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NYC'S HISTORIC PALACE THEATRE BEGINS LIFT TO HOVER 30 FEET OVER TIMES SQUARE

Irene Madrigal, 1.10.22



Currently under construction at 47th Street and Broadway is the TSX Broadway project — which involves the creation of a new 550,000 square foot, \$2.5 billion 46-story tower developed by L&L Holding Company. Upon completion, TSX Broadway will become Times Square’s first entire-building immersive experience, equipped with retail, screen, stage, food and beverage, and hotel components capable of serving over 15 million visitors per year.

The project will feature the largest outdoor food and beverage terrace in Times Square, a brand new luxury hotel, and integrated streaming, broadcasting, and live performance capabilities. Adorning the exterior of the tower will be a full LED lighting system, New York’s only LED crown sign, and a high-resolution 18,000-square-foot podium sign.

In an unprecedented feat of engineering, the historic Palace Theatre will be lifted up 30 feet and incorporated into the new tower, hovering over Times Square. Opened in 1913, the Palace Theatre was originally founded by Martin Beck, a vaudeville entrepreneur. Over the years, the theater has been housed inside three separate buildings. Most of the original theater was demolished in 1988, though its current interior space dates back to its original inception. The original building was replaced by the DoubleTree Suites Times Square Hotel between 1990 and 1991. In 2019, the DoubleTree Hotel was demolished to make way for the start of the TSX Broadway project.



The lifting of the Palace Theatre will involve the usage of a structural steel shoring post and hydraulic jacks to free the structure from the ground. This will allow for the space currently occupied by the Palace’s auditorium and the hotel’s 1987 lobby to be replaced with over 75,000 square feet of experiential retail space extending three stories below ground level and 4,000 square feet of outdoor entertainment space.

According to Domenick Dinizo, Vice President of L&L Holding Company, “there was a somewhat similar project just done by our contractor Urban Foundations back in the ’90s where they moved the Empire Theater laterally. So they did not lift it — they put rails underneath and moved it on train tracks down the street and that was a landmarked theater as well. But to my knowledge, no, [there’s] been nothing like [the lifting of the Palace Theatre] in New York. Maybe even in the world.”



Currently, the theater's auditorium — designated as a city landmark — remains as the only surviving portion of the original theater. As of 2018, the auditorium contained over 1,700 seats and featured wide coved ceilings with boxes, two balconies above an orchestra level, and a large stage located behind an oversized proscenium arch. Upon completion of the TSX Broadway project, the auditorium will be located on the third story of the building. Lifting of the theater officially began on January 7, 2022, and is expected to take six to eight weeks to be completed. During this time period, a sign located outside the building will help indicate the daily ascension progress being made.



After being lifted, the Palace Theater will undergo a \$50 million preservation and renovation that seeks to modernize the establishment while also respecting its historical character. Organized by PBDW Architects, the theater's restoration will include the refurbishment of every inch of its original ornate plaster, an elegant cream and gold-colored paint, and finish scheme that compliments the structure's original design, and new theater amenities such as improved changing rooms for cast members.

In addition, improvements will be made to the theater's mechanical and electrical plumbing systems, bringing the building up to 2014 safety codes with a new sprinkler and HVAC system. Moreover, 10,000 square feet of back of house space is also scheduled to be created as part of the renovation process.

For Dinizo, “as far as the theater, being able to raise it and then in addition with the new tower and the podium we are building on the west side, [will help create] a better guest experience. Essentially everything in the theater [will be] new except for the landmarked finishes... I think it’ll be improved by the fact that the theater will be brought up to 21st century standards [of] technology and comfort.”