

Block 639



455-465 West St. (also 59-77 Bethune St.) left, 445-453 West St. (also 169 Bank St.) right



455-465 West St. (also 59-77 Bethune St.)



455-465 West St. (also 59-77 Bethune St.)



51-55 Bethune St. (also 746-754 Washington St.)



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Lot: part of 1

Address: 445-453 West St. (also 169 Bank St.)

Completed: 1861

Original Owner: William Van Hook

Original Use: mill and office

Lot: part of 1

Address: 455-465 West St. (also 59-77 Bethune St.)

N.B.: 1063 - 6/29/1896

Completed: 1898

Architect: Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz

Original Owner: Western Electric Co.

Original Use: office building, manufactory and workshop

Lot: part of 1

Address: 141-149 Bank St. (also 734-744 Washington St.)
N.B.: 1133 – 1899
Completed: 1900
Architect: Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz
Original Owner: Western Electric Co.
Original Use: Factory

Lot: part of 1
Address: 51-55 Bethune St. (also 746-754 Washington St.)
N.B.: 645 - 12/19/1923
Completed: 1923
Architect: McKenzie, Voorhees and Gemlin
Original Owner: Bell Telephone Laboratories
Original Use: factory and auditorium

Lot: part of 1
Address: 151 Bank St.
N.B.: 554 - 11/5/1928
Completed: 1928
Architect: Bell Telephone Laboratories Inc.
Original Owner: Bell Telephone Laboratories
Original Use: sound recording of motion pictures

Lot: part of 1
Address: 155-163 Bank St.
N.B.: Alt #175
Completed: 1968
Architect: Richard Meier
Original Use: Westbeth Plaza

This complex served as the main research laboratories of Bell Telephone for over 75 years, and was a world center for sound communication innovations. Chain broadcasting, the vacuum tube, and the transatlantic telephone were first invented here, and parts of the first "talkie," the Jazz Singer, were produced here. The bulk of the complex was built in 1896 to the designs of Cyrus Eidlitz, though parts date to 1861 and were originally built as a wood-planing mill. The remainder of the complex was built between 1899

and 1925, and includes a large tunnel cut through the building above the third floor to accommodate the High Line elevated railway. From 1965-70, the building was converted into a subsidized housing, studio, and theater complex for artists known as Westbeth, per the designs of Richard Meier. This was the nation's first subsidized housing complex for artists and one of the first large-scale adaptive re-uses of an industrial building. 1931 (Alt. #1908): modified to accommodate NY Central elevated freight tracks.