

The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

Photography Exhibit Reveals Property Owner's Perspective on West End Urban Renewal *Relates Unique & Rarely-Told Story*

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Boston, MA—[The West End Museum](#) photography exhibit, *Under the Wrecking Ball: A West End Landlord*, depicts the buildings and architecture of the West End around just prior to demolition under urban renewal and conveys the perspective of a property owner. The free exhibit is open to the public now and runs through Fall 2017. It features photographs from a collection donated to the Museum by Ira Tarlin. Ira's father, Eli, owned and managed numerous buildings in the old neighborhood. The demise of the community, says the family, was also Eli's demise. *(Media note: Downloadable show-related images appear [here](#).)*

"Ira's donation of photographs enabled us to create an exhibit that shows a different side of the West End experience—the viewpoint of a landlord and property owner," said Susan Hanson, Museum director. "In the many iterations of the West End urban renewal story, the impact to property owners is almost never told. But, the fact is that they suffered greatly, receiving just pennies on the dollar for their buildings, and enduring incredible hardships. We wanted to tell that story, and the Tarlin family's photos gave us that opportunity."

Eli Tarlin got into real estate, because it was the family business. His father owned properties in Dorchester and the West End. Ira eventually began working for his father both in Dorchester and at the West End office on Leverett Street. He came to personally own properties on several West End streets that no longer exist, including Leverett, Billerica, Causeway and Chambers Streets. Eli's days in the neighborhood came to an end in 1958 as building after building was taken by the City of Boston under eminent domain and demolished. Ira moved his office to a mixed-use property in Somerville, but shortly thereafter—in December 1959—he passed away.

"I'm not sure if the West End urban renewal project killed him, but I suspected that as I got older," Ira Tarlin said of his father. "He was there a long time, since around 1922, [when he] was associated with his dad. That's when he began his career in real estate. I think it was very hard."

Ira has visited the Museum multiple times to see the exhibit and has brought other family members along.

"I think the Museum folks did a wonderful job on exhibiting my dad's West End properties. Keep in mind that these photos were taken about 60 years ago, but the reproduction the Museum did is clear and crisp as if they were recently taken," Ira said. "It's a pleasure to see these photos on display, and I'm sure my father would have greatly enjoyed seeing the exhibit."

The exhibit 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.

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