



Theater Research Projects:

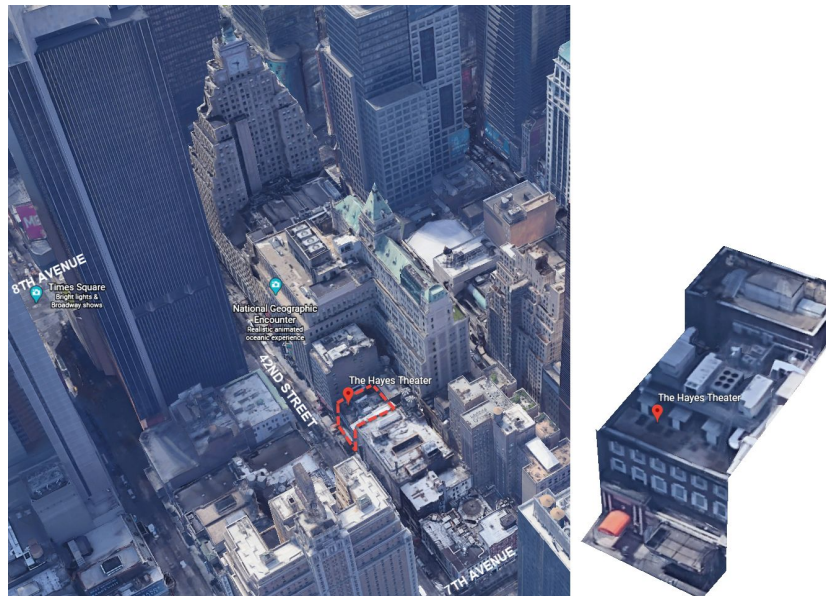
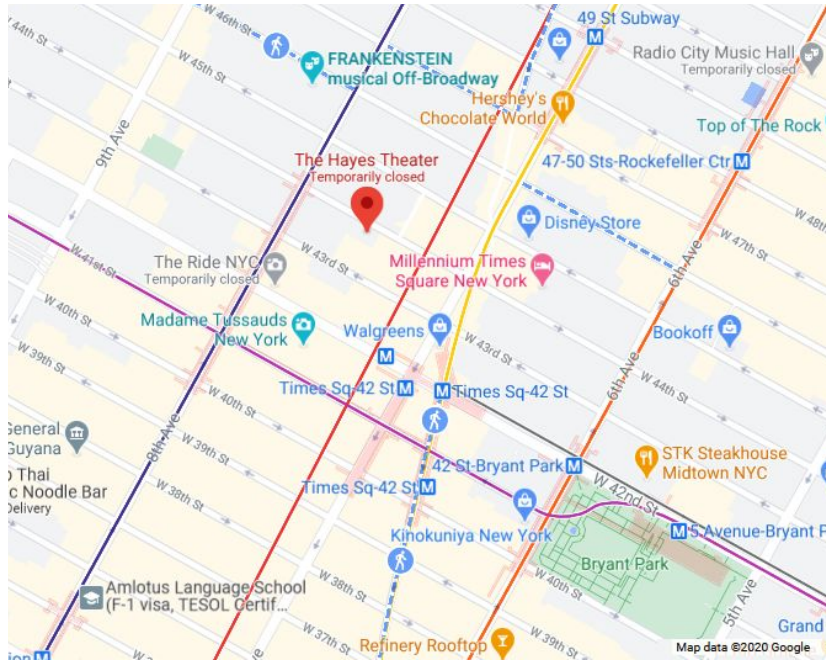
The Helen Hayes Theater

History of the Theatre, ID. Fall 2020

Act II – Architectural Analysis of The Helen Hayes Theatre
By: _____

Site Map:

240 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036



Google Maps & Earth.10/27/2020

THEATER'S PREVIOUS NAMES:

The Helen Hayes theater we know today was previously known by many other names¹:

2018 - Helen Hayes Theater (Current)

1983 - Helen Hayes Theatre

1983 - Little Theatre

1964 - Winthrop Ames Theatre

1959 -63 - Little Theatre. CBS, ABC, and Westinghouse Corporation rented out the space under the original name of the theater

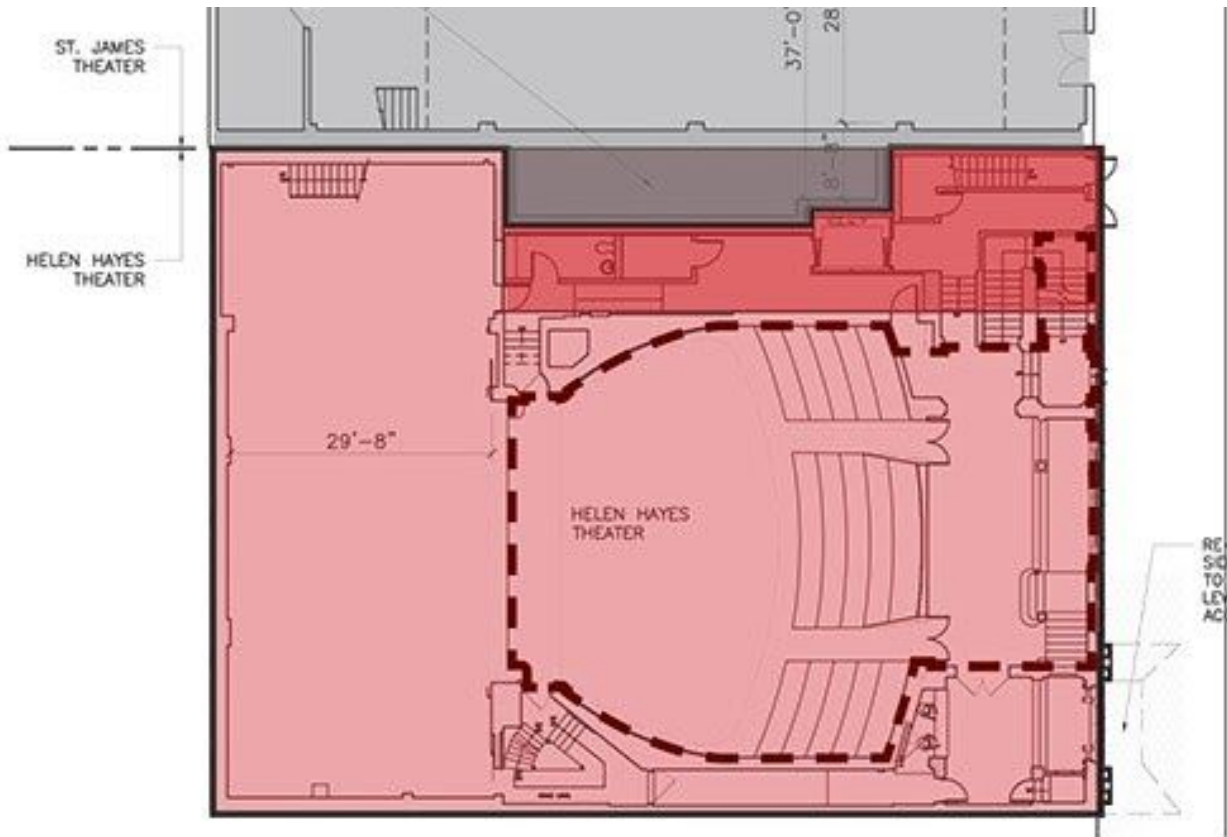
1941 - New York Times Hall

1936 - Anne Nichols' Little Theatre

1912 - Little Theatre

Architectural Plans:

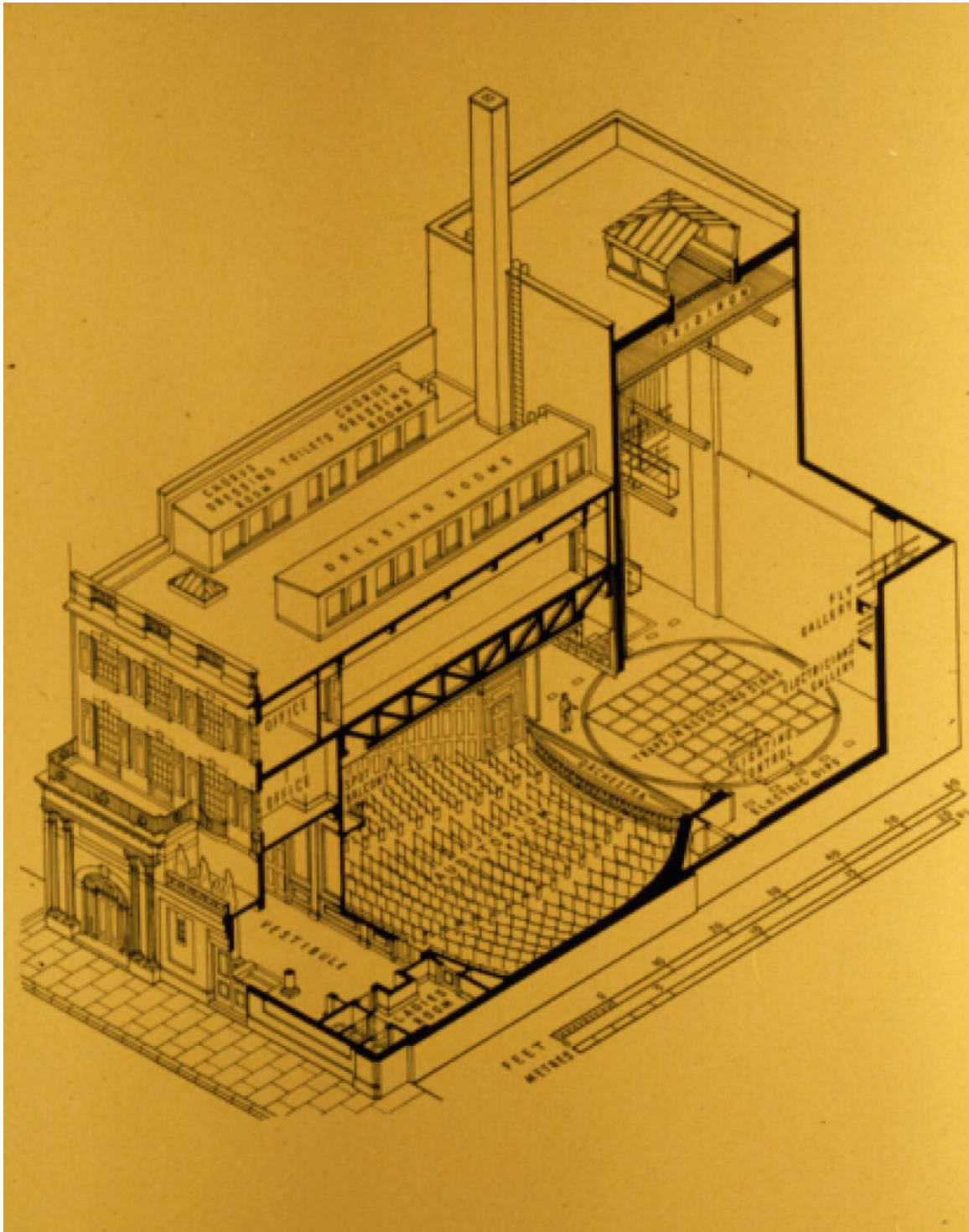
Originally a one level seating with 299 seats, the theater was renovated in 1915 to increase seating to 600 with the addition of another level for seating. Throughout the years the theater had served the world of theater and tv production. In 2017 the latest rounds of renovation and addition of the adjacent lot to the theater was completed. The theater is now owned and run by the Second Stage off Broadway company.



¹See Endnotes at the end of this document

²See Endnotes at the end of this document

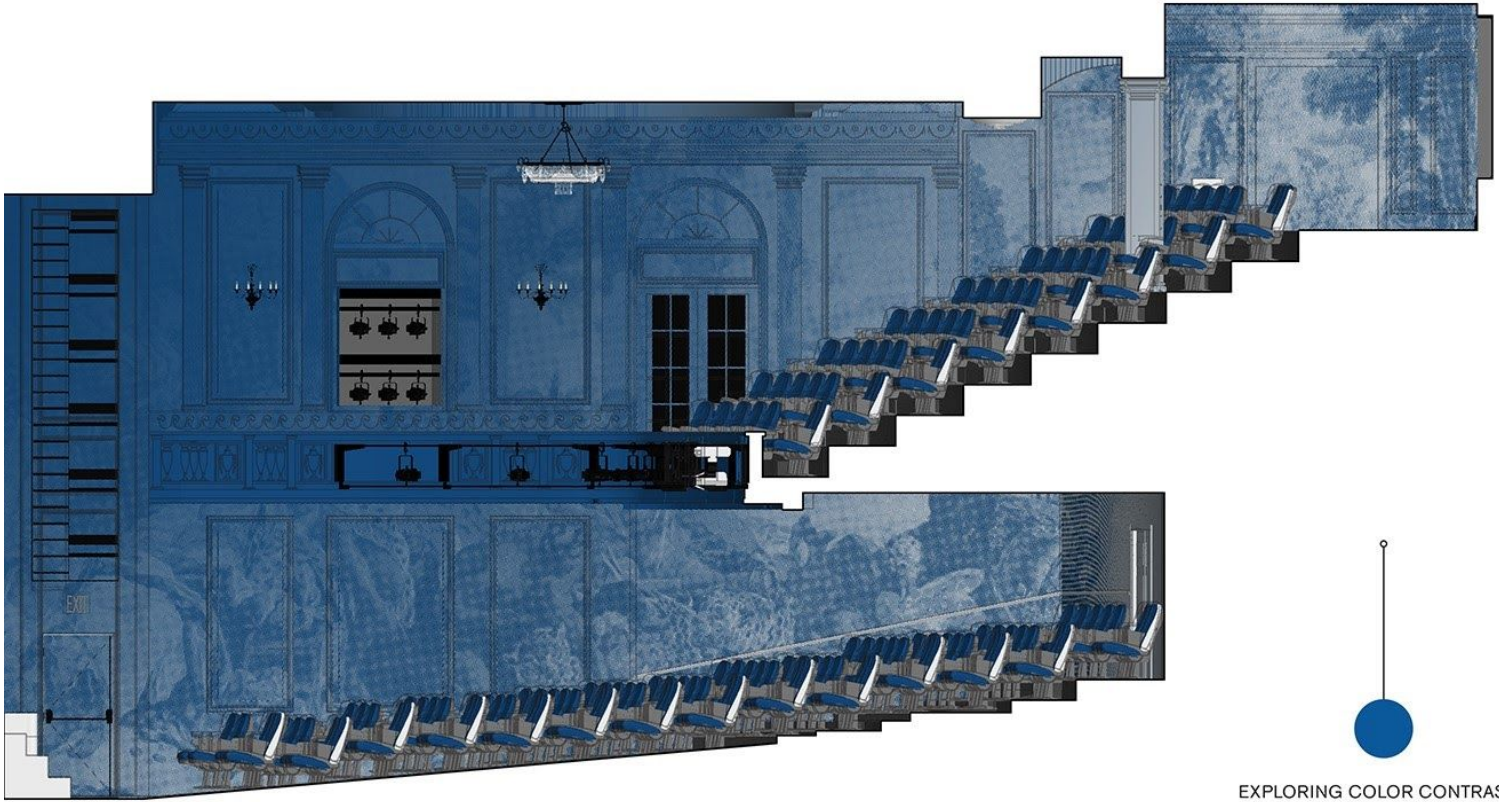
Isometric Section of The Little Theater in 1912:



Theatre and Playhouse. Richard Leacroft and Helen Leacroft. Methuen Drama. 1984³

³See Endnotes at the end of this document

Latest Section of The Helen Hayes Theater as of 2017:



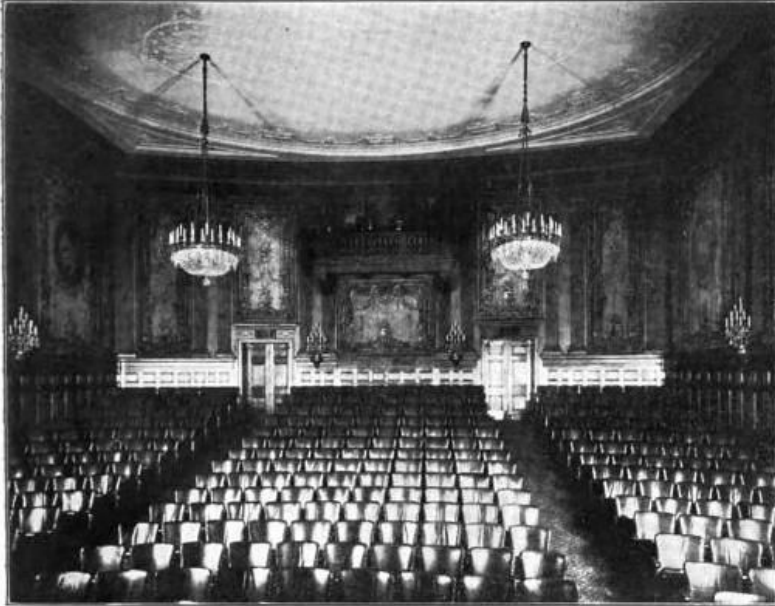
EXPLORING COLOR CONTRAST
BTWN OMBRE AND HALFTONE

LPC Public Hearing Review.Rockwell Group.YIMBY.12,02,2015⁴

⁴See Endnotes at the end of this document

1912 TO 1920 CHANGE IN SEATING:

1912:



THE LITTLE THEATRE—AUDITORIUM

"A mellow drawing-room, where there are chairs for us and for our fellow-guests. Above dark wainscots the walls are hung with ancient tapestries. Over all is a white ceiling, richened and matured by a haze that comes here or goes."

The Bookman. vol. 35. Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912, pp. 241–241.⁵

1920: Balcony added



Broadway's Smallest Theater Is Reopening, This Time as a Nonprofit. Paulson, Michael. *The New York Times*. Feb 02 2018⁶

⁵See Endnotes at the end of this document

⁶See Endnotes at the end of this document

1912 TO 2015 CHANGE IN FACADE:

1912:



Figure (a)⁷

Figure (b)⁸

2015:



Figure (d)⁹

⁷ New York's latest theatrical luxury, exterior of the "Little Theatre," west Forty-fourth Street. The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1912. See Endnotes at the end of this document for full citation.

⁸ Manhattan: 44th Street (West) - Broadway. The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1920. See Endnotes at the end of this document for the full citation.

⁹Google Maps

IMAGE OF THE FINAL ACT OF "FASHION OF THE TIMES". THE FASHION SHOW TOOK PLACE IN 1947:



Broadway's Smallest Theater Is Reopening, This Time as a Nonprofit. Paulson, Michael. The New York Times. Feb 02 2018



Broadway's Smallest Theater Is Reopening, This Time as a Nonprofit. Paulson, Michael. The New York Times. Feb 02 2018 ¹⁰

¹⁰See Endnotes at the end of this document

- Original construction: When was the theatre designed and built?
 - The Little Theater was originally designed by the Harry Creighton Ingalls and F. Burrall Hoffman for the client Winthrop Ames. It was built in 1912. To this day the original materiality of the facade is maintained. Under the Landmarks Preservation statues the theater gained in 1987, the building is legally withheld to maintain the appearance of the building as close to the original construction as possible. The Little theater is #196 in the designation of Landmarks Preservation Commission.¹¹
- Is the theater a purpose-built or adapted performance space?
 - The theater is purpose built since commission. It was meant to be cozy and still is to this day a comforting space to watch plays in.
- What architectural changes were made when converted to a theatre?
 - Since the original design, the theater has expanded into the adjacent lot. It has also added in a left wing space that is double the one originally designed—the left wing. Also the theater expanded the number of seats from 299 to 597 seats.
- Describe the architectural styles of the facade and interior elements.
 - The architectural style of the building is referred to as Beaux-Arts Architecture. It touched on fusing all the classical forms of architecture (*Art nouveau*, Greek, Roman, neo-Georgian, and Colonial) with post modern architecture.
- What is the stage/audience arrangement? How are seats and sections in the auditorium arranged? Describe the dimensions and uses all the areas available to patrons.
 - The theater is and has still remained in the end stage manner; however throughout the century a balcony was added. The Seating area is roughly 50 feet by 50 feet. The stage is 30 feet deep by 75 feet long. The fly space is the same height as what is allocated to the proscenium arch.
- Looking at historical photographs, maps, and GIS databases, describe the neighborhood in which the theatre was originally built. Was it residential, industrial, or retail? Was it a known theatre district? For what types of productions or audiences was the theatre built?
 - The theater was originally built in a commercial zone. The plays that were meant to be played in this theater are more focused on the human gesture and behavior. It is not suited for plays that have too many set changes and large props. The theater is a part of what is known as Broadway theaters. The original theater was meant for the everyday folks but nowadays the theater is meant for the middle class and up. If you can afford the tickets.

¹¹Landmarks Preservation Commission LP-1346.Landmarks Preservation17 Nov. 1987. See Endnotes at the end of this document for full citation.

ENDNOTES:

1. League, The Broadway. "IBDB.com." *IBDB*, Internet Broadway Database, www.ibdb.com/theatre/hayes-theater-1238.

The theater has gone through many name change throughout the 20th century.

2. <https://newyorkyimby.com/2015/12/helen-hayes-theater-to-receive-interior-and-exterior-renovation.html>

The New York YIMBY publication documents and publishes the renovation plans for The Helen Hayes Theater.

3. *Theatre and Playhouse: an Illustrated Survey of Theatre Building from Ancient Greece to the Present Day*, by Richard Leacroft and Helen Leacroft, Methuen Drama, 1984, pp. 138–138.

Drawings show the Isometric section of the The little Theater as per the original architectural plans.

4. Bindelglass, Evan. "Helen Hayes Theater To Receive Interior And Exterior Renovation." *New York YIMBY*, 2 Dec. 2015, newyorkyimby.com/2015/12/helen-hayes-theater-to-receive-interior-and-exterior-renovation.html.

5. Hamilton , Clayton. "The Advant of the Little Theatre." *The Bookman*, vol. 35, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912, pp. 241–241.

The images depict the original state of the audience seating.

6. Paulson, Michael. "Broadway's Smallest Theater Is Reopening, This Time as a Nonprofit." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Feb. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/theater/helen-hayes-lobby-hero-kenneth-lonergan.html

7. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "New York's latest theatrical luxury, exterior of the "Little Theatre," west Forty-fourth Street." *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1912. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-065f-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

8. Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "Manhattan: 44th Street (West) - Broadway" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1920. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-07be-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

9. Google Maps image.

10. Paulson, Michael. "Broadway's Smallest Theater Is Reopening, This Time as a Nonprofit." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Feb. 2018,
www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/theater/helen-hayes-lobby-hero-kenneth-lonergan.html

11. "Landmarks Preservation Commission LP-1346." *NYC.gov*, Landmarks Preservation Commission , 17 Nov. 1987,
s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/1346.pdf.