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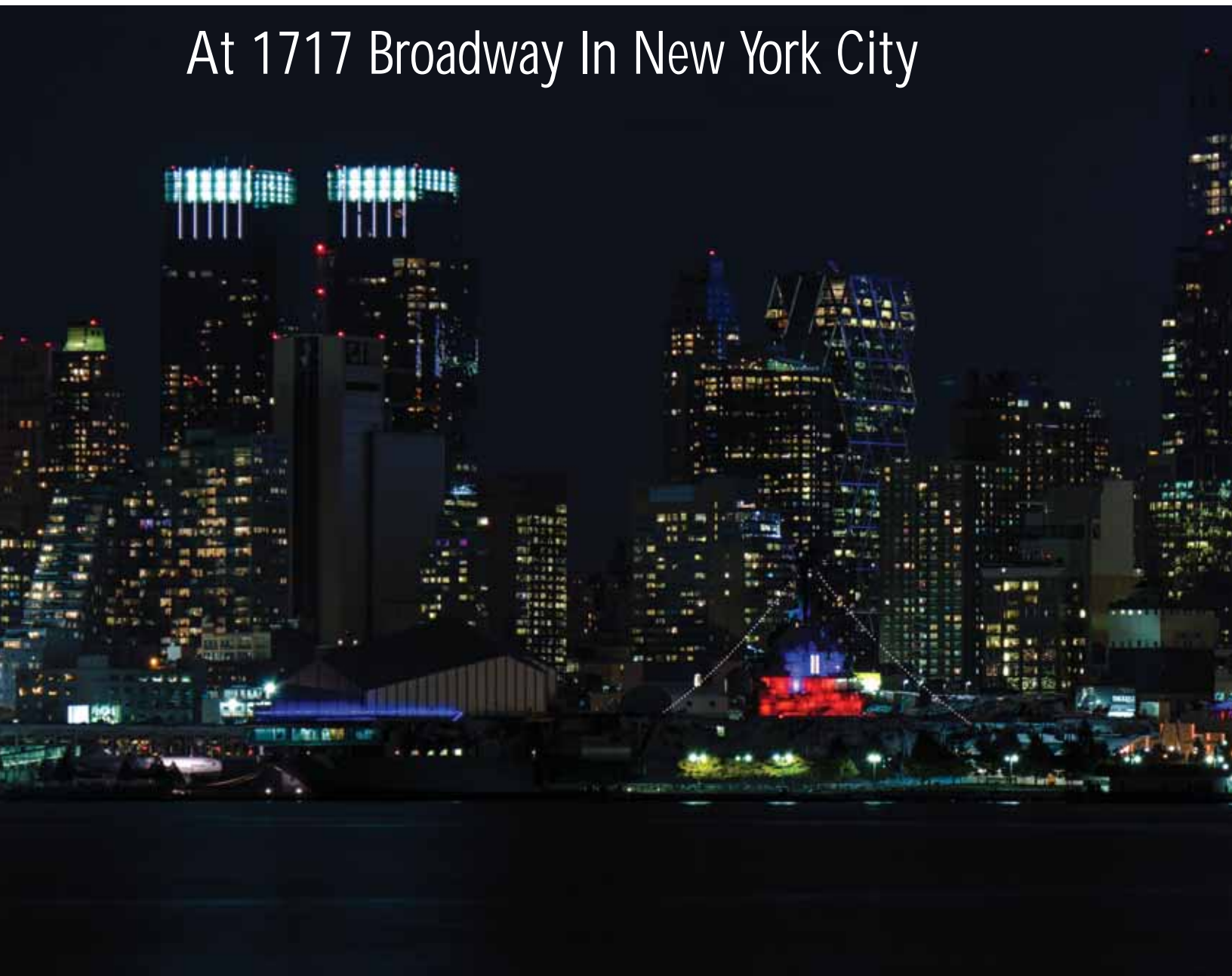
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Focus Lighting Designs For The Skyline

At 1717 Broadway In New York City



Lighting Designers: Brett Andersen, Focus Lighting
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Photo Credits: Ryan Fischer, Focus Lighting
Joshua Spitzig, Focus Lighting



Tasked with the challenge to design the lighting for 1717 Broadway, the tallest hotel building in the Western Hemisphere, Focus Lighting aimed to create a memorable addition to New York's cityscape, and accomplish the owner's goal to "put his thumbprint on the skyline of Manhattan."

For any skyline building, designers must first think about how their building should be similar to and different from other nearby structures – and what tools should be used to achieve those ends. 1717 Broadway sits only six blocks from Times Square – New York City's most brightly lit neighborhood. Virtually every Times Square façade is covered with bright dynamic images – most of which are selling some commercial product. The design team did not want 1717 to become yet another large-scale advertisement because no one would have ever noticed it; it would have just become more Times Square visual noise.

Informed by analysis of iconic buildings worldwide, Focus Lighting instead chose to distinguish 1717 Broadway through a simple yet beautiful combination: dynamic lighting content, presented in a singular electric blue colour. The design for 1717 creates a digital canvas for light art pieces on the skyline of Manhattan – a 'gallery in the sky.' Currently on display: a piece called 'The Skies,' inspired by infrared satellite imagery of the changing weather patterns the earth is experiencing.

After much analysis, Focus Lighting's design team identified three primary views from which the building's lighting would be most memorable. These views ranged from 2 blocks to 2 miles away from the building; the view from across Broadway, Central Park and across the Hudson River. Identifying and understanding the critical elements within each of these points allowed the design team to be certain that the lighting design's visual composition is a beautiful and unforgettable one for a wide array of audiences.

Extensive mock-ups helped determine both the minimum brightness for long-distance visibility and the maximum node spacing so that, close-up, lights appeared not as dots, but as continuous lines. The LED nodes had to be integrated into an already-purchased curtain-wall system. The design team





determined that the crown's window-washing tracks could be repurposed as mounting positions. A custom aluminium extrusion and bracket was designed to match existing mullions, hold the LEDs, and function as a wireway. A standard 7ft fixture length allows any failures to be easily replaced 700ft up. Power and data enter through ventilation louvers and run to custom-designed power supply panels.

The choice of blue as the sole colour is effective in differentiating the building along the New York skyline, while below the crown, horizontal runs of smaller blue LEDs are mounted at the breaks between building sections to help emphasize the 'twisting' in the building's form at a closer view. Blue lighting in the glass elevator shaft connects the lighting above to pedestrians at the street level.

Even when compared to larger buildings with flashier programming or bright advertising, this elegantly simple design achieves its owner's goal to place his personal mark on the skyline. Mock-ups, equipment customization, and in-depth analysis of the primary views of the building led to an energy efficient, exterior lighting solution that successfully creates a simple, sophisticated icon amidst the visual tumult of New York City. ■

Author

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