



**Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation**

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New York, New York 10005

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www.gvshp.org

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October 1, 2012

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

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

Dear Chair Burden and Chair Tierney:

I write to call to your attention a new, further spate of planned out of character development in the South Village, and to again urge you to take action to preserve the scale and character of this historic neighborhood.

[Plans were recently filed for a 14-story building](#) at 180 Sixth Avenue in the South Village. Nearby at 140 Sixth Avenue/78 Sullivan Street plans have been [filed for a 19-story hotel](#). Across the street at 73-75 Sullivan Street plans have been discussed for an 8-story building. At 182 Spring Street, 178 Bleecker Street, and 209-229 Sullivan Street (the Children's Aid Society) there are further plans to destroy historic buildings or historic buildings have already been destroyed, and out-of-context development planned.

As you know, with the exception of a few relatively recent developments, the South Village is composed almost entirely of one to six story buildings, largely built in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its consistent scale and remarkable history as a center of immigrant and bohemian life in New York City has led to the New York State Historic Preservation Office to find it qualifies for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and the Preservation League of New York State to declare it one of the seven most important endangered historic sites in New York State.

To help preserve this scale and history, in 2005 the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation asked the Department of City Planning to rezone the area east of Sixth Avenue with contextual zoning to reinforce the character of the area (attached), and has repeated this request several times since. In 2002 GVSHP first approached the Landmarks Preservation Commission seeking landmark protections for this area, and in 2006 submitted a [formal proposal](#) with boundaries to the Commission. Neither agency has acted upon either request, and the character of this neighborhood has continued to come under assault.

The latest planned 14-story building at 180 Sixth Avenue is particularly concerning for a variety of reasons. It would replace several one to four story

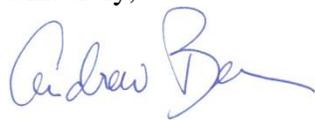
buildings, some of which (already demolished) were nearly 200 years old. It is surrounded largely by three to six story buildings, which it would tower over precipitously. It utilizes development rights from the God's Love We Deliver building at 170 Sixth Avenue/213 Spring Street, a formerly city-owned property given to this invaluable social service agency with the stipulation that it only be used for a community facility/social service. The utilization of its development rights for a private luxury residential development seems to contradict the terms under which this public resource was given away, and its comportment with those terms should be thoroughly reviewed.

The lack of action on these community-requested rezoning and landmarking actions is particularly frustrating in light of the speed with which developer-requested rezonings in the area – by NYU, Trinity Realty, Rudin Management, Peter Moore, and Jamestown Properties -- have moved through the public review and approval process, while your agencies have not even scheduled a hearing on these community-initiated requests.

Trinity Realty's currently proposed Hudson Square Rezoning is particularly worrisome in terms of the impact it would have upon the South Village. Trinity's own environmental impact statement identified for the rezoning application identified the South Village as an impacted historic resource, and in the statement the Landmarks Preservation Commission determined the South Village "landmark eligible." By increasing development pressure upon an area already clearly experiencing overwhelming pressure, the Hudson Square Rezoning will, if passed without landmark protections for the South Village, only accelerate the destruction of the cohesive and historic character of this neighborhood.

Thus as these out-of-scale developments and the Hudson Square rezoning proposal move forward, I urge you in the strongest of terms to move ahead with consideration of the proposed South Village Historic District as soon as possible, as the Landmarks Preservation Commission promised to do in 2009, and with a much-needed contextual rezoning of the area.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
Borough President Scott Stringer  
State Senator Tom Duane  
City Councilmember Margaret Chin

City Council Zoning Subcommittee Chair David Weprin  
City Council Land Use Committee Chair Leroy Comrie  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
Community Board #2  
Preservation League of New York State  
SoHo Alliance  
Bleecker Area Merchants and Residents Association  
Charlton Street Block Association  
VanDam Street Block Association



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October 1, 2012

Hon. Christine Quinn, Speaker  
New York City Council  
224 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1206  
New York, NY 10001

Dear Speaker Quinn:

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[Plans were recently filed for a 14-story building](#) at 180 Sixth Avenue in the South Village. Nearby at 140 Sixth Avenue/78 Sullivan Street plans have been [filed for a 19-story hotel](#). Across the street at 73-75 Sullivan Street plans have been discussed for an 8-story building. At 182 Spring Street, 178 Bleecker Street, and 209-229 Sullivan Street (the Children's Aid Society) there are further plans to destroy historic buildings or historic buildings have already been destroyed, and out-of-context development planned.

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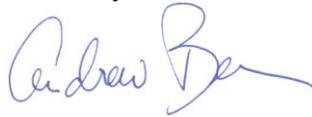
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Thus as these out-of-scale developments and the Hudson Square rezoning proposal move forward, I urge you to insist upon consideration of the proposed South Village Historic District as a condition for approval of the Hudson Square rezoning.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer  
State Senator Tom Duane  
City Councilmember Margaret Chin  
City Council Zoning Subcommittee Chair David Weprin  
City Council Land Use Committee Chair Leroy Comrie  
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Henry Hope Reed  
Alice B. Sandler  
Calvin Trillin  
Jean-Claude van Itallie  
Annie Marie Wiener-Summer  
Anthony C. Wood

January 11, 2005

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

Dear Chair Burden: *Amanda*

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's survey of the South Village has passed an important milestone, uncovering some important information that I would like to share with you.

As you may know, as part of our effort to preserve the special character of the South Village (the area south of Washington Square and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and LaGuardia Place/West Broadway), we have been performing a survey on this approx. 35-block, 800 building area (see attached map). That survey is now complete, and includes current photographs of and information about the number of stories, date of construction, architect, original and current use, and alterations to every building in the study area. Much of this information will be used for analysis for a possible proposal for historic district or landmark protections for the area, and for our efforts to highlight, honor, and commemorate the Italian-American immigrant history of this neighborhood.

However, our survey has also clearly documented the very consistent built environment of the area, a fact which lends itself to analysis and response by the Department of City Planning. We have discovered that over this 35-block area, there is an incredible consistency of built form; almost all buildings reach a maximum height of six stories (with a few exceptional pre-law tenements reaching 7 stories), and very few buildings are under 3 stories. With more than 90% of the buildings tenements, rowhouses, stables, or small-scale industrial loft buildings, there is a remarkable consistency to the building types and built form, creating a wonderfully cogent and unified urban built environment.

We hope to maintain this rare and irreplaceable character. Currently, however, the zoning for the area (almost entirely R7-2 and R-6) does not adequately preserve this built character, and as more and more development pressure builds, this will become a much greater issue in the area. One such example is 60 Thompson Street, a 12-story tower set back behind a plaza which violates the consistent built form of the area. We believe strongly that any new development in the area should maintain the area's streetwall and predominant building heights, which this building does not.

GVSHP would be very interested in discussing with the Department, along with the Community Board, elected officials, other community groups, and the public, adjusting the zoning in this area to reflect and preserve its character. I believe that you will find upon examination that the South Village is an ideal candidate for such changes. I look forward to hearing back from the Department how we might begin such a conversation.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

2005 - Our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year