

# GDPC

GREGORY DIETRICH  
PRESERVATION CONSULTING



GDPreservationConsulting.com

November 10, 2015

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9th Story  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Letter Evaluation  
Proposed Gansevoort Block Redevelopment  
Gansevoort Street / Block 643, Lots 43, 49 & 54  
Gansevoort Market Historic District  
Manhattan Borough, New York County, New York  
NYC-LPC Certificate of Appropriateness Application Nos. 17-6619/6620/6621

Dear Commissioners:

This letter evaluation was completed on behalf of Save Gansevoort LLC. It is intended to evaluate developer, Aurora Capital, and the Gottlieb estate's three Certificate of Appropriateness applications within the context of significance informed by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's "Gansevoort Market Historic District" designation report and the New York City Landmarks Law criteria and the Landmarks Preservation Commission's design considerations.

## Summary Findings

The applicant's proposal to replace two buildings, introduce a rooftop and penthouse addition, and modify the facades of individual buildings along the south side of Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets will clearly alter the experience of the streetscape. While the proposed façade modifications are historically appropriate and stand to enhance the marketplace character of the district, the proposals for larger buildings that embody non-market building typologies dramatically undermines any of the positive aspects of this proposal for the following reasons:

- The demolition and replacement of the underlying brick western section of 46-50 Gansevoort Street with a three-story building within a four-story building envelope measuring 52'-11" at its highest point will irrevocably compromise a resource that contributes to the "historically-mixed

---

architectural character and varied uses" of the district.

- The replacement of the existing one-story building with a six-story building over cellar and two-story penthouse at 70-74 Gansevoort Street evoking a warehouse measuring 120' at its highest point will obliterate the "distinctive character of low-rise market buildings" that is a character-defining feature of the district; and
- The proposal for demolishing the parapet of 60-68 Gansevoort Street and replacing it with a three-story rooftop addition and one-story penthouse measuring 98' at its highest point will overwhelm this former tenement building, which is emblematic of the market building conversions that occurred during the early-mid twentieth century—a key development trend which informs the district's overall significance.

Thus, substantially altering the cohesive and intact low-rise character of this block—which is a virtual anomaly within a district of varying building heights—will dramatically alter the experience of these particular buildings, the block as a whole, and the greater Gansevoort Market Historic District.

## Methods

In conducting this evaluation, I completed a reconnaissance of the subject buildings and their immediate environs on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> as a means of understanding the site and its setting; examined the *Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Report* and Regina Kellerman's *The Architecture of the Greenwich Village Waterfront* as a means of understanding the site's historical and architectural context and significance; reviewed project architect, BKSK Architects LLP's proposal; and applied the criteria of the New York City Landmarks Law and the Landmarks Preservation Commission's design guidelines as a means of gauging the proposal's appropriateness within this regulatory framework.

## Setting

The subject buildings occupy the entire blockfront of Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets along the southern perimeter of the Gansevoort Market Historic District (Figures 1-2). They consist of four market buildings that are located at 46-50, 52-58, and 60-74 Gansevoort Street (Figure 3). This blockfront is surrounded by a combination of historic one-, three-, and five-story market buildings and warehouses to the north; a five-story, mixed-use modern office building to the east; three, four-story historic rowhouses, a six-story historic warehouse, a combination of three- and four-story-over basement historic rowhouses, a five-story historic apartment building, and a modern four-story apartment building to the south; and a nine-story historic warehouse to the west (Figures 4-7). All of the buildings to the north, east, and west of the subject buildings are located within the Gansevoort Market Historic District, as are the three rowhouses and warehouse located to the south of the building along Washington Street between Gansevoort and Horatio Streets. The remainder of properties to the south of the subject buildings are located within the Greenwich Village Historic District.

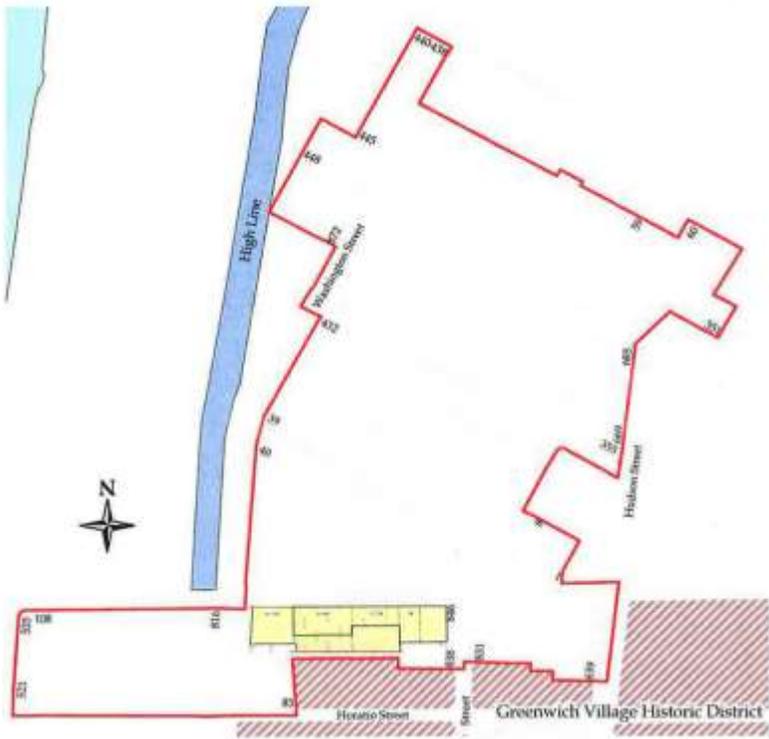
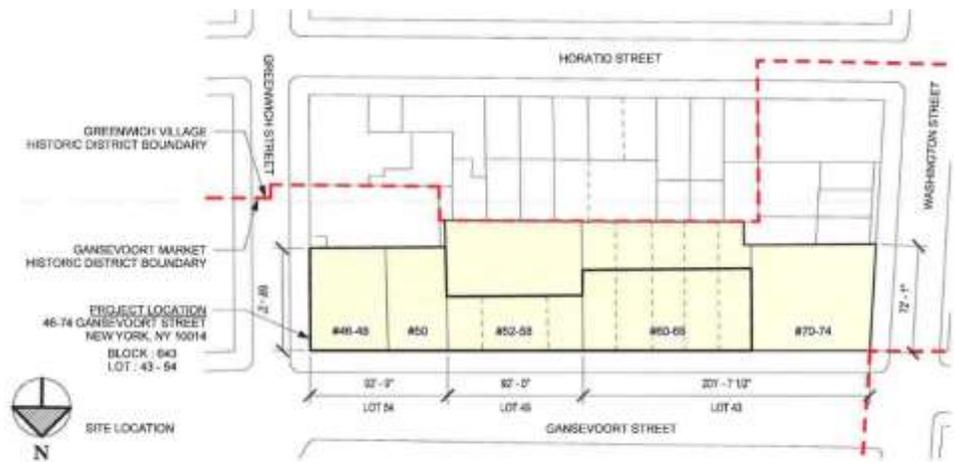


Figure 1. Locator map with subject buildings shown in yellow within the Gansevoort Market Historic District (bounded in red), and the northern border of the Greenwich Village Historic District to the south and east (red hatching).

Source: BSKS Gansevoort District Map, 10/15/15

Figure 2. Locator map showing subject building addresses.  
Base Map: BSKS Gansevoort Site Plan, 10/15/15





**Figure 3. Subject buildings, view southeast from the High Line.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15

**Figure 4. Historic buildings to the north of the subject buildings, view northeast from Washington and Gansevoort Streets.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15



**Figure 5. New construction to the east of the subject buildings, view east from Gansevoort and Greenwich Streets.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15



**Figure 6. Historic rowhouses to the south of the subject buildings within the Greenwich Village Historic District, view northeast from Horatio Street.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/22/15

**Figure 7. Historic warehouse to the west of the subject buildings, view west from Washington and Gansevoort Streets.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15



## **Subject Buildings**

The subject buildings consist of both purpose-built and adapted market buildings that can be described as follows:

---

- **46-50 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 54)

A purpose-built market building occupying a corner lot at Gansevoort and Greenwich Streets comprised of two, two-story sections designed 1938-39 by Charles H. Stadler:

- An eastern section designed in the Moderne style that is clad in buff-colored brick with cast-stone trim, and features a combination of metal-and-glass doors and wood-and-glass doors under transoms, a combination of multi-light, wood-sash and metal-sash windows, and a stepped parapet on both of its facades (Figure 8); and
- A western section comprised of buff-colored brick that is "currently clad with no-style covering" in the form of modern wood paneling with wood trim, and features metal-and-glass entry doors with decorative ironwork under a decorative metal canopy that are flanked by recessed wood-paneled doors under metal louvers and a wood-banded parapet (Figure 9)<sup>1</sup>

- **52-58 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 49)

A vernacular market-style, market building that was adapted in 1937 by architect, S. Walter Katz, and is historically comprised of three mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings:

- A former four-story tenement at no. 52 that was reduced to two stories, and is clad in weathered red brick with a garage-door opening containing a metal-and-glass garage door and transom under a metal canopy extending to nos. 54-56 in the first story and flat-arched window openings with stone lintels containing a combination of double-hung, metal-sash windows and concrete-block unit infill in the second story surmounted by a parapet with cast-stone coping; and
- A former five-story carpenter shop and stable at nos. 54-56 that was reduced to two stories, and is clad in weathered red brick with a series of large openings with metal-and-glass garage doors and transoms under a metal canopy in the first story extending to no. 52, and segmental-arched window openings with double-hung, metal-sash windows and brick lintels and stone sills in the second story surmounted by a parapet with raised-metal lettering and capped with cast-stone coping; and
- A former three-story tenement at no. 58 that was reduced to two stories, and is clad in weathered red brick with a garage-door opening with metal-and-glass doors and transom under a metal awning in the first story, and flat-arched window openings with stone lintels and sills containing double-hung, metal-sash windows in the second story surmounted by a parapet with cast-stone coping (Figure 10)

- **60-74 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 43)

A combination Neo-Grec-style and no-style market building that was adapted in 1940 by the architecture firm of Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, and was historically comprised of a grouping of five mid-late-19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings and one early-mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century building:

---

<sup>1</sup> Jay Shockley, "Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Report," ed. Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2003), 127.

- 
- **60-68:** Five, former five-story tenement buildings that were reduced to two stories, and are clad in a combination of painted and weathered red brick. Features include decorative cast-iron piers with Neo-Grec-style motifs on the first story, alternating with a variety of window and door openings with metal and metal-and-glass doors under an imposing wraparound metal canopy extending over nos. 70-74, and flush stone window pediments with label moldings, decorative incised carvings, and lintelcourses on the second story surmounted by a parapet with cast-stone coping (Figure 11); and
  - **70-74:** A former one-story freight trucking depot converted to a market building in 1949 that is clad in brick and contains a variety of door and window openings containing metal, metal-and-glass, and glass doors, display windows, 4-light casement units along Gansevoort Street, and an elongated display window and pair of glass doors along Washington Street under an imposing wraparound metal canopy extending over nos. 60-68 and surmounted by a parapet with cast-stone coping (Figure 12)



**Figure 8. 46-50 Gansevoort Street, eastern section, view southwest.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15

**Figure 9. 46-50 Gansevoort Street, western section, view southeast.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15





**Figure 10. 52-58 Gansevoort Street, view southwest.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15

**Figure 11. 60-68 Gansevoort Street, view southwest.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15



**Figure 12. 70-74 Gansevoort Street, view southeast.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15

---

## District Context

Beyond the subject buildings and their setting, the Gansevoort Market Historic District is characterized by a wide variety of building types that were either purpose built or later adapted for market use. These latter buildings include former rowhouses, townhouses, tenements, and warehouses that were mostly adapted during the early-mid twentieth century. While some of these buildings reflect the low-rise character that informs the district's significance as a historic marketplace, many of them retain their appearances as former rowhouses, townhouses, tenements, and warehouses, reflecting a variety of scales and designs that diverges markedly from the Gansevoort Street block containing the subject buildings. As noted, the block directly across from the subject buildings to the north contains a variety of historic building typologies, while most of the other blocks in the district contain a mixture of historic, redeveloped, and new buildings that were introduced both before and after the district's designation in 2003. As a result, there is a substantial contrast between the intact marketplace aesthetic embodied by the subject buildings comprising the Gansevoort Street block and the variety of historic buildings, new additions, and new construction comprising the other blocks beyond it to the west, north, and east (Figures 13-17).



**Figure 13. Washington Street, east side, view northeast from Gansevoort Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15

**Figure 14. Little West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, south side, view east from Washington Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15





**Figure 15. West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, north side,  
view northeast from Washington Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15



**Figure 16. West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, south side,  
view southeast from Washington Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15



**Figure 17. West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, south side,  
view southeast from Washington Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/7/15

---

## Historical /Architectural Context and Significance

According to the *Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Report*, the Gansevoort area embodies four major periods of development that encompass both purpose-built market buildings and older buildings that were later adapted for market use. Encompassing a range of buildings that include rowhouses, townhouses, tenements, warehouses, and market buildings, the district's unifying theme is its identity as a marketplace that initially served New York City during the mid-late nineteenth century and expanded its operations to serve the greater metropolitan area by the mid twentieth century. In fact, one commissioner at the time of designation noted how the district "all hangs together because of the market, because of the way it has been used and transformed and adaptively reused for the last hundred and some years."<sup>2</sup>

Further, the designation report notes that, in spite of the fact that there were a variety of building typologies and scales informing the district's early development starting in the 1840s, it was the two-story, purpose-built market buildings introduced during the 1880s that prevailed well into the twentieth century as the prototype for market operations. As described in the report, "These vernacular and neo-Grec style structures typified the low-rise market buildings constructed in the district of the next 90 years: produce (or later, meat) handling on the ground story, shielded by a metal canopy over the sidewalk, and offices on the second story."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the designation report maintains that one of the district's "unique qualities" is the preponderance of historic buildings that were later altered and customized to meet this standard—a highly unusual development trend within the context of commercial real estate in New York. The earliest examples of modification and customization include the Centennial Brewery at 409-411 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, converted in 1901 to meat, produce, and dairy operations, and 21-27 Ninth Avenue, which were rowhouses converted 1923-24 to meat market buildings.

While these examples of adaptive use signified a nascent development trend in the early twentieth century, it was the acquisition of properties during the Great Depression, augmented by the advent of transportation infrastructure, which produced a host of purpose-built market buildings and market building conversions in the ensuing decade. Spurred by the completion of the Holland Tunnel in 1927, the elevated Miller Highway in 1931, and the New York Central Railroad's elevated freight railway in 1934, an entirely new phase of low-rise construction and alterations was initiated in the district to respond to the commercial opportunities presented by these new modes of freight transportation. Regarding purpose-built market buildings, the report in particular highlights 46-50 Gansevoort Street, along with two others (446-448 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 837-843 Washington Street), noting, "Built at a time when the growing prevalence of the automobile resulted in the predominance of new market types throughout the U.S. (such as drive-in markets, chain grocery stores, and supermarkets), these buildings are rare and late examples of the older market building typology."<sup>4</sup> Regarding the phenomenon of market building conversions, the report praises nos. 52-58 and nos. 60-68, along with one other (nos. 71-73), as contributing to Gansevoort Street's overall sense of place, stating, "The unusually wide Gansevoort Street assumed its distinctive character of

---

<sup>2</sup> Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Hearing, 9/9/2003.

<sup>3</sup> Shockley, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

---

low-rise market buildings with metal canopies at this time, largely through such newly adapted structures..."<sup>5</sup>

As for the physical attributes that give the district its visual cohesion, the designation report lists the following: its one- to six-story scale; its multiple buildings designed by the same architect (some of whom were prominent and/or specialists in market building designs); the predominance of brick as a cladding material and the metal canopies that were original to their designs; and the Belgian block paving of its streets. The report also acknowledges the significance of the area's unorthodox street plan, resulting in "[u]nusually large and open intersections [that] contribute to the area's unique quality, particularly where Ninth Avenue meets West 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Gansevoort Street (which was widened in 1887), and provide sweeping vistas that showcase the unusual building typology and mixed-use quality of the district."<sup>6</sup> In fact, LPC Commissioner Pablo E. Vengoechea concurred with this analysis, stating, "A lot of these [streets] have low-rise buildings with very wide open spaces, there's a sense of airiness in the district which is very unique to this part, it's unlike any other part of Manhattan," and then stressed that "whole is greater than the sum of the parts themselves."<sup>7</sup> (Figures 18-19)



**Figure 18. Gansevoort Street,  
view west from Greenwich Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15



**Figure 19. Gansevoort Street,  
view east from Washington Street.**  
Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>7</sup> Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Hearing, 9/9/2003.

---

In reference to the subject buildings, the designation report provides the following justifications for their inclusion in the district:

▪ **46-50 Gansevoort Street**

*This Moderne style market building, with two sections of different heights, contributes to the historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses—including market-related functions—of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. Constructed in 1938-39 as part of the district's last major phase of development, when buildings were being constructed or altered for produce- and meat-related business, the building further contributes to the visual cohesion of the district through its brick facades.<sup>8</sup>*

▪ **52-58 Gansevoort Street**

*This building, which has significant historic fabric reflecting its 1937 alteration, contributes to the historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses—including market-related functions—of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. Altered in 1937, during the last major phase of development of the district, when low-scale buildings were constructed, or buildings were altered and reduced in height for produce- and meat-related businesses and other market uses, the building further contributes to the visual cohesion of the district through its brick and stone façade and metal canopy.<sup>9</sup>*

▪ **60-68/70-74 Gansevoort Street**

▪ **60-68:** *This building, which has significant historic fabric reflecting its 1940 alteration, contributes to the historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses—including market-related functions—of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. Altered in 1940, during the last major phase of development of the district, when low-scale buildings were constructed, or buildings were altered and reduced in height, for produce- and meat-related businesses and other market uses, the building further contributes to the visual cohesion of the district through its brick and stone façade and metal canopy.<sup>10</sup>*

▪ **70-74:** *In 1949, to take advantage of its location across the intersection of Washington Street from the new Gansevoort Market Meat Center, it was converted to a wholesale meat market building, with six separate units with cold storage. The meatal canopy was installed in 1950. For most of its history since 1950, it has been associated with meat and poultry businesses.<sup>11</sup>*

## Design Proposal

As noted, BKSK Architects LLP's design proposal encompasses the entire south side of Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets, and entails replacing two buildings, introducing rooftop, penthouse, and rear additions, and modifying building facades (Figure 20). As for the individual properties contained within this blockfront, the firm is proposing the following:

---

<sup>8</sup> Shockley, 128.

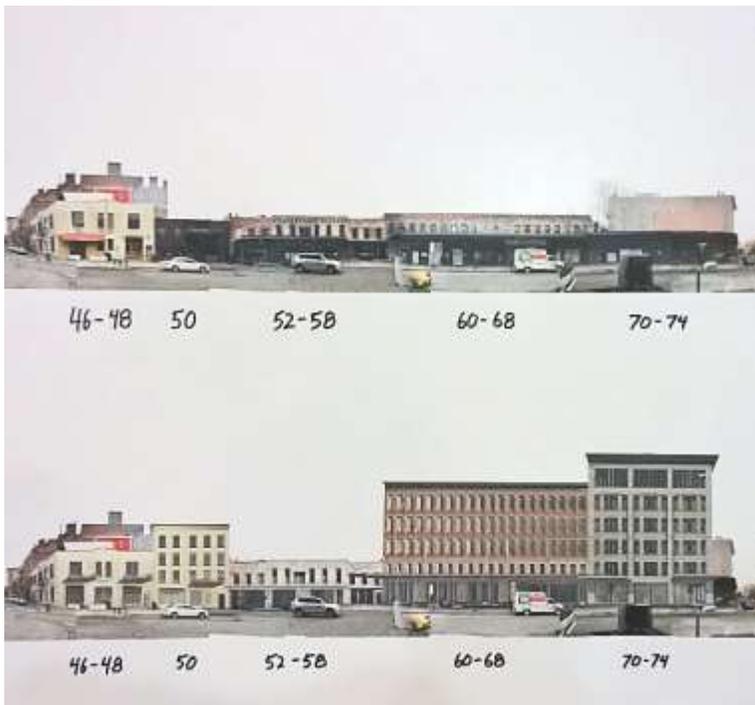
<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 120.

- 
- **46-50 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 54) (Figure 21)
    - **Eastern Section:** Reintroduce the center garage bay on Gansevoort Street facade; replace first-story doors/windows on both elevations with new steel and steel-and-glass units; replace second-story windows on both elevations with new steel-and-glass units to match existing units; reintroduce two metal marquees (with patterned-metal screens)
    - **Western Section:** Replace western section with new three-story building contained within a four-story building envelope rising to a height of 42'-5", with bulkheads rising to a height of 52'-11"; new building to be clad in soldier-laid, buff-colored brick with steel-and-glass storefronts and a steel door in the ground story under a patterned-metal marquee, and steel-and-glass windows in the upper stories under a parapet with two rows of soldier-laid brick corbelling and cast-stone coping; metal guardrail enclosure on roof
  - **52-58 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 49) (Figure 22)
    - Introduce a rear building addition extending an additional 16'-7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" to the rear on the second story; excavate and introduce a rear cellar expansion extending an additional 37'-11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" to the rear, with an additional depth of 2'-11" throughout the existing and proposed cellar expansion; replace metal-and-glass garage doors with steel-and-glass doors in the first story; replace metal doors with steel doors on the first story; remove metal grills and replace concrete block unit infill at no. 52 and aluminum-sash windows at nos. 52-56 with wood-sash windows in the second story; remove raised-metal lettering at nos. 54-56 and the awning at no. 58
  - **60-74 Gansevoort Street** (Lot 43) (Figures 23-24)
    - **60-68:** Remove parapet and introduce a three-story addition rising to a height of 68' and a one-story penthouse atop it rising to a height of 83', with two sets of mechanicals in the southwest corner rising to a height of 95' and 98'; three-story addition to be clad in variegated brick veneer, with windows consisting of single-light, aluminum-and-glass tilt turn units under transoms with cast-stone lintelcourses and sillcourses surmounted by an aluminum cornice with paired brackets; penthouse to consist of a brick veneer-clad wall at the easternmost end with an aluminum-and-glass curtain wall, under and divided by, a series of aluminum channels that are surmounted by an aluminum-and-glass curtain wall guardrail; replace existing first-story configuration with three, tripartite aluminum-and-glass storefront bays at the eastern end and two, aluminum-and-glass storefront/entrance bays at the western end; replace aluminum-and-glass windows with wood-and-glass windows on the second story
    - **70-74:** Replace existing one-story building with new six-story building over cellar rising to a height of 83' and a two-story penthouse atop it rising to a height of 112', with two sets of bulkheads in the southeast corner rising to a height of 117' and 120'; six-story building to be organized into three segmental-arched bays in stories two thru five under a trio of flat-arched bays in story six on both facades; six-story building walls to be clad in variegated gray
-

brick veneer with a combination of corbelled brick spandrels and decorative metal spandrel panels; first-story along Gansevoort Street to consist of one, double aluminum-and-glass storefront at the eastern end and two pairs of glass entry doors/aluminum-and-glass storefronts at the western end; first-story along Washington Street to consist of combination of aluminum-and-glass storefronts and paired-glass doors flanked by fixed-light windows under transoms; steel, wood, and glass marqueses at both elevations; recessed aluminum-and-glass tilt turn windows under transoms throughout stories two thru six; penthouse faced with double-height brick veneer at western end and aluminum-and-glass curtain wall, with wood-board screen fronting second story



**Figure 20. 46-74 Gansevoort Street, detail of schematic showing facades of existing (above) and proposed modifications, rooftop additions, and new buildings (below).**

Source: BSKS Architects LLP, 10/15/15

**Figure 21. 46-50 Gansevoort Street, schematic showing façade modifications for eastern section (left) and replacement building for western section (right).**

Source: BSKS Architects LLP,





**Figure 22. 52-58 Gansevoort Street, schematic showing façade modifications.**  
Source: BKSJ Architects LLP, 10/15/15

**Figure 23. 60-68 Gansevoort Street, schematic showing façade modifications and rooftop addition.**  
Source: BKSJ Architects LLP, 10/15/15



**Figure 24. 70-74 Gansevoort Street, schematic showing replacement building.**  
Source: BKSJ Architects LLP, 10/15/15

---

## Analysis

The applicant's proposal to replace two buildings, introduce a rooftop and penthouse addition, and modify the facades of individual buildings along the south side of Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets will clearly alter the experience of the streetscape. Although the proposed façade modifications are historically appropriate and stand to enhance the marketplace character of the district, the proposals for larger buildings reflecting non-market building typologies dramatically undermines any of the positive aspects of this proposal. Regarding the unsympathetic replacement buildings, the demolition and replacement of the underlying brick western section of 46-50 Gansevoort Street with a three-story building within a four-story building envelope measuring 52'-11" at its highest point will irrevocably compromise a resource that contributes to the "historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses" of the district. Although the loss of its counterpart at 70-74 Gansevoort Street is not anticipated to adversely affect the district due to its lack of material and design integrity, its replacement with a six-story building over cellar and two-story penthouse measuring 120' at its highest point will obliterate the "distinctive character of low-rise market buildings," which is a character-defining feature of the district. It also bears noting that the building proposed for demolition at 70-74 Gansevoort Street possesses a form and scale that is emblematic of the market building prototype—and as such, is an integral part of the larger block of market buildings in contrast to the warehouse-like building proposed for its replacement. Similarly, the proposal for demolishing the parapet of 60-68 Gansevoort Street and replacing it with a three-story rooftop addition and one-story penthouse measuring 98' at its highest point will overwhelm this former tenement building, which is emblematic of the market building conversions that occurred during the early-mid twentieth century—an important development trend which informs the district's overall significance.

Moreover, the physical manifestations of these proposals will undermine the experience of the Gansevoort Market Historic District since Gansevoort Street is one of two significant thoroughfares that serves as a gateway to the district and its heavily trafficked amenities such as the High Line and the Whitney Museum, two international tourist attractions. In fact, the "Purpose and Declaration of Public Policy" of the New York City Landmarks Law explicitly states the importance of preserving historic resources as a means of maintaining the city's standing as a "world wide tourist center" which, "cannot be maintained or enhanced by disregarding the historical and architectural heritage of the city and by countenancing the destruction of such cultural assets."<sup>12</sup> As noted, Ninth Avenue at Gansevoort Street and at West 14<sup>th</sup> Street are "[u]nusually large and open intersections [that] contribute to the area's unique quality...and provide sweeping vistas that showcase the unusual building typology and mixed-use quality of the district."<sup>13</sup> Thus, substantially altering the experience of these iconic views through the loss of the marketplace aesthetic will adversely affect the setting of two international tourist destinations, and in doing so, undermine the intent of the New York City Landmarks Law (Figures 25-26).

The applicant may contend that the redevelopment of these buildings and parcels is consistent with a neighborhood whose history has been informed by taller buildings that have been altered and/or

---

<sup>12</sup> Title 25: Land Use, Chapter 3: Landmarks Preservation and Historic Districts, Section 25-301: "Purpose and Declaration of Public Policy," New York City Administrative Code.

<sup>13</sup> Shockley, 2.

replaced over time. This argument does not speak to the fact that the one- and two-story market building, which is embodied by this particular blockfront, is what makes it significant and the reason it was included in the district boundary. Similarly, the applicant may argue that there is numerous precedent for approvals for these types of additions and new construction within the Gansevoort Market Historic District. However, this claim does not address the fact that other blocks in the district are of a more heterogeneous quality in terms of their scale, which has allowed for a greater flexibility in permitting these types of redevelopment. It also bears noting that some of the biggest contemporary redevelopment projects in the district occurred before it was designated, allowing these buildings to be grandfather in. Thus, to justify a proposal for bigger buildings based on what existed before or on what has happened in other parts of the district ignores the very purpose of the Gansevoort Market Historic District; namely, to preserve the authentic character of one of New York City's last surviving marketplaces.



**Figure 25. Tourists at the Whitney Museum and on the High Line looking at the Gansevoort Street subject buildings, view northwest from Gansevoort Street.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/24/15



**Figure 26. View of tourists on the High Line looking at the Gansevoort Street subject buildings, view southeast from the High Line.**

Photographer: Gregory Dietrich, 10/10/15

---

## New York City Landmarks Law Evaluative Criteria

### *New York City Landmarks Law Evaluative Criteria*

The New York City Landmarks Law offers the following set of criteria with respect to the Commission's evaluation of proposals within historic districts. According to Section 25-307: "Factors governing issuance of certificate of appropriateness" of the New York City Administrative Code states:

- (1) In making such determination with respect to any such application for a permit to construct, reconstruct, alter or demolish an improvement in an historic district, the commission shall consider:
  - (a) the effect of the proposed work in creating, changing, destroying or affecting the exterior architectural features of the improvement upon which such work is to be done, and
  - (b) the relationship between the results of such work and the exterior architectural features of other, neighboring improvements in such district.
- (2) In appraising such effects and relationship, the commission shall consider, in addition to any other pertinent matters, the factors of aesthetic, historical and architectural values and significance, architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, material and color.<sup>14</sup>

### Analysis of Project According to New York City Landmarks Law Evaluative Criteria

My review of the applicant's design proposal within the context of the New York City Landmarks Law criteria indicates the following:

- (1)(a) the effect of the proposed work in creating, changing, destroying or affecting the exterior architectural features of the improvement upon which such work is to be done.**
  - **46-50 Gansevoort Street**
    - **Eastern Section:** The effect of the proposed work stands to enhance the exterior architectural features of the eastern section through a largely sympathetic rehabilitation. Although the proposal does not seek to restore the original 1939 first-story configurations on either the Gansevoort or Greenwich Street façades, it does work within the context of the current building envelope to bring balance to this story's configuration, while also enhancing this section's marketplace character through the reintroduction of marquees (executed in a modern design) and the replacement of both sympathetic and unsympathetic doors and windows throughout with steel and steel-and-glass units, respectively, that

---

<sup>14</sup> Section 25-307: "Factors governing issuance of certificate of appropriateness" of the New York City Administrative Code. <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us>. Accessed 10/27/2015.

---

approximate the originals.

- **Western Section:** The effect of the proposed work stands to destroy the exterior architectural features of the building and its eastern section through its demolition and replacement with new construction. Despite an investigation by the applicant's project team that revealed the presence of the original building under its "no-style covering," the applicant is inexplicably proposing to demolish it and construct an entirely new building (Figure 27).<sup>15</sup> This will not only destroy original exterior architectural features of the western section, but also physically compromise the eastern section by destroying its western half.



**Figure 27. Gansevoort Street subject buildings in 1940, view southwest from Greenwich Street showing underlying western section of 46-50 Gansevoort Street (as indicated by red arrow).**

Source: The New York Public Library Digital Collections

- **52-58 Gansevoort Street**

The effect of the proposed work stands to enhance the exterior architectural features of the building through a sympathetic rehabilitation. Both the proposal to introduce modern storefront improvements that are consistent with the building's marketplace character and the proposal to replace the building's second-story windows with more historically-appropriate units are anticipated to improve the experience of this market building. The rear excavation and second-story addition are not anticipated to adversely affect any significant exterior architectural features and therefore are not anticipated to be at issue.

---

<sup>15</sup> Cas Stachelberg (Preservation Consultant) presentation of 46-74 Gansevoort Street redevelopment proposal, Manhattan Community Board 2 hearing, 10/15/15.

---

- **60-68/70-74 Gansevoort Street**

- **60-68:** The effect of the proposed work stands to destroy the exterior architectural features of the building through its partial demolition. Although the applicant is proposing to introduce modern storefront improvements that are consistent with the building's marketplace character and replace the building's second-story windows with more historically-appropriate units, the partial demolition of the building's parapet and its replacement with a three-story rooftop addition and two-story penthouse will adversely affect its exterior architectural features.
- **70-74:** The effect of the proposed demolition of this building is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on the exterior architectural features based on the fact that it has had its design and material integrity considerably compromised, rendering it a no-style building.

**(1)(b) the relationship between the results of such work and the exterior architectural features of other, neighboring improvements in such district.**

- **46-50 Gansevoort Street**

- **Eastern Section:** The proposed rehabilitation of the eastern section has the capacity to strengthen the relationship between this section of the subject building and the exterior architectural features of neighboring buildings by retaining the original envelope and enhancing its marketplace character through a combination historically-appropriate improvements (doors and windows) and modern elements (storefronts and marquees). This in turn has the capacity to preserve the authenticity and special character of both Gansevoort Street and the Gansevoort Market Historic District.
- **Western Section:** The proposed demolition and replacement of the western section will sever the relationship between it and the exterior architectural features of the neighboring buildings. First, through the destruction of half of an historic resource that is currently obscured by unsympathetic wood covering, and second, by replacing it with a new building measuring 52'-11" at its highest point that makes no attempt to reference the scale of the original. This in turn will substantially compromise the authenticity and special character of both Gansevoort Street and the Gansevoort Market Historic District.

- **52-58 Gansevoort Street**

The proposed rehabilitation of the building's façade has the capacity to strengthen the relationship between the subject building and the exterior architectural features of neighboring buildings. The proposed second-story addition and cellar expansion are not anticipated to exert an adverse impact between the subject building and the rear yards of the adjacent Greenwich Village Historic District. The proposal for the building's façade entails enhancing its marketplace character through a combination of historically-appropriate improvements (windows replacement, elimination of concrete block unit infill, unsympathetic awning, and raised-metal

---

lettering) and modern elements (storefronts and doors). The second-story rear addition will not extend to the footprint of the first-story's rear elevation and thus, is not anticipated to overwhelm the historic relationship between this market building and the rear yards of the single-family dwellings located within the Greenwich Village Historic District.

▪ **60-68/70-74 Gansevoort Street**

- **60-68:** The proposed partial demolition of this buildings parapet and the introduction of five-story rooftop addition measuring 98' at its highest point will compromise the relationship between it and the exterior architectural features of the neighboring buildings. First, through the partial destruction of an historic resource, and second, by replacing it with a sizable rooftop addition that belies the scale of the existing market building. This in turn will substantially compromise the authenticity and special character of both Gansevoort Street and the Gansevoort Market Historic District.
- **70-74:** The replacement of the existing one-story building with a six-story building over cellar with a two-story penthouse measuring 120' at its highest point will substantially undermine the blockfront and the overall district's distinct sense of place. First, through the elimination of an existing scale and form that is a cohesive and character-defining feature of the entire blockfront, and second, through the introduction of a new building with a warehouse-like design that is antithetical to the pervasive market building aesthetic informing this particular block. Thus, this redevelopment will substantially compromise the authenticity and special character of both Gansevoort Street and the Gansevoort Market Historic District.

(2) **In appraising such effects and relationship, the commission shall consider, in addition to any other pertinent matters, the factors of aesthetic, historical and architectural values and significance, architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, material and color.**

▪ **46-50 Gansevoort Street**

As noted, the designation report highlights nos. 46-50 as one of three "buildings that are rare and late examples of the older market building typology."<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, it follows that any proposals affecting this building should focus on a rehabilitation that enhances the authentic experience of the district rather than compromises it.

- **Eastern Section:** The proposed rehabilitation of the eastern section of this building has the capacity to enhance the experience of the district by strengthening its aesthetic, historical, and architectural values through a design and arrangement that preserves and enhances its market character through a retention of its texture, materials, and color. Accordingly, this rehabilitation is anticipated to enhance this blockfront's distinctive character of low-rise market buildings.

---

<sup>16</sup> Shockley, 17.

- 
- **Western Section:** The proposed demolition and replacement of the western section of this building will compromise the experience of the district by eliminating its aesthetic, historical, and architectural values, as manifested in its underlying texture, materials, and color, through an entirely new design and arrangement that rejects the existing market building prototype in favor of an alternative building typology; namely, a mid-rise warehouse-like building that runs contrary to this blockfront's distinctive character of low-rise market buildings.

- **52-58 Gansevoort Street**

As noted, this building was recognized for contributing to the historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses and market-related functions of the district, as well as to the visual cohesion of the district through its brick and stone façade and metal canopy.<sup>17</sup>

The proposed rehabilitation of this building has the capacity to enhance the experience of the district by strengthening its aesthetic, historical, and architectural values through a design and arrangement that preserves and enhances its market character through a retention of its texture, materials, and color. Accordingly, this rehabilitation is anticipated to enhance this blockfront's distinctive character of low-rise market buildings.

- **60-68/70-74 Gansevoort Street**

- **60-68:** As noted, this building was recognized for contributing to the historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses and market-related functions of the district, as well as to the visual cohesion of the district through its brick and stone façade and metal canopy.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, the proposed partial demolition of its parapet and the introduction of a five-story rooftop addition will compromise the experience of the district by overwhelming its aesthetic, historical, and architectural values, as manifested in its texture, materials, and color, through an entirely new design and arrangement that rejects the existing two-story market building prototype in favor of an alternative building typology; namely, a seven-story warehouse measuring 98' at its highest point that runs contrary to this blockfront's distinctive character of low-rise market buildings.
- **70-74:** As noted, since 1950 this building has been associated with meat and poultry businesses but was also regarded as a "no-style" building due to the extensive loss of historic fabric due to multiple renovations.<sup>19</sup> As such, its proposed demolition is not anticipated to affect its aesthetic, historical, and architectural values, as manifested in its texture, materials, and color. By contrast, its replacement with a six-story building over cellar crowned by a two-story penthouse will adversely affect the district through an entirely new design and arrangement that rejects the existing two-story market building prototype in favor of an alternative building typology; namely, an eight-story warehouse measuring 120' at its highest point that runs contrary to this blockfront's distinctive character of low-rise market buildings.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 120.

---

## New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Design Considerations and Analysis of Project

### *New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Design Considerations*

In addition to the regulations prescribed by the New York City Landmarks Law in Section 25-307, Sections 2-16 and 2-19 of the *Rules of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission* offer a set of design considerations for applications pertaining to rear yard and rooftop additions.<sup>20</sup> These considerations have been summarized in the agency's "REAR YARD AND ROOFTOP ADDITIONS Application Guidelines."<sup>21</sup>

#### **Regarding rear yard additions, design considerations include:**

- Will significant features be removed to accommodate the addition?
- How visible is the addition from the public thoroughfare?
- What is the scale of the addition relative to the building and the adjacent buildings?
- What is the effect of the addition on the central green space?
- Does the proposed addition comply with the New York City Zoning Resolution?<sup>22</sup>

#### **52-58 Gansevoort Street**

The proposed rear building addition and cellar expansion is not anticipated to exert an adverse effect on this property since significant features will not be removed to accommodate the addition and neither improvement will be potentially visible from the public thoroughfare. In addition, the scale of the addition is not anticipated to overwhelm the building or its adjacent market buildings and will have no effect on the central green space of the subject buildings or that abuts the north side of the Greenwich Village Historic District. Further, this proposal is as-of-right and therefore in compliance with the New York City Zoning Resolution.

#### **Regarding rooftop additions, design considerations include:**

- Does the addition preserve a sense of the original volume of the building?
- Does the scale of the addition overwhelm the building?
- How visible is the addition from the public thoroughfare?
- Does it comply with the New York City Zoning Resolution?<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Rules of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Title 63, Rules of the City of New York* (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, January 2013).

<sup>21</sup> New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "REAR YARD AND ROOFTOP ADDITIONS Application Guidelines" (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

---

## 60-68/70-74 Gansevoort Street

**60-68:** The proposed demolition of the parapet and its replacement with a three-story rooftop addition and one-story penthouse measuring 98' at its highest point will compromise the original volume of the building, which is historically and architecturally significant for its conversion from a five-story tenement to a two-story market building. Similarly, the scale of the proposed addition, with its three-stories-and-penthouse design which will be highly visible from the public thoroughfare, will overwhelm the building by not only undermining its identity as a market building, but also the larger identity of the blockfront as a rare and intact grouping of market buildings. Although the height, massing, and bulk of the proposal complies with the New York City Zoning Resolution, it is unclear as to whether its use complies since there is currently a restrictive declaration on the subject building (and the other buildings on the block) that prohibits hotel or office use, while residential use continues to be prohibited by the district's pre-existing M1-5 zoning.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in absence of information regarding the proposed use of the building, a determination about its compliance cannot be made.

## Conclusion

In voicing her support for the designation of the Gansevoort Market Historic District, LPC Commissioner and former LPC Acting Chair Sherida E. Paulson stated:

The importance of the markets, and the importance of the development of New York related to the market districts, as centers for their neighborhoods, I don't think can be overstated...the sense of our history and the story of New York that's told through the market districts is important. And we don't have the physical remains of any of these other market areas other than Tribeca, which is a very different kind of animal...[T]hese buildings need to be designated, protected, and preserved to continue to allow us to understand this story and our children to understand this story.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, urban historian and LPC Commissioner Roberta Brandes Gratz also noted the rarity and importance of the surviving market buildings in New York City. Commissioner Gratz further observed that, within the context of other historic American marketplaces, Gansevoort Market was "probably one of the most significant nationwide."<sup>26</sup>

Based on the significance of the subject buildings and this analysis, which evaluates the proposal within the context of the New York City Landmarks Law criteria and the Landmarks Preservation Commission's design considerations, the overall redevelopment proposal informing the Gansevoort Street block is grossly inappropriate. The applicant's proposal to replace two buildings, introduce a rooftop and penthouse addition, and modify the facades of individual buildings along the south side of Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets will clearly alter the experience of

---

<sup>24</sup> According to Zack Winestine, Save Gansevoort LLC, hotel and office uses are not permitted due to a restrictive declaration that was modified and approved by City Council on December 15, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation Hearing, 9/9/2003.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

---

the streetscape. As noted, while the proposed façade modifications are historically appropriate and stand to enhance the marketplace character of the district, the proposals for larger buildings that embody non-market building typologies dramatically undermines any of the positive aspects of this proposal. Regarding the unsympathetic replacement buildings, the demolition and replacement of the underlying brick western section of 46-50 Gansevoort Street with a three-story building within a four-story building envelope measuring 52'-11" at its highest point will irrevocably compromise a resource that contributes to the "historically-mixed architectural character and varied uses" of the district. The replacement of the existing one-story building with a six-story building over cellar and two-story penthouse at 70-74 Gansevoort Street evoking a warehouse measuring 120' at its highest point will obliterate the "distinctive character of low-rise market buildings" that is a character-defining feature of the district. Similarly, the proposal for demolishing the parapet of 60-68 Gansevoort Street and replacing it with a three-story rooftop addition and one-story penthouse measuring 98' at its highest point will overwhelm this former tenement building, which is emblematic of the market building conversions that occurred during the early-mid twentieth century—a key development trend which informs the district's overall significance.

Moreover, these proposals will undermine the experience of the Gansevoort Market Historic District since Gansevoort Street is one of two significant thoroughfares that serves as a gateway to the district and two international tourist destinations: the High Line and the Whitney Museum. As noted, Ninth Avenue at Gansevoort Street and at West 14<sup>th</sup> Street are "[u]nusually large and open intersections [that] contribute to the area's unique quality...and provide sweeping vistas that showcase the unusual building typology and mixed-use quality of the district."<sup>27</sup> Thus, substantially altering the buildings of this segment of Gansevoort Street will compromise the experience of one of the district's most iconic views and, in doing so, undermine the intent of the New York City Landmarks Law to foster the City's role as a world-wide tourist center through the preservation of its historic properties.

It is therefore recommended that the applicant revisit and modify this proposal in order to ensure that the character-defining features informing the subject buildings, as expressed in their "low-rise character," which is emblematic of both purpose-built market buildings and market building conversions, are preserved rather than obliterated through a more appropriately scaled redevelopment that is consistent with the significance of the individual subject buildings, their identity as a cohesive marketplace ensemble, and the district-at-large.

I invite you to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Gregory Dietrich  
Principal

cc: Save Gansevoort LLC

---

<sup>27</sup> Shockley, 2.