

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 Hippodrome Theater

other name/site number B-2338

2. Location

street & town 12 North Eutaw Street  not for publication

city or town Baltimore  vicinity

state Maryland code MD county independent city code 510 zip code 21201

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

12-8-99

Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hippodrome Theater (B-2338)  
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: theater

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals/Beaux Arts

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation masonry  
walls brick  
roof built-up  
other terra cotta

**Narrative Description**

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

Hippodrome Theater (B-2338)  
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland  
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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Performing Arts

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1914-1949

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1914

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Thomas White Lamb, architect

Singer-Pentz Construction Company, builder

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Hippodrome Theater (B-2338)  
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.35 acres Baltimore East quad

#### UTM References

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

1 18 360160 4349980  
Zone Easting Northing

2  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4  
Zone Easting Northing

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 Michael V. Murphy, AIA  
organization Murphy & Dittenhafer, Inc. date 9/10/99  
street & number 800 North Charles Street telephone (410) 625-4823  
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21201

#### 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

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

name/title \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

B-2338  
Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Description Summary**

The Hippodrome Theater, constructed in 1914, is located on the west side of Eutaw Street in downtown Baltimore, Maryland, one property north of the principal commercial intersection of Eutaw and Baltimore streets. An important city landmark since 1914, The Hippodrome Theater is a significant architectural composition representing the grand style of American theaters of the early 20th century and the transition in theaters from live entertainment to motion pictures.

Famed theater architect Thomas Lamb (1871-1942) used ornamental brickwork and terracotta to frame a central motif on the Eutaw Street facade that created a powerful focal point along this urban streetscape. The overall composition demonstrates the symmetry, balance, and proportion associated with Neo-classical architecture, combined with a free use of texture and ornament characteristic of the architect's early eclectic style. On the interior, the theater's 2300-seat auditorium is a curvaceous composition of ovals, domes and coffers, which retains evidence of its original lavish decorative treatment in the baroque manner of the early 20th century.

**General Description**

The monumental east facade of the Hippodrome, fronting on Eutaw Street, is the primary exterior point of interest. The east facade treatment, which also returns around the north and south corners of the building, is a composition of brickwork and terra cotta which demonstrates a classically influenced tripartite composition including a base, mid-section, and ornamental top. The remaining exterior facades of the building, which face alleys on the south, west, and north, consist of ordinary dark brown brickwork punctuated by miscellaneous functional elements such as fire escapes in addition to doors and windows to back stage and other areas. While the east facade was carefully designed for its monumental effect, the other three exterior facades are simpler expressions of interior requirements.

The east facade is composed of a terra-cotta base at the sidewalk level which contains a central grouping of three arched openings forming the theater entrance. The original wood entrance doors with glass transoms have been removed, replaced by 1950s-vintage aluminum systems now covered with plywood. Embedded deep within the current fiberglass clad marquee, dating from the 1960s, are the remnants of the steelwork which supported the original glass and metal canopy which echoed the lines of the three entrance arches and was suspended from the facade by metal cables.

A projecting terra-cotta cornice caps the existing base. Rich texture is achieved in the mid-section through the use of projecting "cross" and "dot" beige brickwork laid out in a non-directional "diaper" pattern at either side of the framed central area. A rectangular frame of squares and diamond shapes surrounds a group of vertically stacked brick courses which create a Moorish, pointed-arch, effect. Substantial wooden window framing subdivides the open areas within the arches that are further divided by a delicate pattern of wooden mullions. The existing windows reflect numerous later modifications to the original design. Two of the four original cast metal light standards still exist on the facade, although the original white globes are missing. At least two variations of a large, vertical, illuminated sign, attached to the facade and announcing "The Hippodrome," are known to have existed in the past, although none survives.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

B-2338  
Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

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The east facade was originally crowned with a magnificent treatment consisting of a terracotta frieze, a projecting terra cotta cornice, and a terra cotta parapet. Although the cornice has been lost, leaving a remnant band of rubble brick, the original frieze is nearly complete in its original bas-relief form. The frieze is composed of an ornamental pattern including repeating putti holding a continuous floral swag, dramatic masks, and the lyre, a classical stringed instrument and symbol of the musical arts. The original parapet is clad in terra-cotta panels and copings.

The auditorium is dominated by a primarily rectilinear proscenium arch that formerly contained elaborate opera boxes on either side. Above the proscenium arch, a richly colored allegorical painting survives despite damage from water and age. The rich and exuberant design of the interior theater space originally featured a subdued palette of creams, tans, and browns accented with silver and gold (since painted over). Original architectural drawings stored at the Avery Library of Columbia University indicate that most changes to the interior have been cosmetic in nature, with the exception of the removal of the opera boxes and alterations to the lobby area.

The auditorium space, with its large balcony, is baroque in terms of its flowing space and eclectic in terms of its ornate plasterwork and other ornament. Curvilinear forms define the main components of the auditorium space including the balcony edge, the rear wall of the lobby, and the motifs of saucer domes and moldings in the main ceiling and the ceiling at the underside of the large balcony. The main theater ceiling and the underside of the balcony each contain a large central recessed oval area, which originally contained ornamental chandeliers, now lost. These saucer domes are surrounded by ornamental moldings and recessed curved panels. Ornamental bosses originally housed light fixtures, also removed. The concrete auditorium floor slopes gradually down to the edge of the stage through a series of risers. The former orchestra pit has been filled in with concrete.

Despite the effects of a series of cosmetic renovations between 1931 and 1962, and subsequent decay, the interior space retains sufficient integrity to reflect its former grandeur. The elaborate proscenium arch remains intact despite considerable plaster damage and several layers of paint. The central cartouche above the proscenium, incorporating the initials "H-T," also survives with some loss of ornament. The ornate proscenium boxes have been completely removed, leaving only a patchwork of remnant materials. While most of the original applied interior finishes have been removed, some visible remnants of the original pattern of framed wall fabric panels and "scagliola" faux-marble wainscoting survive. The seating currently in place dates from the 1950s. Other, more modern accommodations include a motion picture projection booth at the rear of the lower level and ceiling penetrations for a variety of mechanical and electrical devices.

The existing stage is approximately 80' wide, 30' deep and 60' high behind a 43' wide proscenium opening. On either side of the stage are areas for scenery and dressing rooms on several levels. Beneath the stage is a storage area, a boiler room, and former access to the orchestra pit. A fly gallery, with some rigging of an unknown date, exists above the stage area. The modest entry lobby from Eutaw Street provides an air-lock to the outside and a means of access to the balcony level from stairs that rise from the north and south ends of the lobby. The space was originally open to the auditorium; the curved wall which now defines the lobby was added at an unknown date. The current ceiling of the lobby space is a smooth plaster vault which is not believed to be original, as the original architectural drawings indicate a much more elaborate and flatter surface. The lobby currently has a vinyl tile floor and wood paneling from a later renovation. The ticket booth located in the lobby

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

Section number 7 Page 3

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is also not original. Restrooms are located off each stair at an intermediate level between the lobby and the balcony. Additional restrooms are located off the balcony level.

The roof of the building is a concrete slab covered with multiple-ply roofing. The basement of the building is confined to the stage area, in addition to ventilation tunnels which originally circulated chilled air from an ice storage room to vents under the theater seats.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

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**Statement of Significance:**

The Hippodrome Theater is significant in two areas. It is significant under Criterion A for its association with the Performing Arts and Entertainment in Baltimore. Opened in 1914, The Hippodrome Theater was the premiere vaudeville theater of Baltimore, was one of its first motion picture theaters, and is one of an increasingly small number of remaining buildings in the western area of downtown Baltimore which reflect the neighborhood's previous vitality as a commercial and entertainment center. The Hippodrome Theater reflects the era of live entertainment for the masses and the memories of its former glory are deeply imbedded in the fabric of local culture.

The Hippodrome Theater derives additional significance under Criterion C as an outstanding example of early twentieth century theater design. The work of Thomas Lamb (1871-1942), one of America's finest theater architects of the period, its design demonstrates a mastery of scale, proportion, and exterior and interior decoration and detailing which was outstanding in its day.

**Resource History and Historic Context**

*Performing Arts and Entertainment on Baltimore's West Side, ca. 1870-1950s (Criterion A)*

The west side of Baltimore thrived as a vibrant entertainment, retail, and financial district from the late nineteenth century through the 1950s. At the time of the Hippodrome's opening in 1914, the west side district was well established as a bustling entertainment center. A bird's eye view of the area shortly before 1912 indicates the density of pedestrian, electric streetcar, horse and buggy, and automobile traffic already present at the Hippodrome Theater site prior to the theater's construction. The neighborhood was densely populated with the garment trade, banks, department stores, hotels, and all manner of small shops to serve the urban population.

Earlier theaters such as Ford's Theater (1871), the Academy of Music (1875), and the Mayfair (1890) had already established the west side district as the center for live entertainment in Baltimore. At the turn of the century, theater construction quickened with the opening of Blaney's (1901), the Maryland (1903), and the Wizard (1904). In the period just before the construction of the Hippodrome, more new theaters had bloomed on the west side, including the Alcazar (1907), the Howard (1908), the Blue Mouse (1909), the Dixie (1909), the Lexington (1909) and the New (1910).

Marion Pierce and Phillip Scheck, local promoters and purveyors of motion picture equipment and supplies from their shop at 223 North Calvert Street, formed the Hippodrome Theater Company and obtained the future site of the Hippodrome Theater by purchasing part of the former Eutaw House site in 1913. They commissioned Thomas Lamb to plan the most ambitious theater ever attempted in Baltimore. An advertisement from the theater's opening touts the Hippodrome Theater as "the largest theater South of Philadelphia."

Far from cornering the market for theater patrons upon its construction, the Hippodrome Theater had to compete with all of the theaters mentioned above in addition to a raft of new competitors, including Keith's

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

Section number 8 Page 2

(1915), also designed by Thomas Lamb, and the Strand (1916). By 1920, the Hippodrome, the New, and Keith's were attracting over

30,000 customers per week to three daily performances. Initially operated by the Loew's organization, admission to the Hippodrome Theater was 10 cents in the afternoon and 25 cents in the evening. A typical program from 1915 included an orchestra performance followed by trapeze performers, "Thompson's Elephants," Barlow's Dog's and Ponies," "Webb's Seals," and "Arizona Days" featuring "America's greatest cowgirl rider, Adel Von Ohl."

By the 1920s, new west side theaters were being primarily designed for the motion pictures, including the Century (1921) and the Stanley (1927).

In 1917, the Loews organization began to lease the Hippodrome Theater and present "Supreme Vaudeville" and some films. By 1924, the Hippodrome Theater had become the second Keith vaudeville house in Baltimore, after the Maryland Theater. Isadore Rappaport, a Philadelphia theater operator newly arrived in Baltimore, leased the theater in 1921, and after renovating and installing a new marquee, it reopened with live shows and films. In 1941, Rappaport again remodeled, and added big bands to the program. A fire in 1951 closed the theater for several months, and the last stage show was presented in 1959. The theater was leased to Trans-Lux in 1962 and was renovated again in 1963 for the opening of "Cleopatra." In 1989, the doors were closed for the last time.

The Hippodrome Theater has occupied an important place in Baltimore's cultural life for several generations, and was certainly one of Baltimore's most elegant theaters in its heyday. The list of noted performers who graced the Hippodrome Theater stage is too long to recount, beginning with the stars of Vaudeville and later hosting such entertainment figures as George Jessel, Ethel Barrymore, Cab Calloway, Sophie Tucker, Benny Goodman, Guy Lombardo, Glenn Miller, Red Skelton, Danny Kaye, and many more. The Hippodrome Theater serves as an important cultural record of the crucial evolution from live vaudevillian performance to full length feature films that transformed popular entertainment in American society in the early 20th century.

*Architectural Significance (Criterion C)*

The Hippodrome Theater is a transitional piece in the career of its designer, Thomas Lamb, a nationally renowned master of theater architecture. Born in Scotland and without formal architectural training, Lamb began practicing architecture in New York City in 1892 after an apprenticeship as a building inspector, which involved him in the practical considerations of the theater construction. By the time he began working on the Hippodrome, Lamb had established a reputation as one of the nation's leading theater architects with such significant works in New York City as Morris' American (Roof) Theater (1909), Fox's City Theater (1910), The Minsky Theater (1912), Fox's Audubon (1912), and The Royal (1913), as well as numerous theaters in other cities including the Cort Theater, Montreal, and the Winter Garden, Toronto, both designed in 1913. Thomas Lamb's later work includes the Capitol and Zeigfield Theaters in New York, the Fox Theater in Philadelphia, and the Ohio Theater in Columbus. The Hippodrome Theater is one of Lamb's earliest known theaters as well as one of the last opulent designs from his early period. His later work evolved toward a simpler, more

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

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"Adamesque" style. At least twelve of Lamb's theaters are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Work abroad included theaters in England, Australia, North Africa, India, and Egypt.

The exterior design of the Hippodrome Theater reflects the reality of the fierce competition which existed among downtown theaters for customers. Through a richly textured and sculptural facade design of brick and terra cotta, Lamb created a composition which was both inviting and exuberant. The exterior suggests the vitality waiting within, and establishes a strong presence at an otherwise difficult mid-block location. The interior more than lives up the promise of the facade by delivering a richly decorated and dynamic interior space, focused on the elaborate proscenium arch and stage.

The Hippodrome Theater has undergone numerous primarily cosmetic renovations during this century, but nevertheless retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, location, feeling, and association to represent the tradition of Vaudeville theater and the transition to modern cinema in American culture. The Hippodrome Theater also stands as a prominent Baltimore landmark, a place where at least three generations of Baltimoreans have come for entertainment. Significantly, of the more than thirty major theaters which once thrived on Baltimore's west side, only three remain, including the Hippodrome, the Town on Fayette Street, and the Mayfair on Howard Street. The Hippodrome Theater is the largest, the most ornate, and the most intact of these three.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

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**Major Bibliographical References**

Dorsey, John and James D. Dilts. A Guide to Baltimore Architecture. Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1997.

Headley, Robert K., Jr. Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore. Baltimore: by the author, 1974.

Jones, Carleton. Lost Baltimore: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Kidney, Walter C. The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America, 1880-1930. New York: George Braziller, 1974.

Olson, Sherry H. Baltimore: The Building of an American City. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Hillary Russell, "An Architect's Progress: Thomas White Lamb," Marquee: The Journal of the Theater Historical Society of America, v. 21, 1989.

Thomas Lamb Collection, Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Hippodrome Theater  
Baltimore city, MD

Section number 10 Page 1

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**Geographical Data**

*Verbal Boundary Description:*

The nominated property is described as Ward 4, Section 8, Block 631, Lot 17 among the Land Records of Baltimore City.

*Boundary Justification:*

The selected boundaries encompass the entire parcel historically associated with the Hippodrome Theater.

B-2338

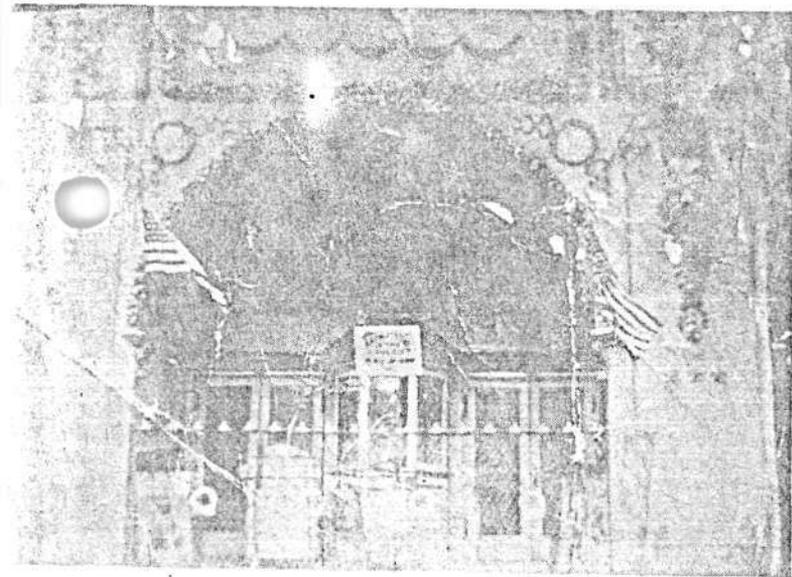
HIPPODROME  
THEATER

BALTIMORE CITY  
MARYLAND

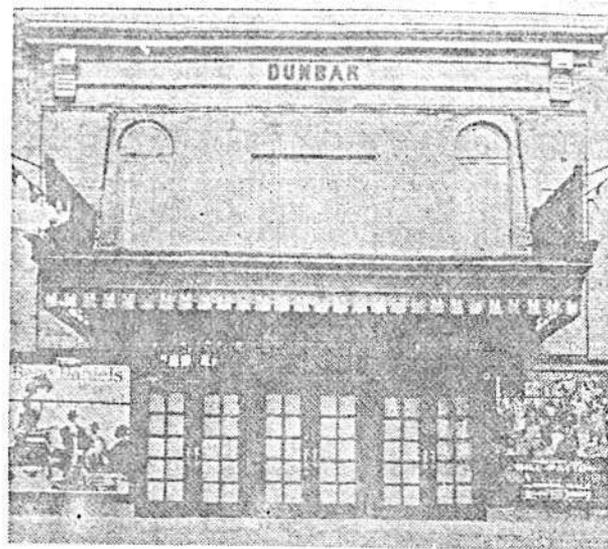
18-360160-  
4349980



Mapped by the Army Map Service



FAIRYLAND (?)



DUNBAR (1928)



ROSLYN (ca. 1950)



HIPPODROME (1914)



AVENUE/GOOD TIME (1951)



RITZ (1951)



TIMES/CHARLES (ca. 1950)

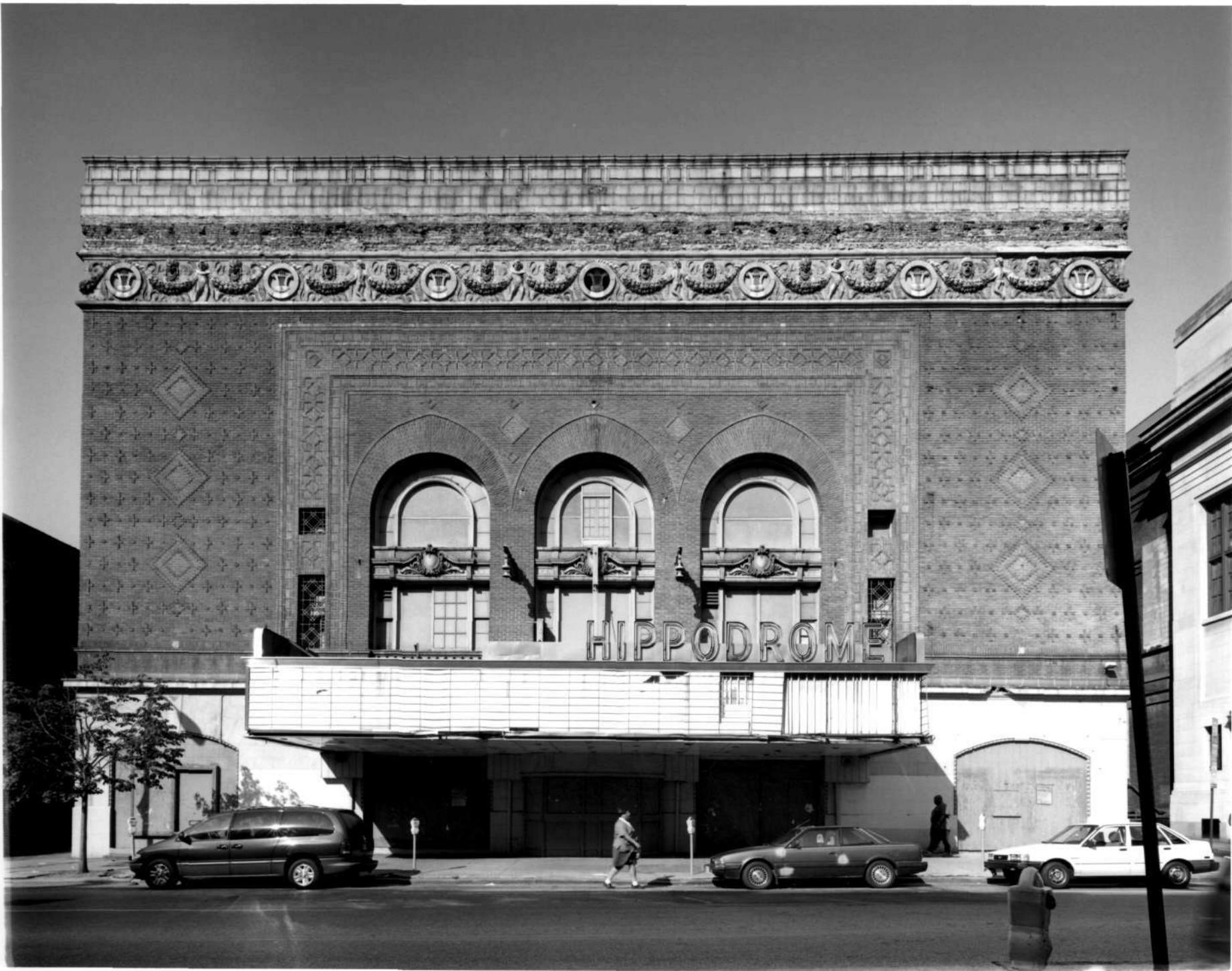
Exit: A History of Movies  
in Baltimore



#1

B-2338

Hypodrome - Baltimore, MD.  
P = MAIN JAMAICAN, 1998  
KUTAW ST LOOKING N-W



B-2338

#2

Hippodrome - Baltimore, Md

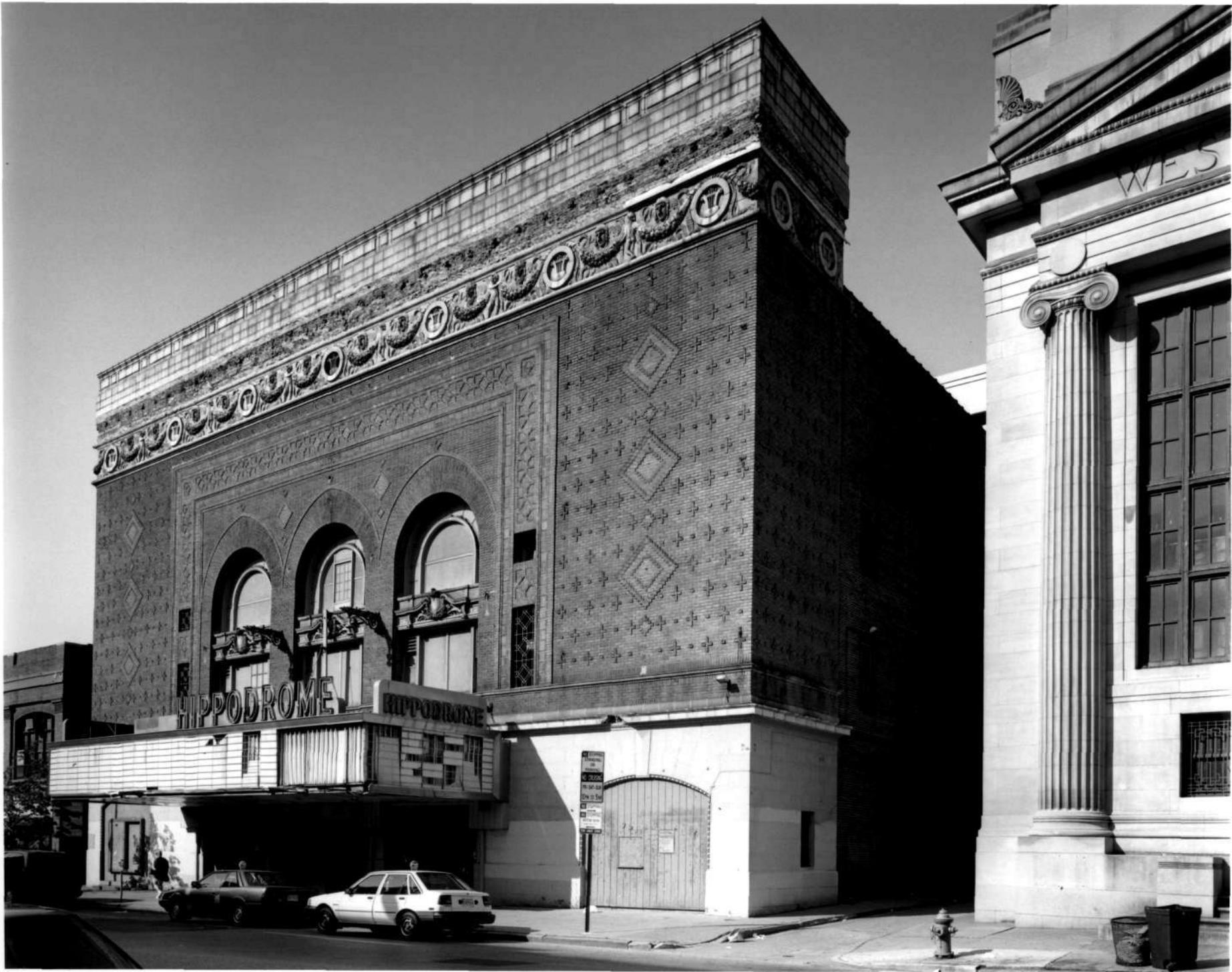
P = Alain Jaramillo, 1998

Entrance

FACADE

LOOKING

WEST



B-2338

# 3

Hippodrome - BATHMARK NO

P = ALAIN JARAMILLO, 1998

Arks, FACADE #

LOOKING ~~WEST~~ S-W.



B-2338

#4

HIPPODROME - BALTIMORE, M.D.

WEST END

P. ALAN JARAMILLO, 1998

SWP

FACADE

LOOKING

EAST



B-2338

# 5 Hippodrome - Baltimore, MD

NOAH AND

WEST

FACADE

LOOKING

EAST

P = ALAIN JARAMILLO - 1998



# 6 <sup>B-2338</sup> HI PODROME - BALTIMORE, MD  
P = ALAIN JARAMILLO 1998

INTERVIEW  
OF

LOBBY

LOOKING

SOUTH



B-2338

#G-A Hippodrome - Baltimore, MD  
P = ALAIN JARAMILLO - 1998

ORCHESTRA

LETTER

LOOKING WEST



B-2338

#1

Hippodrome - Baltimore, MD

P = ALAN JARAMILLO - 1998

THEATER

INTERIOR

LOOKING WEST



B-2338

#8 Hippodrome - BALTIMORE - MD

P = ALAN JARA MILIO - 1998

Balcony  
LEVER

LOOKING WEST



B-2338

# 9 Hippodrome - BALTIMORE, MD.  
P = ARAN JARAMILLO 1998

~~ARAN~~

LOBBY

LOOKING SWTH AT  
STAIR TO BALCONY



B-2338  
# 10 Hippoboscidae - Baryscapus sp.  
P = ALAIN VAN AMILIO, 1998

Stain to  
Barcon<sup>1</sup> -

Abate first  
LANDING

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. B-2338

Magi No. 0423385724

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The Hippodrome

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 12 N. Eutaw Street  not for publication

city, town Baltimore  vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county city

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber

street & number Calvert and Fayette Streets folio

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title CBD West; Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey;  
Baltimore Retail District

date 1976; 1976; 1980  federal  state  county  lo

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation  
Market Center Development Corporation

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-2338

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### Summary

Located on the west side of the first block of North Eutaw Street, the Hippodrome is part of an impressive grouping of three buildings which include two large and imposing banks. (See Figure 1.)

The Hippodrome itself is a massive structure of steel and concrete construction built in 1914 to the design of noted theater architect Thomas Lamb. Its handsome facade presents a design which is highly intact to its original appearance. Unlike other theaters in its vicinity which are more classically inspired, the Hippodrome's facade is a curtain of brick laid in decorative patterns with applied stone and terra cotta ornamentation. The use of brick as a decorative facade feature is not new to the 20th century. However, its use on large sheer walls in a diapering effect (in some cases replacing other decorative materials such as tiles) exemplifies a particularly 20th century development and resembles a Sullivanesque design intent.

The ground floor is ashlar stone. Of the original five, wide, gently arched doorways, only the center grouping remains. The two end entrances have been filled in and are no longer operable. The triple-arched canopy which once hung over the central entrance was replaced by a large rectangular marquee in 1931. Three, recessed, large round-arched windows are grouped together at the center of the facade and set within a decorative Sullivanesque frame. Bands with handsome cartouches divide them horizontally. Today the window panes have been blocked by sheet metal although their original configuration and mullions remain on portions of all three windows.

The building is crowned by a terra cotta cornice (Figure 2) consisting of medallions with lyres interspersed with floral swags, dancing putti, and dramatic masks. The bold overhanging eave which once protected the cornice is now missing; it has been given a more modern replacement in the form of a smooth wide band. The absence of this eave is the most drastic alteration to the facade. The low terra cotta banding above the eave line is still intact.

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### The Interior

The interior of the theater has been altered several times over the years due to fire and economic circumstances, and has been marred as well by insensitive rehabilitation. However, many elegant original decorative elements are intact.

The theater is entered from the street through modern, aluminum-frame doors. The narrow lobby is filled with a modern concession stand running from left to right against the rear wall. The auditorium space is entered to either side of the stand through a curved hallway. Many of Lamb's original decorative elements have been retained in this hallway--egg and dart molding, and pilasters with delicately carved capitals. (See Figure 3.) An original marble staircase, missing its railing, leads up to the mezzanine.

Most of the auditorium space is obscured today by massive drapery which is hung wall to wall, ceiling to floor, and across the proscenium. (See Figure 4.) It is difficult to ascertain how much of the original architectural and decorative fabric remains behind the curtains. An area behind the curtain in the wing was examined and revealed gilded fluted pilasters, some topped with elaborate capitals. In order to make a complete assessment, however, these curtains would have to be removed. The arched and vaulted ceiling of the auditorium retains its dome, which, according to early accounts, was illuminated. It appears to have been painted in a variety of ways including frescos of classical scenes and gilded work. Other decorative features are difficult to see as they are obscured by dark paint.

The original interior decoration of the theater was rich in ornamentation. An undated historic photograph of the auditorium found at the Maryland Historical Society, shows an opulent space. (See Figure 5.) The large, 43-foot-wide stage ("far larger than the average theater"<sup>1</sup>) was framed by an elegant and elaborate proscenium, ornamented by gilded leaves, swags, panels, and dramatic masks. The ceiling above the arch is supported by a dentiled and bracketed cornice. At its center was a cartouche crowned with flags and swords and painted with a shield. Today, the cartouche is intact but is missing its decorative features. Other intact features include the proscenium arch, the capitals which topped its supporting pilasters, the decorative hatchwork in the spandrels, and much of the molding surrounding the center dome.

The stage was protected by a valance (or grand drape) with an art nouveau motif. The act curtain was elaborately painted and is

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typical of theater curtains of the late 19th/early 20th century. Its painted design included voluminous curtains which were gathered and tied back to the side, tassels extending from a keyhole-shaped holes in a shade, a lyre with bugles on a background of olive leaves, and a stylized elephant head with long tusks and dangling trunk.

To either side of the stage were three opera boxes in slightly ascending order. From the early photograph (Figure 5), these appear to also have been gilded and had a dark fabric panel at the center of each. Lights hung from the floor of each box to illuminate a boxed-off seating area below, level with the orchestra. The opera box sections were further articulated by large crowns which projected from the side walls at the height of the proscenium. A heavy scalloped valence hung from these crowns. The entrances to the boxes were also hung with curtains and the wall behind them was decorated with thin gilded pilasters and panels of fabric. The boxes were removed in the 1950s and their entrances were bricked in.

The 43-foot-wide stage itself is quite narrow and is no longer used for live performances. A movie screen has been hung on which films are shown. Stage equipment is extant, as are backstage spaces such as small, plain, cubical dressing rooms.

The width of the auditorium space has been somewhat reduced by the construction of side walls, according to JF Theater management. The rear wall of the auditorium has been retained and is decorated with paneled pilasters with carved capitals similar to those found in the lobby area.

Seats in the orchestra were arranged in three sections, with the chairs forming arcs. This original seating arrangement has been altered--new banks of seats are now arranged in straight rows.

Today, stairs to either side of the auditorium lead to the extant balcony which is presently closed to the public. At the time of its construction, it was described as "a divided balcony, a new idea in theater construction."<sup>2</sup> The steeply sloping balcony can be entered at several levels and is divided into many sections. Mezzanine spaces can be reached either from the highest level or from the lowest. These spaces are today barren of any ornamentation and appear to have been partitioned into small spaces.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Marquee Magazine, "New Hippodrome," reprint of November 23, 1914 article.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. B-2338

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1914 Builder/Architect Thomas Lamb

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Summary

Built partially on the site of the Eutaw House, a historic Baltimore hotel which burned in 1912, the Hippodrome was described as the largest theater south of Philadelphia when it was completed in 1914.<sup>1</sup> (See Figure 6.)

It was designed by Thomas Lamb, one of the most renowned and prolific 20th-century theater architects in this country. It is an important early design by Lamb, as it immediately preceded a turning point in his career. Within a year after the construction of the Hippodrome, Lamb was designing in the Adam style, a style which he continued to use with great success for the next ten years. The Hippodrome is designed in a more opulent style popular for vaudeville theaters at the turn of the century. In addition, it is one of Lamb's earliest theaters, and is perhaps one of the only extant designs from his early career which is still being used as a theater. The importance of Lamb's contribution to theater design has been recognized by the National Register of Historic Places--12 of his works are listed to date. In addition, his contribution to theater design is included in numerous publications on theater history and/or architecture.

Although some sources claim that the Hippodrome was designed solely as a stage for vaudeville, its first program indicates that short movies were also shown. (See Attachment A.) This is significant because, just following 1910, theater design was changing to meet the demand for a showplace for the new and increasingly popular moving pictures. The Hippodrome is an early example of the transition from theaters which staged only live theater to those which were expressly designed to show movies as well as live acts. (Later, architects developed designs for theaters which showed movies alone, and therefore did not require stages.)

The Hippodrome has held an important place in Baltimore's cultural life for many years, and was certainly one of the most elegant theaters in the city in its heyday. Located in what was once the city's theater district, the Hippodrome today stands as the most intact of the extant theaters dating from the early 20th century in Baltimore. Not only has it not been severely altered structurally, but many of its original decorative features are intact and readily visible. In addition it is possible that more ornamentation is extant behind the drapery which obscures much of the auditorium space. Other important features such as the stage and much of its equipment are also extant.

#### Construction History

The Hippodrome was designed by Thomas Lamb in 1914 (who also designed Baltimore's Keith theater) for Pearce and Scheck, a partnership which operated other theaters in the city as well. Built by the Singer-Pentz Construction Company for \$225,000, it was claimed to be the largest theater south of Philadelphia, measuring 77 by 140 feet and seating 3000. (See Figure 6.) Its opening bill included seven live vaudeville acts as well as a short movie.

The size and luxury of the theater were not guarantees for financial success, however, and by 1917 Pearce and Scheck had sold the Hippodrome to the Loew's organization of New York. Under the Loew's management, several showings of a movie were scheduled each day. (See Figure 7.) The film was usually accompanied by live theater in the evening. In 1924, the theater was leased as a B.F. Keith vaudeville house, but it continued to be a financial drain for the owners. In 1931, it was sold for a mere \$14,000 to L. Edward Goldman who leased it to Isidor Rappaport. Rappaport recognized the potential of the theater, refurbished it (exactly how is unclear) and had a grand reopening with movies and stage acts.

From that time until 1952, when it was closed due to a fire, the theater was intermittently successful. During that 20-year period it was apparently remodeled several times. There is no clear record of which alterations were made when or how much damage the 1952 fire caused. Exit lists remodelings in 1931, 1941, and 1952. It is possible that others occurred as well. The last live show was staged in 1959. The theater presently shows only movies and is owned by JF Theaters.

#### Thomas Lamb and The Design of the Hippodrome

Born in Scotland and educated in the United States, Thomas Lamb received his first architectural commission, the City Theater in

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## ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

American Institute of Architects Library. Avery Index and other biographical dictionaries.

Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation. Vertical files.

Enoch Pratt Free Library. Vertical, map and photo files; books.

Library of Congress, Maps and Geography Division.

Maryland Historical Society. Prints and Photographs Division.

National Register of Historic Places. Files on Thomas Lamb.

Peale Museum, Prints and Photographs collection.

## INTERVIEWS

Fruchtman, J., owner of the Hippodrome.

Jensen, Marianne, archivist at Princeton University Library's Theater Collection.

Rappaport, Robert, son of Isadore Rappaport.

Silipo, Ramona, League of Historic American Theaters.

## MAJOR SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (NOT PURSUED)

Thomas Lamb Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University.  
Photographs owned by Bob Rappaport, son of former owner of the Hippodrome

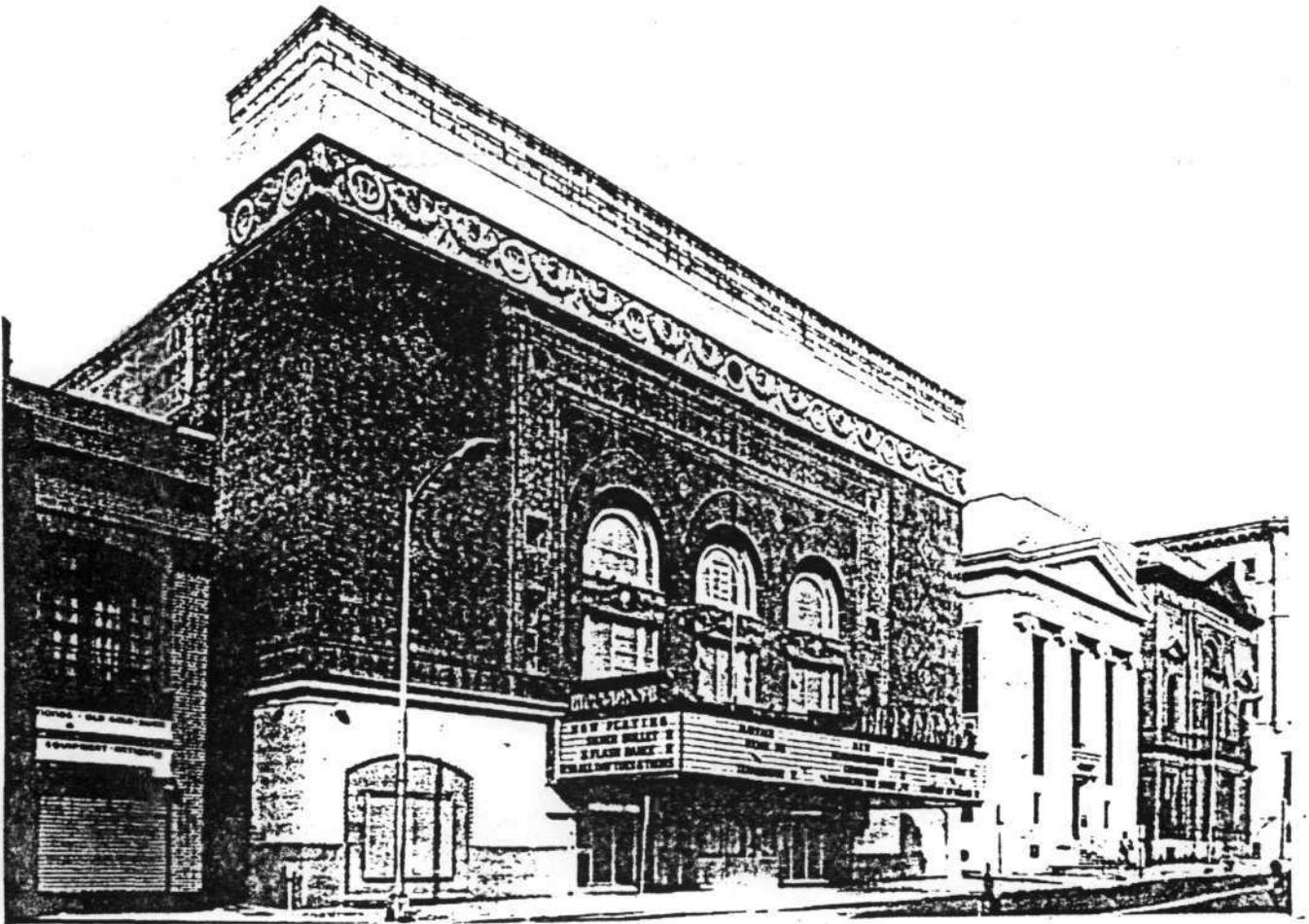


PHOTO: William Lebovich

FIGURE 1

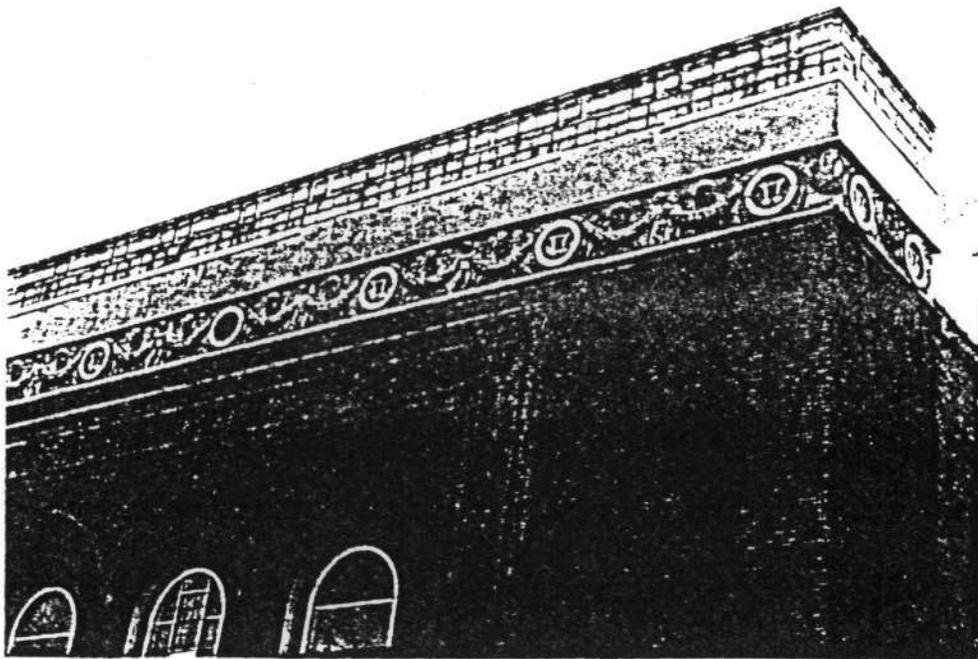


PHOTO: William Lebovich

FIGURE 2

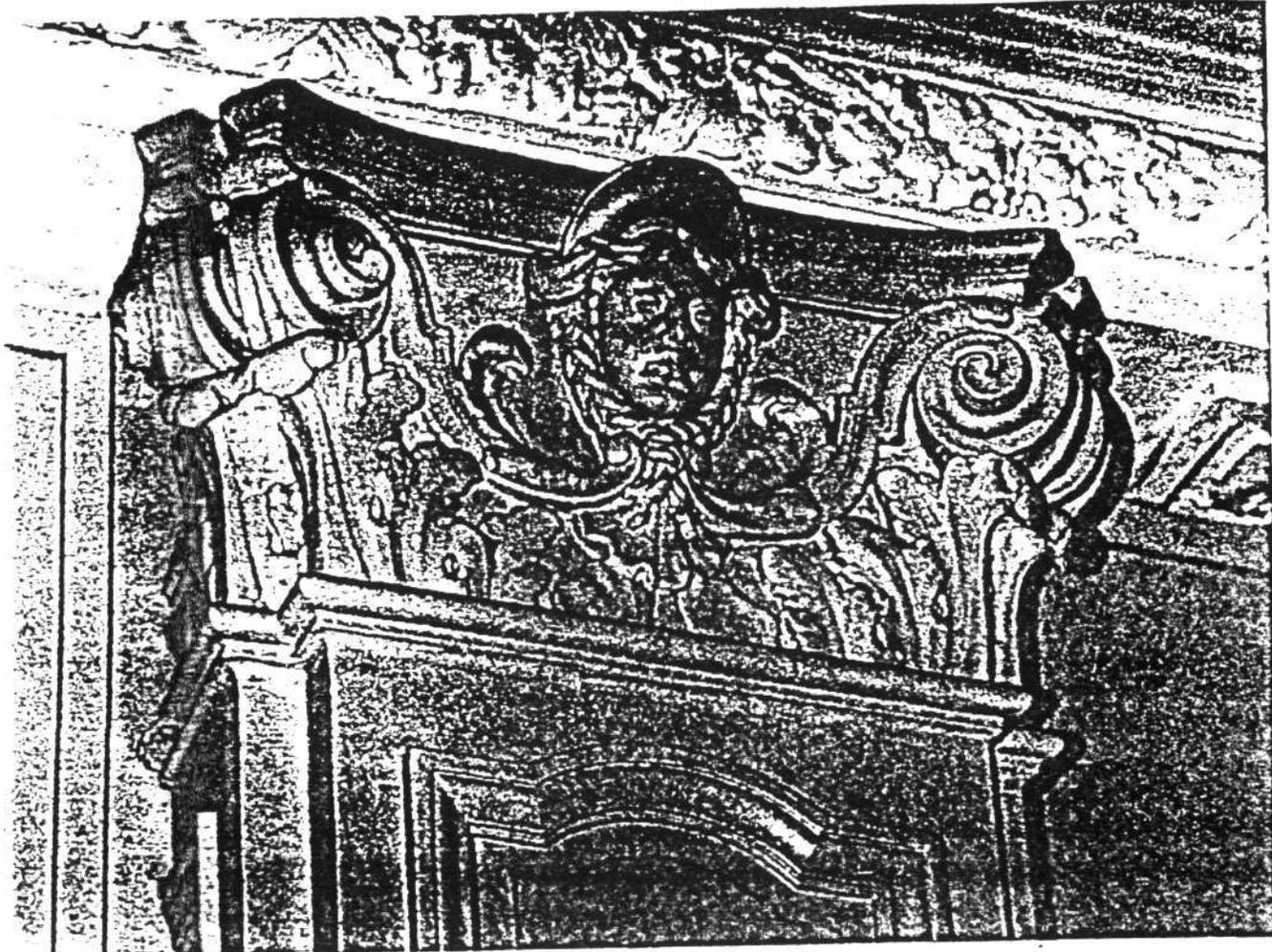


FIGURE 3

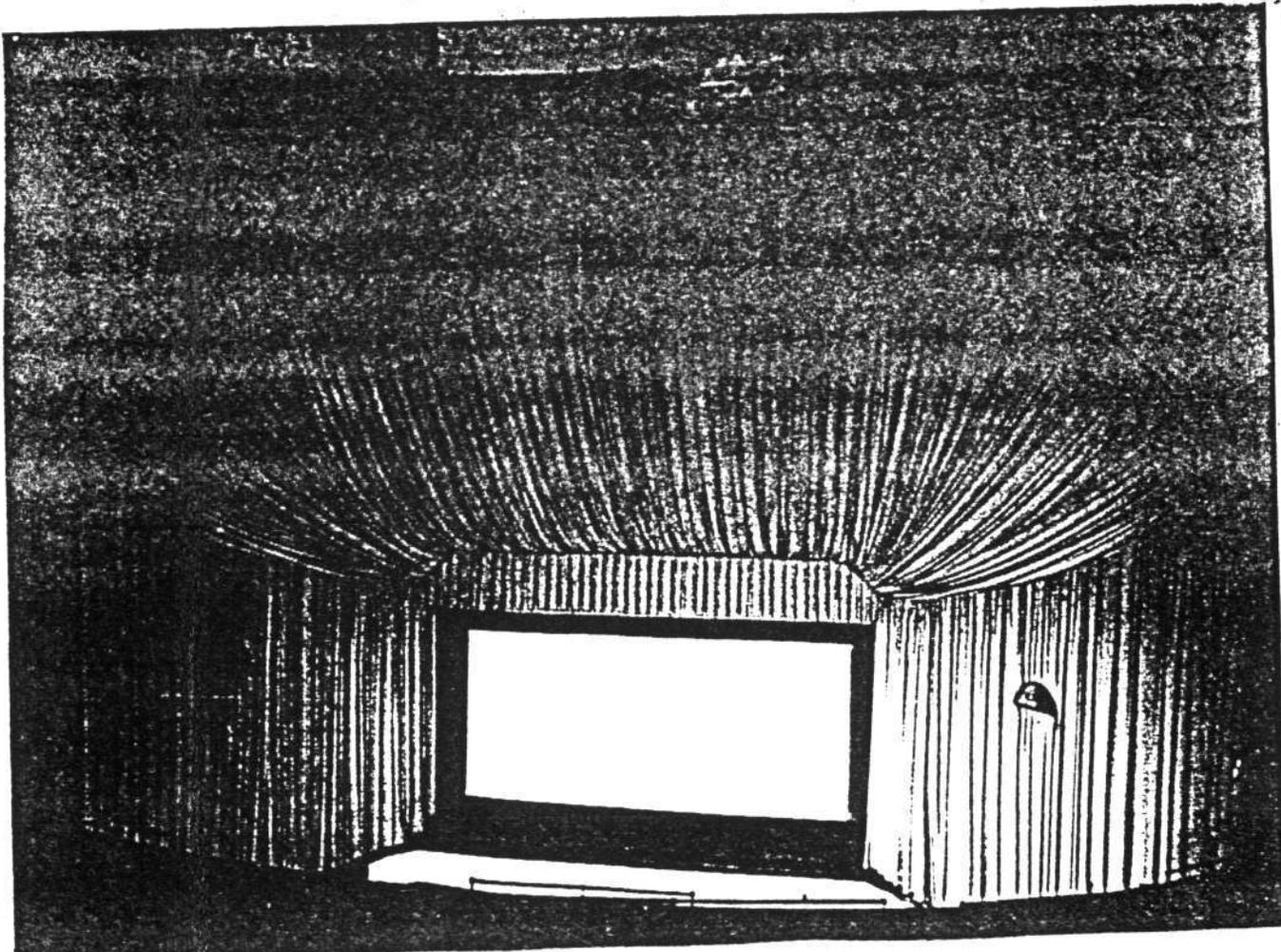


FIGURE 4

PHOTO: William Lebovich

PHOTO: William Lebovich

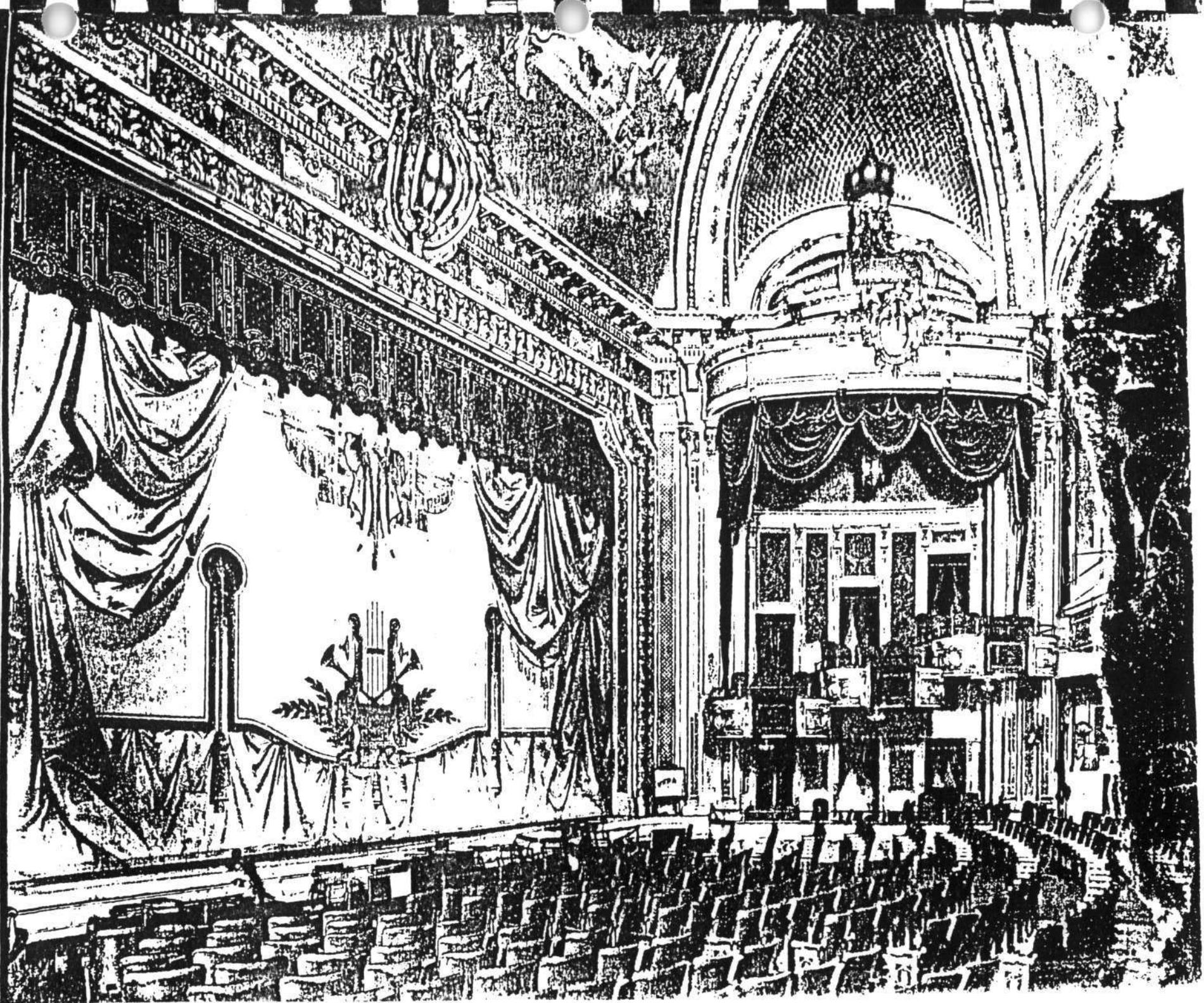


FIGURE 5

Courtesy of Maryland Historical Society

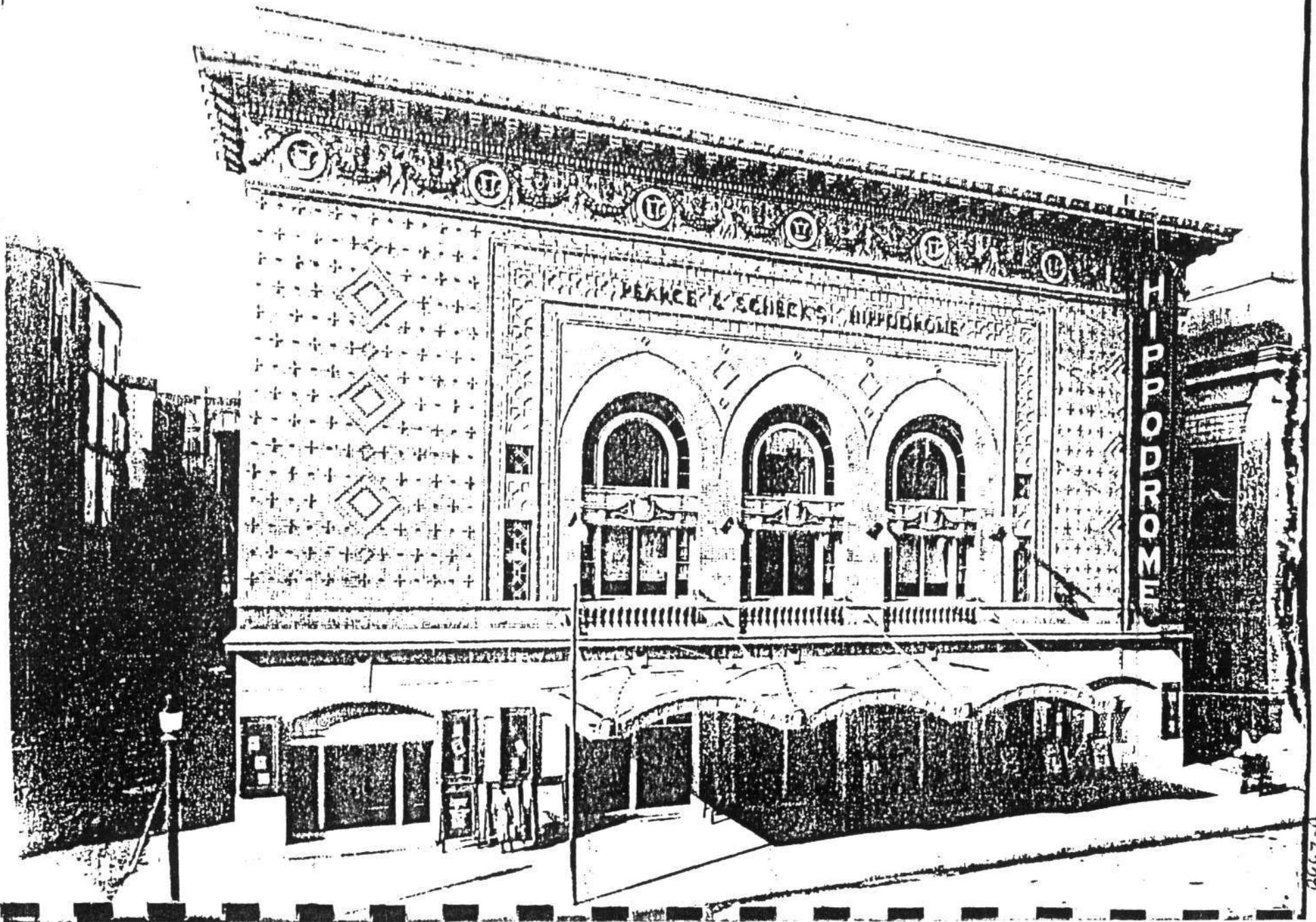


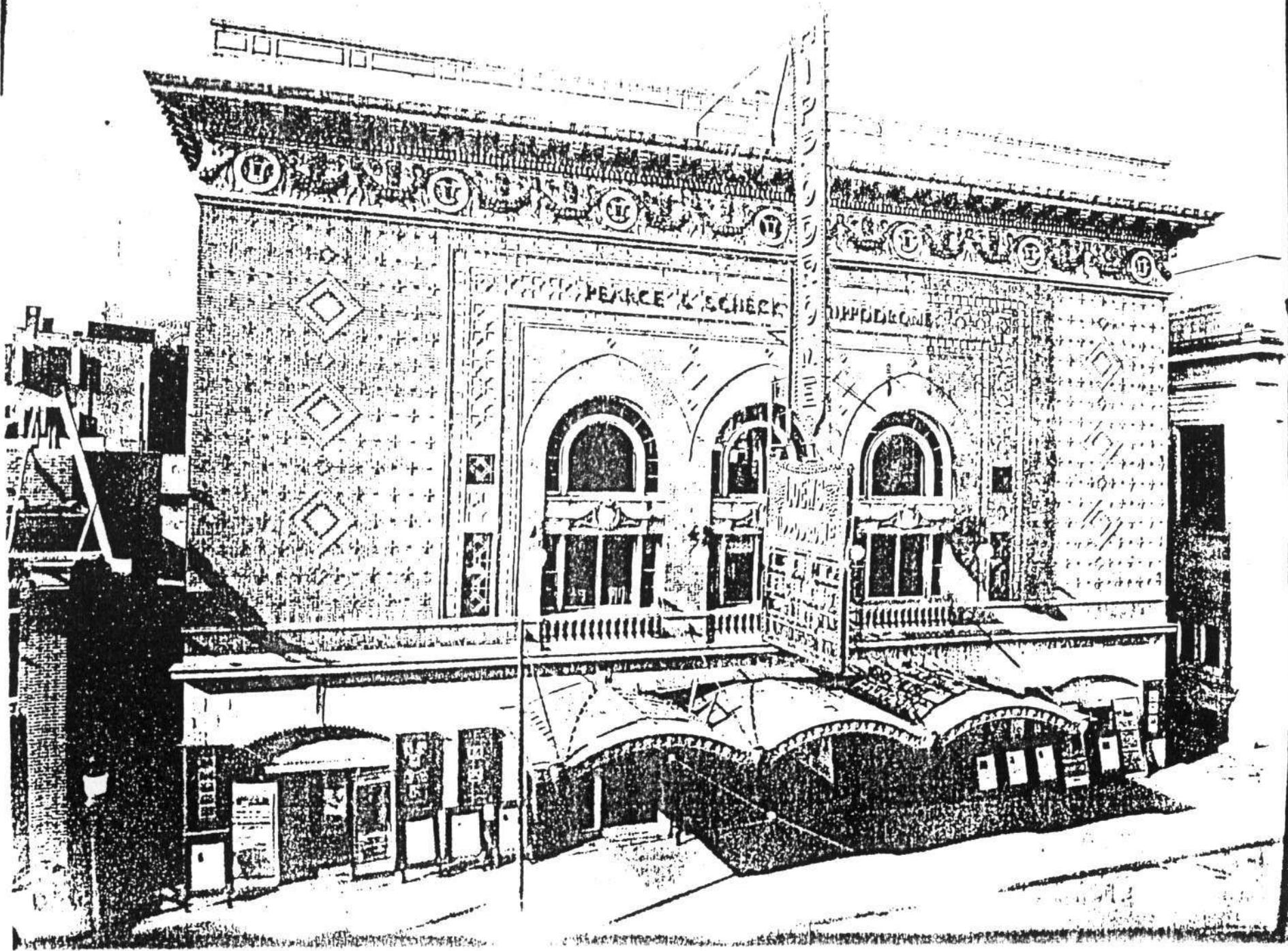
FIGURE 6

Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society

B-2338

FIGURE 7

Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society



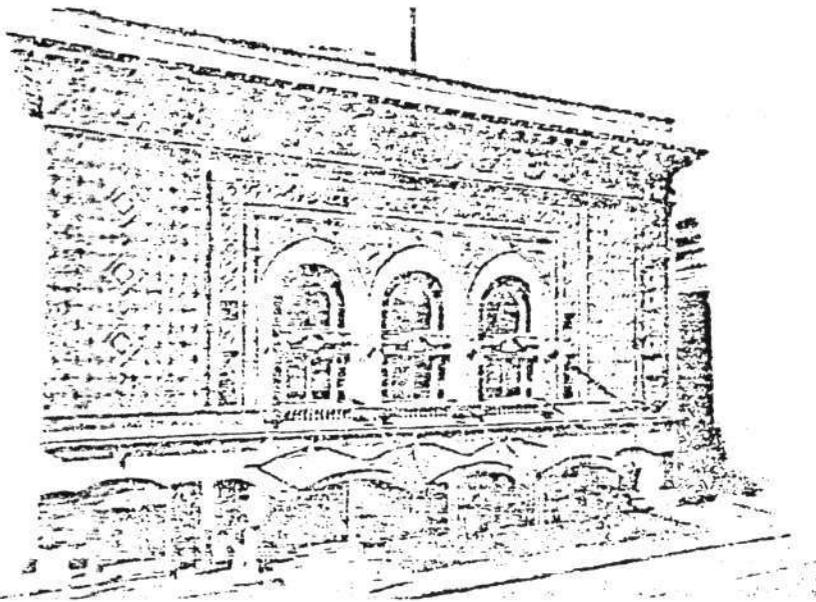
# Baltimore, Md.

November 23, 1914

## NEW HIPPODROME

3000 SEATS

LARGEST PLAYHOUSE  
SOUTH OF  
PHILADELPHIA



Monday, Nov. 23, 1914, at 8 o'clock the curtain will rise on Baltimore's newest theatre, the HIPPODROME, on Eutaw, just off Baltimore St., said to be the largest playhouse south of Philadelphia. A large force of decorators and workmen have been rushing the building to completion and the audience tomorrow night will see a structure that in its perfect state is only a few hours old.

The HIPPODROME seats 3000 persons, with 1300 seats on the first floor. It has a divided balcony, a new idea in theatre construction; and there is not a post to obscure the view, the stage being visible from every seat in the house. The proscenium boxes are large, and give an excellent outlook, being of the modern type. The stage opening is 43 feet wide, far larger than the average theatre, giving room for large productions.

Brown is the prevailing color note in the decoration with tints and solid colors being used exclusively. The walls are covered with brown silk in panels. The house is luxuriously carpeted from top to bottom. An indirect lighting system has been installed, the soft, mellow light being reflected from the ceilings. The fixtures are artistic, the illuminated dome at the rear of the first floor being especially attractive. The impressive entrance is rich in marble, as are the stairways, and the effect is luxurious and pleasing.

The stage is of the most modern type. Connected with it are 16 dressing rooms well fitted up. The switch-board is equipped with "drainers" by which all lights in the house can be controlled, brightened or dimmed gradually, the idea being that the lights are not to be flashed up or shut down suddenly, but so as to produce a gradual softer or brighter effect. Telephones that the proprietors call "whisperphones" connect every part of the house.

The large pipe organ built for this theatre is to be used for incidental music for the pictures and in acts where it can be conveniently introduced. With enough volume to fill the auditorium, it is equipped with all the stops required, chimes and extra deep pedal notes, so that the softest effects can be secured. Frederick Weber, the well-known organist will give a 15 minute organ recital at 8 o'clock each night of opening week.

One feature the audiences will appreciate is the new type ventilating system which is designed to change the air in every portion of the house every five minutes. The box office, with provision for two cashiers, is eq-

uipped with ticket-selling machines and there are cash registers for exchange seats.

The opening bill of vaudeville sets a pretty high standard for the theatre. The acts furnished by famous Marcus Loew Booking Agency, of New York, from which the Hippodrome Company has a franchise for this state.

Special two reel feature pictures are staged with carefully rehearsed special music by the HIPPODROME Orchestra, augmented by the organ.

The HIPPODROME will play three performances daily, one in the afternoon and two at night. During the supper hour special feature reels will be shown, together with the introduction of soloists, filling in the time between the end of the afternoon performance and the opening of the first night bill.

C. E. Lewis, manager of the VICTORIA, retains that house, and also takes charge of the HIPPODROME.

The Baltimore SUN - Sunday, Nov. 22, 1914

Just in case you think all vaudeville was top rate in those days --even on an opening bill-- the following remarks are from the Tuesday Baltimore SUN.

...the claim has been made by the proprietors that the theatre is the most beautiful in the city. Everything has been done to make the structure pleasing to the eye as well as comfortable. The beautiful brown tone has been followed out, with touches of gold here and there and a brilliant red carpet on the floor that makes the contrast.

The ushers are clothed in a light grey and the musicians appear in a semi-military uniform that blends with the house color scheme. A number of handsome floral pieces decorated the stage, and as the Mayor stepped into the box the orchestra played a selection signifying the breaking of dawn, gradually the lights came up from the darkness, and the playhouse was opened with the first number being a motion picture in two parts called "The Iron Master."

It is to be regretted that a more suitable bill of vaudeville was not offered. There were only three acts of the seven that measured up to the standard that the management has stated it meant to maintain. As this is a 50 cent "top" price vaudeville house, some good things are to be expected, and a "headliner" of some note would have given tone to the entertainment. You Cello, Robinson's Elephants and LaFaire and Dawson were the only acts that seemed to arouse enthusiasm...

(The reviewer remained unidentified.)

THEATERS BY THOMAS LAMB  
(LIST PREPARED BY TRACERIES)

<u>Date</u> (r-razed)	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1909 (r)	City	NYC (14th St.)	first commission
1913	Regent	NYC (116th & 7th)	first motion picture house
1914 (r)	Strand	NYC	first of Lamb's Adam style
	Hippodrome	Baltimore	in old theater style
1915	Maryland	Hagerstown	recently restored
1916 (r-1932)	Rialto	NYC	no stage, only screen and pit
1917	Rivoli	NYC	classical facade
	Victoria	NYC	
1918 (r)	Capitol	NYC	largest in world at
time	Palace	D.C.	
1921	Ohio	Cleveland	
	State	Cleveland	
	State	NYC	
(r)	Stanley	Philadelphia	all theaters pre-1925 are in Adam style
1922 (r)	Fox	Philadelphia	
(r)	Knickerbocker	D.C.	rebuilt collapsed 1917 theater
(r)	State	Boston	
(r)	Poli Palace	Waterbury, CT	
1924	State	St. Louis	now a clothing store
1925	Embassy	NYC	
(r)	Albee	Brooklyn	
	Strand	Brooklyn	
1926	State	New Orleans	
	Palace	Columbus	
	Poli Palace	Worcester, MA	
	Proctor's	Schenectady	
	Academy of Music	NYC	
1927	Canal	NYC	
(r)	Proctor's	NYC (86th)	
	Loew's Midland	Kansas City	Louis XVI style

1928	Keith's	Flushing	
	Keith's	Huntington, WVA	
	Memorial (Savoy)	Boston	now an opera house
	Kenmore	Brooklyn	
	Onio	Columbus	
	Stanley	Utica, NY	
(r)	Albee	Cincinnati	
1929	State	Syracuse	Oriental theme
	Pitkin	Brooklyn	
(r)	Fox	San Francisco	
1930	Mayfair (Embassy)	NYC	
(r)	Triboro	Astoria, NY	
	Warner	Torrington, CT	
	Loew's 175th St.	NYC	Oriental theme
	Hollywood	NYC (Broadway)	Louis XVI
1932	Fox	Hackensack, NJ	
(r)	Grand	Atlanta	
(r-1961)	Loew's 72nd St.	NYC	Oriental theme
	Palace of the Soviets	Moscow	unbuilt
1938	Cinema	Miami	
UNDATED:			
	Madison Square Garden	NYC	original structure
	Keith's	NYC (86th)	
	Paramount	Plainfield, NJ	Chinese and Spanish
theme			
	Ziegfeld's	NYC (42nd)	
	Pythian Temple		
	Community	Saratoga Springs	

Designed theaters in England, Australia, South Africa, India and Egypt  
 12 theaters are on the National Register (1985)  
 designed over 300 theaters during his career



# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. B-2338

Magi No. 0423385724

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Hippodrome Theatre

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 12 North Eutaw Street  not for publicationcity, town Baltimore  vicinity of congressional district 3rd

state Maryland county

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Hippodrome Theatre Ltd. Partnership

street &amp; number J.F. Theatres, Inc.-17 W. Pennsylvania Ave. telephone no.: 296-7570

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21204

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber SEB 96

street &amp; number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 173

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Baltimore Retail District Survey

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-2338

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### SUMMARY:

The Hippodrome Theatre is a 1914 concrete and steel theatre building with an ornamental brick, stone, and terra cotta facade in Classical Revival style located on the west side of North Eutaw Street about halfway between West Baltimore and West Fayette Streets in central Baltimore, Maryland. The principal elevation has undergone several changes resulting in the alteration of the street level and entrance, the addition of a lighted marquee in 1931, and the removal of the main cornice in the late 1960's or early 1970's. The interior remains a single auditorium with a large balcony, but much of the original decoration and proscenium boxes are covered with draperies. The Hippodrome continues to show movies on a daily schedule.

### General Description:

The Hippodrome Theatre is a large steel and concrete building with its main elevation facing east and its stage at the west end of the building lot. The facade has a cream-colored base scored to resemble ashlar stone with a central box office flanked by modern glass double doors. Segmental-arched openings in the base were originally windows or billboards, but are now filled in. The 1931 marquee is cantilevered over the entrance area and has free-standing neon lighted letters with the theater's name paralleling the street and two sign panels with neon lettering perpendicular to the building. These are on the top edge of the marquee. The original entrance had three banks of double doors shielded by a cantilevered glass and iron canopy in three shallow arcs.

The upper facade is covered in decorative brick framing a three-bay central unit. The brickwork patterns include diamonds, crosses, and geometric borders framing the central group of arches. The arches are framed in pointed brick arches with bead molding. The windows in the arches are divided by a large horizontal mullion of decorated terra cotta featuring a cartouche and scroll carvings. The upper parts of the windows have a single horizontal muntin and the lower parts are divided by a vertical muntin. An iron framework, possibly for a vertical sign, partially obscures the central window.

The original cornice, consisting of a wide overhang with modillions, was removed in the late 1960's or early 1970's, leaving the elaborate frieze in place. The frieze has cartouches of lyres linked by swagged garlands, theatrical masks, and putti. The parapet is faced with terra cotta panels. The side and rear elevations are common bond stock brick.

The interior has seen several alterations, but the original huge auditorium space remains undivided. The balcony is not currently in use. Marble wainscoting on the balcony walls is visible from the main floor. The main side wall ornamentation is largely intact, but covered by long drapery. Former boxes near the proscenium arch are also covered and filled with concrete block. The barrel-arched foyer behind the curving rear wall of the auditorium has pilasters with composite capitals and floral molding. The space has been remodeled to contain a concession stand.

# 8. Significance

Survey No.

B-2338

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1914 **Builder/Architect** Thomas W. Lamb, arch.

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

**SUMMARY:**

The Hippodrome Theatre is one of three remaining downtown "movie palaces" which exemplify the golden age of movies during the early to mid-20th century. The Hippodrome is the largest of the three, the others being the Mayfair (B-3349) and the Town (B-2352), and is the only one to retain its original auditorium space undivided. When it opened in 1914, the Hippodrome was said to be the largest playhouse south of Philadelphia. It began as a vaudeville house with movies as between-act entertainment and continued more or less in the same format until about 1959 when the last stage shows appeared there. From that time to the present, the Hippodrome has presented movies on a regular basis.

**History and Support:**

The Hippodrome Theatre was built on part of the site of the old Eutaw House, an 1835 hotel which burned in 1912. The designer was Thomas W. Lamb of New York, who also designed Keith's Theater in Baltimore. The owners of the theater were Pearce and Scheck, one of the leaders in stage and film entertainment production in Maryland. They organized the first movie theater circuit in Baltimore.

The original interior decoration of the Hippodrome was basically brown silk wall panels with elaborate plaster and gilt trimmings. The rear stage area contained sixteen dressing rooms. A large pipe organ, a common feature in the best theaters in the early 20th century, was especially built for the Hippodrome. The first program on opening night, November 23, 1914, consisted of seven vaudeville acts and a two-reel movie entitled "The Iron Master". The daily schedule listed three performances, one in the afternoon, with movies during the dinner hour, and two shows in the evening.

By 1917, the Hippodrome was part of the Loew's organization. In 1924, the B.F. Keith theater chain acquired the lease. Economic hard times in the late 1920's and early thirties undoubtedly influenced the closing of the theater in 1931. Later that year, Isidor Rappaport leased the Hippodrome and began a revitalization of the theater's life. A grand reopening in August 1931 was attended by Governor Albert C. Ritchie and George Jessel. This was only one of

(continue, please)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-2338

Headley, Robert K., Jr. Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore, 1974.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Baltimore East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

co-terminous with lot approx. 108 ft. 2 in. x 140 ft. 11 in.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. Davis, Historical Preservation Analyst

organization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. date April, 1986

street & number 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard St. telephone (301) 396-4866

city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

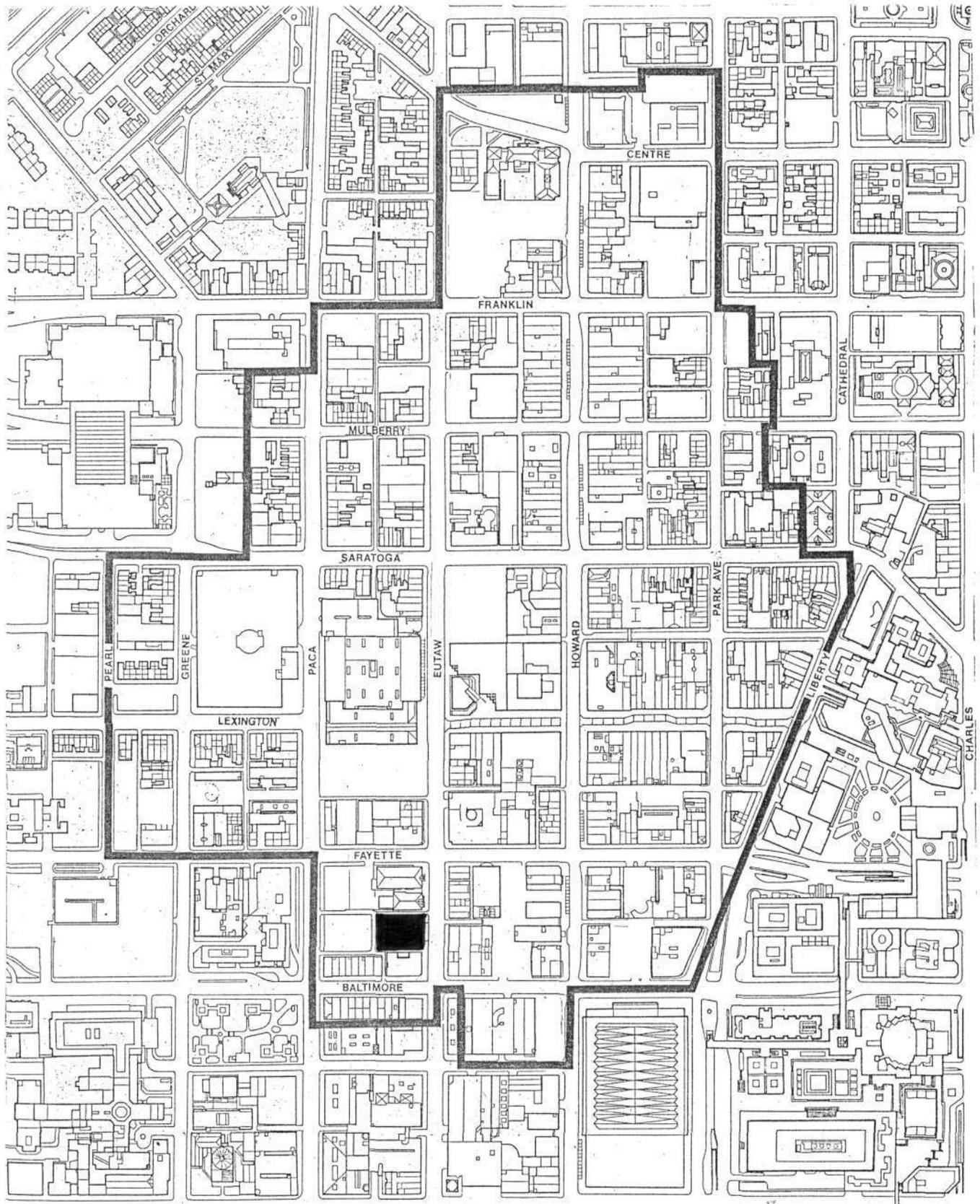
return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

Hippodrome Theatre  
12 North Eutaw Street  
Private

1914

The Hippodrome Theatre is one of three remaining downtown "movie palaces" which exemplify the golden age of movies during the early to mid-20th century. The Hippodrome is the largest of the three, the others being the Mayfair (B-3349) and the Town (B-2353), and is the only one to retain its original auditorium space undivided. When it opened in 1914, the Hippodrome was said to be the largest playhouse south of Philadelphia. It began as a vaudeville house with movies as between-act entertainment and continued more or less in the same format until about 1959 when the last stage shows appeared there. From that time to the present, the Hippodrome has presented movies on a regular basis.

many reopenings through the years which kept the Hippodrome at the top of the entertainment world in Baltimore. By 1959, however, live stage acts were passe and the theater was given over entirely to movies. It was the premiere theater for "My Fair Lady" in Baltimore in the early 1960's and in 1969, the last big opening featuring the movie "Slaves" took place. The Hippodrome has retained the large auditorium of the movie palace era, although it is never filled to capacity, which is 3,000.



Baltimore Metrocenter Survey  
Market Center  
Hippodrome Theatre  
12 North Eutaw Street  
B-2338





Hippodrome Theatre  
12 North Eutaw Street  
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Janet Davis  
March 1986  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
East elevation

B-2338

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Pb 631  
B-2338  
MAGI #0423385724

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

The Hippodrome

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

12 N. Eutaw Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

CITY, TOWN

Room 900

STATE

26 South Calvert St.  
Baltimore, Md. 21202

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hippodrome has been altered many times through the years, however the front facade remains fairly well intact. It is a stone, brick and terra cotta construction, featuring one of the best displays of polychrome brickwork in Baltimore. Its general appearance is that of a monolithic sheer screen punctuated by small arched openings and textured only by the patterns and polychromy of ~~service~~ arrangement of materials.   
 SURFACE

Resting on a high stone ashlar base which rises through the first floor, the brick wall rises above a thin belt of stone. Original entrances at left and right under segmental arches have been filled in. The three central segmental arched openings remain, with the middle one serving as box office. Those flanking the box office are fitted with two sets of double glass doors each. The only adornment around the arches is a surrounding strip of bead and reel molding and overscaled keystones above. The marquee, which spans the entrance area is suspended above.

Three tall recessed arched openings are let in the brick above, their lower halves filled with sheet metal. Thick stone muntins above carry carved cartouches and sheet metal infill is set above in the upper half. Pointed arches of brick are described above the brick by surrounding bead molding. Rectangular stone frames enclose the three window units together, and a second frame is outlined beyond the first on the surface of the facade. The remaining wall area is pattered with crosses, diamond patterns and zig-zags executed in brick. A stone frieze above is adorned with terra cotta lyres, cupids, dramatic masks and swags. The deeply projecting cornice supported on rolled modillions with a row of dentils ~~and~~ WHICH supported the stone parapet above has been removed.   
 THE

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

B-2338

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1914

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hippodrome is probably the most famous, as well as the oldest and largest movie house still in use in Baltimore. Built as a vaudeville house entirely in steel, cement, and stone, it was the largest playhouse south of Philadelphia at the time of its construction. The marquee dates from 1931 and originally contained over 8,000 lights. The brickwork and frieze ornament are among the finest in the city. The interior has undergone alteration on at least two occasions. Many names and events are associated with the Hippodrome, the regions last remaining picture palace.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Planning Assistants

ORGANIZATION

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

DATE

1976

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Room 900

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

26 South Calvert St.  
Baltimore, Md. 21202

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



B-2338

12 N. Entaw

Neg #

B. Pencek

2/76

Block 631