



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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October 17, 2013

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: Designation of Phase II and Phase III of Proposed South Village Historic District

Dear Chair Tierney,

I write regarding the second and third phases of GVSHP's proposed South Village Historic District, submitted to the LPC for consideration in December of 2006. Much of Phase II has been calendared and heard, and the Commission has publicly committed to vote upon designation before the end of the year. The Commission has also publicly committed to complete a survey of Phase III before year's end. Because of the extreme and increasing pressure both areas currently face, I urge you to schedule the vote upon Phase II as soon as possible, and to complete the survey of Phase III and move ahead with designation as soon as possible as well.

Regarding Phase II (north of Houston Street), as you know, even just during the time that the Commission has calendared and heard this area, permits have been granted for new construction which will compromise historic buildings on Minetta Street and Minetta Lane, two of the most picturesque thoroughfares in the proposed district. The losses prior to the Commission's actions have been even greater. There is little time to waste here.

The situation is equally urgent for Phase III (south of Houston Street), which the Commission is in the process of surveying. In letters to Speaker Quinn, you have indicated that Phase III "includes a number of modern intrusions and alterations" which "require extensive further study." As you know, we have conducted our own survey of the entire South Village and have found that Phase III contains a similar number of modern intrusions and alterations to Phase I and II, which the Commission has moved ahead with considering.

According to our survey, there were about 40 modern incursions in Phase I. In drawing the boundaries of the landmark district designated in this area (the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II), the LPC eliminated about 33 of these incursions, which were primarily located at the area's edges. In Phase II, we found about 27 modern incursions; the LPC's boundary for the proposed South Village Historic District eliminated about 10 of these which, as in Phase I, were largely found at the edges of the district as well.

These numbers are actually very similar to the number of modern incursions in Phase III. Our findings show that there are about 30 incursions here, many of which are also located at the edges of the district. We therefore hope and believe that the Commission's survey will find that Phase III of our proposed South Village Historic District is equally worthy of landmark designation, and the Commission will move forward with landmarking expeditiously.

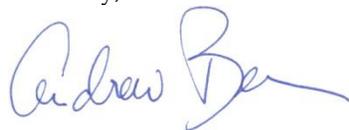
Partially as a result of the recently-approved Hudson Square rezoning, Phase III of the proposed South Village Historic District faces ever-increasing development pressure. The area has lost critical historic sites ranging from the National Register of Historic Places-eligible Tunnel Garage and house at 186 Spring Street (1824), as well as the Weeks-Ludlow house at 54 MacDougal Street (1820). Additionally, several dramatically out-of-scale projects are moving ahead within the district on Sixth Avenue and Sullivan Street.

Phase III and our entire proposed South Village Historic District have been found eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and the district is in the process of being placed on those lists. In addition, the South Village was named to the Preservation League of New York State's 2012-2013 "Seven to Save" list of the seven most important threatened historic sites from across the state.

While the number of "modern incursions" in Phase III is clearly modest and in keeping with other areas the Commission has designated, there is also a great wealth of historically significant sites here -- from the grand St. Anthony of Padua Church and Rectory (built in 1886, the nation's oldest extant Italian-American church) to the Citizen's Investing Company model tenements scattered throughout Sullivan and Thompson Streets. Furthermore, entire streetscapes remain virtually unchanged from well over a century ago, with details such as intact original wooden doorways and storefronts, cornices, lintels and ironwork maintaining an unparalleled visual connection to 19th and early 20th century New York.

I look forward to hearing from the Commission regarding its decision about the scheduling of a vote on Phase II, and the results of its survey of Phase III. This neighborhood and the city risk losing much important history if this action is not taken very soon.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Manhattan Borough President-elect Gale Brewer
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
City Councilmember Margaret Chin
City Councilmember-elect Corey Johnson
Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick
State Senator Brad Hoylman
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