



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 5, 2003/Calendar No. 16

N 040122 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated September 19, 2003, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Gansevoort Market Historic District which consists of the property bounded by a line beginning at the northeast corner of Horatio and West Streets, extending northerly along the eastern curbline of West Street to the southeast corner of West and Gansevoort Streets, easterly along the southern curbline of Gansevoort Street to the southeast corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets, northerly and northeasterly along the eastern curbline of Washington Street to the southeast corner of Washington and West 13th Streets, northwesterly across Washington Street to the southwest corner of Washington and West 13th Streets, northeasterly along the western curbline of Washington Street, northwesterly along the southern property lines of 440 through 446-448 West 14th Street, northeasterly along the western property line of 446-448 West 14th Street and a line extending northeasterly to the northern curbline of West 14th Street, southeasterly along the northern curbline of West 14th Street to a point on a line extending southwesterly from the western property line of 439-445 West 14th Street (aka 438-440 West 15th Street), northeasterly along said line and the western property line of 439-445 West 14th Street (aka 438-440 West 15th Street) to the southern curbline of West 15th Street, southeasterly along the southern curbline of West 15th Street to a point on a line extending northeasterly from the eastern property line of 439-445 West 14th Street (aka 438-440 West 15th Street), southwesterly along said line and part of the eastern property line of 439-445 West 14th Street (aka 438-440 West 15th Street), southeasterly along the northern property line of 421-435 West 14th Street and a line extending southeasterly to and along the northern property line of 409-411 West 14th Street, northeasterly along part of the western property line of 407 West 14th Street, southeasterly along the northern property lines of 407 and 405 West 14th Street, southwesterly along part of the eastern property line of 405 West 14th Street, southeasterly along the northern property line of 401-403 West 14th Street (aka 47-59 Ninth Avenue) and a line extending southeasterly to the eastern curbline of Ninth Avenue, northeasterly along the eastern curbline of Ninth Avenue to a point on a line extending northwesterly from the northern property line of 60 Ninth Avenue, southeasterly along said line and the northern property line of 60 Ninth Avenue, southwesterly along the eastern property lines of 60 through 56 Ninth Avenue and part of the eastern property line of 44-54 Ninth Avenue (aka 355-357 West 14th Street), southeasterly along the northern building line of 351-353 West 14th Street, southwesterly along part of the eastern property line of 351-353 West 14th Street and a line extending southwesterly to the northern curbline of West 14th Street, northwesterly along the northern curbline of West 14th Street to the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and West 14th Street, southwesterly across West 14th Street to the southwest corner of West 14th and Hudson Streets, southerly along the western curbline of Hudson Street to the southwest corner of Hudson and West 13th Streets, northwesterly along the southern curbline of West 13th Street, southwesterly along the eastern curbline of Ninth Avenue, southeasterly along the northern property lines of 5 Little West 12th Street (aka 2-8 Ninth Avenue) through 1 Little West 12th Street, southwesterly along the eastern property line of 1 Little West 12th Street to the northern curbline of Little West 12th Street, westerly along the northern curbline of Gansevoort Street to a point in the center of Hudson Street, southerly along a line in the center of Hudson

Street to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 639-½ Hudson Street, westerly along said line and the southern property line of 639-½ Hudson Street, northerly along the western property line of 639-½ Hudson Street, westerly along part of the southern property line of 641 Hudson Street, northerly along part of the western property line of 641 Hudson Street, westerly along the southern property line of 36-40 Gansevoort Street (aka 831-835 Greenwich Street) and a line extending westerly to a point on a line in the center of Greenwich Street, southerly along a line in the center of Greenwich Street to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 838-840 Greenwich Street, westerly along said line and the southern property line of 838-840 Greenwich Street, northerly along part of the western property line of 838-840 Greenwich Street, westerly along the southern property lines of 52-58 through 60-68 Gansevoort Street and part of the southern property line of 803-807 Washington Street, southerly along the eastern property lines of 803-807 and 799-801 Washington Street and a line extending southerly to a point on a line in the center of Horatio Street, westerly along a line in the center of Horatio Street, and northerly along a line extending southerly from the eastern curblineline of West Street, to the point of beginning, by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on September 9, 2003 (List No. 349, LP 2132).

Pursuant to Section 3020.8 (a) and (b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

The Gansevoort Market Historic District consists of 104 buildings and comprises portions of ten blocks in the northern portion of the West Village neighborhood and the southern portion of the Chelsea neighborhood in Community Districts 2 and 4 in Lower Manhattan. The Greenwich Village Historic District lies to the south and east of the Gansevoort Market Historic District and is generally bounded by University Place to the east; West Fourth Street and St. Luke's Place to the south; Greenwich Street and Washington Street to the west; and Horatio Street, West 12th Street, and West 13th Street to the north. The Chelsea Historic District lies to the northeast of the Gansevoort Market Historic District and is generally bounded by a line midway between Eighth and Ninth Avenues to the east, a line midway between West 18th and West 19th Streets to the south, Tenth Avenue to the west, and a line midway between West 22nd and West 23rd Streets to the north.

The Gansevoort Market Historic District is a distinctive area that reflects a long and varied history of use as an industrial and commercial center for New York City. The architecture of the district has been shaped by this history, resulting in a dynamic mix of markets, warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and row houses that contribute to its industrial and maritime character. The urban form of the district is shaped by the transition between the irregular street pattern south of Gansevoort Street and the grid of the 1811 Commissioner's Plan. The convergence of the two street patterns results in very large, open intersections and unusual public spaces that are unique to this area. The presence of Belgian block paving, brick facades, and metal market canopies also lend a distinctive presence to the urban design of the district. The vintage of the building stock, the bulk of which spans the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, and the varied scale of low market buildings and larger loft structures have resulted in an area that is heterogeneous in form yet unified in feel.

The Gansevoort Market Historic District was, for a significant time, New York City's primary marketplace and shipping center. Although this role has diminished greatly over time, active meat-market uses still exist both within and surrounding the neighborhood. Other establishments, such as high-end boutiques, offices, design studios, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs have been drawn to the Gansevoort Market Historic District over time as a result of its industrial character, and lack of residential uses. The result is a unique and vibrant, 24-hour community of meat-market employees, restaurant and bar patrons, tourists, designers, shoppers, and office and retail employees.

The Gansevoort Market Historic District is primarily zoned M1-5, although small areas of the district encompass other zones as well. The M1-5 designation identifies high performance light manufacturing and commercial areas with 5.00 FAR for manufacturing or commercial uses and 6.50 FAR for community facility use.

A portion of the district, located at the northeast corner of the intersection of West 14th Street, Hudson Street, and Ninth Avenue, and the full block between Gansevoort and Horatio streets and Washington and West streets is zoned C6-2A. The C6-2A district is a contextual designation that permits mixed commercial and residential uses with 6.00 FAR for commercial uses, 6.02 FAR for residential uses, and 6.50 FAR for community facility uses.

The area along Washington Street, between Gansevoort and Horatio streets, to a depth of approximately 85 feet, is zoned C8-4. The C8-4 designation identifies exclusively commercial districts where automotive and heavy commercial services may locate. Such uses are generally incompatible with residential use, which is prohibited within C8-4 areas. C8-4 districts have an FAR of 5.0 for commercial uses and 6.50 FAR for community facility uses.

Development rights may be transferred from lots occupied by individually designated landmark buildings or other structures. No transfer of development rights is permitted from any structure within an historic district. There are no individually designated landmarks located in this historic district.

All landmark building or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on October 17, 2003 (Calendar No.19).

There were 18 speakers in favor of the application and seven speakers in opposition.

The Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) presented the proposal, describing the history of the District and the character of its buildings and form. The presentation focused on the built elements, including significant buildings, structures, and components of urban design, that formed the basis for the designation of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. The presentation emphasized that the proposal would not preclude new development in the historic district and noted that detailed guidelines for new development were forthcoming.

Those who testified in favor of the application included the State Senator from the 29th District; representatives who spoke on behalf of the State Assemblymember from the 66th District, the City Councilmember from the 3rd District, and the Manhattan Borough President; representatives of Community Boards 2 and 4; the Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation; the co-chair of the Save Gansevoort Task Force; the President of the New

York Nightlife Association; the co-chair of the Greenwich Village Community Task Force; representatives of several organizations including the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic Districts Council, and the National Architectural Trust; several local business owners; and several local residents.

Speakers in favor commended the designation for preserving a distinctive ‘sense of place’, and noted that the designation was based more on a unique history of use and urban form than on the preservation of a particular, uniform architectural style. Several speakers noted that the unique character of the neighborhood made it particularly attractive for new development, especially for the entertainment, fashion, and tourism industries. The speakers noted that the creation of the historic district would preserve that unique character. Several speakers also noted that the designation would help ensure that new development be in context with the existing scale of the neighborhood.

A number of speakers in favor of the proposal stated that the three blocks to the west of Washington Street should be included within the historic district, and other speakers advocated for a broader ‘Maritime Mile’ Historic District, which would incorporate the proposed Gansevoort Market Historic District as well as the Greenwich Village waterfront generally west of Washington and Greenwich streets.

Speakers in opposition to the proposal included a representative of the Real Estate Board of New York, the counsel to a local property owner, and several speakers from, and the counsel to, a family of property owners in the affected area.

The majority of speakers in opposition questioned the appropriateness of the area for designation as a historic district, characterizing the building stock as architecturally insignificant and lacking in qualities that meet LPC criteria for designation. Several people testified that façade alterations on some of the retail establishments have altered the historic quality of the buildings to the point that they should not be considered for landmarking. Other speakers in opposition testified that the LPC would be unlikely to approve development applications that involved increases in FAR, thus preventing property owners from realizing their as-of-right development potential. Other speakers stated that new development on top of existing buildings would not be feasible because of the fragile nature of many of the structures in the neighborhood. Several speakers stated that the designation would not address increased residential pressure in the neighborhood, and that an evaluation of the zoning should occur at the same time as the landmarking process. Some speakers stated that, absent a rezoning of the district, future residential development would occur in a haphazard fashion through 74-711 special permits.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the designation of the Gansevoort Market Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution and the economic growth and development of the area. The Commission believes that this proposal would encourage the physical and economic revitalization already underway in the Gansevoort Market area and is consistent with plans for the area's future development and improvement.

The Commission notes that some speakers at the public hearing stated that the historic district designation should proceed concurrently with a rezoning of the area. The Commission believes that the existing M1-5 zoning designation is appropriate. The Commission notes that significant, as-of-right redevelopment, including new restaurants, retail, office, studios, and art galleries, has occurred within the area in recent years. The Commission believes that these newer uses appear to existing harmoniously alongside the meat related businesses, which still have a significant presence in the area.

The Commission believes that the historic district designation is consistent with the City's plans for the reuse of the High Line elevated rail line, which begins at the intersection of Gansevoort and Washington streets, at the western border of the historic district. The Commission notes that the City has filed a Certificate of Interim Trail Use with the federal Surface Transportation Board for the reuse of the High Line as a linear open space, and believes that the Gansevoort Market Historic District would serve as an appropriate entrance to this unique, proposed open space amenity.

The Commission also notes comments by speakers at the public hearing that the historic district designation does not address the residential development pressure in the area, and that the designation would permit residential conversions pursuant to Section 74-711's special permit. The Commission notes that the Department recently opposed the application for a BSA special permit for residential development at 848 Washington Street, located immediately west of the district boundaries but within the general Gansevoort Market area. The Commission believes that the historic district designation would not change the Department's position that residential use within the Gansevoort Market area is inappropriate at this time.

The Commission also notes that speakers expressed concern about future expansion of existing and development of new buildings within the historic district. The Commission notes that, consistent with other historic districts throughout the City, additions to existing and construction of new buildings would be permitted, following review by the LPC for appropriateness based on size, scale, materials, design, detail and the relationship to the particular portion of the historic district.

The Commission believes that the Gansevoort Market Historic District does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal of the historic district or the area involved.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman

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