



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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October 18, 2011

Hon. Michael Bloomberg
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Christine C. Quinn
Speaker, NYC Council
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: Proposed Hudson Square Rezoning and Impact Upon the South Village

Dear Mayor Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn:

I write regarding the proposal by Trinity Realty to rezone Hudson Square, now beginning the Uniform Land Use Review Process, and its impact upon the adjacent South Village.

As you know, the South Village has been proposed for historic district designation by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP). That request for landmark designation has been supported by a broad range of community, preservation, and civic groups, as well as elected officials and the local Community Board. GVSHP first approached the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission about designation of the South Village in 2002, and in 2006 submitted a formal proposal with boundaries, documented history of each building, and a 90-page report and rationale for designation by noted architectural historian Andrew S. Dolkart. Since then the South Village has been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places by the New York State Historic Preservation Office. However, most of the neighborhood, including the area south of Houston Street adjacent to the proposed Hudson Square rezoning, has not been designated, heard or even calendared by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The expressed purpose of the proposed Hudson Square rezoning is to stimulate and facilitate a broader range of development in the Hudson Square area, by introducing currently prohibited residential development and conversions. According to the EIS Draft Scope of Work, the rezoning will "create a vibrant, mixed-use district that can attract and sustain an active street life and residential uses," which the application purports does not currently exist.

Such zoning changes to the Hudson Square area would no doubt have an impact upon the adjacent South Village neighborhood. Inevitably, if Hudson Square's zoning is changed to attract more people, businesses, and development, development pressure would increase upon the neighboring South Village as well. The South Village is composed almost exclusively of lower-scale buildings, many one hundred years old or more, which could easily succumb to increased development pressure. In fact, in recent years, within just two blocks of the proposed Hudson Square rezoning, six buildings in the proposed South Village Historic District have been demolished for new construction. More would no doubt be lost if this rezoning, intended to draw increased development to the area, moves ahead.

I therefore urge you in the strongest of terms not to allow the developer-requested Hudson Square rezoning to move ahead until and unless landmark designation of the adjacent proposed South Village Historic District, long called for by the local community, is considered as well. Without such action, the Hudson Square rezoning will only accelerate destruction of this historic neighborhood, which has suffered too much damage already. It would seem neither appropriate nor even-handed to move ahead with consideration and approval of this developer-requested rezoning while a community-requested historic district proposal has not been given due consideration.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

cc: Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Tom Duane
City Councilmember Margaret Chin
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Members of the City Planning Commission
Community Board #2, Manhattan