



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** February 9, 2012  
**TO:** Architectural Review Committee of the Historic Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Rich Sucre, Historic Preservation Technical Specialist - (415) 575-9108  
**REVIEWED BY:** Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator - (415) 575-6822  
**RE:** **Review and Comment: New Mission Theater, 2554-2558 Mission St Case No. 2005.0694E**

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## BACKGROUND

The Planning Department has requested review and comment on the proposed variant before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). The variant includes conversion of the existing single-screen theater into a five-screen theater (also referred to as the "draffhouse cinema") and is an alternative to the dining and entertainment ("live theater") venue reuse that is part of the proposed project. Currently, the proposed project is undergoing environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Currently, the proposed project includes demolition of the adjacent department store (Giant Value), construction of a new mixed-use residential building, and rehabilitation of the New Mission Theater as a dining and entertainment venue. The proposed draffhouse cinema variant is being considered within the environmental review process alongside the rehabilitation of the theater as a dining and entertainment venue. The Department previously determined that the rehabilitation of the theater into a single screen dining and entertainment venue would not result in a significant adverse impact with the incorporation of mitigation measures (as outlined within the *Historic Resource Evaluation Response: 2550 Mission Street*, dated January 14, 2008; See Attached).

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will have an opportunity at a later date to comment on the entire proposed project, including the new construction and live theater rehabilitation, as part of the larger environmental review process during the publication of the initial study. In addition, the proposed project will be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior and interior alterations to the New Mission Theater, which is designated as Landmark No. 245.

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1910, the New Mission Theater at 2554-2558 Mission Street is located on the west side of Mission Street between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets (Assessor's Block 3616, Lot 007). The subject property is a three-story, single-screen theater distinguished with a 70-ft tall pylon sign and marquee, which fronts onto Mission Street. The building rests upon a concrete foundation and

features an unreinforced brick masonry vestibule and lobby, and a reinforced concrete auditorium. The building is capped by a series of flat and low-pitched gable roofs, and a side-facing stepped parapet wall. In 1916, noted theater architects, the Reid Brothers enlarged and renovated the theater. Their work included adding the three-story main auditorium along Bartlett Street and renovating the interior with Neo-Classical Revival details. Later, in 1932, another noted architect, Timothy Pflueger of Miller & Pflueger, renovated the promenade lobby and Mission Street façade of the theater in an Art Deco style. Since 2003, the building has been vacant. The subject property is located within the Mission Street NCT (Neighborhood Commercial Transit) Zoning District and an 85-X Height and Bulk District.

### CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The New Mission Theater is City Landmark No. 245 per Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code, and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The New Mission Theater is significant under National Register Criterion C (Design/Construction) as the best surviving example of an early twentieth century movie palace in the Mission District and one of only a handful of surviving in San Francisco with any degree of integrity. In addition, the property is significant as the work of two regionally significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger (Timothy Pflueger). Finally, as noted within the designating ordinance (Ordinance No. 87-04), the New Mission Theater is significant under National Register Criterion A (Events) for its association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the twentieth century.

As noted within the National Register nomination and the designating Article 10 landmark ordinance, the character-defining features on the exterior include:

- Art Deco façade
- Free-Standing 70-foot pylon sign with neon tubes spelling out "New Mission"
- Cantilevered marquee
- Streamlined parapet

As noted within the National Register nomination and the designating Article 10 landmark ordinance, the character-defining features within the interior include:

#### *Promenade Lobby*

- Double-height ceiling with mezzanine at rear
- Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades
- Stylized decorative plaster detailing throughout lobby
- Plaster moldings imprinted with a Greek key motif
- Stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors
- Cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses
- Ceiling ornament of stylized floral motifs including tulips, pineapples, and daisies
- Plaster zigzag patterned ceiling moldings recall Maya temple detailing
- Recessed "light coves" below lobby ceiling

- Ceiling medallions
- Etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs<sup>1</sup>

#### *Auditorium*

- Auditorium with over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements
- Monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns and Composite pilasters
- Projection booth
- Shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights
- Cast plaster medallions
- Ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the side walls
- Decorative frieze of urns and garlands
- Denticulated cornice
- Coffered ceiling with deep reveals

#### *Patrons' Lounge*

- Ornate Corinthian pilasters with decorative classical frieze and cornice
- Coffered ceiling
- Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along the north wall

#### *Balcony*

- Parapet adorned with a frieze consisting of garlands and urns
- Suspended plaster domed ceiling with heavily decorated ribs and decorative cast metal grilles
- Scalloped parapet along the south edge of the balcony

## VARIANT DESCRIPTION

As a variant to the proposed single screen “live theater” venue, the Project Sponsor is considering converting the New Mission Theater into a multiple screen movie house with food and alcoholic beverage service operated by Alamo Drafthouse Cinema. The programming for the drafthouse cinema would include both movie screenings and live performances.

Proposed work would include: seismic strengthening, accessibility upgrades in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and various renovations that will bring the property into compliance with current building and safety codes. The scope of the variant would include subdivision of the main auditorium and associated balconies to expand the number of theaters within the property, expanded restroom facilities, and systems upgrades. The variant would utilize the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC). Additionally, the proposed variant would repair, rehabilitate, and maintain the exterior and interior architectural features that convey the building’s historic significance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Project Architect reported that one pair of historic doors remains in place and the other two pairs of doors are missing. It is believed that the doors remain at the project site.

In detail, the proposed variant would include the following scope of work:

*Exterior: Overall*

- Installation of new roofing

*Exterior: Mission Street Façade*

- Repair/restoration of the blade sign and marquee
- Installation of new painted metal panels with reveals at existing pilasters (replacement-in-kind of existing historic feature)
- Installation of a new stainless steel drop-down grille over existing vestibule opening

*Exterior: Bartlett Street (Rear) Façade*

- Repaint and patch existing concrete walls, as required
- Infill of existing window openings and abandoned exit doors

*Exterior: North Façade*

- Removal of the non-complying, non-historic staircase
- Installation of a new code-compliant egress stairs from balcony level to ground level
- Installation of new recessed exit doors and a concrete wall providing egress at the sidewalk
- Installation of a new roof overhang over the new egress stair

*Exterior: South Facade*

- Infill of existing windows and abandoned exit doors

*Interior: Vestibule*

- Installation of full-height shotcrete walls (approximately 8-in thick) and steel moment frame as part of the seismic strengthen scheme
- Removal of the 1960s ticket booth, tile walls and dropped acoustical ceiling
- Restoration of coffered ceiling designed by Reid Brothers
- Refinish walls with plaster and stone base to match proportions of Reid Brothers design based upon documentary evidence and original architectural drawings
- Installation of two new rows of doors in same location as existing doors

*Interior: Promenade Lobby*

- Removal of the historic decorative plaster walls
- Installation of full-height shotcrete walls (approximately 8-in thick) and steel moment frame as part of the seismic strengthen scheme
- Reconstruction of decorative plaster work
- Salvage and display of selected murals on-site. A qualified architectural conservator shall conduct an investigation of the murals to determine the existing condition and shall prepare a plan for salvage and relocation.

- Patch and repair of plaster details at ceiling
- Construction of new ticket counter and concession stand
- Retention and restoration of the Pflueger ornamental railings on the mezzanine level

*Interior: Main Auditorium*

- Conversion of main auditorium from a single screen into five screens, utilizing and dividing the existing balcony levels (one auditorium on the ground floor, three new auditoriums on the lower balcony, and one new auditorium on the upper balcony)
- Retention of half walls between main auditorium and lobby
- Extension of the balcony, which will include salvaging the scalloped edge of the historic balcony, constructing a new wall that includes the salvaged scalloped edge, and concealing the new wall with a curtain to preserve significant interior volume and spatial relationships
- Construction of new tiered platforms for seating in main auditorium over the existing trays or sloped floor
- Expansion of the stage to follow the curve of orchestra pit
- Retention and repair all decorative plaster work, especially the proscenium, denticulated cornice, frieze with garlands and urns, moldings, and plaster relief wall panels
- Retention and repair of suspended plaster ceilings as follows:
  - Coffered ceiling of the main auditorium will be retained, and historic light fixtures will be repaired and rewired
  - Domed ceiling of the upper balcony will remain exposed
  - Decorative cast metal grilles of the lower balcony will be concealed below a new dropped ceiling to protect them from damage
- Installation of new walls between main auditorium and lobby, including installation of a new projection room and restrooms within the main auditorium area
- Installation of a new beer cooler room in location of the boiler room

*Interior: Projection Booth*

- Conversion of the original projection room on the first floor into a bar for theater patrons
- Removal of interior walls within projection booth
- Installation of new openings within the existing projection booth walls on the north, east and south walls
- Retention and repair of decorative plaster reliefs

*Interior: Patron's Lounge*

- Subdivision and reduction in size of patron's lounge
- Retention and repair of ornamental plaster features

*Interior: Women's Lounge*

- Conversion of the women's lounge into service spaces and a commercial kitchen
- Removal of existing women's restroom

- Removal of the lower portion of the historic walls for new openings within the kitchen area (See Drawing A-6.2)
- Retention and repair of historic plaster molding
- Installation of a new cooler room below the staircase adjacent to the Women's Lounge and Patron's Lounge

*Interior: Mezzanine*

- Retention and repair of the interior plaster walls and ceilings. All decorative elements to be restored, as necessary
- Installation of new toilets and lavatories in the existing restrooms
- Removal of existing non-historic egress doors

*Interior: Balcony*

- Extension of the balcony, which will include salvaging the scalloped edge of the historic balcony and constructing a new wall that includes the salvaged scalloped edge
- Subdividing the lower balcony into three theaters (Auditorium Nos. 2, 3, and 4)
- Separating the upper balcony from the lower balcony (Auditorium No. 5)
- Construction of new tiered platforms for seating in the four new theaters over the existing trays or sloped floor
- Retention and repair all decorative plaster work, especially the proscenium, denticulated cornice, frieze with garlands and urns, moldings, and plaster relief wall panels
- Encapsulating and mothballing the decorative plaster ceiling features over the lower balcony level
- Retention and restoration of the historic oval plaster ceiling over the upper balcony
- Installation of new staircases and an elevator lift for the upper balcony theater
- Installation of new restrooms on the balcony level

*Interior: Utilitarian Upgrades*

- Installation of new equipment lift in the basement and new walls to support the new stage
- Installation of a new elevator for access to the balcony level

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Department seeks the advice of the ARC regarding the compatibility of the proposed alterations with the character-defining features of the landmark, as defined by Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Secretary's Standards).

To assist in the evaluation of the variant, the Project Sponsor has provided:

- Page & Turnbull, *Historic Resource Evaluation: New Mission Theater* (February 6, 2012)

This document has been provided for reference. Staff has not completed an evaluation of this document and its findings.

The Department would like the ARC to consider the following information:

**Exterior:**

The variant would maintain and restore the character-defining elements on the exterior, including the Art Deco façade; free-standing pylon sign with neon tubes spelling out “New Mission;” cantilevered marquee; and streamlined parapet.

Most of the other alterations on the exterior occur on non-historic portions or secondary facades, which are not visible and/or are currently unadorned. In particular, the alterations on the north and west (Bartlett Street) façades, including the removal and replacement of exterior stairs and doors, do not impact the building’s overall historic character (See Drawing (2) on Sheet A-1.1).

Of the new exterior features, the metal security grilles should be re-examined for their compatibility with the historic character (See Drawing (1) on Sheet A-3.1). The new metal security grilles are utilitarian in character on a public and highly adorned exterior façade.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the exterior alterations to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the variant would preserve and repair exterior character-defining features.

The Department recommends revising the design of the new metal security grille. The current grilles lack the character and finish typical of this type of feature, and should be designed to be more consistent with the historic character of the exterior.

**Interior – Vestibule and Promenade Lobby:**

The interior unreinforced masonry walls of the vestibule and promenade lobby would be seismically upgraded with new shotcrete walls and a steel moment frame (See Drawing (1) on Sheet A-7.2). To accommodate this work, the interior plaster ornamentation and detailing would be removed and reinstalled (See Drawing (2) on Sheet A-1.1). However, the new shotcrete walls would add approximately eight inches to the thickness of the vestibule and promenade lobby walls, and would impact the decorative ceiling and existing decorative plasterwork. Prior to the removal of these decorative features, all plaster work and decorative elements will be documented and/or salvaged, including the existing historic mirrors. The Department recognizes the constraints entailed with the seismic upgrade and the efforts to achieve an appropriate restoration and reconstruction of these architectural features—many of which are severely deteriorated. This aspect of the project appears appropriate, especially since all of the historic decorative elements will be restored and reconstructed based upon photographic and documented physical evidence, including plaster molds and high resolution photography.

Ultimately, the variant would retain the interior character-defining features including: double-height ceiling with mezzanine at rear; Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades; stylized decorative plaster detailing throughout lobby; Plaster moldings imprinted with a Greek key motif; stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors; cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses; ceiling ornament of stylized floral motifs including tulips, pineapples, and daisies; plaster zigzag patterned ceiling moldings recall Maya temple detailing; recessed “light coves” below lobby ceiling; ceiling medallions; and etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs. Many of these elements will be restored, reconstructed, and/or reinstalled back in place, based upon photographic and documented physical evidence.

Other alterations in these areas, including the removal of non-historic elements and the construction of new ticket counters, appear to be appropriate and would not impact the historic character of these spaces. Further, the variant would salvage the murals in the promenade lobby and display them adjacent to the original projection booth. Although this location would display the murals in a highly public location, some of these murals should be located in proximity to their original location.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the seismic upgrade and interior alterations to the promenade lobby and vestibule to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the variant would retain and/or reconstruct deteriorated character-defining features and also provide for longer term protection of a landmark through a seismic upgrade.

Department staff recommends locating some of the salvaged murals in closer proximity to their original location in the promenade lobby.

**Interior – Main Auditorium:**

The variant would subdivide the main auditorium into five separate theaters: the main auditorium theater (Auditorium No. 1), three theaters within the lower balcony (Auditorium Nos. 2, 3, and 4), and a theater within the upper balcony (Auditorium No. 5) (See Drawings (1) on Sheet A-2.1). To accommodate the subdivision, the lower balcony would be extended by approximately 15-ft 6-in, and the scalloped edge would be recast and reinstalled on the balcony extension (See Sheet A-2.2). To demarcate the location of the original balcony, the variant includes a reveal and curved detail on the underside of the lower balcony (See Drawing (1) on Sheet A-2.4). On the lower balcony, the ceilings of the new theaters are sloped to maintain the sense of the original size and scale of the main auditorium and to avoid damaging historic plaster ornamentation on the main auditorium ceiling. Although the volume of the auditorium would be reduced by the extension of the lower balcony and the insertion of the new theaters, the variant maintains a sense of the auditorium’s triple-height space and also retains important characteristics of this interior, including the over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements, monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns and

Composite pilasters, shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights, cast plaster medallions, ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the side walls, decorative frieze of urns and garlands, denticulated cornice, and coffered ceiling with deep reveals. All of the historic decorative features within the interior of the main auditorium would be retained and repaired. The decorative plaster work on the west and east walls would be minimally impacted by the extension of the balcony. The west and east ends of the extended lower balcony would feature a return to avoid impacting the highly decorative plaster panels.

Other alterations, including the construction of new interior walls between the main auditorium and lobby and the extension of the stage to align with the orchestra pit, appear to be appropriate and would not impact the historic character of this space.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the treatment of the main auditorium to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the variant would retain the interior character-defining features of the main auditorium, including, but not limited to, the triple-height volume, scalloped balcony edge, and Neo-Classical ornamentation.

**Interior – Projection Booth:**

The variant would convert the existing historic projection booth into a bar, and would cut new openings within the north, east, and south walls (See Drawings (3), (4), (5) on Sheet A-6.2). All decorative plasterwork and trim, including the ornate swags, cornices, and panels, would be retained and repaired. The new openings would be cut below the frieze panels. Further, the elevated floor and interior walls of the projection booth would be removed. All of this work retains the primary characteristics of the projection booth and would not impact the overall historic character of this space.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the treatment of the projection booth to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the variant would retain significant ornamentation, including the frieze panels and trim, and its spatial relationship to the main auditorium.

**Interior – Patron’s Lounge and Women’s Lounge:**

The variant would reduce the size of the patron’s lounge, which would be subdivided into a lounge area for theater patrons and a commercial kitchen (See Sheet A-2.1). The women’s lounge would be converted and reconfigured into space for the commercial kitchen and a new wall would be constructed between the lobby and the kitchen (to the west of the projection booth). All decorative plasterwork and trim within these areas would be retained and repaired. Within the commercial kitchen, portions of the existing historic wall will be removed below the frieze panels (See Drawing (8) on Sheet A-6.2). The staircase leading up to the mezzanine level would be retained and preserved, though a portion of the staircase would only be accessible from the

kitchen area. Portions of the promenade lobby murals would be on display on the new wall between the lobby and the kitchen.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the treatment of the patron's lounge and women's lounge to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the variant would retain significant ornamentation, including the ceiling trim, decorative panels and pilasters. The new patron's lounge walls will provide a reveal between the top of the wall and the ceiling, so as to not impact historic pilasters and ceiling trim. This detail would also allow for a reading of the original size of the patron's lounge and would also allow for a continuous reading of the ceiling trim.

**Interior – Mezzanine:**

The variant would maintain the mezzanine level in its current configuration and would rehabilitate the restrooms on this level (See Sheet A-2.2). The restrooms finishes and fixtures have not been identified as character-defining features. All decorative plasterwork and trim within this area would be retained and repaired.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the treatment of the mezzanine to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since the restroom does not possess any character-defining features.

**Interior – Balcony:**

As noted earlier, the balcony would be subdivided to accommodate four theaters: three theaters on the lower balcony and one theater within the upper balcony (See Sheet A-2.3). All decorative plasterwork and trim within the upper balcony, including the highly decorative oval ceiling, would be repaired and preserved. The new staircases and elevator lift to the upper balcony appear to be appropriate and compatible with the historic character of this area in material and design (See Drawing (4) on Sheet A-6.3). Within the lower balcony theaters, the existing historic ceiling would be mothballed, repaired and encapsulated behind a new ceiling. Decorative plasterwork on the

Other alterations, including the construction of the tiered platforms for seating within the lower balcony, appear to be appropriate and would not impact the historic character of this space.

Staff Recommendation:

Overall, the Department finds the treatment of the balcony to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since deteriorated character-defining features would be preserved and repaired and new construction would be compatible with the materials and style of historic features.

Currently, the variant proposes new walls over existing character-defining plaster panels on the east and west walls of the lower balcony. Department staff recommends exposing this decorative plasterwork and trim on the west and east walls.

### **Interior – Utilitarian Upgrades:**

The variant includes a number of utilitarian upgrades, including the installation of a new equipment lift in the basement, construction of new walls to support the new stage in the main auditorium, installation of a new elevator for access to the balcony level, and installation of a new fire suppression system (See Sheet A-2.0). The location of the new elevator appears to be appropriate and will not impact any interior character-defining features. Further, the equipment lift and new basement walls do not appear to impact any of the building's character-defining features. Information on the fire suppression system and the location of sprinkler heads has not been provided by the Project Sponsor.

#### Staff Recommendation:

Overall, Department finds the treatment of the utilitarian upgrades to be generally compatible with the landmark and its character-defining features, since no character-defining features are impacted by the proposed work.

Department staff recommends that the fire suppression system be designed by a qualified professional with experience with historic theaters. This consultant should work closely with the Preservation Architect and Architect of Record.

### **REQUESTED ACTION**

Specifically, the Department seeks comments on the following:

- Appropriateness of aspects of the Variant, including:
  - Subdividing the Main Auditorium;
  - Extension of the Lower Balcony & Reconstruction of the Scalloped Balcony Edge;
  - Seismic Upgrade of the Vestibule and Promenade Lobby;
- Staff Recommendations for the exterior metal grilles, the murals in the promenade lobby, the treatment of the lower balcony west and east theater walls, and the fire suppression system; and
- Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Kerman/Morris Architects, *Architectural Drawings: 2550 Mission Street* (February 7, 2012)
- Page & Turnbull, *Historic Resource Evaluation: New Mission Theater* (February 6, 2012)
- San Francisco Planning Department, *Historic Resource Evaluation Response: 2550 Mission Street* (January 14, 2008)

# 2550 MISSION STREET

## NEW MISSION THEATER RENOVATION BY ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMAS



### STATE HISTORIC BUILDING CODE APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION:

**DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION**  
 City & County of San Francisco  
 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94103-2414

January 8, 2007

VIA FACSIMILE & US MAIL

Mr. Toby Morris, Architect  
 Kerman/Morris Architects LLP  
 69A Water Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94133

RE: 2550-2554 Mission Street, The New Mission Theater  
 Block 3616, Lot 007

Dear Mr. Morris:

In response to your fax of January 8, 2007 requesting that you be authorized to apply the State Historical Building Code to the building at 2550-2554 Mission Street, The New Mission Theater, please be advised that the State Historical Building Code, Section 8-218, indicates that buildings that are on lists or surveys adopted by a national, state or local agency, or buildings that have been deemed eligible for such lists or surveys, may apply the State Historical Building Code. The building at 2550-2554 Mission Street, The New Mission Theater, is designated as Landmark No. 245 as listed in Appendix A to Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code. You are, therefore, entitled to apply the State Historical Building Code to work that takes place in the building and on the site at 2550-2554 Mission Street, The New Mission Theater.

Any specific application to use the State Historical Building Code must detail the specific provisions of that code that you wish to apply along with an explanation as to why the regular building code cannot be applied. State Law requires that the Department of Building Inspection, Fire Department and other enforcing agencies in San Francisco accept reasonably equivalent alternatives to the regular code in dealing with qualified historical buildings. It is strongly recommended that you request a Pre-application Plan Review meeting with the appropriate agency to review any proposed alternatives before submitting a permit application. You may also wish to review Administrative Bulletin AB-013, Disabled Access Alternatives for Historic Buildings, which is printed in the "Rules and Regulations" section of the San Francisco Building Code.

Please contact Laurence Kornfeld directly at (415) 558-6244 if you have any questions regarding the application of the State Historical Building Code.

Thank you very much.

*Laurence M. Kornfeld*  
 LAURENCE M. KORNFELD  
 Chief Building Inspector

cc: Mark Luellen, San Francisco Planning Department  
 Microfilm

### BUILDING DATA:

ADDRESS: 2550 MISSION STREET  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110

BLOCK/LOT: BLOCK 3616, LOT 007

ZONING DISTRICT: MISSION ST NCT, 85-X  
 LOT SIZE: IRREGULAR: 45,141 SF  
 SFBC OCCUPANCY CLASS: A-2  
 CONSTRUCTION TYPE: TYPE I CONCRETE & BRICK

DESIGN: KERMAN MORRIS ARCHITECTS, LLP  
 69A WATER STREET  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133  
 (415) 749-0302 FAX 928-5152

### BUILDING DEPARTMENT NOTES:

2010 C.B.C. With San Francisco Amendments and California State Code.  
 Site is NOT in San Francisco Fire Zone.  
 CONSTRUCTION TYPE: Type I concrete and brick.  
 OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION:  
 Group A-1 Assembly (Motion Picture Theater)

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT NOTES:

PROJECT LOCATION: New Mission Theater  
 2550 Mission Street, Block 3616/ Lot 007

ZONING DISTRICT: Mission Street NCT

PROPOSED BUILDING USE: The existing historic movie theater will be renovated and remodeled to include a theater/food service space.

Project complies with permitted uses on 1st and 2nd Floors:  
 Restaurant/Kitchen (s.736.42)  
 Movie Theater (s.736.46)  
 Bar (s.736.41)

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT (s.736.10): 85-X. No proposed vertical expansion of the New Mission Theater with the exception of minor addition on Bartlett St.

USABLE OPEN SPACE: (NCT) No open space required for commercial use; and none provided.

OFF STREET PARKING (s.736.22): The historic New Mission Theater building contains no parking. No parking spaces are required or proposed.

STREET FRONTAGES (s.736.16): Not applicable to rehabilitation of landmarked structure (s.145.1(d))

MARQUEE (s.736.16): Historical marquee & pylon signs to remain and be restored.

FLOOR AREA RATIO (s.736.2):  
 3.6 to 1 permitted  
 1.6 to 1 proposed (31,117sf/ 20,160sf). Project complies.

### BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGES:

BUILDING AREA CALCULATIONS:  
 LOT AREA: 45,141 sf  
 LOT AREA @ THEATER: 20,160 sf

EXISTING GROSS FLOOR AREAS (TO REMAIN):

A.) BASEMENT: 1,629 sf  
 B.) 1ST FLOOR: 19,429 sf  
 C.) MEZZANINE: 2,270sf  
 D.) BALCONY: 6,239 sf

TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA (A+B+C+D): 29,567 sf TOTAL EXISTING

PROPOSED CHANGE IN FLOOR AREAS:  
 E.) BASEMENT: 0 sf  
 F.) 1ST FLOOR: -113 sf  
 G.) BALCONY ADDITION: 1,663 sf (EXTENDED BALCONY)

TOTAL ADDITIONS (E+F+G): 1,550 sf

EXISTING FLOOR AREA + PROPOSED = 29,567+1,550 = 31,117 sf

OCCUPANT LOAD: 861 OCCUPANTS  
 SEE A-0.3 FOR OCCUPANT LOAD CALCULATIONS

AUDITORIUM / THEATER AREAS:  
 A.) AUDITORIUM #1: 7,020 sf  
 B.) AUDITORIUM #2: 850 sf  
 C.) AUDITORIUM #3: 1,060 sf  
 D.) AUDITORIUM #4: 842 sf  
 E.) AUDITORIUM #5: 2,390 sf

SERVICE AREAS / BARS / LOUNGES  
 A.) THEATER BAR 384 sf  
 B.) PATRON'S LOUNGE 1,029 sf  
 C.) LOBBY BAR 1 193 sf  
 D.) LOBBY BAR 2 86 sf  
 E.) LOBBY LOUNGE 504 sf  
 F.) KITCHEN 1,641 sf  
 G.) BEER COOLER 113 sf  
 H.) MECHANICAL 70 sf

### LOCATION MAP:



### DESCRIPTION OF WORK:

The work consists of the renovation of the historic New Mission Theater on its present lot to be subdivided. Once a single screen movie theater, it will be renovated to be a 5-screen movie theater with food services and bar/ lounge area.

Work involves adding an elevator, making provisions for accessibility, repairing or replacing furniture and finishes, and adding a commercial kitchen and new restrooms. The balcony is to be extended to create more seating area. Also included in the scope of work is mechanical, plumbing and electrical upgrades. Existing lot to be subdivided into (2) lots to separate the theater renovation construction from the scope of work for the new construction of a mixed use building at the adjacent building.

All work to comply with current local and state codes including, but not limited to: the 2010 Edition of the California Building Code, the California Plumbing Code, the California Mechanical Code, the California Electrical Code and the California Fire Code, the current editions of the San Francisco Building and Planning Codes, Title-24 Energy Standards, etc...

Building to be fully sprinklered under separate permit. Fire suppression system to be installed to minimize impact on character defining features of the building (as outlined in HREER, 1-14-08) and others.

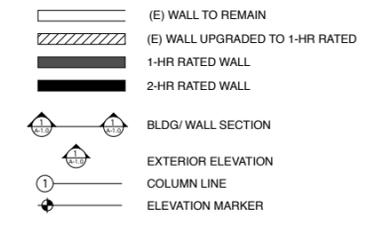
### DRAWING INDEX:

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- A-6.1 INTERIOR ELEVATIONS - PROMENADE LOBBY
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- A-6.4 INTERIOR ELEVATIONS - MAIN AUDITORIUM
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- A-7.1 DETAILS
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### ABBREVIATIONS:

#	NUMBER	EQ	EQUAL	PL	PROPERTY LINE
@	AT	EXT	EXTERIOR	PLY	PLYWOOD
AB	ANCHOR BOLT	FDN	FOUNDATION	PTDF	PRESSURE TREATED DOUGLAS FIR
ADJ	ADJACENT	FIN	FINISH	PLAM	PLASTIC LAMINATE
ALT	ALTERNATE	FLR	FLOOR	PTD	PAINTED
A.F.F.	ABOVE FINISH FLOOR	FLOUR	FLUORESCENT	PTN	PARTITION
APPROX	APPROXIMATE	F.O.C.	FACE OF CONCRETE	R	RISER
ASPH	ASPHALT	F.O.S.	FACE OF STUD	REFR	REFRIGERATOR
		FTG	FOOTING	RWD	REDWOOD
BLDG	BUILDING	FOF	FACE OF FINISH	REINF	REINFORCED
BETW	BETWEEN	GALV	GALVANIZED	R.O.	ROUGH OPENING
BOT	BOTTOM	G.F.I.	GROUND FAULT	RWL	RAIN WATER LEADER
CAB	CABINET	INTERRUPTR	INTERRUPTER	REQ	REQUIRE
CEM	CEMENT	R.O.	ROUGH OPENING	SIM	SIMILAR
CLR	CLEAR	GND	GROUND	SHIT	SHEET
CMU	CONC. MASONRY UNIT	GYP	GYPSPUM	S.O.G.	SLAB ON GRADE
COL	COLUMN	GWB	GYPSPUM WALL BOARD	SPED	SPECIFICATION
CONT	CONTINUOUS	HORZ	HORIZONTAL	STD	STANDARD
CTR	CENTERLINE	HT	HEIGHT	STRUCTL	STRUCTURAL
CL	CERAMIC	SUSP	SUSPENDED	SUSP	SUSPENDED
CLG	CEILING	INSUL	INSULATION	SYM	SYMMETRICAL
CONC	CONCRETE	INT	INTERIOR		
		JT	JOINT		
DBL	DOUBLE	LAV	LAVATORY	TRD	TREAD
DEPT	DEPARTMENT			T&G	TONGUE AND GROOVE
DIA	DIAMETER			THK	TRICK
D.F.	DOUGLAS FIR	MAX	MAXIMUM	T.O.S.	TOP OF SLAB
D.H.	DOUBLE HUNG	MIN	MINIMUM	TP	TOILET PAPER
DN	DOWN	MFR	MANUFACTURER	TB	TOWEL BAR
		MTL	METAL	TYP	TYPICAL
DS	DOWNSPOUT			U.O.N.	UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
DTL	DETAIL	(N)	NOT IN CONTRACT	VERT	VERTICAL
DWG	DRAWING	NO/#	NUMBER	VIF	VERIFY IN FIELD
		N.T.S.	NOT TO SCALE	W	WITH
(E)	EXISTING	O.C.	ON CENTER	W/O	WITHOUT
EA	EACH	OPNG	OPENING	W.C.	WATER CLOSET
ELEC	ELECTRICAL	OPP	OPPOSITE	WDW	WINDOW
EL	ELEVATION			WP	WATERPROOF
				WT	WEIGHT
				WD	WOOD
				WH	WATER HEATER

### GENERAL LEGEND:



**KERMAN MORRIS**  
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8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
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10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



### 2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
 THEATER  
 RENOVATION BY  
 ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
 LOT 007

### TITLE SHEET

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T-1

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 02/07/2012

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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
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BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

SITE PLAN

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**A-0.1**

2 of 29 sheets

**1** SITE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



116 - 2550 MISSION STREET  
2/7/2012 - PLNG\_R8

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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
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EXISTING EXITING PLAN

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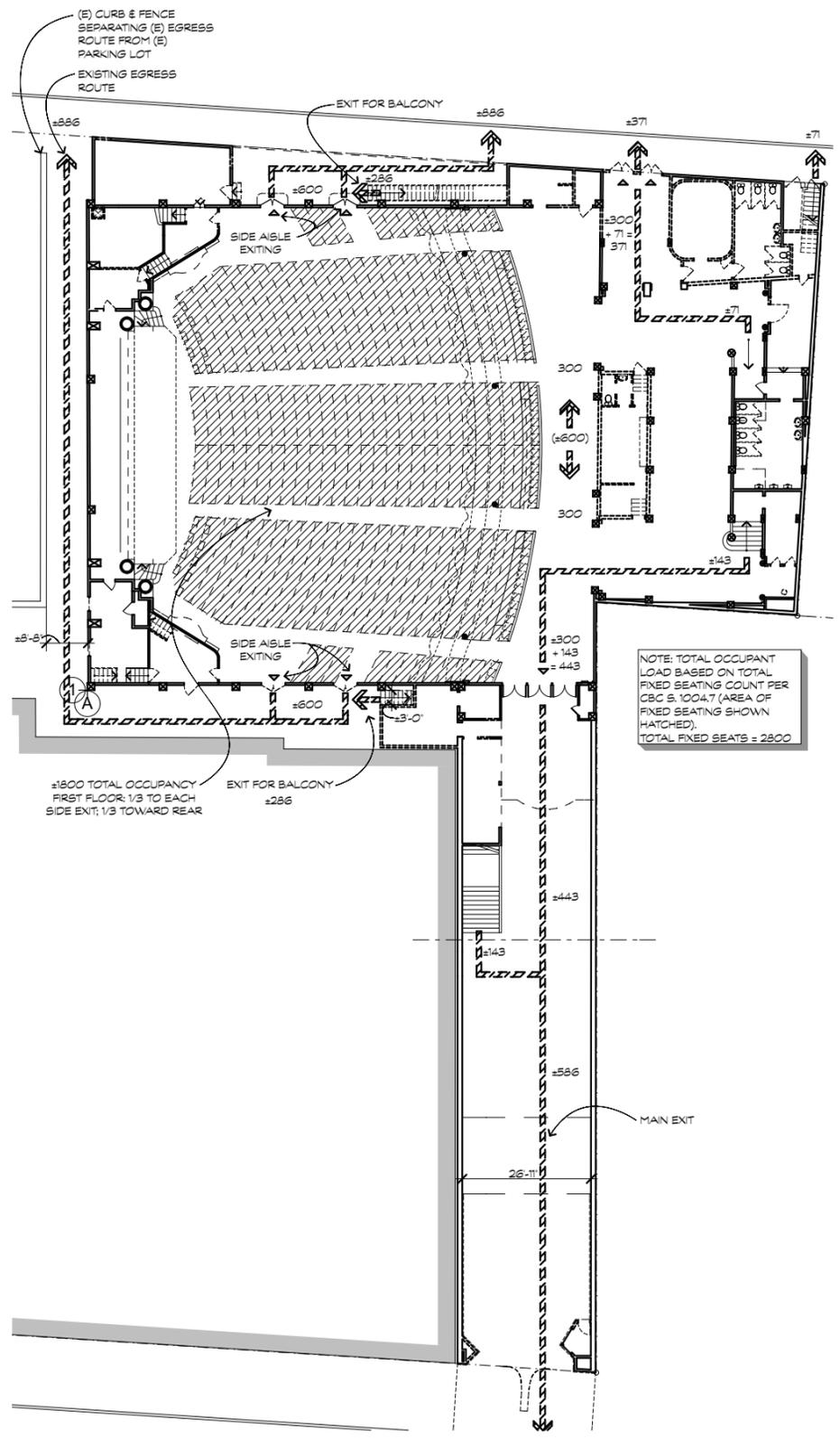
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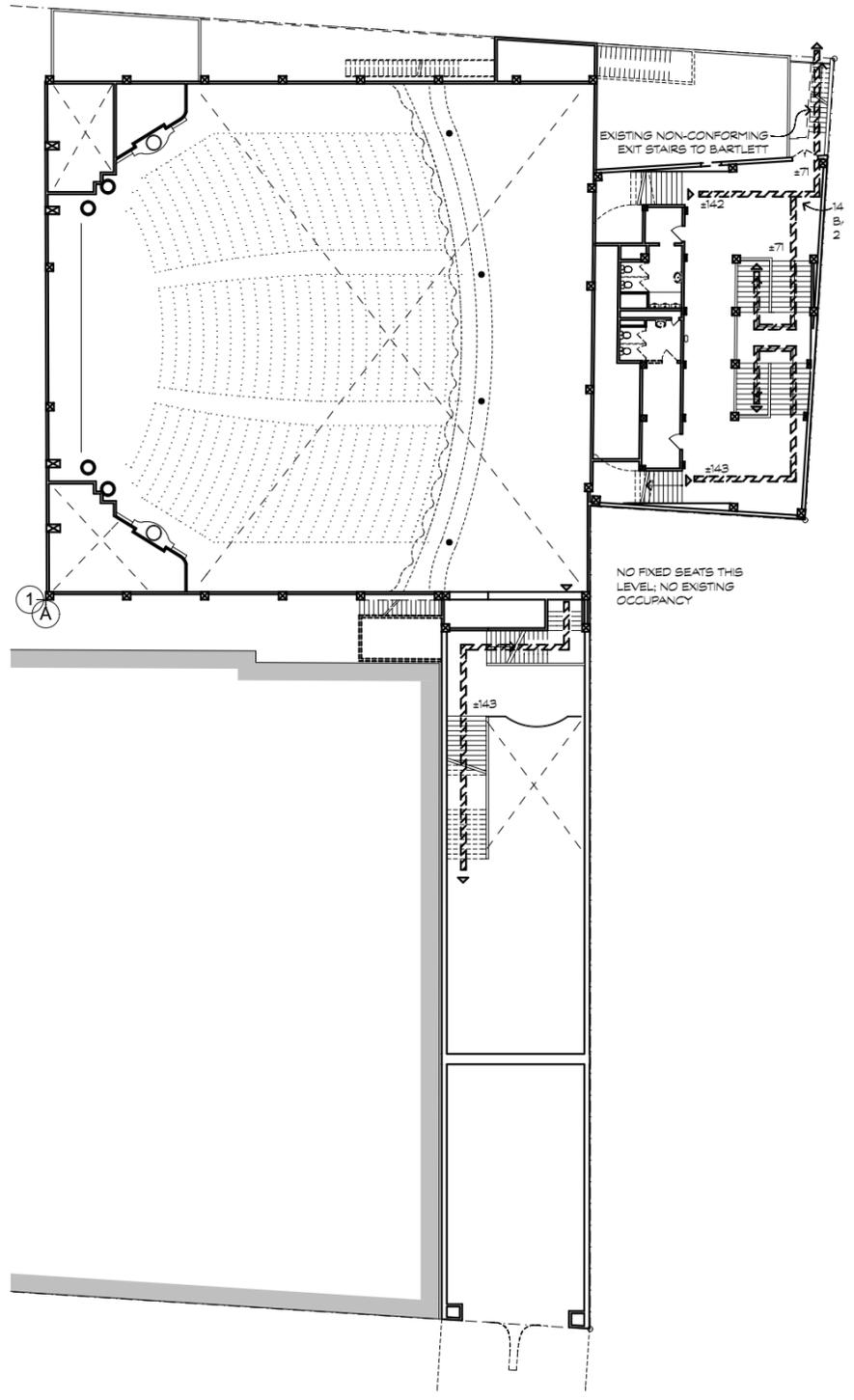
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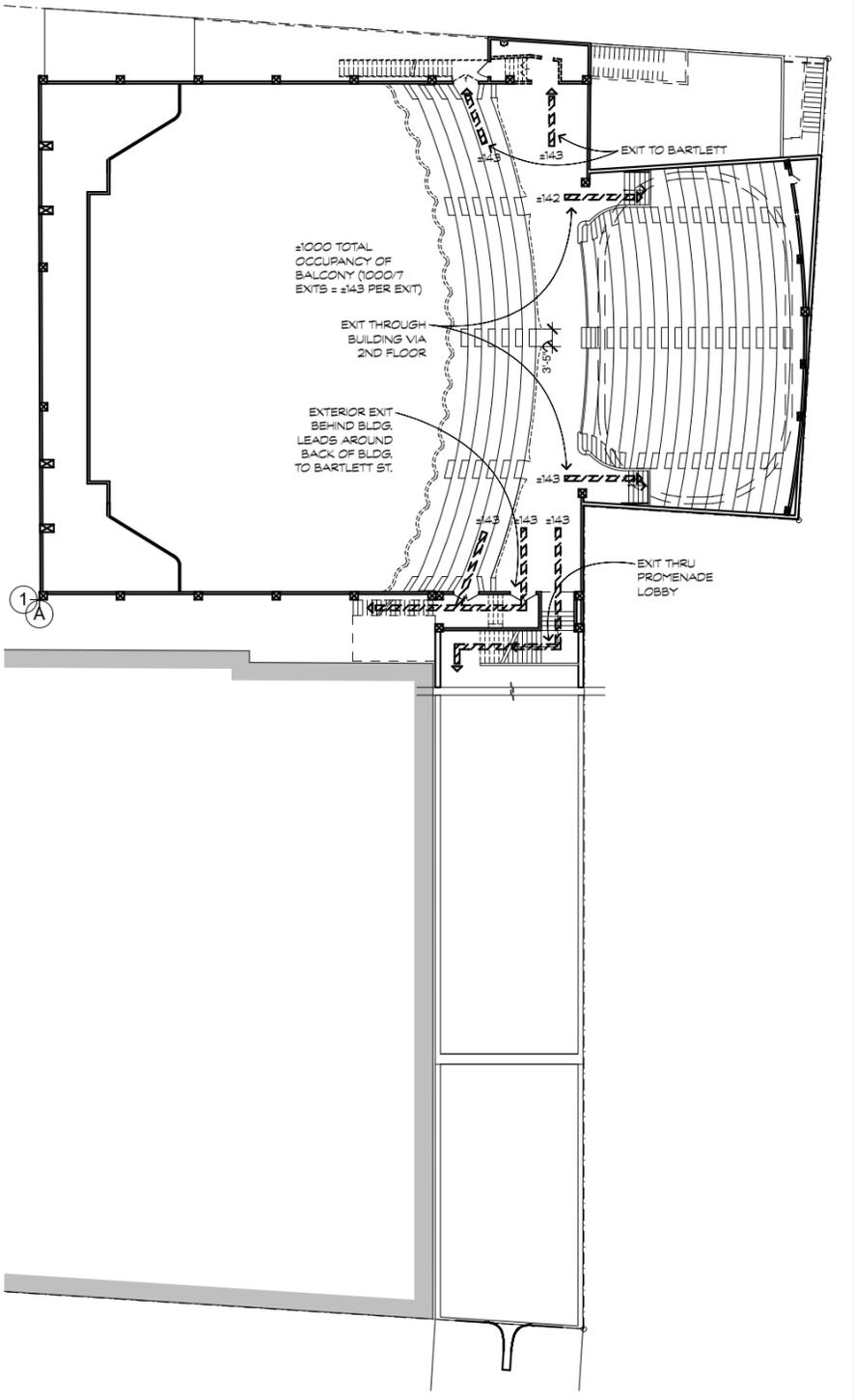
**A-0.2**



**1** EXISTING FIRST FLOOR EXITING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**2** EXISTING MEZZANINE EXITING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**3** EXISTING BALCONY EXITING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

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9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
  
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PROPOSED EXITING PLAN

NOTICE

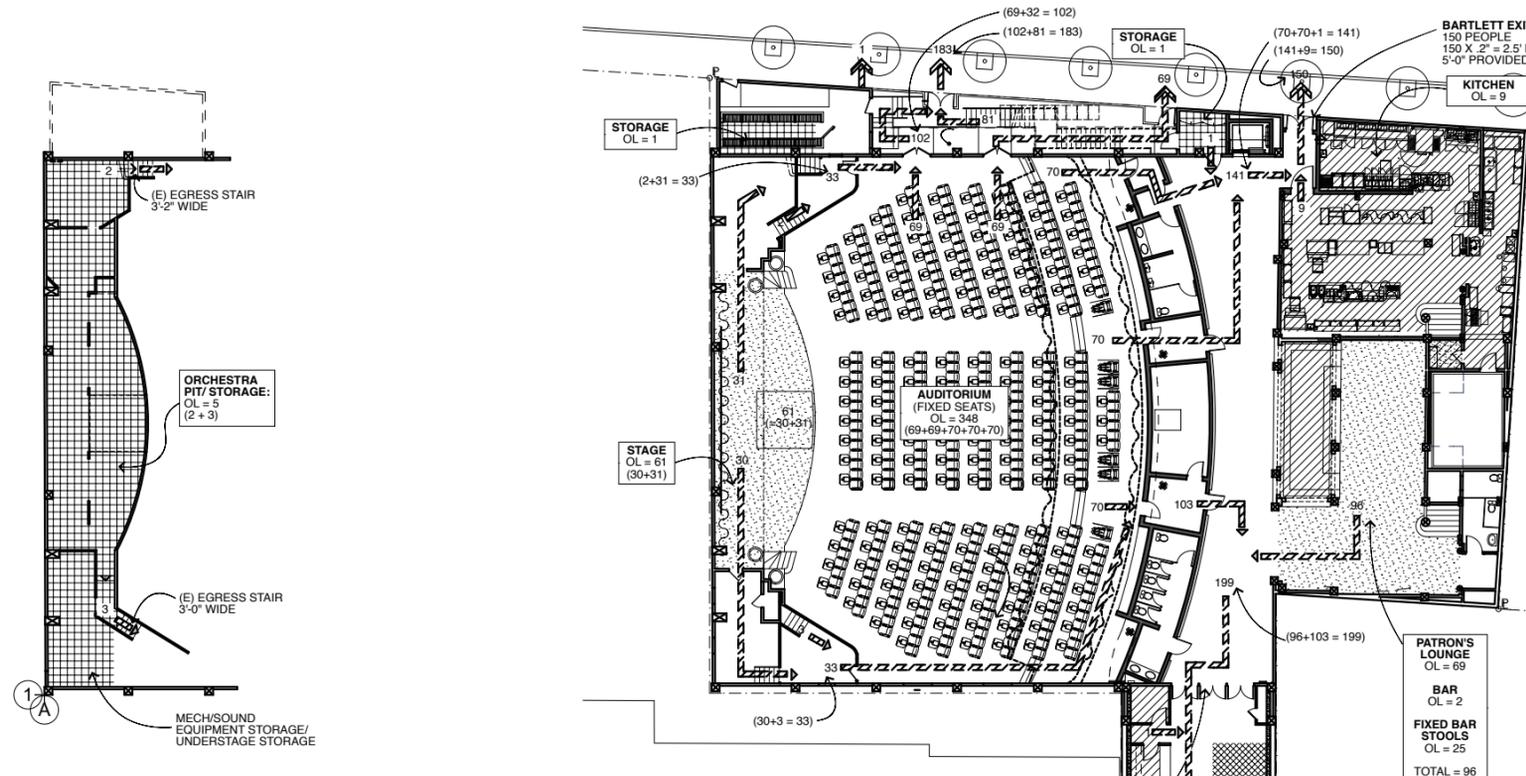
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**A-0.3**

BARTLETT STREET



**0 PROPOSED BASEMENT EXITING PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

**OCCUPANT LOAD CALCULATIONS**

**AREAS WITH FIXED SEATING**

(PER SEC. 1004.7, AREAS HAVING FIXED SEATS SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF FIXED SEATS)

	# SEATS
FIRST	348
MEZZANINE	0
BALCONY	208
<b>TOTAL FIXED SEATS</b>	<b>556</b>

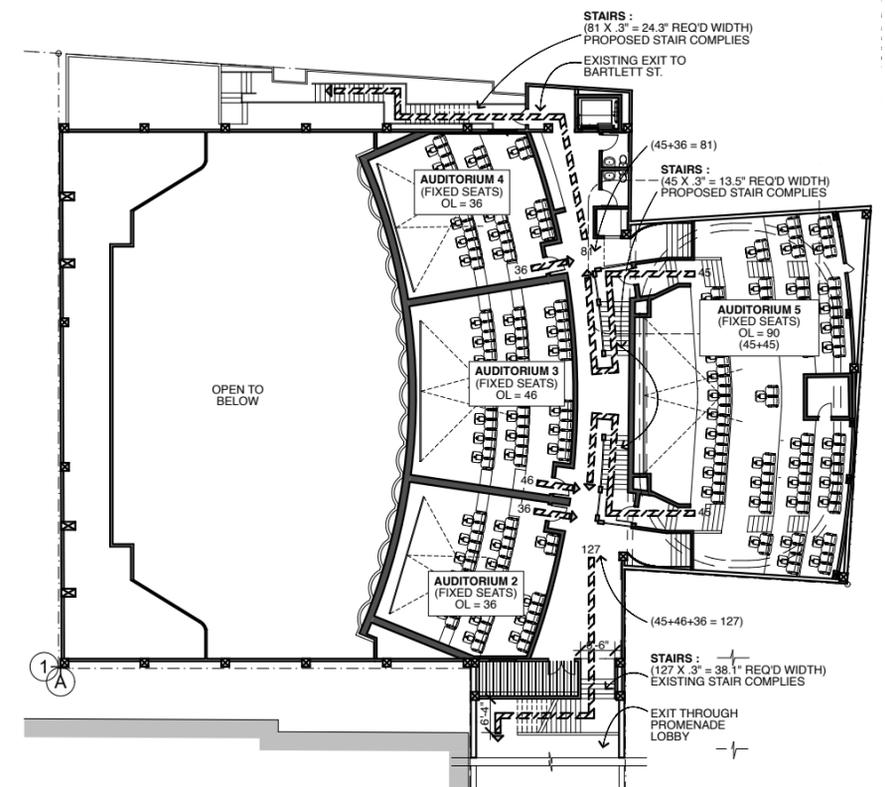
**AREAS WITHOUT FIXED SEATING**

	SF	OCC LOAD FACTOR	OL
<b>ORCHESTRA</b>			
ORCH/STORAGE	1473	300	5
<b>MEZZANINE</b>			
LOBBY MEZZ. SEATING	200	7	29
<b>GROUND FLOOR</b>			
KITCHEN	1641	200	9
BAR	384	200	2
PATRON'S LOUNGE	1029	15	69
PATRON'S BAR STOOLS	na	count	25
STAGE	907	15	61
STORAGE 1 (BEER COOLER)	113	300	1
STORAGE 2 (MECHANICAL)	70	300	1
LOBBY BAR 1	193	200	1
LOBBY BAR 2	86	200	1
LOBBY STANDING AREA	504	5	101
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>305</b>

**TOTAL BUILDING OCCUPANT LOAD:** 861 (556 + 305)

**1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR EXITING PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

**2 PROPOSED MEZZANINE EXITING PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**3 PROPOSED BALCONY EXITING PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

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2550 MISSION STREET  
NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007  
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR &  
ORCHESTRA PLANS

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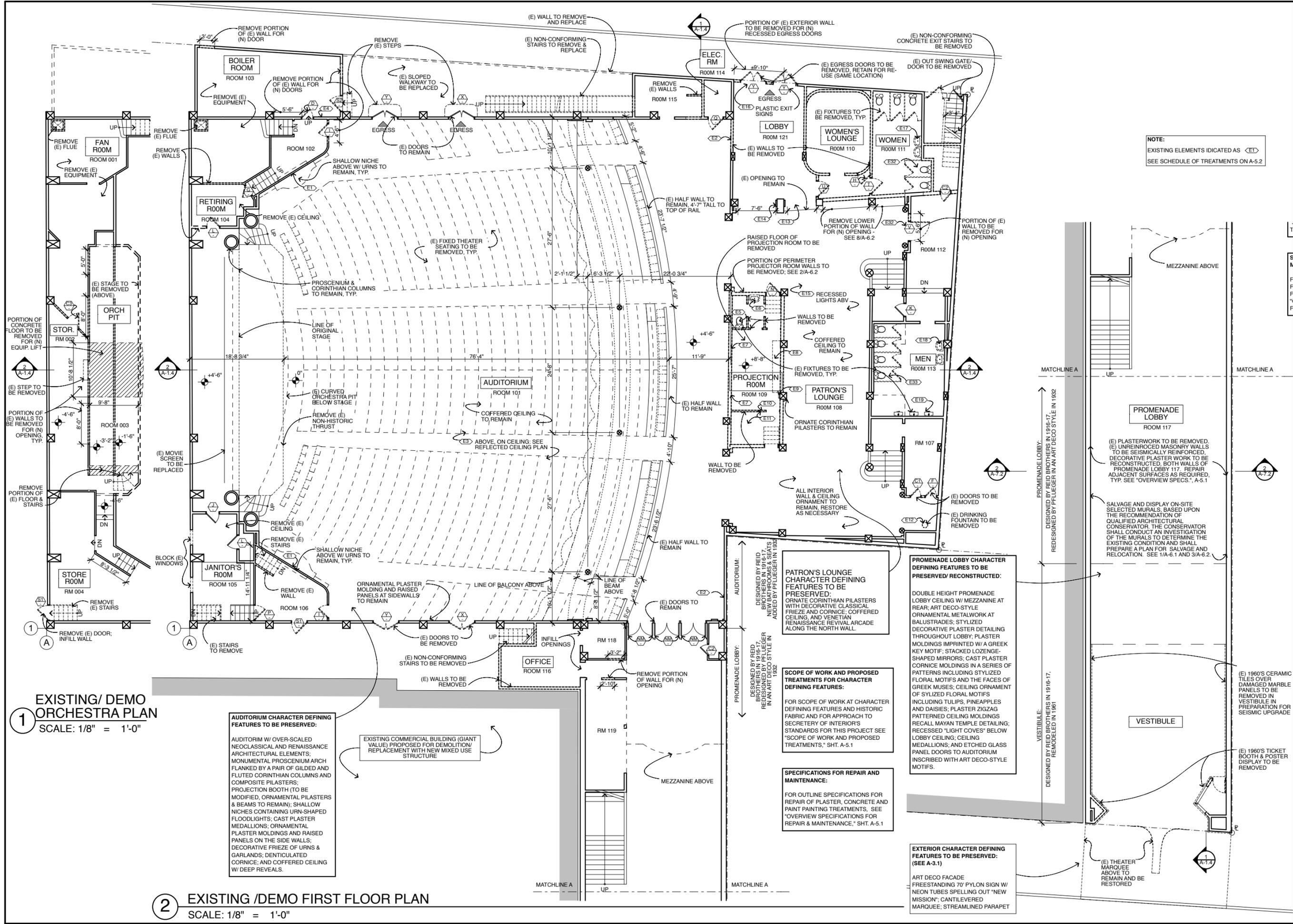
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**A-1.1**



**NOTE:**  
EXISTING ELEMENTS INDICATED AS (E)  
SEE SCHEDULE OF TREATMENTS ON A-5.2

**AUDITORIUM CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED:**  
AUDITORIUM W/ OVER-SCALED NEOCLASSICAL AND RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS; MONUMENTAL PROSCENIUM ARCH FLANKED BY A PAIR OF GILDED AND FLUTED CORINTHIAN COLUMNS AND COMPOSITE PLASTER; PROJECTION BOOTH (TO BE MODIFIED, ORNAMENTAL PILASTERS & BEAMS TO REMAIN); SHALLOW NICHES CONTAINING URN-SHAPED FLOODLIGHTS; CAST PLASTER MEDALLIONS; ORNAMENTAL PLASTER MOLDINGS AND RAISED PANELS ON THE SIDE WALLS; DECORATIVE FRIEZE OF URNS & GARLANDS; DENTICULATED CORNICE; AND COFFERED CEILING W/ DEEP REVEALS.

EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING (GIANT VALUE) PROPOSED FOR DEMOLITION/ REPLACEMENT WITH NEW MIXED USE STRUCTURE

**SCOPE OF WORK AND PROPOSED TREATMENTS FOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES:**  
FOR SCOPE OF WORK AT CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES AND HISTORIC FABRIC AND FOR APPROACH TO SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THIS PROJECT SEE "SCOPE OF WORK AND PROPOSED TREATMENTS," SHT. A-5.1

**SPECIFICATIONS FOR REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE:**  
FOR OUTLINE SPECIFICATIONS FOR REPAIR OF PLASTER, CONCRETE AND PAINT PAINTING TREATMENTS. SEE "OVERVIEW SPECIFICATIONS FOR REPAIR & MAINTENANCE," SHT. A-5.1

**PROMENADE LOBBY CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED/ RECONSTRUCTED:**  
DOUBLE HEIGHT PROMENADE LOBBY CEILING W/ MEZZANINE AT REAR; ART DECO-STYLE ORNAMENTAL METALWORK AT BALUSTRADES; STYLIZED DECORATIVE PLASTER DETAILING THROUGHOUT LOBBY; PLASTER MOLDINGS IMPRINTED W/ A GREEK KEY MOTIF; STACKED LOZENGE-SHAPED MIRRORS; CAST PLASTER CORNICE MOLDINGS IN A SERIES OF PATTERNS INCLUDING STYLIZED FLORAL MOTIFS AND THE FACES OF GREEK MUSES; CEILING ORNAMENT OF SYLIZED FLORAL MOTIFS INCLUDING TULIPS, PINEAPPLES AND DAISIES; PLASTER ZIGZAG PATTERNED CEILING MOLDINGS RECALL MAYAN TEMPLE DETAILING; RECESSED "LIGHT COVES" BELOW LOBBY CEILING; CEILING MEDALLIONS; AND ETCHED GLASS PANEL DOORS TO AUDITORIUM INSCRIBED WITH ART DECO-STYLE MOTIFS.

**EXTERIOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED: (SEE A-3.1)**  
ART DECO FACADE  
FREESTANDING 70' PYLON SIGN W/ NEON TUBES SPELLING OUT "NEW MISSION"; CANTILEVERED MARQUEE; STREAMLINED PARAPET

**1** EXISTING/ DEMO ORCHESTRA PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**2** EXISTING /DEMO FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER RENOVATION BY ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/ LOT 007

EXISTING MEZZANINE PLAN

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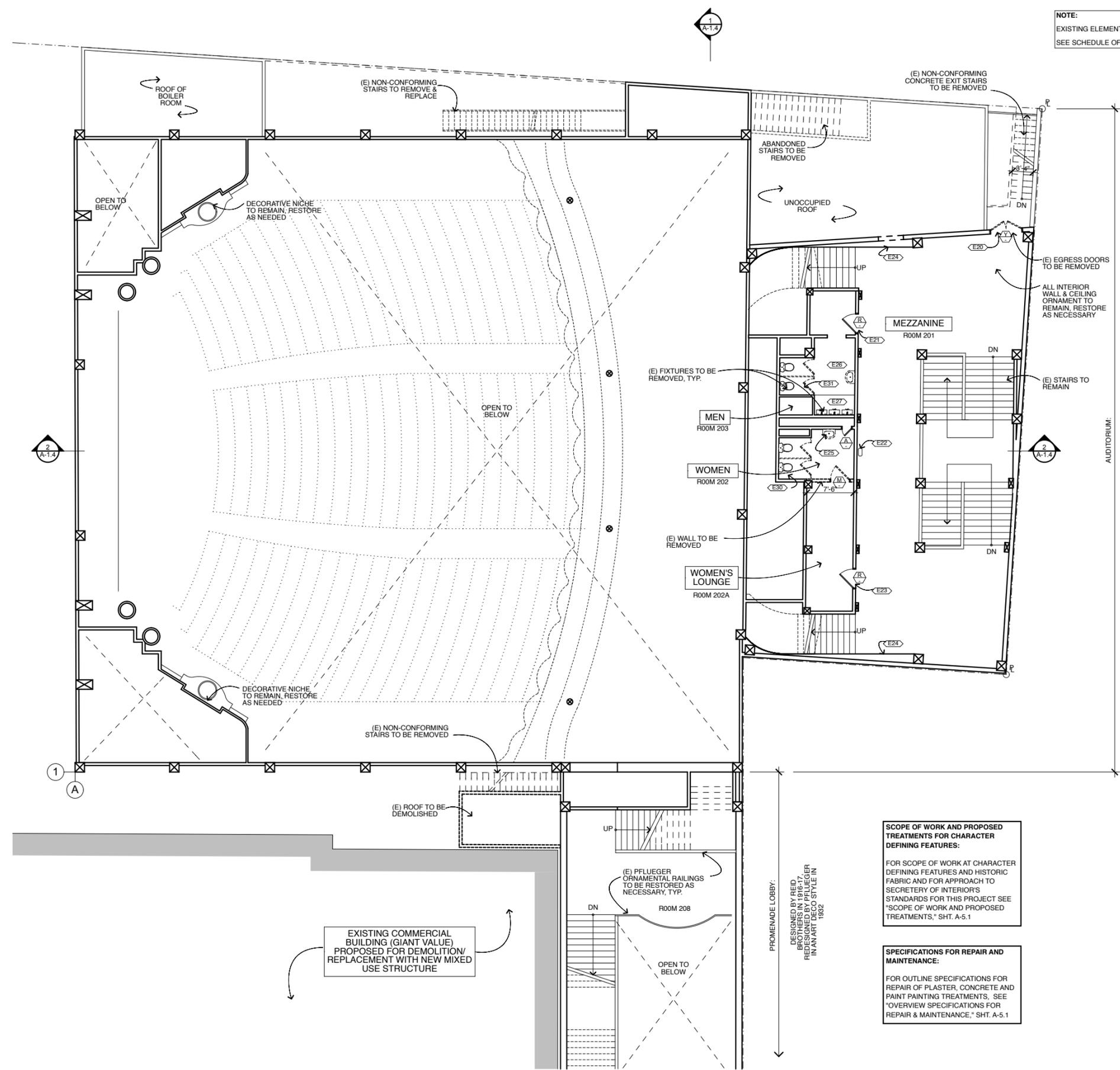
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**A-1.2**

**NOTE:**  
EXISTING ELEMENTS INDICATED AS <E>  
SEE SCHEDULE OF TREATMENTS ON A-5.2



**SCOPE OF WORK AND PROPOSED TREATMENTS FOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES:**

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**1** EXISTING/ DEMO MEZZANINE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

EXISTING BALCONY PLAN

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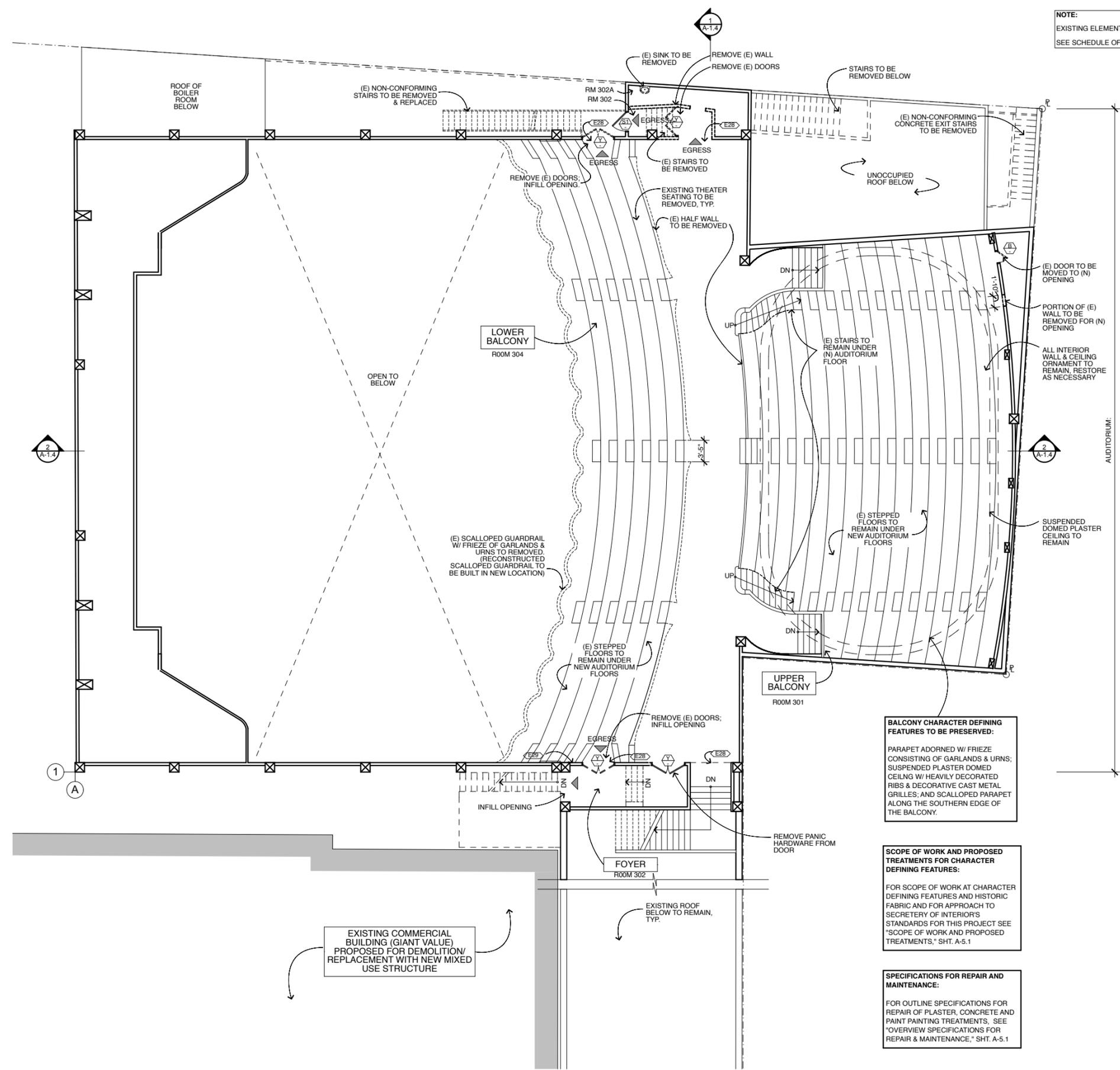
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**A-1.3**

**NOTE:**  
EXISTING ELEMENTS INDICATED AS <E>  
SEE SCHEDULE OF TREATMENTS ON A-5.2



**1** EXISTING/ DEMO BALCONY PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**BALCONY CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED:**  
PARAPET ADORNED W/ FRIEZE CONSISTING OF GARLANDS & URNS; SUSPENDED PLASTER DOMED CEILING W/ HEAVILY DECORATED RIBS & DECORATIVE CAST METAL GRILLES; AND SCALLOPED PARAPET ALONG THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE BALCONY.

**SCOPE OF WORK AND PROPOSED TREATMENTS FOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES:**  
FOR SCOPE OF WORK AT CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES AND HISTORIC FABRIC AND FOR APPROACH TO SECRETARY OF INTERIORS STANDARDS FOR THIS PROJECT SEE "SCOPE OF WORK AND PROPOSED TREATMENTS," SHT. A-5.1

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AUDITORIUM:  
DESIGNED BY BEID BROTHERS IN 1916-17;  
NEW BATHROOMS & SEATS ADDED BY  
PFLUEGER IN 1932

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5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



**2550 MISSION STREET**

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

EXISTING SECTIONS

NOTICE

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE: JLL

DRAWN BY: JLL

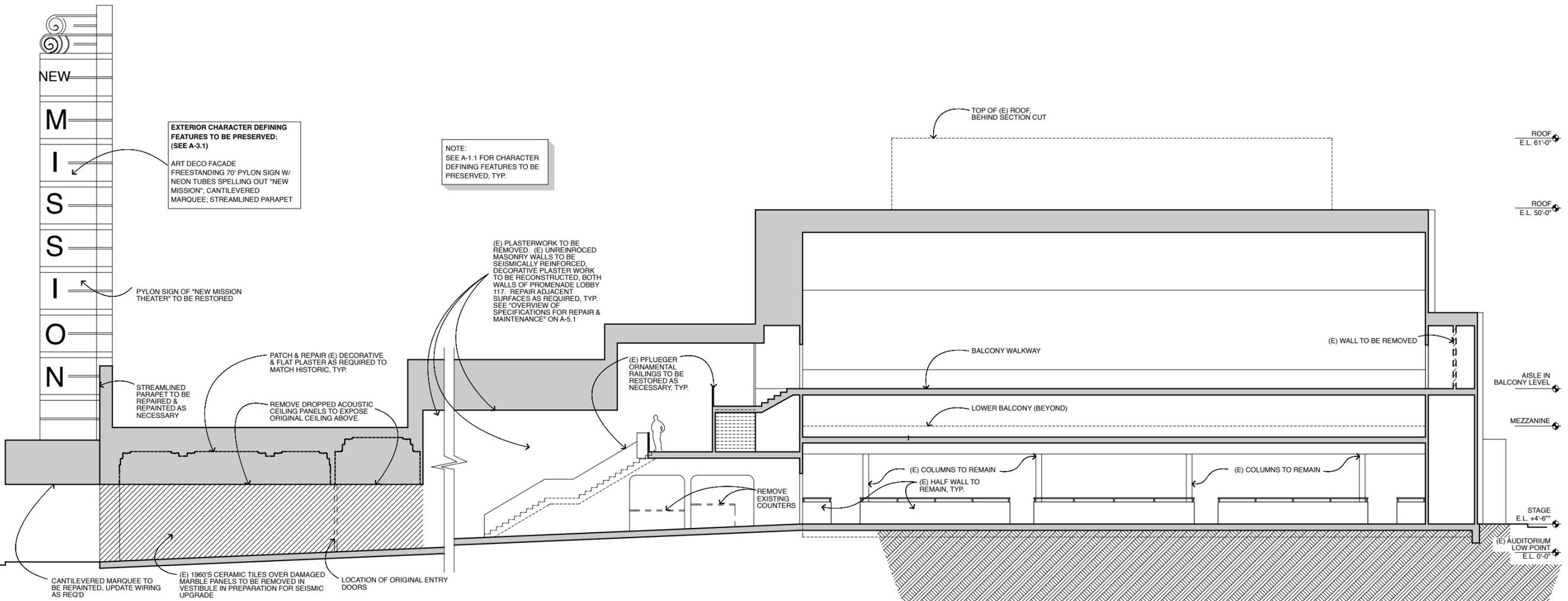
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JOB NO: 1116

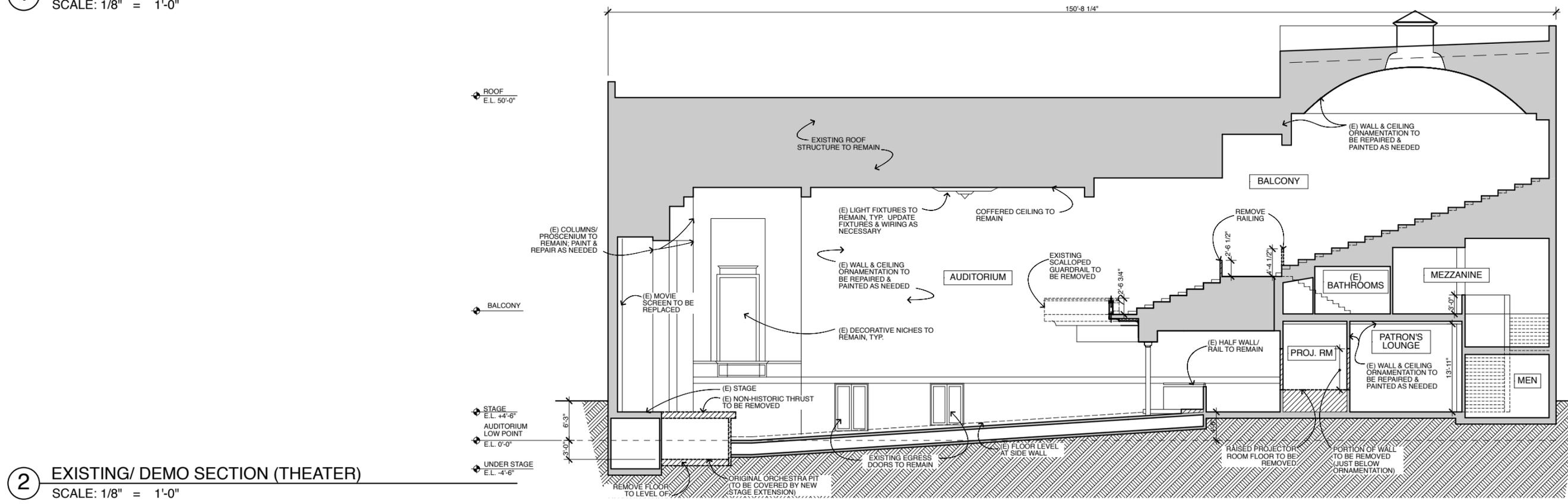
DRAWING

**A-1.4**

8 of 29 sheets



**1** EXISTING/ DEMO SECTION (THEATER & PROMENADE)  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**2** EXISTING/ DEMO SECTION (THEATER)  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
4	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
5	PLNG R4 10/15/07
6	PLNG R5 1/4/08
7	PLNG R6 3/29/11
8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

PROPOSED ORCHESTRA  
PIT

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE:

DRAWN BY: JLL

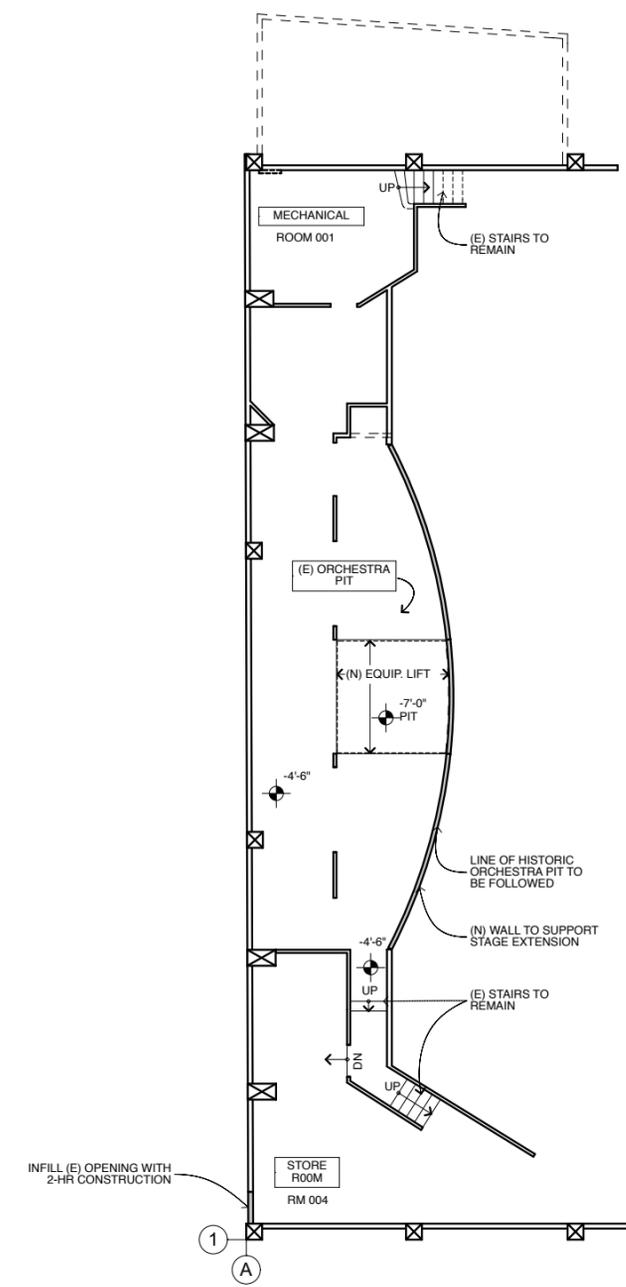
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JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

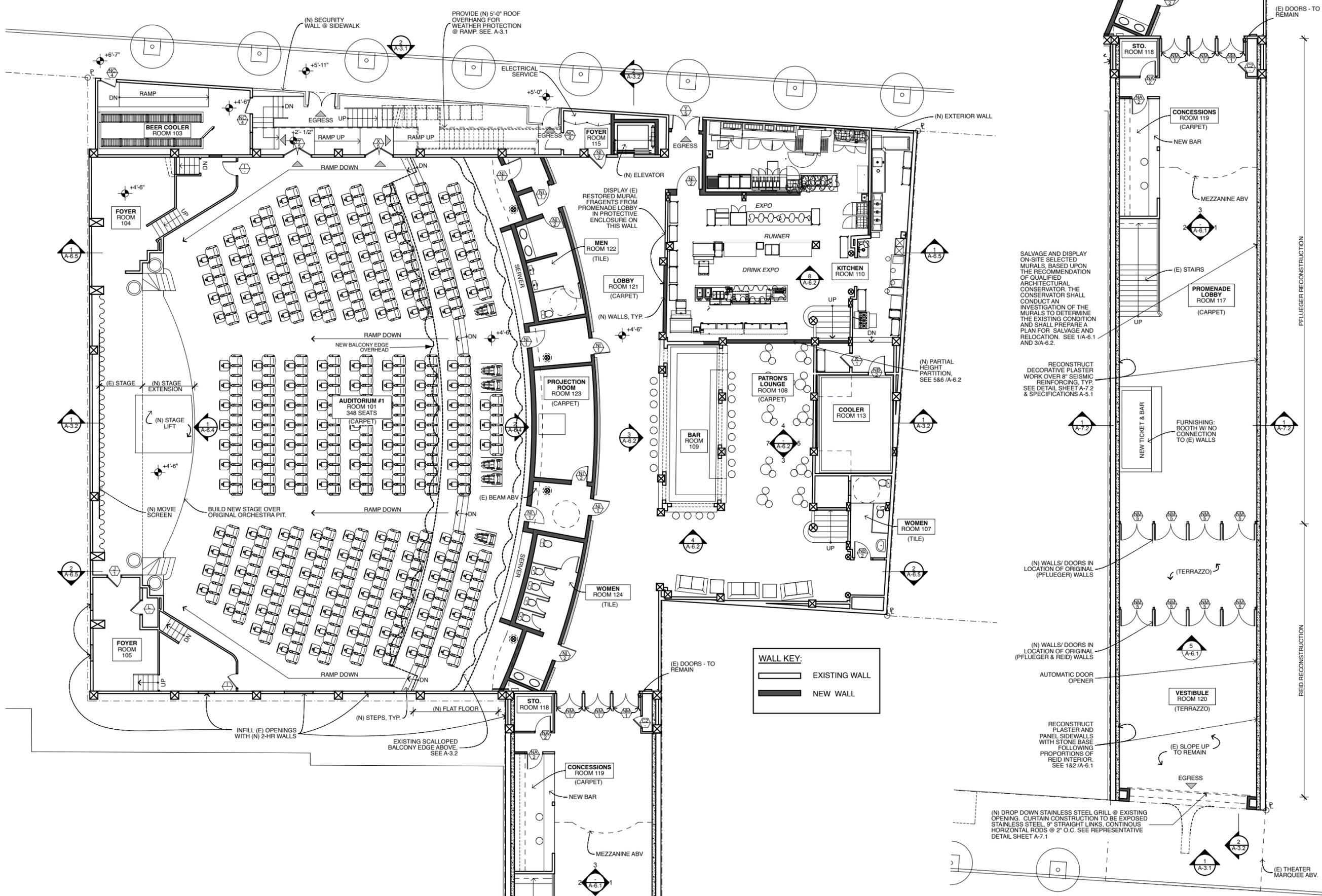
**A-2.0**

9 of 29 sheets



**1** PROPOSED BASEMENT/ ORCHESTRA PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

116 - 2550 MISSION STREET  
2/7/2012 - PLNG. PR



**1** PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**2** PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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DATE:	2/7/2012
SCALE:	
DRAWN BY:	JLL
CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116
DRAWING	

**A-2.1**

118 - 2550 MISSION STREET 2/7/2012 - PLNG. PR

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
  
BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

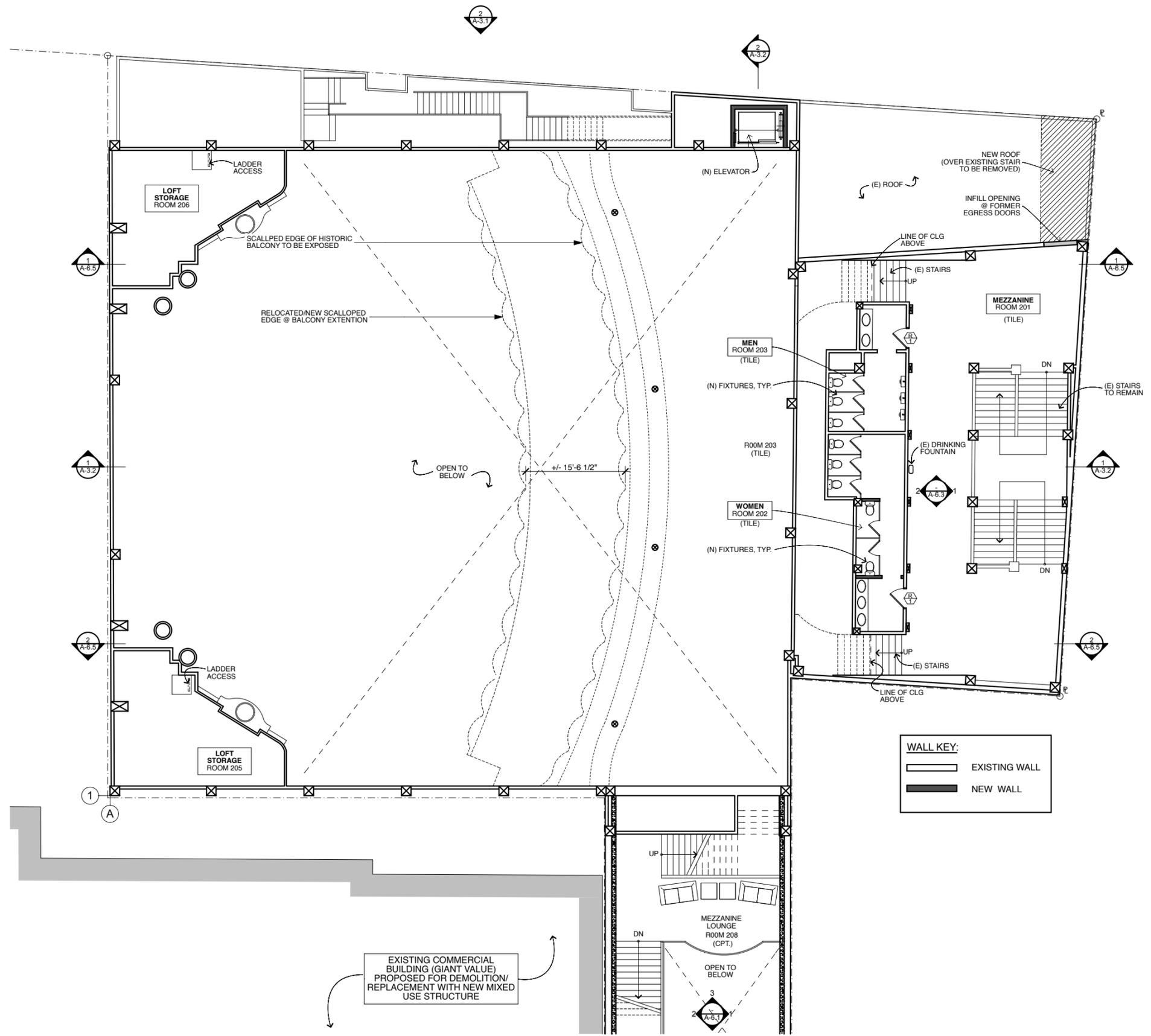
PROPOSED MEZZANINE PLAN

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DATE:	2/7/2012
SCALE:	
DRAWN BY:	JLL
CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

DRAWING

**A-2.2**



**1** PROPOSED MEZZANINE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
4	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
5	PLNG R4 10/15/07
6	PLNG R5 1/4/08
7	PLNG R6 3/29/11
8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER RENOVATION BY ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/ LOT 007

PROPOSED BALCONY PLAN

**NOTICE**

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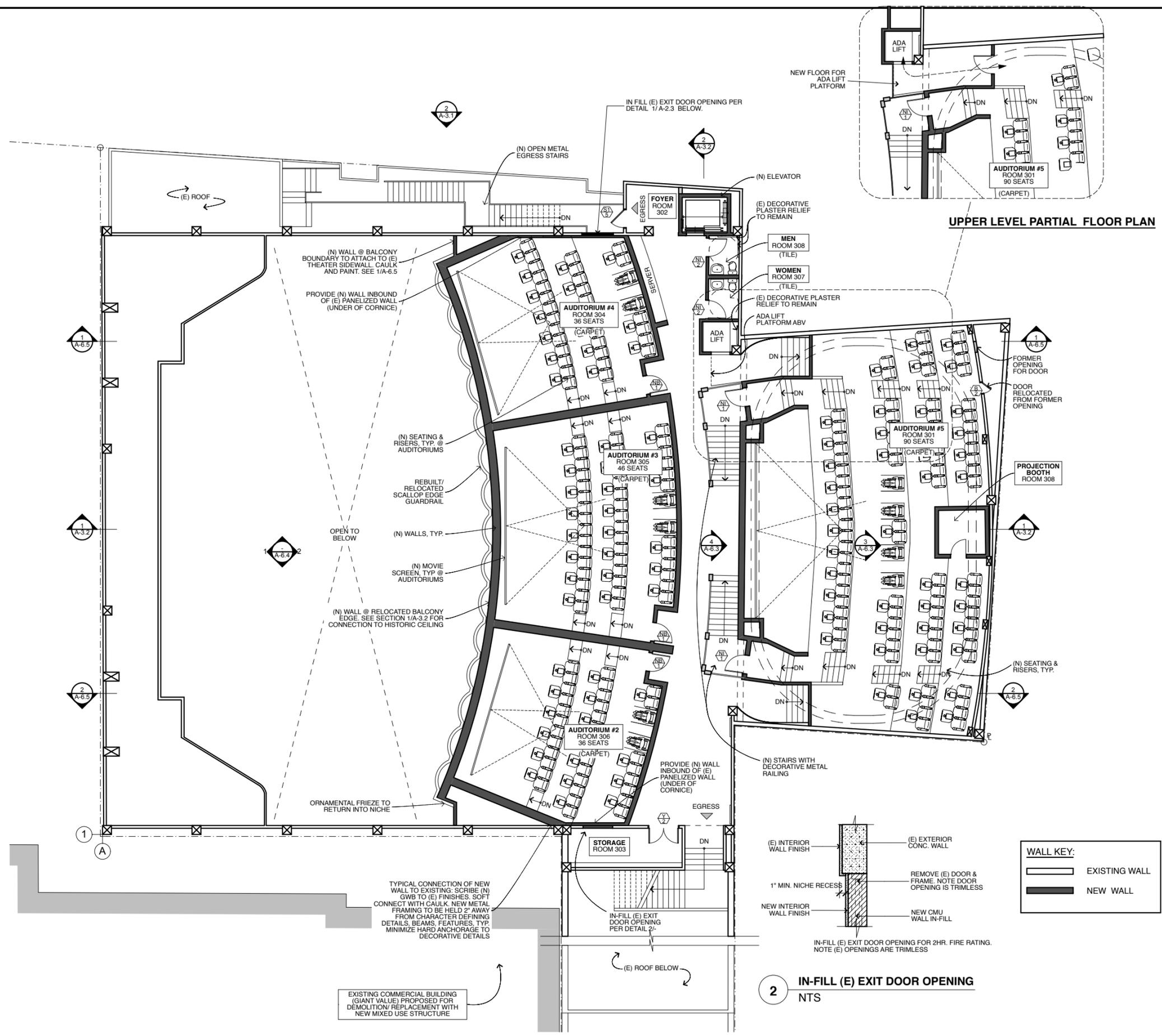
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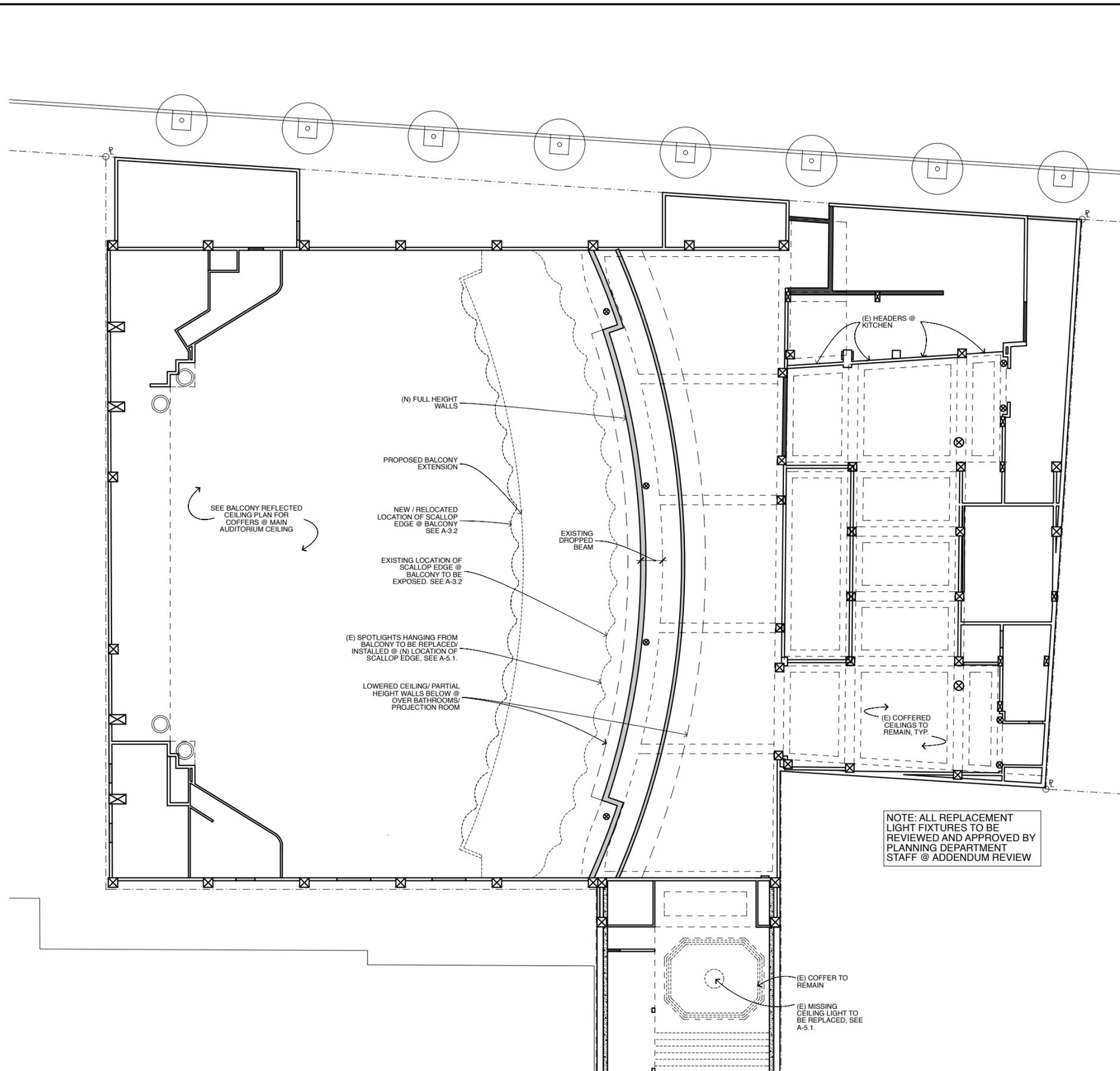
All attachments, connections, fastenings, etc., are to be properly secured in conformance with best practice, and the Contractor shall be responsible for providing and installing them.

DATE:	2/7/2012
SCALE:	
DRAWN BY:	JLL
CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

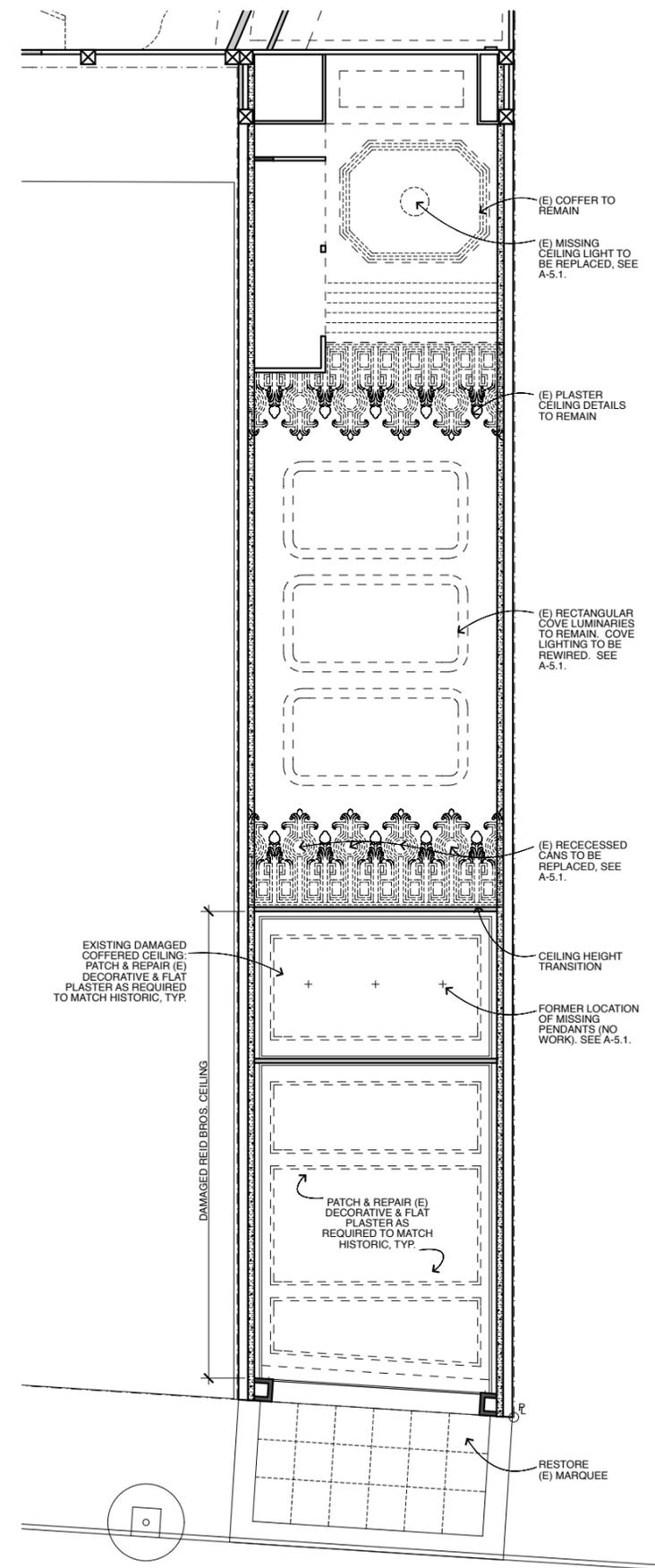
DRAWING

**A-2.3**





**1** REFLECTED CEILING PLAN - FIRST FLOOR  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**2** REFLECTED CEILING PLAN - FIRST FLOOR  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
4	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
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7	PLNG R6 3/29/11
8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

PROPOSED REFLECTED  
CEILING PLAN: FIRST  
FLOOR

NOTICE

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE:

DRAWN BY: JLL

CHECKED BY: TM

JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

**A-2.4**

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
  
BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

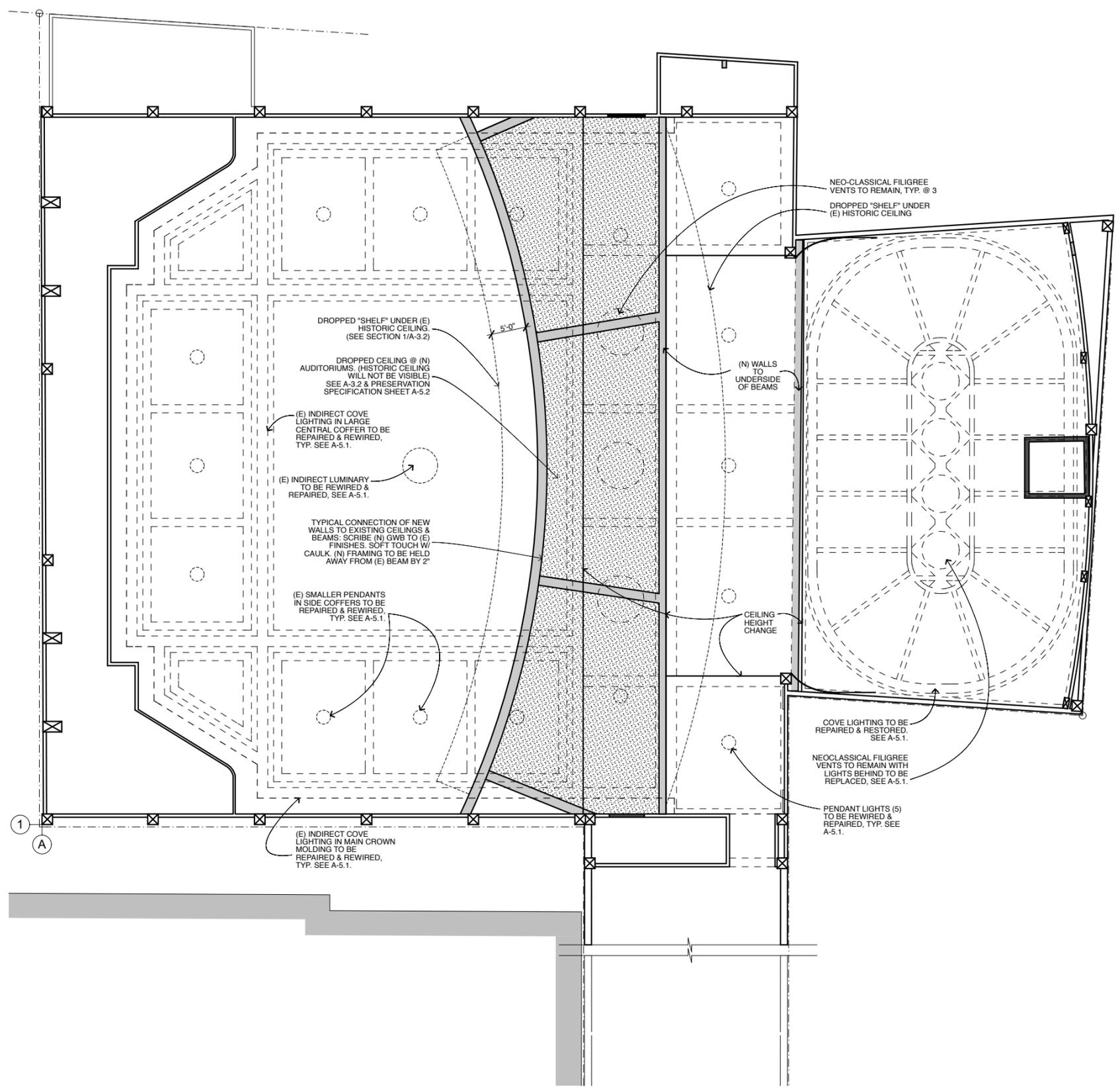
PROPOSED REFLECTED  
CEILING PLAN:  
MEZZANINE & BALCONY

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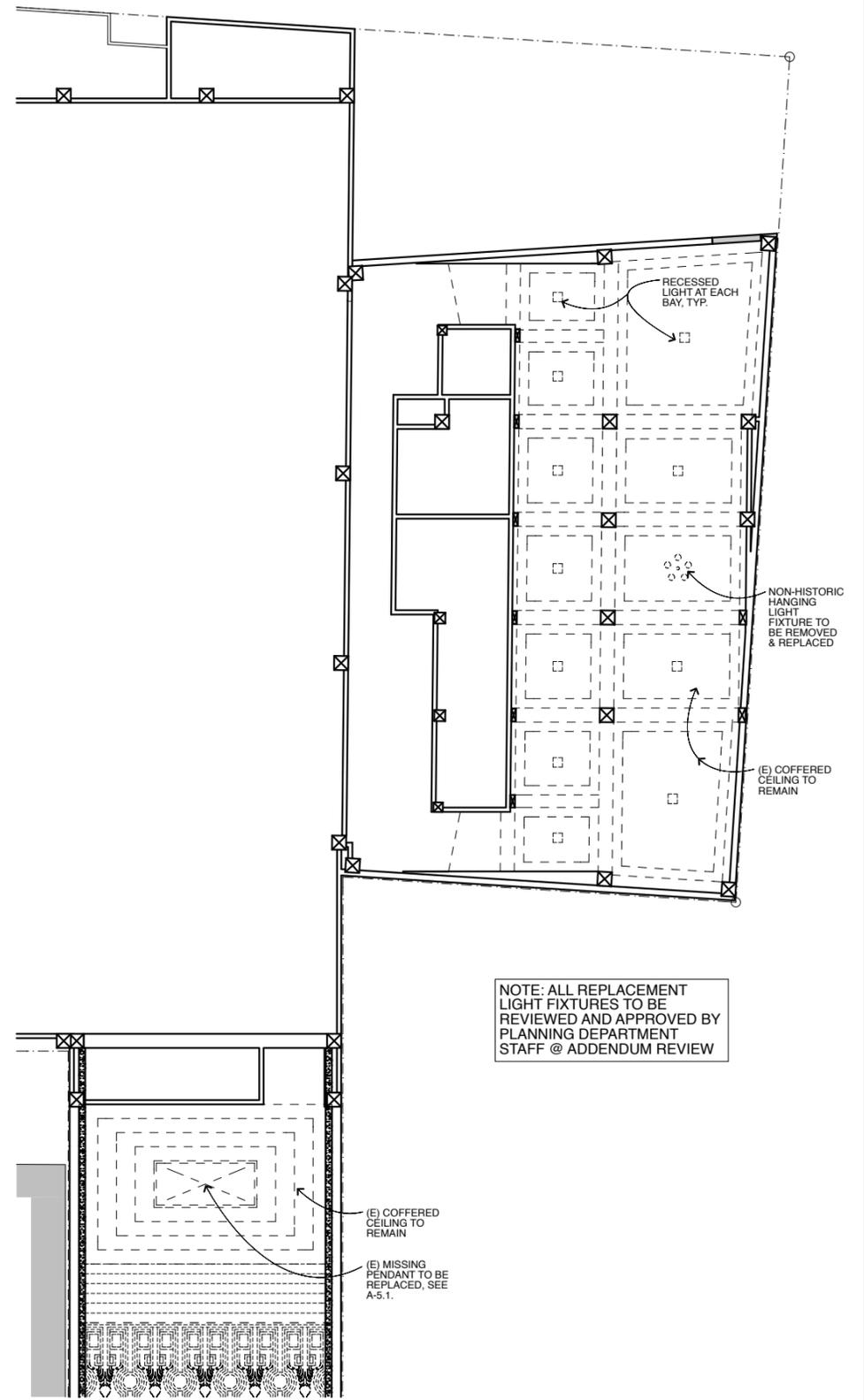
DATE:	2/7/2012
SCALE:	
DRAWN BY:	JLL
CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

DRAWING

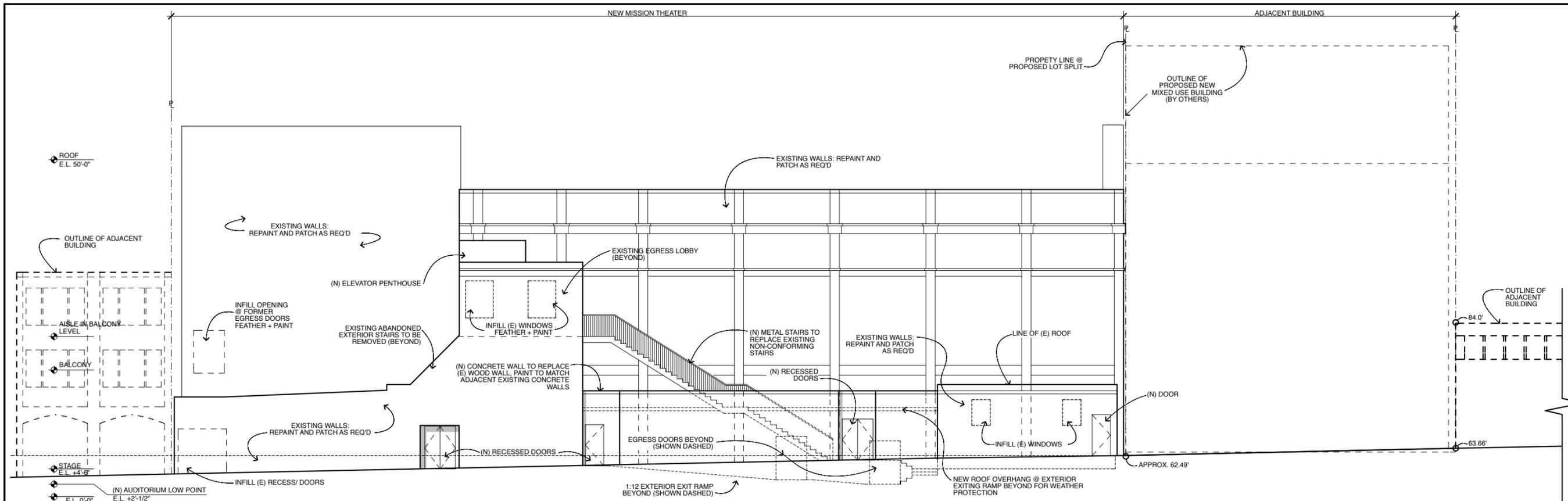
**A-2.5**



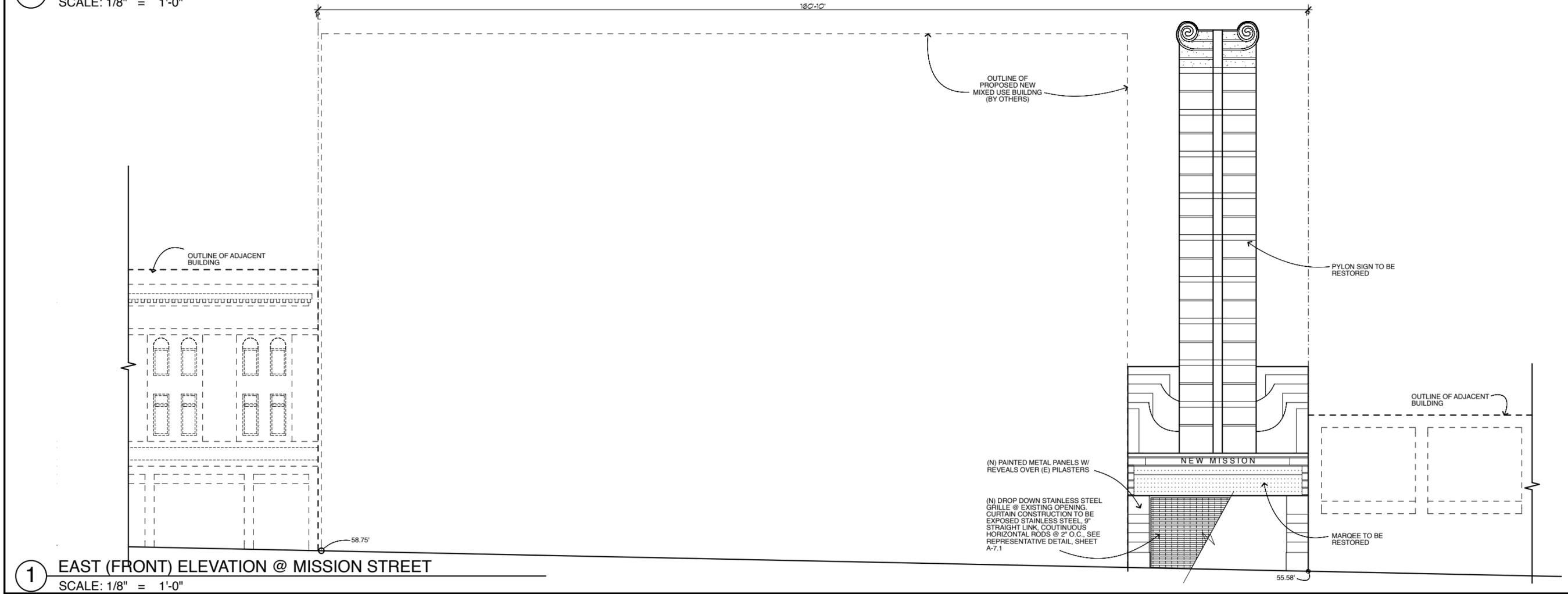
**2** REFLECTED CEILING PLAN - BALCONY  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**1** REFLECTED CEILING PLAN - MEZZANINE  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**2 WEST (REAR) ELEVATION @ BARTLETT STREET**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**1 EAST (FRONT) ELEVATION @ MISSION STREET**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**KERMAN MORRIS Architects**  
69A WATER STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94133  
TEL. 415.748.0392  
FAX. 415.928.5152

Revisions:

PLNG SET 3/30/06
1 PLNG R1 6/12/06
2 PLNG R2 9/12/06
3 PLNG R3 11/2/06
4 PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
5 PLNG R4 10/15/07
6 PLNG R5 1/4/08
7 PLNG R6 3/29/11
8 PLNG R7 1/21/12
9 PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

ELEVATIONS

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DATE:	2/7/2012
SCALE:	
DRAWN BY:	JLL
CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

DRAWING  
**A-3.1**  
15 of 29 sheets

116 - 2550 MISSION STREET  
2/7/2012 - PLNG. RB

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
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8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



**2550 MISSION STREET**

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

PROPOSED BUILDING SECTIONS

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE:

DRAWN BY: JLL

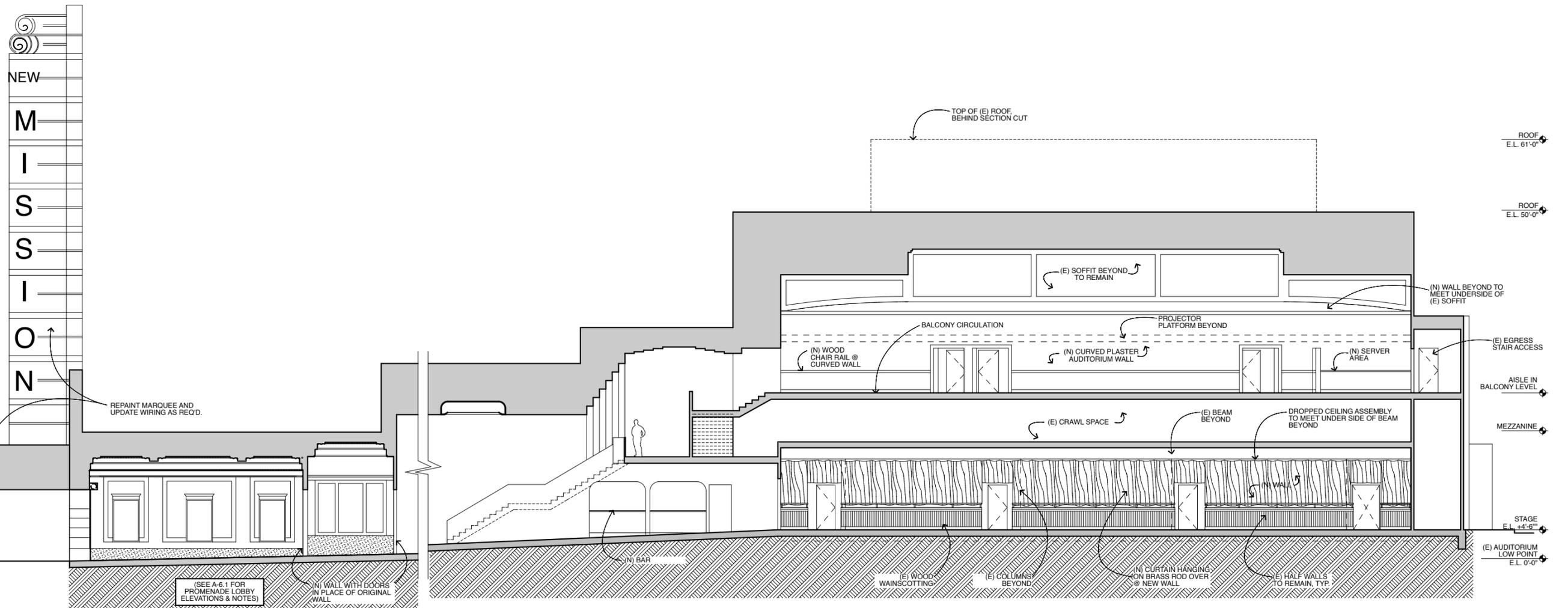
CHECKED BY: TM

JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

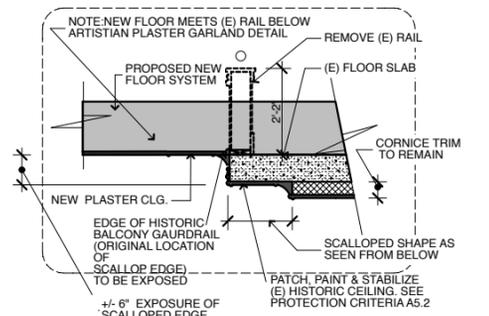
**A-3.2**

16 of 29 sheets

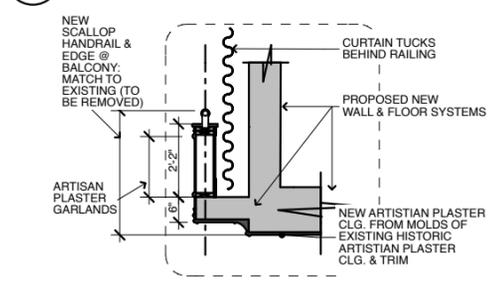


**2** PROPOSED SECTION (THEATER & PROMENADE)  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM:**  
1. BUILDING TO BE FULLY FIRE SPRINKLERED PER NFPA 13.  
2. FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM AND SPRINKLER HEADS ARE TO BE INSTALLED TO MINIMIZE IMPACT ON CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES AND HISTORIC FABRIC, TYP. THRU OUT CEILING.  
3. SEE OUTLINE SPECIFICATION FOR AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM ON SHEET A-5.2

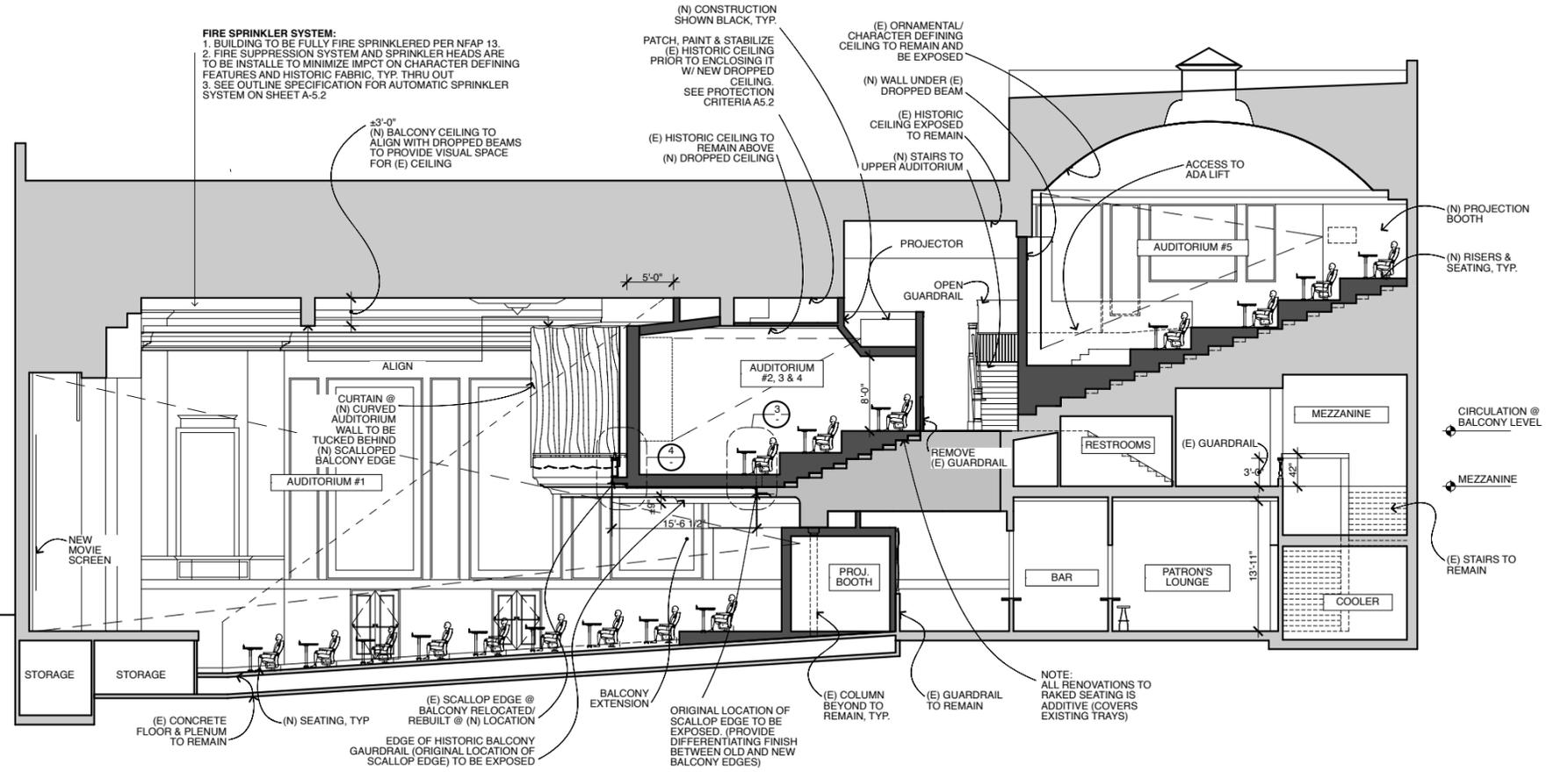


**3** (E) BALCONY EDGE



**4** NEW BALCONY EDGE

**1** PROPOSED SECTION (THEATER)  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

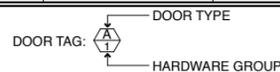


118 - 2550 MISSION STREET  
2/7/2012 - PLNG. PG.

EXISTING NON-HISORIC & HISTORIC DOORS:

DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES		DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES		DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES		DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES	
		SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L			SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L			SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L			SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L
QTY: 1 A		NOTES: INTERIOR CLOSET DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED.		QTY: 1 F		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 M		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 T		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED	
RM: 202		1'-6"x6'-11"	WOOD	RM: 107		2'-2"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 202A		2'-6"x6'-10"	WOOD	RM: 111		3'-3 1/2"x6'-8 1/2"	WOOD
QTY: 1 B		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO RELOCATE 4'-6" HORIZONTALLY		QTY: 1 G		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 N		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 U		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED	
RM: 302		1'-10"x4'-9"	WOOD	RM: 104		2'-3"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 109		2'-7 1/2"x7'-4"	WOOD	RM: 110		3'-4"x6'-10"	WOOD
QTY: 1 C1		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 H		NOTES: INTERIOR CLOSET DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 O		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED (ORIGINAL LOCATION UNKNOWN)  THIS DOOR IS CURRENTLY STORED ON SITE & IS NOT INSTALLED. ORIGINAL LOCATION UNKNOWN		QTY: 1 V		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "NON-HISTORIC DOOR" TO BE REMOVED	
RM: 107		2'-0"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 110		2'-5"x6'-10"	WOOD	RM: UNKNOWN		2'-8"x7'-3"	WOOD	RM: 112		3'-9"x6'-8"	WOOD
QTY: 2 C2		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 2 I		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMAIN		QTY: 1 P		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 W		NOT USED	
RM: 112, 117		2'-0"x7'-0"	WOOD	RM: 101		2'-5 1/2"x6'-4"	WOOD	RM: 105		2'-10"x7'-5"	WOOD				
QTY: 2 C3		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR EXISTING DOOR (NON- HISTORIC) TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 J		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO REMAIN		QTY: 1 Q		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 2 X		NOTES: EXTERIOR EGRESS DOOR W/ PANIC HARDWARE "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMAIN	
RM: 002		2'-0"x6'-11"	WOOD	RM: 105		2'-5 1/2"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 114		2'-11"x6'-9"	WOOD	RM: 101		(2)2'-6"x6'-1 1/2"	WOOD
QTY: 1 D		NOTES: INTERIOR MTL DOOR: FORMER BOILER ROOM DOOR TO BE REMOVED		QTY: 1 K		NOTES: INTERIOR CLOSET DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO REMAIN		QTY: 2 R		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR DOORS TO REMAIN IN ORIG. LOCATION		QTY: 9 Y		NOTES: EXTERIOR EGRESS DOOR W/ PANIC HARDWARE "HISTORIC" DOOR REPAIR AS NEEDED. DOORS AT RM 201, 302 & (E)304 TO BE REMOVED. ONE DOOR @ RM 121 TO BE REMOVED, ONE TO REMAIN. ONE DOOR @ RM 303 TO BE REMOVED, ONE DOOR TO REMAIN WITH PANIC HARDWARE REMOVED.	
RM: 103		2'-2"x5'-3"	MTL	RM: 112		2'-6"x5'-11"	WOOD	RM: 202A, 203		3'-0"x6'-10"	WOOD	RM: 101, 121, 201, 302, 303, (E) 304		(2)2'-6"x6'-11"	WOOD
QTY: 2 E		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED.  THIS DOOR IS CURRENTLY STORED ON SITE & IS NOT INSTALLED. ORIGINAL LOCATION UNKNOWN		QTY: 2 L		NOTES: INTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR DOORS IN RM 105 TO REMAIN DOORS IN RM 104 TO BE REMOVED.		QTY: 3 S1		NOTES: EXTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR DOORS IN RM 004 & 106 TO BE REMOVED. DOOR IN RM 302 TO REMAIN.		QTY: 3 Z		NOTES: INTERIOR EGRESS DOOR W/ SELF-CLOSER "HISTORIC" DOOR W/ ETCHED GLASS  3 PAIRS DOORS EXISTING: 3 DOORS MISSING ORIGINAL GLASS, 2 DOORS W/ ORIG. GLASS CRACKED, 1 INTACT.  REPLACE GLASS WHERE MISSING OR BROKEN, ETCH TO MATCH ORIGINAL & PANIC HARDWARE.  SINGLE LITE GLASS	
RM: UNKNOWN		2'-2"x6'-6"	WOOD	RM: 104, 105		2'-6"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 004, 106, 302		3'-0"x7'-0"	WOOD	RM: 117, 120			OAK & GLASS
<p>GENERAL NOTES REGARDING DOORS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Existing/Historic Doors are labeled "A" through "Z"</li> <li>All New Doors are labeled with an "N" before the door key: i.e. "NA" and "NM."</li> <li>All character defining Historic doors are to be retained, repaired and reinstalled in their original locations (see door type "Z" between Promenade Lobby and Main Auditorium).</li> </ol>				<p>4. All serviceable and repairable original/Historic doors in walls to remain are to be retained, repaired and reinstalled in their original locations, except where noted in floor plans, interior elevations and Door Schedule.</p>				<p>HARDWARE GROUPS:</p> <p>1 = INTERIOR PASSAGE 2 = INTERIOR PRIVACY 3 = EXTERIOR LOCKSET WITH WEATHER STRIPPING</p> <p>5 = PANIC HARDWARE 4 = EXTERIOR LOCKSET AND DEADBOLT WITH WEATHER STRIPPING</p>				<p>QTY: 1 S2</p> <p>RM: 103</p> <p>NOTES: EXTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED</p> <p>3'-0"x7'-0"</p> <p>MTL</p> <p>RM: (E) 101/(N) 121</p> <p>QTY: 3 Z</p> <p>7'-0" x 5'-0"</p> <p>FRONT (PROM. LOBBY)</p> <p>BACK (AUDITORIUM)</p> <p>(2)2'-6"x7'-0"</p> <p>WOOD/GLASS</p>			

DOOR SCHEDULE: VERIFY ALL ROUGH OPENING DIMENSIONS IN FIELD



NEW DOORS:

DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES		DOOR	DIAGRAM	NOTES	
		SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L			SIZE (WxH)	MAT'L
QTY: 2 NA		NOTES: NEW INTERIOR DOOR RECESSED SINGLE PANEL DOOR		QTY: 15 NI		NOTES: NEW INTERIOR DOOR RECESSED SINGLE PANEL DOOR	
RM: 118, 119		2'-10"x6'-8"	WOOD	RM: 101, 110, 115, 121, 122, 123, 124, 301, 307, 308		3'-0"x7'-0"	WOOD
QTY: 5 NB		NOTES: NEW INTERIOR DOOR RECESSED SINGLE PANEL DOOR		QTY: 1 NJ		NOT USED	
RM: 107, 113, 304, 305, 306		3'-0"x6'-8"	WOOD				
QTY: 3 NC		NOTES: NEW EXTERIOR DOOR RECESSED SINGLE PANEL DOOR		QTY: 1 NK		NOT USED	
RM: 103, 115		3'-0"x6'-8"	WOOD				
QTY: 8 NM		NOTES: NEW EXTERIOR EGRESS DOORS W/ PANIC HARDWARE & SELF-CLOSERS  FRONT (PROM. LOBBY)		QTY: 8 NF		NOTES: NEW EXTERIOR EGRESS DOORS W/ PANIC HARDWARE & SELF-CLOSERS  BACK (AUDITORIUM)	
				RM: 117, 120			OAK & GLASS
QTY: 9 Y		NOTES: EXTERIOR EGRESS DOOR W/ PANIC HARDWARE "HISTORIC" DOOR REPAIR AS NEEDED. DOORS AT RM 201, 302 & (E)304 TO BE REMOVED. ONE DOOR @ RM 121 TO BE REMOVED, ONE TO REMAIN. ONE DOOR @ RM 303 TO BE REMOVED, ONE DOOR TO REMAIN WITH PANIC HARDWARE REMOVED.					
		(2)2'-6"x6'-11"	WOOD				
QTY: 3 Z		NOTES: INTERIOR EGRESS DOOR W/ SELF-CLOSER "HISTORIC" DOOR W/ ETCHED GLASS  3 PAIRS DOORS EXISTING: 3 DOORS MISSING ORIGINAL GLASS, 2 DOORS W/ ORIG. GLASS CRACKED, 1 INTACT.  REPLACE GLASS WHERE MISSING OR BROKEN, ETCH TO MATCH ORIGINAL & PANIC HARDWARE.  SINGLE LITE GLASS					
QTY: 1 S2		NOTES: EXTERIOR DOOR "HISTORIC" DOOR TO BE REMOVED					
		3'-0"x7'-0"	MTL				



69A WATER STREET  
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Revisions:

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2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
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5	PLNG R4 10/15/07
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8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

DOOR SCHEDULE

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CHECKED BY: TM  
JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

A-4.1



**INVENTORY OF EXISTING ELEMENTS:**

2550 MISSION EXISTING ELEMENTS

	ELEMENT #	ITEM	MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED	NOTES	
<b>FIRST FLOOR:</b> AUDITORIUM	E1	FIRE HOSES (2)		IN CABINETS EA. SIDE OF STAGE: 1 CAB. PTD SHUT AT ENTRY DOORS FROM PROM. LOBBY & BY ELEC. RM - NO HOSES EITHER LOCATION	TO REMAIN		
	E2	FIRE HOSE HOLDER (2)			SEE NOTES	TO REMAIN @ ENTRY DOORS FROM PROMENADE LOBBY. TO BE REMOVED NEAR ELECTRICAL CLOSET WHERE WALL IS TO BE REMOVED	
	E3	LIGHT FIXTURES		ORIGINAL	TO BE RESTORED	SEE LIGHT FIXTURE REHABILITATION SPECS, SHEET A-5.1	
	BOILER ROOM	E4	FAN CONTROLS		AT INTERIOR WALL BY DOOR	TO BE REMOVED	NOT VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
		E5	SINK		UTILITARIAN	TO BE REMOVED	PROJECTOR ROOM INTERIOR BEING REMOVED, SEE PLANS.
	PROJECTOR ROOM	E6	TOILET		UTILITARIAN	TO BE REMOVED	
		E7	AIR REGISTERS	MTL	SIMPLE GRID, NOT ORNATE	TO BE REMOVED	
		E8	CABINET FOR REELS	WD		TO BE REMOVED	
		E9	WALL MTD LIGHT FIXTURE	CERAMIC	UTILITARIAN	TO BE REMOVED	
		E10	CONTROL PANEL ON WALL		FOR A/C, PROJECTOR, AUDIO	TO BE REMOVED	
		E11	AIR BLOWER(?) & SWITCHES			TO BE REMOVED	
PATRON'S LOUNGE	E12	DRINKING FOUNTAIN		NOT ORIGINAL?	TO BE REMOVED	IN THE PATH OF EGRESS	
	E13	LADIES SIGN	MTL/PLASTIC	NOT ORIGINAL: PLASTIC SIGN & DUCT TAPE ADDED	TO BE RESTORED		
	E14	MEN'S SIGN	PLASTIC	NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE RESTORED		
	E15	RECESSED LIGHTING	MTL/PLASTIC	NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE REPLACED	RECESSED UTILITARIAN SQUARE LIGHTS, NOT ORIGINAL. SEE LIGHT FIXTURE REHABILITATION SPECS, SHEET A-5.1	
	E16	EXIT SIGNS	PLASTIC	NOT ORIGINAL. ABOVE DOORS TO BARTLETT	TO BE REPLACED		
WOMEN'S ROOM	E32	UNIDENTIFIED SIGN	MTL	PLAIN MTL PLATE W/DUCT TAPE, NO TEXT	TO BE REMOVED	AVOVE LOCATION OF (N) DOUBLE DOORS TO SERVER AREA	
	E17	SINKS (2)		FREESTANDING	TO BE REMOVED		
MEN'S ROOM	E18	TOILET (5)		NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE REMOVED		
	E19	SINKS (2)		FREESTANDING	TO BE REMOVED		
<b>SECOND FLOOR:</b> MEZZANINE	E20	URINALS (5)		BUILT-IN	TO BE REMOVED		
	E21	TOILET (4)		NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE REMOVED		
	E22	EXIT SIGN	WD	ORIGINAL	TO BE REMOVED	(EXIT TO BE ABANDONED)	
	E23	MEN'S SIGN	MTL	ONLY MTL FRAME LEFT	TO BE RESTORED		
	E24	DRINKING FOUNTAIN		ORIGINAL	TO REMAIN	CLEAN & REPAIR AS NECESSARY	
WOMEN'S ROOM	E25	WOMEN'S SIGN	MTL	ONLY MTL FRAME LEFT	TO BE RESTORED		
	E26	EXIT SIGNS (2) (?)	MTL/PLASTIC	ONLY FRAME W/PLASTIC LEFT	TO BE RESTORED	THESE MAY NOT BE EXIT SIGNS. COULD BE DIRECTIONAL SIGN TO BALCONY ABOVE. (AT MEZZ. STAIR)	
WOMEN'S ROOM	E27	SINK (1)		FREESTANDING	TO BE REMOVED	RETAIN IF SERVICABLE.	
	E30	TOILET (2)		NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE REMOVED		
MEN'S ROOM	E28	SINK (1)		FREESTANDING	TO BE REMOVED	RETAIN IF SERVICABLE.	
	E29	URINALS (3)		BUILT-IN	TO BE REMOVED		
	E31	TOILET (2)		NOT ORIGINAL	TO BE REMOVED		
<b>BALCONY:</b> BALCONY WALKWAY	E32	EXIT SIGNS (5)	MTL	ORIG. (?)	TO REMAIN	(WHERE EXIT STILL IN USE ONLY)	
	E33	FIRE HOSE (1)		BY LOWER BALCONY EXIT DOORS - W/ HOSE	TO REMAIN		

**AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM:**

**1. Design and Installation:**

The automatic fire sprinkler system shall be designed and installed conforming to the following:

- a) NFPA 13, Installation of Sprinkler Systems 2002 Edition.
- b) NFPA 24, Private Fire Service Mains 2002 Edition.
- c) NFPA 25, Standards for Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water based Fire Protection Systems 2002 Edition.
- d) NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code 2007 Edition.
- e) Local and State Building, Mechanical and Fire Codes.

Zone and main piping layouts of fire protection system will be established related to the architecture, structure and mechanical/electrical systems. Fire Protection Contractor, based on these layouts, shall produce installation/shop drawings for review and approval prior to installation.

**2. Products**

All products used shall be listed in the UL Fire Protection Equipment Directory and approved in the Factory Mutual Approval Guide for service intended.

**3. Fire Sprinkler Heads**

Manufacturers:

Unless otherwise noted below, shall be manufactured by Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Corp., Tyco Fire Projects or Viking Corp.

Automatic, having temperature rating suitable for location. Light Hazard occupancies shall be Quick Response type sprinkler heads.

Architect will review deviations from the specified styles for approval prior to installation. Provide the following type of sprinkler head.

Type A: Unfinished areas such as mechanical spaces.

Brass upright or pendent, 1/2" orifice, ordinary temperature class (155 deg. F), Viking Model M Micromatic or equal. Extended coverage, brass finish, Upright or Pendent, large orifice, ordinary temperature class, Viking ECOH-ELO or equal designed and installed per its listing and FM approval.

Type B: In areas with ceilings.

Concealed Pendent, 1/2" orifice, ordinary temperature class (165 degree F) solder link, Viking Horizon Mirage, Model B-2 adjustable sprinkler, with 135 degree F temperature rated cover plate, flush with ceiling or equal. Cover plate color shall match ceiling color and shall be factory-painted (i.e. by manufacturer).

Type C: in areas where ceiling conditions do not permit installation of pendent head or finished area where sidewall head provides better coverage of hazard.

Sidewall, 1/2" orifice, ordinary temperature class, (155 deg. F), 2 piece adjustable escutcheon, Viking Model M, HSW horizontal or VSW vertical sidewall with Viking E-1 escutcheon or equal. Extended coverage sidewall ordinary temperature class (155 deg. F), Tyco Fire Products, Model TY-FRB or equal designed and installed per its listing and FM approval.

Type D: In walk-in coolers and freezers.

Polished chrome dry pendent, 1/2" orifice, ordinary temperature rating, adjustable recessed chrome escutcheon, Viking Model M or equal. Provide compatible wire cage sprinkler head guard where sprinklers are subject to impact damage.

**4. Approvals**

The automatic fire sprinkler system design and drawings shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review during the addendum review by SFFD and DBI.

**PROTECTION CRITERIA:**

**LOWER BALCONY PLASTER CEILING MEDALLIONS**

Rehabilitation plans call for the installation of dropped ceilings at the "Floating Auditorium" at the lower balcony. Following are criteria for the stabilization and protection of decorative plaster ceiling medallions at this location:

- Inspect and examine the work area to confirm that historic medallions are securely fastened to substrates. Loose sections or components should be repaired by a qualified plastering contractor who is experienced in the repair and restoration of historic decorative plaster.
- Penetrations into historic plaster surfaces for dropped ceiling anchor points should be minimized; however, under no circumstances shall penetrations be placed within ceiling medallions.
- Pre-drill all penetrations to avoid cracking or spalling historic plaster surfaces.
- Place all anchor points at ceiling framing members; no anchorage shall bear solely on lath and plaster assemblies.
- Place no materials in direct contact with historic medallions.
- Monitor the surface of the new dropped ceiling to detect leaks at the historic plaster ceiling. Repair any water damage to historic plaster as soon as possible, using a qualified plastering contractor.



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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

INVENTORY OF EXISTING  
ELEMENTS

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE:

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JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

**A-5.2**

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
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INTERIOR ELEVATIONS -  
PROMENADE LOBBY

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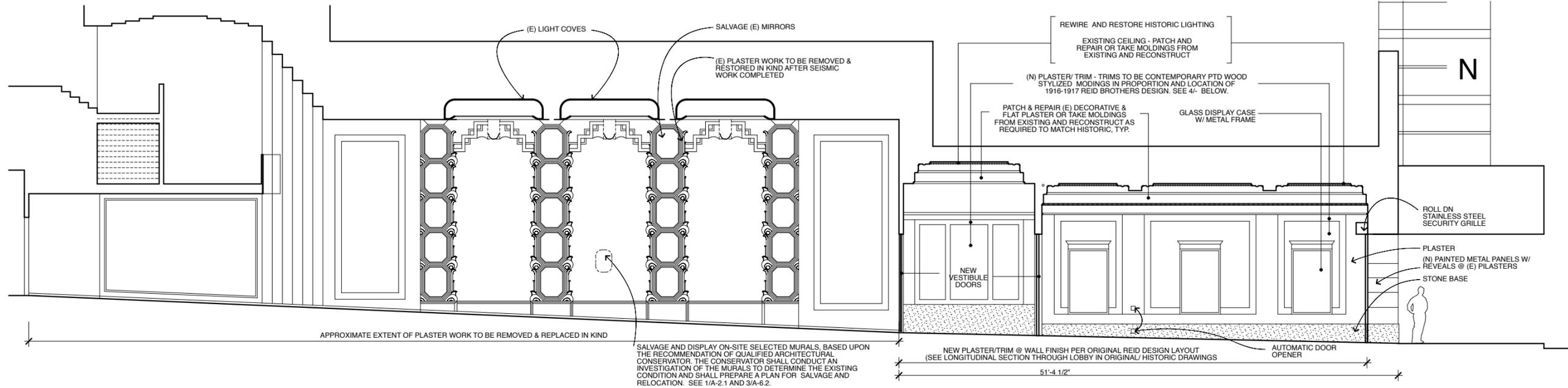
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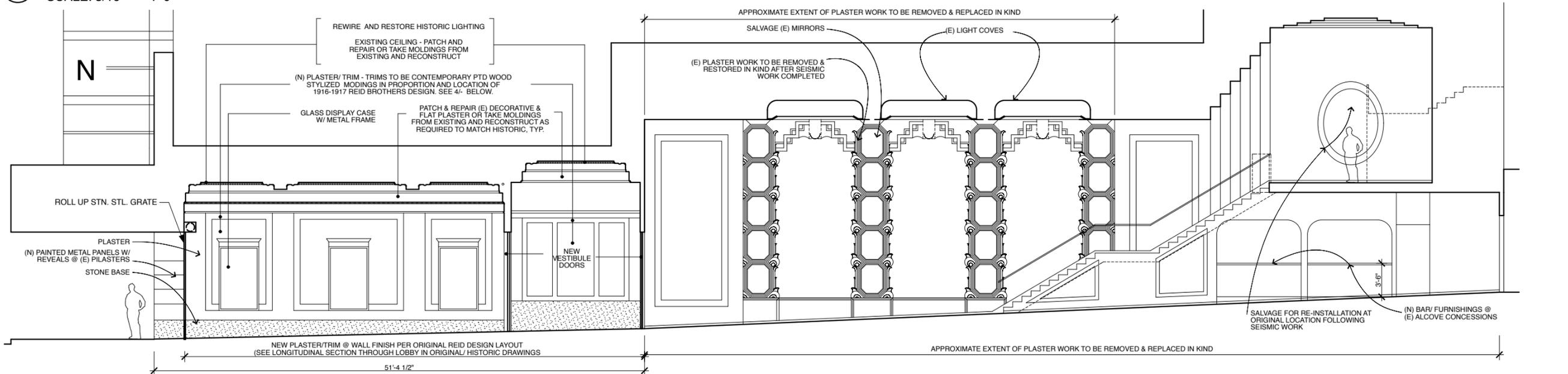
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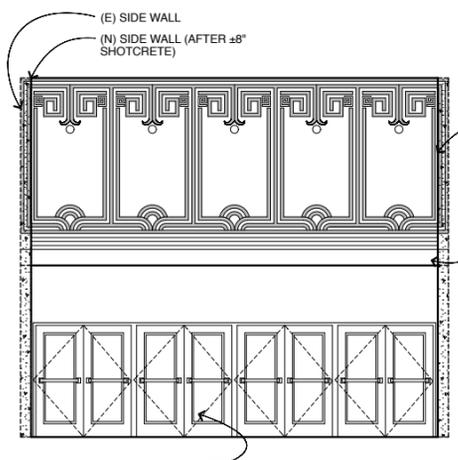
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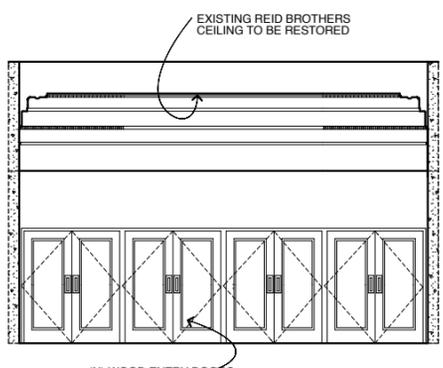
**1** PROMENADE LOBBY - NORTH WALL  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



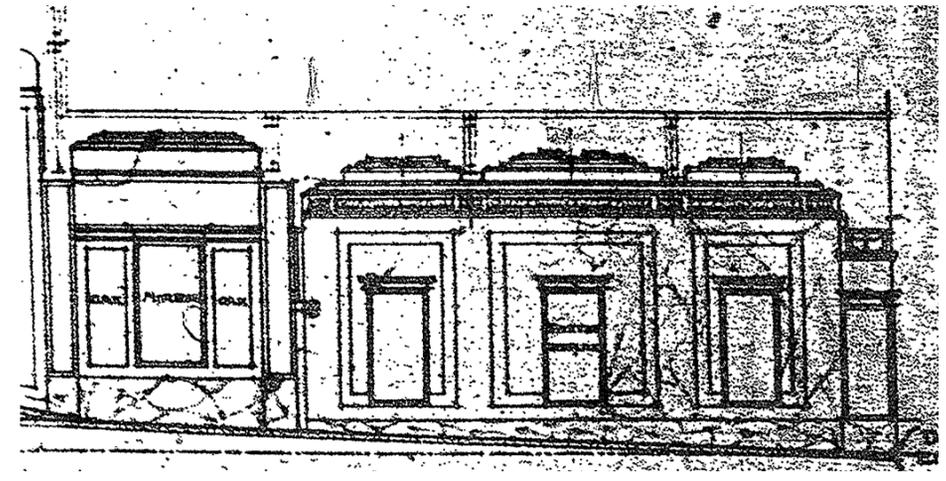
**2** PROMENADE LOBBY - NORTH WALL  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**3** PROMENADE LOBBY - EAST WALL @ NEW DOORS  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**5** ENTRY DOORS AT VESTIBULE  
SCALE: 1/63.71"



**4** PROM / LOBBY: ORIG/HISTORIC REID DWGS NORTH WALL (SOUTH WALL SIMILAR)  
NOT TO SCALE

Revisions:

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1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
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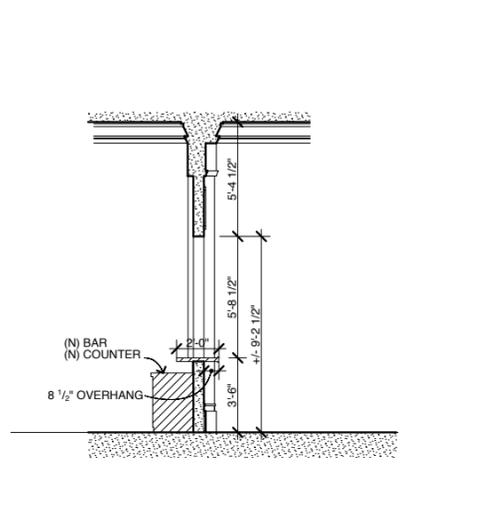
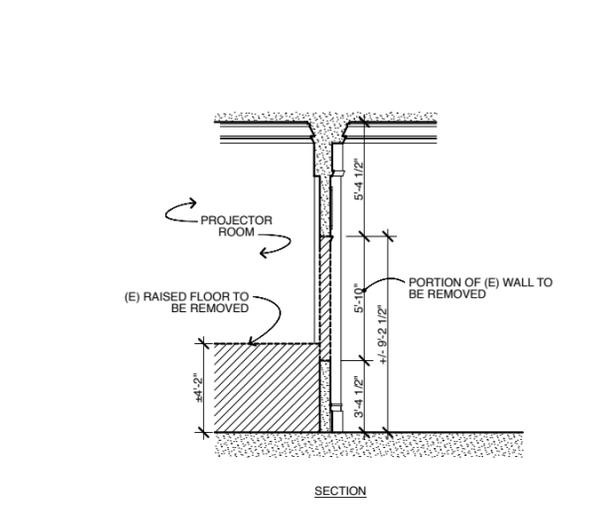
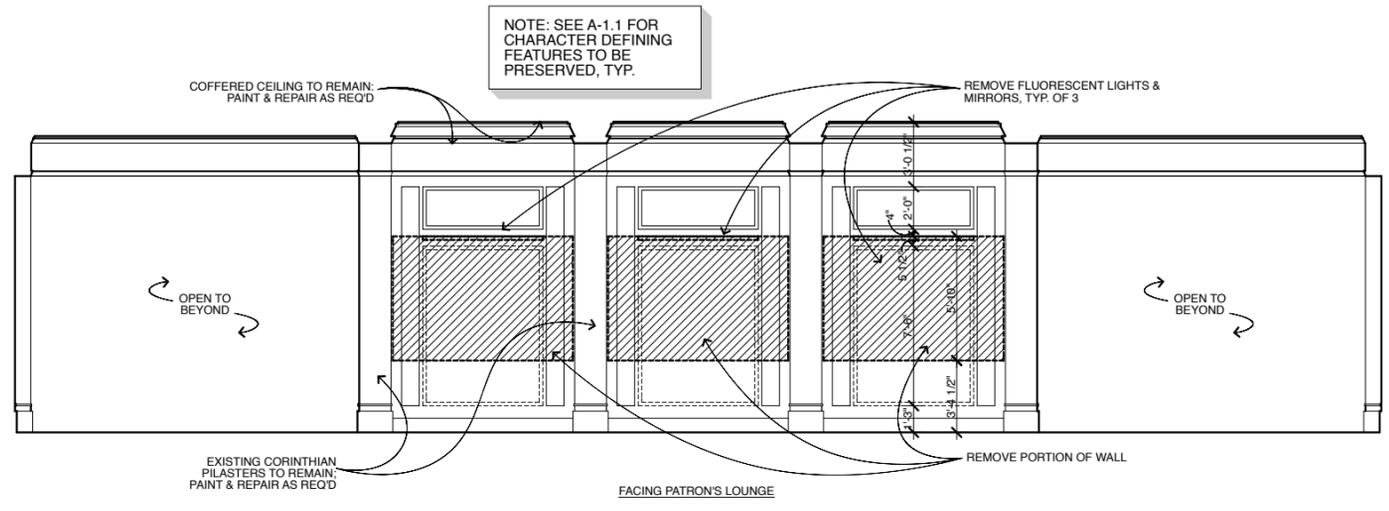
2550 MISSION STREET  
  
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LOT 007

INTERIOR ELEVATIONS -  
GROUND FLOOR

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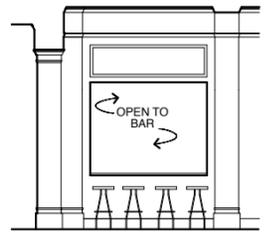
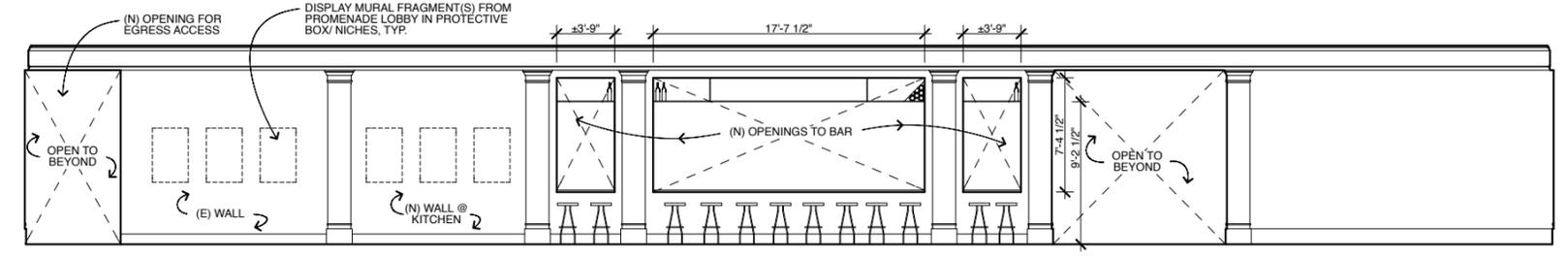
DATE:	2/7/2012
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CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

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**A-6.2**  
21 of 29 sheets



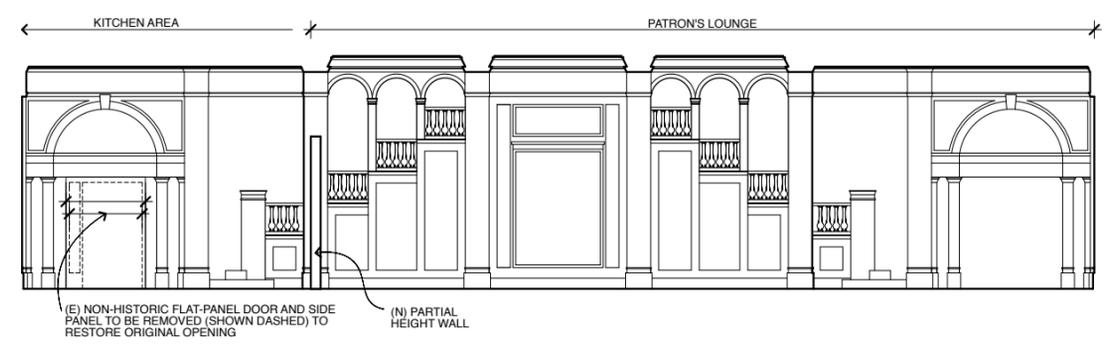
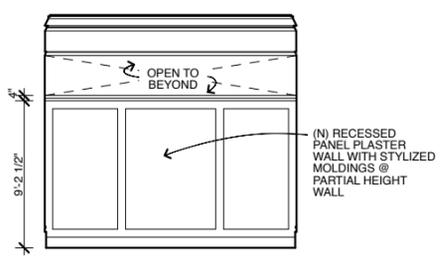
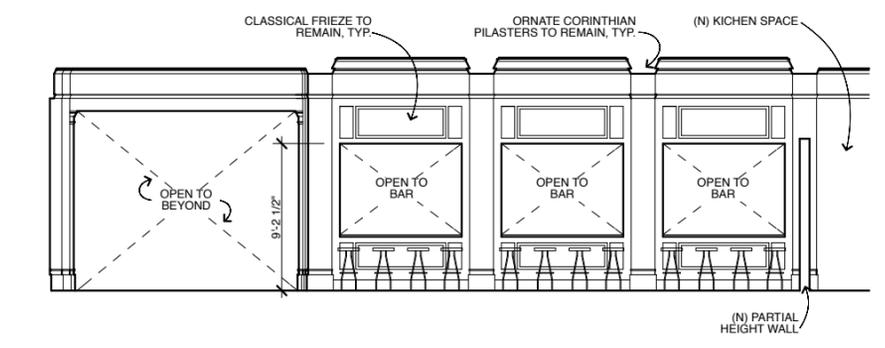
**1** PROPOSED MAIN BAR - SECTION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**2** EXISTING PROJECTION ROOM - ENLARGED DEMOLITION SECTION/ ELEVATION FOR CONVERSION TO MAIN BAR  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**3** GROUND FLOOR CIRCULATION (NORTH SIDE)/ PROPOSED MAIN BAR (AUDITORIUM SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

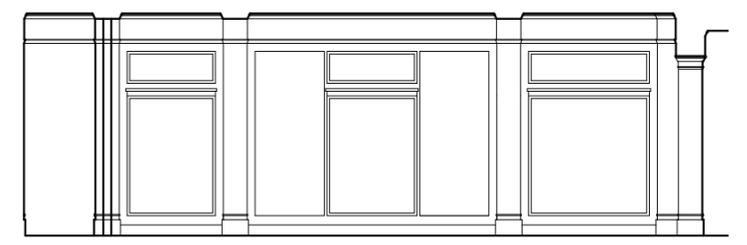
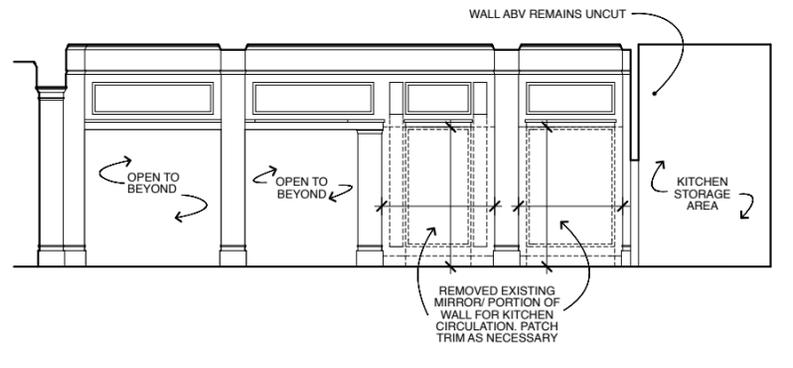
**4** PROPOSED MAIN BAR (EAST SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**5** PROPOSED MAIN BAR (PATRON'S LOUNGE SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

**6** PATRON'S LOUNGE (WEST SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

**7** PATRON'S LOUNGE (NORTH SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**8** KITCHEN WALL (FACING WEST)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

**9** PATRON'S LOUNGE (EAST SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
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BLOCK 3616/  
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INTERIOR ELEVATIONS -  
MEZZANINE & BALCONY

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DATE: 2/7/2012

SCALE:

DRAWN BY: JLL

CHECKED BY: TM

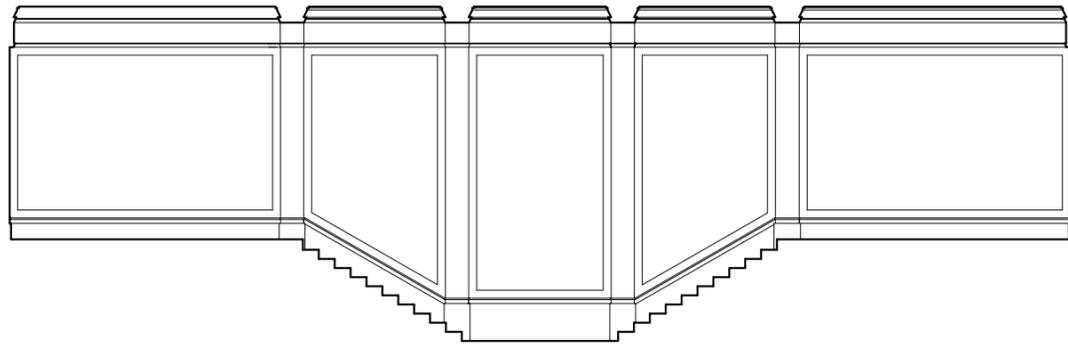
JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

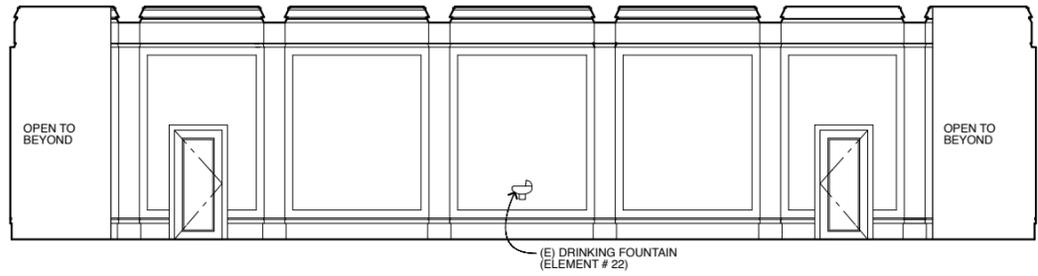
**A-6.3**

22 of 29 sheets

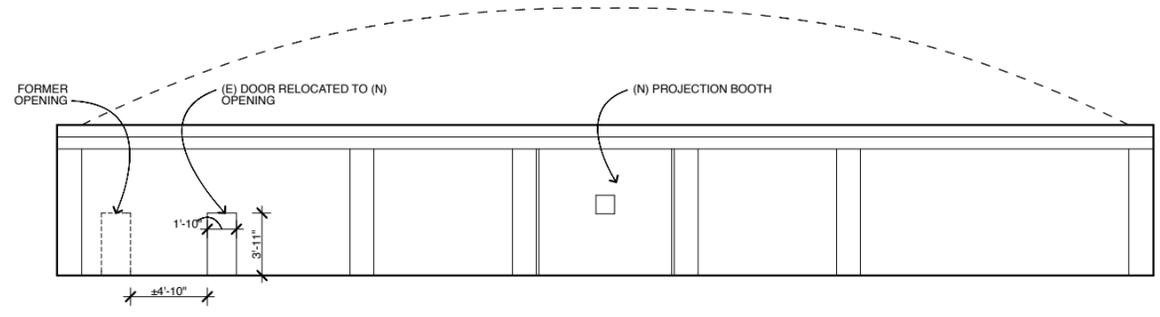
118 - 2550 MISSION STREET 2/7/2012 - PLNG\_R8



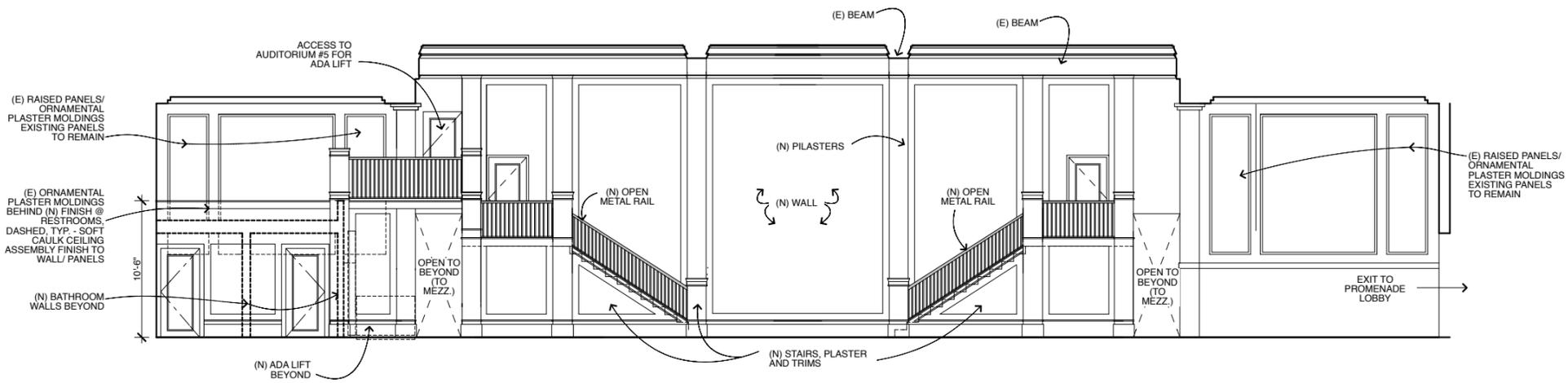
**1** MEZZANINE (NORTH SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**2** MEZZANINE (SOUTH SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**3** BACK WALL OF UPPER BALCONY (NORTH SIDE)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**4** BALCONY CIRCULATION (NORTH SIDE) (SEE 2/A-3.2 FOR SOUTH SIDE ELEVATION)  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
4	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
5	PLNG R4 10/15/07
6	PLNG R5 1/4/08
7	PLNG R6 3/29/11
8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



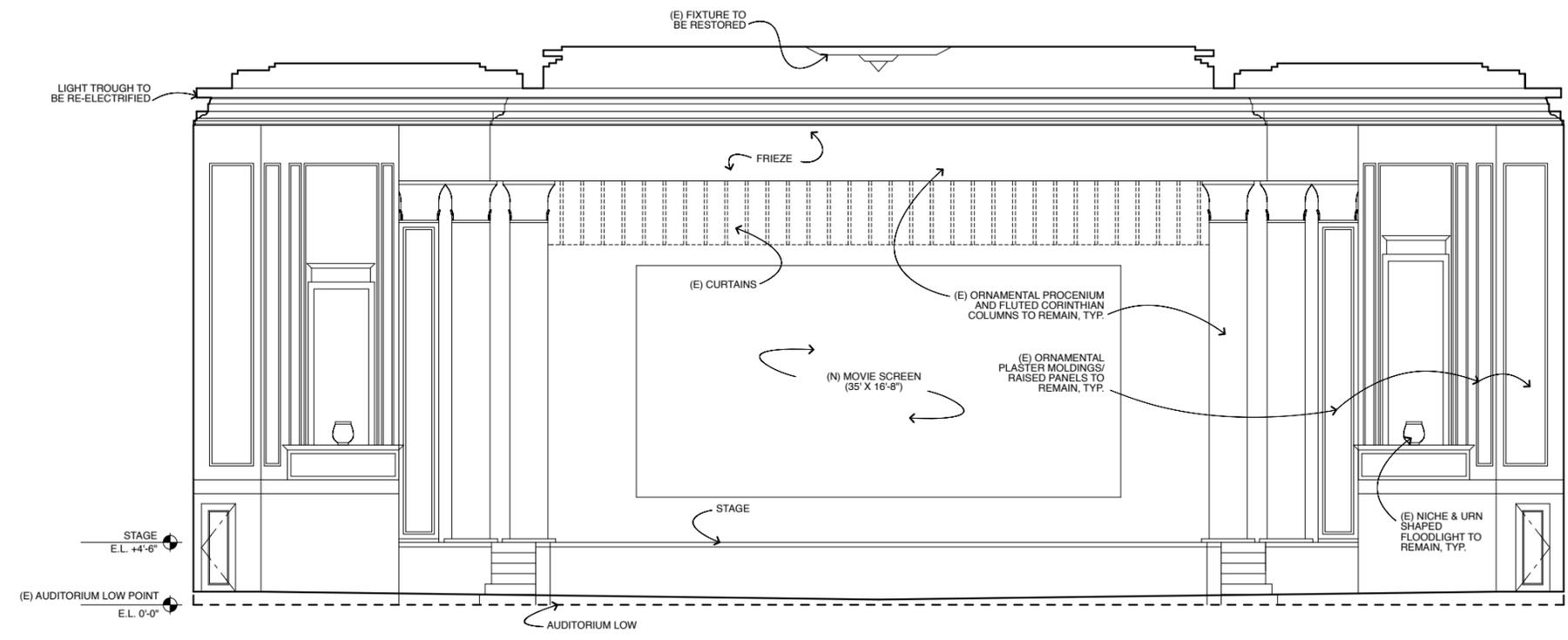
2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
  
BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

INTERIOR ELEVATIONS -  
MAIN AUDITORIUM

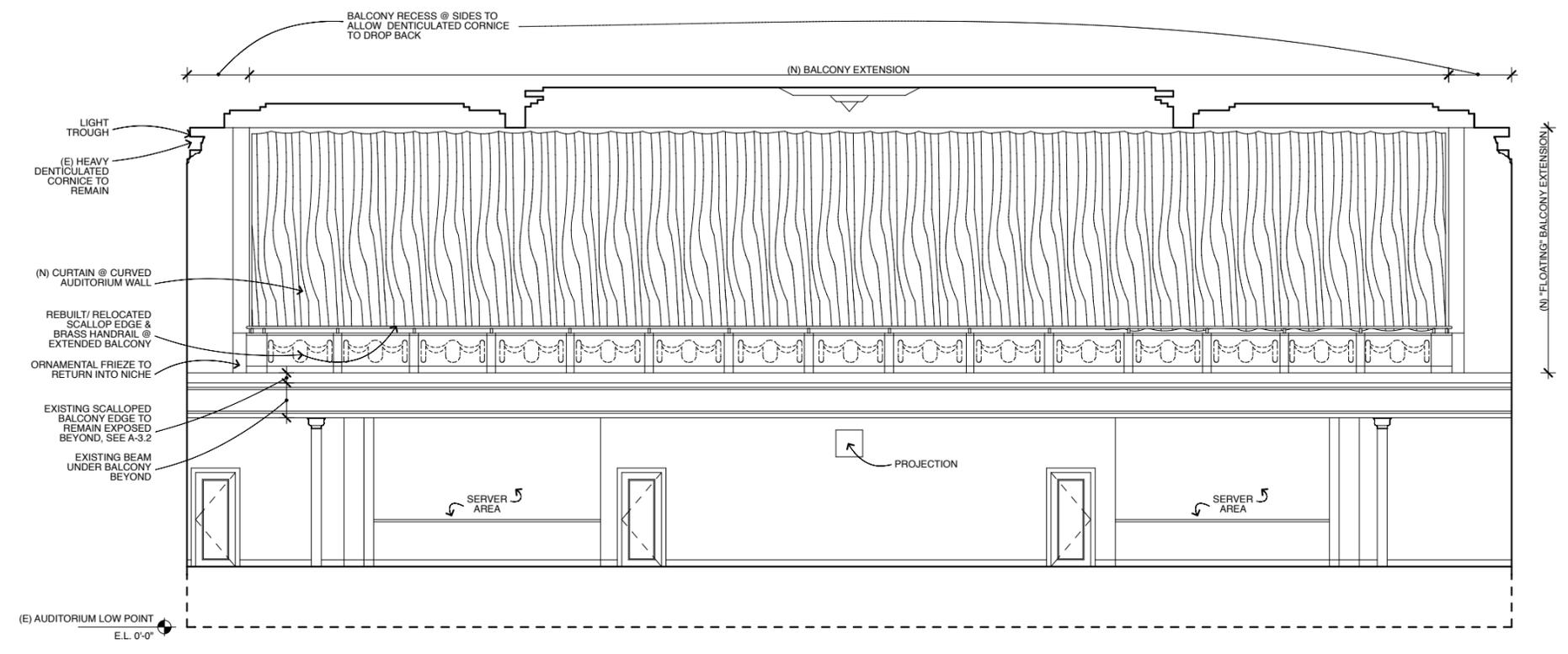
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JOB NO.:	1116

DRAWING  
**A-6.4**  
23 of 29 sheets



**1** MAIN AUDITORIUM: SOUTH WALL  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



**2** MAIN AUDITORIUM: NORTH WALL  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



**2550 MISSION STREET**

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

INTERIOR ELEVATIONS -  
AUDITORIUM SIDE  
ELEVATIONS

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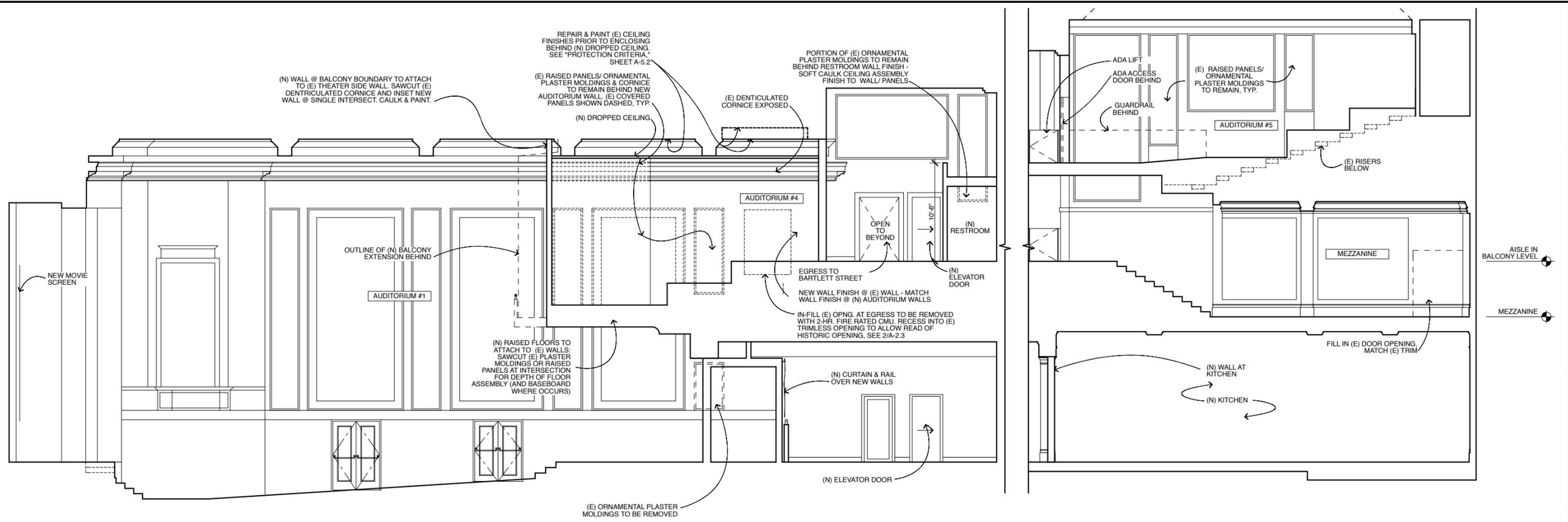
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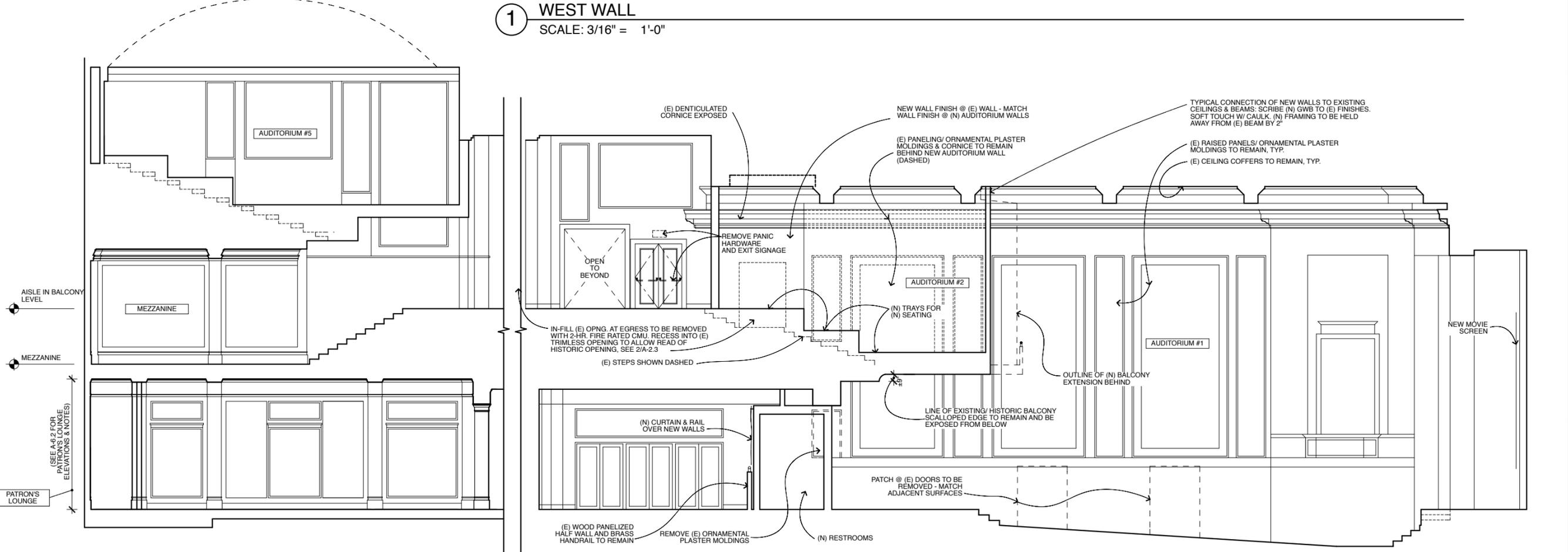
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SCALE:  
DRAWN BY: JLL  
CHECKED BY: TM  
JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING  
**A-6.5**  
24 of 29 sheets

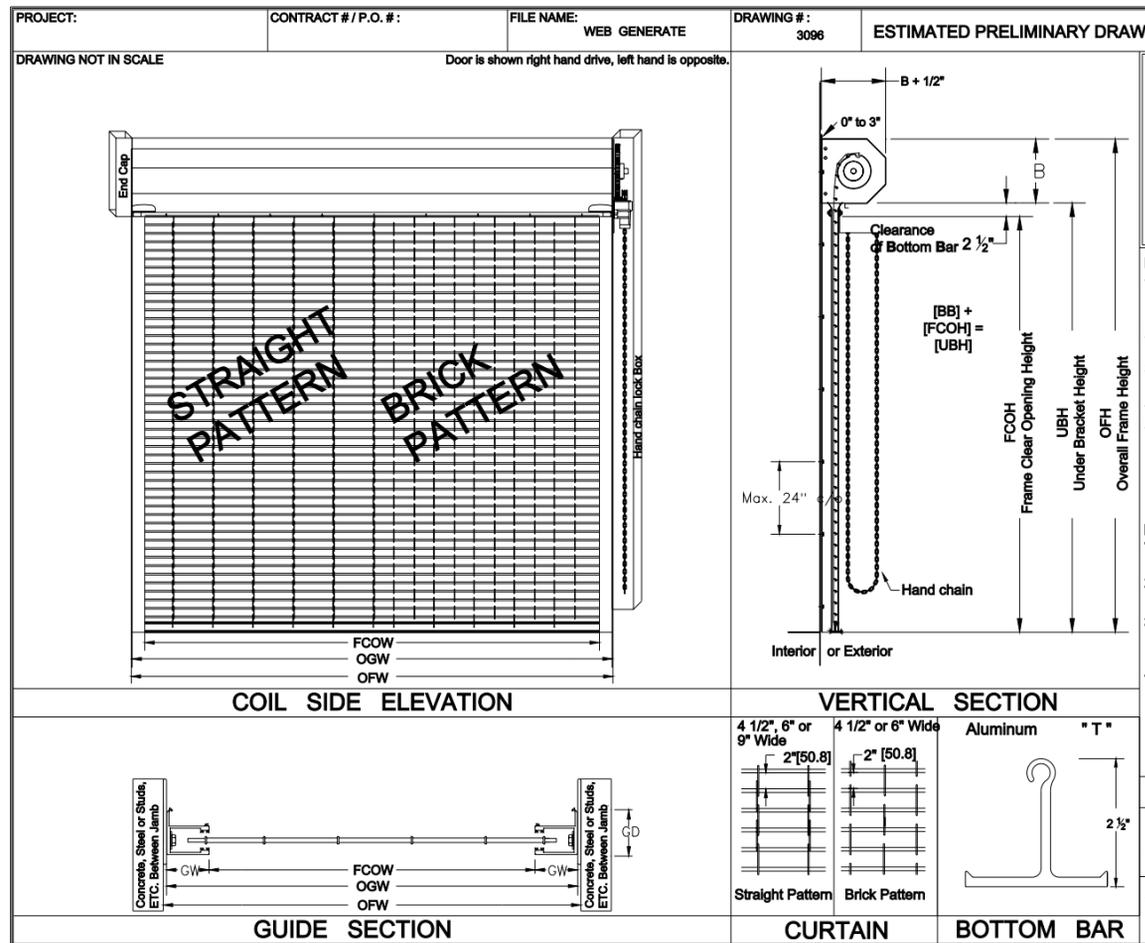


**1 WEST WALL**  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

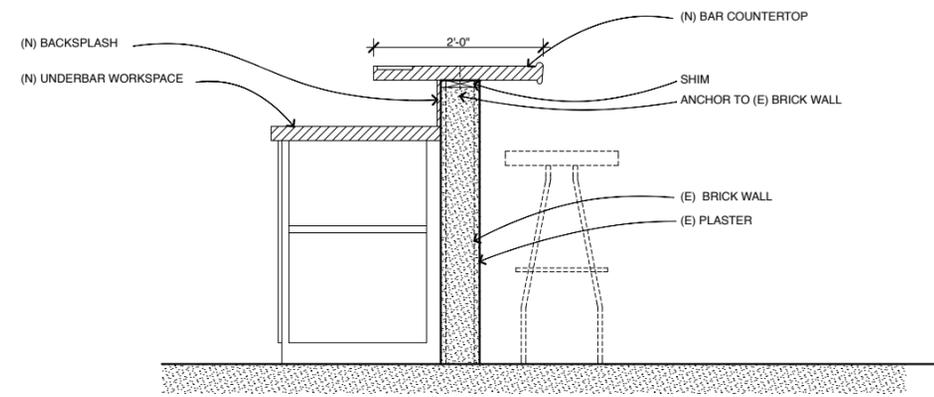


**2 EAST WALL**  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

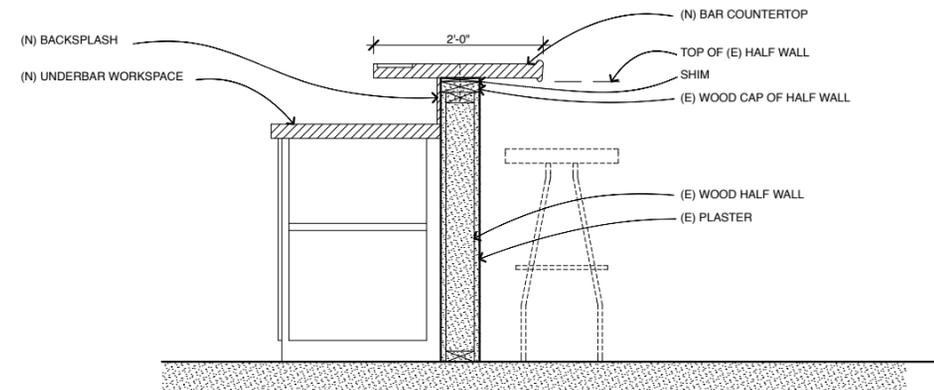
118 - 2550 MISSION STREET  
2/7/2012 - PLNG. RB



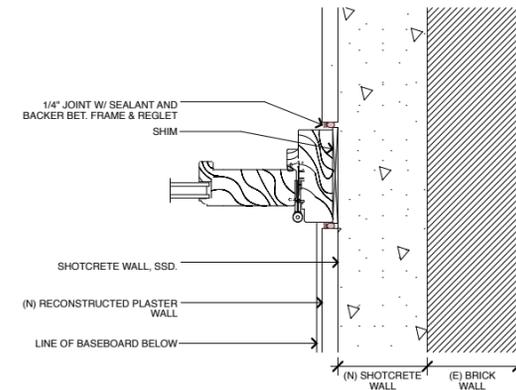
**4** DROP DOWN SECURITY GRILLE  
NOT TO SCALE



**1** BAR DETAIL @ EXISTING WOOD HALF WALL  
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



**2** BAR DETAIL @ EXISTING BRICK HALF WALL  
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



**3** VESTIBULE DOOR JAMB @ PROMENADE LOBBY  
SCALE: 3" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

DETAILS

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SCALE:	
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CHECKED BY:	TM
JOB NO.:	1116

DRAWING

**A-7.1**

Revisions:

1	PLNG SET 3/30/06
2	PLNG R1 6/12/06
3	PLNG R2 9/12/06
4	PLNG R3 11/2/06
5	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
6	PLNG R4 10/15/07
7	PLNG R5 1/4/08
8	PLNG R6 3/29/11
9	PLNG R7 1/21/12
10	PLNG R8 2/7/12



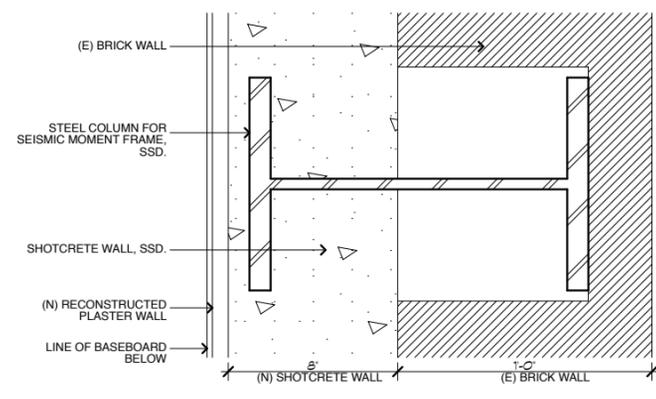
2550 MISSION STREET  
  
NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE  
  
BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

DETAILS: PROMENADE LOBBY

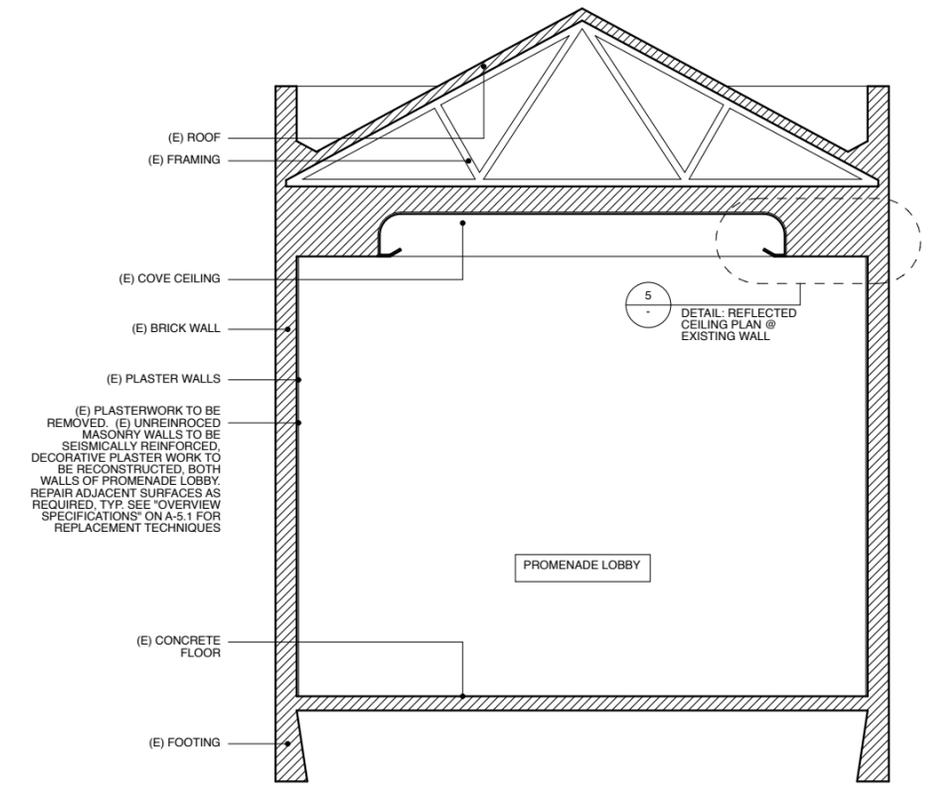
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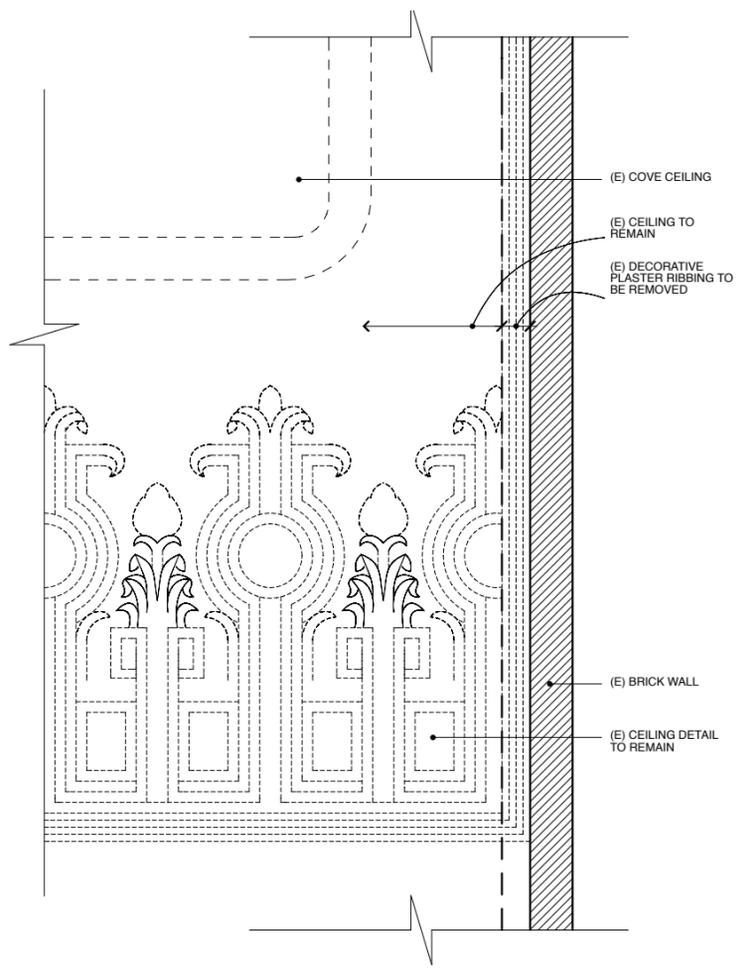
DRAWING  
**A-7.2**  
26 of 29 sheets



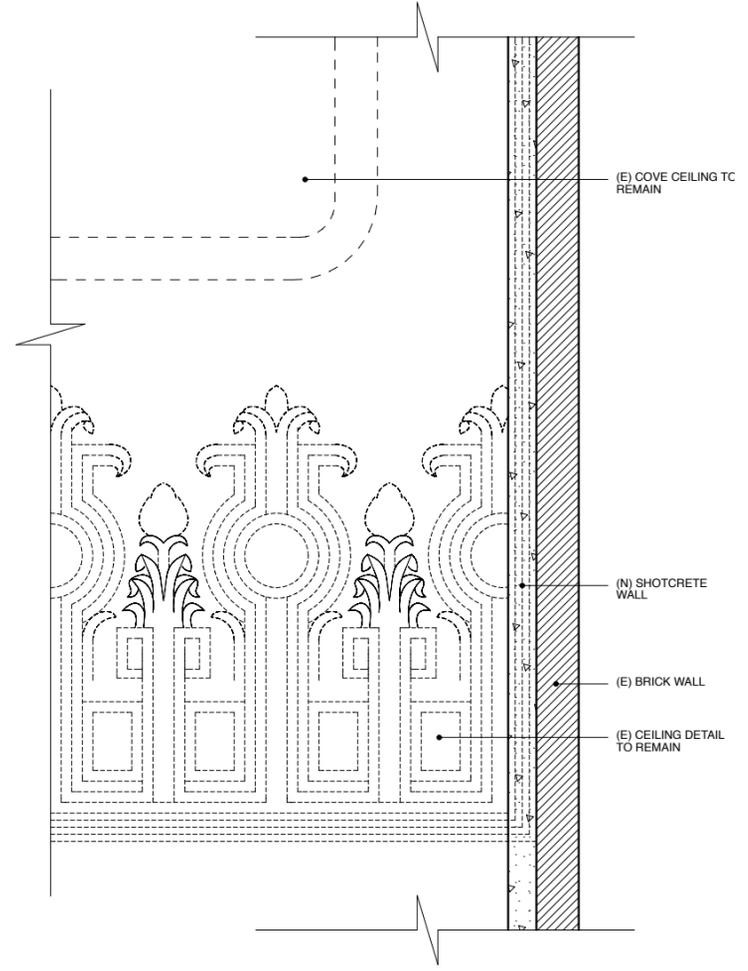
**4** MOMENT FRAME @ PROMENADE LOBBY  
SCALE: 3" = 1'-0"



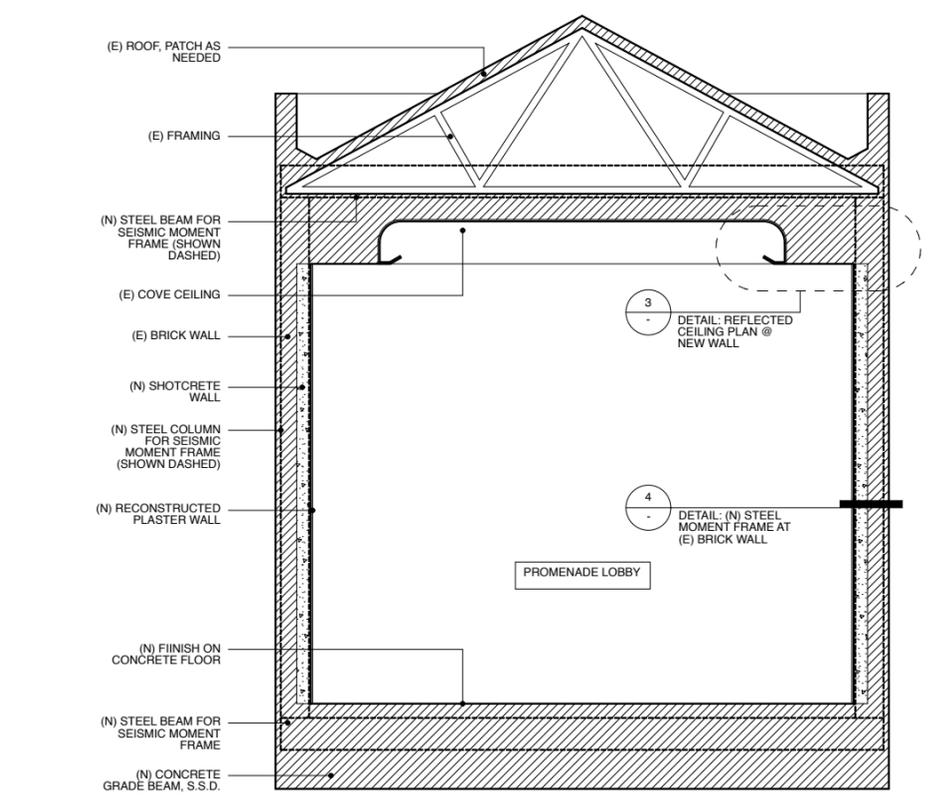
**2** EXISTING LOBBY SECTION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**5** EXISTING LOBBY CEILING  
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



**3** PROPOSED LOBBY CEILING  
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



**1** PROPOSED LOBBY SECTION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

PLNG SET 3/30/06
1 PLNG R1 6/12/06
2 PLNG R2 9/12/06
3 PLNG R3 11/2/06
4 PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
5 PLNG R4 10/15/07
6 PLNG R5 1/4/08
7 PLNG R6 3/29/11
8 PLNG R7 1/21/12
9 PLNG R8 2/7/12



**2550 MISSION STREET**

NEW MISSION THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

ELECTRICAL/  
MECHANICAL FIRST  
FLOOR & ORCHESTRA PIT

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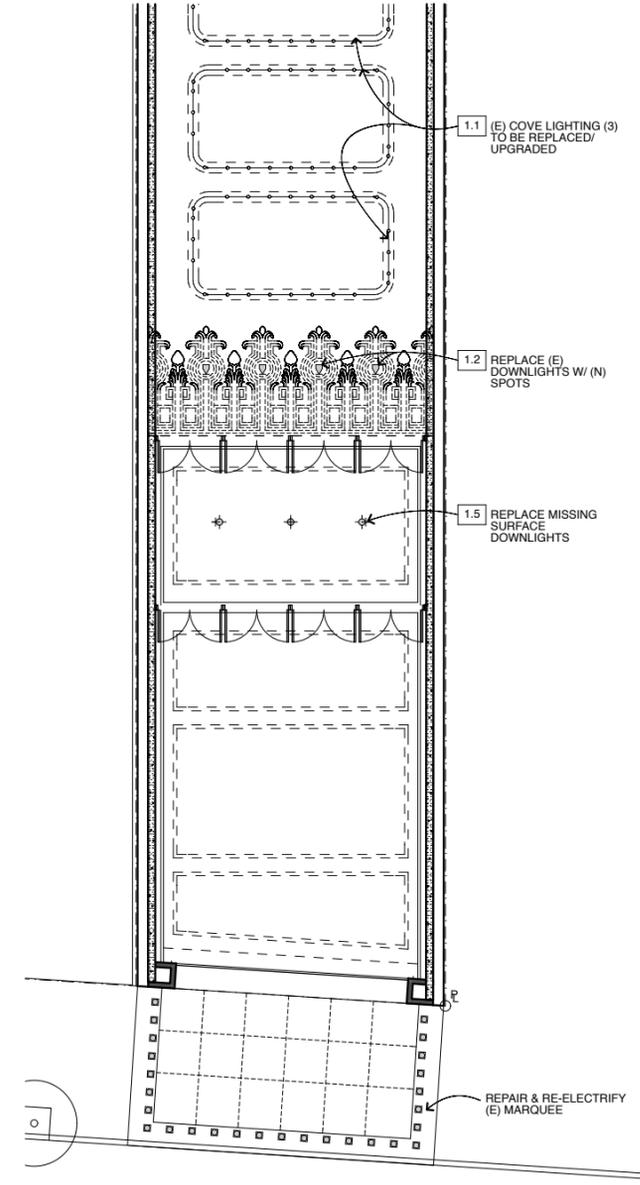
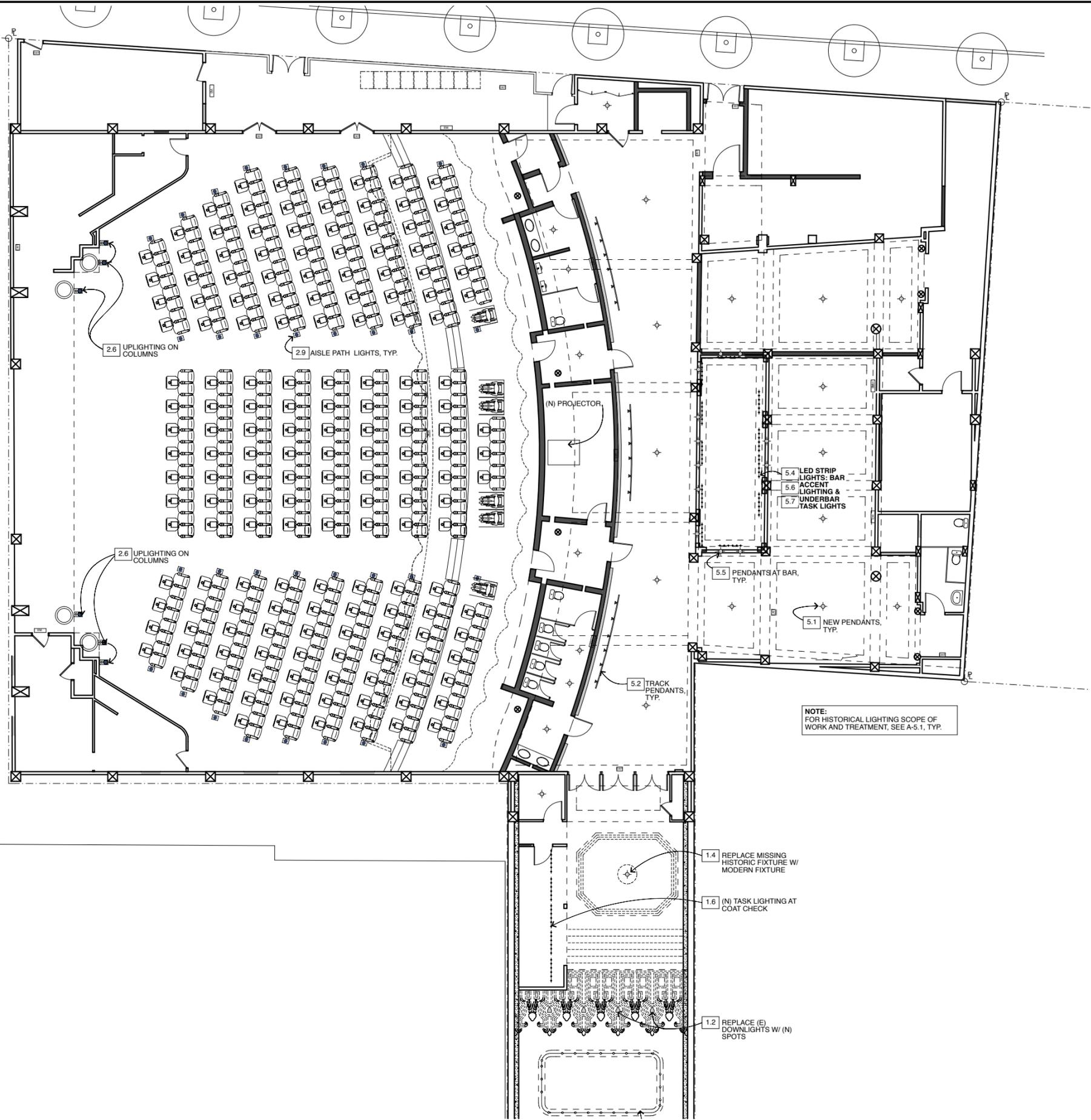
DRAWING

**E/M-1**

27 of 29 sheets

**ELECTRICAL LEGEND:**

1.5	FIXTURE TAG	4	4-WAY SWITCH
○	RECESSED INCANDESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOC. WALL DIMMER
□	RECESSED FLUORESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	REMOTE TRANSFORMER
○	RECESSED WALL WASHER	⌋	DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
◇	SURFACE MTD. CEILING FIXTURE/PENDANT	⌋	WATERPROOF DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
⊕	CEILING MOUNTED PULL CHAIN	⌋	DUPLEX RECEPT. GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER
○	WALL MTD. FIXTURE	⌋	FLUSH FLOOR MTD. DUPLEX RECEPT.
—	CEILING MTD. FLUORESCENT	⌋	IONIZATION SMOKE DETECTOR, 120V AC
—	SURFACE MTD. FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⌋	TELEPHONE OUTLET
—	UNDER CABINET FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⌋	PUSH BUTTON
—	STRIP LIGHTING	⌋	CHIME W/LOW VOLTAGE
—	SURFACE OR PENDANT MOUNTED TRACK FIXTURE	⌋	TRANSFORMER
⌋	RECESSED FLR/RISE MTD. PATH LIGHT	⌋	THERMOSTAT
⌋	RECESSED FLR MOUNTED UPLIGHT	⌋	INTERCOM PHONE
⌋	SPOTLIGHT	⌋	HOSE BIB
⌋	CEILING EXHAUST FAN	⌋	GAS HOOK-UP
⌋	RECESSED FAN/LIGHT COMBO	⌋	WATER CONNECTION
⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOCATION SWITCH	⌋	LIGHTED EXIT SIGN W/ BATTERY BACK-UP
⌋	3-WAY SWITCH	⌋	EMERGENCY LIGHTS



**2** FIRST FLOOR MECHANICAL/ ELECTRICAL PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

**1** FIRST FLOOR MECHANICAL/ ELECTRICAL PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
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6	PLNG R5 1/4/08
7	PLNG R6 3/29/11
8	PLNG R7 1/21/12
9	PLNG R8 2/7/12



2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

ELECTRICAL/  
MECHANICAL MEZZANINE

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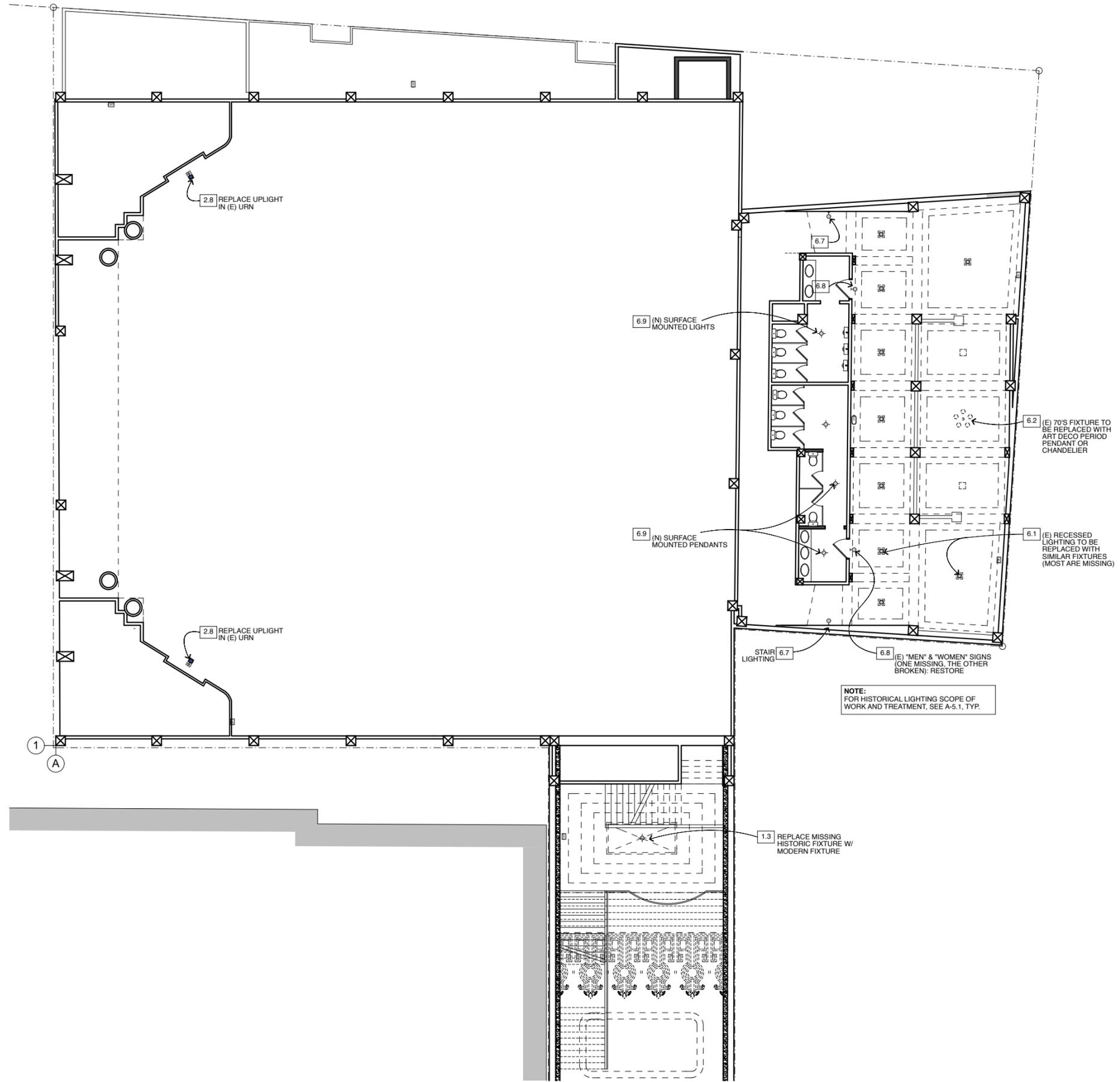
DRAWING

**E/M-2**

28 of 29 sheets

**ELECTRICAL LEGEND:**

1.5	FIXTURE TAG	4	4-WAY SWITCH
○	RECESSED INCANDESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOC. WALL DIMMER
◻	RECESSED FLUORESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	REMOTE TRANSFORMER
○	RECESSED WALL WASHER	⊕	DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
⊕	SURFACE MTD. CEILING FIXTURE/PENDANT	⊕WP	WATERPROOF DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
⊕P.C.	CEILING MOUNTED PULL CHAIN	⊕GFCI	DUPLEX RECEPT. GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER
○	WALL MTD. FIXTURE	⊕	FLUSH FLOOR MTD. DUPLEX RECEPT.
—	CEILING MTD. FLUORESCENT	⊕SD	IONIZATION SMOKE DETECTOR, 120V AC
—	SURFACE MTD. FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⌋	TELEPHONE OUTLET
—	UNDER CABINET FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⊕	PUSH BUTTON
—	STRIP LIGHTING	⊕	CHIME W/LOW VOLTAGE
—	SURFACE OR PENDANT MOUNTED TRACK FIXTURE	⊕	TRANSFORMER
⊕	RECESSED FLR/RISE MTD. PATH LIGHT	⊕	THERMOSTAT
⊕	RECESSED FLR MOUNTED UPLIGHT	⊕	INTERCOM PHONE
⊕	SPOTLIGHT	HB+	HOSE BIB
⊕	CEILING EXHAUST FAN	G+	GAS HOOK-UP
⊕	RECESSED FAN/ LIGHT COMBO	W+	WATER CONNECTION
⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOCATION SWITCH	⊕	LIGHTED EXIT SIGN W/ BATTERY BACK-UP
⌋	3-WAY SWITCH	⊕	EMERGENCY LIGHTS



**1** MEZZANINE MECHANICAL/ ELECTRICAL PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

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Revisions:

	PLNG SET 3/30/06
1	PLNG R1 6/12/06
2	PLNG R2 9/12/06
3	PLNG R3 11/2/06
4	PRE-APP SET 1/22/07
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2550 MISSION STREET

NEW MISSION  
THEATER  
RENOVATION BY  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

BLOCK 3616/  
LOT 007

ELECTRICAL/  
MECHANICAL BALCONY

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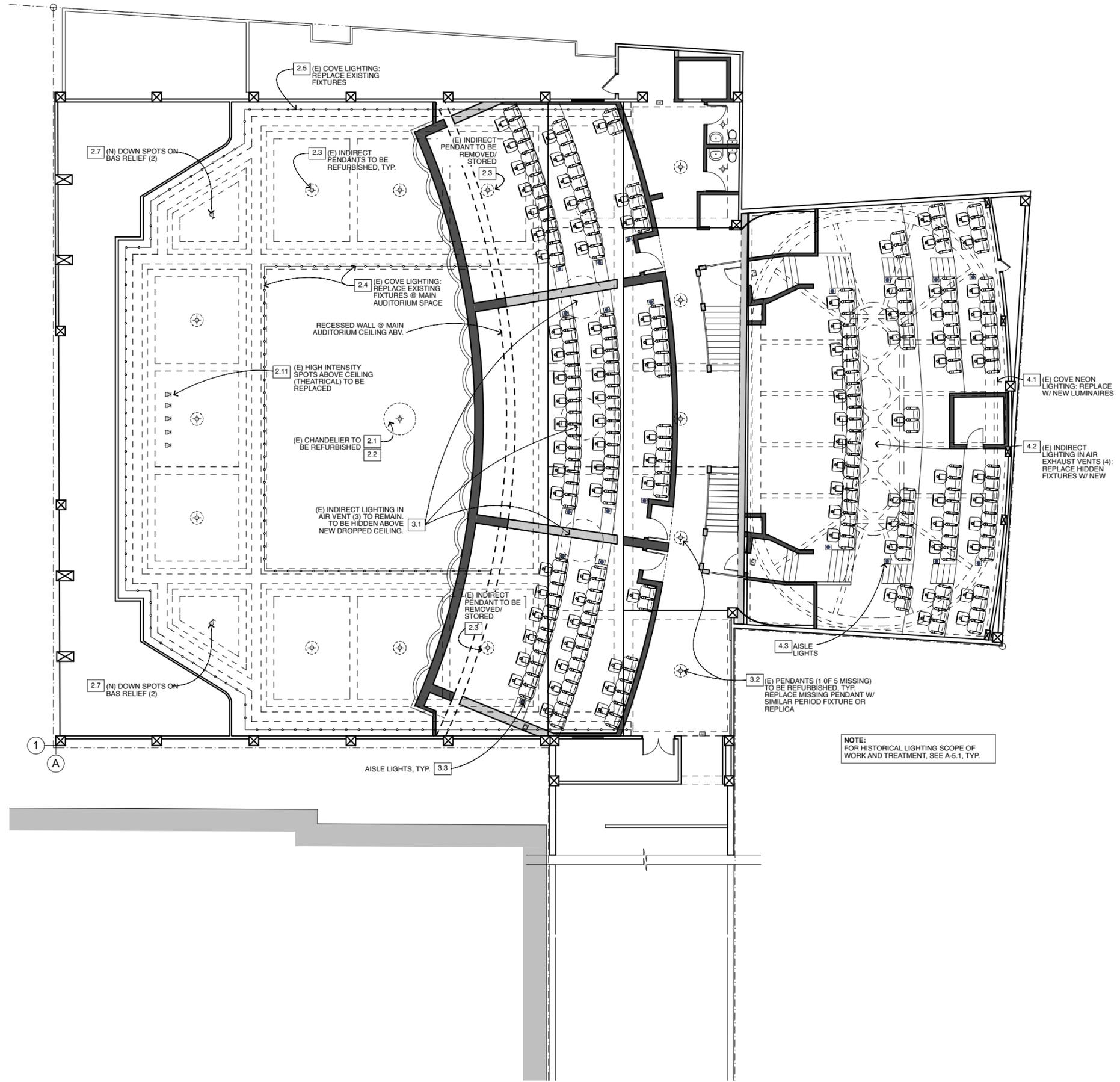
JOB NO.: 1116

DRAWING

**E/M-3**

**ELECTRICAL LEGEND:**

1.5	FIXTURE TAG	4	4-WAY SWITCH
○	RECESSED INCANDESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOC. WALL DIMMER
□	RECESSED FLUORESCENT @ CEILING	⌋	REMOTE TRANSFORMER
○	RECESSED WALL WASHER	⌋	DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
⊕	SURFACE MTD. CEILING FIXTURE/PENDANT	⌋	WATERPROOF DUPLEX RECEPTACLE
⊕	CEILING MOUNTED PULL CHAIN	⌋	DUPLEX RECEPT. GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER
○	WALL MTD. FIXTURE	⌋	FLUSH FLOOR MTD. DUPLEX RECEPT.
—	CEILING MTD. FLUORESCENT	⌋	IONIZATION SMOKE DETECTOR, 120V AC
—	SURFACE MTD. FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⌋	TELEPHONE OUTLET
—	UNDER CABINET FLUORESCENT FIXTURE	⌋	PUSH BUTTON
—	STRIP LIGHTING	⌋	CHIME W/LOW VOLTAGE
—	SURFACE OR PENDANT MOUNTED TRACK FIXTURE	⌋	TRANSFORMER
⌋	RECESSED FLR/RISE MTD. PATH LIGHT	⌋	THERMOSTAT
⌋	RECESSED FLR MOUNTED UPLIGHT	⌋	INTERCOM PHONE
⌋	SPOTLIGHT	⌋	HOSE BIB
⌋	CEILING EXHAUST FAN	⌋	GAS HOOK-UP
⌋	RECESSED FAN/LIGHT COMBO	⌋	WATER CONNECTION
⌋	SINGLE POLE AND MULTI-LOCATION SWITCH	⌋	LIGHTED EXIT SIGN W/ BATTERY BACK-UP
⌋	3-WAY SWITCH	⌋	EMERGENCY LIGHTS



**NOTE:**  
FOR HISTORICAL LIGHTING SCOPE OF WORK AND TREATMENT, SEE A-5.1, TYP.

**1 BALCONY MECHANICAL/ ELECTRICAL PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

NEW MISSION THEATER  
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
[11227]

Prepared for  
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMAS &  
KERMAN/MORRIS ARCHITECTS



**PAGE & TURNBULL**

imagining change in historic environments through design, research, and technology

FEBRUARY 6, 2012

FINAL



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas for proposed alterations to the New Mission Theater at 2550 Mission Street (portion of APN 3616/007) in San Francisco's Mission District (**Figure 1**). The New Mission Theater is a single-screen movie theater originally built in 1910, considerably enlarged and redesigned in 1916, and renovated in the Art Deco style in 1932. The 1916 design is attributed to the prominent San Francisco architectural firm the Reid Brothers, and Timothy Pflueger designed the 1932 renovation project. The building has been vacant since 2003.

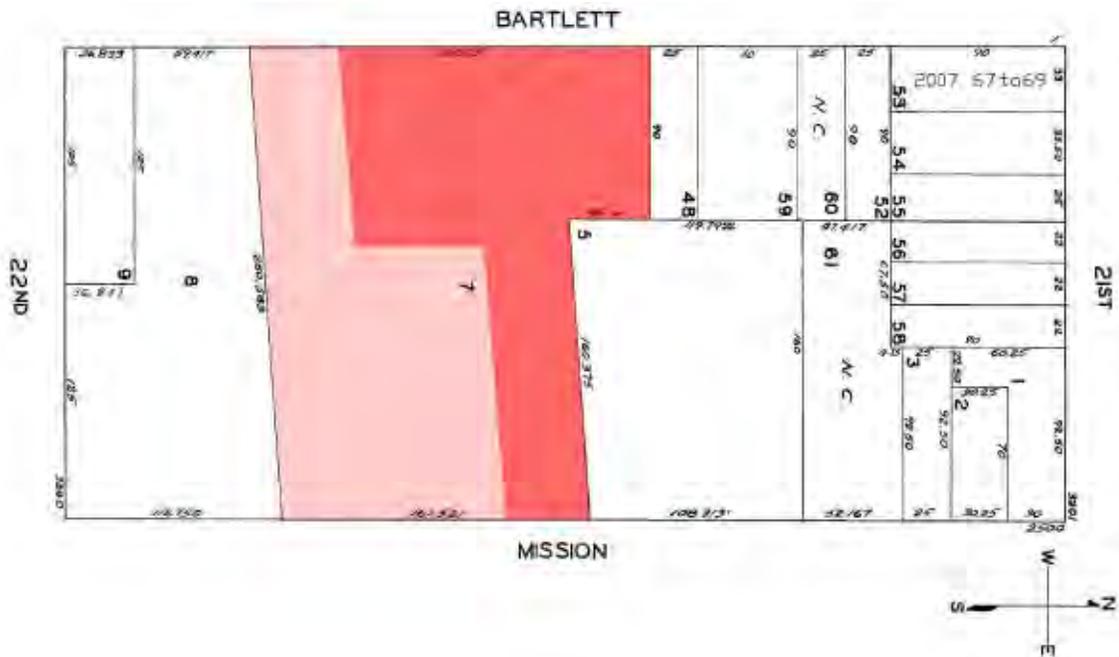


Fig. 1. Block map with approximate boundaries of the New Mission Theater shown in dark red.

The rest of the lot, which is shown in light red, is occupied by another building.

Source: San Francisco Assessor. Edited by author.

The proposed project at the New Mission Theater will adapt the historic theater into a “drafthouse cinema,” a five-screen theater with food and alcoholic beverage service. Work includes seismic strengthening, accessibility upgrades in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and various renovations that will bring the property into compliance with current building and safety codes. The scope of the proposed project, which will retain the building’s historic use as a movie theater, will include installation of freestanding floor space at the historic balcony, expanded restroom facilities, and systems upgrades that will be sensitively designed to minimally affect historic materials. These improvements will increase the building’s functionality for continuing the historic theater use and provide safe and universal access to the building. The project will utilize the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC) to facilitate this change. Additionally, the proposed project will repair, rehabilitate, and maintain the exterior and interior architectural features that convey the building’s historic significance in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This report follows the outline provided by the San Francisco Planning Department for Historic Resource Evaluation Reports, and provides a building description, an abbreviated historic context statement, and an examination of the current historic status for the New Mission Theater at 2550 Mission Street. The report also includes an identification of the character-defining features of the theater, an updated evaluation of the property's eligibility for continued listing in the National Register and California Register, and an evaluation of the proposed project under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

Page & Turnbull prepared this report using previous documentation of the New Mission Theater, namely the National Register Nomination (2001) and the San Francisco Landmark Nomination (2003). Additional research was collected at various local repositories, including San Francisco Assessor's Records, San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, and various online resources.

The analysis of the proposed project included in this report is based upon architectural drawings prepared by Kerman Morris Architects and dated 4 February 2012.

## II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The New Mission Theater is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). It is also a designated City Landmark under Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code. The New Mission Theater is therefore considered an historical resource for the purposes of review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Page & Turnbull finds that the proposed project is designed in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and therefore will not cause a significant adverse effect to historical resources under CEQA.

### III. CURRENT HISTORIC STATUS

This section examines the national, state, and local historical ratings currently assigned to the New Mission Theater at 2550 Mission Street: The following table summarizes the theater’s current ratings and status (**Table 1**).

**Table 1. New Mission Theater Significance Summary**

Address	2550 Mission Street
APN	3616/007 (portion of parcel)
Construction Date	1916-1917 (reconstructed)
Major Alterations	1932 (remodeled)
National Register of Historic Places	Yes (2001)
California Register of Historical Resources	Yes (2001)
Article 10 of SF Planning Code (Landmarks)	#245 (2004)
SF Architectural Heritage	--
<i>Here Today</i>	--
1968 Junior League Files	--
1976 DCP Survey (-2 to 5, with 5 being best)	--
UMB Survey (1990)	Yes
Historic District	--
CHRSC	1S , 3S
<b>Historical Resource under CEQA</b>	<b>Yes (A – Known Resource)</b>

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation’s most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

The New Mission Theater is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (#01001206). In 2001 it was determined to be significant under Criterion C (Design/Construction). The period of significance is 1916-1917, the duration of the Reid Brothers’ redesign of an earlier theater followed by a balcony enlargement, and 1932, the year the theater was remodeled in the Art Deco style by Timothy Pflueger. The following summary of significance is from the 2001 National Register Nomination Form:

The New Mission Theater is the best surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in the Mission District and one of only a handful surviving in San Francisco with any degree of integrity. Furthermore, the building is an important work of two regionally significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger. Both firms were recognized as being “masters” within the architecture profession when hired to work on the New Mission Theater. The New Mission auditorium was the first movie theater interior designed by the Reid Brothers and today it remains the most intact theater interior designed by the firm that exists. [... Timothy Pflueger’s] work on the New Mission Theater is the earliest, the most

intact and only surviving example of the architect's work in theater design, in the Art Deco style, in San Francisco. Finally, with its soaring Art Deco façade and lobby, as well as its excellently preserved Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, the New Mission Theater displays a very high level of artistic value and craftsmanship that is unrealizable today.<sup>1</sup>

Further information about this nomination is provided in the "Evaluation" section of this report, and a copy of the nomination form is included as "Appendix A."

## CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

Properties listed in the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register; therefore, the New Mission Theater is also listed in the California Register.

## SAN FRANCISCO CITY LANDMARKS

San Francisco City Landmarks are buildings, properties, structures, sites, districts and objects of "special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value and are an important part of the City's historical and architectural heritage."<sup>2</sup> Adopted in 1967 as Article 10 of the City Planning Code, the San Francisco City Landmark program protects listed buildings from inappropriate alterations and demolitions through review by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. These properties are important to the city's history and help to provide significant and unique examples of the past that are irreplaceable. In addition, these landmarks help to protect the surrounding neighborhood development and enhance the educational and cultural dimension of the city. As of May 2008, there are 259 landmark sites, eleven historic districts, and nine Structures of Merit in San Francisco that are subject to Article 10.

The New Mission Theater was designated San Francisco Landmark #245 in 2004. The theater was evaluated based on National Register criteria and its significance, as defined by the landmark nomination, was determined to be twofold. Under Criterion A (Event), the significance of the New Mission Theater exists in "its association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century." Under Criterion C (Design/Construction), it is "an excellent and intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and two distinct designs from two of San Francisco's most significant architectural firms, the Reid Brothers and Miller and Pflueger, Architects."<sup>3</sup> The nomination includes a list of significant features that should be preserved. Exterior features include the Art Deco façade on Mission Street, the blade sign that reads "New

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<sup>1</sup> "New Mission Theater," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, Pages 6-7. See the completed nomination form for additional information.

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, *Preservation Bulletin No. 9 – Landmarks*. (San Francisco, CA: January 2003)

<sup>3</sup> "San Francisco Planning Commission Resolution No. 16736" (4 March 2004), 1.

Mission,” the cantilevered marquee, and the streamlined parapet. A variety of interior features to be preserved are located in the promenade lobby, auditorium, patrons’ lounge, and balcony.<sup>4</sup>

Further information about this nomination is provided in the “Evaluation” section of this report, and a copy of the nomination form is included as “Appendix B.”

## CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS CODE

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of “1” to “7” to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register or NR) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register or CR). Properties with a Status Code of “1” or “2” are either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of “3” or “4” appear to be eligible for listing in either register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of “5” have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual importance. Properties with a Status Code of “6” are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of “7” means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register, or needs reevaluation.

The New Mission Theater is listed in the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) database with Status Codes of “1S,” meaning that the building is an “individual property listed in the National Register by the Keeper; listed in the California Register,” and “3S,” meaning that the building “appears eligible for listing in the National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation.”

## SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

San Francisco Architectural Heritage (Heritage) is the city’s oldest not-for-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness and preservation of San Francisco’s unique architectural heritage. Heritage has completed several major architectural surveys in San Francisco, the most important of which was the 1977-78 Downtown Survey. This survey, published in publication *Splendid Survivors* in 1978, forms the basis of San Francisco’s Downtown Plan. Heritage ratings, which range from “D” (minor or no importance) to “A” (highest importance), are analogous to Categories V through I of Article 11 of the San Francisco Planning Code, although the Planning Department did use their own methodology to reach their own findings. In 1984, the original survey area was expanded from the Downtown to include the South of Market area in a survey called “Splendid Extended.”

The New Mission Theater is not included in the 1977-78 Downtown Survey or *Splendid Survivors*.

## 1976 DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY SURVEY

The 1976 Department of City Planning Architectural Quality Survey (1976 DCP Survey) is what is referred to in preservation parlance as a “reconnaissance” or “windshield” survey. The survey looked at the entire City and County of San Francisco to identify and rate architecturally significant buildings and structures on a scale of “-2” (detrimental) to “+5” (extraordinary). No research was performed and the potential historical significance of a resource was not considered when a rating was assigned. Buildings rated “3” or higher in the survey represent approximately the top two percent of San

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 2-3.

Francisco's building stock in terms of architectural significance. However, it should be noted here that the 1976 DCP Survey has come under increasing scrutiny over the past decade due to the fact that it has not been updated in over twenty-five years. As a result, the 1976 DCP Survey has not been officially recognized by the San Francisco Planning Department as a valid local register of historic resources for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The New Mission Theater is not included in the 1976 Architectural Quality Survey.

### UNREINFORCED MASONRY BUILDING (UMB) SURVEY

The 1990 Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey was a reconnaissance-level survey undertaken by the San Francisco Planning Department (Planning Department) after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake to evaluate the significance of the City's large stock of unreinforced masonry buildings that may have been affected by the disaster. Between 1990 and 1992, the Planning Department surveyed more than 2,000 privately owned unreinforced masonry buildings in San Francisco. The Landmarks Board prioritized the UMB Survey into three groups – Priority I, Priority II, and Priority III. Due to the large number of buildings that were surveyed, very little archival research or fieldwork could be done.

The New Mission Theater was included in the 1990 UMB Survey and was not assigned a priority rating. Only the vestibule and promenade lobby are unreinforced brick masonry; the 1916-17 auditorium is reinforced concrete.

### SOUTH MISSION HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

The following description of the South Mission Historic Resource Survey is from the San Francisco Planning Department web site:

The South Mission Survey was conducted by Planning Department staff, with assistance from the historic architecture firm of Page & Turnbull, as one of several planning studies that will be used to inform the implementation of the Mission Area Plan. The South Mission Survey resulted in documentation and assessment of approximately 3,800 individual buildings, including nearly 1,000 individual historic properties and contributors to 13 historic districts. The South Mission Survey included the area that is bounded approximately by 20th Street to the north, Cesar Chavez Street to the south, Potrero Avenue to the east, and Guerrero Street to the west. The South Mission Survey was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission on November 17, 2011.<sup>5</sup>

Since the New Mission Theater was designated as a historic resource previous to the South Mission Historic Resource Survey, it was included in the survey findings as an individual historic resource. It is not a contributing resource to any historic district (**Figure 2**).

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<sup>5</sup> "South Mission Historic Resource Survey," *San Francisco Planning Department*, web site accessed 11 January 2012 from: <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2473>.



Fig. 2. Parcel map of the South Mission Survey area, with the New Mission Theater marked with a star.  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department; edited by author.

## IV. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The New Mission Theater at 2550 Mission Street is located on an irregularly-shaped parcel on the east side of Mission Street in the Mission District. Another building, the Giant Value Store, occupies the same parcel as the New Mission Theater. As described in the Ordinance No. 87-04, “The boundaries of the [New Mission Theater] landmark are coterminous with the footprint of the New Mission Theater and do not include any other buildings on the lot.”<sup>6</sup>

Reconstructed from an earlier theater building in 1915-16 and partially redesigned in 1932, the New Mission Theater’s principal façade on Mission Street features a synthesis of Art Deco and Moderne elements, including a towering 70-foot pylon sign that reads “New Mission” (**Figure 3**). The rear façade on Bartlett Street is minimally adorned and features utilitarian finishes. The building is roughly L-shaped in plan and features an unreinforced brick masonry vestibule and lobby and a reinforced concrete auditorium (**Figure 4**). The building rests on a concrete foundation and is capped by a series of flat and low-pitched gabled roofs with a stepped parapet.

For a detailed architectural description of the New Mission Theater, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.



Fig. 3. Mission Street (primary) façade.  
Source: Page & Turnbull, January 2012.



Fig. 4. Bartlett Street (rear) façade.  
Source: Page & Turnbull, January 2012.

### Surrounding Neighborhood

The following description of the surrounding neighborhood is from the 2001 National Register nomination form and remains accurate as of January 2012:

The towering sheet metal façade of the New Mission Theater can be seen for several blocks from multiple directions. It is located in one of the busiest blocks of Mission Street, a busy shopping area in the heart of San Francisco’s working-class Mission District. The theater is one of the best-preserved structures on this particular block of heavily modernized commercial buildings, most of which date

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance No. 87-04, “Ordinance to Designate 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, as a Landmark,” (8 April 2004), 2.

from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. To the north is a heavily altered, two-story brick commercial building. To the south is the Giant Value Store and directly across the street from the theater is the decaying and abandoned Wigwam/Rialto Theater, a historic Vaudeville house. The New Mission Theater is one of the lynchpins of what was once one of the city's most important theater districts, rivaled only by the Downtown Market Street theater district. Formerly known as the "Mission Miracle Mile," this district comprised roughly eight blocks of Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> streets and in addition to a selection of downtown department stores, it included at least a dozen nickelodeons, Vaudeville houses and movie palaces.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "New Mission Theater," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 7, Page 1.

## V. HISTORIC CONTEXT

### BRIEF MISSION DISTRICT HISTORY

In 1776, Father Francisco Palou founded Mission Dolores on the banks of what the Spanish named Laguna de Manatí. The Mission, located at the southwest corner of Dolores and 16<sup>th</sup> streets, survives today as the earliest architectural artifact from the neighborhood's early recorded history. After the Mexican government secularized the California mission lands in 1833, what is now the Mission District passed into the hands of Californio families. These ranching families—Sanchez, Noe, Guerrero and Valencia—remain memorialized by street names in the district. Although assured that they would retain title to their land, these prominent families gradually lost their land to American settlers after the United States annexed California in 1846.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, transportation from downtown San Francisco to the Mission District continued to steadily improve, bringing the district into the orbit of downtown San Francisco. Ease of access, abundant vacant land, and a balmy climate facilitated the construction of recreational and amusement facilities in the Mission. Meanwhile, residential development grew apace. Many Italianate-style cottages and flats were built after large parcels were subdivided by homestead associations and developers. Large-scale developers constructed thousands of Italianate style residences in the 1860s and 1870s, often developing entire blocks at one time.

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire transformed the Mission from an area of middle-class Victorian residences and amusement parks into a thoroughly urban industrial and working-class district. The fire destroyed the workers' cottages, boarding houses and brick factories of the South of Market District and moved into the Mission, destroying everything in its path until being halted at 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Downtown businesses destroyed in the conflagration relocated to Mission Street. The Mission was remade after 1906 into a predominantly Irish working-class neighborhood with a mixture of other ethnic groups. It was in this period that the Mission took on the basic appearance it has today.

The Mission District, traditionally San Francisco's most self-contained neighborhoods, developed its own cohesive downtown commercial retail/commercial district along Mission Street after 1906. Many downtown department stores, such as Sherman Clay and Hale Brothers, continued to maintain a Mission branch after downtown was reconstructed. The Mission's own "Miracle Mile" developed throughout the early portion of the twentieth century with discount furniture stores, branches of downtown department stores, and at least a dozen motion picture palaces. Mission Street gradually became home to the city's largest entertainment district, which by World War II included the El Capitan, Tower, Grand, New Lyceum, Rialto, and the colossal 2,800-seat New Mission Theater (**Figure 5**).



Fig. 5. Looking north on the 2500 block of Mission Street, 1936. The New Mission Theater is on the left.  
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-4667.

The Mission thrived as a self-contained European-American ethnic community until World War II. The war took thousands of local sons and daughters out of the neighborhood to fight in Europe and the South Pacific. When they returned they were greeted with the benefits conferred by the GI Act: educational grants and low-interest home loans. Many took advantage of both and moved out of the cramped and aging Victorian flats of the Mission to newly developed housing tracts of the Parkside, the Sunset, Marin County, and the Peninsula. As the European-Americans abandoned the Mission, they were gradually replaced by Central American immigrants. From the 1950s to the present, the continued influx of immigrants from these countries has transformed the Mission into San Francisco's largest and most famous predominantly Latino neighborhood.

Although little new construction has occurred since the Second World War, the Mission's building stock experienced a considerable transformation to accommodate the newest wave of immigrants. Department stores and theaters along Mission Street which once catered to the larger population of the City, were converted into shops and community institutions serving the Latino community.

## PROJECT SITE HISTORY

### Early Site History

Before the construction of the New Mission Theater, the site was occupied by one- and two-story Italianate dwellings before an earlier theater building, the Premium Theater, was constructed in 1910 (Figure 6). Under new owners Louis R. Greenfield and Leon I. Kahn, the theater was renamed the Idle Hour Theater in 1913. It operated until 1916, at which time it was significantly enlarged to its present size and renamed the New Mission Theater.<sup>8</sup>

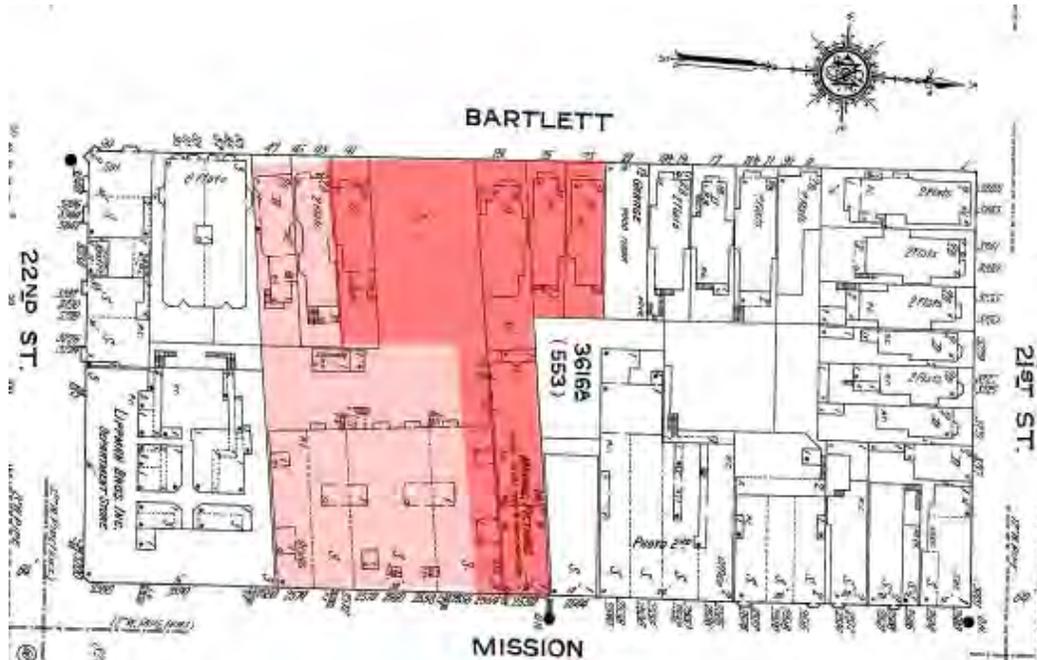


Fig. 6. 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map with approximate modern-day boundaries of the New Mission Theater shown in dark red. The narrow parcel fronting Mission Street was occupied by the Idle Hour Theater. The rest of modern-day Lot 007, which is shown in light red, was occupied by residential and commercial buildings. Edited by author.

### Reid Brothers Design the New Mission Theater

The architects selected to design the new theater were the Reid Brothers of San Francisco. The structure of the old Idle Hour Theater was integrated into the Reid Brothers' new design (the old theater occupied the area of the vestibule and promenade lobby of the new design), and a massive auditorium was added as part of this project. A new one-story brick and stucco façade featured a fusion of Mission Revival and Neoclassical details. The interior was thoroughly finished in the Neoclassical Revival style with a variety of decorative plaster moldings, murals, and gilded ornaments. The theater opened in 1916 to great fanfare.<sup>9</sup>

### Expansion of the New Mission Theater

In 1917, an adjacent parcel to the north of the theater was purchased by Greenfield & Kahn and they hired the Reid Brothers to design a balcony enlargement and new patrons' lounge. The design for the 2,800-seat New Mission Theater, which reopened in November 1917, made it the largest "uptown" theater in San Francisco.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "New Mission Theater," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

### Timothy Pflueger Renovates the New Mission Theater

In 1932, the New Mission Theater was purchased by Abraham Nasser following the death of Louis Greenfield in October 1931. Nasser, whose property holdings grew to a theater empire, repeatedly hired architect Timothy Pflueger, of Miller & Pflueger, to design new theaters and renovate other properties using the most modern architectural styles of the day. In early 1932, Pflueger designed a new Art Deco-style façade and lobby for the New Mission Theater, and it reopened later that year (Figures 7-11).<sup>11</sup>

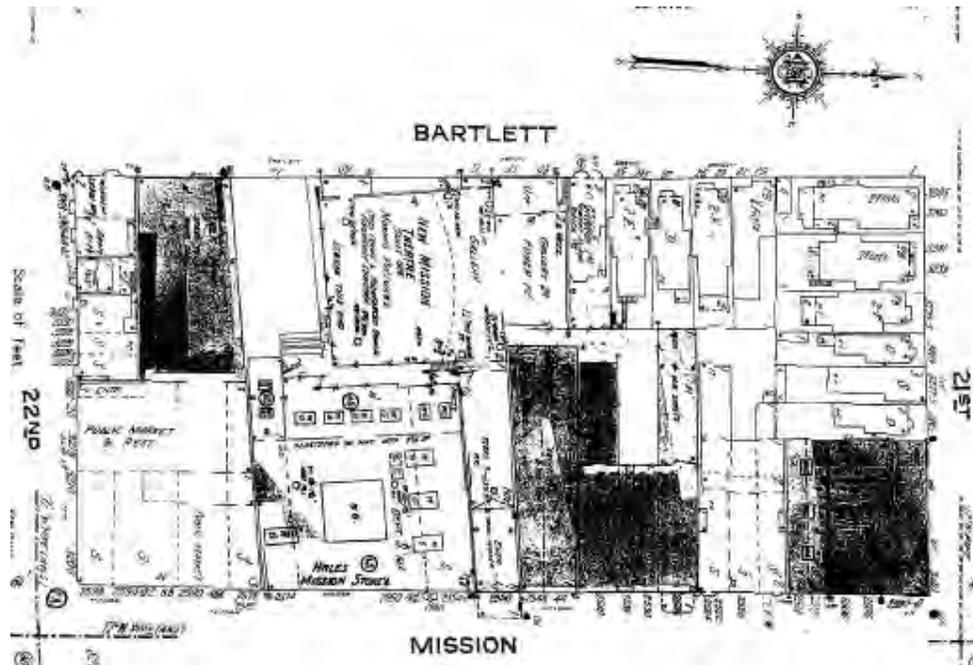


Fig. 7. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map showing the footprint of the New Mission Theater after the Reid Brothers' reconstruction and Pflueger's renovation. Edited by author.

### Post-War Decline

Over the next few decades, repairs and alterations to the theater appear to have been neglected, except for alterations to the vestibule in 1961. The New Mission Theater continued to function as a movie theater until 1993, after which time it changed hands and functions several times. The theater has been vacant since 2003.<sup>12</sup>

For additional information about the project site history, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 6.



Fig. 8. New enlarged balcony designed by the Reid Brothers, 1943.  
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8975.



Fig. 9. New patron lounge designed by the Reid Brothers, 1943.  
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8976.



Fig. 10. Promenade lobby after the 1932 renovation by Pflueger, 1943.  
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8977.



Fig. 11. Mission Street façade of the New Mission Theater after the 1932 renovation by Pflueger, undated.  
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8971.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE “MISSION MIRACLE MILE”

After the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, widespread destruction throughout San Francisco’s downtown had left the City without many of its institutions, including the large number of early theaters. Entrepreneurs and property owners soon established new theater venues in other parts of the City, most notably the Mission and Fillmore districts. By 1925, a dozen movie theaters were in operation on or around Mission Street, and most were located between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>13</sup> This eight-block area was promoted by the Mission Merchants Association as the “Mission Miracle Mile,” which became a shopping and entertainment district.<sup>14</sup>

For additional information, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report. For information about the two California Register-eligible “Mission Miracle Mile” historic districts in San Francisco (the first comprises 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> streets, the second comprises the intersection of 17<sup>th</sup> and Mission streets, and neither includes the New Mission Theater), please see the associated District Records (DPR 523D forms) that are included as “Appendices C and D.”

<sup>13</sup> “New Mission Theater,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, 1.

<sup>14</sup> “Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District” (DPR District Record, April 2011), 21.

## CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY AND OWNERSHIP HISTORY

The following provides a timeline of the history of the New Mission Theater, including major alterations and events.

- 1900:** The site was occupied by several one- and two-story Italianate dwellings.
- 1910:** The property was owned by Franklin B. Ross, who hired architect E.B. Johnston to design a small brick theater building costing \$7,000. The Premium Theater opened in June 1910.
- 1913:** The theater was purchased by Louis R. Greenfield and Leon I. Kahn and its name was changed to the Idle Hour.
- 1915-16:** The theater was redesigned and significantly enlarged by the Reid Brothers, Architects.
- 1917:** The Reid Brothers designed an enlarged balcony and patrons' lounge. The general contractor was Stockholm & Allyn and the owner was the Keil Estate.<sup>15</sup>
- 1932:** Abraham Nasser purchased the New Mission Theater and hired the San Francisco firm of Miller & Pflueger, Architects, to remodel the building in the Art Deco style.
- Ca. 1961:** Various alterations were executed, including the furring out of walls, installation of dropped acoustic ceiling panels, and addition of white ceramic tiles in the vestibule.
- 1993:** The New Mission Theater ceased to function as a theater.
- 1998:** City College of San Francisco purchased the New Mission Theater and the adjacent Giant Value Store.
- Ca. 1998-2003:** The building was occupied by Evermax Home Furnishings and Gifts.
- 2003-2011:** The theater was owned by Gus Murad & Associates.
- 2012:** At the time of publication, Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas is in contract to purchase the New Mission Theater.

## OWNERS AND ARCHITECTS

### Greenfield & Kahn

The partnership of movie theater entrepreneurs Louis R. Greenfield (1889-1931) and Leon I. Kahn lasted from around 1908 until the late 1910s. In 1908, they opened their first theater, the Quality Theater, in San Francisco's Western Addition, and in 1913 they purchased a chain of theaters from Franklin Ross, including the small theater at 2550 Mission Street that would become the New Mission Theater. After parting ways, Greenfield continued to own and operate the successful movie theater empire until 1931, at which point he had acquired massive debt and took his own life.<sup>16</sup>

For additional information about Greenfield & Kahn, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.

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<sup>15</sup> *Architect & Engineer* Vol. 48-49 (January 1917), 109.

<sup>16</sup> "New Mission Theater," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, 2-4.

### Reid Brothers

James and Merritt Reid constituted one of the best-known and most well respected architecture firms in San Francisco around the turn of the twentieth century. James Reid, the principal designer in the Reid Brothers partnership, was born November 25, 1851 in St. John, New Brunswick. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and may have then attended the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, although he did not matriculate. James Reid first came to California in 1888 after being commissioned to design the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. The following year, James moved to San Francisco where he joined his brother Merritt who was already there. The brothers formed what would become a tremendously important firm that would last half a century, until Merritt's death in 1932.<sup>17</sup> His brother James died in 1943. Much of their work took place during the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Both before and after the earthquake and fire, the Reid Brothers designed hotels, office buildings, churches, single-family residences, and theaters. Some of their most important works include the Fairmont Hotel (1906), the Cliff House (1908), the Call Office Building (1914), the First Congregational Church (1914), and the New Mission Theater (1915-16), among many other prominent San Francisco landmarks.<sup>18</sup>

For additional information about the Reid Brothers, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.

### Abraham Nasser and Family

Abraham Nasser and his family owned the New Mission Theater from 1932 until at least the mid-1960s and controlled “what was to become the most famous and the longest-lived theater dynasty in San Francisco.” The Nassers repeatedly hired architect Timothy Pflueger to design and remodel their theaters in the San Francisco Bay Area, including the New Mission Theater.<sup>19</sup>

For additional information about the Nasser Family, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.

### Timothy Pflueger, Architect

Timothy Ludwig Pflueger, the second of six sons of German immigrants, was born in 1892 and raised in the Mission District of San Francisco. Upon graduating from high school, Pflueger apprenticed for architect James R. Miller (1868-1942) before accepting a job to work as an architect for the United States Government in Washington, D.C. in 1917. Pflueger returned to San Francisco in the 1920s to work with Miller as his associate. The firm of Miller & Pflueger was one of the most influential Bay Area architectural firms, designing a number of prominent office buildings, schools, and theaters.<sup>20</sup> The firm played a pioneering role in the development of the Art Deco movement in the Bay Area, and some of their most important San Francisco commissions include the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building (1925), 450 Sutter Street (1927), and the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange (1930), as well as a number of grand movie palaces, including a renovation of the New Mission Theater (1932). After the dissolution of the firm upon Miller's retirement in 1937, Pflueger continued practicing architecture independently until his death on November 20, 1946.<sup>21</sup>

Beginning with his role as architect of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building, which received much press as the tallest skyscraper constructed west of the Mississippi and the first high-rise in the

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<sup>17</sup> Henry F. Withey, AIA. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*, Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970, p. 500.

<sup>18</sup> “New Mission Theater,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Blake Green, “Landmarks that Timothy Pflueger Built,” *The San Francisco Chronicle* (14 April 1986).

<sup>21</sup> ArchitecturalDB, <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/php/architect/index.html> (accessed 8 October 2007).

City of San Francisco, Pflueger became affiliated with avant-garde architectural and technical design in the Bay Area. Pflueger is strongly associated with the Art Deco movement both because of the style of his architectural designs and his desire to merge Moderne art with his architectural projects. Pflueger paid equal attention to the interior décor and the exterior building envelope. Additionally, he formed good working relationships with many local artists, including Michael Goodman, Arthur Matthews, Robert Stackpole, and Diego Rivera.<sup>22</sup> Pflueger also served on several boards and commissions during his career, including the San Francisco Art Association (president in 1933), Consulting Architect for the 1937 design of the Bay Bridge, and the Board of Architects for the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition.<sup>23</sup>

Pflueger's theater designs were especially high-style examples of his signature elaborate façades and richly decorated interiors. Some of Pflueger's grandest and best-known theaters include the Castro Theater, San Francisco (1922) (**Figure 12**); the Alhambra Theater, San Francisco (1926, converted to a gymnasium) (**Figure 13**); the Paramount Theater, Oakland (1930) (**Figure 14**); and the El Rey Theater, San Francisco (1931, converted to a church) (**Figure 15**). Many of Pflueger's additional California theater commissions have been closed or demolished, including the Tulare Theater, Tulare (1927, demolished in 1980); the Alameda Theater #2, Alameda (1932, closed); and the Federal Theater Project at the Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco (1938, demolished 1940s).<sup>24</sup>

Finally, the firm of Miller & Pflueger was also responsible for a number of important Art Deco remodels of existing theaters in San Francisco, including the Royal Theater (1932, demolished 2003); the New Mission Theater (1932, closed 2003); and the New Fillmore Theater (1932, demolished 1970s). The remodel of the Metro Theater (1941, closed 2006) is thought to have been the firm's last theater project.

For additional information about Timothy Pflueger, please see the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003), both of which are included as appendices to this report.

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<sup>22</sup> "Timothy Pflueger: Art, Art Deco and More," *Heritage Newsletter*. (Winter 1981).

<sup>23</sup> Timothy Keegan, "The Art of Timothy Pflueger," *The Argonaut*. 17:2 (Winter 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Steve Levin, "Theaters of Timothy Pflueger," *Marquee* 26:3 (1994): 14-23; ArchitecturalDB, <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/php/architect/index.html> (accessed 8 October 2007);



Fig. 12. Castro Theater (1922), 1927.  
Source: San Francisco Public Library  
Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8598.



Fig. 13. Alhambra Theater (1926), n.d.  
Source: San Francisco Public Library  
Historical Photograph Collection, #AAA-8549.



Fig. 14. Paramount Theater (1930), Oakland. n.d.  
Source: *Cinema Treasures*,  
[www.cinematreasures.org](http://www.cinematreasures.org)  
(accessed 15 October 2007).



Fig. 15. El Rey Theater (1931). Preliminary sketch by  
Miller & Pflueger, Architects.  
Source: Steve Levin, "Theaters of Timothy  
Pflueger," *Marquee* 26:3 (1994): 23.

## VI. EVALUATION

### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

#### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. Typically, resources over fifty years of age are eligible for listing in the National Register if they meet any one of the four criteria of significance and if they sufficiently retain historic integrity. However, resources under fifty years of age can be determined eligible if it can be demonstrated that they are of "exceptional importance," or if they are contributors to a potential historic district. National Register criteria are defined in depth in *National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. There are four basic criteria under which a structure, site, building, district, or object can be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. These criteria are:

- *Criterion A (Event)*: Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- *Criterion B (Person)*: Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- *Criterion C (Design/Construction)*: Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- *Criterion D (Information Potential)*: Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- Resources eligible for the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

The New Mission Theater is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (#01001206). In 2001 it was found to be significant under Criterion C (Design/Construction). The period of significance is 1916-1917, the duration of the Reid Brothers' redesign of an earlier theater followed by a balcony enlargement, and 1932, the year the theater was remodeled in the Art Deco style by Timothy Pflueger. The following summary of significance is from the 2001 National Register Nomination Form:

The New Mission Theater is the best surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in the Mission District and one of only a handful surviving in San Francisco with any degree of integrity. Furthermore, the building is an important work of two regionally significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger. Both firms were recognized as being "masters" within the architecture profession when hired to work on the New Mission Theater. The New Mission auditorium was the first movie theater interior designed by the Reid Brothers and today it remains the most intact theater interior designed by the firm that exists. [... Timothy Pflueger's] work on the New Mission Theater is the earliest, the most intact and only surviving example of the architect's work in theater design, in the

Art Deco style, in San Francisco. Finally, with its soaring Art Deco façade and lobby, as well as its excellently preserved Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, the New Mission Theater displays a very high level of artistic value and craftsmanship that is unrealizable today.<sup>25</sup>

After 11 years of listing in the National Register, the New Mission Theater appears eligible for continued listing under Criterion C (Design/Construction) for the aforementioned aspects of its design.

### San Francisco Landmark

San Francisco City Landmarks are buildings, properties, structures, sites, districts and objects of “special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value and are an important part of the City’s historical and architectural heritage.”<sup>26</sup> Adopted in 1967 as Article 10 of the City Planning Code, the San Francisco City Landmark program protects listed buildings from inappropriate alterations and demolitions through review by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. These properties are important to the city’s history and help to provide significant and unique examples of the past that are irreplaceable. In addition, these landmarks help to protect the surrounding neighborhood development and enhance the educational and cultural dimension of the city. As of May 2008, there are 259 landmark sites, eleven historic districts, and nine Structures of Merit in San Francisco that are subject to Article 10.

The New Mission Theater was designated as San Francisco Landmark #245 in 2004. The theater was evaluated based on National Register criteria and its significance, as defined by the landmark nomination, was determined to be twofold. Under Criterion A (Event), the significance of the New Mission Theater exists in “its association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District’s vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” Under Criterion C (Design/Construction), it is “an excellent and intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and two distinct designs from two of San Francisco’s most significant architectural firms, the Reid Brothers and Miller and Pflueger, Architects.”<sup>27</sup> The nomination includes a list of significant features that should be preserved. Exterior features include the Art Deco façade on Mission Street, the blade sign that reads “New Mission,” the cantilevered marquee, and the streamlined parapet. A variety of interior features to be preserved are located in the promenade lobby, auditorium, patrons’ lounge, and balcony.<sup>28</sup>

After eight years of designation as a San Francisco City Landmark, the New Mission Theater appears eligible for continued designation as a Landmark under National Register Criterion A (Event), for its important role in the development of the Mission’s entertainment district, and Criterion C (Design/Construction), for the aforementioned aspects of its design.

### INTEGRITY

In order to qualify for listing in any national, state, or local register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria and have historic integrity. The same seven variables or aspects that define integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association—are used to evaluate a resource’s eligibility for listing in the California Register and

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<sup>25</sup> “New Mission Theater,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, Pages 6-7. See the completed nomination form for additional information.

<sup>26</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, *Preservation Bulletin No. 9 – Landmarks*. (San Francisco, CA: January 2003)

<sup>27</sup> “San Francisco Planning Commission Resolution No. 16736” (4 March 2004), 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

the National Register. According to the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, these seven characteristics are defined as follows:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building/s.

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The New Mission Theater retains integrity of location, having been continuously located on its present Mission Street site since its initial construction. Over the course of the last century, the "Mission Miracle Mile" has undergone various significant changes, including façade modernizations, adaptive reuse projects, and demolition of historic buildings; therefore integrity of setting has been diminished. The theater retains integrity of feeling as an entertainment venue and integrity of association with the Reid Brothers and Timothy Pflueger, whose design contributions are clearly recognizable. The New Mission Theater retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, since it retains the majority of its original details and finishes (though some have been obscured by modern finishes), and has undergone few interior or exterior alterations since the 1932 renovation by Pflueger. Overall, the New Mission Theater retains a high degree of integrity.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

For a property to be eligible for national or state designation under one of the significance criteria, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials. The character-defining features of the New Mission Theater were previously documented in the National Register nomination form (2001) and the San Francisco City Landmark designation report (2003) and include:

### Exterior

- Art Deco façade
- Freestanding 70-foot pylon sign with neon tubes spelling out "New Mission"
- Cantilevered marquee
- Streamlined parapet

## Interior

- Promenade lobby
  - Double-height ceiling with mezzanine at rear
  - Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades
  - Stylized decorative plaster detailing throughout lobby
  - Plaster moldings imprinted with a Greek key motif
  - Stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors
  - Cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses
  - Ceiling ornament of stylized floral motifs including tulips, pineapples, and daisies
  - Plaster zigzag patterned ceiling moldings recall Maya temple detailing
  - Recessed “light coves” below lobby ceiling
  - Ceiling medallions
  - Etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs<sup>29</sup>
  
- Auditorium
  - Auditorium with over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements
  - Monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns and Composite pilasters
  - Projection booth
  - Shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights
  - Cast plaster medallions
  - Ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the side walls
  - Decorative frieze of urns and garlands
  - Denticulated cornice
  - Coffered ceiling with deep reveals
  
- Patrons’ Lounge
  - Ornate Corinthian pilasters with decorative classical frieze and cornice
  - Coffered ceiling
  - Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along the north wall
  
- Balcony
  - Parapet adorned with a frieze consisting of garlands and urns
  - Suspended plaster domed ceiling with heavily decorated ribs and decorative cast metal grilles
  - Scalloped parapet along the south edge of the balcony

After visiting the New Mission Theater in January 2012 and reviewing historic drawings and photographs, Page & Turnbull confirms the existence of the aforementioned character-defining features.

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<sup>29</sup> In an e-mail correspondence on 20 January 2012, the project architect reported that one pair of historic doors remains in place and the other two pairs of doors are missing. It is believed that the doors remain at the project site.

## VII. CONTEXT & RELATIONSHIP

The new Mission Theater is located on the west side of Mission Street between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets and for many years was a prominent destination on the “Mission Miracle Mile” (**Figure 16**). Historically, this area was associated with post-earthquake commercial development and vaudeville and motion picture theaters. Today, the area’s character has declined, with offices, discount retail stores, apartment buildings, and several vacant buildings, including the abandoned Wigwam/Rialto Theater directly across Mission Street from the subject property.



Fig. 16. New Mission Theater (2550 Mission Street) and vicinity. View north along Mission Street.  
Source: Page & Turnbull, January 2012.

Analysis of Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps shows that at the turn of the twentieth century, the neighborhood featured a variety of commercial and residential uses. The blocks surrounding the New Mission Theater were densely developed, primarily with two- and three-story wood-frame buildings with saloons, shops, restaurants, boarding houses, and single-family homes.

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire decimated other parts of San Francisco, but a high concentration of pre-earthquake buildings survived in the Mission District and the neighborhood experienced an influx of displaced working-class people. While downtown San Francisco was recovering from the devastation, a new commercial and entertainment district developed on Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> streets and became known as the “Mission Miracle Mile.” By the 1920s and 1930s, Mission Street developed as a major entertainment hub, with an abundance of ornate theaters lining the street. In 1925, a dozen or more movie theaters were in operation on or near Mission Street, including the El Capitan (extant, façade only), Excelsior (partially demolished), Majestic (extant), New Lyceum (demolished), New Mission (extant), Roosevelt (extant), State (extant), Victoria (extant), and Wigwam (extant) theaters.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> “New Mission Theater,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2001), Section 8, 2.

Today, the neighborhood immediately surrounding the New Mission Theater is characterized by a mixture of retail, residential, restaurant, and office uses. Buildings in the neighborhood date from a variety of eras, feature an assortment of footprints and massing, and range from two to nine stories in height. Notable neighbors of the New Mission Theater include the abandoned Wigwam/Rialto Theater (1913) directly across Mission Street; the massive Giant Value Store (ca. 1923, extensively altered) immediately to the south of the subject property on the same parcel; and the commercial block (1904) at the northwest corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission streets.

The New Mission Theater fits within the historic context of the area's commercial development as an entertainment district, and its height, massing, composition, and style all stand out among the buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed project at the New Mission Theater does not include any additions or major exterior alterations that would affect the building's relationship to the surrounding neighborhood.

## VIII. PROJECT-SPECIFIC IMPACTS

This section analyzes the project-specific impacts of the proposed project at the New Mission Theater on the environment, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENT QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) is state legislation (Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq.), which provides for the development and maintenance of a high quality environment for the present-day and future through the identification of significant environmental effects.<sup>31</sup> CEQA applies to “projects” proposed to be undertaken or requiring approval from state or local government agencies. “Projects” are defined as “...activities which have the potential to have a physical impact on the environment and may include the enactment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of conditional use permits and the approval of tentative subdivision maps.”<sup>32</sup> Historical and cultural resources are considered to be part of the environment. In general, the lead agency must complete the environmental review process as required by CEQA.

According to CEQA, a “project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.”<sup>33</sup> Substantial adverse change is defined as: “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historic resource would be materially impaired.”<sup>34</sup> The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance” and that justify or account for its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the California Register.<sup>35</sup> Thus, a project may cause a substantial change in a historical resource but still not have a significant adverse effect on the environment as defined by CEQA as long as the impact of the change on the historical resource is determined to be less-than-significant, negligible, neutral or even beneficial.

A building may qualify as a historical resource if it falls within at least one of four categories listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), which are defined as:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1 (g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource,

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<sup>31</sup> State of California, California Environmental Quality Act, [http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/summary.html](http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/summary.html), accessed 31 August 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b).

<sup>34</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(1).

<sup>35</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(2).

provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

4. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Pub. Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Pub. Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Pub. Resources Code sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.<sup>36</sup>

Based on the analysis in Section VI, the New Mission Theater is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore automatically listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. As such, the building falls within Category 1 and therefore appears to qualify as a historical resource under CEQA.<sup>37</sup>

### CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT CEQA REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES

As a certified local government and the lead agency in CEQA determinations, the City and County of San Francisco has instituted guidelines for initiating CEQA review of historic resources. The San Francisco Planning Department's "CEQA Review Procedures for Historical Resources" incorporates the State's CEQA Guidelines into the City's existing regulatory framework.<sup>38</sup> To facilitate the review process, the Planning Department has established the following categories to establish the baseline significance of historic properties based on their inclusion within cultural resource surveys and/or historic districts:

- **Category A – Historical Resources is divided into two sub-categories:**
  - **Category A.1 – Resources listed on or formally determined to be eligible for the California Register.** These properties will be evaluated as historical resources for purposes of CEQA. Only the removal of the property's status as listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources by the California Historic Resources Commission will preclude evaluation of the property as an historical resource under CEQA.
  - **Category A.2 – Adopted local registers, and properties that have been determined to appear or may become eligible, for the California Register.** These properties will be evaluated as historical resources for purposes of CEQA. Only a preponderance of the evidence demonstrating that the resource is not historically or culturally significant will preclude

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<sup>36</sup> Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.

<sup>37</sup> According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), Category 3: "Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources."

<sup>38</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 16: City and County of San Francisco Planning Department CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources* (October 8, 2004).

evaluation of the property as an historical resource. In the case of Category A.2 resources included in an adopted survey or local register, generally the “preponderance of the evidence” must consist of evidence that the appropriate decision-maker has determined that the resource should no longer be included in the adopted survey or register. Where there is substantiated and uncontroverted evidence of an error in professional judgment, of a clear mistake or that the property has been destroyed, this may also be considered a “preponderance of the evidence that the property is not an historical resource.”

- **Category B - Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review.** Properties that do not meet the criteria for listing in Categories A.1 or A.2, but for which the City has information indicating that further consultation and review will be required for evaluation whether a property is an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.
- **Category C - Properties Determined Not To Be Historical Resources or Properties For Which The City Has No Information indicating that the Property is an Historical Resource.** Properties that have been affirmatively determined not to be historical resources, properties less than 50 years of age, and properties for which the City has no information.<sup>39</sup>

The New Mission Theater is listed in the National Register and therefore automatically listed in the California Register, and is listed in Article 10 of the Planning Code as San Francisco Landmark #245. Consequently, the New Mission Theater is classified under **Category A.1 – Resources listed on or formally determined to be eligible for the California Register**, and is therefore considered by the City and County of San Francisco to be a historical resource under CEQA.

## PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following description of the proposed project is from the architectural drawings prepared by Kerman Morris Architects and dated 4 February 2012:

The historic Theater will be adapted to function as a “drafthouse cinema,” a multiple (5) screen movie house with food and alcoholic beverage service. The programming for the drafthouse cinema will include both movie screenings and live performances for special events, movie premiers, charity events, etc. Interior alterations will provide four new auditoriums at the balcony level by expanding over the orchestra level seating and enclosing the space under the oval dome; a commercial kitchen and new bar; expanded restroom facilities and accessibility improvements. Mechanical, electrical, fire sprinkler and plumbing upgrades will be undertaken. The stage will be expanded to function for live events. Improvements will be made to exiting stairs off of Bartlett Street. In the Promenade Lobby, Reconstruction of wall finishes will be required due to severe water damage, which has undermined both the substructure (rusted metal lath) and plaster finishes (wall surfaces and decorative plaster castings). City/Code required upgrading of the [unreinforced masonry] Promenade Lobby will also be undertaken...

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<sup>39</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 16 – CEQA and Historical Resources* (May 5, 2004) 3-4.

These improvements will increase the building's functionality for continuing the historic theater use and provide safe and universal access to the building. The project will utilize the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC). Additionally, the proposed project will repair, rehabilitate, and maintain the exterior and interior architectural features that convey the building's historic significance in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The *Standards for Rehabilitation* provide guidance for reviewing proposed work on historic properties, and are regularly referenced by Federal agencies and the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. Because the theater is a San Francisco City Landmark, proposed alterations will be subject to review and approval by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission.

The details of the scope are outlined as follows:

**Exterior: Mission Street Façade**

- Repair/restore blade sign and marquee
- Install new painted metal panels with reveal at existing pilasters
- Install new stainless steel drop-down grille over existing vestibule opening

**Exterior: Bartlett Street (Rear) Façade**

- Install new code-compliant egress stairs
- Install new recessed exit doors and a concrete wall providing egress at the sidewalk
- Repaint and patch existing concrete walls as required
- Infill existing windows and abandoned exit doors
- Remove existing abandoned stairs
- New roofing as required

**Interior: Vestibule**

- Remove 1960s ticket booth, tile walls and dropped acoustical ceiling
- Reveal and restore coffered Reid Brothers-designed ceiling
- Refinish walls with plaster and stone base to match proportions of Reid Brothers design
- Install two new rows of doors in same location as existing doors

**Interior: Promenade Lobby**

- Reconstruct decorative plaster work over 8" seismic reinforcing (full-height shotcrete walls and steel moment frame)
- Salvage and display selected murals on-site. A qualified architectural conservator shall conduct an investigation of the murals to determine the existing condition and shall prepare a plan for salvage and relocation.
- Patch and repair plaster details at ceiling
- Construct new ticket counter and concession stand

**Interior: Theater Auditorium**

- Convert main auditorium from a single screen to five screens, utilizing and dividing the existing balcony levels (one auditorium on the ground floor, three new auditoriums on the middle balcony, and one new auditorium on the upper balcony)
- Extend balcony, which will include salvaging the scalloped edge of the historic balcony, constructing a new wall that includes the salvaged scalloped edge, and concealing the new wall with a curtain to preserve significant interior volume and spatial relationships
- Construct new tiered platforms for seating in all five auditoriums over the existing trays or sloped floor
- Expand stage to follow curve of orchestra pit

- Retain and repair all decorative plaster work, especially the proscenium, denticulated cornice, frieze with garlands and urns, moldings, and plaster relief wall panels
- Retain and repair suspended plaster ceilings as follows:
  - Coffered ceiling of the main auditorium will be retained, and historic light fixtures will be repaired and rewired
  - Domed ceiling of the upper balcony will remain exposed
  - Decorative cast metal grilles of the lower balcony will be concealed below a new dropped ceiling to protect them from damage

#### Interior: Additional Services

- Convert service spaces at the northwest corner of the ground floor into commercial kitchen that is physically separated from the theater spaces
- Convert original projection room on the first floor into a bar for theater patrons
- Retain patrons' lounge
- Expand restroom facilities on all floors as follows:
  - On the first floor, construct new restrooms and projector between the curved half wall and beam above
  - At the mezzanine, install new toilets and lavatories in the existing restrooms
  - At the balcony, construct two accessible restrooms near the elevator and wheelchair lift
- Install new vertical circulation as follows:
  - Install elevator and egress ramps at the west wall of the theater where an electrical room and chase currently exist
  - Retain existing feature staircase
  - Install wheelchair lift at balcony
  - Install service lift in orchestra pit

## SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (Secretary's Standards)* provide guidance for working with historic properties. The *Secretary's Standards* are used by Federal agencies and local government bodies across the country (including the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission) to evaluate proposed rehabilitative work on historic properties. The *Secretary's Standards* are a useful analytic tool for understanding and describing the potential impacts of substantial changes to historical resources. Compliance with the *Secretary's Standards* does not determine whether a project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource. Rather, projects that comply with the *Secretary's Standards* benefit from a regulatory presumption under CEQA that they would have a less-than-significant adverse impact on an historical resource. Projects that do not comply with the *Secretary's Standards* may or may not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.

The *Secretary's Standards* offers four sets of standards to guide the treatment of historic properties: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. The four distinct treatments are defined as follows:

**Preservation:** The *Standards for Preservation* “require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, along with the building’s historic form, features, and detailing as they have evolved over time.”

**Rehabilitation:** The *Standards for Rehabilitation* “acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continuing new uses while retaining the building’s historic character.”

**Restoration:** The *Standards for Restoration* “allow for the depiction of a building at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.”

**Reconstruction:** The *Standards for Reconstruction* “establish a limited framework for re-creating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.”<sup>40</sup>

Typically, one set of standards is chosen for a project based on the project scope. In this case, the proposed project scope includes the rehabilitation of the New Mission Theater to meet the evolving use of the building while retaining its character-defining features and historic use as a movie theater. Therefore, the *Standards for Rehabilitation* will be applied.

#### Standards for Rehabilitation

The following analysis applies each of the *Standards for Rehabilitation* to the proposed project at the New Mission Theater. This analysis is based upon design documents dated 4 February 2012, prepared by Kerman Morris Architects and included as an attachment to this report (**See Appendix**).

**Rehabilitation Standard 1:** *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*

Since the first motion-picture theater was established at 2550 Mission Street in 1910, the subject property functioned continuously and exclusively as a movie theater until 1993. The proposed project will retain the New Mission Theater’s historic use as a movie theater and will increase the number of screens from one to five. Although the conversion from one screen to five screens will introduce new elements into the original auditorium, it will be done in a manner that respects the building’s distinctive materials, features, and spaces.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 1 because the building’s original function as a movie theater will be preserved.

**Rehabilitation Standard 2:** *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property will be avoided.*

As proposed, the project will retain the historic character of the New Mission Theater and will not remove distinctive materials nor irreversibly alter features, spaces, or spatial relationships that characterize the property. The proposed project does not include any major additions and will retain and preserve the entire Mission Street façade. No exterior alterations will be made to the building’s form, massing, cladding, or architectural details.

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<sup>40</sup> Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995), 2.

On the interior, the proposed project will add four new auditoriums on the existing balcony levels; a commercial kitchen and bar on the first floor; and expanded restroom facilities on all floors. The new construction will not cause the removal of any character-defining features. At the lower balcony, new construction for three auditoriums will create returns where the new walls and dropped ceiling connect to the historic walls and ceiling. This will conceal the connection points as seen from the main auditorium below, thereby retaining the visual effect of the building's significant interior volumes and not affecting the overall spatial relationships. For the proposed auditorium at the upper balcony, character-defining features will not be affected by new construction, and the original volume and ceiling details of the upper balcony will be preserved. The original projection room on the first floor will be converted to a bar for theater patrons. The raised floor and portions of the walls will be removed to accommodate the new use, while the form and footprint of the room will be retained. This design solution preserves the character of the projection room while adapting the space to better serve the building's modern use, and will not affect the historic spatial relationships of the interior. The new commercial kitchen will be located in the northwest corner of the building, an area that is currently occupied by service spaces (namely a rear entrance and women's restroom), and will be physically separated from the theater spaces and not part of a typical theater patron's experience.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 2.

**Rehabilitation Standard 3:** *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historical properties, will not be undertaken.*

The proposed project will neither create a false sense of history nor add conjectural features to the exterior or interior of the building.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 3.

**Rehabilitation Standard 4:** *Changes to a property that have acquired significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

Both the original Reid Brothers design and Timothy Pflueger alterations are significant, but beyond these, the New Mission Theater does not feature any other alterations that have acquired significance in their own right. Alterations to the building include the concealment of the historic Reid Brothers-designed vestibule with ceramic wall tiles and dropped acoustic ceiling panels in the 1960s. These alterations are not considered historically significant and will be removed to reveal the historic vestibule. All work that occurred before the close of the building's period of significance in 1932 will be retained and preserved.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 4.

**Rehabilitation Standard 5:** *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

The proposed project will preserve all distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques of the New Mission Theater. The proposed project will restore the entire Mission Street façade, especially the distinctive blade sign. In the vestibule, historic features that have been concealed since the 1960s—namely the Reid Brothers-designed coved ceiling—will be revealed and restored. Character-defining features in the promenade lobby, auditorium, patrons' lounge, and

balcony will be preserved as follows: The murals in the promenade lobby will be salvaged and showcased on-site so the public may view them as close as possible to their original location, and the decorative Pflueger-designed plasterwork will be removed and replicated after the seismic upgrade. In the auditorium, the proscenium and stage will be retained, as will the denticulated cornice, frieze with garlands and urns, and all other decorative plaster details throughout. The balcony's suspended plaster ceiling will be retained: the domed ceiling of the upper balcony will remain exposed, while the decorative cast metal grilles of the lower balcony will be concealed below a new dropped ceiling to protect them from damage. The scalloped parapet along the edge of the balcony will be partially retained.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 5.

**Rehabilitation Standard 6:** *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

The New Mission Theater has been vacant for nearly a decade and has many deteriorated historic features that are in need of repair. The proposed project entails the extensive repair of these deteriorated features, and will employ a strategy of repair over replacement; where the replacement of distinctive features is required due to severe deterioration, new elements will match the old. The sheet metal elements on the Mission Street façade will be cleaned and painted. In the vestibule, the concealed historic ceiling will be revealed, and the existing plaster will be repaired to match the 1916-17 Reid Brothers design. Regarding the seismic reinforcement in the promenade lobby, as much decorative plasterwork will be preserved as possible, and some plaster will be reconstructed to match the existing. Deteriorated historic features in the auditorium, patrons' lounge, and balcony will be cleaned, repaired, and repainted as necessary. The repair program will be executed in accordance with the treatments prescribed by a qualified architectural conservator on sheet A-5.1 of the attached architectural drawings.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 6.

**Rehabilitation Standard 7:** *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

The proposed project entails the cleaning and repair of historic materials, including graffiti removal, mural restoration, and plaster repair. This work will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. The cleaning and repair program will be executed in accordance with the treatments prescribed by a qualified architectural conservator on sheet A-5.1 of the attached architectural drawings.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 7.

**Rehabilitation Standard 8:** *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measure will be undertaken.*

The proposed project does not include any major excavation work, and no archaeological resources are expected to be encountered. Some foundation work associated with the seismic strengthening that is to be completed, and a new equipment lift will be installed in the orchestra pit. If any

archaeological material should be encountered during this project, construction will be halted and proper mitigation undertaken.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 8.

**Rehabilitation Standard 9:** *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and environment.*

The proposed project does not include any additions to the building. Proposed exterior alterations are limited to the rear (Bartlett Street) façade and include the installation of code-compliant egress stairs and a concrete wall providing egress at the sidewalk. These alterations will be compatible with the historic character of the building and will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships. No new construction is proposed at the roof; however, new roofing will be installed as required.

On the interior, the proposed project will include the construction of two full-height shotcrete shear walls and a steel seismic moment frame in the promenade lobby as part of the seismic retrofit. The shear walls will be resurfaced to match the original plaster elements but without the historic mural fragments, which will be removed and displayed in the new auditorium lobby. This modern interpretation of historic features will differentiate the seismic improvements from the historic materials, but will still be compatible with the building's character. Similarly, the design of the lower balcony extension will be differentiated from the historic building by exposing the original location of the balcony edge and by hanging a curtain on the auditorium side of the new wall. Care has been taken at the new walls and dropped ceiling of the lower balcony to conceal the connection points at the historic walls and ceiling as seen from the main auditorium below, thereby limiting disruptions to the building's significant interior volume. At the upper balcony, a new wall to enclose the auditorium will be constructed below an existing dropped beam and away from the domed ceiling, thereby preserving the character-defining features and volume of the upper balcony. New tiered platforms for seating in all five auditoriums will be additive and will be constructed over the existing trays or sloped floor.

In addition to the auditoriums, interior upgrades include construction of new vertical circulation and service spaces that will be differentiated from, yet compatible with, the historic character and volume of the theater interior. Two staircases and a wheelchair lift will provide access to the auditorium in the upper balcony. An elevator will be installed at the west wall of the theater where an electrical room and chase currently exist. At the first floor, a new bar and commercial kitchen will be located in the patrons' lounge. The bar will occupy the original projection room, and the raised floor and portions of the existing walls will be removed to accommodate the new use, while the form and footprint of the room will be retained. The kitchen will occupy the present rear entrance and women's restroom, (both of which will be relocated) and will be separated from the foyer and bar by full-height walls. New restrooms will be installed on all floors and will not destroy historic materials or features. On the first floor, new walls will be constructed between the curved half wall and beam above to contain restrooms and a projector room, and the historic elements will be visible from the foyer and main auditorium. At the mezzanine, new toilets and lavatories will be installed in the existing restrooms. At the balcony, two accessible restrooms will be constructed near the elevator and wheelchair lift.

The proposed project will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize the property and the building's overall integrity will be maintained. As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 9.

**Rehabilitation Standard 10:** *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Seismic retrofits are typically not considered reversible alterations, but because they are necessary for life safety—especially in areas with high seismic activity, such as California—they can be considered to be acceptable under Rehabilitation Standard 10. The proposed project includes the construction of full-height shotcrete shear walls and a steel seismic moment frame in the promenade lobby. In order to preserve the ornate interior spaces, the seismic retrofit component has been designed to affect as little historic fabric as possible. The proposed seismic scheme is necessary to prevent the further deterioration of the building and is acceptable under this standard as described above.

All other alterations—including the new auditoriums, kitchen, bar, new amenities to meet the current building codes, and accessibility upgrades—will be constructed such that they could be removed in the future without impairing the integrity of the theater.

As designed, the proposed project will be in compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 10.

## ANALYSIS OF PROJECT-SPECIFIC IMPACTS UNDER CEQA

As the above analysis demonstrates, the project as currently designed appears to be in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and does not appear to affect the listing of the New Mission Theater in any local, state, or national historical registers. According to Section 15126.4(b)(1) of the Public Resources Code (CEQA), if a project complies with the *Secretary's Standards*, the project's impact "will generally be considered mitigated below a level of significance and thus is not significant." Because the proposed project at the New Mission Theater complies with the *Secretary's Standards*, it does not appear to cause a significant adverse impact under CEQA.

## ANALYSIS OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS UNDER CEQA

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as follows:

"Cumulative impacts" refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.<sup>41</sup>

The most common cumulative impact relative to historical resources is systematic demolition or alteration of historic resources, or systematic removal of a certain type of building or resource. While

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<sup>41</sup> CEQA Guidelines, Article 20, subsection 15355.

the proposed project at the New Mission Theater includes alterations to a building more than 50 years of age, this action is designed to comply with the *Standards for Rehabilitation* and does not appear to have any cumulative impacts as defined by CEQA. Other adjacent projects and project areas would be governed by environmental clearance documents that require mitigation measure commitments and some by explicit historic preservation policies. Under these circumstances where historic preservation policies and mitigation measures would occur in the future and/or are being implemented, there is little potential for systematic adverse cumulative effects on historic resources.

### SUGGESTED MITIGATION

According to Section 15126.4 (b) (1) of the Public Resources Code: “Where maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of the historical resource will be conducted in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, the project’s impact on the historical resource will generally be considered mitigated below a level of significance and thus is not significant.” Because the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a historical resource, no mitigation measures would be required.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Originally built in 1910 as the Premium Theater, considerably enlarged and redesigned in 1916 by the Reid Brothers, and renovated in the Art Deco style by Timothy Pflueger in 1932, the New Mission Theater is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated San Francisco City Landmark #245. As stated in the National Register nomination form, the New Mission Theater is significant as an excellent example of an early twentieth-century movie palace in San Francisco, as an acclaimed project of two prominent architectural firms (the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger), and for its high level of artistic value. Additionally, the San Francisco Landmarks nomination attributes significance in the New Mission Theater's association with the development of the Mission District's entertainment district in the early twentieth century. The period of significance is 1916-1917, the duration of the Reid Brothers' redesign of an earlier theater followed by a balcony enlargement, and 1932, the year the theater was remodeled in the Art Deco style by Timothy Pflueger. The New Mission Theater is considered to be a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA, and the proposed project is therefore subject to review by the San Francisco Planning Department.

The proposed project at the New Mission Theater will adapt the historic theater into a "drafthouse cinema," a five-screen theater with food and alcoholic beverage service. Work includes seismic strengthening, accessibility upgrades in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and various renovations that will bring the property into compliance with current building and safety codes. The scope of the proposed project, which will retain the building's historic use as a movie theater, will include installation of freestanding floor space at the historic balcony, expanded restroom facilities, and systems upgrades that will be sensitively designed to minimally affect historic materials. These improvements will increase the building's functionality for continuing the historic theater use and provide safe and universal access to the building. The project will utilize the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC) to facilitate this change. Additionally, the proposed project will repair, rehabilitate, and maintain the exterior and interior architectural features that convey the building's historic significance in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

As the above analysis of architectural drawings dated 4 February 2012 demonstrates, the proposed project at the New Mission Theater appears to comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Because the proposed project at the New Mission Theater appears to comply with the Standards, it does not appear to cause a significant adverse impact under CEQA.

## X. REFERENCES CITED

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## **XI. APPENDICES**

### **A. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM**

“New Mission Theater,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (13 May 2001).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
NPS-01001206-0000; NR-18  
National Register Of Historic Places  
Registration Form

PROPERTY No: 119989  
PRIMARY No: 38-004196

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 any 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 New Mission Theater

other names/site number Evermax Furniture

2. Location

street & number 2550 Mission Street

NA  not for publication

city or town San Francisco

NA  vicinity

state California

code CA

county San Francisco

code 075

zip code 94110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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]

9/19/01

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

California Office of Historic Preservation

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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

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 any 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 New Mission Theater

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city or town San Francisco NA  vicinity

state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94110

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Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
California Office of Historic Preservation  
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 commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper _____	Date of Action _____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		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 Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture: theater  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: specialty store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco  
Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
roof steel truss and concrete  
walls concrete and brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other plaster, wood, steel, glass  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**New Mission Theater**

Name of Property

**San Francisco County, CA**

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Architecture**

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**Period of Significance**

**1916-1917**

**1932**

**Significant Dates**

**1916**

**1917**

**1932**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**NA**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**NA**

**Architect/Builder**

**Reid Brothers, Architects**

**Miller & Pflueger, Architects**

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository:

**San Francisco Main Library, History Room**

**New Mission Theater**

Name of Property

**San Francisco County, CA**

County and State

**10. Geographical Data****Acreage of Property Less than one acre****UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	551260	4178660	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

 See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title **Christopher VerPlank**organization **San Francisco Architectural Heritage** date **May 13, 2001**street & number **2007 Franklin Street** telephone **415-441-3000**city or town **San Francisco** state **CA** zip code **94109****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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Peter Goldstein, CFO, City College of San Francisco**street & number **33 Gough Street** telephone **415-239-3000**city or town **San Francisco** state **CA** zip code **94103****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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**Introduction**

The New Mission Theater is a 2,800-seat motion picture house located at 2550 Mission Street in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. The 2500 block of Mission Street, where the New Mission Theater is located, is dominated by a mixture of one-and two-story commercial buildings constructed during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The New Mission Theater is an interesting juxtaposition of two building campaigns. It is composed of an Art Deco façade and promenade lobby, both designed in 1932 by architect Timothy Pflueger, and a large Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, designed in 1916-17 by the Reid Brothers. The theater has an "L" shaped plan; the promenade lobby is 30' wide and it extends 142' to the middle of the block, where it meets the 102' x 108' auditorium. The auditorium is the foot of the "L," and extends over 100' along Bartlett Street. Today the theater's prominent pylon sign is one of the most recognizable architectural landmarks in the Mission District. Pflueger's façade and promenade lobby embody the architect's own imaginative use of Art Deco and Mayan imagery as rendered in plaster wall relief, murals, etched glass and ornamental metalwork. Meanwhile, the 1917 auditorium is one of the largest surviving movie palace interiors in San Francisco with a seating capacity of almost 3,000. Designed by San Francisco's famed Reid Brothers, the auditorium is less heavily altered than the promenade lobby and retains most of its original architectural detailing. The interior of the auditorium is characterized by an abundance of imaginative, over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements, such as the tremendous gilded Corinthian Order columns and pilasters, flood lights hidden within plaster urns, elaborate Neoclassical Revival cornice moldings and fanciful murals. Unfortunately, the New Mission Theater has suffered from years of deferred maintenance and some unsympathetic, but mostly reversible, alterations. The theater currently houses a furniture store.

The theater is located on a large, irregularly shaped parcel which also includes the historic but heavily altered Giant Value Store, a separate but adjoining structure on the same parcel. The Giant Value Store was once a neighborhood branch of Hales Brother Department Store, a major downtown San Francisco institution throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Originally a three-story, Renaissance Revival commercial block, the existing structure displays none of its original character-defining features; the cornice and storefront have been removed and the rest of the façade has been covered with fiberglass paneling.

**Context**

The towering sheet metal façade of the New Mission Theater can be seen for several blocks from multiple directions. It is located on one of the busiest blocks of Mission Street, a busy shopping area in the heart of San Francisco's working-class Mission District. The theater is one of the best-preserved structures on this particular block of heavily modernized commercial buildings, most of which date from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. To the north is a heavily altered, two-story brick commercial building. To the south is the Giant Value Store and directly across the street from the theater is the decaying and abandoned Wigwam/Rialto Theater, a historic Vaudeville house. The New Mission Theater is one of the lynchpins of what was once one of the city's most important theater districts, rivaled only by the Downtown Market Street theater district. Formerly known as the "Mission Miracle Mile," this district comprised roughly eight blocks of Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets and in addition to a selection of downtown department stores, it included at least a dozen nickelodeons, Vaudeville houses and movie palaces.

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**Exterior Description**

**Mission Street Elevation**

The Mission Street elevation was designed by Timothy Pflueger in 1932 to replace the Reid Brothers' 1916 façade. The Reid Brothers' brick-and-stucco facade had been one-story in height and designed in a fanciful blend of Mission Revival and Neoclassical elements. Mission Revival elements included the scalloped parapet with lobed arches and quatrefoil niches and Neoclassical details included urns, Corinthian pilasters and acanthus leaf brackets. The original vestibule and ticket booth was sheltered beneath an ornamental metal-and-glass canopy. Pflueger designed several movie palaces throughout Northern California in a variety of styles, ranging from Churrigueresque to Streamline/Moderne and his 1932 façade for the New Mission Theater is the only surviving example of a theater façade designed in the Art Deco style by the architect in San Francisco. The manner in which Pflueger's facade combines architecture and signage is unprecedented in San Francisco.

The 70'-tall Art Deco sign is one of the most prominent architectural features in the Mission District (Photo 1). The tripartite facade arrangement consists of a large vestibule with a terrazzo floor and ticket booth at street-level; a cantilevered sheet metal marquee and a streamlined parapet in the center, and a large freestanding pylon sign which extends upward from the marquee 70' (Photo 2). Designed during the early years of the Automobile Age, Pflueger's New Mission Theater facade was scaled to arrest the attention of both passing motorists and streetcar passengers, as well as pedestrians. The sign is fabricated of ten, sculpted sheet metal sections painted International Orange. Originally the sign was illuminated at night by neon tubes spelling out "NEW MISSION." Pflueger's façade design, with its pylon-shaped sign and heavy projecting parapet, was inspired by Mayan temples on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico (Photo 3), reflecting the architect's longstanding interest in Pre-Columbian Mexican architecture. The facade also displays European-derived Art Deco detailing such as low-relief ornament, volutes and upturned lines at regular intervals suggesting upward motion and speed. The vertical tripartite composition and exterior details recall Pflueger's better-known and contemporary Paramount Theater in Oakland. Aside from peeling paint and broken neon tubes, the façade of the theater retains a remarkably high degree of integrity, unusual for theater facades which were typically remodeled.

**Bartlett Street Elevation**

The rear elevation of the New Mission Theater faces west onto an alley called Bartlett Street. This elevation, which dates from the Reid Brothers' 1916-17 design, is modest and utilitarian in comparison with their original Mission Street elevation. The Bartlett Street elevation is 110' wide and is divided into seven bays by raised concrete pilasters and into horizontal sections by three concrete belt courses. As it faced a little-used service alley, the Reid Brothers did not feel that it necessary to add ornament to a wall seldom seen by passers-by. This elevation does not depart significantly from its 1917 appearance (Photo 17).

**Interior Description**

**Vestibule**

The vestibule is today the most heavily altered component of the New Mission Theater (Photo 18). The original Reid Brothers' design for the vestibule featured recessed panels, pilasters, pedimented niches (which doubled as movie poster display cases) and a coffered ceiling. The Reid Brothers vestibule walls were covered over by large ceramic panels in 1961 and the coffered ceiling was concealed behind a dropped acoustic panel ceiling. In addition, Pflueger's ticket booth was removed and replaced by a modern ticket booth placed on the

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north wall of the vestibule. Nevertheless, most of the other historic fabric survives behind the more modern materials. The alterations to the vestibule have been additive in nature and appear to be entirely reversible.

**Promenade Lobby**

The promenade lobby is located immediately beyond the vestibule. Although Pflueger did not alter the Reid Brothers' vestibule, he completely redesigned the 142' long promenade lobby in his trademark Art Deco style to match the façade. The carpeted floor of the promenade lobby inclines gently upward toward the doors opening into the auditorium. The promenade lobby is almost two stories in height, except for the rear of the space where a stair and mezzanine is located. Now used as the sales floor of the furniture store and consequently cluttered with merchandise, the original purpose and arrangement of the promenade lobby is difficult to discern (Photo 4). A photograph taken in 1943 conveys the original function of the space more effectively (Photo 5). The mezzanine, which is accessed by a staircase with an elaborate Art Deco-style balustrade, occupies the rear portion of the promenade lobby (Photo 6). The rest of the promenade lobby is decorated with decorative plaster detailing (Photo 7). The north and south walls are divided into five bays; plaster moldings, imprinted with a Greek Key motif, frame the outer bays and lozenge-shaped mirrors, embellished with zigzag moldings, bracket the inner bays (Photo 8). The panels contain murals depicting dancing female figures but these have been covered with whitewash within the past few years. The promenade lobby ceiling is illuminated by three recessed "light coves" embellished with decorative plaster moldings (Photo 9). The light coves still contain ambient lighting fixtures, producing a diffused lighting that contrasted with the dramatic spot lighting originally provided by sconces and torchieres. The plaster cornice moldings feature a series of different patterns including floral motifs and Greek muses. The plaster ceiling ornament depicts stylized tulips, pineapples and daisies (Photo 10). The stair and mezzanine balustrade at the rear of the promenade lobby provide one means of accessing the balcony in the auditorium. The stair and mezzanine both feature chrome-plated steel balusters shaped into sinuous patterns and a handrail made of extruded aluminum (Photo 11). The ceiling of the mezzanine contains a Mayan-inspired medallion with concentric zig-zag plaster moldings surrounding it. Six glazed doors in the west wall of the promenade lobby provide access to the auditorium. Two doors remain in place and four others have been discovered elsewhere in the building. The doors each feature frosted glass panels inscribed with Art Deco designs.

**Auditorium**

The monumental 2,800-seat auditorium opens up as a tremendous box behind the much smaller promenade lobby. The floor-plate of the entire auditorium measures 102' (from west to east) x 108' (north to south) and 50' from orchestra floor to ceiling. Unlike the façade and the promenade lobby, Timothy Pflueger did not make any substantial changes to the Reid Brothers' 1916-17 auditorium aside from installing new bathrooms, ventilation ducts, seats and carpeting. The proscenium, which is located along the south wall of the auditorium, is the centerpiece of the space. The proscenium is dominated by large gilded and fluted Corinthian Order columns which flank the screen on either side (Photo 12). Similarly massive gilded pilasters, with elaborately ornamented shafts, flank the columns. The east and west walls, just beyond the proscenium, feature large niches containing urn-shaped floodlights and cast-plaster medallions depicting trumpet-playing centaurs. The east and west walls are otherwise articulated by rectangular panels demarcated by ornamental plaster moldings. The panels contain pastoral murals which have been painted over. The uppermost section of the east and west walls carries an elaborate frieze of urns and garlands and a gilded denticulate cornice. The auditorium ceiling is articulated by a grid of deep coffers. The floor of the auditorium retains seating and carpeting from Pflueger's 1932 remodel. Aside from inappropriate paint treatments, the auditorium retains a very high degree of integrity.

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### Patrons' Lounge

The patrons' lounge is located on the north side of the auditorium, immediately behind the promenade lobby. This section of the building, which was added in 1917 after an additional lot was acquired to the north of the building, contains the patrons' lounge itself, as well as the projection room, smoking lounges, bathrooms, the ushers' lounge and stairs to the balcony. The projection room separates the patron's lounge from the auditorium. It is a narrow rectangular room clad in ceramic tile. The south wall of the projection room is punctuated by several square openings that originally accommodated the projection equipment, some of which still exists in the room. The elaborately finished patrons' lounge to the north of the projection room, accommodated crowds of guests during intermission. Surrounding it on all sides were the passages to the auditorium, men's and women's restrooms, the smoking lounge, the ushers' lounge, storage and the stairs to the balcony. The walls of the patrons' lounge are divided into bays by large Corinthian pilasters which carry an elaborate classical frieze and a denticulate cornice (Photo 13). A historic photograph shows the patrons' lounge during the New Mission Theater's heyday in 1943 (Photo 14). Similar to the auditorium, the patrons' lounge features a coffered ceiling. One of the most notable details of the patrons' lounge is a Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along the north wall. The arcade articulates the north wall of the patrons' lounge and provides views of the stairs that lead up to the balcony. Continuing in the Venetian Renaissance theme, the Reid Brothers design features two doors in the patrons' lounge framed by "Serliana" or "Palladian" motifs (Photo 15). The bathrooms were the only spaces in this part of the building altered by Pflueger in 1932 and they retain their ceramic tile wainscot, marble partitions and plumbing fixtures.

### Balcony

The 1,000-seat balcony, reached by stairs along the north wall of the patrons' lounge, continues the Neoclassical/Renaissance themes established downstairs but in a more restrained mode (Photo 16). An undulating parapet, adorned with a frieze consisting of garlands and urns, frames the southern edge of the balcony. The other three walls of the balcony are divided into panels by plaster moldings. The centers of each panel contain murals which have been covered by a layer of whitewash. The most impressive feature of the balcony is the oblong dome suspended over this immense space. The dome is divided into three sections by heavy plaster ornament molded into floral motifs. The dome contains decorative cast metal grilles that conceal the theater's state-of-the-art mechanical ventilation system.

### Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in the *National Register of Historical Places*, resources must not only meet one of the criteria listed above; they *must* "retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance." According to the California Office of Historic Preservation, integrity is "the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resources' period of significance." Integrity is evaluated with regard to seven variables: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

"Location" refers to the place where the historic property was constructed. The New Mission Theater maintains its historic location.

"Design" is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, structure, and style of a property. Virtually all of Timothy Pflueger's façade, which has gained significance in its own right, is present to convey the appearance of the exterior of the building from 1932 until the end of the period of significance in 1950. The interior of the theater, particularly the vestibule, has undergone more change than the exterior but virtually all

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of the changes are additive in nature and should they be removed, the appearance of the Reid Brothers' 1916-17 vestibule, auditorium, patrons' lounge and balcony, as well as Pflueger's 1932 promenade lobby, would be restored.

"Setting" is the physical environment of a historic property. Since the end of the period of significance in 1950, the appearance of the Mission District's Miracle Mile, has changed substantially, more as a result of the removal and modernization of historic facades than through demolition. Many of the historic theaters in the district have been demolished, heavily altered or converted into new uses, although some of the historic blade signs still remain, hinting at the appearance of Mission Street during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

"Materials" are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern to form an historic property. The materials of the core and shell of the New Mission Theater: poured-in-place concrete and brick walls, steel roof trusses and decorative finishes such as plaster, glass, stainless steel and wood remain largely intact. Many light fixtures have been removed, as with the 1932-era ticket booth and the original entrance doors. Aside from those changes everything from the ornate 1916-17 plaster moldings to the 1932 carpeting and seating remains in place and intact.

"Workmanship" is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period. The New Mission Theater retains abundant examples of craftsmanship from both of its building campaigns. The ornate plaster and woodwork of the 1916-17 auditorium remains in evidence. The plasterwork in particular is especially fine and essentially not duplicable today. Pflueger's 1932 remodel left behind many examples of high-quality workmanship as well, including the sophisticated plasterwork and ornamental metalwork of the promenade lobby, as well as the sheet metalwork and neon signage of theater marquee craftsman Alexander Aimwell Cantin.

"Feeling" is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The design of the New Mission Theater is unusual in that quite consciously embodies the feeling and culture of two separate eras. The Neoclassical auditorium and patrons' lounge embodies the traditional appearance of early movie palace architecture and live performance theaters, while Pflueger's Art Deco façade and promenade lobby displays the modern yet still grand aesthetic of Depression-era movie houses.

"Association" is the direct link between an important historic event or person and an historic property. The New Mission Theater cannot be compellingly linked with any significant individual or event beyond the local level.

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The photographs submitted with this application were taken in 1999. The building has not undergone any alterations or appreciable deterioration since they were taken. An additional photograph (Photo 18) is being submitted with this revised application of April 15, 2001 to document the existing conditions of the vestibule.

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**Statement of Significance**

The New Mission Theater is significant at the local level under *National Register* Criterion C (Architecture). ~~The period of significance is 1916 to 1950. The beginning date marks the original construction of the building and 1950 is the approximate year in which the decline of the Mission District's Miracle Mile began to result in the diminished importance of the New Mission Theater as a destination for working-class San Franciscans.~~ The theater is significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of a building period and type: an early 20<sup>th</sup> century movie palace, and as a work of two masters: San Francisco's Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger, Architects. The existing auditorium of the New Mission Theater was the first designed by the Reid Brothers and it remains the firm's best-preserved theater interior. Miller & Pflueger's remodel has gained its own level of significance and although not the most comprehensive example of the firm's work, the Mayan-inspired Art Deco elements, particularly the façade, crafted by famed marquee fabricator Alexander Aimwell Cantin, are extremely unique and illustrate Timothy Pflueger's interest in Pre-Columbian Mexican architecture. The New Mission Theater was a centerpiece of the "Mission Miracle Mile" during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 1906 Earthquake and 1940 almost a dozen motion picture houses opened along Mission Street in an eight-block section between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. Initially designed in 1916-17 by the Reid Brothers, the 2,800-seat New Mission Theater was the first "downtown" movie palace constructed in the Mission District. Although many predicted that the New Mission Theater would never survive, the theater opened to much fanfare, including a speech by Mission-born mayor James "Sunny Jim" Rolph. Rolph extolled the opening of the theater as a symbol of the growing political and economic power of the then-predominantly working-class Irish neighborhood. From 1917 until the El Capitan Theater opened in 1928, the original New Mission Theater prospered and dominated the theater trade of Mission Street. After moviegoers began deserting the New Mission for newer theaters, the second owner Abraham Nasser retained Timothy Pflueger to remodel the building in a more up to-date style. Pflueger's modish Art Deco façade and promenade lobby re-popularized the theater in the middle of the Depression and it quickly resumed its position until the end of the Second World War.

**Historical Background**

**Mission District**

The Mission District has traditionally been San Francisco's largest and most self-contained working-class neighborhood. The origins of the neighborhood trace back to the founding of Mission Dolores (originally San Francisco de Assisi) in 1776, by Father Francisco Palou. Under Spanish, Mexican and the early years of American rule, the Mission remained a rural district dominated by several important Californio families. In 1850 a financier and speculator named Charles L. Wilson built a plank toll road, which followed the route of present-day Mission Street, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1867, horse-drawn car lines and a steam railroad line operating along Harrison Street made the district even more accessible. Between 1870 and 1900, the Mission District developed as a middle-class residential neighborhood attracting thousands of native-born American and some German immigrants. After the 1906 Earthquake and Fire destroyed the South of Market district, the Mission District, which remained relatively untouched south of 20<sup>th</sup> Street, attracted many of the predominantly Irish, working-class refugees. Within a few years, the Mission had been transformed by this migration into San Francisco's largest and most populous working-class neighborhood. "The Mission," as it became known, developed as a city within a city, with its own industrial base and workers' housing districts. The Mission also developed its own "downtown" along Mission Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, where "downtown" department stores and banks opened neighborhood branches. This eight-block stretch of Mission Street also played host to the neighborhood's nascent entertainment district, which was primarily composed of taverns, Vaudeville theaters and other establishments catering to factory workers, mechanics, draymen and laborers and their families.

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**Development of the Mission Street Miracle Mile**

The large-scale development of theaters in San Francisco's Mission District began after the 1906 Catastrophe leveled San Francisco's Market Street district, including all of the early Vaudeville houses.<sup>1</sup> Responding to the destruction downtown, some entrepreneurs moved their businesses to the relatively undamaged sections of the Mission and Fillmore Districts, where business could resume quickly. Initially nickelodeon operators and Vaudeville directors converted existing commercial buildings into venues but by 1910 they were constructing theater buildings built specifically for the purpose. The Wigwam Theater, located directly across the street from the New Mission, is a good example of the early post-quake era of theater construction in the Mission. The Wigwam was originally constructed as a Vaudeville hall in 1907 but in 1913 it was demolished and replaced by a larger and more ornate theater designed in the Renaissance Revival style by the firm of Crim & Scott.<sup>2</sup> When it reopened, both Vaudeville productions and silent films were featured there. Theater construction in the Mission District accelerated during the early 1920s, mirroring national trends. By 1925, at least a dozen motion picture theaters were operating on or adjacent to Mission Street. The 1927 City Directory listed the following Mission District theaters: El Capitan, the Excelsior, the Gem, the Majestic, the New Lyceum, the New Mission, the Roosevelt, the Shamrock, the State, The Victoria, the Wigwam and the York. The majority of these were located in the neighborhood's busy commercial heart, on Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. Even after the downtown Market Street theater district was reconstructed, the Mission Miracle Mile continued to thrive and prosper with the working-class neighborhood trade. The construction of the New Mission, and later the El Capitan confirmed the position of the Mission Street Miracle Mile as a major neighborhood rival to the Market Street theater district.

**Site History**

Sanborn maps indicate that before 1910, several wood-frame dwellings occupied the site of the New Mission Theater. The first non-residential structure on the site was a theater named the Premium Theater. Not much is known about this theater beyond the fact that it was designed by an architect named E.B. Johnston and commissioned by a local businessman named Franklin B. Ross, who paid \$7,000 to erect the small brick building at 2550 Mission Street. The Premium opened for business June 1910 and it remained under the ownership of Franklin Ross for three years. In 1913, he sold the Premium and two other theaters in other parts of town to a partnership consisting of two immigrant entrepreneurs: Louis R. Greenfield and Leon I. Kahn. Greenfield & Kahn renamed the theater the Idle Hour and operated it until 1916 when they decided to reconstruct the small theater into the New Mission Theater.

**Greenfield & Kahn**

Between 1910 and 1930, Louis Greenfield built a theater empire that extended as far as Hawaii.<sup>3</sup> Before he took his own life in 1931 at the age of 42, Greenfield had attained (and then lost) a similar level of success in the theater business as San Francisco's two other major movie theater dynasties: the Nasser and the Levin families. By 1922 Greenfield owned at least nine theaters. Seven of these were in San Francisco: the Quality, the Progress, two Premium Theaters, the New Mission, the New Fillmore and Realart Cinemas. Outside of San Francisco he owned the Santa Cruz, in Santa Cruz, California and the Princess in Honolulu, Hawaii. Louis Greenfield was born in Russia in 1889 to Russian Jewish parents who immigrated to New York City soon after his birth. With little formal education, Greenfield worked as a peddler in New York before getting a job in a nickelodeon. Immediately realizing the potential of this new entertainment medium, Greenfield began to seek a more congenial climate and a new market for his newfound avocation and in 1907 he moved to San Francisco. Within a year he joined forces with fellow Russian Jewish immigrant Leon Kahn and launched his first theater, the Quality, at the corner of Eddy and Fillmore Streets in the Western Addition. After the resounding success of

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Directory, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, "Draft Case Report, Wigwam (Cine Latino) Theater," February 24, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Department of City Planning document.

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the Quality, Greenfield & Kahn purchased the Premium Theater chain from Franklin Ross in 1913, which included the small theater at 2550 Mission Street. Greenfield & Kahn made a conscious choice to concentrate upon the emerging neighborhood trade and studiously avoided competing with the rebuilt Market Street theater district.<sup>4</sup>

### Design

Facing increased competition from newer Mission District theaters such as the Poppy on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Greenfield & Kahn decided in 1915 to redesign and expand the small Idle Hour at 2550 Mission Street and make it the largest and most opulent movie palace in the growing neighborhood entertainment district. A shrewd entrepreneur, Greenfield believed that the theater business was like any other in terms of marketing strategy. Greenfield knew that an impressive theater building was just as critical an element in attracting audiences as the movie itself. In a 1922 interview with the *Chronicle* he stated: "I am not a showman...I am a business man merchandising his wares."<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless until 1916, Greenfield had not had the opportunity to build his own movie palace. Greenfield later told the *Chronicle* reporter in 1922, that when he decided to redevelop the Idle Hour in 1915 he wanted "to do something big." The original New Mission Theater was the result of Greenfield's vision and in every detail it reflected his ideas of what a first-class theater should be. In 1915 Greenfield & Kahn hired the Reid Brothers, Architects, one of San Francisco's most prominent architectural firms, to design his magnum opus. Greenfield had grown to admire the firm through their work on San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, where he had had his wedding reception. According to Greenfield, he also chose the Reid Brothers because they had never designed a movie theater before. Greenfield believed that it was preferable to hire a competent firm inexperienced in the realm of movie theater design because he would be in a better position to control the outcome. In 1922 he said:

I had ideas about the sort of house I wanted. And I knew the screen perfectly. It was my business.<sup>6</sup>

### Construction

The Reid Brothers' design for the New Mission Theater, as the new theater was to be called, was a drastic reconstruction of the humble Idle Hour. The permit and plans were filed with the San Francisco Bureau of Building Inspection in November 1915. For the parcel of land to the rear of the Idle Hour on Bartlett Street, the Reid Brothers designed a colossal new auditorium with a floorplate measuring 102' x 108'. The actual Idle Hour Theater was to be gutted and incorporated in its entirety into the New Mission Theater. With only the outer walls left intact, the interior of the Idle Hour was converted into the promenade lobby and concession area for the new theater. The Mission Street façade of the former Idle Hour would receive a new eye-catching façade which was designed to compete with the increasingly ornate façades and signage of newer Mission District theaters. According to Greenfield, for quite some time the construction of the tremendous auditorium escaped the notice of Mission residents. When the concrete walls of the massive auditorium began to emerge above the surrounding buildings in early 1916 there was a fair amount of skepticism that a movie theater this large would succeed in the Mission District. According to Greenfield, theater experts believed that the distance between the projectors and the screen was too great.<sup>7</sup> Others believed that it was not wise to construct a major "downtown theater" in the Mission, especially as the Market Street theater district was almost fully reconstructed. At almost 3,000 seats, the New Mission would be much larger than any of the new downtown theaters and it wouldn't be surpassed until the construction of the Fox Theater, on Market Street, in 1928.

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<sup>4</sup> "Good-Luck Fairy's Magic Wand; Nothing but Hard Work, San Francisco Honolulu Theater Builder Proves This," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 10, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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### New Mission Theater Opens

None of the dire predictions of failure dissuaded Greenfield & Kahn and the New Mission Theater opened with great fanfare six months later, in May 1916. Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph, the Mission Merchants Association and "several thousand residents of the Mission" attended the opening of the New Mission. Progressive Mayor Rolph, a native son of the Mission and a continual booster of his home district, spoke at the opening and congratulated Greenfield & Kahn "on their enterprise" and the people of the Mission "on having such a splendid photoplay theater."<sup>8</sup> Within the year Greenfield & Kahn decided to expand the new theater by enlarging the balcony and building a large patrons' lounge.

### Balcony Enlarged and Patrons' Lounge Added

In early 1917 Greenfield & Kahn bought out a property owner who owned a parcel of land north of the theater on Bartlett Street and demolished the structures on it. Six months later they hired the Reid Brothers again to design a 1,000-seat enlarged balcony for the New Mission Theater, bringing the seating capacity up to 2,800 and making it "San Francisco's largest uptown theater."<sup>9</sup> When the New Mission Theater reopened on November 15, 1917, Greenfield & Kahn and the Mission Merchants Association staged another gala celebration. Christened with a showing of "Poor Little Peppina," a silent film starring Mary Pickford, the program also featured speeches by Samuel Rosenkrantz, president of the Mission Merchants Association, A. W. Allen of Paramount Pictures Corporation and Mayor Rolph. The celebration ended on a patriotic note with a flag-raising ceremony performed by a Boy Scout troop and the Second Field Artillery from the Presidio.<sup>10</sup> Aside from the patriotic revelry (the theater reopened during the height of American involvement in the First World War), the speeches and celebratory activities held in honor of the re-opening of the New Mission Theater attested to the growing influence of the Mission District and confidence of its residents. Twenty years earlier, the thought of the Mission District hosting the West's largest and most elegant "uptown" movie palace and having a Mayor born in the neighborhood give the opening speech, would have been unthinkable.

### New Mission Becomes the Dominant Mission District Theater: 1917-1928

Louis Greenfield (the partnership with Kahn ended in the early 1920s) operated The New Mission Theater successfully throughout much of the Roaring Twenties as the largest and most popular Mission District theater. Advertisements in the local San Francisco papers reveal that the New Mission continually attracted the first-run films released by Paramount Studios in Hollywood. Amenities such as the twelve-piece orchestra, smoking lounges, heating and child care attracted thousands of local movie-goers as well as residents of Potrero Hill, the Outer Mission and Noe Valley to escape reality for an hour or two in the plush interior of the New Mission. Seeking to duplicate his success in the Western Addition Greenfield hired the Reid Brothers in 1919 to design the New Fillmore Theater for a large parcel on Fillmore Street. However by the late 1920s Greenfield's run of prosperity began to erode as larger and more lavish theaters were opened both downtown and along the Mission Miracle Mile. Already by the mid-1920s the Market Street theater district had recovered its pre-quake grandeur with the 3,000-seat Fox Warfield Theater (1921), designed by G. Albert Lansburgh. Nonetheless, the New Mission continued to be the dominant theater in the Mission until 1928 when Ackerman, Hartis and Oppenheim built the El Capitan Theater, two blocks north of the New Mission. The El Capitan, a huge 3,000-seat theater designed by Arthur Crim in the trendy Spanish Colonial/Churrigueresque, began to draw audiences away from the older Mission District theaters like the New Mission. To make matters worse, the Stock Market Crash occurred the next year. The combination of increased competition and growing indebtedness took their toll on Greenfield's movie palace empire and in October 1931 he killed himself over mounting debts. Over \$400,000 in debt, Greenfield was on the verge of losing the New Mission Theater and the rest of his empire to bankruptcy.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Mission Theater Formally Opened," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (May 5, 1916), p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "New Mission Theatre Has Big Capacity," *San Francisco Examiner*, (November 18, 1917), p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> "New Mission Opened with Picnic," *San Francisco Examiner*, (November 16, 1917), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> "Theater Owner Found Hanged in S.F. Office," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (October 26, 1931).

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National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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County and State San Francisco County, California**The Nasser Family Buys the New Mission Theater**

Compelled by the need to pay off Greenfield's substantial debts, his estate sold off his theaters. In 1932, Abraham Nasser, the founder of what was to become the most famous and the longest lived theater dynasty in San Francisco, purchased the New Mission Theater. Nasser was a native of what is now Lebanon and he immigrated to San Francisco in 1900. Nasser's first taste of the theater business occurred in 1908 when he opened a nickelodeon in his confectioner's shop at 18<sup>th</sup> and Collingwood Streets in Eureka Valley. By 1910 Nasser was earning more money from movies than from candy and in that year he constructed a new 600-seat theater at 485 Castro. Twelve years later, in 1922, Nasser hired the then relatively unknown architect Timothy Pflueger, of Miller & Pflueger, to design a new theater for the site. The 1,550-seat, Spanish Colonial style Castro Theater was Pflueger's first major movie palace.<sup>12</sup> As Nasser continued to expand his theater empire he repeatedly hired Pflueger, now recognized, along with G. Albert Lansburgh, as an expert in theater design, to design new theaters and to renovate others. In 1926 Nasser commissioned Pflueger to design the Moorish Revival Alhambra Theater on Polk Street and in 1931 to design the Art Deco masterpiece Paramount Theater in Oakland. In 1932 and 1935 Nasser hired Pflueger to remodel the New Mission and the Royal Theaters, respectively.<sup>13</sup> By the late 1940s, the Nasser family had built up a chain of twelve movie theaters throughout the Bay Area. In 1949 they even branched out into television production after purchasing General Service Studios in Hollywood, where they eventually produced television programs such as "I Love Lucy," "The Lone Ranger," "Mr. Ed" and "The Beverly Hillbillies."<sup>14</sup>

**Timothy Pflueger Hired to Renovate the New Mission Theater**

In order to compete in the cutthroat atmosphere of the Depression, the Nassers embarked upon a campaign to update the appearance of their older theaters, especially the stylistically obsolete New Mission Theater. In early 1932, the Nassers hired Miller & Pflueger of San Francisco to remodel the New Mission in a more modern style. Due to the Depression new construction was usually not a viable option. With materials being expensive but labor cheap, theater entrepreneurs frequently decided to renovate their older theaters rather than replace them. In San Francisco only four new movie theaters opened during the 1930s: the Bridge (1939), Timothy Pflueger's El Rey (1931), the Noc (1937), and the Presidio (1937). All four of these theaters were designed in the Art Deco style.<sup>15</sup> Timothy Pflueger, one of the foremost West Coast architects to work in the Art Deco style, was the primary designer in the firm of Miller & Pflueger and he did much of the work on the New Mission Theater project.<sup>16</sup> Pflueger left much of the original Reid Brothers' work untouched, especially the auditorium. The auditorium, although relatively old, was still very impressive in terms of scale and ornamental effect and would have been too expensive to radically alter. Instead, Pflueger concentrated his efforts on the parts of the theater that were most easily visible such as the façade and the promenade lobby. He removed the Reid Brothers' elaborate 1916 façade and marquee and replaced it with the Art Deco marquee and pylon sign that exist today. Pflueger hired Alexander Aimwell Cantin to fabricate the sign and install the neon for the New Mission façade, as he had done with the Paramount and the Castro Theaters. Pflueger retained the Reid Brothers' Neoclassical style vestibule, with its pedimented niches but he replaced the 1916 promenade lobby interior with Art Deco plaster ornament, mirrors, sinewy metal balustrades, sconces and other light fixtures and carpets. When the New Mission Theater reopened in late 1932, its appearance from Mission Street had been radically transformed and it became the most modern looking theater in the Mission District until Albert Lansburgh's Grand Theater opened in 1940. The theater again regained its popularity and continued, in the words of local residents, to be the most popular destination

<sup>12</sup> "Obituary, Emily Nasser," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 15, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Building files: San Francisco Architectural Heritage.

<sup>14</sup> Tim Kelley, "The Nasser Brothers," *Castro Star*, (July 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Information derived from Heritage building files.

<sup>16</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application of Mission/Fillmore Theatre Co. to Make Alterations to New Mission Theatre," filed July 1, 1932.

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for neighborhood moviegoers during the war and for several years afterward. On this basis, the year of 1950 has been selected as the end of the period of significance.

**Post War Decline**

Despite the gradual post-war decline of the Mission Miracle Mile and the closing of most of the Mission District theaters, the New Mission Theater continued to operate as a neighborhood movie theater until 1993, leaving the Roxie Theater as the last movie theater in the Mission District. The Mission District underwent a gradual demographic and socio-economic transformation during the post-war period, as the predominantly Irish-American residents moved onward to the rapidly growing suburbs of the Sunset District and San Mateo and Marin Counties. The vacant flats and apartments of the Mission filled up with immigrants from Mexico and Central America, transforming the area into San Francisco's largest Latino neighborhood. The Nasser family continued to operate the New Mission Theater throughout the 1950s and 1960s but they did not see fit to perform any significant improvements to an aging theater. The only changes of any significance occurred in 1961, when they furred out the vestibule walls and added a layer of white ceramic panels.<sup>17</sup> The post-war era was an especially tough time for older urban single-screen theaters in America. A 1948 anti-trust suit heard by the United States Supreme Court forced the major movie studios to divest themselves of their theater houses. Frequently, the movie studios that sold their older inner-city theaters could not find buyers who could maintain them properly.<sup>18</sup> Concurrently, suburbanization lured potential audiences away from the older residential neighborhoods. Finally, the increasing popularity of television diverted even more people away from the act of theater going. Urban theaters found themselves confronted with deteriorating neighborhoods and dwindling audiences. While many theaters survived the 1950s and 1960s, few escaped without some degree of modernization or removal of deteriorating ornament. Others closed or deteriorated beyond repair. An anachronism, the New Mission Theater survived as an unaltered movie palace much longer than many of its contemporaries. The New Fillmore, the New Mission's twin, was demolished as were many other San Francisco theaters, including some of the most spectacular downtown theaters, such as the Neo-Baroque Fox Theater on Market Street. Nonetheless, as an independent movie theater, the New Mission Theater did not have access to the expensive, first-run productions available to the suburban multiplex chains. In addition to the occurrence of gang-related violence in and around the theater scared away increasing numbers of nighttime moviegoers. In May 1993, Cinema Cal, the last operator of the New Mission, decided to close the curtains for good. Since then, the New Mission has been leased to a furniture retailer and in 1998, City College of San Francisco purchased the theater.

**Criterion C:**

The New Mission Theater is significant under Criterion C on the local level as an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace embodying "the distinctive characteristics of a type, (and) period," as well as representing "the work of a master" and "high artistic values." The New Mission Theater is the best surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in the Mission District and one of only a handful surviving in San Francisco with any degree of integrity. Furthermore, the building is an important work of two regionally significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger.<sup>19</sup> Both firms were recognized as being "masters" within the architectural profession when hired to work on the New Mission Theater. The New Mission auditorium was the first movie theater interior

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<sup>17</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application of The Keil Company to Make Alterations to 2550 Mission Street," application filed June 28, 1961.

<sup>18</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Information Series, No. 72*: "Curtain Up: New Life for Historic Theaters," (Washington, D.C.: 1993), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage has evaluated and rated the significance of San Francisco's architecture firms as a part of our 1978 Downtown Survey. Firms were given ratings of A, B or C.

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designed by the Reid Brothers and today it remains the most intact theater interior designed by the firm that exists.<sup>20</sup> Timothy Pflueger, the designer of some of San Francisco's most important buildings, designed movie houses in a variety of styles. As a remodel, Pflueger's contribution to the New Mission is an example of Mayan architectural themes, an important element of his work as evidence by the contemporary Paramount Theater in Oakland (also commissioned by the Nassers) as well as the Medico-Dental Building at 450 Sutter in San Francisco. His work on the New Mission Theater is the earliest, the most intact and only surviving example of the architect's work in theater design, in the Art Deco style, in San Francisco. Finally, with its soaring Art Deco façade and lobby, as well as its excellently preserved Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, the New Mission Theater displays a very high level of artistic value and craftsmanship that is unrealizable today.

**Type/Period: American Movie Palace Design: 1900-1940**

The New Mission Theater is an excellent example of a type and period of construction: an early 20<sup>th</sup> century movie palace. The first motion picture in the United States was registered with the copyright office in 1893. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century most American cities began to witness the proliferation of small nickelodeons, where short silent "photo-plays" were shown. Nickelodeons were usually housed in existing commercial buildings with flat floors and few architectural features to distinguish them as new building types. The movie craze intensified during the 1910s and by 1915 there were almost 25,000 "picture theaters" operating throughout the United States. By the late 1910s and early 1920s, the modest nickelodeons were being replaced by extravagant movie palaces displaying the "Baroque roguery" of professional theater designers such as John Eberson, W. W. Ahlschlager and the Rapp Brothers.<sup>21</sup> Initially, inspiration for movie theater design came from traditional live-performance theaters. By the early 1920s, the movie palace construction boom was in full swing. Movie studios such as Paramount began to open larger and more ornate movie theaters that would exclusively show pictures produced in their studios. Architecture was deliberately used by big studios and individual theater owners as a means to attract audiences in a cutthroat business characterized by intense competition. Prominent signs and marquees and elaborate façades illuminated by neon blade signs and marquees were designed to attract movie-goers inside, where they would be confronted with even more ornate lobbies and auditoriums. During the 1920s, Neoclassical, Renaissance and Baroque motifs gave way to more exotic styles such Moorish, Spanish, Mayan, Egyptian, Chinese and even more strange hybrid styles.

San Francisco's New Mission Theater is a rare and excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in San Francisco, and more important, the Mission District. Until after the Second World War Mission Street was lined with several large movie palaces such as the New Mission, the El Capitan, the Granada and smaller theaters like the Grand and the Tower. Early pictures of Mission Street depict a busy commercial streetscape punctuated by the sleek blade signs of movie theaters, where tired factory workers and shoppers could escape their daily routines. With its 2,800-seat auditorium and ornate and sophisticated plaster ornament, the New Mission Theater was the first movie palace in the Mission and today it is the only surviving example. The El Capitan had its auditorium demolished and replaced with a parking lot. Other theaters have been extensively remodeled as discount stores or churches. The New Mission survived as a neighborhood theater until 1993 and aside from some unfortunate painting schemes, very few changes have been made to accommodate a furniture store; even the seats remain in place.

**Work of a Master: Reid Brothers**

The auditorium of the New Mission Theater is an example of the "work of a master," in this case the Reid Brothers. The brothers James and Merritt Reid constituted one of the best-known and most well respected architecture firms in San

<sup>20</sup> "Good-Luck Fairy's Magic Wand Nothing But Hard Work San Francisco-Honolulu Theater Builder Proves This," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 10, 1922), p. D1.

<sup>21</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Information Sheet Number 16: "Preservation of Concert Halls, Opera Houses and Movies Palaces,"* (Washington, D.C.: 1981), p. 16.

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Francisco around the turn of the last century. James Reid, the principal designer in the partnership, was born November 25, 1851 in St. John, New Brunswick. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. James Reid first came to California in 1888 after being commissioned to design the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. The following year, James moved to San Francisco where he joined his brother Merritt who was already there. The brothers formed a tremendously important firm that would last half a century, until Merritt's death in 1932.<sup>22</sup> Much of their work took place during the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. An extremely capable and versatile firm, the Reid Brothers designed hotels, office buildings, churches, single-family residences and theaters. Some of their most important works include the Fairmont Hotel (1906), the Call Office Building (1914), the First Congregational Church (1914), the Cliff House (1908) and many other prominent San Francisco landmarks.

The New Mission Theater's auditorium is significant<sup>23</sup> the largest and the first of many Reid Brothers'-designed movie houses. It also has the highest degree of integrity. A year after the New Mission was completed, Greenfield & Kahn hired the Reid Brothers to design a second major theater for them: the New Fillmore Theater in the Western Addition. During the 1920s, when the theater construction boom reached its climax in San Francisco, the Reid Brothers designed and supervised the construction of at least five other major movie houses in the city, including the Coliseum, at 745 Clement Street (1918); the Alexandria, at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Geary (1923); the Balboa, at 3626 Balboa Street (1925); the York, at 2795 24<sup>th</sup> Street (1926) and the Metropolitan (now the Metro), at 2047-65 Union Street (1923). Of the remaining Reid Brothers' theater interiors, the New Mission retains the greatest degree of integrity, with its 1917 auditorium remaining almost entirely intact. The auditorium of the New Mission embodies the earliest phase of the Reid Brothers' work in theater design. Their earliest theater designs, such as the New Mission and the New Fillmore, were designed in a more traditional mode reminiscent of earlier live-performance theaters. As their career progressed throughout the 1910s and 1920s the Reid Brothers designed theaters in a variety of exotic styles, such as Egyptian for the Alexandria and Secessionist for the Coliseum. Nevertheless, most of the Reid Brothers' theaters have either been demolished or heavily altered. The New Fillmore was demolished in the 1950s and the Coliseum was gutted in the 1960s. Other Reid Brothers' theaters such as the Alexandria, the Balboa and the York have undergone interior alterations that have affected their integrity. The Metropolitan was heavily altered by Timothy Pflueger in 1942, who did not spare the auditorium of a Reid Brothers' theater this time.

The local press gave extensive coverage to the re-opening of San Francisco's grandest movie palace in 1917, illustrating its important role as the centerpiece of the Mission Miracle Mile and high-lighting the auditorium's architectural detailing and amenities. A reporter from the *San Francisco Examiner* wrote: "The theatre, one of the finest film houses in the West, has a seating capacity of 2,800 and represents an investment of \$300,000."<sup>23</sup> The Press was clearly impressed with the amenities and architecture of the New Mission Theater. Much emphasis was placed on the theater's efficient circulation, the large number of "well-placed restrooms" and the elaborate architectural detail. The dome over the balcony provided the biggest thrill to observers. The reporter for the *Examiner* wrote: "Elaborately grilled, the vaulted dome over the balcony, with its intricate design, is an architectural feature that adds grace and beauty to the huge auditorium."<sup>24</sup> The new theater featured many sophisticated technological advances, such as a heating and cooling system and amenities such as a 12-piece orchestra, a pipe organ, several smoking rooms and lounges, as well as "a free child care area in the adjoining garden playground."

<sup>22</sup> Henry F. Withey, AIA, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*, (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), p. 500.

<sup>23</sup> "New Mission Theatre has Big Capacity," *San Francisco Examiner*, (November 18, 1917), p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

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The interior of the New Mission Theater was designed by the Reid Brothers in the Neoclassical/Renaissance Revival style, with many classical architectural details, such as the pedimented poster display cases, an arcaded staircase enclosure and the colossal gilded Corinthian columns flanking the proscenium. The interior ornament, like many theaters of its era, was purposefully designed in an overwrought manner, with gilded, over scaled architectural elements, murals depicting classical mythological subjects and imaginative sculptural relief. Unlike most other Reid Brothers' theaters, the interior of the New Mission's auditorium is amazingly intact, requiring very little beside paint removal and patching to bring it back to its original luster. The interior of the New Mission Theater brought myth and luxury to the lives of working people for the price of a movie ticket and its current appearance completely reflects its original role in the life of the Mission District during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Work of a Master: Timothy Pflueger**

The New Mission is also significant under Criterion C as an important work of Timothy Pflueger of Miller & Pflueger. Remodeled in 1932, by Timothy Pflueger, a partner in the firm of Miller & Pflueger, the façade and promenade lobby of the theater represent the distinctive work of one of the most widely acclaimed architects to work in San Francisco and Northern California from the 1920s to the 1940s. Pflueger was born in 1892 in Stockton, California. He studied architecture at San Francisco's Beaux Arts Institute of Design and worked in several offices until the conclusion of the First World War. After the War he formed a partnership with his mentor and former employer, J. R. Miller, formerly of Miller & Colmesnil. Pflueger, the primary designer of the partnership, was responsible for the design of many important San Francisco landmarks including: the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building (1925), the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange (1930), The Medico-Dental Building at 450 Sutter Street (1929); the Oakland-Bay Bridge (1936) (in collaboration with Arthur Brown, Jr.) and San Francisco City College's Phelan Campus in 1942. Pflueger was also responsible for the design and remodel of nine motion picture theaters throughout the Bay Area and Northern California during his short career (he died at the age of 54 in 1946). Several of these theaters have attained national significance, including the Castro Theater of 1922 (San Francisco Landmark #100), the Alhambra Theater of 1928 (San Francisco Landmark #217) and the Paramount Theater in Oakland, a National Historic Landmark.

The movie palaces designed or renovated by Timothy Pflueger were part of a larger body of important movie palaces being erected throughout California during the 1920s and 1930s, which included such prominent theaters as the Wilburn in Los Angeles and the El Capitan in Hollywood, by Pflueger's contemporary, G. Albert Lansburgh. Pflueger was one of the most prolific and innovative theater architects in Northern California during the 1920s and 1930s. Pflueger's imaginative and exuberant design sensibilities were perfect for this building. Kevin Starr, California's State Historian writes:

Pflueger's architecture was at once romantic, rational, high-tech and festive. He had a genius for communicating well being to the people who used his buildings or sat over drinks on a magic evening in one of his lounges. Pflueger designed buildings for people who liked cities and who liked themselves.<sup>25</sup>

Pflueger's work on the New Mission went above and beyond the scope of most theater remodels of the 1930s. With the Depression in full-swing owners of older theaters found it more economical to hire prominent architects at bargain-basement rates to update the appearance of their stylistically dated movie houses. The Art Deco style was frequently chosen by owners and architects as a fashionable, yet relatively inexpensive way to update the image of an older theater. Much of the relief ornament could be executed in stucco and did not require as much skilled labor. Often the renovation work would be limited to the most visible components of the theater, such as the sign, marquee and the entrance

<sup>25</sup> Butterfield & Butterfield, The John Pflueger Collection, (San Francisco: 1989).

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lobby.<sup>26</sup> There were several other older theaters in San Francisco, such as the Midway Theater on Haight Street, that received inexpensive face-lifts. Pflueger's partial remodel of the New Mission Theater was certainly one of the most expensive and competent movie palace renovations in San Francisco, equaled only by Pflueger's later remodel of the Metro Theater. Pflueger wisely left the Reid Brothers' spectacular auditorium alone aside from updating the carpet and bathrooms. Instead the architect concentrated on radically redesigning the façade and promenade lobby. Pflueger used elements employed in the design of his contemporary masterpiece, the Paramount, in the reconstruction of the New Mission, including the towering sheet metal Art Deco sign/façade, the aluminum balustrades and fixtures, the Mayan-inspired plaster treatments and the figural murals painted by Pflueger's artist collaborators. Pflueger believed in the alliance of architecture and art and he hired Hollywood set painters to paint interior murals for his theater commissions, such as the Metro Theater.

**High Artistic Values and Craftsmanship**

As a surviving movie palace that embodies "high artistic values" and craftsmanship, the New Mission Theater is unmatched in the Mission District and matched by few other theaters in the City, with the possible exception of the Metro Theater (another theater originally designed by the Reid Brothers and remodeled by Pflueger). The Reid Brothers' auditorium displays an incredible level of design sensibility, detailing and craftsmanship. Trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition, James Reid had an able grasp on how to handle classical ornament, creating a fantasy world of 50' high gilded columns and pilasters, coffered ceilings and latticework domes. The interior detailing of the New Mission's auditorium is unmatched in San Francisco in terms of scale, quality and integrity. Its only major competitors aside from the Metro include live-performance theaters such as the San Francisco Opera House, designed by Arthur Brown, Jr. and G. Albert Lansburgh in 1931, the Fox Warfield Theater, designed by G. Albert Lansburgh in 1921 and the Geary Theater, designed in 1909 by the firm of Bliss & Faville. The plasterwork and metalwork in the Reid Brothers' auditorium is very elaborate, of good quality and in excellent condition. Aside from inappropriate paint treatments and some water infiltration, the auditorium of the New Mission Theater survives completely intact, having been spared the almost inevitable periodic remodeling undergone by most other theaters in San Francisco. Although less elaborate than the original Reid Brothers' interior, Pflueger's promenade lobby and façade are important examples of artistry and craftsmanship representing the changed circumstances imposed by the Depression and the influence of international Modernism. Pflueger's ongoing collaboration with artists such as muralist Diego Rivera and sculptor Robert Stackpole, was legendary. In the New Mission Theater Pflueger hired set painters to paint the murals in the promenade lobby, which survive beneath a thin layer of whitewash. Finally, Pflueger's Mayan-inspired Art Deco façade, a collaboration with sign fabricator and neon specialist Alexander Aimwell Cantin (who also worked on the Paramount) displays a high level of craftsmanship and artistry.

**Conclusion**

Since the early years of this century, movie going has continually been one of America's favorite pastimes. Movies have long been entrenched in American culture as a vehicle for disseminating information. They have played a critical role in determining trends in style, recreation, language and even thoughts and social mores. The history of this medium is inextricably linked to the history of the United States during the 20th Century. The association of going to the movies with notions of fantasy and escape from the mundane realities of everyday life greatly influenced the design of early movie palace architecture. Like the movies themselves, the fanciful and opulent architecture of early movie palaces transported the audience to exotic realms before the movie even started. The New Mission Theater is especially interesting, embodying as it does the work of two important architectural firms. The New Mission Theater briefly

<sup>26</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Information Series, No. 72, Curtain Up: New Life for Historic Theaters," (Washington, D.C.: 1993), p. 2.

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enjoyed the limelight as the West's largest and grandest theater. Although that title was quickly eclipsed, the theater continued to serve as a cornerstone in the Mission District's Miracle Mile until the movie houses began to go silent, one after another, in the postwar period. After Mission Dolores, the New Mission Theater is probably the best known visual landmark in the neighborhood with its 70' sign spelling out the name of the theater and the neighborhood simultaneously. In a similar fashion as the Castro Theater, the New Mission Theater has become an icon of the neighborhood.

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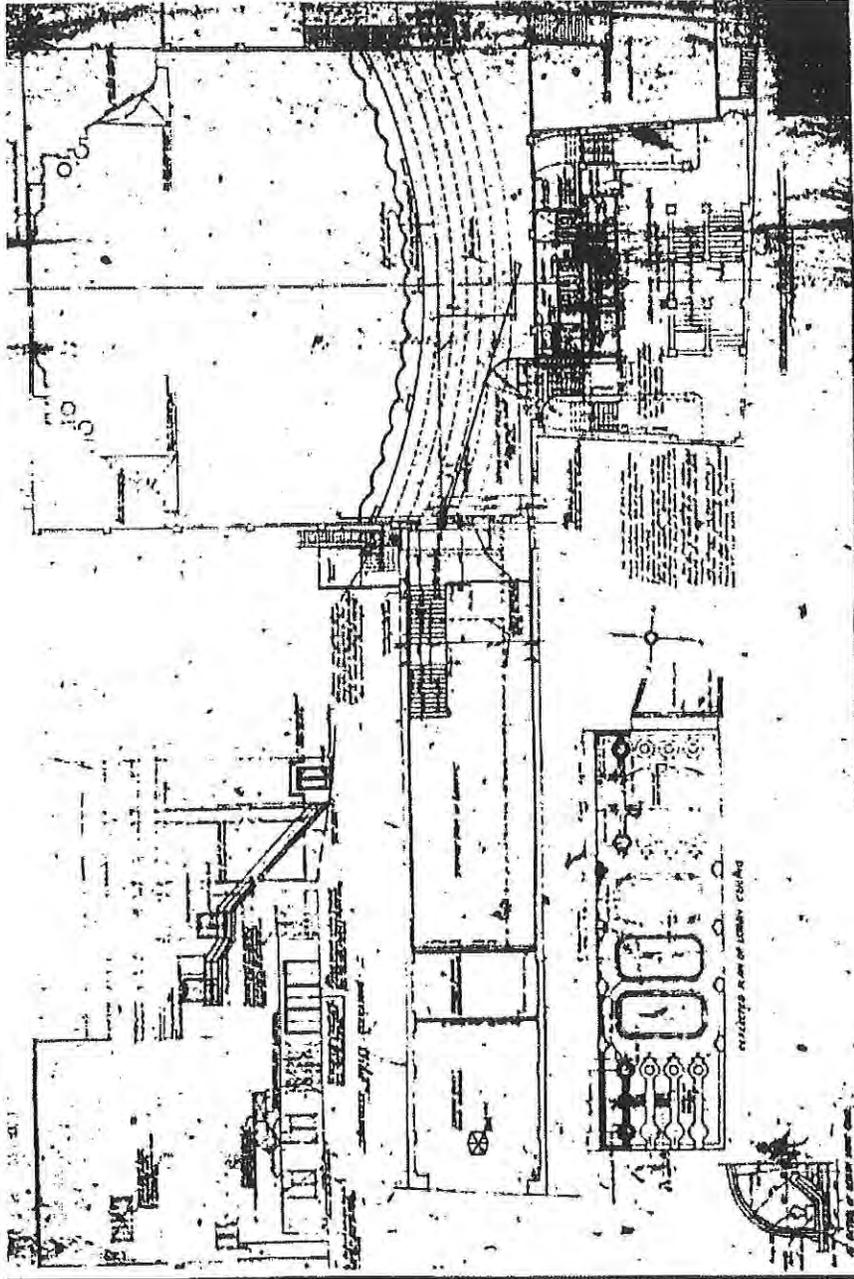


Figure 1: First Floor Plan of New Mission Theater, Drawings by T. Pflueger, 1932

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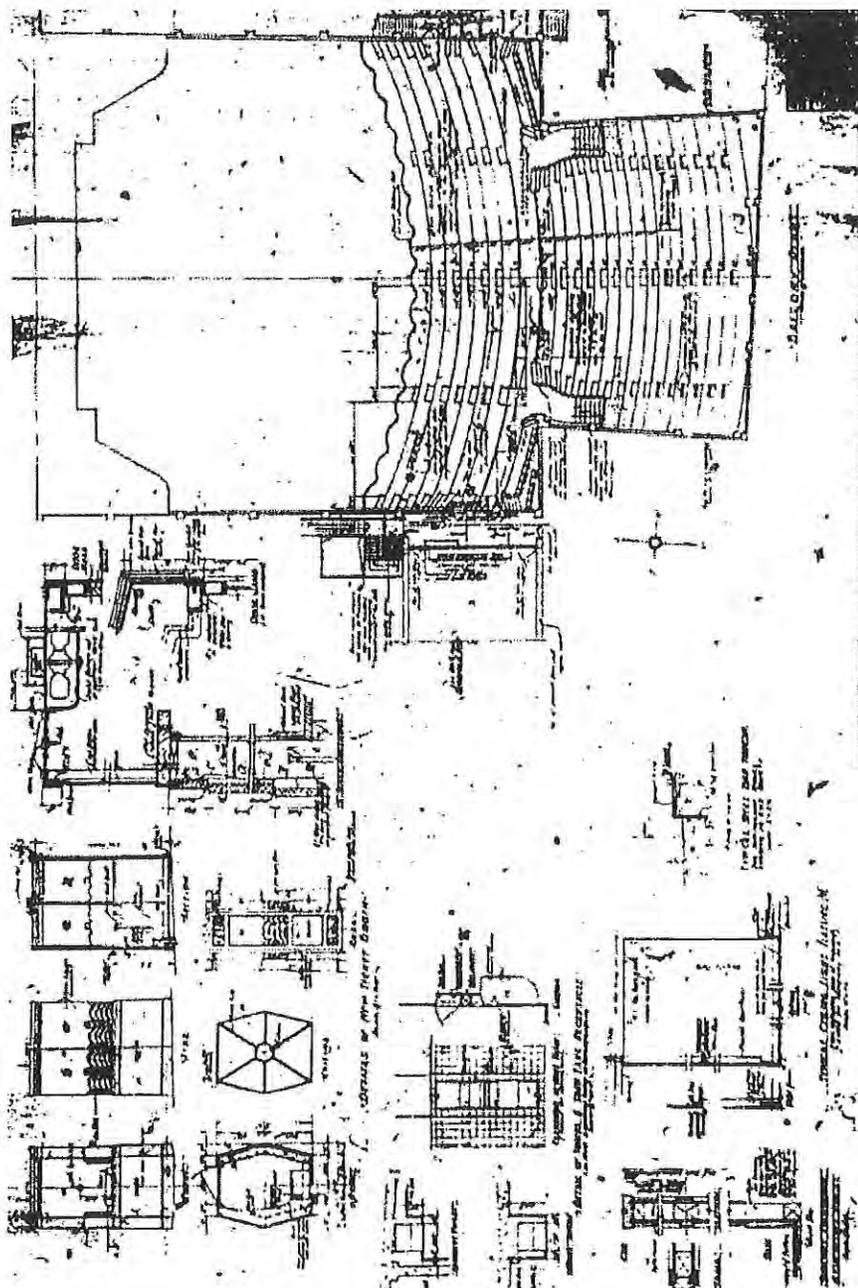


Figure 2: Balcony Plan of New Mission Theater, Drawings by T. Pflueger, 1932

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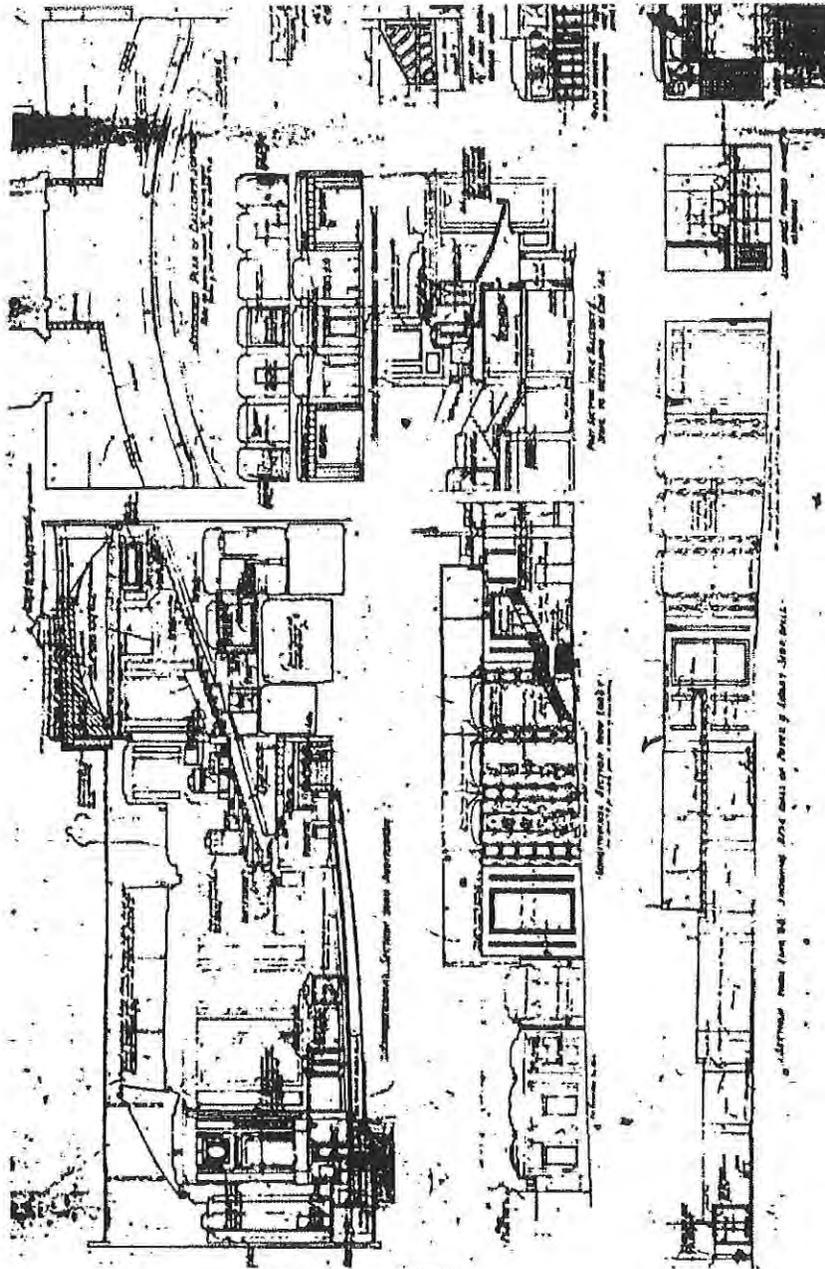


Figure 3: Section of New Mission Theater, Drawings by T. Pflueger, 1932

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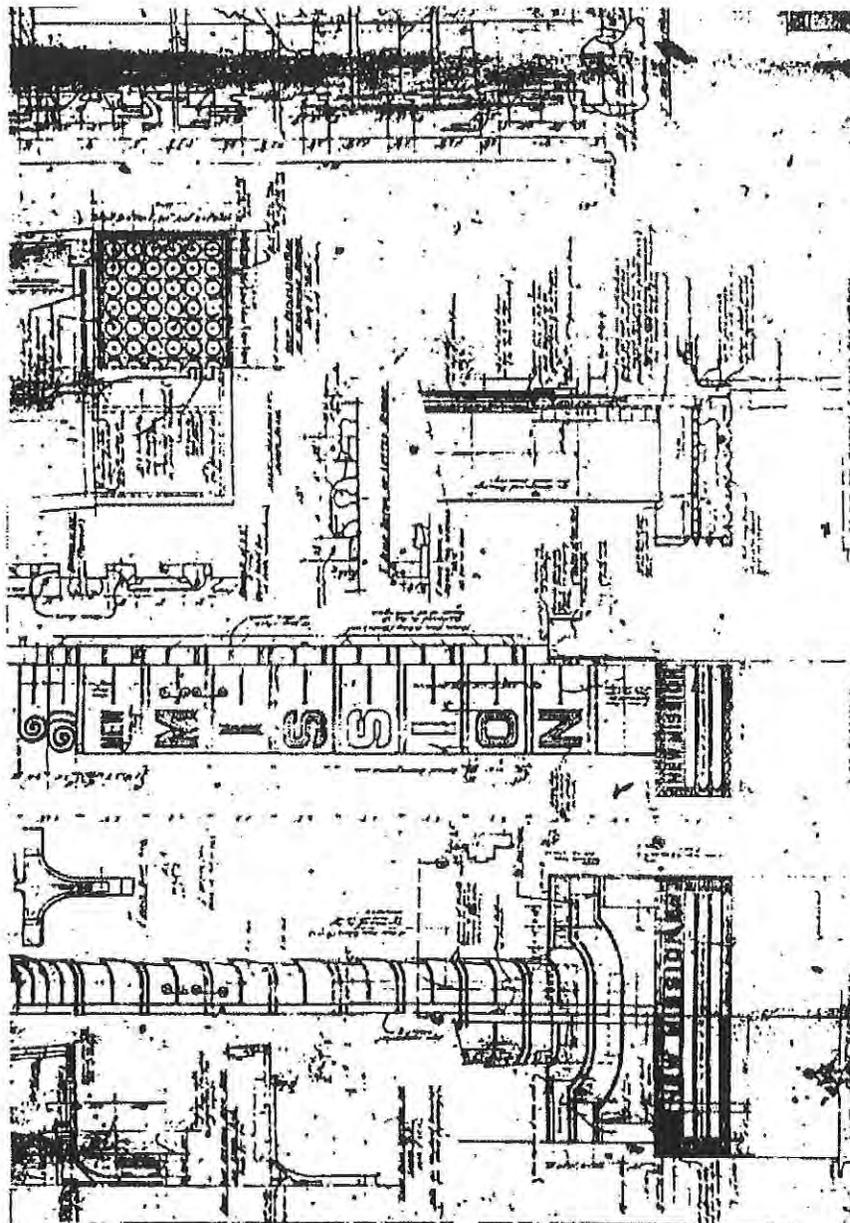


Figure 4: Façade of New Mission Theater, Drawings by T. Pflueger, 1932

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Name of Property New Mission Theater  
County and State San Francisco County, California

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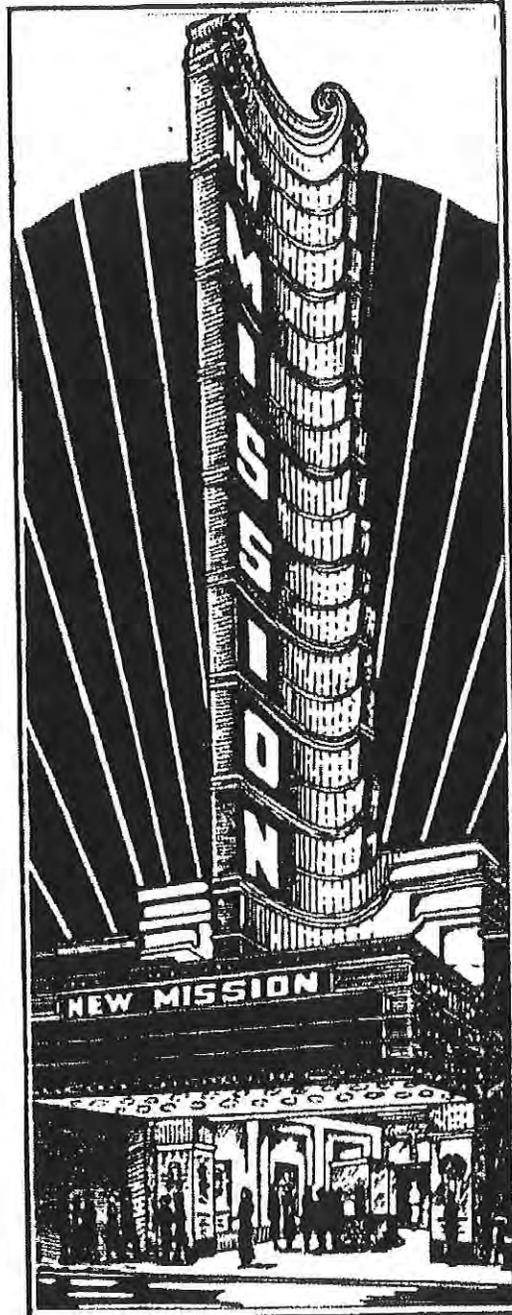


Figure 5: Playbill from Reopening of New Mission Theater, 1932

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1 Name of Property New Mission Theater  
County and State San Francisco, California

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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Section   9   Page   2   Name of Property New Mission Theater  
County and State San Francisco, California

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Pflueger Archives, Glen Ellen, California: drawings and correspondence files for New Mission Theater

San Francisco Architectural Heritage: building and architect files

San Francisco Archives, San Francisco Public Library: historic photographs

San Francisco Assessor's Office: ownership records

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection: building permits and drawings

San Francisco Water Department: water service application

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

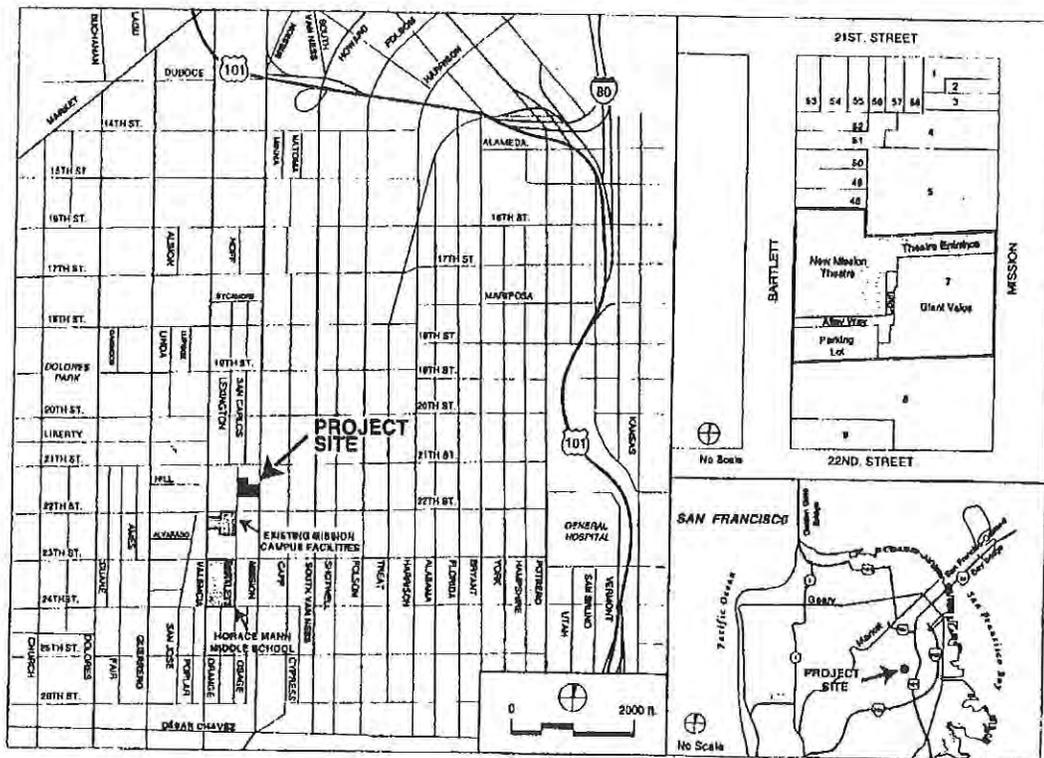
Name of Property New Mission Theater  
County and State San Francisco, California

**Boundary Description**

The New Mission Theater and the adjacent Giant Value Department Store are both located on Block 3616, Lot 7 in San Francisco's Mission District. The block is bounded by Mission Street to the east, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the south, Bartlett Street to the west and 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the north. Lot 7 is bounded by Mission Street to the east, Bartlett Street to the west and adjacent parcels to the north and south. The New Mission Theater building is the only portion of the lot to be included in this *National Register* nomination. It occupies approximately 19,500 gross square feet of the northern part of Lot 7, which in total occupies 44,000 square feet.

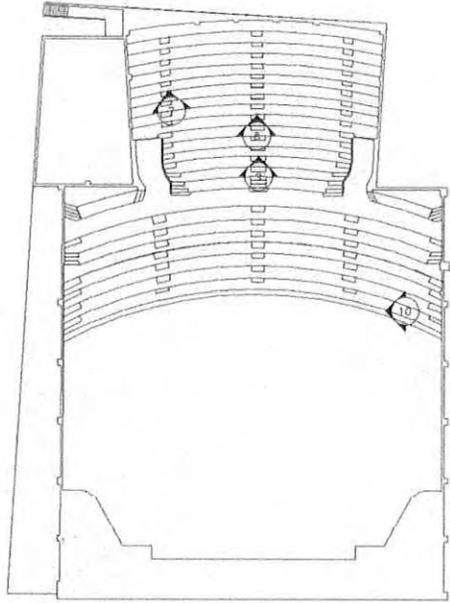
**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries are coterminous with the exterior walls of the New Mission Theater and do not include any other buildings or sites. The New Mission Theater achieved its architectural and historical significance between 1916-17 and 1950 on the present site within the existing building envelope.

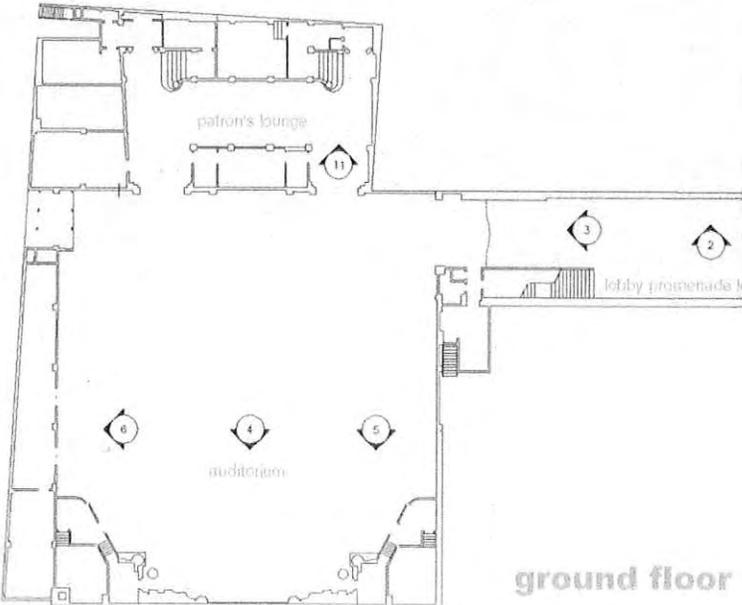


Source: EIP Associates

# New Mission Theater August 2001



balcony



ground floor

**B. SAN FRANCISCO CITY LANDMARKS NOMINATION FORM**

“Ordinance No. 87-04: Ordinance designating 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, as Landmark No. 245,” San Francisco Board of Supervisors (18 May 2004).

1 [Ordinance to Designate 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, as a Landmark.]

2  
3 **Ordinance designating 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, as Landmark No.**  
4 **245.**

5 Note: Additions are single-underline italics Times New Roman;  
6 deletions are ~~strikethrough italics Times New Roman~~.  
7 Board amendment additions are double underlined.  
8 Board amendment deletions are ~~strikethrough normal~~.

8 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

9 Section 1. Findings

10 The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission  
11 Theater, Lot 007 in Assessor's Block 3616, has a special character and special historical,  
12 architectural and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will  
13 further the purposes of, and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning  
14 Code, and will provide for the preservation of the New Mission Theater's significant interior  
15 features.

16 (a) Designation: 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, is hereby designated  
17 as Landmark No. 245. This designation has been fully approved by Resolution No. 589 of the  
18 Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and Resolution No. 16736 of the Planning  
19 Commission, which Resolutions are on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under  
20 File No. 040443 and which Resolutions are incorporated herein and made part hereof as  
21 though fully set forth.

22 (b) General Welfare, General Plan, and Priority Policy Findings

23 (1) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, this Board of Supervisors finds that this  
24 ordinance will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare for the reasons set forth in  
25 Planning Commission Resolution No. 16736 recommending approval of this Planning Code

1 Amendment, and incorporates such reasons by this reference thereto. A copy of said  
2 resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 040443.

3 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 101.1, this Board of Supervisors finds that this  
4 ordinance is in consistent with the Priority Policies of Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code  
5 and, when effective, with the General Plan as proposed to be amended and hereby adopts  
6 the findings of the Planning Commission, as set forth in Planning Commission Resolution No.  
7 16736, and incorporates said findings by this reference thereto.

8 (c) Landmark Data:

9 (1) The description, location and boundary of the Landmark site encompass the only  
10 the portion of Lot 007 in Assessors Block 3616 which contains the New Mission Theater. The  
11 boundaries of the landmark are coterminous with the footprint of the New Mission Theater and  
12 do not include any other buildings on the lot.

13 (2) The characteristics of the Landmark which justify its designation are described and  
14 shown in the Landmark Designation Report adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory  
15 Board on March 3, 2004 and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department  
16 Docket No. 2004.0005L.

17 The characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation are summarized as  
18 follows:

19 Its association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's vaudeville  
20 and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

21 Its status as an excellent and intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with  
22 a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and two distinct designs from two of  
23 San Francisco's most significant architectural firms, the Reid Brothers and Miller and Pflueger,  
24 Architects.  
25

1 (3) The particular features that should be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
2 necessary, are those generally shown in the photographs and described in the Landmark  
3 Designation Report, both of which can be found in the case docket 2004.0005L which is  
4 incorporated in this designation ordinance as though fully set forth.

5 This Board of Supervisors directs that the particular interior and exterior features of the  
6 property listed below shall be preserved and, where any construction, alteration, removal or  
7 demolition of such interior or exterior features requires a City permit, the Board directs that a  
8 Certificate of Appropriateness, pursuant to Planning Code section 1006, must be issued prior  
9 to the issuance of the City permit.

10 The description of the particular interior features that should be preserved is as follows:

11 The Promenade Lobby's double-height promenade lobby ceiling with mezzanine at  
12 rear, the Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades, the stylized decorative plaster  
13 detailing throughout lobby, the plaster moldings imprinted with Greek key motif, the stacked  
14 lozenge-shaped mirrors, the cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including  
15 stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses, the ceiling ornament of stylized floral  
16 motifs including tulips, pineapples and daisies, plaster zigzag-patterned ceiling moldings  
17 recalling Mayan temple detailing, the recessed "light coves" below lobby ceiling, the ceiling  
18 medallions, and the etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style  
19 motifs; the Auditorium's over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements,  
20 the monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns  
21 and Composite pilasters, the projection booth shallow niches containing urn-shaped  
22 floodlights, the cast plaster medallions, ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the  
23 side walls, the decorative frieze of urns and garlands, the denticulated cornice, and the  
24 coffered ceiling with deep reveals; the Patrons' Lounge's ornate Corinthian pilasters with  
25 decorative classical frieze and cornice, the coffered ceiling and Venetian Renaissance Revival

1 arcade along north wall; and the Balcony's parapet adorned with frieze of garlands and urns,  
2 the suspended plaster domed ceiling with heavily decorated ribs and decorative cast metal  
3 grilles, and the scalloped parapet along the southern edge of balcony.

4 The description of the particular exterior features that should be preserved is as  
5 follows:

6 The Art Deco façade, freestanding sheetmetal 70-foot pylon blade sign with neon tubes  
7 spelling out "New Mission", the cantilevered marquee, and the streamlined parapet.

8  
9 Section 2. The property shall be subject to all of the controls and procedures  
10 applicable to landmarks as set forth in Planning Code Article 10 and those controls set forth in  
11 this ordinance.

12  
13  
14 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

15 By:   
16 Sarah Ellen Owsowitz  
17 Deputy City Attorney



# City and County of San Francisco

## Tails

### Ordinance

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**File Number:** 040443

**Date Passed:**

Ordinance designating 2550 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, as Landmark No. 245.

---

May 11, 2004 Board of Supervisors — PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 10 - Alioto-Pier, Daly, Dufty, Gonzalez, Hall, Ma, Maxwell, McGoldrick,  
Peskin, Sandoval

Excused: 1 - Ammiano

May 18, 2004 Board of Supervisors — FINALLY PASSED

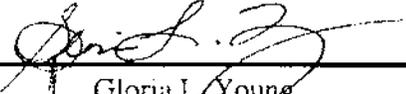
Ayes: 9 - Daly, Dufty, Gonzalez, Hall, Ma, Maxwell, McGoldrick, Peskin,  
Sandoval

Absent: 2 - Alioto-Pier, Ammiano

File No. 040443

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on May 18, 2004 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

MAY 27 2004  
Date Approved

  
Gloria L. Young  
Clerk of the Board

  
Mayor Gavin Newsom

**SAN FRANCISCO**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 16736**

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 2550-2574 MISSION STREET, THE NEW MISSION THEATER, ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 3616, LOT 7, AS LANDMARK NO. 245.**

1. **WHEREAS**, on December 9, 2003, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 796-03, a resolution to initiate the designation of the New Mission Theater as a local Landmark; and
2. San Francisco Architectural Heritage submitted a draft Landmark Designation Report for New Mission Theater, for the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) to consider the landmark designation of the property; and
3. The draft Landmark Designation Report for the New Mission Theater was reviewed by the Landmarks Board at its regular meeting of March 3, 2004, and such documentation was considered a final Landmark Designation Report by the Landmarks Board; and
4. The Landmarks Board found that the New Mission Theater Designation Report describes the location and boundaries of the landmark site, describes the characteristics of the landmark which justifies its designation, and describes the particular features that should be preserved and therefore meets the requirements of Planning Code Section 1004(b) and 1004(c)(1). That Landmark Designation Report is fully incorporated by reference into this resolution; and
5. The Planning Commission reviewed and endorsed the description, location, and boundary of the landmark site, which is the footprint of the New Mission Theater building only (a portion of lot 7 of Assessor's Block 3616) and not the entire lot; and
6. The Planning Commission, in considering the proposed landmark designation employed the National Register of Historic Places rating criteria and found that the New Mission Theater is significant at the local level under National Register of Historic Places Criterion "A" (association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) because of its association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and under Criterion "C" (embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction) as an excellent and intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and two distinct designs from two of San Francisco's most significant architectural firms, the Reid Brothers and Miller and Pflueger, Architects; and

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Resolution for hearing on March 4, 2004

Case No. 2004.0005L

2550-2574 Mission Street, the New  
Mission Theater  
Assessor's Block 3616, Lot 7  
Resolution No. 16736  
Page 2

7. The Planning Commission reviewed and endorsed the following description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation:
  - a. Association with the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
  - b. An excellent and intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and two distinct designs from two of San Francisco's most significant architectural firms, the Reid Brothers and Miller and Pflueger, Architects.
  
8. The Planning Commission reviewed and endorsed the following particular features that should be preserved:
  - a. Exterior:
    - Art Deco façade, freestanding sheetmetal 70-foot pylon blade sign with neon tubes spelling out "New Mission", the cantilevered marquee, and the streamlined parapet

The Board of Supervisors directs that the particular interior features of the property, as listed below, shall be preserved and, where any construction, alteration, removal or demolition of such interior features requires a City permit, the Board directs that a Certificate of Appropriateness, pursuant to Planning Code section 1006, must be issued prior to the issuance of the City permit. The Planning Commission fully supports this provision.

- b. Interior:
  - Promenade Lobby:
    - double-height promenade lobby ceiling with mezzanine at rear
    - Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades
    - stylized decorative plaster detailing throughout lobby
    - plaster moldings imprinted with Greek key motif
    - stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors
    - cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses
    - ceiling ornament of stylized floral motifs including tulips, pineapples and daisies
    - plaster zigzag-patterned ceiling moldings recalling Mayan temple detailing
    - recessed "light coves" below lobby ceiling
    - ceiling medallions
    - etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs
  
  - Auditorium:
    - auditorium with over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

Resolution for hearing on March 4, 2004

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Mission Theater  
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- monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns and Composite pilasters
- projection booth
- shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights
- cast plaster medallions
- ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the side walls
- decorative frieze of urns and garlands
- denticulated cornice
- coffered ceiling with deep reveals

**Patrons' Lounge:**

- ornate Corinthian pilasters with decorative classical frieze and cornice
- coffered ceiling
- Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along north wall

**Balcony:**

- parapet adorned with frieze of garlands and urns
- suspended plaster domed ceiling with heavily decorated ribs and decorative cast metal grilles
- scalloped parapet along the southern edge of balcony

9. The landmark designation of the New Mission Theater meets the required findings of Planning Code Section 101.1 in the following manner:

- The proposed Project will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved, such as the designation of the New Mission Theater as City Landmark No. 245. Landmark designation will help to preserve a significant historic resource associated with patterns of architectural, social and cultural history in San Francisco.
- That the proposed project will have no significant effect on the other seven Priority Policies: the City's supply of affordable housing, existing housing or neighborhood character, public transit or neighborhood parking, preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake, commercial activity, business or employment, or public parks and open space.

10. The landmark designation of the New Mission Theater is consistent with the following portions of the Urban Design Element of the General Plan:

**OBJECTIVE 2: CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.**

**Policy 4** Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Designating this significant historic resource as a local landmark will further a continuity with the past because the building will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board would review any proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made. The proposed landmark designation will not have a significant impact on any of the other elements of the General Plan.

11. The Planning Commission has reviewed documents, correspondence and oral testimony on matters relevant to the proposed landmark designation, at a duly noticed Public Hearing held on March 4, 2004.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission hereby approves the landmark designation of 2550-2574 Mission Street, the New Mission Theater, Assessor's Block 3616, Lot 7 as Landmark No. 245, pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission hereby directs its Recording Secretary to transmit this Resolution, the New Mission Theater Landmark Designation Report and other pertinent materials in the Case File 2004.0005L to the Board of Supervisor's.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Planning Commission on March 4, 2004.

Linda Avery  
Planning Commission Secretary

AYES: Antonini, Boyd, Feldstein, Hughes, Lee, Lee

NOES:

ABSENT: Bradford-Bell

ADOPTED: March 4, 2004

## LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

<b>LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT</b>	<b>LANDMARKS BOARD VOTE</b>
<b>DATE:</b> 23 October 2003	<b>APPROVED:</b>
<b>CASE NO.:</b>	<b>PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:</b>
<b>APPROVED:</b>	
<b>PAGE 1 of 23</b>	<b>PROPOSED LANDMARK NO.:</b>

**HISTORIC NAME** New Mission Theater  
**POPULAR NAME** New Mission Theater  
**ADDRESS** 2550 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94110  
**BLOCK & LOT** Block 3616 / Lot 007  
**OWNER** San Francisco Community College  
**ORIGINAL USE** theater  
**CURRENT USE** presently vacant  
**ZONING** NC-3

### NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- (A)  Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- (B)  Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- (C)  Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- (D)  Has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

### Period of Significance

The period of significance of the New Mission Theater is 1916-1950. The period of significance begins with the date of construction and closes with the approximate date at which the Mission theater district began to decline and lose its important role in the life of the neighborhood.

### Integrity

#### Evaluation of Integrity

The *National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 15* standards and criteria were used to evaluate the building's integrity. *Bulletin 15* defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance. Integrity is the authenticity of a historic resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Integrity involves several aspects, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Overall, the New Mission Theater retains a high degree of integrity. The New Mission Theater retained its original use as a single screen theater from 1916 until 1993. Consequently, the

**LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

DATE: 24 October 2003

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APPROVED:

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**LANDMARKS BOARD VOTE**

APPROVED:

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:

PROPOSED LANDMARK NO.:

changes that occurred have been minimal and are well documented. Generally, the theater has suffered from years of deferred maintenance and some unsympathetic, but mostly reversible alterations. With regard to the exterior, which exhibits peeling paint, limited graffiti, and broken neon tubes at the blade sign, the façade marquee and sign are intact. An analysis of historic photographs reveals that the 1916-17 auditorium remains almost entirely intact.

**Location**

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The New Mission Theater remains in its original footprint in a mid-block site in the 2500 block of Mission Street between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets. The two street-facing elevations of the building on Bartlett and Mission Streets remain intact and convey their original expression.

**Design**

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The original design as conceived by the Reid Brothers for a lavish movie palace coupled with Timothy Pflueger's Art Deco modifications represent an interesting juxtaposition of two building campaigns. The varying design approaches two architectural campaigns illustrates popular styles for movie palaces separated by two decades. The theater retains all the key elements of the original design, such as the structure's expression, proportions, massing, and circulation through the building. The architectural elements and vocabulary that were altered in 1932 remain intact as well. The building design has not been affected by any later additions to the exterior envelope.

**Setting**

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, constituting topographic features, vegetation, manmade features, and relationships between buildings or open space. The New Mission Theater remains in a very dense and busy urban setting. Located on the Mission District's main thoroughfare and principal commercial street, the setting is defined by the presence of one-and two-story commercial buildings constructed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with other movie houses (all altered) in the immediate vicinity.

**Materials**

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. It was the intent of the original architect to construct the most lavish movie palace in the neighborhood. A sampling of original interior finishes and materials include stylized decorative plaster detailing, cast plaster cornice moldings, cast plaster ceiling ornament depicting stylized floral and vegetal motifs including tulips, pineapples and daisies, chrome-plated steel balusters at the stair and mezzanine, auditorium doors with frosted glass panels inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs, and two gilded and fluted Corinthian Order columns flanking the proscenium. The auditorium ceiling is articulated by a bold series of coffers with deep reveals. Exterior building materials are original and include the sheetmetal blade sign and metal marquee. The building retains a high degree of original materials.

**Workmanship**

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, people, or artisan during any given period in history or pre-history. The original 1916 construction epitomizes early 20<sup>th</sup> century design and building technologies, construction techniques, and noteworthy craftsmanship, as do the elements of the 1930s Art Deco modifications. Further, the use plaster

**LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

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ornament, painted murals, and decorative sheet metal at the façade, contributes to the building's high degree of workmanship.

**Feeling**

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historical sense of a particular period of time. Due to an intact setting and few modifications outside of the period of significance, the building retains its original feeling.

**Association**

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Locally significant, not only for its architecture, but also for its role in the economic development of the Mission District, the theater played a pivotal role as a beacon in the neighborhood from 1916 until 1950. In addition, it is associated with the influential San Francisco architects, the Reid Brothers and Timothy Pflueger. Because changes to the building have been minimal, the theater's intact historic fabric continues to convey its links to these important associations.

**ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION 1004 (b)****Boundaries of the Landmark Site**

The New Mission Theater and the adjacent Giant Value Department Store are both located on Block 3616, Lot 7 in San Francisco's Mission District. The block is bounded by Mission Street to the east, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the south, Bartlett Street to the west and 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the north. Lot 7 is bounded by Mission Street to the east, Bartlett Street to the west and adjacent parcels to the north and south. The New Mission Theater building is the only portion of the lot to be included in this landmark nomination. It occupies approximately 19,500 gross square feet of the northern part of Lot 7, which in total occupies 44,000 square feet.

**Characteristics of the Landmark that Justify Designation**

The boundaries are coterminous with the exterior walls of the New Mission Theater and do not include any other buildings or sites. The New Mission Theater achieved its architectural and historical significance between 1916-17 and 1950 on the present site within the existing building envelope.

**Description of the Particular Features that Should be Preserved**

Character-Defining Features:

Exterior:

Art Deco façade

freestanding 70' pylon sign with neon tubes spelling out "New Mission"

cantilevered marquee

streamlined parapet

Interior:

Promenade Lobby:

- double height promenade lobby ceiling with mezzanine at rear
- Art Deco-style ornamental metalwork at balustrades
- stylized decorative plaster detailing throughout lobby
- plaster moldings imprinted with a Greek Key motif

**LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**DATE: *24 October 2003*

CASE NO.:

APPROVED:

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**LANDMARKS BOARD VOTE**

APPROVED:

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PROPOSED LANDMARK NO.:

- stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors
- cast plaster cornice moldings in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses
- ceiling ornament of stylized floral motifs including tulips, pineapples and daisies
- plaster Zigzag-patterned ceiling moldings recall Mayan temple detailing
- recessed "light coves" below lobby ceiling
- ceiling medallions
- etched glass panel doors to auditorium inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs

**Auditorium:**

- auditorium with over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements
- monumental proscenium arch flanked by a pair of gilded and fluted Corinthian columns and Composite pilasters
- projection booth
- shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights
- cast plaster medallions
- ornamental plaster moldings and raised panels on the side walls
- decorative frieze of urns and garlands
- denticulated cornice
- coffered ceiling with deep reveals

**Patrons' Lounge:**

- ornate Corinthian pilasters with decorative classical frieze and cornice
- coffered ceiling
- Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along the north wall

**Balcony:**

- parapet is adorned with a frieze consisting of garlands and urns
- suspended plaster domed ceiling with heavily decorated ribs and decorative cast metal grilles
- scalloped parapet along the southern edge of the balcony

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**DESCRIPTION****Introduction**

The New Mission Theater is a 2,800-seat motion picture house located at 2550 Mission Street in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. The 2500 block of Mission Street, where the New Mission Theater is located, is dominated by a mixture of one-and two-story commercial buildings constructed during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The New Mission Theater is an interesting juxtaposition of two building campaigns. It is composed of an Art Deco façade and promenade lobby, both designed in 1932 by architect Timothy Pflueger, and a large Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, designed in 1916-17 by the Reid Brothers. The theater has an "L" shaped plan; the promenade lobby is 30' wide and it extends 142' to the middle of the block, where it meets the 102' x 108' auditorium. The auditorium is the foot of the "L" and extends over 100' along Bartlett Street. Today the theater's prominent pylon sign is one of the most recognizable architectural landmarks in the Mission District. Pflueger's façade and promenade lobby embody the architect's own imaginative use of Art Deco and Mesoamerican imagery as rendered in plaster wall relief, murals, etched glass and ornamental metalwork. Meanwhile, the 1917 auditorium is one of the largest surviving movie palace interiors in San Francisco. Designed by San Francisco's famed Reid Brothers, the auditorium is less heavily altered than the promenade lobby and retains most of its original architectural detailing. The interior of the auditorium is characterized by an abundance of imaginative, over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements, such as the tremendous gilded Corinthian Order columns and pilasters, flood lights hidden within plaster urns, elaborate Neoclassical Revival cornice moldings and fanciful murals.

The theater is located on a large, irregularly-shaped parcel which also includes the historic but heavily altered and non-contributing Giant Value Store. The Giant Value was once a neighborhood branch of Hales Brother Department Store, a major downtown San Francisco institution during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Originally a three-story, Renaissance Revival commercial block, the existing structure displays none of its original character-defining features; the cornice and storefront have been removed and the rest of the façade has been covered with fiberglass paneling.

**Context**

The towering sheetmetal blade sign of the New Mission Theater can be seen from several blocks in all directions and it stands out from its humbler commercial context. It is located on one of the busiest blocks of Mission Street, a commercial district with a middle to lower socio-economic character in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. The theater is one of the best-preserved structures on this particular block. Many of its neighbors are heavily modernized commercial structures dating from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. To the north is a heavily altered, two-story brick commercial building. To the south is the aforementioned Giant Value department store and directly across the street from the theater is the decaying and abandoned Wigwam/Rialto Theater, a historic Vaudeville house. The New Mission Theater is one of the lynchpins of what was once one of the city's most important theater districts, rivaled only by the Market Street theater district. Formerly known as the "Mission Miracle Mile," this district comprised roughly eight blocks of Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets and in addition to a selection of downtown department stores, it included at least a dozen nickelodeons, Vaudeville houses and movie palaces.

**Mission Street Elevation**

The manner in which the New Mission Theater's facade explicitly combines architecture and signage was largely unprecedented in San Francisco when the building was renovated by the

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firm of Miller & Pflueger in 1932. Perhaps more than any surviving historic theater façade in San Francisco, the sign of the New Mission is the façade, sharing much in common with Pflueger's contemporary Paramount Theater in Oakland. Since 1932, the 70'-tall sign has served as one of the most prominent architectural features of the Mission District. The facade is a tripartite arrangement consisting of a large opening and ticket booth at street-level; a cantilevered marquee and streamlined parapet at the roofline, and a large freestanding pylon sign above. Designed during the early years of the Automobile Age, Pflueger's New Mission Theater facade was scaled to arrest the attention of passing motorists, pedestrians and streetcar passengers. The sign is fabricated of ten stacked sheet metal sections and is painted International Orange, the same color as the contemporary Golden Gate Bridge. Originally the sign was illuminated at night by neon tubes spelling out "NEW MISSION." Currently the neon tubing is in need of repair.

The Mission Street elevation was designed by Timothy Pflueger in 1932 to replace the smaller 1917 façade designed by the Reid Brothers. The existing facade is an interesting composition that reflects the advanced design sensibilities of its creator. As one of the Bay Area's most prominent self-trained masters, Pflueger designed several movie palaces throughout Northern California in a variety of styles, ranging from Churrigueresque to Streamline/Moderne. Pflueger's New Mission Theater facade is the only surviving example of a Art Deco theater façade designed by Pflueger in San Francisco. The vertical tripartite composition and exterior details recall Pflueger's better-known contemporary Paramount Theater in Oakland. Pflueger's façade for the New Mission reveals the architect's interest in Mayan and Aztec sculpture and architecture. The New Mission Theater's façade, with its pylon-shaped sign and heavy projecting parapet were both inspired by Mayan architectural motifs. The sign and marquee also displays more typical European-derived Art Deco detailing such as low-relief ornament, volutes and flowing lines suggesting upward motion and speed.

Pflueger's 1932 renovation of the New Mission Theater replaced the original Reid Brothers' 1916-17 façade. The Reid Brothers were one of the most prominent architectural firms to work in San Francisco around the turn-of-the-century. Their work, which was largely Neoclassical in inspiration, included office buildings, movie theaters, private residences and hotels, including the famed Fairmont Hotel. Their façade for the New Mission Theater was one-story high and designed in a fanciful blend of Mission Revival and Neoclassical elements. The Mission Street elevation featured details indicative of the Mission Revival style, including a scalloped parapet with lobed arches and quatrefoil niches. The façade was made of brick and stucco and also incorporated some Neoclassical details such as urns, Corinthian pilasters and acanthus leaf brackets. The Reid Brothers' façade was dominated by a large ornamental metal and glass canopy which sheltered the vestibule and ticket booths from bad weather and provided a venue for signage.

**Vestibule**

The vestibule is today the most heavily altered section of the New Mission Theater. The original Reid Brothers' Neoclassical Revival design for the vestibule featured recessed panels, pilasters, pedimented niches (which doubled as movie poster display cases) and a coffered ceiling. The Reid Brothers vestibule walls were hidden beneath modern ceramic panels in 1961. The coffered ceiling was also hidden behind a dropped acoustic tile ceiling and a new terrazzo floor was installed at the same time. In addition, Pflueger's ticket booth was removed. Nevertheless, most of the other historic fabric survives behind the modern materials and could be removed relatively easily.

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**Promenade Lobby**

Located immediately beyond the vestibule is the promenade lobby. While Pflueger did not alter the vestibule, he completely redesigned the 142' long promenade lobby in the Art Deco style to match the façade. The carpeted floor of the promenade lobby inclines gently upward toward the auditorium. The promenade lobby ceiling is two stories in height except for the rear portion where the mezzanine is located. A photograph taken in 1943 conveys the original function of the space. The mezzanine, which is accessed by a staircase with an elaborate Art Deco-style balustrade, occupies the rear portion of the lobby. The rest of the promenade lobby is decorated with stylized decorative plaster detailing. The north and south walls are divided into five bays. Plaster moldings imprinted with a Greek Key motif frame the outer bays and stacked lozenge-shaped mirrors bracket the inner bays. The panels contain murals which have been covered with whitewash within the past few years. The murals depicted dancing female figures. The promenade lobby ceiling is illuminated by three recessed "light coves". These contain ambient lighting fixtures which produced a diffused lighting that contrasted with the dramatic spot lighting provided by sconces and torchieres. The cornice moldings, also made of cast plaster, are designed in a series of patterns including stylized floral motifs and the faces of Greek muses. This ceiling ornament depicts stylized floral and vegetal motifs including tulips, pineapples and daisies. At the west side of the lobby a staircase rises to the mezzanine level. The stair and mezzanine balustrade features chrome-plated steel balusters shaped into sinuously curved patterns and a handrail made of extruded aluminum. The primary decorative feature of the ceiling above the mezzanine is a rectangular medallion which once provided a backdrop for a missing lighting fixture. Zigzag patterned ceiling moldings recalling Mayan temple detailing surrounds the medallion.

**Auditorium**

Six glass-panel doors in the west wall of the promenade lobby originally provided access to the 2,800-seat auditorium. Two doors remain in place and four others have been discovered elsewhere in the building. The doors each feature frosted glass panels inscribed with Art Deco-style motifs. Upon entering the auditorium, one sees the monumental proscenium arch and movie screen to the left and the patrons' lounge and projection booth to the right. The floor-plate of the entire auditorium measures 102' (from west to east) x 108' (north to south) and 50' from orchestra floor to ceiling. A review of historic photographs and the Reid Brothers' plans, reveal that the auditorium retains a very high degree of integrity. When Pflueger was hired to remodel the theater in 1932 he did not make substantial changes to the Reid Brothers' auditorium aside from installing new bathrooms, ventilation ducts, seats and carpeting. The proscenium is the centerpiece of the auditorium. Two gilded and fluted Corinthian Order columns flank the proscenium on either side. Similarly proportioned Composite Order pilasters with elaborately ornamented shafts flank the columns. The pilasters are followed in turn by shallow niches containing urn-shaped floodlights and cast plaster medallions depicting trumpet-playing nymphs. The side walls of the auditorium are composed of raised panels demarcated by ornamental plaster moldings and the uppermost section of the walls carries an elaborate frieze and a denticulate cornice. The panels contain pastoral murals which have been painted over. The decorative program of the frieze consists of an alternating pattern of urns and garlands. The auditorium ceiling is articulated by a bold series of coffers with deep reveals. The floor of the auditorium retains its 1932 seating and sections of 1932 carpeting.

**Patrons' Lounge**

The patrons' lounge is located on the north side of the auditorium beneath the balcony. In addition to the patrons' lounge there is the projection room, smoking lounges, bathrooms, the ushers' lounge and stairs to the balcony. The patrons' lounge was the most important space in

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this section of the auditorium. Located between the projection room and the stairs to the balcony, the patrons' lounge accommodated crowds of guests before and after the feature presentation, as well as during intermission. Public restrooms, smoking lounges, stairs to the balcony and other ancillary spaces opened off the patrons' lounge on three sides. The walls of the patrons' lounge are divided into bays by ornate Corinthian pilasters which carry an elaborate classical frieze and cornice. A historic photograph shows the patrons' lounge during the New Mission Theater's heyday in 1943. Similar to the auditorium, the patrons' lounge features a coffered ceiling. One of the notable features of the patrons' lounge is a Venetian Renaissance Revival arcade along the north wall. The arcade serves the dual purpose of articulating the northeast and northwest walls of the patrons' lounge, as well as illuminating the stairs that lead up to the balcony. Continuing in the Venetian Renaissance theme, the Reid Brothers framed two of the doors in the patrons' lounge with "Serliana" or "Palladian" openings. The bathrooms and the projection room retain their 1932 appearance with porcelain tile wainscot, marble partitions and 1932-era fixtures.

**Balcony**

The 1,000-seat balcony, reached by stairs along the north wall of the patrons' lounge, continues the Neoclassical/Renaissance themes established downstairs but is more restrained. An undulating parapet frames the southern edge of the balcony. The parapet is adorned with a frieze consisting of garlands and urns. The other three walls of the balcony are divided into panels by plaster moldings. The Reid Brothers' murals in the center of each panel have been covered by a layer of whitewash. The most impressive feature of the balcony is the oblong dome suspended over this immense space. The dome is divided into three sections by heavily decorated ribs and the center of the dome contains decorative grilles. These grilles are made of cast metal and conceal the theater's state-of-the-art mechanical ventilation system.

**Bartlett Street Elevation**

The west, or rear, elevation of the New Mission Theater faces an alley called Bartlett Street. This elevation is quite modest and utilitarian in comparison with the Mission Street elevation. Being located on a service alley, the Reid Brothers did not add ornament to a side of the building that would not be seen by the public. The Bartlett Street elevation is 110' wide and is divided into seven bays by simple concrete pilasters and into horizontal sections by three concrete belt courses. This elevation does not depart significantly from its 1917 appearance.

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### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The New Mission Theater is significant at the local level under *National Register* Criteria A and C. The period of significance is 1916 to 1950; the former date is the building's construction and the latter date is the approximate date at which the Mission theater district began to decline and lose its important role in the life of the neighborhood. The New Mission Theater is significant under Criterion A by virtue of its ground-breaking role in the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's Vaudeville and movie house district during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Between the 1906 Earthquake and 1940 almost a dozen motion picture houses opened along Mission Street in an eight-block section known locally as the "Mission Miracle Mile." Initially designed in 1916-17 by the Reid Brothers, the resulting 2,800-seat theater was the first "downtown" movie palace constructed in an outlying neighborhood and incidentally the largest movie palace in California for a brief period. The construction of such a large and grand theater in an outlying, predominantly blue-collar neighborhood was a brave gesture by its owners, the partnership of Greenfield and Kahn. Although many predicted that such a movie palace would never survive, the theater opened to much fanfare. The opening festivities including a speech by Mission-born mayor James "Sunny Jim" Rolph, who extolled the opening of the theater as signifying the arrival of the Mission District on the stage of civic affairs. From 1917 onward the original New Mission Theater was the largest and most architecturally lavish movie palace in the Mission District until the El Capitan Theater opened in 1928. After several years of decline, the new owner Abraham Nasser retained Timothy Pflueger to redesign sections of the building in a more up-to-date style. Pflueger's modish Art Deco façade and promenade lobby put the theater back on the map and it resumed its position of popularity until well after the Second World War.

The New Mission Theater is also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and the work of two of San Francisco's most significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger, Architects. The theater represents two eras in the grand traditional era of movie palace design, with the Reid Brothers' 1916-17 Neoclassical Revival auditorium and Miller & Pflueger's 1932 Art Deco facade and promenade lobby. The New Mission was the first theater designed by the Reid Brothers, who went on to design a dozen or more theaters in San Francisco and surrounding communities and despite its age it remains the firm's best-preserved theater interior. Miller & Pflueger's 1932 alterations were commissioned by its new owner Abraham Nasser as a means to give the most visible components of the theater a more up-to-date appearance. Pflueger's sheet-metal pylon sign and marquee and redesigned lobby have gained significance in their own right and work well together with the Reid Brothers' design. The façade and many of the interior elements share much in common with Pflueger's contemporary Paramount Theater in Oakland and represent a rare surviving example of a theater designed by the architect in the Art Deco style.

#### **Criterion A**

##### **Mission District**

The Mission District has traditionally been San Francisco's largest and most self-contained blue-collar neighborhood. The origins of the neighborhood trace back to the founding of Mission Dolores (originally San Francisco de Assisi) in 1776, by Father Francisco Palou. In 1850 a financier and speculator named Charles L. Wilson built a plank toll road, which followed the route of present-day Mission Street, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1867, horse-drawn car lines and a steam railroad line operating along Harrison Street made the district even more accessible. Between 1870 and 1900, the Mission District developed as a middle-class residential neighborhood attracting thousands of native-born American and some Irish and German residents. After the 1906 Earthquake and Fire destroyed the largely Irish, blue-collar South of

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Market district, the mostly undestroyed Mission attracted many of the refugees. Within a few years, the Mission had been transformed by this migration, which was accompanied by an influx of industry, into San Francisco's largest and most concentrated blue-collar neighborhood. "The Mission," as it became known, developed as a city within a city, with its own industrial base and workers' housing districts. The Mission also had its own "downtown" along Mission Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, where "downtown" department stores and banks opened neighborhood branches. This eight-block stretch of Mission Street also played host to the neighborhood's entertainment district, which was composed of taverns, Vaudeville houses and nickelodeons.

**Development of the Mission Street Miracle Mile**

The large-scale development of theaters in San Francisco's Mission District began after the 1906 Catastrophe leveled San Francisco's Market Street district, including all of the early nickelodeons and Vaudeville houses.<sup>1</sup> Responding to the destruction downtown, some entrepreneurs moved their businesses to the relatively undamaged sections of the Mission and Fillmore Districts, where business could resume quickly. Initially nickelodeon operators and Vaudeville directors converted existing commercial buildings into venues but by the 1910s they increasingly constructing custom-designed theater buildings which could be used for both live performances and "photo plays." The Wigwam/Rialto, located directly across the street from the New Mission, is a good example of this early phase of theater construction in the Mission. The Wigwam was originally constructed as a wood-frame Vaudeville hall in 1907 but in 1913 it was demolished and replaced by a larger and more ornate theater designed in the Renaissance Revival style by the firm of Crim & Scott.<sup>2</sup> When it reopened, both Vaudeville productions and silent films were featured there.

Theater construction in the Mission District accelerated during the 1910s and 1920s, mirroring national trends. By 1925, at least twenty motion picture theaters were operating on or adjacent to Mission Street. The 1927 City Directory listed the following Mission District theaters: El Capitan, the Excelsior, the Gem, the Majestic, the New Lyceum, the New Mission, the Roosevelt, the Shamrock, the State, The Victoria, the Wigwam and the York. The majority of these were located in the neighborhood's busy commercial heart, on Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. Although the Market Street theater district eventually rebounded, the Mission's neighborhood theater district continued to thrive and prosper, especially after the firm of Greenfield and Kahn converted their small Premium Theater into the massive New Mission "movie palace" in 1946-17. The construction of the New Mission, and later the El Capitan confirmed the position of the Mission Street Miracle Mile as a major neighborhood rival to the Market Street theater district. Mission Street's popularity as an entertainment district was amplified by its proximity to multiple streetcar lines and the residential areas "South of the Slot," and most important, its cheaper ticket prices. From the First World War until well after the end of the Second World War, the Mission District theaters provided an avenue of escape from monotonous factory jobs, cramped apartments and poverty.

**Site History**

Sanborn maps indicate that before 1910, several wood-frame dwellings occupied the site of the New Mission Theater. The first non-residential structure on the site was a theater named the Premium Theater. Not much is known about the appearance of this theater building beyond the fact that it was designed by an architect named E.B. Johnston and commissioned by a local

<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Directory, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, "Draft Case Report, Wigwam (Cine Latino) Theater," February 24, 1993.

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businessman named Franklin B. Ross, who paid \$7,000 to erect the small brick building at 2550 Mission Street. The Premium opened for business June 1910 and it remained under the ownership of Franklin Ross for three years. In 1913, he sold the Premium and two other theaters in other parts of town to a partnership consisting of two immigrant movie house entrepreneurs: Louis R. Greenfield and Leon I. Kahn. Greenfield and Kahn renamed the theater the Idle Hour and operated it until 1916 when they converted the small theater into the lobby of their first movie palace, the New Mission Theater.

**Greenfield & Kahn**

Over the next twenty years, Louis Greenfield built a theater empire that extended as far as Hawaii.<sup>3</sup> By the time he took his own life in 1931 at the age of 42, Greenfield had attained a similar level of success in the theater business as San Francisco's two other major movie theater dynasties: the Nasser and the Levin families. By 1922 Greenfield owned at least nine theaters. Seven of these were in San Francisco: the Quality, the Progress, two Premium Theaters, the New Mission, the New Fillmore and Realart Cinemas. Outside of San Francisco he owned the Santa Cruz, in Santa Cruz, California and the Princess in Honolulu, Hawaii. Louis Greenfield was born in Russia in 1889 to Russian Jewish parents who immigrated to New York City soon after his birth. With little formal education, Greenfield worked as a peddler in New York before getting a job in a nickelodeon. Immediately realizing the potential of this new entertainment medium, Greenfield began to seek of a more congenial climate and a new market for his newfound avocation and in 1907 he moved to San Francisco. Within a year he joined forces with fellow Russian Jewish immigrant Leon Kahn and launched his first theater, the Quality, at the corner of Eddy and Fillmore Streets in the Western Addition. After the resounding success of the Quality, Greenfield and Kahn purchased the Premium Theater chain from Franklin Ross in 1913, which included the small theater at 2550 Mission Street. Greenfield and Kahn made a conscious choice to concentrate upon the emerging neighborhood trade and studiously avoided competing with the rebuilt Market Street theater district.<sup>4</sup>

**Design of the New Mission Theater**

Facing increased competition from newer Mission District theaters such as the Poppy on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Greenfield and Kahn decided in 1915 to redesign and expand the small Idle Hour at 2550 Mission Street. A shrewd entrepreneur, Greenfield believed that the theater business was like any other in terms of marketing strategy. Greenfield knew that an impressive theater building was just as critical an element in attracting audiences as the movie itself. In a 1922 interview with the *Chronicle* he stated: "I am not a showman...I am a business man merchandising his wares."<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless until 1916, Greenfield had not had the opportunity to build his own movie palace. Greenfield later told the *Chronicle* reporter in 1922, that when he decided to redevelop the Idle Hour in 1915 he wanted "to do something big." The original New Mission Theater was the result of Greenfield's vision and in every detail it reflected his ideas of what a first-class theater should be. In 1915 Greenfield hired the Reid Brothers, Architects, one of San Francisco's most prominent architectural firms, to design his magnum opus. Greenfield had grown to admire the firm through their work on San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, where he had had his wedding reception. According to Greenfield, he also chose the Reid Brothers because they had never designed a movie theater before. Greenfield believed that it was preferable to hire a competent

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Department of City Planning document.

<sup>4</sup> "Good-Luck Fairy's Magic Wand, Nothing but Hard Work, San Francisco-Honolulu Theater Builder Proves This," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 10, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

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firm inexperienced in the realm of movie theater design because he would be in a better position to control the outcome. In 1922 he said:

I had ideas about the sort of house I wanted. And I knew the screen perfectly. It was my business.<sup>6</sup>

**Construction**

The Reid Brothers' design for the New Mission Theater, as the new theater was to be called, was a drastic reconstruction of the humble Idle Hour. The permit and plans were filed with the San Francisco Bureau of Building Inspection in November 1915. For the parcel of land to the rear of the Idle Hour on Bartlett Street, the Reid Brothers designed a colossal new auditorium with a floorplate measuring 102' x 108'. The actual Idle Hour Theater was to be gutted and incorporated in its entirety into the New Mission Theater. With only the outer walls left intact, the interior of the Idle Hour was converted into the promenade lobby and concession area for the new theater. The Mission Street façade of the former Idle Hour would receive a new elaborate façade which was designed to compete with the increasingly ornate façades and signage of newer Mission District theaters. According to Greenfield, for quite some time the construction of the tremendous auditorium escaped the notice of Mission residents. When the concrete walls of the massive auditorium began to emerge above the surrounding buildings in early 1916 there was a fair amount of skepticism that a movie theater this large would succeed in the Mission District, or anywhere for that matter. According to Greenfield, theater experts believed that the distance between the projectors and the screen was too great.<sup>7</sup> Others felt that it was not wise to construct a major "downtown theater" in the Mission. At almost 3,000 seats, the New Mission would be much larger than any of the downtown theaters until the construction of the Fox Theater in 1928.

**New Mission Theater Opens**

None of the dire predictions of failure dissuaded Greenfield and Kahn and the New Mission Theater opened with great fanfare six months later, in May 1916. Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph, the Mission Merchants Association and "several thousand residents of the Mission" attended the opening of the New Mission. Progressive Mayor Rolph, a native son of the Mission and a continual booster of his home district, spoke at the opening and congratulated Greenfield & Kahn "on their enterprise" and the people of the Mission "on having such a splendid photoplay theater."<sup>8</sup>

**Balcony Added**

A year later in 1917, Greenfield and Kahn hired the Reid Brothers again to design a 1,000-seat balcony for the New Mission Theater, bringing the seating capacity up to 2,800 and making it "San Francisco's largest uptown theater."<sup>9</sup> When the New Mission Theater reopened on November 15, 1917, Greenfield and Kahn and the Mission Merchants Association staged another gala celebration. Christened with a showing of "Poor Little Peppina," a silent film starring Mary Pickford, the program also featured speeches by Samuel Rosenkrantz, president of the Mission Merchants Association, A. W. Allen of Paramount Pictures Corporation and Mayor Rolph. The

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Good-Luck Fairy's Magic Wand, Nothing but Hard Work, San Francisco-Honolulu Theater Builder Proves This," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 10, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Mission Theater Formally Opened," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (May 5, 1916), p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "New Mission Theatre Has Big Capacity," *San Francisco Examiner*, (November 18, 1917), p. 56.

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celebration ended on a patriotic note with a flag-raising ceremony performed by a Boy Scout troop and the Second Field Artillery from the Presidio.<sup>10</sup> Aside from the patriotic revelry (the theater reopened during the height of American involvement in the First World War), the speeches and celebratory activities held in honor of the re-opening of the New Mission Theater attested to the growing influence of the Mission District and confidence of its residents. Twenty years earlier, the thought of the Mission District hosting the West's largest and most elegant movie house and having a Mayor born in the neighborhood give the opening speech, would have been unthinkable.

The local press gave extensive coverage to the re-opening of San Francisco's grandest movie palace and a reporter from the *San Francisco Examiner* wrote: "The theatre, one of the finest film houses in the West, has a seating capacity of 2,800 and represents an investment of \$300,000."<sup>11</sup> The Press was clearly impressed with the amenities and architecture of the New Mission Theater. Much emphasis was placed on the theater's efficient circulation, the large number of "well-placed restrooms" and the elaborate architectural detail. The dome over the balcony provided the biggest thrill to observers. The reporter for the *Examiner* wrote: "Elaborately grilled, the vaulted dome over the balcony, with its intricate design, is an architectural feature that adds grace and beauty to the huge auditorium."<sup>12</sup> The new theater featured many sophisticated technological advances, such as a heating and cooling system and amenities such as a 12-piece orchestra, a pipe organ, several smoking rooms and lounges, as well as "a free child care area in the adjoining garden playground."

Louis Greenfield (the partnership with Kahn ended in the late 1910s) operated The New Mission Theater successfully throughout much of the Roaring Twenties as the largest and most popular Mission District theater. Greenfield was so pleased with the success of the New Mission that he hired the Reid Brothers the next year to design an identical theater (the New Fillmore) in the Western Addition. However by the late 1920s Greenfield's run of prosperity began to erode as larger and more lavish theaters were opened both downtown and along the Mission Miracle Mile. By the mid-1920s the Market Street theater district had recovered its pre-quake grandeur with the Fox Warfield Theater (1921) and the Golden Gate Theater (1922), both of which were designed by G. Albert Lansburgh. Nonetheless, the New Mission continued to be the dominant theater in the Mission until 1928 when Ackerman, Harris and Oppenheim built the El Capitan Theater, two blocks north of the New Mission. The El Capitan, a huge 3,000-seat Spanish Colonial/Churrigueresque theater designed by Arthur Crim, began to draw audiences away from the older Mission District theaters like the New Mission. To make matters worse, the Stock Market Crash occurred the next year. The combination of increased competition and growing indebtedness took their toll on Greenfield's movie palace empire and his peace of mind and in October 1931 he killed himself. Over \$400,000 in debt, Greenfield was on the verge of losing the New Mission Theater and the rest of his empire to bankruptcy.<sup>13</sup>

**The Nasser Family**

Compelled by the need to pay off Greenfield's substantial debts, his estate sold off his theaters. In 1932, Abraham Nasser, the founder of what was to become the most famous and the longest-lived theater dynasty in San Francisco, purchased the New Mission Theater. Nasser was a

<sup>10</sup> "New Mission Opened with Eclat," *San Francisco Examiner*. (November 16, 1917), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> "New Mission Theatre has Big Capacity," *San Francisco Examiner*. (November 18, 1917), p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> "Theater Owner Found Hanged in S.F. Office," *San Francisco Chronicle*. (October 26, 1931).

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native of what is now Lebanon and he immigrated to San Francisco in 1900. Nasser's first taste of the theater business occurred in 1908 when he opened a nickelodeon in his confectioner's shop at 18<sup>th</sup> and Collingwood Streets in Eureka Valley, as a means to increase candy sales. In 1910 Nasser realized that his nickelodeon was earning more money than the candy and in that year he constructed a new 600-seat theater at 485 Castro. In 1922 the Nassers hired the then relatively unknown architect Timothy Pflueger, of Miller & Pflueger, to design a new theater for the site. The 1,550-seat, Spanish Colonial style Castro Theater was Pflueger's first major movie palace.<sup>14</sup> As Nasser continued to expand his theater empire he repeatedly hired Pflueger to design new theaters and to renovate others. In 1926 Nasser commissioned Pflueger to design the Moorish Revival Alhambra Theater on Polk Street and in 1931 to design the Art Deco masterpiece Paramount Theater in Oakland. In 1932 and 1935 Nasser hired Pflueger to renovate the New Mission and the Royal Theaters, respectively.<sup>15</sup> By the late 1940s, the Nasser family had built up a chain of twelve movie theaters throughout the Bay Area. In 1949 they branched out into television production after purchasing General Service Studios in Hollywood, where they eventually produced television programs such as "I Love Lucy," "The Lone Ranger," "Mr. Ed" and "The Beverly Hillbillies."<sup>16</sup>

**Pflueger Renovates the New Mission**

In order to compete in the cutthroat atmosphere of the Depression, the Nassers embarked upon a campaign to update the appearance of their older theaters, especially the stylistically obsolete New Mission Theater. In early 1932, the Nassers hired Miller & Pflueger of San Francisco to redesign the façade and promenade lobby in a more modern style. Due to the Depression new construction was usually not a viable option. With materials being expensive but labor cheap, theater entrepreneurs frequently decided to renovate their older theaters rather than replace them. In San Francisco only four new movie theaters opened during the 1930s: the Bridge (1939), Timothy Pflueger's El Rey (1931), the Noe (1937), and the Presidio (1937). All four of these theaters were designed in the Art Deco style.<sup>17</sup> Also a result of the Depression, San Francisco's movie house owners had the luxury of hiring prominent architects at bargain-rate prices to remodel their older theaters. The Art Deco style was frequently chosen by owners and architects as a fashionable, yet relatively inexpensive way to update the image of an older theater. Much of the relief ornament could be executed in stucco and did not require as much skilled labor. Often the renovation work would be limited to the most visible components of the theater, such as the sign, marquee and the entrance lobby.<sup>18</sup> There were several other older theaters in San Francisco, such as the Midway Theater on Haight Street, that received inexpensive face-lifts. Pflueger's partial remodel of the New Mission Theater was certainly one of the most expensive and competent movie palace renovations in San Francisco, equaled only by Pflueger's later remodel of the Metro Theater.

Timothy Pflueger, one of the foremost West Coast architects to work in the Art Deco style, was the primary designer in the firm of Miller & Pflueger and he did much of the work on the New Mission Theater project.<sup>19</sup> Pflueger left much of the original Reid Brothers' work untouched,

<sup>14</sup> "Obituary, Emily Nasser," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 15, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Building files: San Francisco Architectural Heritage.

<sup>16</sup> Tim Kelley, "The Nasser Brothers," *Castro Star*, (July 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Information derived from Heritage building files.

<sup>18</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Information Series, No. 72, Curtain Up: New Life for Historic Theaters," (Washington, D.C.: 1993), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application of Mission Fillmore Theatre Co. to Make Alterations to New Mission Theatre," filed July 1, 1932.

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especially the auditorium but he radically redesigned the 1916-17 façade and promenade lobby. The auditorium, although relatively old, was still very impressive in terms of scale and ornamental effect and would have been too expensive to radically alter. Instead, Pflueger concentrated his efforts on the parts of the theater that were most easily visible from outside. He removed the Reid Brothers' elaborate 1916 façade and marquee and replaced it with the Art Deco marquee and pylon sign that exist today. Pflueger hired Alexander Aimwell Cantin to design and install the neon for the New Mission façade and sign, as he had done with the Paramount and the Castro Theaters. Pflueger retained the Reid Brothers' Neoclassical style vestibule, with its pedimented niches but he replaced the 1916 promenade lobby interior with Art Deco plaster ornament, mirrors, sinewy metal balustrades, sconces and other light fixtures and carpets. Pflueger believed in the alliance of architecture and art and he hired Hollywood set painters to paint interior murals for his theater commissions, such as the Metro Theater. The murals in the New Mission promenade lobby were probably painted by these artisans. When the New Mission Theater reopened in late 1932, its appearance from Mission Street had been radically transformed and it became the most modern looking theater in the Mission District until Albert Lansburgh's Grand Theater opened in 1940. The theater again regained its popularity and continued, in the words of local residents, to be the most popular destination for neighborhood moviegoers during the war and for several years afterward. On this basis, the year of 1950 has been selected as the end of the period of significance.

**Post War Decline**

Despite the gradual post-war decline of the Mission Miracle Mile and the closing of most of the Mission District theaters, the New Mission Theater continued to operate as a neighborhood movie theater until 1993. The Mission District underwent a gradual demographic and socio-economic transformation during the post-war period, as the predominantly Irish-American residents moved onward to the rapidly growing Sunset District and the suburbs of San Mateo and Marin Counties. The vacant flats and apartments of the Mission filled up with immigrants from Mexico and Central America, transforming the area into San Francisco's largest Latino neighborhood. The Nasser family continued to operate the New Mission Theater throughout the 1950s and 1960s but they did not see fit to perform any significant improvements to an aging theater in an increasingly poor neighborhood. The only changes of any significance occurred in 1961, when they furred out the vestibule walls and added a layer of white ceramic tiles.<sup>20</sup>

The post-war era was an especially tough time for older urban single-screen theaters in America. A 1948 anti-trust suit heard by the United States Supreme Court forced the major movie studios to divest themselves of their theater houses. Frequently, the movie studios that sold their older inner-city theaters could not find buyers who could maintain them properly.<sup>21</sup> Concurrently, the suburbanization that afflicted American cities during the post-war period lured potential audiences away from the older residential neighborhoods. Urban theaters found themselves confronted with deteriorating neighborhoods and dwindling audiences. Finally, the increasing popularity of television diverted even more people away from the act of theater going. While many theaters survived the 1950s and 1960s, few escaped without some degree of modernization or removal of deteriorating ornament. Others closed or deteriorated beyond repair.

<sup>20</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application of The Keil Company to Make Alterations to 2550 Mission Street," application filed June 28, 1961

<sup>21</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, Information Series, No. 72: "Curtain Up: New Life for Historic Theaters," (Washington, D.C., 1993), p. 2.

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The New Mission Theater survived as a movie theater much longer than many of its contemporaries. The New Fillmore, the New Mission's twin, was demolished as were many other San Francisco theaters, including some of the most spectacular downtown theaters, such as the Neo-Baroque Fox Theater on Market Street. The New Mission Theater remained in business until the early 1990s, showing second-run horror movies. As an independent movie theater, the New Mission Theater did not have access to the expensive, first-run productions available to the larger multiplex chains. In May 1993, Cinema Cal, the last operator of the New Mission, decided to close the theater. In late 1998, City College of San Francisco purchased the theater, with a view to demolition to make way for a new campus building. The New Mission was then leased to a furniture retailer and used as commercial retail space until January, 2003. At present City College seeks a new buyer for the property.

**Criterion C**

The New Mission Theater is significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace embodying "the distinctive characteristics of a type, (and) period," as well as representing "the work of a master" and "high artistic values." The New Mission Theater is the best surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in the Mission District and one of only a handful surviving in San Francisco with any degree of integrity. Furthermore, the building is an important work of two regionally significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger.<sup>22</sup> Both firms were recognized as being "masters" within the architectural profession when hired to work on the New Mission Theater. The New Mission auditorium was the first movie theater interior designed by the Reid Brothers and today it remains the most intact theater interior designed by the firm anywhere.<sup>23</sup> Timothy Pflueger, the designer of several movie theaters in San Francisco and elsewhere in Northern California, designed movie houses in a variety of styles. As a remodel, Pflueger's contribution to the New Mission is not the most important example of his work. Nonetheless, his work on the New Mission Theater is the earliest and most intact and only surviving example of the architect's work in theater design, in the Art Deco style, in San Francisco. Finally, with its soaring Art Deco façade and lobby, as well as its excellently preserved Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, the New Mission Theater displays a very high level of artistic value and craftsmanship that is unrealizable today.

**Early American Theater Design**

The first motion picture in the United States was registered with the copyright office in 1893. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century most American cities began to witness the proliferation of small nickelodeons, where short silent "photo-plays" would be shown. Nickelodeons were usually housed in existing commercial buildings with flat floors and few architectural features to distinguish them as new building types. The movie craze intensified during the 1910s and by 1915 there were almost 25,000 "picture theaters" operating throughout the United States. By the late 1910s and early 1920s, the modest nickelodeons were being replaced by extravagant movie palaces displaying the "Baroque-roguey" of professional theater designers such as John Eberson, W. W. Ahlschlager and the Rapp Brothers.<sup>24</sup> Initially, inspiration for movie theater design came from traditional live-performance theaters. By the early 1920s, the movie palace construction boom was in full swing. Movie studios such as Paramount began to open larger and

<sup>22</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage has evaluated and rated the significance of San Francisco's architecture firms as a part of our 1978 Downtown Survey. Firms were given ratings of A, B or C.

<sup>23</sup> "Good-Luck Fairy's Magic Wand Nothing But Hard Work San Francisco-Honolulu Theater Builder Proves This," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (December 10, 1922), p. D1.

<sup>24</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, Information Sheet Number 16: "Preservation of Concert Halls, Opera Houses and Movies Palaces," (Washington, D.C.: 1981), p. 16.

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more ornate movie theaters that would exclusively show pictures produced in their studios. Architecture was deliberately used by big studios and individual theater owners as a means to attract audiences in a cutthroat business characterized by intense competition. Prominent signs and marquees and elaborately decorated façades were designed to attract movie-goers inside, where they would be confronted with even more ornate lobbies and auditoriums. During the 1920s, Neoclassical, Renaissance and Baroque motifs gave way to more exotic styles such as Moorish, Spanish, Mayan, Egyptian, Chinese and even more strange hybrid styles.

San Francisco's New Mission Theater is a rare and excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century movie palace in San Francisco, and more important, the Mission District. Until after the Second World War Mission Street was lined with several large movie palaces such as the New Mission, the El Capitan, the Granada and smaller theaters like the Grand and the Tower. Early pictures of Mission Street depict a busy commercial streetscape punctuated by the sleek blade signs of movie theaters, where tired factory workers and shoppers could escape their daily routines. With its 2,800-seat auditorium and ornate and sophisticated plaster ornament, the New Mission Theater was the first movie palace in the Mission and today it is the only surviving example. The El Capitan had its auditorium demolished and replaced with a parking lot. Other theaters have been extensively remodeled as discount stores or churches. The New Mission survived as a neighborhood theater until 1993 and aside from some unfortunate painting schemes, very few changes have been made to accommodate a furniture store; even the seats remain in place.

**Reid Brothers**

Brothers James and Merritt Reid constituted one of the best-known and most well respected architecture firms in San Francisco around the turn of the last century. James Reid, the principal designer in the partnership, was born November 25, 1851 in St. John, New Brunswick. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. James Reid first came to California in 1888 after being commissioned to design the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. The following year, James moved to San Francisco where he joined his brother Merritt who was already there. The brothers formed a tremendously important firm that would last half a century, until Merritt's death in 1932.<sup>25</sup> Much of their work took place during the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. An extremely capable and versatile firm, the Reid Brothers designed hotels, office buildings, churches, single-family residences and theaters. Some of their most important works include the Fairmont Hotel of 1906, the Call Office Building of 1914, the First Congregational Church of 1914, the Cliff House of 1908 and many other prominent San Francisco landmarks.

The New Mission Theater was the first of many Reid Brothers'-designed movie houses. A year after the New Mission was completed, Greenfield and Kahn hired the Reid Brothers to design a second major theater for them: the New Fillmore Theater in the Western Addition. During the 1920s, when the theater construction boom reached its climax in San Francisco, the Reid Brothers designed and supervised the construction of at least five other major movie houses in the city, including the Coliseum, at 745 Clement Street (1918); the Alexandria, at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Geary (1923); the Balboa, at 3626 Balboa Street (1925); the York, at 2795 24<sup>th</sup> Street (1926) and the Metropolitan (now the Metro), at 2047-65 Union Street (1923). Of the remaining Reid Brothers' theater interiors, the New Mission retains the greatest degree of integrity, with its 1917 auditorium remaining almost entirely intact. The auditorium of the New Mission embodies the earliest phase of the Reid Brothers' work in theater design. Their earliest theater designs, such

<sup>25</sup> Henry F. Withey, AIA, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*, (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), p. 500.

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as the New Mission and the New Fillmore, were designed in a more traditional mode reminiscent of earlier live-performance theaters. As their career progressed throughout the 1910s and 1920s the Reid Brothers designed theaters in a variety of exotic styles, such as Egyptian for the Alexandria and Secessionist for the Coliseum. Most of the Reid Brothers theaters have either been demolished or heavily altered. The New Fillmore was demolished in the 1950s and the Coliseum was gutted in the 1960s. Other Reid Brothers theaters such as the Alexandria, the Balboa and the York have undergone interior alterations that have affected their integrity. The Metropolitan was heavily altered by Timothy Pflueger in 1942. Of the Reid Brothers' other theaters, only the New Fillmore was comparable to the New Mission in terms of style and scale.

The interior of the New Mission Theater was designed by the Reid Brothers in the Neoclassical/Renaissance Revival style, with many classical architectural details, such as the pedimented poster display cases, an arcaded staircase enclosure and the colossal gilded Corinthian columns flanking the proscenium. The interior ornament, like many theaters of its era, was purposefully designed in an overwrought manner, with gilded, over-scaled architectural elements, murals depicting classical mythological subjects and imaginative sculptural relief. Unlike most other Reid Brothers' theaters, the interior of the New Mission's auditorium is amazingly intact, requiring very little beside paint removal and patching to bring it back to its original luster. The interior of the New Mission Theater brought myth and luxury to the lives of working people for the price of a movie ticket and its current appearance completely reflects its original role in the life of the Mission District during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Timothy Pflueger**

The Art Deco Mission Street facade and promenade lobby together form another architecturally significant component of the New Mission Theater. Designed in 1932, by Timothy Pflueger, a partner in the firm of Miller & Pflueger, these elements of the theater represent the distinctive work of one of the most widely acclaimed architects to work in San Francisco and Northern California from the 1920s to the 1940s. Pflueger was born in 1892 in Stockton, California. He studied architecture at San Francisco's Beaux Arts Institute of Design and worked in several offices until the conclusion of the First World War, when he formed a partnership with his mentor, J. R. Miller. Pflueger, the primary designer of the partnership, was responsible for the design of many important San Francisco landmarks. Some of the most important examples include: the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building of 1925, the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange of 1930, The Medico-Dental Building at 450 Sutter Street of 1929; the Oakland-Bay Bridge of 1936 (in collaboration with Arthur Brown, Jr.) and San Francisco City College's Phelan Campus in 1942. Pflueger was also responsible for the design and remodeling of nine motion picture theaters throughout the Bay Area and Northern California during his short career (he died at the age of 54 in 1946). Several of these theaters have attained national significance, including the Castro Theater of 1922 (San Francisco Landmark #100), the Alhambra Theater of 1928 (San Francisco Landmark #217) and the Paramount Theater in Oakland, a National Historic Landmark, the highest honor that can be bestowed on a structure.

The movie palaces designed or renovated by Timothy Pflueger were part of a larger body of important movie palaces being erected throughout California during the 1920s and 1930s, which included such prominent theaters as the Wilton in Los Angeles and the El Capitan in Hollywood, by Pflueger's contemporary, G. Albert Lansburgh. Pflueger was one of the most prolific and innovative theater architects in Northern California during the 1920s and 1930s. Pflueger's imaginative and exuberant design sensibilities were perfect for this building. Kevin Starr, California's State Historian writes:

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Pflueger's architecture was at once romantic, rational, high-tech and festive. He had a genius for communicating well-being to the people who used his buildings or sat over drinks on a magic evening in one of his lounges. Pflueger designed buildings for people who liked cities and who liked themselves.<sup>26</sup>

As a remodeling of an older theater Pflueger's contribution to the New Mission Theater is not the most important or unadulterated example of his work. With that said, Pflueger's work on the New Mission went above and beyond the scope of most theater remodels of the 1930s. With the Depression in full-swing owners of older theaters found it more economical to hire prominent architects at bargain-basement rates to update the appearance of their stylistically dated movie houses. Often this work did not depart beyond replacing the carpeting or the seats and possibly covering an ornate but expensive-to-maintain façade with stucco. To his credit, Abraham Nasser gave Pflueger a significant amount of leeway when they hired Miller & Pflueger to renovate the New Mission Theater. Pflueger wisely left the Reid Brothers' jaw-dropping auditorium alone aside from updating the carpet and bathrooms. Instead the architect concentrated on radically redesigning the façade and promenade lobby. Pflueger used elements employed in the design of his contemporary masterpiece, the Paramount, in the reconstruction of the New Mission, including the towering sheet metal Art Deco sign/façade, the aluminum balustrades and fixtures, the Mayan and Aztec-inspired plaster treatments and the imaginative murals painted by Pflueger's artist collaborators.

As a surviving movie palace that embodies "high artistic values" and craftsmanship, the New Mission Theater is unmatched in the Mission District and matched by few other theaters in the City, with the possible exception of the Metro Theater (another theater originally designed by the Reid Brothers and remodeled by Pflueger). The Reid Brothers' auditorium displays an incredible level of design sensibility, detailing and craftsmanship. Trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition, James Reid had an able grasp on how to handle classical ornament, creating a fantasy world of 50' high gilded columns and pilasters, coffered ceilings and latticework domes. The interior detailing of the New Mission's auditorium is largely unmatched in San Francisco in terms of scale, quality and integrity. Its only major competitors aside from the Metro include live-performance theaters such as the San Francisco Opera House, designed by Arthur Brown, Jr. and G. Albert Lansburgh in 1931, the Fox Warfield Theater, designed by G. Albert Lansburgh in 1921 and the Geary Theater, designed in 1909 by the firm of Bliss & Faville. Most important, aside from inappropriate paint treatments, the auditorium of the New Mission Theater survives completely intact, having been spared the almost inevitable periodic remodeling undergone by most other theaters in San Francisco. Although more restrained and less costly than the original Reid Brothers' interior, Pflueger's promenade lobby and façade are important examples of artistry and craftsmanship. The murals on the walls of the lobby painted by experienced set painters have been painted over with a thin layer of whitewash but they survive intact beneath. Pflueger's imaginative Mesoamerican and Greek-inspired plasterwork in this space is very unusual in its mixture of themes and high level of execution. Finally, Pflueger's façade, a collaboration with sign fabricator Alexander Aimwell Cantin (who also worked on the Paramount) displays the architect's signature Aztec and Mayan-inspired variant of the Art Deco.

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<sup>26</sup> Butterfield & Butterfield, *The John Pflueger Collection*, (San Francisco: 1989).

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**Conclusion**

Since the early years of this century, movie-going has continually been one of America's favorite pastimes. Movies have long been entrenched in American culture as a vehicle for disseminating information. They have played a critical role in determining trends in style, recreation, language and even thoughts and social mores. The history of this medium is inextricably linked to the history of the United States during the 20th Century. The association of going to the movies with notions of fantasy and escape from the mundane realities of everyday life greatly influenced the design of early movie palace architecture. Like the movies themselves, the fanciful and opulent architecture of early movie palaces transported the audience to exotic realms before the movie even started. The New Mission Theater is especially interesting, embodying as it does the work of two important architectural firms. The New Mission Theater briefly enjoyed the limelight as the West's largest and grandest theater. Although that title was quickly eclipsed, the theater continued to serve as a cornerstone in the Mission District's Miracle Mile until the movie houses began to go silent, one after another, in the Post war period. After Mission Dolores, the New Mission Theater is probably the best known visual landmark in the neighborhood with its 70' sign spelling out the name of the theater and the neighborhood simultaneously. In a similar fashion as the Castro Theater, the New Mission Theater has become an icon of the neighborhood.



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San Francisco Architectural Heritage: building and architect files

San Francisco Archives, San Francisco Public Library: historic photographs

San Francisco Assessor's Office: ownership records

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection: building permits and drawings

San Francisco Water Department: water service application

**RATINGS**

The New Mission Theater is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Check all that apply.

523A , 523B , 523L (continuation sheets)

Context Statement

Other

3 x 5 original black and white archival quality photos (11) – one original set only

8 ½ x 11 color images (19) – color for original set only, all others b&w copies

copies of floor plans, sections and façade elevation by Timothy Pflueger, dated 1932 (4)

historic images (2)

State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 2 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder)

P1. Other Identifier: *New Mission Theater*

P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted a. County *San Francisco*

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ ; R \_\_\_\_\_ ; 1/4 of \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 of Sec \_\_\_\_\_ ; B.M. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Address *2550 Mission Street* City *San Francisco* Zip *94110*

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_ mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Parcel No. *3616/007*

P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The New Mission Theater, a 2,800-seat single screen movie theater, is located on a large, irregularly-shaped parcel in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. The immediate setting is dominated by a mixture of early 20th century one-and two-story commercial buildings. The New Mission Theater is an interesting juxtaposition of two building campaigns. It is composed of an Art Deco façade and promenade lobby, both designed in 1932 by architect Timothy Pflueger, and a large Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival auditorium, designed in 1916-17 by the Reid Brothers. The facade is a tripartite arrangement consisting of a large opening and ticket booth at street-level; a cantilevered marquee and streamlined parapet at the roofline, and a large freestanding pylon sign, a 70'-tall sheet metal sign is one of the most recognizable architectural landmarks in the Mission District. Pflueger's façade and promenade lobby embody the architect's unique use of Art Deco and Mesoamerican imagery as rendered in plaster wall relief, murals, etched glass and ornamental metalwork. The 1917 auditorium is one of the largest surviving movie palace interiors in San Francisco and is less heavily altered than the promenade lobby, retaining most of its original architectural detailing. The interior of the auditorium is characterized by ornate, over-scaled Neoclassical and Renaissance architectural elements, such as the gilded Corinthian Order columns and pilasters, flood lights hidden within plaster urns, elaborate Neoclassical Revival cornice moldings and fanciful murals. The theater has an "L" shaped plan; the promenade lobby is 30' wide and it extends 142' to the middle of the block, where it meets the 102' x 108' auditorium.

P3b. Resource Attributes: *HP10 - Theater*

P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo:

(View, date, accession #)

*View is looking south along Mission Street, dated 2003.*

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. Owner and Address:

*San Francisco Community College  
33 Gough Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103*

P8. Recorded by:

*Katherine T. Petrin  
Architectural Resources Group  
Pier 9, The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA 94111*

P9. Date Recorded: *24 October 2003*

P10. Survey Type (Describe)

*Intensive.*

P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

*National Register Nomination, submitted February, 2001*

Attachments:

None  Continuation Sheet  District Record  Rock Art Record  Other (List)  
 Location Map  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Linear Feature Record  Artifact Record  
 Sketch Map  Archaeological Record  Milling Station Record  Photograph Record

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

Page 2 of 2

NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

B1. Historic Name: *New Mission Theater*

B2. Common Name: *New Mission Theater*

B3. Original Use: *single-screen movie theater*

B4. Present Use: *vacant*

B5. Architectural Style: *Art Deco (façade and promenade lobby) Renaissance/Neoclassical Revival (auditorium)*

B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Originally designed in 1916-17 in the Neoclassical style by the Reid Brothers, the building was altered in 1932 by architect Timothy Pflueger who updated the façade and lobby in the Art Deco style. Modifications occurred in the 1960s included suspended acoustic tile ceiling and ceramic wall panels which cover historic fabric in the vestibule.

B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: *Reid Brothers (1916); Timothy Pflueger (1932)*

b. Builder: *unknown*

B10. Significance: **Theme** *Theater Architecture*

**Area** *Mission District, San Francisco*

**Period of Significance** *1916-1950*

**Property Type** *theater*

**Applicable Criteria** *A, C*

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The New Mission Theater is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C. The period of significance begins with the date of construction and closes with the approximate date at which the Mission theater district began to decline and lose its important role in the life of the neighborhood. The New Mission Theater is significant under Criterion A for its role in the establishment and evolution of the Mission District's Vaudeville and movie house district at the beginning of the 20th century. As the first "downtown" movie palace constructed in an outlying neighborhood (the largest movie palace in California at the time of construction), it opened to much fanfare. From 1917 onward the original New Mission Theater was the largest and most architecturally lavish movie palace in the Mission District until the El Capitan Theater opened in 1928. In 1932 Timothy Pflueger was commissioned to redesign sections of the building in a more up-to-date style. Due to Pflueger's modish Art Deco façade and promenade lobby, the theater resumed its position of popularity until after the Second World War. The New Mission Theater is also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early 20th century movie palace with a façade and auditorium representing two distinct eras and the work of two of San Francisco's most significant architectural firms: the Reid Brothers and Miller & Pflueger, Architects. The New Mission was the first theater designed by the Reid Brothers, who later designed more than a dozen theaters in San Francisco area. The New Mission remains the firm's best-preserved theater interior. Miller & Pflueger's 1932 alterations, including the sheet-metal pylon sign and marquee and redesigned lobby have gained significance in their own right and complement the Reid Brothers' design. Overall, the New Mission Theater retains a high degree of integrity. The theater retained its original use as a single screen theater from 1916 until 1993. On the exterior, which exhibits peeling paint, limited graffiti, and broken neon tubes, the marquee, blade sign and façade are intact. The 1917 auditorium remains almost entirely intact. The theater has suffered from years of deferred maintenance and some unsympathetic, but mostly reversible alterations.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: *HP10 - Theater*

B12. References:

*See complete bibliography attached to both National Register Nomination submitted February, 2001 and to Local Landmark Application submitted November, 2003.*

B13. Remarks:

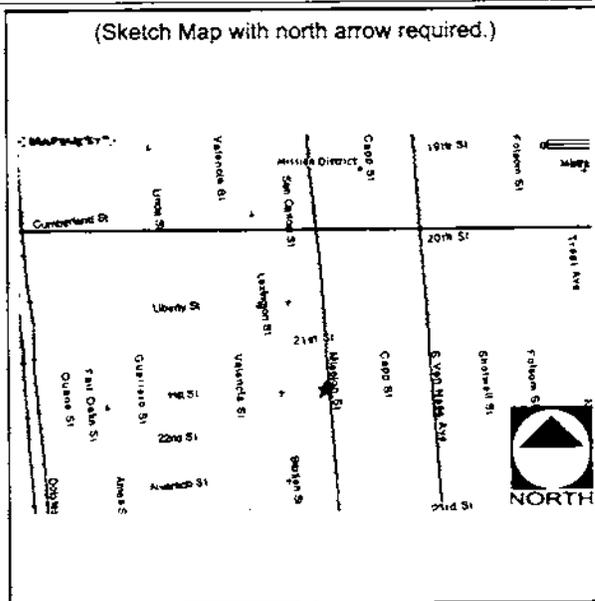
*Katherine T. Petrin*

B14. Evaluator: *Architectural Resources Group*

Date of Evaluation: *24 October 2003*

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)





**C. "MISSION MIRACLE MILE 19<sup>TH</sup> TO 20<sup>TH</sup> STREETS HISTORIC DISTRICT"**

The attached District Record (DPR 523D) was prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department in April 2011.

**D1. Historic Name:** Mission Miracle Mile

**D2. Common Name:** Mission Street

**\*D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

The historic district is located within the retail commercial corridor of Mission Street in the Inner Mission North neighborhood. Contributors to the historic district are buildings that were originally constructed between 1906 and 1927, during the period of reconstruction that followed the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Contributors also include buildings that were expanded, remodeled, and/or improved during the period of commercial modernization from the mid-1920s to approximately 1960. Contributors are one to three stories in height. All buildings contain storefronts that occupy the ground floors. Upper stories contain residential or commercial uses. Contributors vary in building footprints, construction types, and stylistic details. They include mostly wood-frame, single-story stores, and two-story and three-story mixed-use structures, that were erected during the first post-fire decade. They also include larger commercial and apartment buildings that were constructed during the second post-fire decade, and structures that display designs and materials that were applied during the mid-century era of modernization. *(Continued on Page 3.)*

**\*D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):

The boundary of the historic district encompasses a linear area containing all of the properties that are located on the west side of Mission Street between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. *(See map on Page 13.)*

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

The boundary of the historic district contains a coherent grouping of thematic contributors. On Mission Street to the north and south of the historic district, fewer than half of the properties are considered both thematic and intact, and several major intrusions exist. The thematic area does not extend to the east or west beyond Mission Street.

**\*D6. Significance:** **Theme:** Post-Fire Reconstruction; 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Development and Architecture  
**Area:** Inner Mission North, San Francisco

**Period of Significance:** 1906-1927; circa 1925-1960  
**Resources Criteria 1 & 3**

**Applicable Criteria:** California Register of Historical

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

*Criterion 1:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 at the local level, because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history. The historic district is associated with the reconstruction, growth, and development of the American retail economy on Mission Street, which became the largest and most important shopping destination in San Francisco during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, outside of downtown's Union Square. Events include the post-fire physical rebuilding of structures and recovery of commerce that occurred in the Inner Mission North after the 1906 earthquake and fires. Events also include the development of the mid-century "Mission Miracle Mile" shopping district, during which time the stores of Mission Street competed directly with downtown San Francisco for retail business.

*Criterion 3:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3 at the local level, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period, region, and methods of construction, and it possesses high artistic values. The historic district contains commercial and mixed use building types that exhibit designs and styles that represent the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, the historic district reflects the craftsmanship and techniques of the Edwardian-era period of small-scale, wood-frame rebuilding, during which time construction practices transitioned from vernacular and expedient to ornate and substantial. In addition, the historic district is augmented by buildings that are characteristic of later commercial upbuilding, as well as by buildings that display elements that are associated with the "Mission Miracle Mile" era, during which time storefronts and façades were modernized according to innovative designs, materials, and techniques of the mid-century period. *(Continued on Page 14.)*

**\*D7. References** (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.): *(Continued on Page 26.)*

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Matt Weintraub, Preservation Planner

**Date:** April 2011

**Affiliation and Address:** San Francisco Planning Dept., 1650 Mission St, Ste. 400, San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.    \*Date: April 2011     Continuation     Update

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**\*D3. Detailed Description (Continued):**



Mission Street in 1944, during a war bond parade. View southwest towards 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4705).*



Mission Street in 2011. View southwest towards 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The commercial buildings that are located here within the historic district are similar to those that are shown in the photograph to the left. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Character-Defining Visual Characteristics

The visual characteristics of the historic district include but may not be limited to the following:

- The urban development pattern of a densely developed retail and transportation corridor, containing small-scale and medium-scale structures with horizontal rooflines at varying levels, that are packed tightly together, abutting each other at the fronts of lots, along both sides of Mission Street.
- The pedestrian-level development pattern of continuous strips of storefronts and commercial spaces, with most ground floors containing small, narrow, and regularly spaced storefronts, including larger buildings that were historically partitioned into multiple storefronts.
- Similarly designed Edwardian-era, narrow, wood-frame structures that include storefronts at the ground floors and dwellings at upper stories, which were mostly built between 1906 and the early 1910s, as well as a few larger and more substantial structures that were built during the 1920s.

The visual characteristics of individual contributing properties include but may not be limited to the following:

- Architectural styles and/or types that include: Classical/Roman Revival (columns/pilasters; pediments/porticos; boxed eaves with cornices, dentils, modillions, frieze bands); Beaux Arts (paired columns/pilasters; exuberant façade ornament; roofline balustrades); Mission Revival (wood and/or smooth stucco facing; overhanging eaves at doors/windows; Spanish tile accents; curved parapets); Spanish Colonial Revival (smooth stucco facing; low-pitched roofs covered in Spanish tile; eaves with minimal or no overhang; arched openings); Art Deco (plain smooth façade surfaces; geometric relief; vertical linear elements); 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial (large floor plates; flat façades without bay windows; prominent marquee entrances; plate-glass display windows at ground floors; regular bands of large windows at upper floors; horizontal roofline detail).
- Height, form and massing that varies among individual structures, including: building heights that range from one to three stories; building footprints that range from narrow size to standard size; façades with or without bay windows; structures that may be either vertically or horizontally emphasized by width, fenestration, and/or

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façade detailing; and rooflines that terminate horizontally with various kinds of entablatures and linear raised features, including shaped parapets.

- On buildings constructed during the decade after the fires of 1906, typical materials and features consistent with Edwardian-era commercial and mixed-use designs include: wood cladding (including cove/shiplap siding, flush siding, and/or shingles); brick cladding; stucco as a primary or secondary facing material; bay windows (typically angled; may also be square and/or rounded); wood windows (typically double-hung; may also be casements); wood trim; cast plaster ornament; and heavy cornice lines.
- On buildings constructed during the late 1910s and 1920s, typical materials and features consistent with early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and apartment building designs include: concrete, brick, and/or stucco facing; large horizontal windows with multi-light metal or wood sash; details/ornament in formed concrete, brick, cast plaster, or stucco.
- Storefront designs and materials including: plate-glass windows with wood or metal frames, or “cornerless” (without frames), and which may project out over the supporting bulkheads; bulkheads with decorative grills on air vents, and clad with square ceramic tiles that may be decoratively detailed, or clad in structural glass/ceramic panels that may be non-original; angled, recessed vestibules and/or open outdoor lobbies with marble tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; metal-framed signs/marquees that may or may not be illuminated by individual bulbs or by neon tubes.

### Features and Elements

The historic district is comprised of a row of one-story, two-story, and three-story commercial/mixed-use buildings. The single-story buildings and the multiple-story buildings are distributed approximately evenly throughout the historic district, such that the row exhibits a mixed character in terms of scale and roofline heights. Nearly all of the buildings occupy narrow lots that are 25 feet or 30 feet wide, as well as a single lot that is 35 feet wide. The two lots that are wider than that, at 50 feet and 60 feet, contain buildings that were constructed in the 1920s, whereas the majority of lots contain contributing buildings were constructed between 1906 and the mid-1910s. Despite the varying heights and types of buildings, the tightly packed arrangement of mostly narrow structures uniformly built out to the fronts of lots, and containing storefronts of similar widths, results in an overall development pattern that is consistent with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial corridor. Overlaid upon this streetscape are the modernizations to some storefronts, façades, signs, and sidewalks that occurred between the 1920s and approximately 1960, which contributed to the physical development of the premier urban retail shopping corridor that became known citywide as the “Mission Miracle Mile”.



West side of Mission Street. View southwest towards 20<sup>th</sup> Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



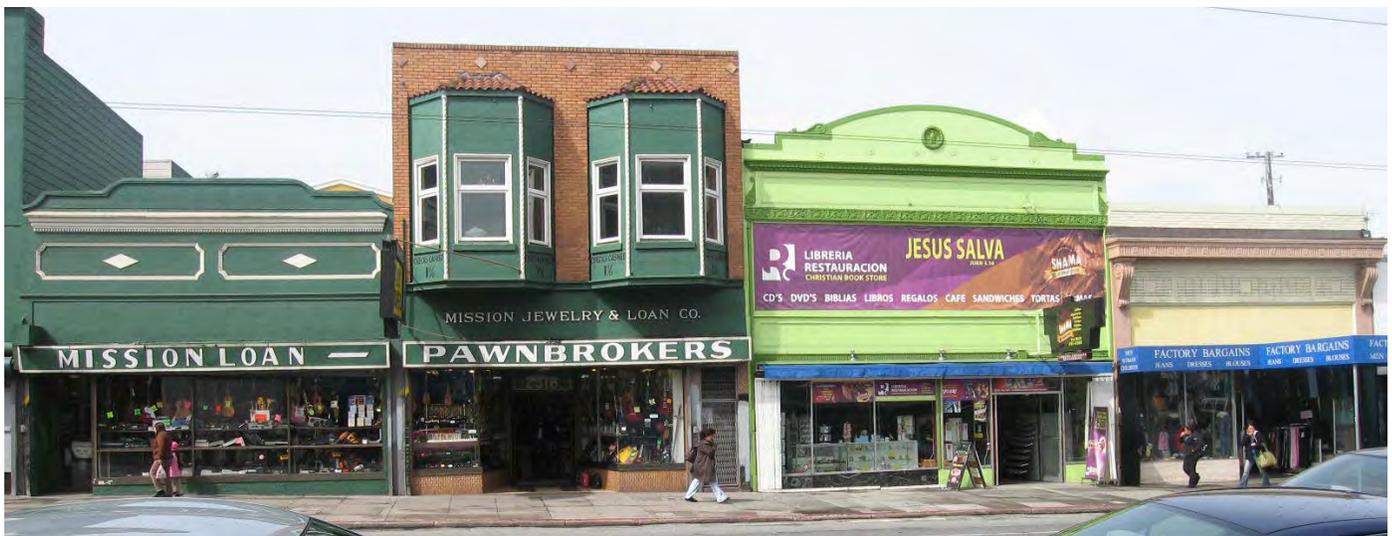
West side of Mission Street. View northwest towards 19<sup>th</sup> Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The following sections further describe the features and elements that comprise the historic district, including areas, sites, groupings of structures, individual buildings, and their characteristics.

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*Small-Scale Reconstruction*

The post-fire reconstruction of Mission Street involved intensification of commercial uses. In the weeks and months after the disaster, as soon as the debris was cleared, business owners flooded back to Mission Street in densities that were greater than existed before the fires. Every lot fronting Mission Street was rebuilt with a commercial component, thereby changing the character of the street from a mixed-use streetcar corridor, as it had been before the 1906 disaster, to a continuous shopping strip. A great many of the earliest post-fire commercial buildings on Mission Street consisted only of single-story storefronts with minimal detailing, or storefronts with small shopkeepers dwellings above, which were expediently constructed for merchants who were desperate to be back in business. While most of these very early post-fire buildings were replaced or expanded as the reconstruction of the Inner Mission North progressed, some were maintained, improved, and used throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Grouping of four adjacent commercial buildings, including a mixed-use building, that were constructed in 1906 on the west side of Mission Street, just south of 19<sup>th</sup> street. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The historic district contains a rare grouping of mostly intact, small-scale commercial buildings that were erected within the first year of post-fire reconstruction. At the northern end of the row stand four structures that were erected only a few weeks or months after the disaster in April 1906. Three of these relief-era commercial buildings were designed as single-story with similar façades that consisted simply of shaped parapets with cornices located above the storefronts. A fourth building followed an Edwardian-era two-story mixed-used plan with bay windows and cornice at the upper story, which was stylistically remodeled with a Spanish Colonial Revival theme in 1927. As the reconstruction transitioned to recovery, these buildings housed staple businesses such as photos, tableware and china, and groceries. By mid-century, they contained mostly apparel stores and a jeweler, which indicated that the retail sector on Mission Street had shifted away from neighborhood goods and services and towards specialized in-demand retail products.

As the reconstruction progressed, property owners benefited from increased supplies of labor and materials, as well as availability of architects, with which to facilitate the rebuilding. Consequently, buildings constructed only one or more years after the 1906 disaster tended to be larger, more substantial, and/or more elaborate in design. By 1907, the upbuilding of three-story buildings with multiple-family residential floors located above storefronts became common, as did the application of architectural flourishes. These mixed-use buildings followed a typical design that included bilateral arrangements of bay windows and fenestration on street façades, and Edwardian-era ornamentation that spanned a range of Beaux Arts-influenced styles. Within the historic district, examples included: the building constructed in 1907 at 2370 Mission Street, which displayed Classical features such as a rooftop balustrade integrated with the cornice, and a combination of angled and curved bay windows; and the building constructed in 1912 at 2332-2336 Mission Street, which adapted Craftsman and Mission Revival features. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the stores in these buildings sold ladies goods, corsets, millinery, and gifts.

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Mixed-use buildings that were constructed in 1907 (left) and 1912 (right), on the west side of Mission Street at mid-block locations. Views west. San Francisco Planning Department.

In addition, the construction of economical, single-story commercial buildings continued to occur, even as nearby properties were upbuilt. Though small-scale, these later post-fire small commercial buildings displayed architectural elaboration. For instance, two small structures that were constructed in 1915 at 2356 and 2374 Mission Street, which housed uses such as a bakery/lunch diner, a market, a hardware store, apparel, and optometry, featured upper façades that were decorated with Classical cornices, brackets, shaped parapets, and applied ornament.



Small commercial buildings that were constructed in 1915, on the west side of Mission Street at mid-block locations. Views west. San Francisco Planning Department.

### Large-Scale Infill

While the standard lots on Mission Street were typically reconstructed with narrow, wood-frame structures, the larger lots that existed provided opportunities for more substantial construction at a greater scale. By the 1920s, the improved economic climate and advances in building practices prompted a third phase of reconstruction that involved the upbuilding of these larger properties. This resulted in multiple-story buildings, many of them reinforced concrete and/or steel frame construction, that were dedicated to commercial uses or that contained apartments stacked above large retail

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floor plates. In many cases, the large commercial ground floors were designed for single uses, such as department stores and/or mixed merchandise stores.

Within the historic district, two larger lots on the west side of Mission Street were upbuilt during the 1920s. In 1926, a reinforced concrete mixed-use apartment building was erected at 2360-2366 Mission Street, at mid-block. It replaced two single-story commercial buildings that were constructed in the aftermath of the 1906 disaster, similar to those that are still extant within the historic district. The construction of apartment buildings such as this indicated the continued growth of the neighborhood's residential population during the post-fire era, when the working classes of the city became consolidated in the Mission District, due in large part to the industrial/commercial reconstruction of the South-of-Market, a former mixed-use neighborhood. This three-story, 14-unit apartment building was designed by Albert W. Burgren, an engineer who had previously designed several residential hotels in San Francisco in partnership with architects, for owner E.J. Lubble. This building's styling was a later example of Classicism that dominated the post-fire reconstruction. Its broad street façade was scored to resemble cut stone blocks, and it was richly dressed in cartouche panels, medallion bands, triglyphs, and a broad denticulated cornice. Other architectural features included the arched residential entrance, wide bay windows, and divided wood casements.



Mixed-use apartment building that was constructed in 1926, on the west side of Mission Street at a mid-block location. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Apartment building façade details and commercial blade sign. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Mixed-use apartment building storefront entrance. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

At the tall ground floor, Siegel's apparel store has occupied a commercial space since at least 1937, when neon tube lettering was added to the store's existing vertical double-faced sign. In 1941, Siegel's store expanded to fill the entire ground floor, and the storefront was unified. Over the years, Siegel's utilized visual merchandising techniques such as neon lettering that announced "For Dad and Lad" to passers-by. More recently, Siegel's installed new display windows, aluminum doors, and stucco fascia to the storefront in 1978, and installed a curved canvas canopy in 1979. The brick bulkheads and water tables, as well as the angled vestibule and the divided transom that is located over the store entrance, may remain intact from the mid-century makeover of the storefront. Siegel's apparel store still occupies the commercial ground floor of the building and still sells men's and boys clothing, as it has in this location on Mission Street for at least 75 years.

The 1920s also saw the construction of multiple-story commercial operations on Mission Street, which reflected the expanding scale and scope of the American retail economy. These buildings utilized large rectangular floor plates and long street frontages (hence requiring large lots) in order to maximize merchandising space during an era of increasing competition among brand-name products and retail businesses. These commercial buildings included multiple stories and internal mezzanines that allowed for additional display areas, storage, manufacturing, and/or offices. They also included exterior design features such as prominent entrances and sign marquees, long rows of large windows, flat exterior wall surfaces, and long clean horizontal rooflines.

In keeping with this trend of commercial upbuilding, a large two-story with mezzanine and basement, brick-clad structure was erected in 1927 at the northwest corner of Mission and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. This substantial reinforced concrete, steel-frame

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building was designed to carry the load of two additional stories had that been desired. The building was designed by architect Arthur T. Ehrenpfort for owner Wm. C. Ehrenpfort, though an earlier application for a construction permit, which was cancelled, listed the Granat Bros. as owners. Ehrenpfort's simplified Classical/Renaissance Revival design incorporated elements such as a cornice lined with acroterion, a flat parapet/balustrade, rope molding at the corners, a keystone-arched entrance on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and wood-frame windows that varied from wide horizontal bands at the mezzanine to rows of narrow windows at the upper story. When construction was completed, the Granat Bros. jewelers took ownership of the building and relocated from their previous site, one block to the north on Mission Street. The Granat Bros. used the lower story for display and sales, and converted the upper story into a jewelry manufacturing workshop. The Granat Bros. jewelry operation anchored this corner location at Mission and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets for several decades. In addition to makers of fine jewelry, the Granats regularly sponsored and organized winning baseball teams in the San Francisco Midwinter League, for which games were played at nearby Recreation Park on Valencia Street.



The Granat Bros. building in 1927. View northwest. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-6823).*



The Granat Bros. jewelry manufacturing shop and store building in 2011, located at the northwest corner of Mission and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets. View northwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

### *Mid-Century Modernizations*

Along the entire length of Mission Street within the Mission District, a significant pattern of development occurred after the post-fire reconstruction of buildings was completed in the 1920s. This development related to the ever-increasing competition among retailers to sell to consumers who could sift through markets flooded with nationwide brand names and a plethora of goods during postwar periods of general economic prosperity. From approximately the mid-1920s to the 1960s, retailers redefined the visual appearances of their stores and buildings on a fairly regular basis, in order to better display their products and their shopping environments to discriminating shoppers. Many commercial spaces were remodeled several times during the period by one or more occupants in succession.

The modernizations were influenced by designers who were open to using modern materials and to departing from previous design modes. Typical "Visual Front" storefront alterations included: installation of plate-glass windows; widening/deepening of entry vestibules; re-facing of surfaces in modern materials such as ceramic tile, structural glass (e.g., Vitrolite, Carrara Glass), and/or metal panels; installation of tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; and installation of projecting signage. More dramatic "Visual Front" renovations involved the transformation of entire structures into display objects by removal of all façade extrusions such as bay windows, cornices, and/or applied ornament, and replacement with plain wall surfaces, modern cladding materials such as ceramic, structural glass, metal, and/or smooth stucco, and rectangular metal windows.

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.

\*Date: April 2011

Continuation

Update



The building located at 2326-2330 Mission Street, with "Visual Front" façade and storefront that were installed in the 1930s and 1950s. Views northwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Within the historic district, several buildings display alterations, modifications, and improvements that related to the period of modern visual merchandising and the "Mission Miracle Mile" shopping district. One building that was originally constructed in 1911 demonstrates the results of a total mid-century makeover. Located at 2326-2330 Mission Street, the building initially followed a typical Edwardian-era design with bay windows at the upper story. In 1934, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century storefront was renovated to include a wide outdoor lobby with angled, corner-less plate-glass display windows, bulkheads clad in structural glass panels, and ceramic tile floor paving with a "Mission" custom signature. In 1952, the transformation of the structure was completed when the bay windows and other extrusions (except for the double-faced blade sign) were removed from the upper story façade and it was re-faced with Vitrolite panels and stucco. The resulting appearance of the commercial building included many of the elements that typified a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century "Visual Front", including the open, glass-filled articulated storefront and the clean lines, blank surfaces, simple square windows of the upper façade, and projecting signage.



The "Visual Front" storefront that was installed circa 1930s at 2356 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The "Visual Front" storefront that was installed in 1959 by the Regal Mfg. Co. at 2376-2380 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

While no other buildings within the historic district were completely transformed by alterations, several other storefronts were modernized according to "Visual Front" principles of commercial retailing. A storefront very similar to that found at 2330 Mission Street was installed within the small shop at 2356 Mission Street, approximately during the 1930s. The storefront included: an outdoor lobby with angled corners; corner-less plate-glass; ceramic tile cladding at bulkheads; and marble tile floor paving. Another small store located at 2376-2380 Mission Street was renovated in 1959 by the Regal Mfg. Co., which installed new windows, bulkheads, doors, and terrazzo floor paving, and they extended the lobby six feet further into the store. This "Visual Front" renovation indicated a shift in modern design away from angles and curves, as found in Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, and towards the rectilinear forms that were associated with International mid-century modernism.

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The adjacent commercial building located at 2386-2388 Mission Street, which was divided into two exceptionally narrow commercial spaces, also contains “Visual Front” modernizations. The southern storefront at 2388 Mission Street was altered in 1931 by L. Salomon with very tall corner-less plate-glass windows that returned at angles into the vestibule, forming a glass corridor/anteroom as an entryway into the store. The height of the northern storefront platform was altered in 1954, and “rustic” was installed to replace stucco, which presumably referred to the installation of brick bulkheads with decorative vents below corner-less plate-glass displays with metal flashing. Another narrow storefront was altered approximately in the 1930s to feature a small outdoor lobby with angled corners, which made efficient use of the limited space. The storefront at 2336 Mission Street also included corner-less plate-glass windows, wood paneled bulkheads, double sash wood doors with border outlines painted onto the glass, and marble tile flooring with the storefront’s street number inlaid at the sidewalk edge.



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed in 1931 at 2388 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed circa 1954 at 2386 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed circa 1930s at 2336 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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Contributors

Contributors to the historic district qualify for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CD" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation"), according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. In addition, several contributors appear to be individually significant historic and/or architectural properties, and therefore qualify for assignment of CHRSC of "3CB" ("Appears eligible for CR both individually and as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation").

The following list includes information for the **13 contributing properties** located within the historic district:

Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2304	3596002	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2310	3596003	Commercial, 2-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2316-2318	3596004	Commercial, 2-story	Mediterranean Eclectic	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2320-2322	3596125	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2326-2330	3596006	Commercial, 2-story (Mission Thrift)	Commercial Modern	1911	3CB
Mission Street	2332-2336	3596007	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Craftsman/Mission Revival)	1912	3CD
Mission Street	2356	3596011	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1915	3CB
Mission Street	2360-2366	3596012	Mixed-use, residential/commercial (Siegel's)	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1926	3CB
Mission Street	2370	3596014	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Craftsman)	1907	3CD
Mission Street	2374	3596015	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2376-2380	3596016	Commercial, 1-story	Modern	1934	3CD
Mission Street	2386-2388	3596119	Commercial, 1-story	Modern	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2390	3596019	Commercial, 3-story (Granat Bros. jewelers)	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1927	3CD

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Non-contributors

The historic district contains non-contributors that were constructed during the historic district's period of significance, but that have undergone physical alterations (often cumulative) that negatively affect the ability of the properties to convey historical and/or architectural significance. These properties are assigned CHRSC of "6L" ("Determined ineligible for local listing or designation through local government review process; may warrant special consideration in local planning") , according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. The historic district also contains non-contributors that were constructed after the historic district's period of significance, and that are not known to be associated with any historical events, persons, or architecture that may be considered significant, and are therefore assigned CHRSC of "6Z" ("Found ineligible for NR [National Register of Historic Places], CR or Local designation through survey evaluation"). Generally, non-contributors are found to be compatible with the scale, massing, and uses that characterize the historic district, which retains overall integrity.

The following list includes information for **4 non-contributing, non-historic properties** located within the historic district:

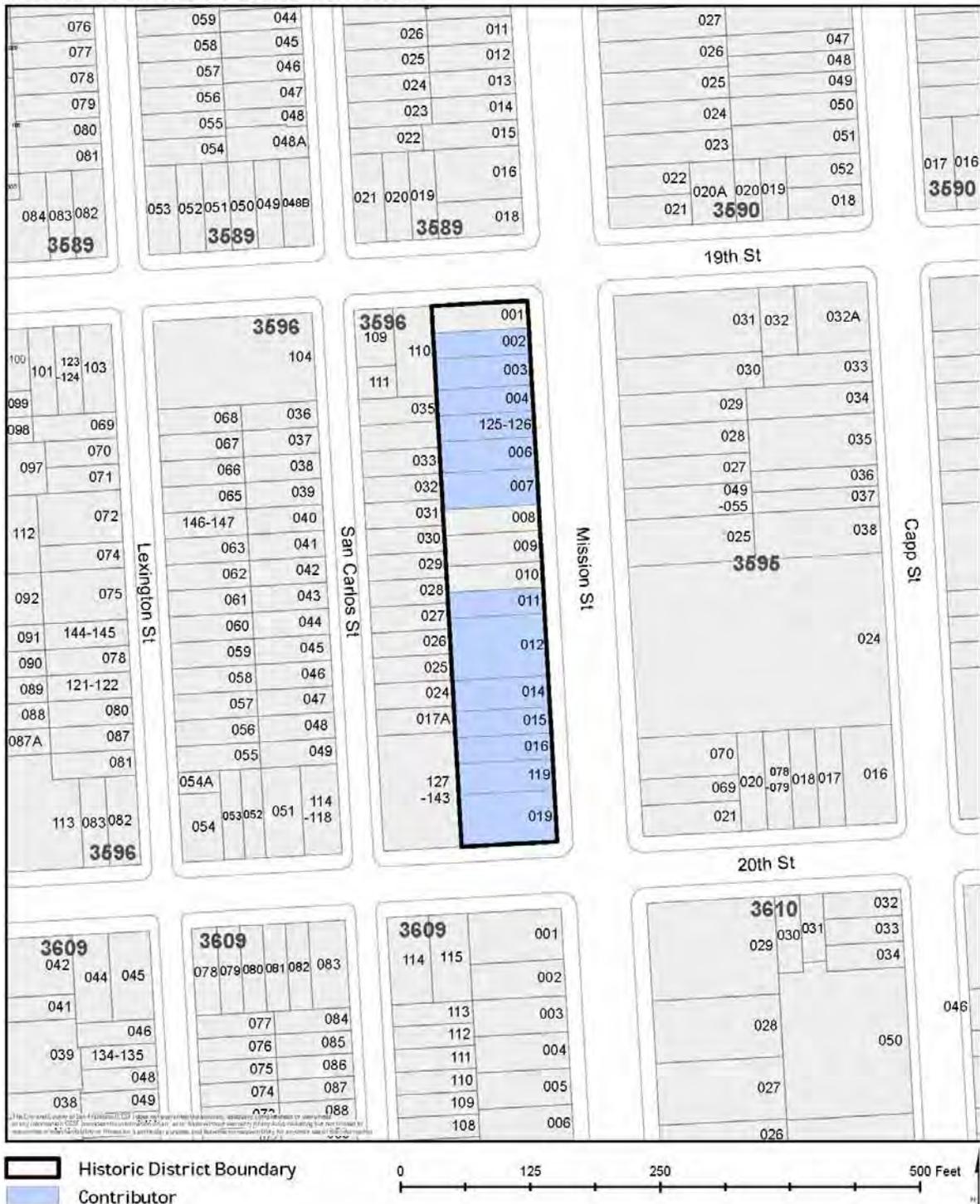
Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2300	3596001	Commercial, 1-story	Moderne (Altered)	1937	6L
Mission Street	2338	3596008	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1929	6Z
Mission Street	2344	3596009	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1912	6Z
Mission Street	2352	3596010	Commercial, 2-story	None (altered)	1910	6Z

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**\*D4. Boundary Description (Continued):**

Boundary Map

Properties are labeled with Assessor block numbers and lot numbers for identification purposes.



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**\*D6. Significance** (Continued):

The historic district, a significant and distinguishable entity, qualifies for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CS" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as an individual property through survey evaluation") according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8.

Historical Context

After the Inner Mission North was destroyed by the earthquake and fires of April 1906, the reconstruction of the neighborhood involved three phases. The initial "relief" phase, which ended in 1908, was characterized by small ad hoc cottages and shacks that provided immediate, temporary shelter for the desperate refugee population, and by hastily erected shops and stands that were critical in providing for the flows of common goods and services, as well as cash, that helped to sustain the area's refugee population. The second phase of "rebuilding" involved the construction of permanent replacement structures, which in some instances began immediately after the 1906 fires, and in other instances continued well into the 1910s. During the final phase of post-fire "recovery" that extended into the 1920s, the permanent resettlement of uprooted populations in rebuilt neighborhoods such as the Inner Mission North was finally achieved, and the commercial corridors of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Valencia Street witnessed growth, improvement, and prosperity.

Within the historic district, which is part of the most urbanized area of the Inner Mission North, only a very few small, plain commercial buildings remain intact from the early "relief" era. Most of the extant commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings represent the permanent "rebuilding" period, during which substantial multiple-story structures were erected to replace either destroyed buildings and/or the earliest temporary structures. Also represented are buildings that were constructed after the initial wave of rebuilding, during the extended post-fire "recovery" period, which included physical development related to the ongoing reestablishment and expansion of commerce continued within the retail corridors.

The historical context of the 1906 earthquake and the post-fire period of rebuilding and recovery in the Inner Mission North is further established in the following sections, which is largely excerpted from the San Francisco Planning Department's National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (NPS Form 10-900-b), *Historic Neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California*, which was adopted by San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. 93 on November 17, 2010.

*1906 Earthquake and Fire*

The great earthquake of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1906, and the citywide fires that followed, were defining for the Mission District, as for all of San Francisco. While the earthquake itself destroyed mostly brick structures and buildings that stood on filled land, it also started dozens of major fires, most of them in the densely crowded South-of-Market area of tenements and industry. Firefighting was hampered by broken water mains, and the fires spread and merged uncontrolled, feeding on the primarily wood building stock. The ensuing conflagration, whose severity was compounded by numerous tactical errors on the part of city officials and army commanders, utterly consumed four-fifths of San Francisco, including approximately 28,000 buildings, over the next three days. Thousands of lives were lost. "The flames ravaged the financial district, the downtown commercial center, much of the industrial sector, and the city's most densely populated residential neighborhoods north and south of Market. The economic and social core of the west's greatest metropolis was in ruins."

After three days of citywide destruction, the fire's advance was finally halted in the Mission District, though not before approximately 30 blocks in the Mission were leveled (out of a total citywide of more than 500 blocks). Just as the citywide firestorm had wiped out the core of San Francisco, leaving a broken ring of surviving outlying neighborhoods, the Mission District fires had carved out the oldest and most crowded area of the Mission, the Inner Mission North, while leaving untouched neighborhoods to the south, east, and west.

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Valencia Street lay in ruins one day after the 1906 earthquake. View north towards 18<sup>th</sup> Street. When this photograph was taken, the firestorm was visibly approaching from the north, and apparently it had already reached the next block. All of the buildings shown in this photograph burned within hours, as seen in the photograph to the right. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3549).*



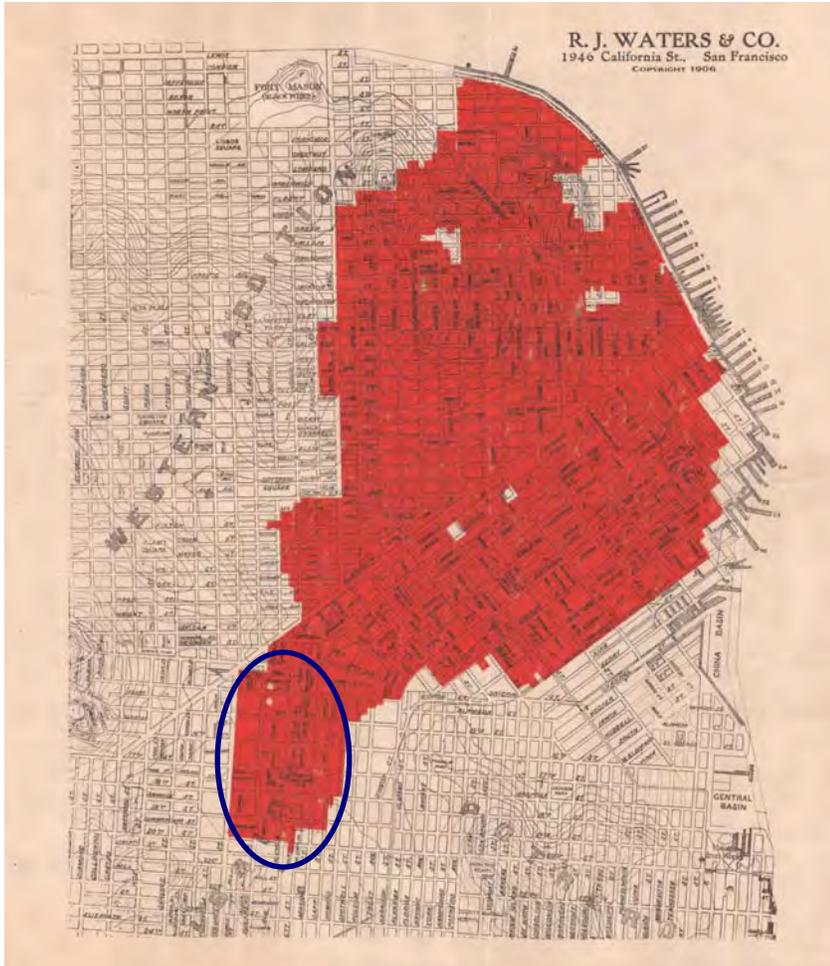
Valencia Street in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires. View north from approximately the same location as in the photograph to the left. There was total destruction of structures, roads, transit lines, and utility lines. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3252).*

### *Rebuilding and Up-building*

The rebuilding of San Francisco in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires was unprecedented in scope and effort. Rebuilding required clearing of approximately four square miles of absolutely devastated urban landscape (involving temporary installation of debris-carrying rail-cars through city neighborhoods), repair of broken utilities, transit lines, and roads, and total replacement of burned structures and neighborhoods. All of this was accomplished and more, without central plan or control, by private citizens, businesses, and city government. In *The Earth Shook, the Sky Burned*, Bronson celebrated the physical reconstruction of the city as a victory for character, efficiency, and technology:

“And the job was not only done, but it was done faster and better than anyone thought possible. In three years, almost all of the burned area was rebuilt... In 1909, more than half of America’s steel and concrete buildings stood in San Francisco. In three years, the assessed valuation of the City was half again as much as it had been before the fire. Twenty thousand buildings – bigger, stronger, more modern than the 28,000 which went up in smoke – had been finished in that space and time.” (Pages 178-179)

In the burned area of the Inner Mission North, at least 600 buildings were constructed from the summer of 1906 through 1908, which was the peak of rebuilding activity citywide. From 1909 until the beginning of World War I, as building activity gradually tapered off, another 400 or so buildings were erected in the neighborhood. Complete reconstruction of the Inner Mission North took longer than for that of downtown and its nearby residential neighborhoods, due in part to politics and business, which dictated that restoration of the downtown core was highest priority. Also, working-class and/or immigrant citizens experienced difficulties and delays in obtaining insurance claims. In many cases, insurance pay-outs ultimately could not cover costs of rebuilding and owners were forced to sell their properties to speculators and commercial builders. A decade after the fire swept through the neighborhood, there remained more undeveloped and underutilized land in the Inner Mission North than there had been before the fire.



The physical rebuilding of San Francisco and the Inner Mission North involved “upbuilding,” a process of constructing larger structures with more units to replace those that had been destroyed. The upbuilding of the Mission was related to a lucrative rental market for permanent housing following the disaster, which prompted rebuilding at higher density. Post-fire residential buildings were taller, bulkier, and covered more of their lots so that front and side yards were reduced or eliminated. In the Inner Mission North, where single-family dwellings and two-family flats had dominated the formerly suburban neighborhood before the fires, the post-fire upbuilding resulted in a mostly three to six-unit housing stock, built cheek-to-jowl and forming solid blocks of urban streetscape. Overall, the upbuilding and the greater population density of the Inner Mission North changed the neighborhood character from suburban to urban, as indicated by Godfrey in *Neighborhoods in Transition*: “The housing shortage in the city encouraged the development of increased densities in the Mission...[V]acant lots were developed, often with higher-density flats and apartment buildings, to house refugees from ravaged areas...This lowered the social standing of the district, making it a more strictly working-class area.” (Page 146)

Map of San Francisco by R.J. Waters & Co. (1906), showing the vast area (shaded) that was destroyed by the firestorm of 1906, and that was reconstructed in phases during the years and decades that followed. The outlined area indicates the northern portion of the Mission District that was destroyed by fires and that was rebuilt. Residential reconstruction in the Inner Mission North was mostly completed during the 1910s, while reconstruction of the Mission District’s commercial corridors continued through the 1920s.

In the first year or so after the disaster, while building materials, labor, and capital were scarce, many owner-builders endeavored to construct small, plain single-family cottages just large enough to provide basic shelter. These small vernacular dwellings were usually intended as temporary housing solutions;

many were replaced with larger residential buildings within a few years, while others were retained at the backs of lots and multiple-family housing was constructed in front. More rarely, some property owners in the Inner Mission North bucked the trend of upbuilding and rebuilt permanent, full-size single-family houses, some of them architect-designed, rather than convert their land to rental housing.

While post-fire buildings were essentially larger, more crowded versions of the wood boxes that had been built for decades, their façades revealed clear shifts in architectural tastes that occurred around the turn of the century. Post-fire row-house construction uniformly incorporated Beaux-Arts-influenced architecture that emphasized formal classicism over the riotous decoration and textures of the late Victorian era. Post-Victorian-era architecture was described by Alexander and Heig in *San Francisco: Building the Dream City*:

“Generally referred to today as ‘Edwardian,’ these buildings loosely followed the Roman Revival Style popular in the city just before 1906. Completely of frame construction, their first floors are generally given a veneer of yellow or Roman brick. The finer examples have a columned entrance, sometimes

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with marble steps and paneling, and perhaps leaded, beveled glass in the front door and side panels. Above the first floor are rows of curved bay windows whose large glass panes are also curvilinear, especially at corners. The heavy roof lines are turned out with modillions and cornices, and any stray door or window handsomely ornamented with pilasters and consoles, in the approved Roman Revival style.” (Page 362)

In addition to these more fully developed examples of Edwardian-era architecture, plainer and less expensive versions were built in the Mission. Workingman’s Edwardians featured slanted bay windows rather than curved; cast stone bases rather than brick; simple cornice details such as “block” modillions; and fewer façade details. Waldhorn and Woodbridge’s *Victoria’s Legacy* provided this alternate description of similar building stock:

“Edwardian buildings are two to three stories high with flat roofs and shallow cornices made up of small, flat brackets with rows of molding underneath, usually dentils and egg and dart. The bay windows are the three-sided slanted variety, although buildings on corner lots often have a rounded corner bay. Some Edwardians have exterior stairs forming a series of balconies in the center of the front of the building; apartments in this type of Edwardian were called “Romeo” or “Romeo and Juliet” apartments because of the balconies...” (Page 205)



Guerrero Street in 1928. View north towards 14<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-3941).*



Valencia Street in 1927. View south towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5930).*

Within the fire zone, the massive reconstruction effort over a short period of time generated swaths of remarkably consistent, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture. Stylistic variations occurred, though standard façade layouts and building plans dominated. In addition to Roman Revival-derived architectural styles, other popular styles included: Mission Revival, which substituted classical features for Spanish tile accents and bell-shaped parapets; Craftsman with clinker-brick bases, boxy window bays, and bracketed eaves; and later Queen Anne, which was classically-influenced and featured ornament that was toned down from late 19<sup>th</sup>-century versions. Some builders expanded the Edwardian-era lexicon by artfully combining features of different styles such as Craftsman and Mission Revival, or Classical Revival with Moorish influence.

### *Rush to Economic Recovery*

When the Inner Mission North was cleared of fire debris in the weeks and months that followed the disaster, businesses and merchants flooded back to the established commercial corridors of Mission and Valencia Streets (north of 20<sup>th</sup> Street) and 16<sup>th</sup> Street. As transit lines were restored through the Mission District and residential populations grew, commerce responded. According to Scott in *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective*: “The

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intersection of Mission and Twenty-second streets, a transfer point for the Twin Peaks and Potrero districts, became the hub of a new retail center. Shopping areas also sprang up at Valencia and Sixteenth streets and at Twenty-ninth and Church streets.” (Pages 111-112) By the mid-1910s, the Mission’s miles-long, uninterrupted network of retailing and services, spanning the entire valley north-south and east-west, was not only restored, but expanded and intensified above pre-fire levels.

In particular, the primary commercial strip of Mission Street, which attracted a citywide crowd as well as neighborhood residents, was reconstructed as a continuous corridor of storefronts between 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Streets, which involved the raising of existing dwellings and storefront additions in the southern Mission District. Mission Street feature a multitude of businesses ranging from billiards and bowling to a “Japanese store,” as well as department stores such as Lippman Bros. (established while the downtown flagship store was rebuilt) and theaters such as the New Mission, the Majestic, the Peoples, the Wigwam, and the Grand, all located within two blocks of the important 22<sup>nd</sup> Street juncture. Furniture stores also proliferated on Mission Street, with nine located on the block between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets.



Mission Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1935. View southwest. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4590).*



Valencia Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1949. View northeast towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5926).*

Valencia Street, a commercial corridor running parallel to Mission Street to the west, was designated in 1907 as part of the Victory Highway, an early automobile route that predated the Lincoln Highway. While Valencia Street contained some entertainment and neighborhood commerce, the street also served as a service corridor with connection to the San Jose Road. Valencia contained a Levi Strauss clothing factory, auto service garages, dairies, sheet metal works, a macaroni factory, and undertakers. The east-west neighborhood commercial thoroughfares of 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the Inner Mission North (rebuilt after the fire) and 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the southern Mission (upbuilt after the fire) intersected with Mission and Valencia Streets and completed the district-wide commercial network. Small retail strips branched off of Mission and Valencia Streets on other east-west numbered streets as well, such as 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. North of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, in the area located closest to the South-of-Market, the Mission District received the overflow of post-fire industrial and commercial development; uses such as wood planing, cement works, marble works, and lithography intermixed with enclaves of multiple-family flats and residential hotels.

As with residential construction, post-fire commercial construction progressed from small, utilitarian wood structures, usually minimally adorned, to larger and more substantial buildings as capital, labor, and materials became increasingly available. Over time, many of the earliest and smallest post-fire commercial buildings were replaced, while others were retained. The influence of Classical architectural style was apparent in commercial façades decorated with pilasters, entablatures, and applied ornament. By the 1910s, construction in brick was more common, as were commercial buildings with larger footprints (often partitioned into multiple units) and two or three stories tall. Large mixed-use buildings proliferated, with multiple residential units located above storefronts; though more expensive to construct, they

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provided diverse streams of rental income. As in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, mixed-use buildings conformed closely to patterns and styles of residential construction except for the insertion of storefronts at the ground floor. Residential hotels were also found in the commercial corridors of the Inner Mission North, including on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the nearby blocks of Valencia and Mission Streets.

The post-fire rebuilding period coincided with nascent innovations in storefront design during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Development of structural plate-glass facilitated window displays and storefronts consisting of wide panes of glass set above low bulkheads paneled in wood or clad in tile. Another innovation involved recessing storefront entrances, in part to meet codes for sidewalk access, but also to create niches in flat storefronts. In the unpublished draft of *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained the retailer's reasoning behind the design:

"The only indentations were doors – small diagonal-sided 'vestibules' – so labeled in architectural plans...These vestibules extended the shop's display space. They also let customers get out of the flow of foot traffic, and spend more time looking. Then, ideally, they overcome what retailers call 'threshold resistance' and get potential shoppers inside the store. As one commentator put it in 1903, 'The easily tempted customers...find themselves, literally, in the shop before they are aware.'" (Page 3)

#### *Commerce in Good Times, Bad Times*

In the 1920s, the U.S. economy boomed as the nation rebounded from its wartime footing and production turned from military goods to consumer goods. The economy was also vivified by wartime advances in manufacturing and transportation, and by migrations of labor forces to industrial cities. The revived economy flooded the nation's markets with goods, and retailers increasingly vied for the attentions of consumers, who had more purchasing choices than ever before. During this time, Mission Street, one of the City's oldest and longest retail strips, as well as the other streetcar-oriented commercial corridors of the Mission District, competed directly with San Francisco's downtown for consumer dollars, as well as with other neighborhood shopping districts.

Mission District merchants found themselves in an era of increasing competition and proliferating brand names, "the greatest onslaught of consumerism ever." During the interwar period, the Mission Merchants Association promoted shopping on Mission Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> and Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, with stamp books that included coupons for participating merchants, advertisements, and classified business directories. In addition to joining promotional associations, individual merchants kept pace with competition and with consumer expectations by installing modern, innovative storefronts that became outdoor shopping "rooms." Previously, retailers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had installed elaborate, moveable displays behind plate-glass windows as a visual merchandizing technique. However, the consideration of storefronts themselves as mechanisms for visual merchandizing, and the resulting experimentation of forms, materials, and technology originated with "a marketing concept proffered during the 1920s commercial boom: that dramatic display was essential in capturing hearts, minds, and pocketbooks", according to Heller in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*.

Correspondingly, commercial architects of the interwar period redesigned traditional storefronts of the Mission District with consumer marketing in mind. Designers lengthened the small, rectangular entry vestibules into mini-corridors, or "arcades," by pushing the entry doors inward toward the shop's interior, while also lengthening the adjacent window displays. These storefront arcades lured pedestrians from their pass-bys, into brightly lit spaces where they could continue admiring wares out of the crowds, eventually finding themselves closer to a shop's interior (and its cash register) than the street. Deep arcades also proved suitable for installation in the narrow, subdivided retail slots within commercial buildings that characterized the period.

Commercial designers also experimented with the shapes of the entry arcades. During the 1920s, Art Deco architectural style inspired wedge-shaped and zigzag-shaped entrances with "corner-less" plate-glass windows (no mullions). In the 1930s, curvilinear ("waterfall") arcades were popular, inspired by the Streamline Moderne architectural style. These variegated geometries created pockets along the sides of the arcades that allowed consumers to gather and "window-shop," out of the way of the path of travel but visible to passers-by. By the 1940s, storefront entrances had widened into boxy "lobbies" that essentially served as large, outdoor display rooms, where

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pedestrians could move about at leisure. Storefront details often included: geometric terrazzo paving that extended from public sidewalks to shop interiors, often customized with merchant signatures; windows displays that projected into space over bulkheads; and materials such as structural glass, ceramic tile, and metal trim uses as both interior and exterior cladding. In *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, Heller explains how these storefront design innovations fundamentally changed commercial streetscapes:

“The quintessential storefront was not designed merely as a showroom where merchandise was mechanically arranged and formulaically displayed. Instead, this brightly lit transformative space was conceived as a majestic platform, like a proscenium stage, where products would enthrall through all manner of arresting performances. Product displays veritably beckoned the audience to come onstage or backstage, and instead of ovations, the audience was encouraged to consume. As the storefront evolved over time, from simple window dressing to grand fourth wall, elaborate tableau framed by lush architectural details heightened the viewers’ anticipation – and desire.” (Page 8)



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1924. View northwest. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4630).*



Mission Street, north of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1936. View north. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4667).*

Beyond storefronts, commercial architects of the interwar period in the Mission District were influenced by a variety of popular architectural styles. For instance, smaller wood-frame commercial and mixed-use buildings drew from the “entrepreneurial vernacular” designs of Period Revival and Modernism that were also used in residential construction. Meanwhile, larger and more substantial brick and reinforced concrete commercial buildings, including large apartment buildings with ground-floor storefronts, tended to utilize Classical styles in the 1920s. Commercial tastes trended towards Modernism as well, with Art Deco architectural style popular in the 1920s and Streamline Moderne in the 1930s. Among the most impressive examples of Modernist architecture were the Streamline Moderne remodel of the older commercial building at 2205 Mission Street with iron enamel panels, rounded corners, and a marquee/tower sign, and the Moderne renovation/expansion of the mixed-use Mission Masonic Temple with ceramic veneer, speed lines, and iconic decoration. These fully rendered Modernist examples presaged the kind of commercial development that dominated in the post-World War II period.

Unlike housing construction during the interwar period, which was mostly “in-fill” to existing residential building stock, interwar-era commercial development resulted in significant changes and additions to the Victoria/Edwardian-era shopping corridors of the Mission District. Commercial modernization resulted in the renovation, expansion, and/or complete replacement of many structures on Mission Street, as well as on Valencia, 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, according to the popular fashions and marketing strategies. These included theaters, most of which had been converted from live shows to motion pictures, and that provided important recreation to Mission District residents even during the bad times. According to Hooper’s *San Francisco’s Mission District*. “Life continued [during the Depression] with simple pleasures. Neighborhood movie houses were a big draw on Saturdays. At the El Capitan on Mission Street, there was

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an orchestra and one could spend the afternoon seeing a ‘chapter’ (part of a serial), a vaudeville act, an a feature film – all for 10¢.” (Page 8)

During the 1920s, storefront modernization was privately fueled by the booming retail economy. However, when the economy crashed during the early 1930s, the newly-created Federal Housing Administration (FHA) promoted a “Modernize Main Street” campaign and established a “Modernization Credit Plan” that provided low-interest private loans for renovations of existing storefronts. The federal government and the building trades industry, which backed the program and participated in it, intended to stimulate construction as well as retail activity. The program was active from 1934 to 1943, during which time many San Francisco merchants obtained government-insured loans and modernized their commercial storefronts.

### *Mission Miracle Mile*

The U.S. experienced an economic boom in the period after World War II that was even more intense than the economic expansion that occurred after the First World War. Following the long Depression of the 1930s and several years of wartime rationing and production, a torrent of pent-up consumerism swept through the economic landscape. The postwar consumer economy was fueled by unprecedented growth and prosperity for the American middle classes. In *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained: “Retail spending surged from 1945 to 1955, spurred by higher populations, saved-up war wages, salaries that had effectively doubled, and the formation of millions of new households and their suburban homes... [T]he generation that came of age in the U.S. after World War II was, arguably, the richest age cohort of humans in the history of the earth.” (Page 6)

However, the changing geographies of postwar communities challenged the vitality of older urban shopping districts, such as the Mission District’s commercial corridors. As established residents increasingly left the area for outlying suburbs, the historic customer base for local businesses diminished. The dominance of automobiles, the need for parking, and the development of exurban options for shopping and services worked against the success of urban retail districts. In efforts to counter the trend of suburbanization, Mission District merchants ramped up their promotions. The Mission Merchants Association promoted Mission Street, from 16<sup>th</sup> to Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, as the “Mission Miracle Mile,” similar to other “miracle mile” shopping district in U.S. cities (including Southern California, where they originated) but the only one in San Francisco. The Merchants Association also organized the installation of seasonal holiday decorations (typically “Mission bells”) as well as district-wide promotional sales, called “Dollar Days”, which attracted citywide and regional crowds. While the Mission Miracle Mile in strict definition was limited to Mission Street, which received the greatest share of consumer activity, the parallel corridor of Valencia Street, and the intersecting retail strips of 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, also benefitted from the promotions and activity, as did side-spurs of retail strips on other east-west numbered streets.

As they did in the interwar years, merchants also turned to innovative storefront architecture as a way to attract customers and generate business. Postwar renovations, often involving wholesale alterations to storefronts and façades of older commercial buildings, represented a last-ditch attempt by business owners to maintain the urban shopping districts as vital and thriving. Even though Americans were slower to accept truly “modern” storefront innovations than were Europeans, who set the pace, the postwar period finally saw widespread acceptance of commercial Modernism and a reduction of interest in architectural historicism. In the Mission District, this trend was noticeable by the late 1930s when large, fully rendered Moderne designs were constructed on Mission Street; these early examples proved influential to the postwar generation of commercial designers. As Heller conveys in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*: “Store designs had to evoke otherworldliness to transform the ordinary into an unparalleled experience...When the post-World War II building boom began, the need for more stylish stores increased, and these contemporary retail portals came to define standardized marketing aesthetics.” (Pages 11-12)

Mid-century retail designs (which were pioneered decades earlier in Paris, New York and Los Angeles) departed radically from earlier commercial traditions by treating entire building façades as display objects. Elements and materials that originated as interior or storefront features, such as structural glass, extruded metal trim, and spotlight illumination, were applied to the exteriors of façades. Solid, horizontal or tilted awnings were installed over storefronts,

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often supporting freestanding metal sign letters. Above that, historic building materials and features were covered by modern metal screens, ceramic tile panels, or plain stucco walls with projecting geometric signage. Upper stories (where present) often contained ribbon windows with flat trim. For individual storefront designs, the degree of distinction and the level of detail depended on its source, as related by Heller in *Shop America*: “While individual architects created their own iterations of the dominant style, which included store names made of large Gothic letters, glass-block surfaces, and cantilevered marquees, various American glass manufacturers and construction companies serving retail entrepreneurs offered subtle alterations on a typical layout.” (Page 11) When making storefront upgrades, Mission District merchants typically chose from among the various designs that were commercially available; less frequently they employed architects for custom renovations.



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1944. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4691).*



Mission Street near 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 1954. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4707).*

While storefront designers of the earlier interwar period experimented with various entry shapes, such as vestibules, arcades, and lobbies, which blurred the thresholds between street spaces and shop spaces – in fact, they created entirely new, nebulous spaces between streets and shops – mid-century commercial architects attempted to eliminate the thresholds altogether. They accomplished this through “visual front” or “open-front” designs that provided maximum exposure of goods for small shops that competed for street presence in dense retail environments, which Heller described in *Shop America*: “Modern storefronts were dedicated to certain principles of visibility. One typical catalog’s sales pitch noted, ‘Vision begins at the bulkhead and continues up to the ceiling,’ to give the customer a sense of monumentality even in a store that has ‘narrow frontage or a middle-of-the-block location.’” (Page 12) Open-front storefronts were first used by large mixed-merchandise stores, such as department stores and grocery stores, and soon became the modern standard. In his lecture *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth identified the significance of the open-front design:

“In general, the completely transparent front, adopted in the post-World War II decades, was the most important shift in ordinary storefronts in the entire twentieth century. This form became known as the “open-front,” or “see-through” shop window. With an “open-front shop,” the whole store becomes a window display. The lines between street, sidewalk, and store are merged. The store is no longer a

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.    \*Date: April 2011     Continuation     Update

visually semi-private realm, but a place where shoppers as well as goods are on full, public view.”  
(Page 11)

Open-front storefronts were constructed with tall plate-glass windows as the predominant element, often set at angles tilted out over the street; bulkheads were minimized or eliminated altogether. The window-walls, without intervening product displays, provided unobstructed views into shop interiors, where the full scope of affordable treasures within could be grasped. Earlier open-front window-walls were setback at diagonals from the sidewalk, and were intended as “scoops” to draw pedestrians inward towards entrances. Eventually, as visibility became the premium and needs for merchandise space trumped attempts to physically direct pedestrians, window-walls were brought forward parallel to the sidewalk, such that only invisible glass separated pedestrians from goods.

Mission Street, the “Miracle Mile,” became a hotbed for mid-century design renovations. In particular, storefront modernization was focused on the Mission Street blocks located between approximately 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets, where a concentration of theaters, department stores, jewelers, appliance stores, and the Masonic Temple comprised the heart of the “mile.” Postwar commercial renovations were less common, but nonetheless occurred, on other commercial strips, such as Valencia, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, which relied to a greater degree on stable clientele of local residents specialized customers. Still, individual merchants and commercial building owners throughout the Mission District, including “pop” establishments such as record stores, salons, and fast-food restaurants were compelled to design or redesign according to postwar fashions. Also, the rise of International architectural style influenced construction of nearly all kinds of properties during the postwar period, including residences, apartments, office buildings, and churches.

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Integrity

The historic district and its contributing properties retain integrity of historic physical condition such that they convey relationships to the historic period of significance. Few alterations have occurred to contributing properties within the historic district. Contributors retain most or all of the aspects of integrity, as discussed further in the following analysis.

*Location*

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Contributors are located on the sites of properties that were destroyed by the earthquake and fires of 1906. Contributors were either constructed at those locations or, in some cases, moved to those locations during the post-fire reconstruction, which is also an important facet of the post-fire era. Therefore, integrity of location is retained.

*Design*

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Contributors exhibit architectural designs that are closely associated with Edwardian-era development patterns and the period of post-fire reconstruction. Contributors includes characteristics such as styles, spatial arrangements, proportion, scale, ornamentation and materials that relate to each other in ways that reflect historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. Some contributors have experienced alterations to design that have achieved significance in their own right. For the historic district as a whole, design includes the way in which buildings, sites, and structures are related, including the spatial relationships between buildings, the visual rhythms in streetscapes, and the layouts of walkways and roads. Therefore, integrity of design is retained.

*Setting*

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, and it refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. Contributors exist in the same basic physical conditions under which they were built and functioned, including: topography; block and lot layout; street design; neighborhood composition of commercial retail corridors and residential enclaves; relationships between buildings; and relationship of the historic district to nearby areas. Therefore, integrity of setting is retained.

*Materials*

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Contributors retain the majority of exterior, visible materials that were used to in the historic construction, ornamentation, and/or improvement of buildings during the period of significance. Some contributors have experienced alterations to materials that have achieved significance in their own right. Therefore, integrity of materials is retained.

*Workmanship*

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. Contributors display evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing and/or altering buildings, as expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes, as well as in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. The workmanship of contributors furnishes evidence of the technology of crafts, illustrates the aesthetic principles of the historic period, and reveals individual, local, regional, and national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. Therefore, integrity of workmanship is retained.

*Feeling*

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time, which results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. Contributors retain

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historic design, materials, workmanship, and setting that cumulatively relate the feeling of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, integrity of feeling is retained.

*Association*

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Contributors retains association by virtue of being located in the place where the significant historic events and activities of post-fire reconstruction occurred, and by virtue of being sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Therefore, integrity of association is retained.

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**\*D7. References:** (Continued from Page 1)

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**D. “Mission Miracle Mile at I 7th Street Historic District”**

The attached District Record (DPR 523D) was prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department in April 2011.

**D1. Historic Name:** Mission Miracle Mile

**D2. Common Name:** Mission Street

**\*D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

The historic district is located within the retail commercial corridor of Mission Street in the Inner Mission North neighborhood. Contributors to the historic district are buildings that were originally constructed between 1906 and 1924, during the period of reconstruction that followed the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Contributors also include buildings that were expanded, remodeled, and/or improved during the period of commercial modernization from the mid-1920s to approximately 1960. Contributors are mostly three stories in height, and vary from two to four stories. All buildings contain storefronts that occupy the ground floors. Upper stories contain residential or commercial uses. Contributors vary in building footprints, construction types, and stylistic details. They include Edwardian-era wood-frame structures that were erected during the first post-fire decade, larger and more substantial commercial and apartment buildings that were constructed during the second post-fire decade, and structures that display designs and materials that were applied during the mid-century era of modernization. *(Continued on Page 3.)*

**\*D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):

The boundary of the historic district encompasses a linear area containing properties located on both sides of Mission Street, north of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street to approximately mid-block locations. *(See map on Page 18.)*

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

The boundary of the historic district contains a coherent grouping of thematic contributors, while excluding non-contributors (non-significant altered properties and non-thematic properties) to the extent feasible. On Mission Street to the north and south of the historic district, fewer than half of the properties are considered both thematic and intact, and several major intrusions exist. The thematic area does not extend to the east or west beyond Mission Street.

**\*D6. Significance:** **Theme:** Post-Fire Reconstruction; 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Development and Architecture  
**Area:** Inner Mission North, San Francisco

**Period of Significance:** 1906-1924; circa 1925-1960 **Applicable Criteria:** California Register of Historical Resources Criteria 1 & 3

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

*Criterion 1:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 at the local level, because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history. The historic district is associated with the reconstruction, growth, and development of the American retail economy on Mission Street, which became the largest and most important shopping destination in San Francisco during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, outside of downtown's Union Square. Events include the post-fire physical rebuilding of structures and recovery of commerce that occurred in the Inner Mission North after the 1906 earthquake and fires. Events also include the development of the mid-century "Mission Miracle Mile" shopping district, during which time the stores of Mission Street competed directly with downtown San Francisco for retailing business.

*Criterion 3:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3 at the local level, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period, region, and methods of construction, and it possesses high artistic values. The historic district contains commercial and mixed use building types that exhibit designs and styles that are representative of the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, the historic district reflects the transition from Edwardian-era wood-frame mixed-use buildings to larger, more substantial 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial emporiums and apartment buildings with Classical and Art Deco influences. The historic district also demonstrates innovative uses of "Visual Front" modern materials and designs that were applied to existing commercial buildings during the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. *(Continued on Page 19.)*

**\*D7. References** (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.): *(Continued on Page 31.)*

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Matt Weintraub, Preservation Planner

**Date:** April 2011

**Affiliation and Address:** San Francisco Planning Dept., 1650 Mission St, Ste. 400, San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.    \*Date: April 2011     Continuation     Update

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**\*D3. Detailed Description (Continued):**



Mission Street in 1940. View south towards 17<sup>th</sup> Street. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4694).*



Mission Street in 2011. View south towards 17<sup>th</sup> Street, from near the same location as in the photograph to the left. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Character-Defining Visual Characteristics

The visual characteristics of the historic district include but may not be limited to the following:

- The urban development pattern of a densely developed retail and transportation corridor, containing medium-scale structures with horizontal, unbroken rooflines that are packed tightly together, abutting each other at the fronts of lots, along both sides of Mission Street.
- The pedestrian-level development pattern of continuous strips of storefronts and commercial spaces, with most ground floors containing small, narrow, and regularly spaced storefronts, including larger buildings that were historically partitioned into multiple storefronts, but also with a few exceptionally large structures with ground floors that were historically dominated by single commercial spaces and storefronts.
- The west side of Mission Street, which is characterized by similarly designed Edwardian-era, narrow, wood-frame structures that include storefronts at the ground floors and dwellings at upper stories, which were mostly built between 1906 and the early 1910s.
- The east side of Mission Street, which is characterized by wider and more massive buildings, including brick and concrete structures designed for large commercial uses, that were mostly erected during the late 1910s and 1920s.

The visual characteristics of individual contributing properties include but may not be limited to the following:

- Architectural styles and/or types that include: Classical/Roman Revival (columns/pilasters; pediments/porticos; boxed eaves with cornices, dentils, modillions, frieze bands); Beaux Arts (paired columns/pilasters; exuberant façade ornament; roofline balustrades); Mission Revival (wood and/or smooth stucco facing; overhanging eaves at doors/windows; Spanish tile accents; curved parapets); Spanish Colonial Revival (smooth stucco facing; low-pitched roofs covered in Spanish tile; eaves with minimal or no overhang; arched openings); Art Deco (plain smooth façade surfaces; geometric relief; vertical linear elements); 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial (large floor-plates; flat façades without bay windows; prominent marquee entrances; plate-glass display windows at ground floors; regular bands of large windows at upper floors; horizontal roofline detail).

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- Height, form and massing that varies among individual structures, including: building heights that range from two to four stories; building footprints that range from standard size to giant size; façades with or without bay windows; structures that may be either vertically or horizontally emphasized by width, fenestration, and/or façade detailing; and rooflines that terminate horizontally with various kinds of entablatures and linear raised features (including a Mission Revival-style building with parapet and cornice).
- On buildings constructed during the decade after the fires of 1906, typical materials and features consistent with Edwardian-era mixed-use designs include: wood cladding (including cove/shiplap siding, flush siding, and/or shingles); stucco as a primary or secondary facing material; bay windows (typically angled; may also be square and/or rounded); wood windows (typically double-hung; may also be casements); wood trim; and cast plaster ornament.
- On buildings constructed during the late 1910s and 1920s, typical materials and features consistent with early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and apartment building designs include: concrete, brick, and/or stucco facing; large horizontal windows with multi-light metal or wood sash; details/ornament in formed concrete, brick, cast plaster, or stucco.
- Storefront designs and materials including: plate-glass windows with wood or metal frames, or “cornerless” (without frames), and which may project out over the supporting bulkheads; bulkheads with decorative grills on air vents, and clad with square ceramic tiles that may be decoratively detailed, or clad in structural glass/ceramic panels that may be non-original; angled, recessed vestibules and/or open outdoor lobbies with marble tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; metal-framed signs/marquees that may or may not be illuminated by individual bulbs or by neon tubes.



Mission Street, view north from 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The west side (left in the photograph) and the east side (right in the photograph) are distinguished by differing lot layouts and development patterns. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Mission Street, view north towards 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The west side (left in the photograph) and the east side (right in the photograph) are distinguished by differing lot layouts and development patterns. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

### Features and Elements

Within the historic district, the west side and the east side of Mission Street are distinguished from each other by differences in lot sizes, building sizes, construction practices, and phase of post-fire reconstruction. The west side of Mission Street is characterized primarily by very narrow lots and by wood-frame, medium-scale buildings that were constructed during the first post-fire decade, 1906 to the mid-1910s. In comparison, the east side of Mission Street is generally characterized by larger lots and a greater variety of building types, including massive, brick and/or concrete buildings that were constructed during the second post-fire decade, from the mid-1910s to the mid-1920s. These two distinctive components, the east and west sides of Mission Street, comprise an early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial corridor. An overlay to this streetscape are the modernizations to some storefronts, façades, signs, and sidewalks that occurred between the 1920s and approximately 1960. These historic patterns primarily contributed to the physical development of the premier urban retail shopping corridor that became known citywide as the “Mission Miracle Mile”.

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The following sections further describe the features and elements that comprise the historic district, including areas, sites, groupings of structures, individual buildings, and their characteristics.

*Mixed-Use Flats, Shops, and Hotels*

After the 1906 disaster, most property owners on Mission Street pursued immediate reconstruction by rebuilding with available materials at greater scales and higher densities, as occurred everywhere in the Inner Mission North. The post-fire reconstruction of Mission Street also involved intensification of commercial uses, as well as increased scale and density of structures. Every lot fronting Mission Street was rebuilt with a commercial component, thereby changing the character from a mixed-use streetcar corridor, as existed before the 1906 disaster, to a continuous shopping strip. On lots where single-story commercial buildings were erected during the early post-fire period, these were expanded or replaced by multiple-story mixed-use buildings within a few years of the 1906 disaster.



The west side of Mission Street, north of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. View northwest from near 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The building located at 2114 Mission Street, shown at far left within the frame, is individually notable for its architecture. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The west side of Mission Street, north of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. View southwest from mid-block. Typical Edwardian-era multiple-family residential architecture. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Consequently, within a decade of the 1906 disaster, the west side of Mission Street within the historic district was consistently rebuilt with multiple-story, wood-frame mixed-use structures that typified the post-fire rebuilding pattern. These buildings were constructed wall-to-wall with each other on narrow lots that were typically just over 23 feet wide. The ground floors uniformly contained small storefronts and long, narrow commercial spaces. In the few buildings that occupied larger lots with wider street frontages, ground floors were divided into multiple storefronts with symmetrical, matching layouts. The architecture of the wood-frame reconstruction that dominated the west side of Mission Street was entirely consistent with post-fire residential building stock: high density multiple-family building types, including several residential hotels; predominantly three stories in height, with some variation to two and four stories; street façades featuring bilateral arrangements of bay windows and fenestration; and Edwardian-era ornamentation spanning a range of Beaux Arts-influenced styles. This tightly packed arrangement of evenly spaced, similarly designed buildings resulted in exceptionally rhythmic patterns of storefronts, residential entrances, bay windows, and cornice lines, with few breaks overall.

Architecturally, one of the most notable buildings was constructed at 2090 Mission Street. It was designed by architect M. Mattanovich with parapet elements of the Mission Revival architectural style, unusual Art Nouveau-influenced details at the bay windows, and a Classical balustrade. Claus Haderler, who owned the property before the 1906 fires and whose family owned the property for decades afterward, commissioned its construction in 1914. Another building located at 2114-2118 Mission Street stands out as an example of the Mission Revival style, with signature bell-shaped parapet and Spanish tile clad eaves, as well as stylistically consistent features at the storefront such as arched openings and tile cladding/paving with Mediterranean decorative floral patterns. The remainder of the wood-frame structures within the historic district exhibit features that are consistent with the Classical Revival architectural style, including: cornices dressed with modillions, dentils, and egg-and-dart; spandrel panels on bay windows; and flat, clean rooflines.

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Two buildings with Classical detailing located on the west side of Mission Street, near 16<sup>th</sup> Street. View west. The building at left originated as a single-story commercial building that was erected in 1906 and expanded vertically with two residential floors in 1912. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Buildings located on the west side of Mission Street, south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. View northwest. The building located at the right exhibits Mission Revival architectural style. The buildings located at the center and at the left were constructed of concrete. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Commercial storefront architecture within the historic district is mostly consistent with early 20<sup>th</sup> century development patterns. During this period, the importance of visual displays and easy access to goods was becoming a primary consideration for retailers competing in a marketplace of increasingly mass-produced, brand-named goods. Thus, storefronts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century included: large panes of plate-glass set above low wood or tile bulkheads; display stands located behind the windows; slightly recessed entrances with marble tile floor paving; and wide transom bands above the storefronts that provide natural illumination to the interiors. Although many storefronts within the historic district were altered materially in varying degrees over time, such as changes to cladding materials, framing systems, windows and doors, most storefronts retain historic forms. These include recessed, angled entrances, display windows, low bulkheads, and clerestory bands (many of which are intact behind applied signage, canopies, or other obscuring additions). Several storefronts retain individual historic materials and features such as bulkhead tiles, decorative grills at bulkhead vents, marble tile floor paving, and wood sash doors.



Typical storefront, located at 2128 Mission Street (built 1913). Includes: plate-glass windows in custom metal frames with fretted inlays that match the façade; decorative grills at bulkhead vents; an angled vestibule and wood sash door; and a decorative multi-light clerestory, which runs the width of the building above the first story. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Customized storefront for a "bazaar", located at 2118 Mission Street (built 1912). Includes: an arched entrance and arched plate-glass windows; bulkheads clad in decorative floral tile (painted over at street face); and a deep arcade entrance with decorative floral floor tile. Consistent with the building's overall Mission Revival styling. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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The small-scale storefronts that lined the west side of Mission Street conveyed a great variety goods and services to the shoppers, commuters, and residents who traveled the commercial thoroughfare. In 1920, the merchants and businesses that operated on the west side of Mission Street within the historic district, a stretch of less than two blocks, included several of each of the following: clothing, shoes, groceries, candies, jewelry, and men's furnishings; as well as a dry goods, a delicatessen, and a razor grinder. In addition, a "bazaar" was located within the elaborately detailed customized storefront and commercial space at 2118 Mission Street.

As the post-fire reconstruction of Mission Street progressed during the 1910s and 1920s, building techniques transitioned from expedient wood-frame construction to more substantial concrete and brick construction. Within the historic district, the earliest reinforced concrete building was constructed in 1912 at 2040-2042 Mission Street, on the west side of the street. This concrete building was designed to match the general scale, style, and form of the wood-frame Edwardian-era structures that it was set amongst. In contrast, the reinforced concrete building that was also erected the following year on the west side of Mission Street in 1913, located at 2126-2132 Mission Street, indicated a trend towards larger scale construction. The building occupied a double-wide lot, it featured a tall ground floor divided into three matching storefronts, and its primary façade was a flat wall devoid of bay windows but dressed in handsome Classical accents. This large mixed-use building heralded the arrival of larger apartment buildings to the area.

#### *Apartments and Emporiums*

While the small, narrow lots on the west side of Mission Street were consistently upbuilt with multiple-family, mixed-use structures during the decade following the 1906 fires, the much larger lots that existed on the east side of Mission Street remained underutilized until the mid-1910s. In the aftermath of the 1906 disaster, the east side of the street was mostly repopulated with low-scale, single-story wood-frame commercial buildings that provided immediate utility for merchants and customers. Whereas many post-fire single-story structures located on Mission Street were replaced or expanded within a few months or years of initial construction (including several on the west side of Mission Street), those that were built on the east side of the street within the historic district remained for a full decade, until urban development pressures and changes in building practices made it feasible and desirable to build out the large lots.



The east side of Mission Street. View southeast towards 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The concrete apartment building located at the left was constructed in 1914. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The northeast corner of Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. View northeast. The corner commercial building was constructed or expanded in 1922. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

From the mid-1910s to the mid-1920s, these underused lots on the east side of Mission Street provided prime opportunities for development. During that time, multiple-story buildings with large footprints were constructed to replace earlier small-scale post-fire development. These substantial buildings, including several constructed of brick and concrete, represented the final phase of reconstruction on Mission Street following the 1906 disaster, during which time construction of mixed-use housing gave way to construction of dedicated commercial buildings. The first two large structures that were built on the east side of Mission Street included residential components. In 1914, a three-story concrete apartment building with divided storefronts, located at 2059-2065 Mission Street, was constructed on a lot that measured 75 feet wide by 105 feet deep. The building featured a decorative Classical treatment that matched that of a

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similar, smaller concrete apartment that was constructed the previous year on the west side of the street at 2126-2132 Mission Street. Also, in 1915, a large hotel building with a ground-floor department store was erected at 2135-2137 Mission Street, on a lot that measured 50 feet wide by 122-½ feet deep.

Following that, the construction of dedicated commercial buildings dominated the east side of Mission Street. The designs of these early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings reflected developments in commercial architecture that occurred as the American retail economy expanded in scale and scope. The buildings utilized large rectangular floor plates and long street frontages (hence requiring large lots) in order to maximize merchandising space and to allow for displays of many different kinds of goods, during an era of increasing competition among brand-name products and retail businesses. These commercial buildings included multiple stories and internal mezzanines that allowed for additional display areas, storage, manufacturing, and/or offices. They also included exterior design features such as prominent entrances and sign marquees, long rows of large windows, flat exterior wall surfaces, and long clean horizontal rooflines. The dedicated commercial buildings that were constructed on Mission Street during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resembled the downtown retail emporiums and department stores with which they competed economically. The emphasis on visual merchandising and availability of mass quantities of products to wide audiences differed from earlier modes of retailing, in which small merchants and businesses typically offered only a few kinds of goods and services in limited quantities and varieties to stable customer bases.



The Redlick/Redlick-Newman Co. furniture store building, located at the southeast corner of Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. View southeast. The building was originally constructed in 1916 and expanded in phases: 1924; 1936; 1941. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The east side of Mission Street, south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. View northeast. From left to right: The Redlick-Newman Co. furniture store building; the Albert Hotel with department/furniture store at ground floor (obscured by trees), built 1915; and the Klopstock Bros. furniture store building, built 1923. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The economic subsector that supported construction and expansion of these emporium-style buildings on Mission Street was furniture sales. During the post-fire period, the acquiring of home furnishings became a years-long or decades-long process for the many thousands of refugees who had lost virtually all their worldly possessions in the 1906 disaster. To supply this ongoing demand for domestic fittings, furniture makers and sellers gravitated to the east side of Mission Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, where access to transportation and pedestrian activity guaranteed high visibility of goods. In 1920, this two-block stretch alone on the east side of Mission Street contained approximately nine different furniture stores, as well as upholstery, furniture repair, and sewing machine repair establishments. A related development was the construction in 1922 of a two-story corner commercial building at 2081 Mission Street, on a large square lot at the northeast corner of Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets, and its occupation by the Cline Piano Co. Construction of this building with elements of Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, such as the wide overhanging eaves with Spanish barrel tile accents, may have involved vertical expansion of a previously existing one-story structure.

The major furniture and home appliance establishments included very large emporiums, such as: Redlicks/Redlick-Newman Co., which constructed its giant store and warehouse in 1916 at 2101-2129 Mission Street, on the southeast corner lot at Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets (*see also: Redlick-Newman Co. Building section on Pages 9-11*); the Klopstock Bros., which built a similar furniture store and large warehouse complex in 1923-1924 at 2141-2153 Mission Street and 238 Capp Street (*see also: Klopstock Bros. Co. Complex section on Pages 11-12*); and the Lachmann Bros. store and

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warehouse complex (no longer extant) that was located just south of 16<sup>th</sup> Street on Mission Street. Smaller furniture stores and related businesses filled out most of the rest of the east side of Mission Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, including the commercial space that was located between Redlick-Newman and Klopstock Bros., which sold furniture and hardware before becoming a department store.

*Redlick-Newman Co. Building*

At the heart of the historic district, figuratively and geographically, is found the Redlick-Newman Co. building, which is located at 2101-2129 Mission Street. Constructed in 1916, and designed by architect Smith O'Brien who was trained by Clinton Day, this building was one of the first and most impressive of the commercial emporium-type buildings to be constructed on Mission Street. It was constructed for Redlicks, which became the Redlick-Newman Co., and then again Redlicks, a furniture and appliances business that was founded in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires. At first, Redlicks was located at the intersection of Mission and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, amongst the numerous other furniture businesses and related establishments that gravitated to the strip. Redlicks grew considerably in its first decade of business, and by the mid-1910s the company was ready to relocate to its own massive dedicated structure at the southeast corner of Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. The architectural plans for the new building included notes such as "Newmans vestibule", which indicated an early connection between Redlicks and Newmans at that time.



The Redlick-Newman Co. building, located at 2101-2129 Mission Street, in 2011. View southeast. The original structure extended from the corner rooftop pediment to the southern rooftop pediment (located at right), and from the corner east to the break in the larger windows (located at left). Additions to the original building include the southernmost section (located at far right) and the easternmost section (located at far left). *San Francisco Planning Department.*

At this prominent corner site, the massive three-story, brick-faced structure supported by concrete columns was erected on a giant lot with 160 feet of frontage on Mission Street and 213-½ feet of frontage on 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Architect O'Brien, who was commissioned by Mssrs. J.J. and B.C. Brown, designed such practical considerations for Redlicks as: vast stacked floor-plates separated into functional sections at every level; prominent entrance and signage; an internal plan oriented towards product displays; bands of large windows; and clean form and lines on the exterior. The stylistic treatment of the building was influenced primarily by the Beaux Arts movement, as were the designs of many commercial buildings that were constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. O'Brien's façade design incorporated restrained Classical features and ornament such as titanic pilasters separating the windows bays, and an entablature with patterned frieze bands,

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medallions, a denticulated cornice, and subtle pediments at the north and south corners of the original primary façade. Previously, O'Brien had partnered with Frederick Herman Meyer, with whom he had studied Chicago office building architecture. In 1908, after working with the elder O'Brien for six years, Meyer started his own office and went on to become one of the most prominent City Beautiful architects in San Francisco, and a designer of the Civic Center.

The Redlick-Newman Co. building was perfectly designed and situated as a furniture store, warehouse, and shop. It was designed as a large block with two interconnected functional sections. Section 1, so labeled on the architectural plans, included the larger western section with corner frontage, the customer entrance on Mission Street, a vast interior gallery at the ground floor, three huge square floors stocked with furniture, appliances, and other merchandise that were available for customers to inspect, admire, and purchase, and offices at the back. Section 2, the eastern section behind the store, included a three-story warehouse that integrated with each of the display floors, an area for polishing and setting up of furniture on the second story, and a loading shed with access to 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Redlick-Newman Co. continued to grow at its permanent home. The warehouse section was expanded eastward on the lot to its current extent in 1924 by architect Mel I. Schwartz, who also designed the nearby Klopstock Bros. building that was completed the previous year. Likewise, the store section was expanded westward, which resulted in an L-shaped building plan. In 1936, local contractor Antone Petersen cut openings between the original store and the addition and altered the storefronts to match, so that they were virtually indistinguishable from each other except for the location of the original cornice pediments. Petersen also added an internal mezzanine in 1936, and constructed a two-story office addition, presumably at the rear, in 1941. Eventually, the loading operations were moved off 17<sup>th</sup> Street to the interior of the block, where three brick panels on the south-facing façade of the warehouse addition were replaced by steel roll-up doors and an aluminum awning in 1959.



The Redlick-Newman Co. building in 1935. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-7335).*



Bands of large divided metal-sash windows with brick water tables, located at the Mission Street façade of the Redlick-Newman Co. building. View northeast. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Façade, cornice, and parapet details of the Redlick-Newman Co. building. View east. The boundary between the original structure (left) and the southern addition (right) is visible as a vertical line that runs through the wider pilaster that is located right of center. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

In the 1930s, a change in the store's management and reversion to its original name of Redlicks prompted a new advertising scheme. The double-faced vertical blade sign that advertised the Redlick-Newman Co., which was located at the center of the Mission Street façade, was altered to "Redlicks" in 1941, although the customized terrazzo floor paving at the main entrance with "Redlick-Newman" signature was retained. In addition, a huge square freestanding sign was erected on the rooftop, where it overlooked the intersection. The rooftop sign was originally installed in the 1930s by Occidental Stoves, a brand that Redlick-Newman sold, but Redlicks soon replaced the company's advertising with its own unique slogan that played off the store's location at Mission and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. Within the square metal frame, Redlicks installed individual metal letters and numbers, illuminated with bulbs and

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neon, that exclaimed: "17 Reasons Why!" According to Charles Redlick, who ran the store from 1945 until it closed in 1975, as quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner*:

"We were looking for some message to bridge over the fact we were changing the name... My father [Abraham Redlick] developed this slogan after much study, asking everybody and their cousin. He'd gotten the idea from Heinz 57 years back. They had 57 brands of food or pickles, whatever... People would ask what the 17 reasons were, and we would guff it off. There were no 17 reasons."

In recent years, the "17 Reasons Why!" rooftop sign was removed and replaced with contemporary general advertising. (It is believed that the individual metal letters/numbers are still in existence and currently in the possession of private parties.) However, the tremendous visibility of the historic sign over several decades spawned a popularity that resulted in production of commercial graphics that were based on the design of the sign, the naming of artwork and organizations (ranging from nonprofits to rock bands) in ways that evoked the sign's slogan, and even a full-scale recreation of the sign that was used in a national cable television program.



Bands of large divided metal-sash windows with brick water tables, located on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street façade. View south. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Entrance to the warehouse/office section, with pressed metal canopy, located on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street façade. View south. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The south-facing side of the building at the interior of the block. View northeast from Capp Street. The building's three sections include: the store with Mission Street frontage at left; the original warehouse at center; and the rear addition at right. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

### *Klopstock Bros. Co. Complex*

A building complex that was similar to the Redlick-Newman Co. property in function, plan, and architectural presence was constructed in the early 1920s, on a Mission Street site located just to the south of the Redlick-Newman Co. property. In 1923, a three-story reinforced concrete building with brick walls was constructed on a lot that measured 75 feet wide by 122-½ feet deep, at 2141-2153 Mission Street. This large commercial structure was designed by architect Mel I. Schwartz, who also designed an addition to the back of the Redlick-Newman Co. building the following year, and it was built by John Spargo.

Although the career of architect/engineer Schwartz was not as distinguished as that of his former partner Samuel Heiman, with whom he worked between 1914 and 1919, Schwartz appears to have been responsible for at least two notable works: the three-story addition and remodeling of the former two-story commercial building that is located at 77 New Montgomery Street in 1920; and the Klopstock Bros. building. The building on Mission Street appears to have been a very early, prototypical example of Art Deco architectural style, with characteristic façade elements such as vertical fins, bands of geometric circles and diamonds, and subtle roofline projections evoking Gothic influences for which Schwartz was also known. The building followed the established emporium/department store-type plan: a large footprint

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with a long street frontage for visibility; a façade dominated by bands of large windows and a major pedestrian entrance; and multiple stories and large floor-plates contained within a cleanly defined block.



The Klopstock Bros. furniture store building, constructed in 1923 on Mission Street, south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. View east. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Art Deco façade elements of the Klopstock Bros. building. View east. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The building was constructed for and occupied by the Klopstock Bros. furniture company. Like the Redlicks company, the Klopstock Bros. emerged as major suppliers of home furnishings in the Mission District during the post-fire period. During the 1910s, the Klopstock Bros. operated a plant out of several buildings located on nearby Capp Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, where they manufactured and sold mattresses. By 1923, the Klopstock Bros. decided to consolidate and relocate to the heavily traveled transportation and commercial corridor of Mission Street, where they commissioned the construction of their own furniture emporium building by Schwartz and Spargo. The following year, the Klopstock Bros. completed construction of the second, utilitarian phase: a long ell-shaped, two-story concrete warehouse located behind and abutting the store, on a flag lot with frontage on Capp Street.



The back of the Klopstock Bros. furniture store. View west from Capp Street. The ell-shaped warehouse abuts to the left. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The Klopstock Bros. furniture warehouse located at 238 Capp Street, constructed 1924. View southwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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*Mid-Century Modernizations*

Along the entire length of Mission Street within the Mission District, a significant pattern of development occurred after the post-fire reconstruction of buildings was completed in the mid-1920s. This development related to the ever-increasing competition among retailers to sell to consumers who could sift through markets flooded with nationwide brand names and a plethora of goods during postwar periods of general economic prosperity. From approximately the mid-1920s to the 1960s, retailers redefined the visual appearances of their stores and buildings on a fairly regular basis, in order to better display their products and their shopping environments to discriminating shoppers. Many commercial spaces were remodeled several times during the period by one or more occupants in succession.



The box marquee and ground-floor plate-glass display windows of the Redlick-Newman Co. building. View south. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The customized terrazzo floor paving at the main entrance of the Redlick-Newman Co. building. View northeast. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The modernizations were influenced by designers who were open to using modern materials and to departing from previous design modes. Typical "Visual Front" storefront alterations included: installation of plate-glass windows; widening/deepening of entry vestibules; re-facing of surfaces in modern materials such as ceramic tile, structural glass (e.g., Vitrolite, Carrara Glass), and/or metal panels; installation of tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; and installation of projecting signage. More dramatic "Visual Front" renovations involved the transformation of entire structures into display objects by removal of all façade extrusions such as bay windows, cornices, and/or applied ornament, and replacement with plain wall surfaces, modern cladding materials such as ceramic, structural glass, metal, and/or smooth stucco, and rectangular metal windows.



The triangular marquee and ground-floor plate-glass display windows of the Klopstock Bros. building. View southeast. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The customized terrazzo floor paving and wide angled vestibule at the main entrance of the Klopstock Bros. building. View east. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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Within the historic district, several buildings display alterations, modifications, and improvements that related to the period of modern visual merchandising and the “Mission Miracle Mile” shopping district. For instance, the Redlick-Newman Co. and the Klopstock Bros. updated their storefronts with larger plate-glass windows, larger entrances with customized terrazzo floor paving, and modernized marquees and signage during the 1920s and 1930s. The hotel/department store that was located between them followed suit in the mid-1940s with a simplified ground-floor remodel that included bands of plate-glass, re-facing in structural glass and ceramic tile, and speedlining. On the east side of Mission Street, a two-story structure located at 2040-2042 Mission Street, originally erected in 1907, underwent a series of storefront and façade renovations from the 1920s to the 1950s. The final result was a thoroughly modern “Visual Front” that exemplified the design ideals of commercial retailing during the mid-century period of the Mission Miracle Mile. It featured a tiled storefront with a wide angled outdoor lobby, projecting window displays, and steel doors and frames, and an upper façade clad in structural glass with metal windows and details.



The building with a “Visual Front” located at 2040-2042 Mission Street. Views west. Materials and features include: structural glass facing; steel trim, rectangular metal windows; deep angled vestibule; plate-glass in metal frames; overhanging window displays; metal sash doors. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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Contributors

Contributors to the historic district qualify for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CD" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation"), according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. In addition, several contributors appear to be individually significant historic and/or architectural properties, and therefore qualify for assignment of CHRSC of "3CB" ("Appears eligible for CR both individually and as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation").

The following list includes information for the **20 contributing properties** located within the historic district:

Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2026-2030	3569/004	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1907	3CD
Mission Street	2032-2034	3569/005	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2040-2042	3569/007	Commercial, 2-story	Commercial Modern	1907 / c. 1940-1960	3CB
Mission Street	2044-2046	3569/008	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1912	3CD
Mission Street	2056-2058	3569/011	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2059-2065	3570/023	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Classical Revival	1914	3CD
Mission Street	2060-2062	3569/012	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2069-2071	3570/022	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2072-2074	3569/014	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2080-2086	3569/015	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2081	3570/020	Commercial, 2-story	Mediterranean Revival	1922	3CD
Mission Street	2090	3569/016	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Mission Revival)	1914	3CB
Mission Street	2094	3569/016 A	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (altered)	1906	6L
Mission Street	2101-2129	3575/091	Commercial, 3-story (Redlick / Redlick-Newman Co.)	Classical Revival	1916 / 1924 / 1936-1941	3CB
Mission Street	2114	3576/002	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Mission Revival)	1912	3CB
Mission Street	2122	3576/003	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian	1923	3CD
Mission Street	2126-2132	3576/004	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Classical Revival	1913	3CB
Mission Street	2135-2137	3575/038	Mixed-use, hotel/commercial	Edwardian (Mediterranean Revival)	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2141-2153	3575/037	Commercial, 3-story	Art Deco	1923	3CB

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Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Street			(Klopstock Bros.)			
Capp Street	238	3575/048	Industrial, 2-story (Klopstock Bros.)	Vernacular	1924	3CD

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Non-contributors

The historic district contains non-contributors that were constructed during the historic district's period of significance, but that have undergone physical alterations (often cumulative) that negatively affect the ability of the properties to convey historical and/or architectural significance. These properties are assigned CHRSC of "6L" ("Determined ineligible for local listing or designation through local government review process; may warrant special consideration in local planning") , according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. The historic district also contains non-contributors that were constructed after the historic district's period of significance, and that are not known to be associated with any historical events, persons, or architecture that may be considered significant, and are therefore: (1) assigned CHRSC of "6Z" ("Found ineligible for NR [National Register of Historic Places], CR or Local designation through survey evaluation") if constructed 50 or more years ago; or (2) CHRSC of "7R" ("Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey: Not evaluated") if constructed less than 50 years ago. Generally, non-contributors are found to be compatible with the scale, massing, and uses that characterize the historic district, which retains overall integrity.

The following list includes information for **6 non-contributing, non-historic properties** located within the historic district:

Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2038	3569/006	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1910	6Z
Mission Street	2048-2050	3569/009	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1906	6Z
Mission Street	2052-2054	3569/085	Commercial, 2-story	None (altered)	1912	6Z
Mission Street	2068-2070	3569/013	Commercial, 2-story	None	1985	n/a
Mission Street	2073-2075	3570/048	Commercial, 2-story	Commercial Modern	1918, 1924 / c. 1960	6L
Mission Street	2100	3576/001	Commercial, 1-story	None	1963	6Z

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**\*D4. Boundary Description (Continued):**

Boundary Map

Properties are labeled with Assessor block numbers and lot numbers for identification purposes.



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**\*D6. Significance** (Continued):

The historic district, a significant and distinguishable entity, qualifies for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CS" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as an individual property through survey evaluation") according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8.

Historical Context

After the Inner Mission North was destroyed by the earthquake and fires of April 1906, the reconstruction of the neighborhood involved three phases. The initial "relief" phase, which ended in 1908, was characterized by small ad hoc cottages and shacks that provided immediate, temporary shelter for the desperate refugee population, and by hastily erected shops and stands that were critical in providing for the flows of common goods and services, as well as cash, that helped to sustain the area's refugee population. The second phase of "rebuilding" involved the construction of permanent replacement structures, which in some instances began immediately after the 1906 fires, and in other instances continued well into the 1910s. During the final phase of post-fire "recovery" that extended into the 1920s, the permanent resettlement of uprooted populations in rebuilt neighborhoods such as the Inner Mission North was finally achieved, and the commercial corridors of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Valencia Street witnessed growth, improvement, and prosperity.

Within the historic district, which is part of the most urbanized area of the Inner Mission North, only a very few small, plain commercial buildings remain intact from the early "relief" era. Most of the extant commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings represent the permanent "rebuilding" period, during which substantial multiple-story structures were erected to replace either destroyed buildings and/or the earliest temporary structures. Also represented are buildings that were constructed after the initial wave of rebuilding, during the extended post-fire "recovery" period, which included physical development related to the ongoing reestablishment and expansion of commerce continued within the retail corridors.

The historical context of the 1906 earthquake and the post-fire period of rebuilding and recovery in the Inner Mission North is further established in the following sections, which is largely excerpted from the San Francisco Planning Department's National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (NPS Form 10-900-b), *Historic Neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California*, which was adopted by San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. 93 on November 17, 2010.

*1906 Earthquake and Fire*

The great earthquake of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1906, and the citywide fires that followed, were defining for the Mission District, as for all of San Francisco. While the earthquake itself destroyed mostly brick structures and buildings that stood on filled land, it also started dozens of major fires, most of them in the densely crowded South-of-Market area of tenements and industry. Firefighting was hampered by broken water mains, and the fires spread and merged uncontrolled, feeding on the primarily wood building stock. The ensuing conflagration, whose severity was compounded by numerous tactical errors on the part of city officials and army commanders, utterly consumed four-fifths of San Francisco, including approximately 28,000 buildings, over the next three days. Thousands of lives were lost. "The flames ravaged the financial district, the downtown commercial center, much of the industrial sector, and the city's most densely populated residential neighborhoods north and south of Market. The economic and social core of the west's greatest metropolis was in ruins."

After three days of citywide destruction, the fire's advance was finally halted in the Mission District, though not before approximately 30 blocks in the Mission were leveled (out of a total citywide of more than 500 blocks). Just as the citywide firestorm had wiped out the core of San Francisco, leaving a broken ring of surviving outlying neighborhoods, the Mission District fires had carved out the oldest and most crowded area of the Mission, the Inner Mission North, while leaving untouched neighborhoods to the south, east, and west.

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Valencia Street lay in ruins one day after the 1906 earthquake. View north towards 18<sup>th</sup> Street. When this photograph was taken, the firestorm was visibly approaching from the north, and apparently it had already reached the next block. All of the buildings shown in this photograph burned within hours, as seen in the photograph to the right. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3549).*



Valencia Street in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires. View north from approximately the same location as in the photograph to the left. There was total destruction of structures, roads, transit lines, and utility lines. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3252).*

### *Rebuilding and Up-building*

The rebuilding of San Francisco in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires was unprecedented in scope and effort. Rebuilding required clearing of approximately four square miles of absolutely devastated urban landscape (involving temporary installation of debris-carrying rail-cars through city neighborhoods), repair of broken utilities, transit lines, and roads, and total replacement of burned structures and neighborhoods. All of this was accomplished and more, without central plan or control, by private citizens, businesses, and city government. In *The Earth Shook, the Sky Burned*, Bronson celebrated the physical reconstruction of the city as a victory for character, efficiency, and technology:

“And the job was not only done, but it was done faster and better than anyone thought possible. In three years, almost all of the burned area was rebuilt... In 1909, more than half of America’s steel and concrete buildings stood in San Francisco. In three years, the assessed valuation of the City was half again as much as it had been before the fire. Twenty thousand buildings – bigger, stronger, more modern than the 28,000 which went up in smoke – had been finished in that space and time.” (Pages 178-179)

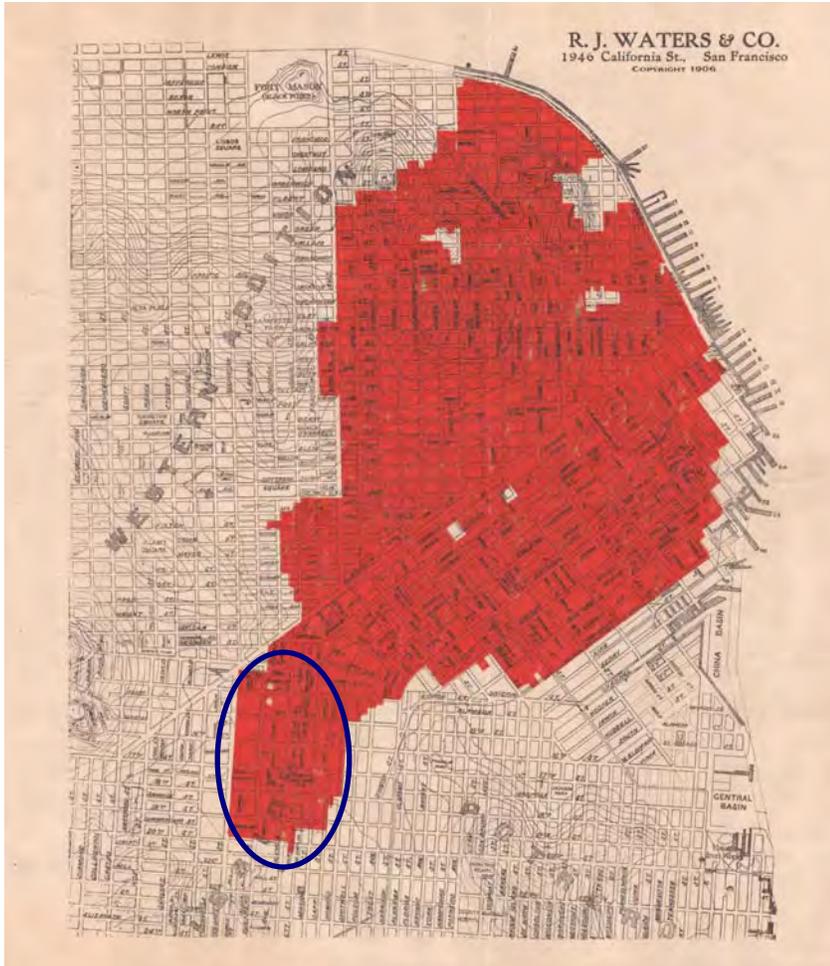
In the burned area of the Inner Mission North, at least 600 buildings were constructed from the summer of 1906 through 1908, which was the peak of rebuilding activity citywide. From 1909 until the beginning of World War I, as building activity gradually tapered off, another 400 or so buildings were erected in the neighborhood. Complete reconstruction of the Inner Mission North took longer than for that of downtown and its nearby residential neighborhoods, due in part to politics and business, which dictated that restoration of the downtown core was highest priority. Also, working-class and/or immigrant citizens experienced difficulties and delays in obtaining insurance claims. In many cases, insurance pay-outs ultimately could not cover costs of rebuilding and owners were forced to sell their properties to speculators and commercial builders. A decade after the fire swept through the neighborhood, there remained more undeveloped and underutilized land in the Inner Mission North than there had been before the fire.

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The physical rebuilding of San Francisco and the Inner Mission North involved “upbuilding,” a process of constructing larger structures with more units to replace those that had been destroyed. The upbuilding of the Mission was related to a lucrative rental market for permanent housing following the disaster, which prompted rebuilding at higher density. Post-fire residential buildings were taller, bulkier, and covered more of their lots so that front and side yards were reduced or eliminated. In the Inner Mission North, where single-family dwellings and two-family flats had dominated the formerly suburban neighborhood before the fires, the post-fire upbuilding resulted in a mostly three to six-unit housing stock, built cheek-to-jowl and forming solid blocks of urban streetscape. Overall, the upbuilding and the greater population density of the Inner Mission North changed the neighborhood character from suburban to urban, as indicated by Godfrey in *Neighborhoods in Transition*: “The housing shortage in the city encouraged the development of increased densities in the Mission...[V]acant lots were developed, often with higher-density flats and apartment buildings, to house refugees from ravaged areas...This lowered the social standing of the district, making it a more strictly working-class area.” (Page 146)

Map of San Francisco by R.J. Waters & Co. (1906), showing the vast area (shaded) that was destroyed by the firestorm of 1906, and that was reconstructed in phases during the years and decades that followed. The outlined area indicates the northern portion of the Mission District that was destroyed by fires and that was rebuilt. Residential reconstruction in the Inner Mission North was mostly completed during the 1910s, while reconstruction of the Mission District’s commercial corridors continued through the 1920s.

In the first year or so after the disaster, while building materials, labor, and capital were scarce, many owner-builders endeavored to construct small, plain single-family cottages just large enough to provide basic shelter. These small vernacular dwellings were usually intended as temporary housing

solutions; many were replaced with larger residential buildings within a few years, while others were retained at the backs of lots and multiple-family housing was constructed in front. More rarely, some property owners in the Inner Mission North bucked the trend of upbuilding and rebuilt permanent, full-size single-family houses, some of them architect-designed, rather than convert their land to rental housing.

While post-fire buildings were essentially larger, more crowded versions of the wood boxes that had been built for decades, their façades revealed clear shifts in architectural tastes that occurred around the turn of the century. Post-fire row-house construction uniformly incorporated Beaux-Arts-influenced architecture that emphasized formal classicism over the riotous decoration and textures of the late Victorian era. Post-Victorian-era architecture was described by Alexander and Heig in *San Francisco: Building the Dream City*:

“Generally referred to today as ‘Edwardian,’ these buildings loosely followed the Roman Revival Style popular in the city just before 1906. Completely of frame construction, their first floors are generally given a veneer of yellow or Roman brick. The finer examples have a columned entrance, sometimes

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with marble steps and paneling, and perhaps leaded, beveled glass in the front door and side panels. Above the first floor are rows of curved bay windows whose large glass panes are also curvilinear, especially at corners. The heavy roof lines are turned out with modillions and cornices, and any stray door or window handsomely ornamented with pilasters and consoles, in the approved Roman Revival style.” (Page 362)

In addition to these more fully developed examples of Edwardian-era architecture, plainer and less expensive versions were built in the Mission. Workingman’s Edwardians featured slanted bay windows rather than curved; cast stone bases rather than brick; simple cornice details such as “block” modillions; and fewer façade details. Waldhorn and Woodbridge’s *Victoria’s Legacy* provided this alternate description of similar building stock:

“Edwardian buildings are two to three stories high with flat roofs and shallow cornices made up of small, flat brackets with rows of molding underneath, usually dentils and egg and dart. The bay windows are the three-sided slanted variety, although buildings on corner lots often have a rounded corner bay. Some Edwardians have exterior stairs forming a series of balconies in the center of the front of the building; apartments in this type of Edwardian were called “Romeo” or “Romeo and Juliet” apartments because of the balconies...” (Page 205)



Guerrero Street in 1928. View north towards 14<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-3941).*



Valencia Street in 1927. View south towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5930).*

Within the fire zone, the massive reconstruction effort over a short period of time generated swaths of remarkably consistent, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture. Stylistic variations occurred, though standard façade layouts and building plans dominated. In addition to Roman Revival-derived architectural styles, other popular styles included: Mission Revival, which substituted classical features for Spanish tile accents and bell-shaped parapets; Craftsman with clinker-brick bases, boxy window bays, and bracketed eaves; and later Queen Anne, which was classically-influenced and featured ornament that was toned down from late 19<sup>th</sup>-century versions. Some builders expanded the Edwardian-era lexicon by artfully combining features of different styles such as Craftsman and Mission Revival, or Classical Revival with Moorish influence.

### *Rush to Economic Recovery*

When the Inner Mission North was cleared of fire debris in the weeks and months that followed the disaster, businesses and merchants flooded back to the established commercial corridors of Mission and Valencia Streets (north of 20<sup>th</sup> Street) and 16<sup>th</sup> Street. As transit lines were restored through the Mission District and residential populations grew, commerce responded. According to Scott in *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective*: “The

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intersection of Mission and Twenty-second streets, a transfer point for the Twin Peaks and Potrero districts, became the hub of a new retail center. Shopping areas also sprang up at Valencia and Sixteenth streets and at Twenty-ninth and Church streets.” (Pages 111-112) By the mid-1910s, the Mission’s miles-long, uninterrupted network of retailing and services, spanning the entire valley north-south and east-west, was not only restored, but expanded and intensified above pre-fire levels.

In particular, the primary commercial strip of Mission Street, which attracted a citywide crowd as well as neighborhood residents, was reconstructed as a continuous corridor of storefronts between 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Streets, which involved the raising of existing dwellings and storefront additions in the southern Mission District. Mission Street feature a multitude of businesses ranging from billiards and bowling to a “Japanese store,” as well as department stores such as Lippman Bros. (established while the downtown flagship store was rebuilt) and theaters such as the New Mission, the Majestic, the Peoples, the Wigwam, and the Grand, all located within two blocks of the important 22<sup>nd</sup> Street juncture. Furniture stores also proliferated on Mission Street, with nine located on the block between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets.



Mission Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1935. View southwest. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4590).*



Valencia Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1949. View northeast towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5926).*

Valencia Street, a commercial corridor running parallel to Mission Street to the west, was designated in 1907 as part of the Victory Highway, an early automobile route that predated the Lincoln Highway. While Valencia Street contained some entertainment and neighborhood commerce, the street also served as a service corridor with connection to the San Jose Road. Valencia contained a Levi Strauss clothing factory, auto service garages, dairies, sheet metal works, a macaroni factory, and undertakers. The east-west neighborhood commercial thoroughfares of 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the Inner Mission North (rebuilt after the fire) and 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the southern Mission (upbuilt after the fire) intersected with Mission and Valencia Streets and completed the district-wide commercial network. Small retail strips branched off of Mission and Valencia Streets on other east-west numbered streets as well, such as 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. North of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, in the area located closest to the South-of-Market, the Mission District received the overflow of post-fire industrial and commercial development; uses such as wood planing, cement works, marble works, and lithography intermixed with enclaves of multiple-family flats and residential hotels.

As with residential construction, post-fire commercial construction progressed from small, utilitarian wood structures, usually minimally adorned, to larger and more substantial buildings as capital, labor, and materials became increasingly available. Over time, many of the earliest and smallest post-fire commercial buildings were replaced, while others were retained. The influence of Classical architectural style was apparent in commercial façades decorated with pilasters, entablatures, and applied ornament. By the 1910s, construction in brick was more common, as were commercial buildings with larger footprints (often partitioned into multiple units) and two or three stories tall. Large mixed-use buildings proliferated, with multiple residential units located above storefronts; though more expensive to construct, they

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provided diverse streams of rental income. As in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, mixed-use buildings conformed closely to patterns and styles of residential construction except for the insertion of storefronts at the ground floor. Residential hotels were also found in the commercial corridors of the Inner Mission North, including on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the nearby blocks of Valencia and Mission Streets.

The post-fire rebuilding period coincided with nascent innovations in storefront design during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Development of structural plate-glass facilitated window displays and storefronts consisting of wide panes of glass set above low bulkheads paneled in wood or clad in tile. Another innovation involved recessing storefront entrances, in part to meet codes for sidewalk access, but also to create niches in flat storefronts. In the unpublished draft of *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained the retailer's reasoning behind the design:

"The only indentations were doors – small diagonal-sided 'vestibules' – so labeled in architectural plans...These vestibules extended the shop's display space. They also let customers get out of the flow of foot traffic, and spend more time looking. Then, ideally, they overcome what retailers call 'threshold resistance' and get potential shoppers inside the store. As one commentator put it in 1903, 'The easily tempted customers...find themselves, literally, in the shop before they are aware.'" (Page 3)

#### *Commerce in Good Times, Bad Times*

In the 1920s, the U.S. economy boomed as the nation rebounded from its wartime footing and production turned from military goods to consumer goods. The economy was also vivified by wartime advances in manufacturing and transportation, and by migrations of labor forces to industrial cities. The revived economy flooded the nation's markets with goods, and retailers increasingly vied for the attentions of consumers, who had more purchasing choices than ever before. During this time, Mission Street, one of the City's oldest and longest retail strips, as well as the other streetcar-oriented commercial corridors of the Mission District, competed directly with San Francisco's downtown for consumer dollars, as well as with other neighborhood shopping districts.

Mission District merchants found themselves in an era of increasing competition and proliferating brand names, "the greatest onslaught of consumerism ever." During the interwar period, the Mission Merchants Association promoted shopping on Mission Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> and Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, with stamp books that included coupons for participating merchants, advertisements, and classified business directories. In addition to joining promotional associations, individual merchants kept pace with competition and with consumer expectations by installing modern, innovative storefronts that became outdoor shopping "rooms." Previously, retailers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had installed elaborate, moveable displays behind plate-glass windows as a visual merchandizing technique. However, the consideration of storefronts themselves as mechanisms for visual merchandizing, and the resulting experimentation of forms, materials, and technology originated with "a marketing concept proffered during the 1920s commercial boom: that dramatic display was essential in capturing hearts, minds, and pocketbooks", according to Heller in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*.

Correspondingly, commercial architects of the interwar period redesigned traditional storefronts of the Mission District with consumer marketing in mind. Designers lengthened the small, rectangular entry vestibules into mini-corridors, or "arcades," by pushing the entry doors inward toward the shop's interior, while also lengthening the adjacent window displays. These storefront arcades lured pedestrians from their pass-bys, into brightly lit spaces where they could continue admiring wares out of the crowds, eventually finding themselves closer to a shop's interior (and its cash register) than the street. Deep arcades also proved suitable for installation in the narrow, subdivided retail slots within commercial buildings that characterized the period.

Commercial designers also experimented with the shapes of the entry arcades. During the 1920s, Art Deco architectural style inspired wedge-shaped and zigzag-shaped entrances with "corner-less" plate-glass windows (no mullions). In the 1930s, curvilinear ("waterfall") arcades were popular, inspired by the Streamline Moderne architectural style. These variegated geometries created pockets along the sides of the arcades that allowed consumers to gather and "window-shop," out of the way of the path of travel but visible to passers-by. By the 1940s, storefront entrances had widened into boxy "lobbies" that essentially served as large, outdoor display rooms, where

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pedestrians could move about at leisure. Storefront details often included: geometric terrazzo paving that extended from public sidewalks to shop interiors, often customized with merchant signatures; windows displays that projected into space over bulkheads; and materials such as structural glass, ceramic tile, and metal trim uses as both interior and exterior cladding. In *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, Heller explains how these storefront design innovations fundamentally changed commercial streetscapes:

“The quintessential storefront was not designed merely as a showroom where merchandise was mechanically arranged and formulaically displayed. Instead, this brightly lit transformative space was conceived as a majestic platform, like a proscenium stage, where products would enthrall through all manner of arresting performances. Product displays veritably beckoned the audience to come onstage or backstage, and instead of ovations, the audience was encouraged to consume. As the storefront evolved over time, from simple window dressing to grand fourth wall, elaborate tableau framed by lush architectural details heightened the viewers’ anticipation – and desire.” (Page 8)



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1924. View northwest. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4630).*



Mission Street, north of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1936. View north. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4667).*

Beyond storefronts, commercial architects of the interwar period in the Mission District were influenced by a variety of popular architectural styles. For instance, smaller wood-frame commercial and mixed-use buildings drew from the “entrepreneurial vernacular” designs of Period Revival and Modernism that were also used in residential construction. Meanwhile, larger and more substantial brick and reinforced concrete commercial buildings, including large apartment buildings with ground-floor storefronts, tended to utilize Classical styles in the 1920s. Commercial tastes trended towards Modernism as well, with Art Deco architectural style popular in the 1920s and Streamline Moderne in the 1930s. Among the most impressive examples of Modernist architecture were the Streamline Moderne remodel of the older commercial building at 2205 Mission Street with iron enamel panels, rounded corners, and a marquee/tower sign, and the Moderne renovation/expansion of the mixed-use Mission Masonic Temple with ceramic veneer, speed lines, and iconic decoration. These fully rendered Modernist examples presaged the kind of commercial development that dominated in the post-World War II period.

Unlike housing construction during the interwar period, which was mostly “in-fill” to existing residential building stock, interwar-era commercial development resulted in significant changes and additions to the Victoria/Edwardian-era shopping corridors of the Mission District. Commercial modernization resulted in the renovation, expansion, and/or complete replacement of many structures on Mission Street, as well as on Valencia, 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, according to the popular fashions and marketing strategies. These included theaters, most of which had been converted from live shows to motion pictures, and that provided important recreation to Mission District residents even during the bad times. According to Hooper’s *San Francisco’s Mission District*. “Life continued [during the Depression] with simple pleasures. Neighborhood movie houses were a big draw on Saturdays. At the El Capitan on Mission Street, there was

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an orchestra and one could spend the afternoon seeing a 'chapter' (part of a serial), a vaudeville act, an a feature film – all for 10¢." (Page 8)

During the 1920s, storefront modernization was privately fueled by the booming retail economy. However, when the economy crashed during the early 1930s, the newly-created Federal Housing Administration (FHA) promoted a "Modernize Main Street" campaign and established a "Modernization Credit Plan" that provided low-interest private loans for renovations of existing storefronts. The federal government and the building trades industry, which backed the program and participated in it, intended to stimulate construction as well as retail activity. The program was active from 1934 to 1943, during which time many San Francisco merchants obtained government-insured loans and modernized their commercial storefronts.

### *Mission Miracle Mile*

The U.S. experienced an economic boom in the period after World War II that was even more intense than the economic expansion that occurred after the First World War. Following the long Depression of the 1930s and several years of wartime rationing and production, a torrent of pent-up consumerism swept through the economic landscape. The postwar consumer economy was fueled by unprecedented growth and prosperity for the American middle classes. In *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained: "Retail spending surged from 1945 to 1955, spurred by higher populations, saved-up war wages, salaries that had effectively doubled, and the formation of millions of new households and their suburban homes... [T]he generation that came of age in the U.S. after World War II was, arguably, the richest age cohort of humans in the history of the earth." (Page 6)

However, the changing geographies of postwar communities challenged the vitality of older urban shopping districts, such as the Mission District's commercial corridors. As established residents increasingly left the area for outlying suburbs, the historic customer base for local businesses diminished. The dominance of automobiles, the need for parking, and the development of exurban options for shopping and services worked against the success of urban retail districts. In efforts to counter the trend of suburbanization, Mission District merchants ramped up their promotions. The Mission Merchants Association promoted Mission Street, from 16<sup>th</sup> to Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, as the "Mission Miracle Mile," similar to other "miracle mile" shopping district in U.S. cities (including Southern California, where they originated) but the only one in San Francisco. The Merchants Association also organized the installation of seasonal holiday decorations (typically "Mission bells") as well as district-wide promotional sales, called "Dollar Days", which attracted citywide and regional crowds. While the Mission Miracle Mile in strict definition was limited to Mission Street, which received the greatest share of consumer activity, the parallel corridor of Valencia Street, and the intersecting retail strips of 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, also benefitted from the promotions and activity, as did side-spurs of retail strips on other east-west numbered streets.

As they did in the interwar years, merchants also turned to innovative storefront architecture as a way to attract customers and generate business. Postwar renovations, often involving wholesale alterations to storefronts and façades of older commercial buildings, represented a last-ditch attempt by business owners to maintain the urban shopping districts as vital and thriving. Even though Americans were slower to accept truly "modern" storefront innovations than were Europeans, who set the pace, the postwar period finally saw widespread acceptance of commercial Modernism and a reduction of interest in architectural historicism. In the Mission District, this trend was noticeable by the late 1930s when large, fully rendered Moderne designs were constructed on Mission Street; these early examples proved influential to the postwar generation of commercial designers. As Heller conveys in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*: "Store designs had to evoke otherworldliness to transform the ordinary into an unparalleled experience...When the post-World War II building boom began, the need for more stylish stores increased, and these contemporary retail portals came to define standardized marketing aesthetics." (Pages 11-12)

Mid-century retail designs (which were pioneered decades earlier in Paris, New York and Los Angeles) departed radically from earlier commercial traditions by treating entire building façades as display objects. Elements and materials that originated as interior or storefront features, such as structural glass, extruded metal trim, and spotlight illumination, were applied to the exteriors of façades. Solid, horizontal or tilted awnings were installed over storefronts,

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often supporting freestanding metal sign letters. Above that, historic building materials and features were covered by modern metal screens, ceramic tile panels, or plain stucco walls with projecting geometric signage. Upper stories (where present) often contained ribbon windows with flat trim. For individual storefront designs, the degree of distinction and the level of detail depended on its source, as related by Heller in *Shop America*: “While individual architects created their own iterations of the dominant style, which included store names made of large Gothic letters, glass-block surfaces, and cantilevered marquees, various American glass manufacturers and construction companies serving retail entrepreneurs offered subtle alterations on a typical layout.” (Page 11) When making storefront upgrades, Mission District merchants typically chose from among the various designs that were commercially available; less frequently they employed architects for custom renovations.



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1944. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4691).*



Mission Street near 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 1954. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4707).*

While storefront designers of the earlier interwar period experimented with various entry shapes, such as vestibules, arcades, and lobbies, which blurred the thresholds between street spaces and shop spaces – in fact, they created entirely new, nebulous spaces between streets and shops – mid-century commercial architects attempted to eliminate the thresholds altogether. They accomplished this through “visual front” or “open-front” designs that provided maximum exposure of goods for small shops that competed for street presence in dense retail environments, which Heller described in *Shop America*: “Modern storefronts were dedicated to certain principles of visibility. One typical catalog’s sales pitch noted, ‘Vision begins at the bulkhead and continues up to the ceiling,’ to give the customer a sense of monumentality even in a store that has ‘narrow frontage or a middle-of-the-block location.’” (Page 12) Open-front storefronts were first used by large mixed-merchandise stores, such as department stores and grocery stores, and soon became the modern standard. In his lecture *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth identified the significance of the open-front design:

“In general, the completely transparent front, adopted in the post-World War II decades, was the most important shift in ordinary storefronts in the entire twentieth century. This form became known as the “open-front,” or “see-through” shop window. With an “open-front shop,” the whole store becomes a window display. The lines between street, sidewalk, and store are merged. The store is no longer a

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visually semi-private realm, but a place where shoppers as well as goods are on full, public view.”  
(Page 11)

Open-front storefronts were constructed with tall plate-glass windows as the predominant element, often set at angles tilted out over the street; bulkheads were minimized or eliminated altogether. The window-walls, without intervening product displays, provided unobstructed views into shop interiors, where the full scope of affordable treasures within could be grasped. Earlier open-front window-walls were setback at diagonals from the sidewalk, and were intended as “scoops” to draw pedestrians inward towards entrances. Eventually, as visibility became the premium and needs for merchandise space trumped attempts to physically direct pedestrians, window-walls were brought forward parallel to the sidewalk, such that only invisible glass separated pedestrians from goods.

Mission Street, the “Miracle Mile,” became a hotbed for mid-century design renovations. In particular, storefront modernization was focused on the Mission Street blocks located between approximately 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets, where a concentration of theaters, department stores, jewelers, appliance stores, and the Masonic Temple comprised the heart of the “mile.” Postwar commercial renovations were less common, but nonetheless occurred, on other commercial strips, such as Valencia, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, which relied to a greater degree on stable clientele of local residents specialized customers. Still, individual merchants and commercial building owners throughout the Mission District, including “pop” establishments such as record stores, salons, and fast-food restaurants were compelled to design or redesign according to postwar fashions. Also, the rise of International architectural style influenced construction of nearly all kinds of properties during the postwar period, including residences, apartments, office buildings, and churches.

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### Integrity

The historic district and its contributing properties retain integrity of historic physical condition such that they convey relationships to the historic period of significance. Few alterations have occurred to contributing properties within the historic district. Contributors retain most or all of the aspects of integrity, as discussed further in the following analysis.

### *Location*

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Contributors are located on the sites of properties that were destroyed by the earthquake and fires of 1906, and on the sites upon which the contributors were originally constructed. Therefore, integrity of location is retained.

### *Design*

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Contributors exhibit architectural designs that are closely associated with Edwardian-era and early 20<sup>th</sup> century development patterns and the period of post-fire reconstruction. Contributors includes characteristics such as styles, spatial arrangements, proportion, scale, ornamentation and materials that relate to each other in ways that reflect historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. Some contributors have experienced alterations to design that have achieved significance in their own right. For the historic district as a whole, design includes the way in which buildings, sites, and structures are related, including the spatial relationships between buildings, the visual rhythms in streetscapes, and the layout of the street corridor. Therefore, integrity of design is retained.

### *Setting*

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, and it refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. Contributors exist in the same basic physical conditions under which they were built and functioned, including: topography; block and lot layout; street design; neighborhood composition of commercial retail corridors and residential enclaves; relationships between buildings; and relationship of the historic district to nearby areas. Therefore, integrity of setting is retained.

### *Materials*

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Contributors retain the majority of exterior, visible materials that were used to in the historic construction, ornamentation, and/or improvement of buildings during the period of significance. Some contributors have experienced alterations to materials that have achieved significance in their own right. Therefore, integrity of materials is retained.

### *Workmanship*

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. Contributors display evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing and/or altering buildings, as expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes, as well as in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. The workmanship of contributors furnishes evidence of the technology of crafts, illustrates the aesthetic principles of the historic period, and reveals individual, local, regional, and national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. Therefore, integrity of workmanship is retained.

### *Feeling*

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time, which results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. Contributors retain

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historic design, materials, workmanship, and setting that cumulatively relate the feeling of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, integrity of feeling is retained.

*Association*

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Contributors retains association by virtue of being located in the place where the significant historic events and activities of post-fire reconstruction occurred, and by virtue of being sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Therefore, integrity of association is retained.

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**\*D7. References:** (Continued from Page 1)

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\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept. \*Date: April 2011  Continuation  Update

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## **E. DRAWINGS, NEW MISSION THEATER RENOVATION BY ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMAS**

Please refer to the attached drawing set by Kerman Morris Architects entitled “New Mission Theater Renovation by Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas” (4 February 2012) for architectural drawings of the proposed project.



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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

## Historic Resource Evaluation Response

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

MEA Planner: Sarah Jones  
Project Address: 2550 Mission Street  
Block/Lot: 3616/007  
Case No.: 2007.0864E  
Date of Review: January 14, 2008  
Planning Dept. Reviewer: Tim Frye  
(415) 575-6822 | tim.frye@sfgov.org

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PROPOSED PROJECT       Demolition       Alteration

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes demolishing the adjacent department store (Giant Value) to construct two new buildings with ground-floor commercial space, a childcare center, and 95 residential units. The New Mission Theater will be rehabilitated into a dining and entertainment venue. The front portion of the New Mission Theater (identified as the Promenade Lobby) is a constructed of unreinforced masonry. The Promenade Lobby will be seismically upgraded.

### PRE-EXISTING HISTORIC RATING / SURVEY

The subject building is City Landmark No. 245, the New Mission Theater. It shares the lot with a former Hales Department Store Building (currently Giant Value) that has been evaluated and determined ineligible for the California Register.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT / NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The subject building is located on Mission Street between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets, within the eligible Mission Miracle Mile Historic District and the Mission Street Historic Theater District, although at this time both potential districts have not been thoroughly documented. The immediate area is comprised of commercial and mixed-use structures ranging from one to five stories in height and constructed during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. There are also a number of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century movie palaces, similar to the New Mission Theater, located in close proximity to the site.

1. **California Register Criteria of Significance:** Note, a building may be an historical resource if it meets any of the California Register criteria listed below. If more information is needed to make such a determination please specify what information is needed. *(This determination for California Register Eligibility is made based on existing data and research provided to the Planning Department by the above named preparer / consultant and other parties. Key pages of report and a photograph of the subject building are attached.)*

Event: or       Yes       No       Unable to determine

Persons: or  Yes  No  Unable to determine  
Architecture: or  Yes  No  Unable to determine  
Information Potential:  Further investigation recommended.  
District or Context:  Yes, may contribute to a potential district or significant context

If Yes; Period of significance: See Below

Notes: Based on the information outlined in the 2003 Designation Report, the subject building is eligible for the California Register and is currently designated City Landmark No. 245.

The period of significance for the New Mission Theater is 1916-1950. This period also falls within the periods of significance for the Mission Miracle Mile District and the Mission Street Historic Theater District.

For more information regarding the justification for designation, list of significant features and the history of the New Mission Theater; please refer to the Landmark Designation Report for City Landmark No. 245 and Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 569.

- 
2. **Integrity** is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted above:

Location:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Setting:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Association:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Feeling:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Design:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Materials:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Workmanship:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

While the vestibule was reconfigured, the ticket booth removed, and the walls clad in dimpled ceramic tiles in the 1960s, the New Mission Theater displays a high level of integrity. The designation report states that the New Mission Theater has one of the most intact historic movie palace interiors in San Francisco.

- 
3. **Determination whether the property is an "historical resource" for purposes of CEQA**

No Resource Present (*Go to 6. below*)  Historical Resource Present (*Continue to 4.*)

- 
4. **If the property appears to be an historical resource, whether the proposed project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards or if any proposed modifications would materially impair the resource (i.e. alter in an adverse manner those physical characteristics which justify the property's inclusion in any registry to which it belongs).**

- The project appears to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. *(Go to 6. below)*  
*Optional:*  See attached explanation of how the project meets standards.
- The project is NOT consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and is a significant impact as proposed. *(Continue to 5. if the project is an alteration)*

For more information regarding the analysis below, please refer to the plans submitted with this application, in particular, Sheets A-5.1 and A5.2.

**Pylon Sign, Marquee, and Façade:** All exterior elements along Mission Street are proposed to be repaired and repainted. The marquee and pylon sign will receive new neon tubing to match the historic illumination pattern and will be rewired.

**Vestibule:** The vestibule of the subject building retains the least amount of historic fabric due to a 1960s renovation. Staff has determined with the project sponsor that the original 1916 coffered plaster ceiling still exists under the drop ceiling in this location. The proposal is to remove the non-historic ticket booth, and dimpled ceramic tile cladding; reinstall two sets of compatible doors in their historic locations; construct a new ticket booth in a contemporary design based on the historic Streamline Moderne elements of the façade; clad the side walls in textured stainless steel with Streamline Moderne motifs; and restore the historic plaster ceiling. Staff has determined that the proposed work in the vestibule is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards as all remaining character-defining features will be retained and repaired. Those elements determined to be beyond repair will be replaced in-kind. The ticket booth and stainless steel cladding will be contemporary in design yet will reference historic elements of the 1932 Pfleuger renovation without creating a false sense of history and will be compatible with the character-defining features of the building.

**Promenade Lobby:** The lobby portion of the building is constructed of unreinforced masonry and requires seismic upgrades to meet current safety requirements. The lobby is comprised of a double-height volume approximately 140’ in length and 27’ in width. There is a stair and Mezzanine level at the rear that leads to the balcony. Timothy Pfleuger renovated this lobby in 1932 using a variety of motifs in an Art Deco style. The ceiling is comprised of geometric organic moldings and plasterwork and three large coves with indirect lighting. The walls of the promenade lobby contain four vertical bands of lozenge-shaped mirrors each surrounded by decorative plasterwork and capped by additional bands of eclectic Mesoamerican and Egyptian revival motifs. In between the bands are recessed or flat areas that contain murals. The subject matter of the murals is unknown as all are covered with many layers of paint. Architectural Resources Group confirmed that the murals still exist under the paint during their documentation and preliminary paint analysis of the lobby.

The lobby has extensive water damage. Significant corrosion of underlying metal lath has caused the existing plaster to crumble and separate from the wall. In some areas, the plaster has been destroyed and removed all together.

Due to the existing condition of the plasterwork in this location and that this part of the building requires seismic upgrades, all plaster and lathe, except for the ceilings, will be removed. The proposed work at this location will cause a significant adverse impact to the historic resource. The project sponsor has agreed to the following mitigation measures:

- Once the lobby has been seismically upgraded all plasterwork shall be reconstructed pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Reconstruction will be based on measured drawings, HABS-level photography, salvaged elements, and relief molds.
- All lozenge-shaped mirrors shall be salvaged and reused in the reconstruction. All mirrors that cannot be salvaged or are missing shall be replaced in-kind.
- The remaining historic elements of the promenade lobby and mezzanine level shall be restored pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, including the cove ceilings, stepped ceilings, mezzanine stair and railing, doors, hardware, and any other character-defining features outlined within the designation report shall be restored,
- Conservators shall salvage as much of the six murals as possible. The salvaged murals shall be retrieved and cleaned pursuant to the recommendations outlined by Architectural Resources Group in their *New Mission Theater: Promenade Entrance Documentation & Preliminary Paint Analysis Report*, October 2007. The salvaged murals shall be displayed in an area at all times for public view inside the New Mission Theater and shall include a display of educational information regarding the seismic work and the restoration of the murals.
- The project sponsor shall conduct all work in cooperation with the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Planning Department Preservation Staff and give periodic updates in written form to ensure that all work is done in accordance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Staff has determined that the mitigation as outlined above shall reduce the adverse impact upon the resource to less than a significant level for the following reasons:

- While the seismic upgrades to the promenade lobby will remove historic fabric and reduce the width of the lobby by 8" on each side for a total of 1'4", once the lobby is reconstructed in accordance with the mitigation measures outlined above, the lobby will appear much as it did after the 1932 Timothy Pfleuger renovation.
- By seismically upgrading the promenade lobby the New Mission Theater can meet currently safety requirements to allow for public assembly which will return it back to its historic use and will allow it to be enjoyed by the community at-large.

- The murals shall be salvaged, cleaned, restored and put on public display on the premises for public enjoyment and to educate the community about the theater and the reconstruction of the promenade lobby.
- All other existing historic elements within the Mezzanine and Promenade Lobby area shall be retained and restored in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

**Mezzanine:** In addition to the reconstruction as discussed above a new opening will connect the lower balcony to the mezzanine level. This opening on the mezzanine side will occur at a location that does not possess any of the character-defining associated with the resource. The lower balcony side of the opening will intersect decorative trim work. These details will be minimally altered and are not in a prominent location that staff considers will cause a negative impact on the resource.

The opening will be located in a location that will not have a negative impact upon the resource and staff has determined meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

A new pendant light fixture shall be installed on the mezzanine level at the location depicted in a 1943 photograph. The historic light fixture is missing. The replacement light fixture will be contemporary in style but will be compatible with the character-defining features of the resource.

**Main Auditorium:** All seats within the main auditorium will be removed. The floor will be leveled in tiers and tables, chairs, and banquettes will be installed for dining. This will change the slope of the main auditorium and create a higher low point for the floor from ## to ##. This change in the slope of the floor will impact the main auditorium in terms of ##### but will not impact any decorative plasterwork around the perimeter. Historic doors may have to be slightly modified to accommodate the new floor levels but these modifications will be almost indistinguishable to patrons. It is the determinations of staff the change in elevation of the slope of the floor will cause an impact on the subject building but does not raise the impact to a significant level.

A new sound booth will be constructed at the rear center of the auditorium. Behind the sound booth run a row of steel columns with modest ornament. These columns support the lower balcony above. In front of the columns and running the length of the underside of the lower balcony, movable sound partitions will be installed to separate events from the main auditorium and the patron's lounge. There will be a glass door fixed at each of the aisles to allow for patrons to move between the two areas. Based on the location, product information, and installation details provided by the project sponsor, staff has determined that the installation of transparent sound partitions will not have a negative impact upon the resource. The partitions will be transparent and whether open or closed will allow the main auditorium to express its great volume and will not obscure, destroy, or negatively impact any character-defining features.

All other elements within the main auditorium, such as decorative plasterwork, light fixtures, directional signs, doors, and hardware will be retained and repaired in their existing locations in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

**Proscenium Arch & Stage:** All elements of the proscenium arch shall be retained and repaired. The age of the current stage configuration is unknown and is in a different configuration than what is depicted on the original architectural plans. A 1943 photograph appears to show that the stage was constructed as it was originally depicted on the 1916 plans. The proposal will remove the current stage and orchestra pit and reconstruct a new stage slightly larger than the original stage but replicating the original shape. As the existing stage does not appear to be historic and is not original stage, staff has determined that the elimination of the orchestra pit and the construction of a larger stage in the historic shape to accommodate contemporary live shows will not have a significant adverse impact on the resource and will allow the reintroduction of live performance to this venue.

**Projection Booth:** The historic Projection Booth is located on the ground floor between the Patron's Lounge and the Main Auditorium. The floor inside the projection room is approximately 4' higher than the main floor. It contains a small bathroom and is accessed by two internal stairs that exit on the east and west sides of the room.

The proposal calls for converting the Projection Booth into the Main Bar. On the Patron's Lounge side of the projection room recessed areas are situated between large pilasters. The recessed areas are comprised of a large mirror with picture frame molding and a plaster frieze. Other than the pilasters, the Main Auditorium side of the Projection Booth does not contain any of the decorative features found on the opposite side. The raised floor will be removed. An opening will be cut into the walls between each of the pilasters and below a decorative plaster frieze. A bar counter will be installed on the remainder of the wall within this recessed area, approximately 3'-6" in height. The openings will have a 6" reveal on either side to allow the pilasters and recessed areas to express their relationship to one another.

Staff has determined that altering the Projection Booth into the Main Bar will not have a significant impact upon the resource. The size, configuration and location of the areas that will be removed will still allow the projection room to communicate its original volume.

The Projection Booth functions as a separation between the Main Auditorium and the Patron's Lounge. The mirrors and picture frame molding that are viewed as character-defining features will be altered along the Patron's Lounge side of the Projection Booth. While altered, the Projection Booth will still express the historic visual and spatial relationship between the Main Auditorium and the Patron's Lounge. The removal of the mirrors and moldings will not create a significant impact upon the resource and the project sponsor has proposed openings within the Projection Booth walls that are sensitive to the overall rehabilitation. However, staff recommends that the mirror and moldings at the center recessed bay on the Patron's Lounge side of the Projection Booth be retained to preserve additional historic fabric and character-defining features as well as improve the historic spatial relationship and intimacy of the Patron's Lounge

area. This center recess also relates to a matching recess with similar decorative detailing directly across from it along the underside of the stair that leads to the Mezzanine Level.

**Ground Floor Women's Lounge:** The proposal will remove the Women's Lounge and Restroom on the ground floor and insert an elevator shaft and new egress stair at that location. Based on a site visit staff has determined that this area contains no character-defining features that are associated with the resource. The opening that originally led to the Women's Lounge will be infilled and slightly recessed. All other surrounding decorative features shall remain. Given the discreet location of the Women's Lounge and the lack of any character-defining features staff has determined that the proposed alterations will not have a significant adverse impact on the resource.

**Ground Floor Men's Room:** The proposal will remove the ground floor Men's Room and replace it with Storage and an Office. Based on a site visit staff had determined that this area contains no character-defining features that are associated with the resource. As a result, staff has determined that the proposed alterations will not have a significant adverse impact on the resource

**Mezzanine Level:** Aside from updating the exiting bathrooms and the installation of two free-standing bars, there are no proposed alterations to the Mezzanine Level. There are no character-defining features that were identified in either of the bathrooms at this level. Details provided demonstrate that installation of the bars will not impact any decorative plasterwork or any other character-defining features of the subject building. For more information regarding potential impacts to the Mezzanine Level, please refer to the Sound Attenuation section below.

**Upper & Lower Balcony:** The balcony area will also function as an additional dining area. The seats will be removed and the sloped floor will remain but it will be terraced to accommodate tables and chairs. The locations of the aisles will remain along the upper balcony. The wall that separates the upper balcony from the main path of travel will be converted into a bar. This wall will be treated like the Main Bar at the location of the Projection Booth. The low wall that separates the lower balcony from the main path of travel will also be retained. The openings in the wall that provided a path of travel to the lower balcony will be infilled with glass.

**Decorative Plaster Work & Ceilings:** All ceilings and decorative plasterwork shall be retained and repaired according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

**Historic elements, such as doors, light fixtures, hardware, directional signs, etc.:** All identified historic elements shall be retained and repaired. All historic light fixtures shall be rewired and restored. Any missing light fixtures shall be replaced with contemporary fixtures that are compatible with the other historic light fixtures and all required emergency lighting shall also be designed to be inconspicuous and compatible with the character-defining features of the resource. Staff has determined that the project sponsor's submitted schedule for restoration and rehabilitation of these existing features meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and shall not create a significant adverse impact upon the resource.

**Sound Attenuation:** Mitigation near the Mezzanine and the Patron's Lounge will have to be implemented to minimize noise and vibration that may travel to the Buddhist Center next door. Sound insulation can be blown in or rolled out over the existing ceilings and within existing crawl spaces (as opposed to attach insulating panels to the exposed ceiling in a rigid format as was proposed by Salter Associates.) Installing insulation within the crawl space will not require the need to attach new materials to the historic ceilings and will not negatively impact the historic resource.

**Fire Suppression:** A sprinkler system shall be installed within the subject building for fire suppression. The project sponsor has determined that the system may be installed in the following manner to minimize its impact on the character-defining features of the resource.

1. The pipes can be run on the outside of the auditorium building and boxed in. The auditorium exterior is characterized by unornamented concrete walls (structural pilasters and infill walls of concrete).
2. The main sprinkler service will come in from the Bartlett Street side of the building where the backflow can be installed (not visible within the historic interior). The size of the sprinkler service will be determined by code/area/occupancy and will be connected to water mains in the street. Research into size of existing and proposed mains and Fire flow calculations will be performed.
3. All interior plaster wall finishes are held off the structural concrete wall typically 6"-8," and it is in these cavities that existing wiring and plumbing run. The sprinkler runs, likewise, will run unseen within these wall cavities.
4. All the plaster ceilings (the main auditorium, the mezzanine of the Reed theater; and in the Pflueger promenade lobby) are held away from the concrete and wood roofs substantially. In the main auditorium there is a catwalk over the decorative ceiling with about 12 feet of headroom. Both the mezzanine and the promenade lobby have substantial crawl spaces between their ceilings and their roofs. These spaces, likewise, will be used to run sprinkler piping serving concealed and exposed sprinkler heads

Staff concurs with the above approach to installing the fire suppression system and has determined that its installation shall not be detrimental to the historic resource and will not have a significant adverse impact upon the historic resource.

**Summary:** Staff has determined that the project, as proposed, shall not create a cumulative significant adverse impact under CEQA provided that the mitigation measures outlined for the Promenade lobby, cited above, are implemented as part of the project and that the project follows the current plans.

- 
5. Character-defining features of the building to be retained or respected in order to avoid a significant adverse effect by the project, presently or cumulatively, as modifications to the project to reduce or avoid impacts. Please recommend conditions of approval that may be desirable to mitigate the project's adverse effects.

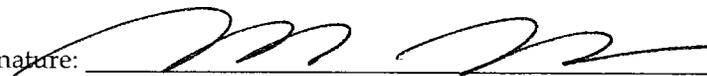
6. Whether the proposed project may have an adverse effect on off-site historical resources, such as adjacent historic properties.

Yes     No     Unable to determine

Notes: The immediate context is mixed and does not display a high level of visual continuity. It does not appear that the proposal will have a significant adverse impact on any eligible off-site historic resources.

#### PRESERVATION COORDINATOR REVIEW

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Mark Luellen, *Preservation Coordinator*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1-18-08

cc: Sonya Banks, *Recording Secretary*, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
Sarah B. Jones, Environmental Planner  
Virnaliza Byrd / Historic Resource Impact Review File

TF: G:\PROJECTS\HRER2007\Mission\_2554\_NM\_2005.0694E.doc