



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

252 East 11th Street
New York, New York 10003

(212) 475-9585
fax: (212) 475-9582
www.gvshp.org

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February 7, 2007

Edward J. Fortier, Esq.
Director, Padlock/Sign Enforcement Units
NYC Department of Buildings
280 Broadway
New York, NY 10007
via e-mail to edwardf@buildings.nyc.gov

Re: 352 West 13th Street, Hotel Gansevoort

Dear Mr. Fortier:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Department of Buildings' inspection and investigation of the above-referenced double-billboard. As you know, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation is extremely concerned about these signs that are in the process of being erected, which are of the scale of billboards you would expect to see on an interstate freeway, as are the literally scores of neighbors we have heard from about them. I recognize and appreciate the swift and vigorous attention you have given to this matter, and appreciate the thorough response you have given to our letter of January 18 regarding this issue.

I appreciate that the Department is requesting additional information from the applicant, but recognize that under current conditions and with the information you have the Department believes the signs may be legal. However, I will re-raise two issues that you and I have discussed and ask that the Department investigate them further, as I believe they may ultimately prove the signs illegal:

- **Angle of the Signs in Relation to a Residential or Commercial District Boundary.** As it would appear that the signs may in fact be at less than a 90 degree angle from the boundary of the adjacent C1-6 district, I ask that this be re-measured. Additionally, however, in addition to the C1-6 and R6 districts from which the angle was mentioned in your letter, the sign appears to be within 500 feet of the boundary of a C6-2A and R6B district, and appears to face these district boundaries almost directly, rather than at the requisite 90 degrees. In light of this, I ask that the Department re-examine this issue with an eye towards disqualifying these signs on these bases.
- **Prohibition of Illumination of Signs Above 58 feet in Height.** The zoning text prohibits indirectly illuminated signs above 58 feet in height at this location. While only the lower of the two signs, with a height of 52 feet, is supposed to be indirectly illuminated, because the upper sign, which rises to 75 feet, is directly above the lower sign's illumination, we

believe the upper sign may in fact end up being indirectly illuminated as well. Should this be the case, this would make the upper sign out of conformance with zoning regulations.

I appreciate the Department's continued willingness to investigate this matter. Given the rapid proliferation of illegal billboards in this area (reported to the Department in previous letters), there is a great deal of distress over these newest signs as well as the many long-standing signs which are yet to be removed. I appreciate your commitment to act against those illegal non-arterial signs in the near future, as I believe that such action is essential to preserving the character of this neighborhood and ensuring that it does not turn into a "mini-Times Square." Should the billboards at 352 West 13th Street prove to be legal, we will continue to urge city officials, as we have before, to contemplate actions which would improve those regulations, and signs do not belong and are entirely unwelcome in this neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: DOB Commissioner Patricia Lancaster
DOB Manhattan Borough Commissioner Christopher Santulli
City Planning Chair Amanda Burden
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick