

AIA New York Chapter

The Founding Chapter of The American Institute of Architects



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

December 10, 2007

Dear Chair Tierney,

On behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and our more than 4,000 architect and public members, we urge you to move ahead with a study to consider the designation of the proposed South Village Historic District. The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, with distinguished architectural historian Andrew Dolkart, has produced a report that is detailed and thorough, and it merits evaluation by the Commission as soon as possible. As you know, we have an especially keen interest in the progress of the GVSHP's proposal.

The streets of the South Village are lined with a rich array of buildings of architectural, historical, and cultural significance. The tenements, row houses, industrial lofts, churches, and other buildings in the area reflect the changing character of life in New York over a period of two hundred years. Andrew Dolkart describes the South Village as an archetypal immigrant community from the last great wave of immigration, with perhaps New York's finest compliment of intact working class architecture from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He describes "the incredible concentration of tenements of every style and configuration – pre-law, old law, new law, Neo-Grec, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Beaux Arts – is virtually unrivalled in New York... and within its boundaries are more than fifty intact rowhouses in the Federal style (1800-1835) and twenty-five in the Greek Revival style (1835-1850)."

We also urge you to consider the immediate designation of the special historic buildings at 233-237 Bleecker Street. Constructed in the early 1800's, these iconic buildings are located at a critical intersection (Carmin Street) in the South Village and are worthy of individual designation. There is significant research compiled by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation documenting their early history, their relationship to important historic events, and their possible connection to the Edward Hopper painting, "Early Sunday Morning". These rare, historic early 19th century structures face the continuing threat of insensitive alterations and possible demolition.

We hope to hear from you soon, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joan Blumenfeld
2007 Chapter President



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Co-Chair, AIA Historic Buildings Committee

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