

Then and Now in Your Neighborhood Activity

Photographs can take us back in time, giving us a glimpse of what our neighborhood was like a long time ago. [Urban Archive](#) is a website where you can explore New York City's past through thousands of historic images gathered from libraries, museums, and other institutions.

Look at the historic view we found of the Center for Architecture's block below, then take a trip back in time on Urban Archive to see what your street, school, or neighborhood used to look like!



LaGuardia Place: Then



LaGuardia Place: Now

While exploring Urban Archive, we found the amazing picture on the left, which shows the Center for Architecture's block over 80 years ago. At that time, our building was used as the warehouse and office for an Italian wine importer. Can you find any clues about this use in the photo? (Hint: zoom in to look at the words on the front of the building.) Many buildings change their use over time. The Center for Architecture was originally built as an urban factory in 1911.

The picture on the right shows 536 LaGuardia Place today, with the Center for Architecture on the ground floor and condominium apartments above. What else has changed on this block?

You can see the tracks of the Sixth Avenue Elevated train have been replaced by a bike rack and sidewalk. The tracks were torn down in 1939 and replaced by the Sixth Avenue subway. Imagine how different LaGuardia Place would look and sound if there were still trains rumbling overhead!

Materials

Internet access on your computer or phone

Instructions

- Step 1** You can access Urban Archive in two ways:
a) Using [Urban Archive's website](#)
b) Downloading and installing the free [Urban Archive app](#) on your iPhone (the app is not yet available for Android)
- Step 2** Historic photos and views are marked by purple circles and rectangles. Click on any of these to see photos and read more about them and the collections they came from.
- Step 3** You can also type an address or name of a place into the search box marked with a magnifying glass.
- Step 4** Check out the collections from the many museums and institutions that have contributed to Urban Archive.
- Step 5** Be inspired by [Stories](#) from all around the city. Maybe your school is included in the story about [City Schools](#), or see how New Yorkers used to [play](#) in times past.