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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COALITION OF COMMUNITY AND PRESERVATION GROUPS SUES TO BLOCK UNLAWFUL DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC WEST VILLAGE BUILDING FOR NEW RUDIN LUXURY CONDO/ST. VINCENT'S TOWER PROJECT**

New York, NY, March 9, 2009—Protect the Village Historic District (PVHD), a community advocacy group, announced today that it has sued the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Centers to block the demolition of the historic Curran/O'Toole building and prevent construction of 400 luxury condos and a 300 foot hospital tower in the midst of the Greenwich Village Historic District. The suit alleges that the LPC's approval of a 'hardship' application for the demolition misconstrued the City's Landmarks Preservation law and failed to properly consider viable alternatives.

PVHD is joined in the lawsuit by the Historic Districts Council, DoCoMoMo New York-Tristate, Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side and Landmark West! as well as by numerous Village residents and buildings.

The suit seeks to prevent the demolition of this landmark modernist building on Seventh Avenue between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets which was authorized by a narrow 6 to 4 vote by the LPC on October 28, 2008. The demolition is part of the Rudin/St. Vincent's development plan to construct a 300' hospital tower and a 235' luxury condominium tower in the midst of historic Greenwich Village. The Commission's approval of a hardship application followed its unanimous determination of May 6, 2008 that the Curran/O'Toole Building makes a unique contribution to the Village Historic District and that demolition of Curran/O'Toole would not be appropriate under the landmarks law.

The suit alleges that the LPC failed to follow the hardship standards previously established by the U.S. Supreme Court. In particular, the suit alleges that the LPC acted illegally by allowing St. Vincent's to claim hardship when St. Vincent's made no assertion of financial need and acquired the Curran/O'Toole Building AFTER the landmarks restrictions were already in place. The suit also argues that demolition of this historic building is inappropriate because the building is fully adequate for the purposes for which St. Vincent's acquired it—clinic and office space.

Commented Tom Molner, PVHD Chair: "We seek the assistance of the courts to require our City's Landmarks Preservation Commission to fulfill its duty and protect the Greenwich Village Historic District. We are gratified that in October four LPC Commissioners agreed with our

position and voted to reject this hardship application. Our landmark districts are the jewels of the City of New York. It has always been apparent that ample alternatives to this insensitive and wasteful plan exist. Even more options are available in today's market."

Commented Al Butzel, counsel to PVHD: "Our suit alleges that the LPC failed to properly apply the key Supreme Court precedents which saved Grand Central Terminal and St. Bartholomew's Church. The LPC did not make an adequate investigation of alternatives, including the potential reuse of St. Vincent's existing buildings. Our brief includes suggestions for a mid-block facility that is appropriate to the Historic District and can be developed while the hospital remains in operation."

Commented Delia Guazzo, PVHD Steering Committee member: "We appreciate the broad level of support for our efforts to protect Greenwich Village from this destructive plan. PVHD currently has over 1,000 members. We are grateful to the Historic Districts Council, DoCoMoMo New York-Tristate, the Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side and Landmark West! who have recognized that this threat to Greenwich Village is a threat to preservation across our city and beyond."

For more information on PVHD, see [www.protectthevillage.org](http://www.protectthevillage.org) or use the contacts at the top of this release.

Protect the Village Historic District was formed to advocate for the Greenwich Village community and its interests in the face of a massive and inappropriate development proposal from the Rudin Organization and St. Vincent's. PVHD seeks to significantly downsize and reshape this destructive proposal and to protect the Greenwich Village Historic District. PVHD does not oppose the modernization of St. Vincent's. It does, however, consider it vital that any development respect our historic neighborhood, the City Landmarks Preservation laws, and the values of our community. PVHD supports alternatives that accomplish these goals. PVHD is a sponsored project of the Citizen Action program of the Open Space Institute, Inc. (OSI). Views expressed by PVHD are not necessarily those of OSI. See contacts at the top of this release.

The Historic Districts Council is a citywide advocate for New York's designated historic districts. Contact: Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director, [sbankoff@hdc.org](mailto:sbankoff@hdc.org); 212-614-9107.

DoCoMoMo US-New York-Tristate, is a local chapter of the international organization focused on identifying and protecting buildings and sites of Modern Movement architecture. Contact: [info@docomomo-nytri.org](mailto:info@docomomo-nytri.org).

Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side works to enhance and protect historic neighborhoods in Manhattan, focusing on the Upper East Side where it acts to defend the historic character of the area's architecture. Contact: Elizabeth Ashby, [e.ashby96@gmail.com](mailto:e.ashby96@gmail.com).

Landmark West! is a not-for-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side. Contact Kate Wood at [katewood@landmarkwest.org](mailto:katewood@landmarkwest.org); [www.landmarkwest.org](http://www.landmarkwest.org); 212-496-8110.