

AMBLER WARNER THEATER
108 E. Butler Pike
Amber
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-6029

HABS
PA
46-AMB,
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 97127
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

AMBLER WARNER THEATER

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Location: 108 East Butler Pike, Ambler, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Significance: The Ambler Warner Theater, an example of Beaux Arts architecture, was built by Warner Brothers and is the last of three theaters which once served the town of Ambler, Pennsylvania, the company town of Keasbey and Mattison.

Description: This multi-storied brick and stone building is composed of three parts: the main facade and store fronts, main hall/transition area, and lobby/theater. The central marquis section is two stories high and three bays wide. Two sets of glass and metal double doors provide access to the interior. The marquis is suspended above the entranceway by guy wires anchored higher up the facade on either side of three large five pane by three pane arched windows. There are floral designs between the window alcove and the beltcourse of stone above. Above the beltcourse is an ornamental crest in the middle of the facade. On each side of the crest there are two pinnacles, each with two empty alcoves. Flanking the marquis section are two one-story wings, each faced in the same cut stone. Each also has glass and metal store windows and doors. A small parapet is entered along the roofline of each.

The next section of the exterior of the building is one-story high and five bays wide, and is faced in rough-cut stone in irregular courses. There are five window openings with brick sills. The remainder of the building houses the lobby and theater proper. This section is faced in red brick and varies in height from one to three stories. Three brick pilasters project out from the main section on both the north and south facades. The rear or west facade of the building is also faced in red brick, but has a small stone wing projecting from the central section. There are four brick pilasters on this elevation which is flanked by two symmetrical wings. Curving stairways enter each wing and provide access to the theater through doors at the ground level.

The entrance and lobby are connected by an upward sloping hall. Sliding glass doors provide egress from the hall to the stores on either side. Three openings lead into the lobby. The bracketed pilasters with an oriental motif project out from the walls of the lobby. Tile mosaics on the north and south walls of the lobby are centered between doorways leading to other parts of the theater. The concession counter is located on the east wall and is flanked by a pair of doorways leading to the theater. The walls of the theater itself are unadorned. Flanking the stage and screen are false paired boxes which are decorated with gold and silver floral designs, crests, bands and moldings. A large

griffin figure is fixed to the lighted dome in the center of the ceiling. The seats and curtains are original as is the hardware in the projection room. This hardware includes a switchboard made by the Cleveland Switchboard Company, and weighted fire doors made by Willis Fire Windows and Fire Doors.

History: Ambler Warner Theater was built by Warner Brothers in 1926. It was later owned by Turning Point, Inc. to house a community arts center called "Rising Sun" and the next owner converted it to the Ambler Christian Theater.

The building is presently owned by Dr. Harry Bristow, Ph.D., Cinemaster who is using the structure for Cinema/Film Library/Religious Bookstore.

Sources: Field Survey, Summer 1994.

Historian: Thomas Heard, HABS, Summer 1994.