

MINNIE E. YOUNG HOUSE, 19 East 54th Street, Manhattan
Built: 1899- 1900; architect Hiss & Weeks

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1290, Lot 14

On September 13, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Minnie E. Young House. The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. At that hearing four people testified in favor of the proposed designation of the Minnie E. Young House, including a representative of the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, The Municipal Art Society of New York, and The Commission also received a letter in support of designation from State Senator Brad Hoylman. The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) submitted written testimony in opposition to designation.

Summary

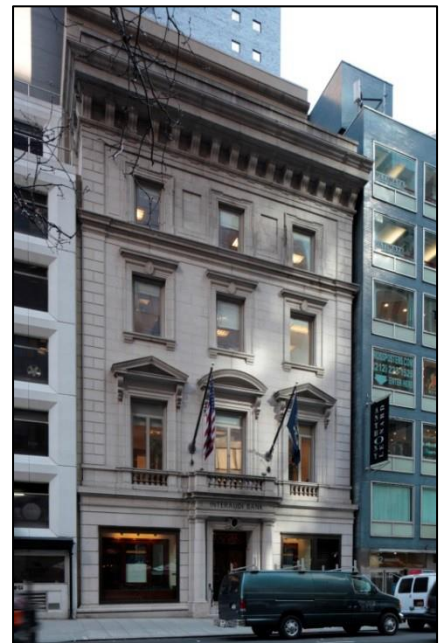
The Minnie Young House is a distinguished Renaissance Revival style townhouse designed by the prominent architectural firm of Hiss & Weekes. One of the firm’s earliest works, it was built in 1899-1900. Designed by classically-trained architects, the house reflects the upper class tastes and preferences of wealthy New Yorkers during the early 1900s. The house represents the period, prior to the construction of Grand Central Terminal, when the area around Fifth Avenue in East Midtown was a prestigious residential enclave.

The townhouse was erected in 1899-1900 for Minnie E. Young, widow of stockbroker Albert Young. Minnie Young was one of five siblings who had inherited a fortune from their uncle, American Tobacco Company founder-Richmond real estate developer Lewis Ginter. Her husband Albert was a partner in the successful brokerage house of Arents & Young with her brother George Arents, who also served as treasurer of the American Tobacco Company.

Paris-trained architect Philip Hiss (1857-1940) and H. Hobart Weekes (1867-1950), established their partnership in 1899 and practiced together until 1933. Their firm was particularly noted for its Italian Renaissance Revival style designs including the Gotham Hotel (now Peninsula Hotel) at Fifth Avenue and 54th Street (1902-05) and Belnord Apartments, 201-225 West 86th Street (1908-09), both designated New York City Landmarks.

The Young House features a 40-foot-wide granite facade with a monumental entrance portico, molded window enframements including pedimented window surrounds and balustrades at the second story, rusticated piers, recessed panels, elaborate belt courses and a boldly projecting stone cornice. Soon after its completion, architectural critic Russell Sturgis praised the Young House for the simplicity, fine proportions, and “general dignity” of its design.

By the 1910s this area in East Midtown rapidly changed from a prestigious residential enclave to a bustling business center. Reflecting those changing uses, in 1920 the Young Residence was converted for commercial use by architect Mott B. Schmidt for the fashionable dressmaking firm Lucille Ltd.,



headed by Lady Duff Gordon. Later occupants of the Minnie Young House were antiques and historic-interiors dealer Arthur S. Vernay (1923-1940) and the national headquarters for the English Speaking Union (1940-1957). In 1962, 19 East 54th Street became headquarters of the Kenneth Beauty Salon, whose owner, Kenneth Battelle (April 19, 1927- May 12, 2013) was the first “star” hairdresser credited with creating Jacqueline Kennedy’s signature bouffant hair style in the 1960s. In 1993, the Minnie Young House became the New York headquarters of the U. S. subsidiary Bank Audi (USA) (renamed InterAudi Bank in 2003).

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Description

The Minnie E. Young house is a six-story townhouse with a 40-foot wide granite façade on the north side of East 54th Street.

Front (south) façade

Historic: Five-story, three-bay, Renaissance Revival style townhouse with granite water table and bead molding at base; rusticated first-floor façade; bronze encased display windows flank granite steps at central entrance, central portico entrance featuring flanking Doric engaged columns, and carved stone enframements with cartouche above slightly recessed main entrance. Molded window enframements featuring scrolled bracketed, pedimented window surrounds, including balustrades at the second story, rusticated piers at second and third floors, support a molded stone cornice that acts as sills for windows at the fourth floor with label molding and flanked by recessed panels; a boldly projecting bracketed stone cornice.

Alterations: Ground-floor windows enlarged; service door added in the 1920s; fifth floor added in in the 1960s, and doors and windows replaced due to a fire in 1990 that partially gutted the building causing extensive damage to the interior and the rear façade at first and second floors; addition extending approximately 19 feet to the rear and; fifth floor enlarged and sixth story added in 1993. Parged brick and concrete addition is visible at sixth floor with small windows and stone cornice.

East and West façades

West façade: Partially obscured by adjacent property from first to fourth floors.

Alterations: Parged brick and concrete addition is visible at sixth floor with small windows and stone cornice.

East façade: Partially obscured by adjacent property.

SITE HISTORY

Evolution of East Midtown¹

Pre-Grand Central Era

In 1831, the recently-established New York & Harlem Railroad signed an agreement with New York State permitting the operation of steam locomotives on Fourth (now Park) Avenue, from 23rd Street to the Harlem River. Five years later, in 1836, several important street openings occurred in East Midtown. These included 42nd Street, Lexington Avenue and Madison Avenue. Initially, trains ran at grade, sharing Fourth Avenue with pedestrians and vehicles. In 1856, locomotives were banned below 42nd Street -- the current site of a maintenance barn and fuel lot. Though rail passengers continued south by horse car, this decision set the stage for East Midtown to become an important transit hub.

Cornelius Vanderbilt acquired control of New York & Harlem, Hudson River, and the New York Central Railroads in 1863-67. Under his direction, a single terminal for the three railroads was planned

and built, known as Grand Central Depot (1868-71, demolished). It was a large structure, consisting of an L-shaped head-house inspired by the Louvre in Paris, with entrances on 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, as well as a 652-foot-long train shed. The area immediately north, mainly between 45th and 49th Streets, served as a train yard. Traversed by pedestrian and vehicular bridges, this busy facility occupied an irregularly-shaped site that extended from Lexington to Madison Avenue.

The earliest surviving buildings in midtown are residences in Murray Hill, directly south of 42nd Street. An 1847 covenant stipulated that all houses be built with brick and stone and many handsome ones survive, particularly east of Park Avenue. Following the Civil War, residential development continued up Fifth Avenue, transforming the area between St. Patrick's Cathedral (1853-88) and Central Park (begun 1857, both are New York City Landmarks). Though most of the large mansions – many owned by members of the Vanderbilt family – have been lost, other impressive residences survive on the side streets, between Park and Fifth Avenues. New York City Landmarks in the East 50s include: The Villard Houses (1883-85), William & Ada Moore House (1898-1900), Morton & Nellie Plant House (1903-05), and the Fisk-Harkness House (1871/1906).

Terminal City

In 1902, 15 railroad passengers were killed in a rear-end collision in the Park Avenue Tunnel, near 56th Street. In response to this tragic accident, William J. Wilgus, chief engineer of the New York Central Railroad, proposed that not only should steam locomotives be eliminated from Manhattan but that the terminal be expanded and completely rebuilt. The city agreed and Grand Central Terminal (a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark) was completed in February 1913.

Wilgus envisioned the terminal as part of a city-with-the-city, knitted together by more than two dozen buildings constructed above the newly-submerged rail tracks. Faced with tan brick and limestone, these handsome neo-classical style buildings formed an understated backdrop to the monumental Beaux-Arts style terminal. A key example is the New York Central Building, a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark. Erected by the railroad in 1927-29, it stands directly above the tracks and incorporates monumental archways that direct automobile traffic towards the Park Avenue Viaduct (1917-19, a designated New York City Landmark). Grand Central Palace, a 13-story neo-classical style convention hall and exhibition building on the east side of Lexington Avenue between 46th Street and 47th Street, built by the Grand Central Railroad to the designs of Warren & Wetmore working in collaboration with Reed & Stem in 1910, became New York's principal venue for trade fairs and corporate displays.

The new terminal and subway attracted considerable commercial development to East Midtown, especially near 42nd Street, the original route of the IRT subway. Most of these buildings date to the 1910s and 1920s. In contrast to the neo-classical, City Beautiful, aesthetics that shaped Terminal City, these distinctive skyscrapers frequently incorporate unusual terra-cotta ornamentation inspired by medieval (and later, Art Deco) sources. Memorable examples include: the Bowery Savings Bank Building (1921-23, 1931-33) and the Chanin Building (1927-29, both designated New York City Landmarks).

In 1918, subway service was extended up Lexington Avenue, north of 42nd Street. Though Terminal City was planned with several hotels, such as the Biltmore and Commodore (both have been re-clad), more rooms were needed. A substantial number were located on Lexington Avenue, between 47th and 50th Streets, near the Grand Central Palace, which brought thousands of travelers to the area for trade fairs and events such as Westminster Kennel Club Show. Among the hotels that catered to this business were the Lexington and later the Shelton.

Post-World War II Era

Following the end of the Second World War, the New York Central Railroad struggled with debt and entered a significant period of decline. In response, it began to terminate lot leases and sell off real estate properties. The impact of the situation was most powerfully felt on Park Avenue. Apartment buildings and hotels were quickly replaced by an influx of glassy office towers, with such pioneering mid-20th century Modern works as Lever House (1949-52, a New York City Landmark) and the

Seagram Building (1954-56, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark). The success of these and other projects helped make Park Avenue (and East Midtown) one of Manhattan's most prestigious corporate addresses.

East 54th Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues²

The creation of Central Park, which began in 1857, combined with the northward growth of New York City on Manhattan Island, helped the area develop into a middle-class residential district, while pushing established residents of the existing shanty towns farther northward. During the building boom that followed the Civil War, four-story brick and brownstone-faced row houses were built on the streets of the West 40s and 50s, while larger mansions were erected along Fifth Avenue. Beginning in 1879, the Vanderbilt family built several mansions on the avenue. They had such an influence on the development of the neighborhood that the ten blocks off of Fifth Avenue, south of Central Park gradually became known as "Vanderbilt Row," one of the most prestigious residential districts in late-19th century New York. 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.³ The neighborhood was also home to many titans of industry who would also build lavish townhomes. John D. Sr. and John D. Jr. Rockefeller resided at Nos. 4 and 10 West 54th Street, and banker Phillip Lehman at No. 7 West 54th Street.⁴

Historic maps indicate that the immediate area developed sporadically from the 1850s onward; it was not until the late 1870s that residential development intensified, and by 1886 modest brownstone row houses lined the north and south sides of East 54th Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues.⁵ As the blocks between Fifth and Madison Avenues became one of the most exclusive residential neighborhoods in Manhattan elite New Yorkers built lavish townhomes on the block. William Earle Dodge Stokes builder of the Ansonia also built No. 4 E. 54th St., and financier William H. Moore purchased the property in 1900 and lived there until his death in 1923.⁶ Textile merchant, John R. Platt lived at No. 7 East 54th Street, and brewery owner Childe H. Childs lived at No. 8 East 54th Street.⁷

In the years following World War I, the mansions of Fifth Avenue and the lavish residences of the adjacent East and West 50s side streets began to give way to commercial and apartment house development. Seeking a more exclusive location, wealthy families moved farther north to the Upper East Side. Most of the townhouses that survived were altered for commercial use on the ground floors and divided into apartments above; by the 1920s and 1930s, most houses on East 54th Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues were occupied by those working in the antique interior decorator and garment trades.

Design and Construction

In 1899, four years after the sudden death of her husband Albert, and in the same year her eldest son Albert M. died, Minnie E. Young purchased two lots on the north side of East 54th street, numbers 13-1/2 and 14, from John W. and Elizabeth Kearny, which combined measured 40 feet wide by 100 feet deep.⁸ Young hired architects Phillip H. Hiss & H. Hobart Weeks to design a home that would reflect her position and social status. For their design of the Young house Hiss & Weeks chose to work in the familiar, classically-inspired Italian Renaissance Revival style.

The Minnie E. Young house is an example of Hiss & Weeks skillful adaptation of an Italian Renaissance facade to the requirements of a New York townhouse in which the sober and the elegant are successfully combined. From the mid-to-late 1890 to the 1930s, the Italian Renaissance Revival style was a popular style for New York City buildings. The design of the building is based on 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance palazzos with the elevation of windows indicating the hierarchy of interior spaces from the public second floor parlor with its pedimented surrounds to the private third and fourth floor rooms for personal use with their simpler molded surrounds. Typical to the style, the four-story townhouse incorporates classical details such as a monumental entrance portico, different molded window enframements at each floor, elaborate belt courses between stories, and a massive cornice.

The Minnie Young House's granite façade is also in keeping with the Italian Renaissance Revival style, which were almost always masonry, and usually stone.⁹ The house has a monumental appearance on the block, created not only by its generous size compared to houses built on the standard 25-by-100-foot New York City lot, but also the rich carving and classical detailing. In his review of turn of the century row houses on East and West 54th Streets, architecture critic Russell Sturgis praised the Young House for its simplicity, proportions and "general dignity of the façade."¹⁰

Hiss & Weekes were not only aware of Italian Renaissance prototypes in Italy, but were also keenly aware of contemporary buildings in New York by McKim, Mead & White, which were altering the appearance of the city. Weekes was employed by McKim, Mead & White, from 1886 to 1899, during which time the firm produced its most important Renaissance-inspired buildings. McKim, Mead & White's lasting fame and influence is associated with the revival of Renaissance styles. The Villard Houses (1882-85) (a designated New York City Landmark) and the Boston Public Library (1887-95) are among two of the most important monuments that reintroduced the Renaissance style to America and both were undertaken while Weekes was with the firm serving as draftsman and designer.¹¹

American Basement Plan Design¹²

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, 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 row house 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,"¹³ 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.¹⁴ This trend was reflected not only in the treatment of reconstructed row houses but also in new rows erected by speculative builders "three or four at a time, each house [having] the distinction of an individual design."¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ The American Basement plan took expression in a variety of architectural styles, including Colonial Revival, Beaux-Arts, and Renaissance Revival. Fine examples of the American basement plan include: No. 4 East 54th Street, No. 7 West 54th Street, and No. 19 East 54th Street.

Minnie Edith [Arents] Young¹⁷

Minnie Edith Arents Young (1855-1931), widow of stockbroker, Albert Young (1845-1899) married in 1874, and had three children: two boys, Albert M. (1875-1899), and Lewis Ginter Young (1882-?) and a daughter, Edna Hoyt Young (1881-1952). Minnie Young was one of five siblings who inherited a fortune from their uncle, American Tobacco Company co-founder and Richmond real estate developer Lewis Ginter. Her husband, Albert, was a partner in the successful brokerage house of Arents & Young with her brother George Arents, who also served as treasurer of the American Tobacco Company. After returning from Richmond, Virginia George lived with his sister for a short time at 19 East 54th Street. He

later became an avid collector and benefactor of the New York Public Library.¹⁸ Mrs. Young resided at 19 East 54th Street with her eldest sister Joan Arents (1835-1923) her son, Lewis G. Young and several servants, from 1900 until 1920.¹⁹ In November 1920, Mrs. Minnie Young moved to 420 Park Avenue retaining ownership of the property on East 54th Street until her death in 1931.²⁰

Phillip Hanson Hiss (1857-1940) & H. Hobart Weekes (1867- 1950)²¹

The firm of Hiss & Weekes was formed in 1899. Philip Hiss (b.1857-d.1940) was born in Baltimore and received his early education there. Later, he traveled to Europe and continued his studies in Paris. On his return to this country he settled in New York and established an architectural partnership with H. Hobart Weekes. Weekes, a native New Yorker, was educated at the Trinity Church School and later traveled through the United States, England, France, Italy and Greece studying architecture and sculpture. Soon after his return to New York in 1886, he joined the firm of McKim Mead & White and remained with them until 1899 when he joined with Hiss. The firm of Hiss & Weekes continued in practice for 34 years producing a number of buildings in the city including: Gotham Hotel (1902-05) an imposing Italian Renaissance Revival style that hotel recalls the golden age of luxury (a designated New York City Landmark); the Belnord Apartments (1908-09), a massive Italian Renaissance Revival style apartment house on West 86th Street (a designated New York City Landmark); and the handsome Beaux-Arts townhouses at 6 and 8 East 65th Street (in the Upper East Side Historic District). Outside the city, other buildings by the firm include the Church of Bethesda by the Sea in Palm Beach, Florida, the Elizabeth Arden Building in Chicago, and private homes on Long Island and in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Later History

After World War I, the neighborhood changed rapidly from a residential neighborhood to commercial area. In November 1920, Mrs. Minnie Young moved to 420 Park Avenue retaining ownership of the property on East 54th Street, and entered into a business lease with Lady Duff Gordon, dressmaker to the “wealthy and famous.” Her firm Lucille’s was credited with “bringing freedom and grace back to women’s dress after the Victorian Era.”²² After extensive renovations to the first floor interior, including the installation of show windows on the ground floor, Lucille’s opened for business.²³

In 1933 Arthur S. Vernay (May 11, 1877- October 25, 1960) a noted English art and antiques dealer, decorator, big game hunter and naturalist purchased 19 East 54th Street, prior to that he leased the property for eight years.²⁴ Vernay started his antiques shop in 1906, and sold antiques and decorative arts to a number of influential New Yorkers including Sir Charles Carrick Allom, Consuelo Vanderbilt, Benjamin Altman, Solomon R. Guggenheim, as well as leading art dealerships such as M. Knoedler & Co. and Tiffany Studios.²⁵ Vernay officially retired in 1941, but the business continued in existence with Stephen J. Jussel, J. Gordon Irving, and J.L. van den Broeck as officers.²⁶

The English Speaking Union purchased the building in 1943 to serve as the national headquarters. The English Speaking Union in the United States was organized after World War I, “to strengthen friendly relations of English speaking peoples.”²⁷ The Union used the townhouse as offices, housing the United Nations Officers Club, Committee for Overseas Children, as well as War Relief Workroom. The Union sold the property in 1956. The property was sold to Henry Payson that year, however a lengthy court battle would not resolve the sale until 1958.²⁸

In 1962, 19 East 54th Street became headquarters of the Kenneth Beauty Salon, whose owner, Kenneth Battelle (April 19, 1927- May 12, 2013) was the first “star” hairdresser credited with creating Jacqueline Kennedy’s signature bouffant hair style in the 1960s.²⁹ Other clients included Marilyn Monroe, Happy Rockefeller, Brooke Astor, Lucille Ball, and Katharine Graham.³⁰ In 1961, Mr. Battelle became the first and only hairdresser to receive the Coty American Fashion Critics Award, given from 1943 to 1984. New York Times reporter Enid Nemy declared in a 1985 article that Mr. Battelle had become “more than fashionable -- although he was still that. He was an institution.”³¹ A fire in 1991 destroyed most of the rear second and third floors and a subsequent dispute concerning the lease agreement held the restoration in limbo for over a year. In 1991 Emery Roth & Sons designed the restoration of 19 East 54th Street, which

included expanding the building into the rear side yard at the first through fifth floors, as well as an expansion of the fifth floor and an addition of the sixth floor.³²

In 1993, the Minnie Young House became the headquarters of Bank Audi (USA) (renamed InterAudi Bank in 2003).³³

Conclusion

Today, this area of East Midtown still includes a few scattered examples of 1870s brownstone row houses, elegantly designed town houses from the early 1900s, low-rise apartment buildings, and small commercial establishments. But, by-and-large, it has also been transformed into the city's central business district with large office buildings, hotels, and high rise residential towers. Designed by classically-trained architects, the distinguished Renaissance Revival style house is townhouse reflects the upper class tastes and preferences of wealthy New Yorkers during the early 1900s, when the area around Fifth Avenue in East Midtown was a prestigious residential enclave.

Report prepared by
Theresa C. Noonan
Evolution of Midtown East
prepared by Mathew Postal
Research Department

Notes

¹ This section is mostly based on designation reports prepared by members of the research staff at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Also see Kurt C. Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal* (John Hopkins University Press, 2003), Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Rizzoli Books, 1983) and Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between Two World Wars* (New York Rizzoli Books, 1987).

² Portions of this section are adapted from: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *E. Hayward and Amelia Parsons Ferry House* Designation Report, (LP-2330), (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Gale Harris, 3; LPC, *John Pierce Residence* Designation Report, (LP-2327), (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Christopher D. Brazee,

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).

³ 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."

⁴ J. W. Hartz, *Phillips Elite Directory of Private Families for New York City*, (New York: W. Phillips & Co. (N.Y.) 1899-1900, 1902-03, 1907, 1909, 1913, 1915, 1917, 1921; *Dau's Greater New York Blue Book, 1899-1900, 1902-1903*.

⁵ *Plan of New York City, from the Battery to Spuyten Duyvil Creek* (New York: Mathew Dripps, 1867); *Atlas of the*

City of New York, borough of Manhattan (New York: G.W. Bromley & E. Robinson, 1879 and 1891); *Atlas of the City of New York: embracing all territory within its corporate limits from official records, private plans & actual surveys* (New

York: E. Robinson & R.H. Pidgeon, 1885); *Atlas of the City of New York: embracing all territory within its corporate limits from official records, private plans & actual surveys*, (George W. and Walter S. Bromley 1911).

⁶ William H. Moore founder of U. S. Steel would purchase the house in 1902 and Mrs. Ada Moore lived there until her death in 1955; "A Mansion by Stanford White Is a U. S.-Israel Culture Center", *New York Times*, January 23, 1966.

⁷ No. 57 East 54th St was home to real estate lawyer George F. Butterworth and later leased to Cletmet C. Moore grandson of Clement Clark Moore, John Pomeroy Townsend, President of Knickerbocker Trust lived at No. 53 East 54th Street, coal

merchant John K. Olyphant lived at No. 59 East 54th St. Information adapted from: *Phillips Elite Directory: 1899-1900, 1902-1903; Dau's Greater New York Blue Book, 1907, 1909, 1913, 1915, 1917, and 1921*.

⁸ See New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building Permit No. 340-1899; New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber No. 58, Liber page 299.

⁹ Information in this section adapted from: Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture, An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York:W. Norton & Company, 1998) 186; <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/late-19th-century-revival.html>.

¹⁰ “The Art Gallery of the New York Streets,” *Architectural Record*, 10 (July 1900), 92-112.

¹¹ Portions of this section are adapted from: LPC, *Gotham Hotel (now Peninsula Hotel)*, (LP-1697) (New York: City of New York, June 6, 1989), prepared by James T. Dillon, 2.

¹² 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).

¹³ Hamlin, 100.

¹⁴ Croly, 561.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hamlin, 100.

¹⁷ Information adapted from: Minnie Edith Arents, http://trees.ancestrylibrary.com/tree/69892593/person/36209755627?ssrc=&ml_rpos=8; <http://www.lewisginter.org/where-did-lewis-ginters-money-go/>, accessed on December 10, 2015.

¹⁸ Information adapted from: http://www.vanderbiltcupraces.com/blog/article/driver_profile_george_arents_jr;

¹⁹ Information adapted from: 1920; Census Place: *Manhattan Assembly District 15, New York, New York*; Roll: *T625_1212*; Page: *5B*; Enumeration District: *1051*; Image: *586*

²⁰ Information adapted from: 1930 United States Federal Census; at the time of her death Minnie E. Young’s estate was appraised at a net worth of \$1,147,113, and her property at 19 East 54th Street was valued at \$400,00 dollars; “E. D. Adams Left \$ 1,189,012 Estate,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1933.

²¹ Philip Hiss obituary, *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1940, H. Hobart Weekes obituary, *New York Times* Dec. 18, 1950.

²² “Lady Duff Gordon Style Expert Dies,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1935, 17.

²³ “Commercial Leases,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1920, 24,” “Lucile LTD. 19 East 54th Street”, *New York Times*, March 26, 1922, 20.

²⁴ “Antique Firm Buys East 54th Street House,” *New York Times*, April 6, 1933, 34.

²⁵ Frick Collection, *Archives related to: Arthur S. Vernay Incorporated*, at

<http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/browse/browserecord2.php?-action=browse&-recid=7420>, accessed on November 19, 2015;

http://findingaid.winterthur.org/html/HTML_Finding_Aids/COL0739.htm.

²⁶ http://findingaid.winterthur.org/html/HTML_Finding_Aids/COL0739.htm, accessed on January 8, 2016.

²⁷ “60,000 Gift Aids Reality Purchase” *New York Times*, September 15, 1943, 48.

²⁸ New York State Supreme Court: Henry Payson v. English Speaking Union, Rep. *New York Law Journal* V. 139, (June 10, 1958), 7.

²⁹ “Hairdresser Using Skills for Charity, Kenneth Waiting to Open New Salon,” *New York Times*, October 10, 1962, 54.

³⁰ “Hairdresser Counts the Famous Among His Clients,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1961, 38.

³¹ “Enduring Style: In catering to fashionable women, Kenneth has become a New York institution in hair design.” *New York Times*, November 3, 1985, SM90.

³² “19 East 54th Street, an 1890 Granite Front Phoenix,” *New York Times*, September 29, 1991, R1.

³³ “Foreign Bank Pays Premium for Smart Address,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1993, R13; Audi Bank renamed in May 2003; Information adapted from: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/bank-audi-usa-renamed-interaudi-bank-to-reflect-heritage->

[and-focus-on-interpersonal-international-and-interactive-client-service-55470997.html](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/bank-audi-usa-renamed-interaudi-bank-to-reflect-heritage-and-focus-on-interpersonal-international-and-interactive-client-service-55470997.html), accessed on January 11, 2013.

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 Minnie E. Young House has special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as a part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, that the Minnie Young House is a distinguished Renaissance Revival style townhouse designed by the prominent architectural firm of Hiss & Weekes, that this is one of the firm's earliest works, it was built in 1899-1900, that it was designed by classically-trained architects, the house reflects the upper class tastes and preferences of wealthy New Yorkers during the early 1900s, that the house represents the period, prior to the construction of Grand Central Terminal, when the area around Fifth Avenue in East Midtown was a prestigious residential enclave, that the townhouse was erected in 1899-1900 for Minnie E. Young, widow of stockbroker Albert Young, that Minnie Young was one of five siblings who had inherited a fortune from their uncle, American Tobacco Company founder-Richmond real estate developer Lewis Ginter, that Her husband Albert was a partner in the successful brokerage house of Arents & Young with her brother George Arents, who also served as treasurer of the American Tobacco Company, that Paris-trained architect Philip Hiss (1857-1940) and H. Hobart Weekes (1867-1950), established their partnership in 1899 and practiced together until 1933, that their firm was particularly noted for its Italian Renaissance Revival style designs including the Gotham Hotel (now Peninsula Hotel) at Fifth Avenue and 54th Street (1902-05) and Belnord Apartments, 201-225 West 86th Street (1908-09), both designated New York City Landmarks, that the Young House features a 40-foot-wide granite facade with a monumental entrance portico, molded window enframements including pedimented window surrounds and balustrades at the second story, rusticated piers, recessed panels, elaborate belt courses and a boldly projecting stone cornice, that soon after its completion, architectural critic Russell Sturgis praised the Young House for the simplicity, fine proportions, and "general dignity" of its design, and that by the 1910s this area in East Midtown rapidly changed from a prestigious residential enclave to a bustling business center, that reflecting those changing uses, in 1920 the Young Residence was converted for commercial use by architect Mott B. Schmidt for the fashionable dressmaking firm Lucille Ltd., headed by Lady Duff Gordon, that later occupants of the Minnie Young House were antiques and historic-interiors dealer Arthur S. Vernay (1923-1940) and the national headquarters for the English Speaking Union (1940-1957). In 1962, 19 East 54th Street became headquarters of the Kenneth Beauty Salon, whose owner, Kenneth Battelle (April 19, 1927- May 12, 2013) was the first "star" hairdresser credited with creating Jacqueline Kennedy's signature bouffant hair style in the 1960s, and that in 1993, In 1993, the Minnie Young House became the headquarters of Bank Audi (USA) (renamed InterAudi Bank in 2003).

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 Minnie E. Young House Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 1290, Lot 14 as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen,
Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson,
Adi Shamir-Baron, Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Photo: Sarah R. Moses, 2016



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Addition
Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Main entrance
Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Secondary entrance
Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Photo: c. 1944



Minnie E. Young House
19 East 54th Street
Photo: Sarah R. Moses, 2016

