

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Missouri Theater and Missouri Theater Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATIONSTREET & NUMBER 112-128 South 8th Street
713-721 Edmond Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

#6 - Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Missouri

029

Buchanan

021

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

City of St. Joseph

STREET & NUMBER

11th and Frederick Streets

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64501

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

5th and Jule Streets

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Landmarks of the City of St. Joseph

DATE

1974, 1978

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Missouri State Historical Survey
1979
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City

state
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Missouri Theater in downtown St. Joseph, Missouri, faces south and measures 76'6" (north and south) by 139' 9" (east and west). The two story Missouri Theater Building which abuts the theater on the east measures 63'6" (north and south) by 139'9" (east and west). These buildings are connected by a doorway at the theater's mezzanine level. Originally, additional connecting doors were located at orchestra and mezzanine levels.

The buff terra-cotta and red and blue enameled tile faced exterior of the Missouri Theater owes its character to Moorish prototypes. Its three-bayed primary facade is dominated by Art Deco piers, a central horse-shoe arch and other Moorish inspired polychrome and trefoil arched embellishment. The original marquees and arcuated parapet once emphasized the verticality of this design more than the present arrangement (see photo #2).

The Missouri Theater Building abuts the theater on the east. Its brick exterior is richly ornamented with varied motives in applied terra-cotta at the unaltered second floor level. The first floor level has been altered through the modernization of its storefronts.

This theater's interior offers an excellent example of a single balcony with mezzanine house of the "atmospheric" genre. The patron first enters the lobby, which is faced with variegated turquoise, buff, brown and maroon tiles, and proceeds into the auditorium where an exotic fantasy beneath the desert tent of Persian kings awaits. A plaster tent canopy is suspended from the ceiling, which evokes blue skies dotted with fleecy clouds. Surrounding embellishment includes double bull capitals on the engaged columns of the coves on those flanking the proscenium arch and on those adorning the elaborate pierced organ screens. In addition, pacing, winged human-headed lions in plaster relief, which flank the proscenium at orchestra level, heraldically disposed, winged horses along the frieze which surrounds the proscenium, the guilloche band which edges the canopy, the frieze of kneeling ibexes which runs beneath the organ screens and across the loge apron, the frieze of bowmen and charioteers which runs around the entire auditorium at cornice level and the stepped and crenellated parapet above all derive from motives commonly found in the arts of ancient Persia, Babylon and Assyria. Specifically, the ideas for these designs were taken from stone sculpture and reliefs found at the ancient sites of Susa, Persepolis, Nimrud and Nineveh, dating from ca. 900 B.C. to ca. 500 B.C. They have been executed here in ornamental plaster and staff in colors of buff, pale green, pink and taupe. In addition murals depicting views of ancient Persepolis once adorned the cove walls but were over-painted at an unknown date.

The Missouri Theater was constructed as a movie house. Provision for stage shows was made, however, in its large stage, 52' wide by 28' deep by approximately 70' high, its five dressing rooms, its orchestra pit for a forty piece orchestra, a fly gallery with forty-four counterweighted lines and a resistance type dimmer board for control of house and stage lighting.

Alterations to the Missouri Theater include installation of a snack bar in the foyer (1947), loge and lobby renovation and installation of rocker seating (1960) and the removal of the original marquees, art glass and parapet decoration from the primary facade (1960's).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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	1927	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Builder: W.J. Assenmacher Architect: Boller Brothers
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
The Missouri Theater in St. Joseph, Missouri is significant as a prime example of a pre-Depression era movie palace with extravagant interior decoration of Near Eastern inspiration, designed by the noteworthy Midwestern theater architects, the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, Missouri. It is important to the local citizenry and has been declared a local landmark by the city.

The Missouri Theater was constructed by Joseph Goldman, a local attorney and theater promoter, through the Capital Building Company of Lincoln, Nebraska. After construction began, Capital leased the property to Paramount-Publix Theaters Corporation which completed the construction. The general contractor for this construction was the W.J. Assenmacher Company of Lincoln, Nebraska, a firm specializing in theater construction in the Midwest. The architects, the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, were responsible for the designs of many Midwestern movie palaces including the Neo-Rococo Missouri Theater in Columbia, Missouri¹, the Neo-Baroque Lincoln Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska and the Spanish Colonial Texas Theater in San Antonio, Texas.²

The adjoining Missouri Theater Building was constructed immediately after the completion of the theater, and both were ready for their grand opening on July 25, 1927. This opening was modest with only one newsreel, one short and a feature, "Rough House Rosie", starring Clara Bow. More elaborate shows with orchestral reviews and vaudeville acts were not included in the program until the fall of 1927.³

From the time of its opening until the end of World War II, when St. Joseph's entertainment district moved to the eastern suburbs, the Missouri Theater was the prime first run house in town. It was closed as a movie house in 1970, but a succession of owners allowed the performing arts access to the theater. In 1976, Town Hall Center, Inc. was organized by a group interested in saving the building from possible demolition or conversion into a multi-cinema facility. This organization purchased the theater for \$125,000 in October of the same year and was active in booking professional shows into the theater and securing local promoters to back them. Subsequently, the local citizenry voted for a bond issue of \$750,000 for the purchase and renovation of the theater as a city center for the performing arts. The city took possession of the building on April 24, 1978 and the firm of Patty, Berkebile, Nelson and Associates was hired as renovation architects, with Lawhon Construction Company under contract for the work. The first phase of renovation will include a new roof, complete rewiring, installation of new seating, refinishing of the stage floor, restoration of the lobby and the primary facade to their original conditions, installation of a restroom for the handicapped and construction of a new concession stand on the mezzanine. Additional funds will be sought to provide a new 80 circuit dimmer board and patch panel, the rejuvenation of the fly gallery, the restoration of the adjoining storefronts on the Missouri Theater Building, a new sound system, carpeting and many other items and services. The theater restoration has been the impetus for the organization of a group of local citizens into a chapter of the American Theater Organ Society. The primary aim of this chapter is to secure a Wurlitzer organ to replace the \$150,000 original which was removed from the theater in the 1960's.⁴

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

FOOTNOTES

1. The nomination of this theater to the National Register of Historic Places is currently pending.
2. R.W. Sexton and B.F. Betts, eds., American Theaters of Today (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1927), pp. 114-116, 136-138.
3. St. Joseph [Missouri] News Press, July 24, 1927.
4. Data on the current status of the Missouri Theater is taken from the draft National Register Inventory-Nomination Form, completed by Tom Carneal of Northwestern Missouri State University, March 27, 1979 and Glen Walker, "Missouri Theater-All is Not Roses", St. Joseph Magazine, March, 1979, pp. 9-10.

1 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Data excerpted from draft National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the Missouri Theater completed by Tom Carneal of Northwest Missouri State University, March 27, 1979.

. St. Joseph [Missouri] News Press, July 24, 1927.

. Sexton, R.W. and B.F. Betts. American Theaters of Today. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1927.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME "St. Joseph North, Mo.-Kans."

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 341490 4403220

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South 20' of lot 6, all of lots 7 and 8, blk 8, Smith's first addition to the City of St. Joseph.

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

3 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Noelle Soren
Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

4 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer, for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

TEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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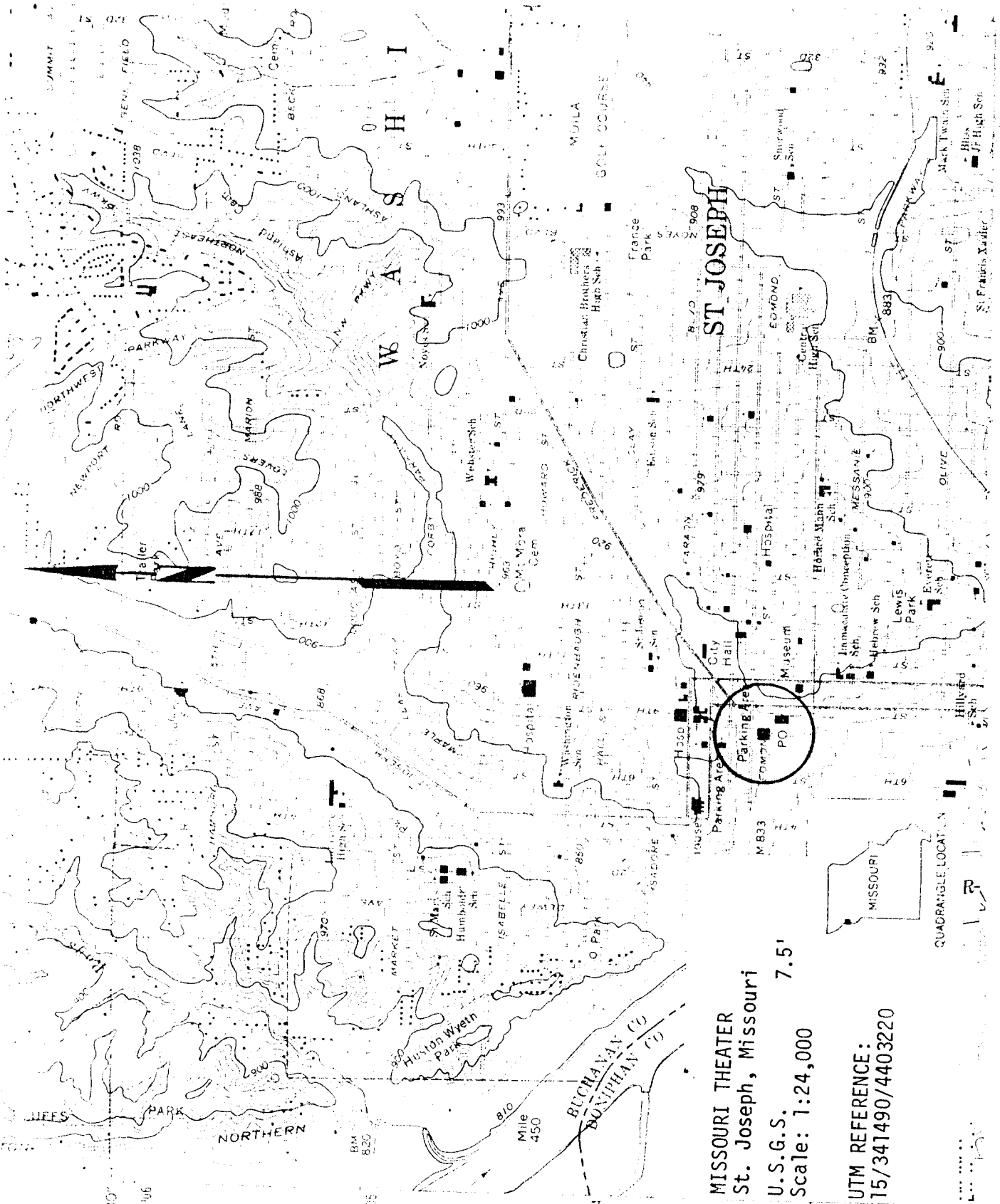
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MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

4. Walker, Glen. "Missouri Theater-All is Not Roses", St. Joseph Magazine,
March, 1979, 9-10.



MISSOURI THEATER
St. Joseph, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCE:
15/341490/440320

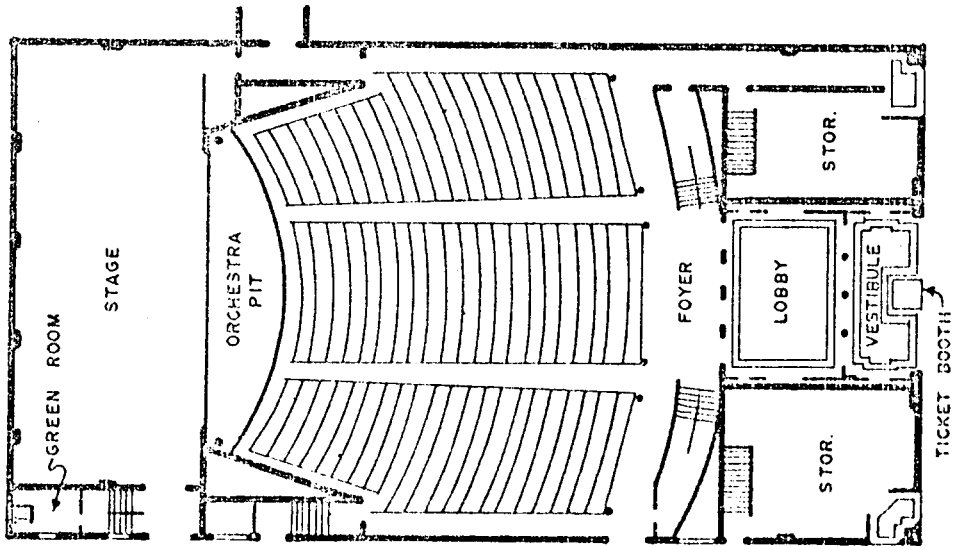


QUADRANGLE LOCATION

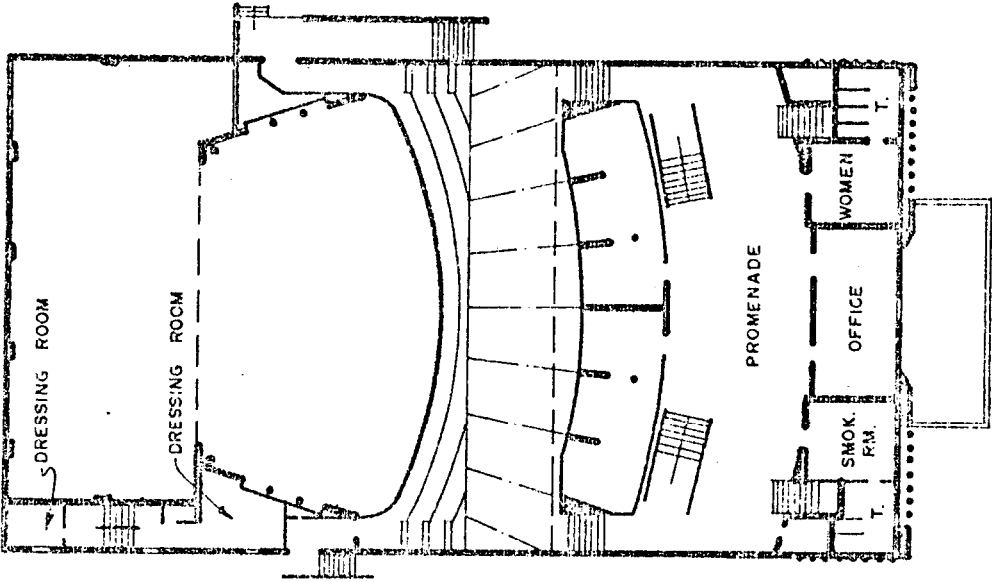
MISSOURI THEATER ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

NOT TO SCALE

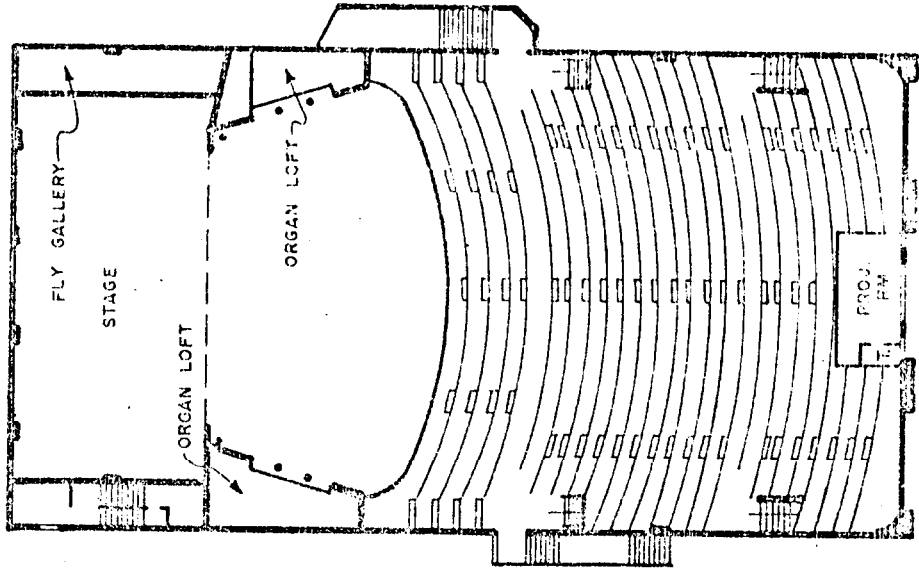
BOLLER BROTHERS, ARCHITECTS



ORCHESTRA
(SEATING 850 PERSONS)



MEZZANINE



BALCONY
(SEATING 750 PERSONS)

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Missouri Theater and Missouri Theater Building
City or Vicinity: St. Joseph
County: Buchanan County State: MO
Photographer: Noelle Soren
Date Photographed: May 1979

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13. View to N of primary (S) façade just prior to the beginning of restoration. The theater is primarily a sandy buff with coral, ultra-marine and black highlights. Photo by Andrew Lord, Dec. 1978.

2 of 13. Architect's original drawing of the primary façade of the theater as it was intended to look. The central embellishment within the horse-shoe arch was of art glass and the highly decorated parapets on all three bays were of terra cotta. These features along with the two vertical marquees will all be restored under the current plan. Photo by RW Sexton in American Theaters of Today (1927), p. 137.

3 of 13. View to the NW of the theater and the theater building. Note that restoration is in progress on the theater façade. The canopy encircling this building will be removed.

4 of 13. S façade of the theater building, detail of the terra cotta embellishment surrounding the windows on the second floor.

5 of 13. Missouri Theater, first floor, entrance foyer, W wall. This wall was revealed during the current restoration after having been concealed for many years. Its upper portion is in shades of tan, brown, yellow and coral while the surrounds of the Moorish arches are in ultra-marine tiles. The lower portion of the wall is in shades of ultra-marine, brown, grey, black and tan. Note the moldings in the recessed ceiling. Photo by Andrew Lord, Dec. 1978.

6 of 13. View to W, mezzanine foyer of the theater. Walls here are in shades of sandy tan, beige and brown with pastel painted decoration on the swirled lintels, floral inspired capitals and resetted moldings. Photo by Andrew Lord, Dec. 1978.

7 of 13. Mezzanine foyer of the theater, view up into ceiling recesses showing the array of decoration in shades of pale green, pink, gold, tan and taupe.

8 of 13. View to N of auditorium from near rear of balcony.

9 of 13. View to S of auditorium from center stage.

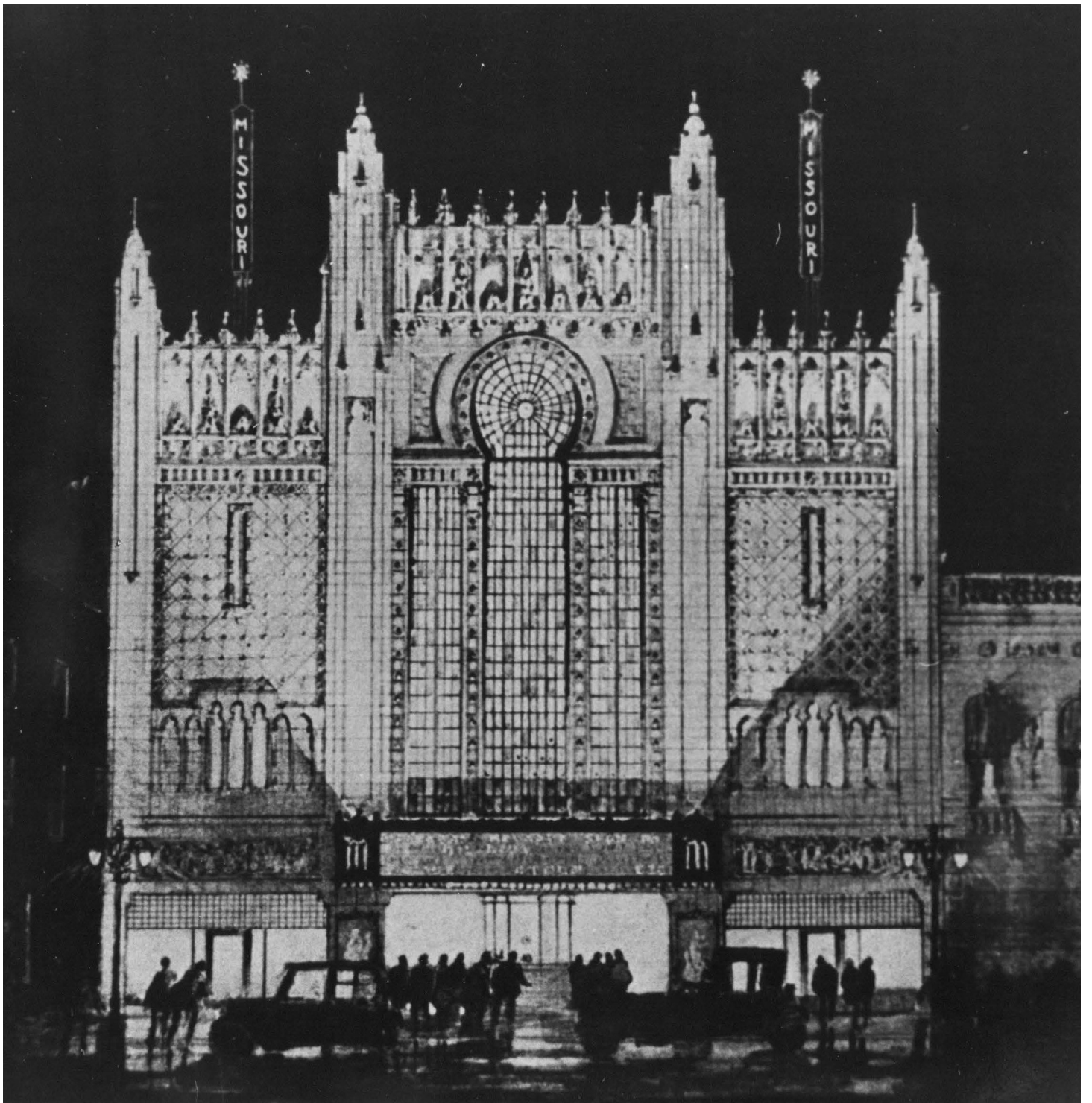
10 of 13. View to N, detail of proscenium arch. Parapet with stepped crenelles derives from the parapet surrounding the grand staircase to the Royal Audience Hall at Persepolis (circa 500 BC) in modern Iran. The warrior frieze which is done in gold on Pompeiian red ground derives from the relief of King Assurnasripal hunting lions (9th century BC) from Nimrud in modern Iraq. Photo by Noelle Soren, May 1979.

11 of 13. View to NW, detail of proscenium arch. These double bull capitals are copies of those from the Royal Audience Hall of the palace of Artaxerxes II at Susa in modern Iran (circa 375 BC).

12 of 13. View to E in theater balcony showing the suspended plaster tent with its moldings and rosettes in detail. The suspension wires are very faintly visible above the canopy. Note the Art Deco lighting arrangement in the coves where scenes of Persepolis were once painted.

13 of 13. Detail of lower section of organ screen on the W wall. This winged man-lion is strikingly similar to the figures guarding the entrance to the Palace of Sargon at Khorsabad (circa 720 BC) but those two figures are half bull rather than lion. The frieze above depicts a common Near Eastern heraldic motif here done in gold on a background of Pompeiian red.







62-65773

