

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1122



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Poli's Palace Theatre

other names/site number Showcase Cinema; Franklin Sq. Theatre; Grand Theatre; The Hanover Theatre

2. Location

street & number 2 Southbridge Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Worcester

☐ vicinity

state MA code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01608

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Brona Simon

November 16, 2010

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, SHPO, MHC

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain):

for Edison H. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

1-10-11

Date of Action

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Name of Property

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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	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
Worcester, MA, MRA, 1980

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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.)

BEAUX ARTS

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK

walls: BRICK, TERRA COTTA, GLASS, METAL

roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber

other:

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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	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

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other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Poli's Palace Theatre in Worcester consists of the remnants of the former 1904 Franklin Square Theatre façade and entrance lobby, the 1926 Classical Revival theater interior designed by Thomas W. Lamb and commissioned by Sylvester A. Poli, and an entrance lobby and stage extension constructed in 2008. The narrow terra-cotta Beaux Arts, 1904 façade at 2 Southbridge Street (Historic photo and Photos 1, 3) contains the original upper story terra-cotta arch and spandrels, ornamented with shields, wreaths, ribbons, and sea monster heads in bas relief. Corinthian columns frame the façade, the frieze is enriched with floral ornament in higher relief, and the cornices are 2008 reproductions.

The 1926 Thomas Lamb interior retains the two-story inner lobby (Photos 6, 7), the mezzanine promenade (Photo 5), and balcony (Photo 7) with original features such as railings, chandeliers, molded plaster ornament, Ionic columns, mirrored wall panels, ornamental ceiling grilles, molded arches, and medallions. The inner lobby features the original scagliola (marbleized) finish on the west wall, a sweeping stair with a curved, cast-iron, open-work balustrade (Photo 7), and the colonnaded east wall with small saucer domes in the arches (Photo 6). The mezzanine promenade (Photo 5) is framed by Doric columns, supporting an elliptical vault with original ceiling medallions. The balcony walls, enriched by arches with cove molding, and the main ceiling above the balcony with a delicately ornamented saucer dome, are all original (Photos 9, 10). The lobby chandeliers (Photo 6) and the three-tiered main chandelier in the auditorium (Photo 12) are original. New paint finishes highlight the ornamental plaster and extensive moldings, which enliven all of the theatre surfaces.

Despite changes over time, the theater retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as an elaborate palace-type theater. A 2008 rehabilitation of the theater restored the missing elements on the 1904 façade, reestablished the original volumes of the 1926 theater (which had been subdivided into multiple theaters), restored the missing detail at the lower portion of the walls at the orchestra level, and reconstructed the proscenium arch, proscenium boxes, and the dress circle of the balcony, which had been removed.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Site and Building Massing

The former Poli's Palace Theatre sits on a lot that is approximately trapezoidal in plan, bordered by Southbridge Street to the west, by Burnside Court (a private paved road/drive) to the south, by a parking lot to the east, and by a building on Southbridge Street and a parking lot to the north. (See First Floor Plan, 2010) The lot is not much larger than the footprint of the building. The north border of the site is irregular, jogging around the irregular walls on this elevation. The grade slopes down slightly from north to south along Southbridge Street. The building sits at the sidewalk along Southbridge Street and along Burnside Court.

Now called the Hanover Theatre, the building has four parts. (See First Floor Plan, 2010) The original 1904 entrance façade and entrance lobby is at the northwest corner of the site (A); south of that is the entrance and entrance lobby completed in 2008 (B). The Thomas Lamb-designed theater (1926) is at the center of the site (C), and the L-shaped portion that forms the east and northeast sections was completed in 2008 (D).

The narrow 1904 facade on Southbridge Street (A) (Photo 3), the original 1904 theater entrance, provided access to an entrance corridor, which led east toward the theater that was oriented north-south. A three-story office building, trapezoidal in plan, fronting on Southbridge Street was replaced in 2008, with an entirely new structure (B) containing the entrance, ticket lobby, elevator, and upper lobby (Photo 1). Behind (east of) these sections, the theater then steps up in

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one, two, and three stories in various volumes as it extends back toward the auditorium, which is the tallest section of the building. These volumes, enclosing the former fan room, projection booth, the main auditorium, and at the rear, the stage house, are built of red brick, with terra-cotta coping at the top of the walls. East of the stage house is (Section D) the 2008 stage extension and the new green room, which replaces the 1926 green room.

EXTERIOR

Section A

As part of the 2008 rehabilitation, a 1968 brick façade was removed to reveal the 1904 terra cotta façade of the former Franklin Square Theatre. (Illustration 1 and Photos 1, 3). The terra-cotta facade has a 1½-story arched window opening, framed by a molded arch embellished with ribbons framing individual light sockets. Ornamental spandrels below the arch have shields and floral ornament in bas-relief. The spandrels above the arch are enriched with wreaths, ribbons, and fantastical sea monster heads, and are framed in egg-and-dart molding. Centered above the arch is a projecting keystone ornamented with an acanthus leaf. Light sockets with bulbs frame the arch and the façade. The large arched window at one time held stained glass, but there is no historic glass remaining in the window. Set within the monumental arch are paired, round-arched windows, with a central oculus above. A small triangle of stained glass remains between the two round-arched windows. The monumental columns framing the façade were reproduced in fiberglass-reinforced plastic (FRP), based on early photographs. The heavily ornamented frieze has floral ornament in higher relief, above which are a dentil band, shallow brackets, and a cornice, all of which also were reproduced in FRP. The frieze was based on remnants of the original that had been chipped, and the cornice was based on photographs. An upper pedimented parapet, also removed in 1968, has not been reproduced. The paired center doors and curved storefronts at the first story were constructed in 2008.

Section C

The secondary 1926 elevations (north and south walls, and upper west wall of the auditorium) are built of red brick (Photo 4). The building steps up in various volumes as it extends back toward the auditorium, which is the tallest section of the building. This area houses the mechanical and control rooms, and the main auditorium. At the rear is the stage house.

Section B

The 2008 lobby/entrance building is sheathed in cast-stone veneer, with monumental pilasters framing bays of glass and aluminum curtain wall construction (Photo 1). The façade of this section is divided into four bays and a southwest bay that turns the corner on Burnside Court. The entrance is sheltered by a broad marquee, and is located toward the south end of the Southbridge Street façade.

Section D

The stage extension and the new green room are sheathed in an insulated metal panel set on a concrete foundation. (Photo 4)

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INTERIOR

Founders' Room

The former location of offices at the second floor of the 1904 Franklin Square Theatre has been rehabilitated for use as the Founders' Room, a lounge. The west wall is dominated by the oversized round-arched window framed by pilasters (Photo 13). The dentil cornice was retained and replicated to complete the room. The Founders' Room is entered through an inglenook consisting of a built-in bench on the north wall and a fireplace on the south, both framed by Ionic columns in antis on tall pedestals. The walls above are enriched with molded panels. The fireplace has a turquoise tile surround and a green tile hearth.

Outer Lobby and Ticket Lobby

The 2008 lobby/entrance building houses the box office at the south end. A few steps bring you up to the outer lobby, which is all new construction. An upper lobby at the mezzanine level has a glass railing and overlooks the outer lobby below (Photo 14).

Inner Lobby

Immediately east of the 2008 outer lobby is the 1926 inner lobby. (Photo 5) It is a long, narrow rectangle in plan, two stories in height, running north-south. The south end incorporates a sweeping grand staircase trimmed with cast-iron railings in a swirling classical vine motif. The quarter-turn stair with a landing runs along the west and south walls of the lobby reaching the mezzanine promenade and the balcony level (Photo 7).

The west wall at the first floor of the lobby is finished in scagliola (marbleizing) with medallions in low relief set high in the wall. (Photos 6, 7) The original finish was revealed when the covering paint started to peel and was removed during the rehabilitation. At the east wall, the original arcade remains with basket-handle arches and medallions in the spandrels of the arches. A band ornamented with Greek fret runs around the lobby at the level of the second floor.

At the second floor, fluted pilasters frame the bays at the north, west, and south walls, while columns mark the bays along the east wall. (Photo 6, 7) A frieze, cove cornice, and the ceiling are all ornamented in floral and classical motifs in low relief. The north, south, and west walls have mirrored panels divided by muntins, and an ornamental open-cut iron balustrade with a wood rail matching the stair. The same balustrade and rail span between the columns on the east wall. Views of the theatre when it was completed show wood railings with square balusters at the mezzanine promenade, indicating that the iron railings were installed later. The ceiling bays contain octagonal, ornamental ventilation grilles. Three original crystal chandeliers have been restored and reinstalled.

At the south end of the 1926 lobby, steps lead down to three pairs of egress doors. Over the doors are stained glass exit signs, set in a frieze ornamented with Adamesque detail. Several similar exit signs set in a similar frieze are found inside the auditorium. Some are original, and some are reproductions meant to be compatible with the originals.

Mezzanine Promenade

The mezzanine promenade runs parallel to the 1926 lobby (Photo 5). Its west wall, defined by tall Doric columns, overlooks the two-story lobby. An ornamental cast-iron balustrade matching the stair spans between the columns. Its east wall has corresponding Doric columns in antis, supporting a paneled beam with a soffit ornamented in low relief. The molded wall panels have notched corners and a low chair rail below. The elliptical-vaulted ceiling has medallions and suspended ceiling vents. Marble stairs lead from the northwest corner and the southwest corner of the mezzanine to the upper balcony level. The men's and women's toilets entered from the mezzanine were installed in 2008, at approximately the same location as the original toilet rooms.

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Auditorium

Early photographs (Illustration 2) and the original drawings indicate that the auditorium extended to the arcade at the east wall of the lobby. According to the 1926 Thomas Lamb drawings, the entire theater held 2,908 seats, not including the proscenium boxes. Alterations in 1968 and 1973 relocated the back wall of the orchestra level to the east (at its existing location), installing new toilets and a projection booth inside what had been the rear of the old auditorium, and creating a north-south corridor east of the original rear wall of the orchestra level. The slope of the auditorium floor was raised, adjusting to the new rear wall of the auditorium. The present location of the back of the auditorium and the auditorium floor slope are presently at the 1968 configuration. The original arch detail, ceiling medallions, and ceiling molding are still visible in the corridor along the former back wall of the auditorium (Photo 7). The side walls of the orchestra level have arches with fabric panels framed by paneled piers. These were rebuilt in 2008, based on some remnants and on early photographs.

The balcony contains a three-row dress circle at the front of the balcony and two crossover aisles (Photo 11). Four stepped aisles run up the height of the balcony to egress doors in the rear wall. Two stairs lead down to the mezzanine from either end of the second crossover. The lower balcony is reached by two vomitories that lead off of the east side of the mezzanine promenade to the first crossover. At the balcony, the two existing vomitory openings are rimmed by an original heavy wood balustrade, and the molded panels on the vomitory walls are original.

The balcony walls have blind round arches that rise up to a cove ceiling (Photo 10). A large, shallow, saucer dome defines the entire main ceiling (Photo 9). The auditorium ceiling remains intact, including its Adamesque bas-relief plaster moldings, medallion ceiling vents, ceiling grilles, and the central chandelier, which once was raised and lowered to avoid obstructing views from the balcony. The chandelier was restored, the missing lowest tier of the chandelier was rebuilt, and it is installed at the center of the ceiling (Photo 12). Gilding, contrasting paint colors, and ornamental painting were also used to highlight the moldings at the walls and ceilings. The arch that spans the theatre behind the proscenium boxes (and in front of the balcony) is original (Photos 10, 11). Everything forward (east) of that arch was built in 2008.

The proscenium arch and proscenium boxes were reconstructed during the 2008 rehabilitation based on the original drawings and historic photographs (Photos 8, 10). The lower three rows of the balcony (dress circle) had been removed and also were rebuilt. All of the theater seats, fabrics, and carpets are new, installed in 2008. The stage, which had been removed, was rebuilt. The front (west) edge of the stage was rebuilt at the location of the original, an orchestra pit was rebuilt at the location of the original, and the depth of the stage was increased (the back wall was moved to the east) to meet the requirements of contemporary performances.

Stage and Green Room

The stage house extension and green room are all new construction (2008). The stage has a tall fly loft, wings, and equipment all suited to contemporary performance theatres. The green room is entered from the north wall of the stage. It has all new finishes and fixtures.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known on the theater property, it is possible that sites are present. One ancient site is recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the area represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. This part of Worcester is classified as urban land, consisting of buildings, shopping centers, roads, and parking lots in the built-up part of the city. More generalized soil maps for this portion of Worcester County, however, classify the theater locale as an excessively drained urban area on an outwash plain glacial landscape. A small unnamed pond is located within 1,000 feet northeast of the theater, in a park east of the Worcester City Hall.

In spite of the information presented above, the potential for locating significant archaeological resources, both ancient Native American and historic, on the theater property is low. Any potential cultural resources that predate the 1904-2008

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period were destroyed by the original construction and later renovations to the theater as it exists today. Worcester atlases show several buildings at this location as early as 1886; however, little is known about their construction, function, and demolition. Construction of Poli's Palace Theatre, which covers nearly the entire nominated property, would have destroyed most or all archaeological evidence of the historic structures discussed above, and earlier potential ancient Native American sites.

(end)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance

1904 – 1960

Significant Dates

1904 (construction of Franklin Sq. Theatre)

1926 (opening of Poli's Palace Theatre)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Thomas W. Lamb (interior only, 1926)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance extends from the date of construction of the first Franklin Square Theatre in 1904 to 1960, to allow for the standard 50 year cut-off, established to allow historical perspective. The theatre continued to function as a theatre during that time.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Poli's Palace Theatre meets criteria A and C for National Register listing at the local level. It meets criterion A as an excellent example of a "palace" theater, a large and luxurious building built for combined vaudeville/motion picture shows, a type which first appeared around 1912 or 1913. These grand theaters of 2,000 to 3,000 or more seats featured interiors that were as much of an attraction as the show itself. They featured imposing lobbies, awe-inspiring auditoriums and elaborate lounges that were grand in scale and trimmed with lavish detailing such as crystal chandeliers, elegant gilt painted ornament and abundant classical architectural features. As a jewel of Sylvester Z. Poli's New England theater chain, Poli's Palace was fully embraced by Worcester patrons for the "tasteful luxury of its appointments" and for its "theatrical architecture," typical of the palace theater, which transported attendees to an alternate reality of fantasy, suggestive of the surroundings associated with royalty. It is therefore significant as an important entertainment venue for the city of Worcester as well as part of Poli's successful theatrical empire.

The Poli's Palace Theatre meets criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an excellent example of the work of internationally known theater architect, Thomas W. Lamb. Poli's Palace Theatre is the oldest, largest, and architecturally the finest of three large vaudeville/motion picture theatres surviving in Worcester from the early 20th century heyday of American theater construction. The intact portions of its interior are representative of Lamb's work and are clearly in an architectural class above that of the surviving sections of the other two theaters. The lobby, mezzanine, and balcony can be counted among the most outstanding interior spaces in the city. Poli's Palace Theatre retains integrity through the retention of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is significant at the local level as a grand palace-type theater associated with mass entertainment in Worcester through most of the 20th century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Franklin Square Theatre, Predecessor to Poli's Palace Theatre

In about 1904, the Franklin Square Theatre was constructed on part of this site for Ransom C. Taylor, an owner of extensive Worcester real estate holdings. Worcester atlases show that Taylor owned several buildings at this location as early as 1886. It is not known precisely what caused those buildings to be demolished and a theater to be built here. Some time prior to his death in 1910, Mr. Taylor transferred ownership of the theater to his son, Willard, and daughter-in-law, Pauline L. Taylor. Pauline Taylor was listed in the real estate section of the Worcester House Directory as the owner as early as 1908. Taylor was also responsible for the construction in 1891 of an earlier theater in the city, Lothrop's Opera House, still standing at 17 Pleasant Street.

The Franklin Square Theatre is said to have seated 1,700 as a venue for legitimate theater. Set back from Southbridge Street, it was oriented with its stage to the south and had a narrow street entrance with a long west-east corridor leading from the street to the lobby on the north end of the theater. An undated early postcard view (see Illustration 1) shows the theater's elaborate entrance flanked by commercial buildings. The theater building had the same north-south dimension as the present theater. The walls of this earlier theater are incorporated into the north and south walls of the present building, but the lot was not very deep in the east-west direction, and the earlier building was only as wide as the distance from the west wall of the present grand staircase lobby to about where the eastern end of the balcony is today. At the time of its construction, there were no buildings between the 1904 theater and the street, except for an elaborate, light-colored terracotta, Beaux Arts-style entrance façade. The location of the entrance, listed in Worcester directories as 2 Southbridge Street, corresponds to the far left-hand side of the present facade. Sometime around 1915, a three-story commercial block was built by the next owner, S. Z. Poli, south of the main entrance along the street in front of the main body of the theater.

Known as the Poli Building when it was built, the commercial building was renamed the Grand Theatre Building in the 1920s, and the Palace Theatre Building after 1926, in keeping with the names of the theater over time. It was occupied by various small retail and office tenants. It seems there were six stores (4, 6, 8, 12, 14, and 16 Southbridge Street) and one office entrance to the upper floors (10 Southbridge Street). Retail tenants who leased space here at different times between

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1916 and 1930 included a confectionery, a saloon, a florist, a store selling men's furnishings, restaurants, a pawnbroker, a barber, and a loan company. During the same period, the offices at the second and third floors had a variety of small tenants, such as a tailor, an office for the Machinists Union, a dressmaker, a corset shop, a beauty shop, a jeweler, and Annie Anderson had her employment office here from 1916-1930. Also on the office floors were music teachers, a dance teacher, and Crosbie's Orchestra & Studio. By 1930, Poli's Palace had taken over the stores at 4-8 Southbridge for their enlarged lobby (where the large marquee was located), and 2 Southbridge had been converted to a store.

Sylvester Z. Poli, the Connecticut owner of a growing chain of New England theaters, bought the Franklin Square Theatre in 1912. Poli was no stranger to Worcester, since he had owned another theater here for several years. In 1905, he had built the Front Street Theatre on a downtown lot. When he bought the Franklin Square Theatre, he changed its name to the "Grand Theatre." The building continued to host the theatrical road shows that had been its mainstay, but the new owner also added his own "Poli Players," a stock company, to perform popular plays less expensively. Under his ownership, the theater was known for offering the best in "sensational" plays. In 1912, Poli also invested in a third theater in Worcester, when he bought a half-finished 2,600-seat theatre on Elm Street, quickly completed its construction, and began presenting high-class vaudeville acts there. His original Worcester venue on Front Street was then renamed the "Plaza Theatre" and was dedicated to movies and popular-priced vaudeville shows. Charles Nutt in his 1919 History of Worcester noted that where other theaters in the city had failed, Poli's houses were always crowded. Even though he owned three theaters here, every one of them was profitable.

Grand Remodeled as Poli's Palace Theatre

In 1925, Sylvester Poli undertook the complete remodeling of his Grand Theatre in Worcester. The new theater, opened in November of 1926, was known as Poli's Palace Theater (Illustration 3). Mr. Poli's stated philosophy on new theaters seems to explain much about his reasons for rebuilding the Grand Theatre:

(1) if you don't keep up with the trend of the times and if you let up on your work, someone else will step in and take your place. (2) if a city has patronized you, stay there and re-invest in that city, in most of the cities where I have theaters I went back and rebuilt three times. Where I could not find a good large location, I tore down the old structure and rebuilt on the same ground.

The architect for the remodeling was Thomas W. Lamb of New York, a leading theater designer of the day who had already planned several buildings for the Poli chain. Lamb had designed a similar conversion of an existing theater (1917) in New Haven, to a much larger theater, renamed Poli's Palace Theatre (no longer standing). As was true in New Haven, Lamb's remodeling required the demolition of almost the entire existing building, which was extended eastward and rearranged so that the stage was positioned at the east end. The new fireproof Worcester theater provided facilities both for stage performances and movies, and increased the seating capacity to more than 3,000. Contemporary descriptions of the newly constructed building claimed that it could seat 3,500. The seating capacity in later years was given as 3,200 or 3,100. However, the 1926 drawings showed 2,908 seats, not including the proscenium boxes. This renovation produced a highly ornate interior with gilded and painted plaster ornament, trim of marble and travertine, marbleized (scagliola) columns, mirrored walls, and crystal chandeliers. Also impressive was the grand and expansive character of the interior space. From every seat in the house the sightline was clear, with no posts to get in the way.

On opening night every seat was filled, and enough people were waiting outside to have completely filled all the seats once again. The program included a newsreel, five vaudeville acts, and a "flashlight" photograph of the audience taken before the showing of the feature film, The Ace of Cads with Alice Joyce and Adolphe Menjou. Newspapers gave the theater interior rave reviews. It was called "a triumph of theatrical architecture" and "the ace of the Poli circuit." One reviewer noted: "S. Z. Poli has built a theater that will thrill not only the regular patron of vaudeville but even those who are interested in architectural beauty alone." He continued: "In spite of its large size the theater gives the 'intimate' feeling that is so noticeably absent in many of the larger houses." Another reviewer wrote that this new building was

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much more than a structure built to make money for its owner. He called it a "service to the community," and noted that its handsomely beautiful interior possessed the magical ability to whisk one away from the cares and realities of the day-to-day world, into a land of make-believe:

[The] architect has done an amazing thing. He has wrought into the everyday life of the community something of rare beauty and dignity and comfort. It is an influence from which the first glare of astonishment will pass. Custom will bring familiarity. The community will gradually take upon itself the sense of ownership and pride, and into the leisure of the people's lives this lovely thing will weave itself as a personal possession. Its richness, its dignity, its beautiful proportions, the tasteful luxury of its appointments, will become part of the background of personal and civic point of view that will establish a standard. This is an incalculable service to the community, and it brings us back, after all to S. Z. Poli, whose vision, courage, energy, and enterprise have made it possible....Much less money could have been spent with equal assurance of financial return. There is here a surplus of beauty that is S. Z. Poli's contribution to the city and to his own articulate love of beauty for its own sake and of achievement as a monument to his labor.

But to get to the present opening, there was an atmosphere of public gala about it. The newly discovered spaciousness and richness of lobbies and mezzanine brought to the entering crowd an interest that predominated the mere interest of going to a show. They had gone to see and to be part of a spectacle. And it was a spectacle. There will be no attempt here to describe the theater, because if it were described you would still greet it with the same gasp of incredulity when you actually entered it, and that would make this of the nature of an anti-climax. The thing is so unexpected and so impressive that it works a magic. It restores one to those happy days of unreality when it seemed that elf and fairy-like people came amid a glamour of light from a Never Never Land, glittering in jewels, unrelated to the mundane and oppressive things of life, and performed miracles of magic and agility and faerie for our amusement. There's something sweetening and refining about grasping once more that unsophisticated joy, even if only nebulously and with willfully closed eyes. It is there, amid the magic of lighting and richness and the softening influence of deep perspective."

Thomas W. Lamb, Architect

The architect of Poli's Palace, Thomas White Lamb (1871-1942), was born in Dundee, Scotland, but came to the United States as a young man and received his architectural training at Cooper Union in New York City. Lamb was designing theaters in New York as early as 1912, and in Boston by 1915. His first design for Sylvester Poli seems to have been the Palace Theatre in New Haven in 1917. Prior to planning Poli's 1926 Worcester Palace Theatre, he designed three other Poli theaters in Waterbury and Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1922.

Lamb became one of the most sought-after designers of vaudeville theaters and movie palaces in the country during their heyday in the 1910s and 1920s. He was responsible for at least 300 theaters in North America, and designed many of the largest. As many as sixteen of his theaters were built in Canada. Others were constructed in England, Australia, North Africa, India, and Egypt. Among his best-known buildings are the 3,000-seat B.F. Keith Memorial Theatre/Savoy Theatre (extensive rehabilitation completed in 2004), 539 Washington Street, Boston (NRDIS, 1979); the 5,300-seat Capitol Theatre, New York City; Loew's Midland Theatre, Kansas City; and the San Francisco Fox Theatre. The Massachusetts Historical Commission's MACRIS list includes additional Lamb theatres still standing in Boston. Lamb also designed New York City's 16,000-seat third Madison Square Garden arena, since replaced.

Although lavish in the materials used and dramatic in their effect, the theaters of Thomas Lamb are known for being more conservative and less flamboyant and exotic than many other early 20th century movie palaces. Before about 1926, his work was most typically Classical Revival in style, and often strongly influenced by the clean-lined designs of the English

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Neoclassical architect Robert Adam. His later designs were often more elaborate. During that period, he built in the French Baroque style and even turned to Oriental influences for inspiration. Worcester's Poli's Palace Theatre reflects the earlier, more reserved, Adam-inspired phase of Lamb's work. The description of Poli's Palace as "deluxe" in the 1941 Worcester theater survey referred most likely to the quality of the materials and finishes and perhaps to the condition of the theater, while the design itself was restrained compared to his later theaters, which drew from more flamboyant and exotic styles.

The "Palace" Theater Phenomenon

An American trend of building very large and luxurious theaters for combined vaudeville/motion picture shows seems to have begun around 1912 or 1913. Sylvester Poli was building large, 2,000-3,000-seat theaters in 1912. The Regent Theatre in New York City (also a Thomas Lamb design for owner Henry Marvin) is said to have been one of the first "palace" theaters, built in 1913. Poli's first playhouse to bear the name "Palace Theatre" was a 2,000-seater (no longer standing) built in 1913 in Springfield, Massachusetts. The first of the chain with a cantilevered balcony offering clear sight lines from every seat, the Springfield building set the pattern for later Poli "palace" theaters, including his Palace Theatre in Worcester.

These grand theaters were built and promoted by entrepreneurs such as Sylvester Poli and Samuel L. (Roxy) Rothapfel of New York, who recognized that the theater interior could be as much of an attraction as the show itself. They featured imposing lobbies, awe-inspiring auditoriums, and elaborate lounges that were grand in scale, trimmed with lavish detailing, and often furnished with genuine European antiques. They were equipped with the finest organs, and were provided with permanent orchestras and a staff of uniformed ushers. Both stage shows and first-run films were the daily fare. Because the cost of tickets was easily within the reach of the general public, they offered the everyday person a chance to feel like royalty, or to enter a world of make-believe in "fantasy" environments of exotic architectural details and unusual furnishings. The showmanship and lavish amenities of these elaborate theaters, together with the development of the feature-length film in 1915, made "movie palaces" a commercial success. In the days before television, many people attended several shows a week at downtown theaters in American cities and towns, often patronizing restaurants and traveling on public transportation. As many as 4,000 new theaters were built across the country between 1914 and 1922. Many were large "palace" theaters.

Only a month after Worcester's Poli's Palace Theatre opened in 1926, it had a new rival, the Capitol Theatre, which opened around the corner on Franklin Street. Designed by architect Roger Garland for owner Benjamin I. Coonen (a real estate developer), it was a "palace" theater as well, with many of the same amenities as Poli's, but with a Spanish flair. Seating 2,500, it was said to be the first example of an "atmospheric" theater interior in the eastern United States (east of Chicago or north of Miami). It offered the Worcester public the fantasy of viewing shows in the open air. According to a newspaper article: "It gives the effect of a Spanish garden with blue sky, moonlight and moving clouds through which are revealed the starlit heavens and the illusion of being out of doors while actually seated within the theater auditorium...."

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One suspects that Poli got wind of plans for this new theater and moved quickly to beat his competitors to the punch by opening his better-designed and more deluxe theater first. In 1928, the 2,600-seat Art Deco-style Plymouth Theatre (MHC #715) opened on Main Street. It was apparently not as lavish as either Poli's Palace or the Capitol. The Plymouth was reportedly operated by Alfred Gottesman, of Gottesman Theatrical Corp. and designed by Arland W. Johnson.

The Long Success of Poli's Palace

Through the years, Poli's Palace Theatre maintained predominance over Worcester's other theaters and was considered the finest. A 1941 survey recorded each of the city's theaters and noted their condition. Poli's was judged "deluxe," the only theater given a rating of class rather than of actual condition. Presumably, this means that it was especially well cared for, so that its deluxe character was maintained in better than "good" condition. Among other competing theaters, the Capitol earned a "good" rating and the Plymouth "fair." Poli's remained the city's largest, most deluxe, and best-maintained theater through the mid 1960s, when it was sold by Loew's.

Sylvester Poli and the Poli Theatre Chain

Sylvester Zefferino Poli (1859-1937) was born in Italy, near Lucca in Tuscany. Trained in Rome and Paris as a sculptor of wax figures for wax museums, he came to the United States in 1881 to work for the Eden Musee, a wax museum in New York City. On his own in about 1887, he set up some small collections of wax figures that he displayed as "dime museums" in several cities. Encouraged by their success, he opened a permanent museum with a partner in 1889 in Toronto, Canada. On the third floor was a wax museum; on the second, curios, a menagerie, and freaks; and on the ground floor, offered a variety show. This was Poli's official start in show business. He then moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where in 1893 he opened the Wonderland Theatre with vaudeville and freak shows for family audiences. As they became more widely available, motion pictures were also added to these shows. His success in New Haven encouraged him to establish theaters in other cities, too. By 1904, he was operating in Waterbury, Bridgeport, and Hartford, Connecticut, as well as in Springfield, Massachusetts.

As his chain of theaters grew, Poli's organization became strong competition for the powerful and well-established Boston vaudeville promoters, Benjamin F. Keith and Edward F. Albee. Showing Keith and Albee that he would not be intimidated by them, he continued to expand his holdings. Ultimately, the two parties made a sort of non-aggression pact with one another. By 1913, Poli owned theaters as far south as Washington, D. C., and as far west as Scranton, Pennsylvania, with the largest number in New England.

A 1928 Worcester newspaper article noted that Poli's "business methods and his policy of public entertainment have earned for him the sobriquet of the P. T. Barnum of the movies." According to another article of the same year, "He always provided attractive entertainment and good entertainment, but it was always entertainment to appeal to the tastes and budget of the many rather than to the requirements and financial schedules of the few. Mr. Poli imagined crowds. He sold amusement. He sold good values at attractive terms. The Latin operated imaginatively like a Yankee of the old school." Sylvester Poli liked to give people a good show at a reasonable cost, and that was part of his success, but, equally it was his showmanship, imagination, business skill, and personal manner that made him successful.

Fox-Poli Theatres

In 1928, Poli, having reached the age of retirement, sold his privately owned chain of theaters to Fox Theatre Corporation, headed by William Fox. At that time his holdings, valued at \$26 million, were limited to central and southern New England and offered a total seating capacity of 45,000. Because Poli retained more than 75% interest in the properties through a first mortgage, his theaters would be called "Fox-Poli" theatres. This purchase by Fox represented the corporation's expansion into New England, and made Poli's theaters part of a motion picture empire that included a Hollywood motion picture studio and a film distribution network that extended across the United States, coast-to-coast, and also had international interests, with offices in 40 countries worldwide. Fox also owned Movietone, which was, with others, about to revolutionize the movie business with "talking" pictures. The Worcester newspaper article that

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announced the sale noted that Poli's theaters would be equipped with Movietone projection apparatus for talking pictures as part of the deal.

Loew's-Poli Theatres

In 1932, following the 1929 stock market crash, Fox went into bankruptcy. Poli, who was still holding 78% interest, again took control of his New England theaters in 1933, together with other investors. In 1934, he sold his portion of the eighteen Poli properties to Loew's Theatres. According to the agreement, they became known as "Loew's-Poli" theaters. From the about the 1940s through the 1960s Loew's gradually sold off its former Poli theaters. In Worcester, the Front Street Theatre was demolished to make way for a Woolworth's five-and-ten-cent store, completed in 1942. The Elm Street Theatre was sold about 1955, stood vacant for some time, and was demolished in 1961. In 1964 Loew's sold its last Worcester theater, the Loew's-Poli (formerly Poli's Palace Theatre) to Central Theater Corporation of Passaic, New Jersey. It was one of the last of Poli's theaters still owned by Loew, as at that time, before the 1964 sale, only five of the eighteen movie houses Poli had conveyed to Loew were still in Loew's hands.

Showcase Cinema

In May of 1967, Redstone Theatre Corporation of Boston purchased the Worcester property with plans to remodel it as Showcase Cinemas. (Illustration 4 shows the theater before alterations began.) The theater closed in June, and work was begun immediately to transform the single hall into two theaters, one on the ground floor and a second one in the former balcony. On the ground floor, the stage, proscenium wall, upper seating boxes, and some, or all, of the ceiling under the balcony were removed. Restrooms and a projection room were installed at the rear of the orchestra level. New walls and ceiling, a panoramic movie screen, and new seating were installed.

To enclose the balcony section, the dress circle, consisting of the first three rows of balcony seating, was removed. The open end was enclosed and a projection screen installed. Old theater seating was removed, floor slopes were modified to adjust the sight lines to the new movie screen, and new seating was installed. Although the original decorative painting was painted over, three-dimensional architectural details and decorative features were left intact. Thoamas Lamb's inner lobby and mezzanine were not altered.

On the exterior, a new entrance was created at the south end of the former commercial block. The existing theater entrance and the ground floors of the former storefronts were converted to form a spacious new lobby. The façade was removed from the commercial block, and a new continuous buff-brick façade covered the facades of the commercial block and the old 1904 theater facade. The upper floors of the commercial building could not be occupied as offices after this, since the space had no windows.

In 1973, the building was further renovated by National Amusements, Inc. (Redstone Theaters) to allow the simultaneous showing of four films at a time. The ground-floor section of the auditorium was broken into two theaters. On the upper level, a portion of the former mezzanine was converted to a small theater, causing little loss of original fabric. The spaces between mezzanine columns were filled in and new walls were built at either end to create a room. During the 1973 renovation, the former balcony was not altered from its 1967 state.

Poli's in Comparison to Other Surviving Worcester Theatres

As happened to Poli's, alterations were also made to the interiors of the other two surviving Worcester vaudeville/motion picture theaters, the Capitol (now Paris Cinema, MHC # 2392), 66 Franklin Street, 1926, and the Plymouth (later E. M. Lowe's, MHC # 715), 255-265 Main Street, 1928. Just as Poli's lost or had obscured its original facades, the main facade of the Capitol/Paris was covered with a sleek new face in the 1960s. The only one of the three that still has its exterior intact is the Plymouth Theatre. Not one of the theaters still preserves its original marquee and sign today.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Worcester Center for the Performing Arts

Showcase Cinemas closed in 1998, when a large new multiplex cinema was built on the edge of the city. National Amusements transferred ownership of the downtown Showcase Cinema to the Worcester Center for Performing Arts (WCPA) for a nominal fee in 2002. Founded by Edward Madaus and Paul Demoga, this nonprofit organization started a major capital campaign to rehabilitate and reopen the theater. With tremendous local, regional, and state support, WCPA was able to rebuild, restore, and repair several significant features in the theater. They completed the rehabilitation of the theater in 2008, returning it to a single theater, restoring and highlighting Lamb's original interior architecture. Now called the Hanover Theatre, the former Poli's Palace Theatre currently functions as a theater for performing arts and films.

The original Lamb drawings and excellent photographs from the E. B. Luce Collection provided documentation for the interior rehabilitation. After removing all of the 1967 and 1973 walls and ceilings that subdivided the theater, the restoration could begin. The proscenium arch and proscenium boxes were rebuilt. The missing molding detail at the side walls of the orchestra level was replaced. The stage and orchestra pit were rebuilt, and the depth of the stage was increased. The missing dress circle was rebuilt at the balcony. The 1926 Lamb inner lobby and the mezzanine were intact, with minor changes. The theater had been painted monochromatic colors, which camouflaged the plaster detail. The 2008 color palette highlights the bas relief plaster ornament and moldings that decorate the walls and ceilings. Chandeliers in the inner lobby and the auditorium were restored and reinstalled.

The 1904 terra-cotta façade of the Franklin Theatre, which had been concealed behind the Showcase Cinema façade since 1967, was uncovered. The remaining intact terra-cotta was repaired, and moulds were made of the damaged sections of terra-cotta at the parapet cornice so that they could be reproduced in FRP. The rows of light sockets that line the interior of the arch and frame the façade were rewired and new bulbs installed. As part of the project, the remnant of the commercial block at 4-16 Southbridge Street was demolished in 2008, and a new lobby with a new marquee was constructed in its place.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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"Thomas W. Lamb, Ohio Theatre, 1928": <http://www.columbusarts.com/html/virtual.html>

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Photographs

Collection E. B. Luce, Worcester

Drawings

Office of Thomas W. Lamb, Architect. "Theater Building, Worcester, Mass." Job No. 2145. The drawings are held at the Avery Library, Columbia University.

(END)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): HPCA # 16,377

☐ 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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

USGS Quad WORCESTER NORTH

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>268767</u> Easting	<u>4682531</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

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

The boundaries include all of parcel no. 03-013-00011, as shown on assessor's tile map M25, Worcester, MA.

TRACT I:

Beginning at the corner formed by the intersection of the northerly side of Burnside Court with the easterly side of Southbridge Street;

THENCE running easterly along Burnside Court one hundred twenty-four and 58/100 (124.58) feet to land formerly of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad Company but now of the grantor corporation, which land is registered by the Land Court for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is hereinafter described;

THENCE northerly by said other land of the grantor corporation one hundred seven and 39/100 feet to land formerly of one Sargent and now or formerly of one Butler;

THENCE westerly by said Butler land forty-six and 5/100 (46.05) feet to a point;

THENCE running southerly along land of said Butler 42/100 (.42) feet, more or less;

THENCE running westerly along land of said Butler and along a right of way leading from the premises herin described to Federal Street on the north and long land now or formerly of Linbrod Realty Corporation on hundred three and 22/100 (103.22) feet, more or less, to the westerly side of Southbridge Street;

THENCE southerly along the easterly line of Southbridge Street one hundred seventeen and 42/100 (117.42) feet, more or less, to the place of beginning.

TRACT II:

Also that certain parcel of land situated on Burnside Court in said Worcester, Worcester County, Massachusetts, bounded and described as follows:

Southwesterly by the northeasterly line of Burnside Court, 89.30 feet;

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Northwesterly by land formerly of Sylvester Z. Poli, but now of the Company, and by land formerly of Frank A. Drury et al, but now of one Butler, 123.73 feet;

Northeasterly by Lot #1 as shown on the plan hereinafter mentioned, and now or formerly owned by Brewer Realty Company, 153.81 feet;

Southeasterly by land now or formerly of Thomas W. Dwyer, 14.64 feet;

Southwesterly by land now or formerly of the E. W. Ham Electric Company, 62.88 feet;

Southeasterly by said Electric Company, being the middle line of a passageway, 103.07 feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries represent the parcel that has been associated with the Hanover Theatre, former Poli's Palace Theatre, since it was completed in 1926. It also includes a parcel of land on which the stage extension was built in 2008, the two comprising the entire existing lot associated with the theatre.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Ceccacci, consultant, Leslie Donovan, Tremont Preservation Services LLC, Betsy Friedberg, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date November 2010

street & number 374 CONGRESS STREET, SUTE 301

telephone 617-727-8470

city or town BOSTON

state MA

zip code 02125

e-mail donovanl@erols.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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Name of Property

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Poli's Palace Theatre
City or Vicinity: Worcester
County: WORCESTER State: MA
Photographer: Kate Matison
Date Photographed: August 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 Facing E; 1904 façade (left), 2008 façade (right)
- 2 Facing E; 2008 entrance, lobby building
- 3 Facing E; detail 1904 Franklin Square Theatre façade
- 4 Facing W; rear (east) elevation
- 5 Facing S; interior: mezzanine promenade view
- 6 Facing NW; interior: 2nd floor, inner lobby
- 7 Facing NE; interior: mezzanine, inner lobby
- 8 Facing E; interior: view of stage and proscenium
- 9 Facing W; interior: balcony and main ceiling
- 10 Facing SW; interior: proscenium boxes, reconstructed in 2008
- 11 Facing N; interior: balcony and dress circle
- 12 Interior; main chandelier, original plaster ceiling and molding
- 13 Facing N; interior: 2nd floor of 1904 building
- 14 Facing NE; interior: upper lobby, 2008 building

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Postcard view of 1904 Franklin Square Theatre
2. Undated view of auditorium, facing W
3. ca. 1926 view of Poli's Palace Theatre façade
4. ca. 1967 view of Loew's Poli Theatre, prior to Showcase Cinema renovation

SITE PLANS

1910 Sanborn atlas plan
1936-1937 Sanborn atlas plan
Site plan with dated chart of various additions
Site plan, Poli's Palace Theatre (oversize)

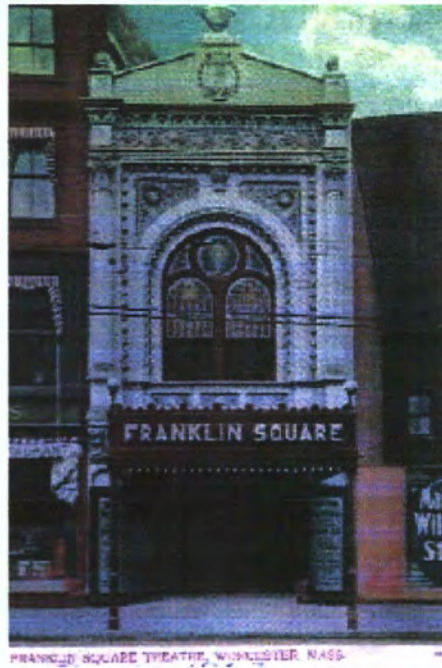
Property Owner:

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

Name WORCESTER CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
street & number 2 SOUTHBRIDGE STREET telephone (508) 770-0101
city or town WORCESTER state MA zip code 01608

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



<http://www.worcestermass.com/places/images/franklinsq.jpg>



<http://www.worcestermass.com/places/images/user-image-1249065190.jpg>

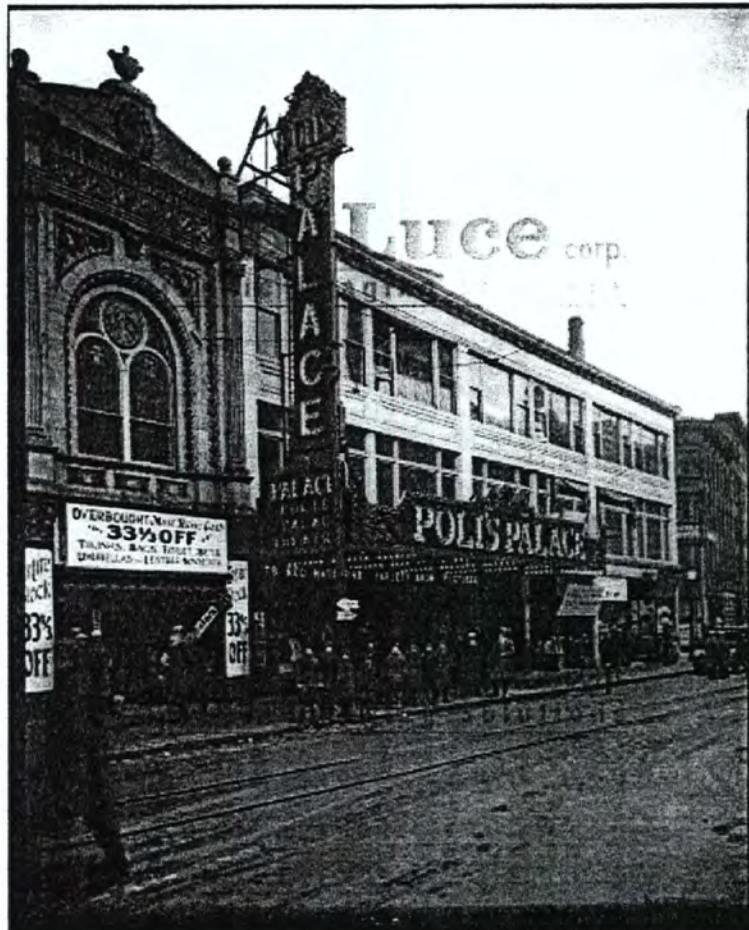
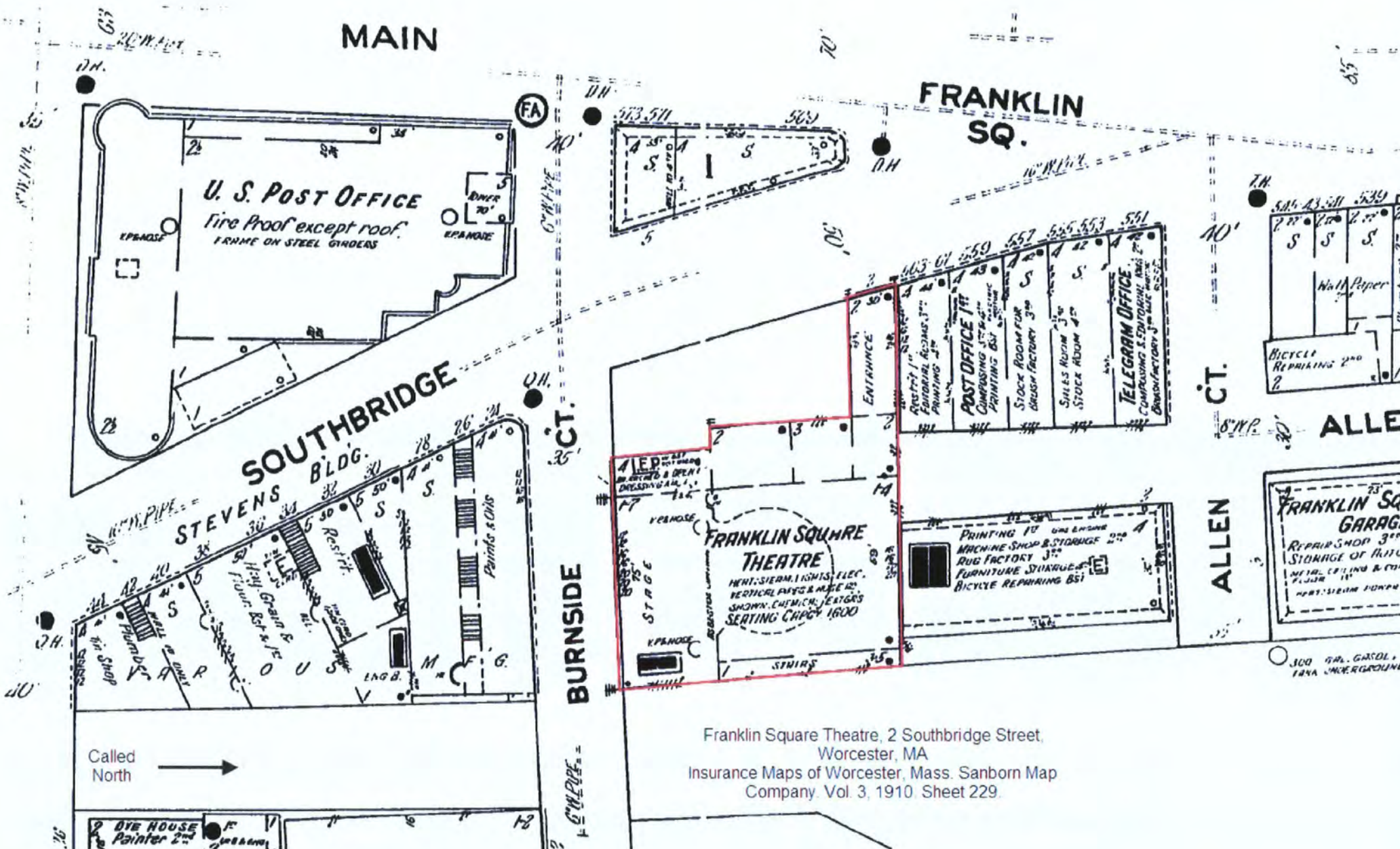


ILLUSTRATION # 3

Poli's Palace Theatre, about 1926
(E.B. Luce photograph)



Southbridge Street view, assumed 1967



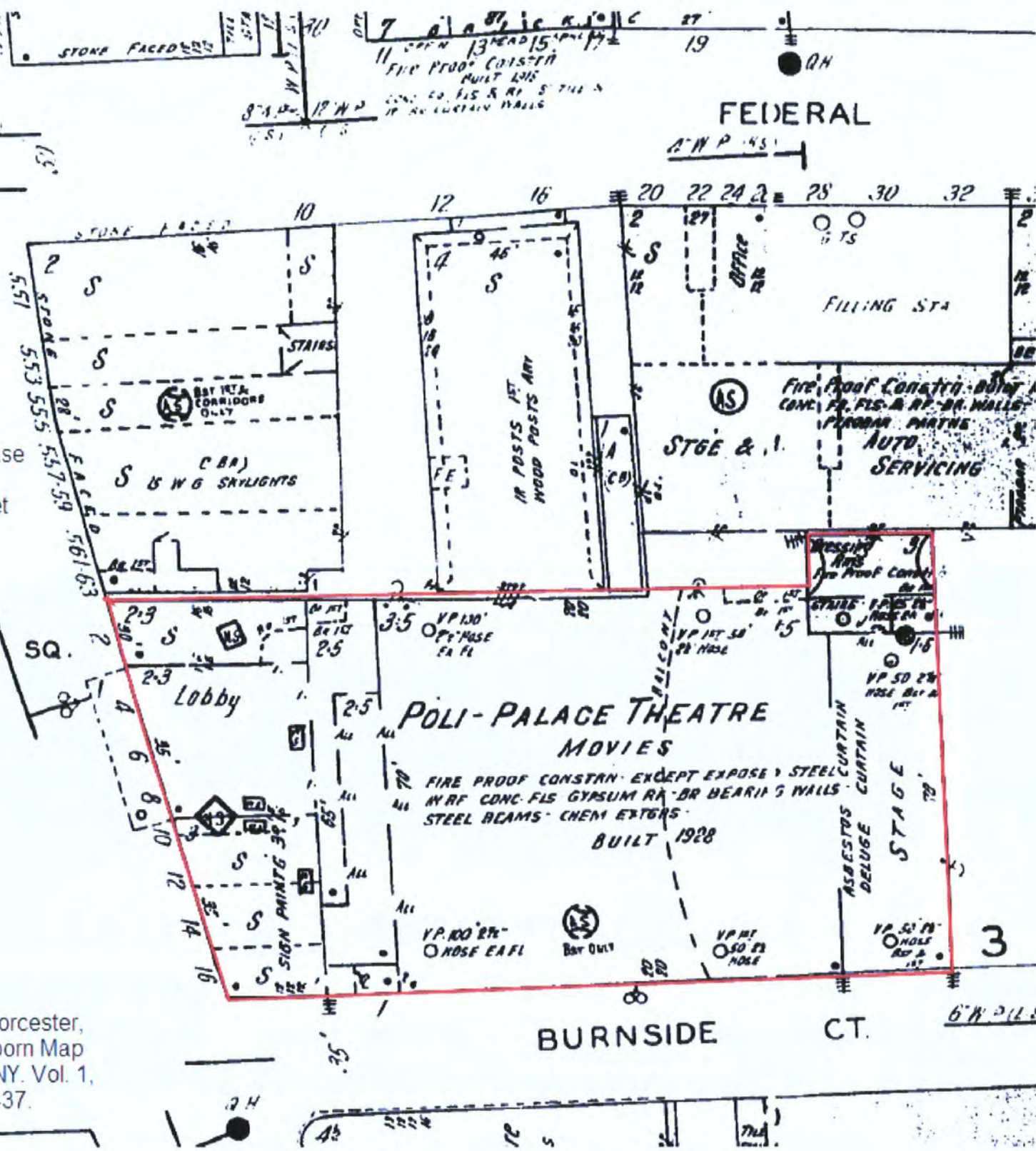
Franklin Square Theatre, 2 Southbridge Street,
Worcester, MA
Insurance Maps of Worcester, Mass. Sanborn Map
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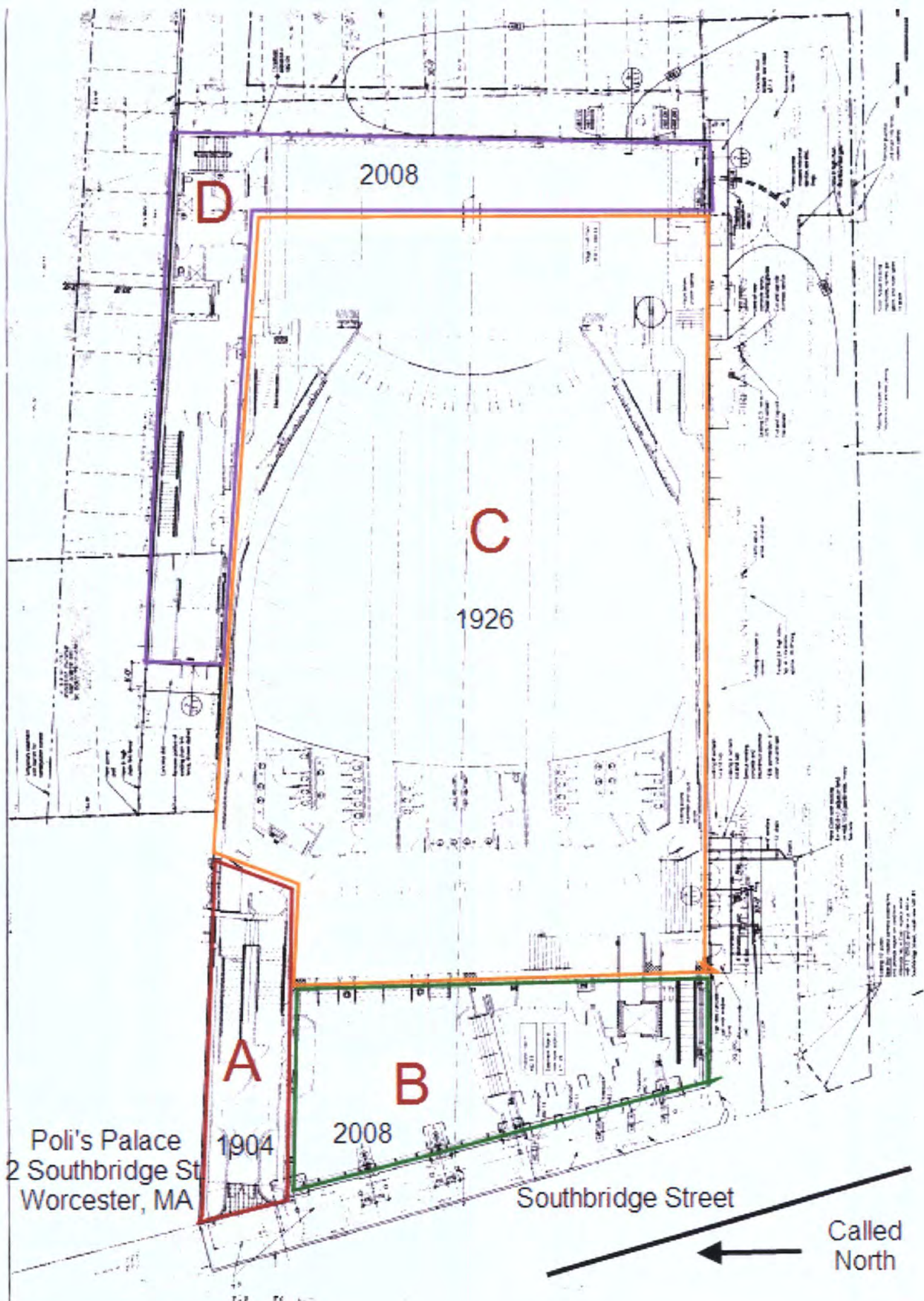
Poli's Palace/Showcase
Cinema
2 Southbridge Street
Worcester, MA

FRANKLIN
SQUARE

Called North

Insurance Maps of Worcester,
Massachusetts. Sanborn Map
Company, New York, NY. Vol. 1,
Sheet 14. 1936-37.





2008

D

C

1926

A

B

1904

2008

Poli's Palace
2 Southbridge St
Worcester, MA

Southbridge Street

Called
North

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Poli's Palace Theater

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 11/24/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/22/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/06/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/09/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10001122

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1-10-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 1

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

FRONT FACADE: 1904(L), 2008(R) LOOKING E

MA_WORCESTER(WORCESTERCOUNTY) - POLI 1.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER, MA

PIOTO 2

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

NEW (2008) ENTRANCE, LOBBY BUILDING, FACING E

MA-WORCESTER(WORCESTERCOUNTY)-POLI 2.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE PHOTO 3
WORCESTER(WORCESTER) MA

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

FRANKLIN SQ THEATRE FACADE (1904)
LOOKING E

MA_WORCESTER(WORCESTERCOUNTY)-POLI3.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 4

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

REAR (E) ELEVATION, LOOKING W

MA_WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI4.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 5

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

MEZZANINE PROMENADE, VIEW S
MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 5. ff



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER, MA

PHOTO 6

KATE MATISON PHOTO

AUG 2010

INNER LOBBY, 2ND FLOOR, VIEW NW

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 6.17



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 7

KATE MATISON PHOTO

AUG 2010

INNER LOBBY, MEZZANINE, LOOKING NE

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 7.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER) MA

PHOTO 8

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

VIEW E of STAGE & PROSCENIUM

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 8.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 9

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

VIEW W, BALCONY and MAIN CEILING

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 9.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE PHOTO 10
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2016

VIEW SW, SHOWING PROSCENIUM
BOXES RECONSTRUCTED IN 2008

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) -
POLI 10.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
INORCESTER (INORCESTER) MA

PHOTO 11

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

VIEW N, BALCONY and DRESS CIRCLE
MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTERCOUNTY) - POLI11.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER) MA

PHOTO 12

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

MAIN CHANDELIER, ORIGINAL PLASTER CEILING MOLDING

MA - WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 12.tif



POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER) MA

PHOTO 13

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

2ND FL. 1904 BUILDING, VIEW N

MA. WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 13. tif



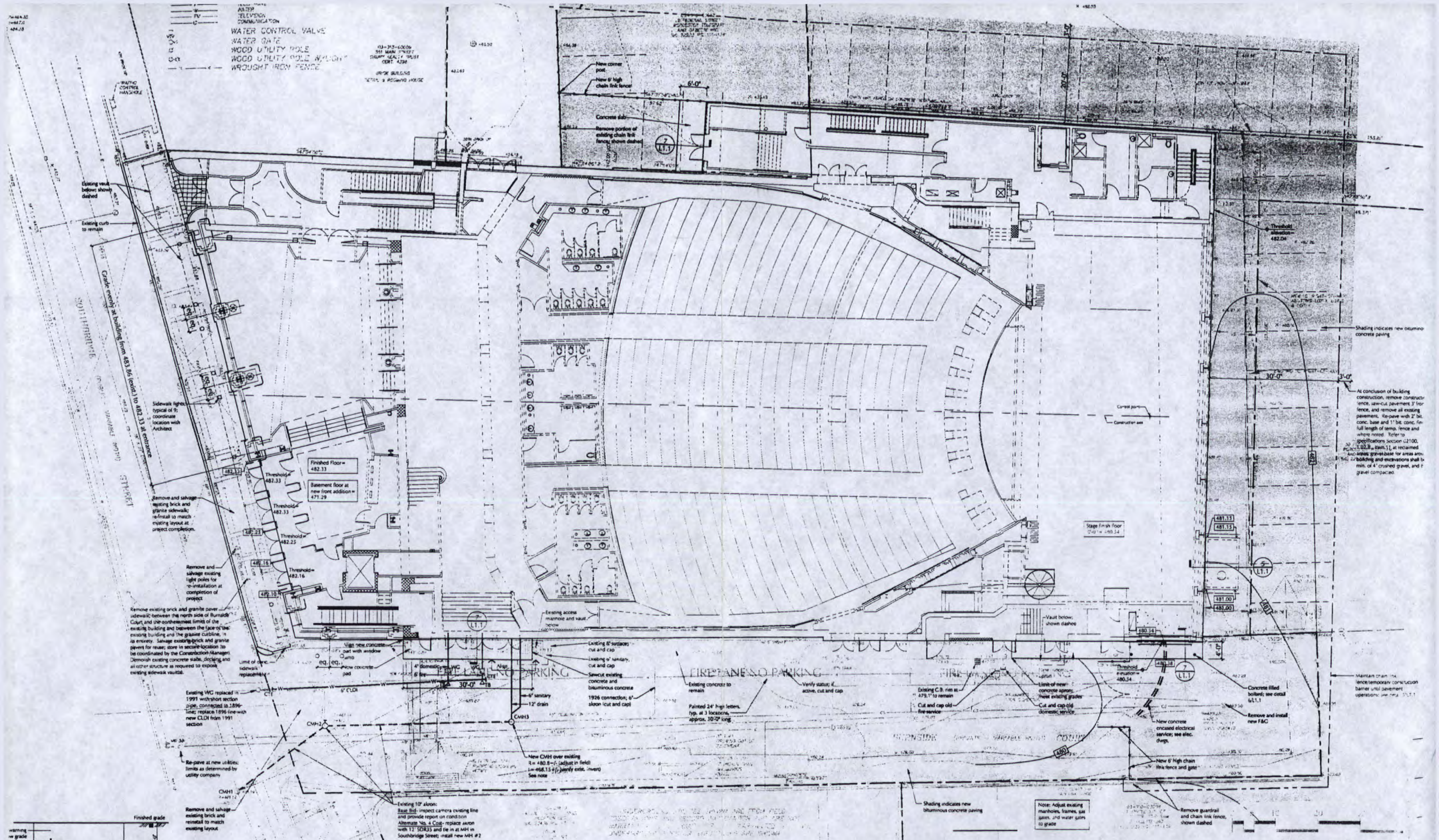
POLI'S PALACE THEATRE
WORCESTER (WORCESTER), MA

PHOTO 14

KATE MATISON PHOTO AUG 2010

2008 UPPER LOBBY

MA-WORCESTER (WORCESTER COUNTY) - POLI 14.tif



Layout and Utility Plan

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

Site Plan
Poli's Palace Theatre
Hanover Theatre
2 - 16 Southbridge Street
Worcester, MA

LEGEND

CLO1=
CMH=
CTE=



- Legend**
- Building
 - Garage
 - Outbuilding
 - Deck
 - Patio
 - Tank
 - Smokestack
 - Parking - Paved
 - Parking - Unpaved
 - Driveway - Paved
 - Driveway - Unpaved
 - Parcel
 - Street - Paved
 - Street - Unpaved
 - Street - Cemetery
 - Bridge
 - Airport
 - Railroad
 - Pond
 - Stream
 - Tile Grid

DATA SOURCES:
All Spatial data: City of Worcester Geographic Information System
Original Planimetric Data: Digitized at 1:480 scale
(Data true resolution: 1 inch = 40 feet) 1989.
Updated Planimetric Data: Digitized at 1:1200 scale
(Data true resolution: 1 inch = 100 feet) 2003.
Parcel Data: Maintained by the City of Worcester
Assessing Department, updated as of January 1, 2008.

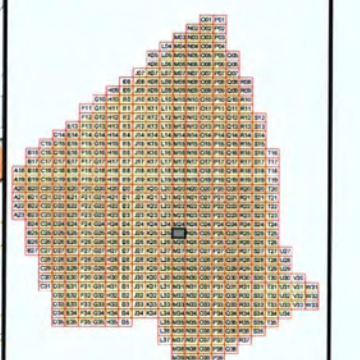
COORDINATE SYSTEM:
All map data is in the Massachusetts State Plane
Coordinate system, North American Datum of 1983,
Massachusetts Mainland Zone (4151). Units are
measured in Feet.

NOTICE:
This map has not been updated and may not
contain the most current information available to the
Assessing Department. Consult with the department
for current information.

1 inch equals 60 feet
0 15 30 60 90 120 Feet

Tile: M25

L24	M24	N24
L25	M25	N25
L26	M26	N26





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

November 16, 2010

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Poli's Palace Theatre, Two Southbridge Street, Worcester (Worcester County), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property in the Certified Local Government community of Worcester were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Please note that MHC staff has previously discussed this property with National Register staff. We request expedited review of this nomination.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Edgar Luna, Worcester CLG Coordinator
Leslie Donovan, Tremont Preservation Services
Deborah Packard, Preservation Worcester
Troy Seibels, Worcester Center for the Performing Arts
Joseph C. O'Brien, Mayor, City of Worcester
Peter Schneider, Worcester Historical Commission
Chair, Worcester Planning Board



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 31, 2011

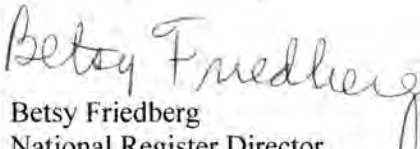
Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Poli's Palace Theatre, Worcester (Worcester County), MA

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are writing to correct a technical error on the cover form for the National Register nomination for Poli's Palace Theatre, listed on January 10, 2011. The nomination is not an amendment to the Worcester MRA. A corrected page 2 of the cover form, without reference to the MRA, is enclosed. Thank you for correcting this nomination form.

Sincerely,


Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

ACTION: NATIONAL REGISTER INFORMATION SYSTEM

Id 10001122 LI 01/10/2011 MA Worcester Poli's Palace Theater
01 More

Name Poli's Palace Theater

Address 2 Southbridge St

City Worcester Vicinity Restrict

State MASSACHUSETTS County Worcester

Status LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER Date 01/10/2011

Day45 01/08/2011 Resource Type BUILDING Acreage 0.9

Multiple

Contributing bldg	1	Site	Strc	Obj	Total
Noncontributing bldg		Site	Strc	Obj	Total
Park					