

**Forging a Path:
Seeking The Right Side of History**

Chronicle

Situation Background – KEY FACTS supporting active targeting of SANS

- **1980's** – The Village of Sag Harbor became a Certified Local Government (CLG) — According to the National Parks Service: “Being a CLG demonstrates your community’s commitment to saving what is important from the past for future generations.” With this, is the agreement to follow State procedures and guidelines including identifying and designating worthy historic properties.
 - **1994** – the Sag Harbor Village expanded its Historic District to include area around the Watchcase area and Eastville. The only reason SANS was not included was its age had not reached 50 years yet. But the sponsors knew the required benchmark would be reached in years 1998-2002. The Nomination Form stated that the SANS areas “deserve future study as early resort communities built for African Americans”.
 - **1994 to present** – The Village, acting as a CLG, could proceed with a SANS review given its mandate to review Village housing inventory every 5 years including the SANS area. This failed to happen from 1994 to today. In 2016, local History authority requested, on record, that SANS is considered by the Village for Historic District designation.
 - **2016** – We were advised by a press contact and a Village official that they had clear reason to believe our SANS area was a target for large scale, aggressive real estate turnover tactics with the goal of creating new ownership across all of SANS.
 - **2016** – Email circulated in 2016 to reach out to owners who may want to sell and receive \$600,000 cash for their homes; understand “Finders’ Fees” were offered to select people
 - **2016 to present** – Real Estate agents and nameless street door-knockers started knocking on SANS’ numerous doors and contacted owners with messaging: “Just saw your house and love it; Would you be interested in selling it?” or simply “Would you consider selling?” Even in 2020, for example, Ninevah landowner approached by strangers in St. Albans Queens asking if she would be interested in selling her property in Ninevah.
- Note:* There is an organized effort to research every property. We were told a developer knows more about everyone’s financial situation and circumstances than the residents know themselves.
- **2016 to present** – A number of Village Code issues were challenged by developers and specific building in SANS was leniently handled by the Village. Those residents who protested were told nothing could be done since there were no strong reasons to deny developer requests. Scale and character Code obligations were ignored.
 - **2016-2018** – Village placed some Code issues under a Moratorium to make changes to the Code. When the moratorium ended, changes continued:

- o The Village appeared to weaken the Code and avoid having to rule on Scale and Character Code issues (Note: average area house sf was about 1500 sf)
 - o Specifically, authority, control, and community notifications regarding new buildings over 3,000 sf scale and character were changed
 - o Village Trustees eliminated their right to review and refuse to approve homes over 4,000 sf; thereby relying solely on GFA (Gross Floor Area) rules. Raised limit regardless of lot size to 7,000 sf.
 - o Building notices (signs & letters) to neighbors were eliminated for construction of new homes under 3,000 sf; Notices for Harbor or Zoning issues or other changes are NOT easily available to residents
 - o All ARB notices were placed online; All other notices such as Harbor, Zoning, etc. are not online.
 - o It is hard to know what is changing in neighboring homes unless you look at each Committee agenda which is ONLY posted the day before the meeting.
- **2016-2017** – After a Full-Page Ad (Don't Pillage Our Village), 300 online signatures, and regular objections in-person and in writing, the ARB Chair made note, there is nothing that can be done to protect the SANS area. If we had "Historic District" standing, we would be able to better protect Scale and Character and prevent some of the "McMansion" development.
 - **2016** – With this benchmark in 2016, the Village advised that we had to provide 51% of residents to request this designation. We did. The Village refused to move on this from a personnel or resource level. These petitions were moot for State and National designations.
 - **2016** – Village and Long Island officials, including the hired Village consultant, visited SANS and concluded that there was not enough in SANS to qualify in their judgment, but said we could go to the State directly and that the potential of our success may be low. Net, Village would not proceed based on our local efforts to date. Also, the Village would not help us comply and document the history for consideration.
 - **2018** – Other indications and even a non-legacy neighbor let us know that "talk" was legacy families et al. are being targeted to flip out ownership. A few agreed with this approach.
 - **2018** – We followed up and applied to the State after self-funding our Research Survey etc.
 - **2018** – Sag Harbor Historic District expansion and Village funding was recommended for another area (non-SANS) for Board of Trustee approval and State grant funding. (Dec. 2018 agenda); SANS was excluded from the recommendation despite SANS' progress and documentation. Later (2023), SHPO indicated that it was assumed by all including the consultant performing the 2018 Survey that the SANS Historic District was already certified and not requiring a Village repeat.

- **Early 2019** – received anonymous call for a Village resident advising SANS is definitely “targeted” to flip ownership of homes in a mass strategic plan. The person hoped SANS knew and SANS would try to protect the area from anticipated aggressive, predatory efforts.

- **2019** – SANS asked by one developer and legacy Azurest resident (day before State mtg.) to sign an agreement to not seek local designation in exchange for his not seeking to halt SANS’ State application. Also, he wanted SANS and subdivision Presidents to sign a contract to ensure no future residents could apply. This was followed by a lawyer representing him (also a SANS developer) calling the State asking for all emails, phone calls, and materials involved with SANS’ application with the goal to stop the State meeting.

- **2019** – SANS granted NYS and National Historic District Listing

- **2020** – Recent news article reaffirms a strong corporate business interest to acquire privately-owned single-family residences to eliminate private family ownership and create “rental” properties.

- o <https://nypost.com/2020/07/18/corporations-are-buying-houses-robbing-families-of-american-dream/>

- o <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/magazine/wall-street-landlords.html>