The dignified, landmarked Georgian-style double townhouse at 47-49 E. 65th St. in Manhattan, now the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, was the Manhattan home of FDR and his wife, Eleanor from its completion in 1908, with Sara Delano Roosevelt occupying No. 47 and her son and daughter-in-law Franklin and Eleanor residing in No. 49. The fourth-floor front bedroom of No. 49 was where FDR, stricken with polio in 1921, began his struggle to convalesce from the crippling disease and resume an active life. In 1942, a year after Sara Delano Roosevelt’s death, a group of citizens raised funds to purchase the brick townhouse and gave it to Hunter College for use as a social and interfaith center – an act that so pleased President Roosevelt that he furnished its library and donated books for it. The double townhouse, was designated a city landmark within the Upper East Side Historic District in 1973 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Today, after an extensive renovation by the University, the landmark has been restored and modernized to serve as an educational center and public policy hub for the 21st Century. The New York City Landmarks Commission described the townhouse as follows:

SARA DELANO ROOSEVELT HOUSE, 47-49 East 65th Street (No. 47, formerly the residence of Sara Delano Roosevelt, No.49, formerly the residence of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt), Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1908; architect Charles A. Platt.

On May 26, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House and the proposed
designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 19). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

**DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS**

This dignified Georgian style double townhouse was designed by Charles A. Platt and built in 1907-08. The residence was commissioned by Sara Delano Roosevelt, with No. 47 to be occupied by her and No. 49 by her son and daughter-in-law Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and their family. The design of the house is similar to Nos. 6 and 8 East Seventy-Sixth Street, the Ludlow-parish houses, where, in 1905, Eleanor had been given in marriage to her cousin Franklin by her uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt.

The young family moved about a great deal, but beginning with the autumn of 1908 they lived in the Sixty-Fifth Street residence whenever they were in New York City, where Franklin Roosevelt carried on his activities as a lawyer and an officer of an insurance firm. In August 1921 he was suddenly stricken with poliomyelitis. Upon being released from the hospital at the end of October, he insisted on going directly to the townhouse -- rather than to the seclusion of Hyde Park -- and began his convalescence in the fourth floor front bedroom. In the remaining months of 1921 and in 1922, the house became the scene of the most critical struggle in the life of Franklin Roosevelt: his determined recovery from the illness and his gradual resumption of an active life. After 1928, members of Franklin Roosevelt’s family lived at No. 49 only for brief periods.

Sara Delano Roosevelt occupied No. 47 until her death in 1941. Shortly thereafter, funds were raised by a group of interested citizens, and in 1942 the double house was purchased for a moderate sum and presented to Hunter College for use as a social and interfaith center. This use was assured when the residence was acquired in 1943 by a membership corporation created by a special act of the New York State Legislature.

President Roosevelt was delighted that the Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House was to serve a function which he felt would have pleased his mother; he furnished the library in No. 47 and donated a large number of books for it.

Few physical changes were made to the interiors, but in order to accommodate large gatherings, the two dining rooms and the two parlors were thrown together. All of the rooms were refurnished.

Architecturally, the five-story double residence is well-conceived. It is built of brick laid up in Flemish bond, with limestone used at the basement and first floor and as trim at the upper stories. A handsome stone cartouche is set in the center of the brick wall between the third and fourth floors.