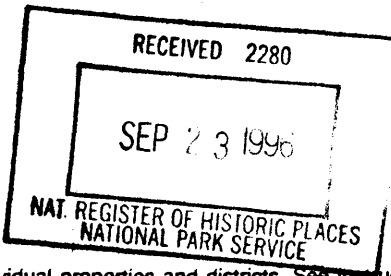


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Balboa Theatre
other names/site number El Teatro Balboa City Historical Site #77

2. Location

street & number 868 Fourth Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town San Diego N/A vicinity
state California code CA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] September 15, 1996
Signature of certifying official Title Date
State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other. (explain:)

[Signature] Edson H. Beall 10.24.99
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Entered in the National Register

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 0 Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture: Theatre

Theatre-Vacant

Commerce/Trade: Business

Business (offices & store fronts) - Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Colonial Revival

foundation Concrete

walls Exterior-Stucco

roof Red clay tile

other

Narrative Description

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

See Expanded Section 7

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Performing Arts

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1924-1930

Significant Dates

1924 Opening of Theatre

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wheeler, William H., Architect

Wurster Construction Company, Contractor

A.T. Heinsbergen & Company, Inc.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Balboa Theatre
Name of Property

San Diego California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .34 Ac.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vonn Marie May, Cultural Resource Planner

organization The Balboa Theatre Foundation date 19 July 1996

street & number P.O. Box 371461 telephone (619) 466-2542; (619) 660-8184

city or town San Diego state CA zip code 92138

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name The City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency

street & number 202 'C' Street City Administration telephone (619) 235-2200

city or town San Diego state CA zip code 92101

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

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

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

Section 7 Summary Paragraph

The Balboa Theatre building is a five story structure occupying three 50'x100' lots fronting two city streets at right angles, anchored by a seven story corner piece at a 45° angle culminated by an ornate polychrome tiled dome. It houses a 1500 seat theatre, 34 office spaces and 6 ground floor storefronts. The construction media is steel reinforced frame with hollow clay tile infill and adobe clay roof tiles. The exterior and interior walls are finished with textured plaster. The east elevation consists of storefront and office/hotel spaces compatible with the existing business neighborhood and is predominantly Mission Revival style. The north elevation is nearly opaque reflecting the theatre use inside and illustrates more of the Plateresque style. The northeast corner architecture crowned with its ornate dome rises two floors above the fifth floor offices. The interior holds office/hotel spaces, theatre auditorium space, stage area, balcony, balcony lounge, support spaces, projection booth and access corridors. The theatre is in the heart of downtown San Diego, CA, adjacent to the historic 'Gaslamp Quarter' and part of the Horton Plaza Redevelopment Area. The building exterior and interior are in good condition. Modifications have been made during its history but not to a degree that would preclude a complete and honest restoration.

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

Section 7 Introduction

The following represents an existing conditions analysis based on previous studies commissioned by the current owners, The City of San Diego, and the Balboa Theatre Foundation. Photo reconnaissance was also conducted in May 1996, by the Foundation, to further document the visual condition of both the exterior and interior of the theatre and its attendant office and retail spaces.

Visual examination of the building revealed no distress of the concrete columns, floor slabs or beams. The compressive strength results of 1974 and 1985 core tests taken in the columns and slabs varied, but the existing concrete structure is considered adequate to undertake a program of structural strengthening.

Original plans of this building have not been found, however, photographs taken during construction in 1923 show clearly that the building was designed as a steel reinforced concrete frame with hollow clay tile filler walls and some brick framing of the arches and around window openings. The interior walls are of gypsum block material also known then as 'pyrobar' used extensively for interior partitions during this period.

Architectural Description-Exterior

The Balboa Theatre is essentially, what would be called today, a 'multi-use' structure. Originally built as a legitimate and cinematic theatre space with a seating capacity of 1534, the auditorium and stage are encased on two streetsides one ground floor level of six storefronts on the Fourth Avenue side and four floors totaling 34 office spaces above. The project represented an investment of \$800,000 and was heralded in the press as 'a gem of a theatre'.

Within a rectangular city block the building occupies three complete 50'x100' parcels along the Fourth Avenue side and a half block section along 'E' Street, that has since been vacated to an easement for pedestrian use. Along the Fourth Avenue elevation the building was designed as an office building with ground floor retail intended to be compatible with other street fronted commercial buildings at the time.

The Fourth Avenue elevation is modulated by a series of flat five story high pilasters which separate a series of paired double hung windows. At ground level the storefronts continue the vertical modulation and are further defined by arched clerestory windows above the storefronts. The office/hotel entrance bisects this

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

elevation with four bays on each side. There was a marquee-like canopy at the office/hotel entrance that displayed, "Balboa Office Building". Originally the exterior fire escape stairs were at this location. Also as part of this entry, an elevator serviced the office/hotel floors and is articulated above the clay tile building roof by its own double pitched roof.

The 'E' Street facade changes in character significantly from that of the Fourth Avenue elevation. The opaque character and lack of openings clearly reflects the immensity of the theatre use inside. The north facade is for the most part an encasement wall providing the interior with a 'light & sound lock' and is measured in its use of exterior ornament.

The top story continues the paired double hung windows from the Fourth Avenue elevation, however, the fourth story has only one small ocular window per bay. The third story is entirely opaque and contains one ornamental niche per bay. The second level has one ornamentally detailed double hung window per bay as well. The ground level is entirely opaque and is for the most part only modulated by the vertical pilasters. It also contains two small non distinct service doors at either end. The horizontal band that defines and separates the ground level from the upper portions and the vertical modulation of the Fourth Avenue elevation is continued on the 'E' Street elevation as well.

As a prominent architectural statement the building is anchored by a domed octagonal seven floor height projection addressing the street intersection at a 45° angle. This detail not only offered more premium interior space by its angled protuberance but it was also a way of placing the marquee in a three-way position in more public view.

The ground level is the main theatre entrance and begins at the exterior entry foyer with the ornamental tile floor illustrating Balboa's Ship. The non-original marquee is flush against the facade covering glazed clerestory art glass windows that can be seen in historic photographs.

The fenestration at the third level consists of three ornamentally detailed large double hung windows with abbreviated balcony railings. The fourth level consists of one large tripartite window assembly flanked by two ocular windows one larger on the east side. The fifth level continues the tripartite in the front and is flanked by two pair of double hung windows.

Octagonal in plan, the dome and cupola reach nearly three stories in height and begins at the foundational cornice atop the five floors of the building. The first level of the

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

dome complex, the drum, is eight cells consisting of large ocular openings which contain plaster lattice work framed by metal scroll work. This level visually supports a large cornice above and also acts as the base of the dome with finials and other ornament. The polychrome tile is punctured by smaller ocular openings and is crowned by a tall thin cupola.

Architectural Description-Interior

The interior of the theatre reflects a 1920's theatre eclecticism that blends Mediterranean Classicism with Moorish and Spanish Revival styles. The design also reveals the performer/architect Wheeler's touches in ways that appreciative modern musicians and performers note were designed by someone who had to have been a performer himself; i.e.: the orchestra pit is larger than most legitimate theatres of this capacity and is able to accommodate 30 to 40 pieces with excellent access. There are 14 dressing rooms in the basement. Unamplified sound delivery is unusually efficient and excellent for both music and theatre.

In a San Diego Union article of 9 July 1985 Donald Dierks, Music Critic, observed, "Is the hall (Balboa) acoustically suitable for music performance? After recent performances of chamber music heard there, the answer is a resounding , 'Yes'. From any location in the room, pianissimos were well projected, fortes were undistorted, the reverberation time gave the music a fine sense of life, and the bass response was clear and immediate."

The auditorium space is defined by its vertical pilasters which both visually and structurally connect with the reinforced concrete ceiling beams to create an integrated and cohesive spatial design. The coffered ceiling consists of alternating plaster and Moorish lattice panels which also contribute to the scale of the auditorium space.

The reinforced concrete proscenium arch is crowned by open plaster fret work that screens the organ loft above which then connects to the first primary beam of the ceiling. The sound delivery from these stylized screens throughout the ceiling has been referred to as a 'pre-surround' sound and is a significant feature in the Balboa's interior.

The proscenium arch is flanked by two very unusual 28' high vertical waterfalls that also serve as a rudimentary air-conditioning system connected to a large centrifugal blower (squirrel cage) in the basement. The fountains have three speeds allowing the water to cascade slowly like glycerin or more accelerated and louder. Another very distinct feature within the theatre's interior.

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

The side walls consist of equally spaced pilasters that are connected by an ornate cornice which in turn connects and emphasizes the rectilinear grid of the ceiling. The applied ornament of the interior pilasters and surfaces further enhance both the acoustics and the design integrity of the space.

The gently sloped ground floor provides three quarters of the theatre seating with excellent sight lines. The steeply raked balcony provides the remaining one quarter seating. The second level balcony lounge essentially functions as the primary lobby space. Over the years this space has been modified yet still retains its essential character.

Elements of the original interior design that are still intact:

Corinthian entablature/pilasters, polychrome detailing, stencil work, plaster ornamentation, fretwork, coffered ceiling, two wall water fountains and chandeliers .

Theatre functions in the Balboa Theatre:

Entry foyer, entry lobby, proscenium, stage, fly loft, Stage Manager's console, counterweight carriage, production services, orchestra pit, balcony, balcony lounge, perimeter promenades, sight lines, acoustics, sound delivery, lighting, electrical, plumbing, dressing rooms, public rooms and stage trap elevator.

•Chronology of the Balboa Theatre

1923, May •Southern Trust and Commerce Bank finances the Balboa Building Company. Purchase of Lots J, K and L of Horton's Addition, City of San Diego.

1923, June •Construction contracts for theatre let to the Wurster Construction Co. under the auspices of the Balboa Building Co. comprised of Robert E. Hicks & Godfrey Strobeck.
(Strobeck is not mentioned in promotional ads)

- Water Permit issued 12 December 1923.
- Construction completed in March 1924.

1924, Mar 28 •Grand Opening of the Balboa Theatre

- Nationally recognized Vaudeville Acts open i.e.: Fanchon & Marco and the Sunkist Beauties. F&M used the Balboa as their incubator for road tour acts thereafter. Movie stars Conway Tearle and Corinne Griffith also appeared.

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

- 1930, Dec 5 • Became 'El Teatro Balboa' (Fox Balboa), modest renovation and enhanced 'Spanish Revival' interpretation. Added four 'Spanish' chandeliers, repainted the entry lobby, ramps and public areas. New 'neon' Marquee was introduced at this time.
- Became all Spanish language cinematic/legitimate venue and offered Spanish language lessons.
- *1942-1945 (WWII) • U.S. Navy appropriated The Balboa's office spaces under WWII mobilization utilizing all the Fourth Avenue office spaces to billet personnel. Functional modifications to accommodate perpetual sleeping shifts, (3 shifts in a 24 hour period) i.e., basins, showers and water closets.
- Fourth Avenue loading dock arch enclosed as storefront.

* Several modifications during the military occupation are undocumentable.

Postwar Era 1946-1958

- Modifications to theatre interior, several rows of seating closest to entry lobby (auditorium north wall) removed.
 - Snack bar construction in entry lobby intruded into auditorium. Four ornamental etched glass windows that separated the auditorium from the entry lobby were removed. All similar ornamental etched glass windows were plastered over.
 - Stairwell from second level (northeast interior) removed and replaced with movable ladder. Hot dog stand created in coat check area.
 - Men's room added in Balcony Lounge.
 - Manager's Suite created in the south end of the hotel space. Room #201.
 - National Theatres Corporation operates as cinematic theatre only.
 - Interior drop ceiling under rotunda space added to create a 'modernization' attempt.
 - All new theatre seating added, ground floor and balcony.
 - Minor Building Code retrofitting in hotel of fire door ingress/ egress.
 - Fourth Avenue SRO housing continued as Balboa Hotel.
 - Exterior tile wainscoting added.
- 1959 • Sold to Service Auto Parts, et al., in anticipation of demolition.
- Preliminary salvage began, all marble in upstairs restrooms removed as well as fixtures in downstairs restrooms removed.
- Original canopy marquee and vertical 'Balboa' sign were removed,

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Section number 7 Page 7 Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

replaced with flush facade signage.

- 1960, Jan 15 •Purchase of Balboa Theatre by Russo Enterprises and operated as an 'action movie' venue.
- Balcony seating removed to limit the need for Union requirement of projectionists per amount of seats.
 - Hotel use continued through mid-1960's. Closed by order of the Fire Department for previous owner's non-code alterations and potential fire risk.
- 1972, Aug 4 •Balboa Theatre designated a City of San Diego Historic Site #77.
- 1977, May 25 •San Diego City Council votes unanimously to put the Balboa Theatre on the National Register of Historic Places contemporaneous with the designation of the Gaslamp Quarter.
- Balboa Theatre was exempted from designation by CCDC.
- 1978 •Architectural as-built drawings commissioned by CCDC.
- 1985, Nov 11 •Eminent domain by the City of San Diego's Redevelopment Agency
- Subsequent litigation by Russo Enterprises, settled in 1988
 - Water tower on roof removed.
 - Exterior fire escape stairs removed.
- 1987, Jan 13 •Balboa Theatre Foundation formed, to promote and preserve the Balboa Theatre as a 1500 seat live performance venue. BTF study presented to the City Council.
-
- 1987-88 •Restoration study completed by Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.

The following is provided as a detailed description of the theatre in its most pristine state as close to its period of significance. It is excerpted from a 12 October 1933 Fox West Coast Theatres Insurance Inspection Report by Cosgrove & Company, Inc. Insurance Brokers and Adjusters, Los Angeles, California.

This property consists of a fairly large theatre and office building centrally located in the downtown business section of San Diego. The building was erected in the year 1924 and has since been maintained in a good state of repair. The theatre contains approximately 1600 seats and is operated daily for the showing of sound motion pictures. The stage

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

portion, however, is quite large and completely equipped for presenting stage performances should they be desired. The office section is five stories in height and is cut off from the theatre by an 8-inch hollow tile wall. The ground floor of this section is occupied on the ground floor by mercantile stores while the upper floors are used primarily for office purposes.

The building is Class 'B' construction throughout, having an independent reinforced concrete frame with hollow tile panel walls and concrete slab floors and roof. Inside protection is well provided by an interior system of vertical standpipes with hose and a good supply of chemical extinguishers in addition to which there is a system of automatic sprinklers covering the stage and basement portion of the building.

Area: 100'x150' equals 15,000 square feet ground floor area.

Height: One equals six, three equals five and five stories with basement.

Walls: 8-inch hollow tile panel walls supported by a reinforced concrete frame.

Roof: Reinforced concrete slab.

Roof Structures: One hollow tile and reinforced concrete penthouse enclosing elevator machinery. There is also a small corrugated iron enclosure on the roof which was formerly used as a radio broadcasting station, but which is now vacant.

Floors: Reinforced concrete slab.

Floor Openings: Elevators: One in office section extending from the basement to the fifth floor. The shaft is of concrete construction with metal frame and wire glass panel doors at each floor level. One hydraulic lift from stage basement to stage. Stairway: One in office section from basement to roof, open. Theatre section: One stage to basement, also open stairway from foyer to balcony. (Assumed omitted Actor's cross-over stair)

Partitions: Hollow tile partitions between stores on the ground floor of office section.

Interior Finish: Metal lath and plaster.

Theatre Section: Stage-The stage portion is fairly large being approximately 30'x60' and is well ventilated by automatic ventilators in the stage roof. The stage floor is concrete slab surfaced with wood. The grid iron is of steel construction with all hoisting equipment in place and ready for use.

Proscenium Wall: The proscenium wall is of reinforced concrete construction extending from the basement to the roof. The main auditorium opening is protected by a non-standard asbestos curtain operating in steel channels. There is one opening from stage to auditorium, protected by double automatic tin clad fire doors; two openings from stage basement to orchestra pit and protected by single equipped with a single tin clad fire door.

Stage Basement: Dressing Rooms-There are eleven dressing rooms separated by hollow tile partitions with swinging tin clad doors at the openings. The basement also contains

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

several miscellaneous storage rooms.

Projection Booth: *The booth which is located at the top of the balcony, is cut off by hollow tile partitions and has concrete floor and metal lath and plaster ceiling. The opening from the balcony into the booth is protected by a single tin clad swinging fire door. Ventilation is provided by means of small vents extending through the roof. Equipment includes two Peerless projection machines; a fair metal film cabinet; enclosed automatic rewinder; a metal covered work bench, and a metal safety waste can for film scraps.*

Motor Generator Room: *This room is located adjacent to the booth and is of similar construction with the communication being protected by a tin clad swinging fire door.*

Heat: Steam from central heating plant.

Light: Incandescent electric lights, wiring in conduit.

Power: Electric motors well arranged.

Special: Projection booth

Conclusion

This building was found to be in splendid condition as regards cleanliness and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment, and we, therefore, have no recommendations for improvement to offer at this time.

The following is provided as the most recent assessment of the theatre and is excerpted from Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc. Comments made as a preface to the 1988 Redevelopment/Restoration Study:

•The theatre does not meet modern expectations for audience or performer amenities: lavatories, dressing rooms, lounges, concession facilities and lobbies all need improvement.

•The theatre requires substantial improvement in code related areas such as: earthquake stability, existing and circulation routes, and seat spacing requirements. In addition, modern mechanical systems are required in the theatre; including air-conditioning.

•The auditorium has a large cubic volume, high ceiling and substantial depth. This indicates a room amenable to music, a 'live' or reverberant space.

•An acoustical test of reverberation time (time required for a loud sound to diminish) was conducted. It indicated good natural acoustics for opera and symphonic music.

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•Other tests indicate that the room requires attention in several areas to ensure a 'quiet' quality acoustical environment. These include: exterior sound and lightlocks, and improvements to the auditorium sound distribution.

Excerpted from the Interior Specialists...Conrad Schmitt Studios, Inc. 29 December 1987

The Balboa Theatre is in relatively good condition. It appears that only minor repairs and alterations are required on the surfaces upon which the decorating would be applied. Despite the fading colors and the plaster damage that has occurred over the years, substantial amounts of the decorative features, i.e., glazes, borderization, stencil patterns and polychromed finishes exist to such a degree that duplication of embellishment or elaboration can be accomplished with relative ease.

We have toured many theatres and historical landmarks throughout the country (many of which were built during the same era), many of which are now in shabby condition. Only a few precious gems remain, far fewer yet are in the condition of the Balboa and only a small handful are actually operating. It is evident that this theatre was designed, built and decorated in a very professional manner. The materials used throughout and the attention to detail and ornamentation in the original decoration were obviously of the finest quality, executed by the highest caliber craftsmen at the time.

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

Undated architectural drawings (assumed 1978) showing existing conditions of the Balboa Theatre were commissioned by the City of San Diego through its Redevelopment Agency and implementation arm the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) by the architectural firm of:

Donald J. Reeves & Associates
3631 Fifth Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 298-9601

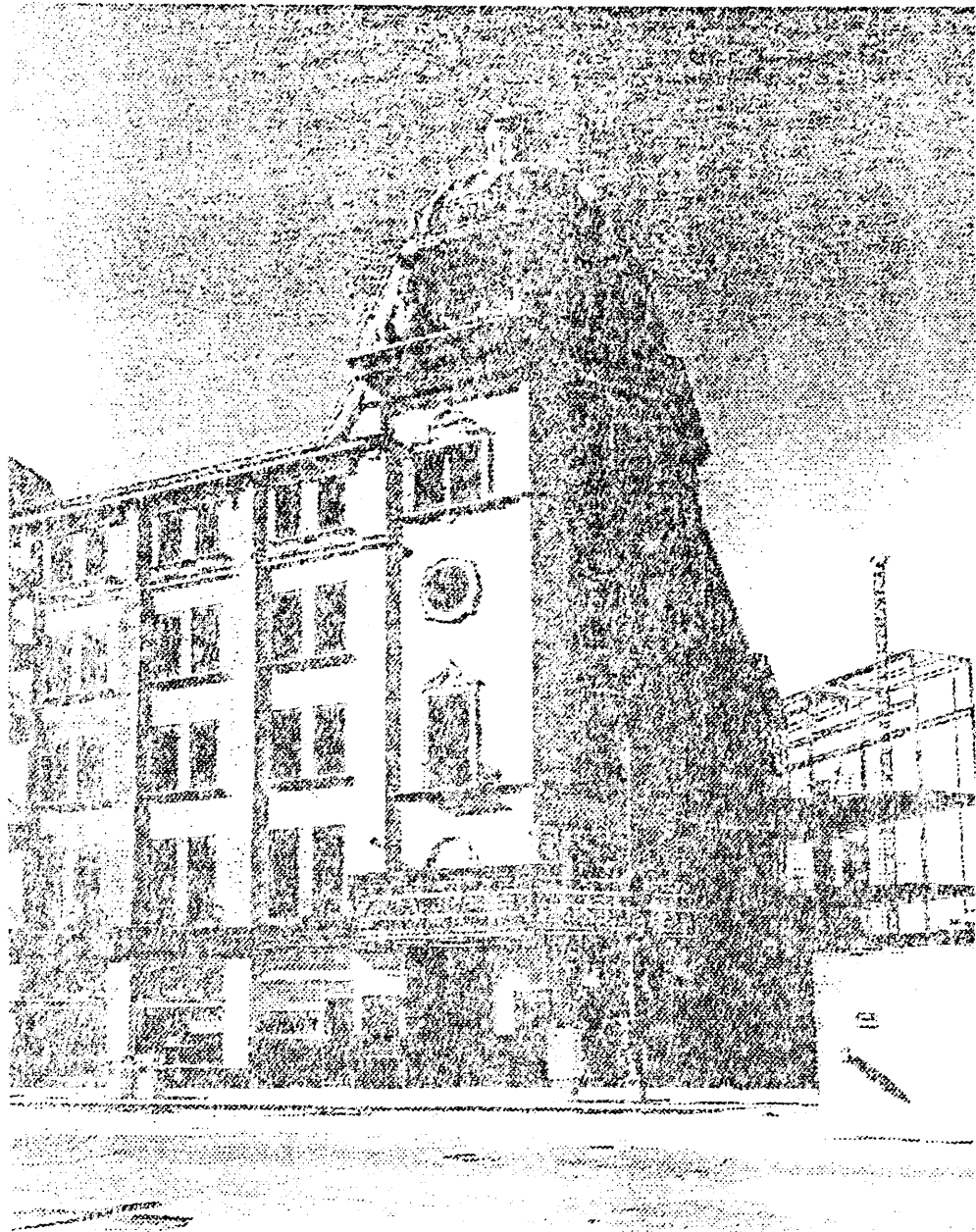
Reproductions of the those plans are herewith.

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*Balboa Theatre Exterior-Redevelopment Area 1984



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Section number **8** Page **1**

Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

Section 8 Summary Paragraph

The Balboa Theatre building, built in 1924, is an excellent example of the early 20th century Spanish Colonial Revival movement. Contextually, it directly relates to the 1915-1916 Panama-California International Exposition that is credited with launching this movement. The Balboa Theatre building meets Criterion A in the area of broad patterns of entertainment and the performing arts. Significance is demonstrated in its design to accommodate both first rate legitimate and cinematic presentations. In 1923 the owner/developer signed the largest motion picture distribution contract in California anticipating the cinematic trend for downtown San Diego. The Balboa Theatre building meets Criteria C in the area of architecture as one of the best commercial examples of the Spanish Colonial style, in San Diego, borrowing directly from the Exposition and utilizing many of the same contractors, designers and craftsmen. The architect William Wheeler was also an accomplished musical performer who built many features into the interior that enhanced the acoustics and performance spaces. The Balboa is one of the last remaining theatres from the 1920's still in existence in San Diego.

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

• Statement of Significance Narrative

The following is a Statement of Significance and the application of National Register Criteria and Themes. The initial period of construction and the building's development are discussed with emphasis on extant features of both the interior and exterior which express that significance.

• National Register Criteria and Themes

Criterion A:

Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Themes: Recreation and Entertainment & Performing Arts

As a major player in the establishment of live performance theatres and the sweeping business of motion pictures during the 1920's, the Balboa Theatre anchored this national trend in the most southern and western part of the country. In a city with an uncertain economic future following the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition, the Balboa was truly a pioneering effort on the part of its developer, architect and contracting team, and was a landmark the day it opened. The period of significance is from the grand opening in 1924 through 1930 which encapsulates the most successful period of live performance and cinematic presentations.

Following the 1915-16 Panama-California International Exposition in Balboa Park, that attracted 3.7 million visitors, many of means, the city was transformed by the event and an urban sophistication slowly began to happen. San Diego's population doubled in this decade rising from 75, 000 to 148,000. The Balboa Theatre was a grand experiment in an economically volatile city.

In 1923 the Balboa Building Company was formed, initially consisting of Robert E. Hicks and Godfrey Strobek. The charge was to build a distinctive culturally based theatre to further exploit the Spanish Revivalism that the Exposition had preceded. The project was financed by the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank. The bank President was G. Aubrey Davidson, mastermind behind San Diego's improbable Exposition venture. The vision that was conjured from personal entertainment experiences of both Hicks, promoter and developer, and Wheeler, opera singer and architect, anticipated the region's potential.

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

Named for the Spanish explorer Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the first European to discover the Pacific Ocean in 1513, the Balboa Theatre opened on 28 March 1924 with much promotion and local support. Conceived and developed primarily by Robert Ernest Hicks and designed by architect William H. Wheeler, the Balboa was meant to accommodate legitimate theatre use with a strong cinematic state-of-the-art component. Unlike other theatre houses being built on the west coast at the time, the Balboa was grounded in live performances while providing for the emergent trend of motion pictures.

The word describing live performances as 'legitimate' implies that the motion pictures were somehow 'illegitimate', a lesser art form. The talking 'movies' were beginning their ascendancy whereas vaudeville, in particular, was in its twilight. In this confluence of entertainment the Balboa staged both types of experiences successfully from 1924-1930.

Live performances; i.e.: vaudeville, circus-like acts, musical theatre and even a one time ice rink atop the oversized orchestra pit, were all part of the Balboa's celebrated past. Nationally significant vaudeville acts played on the stage of the Balboa, in particular, Fanchon and Marco who opened the theatre to great pomp. Thereafter this group composed, developed and tested their acts at the Balboa prior to going 'on-the-road'.

With regard to the Balboa's cinematic contribution the San Diego Union reported on 7 December 1923: "Cabrillo and Balboa Theatres affiliate with West Coast, Inc....Signing the largest moving picture theatre affiliation contract on record in California, Bob Hicks of the Cabrillo theatre is to be affiliated in the Cabrillo and the new Balboa theatres with the West Coast company."

Of the six 1000 seats-or-more theatres in the central city area contemporaneous to the Balboa, three have since been demolished, one exterior demolished, one is vacant with a demolition permit pending, leaving only the National Register Spreckels Theater in use as a successful legitimate stage with attendant office/retail. The diminishing number of these 1920's survivors contributes all the more to the Balboa's significance.

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

Criterion 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.

Themes: Architecture

The American phenomena of movie houses began in the 1910's with styles that reflected the trends of the day. Starting from a Beaux-Arts/Classical Revival tradition, the 1920's evolved into more exotic 'Revival' styles and later the futuristic designs of the 1930's. The 1920's captured the public's interest by providing settings that were often more enchanting than the moving picture of the day. That pleasing essence of an intangible movie-going experience... 'synesthesia'... was the seduction by the venue itself. Indeed, the Balboa perpetuated the poetic world of Cervantes Golden Age of Spain, starting at the entry with the homage to Balboa in decorative tile at the edge of the public sidewalk.

The Balboa Theatre is an example of the 1920's Spanish Colonial Revival movement that was preceded in the southwest by the 1915-16 Panama-California International Exposition held in San Diego, CA. The Balboa Theatre created a layer of both architectural and cultural history. The distinctiveness of the theatre's interior and exterior took the national trend of 'pleasure palaces', in San Diego, to a detailed Spanish Colonial Revival interpretation as a continuum of the newly spawned regional styles.

San Diego, the upstart city that staged its own Exposition without sanction by the federal government, created one of the most character-defining complexes of revival architecture in the Southwest. Author T.E. Sanford, in his book Architecture of the Southwest, noted: "The marriage of what was seen as historical and logical appropriateness and unfamiliarity was a fruitful one'. C.M. Price in the March 1915 issue of Architectural Record 37 claimed..." and Balboa Park became the birthplace of that Spanish Colonial revival which by 1925 had become a nationwide craze."

Despite the efforts of style originator Bertram Goodhue, who lobbied strongly to remove the entire site (except his California State Building complex), the Exposition remnants escaped planned demolition in 1917 and thereafter became a cue for Spanish/Mission Revival styles of the 1920's. Representative variations were Churrigueresque, Plateresque, Colonial, Renaissance, Mission and Moorish styles that stood as progenitors signaling the new direction.

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

The mastermind of the Exposition, banker G. Aubrey Davidson, was a part of the initiating financial picture for the Balboa, through his presidency at the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank. The General Contractor, the Wurster Construction Company, was responsible for the domed California Tower and Quadrangle (National Historic Landmarks) designed by the master Spanish Colonial architect, Bertram Goodhue. Known for their expertise in steel reinforced concrete work, some of Wurster's other accomplishments were: the largest outdoor Organ Pavilion sponsored by John D. Spreckels the Sugar magnate, the Wholesale Terminal Building in Los Angeles, the Agua Caliente Race Track in Tijuana, B.C. and other large scale works.

These direct associations to the Exposition's permanent buildings and the Balboa Theatre is a physical and interpretive link, perpetuating the romanticism of the Spanish Revival period of the 1920's.

Architect William H. Wheeler, noted Mission Revivalist, designed the theatre with experience he had gained working for his former employer, the Southern Pacific Railroad in which the Mission Revival style was the order of the day. On the Balboa, Wheeler had the opportunity to borrow from the Exposition models and apply more exterior ornamentation, with a combination of Mission Revival on the Fourth Avenue office/retail facades and a Plateresque style at the corner dome and "E" Street elevations.

The original architectural concept for the Balboa Theatre shown in the San Diego Union on 3 June 1923, proposed a more slender and taller turret-like structure instead of the existing multi-celled dome. At some point a redesign was implemented atop the geometric base that blended well with the vertical lines of the corner feature beneath. The -dome design was, again, borrowed from Spanish Revival themes of the Exposition's California Tower. Local architectural historians comment that it also bares a diminutive resemblance to the dome atop the Santa Maria Della Salute in Venice, Italy.

The exterior of the Balboa cannot claim the baroque detailing of the eighteenth-century Churrigueresque or ultra-Baroque, but rather falls more appropriately within the muted expressions of sixteenth-century Plateresque and eighteenth-century Mission Revival. The interior, however, celebrates ornament more with a blend of Mediterranean Classicism and a strong influence of Moorish detailing. Theatre design until that time had followed the Beaux-Arts/Classical Revival traditions. The Balboa Theatre was a deliberate Spanish Revival attempt both inside and out with a committed dedication to 'interpretive' detail, such as usherettes in authentic costume.

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

Architectural styles prior to the 1920's were generally representative of the California Bungalow, Classical Revival, Italianate and modernist versions of Mission Revival. Not until and following the exposition did the city synthesize a regional style that borrowed heavily from the remaining examples of 1915.

In the context of other large Spanish Colonial Revival commercial buildings being built around this time, very few came to be. The Santa Fe Railway Depot (1914) was built to provide transportation for fair-goers but was clearly 'Mission Revival'. In the 1920's fellow Spanish Revivalist architect, William Templeton Johnson, introduced the Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum, both in Balboa Park in 'Plateresque' style. 'Temp' also designed the Junipero Serra Museum at the Royal Presidio San Diego in Mission Revival, as well as two of San Diego's first 'high' rises downtown. The Balboa Theatre departs from these pieces with its polychrome tiled dome and its positioning on the site.

The interior of the theatre illustrates a Moorish fantasy with Islamic-like patterned ornamental fretwork for the organ pipes, classical columns, a coffered ceiling, polychrome relief designs, and two unique 28' tall vertical wall fountains flanking the proscenium. The fountain designs were pastoral scenes in relief that incorporated slow sheets of water that served functionally as the building's cooling system.

Other than aesthetic considerations, particularly distinctive about the interior of the theatre is Wheeler's personal knowledge as an accomplished opera singer and performer. With respect to live musical theatre, he created architectural allusions from his perspective which resulted in a performer-friendly venue. The extraordinary acoustics, unusually spacious backstage rooms, an oversized orchestra pit with two accesses and other touches were some of his signature details.

The Balboa Theatre exhibits a substantial degree of historical and architectural integrity. The property is structurally sound and has been maintained in a good state of repair. Stylistic modifications and loss of original fabric to the architectural facade and interior have been minor. The primary functions of the building remained the same through more than six decades until closure by the City of San Diego in 1985.

Robert E. Hicks, Theatre Developer

Robert Ernest Hicks, son of Charles Beverly and Annie Mathis Hicks, was born in Owensboro, Kentucky, on 22 September 1876. He began work in the newspaper business as a copy boy on The Owensboro Morning Messenger in 1885, starting a

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Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

journalistic career which reached its peak in the lusty era when F.C. Bonfils and H.H. Tammen were the publishers of The Denver Post. As a reporter and editor on various Colorado newspapers, 'Bob' Hicks became a special correspondent for some metropolitan dailies and the Associated Press, covering big stories in Mexico and the western United States.

During the Spanish American War he was the City Editor of The Denver Times where he worked along side Gene Fowler and Otto Floto. The former became a noted screen writer and the latter a sportswriter and circus magnate. In Denver, Hicks became interested in theatre and managed several expositions and large outdoor enterprises. He met and married Charlotte Elizabeth Lewis of Denver on 21 May 1900. They had two children, James Herndon Hicks and Elizabeth Lewis Hicks.

The family came to San Diego in 1913 whereupon Hicks purchased and opened the Plaza Theatre in 1914. In 1915 he subsequently built the Cabrillo Theatre, less than a 1/2 block from the future site of the Balboa Theatre. Walter S. Keller was the architect on both the modest sized Plaza and Cabrillo Theatres. Keller, a New York City architect who had served in the Army Corps of Engineers prior to coming to San Diego, developed a noted career and became known for his fine craftsmanship and Spanish Revivalist design expertise that led him to several prominent building commissions.

Hicks would later envision building the remarkable Balboa Theatre with architect William H. Wheeler, another noted designer, opera singer and 'man of theatre'. Together they would assemble a stellar construction team that was the who's who of the construction industry, late of the San Diego 1915 Panama California Exposition, and effect their vision.

The Balboa Theatre operated continuously from then on, however, Hicks left the scene by the early 1930's. He returned to the newspaper business and worked for The San Diego Sun. From 1934 to 1938 he served as an editor on The San Diego Union. Additionally, he was a Potentate of the Shrine, a Commander of the Knights Templar, and a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason. He was also a member of Blackmer Masonic Lodge, President of the San Diego Rotary Club and the Cuyamaca Club.

His wife Charlotte was very active in local and national Eastern Star activities and preceded him in death in March of 1939. Robert Hicks was fatally stricken while at the wheel of his car enroute to Wyoming, on business, on 7 November of 1939. He was survived by the passengers of the vehicle, daughter-in-law Helen Lowry Hicks and grandchildren Patricia and Janis Hicks.

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William H. Wheeler, Architect

Born in Melbourne, Australia in 1873 William H. Wheeler, after apprenticing in architecture, left at the age of 20. He lived in Canada briefly then moved to San Francisco, CA in 1900. While studying structural engineering at the University of California at Berkeley he supported himself by singing at the Tivoli Opera House in San Francisco.

Achieving relative stability he then married and had three children. Following the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, responding to his wife's ill health, he moved his family to Arizona and began work with the Southern Pacific Railroad, working steadily with them until 1913. His wife died in 1913 and Wheeler moved to San Diego with his children, around the same time as Robert E. Hicks. Wheeler remarried and had two sons, one of whom became a prominent architect in his own right, Richard Wheeler. William H. Wheeler passed away in 1956 at the age of 83.

Throughout his career, Wheeler obtained contacts for architectural projects from his pursuit of personal interests. He played the vaudeville stage with Jack Dodge during his first few years in San Diego. Dodge was a civic leader and promoter of theatrical and sporting events. Dodge managed the Isis and Spreckels Theatres through "opera seasons, light and grand...".

Wheeler easily found friendships with notable people such as, Madame Shumann-Heink, John D. Spreckels and Aimee Semple McPherson, from which he received architectural commissions. He was a successful architect, designing many prestigious commercial, theatre and church buildings during the 1920's. A sampling follows:

- Aimee Semple McPherson's Four Square Gospel Temple in Los Angeles
- Temple Beth Israel in San Diego
- Agua Caliente Racetrack in Tijuana, B.C.
- The Governor's Palace in Mexicali
- Harcourt, Brace & Javanovich in San Diego
- Immaculate Conception in Old Town San Diego
- John D. Spreckels Residence in Coronado

Wheeler was also a noted civic leader founding the San Diego chapter of the AIA (American Institute of Architects) in the late 1920's. In a San Diego Union article dated 25 February 1927, reporting on the meeting of architects he had called, Wheeler was quoted, "the object of the meeting was to form an organization of San Diego architects to the end that said architects might have a beneficial influence on the architecture of

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San Diego by presenting a unified front on matters pertaining to civic improvements and by educating the public opinion to a better appreciation of the services, both esthetic and financial, of a competent architect." The charter of the San Diego Chapter of the AIA was dated at Washington DC 27 April 1929 and the first meeting was 18 July 1929.

Appointed by the Governor as President of the State Board of Architecture, Wheeler served a total of eight years from 1928, and as he stated, "had devoted a great deal of time to it without compensation and he hoped he would be able to use his influence in inducing the Governor to appoint a San Diego architect to fill the vacancy on the Board when his term expired."

Wheeler lectured and editorialized on the Mission Revival styles. Karen J. Weitze wrote in California's Mission Revival, "Southern Pacific depots were closely patterned after the missions, employing a pastiche of bell towers, gables, and arches. Exemplifying the railways's interest in the Mission Revival, W.H. Wheeler - a representative from the company's engineering department - devoted one quarter of a 1906 lecture on architectural styles to a discussion of historic and modern mission design. Wheeler gave the lecture before the Hillside Club in Berkeley."

A.T. Heinsbergen, Artist/Designer

The interior ornamentation was designed by the nationally known A. T. Heinsbergen & Company, Inc. of Los Angeles, a noted theatre interior design group responsible for the original interior designs of over 700 theatres throughout the country and the recent restorations of Carnegie Hall, the California State Capitol building, the Oakland Paramount Theatre and several others.

Anthony Heinsbergen (1895-1981) nationally acclaimed Dutch born muralist and artist, emigrated to Los Angeles in 1906 having apprenticed his craft in his native Holland. He continued his art studies in Los Angeles and received his first major theatre commission from Alexander Pantages in 1924. Heinsbergen was most proud of his classically inspired murals for the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver, B.C., but is largely remembered for his "delightful mish-mash of Byzantine sumptuousness, Art Deco cubism and pure kitsch, perfect for the timeless and vulgar opulence of movie-going."

Reflecting on his career and commenting on the demise of grand movie theatre design, Heinsbergen commented as follows, "They stopped building them in the 1940's, when there was a depression in the movie business. There were no good pictures coming out and television was just coming in. But you know what really killed them? No parking. People started going to the suburban theaters so they could park their cars. It's

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as simple as that."

Anthony Heinsbergen died on 14 June 1981 at the age of 86. The firm is still operated by A.T. Heinsbergen, Jr. in Los Angeles CA. In a letter to Centre City Development Corporation/San Diego 31 July 1984, regarding the interior of the Balboa Theatre, Business Director Dawn Heinsbergen wrote, "It was our firm, under the direction of...Anthony B. Heinsbergen, who designed and executed the beautiful painted decorations in the interior. As a matter of fact, we still have the original sketches in our library...".

Balboa Theatre Use History

1923-1930	Robert E. Hicks/West Coast Owner/Developer	Legitimate & Cinematic
1930-1959	Fox West Coast-Fox Balboa El Teatro Balboa W/Dios Del Mar Owners/Operators	Cinematic & Legitimate
1960-1985	Russo Suburban Enterprises Owners/Operators	Cinematic
1985-Present	City of San Diego-CCDC Owners/City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency	Vacant

The following is a San Diego Union article dated 28 March 1924 boasting of an all San Diego construction team, many of whom participated in the construction of San Diego's 1915 Panama-California Exposition.

William H. Wheeler, Architect
Wurster Construction Company, General Contractor

Contractors

Ed Thayer, Plastering Contractor	J. Campbell Johnson, Sculptor and Modeler
Novelty Sheet Metal Works	City Ornamental Iron Works
Southwest Onyx & Marble	San Diego Hardware Company
National Iron Works	Austin Safe & Desk Co., Theatre Seating
San Diego Tile & Woodstone Co.	Steele & Nelson

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John Hanson Rock & Sand
W.J. Bailey Company, Plasterer
Portland Cement
M.J. O'Neill Brick Contractor
Bledsoe Furniture Company
Frank Reinemund, Glass
Theodore F. Snyder, Perry Christenson
& Campbell, Painters

Pioneer Truck Company, Excavating
Spreckels Bros. Commercial Co.
Reed Brothers, Plumbing
McCormick Lumber Company
Armstrong-Power Studios, Inc.
W. Scott May

The City of San Diego was so beside itself at the opening of the theatre that the hometown newspaper, The San Diego Union, published a disclaimer saying that it was trying to hold down all the promotional rhetoric and meant every word it said in praise of the theatre.

Excerpts from the San Diego Union 28 March 1924-Opening Night

The exterior of the structure is of Spanish Mission Renaissance architecture, appropriately so for the playhouse has been named by its owner after the discoverer of the Pacific, and everything about it is suggestive of the beauty of Spain and the history and tradition of early San Diego.

The architecture is simple, rather than ornate, and its black and gold tiled dome is virtually its only embellishment. The structure, besides the theatre which occupies the major part, also houses 34 offices and six stores.

The spacious lobby of the show house, entered from beneath a sheltering marquise leads into the handsome foyer. Through the foyer the auditorium is entered, and from it, on the right, a sloping concrete floor paves the way to the balcony and plaisance (second floor balcony lounge).

The plaisance is a special feature of the new theatre, designed as a lounging and meeting place for patrons. Davenport and comfortable big chairs invite leisure and undisturbed rest; soft music emanates from the grills to charm the ear; the decoration of the room done by the same artist who decorated the famous Teatro Internacional in Mexico City, delights the eye.

The auditorium, spacious, comfortable, beautiful is an ideal of theatre construction, leather cushioned opera seats, 36 inches apart, engage the sloping floor from the rear of the room to the orchestra pit. the orchestra pit will accommodate 75 players. [sic] Two doors, one on either side lead the players to club rooms which have been provided for

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them in the basement.

The dressing rooms, for the feature act performers also are in the basement. They will accommodate 80 persons and more room can be improvised. Other compartments are for electricians, carpenters, and stage hands.

The feature of the interior decoration of the Balboa is said to be unique, is the replica of world famous water falls, created by falling water and the superb lighting effects of the showhouse. For these two immense grottoes, nearly 30 feet high have been built into the walls on either side of the proscenium arch. The lights will play upon the water, which tonight will represent cascades, during intermissions, providing charming diversion.

The light arrangement for the Balboa is declared the best of any state, having four colors; red, blue, white and yellow, which will produce a blend desired, and creating scenes of entrancing beauty. Cast upon the ceiling of the auditorium they will reveal a decoration having the appearance of a beautiful Persian rug; on panels of the the side walls, rich tapestry.

The hues used to decorate the theatre's interior are so blended and harmonized that they are undefinable, although a glinting bronze might be termed the predominating shade.

One of the three curtains used to hide the stage is of particular interest. Designated as the title curtain it has the appearance of a silver sheet perforated by green holes. The cost of this one item was \$3,000.

As fine a pipe organ as can be found in any theatre in the land, supplemented by echo organs in the rear of the house has been installed by Hicks for the new cinema palace. As if that were not enough he has engaged the service of professional musicians for a symphony orchestra and has placed over them as their director, Bob Gaderer, the genius who has presided over the Cabrillo's orchestra for the last three years, thus guaranteeing the musical stability of the new theatre's programs.

Persons with an eye for pulchritude will find that the winsome 'usherettes' at the new Balboa Theatre will not be the least of the attractions. Rich costumes will give them the appearance of diminutive Spanish cavaliers. Trousers of black velvet, ending in colorful flares; vivid sashes, gold bodices and cunning boleros will be worn by the bevy of charming young women who will officiate as ushers, with velvetine hats completing the Spanish effect. This afternoon at 2 o'clock, everyone in the house

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Additional Documentation

Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

- All photographs were taken by Barry J. Carlton.
- All photographs were taken in May 1996.
- All negatives are the property of Stephen Karo
10760 Itzamna Road • La Mesa, CA 91941 (*San Diego County*) and
they are in his possession.

<u># Photograph</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1	Exterior - urban context, north and east sides of theatre, looking westward
2	Marquee & entrance, northeast corner, facing southwest
3	Entry foyer tiled inset of Balboa's ship, facing south
4	Entry foyer, tiled floor entry & etched glass double doors (original), looking southeast
5	View from entry lobby to entry foyer through etched glass doors (original), looking northeast
6	Interior - entry lobby, facing west wall
7	Interior - second level balcony lounge, facing west wall
8	Interior - drop ceiling at dome, facing northeast
9	Interior - above proscenium & coffered ceiling detail, facing south
10	Interior - ornamentation: pilasters with entablature details & polychrome plaster, facing west wall
11	Interior - balcony access & ornamentation, facing southwest
12	Interior - proscenium & stage - shows grillwork over proscenium, flanking water fountains, coffered ceiling, orchestra pit & two chandeliers from the 1930's at the far right & left, facing south
13	Interior - ornamentation with balcony, facing east
14	Interior - seating capacity: originally 1,000 on the floor, 534 in the balcony; current count yields 850 on the floor & 0 in the balcony, facing north wall
15	Interior - stage right counterweight system, facing east
16	Interior - flyloft & catwalk, facing west wall
17	Interior - stage manager's console, facing east
18	Interior - office/hotel spaces, facing south
19	Interior - office/hotel spaces, facing northeast
20	Interior - office/hotel spaces, facing south

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Balboa Theater, San Diego, CA

Undated architectural drawings (assumed 1978) showing existing conditions of the Balboa Theatre were commissioned by the City of San Diego through its Redevelopment Agency and implementation arm the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) by the architectural firm of:

Donald J. Reeves & Associates
3631 Fifth Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 298-9601

Reproductions of the those plans are herewith.

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Balboa Theater San Diego, CA

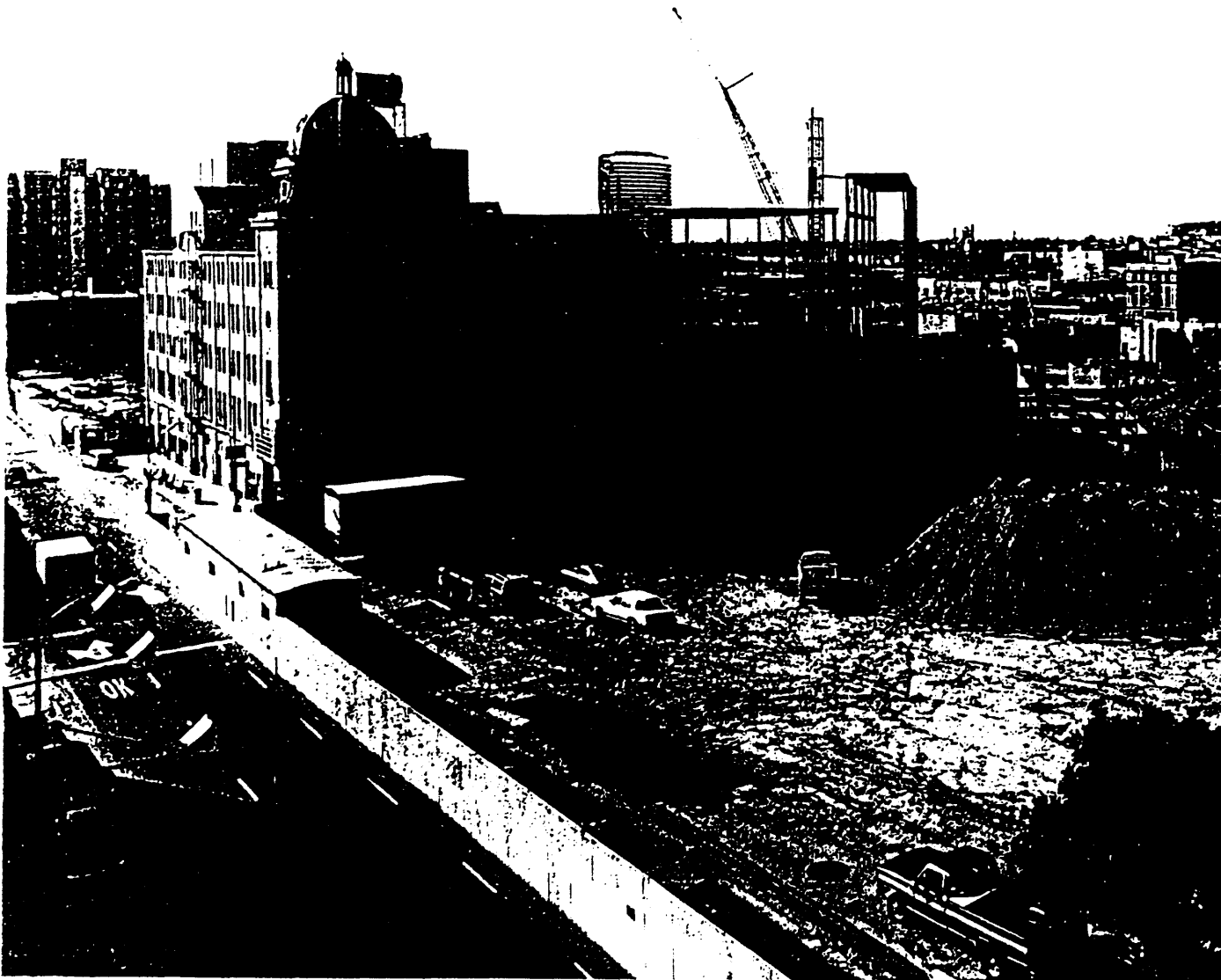
SECTION 7 ADDENDUM

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•Balboa Theatre Exterior-Redevelopment Area 1984



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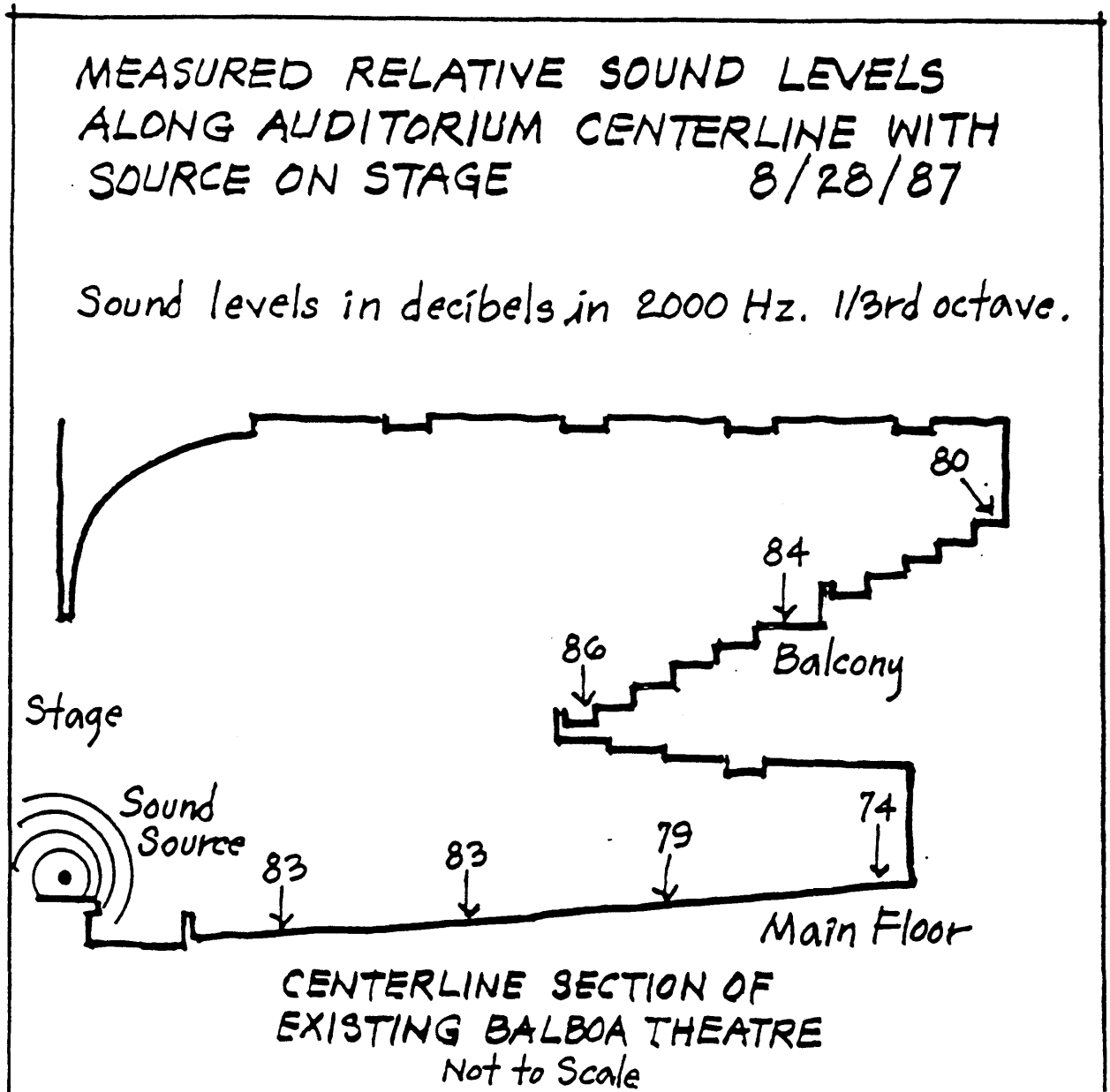
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

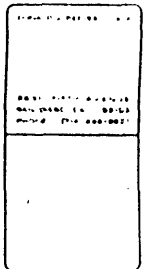
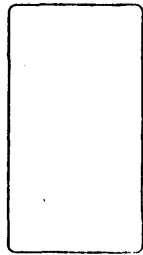
Section number 7 Page _____

- Graphic of Dispersed Sound Levels
Taken from 1988 Restoration Study

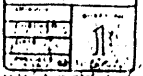
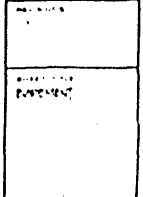
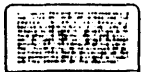
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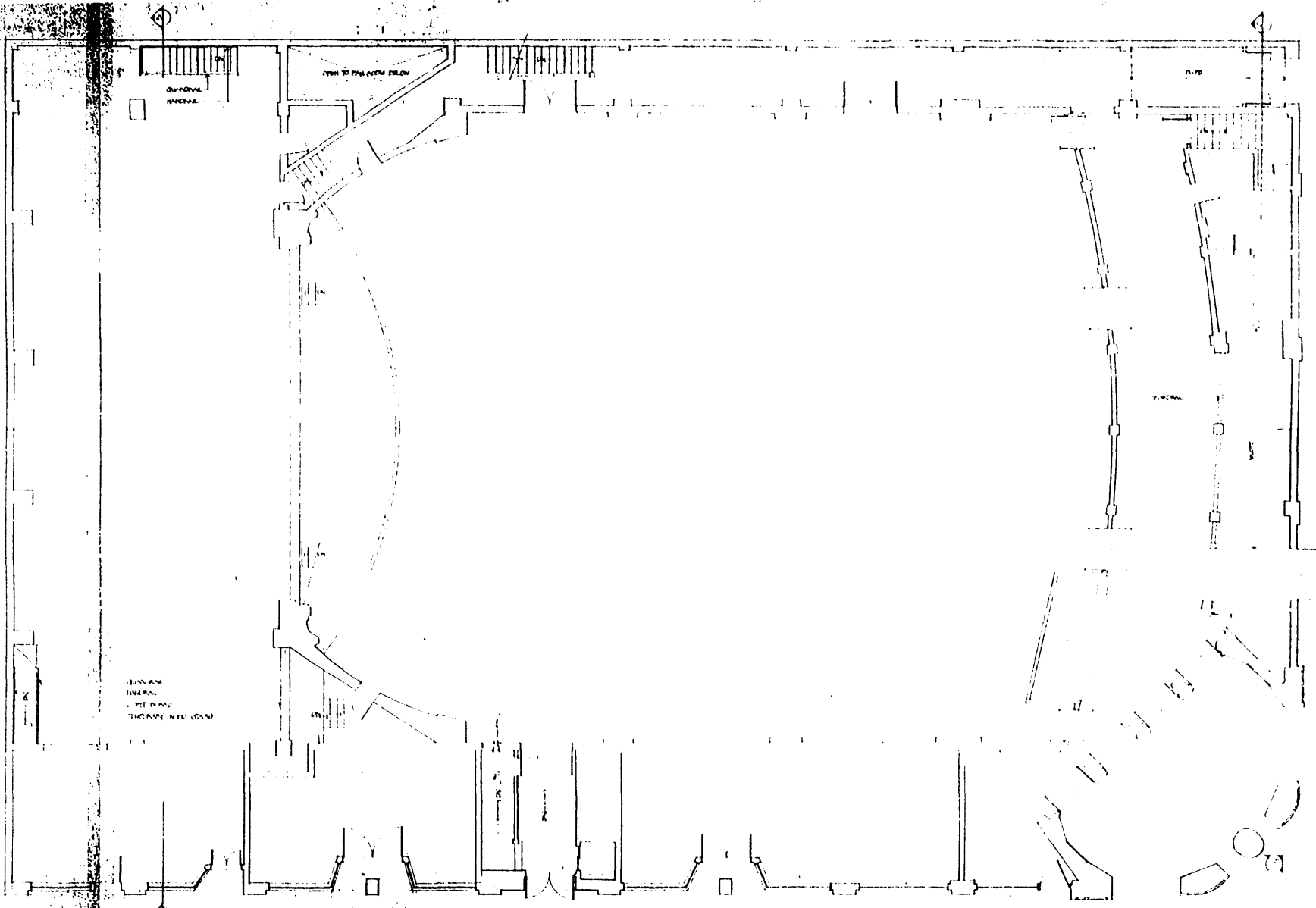


BALBOA THEATRE
 FOURTH AVENUE & E STREET
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA



ARCHITECT DONALD J. REEVES & ASSOCIATES

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92102



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ARCHITECT DONALD J. REEVES & ASSOCIATES
 1217 F STREET, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92102
 TELEPHONE (714) 238-7301

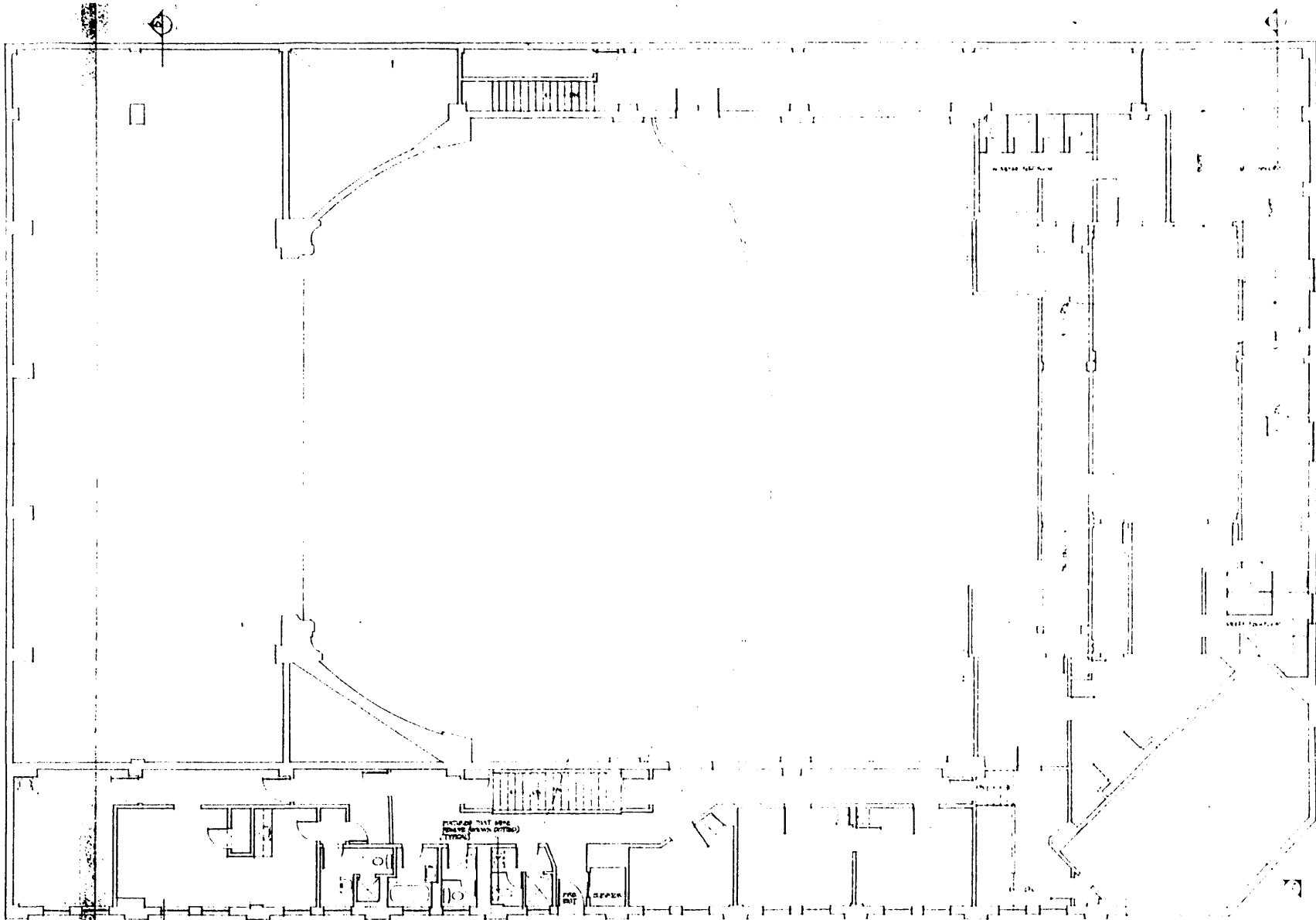
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FALCO THEATRE
 FOURTH AVENUE & E STREET
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

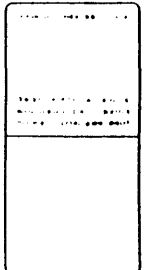
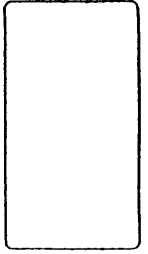
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→ SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ARCHITECT DONALD J. REEVES & ASSOCIATES
 3821 FIFTH AVENUE SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92103

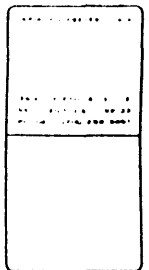
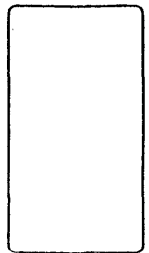
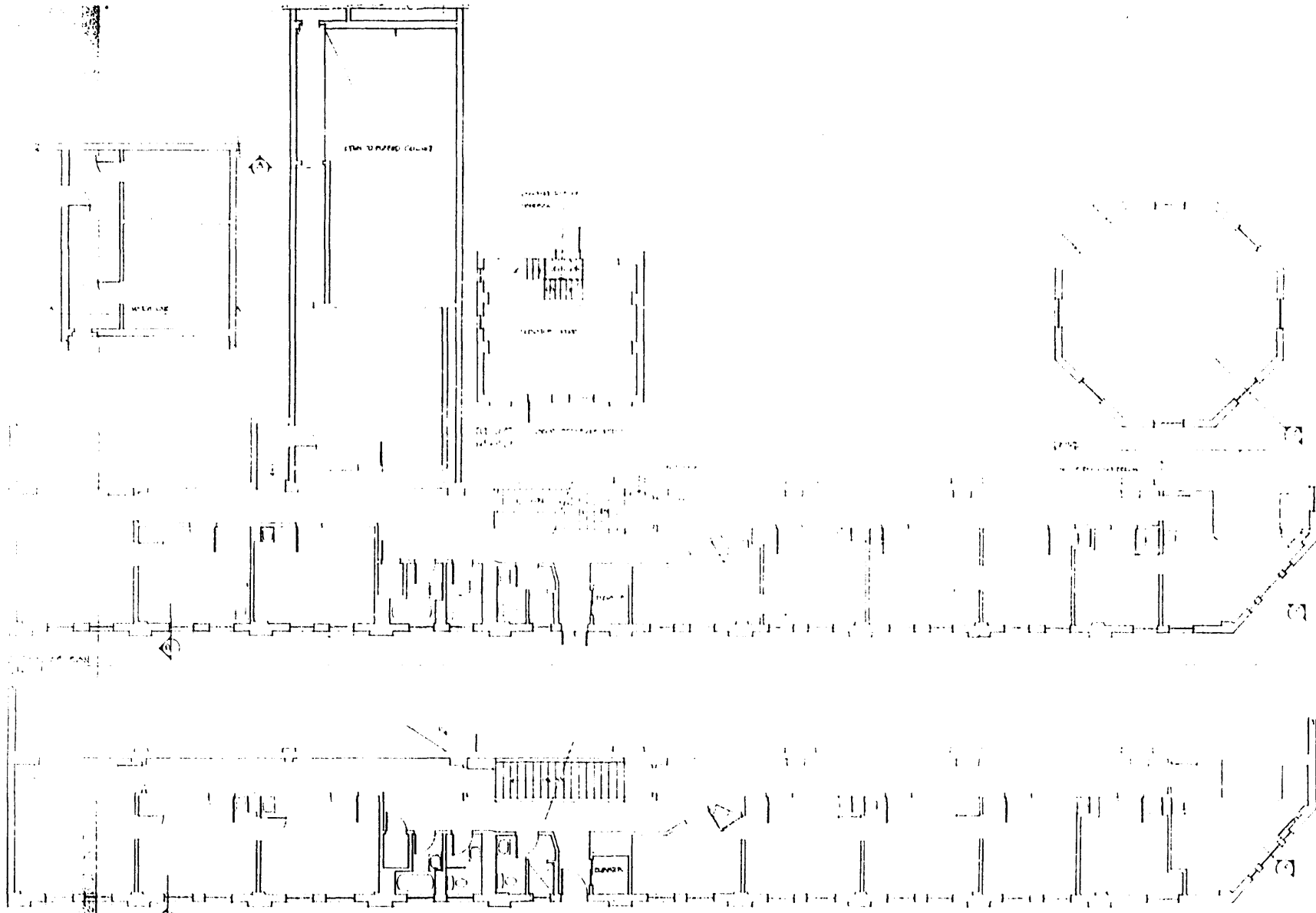


BALBOA THEATRE
 FOURTH AVENUE & STREET
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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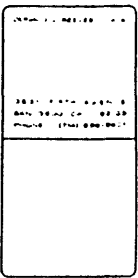
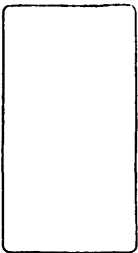
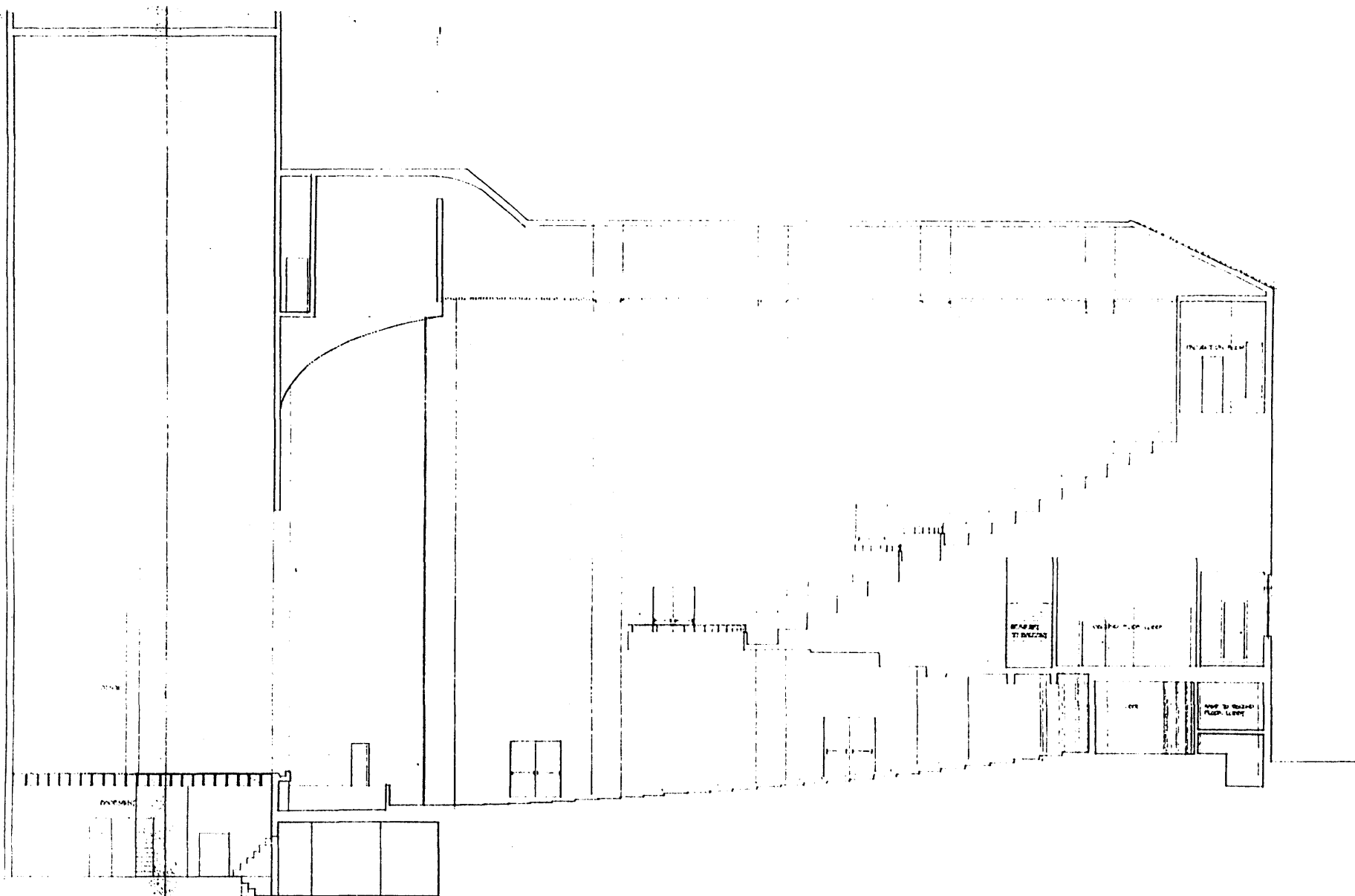
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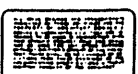
BALBOA THEATRE
FOURTH AVENUE & STREET
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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EL ALBA THEATRE
FOURTH AVENUE & STREET
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA



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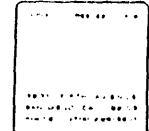
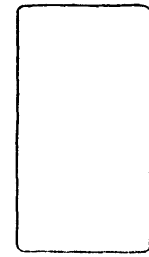
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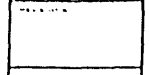
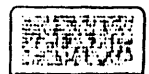
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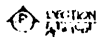


BALBOA THEATRE
 FOURTH AVENUE & E STREET
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

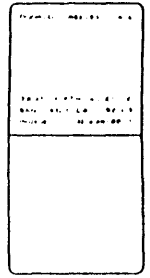
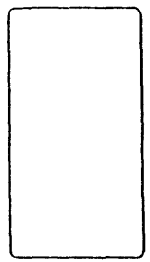
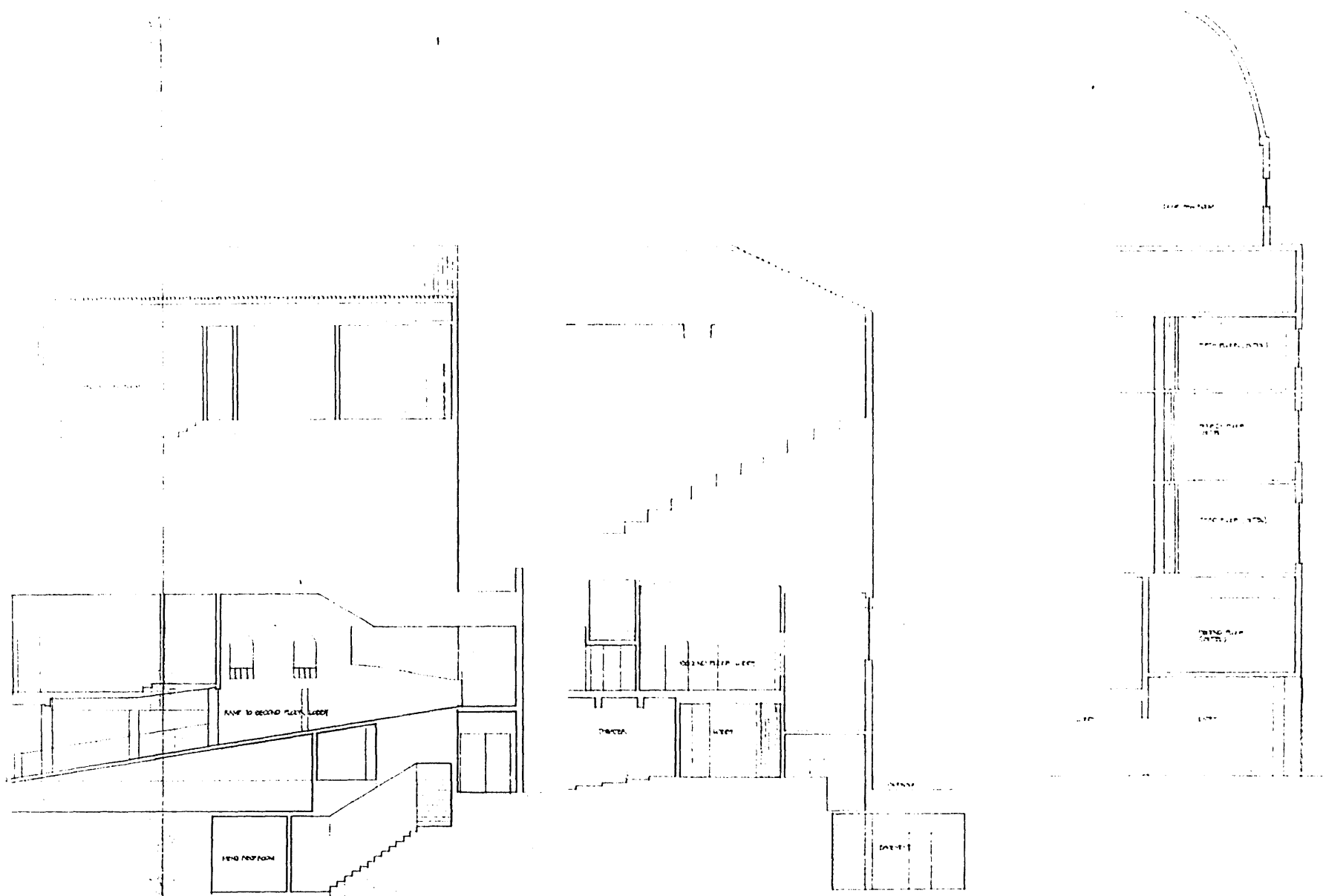


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



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BALBOA THEATRE
 FOURTH AVENUE & E STREET
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Balboa Theatre San Diego, CA

SECTION 8 ADDENDUM

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page

•Obituary-Robert E. Hicks, Owner/Theatre Developer 1939
Notice of Death 8 November, 1939 The San Diego Union

8, 1939

Robert E. Hicks Killed in Crash; Kin Injured

A lifetime that featured a colorful journalistic career, success in theatrical enterprises and a well-earned civic prominence ended yesterday for Robert E. Hicks, 63.

Mr. Hicks, a local resident since 1913, former member of The San Diego Union editorial staff, and former owner of the Cabrillo and Plaza theaters, was killed yesterday in an automobile accident 55 miles east of Rock Springs, Wyo.

The Associated Press reported that Mr. Hicks' car left the highway and overturned three times. His daughter-in-law, Mrs. Helen Hicks, suffered a scalp wound, and her daughter, Janis, 9, a shoulder injury. Patricia, another daughter of Mrs. Hicks, was not hurt.

EN ROUTE TO VISIT SON

The group left here Saturday and was going to Ogallala, Neb., to visit Mr. Hicks' son, James Hicks, local real estate and insurance man who has been in Ogallala for several months on a business matter.

The body will be brought to San Diego for funeral services.

Mr. Hicks began newspaper work when a small boy. Born in Owensboro, Ky., Sept. 22, 1876, he worked in the office of the Owensboro Morning Messenger when only nine years old, starting a journalistic career which reached its peak in the lusty era when F. C. Bonfils and H. H. Tammen were publishers of the Denver Post.

Newsman Dies



ROBERT E. HICKS

... victim of Wyoming accident.

After working as a reporter and editor on various Colorado newspapers, Mr. Hicks became a special correspondent for some metropolitan dailies and The Associated Press, covering many big stories in Mexico and the western United States.

SERVED DENVER NEWSPAPERS

During the Spanish-American war he was city editor of the Denver Times, later joining the staff of the Denver Post, where he worked alongside such famed journalistic figures as Gene Fowler, now a successful author and movie writer, and Otto Floto, sports writer, who became a circus magnate.

Before coming here in 1913, Mr. Hicks became interested in theatrical enterprises in Denver, and also managed several expositions and large outdoor enterprises.

He opened the Plaza theater here in April, 1913, and was connected with that theater until 1917, meanwhile building the Cabrillo theater and opening it in 1915.

Leaving the theatrical business in 1926, Mr. Hicks entered the insurance business with his son. In 1934 he joined The Union's editorial staff, retiring in July, 1938, because of illness.

HIGH IN MASONRY

His wife, Mrs. Charlotte Hicks, whom he married in Denver in 1900, died here March 15 of this year. The couple had resided at 4250 Arguello way since 1917.

Mr. Hicks was a former potentate of the Shrine, former commander of the Knights Templar and a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason. He was a member of Blackmer Masonic lodge. He also was a former member of the Cuyamaca club, and former president of the San Diego Rotary club.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Eager; his son, James; three grandchildren, Patricia and Janis Hicks and Betsy Ann Eager; his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Helen Hicks, and a son-in-law, Dr. B. F. Eager.

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PAGE EIGHT—A

Masonic Rites Set Today For Robert E. Hicks

Under auspices of Blackmer Masonic lodge and with the Rev. John B. Osborn officiating, services will be held at 3 p.m. today at Merkley's mortuary for Robert E. Hicks, 63, pioneer newspaper man. Cremation will follow.

Mr. Hicks, a former member of The Union staff, was killed Tuesday in an automobile accident 55 miles east of Rock Springs, Wyo. The body arrived here yesterday.

Although Mr. Hicks spent many years in the newspaper business, he owned and managed for several years the Cabrillo and Plaza theaters here.

Memorial Services

FOR

Robert E. Hicks

BORN

Kentucky

Sept. 22, 1876

SERVICES HELD AT

Merkley's Mortuary

Nov. 13, 1939

at 3:00 o'clock

OFFICIATING

Blackmer Lodge No. 442 F&AM

Rev. John B. Osborn

CREMATION

Merkley's Mortuary

Crossing the Bar

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.*

*But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam.
When that which drew from out the
boundless deep
Turns again home.*

Alfred Tennyson.

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- Obituary-William H. Wheeler, Architect 1956
Notice of Death 1 February 1956 The San Diego Union

THE SAN DIEGO UNION

Wed., Feb. 1, 1956
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

a-7

SAN DIEGO OBITUARIES

William Wheeler, Retired Architect, Succumbs At 83

William Henry Wheeler, 83, a retired architect who designed many buildings here, died Monday at his home, 2151 Guy St. He had lived here since 1912.

Wheeler, a former actor, had played in vaudeville with the late Jack Dodge. A native of Melbourne, Australia, he was on the operatic stage three years and was a captain in the Army Corps of Engineers in World War I.

Wheeler came to San Diego from Arizona, where he was supervising architect for the Southern Pacific Railway. Buildings he designed includ-

ed the San Diego Club, the Balboa Theater Building and the San Diego Hotel Annex in San Diego, the Four Square Gospel Temple in Los Angeles and the governor's palace in Mexico.

Funeral services will be at 9 a.m. Friday in Benbough Mortuary. Private graveside services will be conducted at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Mary K.; three sons, Richard, George and Henry L., and a daughter, Mrs. Ethel H. Turpin, all of San Diego.

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Continuation Sheet

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EL CARAVEL for March, 1928

•William H. Wheeler, Architect

From San Diego Athletic Club Periodical
El Caravel March 1928

EL CARAVEL for March, 1928



Volume 2, No. 3 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA MARCH, 1928

Published monthly by the San Diego Athletic Club
Subscription: \$2.00 per year; Single copies 25 cents

EL CARAVEL COMMITTEE:

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Tom H. Shore Editor
H. H. Fawcett Business Manager
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Mr. Wheeler Does
Fine Work As
Supervising
Architect

To William H. Wheeler, A. I. A., should be given more than ordinary credit for the splendid club home which we have. Mr. Wheeler gave unstintingly of his time and energy in supervising the construction of the club building. Into his work he put, not only the technical skill of an architect, but also the added interest of a loyal club member.

Mr. Wheeler is president of the State Board of Architects for the Southern District. He is also president of the Architectural Association of San Diego. Among his pieces of handiwork are the Governor's Palace at Mexicali, Aimee Semple McPherson's Tabernacle at Echo Park, the Balboa Theatre and the San Diego Hotel Annex in San Diego.

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• Balboa Theatre-Exterior

The San Diego Union 3 June 1923 of first design concept

R THE SAN DIEGO UNION: SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 3, 1923

Contract Let for \$800,000 Balboa Theatre Of Full Five Stories, to Be Completed Dec. 1

Designed by William H. Wheeler, architect, showing how the Balboa theatre at North 1st and B streets will look when completed. The theatre will be five stories high instead of two as originally planned, and the present location is more centrally located than the former site.

The Wheeler Construction Company, which owned the site, has been let to the "Balboa" Construction Company by "Buck" Hines and Charles H. Hines, who constitute the Balboa Building Company. The structure will consist of five stories above ground and a basement addition to the lower ground level. The theatre will be five stories high instead of two as originally planned, and the present location is more centrally located than the former site.

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Surf Fishing Invented At Mission Beach by Johnnie Moffat, Asserts F. Kiessig

Great Walton man has been the first man to use a rod and reel, says Kiessig. Johnnie Moffat was the first man to use a line for the purpose of catching fish. Johnnie Moffat invented the sport of surf fishing. He made his first cast in 1882, and since that time the sport has become popular. In those days there was no fishing gear to be had, and the fisherman had to make his own. He used a line of twine and a hook of iron. He also used a bait of fish. The sport has become popular, and many people are now fishing for sport.

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•Wurster Construction Company
1 January 1924 The San Diego Union

A Story of Progress---

THE pictures tell the story. A few short months ago the steam shovel started the excavation work for the new Balboa theatre at Fourth and E Streets. In just a few weeks San Diego's finest new theatre will be a reality.

And in the same way the huge business was built up that has made the name "Wurster" stand so high in the building industry. In 1849 P. H. Wurster organized the Wurster Construction Company at Buffalo, New York.

Today, buildings that stand out as the finest in the various communities where the company operates, are monuments to the organization's success.

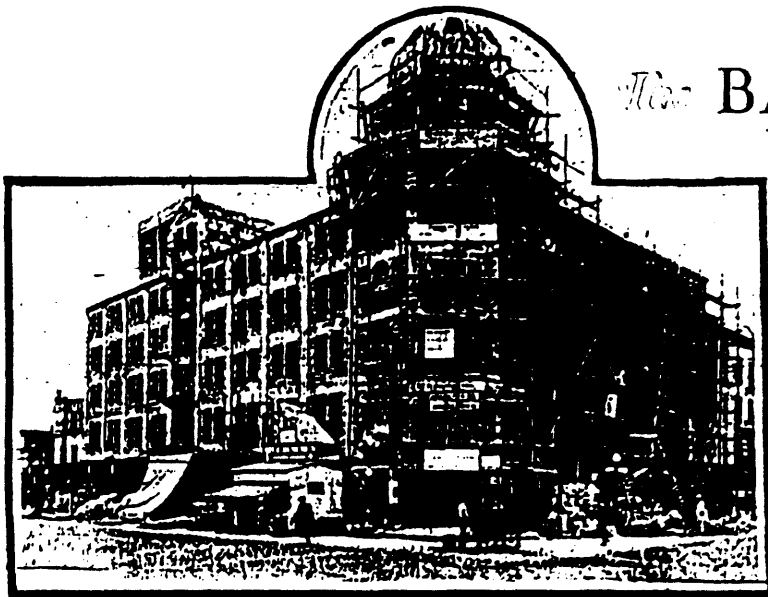
The company specializes in reinforced concrete buildings, and some of the largest projects undertaken in the west and southwest were under the guidance of Mr. Wurster and his efficient staff.

Some of the jobs include: \$10,000,000 Wholesale Terminal Buildings, Los Angeles; the California Building, San Diego; Coronado High School, Golden West Hotel, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, etc.

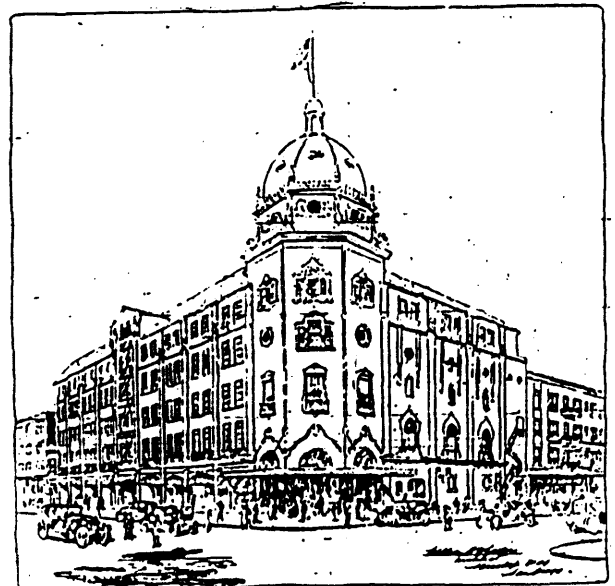
Wurster Construction Co.

Spreckels Bldg.
San Diego

Terminal Bldg.
Los Angeles



The BALBOA
Theatre



December

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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- **Balboa Theatre Exterior-Initial construction 1923**
Shows concrete superstructure and clay tile filler walls



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- Balboa Theatre Construction 1923-24
Shows opening act 'Fanchon & Marco'
on marquee. Note art glass over marquee.

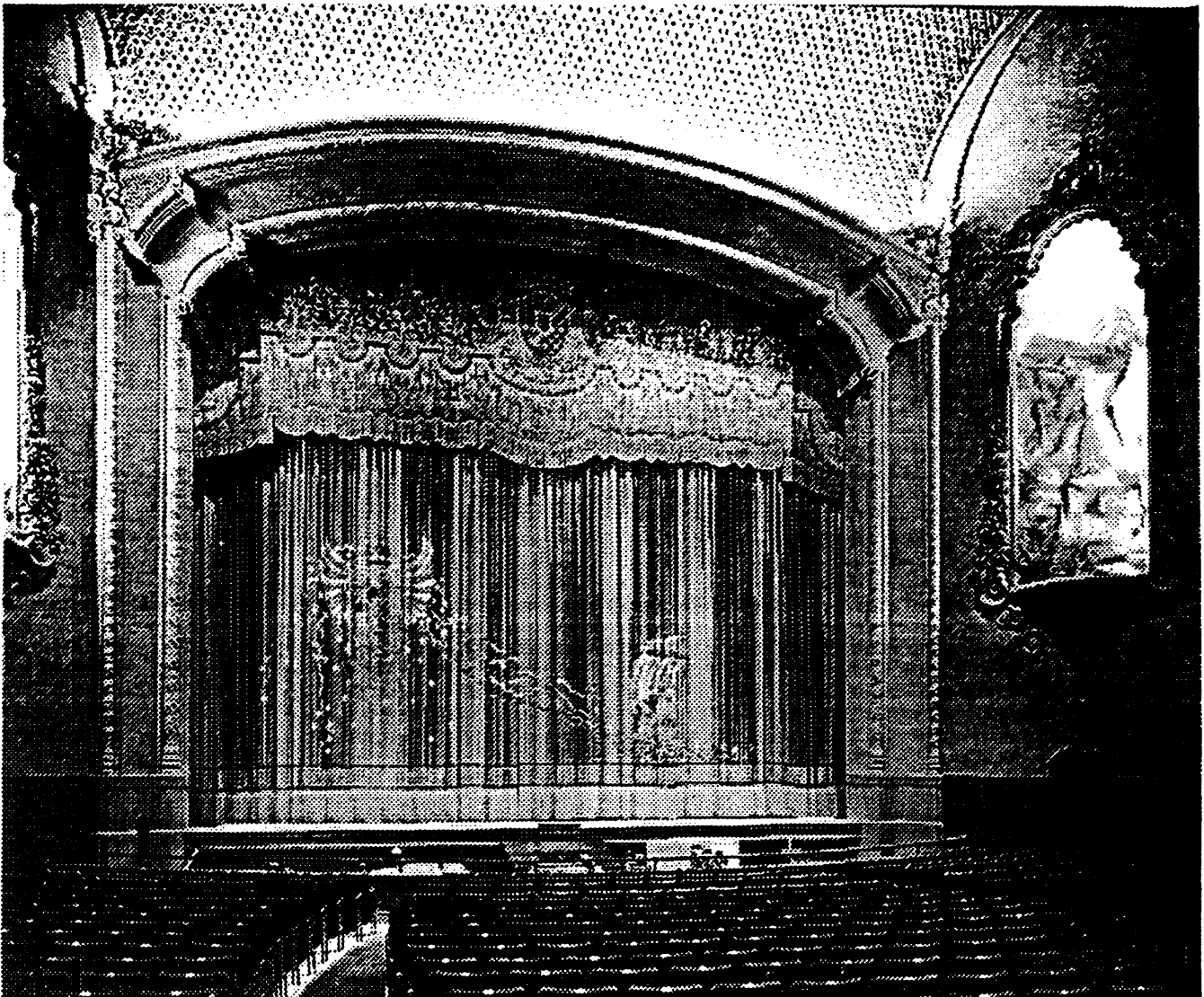


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Section number 8 Page

- Balboa Theatre-Interior at opening 1924
Proscenium with curtain (note Balboa's ship in design),
west wall water fountain, and ceiling grillwork

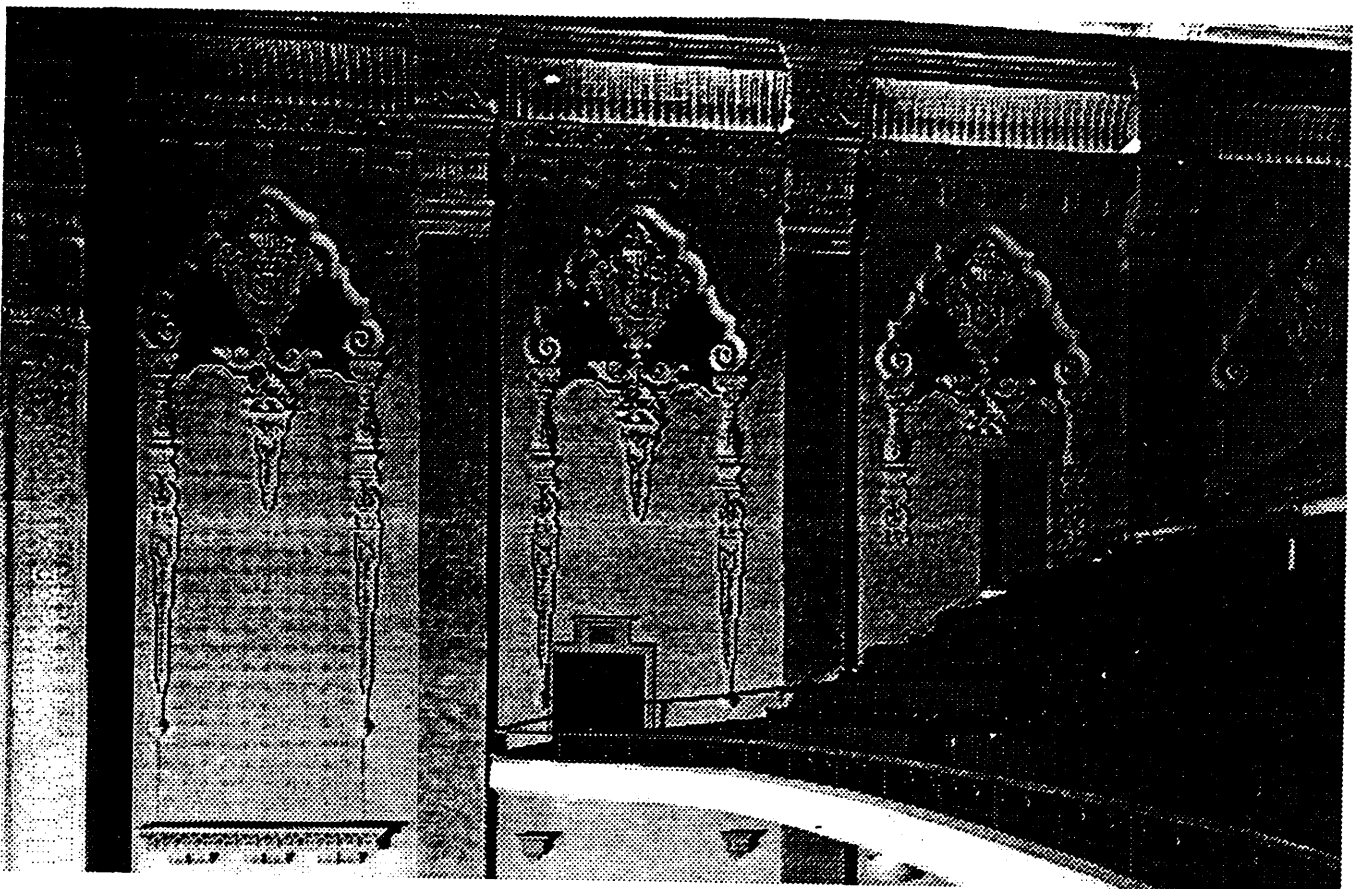


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- Balboa Theatre-Interior at opening 1924
West wall interior showing entablature and pilasters, balcony,
balcony exit, and polychrome plaster ornamentation



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- **Balboa Theatre-Interior at opening 1924**
One of two flanking wall water fountains



United States Department of the Interior
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- Balboa Theatre-Interior at opening 1924
Second floor Balcony Lounge

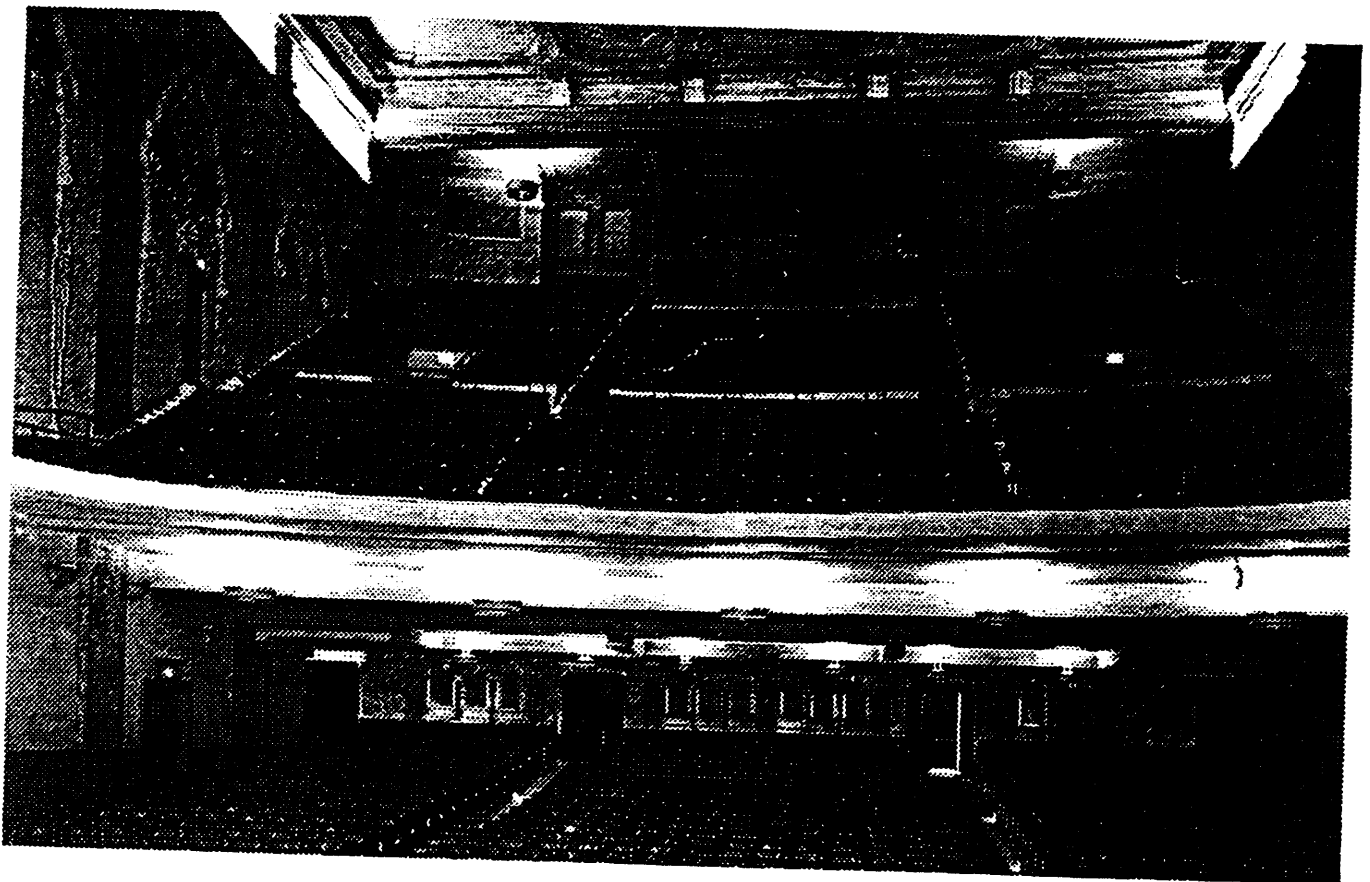


United States Department of the Interior
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- **Balboa Theatre- Interior at opening 1924**
Seating capacity, 900 on ground floor, 600 in balcony

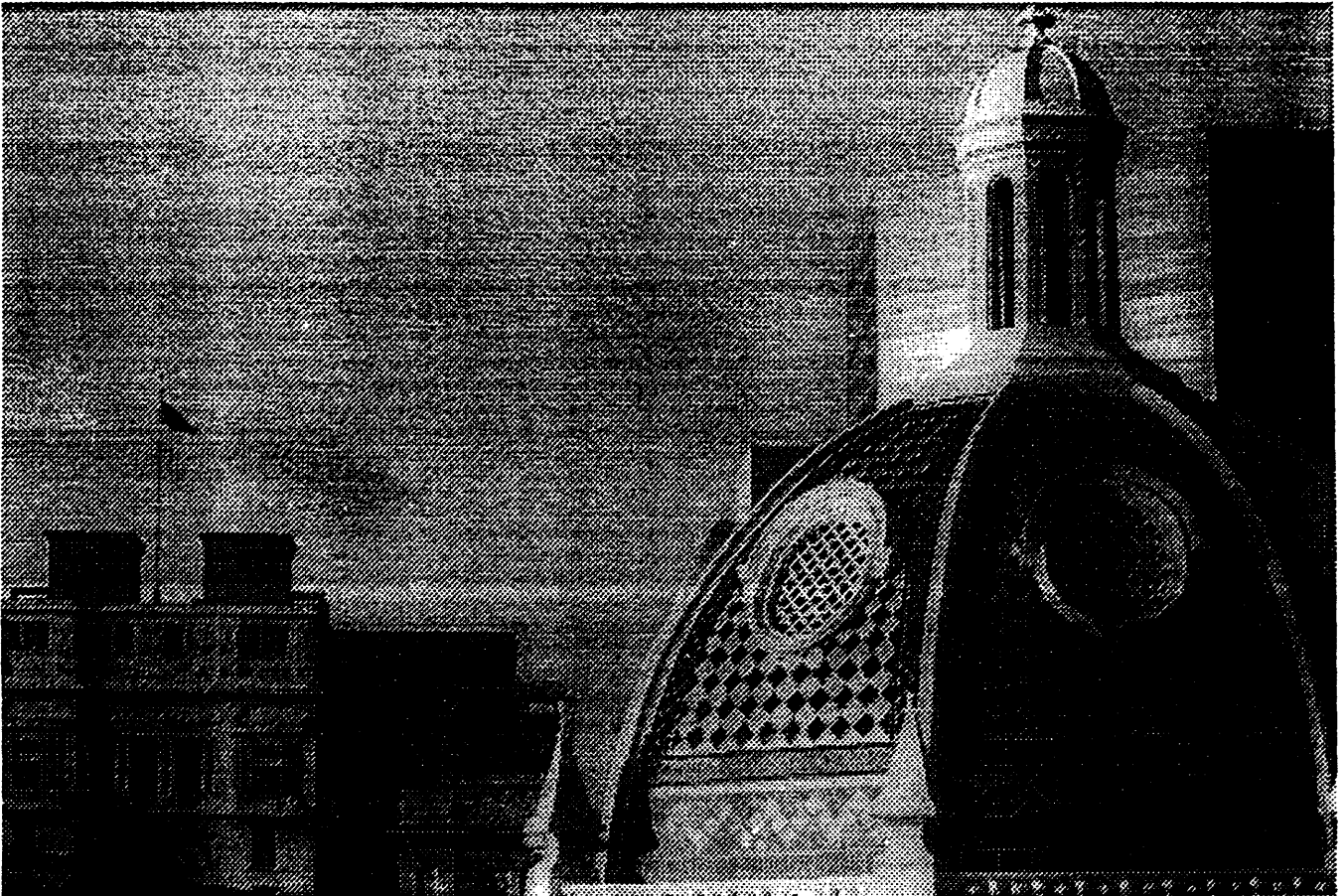


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•Balboa Theatre Dome-1987



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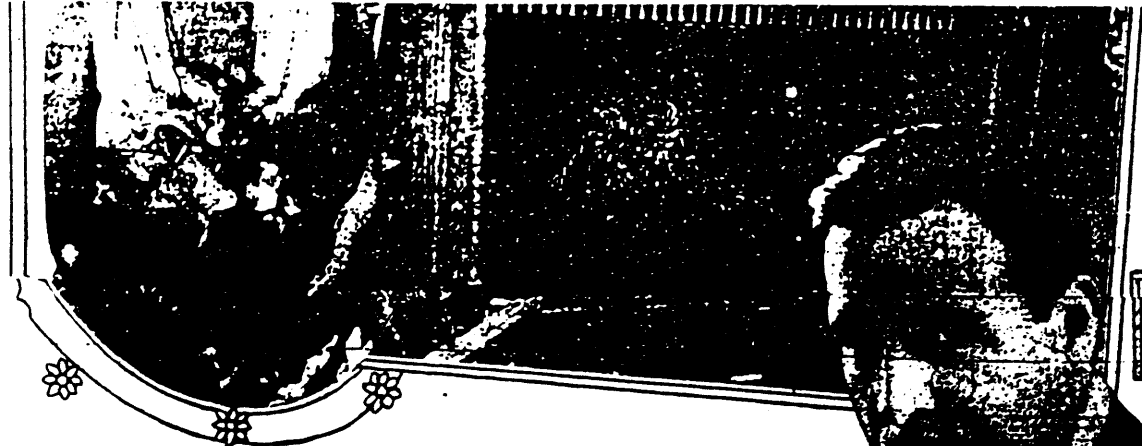
•Balboa Theatre Opening Announcement, Cont'd.
28 March 1924 The San Diego Union

**BALBOA CATERS
TO MUSIC LOVERS**

"Music in these days of universal popularity is no longer a luxury, but a necessity to the modern mind."
Inspired by this thought, the Balboa Theatre has planned an elaborate program of human happiness and enjoyment. It is in the building of the Balboa Theatre that the great concentration of the art world is to be seen in the Balboa Theatre program.
As this is the first of its kind, it is hoped to give thought to the music, accompanied by the artists of the day of the Balboa. The first night will be held in the new theatre.
The Balboa Theatre has engaged the services of professional musicians for a complete orchestra and has planned a series of "concerts" under the leadership of the great who has produced some of the world's greatest music. The Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world, and the Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world.

**'USHERETTES' LAST
WORD AT BALBOA**

Persons with an eye for posterity will find that the "usherettes" at the Balboa Theatre will not be the last of their kind. Their existence will give them the appearance of a hundred Spanish ushers.
The Balboa Theatre, under the leadership of its great manager, will have the honor of presenting the "usherettes" in their own right. The Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world, and the Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world.



**Oregon Captures
Rebel Leader
On Joy Ride**

PORTLAND, Ore., March 27.—President Adams Oregon, at the point of a gun, today made prisoner of Gen. Sam Army, one of the leaders of the rebel forces.
The rebel captured on a joy ride in the Balboa Theatre. The rebel captured on a joy ride in the Balboa Theatre. The rebel captured on a joy ride in the Balboa Theatre.

**Announce Program to Open
New Balboa Theatre Tonight**

Eight shows from the program to announce program have been made for the opening performance of the new Balboa Theatre tonight. The program will be as follows:
8:15 P. M. — Dance of the Hours
9:15 P. M. — The Merry Widow
10:15 P. M. — The Merry Widow
11:15 P. M. — The Merry Widow

**CRAFTSMEN GIVEN
CREDIT FOR WORK**

Many of them representing San Diego craftsmen, who are responsible for the completion of the beautiful new Balboa Theatre. The following list includes companies and individuals who constructed and decorated the theatre.
Worcester Construction Company, 1234 Broadway, San Diego, Calif.
Theatre architect and interior decorator, W. J. ...



Portrait of W. J. ...

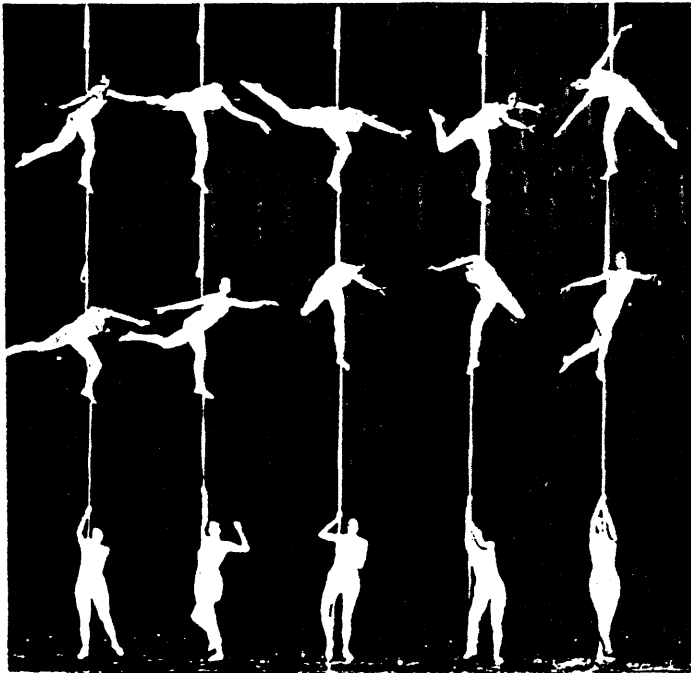
...the theatre will be the most famous music theatre in the world. The Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world. The Balboa Theatre is the most famous music theatre in the world.

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•Fanchon & Marco
Sunkist Beauties



It was as easy to pick a bushel of Sunkist Beauties for a Fanchon & Marco Idea as it was to knock oranges off a tree in the San Fernando Valley. Every "ballet and military tap" studio in the United States was grinding out dancers, and most of them gravitated to Hollywood in the Twenties in hopes of getting into pictures; by the time the Vitaphone had swept on the scene in a flurry of all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing movies, the gravitation became an avalanche. One would-be Sunkist Beauty was Myrna Loy, who auditioned for Fanchon & Marco at the age of fifteen, fresh from her father's ranch in Montana.

"Myrna," recalled Miss Fanchon some years later, "was really a poor dancer, but her beauty was a strange, exotic type. The fact that she couldn't make good as a chorus girl was in her favor, for it showed marked individuality."

Miss Fanchon's somewhat enigmatic appraisal of Myrna's talent as a dancer was confirmed for all to see in 1929 when she participated in a markedly bovine *pas de deux* in Warner Brothers' all-talking-singing-dancing *Show of Shows*.

Others who rose to stardom after an F & M apprenticeship were Mark Plant, June Knight, Janet Gaynor (an extra girl in assorted tableaux), Doris Day, Lyda Roberti, who worked for a year as a chorus girl and was allowed to sing "What Do You Do on a Dew, Dew, Dewy Day" one night in Los Angeles when one of the principals of the "Rainy Nights" Idea caught cold; Lyda was kept on stage for more than a half hour talking Polish, improvising and dancing, and, true to Hollywood legend, signed a picture contract the very next day.

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- Theatre Organ Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society
January / February 1986 Volume 28, Number 1
Shows 4/26 Robert-Morton console in the Balboa Theatre 1925

THEATRE ORGAN

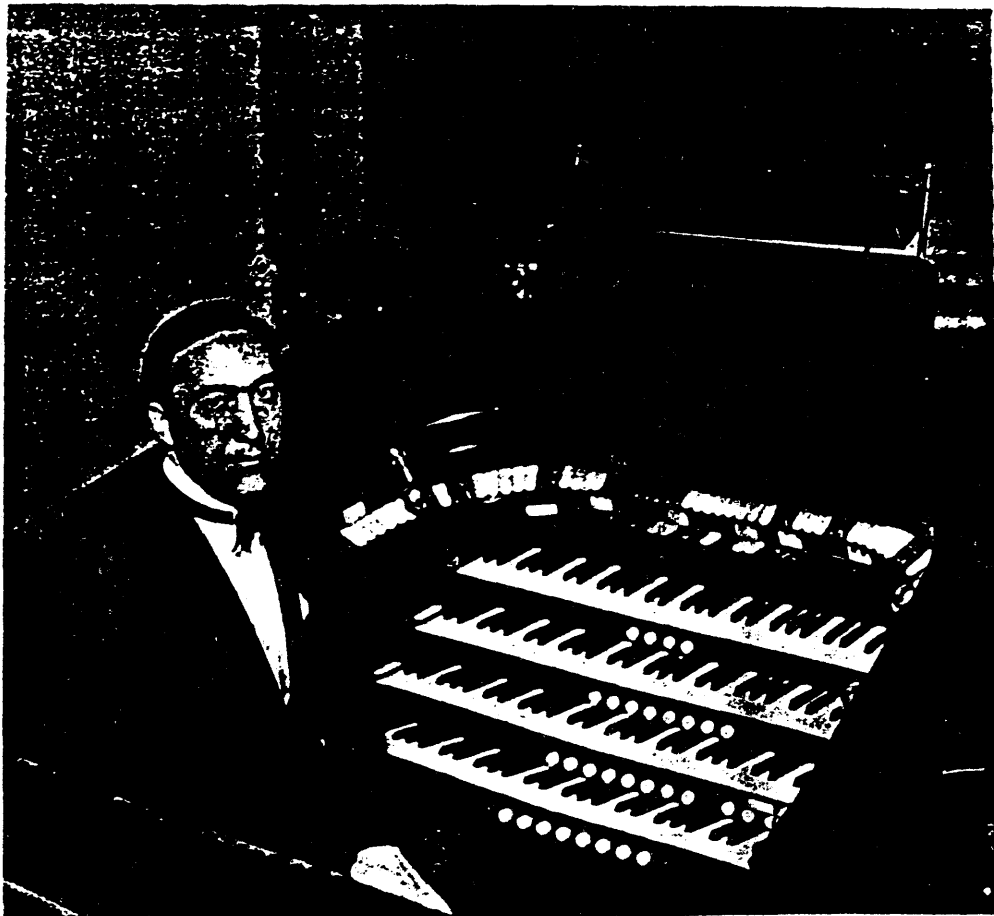
(ISSN 0040 5531)

JOURNAL OF THE
AMERICAN
THEATRE ORGAN
SOCIETY

Library of Congress
Catalog Number — ML1 T 334

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 1
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1986

Ed Swan poses at the 4/26 Robert-Morton console in the Balboa Theatre, San Diego, in 1925. He feels that this instrument was the finest theatre organ he ever played. An echo division was installed over the balcony. *(Swan Collection)*



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National Park Service

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•Fanchon & Marco/Sunkist Beauties-Vaudeville

Taken from 'The Last Remaining Seats' by Ben M. Hall,
citing Fanchon & Marco as the 'first-string' nationally renown
vaudeville act traveling 52 weeks per year coast to coast.

"No one seems to know just what Miss Fanchon's first name is. Ever since the days when she and her brother Marco composed a first-string vaudeville act, they have been known simply as Fanchon & Marco."

- *The Atlanta Journal*, December 22, 1929



Marco



and Fanchon.

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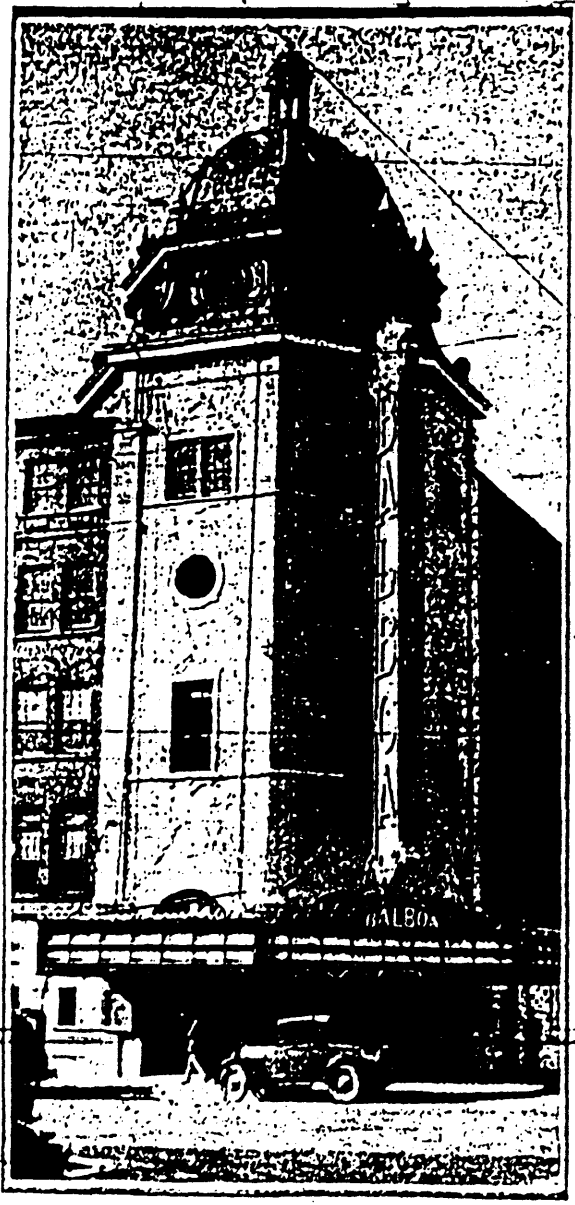
National Register of Historic Places
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- El Teatro Balboa-1930's
30 November 1930 The San Diego Union

El Teatro Balboa

It's the same popular Balboa theatre but its name has been given a Spanish dignity. The newly-lerorated Fourth street theatre opens Friday as a strictly Spanish language screen and stage playhouse.



- San Diego Union photo

**FOX WILL SHOW
SPANISH FILMS
ONLY AT BALBOA**

House Remodeled and Now
Equipment Installed; to
Open Dec. 5.

Bringing a new type of motion picture theatre to the city of San Diego, the Fox Balboa will open its doors Friday, Dec. 5.

Work has been going on in the Fourth and E street house for almost two weeks, and it is expected to have the theatre in excellent condition by the opening date.

Extensive alterations and an almost complete renovation of the theatre has taken place. The front of the house is graced by a new neon marquee. The entire theatre, inside and out, has been redecorated. The old projection equipment has been taken out and a complete new Western Electric sound system has been installed. In fact, everything that goes to make a theatre up to date and modern has been taken care of.

The Fox Balboa, a unit of Fox West Coast Theatres, is to be devoted to the showing of Spanish pictures only. It is to be a deluxe Spanish talking picture theatre. Which means that big pictures, filmed in Spanish, featuring Spanish actors and actresses are to be shown there. It is the intention of the Fox West Coast Theatre organization to make the Fox Balboa the equal of the big motion picture theatre of Mexico City. It will be operated in the same fashion.

The opening itself is to be put on in a lavish manner. Stars from the motion picture colony, including such well known celebrities as Rosita Moreno, Barry Norton, Ramon Preeda and others of equal note, will be present. The opening celebration is to be commensurate in importance with the addition of this theatre to the colony in San Diego.

THE SAN DIEGO UNION; SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 30, 1930

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page

BALBOA
SAN DIEGO'S GREATEST ENTERTAINMENT
DIRECTION WEST COAST THEATRES INC.

STARTS TODAY

*Not merely a comedy,
but a Screen Epic*

CHARLIE CHAPLIN
IN
THE GOLD RUSH
A UNITED ARTISTS PICTURE

WEST COAST Presentation
"A Garden Gate"
Produced by
Fanchon & Marco
Featuring
Johnny Perkins, Master of Ceremonies,
and
The Sunkist Beauties

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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•Balboa Theatre Opening Announcement
28 March 1924 The San Diego Union

BALBOA THEATRE

ANOTHER LINK IN CALIFORNIA'S GREATEST CHAIN OF THEATRES
Direction of R. E. Hicks and West Coast Theatres, Inc.

GRAND OPENING TONIGHT AT 6 O'CLOCK

Two Complete Performances at 6:30 and 9:15

<p>PLEASE NOTE</p> <hr/> <p>Regular Prices Will Prevail Opening Night</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">OPENING PROGRAM</h3> <table style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: middle;">A Tremendous Event</td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Corinne Griffith and Conway Tearle — in — "LILIES OF THE FIELD" From the play by Wm. Harlburt Directed by JOHN FRANCIS DILLON — A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE —</p> </td> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: middle;">A Wonderful Bill</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">➔</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">FANCHON & MARCO'S MUSICAL MELANGE Featuring Elsie Meyerson's Jazz Symphonists King Sisters, Dorothy Lamsdin, Cecile Jaffe and JOHNNY PERKINS—FAST, FAT and FUNNY</p> </td> <td style="text-align: center;">➔</td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; font-size: small;">Special Comedy Kinogram News</td> <td style="width: 34%; text-align: center;">BALBOA CONCERT ORCHESTRA OF 20 PICKED MUSICIANS "Bob" Gaderer - - - - - Director</td> <td style="width: 33%; font-size: small;">Novelty Reel Lighting Effects</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">Special Opening Night Features POSITIVE PERSONAL APPEARANCE of CONWAY TEARLE ADELE ROWLAND CORINNE GRIFFITH CHARLIE MURRAY—AND HIS BEARD</p>	A Tremendous Event	<p style="margin: 0;">Corinne Griffith and Conway Tearle — in — "LILIES OF THE FIELD" From the play by Wm. Harlburt Directed by JOHN FRANCIS DILLON — A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE —</p>	A Wonderful Bill	➔	<p style="margin: 0;">FANCHON & MARCO'S MUSICAL MELANGE Featuring Elsie Meyerson's Jazz Symphonists King Sisters, Dorothy Lamsdin, Cecile Jaffe and JOHNNY PERKINS—FAST, FAT and FUNNY</p>	➔	Special Comedy Kinogram News	BALBOA CONCERT ORCHESTRA OF 20 PICKED MUSICIANS "Bob" Gaderer - - - - - Director	Novelty Reel Lighting Effects	<p>PLEASE NOTE.</p> <hr/> <p>Box Office Will Open at 6 o'Clock</p>
A Tremendous Event	<p style="margin: 0;">Corinne Griffith and Conway Tearle — in — "LILIES OF THE FIELD" From the play by Wm. Harlburt Directed by JOHN FRANCIS DILLON — A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE —</p>	A Wonderful Bill									
➔	<p style="margin: 0;">FANCHON & MARCO'S MUSICAL MELANGE Featuring Elsie Meyerson's Jazz Symphonists King Sisters, Dorothy Lamsdin, Cecile Jaffe and JOHNNY PERKINS—FAST, FAT and FUNNY</p>	➔									
Special Comedy Kinogram News	BALBOA CONCERT ORCHESTRA OF 20 PICKED MUSICIANS "Bob" Gaderer - - - - - Director	Novelty Reel Lighting Effects									

<p>Please Note</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">The beard which Charlie Murray wears is occasioned by the fact that the picture he is now making calls for him to do so.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Please Note</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">The opening program (minus the special features) will be presented for the following 7 Days</p>
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LOGAN HEIGHTS

Sunday and Monday, Aug. 31 and Sept. 1
MADGE KENNEDY and MONTE BLAKE
in "THE PURPLE JEWELRY"
Tuesday, September 2
STUPEL CLAYTON
in "KISS THE VAMP"

Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 3 and 4
RICHARD DIX and LOIS WILSON
in "ICE BOUND"
Friday and Saturday, Sept. 5 and 6
FRAN L. ROOPE
in "THE CODE OF THE SEA"

RAMONA

Sunday and Monday, Aug. 31 and Sept. 1
RICHARD DIX and LOIS WILSON
in "ICE BOUND"
Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 2 and 3
THOMAS MCELHAN
in "THE CONFIDENCE MAN"

Thursday and Friday, Sept. 4 and 5
Cecil De Mille's "THELMA"
Saturday, Sept. 6
WILLIAM S. HART
in "WILD BILL HICKOK"

If it's a Paramount Picture it's the best show in town

Four De Luxe Shows
Sunday--1:00--3:30
6:00--8:30
Come on Time

BALBOA

Direction of Bob Hicles

TODAY AND
--ALL WEEK--
Regular Prices

Rudolph Valentino

IN

"MONSIEUR BEAUCAIRE"

By Booth Tarkington

with

BEBE DANIELS --- DORIS KENYON --- LOIS WILSON
and 500 Others

Note: Because of the length of this Program there will be but four shows daily
at 1:00 - 3:30 - 6:00 - 8:30

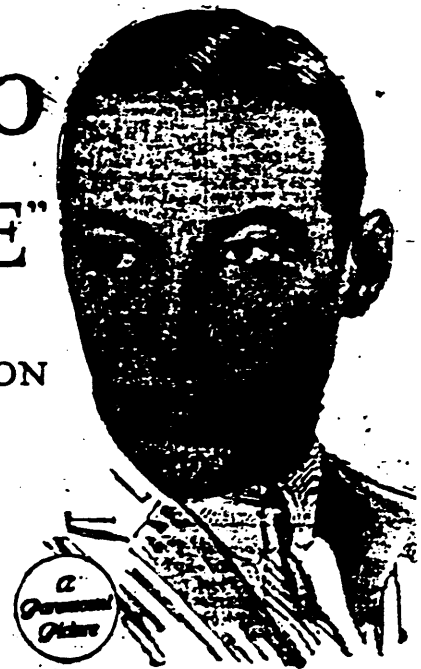


No
Advance
in
Prices

Brick English's Band
Super-Artists

Edna Torrence and Boys
Novelty Dance Divertissement

Daily
from
One
to
Eleven



Always Good Seats at Matinees

UNION ADS BRING BUSINESS

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number **8** Page **13** Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

including the usherettes, musicians and electricians, will have a final rehearsal for their parts they will play tonight and at succeeding performances.

The completeness of detail which has been worked out was aptly characterized when Sid Grauman, Los Angeles theatre man and personal friend of Mr. Hicks, said after seeing the new theatre, "you haven't forgotten anything, have you Bob?"

Excerpts from the San Diego Union 29 March 1924-Reaction to Opening Night

The occasion was a personal triumph for Bob Hicks, who was largely responsible for the creation of the Balboa. Sheafs of telegrams were thrust into his hands from time to time by hurrying messengers... But chiefly the opening performance was a tribute to the long hours of work that Mr. Hicks has spent in preparation for the event.

Some 2000 persons were seated in record time by a corps of usherettes that proved to be as efficient as they were decorative...Both of last night's audiences were given full opportunity to enjoy the beauties of the new theatre before the lights were dimmed for the feature picture. The finest theatre orchestra yet heard in San Diego gave a splendid 30 minute concert before the start of the formal program, while the electricians gave a demonstration of the lovely ever changing softly tinted lighting system, with which the theatre is equipped, and the miniature waterfalls on either side of the proscenium murmured a soft obligato to the music of the orchestra.

A feature of the opening concert was the exhibition of the beautiful metallic cloth curtain which seemed to stand at one moment like a rocky precipice, then to change to a blue ice wash, then a scintillating screen of crimson fire as the lights played a color symphony over its lustrous surface. The audience frequently applauded some particularly lovely combination of colors.

The metallic curtain crinkled softly aside and revealed a peppy jazz band of girls who played for an exquisitely dainty tap dance. The Fanchon and Marco revue was a distinct success...

There is no doubt that the Balboa Theatre is an addition of which San Diego can be proud. It is rich in coloring, yet restful. It is real Spanish as befits its name. It is comfortable to a degree that merits not only special mention, but to such a degree that its impression on the audience last night was distinctly visible. There was a look of surprised pleasure on their faces as they sank into the comfortable seats, deep, soft and wide.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 14 Balboa Theatre, San Diego, CA

There is a great airy spaciousness to the auditorium, due to the height of the ceiling, a credit to the architect, and to the work of J.R.Comly, construction engineer who worked out the great span with Mr. Wheeler. And despite the surprising vastness of the interior, the acoustics are about perfect. The orchestra in its fortissimo efforts was not deafening, and the softest spoken words of the screen celebrities could be heard to the extreme back of the balcony.

San Diego Theatre Inventory in 1920's

Theatres of 500 seats or less

Theatres Extant 1996

- Cabrillo Theater
- Plaza Theater
- Palace Theatre
- Aztec.....Aztec
- Bijou.....Bijou
- Casino.....Casino
- Superba
- Savoy
- New Colonial
- Mission
- Broadway

Theatres 1000 seats or more

Theatres Extant in 1996

Comments

- Pantages/Orpheum (1500).....Demolished
- Isis/ Fisher Opera House (1400).....Demolished
- Russ Auditorium (3000).....Demolished
- Fox (2255).....Fox Symphony Hall/ Interior.....Exterior/ Demo
- Balboa (1500).....Balboa.....Vacant
- California (2000).....California.....Vacant
- Spreckels (1500).....Spreckels.....In Use

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Balboa Theatre San Diego, CA

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National Park Service

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Section number **9** Page **2**

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Section number **9** Page **3**

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•Persons Contacted:

S. Kathy Flanigan, Historian

Janis Herndon Hicks Manos, Grand Daughter of Robert.E. Hicks

-B.A. Drama, M.A. Theatre Production SDSU

-Actor's Equity Association Liaison Committee-Member

-Advisor to City of Poway, Poway Center for the Performing Arts

-Screen Actors Guild-Member

-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists-Member

Steve Karo, Founder of Balboa Theatre Foundation

Jeffrey D. Shorn, AIA

-B.A. Architecture, M.A. Education

-Former Dean/ Professor of Architectural History at the New School of Architecture, San Diego, CA

-CPF Board Trustee

-City of San Diego Historical Site Board

Gerl Wheeler, Widow of Richard Wheeler (William H. Wheeler's son)

Celia Wetherbee of the Russo Family/Suburban Enterprises

•Research Facilities:

Personal family files of Jan Hicks Manos, Grand Daughter of R.E. Hicks

SDHS/San Diego Historical Society Archives and Photo Archives 'The Ticor Collection'

San Diego City Central Library, California Room

San Diego Union (Union-Tribune) Archives, San Diego City Central Library

UCSD/University of California at San Diego Library, Art and Architecture Department

USD/University of San Diego Library

•Section #7 Photography-Barry Carlton, Esq.

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•Plaza Theatre-1914

Robert E. Hicks, Owner/Operator
William S. Keller, Architect



United States Department of the Interior
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Section number 8 Page

- Cabrillo Theatre-1915
Robert E. Hicks, Owner/Developer/Operator
William S. Keller, Architect



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- Balboa Theatre-One time Ice Rink in Orchestra Pit-1930's



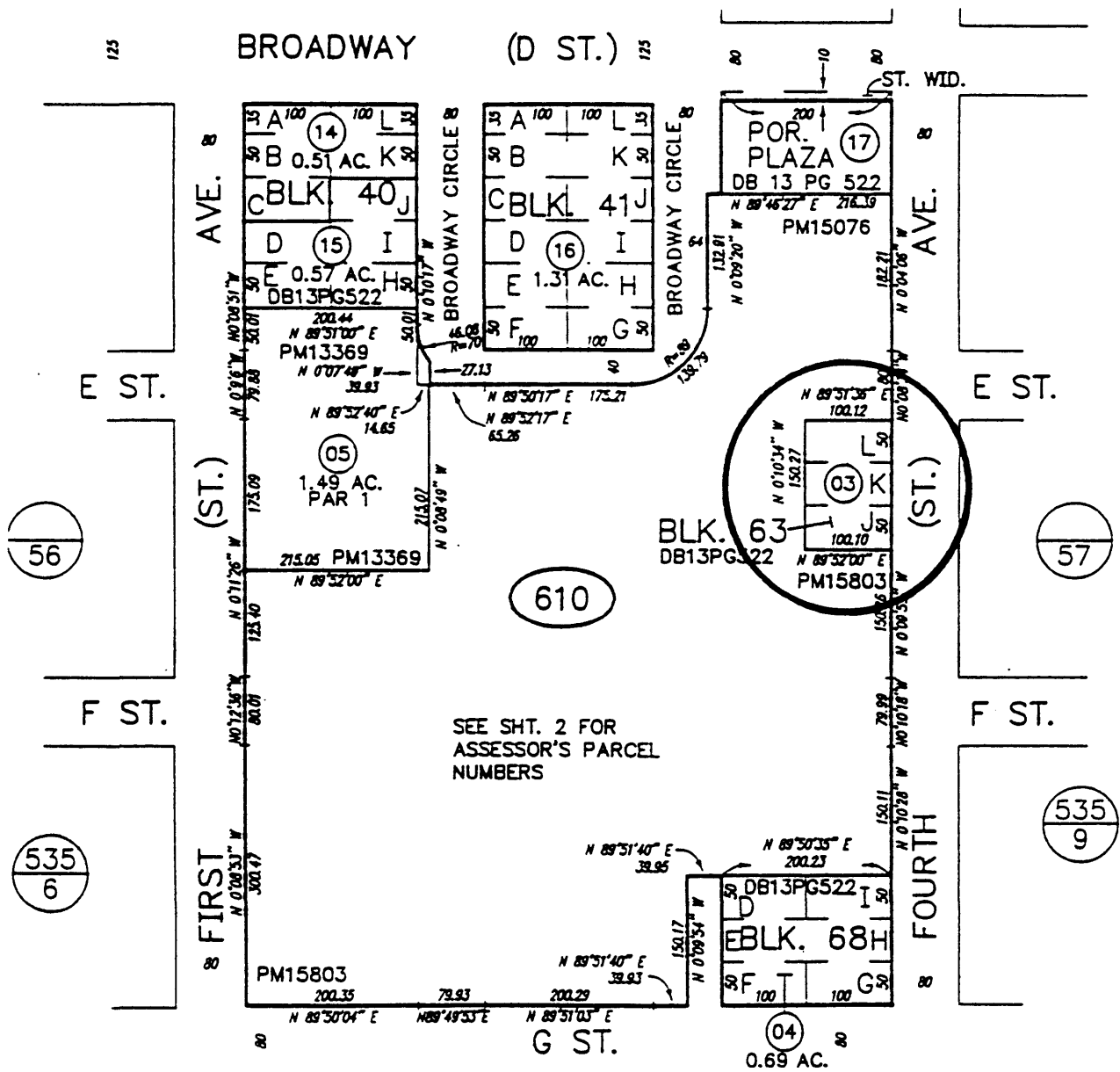
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Section number 10 Page 1

Balboa Theatre San Diego California

- Balboa Theatre 868 Fourth Avenue-Assessor's Parcel Map
Horton's Addition, Block 63, Lots J-K-L
Assessor's Parcel #533-610-03-00, Map DB0013PG522



SEE SH. 2 FOR
ASSESSOR'S PARCEL
NUMBERS

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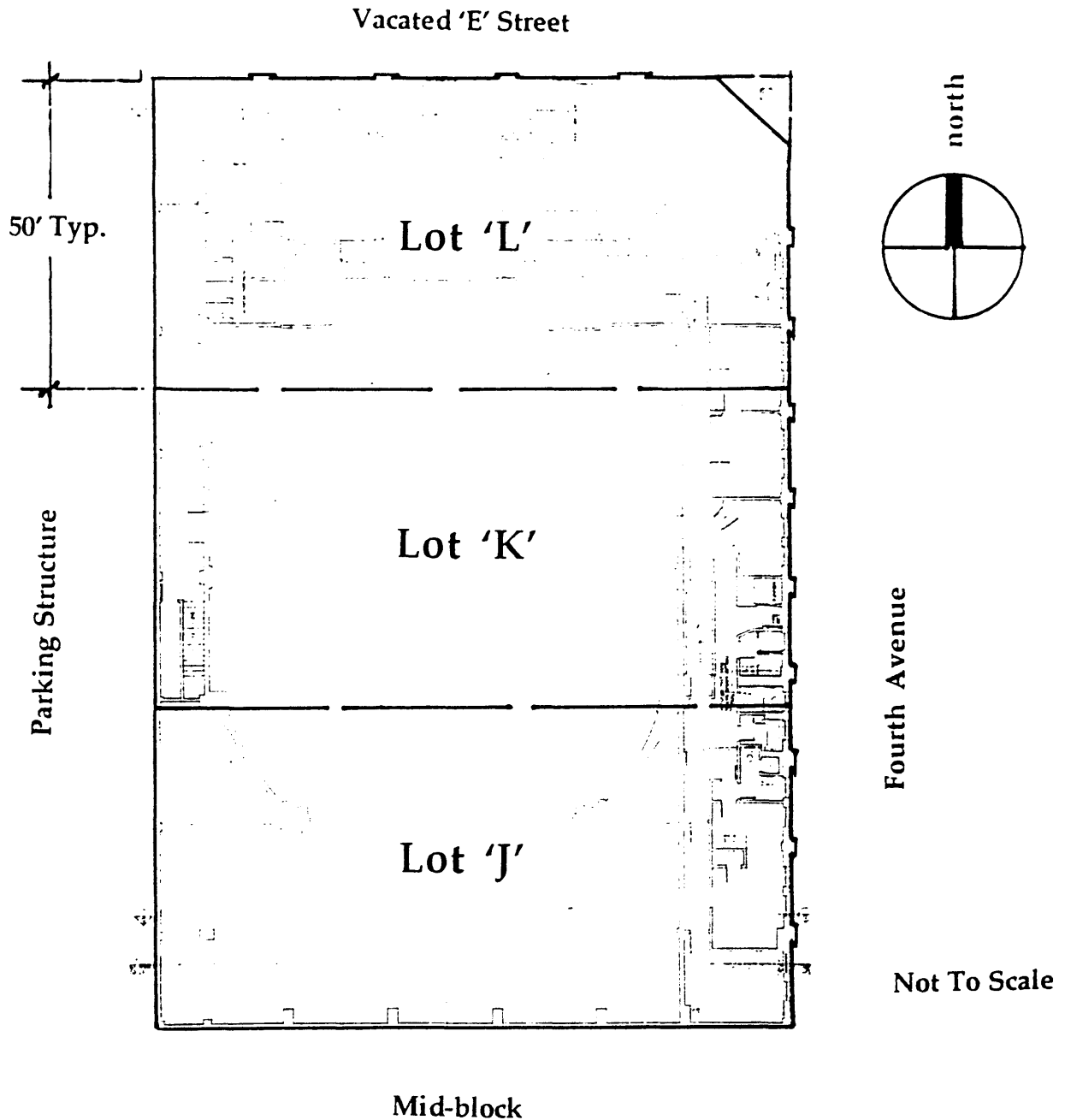
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Page 2

Balboa Theatre San Diego County, CA

- The exterior walls of the structure occupy three city lots and is built to the public right-of-way property lines, as shown:



United States Department of the Interior
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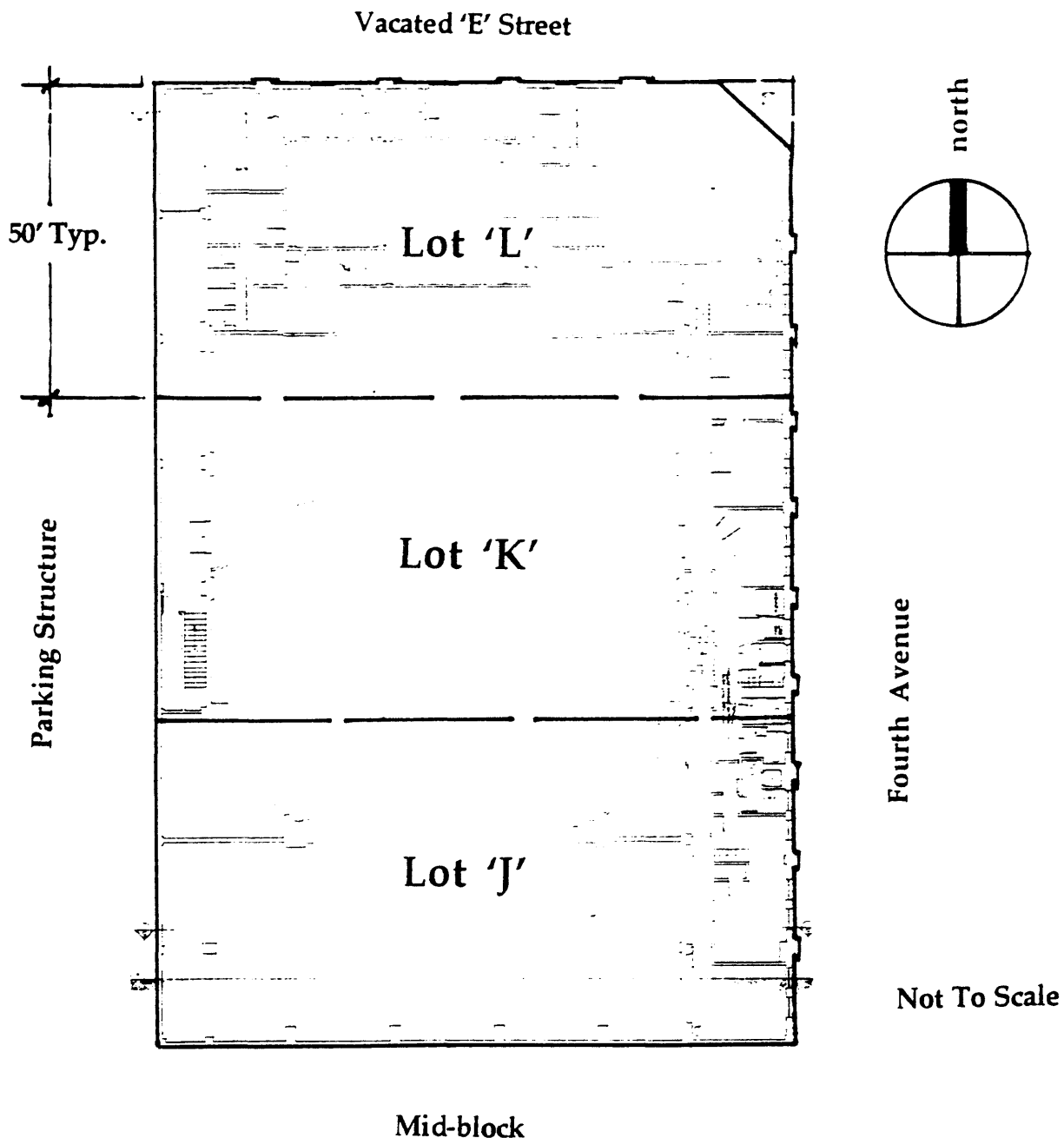
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Page 2

Balboa Theatre San Diego County, CA

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Section number **10** Page **3** **Balboa Theatre San Diego County, CA**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
5/7/23	S Trust & Com Bk.....	Balboa Bldg Co.....	J,K,L
5/1/23	Balboa Bldg Co.....	S Trust & Com Bk.....	Trust Agt \$275,000 bonds
1/19/24	Hicks, R.E.....	Wurster, F.H.....	Agt Balboa Theatre
4/24/24	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Notice of Completion.....	Comp 4/23/24
10/27/26	U.S. Fidelity & Guaranty Co.....	Strobeck, G.L.....	For money judgment for acctg
8/31/27	Silver Gate Theatres Inc.....	Levy, Bert.....	Lease 10 yrs. \$330,000 Balboa Theatre
8/31/27	Silver Gate Theatres Inc.....	Levy, Bert.....	Bill of sale \$50,000 fixtures, etc.
8/31/27	Levy, Bert.....	Silver Gate Theatres Inc.....	Chat Mtg Balboa \$45,000, 7%
10/18/28	Strobeck, G.L.....	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Rel Mtg 403-44
12/17/28	Balboa Bldg Co vs	Ralston, Leo	846 4th Balboa Theatre Bldg, restitution of premises
7/29/29	California Electric Wks vs.....	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Mech Lien \$533.45
10/17/29	Wurster, F.H. Estate.....	Hicks, R.E.....	Rel lien (Mtg) 395-243
10/14/29	Wurster, Alice.....	Hicks, R.E.....	Rel lien (Mtg) 395-243
10/10/35	Wood, G.W.....	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Quick claim of bldg
10/30/39	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Corp. of America.....	Trust deed \$81,000
12/4/41	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Prichard, J.C.....	Bldg contract \$28,640
11/29/43	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Notice of compl.....	compl 11/21/43
2/6/45	Balboa Bldg Co.....	Notice of non-responsibility	
6/28/46	Bank of America.....	Nat'l Theatres Corp	
7/27/46	Segal, Russel H.....	Kingston, M.....	Notice to sell lease
9/8/55	SD Theatre Corp.....	Cert. of Ownership.....	Merger
10/5/59	SD Theatre Corp.....	Fisher, M. Bert.....	Quick claim & Bill of Sale
8/11/59	SD Theatre Corp.....	Kreiss, Norman.....	Agree to lease & lease
11/30/59	Kreiss & Fisher & Serv Auto parts	L Ti Svs G	
1/5/60	L Ti Svs G.....	Russo Ent Suburban Theatres	
1/5/60	Russo Ent Suburban Theatres.....	L Ti Svs G.....	Trust deed \$100,000
1/25/60	Fox West Coast Th Corp.....	Fisher, Kreiss.....	Exercise opt to lease
1/25/60	Suburban Th Inc.....	US Fox Westcoast.....	Declty; relief & Theatres Corp.....
10/11/60	Russo & Suburban Theatres	Fox West Coast Th.....	Quick claim Lease
11/11/85	Russo & Suburban Theatres	SD Redev Agcy.....	Eminent domain