



The Voice of the West Village

WestView News

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Croman/WhiteHorse

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While it is easy to “Rage, Rage Against Croman,” (April 2019) and all the other horrible landlords and haughty millionaires who are buying up our beloved neighborhood and changing its very character, we have to acknowledge that these people are not Viking raiders who swoop down on unsuspecting property owners and take over their buildings by force. In every instance, somebody chose to sell a building to an awful person who has no regard for West Village history or the people who live here.

So we can condemn Steve Croman if he does indeed choose to put one of the most legendary bars in New York City, the White Horse Tavern, out of business. But shouldn't we also ask: Why did the previous owner of the building sell to such a scoundrel? Perhaps Croman's offer was the highest? Perhaps Croman's offer was the only one received? But the fact remains that the building's previous owner knew of Croman's history and chose to sell it to him anyway. If we are going to condemn Croman for not caring about the West Village, isn't it fair that we say the same about the previous owner?

Croman isn't the only philistine intent on destroying our history. One of the most unique buildings in all of the West Village, the one-story little artist's studio house at 258 W. 11th St., was demolished by its new owner so he could dig three floors below street level to build a swimming pool. But is he the only one to blame for that loss? The previous live-in owners of the small apartment building to which the little house was attached chose to sell it to someone who cares nothing about history, and as a result, we've lost that little house with the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, who, in its wisdom, decided that the new owner could simply build a facsimile of the old house he destroyed when he's finished construction on his mansion.

I applaud WestView for calling our attention to the criminal Croman and the power he now has to destroy the wonderful White Horse. But he is not the only villain in this piece. Until West Village building owners decide that the best offer they get for their properties is not always the best thing for the neighborhood, we should all brace ourselves for more landmark institutions and historic buildings to be lost.

—*Charley McKenna*