

PH 0662 135

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 6 1978
DATE ENTERED MAR 21 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Elitch Theatre
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Elitch Gardens
West 38th Avenue and Tennyson Street
CITY, TOWN Denver VICINITY OF Denver CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT #1
STATE Colorado CODE 08 COUNTY Denver CODE 031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED Summers	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED Summers	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Jack Gurtler and Mr. Arnold Gurtler
The Elitch Gardens Co. and The Elitch Amusements, Inc.
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN 4620 W. 38th Avenue STATE Colorado
VICINITY OF Denver

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City of Denver, Clerk and Recorder's Office
STREET & NUMBER 14th and Bannock Streets
CITY, TOWN Denver STATE Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites
The Denver Inventory
DATE Ongoing
1973 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Colorado
Denver Planning Office
CITY, TOWN Denver STATE Colorado

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1890</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Elitch Theatre is one of the original buildings within the nationally famous Elitch Gardens, an amusement park located in northwest Denver. It is bounded on the east by Tennyson Street, on the north by West 38th Avenue, on the south by West 36th Avenue and on the west by Wolff Street. The westerly portion of the property is a large parking lot. The theater building is located just inside the entrance into the park from the parking lot.

The most westerly portion of the building is the backstage building, constructed 1954-55. Attached to the east of this building is the theater building with the main entrance facing east to the interior of the park. To the south-east of the entrance is a sunken garden with a brick wall and beyond, a low restaurant building constructed in 1976 on the site of the Trocadero Ballroom, demolished in 1975. To the northeast of the entrance is a circular fountain and pool where fresh carnations from the Elitch greenhouses float on the water. These areas are enjoyed by the theater patrons during intermissions.

The theater building is an example of resort architecture and a combination of stick and shingle styles. This form of architecture is now beginning to be recognized as an important art and building form, predominantly found in the Great resort hotels throughout America. During the summer of 1977 there was an exhibit of resort architecture at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City. The Elitch Theatre is similar in shape, but smaller, to the polygonal wing of the Hotel Del Coronado in San Diego, California.

The exterior of the theater is faced in wood drop siding painted grey with white trim. Through the years there have been additions and changes which are part of the history of the building, but the main structure, housing the auditorium, has retained its original structural form. It is octagonal in shape, 43 feet each side, two stories high with a tent-shaped shingle roof of moderate pitch. Rising above the central portion of the roof is an octagonal, miniature version of the main building which is crowned by a shingle-faced open belvedere or look-out tower, also octagonal in shape. Each face of the tower has two small recessed arches and the tops of the walls are corbelled and crowned with a balustrade. There is a flag pole in the center of the flat roof.

The main entrance to the theater is on the east side of the building facing into the park. A two story addition of the late 1890's or early 1900's forms a vestibule or outer lobby measuring 43 feet wide by 28 feet deep with a 16.3 foot ceiling. Covering the walls of the vestibule are framed photographs of persons and theater companies who have appeared at the theater throughout the years. On either side is an enclosed stairway to the balcony.

Sheltering the front of the vestibule is a portico or canopy with a flat roof which is supported by wood columns along the outer edge and on the inside next to the building by attached and free standing square posts with knee braces which meet to form an arched entrance into the vestibule.

To the right of the vestibule is a covered walkway with a flat roof supported at intervals by round wood columns which leads around the building to the open, wooden stairway to the balcony and a double door exit on the main floor. The left side of the building is treated in a similar manner.

Connected to the rear, to the west of the theater, is the backstage building of grey concrete block, rectangular in shape with a flat roof. This building, constructed in 1954-55, has no architectural merit and is strictly utilitarian. It replaced a much smaller building and permits a far greater variety and versatility of stage settings than previously.

On the interior of the theater, just inside the main entrance, is the foyer or inner lobby. It functions as an interior corridor which encircles the main

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 6 1978

MAR 21 1978

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

auditorium and is separated from it by a wooden partition with openings into the aisles. This corridor was at one time an open veranda which was found on both the main and balcony levels, but has been enclosed, possibly at the same time the vestibule was built.

The ceiling height of the auditorium is 32 feet; and there are a total of sixteen supporting metal pillars under the outer edge of the balcony, twelve on the lower floor and four in the balcony. There are eight boxes for seating, four on either side with two on the main level and two directly above in the balcony.

The proscenium arch is 33 feet 4 inches wide and 22 feet 4 inches high. From the curtain line to the back wall of the stage is 44 feet. The opening is elaborately decorated with molded plaster decorative designs. There are wall panels on either side of the stage opening which were at one time painted with mountain scenery and covered with mosquito netting stretched across the panels to mute the colors.

One of the outstanding features of the interior is the stage curtain. It depicts a cottage surrounded by hollyhocks with the verse at the bottom, "Ann Hathaway's Cottage, A Mile Away, Shakespeare Sought, At Close Of Day." The date when this curtain was installed is not known. The original curtain, installed for the opening in 1890, was a "roll" curtain of Irish linen, 36 feet across and 33 feet high, with local scenes painted in oils depicting nearby Berkeley Lake and Elitch Gardens with the city and Rocky Mountains in the background.

The dressing rooms are located on both sides of the stage on the first and second floors of the original building. Access to the rooms located at stage left was cut off when the 1954-55 backstage addition was constructed and these are no longer in use.

In addition to the two customary aisles running to the stage on the main floor there is an aisle running across the auditorium behind the parquet section. The seats on the main floor have replaced the original ones, but those in the balcony appear to be the original ones with folding seats of polished wood and a wire hat rack beneath. There are 1,419 seats in the auditorium and 48 seats in the boxes, a number which belies the feeling of intimacy within the building.

There is no complete detailed description of the original theater building as it appeared the opening season of 1890. However, according to the newspaper reports and from an account by Mary Elitch, the building was a nearly circular structure with open sides and a tent-like roof. Its original use was for the performance of vaudeville. The reporters of the day referred to it as a "theatorium" and an early advertisement of the Gardens called it the "Pavilion Theater."

The auditorium area was enclosed in 1891 or 1892, but there were verandas on the main and balcony levels on all sides of the building except to the rear where the backstage building was located. The verandas were edged with wood railings and had posts with knee braces at evenly spaced intervals. The two level were reached by means of open, outside wooden stairways with wood hand rails.

The tent-shaped roof was painted with geometric designs; stars, circles and semi-circles. The rest of the roof was as it appears today.

At the present time the building still retains the original structural,

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 6 1978
DATE ENTERED MAR 2 - 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

octagonal shape, original roof lines, and belvedere, but the painted design is gone.

Gas lighting was installed on the interior for the second season in 1891. The lights were controlled from the right side of the stage immediately behind the proscenium arch from where it was possible to control every light in the house. There was one row of footlights protected by glass globes. The glare into the auditorium was prevented by small shades which allowed the stage to be fully illuminated. Electricity was installed in the Gardens in 1891, but not in the theater until 1899.

There was no heat in the building until 1907 when, because of the cool Colorado evenings, steam heat was installed for the comfort of the patrons. Early ventilation was achieved through a series of "vent stacks" at the base of the ceiling that caused a steady stream of air to the interior.

This charming theater building is distinctive in its history and its architectural style and it enjoys the unique position as housing the oldest, continuously operating stock company in the United States today. It is also one of the two original buildings that were part of Elitch Gardens when it opened in 1890. The other building is the Orchard Cafe in the old Elitch farmhouse.

The owners, Jack and Arnold Gurtler, are in the process of planning restorative work for the theater to be done in the near future, and it will be in keeping with the historical and architectural flavor of the building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Elitch Theatre building is significant for several reasons, primarily for being the oldest continuously operating summer stock theater building in the United States. It is also significant in its association with the great and near great of the theatrical world who have appeared on the Elitch stage over the past 87 years. The theater building has architectural significance in that it is an example of resort architecture, now recognized as an important part of American architectural history. The theater and Elitch Gardens have played an important role in the cultural and entertainment history of the city of Denver.

The history of the Elitch Theatre is inextricably linked with that of Elitch Gardens. It was one of the buildings constructed for the 1890 opening of the Gardens on the site of a farm west of the city of Denver owned by John and Mary Elitch.

The theater building and the bear pits in the Elitch Gardens zoo were designed by Denver architects, Charles Herbert Lee and Rudolph Liden. Liden had been a draftsman for the well-known Denver architectural firm of Varian and Sterner, and Lee was also employed as a draftsman for architect Frank C. Eberly. Together they formed their own firm, Lee and Liden, in 1889, but the association was apparently short-lived, and by 1895 Mr. Lee was in practice by himself.

John Elitch was born in Mobile, Alabama, on April 10, 1850. In 1862 he moved with his parents to Santa Clara, California, and after graduation from Santa Clara College he went into the restaurant business with his father. In 1872 he married Mary E. Houck of San Jose, California, and the couple moved to San Francisco and opened a restaurant in a theater building. They were patronized mainly by theatrical people; and this experience was to influence Mary Elitch for the rest of her life, and she never lost her love of the theater.

After two additional business ventures, a traveling theater company which failed and a restaurant business in Durango, Colorado, the couple arrived in Denver in 1882. Here, John and his father, John Elitch, Sr., again went into the restaurant business together. The first establishment was called Elitch Restaurant and Oyster House, and in a few years they moved to a new location and the business became Elitch's Palace Diningrooms. In the late 1880's John and Mary bought

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arps, Louisa Ward. Denver In Slices. Sage Booke, Denver. 1959. pp. 210-227.
 Corbett and Ballinger. The Denver City Directory. Denver. 1884-1891.
The Denver Republican. May 2, 1890. p. 3, c. 3.
 Denver, City and County. Tax Assessor Appraisal Sheet, Elitch Gardens.
 Dorsett, Lyle W. The Queen City. Pruett Publishing Co. Boulder. 1977. pp. 161, 163, 172.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 3	4 9 6 0 5 0	4 4 0 1 8 3 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All blk 1 Cottage Hill Gardens exc pt to st and L 1 to 52 inc and L 196 to 200 inc & E 3.855 ft of L 195 Cottage Hill Land Co. add & aly vac ord 71-1942 & pt sts & av vac ord 24-1923 & av & W of Tennyson St. 7 S of 38th av & E of E L 1 sd bld 1 & sd E L 1 exld sly exc pt on N to city.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Barbara Norgren / Preservation Consultant

September 10, 1977

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Denver

837-1858

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

770 Pennsylvania Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Denver

Colorado

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Colo SHPO

DATE

1/14/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Catherine Cole

DATE

3-21-78

DATE

3-16-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 6 1978

DATE ENTERED MAR 21 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Chilcott farm, a few miles west of the city, located just beyond the town of Highland. Here the Elitches grew vegetables which they used in their restaurant. There were already quite a few apple and cottonwood trees on the farm, and to these John and Mary added additional trees and flower gardens. In 1888 they sold their restaurant in the city and spent their full energies in preparing the farm to be opened as an amusement park. The new park was to include a theater for vaudeville performances, a well-stocked zoo, extensive flower gardens, a merry-go-round, and a small artificial lake.

On May 1, 1890, the mayor of Denver, Wolfe Londoner, gave the opening speech from the stage of the new theater. He proclaimed that the Gardens would do much for the prosperity of Denver and that it was the best advertisement that Denver could have. In testimony to this statement, the year 1974 saw more than one million paid gate admissions into the park. After the mayor's speech, a ten-act vaudeville performance was presented in the open-sided theater or "theatorium" by the vaudeville company organized by John Elitch: The Goodyear, Elitch, and Shillings Minstrel Show. The tone of this show, which was described as, "bright, clean and there was nothing unseemly about it", established the management and operating philosophy for Elitch Gardens which has continued to this day. Phineas T. Barnum and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb were guests of the Elitches on that opening day.

Countless Denverites and visitors alike have enjoyed the variety of entertainment provided at the Gardens. For many years the advertising motto has been "not to see Elitch's is not to see Denver". There has always been something here for young and old alike, and it has always been considered a family place, clean and respectable. Even in the beginning it was termed as one of the finest resort places in America. "Throughout the gardens order is maintained and questionable characters of both sexes are rigidly excluded", states an 1890 newspaper article.

With her love for children, Mary Elitch provided safe, wholesome entertainment for youngsters. Every Tuesday was Children's Day and many came without parents to be looked after by Mary Elitch herself. Under Mary Elitch's management there were many children's programs and there were also free concerts offered up to World War I. She provided entertainment of the highest quality at the lowest possible cost to the citizens of Denver. In the early years there were various outdoor performances of acrobatics and animal acts. Every Saturday and Sunday from 1890 to 1907 there was a balloon ascent at the park with Ivy Baldwin doing stunts on a trapeze. Later on symphony concerts were presented in the Gardens on Friday afternoons and in the 1920's free dancing lessons were offered at the Trocadero Ballroom. All of this was in addition to the entertainments which were presented regularly.

After the 1890 opening season in Denver John Elitch took his vaudeville company on tour of the Western states, and while in San Francisco he became ill and died on March 10, 1891. His body was brought back to Denver and buried at Fairmount Cemetery.

Mary Elitch continued to run the Gardens after John's death, and she received

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 6 1978

DATE ENTERED

MAR 21 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

national acclaim as the only woman zoo keeper in the world. In 1901 Mary married Thomas Long, Elitch box office manager. As Mary continued to run the Gardens she ran into financial difficulties and went into debt. These debts were paid off by prominent Denver citizens, J. K. Mullen and Jim Berger, and in 1916 John Michael Mulvihill bought the Gardens and assumed total ownership. Mary Elitch continued to live in her home inside the park until a few years before her death in 1936. Today Elitch Gardens is operated by Mulvihill's grandsons, Arnold and John M. Gurtler.

In spite of John Elitch's untimely death, Mary Elitch's sincere interest in the theater continued. She discontinued the vaudeville acts and had the theater building enclosed some time in 1891 or 1892, leaving the verandas on the first and second floors. Most of the records of the alterations to the theater were lost in a fire a few years ago and to date there is very little information to indicate the exact years any changes were made in the building.

After the theater was enclosed Mary Elitch first promoted the performance of light opera. She is credited with making an outstanding cultural contribution to Denver by continuing to present light opera and classical music at the theater in the late 1890's after the Tabor Grand Opera House changed ownership and the Broadway Theater went bankrupt. There was very little sophisticated music in Denver in the early 20th century other than the entertainments presented at Elitch Gardens.

The theater building was used for attractions other than light opera and plays by the stock company. On August 14, 1896, Mary Elitch presented the Edison Vitascope to the people of Denver for the first time. This was the first screen projected motion picture ever shown in the city. In 1898 the films were brought directly from the battlefields of Cuba and the Philippines. The first movie of the Passion Play was also shown at the theater. Each spring in the early 1900's the theater was used by the seniors of Miss Wolcott's School to present a Shakespearian play and in 1955 and 1958 the Junior League of Denver presented their "Follies" in the theater.

In 1897 Mary Elitch organized a summer stock company, and the first play that season, presented on April 30, 1897, was "Helene" with playwright Eugene O'Neill's father, James O'Neill, as the leading man. The leading lady was Jane Kennark and the director was George Edison. Throughout that season a new production was presented each week. That year marked the beginning of the long run for the oldest summer stock theater in the United States.

Mary Elitch hired competent directors and went to New York each spring to select the plays and actors for the coming season. In 1899 the stock company consisted of director Walter Clarke Bellows and Henrietta Crosman who was the lead of the company which consisted of Lillian Daly, Madge Carr Cooke, Eleanor Robson, Katherine Field, J. Henry Kolker, Frederick Conger, Herman Sheldon and David Miles.

The list of great and near great of the theatrical world who have appeared at the Elitch Theatre is lengthy indeed. Many who became well-known performers gained their early experiences there. The theater provided young artists with a rare opportunity to perform under highly exacting, but very favorable conditions.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
FEB 6 1978
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

Time and time again it proved to be a stepping stone in the careers of dozens of important performers.

Antoinette Perry, who in the 1940's was one of New York's outstanding producers and directors, spoke her first lines from the Elitch stage at age 11. Douglas Fairbanks scrubbed the stage to get a ticket to attend his first play there.

Among the early performers were General Tom Thumb and P. T. Barnum in 1890 when the theater was showing vaudeville. In 1906 Sarah Bernhardt appeared in "Camille" and "La Sorciere". A few of the many others who have made stage appearances in the theater are Helen Mencken, Blanche Bates, Harold Lloyd, Grace Kelly, Steve Allen, Jayne Meadows, Jose Ferrer, Gloria Swanson, Mickey Rooney, Ginger Rogers, David Warfield, Cecil B. DeMille, Frederic March and many, many others. The pictures of a great number of those who have appeared at the theater hang in the vestibule.

No other summer stock theater has equaled the number of years of successful operation in addition to the number of productions presented during a season. In the earlier years of the theater, there was no hesitation to present classical works and very few theaters other than Elitch's produced original scripts.

As early as 1926 the comment was made by the drama critic for the Minneapolis Times, Carlton Miles, in The Echo that it was doubtful if there was any other company in the country that has had as many notable names connected with it. It was the only stock company which had been in existence for as long a time. He also stated that it was a national institution rather than local. He went on to say that there is "a spell that clings to this curious little theater that paralyzes actors with fright on opening nights when they think of the great ones who have walked the same boards". The theater holds a fascination for everyone who enters because it is not only a theater, but also a museum of theatrical history.

The theater as a structure exemplifies a style of architecture which is beginning to be recognized in its own right. This resort architecture is predominantly a combination of stick and shingle styles and appears in buildings constructed for seasonal use - such as resort hotels and bandstands. In addition to Elitch Theater, some of the better known examples of this style of architecture in Colorado include the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park and the Chautauqua Auditorium in Boulder (both listed in the National Register of Historic Places) and the Golf Club at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs.

Elitch Theater - through its long association with summer stock and notable performers from the world of theater and through special architectural style - is an important element of the cultural history of this area.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 6 1978

DATE ENTERED

MAR 21 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Hall, Frank. History of the State of Colorado. The Blakely Printing Co., Chicago. 1895. v. III, p. 436.

Jones, William C. and Forrest, Denton. Denver, A Pictorial History. Pruett Publishing Co., Boulder. 1973. p. 299.

Levy, Edwin Lewis. Elicth Gardens, Denver, Colorado. A History of the Oldest Summer Theater in the United States, (1890-1941). Dissertation. Columbia University, 1960.

Miles, Carlton, "The Tradition of Elicth's Gardens Theater", The Echo, The Rocky Mountain Magazine of Comment and Art. The Motor Club of Colorado. July, 1926. p. 11.

The Rocky Mountain News. Denver. May 21, 1899. p. 20, c. 1. June 15, 1941. p. 23, c. 1.

Smiley, Jerome C.. History of Denver. Evansville, Indiana. Unigraphic Printers. 1971. Reprint of 1901 edition. p. 908.

Western Architect and Building News. Denver. v. I, #11, p. 173.

Westerner's Brand Book, Denver Posse. 1948. pp. 129-158.

Young, William C. Documents of American Theater History. American Library Association. Chicago. 1973. v. II, pp. 244-253.

5-17-35 SCALE 1" = 20' FEET

THEATRE BLDG

STAGE
H 3

PROSCENIUM ARCH

P.L.O.G. 20

H 30.3

AUDITORIUM

VESTIBULE

H 16.3

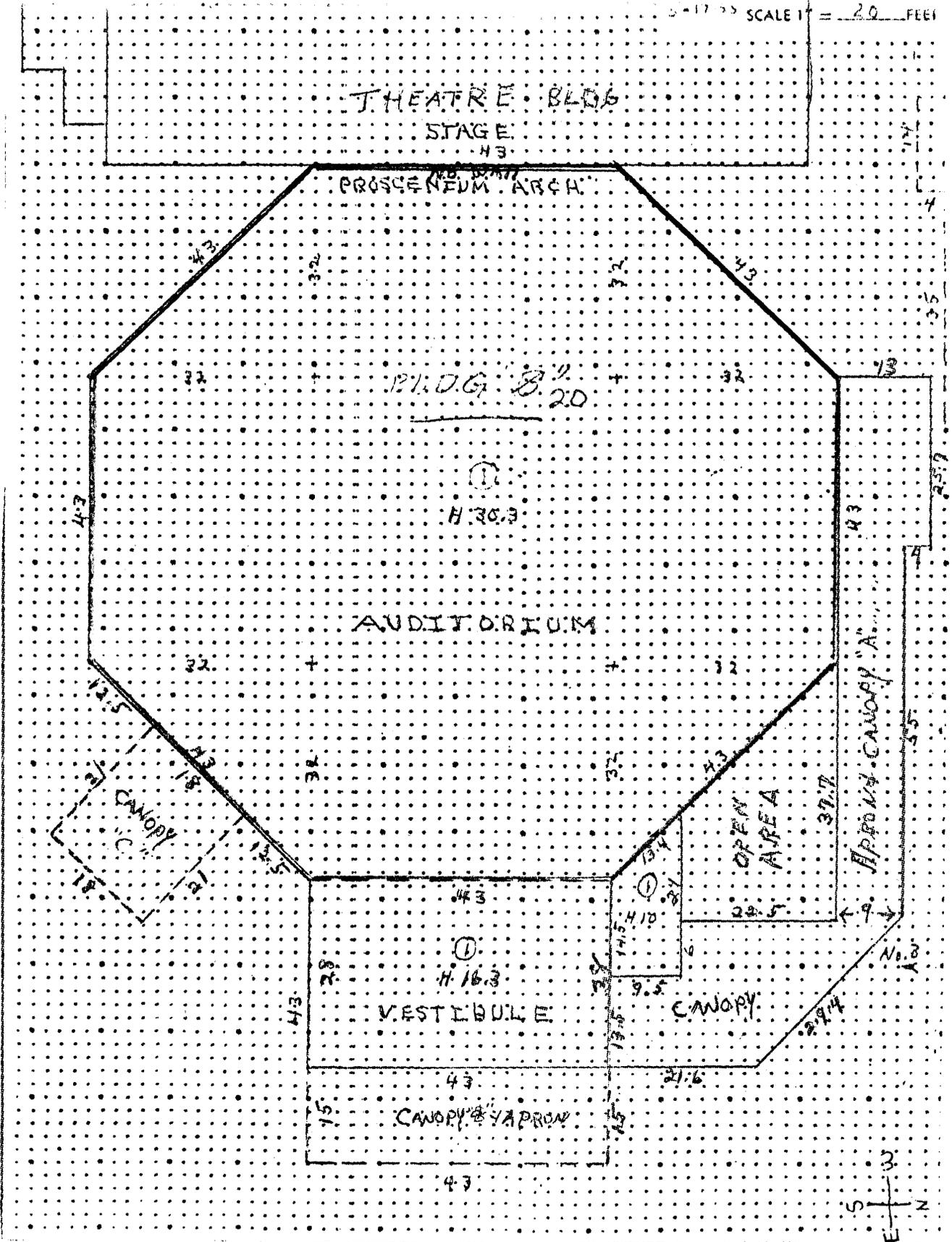
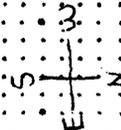
CANOPY BY APPROX

OPEN AREA

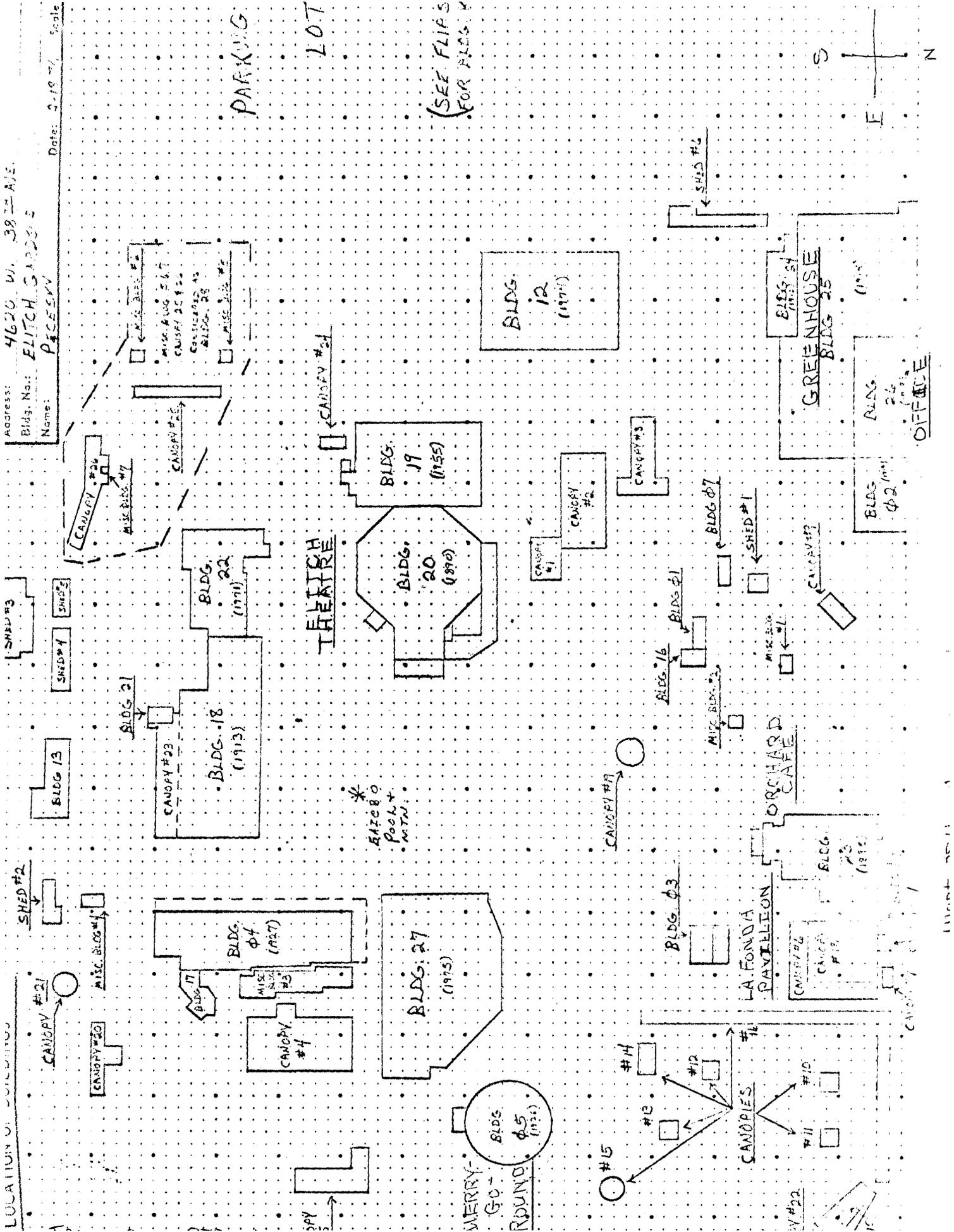
CANOPY

APPROX CANOPY AREA

CANOPY "C"



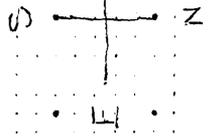
LOCATION OF BUILDINGS
Address: 4620 W. 38th Ave.
Bldg. No.: ELITCH GARAGE
Name: PICESKY
Date: 2-18-71 Scale



PARKING

LOT

(SEE FLIPS FOR BLDG. #)



THEATRE

* Bldg 80
Rock +
M.T.M.

MERRY-GO-ROUND
BLDG. 35 (1915)

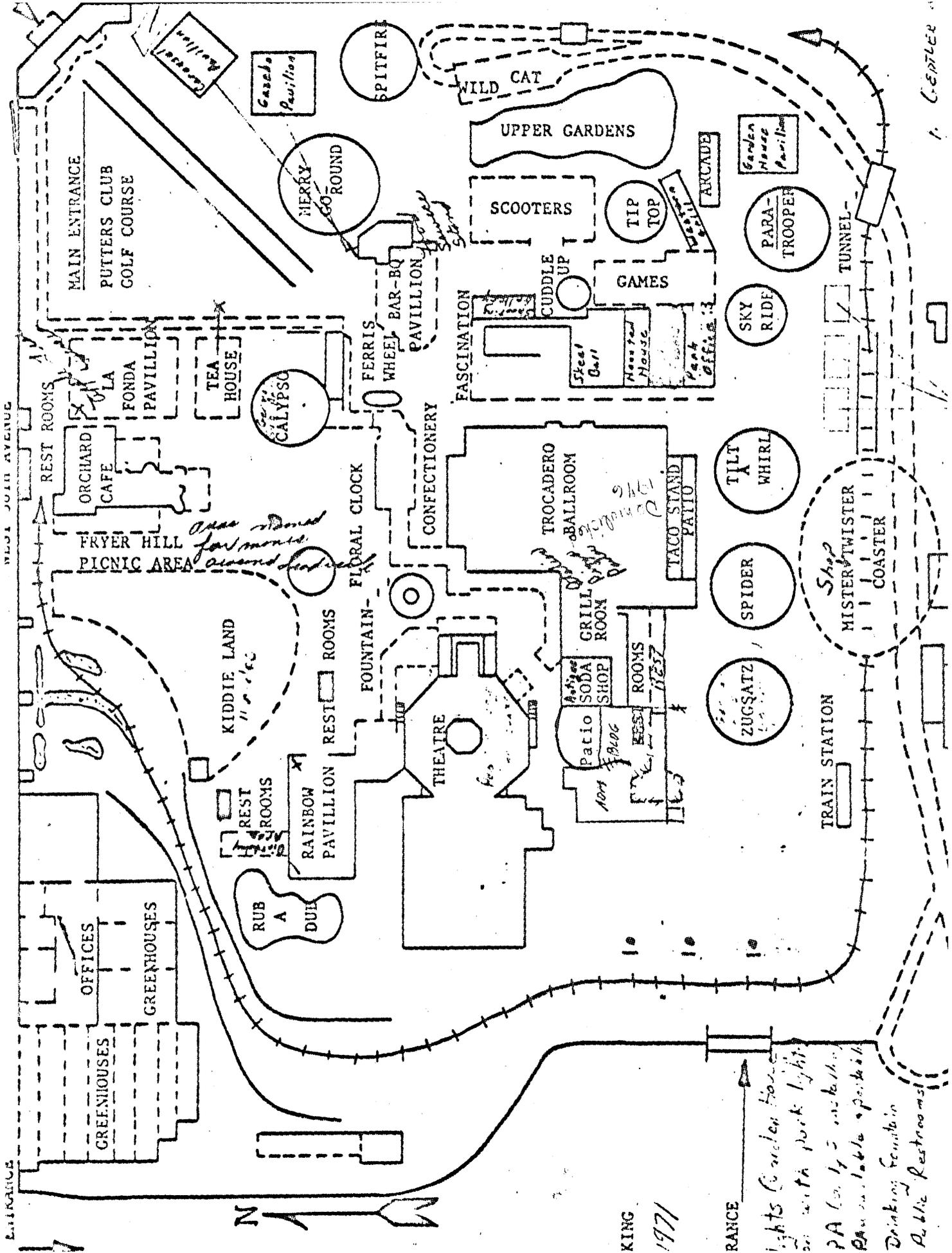
ORCHARD CAFE

LA FONDA PAVILLION

GREENHOUSE
BLDG. 35 (1915)

OFFICE

BLDG. 30 (1915)



101 JOH AVENUE

1. CENTER

KING
1971

RANCE
lights Garden House
with park lights
PA (only 5 inches)
PA available park
Drinking Fountain
Public Restroom