

**EBERHARD FABER PENCIL
COMPANY
HISTORIC DISTRICT
Designation Report**



**New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 30, 2007**

Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District Designation Report

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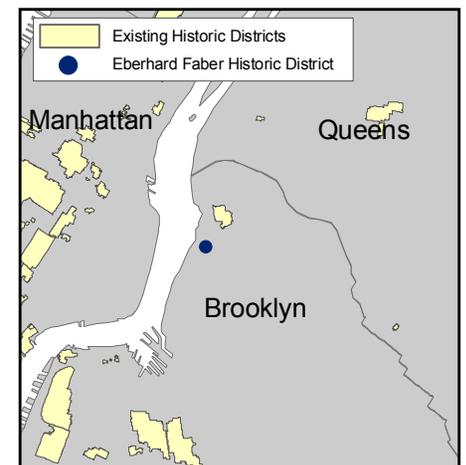
Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District



Eberhard Faber Pencil
Company Historic District
Borough of Brooklyn, NY
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Designated: October 30, 2007

 Historic District Boundary



TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On July 24, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District (Item No. 3). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Five people spoke in favor of the designation, including representatives of the Municipal Arts Society, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Waterfront Preservation Alliance of Greenpoint and Williamsburg, and the Roebling Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archaeology. The Commission also received several letters and e-mails in support of designation, including from City Councilmember David Yassky and the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America.

Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District Boundary Description

The Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District consists of the properties bounded by a line beginning at northeast corner of Greenpoint Avenue and West Street, then extending northerly along the eastern curbline of West Street to the southern curbline of Kent Street, then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then extending northerly across Kent Street and along the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street to a point in said property line formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the easternmost building line of 59-63 Kent Street, then southerly along a line extending to the southern curbline of Kent Street (including all light wells on the eastern side of 59-63 Kent Street), then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 76 Kent Street, then southerly along the eastern property lines of 76 Kent Street and 47-61 Greenpoint Avenue to the northern curbline of Greenpoint Avenue, then westerly along said curbline to the point of beginning.

Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District

Summary

The Eberhard Faber Pencil Factory Historic District, located in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, consists of eight buildings and one freestanding wall incorporating the remaining portions of the facades of three largely-demolished nineteenth-century buildings that occupy parts of two blocks along Greenpoint Avenue, West Street, and Kent Street. The Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, originally the A. W. Faber Company, was founded by Eberhard Faber (1822-1879) in 1861. Following a disastrous fire at the Manhattan plant in 1872, Faber moved the factory to Brooklyn, where it remained until 1956. The company is credited with bringing German lead pencil-making techniques to the United States and Faber grew to become one of Brooklyn's most important factories, employing hundreds of workers, most of which were women. In addition to mass-producing low-cost pencils, the Brooklyn plant made pen holders and related stationary items. The earliest structures, located on West Street and extending the full block between Kent Street and Greenpoint Avenue, all date from the 1860s to the early 1880s, including the two south buildings that records suggest were acquired from a faience pottery works. These buildings are decorated with stone lintels that display the company's logo, a feature that Faber trademarked for use on his pencils in 1861. Most of the buildings in the historic district date from the mid-1880s to the 1910s and were designed to complement the earlier structures, displaying elements of the German Renaissance Revival style, such as segmental lintels, carefully detailed brickwork, and corbels, as well as pedimented parapets that display Faber's star and diamond motif. The final building in the district was constructed in 1923-24. It is the complex's signature building and the largest structure in the historic district. Six stories tall, the upper floor is embellished with stars and pencils, gigantic glazed terra cotta reliefs that proudly advertised the company's main product to pedestrians and passengers using the nearby ferry. Not only did the company become a significant presence in Greenpoint, occupying two square blocks, Eberhard Faber would also turn into a nationally recognized brand name. Furthermore, in an early example of corporate branding, many of the Eberhard Faber buildings prominently display a star-and-diamond motif on their pedimented parapets in order to establish visual continuity across blocks. Built over several decades, these buildings provide a concise history of the development of industrial architecture in Brooklyn, as well as one company's rise to national prominence.

Historical and Architectural Development of the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District

The Faber Family and Pencil Making¹

Since the eighteenth century, the name Faber has been closely associated with the production of pencils and writing paraphernalia. The Faber family was known to have been engaged in making lead pencils in the village of Stein, Germany, near the city of Nuremburg as early as 1761 when the business was founded by Kasper Faber. His son Anton Faber took over in 1784 and the company came to be known as the A.W. Faber Company. Faber used the traditional process of pencil-making by smelting lead and sawing it into pieces to fit in a wooden case. Anton's grandson, Johann Lothar, took charge of the business in 1839 after having traveled to France where he observed the French process of pencil production, which consisted of mixing pulverized graphite, a form of carbon, with clay and encasing the cylinder in wood. Machinery was used to cut and groove the wooden slats into which the leads would be inserted and the graphite-and-clay mixture was extruded in long strips from presses.² Faber then adopted the French technique, allowing the company to introduce a new line of smooth drawing pencils with varying hardnesses. It also permitted pencils to be mass-produced at lesser cost. He also innovated the designs of pencils by adding rubber eraser tips and protective metal tip covers. By mid-century, Faber had become synonymous with pencils, making a

¹ This section is based on the following sources: "Brooklyn Pencil Firm Producing at Capacity," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Jun. 16, 1941), 8; Columbia University archives – Columbiana Library; "Eberhard Faber" obit., *The American Bookseller* (March 15, 1879), 217; Jeffrey A Drobney, *Lumbermen and log sawyers: life, labor, and culture in the North Florida timber industry, 1830-1930* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, c.1997) 20-23, 27-28; "Eberhard Faber," *The History of New York State Biographies, Part 2*, ed. James Sullivan (online edition: <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ny/state/his/bio/pt2.html>); Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993) 40; Edward H. Knight, "Pencil," in *Knight's American Mechanical Dictionary, A Description of Tools, Instruments, Machines, Processes and Engineering; History of Inventions; General Technological Vocabulary* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1876), 1657-1659; Benson J. Lossing, *History of American Industries and Arts* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1878), 511-512; "The Making of a Lead Pencil," *Scientific American* (Aug. 22, 1903), 136; D.M. McCarrach, "Eberhard Faber Sales Manual (1945); New York City, Office of the Register, Kings County; *New York Times* (Mar. 4, 1879), 8; Henri Petroski, *The Pencil: A History of Design and Circumstance* (New York: Knopf, 1992); *The Story of the Oldest Pencil Factory in America*, (New York: The Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, 1924), 6, 10; and Charlton W. Tebeau, *Florida from Indian Trail to Space Age: A History* (Delray Beach, FL: Southern Publishing Co., 1965), 186.

² The process begins with graphite being ground and mixed with water and acids to remove impurities, then it is washed and allowed to settle out and dry. It is then mixed with clay that itself has gone through a purifying wash and, then, dried. The two powders are mixed together with water to a consistency of cream. The higher the proportion of clay, the harder the lead; more graphite makes it softer. The mix is fed into mills for finer grinding, and then enclosed in canvas and put through a press to squeeze out all of the water, creating a dough-like substance. It then goes to the forming process, where powerful screws extrude the lead in a thread of the desired shape, which is dried, cut, and placed in a crucible to harden. The cedar is sawed into blocks the length of a pencil and the width of six pencils, and run through a planing and grooving machine. The leads are then laid into the grooves of one piece of wood while a second piece is coated with glue and laid over it. These are then placed into a press until the glue is dry. A planing machine then cuts and shapes the individual pencils.

consistently fine product.

Johann Lothar's youngest son, Eberhard Faber (1822-1879),³ came to the United States in 1848 to secure a supply of Florida cedar for the German plant. He settled in New York City, and by 1850, had opened a store selling pencils and other stationery items at 133 William Street in lower Manhattan, while continuing to export red cedar wood used in pencil manufacturing from the United States to the Faber pencils factories in Stein. In 1861, Faber was granted a trademark for the production of lead pencils and opened the American manufacturing branch of A.W. Faber, in a factory close to the East River, near 42nd Street, where the United Nations now stands. It was the first pencil factory opened in the United States. Among Faber's reasons for opening a factory in the United States were the high tariffs, freight, and marine insurance costs for importing goods. Faber is credited with bringing to the United States the innovative German lead pencil-making techniques that his family had developed in Germany.

There is no direct evidence showing that the Fabers owned slaves at their Florida cedar plantation, but it is well known that the labor of mid-century sawmills in Florida was composed mainly of slaves and that a good deal of forest product was shipped to pencil factories in the north and in Europe.⁴ These workers were usually supervised by white overseers, and were "responsible for the upkeep of the mills, as well as for logging and lumber production."⁵ By the time of the Civil War, the north Florida lumber industry was thriving, second only to the cotton industry in size.⁶ Although most timbering operations were halted during the war, the activity was revived during reconstruction. Many of the newly-freed blacks found permanent employment at the mills, which offered them considerably higher pay than what was being earned by their counterparts working in the fields.⁷

When a fire destroyed the plant in May 1872, Faber decided to move the manufacturing plant to Brooklyn and resume production as quickly as possible by acquiring a large site containing existing factory buildings in industrial Greenpoint.⁸ The new plant was up and running within three months; a gradual expansion of the plant took

³ Born Johann Eberhard Faber.

⁴ A typical mill in the 1850s employed a few skilled workers such as sawyers, but most of the work forces consisted of slaves either owned by the mill operators or rented from their owners for established periods. (Drobney, 20) According to Gannon, forty percent of Florida's population in 1860 was made up of slaves, "which suggests the principal supports of the economy: cotton and forest products." Gannon, 40.

⁵ Drobney, 21.

⁶ Major logging areas of north Florida in the 1850s included Pensacola, Jacksonville, Fernandina, and Cedar Key, which was the location of Faber's property. Cedar Key is located on the Gulf of Mexico, about 150 miles north of Tampa. Expanding railroad lines made possible the rapid industrial growth of this area. Tebeau, 186.

⁷ "Reports by agents of the Freedmen's Bureau immediately after the Civil War commented on the large number of former slaves working in the lumber industry." Drobney, 28.

⁸ The area was convenient to Manhattan via East River ferries to 10th Street and 23rd Street. Faber purchased the building from Francis Gove. (Source: New York City, Office of the Register, Kings County, Deed Liber 632, p. 425 and 650, p. 457.)

place in the following decades. The company's main offices, however, remained in Manhattan, moving from the original William Street location to 718-720 Broadway in 1877.⁹ Following Eberhard's death in 1879, his son John Eberhard Faber (1859-1946)¹⁰ became president. John studied civil engineering and mining at Columbia University, graduating the year before assuming presidency of the company. Under his leadership, the company continued to expand at a rapid pace and was incorporated as the E. Faber Pencil Company in 1898,¹¹ as was the Eberhard Faber Rubber Company of Newark, New Jersey, which produced rubber erasers and rubber bands. Faber was responsible for many breakthroughs in the production of pencils and related items, including having been the first pencil manufacturer maker to merchandise pencils with color tips (known as Mongol pencils, they became the world's most popular color pencil), the first to apply polishes in bright colors to the wood encasements, and the first to offer color pencils in sets.

The Faber company grew to become one of the largest pencil manufacturers in the world, with additional factories located in Germany, Canada, and Argentina. Faber also owned large swaths of forestland in Florida and elsewhere, setting up saw mills to supply the wood needed to manufacture pencils. Faber grew to become one of Brooklyn's most important factories, employing hundreds of workers, many of which were women.¹² In addition to mass producing low-cost pencils, the Brooklyn plant made pen holders, molded fountain pens, and related stationary items. The company also made pencil cases, inks, thumbtacks, trace paper, and other office supplies, as well as eyebrow pencils and eyeliners.¹³

⁹ This location is now included within the boundaries of the NoHo Historic District, although the building currently occupying the site was built in the early twentieth century. Later, the company's offices were moved to 541 Pearl Street, then to 299 Broadway followed by 200 Fifth Avenue.

¹⁰ He also dropped his Christian name following his father's death.

¹¹ The company was re-incorporated as the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company in 1904 due to a lawsuit filed by the A.W. Faber Company regarding the use of the Faber name. *Scientific American*, (Sept. 17, 1904)

¹² A small fire occurred in one of the Faber buildings in 1901; according to an article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* (Nov. 26, 1901), p. 20: "A slight fire on the third floor of the Faber Lead Pencil Company, at 100 West Street, caused great excitement yesterday among the 200 girls employed in the building."

¹³ Other pencil makers located in and around New York City included the American Lead Pencil Company, the Joseph Dixon Crucible Company, and the Eagle Pencil Company.

Industrial Greenpoint¹⁴

One of the first industries to be located in Greenpoint was the shipbuilding trade, starting in the 1850s. That decade brought a period of general prosperity and financial expansion for New York City. The unprecedented wealth flowing into the city, coupled with massive European migration, created a building boom and radically transformed its character and size. This growth and development in Manhattan began to displace the great shipyards from their traditional site along the East River from Grand Street north to East 14th Street in Manhattan. Over a dozen firms were to move across the river to Greenpoint, turning it into one of the major areas for shipbuilding in the country. As a center for shipbuilding, it was rivaled only by the Clyde in Scotland. Dozens of shipbuilders were located in Greenpoint, as were scores of companies that supplied materials, such as lumber, engines, iron, and marine hardware, to the shipbuilding companies.¹⁵ During the Civil War, many Union vessels used in the conflict were built in Greenpoint, including the Monitor, which was made at the Continental Shipyard. Many vessels were also made for use in the growing nineteenth-century China trade. After the war, there was a marked decline in shipbuilding in Greenpoint as the United States government auctioned off its surplus ships, but other industries that were moving to Greenpoint continued to prosper as the century progressed.

Other important industries in nineteenth-century Greenpoint included china and porcelain works producing tea sets, pitchers, bowls, door knobs, cameos, and busts. In 1883, all of Brooklyn's porcelain and pottery works were located in Greenpoint. Among the most prominent firms were Charles Cartlidge & Co., the Union Porcelain Works, the Empire China Works, and Faience Manufacturing Company, which formerly occupied several manufacturing buildings at the northeast corner of West Street and Greenpoint Avenue that Faber took over the late nineteenth century, converting them for its own use.¹⁶

Glass making was another important Brooklyn industry in the nineteenth century and one of the best-known glass factories was the Greenpoint Glass Works. The company was known for producing high-quality glass used in table settings. By the 1880s, eighteen

¹⁴ This section was adapted from: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Greenpoint Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1248), (New York, 1982), prepared by the Research Department, and includes the following sources: Edward Altee Barber, *The Pottery and Porcelain of the United States* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1893), 162-164, 187, 254-256; Joshua Brown and David Ment, *Factories, Foundries, and Refineries* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Rediscovery, 1980), 12-19, 30-31, 42; William L. Felter, *Historic Green Point* (Brooklyn: Green Point Savings Bank, 1919), 18-24, 30-32, 36-38, 50-52; John H. Morrison, *History of New York Ship Yards* (New York: Wm. F. Sametz & Co., 1909), 41; Henry R. Stiles, *The History of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New-York* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 187, 274, 288, 762; and Stephen Weinstein, "Greenpoint," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 505-506.

¹⁵ The Greenpoint yards included those of Edward Lupton, Edwin Childs, William Boggs, William W. Colyer, Jonathan Easom, Elisha S. Whitlock, Thomas Seabury, Robert H. Snyder, Henry Steers, Robert H. Felter, Lawrence & Foulks, Sneed & Co., John Enlis & Son, Thomas Fitch Rowland, Jeremiah Simonson, Webb & Bell, and Jabez Williams.

¹⁶ The Faience Manufacturing Corporation, founded in 1881, produced French-inspired, ornamental white-bodied earthenware with applied, underglazed, painted flowers and other high-quality china. It closed in 1892.

of twenty glass factories in Brooklyn were located in Greenpoint. Greenpoint and the neighboring community of Williamsburgh also became the oil refining center for New York in the nineteenth century. The Astral Oil Works was opened by Charles Pratt and merged with the Standard Oil Company in 1874. By 1875, about fifty refineries were operating in Brooklyn, most along the Newtown Creek and the East River.

By the 1880s, Greenpoint was the location of the majority of Brooklyn's brass foundries and iron foundries, as well as many breweries, book and drug plants, furniture makers and scores of other industries, such as sugar refining, box making, machine shops, and boiler makers, making it one of the most important manufacturing districts in the region. Included among the hundreds of companies to set up in Greenpoint in the late nineteenth century was the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company.

Growth of the Eberhard Faber Factory Complex¹⁷

Many of the buildings the Eberhard Faber Factory Historic District exhibit characteristic features of late-nineteenth-century factories. Like other industrial buildings of the time, these buildings derived their appearance and form from practical needs; “the aesthetic basis of American industrial building design,” according to architectural historian Betsy Hunter Bradley, “was an ideal of beauty based on function, utility, and process.”¹⁸ Among these features are relatively narrow building widths arising from functional requirements; in industrial buildings, before the advent of artificial lighting, the need to bring ample natural light to the interior dictated a narrow width which, in turn, led the typical factory to take the form of an I, or of an amalgamation of wings in the shape of an L, U, H, or E.¹⁹ Flat roofs, similarly, were practical features that were characteristic of the era's industrial buildings. Gabled roofs had largely been supplanted by flat roofs on factories by the 1860s, as architects and other designers of industrial lofts sought to eliminate attic spaces within which dust might accumulate and spark fires.²⁰ Brick parapets were often built up to resemble gables to relieve the horizontality of the long rooflines; several such pediments are found on the Faber buildings.

Many features, while rooted in function and chosen primarily for utilitarian purposes, also played an aesthetic role, enabling buildings to maintain the street wall and shield the interior yards from public view, both of which were important to factory

¹⁷ This section has been adapted from LPC, *Estey Piano Company Factory* (LP-2195), prepared by Michael Caratzas, and draws upon the following sources: Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque; the Corporate and Early Gothic Styles* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1980), 22-90.

¹⁸ *The Works*, 202.

¹⁹ In some cases, the factory took the form of a K, as at the Joseph Loth & Company Silk Ribbon Mill (Hugo Kafka, 1885-86), which is a designated New York City Landmark. See LPC, *Joseph Loth & Company Silk Ribbon Mill* (LP-1860) (New York: City of New York, 1993), prepared by Betsy Bradley.

²⁰ On this point, in addition to *The Works*, p. 179, see Brigitte Cook, “Preserving Design Objectives Found in Industrial Architecture of Mott Haven” (Unpublished Columbia University class paper, c.2004), 3.

owners who wanted their buildings—their companies’ “public facades”—to exhibit a neat appearance.²¹ The regular pattern of window openings allowed for even interior illumination but, as on other industrial lofts, also provided “a sense of organization and, by extrapolation, dignity for the ... exterior.”²² Brick was usually chosen for factory walls and facades because it was among the most fire-resistant materials then available. Decorative brickwork—including stringcourses and corbels—were often used as a “relatively economical means of relieving plain brickwork.”²³ This technique was also seen on residential buildings that were contemporary to the Eberhard Faber buildings, particularly on large multiple dwellings with similarly expansive facades. Many examples survive today within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District of five-, six-, and seven-story flats from the 1880s and early 1890s displaying dogtoothing, recessed panels, channeling, pilasters, corbelling, and other forms of decorative brickwork, together with contrasting stone highlights, that break up and animate their lengthy facades.

Regular fenestration patterns and long, monumental brick facades would project a strong, solid, and attractive image for the company. This was important in an era in which a factory often served as an advertisement for its firm; companies typically produced bird’s-eye renderings of their industrial complexes that appeared in their catalogs, in business directories, in advertisements, and on company letterhead.²⁴ Generally, these depicted the factory as a hub of activity with smoke pouring from its chimneys, the home of a successful business that, by implication, made a desirable and dependable product.

According to Bradley, architects tended to practice “rationalized placement of ornament” in designing factory buildings, considering decoration to be most appropriate for entrances, towers, and other prominent features.²⁵ American companies were often very proud of their buildings and frequently placed their logos in prominent positions on the facades, mostly on lintels, bands, door surrounds, towers, and decorative panels. Faber placed its star insignia on the window lintels and parapets, although on its final building in the complex on Greenpoint Avenue, terra-cotta panels displaying pencils were placed on the upper part of the façade.

Many of the buildings in the Eberhard Faber Historic District are excellent examples of the American industrial interpretation of the German Renaissance Revival or *Rundbogenstil*, which developed in the 1830s and 1840s, and “synthesized classical and medieval architecture—particularly the round-arched elements of those styles—and

²¹ *The Works*, 60.

²² *The Works*, 162.

²³ *The Works*, 234.

²⁴ For example, *King’s Handbook of New York City* (Boston: Moses King, 1893) contained a large section, spanning pp. 913-984, devoted to “notable manufacturers” that included many illustrations of factory complexes.

²⁵ *The Works*, 232.

relied on brick and locally available stone,” according to Bradley.²⁶ Despite its name, buildings constructed in the American version of the style often used economical segmental-headed window openings. They also utilized corbelling, patterning, and other forms of decorative brickwork, to model and bring variety to their facades, and had parapets that sometimes varied in height and featured pediments, bringing additional visual interest. The Eberhard Faber factory buildings showcase many representative features of factory buildings of their time and exhibit an elegant handling of these features.

The earliest structure in the historic district, and the first to be occupied by Faber, is 100-106 West Street. It was built in the mid-1860s, possibly as an investment by Greenpoint resident Francis N. Gove, an iron merchant-turned speculator.²⁷ This Italianate-style factory building with German Renaissance Revival style additions is constructed of brick with cast-iron lintels and sills on the lower floors. Faber acquired the building from Gove on June 24, 1872, approximately four weeks after fire destroyed the Manhattan factory. The corbelled parapet and gable, earmarks of the German Renaissance Revival style, appear to have been added in the 1880s. The fourth story appears to have been added to the south wing of the building in c.1901, at the same time that the fourth story was added to the adjacent building at 98 West Street. Both additions were designed by architect Philemon Tillion, a local architect, who began his practice in 1888. He also designed a row of flats in the Greenpoint Historic District. Tillion chose to continue the look of the earlier Faber buildings by incorporating triangular pediments with circular medallions. The bracketed, cast-iron window sills and segmental cast-iron window hoods decorated with acanthus leaves identify the building’s original Italianate style. Sections of the ground story have been altered, and the eastern wing of the building was demolished in the mid-twentieth century, but the building remains largely intact.

Another early building in the complex that predates Faber’s move to Brooklyn is 98 West Street, which appears to have been constructed about 1870, possibly by the Faience Manufacturing Company, a successful pottery maker, which occupied the building before Faber. Also an Italianate-style building with German Renaissance Revival-style additions, it is a four-story timber structure, faced with brick; it features bracketed cast-iron window sills and molded lintels which were typical of the Italianate style. The building was increased to three stories in 1881. Prior to 1905, possibly at the time that Faber acquired it, the ground story was converted to a loading dock. The fourth story and cornice, dating from c.1901, were designed in the German Renaissance Revival style, thus matching the other buildings in the complex by architect Philemon Tillion, who also designed Faber’s enlargement of the adjacent 100-106 West Street.

In 1881, construction began on 37 Greenpoint Avenue, located at the northeast corner of West Street, by S.A. Valentine, whose family owned and developed many properties in the immediate area. The new building application filed at the Department of Buildings listed it as a store and tenement, and the building’s size and proportions

²⁶ *The Works*, 235.

²⁷ According to Brooklyn City Directories from the 1850s to 1870s, Gove – who resided on Noble Street in Greenpoint – began as a machinist, but by the early 1860s was an iron merchant with a Manhattan business address. In the late 1860s, which is about when this building was constructed, he was listed, instead, as a speculator. In the early 1870s, he became associated with the New York Oil Company.

suggest just that; however, it appears that this four-story, neo-Grec-style building, which is constructed of common-bond brick, was actually completed as a factory and offices or converted to that use shortly thereafter. The first-known occupant of the building was the Faience Manufacturing Company, makers of pottery, which expanded into this location from its original location next door at 98 West Street. However, by the end of the decade, the building had been taken over by Faber for use as its offices and mailing address, remaining as such until the company left Brooklyn in the 1950s. It also appears that Faber replaced the original window lintels with the present ones, which display the company's star logo, soon after taking over the building. These incised brownstone lintels are indicative of the neo-Grec style, which was popular in the 1880s. Except for the installation of fire escapes in the 1920s and some ground story alterations, the building appears to be largely intact to the late nineteenth century.

The three-story, brick building at 76 Kent Street was built sometime between 1886 and 1904, apparently as a stable and loft. The developer and first occupants have not been determined, although Faber was expanding its operations at the time. The building is characterized by segmental fenestration with projecting header brick lintels and has restrained brick cornice and parapet made up of projecting and alternating brickwork, all of which are reminders of its German Renaissance Revival style. The steel lintel at the first story, which is decorated with rosettes, appears to be an early twentieth century alteration. Although some of the window openings have been altered and the hoist has been removed, the building remains largely intact. By the mid-twentieth century, the building was being used by Faber for storage. It was partially converted to residential use in 1980.

Subsequent buildings, dating from the 1890s to the 1910s, were somewhat larger and designed to complement the earlier structures in the complex, displaying carefully detailed brickwork and pedimented parapets that display Faber's star and diamond motif. The structure at 58 to 70 Kent Street, presently a two-story brick wall with truck entrances, include the remnants of the façades of three factory buildings, including one (originally 60-64 Kent Street) designed in the German Renaissance Revival style by well-known Brooklyn architect Theobald Engelhardt²⁸ and built in c.1895 by the A.W. Faber Co. The other buildings were the German Renaissance Revival style building at 66-70 Kent Street (which was linked at the fourth story to 59 Kent Street by an iron bridge across Kent Street) and the Italianate style building at 58 Kent Street, which was one of the buildings constructed by iron merchant and Greenpoint resident Francis Gove in the 1860s and acquired by Faber in 1872. These buildings, which resembled other brick buildings in the Faber complex, incorporating central pediments, were largely demolished, except for portions of the front facades, prior to the mid-1980s. However, some of the original historic fabric remains visible, including the brick cornice and cast-iron lintels at the center of the façade at the first and second stories, as well as the

²⁸ Born in 1851 in Brooklyn, Theobald Engelhardt, the designer of 60-64 Kent Street, opened an architectural office in that city in 1877, and over the course of the next several decades produced plans for hundreds of buildings, mainly in Bushwick, Bedford, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint. His work included houses, factories, banks, and churches, a number of which are located within the Greenpoint Historic District, including St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1891) at 152-157 Milton Street, the Greenpoint Home for the Aged (1886-87) at 137 Oak Street, and the houses at 122 and 124 Milton Street (1889). He also designed the former Maison au Candy Company (1885), now the Cadman Plaza Artists Houses at 22 Henry Street in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District.

segmental fenestration and dentil courses, which are reminders of its original German Renaissance Revival style appearance.

The brick, German Renaissance Revival-style factory building at 39-45 Greenpoint Avenue, five stories in height, was designed by architect John M. Baker²⁹ and built c. 1901 by members of the Valentine family, who owned and developed many parcels of land in the area, including a number of buildings now in the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District. Faber was occupying 39-45 Greenpoint Avenue by the 1920s, but it is unclear when the company moved in. It is characterized by segmental fenestration with radiating header-brick lintels and corbelled parapet, exemplifying the German Renaissance Revival style. Iron tie plates in the shape of stars, Faber's advertising logo, are found on sections of the façade, but it is not known whether they were placed on the façade by the company. Following the sale of the complex, this building, as well as the four other four- and five-story structures on lot numbers 1 and 3, was altered for use as factories and offices. The building, which was acquired by North Berry Capital in 2004, remains largely intact.

The brick, German Renaissance Revival-style factory building at 72-74 Kent Street, three stories and basement in height, was built c.1904-08, possibly by the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, which was expanding its operations in the early twentieth century. This three-story brick building resembles other buildings in the Faber complex, incorporating a central pediments and the company's star motif. It is further characterized by its segmental fenestration with header brick lintels and corbelling at the roof parapet, all of which identify its German Romanesque Revival style. The first story has been altered and some of the windows have been sealed with masonry, but the upper part of the building remains largely intact.

The brick, German Renaissance Revival-style factory building at 59-63 Kent Street, five stories in height, was built in c.1910-11 by the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company at a time when the company was expanding its pencil manufacturing activity in the area. The architect of record, according to the *Real Record and Builders Guide*, was F. Nelson, of whom nothing is known.³⁰ This building resembles other brick buildings in the Faber complex, incorporating such characteristics of the German Renaissance Revival style as a central pediment, brick corbelling, and segmental fenestration, as well as featuring the company's star within a diamond logo. Prior to 1940, an iron bridge connected the building, via the fourth story, to a building that originally stood on the south side of Kent Street. The fire escape, at the west end of the façade, is historic, and dates from before 1940. Although the ground floor façade appears to have been altered, the building remains largely intact.

²⁹ John M. Baker (dates undetermined) was an architect who worked from about 1894 until at least the 1910s, with offices in Brooklyn and Long Island City. He specialized in the design of factory buildings. Included among his works are No's 22-26 and 28-30 Little West 12th Street in the Gansevoort Historic District, as well as the Bay State Clothing Co. factory and the New York Land & Warehouse Company. His residential commissions included several houses in the Hunters Point Historic District in Queens and flats buildings in Greenpoint. He also designed the Queens County Clerk and Surrogate Court Building (1912).

³⁰ His address, as listed by the guide, was 37 Greenpoint Avenue, which was also the mailing address for Faber.

The final, and most structurally-advanced, building in the historic district, is 47-61 Greenpoint Avenue. This reinforced concrete, Art Deco style factory building was designed by architect Frederick H. Klie³¹ and built c.1923-24 for the Eberhard Faber Pencil Co. The six-story building is characterized by its large daylight windows, concrete piers, gigantic reliefs of yellow pencils sharpened to a point, and concrete roof parapets with shallow reliefs of diamonds that enclosing Faber's trademarked stars. The building's stylized concrete piers and abstract terra-cotta ornament are indicative of the Art Deco style. The building, which is highly visible above the surrounding structures, is largely intact although the original steel sash has been replaced and metal sheathing has been installed over window sills and lintels. The building was interconnected internally to its neighboring Faber buildings until the company sold the buildings in the 1950s, at which time the openings were closed off.

Subsequent History³²

The industrial base of the Greenpoint neighborhood diminished after the Second World War, and the Faber pencil plant closed in 1956 with most of the company's operations moving to Pennsylvania.³³ The Brooklyn buildings were subsequently sold to investors. In 1988, Eberhard Faber was acquired by the A.W. Faber-Castell Corporation.

³¹ The architect, Frederick H. Klie, began his professional career drafting in the design office of Edward Burnett. He opened his own office in the early 1920s, and continued to practice until at least 1940. The Faber building appears to be one of his earliest commissions. He also designed buildings in the NoHo Historic District.

³² "Big Pencil Plant Sold in Brooklyn," *New York Times* (Aug. 17, 1956), 44; "Eberhard Faber," folded brochure c.1984; "Eberhard Faber Will Move Its Plant From Brooklyn," *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 24, 1955), 8; Petroski, 173; and Weinstein, "Greenpoint," 506.

³³ The Newark, New Jersey, plant closed in 1963.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this area, Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value, which represent one or more eras in the history of New York City, and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds that among its special qualities, the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District, located in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, consists of eight buildings and one freestanding wall incorporating the remaining portions of the facades of three largely-demolished nineteenth-century buildings; that the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, originally the A. W. Faber Company, was founded by Eberhard Faber in 1861; that Faber is credited with bringing German lead pencil-making techniques to the United States; that, following a disastrous fire at the Manhattan plant in 1872, Faber moved the factory to this location in Brooklyn; that Faber grew to become one of Brooklyn's most important factories, employing hundreds of workers, most of which were women; that, in addition to mass-producing low-cost pencils, the Brooklyn plant made pen holders and related stationary items; that the earliest structures in the historic district date from the 1860s to the early 1880s, including the two south buildings that records suggest were acquired from a faience pottery works; that these buildings are decorated with stone lintels that display the company's logo, a feature that Faber trademarked for use on his pencils in 1861; that other buildings in the historic district date from the mid-1880s to the 1910s and were designed to complement the earlier structures, displaying elements of the German Renaissance Revival style, such as segmental lintels, carefully detailed brickwork, and corbels, as well as pedimented parapets that display Faber's star and diamond motif; that the final building in the district, constructed in 1923-24, is the complex's signature building and the largest structure in the historic district; that it is embellished with stars and pencils, as well as gigantic glazed terra cotta reliefs that proudly advertised the company's main product to pedestrians and passengers using the nearby ferry; that the company became a significant presence in Greenpoint, occupying two square blocks; that Eberhard Faber would also turn into a nationally recognized brand name; that, in an early example of corporate branding, many of the Eberhard Faber buildings prominently display a star-and-diamond motif on their pedimented parapets in order to establish visual continuity across blocks; that the company remained at this Brooklyn location until 1956; that, built over several decades, these buildings provide a concise history of the development of industrial architecture in Brooklyn, as well as the company's rise to national prominence; and that the intact and cohesive streetscapes provide the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District with a special sense of place.

Accordingly, pursuant to Chapter 21 (formerly Chapter 63) of the Charter of the City of New York, and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an historic district, the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District, Borough of Brooklyn, consisting of an area

bounded by a line beginning at northeast corner of Greenpoint Avenue and West Street, then extending northerly along the eastern curbline of West Street to the southern curbline of Kent Street, then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then extending northerly across Kent Street and along the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street to a point in said property line formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the easternmost building line of 59-63 Kent Street, then southerly along a line extending to the southern curbline of Kent Street (including all light wells on the eastern side of 59-63 Kent Street), then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 76 Kent Street, then southerly along the eastern property lines of 76 Kent Street and 47-61 Greenpoint Avenue to the northern curbline of Greenpoint Avenue, then westerly along said curbline to the point of beginning.

Robert Tierney, Chair

Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Roberta Gratz, Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

Building Profiles

37 Greenpoint Avenue (a/k/a 90 to 96 West Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/1 in part

Date: c.1881 (NB 708-1881)

Architect: None listed

Original Owner/Developer: S.A. Valentine

Type: Originally a store and tenement

Style/Ornament: neo-Grec

Material: Common-bond brick

Stories: Four



37 Greenpoint Avenue (*at the corner*)

History

This four-story, neo-Grec-style building, which is constructed of brick, was built c.1881 by members of the Valentine family, who owned and developed many parcels of land in the area. Although the building plans filed with the Department of Buildings stated that it would be developed as a store and tenement, it appears that the building was either completed as a factory and offices or converted to that use shortly thereafter. The first-known occupant of the building was the Faience Manufacturing Company, makers of pottery, which expanded into this location from its original location next door at 98 West Street. However, by the end of the decade, the building has been taken over by Faber for

use as its offices and mailing address, remaining as such until the company left Brooklyn in the 1950s. It also appears that Faber replaced the original window lintels with the present ones, which display the company's star logo, soon after taking over the building. These incised brownstone lintels are indicative of the neo-Grec style, which was popular in the 1880s. Except for the installation of fire escapes in the 1920s and some ground story alterations, the building appears to be largely intact to the late nineteenth century.

Description

West Street facade: Five bays at the first story; eight bays at the upper stories; secondary entryway covered with aluminum roll-down gate; projecting, bracketed brownstone window sills; incised brownstone window lintels that display a star, Faber's trademark, at center. Flanked by foliate motifs; non-original metal one-over-one sash; historic wrought-iron fire escape; sections of rebuilt brickwork above the first story; window hoods removed from the two northernmost bays of the first story. Greenpoint Avenue facade: Three bays; main entryway covered with an aluminum roll-down gate; brick and concrete ramp with tube railing; faded sign painted above the first story; metal grilles at the first story windows; similar to the West Street facade; non-original one-over-one metal sash. Roof: Wood cornice featuring scrolled brackets and paneled frieze; brick chimneys.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories.
Real Estate Record and Builders Guide (Aug. 27, 1881), 848.

39 to 45 Greenpoint Avenue

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/1 in part

Date: c.1901 (NB 1280-1901)

Architect: John M. Baker

Original Owner/Developer: R.L. Valentine

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: German Renaissance Revival

Material: American-bond brick

Stories: Five

History

This German Renaissance Revival style building was designed by architect John M. Baker and built c. 1901 by members of the Valentine family, who owned and developed many parcels of land in the area. Faber was occupying the building by the 1920s, but it is unclear when the company moved in. It is characterized by segmental fenestration with radiating header-brick lintels and corbelled parapet, which exemplify the German Renaissance Revival style. Iron tie plates in the shape of stars, Faber's advertising logo, are found on sections of the facade, but it is not known whether they were placed on the facade by the company. The building remains largely intact.



39 to 45 Greenpoint Avenue (at center of view)

History (continued)

John M. Baker (dates undetermined) was an architect who worked from about 1894 until at least the 1910s, with offices in Brooklyn and Long Island City. He specialized in the design of factory buildings. Included among his works are Nos. 22-26 and 28-30 Little West 12th Street in the Gansevoort Historic District. His residential commissions included several houses in the Hunters Point Historic District in Queens and flats buildings in the Greenpoint Historic District. He also designed the Queens County Clerk and Surrogate Court Building (1912).

Following the sale of the complex, this building, as well as four other four and five story structures on lot numbers 1 and 3, were altered (ALT 3057/58) for use as factories and offices. In 2004 the building was acquired by North Berry Capital.

Description

Eleven bays; greystone water table; main entryway with non-original metal door and projecting aluminum awning; non-historic attached signs and annunciator panel at the first story; cast-iron lintel about the first story decorated with rosettes; non-original secondary entryway with aluminum door and two concrete steps; projecting brownstone window sills; segmental window lintels with radiating header bricks and segmental

moldings; non-original metal sash; non-original wrought-iron fire escape; star-shaped iron tie plates; security lighting; corbelled brick roof parapet with a dentil course set with angled brick.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York, 1979).

Gansevoort Historic District Designation Report.

47 to 61 Greenpoint Avenue

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/24 in part

Date: c.1923-24

Architect: Frederick H. Klie

Original Owner/Developer: Eberhard Faber Pencil Co.

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: Art Deco

Material: Reinforced concrete, brick and terra cotta

Stories: Six

Significant alterations: Replacement sash; metal sheathing over window sills and lintels.



47 to 61 Greenpoint Avenue

History of 47 to 61 Greenpoint Avenue

This reinforced concrete, Art Deco style factory building was designed by architect Frederick H. Klie and built c.1923-24 for the Eberhard Faber Pencil Co. as the final building in the manufactory's complex. The building is characterized by its large daylight windows, concrete piers, gigantic reliefs of yellow pencils sharpened to a point, and concrete roof parapets with shallow reliefs of diamonds that enclosing Faber's trademarked stars. The building's stylized concrete piers and abstract terra-cotta ornament are indicative of its Art Deco style. The building, which is highly visible above the surrounding structures, is largely intact although the original sash has been replaced.

The architect, Frederick H. Klie, began his professional career drafting in the design office of Edward Burnett. He opened his own office in the early 1920s, and continued to practice until at least 1940. The Faber building appears to be one of his earliest commissions. He also designed buildings in the NoHo Historic District.

The building was interconnected internally to its neighboring Faber buildings until the company sold the buildings in the 1950s, at which time the openings were closed off.

Description

Main Façade (on Greenpoint Avenue): Ten bays; main entryway covered with aluminum roll-down gate; non-historic metal door at secondary entryway; security lighting; grouped fenestration; paired fenestration divided by brick piers at the end bays; recessed loading dock is at center bay of the first story; multi-story, projecting concrete piers extend the full height of façade, surmounted by terra-cotta reliefs of sharpened pencils; red brick panels set in common bonds below and above the cast-concrete window sills and lintels; non-original one-over-one aluminum frame windows; brick parapets at the roofline interspersed by concrete pediments with shallow, terra-cotta reliefs of diamonds enclosing Faber's trademarked stars; terra-cotta coping. East Façade (partially visible from Greenpoint Avenue, Kent Street and Franklin Avenue): Four bays; similar to the main façade; windows at elevator shaft filled in with cement and painted; two bays on the sixth story also sealed. North Elevation (partially visible from Kent Street and Franklin Avenue): Unpainted concrete; no brick or terra cotta decoration; two-over-two aluminum sash vertical aluminum ventilation pipes extending to the roof. Roof: Water tower, set on a metal framework, with a conical roof; concrete elevator bulkhead on the east side; cell towers.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories.

New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Brooklyn, Block/Lot files.

(Certificate of Occupancy, dated April 30, 1924; Alterations Application ALT 367-1957). Ward, 43.

58 to 70 Kent Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/7 in part

Dates: c. 1895 (NB 1753-1895); c. 1898-1904; largely demolished mid-20th century; c.1940s

Architect: Theobald Engelhardt (c.1895); not determined (c.1898-1904, c.1940s)

Original Owner/Developer: A.W. Faber Co.; Eberhard Faber Pencil Company

Type: Freestanding wall (incorporating part of the façade of two factory buildings)

Style/Ornament: German Renaissance Revival/Utilitarian

Material: Brick

Stories: Two



58 to 70 Kent Street

History

This two-story brick wall with truck entrances at Nos. 58 to 70 Kent Street includes the remnants of the façades of three factory buildings, including one (originally No. 60-64 Kent Street) designed in the German Renaissance Revival style by well-known Brooklyn architect Theobald Engelhardt and built in c.1895 by the A.W. Faber Co. The other buildings were the German Romanesque Revival style 66-70 Kent Street (which was linked at the fourth story to 59 Kent Street by an iron bridge across Kent Street) and the Italianate style 58 Kent Street, which was one of the buildings constructed by iron merchant and Greenpoint resident Francis Gove in the 1860s and acquired by Faber in 1872. These buildings, which originally incorporated central pediments, resembled other brick buildings in the Faber complex, but were largely demolished prior to the mid-1980s. However, some of the original historic fabric remains visible, including the brick cornice and cast-iron lintels at the center of the façade at the first and second stories, as well as the segmental fenestration and dentil courses, which are reminders of the German

Renaissance Revival style.

Born in 1851 in Brooklyn, Theobald Engelhardt, the designer of 60-64 Kent Street, opened an architectural office in that city in 1877, and over the course of the next several decades produced plans for hundreds of buildings, mainly in Bushwick, Bedford, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint. His work included houses, factories, banks, and churches, a number of which are located within the Greenpoint Historic District, including St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1891) at 152-157 Milton Street, the Greenpoint Home for the Aged (1886-87) at 137 Oak Street, and the houses at 122 and 124 Milton Street (1889). He also designed the former Maison au Candy Company (1885), now the Cadman Plaza Artists Houses at 22 Henry Street in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District.

Description

Fifteen bays, including two vehicular entrances at either end filled with aluminum roll-up gates; window and door opening sealed with masonry or enclosed by steel roll-up gates; non-historic attached signage; projecting greystone window sills and segmental fenestration; radiating brick lintels, projecting piers, stone band course, and dentil course above the second story of No. 60-64 Kent Street; projecting header bricks at the lintels of No. 66-70 Kent Street; iron shutter hinges at the windows of 66-70 Kent Street. Site Features: Sidewalk partially paved with Belgian blocks.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories; Francis, 88; LPC, *Greenpoint Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1248), prepared by the Research Department (New York, 1982), 62; *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* (Oct. 26, 1895), 587.

59 to 63 Kent Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2549/36 in part

Date: c.1910-11 (NB 4541-1910)

Architect: F. Nelson

Original Owner/Developer: Eberhard Faber Pencil Co.

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: German Renaissance Revival

Material: Brick

Stories: Five

History

This German Renaissance Revival style factory building was built in c.1910-11 by the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company at a time when the company was expanding its pencil manufacturing activity in the area. The architect of record, according to the *Real Record and Builders Guide*, was F. Nelson, of whom nothing is known. His address, as listed by the guide, was 37 Greenpoint Avenue, which was also the mailing address for Faber. These building resemble other brick buildings in the Faber complex, incorporating such

characteristics of the German Renaissance Revival style, such as a central pediment, brick corbelling, and segmental fenestration, as well as featuring the company's star within a diamond logo. Prior to 1940, an iron bridge connected the building, via the fourth story, to a building that originally stood on the south side of Kent Street. The fire escape, at the west end of the façade, is historic, and dates from before 1940. Although the ground floor façade appears to have been altered, the building remains largely intact.



59 to 63 Kent Street

Description

Nine bays; main entryway in easternmost bay with steel lintel, wood transom, steel door, and folding steel gate; secondary and freight entryways at the west end with steel roll-down gates; basement and first story fenestration sealed with masonry; projecting greystone window sills; segmental fenestration with projecting header bricks at the five central bays of the second through the fourth stories; possibly original six-over-six wood sash in most windows; non-original, but historic wrought-iron fire escape; scarred brick demarking the location of the bridge that once connected it to a building on the other side of Kent Street; pedimented brick roof parapet incorporating Faber's star and diamond logo; corbelled brick cornice with dentils; electrical conduits; burglar bell. West Elevation (currently visible due the demolition of the adjacent building): Seven irregular bays; full-height metal stairway entered via steel doors at each floor; window openings filled with either historic two-over-two metal sash, plywood, or concrete blocks; shadow of demolished building at the lower stories. East Elevation: Light wells; elevator bulkhead; historic two-over-two metal sash. North Elevation (partially visible from Java Street): Paired fenestration; historic two-over-two metal sash at the lower floors; historic

steel casements at the fifth floor. Roof: Wooden water tower; brick elevator bulkhead; brick chimney at the northwest corner.

At the northeast corner of the roof is a wood water tower, dating from before 1940.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories; New York City Department of Taxes, photograph c. 1940; *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* (July 2, 1910), 4.

72 to 74 Kent Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/7 in part

Date: c.1904-1908

Architect: Not determined

Original Owner/Developer: possibly Eberhard Faber Pencil Co.

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: German Renaissance Revival

Material: Brick

Stories: Three and basement



72 to 74 Kent Street

History of 72 to 74 Kent Street

This German Renaissance Revival factory building was built c.1904-08, possibly by the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, which was expanding its operations in the early twentieth century. This three-story brick building resembles other buildings in the Faber complex, incorporating a central pediments and the company's star motif. It is further characterized by its segmental fenestration with header brick lintels and corbelling at the roof parapet, all of which identify its German Renaissance Revival style. The first story has been altered and some of the windows have been sealed with masonry, but the upper part of the building remains largely intact.

Description

Nine bays; two non-original pedestrian entrances with steel doors and roll-down gates; central vehicular entryway with steel roll-down gate; non-original window in the east bay with steel bars; projecting greystone window sills and segmental lintels made of up radiating and projecting header bricks; non-original one-over-one aluminum sash in window openings reduced in height with infill brick; iron shutter hinges at the windows; windows at the basement level and first story sealed with brick; steel tie plates; two non-original wrought-iron fire escapes (one shared with 76 Kent Street); pedimented brick roof parapet incorporating Faber's star and diamond logo; corbelled brick cornice with dentils; non-historic signage and lighting.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories.

76 Kent Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/16

Date: c.1886-1904

Architect: Not determined

Original Owner/Developer: Not determined

Type: Stable/storage

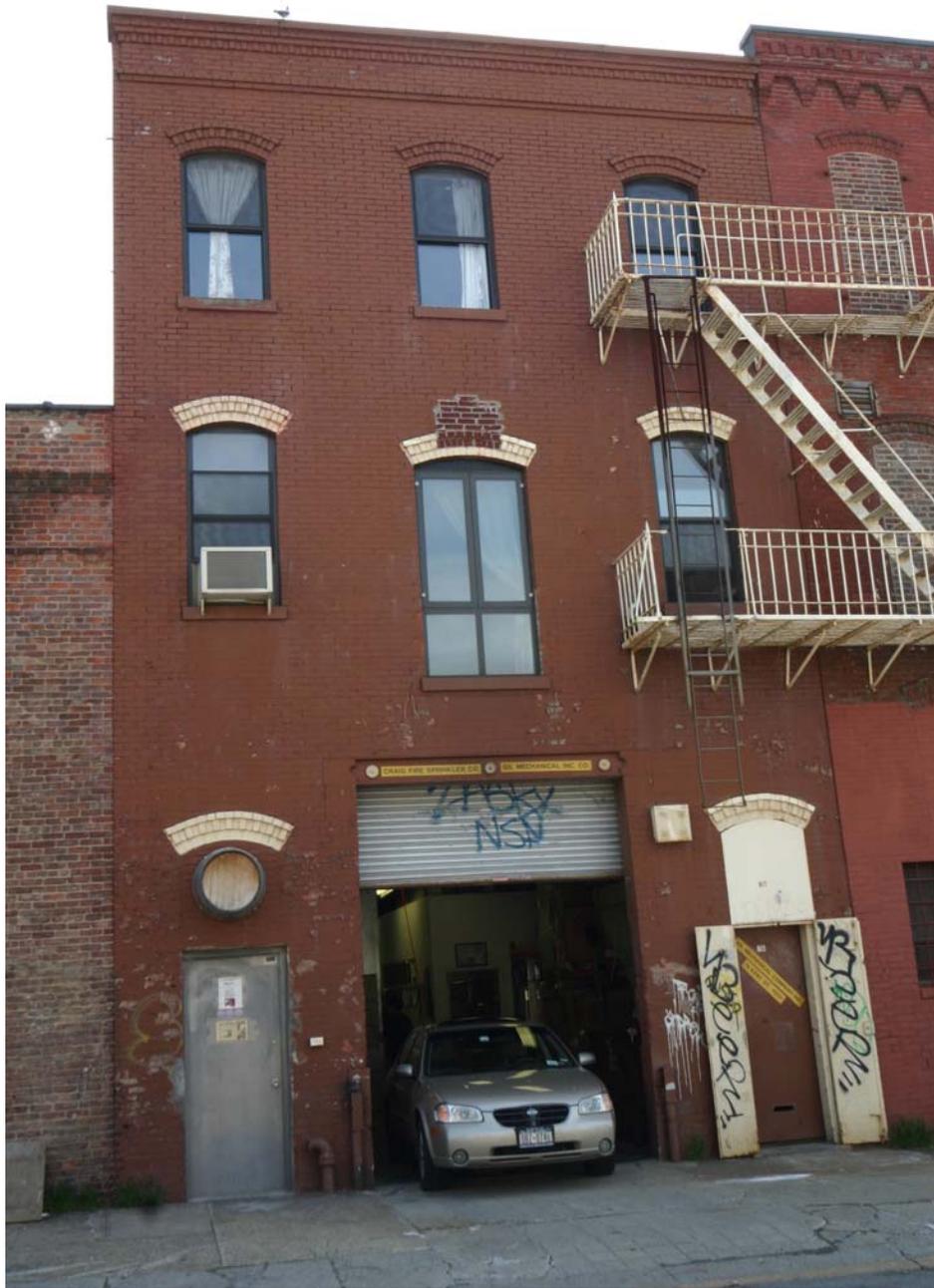
Style/Ornament: German Renaissance Revival

Material: Brick, painted.

Stories: Three

History

This German Renaissance Revival style building was built c.1886-1904 as a stable, possibly by the Fabers, who were expanding their operations at the time. The building is characterized by segmental fenestration with projecting header brick lintels and its restrained brick cornice and parapet made up of projecting and alternating brickwork, all of which are reminders of its German Renaissance Revival style. The steel lintel at the first story, which is decorated with rosettes, appears to be an early twentieth century alteration. Although some of the window openings have been altered and the hoist has been removed, the building remains largely intact. By the mid-twentieth century, the building was being used by Faber for storage. The building was partially converted to residential use in 1980.



76 Kent Street

Description

Three bays; vehicular entryway with steel lintel decorated with rosettes and enclosed by roll-down gate; secondary entryways in the side bays with non-original aluminum doors; original first-story window partially sealed and converted to entryways; projecting greystone window sills, painted; segmental window lintels composed of radiating and projecting header bricks, painted; original hoist removed and masonry replaced; non-

historic aluminum sash and casements; non-original wrought-iron fire escape (shared with 72-74 Kent Street); brick cornice and roof parapet with projecting and denticulated brickwork; burglar bell box at the first story.

Significant References

Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, and city directories; New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Brooklyn (Certificate of Occupancy, dates May 16, 1980).

98 West Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/1 in part

Date: c.1870; altered c.1905-1916

Architect: Not determined

Original Owner/Developer: Possibly Faience Pottery; alterations: Eberhard Faber Pencil Co.

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: Italianate; German Renaissance Revival

Material: Brick

Stories: Four

Significant Alterations: c.1881 (Alt 645-1881); c.1901 (ALT 1736-1901; P. Tillion, architect)



98 West Street (*at center of view*)

History of 98 West Street

This Italianate style building with German Renaissance Revival-style additions is a four story timber structure, faced with brick. It appears to date from before 1876 since a two-story structure is visible in an early engraving, and features bracketed cast-iron window sills and molded lintels which were typical of the Italianate style. During the 1880s the building was occupied by Faience Manufacturing Company, a successful pottery maker, and the building was increased to three stories in 1881. Prior to 1905, possibly at the time that Faber acquired it, the ground story was converted to a loading dock. The fourth story and cornice, dating from c.1901, were designed in the German Renaissance Revival style, thus matching the other buildings in the Faber complex, by architect Philemon Tillion, who appears to have added the fourth story to the south wing of 100-106 West Street at the same time. Tillion, a local architect who began his practice in 1888, also designed a row of flats in the Greenpoint Historic District.

Description

Three bays; first-story loading dock with roll-down gate and suspended metal canopy; bracketed, cast-iron window sills at the second and third stories; molded, cast-iron window hoods at the second and third stories; projecting greystone window sills and segmental lintels made of header bricks at the fourth story; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; corbelled roof parapet with dentils and stone coping; concrete block bulkhead, painted, on the roof.

Significant References

LPC, *Greenpoint Historic District Designation Report*, 63.

Real Estate Record and Builders Guide (Oct. 8, 1881), 958; (Dec. 21, 1901), 904.

100 to 106 West Street (a/k/a 50 to 56 Kent Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block/Lot: 2557/3

Date: c.1860s

Architect: Not determined

Original Owner/Developer: Francis N. Gove

Type: Factory

Style/Ornament: Italianate; German Renaissance Revival

Material: American-bond brick, cast-iron lintels and sills

Stories: Four

Significant alterations: c.1901 (ALT 1736-1901; P. Tillion, architect)

History

This Italianate style factory building with German Renaissance Revival style additions appears to have been built in the mid-1860s by Francis N. Gove, an iron merchant and Greenpoint area resident. Faber acquired the building from Gove on June 24, 1872, approximately four weeks after fire destroyed the Manhattan factory. The corbelled parapet and gable, earmarks of the German Renaissance Revival style, appear to have been added in the 1880s. The fourth story appears to have been added to south wing of the building in c.1901, at the same time that the fourth story was added to the adjacent

building at 98 West Street by Philemon Tillion. Tillion was a local architect, who began his practice in 1888. He also designed a row of flats in the Greenpoint Historic District. Tillion chose to continue the look of the earlier Faber buildings by incorporating triangular pediments with circular medallions. The bracketed, cast-iron window sills and segmental cast-iron window hoods decorated with acanthus leaves identify the building's original Italianate style. Sections of the ground story have been altered, and the eastern wing of the building was demolished in the mid-twentieth century, but the remaining building is largely intact.



100 to 106 West Street, a/k/a 50 to 56 Kent Street (*Kent Street Facade*)



100 to 106 West Street, a/k/a 50 to 56 Kent Street (*West Street Façade*)

Description

West Street Façade: Twelve bays; altered entryways, partially sealed with brick; steel doors; segmental cast-iron lintels at the entryway and windows; bracketed window sills; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; star-shaped iron tie plates; basement fenestration sealed with wood and concrete blocks; greystone lintels over basement fenestration; non-historic attached signage; electrical conduits; non-historic HVAC and lighting; historic wrought-iron fire escape; triangular pediments with circular medallions at the roofline; corbelled cornice with dentils; repointed brickwork. Kent Street Façade: Nine bays; similar to the West Street façade; greystone water table and bulkhead; fieldstone foundation and areaway walls; non-historic steel door; historic wrought-iron fence at the areaway; non-original wrought-iron fire escape; non-historic HVAC and lighting; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. Roof: Concrete elevator bulkhead.

Significant References

Borough of Brooklyn, Offices of the Register, deeds and libers; Brooklyn and New York City atlases, maps, city directories, and tax assessment records; LPC, *Greenpoint Historic District Designation Report*, 72.