



Greenwich Village
SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION



For Immediate Release

November 27, 2018

Westbeth ‘Home To the Arts’ Honored With Historic Plaque
*Marker unveiled celebrating scientific advancements and
pioneering artists’ housing connected to historic West Village complex*

New York, NY – On Tuesday, November 27th at 1pm the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) dedicated a historic plaque on the Westbeth Artists Housing complex in Greenwich Village, honoring its history as a place of sound technology innovation and as a groundbreaking home to artists. Speakers included Andrew Berman, Executive Director of GVSHP; Patricia C. Jones, Board Chair of Westbeth; Nancy Gabor, Vice President of Westbeth Artists Residents Council; Joan Davidson, President Emeritus, J.M. Kaplan Fund; and Domhnaill Hernon, Head of Experiments in Art and Technology, Nokia Bell Labs.

The building complex now known as Westbeth was built from c.1860 to 1934 and originally served as the home of Bell Telephone Labs (1898 to 1966), where many technological innovations were developed or advanced, including radar, television and video telephones.

It re-opened in 1970 as Westbeth, an early example of large-scale adaptive re-use of an industrial building. The original highline rail line ran through the complex, and the rail bed still visibly carves through this former industrial landmark building.

One of the first projects supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and developed in collaboration with the J.M. Kaplan Fund, Westbeth provides affordable live-work space to nearly 400 artists and their families. The complex is a designated New York City, State, and National landmark.

“Westbeth is honored to receive a historic plaque from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation,” said Patricia Jones, Board Chair of Westbeth. “From its beginnings as the home of Bell Telephone Labs to now serving as one of New York’s only affordable live-work spaces for artists and arts nonprofits, Westbeth has always provided space for creativity to flourish. The GVSHP plaque serves as a reminder of the impact this building has had on New York City.”

GVSHP launched its historic marker program in May, 2012, and this will be the 13th such marker. Other sites already marked include the former homes of Jean-Michel Basquiat, James Baldwin, Frank O’Hara, the San Remo Café, the Fillmore East, and the Martha Graham Dance Studio.

“Few places embody more of New York’s rich history or what makes our city great than Westbeth,” said Andrew Berman, Executive Director, GVSHP. “From its time as a laboratory of pioneering sound innovation to its last half century as groundbreaking affordable live-work space for artists, this complex has been on the forefront of New York’s evolution from commercial to cultural capital of the world. We are proud to honor its legacy and celebrate its ongoing contributions to our neighborhood and our city.”

A complete list and additional information about the GVSHP historic marker program can be found at www.gvshp.org/plaque. More information about Westbeth can be found at www.westbetharts.org; for information about arts programming at Westbeth, visit www.westbeth.org, the site of the Westbeth Artists Residents Council.

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