

# The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

## New Photo Exhibit Traces West End's Transition from 1961-1980

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Boston, MA—In 2014, Boston's West End neighborhood will continue its transition into a dynamic residential and corporate address. In some ways, the changing neighborhood is a reminder of the incredible transformation that occurred more than half a century ago as residents of the old West End relocated amid the slum clearance project that gave rise to a modern urban landscape.

On January 24, the [West End Museum](#) will premiere a new exhibit, *A Neighborhood in Transition: 1961 - 1980*, featuring the photographs of West End resident Charles Frani, who snapped hundreds of images of his changing neighborhood over the course of two decades. The opening reception takes place at 6:30 p.m. Concurrent programs will be offered throughout the run of the show, which concludes on May 11, 2014. The exhibit, reception and most of the concurrent programs are free and open to the public. (*Media note: Reception and program details appear on the following pages; downloadable show-related images appear [here](#).*)

Exhibit Co-Curators Duane Lucia and Giselle Valdes spent hours poring through a large collection of Frani photographs to select those that most vividly depict the transformation and evolution of Boston's West End. Valdes then painstakingly restored all of the chosen images—both original photo negatives and digital scans. The resulting exhibit captures the contrasting currents that swept out old West Enders while welcoming in new ones. Frani's photographs provide a stark reminder of how thousands of Bostonians were driven from their well-worn tenement homes while others moved into gleaming, high-rise apartments.

"Most of the 8,000-plus West End residents evicted from their homes by 1960 had moved on," according to Lucia. "However, seeing images of the final stages of the destruction of the neighborhood and the lingering few people and businesses left going about their daily chores as if normal resonates of a wartime surrealism."

Frani captured key moments in Boston's transition from an old, economically depressed city to a gentrified, world-class center of education, healthcare and technology. One of the featured photos shows a crowd watching as firefighters battle smoke and flames at the Old Howard Theater in Scollay Square. The Howard, which had become a burlesque house and was closed by city censors in 1951, was razed after the mysterious 1961 fire. In its place, Boston built its new Government Center.

*A Neighborhood in Transition* is free and open to the public during regular Museum hours.

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*About the West End Museum:*

*The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Last Tenement," highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station at 150 Staniford St. Suite 7. Hours: Tuesday - Friday 12:00pm - 5:00pm; Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. Admission is free.*

## **A Neighborhood in Transition Programs**

Preregistration is required for all programs at [thewestendmuseum.org/whats\\_on/event-registration](http://thewestendmuseum.org/whats_on/event-registration).

### **Opening Reception**

Friday, January 24; 6:30pm to 8:30pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

Tour the exhibit and enjoy light refreshments.

### **Films: *No Time for Ugliness* and *A Place to Live***

Wednesday, February 5; 6:30 to 8:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

Two short films from the 1960s extol the benefits of urban renewal for their communities and through the context of the time period. *No Time for Ugliness* examines various urban renewal projects in several cities including Hartford, Austin and San Francisco. The film focuses on economic benefits to the cities. *A Place to Live* was commissioned by the Chicago Department of Urban Renewal in 1968. Filmmaker Dewitt Beall followed families as their buildings were taken by eminent domain and the city moved them into more “appropriate housing.” The film praises the efforts of the department, focusing primarily on the positive aspects of urban renewal.

### **Exhibit Tour: *A Neighborhood in Transition: 1961-1980***

Thursday, February 13; 6:30 to 8:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: \$7 for Museum members/\$15 for non-members

Exhibit Co-Curator Duane Lucia will lead the tour and discussion, taking participants on a journey of lost streets and a changing Boston.

### **Film: *Mission Hill and the Miracle of Boston***

Wednesday, February 19; 6:30 to 8:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

*Mission Hill and the Miracle of Boston*, completed in 1978, documents the story of urban renewal, racial conflict and the struggle of a neighborhood to survive its changing times. The film features the voices of real estate developers, community activists, workers and residents.

### **Film: *Battle for Brooklyn***

Wednesday, February 26; 6:30 to 8pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

Focusing on the recent case at the Atlantic Yard development in Brooklyn, New York, this film highlights the continuing issues with eminent domain and urban renewal and the involvement of public/private developers by telling the story of one man fighting to keep his “perfect apartment.”

**Film: *Le Corbusier***

Wednesday, March 19; 6:30 to 8pm  
@ West End Museum  
Cost: FREE

A documentary on the French/Swiss Architect and Urban Planner Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris—better known as Le Corbusier—who is viewed as one of the pioneers of modern architecture. Le Corbusier's controversial ideas on architecture and urban planning were hotly contested by greats such as Salvador Dali, Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford. While Le Corbusier was one of the few to recognize the future importance of the automobile, his emphasis on the new technology was criticized for creating isolation and destroying connectivity. Using his five points of architecture, Le Corbusier designed whole cities made up of skyscrapers with vast lawns between them.

**Panel Discussion: *The Problems with Displacement***

Tuesday, April 8; 6:30 to 8:00pm  
@ West End Museum  
Cost: FREE

What was the psychological toll of urban renewal on neighborhood residents? Displaced West Enders and a former resident of the New York Streets neighborhood in Boston's South End discuss their personal experiences living through two of Boston's major urban renewal projects. In addition, the Museum will show *West Ender* Editor Jim Campano's 1995 interview with Boston College psychologist Marc Fried, who led a team of researchers that interviewed hundreds of West End residents before and after the neighborhood was demolished. Fried's paper, "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation," validated the belief that residents grieved for the loss of their neighborhood in the same way people grieve the death of a loved one. Later, that work was published in the book, *The World of the Urban Working Class*.

**Film: *American Experience: The World that Robert Moses Built***

Monday April, 21; 6:30 to 8pm  
@ West End Museum  
Cost: FREE

This episode from the PBS series, *American Experience*, profiles the life and work of architect and builder Robert Moses. His vision for New York shaped the city's character from the 1920s to the 1960s. Archival clips and photographs—as well as personal accounts—tell the story of some of Moses' most famous achievements, including the construction of many of New York's highways and bridges, as well as familiar icons of the New York skyline, such as the United Nations offices and the Lincoln Center.

**Film: *Jane Jacobs in Her Own Words***

Friday, May 2; 6:30 to 8pm  
@ West End Museum  
Cost: FREE

The West End Museum presents this film as part of Jane's Walk Weekend, when walking tours are held throughout neighborhoods across the globe to commemorate the birth of urban activist and author Jane Jacobs. Her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is considered a classic and scathing criticism of urban planning and urban renewal. In the film, Jacobs discusses urban planning in Toronto and Montreal; the similarities between economies and nature; and her book, *Dark Age Ahead*. Museum Program Committee Chair Kimberly Whitaker will lead a discussion of how Jacobs' views relate to the West End.

**Walking Tour: Jane Jacobs in the West End: Could her ideas have changed the neighborhood?**

Saturday, May 3; 11:00am to 1:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

Museum Docent Jim Briand and Program Committee Chair Kimberly Whitaker lead this tour through the West End examining multiple theories of urban planning, including how the concepts of the Radiant City and Garden City—ideas Jacobs rejected as damaging to neighborhoods—prevailed in the West End. You are left to decide what kind of urban plan would have worked best in the West End.

**Walking Tour: Remnants of Urban Renewal**

Saturday, May 3; 1:00 to 3:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: \$7 for Museum members/\$15 for non-members

Even after Boston's urban renewal project re-created the West End in the late 1950s and early 1960s, some important architectural buildings were left intact. Duane Lucia, Co-Curator of the exhibit, *A Neighborhood in Transition*, will lead this tour focusing on notable buildings that withstood urban renewal and remain significant to residents of the West End and Beacon Hill. The tour will begin at the West End Museum and end at the Otis House on Cambridge Street.

**Panel Discussion: Urban Planning in Boston Today**

Wednesday, May 7; 6:30 to 8:00pm

@ West End Museum

Cost: FREE

Urban planners discuss current theories surrounding the planning and development in Boston.

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