Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 25, 2011, Designation List 449
LP-2391

BELL TELEPHONE LABORATORIES COMPLEX (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now WESTBETH ARTISTS' HOUSING), 445-465 West Street, 137-169 Bank Street, 51-77 Bethune Street, and 734-754 Washington Street, Manhattan. Built c. 1860; 1896-1903, Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz, architect, Marc Eidlitz & Son, builder; 1924-26, McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, architect, Tidewater Building Co., builder; 1929, Warren B. Sanford, engineer, Turner Construction Co., builder; 1931-34 alterations, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, architect; and 1968-70 conversion, Richard Meier, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 639, Lot 1.

On January 12, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirteen people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Thomas K. Duane, State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Community Board 2, Westbeth Center for the Arts, Westbeth Board of Directors, Westbeth Artists' Residents Council, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and Historic Districts Council. In addition, the Commission received numerous communications in support of designation.

Summary

The Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex of buildings, occupying an entire city block in Manhattan's Far West Village, is highly significant as the site of one of the world's most prestigious telecommunications research organizations, and later, as the first and largest publically- and privately-funded artists' housing project in the United States, as well as a pioneering large-scale industrial rehabilitation project. The oldest structure is the vernacular Italianate style Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building (c. 1860) at 445-453 West Street, one of the few extant 19th-century industrial buildings along the Hudson River waterfront, which housed a number of significant manufacturers over the decades. The Western Electric Co. built an office and factory building for telephone-related equipment (1896-1903) at 455-465 West Street, 149 Bank Street, and 734-742 Washington Street. Designed by Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz in a restrained neo-Classical style and clad in buff-colored brick and terra cotta, the building was constructed by Marc Eidlitz & Son. After 1913, the building ceased as a manufacturing plant and was largely the headquarters of Western Electric's Engineering Department. In 1925, it became Bell Telephone Laboratories for research and development for both the American Telegraph & Telephone Co. and Western Electric Co. Bell Labs' facilities were expanded with the construction of 744-754 Washington Street (1924-26, by McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin) and the Moderne style 151 Bank Street (1929, Warren B. Sanford, engineer), a pioneering experimental sound motion picture studio, and by the incorporation into the complex of the c. 1860 factory building. Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker was responsible in 1931-34 for alterations to the sections of the complex on Washington Street for the New York Central Railroad's elevated freight railway. Research work that resulted in many significant innovations and inventions was conducted here. After Bell Labs vacated the property in 1966, Roger L. Stevens, first chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, conceived of the complex as a pilot project of subsidized, affordable studio living quarters for artists, which was substantially supported and inaugurated by the J.M. Kaplan Fund. It was converted in 1968-70 into Westbeth Artists' Housing, the first major work by architect Richard Meier, with 383 residential and work studio units, as well as gallery, performance, and commercial spaces, and a park. Westbeth Artists' Housing continues to occupy the site.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of Far West Greenwich Village Prior to World War I [1]

By the 1840s, New York City saw a rapid increase in domestic and foreign trade through the Erie Canal, transatlantic shipping, and the railroads, and after the Civil War, the city flourished as the commercial, financial, and manufacturing center of the country. The far western section of Greenwich Village developed with mixed uses, including residences, industry, and transportation- and maritime-related commerce. The North (Hudson) River shoreline had been regularized and land-filled to West Street, and by 1840, over fifty wharves were constructed along the river from Lower Manhattan to Gansevoort Street. In 1846, the Hudson River Railroad was incorporated, and was constructed along West Street, terminating in a station at Chambers Street in 1851 (this was replaced by the St. John's Park Terminal for freight in 1868). In 1869, an elevated railroad line was completed along Greenwich Street, providing a rapid connection to lower Manhattan but also limiting (or directing) the development possibilities along the street. In the later 19th century, this section of Greenwich Village continued its mixed-use character through construction of factories, stables, and multiple dwellings. To the northwest, roughly north of Horatio Street, a market district developed after the City's creation of the Gansevoort Market (1879), for regional produce, and the West Washington Market (1889), for meat, poultry, and dairy products [today this area is largely the Gansevoort Market Historic District]. New York had also developed as the largest port in the United States by the early 19th century, and in the early 20th century emerged as one of the busiest ports in the world. While South Street along the East River had earlier been the primary artery for maritime commerce, West Street became a competitor in the 1870s and supplanted the former by about 1890.

A major public undertaking that had a profound impact on this section of the Hudson River waterfront was the construction, by the New York City Department of Docks, of the Gansevoort Piers (1894-1902) and Chelsea Piers (1902-10, with Warren & Wetmore), between West 11th and West 23rd Streets. These long docks accommodated the enormous trans-Atlantic steamships of the United States, Grace, Cunard White Star, Panama Pacific, and American Merchant lines. This area was described in 1914 as "in the heart of the busiest section of the port, adjacent to the transatlantic liners, coast and gulf vessels, between Christopher and 23rd Streets, surrounded by 5,000 seamen of all nationalities" of the half a million seamen that came into the harbor each year.[2] Beginning in the 1890s, this area became the locus for a number of large storage warehouses, as well as transportation-related commerce, firms associated with food products, and assorted industries. The U.S. Appraisers Store (later U.S. Federal Building) (1892-99, Willoughby J. Edbrooke), 641 Washington Street, was constructed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a warehouse for imported goods awaiting customs appraisal. Financier-brewer James Everard built an enormous 12-story structure at 277-283 West 10th Street (1894-96, Martin V.B. Ferdon) that became known as the Everard Storage Warehouse. Brothers-in-law Edmund Coffin and Henry Thompson Sloane, of the intermarried families descended from the founder of W. & J. Sloane & Co., the home furnishings and carpets firm, constructed adjacent warehouses at 726-736 Greenwich Street (1897-98, Gilbert A. Schellenger) and 720-724 Greenwich Street (1901-02, James B. Baker). Fleischmann & Co., producers of America's first distilled gin and commercial yeast, built No. 701 Washington Street (1887-88, Theodore G. Stein; demolished), described in the *New York Times* in 1897 as Fleischmann's "Eastern offices... and the headquarters of [its] yeast business";[3] the national headquarters was moved here from Cincinnati in 1919. Surviving are the firm's stables building and factory (1908-09 and 1910-11, Arthur M. Duncan), 140-144 Perry Street and 695-697 Washington Street.[4]

Gulian Hook's New-York Planing Mill and Steam-powered Factory Property [5]

The extant building (c. 1860) at today's 445-465 West Street/165-167 Bank Street was but one portion of a large parcel (152 by 210 feet) at the northeast corner of West and Bank Streets acquired in 1845 by William Van Hook (1782-1864), a wealthy and well-connected lawyer and president of the Phoenix Bank. An 1851 city directory indicated that Van Hook operated a planing mill at (then) 141-149 Bank Street; the adjacent blockfront on West Street contained lumber and lime yards, while the rest of Bank Street had vacant lots and a whiting factory (producing powdered chalk used for paints and inks). An 1854 map of this block depicted two lumber yards on West Street; rowhouses and a saw mill on Bethune Street; a coal yard, houses, and an alley leading to a putty factory on Washington Street; and an iron foundry and "New York Saw Mills" on Bank Street. By 1858, there were two two-story structures on Van Hook's lot, identified in the 1860 tax assessments as a planing mill. In 1860, additional construction resulted in, on the corner, a four-story vernacular Italianate style steam-powered factory structure (today's 445-465 West Street/165-167 Bank Street), built as a speculative rental property, as well as a three-story mill, and a two-story office. In July 1860, Gulian Hook advertised "TO LET, WITH STEAM POWER – The whole or portions of the handsome brick BUILDING, now being erected in the most substantial manner, on the corner of Bank and West sts. ... with power to the extent of 100 horses,"[6] and in 1862 the entire property was transferred to him. Gulian Hook (1822-1901) was, since 1856, the husband of nee Josephine Throckmorton Roach (1830-1916), a niece of William Van Hook who was her uncle's sole heir (William and Catherine Throckmorton Van Hook had adopted Josephine as a baby after her mother's death). According to the 1860 Census, the Hooks lived with Van Hook at his residence at 5 Fifth Avenue. Both Hook and Van Hook were listed in city directories in association with the New-York Planing Mill (No. 163 Bank Street after c. 1865), until Van Hook's death in 1864; Hook's listings continued until 1870. According to the *New York Times* in August 1868, "a fire occurred in the large three-story [sic] brick buildings... and caused the destruction of the greater part of the buildings and their contents."[7] Suffering a number of financial setbacks, the Hooks moved to Schenectady.

In 1870, Gulian and Josephine Hook, and John de Witt and Louisa B. Hook, sold this property, which changed hands a number of times until 1874, when it was acquired through foreclosure sale by Ambrose C. Kingsland (1804-1878), a wealthy merchant, real estate investor, and former New York City Mayor (1851-53), with sons George L. and Ambrose, Jr. The auction advertisement specified "four-story brick buildings ... on West st. and three-story brick buildings... on Bank st."[8] Another fire occurred in 1880 in the corner building (445 West Street), with the roof burned off. Following Ambrose C. Kingsland's death, the property was advertised at an 1881 executor's sale: "The valuable property north-east corner of West and Bank sts., embracing about 12 City lots, covered with substantial four-story buildings... on West st., and a three-story building... adjoining on Bank st., together with other buildings recently erected. ... Producing at present a rental of about $17,000 per annum."[9] The Kingsland family, however, did not sell the property until 1891, as a speculative investment to George Frederick Morgan (1846-1925), president of Enoch Morgan's Sons Co. (established 1809), one of the largest American manufacturers of soap products (including "Sapolio" soaps), located at the southeast corner of West and Bank Streets since 1844.

Landfill between 1854 and 1865 resulted in the creation of several entirely new blocks to the west of West Street extending to 13th Avenue (this landfill was removed in the early 1890s for the steamship piers' construction); confusingly, the buildings across West Street from the Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building employed the same range of addresses.[10] During the three decades from 1860 through 1892, the Hook-Kingsland-Morgan complex of buildings at the northeast corner of West and Bank Streets housed a very wide variety of industrial concerns. Early tenants of the

corner building, from the 1860s through the 80s, included, among other concerns, woodworking firms, and manufacturers of fire escapes; children's rocking horses, carriages, and toys; tanks; and paints.[11]

After Morgan's purchase of the property in 1891, the corner building (443-447 West) was from 1892 to c. 1901 the New York Car Wheel Works, the New York factory of a Buffalo-based company, touted in an advertisement as "Makers of High Grade WHEELS for Electric and Cable Tramway and Steam railway Service . ... Largest and Most Complete Equipment and Plant..."[12] During Morgan's lifetime, he commissioned and had constructed three additional buildings on the parcel (now demolished).[13] Tenants of the c. 1860 corner building included an iron and steel commission merchant, a paper box and mailing tube manufacturer, and dealer in asbestos materials.[14]

Following George F. Morgan's death in 1925, a 100-year lease was signed in December 1927 between Morgan's heirs (wife Helen de Wolfe Morgan and son John W. Morgan) and Bell Telephone Laboratories. This included the surviving corner building at 445-465 West Street/165-167 Bank Street, one of the oldest extant industrial buildings along the Hudson River waterfront, and three other structures at 151-163 Bank Street (now demolished). This property remained in the ownership of Morgan family heirs until 1968, when it became part of Westbeth Artists' Housing.

Western Electric Co. [15]

A small telegraph supply company, started in Cleveland in 1869 by Enos. M. Barton and Elisha Gray and moved to Chicago in 1872, became the Western Electric Manufacturing Co., merging with the Ottawa shop of the Western Union Telegraph Co. Between 1875 and 1882, Western Electric expanded through acquisition of a number of other firms, including the George H. Bliss Co., Electrical Improvement Co., Western Union's New York shop, Chicago Telegraph Supply Co., and the Gilliland and Charles Williams plants in Indianapolis and Boston. Following Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone in 1876, the American Bell Telephone Co. was organized in 1880, and in November 1881 purchased a controlling interest in the Western Electric Manufacturing Co. The latter's name was changed to the Western Electric Co., with its headquarters and factory (1883) in Chicago. As the official manufacturing unit of the Bell System, Western Electric's original function was to provide a dependable source of telegraph and telephone instruments and apparatuses of reliable quality that were compatible system-wide. Western Electric greatly expanded over the years through its telephone, electrical light, electric railway, and other lines of business. *King's Handbook of New York* in 1892 described the Western Electric Co. as

> one of the foremost electrical supply and manufacturing companies of the world, [which] has been closely identified with the wonderful development of electrical science in the last fifteen years. From small beginnings in Chicago it has risen to the dignity of an international organization, having its plants scattered over both continents. Its dynamos, its arc and incandescent lights, its annunciators and fire-alarm systems, its telephone and telegraph instruments, its aerial, underground and submarine cables are practical testimonials to its enterprise and mechanical skill.[16]

A mechanical department, established in 1884 in Boston, was responsible for research and product development.

In March 1885, the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T) was incorporated in New York as a subsidiary to expand the long-line connections of American Bell, and to assist in

maintaining the parent company's virtual monopoly control of telephony through low-cost "universal service," as well as through technological improvements. AT&T assumed all assets and became the parent company of the Bell System in 1899.

In New York City, a ten-story Western Electric office and factory building was constructed in 1888-89 at 127-131 Greenwich Street (aka 22 Thames Street) (Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz, architect). *King's Handbook* mentioned that this facility "turns out the smaller electrical instruments, such as telephones and transmitters, telegraph and testing instruments, annunciators and call-bells,"[17] compared with the heavier equipment manufactured in Chicago.

Western Electric Co. Building in Greenwich Village [18]

Beginning in January 1896, the Western Electric Co. of Illinois began to acquire parcels of land on the block of the Far West Village waterfront bounded by West, Bethune, Bank, and Washington Streets. Architect Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz filed in June for a large ten-story office and factory building for Western Electric, at the southeast corner of West and Bethune Streets, projected to be about four times larger than the company's downtown factory, at a cost of one million dollars. The Superintendent of Buildings approved the application in September. An account of the beginning of the project stated that "an extensive job of piling was necessary before the foundations could be built because of the sandy nature of the soil and the proximity of the river."[19] The plan of the main part of the building was divided into four distinct sections (Sections A, B, C, and D) separated by fire walls and located around a courtyard. Section B was begun first in September 1896 and nearly completed in early 1897, when Section C was started, both at the middle of the block along Bethune Street. *Electrical Engineer* in February 1897 announced that "C.L.W. Eidlitz, the architect, has planned an immense combination office and factory building for the Western Electric Company. When the structure is completed it will have a frontage of 145 feet on West street and 285 feet on Bethune street. ... At present, owing to an unexpired lease of the corner property, only the rear section is to be erected."[20] Western Electric moved in 1897 into Section B (57-67 Bethune Street), where it operated an electrical supply store while also maintaining one at Thames Street.

Section E (149 Bank Street) was built in 1897 to Eidlitz's design for lumber storage and a dry kiln. In 1900, Eidlitz connected Section E to Section B and added a two-story extension on Bank Street, similar in design to the lower portion of Sections B-C. With setbacks on the third and fourth stories, the expanded Section E was later said to have been "designed to house the machinery for making iron-covered submarine cable."[21] Between April 1898 and June 1899, Western Electric completed acquisition of much of the block, aside from George F. Morgan's large lot (which included the Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building) at the northeast corner of West and Bank Streets, and three lots at Washington and Bethune Streets. In a letter to the Commissioner of Buildings in February 1899, Eidlitz requested "to resume building operations under the original permit" considering that only "Sections 'B' and 'C' were built" ... "owing to an unexpired lease, possession could not be obtained of the property fronting on West Street."[22] Sections A and D were built at the same time in 1899. *American Electrician* in July 1900 commented:

> The new factory of the Western Electric Company... now approaching completion, was... planned in its entirety before work upon it was commenced, so that all its parts are properly designed for the work which will be called upon to perform for some time at least. The factory is as highly developed, organized and specialized as though it were a manufacturing establishment in a much older line of work, and possesses many points of interest... The entire factory is contained in one building about 150 x

> 275 ft. in size, and with a height of 10 stories in one part and 13 stories in another part. This building, with a three-story annex, houses some 3400 employees on its 11 acres of floor space. The isolated plant which supplies electric current for lighting and all power in the building is probably the largest plant delivering its output to one building in the world. [23]

The Western Electric Co. Building, designed in a restrained neo-Classical style and clad in buff-colored brick with buff-colored terra-cotta ornament above a grey granite watertable, was of fireproof steel skeletal construction and cost $1.136 million. This location was probably the largest manufacturer of telephone apparatus in the world, with a foundry, forge shop, and cable department in the basement, and the rest of building housing various stages of manufacture, with the engineering department and offices above the tenth story. With completion of this plant, Western Electric's downtown building ceased as a factory.

Also in 1899, Eidlitz filed for Section G at the northwest corner of Washington and Bank Streets, as a cable making plant. Designed at ten stories to match Sections A-D, construction was started in 1899 but disapproved by the Buildings Dept., and this section was abandoned for a number of years; only three stories were built as needed, completed in October 1903. The entire Western Electric Co. Building (Sections A-D, E, and G) was constructed by the firm of Marc Eidlitz & Son. A Section H, built in 1906 (Eidlitz & McKenzie; now demolished) at the southwest corner of Washington and Bethune Streets, was a three-story reinforced concrete storehouse for pig lead, paper, and copper wire used in the cable plant.[24] In 1908, however, the cable making operation was moved to Western Electric's Hawthorne (Cicero, Illinois) plant.

In 1907, under Theodore Newton Vail, the new president of AT&T (whose headquarters moved from Boston to New York), the research, design, and engineering departments of the Bell System were consolidated into a single organizational entity at 463 West Street (the corporate address used for the Greenwich Village plant), now the Engineering Dept. of the Western Electric Co. As the manufacturing arm of Bell, Western Electric designed and produced the equipment that Bell sold to home consumers, including telephones, as well as the components of the whole telephone network (such as central switches, fuses, protection devises, wire, repeaters, and amplifiers). The manufacture of transmitters and receivers at 463 West Street was second in volume only to the Hawthorne plant. After 1907, Western Electric's general offices in Chicago were merged with its New York executive offices, and located on the upper stories at 463 West Street. A Research Branch was organized within Western Electric's Engineering Dept. in 1911. This building continued to serve mainly as a factory until the end of 1913, with day and night shifts and some 8,000 employees, but by early 1914, the last manufacturing functions here were moved to Hawthorne. In November 1915, the Western Electric Co. of Illinois transferred this property to Western Electric Co., Inc. (of New York). The building was jointly occupied by Western Electric's Engineering Dept., New York Distributing House, and General Administrative Offices. During World War I, with the growth of the engineering divisions, 463 West Street became overcrowded, and Western Electric's executive departments moved to the AT&T Building at 195 Broadway in 1916; the Distributing House was relocated in 1918; and by 1921, the building was used solely by the Engineering Dept. In August 1923, the Western Electric Co. acquired three lots at Washington and Bethune Streets (then a six-story warehouse owned by the American Distributing Co.), and in December filed for the construction of a large addition to its plant [Section H, see below], to replace this warehouse and Western Electric's older Section H.

The 463 West Street facility of Western Electric's Engineering Dept. was the site of research

that led to many significant and pioneering electrical innovations and inventions. Harold D. Arnold developed the first vacuum tube amplifier (1913), a technological breakthrough that provided stability and control, making possible long-distance (1915) and, later, international telephone transmission. Edward C. Wente in 1916 produced the condenser microphone, which could transmit the entire range of the human voice, leading to its eventual use for radio, electrically cut recordings, and sound motion pictures. Western Electric research led to advances in loudspeakers, public address systems, and hearing aids. In 1920 and 1922, experimental radio stations 2XS and WEAF broadcast here; highly popular, the operation was sold in 1926 to Radio Corporation of America (RCA). After a decade of research, a sound-on-disc film projector was developed in 1923, a technique that allowed synchronized sound for motion pictures – Western Electric interested Warner Brothers in 1925 in this technology, which was jointly licensed to the Vitaphone Corp. for its exclusive use.

Architect: Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz/ McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin/ Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker [25]

Cyrus Lazelle Warner Eidlitz (1853-1921) was born in New York City into a family of eminent architects, engineers, and builders. He was the son of the distinguished architect Leopold Eidlitz (1823-1908), born in Prague of Austrian Jewish heritage, who was a founding member of the American Institute of Architects (1857) and was particularly noted for his involvement in the design of the Produce Exchange, New York County (Tweed) Courthouse,[26] and Temple Emanu-El in New York City, and New York State Capitol, Albany. Cyrus was named for his grandfather, Cyrus Lazelle Warner, also an architect, who is best known for the design of the Beth Elohim Synagogue (1840-41), Charleston, S.C. His uncle, Marc Eidlitz [see below], was the head of one of the most prominent building concerns in New York, while two other uncles, Samuel A. and Benjamin W. Warner, were architects specializing in commercial work. His brother, Leopold, and a cousin, Charles S. Warner, were engineers.

Cyrus Eidlitz studied at a preparatory school in Geneva, Switzerland, then at the Royal Polytechnic Institute, Stuttgart, Germany, in 1871-72. He entered his father's office as draftsman, and though in 1876 he was listed independently in directories, continued in his father's firm (they shared an office with his brother Leopold), and the elder Leopold Eidlitz was responsible for assisting his son in obtaining work. An early project of Cyrus's was the rebuilding in 1878-79 of the fire-damaged St. Peter's Church, 2500 Westchester Avenue, the Bronx, built to his father's design in 1853-55.[27] As his career progressed into the 1880s, Cyrus Eidlitz worked largely in the Richardsonian Romanesque stylistic vein – among his notable buildings were Michigan Central Railroad Stations (1882-83, demolished; and 1887), Detroit and Kalamazoo, Michigan; Dearborn Street Station (1883-85), Chicago; Buffalo [New York] Public Library (1884-87, demolished); and San Antonio [Texas] National Bank (1886).

In New York City, Eidlitz designed the city's earliest consolidated telephone exchange structures for the Metropolitan Telephone & Telegraph Co., including 18 Cortlandt Street (1886-87, demolished), the first purpose-built telephone building in New York; 113 West 38th Street (1888, demolished); 140 Spring Street (1889-90); and Broad Street (1890, demolished). Other institutional and commercial commissions included the Racquet & Tennis Club (1890-91, demolished), 27 West 43rd Street; Bank for Savings (1893-94, facades extant), 280 Park Avenue South; Fidelity and Casualty Building (1893-94, demolished), 99 Cedar Street; Association of the Bar of the City of New York Clubhouse (1895), 42 West 44th Street; Society House of the American Society of Civil Engineers (1896-97), 220 West 57th Street; Townsend Building (1896-97), 1121 Broadway;[28] and Washington Life Insurance Co. Building (1897-98, demolished), Broadway and Liberty Street. His

telephone-related commissions led to an association with the Western Electric Co. and the design of its buildings at 127-131 Greenwich Street (22 Thames Street) (1888-89); and 463 West Street (1896-1903).

Around 1904, the firm of Eidlitz & McKenzie was established, primarily to handle commissions associated with the telephone business. Andrew Campbell McKenzie (1861-1926), born in Dunkirk, N.Y., had arrived in New York City in 1884 and worked for the firm of Babb, Cook & Willard prior to entering Eidlitz's office c. 1900. The firm's most famous work was the *New York Times* Building (1903-05; re-clad 1966), at 25 stories then the city's tallest structure. Cyrus Eidlitz retired in 1910, after which the firm continued as McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin from 1910 to 1926. Stephen F. Voorhees (1878-1965), who studied civil engineering at Princeton University, began as a civil engineer and superintendent of construction with Eidlitz & McKenzie in 1902, and worked on the foundation of the *Times* Building. Paul Gmelin (1859-1937), born in Germany and educated in Stuttgart, worked as a draftsman after his arrival in the U.S., briefly in the firm of McKim, Mead & White, and then with Babb, Cook & Willard, where he met McKenzie. McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin continued the firm's association with the design of telephone-related structures, including the Walker Lispenard Building (later Long Distance Building of the American Telephone & Telegraph Co.) (1911-16), 32 Sixth Avenue, Western Electric Co. warehouse (1920-22), 395 Hudson Street, and Barclay-Vesey Building (1923-26), 140 West Street,[29] as well as the Brooklyn Municipal Building (1924-27). From 1926 to 1938, the successor firm was Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, with Ralph Walker (1889-1973), who joined the office in 1919.

The Builder: Marc Eidlitz & Son [30]

The construction firm of Marc Eidlitz & Son, builder of the Western Electric Co. Building (Sections A-D, E and G), was known for its high-quality work and was responsible for many notable commercial and institutional buildings and skyscrapers, as well as private residences of the wealthy, in New York City. Born in Prague, Bohemia, Marc Eidlitz (1826-1892) emigrated to New York in 1847, was apprenticed to a mason/builder, and started his own building firm in 1854. He was the brother of architect Leopold Eidlitz and the uncle of Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz. Marc Eidlitz's firm built such important structures as the Metropolitan Opera House, Steinway Hall, Astor Library addition, Lord & Taylor,[31] Broadway Tabernacle, Presbyterian and German Hospitals, and the residences of J.P. Morgan and Ogden Goelet. Eidlitz is said to have "practically retired"[32] from the firm in 1888, becoming president of the Germania Bank, and upon his death in 1892, his son Otto Marc Eidlitz (1860-1928), became president of the construction company, a position he held until his death. Otto Eidlitz had received civil engineering degrees from Cornell University in 1881 and 1890, entering his father's business after the first, and was made a partner in 1884. Robert James Eidlitz, his brother, was educated as an architect at the Royal Polytechnic in Berlin and began working in the firm in 1889. Among the later buildings constructed by the firm in New York were the St. Regis Hotel, B. Altman's, Arnold Constable & Co., Empire Building, J.P. Morgan Building on Wall Street, American Telephone & Telegraph Building, Yale Club of New York City Building, and Bankers' Trust Co. Building.[33]

History of Far West Greenwich Village After World War I [34]

After a period of decline, Greenwich Village was becoming known, prior to World War I, for its historic and picturesque qualities, its affordable housing, and the diversity of its population and social and political ideas. Many artists and writers, as well as tourists, were attracted to the Village. At the same time, as observed by museum curator Jan S. Ramirez,

> As early as 1914 a committee of Village property owners, merchants, social workers, and realtors had embarked on a campaign to combat the scruffy image the local bohemian populace had created for the community. ... Under the banner of the Greenwich Village Improvement Society and the Greenwich Village Rebuilding Corporation, this alliance of residents and businesses also rallied to arrest the district=s physical deterioration... their ultimate purpose was to reinstate higher-income-level families and young professionals in the Village to stimulate its economy. Shrewd realtors began to amass their holdings of dilapidated housing. [35]

These various factors and the increased desirability of the Village led to a real estate boom – "rents increased during the 1920s by 140 percent and in some cases by as much as 300 percent".[36] The desirability of even the far western section of Greenwich Village as a residential community by the late 1920s was exemplified by the conversion of some multiple dwellings and other building types into middleclass apartments.

Several transportation improvements constructed or planned during the 1920s had an immediate or eventual impact on the Far West Village, helping for one to perpetuate the existence and increase the importance of the Gansevoort Market neighborhood. Beginning in 1913 and 1925, Seventh and Sixth Avenues were extended southward through Greenwich Village, in connection with the construction of the Holland Tunnel in 1919-27. As early as the 1910s, Calvin Tomkins, Commissioner of the Dept. of Docks, had proposed an elevated freight rail line along the West Side, to replace the surface tracks. This project was delayed, however, by World War I. Julius Miller, the Manhattan Borough President, in 1925 advocated an elevated highway to be constructed along the West Side as well. These two projects, called the "West Side Improvement," were finally authorized by the N.Y.C. Grade Crossing Elimination Act of 1928. The New York Central Railroad's elevated freight railway (1931-34) passed through some thirty buildings on its route southward to the new St. John's Park Freight Terminal at West and Clarkson Streets. While providing easier access between the Hudson River waterfront and the metropolitan region, these improvements had a number of effects on real estate values and on the uses of buildings, particularly along West and Washington Streets. The Federal Writers' Project's *New York City Guide* (1939) described this stretch of the waterfront along West Street, the "most lucrative water-front property in the world," as follows:

> Although the western rim of Manhattan is but a small section of New York's far-flung port, along it is concentrated the largest aggregate of marine enterprises in the world. Glaciers of freight and cargo move across this strip of ... water front. It is the domain of the super-liner, but it is shared by the freighter, the river boat, the ferry, and the soot-faced tug... Ships and shipping are not visible along much of West Street. South of Twenty-third Street, the river is walled by an almost unbroken line of bulkhead sheds and dock structures... . [37]

The increased reliance on automobiles and trucks as primary forms of transportation after World War I was displayed in the Far West Village by the conversion of stables buildings into garages, construction of utilitarian structures for trucking companies, and the continuing location of businesses here, including a number of storage companies and several significant paper firms. In 1929, the Fleischmann Co. was chosen as the centerpiece of a $430 million consolidation of food manufacturers (named Standard Brands, Inc.) by J.P. Morgan & Co.; Fleischmann remained in the

Village until 1944. After 1960, with the introduction of containerized shipping and the accompanying need for large facilities (space for which could be accommodated in Brooklyn and New Jersey), the Manhattan waterfront rapidly declined as the center of New York's maritime commerce. In addition, airplanes replaced ocean liners carrying passengers overseas. Most of the piers and many of the buildings associated with Manhattan's Hudson River maritime history and commerce have been demolished.

Bell Telephone Laboratories [38]

By the end of 1924, the expanding scope of research and the number of employees (some 3,600) of Western Electric Co.'s Engineering Dept. resulted in the organization of a new entity. In January 1925, Bell Telephone Laboratories Incorporated ("Bell Labs") was launched, eventually consolidating the engineering units of Western Electric and AT&T, and with dual functions: to conduct fundamental laboratory research for AT&T (Bell System), and to apply that research to the invention, development, and design of apparatus and electrical communication systems that would be manufactured by Western Electric. Bell Labs was jointly owned by AT&T and Western Electric.[39] Frank B. Jewett, the first president of Bell Labs, was an electrical engineer who had formerly been vice president of Western Electric and then vice president of AT&T. Though the initial overall mission was the maintenance of high-quality universal telephone service in the United States, and thus the labs' actual work was primarily designing telephone-related equipment, Bell Labs emerged as one of the world's preeminent private industrial research laboratories, considered a leader in the scope, quality, and scale of its work.

Countless significant technological innovations occurred at Bell Labs' West Street plant. Joseph P. Maxfield and Henry C. Harrison developed an orthophonic recording system in 1925 (the Victor Talking Machine Co. was licensed under Western Electric patents) that later led to high fidelity long-playing (LP) records and the record-playing stylus. Harold S. Black worked on pioneering amplification techniques to minimize feedback. Herbert E. Ives's use of photoelectric cells to send pictures over wires led the effort that resulted in the first demonstration of television in 1927 between Washington (Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover) and 463 West Street. A subsidiary Electrical Research Products, Inc., was formed in 1927 to develop and distribute sound equipment and provide technicians for Hollywood studio and movie theater installation (the label "Western Electric Microphonic Recording" is seen on a large number of films of the period). Also that year, radiotelephone service (developed here) began between New York and London. In 1929, Bell Labs demonstrated color television, and the high-frequency coaxial cable was developed. By 1932, high-fidelity stereophonic recordings had been developed, with the noted conductor Leopold Stokowski of the Philadelphia Orchestra working with Bell Lab's Arthur C. Keller on recordings at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. Bell developed a stereophonic transmission system in 1934. Clinton J. Davisson in 1937 was the first Bell Labs scientist to receive a Nobel Prize in Physics, for the detection of electron waves. In 1937-39, the labs produced the "first operating electrical digital computer using binary number notation."[40]

Expansion and Demise of the Bell Labs Complex [41]

Concurrent with the creation of Bell Labs as an organizational entity was the expansion of Western Electric's building into a complex for Bell Labs. Section H (51-55 Bethune Street/ 744-754 Washington Street) was originally filed by Western Electric in December 1923 to replace the existing Section H structure (1906, Eidlitz), a coal bin, and the newly-acquired American Distributing Co. warehouse. The large (81 x 130 feet) new 11-story factory building (1924-26,

McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin) was constructed by the Tidewater Building Co., at an estimated cost of $600,000, for telephone and radio research work, with an acoustic laboratory on the second story and an auditorium on the top story.

With the long-term lease in 1927 of the Morgan family's buildings at the northeast corner of West and Bank Streets, Bell Labs controlled the entire block (an estimated 98,000 square feet of land) housing some 3,900 scientists and technicians. On the eastern portion of the Morgan property (151-153 Bank Street), Bell Labs built Section L in 1929 for experimental work in the development of sound recording for motion pictures, housing a sound stage, control room, film and disc recording rooms, developing, editing, and printing rooms, a theater, dressing rooms, a film storage vault, and optics and acoustics research labs. It is said to have been the "first fully equipped experimental film studio built expressly for the perfection of talkies."[42] The three-story, brick-clad Moderne style structure was designed by Warren B. Sanford, an engineer and plant manager of Bell Labs, with the Turner Construction Co. as builder. One history stated that "the Sound Picture Lab was the highlight of tours of Bell Labs in the early 1930s, with visitors ranging from Hollywood royalty like movie stars Rod La Roque and Vilma Banky, to real royals like the king and queen of Siam."[43] By 1937, however, Bell Labs abandoned direct involvement in the movie business, and this facility was converted for the testing of telephone apparatus.

The West Side Improvement projects seriously affected Bell Labs' plant. After the New York Central Railroad received an easement along Washington Street in November 1931 for its elevated freight railway, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker was responsible for alterations to Bell Labs' portion, through Section H and atop Section G, constructed between October 1931 and April 1934 at an estimated cost of $100,000. Noise from the elevated freight railway, as well as the elevated highway constructed above West Street, became a problem for electronics work here. By the 1930s, Bell Labs had also overgrown its space at this plant, expanding into other Manhattan buildings and several locations in New Jersey. With World War II funding and a vast increase in the number of technicians working on such projects as radar and cryptanalysis (codebreaking, etc.) for the National Defense Research Committee, Bell Labs was spurred to move its headquarters in 1941 to Murray Hill, New Jersey. This was where Bell Labs' earlier research culminated in 1947 in one of its most famous innovations, the transistor -- called "the single most significant electronic invention of the era"[44] (Nobel Prize, 1956: William Shockley, John Bardeen, and Walter H. Brattain). Bell Labs ceased use of its complex at 463 West Street in December 1966.

Residential Conversions in Far West Greenwich Village, 1960s-80s

In 1961, Mayor Robert Wagner announced an urban renewal plan for the far western section of Greenwich Village, to the south of Bell Labs, that would have included the 12 blocks bounded by West, Christopher, Hudson, and West 11th Streets, and another 2 blocks along West Street south of Christopher Street. As reported in the *Times* in March 1961,

> residents of the site immediately rallied in vigorous protest. Their spokesman [sic] was Mrs. Jane Jacobs, an editor of *Architectural Forum* magazine, who lives with her family in a house they own at 555 Hudson Street. The entire site, the group said, contains only a negligible amount of blight. It would be unconscionable, they argued, to demolish any of their well-maintained homes to make way for a bleak, architecturally sterile, institutional housing development.

The Housing and Redevelopment Board responded that its intention was actually to "remove the

industrial buildings, warehouses and trucking depots that threaten the neighborhood."[45] That same year, Jane Jacobs authored the influential *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. This renewal plan was never to proceed as initially envisioned by the City. Jacobs, on behalf of the West Village Committee, wrote to the newly formed New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1963 (prior to the passage of the Landmarks Law in 1965 which enabled designations), urging that any consideration of a Greenwich Village historic district include the far western section of the Village to West Street.[46]

By the late 1960s, the large buildings of Far West Greenwich Village were ripe for re-use and conversion into apartments. Bell Labs was an early conversion (1968-70), as well as a pioneering residential/studio complex for artists, Westbeth Artists' Housing [see below]. The two large Coffin-Sloane warehouse buildings at 720-724 and 726-736 Greenwich Street were combined and converted in 1974-76 as the Towers Apartments, and in 1974-78, the Everard Storage Warehouse, 277-283 West 10th Street, was converted into the Shephard House Apartments. The former 9th Police Precinct Station House (1896-97, John duFais), 135 Charles Street, was purchased at public auction in 1976 and converted into "Le Gendarme" Apartments. In 1975, the *New York Times* mentioned that the "western fringe of Greenwich Village is one area where real-estate specialists expect a surge in conversions,"[47] and by 1978, the *Times* described "a neighborhood in formation":

> Hemmed in by warehouses, factories and garages... not much has changed, in many ways, since the turn of the century... yet unmistakable signs of fundamental change are everywhere. ... What is happening here, west of Hudson Street in what might be called the "Far West Village," is the birth of a neighborhood. [48]

The Miller Elevated Highway, closed in 1974, was demolished in the 1980s. The elevated freight line also ceased operation, and the section south of Gansevoort Street was demolished at this time. The buildings along West Street, formerly in the permanent shadow of the highway, were exposed again, and the street was suddenly attractive for residential development, including building conversion and demolition. The former Manhattan Refrigerating Co. complex, occupying the entire block along West Street between Horatio and Gansevoort Streets, was renovated and converted as the West Coast Apartments and opened in the 1980s.[49] By 1999, the *Times* observed the Far West Village's "developers' gold rush" to convert structures and construct new high rises along the West Street corridor.[50]

Westbeth Artists' Housing [51]

Roger L. Stevens, a leading New York theater producer, was appointed the first chairman of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., as well as the first chairman of the National Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts (1965-69). Stevens determined early on that among the Endowment's concerns should be the need for affordable studio living quarters for American artists, as there was an acute shortage of legal loft-type living and working studios within the means of many artists. Sensing a potential solution in the conversion of industrial buildings, Stevens wanted a pilot project in New York City, considered the center of the American art scene, and turned to Jacob M. Kaplan of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, a philanthropic foundation that had previously funded small-scale renovations of several brownstones and lofts for artists. After looking for a project site for two years, they were alerted to the vacant Bell Labs complex by developer William Zeckendorf, Sr., in July 1967. The National Endowment and the J.

M. Kaplan Fund jointly contributed seed money of $750,000 apiece (later increased to $1.5 million each) and the project was announced publically in August 1967. The Westbeth Corp. Housing Development Fund Co., Inc., was organized in September (it was later incorporated as non-profit in April 1968) to purchase, renovate, and operate the complex. L. Dixon Bain, Jr., a former public relations employee of Western Electric and AT&T, was selected as administrator, while Joan Kaplan Davidson, Kaplan's daughter and the Fund's vice president, was the founder and president of the Westbeth Corp. Together, Davidson and Bain developed the project from mere conception into a physical reality, working through all of the actual terms of the complex financing, rehabilitation, operation, and selection of artists, etc. In June 1968, the entire property was transferred from Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc. ($2.5 million) and Morgan family heirs ($900,000) to the Westbeth Corp. A low-cost 3% mortgage of $11.5 million, arranged through Bankers Trust Co. and guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), was the first such use of FHA's moderate income housing program for a professional group or for artists' housing. Tensions inevitably developed between the Westbeth Corp. and FHA, which viewed Westbeth as middle-income housing and had to be convinced to bend its rules for flexible space allotments for artists' living and working. The non-profit project also secured a 70% tax abatement status (increased to 100% in 1982), and the New York City Planning Commission created its first special zoning district in order to allow living and working space within this industrial zone. The June 21, 1968, groundbreaking ceremony was attended by Mayor John Lindsay, along with Stevens and Kaplan. After the withdrawal of further National Endowment involvement under the Nixon administration, the Kaplan Fund remained the leading source of the project's support. Westbeth also received the endorsement of Village leaders, including Jane Jacobs.

The architect of the buildings' conversion into artists' housing was Richard Meier, a classmate of Joan Davidson's brother, Richard Kaplan, at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Meier's first significant architectural work, the Westbeth project was completed in two years. Inspired by Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles, Meier created 383 single-story and duplex residential units, gallery space, dance and theater performing spaces, as well as common studio spaces in the basement and the Section I (former Hook's Steam-powered Factory) building. The truck access loading platform on West Street became a pedestrian entrance, and additional entrances were created on Bethune Street and to the south; the two buildings at 155-157 and 159-161 Bank Street were demolished for a park; and two floors in the central courtyard of Sections A-D were demolished, opening the courtyard to the sky, with curved steel fire escape balconies and a concrete ramp to the second story installed. Graphic Construction Corp. was the contractor of the complex.

Westbeth's financing was partly dependent on commercial income to be derived from over 100,000 square feet of rental space. This aspect of the project was never successful, however, as the spaces proved hard to rent, in part because of perceptions of the neighborhood at the time. An early, if brief, lessee was [Jacques] Mourlot Studios, a French lithographic firm; most of the ground-story space around the courtyard ended up as residents' galleries. An advisory group was formed to select a diverse range of artists as Westbeth's first residents – professional artists were sought, though not necessarily "name" ones (the initial concept of Westbeth was that this was to be a place of short-term residency, until artists established themselves and moved on). The first tenants moved in in 1969, though the official opening was in May 1970; the final project cost was around $12.5 million.[52] Peter Cott served as executive director in 1970-73.

The utopian conversion of the Bell Labs complex into Westbeth Artists' Housing was

pioneering in many ways. Considered one of the world's first large-scale adaptive re-use projects of an industrial building, it has also been called (in 1970) the "largest artist's housing facility in the world, and the only one of its kind in the United States" by Ada Louise Huxtable in the *New York Times*;[53] and, more recently, "the first and to this day, largest publically and privately financed conversion of an industrial complex into housing for artists in the United States;"[54] and the "largest residential rehabilitation project ever undertaken in the United States."[55] Praised for its spatial planning, Westbeth received a number of design awards in 1970-71, including those from the American Institute of Architects, National Center for Low- and Moderate-Income Housing, and New York State Association of Architects. The project was influential in helping to codify the concept of artists living in former industrial spaces in New York City and elsewhere, and inspired the conversion of factories for a wide variety of uses.

Typical of many large New York City apartment buildings, Westbeth has seen its share of internal frictions and controversies since the beginning, including neighbor conflicts, but with the additional considerations of so many artists as residents together; differences between visual and non-visual artists, the former deeming the units too small for painters and sculptors; and such questions as tenant upgrades, length of stay, inheritance, and non-artists rights. The Kaplan Fund had planned to withdraw its involvement after Westbeth's completion, but the complex was not found to be financially self-sustaining; the Fund ended its financial and managerial role in 1973, turning control over to a Board of Directors. The recession and state of the city in the 1970s further complicated matters. There was a contentious rent strike in 1972 after a 17.5% rent increase in order to meet expenses. The Government National Mortgage Assn. assumed the mortgage in 1970, followed by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development in 1975. As Westbeth continued to run a deficit, there was a move to turn the complex into a cooperative in the 1980s. The New York City Housing Development Corp. acquired the mortgage in 2009, and the tax abatement was extended for another 40 years.

Aside from the large number and wide variety of artist-residents at Westbeth over the last four decades, many of them notable,[56] the complex has housed a number of significant artistic, and other, organizations. The most famous of these (since 1971) has been the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, located in the former penthouse auditorium of Section H (55 Bethune Street). Section L, originally the experimental sound motion picture studio, has housed a series of theaters over the years (using the addresses of 151 and 155 Bank Street): the first home of the newly-founded Theater for the New City (1971-72), which also started the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade at Westbeth Park, led by Westbeth resident and puppeteer Ralph Lee; Westbeth Cabaret Theater (1971-73); Exchange Theater (1972-75); Westbeth Theatre Center (1977-2004); Bank Street Theater (since 1994); and New School for Drama Theater (since 2004). The Westbeth Art Gallery, 57 Bethune Street, has served as a showcase for residents' work. Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, New York City's first lesbian and gay synagogue (established 1973), has worshiped here since 1975. The complex has been listed twice on the National Register of Historic Places, in 1975 as Bell Telephone Laboratories, and in 2009 as Westbeth.

Description

Note: The building Sections described in this report are the historic Section denominations used by the Western Electric Co. and Bell Labs (At the time of designation, Westbeth uses a slightly different Section arrangement).

Section I (former Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building, c. 1860), 445-453 West Street/ 165-167 Bank Street

vernacular Italianate style; four stories; red brick cladding (painted white by the 1930s, now mostly removed on West Street); articulated by arcaded triple bays separated by pilasters (three bays on Bank Street, six bays on West Street, plus two additional northern double bays); rectangular windows on lower three stories and round-arched on fourth story (in the 1890s were six-over-six double-hung wood sash) (most replaced by one-over-one and two-over-two double-hung wood sash, one-over-one aluminum sash, and metal single pane; covered by metal mesh on second story); two second-story decorative iron brackets with lamps on West Street (c. 1939-65); corbeled brick cornice; roof bulkhead located at the north end of West Street (pre-1931)

Bank Street First Story: (west to east): 1) three smaller segmental windows (covered by metal mesh) set within original rectangular opening (pre-1931) 2) former loading dock (pre-1931) with one window, concrete infill with air-conditioning units, and entrance with concrete steps, decorative iron railings, and non-historic metal door 3) two windows (covered by metal mesh) and entrance with concrete steps, decorative iron railings, and non-historic metal door and transom

West Street First Story: watertable re-built with brick and concrete; (bays north to south): 1) vehicular entrance with steel I-beam lintel (c. 1912) and metal pulldown door (originally two windows) 2) vehicular entrance with steel I-beam lintel (c. 1900/1915) and metal pulldown door (originally a segmental-arched passageway) 3) northern doorway (with concrete steps and non-historic metal door and transom covered by metal mesh) and two windows (original configuration; covered by metal mesh); 4) metal loading dock (pre-1931) with concrete lintel, wooden pulldown door, and one window (with non-historic wrought-iron grille); 5) three windows (with non-historic wrought-iron grilles); 6) loading dock (pre-1931) with wooden pulldown door, southern metal pilaster, curved parged-brick wingwalls with curved iron pipe railings, and flagstone-and-brick steps, and one window (covered by metal mesh); 7) and 8) three windows each (with non-historic wrought-iron grilles) (the southernmost six triple-bays each originally had a northern doorway and two windows)

Sections A-D (1896-99, Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz), 455-465 West Street/ 57-77 Bethune Street

neo-Classical style; ten stories (with three-story upper section on West Street); rectangular in plan around interior light court; buff-colored brick cladding with buff-colored terra-cotta ornament above high grey granite watertable; cornices above the second, eighth, tenth, 12th (corbeled brick and copper), and 13th (copper) stories; West and Bethune Streets windows have four-over-four double-hung wood sash on floors one through nine (some windows on West Street have one-over-one replacements; some West Street and all Bethune Street first- and second-story windows covered by metal mesh) and one-over-one double-hung wood sash at 10th- 12th stories, and one-over-one and four-over-four double-hung steel sash on the 13th story; West Street pressed-metal angled bay window with balcony at 11th-12th stories; flagpole, antenna, and water tanks on roof

West Street Base: basement windows have iron bars; windows covered with metal mesh; two-story rusticated grey ranite entrance frontispiece with broad segmental vehicular entrance archway leading to interior court, with two huge decorative iron gates surmounted by decorative iron grille; archway flanked by large decorative iron doors, surmounted by large decorative iron lamps on

brackets; entrance north of frontispiece, with non-historic metal-and-glass door with transom and side panels

Bethune Street Base: granite watertable at westernmost four bays, with windows (covered with iron grilles); most other bays had basement window openings (some with iron grilles, most filled with bric); central entrance leading to the interior light court (1968-70) has concrete steps with iron pipe railings and molded sheet metal lintel/cornice, surmounted by an historic decorative iron bracket with a hanging lamp, flanked by a sign to the east; entrance near eastern end has concrete steps, a non-historic metal door with transom, concrete surround, and non-historic metal mesh gate, surmounted by an historic decorative iron bracket with a hanging lamp

South Elevation: red brick cladding (painted white by the 1930s); two first-story open passageway bays leading from Westbeth Park on Bank Street to the interior light court (1968-70) flanked by two plate glass doors and one bay with plate glass windows; windows with six-over-six (and some four-over-four on upper stories) double-hung steel sash (some recent one-over-one and six-over-six metal replacements); western end 10th to 13th stories clad in buff-colored brick, with metal oriel window at the 12th-story eastern end (with four-over-four double-hung wood sash); two huge brick chimneys at southeastern corner

Interior Light Court: asphalt tile paving, circular concrete seating area, large first-story plate glass windows; open bays with plate glass doors and windows and parged ceilings on the first and second stories at the eastern end, with a long curved concrete ramp with iron pipe railing leading to the second story; court walls have been painted; some first-story bays on the south wall have been filled with brick; most window bays are tripartite (some are single) with four-over-four double-hung steel sash; second, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, and tenth stories have curved metal balconies/fire escapes with metal mesh floors (all alterations 1968-70)

Passageway between Westbeth Park and the light court: parged piers and ceiling, asphalt tile paving, plate glass doors and windows, metal service doors, and a curved glass window at the northeast corner

Passageway between Bethune Street and the light court: parged ceiling and walls, two pairs of double plate glass doors, and two metal service doors

Passageway between West Street and the light court: concrete steps with iron pipe railings, two large round columns, plate glass windows, and three metal service doors at the western end

Section E (1897/1900, Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz), 149 Bank Street

neo-Classical style; narrow two-story buff-colored brick and terra cotta (above granite watertable) street facade, built in conjunction with Sections A-D; wide first-story bay with original steel lintel, filled in with brick of a yellower hue (pre-1965), with non-historic metal door and vents; second-story windows with four-over-four double-hung steel sash (covered with metal mesh); two additional setback stories

Section G (1899-1903, Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz; altered 1931-34, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker), 137-147 Bank Street/ 734-742 Washington Street

neo-Classical style; three stories, built in conjunction with Sections A-D; U-shaped in plan; buff-colored brick cladding with buff-colored terra-cotta ornament above grey granite watertable; altered 1931-34 to carry the New York Central Railroad ("High Line") (rail line removed 1991), with partial demolition of third story along Washington Street

Washington Street Base: northernmost five bays (originally two openings per bay per floor, except for the southernmost with one) combined into one large opening per bay (with triple windows with one-over-one steel sash) (1968-70) (all windows covered by metal mesh); second-story historic decorative iron bracket with hanging lamp at south end; second story surmounted by iron pipe railing; western third-story wall surmounted by mechanical equipment and chainlink fence

Bank Street Base: three westernmost first-story bays have steel lintels (westernmost is original); second-westernmost bay has entrance with concrete steps with decorative iron railings and a metal-and-glass door with a transom (both covered with metal mesh); first- and second-story windows have four-over-four double-hung steel sash (two on first story are one-over-one replacements) (all covered by metal mesh) and the tripartite third-story windows have four-over-four double-hung wood sash; two second-story historic decorative iron brackets with hanging lamps; the portion corresponding to the High Line was rebuilt (1931-34) with easternmost entrance with double wood-and-glass doors with a transom (covered with metal mesh), replacement of some brickwork with bricks of yellower hue, and second-story brick corbeling that supports a riveted steel plate girder surmounted by a chainlink fence

Section H (1924-26, McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin; altered 1931-34, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker), 51-55 Bethune Street/ 744-754 Washington Street

neo-Classical style; eleven stories; L-shaped plan with side light court; buff-colored brick cladding with buff-colored terra-cotta ornament above a grey granite watertable; most bays above the base have tripartite windows except at Bethune Street eastern end and both ends of Washington Street, which are paired or single; four-over-four (some six-over-six) double-hung steel sash (several replacements are one-over-one); altered 1931-34 to carry the New York Central Railroad ("High Line") (rail line removed 1991), with partial demolition of third and fourth stories on Washington Street and two easternmost bays on Bethune Street, except for framing on the open bays (reinforced with concrete beams and interior bracing, with iron pipe railings on Washington Street and chainlink fencing on Bethune Street); third- and fourth-story banner poles at Washington Street northern end; cornices above second, eighth, and tenth stories; set-back 11th story has gable roof, cooper cornice with returns, an oculus window at north and south ends, and round-arched windows; a two-story bulkhead adjoins this story to the west; red tile roofs; a bridge connects upper portion to Sections B-C

Bethune Street Base: entrance has granite steps, curved decorative iron railings, granite and cast-stone molded surround, double brass-and-glass doors and entablature, decorative iron-and-glass canopy (post-1970) bearing the letters "Westbeth Artists' Housing" and "55", surmounted by historic decorative iron bracket with a hanging lamp; windows covered by metal mesh; easternmost section corresponding to the High Line rebuilt (1931-34), with second story terminated by brick corbelling supporting a riveted steel plate girder

Washington Street Base: each bay originally had two openings per floor (except for single opening on southernmost first-story bay) combined into one large opening (with triple windows with one-over-one steel sash) in the central five bays (1968-70); northern- and southernmost windows have four-over-four double-hung steel sash; windows covered by metal mesh; southernmost bay entrance has double metal-and-glass doors with a transom with an historic decorative metal grille; first-story sign board at northern end; second-story historic decorative iron brackets with hanging lamps at each end

South Facade: unornamented buff brick cladding; tripartite windows above the High Line,

except for two single windows on the tenth story and single windows on the 11th story

Section L (1929, Warren B. Sanford, engineer), 151-153 Bank Street
Moderne style; four stories; orangish brick cladding above a concrete base; entrance with non-historic metal-and-glass door with a transom and sidelight, approached by concrete access ramp with iron railings, and flanked by sign boards; historic first-, second-, and fourth-story horizontal two-over-two double-hung steel sash windows (covered with metal mesh on first two stories and two fourth-story louvers have been inserted); third-story central opening covered with metal (formerly it had a hoist); second-story banner poles; third-story flagpole

Westbeth Park (1968-70), 157-163 Bank Street
concrete aggregate and asphalt tile paving; broad concrete steps and a later concrete ramp at the north end, with iron railings (post-1970), leading to two large passageway openings to the interior light court of Sections A-D, with steps with metal railings to the east side of this; flanking planting areas with curved concrete tree pits/seating areas; round flagstone planting area (originally a fountain) surrounded by round concrete seats; raised concrete wall/seating area with round tree pits at the sound end of the park, flanked by steps to the west, with metal railings

Section I Eastern Wall (painted) has two non-historic metal doors, first-story section of single-pane metal windows with transoms, and six-over-six double-hung wood windows (covered by metal mesh on second story)

Section L Western Wall (painted) a first-story non-historic metal door and former openings (filled with brick and concrete block) and second-story (and one third-story) four-over-four double-hung steel windows;

Sources: Western Electric Co. photographs (1896-99), hlw [successor firm to Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz]; *Marc Eidlitz & Son 1854-1904*; New York Public Library digital online photographs (1931-34); NYC Dept. of Taxes photograph (c. 1939); LPC, misc. historic photographs and John B. Bayley photographs (c. 1964); Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation photographs (1988)

Report researched and written by
JAY SHOCKLEY
Research Department

NOTES

[1] This section was adapted from: Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension Designation Report* (LP-2184)(New York: City of New York, 2006), written and researched by Jay Shockley.

[2] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Seamen's Institute of the American Seaman's Friend Society* (New York: ASFS, 1914), 3.

[3] Charles Fleischmann obit., *New York Times (NYT)*, Dec. 11, 1897, 5.

[4] The U.S. Appraisers Store is a designated New York City Landmark. The other extant buildings mentioned are located within the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension.

[5] New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; New York City, Tax Assessments (1857-82); NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alt. 940-1880, NB 350-1912); *New York City Directories* (1851-1925); *New York State Business Directory & Gazetteer* (1869-70); *Boyd's Business Directory* (1869-70); New York City Maps, Bromley (1879) and Robinson (1885); Frances G. Sitherwood, *Throckmorton Family History* (Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Prtg. & Stationary Co., 1929), 110-111; "Mason's Lath," *New York Herald (NYH)*, May 1, 1856, 3; U.S. Census (New York, 1860); "To Let," *NYH*, Jan. 8, 1860, 6, and *NYT*, Feb. 2, 1860, 6; Elder & Brown, advertisement, *American Agriculturalist*, Oct. 1866, 377, and *NYT*, May 19, 1872, 8; "Wanted - A Copper Still" [Henry Wilkins], *NYH*, June 3, 1869, 1; "Steam Power to Let" [Peek & Bogart], *NYH*, Apr. 25, 1870, 2; "Today's Auctions," *NYT*, Sept. 15, 1874, 6; "To Let" [A.C. Kingsland & Sons], *NYH*, Feb. 2, 1875, 2; "Ground to Pieces," *NYT*, and "Horrible Suicide," *NYH*, Mar. 14, 1875, 2 and 5; "Auction Sale - Hobby Horse Factory," *NYH*, Dec. 14, 1877, 7; A.C. Kingsland obit., *NYT*, Oct. 15, 1878, 5; "The Gotham Oil-Works on Fire," *NYT*, Jan. 17, 1879, 2; "Foreman Sullivan's Brave Act," *NYT*, and "Large Fire in West Street," *NYH*, July 30, 1880, 5 and 1; "Business Troubles" [Metallic Decorating Co.], *NYT*, Apr. 28, 1888, 5; "Old Time Estates Sold," *NYH*, Jan. 25, 1889, 11; "Recorded Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Mar. 19, 1889, 7; "Failures in Business" [H. Bencke Lithographic Co.], *NYT*, Nov. 7, 1890, 5; "The New York Car Wheel Works," *The Street Railway Journal* (1892), 501; "Business Troubles" [Frank L. Froment], *NYT* and *NYH*, Oct. 15, 1893, 11 and 7, and *NYT*, Nov. 16, 1893, 6; "Burned Out Twice in Six Months," *NYT*, July 21, 1894, 2; Tight Joint Co., advertisement, *Ice & Refrigeration*, Dec. 1900, 37; "$10,000 Fire in Bank Street," *NYT*, Sept. 1, 1908, 1; "Many Women in Peril in Soap Factory Fire," *NYT*, Sept. 13, 1908, 18; "To Let for Business Purposes," *NYT*, Jan. 9, 1914, 18; "Robert A. Keasbey Co.," *The Heating & Ventilating Magazine* (1916), 66; Robert A. Keasbey Co., advertisement, N.Y. Society of Architects, *Yearbook* (1918-19), L1; G.F. Morgan obit., *NYT*, Feb. 8, 1925, E7; "Business Notes" [Empire Paper Products Corp.], *NYT*, Mar. 5, 1925, 32; "Enoch Morgan's Sons Company," *NYT*, Sept. 19, 1926, AN46; "Bank St. Buildings in 100-Year Lease," *NYT*, Dec. 27, 1927, 47; "$6,511,971 in Estate Left by G.F. Morgan," *NYT*, Jan. 29, 1932, 15; "Two Quitclaims Downtown," *NYT*, June 14, 1932, 39.

[6] "To Let With Steam Power," *NYH*, July 18, 1860, 2.

[7] "Fire in Hook's Planing Mills – Aggregate Loss Over $40,000," *NYT*, Aug. 28, 1868, 2. Also "Extensive Fire in New York – Loss $43,000," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, and "Extensive Fire in Bank St.," *New York Herald-Tribune*, Aug. 28, 1868, 3 and 3.

[8] "Peremptory Sale," *NYT*, Dec. 10, 1874, 6.

[9] "Executors' Sale," *NYT*, Feb. 21, 1881, 7.

[10] John Innes, a machinist/engineer who advertised "Steam Engines, Shaftings, Hangers, Pulleys, &c., &c. Presses, Press-Screws & Saw-Mill Work," was listed at 450/453 West (c. 1862-81), continued as John Innes & Son, 453 West (1881-83), then John Innes' Son (Andrew J. Innes)/ Rapid Iron Works, 453-454-455 West (1883-92), "engine builder and machinist... repairing steam engines and wood planers a specialty." John Leonard started out in the scrap iron business at 450-451 West (corner of Bank) (c. 1866-80), and then "built in 1881" the Manhattan Rolling Mill, manufacturer of horse shoe iron and toe calk steel, at the L-shaped property at 445-451 West/177-179 Bank (1881-97). John Innes, advertisement, *Boyd's Business Directory*, 596, and NYC Directory (1883-84), v. 2, 48; James M. Swank, *Directory of the Iron and Steel Works of the United States* (1884), 91; Edwards & Critten, eds., "Manhattan Rolling Mill," *New York's Great Industries* (New York: Histl. Publg. Co., 1885), 186.

[11] [Eben] Peek & [Gilbert J.] Bogert, mirror and picture frames manufacturer, 445 West/163 Bank (c. 1863-73); William H. Carr, machinist, 450 West (c. 1867-70); Ulysses B[illings]. Brewster & Co., chocolate, 448 West/155 Bank (c. 1867-69); American Fire Escape Co., 445-446 West (c. 1867-77); [Roscoe G.] Elder & [John H.] Brown, manufacturers of children's hobby and rocking horses, cradles, wagons, sleighs and carriages, 445-452 West (c. 1867-75), continued as John H. Brown, carriages/toys (c. 1875-79); William E. Bird, oscillating machines, 163 Bank (c. 1868-70); William M. Kelly, washboard manufacturer, 449 West (c. 1869-70); Henry Wilkens, tanks, 441-447 West (c. 1869-90); Reynolds & Co., manufacturer of white lead and zinc paints, 449-457 West (c. 1871-76), Samuel Jacobs, white lead and paints, 445-453 West (c. 1876-89), and Jacobs & McCafferty, paints, 445 West (1889-91); George Vanzile, Jr., woodcarver, 446-450 West (c. 1876-81); Mark M. Dobson, liquors, 446 West (c. 1879-81);

E[leazar]. S. Vaughan & Sons, railings/fire escapes, 445-446 West (c. 1879-81); Domestic Sewing Machine Co. (1880); [George W., Frank J., Robert M.] Donaldson Bros., lithographers, 445 West (c. 1881-86); and Metallic Decorating Co., decorators and fabric convertors, 453 West/163 Bank (1887-88). The building was depicted on an 1879 map as a box factory, and on an 1885 map as the Star Card Co.

Tenants in other buildings on the property included: Charles Farnham, cabinetmaker/ furniture maker, 157 Bank (c. 1866-72); Aronson Bros., manufacturer of paper collars, 155-157 Bank (c. 1866-69); Waldo H. Jordan, steam carpet cleaning, 157 Bank (c. 1866-70); [William] Kern & [Conrad] Hommel, moldings, pianofortes, 155 Bank (c. 1867-69); and [John C.] DeLaVergne & [William M.] Mixer Refrigerating Co. (established 1880)/ DeLaVergne Refrigerating Co., 157 Bank (c. 1882-89), operated by John C. DeLaVergne, a brewer who in 1879 installed the first advanced ammonia compressor for refrigeration that became the standard in breweries for four decades. Willis R. Woolrich, *The Men Who Invented Cold: A History of Refrigeration* (New York: Exposition Pr., 1967); James T. White, *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 25 (1967); John P. Arnold and Frank Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America* (Chicago: 1933); Richard G. Wilson and Terry R. Gourvish, eds., *The Dynamics of the Modern Brewing Industry Since 1800* (New York: Routledge Pr., 2003).

[12] *The Street Railway Journal* (1898), 212.

[13] In 1892, a new seven-story building was constructed at 159-161 Bank Street (John B. Snook & Sons, architect), location of Tight Joint Co., ammonia fittings and flange unions for refrigeration piping (c. 1894-1901). A fire in 1894 destroyed Nos. 153 and 155-157 Bank. In 1901, three buildings on the property were connected internally. In 1912-13, a new six-story building was constructed at No. 155-157 Bank (John B. Snook & Sons, architect). A new one-story warehouse building was constructed in 1915 at 151 Bank (John B. Snook Sons, architect).

[14] Frank L. Froment, iron and steel commission merchant (began 1880), 445-446 West/161-163 Bank (c. 1892-97), continued as Froment & Co. (with L. Victor and Eugene M. Froment), 151 Bank (c. 1897-1913); and Empire Paper Tube & Box Co./ Empire Paper Products Corp., paper boxes and mailing tubes, 445-449 West/155-159 Bank (c. 1901-25). The entire site was advertised for lease in 1914. Robert A. Keasbey Co. (founded c. 1886), asbestos materials for steam, water, and brine pipe and boiler coverings, was located at 445 West from 1916 to about 1927.

[15] "Western Electric Company," *The Street Railway Journal* (Sept. 1897), 577, and *The Sibley Journal of Engineering* (Mar. 1906), 281; "Bell Transmitters and Receivers in the Making," Bell Telephone Co. of Pa., *The Telephone News*, Oct. 1, 1911, 4; "Western Electric Executive Offices Are Moved," *Electrical Review & Western Electrician*, June 17, 1916, 1132; Russell W. Burns, *Communications: An International History of the Formative Years* (London: Instn. of Electrical Engineers, 2004), 180; Arnold Thackray and Minor Myers, Jr., *Arnold O. Beckham: One Hundred Years of Excellence* (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Fdtn., 2000), 62-63; Terry Miller, *Greenwich Village and How It Got That Way* (N.Y.: Crown Publrs., 1990).

[16] "Western Electric Company," Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York* (New York: M. King, 1892), 858.

[17] Ibid.

[18] New York County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings (NB 1063-1896, NB 616-1897, NB 1133-1899, Alt. 1452-1900); Western Electric Co. Building archive, hlw [successor architectural firm to Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz]; "Recorded Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Jan. 24, 1896, 15, May 9, 1899, 9, and May 20, 1899, 12; "In the Real Estate Field," *NYT*, July 1, 1896, 12; "The Building Department," *NYT*, July 28, 1897, 5; "Buildings Projected," *Real Estate Record & Builders Guide*, July 31, 1897, 177; "The Building Department," *NYT*, Aug. 2, 1899, 10, and June 20, 1900, 12; "Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Nov. 19, 1915, 20; "Sales in Greenwich Village," *NYT*, July 17, 1923, 33; "Western Electric Controls Block," *NYT*, Aug. 9, 1923, 24; A.R. Thompson and G.B. Lockhart, "The History of West Street," *Western Electric* (Jan. 1925), 4-6, 20; "Construction of the Western Electric Building," typed manuscript (n.d.) in the AT&T Bell Laboratories Archives; Don Woodford, "Parnassus on the Hudson," *Bell Telephone Magazine* (July-Aug. 1970), 5-8; "Western Electric -- A Brief History," www.porticus.org/bell/westernelectric_history.html website.
The author wishes to thank Kate Holliday for her organization of the Eidlitz firm's archives, and for arranging access to the Western Electric material.

[19] Thompson and Lockhart, 6.

[20] "Western Electric Company," *Electrical Engineer*, Feb. 3, 1897, 151.

[21] Thompson and Lockhart, 6.

[22] NYC, Dept. of Buildings, C.L.W. Eidlitz, letter to Commr. of Buildings Thomas J. Brady, Feb. 21, 1899.

[23] "The Power Plant of the New York Factory of the Western Electric Company," *American Electrician* (July 1900), 333-334.

[24] In addition, Western Electric built two warehouses on the south side of Bank Street in 1903 and 1905.

[25] LPC, architects files, *Society House of the American Society of Civil Engineers Designation Report* (LP-2297) (New York: City of New York, 2008), written and researched by Jay Shockley, and *Long Distance Building of the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. Designation Report* (LP-1747) (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by David M. Breiner; Montgomery Schuyler, "Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz," *Architectural Record* (July-Sept. 1895), 411-435; Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1979), 28; James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1989), 22, 52; Kathryn E. Holliday, *Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008); Sarah B. Landau and Carl Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1996); "Cyrus Eidlitz," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* 2, Adolf F. Placzek, ed. (New York: Free Pr., 1982), 13; "Cyrus Lazelle Warner Eidlitz," *Dictionary of American Biography* 3, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds. (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1931), 60; Eidlitz, obit., *NYT*, Oct. 6, 1921, 13; McKenzie obit., *NYT*, Oct. 11, 1926, 21; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880* (New York: Monacelli Pr., 1999); Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli Intl. Publs., 1983).

[26] The courthouse is a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark.

[27] The church complex and cemetery is a designated New York City Landmark.

[28] The Bar Assn. and ASCE buildings are designated New York City Landmarks. The Townsend Building is included within the Madison Square North Historic District.

[29] The Walker Lispenard and Barclay-Vesey Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks and Interior Landmarks.

[30] "An Historic Firm," *Architectural Record* (Apr.-June 1896), 454-455; M. Eidlitz obit., *American Architect & Building News* (1892), 77; O. Eidlitz obit., *NYT*, Oct. 31, 1928, 31; "Otto Marc Eidlitz," *Who Was Who in America* 1 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1943); *Marc Eidlitz & Son 1854-1904* (New York, 1904).

[31] The Astor Library is a designated New York City Landmark and the Lord & Taylor building is within the Ladies' Mile Historic District.

[32] "An Historic Firm."

[33] The St. Regis Hotel, B. Altman's, J.P. Morgan, Empire, Yale Club, and Bankers' Trust Co. buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.

[34] This section was adapted from: LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension Designation Report.*

[35] Jan S. Ramirez, "The Tourist Trade Takes Hold," in Rick Beard and Leslie Cohen Berlowitz, *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1993), 388.

[36] Ramirez, in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995), 508.

[37] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide* (New York: Octagon Bks., 1970), reprint of 1939 edition, 68-69.

[38] Woodford; Thackray and Myers; Burns; Miller; "Western Electric -- A Brief History;" "Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc.," *Bulletin of the National Research Council* (Dec. 1938), 34; "Bell Labs," J.L. Heilbron, *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2003), 84; "The Establishment of Bell Labs," David A. Minder, *Between Human and Machine: Control and Computing Before Cybernetics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Pr., 2004), 113-114; Lillian Hoddeson and Vicki Daitch, *True Genius: The Life and Science of John Bardeen* (Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Pr., 2002), 120; "*When Movies Learned to Talk: A Brief History of Sound in Early Motion Pictures* by Michael Kunkes," www.editorsguild.com website (2005); Steven E.

Schoenherr, "Sound Recording Research at Bell Labs," http://homepage.mac.com/oldtownman/recording/bell-labs.html website (1999); "Bell Labs [Murray Hill]," Maxine N. Lurie and Marc Mappen, *Encyclopedia of New Jersey* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Pr., 2004), 68; "American Telephone & Telegraph Company," John Simley, ed., *International Directory of Company Histories* 5 (Chicago: St. James Pr., 1988), 259-261; National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, "Bell Telephone Laboratories" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, prepared by James Sheire (1975).

[39] "Telephone Co. Forms Concern for Research," *NYT*, Dec. 18, 1924, 32.

[40] Woodford, 8.

[41] New York County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings (NB 645-1923, NB 554-1928, Alt. 1908-1931); "Building Being Constructed for Radio Research Work," *NYT*, Mar. 29, 1925, RE1; "Real Estate Notes," *NYT*, Oct. 11, 1928, 53; "Experimental Theatre for Bank St.," *NYT*, Nov. 6, 1928, 54; "Buildings Projected," *Real Estate Record & Builders Guide*, Nov. 10, 1928, 42; Warren B. Sanford obit., *NYT*, Apr. 29, 1955, 23.

[42] Miller, 171.

[43] Emily A. Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America 1900-1933* (Cambridge: MIT Pr., 2002), 286.

[44] Richard C. Dorf, *The Electrical Engineering Handbook* (Boca Raton, Fl.: CRC Pr., 1997), 608.

[45] "'Village' Housing a Complex Issue," *NYT*, Mar. 23, 1961, 35, 39.

[46] Jane Jacobs, letter to LPC, Oct. 31, 1963, cited in Community Board 2, letter to LPC, Sept. 23, 1991, in Far West Greenwich Village research files.

[47] "City to Seek Extension of Tax Aid for Housing," *NYT*, June 29, 1975, 1, 10.

[48] Carter B. Horsley, "The Making of a City Neighborhood," *NYT*, Dec. 24, 1978, R1, 2.

[49] The complex is located within the Gansevoort Market Historic District.

[50] David W. Dunlap, "In West Village, a Developers' Gold Rush," *NYT*, Aug. 29, 1999, RE1 and 6.

[51] New York County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alt. 175-1968); Woodford; National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, "Westbeth" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart (2009); Westbeth Artists Residents Council, "Westbeth Artists Housing Information" (Jan. 2004); Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Westbeth Oral History Project, interviews with Joan Kaplan Davidson, L. Dixon Bain, Peter Cott, Ana Steele Clark, Tod Williams, and Merce Cunningham (2007); Lisa Greenwald, "The History of the J.M. Kaplan Fund" (n.d.); "$10-Million Block to House Artists," *NYT*, Aug. 8, 1967, 41; "Plan Disclosed to Alter N.Y. Lab Into Housing Center for Artists," *Washington Post*, Aug. 8, 1967, A2; "West Village Renaissance: 500 Artists' Apartments," *Village Voice*, Aug. 10, 1967, 3; "Art City," *Newsweek*, Aug. 21, 1967, 63; "Homes for Artists on Lower West Side," *Interiors* (Sept. 1967), 14; "Bell Lab. Building To Be Sold," *Real Estate Record & Builders Guide*, Nov. 4, 1967, 2-3; "City Approves Plan for 'Village' Artists' Center," *NYT*, Mar. 22, 1968, 51; "Westbeth," *The New Yorker*, June 8, 1968, 26-28; "Ground Broken for Westbeth, Project for Artists," *NYT*, June 22, 1968, 29; "Housing for Artists Threatened," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1968, A10; "Greenwich Village Renewal Under Way" and "Poor May Get Artists' U.S.-Financed Housing," *Los Angeles Times*, July 6 and 7, 1968, A10 and OC18; "Apartments for Artists Start Here," *NYT*, Sept. 8, 1968, R1, 10; "Artists Want Space, Not Gracious Living," *Village Voice*, Nov. 13, 1969, 11-12, 62; "Westbeth's Rehabilitation Project: a Clue to Improving Our Cities," *Architectural Record* (Mar. 1970), 103-106; "Artists' Housing, Like Art, Mainly a Matter of Taste," *NYT*, Mar. 13, 1970, 43; Ada Louise Huxtable, "Bending the Rules," *NYT*, May 10, 1970, 111; "Artists' Colony Formally Opens," *NYT*, May 20, 1970, 33; "One of a Kind," *Architectural Forum* (June 1970), 71-72; "If City Living Gets You Down, Try a Room in Bohemia," *Washington Post*, June 7, 1970, 110; Peter Blake, "Downtown Dakota," *New York*, Aug. 3, 1970, 54, 57; "Westbeth: Artists in Residence," *Architectural Forum* (Oct. 1970), 44-49; "Low-Cost Design Winners," *Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 1970, E4; Westbeth Corp. Housing Development Fund Co., "Westbeth's Magnificent Past" (1970); "New York State Association of Architects Gives Certificates of Merit," *Architectural Record* (Jan. 1971), 41-42; "Low-Budget Buildings Fare Well in A.I.A. Awards," *NYT*, May 30, 1971, R1; "The 1971 Honor Awards," *A.I.A. Journal* (June 1971), 50; "10 at Westbeth Get Eviction Notices," *NYT*, Sept. 24, 1971,

32; "An Artists' Colony in New York City," *House & Home* (Oct. 1971), 104-105; Joan K. Davidson, Letter to the Editor, *NYT*, Nov. 14, 1971, D21, 40; "Westbeth's in Trouble," *Village Voice*, Nov. 18, 1971, 10, 31-33; Dore Ashton, *New York* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972), 222-223; "Hard Times at Westbeth," *Village Voice*, June 8, 1972, 3; "Artists at Westbeth Fight Plan for a 17 Per Cent Increase," *NYT*, June 18, 1972, 50; "Wasting of Westbeth," *Village Voice*, June 22, 1972, 3; "Westbeth: A Great Idea Whose Time May Be Up," *New York*, July 24, 1972, 60; "The Sack of Westbeth: Will it Succeed?," *Village Voice*, July 27, 1972; "Artist Pressing Protests on Rent," *NYT*, July 30, 1972, 29; "Strains at Westbeth Threaten a Noble Vision," *NYT*, Sept. 24, 1972, R1, 12; "Westbeth Debate," *NYT*, Oct. 29, 1972, R12; "Westbeth Losing Kaplan Fund Aid," *NYT*, Feb. 16, 1973, 22; Joan K. Davidson, "Westbeth: the First Five Years," *NYT*, Feb. 18, 1973, 25, 39; "Kaplans Leave Westbeth," *Village Voice*, Feb. 22, 1973; "Mrs. Davidson Quits Westbeth," *Art Workers Newsletter* (Mar. 1973); Elisabeth K. Thompson, *Apartments, Townhouses and Condominiums* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), 138-141; "Westbeth Artists' Housing," in *Richard Meier Architect: Buildings and Projects 1966-76* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1976), 113-117; "Westbeth Artists Housing," in Walter Kidney, *Working Places* (Pittsburgh: Soc. for Industrial Archeology, 1976), 86-88; "It's an Uncertain Eden for the Artists at Westbeth," *NYT*, Aug. 15, 1976, R1, 6; "Westbeth Artists Housing," in Barbaralee Diamonstein, *Buildings Reborn* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 162-163; "Westbeth" in Michael Winkleman, "The New Frontier: Housing for the Artist-Industrialist," *New York Affairs* (1978), 50-52; "Bell Telephone Laboratories, New York" in Sherban Cantacuzino and Susan Brandt, *Saving Old Buildings* (London: The Archl. Pr., Ltd., 1980), 91-92; "Westbeth Artists' Housing," in Jeanne M. Davern, *Architecture 1970-1980, A Decade of Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1980), 16; "Westbeth Races Foreclosure Deadline," *NYT*, May 22, 1983, R7; "Westbeth's Residents Study the Art of Co-oping," *Villager*, Jan. 31, 1985, 1, 4; "Artist-Housing Tenants Are Split on Co-op Plan," *NYT*, Nov. 24, 1985, 50; "Some Ideals, Like Westbeth, Are Worth the Trouble" and "Westbeth Woes Have Long History," *Villager*, Jan. 8, 1987, 1, 4-5; "Co-oping Fight Bruised Westbeth," *Daily News*, Mar. 25, 1987; "Westbeth at 20: Artists' Utopia Still A-Borning," *NYT*, Feb. 7, 1989, C10; "Elevated Freight Line Being Razed Amid Protests," *NYT*, Jan. 15, 1991, B1; "Westbeth," *Metropolis* (July-Aug. 1995), 19-25; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1960* (New York: Monacelli Pr., 1995), 251-254; "Westbeth, a Canvas Still Taking Shape," *NYT*, May 25, 2000, F1, 11; "The Way They Were," *The Architect's Newspaper*, Aug. 1, 2007, 16; "Westbeth Mortgage is Sold..., *Chelsea Now*, Sept. 10-23, 2009. The author wishes to thank Andrew S. Dolkart for the loan of his Westbeth research material.

[52] *NYT*, May 10, 1970.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Dolkart, sect. 8, 1.

[55] *New York 1960*, 252.

[56] Photographer Diane Arbus committed suicide in her studio here in 1971.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of these buildings, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing) has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), occupying an entire city block in Manhattan's Far West Village, is highly significant as the site of one of the world's most prestigious telecommunications research organizations, where research work that resulted in many significant innovations and inventions was conducted, and later, as the first and largest publically- and privately-funded artists' housing project in the United States, as well as a pioneering large-scale industrial rehabilitation project; that the oldest structure is the vernacular Italianate style Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building (c. 1860) at 445-453 West Street, one of the few extant 19th-century industrial buildings along the Hudson River waterfront, which housed a number of significant manufacturers over the decades; that the Western Electric Co. built an office and factory building for telephone-related equipment (1896-1903) at 455-465 West Street, 149 Bank Street, and 734-742 Washington Street, designed by Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz in a restrained neo-Classical style and clad in buff-colored brick and terra cotta, and constructed by Marc Eidlitz & Son; that after 1913, the building ceased as a manufacturing plant and was largely the headquarters of Western Electric's Engineering Department; that in 1925, it became Bell Telephone Laboratories for research and development for both the American Telegraph & Telephone Co. and Western Electric Co., and its facilities were expanded with the construction of 744-754 Washington Street (1924-26, by McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin) and the Moderne style 151 Bank Street (1929, Warren B. Sanford, engineer), a pioneering experimental sound motion picture studio, and by the incorporation into the complex of the c. 1860 factory building; that Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker was responsible in 1931-34 for alterations to the sections of the complex on Washington Street for the New York Central Railroad's elevated freight railway; that after Bell Labs vacated the property in 1966, Roger L. Stevens, first chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, conceived of the complex as a pilot project of subsidized, affordable studio living quarters for artists, which was substantially supported and inaugurated by the J.M. Kaplan Fund; that it was converted in 1968-70 into Westbeth Artists' Housing, the first major work by architect Richard Meier, with 383 residential and work studio units, as well as gallery, performance, and commercial spaces and a park; and that Westbeth Artists' Housing continues to occupy the site.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), 445-465 West Street, 137-169 Bank Street, 51-77 Bethune Street, and 734-754 Washington Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 639, Lot 1, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo E. Vengochea, Vice Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

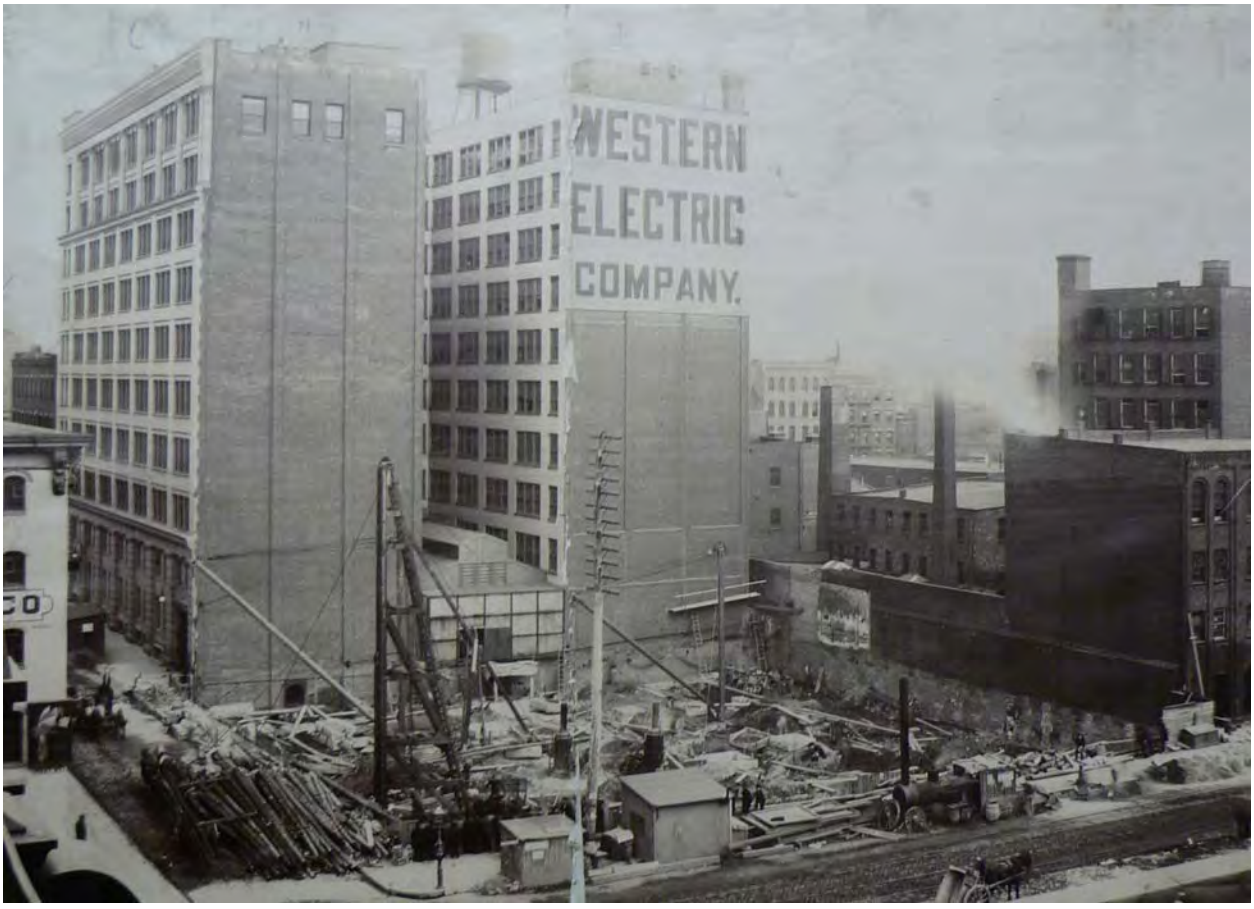
Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including the former Western Electric Company and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Buildings) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), 445-465 West Street, 137-169 Bank Street, 51-77 Bethune Street, and 734-754 Washington Street, Manhattan.

Photos: Upper: c. 1929 Lower: LPC, John B. Bayley (c. 1964)

Western Electric Company Building,
Sections C and B

Photos:
Upper: Rendering, Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz (1896)
Lower: Under construction (1897)

Source: hlw [successor firm to Eidlitz]



Western Electric Company Building, Sections C and B, and Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building (Section I)

Photos:
Upper: NYC Municipal Archives (c. 1898)
Lower: hlw [successor firm to Eidlitz] (1899)

Western Electric Company Building,
Sections A and D

Photos:
Upper: under construction (1899)
hlw [successor firm to Eidlitz]

Lower: completed (1899)
Marc Eidlitz & Son 1854-1904

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Sections A-D

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Sections D and C

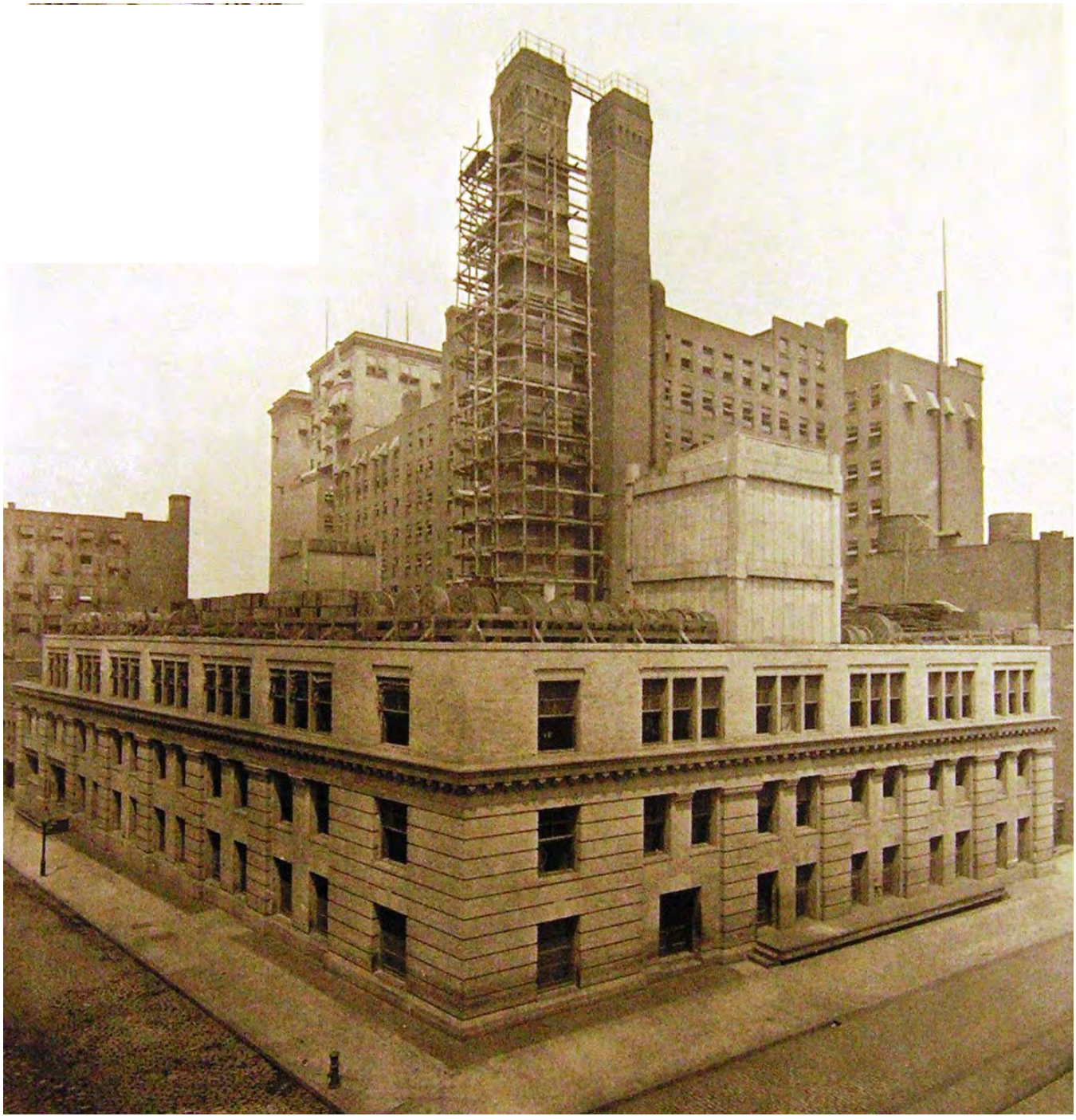
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Sections A-D, Interior Light Court

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section E

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)



Western Electric Company Building, Section G

Photo: *Marc Eidlitz & Son 1854-1904* (c. 1903)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), showing Section G prior to the construction of the New York Central Railroad elevated freight railway (1931)

Source: Courtesy of Digital Gallery (ID No. 724208F), New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building), Section G

Photos: LPC, John B. Bayley (c. 1964)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section G

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now West-beth Artists' Housing), showing Section H prior to and during the construction of the New York Central Railroad elevated freight railway
(c. 1931 and 1933)

Source: Courtesy of Digital Gallery (ID No. 7242211F), New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (including former Western Electric Company Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), showing Sections G and H after construction of the New York Central Railroad elevated freight railway (1934)

Source: AT&T Archives

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section H

Photos: LPC, John B. Bayley (c. 1964)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section H

Photos: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section H

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (former Hook's Steam-powered Factory Building) (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section I

Photos: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now Westbeth Artists' Housing)

Upper: Sections L, E, and G (1936)
Courtesy of Digital Gallery (ID No. 716441F), New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

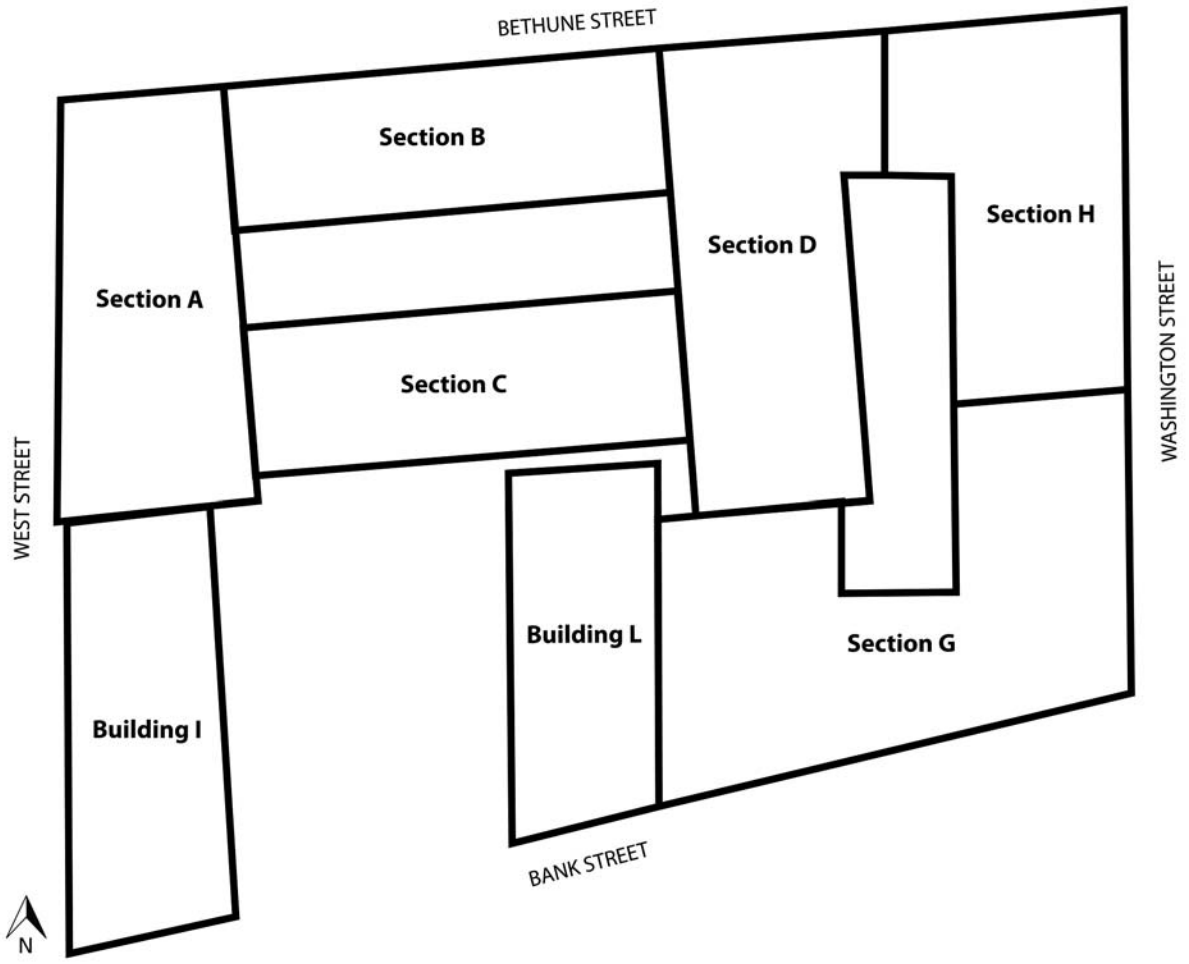
Lower: Section L
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (1988)

Bell Telephone Laboratories Complex (now Westbeth Artists' Housing), Section L

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

Westbeth Artists' Housing, Westbeth Park

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2011)

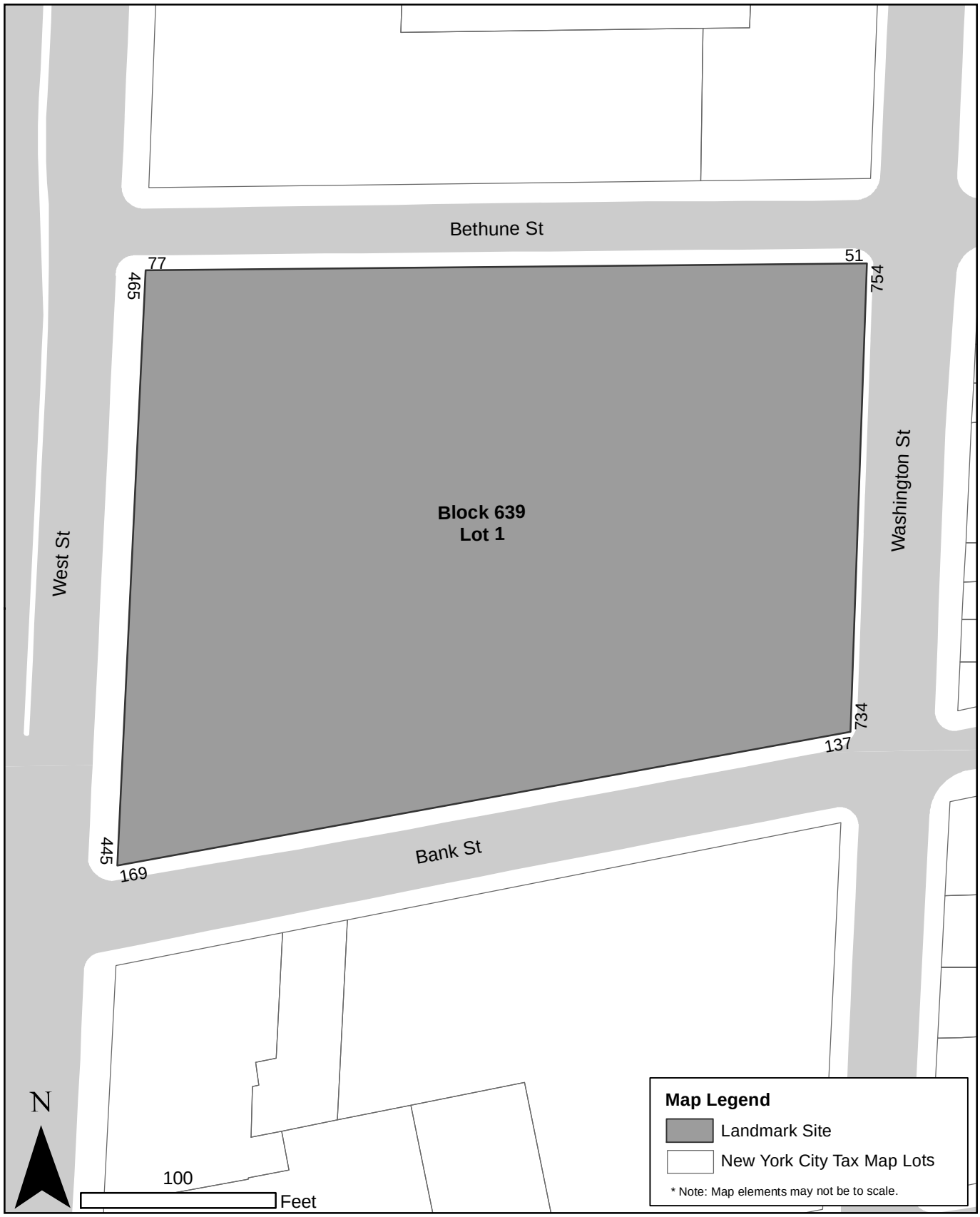


Westbeth Artists' Housing, Section arrangement used by Westbeth

BUILDING SECTIONS WITHIN THE BELL TELEPHONE LABORATORIES COMPLEX

Note: The building Sections depicted on this map are the historic Section denominations used by the Western Electric Co. and Bell Labs (At the time of designation, Westbeth uses a slightly different Section arrangement).

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 25, 2011



BELL TELEPHONE LABORATORIES COMPLEX (INCLUDING THE FORMER WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY AND HOOK'S STEAM-POWERED FACTORY BUILDINGS) (NOW WESTBETH ARTISTS' HOUSING) (LP-2391)
445-465 West Street, 137-169 Bank Street, 51-77 Bethune Street, and 734-754 Washington Street
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 639, Lot 1

Designated: October 25, 2011

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 25, 2011