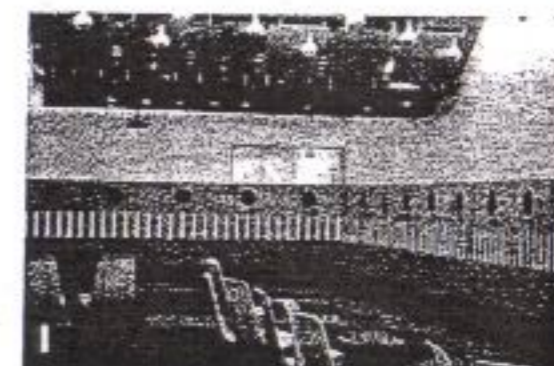
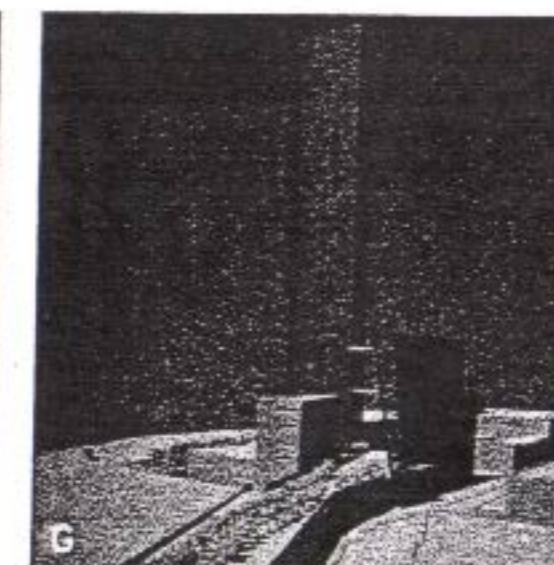
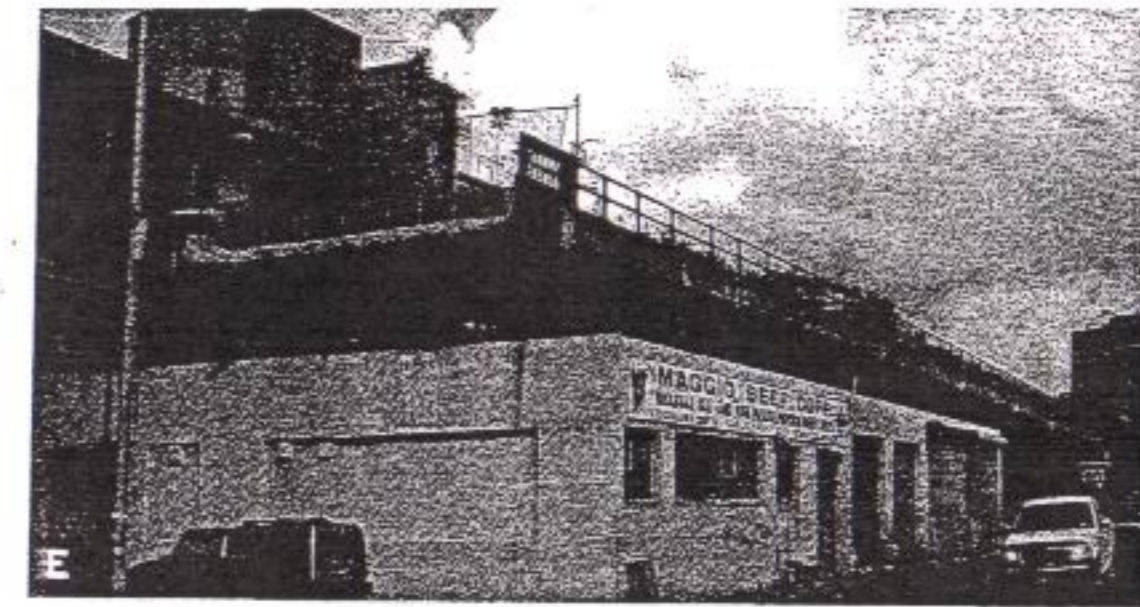
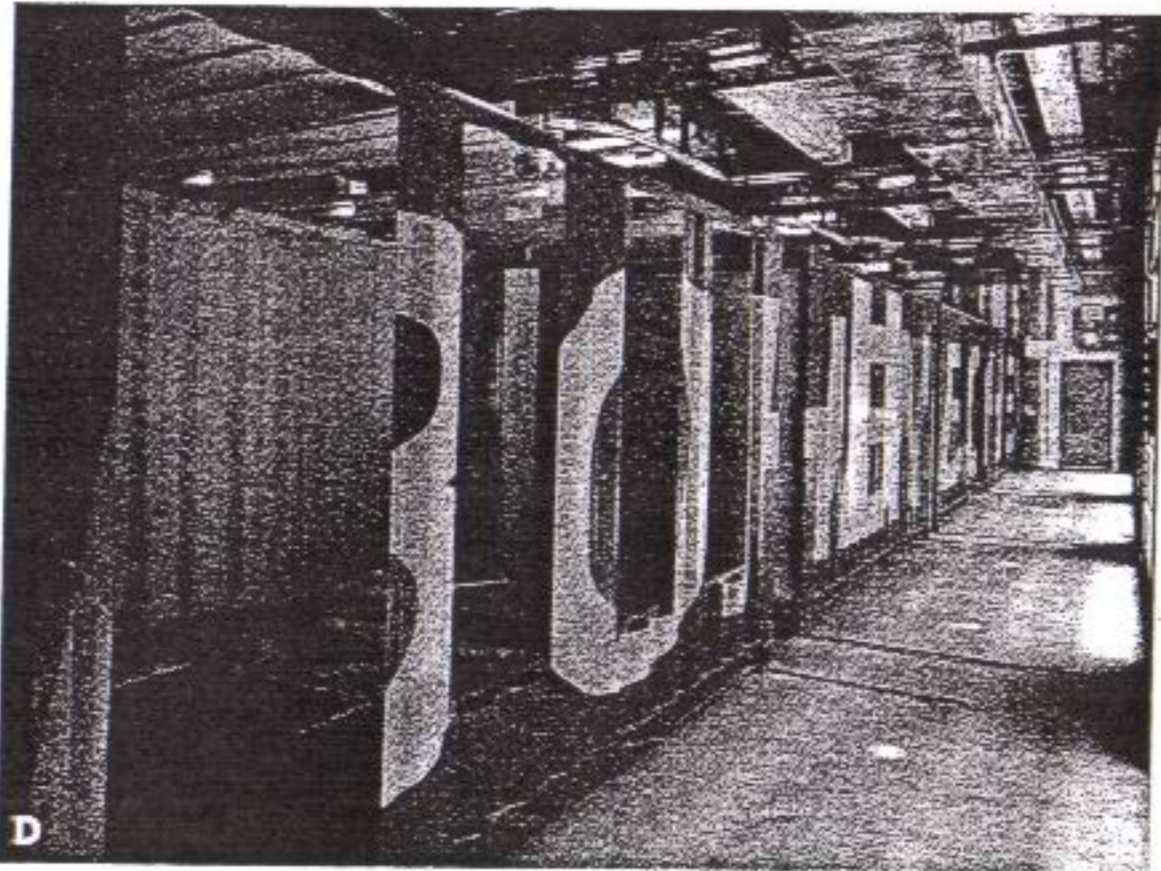
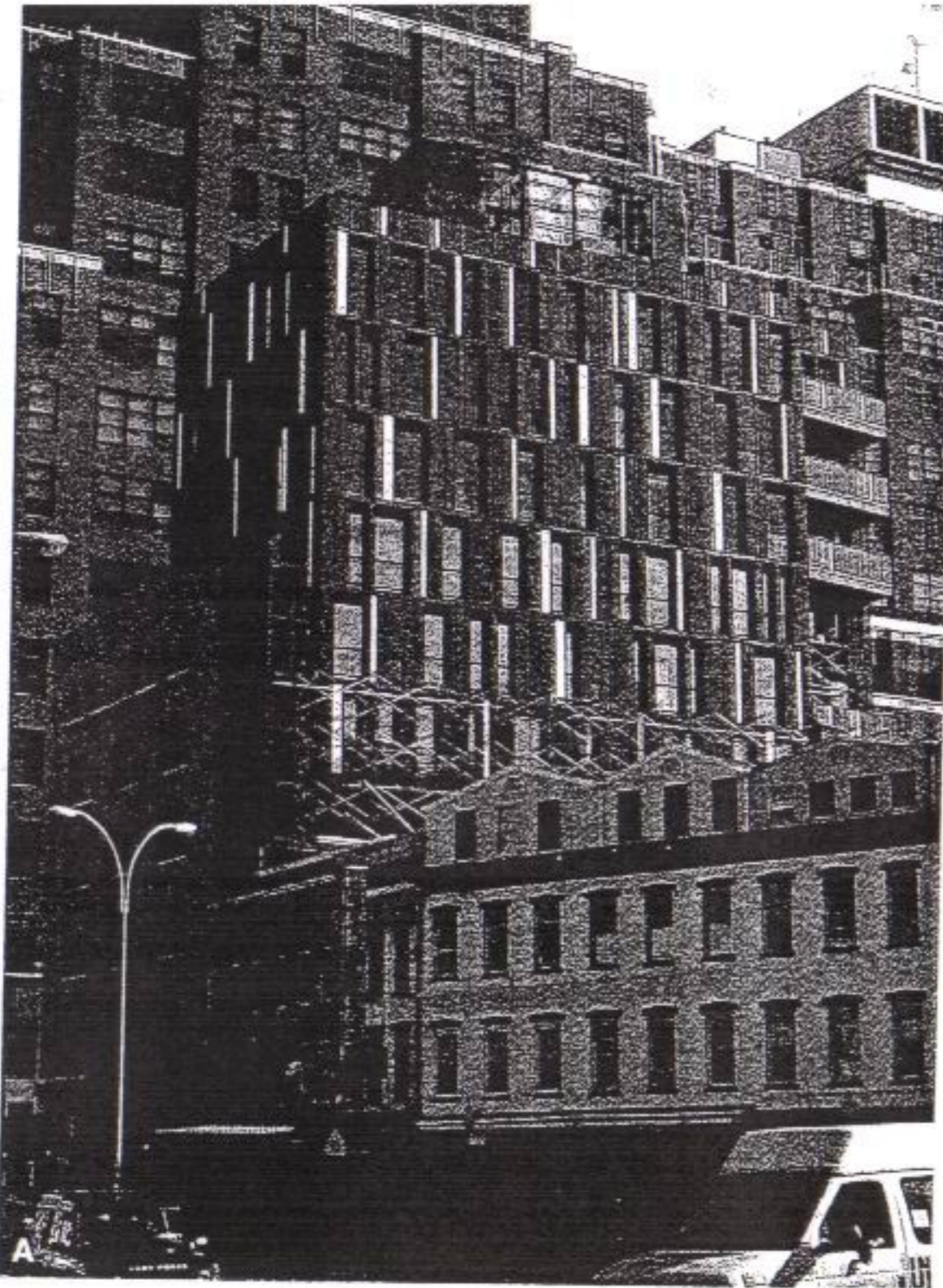


# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

## 01 11.10.2003

NEW YORK ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM

\$3.95



### Packed with Potential. Will the Meatpacking District's recently approved landmark status help—or hinder— its architectural edginess? *James Way reports.*

Like raw meat, trendy spots in New York have short shelf lives; however, the lure of Meatpacking District endures. For the past several years, the area has been a strong hook for hip restaurants, clubs, galleries, boutiques, and more recently, hotels, turned on by the grit (and gristle) of its still-active agri-industrial businesses. Beyond the romantic grunge appeal, there are plenty of practical reasons—for example, a supply of low-rise buildings with open-floor plans—that have made the Meatpacking District the most architecturally happening quarter of the city.

Lindy Roy has designed a new bar for an as-yet-undisclosed

site not far from the Vitra store, her first New York project. Over the summer, Asymptote unveiled its first retail environment, the flagship of Brazilian fashion designer Carlos Miele. Last year, Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano of LOT-EK completed the interior for the Bohen Foundation, a raw open space made flexible with exquisitely hacked shipping containers and exhibition walls that slide on tracks. Ali Tayar of Parallel Design just completed Pop Burger, a hamburger joint/lounge that's at once refined and funky. SHoP/Sharples, Holden, Pasquarelli is finishing a condominium tower—a ten-story glass and steel addition that's planted, parasitelike, atop a six-story 1905 brick warehouse. Mancini Duffy Architects is designing a new restaurant in the tip of highly visible triangular building at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Many more projects are on the boards.

The intense building activity has inspired the neighborhood's old-timers to try to monitor the nature and quality of new developments. One active group, Save Gansevoort Market, led by Florent Morellet, who opened his eponymous restaurant on Gansevoort Street in 1984, and Andrew Berman, Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHIP), lobbied successfully for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to land-

mark the area. As of September, the LPC must approve any new construction, demolition, or alteration of any existing building within the newly named Gansevoort Market Historic District, an area that reaches roughly from 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Horatio, Hudson to the West Side Highway.

Supporters of this effort are primarily concerned with preserving the characteristics that make the area unique—its intimate scale, rough texture, libertarian mix of uses. Had the neighborhood been landmarked, the problematic aspects of the 13-floor Hotel Gansevoort could have been mitigated. "It looks sterile, like a hospital," says one meatpacker. Morellet agrees that the zinc-and-glass cladding is inappropriate, as is its scale. "It doesn't fill out the lot line, which is important around here," says Morellet. "The building is piled on one end of the site, to push it higher because hotels can charge more for rooms with a view."

Locals are wary in particular of the introduction of high-priced residences, which threaten to drive up rents and force out existing businesses. The neighborhood's most controversial project is Landmark Development's 450-foot-tall hotel and condominium highrise, designed by Jean Nouvel. More than a year ago, residents vilified the project as inappropriate

in use and scale for its context. In response, Landmark's Stephen Touhey asked Nouvel for a revised plan, eliminating the residences and keeping the hotel and retail components, which he hopes will break ground in 2004 and be completed by 2006. At the base of the 34-floor hotel will be 32,000 square feet of retail space, filling the lot. The Highline runs through the site, and will be preserved, becoming a public "urban terrace" that is accessed from the building's second floor. However, in October, the GVSHIP staged a small protest, charging that the hotel is a Trojan horse, and will in fact house as many long-term residents as transient visitors.

Alternatively, there are those who insist that a mix isn't a mix unless it includes residences. Historian M. Christine Boyer keeps the point simple: New developments are fine, "as long as the meatpackers can stay."

Change is not just inevitable, but welcome to many. Says early settler Lignano of LOT-EK,

"We're not against change, as long as [the area] maintains diversity and tension." The potential danger of landmark status is that the neighborhood become frozen in a romantic image of the past. The LPC is currently advised by a review committee that includes Morellet and Berman, who are strong advocates of contemporary design, but there is no guarantee that the district won't fall into a more "by the books" administration, with Disneyfied results, once these open-minded protagonists are gone. Boyer offers South Street Seaport as a cautionary tale. The former maritime district was landmarked in 1977, with the similar intention of maintaining "authenticity." "But what the hell is authenticity?" Boyer asks. South Street Seaport ended up becoming a tourist-oriented shopping district, despite best intentions. "I fear the same thing might happen with the Meatpacking District."

JAMES WAY IS AN EDITORIAL ASSISTANT AT AN.

**A** The Porter House Condominium (Nov. 2003) 366 W. 15<sup>th</sup> St. Architect: SHoP/Sharples, Holden, Pasquarelli Client: Jeffrey M. Brown Associates 45,000 sq. ft.

**B** Hotel Gansevoort (Dec. 2003) 18 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. Architect: Stephen B. Jacobs Group PC Client: WSA Management Ltd. 133,000 sq. ft.

**C** Maritime Hotel (Apr. 2003) 363 W. 16<sup>th</sup> St. Designer: Eric Goode, Sean MacPherson Client: Eric Goode, Sean MacPherson, Richard Born, Ira Drukier 100,000 sq. ft.

**D** Bohen Foundation (Nov. 2002) 415 W. 13<sup>th</sup> St. Architect: LOT-EK Client: Bohen Foundation 15,000 sq. ft.

**E** Highline Gansevoort St. to 34<sup>th</sup> St. RFO to convert the Highline into a public park currently under development.

**F** Vitra (Nov. 2002) 29 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. Architect: ROY Client: Vitra 13,000 sq. ft.

**G** Landmark Tower (2006) 848 Washington St. Architect: Jean Nouvel Client: Landmark Development 170,000 sq. ft.

**H** Carlos Miele (June 2003) 430 W. 14<sup>th</sup> St. Architect: Asymptote Client: Carlos Miele 3,500 sq. ft.

**I** Pop Burger (Sept. 2003) 58-60 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. Architect: Parallel Design Client: Roy Liebenthal 3,000 sq. ft.

PHOTOS: A, B, C, E, J. JAMES WAY  
D: PAUL WARCHOL / COURTESY LOT-EK  
F: RICHARD BARNES / COURTESY ROY  
G: COURTESY LANDMARK DEVELOPMENT  
H: PAUL WARCHOL / COURTESY ASYMPTOTE