



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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March 15, 2013

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

via e-mail to rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov

Re: Proposed South Village Historic District

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write regarding the Landmarks Preservation Commission's recent commitments regarding the proposed South Village Historic District.

We understand that the Commission has agreed to hear and vote upon the area north of Houston Street before the end of the year, and has agreed to survey the area south of Houston Street before the end of the year.

This entire area is immediately endangered, and has lost many historically significant sites in the ten years since we first approached the Commission about designating this area. As you know, the nine month time frame for voting upon the northern section nevertheless leaves ample time for further demolition, alteration, and inappropriate new development to occur in this area, or for developers to simply secure permits to allow them to demolish, alter, or build – permits which then remain valid and can be used after landmark designation takes place. We expect the rate of demolition, alteration, and new construction, which has increased in recent months in anticipation of the Hudson Square rezoning, to accelerate even more quickly with the rezoning's approval later this month.

The southern section is no less immediately endangered, and we are deeply concerned that the Commission has not committed to do more than survey the area before the end of the year. As you know, a permit has been approved at 54 MacDougal Street for demolition of an 1820 house with connections to some of the most important figures in early New York and American history. Several other historic sites in this area, including 186 Spring Street, an 1824 house determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, have been demolished or are planned for demolition. The southern section, like the northern section, has been determined in its entirety eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and was, like the northern section, listed as one of the seven most significant and endangered historic places in New York State by the Preservation League of New York State. I thus urge you again to consider the southern section of the proposed South Village Historic District for immediate landmark designation.

As you know, GVSHP has performed primary source research documenting the history of every one of the buildings in the proposed district, both north and south of Houston Street. Additionally, we are in the process of compiling a State and National Registers of Historic Places nomination for the entire proposed South Village Historic District, which includes additional historic information about every one of these buildings. We offer this information to you and the staff of the Commission at your request to help expedite the process, and to move ahead with designation of both sections as soon as possible.

We have of course already provided you with an [82-page report](#) we commissioned by architectural historian and scholar Andrew Dolkart about the historic significance of this entire area, and the report "[The Italians of the South Village](#)" we commissioned by noted immigration scholar Mary Elizabeth Brown, which similarly documents the unique historic significance of this entire area. Both make the case for and the work of landmark designation much easier, and demonstrate the need to proceed with designation immediately.

I hope you will move ahead with landmark designation of this entire area as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director