

“Today, NYU is looked at as the enemy by anyone who lives in the Village.”¹

In the past thirty years, residents of Greenwich Village have seen NYU acquire a steadily acquire more and more properties, either by purchase or lease. In 2001, the *New York Times* reported, “Not counting its medical and dental schools, NYU today owns about 60 buildings with 9.3 million square feet, about 50 percent more than the 6.3 million square feet it owned in 1970.”²

NYU’s real-estate frenzy can be seen as a result of their bid to shift from a commuter-school to aspiring top-tier university. Chair of NYU’s Board of Trustees, Martin Lipton told the *New York Times*, “Under Jay Oliva [NYU President 1991-2002], we have really achieved much of what we dreamt of 25 years ago. We have finished the transformation from a regional commuter school to a global university.”³

It’s not just that NYU has acquired a lot of property; it’s what they do with it that has been a sore point for Village residents. By taking advantage of the Community Facilities Bonus of the Zoning Resolution – which raises the maximum bulk allowed to be built by certain institutions like universities – NYU has constructed buildings that are significantly larger than others in the neighborhood,⁴ and have been described simply as “hideous.”⁵ Referring to NYU’s dorm on 14th Street, which the *Village Voice* remarked “has all the appeal of a modern hospital,” Jack Taylor, chair of the Union Square Community Coalition Historic Preservation Committee explained, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but in this eye it’s no beauty either design-wise or scale-wise.”⁶

Residents have expressed their hope that NYU’s current President, John Sexton, may be more sensitive to the concerns of those who live and work in the Village. Andrew Berman, Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation told the *Columbia Spectator*, “NYU president John Sexton made a big deal of saying he’d, unlike his predecessors, be very respectful of ‘fragile ecosystem of Greenwich Village’ and that he’d make a great effort to work with the community on development projects.”⁷ However, one of NYU’s most recently proposed projects – the 12th Street dorm – has still elicited harsh criticism. Scott Sumnerstein told the *Village Voice*, “People are pissed. The university wants to transform the East Village into its own private campus.”⁸

¹ Karen W. Arenson, “The Villain of the Village? As NYU Edges Oout and Up, Neighbors Put Up a Fight,” *New York Times*, 4/19/2001.

² Karen W. Arenson, “The Villain of the Village? As NYU Edges Oout and Up, Neighbors Put Up a Fight,” *New York Times*, 4/19/2001.

³ Karen W. Arenson, “Presidents Are Set to Step Down At Columbia and N.Y.U. in '02,” *New York Times*, 4/4/2001.

⁴ David. W. Dunlap, “A Delicate Balance: Community Facilities And Communities,” *New York Times*, 10/27/2002.

⁵ Lenora Todaro, “Shadow of the Ivory Tower,” *Village Voice*, 9/18/1999.

⁶ Lenora Todaro, “Shadow of the Ivory Tower,” *Village Voice*, 9/18/1999.

⁷ Olivia Rosane, “NYU to Build Village High Rise,” *Columbia Spectator*, 1/18/2006.

⁸ Kristen Lombardi, “Not subject to Review”, *Village Voice*, 3/7/2006.