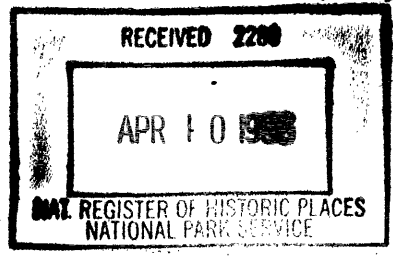


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Palace Theatre

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 7 Ledgewood Avenue NA not for publication

city or town Netcong, Borough of vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Morris code 027 zip code 07857

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 3/25/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper
Patrick Andrews

Date of Action
5/24/95

The Palace Theatre
Name of Property

Morris County, New Jersey
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
N/A		sites
N/A		structures
N/A		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 AND CULTURE: theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE; STUCCO (front);
METAL (fly tower only).
roof Asphalt
other N/A

Narrative Description

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

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 N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- ENGINEERING
- PERFORMING ARTS
- ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- ETHNIC HERITAGE: European

Period of Significance

1919 - 1945

Significant Dates

1919; 1934; 1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

See continuation sheet 8-12

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Vreeland, Jacob J., Jr. Architect
Gallo Brothers, Builders

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Sussex Cty. Library; Lake Hopatcong Historical Society; Musconetcong Foundrymen's Historical Society

The Palace Theatre
Name of Property

Morris County, New Jersey
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately .5 acres Stanhope, NJ Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	5 2 4 8 6 0	4 5 2 7 5 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Mary Delaney Krugman / Historic Preservation Consultant

organization N/A date January 31, 1996

street & number 62 Myrtle Avenue telephone 201-509-2153

city or town Montclair state NJ zip code 07042

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Growing Stage Theatre Company

street & number P.O. Box 132 telephone 908-879-4946

city or town Chester state NJ zip code 07930

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

General

The Palace Theatre is a theater building constructed in 1919, with significant alterations dating from 1934 and 1938. It is located in the Borough of Netcong, Morris County, New Jersey. It consists of three stories on the main elevation, and two stories in the auditorium space. It is constructed principally of concrete and masonry on the exterior, the interior walls being constructed either of concrete or wood framing and plaster on lath.

Site

The Palace Theatre was built on a site located on the outskirts of the Netcong central business district. The town center of the Borough of Netcong is located southwest of the Palace Theatre where Main Street and NJ Transit's Morris and Essex railroad line intersect approximately three blocks away. It was apparently placed in a more convenient location for vehicular travel than the convenience to the business district. It is sited along Ledgewood Avenue, now Route 183. This road was part of the original alignment of Route 206, a major traffic arterial between Newton and Somerville. In this location, it had visual prominence for those traveling northwestern New Jersey in the mid-Twentieth Century.

The property sits near the shores of Lake Musconetcong nearby the point where the State of New Jersey currently maintains a small state park. The narrow lot sits between a bank to the north and a garage to the south. The bank site, which features a modern bank structure, was the former parking lot for the theater. A garage occupied the adjoining property to the south when the theater was originally built. That structure is reported to have burned down in the mid-1950s and was replaced by the current building, an auto-body shop.

The narrow lot on which the theater is located allows for very little setback from the lot lines. The facade fronts directly onto the Ledgewood Avenue sidewalk. There is a narrow alley between the theater and the garage to the south. The driveway to the bank parking lot is located approximately 10 feet from the north side of the theater. The eastern boundary of the property is located approximately thirty feet beyond the fly tower.

Overall

The plan of the Palace Theatre is a simple rectangle, 55 x 127 feet. It is oriented on an east-west axis with the front facade facing west onto Ledgewood Avenue. There are three basic components to the building. These are the front three-story facade, the main two story body of the theater, and the rear multi-story fly tower. The facade is a flat stuccoed plane that conceals the original brick masonry facade. This stucco facade was actually applied to a separate wood furring structure which was constructed over the original facade. The facade has shallow reveals

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

that build the wall out slightly at the middle. It has a gently stepped parapet over this center section. The main body of the theater has a gable roof with the ridge oriented on a east-west axis. The gabled roof is concealed by the stepped parapet of the western facade.

Five structural bays form the main body of the theater. Evidence in the interior seems to show that the first bay has a crawl space foundation. The foundation at the next four bays is a slab directly on grade. The fly tower above the sixth bay is a tall rectangular structure located at the very rear of the composition that rises prominently above the other buildings in the vicinity. The fly tower has a simple shed roof that slopes toward the rear of the property. Below the fly tower is an understage pit or full basement.

Exterior

1. The **front facade** consists of a lower one-story storefront, the main theater entrance, and two upper stories. Originally, the three floor levels were expressed in the facade fenestration: two storefronts flanking the theater entrance (and later the marquee) on the first floor, and three sets of paired double-hung windows on the second and third floors.

The tripartite facade, defined by banded pilasters, was articulated in brick and limestone. The center pavilion was crowned with an open pediment. The side wings were topped off with an entablature and parapet wall. It appears from the historic photographs that the architrave and denticulated frieze were constructed from limestone masonry. The cornice appears to have been built from wood. The windows contained limestone sills and lintels, some of which can still be seen behind the existing stucco cladding. The lintels had pronounced keystones and the second-story sills contained three brackets each. The porous ochre-colored bricks contained deeply struck mortar joints. Within the open pediment was an inscribed limestone panel that contained the inscription "1919" over the word "PALACE," which was placed over the word "THEATRE".

For aesthetic reasons or perhaps the necessity of improved waterproofing, the front facade was altered to its current Art Deco appearance. Aesthetically, the change can be regarded as a symbol of the prominence of motion pictures over theater in 1938. As a practical matter, the need for improved waterproofing may have arisen from the failure of the original masonry facade to shed water, thereby causing failure of interior plaster finish surfaces. An examination of the interior and the extant brick masonry makes this theory very plausible.

The upper two stories of the 1938 facade became a single super-story organized in three bays, the original windows concealed behind a vertical strip of glass blocks. The central bay is defined by the marquee at the storefront level. Under the marquee, two doors with sidelights define the main entry to the theater. The central bay of the upper levels is set off from the side bays by a series of reveals which build toward the center and gradually raise the parapet to its highest point at the middle. The extant storefront wall material consists of yellow stucco textured with a large stone aggregate, reportedly applied ca. 1978. The upper stories on the front facade

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

consist of a smoother stucco finish.

There is variety in the **fenestration** of the facade. At the third floor level, there is a circular signboard within a reveal in the center panel. At the second floor level in the central bay, there is a large window unit of fixed steel sash of multiple panes having two smaller casement windows within it. This is the only indication of a second floor that appears on the front facade. The window bays of the storefronts to either side of the main entrance are not identical, the north side having two large rectangular window units separated by a mullion, and the south (right) side having a single window unit, similar in size to one of the units on the north, but turned ninety (90) degrees. The grandest feature of the front facade is the two vertical ribbon windows of glass block. Evidence found inside the theater shows that these windows conceal the original second and third floor double hung windows behind them, although historic photos show that, when originally installed, the clear glass blocks revealed the separations between the floors.

2. The **side walls** of the main body of the theater were constructed out of poured-in-place concrete. An indication of this type of concrete construction is the imprint of the formwork boards on the side walls which are generally five and one-half inches wide. Concrete pilasters divide each of the side walls into six structural bays. The pilasters project slightly from the poured-in-place concrete infill and support a continuous architrave that follows the roofline. The pilasters correspond to the internal structural components that support the roof.

The structural components in the second, third and fourth bays consist of three steel trusses and interior bearing walls in the first and fifth bays. These structural features carry the wooden rafters that, in turn, support the board sheathing. The architrave is interrupted at points where the third story windows toward the front and rear of the building penetrate its lower edge.

Both the north and south facades of the theater have two pairs of exit doors. Exit from the balcony was made by means of metal fire escapes located on each side wall with single doors. Currently only the north side has an extant fire escape. Only the basket remains on the south side, the stair portion having been removed. The fenestration on the north and south sides of the main body of the theater are almost identical.

The wooden roof structure meets the side walls with a wooden soffitted overhang, fascia, and crown moulding and a wooden frieze board. There is no evidence of gutters and leaders on the building. It appears that water simply ran off the roof onto the grade or pavement below.

Something of an oddity on the north, east and south facades are **metal eyelets** which penetrate the concrete architrave just below the wooden frieze. These are made from one inch diameter round steel bars formed into a loop at one end and a "U" at the other, where they attach to the building. They are regularly spaced on the side walls, creating ten bays between them. The spacing does not correspond to the structural bays. The eyelets are present at the top of the north, east and south poured-in-place concrete walls and cornice of the fly tower. The exact function of these eyelets is unknown as there appears to be no structural rationale for them. It is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

conjectured here that they may have been installed to support scaffolding for the routine application of protective coatings to the concrete and the corrugated siding.

3. The base of the **fly tower**, or the sixth bay, consists of the same poured-in place concrete as the side walls of the theater. The upper levels however are wood framed and clad in corrugated sheet metal panels. The size of the panels vary, particularly on the south and east sides. This upper level has two small window openings on the north, east and south sides of the fly tower. The openings are square in shape and are currently covered with plywood panels. There is a concrete chimney that rises along the rear wall toward the east side. This vertical feature breaks the cornice line of the fly tower roof and climbs a few feet above the roof at this position, where it is made of brick.

The base of the fly tower is also a poured-in-place concrete structure. It carries the structural bay pattern established on the side walls of the main theater section. However, on the eastern wall the bay rhythm changes to a B-A-B spacing where the end bays are smaller than the center bay. The fly tower has an additional level below grade known as the understage pit or full basement. There is a bulkhead door type entrance on the east wall in the southernmost bay. There are other window and vent openings in the base of the fly tower in the center and north side bays.

Unlike the side walls of the main theater section, the concrete walls of the fly tower are articulated at the base with a watertable. Here, the watertable increases the foundation thickness by approximately five inches. The vent and window openings to the pit are located within this watertable. On the north and south sides of the fly tower, there are stage right and stage left doors. These doors are single leaf openings. The south side door has three concrete steps down to the alley. There are no steps on the north side. There are single windows in these bays as well. They are located high on the wall and they cut into the concrete architrave, similar to the third-floor windows on the south and north side walls.

Interior

1. Main Floor

The interior spatial arrangements follow the overall tripartite organization of the exterior. The rooms behind the facade are contained within the first east-west structural bay closest to Ledgewood Avenue, with the exceptions of the second floor rest rooms and the projection booth, all of which are in the second structural bay from the street. They generally consist of theater lobby and former commercial storefronts on the first floor; theater management offices and rest rooms on the second floor; and meeting room and projection booth on the third floor. The main body of the theater was separated from these front spaces by two runs of stairs which rise from the main lobby on the first floor to the north and south sides of the second floor balcony. The main theater space consists of a cross aisle across the western end (112) separated from the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

seating area by a screen, a seating area under the central balcony (113), seating areas under the side sections of the balcony (114) & (115), the center open seating section (116) and two levels of boxed seats on either side of the stage (117), (118), (218) & (219).

The former **orchestra pit** in front of the stage has been filled in with concrete. The "U"-shaped **balcony** at the second level covered roughly one-third of the first level then extended along each side wall toward the enclosed boxed seating areas. The balcony is supported by a pair of true steel "I" beams which spanned from the north and south side walls and are supported internally by two round steel columns. The paired "I" beams are bolted together and penetrate clear through the concrete side walls on which they bear. This may indicate that the method of balcony support was not completely designed when the side walls were poured.

The **stage and fly tower** are open through two levels (119). There is a permanent ceiling now installed at the third level as the fly pulleys are for the most part non-operational. The pit under the stage includes a boiler room to the south side.

The current **main entry lobby** (101) was originally two spaces. When the theater was built, the entrance doors were recessed behind the front wall and there was an inner vestibule. As part of the 1934 alterations, the entrance and lobby were changed by the relocation of the two pair of doors closer to the outer wall and separated by a newly installed ticket booth. Ca. 1940s, the ticket booth was removed and a stainless steel poster case was placed between the doors. The current entry doors are made of aluminum and are of recent vintage, reportedly installed in 1978. They have been simplified to contain a single door and sidelight at each entry. The lobby contains a concrete floor which was formerly covered by carpet. The paneling of the interior walls of this space seem to be from at least two different periods, the earliest of which appears to be ca. 1970. The placement of the original entry doors is not evident through extant lobby finishes. However, the original storefront room to the south (105), with its wall finishes removed, clearly indicates a change in construction from brick masonry to concrete approximately seven (7) feet from the front wall.

The **inner lobby** (102) was formerly the only lobby. It controlled major aspects of internal circulation between the two main staircases. From this inner lobby, the two **stairways** rise in opposite directions to the second floor balcony level. These two concrete stairways (103) & (104) splay wider as they rise. The steps are covered in a character-defining carpet of a geometric design apparently from the 1930s remodeling. The ceiling is clad with a pressed metal ceiling and cornice, and very probably dates from the original period of construction. The adjoining walls contain a simple handrail with wainscot and painted plaster walls on concrete. Both side walls of the stairways were built out of poured-in-place concrete.

The **first floor, southwest corner room** (105) was originally a separate storefront space, and still possesses its original pressed metal ceiling with a deep coffer and perimeter cornice. In the 1940s, it was reportedly reclaimed by the theater operation and converted to a smoking lounge, with spaces carved out for the ticket window and box office. The last operational ticket

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

booth location was in the northwest corner of this room, where one window opened on to the sidewalk and another into the main interior lobby. The enclosed room within the former store functioned as a **men's room** (106), which has also retained its original pressed metal ceiling.

There is a **small vestibule** (108) between the inner lobby and the northwest corner room. This area served as a concession area after the northwest corner room (109) was no longer a separate commercial storefront.

The **northwest corner room** (109) was formerly a separate storefront, similar to the southwest corner room (105). A pressed metal ceiling and cornice, still largely intact, are not as deeply coffered as those of the former storefront on the opposite side. Carved out of this space is a women's rest room (110), which carries the same pressed metal ceiling as the storefront.

The **cross aisle** (112) has some of the most interesting historic architectural finishes. The pressed metal ceiling is similar to the one contained within the stairways (103) & (104). On the west wall and the north and south walls are surviving sections of the original paneled wood wainscoting. With the installation of glass heat electric panels, wood furring was installed in order to stretch fabric around the heating panels. It appears that earlier fabric was also placed above the wood wainscot. The wood casing around the passageway to the lobby appears to be original.

At the southern end of this cross aisle, there is a **water fountain** on the west wall made from ceramic tile. It appears to date from the late 1930s, and very possibly was infill for a previous opening.

The walls at the northern and southern ends of the cross aisle each contain a pair of exit doors leading to the exterior. Although the extant doors are not important features, the casings which are partially concealed by later plywood enclosures should be considered original material.

The **screen** which separates the cross aisle from the main seating area appears to date from the 1930s. The openings in the screen define the main seating aisles. In its last arrangement, the seating was interrupted by two center aisles and two aisles along the side walls, thereby creating three groups of seats. This arrangement is also reflected in the screen, which has three sections. The middle section incorporates two steel columns at either end. The screen has glass panels inset between decorative standards over a paneled base that is approximately five (5) feet high. Although now painted, it appears that this wood screen was originally stained.

The **seating area under the balcony** (113) carries the same pressed metal ceiling as the cross aisle. The floor in the seating area is a concrete slab and the aisles appear to have been carpeted. The screen mentioned in the cross aisle forms the west wall behind the seating area. Just under the edge of the balcony overhang are two steel columns that support the paired "I" beams that carry the balcony. The pressed metal ceiling turns up to clad the "I" beams. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

north and south walls contain numerous scars from the various treatments of these surfaces. It appears that the side walls carried a painted wainscot with fabric stretched above it.

The **seating areas under the side extensions of the balcony** (114) & (115) carry the same ceiling and floor conditions as the area under the main portion of the balcony. One extant door on the wall leading to the former box seating area is designed with six horizontal panels. The most recent decorative treatment of the north and south side walls consisted of a fiberboard sheathing over furring strips attached to metal cladding that consisted of painted stippled panels. Paneled pilasters of the box areas adjacent to the stage appear to have gone through at least three transformations: 1) fluted wood pilasters; 2) applied flutes over a flat board; and 3) flutes removed, pilaster covered over with masonite sheathing over furring strips.

The **principal seating area** (116) has the concrete floor with aisles that were once carpeted. There are no extant seats but bolt holes remain in the floor, indicating the former seating arrangement. The ceiling of the main auditorium consists of a polychromatic pressed metal ceiling with cornice and frieze. In the center of this ceiling is a square section with squared corner cut outs. A chandelier hangs from the mid-point and a decorative drapery radiates from the center point to the edges of the square, where it is fastened under the pressed metal border. The stage defines the eastern edge of this space.

The **proscenium arch** is constructed of concrete coated with plaster and decorated with a sponge-painted finish. It was covered by an ornamental drapery that appears to be identical to that which radiates from the ceiling of the main auditorium. Although recent rehabilitation work has resulted in the fabric detaching from the proscenium, the drapery is being stored for further investigation and possible reinstatement.

The **orchestra pit**, formerly located at the base of the stage, was connected to the understage pit by a shared wall at the edge of the stage. The orchestra pit has been filled in with concrete. Understage lighting for the pit remains in place.

The **former box seat areas** (117) & (118) flank the proscenium to either side. The floors and walls for the box seats that face the main seating area (116) have been totally removed. The western walls of the boxes are partially extant and appear to have double beaded board paneling on their walls. The outer walls and eastern walls are plaster on concrete. The ceiling of the south box (117) has pressed metal where the north box (118) appears to contain sheets of 4 by 8 plywood.

The **stage** (119) is made of hardwood floor that is severely deteriorated due to long term water infiltration from the failed roofing in the fly tower. Recessed metal footlights that appear in photographs ca. 1932-1933 are still in place in the stage floor. The "ceiling" to the stage area is an exposed frame covered with planks. The installation of this structure marked the end of the functional life of the fly tower, which was traditionally used as the space within which to raise and lower stage scenery. The eastern wall of the stage is concrete. There are no walls stage left or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

right. The proscenium arch is concealed by the draped fabric already mentioned.

The spaces to stage left and stage right (120) & (121) are finished in a similar manner to the stage proper. The exceptions to this are the walls which separate these spaces from the theater proper, which are painted concrete. The stage right (120) contains a stair to the upper levels of the fly tower. The stage left contains a stair to the understage pit.

2. Second Floor

The principal spaces of the second floor were the three rooms across the western end of the building (204), (206) & (207) (formerly used for office space, then as an apartment for the theater manager), and the balcony of the auditorium. There is a hallway (203) that organizes the front rooms of the second floor.

The front or west walls have plaster directly on the brick masonry. The east wall of the hallway (203) is concrete as are the exterior walls except for that of the front facade. All other partitions have plaster over wood lath on wood frame walls. Wood flooring and plaster on wood lath ceiling is typical.

The landings at the top of the stairs turn eastward into small vestibules that lead to six steps up to the balcony. These vestibules contain significant architectural finishes. The vestibules to the south (209) and the north (214) have floors carpeted with a pattern similar, yet different, to the carpet pattern in the stairwells. The exterior walls here have the same paneled wood wainscot that is located in the cross aisle downstairs. The plaster on the concrete wall above this wood wainscot has a sponge painted finish. The inner walls on the opposite side of the stairs has a chair rail and vertical board paneling that is similarly painted.

There are narrow corridors (210) & (213) under the balcony that lead from these vestibules to the second floor rest rooms. At its southernmost end, this corridor (210) contains a large air handler for the air conditioning system; on the floor of this area is a geometric patterned carpet, and decorative stenciling runs along the wall at shoulder height. All of the walls and ceilings in these rooms have plaster on metal lath except that the west walls are plaster on concrete.

The balcony (215) has four (4) different types of carpet over the upper stepped platforms. It has a wood stripped floor at all levels. The ceiling is covered with the elaborate pressed metal panels with cornice and frieze. The walls are sponge painted. The side extensions to the balcony on the south (216) and the north (217) have the strip wood floor and miscellaneous carpets. The side or exterior walls carry plaster on concrete with sponge painted finish over a wooden chair rail. The chair rail motif carries across the east walls where the second story of the box seats were located. The same stippled metal panels as appear on the corresponding wall on the first floor also appear here.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

The second level of the **box seat areas** (218) & (219) no longer exists. The floors of these seating areas have been removed. Only the south side of the second level of the fly tower (220) could be investigated. This area is finished the same as the space below it (120). The south side still contains an electrical switching panel mounted on a slate panel that controlled the lighting, curtain, and other stage features. There is also a wooden ladder rising to the upper levels of the fly tower in this area.

3. Third Floor

The **meeting room** (305) occupies the principal part of the third floor. The walls on the south and east are plaster on concrete, with plaster on brick for the west wall. Double beaded board covers the north wall, where there is also located a small wooden platform. There is a small wooden platform also along the southern wall of the room.

There is a vestibule (302) at the top of the third floor stairs. This space leads to what appears to have been a coat room (303) and a small toilet room (309) in the northwest corner. The ghost of a long-hung bunting can be seen on the northern wall of the coat room. The interior partitions have beaded paneling, plaster on wood lath on the ceiling and the north wall, and plaster on concrete on the east wall. This space has double beaded board on all walls except the west wall, which has plaster on brick.

The **projection booth** (306) is accessed from the top of the balcony. It has a concrete floor with raised concrete bases for the projectors. It has concrete walls on all sides. The exterior walls are covered with a faded red-colored damask fabric.

The **upper level of the fly tower** (307) formerly contained the hoisting platform for the fly. The finishes in this area are the same as the space below it (220).

4. Roofing

There are two roof structures at the Palace Theatre. The first one is a gable roof over the main theater section. The second is the flat, shed roof over the fly tower. The extant roofing material on the gable roof is asphalt shingles. Evidence shows that the roofing on the fly was mineral surfaced roll roofing.

The **main gable** roof structure is broken up into five (5) bays. These bays are defined by the pilasters along the side walls. The first structural bay is created by the front (west) wall of the original facade and an internal bearing wall which separates the main theater from the various rooms of this front section. The other bays are created by steel trusses which span clearly across the theater from north to south and bear at the pilaster points. There are three (3) trusses at the three interior pilaster points. Each truss spans approximately 55 feet. These structural members are built up from paired angle shapes to form Pratt trusses. There is a ridge rafter. The rafters carry board type sheathing. A roof hatch is located in the front bay on the north side.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, NJ

The fly tower shed roof contains roof rafters which span from the west and east bearing walls of the structure. These rafters bear directly on top plates on these wood frame walls. There is a cockloft-like space directly below the roof in the fly tower. This level contained the pulleys for the hoisting of stage apparatus. The rafter spans and the cockloft framing have knee braces that rise from the east and west bearing walls, just below the cockloft. The knee braces intersect the rafters at roughly one-third of the way from either rafter end. The fly tower roof system is sheathed with boards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

The Palace Theatre is an excellent example of a vernacular interpretation of a grand era in theater design, at a time when live productions were "sharing the stage" with the fledgling movie industry. Although constructed of modest materials, it was created as a cultural center and community gathering place for the Borough of Netcong. In the 1930s, it expanded its cultural role in the region with the production of live performances starring well-known figures of Broadway theater and American film, as well as first-run films from that period -- a role it continued into the late 1940s and early 1950s.

It is in auditorium space that one can still appreciate the grandeur of the 1930s movie era. The sweep of the ornamental ceiling drapery, although now soiled with the residues of age, still impress the visitor, especially when viewed from the balcony. It is echoed in the drapery around the proscenium, which serves less as a space-defining element than an elegant frame around the stage area, in billowy correspondence with the radiating folds of the ceiling fabric.

The fact that, except for the main facade, the theater building is constructed of poured concrete is also of major significance. Concrete was used in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries for such utilitarian structures as bridges and industrial buildings. Thomas Edison pioneered its use in residential architecture in this country; and, in the early decades of the Twentieth Century, it was used as well in the smaller works of architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Irving Gill, who delighted in the modern application of its practical and plastic properties. The Palace Theatre, however, used concrete in a new way: the construction of an elegant "entertainment palace."

The practical considerations of maintenance of such a monolithic wall structure may very well have dictated another unique facet of its construction: the steel eyelets that ring the exterior of the auditorium and fly tower -- an innovative response to a new building form not seen in other structures.

The Palace Theatre today stands as a vernacular gem of theater construction, in spite of the application of insensitive facing materials at the street level. Although deteriorated after long years of misuse and no use, much of the original fabric and design still remains. If restored as a theater, it will again contribute its "firmness, commodity, and delight" to the region.

A summary of the significance of the Palace Theatre as evaluated in accordance with the National Register criteria can be listed as follows:

Criterion A

- As evidence of the *evolution of the American entertainment industry* from live

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

stage performances to film during the first decades of the Twentieth Century, and the resulting evolution of the uses of interior spaces in such buildings; and

- *As the site of public ceremonies and major events* significant to the community of Netcong and the surrounding region during the period of its greatest significance.

Criterion B

- As a result of its *associations with persons important to the entertainment industry* in the 1930s; and
- As a result of its associations with *citizens important to the civic and commercial life of Netcong*. Three of its original incorporators were Italian residents of the town who had become some of its leading citizens. They were members of the Netcong Italian community, the presence of which has been recognized by the Little Italy Historic District, which a cultural resource survey found to eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.¹

Criterion C

- As an early example of the use of *concrete construction in theaters*; and
- As having features that may represent an *innovative system of tying scaffolding* to a monolithic wall surface for future maintenance; and
- In its *rare use of drapery as a decorative ceiling treatment*; and
- In its *design modifications of the front facade*, evidencing a vernacular interpretation of the evolution of architectural design inspired by the Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs of 1925, and the response of commercial architectural design to the rising popularity of the automobile.

Historical Background

Netcong is a small, hilly village located in the Musconetcong River valley at the southwestern end of Lake Musconetcong. Geologically, the area is considered to be part of the

¹Acroterion, "New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory, Morris County Cultural Resource Survey, Inventory No. 1428-001: Little Italy Historic District, Netcong, NJ" prepared for the Morris County Heritage Commission (1986); New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, Draft of an Internal Memorandum Re Listed and Eligible Historic Districts in New Jersey (6 December 1993).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

New Jersey Highlands, which are composed of gneiss in the upland districts.² It currently has a population of approximately 3,600.

The Borough of Netcong was originally known as "South Stanhope." The Musconetcong Iron Works located in nearby Stanhope brought many laborers into the area, and it was they who formed the little village just across the Musconetcong River. In 1889, the settlement changed its name to "Netcong," and in 1894 was incorporated as a borough. The last station in Morris County on the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad line, Netcong was near Port Morris, the site of rail yards and coal storage for both the Delaware, Lackawanna line as well as the Lehigh and Hudson Railroad. In 1914, local industries included the iron foundry of the Singer Sewing Machine Company and the Ashley Silk Co. mill. Netcong was considered a banking and business center for the region.³

The Morris Canal passed within a few hundred yards of the site on which the Palace Theatre was constructed. Lake Musconetcong, the shores of which are immediately adjacent to the Palace Theatre, was a part of the Morris Canal transportation network that began in Philipsburg, and went east over the hilly center of the state to the canal basin in Jersey City.

The Palace Theatre, Inc. purchased its site from Elmer King, Mayor of Netcong, who had purchased it in 1916 from the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, lessee of the Morris Canal and its various land holdings since 1871.⁴ The sale of the Palace Theatre property was part of the divestment of canal property that was finally concluded in 1928.⁵ The canal had fallen into disuse with the rise of rail transportation and, after the turn of the century, the lake area that included nearby Lake Hopatcong and Budd Lake, and Lake Musconetcong, became a popular vacation destination.

The founding of the Palace Theatre has much to do with the rising affluence and amount of leisure time of nearby residents, the region's rising status as vacation resort, as well as the increasing popularity of the entertainment industry in the regions outside of metropolitan areas.

²Peter O. Wacker, *The Musconetcong Valley of New Jersey: a Historical Geography* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968): 4, 18.

³A. Van doren Honeyman, ed., *Northwestern New Jersey: A History of Somerset, Morris Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex Counties*, Vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co, Inc., 1927), 347-348; Federal Writers' Project of the Work Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey, *The WPA Guide to 1930s New Jersey*, rpt. (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1939, 1986); Bureau of Industrial Statistics of New Jersey, comp., *The Industrial Directory of New Jersey* (Camden, NJ: S. Chew & Sons., Co., 1915), 342-343; "Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, Vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914), 214-216.

⁴Federal Writers' Project of the Work Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey, , *Stories of New Jersey* (New York: J.J. Little and Ives Co., 1938), 402-413.

⁵Henry Charlton Beck, *The Roads of Home: Lands and Legends of New Jersey*, rpt. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

The Palace Theatre reflected this national trend. In its Certificate of Incorporation, dated April, 1919, the Palace Theatre, Inc., stated that its purpose was to "build, construct, and operate a theatre for moving pictures, vaudeville and other shows, exhibitions and entertainment . . . [and] to construct and rent offices, stores, lodge rooms, &c in said theatre."⁶ At the time of construction, there were only two other "houses of entertainment" in the borough: The Mansion House, and the Imperial Hotel.⁷

The Palace Theatre building was constructed and used over the next twenty-five years as a multi-use building. Retail stores and service establishments occupied the first two floors, the third floor being used as a meeting hall. Gradually, with the rise of motion pictures as a form of popular entertainment, the use of the rooms on the upper floors of the western portion of the building was gradually disbanded. With the recladding of the facade in 1938 in which the original windows were obscured with the stucco facing or glass block, the interiors of the upper floors became dark and unattractive spaces, reflecting the transition of the building from a multi-purpose to a single-purpose enterprise: a theatre.

The original design of the Palace stage was meant to accommodate serious live theater as well as local productions or ceremonies. The fly tower, which allowed the raising and lowering of scenery, was equipped with a complex pulley system integrated into the ceiling joists. The side wings contained spaces for costume changes and for operation of the lighting and pulley system. The control panel for the lighting is still in place in the southern wing of the theatre. These elements identify the Palace Theatre as a transitional building.⁸ In an era when the future profitability of the motion picture industry was in no way assured, the owners were more inclined to create a building form that would accommodate stable, traditional uses as well as providing the flexibility to accommodate an innovative form of entertainment.

Motion pictures began to be shown at the turn of the century as part of other established forms of popular entertainment, such as the penny arcade and vaudeville theatre. Thomas Edison's "Kinetoscope," through which a single viewer could see "moving pictures," premiered in 1894, and was followed two years later by an improvement called the "Vitascope," which could project pictures from a remote location onto a screen to be seen by an audience.

The first films were "shorts" that lasted only a few minutes, and catered to a mass audience attracted by novelty and mechanical devices. The growth of the industry took a major step forward in 1915 when the D.W. Griffith film *Birth of a Nation* became a major financial and

⁶Palace Theatre, Inc. Certificate of Incorporation dated 24 April 1919, filed in the Morris Cty, NJ, Incorporation Bk. F, p. 202, 22 April 1919.

⁷"Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, 216.

⁸Later, American theaters looked to European set design that utilized built-up architectural sets and revolving and wagon stages that reduced the need for fly towers. Roi L. Morin, "Design and Construction of Theaters," *The American Architect (The Architectural Review)* Vol. CXXII, no. 2406 (8 November 1922), 393.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

artistic success. Thereafter, feature films became the norm, replacing "shorts." The "movies" were making a more permanent place for themselves in the entertainment industry.

In January, 1919, the year the Palace was constructed, the editor of the newly created "motion picture department" of *The New York Times* considered the question of "Taking Movies Seriously."⁹ His support of the potential of the fledgling film industry as a viable art medium was one more step to national recognition and increased credibility.

The shift away from inexpensive "nickelodeons" to combination vaudeville/movie houses were reflected in the move from storefronts to buildings that would improve their public image. Often the name "Palace" was given to Main Street theaters to enhance their image.

Significance Under Criterion A: Association with Important Events

The Palace Theatre in Netcong assumed the role of an important civic building for the people of that town and the surrounding region, in addition to its function as an entertainment center. It was the site of such events as high school graduation ceremonies, and numerous events sponsored by local civic and trade associations. Just across the street from the theater, Netcong residents gathered for the memorial ceremony marking the death of President Warren G. Harding in 1923. It was also the site of plays, concerts, and other cultural events that were advertised and drew audiences from Netcong and the other towns and resort areas in the region.¹⁰

The Palace Theatre is also significant because it was the site of the live performances of plays written and performed by people important to the entertainment industry, particularly in the 1930s (see notations under "Criterion B," below). Milton Gropper, noted playwright of the period, premiered one of his plays in the Palace. Another play, "Home James," by A.E. Thomas, was also performed at the Palace Theater prior to its Broadway debut.¹¹

Significance Under Criterion B: Associations with Individuals Important to History

Among the immigrants who came to Netcong around the turn of the century was a group of Italians, the presence of which has been recognized in a 1986 cultural resource assessment

⁹"Taking Movies Seriously," *The New York Times* 5 January 1919, IV:6.

¹⁰Doris Van Why, Widow of manager of Palace Theatre, Netcong, NJ (late 1930s - mid-1940s), in Interview with Brian Morrell (March 1995); Paul Batson, son of Lewis Batson, projectionist of Palace Theatre, Netcong, NJ (1939-1980), interview with Brian Morrell (March 1995).

¹¹*Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (22 July 1933), 10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

sponsored by the Morris County Heritage Commission. That study found that a local district, known as the Little Italy Historic District, would be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.¹² Three of the original incorporators of the Palace Theatre -- Michael C. Gallo, John L. Gallo, and Michael Barone -- were members of this Italian community in Netcong.

The Italian-born Gallo brothers, John and Michael, rose to prominence as businessmen and community leaders. John and Michael Gallo were partners in the contracting company that constructed the Palace Theatre, as well as numerous other public and religious buildings in the region.¹³ The Gallo Brothers offices were housed in the Palace Theatre building during the 1920s. John Gallo came to the United States from Italy in 1892 as a stone cutter, and later served as member of the Netcong Borough Council. He was also one of the organizers of the Netcong Fire Company, No. 1. His brother, Michael, served as the Mayor of Netcong (1936-1939), and also terms as a member of the Borough Council (1919-1921; 1949), charter member of the Hilltop Fire Company, and director of the Musconetcong Building and Loan Assn. for 53 years, as well as being a member of numerous other civic and fraternal organizations.¹⁴

Michael Barone served as a water commissioner for sinking fund (1914 - ?), and was a local merchant.¹⁵

The two remaining incorporators, Everett James Applegate, and A. Austin King, were also businessmen and civic leaders in the community of Netcong. Applegate served as a member of the Netcong Borough Council, the Board of Education, and as Commissioner on the Netcong Water Board, among other positions in the borough.¹⁶ King was the Mayor of Netcong (1922-1927), and served as president of the Board of Education, borough assessor and chief of the fire department. King was also recognized for his business activities, having served as the president of the Musconetcong Building and Loan Assn., president of the Netcong Businessmen's Assn., and was the sole Ford Company automobile dealer in Morris County (1900-1914) and was honored as the owner of the oldest Standard Oil (Esso) dealership in the

¹²Acroterion (1986); New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, Draft of a Memorandum (6 December 1993).

¹³Gallo Brothers, "Gallo Brothers, Contractors and Builders, Netcong, New Jersey," Brochure (ca. 1925). Some of the other buildings constructed by the Gallo Brothers included Dover General Hospital, Dover, NJ; Netcong High School, Netcong, NJ; Borough Hall, Stanhope, NJ; Arrow Building, Dover, NJ; Crown Department Store, Dover, NJ; Flock Building, Hackettstown, NJ; Borough Hall, Andover, NJ; M.E. Church, Netcong, NJ, and others.

¹⁴John Gallo, Ex-Netcong Councilman," *Morris County's Daily Record*, Obituary (30 January 1960); "Set Rites for M.C. Gallo, 86," *Morris County's Daily Record*, Obituary (23 September 1963), 11.

¹⁵"Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, Vol. 1, 216; "Michael Barone, 91," *Morris County's Daily Record*, Obituary (29 October 1958), 17; "Michael Barone," *New Jersey Herald*, Obituary (30 October 1958).

¹⁶"Set Rites for E.J. Applegate," *Morris County's Daily Record* (30 July 1963), 2; "Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, Vol. 1, 216.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

State of New Jersey¹⁷

The architect and designer of the original theater building, Jacob J. Vreeland, Jr. of Dover, New Jersey, designed and supervised the construction of a number of significant buildings in the region, including residences, commercial buildings, and public and semi-public buildings. In addition to the Palace Theatre building, he was the architect and designer of the Dover City Hall building (ca. 1900), which was described in a local newspaper article in 1898; a rendering of the proposed design was published in *Biographical and Genealogical History of Morris County, New Jersey* (1899), along with a biography of Vreeland himself.¹⁸

In addition, the Palace Theatre has an important connection to prominent figures in the entertainment industry in the 1930s. As a regional center for legitimate theater productions, the Palace Theatre drew from nearby resort areas, notably that of Lake Hopatcong. Performances by the Hopatcong Broadway Players starred actors from the Broadway stage in productions of plays and musicals that were then, or had just finished, running on Broadway. Bert Lytell (1885-1954), Celeste Holm (1919 -), Pauline Frederick (1883-1938), the dramatic actress Gale Sondergaard (1899-1985), and the romantic comedy team of Mr. and Mrs. Coburn, were among the group of prominent actors and actresses of national reputation who performed at the Palace in the 1930s. One of Broadway's leading authors of the period, Milton H. Gropper (1896-1955), premiered his new play "Grounds for Indecency" reported to be one of the last plays to be considered by David Belasco of the Belasco Theater, New York, before his death, at the Palace in August, 1934. Gropper flew from his home in Beverly Hills, California for the premier.¹⁹

The patrons of the Hopatcong Broadway Players were also important figures in the region: the Mayors of Netcong, Mt. Arlington, and the Borough of Hopatcong, and the Deputy

¹⁷"Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, Vol. 1 216; "A.A. King, Ex-Mayor of Netcong," *Morris County's Daily Record*, Obituary (14 April 1964); "Locals," *The Stanhope Eagle* (30 March 1950).

¹⁸J.J. Vreeland, Jr., *Biographical and Genealogical History of Morris County, New Jersey* Vol. II (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 714. See also "Jacob J. Vreeland, Jr.," *A History of Morris County New Jersey* Vol. II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914), 111-113.

¹⁹"Bert Lytell Returns in 'Death Takes a Holiday,'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (29 July 1933); "Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (1 July 1933); *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (8 July 1933), 10; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (1 July 1933), 10; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (15 July 1933), 10; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (5 August 1933), 10; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (21 July 1934), 10; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (11 August 1934), 9; *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*, Advertisement (25 August 1934), 7; "Hopatcong Broadway Players Remaining All Next Week," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (1 September 1934), 4; "Hopatcong Players Present 'The Shannons of Broadway,'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (19 August 1934), 5; "Final Week for Hopatcong Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (26 August 1933), 4; "Hopatcong Broadway Players Present Bert Lytell in 'Her Master's Voice,'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (21 July 1934), 5; "Pauline Frederick Appearing at Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (4 August 1934), 4; "Author Flying to Hopatcong for Premier Presentation by Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (11 August 1934), 4; "'Pursuit of Happiness' Staged by Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (18 August 1934), 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

Director of Newark were all counted among the notable supporters of the group.²⁰

Significance Under Criterion C: Design / Construction

1. *Early Use of Poured Concrete in Theater Construction*

The use of reinforced concrete in building construction came late to the United States. Although it is an ancient building material, dating from its use by the Romans, it was enjoying a new popularity in Europe at the end of the Nineteenth Century. Some notable American architects (Frank Lloyd Wright, Irving Gill) began experimentation with "ferroconcrete" in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, but primarily it was used in industrial construction -- structural framework, silos, and other utilitarian structures.²¹

The Palace Theatre is significant as an early use of a poured-in-place concrete shell in theater construction, which was quite new in 1919. Most American theaters used traditional materials of masonry, steel framing, and timber. Current research finds that the first report in architectural journals of such a construction method for theaters was noted in January, 1918, with an article on two buildings that used only a concrete structural skeleton and concrete floor slabs.²² Both of those theaters, however, used a different material for infill between the structural columns -- terra cotta tiles or masonry. None have appeared in the research to date that used poured concrete infill such as was used in the Palace Theatre, which gives it special significance as evidence of an innovation in construction methods for a particular building type.

There are a number of buildings in Netcong that are made of masonry or concrete, including some residences located in the Little Italy Historic District. For the most part, however, they are utilitarian structures, i.e. garages, industrial buildings, or outbuildings. The cultural resource assessment linked many of these buildings to the preference for masonry -- a traditional building material for the Italian residents.²³ Other reasons for its use may have included the extreme combustibility of silver nitrate film used in early motion picture production, and therefore

²⁰ "Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (1 July 1933);

²¹ Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture 1900-1925* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989); Christina Lee Wallace, "The Evolution of Reinforced Concrete Technology (1848-1918)" M.S. Thesis, Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (1987); Sigfried Giedion, "Ferroconcrete and Its Influence Upon Architecture," in *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Fifth Ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 322-333. Carl W. Condit, *American Building: Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 240-261.

²² "Concrete in Theatre Construction," *Architecture and Building* Vol. L, no. 1 (January 1918), 5-7.

²³ Acroterion, Historic District Survey Form (1986), 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

a preoccupation with fireproofing.²⁴ The fact that the projection booth in the Palace Theatre was constructed completely out of concrete, as well as the fact that the multi-use rooms located to the west of the auditorium were separated from the theater spaces by interior concrete walls, would seem to indicate that fireproofing was a factor in the selection of materials used for the construction of the interior. Wartime shortages of steel may have been another reason for the use of concrete, although in 1918 even cement reserves were low due to wartime shortages of coal.²⁵

2. *Architectural Elements that Demonstrate Innovative Systems*

The steel eyelets that run along the cornice at regular intervals on three sides of the theater are unusual for construction of this type, and may well be significant to the method of construction, although current research has not uncovered their original purpose. It is possible that they were a new method for hanging scaffolding on a monolithic wall surface for ease of maintenance and/or applications of protective finishes, possibly first used in a more ornamental form by the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh in the Glasgow School of Art (1907-1909). In any event, these eyelets are unusual elements in the Palace Theatre building, and seem to represent an innovative building system created in response to a new kind of large, monolithic wall surface, and a practical need for economy of maintenance.

3. *Evolution of Exterior Design: 1919 - 1938*

The evolution of the front facade from a simply articulated design with classical elements for its commercial storefronts and modest theater entrance, to a much larger scale Art Deco design says much about the importance of creating a quickly readable landmark on a main street. With the remaking of Ledgewood Avenue into a major traffic arterial ca. 1929, travel by automobile increased the speed at which potential customers passed by the commercial signage and storefront of both the retail and entertainment establishments in the Palace Theatre. Given the change in traffic pattern that brought greater visibility to the theatre and the increased speed of passing vehicles, it became extremely important to increase the size, scale, coloration, and lighting of such businesses in order to insure that they would be easily seen by the passing motorist. The changes in the facade of the Palace Theater clearly reflected this need.

The stylistic influences of the Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs of 1925 on vernacular construction in the United States are also clearly expressed here. The style that came to be known as "Art Deco" had a number of recurrent features that synthesized classical symmetry and modernist simplification of form: projecting ziggurat building forms, smooth planar surfaces, use

²⁴Maggie Valentine, *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 27-28.

²⁵"Concrete in Theatre Construction," 5; "Real Estate: Building Materials," *The New York Times Index* (January - March 1918), 326; "Building Materials," *The New York Times Index* (January - March 1919), 57.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

of machine-age materials, an ornamental repertoire of simple motifs such as sunbursts, zig zags, the use of bold coloration in fabric and finishes, and, by the early 1930s, the pervasive appearance of curvilinear streamlining.²⁶

In 1934, the first year since the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 that box office receipts experienced an increase rather than a decline,²⁷ the Palace Theatre completed the first of two major renovations that were intended to incorporate the new modernity, albeit on a vernacular scale. These renovations concentrated for the most part on the improvement of systems and the redecoration of the interior (see Architectural Chronology, Section 8, Appendix A), the major exterior alteration being limited to the installation of a modern marquee. The sunburst drapery and chandelier on the auditorium ceiling (see discussion below), the drapery around the proscenium, and the bold carpeting were installed at this time, giving the interior spectacular decorative features and a modern panache that was meant to convey the new spirit - as well as increasing theater revenues.

In 1938, the major exterior renovations were completed, including a recladding of the front facade with stucco on metal lath, configured in a vernacular interpretation of the craggy ziggurat forms of Art Deco design. Historic photos show curvilinear hoods over the storefronts in what appear to be high contrast porcelain enamel panels with streamlined detailing. The use of stainless steel casings for the poster display cabinets also utilized a high-quality material of the machine age, and was a distinctive feature of the Art Deco motif. The chevron motif on the central ticket booth as shown in historic photographs also keyed the new exterior into the Art Deco style. The small round panel inserted into the center of the composition at the third story is a device that appeared in high-style Art Deco compositions elsewhere, notably in the octagonal portholes of Henry Hohausser's Essex House in Miami Beach (1938), and the "cheese holes" of Morris Lapidus's retail architecture of the late 1930s.²⁸

The use of glass block in the vertical bands installed over the existing windows of the front facade was, although somewhat awkward from a design standpoint, was clearly an attempt to emulate the use of a modern material in a manner reflective of "international style" window bands. Such vertical bands of glass block had also begun to be incorporated into retail design in the 1930s.²⁹

²⁶Richard Striner, *Art Deco* (New York: Archetype Press, Inc., and Abbeville Press, 1994), 25.

²⁷U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States -- Colonial Times to 1970, Part I* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1975), 400.

²⁸Striner, 38; see also Martina Düttman and Friederike Schneider, eds., *Morris Lapidus: Architect of the American Dream* (Basel, Switz.: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1992).

²⁹See Mary Delaney Krugman, "From Main Street to Mall: The Evolution of the American Branch Department Store," Master's Thesis, Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (1995).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

A fascinating aspect of the 1938 make-over, however, is that the original building front could still be perceived through the clear glass block bands, where the wall surface between the floors showed through the glass. The original facade can still be seen from the interiors of the second and third floor. With the 1938 makeover, the use of the upper stories of the theater building was totally given over to the movie house. The inexpensive construction and lack of finishing on the interior reflect the "illusion" of a true structural change. Illusion was important to the movie industry, and here the fantasy is played out in the facade of the Palace Theatre.

4. *Significant Decorative Element: Ceiling Drapery*

The fabric ornamentation of the auditorium ceiling appears to be rare in theater construction. For the most part, ceilings of such spaces were ornamented with architectural detail -- coffered ceilings, ornamental plaster medallions, decorative finishes, and/or chandeliers. Current research has found little evidence of drapery as a decorative treatment for theater ceilings; only one theater has been discovered that used a similar treatment, and that was in a proposed design for a theater in Oskar Strand, Vienna, Austria (unbuilt).³⁰

The fabric sunburst is a spectacular and character-defining element of the interior, although it appears to be in a deteriorated condition. Drapery around the proscenium is even more deteriorated than the ceiling fabric, and while of apparently similar material, is not as important to the spacial impact of the theater as is the sweep of the ceiling drapery. The fabric of both appears to be a heavy material, uniformly discolored, which may indicate a kind of metallic cloth. Closer inspection reveals that the material was muted gold in color and has some residual sheen in the folds not exposed to dust and dirt. Given preoccupations with fire in theaters, however, it may well be that it is made of or includes a fire-retardant material.

³⁰Roi L. Morin, "Design and Construction of Theaters," *American Architect / Architectural Review* Vol. CXXII, no. 2406 (8 November 1922), 399.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

List of Significant Persons:

Figures prominent in the entertainment industry during the Period of Significance, who were associated with the Palace Theatre.

Bert Lytell (1885 - 1954);
Celeste Holm (1919 -);
Pauline Frederick (1883 - 1938);
Gale Sondergaard (1899 - 1985);
Milton H. Gropper (1896 - 1955).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

APPENDIX "A"

Section number 8 Page A-1Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

Architectural Chronology of Palace Theatre (PT)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 May 1919 | Construction begun; Gallo Bros catalogue reports J.J. Vreeland (1875 - ?) to be architect. |
| ca. 15 May 1919 | Foundation work in progress. |
| ca. 15 Aug. 1919 | Roof was being placed on formed concrete building; brick front constructed. |
| late Aug. 1919 | Electrical wiring installation commenced. |
| 1920 | Garage adjacent to theater burns. Apparently similar in construction (concrete) to PT, owned by A.A. King, one of original incorporators of PT. |
| 1932 | A. Austin King (one of orig. incorpor'trs) PT's operator. Preparing to install new projection and sound equipment for "talkies." |
| 1932 | View of theater interior shows drapery behind "standing room only" glass; wainscot on partition to auditorium appears as thin wood veneer emulating ornamental metal railing, backlit. |
| Sept. 1934 | <p>Renovations to PT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new seats upholstered in red leather; • new moving picture and sound equipment; • new stage curtains; • new lighting; • new lobby arrangement; • new furnishings throughout; • oral history places "sunburst" ceiling (extant) and stage drapery (partially extant), center chandelier (extant) in place after this date; • new aisle arrangement (changed from center aisle to two side aisles); • refitted lobby and ticket booth (central box office given Art Deco detailing); • 2 new projection machines w/ new sound equipment; • new stage drops; • new aisle and lobby carpets; • new deep red brocade wall covering; • new lighting effects; • new marquee installed (partially extant); • new poster display cases installed to either side of lobby entry, with partial enclosure of storefronts. |
| ca. 1934 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New heating plant; • new screen and stage equipment. |
| 1938 | Alterations to front facade in Art Deco design: |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

APPENDIX "A"

Section number 8 Page A-2Palace Theatre
Morris Cty., Netcong NJ

- stucco over metal lath on pine furring strips;
- two vertical glass block panels over existing 2nd and 3rd fl. window bays above storefronts;
- metal moderne canopies over storefronts at either side of theater entry;
- what appears to be carrara glass panels (black?) installed at sidewalk level;
- what appears to be porcelain enamel panels over original leaded glass transom windows on storefronts;
- metal casement windows with side panels installed to replace original paired double-hung windows over marquee;
- round solid medallion with 8 equidistant radii and the letters "P" and "T" installed in stucco facing over center of existing paired windows on 3rd fl.;
- all previously existing window openings obscured by new facade except those at the location of the single-bay glass block panels and metal casement window;
- poster display cases from the 1934 renovation remain in place.

Mid 1940s Storefronts bricked in with smaller plate glass windows, door openings removed; box office moved to south of lobby entry in former storefront space; men's lounge and restroom partitioned off from box office; poster display case shown with glass block surrounds. Night photos of marquee show lighting recessed in coffered soffit under marquee.

1950s Orchestra pit still extant; box seats were obscured by floor to ceiling drapery. Steam radiators often leaked, draining into orchestra pit.

1950s - 1970s Color of the body: cream; color of doors: red.

Late 1950s Orchestra pit filled in with concrete.

1970s Color of body: white.

1970s "Glassheat" panels installed as shown in JCPL catalogue, making PT an "all electric building" furred out the interior walls with hemosote panels of alternating beige and rose; box seats boxed in; much of interior finishes were painted over.

1978 - 1980s Lenvera Corp. sold PT to Lakeside Theatre, Inc., Parsippany (cut rate movie house). Color of body: ochre. Aluminum doors installed; detailing removed from marquee; amber-colored pebble surface applied to front facade at first fl.

1981 PT sold to Daniel R. Vernay for moving and storage company (North American Moving Co.); seats removed, PT allowed to deteriorate.

1994 PT purchased by Growing Stage Theater Co.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Miscellaneous History:

- "A. A. King, Ex-Mayor of Netcong." *Morris County's Daily Record*. Obituary. 14 April 1964.
- Acroterion, Little Italy Historic District, Netcong, New Jersey, New Jersey Historic District Survey Form (1986).
- Acroterion, "New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory, Morris County Cultural Resource Survey, Inventory No. 1428-001: Little Italy Historic District, Netcong, NJ" prepared for the Morris County Heritage Commission (1986).
- "Author Flying to Hopatcong for Premier Presentation by Hopatcong Broadway Players." *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (11 August 1934), 4.
- Batson, Paul, son of Lewis Batson, projectionist of Palace Theatre, Netcong, NJ (1939-1980). Interview with Brian Morrell (March 1995).
- Beck, Henry Charlton. *The Roads of Home: Lands and Legends of New Jersey*, rpt. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983.
- "Bert Lytell Returns in 'Death Takes a Holiday.'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*. 29 July 1933.
- "Borough of Netcong," *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*, Vol. 1. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914.
- Bureau of Industrial Statistics of New Jersey, comp., *The Industrial Directory of New Jersey*. Camden, NJ: S. Chew & Sons, Co., 1915.
- Federal Writers' Project of the Work Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey., *Stories of New Jersey*. New York: J.J. Little and Ives Co., 1938.
- Federal Writers' Project of the Work Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey. *The WPA Guide to 1930s New Jersey*. Rpt New York: Rutgers University Press, 1939, 1986.
- "Final Week for Hopatcong Players." *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (26 August 1933), 4.
- "Jacob J. Vreeland, Jr." *A History of Morris County, New Jersey*. Vol. II. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914, 112-113.
- "John Gallo, Ex-Netcong Councilman." *Morris County's Daily Record*. Obituary. 30 January 1960.
- Gallo Brothers, "Gallo Brothers, Contractors and Builders, Netcong, New Jersey," Brochure (ca. 1925).
- Honeyman, A. Van doren ed. *Northwestern New Jersey: A History of Somerset, Morris Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex Counties*, Vol. 1. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co, Inc., 1927.
- "Hopatcong Broadway Players," *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (1 July 1933).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Hopatcong Broadway Players. *Lake Hopatcong Breeze*. Advertisements (1 July 1933: 10; 8 July 1933: 10; 15 July 1933: 10; 22 July 1933: 10; 5 August 1933: 10; 21 July 1934: 10; 11 August 1934: 9; 25 August 1934: 7).

"Hopatcong Broadway Players Present Bert Lytell in 'Her Master's Voice.'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (21 July 1934), 5.

"Hopatcong Players Present 'The Shannons of Broadway.'" *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (19 August 1934), 5.

"Hopatcong Broadway Players Remaining All Next Week." *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (1 September 1934), 4.

"Locals." *The Stanhope Eagle*. 23 April 1919; 30 April 1919; 14 May 1919; 13 August 1919; 20 August 1919; 17 September 1919; 3 December 1919; 28 April 1920; 8 August 1920; 25 August 1920; 22 September 1920; 6 June 1923; 19 October 1932; 2 May 1934; 16 December 1948; 8 September 1949; 30 March 1950; 26 September 1934; 27 June 1923; 13 June 1923; 19 October 1932; 31 October 1934; 31 October 1934; 30 March 1950.

McNair, Kenneth, Sec., Netcong Business Men's Ass'n. *The Stanhope Eagle*. Letter to Editor. 31 October 1934.

"Michael Barone." *New Jersey Herald*. Obituary. 30 October 1958.

"Michael Barone, 91." *Morris County's Daily Record*. Obituary. 29 October 1958.

New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, Draft of an Internal Memorandum Re Listed and Eligible Historic Districts in New Jersey (6 December 1993).

"Palace Theatre, H.L. Houck, Manager, Netcong, New Jersey." *The Stanhope Eagle*. 22 September 1920.

"Palace, Netcong: A City Theatre in the Country." *The Stanhope Eagle*. Advertisements. 29 July 1948; 16 December 1948.

"Palace, Netcong 90." *New Jersey Herald*. Advertisement. 8 May 1952.

"Palace, Netcong 2-0090." *New Jersey Herald*. Advertisement. 30 October 1958.

"Palace Theatre, Netcong, as it is since the recent alterations have been completed [photo caption]." *The Stanhope Eagle*. Photo. 29 September 1938.

"Palace Theatre: One Night -- June 15th, Earlau Wilcox Presents Blanch Pickert." *The Stanhope Eagle*. Advertisement. 6 June 1923.

"Pauline Frederick Appearing at Hopatcong Broadway Players." *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (4 August 1934), 4.

"Pursuit of Happiness' Staged by Hopatcong Broadway Players." *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* (18 August 1934), 4.

"Set Rites for E.J. Applegate." *Morris County's Daily Record*. Obituary. 30 July 1963.

"Set Rites for M.C. Gallo, 86." *Morris County's Daily Record*. Obituary. 23 September 1963: 11.

"Talent Nights' at Palace Theatre." *New Jersey Herald*. 15 May 1952.

"Tony Ross, The Tailor." *The Stanhope Eagle*. Advertisement. 6 June 1923.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Van Why, Doris, widow of manager of Palace Theatre, Netcong, NJ (late 1930s - mid-1940s). Interview with Brian Morrell (March 1995);

Wacker, Peter O. *The Musconetcong Valley of New Jersey: A Historical Geography*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968.

Documents:

Gallo, Mary, Grantor, and Lenvera Corp, Grantees. Bargain and Sale Deed. Recorded in the Morris County Register of Deeds, Book 2096, P. 407, May 19, 1969.

Gallo, Mary, Lessor and Netcong Amusement Co., Inc., Lessee. Lease Agreement. Recorded in the Morris County Register of Deeds, Book K-34, p. 389, April 15, 1935.

Palace Theatre, Inc. Certificate of Incorporation dated 24 April 1919, filed in the Morris Cty, NJ, Incorporation Bk. F, p. 202, 22 April 1919.

Palace Theatre, Inc. from Elmer King and wife. Property conveyance. Recorded in the Morris County Register of Deeds, Book H-25, p. 249, May 16, 1919.

General Architectural History:

Banham, Reyner. *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture 1900-1925*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989.

"Building Materials," *The New York Times Index* (January - March 1919), 57.

"Concrete in Theatre Construction," *Architecture and Building* Vol. L, no. 1 (January 1918), 5-7.

Condit, Carl W. *American Building: Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968, 240-261.

Düttman, Martina and Friederike Schneider, eds. *Morris Lapidus: Architect of the American Dream*. Basel, Switz.: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1992.

Eizenour, George. "The Consultant: Then and Now." *Theater Design and Technology*. No. 41 (Summer 1975), 9-13.

Herbert, William. "An American Architecture." *The Architectural Record*. Vol. XXII (January - June 1908), 111-122.
Krugman, Mary Delaney. "From Main Street to Mall: The Evolution of the American Branch Department Store." Master's Thesis, Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (1995).

Liebs, Chester H. *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1985.

Margolies, John and Emily Gwathmey. *Ticket to Paradise: American Movie Theaters and How We Had Fun*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1991.

Milnar, E. "The Modern Theater." *Architecture*. Vol. 42. (1920), 113-122, 225 - 232.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 4

The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

-
- Morin, Roi L. "Design and Construction of Theaters." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXII, no. 2406 (8 November 1922), 393 - 402.
- "Design and Construction of Theaters, Part II: The Stage." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXII, no. 2407 (22 November 1922), 443 - 450.
- "Design and Construction of Theaters, Part III: Lighting." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXII, no. 2408 (12 December 1922), 493 - 496, 507, 509-510.
- "Design and Construction of Theaters, Part IV: The Projection Booth." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXII, no. 2409 (20 December 1922), 537-542, 553-556.
- "Design and Construction of Theaters, Part V." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXIII, no. 2411 (17 January 1923), 66-71.
- "Design and Construction of Theaters, Part VI: Foyers, Lobbies and Promenades." *The American Architect – The Architectural Review*. Vol. CXXIII, no. 2412 (31 January 1923), 101-104, 117-119.
- "Orchestra Hall, Detroit, and the Grand Theater, Pittsburgh." *Architecture*. Vol. 42 (1920), 239-242.
- Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood: The Largest Cast of International Film Personalities Ever Assembled*. Vol 2. New York: Facts on File, 1992).
- "Real Estate: Building Materials," *The New York Times Index* (January - March 1918), 326;
- Seelye, Elwyn E. "Concrete In Theatre Construction." *Architecture and Building*. Vol. L, no. 1 (January 1918).
- Shisler, Loren. "Small and Original." *Marquee*. Vol. 7, no. 4 (4th Quarter, 1975), 12-13.
- Striner, Richard. *Art Deco*. New York: Archetype Press, Inc., and Abbeville Press, 1994.
- "Taking Movies Seriously," *The New York Times* 5 January 1919, IV:6.
- "Theater Buildings: Index of Past Fifty Years." *American Architect*. Vol. 129 (January 1926), 86-87.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States – Colonial Times to 1970*, Part I (Washington: U.S Department of Commerce, 1975), 400.
- Valentine, Maggie. *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theater*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Wallace, Christina Lee. "The Evolution of Reinforced Concrete Technology (1848-1918)." M.S. Thesis. Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, 1987.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 and Photographs

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty
Netcong, NJ

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 17 of Block 14 of the Tax Map of the Borough of Netcong, New Jersey.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property included the entire parcel historically associated with the Palace Theatre, excluding the parcel between Lake Musconetcong and the theatre lot, which had been subdivided and sold to the Crestmont Savings Bank in the 1970s. That subdivided parcel now is the site of a contemporary bank building and parking lot that do not contribute to the historic significance of the nominated property.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

The following information is the same for all of the photographs listed below:

1. Name of Property: The Palace Theatre
2. County, City, and State where located: Essex Cty., Netcong, New Jersey
3. Name of Photographer: Mary Delaney Krugman
4. Date of Photographs: Historic Photos - 8/95; Contemporary photos - 12/95
5. Location of original negatives: Mary Delaney Krugman
Historic Preservation Consultant
62 Myrtle Avenue
Montclair, New Jersey 07042

6 & 7: Description of views; number of photograph:

Contemporary Photographs:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Photo 1 of 25 | Main (western) and southern facades. Looking NE. |
| Photo 2 of 25 | Detail of Main (western) facade showing offset planes. Looking upwards and SE. |
| Photo 3 of 25 | Marquee located on Main (western) facade at front entrance. Looking N. |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2 and Photographs

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty
Netcong, NJ

-
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Photo 4 of 25 | Southern facade detail showing marks of concrete formwork. Looking NW. |
| Photo 5 of 25 | Cornice of southern facade showing steel eyelets. Looking NW. |
| Photo 6 of 25 | Detail of cornice of southern facade showing steel eyelets. Looking E. |
| Photo 7 of 25 | Detail of SE corner of building, at meeting point of fly tower and concrete wall, showing steel eyelets. Looking NW. |
| Photo 8 of 25 | First floor lobby interior showing ticket window. Looking SW. |
| Photo 9 of 25 | Screening wall between lobby and auditorium, first floor. Looking NE. |
| Photo 10 of 25 | Screening wall between lobby and auditorium, first floor. Looking NW. |
| Photo 11 of 25 | Auditorium, showing former location of box seats at left, with portion of balcony at upper right. Looking SSE. |
| Photo 12 of 25 | Auditorium from balcony, showing stage with ornamental drapery, and drapery on ceiling. Chandelier reported to be original from 1934 alterations shown on floor of balcony. Looking NE. |
| Photo 13 of 25 | Concrete projection booth and seating tiers in balcony. Looking NW. |
| Photo 14 of 25 | Detail of decorative metal cornice in balcony. Looking S. |
| Photo 15 of 25 | Ornamental ceiling drapery in auditorium. Looking upwards and W. |
| Photo 16 of 25 | Detail of decorative metal edging around ceiling drapery. Looking upwards. |
| Photo 17 of 25 | Second floor room at front of building, showing glass block of 1938 facade alterations covering one of the paired windows. Looking W. |
| Photo 18 of 25 | Third floor meeting room; center paired window bays at left. Looking N. |
| Photo 19 of 25 | Detail of interior window, central bay, showing original brick facade under 1938 facade alterations. Looking NNW. |
| Photo 20 of 25 | Fly tower and easternmost portion of northern facade. Looking SE. |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 3 and Photographs

Palace Theatre
Morris Cty
Netcong, NJ

Historic Photos:

- Photo 21 of 25 Two views of Palace Theatre (ca. 1920): 1) Upper view: main (western) facade on Ledgewood Avenue, looking SE; 2) Lower view: main facade on Ledgewood Avenue, with adjacent service station in foreground, looking NE.
- Photo 22 of 25 Harding Memorial Services in front of Palace Theatre, August 10, 1923.
- Photo 23 of 25 Interior view of stage and cast of production (ca. 1920s).
- Photo 24 of 25 Palace Theatre, Main (western) facade (ca. 1938) before installation of Art Deco facade showing 1934 marquee.
- Photo 25 of 25 Palace Theatre, Main (western) facade (ca. 1938) after installation of Art Deco facade.



SUSSEX COUNTY BOROUGH OF STANHOPE

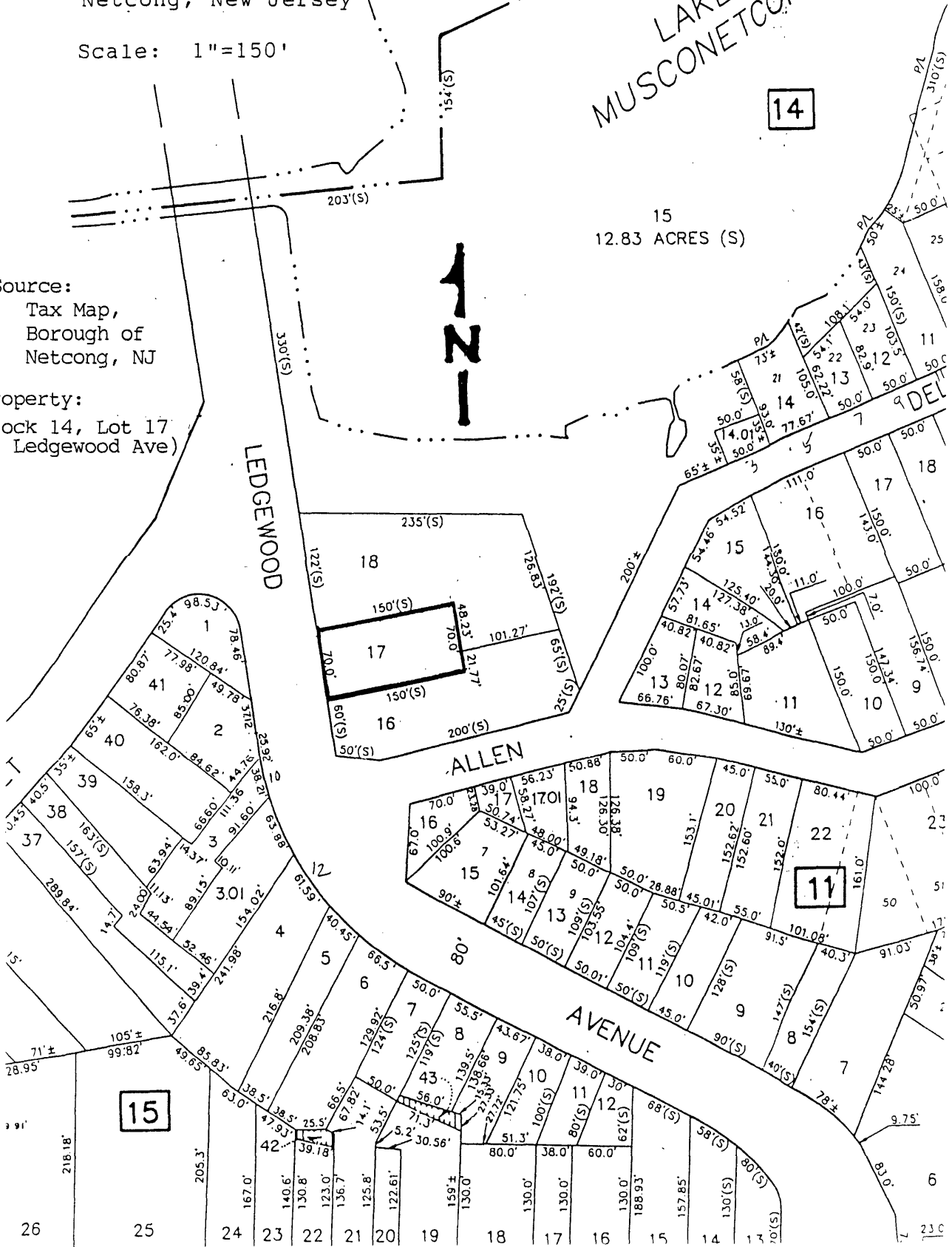
Site Plan

The Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, New Jersey

Scale: 1"=150'

Source:
Tax Map,
Borough of
Netcong, NJ

Property:
Block 14, Lot 17
(7 Ledgewood Ave)



LAKE
MUSCONETCONG

15
12.83 ACRES (S)

14



LEDGEWOOD

ALLEN

AVENUE

15

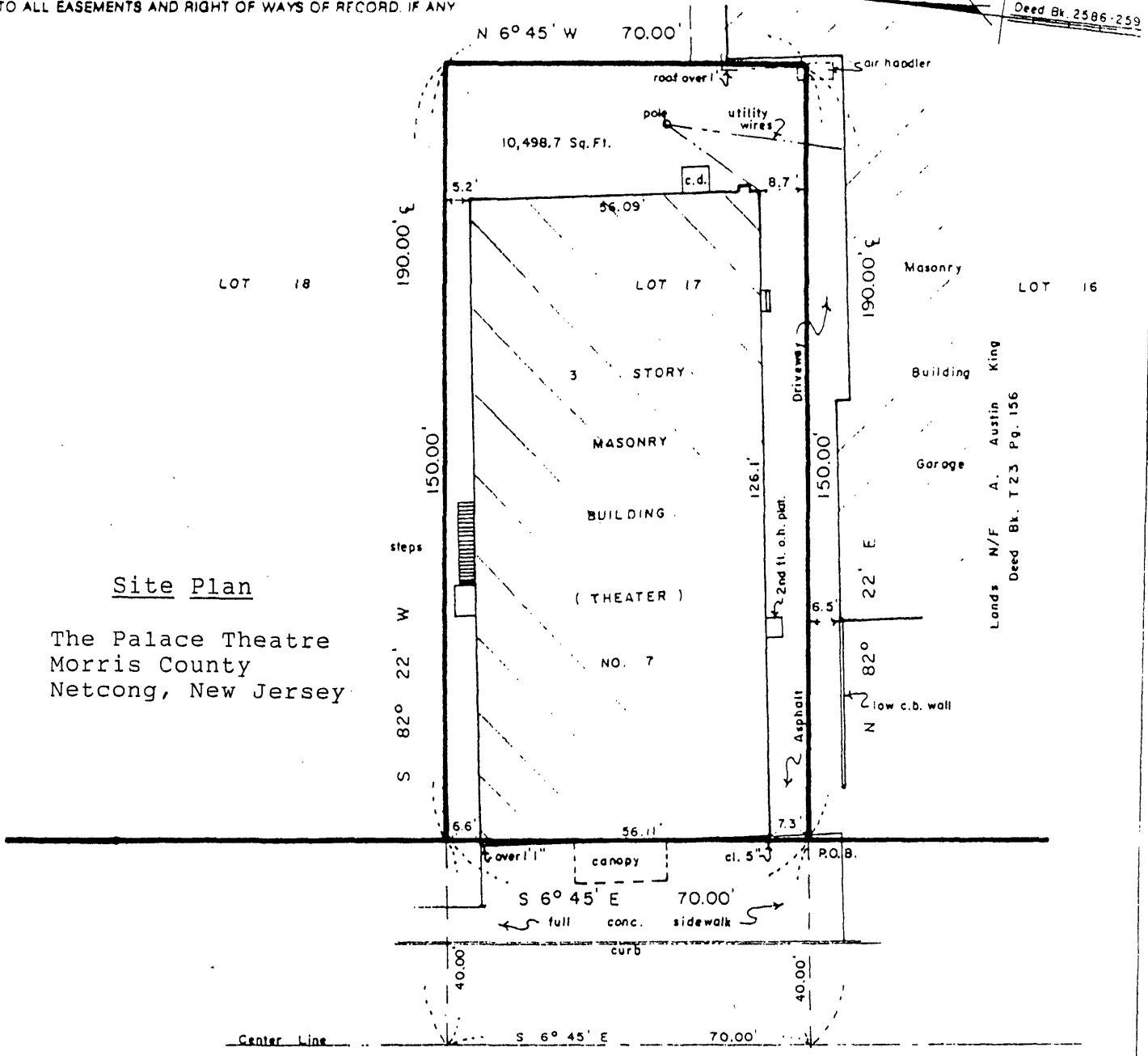
11

AX MAP BL 14
M LOT
M BLOCK

REFERENCE MAP

BUILDING OFFSETS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF FENCES OR OTHER PERMANENT STRUCTURES
SUBJECT TO ALL EASEMENTS AND RIGHT OF WAYS OF RECORD, IF ANY

Deed Bk. 2586-259



Site Plan

The Palace Theatre
Morris County
Netcong, New Jersey

LEDGEWOOD AVENUE

(80')
A/K/A ROUTE 206

THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN MADE FROM INFORMATION FURNISHED TOGETHER WITH EVIDENCE FOUND ON THE GROUND AND IS CERTIFIED TO
LAWYERS TITLE INSURANCE CORPORATION / CROSSTATE TITLE AGENCY, Inc.
CHRISTINE M. DALENA, Esq.,
SKYLANDS COMMUNITY BANK, and its successors or assigns as their name may appear

THIS CERTIFICATION IS MADE SPECIFICALLY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL(S) IN THE TITLE AND/OR THE CERTIFICATION THE UNDERSIGNED WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE OR LIABLE FOR ANY ASSIGNMENT OF THIS SURVEY, THROUGH A SURVEY AFFIDAVIT TO ANY PERSON NOT SO NAMED

DATED APRIL 5, 1995

John Hooyman, Jr.
NJ LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR NO. 13921

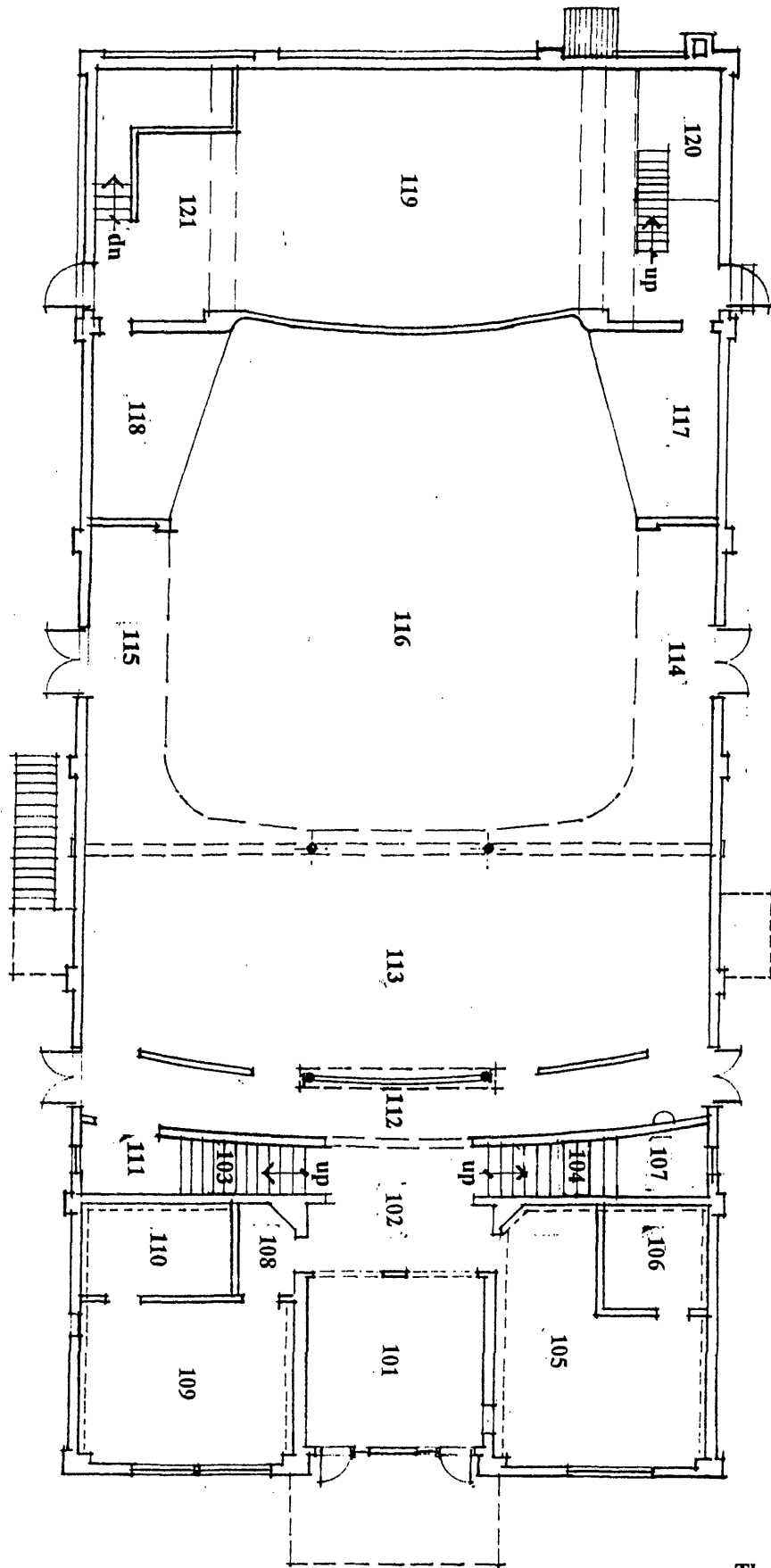
SURVEY MAP PREPARED FOR AND CERTIFIED TO

THE GROWING STAGE THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES, Inc., A NEW JERSEY CORPORATION

BOROUGH OF NETCONG
MORRIS COUNTY NEW JERSEY

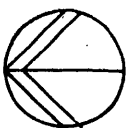
SCALE
1" = 30'
BOOK
PAGE

JOHN HOOYMAN, JR.
HOOYMAN SURVEYING ASSOCIATES
P.O. BOX 83 WYCKOFF N.J. 07481
PHONE & FAX • 201-891-4340

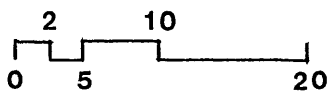


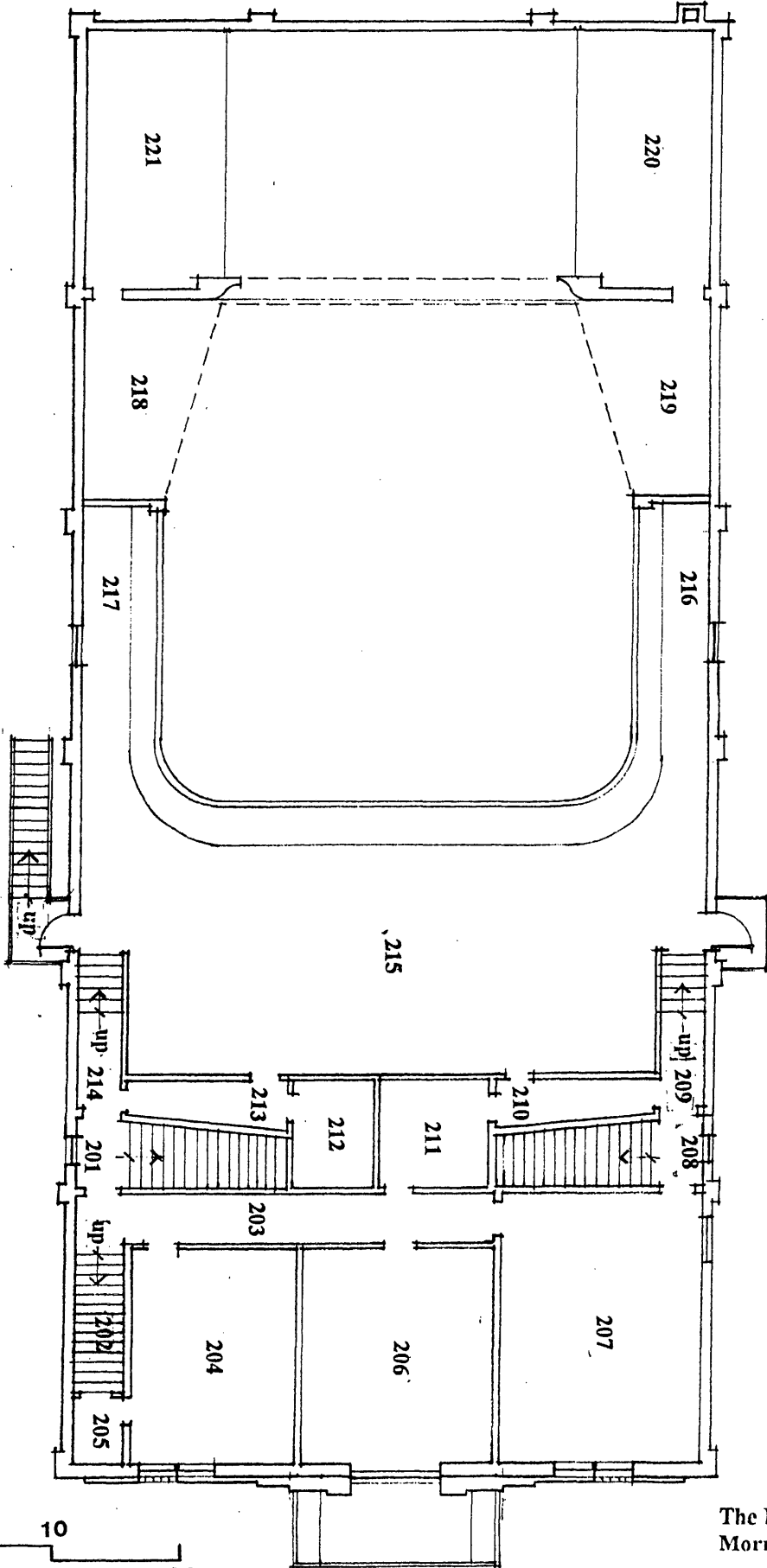
The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Main Floor



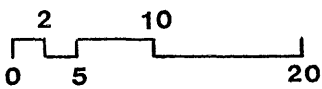
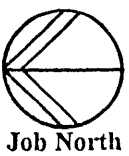
Job North

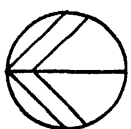
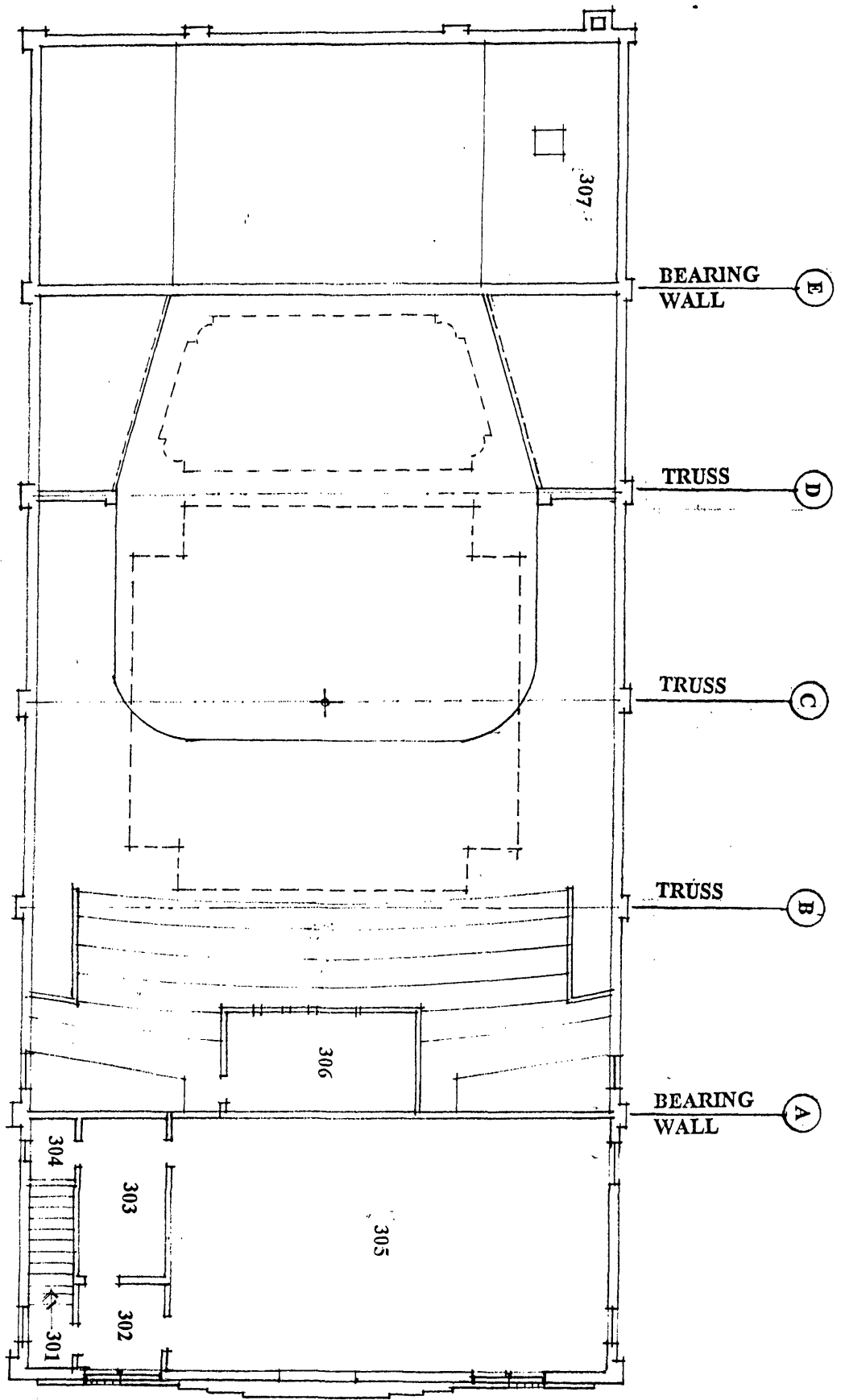




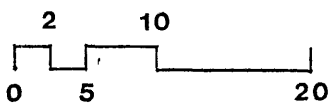
The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Second Floor





Job North

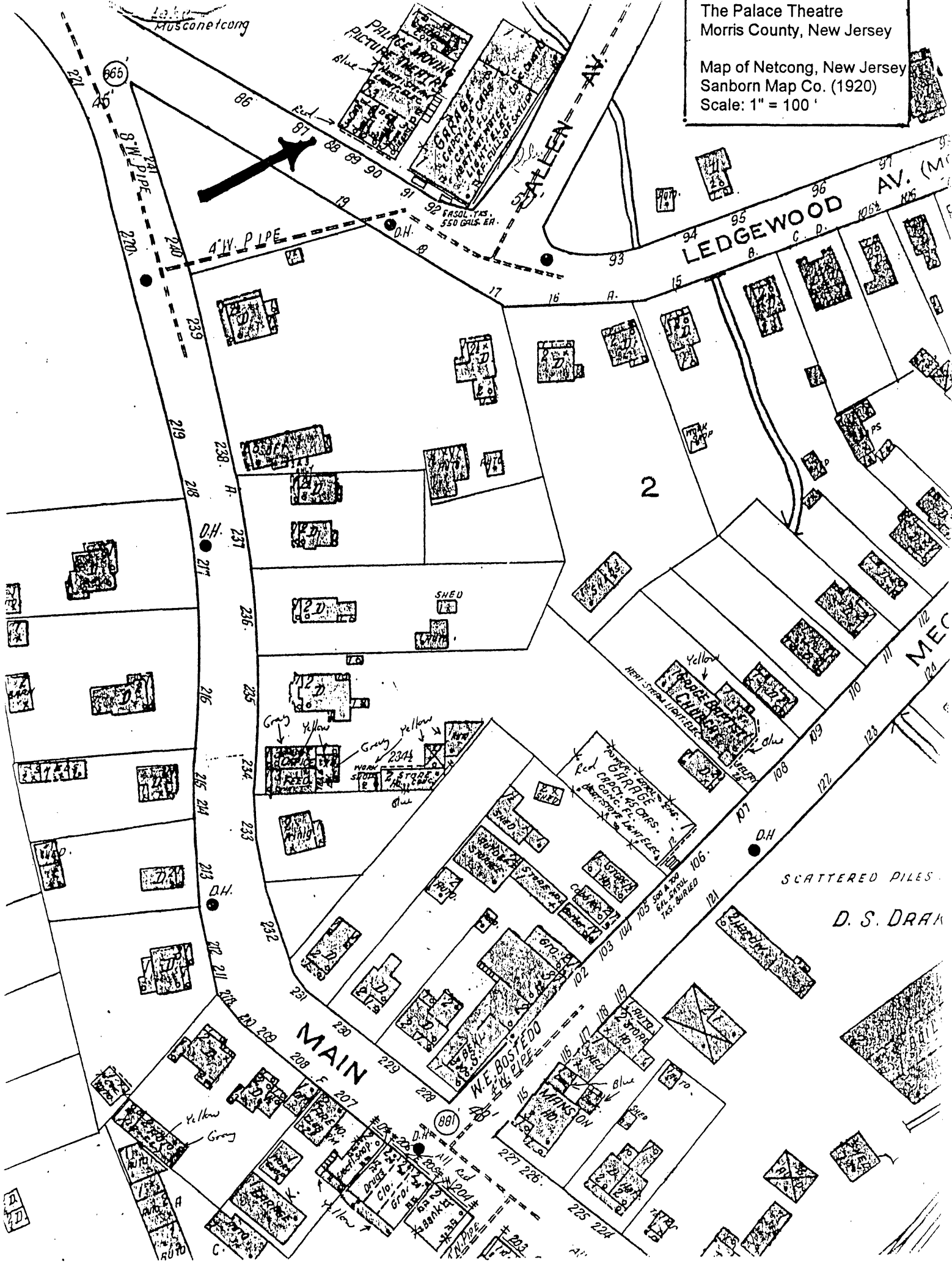


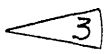
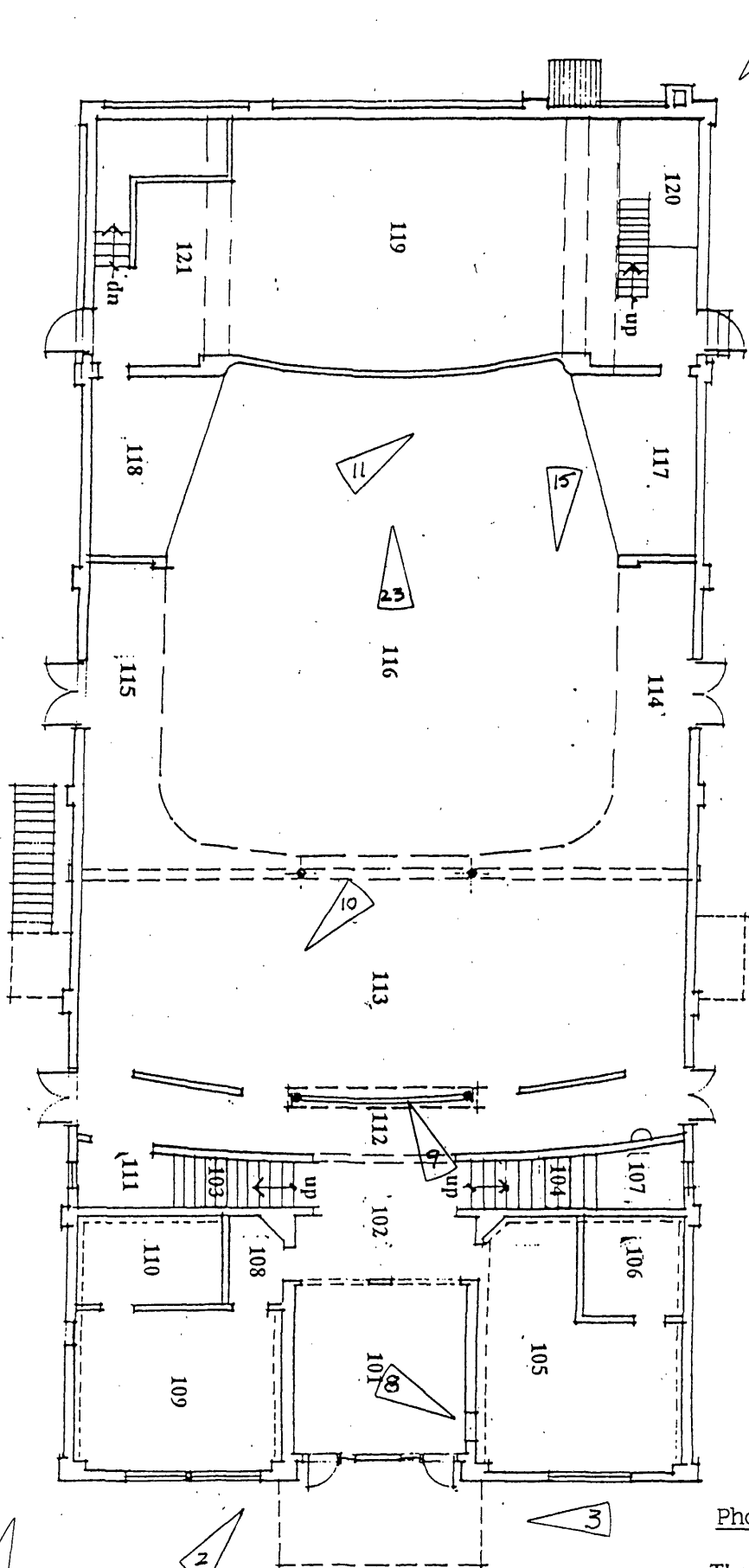
The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Third Floor

The Palace Theatre
 Morris County, New Jersey

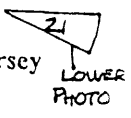
Map of Netcong, New Jersey
 Sanborn Map Co. (1920)
 Scale: 1" = 100'



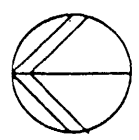
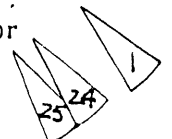


Photograph Orientation

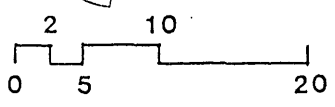
The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

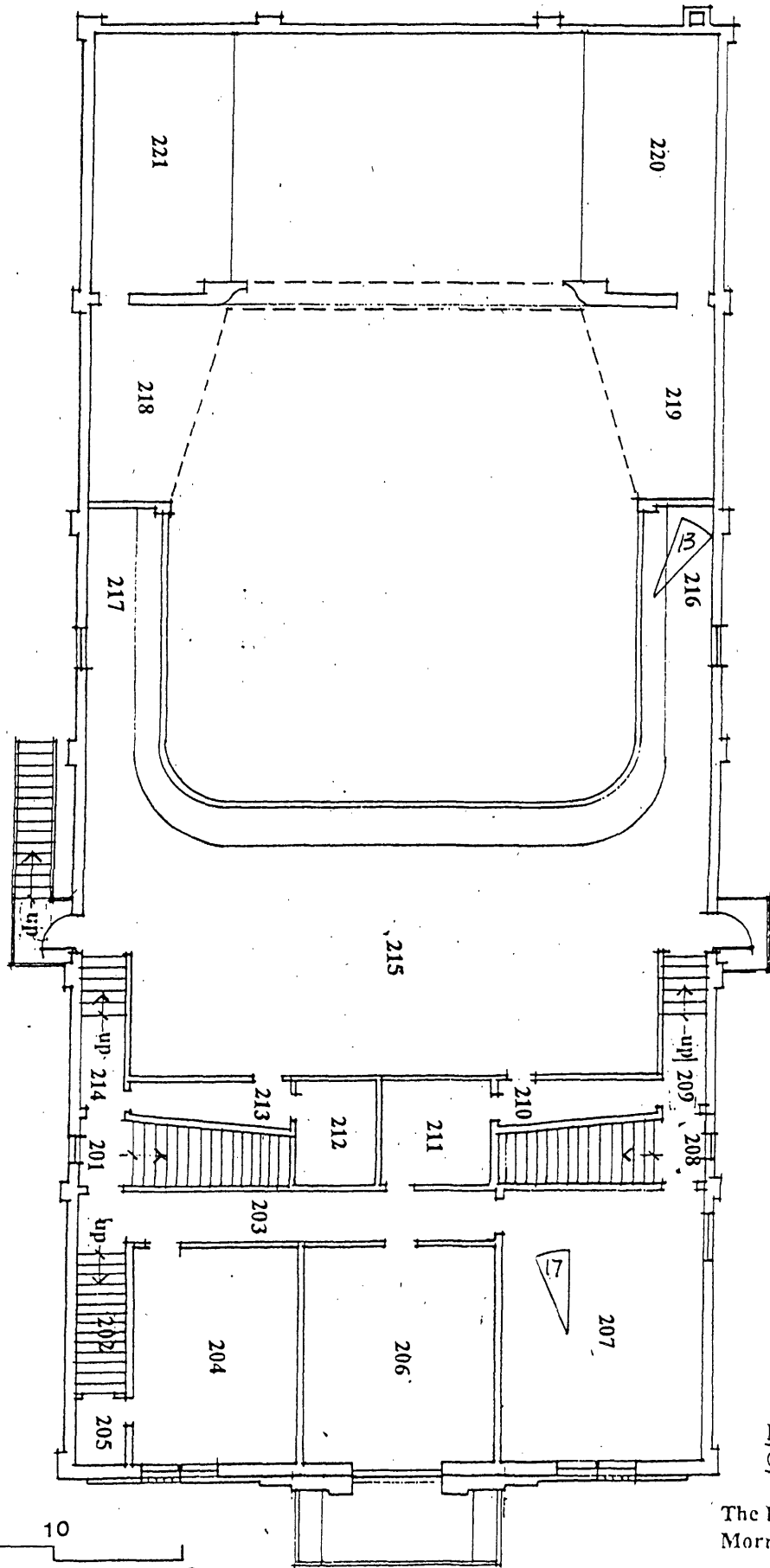


Main Floor



Job North





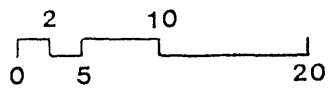
Photograph
Orientation

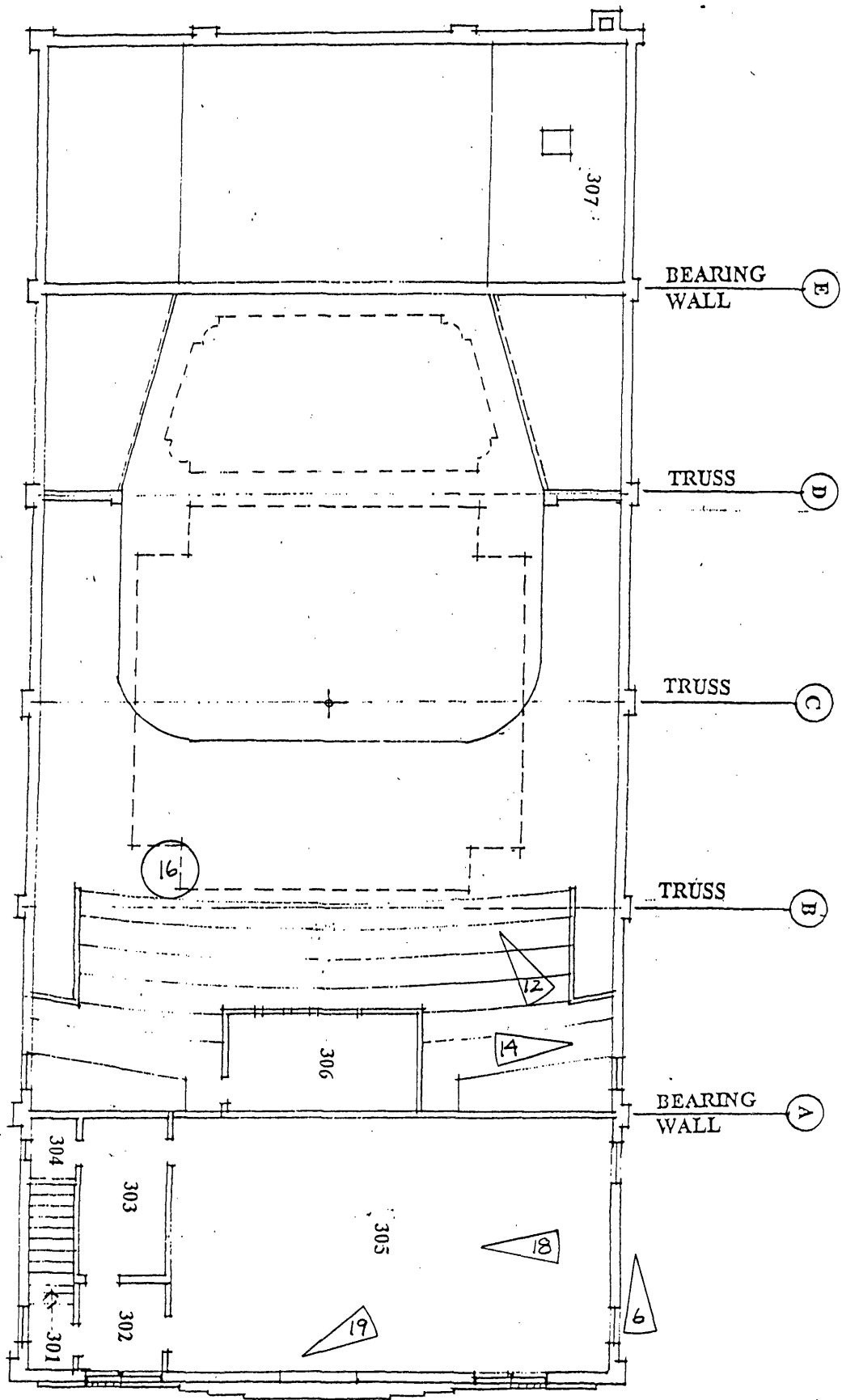
The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Second Floor



Job North

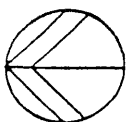




Photograph Orientation

The Palace Theatre
Morris County, New Jersey

Third Floor



Job North

