Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 10, 2009, Designation List 422
LP-2330

**E. HAYWARD and AMELIA PARSONS FERRY HOUSE,** 26 West 56th Street, Manhattan
Built 1871, D. & J. Jardine, architects; remodeled with a new façade 1907-08, Harry Allan Jacobs, architect
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 54

On March 24, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A total of nine witnesses, including representatives of City Council member Daniel Garodnick, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, the Municipal Art Society, the Historic Districts Council, the Society for the Architecture of the City, three members of the West-54-55 Street Block Association and the president of the 45 West 54 Corporation testified in support of the proposed designation. In addition the commission has received letters in support of this designation from State Senator Liz Krueger, the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, and several members of the West 54th and 55th Street Block Association. There were no speakers or letters in opposition to the designation. Prior to the hearing, on June 12, 2008, Manhattan Community Board Five voted to request the designation of this building.


Summary

Remodeled in 1907-08 by the noted architect Harry Allan Jacobs for investment banker Isaac Seligman and long occupied by banker E. Hayward Ferry and his wife Amelia Parsons Ferry, this highly intact former townhouse is an exceptionally fine example of the restrained Neo-French Classic variant of the Beaux Arts style and forms part of "Bankers Row," a group of five residences built for bankers on West 56th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Originally constructed in 1871 by the well-known New York architects D. & J. Jardine, this house was occupied from 1880 to 1907 by the family of George Spencer Hart, a leading wholesaler of dairy products and president of three streetcar lines, who also served as the director of several banks. In 1907-08, Jacobs extended the house at the front and rear and relocated the entrance to the ground story in response to the then current fashion for American basement plans. Reflecting a growing mode for individuated rowhouses, he created a new limestone façade and copper roof. His façade design is distinguished by its use of unadorned planar wall surfaces, nuanced arrangement of solids and voids, carefully balanced proportions, and crisp refined detailing. The building's rusticated base focuses on a large central entry with an elegantly carved lion's head and garlands surmounting a pair of original iron-and-glass doors. The smooth limestone mid-section of the façade is framed by two colossal pilasters set off by narrow bands of waterleaf-and-dart molding. The tripartite windows at the center of the façade retain their historic paired wood casements and transoms and are accented by a stone balcony at the third story. A heavy cornice and balustrade caps the third story, balancing the strong verticals created by the piers. Because of Jacobs' concern with reducing the apparent height of this tall, narrow building and differentiating the bedroom stories, the fourth and fifth stories set back to the original building line and are articulated as a two-story attic crowned by a mansard roof with dormers. At the same time the mansard roofs enhances the French

character of the design. Jacobs, who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, won critical acclaim in the early decades of the twentieth century for his restrained and elegant residences, of which this house is an outstanding example.

E. Hayward Ferry was a prominent businessman, who served as first vice president of Hanover Bank from 1910 to 1929. He and his wife occupied this house from 1908 to 1935. In 1935, it became the headquarters of the distinguished publishing firm of Albert & Charles Boni. It was here that Albert Boni founded the Readex Corporation and began his first experiments with microform technology. After the Boni firm left the building in 1945, it served various uses. From May 1959 to early 1964, it was the salon, workshop, and home of the noted fashion designer Arnold Scaasi. In 1965, it became the headquarters of the Martin Foundation, a charitable trust established by textile magnate Lester Martin, and was dedicated to Eleanor Roosevelt. In addition to the offices of the Martin Foundation, the building housed the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation and Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Cancer Fund as well as other non-profit cultural organizations such as the newly established American Film Institute (c.1967-72). In 1972 the building was conveyed to the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities. It subsequently served as the offices of an importing firm and in 1988 became the New York City headquarters and studios of the Spanish Broadcasting System. In an area today characterized by tall office buildings, this five-story townhouse forms part of a unique small-scale streetscape that was once typical of the neighborhood and is now rare in Midtown.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Midtown and the Development of Vanderbilt Row[1]

Far removed from the center of population at the tip of the Manhattan, the area surrounding Fifth Avenue between 42nd Street and the southern end of Central Park remained rural in character well into the first half of the nineteenth century. Most of the territory was originally owned by the City of New York, which had been granted "all the waste, vacant, unpatented, and unappropriated lands" under the Dongan Charter of 1686.[2] The city maintained possession of these common lands—which once totaled over one-seventh of the acreage on Manhattan—for over a century, only occasionally selling off small parcels to raise funds for the municipality. The city's policy changed after the American War of Independence. In 1785 the Common Council commissioned surveyor Casimir Theodore Goerck to map out five-acre lots to be sold at auction.[3] A new street called Middle Road, now known as Fifth Avenue, was laid out to provide access to the parcels. A second survey of additional lots was undertaken by Goerck in 1796 and two new roads, now Park and Sixth Avenues were created.[4] Under the city's plan, half of the lots were to be sold outright while the other half were made available under long-term leases of 21 years. Many of the parcels were acquired by wealthy New Yorkers as speculative investments in anticipation of future growth in the area.[5] John Mason, one-time president of the Chemical National Bank, for example, acquired most of the lots on the east side of Middle Road in the East 50s in 1825.[6] A number of public and charitable institutions also purchased or were granted large plots along the avenue; the Colored Orphan Asylum was located between 43rd and 44th Streets, the Deaf and Dumb Asylum on 50th Street just east of Fifth Avenue, the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum between 51st and 52nd Streets, and St. Luke's Hospital between 54th and 55th Streets. The rough character of the neighborhood—other tenants at this time included Waltemeir's cattle yard at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 54th Street—persisted into the 1860s, when development pressures finally began to transform the area into a fashionable residential district.[7]

The northward movement of population and commerce along Manhattan Island picked up momentum during the building boom that followed the Civil War. Four-story brick- and brownstone-faced row houses were constructed on many of the side streets in the area, while larger mansions were erected along Fifth Avenue itself. Pioneers in this development were the sisters Mary Mason Jones and Rebecca Colford Jones, heirs of early Fifth Avenue speculator John Mason and both widows of established Knickerbocker families.[8] In 1867, Mary Mason Jones commissioned a block-long row of houses, later known as the "Marble Row," on the east side of the avenue between 57th and 58th Streets. Two years later in 1869, her sister hired architect Detlef Lienau to design her own set of lavish residences one block to the south. Having established the area as an acceptable neighborhood for the city's elite, other wealthy New Yorkers soon followed the Jones sisters northward up Fifth Avenue.[9] The gentrification of the area was furthered by a number of important civic and institutional building projects initiated in the mid nineteenth century. Most notable was the planning and construction of Central Park in the late 1850s and 1860s; the preeminence of Fifth Avenue as the fashionable approach to the park was later solidified in 1870 when the city created a monumental new entrance at Grand Army Plaza. A number of ecclesiastical organizations also opened impressive new buildings on the avenue at this time; St. Thomas Episcopal Church at 53rd Street in 1870 (replaced by the present church by in 1906-13), the Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at 48th Street in 1872 (demolished), the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church at 55th

Street in 1875, and the Roman Catholic St. Patrick's Cathedral between 50th and 51st Streets in 1879 (James Renwick, Jr., a designated New York City Landmark).

The status of the area as the city's most prestigious residential neighborhood was firmly cemented in 1879 when the Vanderbilt family began a monumental house-building campaign on Fifth Avenue. William Henry Vanderbilt—the family patriarch since the death of his father Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1877—built his own palatial residence on the western block front between 51st and 52nd Streets, while his two eldest sons each erected mansions just to the north.[10] The scope of the work was so impressive and the influence of the family on the neighborhood so great that the ten blocks of Fifth Avenue south of Central Park came to be known as "Vanderbilt Row, "one of the most prestigious districts in late-nineteenth-century New York.

West 56th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and the Early History of 26 West 56th Street

Three blocks south of Central Park, West 56th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues followed the trend of other blocks in the area as it became a fashionable location for many of the city's most affluent citizens. By 1879 the entire blockfront on the north side of the street and all but four of the lots on the south side of the street had been developed with single family houses. Among the early occupants were Robert Bonner, editor of the *New York Ledger*, at No. 8; Union Bank president, Robert Schell, at No. 33; Rev. Thomas E. Vermilye, pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Church, at No. 15; and Rev. John Hall, pastor of the nearby Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, at No. 3. The block was also home to a number of prominent German-Jewish merchants including Adolph Lewisohn at No. 53; David L. Einstein, president of the Raritan Woolen Mill, at No. 55; Emanuel Lauer, a clothing manufacture and later an investment banker, at No. 53; and then crockery merchant, later department store founder, Nathan Straus, at No. 47. This house was one of a group of five brownstones extending from 22 to 30 West 56th Street erected by builder-developer, later architect, George W. DaCunha to the designs of architects David and John Jardine in 1871-72.[11] In April 1872, while the houses were under construction, DaCunha conveyed the buildings to Jacob Tallman, a builder and real estate speculator whose construction business was located on West 53rd Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues and who was involved with a number of development projects in the West Fifties.[12] For several years the houses at 22, 24, and 28 West 56th Street were occupied by members of Tallman's family. This house and 30 West 56th Street were leased to tenants. In 1877 Jacob Tallman sold his five West 56th Street houses. This house was acquired by Henry E. Sprague, a wholesale produce merchant with a business on Pearl Street.[13] Henry Sprague and his wife Harriet resided in this house until 1880 when they sold it to Anna Dudley Hart, wife of dairy merchant George S. Hart.

George Spencer Hart was born in Cornwall, Connecticut, in 1837.[14] In 1862, he moved to New York City and established George C. Hart & Co., wholesale dealers in butter and cheese. Headquartered on Pearl Street in Lower Manhattan, the firm grew to include branches on Warren Street in Manhattan, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and Liverpool, England. In 1871, Hart married Anna Dudley, daughter of Charles H. Dudley and Anna Eliza [Fairchild Dudley] Grant. Mrs. Grant's second husband Henry (Harry) L. Grant was a broker and financer of city railway [streetcar] stocks and bonds and under his aegis, Hart acquired "an important interest in the Central Crosstown Railroad Company" in 1874 and served as the company's president from 1885-97.[15] He eventually gained control of two other streetcar lines, the Second Avenue Railway Company and the Christopher and Tenth Street Railroad Company, which he managed until all three of the railroads

under his direction were consolidated with the Metropolitan Traction Company. Hart also served on the boards of several banks.

The Harts and the Grants resided together in this house until about 1890.[16] Anna Hart died in 1893.[17] Her sister and mother, who were the executors of her estate, subsequently conveyed this house to George S. Hart. In 1894 Hart married Frances Wheeler, daughter of George M. Wheeler of Scarsdale.[18] In 1905 the Harts began a series of extensive trips and by 1907 they had decided to sell this house.

On July 22, 1907 the Harts sold 26 West 56th Street to real estate speculator Wesley Thorn.[19] The following day Thorn conveyed the house, subject to a mortgage he had obtained from the Title Guarantee & Trust Bank for $55,000, to investment banker Henry Seligman, who had recently built a mansion for himself at 30 West 56th Street (C.P.H. Gilbert, 1899-1901, a designated New York City Landmark). Thus, Thorn made a handsome profit and Seligman protected his interests by gaining control over a potential development site only two doors away from his house. Less than two weeks after he acquired this house, Seligman had architect Harry Allan Jacobs file plans with the Department of Buildings for extensive alterations including four-story front and rear extensions, upgrades to the plumbing, new bathrooms, new stairs, floors, and partitions, and a new limestone front.[20] Construction began in mid-August 1907 and was completed in June 1908. In November 1908 Seligman sold the house to banker E. Hayward Ferry (1864-1940), subject to a restrictive covenant that stipulated that as long as Henry Seligman owned 30 West 56th Street, 26 West 56th Street was to be "used and occupied as a private residence [by] one family only."[21] In choosing to make his home on West 56th Street, Ferry contributed to the long-standing association of this block with bankers and brokers which led to its being known as "Bankers' Row." In addition to Seligman, Ferry's neighbors included Seligman's banker brother-in-law Edward Wasserman at No. 33 (C.P.H. Gilbert, 1901-02, demolished), Arthur Lehman of Lehman Brothers at No. 31 (John Duncan, 1903-04, demolished?), banker-broker Harry B. Hollins at No. 12-14 (McKim, Mead & White, 1899-1901, a designated New York City Landmark), and Frederick C. Edey at No. 10 (Warren & Wetmore, 1901-03, a designated New York City Landmark).

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry

Ebenezer Hayward Ferry (1864-1940), born in Peterborough, New Hampshire, was the son of the Rev. Charles Brace Ferry, a Unitarian minister, and Ellen Hayward Ferry, a descendant of the Haywards who settled in Massachusetts in the 1640s.[22] E. Hayward Ferry graduated from Harvard in 1886. Soon after graduation, he began his banking career with the National Bank of Redemption in Boston. The following year he took a job with the Bay State Trust Company of Boston. He remained with Bay State until 1900, in later years serving as the company's secretary. In 1900, he became a vice-president of the Shawmut bank and was instrumental in developing the bank's credit department. Shawmut merged with the National Exchange Bank early in 1907 and during this period of reorganization E. Ferry Hayward accepted a position as vice president of the Hanover National Bank in New York City. He became first vice-president of Hanover in 1910 and served in that position until 1929 when Hanover merged with the Central Union Trust Company. Although he relinquished his vice-presidency, Ferry remained on the board of the newly formed Central Hanover Bank and Trust Company. Ferry also served on the boards of a number of major corporations including Bankers Trust, the Phelps Dodge Corporation, the Northern Pacific Railway, the Home Life Insurance Company, and the Old Dominion Company. He was involved in a number of

philanthropic organizations. In the 1890s and early 1900s he served as secretary of the Ramabai Association, which supported the work of Pundita Ramabai, aimed at improving the lives of women in India and eliminating the practice of *Sati* (aka suttee). Later he was involved in fund raising for hospitals and was a member of the executive committee of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Amelia Parsons Ferry (1863-1945), daughter of Sydenham C. and Harriet E. (Morton) Parsons was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, where her father was a merchant and a founder of the New England branch of the YMCA.[23] Amelia Parsons graduated Smith College and married E. Hayward Ferry in 1889. They had one daughter, Harriet, born in 1891.

In 1890, Amelia Ferry's sister Harriet (Hetty) Eddy Parsons married Arthur Curtiss James, the only child of the Ellen Curtiss and Daniel Willis James (1832-1907), one of the richest men in the United States, who controlled Phelps, Dodge & Company, as well as other mining and railroad interests in the west.[24] The Ferrys and the Jameses had extremely close business and personal relationships. E. Hayward Ferry sat on the boards of the many mining and transportation companies in which Arthur C. James had inherited a controlling interest and James was on the board of Hanover Bank.[25] According to newspaper accounts Amelia Ferry and Hetty James were active in the same charities, attended the same parties, and vacationed together with their husbands. This tradition solidified after 1911 when Arthur James purchased "Edgehill Farm," the property adjoining his estate, "Beacon Hill," in Newport and the Ferrys began spending their summers at "Edgehill" while continuing to reside at 26 West 56th Street during the winter months. In 1930, when the census was taken, the Ferrys were occupying No. 26 with three women servants: Alice Smith, Elizabeth McTieh, and Louise Condliff. [26] By 1930 many of the single family townhouses on this block of West 56th Street had become boarding houses or had been subdivided into apartments and ground floor commercial space. Henry and Adelaide Seligman continued to reside at No. 30 in grand style with eleven live-in servants, but both were in their seventies and died within a few months of one another in 1933. This freed E. Hayward Ferry with regard to 26 West 56th Street and in 1935 he arranged to lease the house to Albert Boni as offices for the Albert and Charles Boni's publishing firm. [27] E. Hayward Ferry died in 1940; Hetty and Arthur James passed away in 1941; Harriet Ferry died in July 1945.[28]

Harry Allan Jacobs[29]

Harry Allan Jacobs (1872-1932) was born and educated in New York City, and began his architectural training at the Columbia School of Mines. After graduating in 1894 he continued his studies in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and was awarded the Prix de Rome by the American Academy in Rome. Following his return to this country, he joined the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects and began his own architectural practice in New York in 1900. His earliest known commission, dating from 1900, is a brick-and-limestone store-and-loft building at 133 Mercer Street within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District. Early on he established a reputation as a designer of hotels with the Seville Hotel at Madison Avenue and East 29th Street (1901-02) and the Hotel Marseilles, 2689-2693 Broadway at West 103rd Street (1902-05, a designated New York City Landmark), both exuberant Beaux Arts buildings clad in brick, with limestone, wrought iron, and terra-cotta trim.

Jacobs' practice also focused on the design of elegant residences. An important early example is the Charles Guggenheimer residence at 129 East 73rd Street (1907) in the Upper East Side Historic District. This neo-Italian Renaissance style townhouse, faced in limestone, served as a

model for many of his later commissions. Other commissions earned Jacobs wide recognition, including a new façade design in the neo-Italian Renaissance style for the house of philanthropist R. Fulton Cutting at 22 East 67th Street (1908), the Regency-inspired James J. Van Alen House, now the Kosciuszko Foundation, at 15 East 65th Street (1917), and a residence for theater producer Martin Beck at 13 East 67th Street (1921), all in the Upper East Side Historic District. His country houses included "Meadow Farm," the estate of financer, later governor, Herbert Lehman in Purchase, New York, and "Mountain View Farms," the estate of movie producer Adolph Zukor in Nyack, New York. Jacobs also designed two major institutional residences ─ the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society Administration Building and Cottages in Pleasantville, New York (1908-12) and the neo-Italian Renaissance style Andrew Freedman Home at 1125 Grand Concourse in the Bronx (1924-25, a designated New York City Landmark), the latter in collaboration with architect Joseph H. Freedlander, a specialist in institutional design. Jacobs returned to hotel design in 1927 with the neo-Renaissance style Hotel Elysee located at 54-60 East 54th Street.

Jacobs was a member of the Mayor Walker's Committee on Plans and Survey, a predecessor to the New York City Planning Commission. He was a fellow of the American Institute of Architects and the American Academy in Rome and served as the president of Academy's Alumni Association. He was very active in the Society of Beaux Arts Architects and the Architectural League of New York. He wrote extensively on real estate, planning, and architectural issues for newspapers and magazines. He also was the author of a number of one-act plays, including one written in collaboration with George S. Kaufman.

The Design of the E. Hayward and Amelia Parson Ferry House[30]

In 1903 architectural critic Herbert Croly observed that high-stoop brownstone dwellings had become "extremely unfashionable, both in design and plan" and described a new movement "gradually gathering momentum toward the substitution of reconstructed American basement dwellings for old brownstone fronts."[31]

> In some cases the reconstruction has gone no further than the destruction of the stoop, the placing of the entrance on the ground floor, and the rearrangement of the interior, but for the most part people demand that the old houses shall be utterly destroyed or subjected to such a drastic process of purging that every trace of brownstone is removed. And the process of reconstruction is covering ground with utmost rapidity.[32]

The American basement plan was first introduced around 1880 and gained widespread popularity during the 1890s and first few years of the 1900s. In traditional rowhouses, visitors to the house would enter on the parlor level using a tall flight of stairs, the stoop, from the Dutch for "step," set to one side of the façade. The main reception hall shared the first floor with the parlor, beyond which was another parlor, usually used for formal dining. The family dining room was located in the front of the basement with the kitchen at the rear. In the 1880s it became fashionable to have the dining room and parlor on the same floor, with a small butler's pantry equipped with a dumbwaiter connecting to the basement kitchen. Once the ground floor dining room had been eliminated, the main entrance could be lowered to street level and the front basement space could be given over to a generous foyer leading to a grand staircase. Moving the main stair to the center of the house made it possible to have a larger, better lit parlor, extending across the entire building

frontage. The parlor was treated *en suite* with the stair hall, which functioned as a secondary reception hall, and the rear dining room.

The introduction of this new rowhouse type, known as the American basement plan, coincided with an increasing desire for individualized designs. Reacting against "the monotony of the once fashionable … brown-stone front, in blocks of a dozen or more houses exactly alike,"[33] architects and developers entered into "a persistent and deliberate striving after individuality" using a variety of different styles, designs, and materials to create distinctive façades that would be readily marketable as private, upper-class residences.[34] This trend was reflected not only in the treatment of reconstructed rowhouses but also in new rows erected by speculative builders "three or four at a time, each house [having] the distinction of an individual design." [35] The result, in the view of most designers and critics was entirely positive. Summing up recent architectural trends in 1903, Columbia University architecture professor A.D. F. Hamlin observed "our residence streets have begun to be interesting, our houses to possess individuality of style and design; and the gain to the city is great."[36]

For his design for the Ferry house Harry Allan Jacobs chose to work in the Neo-French Classic variant of the Beaux Arts style just coming into vogue in the early 1900s.[37] Inspired by the French Classical Baroque, principally the works of Jules Hardouin Mansard, and the French Neo-Classical designs of Louis XVI period, this variant was characterized by its emphasis on planar wall surfaces and simple classical details. Among the notable early examples were Hunt & Hunt's twin houses at 645-647 Fifth Avenue (1905, demolished) and Warren & Wetmore's James A. Burden House at 7 East 91st Street (1902-05, which is both an individually designated New York City Landmark and within the Carnegie Hill Historic District). With the Ferry House design, Jacobs moved even beyond those works in the abstraction and simplification of his design, exhibiting an interest in unadorned planar wall surface, nuanced arrangements of solids and voids, carefully balanced proportions, and crisp, refined detailing that characterizes his work from this period.[38]

The most overtly historic element of the Ferry House design is the treatment of the main entry with its concave segmental-arched surround framing a simple trabeated doorway surmounted by a carved lion's head draped with a wreath and swags. It seems almost certain that this treatment was modeled after the doorway of the eighteenth-century house at 25 Rue Charlemagne in Paris, which had been illustrated in the *Architectural Record* in 1906.[39] At the Ferry House the stylized, almost vulpine, lion's head, wreath, and naturalistic garlands are handled with unusual fluidity and grace, suggestive of the Art Nouveau. The wreath motif is echoed in the design of the handsome paired wrought-iron-and-glass doors at the main entry. The entry is flanked by unusual Rococo-inspired curved wrought-iron scrolls that were perhaps intended to serve as hand grips for the front stoop. Less elaborate wrought ironwork is employed for the service entry to the east of main entry and the window gate in the west bay. The base is also enhanced by banded rustication and is capped by a stone cyma molding and frieze enriched with a Vitruvian scroll motif and paterae in low relief.

In the mid-section of the façade, the windows are grouped together in a tripartite arrangement at the center of the façade. This compositional device, which Jacobs also employed at the contemporaneous Guggenheimer house allowed him to leave "a large plain border of stone" around the windows.[40] Here, through simple projections and moldings Jacobs articulated the framing stonework as giant pilasters, profiling the flat moldings framing the window bays with narrow bands of waterleaf-and-dart molding, which are echoed by the narrow moldings capping his abstracted pilasters. Jacobs balanced the strong verticals created by the giant pilasters and window surrounds

with the heavy cornice and balustrade crowning the third story and the balcony beneath the third story windows. In the upper portion of his façade, Jacobs reduced the number of window openings, both to introduce variety in his design and to differentiate these bedroom stories from the public reception rooms on the second and third floors. Concerned with reducing the apparent height of this tall narrow building, Jacobs retained the original setback building line at the fourth story simply refacing the façade wall with the same rusticated limestone banding as the ground story base to create a strong horizontal emphasis. As was common with many of the renovations during this period, the original fifth story façade was taken down and rebuilt as a sloping pseudo-mansard faced with standing seam copper and lit by a pair of segmental arched dormers. This articulation of the fifth story as a mansard also serves to reduce the height of the building and enhances the French character of the design.

In addition to the Guggenheimer house, Jacobs produced a number of townhouse designs and one design for a brownstone converted to commercial use, the Hardman Peck piano company at 433 Fifth Avenue (1910, storefront altered), that can be related to the Ferry House because they share similar compositions [*partis*] — the Guggenheimer house; the John W. Herbert, later Mrs. Frederick Lewisohn House, 835 Fifth Avenue (1910, demolished); the Andrew Miller Residence (demolished)[41] — or similar "signature" decorative details — the balcony at the Guggenheimer House; the cornices and balustrades at the R. Fulton Cutting house and Hardman Peck Store. All these buildings, as noted by a critic writing in the *New York Architect* in 1911, were characterized by a "purity of style and detail," the "same feeling of restraint and good taste;"[42] however, the Ferry House stands out as the simplest and least historicizing of Jacobs' designs from this period, pointing the way for his works of the late 1910s and 1920s, such as the houses at 6, 8, and 10 East 68th Street he designed for Otto Kahn in 1919, where with the exception of sills and shallow ornament in the tympana of the three central windows, there was no ornament on the façades (all three within the Upper East Side Historic District; Nos. 6 and 8 significantly altered).

Albert & Charles Boni, Inc.[43]

Albert Boni (1892-1981) and Charles Boni (1895-1969), the sons of insurance executive Charles Boni and Bertha Saslavlasky Boni, were raised in New Jersey. Albert attended Cornell and Harvard and Charles enrolled at Harvard, but both withdrew from college with the intention of going into publishing. To gain experience in the field, they opened the Washington Square bookshop in Greenwich Village in 1913, which soon became a gathering place for Villagers with literary and leftist leanings. The shop's back room was converted into an impromptu theater for the Washington Square Players (Max Eastman, John Reed, Mary Heaton Vorse, etc.), an amateur group that developed into the Theater Guild. In 1914, the brothers launched their first publishing venture, *The Glebe*, a poetry magazine, which featured the work of still relatively unknown Imagist poets, Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], Ford Madox Ford, William Carlos Williams, as well as James Joyce. In 1915, the Bonis sold the shop to devote their full time to publishing. At the suggestion of Albert Boni, they began producing the Little Leather Library, miniature editions of classic books, which were mass-marketed through dime store sales and mail order and sold over a million volumes in their first year of operation.[44] In 1917, Horace Liveright joined the firm, which incorporated as Boni & Liveright, and began publishing reprint editions of worthy recent works under the imprint of the Modern Library.[45] Within six months, the partners quarreled and Liveright bought out the Bonis, although their name remained associated with the firm until 1928.

In 1923 Albert and Charles Boni again established a publishing house, Albert and Charles Boni, Inc. Among the important books published by their firm during the 1920s were Ford Madox Ford's *No More Parades* (1925), Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* (1926), Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* (1927), and Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. In 1926 the brothers acquired the publishing house of their uncle Thomas Seltzer and with it the American rights to the novels of Marcel Proust. Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s Albert and Charles Boni continued to publish English translations of the seven volumes of *Remembrance of Things Past*. Other notable works included Colette's *Claudine at School* (1931) and Max Eastman's translation of Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* (1931). Charles Boni tried to establish a paperback book club in the late 1920s, but the venture failed and he left the firm in 1930.

During the 1930s Albert Boni concentrated on publishing nonfiction and reprints. Telephone directory listings indicate that the business had five or six employees including Albert Boni and his wife Nell.[46] In 1939, Boni began experimenting with microform printing techniques and established the Readex Microprint Corporation.[47] He continued to experiment with reduction techniques and microfilming through the early 1940s, suspending operations in 1942. In 1945, when Amelia Ferry's executors sold this house, Boni relocated to Chester, Vermont, where he resumed working on the technical difficulties involved in the microform process. By 1950 he was ready to begin publishing and began assembling orders from libraries and universities. Within fifteen years, Readex had more than 500,000 titles on film. Microform revolutionized historic scholarship and information processing. The company remained in the ownership of the Boni family for some time and is now a division of the NEWSBANK Corporation.

Subsequent History

In 1945 Amelia Ferry's estate sold 26 West 56th Street to Della V. Lederer who acquired it on behalf of her husband Ludwig G. Lederer for his firm Lederer de Paris, manufacturer and importer of handbags and accessories.[48] Two months after purchasing the building Della Lederer transferred ownership to the 26 West 56th Street Corporation, controlled by Ludwig Lederer. The Lederer firm remained in this building for a little over two years, sharing space in early 1947 with the Rumanian Legation, which took over the entire building in June.[49]

In July 1950, the 26 West 56th Street Corporation leased the entire building to the Gold Key Club, which began interior renovations in the building.[50] Purportedly a membership club, the Gold Key Club was actually an after-hours bottle club.[51] The club operated until it was raided for violations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law in February 1956. Sixty patrons in evening dress and seventeen club employees, including club president John R. Durante, who lived in an apartment in the building, were apprehended at the site. Vincent Mauro, an ex-convict with underworld connections, "said to have been a behind-the-scenes figure in the club's operation," was also arrested.[52] Durante and Mauro pled guilty in 1957 and received suspended sentences.[53]

Seven months after the police raid, the 26 West 56th Street Corporation sold this building to Abbate Associates, an interior decoration and industrial design firm headed by John Abbate.[54] Abbate used a portion of the building as a residence and design studios and leased space to tenants including an advertising agency and portrait painter.

In May 1959, the building was purchased by Martinall Industries, Inc., a textile processor, "engaged largely in dyeing, finishing and printing textile fabrics,"[55] which was part of the vast textile manufacturing empire of Lester Martin, who had died in April 1959.[56] Martinall Industries

began leasing space in the building to the fashion designer Arnold Scaasi for his design studio, showrooms, and residence.[57] Scaasi, still in his twenties, had won the Coty award in 1958 and was considered one of America's leading designers. He began showing his influential collections at 26 West 56th Street in June 1959 in lavishly redecorated rooms, styled by the fashionable interior designer Valerian Rybar. There, he made a practice of presenting his fashions at night, having the press and buyers dress up in formal attire, and providing his guests with champagne, sipped to the strains of violin music.[58]

In February 1964, Martinall Industries conveyed the building to the Martin Foundation, a charitable trust established by Lester Martin in 1946 to aid educational and social services, which had inherited half of his estate. Soon after, alterations began to convert the building to offices for the foundation. In October 1965 the foundation dedicated its new building to Eleanor Roosevelt.[59] Besides housing the foundation's offices, 26 West 56th Street also contained the offices of the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation and Eleanor Roosevelt Cancer Fund, the renowned Dessoff Choirs, then under the direction of Maestro Paul Boepple, and the offices of Sidney Glazier, the Hollywood actor-producer, who had just completed an award winning documentary on the life of Eleanor Roosevelt.[60] By 1968, the newly formed American Film Institute also had its New York City offices in the building.[61] During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Bennington College Council of Greater New York also had its offices in the building, where it hosted such events as "Three Evenings of and About Literature." The Federal Bar Association of New York and New Jersey was also briefly quartered here in the early 1970s. In 1972, the Martin Foundation conveyed the building to the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, an educational association representing virtually all New York's regionally accredited nonprofit colleges and universities."[62] The Commission in turn leased office space to the Vassar College Capital Campaign and the Colgate University Campaign. The Commission retained ownership of the building until 1980 when it was sold to the Sepulveda Realty Corporation, a Netherlands Antilles Corporation. In 1981, it passed to British Crown Imports, Inc.

In 1988 the building was acquired by the Alarcon Holdings, Inc., which leases the building to the Spanish Broadcasting System (SBS), "the largest publicly traded Hispanic-controlled media and entertainment company in the United States," founded by Pablo Raúl Alarcón (1926-2008). It is currently home to WSKQ-FM, La Mega/Mega Clásicos and WPAT-FM.

In an area today characterized by tall office buildings, this five-story townhouse forms part of a unique small-scale streetscape that was once typical of the neighborhood and is now rare in Midtown.

Description

Located near the center of block on the south side of West 56th Street, the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House is five stories tall and occupies almost all of its 20-feet-wide, 100-feet-deep lot, save for an L-shaped rear yard. The present Beaux Arts style façade dates from a 1907-08 alteration when the front stoop was removed, the lower three stories were extended forward to the lot line, the fifth story façade was taken down and rebuilt as a sloping (quasi-mansard) roof with dormers, and the lower stories were faced with limestone (now painted) and the roof covered with standing seam copper. Because the upper stories of neighboring brownstone at No. 24 remain unaltered and therefore set back from the Ferry house, a small portion of the Ferry house's brick eastern sidewall is also visible.

*West 56th Street Façade* The façade is divided into a one-story base, two-story mid-section, and two-story set back attic.

*Base* Above a high granite plinth, the base is clad with rusticated limestone and is divided into three bays with the wide main entry at the center of the façade. The center entry is approached by wide stone step, which in place of conventional railings has original decorative curved wrought-iron scrolled handgrips at either side of the entry. The recessed doorway is topped by concave tympanum enriched with an elegantly carved wreath and swags looped over a central lion's head. The narrower side bays are set off by splayed lintels and keystones. The western bay contains a paneled stone bulkhead and a window installed after 1940, replacing an original service entrance. The eastern bay remains a service entrance. The center entry retains its original paired wrought-iron-and-glass doors; however, a non-historic hand bar has been installed on the western door. Non-historic metal address numbers "26" are affixed to the lintel above the entrance and the stone piers at either side of the entry. Beneath the numbers on the piers, are non-historic metal plaques with the logo of SBS, the Spanish Broadcasting System, on the eastern pier and a sign reading "Mega 97.9 FM, AMOR 93.1,WSKQ-FM/WPAT FM" on the western pier. Above the numbers there are non-historic metal torcheres installed c. 2008. These replace similarly designed torcheres that were installed sometime after 1940. A non-historic metal fire sprinkler sign and a non-historic round metal cap have been installed on the base of the eastern plinth flanking the entrance. The eastern bay retains its original wrought-iron-and-glass door which has been slightly modified by the installation of a non-historic lock and door knob. A non-historic security camera is attached to the eastern corner of the façade just above the doorway. In the western bay, the window is protected by a wrought-iron-grille. A non-historic sprinkler head and a non-historic security alarm box have been installed on the bulkhead. A non-historic sprinkler sign is affixed to the window sill. There is a non-historic metal water tap with a wire leading to a non-historic metal capped outlet near the base of the western pier. A non-historic fire alarm with a metal conduit leading to the base of the building is located near the western end of the facade. The base is capped by a stone cyma molding and frieze ornamented with Vitruvian scroll motif and paterae.

The smooth limestone middle section is laid with stones laid in alternating wide and narrow bands. The façade is framed by colossal pilasters and features a central two-story tripartite window set off by a molded surround enriched with a waterleaf-and-dart molding. The center window at the second story contains a historic fixed twenty-four light wood window. The narrower openings in the eastern and western bays retain their historic paired six-light wood casements. A stone (now painted) balcony supported by brackets extends along the base of the third story windows. The center opening retains its historic wood six-light French doors surmounted by a six-light transom. The side openings also retain their historic wood windows. These have hoppers topped by four-light paired casements crowned by four-light transoms. This section of the façade is crowned by a full entablature featuring a fillet articulated with a water leaf-and-dart molding, a plain frieze and a denticulated and modillioned cornice which supports two non-historic metal lights.

The fourth and fifth floors are set back to the line of the original rowhouse. The fourth story façade is rusticated and has two flat arched windows with splayed lintels and keystones. The windows are partially screened from view by a stone and terra-cotta balustrade that rests on the third story cornice. The windows retain their original molded wood casings but have non-historic sash probably replacing paired six-light casements topped by six light transoms. The eastern window has

a non-historic iron security gates. A molded cornice enriched with a bead and reel motif caps the fourth story.

The party walls framing the mansard roof are faced with limestone. The mansard is covered with standing-seam copper sheathing and has copper covered dormers with segmental arched window openings capped by molded segmental cornices. The windows originally contained paired four-light wood casements with arched upper lights. These have been replaced with non-historic single-pane windows.

*Eastern Side Wall* The small section of the eastern side wall visible above the second story is faced with painted brick with the side profile of the stone main façade visible at the north end of the wall and stone coping capping the sidewalls of the sloping roof.

Report researched and written by
Gale Harris
Research Department

***NOTES***

[1] Portions of this section are adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *John Pierce Designation* Report, prepared by Christopher D. Brazee (LP-2327), (New York: City of New York, 2009), 2. For more on the development of this neighborhood see also William Bridges, *Map of the City of New York and Island of Manhattan with Explanatory Remarks and References* (New York: William Bridges, 1811); Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes: 647 Fifth Avenue; A Versace Restoration for a Vanderbilt Town House," *New York Times* (April 9, 1995); Gray, "Streetscapes: 57th Street and Fifth Avenue; an 1870 Marble Row, Built in an Age of Brownstones," *New York Times* (April 7, 2002); Arthur Bartlett Maurice, *Fifth Avenue* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1918); New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; David M. Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002);77-607; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880* (New York: Monacelli Press,1999), 5; Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzolli,1983), 307-312, 350-351; M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style, 1850-1900* (New York: Rizzolli,1985), 140-151; I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1928).

[2] Stokes, v. 6, 67. The grant was later confirmed in the 1730 Montgomerie Charter.

[3] Bridges.

[4] The Commissioner's Plan of 1811, which established the principal street grid of Manhattan, borrowed heavily from Goerck's earlier surveys and essentially expanded his scheme beyond the common lands to encompass the entire island. The three existing north-south avenues were incorporated directly into the plan, and the size of the 5 acre parcels fixed the spacing of the 155 east-west streets at approximately 200 feet.

[5] "The wealthy merchants of New York at that period frequently invested their surplus in outlying property." Maurice, 288-289.

[6] There appears to be no evidence that John Mason had enslaved persons in his household.

[7] An article in the *New York Times* used the term "Hog-Town" to describe much of Midtown Manhattan south of Central Park. See "The Offal and Piggery Nuisances," *New York Times* (July 27, 1859), 1.

[8] Mary Mason Jones was the great-aunt of author Edith Wharton and was the inspiration for the character of Mrs. Manson Mingott in the latter's *The Age of Innocence*. Gray, "Streetscapes: 57th Street and Fifth Avenue."

[9] It has been hypothesized that the phrase "keeping up with the Joneses" refers to the Jones sisters. Stern, *New York 1880,* 578.

[10] William Kissam Vanderbilt erected his house at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 52nd Street, just north of his father's residence. Cornelius Vanderbilt II selected a plot several blocks further uptown at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 57th Street.

[11] New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building Docket 1342-1871, 1343-1871, and 1344-1871.

[12] New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 1202, 679.

[13] Conveyances, Liber 1424, 215.

[14] For George S. Hart see the entries on him and his brother and business partner Elias Burton Hart in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: J.T. White, 1904), v. 12, 537-38; John W. Leonard, "George S. Hart," *Who's Who in New York City and State* (4th ed., New York: L.R. Hamersley & Co., 1909), 629.; "Business Troubles," *New York Times,* Jan. 7, 1910, 16.

[15]*National Cyclopaedia*, 538.

[16]Henry Grant seems to have moved out of the house by early 1890, since the 1890 New York City, Police Census, AD 21, ED 14, lists only George Spencer Hart, Anna Hart, Anna E. Grant and a servant, Maggie Brennan, as residents of 26 West 56th Street. In 1891 *Trow's Directory* listed Grant as a residing on West 60th Street.

[17]"Died," *New York Times,* May 24, 1893, p. 5.

[18]While residing in this house Frances Hart became involved in a number of charitable organizations including the American Female Guardian Association & Home for the Friendless, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the Emma Willard Society.

[19] For these transactions see Conveyances, Sec. 5, Liber 142, 1, 2; "Conveyances, " *Real Estate Record & Guide,* July 27, 1907, 148; "Mortgages," *Real Estate Record & Guide,* July 27, 1907, 158.

[20] New York City, Department of Buildings, Alterations Docket, 2211-1907. See also "Improvements to the Henry Seligman Residence, *Real Estate Record & Guide,* Aug. 10, 1907, 214; "Alterations," *Real Estate Record & Guide,* Aug. 10, 1907, 243.

[21]Conveyances, Sec. 5, Liber 144, 482.

[22] This biography of E.H. Ferry is based on his obituaries in the *New York Times,* Apr. 5, 1940, 20 and *Hartford Courant*, Apr 6, 1940, 4; *Who's Who in New York* (New York: Who's Who Publications, 1924),435-436; *Directory of Directors in the City of New York* (New York: Directory of Directors Co., 1915/16-1917/18 *Population Schedules of the Thirteenth Census of the Unites States, 1900*, New York, New York City, Ward 9, series M653, roll 796, p. 496;"Monument to Its Integrity," *Boston Daily Globe*, May, 29, 1907. 11;"Financial," *The Independent* , Jan. 31, 1907, 287; "Hanover Vacancy Filled," *New York Times,* May 4, 1910, 13; "Hanover National Bank Changes," *Bankers*

*Magazine* 80, n. 6 (June, 1910) , 961; "Schenck to Quit Chemical National," *New York Times,* Jan. 18, 1926, 33; "Central Union Trust and Hanover, New York, to Consolidate," *Bankers Magazine* 118, n. 4 (June, 1910) , 680.

[23] For Amelia Parsons Ferry see "Mrs. E. Hayward Ferry," *New York Times,* July, 4, 1945, 13; Henry Parsons, *Parsons Family: Descendants of Cornet Joseph Parsons* (New York: Frank Allaben Genealogical Company, 1912-20), 250-251.

[24] See "Daniel Willis James," *Dictionary of American Biography;* "Arthur C. James, Rail Titan, is Dead," *New York Times,* June 5, 1941, 23; "Arthur C. James Left $34, 771,702," *New York Times,* June 26, 1941, 15; *Who's Who in New York* (New York: Who's Who Publications, 1924), 679.

[25] For the shared business interests of E.H. Ferry and A.C. James see the biographical sources listed above and "New Mining Company, *New York Tribune*, Dec. 11, 1908, 14; "Hanover National Bank, New York," *Bankers Magazine* 78, n. 2 (June, 1910), 309-10.

[26]*Census of the United States, 1930*, New York State, ED 572, roll 1567, p. 1A. The Ferrys' daughter Harriet, who had married attorney William DeForest Manice in 1913, resided in Old Westbury with her husband and children.

[27] The Ferrys moved to 944 Fifth Avenue.

[28] Following her parents' death Harriet Ferry Manice inherited their property. She sold this house but kept "Edgehill Farm," her parents' McKim, Mead & White Shingle Style cottage in Newport and purchased the James's adjoining "Beacon Hill" estate. For those properties see Ronald J. Onorato, AIA Guide to Newport (Providence: AIAri Architectural Forum, 2007), 271-272; "About Swiss Village," http://www.svffoundation.org/about/index.cfm?page=9.

[29] Portions of this biography of Harry Allan Jacobs are adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission [hereafter LPC], *Hotel Marseilles Designation* Report, prepared by Kevin McHugh (LP-1660), (New York: City of New York, 1990), 5. Additional sources include the obituaries for H.A. Jacobs in the *New York Times,* Aug. 22, 1932, 15; *New York Sun*, Aug. 22, 1923; *New York American,* Aug. 23, 1932; *American Architect & Architecture* 142 (Oct. 1932), 92; *Architecture* 66 (Oct. 1932) ; *Architectural Forum* 57(Oct. 1932), suppl. 18; *Pencil Points* 13 (Sept. 1932), 64; LPC, Research Dept., Architects Files, s.v. "Harry Allan Jacobs;" New York Public Library, "Artists Files," s.v. "Harry Allan Jacobs;" Office for Metropolitan History, *Manhattan NB Database 1900-1986* (July 15, 2009), http:/www.MetroHistory.com; "The American Academy at Rome," *New York Times,* Oct. 17, 1897, A2; "To Stable Speedway Flyers," *New York Times,* July 26, 1901, 4; "For Bad Hebrew Boys," *New York Tribune,* Aug. 24, 1906, 1; "New $1,500,000 Home for Hebrew Orphans, *New York Times,* July 19, 1908, 8.

[30] This discussion of the development of the American basement house is based on: Herbert Croly, "The Renovation of the New York Brownstone District," *Architectural Record*, 13 (June 1903), 555-571; Russell Sturgis, "The Art Gallery of the New York Streets," *Architectural Record,* 10 (July 1900), 92-112; Montgomery Schuyler, "The New New York House," *Architectural Record* 19 (February 1906), 83-103; A.D. F. Hamlin, "Architectural Art," *The Forum* 34 (July-1902-June 1903), 100; Sarah Bradford Landau, "The Row Houses of New York's West Side," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 34 (March 1975), 19-36; Stern, *New York 1880*, 568-570; Stern, *New York 1900,* 348, 364, 373, 380, 417; Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building* 2 (New York and London, 1901), 432-434; LPC, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051), (New York: City of New York, 1981).

[31] Croly, 558.

[32] Ibid, 558, 561.

[33] Hamlin, 100.

[34] Croly, 561.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Hamlin, 100.

[37] For more on the French classicist variant of the Beaux Arts style see Stern, *New York 1900,* 330-334.

[38] This discussion of Harry Allan Jacobs designs work of the early 1900s and the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry

House design is based on C. Matlack Price, "A Renaissance of City Architecture," *International Studio* 45 (1911), xcvi-xcviii; C. Matlack Price, "A Renaissance in Commercial Architecture," *Architectural Record,* 31 (May 1912), 449-469; "Some Current Work of Harry Allan Jacobs, Architect," *New York Architect*, Aug. 1911, 165-166; "The City House to Date: The Residence of J.N. Herbert, Esq.," *Architectural Record* 33 (Mar. 1913), 205-216; "Unique Residence Façade," *New York Times,* Aug. 30, 1908,10; *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report,* v. 1, 323, 361, 689, V. 2, 1269-69.

[39] Russell Sturgis, "Parisian Doorways of the Eighteenth Century," *Architectural Record* 19 (Feb. 1906), 125.

[40] "Unique Residence Façade," 10.

[41] A photograph of this house is included in Columbia University, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Dept. of Drawings & Archives, "Harry Allan Jacobs, Photographs, c. 1910-1930, Collection."

[42] "Some Current Work of Harry Allan Jacobs, Architect," 166.

[43] This section on the publishing career of Albert and Charles Boni is based on Peter Dwonkoski ed. *American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900-1980*, *Trade & Paperback, Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 46 (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 19860, 54-58; Charles Egleston, ed. *The House of Boni & Liveright, 1917-1933: A Documentary Volume, Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 288 (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 2004)"Charles Boni, Publisher, Dies, Leader in Literary Movement, *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1969, 27; Herbert Mitgang, "Albert Boni, Publisher, Dies; Founder of Boni & Liveright," *New York Times*, Aug. 1, 1981,14.

[44] The line was subsequently sold to one of the firm's investors, Harry Scherman (1887-1969), who went on to found the Book of the Month Club.

[45] Horace Liveright sold the Modern Library to former Boni & Liveright editor Bennett Cerf who used the imprint as the cornerstone for his firm Random House.

[46] New York Telephone, Address Directories, Manhattan, 1935-1945.

[47] On the early history of the Readex Corporation see Harry Gilroy, "Microfilms Give Boni New Career," *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 1965,51; Jacob Deschin, "Reference Source: Bibliography of Photo Literature Published," *New York Times,* May 5, 1963, 151; "Microprint to Film 60,000 A.E.C. Papers," *New York Times*, June 3, 1957, 14; Readex, "Who We Are. What We Do," @ http:// www.readex.com/readex/index.cfm.

[48] East Side Stores are Sold by Bank, *New York Times,* Sep. 18, 1945, 34; Conveyances, Liber 4378, 86; Liber 4390, 127.

[49]"Rumanians Lease Building," *New York Times,* Jun 18, 1947, 44.

[50] "Buyer to Improve Site on West Side, *New York Times*, July 24, 1950, 36.

[51]"After-Hours Club Raided by Hogan," *New York Times*, Feb 11, 1956, 17.

[52] Ibid.

[53] A few years later, Mauro, an associate of Lucky Luciano, was convicted in a major narcotics smuggling case. See "Club Pleads Guilty, *New York Times*, May 22, 1957, 31; "Bottle Club Fined $500," *New York Times*, June 12, 1957, 28;"12 Arrested Here in Narcotics Ring," *New York Times*, May 18, 1961; "3 Seized in Spain in Narcotics Ring," *New York Times*,, Jan 24,1962; "Luciano's Links to Underworld Investigated by Italian Agents," *New York Times*, Jan. 28, 1962, 66; "Luciano is Linked to Conspiracy Here," *New York Times*, Feb. 3, 1962, 17; "11 Get Long Terms in Narcotics Case," *New York Times*, Feb. 14, 1962, 42; "Four Plead Guilty in N.Y. as Narcotics Smugglers," Mar. 5, 1963, 5.

[54] Conveyances Liber 4980, 450; Liber 5014, 48; "Contract Signed for 56th St. Site," *New York Times*, Sep. 15, 1956, 36; "Manhattan Transfers," *New York Times*, Oct. 22, 1956, 54; "Decorator Acquires Building," *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1956, 75.

[55]"Bates Merger Set with Martinall Co.," *New York Times*, Jan. 24, 1966, 70.

[56] Lester Martin was president and chairman of Windsor Industries, formerly the Consolidated Textile Company, Inc. He

also controlled the Mojud Company, manufacturers of lingerie and hosiery, and the Bates Manufacturing Company, producers of wool and cotton textiles, and held a major interest in the Columbia motion picture studio. For many years he owned a house in Seagate and was a major force in Democratic Party politics in Brooklyn. See " Lester Martin, Industrialist," *New York Times*, Apr. 25, 1959, 21; *Who Was Who,* 3 (Chicago: Marquis, Who's Who, 1960), 558; Leo Egan, "Kefauver Helped by Harriman Aide," *New York Times*, Apr. 18, 1956, 19; Robert E. Bedingield, "Court Asked to Act on 22-Million Will, *New York Times*, July 20, 1961, 24; Robert E. Bedingield, "Indian Head Plans Acquisition of the Bates Manufacturing Co.," *New York Times*, Nov. 26, 1959; "Bates Mfg. Co," *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1961,47.

[57] Nan Robertson,"Scaasi a Diminutive Man, But Thinks in Big Terms, *New York Times*, June 10, 1959, 40;"Designer Buys House," *New York Times*, June 17,1959,57; "Office Tour Set; Proceeds to Aid Designers' Fund *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1959,52.

[58] "American Collections," *New York Times,* June 11, 1959, 38; "American Collections: Ebullient Designer with Sense of Drama," *New York Times,* June 10, 1960, 34; "American Collections: Scaasi Designs Draw Crowd's Bravos," *New York Times,* Nov. 11, 1960, 26.

[59] "Mrs. Roosevelt Honored By Martin Foundation," *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 1965, 20.

[60] For the Dessoff Choirs see "Five Music Groups Holding Auditions," *New York Times,* Jan 30, 1966, 74; *The Dessoff Choirs: About Us Archives*, http://www.dessoff.org/new/ about_us/. For *The Eleanor Roosevelt Story* see http:www.answers.com/topic/the-eleanor-roosevelt-story-1.

[61] "$50,000 To Be Given For New Film Group," *New York Times,* Oct. 5, 1968, 40; "History of AFI," at http://www.afi.com/about/history.aspx.

[62] "Center Helping Students Select a New York College," *New York Times,* Mar. 6, 1977, 48; See also "Information Center Opened," *Amsterdam News*, Feb. 26, 1977, A8; Simon Anekwe, "Scholarship Program," *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 15, 1981,37; Conveyances, Reel 265, 263

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House, a highly intact former townhouse, remodeled in 1907-08 by the noted architect Harry Allan Jacobs for investment banker Isaac Seligman and long occupied by banker E. Hayward Ferry and his wife Amelia Parsons Ferry, is an exceptionally fine example of the restrained Neo-French Classic variant of the Beaux Arts Style and forms part of "Bankers Row" a group of five residences built for bankers on this block of West 56th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues; that this house was originally constructed in 1871 to the designs of the well-known New York architects D. & J. Jardine and was occupied from 1880 to 1907 by the family of George Spencer Hart, a leading wholesaler of dairy products, who also served on the board of several banks; that Jacobs's 1907-08 alterations reflected turn-of-the-twentieth-century architectural trends in their incorporation of an American basement plan and an individually-designed limestone façade and is distinguished by its use of unadorned planar wall surfaces, nuanced handling of solids and voids, carefully balanced proportions, and crisp refined detailing; that the design includes such noteworthy features as the elegantly carved wreath looped over a lion's head in the recessed tympanum above the main entry, paired colossal pilasters set off by narrow bands of water-leaf-and-dart molding, tripartite windows, which retain their historic wood sash, and setback upper stories articulated as a two-story attic crowned by a mansard roof with dormers; that Jacobs, who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, won critical acclaim in the early decades of the twentieth century for his restrained and elegant residences, of which this house is an outstanding example; that E. Hayward Ferry was a prominent businessman, who served as first vice president of Hanover Bank from 1910 to 1929, and occupied this house with his wife Amelia Parsons Ferry from 1908 to 1935; that from 1935 to 1945 this building was the headquarters of the distinguished publishing firm of Albert & Charles Boni; that it was here that Albert Boni founded the Readex Corporation and began his first experiments with microform printing leading to a revolution in information technology; that from 1959 to 1964, this building was the salon, workshop, and home of the noted fashion designer Arnold Scaasi; that in 1965 it became the headquarters of the Martin Foundation and was dedicated to Eleanor Roosevelt; that from 1965 to 1972 it housed the offices of the Martin Foundation, the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation and Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Cancer Fund and non-profit cultural organizations such as the newly established American Film Institute; that in the mid-to-late 1970s the building was occupied by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities; that in 1988 it became the New York City headquarters and studios of the Spanish Broadcasting System and continues to serve in that capacity; that in an area today characterized by tall office buildings, this five-story townhouse forms part of a unique small-scale streetscape that was once typical of the neighborhood and is now rare in Midtown.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House, 26 West 56th Street, Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 54 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Frederick Bland, Stephen F. Byrns, Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
26 West 56th Street, Manhattan
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009*

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House, 26 West 56th Street, Manhattan
New York City Dept. of Taxes Photo, c.1940
*Photo Source: NYC, Dept of Records & Information Services, Municipal Archives*

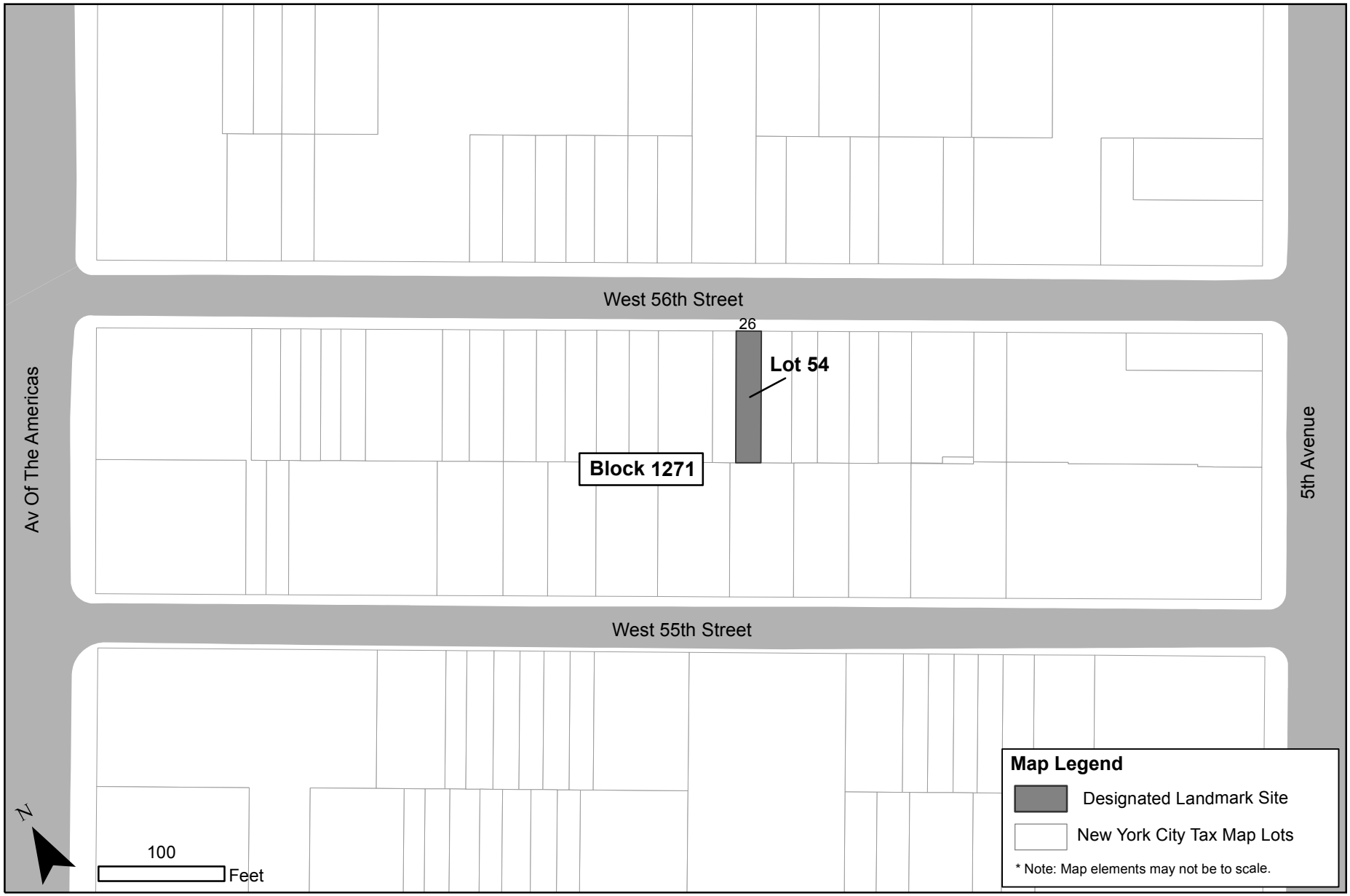
E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
26 West 56th Street, Manhattan
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009*

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
26 West 56th Street, Manhattan
Ground story
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009*

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
Second-story windows
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008*

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
Third-story windows
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008*

E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House
Upper Stories
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008*




E. HAYWARD AND AMELIA PARSONS FERRY HOUSE (LP-2330), 26 West 56th Street.
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 54.

Designated: November 10, 2009

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: November 10, 2009.