

B-4482

MOVIE THEATER/DANCE HALL & SCHANZE THEATER

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

This elegant Beaux Arts theater was built in 1912. Its stucco/plaster facade is currently concealed (and/or removed) by the addition of a modern storefront. Above, the original theatrical appearance is visible. The building is a commercial/social operation today.

Reportedly, nothing remains of the theater interior, which functioned as a moving picture house on the first floor, and a dance hall above.

**D INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM  
SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

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**1. Name of Property**

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**historic name** Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre

**other names/site number** Arch Social Club/ B-4482

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**2. Location**

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**street & number** 2426 Pennsylvania Ave. **not for publication** \_\_\_\_\_

**city or town** Baltimore **vicinity** N/A  
**state** Maryland **code** MD **county** Baltimore City **code** 510  
**zip code** 21217

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification** N/A

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**. National Park Service Certification** N/A

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**5. Classification**

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**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**

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

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
(Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre)  
(Baltimore City, MD)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION & CULTURE Sub: theater  
RECREATION & CULTURE music facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Beaux-Arts

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
walls STUCCO (plaster?) \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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

8. Statement of Significance See continuation sheet.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Performing Arts  
Entertainment/Recreation  
Ethnic Heritage

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Period of Significance 1912-40

Significant Dates 1912

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maps

- Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896.  
Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877.  
Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2, 3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928.  
Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852.

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

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UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	_____	_____	3	—	_____
2	—	_____	_____	4	—	_____

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) retaining original property lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architectural Historians  
organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992  
street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone (202) 234-2333  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

Property Owner

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

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street&number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

Movie Theater/Dance Hall & Schanze  
Theater  
name of property  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance  
Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Economic;  
Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): recreation and culture

Known Design Source: none

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Movie Theatre/Dance Hall &  
Schanze Theatre  
**name of property**  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
**county and State**

DESCRIPTION

This fine Beaux-Arts facade is a testament to the Pennsylvania/North Avenue entertainment corridor of the early 20th century. The three-story, one-bay facade is dominated by a large aedicule. The building is constructed of stuccoed brick and dates from c.1912.

The facade, inspired by the architectural motifs of the Roman Renaissance, features a two-story aedicule formed by Doric pilasters carrying entablature blocks; these are decorated with relief moldings of ornamental leaves and other strips of moldings, and they support a pediment. The pilasters flank a large arched opening, now boarded over. This opening has a large keystone, which projects upwards into the very peak of the pediment. The pediment has rich ornamentation, including egg-and-dart and other moldings; draped female figures, holding the masks of comedy and tragedy, recline in the tympanum. The facade is crowned by a parapet, stepped up higher in the center, with a denticulated cornice. The whole arrangement is placed against a parapeted facade.

This theater now has its first floor obscured by an architecturally incongruous storefront for the Arch Social Club. According to a member of the Club, none of the theater's historic interior remains.

According to the members of the Arch Social Club, nothing remains of the interior of the theater. The building is of fireproof construction and had dressing rooms located in the back.

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OMB No. 1024-0018

PS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Section 8 Page 1

Movie Theatre/Dance Hall &  
Schanze Theatre  
**name of property**  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
**county and State**

SIGNIFICANCE

The Schanze Theater, opened in 1912, is an exceptionally fine building evocative of early twentieth-century recreational tastes, when attending the motion pictures was a special theatrical occasion. Its grand facade, featuring a giant two-story aedicule motif, celebrates the importance of the building in the life of its community. The Schanze appears to have been built by the owner of a successful drugstore/apartment house, located at the corner of Pennsylvania and Fulton Avenues.<sup>1</sup>

When the building was first constructed, movies were shown in the first-floor theater, while the second floor functioned as a dance hall. A Yiddish movie theater known as the Cinema<sup>2</sup> opened at the Schanze theater in January of 1941.<sup>2</sup> It apparently closed less than a year later. Between 1941 and 1970, the fate of the building is not clear, but in the early 1970s the Schanze was used as restaurant, Wilson's, and in 1972, it was purchased by the Arch Social Club.

Baltimore was a city known for having an active movie-going population. It has been estimated that in 1920, 150,000 people out of a population of approximately 850,000 attended at least one movie per week, with the big vaudeville houses apparently drawing the largest crowds.<sup>3</sup> In and around the survey area, there were seven movie theaters by the 1930s, providing an important part of the community's social life. All theaters were located on

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<sup>1</sup> The drugstore/apartment house has since been demolished to make way for a Metro station.

<sup>2</sup> This information is from advertisements in the Jewish Times and material from Exit. Exit cites a 1941 newspaper article describing the opening of a Yiddish movie house in January 1941. The first film was "A Letter To Mother."

<sup>3</sup> Robert Kirk Headley, Jr., "Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore" (Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1974) 20.

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OMB No. 1024-0018

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Section 8 Page 2

Movie Theatre/Dance Hall &  
Schanze Theatre  
**name of property**  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
**county and State**

Fulton, Pennsylvania, or Lafayette.

Pennsylvania Avenue was the hub of cultural life in the 1920s and '30s, the years of Baltimore's African-American Renaissance. It was the major shopping street and the center of entertainment. The African-American community's famous Easter parade marched down Pennsylvania; other parades were held by such lodges as the Elks and Masons, and Halloween revellers. Pennsylvania was the center of jazz. Its night clubs, such as the Royal, Ganbee's, and the Ritz Cafe, attracted every major African-American performer. The Royal ranked with Harlem's famed Apollo.<sup>4</sup>

The theaters in the survey area include the still-extant Schanze and Fulton theaters, and several that are now demolished: by 1914 there were the Red Mill Moving Picture Theater (1510 Lafayette), the Crescent Moving Pictures Theater (1509 Lafayette), the Moving Pictures (Fulton between Woodbrook and Francis, next to the Parkwood Hotel), and, after 1928, the Metropolitan, at 2501 Pennsylvania. The Royal (Douglass) Theater (1329-33 Pennsylvania Avenue; built in 1921 and razed in 1971), was the most important theater in the 1930s, offering live theatrical and musical performances in addition to movies. The Royal was a major venue on the jazz and big band circuit, and attracted major African-American artists in its heyday--the late 1920s up through World War II.<sup>5</sup>

The years 1908 to 1914 were a boom time for the construction of movie theaters. The earliest were built in Baltimore by 1908, including eight in that year alone, the number increasing to a total of 113 theater buildings by 1914. Most theaters were small, seating only about 300 people. Architectural style and decoration could be plain or quite elaborate: many

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Edsall, "Pennsylvania Avenue: Declining for Generation" (Baltimore Evening Sun, 10 May 1967, Enoch Pratt Free Library vertical file) np.

<sup>5</sup> Carleton Jones, Lost Baltimore Landmarks: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings (Baltimore: Maclay, 1982) 64.

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Movie Theatre/Dance Hall &  
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**name of property**  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
**county and State**

early theaters had lavish classical ornamentation, while others were built in existing dwellings. Because theaters did not have a respectable reputation, their owners tried to create a comforting, homey atmosphere.<sup>6</sup>

The program at the theaters typically consisted of a feature movie and two shorts; this was usually accompanied by live entertainment on piano, organ, or drums, and the larger theaters sometimes had entire orchestras. Slide shows previewed movies or illustrated songs, and short skits followed the movie.

Frank H. Durkee, C.W. Pacy, and Charles E. Nolte were early entrepreneurs in the Baltimore movie business. They began their partnership, Durkee Enterprises, around 1916, and owned or operated over a dozen Baltimore movie theaters by the late 1920s. They acquired the Schanze by 1926, and the Fulton in 1927. The Rome Circuit of movie theater operators controlled the Schanze and Fulton theaters at one time in the 1930s or 1940s.<sup>8</sup> The City Directory of 1930 lists the following tenants at 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue: Schanze, the Motion Pictures; Schanze's Hall; and the Bangert & Petticord Dancing School.

The building is currently occupied by the Arts Social Club. The Arch Social Club is a longstanding social institution in the Sandtown neighborhood. organized in 1912, it moved into the obsolete theater in 1972. The function of the organization is to serve as a banquet hall for the neighborhood, and it hosts dances, parties, and wedding receptions.

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<sup>6</sup> Headley 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Headley 8-13.

<sup>8</sup> Headley 18.

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Movie Theatre/Dance Hall &  
Schanze Theatre  
**name of property**  
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**county and State**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edsall, Thomas. "Pennsylvania Avenue: Declining for Generation." Baltimore Evening Sun (10 May 1967, Enoch Pratt Free Library vertical file): np.

Headley, Robert Kirk, Jr. "Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore." Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1974.

Jones, Carleton. Lost Baltimore Landmarks: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings. Baltimore: Maclay, 1982.

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH  
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4482

Neg. No. 8/12

Historic Name Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre

Current Name/Use Arch Social Club

Address(es) 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue

Resource/Property Type

- Rowhouses  
 Commercial Structure  
 Public/Institutional Building  
 Public Housing  
 Site  
 Other

Attached  
 Freestanding

Note: constructed as theater on site of old livery

Stories 3

Primary Material brick Secondary Material plaster

Roof Form flat

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 1 If Rowhouse:  Flat Front  Swell Front  Porch

Window Type:  Double-Hung  
 1/1 Sash  
 2/2 Sash  
 2/1 Sash  
 Other Sash  
 Transom

Door Type:  Single-Leaf  
 Double-Leaf  
 Number of panels (if visible)  
 Transom

Architectural Style Beaux-Arts Date c. 1912

**Noteworthy Features:** Facade has 2-story pavillion with pilasters carrying pediment, whole arrangement placed against parapeted facade. Opening with molded surround, large keystone. Draped female figures recline in tympanum, holding masks of comedy and tragedy. Denticulated cornice. Modern storefront obscures first floor.

Alterations:  Formstone  Stucco  
 Vinyl/Aluminum  Window/Door Changes  
 Awnings  Missing Cornice Elements  
 First-Floor Use Change  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Status:  Occupied  Vacant  Mixed

NR Evaluation:  Contributing  Non-Contributing

Recommended for Intensive Level:  Yes  No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl  
Date: February-April 1992

Affiliation: Robinson & Associates

PENNSYLVANIA AV.

W. NORTH AV.

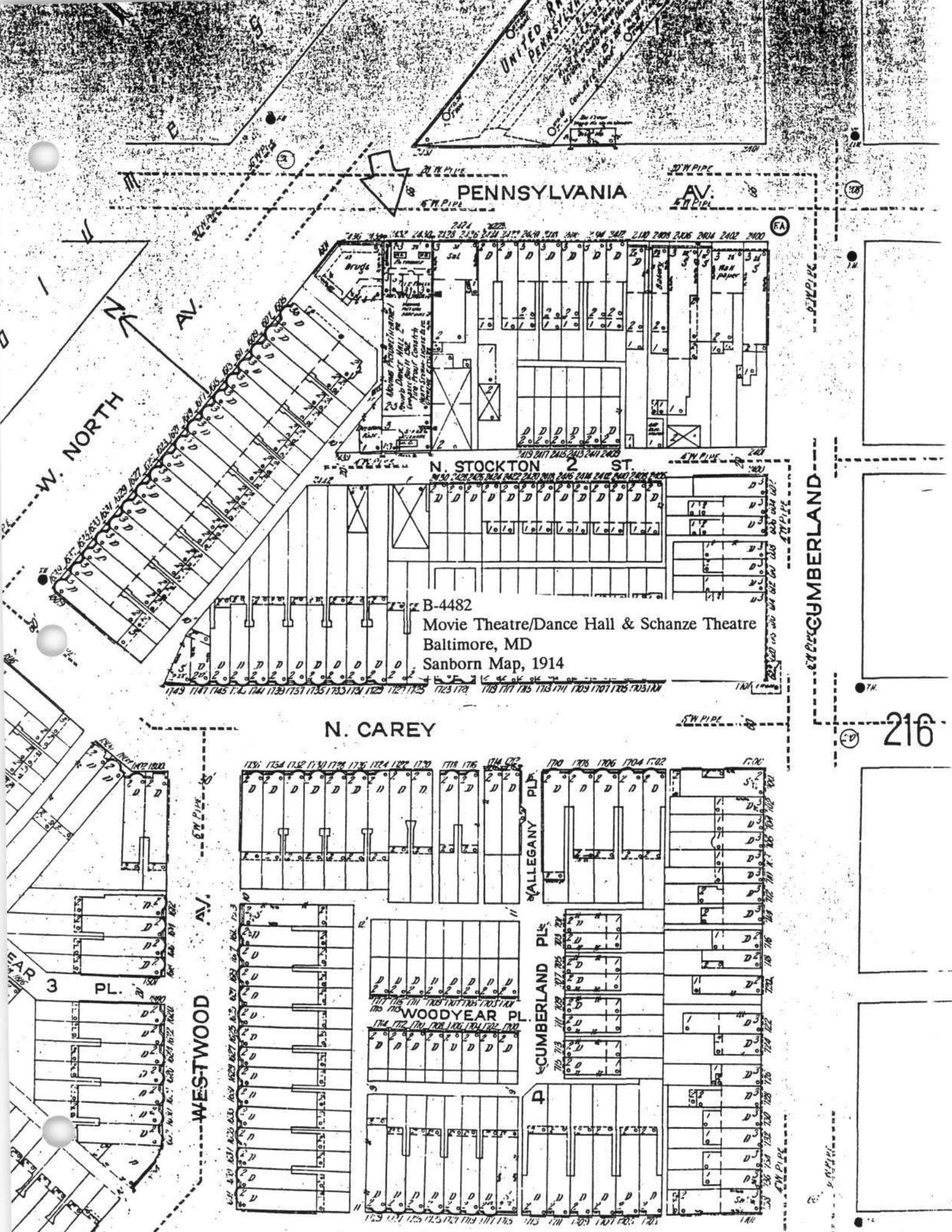
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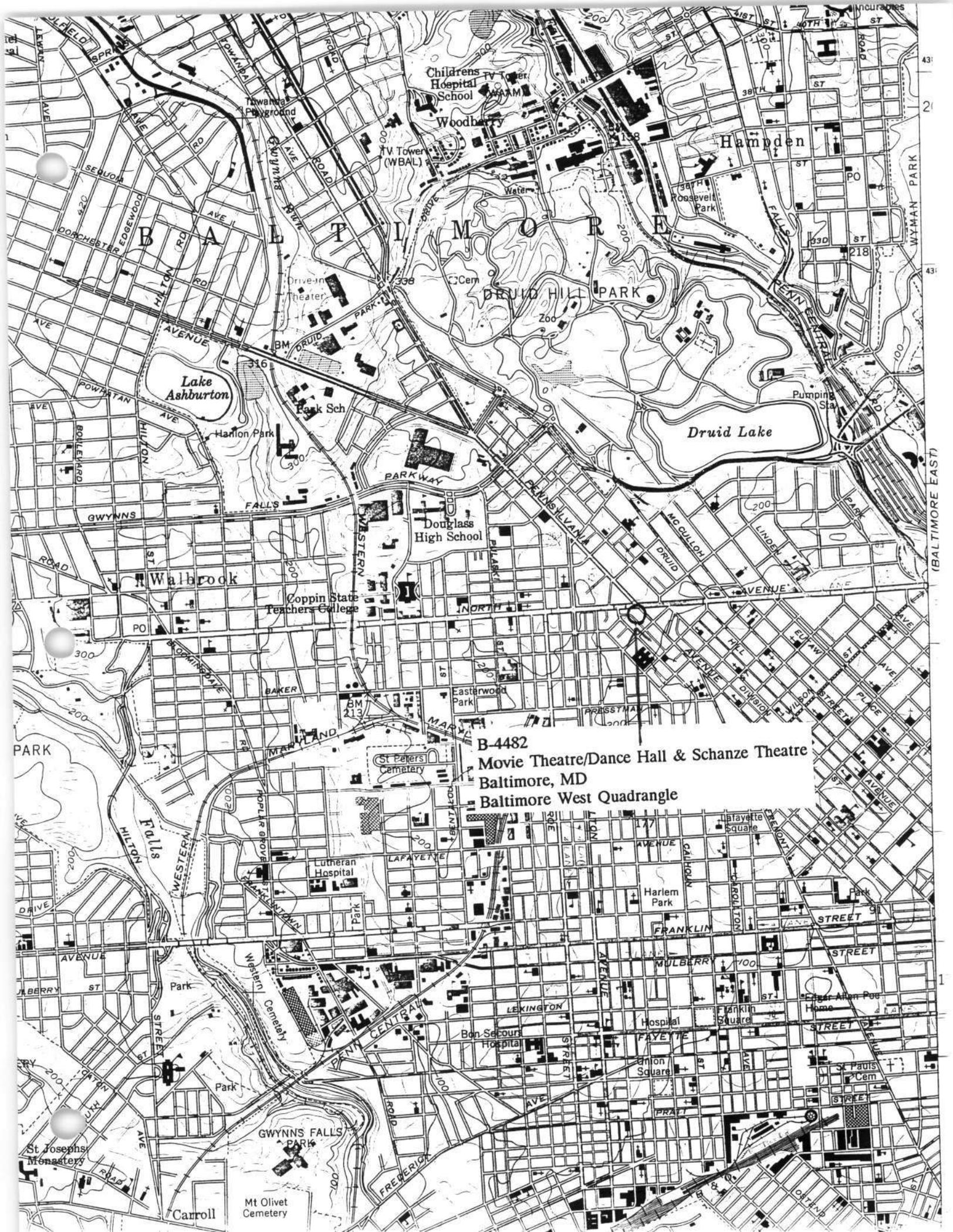
N. CAREY

CUMBERLAND

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Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre  
Baltimore, MD  
Sanborn Map, 1914

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B-4482  
Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre  
Baltimore, MD  
Baltimore West Quadrangle

Childrens Hospital  
School

Hampden

DRUID HILL PARK

Lake Ashburton

Druid Lake

Douglass High School

Walbrook

Coppin State Teachers College

B-4482  
Movie Theatre/Dance Hall & Schanze Theatre  
Baltimore, MD  
Baltimore West Quadrangle

Lutheran Hospital

Harlem Park

Bon Secours Hospital

Franklin Square

St Josephs Monastery

Mt Olivet Cemetery

Carroll

(BALTIMORE EAST)



SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN-NORTH

#B-4482

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH GO LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

HISTORIC: MOVING PICTURE THEATER / DANCE HALL (1912) / Schanze theater

CURRENT: ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, INC.

2430 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

ROLL 8 / NEG 12

2416 (partial) - 2428 PENNSYLVANIA AVE.

2416-24: DWELLINGS; 2426-28 STORES (1890) / SALOON (1914)

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

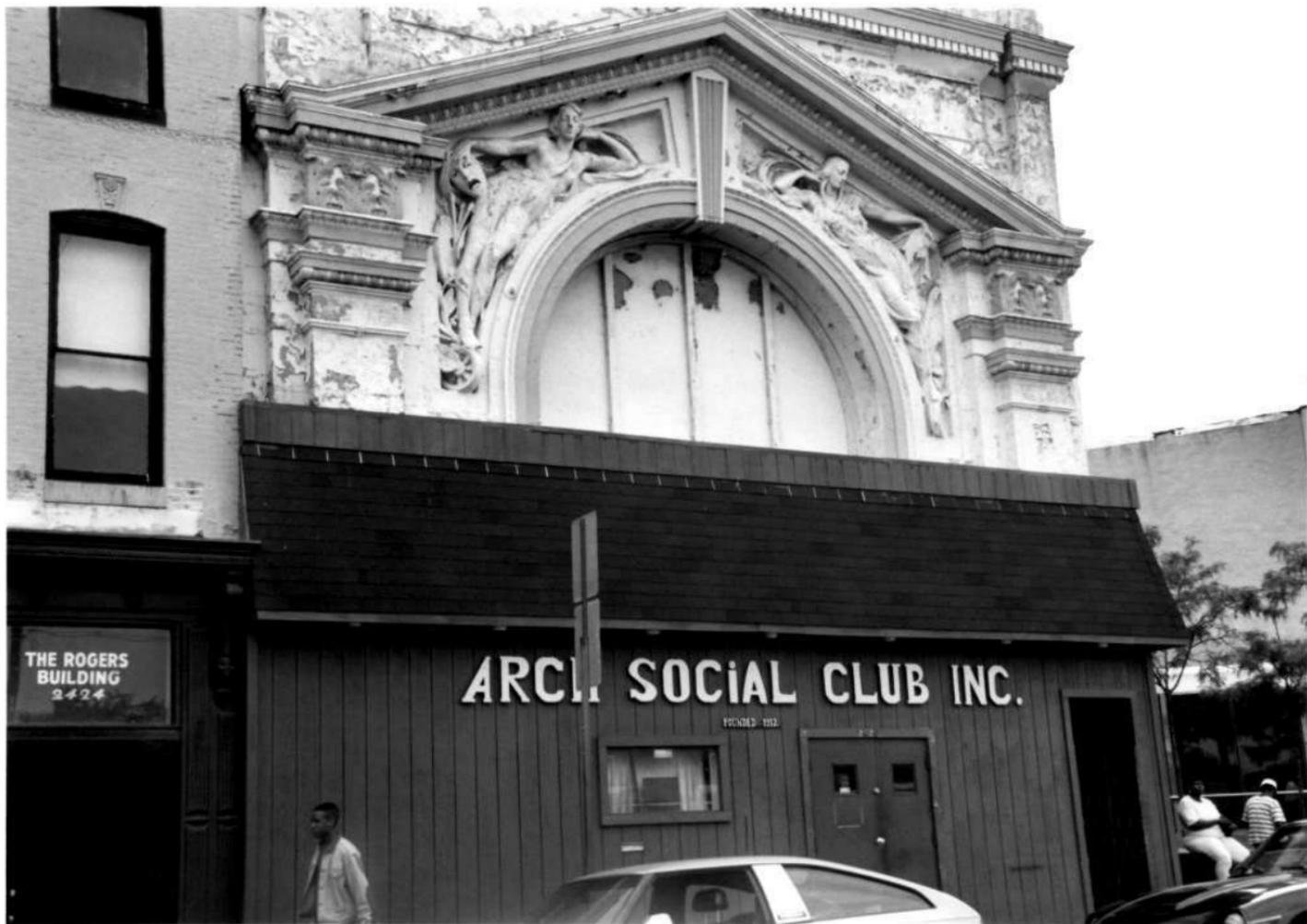
ROLL 8 / NEG 12

1 of 2

THE ROGERS  
BUILDING  
2424

ARCH. SOCIAL CLUB INC.

FOUNDED 1932



Sandtown-Winchester/Penn-North

# B-4482

Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson

July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical and Architectural  
Preservation

Historic: Movie theater/Dance Hall + Schanze Theater

Current: Arch Social Club

2426 Pennsylvania Avenue . NORTHEAST ELEVATION

2 of 2

Roll 9/Neg 19