

# VILLAGE PRESERVATION

GREENWICH  
VILLAGE SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION

## 2026 3rd Council Candidate Questionnaire Respondent: Carl Wilson

### Question 1

**Tell us about your track record on preservation — what are some preservation efforts you've supported or been involved with? What specifically did you do? What were you trying to save or stop?**

Preservation is about protecting the stories and culture of communities that define our neighborhoods.

In Chelsea, I worked alongside neighbors and preservation advocates to help save the historic Colored School No. 4. Through sustained advocacy, the building ultimately achieved landmark designation, ensuring its long-term protection. I also helped secure more than \$4 million for restoration work and worked with the New York City Department of Sanitation to establish a preservation inventory of historic elements inside the building, helping guarantee that important architectural features would be protected as the building is restored and adapted for future use. The goal was clear: preserve both the structure and the legacy it represents as one of the few remaining sites tied to 19th-century Black education in Manhattan.

I was also involved in efforts to ensure that the historic Chelsea Theological Seminary campus remained in the hands of an institution that would respect its historic presence in Chelsea. Working with community stakeholders, I supported advocacy to prevent inappropriate redevelopment and ensure the site would continue to be used in a way that honors its architectural and cultural significance. Today the campus is occupied by Vanderbilt University and is undergoing a thoughtful restoration project that preserves the historic buildings while giving them new life.

During my work on the Midtown South rezoning, I also helped identify and advance landmark protections for a collection of historic buildings, ensuring that key architectural resources in the district will continue standing for generations to come even as the neighborhood evolves and grows.

In the West Village, I helped author letters and organize groups of elected officials to advocate on behalf of the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. Working alongside community advocates, the goal was to prevent the loss of an important public facility and neighborhood institution that has served generations of New Yorkers.

More recently, I formally called on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to pursue landmark designation for St. Benedict the Moor Church following the demolition of its rectory. I submitted a letter urging immediate action, worked with community members to raise awareness, and made clear that this church is a cornerstone of Black Catholic history on the West Side. What we were trying to stop was the piecemeal loss of a historic campus that cannot be replaced once it's gone.

In each of these cases, and in many others, my role has been to organize, advocate, and bring together community voices and elected leaders to ensure that historically and culturally significant places are not overlooked or erased. Preservation is not just about buildings it is about protecting the living history and identity of our neighborhoods.

## Question 2

### **What are some policies that impact preservation that you have supported or opposed? How and why?**

I support strengthening and fully funding the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission so it can proactively designate culturally significant sites, especially those tied to Black, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and working-class history. I also support faster calendaring and greater transparency to prevent demolition by delay.

We must expand landmark protections where they guard against the destruction of significant historic fabric. Additionally, I've supported stronger tenant protections, because preservation must be paired with affordability.

I reject the false choice between housing and preservation. We can build deeply affordable housing while protecting the historic and cultural sites that define District 3.

## Question 3

### **How would you describe the role you think preservation should play in our city and our neighborhoods? How does it fit into the broader picture of your vision for New York and the 3rd Council District?**

Preservation should be a tool for protecting communities and their culture. In District 3, preservation plays a critical role in safeguarding the layered history of the West Side: Black history, LGBTQ+ history, immigrant history, and the working-class institutions that give our neighborhoods character. When we protect culturally significant sites and historic blocks, we protect the stories and identities that make this district more than just valuable real estate.

But preservation cannot exist in isolation. In my broader vision for New York, it must be paired with affordability, tenant protections, and smart housing growth. Landmarking a building means little if long-time residents, small businesses, and houses of worship are priced out. That's why I see preservation as one piece of a larger strategy: protect what matters, prevent displacement, and build many types of housing in ways that respect neighborhood context.

For District 3, that means honoring our historic fabric while ensuring the West Side remains livable for working people. My goal is a city where growth does not erase history and where preservation serves the people who live here.

#### Question 4

**How would you compare the kind of city Councilmember you would be on preservation and development issues as compared to the most recent 3rd Council District representative, Erik Bottcher? Be specific about policies or approaches you agreed with or would continue, as well as those you disagreed with or would handle differently. Feel free to also make similar comparisons to prior occupants of this position, like Corey Johnson, Christine Quinn, or Tom Duane.**

I served as Chief of Staff to State Senator Erik Bottcher and as Community Board 4 liaison to former Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and I am proud of the work we did to preserve landmarks in our community while also encouraging responsible development. I am honored to have their endorsements, along with former Speaker Christine Quinn. I believe preservation and development must serve our communities, not just real estate interests.

Each of these Council Members presided over significant expansions of landmark protections. I would continue the strong commitment these leaders showed to protecting neighborhood character, expanding landmark districts, and pushing for affordable housing. District 3 has benefited from elected officials who understand that preservation is not an obstacle to progress but an essential part of maintaining what makes our neighborhoods unique.

Where I would place additional emphasis is on proactive preservation. That means moving more quickly to identify and protect culturally significant sites, particularly those tied to Black history and LGBTQ+ history that have historically been overlooked in traditional preservation efforts. It also means recognizing the importance of protecting the small-scale commercial corridors and historic streetscapes that define neighborhoods like the Village, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen.

I would also work to formally recognize the long-identified Paddy's Market Historic District in Hell's Kitchen, which has been a priority of Manhattan Community Board 4 for many years. Protecting this area would help preserve an important piece of Hell's Kitchen's immigrant and working-class history while ensuring that the neighborhood's architectural character is maintained.

#### Question 5

**Under previous Mayors, the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center was closed for five years without repairs, with Mayor Adams then proposing to demolish rather than repair it as had been promised. Would you pledge to oppose any plan to demolish the center, including opposing City funding to do so which the City Council would have to approve in its budget? Would you pledge to fight to see the center repaired, restored, modernized, and reopened, and to secure funding if needed to ensure this takes place, and to do so in a way consistent with preserving the landmarked building?**

The Tony Dapolito Recreation Center is a landmarked public facility and a vital community resource. Allowing it to sit closed for years without repairs is unacceptable. I support a solution that preserves the historic character of the building while restoring it to active use, and I would oppose City funding for demolition.

I share the position of Congressman Dan Goldman, State Senator Brian Kavanaugh, former Council Member and current State Senator Erik Bottcher, and Assemblymember Deborah Glick who have called, at a minimum, for retaining the visible façade while creating

modernized recreation space within. It is clear that the current facility does not fully meet the needs of the local community, and the building must be revamped. That work can and should be done in a way that respects its landmark status.

This means working closely with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to ensure any rehabilitation preserves the historic structure while bringing the building up to modern standards for safety, accessibility, and sustainability.

As Council Member, I would push to secure the capital funding needed to restore and reopen the center, and I would use the Council's oversight authority to demand transparency, clear timelines, and accountability from the administration so the community finally gets the recreation center it deserves.

### Question 6

**The plan to develop 388 Hudson Street is an enormous tower in a woefully out-of-context design, sitting on top of a huge base that's intended to replace the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. The number one piece of feedback about the proposed project during the "public engagement" process was to keep the planned building low and squat, step it back from JJ Walker Park to preserve light, and keep the scale and design contextual. Mayor Adams' chosen design ignored all this input. Would you pledge to demand changes to the proposed project along these lines as a condition of your support for the required rezoning and other approvals? Would you also pledge to condition your support on ironclad mechanisms for ensuring the housing remains affordable in perpetuity, which so far have not been offered?**

The proposal for 388 Hudson Street presents a rare opportunity to deliver 100% affordable housing in the West Village, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the country that is in desperate need of more affordable housing. Opportunities to build deeply affordable housing in this part of Manhattan are extraordinarily limited, and any proposal that advances that goal is critical. Ensuring that affordability remains the central priority of this project must guide the process.

At the same time, design matters. Major projects should respect the surrounding neighborhood and public realm. I would work with stakeholders — including Manhattan Community Board 2, local residents, and city agencies — to demand a design that makes the building better relate to the Village context and JJ Walker Park. Thoughtful changes to massing, step-backs, or façade treatment could help the project feel more rooted in the neighborhood rather than overly futuristic or out of place.

Equally important, any project of this scale must include ironclad guarantees that the housing remains affordable in perpetuity. If we are creating new housing on a public site in the West Village, it should remain permanently affordable for the New Yorkers who need it most. It must also have AMIs that accommodate a range of low and moderate income levels.

My goal would be to ensure the project succeeds on both fronts: delivering desperately needed affordable housing while producing a building that contributes positively to the neighborhood and reflects meaningful community engagement.

## Question 7

**Mayor ADAMS' plan for "Gansevoort Square" also ignored community input, choosing a 600-ft.-tall tower that would include super-luxury housing. Village Preservation and hundreds of residents have called for reducing the height of the building by 50-75%, and eliminating all market-rate housing from the project. Would you pledge to demand the same as condition for your support for the required rezoning and other approvals?**

The Gansevoort Square site offers an important opportunity to create new housing in the West Village and Meatpacking District, two neighborhoods where new residential development is extremely rare. At a time when affordability is the defining challenge facing New York City, we should be looking carefully at how publicly controlled sites like this can help deliver housing that working New Yorkers can actually afford.

At the same time, I believe there were legitimate concerns raised about the scale and height of the proposed 600-foot tower. Many residents and preservation advocates felt the proposal did not adequately reflect the surrounding neighborhood context or the feedback that emerged during the public engagement process. With a new mayor taking office and new leadership expected at the New York City Economic Development Corporation, we have an opportunity to reevaluate this project and ensure that community input is taken seriously.

I would support revisiting the height, massing, and overall program of the project to determine whether a more contextual design could still deliver significant public benefits. At the same time, I believe the City should be doing everything possible to maximize permanently affordable housing on publicly owned land. If the public is contributing land or other resources, the outcome should prioritize affordability for the long term.

My goal would be to strike a responsible balance: advancing the city's housing and affordability goals while ensuring that development at Gansevoort Square respects the surrounding neighborhood and reflects a more thoughtful planning process than what has occurred so far.

## Question 8

**Village Preservation is fighting for landmark designation of the endangered original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street, which was NYC's very first Spanish-language church. Would you support this effort and call on the Landmarks Preservation Commission to landmark the building?**

Yes. I would support landmark designation of the original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street and would call on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar and designate the building.

As New York City's first Spanish-language church, it represents an essential chapter of Latino and immigrant history in our city. Sites like this tell the story of who built our neighborhoods and how communities of faith created support systems for newly arrived New Yorkers. Once they are gone, that history cannot be replaced.

If elected, I would advocate directly with the Mayor Mamdani and the LPC for landmark designation and work with preservation groups, faith leaders, and local residents to elevate the urgency of protecting the building. Preservation must reflect the full diversity of our city's history — and safeguarding this church is part of that responsibility.

## Question 9

**There has been an appalling lack of accountability by either city agencies or developers for severe damage to landmarked buildings in the 3rd Council District, including 14-18 Gay Street, 16-20 Christopher Street, 10 Fifth Avenue, and 44-54 Ninth Avenue and 351-355 West 14th Street, all of which have resulted in rent-regulated tenants, many of whom were elderly, being displaced. What would you do about the increasingly common problem of developers being allowed to damage or destroy older or landmarked buildings in violation of existing rules and regulations, often destroying rent-regulated housing and displacing long-term tenants, and the City doing little or nothing about it?**

What's happened at these sites is unacceptable. When developers damage landmarked or older buildings and displace rent-regulated tenants with minimal consequences, it undermines both preservation and housing stability.

I will demand significantly stronger enforcement and penalties, real fines, automatic stop-work orders for serious violations, and public reporting when landmarked properties are compromised. Demolition by neglect or reckless construction cannot be tolerated.

We need stronger tenant protections: criminal penalties for landlords who harass tenants, guaranteed right of return at the same regulated rent, full temporary relocation assistance if needed, and strict oversight. I will use the Council's oversight authority to hold agencies like the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and DOB accountable for enforcement failures.

Preservation without enforcement is meaningless, and developers who displace tenants through damage must face real consequences.

## Question 10

**What is your position on "City of Yes" and policies like it, which increase the allowable height and bulk of very expensive market rate development with no affordability requirements?**

I support the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity because New York City's housing shortage is driven in part by zoning rules that make it impossible to add new homes in many parts of the city. For decades, large areas outside Manhattan have been limited to suburban style housing. Allowing modestly more housing in appropriate places is an important step toward addressing the broader housing crisis and reducing pressure on rents citywide.

At the same time, expanding housing opportunities must be done thoughtfully and with respect for neighborhood character and historic resources. Preservation and growth are not mutually exclusive. New housing can and should be added in ways that protect landmarked buildings, respect historic districts, and maintain the qualities that make our neighborhoods special.

City of Yes is ultimately a framework. In districts like ours, the Council Member will continue to play a major role through the land use process and through negotiations with the administration to ensure that new development meets community needs. That includes advocating for stronger affordability commitments, thoughtful design, and projects that contribute positively to the surrounding neighborhood.

As Council Member, I would work to ensure the goals of City of Yes are realized responsibly. New York needs more housing, but it must be housing that serves New Yorkers across a range of incomes while protecting the historic and cultural fabric that defines our communities.

## Question 11

**What was your position on ballot measures 2-4, which were voted upon in 2025, and which gave the Mayor vastly increased power to make unilateral decisions about development in NYC neighborhoods, including largely unaffordable market-rate development?**

Like the majority of New Yorkers, I supported ballot measures 2–4 in 2025. For too long, our land use system has allowed individual Council Members like Vicky Paladino to effectively veto all new housing in their districts. That dynamic has made it far too easy for a small number of elected officials to block new homes, even as the city faces a severe housing shortage. I agree with Mayor Zohran Mamdani and others who believe the system cannot continue to function that way. One Council Member should not be able to stop nearly all housing construction in their district while the rest of the city struggles with rising rents and limited supply.

At the same time, stronger planning authority must still include meaningful community input and a clear role for the City Council in shaping land use decisions. As a Council Member, I would work to ensure these powers are used responsibly so that new development improves affordability and fits thoughtfully within neighborhood contexts.

## Question 12

**What is your position on the city’s current “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” program, which allows for massive increases in the allowable size of primarily market-rate developments in exchange for setting aside a fraction of the development (a much smaller fraction than the increase in the allowable size of development) at below market rate, though those units will still, overall, be unaffordable to the majority of NYC renters and about half of NYC residents? Do you think this is a worthwhile tradeoff, given that the large increases in allowable size of development encourage the demolition of existing older housing stock, which often contains more affordable housing than the new development?**

The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program is currently one of the only tools the city has to require permanently affordable housing as part of new development. At a time when New York is facing a severe housing shortage, we have to use every available tool to create more affordable homes.

We must also recognize concerns about the potential loss of older housing stock and historic fabric that can accompany rezonings. Older buildings often contain naturally occurring affordable housing and contribute to the architectural character that makes neighborhoods like the Village, Chelsea, and Hell’s Kitchen so distinctive. Recognizing the importance of those assets should remain an important part of our planning process.

I would support efforts to strengthen the program so it produces more deeply affordable housing and a larger share of affordable units within new developments. The goal should be to ensure that when additional development rights are granted, the public receives meaningful and lasting affordability in return.

Ultimately, addressing the housing crisis requires a balanced approach: preserving important historic and existing housing where appropriate while also allowing thoughtful growth that produces permanently affordable homes for New Yorkers.

### Question 13

**What was your position on the state legislature allowing the lifting of the floor area ratio cap for residential development in NYC, which enabled the possibility of developments like the planned 600-ft.-tall tower on Little West 12th and West Street at “Gansevoort Square,” and will allow much additional ultra-tall, ultra-dense development in residential neighborhoods?**

I supported lifting the residential FAR cap in New York State. At a time when we are facing the worst housing shortage in decades, maintaining an arbitrary citywide limit on residential floor area does not make sense.

There are many areas where additional residential density is appropriate and necessary, particularly in places like Hudson Yards and other high-density corridors where infrastructure can support it. Lifting the cap allows the City to plan for housing growth more rationally rather than being constrained by an outdated blanket restriction.

At the same time, individual projects should still be evaluated through the land use process to ensure they are appropriate for their context and contribute to the city’s housing and affordability goals.

### Question 14

**In recent years, the number of new landmark designations in NYC has dropped precipitously, to unprecedented levels in the history of the landmarks law. The few designations taking place are rarely endangered buildings or neighborhoods facing immediate threats, but often honorifics for sites already landmarked, otherwise protected, or facing no foreseeable or even possible threat. Do you think the city is doing enough to recognize and protect our history, especially the diverse histories of underrepresented groups which current preservation efforts particularly focus upon? If you don’t think the City is doing enough, what would you do to try to effect change?**

No, I do not believe the City is doing enough. When the number of new landmark designations drops to historic lows, and the few that move forward are largely symbolic or non-endangered sites, it signals a system that is reactive at best. Preservation should not be limited to honorific recognitions after the threat has passed, it should be a proactive tool to protect buildings and neighborhoods facing real development pressure.

This is especially urgent when it comes to the histories of underrepresented communities, Black, Latino, Asian, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, whose cultural sites have too often been lost before they were ever formally recognized.

If elected, I will push for reforms at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to increase transparency around calendaring decisions, establish clearer timelines for evaluating eligible sites, and prioritize endangered properties. I will also advocate for dedicated funding and staff to proactively survey and document culturally significant sites before they are threatened.

I will use the Council’s oversight authority to hold hearings on the decline in landmark designations and demand accountability for delays. Preservation should reflect the full, diverse history of our city. It should function as real protection, not just recognition after the fact.