

GAYETY THEATRE
405 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1123

HABS
MD-1123

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GAYETY THEATRE

HABS No. MD-1123

Location: 405 East Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21202; UTM coordinates: 18.361142.4349928. Facade faces north on East Baltimore Street, on a lot bounded by Custom House Alley (formerly Avenue) to the east, Commerce Street to the west.

Present Owner: Jack Gresser

Present Use: The interior of the Gayety was subdivided in 1985 to accommodate three separate show bars, with entrances on the east side, and an adult novelty shop, facing East Baltimore Street (entrance on north side).

Significance: The Gayety Theatre is the oldest remaining burlesque theater in Baltimore. This section of Baltimore Street is locally known as "The Block," and constitutes the last vestige of an area of the city primarily known, from World War I to the 1970s for the preponderance of adult-theme businesses, such as bars, bookshops, arcades and burlesque theaters. "The Block" is characterized by two and three story early-twentieth-century masonry commercial buildings (most greatly altered at pedestrian level) and is contained, to the east, by the massive concrete police station, built ca.1982, and to the north, by a 14-story brick city office building erected in 1983. The elaborate ornament of the Gayety facade typifies the exuberance of turn-of-the-twentieth-century theater design as a sub-genre, in this case drawing on both Baroque and Art Nouveau ornament for its eye-catching and fanciful decorative vocabulary.

Historian: Laurie Ossman, Ph.D., Summer 2001

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1905. Commission followed widespread destruction in Baltimore's commercial and financial center on February 7-8, 1904. First performance at the Gayety is recorded in local press as February 5, 1906.¹

2. Architect: J.B. McElfatrick & Sons.² The firm of J.B. McElfatrick & Sons was

¹ "Gayety is the Newest," Baltimore (Morning) Sun 6 February 1906: 12, c.3-4.

² The existence of three active McElfatricks has led to much confusion and many mis-attributions in the scant available literature. The Gayety design is attributed in recent local sources to "J.R." McElfatrick," a likely mis-transcription of "J.B." traceable to Robert Kirk Headley's Exit of 1974. See Robert Kirk Headley, Exit: A

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probably the most prolific theater design firm in the United States, credited with 228 built commissions in 90 U.S. cities between the Civil War and World War I.

John Bailey McElfatrick (1828-1906), the son of a carpenter and architect, was born in Middletown, Pennsylvania, and practiced in Fort Wayne, Indiana (where son William H. was born in 1854) and Louisville, Kentucky, before re-establishing the firm as J.B. McElfatrick and Sons in St. Louis, ca. 1878. Information regarding the restoration of the Meridian (Mississippi) Grand Opera House of 1879 states that original design documents discovered on site (stamped "J.B. McElfatrick, St. Louis") credit a G.M. Torguson with the facade design. This raises the question, for further study beyond the scope of this report, of the size of the firm and division of design responsibility within it at this time.³ With the inclusion of sons John Morgan and William H., the McElfatrick firm grew in stature and moved to the Tin Pan Alley area of New York's theater district in 1884. In 1885, the firm received the prestigious commission for the National Theater in Washington, DC. Sixty of the firm's 228 known commissions were built in New York, most notably the Metropolitan Opera House (1893). In addition to such prestigious, "high culture" venues, the firm continued to design popular culture burlesque houses. Baltimore's Gayety is listed as the chronologically final design in the selection of 20 works in the McElfatrick entry in *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, implying the commission is considered among the prolific architect's most noteworthy.

The Gayety was likely among the last theaters designed by the firm during J.B. McElfatrick's lifetime, as the building opened in February 1906, the same year in which J.B. McElfatrick died.⁴

History of Movies in Baltimore (University Park, MD: Self-Published, 1974): 73. According to all other published works consulted, there was no "J.R." in the McElfatrick family firm. See "McElfatrick, J.B.," Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, Adolf K. Placzek, Ed. (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1982): v.3, 135; David Naylor and Joan Dillon, American Theaters: Performance Halls of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Wiley/Preservation Press, 1997); "William H. McElfatrick," <http://www.sah.org/aame/biom.html#30> (site visited 8/21/01).

³ Internet address: <http://www.visitmeridian.com/operahouse.html> (site visited 8/21/01). Meridian lays claim to being "the last mid-sized theater in America designed by McElfatrick," which is a somewhat misleading superlative, as the New Victory Theater (originally named Theater Republic, Times Square, New York, 1900) and alterations to the Allentown (PA) Symphony Hall (1899) are also solidly documented as J.B. McElfatrick designs, the practice now based in New York.

⁴ To add to the confusion, some unpublished local sources credit the Gayety design to William H., which initially seems plausible, as he might have been the firm's principal on the commission and is known to have designed the Town Theater, also in Baltimore, in the roughly same period (Town Theater, 315 West Fayette Street, 1910, credited to McElfatrick in association with the Baltimore firm of Simonson and Pietsch). However, the same sources reverse the father-son relationship and make William H. the father, who allegedly died during construction, with the commission completed by his son (variously J.B. or the omnipresent, nonexistent J.R.). As neither father J.B. nor son William H. McElfatrick died before the completion of the Gayety (William lived until 1922), one might surmise that a long-lost source surmised that since the Gayety is one of the last

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses

1905-1910: Charles W. Greeble/Columbia Amusement Company. First manager: Howard M. Gilbert.

1910-51: Owned and operated by John "Hon" Nickel.

1951- Dec. 1977 : Owned by John H. Nickel and Mrs. Marion McKew, children of John "Hon" Nickel. Leased 1962-69 to Frank Engel, as Boston-based burlesque theater operator. Following a catastrophic fire of December 22, 1969, the building remained vacant until 1977.

1977-present: Jack Gresser/BFC Realty.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: D.S. Schaffer, plaster work.

5. Original plans and construction: Original design and construction documents for the Gayety have not been located.

6. Alterations and additions: The Gayety was gutted by fire in December 1969. Nothing of the 1905 interior remains, although owner Gresser (phone interview June 2001) stated that when he acquired the property in 1977, fragments of "gilt columns and elaborate balconies with gilded railings" were still on site, although severely deteriorated from exposure to the elements. Following various attempts to find support and tax incentives to finance the conversion of the shell of the Gayety into a legitimate retail "mini-mall" in 1984, Gresser retained architects Kann & Ammon to create three small show bars, opening onto Custom House Alley, with an adult retail shop facing East Baltimore Street and offices on the upper stories. The historic facade was retained with ornamental features emphasized by a polychrome paint scheme in rust, pale ochre and dark green.

B. Historical Context

The Gayety is the venerable keystone of a district referred to locally as "The Block," and known for its adult entertainment. "The Block" is somewhat of a misnomer, as the area of arcades, bars, burlesque houses and adult book shops extended east from Calvert Street for

commissions of the firm during J.B. McElfatrick's lifetime, and since J.B. died in the same year as the Gayety opened, and since William H. was the principal on another local theater (and may or may not have been the principal in charge of the Gayety project), various unproven assumptions were made and strung into an impossible, yet dramatic, narrative. In the account of the Gayety's grand opening in The Baltimore Sun, ("Gayety is Newest," 6 February 1906, p.12, c.3) J. McElfatrick is listed among the out-of-town men in attendance, but it is unknown if this was J.B. or his son, John Morgan.

approximately eight blocks in the middle third of the twentieth century. Due to various cultural forces, and particularly to a concerted “anti-smut” campaign during the mayoral tenure of William Donald Schaefer in the early 1980s, most of this extensive commercial sub-cultural landscape no longer exists, and “the Block” is, in fact, a singular representative of a once-thriving red-light district.

From the original charter of Baltimore Town of 1729, Baltimore Street (originally called Market Street) stood at the heart of the urban landscape. The town’s commercial, civic and financial institutions—as well as residences, hotels, cultural institutions and churches—were distributed to the east of Calvert Street, most densely clustered from Monument Square south to the waterfront. Few of the clapboard, gambrel-roofed domestic-scale eighteenth-century structures in this area survived the city’s growth in the nineteenth century. Wooden structures were replaced first by more substantial three- and four-story brick buildings with gable roofs, which were often superseded in the mid nineteenth century by more elaborate, representationally turgid Second Empire style and Italianate buildings, often brownstone, some with cast-iron facades. Chiefly spurred by the financial and commercial boon incited by the expansion of the railroads, the architecture of Baltimore’s commercial core grew exponentially in scale, rhetoric and sophistication at mid century. Chief among the landmarks of the district in this period was the five-story, cast-iron, mansard-roofed *Baltimore Sun* building (1850-1, not extant) at the corner of Baltimore and South Streets, a block from the site of the Gayety Theatre. Half a dozen or more newspaper offices were located in the district. As the city was a hub of ironwork production, the use of cast-iron facades was emblematic of civic identity, as well as practicality. Residents ceded their lots to commercial buyers and developers, in reaction to the district’s shifting character.

Guidebook author John F. Weishampel remarked in 1866 that, along Baltimore Street, the public was “greatly annoyed at the demolishing of houses and falling of rubbish upon the pavement amidst dense clouds of dust.”⁵ Literally dozens of banks built masonry and iron structures, implying stability and permanence, in the district. The Mercantile Trust & Deposit at 200 East Redwood Street (1883-6) not only represents the elaborate application of various nationally-current period-revival styles in the nineteenth-century civic center, but was one of the very few structures to survive the fire of February 7-8, 1904 that leveled most of the financial district. However, the institutional character of the district should not be overestimated: Weishampel referred to Baltimore Street as “the promenade of beauty and fashion,” for its proliferation of dry goods, jewelry and clothing shops.⁶ His description suggests that the area now known as “The Block” was late-nineteenth-century Baltimore’s

⁵J.F. Weishampel, Jr., *The Stranger in Baltimore* (Baltimore: NP, 1866): 167, as cited in James D. Dilts (*Baltimore Commercial Architecture Project*, City of Baltimore Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation/Maryland Historical Trust, 1992, section 3).

⁶ J.F. Weishampel, Jr., *The Stranger in Baltimore* (Baltimore: NP, 1866): 63.

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analogue to Manhattan's Broadway.⁷ Like Broadway, the district had its cultural attractions as well, most notably the 1828-9 Baltimore Museum (successor institution to the Peale Museum on Holliday Street) at the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets (destroyed by fire, 1873), but "low culture" attractions such as the Colonnade Penny Arcade (404-6 East Baltimore Street, destroyed 1904) also sought to capture pedestrian interest.

Even before the 1904 Fire, however, rising commercial rents began to spur substantial relocation of retail shops west to Howard Street, in an area previously dominated by wholesale outlets. The Fire accelerated this trend, as retail tenants moved to existing space elsewhere in the city rather than await rebuilding. The major financial institutions generally announced rebuilding plans within months of the Fire, as if to reassure clients that the institutions—if not the structures which housed them—remained impervious to the devastation. The Gayety was built on the former site of the newspaper, The German Correspondent,⁸ indicating that the press could not await the construction of new quarters in the so-called "burnt district," and lots formerly occupied by newspapers were sold to new owners for new uses.

While many legitimate theaters and vaudeville houses were built in the Howard Street vicinity, some—like the Gayety, Lubin's Nickelodeon and Vaudeville "duplex" directly across the street (404-6 East Baltimore Street), the Victoria (415 East Baltimore Street, 1908, later known as the Embassy) and the Rivoli (418 East Baltimore Street, Theodore Wells Pietsch, architect, 1909)—defined East Baltimore Street as a "popular entertainment" center, with an emphasis on burlesque and vaudeville.⁹ This did not, perforce, mean that the financial district hit the skids after the 1904 Fire: in spite of connotations acquired later, burlesque and vaudeville were mainstream forms of entertainment aimed at the working and middle classes.

The Gayety was certainly not the most prestigious theater in Baltimore; however, its ornamental audacity does suggest an assertion of its status as the pre-eminent theater of its type (i.e. burlesque) in the city. That such a "low-culture" genre should receive such elaborate treatment stands as evidence of the prolific (and competitive) performing arts culture that thrived in the city at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁷ Weishampel makes the comparison explicitly, in reference to the constant change and construction in the area, stating on page 167, "Baltimore, Charles and other Streets, like Broadway in New York, will probably never be finished..."

⁸ "War of the Burlesquers," Baltimore Sun 6 February 1906: p. 12, c.4.

⁹ James D. Dilts, Baltimore Commercial Architecture Project, section 3, page 9 states that The Victoria was the first theater in Baltimore built specifically for vaudeville, as opposed to burlesque, which was purpose-built Gayety's raison d'être. The main distinction between the two similar genres appears to have been the more risqué content of the skits and comedy in burlesque, as well burlesque's emphasis on scantily-clad women. vaudeville was considered suitable for all age groups while burlesque was strictly for adults, albeit adults of both sexes. The Gayety was noted as the third theater specifically dedicated to burlesque in Baltimore, preceded by the "reopened Bijou" and an un-named other. "War of the Burlesquers," 12, c.4.

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By World War I, the Gayety's neighbors had made the switch to showing movies. In the 1920s and 1930s, cinema began to supplant burlesque and, especially, vaudeville as the chief form of low-cost popular entertainment across the United States. Burlesque houses, such as the Gayety, promoted more risqué acts in the effort to give the public something that they couldn't get in movies (especially after major Hollywood Studios adopted the Hayes production Code in 1932, which not only banned nudity but placed draconian restrictions on sexual content and references in film). Nostalgic descriptions of performances at the Gayety and its peers indicate that, by today's standards, the performances were quite modest.¹⁰ However, the aura of taboo was a large part of what sustained burlesque in general, and the Gayety in particular, through the mid twentieth century.

Newspaper articles dating from the December 22, 1969 fire which gutted the Gayety often remark that the "quality" of entertainment there had declined since World War II.¹¹ From its heyday in the 1910s and 1920s—when the Gayety's bill included nationally-prominent comedians such as Abbott and Costello, Phil Silvers, Jackie Gleason and Red Skelton—the Gayety was a "top-of-the-line" burlesque house. In this period (just before and after World War II) iconic strippers such as Gypsy Rose Lee, Blaze Starr, Sally Rand, Valerie Parks and Ann Corio performed there. Following the War, major banking and commercial institutions in need of additional office space relocated or shifted their major operations to the new civic center along Charles Street. Upscale retail either moved to Howard Street or, later, out of the city altogether, to suburban shopping centers and malls. More arcades, as well as adult bookshops, peep shows and show bars cropped up to fill in the vacant spaces and gradually redefined East Baltimore Street as a "red light district," analogous to New York's Times Square, Washington, DC's 14th Street and New Orleans' legendary Bourbon Street. By the 1960s, the Gayety no longer hosted headline performers, and local news features surrounding the cataclysmic fire in 1969 tended to emphasize nostalgia for its decline. In this sense, the Gayety Theatre building encapsulates the history of burlesque as an entertainment form in the United States and its interaction with civic form in the twentieth century.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

¹⁰ "Fire Burns Gayety Theater, Oldest Local Burlesque Site," Baltimore Evening Sun 22 December 1969, sec. A, p 1, 10, c.1, ill.; "Many Stars Played the Gayety," Baltimore [Morning] Sun 22 December 1969 sec. A p.10, c.1, ill.; Gilbert Sandler, editorial, "The City Lost Something That Night," Baltimore Evening Sun 30 September 1975, n.p. (clipping file, MHS); "Arson in Gayety Theater, Warehouse Fire Suspected," Baltimore Evening Sun 22 December 1969, n.p. (clipping file, Maryland Room, Pratt Library & MHS).

¹¹ "Fire Burns Gayety Theater, Oldest Local Burlesque Site," Baltimore Evening Sun 22 December 1969, sec. A, p 1, 10, c.1, ill.; "Many Stars Played the Gayety," Baltimore [Morning] Sun 22 December 1969 sec. A p.10, c.1, ill.; Gilbert Sandler, editorial, "The City Lost Something That Night," Baltimore Evening Sun 30 September 1975, n.p. (clipping file, MHS); "Arson in Gayety Theater, Warehouse Fire Suspected," Baltimore Evening Sun 22 December 1969, n.p. (clipping file, Maryland Room, Pratt Library & MHS).

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Baroque Revival-style burlesque theater. The Gayety's facade (the only remaining element of the historic structure) is a particularly lavish version of the nineteenth-century burlesque theater sub-genre. The burlesque theater evolved from European opera house models by way of the music hall type (as opposed to a civic meeting house type for legitimate theaters in much of the United States throughout the nineteenth century), likely because associations of slightly louche European cosmopolitanism were part of the image burlesque hoped to project. In addition, the building of many major opera houses in Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth drew on the Baroque for inspiration (most notably Garnier's Paris Opera, the intentional hallmark structure of high culture in Second Empire in France), and the Baroque Revival style permitted for a free application of exuberant ornament atop a loosely classical shell and tectonic vocabulary. The classicism provided for grandeur and simplicity of form, while the ornamental opportunities might allow the building's facade to act as a three-dimensional marquee, advertising sumptuous escapist entertainments. In addition, the ease with which Baroque Revival ornament elided into Art Nouveau, with its anthropomorphic (and predominantly female) decorative vocabulary made it an apt choice for houses, such as the Gayety, for which the animate female form was one of the major attractions. While the Gayety facade appears relatively small in scale, Headley states that the building seated 10,000 patrons per week during the World War I era.¹² While the building finds some formal parallel in small-city opera houses of the period, such as the Opera House in Maysville, KY (1898); the Folly Theater (Kansas City, MO, 1899) or McElfatrick's own Meridian (MS) Opera House, the highly ornamental burlesque developed as a distinct sub-genre of the theater form at the turn of the century. Further research may determine to what extent the McElfatrick firm helped establish this sub-genre in the United States.

2. Condition of fabric: Stable, with some detachment of ornament from substrate and deterioration therein.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions/foundations: N/A

2. Walls: Buff-colored brick (now over-painted in same color) with sheet-metal ornament. Due to over-painting, it unclear if contrasting brown masonry columns on upper levels are stuccoed brick (most likely), cast concrete or stone. Based on visual examination and newspapers photographs taken prior to 1969, the original building shell was load-bearing red brick laid in common bond, faced with decorative buff-

¹² Headley 20.

colored brick on the East Baltimore Street (north) elevation. The facade articulation follows an overall a-b-a pattern with a central, slightly recessed, focal pavilion defined by a broken pediment defining the entrance bay , flanked by symmetrical triple-arched subsidiary bays with flat roof lines.

3. Structural system, framing: Not original; present dates to 1984. Given the original span of the auditorium, the 1905-6 building likely featured structural steel girders to support the roof and requisite proscenium span.

4. Openings

a. Doorways and Doors: None original. Fixed pane windows date to 1984-5 remodeling.

b. Windows and shutters: None original.

5. Ornamental features: The ground level of the three-story facade is articulated by eight quasi-rusticated piers (brick with recessed joints every fourth course), defining an a-b-a-c-a-b-a rhythm of openings on the street level. The rusticated effect is created by alternating recessed mortar joints every third course of brick. The central opening, where the box office and lobby entrance were located, was capped (at least as early as the 1920s) by gaudy electric signage suspended perpendicular to the facade plane, rising to the peak of the central pediment in height. Thus, the current appearance of this area as a "void" is somewhat misleading as to the facade's appearance during its primary period of significance. The ground level is emphatically defined by a boldly projecting cornice which projects into an entrance canopy defined by twin corner pediments over the central bay. Steel cable anchored to steel reinforcement sandwiched between the structural red brick shell and buff brick facade revetment supports this cantilevered entrance canopy.

The second and third stories of the facade are visually unified by the use of multi-story arches as a visually predominant motif. The side bays feature three narrow arches, each containing a single flat-lintel window opening on the second level and a single arch-headed opening on the third. In one of the Gayety's more fanciful decorative elements, four terra-cotta heads in an Art Nouveau style alternate with the openings. From the scanty visual evidence available, it appears that these elements may not have originally presented such a vivid polychrome treatment, however the present owner states that every attempt was made, during the 1984 restoration, to match surviving evidence of original color scheme. The triple-arch rhythm of the side bays receives light visual reinforcement from an applied arch molding accented with rosettes. A pressed sheet metal decorative frieze is surmounted by a boldly projecting cornice with heavy corbels, closely spaced.

The division between the three-bay sides and the central section is defined by

the continuation of the quasi-rusticated pier forms that flank the entry doors on the ground level. Compound moldings concentrated immediately below the cornice act as capitals. It is from these that the Gayety's striking "trophies" appear to be suspended. These applied metal ornaments consists of elaborate Art Nouveau-style female heads surmounting wreaths from which project conical breast-like forms. These elements, although unclear in early views, were most likely installed prior to 1935. Some variant of the "comedy/tragedy" masks appear to be suspended from the wreath by ribbons.

The visual weight of this horizontal element is leavened by its re-articulation as a pediment capping the central bay. The center bay has an overall verticality of emphasis, due largely to the visual dominance of the arched opening that rises from the first string course through the second and third levels, where it is surmounted by an arch accented with an oculus. The Gayety also features a central Palladian motif, a trademark of the McElfatrick firm's theater fronts: the dominant multi-story arched opening is flanked by Ionic columns spaced slightly within the bay recess marked by the rusticated piers. The impost block of these columns support a semi-circular arch molding that echoes the form of the central opening, curving above the datum line of the cornice, thus "pushing" the cornice up to form the central pediment. A scrolled corbel acts as the keystone of the central arch of the focal Palladian motif. The peak of the pediment shelters a heavily ornamented cartouche that bears the name "The Gayety."

6. Roof

a. Shape, covering: Not original.

b. Cornice, eaves: Cast sheet metal, painted medium rust-brown. For description of arrangement and motifs, see architectural character(above).

C. Description of Interior: As noted in I.6., The Gayety's interior was entirely destroyed by fire in December 1969. No plans or drawings of the historic interior have been located.

D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: Urban setting, no setback, flush to lot line on all sides. For context, see "significance" statement (above).

2. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: No design drawings for the Gayety have been identified.

B. Early Views: Illustrations noted, as applicable, in list of works consulted. The earliest known view of the structure ran in the Baltimore Sun on February 11, 1906 (p. 14, c. 2-4). No views of the Gayety, specifically, are listed in the catalog of the extensive photograph collection of the Maryland Historical Society, although Dilts includes an excellent view of the Gayety ca. 1940 in Baltimore Commercial Architecture Project (full citation below), credited to the Peale Museum MC 9256. Dilts also includes a copy of a streetscape that includes the Gayety, entitled "Lubin's German bank, Gayety, Balto. and Holliday Sts [*sic*], ca. 1915-20, credited to "Library of Congress, Baltimore Street Views."¹³ Jacques Kelly's 1982 Bygone Baltimore includes a view (p. 132) of the Gayety, with a banner clearly dating the image to 1935. This image is credited to the Maryland Historical Society, but may not be searchable under the theater name or catalogued at the time of this study.

C. Interviews: Jack Gresser, owner (via telephone), June 2001.

D. List of Works Consulted

1. Newspapers

"Arson in Gayety Theater, Warehouse Fire Suspected," Baltimore Evening Sun 22 December 1969, n.p (MHS clipping file).

"Down She Goes: workmen lower the famous marquee..." Baltimore Sun 29 August 1970, n.p. caption with ill. (MHS clipping file).

"Fire Burns Gayety Theater, Oldest Local Burlesque Site," Baltimore [Evening] Sun 22 December 1969: sec. A, p 1, 10, c.1, ill.

"Gayety is Newest," Baltimore Sun 6 February 1906: 12, c.3-4.

"Gayety To Present New face as Block Mini Mall," Baltimore Sun 9 October 1984: sec. d, p.4, c.1-4, ill.

"Gayety to be Reincarnated as Mini-Shopping Center," Baltimore News-American 5 October 1984: sec. A, p. 4, c. 1-4, ill. (Gayety file, City of Baltimore, CHAP).

Gunts, Edward, "Historic Gayety Comes Onto the Block," Baltimore Sun 14 March 1988: sec. A, p.1, n.c.,+ sec. A, p.8 c.1-2, ill. (Gayety file, City of Baltimore, CHAP).

Herman, Walter and Jacques Kelly, editorial, "Gayety Gets Future as Mini-Mall," "Baltimore News-American, 5 October 1984: n.p., ill. (Gayety file, City of Baltimore, CHAP).

¹³ Unfortunately, this citation no longer seems to correspond to the division's cataloguing system.

Kelly, Jacques, "Gayety's New Act Can't Top the Old," Baltimore News-American, 17 April 1986: np., ill. (Gayety file, City of Baltimore, CHAP).

"Many Stars Played the Gayety," Baltimore [Morning] Sun 22 December 1969 sec. A p.10, c.1, ill.

Sandler, Gilbert, editorial, "The City Lost Something That Night," Baltimore Evening Sun 30 September 1975: n.p. (MHS clipping file).

2. Secondary Sources and Contextual Studies

Cary, David. A Bit of Burlesque: A Brief History of Its Times & Stars .San Diego: Tecolote Publications, 1997.

Corio, Ann, This Was Burlesque . NY: Grosset & Dunlap/Castle Books, 1968.

Dilts, James D.. Baltimore Commercial Architecture Project. City of Baltimore Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation [CHAP]/Maryland Historical Trust, 1992. Unpublished.

Headley, Robert Kirk. Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore . University Park, MD: Self-published, 1974.

Morrison, Andrew Craig. "J.B. McElfatrick." Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects. NY: Free P/Macmillan, 1982.

Naylor, David and Joan Dillon. American Theaters: Performance Halls of the Nineteenth Century. NY: John Wiley/Preservation Press, 1997.

Olesker, Michael. Michael Olesker's Baltimore. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.

Weishampel, J.F. Jr.. The Stranger in Baltimore . Baltimore: NP, 1866.

Ziedman, Irving. The American Burlesque Show . NY: Hawthorn Books, 1967.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

Blackwood, David Byrne, The Theatres of J.B. McElfatrick and Sons, Architects, 1855-1922, Diss. (Lawrence, KS: U of Kansas, 1966). Requests to borrow this dissertation yielded no results.

The New York Historical Society has extensive holdings in theater and social history of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York and may contain information about the firm of J.B. McElfatrick and Sons and their works. These collections are not currently

searchable online.

Hundreds of streetscape views and views of nearby buildings in regional photographic archives might yield additional visual information.

Kann-Ammon, the architecture firm of record in the 1984 Gayety reconstruction/reuse may have pre-restoration documentation, but the successor firm of Kann & Associates could not be reached during the course of this study.

F. Supplemental Material

As few sources discuss the interior decoration or arrangement of the Gayety and no historic views of the interior have been located, the following description is transcribed from the article "Gayety is Newest," printed in the Baltimore Sun, 6 February 1906: p.12, c.3-4.

A new avenue—an avenue for pleasure seekers—was opened up yesterday in the burnt district. It was the Gayety Theatre, and anyone wishing his footsteps to lead him to a playhouse pleasing in all its architectural beauty can find it at this same establishment. Primarily, it is a playhouse for men, as attested by the fact that while watching the artists beyond the footlights and admiring the work of decorative artists on the other side of the curtain smoking is allowed....

Those interested in new buildings have admired the theatre at Baltimore [S]treet and Custom House [A]venue. Its exterior is attractive and invites one to a beautiful interior. The seating capacity of 1,600, divided into a main floor, a balcony pit and three boxes on each side. The aisles are wide and the seats comfortable, affording elbowroom between. The first box is raised several feet above the floor and gives a commanding view of the stage, and the orchestra is sunk several feet, which assures to those in the first row an unobstructed view. In general the color scheme is a rich red, with the balconies and boxes relieved by old ivory and gold relief work, made bolder by green draperies. Three curtains were used, and while the drop is not pretentious, it is more delicate and in better taste than many in larger houses.

Altogether, if the general opinion of the many is to be taken, Baltimore's newest playhouse is creditable to the Columbia Amusement Company, which spent \$50,000 to secure a house in this city.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

During the summer of 2001, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Maryland Historical Trust, in coordination with the City of Baltimore's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and Preservation Maryland, recorded ten historic buildings and sites within Baltimore's Central Business District through large-format photography and original historical research. The heart of the downtown area and focus of intensive redevelopment efforts, Baltimore's Central Business District is a designated city historic district and home to a diverse array of historic commercial and civic buildings, churches, theaters and other landmarks. Many of them predate the district's Great Fire of 1904 and chronicle Baltimore's rise as a financial, commercial and civic center. This project, coordinated by Martin Perschler, Collections Manager, HABS/HAER, and Catherine Lavoie,

GAYETY THEATRE
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Senior Historian, HABS, and resulting in more than 150 photographs by Baltimore photographer James W. Rosenthal for HABS and ten detailed architectural histories by Laurie Ossman, PhD., also a Baltimore resident, grew out of concern about the recent loss of the Merchants & Miners Transportation Company Building at 17 Light Street and other buildings of architectural distinction in Baltimore.

Ranging chronologically from the Peale Museum (1814) to the Baltimore Trust Company Building (1929), and in function from Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1846) to the Gayety Theatre (1906), the ten landmarks selected for this study illustrate the architectural diversity of the district and the myriad forces that have informed the district's growth and evolution over time. The documentation resulting from this project formed the basis of a photographic exhibit that was launched at the Maryland Historical Society in May 2002 during National Historic Preservation Month.

The ten historic buildings and sites that were studied during the project are:

Alex. Brown & Sons Company Building (HABS MD-1121)
B&O Railroad Company Headquarters Building (HABS MD-1122)
Baltimore Trust Company Building (HABS MD-1119)
Gayety Theatre (HABS MD-1123)
Mercantile Trust & Deposit Company (HABS MD-191)
Monument Square & the Battle Monument (HABS MD-1126 and MD-185)
Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (HABS MD-1124)
Peale Museum (HABS MD-398)
Pennsylvania Railroad Company District Office Building (HABS MD-1125)
Vickers Building (HABS MD-1120)