

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 Beverly Theater

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 7740 Olive Boulevard [N/A] not for publication

city or town University City [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis County code 189 zip code 63130

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 06/15/05
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Missouri Department of Natural Resources

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

Beverly Theater
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

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
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ 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
_____ N/A _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
CONCRETE
roof SYNTHETICS/rubber
other _____

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

Beverly Theater
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1937-1955

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stiegemeier, Oliver. W., Architect

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Beverly Theater
Name of Property

St. Louis (County), MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property under 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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

2 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing

3 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

4 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen Bode Baxter, Architectural Historian; Timothy P. Maloney and Mandy K. Ford, Research Associates

organization Karen Bode Baxter, Preservation Specialist date April 4, 2005

street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593

city or town St. Louis state Missouri zip code 63109-3108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Lan Qing Chen

street & number 8148 Olive Boulevard telephone (314) 993-6208

city or town University City state Missouri zip code 63130

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Description

The Beverly Theater is an Art Deco style movie theater built in 1937, located in University City, Missouri at 7740 Olive Boulevard, a main artery to the western suburbs of St. Louis. The yellow brick building is a barrel vault roofed structure with a cast concrete façade that has highly stylized Art Deco ornamentation that distinguishes it from surrounding commercial buildings, both because of its unusual stylistic detailing and because of its prominence in the streetscape, separated by open land from adjacent properties. The bank of full light entry doors on the symmetrical façade mark the entry into the theater and the surrounding facade is highlighted by a series of cast concrete, Art Deco style details, including the reeding on the cornice, the rounded edges and horizontal lines at the corners, the chevrons, fan motifs, and the large, bowed glass block window above the entry. The cornice features an unusual metalwork railing with metal swags that is silhouetted against the sky. The building is on the southeast corner of the intersection of Olive Boulevard and what was a private street, named Riegert Avenue, just west of North-South Road. The private street was eliminated with the recent redevelopment project that also resulted in the construction of a one story commercial kitchen addition that sits back from the main theatre façade on its east side and utilizes the stepped cornice and matching brick to tie its design to the historic building, which is now used as a restaurant. The lot to the east of the Beverly Theater is now vacant where a commercial building once stood on the site. To the south is a parking lot for the theater and to the north is Olive Boulevard. In the surrounding neighborhood on Olive Boulevard, the only other extant building dating to the Art Deco period is an Art Moderne building to the east at the southeast corner of North-South Road and Olive Boulevard. All other extant buildings are commercial facilities and date from the 1950s or later on this section of Olive Boulevard.

EXTERIOR FEATURES

The north façade of the Beverly Theater faces Olive Boulevard. The foundation is poured concrete and the sidewalk in front of the theater is raised to the level of the main entrance doors thus covering the foundation material on the front of the building. The façade is made of cast concrete with numerous Art Deco design features. The main floor of the facade has three bays. The paired end bays feature centered brass panels with an inset for the advertisements for the cinema. The insets feature two side panels on either side of the poster opening and three panels across the bottom. The poster area is framed by two reeded columns with a cornice across the top. The paired end bays curve around the corners and have four incised horizontal lines creating a streamlined appearance. The center bay consists of six wood framed, single light doors with large twisted iron handles. Centered between these doors was a nonhistoric glass block panel, infilling the original ticket booth area, an alteration that had occurred in the late 1980s, but as part of the historic rehabilitation project, the glass block has been removed and the ticket booth reconstructed.

A reeded cornice separates the main floor and the upper level of the theater. Over the end bays are relief designs on the reeding that are two heart shaped concrete ribbons making a figure eight with a center medallion. Above the cornice line on the end bays are two mounted exterior lamps that are not original to the theater. Projecting up the center of the paired end bays past the roofline are reeded sections with five reeds bordered by zigzag designs. The reeded section punctuates the cornice line above the roof and has stepped cascades down each side to the top of the cornice line. Below the cornice line at the roofline are two Greek key designs. The center bay on the second floor is banded in brick across above the reeded cornice line where the original marquee was anchored and was removed in the late 1980s. Above the marquee is a curved glass block window that is twenty-three blocks wide by twelve blocks high. Bordering the window are two chevron panels in a vertical rotation. Above the glass block window is the cornice line that features an Art Deco fan shaped pattern with chevrons above the fans. On the roof cresting is a delicately shaped metal railing with five posts that are stepped in height to create a half moon shape across the façade. They have metal swags stretched between them with x-shaped bands with a medallion at their crossing points.

The east elevation features five brick pilasters evenly spaced to the center leaving the north and south ends double width sections. The poured concrete foundation is exposed on the side of the building as the land slopes downhill toward the rear of the lot. There are three openings in the north bay that consist of paired metal exit doors on the main level with a larger double hung window on the second floor centered over the smaller main floor double hung window. The roof cornice line with the Art Deco fan shaped motif with the chevrons wraps around from the front. The roofline extends to the center of the double bay, then drops approximately four feet to accommodate the barrel shaped roof over the auditorium.

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Description (continued)

The south (rear) elevation has openings at the foundation level for HVAC equipment. There are two giant fan cylinders within a metal framework projecting from the rear of the building. There are no openings in the south wall of the building above the foundation level.

The west elevation was the same configuration as the east elevation with the exception of a chimney in the center of the double bay at the south end and paired metal stage doors to the north of the chimney. The three openings at the north end of the building mirror those of the east elevation. As part of the certified historic rehabilitation project nearing completion, a one story addition has been built of complementary bricks, set back from the façade to connect through the lobby of the historic building.

INTERIOR FEATURES

The interior of the building retains the 1937 configuration of the use of space as a single screen movie theatre, with a lobby across the front and ramped seating south toward the shallow stage and movie screen.

The lobby has an interior foyer behind the ticket booth area spanning the front between the six entry doors, with a terrazzo floor and a flanking series of doorways leading into the main lobby. The foyer provided access on either end to the restrooms and to the upper level mezzanine, which was enclosed as an office. The lobby and mezzanine areas had dropped ceilings and nonhistoric lighting fixtures added at some point, but these were removed during the current project. The original ticket booth was missing from the lobby but during the rehabilitation project, the shadow marks on the floor were used to recreate its configuration.

The auditorium retains some of the wall relief features that are vertical and horizontal bands that have reeding in their design work. The original stage had been covered when the church that had owned the building installed a large stage apron. A recent rehabilitation project removed the non-historic structure revealing the original platform. The original sloped floors were converted into tiered floor levels with several rows of the original auditorium seating retained in front of the screen.

ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

The exterior of the building retains a high degree of integrity. However, the original marquee and exterior lamps are missing from the main façade of the building. The current rehabilitation project went to great effort to repair the severely damaged brick that had sloughed off in many areas due to extensive water infiltration into the masonry walls. The historic details are being carefully repaired on both the exterior and interior as part of this project as well. Although the new owner is a Chinese restaurant and the ramped floor has been modified to create tiered seating levels for tables, some of the auditorium seating was retained and the original stage and screen restored along with the reeded wall designs. Even the original balcony has been reopened. To maintain this high degree of historic integrity on the interior, the original side exit doors on the west side now lead to an addition where the kitchen is located. This addition was carefully designed, using a similar yellow brick and complementing the tiered façade details of the historic building while setting back far enough the addition is not easily visible when traveling from the east. Overall the building's pronounced exterior Art Deco features continue to define the building and provide an excellent example of the movie palaces designed during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

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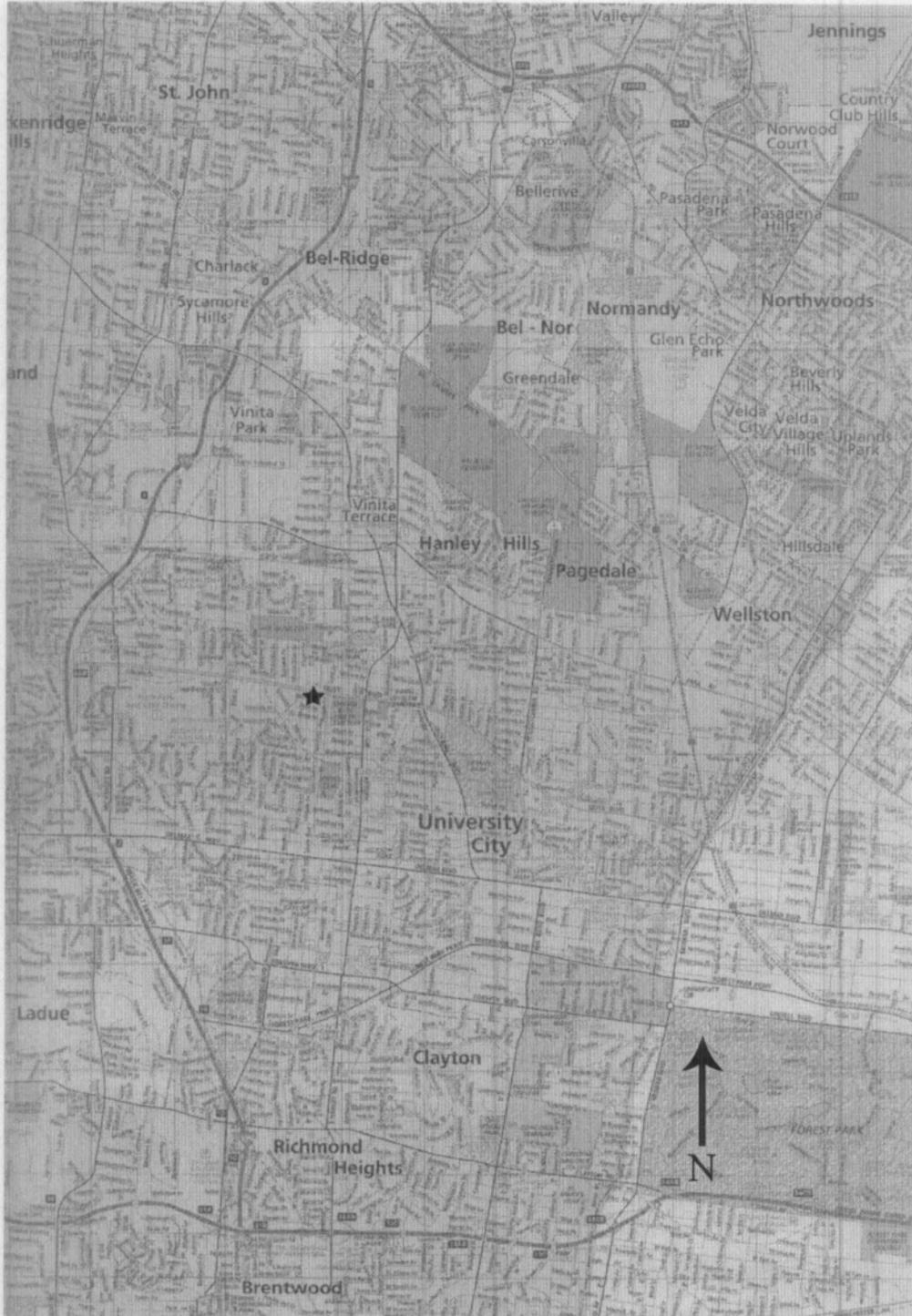
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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Map of City of St. Louis Metropolitan Area

Locating Property



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National Park Service

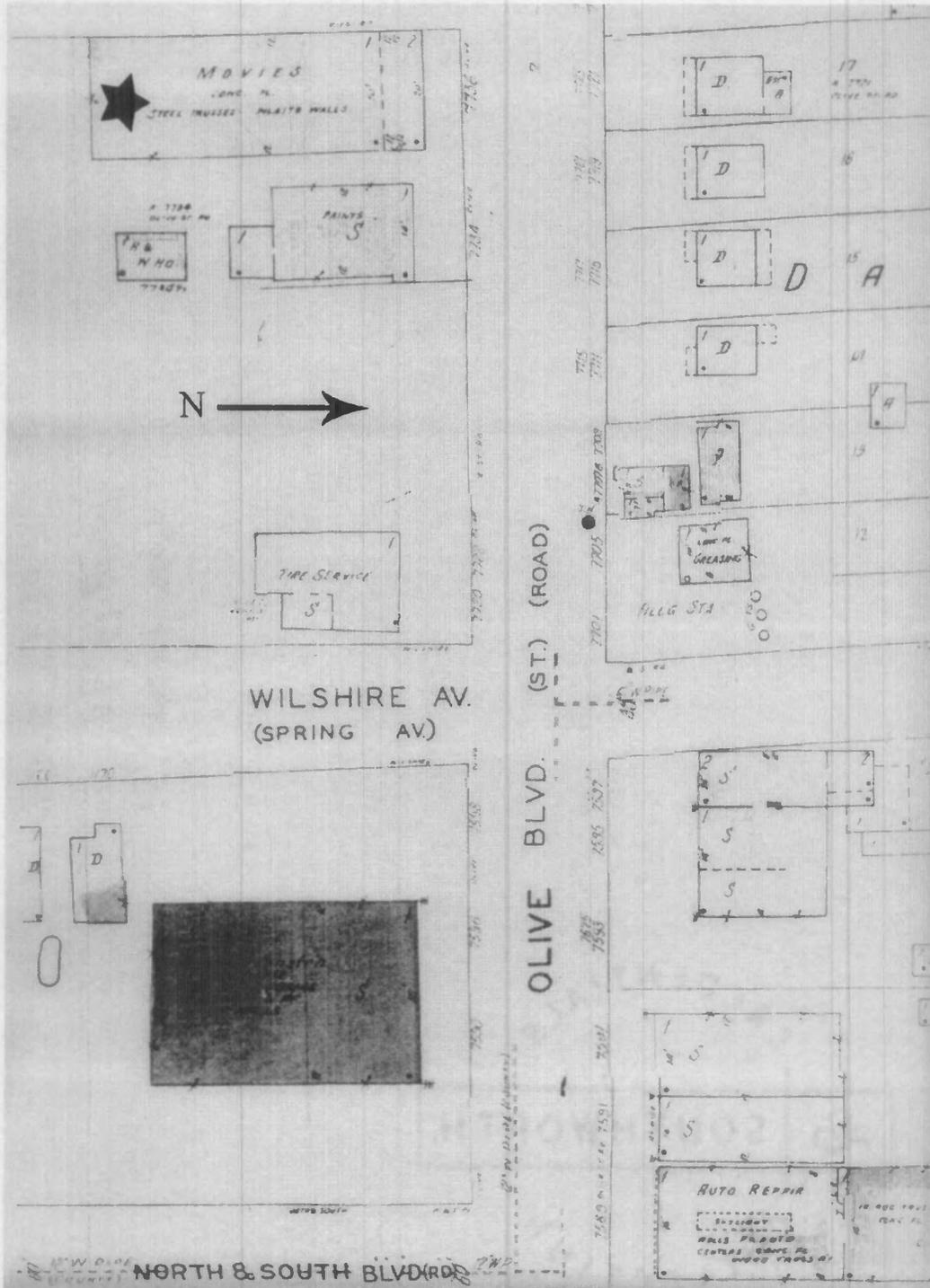
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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, updated through 1951

Locating Property



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

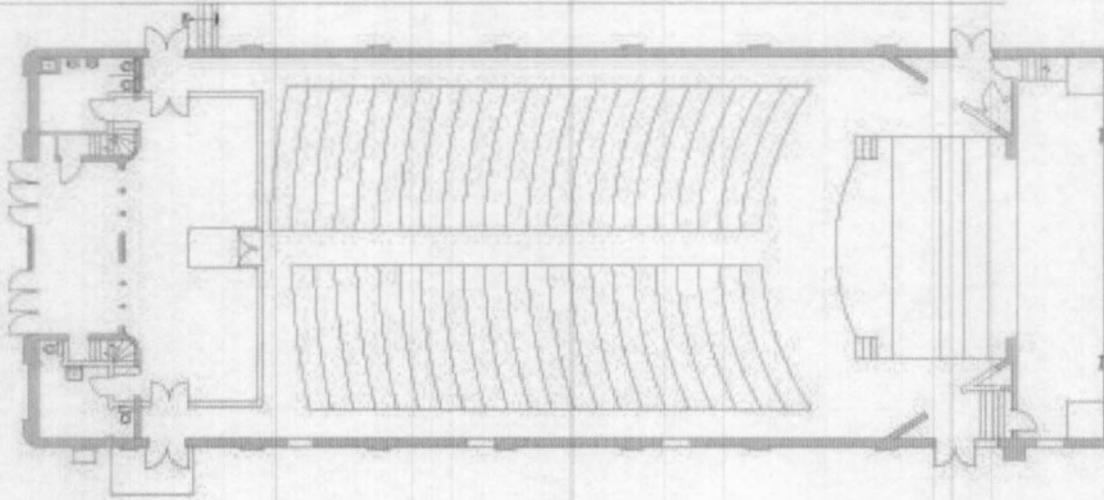
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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Courtesy of St. Louis Design Alliance

First Floor Plan (Pre-Renovation)



MAIN LEVEL



RECEIVED
COUNCIL ON
ARCHITECTURE
325 Cotton Street

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

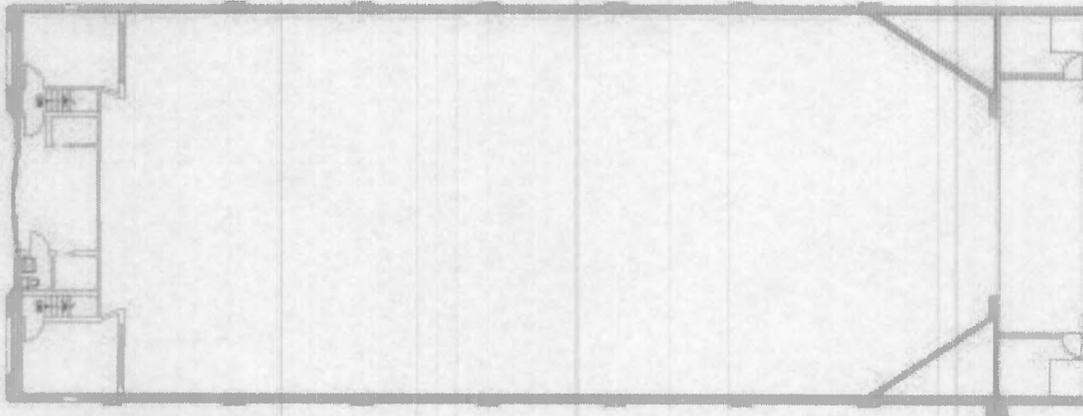
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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Courtesy of St. Louis Design Alliance

Second Floor Plan (Pre-Renovation)



MEZZANINE LEVEL



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

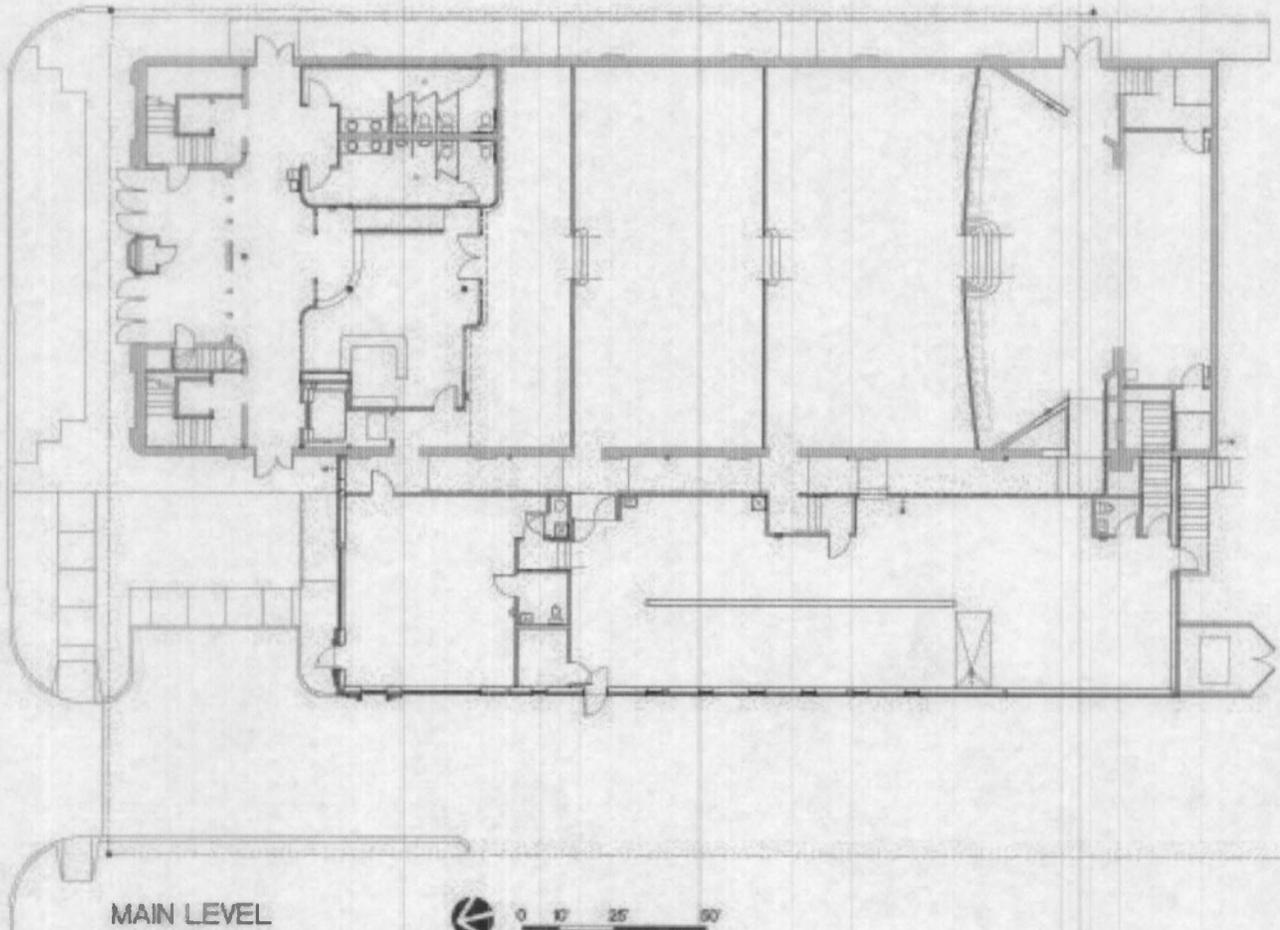
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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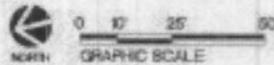
Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Courtesy of St. Louis Design Alliance

First Floor Plan (After Renovation)



MAIN LEVEL



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

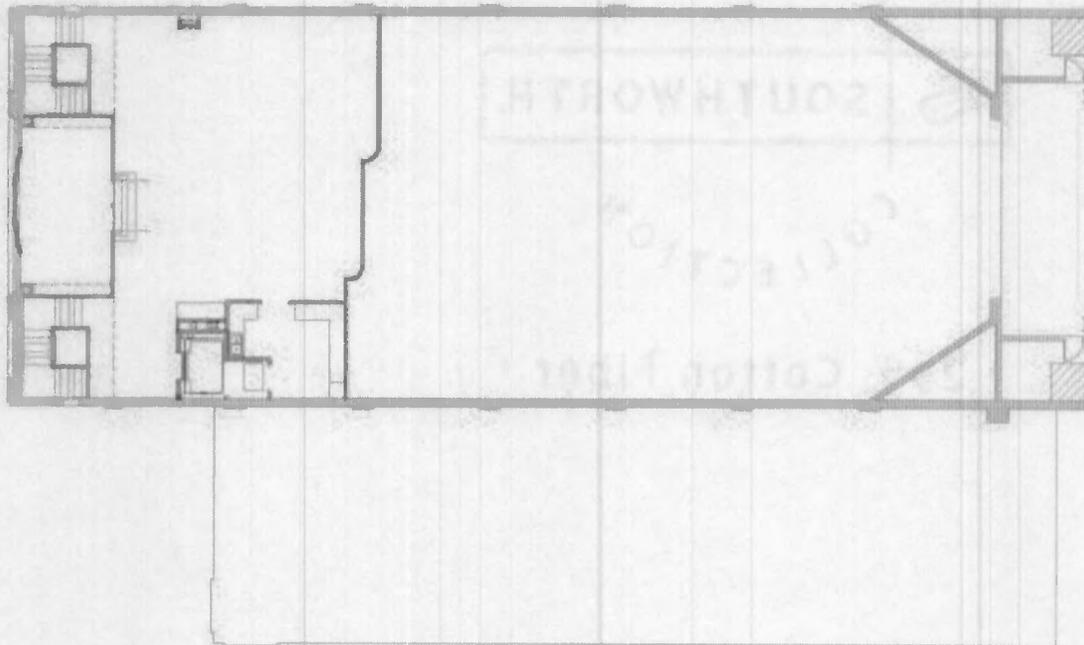
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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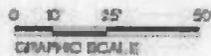
Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Courtesy of St. Louis Design Alliance

Second Floor Plan (After Renovation)



MEZZANINE LEVEL



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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Statement of Significance

SUMMARY

The Beverly Theater, located at 7740 Olive Boulevard in University City, the suburb just west of the Saint Louis city limits in Saint Louis County, Missouri, was completed in 1938 according to the design of Oliver W. Steigemeyer to house a movie theater operated by Henry Holloway.¹ The building is one of the last neighborhood theaters intact in Saint Louis, and one that retains a high degree of its historic integrity. As such, the Beverly Theater is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation and it is also eligible under Criterion C: Architecture for its distinctive Art Deco design. The period of significance for the Beverly Theater is from its construction in 1937 until 1955. The Art Deco designed building is one of the last of the local theaters in the Saint Louis Metropolitan area and represents an important era in the development of the movie theater between the picture palaces of the 1920s and the big box cineplexes and multi-plexes of today.

BUILDING HISTORY

The theater was run as the Beverly Theater from the time it opened until 1967, when the name was changed to the New Beverly Theater. This short lived theater was replaced by the Fine Arts Theater in 1970, a theater with a questionable business plan that saw the operators of the theater showing G-rated and family movies during the day and switching over to X-rated movies at night. Despite the potential hazards created by the theater's two different client bases, the Fine Arts Theater remained in business until 1986. Then in 1987 the building was purchased by a church to house its services.²

HISTORY OF MOVIE THEATERS

The theater is a building type that has existed in the United States since before the country's inception, with the first theater appearing in colonial Williamsburg over sixty years before the American Revolution.³ As the country grew, theaters spread across the land, but it was not until the start of the 1900s that a major change occurred in theaters. Instead of stage shows, theaters started displaying shows utilizing a new type of technology: the moving picture.⁴

The first movies were not shown in theaters dedicated to the purpose, but rather were shown in existing structures. The first of these types of buildings were the kinetoscope parlors. Kinetoscopes were small film watching devices invented by Thomas Edison, a box with a light source, a lens, and the film reel inside and a small viewer for the patron to watch the movie. These parlors did not require anything more than an open room and kinetoscope parlors consisted of a simple empty room lined with kinetoscopes.⁵ The other main venues to watch early movies were usually stage theaters and music halls, although these spaces were poorly suited to a medium that required straight sight lines and the ability to close the room off to light. Often when movies were shown in such locations it would only be a part of the entertainment bill to go along with a vaudeville show or musical performance.⁶

The next major step in the development of the movie theater was the nickelodeon. The nickelodeon was a small plain building, similar to a kinetoscope parlor in that it was largely unadorned, that would have a small stage in the front where a sheet could be hung for use as a screen, an area for a band or piano player, and rows of benches or bleachers for the patrons.⁷ The nickelodeons were seen as unsavory places, and many of the upper class citizens who frequented stage theater and opera actually called for the regulation of these new theaters, especially in regard to supervision of women and children in the building and censorship of the movies being shown. These complaints about the social elements that nickelodeons attracted occurred at the same time that respectable theaters started showing vaudeville shows and stage theaters were becoming more likely to show a film reel as part of the show to the very same people who were complaining about the nickelodeons.⁸ As a result of the clear demand for the product and complaints about the way it was delivered to the customer, a new building type was designed: the movie theater.

By 1913 the first motion picture palace, the Regent, opened in New York City.⁹ The opening of the Regent started the second age of the motion picture theater, following in the wake of the first movie theaters, Nickelodeons and small theaters set up in pre-existing buildings. The new picture palaces were often very exotic, with motifs that ranged from Orientalism, such as Grauman's Chinese Theater (now known as Mann's Chinese Theater, in Los Angeles), Islamic/Moorish themes such as the Alhambra theater in San Francisco. Atmospheric theaters, which were designed to look like outdoor settings, such as the Italianate nightscape of the Cort Theater in Chicago, were also popular.¹⁰ These theaters were meant to create a space of fantasy and relaxation as people allowed themselves to become lost in the flickering images on the screen and the live music from the orchestra pit or piano accompanying the movie.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

As the medium progressed, new designs began to appear in movie theaters. By the start of the Great Depression, the great picture palaces of the theater industry's second age began to run into financial difficulties. The Great Depression meant that luxuries like an evening at the movies were less attractive than they had been in the roaring twenties. Many theaters offered extra attractions so customers could get a better deal for their dollar, such as the miniature golf course the Roxy in New York City installed in its lobby.¹¹ In addition, many of the picture palaces were owned directly by the studios and as the studios had financial problems, eliminating the picture palaces were one of the first cost cutting measures taken to save the studios.¹² The large buildings were also expensive to operate and a new technological innovation made the picture palaces even less appealing to theater goers.¹³ The invention of the talkies made the large, ornate picture palaces less functional for movies with sound. The large open areas and extensive architectural detailing, usually done in hard, acoustically reflective materials, made it almost impossible to actually hear and understand the dialogue in the movie.¹⁴

Although the massive picture palaces were not financially sound, movies were still making money. Although the growth of theater development slowed tremendously during the Depression, as did so many other industries, it did not end entirely. New theaters built in the 1930s tended to be designed in the Art Deco, Art Moderne or Streamlined styles.¹⁵ This change was not purely financial. The growth of the Art Deco style and related modern styles were also more suited to the times, as the excesses of the twenties were replaced with the sober atmosphere of the Depression. The older picture palaces had been historically designed with palaces in mind, full of rich tapestries, decorated columns, and fine art work. These details were not the type of riches that people wanted to be reminded of during the Depression. In addition, all of the architectural details were a major cause of the acoustical problems the early talkies faced.¹⁶ The new Art Deco buildings, with their streamlined details based on geometric patterns that were often flat were much more suited acoustically to talkies than the baroque detailing of the picture palaces.

Many scholars also offer the idea that the changing attitudes towards movies themselves influenced the design shift. These attitudes included the fact that the early atmospheric and exotics were used to display a new and exotic technology. As the films themselves supplanted the novelty of seeing moving pictures and movies became a socially acceptable art form, the buildings did not need to act as an architectural defense to the activities inside and people were no longer impressed by the novelty of the experience itself, including the awe created by the buildings. There was no reason to risk alienating frugal customers with the exuberant designs of the picture palaces.¹⁷

At the same time, Art Deco's debut in Paris made the style synonymous with elegance, an image that carried over to the United States and allowed the smaller neighborhood theaters that replaced the picture palaces to retain some of the elegance and connotations of money without being ostentatious.¹⁸ The Beverly Theater, constructed in 1937 in the midst of the Great Depression and at the height of popularity of the Art Deco style, is one of these third generation movie theaters and represents the shift to less ornate, smaller, neighborhood Art Deco designed movie theaters. These smaller neighborhood theaters were often located on secondary arterial streets in the smaller neighborhood commercial areas. These theaters generally had only one screen, as did the picture palaces, but the theaters held as little as a tenth the number of people. These theaters were also occasionally in the midst of a larger destination shopping district as well, but even when placed in such an area, the theaters were still the same smaller size.

After World War II, as the people in the United States began to move to the suburbs, the neighborhood theaters began to face the same fate as the picture palaces before them, although for different reasons. The migration to the suburbs took the customers away from many neighborhood theaters. By the 1930s, the new shopping malls and automobile based society of the suburbs did not allow for small neighborhood theaters on a street corner without nearby parking. Instead theater design shifted to large complexes, where the theater owner could build a parking lot on site and, more importantly, have enough room for multiple movie screens within the same theater. These cineplexes and megaplexes quickly replaced the neighborhood theater, forcing those that remained open to become Art House theaters, specializing in foreign films and "high" art films in some cases and adult fare in other cases.¹⁹ Even with the attempt to find a new customer base, the neighborhood theater could not effectively compete with a cineplex offering multiple movies at a time in a more convenient location.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

HISTORY OF ST. LOUIS MOVIE THEATERS

Movie theaters in Saint Louis followed the same pattern as the rest of the nation. The earliest theaters were in small storefronts, music halls and in the case of the "theater" established by a man named Mike Nash, a tent.²⁰ At the time, Saint Louis was even producing a number of the movies shown in the theaters, including a 1911 movie called "The James Boys in Missouri" which was the first three reel movie produced in the United States (by comparison, D.W. Griffith's 1915 epic "Birth of a Nation" was twelve reels long).²¹ "The James Boys in Missouri" was produced by Orrin T. Crawford, who was the first man in Saint Louis to build a theater for the sole purpose of showing movies.²² The movies quickly became popular in Saint Louis and by 1916 the Star-Times was the first Saint Louis newspaper to include movie listings, which already included ten theaters: The Grand Central, the American, the Kings, the Congress, the Cinderella, the Juanita, the Chippewa, the Pageant, the Knickerbocker and the Ritz.²³ Within the next ten years these smaller theaters were joined by the major picture palaces in Saint Louis, which included the Missouri theater in 1920 with 3,500 seats, Loew's State Theater in 1924 with 4000 seats (the third largest theater in the country at the time), the Ambassador in 1926 and the Fox in 1929. The Fox not only became the third largest theater in the country when it opened; it remained so until 1948.²⁴

These theaters saw initial success, but faced the same problems as theaters around the country at the start of the 1930s: The Great Depression. The lack of money available for entertainment hurt the theater's owners, but it did not destroy the movie theater in business. Instead, Saint Louis theater owners followed the tactics of theater owners around the country; the new theaters they built were smaller and less ornate and tended to be smaller, neighborhood, Art Deco, Streamlined, or Art Moderne designed buildings. This era of theaters saw the growth of theaters throughout the Saint Louis area, with almost every neighborhood seeing a movie theater built nearby. Over fifty theaters in metropolitan Saint Louis were in operation by 1936.²⁵ The Beverly Theater, built the next year, was one of at least twelve theaters built in the metropolitan area between 1936 and the start of World War II (for the United States) in 1941.²⁶

BEVERLY THEATER

As one of the earlier theaters from this third building period in theater design, the period of the neighborhood theater, the Beverly Theater retains an extraordinarily high degree of its architectural integrity, with the removal of the marquee the only obvious change to the façade from the Beverly Theater's time as a theater. This theater has survived with a high degree of integrity to its original features on the main façade of the building. The cast concrete designs of the Beverly Theater remain in excellent condition with the Art Deco motifs clearly intact. These features include chevrons, reeding, fan shapes, stepped roof designs, delicate metal work on the roof cresting, and elaborate brass fittings for the main entrance doors and advertising spaces of the building. Glass block windows were a new innovation in building design in the 1930s and were employed in the design of the Beverly Theater.

As an Art Deco neighborhood theater, the Beverly Theater is one of the best remaining examples of the neighborhood movie theater still extant in Saint Louis. An extensive window survey of former movie theater sites (found in the telephone books and city directories) find that the vast majority of the former movie theaters buildings are no longer extant.²⁷ Of those that are still intact, most have lost their historic integrity and are often not even recognizable as a theater building.²⁸ As one of the few remaining neighborhood movie theaters, and one of the last that retains any semblance of historic integrity, the Beverly Theater is especially significant as a physical remnant of this important form of entertainment.

OLIVER W. STIEGEMEYER, ARCHITECT

The Beverly Theater was designed by Oliver W. Stiegemeyer, an architect born in 1891, who first appeared in the St. Louis city directories in 1910 as a draftsman. He worked for August F. Haeussler from 1909-1910 and then went to work for Duggan and Huff from 1910-1912. In 1913 he went into partnership with Mr. Kennerly and they worked together until 1931. One of their notable collaborations in residential architecture was the Mediterranean style home constructed at 3424 Longfellow in Saint Louis. In Illinois, he is credited with designing the DuQuoin State Fairgrounds, also utilizing Moderne and Art Deco design themes. His last offices were at 4412 Lindell Boulevard and he retired from practicing architecture in 1942 and died in 1985.²⁹

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Endnotes

- ¹University City, Building Plans/Permits, "Permit #6940," 29 May, 1937; *Gould's Saint Louis (Missouri) City Directory* (Saint Louis, MO: Polk Gould Directory Company Publishers, 1938), 1125.
- ²Saint Louis Public Library, "City Clippings, *Saint Louis Post Dispatch*, Jerry Berger's Column 14 March 1986"; The Historical Society of University City, Clippings Files, Theaters, "City Clippings", Clayton Citizens Journal, 24 July 1987, 1a; *Gould's Saint Louis City Directory*, 1967, 344.
- ³Susan McCarter, "Historic American Theaters," *Forum Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Summer, 1996, <https://forum.nationaltrust.org/subNTHP/displayNews.asp?lib_ID=149> (30 August 2004).
- ⁴McCarter. "Historic American Theatres."
- ⁵Dennis Sharp, *The Picture Palace*, (New York: Frederick A. Prager, Inc., 1969), 24.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, 22; David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981), 24.
- ⁷Naylor, *American Picture Palaces*, 23.
- ⁸Mary Halnon, "From Nickelodeon to Picture Palace," in *Some Enchanted Evenings: American Picture Palaces* (VA: University of Virginia, American Studies (online), 1998), *American Picture Palaces*, n.d. <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/PALACE>> (30 August, 2004).
- ⁹*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰Naylor, *American Picture Palaces*, 11,78; Edwin Heathcote, *Cinema Builders*, (West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), 16-17.
- ¹¹Halnon, "The Thirties: Depression and Art Deco," in *Some Enchanted Evenings*.
- ¹²*Ibid.*
- ¹³Sharp, 101.
- ¹⁴Sharp, 101-102.
- ¹⁵Hanlon, "The Thirties;" Naylor, 141.
- ¹⁶Naylor, *American Picture Palaces*, 141, 157.
- ¹⁷Hanlon, "The Thirties."
- ¹⁸Heathcote, 21.
- ¹⁹Missouri Historical Society, (Saint Louis, MO), *Missouri Historical Society Saint Louis Clippings Book*, Vol. 4, 110.
- ²⁰Missouri Historical Society, (Saint Louis, MO), *Missouri Historical Society Saint Louis Clippings Book*, Vol. 1, 27.
- ²¹Halnon, "From Nickelodeon to Picture Palace;" Missouri Historical Society, (Saint Louis, MO), *Missouri Historical Society Saint Louis Clippings Book*, Vol. 1, 27.
- ²²Missouri Historical Society, (Saint Louis, MO), *Missouri Historical Society Saint Louis Clippings Book*, Vol. 1, 32.
- ²³Missouri Historical Society, (Saint Louis, MO), *Missouri Historical Society Saint Louis Clippings Book*, Vol. 3, 14.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵*Gould's Saint Louis City Directory*, (1936).
- ²⁶*Gould's Saint Louis City Directory*, (1936; 1937, 1938, and 1941).
- ²⁷Windshield Survey of Saint Louis Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Theaters. Conducted Summer 2004.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*
- ²⁹*Gould's Saint Louis City Directory*, (1910), 1958; (1941), 442; (1942).

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Verbal Boundary Description

Parcel 1 being Lots 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10 in Block 2 of Pearl Heights, & Parcel 2 being all of Riegert Avenue lying between Blocks 2 & 3 of Pearl Heights, a subdivision recorded in Plat Book 17, page 19 in the St. Louis County Land Records Office in St. Louis County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries incorporate all of the property that is identified and constitute the entirety of the property since the construction of the building.

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Beverly Theater
St. Louis County, MO

Photo Log

Photographer: Timothy P. Maloney

June 2003

Negatives with preparer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

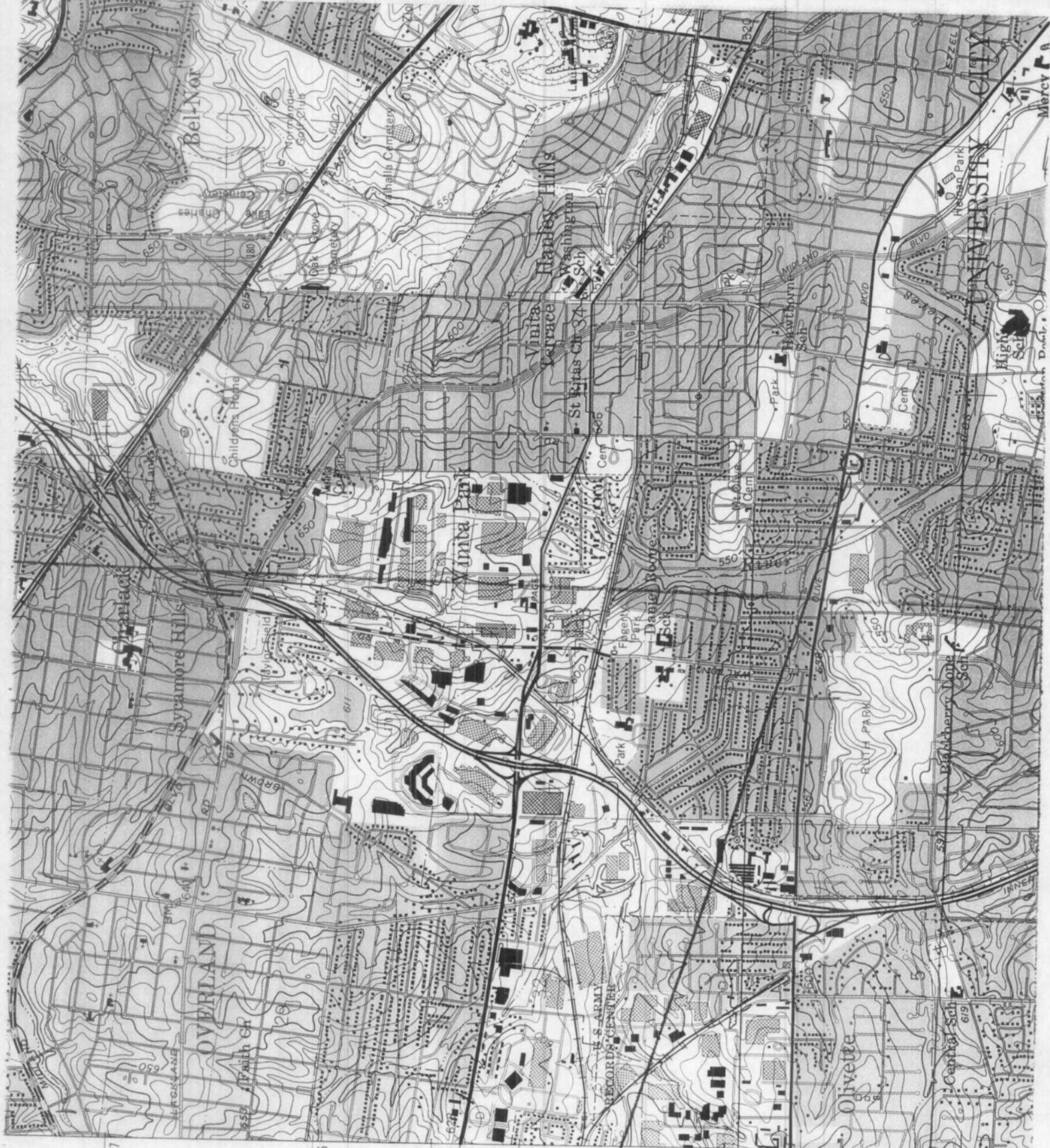
- Photo #1: Exterior, looking southwest at east elevation and façade
- Photo #2: Exterior, detail of west set of entry doors on facade
- Photo #3: Exterior, looking southeast at west corner of façade and west wall
- Photo #4: Exterior, looking southeast at upper façade above entry
- Photo #5: Exterior, looking northeast at west and south elevations
- Photo #7: Interior of lobby, looking west
- Photo #8: Interior of inner lobby, looking east
- Photo #9: Interior, looking north through inner lobby to outer lobby and entry
- Photo #10: Interior of theater, looking southeast from northwest corner of auditorium
- Photo #11: Interior of theater, looking south at screen/stage from mid-auditorium
- Photo #12: Interior of theater, looking north at mezzanine and entry from front of auditorium

Photographer: Sheila Findall

December 2004

Negatives with preparer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

- Photo #6: Exterior, looking southeast at façade and addition on west side of building



42301
4287
4286
19M TOUS 67
7961 III NW
(CREVE COEUR)
1 MI TOUS 40 & 61
CREVE COEUR 1 MI
340
4283
40'

Beverly Theater, 46 N.
University City,
St. Louis County, Mo.
UTM Reference:
15/731650/4283525

T. 45 N.
40'



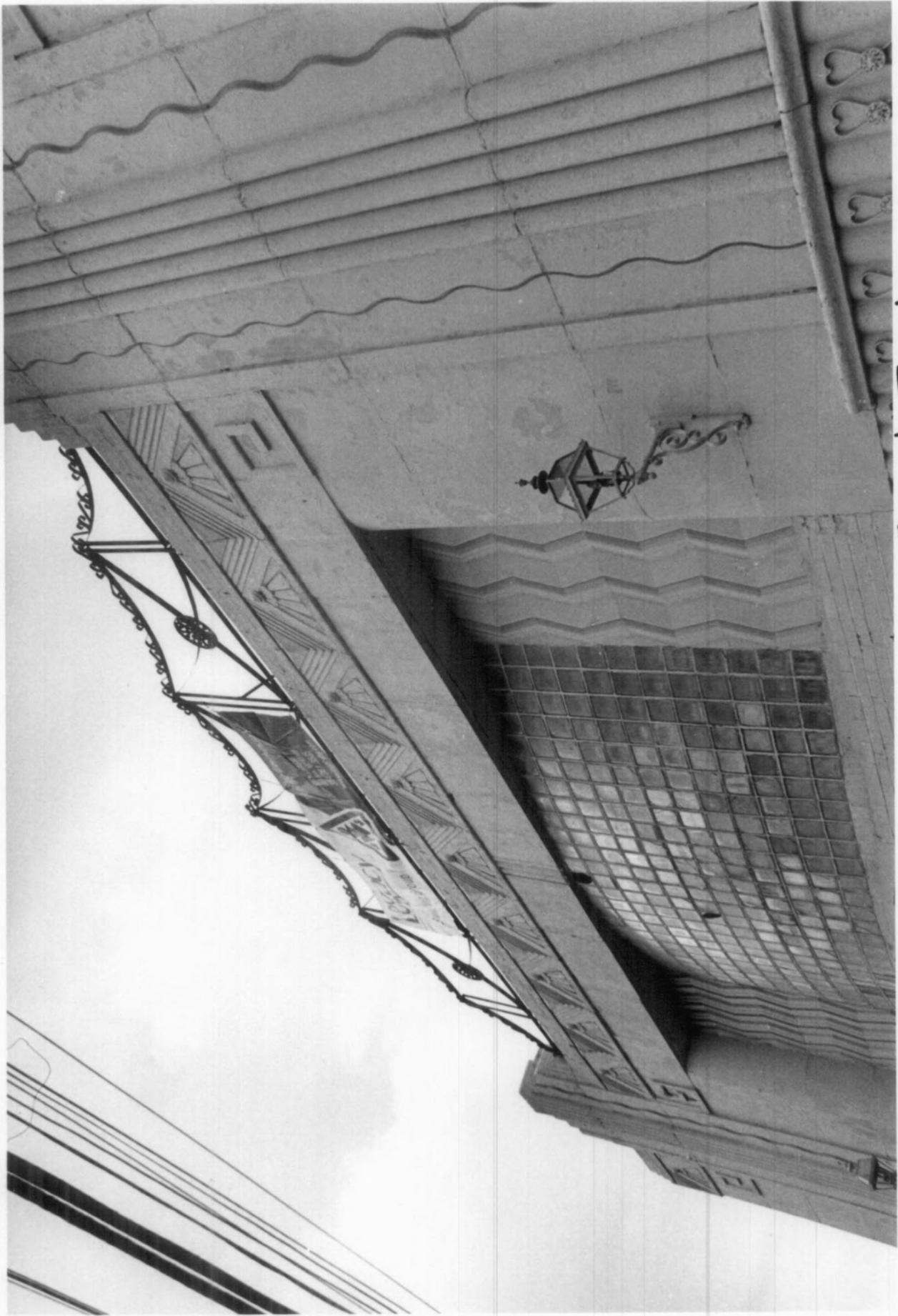
Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County Mo
Photo# 1



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 2



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 3



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 4



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 5



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 6



Beverly Theater
University City, St Louis County, Mo
Photo # 7



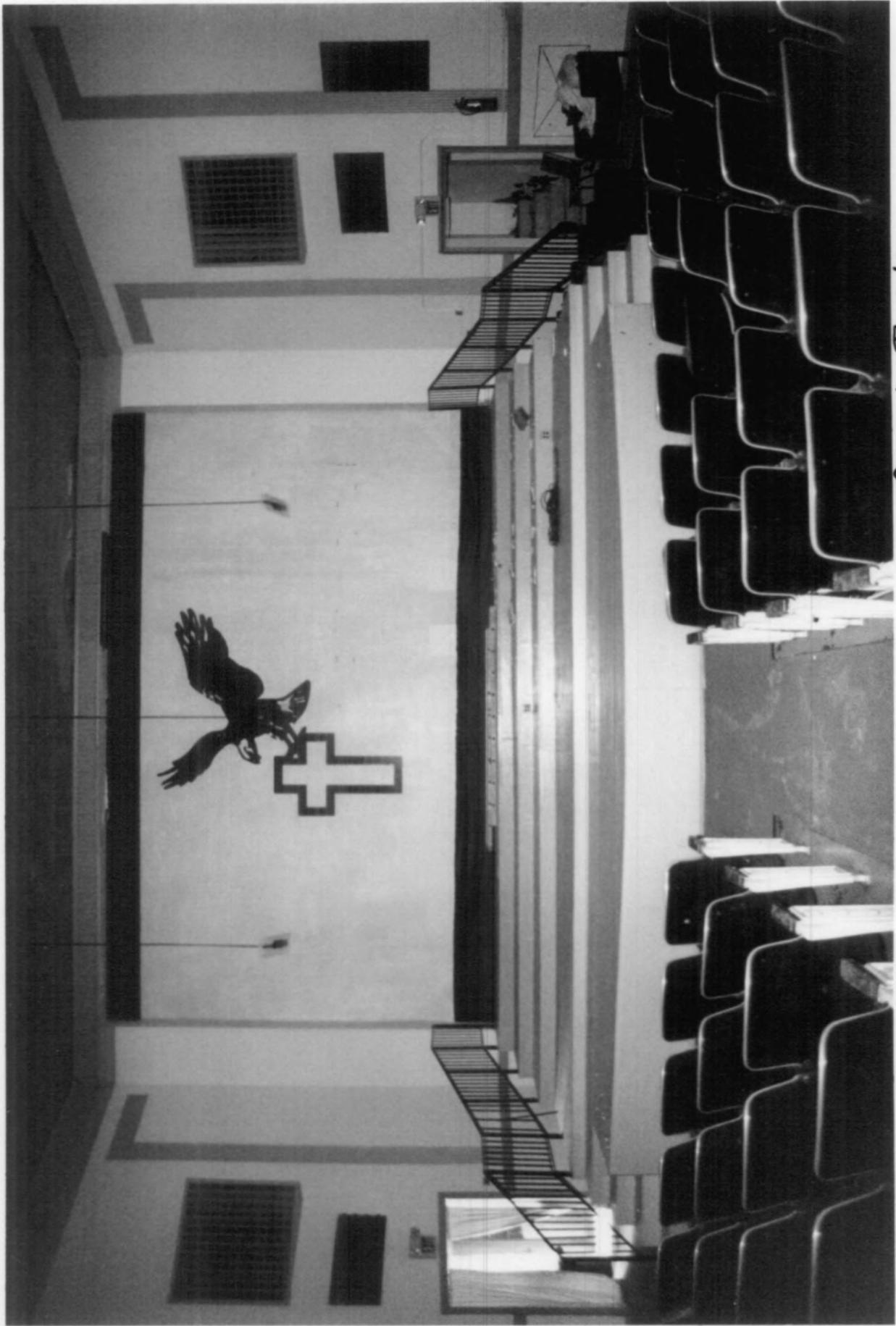
Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 8



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo
Photo # 9



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 10



Beverly Theater
University City St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 11



Beverly Theater
University City, St. Louis County, Mo.
Photo # 12