

## **Point by Point Rebuttal**

The Study Report, though providing useful information about The Gaiety, suffers from numerous inaccuracies. The most serious of these are addressed here. The document citations correspond to those of the Study Report.

The inaccurate statements of the Study Report are quoted in **bold**, with the correction below. Because of repeated insertion of inaccurate facts in the Study Report, some repetition in this rebuttal has been unavoidable.

The photos inserted as part of **2.2 Physical Description** conspicuously neglected to include any historical interior images of the many that are available.

### **2.0 DESCRIPTION**

#### **2.2 Physical Description**

Several facts that support a landmark designation for The Gaiety Theatre and relate to its Physical Description were omitted from this section. They include:

##### Exterior

o No mention is made that one of the buildings abutting The Gaiety on its south side is a ca. 1825 structure. Though it has undergone insensitive remodeling, it remains part of, and is indicative of the fabric of The Gaiety's immediate area, in which five other buildings are already landmarked.

o No mention is made of either the many fire escapes that lead from the more than 40 emergency exits, or about The Gaiety's extraordinary physical placement in which three of its four exterior walls do not abut another building. The Gaiety was the first theatre built after the Boston Fire Code was rewritten in 1907 by Gaiety architect Clarence Blackall. As such, it is a historic example of Boston's forward-mindedness on this public safety issue.

##### Interior

o In the balconies, the concrete risers spacing is based on the new minimum dimensions of 30" back-to-back which Blackall added to the 1907 Boston Building Code.

o No mention is made of the expansive stage floor area. At 36 feet by 66 feet, it is suitable for concerts including classical, jazz, world music, chamber opera, and operetta. The proscenium arch is only one foot narrower than the proscenium arch at the Colonial Theatre. Indeed, the stage dimensions are roughly equivalent to the Majestic and Wilbur, to which The Gaiety was favorably compared in the Landmarks Commission's Theater Survey. Although the stage is ample for many uses, it is insufficient for Broadway roadshow blockbusters. This characteristic,

however, will make it more affordable for other kinds of producing organizations that are priced out of the larger houses.

o No mention is made of an important piece of furniture on the second balcony. The entire back wall of the balcony is filled with a curved, built-in wooden bench designed by architect Clarence Blackall for the ten-cent gallery gods. Surviving original architectural furniture in the balcony lounges are also unmentioned.

**The entire first floor elevation, including the former theatre entrance in the center and storefronts on either side, is now covered by old signage and deteriorating remnants from a succession of insensitive remodelings.**

**At the front of the auditorium, the proscenium arch has suffered extensive damage from leaking rainwater falling onto the stage.**

**The basement rooms are now filled with several feet of standing water, which has caused considerable damage.**

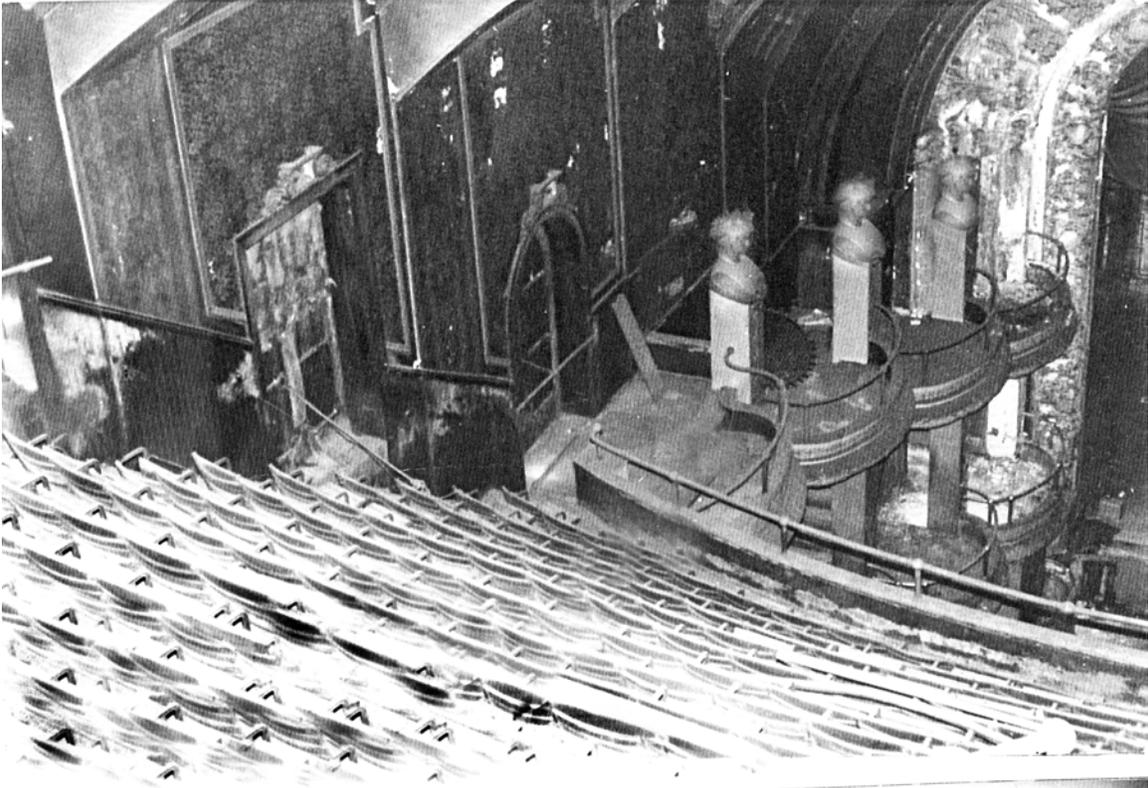
The Study Reports states that The Gaiety Theatre was bought by the present owners in 1986. However, the willful neglect of the building by the present owners is not addressed, apart from noting (in 2.1, Type and Use) that “it was purchased by Kensington Investment Company to hold for development.” This is contradicted by the Boston Globe report published on January 30, 1996 that The Gaiety’s owner, Stuart Pratt, was in negotiations with Foxy Lady of Providence to re-open The Gaiety as a night club.

Particularly damaging to the fabric of the building has been the large pools of water on the roof that can clearly be seen from the upper floors of the China Trade center next door. (See photograph on page 65.) This water is steadily dripping into the auditorium and eroding decorative plaster of the vertical elements of the proscenium arch.

The water could be removed by a simple cleaning of roof drains, an inexpensive procedure. This act of routine maintenance also would likely also eliminate the one major source of the standing water currently in The Gaiety’s basement.

**All of The Gaiety Girls heads have been removed, although at least one has survived to show the original appearance.**

The Study Report reports no effort to determine whether they are in storage elsewhere. All The Gaiety Girls were in place as recently as 1995, as shown in the photo on the following page taken that year by Boston theatre historian Fred McLennan.



**Fred McLennan remembers taking this picture during negotiations between Kensington's Stuart Pratt and the Foxy Lady in 1995.**

**The original drop curtain, with its painted scene of Lake Maggiore, is no longer extant.**

This hanging was not a drop curtain, rather it was a decorated fire curtain. The City of Boston Building Department has no record of its being removed. A fire curtain is normally flown in a position tight against the fire wall separating the auditorium from the theater, and may still be there.

**Most of the auditorium has been painted over white, obscuring the original magenta color scheme and stenciling.**

Not mentioned is that not only has this white paint obscured decorative treatments, it has also preserved them. Restoration experts have stated that a careful removal of small areas of the white paint will reveal sufficient information about the original decoration that it can be replicated, if that is desired.

**The original brass railings have been removed from the balconies and boxes.**

The 1995 photograph mentioned above shows them in place.

According to the Feasibility Study for renovating The Gaiety Theatre, new brass railings will cost \$16,000 to replace. This is a relatively low-cost consideration.

**The Orchestra pit has been filled in.**

Because access to The Gaiety has been denied to the Friends, no independent study of the orchestra pit has been possible. However, it is worth noting that when Sarah Caldwell first used the B.F. Keith Memorial Theatre, she faced the same situation. She was able to remove both the concrete covering of the pit, along with a cinderblock wall that filled the entire proscenium arch, in less than one week. A filled-in orchestra pit is a negligible problem.

**Stenciled ornamentation of yellow leaves on a dark green background, used here and elsewhere in the theatre, may also date from the early 1930's, or from a redecoration in 1939, when the theatre returned briefly to burlesque revues.**

This statement, and the several that follow in this paragraph that are related to the original decoration, are based on speculation, and are not supported by paint analysis or expert opinion.

**According to newspaper accounts and plans, the basement was used for lounging and smoking room, lavatories for men and women, and dressing rooms and facilities for performers. The main lounging room is relatively plain and has a simple brick fireplace.**

No mention is made of the two large lounging rooms for each of the first and second balconies. These rooms are accessed by a short series of steps from the balconies toward the front of the building. While other Boston theatres have circulation spaces on their balcony levels, none have separate lounges for the balconies. Blackall's building code of 1907 was the first to require that each division of a theater have lobby space sufficient to hold all its patrons.

### **3.0 SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **3.1 Historic Significance**

##### **Summary**

**The Gaiety management did not play a seminal role in shaping the content of shows or the direction of burlesque as an entertainment form.**

None of Boston's theatres, apart from one or two local repertory companies, shaped the content of the shows they presented. Then, as now, Boston's (and the rest of the nation's) theatre managements took what was available from New York.

Missed in this discussion is the social significance of the type of shows that The Gaiety presented. As one of only two theatres that presented a large number of African-

American performers – and the only one of these left – The Gaiety introduced Boston audiences to the hundreds of black performers, whose opportunities to perform elsewhere were severely restricted by racial intolerance.

Charles Waldron actually did produce burlesques at The Gaiety both before and after the Casino was built. Indeed, the opening night production at The Gaiety, *The Trocadero Burlesquers* was produced by Boston's Charles Waldron.

Also ignored is the role played by E. M. Loew who did indeed originate shows that he produced for The Gaiety and then toured to other of his theatres around New England. Loew, who loved the excitement of live variety performances, maintained The Gaiety's vaudeville and burlesque traditions for the first few years after he bought the theatre in 1931. Following a hiatus in live performances in the mid-1930's, he re-instituted them later in the decade. After The Gaiety became E. M. Loew's Publix and dropped live acts, Loew continued producing revues in some of his other theatres.

**Columbia's musical comedies, melodramas and revues have been characterized as a shrewdly concocted amalgam of talent, sex and exploitation.**

The research in this section is selective and misleading. The Study Report correctly attributes the above-cited line to *The American Burlesque Show* by Irving Zeidman.

However, the Study Report fails to note that this quotation is one sentence of the larger and more explicative context of the 52 pages devoted to the history of the Columbia Circuit, also known as the Eastern Wheel. All authorities in popular theatre attest that the Columbia Wheel was the "Tiffany of burlesque," never resorting to "dirty" shows.

What needs to be noted is that Mr. Zeidman was a social worker, a school teacher, and an outspoken foe of burlesque. While he should be applauded as a reliable historian, he lacks background, reputation and distinction as a critic. Other burlesque observers, with credentials as critics, have been greatly appreciative of burlesque.

**While it is possible that some famous post World War II radio, film, or television comedians may have performed earlier in their careers at The Gaiety Theatre, this has not been confirmed.**

In a January 21, 2003, letter to Mayor Menino (a copy of which is in the Boston Landmarks Commission folder on The Gaiety Theatre), veteran comedienne Rose Marie, long a favorite on TV's *Dick Van Dyke Show*, wrote:

Being a performer myself, I have been to and performed in Boston many times over the years, and have had the pleasure of seeing some wonderful vaudeville shows at The Gaiety.

Years ago I appeared with Phil Silvers in *Top Banana*. We were appearing at the Shubert Theatre there in Boston. One night all of the burlesque performers from

*Top Banana*, including Phil Silvers, decided to do a show at The Gaiety Theatre. Every best known comic was there doing marvelous routines from the very beginnings of burlesque and vaudeville.

**It does not exemplify vaudeville's long-time strategy of building lavish theatres and attracting bourgeois audiences.**

This statement is uninformed and inaccurate. Of the 4000 theatres coast-to-coast that played vaudeville from 1905 to 1932, fewer than 400 of the theatres were up to the standards of The Gaiety Theatre by any measure. More than 2,000 vaudeville theatres were conversions from grange halls, chapels, saloons, club houses and like properties built for occasional assembly but not intended for daily use as a theatre. They lacked dressing rooms and even adequate plumbing for the acts; many were fire hazards.

Frank Cullen, Founder of the American Vaudeville Museum, writes:

Of the nearly 500 theatres in the United States that were of a comparable standard to The Gaiety, we at the American Vaudeville Museum estimate, based on the materials available for research, and our contacts with vaudeville experts across the nation, fewer than 65 equaled or surpassed The Gaiety in the quality of their design and appointments, the extent of their safety features, the size of their stages, seating capacity or sight lines and dimensions.

The Gaiety, contrary to some assertions, was built for quality productions. The rivalry between the Shubert organization and the Keith-Albee circuit broke out in 1907 after The Gaiety had been planned and was being constructed. The owners soon discovered they were caught in a squeeze play between Keith & Albee and the Shuberts.

The Study Report's contention that burlesque did not court the patronage of "bourgeois audiences" is a dangerously condescending position. It borders on elitism and racism and demonstrates both carelessness and a lack of expertise. True, it was likely rare that the boiled-shirt, fur-wearing, hackney-driven class patronized The Gaiety. But does being working class exclude an audience member from the middle-class aspirations usually ascribed to the bourgeoisie?

That working class audiences, both black and white, chose for their entertainment to come to a theatre where no liquor was served, instead of seeking amusement in taverns and saloons, speaks to the respectability of The Gaiety's audiences of the period between 1908 and 1928.

Press reports of the opening from Boston's leading newspapers, including several cited in the Study Report (**D. The Gaiety Theatre in Boston: Theatrical History**) describe a very lavishly decorated theatre, and attest to The Gaiety's advertised claim of being "Boston's Handsomest Playhouse." To wit:

*The Boston American* (November 22, 1908)

The Gaiety is built on the Washington Street site of the old Lyceum. It is thoroughly up to date in every theatre requirement. It is splendidly decorated, and is provided with every feature safe-guarding audiences.

Behind the scenes, the theatre is admirably equipped. The latest things in electrical and other scenic effects are supplied, and several new and novel ideas are worked into the stage architecture.

The Gaiety, though of good size, has a delightful, cozy effect. The decorations are artistic, and whichever way the eye turns, there is a pleasing prospect.

*The Boston Herald* (November 22, 1908)

In the main auditorium, the general color scheme is old mahogany and gold. The great arches supporting the roof are in full sight, and are handsomely decorated. There are no posts under the balconies, for they are built along the cantilever plan, and the boxes are of the latest approved open design.

The seats are large and comfortable, and the aisles are wide. Handsomely furnished parlors have been provided for the ladies, and a smoking room for the men.

*The Boston Sunday Globe* (November 23, 1908)

Looking from the stage, it is easy to see wherein both artistic grace and utility have been combined in the whole proscenium arrangement of the main floor, with three tiers of boxes in red draperies and finish, and the two balconies. It is artistic as a whole in line, in decorative scheme, and in lighting.

The general tone of the house is soft magenta, which gives it a rich appearance.

Rich curtains separate the outer foyer from the inner foyer that runs around the orchestra circle, from which lead three exits on each side that are curtained in damask. The orchestra boxes on each side are slightly raised and richly furnished. The draperies are a deep red, which makes a strong contrast with the old gold of the proscenium arch, and the magenta of the rest of the house.

The proscenium arch is of graceful sweep. In the center is a charming head of a girl, from which radiates the elaborate decorative scheme, burnished in gold.

The Study Report ignores a highly favorable description of The Gaiety by Boston historian Douglas Shand Tucci. In his 1968 monograph *The Puritan Muse*, Tucci described The Gaiety as “a first class theatre [that] was erected solely with Burlesque in

mind.... [Its] interior was as tasteful and plush as any legitimate theatre to be found in the city.”

The original management of The Gaiety, George R. Bacheller and Ralph L. Ripley, clearly promoted the theatre to “bourgeois audiences.” In advertising that announced the opening of The Gaiety, they state as their policy:

In presenting to Boston another magnificent home of amusement, the management takes this opportunity to emphasize the fact that only the best and most refined form of burlesque and vaudeville will be given, the performances being equally adapted for ladies and gentlemen.

A review of opening night noted:

*The Boston Journal* (November 24, 2003)

The policy of Manager Bacheller in running clean, catchy burlesques and musical travesties in the new theatre, and performances that will draw women as well as men, was clearly depicted in last night’s performance.

Press accounts describing the entertainment offered use words like “high class olio,” “first-class travesties,” “high class burlesque with the very best vaudeville acts.” *The Boston Sunday Globe* noted that: “The discipline of ‘The Wheel.’ with which The Gaiety is associated, is strict nowadays, and will not tolerate anything of an offensive nature.”

**With the exception of the Globe Theatre, other Boston Theatres associated with burlesque are no longer extant.**

The extensive conversion of the Globe into a restaurant effectively eliminates it as an extant theatre. A visit to the Globe would reveal that while the exterior shell along with the facade remain, the interior features of the original Globe theatre have been almost entirely demolished. The orchestra, balconies, boxes and stage house are gone.

All the more reason to save The Gaiety Theatre: it is the last one built for vaudeville, burlesque and comic opera that remains standing in Boston.

Of historical note is the fact that The Gaiety is next door to the very first known vaudeville theatre in America—the Vaudeville Saloon in Boylston Hall, now called the China Trade Building. [See: comments on **3.1 Historic Significance / B. Vaudeville in Boston** for further explication. See picture of Boylston Hall in the Appendix.]

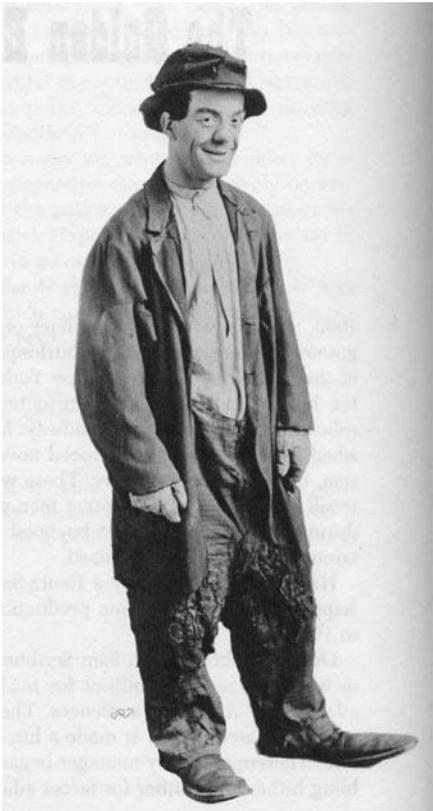


[www.corbis.com](http://www.corbis.com)

Fanny Brice ca. 1910



Bobby Clarck



Tommy "Bozo" Snyder



Joe Welch

### **3.1 Historic Significance / A: Theatre in Boston, 1790-1908**

**The present Gaiety stands on the site of two previous theatres with educational sounding names. The earliest, The Boylston Museum, was replaced by The Lyceum Theatre, known by the turn of the century as a venue for vaudeville and burlesque.** More accurately, this should state “three previous theatres.” There has been a theatre on the site of The Gaiety since at least 1876, with the opening of the New Boylston Museum which was described by the *Boston Post* as a “cozy little theatre.” Star Novelty Theatre was added to the name in 1877.

On November 9, 1885, the Boylston Museum gave way to The World’s Museum, with an auditorium seating 1,000. On September 19, 1892, the Lyceum Theatre opened on the site. It incorporated the World’s Museum’s outer wall on Washington Street, but was otherwise completely rebuilt.

Even before there were theatres on this site, the neck of land, now Washington Street, that connected Boston proper with Roxbury and other outlying areas, was a place of taverns. Besides offering accommodations to travelers, taverns hosted entertainments for their patrons. Troubadors, jugglers, acrobats and storytellers performed. This makes The Gaiety site one of the earliest – perhaps the earliest recorded, and the longest continuing – venues for variety performances in Boston, and among a handful of the oldest in the colonies. Taverns and marketplaces were where itinerant musicians and performers gathered to entertain the public, just as in the area around today’s Quincy Market.

**The oldest surviving Boston theatres are the Colonial (1900), the Globe (1903) and the Majestic (1903).**

The Gaiety is the third-oldest intact theatre in Boston, and should be so described here. As noted in the previous section, The Globe is no longer a theatre, and owing to major interior reconstruction is unlikely to return to theatrical use. The only original feature that remains in The Globe is its proscenium arch.

If nonfunctional theatres like The Globe, or remnants of early structures that were once used as theatres, are the basis for this listing, then it should include The Orpheum, whose exterior walls and elements of its interior date to 1854, and the Bijou Theatre which was built in 1883, or even the B.F. Keith Memorial/Opera House whose foundations are said to incorporate those of The Boston Theatre built in 1854.

There has been a theatre on The Gaiety site since at least 1876.

This listing is an example of diminishing The Gaiety’s case for landmark designation through the selective presentation of facts.

### **3.1 Historic Significance / B. Vaudeville in Boston**

**[B.F.] Keith is credited with initiating the establishment of well-planned, respectable family variety.**

As a review of the growing body of scholarship on vaudeville would reveal, this statement is simply not correct.

Most scholars attribute the establishment of season-after-season, wholesome family entertainment to Tony Pastor in New York on 25 April 1865 at a self-named theatre. His policy inspired Keith and other variety managers to forsake rude entertainments and seek a family audience with ‘polite variety.’

However, neither Tony Pastor nor B.F. Keith can be credited. That distinction belongs to the Vaudeville Saloon in Boylston Hall, next door to what would one day be the site of The Gaiety.

The year was 1840: six years before the birth of B.F. Keith, a quarter of a century before Tony Pastor’s polite variety, and one year before the opening of the Boston Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts on Tremont Street near King’s Chapel.

The Vaudeville Saloon offered recitations, melodrama, excerpts from classic plays, lectures, ballet, clog dancers, singers, melodramas, instrumental offerings and variety acts on its bills. [See next page for program.]

The documentation for the Vaudeville Saloon is in the Rare Books Department of the Main Branch of the Boston Public Library, a discovery made by Frank Cullen of the American Vaudeville Museum. In addition, the Harvard Theatre Collection has a substantial trove of pre- B. F. Keith vaudeville material.

**Of all the vaudeville theatres in Boston, only the Keith Memorial (now known as the Savoy, or more recently, the Opera House) remains.**

This is inaccurate. The Keith Memorial was never a vaudeville theatre. That was the intention, but by October 1928, when the Keith Memorial opened, sound movies were all the rage, and the Keith Memorial became a ‘presentation house’ showing first class Hollywood movies and occasional live performances, like popular music orchestras, preceding the showing of the feature film.

In fairness, the Study Report may have mistaken the Keith Memorial for the B.F. Keith Theatre which did play vaudeville, and was sited next to the Keith Memorial. It underwent several changes, including one in 1928 when the Shuberts leased it as a playhouse. B.F. Keith’s was demolished in 1952. So The Gaiety, indeed, remains the last theatre standing in Boston that played either vaudeville or burlesque.

# VAUDEVILLE SALOON

At Boylston Hall, corner of Washington  
and Boylston Streets.

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**GREAT ATTRACTION!**

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## BENEFIT OF MR. J. P. ADDAMS

AND POSITIVELY HIS LAST APPEARANCE.

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First appearance on any Stage of

**Messrs. EATON and N. RICH!**

**Mr. J. P. ADDAMS as WILLIAM TELL!**

---

Last appearance of **MRS. HILDRETH!**

---

Last appearance of

**Messrs Benson, Curtis & Haynes**

On Friday Evening.....August 21st, 1840,

The Performances will commence with the celebrated Play by J. S. Knowles, Esq  
(as abridged) entitled,

# WILLIAM TELL!

Or...The Hero of Switzerland.

**William Tell - - - - - Mr J. P. Addams**

Gesler.....	Mr W. Marshall
Michel.....Mr Haynes	Sarnem.....Mr Curtis
Rodolph.....Hathaway	Verner.....O. Marshall
Melctal.....Benson	Emma.....Mrs Meer
Albert.....(Her last appearance.)	Mrs Hildreth

Vaudeville in Boston 6 Years Before the Birth of B. F. Keith

**This theatre is highly significant not only because of the lavish interior...**

This is the second instance in the Study Report where the word “lavish” is used to describe whether a theatre is significant, and by extension, worthy of landmark designation. (see: **3.1 Historic Significance / Summary**)

While the decorative arts may add to the pleasure that audiences experience, the main reason a theatre building exists is so that a large number of people can sit together, usually in the dark, and watch and listen to one or a small number of other people. The important conditions in this scenario are acoustics, sightlines, and physical comfort, occasioned by features such as good seats, temperature controls, and fresh air.

Lavishness has nothing to do with the central purpose of a theatre. Few theatres built since the 1950s have made any attempt to be lavish. Yet they are judged to be good theatres if they fulfill their purpose well.

The Gaiety has exceptional acoustics, superb sightlines, and, in its day, it was considered to be “lavishly” decorated. (See newspaper accounts cited above.) Those decorations have been effaced over time by neglect and vandalism and by the present owner who continues to allow blocked roof drains to leak water through the decorative plaster of the proscenium arch and to collect in the basement. But the most important aspects of The Gaiety remain intact: its outstanding acoustics and unobstructed sightlines, which many press reports in 1908 noted for the sense of intimacy they created.

The original decorations that were in The Gaiety when it opened can be restored. The original architectural drawings are available in the archives of the Boston Public Library. Many once-abandoned theatres in other cities have faced far greater obstacles in being returned to life as working houses, and at far greater expense than what would be required to restore The Gaiety.

**3.1 Historic Significance / C. Burlesque: Background**

As sources of information, the Study Report has chosen only two reference works *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* by Robert C. Allen as well as the previously cited *The American Burlesque Show* by Irving Zeidman – both of which demonstrate authorial bias against burlesque.

Mr. Zeidman’s book is reliable as history, yet he offers opinions and makes aesthetic judgments with no apology for his lack of expertise in the arts of any type. Mr. Allen’s book is not entirely reliable as history, and largely ignores the period between the 1890s and the late 1920s, the very period when The Gaiety Theatre was offering burlesque, revues, musical comedy and vaudeville.

At page 224, Mr. Allen interrupts his coverage of burlesque after a discussion of the seminal Weber & Fields Music Hall (which in addition to Joe Weber and Lew Fields, starred Lillian Russell, De Wolf Hopper and that great serious actor David Warfield) that ceased operations in 1904, four years before The Gaiety opened.

Mr. Allen then digresses to carnival side shows. When he resumes his history of burlesque on page 238, his focus is Billy Minsky's skin shows. His narrative has pole-vaulted an entire generation into the middle of the 1920's. What then follows is a lament about the introduction of striptease.

What Mr. Allen has to say about burlesque does not apply to The Gaiety Theatre or to the Columbia Circuit – even incidentally. In the index of *Horrible Prettiness* there is not a single reference to the Columbia Circuit or the Eastern Wheel, as the largest, classiest and most important of all burlesque circuits was alternately known. Mr. Allen's book is irrelevant to any discussion of The Gaiety Theatre in Boston.

The acknowledged expert in burlesque was Bernard Sobel, author of several books about vaudeville and burlesque. *Burleycue: An Underground History of Burlesque Days* (Farrar & Rinehart, NYC, 1931) remains the standard reference text in the field of burlesque, yet the Study Report fails to include Mr. Sobel's findings.

The other two major books about burlesque are *Minsky's Burlesque* by Morton Minsky & Milt Machlin (Arbor House, 1986) and *This Was Burlesque* by Ann Corio & Joseph DiMona (Madison Square Press, 1968). But they tend to be as affectionate and laudatory as Allen's is irrelevant and Zeidman's is elitist.

Bernard Sobel, however, held a more balanced view than either extreme. Rather than dismiss this historic aspect of American theatre history in a single sentence as does the Study Report, here are two paragraphs from Sobel's book published in 1931:

Not so many years ago—as recently as the War [WWI]—there were dozens of burlesque shows throughout these United States, but they're dwindling away suddenly. The names of the giants of the profession, names like Scribner, Mack, Gus Hill, Al Reeves, Bedini, [all of whom appeared at The Gaiety] are already dimming into the vague past. The burlesque circuits, once names of magic significance, have dwindled away to a few Mutual and Minsky shows, a few routine stock companies, an occasional shoestring production which opens one night and closes the next.

And thus, what Sime Silverman [founder, publisher and editor of *Variety* “the show biz bible”] calls the “cradle of musical comedy” the nurturing place for American comics, has almost ceased to rock, and the funny men must break in their art as best they can.

### **3.1 Historic Significance / C. Burlesque: Background**

**While some variety acts played at both vaudeville and burlesque houses, the difference in underlying principles has been described as “one of night and day,” with burlesque being “all the things vaudeville wanted no part of.”**

This conclusion is a further example of selective choice of criticism and editorializing, rather than fair analysis. The author of the above quote is Robert C. Allen, and as detailed in the preceding section; his opinions are extraneous to the purpose of this Report. Burlesque is a significant landmark in the development of the American theatre and film. Uninformed conclusions as to the unworthiness of burlesque are highly subjective.

### **3.1 Historic Significance / D. The Gaiety Theatre in Boston: Theatrical History**

The Study Report in this section completely supports the contentions of the Friends of The Gaiety and the American Vaudeville Museum on the significance of The Gaiety Theatre. In so doing, it directly contradicts many of the conclusions stated by the Study Report in other sections. For example:

The Study Report quotes from an incompletely identified newspaper (which from a footnote appears to be the *Globe*) on The Gaiety’s opening night, as follows:

*The Boston Sunday* sub-headline called The Gaiety “*A Model of Comfort, Complete in Stage Equipment and Accommodations of Every Kind—Well Lighted, Well-Ventilated, and Up to Date in All Respects Is This New Home of Vaudeville and Burlesque.*”

The theatre was praised for its comfortable seats, each with a clear and unobstructed view. According to these accounts, the first balcony is ‘*supported by one of the largest steel girders ever used in a building in this city.*’

The Gaiety reportedly had ‘*perfect ventilation in every part of this theatre.*’ The switchboard was ‘*a wonderful affair*’ with its 67 divisions and its chronometers to fix the time of acts, the raising of the first curtain and the falling of the last curtain. The new theatre was lauded as fireproof and safe, with abundant exits.

The Study Report uses this contemporary account to establish that:

- a) The Gaiety was built as a vaudeville house, as well as a burlesque house;
- b) it was one of the finest, safest and most comfortable theatres ever built in Boston by 1908; and
- c) the steel girder cantilever balconies, safety measures, air ventilation system, electric chronometers and other technology were innovative, and all part of an effort to attract discerning audiences, as was “*the clear, unobstructed view*” that remain in the theatre today and testify to The Gaiety’s ranking among the top three or four theatres and concert halls in Boston.

Yet, in an earlier section, **3.1 Historic Significance / Summary**, the Study Report contends:

**Although vaudeville acts were a traditional part of burlesque shows, The Gaiety was a burlesque rather than a vaudeville theatre. It does not exemplify organized vaudeville's long-time strategy of building lavish theatres and attracting bourgeois audiences, nor was it a part of an organized vaudeville circuit.**

The Study Report is wrong about all those assertions.

Even a cursory review of its advertising will reveal that The Gaiety was a vaudeville, as well as burlesque theatre. Indeed, very few theatres were single purpose venues. Shows often alternated among vaudeville, revue, musical comedy or burlesque within the same season or the same month. Indeed, *The Boston Globe* review of the inaugural show, quoted by the Study Report, states clearly the burlesques opened and closed the show, while vaudeville performers, including featured African-American and Jewish acts, were at its heart in the middle segment. This was at a time when nearly all shows had three main segments or acts, and two intermissions.

Finally, as to the quality of the theatre itself, the Study Report includes a quote the *Boston American* in 1913 that challenges the Study Report's contention that "does not exemplify organized vaudeville's long-time strategy of building lavish theatres."

[The Eastern Wheel / Columbia Burlesque Circuit's] progress in Boston merely reflects its progress in every city included in the Eastern Wheel. Here we have The Gaiety and Casino Theatres – both new and structurally perfect playhouses.

Contradictory statements like those cited here raise serious questions about both the intent of the Study Report, and its conclusions.

**Quoted from the *Boston American* in 1913:**

**"...there will be but two houses devoted to organized burlesque in Boston next season [1914], The Gaiety and the Casino. That leaves the fate of the Howard Atheneum and the Grand Opera House somewhat in doubt."**

Of these four venerable Boston theatres mentioned, only The Gaiety still stands. This underscores its singular importance as the sole remaining representative of a once-thriving aspect of Boston's popular culture.

**The black comedy team of Buck and Bubbles appeared at The Gaiety in 1924.**

Buck & Bubbles (who performed as a team from 1912 to 1953) are improperly described in the Study Report as a comedy team. Although they did engage in some amusing byplay, far more important is their work as dancers, jazz singers and musicians.



**Buck and Bubbles in 1930**

John W. Sublett (Bubbles) is credited with being the creator of “rhythm tap dancing.” Until Bubbles, percussive dancers largely hammered with their heels. Bill Robinson lifted the foot onto the toe or metatarsus, but it was Bubbles who first employed the entire foot, alternating between heel and toe, and syncopating the rhythm. For this, he is considered a jazz artist, prefiguring more sophisticated drumming than the simpler, regular tempo employed by ragtime drummers in New Orleans style jazz.

Buck (Ford Lee Washington) was a jazz pianist and trumpeter who recorded with Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith and Coleman Hawkins. Both Buck and Bubbles were renowned, as well, as jazz singers, among the first as differentiated from blues singers. George Gershwin created the role of Sportin’ Life in *Porgy and Bess* expressly for John W. Bubbles.

They made movies in the United States and England. When they played *The Gaiety* in 1924, their weekly salary for revues was in the \$1800-\$2400 range, depending on venue, hardly a small-time burlesque act.

**Many of these shows played for one week.**

A review of advertising in Boston newspapers, as has been conducted by the Friends of The Gaiety, will show that many of these shows were extended and played multiple weeks.

**These productions provided important opportunities for talented black performers. However burlesque histories suggest that the presentation of black and integrated productions should not be interpreted as enlightened race relations.**

This begs the question “Why not?” In the context of that era, what other arena of American life offered integrated work between black and white? What other institution in the public or private sector promoted integration on stage and in the audience?

Of course, relations were not perfect. They never are between people in a work situation, especially one as emotionally charged as theatrical work. But it was a generation ahead of what could be found in the armed services, the government, the church, and the business world.

Advertisements laying emphasis on integrated shows and concerts of spirituals probably reflected a sensitivity more enlightened than that of the general population.

**Historian Irving Zeidman makes the following observation on integration as one of several unsuccessful strategies to save the Columbia Wheel in the years of declining audiences and profits:**

*Cartoon comedies, melodrama, clean burlesque, dirty burlesque, Negro aggregations, mixed black and white troupes, vaudeville – Columbia tried them all in the last dying years. To no avail.*

Neither the Study Report’s comment, nor the quote can diminish the fact that racial integration was standard operating procedure at The Gaiety Theatre. Furthermore, Zeidman’s contention that these shows were not commercially successful is questionable. The Gaiety hosted Black and integrated shows throughout the 1920’s, when the Harlem Renaissance was igniting widespread interest in African-American culture. The managers of The Gaiety would not have continued this policy had it proved unprofitable.

**The Gaiety Theatre management does not appear to have created shows for local presentation or for travel on the Eastern Wheel.**

The Study Report may well be correct in this conclusion, but it is important to stipulate that it is an unproved assumption awaiting more extensive research than has been possible to perform in the short time since this process began four months ago. Even were this unsubstantiated assumption to prove true, what has it to do with the worthiness of The Gaiety Theatre or its cultural significance?

What shows originated at the Shubert, the Colonial or the Majestic before it was rescued by Emerson College? The argument that some Broadway shows were doctored here in Boston is lame. Rodgers & Hammerstein's musicals regularly used Boston as their major tryout town, and Elliott Norton's reviews in *The Boston Post* sometimes provided very useful suggestions to the producer. But Cyrus Durgin of *The Boston Globe* and the reviewers at the *Herald* and *Record* were not respected by New York theatre people. More producers took their shows to New Haven and other cities for tryouts where it was both less expensive and closer to Broadway.



**Following WWII, The Gaiety was renamed The Victory. It was renamed E. M. Loew's Publix in 1949**

**After World War II, the “New Gayety” was used as a movie theatre only. In 1949, the entrance and lobby were totally redecorated, and the name was changed to the Publix.**

Missing here is any biographical discussion of E. M. Loew, one of the most important businessmen in Boston at the time. The owner of more than 100 theatres, drive-ins, nightclubs, and sporting facilities up and down the East Coast, he used the great wealth he acquired as a showman to fight for equality for Jews.

E.M. Loew was a great proponent of vaudeville and burlesque. Long after the art-form had died elsewhere he made an effort to keep it going at The Gaiety. For many years, some of the offices that oversaw his sprawling empire were located in The Gaiety Theatre office building.

The theatre was renamed “The Victory” shortly after VE Day, and remained that until 1949.

**Douglass Shand Tucci in his 1977 article “The Boston Rialto: Playhouses, Concert Halls and Movie Palaces” mentions The Gaiety in passing, as “another Blackall design.”**

This is an incomplete and selective quote. Tucci elaborated upon the charms and beauty of The Gaiety in a 1968 monograph, *The Puritan Muse*, where he described The Gaiety this way:

...the hour of glory for Burlesque, in Boston at least, had already occurred the year before. In December of 1908, for the first (and as it turned out, the only) time, in Boston theatrical history, a first class theatre was erected solely with Burlesque in mind. The New Gaiety Theatre was described by the *Record* as “a model of comfort, complete in stage equipment and accommodations of every kind – well-lighted...and up to date in all respects.

Its enormous marquee bathed lower Washington Street in brilliant light, and the interior was as tasteful and plush as any legitimate theatre to be found in the city. The proscenium was a stunning combination of soft gold medallions on a cream base and there were twelve elegantly designed private boxes on either side of the proscenium that connected with the two balconies.

A copy of this monograph was provided to the writers of the Study Report by The Friends of The Gaiety.

### **3.1 Historic Significance / E. Other Burlesque Theatres in Boston**

**Douglas Shand Tucci has described the Old Howard this way: “...perhaps the most famous burlesque theatre in the world...”**

This statement requires clarification. The Old Howard achieved its fame in the 1940's because it had earned a reputation for dirty shows and cheesy productions.

(Note: Research on the later aspects of burlesque for this report has been assisted by George Lowe (a/k/a Les Carter), the only known living performer who worked at the Old Howard. Now a Cambridge resident, Mr. Lowe performed at the Old Howard from just after World War II until the early 1950s. He is the last, first-hand expert on the subject. He is a member of the American Vaudeville Museum. The Friends of The Gaiety are grateful to him for his guidance in several matters.)

**Besides The Gaiety, the other remaining Boston theatre associated with burlesque is the Globe, which still stands almost directly across Washington Street from The Gaiety....**

**The auditorium of the Globe now houses a Chinese restaurant and a Chinese grocery store.**

To consider the Globe a theatre, after it has been so completely altered structurally points to the desperation of the Study Report to minimize the uniqueness of The Gaiety. The Gaiety is the only extant burlesque and vaudeville theatre in Boston.

After mentioning many of the great moments in its history when it still was a theatre, the Study Report adds, almost in passing, that The Globe is now a restaurant and a grocery store. What is not mentioned is the fact that the interior has been significantly altered twice. In 1929, the two original balconies were removed and replaced by a single new one. The extensive renovation included the stage house and an "impressive" new lobby.

Then, with the coming of The Emperor's Garden restaurant a dozen years ago, the structure was significantly altered again. This time, a second floor was built in the auditorium, transforming what had been a theatre into a two-story building.

This is the third instance where the Globe is listed in the Study Report as a theatre.



**The last remaining Gaiety Girl head**

### **3.2 Architectural Significance**

#### **Summary**

**The Gaiety’s auditorium is a pleasant space with relatively modest decoration. While some of the details are handsome, such as the proscenium arch and the “Gaiety Girl” heads, ornamentation is largely confined to simple plasterwork or stenciling.**

This statement with its dismissive tone (“modest decoration” and “simple plasterwork or stenciling”) reflects a lack of any serious discussion of the interior decoration of the theatre. Furthermore, it reflects a complete lack of awareness of the relationship between architectural pioneer Louis Sullivan, and The Gaiety’s architect, Clarence Blackall. Trained in Chicago when Sullivan was in his apogee there, Blackall regularly championed Sullivan’s ideas. Both the Colonial Theatre and The Gaiety Theatre were decorated by Blackall’s frequent collaborator, Pennell, Gibbs and Quiring, Co. It’s striking that not a single historic interior picture was included in the study report

Sullivan was the first architect to build a steel-framed building. Blackall was the first architect to build a steel-framed building in Boston. In an article published in 1887,

Blackall praised the McVicker's Theatre, designed by Sullivan and his partner Dankmar Adler.

Blackall was eclectic in his use of style. It ranged from the Colonial Revival of the Wilbur Theatre, to the ornate fantasy of the Wang, to the restrained classicism of Temple Israel, and embraced many other styles. No two of his buildings look the same. He was always trying something new. When it came to The Gaiety, it is clear that Blackall drew his inspiration from Sullivan's theatrical masterwork, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago.

The succession of telescoping arches, the series of stepped boxes that connect the balconies to the stage, the broad balconies that feel unconstrained – all of these are present in both The Gaiety and the Auditorium Theatre.

In both theatres, ornamentation was primarily and deliberately planned as geometric patterns painted directly on the walls and ceiling, rather than the applied ornamental plasterworks that Blackall used in other theatres. Photographs of The Gaiety published at the time of its opening display vast fields of gilding, accented by bands of alternating diamonds and squares – almost identical to the Auditorium Theatre.

Joseph M. Siry, who is a professor of art history and American studies at Wesleyan University, is an expert on Louis Sullivan. He has recently published a book titled, *The Chicago Auditorium Building: Adler and Sullivan's Architecture and the City*. In a recent essay, he wrote:

Plans and views of the original interior of The Gaiety Theatre after it opened in 1908 show a hall with proscenium-like arches that form segments of the ceiling as it rises out from the stage over the audience hall. Based on these images, I know of no theatre prior to 1908 that would be more likely inspirations for Blackall's interior design than those of Adler and Sullivan.

**Claims that Wallace Sabine collaborated on the acoustics are unsubstantiated by documentation.**

True. But neither is there documentation stating that Sabine was not involved. What does exist is physical evidence in the theatre of Sabine's having worked there on its acoustics at some point in the decade between when the theatre opened and his death.

The determination that felt-covered horsehair panels on the side walls of the balconies were placed there under the supervision of Sabine was made after an on-site inspection by Dr. David Griesinger who found that they are identical to such panels placed by Sabine in Paine Hall at Harvard. No other acoustician is known to have used Sabine's system. Sabine himself abandoned it eventually.

Scholars of Sabine, including Dr. Leo Beranek and William Cavanaugh, along with the archivist of Sabine's papers, John Kopec, have all attested that the long, documented

relationship between Sabine and Blackall suggests for many reasons that the two worked together often.

The research of Dr. Emily Thompson lays out the likelihood that Sabine was involved in The Gaiety after it had opened, possibly even a few years later.

Because Sabine died young, the number of buildings in which he worked is few. Masterworks like the Boston Opera House on Huntington Avenue have been destroyed. The Gaiety stands as one of the relatively few buildings in which his work can be studied.

For acoustical scientists – a profession that is based in large part in Boston – Sabine buildings are considered invaluable. The discovery of a Sabine-related structure has caused great enthusiasm among acousticians who are eager to visit it. All requests to have access to the building, however, have been denied by the present owner.

A lengthier discussion on the relationship between Sabine and Blackall, and Sabine's involvement in The Gaiety can be found in the section entitled: **New Information on The Gaiety / Acoustics.**

**The Gaiety's technological features are current but not advanced.**

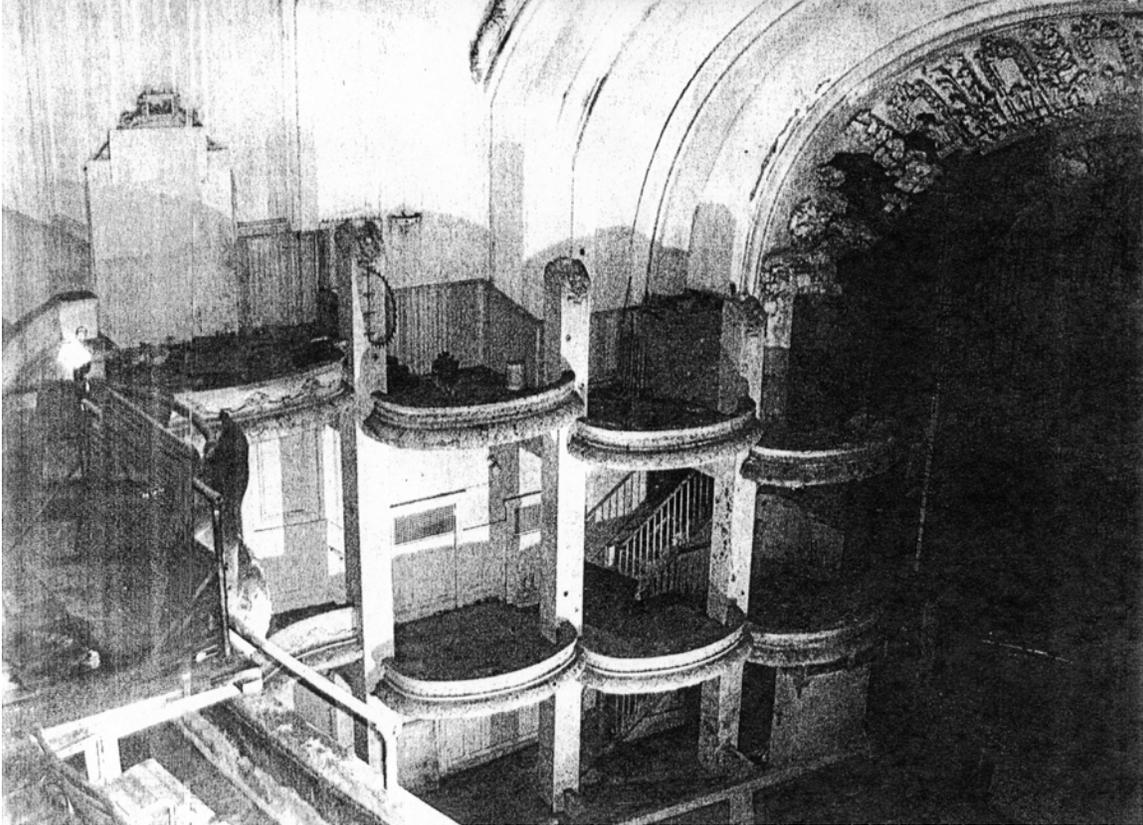
This contradicts the Boston Landmarks Commission's own statement that "...the theater was structurally advanced in its use of a single girder, called, 'one of the largest steel girders ever used in a building in this city' to support the balcony, thus eliminating the need for supporting columns." This finding is in the 1979 Theatre Survey.

**The Gaiety has lost of its architectural integrity.**

This is patently untrue. What it has been lost or merely obscured are its decorative elements, particularly in the foyer which has been adapted insensitively for other uses over the years. But the architecture of The Gaiety remains solidly cast in the reinforced concrete that made it a Boston "first" for fire safety in 1908.

Furthermore, the Boston Landmarks Commission's Central Business District Survey states, "the Publix [Gaiety] is a good example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century baroque theater interior designed for live performances, with good spaces and sight lines, an intimate feeling, and good detailing...the auditorium is virtually intact and could be restored to its original glory...recommended for future National register listing".

The losses of the box office, vestibule and storefronts do not mitigate against landmarking or restoration. Many European opera houses and concert hall have modern public spaces connected with historic theaters as casualties of war. The theater is the auditorium. The fact that seats have been removed is totally irrelevant. Uncovering the orchestra pit would be trivial. Paint does not replace the decorative finishes, but rather covers and preserves them.



**The Gaiety in January, 2003 showing boxes, proscenium arch and vaulted ceiling**

**So much has been removed that decorative treatments could only be approximated with a substantial amount of guesswork for the auditorium.**

Not true. All the original plans for the theatre exist, including details on decorative elements. A near exact replication of the original could be created. On the upper levels, some of the original stenciling is still clearly visible.

**Lounges and smoking rooms in the basement are currently under several feet of water. Within the auditorium itself, the lower half of the proscenium arch is gone, and boxes close to the stage have suffered heavy water damage.**

Why? Because the present owner is engaged in the willful neglect of this building. Water has been pooling where the roof meets the stage house for years, and solely because of plugged drains, has been seeping over the flashing and dripping steadily into the theatre.

As long ago as 1988, a member of the team who wrote the Midtown Cultural District Plan visited the theatre and noted the constant falling of water along the sides of the proscenium, which was then largely intact.



**Severe pooling on the roof because of plugged drains in November 2002**

The water in the basement could be pumped out in less than a day, but it would appear that the present owner clearly wants the building to deteriorate to such a degree as to be able to argue that it is blighted. Yet despite this deliberate neglect, the soundness of The Gaiety's structure has been repeatedly confirmed, even by architects and engineers hired by the present owner.

To use this as a reason for denying landmark designation to The Gaiety Theatre would set a dangerous precedent of rewarding irresponsibility.

**The original seats have been removed in the orchestra and first balcony.**

It is highly unlikely that the original 1908 seats continued to be used for The Gaiety's 70 years of active service. Even if they were, any renovation of the theatre would involve installing new seats. Consequently, the absence of the previous seats means nothing.

**The orchestra pit has been filled in.**

It can be cleaned out in a day's work, as Sarah Caldwell demonstrated when she faced the same problem at the B.F. Keith Memorial/Opera House.

**Most of the auditorium has been painted white, replacing decorative finishes.**

But not all. Several areas of stenciling are still visible. Furthermore, the white paint is actually protecting the layers below it. It can be removed to answer any questions about the original decorating scheme that are not addressed by the original designs, which survive.

**Although it is one of Boston's first theatres built exclusively for movies, the first to have amplification for "talkies," and a known collaboration between Blackall and Sabine, the interior of the Modern has suffered extensive water damage.**

The Study Report staff is wrong to assert that the Modern was the first Boston theatre to have amplification for talkies. The Beacon Theater did so earlier, as did The Colonial which showed *Don Juan* with John Barrymore in a Vitaphone roadshow engagement some months before the Modern.

It is perhaps worth noting that the Boston Redevelopment Authority seized the Modern because of the willful neglect of the building by its then-owner that led to the "extensive water damage" noted here.

**...The Gaiety was built in just five months, with no time or money to spare. Blackall himself wrote: "The Gaiety was an experiment in using cheaper materials for good effect."**

The tone of this statement is belittling, where it might more appropriately be congratulatory. On what basis is the claim being made that the time of construction was dictated by Blackall's having "no time or money to spare?" No evidence is offered.

Instead, consider the following statement which appears in the Study Report two pages later in section **B: Blackall's Theatres**.

"The series [in *The Brickbuilder*] appears to have launched Blackall's career as a designer of functional, fireproof, comfortable, "modern" theatres with good sightlines and back-stage facilities which could be built at reasonable cost and return a profit to investors.

Would not any present-day builder – which Blackall was, along with being an architect – share Blackall's sentiments when less expensive methods of construction could be found? The emphasis here should not be on the "cheaper materials," but on the "good effect." Despite using economical materials, he achieved a good effect.

Furthermore, the source of this quotation, on which so much rests, is described in the footnotes as a card from a file in the Boston Public Library which cites a "handwritten journal" that can not be located. The quotation may well be accurate, but since that cannot be proven, the use of it here is questionable.

**The Gaiety is not an outstanding example of the work of Boston architect Clarence H. Blackall.**

This is a highly subjective judgment. Furthermore, it is very difficult to make any genuine comparison with his other theatres. All but five of the 22 theatres Blackall designed for Boston have been destroyed.

In The Gaiety, Blackall solved major engineering challenges, used new building methods, established a model for fire safety, and created exceptional acoustics. It is worth noting that in Blackall's own scrapbooks, now kept in the Boston Public Library, he had more pages on The Gaiety than any of his other theatres, apart from The Colonial and The Metropolitan. This suggests that he thought well of The Gaiety.

Indeed, the mere fact that The Gaiety is one of one of five restored or restorable survivors of the once-vast oeuvre of a significant architect like Blackall makes saving The Gaiety all the more urgent. The Boston Landmarks Commission's Theatre Survey states that, "...only three [of Blackall's theaters] are of greater significance [than The Gaiety]."

**The Gaiety represents the kind of practical "modern" theatre built at the height of the show business era.**

The phrase "the show business era" is too vague to be useful in a report of this gravity.

**Blackall built many of these no-nonsense theatres. They have not survived because they are no longer up-to-date production-wise, their architecture is uninspiring compared to other Boston theatres, and the audience for live performances has decreased substantially with the introduction of other forms of entertainment.**

As noted in **3.1 Historic Significance / Summary**, The Gaiety could hardly be described as a no-nonsense theatre. It was a highly decorated, "lavish" downtown venue that held its own on the Boston Rialto.

As discussed above, its architecture – far from being "uninspiring" – represents an exceptional Boston structure that was informed by the architectural vision on Boston's native-born Louis Sullivan.

As to production capabilities, The Gaiety, though its proscenium is as wide as the Colonial's, will probably never host a Broadway blockbuster. However, for the very large number of musical organizations in Boston needing a 1,500 seat-house with good acoustics, The Gaiety is ideal. Also, producers of light opera and chamber opera often make do with far less than what The Gaiety can offer, with its grid and fly space, its deep stage, its capacity for full modern lighting installation, and, again, its acoustics.

The statement that "the audience for live performances has decreased" is bogus and flies in the face of dozens of demographic tracking mechanisms. Audiences are growing for all of the performing arts, as has been cited in the effort to reopen the Paramount, the

Modern and the Opera House. Even an elite art-form like opera is attracting new and younger audiences.

Borrowing a quote from the Study Report two pages later in **Section B: Blackall's Theatres**:

In his writings, Blackall referred to this type of theater as 'American,' a word he uses almost synonymously for practical and democratic. Blackall thought highly enough of The Gaiety to save extensive news clippings and the program from the theatre's dedication and opening night in his own personal albums. These are maintained in the Boston Public Library.

### **B. Blackall's Theatres**

This section of the Study Report should be read closely. It is filled with powerful arguments why The Gaiety Theatre – the last of its kind – should be saved. None more so than the mention that:

Among Blackall's theatres falling squarely into the "common sense" category are The Gaiety, Casino, Plymouth and National.

All these theatres are gone, except for The Gaiety.

### **C. Fireproof Construction**

**By the time that The Gaiety was built, fireproof construction was commonplace.** Blackall wrote 35 additions to the Boston fire code for theatres. The Gaiety is the first to be built after the adoption of these codes. With both the codes and the theatre having been created from the same mind, The Gaiety provides an exceptional example of the latest thinking and practice of fire safety in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The fire safety codes written by Blackall are far more stringent than the 1885 codes (amended in 1896) then in place. As such, they mark a major change in the way the City of Boston addressed issues of fire safety in theatres. The Study Report's contention that there are no substantial differences is untenable.

A comparative study of The Gaiety, the first Boston theatre built after Blackall's 1907 rewriting of the fire safety codes, and The Globe, built in 1903, reveal major differences. While fire codes prior to 1907 may have had the stated intent of fire proofing theatres, it was only with the revisions by Blackall that they came close to achieving that.

This issue is discussed fully in an earlier section of this report, **New Information on The Gaiety / Fire Codes and Safety**. As detailed there, The Globe, with a capacity of 1400 as compared to The Gaiety's 1700, had serious deficiencies in the number of exits, and in access to those exits.

For example, there were only two emergency doors for the entire orchestra in The Globe, and these opened into narrow passageways between two other buildings. There are no exterior fire escapes from upper floors; patrons would either have had to exit via the main stairs to the foyer, or descend a narrow winding staircase located in the box seats within the auditorium.

Conditions like these are expressly forbidden after the 1907 codes. Per the requirements of Blackall's new code, The Gaiety had 43 exits, versus 10 at The Globe. Aisles at The Gaiety were more numerous and wider. Altogether, ten of Blackall's new innovations in the 1907 code would have prevented The Globe from obtaining a building or occupancy permit.

Panicked patrons fleeing a fire in The Globe, stood a serious chance of being blocked by the kind of pile-up at the exits as had happened three years before during a fire at the Iroquois Theatre in Chicago. With the increase in the number and size of exit doors, as exemplified by The Gaiety, the possibility of that is greatly lessened.

#### **D. Steel Frame Construction**

**Jordan Hall, constructed about 1903...is an earlier example of a Boston theatre where the balcony is not supported by columns.**

This is not true. The Jordan Hall balcony is, in fact, supported by columns. As detailed in **New Information About The Gaiety / Structural Innovations**, these columns, are embedded in the wall that separates the auditorium from the foyer.

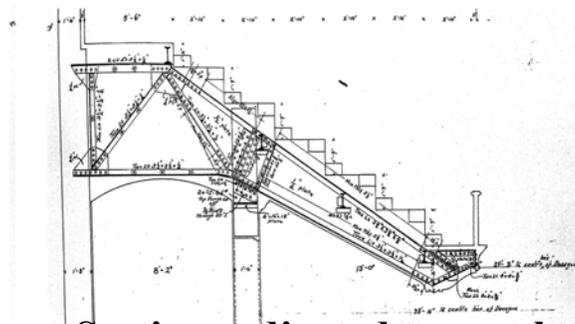
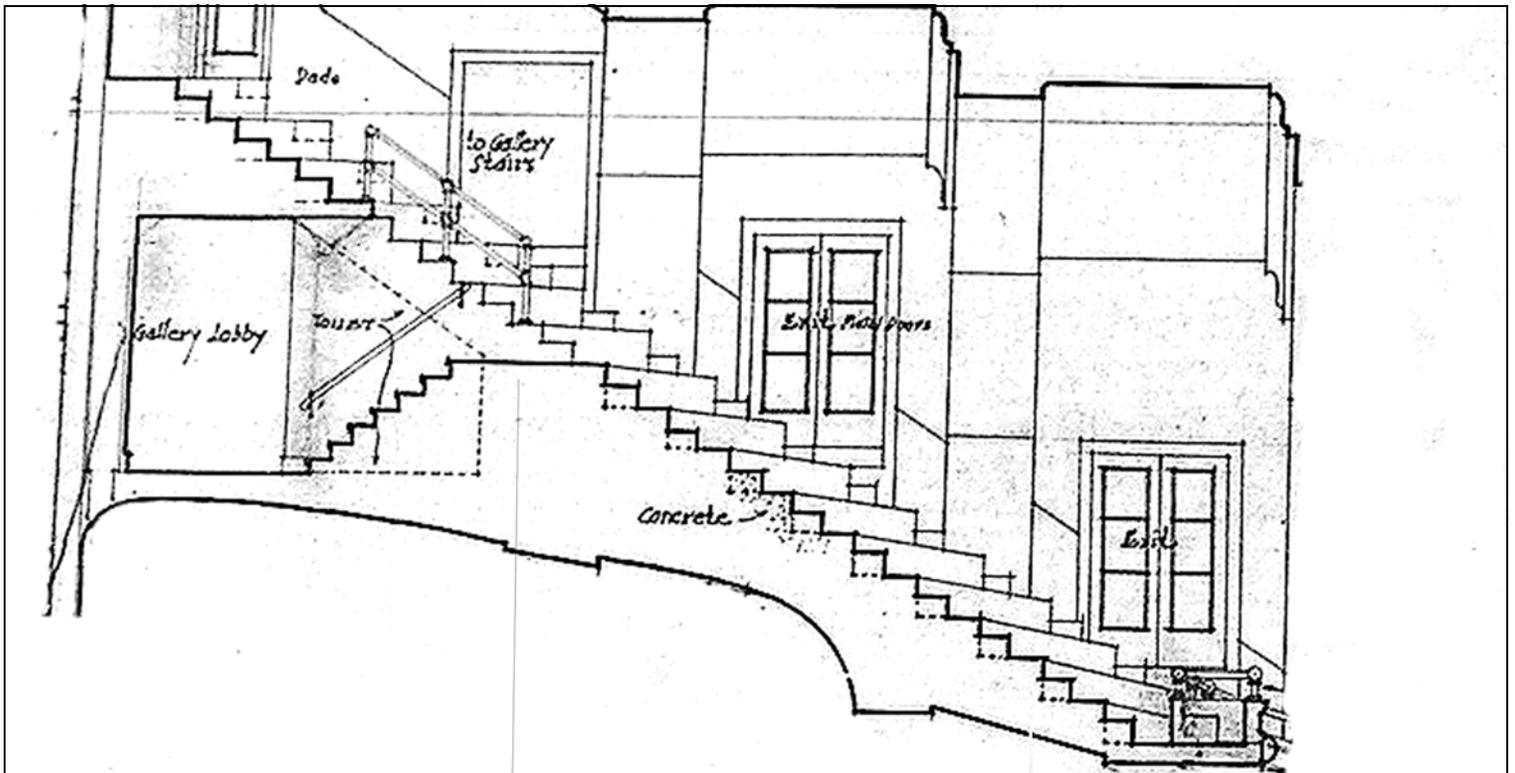
Only three of the seven rows of seats in the Jordan Hall balcony project beyond these support columns. In The Gaiety, 17 rows of seats are supported with no columns. An argument based on a comparison between Jordan Hall and The Gaiety has no merit, except in the matter of acoustics.

The Boston Landmarks Commission's Theatre Survey concurs, stating:

...the theatre was structurally advanced in its use of a single girder, called 'one of the largest steel girders ever used in a building in this city' to support the balcony, thus eliminating the need for supporting columns.

# Gaiety Theatre Balcony (1908)

49' deep 17 rows with no columns



# Jordan Hall Balcony (1903)

22' deep 7 rows Note: only 3 rows projecting beyond columns

**Sections adjusted to equal scale show relative proportions and projections.**

The Landmarks Study Report denies the significance of The Gaiety's engineering by comparing its balconies to those of the 1903 Jordan Hall, claiming erroneously that Jordan hall preceeded it in having balconies unsupported by columns. Jordan Hall's 22' deep, 7 row balconies multiple cantilever system were supported by columns in the vestibule wall. Only three rows overhang the orchestra. The balconies of The Gaiety, which measure 49' deep with 17 rows, are the first in Boston supported by long span girders. Indeed Blackall achieved the most daring balcony projection of any Boston venue until the RKO Boston nearly 20 years later. In his article in *Brickbuilder*, Blackall presents The Gaiety (nee New Lyceum) as the apotheosis of balcony engineering, which he achieved by means of the largest girders attempted to date. The massive built up riveted I-beams measured 54" x 12" in section, and spanned 57ft. They were buried in reinforced concrete for superior fire protection. Yet even with these huge beams the balconies felt airy because the ceiling height of 60 feet permitted generous spaces to exist between and above these generous and grand seating areas. LeMessurier Consultants comments on the inapptness of the study report's Jordan Hall comparison: ***The balcony of Jordan Hall is an unremarkable and modest design...supported on columns. The Blackall design for The Gaiety is much more structurally daring.***

## **E. Acoustics**

This issue has been discussed at great length earlier in this report in **New Information About The Gaiety / Acoustics**.

**In his series of articles on theatre design in *The Brickbuilder*, Blackall makes similarly dismissive remarks. The March 1908 issue contains the following statement: “Acoustics is the one baffling problem which has so far set at naught scientific research, etc”.**

Blackall’s statement needs to be placed in perspective. In 1907, Blackall completed construction of an auditorium on the campus of The University of Illinois, his alma mater. In its first months of use, it became apparent that the acoustics were dreadful.

His embarrassed response to the University was to encourage them to consult a physicist, Floyd Watson, much as Sabine had previously been engaged by Harvard. In his memoirs, Blackall wrote:

Ever since Dean Sabine's knowledge was available I have consulted with him on every hall of audience, and every banking room or manufactory where quiet is desired, and today we always treat our buildings acoustically and are reasonably sure of the results.

Blackall’s statement in the March 1908 *Brickbuilder* appears to be his attempt to explain away one of his major failures.

**He [Sabine] had 13 clients throughout the country, including the new Boston Opera House, but not The Gaiety.**

The suggestion that Sabine had only 13 clients is an unsupported conclusion based on incomplete research.

Sabine rarely asked for, or received payment for his work. He received nothing for his work on Symphony Hall. Sabine, who was salaried by Harvard University, viewed his work in theatres, such as The Gaiety, as experiments in the unfolding science of acoustics. They were his laboratories.

Blackall was the most prolific builder of theatres in Boston. From Sabine’s point of view, each of Blackall’s new auditoria was another opportunity to test his theories. It is known that the two men worked closely for many years. Even if Sabine was not initially consulted in the design of The Gaiety, it is highly unlikely – given all that is known about his close working relationship with Blackall – that he did no work at The Gaiety.

Given the presence to this day in The Gaiety of felt-covered horse-hair panels of a type used elsewhere by Sabine, it is reasonable to conclude that at some point between 1908, when The Gaiety was built, and 1919, when he died, Sabine was involved in The Gaiety.

This makes the building important to acoustical scientists, who have relatively few opportunities to study buildings in which Sabine worked, given his early death at age 50, just as he was entering what would have been the height of his career.

This, however, is not to say that Sabine's work in The Gaiety was not contemporaneous with its construction. Just as there is no conclusive documentation stating that he did work there then, there is no conclusive documenting stating that he did not.

**This padding was likely installed as part of remodeling projects in the 1930's or 1940's when the theatre was converted for showing films, as its decorative overlay matches that of the projection booth.**

This statement is not supported by any analysis of the fabric of the wall panels beyond a superficial visual observation. Until such analysis is undertaken, there is no way to know either whether these fabrics which appear the same, in fact are the same, or even from what era they date.

The Friends of The Gaiety are prepared to cover the cost of an independent analysis of the materials in these wall panels. Requests for access to the theatre to conduct such tests have been repeatedly denied by the present owner.

**The quality of The Gaiety's acoustics is difficult to determine given present conditions. The building is unheated and is missing most of the seats as well as other building elements that would affect the sound.**

Dr. David Griesinger, who conducted acoustic tests in The Gaiety in October, 2002, acknowledges that these adverse conditions are not helpful. Nonetheless, using the kinds of formulae he employs in his work for opera houses and concert halls world wide (most recently the New Bolshoi in Moscow), he has devised various means of compensating for this. His report is based on actual acoustical measurements and extensive computer analysis.

Douglas Sturz, an acoustician hired by the present owner to refute Dr. Griesinger has stated that he took no measurements of the acoustics. His report, submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission as part of a Feasibility Study funded by the present owner, is based solely on visual observation and, in his words, "walking around and making some noises." As did Dr. Griesinger, Mr. Sturz concluded that in most of the theatre, the acoustics are well suited to music.

### **3.3 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation**

As detailed earlier in this report, The Gaiety Theatre more than meets Criteria B, C, and D. It is eligible to meet Criterion A, as stated by the Study Report in section

#### **6.1 / E. National Register Listing:**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has determined that The Gaiety Theatre is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Furthermore, The Boston Landmarks Commission's Central Business District Survey recommended The Gaiety for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Consequently, the underlined statement that "the theatre does not meet the criteria for Landmark designation" is disingenuous.

### **5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT**

#### **5.1 Background**

**By the 1960's, when Scollay Square had been razed to construct Government Center, the adult entertainment district that it had hosted migrated to Lower Washington Street and became known as the Combat Zone.**

The adult entertainment uses did not give the area this name. A Washington Post story headlined "Boston's Red-Light District Flickers" was reprinted in *The Tech*, MIT, March 21, 1995, explains

It is known officially as the Lower Washington Street Adult Entertainment District, but everyone calls it the Combat Zone.

...The area acquired its name before it became zoned for sex. Initially, it was home to a number of small tailor shops, and troops shipped through Boston during World War II got their uniforms altered there. When members of different branches bumped into each other on the sidewalks, combat often erupted.

Later, during the 1950s and 1960s, Boston, like many cities, embarked on a large-scale "urban-renewal" effort, which involved leveling districts of the city and replacing them with new office towers and apartment buildings.

One of the last places to go under the wrecker's ball was Scollay Square, which had been home to Boston's burlesque houses. When the area was torn down to make way for the new City Hall and government center, the honky-tonk businesses migrated to the Combat Zone.

**Zoning to formalize the adult entertainment district dates to 1974**

The Boston Redevelopment Authority, after clearing Scollay Square, concentrated these uses in the “Combat Zone” by zoning an Adult Entertainment District on lower Washington Street.

This severely and negatively impacted the then-operating Gaiety/Publix Theatre. With the presence of sex shops and their clientele, the family-oriented second-run double bills that had been staples at the Publix, could no longer draw a crowd. In their place, kung-fu films were presented aimed at attracting audiences from neighboring Chinatown. Until that time, The Gaiety, as remembered by Kenneth Loew, nephew and employee of E.M. Loew, “was always a money maker.”

**In 1961 members of the Boston architectural community prepared *The Architects Plan*. Among other recommendations to revitalize the central part of Boston, the 1961 plan proposed the development of new towers from the Government Center area proceeding southerly along the Tremont and Washington Street corridors and then turning westerly below Boston Common to follow the Mass Turnpike. The 1961 plan first used the term “High Spine” for the progression of towers, and “hinge Block” for the block containing The Gaiety, where the High Spine pivoted sharply toward the Back Bay.**

The referenced Architects’ Plan “High Spine” concept has long been discredited, acknowledged as simply a marketing package for what was perceived as an inevitable trend of tower construction; it is a concept no longer respected even by the design community, and evoked primarily by developers.

**An amendment to Article 38 created PDA IV within the block where The Gaiety Theater is located. PDA’s allow developers to mitigate additional height and density by offering other amenities that contribute to BRA and City of Boston goals.**

The report implies that The Gaiety is a PDA, and thus a developer using that site is by right allowed to build additional height. The report also opines that the “amenities” the developer owes for this height will be beneficial contributions to BRA and City of Boston goals.

In fact, the Midtown Cultural District Plan explicitly states (p. 105):

Limiting the heights of new buildings in areas with historic buildings will reduce the development pressures to destroy the historic buildings and will instead steer those forces into the renovation of historic buildings.

The Plan expressly intends (p. 101) to

preserve the historic character of the area by protecting historic buildings, blocks, and street patterns; steering major development into areas that contain few historic structures; limiting building heights in areas with historic buildings; and promoting the renovation of historic buildings. This commitment to historic preservation ends a 30-year era in which more than 1,200 historic downtown buildings were destroyed for such projects as Government Center, the Central Artery, and Charles River Park.

And on page 102, the Plan states:

The Midtown Cultural District Plan will not only protect the district's historic buildings, it will, for the first time in the city's history, protect the historic blocks of buildings that give Boston's commercial areas their unique scale and character.

The Plan intent is specifically (p. 109) to:

- Limit the height of new buildings in areas with a large concentration of historic buildings.
- Establish the Ladder Blocks Historic District.
- Protect about 130 historic buildings from demolition or inappropriate renovation.
- Establish a 5-year moratorium on the destruction of Category III buildings, allowing time for the Boston Landmarks Commission to review and vote on permanent protections for those buildings.
- Steer new construction to areas with few historic buildings and channel a portion of Boston's growth into vacant historic buildings.
- Strengthen the Boston Landmarks Commission's power to designate historic buildings as landmarks and strengthen the city's power to create historic districts.

Because the Study Report omits the plentiful documentation favoring preservation and includes only material, it implies that the demise of The Gaiety is inevitable and even beneficial, apparently in support of the arguments for demolition as promoted by the BRA and the developer.

**Between 1977 and 2003, a total of 10 Theatre District buildings have been designated as Boston Landmarks.**

The Midtown Cultural District Plan proudly says (p107): "The area's large concentration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theaters is one of the best examples of an early theater district in the country."

On the Cultural District Conceptual Plan: "Boston has the highest concentration of historic theaters of any American city outside of New York." On this Plan drawing, The Gaiety is specifically designated as "Vacant theater – worthy of preservation."

Given this unusually dense cluster of historic structures, it only makes sense to include The Gaiety. The Gaiety is a theatre. This is the Theatre District. Saving The Gaiety strengthens the architectural fabric of the neighborhood. Putting The Gaiety back into use will increase the critical mass of culture seekers needed to make the Theatre District vibrant.

**The *Midtown Cultural District Plan* concluded that the preservation of The Gaiety Theatre needed further study.**

This statement is wrong. The Plan clearly designates The Gaiety itself as “worthy of preservation” on the Cultural District Conceptual Plan. (facing p.23)

The Plan says: “The reuse of the Publix/Gaiety or Pilgrim Theatres on the Hinge Block needs further study.” Two sentences later, the Plan notes that the “Publix/Gaiety or the Pilgrim Theatre could become a new Asian performing arts center. These policies will maintain the historic and well-distributed pattern of theater uses throughout the district.” The Pilgrim Theatre was demolished in 1995. The Gaiety is left to carry out this community goal.

It is worth noting that the Plan also states:

In order to preserve the existing concentration of theatre structures and uses in the Midtown Cultural District, the zoning plan will prohibit demolition or change of use of the existing theatres in the district.

## **5.2 Current Planning Issues**

**A subsidiary of the Kensington Investment Company, Inc., purchased The Gaiety Theatre on October 28, 1986. The Gaiety is within their assembly of four buildings and a vacant parcel to create PDA IV.**

According to public documents in the City Assessor’s Office, Kensington Investment Company, Inc., owns only three buildings in this area. The company also owns the second floor above another building, but has no claim to square footage of the ground beneath it. The vacant parcel is owned by the BRA. Two other privately-owned properties comprise the proposed site.

The properties owned by the developer do not create PDA IV. PDA IV is an area within the Midtown Cultural District where qualifying projects may apply for PDA designation.

**A petition for designation of The Gaiety Theatre as a Boston Landmark was accepted by the Boston Landmarks Commission on November 26, 2002, by a 5-4 vote.**

The vote was 5-3.

**The project review and approval process began in November 2001. The FPIR (Final Project Impact Report) is scheduled for filing in March 2003, to be accompanied by a 60-day comment period. The PDA Development Plan, to be submitted in March 2003 as well, will trigger a 60-day comment period. All approvals are anticipated by June 2003.**

The FPIR was filed on March 10, 2003.

The PDA Development Plan was not submitted in March, as stated. On April 3, in response to questions at a public meeting convened by the BRA as to when the PDA Development plan would be filed, J. Ralph Cole, the president of Kensington Investment Company, Inc., accompanied by his counsel, Matthew J. Kiefer, said they did not know. Mr. Cole stated that "It will be as long as it takes." In response to a question, he effectively indicated that it could take as many as six months, and possibly more.

The delay is caused by the fact that Kensington does not own sufficient land required to be eligible for a PDA designation. A minimum of one full acre, or 43,560 square feet, is required. At this time, Kensington is saying that it has 30,227 square feet.

But even this figure is contested, as two privately-owned properties comprising 2,396 square feet would have to be taken by eminent domain. The legality of those takings is open to challenge on several fronts. Nicholas Romano, owner of one of the properties, has stated publicly that he will fight any attempt to take his property by eminent domain. (*The Sampan*, December 20, 2002)

The 30,227 square feet also includes 6,931 square feet of property owned by the BRA, specifically a vacant lot and the alley known as Boylston Square.

At one point, Kensington Investment Company, Inc., had sought to include the China Trade Center, 15,390 square feet in land area, in the project "site", but dropped that idea after public protests that the China Trade Center is not part of the project, that Kensington has no control over the China Trade Center as legally required for site assembly, and that the China Trade Center is not within the PDA-eligible area of the Midtown Cultural District. Despite these impediments, in a public statement on April 3, Kensington counsel Matthew Kiefer reported that Kensington was once again looking at including The China Trade Center.

Mr. Kiefer also stated on April 3 that Kensington was actively considering the inclusion of the abutting public streets in the area. The legality of this proposal, for which there is no precedent, and which is counter to the intent of the PDA purpose (to allow flexibility for planning large development areas) has previously been publicly challenged. Again, as all project documents acknowledge, all land within a project "site" must be within the control of the proponent, and public ways cannot be encumbered in this way.

Without the full acre and the PDA designation, the height of the Kensington apartment tower would be restricted to 155 feet, or about half of what is planned.

Even if the Kensington does manage to assemble a full acre, a PDA designation is not automatically guaranteed. Developers seeking PDA designation are subject to a rigorous review process that considers all project impacts.

Given these obstacles, the Kensington project can not be built as planned. Consequently, the Study Plan's statement that "all approvals are anticipated by June, 2003," is unfounded.

### **5.3 Current Zoning**

**The Gaiety Theatre is located within PDA IV of the Midtown Cultural District. The allowed maximum height is 290 feet and the maximum FAR is 15.4.**

While The Gaiety Theater is located within PDA IV, which allows a maximum height of 290', this project does not, as discussed above, qualify to be designated as a PDA and the applicable zoning for the project is 155'.

The Study Report is here recycling misleading information that appears in documents submitted to the BRA by the Kensington Investment Company, that the project is entitled to build to PDA-allowed height and density simply by virtue of being located within the boundary of one of the four PDA-eligible districts in the Midtown Cultural Area.

In fact, a project within a PDA-eligible district is not automatically entitled to PDA privileges. It must also meet the Zoning Code criteria for designation: one full acre of development land, fully under the control of the development proponent. With this project, there are several problems:

1. Kensington does not own or control all the parcels it includes in its "site" description.
2. To acquire the outstanding parcels, the BRA is offering Kensington its use of urban renewal eminent domain, though it is not legally entitled to exercise it on these parcels, lacking several required approvals.
3. Even the purchase or seizure of these parcels would only bring Kensington's total land area only to about 30,000 square feet, as acknowledged on page 2-4 of the Draft Project Impact Report. An acre is 43,560 square feet.
4. Kensington tried to include the City of Boston-owned China Trade Center and Boylston Square alley in the "site" boundary. Public protest discouraged this plan. Most recently, Kensington announced publicly, although not in any officially filed document, that the acreage shortfall will be made up by

including the sidewalk and cartway of Washington Street, to the centerline, as well as the public way of LaGrange Street in the “site” boundary. Kensington has claimed that including public ways in PDA boundaries has precedent; however, no other PDA has been found which actually depends on public ways to count as PDA-qualifying acreage.

Thus, the Study Report’s final statement that, “All approvals are anticipated by June 2003,” is unfounded in view of these several regulatory obstacles, and appears intended to discourage opposing action.

## **6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

### **6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission**

#### **A: Individual Landmark Designation**

**[The Gaiety Theatre] falls short of meeting any of the criteria, historic or architectural, required for designation as a Boston landmark.**

The Gaiety Theatre more than meets three of the four specified criteria, and is eligible for the fourth.

#### **C: Preservation Restriction**

**[The owner] is anticipating final approvals for new construction in the spring of 2003.**

The Kensington Place project cannot be built as planned. The expectation that final approvals will be obtained by spring of 2003 is unfounded.

#### **D: Preservation Plan**

**On March 3, 2003, the owner released a new feasibility study for the renovation of The Gaiety Theatre. The conclusion states that the reuse of the theatre is possible and also lists major obstacles.**

The Feasibility Study commissioned by Kensington puts the cost of renovation at about \$25 million. According to experts consulted by The Friends, that figure is wildly inflated. Even Kensington’s own engineering study prepared in 2001 by Maurice Reidy Associates posited that it would only “...cost several millions of dollars to restore the building to its original eminence.” In 1995, the Boston Globe reported that an agreement between the Foxy Lady strip club and Kensington projected a \$3 to \$4 million restoration of The Gaiety. The article appears in the Appendix.

The Kensington figure incorrectly assumes that The Gaiety will be presenting Broadway blockbusters and needs a stage house the size of the Wang’s. The costing, therefore, includes the acquisition of adjoining land needed in order to expand wing space. It also includes the restoration of the entire office building attached to the theatre.

The best use of The Gaiety is not as a Broadway house, but rather as a concert hall which is desperately needed. Boston already has three other Broadway houses with a fourth soon coming on line.

Kensington posits for costing purposes that the restoration will involve 52,000 square feet. By contrast, LeMessurier Consultants have stated that the figure is more accurately placed at 25,000 square feet.

The restoration of the B.F. Keith Memorial/Opera House is being costed at \$450 per square foot. Applying this figure to the LeMessurier Consultants' square footage, the cost is about \$12 million.

By point of comparison the Opera House has over 90,000 square feet. The total cost there including a new stage house is pegged at \$36 million.

David Colfer, the general manager of the Spingold Theatre at Brandeis University, and formerly the general manager of the Colonial Theatre during its 1995 restoration, has developed a spread sheet to show that a restored Gaiety can be a profitable venture. His experience in commercial and non-profit theatrical ventures leaves him uniquely qualified to prepare this commentary. The spread sheet (see next page) shows a likely range of revenue streams at The Gaiety Theatre based on various rental and ticket price scenarios.

## **6.2 Impact of Alternatives**

### **A. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation**

**Without landmark designation, the City would be unable to offer protection for the building or guide future changes to the building under Chapter 772.**

This would be a great, and preventable, loss to the people of the City Of Boston.

### **B. Preservation Plan**

The Feasibility Study dated March 3, 2003, allows the present owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and reconsider all options for development of the property. The Friends of the Gaiety have twice written to the present owner requesting meetings to discuss these very issues. No response has been received.

The Friends consider the Feasibility Study a useful first step towards considering the practical issues of renovating the theatre. We are concerned, however, that the inflated cost has been put forward so that restoration will, in fact, seem unfeasible.

The Friends are prepared to work with the present owners, and to raise funds both for restoration, and the creation of a Gaiety Theatre endowment to support programming.

**Gaiety Theater Gross Potential Scenarios**

Seating Assumptions	Qty.
Orchestra	600
First Balcony	350
Second Balcony	400
Boxes	50
Total	1400

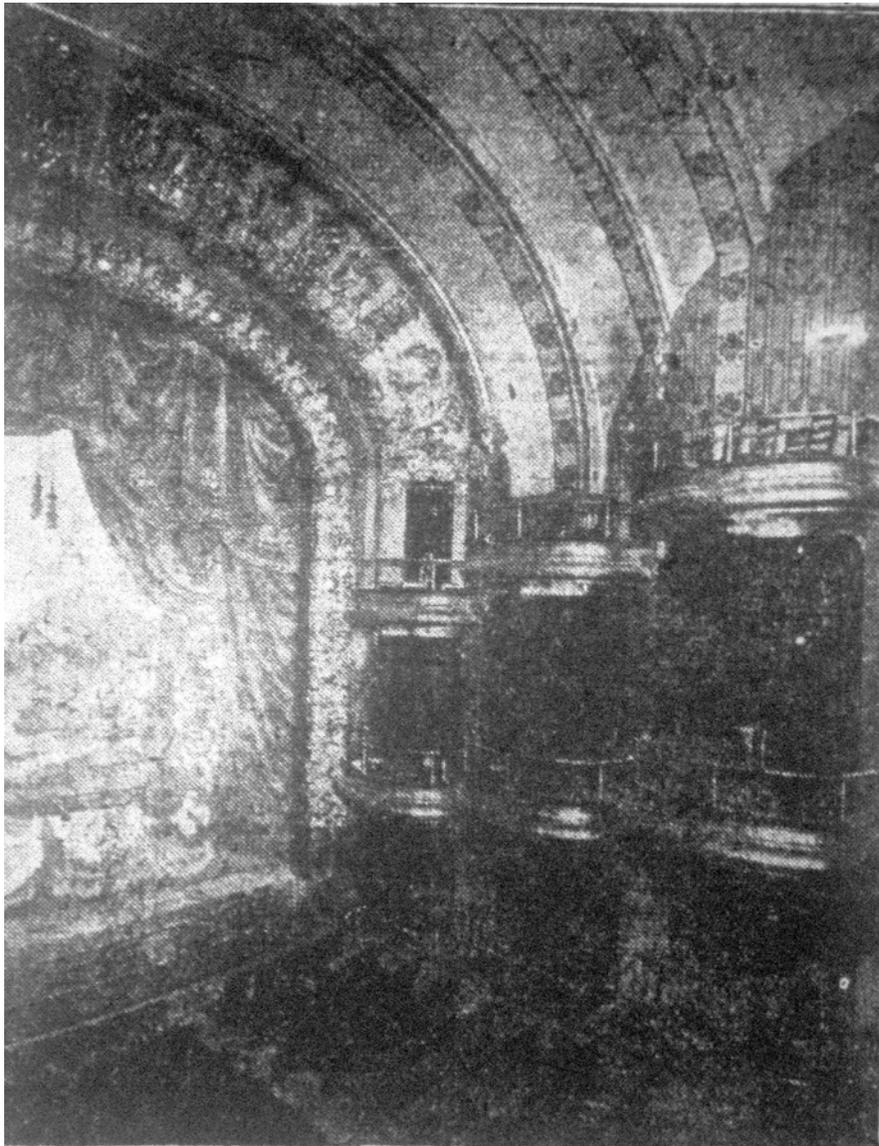
Pricing Assumptions	Qty.
Top Price	800
Second Price	350
Third Price	250
	1400

Sample Prices	Scenario 1			Scenario 2			Scenario 3			Scenario 4			Total Number of Perfs/Year		
	Top Price	Second Price	Third Price	Top Price	Second Price	Third Price	Top Price	Second Price	Third Price	Top Price	Second Price	Third Price			
Per Performance Total	\$ 60	\$ 50	\$ 40	\$ 75,500	\$ 50	\$ 40	\$ 30	\$ 40,000	\$ 30	\$ 20	\$ 10	\$ 32,000	\$ 20	\$ 10	\$ 24,000
Three perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 226,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 184,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 142,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 100,500
Number of wks	16	32	44	3,624,000	16	32	44	2,952,000	16	32	44	2,280,000	16	32	1,608,000
Four perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 302,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 2,952,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 4,560,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 3,216,000
Number of wks	32	32	44	9,664,000	32	32	44	8,118,000	32	32	44	6,270,000	32	32	4,422,000
Five perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 377,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 246,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 190,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 134,000
Number of wks	32	32	44	12,080,000	32	32	44	3,936,000	32	32	44	3,040,000	32	32	2,144,000
Six perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 453,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 307,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 237,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 167,500
Number of wks	32	32	44	14,496,000	32	32	44	4,920,000	32	32	44	3,800,000	32	32	2,680,000
Seven perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 528,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 369,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 285,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 201,000
Number of wks	32	32	44	16,912,000	32	32	44	5,904,000	32	32	44	4,560,000	32	32	3,216,000
Eight perfs per week	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 604,000	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 430,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 44	\$ 332,500	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 234,500
Number of wks	32	32	44	19,328,000	32	32	44	6,888,000	32	32	44	5,320,000	32	32	3,752,000
	32	32	44	26,576,000	32	32	44	18,942,000	32	32	44	14,630,000	32	32	10,318,000
	44	44	44	604,000	44	44	44	492,000	44	44	44	380,000	44	44	268,000
	44	44	44	9,664,000	44	44	44	7,872,000	44	44	44	6,080,000	44	44	4,288,000
	44	44	44	19,328,000	44	44	44	15,744,000	44	44	44	12,160,000	44	44	8,576,000
	44	44	44	26,576,000	44	44	44	21,648,000	44	44	44	16,720,000	44	44	11,792,000

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Therefore, the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the Gaiety Theatre not be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.**

It is not possible to read the Study Report and this report without concluding that The Gaiety Theatre is historically or architecturally significant. A landmark designation is long overdue.



**Opening Night, November 23, 1908**