



November 17, 2005

Hon. Amanda Burden
Chair, New York City Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Potential East Village Rezoning and mid-block sites
between 3rd and 4th Avenues**

Dear Chair Burden:

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation is extremely encouraged that the Department of City Planning has begun the process of discussing a possible contextual rezoning of the East Village. GVSHP feels strongly that such a rezoning is very necessary for this area, and that few neighborhoods present as clearly uniform a built character as the East Village, which so easily lends itself to such a rezoning. Given the growing pressure for out-of-scale development in this neighborhood and the lack of attention to this issue in past years, it would be a great tribute to the Department to address this long-overlooked planning need. A contextual rezoning would go a long way to preserve the character and scale of what is one of New York's and the world's most distinctive neighborhoods. GVSHP intends to work closely with Community Board #3, local community groups, and the Department on this effort, and we strongly encourage all parties to move ahead as quickly as possible.

I must, however, also note the Society's strong desire to see the 3rd and 4th Avenue corridors and the mid-block sites in between included in a rezoning action. While we recognize that the width of these streets and the existing built context might warrant a different response than some other areas of the East Village, there can be no doubt that the current zoning is inadequate for ensuring an appropriate size and scale of development. The recently announced plans for a 26-story dormitory at 110-124 East 12th Street is a perfect example. This building, as-of-right under the current zoning, would place the tallest building in the entire East Village in the middle of a block on a narrow side street, where it will tower over the handsome historic loft buildings on Fourth Avenue and even over the large and bulky NYU dormitories nearby on 3rd Avenue, to say nothing of the much more modestly-scaled 19th century row houses, stables, ecclesiastical buildings, and local landmarks like Webster Hall which face or abut this site.

I understand that the Department has expressed a reluctance to consider changing the zoning for Third and Fourth Avenues. While I would ask that you reconsider this, I would also ask that the Department consider at least a rezoning of those mid-block sites between these two avenues, which could be done with or without including the avenues. These mid-block sites from 9th to 13th Streets are distinguished by a handsome array of pleasingly-scaled historic buildings, the scale of which the zoning should, but currently does not, reinforce. In light of their current ill-fitting zoning, a rezoning of these sites is warranted and quite necessary, and would be consistent with any effort to maintain and reinforce the defining

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character of the East Village. Thus I strongly urge the Department to consider including these sites in any possible rezoning plan that is considered.

Regardless, GVSHP looks forward to working closely with the Community Board, the Department, and other community groups on this rezoning effort, and remains very committed to that effort. We hope that a contextual rezoning for this neighborhood will move ahead as quickly as possible.

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: State Senator Tom Duane
Councilmember Margarita Lopez
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Councilmember-elect Rosie Mendez
Community Board #3
East Village Community Coalition
St. Ann's Committee