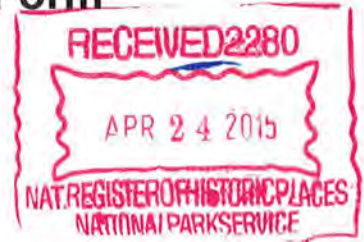


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Drexel Theater

Other names/site number: Drexel Theatre

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2254 E. Main St.

City or town: Bexley State: Ohio County: Franklin ZipCode: 43209-2319

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

Barbara Bovee DSHPO for Inventory & Registration April 9, 2015
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection
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

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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 Nelson W. Beall *6-8-15*
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

RECREATION & CULTURE: Theater

Current Functions

RECREATION & CULTURE: Theater

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

Modern Movements: Art Deco

Modern Movements: Art Moderne

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Marble, Metal, Glass Block

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Drexel Theater was constructed in 1937, combining characteristics of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. Art Deco elements include the stepped back massing of the façade and parapet wall, symmetrical façade, fluted marble walls at the entrance, stylized lettering on the marquee, sign, and interior exit signs, geometric decorative motif painted in the auditorium, and interior remnants of reeded ceiling cornice and door surrounds. Art Moderne elements include the smooth stucco façade wall, curved corners on the exterior (including the marquee) and the interior (most noticeable on the poster showcases), the banded glass block, and the use of stainless steel for decorative trim on the interior and exterior.

The Drexel Theater is located in Bexley, Ohio on East Main Street, a very busy commercial thoroughfare that extends for miles through multiple municipalities. Located at 2254 East Main Street, the Drexel Theater's marquee is a dominate presence on the streetscape. The building consists of a single narrow storefront that extends to the north several feet beyond the neighboring building, where it then balloons outward forming the theater auditorium. It maintains historic integrity, reflecting an era when single-screen theaters were abundantly found in neighborhoods throughout the Columbus metropolitan area.

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Narrative Description

Commercial buildings around the Drexel Theater tend to be two-story brick buildings. To its east, the theater abuts an early 20th century commercial building. A pocket park and a few parking spaces are directly to the west and beyond that is the Bexley City Hall. (Photo 1) From the east, the historic National Road passed through Bexley on East Main Street, going west to the Scioto River in downtown Columbus. In 1926, when it became known as U.S. Rt. 40, the National Road was slightly rerouted off of East Main Street, going north on Drexel Avenue up to East Broad Street, and then heading west again. Despite the rerouting, East Main Street remained Bexley's commercial center, with a mix of early and mid-20th century buildings. The campus of Capital University is on the south side of East Main Street, directly across from the Drexel Theater.

Constructed in 1937, it is often stated that the Drexel Theater's auditorium and marquee were additions to an extant c.1900 storefront, containing a grocery store. Examination of the Columbus City Directory and historic maps indicates that the Drexel Theater was constructed in 1937, as a theater building. The 2254 E. Main Street address does not appear in the city directories until 1937. That year, the city directory does mention a restaurant, operated by Ethel L. Zeise, at 2254. However, by printing of the 1938 city directory, the Drexel Theater is listed. The Drexel was built on a vacant lot between a c.1920 brick commercial building at 2248-50 E. Main and a large multi-storefront Colonial Revival commercial building at 2256-68 E. Main. The building at 2248-50 was demolished in the 1990s, and the 1925 Colonial Revival commercial building to the east is still extant. (See Attachment A – Maps)

The Drexel Theater's marquee and neon sign are the most prominent features of the façade. (Photos 2-4) A newspaper article printed upon the theater's opening stated that the background colors for the sign and marquee were cream and light blue.¹ Today, they are turquoise with red accents. The marquee has a projecting canopy, made of metal panels. The canopy fascia has Drexel spelled out in stylized red neon lettering. Red metal strips curve around to the side, framing the fascia on all three sides. Two protruding stainless metal bands are present on the front and sides of the marquee, stopping just before the neon lettering. These horizontal bands cover neon lights underneath. The sides of the marquee are stepped three times, with the widest portion against the façade. The underside of the marquee is encircled by a double row of exposed light bulbs, at the edges. (Photo 5) In the middle, a grid system with embossed metal panels is present. Originally, the marquee soffit had more light bulb rows than what is there

¹ "Streamline Type Signs and Marquee Decorate Bexley's Newest Theater," *The Columbus Dispatch*, December 25, 1937.

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presently. Light bulb rows extended the width of the soffit, dividing it into three sections with smooth panels in between the lights. The pattern of lights was changed after 1994. (See Attachment B – Historic Images)

A vertically oriented sign is above the marquee. (Photo 4) Perpendicular to the building, it looks like a narrow fin sticking out from the façade. Like the marquee, the sign is metal, with the ‘Drexel’ in red neon letters on each side. The letters are separated by horizontal neon lights. The sign is situated in the middle of the marquee and is attached to it, at the front edge, by a curved piece. The curved sign base also contains bands of neon lighting. A metal anchor, original to the sign, connects the sign to the façade, between the R and the E.

The building’s storefront entrance is recessed. (Photos 5-6) An attractions board, facing E. Main St., forms a fascia for the entrance. The attractions board has a metal frame and metal panels connect it to the façade. Originally, it was divided in two, horizontally, by a metal band. The attractions board was altered slightly by the early 1970s, when the dividing band was removed and a new panel for the lettering was installed. The underside of the attractions board forms the ceiling for the recessed entrance. It has screened panels within a metal grid system. Originally, there were peach colored mirrors on the underside, which created a glow from reflected light, when patrons entered the theater. The side walls of the recessed entrance have fluted pink marble panels. Built-in poster frames are within each side wall. Historically, a ticket booth was in the center of the entryway. Octagonal in shape, it jutted out from the entrance wall and had narrow, vertical windows at each angled wall section. (See Attachment B – Historic Images) The ticket booth was removed circa 1960, but the base of it remains. The base was re-faced with permastone, above a terrazzo baseboard. It was at one time used as a planter, but was enclosed with wood boards by 1984. The recessed entryway has a terrazzo floor and paired doors on either side of the former ticket booth. The full-light doors are replacements. The original doors, also full-light, had curved metal handles, matching Art Moderne motif of the building. Although some materials have changed slightly, the original entrance configuration is intact.

Above the marquee, the building has a stepped parapet. (Photo 3) Smooth vertical panels correspond to the parapet outline, and the panels successively project forward. The façade wall was painted white, until the early 1980s when a multi-color scheme was applied. The vertical sections at the corners of the façade are comprised of glass block. On the western edge, the parapet and glass block section wrap around to the side elevation. Historically, light towers with multicolor lights were within the glass tower sections. By 1976, the glass block was boarded over. The light towers were uncovered by new owners in the early 1980s.

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The west elevation is a solid brick wall that has been painted. (Photo 6) It is one story in the front portion of the building. Separated by a sidewalk, a c.1920 commercial building was beside the Drexel Theater until the early 1990s. A parking area replaced the building and a landscaped pocket park was planted to buffer the parking lot from Main Street. Shrubs and trees line the west elevation. The auditorium to the rear of the building is irregularly shaped. The rectangular storefront and the auditorium roughly give the building an arrow-shaped configuration. The northernmost section of the auditorium, corresponding with the interior movie screen, is several feet taller than the building's single story. The auditorium's walls are stuccoed and painted brown. The middle portion of the roof is domed, providing an open volume space within the auditorium. Two emergency exits from the auditorium are present, one each on the east and west sides. They are below grade, matching the sloped floor of the auditorium. Beyond the auditorium, the southern portion of the east elevation abuts the neighboring building and is not visible from the street. (Photos 2-3)

Interior

A vestibule is inside the front entry doors. (Photo 7-8) The interior half of the former ticket booth is centered on the south wall. Matching the exterior half, only the base of the ticket booth remains and is also faced with permastone and enclosed with wood boards. The vestibule has a terrazzo floor. The side walls of the vestibule contain built-in wood poster showcases, original to the theater. The showcases are comprised of a central square section, with a circular mirror, flanked by a poster frame on each end. The projecting showcases have curved corners and a band of three metal strips defines the top. A metal grid, which covered the former heating radiators, is below each mirror. The mirror on the east wall was altered circa 2000. The central portion was cut out creating a window into the café of the neighboring building. It has since been enclosed. (Photo 7) A wood desk, which once served as a ticket counter, is in the middle of the vestibule. A single poster frame is on the north vestibule wall. It is flanked by paired doors leading into the lobby.

The Drexel Theater's lobby is north of the vestibule. (Photos 9-10) Historically, the lobby was open and did not have a concession stand. The current concession stand was added in 1981 by the previous owner. The wood and glass concession stand is curved, with a curved soffit, containing recessed lights, above it. The new concession stand was intended to be compatible with the Art Deco characteristic of the building. Two original poster showcases are on the east wall of the lobby, behind the concession stand. A round peach-colored mirror is on the west wall of the lobby. It matches the two mirrors in the vestibule, and all were replicas from historic documentation. The west lobby wall contains three original wood poster frames, each having a metal grid underneath for the previous heat system. At the top, the poster frames are connected by a wood band, forming a continuous stringcourse across the wall. In 1981, when new owners

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acquired the Drexel, the wood band was intact at the showcases. In other places within the lobby, it was missing and replicated to match the existing. A continuous chair rail aligns with the bottom of the poster frames. The carpet in the lobby is a replica of the original pattern. It was installed in 1991, from a mill in Georgia, after remnants were found in the auditorium and underneath a phone booth. See Attachment B for historic interior views.

There is a drop ceiling in most of the lobby. The north end of the lobby, just beyond the concession stand, retains an original section of ceiling. (Photo 11) Here, it is smooth finish with a cornice. A diamond shaped light fixture is centered in this section of ceiling. It has a diamond shaped surround, with stars on the perimeter. This light arrangement was once found throughout the lobby. There is evidence that more of the diamond light surrounds are present above the drop ceiling. The lobby reportedly once had a trough for neon lights, which is no longer evident.² A water fountain is on each side wall, at the north end of the lobby. They are pink ceramic and have a yellow corrugated ceramic backsplash. The water fountains were likely added in the 1960s. (Photo 12)

The Drexel Theater was once a single auditorium, seating about 727 people. In 1991, the large auditorium was divided, with new partition walls at the back to create two additional auditoriums. (See Attachment B) The historic auditorium now seats about 320 people. (Photos 14-15) The old seats were replaced with new ones, with each row having a new wood Art Deco end panel. The walls retain the original velvet above a plaster wainscot. The fabric was carefully removed from the original rear wall and applied to the newly constructed 1991 rear wall. Stainless metal strips separate sections of wall materials. A light tower is located every few feet along the auditorium side walls. Projecting soft light onto the ceiling, the rounded light columns protrude from the wall, creating a scalloped effect. A cornice features an Art Deco motif. It is an original paint scheme that has been retained and retouched over the years. Exit signs in the auditorium, and the lobby, are original to the building. The lettering is specialized, matching that of the neon sign on the marquee. (Photo 16)

The plaster ceiling is recessed in the center of the auditorium. (Photo 14) The ceiling is stepped above the screen, repeating the theme of three, as seen on the horizontal bands in multiple locations around the front portion of the theater. In the corner where the walls meet the proscenium, a light column is present. These light columns have a stepped capital.

A wooden partition wall, serving as a light and sound buffer, is at a back of the auditorium. (Photo 13) It is comprised of board and batten on the bottom and six columns on the top. The columns have capitals that match the design of the tower lights at the proscenium. A spider web

² Byron, Nancy Hubbard. 'Renovation opens program options for Drexel,' *Bexley This Week*, November 18, 1991.

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patterned panel is between the columns. The screen partition is original to the theater, but it was moved forward when the auditorium was divided. The partition wall was in poor condition and was significantly restored, with some sections rebuilt, in the 1991 remodel.

The main auditorium is now accessed by a short hallway, whereas it was initially just off of the lobby. (Photo 11) The two small theaters, added in 1991, are situated on either side of the hallway, between the lobby and the auditorium. They are compatible with the building's overall Art Deco characteristics. Red curtains are on the wall, above the wainscot. The walls are defined by imbedded pilasters with attached light sconces. (Photo 17)

Stairs, off of the lobby, access the upper story of the theater. The stairs are on the east wall, north of the concession stand. In the stairwell, the original metal railing is intact. Small offices and the projection booths are on the second story. (Photos 18-19) The offices have plain plaster walls and drop ceilings. Doors on the upper floor have wood surrounds that are similar in profile to the cornice in the lobby. Originally, the women's room was on the mezzanine level. During the remodel, the space was converted to a projection room for Screen 2.

During the 1991 interior renovation, an opening was cut into the eastern wall on the first floor, providing passage into the adjacent building. The opening connected to a hallway, at the rear of the other building. New women's and handicap restrooms were constructed in this space, accessed from the new hallway. In 1995, the Drexel's owners opened an affiliated café in the abutting storefront. The rear hallway then provided interior access from the café directly into the Drexel Theater lobby. At this time, access to the men's room was relocated from a short corridor off of the theater lobby to the hallway and an exterior door was added to the rear of the buildings. (Photo 20)

The basement contains storage areas for the concession stand. It has a drop ceiling and tiled floor. There is no historic detail present in the basement.

Historic Integrity

The Drexel Theater maintains historic integrity. Other than minor alterations to the façade, the exterior of the building has not changed. Although the marquee and the façade have been modestly altered with a new color scheme and the lighting underneath the canopy was reconfigured, they are minimal changes and the building still reads as a 1930s neighborhood theater. The oversize marquee and sign was an important character defining feature of early 20th century neighborhood theaters. The entrance, with centered ticket box remnant, configuration is

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intact. These typical historic features illustrate common design motifs of neighborhood theaters as significant entertainment and recreation facilities.

On the interior, a vestibule and/or lobby and the auditorium constitute the primary character defining spaces for the neighborhood theater building type. In the Drexel, the biggest alteration to the building was the division of the main auditorium space in 1991. The owners at the time, Jeff and Kathy Frank, gave careful consideration to the alteration, knowing how much people loved the iconic theater. Making the alteration was the only choice in keeping the Drexel open and operating as a theater. In a *Columbus Dispatch* interview, Jeff Frank discussed the auditorium division and the reality of business survival. "You can't operate a single, first-run screen anymore. Even the days of the three-plex for commercial films are over... We saw other art theaters around the country doing this. Some didn't do it, and now they're gone."³ Due to the thoughtful design, the main auditorium still has the sense of being a single, large theater. Instead of dividing the original auditorium down the middle, as was often the custom in such scenarios, two small theaters were created in the rear portion of the auditorium. Frank further noted, "I'm sure there are going to be some questions. Someone is going to say we're ruining this great historical theater. But we're not altering the basic theater. Someday it could go back to being a single-screen."⁴

The other primary interior modification to the building was the addition of the current concessions stand in the lobby. This change is compatible with the historic building, referencing the Art Deco lines without directly copying them. Like the auditorium alteration, the 1981 concessions stand is easily reversible. Despite these two interior changes, the Drexel Theater has enough historic materials to reflect its era of significance and building type.

The building retains its Art Deco elements, including the streamlined parapet wall, the stylized animal ornament of the spider web screen, and stylized lettering and decorative paint detail. Although the full ticket booth is no longer extant, the angular configuration of the remaining base provides additional evidence of the building's Art Deco features. Intact Art Moderne characteristics include the curved corners, prominent glass block banding, and usage of stainless metal strips as a decorative device. These architectural styles were heavily utilized in the 1930s for neighborhood theaters. As applied to the Drexel Theater, the combined styles help to convey the building as a typical building type from the early 20th century; the building type in turn conveying association with entertainment/recreation trends of the 1920s through 1940s.

³ Gabrenya, Frank. "And then there were 3," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 3, 1991, p.G1.

⁴ Gabrenya, "And then there were 3," p.G1.

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The Drexel Theater also maintains its historic setting and conveys a sense of time and place. The setting for the property is intact, including the adjacent 1925 commercial building. This portion of East Main Street was once part of the National Road, and it remains Bexley's commercial and civic center. The commercial setting and the period marquee and sign give the Drexel Theater a sense of time and place. It is obviously of an era of style and detail that is no longer constructed. Maintaining its presence on the streetscape, the Drexel is an important and highly visible landmark for the city of Bexley, as well as the greater Columbus community.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation
Architecture

Period of Significance

1937-1965

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Robert R. Royce

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (

The Drexel Theater is nominated under Criterion A for entertainment and recreation. During the early 20th century, movies were a novel and inexpensive form of entertainment and they became extremely popular. The Drexel Theater is an excellent representative of a bygone era, when neighborhood theaters were commonly found in every commercial center. It is an intact example of this phenomenon and is one of the last grand neighborhood theaters operating in Columbus, Ohio. It is being nominated at the local level of significance. The Drexel Theater is also significant under Criterion C, as an intact representative of an architecturally distinctive building type. Small single-screen theaters were once a common sight in neighborhood and suburban commercial centers. The period of significance begins with the construction of the theater; 1937 and continues to 1965, since the function and activity of the property that began historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the period of significance. The Drexel Theater is one of Columbus' few remaining examples of this building type.

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

Background History

The Drexel Theater was constructed in 1937, reportedly in 90 days,⁵ and the Franklin County Auditor denoted the theater as complete in 1938. Historically, and until recently, the ownership of the physical building and the theater business were separate. When the Drexel Theater was built, the property was owned by the Drexel & Main Corporation, which also owned the abutting 1925 Colonial Revival commercial building, plus commercial buildings to the north of it along Drexel Avenue.

At the time of construction, Bexley, Ohio was a small city of almost 8,000 residents. Situated just east of Columbus, Bexley is an inner-ring suburb of the capital city. The community was formed in 1908 in a merger of an upscale residential enclave north of East Broad Street called Bullitt Park and a Lutheran community called Pleasant Ridge, surrounding a seminary, just south of East Main Street. The 1901 Sanborn map shows sparse settlement around the intersection of Drexel and Main streets. An Evangelical Lutheran Christ Church was at the northwest corner, where the Colonial Revival commercial building stands and a sprinkling of houses are indicated. In 1921, the church was being used by the Capital University School of Music, houses and brick commercial buildings had filled up most of the adjacent lots, and a public school was present on East Main. Twenty years after the merger, Bexley was incorporated as a city in 1928. Bexley remains a predominantly affluent community, and its Lutheran roots are intact via Capital University, established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1830, which is regarded as one of the oldest and largest Lutheran-affiliated universities in the United States. The city is also home to a large Jewish population, with multiple synagogues located along East Broad Street. Due to its landlocked 2.45 square miles, Bexley's population has only had modest growth through the decades. Population peaked at nearly 15,000 in 1970, and since then has hovered around 13,000. In 2013, the city, with its city forester-managed 14,000 trees, was designated an arboretum by the Morton Register of Arboreta.

The Drexel Theater business was developed by William C. Chesbrough. Costing \$125,000, the neighborhood movie palace was the ninth one in his chain of Columbus theaters. Chesbrough and his wife, Ethel, also owned three theaters in Dayton, plus a film booking service. Robert R. Royce was the architect for the building, and the P.F. Yoerger Sign Company designed and built the marquee and sign. The theater opened December 25, 1937, showing the movie *One Mile From Heaven*. The Drexel's first manager was Ronald A. Howard.⁶

Ownership of the theater building changed in 1949, when it was transferred to Roberta M. Miller and then the Drexel Amusement Co. The building housing the theater was then purchased by the

⁵ Sheridan, Phil. *Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters, Vol.3*, Columbus, Ohio: Phil Sheridan Promotions, 1992, p.137

⁶ Sheridan, Phil. *Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters, Vol.3*, Columbus, Ohio: Phil Sheridan Promotions, 1992, p.137

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Gay Street Realty Co. in 1960, which owned the property for the next half century. Ownership of the Drexel Theater business also changed during the mid-20th century. Ethel Miles, owner of several neighborhood movie theaters, included the Drexel Theater among her holdings. Ethel Miles was the ex-wife of William Chesbrough, the Drexel's developer. After their divorce in the mid-1930s, she married Walter Miles and retained ownership of several neighborhood theaters that Chesbrough had established.

In 1959, Jerome C. Knight, a Bexley resident, leased the Drexel business from Miles. Jerry Knight had grown up in the theater operation business, his parents operating a handful of movie theaters in the 1940s. Upon his father's retirement in 1951, Knight, at the age of 22, took over the family's remaining theater. He subsequently leased a number of theaters during the 1950s, including the Indianola, the Avondale, the Rivoli, and the Grandview. Like the Drexel, the Grandview Theater was previously under the control of Ethel Miles.

For a number of years, Jerry Knight had a successful run with the Drexel. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, he carefully guarded the Drexel's reputation by not showing mainstream films that were too explicit. Eventually, business at the Drexel diminished, due to increased competition from national chain theaters, all of which were multiplexes that changed the business dynamic for independent theaters. By 1981, the Drexel Theater was worn down, showing bargain movies, and Knight decided to not renew his lease. He moved on to a Swensen's Ice Cream Factory & Fine Foods franchise, on South Hamilton Road.

Jeff and Kathy Frank purchased the Drexel Theater business from Knight. Owning it for the next thirty years, they represent the longest span of ownership for the theater. The Franks both came from a professional art background. Jeff Frank had a degree in film studies and organized the film series for the Columbus Museum of Art and the Ohio Theater. After working there for three years, he left an assistant executive director position at the Ohio Theater to take on the Drexel venture. Kathy Wooley Frank also had an art background and worked at the Columbus Museum of Art. The couple's combined art and film knowledge proved to be instrumental in the long-running existence of the theater.

The Franks closed the theater for one month to complete \$300,000 worth of interior renovations. They removed the multitude of trellises and arbors with attached fake flowers, which had been added throughout the interior, along with anything else that wasn't compatible with the original 1930s design. They repaired plaster, repainted the Art Deco motif in the auditorium, restored missing neon on the marquee, and reconnected the light fixture behind the glass block. Kathy Frank was largely responsible for the redecoration of the Drexel Theater. They reopened on October 27, 1981 with a gala celebration. Ginger Rogers was the guest of honor for the event, introducing her 1935 movie *Top Hat*. (See Attachment B – Historic Images) Depicting a dancing Rogers and Fred Astaire, a stained glass window hangs in the vestibule window, commemorating Roger's visit.

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In addition to classic movies, such as Alfred Hitchcock rereleases, the Franks took a risk on foreign films. In January 1982, they screened *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, a Russian soap opera, which was a box office success for them. Until the Franks began showing foreign and art films, such movies were not screened in the city. In an interview a few years after taking over the business, Kathy Frank stated, "We're trying to fill a gap, within the movie format, for entertainment in Columbus. We're trying to provide something that we don't feel is here."⁷ Later that year, their, and the theater's, standing grew beyond Columbus, when ticket sales exceeded expectations for *My Dinner with Andre*. "Distributors from around the country began to take notice of the Drexel after the smashing returns...*My Dinner with Andre* put us on the map nationally and established our reputation."⁸

Throughout their tenure, the Franks continued to offer foreign, documentary, independent, and art films. The format was very successful, and in 1986, they leased the Camelot North Theater. Located in the Clintonville neighborhood, at 4250 N. High St., the single-screen 1941 theater was reopened as the Drexel North, with similar programming. It also became the location of the Drexel's popular 24-hour movie marathons in the horror, science fiction and B-movie genres.

In an attempt to compete with the multiplexes and the growing trend of watching movies at home on video, the Franks decided to create multiple small auditoriums within the Drexel. The design work was completed by Worthington, Ohio architect, Denver A. Hague. Recognizing that the Drexel was special and the alteration might be contentious, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported, "An internal renovation will turn the single-screen theater into a three-screen operation. For the movie theater in Columbus with the most loyal following to take such a radical step is a matter of facing reality. 'We had to be realistic,' said Jeff Frank, co-owner of the Drexel with his wife, Kathy. 'We either do this now or not be here. It's either a three-screen theater or a furniture store.'⁹ Frank then went on to reassure his faithful patrons that the Drexel would not become "the Drex-plex."

The auditorium partitioning was completed in the summer of 1991. The original theater remained the largest, with 320 seats, and the two smaller theaters having 130 and 110. The creation of the secondary theaters was a successful business decision, with the Drexel's attendance doubling by April 1992.¹⁰ The selection of film offerings increased, and the Franks were more competitive in the film distribution market.

The renovation project also included relocation of the women's restroom from the second floor to a hallway on the first floor. Located in the abutting building, the hallway also provided access to the Drexel Radio Café. The café was planned for in the 1991 renovations, but was not opened until June 19, 1995. The window opening created in the theater vestibule, looking into the café, was meant to serve as a visual enticement for the new business.

⁷ Flely, Dennis. "The Drexel Making Movies Fun Again," *Capitol – The Dispatch Magazine*, May 13, 1984, p.9.

⁸ Flely, Dennis. "The Drexel Making Movies Fun Again," *Capitol – The Dispatch Magazine*, May 13, 1984, p.9.

⁹ Gabrenya, "And then there were 3," p.G1.

¹⁰ http://www.bexleylibrary.org/Main_Street_Drexel

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In 1995, the Franks lost their lease on the Drexel North location in Clintonville, when it was sold by the owner. The building was then converted to a chain drug store and then into a gym. The building today continues to operate as a gym. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Franks were involved with programming for new downtown Columbus multi-plexes, the Arena Grand and the Gateway.

The Drexel Theater suffered financially during the recession of 2009. Movie attendance was down and compounding the problem, several art film distributors went out of business, reducing the number of offerings for the theater. Out of concern the theater would close, a nonprofit group, Friends of the Drexel, was formed that year to support it. The nonprofit group commissioned a study of the Drexel's customer base, operations, financial stability, new prospects, and business competition. In 2011, the Franks were ready to retire and sold the Drexel Theater assets to the nonprofit group. Upon asset transfer, the business was converted to nonprofit status, and the Drexel Radio Café was closed. Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA) was brought in to manage the theater for the nonprofit. CAPA also purchased the building from the Gay Street Realty Co. in 2011.

Architect

The architect for the Drexel Theater was Robert R. Royce. Royce's firm, R.R. Royce & Associates, was organized in 1928. He was predominantly a residential architect, and the Drexel represents one of his very few commercial designs. Royce specialized in the Upper Arlington community. In the 1930s, when he designed the Drexel, Royce was creating large period revival style houses.

Columbus Movie Theaters

Early movies were short films that were typically a minute or less in duration. By the late 1890s, they were being projected on a screen as part of traveling vaudeville acts or as demonstration pieces. The films proved popular and changes in the distribution of films in the early 1900s led to the rise of nickelodeons. The first nickelodeon (a name which combined the admission fee and the Greek word for theater) opened in Pittsburgh on June 19, 1905, with 450 people attending.¹¹ Representing the first development phase of permanent movie theaters, they proved immensely popular and in unbelievable growth, between 8,000 and 10,000 were operating by 1908.¹²

Nickelodeons proliferated throughout Columbus during the early 1900s. As was the case across the United States, Columbus' citizens were wild for the new motion picture craze and nickelodeons were quickly profitable. They sprang up in storefronts everywhere, offering movies for five cents. Nickelodeons typically had fancy names and sometimes elaborate

¹¹ <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/first-nickelodeon-opens>

¹² <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/394161/history-of-the-motion-picture/52138/Early-growth-of-the-film-industry>

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facades, but inside were just open spaces with wooden chairs or benches. One of Columbus' nicest nickelodeons was the Exhibit, built by Max Stearn in 1907.

As movie viewing became more popular, movies became longer and movie palaces began to replace nickelodeons. Still considered cheap entertainment, movie palaces more comfortably seated hundreds, sometimes thousands of patrons. The first movie theater, without a stage, opened in New York City in 1914. "Eventually, luxurious movie palaces were built in all the major American cities and on the West Coast. The trend was toward larger, opulent 'picture palaces' to cater to increasing upper-class audiences."¹³

Constructed in 1914, the Majestic Theater is considered to be Columbus' first motion picture theater. Expanding upon his nickelodeon experience, Max Stearn opened the 1200-seat Majestic, which "would be the capital city's first large, fancy theater built expressly for the showing of movies."¹⁴ Because the Majestic was constructed during the overlapping years of live vaudeville performances and early motion pictures, a stage, orchestra pit, and dressing rooms were included, in case they were needed. Despite the cautious inclusions, Stearn "believed a theater could be profitable even if it had only motion pictures."¹⁵

The Majestic had pioneered the showing of feature-length films and movie palace concept in Columbus. But, the 1914 Grand Theater, at 59 E. State St., pioneered talking motion pictures in the city. The Grand's operator, J. Real Neth, invested \$25,000 in sound equipment for the 1927 talkie, *The Jazz Singer*.¹⁶ The Majestic resisted the conversion for a while, instead relying on live organ accompaniment as silent movies had traditionally done.

The movie palace concept quickly took hold and downtown Columbus had an assortment of them during the early 20th century. The dual purpose model of a combined live performance and movie theater persisted throughout the 1920s. William James, who owned a small consortium of downtown theaters, opened the 3,100-seat James Theater in 1921. Though the opulent theater could accommodate live performances, the newspaper reported that "at the present time it is not the intention of the owner to endeavor to use this stage for anything except pictures."¹⁷

Two of the city's present day iconic historic theaters were built in the 1920s as combination movie palaces. The 2,779-seat Ohio Theater was completed in 1928 (NR and National Historic Landmark listed). Built for the Loew's Theaters chain, the building also included accommodations for live performances. Founded in 1904, the Cincinnati chain established extravagant palaces across the country, mostly in the Midwest and East Coast. The 2,827-seat Palace Theater was part of the Art Deco American Insurance Union Citadel (more commonly

¹³ Dirks, Tim. <http://www.filmsite.org/pre20sintro3.html>

¹⁴ Sheridan, Phil. *More About Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters*, (Columbus, Ohio: Self-published, 1984), p.76.

¹⁵ Jones, Johnny. "Early Picture Made in City," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 17, 1970, p. B-3.

¹⁶ Sheridan, Phil. *More About Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters*, Columbus, Ohio: Self-published, 1984, p.69.

¹⁷ Sheridan, Phil. *More About Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters*, Columbus, Ohio: Self-published, 1984, p.17.

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known as the LeVeque Tower, NR listed 1975). The Palace opened in November 1926, and like some of the city's earlier theaters, it did double duty as a vaudeville and movie theater. It was associated with the Keith-Albee vaudeville circuit. In 1929, it became the RKO Palace and functioned predominantly as a movie theater, until 1975.

By 1940, Columbus had nine movie theaters in the downtown. Older theaters, such as the 1896 Southern Theater, had been converted from touring productions to movies. Movies were shown at the Southern as early as the 1910s, and the theater became a movie house exclusively in 1931, closing in 1979. As the 20th century progressed, many of downtown's early 20th century theaters began to be demolished for new construction. The Majestic, Columbus' first movie theater, was razed in 1950. The 1921 James Theater, which had become part of the Loew's chain in 1927, was demolished in 1961, with an office building complex taking its place.

Across Columbus' neighborhoods and early suburbs, motion picture theaters were established to capitalize on their popularity. If the downtown's offerings were plentiful, the small neighborhood theaters were just as abundant, with thirty-eight existing by 1940. Although there were scads of neighborhood theaters throughout Columbus and its suburbs, movie options were still limited. Neighborhood theaters were restricted to second run movies in the distribution system mandated by film production companies. A system that persisted into the 1960s, new movie releases were first given to the big downtown movie palaces. A neighborhood theater might have to wait anywhere from thirty to ninety days before it could screen a popular movie. A 1965 *Columbus Dispatch* article noted that a shift in first-run movie screening was beginning to take place in the city. At the time, there were two first run downtown theaters in Columbus, the Ohio and the Palace, plus a Cinerama screen, which had long runs and reserved seating. The author, the *Dispatch*'s stage and music editor happily reported on the emerging shift of first run movies in the suburbs, "no doubt but that the downtown monopoly on premieres has been broken."¹⁸

Despite the unfavorable distribution system, every neighborhood with a commercial center had a theater at some point in the early-mid 20th century. To name a few, German Village had Thurmania, 1915 (later converted to commercial use); Clintonville had the Clinton Theater, 1927 (demolished); the Short North had the Garden Theater, 1920 (partially restored performance space); and the west side had the Ritz Theater, 1927 (converted to a church). Neighborhood theaters were proliferate enough in Columbus that in 1911 a *Dispatch* cartoonist depicted a busy street scene with a caption above the theater reading, "The Avondale Theater – No neighborhood complete without its picture show." (See Attachment C – Neighborhood Theaters)

Like many early 20th businesses located in historic commercial centers, neighborhood theaters began to suffer from increased competition during the late 20th century. Commercial activities increasingly were clustered around new residential developments, which were built more and more distant from Columbus' downtown, as well as from the old suburban downtowns. New large shopping centers and malls were built in every quadrant of the city. As a result, historic

¹⁸ Wilson, Sam. "Downtown Monopoly Gone In First-Run Film Field," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 27, 1965.

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neighborhood commercial clusters first lost patrons and then the businesses themselves. The new suburban shopping complexes, with massive seas of parking, tended to be comprehensive concepts, which included movie theaters. Most old neighborhood movie theaters did not survive this late 20th century transition to suburban, auto-oriented commercial development.

At the same time, neighborhood theaters also faced a changing business model within the movie industry. Distributors wanted guarantees that theater managers would show films for a specified length of time. If the film did not sell tickets, theater operators were stuck until the guaranteed time period was up. Single screen theaters were at a disadvantage under this system, as an underperforming movie could not be shifted to a secondary screen.

Movie theaters of the early to mid-20th century only had one screen. New theaters of the 1960s were still only screen, such as the 1964 Northland Cinema, recognized as Columbus' first mall theater, and the 1968 theater in Eastland Mall. The move away from single-screens happened quickly after the 1960s. For example, the Graceland Shopping Center, north of Clintonville, included the Graceland I and II, a new twin screen, opened in February 1973. Beginning in the 1970s, most theaters, including the state-of-the-art ones built in the previous decade, were split to form a twin cinema. By the late 1970s, new theaters were multi-screen, such as the 1978 Eastland Plaza 6, built near the mall. By the 1980s, eight or more screens were common, and movie theaters were becoming known as multi-plexes.

Historic Significance

The Drexel Theater is being nominated under **Criterion A** for its association with the entertainment and recreational trend. Built during the heyday of neighborhood theaters, it is an intact example of the once popular entertainment venue. "For generations, the Drexel Theater has been central Ohio's first source for independent film and the best of Hollywood and international cinema, striving to specialize in simply the best films from around the world. Named among the "Ten Best Art Blessings" by *The Columbus Dispatch*, the Drexel is Columbus' premier arts cinema, providing unique programming in an eclectic, neighborhood film-going experience."¹⁹

When constructed in 1937, the Drexel Theater joined the two-year-old Bexley Theater on Bexley's Main Street, the primary commercial thoroughfare. "More than simply another business along the sidewalk, the new houses of entertainment, for the most part, visually upstaged their more staid commercial neighbors. In fact, by the 1920s, the iconic force of the movie house had become so powerful in the public mind that the brightly lit marquee, touting the latest movie playing in town, became a sure sign that a main street or neighborhood shopping area had 'made it'."²⁰ This sentiment is surely true for the young community of Bexley, which

¹⁹ <http://www.drexel.net/index.php/about>

²⁰ Chester Liebs, "Silent Screens in a New Century," in *Silent Screens: The Decline and Transformation of the American Movie Theater*, Putnam, Michael (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.77.

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had reached city status in 1931. Despite the Great Depression, the city was thriving with construction of the two movie theaters. Other recreation options included the establishment of two soda fountains in the 1930s and the Glass Bowl. Built in 1938, the Glass Bowl was a restaurant within a building shaped like an upside-down champaign glass. The round building was comprised of glass block and the 'stem' served as the building's sign, which was lit on the interior with neon lights. The Bexley Theater, the soda fountains, and the Glass Bowl are all gone, leaving the Drexel Theater as the remaining representative of Bexley's 1930s entertainment and recreation culture.

During an era when neighborhood theaters were closing or had already closed, Jeff and Kathy Frank kept the Drexel Theater alive by creating an arts oriented programming that was lacking in the Columbus metropolitan area. By being true to the historic qualities of the theater, they created an atmosphere of cinematic creativity. In 1981, upon purchasing the Drexel Theater business, Jeff Frank stated when it opened, it was "one of the finest neighborhood theaters in the city. It was first-class all the way, a beautiful example of the art deco theater and the only one left in the city which still retains the flavor of the period."²¹ The Drexel's niche programming, since 1981, created a "brand," which has had a significant impact on Columbus' arts scene. In just a few short years, the *Dispatch's Capitol Magazine* was calling the reinvigorated Drexel Theater a "cultural landmark in Columbus."²²

The Drexel Theater is one of the last neighborhood theaters left operating in the Columbus region. It has been in continuous operation since its opening on December 25, 1937. This suburban theater reflects an era when people walked to their neighborhood commercial center for shopping and entertainment activities. Many of these theaters throughout Columbus have been demolished, while others were converted to different functions. Two other single-screen neighborhood theaters are currently in operation in the Columbus area: the Grandview Theater and the Indianola Theater, now Studio 35. Located in the Grandview Heights suburb, the 1926 Grandview Theater is of the combined commercial storefront and theater building type. It was closed in 1961 and reopened as a movie theater in 1987. The Franks took over operation of the theater in 1992, then dubbed Drexel Grandview. Due to the economic downturn, they gave up operation of the theater in late 2008. It was subsequently purchased by new owners and is presently screening movies. Located in the Clintonville neighborhood, the 1938 Indianola Theater changed hands in 1957. Then becoming the Fox Theater, it was under ownership of Jerry Knight, who changed it to a foreign and art film theater. In 1964, the theater became Studio 35 and adopted an eighteen and over policy. Today, it is a first run, independent picture house.

²¹ Flely, Dennis. "Drexel To Be Restored To '30s Glory," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 4, 1981, p. C16.

²² Flely, Dennis. "The Drexel Making Movies Fun Again," *Capitol -- The Dispatch Magazine*, May 13, 1984, p.9.

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Through its continued operation, the Drexel Theater exemplifies the neighborhood theater tradition. It reflects an era when movies were a primary source of entertainment. The Drexel's management during the 1960s and 70s was able to keep the theater operating – a time when many neighborhood theaters closed or became adult film venues. In the latter case, neighborhood opposition was often the impetus for a theater's demise. When ownership changed in 1981, the new owners, Jeff and Kathy Frank, committed to an underserved segment of film in the Columbus region. Under their direction, the Drexel Theater featured cinema as art programming and special events were held to celebrate movie runs. Though it occurred after the Period of Significance, in the late 20th century into the present day, the Drexel Theater has become a beacon for alternative film and is considered part of metro region's overall arts scene. In 1996, Kathy Frank summarized their goal with the Drexel, to maintain a theater where "customers can have a unique movie experience and an architecturally historical experience at the same time."²³

The Drexel Theater is also being nominated under **Criterion C**, as an iconic building type, the early 20th century neighborhood theater. Typical components of a neighborhood theater were a marquee and sign, sometimes integrated into a singular design, a lobby/concessions space, and the single-screen auditorium. The Drexel Theater has all of these elements, even with the division of the original auditorium.

By the mid-1930s and into the 1940s, neighborhood theaters in Columbus and the inner suburbs took on greater architectural flair. More modern architectural styles were used, such as Art Deco, Art Moderne, and other category-defying Modernist styles. Distinctive building shapes were sometimes employed too. Soaring signs, meant to catch the eye of motorists, became a hallmark of neighborhood theaters. Columbus area examples (See Attachment C) of the more fantastical era of neighborhood theaters include the Bexley Theater, 1935, an innovative double-screen configuration that was demolished in 1997; the Main, 1937, opened by the same owner as the Drexel (converted to commercial use and now vacant, marquee intact, but slightly altered); Neth's Markham Theater, 1937 (demolished); The Boulevard, 1940 (demolished); University Theater, 1947 (converted to restaurant use, the terra cotta relief sculpture is intact, but the marquee has been removed).

In addition to the still operating Grandview Theater and Studio 35 and other above mentioned theaters, there are at least two other 1930s-40s neighborhood theaters still standing, which are recognizable as their original function. Included among these examples are The Cleve, 1938, located in the Linden neighborhood (partially intact façade, minus the marquee, gutted interior, currently being converted to a community center) and The Livingston, 1947, near the Driving Park neighborhood (the façade is largely intact, including an upturned canopy with integrated

²³ Horwitz-Whitmore, Ina. 'Gala to support restoration,' *Bexley This Week*, February 5, 1996.

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neon sign, currently vacant). All noted examples would require additional investigation to determine their level of historic integrity and National Register designation potential.

The Drexel Theater is a combination of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, which also serves to place the building within the era of the neighborhood theater building type. It's characteristic design of integrated marquee and sign make it an easily identifiable building type from the early 20th century.

Conclusion

The Drexel Theater is little changed on the exterior, illustrating “a distinctive architectural type that was integral to neighborhood business and social life.”²⁴ It is one of a very few surviving examples of the once ubiquitous neighborhood/suburban theater, which provided inexpensive entertainment close to home. The biggest interior change to the building was the alteration of the single-screen auditorium to three. By the 1990s, Drexel Theater owners, Jeff and Kathy Frank, determined that the theater's survival mandated the addition of screens. The sensitive design of the 1991 theater remodel allowed for the retention of the primary Art Deco features in the historic auditorium. The design also allowed audience members, within the original auditorium space, to still have the sensation of being at a single-screen neighborhood theater. As a building type, the Drexel Theater maintains historic integrity fully able to reflect its period of construction and role as a source of neighborhood recreation. It is a significant example in the Columbus metropolitan area of early 20th century neighborhood theater design.

²⁴ Busch, Jane. *Moreland Theater Building – National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 4, 2011, p.14.

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Site Visit

October 10, 2014: Site visit with Nathalie Wright and Jeff Frank, previous owner of the Drexel Theater (1981-2011).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Acreeage of Property Less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 334395 | Northing: 4424607 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary is comprised of Franklin County Auditor Parcel ID 020-004847-80.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary includes the lot and building historically associated with the Drexel Theater, during the Period of Significance.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nathalie Wright, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization: Prepared for the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts
street & number: 349 E. Tulane Rd.
city or town: Columbus state: Ohio zip code: 43202
e-mail nwright66@yahoo.com
telephone: _____
date: February 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Drexel Theater

City or Vicinity: Bexley County: Franklin County State: Ohio

Photographer: Nathalie Wright Date Photographed: October 10, 2014 & February 10, 2015

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

1. Streetscape, looking northeast
2. Streetscape and façade, looking northwest
3. Façade and west elevation, looking north
4. Façade, marquee and sign, looking west
5. Façade, recessed entrance, looking north
6. West elevation, looking northeast
7. Interior, vestibule, looking northeast
8. Interior, vestibule, looking north
9. Interior, lobby, looking northeast
10. Interior, lobby, looking southwest

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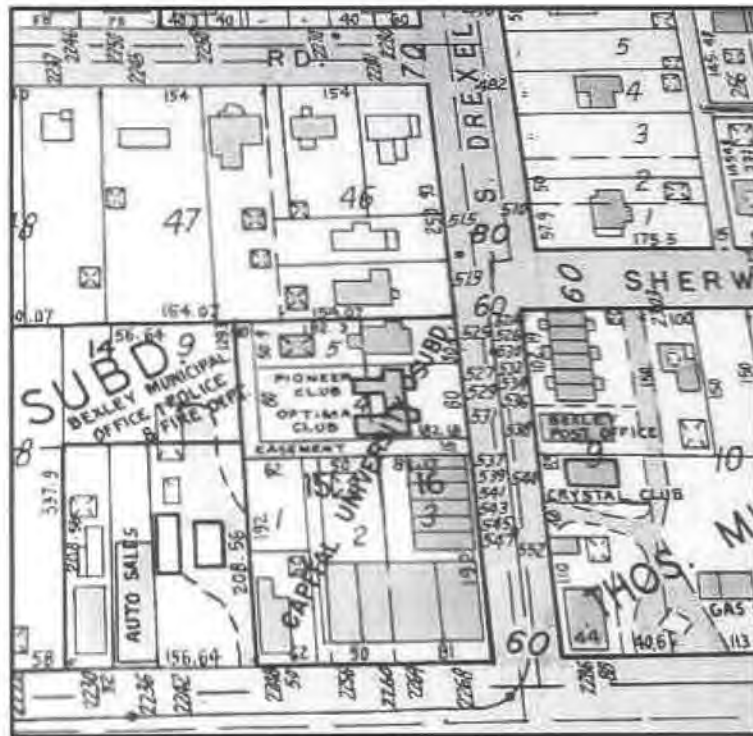
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11. Interior, lobby, looking north
12. Interior, lobby, looking southwest
13. Interior, theater auditorium, partition, looking north
14. Interior, theater auditorium, looking northeast
15. Interior, theater auditorium, looking southeast
16. Interior, theater auditorium, sign, looking east
17. Interior, Screen 3, looking southeast
18. Interior, office, looking east
19. Interior, projection room, looking north
20. Interior, hallway, looking east

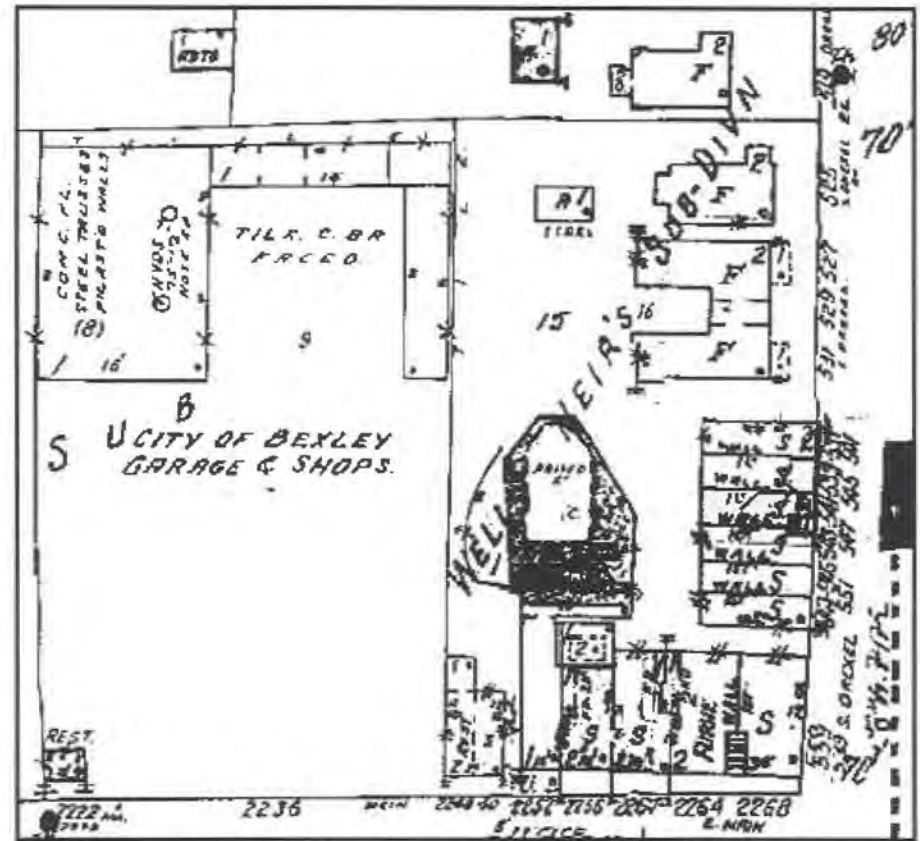
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Attachment A – Historic Maps



1937 Plat Map



1950 Sanborn Map

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Attachment B – Advertisements



GRAND OPENING

**DREXEL
THEATER**

EAST MAIN ST. NEAR DREXEL AVE.

Christmas Day

Matinee, 2:00 o'Clock, and Continuous Showings

Featuring

"A MILE FROM HEAVEN"

Shorts—Comedy—March of Time

ADMISSION: CHILDREN 10c—ADULTS 25c

December 25, 1937, *Columbus Dispatch*



GINGER ROGERS

**MISS GINGER ROGERS IN PERSON
& THE 1935 CLASSIC FILM "TOP HAT"**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1981, 1:30 P.M. AND 7:30 P.M.

8:30 - Matinee 5:15 Evening
Tickets Drexel Theatre, 305 1000-600
Central Ticket Office, 5000, 1000-600
Call Columbus Group 511-0010
PRESS: GIBBY 291-1300

DREXEL
THEATER

1000-6000

1000-6000

1981 Grand Reopening, Courtesy Jeff Frank

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Attachment C – Historic Photos

New Neighborhood Houses Open on Christmas Day



• The Drexel, newest of the W. C. Chesbrough chain of suburban theaters, is to have its formal opening Christmas afternoon. First film to be shown will be 'Opa Mita from Heaven.' On Sunday the screen program will be topped by Irene Duano in 'The Awful Truth.'

December 25, 1937, *Columbus Dispatch*



1941, usher, from "Spring for a Seat Festival"



1947, from *Those Wonderful Old Downtown Theaters, Vol.3*

Drexel Theatre
Name of Property

Franklin, Ohio
County, State

Attachment C – Historic Photos



1976, *Columbus Monthly*



1985, http://www.bexleylibrary.org/Main_Street_Drexel



1994, from *A Guide to The National Road*



1997, Courtesy Jeff Frank



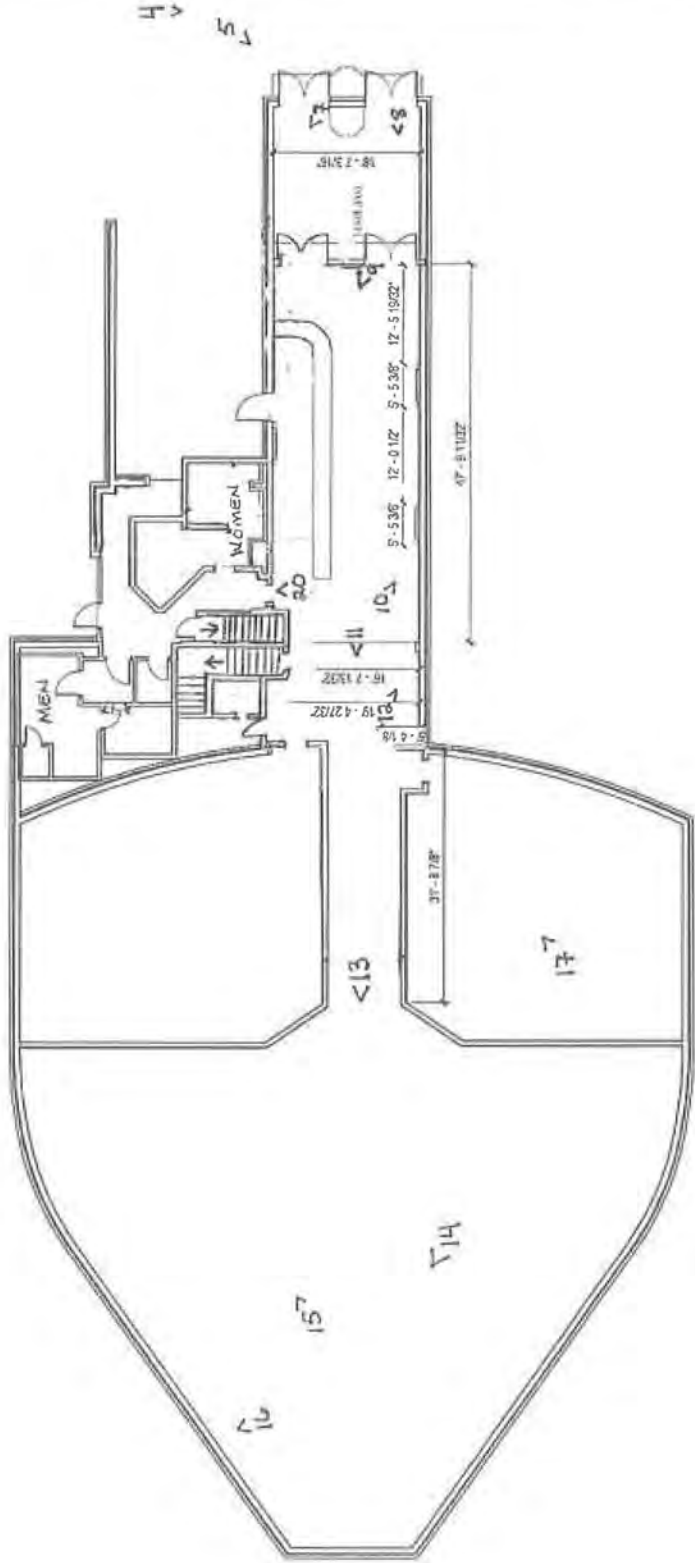
1720 First Street, Suite 200
 Cincinnati, OH 45202
 513.533.7643 FAX 513.533.7644
 WWW.M+A-ARCHITECTS.COM

Drexel Theater

PROJECT NUMBER	1720-01
DATE	11/14/14
PROJECT NAME	Drexel Theater
ARCHITECT	M+A Architects
OWNER	Drexel University
DATE	11/14/14

A2.2b

E. MAIN STREET



FIRST FLOOR
 1/8" = 1'-0"



DREXEL THEATER
 FRANKLIN CO., OH
 PHOTO KEY

© 2014 M+A Architects





PARKWAY

1956

THE BEST FOR THE SA
OF THE

STREEL

STREEL

STREEL



DREXEL

DREXEL

MY OLD LADY
LOVE IS STRANGE

PRIDE
HECTOR



DREXEL

DREXEL



D
R
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X
E
L

DREXEL

HOW THE
MUSIC BEAT



WOSU BEXLEY SHOW FREE SUN
RED CARPET BASH FEB 22

2254





DREXEL

WASH BERTS SHOW FREE SAT
BIG COMET MAIN FLOOR



Small red and white poster or notice on the wall.







Great Theatre Tickets

Box Seats	...
...	...
...	...
...	...
...	...

DREKEL PRESENTS
THE ROOM
CROWDING
WELL BE
A MESS

2



EXIT

EXIT



"AL KNOCKOUT"
pStone
★★★ **"TERRIFIC"**
THE JEFFREY THOMAS
"TO RESIST,
MAKE YOU CHEER!"
"ABSOLUTELY
SUPERB"
Indiewire
PRIDE

IN OUR NEW
**MEMBERSHIP
PROGRAM**
DREXEL
Support
THE
home for
Independent
film in
Columbus
MEMBER ACTION!



2

DREXEL

Pride

3

1

DREXEL





1

DRETEL

Love is
Strange

DC
DIO
SOUND SYSTEM



BUSTER KEATON



\$3 Adults
\$1 Kids

BUSTER KEATON
MOVIE NIGHT @ THE DREXEL

THE NAVIGATOR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16 @ 7PM

EXIT





EXIT

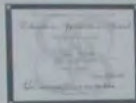


Bexley Middle School FilmFest

Enjoy a movie with us... then dinner... the event at **BARREL 44** **WHISKEY BAR AND RESTAURANT** Ask us for a special coupon to save 25% on your food purchases today at Barrel 44. A Movie...then Dinner. It's a perfect night out!



DREXEL
THE UNIVERSITY FOR BUSINESS



Drexel Theatre
Class of 2016 Fest

7:00 Bully is SOLD OUT

Ohio Christmas Bazaar
July 18-20, 2013

Chimpanzee
DREXEL

101

PROGRESSIVE
NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

International Blue
LABORERS



A tall, light-colored metal cabinet or shelving unit. The top is cluttered with cardboard boxes, some labeled 'LINKYO' and 'E-LIV'. A red Coca-Cola vending machine stands to the left of the cabinet. A pink sticky note is attached to the cabinet door, and a yellow radiation warning sign is on the lower part. The shelves inside contain various items, including papers and containers.

A large, grey and black multifunction printer or copier. To its right is a black printer with a small yellow duck figurine on top. The desk in front of the printer is covered with stacks of papers and folders.

A wooden desk with a computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse. The desk is cluttered with numerous papers, folders, and a stack of books. A blue office chair is positioned in front of the desk.





TELETYPE
ST. VALENT
BROAD
FOURTH
NORTH
HE. TOWER

Handwritten notes on a whiteboard, including a list of items or names.

Phone numbers:
Main - (414) 333-5999
LEW - (414) 750-1463
TRANS - (414) 740-2532
EOLA - MS 5800
(414) 345-5301



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Drexel Theater
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 4/24/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/19/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/03/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/09/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000322

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 6-8-15 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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

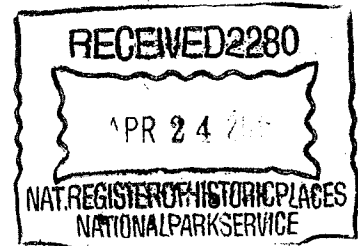
OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on April 17, 2005
For nomination of the Drexel Theatre to the National Register of
Historic Places: Franklin Co, OH

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Photographs
 Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
 Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
 Paper PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence
 Paper PDF
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____



April 17, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register
and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl. (2280)
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find five (5) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATION

Drexel Theatre
Graham, A. B., House
Theresa Building
United States Carriage Company
West Fourth Street Historic District (Amendment)

COUNTY

Franklin
Franklin
Franklin
Franklin
Hamilton

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nominations for the Graham, A. B., House and the Theresa Building nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

The West Fourth Street Historic District (Amendment) corrects an error in the historic district boundary for the West Fourth Street Historic District (Boundary Increase), NR Reference No. 07000028.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

for Barbara Bowen

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures