

VICTORIA THEATER

Carolina Rianchos



Early site in 1930s



Developed site in 2024



Early site in 1970's

The case of the Loews Victoria Theater is an example of the complexity between preservation of heritage and development in Harlem. It is a reminder of the importance of recognizing and valuing the cultural identity that has shaped this community. As the neighborhood continues to evolve, it is important for both residents and newcomers to engage in meaningful conversation about the future. Finding a balance between adaptation and preservation will be key to ensuring that Harlem retains its character while embracing necessary change. The challenge lies not only in honoring the past but also to create a future that respects the contributions of all community members.

Intangible History

The Loews Victoria Theater faces the challenges of conserving a place's heritage, history, and identity. At first glance, the theater's façade captures your eyes giving you hope that its interior still holds Harlem identity, however, at a deeper level it reveals its losses due to renovations and new constructions. While some interior elements retain glimpses of the theater's historical significance, the structure reflects a developer-driven identity that prioritizes profit over community, risking the displacement of long-time residents. This presentation intends to address the interconnected themes of, erasure, futurity, preservation vs "heritage," and the impact of capitalism on Harlem. The Loews Victoria Theater was once a symbol of freedom for emancipated African Americans, offered a space where they could enjoy equal treatment, express their culture, and performance space. This rich history underscores Harlem's legacy as a haven for African Americans seeking relief and equality.