

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See Instructions In *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Golden Gate Theater

and/or common Golden Gate Theater/Vega Building

2. Location

street & number 5170-5188 E. Whittier ^{Bvd.} ~~Boulevard~~ _____ not for publication

city, town Los Angeles _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 25th

state California _____ code 06 _____ county Los Angeles _____ code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. James N. Angelopoulos, et.al.

street & number 937 S. Atlantic Blvd.

city, town Los Angeles, 90022 _____ vicinity of _____ state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles County Hall of Records

street & number 320 West Temple

city, town Los Angeles, _____ state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title California Historic Resources Inventory _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Sacramento _____ state California

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Golden Gate Theater/Vega Building is an eclectic Churrigueresque/Deco style complex of offices, shops, apartments, and playhouse, ranging from three to four stories in height. The ornament of the structure is an eclectic mix of Spanish details drawn from Renaissance Baroque and Churriguersque buildings. The entire complex is composed of three major elements. First, there is the "L" shaped Vega Building located on the corner of Whittier and Atlantic Boulevards. Consisting of a four story octagonal tower flanked by three story south and west wings. Second, there is the Golden Gate Theatre consisting of a three story structure with basement. Third, a courtyard is formed by the Vega and Golden Gate Theatre structures whereby the Golden Gate Theatre is located within the "L" shaped configuration and slightly south of the Vega Building.

The most prominent element of the complex is the Vega Building's four-story octagonal tower situated on the intersection of Atlantic and Whittier Boulevards. The tower is engaged on five of its eight sides to the south and west wings of the building. On the second floor of the tower are three arched doorways, one centered on each of the three street intersection-exposed octagonal sides. Each arched doorway has a glass transform and double doors with glass panels. A wrought iron railing is part of the tower's street exposed balcony. The third floor of the tower has small windows centered above each second floor doorway. Above these windows is a molded belt course from which vertical stucco ribs run to the band of bas relief stucco ornament at the top of the tower. The vertical ribs create rectangular frames that surround patera. Stucco pilasters attached to the corners of the octagon run from just above the ^{third story} window level to the roof of the tower. The flattened conical roof of the tower is capped with an octagonal lantern (cupola) containing open archways and a flattened conical roof.

The west wing is a two story structure attached to the tower at its east end. The center of the first floor is dominated by a twenty-six foot wide segmental arch that opens into an arcade. A three sided marquee lies immediately above the central segmental arched entrance. There are two segmental arches on each side of the central archway. Beneath each segmental arch are glass transforms, glass walls, and a glass door. Each arch area forms the showcase window for individual storefronts. On the second floor of the west wing are seven flat window openings and eight pairs of french doors with iron balconets. There are four french doors immediately above a molded projecting cornice that lies above the three sided marquee. The entire wall directly above the cornice projects slightly outward from the first floor wall. There are two french doors at the extreme east and west ends of the structure. Decorative stucco pilasters flank the east and west ends of the two central french doors. Above these french doors are two bas relief squares. Above these two squares of bas relief there is a molded projecting cornice that defines the roofline of the structure. Immediately above this cornice, within the expanse of the marquee, is a parapet that rises above the structure's hipped roof. The bas relief panels set into the parapet are composed of alternating pilasters and patera that are topped by a molded projecting cornice.

The south wing is very similar to the north wing. The marquee and stucco bas relief above the arcade entranceway are identical to those described for the Whittier Boulevard entranceway. The differences between the south and west wing include the following: (1) aside from the four french doors immediately above the marquee, there are no other pairs of french doors along the second story; (2) there are only two segmental arches to the south of the central segmental arched entranceway to the arcade; and (3) to the north of the central arch on the first floor is a narrow arch with a glass transform and glass door that leads to an access stair case for the apartments on the second floor and third floors.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1927 **Builder/Architect** Balch Brothers-Architect
 Vega Corporation-Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Golden Gate Theatre is the most monumental secular building complex in unincorporated East Los Angeles. It is significant not only for its size and architecture, but also for its physical and social interrelationship with the surrounding community. The building complex is well-known and has always been considered a landmark by local residents since it was built. The Golden Gate Theatre and Vega Building complex retain much of their significant architectural integrity and design intent. Many of the structures' important decorative design elements are well preserved and require minimal restoration. The alterations on the first floor of Guadalajara Jewelers have disturbed the symmetry of the structure's south wing but have not detracted from the architectural uniqueness and impressiveness of this property as it relates to the community. The large theatre with its elaborate facade and interiors, reflects a period in history when cinema houses were movie palaces capable of producing complimentary live acts.

Constructed in 1927 by the Vega Corporation, P.N. Snyder, the president and original owner, envisioned a Spanish Renaissance design. Plans by the Balch Brothers, prominent theatre architects in Southern California during the pre-World War II era, called for the entrance to replicate the portal of the University of Salamanca in Spain. The theater was designed both as a legitimate playhouse, seating 1,500 and a movie house with the most up-to-date equipment. Total construction costs were \$500,000 for the complex. The original 12 stores, also of Spanish design, were housed on the first floor of the Vega Building. The courtyard contained two fountains of decorative Spanish tile. Interior designs were created by A.B. Heinsberger of the Heinsberger Decorating Company, famous for their contributions to the interiors of the Los Angeles City Hall and the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood. Lighting was created by Julius Dietzmann's Ironcraft Works, and ornamental wrought iron was created by Winter Ironworks. Original projection motor generator sets were manufactured by Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, while Consolidated Steel Corporation contributed the building's structural steel.

The Vega Building and Golden Gate Theatre have changed very little in terms of its present use and intended use when the structure was built over fifty years ago. The shops have always included small-scale service-oriented businesses such as tailor, shoe repair, barber, photography, drug store, and other similar shops. Over the years these businesses have been sold to new proprietors, but the nature and scale of the shops have remained the same. The apartments on the second and third floors are small bachelor or one-bedroom apartments that provide housing for approximately fifty elderly and low-income family residents. The theatre first presented silent films, hence there was an organ console and orchestra pit. With the advent of sound pictures, organs and orchestra pits became obsolete. In the case of the Golden Gate Theatre, the orchestra pit was eventually filled with a concrete platform staircase. However, the theatre's early years experienced variety acts programed in between film screenings, as was common during the twenties and thirties. During the sixties, there were occasional rock concerts and when box office receipts sagged, there was even an amateur variety series before film screenings to attract a larger audience. Since the sixties, the theatre

9. Major Bibliographical References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

(SEE ATTACHED)

AERIAL NOT VERIFIED

RECORDED

AUG 13 1980

OHP

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .8 acres

Quadrangle name Los Angeles

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>1</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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

state	<u>n/a</u>	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title GELA Cultural Heritage Survey Team

organization TELACU/CRG

date August 25, 1980

street & number 5327 E. Valley Boulevard

telephone (213) 225-0085

city or town Los Angeles, 90032

state California

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

K. Mellon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-13-81

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Dona M. Doyle
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/2/82

Attest:

Chief of Historic Preservation

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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The first floor of the tower structure and first floor south wing adjacent to the tower houses Guadalajara Jewelers and was physically altered in May of 1977. The exterior of the tower and first floor south wing adjacent to the tower has been restuccoed with a coarse stucco that is radically different from the original smooth stucco used throughout the complex. The symmetry of the segmental arches has been broken with the Guadalajara Jewelers alterations. Instead of the wide segmental arches on each side of the arcade entranceway, the layout of the showcase windows were changed to meet the needs of the jewelry store. The altered showcase windows are small, eye-level, security-designed and evenly spaced.

The Golden Gate Theatre first floor facade is composed of rusticated stonework at the base. Above the rusticated stonework lies a band of elaborate stucco bas relief that defines the upper stories along the facade of the structure. In the center of the first floor facade are three double doors with projecting arched porticos over each door. The center bay encompassing the three central double doors projects slightly forward. Within the central bay, encompassing the three central double doors, and above the band of elaborate stucco bas relief, rests a large arched window and balconet. On either side of the arched window are decorative pilasters and a decorated band frames the upper portions of the arch. Above the central arched window is an arched niche with a balconet. The upper portion of the niche's arch is surrounded by a band of parapet bas relief that extends across the entire central bay. The parapet rises higher than the rest of the theatre's frontage facade to denote the entrance. The entire facade is articulated with vertical ribs that run from the bas relief just above the rusticated stonework to a band of bas relief topped by a projecting molded cornice on either side of the bay's parapet. The exterior sides and rear of the theatre are of cast concrete. There are side exit doors and an iron staircase on the side walls that lead from the mezzanine and balcony levels of the theatre. The stage portion of the theatre has a 24 foot deep fly space that rises above the theatre's roof.

The interior of the theatre consists of a first floor entrance lobby, displaying a variety of ornate art deco elements, including tile water fountains with fish in silver and gold over them and recessed ceilings with floral patterns. A giant sea shell in the center of the lobby contains the concession stand. Towards the rear of this sea shell concession stand are winding stairways that lead to the mezzanine and balcony levels. The lobby of the second floor maintains the recessed ceilings with floral patterns. Square support columns and pilasters are topped with modillian-like capitals. Art deco lamp shades are centrally located in the center of each rectangular recessed ceiling section. The orchestra level seating is divided by four aisles with two squares columns supporting the mezzanine level. The mezzanine level forms a horseshoe halfway around the theatre. Above the mezzanine is a walkway with stairs leading to the balcony level seats. The interior walls of the theatre are plain. All decorative efforts are focused on the square proscenium. To either side of the proscenium are curved projecting elements that connect the proscenium frame with the interior side walls. In each bay is an arched exit doorway and above these are pseudo-boxes surrounded with elaborate bas relief. A band of bas relief tops the front and side walls. The recessed ceiling has floral patterns similar to the lobby in between the ribs that run from side to side.

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There was an alteration to the rear exterior wall of the theatre in April of 1975. When repairing fire damage to the stage area the rear stage door was sealed off with concrete blocks. Also, from observing historic photographs and interviews, it is clear that the theatre once had an orchestra pit, however data as to exactly when the orchestra pit was filled in with concrete curved platform stairs could not be secured.

The west wing arcade consists of a detached art deco box office/ticket booth. To either side of this detached ticket booth are two arches identical to the archways on the west wing's facade. These arches have transoms, walls and doors made of glass. These arches provide ample storefront showcase area for the shops housed on the first floor of the west wing. The arcade of the south wing has plain walls and no arches or shop windows. Instead, the south wing arcade has poster frames evenly spaced along its walls. The ceilings of both arcades are identical and display bare support ribs. The arcades lead into a courtyard in front of the theatre. The courtyard has concrete slab flooring. At one time there were two fountains within the courtyard, but they have been removed. The Specific date of this modification could not be secured.

The building complex composed of the Golden Gate Theatre and Vega Building has, despite alteration, retained its sense of time and place. The majority of its structural features including its configuration, detailing, and decorative elements have been unaltered. As a result, the building has clearly retained its sense of architectural integrity and original design intent.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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has screened movies that were already six to twelve months old or revivals. Since the mid-seventies, all films have been screened with Spanish subtitles thus reflecting a community where easily half of its residents are immigrants from Mexico. The theatre also observes marketing policies similar to other neighboring Spanish-speaking cinema houses such as "two for one" on certain week nights, keno, etc. The theatre currently attracts a steady audience from the local area.

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Architectural Digest V.7, p. 144. Fischer, Naomi (interview). Learn, Margaret (interview 8/25/80). Los Angeles County Assessors Roll, 1978 (5245-001-019). Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, East Area Office Commercial Industrial Property - Region 25. Los Angeles Evening Express "Yearbook", 1928, p.23. Los Angeles Examiner: "New building to rise soon in East Side," 4/4/1926, pt. IV. p.4; "New theatre contract let", 12/18/27, pt. IV., p.5. Los Angeles Times: "East side gets structure", 2/13/27, pt. V., p.2; "Millions being expended for Southland theatres", 12/18/27, pt. V., p.1. Palmer, Edwin; History of Hollywood, V.2, p. 307. Sanborn Maps, Southwest Builder and Contractor 2/11/27, p.52, 3/21/30, p.49.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A rectangular parcel, beginning at the intersection of the southerly line of Whittier Boulevard and easterly line of Atlantic Boulevard, proceed south 231' along said line of Atlantic Boulevard, then west 140', then north 231', then east 140' along said line of Whittier Boulevard to point of beginning. See map book 5246, p. 6, parcel 4, in Los Angeles County Assessor's Office.

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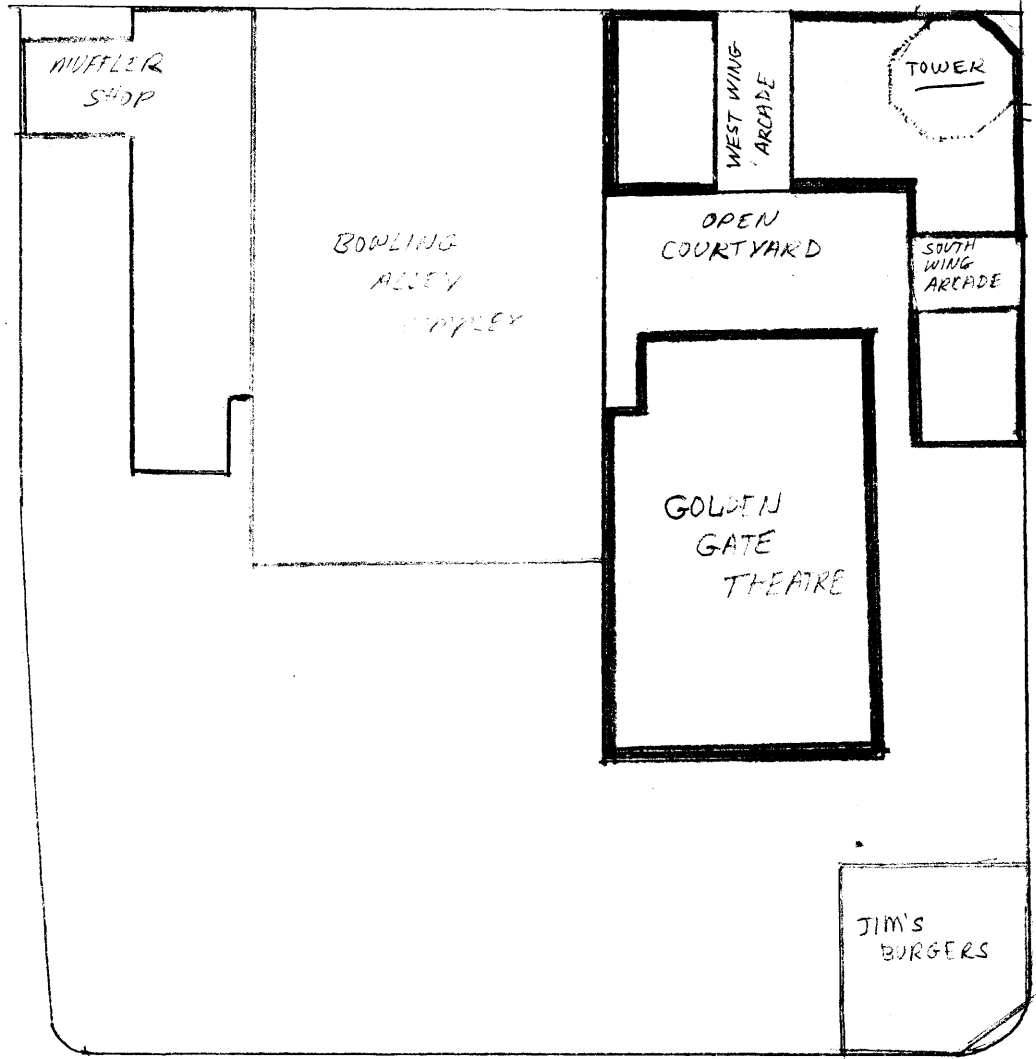
Sketch map of the Vega Building and Golden Gate Theatre.

Scale: 1/32" = 2 feet



WHITTIER BLVD.

← VEGA BLDG WEST WING →



↑ VEGA BLDG. SO. WING ↓

ATLANTIC BLVD.

SPOON HILLS

EAST SAINT LOUIS PLACE

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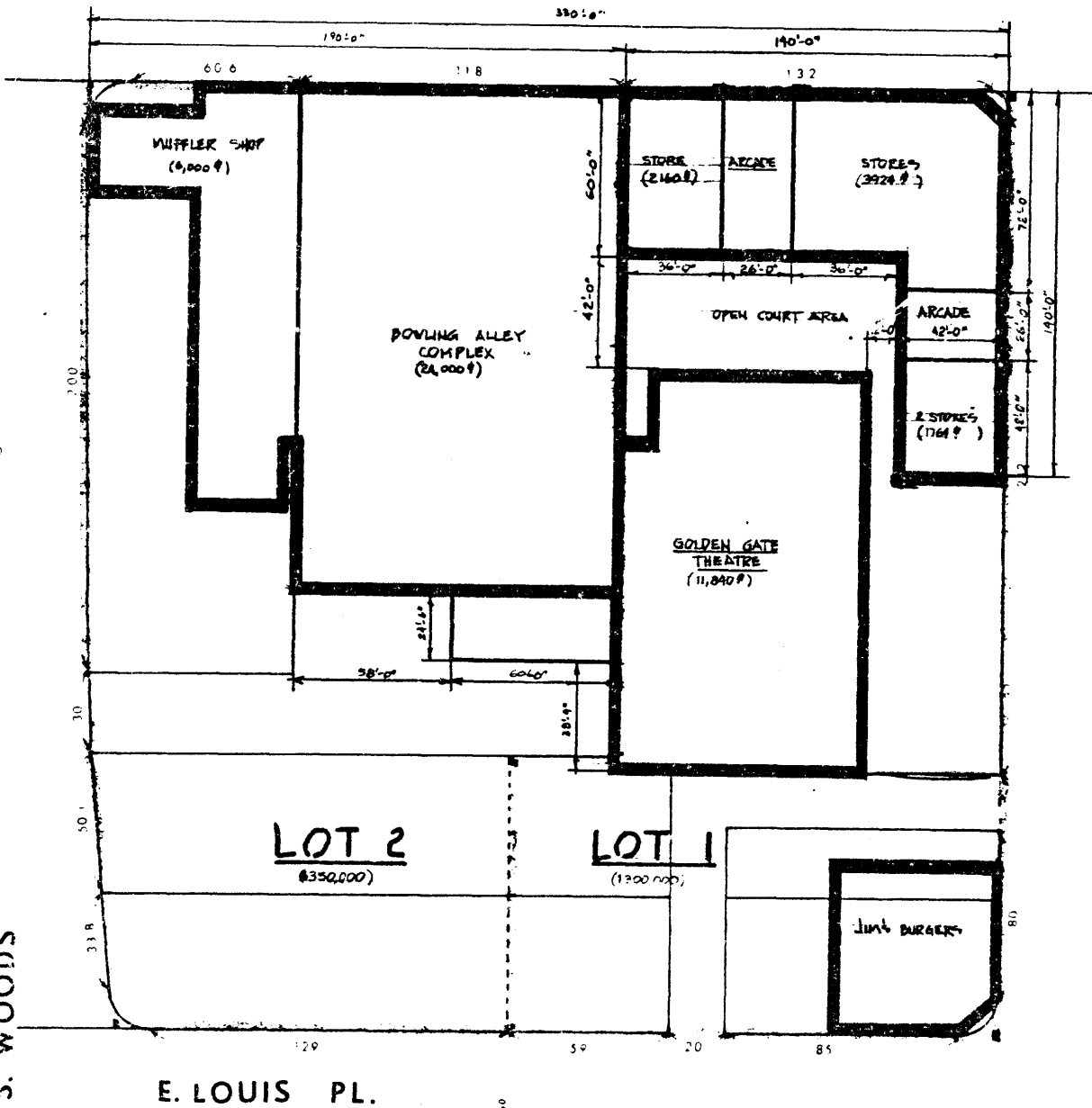
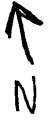
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SKETCH MAP OF STRUCTURE AND SITE

WHITTIER BLVD.



ATLANTIC BLVD.

S. WOODS

E. LOUIS PL.