GVSHP discovered that the City’s own records, data, and environmental analyses of the area categorized the Trump SoHo as a residence. When GVSHP brought this to the attention of city officials, they responded with dead silence—even when media inquiries found that there was no evidence that any of their promised monitoring of the Trump SoHo for compliance with the zoning ever occurred.

For more information, see gvshp.org/hudsq and [/trump](http://trump).

East Village Preservation Roundup

Following Landmark and Zoning Success, Preservation Threats and Progress Continue

We have made tremendous progress on historic preservation in the East Village in recent years. In 2008 and 2010, we helped secure a rezoning of the entire neighborhood, replacing outdated zoning which encouraged high-rise and dorm development with 'contextual' rezoning which encouraged lower-scale development, retention of existing buildings, and residential rather than dormitory uses. In 2012 and 2013, the neighborhood's one small historic district was joined by two much larger ones, ensuring the preservation of hundreds of the neighborhood's most historically significant buildings on more than a dozen blocks.

But we still have a lot of work to do. GVSHP is working with a coalition of groups to propose and push for expanded landmark protections. Here are some of the other recent preservation challenges we have faced:

Old P.S. 64, 605 E. 9th Street: GVSHP is working with a coalition of local groups and elected officials to ensure the preservation of this historic building, and its return to a true community use. Built in 1906 by New York's premiere public school architect C.B.J. Snyder, it was converted to a beloved community/cultural center in 1977. In 1999 the building was purchased from the City by a developer, who has continuously sought to tear it down

and replace it with a huge dorm, at one time proposing a 23-story high-rise. In 2005 the building was landmarked, and the developer tried to prevent designation by destroying the school's architectural details and features. He has since let the building lay fallow and open to the elements, deteriorating markedly.

Now the developer is again seeking to turn the building into a dorm, rather than return it to a community/cultural center. GVSHP opposed the landmarks application for the dorm conversion, which would require changes to the exterior which we believe are inappropriate for the historic building. But we are also fighting the issuance of permits for the dorm conversion by the Department of Buildings, because the plan fails to meet the strict requirements for proof of a long-term lease

century, and included among its worshipers Sara Delano Roosevelt and Dorothy Day. Its beautiful architecture, inspired by Italian models, was immortalized by Allen Ginsberg in several poems written during the twenty years he lived across the street.

Unfortunately, the City has refused our request to consider landmark status for the church buildings to save them from demolition. We are now appealing to the developer to preserve the historic structures, which could easily be done by building on the much larger open yard next door which he also owns, while re-using these architecturally distinctive and irreplaceable buildings. See gvshp.org/mhoc.

Mezritch Synagogue, 415 East 6th Street:

In 2008, GVSHP and allies stopped a plan to demolish this historic synagogue, a mini architectural tour-de-force and the last operating tenement synagogue in the East Village, and pushed for landmark designation of the building. In 2013, it was included in the new East Village/Lower East Side Historic



Old P.S. 64 (l.), GVSHP and allies rally to save Mary Help of Christians Church (m.), and Mezritch Synagogue (r.); credit: Barry Munger).

from an accredited school before permits for a dormitory can be issued. See gvshp.org/ps64.

Mary Help of Christians Church, 436 East 12th Street: GVSHP and a coalition of groups are fighting to save this historic church, its school, and rectory from demolition by a developer. The church has been a centerpiece of immigrant life in the East Village for over a

District. Now, a new plan will turn much of the building into residences while allowing the small, financially-strapped congregation to continue to operate in the ground floor. GVSHP successfully called for some changes to a small proposed rooftop addition to ensure it was not visible and did not detract from the synagogue's striking façade. See gvshp.org/ev for more info.

NYU Expansion Battle Update

Court Challenge Continues As University Breaks Promises, Destroys History

When the Borough President, City Planning Commission, and City Council approved NYU's massive Village expansion plan last year—overturning zoning restrictions and long-standing urban renewal agreements, and turning over public green space for university development—GVSHP joined NYU faculty, fellow community and preservation groups, and Assemblymember Deborah Glick in suing to overturn the approvals. Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP are now representing us in the case.

Our Article 78 Petition alleges that the approval of the NYU plan was illegal because it gave away public parkland without state legislative approval, and because the government did not follow necessary procedures with respect to historic preservation, zoning requirements, deed restrictions, environmental impact laws, and public meetings.

A number of former public officials have filed affidavits in our favor, including former NYC Parks Commissioner Henry Stern and former Transportation Commissioner Christopher Lynn. Both claim that the four parks turned over to NYU in the plan—Mercer Playground, LaGuardia Corner Gardens, LaGuardia Park, and the Mercer-Houston Dog Run—were dedicated

by the City as public parkland, which is helpful evidence in our public parkland claim. The case is before a judge.

In other NYU news, this spring the city approved a zoning variance to allow NYU to add labs and other uses prohibited by zoning regulations to the building at 726-730 Broadway (at Waverly Place). The project also requires adding a 4-story rooftop mechanical addition to the building, located in the NoHo Historic District.

GVSHP strongly opposed approvals for this project for several reasons. First, the large addition is totally inappropriate for the historic district.

Secondly, however, SoHo and NoHo have unique zoning which strictly limits university uses, which has prevented these small but distinctive neighborhoods from being overrun by NYU expansion over the years, in spite of their close proximity to the university's "core." In granting this zoning variance, the City has chipped away at this zoning firewall which is so essential to preserving these neighborhoods' character.

Finally, when NYU sought approvals for its massive expansion plan, it promised that it was putting all its



NYU's Brittany Dorm, mid-renovation; casement windows, which matched the neo-Gothic design, were ripped out and replaced with modern single-pane windows. All the old windows were eventually removed.

plans on the table, and was for the first time being entirely transparent in its planning. But just days after they received their approvals from the City Council, NYU filed its application for 726-730 Broadway—plans which were never disclosed during the prior public approval process. Additionally, several NYU faculty members testified that the facilities NYU was planning to locate in 726-730 Broadway

were exactly the same facilities the university claimed would go into the new buildings in their massive expansion plan just approved by the City, further undermining the university's argument. In spite of this, none of the City Councilmembers nor the Borough President who approved the NYU expansion plan would speak out against or oppose this zoning variance.

Adding insult to injury, this spring NYU undertook a renovation of its Brittany Hall dorm at 55 East 10th Street (at Broadway), a meticulously-detailed 1929 Gothic-revival former apartment hotel meant to harmonize with the landmarked Grace Church across the street. NYU needlessly ripped out the multi-pane casement windows and replaced them with totally inappropriate single-pane windows which destroyed the building's delicate rhythm and harmony. GVSHP spotted the renovation in mid-process and called upon NYU President John Sexton to preserve the building's historic architectural details. Sadly, but not surprisingly, he refused.

See gvshp.org/nyu.

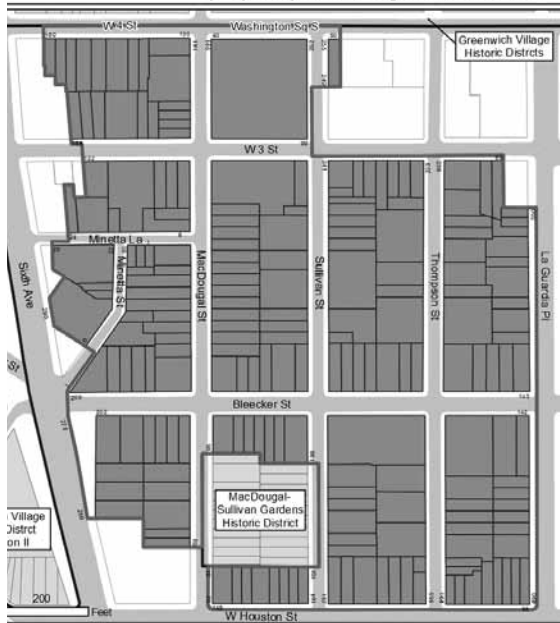


726-730 Broadway, where NYU received a zoning variance to build labs prohibited by the zoning.

South Village Victory continued from cover

GVSHP therefore led a campaign calling for the Hudson Square rezoning to be rejected unless landmark protections for the South Village were also approved. We helped generate thousands of letters, e-mails, and phone calls to public officials, especially City Council Speaker Quinn, who would ultimately decide the fate of the rezoning, and had the power to leverage

(Proposed) South Village Historic District



movement on landmarking the South Village from the City. Such a campaign demanding that a rezoning not move ahead unless landmarking also take place had never been waged before.

But with a lot of help and participation, we ultimately succeeded. The deal between the City Council and the City for the Hudson Square rezoning included a commitment to “hear and vote upon” landmark designation of “phase II” of our proposed South Village Historic District—the area north of Houston Street—before the end of the year (though the exact boundaries of what the City would landmark were not specified). Unfortunately, the deal only included

a commitment to “survey” the final phase of our proposed historic district, south of Houston Street, before the end of the year, with no commitment on a vote. This was nevertheless an enormous step forward, and a dramatic turnaround from the City’s prior stubborn resistance to any further action on landmark designation in the South Village.

When the City released its proposed boundaries for the “phase II” landmarking, they included by far most of what we proposed for landmark



NYU's Vanderbilt Hall (l.) and Kevorkian Center (m.), and 130-148 West Houston Street (r.), which GVSHP successfully advocated to have added to the proposed historic district.

designation, from early 19th century houses to turn-of-the-century tenements; the homes of groundbreaking institutions from Little Red Schoolhouse to the Children’s Aid Society; innovative 19th century reform housing developments such as the former Mills House No. 1 at 160 Bleeker Street; and sites where cultural innovators such as Eugene O’Neil, Louisa May Alcott, Jack Kerouac, Bob Dylan, and Jimi Hendrix lived, worked, or played.

But the proposed district excluded several sites from GVSHP’s proposed district, including a row of ten 1840’s houses at 130-148 West Houston Street which were originally built in conjunction with MacDougal Sullivan Gardens, as well as NYU’s Vanderbilt Hall Law School and Kevorkian Center on Washington Square South—atypically low-rise, contextual NYU buildings which do an admirable job of relating to the surrounding park and historic neighborhood. Each of these sites related to the South Village’s history

and architecture, and without landmarking, each could be replaced by grossly out-of-scale development—in the case of Vanderbilt Hall, a tower as high as 300 feet!

GVSHP immediately pushed for inclusion of these sites in the proposed historic district, calling upon Speaker Quinn and the City to support expansion of the boundaries. They eventually did, and the sites were added to the historic district now officially under consideration.

The next official step is a public hearing on the proposed district, scheduled for June 25th. A final vote will likely not take place before December, at which point we will find out how much of the proposed district the City will ultimately landmark (by law the City can shrink, but not expand, the proposed district boundaries when they vote).

GVSHP will fight to ensure that the entire proposed historic district is ultimately approved by the City, and none of the proposed sites are removed or demolished before the vote, which can happen. We will also continue to fight for landmark designation of “phase III” of the South Village, the historic but imminently endangered section of the neighborhood south of Houston Street, which the City has not yet committed to landmark.

For more information, see gvshp.org/sv.

Historic Plaque Marks PFLAG Founding

GVSHP was proud to partner with Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and the Church of the Village at 13th Street and 7th Avenue, for the placement of a historic plaque to mark the founding of PFLAG at the church in 1973. Forty years ago, PFLAG founder Jeanne Manford, a Queens school teacher and mother, held the first meeting here of what has come to be an international organization with more than 350 chapters and 200,000 members in the United States alone.



Historic plaque unveiling ceremony with representatives of GVSHP, PFLAG, and the church; elected officials; the Manford family; and attendees of the original meeting in 1973.

This plaque placement was somewhat bittersweet, as Jeanne died earlier this year at the age of 92, but her legacy lives on. GVSHP continues to document and highlight the extraordinary array of sites connected to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) history and the LGBT Civil Rights movement in our neighborhoods. We are also working with our partners to expand our historic plaque program to a variety of sites and facets of history throughout our neighborhoods.

See gvshp.org/pflag and [/plaque](http://plaque).

Proposed Hotel at 27 E. 4TH Street, Next to Merchant's House Museum

GVSHP continues to oppose the application for landmarks approval to construct a 9-story hotel with a glass-curtain façade adjacent to the landmarked Merchant's House Museum, New York's only 19th century home preserved on the interior and exterior. At a landmarks public hearing this past fall, GVSHP testified that the proposed construction could damage or

even undermine the Merchant's House, and that the scale and design of the proposed new building is inappropriate for the NoHo Historic District of which it is a part. This spring, the Landmarks Preservation Commission reviewed a revised proposal

for the new building, and withheld approval pending further changes, citing many of the concerns we and others raised. GVSHP will continue to work with the museum and neighbors to fight any plan which could threaten the museum or undermine the aesthetic integrity and scale of the NoHo Historic District.

See gvshp.org/27e4.

Bike Share Stations

GVSHP strongly supports efforts to increase pedestrian access to public space and accommodate non-traditional, non-polluting forms of transportation. Thus we were excited to hear that a bike share program was being established in New York, as has been done in an increasing number of cities around the globe.

However, we have had some concerns about the particulars and process for implementation, and have urged the City to make adjustments. As a historic preservation organization, our chief concerns revolve around the placement, design, and size of these stations within historic districts. We believe such stations, which have a significant visual presence, should require full public review and approval by the Landmarks Preservation

Commission, as do a wide range of other public and private projects, including much street furniture. We have urged the City to subject these stations to such a process, which has so far not taken place. We are confident that such a review would help address significant concerns which have arisen about the stations, while ensuring appropriate locations for their placement and operation.

See gvshp.org/bike.

*in
brief*



Proposed 9-story hotel at 27 E. 4th Street (l.), next to Merchant's House (r.).

From the Director

This is a wonderful time of year for GVSHP. Our Annual Benefit House Tour was our most successful fundraiser ever, opening the doors to beautiful homes throughout our neighborhood. And our Annual Village Awards gives us an opportunity to say thanks to some of the people, places, businesses, and organizations that make our neighborhood so special. This year's awardees are Avignone Chemists and Block Drugs, two of our neighborhood's oldest independent businesses; the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, protectors of an endangered historic slice of our neighborhood; NYU Faculty Against the Sexton Plan, outspoken and effective critics of the university's expansion; Jeremiah Shea, the recently retired head of the 9th Precinct Community Council for two decades; and Sir Winston Churchill Square, whose volunteers make this tiny slice of green bloom brilliantly.



We have other reasons to be grateful. After many years, we've finally gotten movement again on landmark protections for the South Village—a historic section of our neighborhood which, until just a few years ago, was entirely left out of the Greenwich Village Historic District, and which faces demolition threats. After a landmarking deal between the Council and the City left out key sites from the proposed historic district—including potential NYU development sites—we successfully pushed to have them added back in.

Over the course of the Bloomberg Administration, GVSHP has helped secure landmark protections for nearly a thousand buildings in the West, South, and East Village and NoHo. We've also helped secure community-friendly contextual rezonings of more than one hundred blocks of our neighborhood to help preserve their character and prevent overdevelopment. Come 2014 there will be a new administration in City Hall, and a new set of challenges. But with your help and support, GVSHP will be up to the task.



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We also wish to acknowledge the support of City Council Members Rosie Mendez and Margaret Chin, and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, through the Department of Education.

GVSHP Bulletin Board

Join our e-mail list for alerts and updates on important preservation and development issues—e-mail gvshp@gvshp.org.

Help the cause—Volunteer for GVSHP, or host a 'friendraiser', a free event introducing friends and neighbors to GVSHP. Go to gvshp.org/volunteer or gvshp.org/friendraiser.

Want to know about landmarks applications in your neighborhood? Visit our landmarks applications webpage, the only one of its kind in the city. You can view any application in the Village, East Village, Meatpacking District or NoHo for any proposed change to a landmarked building that requires a public hearing. You can find out when the hearings and votes will take place, how you can weigh in and affect the outcome, and sign up for alerts about the status of the application—see gvshp.org/lpc.

Visit GVSHP's blog *Off the Grid* for fun and fascinating glimpses into our neighborhoods' hidden history, eye-catching architecture, and colorful characters—gvshp.org/blog.

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