United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DRAFT

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name G.E. Building 32

other names/site number Mohawk Overall Company Building

name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 108 Erie Boulevard | N/A not for publication

city or town Schenectady | N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Schenectady code 093 zip code 12305

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide _x_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

x	private
	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:
Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: SYNTHETICS
other: REINFORCED CONCRETE

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

"G.E. Building 32" at 108 Erie Boulevard is located on its original footprint approximately halfway between downtown Schenectady, Schenectady County, New York, and the original General Electric (G.E.) Headquarters. Constructed in 1909 by the architectural firm A. G. Lindley Company of Schenectady, the freestanding, four-story, commercial style brick building used a new steel reinforced cast concrete structural system known as "Daylight Factory" that allowed for an open floor plan, with more windows and natural light and air. General Electric used the building from 1915 to 1987 primarily as an educational building before selling it to the city of Schenectady. When G.E. downsized in the mid-1980s many of its buildings were demolished, but perhaps being located outside of the G.E. campus itself, this building was sold to the city instead. G.E. Building 32 and the adjacent building at 112 Erie Blvd. – a ca. 1887 industrial building that served as G.E. Building 31 beginning in 1915 - are the only two known turn-of the-twentieth century commercial/industrial buildings directly related to G.E. still standing on Erie Blvd. The only other known G. E. building on Erie Blvd. is the ca. 1930 concrete block and brick former Grocery Warehouse building at 104 Erie Blvd., which by 1953 served as a Training Center as G. E. Building 33. Despite the conversion from manufacturing to education and office use, the fireproof construction and reinforced concrete construction of 108 Erie Blvd. remains fully legible and intact. The exterior also remains intact with good integrity.

Narrative Description

Setting

At the time of its construction in 1909, G.E. Building 32 fronted the narrow pedestrian Dock Street that ran alongside the 1825 Erie Canal. It was strategically built in the middle of the industrial locus formed from the Erie Canal, mid nineteenth-century railroad lines, and the late nineteenth-century electrical universe of General Electric (see Figure 3). Two- and three-story frame and brick commercial and industrial buildings lined the southeast side of the canal from State Street south towards 108 Erie Blvd., with several iron bridges spanning the canal in view of the building. The northwest side of the canal was less developed and featured a tow path amid the low-lying area of the Mohawk River. Around 1922, this section of the Erie Canal was covered over to create the six-lane wide Erie Boulevard, which became the northeast/southwest corridor between G.E. and the

American Locomotive Company (ALCO), which was located north of downtown Schenectady. Most twentieth-century buildings along both sides of Erie Blvd. from State Street south to its entrance at G.E. have been demolished, including those removed for the early 1960s construction of the I-890 spur and its cloverleaf. G.E. Building 32 currently fronts the south side of Erie Blvd., about a half mile southwest from its intersection with State Street in downtown Schenectady. The elevated six-lane-wide I-890 also separated Building 32 from the entrance into what was historically G.E.'s main plant, most notable for its six-story Research & Development Building 37. The latter was built in 1925-1926 facing east towards the newly opened Erie Blvd. Building 37 is famous for its iconic neon General Electric sign and 36-foot diameter G.E. monogram mounted on its roof facing up the boulevard and visible through much of Schenectady. (Figure 8).

As is typical of early twentieth century Industrial Commercial style architecture, G.E. Building 32 is a narrow, rectilinear-mased building measuring 35 feet wide by 140 feet deep that stands on a raised cast-concrete basement with a cast-stone water table. The four-story brick building was constructed to incorporate the newest building technology using a steel reinforced cast concrete structural system. This was known as "Daylight Factory" design, which allowed for an open floor plan and large numbers of windows that admitted an abundance of natural light and air. This construction was also more fire-resistant than other buildings of the time and was noted on the Sanborn Insurance Maps as "fire proof constrn." The building was assigned a different color in Sanborn to represent that it was "fire proof," the only such building on the southern end of Erie Blvd. The roof is flat with a parapet, and its intact cornice has been covered under 1990s ribbed metal paneling (Photos 1-3). The roof has a new membrane.

Exterior

G.E. Building 32, with a brick exterior and cast-concrete foundation, has a three-bay-wide symmetrical main facade that features original fenestration with a wide center bay. The outer bay windows are all single, and the center bay windows are all tripartite. The current entrance is a centered single-leaf aluminum-framed glass door with a glass sidelight. The side elevations have thirteen symmetrical windows on each floor with paired, sash replacement windows. The rear has asymmetrical window bays that correlate to the interior bathrooms, stairwell, and elevator shaft.

All the window bays feature cast-sandstone sills and segmental brick arches, although the arches on the fourth-floor windows are also covered by ribbed metal paneling that extends over the cornice. The current windows are paired one-over-one aluminum. However, some historic windows remain on the east elevation, the basement, and rear first floor. The vertical row of windows on the second bay in from the front of the building, on the east elevations has metal windows. Each window bay has four fixed panes of glass divided by narrow metal mullions in steel framing (Photos 11 & 12). These remaining metal windows are similar in appearance to the current aluminum replacement windows. The window on the rear first floor elevation is covered by the entrance addition but is visible from the interior; it is a single metal window set into the brick wall with two metal horizontally pivoting sashes (Photo 4). Additionally, some metal hopper windows are still visible from the interior west wall of the raised basement. These basement windows were covered over by the ca. 1977 infill building at 106 Erie Blvd. Based on the remaining historic windows it would be surmised that the original windows were steel.

Exterior Alterations

A 1909 postcard depicting the new building shows the windows as paired, one-over-one sash windows with a dividing mullion (Figure 1). Photographs taken in 1961 during the new construction of I-890 through the edge of downtown show the building with paired, two-over-two windows on the southwest elevation, facing the G.E. plant (Figure 6). In the 1990s, the owner at that time replaced most of the windows with the current paired one-over-one aluminum-clad windows, same style as the original fenestration. At the same time, the original brick denticulated cornice was covered with ribbed metal paneling. The project manager believes, but cannot yet confirm, that the original cornice remains underneath.

The front of the building originally had two single-leaf, half-glass door entrances with transoms located above the water table on the outside flanking bays. The segmented brick arch above this original entrance is still visible in what is now the second floor. The doors were accessed by straight flights of steps alongside the façade. Prior to 1961, and perhaps as soon as the construction of Erie Blvd. in 1922-25, the front steps were removed, and the entrance was lowered to street level. The post card also shows two steel fire escapes on the south elevation. These were removed when the one-story infill building at 106 Erie Blvd. was constructed ca. 1977. Photographs and images from Google Earth indicate that 108 Erie Blvd., originally red brick, has been painted at least twice, more recently, a beige-green color.

Additions

Circa 1977 a one-story infill building (106 Erie Blvd.) was added to the empty parcel between 108 Erie Blvd. and 104 Erie Blvd, which was constructed ca. 1930 and served as G.E. Building 33. The ribbed concrete block infill building has a flat membrane roof and four symmetrical façade bays. The fenestration includes three fixed glass aluminum frame windows and recessed, double leaf aluminum and glass doors. The two buildings do not have a historically physical opening between them—the current owner did create an access space into the building through the basement wall. The ca. 1977 infill building covered the existing square window bays of the raised basement and first floor on the west elevation. These first-floor windows were removed and infilled. The current owner of 108 Erie Blvd. also owns 106 Erie Blvd., but the 1977 building falls outside the period of significance and is not part of this nomination.

Interior

The interior of the four-story building appears to have retained most of its original predominantly open floorplan layout. The basement level features massive concrete footings and thick square concrete posts supporting reinforced concrete beams across the width of the building. The upper floors have an open floor plan with no need for interior supporting posts, as the reinforced-concrete beams easily span the thirty-five-foot width of the building. The Daylight Factory design was particularly suited to manufacturing because of its open floor space. The ceilings are open and show rows of plaster-covered, reinforced-concrete beams spanning the width of the open room and resting on the brick piers between each window bay (Photos 5 & 6). The floor of the first floor is concrete, and the three upper floors have narrow tongue-and-groove wood flooring on top of sleepers that are infilled with cinders for additional fireproofing. In most floor areas, perhaps due to the use of heavy machinery, the wood flooring was covered with diagonally laid two-inch by six-inch wood boards and covered with linoleum tile.

The front section of each upper floor was divided apart with a metal lath and plaster wall. A non-extant steel door separated the open stairwell area from the interior working space. The western end of the stairwell space,

which faces the G.E. plant, was further divided with sheets of wood paneling, creating a private office space. The original cast-metal staircase along the interior of the front wall remains in good condition. The rear section of the upper three floors had a men's bathroom in the far southeast corner, an original cast-metal stairwell in the middle, and an original passenger elevator in the far southwest corner that is still intact. Overall, the interior plan and materials sufficiently convey the building's historic functions as a manufacturing and educational facility during the twentieth century.

Integrity Statement

The physical integrity of the building remains high. Overall, the building retains a strong degree of architectural integrity to convey its original design as an early twentieth century manufacturing facility and its continued use in a similar capacity. The construction of I-890 and the demolition of surrounding buildings make G.E. Building 32 a rare surviving example of early Daylight Factory design on the west side of Schenectady. Although the setting has radically changed, the design, feeling, association, and materials all illustrate excellent architectural integrity and convey historic meaning from the 1909 period of significance.

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1909

Significant Dates

1909

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lindley, A.G., Company, Architects, Schenectady, NY

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance is 1909, the year the building was constructed using reinforced concrete construction for which it is significant under Criteria C.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

G.E. building 32 is significant under Criterion C as a substantially intact, representative example of a reinforced concrete factory building constructed in accordance with emerging fireproofing techniques of the early twentieth century. Located at 108 Erie Boulevard, GE Building 32 was designed in 1909 by the Schenectady architectural firm A.G. Lindley only six years after Albert Kahn introduced reinforced concrete to the U.S. The building fronted what was then the pedestrian Dock Street along the 1825 Erie Canal. It was originally occupied by the Mohawk Overall Company; however, in 1915 it was sold to General Electric, where it served first as a machine shop, then as a military educational center, civic meeting space, and, from the 1930s until the 1980s, as General Electric's educational building. The four-story, rectangular building is constructed of brick exterior with cast-concrete foundation. All the windows feature cast-sandstone sills and segmental brick arches; original fenestration and, in some cases, original materials, survive. Although the brick has been painted and the cornice covered with metal corrugated material, the exterior reflects its original commercial purpose and retains its location, setting, form, structural features, and many original materials. Despite the building's original factory use, it was constructed when General Electric was already driving Schenectady's economy. By the time G.E. took over the building, the company was already a massive enterprise that employed over 17,000 people. Schenectady remained the company's base even as it expanded to open offices and factories across the United States. A 1914 Sanborn map of Schenectady, shortly before GE acquired the building, shows that Building 32 was the only reinforced concrete "fireproof" building along both sides of the Erie Canal between the main GE campus to the west and downtown to the east, where there was a smattering of concrete buildings in the same period. GE Building 32 retains important elements associated with Daylight Factory design, including concrete columns, walls, and roof, intact stairways on either end, and, most notably, its uninterrupted open floor plan on each floor. Although this may not have been the first reinforced concrete structure built for GE, historic photos and Sanborn maps of the company's immense, 639-acre campus show the predominance of earlier mill factory structures during the first two decades of the twentieth century. It is also one of very few remaining buildings that represent G.E.'s industrial history at all, as so many were demolished in the twentieth century once the Erie Canal was filled in and after the decline of General Electric (see figures 12 and 13 in the nomination). During the 1980s, after a major downsizing, many of its 240 buildings on the Schenectady main campus began to be demolished. It is also one of very few surviving buildings that represent the long and significant association between GE and the city of Schenectady. Of the enormous campus shown in contemporary maps and photos, no more than a handful of buildings survive to represent its importance.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Early Schenectady

Schenectady is the county seat of Schenectady County and was established as a city in 1798. The city was created as a Dutch settlement on the south floodplain of the Mohawk River in the Mohawk Valley of upstate New York. The land was obtained from the Mohawk tribe in 1661. The name Schenectady is derived from the name of their settlement, Schonowa which means "place beyond the pine plains." This referred to the stretch of

land between the pine plateau of the City of Albany to the south and the pine plateaus of Schenectady.[1] Further, the Iroquois path between the two early settlements was the precursor to the historic State Highway 5, which turns into State Street (originally Albany Street) in downtown Schenectady. The beginning of sustainable industry in Schenectady was the construction of the Erie Canal between 1817 and 1825. The original Erie Canal traversed 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo, New York, and changed the course of the Mohawk River. This allowed for boats to travel from the Hudson River to the Great Lakes. Schenectady became a stopping point along the route, but not a port city, as it had once hoped.[2] However, the canal created the most important intersection in the city when it crossed with State Street, and Schenectady became established as a transportation, boatbuilding, and trading center.

In addition to establishing the town as a transportation center, two successive railroads were created. In 1831, the sixteen-mile-long Mohawk and Hudson Railroad carried passengers and freight from the Erie Canal in Schenectady to Albany.[3] The company became the Albany and Schenectady Railroad in 1847 and merged into the New York Central Railroad in 1853. In 1832, the Schenectady and Saratoga Railroad opened to the north, and by 1836, rail traffic was also running west to Utica. The railroads and canal business created an economic base for the new industrial city, and the 1848 Schenectady Locomotive Works on the east side of town solidified it. But this increasing amount of industry required a substantial work force, and many workers relocated from the surrounding New England and New York City areas.

However, more immigrants began to arrive from Europe, initially the Irish and British, and by the 1850s the Germans became a strong presence.[4] Nichalos Schermerhorn had immigrated from Germany in 1826 and became a prominent businessman in Schenectady. In 1874, he partnered with his son, William G. Schermerhorn, and worked in coal, hay, feed, and milling businesses, including owning a flour mill. William himself became further involved with the railroad and knitting mills. In addition, he was a prominent landowner and active in local civic and governmental agencies.[5] The Schermerhorn family owned a large portion of the undeveloped land along the southern bank of the Erie Canal where General Electric would rise from. This low-lying area remained predominantly undeveloped until after the Civil War, but by the 1880s, the city was becoming established, populated, and developed. When the Schenectady Locomotive Works merged into the American Locomotive Company (ALCO) in 1901, it became a basis of employment and stability for over a century. At that time, ALCO employed 4,000 men in forty-four buildings on sixty-five acres, only eclipsed by the emergence of the General Electric Company.

[1] Neil Larson, *City of Schenectady Historic Resource Survey: A Reconnaissance Level Survey conducted for the Schenectady Urban Cultural Park and Department of Development March 1993,* Volume 1, pp. III-1-2.
[2] Larson, Volume 1, p. III-41.
[3] Larson, Volume 1, pp. III-47-48.
[4] Larson, Volume 1, p. III-51-52.
[5] John Henry Monroe, *Schenectady, Ancient and Modern: A Complete and Connected History of Schenectady from the Granting of the First Patent in 1661 to 1914*, (Geneva, NY: Press of W.F. Humphrey, 1914), 243-244

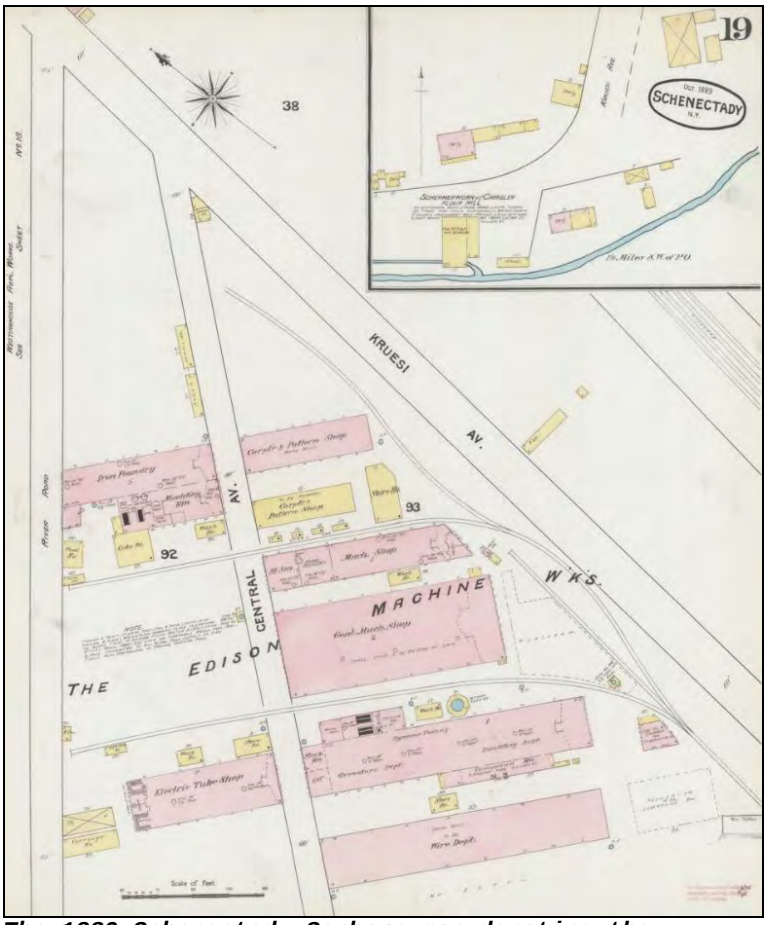
1886 Edison Machine Works

In March 1881, inventor Thomas Alva Edison moved to New York City and opened the Edison Machine Works on the lower east side of Manhattan. At this time, he also owned the Edison Electric Lamp Company and other companies that manufactured lamps, generators, conductors, and other components for his electric lighting system.[6] The Edison Machine Works was incorporated in 1884, and by 1886, with a staff of 800 and cramped for space, Edison began looking elsewhere for a bigger factory. When Edison was searching for his new property, a prime industrial site became available in Schenectady on the Schermerhorn property.

The proposed site had recently been prepared for the new McQueen Locomotive Works on eight-acres with two new and unused brick "cathedral shops." But in May 1886, the new company went into receivership, and the site became available. After much negotiating the Edison Machine Works closed the deal on June 26, 1886.[7] Edison and close associates visited the property on August 20, 1886. In addition to providing less expensive land and labor, and excellent water and rail connections, Schenectady provided an abundance of willing labor, unlike striking workers in New York City at that time. Although Edison relocated his company to the Schermerhorn property with 200 employees, he never intended to work or live there. After his wife's death in March 1884, he remarried in February 1886, and brought his bride to their newly built Glenmont estate in Llewellyn Park, New Jersey. In November 1886, Edison moved his laboratory to the Edison Lamp Works in East Newark, New Jersey, and in 1931, he died at his estate Glenmont.[8]

At the Edison Machine Works in Schenectady in 1888, approximately a dozen shops producing equipment for the Edison electric power system had been constructed.[9] The October 1889 Schenectady Sanborn Map denotes the "Edison Machine Works" with seven large brick factories supported by approximately twenty-two smaller frame ancillary buildings. In 1889, the Edison Machine Works merged into the Edison General Electric Company, and by 1892, the new company had two dozen buildings with 800 employees.[10]

[6] "Life of Edison," Rutgers University School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers-New Brunswick, https://edison.rutgers.edu/life-of-edison/chronology/1881-1890.
[7] George Wise, *Edison's Decision*, (Schenectady, NY: Schenectady Historical Society, 2016), 115-117.
[8] "Life of Edison," https://edison.rutgers.edu/life-of-edison/chronology/1881-1890.
[9] Wise, p. 126.
[10] *General Electric Schenectady Works Welcomes You* (Schenectady, NY: General Electric Company, 1953), Museum of Innovation and Science, https://nyheritage.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16694coll20/id/16949/



The 1889 Schenectady Sanborn map denoting the Edison Machine Works and buildings of mostly brick construction (https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn06246_002/).

However, Edison was faced with competition from two other larger electrical companies, the Thomas-Houston Electric Company of Lynn, Massachusetts, and George Westinghouse's Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based Westinghouse Electric Company. Thomas-Houston and Westinghouse favored alternating current, which would soon become the United States electrical standard. Westinghouse and Edison were battling over the electrical market - known as the War of the Currents – there being much debate over whether harnessing electricity with direct current (DC) or alternating current (AC) was more practical. Edison favored DC, but Westinghouse won that battle when his company was chosen over Edison's to design and light the entire 1893 Columbian Exposition.

In 1891, Edison considered reducing his competition with the intention of purchasing Thomson-Houston. He contacted his friend and former investor J.P. Morgan, a prominent New York City banker. Morgan himself wanted to rival George Westinghouse, and he instead acquired both Edison's company and Thomson-Houston. On May 15, 1892, Morgan merged the Edison General Electric Company and the Thomson-Houston Electric Company and dropped the name Edison. The company simply became the General Electric Company.

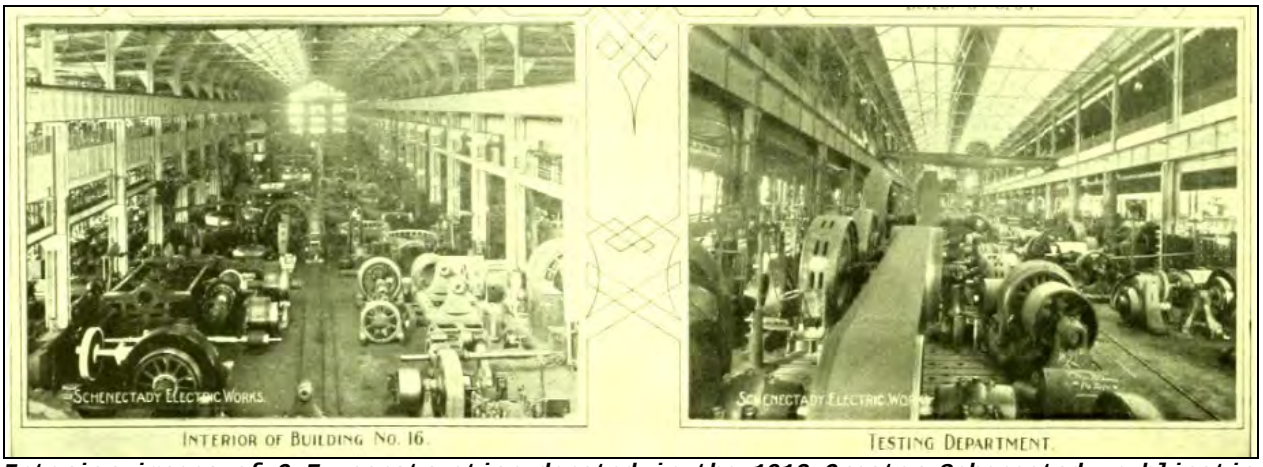
1892 General Electric Company

After the General Electric Company was established in 1892, its growth was unprecedented. The May 1894 Schenectady Sanborn Map denotes the "General Electric Co." with thirteen brick buildings and twelve frame buildings. It appears that six of the original Edison brick buildings were kept and that most if not all the frame buildings were demolished, and that more rail tracks were constructed. This 1894 map is the last time that the main campus buildings of G.E. are shown on the Sanborn maps. By 1900, G.E. employed 3,000 people. The combination of the railroad (and soon streetcars lines), large locomotive yards, and General Electric made Schenectady one of the largest manufacturing cities of the eastern United States. By 1912, G.E. employed 17,065 people.

A 1914 publication promoting the city of Schenectady provided numerous descriptions not only of the city but of the General Electric plant. The *Schenectadian, Portraying the Advantages, Attractions and Opportunities of the Electric City* stated that two original Edison buildings were still in use (Building 10 and half of Building 12) and that the total ground area of G.E. was 335 acres with a total floor space of five million square feet. Construction material was not noted, but the plant included about fifty large buildings and 100 smaller buildings. The Schenectady plant was "mainly devoted to the manufacture of the largest electrical apparatus," which in 1912, included but was not limited to generators and motors, steam turbines, induction motors, and railway motors. The greatest product produced there was the "Curtis Steam Turbo-Generator," which required a building of 295 feet wide by 800 feet long.[11]

The 1914 *Schenectadian* promotional publication states that "Its [G.E.'s] buildings are of the most modern construction and design, and for the most part fireproof. Concrete and steel are used largely in their construction."[12] By 1914, there were approximately fourteen buildings, including 108 Erie Blvd., in the greater downtown area of Schenectady that were constructed in the new fireproof design of reinforced concrete floors and steel construction. A 1912 *Greater Schenectady* publication shows interior views of G.E.'s mammoth factories denoting an open floor plan with cathedral ceilings apparently supported by steel posts and trusses.[13] It could be concluded that the smaller workshops were of the more common brick and wood post-and-beam construction.

[11] Benjamin S. Henry for the Schenectady Board of Trade (Schenectady, N.Y.) *The Schenectadian, Portraying the Advantages, Attractions and Opportunities of the Electric City*. p. 36. Schenectady, N.Y., The Gazette Press, c. 1914. https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/schenectadianpor00sche/schenectadianpor00sche.pdf.
[12] Henry, p. 38.
[13] *Greater Schenectady,* (Portland, ME: L. Nelson Company, 1912), https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t77s7x33f,



Interior images of G.E. construction denoted in the 1912 Greater Schenectady publication (https://lccn.loc.gov/tmp92006791.)

With the increasing number of new employees, G.E. needed a way to efficiently move them, especially during two major shift changes. G.E. was fortunate enough to capitalize on the newly established Schenectady Street Railway Company, which had opened in 1886 and converted to electric power in 1891.[14] G.E. realized that a solution would be to use their latest turbines for a power system with the railway's trolley lines. Subsequently, in 1898, G.E. not only bought the Schenectady Railway Company, but also the Schenectady Illuminating Company (formerly the Westinghouse Illuminating Company) for $750,000.[15] Soon, the railway company constructed about twenty-three miles of city tracks and forty-two miles of interurban track.

[14] Eric H. Allen, *Schenectady: Trolley Hub of Eastern New York*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2021), 7 and 9.
[15] Allen, p. 12.

1907 Panorama of the "General Electric Co. Schenectady Works," denoting the railroad in the foreground with the buildings oriented toward it. The future Erie Blvd.is to the right (https://lccn.loc.gov/15001495).

Along with the city streetcar line, G.E. constructed a system within the main plant for loading and unloading thousands of employees during rush hours. The well-known G.E. Loop operated at the entrance of the plant where streetcars could quickly pull up and discharge workers without congesting the mainline.[16] This streetcar loop is depicted on G.E.'s 1926 Manual for Employees map (Figure 3). It was accessed via Washington Avenue, just to the north of Erie Boulevard. In 1920, the then 523-acre G.E. plant was interwoven with eleven miles of narrow-gauge electric railroad tracks.

In 1920, the city's population was 88,723, and G.E. employed 21,086 people that worked in 301 buildings - equal to 128 acres of factory floor space. In 1922, G.E. had factories in forty-two cities throughout the United States with 71,000 employees. But the Schenectady plant was by far the largest, and in 1924, it employed more people than any other manufacturing enterprise in New York State.[17] Schenectady quickly became known as "The Electric City" and "The City That Lights and Hauls the World" because of the city's two economic backbones -- G.E., and ALCO, which operated until 1968.[18]

By the early 1920s, the growth of the city required improved infrastructure. The importance of the 1825 Erie Canal was diminishing, and there was a greater need to efficiently move the thousands of employees entering and exiting through the main gate at the ever-growing G.E. plant. By 1925 the century-old section of the Erie Canal and towpath close to the G.E. plant was filled in and covered over to create the current six-lane Erie Boulevard. The new Erie Blvd. provided both vehicular and pedestrian transportation directly into the one main entrance of the G.E. plant. The boulevard was different than earlier city streets as it was unusually wide and very automobile oriented with more parking for cars, sidewalks, and more street lighting. Historic photographs and maps also denote how the G.E. plant was originally oriented south towards the railroad, but after the

[16] Starr, Timothy. "History Lesson: Tolley Line Was Vital to Ballston Spa Area Commuters." *The Saratogian*, March 4, 2012. https://www.saratogian.com/2012/03/04/history-lesson-trolley-line-was-vital-to-ballston-spa-area-commuterspublished-march-4-2012/. Accessed August 1, 2023.
[17] Nelson Green, *The Old Mohawk Turnpike Book*, (Fort Plain, NY: Nelson Greene, 1924), fulton.nygenweb.net/Turnpike/Schenec.html. no pages given.
[18] Julia Kirk Blackwater, *Electric City: General Electric in Schenectady,* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 189.

construction of Erie Boulevard newly constructed buildings faced northeast towards Erie Blvd. and downtown. Furthermore, the new boulevard spanned between the two Schenectady industrial giants, G.E., and ALCO.[19]

1909-1914 The Mohawk Overall Company Occupation

When 108 Erie Blvd. was built in 1909 it fronted Dock Street - a narrow paved pedestrian road wedged between a line of commercial and industrial buildings and the Erie Canal. William G. Schermerhorn owned much of this land along the Erie Canal, and he and his wife, Sarah, sold the original parcel for 108 Erie Blvd. to the "Edison General Electric Company on March 23, 1902 (**DB:150/240**). Thus G.E. was temporarily an owner of the undeveloped property prior to its occupation of the site many years later.

On July 3, 1909, the parcel was sold to three businessmen from Vermont, James F. Hooker, William H. Corser, and Charles O. Whitaker (DB:190/208). The three owners had formed the Mohawk Overall Company (Mohawk) with grandiose but flawed plans to employ seven hundred people in the production of jean overalls. Although the company was initially successful, it had apparently started under false pretenses. The new owners of the Mohawk Overall Company were former partners with the Hooker, Corser and Mitchell Company of Brattleboro, Vermont, then the largest manufacturers of overalls in the world. When James Hooker, William Corser, and Charles Whitaker departed that company to build a factory of their own they also poached some of its employees, confidential information, and client list. By March 1913 the Vermont company sued Mohawk and won.[20] This lawsuit against Mohawk provides a description of the 1909 construction of the building. "On May 11, 1909, a deal was closed between Hooker, Corser and Whittaker and parties in Schenectady for lands for the purpose of a factory site. For several years before 1909 the officers of said corporation had been looking about for a suitable place for a branch factory…on June 14, 1909...Hooker, Corser and Whittaker made a contract to erect a factory on the Schenectady property…and shortly thereafter they constructed a plant for the manufacture of overalls…"[21]

By 1912, the Mohawk Overall Company was firmly established in Albany, Troy, and Schenectady. By 1914 Hooker was president of the Schenectady Board of Trade and comptroller for the City of Schenectady in 1914 and was involved with the publication of *The Schenectadian*, even writing the forward. His opening line verbosely describes the city as "Schenectady, the most beautiful, most healthful, and rapidly growing industrial city in the east, looks forward with confidence to the future."[22] The new company obviously had good intentions of creating a permanent business in Schenectady as it hired the local architectural firm A. G. Lindley Company, Architects to design the building. A.G. Lindley was also a new business and had just been incorporated in 1905 with $15,000 in capital. The principals were Arthur George(A.W.) Lindley, C.W. Brown, and L.W. Evans, and they focused on residential, school, and church commissions. Lindley (1871-1929) was from Williamstown, Massachusetts, where his father worked as a contractor and a builder. As a young adult, he

[19] Larson, Volume 2, p. IV-27.
[20] "Local Cases Decided by High Court,"*The Argus* (Albany, New York), March 6, 2013.
[21] Hooker, Corser Mitchell Co. v. Hooker, 103 Misc. 66, 170 N.Y.S. 570 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1918), https://casetext.com/case/hooker-corser-mitchell-co-v-hooker.
[22] Henry, p. 2.

began working in Bennington Vermont, before returning home and working in construction. Arthur moved to Schenectady in 1901 and began drawing and constructing buildings. By 1905, Lindely had established his own architectural firm, with an early interest in church designs.[23] A July 16, 1907, article in the *Canajoharie Courier* (Canajoharie, NY) noted that A.G. Lindley had been engaged to draw plans for the Trinity Reformed Church of Amsterdam [NY]. The *Amsterdam Evening Recorder* also noted in its December 17, 1907, edition that "…the A. G. Lindley Architect Company, of Schenectady had prepared plans and specifications. The plans were for an addition to the original 1892 church building and that "The brick and stonework of present chapel will be followed in the new building as well as the hard pine interior in the wainscotting and floors." The church was built on a coursed stone foundation with brick walls. The church still stands and was bought by the Covenant Presbyterian Church after the Trinity Reformed Church dissolved in 1977.[24] Lindley was also involved with school designs. The September 10, 1908, edition of the *Ilion Citizen* exclaimed that a Lindley-designed schoolhouse in Utica as "the best in the county…the building is constructed entirely of concrete blocks, and it shows that this form of construction lends itself easily to artistic effects. The plans were made by A. G. Lindely of Schenectady who stands at the head of his profession in school house architecture."[25]

Lindley relocated to Los Angles in 1912 and focused on church designs for the remainder of his career. He was also a member of the American Association of Engineers and a prominent figure in civic, religious, and fraternal organizations.[26]

108 Erie Boulevard and Reinforced Concrete Construction [27]

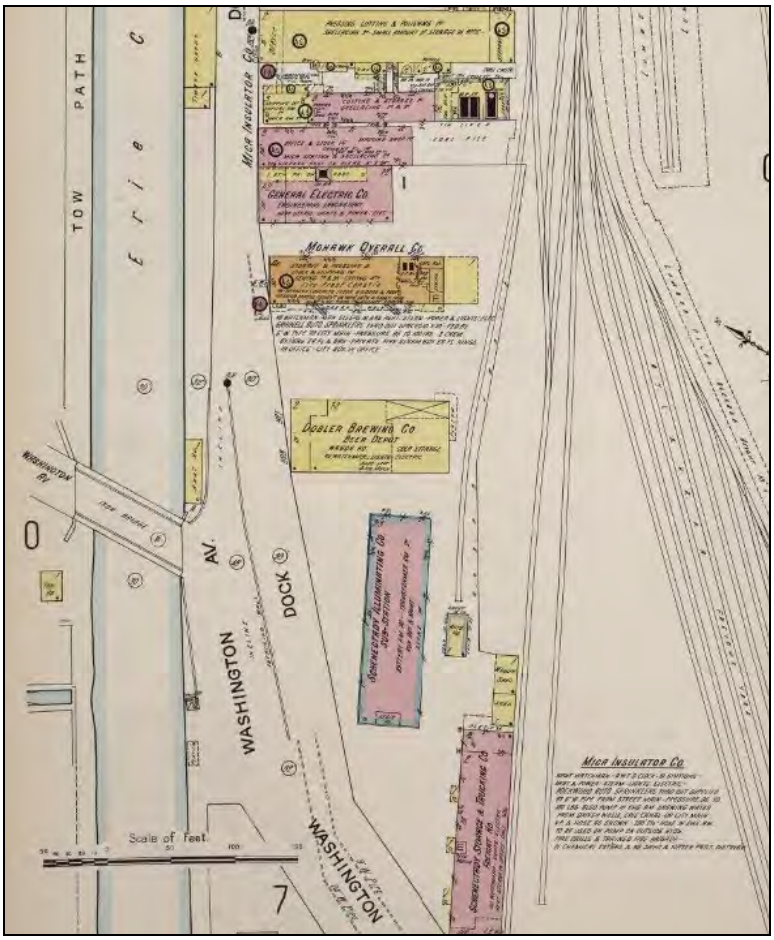
Lindley designed G.E. Building 32 to be fireproof and utilitarian in design. It was built in the new Industrial Commercial style that became more popular within urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This type of industrial building was usually located near a natural feature or resource that was required for the production or shipment of goods, which in this case was the Erie Canal and the railroad lines. Production and/or storage of goods was the primary focus of the Industrial Commercial style, so form always followed function. Interior plans were shaped according to the machinery and/or processes necessary for the commercial enterprise.

This construction was also more fire-resistant than other buildings of the time and was noted on the Sanborn Insurance Maps as "fire proof constrn." The building was assigned a different building color (brown) to represent that it was fireproof. The 1914 Sanborn map shows it was the only such building on Dock Street between G.E. and State Street, with approximately thirty-one other buildings fronting Dock Street. Out of these, eighteen were still frame. Further, a row of almost contiguous brick commercial buildings line the Erie Canal

[23] John Calvin Sherer, *History of Glendale and Vicinity*, (Glendale, CA: Glendale Publishing Company, 1922), 440.
[24] "Our History", Covenant Presbyterian Church, accessed August 12, 2024, https://www.covenantamsterdam.org/our-history
[25] *The Ilion Citizen* (Ilion, New York), September 10, 1908.
[26] Sherer, 440.
[27] This section is largely derived from the National Register nomination for Alling and Cory Buffalo Warehouse (NR Number 10000026), prepared by Tom Yots, 2009 and the draft PDIL National Register nomination for The Selfridge & Langford Building, prepared by Joey Duggan, August 2023.

north of State Street, but none of these were indicated to be fireproof. Upon further examination of the 1914 Sanborn Maps of greater downtown Schenectady, there were thirteen additional fireproof buildings, primarily located on the two main blocks of State Street. Most of the buildings on State Street were brick, although frame buildings still existed. Five fireproof buildings on this strip included a hardware building, a furniture store, and a merchandise store. Below is a list of the fireproof buildings in greater downtown Schenectady in 1914, in order of their construction date. Seven of the buildings are non-extant and those that survive are bolded.

1. Edison Public School, 1900-1902. Current S. Broadway, south of State St. Two-story. Non-extant.
2. Schenectady High School, 1903, with a second building in 1911. Northeast of downtown. Demolished 1974.
3. **Whole Grocery & Fruit**, 1904. Current N. Broadway, north of State St. Four-story. Extant.
4. **Schenectady Savings Bank**, 1904-1906. 500 State St. (south-side). One-to three-stories. Extant (Bank).
5. Furniture Store, (possibly A. Brown and Son) 1906. 416-418 State St., (south-side). Five-story. Non-extant.
6. **Union Passenger Station**, 1909-1910. Northwest of State St. between Erie Canal and RR. Extant.
7. Furniture Store, 1909. 217-219 S. Center Street, south of State St. Five-story. Non-Extant.
8. Illuminating Company Building, 1910. 509-513 State St. Two-story. Non-Extant.
9. **Burger's Furniture Store**, 1910. 100 Block of State St. (south-side), west of Erie Blvd. Two sections, four and five-stories. Extant. (2018 renovation for apartments and brewery).
10. **H. S. Barney Company Storehouse**, 1912. 211 Liberty St., northwest of State St. and Erie Blvd. Four-story. Extant, with an addition.
11. **Schenectady Railway Co. Building**, 1913. 512 State St. (south-side). One-to three-stories, stone-faced building. Extant. (Recently renovated and the interior rediscovered).
12. Schenectady County Jail, 1913. Veeder Street, south of State St. and east of Courthouse. Non-Extant.
13. Under construction, 1914. 130 Barrett St. Three-story. Adjacent to the NY Telephone Co. Non-Extant.



Section of 1914 Schenectady Sanborn Map denoting the 1909 Mohawk Overall Co. at 108 Erie Blvd. between Dock Street, the 1825 Erie Canal and the 1853 New York Central Railroad. Note the fireproof construction of the Mohawk Overall Co.(the only one on the map that is fireproof from State St. to G.E.).

The roots of the concrete methods of construction for G.E. Building 32 go back to the second half of the nineteenth century with several technological advancements and architectural breakthroughs. Thaddeus Hyatt was an American engineer and inventor living in England in the 1870s when he sought a method for making floors with greater capacity for withstanding fires. Using two French flooring systems as his guide, he was inspired by the way they used cementitious material and wrought iron. Hyatt modified the system into a concrete tile construction method using iron grid bonded with Portland cement. These tiles, designed for use as flooring and sidewalk panels, could be mass produced cheaply. After patenting the method, Hyatt publicized his construction breakthrough widely in the United States.[28]

The publicity of Hyatt's design was much more successful in the United States than England, and American builders quickly adopted his technology. Engineers and architects in the United States had used concrete for nearly a century, most notably on the construction of the Erie Canal. These early projects were made of locally

[28] Sara E. Wermiel, "California Concrete, 1876-1906: Jackson, Percy, and the Beginnings of Reinforced Concrete Construction in the United States," *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Construction History*, May 2009, 1-2.

sourced hydraulic cement for the construction of locks and canals. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, innovators experimented with the use of reinforced concrete in idiosyncratic projects like William E. Ward's home in Port Chester (1873-76, NR listed in 1976). This Second Empire and Gothic Revival house was composed entirely of reinforced concrete, but it remained constrained compared to later techniques that allowed for mass manufacturing and more robust work.

Hyatt's method offered a solution and launched a movement that resulted in the incorporation of reinforced concrete in every kind of construction method, particularly after Peter H. Jackson used it to construct sidewalks in San Francisco. In the 1880s, Jackson's company, P.H. Jackson & Co., sold the panels off Hyatt's patent and inspired another generation of architects and engineers to develop the process further. Architect George W. Percy worked with Ernest L. Ransome to patent a method of reinforced concrete using twisted iron bars in place of Hyatt's grid system. This was both more cost effective and allowed for innovation in design. Percy and Ransome worked with the notable Stanford family to construct two buildings entirely made of reinforced concrete – the Leland Stanford Jr. Museum (1891, extant) and Roble Hall (1891, demolished 1996) on the campus of Stanford University. After the devastating 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco left much of the Bay Area in ruins, these two buildings withstood the disaster remarkably well, increasing the technology's reputation for durability. [29]

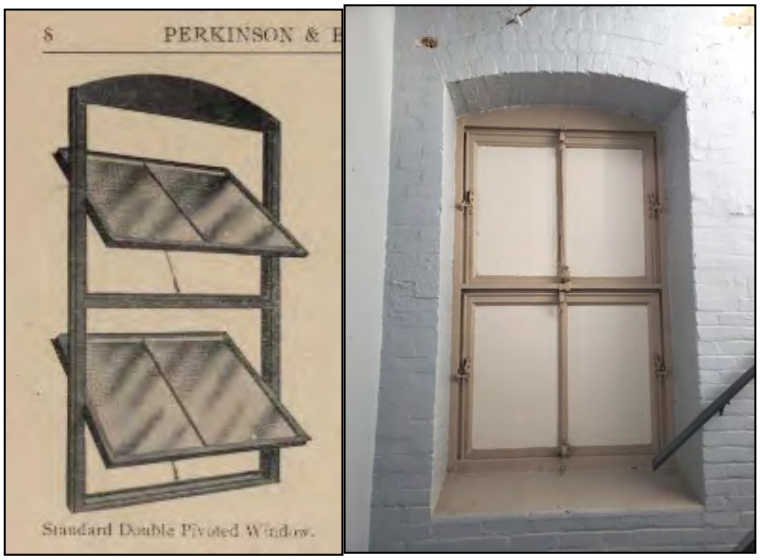
In the last decades of his career Ransome developed and championed reinforced concrete as a superior building material. In 1898 he began working for the Pacific Coast Borax Company, where he engineered a reinforced concrete floor in their Alameda, California location (not extant). During this time, he also incorporated steel in place of iron as the reinforcing mechanism, using this new method on the Pacific Coast Borax Company refinery in Bayonne, New Jersey. While his designs for the original refinery used self-supporting reinforced concrete block in an imitation of masonry construction, Ransome pioneered the use of reinforced concrete as a skeletal system for the construction of an addition. This provided more strength to large window bays, as well as more fire resistance. Following the success of this project he patented the design.[30]

Ransome's skeletal reinforced concrete construction system was revolutionary in the built environment during the twentieth century. In 1902, Ransome sold one of his patents to Henry Chandlee Turner, who went on to construct hundreds of warehouses, commercial buildings, and factories using the reinforced concrete skeleton method. The success of this construction in highly publicized projects such as Cincinnati's Ingalls Building (1903, NR listed in 1974) established the use of this method as reliable, particularly on multi-story buildings such as 108 Erie Blvd. Architects and engineers adopted this construction method particularly in buildings where fireproofing was paramount, and the use of natural lighting and ventilation became important.

[29] Wermiel, "California Concrete, 1876-1906," 2-4; Jennifer Walkowski, "The Huyler Building," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Albany, New York, 2011, Section 8, Pages 2-3.
[30] Wermiel, "California Concrete, 1876-1906," 2-4; Walkowski, "The Huyler Building," Section 8, Pages 3-4; Ernest L. Ransome and Alexis Saurbrey, *Reinforced Concrete Buildings* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1912), 6-11.

In 1903, architect Albert Kahn originated the practice of maximizing natural light and ventilation, prior to the use of artificial lighting.[31] With Kahn's approach, large windows filled spaced between reinforced concrete frame, admitting abundant light and air to each floor. Elevators linked various working levels, as seen in the existing elevator in the rear corner of G.E. Building 32. This new type of "Daylight Factory Design" combined the engineering marvel of reinforced concrete with the expansive open floor plans that allowed natural light to flood in. Daylight Factory Design often combined a reinforced concrete frame with exterior brick masonry. This architectural shift and enthusiasm for reinforced concrete and Daylight Factory Design coincided when the scale of commercial enterprises in Schenectady were growing along the Erie Canal. The design of G.E. Building 32 occurred as these trends coincided, and it demonstrated one of the first instances of the use of skeletal reinforced concrete in Schenectady.

A notable characteristic of Daylight Factory Design is the fenestration, which usually includes a long row of individual or paired windows running the length of the building. Window operations consisted of double-hung, fixed, awning, or pivot. Industrial windows made in the nineteenth century were typically wood, while those made in the twentieth century were metal, as at G.E. Building 32. The existing historic metal windows in the building fall under two categories based on the 1906 catalog from the Perkins & Brown Fireproof Windows from Chicago, Illinois: the "Standard Pivot Window" and the "Standard Double Pivoted Window." Their windows were made of "No. 24 special annealed soft galvanized iron that does not crack or chip in forming."[32] An excellent example of the Double Pivot Window is extant on the first-floor rear (now covered by exterior addition).



"Standard Double Pivoted Window" from the 1906 Perkins & Brown Fireproof Window catalog and its corresponding extant example at GE Building 32.

[31] "A Powerhouse of Architecture and Engineering Innovations," The Work of Albert Kahn, Albert Kahn: Legacy Foundation, https://albertkahnlegacy.org/work-of-albert-kahn/.
[32] *Fireproof windows that are dust and weather proof*, (Chicago, Illinois: Perkins & Brown, 1906), *https://archive.org/details/perkins-and-brown-metal-windows-1906-a/*.

1913-1987: General Electric

In early 1913, the Supreme Court of New York allowed the Mohawk Overall Company to change its name to the Mohawk Clothing Company, Inc.[33] Nonetheless, the Mohawk company went into receivership and its property, including the land, building, machinery, and equipment, was sold in foreclosure in 1914.[34] After an injunction was issued by the Vermont Court, Schenectady citizen N. Irving Schermerhorn, whose family owned the original parcel, was appointed not only the receiver of the Mohawk Clothing Company, Inc. but to continue its business. Under this injunction Mohawk was ordered "to discharge all salesmen employed by the corporation and their superintendent and leading employees, and to prevent the corporation doing business with some 2,000 odd customers" of the Vermont-based company.[35] By August 4, 1914, James F. Hooker had resigned as president and director.[36] On June 15, 1915, Maude E. Hooker, wife of James F. Hooker, and Florence A. Corser, wife of William H. Corser (vice-president), sold the building to the General Electric Company (DB:243/144). But the building at 108 Erie Blvd. stood in sight of the burgeoning electrical empire of the General Electric Company, which soon evolved into the world's largest electrical works in the world and one of the country's most profitable industries.

Machine Shop 1915 - ca. 1935

When G.E. bought the building in 1915, the *Schenectady Gazette* reported that the machinery in the building would be removed as it didn't transfer with the property. It also stated that it was initially thought that the building would be used "for laboratory purposes," but it changed to be used for "war munitions."[37] This seems apparent until it became a machine shop a year later. A December 31, 1916, article in the *Knickerbocker Press* noted that "Workmen have changed the shrapnel factory, known as Building 32, formerly the Mohawk Overall Company's plant into a machine shop…."[38] Further, the 1926 G.E. Employee Handbook site map denotes G.E. Building 32 as a "Machine Shop." Ten other "Machine Shop" buildings were also noted on the G.E. site map (Figure 3). The building's original construction for a factory with an open floor plan was suitable for the new G.E. use as a machine shop. As of 2016, machining still occurred in at least one large building on the main G.E. campus.[39]

According to numerous articles in the *Schenectady Gazette*, Building 32, particularly Room 100, was host to many various civic and military organization meetings from the 1930s to the mid-1950s. In the early 1930s, numerous military-oriented classes were taught, including courses in Field Artillery; "signal communication for all branches of the reserve officer's corps;" "interior guard duty;" the U. S. Army Reserves course on "Defense Against Chemical Warfare;" and "writing official communications." In 1933, "Officers and members of the American Legion auxiliaries were invited to the Red Cross production rooms, building 32, General Electric

[33] "Legal Notice," *Schenectady Gazette,* February 5, 1913.
[34] Carl Johnson, "The Mohawk Overall Company," *The* Hoxie (blog), December 26, 2017, https://hoxsie.org/2017/12/26/mohawk_overall/.
[35] "Borst Names Receiver for Clothing Company," *Schenectady Gazette,* June 16, 1915.
[36] "Hooker Resigns," *Schenectady Gazette,* August 4, 1914.
[37] "G.E. Purchases Mohawk Clothing Company's Plant," *Schenectady Gazette,* June 16, 1915.
[38] "22,500 Listed on Payroll of G.E.in Schenectady," Albany *Knickerbocker Press,* December 31, 1916.
[39] Wise, 155.

Company, Erie boulevard … to assist with the cutting and sewing work which carried on by the 27th Division auxiliary…."[40] Other civic organizations, from the Boy Scouts to amateur radio and astronomy clubs, met at Building 32. Further, a 1938 article in the *Schenectady Gazette* provided a glimpse of the use of the machine shop, as noted that "Former employees of the flow meter and regulator departments building 32, General Electric Company held a dinner at the popular Blue Bird tavern, Broadway." A flow meter is an instrument for monitoring, measuring, or recording the rate of flow, pressure, or discharge of liquids or gases, and a regulator is a device for controlling the rate of working of machinery or for controlling fluid flow.

Educational Building ca. 1935 - 1987

The function of the building may have changed as early as 1935, based on a 1935 Troy *Times Record* article that noted that "weekday classes will be held in Public School 12, Albany *and* the General Electric **Educational Building**, Schenectady."[41] There are no other Educational Building shown on the 1926 G.E. Employee Handbook site map, and the 1930 Sanborn map does not denote the building yet as the Educational Building. A June 1943 *Schenectady Gazette* article also mentioned the building's new use regarding a new Junior War Training Program. The federal program was offered at the Broadway Vocational School for "boys and girls over 16 years of age" for ten courses ranging from drafting to welding to electrical work. The courses were taught at the vocational school and five other locations including the "General Electric educational building."[42] Further, the site map of the 1949 General Electric Schenectady Works souvenir booklet and the 1953 Sanborn Map shows the building as the "Educational Building" (Figure 5).[43] The building served in this capacity until closing in 1987.

Evolution of General Electric

What began with a handful of Edison Machine Shops ballooned into the General Electric Company with 301 buildings by 1920. Based on available historic photographs, they seem to be both brick-veneered concrete buildings built in a Daylight Factory design and solid brick buildings. It appears that the height of building development occurred in the 1920s, as the *Schenectady Works Welcomes You!* souvenir booklet published by General Electric in 1949 states that it employed 30,000 people in 240 buildings on 600 acres.

[40] "Engineers to meet Tuesday," *Schenectady Gazette,* December 5, 1952; "Amateur Astronomy Club to Meet Monday," *Schenectady Gazette,* October 16. 1937.
[41] "College Centers Expected to aid Hundred in City," Troy *Times Record*, September 30, 1935.
[42] "New Junior War Training Program Open," *Schenectady Gazette,* June 9, 1943.
[43] *General Electric Schenectady Works Welcomes* You, Museum of Innovation and Science, https://www.misci.org/

Photo from page 2 of the 1949 Schenectady Works Welcomes You! souvenir booklet published by General Electric. The booklet stated that there were 240 buildings at this time. Note G.E. Building 32 circled in lower right corner, showing the building already painted.
https://www.schenectadyhistory.org/ge/swwu/index.html.

After World War II and the decline of the streetcar, railroads, and locomotive yards, neither General Electric nor Schenectady enjoyed its previous levels of growth. In 1974, G.E. began to downsize, and it moved its main headquarters from New York City to Fairfield, Connecticut. Surprisingly, the first two original "cathedral shops" from McQueen Locomotive survived until the 1970s. By the early 1980s, some of the buildings in the 639-acre General Electric main plant began to be demolished. G.E. continued to severely downsize and sold G.E. Building 32 to the City of Schenectady in December 1987. By 2001, most of the buildings in the G.E. campus had been demolished. Today, there are only thirty-three remaining buildings, including the 1949-1950 Turbine building, Building 273, that covers approximately twenty acres, and about a dozen ancillary structures. By late 2021, G.E. employed fewer than 4,000 people at the Schenectady plant - from a high of 40,000 in 1950 – but it was still the largest among the twenty-two or so G.E. facilities in New York.[44]

[44] John Cropley, Albany *Daily Gazette*, February 11, 2021.

2001 Aerial view of the G.E. campus. This map and later maps show only about 33 remaining main buildings. G.E. Building 32 is circled in red.(USGS Earth Explorer).

Aside from a few architecturally important buildings closer to the main intersection of Erie Blvd. and State Street and the Central Fire Station listed on the National Register of Historic Places, most twentieth century buildings along both sides of Erie Boulevard from State Street south to its entrance at G.E. have been demolished, including those removed for the early 1960s construction of the Interstate-890 spur and its cloverleaf exiting onto Erie Blvd. This cloverleaf blocks the view of a ca. 1950s commercial building on the north side of Erie Blvd and the National Register listed 1936 Amory Building beyond that on Washington Avenue (Figure 6).

After G.E. Building 32 was sold to the Schenectady Industrial Development Agency in 1987 (DB:1171/56), it went through a series of successive commercial ventures before the current owner, 104-112 Erie LLC, bought it in 2008 (DB:1795/196). Although Building 32 has been abandoned since then, the original manufacturing and architectural presence of the Mohawk Overall Company and the General Electric Company remain viable.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__X__ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other

Name of repository: New York State Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.25
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.811311 Longitude: -73.949116

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
Since this property was once part of a large parcel owned by GE, the nomination boundary was drawn to include the current legal lot that contains the building. The excluded non-historic addition at 106 Erie Blvd. is on a separate tax parcel.

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Stuart Beckett, Architectural Historian and Mark McConnel, AIA; edited by Leslie Krupa, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

organization Summit Studio, LLC date August 2024

street & number 4353 Windy Gap Drive telephone 540-915-1233

city or town Roanoke State VA zip code 24014

e-mail mm@thesummitstudio.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner:

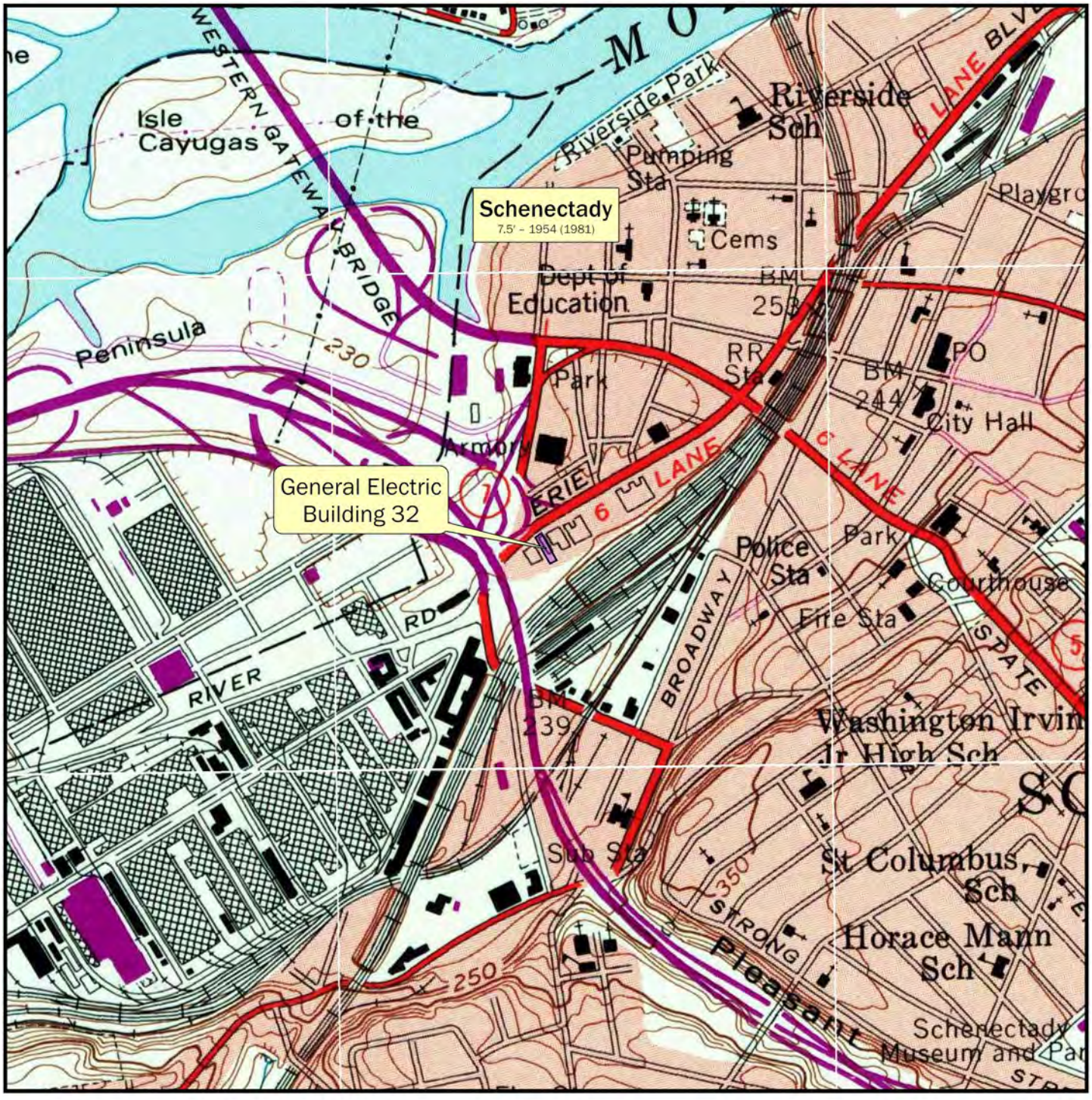
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State



1:12,000
0 500 1000 ft

General Electric Building 32

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 07/08/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

1:2,400
0 100 200 ft

Nomination Boundary (0.25 ac)

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2021 Mapped 07/08/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

1:2,400
0 100 200 ft

Nomination Boundary (0.25 ac) Tax Parcels

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N Schenectady County Parcel Year: 2021 Mapped 07/08/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Figure 1. 1909 Post card image of the Mohawk Overall Company. Note the front entrance layout and original brick cornice. https://hoxsie.org/2017/12/26/mohawk_overall/.

Figure 2. This 1913 image shows a walkout of GE Employees looking east down Dock Street (now Erie Blvd.) toward State Street in downtown Schenectady. 108 Erie Blvd is seen in the upper right corner. (Photo courtesy of MiSci- Museum of Innovation & Science, Schenectady, New York.)

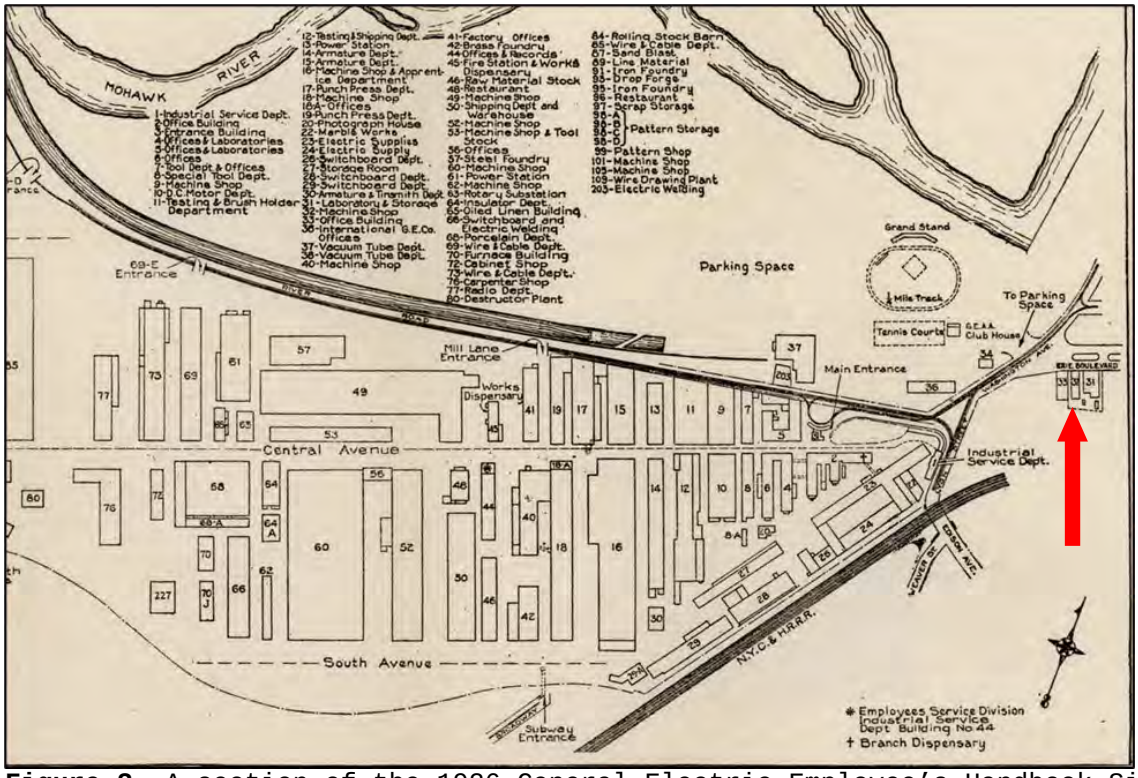


Figure 3. A section of the 1926 General Electric Employee's Handbook Site Map denoting Building 32 (red arrow) as "Machine Shop."

Figure 4. "GE Schenectady Work, Aerial View, 1928" From the New York Heritage Digital Collection. GE Building 32 is visible on the very bottom of the photo. This shows both the size of the GE complex and their continued use of large, late nineteenth century mill factory buildings. GE building 32 is visible on bottom left (see red arrow.

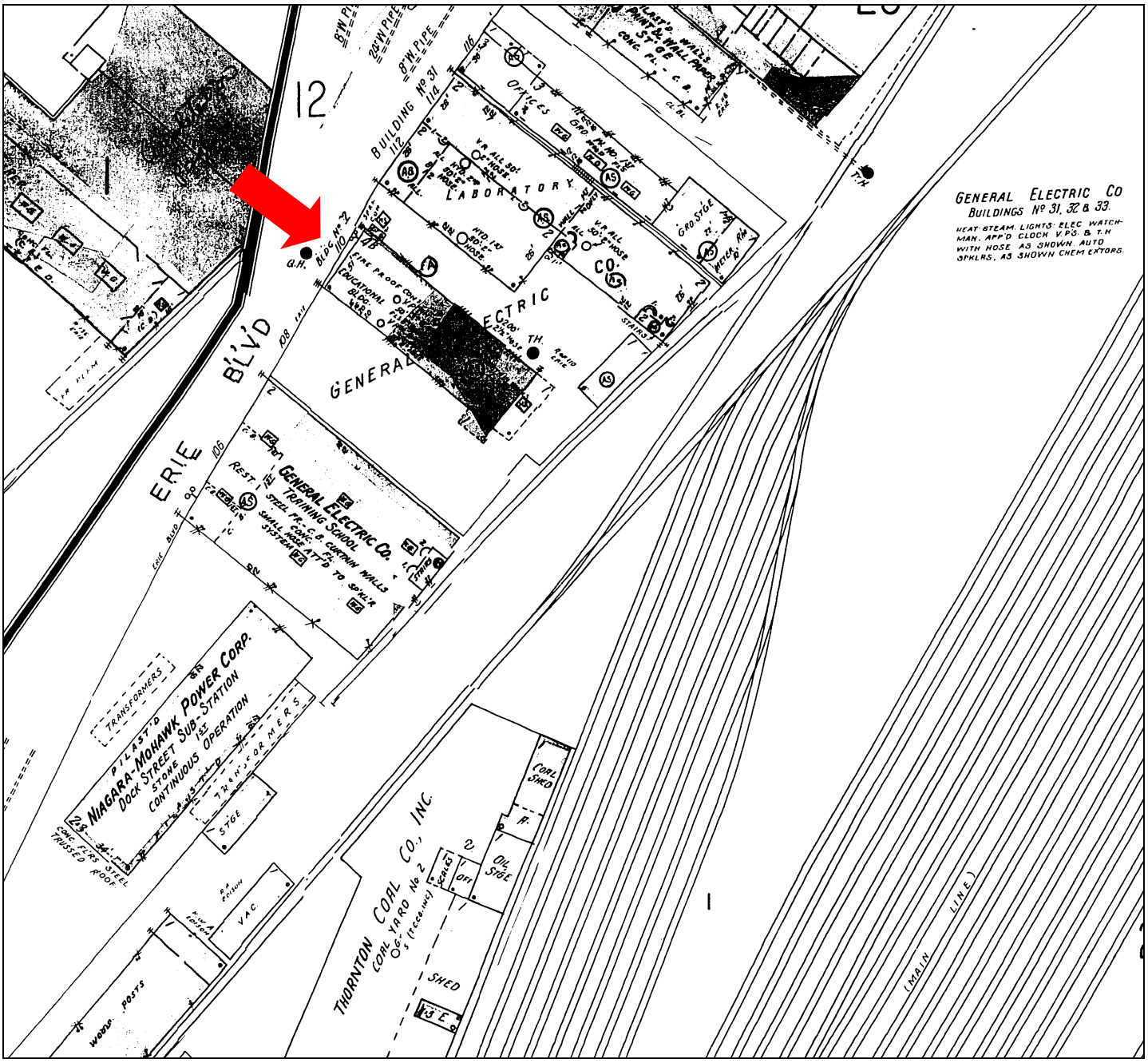


Figure 5. Detailed section of the 1930-1953 Schenectady Sanborn Map denoting G.E. Building 32 (red arrow) denoted as “Educational Building. Note the building address was 110 Erie Blvd. at that time and not 108 Erie Blvd. as it is currently addressed. And note the three G.E. Buildings, 31, 32, and 33. All buildings currently exists.

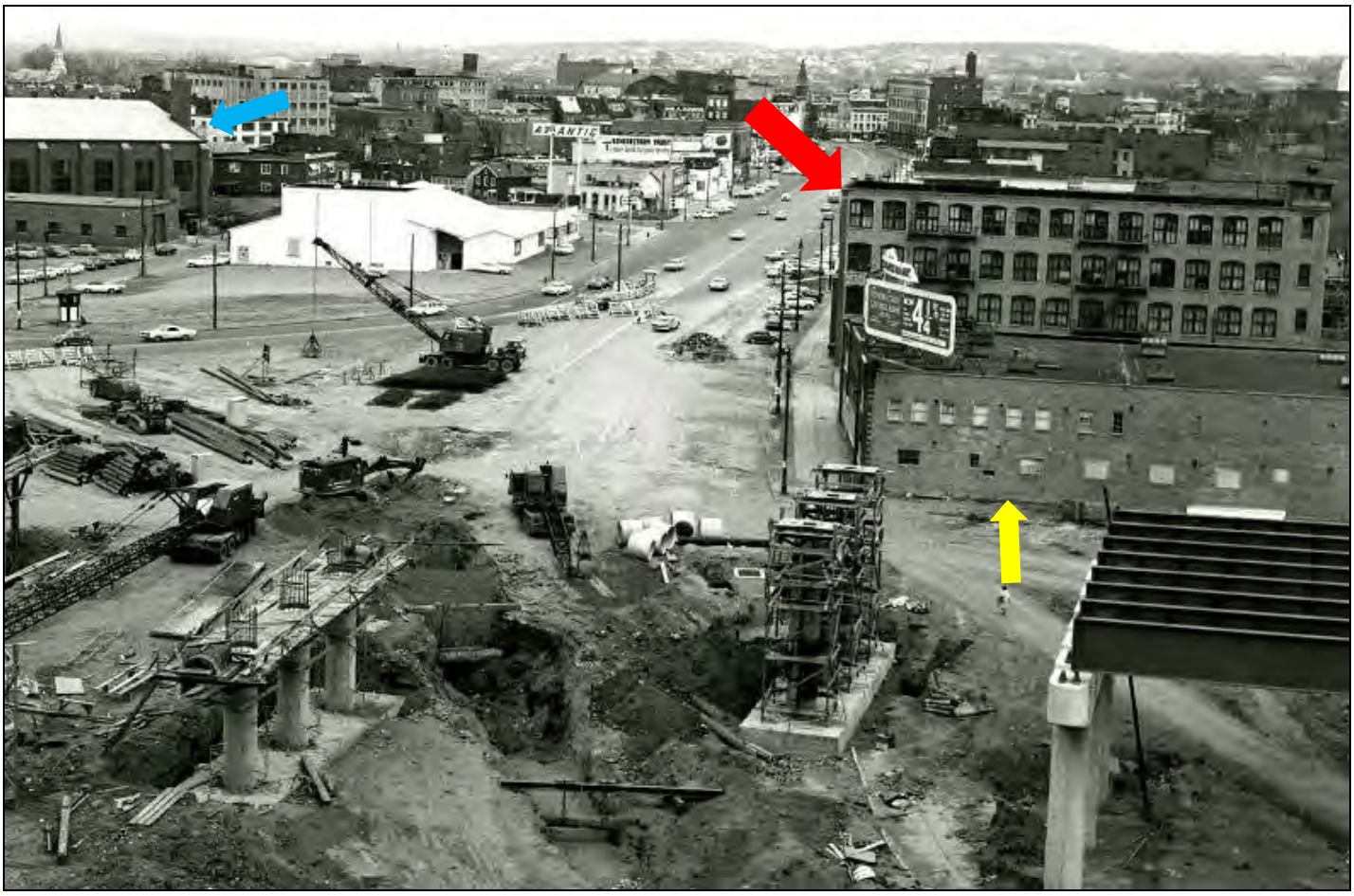


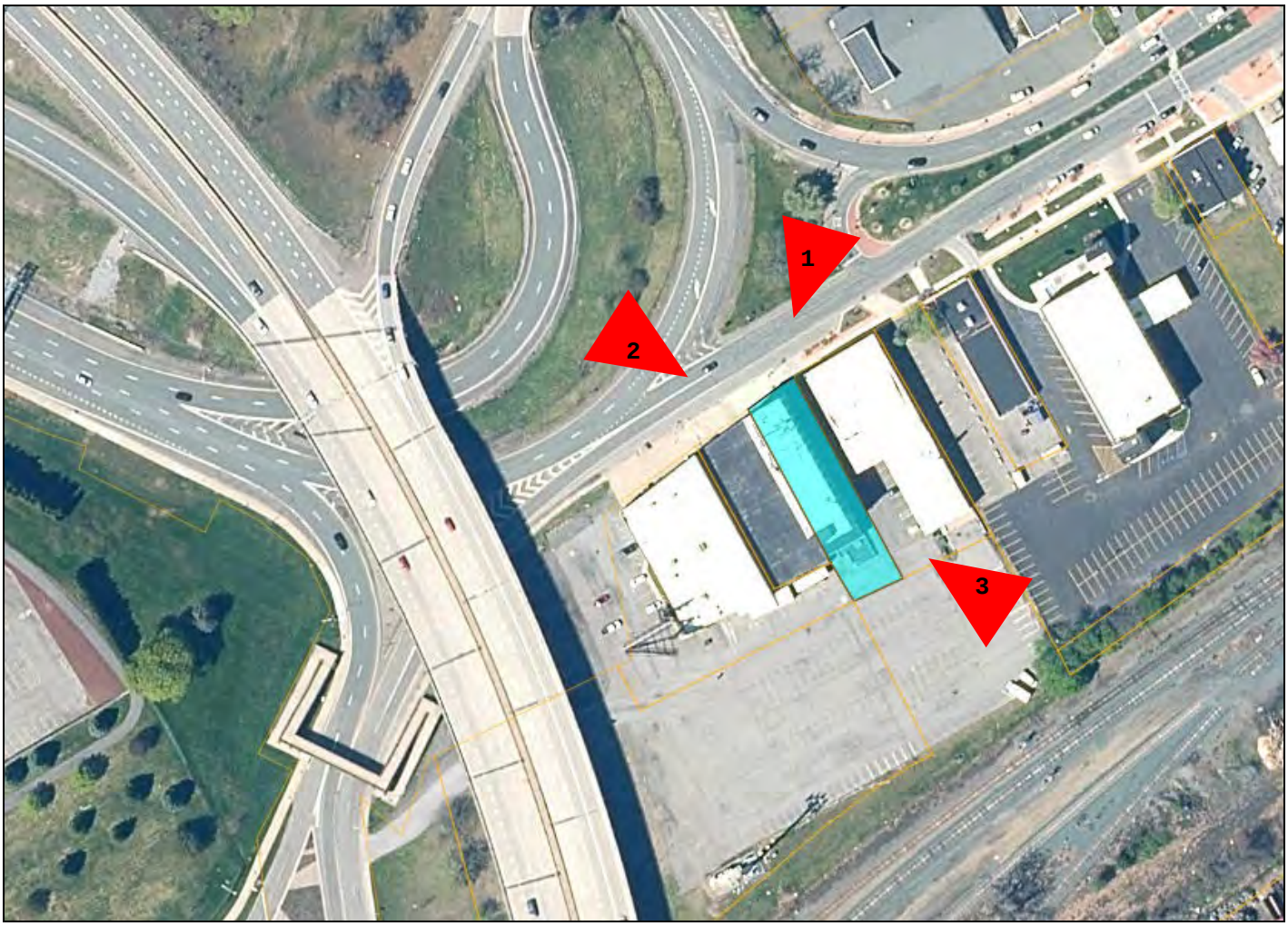
Figure 6. A 1961 image of the construction of I-890 and its eventual cloverleaf into Erie Blvd. This was taken from G.E. at its main entrance looking northeast up Erie Blvd. towards the intersection with State Street and downtown Schenectady. G.E. Building 32 is to the right (red arrow). G.E. Building 33 stands in front of Building 32 (small yellow arrow). The National Guard Armory is across the street and the far upper left-hand corner (small blue arrow). This extant building held many civic and military meetings as did Building 32.(Photo courtesy of Schenectady Historical Society).

Figure 7. A current Google aerial image from same angle as the prior image illustrates how few buildings remain from the original GE complex. GE Building 32 is visible on bottom left with red marker.

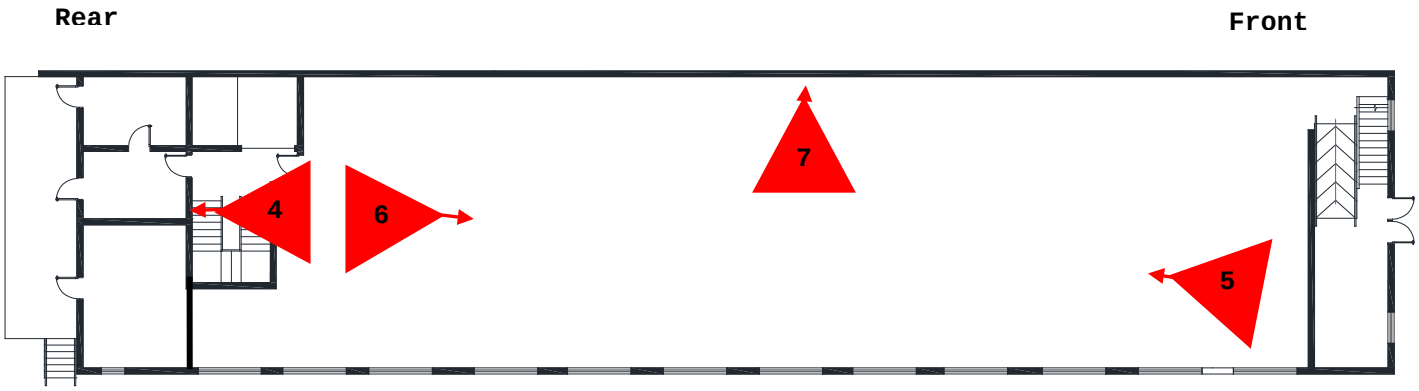
Figure 8. General Electric's former headquarters building with iconic logo and sign, 2018. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, https://www.loc/gov/item/2018700863

GE Building 32 Schenectady, NY
Name of Property County and State

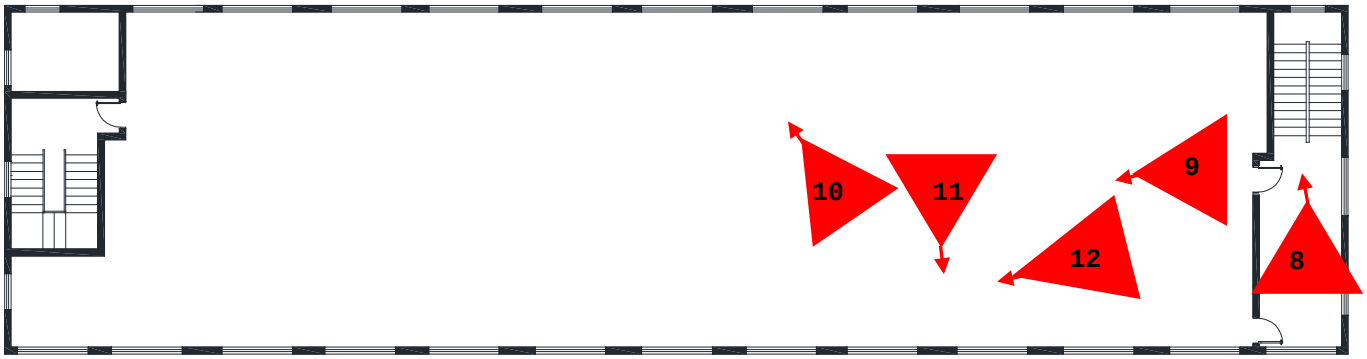
Photo Keys



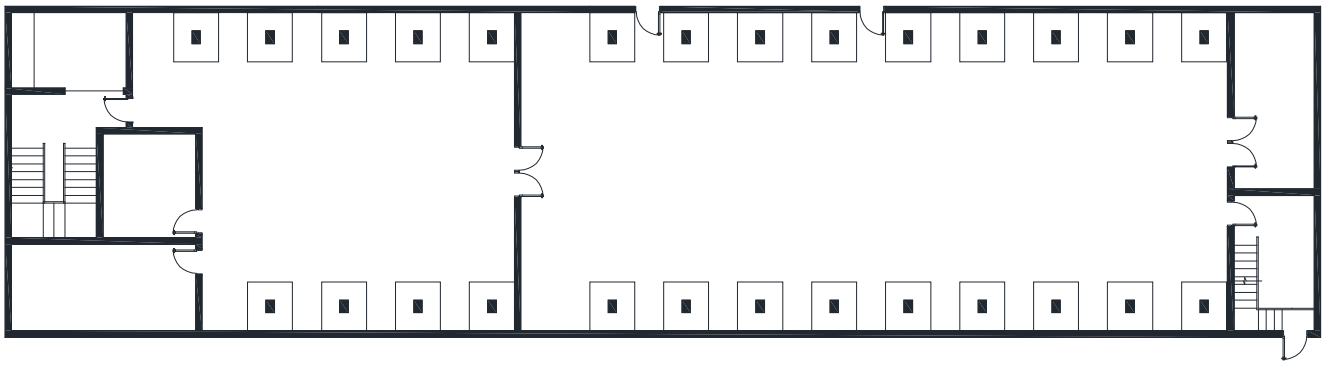
Exterior photo key of GE Building 32 (108 Erie Boulevard)



Interior first floor plan and photo key



Interior second floor plan and photo key(floors three and four are identical)



Interior basement floor plan

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: G.E. Building 31

City or Vicinity: Schenectady

County: Schenectady State: New York

Photographer: Anne Stuart Beckett and Mark McConell

Date Photographed: May 19 and 20, 2023.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 12: View south of Main façade and east elevation of 108 Erie Blvd.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0001

2 of 12: View southeast of Main façade and west elevation from Erie Blvd.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0002

3 of 12: View north of rear elevation and west elevation from rear parking lot.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0003

4 of 12: Interior, first floor, metal, double-pivot window on rear elevation, covered by rear addition. The top part of the infilled window is visible from the exterior, see Photo 3.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0004

5 of 12: Interior, first floor level, view towards rear of building. Note missing and infilled windows on west elevation.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0005

6 of 12: Interior, first floor, view towards front of building.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0006

7 of 12: Interior, first floor, view of boarded up fenestration.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0007

8 of 12: Interior, second floor, typical main staircase, and former office space. View west.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0006

9 of 12: Interior, second floor, typical floor layout. View towards rear.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0007

10 of 12: Interior, second floor, typical floor construction detail.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0008

11 of 12: Interior, third floor, typical view of window fenestration, east wall towards 112 Erie Blvd. Note the metal window to the left.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0009

12 of 12: Interior, third floor, typical view of room and window fenestration, east wall.
NY_Schenectady_G.E.Building32_0010

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