

## West 135th Street Apartments

Individual Landmark

107-145 West 135th Street



*West 135th Street Apartments Photo: Melanie Nanez*

After building their church in Harlem in 1911, St. Phillips Episcopal Church, working through realtor Philip Payton, purchased these 10 apartment buildings, on West 135th Street between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevards, for \$640,000. They were subsequently rented to African Americans, who had previously been prohibited from renting housing west of Lenox Avenue, now Malcolm X Boulevard. Photographer James Van Der Zee, who documented the lives of Harlemites, maintained his studio at No. 107 between 1916 and 1930.

George F. Pelham, one of New York's most prolific architects, designed the buildings, which were constructed between 1905 and 1907. The late Gene Norman, former NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair, and Save Harlem Now! co-founder, once suggested a 135th Street Historic District to contain these buildings and more.