



June 12, 2012

Oreo cookie birthplace could get 'double stuffed' in Chelsea Market expansion



The proposed expansion plan for Chelsea Piers. (Photo: GVSHP)

A lot has changed since 1912. The Oreo cookie, fortunately, hasn't. Manhattan's Chelsea Market, the birthplace of "America's Favorite Cookie," is another story. Once the home of National Biscuit Company, the block-long Chelsea Market building is now home to the Food Network, Google, an indoor shopping complex, and it's very own speakeasy.

As the *Associated Press* reported June 9, Chelsea Market is now host to an argument between Jamestown Properties, who would like to expand the building, and neighborhood preservationists, who prefer it the way it is.

Pro-expansion advocates argue that increasing the space of the building could pave the way for the kind of high-tech information jobs Mayor Michael Bloomberg has prioritized as essential to the city's longevity and growth.

Preservationists, like Andrew Berman of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, argue that a the expansion could compromise the very thing that makes Chelsea Market a popular spot for residents and tourists alike.

"The complex which is an icon of adaptive reuse is wonderful and successful as it is," Berman told the *Associated Press*.

While the initial design would add a bold addition to the skyline above the Meatpacking District and the High Line, New York City real estate broker Tony Sargent speculated on his blog, *The Sargent Report*, that the final expansion would be much less audacious:

As others have suggested, my guess is that the developers have gone with a building design proposal that is larger than they hope for and probably obstructive in the hopes they can come back with something the community will accept that is perhaps smaller in scale.

I hope the developers will design something more to scale and creative and include community-friendly facilities and services that add to the neighborhood.

What are your thoughts? Should the birthplace of the Oreos remain as unfussy as possible, or should the building be allowed to expand, Double Stuff style? Weigh in below