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## Historic White Horse Tavern Closes For Renovations As New Owner Takes Over

by [Paula Mejia](#) in [Food](#) on [Apr. 29, 2019 11:47 am](#)



*(Scott Lynch / Gothamist)*

The legendary White Horse Tavern, one of the [oldest bars in New York City](#) and a venerable literary haunt, closed on Sunday night for renovations, a tipster informed Gothamist. The Greenwich Village Historic Society for Historic Preservation [confirmed the news](#) on Twitter, and the bar's windows have since been papered over.



*The White Horse Tavern will be shut for weeks as it undergoes repairs. (Paula Mejía/Gothamist)*

The White Horse recently changed hands when the building it occupies was sold to the [infamous lordlord Steve Croman](#), who recently did time in prison for tax and mortgage fraud. The bar's new proprietor, Eytan Sugarman, is a restaurateur whose ventures include Midtown's Hunt and Fish Club, which has ties to Anthony Scaramucci.

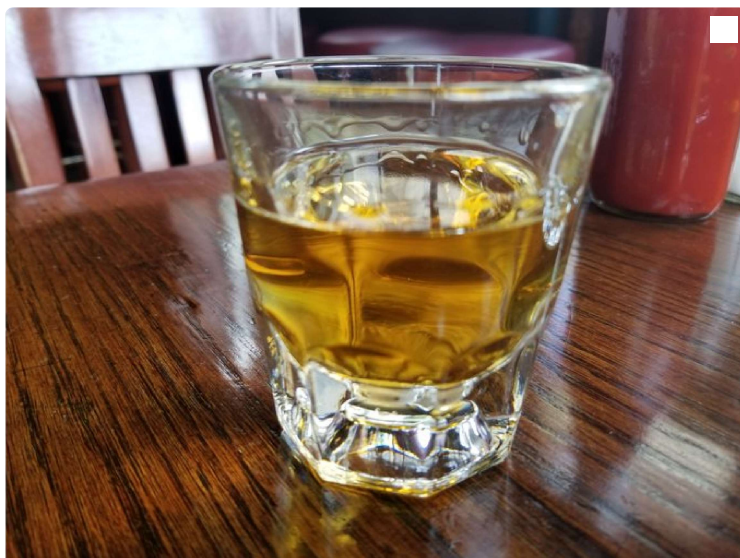
In a community board meeting last month, [Sugarman reassured](#) worried West Village residents that besides tweaking a few things (and having "a little bit of a better burger") he would keep the beloved bar as is. "I have every intention of keeping this amazing institution the way it is, I have no intention of making any dramatic changes," Sugarman said in front of Community Board 2. "I want to fix what needs to be fixed, I essentially took this to maintain the integrity, to preserve the White Horse Tavern."

**Update:** A sign posted to the bar's door said it would be shutting down to make "some much needed repairs and upgrades" over the next few weeks. "Have no fear, we have no intention of changing any of the historical elements that make the White Horse Tavern the landmark that it is," it reads.

The historic bar has been a city landmark since the late 1960s, which means that Sugarman and his team can't make changes to the exterior. The White Horse's interior, though, is another story—though there's been a recent [movement to landmark the inside of the bar](#), too.

It's unclear what changes might take shape, or when exactly the White Horse will re-open. But wary barflies worry that the bar's spirit is in danger, as well. Last month, a handful of regulars [held a "wake" for the longtime drinking spot](#) of legends like Dylan Thomas, the Welsh poet who infamously dropped dead after drinking at the White Horse.

Online, people reminisced and paid their respects to the old watering hole over the weekend.



**Literary Manhattan**  
@LitManhattan

On the last day the White Horse Tavern operates under the old owners, they have 26 bottles of Fire Ball, and they're VERY serious about getting rid of all of it! Come on down!

5 11:24 AM - Apr 28, 2019

[See Literary Manhattan's other Tweets](#)

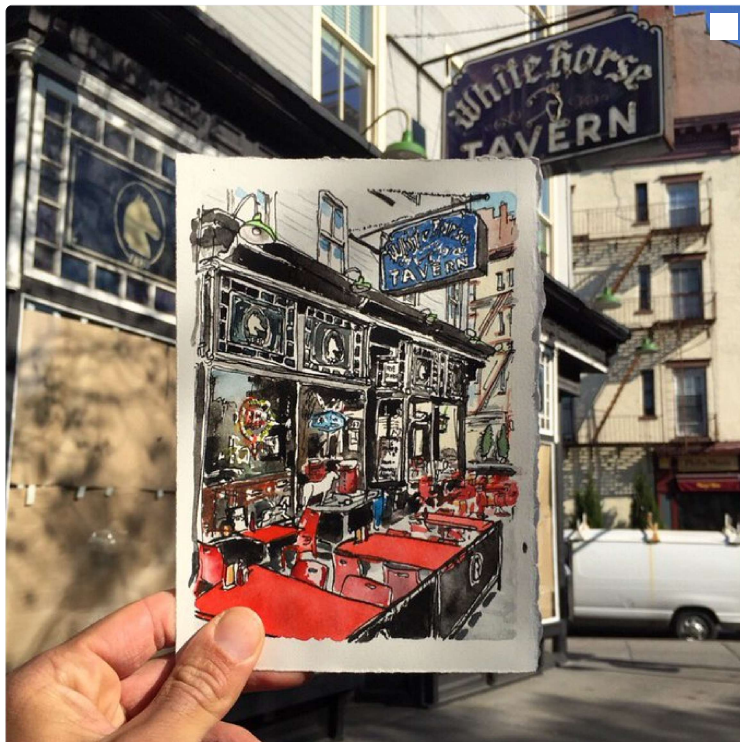


**Richard Crouse**  
@RichardCrouse

Yesterday #NYC lost a legendary place. The White Horse Tavern closed after 139 years of beer stand glory. I have spent my fair share of time and there but not as much as Jack Kerouac who spent so many hours there someone wrote "Jack go home" on the bathroom wall...

46 9:49 AM - Apr 29, 2019

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**Nick Golebiewski**  
@nickdesign

Oops, I'm too late photographing my watercolor painting of the White Horse Tavern! It's closed as of today for "renovations," we'll see what it looks like when it reopens and hope the calls to landmark the interior were heard. Dylan Thomas drank here in the 1960s!

7 11:03 AM - Apr 29, 2019 · White Horse Tavern

[See Nick Golebiewski's other Tweets](#)

Attempts to contact Eytan Sugarman and the White Horse Tavern on Monday morning were unsuccessful. We'll update as we find out more.

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DYLAN THOMAS EYTAN SUGARMAN GREENWICH VILLAGE

LANDMARK STEVE CROMAN WHITE HORSE TAVERN

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**Lloyd Bergenson** • 5 days ago

It's going to be gutted and turned into a frat sports bar.

4 | • Reply • Share ›



**Andrew** → Lloyd Bergenson • 5 days ago

I'm hoping we get another nail salon, because there aren't enough of those in the city. :) although a nail salon that serves alcohol isn't the worst idea. I do like a good Jack with a pedicure.

2 | • Reply • Share ›



**skypilot** → Andrew • 5 days ago

Rusty Nail Salon

3 | • Reply • Share ›



**Snanglebutt** → Andrew • 5 days ago

I was hoping for another CVS myself.

3 | • Reply • Share ›



**merricat** → Snanglebutt • 5 days ago

what, no love for TD Bank?

3 | • Reply • Share ›



**jp** → Andrew • 5 days ago

Just Salad.

| • Reply • Share ›



**Jeremy Freedman** → Andrew • 4 days ago

was really hoping for a Chemical Bank...



1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**NoSnarkHere** → Lloyd Bergenson • 5 days ago

It already was?

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**alme** → Lloyd Bergenson • 5 days ago

Not in that neighborhood. More likely another Spotted Pig.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Lloyd Bergenson** → alme • 4 days ago

As a rule, you don't paper over windows unless you are doing some major renovation work that you don't want people to see.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Mack Argument** → Lloyd Bergenson • 4 days ago

They constantly paper over windows in SoHo even when the only thing they're doing is changing a few light fixtures and redoing the backbar, so who the hell knows.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Lloyd Bergenson** → Mack Argument • 4 days ago

It's generally not the case in retail renovations. Perhaps restaurants/bars are different. Of course, if the space had been landmarked, as I've been advocating for years before the property was sold, we wouldn't have to worry about the owner gutting the space to begin with.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**skypilot** • 5 days ago

Why is a notorious slumlord and convicted felon like Croman allowed to still buy and manage properties in this city?

13 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**jp** → skypilot • 5 days ago

This. He should be put on the police force where people like that belong.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Fishchum** → skypilot • 5 days ago

So you're advocating that anyone with a felony conviction be barred from buying and selling real estate?

^ | v • Reply • Share >



^ | v • Reply • Share >



**skypilot** → Fishchum • 5 days ago

If they neglected their position to commit felonies. We take lawyer's and doctor's licenses away.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Fishchum** → skypilot • 5 days ago

But we're not talking about practicing law or medicine - you need a license for that, but you don't need one to buy real estate. We're talking about someone with a felony conviction never being allowed to buy a home to live in or buy as an investment.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**skypilot** → Fishchum • 5 days ago

In this city, yes. He defrauded many people, he tried to make their lives intolerable by forcing from their homes. No one's stopping him from investing outside the city where he committed felonies, but I don't think it's unreasonable to declare that he can't invest in any more properties in the city where he committed numerous felonies attached to his previous properties. It would prevent a notorious scumbag from continuing his ways and send a warning to other would be slumlords.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Fishchum** → skypilot • 5 days ago

Sorry, the law doesn't work like that. You can't use it to single out someone like that. Prohibiting someone with a felony conviction from buying and selling real estate means affecting EVERYONE with a felony conviction on their record.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**skypilot** → Fishchum • 5 days ago

This was a visceral half-baked reaction on my part, but I don't think it's unreasonable. I didn't suggest everyone with a felony conviction, just slumlords who have felonies from how they illegally managed their properties.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Fishchum** → skypilot • 5 days ago

I get it, and believe me, I'm not defending this guy.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**bluecanary1** → Fishchum • 5 days ago

A law prohibiting people convicted of felonies regarding their management of property from buying and managing property could be narrowly tailored so as to achieve its purpose: keeping slumlords from slumlording, without catching others in its net.

6 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**90% Beard, 10% Man** → bluecanary1 • 4 days ago

The more I think about it, the more I think an enforcement regime that allows plea deals that include bans on slumlord behavior would be a great thing.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**bluecanary1** → 90% Beard, 10% Man • 4 days ago

"You have three choices: take your chances at trial and perhaps get life in prison, plea down and receive a minimum of 20 years in prison, or agree to never own rental properties again."

That would work.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**90% Beard, 10% Man** → Fishchum • 4 days ago

Not necessarily. Their are specific punitive measures for specific crimes. This sort of measure would be more like securities fraudsters being barred from sitting on the boards of any publicly-traded companies.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Guy Ross** → Fishchum • 4 days ago

Can I advocate for a licensing for majority ownership or management of rental property which can be revoked for felons or behavior deemed to be outside a set of established guidelines?

As a bonus: the Kushner Family would be out of business.

You down?

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Fishchum** → Guy Ross • 4 days ago

Sure, sounds great.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Guy Ross** → Fishchum • 4 days ago

Great. Motion is passed.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Mack Argument** → Fishchum • 4 days ago

I'd say if your felony relates to some kind of real estate fraud, yeah, probably.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**jay** → skypilot • 5 days ago

and why can they vote right? /s

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**skypilot** → jay • 5 days ago

wut? why an they vote right?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**jay** → skypilot • 5 days ago

It was meant to say "can". Just because you go to jail doesn't mean you are prevented from purchasing assets.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**skypilot** → jay • 5 days ago

I wasn't suggesting that, but I think it's fair to ban slumlords who were convicted of felonies related to their property management strategies from owning rental properties in NYC. FWIW, I think felons should be allowed to vote, I'm a firm believer that rehabilitation and reintegration into society should also include giving them their rights to perform their civic duties.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**GiuseppeGiorgio** → skypilot • 5 days ago

Kind of like a car. If I commit any number of crimes while driving it's quite possible I will be banned from driving for a specified amount of time. While I may be able to own a car I can get in serious trouble if caught behind the wheel of one. Same with housing, let him own whatever he wants but if his crimes affected tenants he should not be allowed to "operate" as a landlord. A building is still an asset regardless if it has tenants or not.

There is no end to the amount of pro-landlord sentiment around



here...

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



This comment was deleted.



**jay** → Guest • 5 days ago

If what you wrote was true, yes it would stand to reason, but what you wrote is not true.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**bluecanary1** → jay • 5 days ago

You're right. My mistake. They can be barred from sitting on corporate boards. Either way, there are laws that prohibit them from doing certain actions.

I don't see why a prohibition on managing property, after you've been convicted of mismanaging property, would be any different.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**jay** → bluecanary1 • 5 days ago

You can't work in the financial industry (since it's regulated) but you can own/trade stocks for a personal account. He owns the property which is different than managing it - I don't see how you would be able to force someone, ex-con or not, to use a manager of the gov'ts choice.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**brunostrange** • 5 days ago

I hope this place survives, but everyone talks about it as though writers and poets were still holding court at the place. It's mostly finance types there these days.

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**GiuseppeGiorgio** → brunostrange • 5 days ago

But, but Dylan Thomas drank in there 55 years ago?!

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Alan** → GiuseppeGiorgio • 5 days ago

I've got some bad news. 1953 was a lot longer than 55 years ago.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**GiuseppeGiorgio** → Alan • 5 days ago

Gee thanks! Except the tweet that was included said "60s" so I understandably averaged it to 1965...

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Fu Boy** → brunostrange • 5 days ago

While I love the history of the place, the last couple of times I've been there were largely insufferable. And, by the taste of it, they haven't cleaned the lines of their taps since the 90s.

Wasn't sad to not go back but I am curious to see what becomes of it.

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**The\_Lisa** • 5 days ago

Fireball? Barf!

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Gothampc** • 5 days ago

If anyone sees Steven Croman, tell him my toilet needs fixing.  
#OnceASlumLord,AlwaysASlumLord

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**YuplSmoke** • 5 days ago

The best part about the White Horse Tavern was looking at it from inside WXOU

^ | v • Reply • Share >



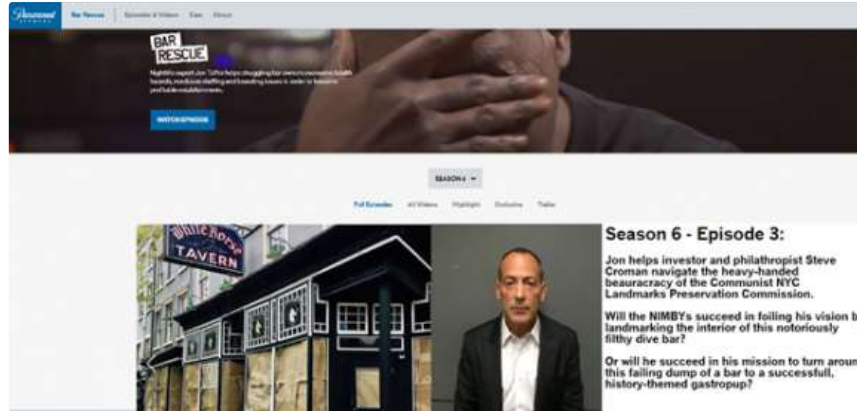
**ImACat** • 5 days ago

I'm guessing Croman is getting the place spruced up for SantaCon 2019.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Linda** • 4 days ago



^ | v • Reply • Share >



**DrOzProps** • 3 days ago

I get that the landlord is a huge asshole but I highly doubt they're going to completely gut the interior of the place. That will **always** be a draw for customers and there's no reason to screw with that. Quite frankly the place could use a little work and given the shoddy prior management there are probably a ton of basic upgrades to the kitchen, electrical, plumbing, etc. that are long overdue. If I had to guess they will spruce up the inside a little bit and get rid of stuff like the tacky digital jukebox, probably double or triple their draft beer offerings and sell mostly \$8-9 craft beers, sell \$14-16 "bespoke cocktails" each named after the bar's past luminaries, and have a new kitchen serving "elevated bar bites." You know, basically become like every other bar that has opened in the last 5+ years except this one will still be sold as the place where Dylan Thomas drank. That's basically what has happened to every Irish pub or dive bar in every gentrified neighborhood in the city that has undergone a renovation or change in ownership in recent years.

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