



Greenwich Village

SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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GVSHHP was founded in 1980 to preserve the architectural heritage and cultural history of the Village



Save Gansevoort Market

The Save Gansevoort Market Task Force is made up of local residents, building owners, business leaders, and preservationists who are working to protect this historic area of New York. Under the auspices of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the task force conducts educational programs about Gansevoort Market and advocates its designation as an historic district. Gansevoort Market is unique and it is threatened. Anchoring the northwest corner of Greenwich Village, it has functioned as a market for the more than 150 years, first as a farmer's market, then a produce market and now a meat market. Buildings, awnings and streetscapes from its entire life span still exist and are still used, some for their original market purposes, others for new ones. Most of these buildings are unpretentious, but they are authentic and create a distinct sense of place. With real estate currently booming and the Hudson River Park developing, Gansevoort Market is vulnerable to radical change. Without adequate protection and education, the low-rise, brick-built character of this district is likely to disappear. Development does need to take place in order to keep this remarkable area thriving; but it has to be planned development that retains the scale and mood, the historic and architectural character of the area. Designation as an historic district is the way to assure compatible development. Without this protection, Gansevoort Market will vanish and so will a collective memory of the city's market life.



The Progress of the Save Gansevoort Market Task Force

In 1999, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation walked through Gansevoort Market with the Landmark Preservation Commission Chair, Jennifer Raab and her staff. LPC had to be convinced that there was architectural and historic merit for a new district. They offered that if the Society could make an argument that the Gansevoort area was a coherent district, LPC would entertain the possibility of a Gansevoort Market Historic District.

In response, the Save Gansevoort Market Task Force was formed. The Task Force worked to gain the support of the preservation community, the Community Boards, neighborhood activists and elected officials. (Even Mayor-elect Bloomberg wrote in September to say that he was a "strong supporter of the Gansevoort Market and maintaining its unique history.") Saving Gansevoort Market is important to many people and organizations around the city.

The Task Force retained the services of noted architectural historian, Thomas Mellins, to prepare a report for submission to the Commission. There were a series of meetings with LPC to discuss

the progress of his work. Through this process, LPC asked Mr. Mellins to extend the northern boundary of the district into Chelsea to include the Chelsea Market complex (formerly the Nabisco headquarters) and the Old Homestead buildings on the corner of Ninth Avenue and West 14th Street. We were told that they were looking forward to receiving our report and that they also had been looking into the area. Our final report was submitted October, 2001.

LPC acknowledges that the report makes a convincing argument that Gansevoort Market evokes a unique “sense of place” and tells a rich story about the market and industrial history of New York from the late 1800s to the 1930s. There is a special “urbanism” in the district created by low-rise buildings, metal awnings and cobblestone streets that combine into streetscapes that no longer exist anywhere in New York City. More importantly, the district includes several handsome buildings by architects of renown.

We urge you to contact the Landmarks Preservation Commission and ask them to calendar a hearing for the Gansevoort Market immediately. Our Task Force is eager to work with the Commission and provide whatever help they may need. We are willing to do additional research and we are working with a prominent group of architects and preservationists to develop design guidelines that LPC could use to regulate a Gansevoort Market Historic District, and to help to preserve this important and thriving neighborhood.

Please join us. With your vocal, moral and financial support, we can preserve this original market area for posterity.

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