

Farewell to Worth Street

The latest victim of "progress" in New York City is the elegant, colonnaded row between Worth and Thomas Streets, from Church Street to Broadway, a notably fine stretch of superior cast-iron fronted Victorian "street architecture" almost a hundred years old. "Progress" in this case will be represented by a parking lot—an art form which will probably stand to our own age as the temple stands to Greece.

The Worth Street properties were disposed of by a tax-free charitable foundation—the Cannon Foundation of Cannon Mills—which evidently felt more charitably inclined toward the Katz Parking System than toward the city's historic architecture. For years the buildings had been restored and maintained in exemplary fashion as a conscious historic demonstration, complete with gas lamps, only to be condemned today.

Does the same fate await the one other outstanding remnant of the city's nineteenth century cast-iron street architecture, in the Greene Street area? These commercial slums, urgently in need of rehabilitation, are situated just below Greenwich Village and contain the kind of loft space that might provide an ideal answer to the problem of New York's displaced artists. It's worth remembering that the artists restored the Village so well, with such an increase in real estate values, that they've been priced right out of it.