

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

OMB NO. 1024-0018, NPS FORM

DEC 8 1989

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets. Type all entries.

1. Name of Property 5-15 West 54th St. Residences

historic name

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 5-15 W. 54th St. | | not for publication

city, town New York | | vicinity

state New York code NY county NY code 061 zip code 10019

3. Classification

Ownership of property	Category	Number of resources within property	
[X] private	[ ] building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
[ ] public-local	[X] district	5	buildings
[ ] public-State	[ ] site	0	sites
[ ] public-Federal	[ ] structure	0	structures
	[ ] object	0	objects
		5	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listings: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, this property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

Date 11/20/89

State or Federal agency and bureau

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

[X] entered in the National Register.

[ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] see continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:)

Entered in the  
National Register

Signature of keeper

Date 11/4/90

Signature of keeper

Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Function

(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwellings

### Current Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Multiple Dwellings

Commerce/Business

Commerce/Financial Institutions

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th century revivals:

Beaux Arts, Colonial Revival,

Italian Renaissance, Classical

Revival.

### Materials(enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick, stone

roof copper

other iron, copper

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The five houses at 5-15 West 54th Street are located on the north side of West 54th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in New York County, N.Y. The buildings are located in the heart of midtown Manhattan and are surrounded by a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional buildings. Immediately to the east of the buildings is the University Club (NR listed) located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 54th Street. Fifth Avenue in the vicinity of 54th Street is lined almost entirely with commercial buildings dating from the early decades of the twentieth century. Immediately to the west of the nominated buildings, at 17 West 54th Street, is the Rockefeller Apartments, an eleven-story building dating from 1935-37 that is an early example of the International style. To the west of the Rockefeller Apartments are other apartment buildings, a group of brownstone houses from the 1870s and two early twentieth century townhouses, among other structures. To the south of the five townhouses discussed in this nomination, across West 54th Street, is the garden and east wing of the Museum of Modern Art as well as a post-World War II stone office tower. To the north, at the rear of 5-15 West 54th Street, is a new office building and four speculator built rowhouses from the 1890s with modern commercial ground floors. Each of the five nominated buildings occupies almost all of its lot. The buildings occupy less than one acre altogether. The boundary of this nomination encompasses the historic lots on which the five houses stand. All five buildings retain their integrity to a very high degree.

The five buildings at 5-15 West 54th Street can be discussed as four separate units, each designed by a different architect. However, although the design of each unit is different, the grouping has a great deal of continuity, both historically and architecturally. All of the buildings were erected within a few years of one another. The buildings are of approximately the same height and all have a similar scale and massing. The buildings were erected in the styles most popular in the final years of the nineteenth century and they reflect the tastes of some of New York's wealthiest patrons and most talented architects during this period. Since their completion, these townhouses have formed one of the most cohesive turn-of-the-century residential units in midtown Manhattan. They are distinguished from their neighbors by their common age, similar history and compatible appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet.



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5 West 54th Street

The Dr. Moses Allen Starr Residence is a neo-Italian Renaissance style building with a rusticated limestone basement and first floor with buff-colored brick trimmed with limestone above. The first floor is dominated by an entrance reached via a low stoop. The double metal grille doors are set within an enframingent composed of a pair of fluted Ionic pilasters supporting an entablature with a projecting cornice. A panel in the center of the frieze and architrave is ornamented with guttae. To the right of the entrance are two crisply cut windows with rusticated voussoirs and a projecting keystone.

On the second floor are two windows set within enframements that are identical to that at the entrance except that the pilasters are not fluted. Below each window is a limestone panel with foliate detail. Between the windows is a large carved cartouche. On the third floor are three windows with simple limestone enframements. The fourth floor also has three windows. These have a continuous limestone lintel with three projecting keystones. All of the windows have multi-paned wood sash. The building is crowned by a projecting modillioned cornice. At the attic level, a stone balustrade runs in front of the mansard roof, which is pieced by three dormer windows, each of which has a broken segmental-arched pediment with urns. The building is set behind an areaway with a handsome wrought-iron railing. Small air conditioner vents above the third floor and a metal and glass barrier on top of the roof are the only alterations to the exterior of the building.

7 West 54th Street

The Philip Lehman Residence is an imposing Beaux-Arts style building with a facade clad entirely in limestone. The building steps out slightly from the line of the townhouses to either side. The house has a smooth limestone base that supports three stories of rusticated limestone articulated with luxuriant relief carving. A low stoop of four granite stairs leads to the segmental-arched central entrance with its keystone in the form of an elaborate cartouche. The entrance contains a pair of glass doors. To either side of the entrance is a crisply cut rectangular window. The second floor is articulated by a pair of tall segmental-arched openings with French doors. The French doors lead out onto a shallow convex balcony with vertically set oblong perforations. The balcony is supported by brackets hung with garlands. These brackets also serve as the keystones for the first floor windows. In addition, the balcony rests on the entrance keystone.

The keystones of the second floor windows blossom into oversized cartouches that reach to the level of the third floor window sills. The third floor windows have simple enframements and handsome iron window guards. Above the third floor is an elaborate cornice supported by alternating large and small brackets between which are ornate panels. Rising from the cornice are two rectangular dormers with projecting cornices on which rest heavy cartouches. The tops of the dormers project from the tall steep mansard roof with its slate shingles. Above the two dormers are three ocular windows

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with copper frames and cartouches. The building is crowned by a limestone coping with foliate detail. The only alterations to the exterior are the replacement of the second and third story windows. The original interiors were removed during the 1960s; the 1960s interiors were transferred to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1970s.

9-11 West 54th Street

The James J. Goodwin double house is an intact Colonial Revival style townhouse with a rusticated basement and first floor and brick laid in Flemish bond on the second through fourth floors. The house is five bays wide. The main entrance is located in the center of the first floor and is reached via a short flight of stairs leading to a portico supported by a pair of fluted Ionic marble columns that have deteriorated, but have been stabilized. The entablature of the portico has a carved panel with foliate detail and a modest cartouche. The pair of wood and glass entrance doors is set within a simple stone enframingent. To the left of the main entrance are two windows with 6x6 wood sash and projecting keystones. To the right is a single window and the entrance to the secondary residence. This entrance is also reached via a short flight of stairs. The pair of wood and glass doors is set within an enframingent that is a simplified version of the main entrance's portico. This enframingent has a pair of fluted Ionic pilasters and a carved entablature panel.

The piano nobile is the most imposing floor of the house. It consists of five tall openings with floor length windows with 6x9 wood sash. Each window has a limestone enframingent with an entablature supported by delicately carved brackets and crowned by an entablature with paneled frieze and projecting stepped cornice. Each window has an elegant wrought-iron balcony. At the central window the balcony is rectangular and runs along the cornice line of the entrance portico; a similar, but shallower balcony is located at the window above the secondary entrance. The remaining three windows have curving balconies. The ironwork of each balcony has a central rosette flanked by rows of elongated diamonds.

On the third floor are 6x6 windows with limestone sills and splayed lintels with projecting keystones. The central window has a rectangular iron balcony. A beltcourse runs between the third and fourth floors and serves as the sill for the fourth floor windows, each of which has 6x6 wood sash and a simple splayed lintel with projecting keystone.

The building is crowned by a modillioned cornice and stone balustrade that runs in front of the five dormer windows at the attic level. The hipped-roofed dormers project from the cooper mansard. Three brick chimneys rise above the mansard. The house is set behind an areaway with an elegant iron fence, ornate posts, and an elaborate gate. The exterior of the house was restored in the early 1980s. At the same time, the interior, which had been poorly maintained during the tenancy of a private school, was carefully restored to its original condition and a non-contributing modern extension was added to the rear of the building.



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13-15 West 54th Street

Nos. 13 and 15 West 54th Street form a pair of virtually mirror image houses. Each of these limestone buildings has a rusticated one-story base. In the center of the facade is a pair of round-arched entrances with wood and glass double doors. The entrances share prominent dog-legged stoops with high walls. On the street wall of each stoop is a cartouche. Additional cartouches serve as the entrance arch keystones and support bowed second floor balconies with balustrade railings. These balconies are set in front of windows with eared enframements and cartouche keystones. Flanking the entrances and second floor windows are two-story bowed bays, each of which is three windows wide. On the second floor the windows are flanked by piers ornamented with vermiculated blocks.

The third floor of each house is articulated with three windows. Each is set within a heavy stone enframement with blocks and an ornate foliate lintel with scroll keystones. A projecting beltcourse runs between the third and fourth floors and serves as the sill for the fourth floor windows. Each house also has three fourth floor windows. These are segmental-arched with eared enframements and cartouche keystones. Between the windows are tapered Ionic pilasters set on bases; at each end of the houses is a pair of pilasters. Between Nos. 13 and 15 is a large carved plaque. An overhanging denticulated cornice runs above the fourth floor of both houses.

The roofline of each house differs slightly. No. 13 has a copper mansard pierced by three segmental-arched dormer windows. No. 15 has a simple stone balustrade and no visible mansard. The houses are set back behind an areaway with stairs descending to the basement level. Three windows with elaborate iron grillework light the basement of each house and each basement has an entrance with similar grillework located beneath the stoop. The exterior of each house remains unaltered.

In summary, the five buildings retain an outstanding level of integrity and compose a rare and distinctive enclave in the midtown neighborhood.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of significance

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1896-1900

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

McKim, Mead & White; R.H. Robertson;

Henry Hardenbergh; John Duncan

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The buildings at 5-15 West 54th Street are architecturally significant as an outstanding collection of high-style single family townhouses that recall the last phase of residential development by New York City's wealthy families in midtown Manhattan. Constructed between 1896 and 1900, the five residences were erected during the brief period at the turn of the century when some of the streets immediately east and west of Fifth Avenue were redeveloped from middle-class neighborhoods into enclaves for the wealthy, whose large-scale residences had been built along Fifth Avenue in this neighborhood since the 1860s. The nominated buildings, along with the adjacent University Club (NR listed), which occupies the corner of West 54th Street and Fifth Avenue, were built on the site of St. Luke's Hospital, which had recently moved uptown to a new complex at 113th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. All of the five residences were built as large, single-family homes, the majority commissioned by individuals for their own use and two developed as investments and quickly sold to wealthy families; all five were the work of some of New York's most prominent architectural firms, including McKim, Mead & White, R.H. Robertson, Henry Hardenbergh and John Duncan. Individually and collectively, these houses represent the eclectic historicism, often premised on classical and Renaissance forms, that dominated American architecture in the late nineteenth century. In addition, one of the five, McKim, Mead & White's double house at 9-11 West 54th, is an extremely early example of the Colonial Revival style used for an urban dwelling. Although four different, distinctive designs are represented in these five houses, the group members form an extremely cohesive row, unified by their large size, compatible scale, similar massing, masonry construction, mansard roofs, rhythmic fenestration, and classical allusions. Their proximity to McKim, Mead & White's monumental Italian Renaissance style University Club enhances the significance of this row as an extremely fine example of sophisticated urban design. In addition to their architectural significance, the West 54th Street rowhouses are also noteworthy as the residences of some of New York City's most prominent citizens, including neurologist Dr. Moses Allen Starr, art collectors Philip and Robert Lehman, businessmen James Junius Goodwin, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Howard Maxwell, and James B. Dickson, and politician, art collector, and patron Nelson Rockefeller. Although the influx of wealthy residents into the midtown neighborhood ended around World War I, when office buildings and stores began to replace mansions and townhouses, the five nominated properties were maintained as residences into the 1970s. In addition to the outstanding integrity of each resource, the intact row is significant as an extremely rare surviving example of its type in midtown Manhattan.

[X] See continuation sheet.



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Midtown Manhattan, from 42nd Street to 59th Street and from Park Avenue to Sixth Avenue, remained largely undeveloped until the mid nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century and the first decades of the succeeding century, this area was dotted with farms interspersed with a few shantytowns. In the 1850s the area was so far uptown (at this time, New York's wealthy citizens lived in the Gramercy Park and Murray Hill areas south or just north of 34th Street) that several institutions were attracted to the neighborhood because of its quiet semi-rural character. One of the most important of the institutions to purchase land here was St. Luke's Hospital. St. Luke's was incorporated in 1850. In 1854 the Sisters of the Holy Communion, an Episcopal order, opened the hospital's first infirmary and four years later the hospital moved into a handsome early Romanesque Revival style building on the west side of Fifth Avenue between 54th and 55th streets.

The northward development of New York's residential neighborhoods soon caught up with St. Luke's Hospital. During the building boom that followed the Civil War, residential development swept north along Fifth Avenue and by the early 1880s the entire area south of Central Park had become a prime residential quarter. Fifth Avenue was lined primarily with large mansions (including those built for the Vanderbilts between 51st and 53rd streets), substantial rowhouses, and imposing institutional buildings. The side streets saw speculative development with rows of Italianate, neo-Grec, and Queen Anne style houses erected and then sold to middle-class buyers. St. Luke's soon came to be an old-fashioned anomaly in the neighborhood.

Early in the 1890s, the trustees of St. Luke's Hospital decided that they needed a more up-to-date building, located in a quieter section of the city. Thus, in 1892, the hospital announced that it had purchased land on 113th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive, just north of the planned Cathedral of St. John the Divine, with the intention of erecting a new modern hospital. The new St. Luke's Hospital opened in 1896 and the land on which the old building had stood was sold to various people. The demolition of St. Luke's offered superb opportunities to the new land owners to erect imposing buildings. West 54th Street was an especially propitious location for the construction of grand new residences since this was one of the area's most beautiful blocks; on the north side of the street was John D. Rockefeller's brownstone mansion with its extensive gardens (now the site of the Museum of Modern Art's sculpture garden).

The first major construction project on the former St. Luke's land was the design and building of McKim, Mead & White's University Club (NR Listed) in 1896-1900 on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 54th Street. This development was concurrent with the erection of the five townhouses at 5-15 West 54th Street between 1896 and 1901. These townhouses were among the last prestigious single-family residences to be erected in midtown. By the 1890s, New York's wealthiest families had begun to build mansions and townhouses on and just off of Fifth Avenue north of 59th Street. For a brief period in the 1890s and the first years of the 1900s, new townhouses were erected south of 59th Street, but as the tide of development moved inexorably north, the construction of townhouses in this area virtually ceased. As office buildings, stores, and lofts moved onto the midtown streets between 42nd and 59th, most of the residences were demolished or heavily altered. The five houses at 7-15 West 54th Street form the largest intact

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group of buildings from the final period of midtown's development as a residential neighborhood. This group was, apparently, always one of the most prominent in the neighborhood. This was due to the fact that these buildings were erected on the open land created by the demolition of St. Luke's Hospital. Other townhouses erected at the turn of the century in this area were either replacements of single old rowhouses or alterations of the old rowhouse facades. These changes occurred somewhat haphazardly and, although there were a number of townhouses of great architectural distinction erected in midtown during this period (most have been demolished), they were not generally erected as part of a cohesive grouping.

The first of the West 54th Street townhouses was No. 9-11, designed in 1896, just after St. Luke's Hospital vacated the site. Within five years, all five buildings had been completed. The five buildings illustrate two of the major trends in townhouse development in New York at the turn of the century. Three of the residences, Nos. 5-11, were erected by private individuals who hired architects to design homes specifically for their own personal use. Two of the houses, the pair of residences at 13-15 West 54th Street, were erected by a speculator, who built the houses with the intention of selling them upon completion. All five of these residences housed the families of wealthy and prominent business and professional men and all were designed by leading architects of the period.

The five buildings represent the eclecticism characteristic of late-nineteenth century American architecture. During this period, most successful American architects designed buildings in a variety of revival styles, particularly those based on classical and Renaissance forms. In New York, wealthy patrons sought buildings whose designs were based on what they thought to be the finest architecture of the past or on the latest European forms. Thus, New York's most prestigious residential streets were lined with a distinctive mix of houses designed in the Italian Renaissance, French Renaissance, French Neoclassical, English Georgian, French Beaux-Arts, American Colonial Revival, and other styles. Each house, or group of houses, was designed to be seen as an individual unit standing apart from its neighbors. Together, however, these buildings were unified by scale, materials, sophistication and, often, by the use of Renaissance and Classical inspired design motifs.

The sense of cohesive design is particularly evident in the group of five houses on West 54th Street. All five of the West 54th Street houses are of masonry construction (three are stone and two are brick with stone trim). Each has four main floors and a sunken basement and four of the houses have mansard roofs lit by dormer windows. All of the buildings display a Renaissance-inspired massing, with horizontal window bands and rhythmically placed and symmetrically balanced window and door openings. In addition, with the exception of the slight projection at No. 7, the facades of these buildings maintain a generally consistent street line that enhances the strong sense of unity within the grouping.

As has been noted, the group of houses at 5-15 West 54th Street is especially significant because of its relative rarity. However, each one of these buildings is also significant in its own right. The architect, history, and design of each building is discussed below.



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5 West 54th Street

No. 5 West 54th Street is a handsome, beautifully detailed Italian Renaissance inspired brick and stone house designed by the prominent New York architect Robert Henderson Robertson. The house was built for Dr. Moses Allen Starr (1854-1932). Starr was one of America's leading neurologists in this period. He was born in Brooklyn and educated at Princeton, Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, and in Heidelberg, Paris, and Vienna. Starr was a pioneer in brain surgery research and a distinguished teacher and author; he taught at Columbia University from 1889-1915. In 1896, the year before construction began on 5 West 54th Street, Starr was elected president of the American Neurological Association.

For his new home, Starr commissioned a design from one of New York's most talented late-nineteenth century architects. R.H. Robertson (1849-1919) was a prolific designer of institutional, commercial, and residential buildings. He had a long and successful career that spanned a period of great stylistic ferment. Born in Philadelphia and a graduate of Rutgers College, Robertson's earliest architectural training was in the Philadelphia office of Henry Sims, a designer of country houses and Gothic churches. In about 1870, Robertson briefly worked in the New York office of George B. Post before opening his own office. In 1874 or 1875 Robertson formed a partnership with William Potter, an architect with similar design sensibilities. The Potter & Robertson firm was active until 1880. Working independently in the 1880s and 1890s, Robertson's designs show the influence of new architectural trends—first the Romanesque Revival popularized by Henry Hobson Richardson and later the Renaissance Revival popularized in New York largely by McKim, Mead & White. Although Robertson was not a design innovator, he kept close track of new design developments and was able to interpret the new styles freely, creating works of great individuality.

Robertson was an important designer of ecclesiastical and institutional buildings and was a pioneer in the design of skyscrapers. Among his most important religious and institutional buildings are St. Luke's Episcopal Church (1892) in the Hamilton Heights Historic District (NR listed), St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (1896; NR listed) on West End Avenue and West 86th Street, the former YWCA (1883) on East 15th Street, and the United Charities Building (1892; NR listed) on Park Avenue South and East 22nd Street, all in Manhattan. Among Robertson's most significant skyscrapers are the Lincoln Building (1889-90; NR listed) on Union Square West, the McIntyre Building (1890) on Broadway and East 18th Street, the American Tract Society (184) on Nassau Street, and the Park Row Building (1895-99).

Robertson's major buildings of the 1880s and early 1890s, such as St. Luke's Church and the Lincoln Building, were designed in the Romanesque Revival style. Robertson was one of the first architects in New York to incorporate Renaissance-inspired forms in his works. This can be seen, for example, in the transitional Romanesque Revival/neo-Renaissance style McIntyre Building and American Tract Society. By the mid 1890s, Robertson was designing in a sophisticated neo-Renaissance style. This is especially evident on residential buildings such as the Starr house.

The Starr residence is a rare surviving example of Robertson's neo-Renaissance style residential work in New York City; most of his residences have been demolished.

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Particularly notable Italian Renaissance inspired forms on the house are the balanced arrangement of windows, the entrance and piano nobile windows, which have stone enframements with Ionic pilasters, and the handsome central cartouche.

After the death of Dr. Starr in 1932, the house was maintained by his widow, Alice Dunning Starr. In 1943, she sold the house to Robert Lehman, who lived next door at No. 7. Lehman donated the building to the United States government. The government converted the building into "Freedom House," a rest home for World War II veterans. In 1948 Freedom House was purchased by Faberge Inc., which occupied the house as offices until 1970. Since 1974 the house has been occupied by John S. Lastis, Inc. and has been named Petrola House.

7 West 54th Street

Immediately to the west of the Starr residence is the final house erected in this small residential grouping—the Philip Lehman residence, dating from 1899-1900. Philip Lehman (1861-1947) was one of New York's most prominent bankers. Lehman was the cousin of New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman and the son of Emanuel Lehman, a founder of Lehman Brothers. Lehman Brothers was founded as a cotton brokerage in the 1850s and, after the Civil War, developed into one of the world's leading investment banking houses. Philip Lehman became a partner in the firm in 1887. He served as first chairman of the board of directors from 1929-1941. Lehman was also an art collector who amassed a large collection of paintings by old masters that was augmented after his death by his son Robert, who occupied the house in this period. Robert Lehman supervised the redecoration of the house's interior in the early 1960s. After Robert's death in 1969, the family art works were deeded to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which erected the Lehman wing to house the collection. As part of the Lehman bequest, the museum removed the 1960s interiors from the house and recreated them in the new Lehman wing. The house is now used as offices.

For his new house, Philip Lehman commissioned a design from the prestigious architect John Duncan (1855-1929). Although John Duncan designed a large number of exceptionally fine residential buildings, his fame rests on his designs for two important civic monuments—the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch on Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn (1889-92; NR listed) and Grant's Tomb in Manhattan (1891-97; NR listed). Duncan established his independent practice in New York in 1886. His winning competition entry for the Brooklyn memorial, followed shortly by his success in the Grant's Tomb competition, led to a successful career. Although these two monuments are imposing classically inspired works, most of Duncan's buildings reflect the influence of French Beaux-Arts design, with its emphasis on white masonry and exuberant sculptural decoration. The Lehman house is the finest surviving Beaux-Arts style townhouse in midtown Manhattan. Prominent Beaux-Arts features on this design are the use of rusticated limestone for the facade, the curved piano nobile balcony supported by boldly carved brackets, the exuberantly carved cartouches at the entrance keystone and between the second and third floor windows, and the steep mansard roof pierced by projecting ocular windows.



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Among Duncan's other notable Beaux-Arts style designs are those for the Knox Building (1901-02) at the corner of Fifth Avenue and West 40th Street, the Elias Asiel residence (1901) at 15 East 63rd Street, and the Henri P. Wertheim residence (1901-02) at 4 East 67th Street. Also of note is the still extant Beaux-Arts style house at 31 West 56th Street, commissioned in 1903 by Philip Lehman's cousin Arthur Lehman.

9-11 West 54th Street

The James J. Goodwin residence at 9-11 West 54th Street is one of the finest surviving Colonial Revival style townhouses in New York City and is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, example of this style extant in New York City. The double house, erected for James J. Goodwin, was designed by the firm of McKim, Mead & White and is one of the firm's earliest and most sophisticated essays in the use of the American Georgian and Federal architectural idiom. James Junius Goodwin (1836-1915) was one of the most prominent businessmen in New York at the turn of the century. Goodwin was a cousin and business partner of financier J. Pierpont Morgan. He was a banker and served as a director of the Erie Railroad, the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the Hartford Fire Insurance Company.

In 1896, Goodwin commissioned the design of his new home from McKim, Mead & White, perhaps the most prestigious architectural firm in America at that time. The firm of McKim, Mead & White was established in 1879 by Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909), William Rutherford Mead (1846-1928), and Stanford White (1853-1906). In the 1880s, the firm pioneered in the design of buildings modeled closely on the great monuments of the Italian Renaissance. Beginning in 1882 with the design of the Villard Houses (NR listed) on Madison Avenue and East 50th Street and continuing with the 1887 design of the Boston Public Library, the firm established a new mode of Renaissance-inspired design. Late in the 1880s, the firm began to experiment with the use of American Georgian and Federal architectural motifs, particularly for country houses. In 1890, urban buildings based on eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century American architecture began to be designed by McKim, Mead & White. Some of the earliest examples, such as the Francis I. Amory/Richard Olney double house (1890-92), were in Boston. In New York, the firm first used the style in 1892 for the Henry Augustus Coit Taylor double house (demolished) and then for James J. Goodwin's double house on West 54th Street.

The Goodwin House is closely modeled on one of the great Federal style houses of America--the third Harrison Gray Otis house on Beacon Street, Boston, built in 1806. While the proportions of the Goodwin residence are somewhat heavier than those of the Otis house, the facade designs are very similar. McKim and Mead, the partners in charge of this project, used the form of the third Harrison Gray Otis House and adapted it to the needs of a wealthy New York family at the end of the nineteenth century. Among the particularly notable Colonial Revival style features of the house are the use of brick laid in Flemish bond, the projecting Ionic portico on the main entrance and the simpler Ionic enframing at the secondary entrance set to the side, the floor-length second floor windows with their stone enframements and delicate iron railings, the splayed window lintels on the upper floors, and the cornice balustrade.

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James Goodwin and his wife, Josephine, lived in the main section of the house at No. 11. After Mr. Goodwin's death in 1915, Mrs. Goodwin continued to live in the house. The smaller house at No. 9 was leased by the Goodwins to a number of families. In 1921-22 the Goodwins' son Walter occupied the residence. In 1944 the house was sold to the Parsonage Point Realty Co., which leased it to the Rhodes Preparatory School in 1946. Rhodes remained here until 1979, when the building was sold to the United States Trust Company. The bank hired the architectural firm of Haines Lundberg Washler to undertake an extensive restoration of the building, while, at the same time, adding a modern non-contributing banking facility to the rear of the structure. This restoration has received a large number of awards, including the New York Landmarks Conservancy's annual Chairman's Award for Excellence in the Restoration of a Distinguished Landmark Building.

13 and 15 West 54th Street

The two houses at 13 and 15 West 54th Street differ from the other houses in this grouping in that they were commissioned by a speculative developer who planned to sell the houses upon their completion. The buildings were built by William Murray, a businessman and noted yachtsman from Larchmont, New York. Murray was a director of the Dixon Crucible Company of Jersey City, N.J., the Title Guarantee Company, and the New York and Stamford Railroad. He and his wife, Alice T. Murray, lived in Larchmont for forty years and built 13 and 15 West 54th Street as investments.

In order to attract wealthy buyers to these houses, the Murrays commissioned a design from the prestigious architect Henry Hardenbergh (1847-1918). Hardenbergh began his career in 1865, when he entered the office of Detlef Lineau. Six years later, Hardenbergh established his own office. Beginning in the 1880s, Hardenbergh received commissions for a succession of important New York City buildings. Besides these two townhouses, Hardenbergh's major works include the Dakota Apartments (1880-84; NR listed) on Central Park West and West 72nd Street, the Waldorf (1893, demolished) and Astoria (1895, demolished) hotels on Fifth Avenue and 34th Street, the Plaza Hotel (1907; NHL) on Fifth Avenue and 59th Street, and the Hotel Martinique (1897-1910) on Broadway and West 32nd Street.

For most of his buildings, Hardenbergh favored design motifs modeled on Northern Renaissance precedents. The two West 54th Street houses were designed with French Renaissance details such as tapering Ionic pilasters, banded piers, and cartouches. The use of these motifs places the building within the neo-Renaissance mode that had become popular for New York residences in the 1880s and 1890s.

No. 13 West 54th Street was sold by the Murrays to Jessie Neilson in 1898. She sold the house to John D. Rockefeller in 1906. Rockefeller, the founder of the Standard Oil Company, lived across the street at 4 West 54th Street. In 1909, Rockefeller's son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of America's greatest philanthropists, purchased the house from his father. He and his wife, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, lived here until 1918, when they transferred their household to 10 West 54th Street. At that time the house was leased to Howard Maxwell, vice president of the Atlas Portland Cement Company. The Rockefellers retained ownership of the house and Nelson Rockefeller used it as a residence and office from the 1940s until his death in the building in 1979.



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No. 19 West 54th Street was not sold by the Murrays until 1906, when it was purchased by James B. Dickson, the president of the Johnson & Higgins Insurance Company. Dickson's wife, Harriet, resided here until her death in 1953. Two years later the building was purchased by Nelson Rockefeller. The Museum of Primitive Art, a Rockefeller institution that primarily displayed Nelson Rockefeller's collection of African, Pacific, and Pre-Columbian art, was housed here from 1955 until the collection was donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the mid 1970s.

Following Nelson Rockefeller's death, the two houses were sold to Bernard H. Mendil and used for offices. In the 1980s, 13 and 15 West 54th Street were purchased, along with the adjacent property immediately to the north on West 55th Street, by the development firm of Feldman Brothers. This firm demolished two houses on West 55th Street and commissioned an office building from Emery Roth & Sons. Nos. 15 and 17 West 54th Street were restored and converted for office use as part of this project.

All five of the buildings in this West 54th Street enclave have retained their integrity to an extraordinarily high degree. All of the facades are in exceptionally good condition and retain almost all of their historic detail. Although individual intact townhouses from the 1890s and first years of the 1900s can be found on other streets in midtown, there is not other comparable grouping of architecturally distinguished intact buildings. Each one of the five former residences on West 54th Street is distinguished in its own right; each was designed by a prominent architect, had prestigious owners, and exemplifies the finest in late nineteenth century architectural design. The significance of each individual house is transcended by the fact that these five magnificent buildings survive adjacent to one another; the group exemplifies the finest in late nineteenth century urban residential design in midtown Manhattan.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 118 586400 4512600  
Zone Easting Northing

C           
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

D           
Zone Easting Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

---

## Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary was drawn to encompass the current lots of the five buildings as outlined on attached map.

☐ See continuation sheet

---

## Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to encompass the current and historic lots of the five properties. Adjacent properties in all four directions are dissimilar in period, scale, style, function and/or history.

☐ See continuation sheet

---

## 11. Form Prepared By See also continuation sheet.

name/title Kathleen LaFrank

organization NYS Office of Parks, Rec. & H.P. date October 1989

street & number Agency #1, Empire State Plaza telephone (518) 474-0479

city or town Albany state New York zip code 12238-0001



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

5-15 West 54th St. Residences  
New York City, New York County, NY

Section number 9 Page 1

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

5-15 West 54th St. Residences  
New York City, New York County, NY

Section number 11 Page 1

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11. Research and nomination prepared by:

Andrew Dolkart  
Preservation Consultant  
Hudson View Gardens  
116 Pinehurst Ave., S-11  
New York, New York 10033





C.4 77 SEC.5 5-15 W. 54th St. Residences  
 New York, New York County  
 1" = 120' ; Boundary indicated by heavy line

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Residences at 5-15 West 54th Street

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 12/08/89      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/19/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/04/90      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/22/90  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89002260

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT    ☐ RETURN    ☐ REJECT    1/4/90 DATE    Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



---

CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count \_\_\_resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic \_\_\_current

---

DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

\_\_\_summary paragraph  
\_\_\_completeness  
\_\_\_clarity  
\_\_\_applicable criteria  
\_\_\_justification of areas checked  
\_\_\_relating significance to the resource  
\_\_\_context  
\_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance  
\_\_\_justification of exception  
\_\_\_other

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_acreage \_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_UTMs \_\_\_boundary justification

---

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_sketch maps \_\_\_USGS maps \_\_\_photographs \_\_\_presentation

---

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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JLV8900035 N3H11

Photo 1

Bldgs at 5-15 west 54th st. NY, NY co.

Photo: A Dolkart 1939

Neg: Oprhp

View W. 54th from Southwest



PRIVATE

FORD



111211 9500068A7C

Photo 2

Bldgs at 5-15 W.54th st, NY,NY Co.

Photo: A Dolkart 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 13-15 W. 54 from Southwest



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DAILY

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View: 13-15 W. 54 from southeast



PRIVATBANK



Photo 4  
bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st, NY, NY Co.  
Photo : A Dolkart, 1989

Neg.: Oprhp

View: 13-15 W. 54 Detail from Southwest



Photo: 5

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 13 W, 54 stoop from Southwest

Photo: 5

Bldgs. @ 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg. Oprhp

View: 13 W. 54 Stoop from Southwest

View: 13 W. 54 Stoop from Southwest

JLV8900635 N3N11





11W54 5200068A7C

Photo 6

Bldgs. at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 11 W. 54 from Southwest

Photo 6

Bldgs. at 5-15 West 54th st NY, NY Co.

Photo: A Dolkart 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 11 W. 54 from Southwest





11M2N 9206068A7C

Photo 7  
Eldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.  
Photo: A Dolkart, 1989  
Neg. Ophrp

View: 11 W. 54 entrance from South



111111 111111 111111 111111

Photo 8

Bldgs. at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Phto: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg. Ophrp

View: 11 W. 54th st. from West





11N2N 5500068A7C

Photo 9

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st, NY, NY Co.

Photo: A Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 7 West 54 from Southwest





11121N 92000068A710

Photo 10  
Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.  
Phto: A Dolkart, 1989  
Neg: Oprhp  
View: 7 W. 54 Detail from South



1122N 5200068A7C

Photo 11

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View 7 & 5 W. 54 from Southwest





Photo 12

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 5 W. detail of second floor  
from Southwest

Photo 12

Bldgs. @ 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: 5 W. Detail of second floor  
from Southwest



Photo 13

Bldgs. at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: W. 54 from Southeast

photo 13

Bldgs at 5 - 15 West 54th st NY, NY Co.

Photo: A Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: W. 54 from Southeast

JLY8900635 N3N11





12N2N 5290068A7C

Photo: 14

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY

Phto: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: W. 54 from Southeast



JLW890068A7C

Photo 15

Bldgs at 5-15 West 54th st. NY, NY Co.

Photo: A. Dolkart, 1989

Neg: Oprhp

View: W. 54 from Southeast





NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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5-15 W. 54th St. Residence  
New York, New York Co  
Central Park Quad  
Zone 18  
E586400 N4512600

Prepared and published in 1975 by the New York State Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

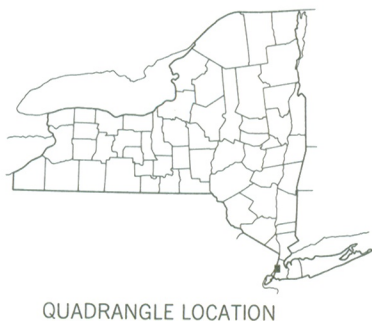
Map base from 1966 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle.

Map revisions made using 1974 aerial photography, construction plans, official records and other sources. Features revised include: highways and other transportation facilities; civil boundaries; recreation sites; hydrography; and buildings. Grey tint indicates intensively developed areas in which only landmark buildings are shown.

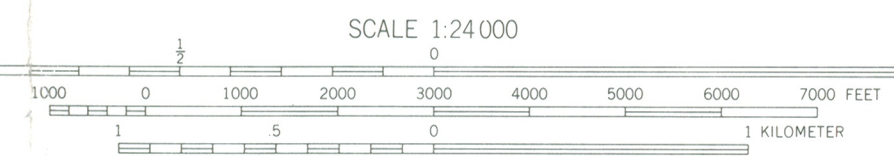
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Map revisions outside New York State are limited to major highways.

1975 revisions by F. G. Califano



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum.  
1000-meter ticks based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid.  
Between 72° and 78° West Longitude, this grid is identical to Zone 18 of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid. Areas east of 72° and west of 78° are direct mathematical extensions of Zone 18.

10,000-foot ticks based on the New York Plane Coordinate grid, Long Island Zone.

ENTIRE NEW YORK STATE MAP AREA IS WITHIN THE NEW YORK CITY METROPOLITAN URBAN AREA

SPECIAL TOPOGRAPHIC EDITION  
Contours, at 10-foot intervals, shown unrevised from 1966 U.S. Geological Survey map. Datum is mean sea level.

BOUNDARIES:  
State.....  
County.....  
Town or City.....  
Incorporated Village.....  
Federal-Aid Urban Area.....

ROADS:  
Touring Route markers:  
Interstate.....  
U.S. ....  
State.....  
State Highway number and limit.....  
County road.....  
Interchange number.....  
Divided highways and streets:  
Wide mail.....  
Narrow mail or barrier.....  
Undivided highways and streets:  
.....  
Vehicle track; trail.....