NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x' in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mainstreet Theatre

other name/site number Junior Orpheum Theatre

2. Location

street & town 1400 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Kansas City N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☒ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles 28 DECEMBER 2006

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Theater
COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Beaux Arts

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls terra cotta
brick
roof asphalt
other ceramic tile

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Mainstreet Theatre
Name of Property

Jackson County, MO
County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1921-1956

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rapp, C. W. and Rapp, Geo. L, architects (Chicago)

Thompson-Starrett Construction Company (Chicago)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☒ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other Name of repository:

Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Mainstreet Theatre
Name of Property

Jackson County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/5	3/6/3/0/4/8	4/3/2/8/7/2/8
2	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /
3	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /
4	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)
see continuation sheet

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
see continuation sheet

☒See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein and Mary Ann Warfield

organization Architectural and Historical Research, LLC date August 7, 2006

street & number 1537 Belleview Avenue telephone 816.472.4154

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
name/title Midland-Empire Partners

street & number 1100 Walnut Street telephone 816.842.1045

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.)*.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Summary:

The Mainstreet Theatre, located at 1400 Main Street, Jackson County, Missouri, was designed by the noted Chicago architectural firm of C. W. and Geo. L. Rapp in 1920-1921 and built by Thompson-Starrett Construction Company (Chicago) in 1921. Today, the Mainstreet Theatre, sited on the southwest corner of 14th and Main streets, stands as a prominent reminder of the golden age of grand movie palaces. Rising four-stories at the theater and entrance portions, the Beaux Arts Mainstreet Theatre still displays its rich, classically adorned running ornament in bas relief, rusticated terra cotta and buff brick exterior, prominent Byzantine styled dome embellished with golden tiles and storefront openings at the primary (east and north) facades. The focal point of the theatre is the elaborate corner entrance crowned by a dome covered with golden tile. Storefronts line the Main Street façade, while there are few extant Chicago-style window units at the second story Main Street and 14th Street facades. A third floor is set back, veneered with buff brick and carries a pent roof of green tile. Although the Mainstreet Theatre has been altered over the years and has suffered from neglect, its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association has been retained at the exterior. Its high degree of its character-defining physical features, exterior materials and key interior spaces are representative of the period of historic significance.

Elaboration:

Measuring ten bays on the east and five bays on the north, the Mainstreet Theatre is generally rectangular in plan and is comprised of a tripartite scheme, where an exuberantly composed four-story curved entry bay is flanked by two-story wingwalls. For reasons of security, all fenestration and entrances are boarded up. While extant openings are original, the majority of the windows have been removed. The canted entry is characterized by a two-story arched window set in a molded surround, and flanked by two pairs of narrow fenestration. The spandrel at each of these windows is articulated with urns and foliated rinceau in relief. In addition, there is a pair of dolphins in high relief at the spandrel of the arched window. Set directly below the arched window is a frieze decorated with a triumvirate of cupids nesting between foliated rinceau. The original entrance to the theater, set below a non-original canopy, has been boarded.

Crowning the main entrance bay is a Byzantine inspired dome, the surface of which is covered with gold, terra cotta imbricated tiles. Circling the dome are eight oculi or oeil-de-boeuf, each set in a molded terra cotta surround and punctuated with a modified modillion keystone embellished with leaf garlands at the top of the recess and flanked with festoons of fruit at the base. Where each arch springs to the next around each oculus from the skew blocks, an intricately carved finial with swags of garlands set atop battered pedestals rests above paired Ionic ancons with acanthus leaves and floriated medallions at the curve of the scroll. The whole of the dome is supported by brick setbacks with stone coping.

A prominent Ionic styled entablature separates the fenestration of the entry bay from the dome. This highly decorative element retains the banderol molding, floriated and oundy patterned running mold and Ionic denticulation at the cornice (which stretches the full width of the entry block), and a frieze embellished with encarpas in high relief. The frieze, which is set at the curved portion of the entrance, also features deeply carved emblems of trumpets and harps. Where the frieze turns to the flat wall plane, the vocabulary changes to decorative pateraes.

The two-story wingwalls at the north and east facades are divided into bays by Ionic pilasters with carved, foliated design above the dentils at the capitals. At the east façade, display windows and entrances at the first story and the Chicago style windows at the second story have been boarded up, with two exceptions. At the far south and north ends of the east façade, second story, the framing of the original windows is extant. Terra cotta panels above the second story fenestration reveal pateraes at the center. A molded stringcourse separates the first and second stories, while a denticulated stringcourse is located below the cornice line. The wingwall of the north façade is similarly articulated. Varying from the design of the east façade is the stringcourse located above the entrances (now boarded up), which is embellished with small pateraes. A single Chicago Style window frame located at the far west end is exposed. The north façade terminates at the far west bay (housing the grand staircase of the interior) with a stark, rusticated wall, adorned with an urn, marked by swags and consoles, placed within a deep, centered niche. Above the niche is a blank frieze placed below a continuous stringcourse

with banderol molding, floriated and scrolled running mold and Ionic denticulation. At the cornice line is a centered, carved balustrade.

Set back from the theater entrance and storefront facades, is the main auditorium block. Rising four stories, it features common buff brick, terra cotta belt coursing (which repeats the classical vocabulary found on the terra cotta coursing and cornice) and green tiled mansard roofs, each with a drip course decorated with Greek fretwork, at the east and north facades. A pedimented bay (the location of the stage house) with tripartite blind windows, terra cotta coursing and paterae mark the far south bay of the east façade, while a similarly schemed unit, with a centered cartouche, is placed at the center bay of the north façade.

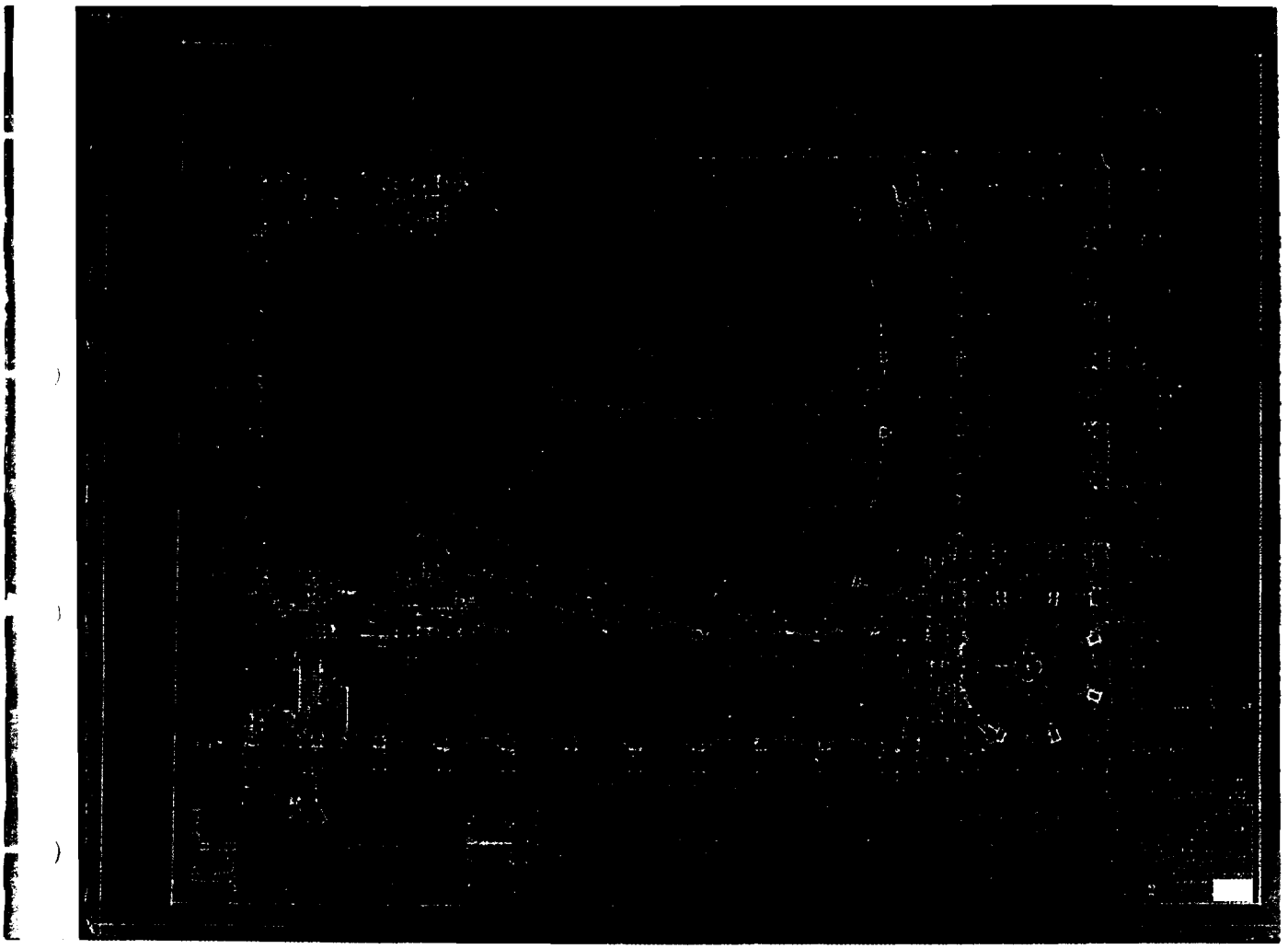
The south and west facades remain unadorned. The south is constructed of common brick. The west façade is generally read as a masonry wall with scattered two/over/two double-hung, sash windows at the far south bay and north of center. A concrete ramp leads to a door and a metal fire escape runs from the second story to the roof. Two overhead doors, one at the south end bay and one toward the center to the north have been boarded up. A metal fire door and platform is located at the top story of the south bay.

At the vaulted roof of the auditorium block are several vents and flues. Paired brick smoke vents for the stage are located at the south end, a pair of heating system boiler flues at the center of the roof and at the north end are metal roof vents.

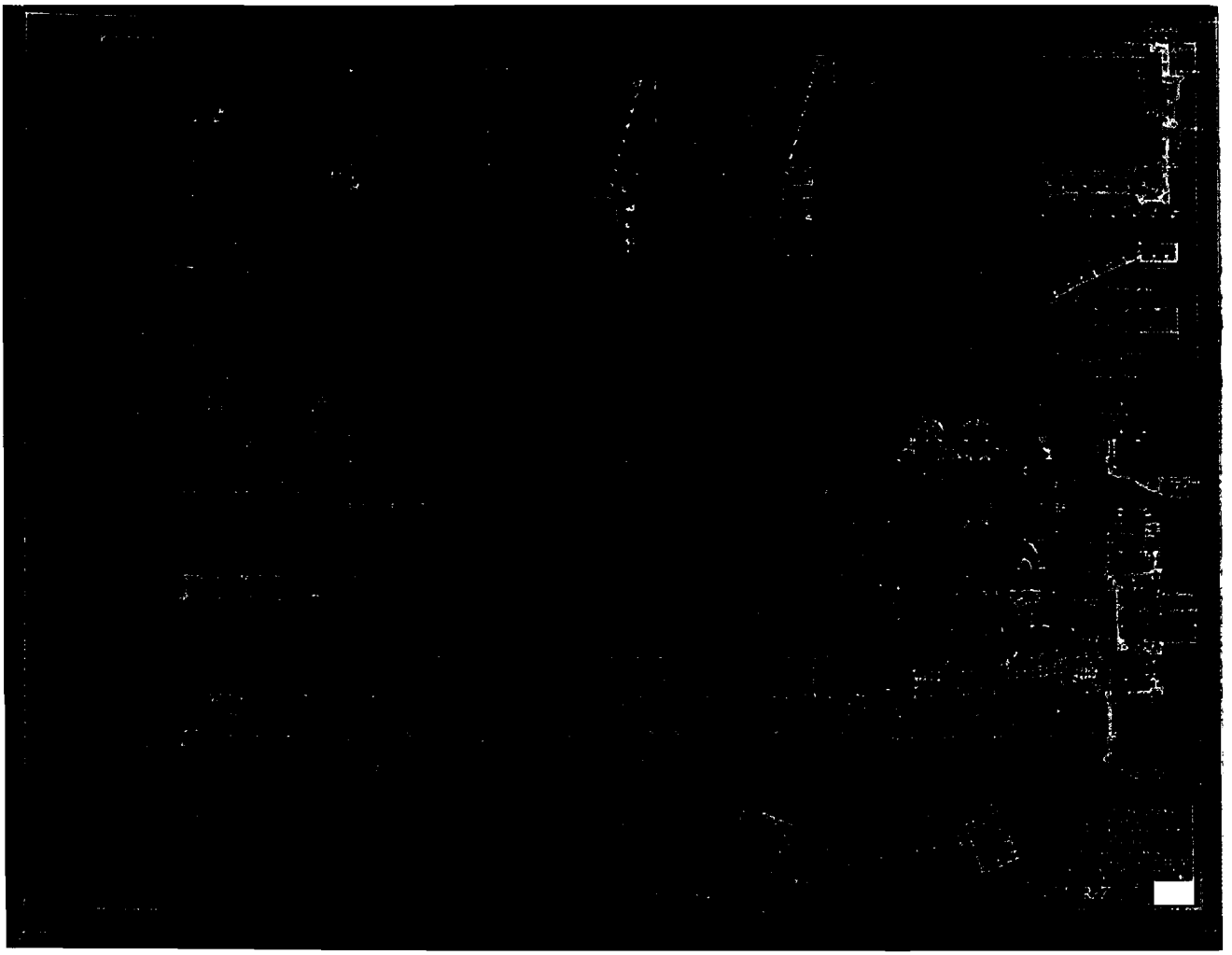
Each floor of the interior of the Mainstreet features exposed concrete structural elements. Due to water damage over the years that the building sat vacant, the decorative features were severely damaged and deteriorated. However, the main stairs and the character-defining interior spaces such as the lobby, mezzanine, stage, proscenium arch, main auditorium and balcony remain intact. The entry lobby is located at the north end of the building. To the west, at the end of the lobby is the grand staircase. The structure that housed the main auditorium, split in two levels during the 1966 renovation, is intact. In addition, the stage structure remains,

however the wood floor has been removed. Storefront framework and openings at the east end of the building are extant. The remaining interior reveals structural components of the mezzanine and upper floors.

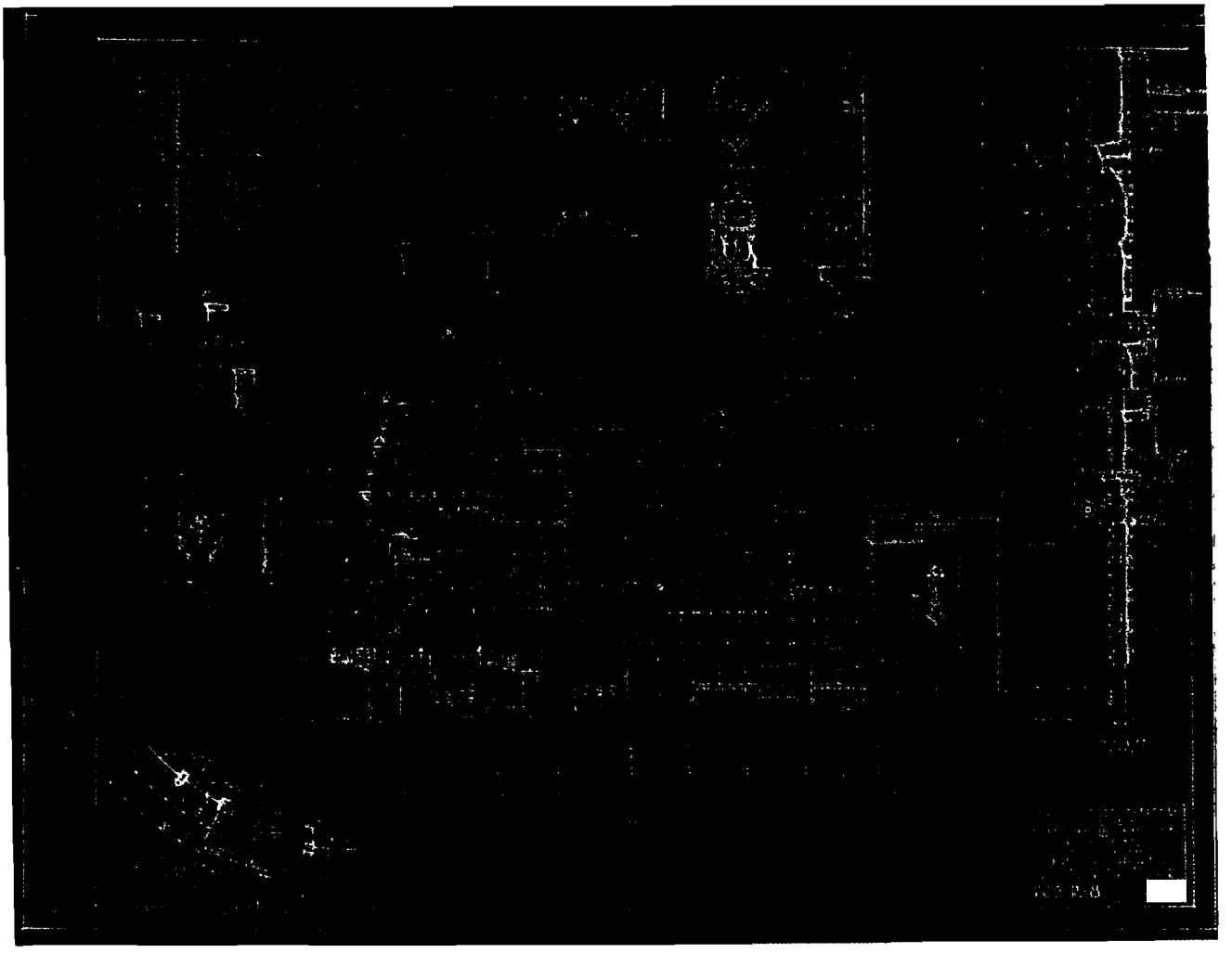
Currently, there are proposed plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Mainstreet Theatre. Future plans include the rehabilitation of the exterior and the construction of a multiplex theatre scheme. Plans for the project will be prepared in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Once the proposed plans are completed, they will be submitted to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service for review and compliance.



Rapp and Rapp, Mainstreet Theatre, Revised First Floor Plan, January 12, 1921



Rapp and Rapp, Mainstreet Theatre, Revised Main Street Elevation, March 7, 1921



Rapp and Rapp, Mainstreet Theatre, Revised 14th Street Elevation, March 7, 1921

SUMMARY

The Mainstreet Theatre, located at 1400 Main Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C with local significance in the areas of ARCHITECTURE and ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION. The Mainstreet was designed in 1920-1921 by the prestigious Chicago architectural firm of C. W. and Geo. L. Rapp, who were responsible for the designs of some of the most important theaters across the United States during the 1920s and the 1930s. The Mainstreet Theatre stands today as of one of Rapp and Rapp's most significant architectural expressions developed in the early years of their practice, displaying a unique type of exterior design that has become one of Kansas City's most visible historic landmarks. It appears that its Beaux Arts scheme, which incorporates a dynamic Byzantine styled dome at the main entrance, is the only one of its kind by Rapp and Rapp.[1] Developed by actor-turned-promoter Martin Beck, the Mainstreet was designed as a Junior Orpheum Theatre, one of the first theaters of its type in the country to cater to the working class. The 3,250-seat theater presented vaudeville acts, first run movies and traveling shows from 1921-1949. For this reason, the Mainstreet represents an important, nascent phase of what became American's most popular form of entertainment during the early years of the 20th century. In Kansas City, the Mainstreet Theatre is also important as the first theater designed to handle the transitional period in theater history when staged variety shows began competing with the moving picture. Additionally, its stretch of storefronts sited along Mainstreet augmented revenue for the theater venture, while adding visual interest to the adjacent storefronts along one of Kansas City's most fashionable commercial thoroughfares. Its period of significance is 1921, the date of construction, to 1956 (movies were still shown at the theater), the cut-off date imposed by the National Park Service.

Elaboration

In May 1920, a building permit was issued for the razing of a brick building located at 1400-1416 Main Street,

[1]This conclusion was drawn from reviewing the architectural and photographic files of Rapp and Rapp located at the Chicago Museum of History. Furthermore, Joseph Duci-Bella, ASID, noted theater historian said in a telephone interview that he feels that the design for the Mainstreet is unique for Rapp and Rapp.

Kansas City.[2] Although the lot remained undeveloped for several months, on September 29, 1920, an announcement for the construction of a new theater on the corner of 14th Street and Main was listed in local Kansas City construction news. The owner was listed as Martin Beck, president of the Orpheum Theatre Circuit located in San Francisco, California. A well-known theater design firm with over 400 theaters during their prolific career, Rapp and Rapp of Chicago, was awarded the design contract.[3]

The firm of Lieberman, Klein and Hein, also of Chicago, was chosen as construction engineer. Plans for the theater called for brick, stone, granite and terra cotta work for a two-story reinforced concrete building 146 ft. by 198 ft. with a basement and balconies.[4] Although the closing date on bids was September 28, action on the final contract bids was delayed and it was not until October 27, 1920, that Thompson and Starrett Company of Chicago was named general contractor. The steel work was awarded to Kansas City Structural Steel Company on November 10 and on November 24 the contract for reinforced steel was awarded to Corrugated Bar Company, also of Kansas City, Missouri.[5]

A building permit was purchased on January 1, 1921, for the construction of a four-story building with a $15,000 bond filed. The total cost of the theatre, built by the Junior Orpheum Company, a division of the Orpheum Theatre Circuit, was estimated at $900,000. The permit also included the construction for the areaway, canopy and a musician roost.[6]

In Kansas City, the Mainstreet Theatre is important as the first theatre designed to handle this transitional period in theater history when staged variety shows began competing with the moving picture. The Mainstreet, with a seating capacity for 3,250, was designed specifically to provide space for both staged variety shows, as well as a projection system to show movies.

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[2] Landmarks Commission, Building Permit No. 69143, City of Kansas City, Missouri.
[3] *Western Contractor* 29 September 1920, 31-32.
[4] *Ibid,* 31-32.
[5] *Western Contractor* 27October 1920, 34; 10 November 1920, 32; 24 November 1920, 32.
[6] Landmarks Commission, Building Permit No. 12750, City of Kansas City, Missouri,

The Mainstreet Theatre, as a Junior Orpheum, featured lesser known vaudeville and variety performers while providing these entertainers with a training ground before moving into the more expensive venues. Although the theater catered primarily to the lower income level of theater-goers by offering lower or "popularly priced" tickets, it provided a luxurious environment as experienced in the higher priced theaters.[7]

Overview of Theatrical Entertainment in the United States and the Road to Kansas City

In 1792 the first variety show to perform in America appeared before an audience in New York's St. John Street Theatre. George Washington was in attendance while a tight rope dance was performed by a professional ballet troop that had fled Paris during the French Revolution. Themed shows and individual entertainers became increasingly popular and began traveling across the United States to present their talents. At the opening of the 800-seat Lafayette Theatre in New York in July 1825, an acrobatic troupe from China was the entire evening's featured entertainment. As the variety show became more sophisticated it became known as vaudeville.[8]

Early vaudeville shows, symphonic productions and legitimate theater presentations were affordable to the wealthy and upper middle classes. However, as America became more industrialized, the lower classes began to have more free time as well as a desire to be entertained. Agents and theatrical managers began to shift their attention to accommodate the growing interest in entertainment by expanding programs and offering more variety in ticket price, venue and forms of entertainment. Many smaller neighborhood theaters were being opened on the outskirts of main business districts.

For a short period of time, c.1880-1894, the dime museum became popular with the lower class residents of large cities. The price of a ticket was only a dime. These museums offered sensationalized yet unknown acts and

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[7] Arthur Frank Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars: How Keith-Albee and the Orpheum Circuit Controlled the Big-Time and It's Performers* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 246. When Mainstreet opened, the Orpheum Theatre, offering vaudeville until 1934, was located at 12th and Baltimore where the ticket prices were considerably higher.

[8] *Ibid,* xvi-xvii.

human curiosities. Performers were from a wide range; dwarfs and giants, magicians and opera singers, bearded ladies and tattooed men. The term "freak show" is firmly linked to this era of carnivalesque showmanship. A popular show at the New York Dime Museum was the 'Three Headed Songstress,' who was actually an optical illusion appearing as three heads on one body. Eventually, the desire for theatrical quality replaced these sensationalized curiosities.[9]

In 1896 the moving picture made its debut when the Vitascope premiered the short silent film, *Rough Sea at Dover,* in New York City's New Music Hall on Thirty-Fourth Street. The effect on the audience was reported as "simply marvelous" when those in the front row thought they would be soaked by ocean waves. A similar projection system called the Biograph Company was used in the Orpheum Theatre Circuit. The Biograph proved to be highly successful when introduced at the Orpheum in San Francisco in 1898 and was later brought to Kansas City, along with vaudeville.[10]

Although theater owners discovered the importance of the early moving pictures (which were only fifteen to twenty minutes in length), these shorts were considered chasers leading up to the performances of live entertainers of the vaudeville circuit well into the second decade of the 20th century.[11] It was not until 1915, with the debut of D. W. Griffith's three-hour silent film, *The Birth of a Nation,* produced by Biograph, that the moving picture grabbed the imaginations and the attention of middle class theatre patrons.[12]

The Orpheum Theatres of Walter Gustav

In 1880 San Francisco was the seventh largest city in the United States with a population over 200,000. Entertainment in the western states could not match San Francisco: grand and light opera; ballet; circuses;

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[9] *Ibid,* 13-14.
[10] "Orpheum Anniversary," *Kansas City Times* 8 June 1923, Clippings, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. The clipping file is unpaginated.
[11] Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars*, 88-91.
[12] Tom Dirks, "The Birth of a Nation," *The Greatest Films, Online* Accessed July 23, 2006. http://www.filmsite.org/birt.html Although Dirks discusses the intense bigotry and racist propaganda that the film embodied, he is quick to point to the impact this

Shakespearean plays and plays performed in French, German and Italian. Theaters had seating for over two-thousand audience members. There was also a dark side to San Francisco's theaters where entertainment was offered in the bawdy houses and saloons. The variety acts performed by minstrel shows and comedy farces in these venues were considered vulgar, prurient and immodest, but they were cheap—free with the purchase of a drink.[13]

In 1882 a German immigrant named Walter Gustav was operating the Vienna Gardens in San Francisco. Gustav had been exposed to all forms of entertainment while in his native Germany before coming to the United States. He was very familiar with the German Beer Gardens which prohibited vulgarity and opted to attract families instead. The Vienna Gardens offered oompah bands and Sunday picnics, dancing, concerts, folk music and singing along with gymnastic societies that performed staged shows. By 1884, Walter opened another venue, the Telegraph Hill Observatory and Concert Hall. In 1885 he opened the Wigwam Garden as a ventilated concert hall with 2,000 seats. In 1887, after a trip to Europe, Walter opened his San Francisco Orpheum Opera House with 3,500 seats, as designed and named for the opera houses of Europe.[14]

Gustav's Orpheum went through a brief period of success until failure came in the form of financial problems in 1891. He eventually had to lease out the San Francisco Orpheum to another vaudeville circuit which, after only two years, also failed. To Gustav's's fortune, Morris Meyerfeld, Jr. became a major investor and partner. As the financial wizard, Meyerfeld managed the company's bookkeeping while Walter managed the house. Having saved the Orpheum, Meyerfeld became known as "the Rockfeller of vaudeville."[15]

Gustav, with Meyerfeld, reopened the Orpheum on October 23, 1893. Among the headliners were the Four Cohans, with George M., his sister Josephine and their parents. The successful partnership allowed the Orpheum to expand to Los Angeles (1894) then opened a booking office in New York (1897). Before the end of

movie made to the film industry in general as well as the standards, as set by Griffith, that are still followed today.

[13] Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars,* 35-36.

[14] *Ibid*, 37-49.

1897, they had made their decision to open a theater in Kansas City. The Cohans' were frequent headliners on the Orpheum Theatre stages.[16]

Meyerfeld believed that performers needed to have more engagements before reaching California. With this in mind, the idea of establishing theaters between the Pacific Coast and the Midwest appealed to his business sense. He called it the "eastern march." Deciding where to open the theaters became a crucial decision as the distance between cities west of the Mississippi was problematic. Trains were often delayed, while communications between theaters was slow, and the worst of winter weather had the potential of stranding performers in the middle of Kansas or Colorado.

In 1890 Kansas City had a population of 132,716 and a thriving economy. Railroad lines reached out in every direction from its ideal centralized location. As an industrialized city with stockyards, meat packinghouses, and other large business interests, Meyerfeld and Gustav envisioned that bringing quality entertainment to Kansas City would become a successful venture for the Orpheum Theatres.

In 1897 they decided to "lease the 2,084-seat Ninth Street Theatre in Kansas City and renamed it the Orpheum."[17] On opening night, February 8, 1898, the seats were sold out and people had to be turned away. Just three months after the Orpheum opened in Kansas City, May 9, 1898, Walter Gustav died.[18]

Meyerfeld found himself in the position of president. He quickly began expanding the Orpheum Theatres in the Midwest, beginning by leasing the 3,000-seat Creighton Theatre in Omaha, Nebraska. The same philosophy in opening the Kansas City Orpheum Theatre applied to Omaha; industrialized, prominent railway hub of the Union-Pacific line, and a growing population from the 1890s census of 140,000. Opening night of the Omaha

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[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid,* 50-58.
[17] *Ibid,* 58-59.
[18] *Ibid.*

Orpheum Theatre was another sold out event.[19]

In 1897 Meyerfeld linked his Orpheum Theatres to the Western Circuit of Vaudeville Theatres (WCVT), an association of theater owners in Chicago. This group coordinated the bookings of vaudeville acts throughout the Midwest. Joining the group, as an independent theater, was a critical move for Meyerfeld. He could then offer a guarantee of multiple bookings to the performers between Chicago and the Pacific Coast.[20]

Meyerfeld noted that the performers still had a full week's travel time between Missouri and the West Coast. He decided that Denver would be the home of the next Orpheum Theatre. The Denver Orpheum opened in September 1899.[21] Denver was the fifth theater and with it came success as well. The Orpheum Theatres were able to hire veteran performers as well as up and coming vaudeville performers. W. C. Fields was just one of many who toured the five theatres in the spring of 1900.[22]

Martin Beck (1867-1940) and the Orpheum Circuit

After the Orpheum joined the WCVT in 1897, Meyerfeld decided to open a booking office in Chicago in 1898. Martin Beck was hired to manage the Chicago office and "played a crucial role in the Orpheum's history."[23] Beck was a visionary who viewed vaudeville as a growing entertainment form that had the potential to become a high culture art form in presenting drama, music, dance and comedy. His objective was to "make the Orpheum circuit bring the highest forms of art within the reach of the people with the slimmest purses."[24]

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[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid*, 59-66.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*

Left to right: Martin Beck, Orpheum Circuit general manager with president, Morris Meyerfeld, Jr.
From: Arthur Frank Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars,* 2006.

Like Meyerfeld, Beck was a German-speaking immigrant of Jewish descent. Beck was born in Liptovsky Svaty Mikulas, then Slovakia, located within the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Beck was working as an actor when he left his country to come to the United States with the hope of finding work. He eventually landed a job managing a vaudeville troupe out of Oregon. He took them to the San Francisco Orpheum where only part of the group was hired by Gustav Walter in 1895. Beck was not one of them.

Distraught over not being hired, Beck became interested in starting his own German stock company and went to Meyerfeld for advice. Meyerfeld took an immediate liking to Beck and hired him as a booking agent which led to his promotion as general manager. Beck became a quick asset to the circuit as well as a close friend to Meyerfeld.

In July 1899, Beck married Meyerfeld's niece, Sarah Sonnenberg.[25]

Martin Beck was very talented at recognizing excellent performers. In 1899, Beck discovered twenty-five year old Harry Houdini performing in a dime museum in Minneapolis. Beck told Houdini he was a rotten showman and suggested that he quit performing "the little magical stuff...and just give a couple of big thrillers, like handcuffs and the trunk trick? You have two big stunts at which nobody else can touch you." Beck then offered Houdini a contract at sixty-dollars a week on the Orpheum circuit with a raise if he "made good." In short time, Houdini was being paid $150 a week and was given headliner billing.[26]

After Walter Gustav's death, Beck's importance became more pronounced in the business. The New York offices of Keith and Albee (K-A), who operated a similar East Coast vaudeville circuit to the Orpheum Theatres West Coast operation, began to push for a national association of vaudeville theater owners in order to regulate the salary of performers. This resulted in the founding of the Association of Vaudeville Managers of the United States (AVM).[27]

In 1901, under Beck's urging, the Orpheum Vaudeville Circuit was founded in order to form a stronger corporation. The Orpheum Circuit included 60 theaters and had a vaudeville monopoly west of Chicago while the Keith-Albee (K-A) circuit covered the east. Beck and Meyerfeld had signed an agreement with K-A that the Orpheum Circuit would continue to develop theaters west of the Mississippi while the territory east, up to but not including Chicago, was to remain K-A territory.

However, Beck attempted to break through the K-A barrier in 1911 when he built the famous Palace Theater on New York Times Square, which became the mecca of the theater world.[28] Unknown to Beck, Meyerfeld thought

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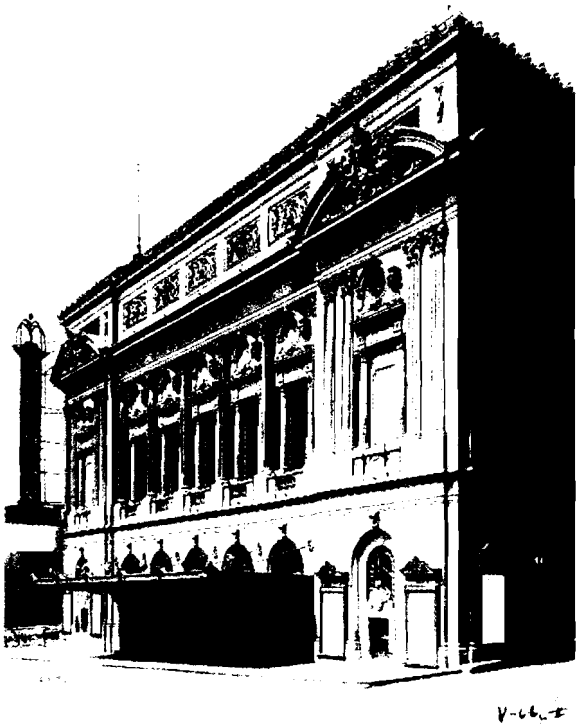
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid, 103.*
[28] "Martin Beck," *Cultural Contributions of Americans with Roots in Slovakia,* Online, accessed July 20, 2006. http://www.svu2000.org/cs_america/culturslo.htm For more information about Beck, see Joseph Laurie, *Vaudeville: From the Honky-*

a working relation with K-A was more important to insure the Orpheum's success, so he sold 51 percent of his share of the Palace to K-A leaving Beck with only 25 percent. Beck was devastated but only for a short time.[29]

Beck had an uncanny yet highly successful way of choosing sites for new theaters. After examining the growth pattern of Kansas City's downtown area, he chose a site at the corner of 12th and Baltimore for a new Orpheum Theatre. At the time, 12th and Baltimore was on the undeveloped south-western fringe of the downtown business district. It was on "a side street, out of the way." Once the theater was constructed, it helped to develop the neighborhood south of 12th Street.[30]



Orpheum Theatre (1913), Kansas City located at 12th and Baltimore and a 1915 program cover

tonks to the Palace (New York: I-loft, 1953). A short biography on Beck can be also found in *Dictionary of American Biography*, Suppl. 2, (1944), 32-33.

[29] Wertheim, 203.

[30] *Mainstreet Theatre, Kansas City, Missouri: Orpheum Circuit, Jr.* N.P. 1921, 3.

After 1913, the Orpheum Theatre Circuit found itself facing strong competition from a theater group based in Seattle, Washington, owned by Alexander Pantages. His theaters appeared in nearly every city where an Orpheum Theatre was located. The shows were cheap, from ten to thirty cents, and Pantages required his performers to do three to four shows a day when most others did no more than two. The Orpheum responded by building new theaters that could offer both vaudeville and motion pictures at a popular price.[31]

The first Junior Orpheum, as they became known, was the 2,766-seat State-Lake Theatre in Chicago and was designed by Gustave Albert Lansburgh. By 1922, five cities were home to Junior Orpheum Theatres; Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Kansas City, Missouri.[32]

In 1920 Morris Meyerfeld retired from the Orpheum Circuit leaving Beck, who had been second in command, to be appointed as president of the company. Beck decided that the junior orpheums needed to be built in every city that had an Orpheum Circuit Theatre. With the success of the Orpheum Theatre at 12th and Baltimore and using the same criteria, he again looked south of the city's downtown area and decided that 14th and Main Street would be an excellent location for an Orpheum Junior theater. In September 1920 announcements about the new "popular priced theatre" appeared in the local news and bid requests appeared in the local building trade publications in Kansas City.

In 1921 the Mainstreet Theatre was hailed as the largest of the luxurious theaters in Kansas City, as well as having the greatest seating capacity of 3,250-seats. While the Orpheum Theatre closed during the height of the summer heat, the Mainstreet could remain open year round. It was equipped with a cooling system that maintained a temperature of 70 degrees even in the hottest weather.[33]

The Mainstreet Theatre opened on October 30, 1921. The Seven Foys, featuring Eddy Foy and his progeny of

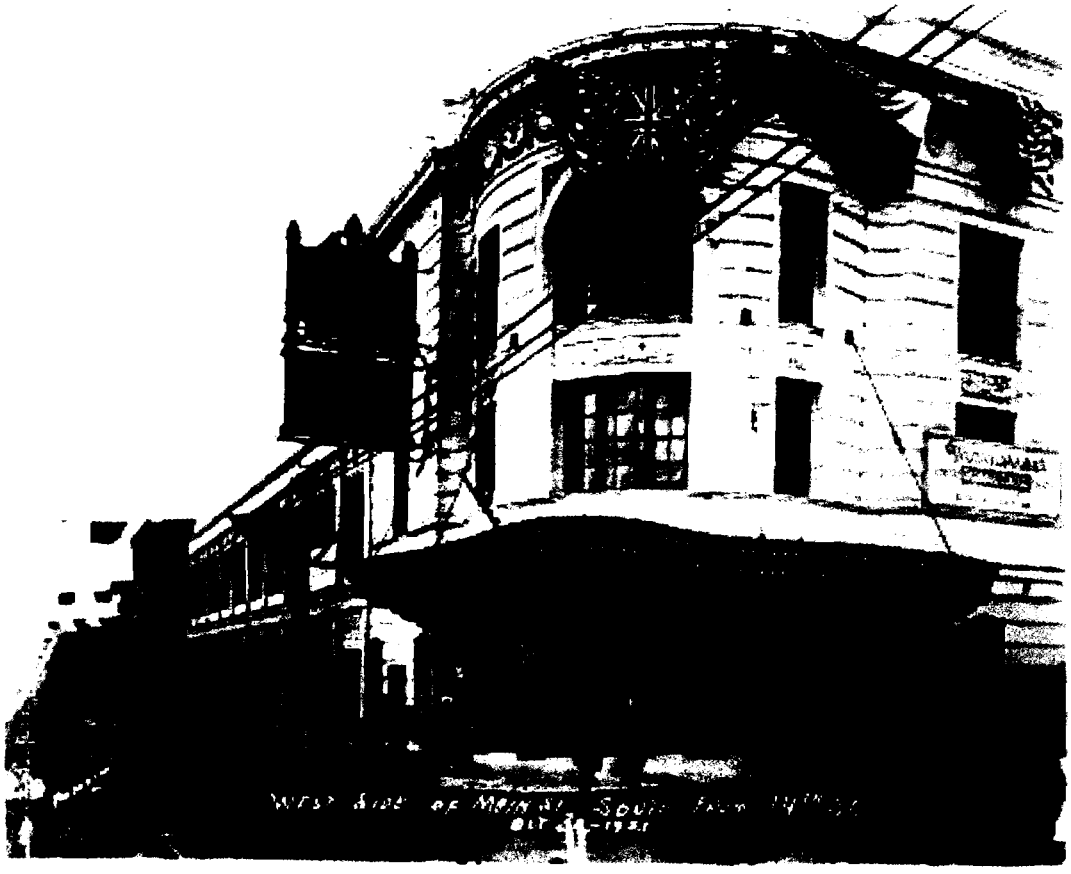
[31] Wertheim, 244-246.
[32] "Orpheum Idea Born a Third of Century Ago," *The Kansas City Journal-Post* 22 October 1922, Sec.3, p. 4.
[33] *Ibid.*

four sons and two daughters were the headliners. The show was titled "The Foy Fun Revue."[34] The theater supported the Junior Orpheum policy of offering popular-priced, vaude-film shows. As a live theater enthusiast, Beck had hesitated to show feature films in the Circuit's big-time theaters.[35] The vaude-film combination was gaining popularity but Beck remained unmovable in his decision. The partners and investors in the Orpheum Theatre Circuit began planning to remove Beck from his position as president. The group regularly quarreled with Beck over theater building policy as well as general management issues.[36]

Mainstreet Theatre, Opening Day, October 30, 1921

Courtesy of Western Historic Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri- Kansas City

[34] "Mainstreet," *The Independent* 5 November 1921, n.p.
[35] Wertheim, 247.
[36] *Ibid.*



Mainstreet Theatre, Opening Day, October 30, 1921
Courtesy of Western Historic Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

In January 1923, the pressure from investors was too much; subsequently Beck resigned. He had become frustrated with the industry and was still bitter about soured business with the Palace Theatre in New York. He saw the opportunity to make quick money by selling off his holdings in Orpheum shares. With the cash in his pocket and out from under the restrictive contracts with the K-A circuit, he was able to build a "legitimate" theater that he called The Martin Beck Theatre in New York City. It was designed by Beck's favorite architect G. Albert Lansburgh,

Beck managed Martin Beck Theatre (which continues to offer Broadway shows today), until his death in 1940. In 1968, the Martin Beck Estate sold the theatre to Jujamcyn, a New York based theater company that operates Broadway plays. In 2003, it was renamed in honor of caricaturist-cartoonist Al Hirschfeld who chronicled live theatre in New York for seventy-five years.[37]

Kansas City's Mainstreet Theatre: 1922-1985

The Mainstreet Theatre was the largest theatre in the downtown area until the Midland Theatre was built at 13th and Main in 1927. The Mainstreet was the largest of all the Junior Orpheum theaters built by the circuit. The building included shops on the first floor along Main Street and office space on the second floor. A free nursery attended by a trained nurse and assistants was made available to parents with young children.

Rapp and Rapp's design for the Mainstreet Theatre, like that of the Tivoli and the Chicago theaters, are similar in that the buildings employ monumental arches at the main façade. These two Chicago theaters, opened to the public in 1921, just prior to Kansas City's Mainstreet, offer a contrast and comparison in style and function.

The Tivoli, which opened February 21, 1921 (demolished in 1963), limited by a narrow city lot, was Rapp and Rapp's first large, free-standing movie palace built for Balaban and Katz's Orpheum circuit.[38] The Tivoli, like the Mainstreet, employed a monumental arch at the entrance. Of this element, George Rapp wrote:

> The entrance gives an alluring view of the loft colonnade and beautiful light fixtures of the grand lobby through a large arched window and being brilliantly lighted contrasts splendidly with the severe lined commercial buildings in the neighborhood.[39]

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[37] "Al Hirschfeld Theatre (The Martin Beck Theatre)," *Internet Broadway Database* (IBd). Accessed, July 20, 2006. http://www.ibdb.com/venue.asp?id=1262

[38] According to C. W. Rapp, the great nephew of the Cornelius and George, Balaban and Katz's theaters were only located in Chicago. C. W. Rapp, phone interview with C. Millstein, July 27, 2006.

[39] George L. Rapp, "History of Cinema Theater Architecture," *Living Architecture* (Chicago: A. Kroch, 1930), 62.

At the Tivoli, the arch capped by an arched pediment was the big attraction of the exterior; Rapp and Rapp minimized the décor of the rest of the facade. Unlike the Mainstreet, there was no exterior dome or commercial space. Also, contrasting the "L"-shaped interior of the Mainstreet, the outer foyer and lobby were placed parallel to the auditorium.

Opened just four days before the Mainstreet Theatre, the Chicago Theater, another design for Balaban and Katz, also employs a prominent arch at its main entrance. Instead of leaping further into the realm of fantasy with a dome, the Chicago Theater terminates in two stories of office space enriched with an operatic display of classical motifs between the two attic floors. However, it is the interior design that is similar to the Mainstreet, in that it moves the patron through a lobby and grand staircase into an auditorium at the turn of the "L". Since the Chicago Theater was designed in 1919, the scheme for this configuration may have been the first time it was employed.

It appears that the Mainstreet Theatre was characterized by two unique elements: the Byzantine dome at the entrance bay and storefronts that line the east façade.[40] Furthermore, the Mainstreet was not a part of a high-rise building scheme, like so many theaters that Rapp and Rapp designed throughout the country during the mid to late 1920s. These three-part commercial block buildings, often designed in the Chicago Style, were planned where land was expensive and developers hedged their bets on revenues from the theater as well as the commercial office space.[41] Examples of this combination of theater/high rise space include the Oriental Theater (Chicago, 1926; now the For Center for the Performing Arts); the Orpheum Theatre (Omaha, 1927); the Michigan Theatre (Detroit, 1926; closed); the Piccadilly Theatre (Chicago, 1927); the Paramount (New York, 1926; razed); and the Ambassador (St. Louis, 1926; razed).

According to Joseph Duci-Bella, theater historian, Rapp and Rapp kept proof books of buildings on their drafting tables. From these, clients often chose their type and style of theater. It became more common for an

[40] The Paramount Theater, Aurora, Illinois (1931), features a slender tower as the main façade.

investor to choose a larger commercial portion constructed above the theater portion, as there was "an economy in add-ons." Duci-Bella also stated that the Rapps were unquestionably influenced by Louis Sullivan's designs for commercial buildings in Chicago. Sadly, Duci-Bella commented on the state of Rapp and Rapp's theaters: "Most are gone and the best are gone."[42]

After a successful run, the Mainstreet Theatre went through several transitional periods prior to its permanent closure in the 1980s. In 1924 the Keith-Albee circuit consolidated with theOrpheum Theatre circuit resulting in combined earnings of $3.9 million for that year. In 1927 an agreement to complete a merger was reached and a new holding company, the Keith-Albee and Orpheum (KAO), was incorporated on January 28, 1928.[43]

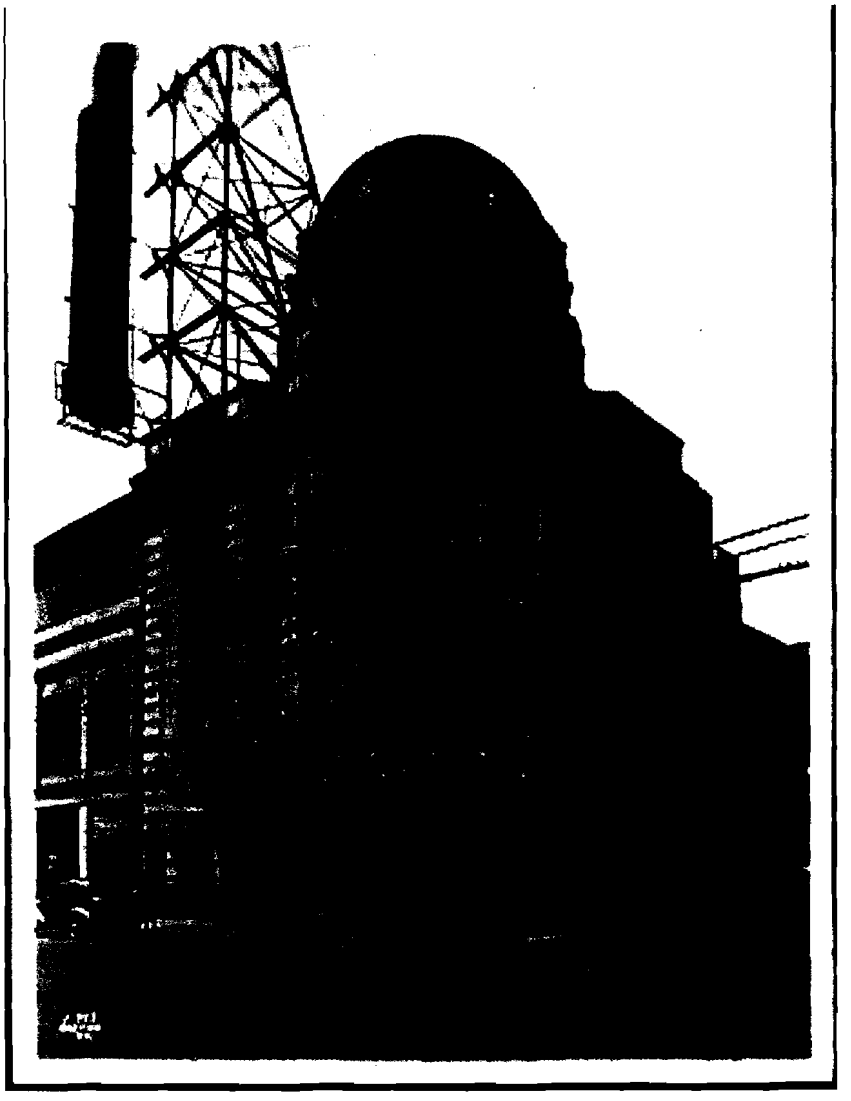
At this point in the Mainstreet Theatre's history, the fluctuations of corporate takeovers within the theater industry became highly complex. After much maneuvering, the old K-A and Orpheum circuit became part of the Radio Keith Orpheum (RKO) Corporation in which a young Joseph P. Kennedy played an instrumental part by transforming the Keith-Albee and Orpheum circuits into one of the top film producing companies in the country.

In 1929 moving pictures were no longer silent and sound systems were being installed in theaters throughout the country. RKO theaters were featuring movies as the prime attraction and vaudeville became the sideshow. The Great Depression took a heavy toll on vaudeville. As one vaudeville star stated, "[vaudeville was] the lost world on the map of show business. The depression had all but stamped it out of existence....Vaudevillians became taxi drivers, waiters and car salesmen, or took any job they could find."[44] Many vaudeville performers simply disappeared into obscurity.

The Mainstreet continued to operate throughout the depression years. Tickets were dropped to ten cents during

[41] C. W. Rapp, great-nephew of C.W. and George Rapp, July 27, 2006. Phone interview with C. Millstein.
[42] Joseph Duci-Bella, ASID and Theatre Historian, August 3, 2006. Phone interview with C. Millstein
[43] Wertheim, 262-263.

this time and special themed nights were held to attract audiences. The local theaters competed for audience share with give-aways of dishes, groceries and cash. In 1938 the Mainstreet Theatre officially closed and was only open for special events through 1941. It remained closed during World War II and until 1949.



RKO Mainstreet, August 1, 1938

[44] *Ibid, 275.*

After extensive renovations the theater formally reopened, in July 1949, as the R-K-O Missouri Theatre. Lawrence Lehman, manager of the theater, stated that the theater's interior was undergoing a major renovation with wall-to-wall carpeting in the lobby, woodwork and walls completely renovated, while the nursery was retained in the basement. A new air conditioning plant was installed along with new heating facilities. The exterior was also altered with a new marquee and sign. Seating was refurbished but reduced to only 2,600 from the previous 3,200 plus.[45] In the early 1950s, the Missouri showed the first 3-D movie in Kansas City.

During the mid-1950s, the Missouri Theatre installed Cinerama, a technique of projecting movies with three projectors at the rear of the main floor and a wide screen. The front of the balcony was raised to accommodate the projector throw from below. The three opera boxes on each side of the proscenium were removed to accommodate the huge curved screen.

Eventually the novelty of Cinerama wore off. The theater again closed and did not reopen until the 1960s when it was renamed the Empire Theatre. The seating capacity was again reduced to 1,200. The theater ran big budget Hollywood blockbuster films during the 1960s.[46]

In the early 1960s, the Durwood Theatre Company, now American Multi Cinema (AMC) bought the theater and renamed it the Empire. In 1967, Durwood split the Empire into two theaters, by adding steel girders to the front of the balcony and extending a deck from the balcony to the proscenium. This made a large theater upstairs with 1,005 seats. It was first called the Royal, and later the Empire I. The Empire II (first floor) continued as a Cinerama Theatre. In 1980, the upstairs was further split in two with a wall down the middle. Each theater seated about 400. A small lobby under the balcony had been converted earlier to a narrow theatre with a small screen seating about 100. It was called the Academy then later known simply as the Empire 1, 2, 3, and 4. After Cinerama films were no longer made, the middle portion of the curved screen was removed and a flat screen was

[45] "Theatres, Mainstreet-Name Changed," *The Kansas City Star* 1 April 1949. Clippings, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[46] Dory DeAngelo,"Rise and Fall of the Empire," *KC Life Downtown* 22 June 1988, 13.

added at the front of the stage housing.[47]

In 1985 the theater closed for the last time while owned and operated by the AMC Theatre Corporation. It was deemed "no longer viable as a film theatre," according to Ron D. Leslie of the AMC chain. While under AMC's ownership, the Empire became a multi-plex theater with four small theaters each showing a different film. The theater featured first run comedy as well as action and horror films until it closed in October 1985.[48] Subsequently, the building was sold to Executive Hills, Inc., which announced plans in 1986 to build several office buildings in the area and demolish the Empire, leaving only the tower and the dome section intact.

The Architectural Firm of C. W. and Geo. L. Rapp

"Here is a shrine to democracy where the wealthy rub elbows with the poor."[49]

George L. Rapp on theater design

Cornelius W. and George L. Rapp were brothers from a family of seven boys, four of whom were influenced to take up architecture by their father Isaac Rapp. Isaac, Sr., was a carpenter-architect from Carbondale, Illinois.[50] Two of the Rapp brothers, Isaac Hamilton (b.1855) and William Mason (b. 1863) Rapp formed an architectural practice in the southwest between Trinidad, Colorado, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1899. Isaac and William's designs include: the New Mexico Pavilion for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and the La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe.[51]

Cornelius Ward (1861-1927), known as C.W., gained basic architectural skills from his father when he assisted

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[47] Letter to Tom Jeffrey, c/o Newsreel, from Tom Taylor, July 28 1992. Files, Theatre Historical Society, of America, Elmhurst, IL.
[48] Robert C. Trussell, "End of the Empire" *The Kansas City Star* 25 October 1985, 1A, 5A.
[49] David Naylor, *American Picture Palace: The Architecture of Fantasy* (Van Nostrand Reinhold Co,: New York, 1981), 31.
[50] John W. D. Wright, *A History of Early Carbondale, Illinois, 1852-1905.* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University, 1977), 275.
[51] *Architectural Record* 15 April 1904, 337-360.

in the construction of the Southern Illinois Normal School at Carbondale which is now Southern Illinois University. He later struck out on his own and worked throughout the central and southern area of Illinois designing courthouses, schools and churches. C. W. served as the State Architect of Illinois under Governor Altgeld (1893-97).[52]

George Lesley Rapp (1878-1942) received a formal education at the University of Illinois but studied architecture abroad. In analyzing Geo. L. Rapp's architectural style, it is thought that he was well exposed to the Ê cole des Beaux Arts, although it was not taught at the University of Illinois until well into the 20th century.[53] Once George returned to Chicago, he began his architectural career as "first assistant of Edmund Krause, then engaged in preparing plans for the Majestic Theatre."[54]

The architectural firm Rapp & Rapp was formed in 1906 when C. W., after practicing for several years under his own name, asked his younger brother, Geo. L. to form a partnership. Their office was located in the Chicago Title and Trust Building. In 1910 the firm got its first independent commission for a theater, the Majestic Theatre in Dubuque, Iowa, designed in the Second Empire style. Although the firm designed many other types of buildings, the firm's name became synonymous with movie theater design.

The first successful building designed by the firm was for the Central (Park) Theatre on Roosevelt Road in Chicago (which combined commercial space above the theater), followed in the ensuing years by the Tivoli, Riviera, the Chicago, Uptown, Palace in the Bismarck Hotel building and the Oriental in the Masonic Building. Rapp and Rapp, did not, however, limit their practice to theater design. Under the firm name they prepared plans for the Fort Dearborn Bank Building at 203 N. Wabash Ave. and other large business and commercial

[52] Ann Rutherford Fair, "The American Movie Palace: Three Treasures by Rapp and Rapp," May 1982, 20-23. M.A. Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Obituary, "George L. Rapp, 1878 – September 17, 1941," n. p. Illinois Society of Architects, December 1941. Archives, Theatre Historical Society of America, Elmhurst, Illinois.

buildings in Chicago.[55]

In 1917 the Rapp firm was commissioned by Balaban and Katz. Balaban had been a fervent fan of the kinetoscopes and nickelodeon machines in arcades that he visited as a child. He ran several nickelodeon arcades early in his career. After *Birth of a Nation* premiered in 1915, Balaban saw a brilliant financial future in showing moving picture on a grand scale. He also saw the need to improve his theaters to entice the middle class into them. Balaban intended to build grand "presentation houses" to showcase the latest developments in moving pictures. Unlike the vaudeville circuits, Balaban featured movies rather than performers.

In 1916 A. J. Balaban partnered with Sam Katz who was a source of financial backing. Balaban took Katz to Baraboo, Wisconsin, to see the Al Ringling Theatre (extant) designed by Rapp and Rapp. It was a replica of a small European opera house. Katz was impressed with the Rapps. The commission they received in 1917 was to design the Central Park Theatre.[56] The success of the Central Park Theatre led to many more commissions for Balaban and Katz. Rapp and Rapp's first true movie "palace' for Balaban and Katz was built in 1921. The construction of the Tivoli Theatre on Cottage Grove Avenue (demolished) was followed by the Chicago Theatre (extant) on State Street in 1922.[57]

Although Balaban and Katz relied on Rapp and Rapp's designs to build their movie palace empire the Rapps continued to take other theater commissions as well. From 1920 through 1927, the Rapps designed a number of theaters for the Orpheum Theatre Circuit. Two of the earliest theaters were Junior Orpheum theatres, the State-Lake Theatre directly followed by the Mainstreet Theatre in Kansas City.

When C. W. died in 1927, George Rapp incorporated the firm that C. W. began in order to give key members of

[55] Ibid.
[56] Ann Rutherford Fair, M. A. Thesis, 25-27.
[57] Ibid.

the office a share of interest in the firm.[58] The company name became C. W. and Geo. L Rapp, Inc.
In 1930, just prior to the depression, Warner Brothers began negotiations with George L. Rapp for a circuit of movie palaces throughout Europe. The negotiations included possibly designing a new La Scala opera house in Italy. However, the depression cancelled any further planning. The company survived the depression through the continued construction of theaters, which seemed to "naturally gravitate to the Rapps."[59]

George retired in 1938 and his nephew, Mason G. Rapp, continued to run the architectural firm.[60] In 1942 George L. Rapp died after complications from a fall in his home.[61] After George's death the firm was renamed Rapp & Rapp.

During the 1940s the firm successfully "de-specialized" from being a theater design firm. They pioneered drive-in banking architecture and windowless factories. Their projects included automobile showrooms, banks, factories and car washes. Renovation was also a part of their business. When Cinemascope made its debut, Rapp and Rapp were often hired to renovate theaters to accommodate the large screens and equipment.[62]

Although the Rapp brothers will always be remembered for their spectacular theaters of the 1920s and 1930s, they are also known for other design projects equally as grand including: the National Press Building, Washington, D.C.; the Bismarck Hotel, Chicago; the North Wabash Bank Building, Chicago; numerous apartment buildings throughout Chicago; and the Balaban Family Mausoleum in the Waldheim Cemetery.

In all, C. W. and Geo. L. Rapp designed over 400 theaters across the United States. Rapp & Rapp designs are a subject of interest to avid theater history buffs. Cinema Treasures is a web site that covers a total of eighty-

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[58] C. Ward Rapp, "A Brief Rapp and Rapp History," July 4, 1978. Letter, Theatre Historical Society of America, Elmhurst, Illinois. C. Ward Rapp is a nephew to C. W. and Geo L. Rapp and the son of Mason Rapp.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] "Retired Chicago Architect Dies from Fall Injuries," *Chicago Daily Tribune* 18 July 1941,14.
[62] C. Ward Rapp. Letter.

seven designs of which thirty-two were designed for locations in Illinois. Of the eighty-seven theaters, only thirty-seven remain open, five are reported to be under renovation and forty-five Rapp and Rapp theaters are either closed or have been demolished.[63]

In Missouri, there are only three known theaters that were designed by Rapp and Rapp. Two were located in St. Louis, the Ambassador which has been demolished and Powell Symphony Hall which was renovated and is currently home to the St. Louis Symphony. In Kansas City, Missouri, the firm designed the Mainstreet Theatre at 14th and Main in 1921 which has been closed since 1985.[64]

[63] "Rapp & Rapp," *Cinema Treasures* Online, Accessed July 20, 2006. http://cinematreasures.org/firm/51/show=all
[64] Ibid.

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Duci-Bella, Joseph. Phone interview with C. Millstein, August 3, 2006.

Rapp, C. W. Phone interview with C. Millstein, July 27, 2006.

Verbal Boundary Description:
The W 130 FT. Lots 208, 209, 210, 211 and 212 and 14 1/4 FT Fronting on S LI 14th Street, Lying East of & Adjacent Lot 1 Block L, 2nd RES OF REIDS & RNG S157 FT. MCGEES ADD.

Boundary Justification:
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Mainstreet Theatre.

Key to Photographs:
Len Fohn, photographer, July 20-23, 2006. All negatives are archived at AHR, LLC, Kansas City, Missouri.

1. Main entrance; view facing southwest
2. Detail of main entrance bay; view facing west
3. East façade; view facing west
4. Detail of the northern bays of the east faced; view facing west
5. North façade; view facing southwest
6. North faced; view facing south
7. North and west facades; view facing east, southeast
8. West façade; view facing east
9. West façade; view facing northeast
10. West and south facades; view facing northeast
11. South façade; view facing north
12. East and south facades; view facing northwest
13. First Floor, view of grand staircase; view facing looking west.
14. First Floor, view of auditorium and stage house; view facing southwest.
15. Mezzanine; view facing east.
16. Balcony; view facing north.

Mainway

UTM REFS: *
15/363048 E
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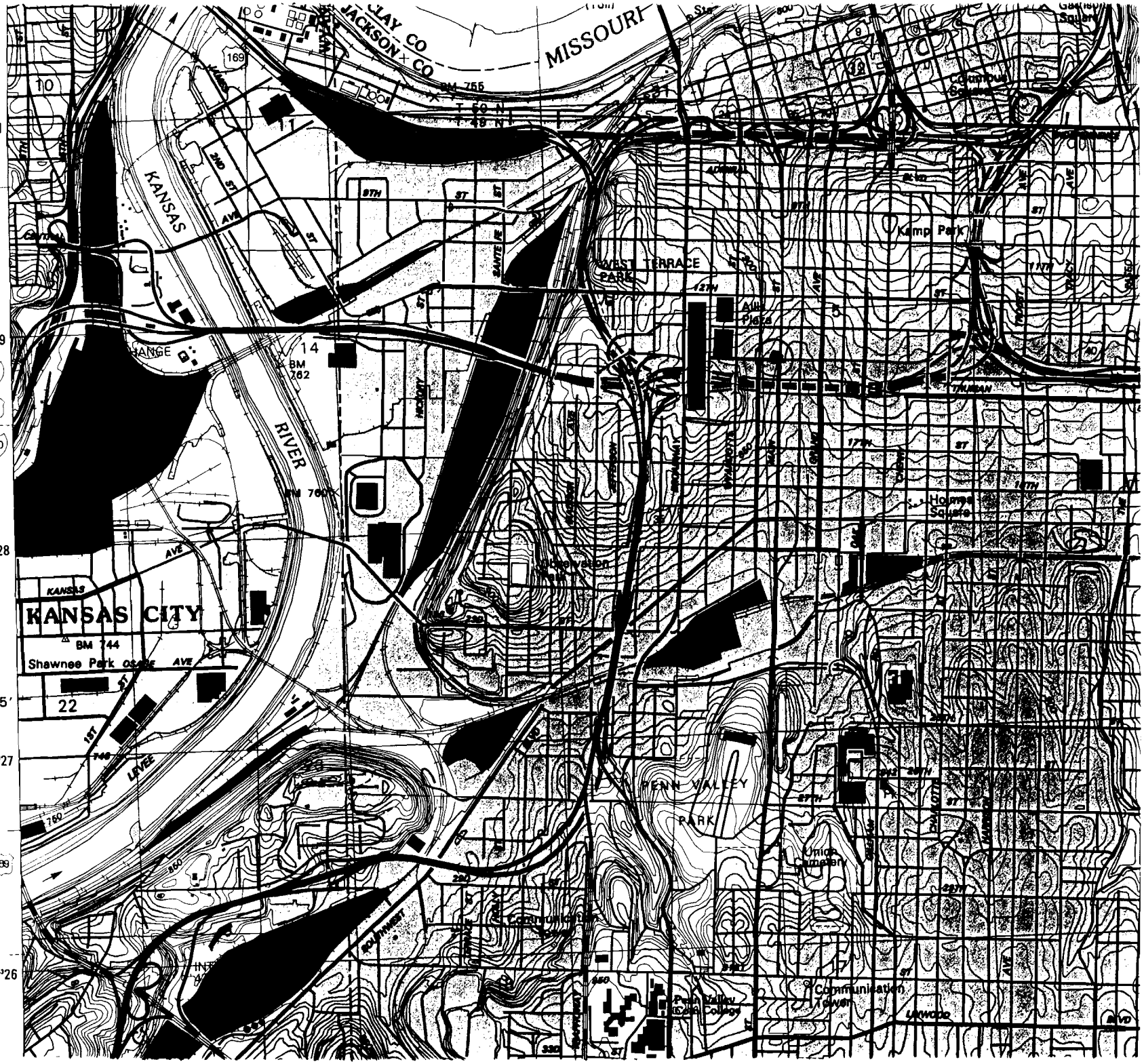
*UTMS FROM GIS SYSTEM



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