



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960  
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY, OCT. 30, 2007**  
**No. 07-26**

**CONTACT:** Lisi de Bourbon  
212-669-7938

### **LANDMARKS COMMISSION DESIGNATES EBERHARD FABER PENCIL FACTORY COMPLEX IN GREENPOINT AS A HISTORIC DISTRICT**

*Two-Block Complex Becomes New York City's 89<sup>th</sup> Historic District*

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved the designation of the former Eberhard Faber Pencil Factory in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood as a historic district. Comprising nine architecturally distinctive 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings along Greenpoint Avenue and West and Kent streets, the complex is one of scores of manufacturing sites across the City to be given landmark status since 2002. The vote came on the same day the Commission held a public hearing on a separate proposal to landmark more than 50 industrial and commercial buildings in the DUMBO section of Brooklyn.

"The Commission has worked steadily over the past few years to preserve New York City's rich industrial past, particularly along the Brooklyn waterfront," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "This complex fueled Eberhard Faber's rise to local, national and international prominence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, becoming one of Brooklyn's most important employers, and one of the world's best known brands of pencils."



The company first opened a factory in Manhattan near 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and the East River in 1861 as the U.S. branch of Germany's A.W. Faber Company, a pencil manufacturing company dating to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1872, Eberhard Faber, the great grandson of the company's founder, moved the operation to Brooklyn after the Manhattan plant – the first pencil manufacturer in the United States -- was destroyed by fire.



Faber bought two Italianate-style factories with German Renaissance Revival style – also known as Rundbogenstil -- additions **at 98 and 100-106 West Streets** that date to the 1860s, and housed a glazed pottery manufacturer. Both are decorated with stone lintels that display the company's logo, a star within a diamond. Most of the other buildings in the district were constructed between the mid-1880s and 1910s, and designed to complement the earlier ones through the use of German Renaissance Revival style elements.

*More*

But the complex's largest and most prominent building, at **47 to 61 Greenpoint Avenue**, was designed in the Art Deco style by Frederick H. Klie, an architect who was responsible for several buildings in the NoHo Historic District in Manhattan. The last building erected at the complex, the six-story factory was made of reinforced concrete, brick and terra cotta, and completed in 1924. Its upper floor is decorated with gigantic glazed terra cotta panels of yellow pencils sharpened to a point, as well as diamond-enclosed stars, advertising Eberhard Faber's main product.

Eberhard Faber died in 1879, and was succeeded by his son, John, who presided over the expansion of the company. Over the course of its history, Faber became the first pencil manufacturer to sell pencils with color tips, apply bright-colored polishes to the wooden encasements that surround the slender cylinder of graphite and the first to offer color pencils in sets.



In addition to pencils, the Brooklyn plant made pen holders and molded fountain pens until 1956, when most of Faber's operations relocated to Pennsylvania. The buildings eventually were sold to investors. In 1988, Eberhard Faber was acquired by the A.W. Faber-Castell Corporation.

The addresses of the other buildings that comprise the historic district are as follows: **37 Greenpoint Avenue**(a/k/a 90 to 96 West Street); **39 to 45 Greenpoint Avenue**; **58 to 70 Kent Street** ; **72 to 74 Kent Street** ; **76 Kent Street**; and **59 to 63 Kent Street**.

Today's designation brings to 89 the number of historic districts in all five boroughs. LPC is responsible for protecting these groups of historically, culturally and architecturally significant structures that are characterized by a distinct sense of place and a coherent streetscape. Backed by the country's strongest preservation law, the Commission is authorized to approve or deny permission for changes to the buildings in these districts.

\*\*\*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to some 24,000 buildings, including 1,180 individual landmarks, 120 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 89 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the law, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough. There are 11 commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms.

