

Earle Theatre
(Cosmopolitan, Warner Theatre)
13th and E Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-639

HABS
DC,
WASH,
588-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 13th and E Streets, NW
Washington, DC

USGS Washington West Quadrangle
UTM Coordinates 18.323990.4307000

Present Owner: Warner Theatre Associates Limited Partnership

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: The Earle Theatre (Warner Theater) and Office Building, designed by C. Howard Crane, a nationally-noted theater architect, has long been recognized as an important example of movie palace architecture. The theater also represents the culminating efforts of local movie exhibitors, Aaron and Julian Brylawski. These two Washingtonians were closely associated with the evolution of motion pictures and the film industry in the national capital. Their participation as local entrepreneurs in the development of this business is significant for it was during this time that the large film companies began to monopolize the industry with growing chains of theaters. The combined office/theater strategy used in the Earle is an early and noted example of mixed-use planning which provides insight into the commercial and social history of Washington from the 1920s onward. Since its opening in 1924, the theater has taken part in the major trends in American entertainment and has been associated with many famous personalities. In its siting and design, the Earle (Warner) Theatre and Office Building responds to and strengthens the original L'Enfant Plan with its unique relationship between the commercial grid system and monumental elements such as Pennsylvania Avenue. The Earle is recognized as being the last of the grand movie palaces remaining in downtown Washington where a thriving entertainment district once existed.

PART I HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Original and Subsequent Construction:** April 1921: The Cosmos Theatre Co. announces plans for a movie palace to be built at 13th and E Streets, N.W. and to be known as the New Cosmos January 1923: C. Howard Crane and Kenneth Franzheim present a scheme for a 10-story office building and theater combination. July 1923: Excavation work begins. December 1924: The theater opens as the Earle Theatre. June 1927: Construction of 11th story addition (D.C. Permit to Repair #660, 23 July 1927). September 1953: Conversion of theater for presentation of Cinerama (D.C. Permit #47729, 23 September 1953). 1977: \$100,000 renovation including extending stage over orchestra pit (Numerous D.C. permits filed). August 1987: Warner Theatre Association Limited Partnership purchased the building with intention of historic rehabilitation.
2. **Architects:** The Earle (Warner) Theatre was originally designed by C. Howard Crane and Kenneth Franzheim. In 1927, John Zink of the Baltimore firm Zink, Atkins and Craycroft added an 11th floor to the office building.

C. Howard Crane

C. Howard Crane was a prolific and well-known theater architect during the "movie palace" era of the early 20th century. Born on August 13, 1885 in Hartford, Connecticut, Crane attended public high school for two years before taking up architecture in 1904 as an apprentice in the Connecticut office of Bailey & Goodrich. In 1905, Crane moved to Detroit, where he continued his apprenticeship in the notable firms of Albert Kahn; Field, Hinchman & Smith; and Gustave A. Mueller. After a brief partnership in the firm of Watt & Crane, he opened his own office in 1910 under the name of C. Howard Crane. The office was extremely successful, eventually employing as many as 53 draftsmen and expanding to include branch offices in New York and London.

The firm of C. Howard Crane specialized in theater design. Beginning with the Majestic Theater (1917) and Orchestra Hall (1919) in Detroit, the firm went on to design more than 325 theaters in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. In the late 1920s, when the Hollywood studios were becoming prominent and establishing a network of their own theaters, the studios entered into exclusive contracts with the various theater architects to help create a chain of identifiable theaters which would promote the studio and its films. Crane worked for Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Charlie Chaplin to design the flagship theater for United Artists in Los Angeles (1927). He designed the company's theaters in Detroit and Chicago as well. Several of the Fox theaters were also designed by Crane, including the Brooklyn Fox (1928) and the well-known twin designs of the Detroit and St. Louis Fox theaters (1928 and 1929).

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At the onset of the Great Depression, Crane moved to England, where his London office continued to specialize in theater design. At the close of World War II, Crane resumed his annual visits to his Detroit office. He devoted his remaining energies to rebuilding or modernizing British industrial plants. He continued to reside in London, where he died on August 14, 1952, at the age of 67. One of the most prolific theater architects of his time, he was noted for the style of his large theaters and for their excellent acoustics.

Kenneth Franzheim

Kenneth Franzheim was born in Wheeling, West Virginia on October 28, 1890. After graduating from Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey, Franzheim attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He graduated from MIT with a degree of Bachelor of Architecture in 1913. After graduation, Franzheim worked for four years in Boston for Welles W. Bosworth. During the war years, 1917 to 1919, Franzheim served as a first flight lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps at Ellington Field near Houston. While serving in the war, he met and married the daughter of oil man Edward F. Simms.

After the war, Franzheim went to Chicago, where he opened his first office with C. Howard Crane. In 1924-25, he and Crane also opened offices in Boston and New York. During this time, Franzheim served as associate architect for the Earle Theatre and Office Building. From 1925 to 1940, he practiced in New York, adding a branch office in Houston in 1937.

During the war years of 1941 to 1944, Franzheim spent time in Washington, D.C., helping to solve the defense housing problem. Franzheim was one of the first architects to devote time to airport design.

Franzheim was elected to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) College of Fellows in 1949. That year he was the president of the Houston Chapter of the AIA and chairman of the AIA national convention, where Frank Lloyd Wright received the AIA Gold Medal. Franzheim died in Mexico on March 13, 1959.¹

John Zink

John Zink, of the Baltimore firm Zink, Atkins and Craycroft, was the architect responsible for the 11th floor addition to the Earle (Warner) in 1927. Born in Baltimore in 1886, Zink attended the Maryland Institute and then worked for the

¹ Gerald Moorehead, Kenneth Franzheim.

firm of Wyatt and Nolting. Prior to World War I, Zink moved to New York where he attended night school at Columbia University and studied theater architecture under the important theater designer, Thomas Lamb. Returning to Baltimore in 1918, he worked with Ewald G. Blanke and W.O. Sparklin, eventually forming the firm of Zink, Atkins and Craycroft. Designing nearly 200 theaters in the Baltimore-Washington-New York area, Zink was cited in Washington Deco as "the acknowledged regional specialist in movie houses" (Washington Deco, p. 85). Most of Zink's theater designs date after the 1930s and were in the Art-Moderne style. The 11th story addition to the Earle in 1927 was fairly early in Zink's career and lacks distinction. It should not be considered a theater design as its purpose is office, although it does show his tendency towards the utilitarian lines that he would develop into a stylistic motif in his Art-Moderne theater designs.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:**

The Cosmos Theatre Company/Aaron and Julian Brylawski

The Cosmos Theater Company was formed in 1909 by Aaron Brylawski and Thomas Armat. Both partners had been entrepreneurs in the local film industry, owning small nickelodeon theaters in downtown Washington. With the conversion of the Cosmos and the Crescent Theaters into the larger Cosmos Theater in 1909, the Cosmos Theater was formed. The new 900-seat vaudeville-movie house at 9th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. became the flagship for the new partnership and their small chain of theaters. The Cosmos Theater Company proved a successful operation, prospering with the growing popularity of the movie industry. In 1921, the Cosmos Theater Company, with Aaron Brylawski, A. Julian Brylawski, Thomas Armat, and Alexander Wolf as partners, announced plans for a new flagship theater. The New Cosmos Theater, subsequently known as the Cosmopolitan, the Earle, and presently the Warner Theatre, represents the culminating effort of these local entrepreneurs.

Aaron Brylawski (March 23, 1851- October 21, 1929) came to Washington from Baltimore in 1902 to manage The Castleberg Jewelry Company. Through the jewelry business, he became acquainted with A. C. Meyer, a diamond salesman with a brother in the movie business in New York. Meyer convinced Brylawski to invest with him in movie theaters. Beginning with such small storefront theaters as the Palace Theater, the Happyland, the Pickwick Theater, and the Colonial Theater, Brylawski became a successful entrepreneur in the movie industry. Through his business dealings with Thomas Armat and the Cosmos Theater Company in 1909, Brylawski became associated with the major movie operators of the United States and would continue to participate in the next era of movie exhibition - the era of the "movie palace." With the construction of the Earle Theatre and Office Building, the dreams of the Brylawski family to develop a major "movie palace" were realized. Although financial problems encountered during construction forced the Brylawski family to sell the controlling interest in the project to the Stanley Corporation of

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America, Aaron Brylawski remained actively involved in the Earle as general manager of the Cosmos Theater Company. Brylawski continued to be a pioneer in the local movie industry, forming the local chapter of the Motion Picture Exhibitors, later known as the Motion Picture Theater Owners Association.

A. Julian Brylawski (December 1, 1882 - May 15, 1977) joined his father in the theater business in 1907. As vice-president of the Cosmos Theater Company, Julian was instrumental in the construction of the Earle Theatre and Office Building. When the Cosmos Theater Company merged with the Stanley Corporation of America in 1925, Julian became head of the regional real estate interests of the Stanley Corporation, with offices in the Earle Building. After Warner Brothers acquired the Stanley interests in 1928, Brylawski managed the real estate department for Warner Brother's southeast region. He continued to work for Warner Brothers until 1965, when, at the age of 90, he retired.

Throughout his long life in Washington, Julian Brylawski was actively involved in promoting the theater business. Serving for over 40 years as president of the Motion Picture Theater Owners Association, Brylawski worked to represent the interests of local theater owners in both local and national issues. As president, Julian Brylawski worked to negotiate labor and union contracts for the theater owners. Julian Brylawski was also involved in devising theater regulations for the District of Columbia. When the proposal for daylight savings time was introduced, Julian testified against it, believing that the longer days would hurt the evening ticket sales for movies. He succeeded in delaying the adoption of daylight savings time by D.C. for several years. He also lobbied against the enforcement of minimum wage, as theater owners could not afford to pay the required wage of 25 cents to their large corps of ushers. As a member of the War Production Board during World War II, Brylawski represented the interests of the movie industry, making sure that studios could get film and supplies for the production of movies.

The Stanley Corporation of America

The Stanley Corporation became associated with the Earle Theatre in 1924 when the Brylawski's solicited their financial help during the construction of the theater. At the time, the largest mid-Atlantic theater chain, the Philadelphia-based Stanley Corporation was interested in expanding into the Washington market. As a result of their involvement in the Cosmos Theater Company venture, the name of the theater was changed from the Cosmopolitan to the Earle Theatre and Office Building. (The secretary of the Stanley Corporation at the time, and former governor of Pennsylvania, was George E. Earle.) It is unclear exactly when the Stanley Corporation gained control of the Earle Theatre and Office Building, however, within a week of its opening, the Cosmos Theater Company was reorganized to reflect the increased financial interest of the Stanley Corporation. Jules Maustbaum, president of the Stanley Corporation, was named as the new president and Julian Brylawski became vice-president and general manager of the Cosmos Theater

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Company, as well as director of local activities for the larger Stanley Corporation. A new board of directors was appointed for the Cosmos Theater Company, including: Jules Maustbaum and J.J. McGuirk of Stanley; E.J. Lauder of the B.F. Keith Co.; and Julian Brylawski, Aaron Brylawski, and Alexander Wolf of the original Cosmos Theater Company. Impressed with the success of the Earle, the Stanley Corporation eventually purchased the remaining theater interests of the Cosmos Theater Company.

The Stanley Corporation continued to enlarge their holdings in Washington, merging with another local movie pioneer, Harry Crandall, in 1926. Both Crandall and the Brylawskis continued to be involved in the management of the new Stanley-Crandall Corporation of Washington.

Warner Brothers Pictures

In 1928, Warner Brothers Company merged with the Stanley Corporation to form the Stanley-Warner organization. It appears that Harry Crandall was still involved, although his name did not appear in the company title. This acquisition of the Earle by Warner Brothers signified the beginning of an era when a few large film companies would monopolize the ownership of theaters throughout the country. The Warner Brothers organization was formed by the Warner children in 1903 with the opening of the Newcastle Theater in Newcastle, Pennsylvania. Faced with the difficulty of obtaining films for their modest theater, the brothers recognized the need for an organized exchange business and established their own film exchange in Pittsburgh. After six years of thriving business, however, the small exchange was overpowered by the larger exchanges controlled by the big film producers. The Warner brothers decided then that the only way to compete and stay in the film business was to produce and show their own films. A successful venture from the start, Warner Brothers went on to become one of the largest and most innovative of the country's film production companies. In 1926, with the introduction of Vitaphone, a sound process that the Warner Brothers Company developed with Western Electric and the Bell Telephone Laboratories, the company began expanding their theater holdings. As many theaters refused to install Vitaphone, Warner Brothers was faced with the need to lease or buy the theaters. The Warner-Stanley merger in 1928 was a result of this growing need for Warner Brothers to expand their theater holdings in order to distribute their films. The building, however, continued to be called the Earle Theatre and Office Building for many years. It was not until 1947 that the name was changed to the Warner Theatre and Office Building.

Thirteenth and E Street Associates/J.A. Weinberg

The Warner Theatre and Office Building was sold by Stanley-Warner in 1971 to Thirteenth and E Streets Associates, with J.A. Weinberg as principal partner. Suffering from the aftermath of the racial riots of the late 1960s, the theater was

then closed. The theater and the office remained vacant until 1973 when the office space was leased to the General Services Administration. The theater was also reopened, serving for four years as a pornographic movie theater. The name was changed to Plaza One under this ownership.

Warner Theatre Association Limited Partnership

The Warner Theatre Association Limited Partnership acquired the building in August 1987. Historic rehabilitation of the office building and theater is expected to be completed in 1992.

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Longacre Engineering & Construction Company, Inc. with offices at the Southern Building, Washington, D.C., were listed as the builders on the original building permit (D.C. Permit to Build #10592). Gibelli and Company of Philadelphia were noted as responsible for the interior design (The Exhibitor, 1 March 1925), including the painted plaster ceilings, and the painted and gilded plaster reliefs in the lobby, foyer, mezzanine, balcony and auditorium. The original auditorium seats (no longer extant) were supplied by American Seating Company. The organ (now located at the University of Maryland) was supplied by Kimball.
5. **Original plans and construction:**

The building as originally conceived by the Cosmos Theater Company was to be a large structure designed for the sole purpose of housing a movie theater. The "New Cosmos," as it was to be called, was expected to cost \$1,500,000. An illustration of the "proposed vaudeville theater" with a detailed description of its features appeared in The Evening Star on April 30, 1921. As illustrated, the theater was to be a massive structure with large towers on the two corners oriented towards 13th Street. Features listed included a supervised nursery and playroom, unbroken sight lines in the auditorium (the balcony being cantilevered rather than supported by columns), three large high-speed elevators, a roof garden and outdoor movie theater, and an underground grotto theater to serve male patrons who wished to smoke while they enjoyed the movies. Bowling alleys and a restaurant in the basement were also mentioned. The theater was to be decorated throughout in the "Adam period" or Adamesque style. Mechanical systems, as well as support facilities, were to be provided in a separate building attached to the east on E Street. This arrangement would provide every possible comfort to the performers - spacious dressing rooms with natural light and air, a club room, and elevator service to the stage. For unknown reasons, however, this scheme was abandoned for a new design in August 1922. The new scheme, as announced in the Evening Star, consisted of "a white stone structure ... that will house a theater with a capacity of 2,400, a restaurant, 200 offices and 18 bowling alleys" (Evening Star, 3 August 1922, p. 9).

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In 1922, the same Cosmos Theater Company proposed a new design consisting of theater and office spaces in a single structure. No explanation for the change in plans was offered, only that this "structure supersedes the one originally announced as planned...(and that) the type of building, with theater incorporated, finally adopted will represent a vast improvement over the enterprise announced many months ago" (Evening Star, 10 January 1923, p.2). The theater, to be called the "Cosmopolitan" and based on the design of nationally renowned theater architect C. Howard Crane, was again estimated to cost \$1,500,000.

The Cosmopolitan, in its combination of such a great amount of office space with an elaborate theater to create a fully integrated building design, represented a relatively new approach. The building was featured in a 1923 article "Making the Theatre Site Pay" with the comment that "the time when theatre men erect a building exclusively for theatre uses is about past" ("Making the Theatre Site Pay", Exhibitors Trade Review, 7 June 1923, p. 262). This article emphasized the potential of the building which included a modern 10-story building of granite and terra cotta, a restaurant seating 300 persons in the basement; a dancing garden for 1000 persons in the basement, a roof garden seating 1,500 for summer pictures, and two hundred offices in the building. The article goes on to describe the many other "modern" features to be incorporated in the design.

Although reports and descriptions of the theater plans appeared in the local newspapers as early as 1921, construction of the building did not actually begin until much later, with the permit to build not being issued until June 1924. Excavation of the site began in July 1923 with preliminary drilling indicating that bedrock existed 20-30 feet below surface. Upon further exploration, however, the site was discovered to lie on the Potomac River flood plain. The change in plans and numerous extra structural footings required to secure the foundation for the building resulted in great delays to the construction schedule and proportionate increases in the projected costs of the venture. With the costs running \$100,000 over budget at this point, an infusion of funds was desperately needed in order to complete the project. This situation resulted in the Stanley Corporation of America becoming a major investor in the Cosmopolitan Theater.

Construction finally began in March 1924 with a permit issued to erect the structural steel work up to the 7th floor (D.C. Permit to Repair #7496, March 18, 1924). The permit to build was subsequently issued on June 5, 1924 (D.C. Permit to Build #10592) to the Cosmos Theatre Company with C. Howard Crane listed as architect and Longacre Construction Company, Inc. as the builder. The cost to construct the building alone was estimated on the permit to be \$800,000.

The construction of the building continued to attract public interest as well as to provoke internal controversy. A conflict with the subcontractor over the foundations again caused delay in the construction with a subsequent increase in costs (Headley,

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Robert K. "The Warner Theater, Washington, DC", Marquee, Vol. 12, no. 1 and 2, 1980, p. 25). In April 1924, the Evening Star reported that the building was "beginning to attract attention for unusual things," the most recent being the installation of the balcony girder which was cited as the "largest and heaviest piece of steel ever delivered in one piece in the United States." (Evening Star 21 April 1924, p.17). Another noted innovation in the building's construction was the use of six 85-foot marine masts to secure the balcony girders while being riveted. This unusual method of steel work saved both valuable time and money as it eliminated the need to construct temporary supports for the girders. Union problems later interfered with the building's completion when a dispute over the windows arose between the glaziers and the masons. The resulting two week delay in construction dealt the final blow to the financially vulnerable Brylawski family. In seeking the additional capital needed, they would lose control of the theater and office building.

Before its completion in December 1924, the costs had escalated to a reported \$2,500,000 and the name of the building had been changed to the Earle Theatre and Office Building. Originally, the theater was to be named the "Cosmopolitan" as the flagship theater for the Cosmos Theater Company, then comprised of the Brylawski family, Thomas Armat, and Alexander Wolf. Due to the immense increase in the construction costs caused by problems with the foundation work, the Stanley Corporation of America, supplied the extra capital needed, becoming a partner in the project. The Stanley Corporation subsequently took control of the project when construction was further delayed by a strike. The change in name to the "Earle" was announced in November by Julian Brylawski in the Evening Star with the explanation that "the name was given to the new building because of the likeness to that of the Earle Theatre in Philadelphia" (Evening Star, 24 November 1924, p.34).² Other sources claim that the change was in deference to Governor George E. Earle of Pennsylvania, an officer and a major shareholder of the Stanley Corporation. It has also been suggested that "Cosmopolitan," the name originally intended, was too long for the marquee as constructed (Robert K. Headley, "The Warner Theater, Washington, D.C.", Marquee, p. 25). Brylawski emphasized in his announcement that "the change in name will not have any thing to do with the control of the theater . . . The theater is still controlled and will be operated by the same theater company" (Evening Star, 24 November 1924, p. 34).

The Brylawskis and executives of the Stanley Corporation promised that the theater would be ready for the Christmas holidays. This caused much speculation among onlookers for the building appeared to be far from complete. Of course, it was not evident to the general public looking on that the theater could be ready prior to the

² The Earle of Philadelphia, designed by noted theater architects Hoffman and Henon, also opened its doors for business in 1924. Like the Earle Building of Washington, the Earle of Philadelphia incorporated theater and office spaces, was finished in terra cotta and was derived from Italian Renaissance precedents.

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completion of the office portion of the building. The Stanley Company managed to surprise the public and keep their promise with the grand opening of the theater on December 27, 1924. The office spaces of the building were completed six weeks later.

The theater and office building as completed in 1924 was claimed to be "Washington's most beautiful commercial building" (Evening Star, 20 November 1924). Cited in the same article as "the most modern structure of the kind Washington has known," the 10-story terra cotta and granite building skillfully combined a distinguished office building with the entertainment attractions of a theater, a restaurant, a ballroom, and a roof garden and outdoor theater. The 220 offices were located in the five floors above the theater with a separate entrance and elevators provided in the corner tower at 13th and E Streets, N.W. The theater, with a capacity of 2,500, consisted of a foyer, lobby, mezzanine promenade, auditorium, stage and back of house facilities. The basement featured a terraced ballroom for 1,000 and a restaurant with seating for 300 persons. Beginning in the summer, dancing and outdoor movies were offered nightly on the roof garden.

6. **Alterations and Additions:** June 1925: The Earle roof theater opens. In 1925 the roof was converted into an elegant Italian-style garden with "benches, palms, awnings and other features designed to give the comfort and relief from the heat of the streets" (Washington Post, 31 May 1925, p. 2). A five-foot safety net bordered the garden to insure safety while patrons enjoyed the spectacular views of the city.

June 1927: Construction of 11th Story. In 1927, the original 200 offices in the building were augmented by the conversion of the roof garden into an additional floor of offices. This addition was designed by John Zink of the Baltimore firm Zink, Atkins and Craycroft (D.C. Permit to Repair #660, 23 July 1927), Owner: Cosmos Theater Company.

December 1927: Alterations to stage. In 1927, the Earle Theatre replaced its vaudeville acts with first-run motion pictures. Minor alterations to accommodate the new programs included the adaption of the theater to the three-light system then best suited for moving pictures, the enlargement of the orchestra pit for the larger \$100,000 Metropolitan Orchestra, and the installation an elevator in the pit (D.C. Permit to Repair #4760, 7 December 1927), Owner: Stanley Company of America.

December 1928: Alterations to lobby and relocation of box office. (D.C. Permit to Repair #119060, 17 December 1928), Owner: Cosmos Theater Company.

January 1932: Build addition to present machine booths (D.C. Permit to Repair #219041, 8 January 1932), Owner: Warner Brothers, Inc.

December 1938: Erect movable platform in orchestra pit (D.C. Permit to Repair #219041, 15 December 1938), Owner: Warner Brothers Management.

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October 1940: Remodel, repair and redecorate interior, replace marquee (D.C. Permit to repair #238153, 31 October 1940), Owner: Stanley Company of America, Inc.

August 1947: Erect five neon signs--all read "Warner" (D.C. Permit to Repair #298313, 21 August 1947), Owner: Warner Brothers.

September 1953: Three-D and Cinerama conversions (D.C. Permit #A-47729, 23 September 1953), Owner: Stanley Company of America. As the popularity of the home television came to threaten the film industry in the 1950s, technological progress in the movie industry became critical and resulted in alterations to existing theater facilities. The 3-D movie and Cinerama techniques were products of this competitive age.

"Bwana Devil," the first three-dimensional film, was presented to Washington audiences on January 29, 1953 at both the Warner (formerly the Earle) and Ambassador theaters. Produced by Natural Vision, "Bwana Devil," was a box office success as the first feature-length film to employ the new process. Upon entering the theater, moviegoers were handed a pair of cardboard glasses. The three-dimensional effect was created by filming with two double-lens cameras from slightly different angles. In displaying the picture, two projectors were used simultaneously. This technique of projection required only minor alterations to the existing projection system of Warner.

Three-dimensional was followed that same year by the arrival in Washington of the latest sensation of the film industry, "This is Cinerama." The revolutionary production arrived to Washington in 1953, a year-and-a-half after its New York debut. Its seemingly slow promotion can be explained by the fact that theaters were not readily convertible to the display of Cinerama as well as a complete lack of competition. "This is Cinerama" was the only production to date and the filming techniques, invented by Fred Waller, belonged to the Cinerama Production Corporation. This new technique involved filming through three different lenses of the same camera and then projecting the images from three different projectors onto a wide curved screen. This new process required an astonishing 8,000 foot reel of film to run at 146 frames per second, compared to the old rate of 90 frames per second. The three projectors had to be delicately synchronized from three different booths at the rear of the orchestra floor. The shape and dimension of the screen was dictated by the full peripheral vision of the human eye. The resulting effect was an illusion of depth to the screen and a sensation by the viewer of actually being included in the action on the screen. The use of stereophonic sound contributed to this feeling of immersement in the movie. The typical motion picture house required numerous alterations to accommodate the three projectors and wide curved screen of Cinerama.

In preparation for the local debut of Cinerama, the Warner Theatre closed for repairs on October 1, 1953. The \$150,000 renovation took six weeks to complete and included extensive alterations, particularly in the stage area. The installation of the large 24' x

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68' curved screen and the projection system required the removal of the side loge boxes, the removal of the organ console, and a reduction in the seating capacity from 2,100 to 1,300 seats. The large ornate proscenium arch was obscured by the modern screen. (D.C. Permit to Repair #A-47729, 23 September 1953) Newspapers reported that "the transformed Warner Theatre after its \$150,000 face-lifting takes an entirely new place in the community's entertainment life" (Evening Star, 1 November 1953, p. E-1). The theater re-opened on November 5th with the Washington debut of "This is Cinerama."

1962: Install sound barrier wall between lobby and auditorium (D.C. Permit #B93040, 17 October 1962).

1973: Interior alterations, including the removal of chandeliers in auditorium.

1977: \$100,000 renovation, including stage over orchestra pit (Cellar Door Productions).

1984: Remodel office lobby, new exterior steps and handicap ramp (D.C. Permit to Repair #B-3900836, 2 March 1984 and #B-301588, 30 May 1984).

B. Historical Context

1. **General History:** The development of the motion picture industry in the District of Columbia is typical to that of the rest of the country. Characteristic of any such development, it followed technological progress, reflected cultural trends, and responded to the expectations of the public. Interest in the movie as a form of entertainment first began with Edison's invention of the vitascope in 1895. Thomas Armat, a local Washingtonian, made a critical contribution to the development of the film industry with his invention of the "star guide." This device helped reduce the jumpiness of the images on the screen, a problem with Edison's projector and an impediment to the creation of full-length motion pictures. With this and other advances in technology, the film industry became a large and profitable business nationally as well as in this city.

The first theaters for the exhibition of moving pictures were converted stores with seating for several hundred people. These modest storefront theaters became known as "nickelodeons," a name derived from combining the Greek word for theater, "odcon", with the standard price of admission. This new form of entertainment soon caught on and by 1908 there were between 8,000 and 10,000 nickelodeons operating across the country. The first of these theaters to appear in Washington was the Star, opening in 1906. Located at 10th and D Streets, N.W., the Star was owned and operated by Thomas Armat.

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Aaron Brylawski and A.C. Mayer, both local jewelry merchants, entered the Washington motion picture industry in 1909 with the opening of the Palace Theater, a small nickelodeon theater at 307 Ninth Street, N.W. The motion picture business proved promising and the local exhibitors expanded their holdings with the purchase of the Bijou on D Street, N.W. and the Happyland on Seventh Street, N.W. Soon afterwards, A.C. Mayer sold his interests in the business to the Brylawskis. Aaron Brylawski and his son A. Julian continued to develop their theater empire with the purchase of the Pickwick and the Colonial theaters. In the Pickwick Theater, the Brylawskis installed a noise machine, introducing to Washington the idea of sound accompanying the motion picture. The Brylawskis continued to be involved in the development of the industry when in 1909 they became associated with Thomas Armat. The Brylawskis helped Armat convert the Cosmos and the Crescent Theaters, his two movie houses at 9th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, into one large theater, a new Cosmos. With seating for 900 people and provisions for both moving pictures and vaudeville, the Cosmos Theater joined the trend towards the larger entertainment houses that were becoming popular. In that same year, the Brylawskis, Armat, and Alexander Wolf incorporated to form the Cosmos Theater Company. The Cosmos Theater became the flagship for this small chain of movie houses. Although these theaters were not as large or elaborate as the movie palaces that were to follow, they were an initial force in the development of the movie picture industry in the District of Columbia.

After 1910, with the improvements in film production and presentation, and the increasing popularity of the movies, the nickelodeon began to be replaced by full-scale theaters specifically designed for the showing of movies. The first of these theaters was the Regent in New York, designed in 1913 by Thomas Lamb. The movie business in Washington expanded from the eleven theaters existing in 1909 to 69 by 1914. Most of these new theaters were located around 9th and D Streets, N. W., in the area of the Star Theater. After 1914, the movie industry in Washington also expanded with the construction of several large-capacity movie houses. By 1918, three new theaters -- the Rialto (713-717 9th Street, N.W. with 2100 seats), the Palace (1306 F Street, N.W. with 2423 seats), and the Metropolitan (932-934 F Street, N.W. with 1484 seats) -- had been built in Washington with a capacity of more than 1,000 people. These larger theaters were located downtown, gradually expanding the theater district from 9th and D Streets, N.W. to the west along F Street, N.W.

The Cosmos Theater Company continued to participate actively in the local movie theater industry and prospered in its enterprises. In 1921, the company announced plans for a new flagship theater. The New Cosmos Theater (The Earle Theatre), to be located downtown at 13th and E Streets, was to be "the largest and finest in the city" (Evening Star, 28 April 1921, p. 19).

The Earle Theatre opened on December 27, 1924 as a "Christmas present" to the people of Washington (Evening Star, 28 December 1924, p. 16). A formal opening ceremony was held at two o'clock in the afternoon on December 27th with District

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officials, local theater managers, and reporters all present to welcome the new theater and congratulate the Brylawski family. District Commissioner Cuno H. Rudolph cited the Earle Theatre and Office Building "as an important step in the beautification of the National Capital," adding that it "would stand as a monument to the vision of Aaron and Julian Brylawski, who conceived it" (Evening Star, 28 December 1924, p.16). The public opening of the theater later that evening was greatly anticipated and enjoyed by sell-out crowds. The program began at six o'clock with a full bill of vaudeville acts and photoplays. Featured acts included Harry Green in "The Cherry Tree," The Kanazawa Trio - a balancing and comedy duo, "Singing" Eddie Nelson, Senor V. Westony on the piano accompanying Olive Cornell, Meyer Davis and the "Le Paradis Band," as well as the vaudeville acts of Senna and Weber and Arthur West and Co. Two short photoplays from the Stanley Company, "Monsieur, Don't Cry" and "Scenic Splendors," completed the evening's entertainment.

Early reports had suggested that "only an inspection of the completed institution will reveal the scope of the enterprise" and the theater was now open for inspection by all (Evening Star, 20 November 1924). With a continuous-run policy and the promise that "popular prices will always prevail," many came to admire the new theater (Washington Post, 25 December 1924, p. 12). Impressive features included the 2,500 seats, each with unobstructed views and excellent acoustics. The rich interior of Chinese lacquer set against a green gold background was cited as "something new in interior furnishing" (Washington Post, 26 December 1924, p.10). The Washington Post reported that "the unanimous opinion was that the Earle is just about the last word in theater construction, a thing of beauty, a valuable addition to the architectural wealth of the nation's Capital... the theater is a masterpiece" (Washington Post, 28 December 1924, p.2).

2. **History of the Building's Use:** In 1923, the Earle Theatre and Office Building, "located in what is credited with being the heart of Washington's downtown shopping district and within easy access of government buildings," was promoted as being "attractive both as a theater and office building" (Evening Star, 10 January 1923, p.2). The theater/office building complex included 220 offices, a full-scale movie palace, a ballroom, a restaurant, and a roof garden and outdoor movie screen. This mixture of uses resulted in a building that would endure against numerous conflicting economic forces, continuing to be a prominent figure in the entertainment and commercial affairs of the city.

The main attraction of the building was its entertainment offerings. With its theater, ballroom, restaurant, and roof garden, the Earle was able to provide a full complement of activities - from dinner before the show to dancing afterwards - either indoors or out. The theater was described as a "house you'll find it a pleasure to enter and a regret to leave" (Washington Times, 28 December 1924, p.14).

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a. Theater

Premiere Movie/Vaudeville

The Earle Theatre opened in 1924 as a premiere movie/vaudeville house featuring stage shows from the Keith circuit and Stanley photoplays. After a week-long run of the expanded inaugural program, the Earle shortened the billing to five acts to allow for a feature film presentation (Washington Times, 28 December 1924, p.14). Admission prices ranged from 30 cents to one dollar, depending on the seat and the time of the show. With a continuous run policy from one to eleven o'clock p.m. and popular admission prices, the Earle was an immediate success.

In 1927, it was announced that the Earle Theatre was to become a "first-run theater." As a result of the 1925 merger between the Stanley Company and the Crandall theater interests, the first-run pictures of the Crandall-owned Metropolitan Theater were to be moved to the Earle. Newspaper reports explained that the "present vaudeville policy" of the Earle would be replaced by first-run pictures "plus presentations and headline artists." Previously, the Earle had emphasized the vaudeville acts with photoplays as a secondary feature. Minor alterations to accommodate the new programs included the adaption of the theater to the three-light system then best suited for moving pictures, the enlargement of the orchestra pit for the larger \$100,000 Metropolitan Orchestra, and the installation of an elevator in the pit. The lobby was also remodeled and the box office relocated (D.C. Permit to Repair #119060, 17 December 1927, D.C. Permit to Repair #4760, 7 December 1928). New admission prices for the Earle were advertised at 25 cents before noon; 25 to 35 cents from noon until 6 p.m.; and 35 to 50 cents for the evening shows. No decision was announced at the time about the future programming of the Metropolitan, although it was predicted that it would not convert to vaudeville, but continue as a lower-priced picture house (Evening Star, 29 November 1927, p.2). The policy change at the Earle indicates a change in emphasis that was universal in the theater industry. The shift in focus from the traditional vaudeville acts with short-run photoplays to full-feature motion pictures and smaller stage shows follows the progress of the motion picture industry as film techniques improved to allow more sophisticated full-length feature films.

Perhaps the greatest innovation in the film industry was the invention of the "talking picture." The first movie where the characters on the screen actually spoke was the "Jazz Singer" in 1927 starring Al Jolson. His short statement "Wait a minute, you ain't heard nothing yet!" made movie history. The first 100% talking picture was "Lights of New York," released in 1928 and presented at the Earle on September 8, 1928. This introduction of sound in movies greatly affected the presentation strategies of picture houses. With a greater faith in the attraction of the movie itself, theater owners began to focus entirely on the

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movie, often enlarging the house orchestra to complement the newer sophisticated film productions. After the 1930s, only a few dozen picture houses continued to include vaudeville and stage shows in their productions (Testimony of David Gomery, Historic Preservation Review Board Hearing, II-61).

Although a 1928 buy-out attempt by the local Keith Albee-Orpheum movie interests caused rumors that the Earle Theatre would discontinue movies to show high-class vaudeville exclusively, motion pictures continued to be the principal attraction at the Earle (Evening Star, 29 July 1928, p.4-2). In fact, the year 1929 introduced a policy of pictures-only at the Earle. After only one year, however, popular tastes demanded the return of the stage show. Again in 1936, Warner Brothers, as new owners of the Earle, announced that stage shows would be suspended for one week during the showing of "Anthony Adverse." General Zone Manager John J. Payette explained that as a "result of our preview of 'Anthony Adverse,' which proved to be such an unusual and outstanding feature that we felt a stage show, following two and a quarter hours of superb screen entertainment would be superfluous." The change in policy provoked great public concern with numerous letters and phone calls of inquiry and protest over the disappearance of vaudeville directed to Warner Brothers (Washington Post, 1 September 1936, p.16).

The golden age of the Earle Theatre began in the late 1930s with the arrival of Harry Anger as production manager in 1937. Under Anger, the Earle stage shows became top-ranked, bringing such names as Red Skelton, Jerry Lewis, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and George Burns and Gracie Allen to the theater. The big band sounds of Benny Goodman, Guy Lombardy, and Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey also came to the Earle during this time. With the help of General Manager John Payette, Anger began to plan the stage shows and miniature reviews along themes to complement the featured film. Weekly, he would travel to New York to obtain the highest quality acts, costumes, scenery, and music. Anger was also responsible for bringing the Roxettes from the Roxy Theater in New York to the Earle as a permanent act in 1938 (Testimony of Frank Delaney, HPRB Hearing II-183).

The introduction of the Roxettes, a dance and service troupe, in 1938 assured the continued success of the stage show at the Earle. The 16-member troupe brought the tradition of the lavish stage shows of New York to Washington. Patterned after the popular Rockettes of Radio City Music Hall, the Roxettes were a precision dance troupe with talent in "trick dancing" as well. Their dancing stunts on stilts, ladders, balls, and unicycles were guaranteed crowd-pleasers. As a group, the dancers ranged from 18 to 24 years of age and 5'2" to 5'7" tall. Membership in the popular troupe meant hard work and long hours. The typical day began with rehearsal at nine in the morning followed by four shows daily with additional rehearsals during the film presentations. Backstage, a

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sign over the door read "Through these portals pass the most talented girls in the world" (Ibid. II-184).

The troupe did more than perform on stage as they participated in various community services spreading good will as well as publicity for the Earle throughout the city. They supported the World War II effort by selling war bonds - the troupe would dance for the purchaser of a \$100 bond. The Roxyettes also paid regular visits to Walter Reed General Hospital, Bethesda Naval Hospital, Forest Glen, Bolling Field, the Stage Door Canteen, and St. Elizabeth's, entertaining servicemen and patients. In the Roxyettes, the Warner Brothers and the Earle Theatre gained not only a permanent and popular stage attraction, but a valuable boost to their local public image as well. The year 1945, however, marked the end of the Roxyettes as the stage shows were discontinued entirely for a "movies only" policy at the Earle. Warner Brothers hosted a farewell dinner in their honor at the Balkan Room, the restaurant in the basement of the Earle, after their last show on August 15, 1945 (Washington Post, 14 August 1945, p.13).

"Movies Only" Policy

The era of live stage shows came to an end in August 1945, with the announcement by the Earle management of a "movies-only" policy. The change in policy was necessitated by a backlog of unreleased movies in Hollywood. Without stage shows, the Earle would be able to schedule more showings daily, thus introducing new films more frequently. The Earle predicted that it would be able to clear popular first-run movies in two weeks. Lower admission prices were another promise of the new policy (Washington Times-Herald, 11 July 1945, p.16). Originating in small store-front nickelodeons with the exhibit of primitive moving pictures, the movies soon joined with popular vaudeville acts and inspired the creation of the extravagant combination vaudeville/picture palaces. As the palaces and presentations became more and more excessive, the movies became almost overshadowed and even overlooked. R.W. Sexton in his 1927 book American Theaters of Today explained that: "the 'movies,' at one time, not so long ago, offering an entire program, are being relegated to a position of almost minor importance in a program of what might be described as a new form of theatrical entertainment" (R. W. Sexton, ed., American Theaters of Today, p. 1).

With the maturity of the film industry in the late 1930s and 1940s and the elimination of stage shows, the movies returned as the main attraction of the picture palace in 1945.

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Name Changed To Warner Theatre

Although Warner Brothers purchased the interests of the Stanley-Crandall Company and the Earle Theatre in 1928, it was not until 1947 that the name of the building was changed to Warner. Popular stories tell how Henry Warner on his visit to Washington to inspect the theater inquired who "Earle" was. Upon hearing that the theater was named after Governor Earle of Pennsylvania, treasurer and major stockholder of the Stanley Corporation, Warner replied "I own that theater, put my name up there" (Robert K. Headley, "The Warner Theatre, Washington, D.C.", Marquee, p.25). Official statements explained that "the company decided upon a change, not because it has anything against the name 'Earle,' but merely because it likes Warner better. And thinks it is more fitting for the premier house in the company's local chain" (Evening Star, 6 September 1947, p.B-20). For whatever reason, large signs reading "Warner" replaced the earlier "Earle" and "Earle-Warner" signs in September 1947 (D.C. Permit to Repair #298313, 21 August 1947). A formal announcement of the new name was made with the local debut of Warner Brothers' largest film production of the year, "Life With Father."

Technical Innovations of the 1950s

As the premiere Warner Brothers theater in the Washington area, the Warner Theatre continued to keep the local movie-goers abreast of the latest technological progress of the film industry. This progress became critical in the 1950s as the film industry was threatened by the popularity of home televisions. To increase the attraction of the movies, innovations in presentation were developed during this time. The 3-D movie and Cinerama techniques were products of this competitive age.

The Decline of the Downtown and the Warner Theatre

After the success of Cinerama in the 1950s, the Warner Theatre continued to show first-run movies. Such major motion pictures as "Camelot" (1967) and "Hello Dolly" (1968) made their Washington premiere at the downtown theater. These, however, were the last of their kind to show in downtown Washington. The popular growth of the suburbs in the 1960s with the prevalence of the automobile and the television caused a steady decline in the patronage of downtown theaters. The death of Martin Luther King and the ensuing riots of the late 1960s dealt a final blow to the glamour of the Warner Theatre and the surrounding downtown. The entertainment offerings of the Warner degenerated during this time, featuring primarily second-rate and pornographic movies. Following the sale of the theater by Warner Brothers in 1971, the theater remained dark for several years. Under a new lease agreement with T.P. Production of New York in 1973, the Warner began to be used for rock concerts as well as such notable pornographic films such as "Slaughter" and "Deep Throat."

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In 1977, with the lease of the theater by Cellar Door Productions, the Warner Theatre was restored to its dignity as a place of better entertainment. This era of revival included such memorable performances as the Broadway preview of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf," Neil Simon's "Chapter Two," "Ain't Misbehavin'," the Harlem Dance Theater, as well as a surprise concert by the Rolling Stones in 1978. The theater was closed in September 1989, for historic rehabilitation.

- b. **Roof Garden and Outdoor Movie Screen:** Beginning in 1925, with the opening of the roof garden and outdoor movie screen, the Earle became more than simply an office building and theater. The roof was converted into an elegant Italian-style garden with "benches, palms, awnings and other features designed to give comfort and relief from the heat of the streets" (Washington Post, 31 May 1925, p.2). A five-foot safety net bordered the garden to insure safety while patrons enjoyed the spectacular views of the city. The tower at the southwest corner of the building housed three high-speed elevators, the entrance lobby, and the projection room. The exterior wall served as a rear projection screen. The nightly festivities began at eight o'clock with two showings of a feature film and an hour of dancing afterwards to the music of Floyd Wheeler and the Earle Orchestra. The film offerings changed three times a week and general admission was 35 cents (Washington Post, 31 May 1925, p. 2). Opening night on the roof featured Colleen Moore in "Sally." As many as 1,500 people came to the Earle to escape the heat of the summer nights and enjoy movies, dancing, and the spectacular views from the roof garden. Unfortunately, the difficulty of efficiently transporting 1,500 people up ten stories and the traffic noise of the busy streets below proved too much for the Earle roof garden theater. The escape from summer heat also became unnecessary as air conditioning was introduced to the indoor theaters. After a second season of dancing only, the Earle roof garden suffered the same defeat as many other roof-top operations in the city (Washington Post, 14 June 1925, p. 2). In 1927, the roof was enclosed with the addition of an eleventh story office floor and the theater below was air conditioned for the summer of 1928.
- c. **Ballroom and Restaurant:** Other attractions at the Earle included a ballroom and a restaurant in the basement, "providing an ideal place to drop in before or after the performance" ("Making the Theatre Site Pay", Exhibitors Trade Review, p.262). The Swanee Ballroom is listed in the D.C. City Directories from 1927 through 1938. The 1,000 seat basement ballroom had a terraced dance floor and small raised stage for the band. Meyer Davis and the Swanee Syncopaters provided the music. For many years, the ballroom was the site for the annual dinner dance of the Washington Warner Club. In the late 1930s, the ballroom was converted to the Lurba Family Earle Restaurant, finally becoming the Neptune Room in 1954. The Neptune Room was a popular cocktail lounge and restaurant featuring Ted Steele at the Hammond and Novachord organs. The

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"up-scale" restaurant was under the management of Elmer Day, who also managed the Balkan Room located in the same building at 1233 E Street. The two restaurants shared kitchen space in the building.

- d. **Circulating Library:** In September 1940, Warner Brothers introduced a new service at the Earle with the opening of a "million dollar" circulating library. The library offered theater patrons the opportunity to read the stories of upcoming screen plays. The service was offered at no charge with the lending period lasting five days.
- e. **Office:** Besides its attraction as an entertainment complex, the Earle Building served as a major downtown office space. The office component of the building was introduced to the design of the theater in 1922 as a means to assure a more profitable use of the valuable corner site. This approach proved successful and, in 1927, the original 200 offices were augmented by the conversion of the roof garden into an additional floor of offices.

Office Tenants

Located at a prime downtown location, the office component of the building was immediately successful. A 1923 newspaper article describing the new mixed-use plan for the building reported that "already applications for offices...(were) sufficient to take care of two of the five floors" (Evening Star, 10 January 1923, p.2). The building provided offices over time for the local operations of its owners: the Stanley Company of America, the Stanley-Crandall Company, and Warner Brothers. The theater-office building complex also attracted various film and entertainment enterprises to locate their offices there. These included the U.S. Theatrical Enterprise, the Interstate Amusement Company, Musical Washington, and the Maurice Winthrop Dancing Studio. The proximity of the building to F Street and the U.S. Patent Office induced many patent lawyers to locate in the new office building. National interest associations such as the National Flag Association, the Fleet Reserve Association, Federal Bar Association, and the "We Want Beer" Association, as well as numerous federal offices, established themselves at the prominent site near Pennsylvania Avenue. Federal offices included the Federal Tax Court, the U.S. Board of Tax Appeals, U.S. Board of Mediation, U.S.D.A. Bureau of Home and Agricultural Economics, and the National Recovery Administration and the Code Authority. In 1973, the entire building was leased to the General Services Administration. At present the offices of the building are closed for renovation.

Radio Studio

In addition to the theater with its movie offerings, the Earle Theatre and Office Building was important as the center of a second form of early entertainment - radio broadcasting. Since the introduction of commercial broadcasting in Detroit in 1920, the radio became a highly popular and common form of home entertainment. By 1930, 40% of American families owned a radio.

Washingtonians eagerly joined the ranks of listeners with a radio in 90% of homes in the District of Columbia by 1938. Of the four stations in the Washington area, only two were affiliated with national stations. From 1934 to 1953, the CBS affiliate, WSJV, was stationed in the Earle Building with studios and offices on the 8th floor. During this period of radio broadcasting, the emphasis was on the personality of the program announcer. In this area, WSJV was fortunate to have the personality of Arthur Godfrey with his popular program, the "Sun Dial." For 14 years, Godfrey entertained listeners with his folksy style, a great contrast to the formal tuxedo-clad announcers typical of the times. Godfrey's programs consisted of popular tunes interspersed with his easygoing chit-chat, original melodies, birthday greetings, and personalized advertisements. By 1939, 50% of the local audience were Godfrey fans. Arthur Godfrey went on to become a national radio and television personality. For several years, Godfrey continued his popular morning show from the Earle in Washington while broadcasting from the New York CBS station in the afternoons. Eventually, Godfrey gave up the "Sun Dial" program in Washington as he became more involved in television. Other prominent radio personalities broadcasting from the Earle Building, included Edward R. Murrow, Eric Severeid, Charles Collingwood, Robert Trout, John Daly, George Herman, and Walter Cronkite. The years of experience in the nation's capital prepared many of these early radio broadcasters to become well-known television newscasters.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural Character:** The ten-story theater and office building, originally known as the Earle, is designed in the Renaissance Revival style with rich terra cotta ornamentation. Multi-purpose in program, the building contains both theater and office spaces. The theater is expressed on the exterior of the building by the use of blind arches along the 13th and E Street facades and by a marquee located at the northern end of the 13th Street elevation. The offices are located above the theater in floors six through eleven with a separate entrance in the elaborately ornamented corner tower. An 11th-story office addition was constructed in 1927. This addition is utilitarian in design and setback from the original facades.

The interior of the building is organized into distinct theater and office spaces. The theater's foyer, lobby, mezzanine promenade, auditorium, stage, and back stage areas were designed in the French Renaissance style with Adamesque detailing highlighted in rich, golden hues. These details are representative of the ornate decoration and luxuriant materials theater owners used in order to create the image of Hollywood for the theater patrons. The office spaces of the building are utilitarian in design and clearly removed from the extravagance of the theater.

2. **Condition of Fabric:** The exterior is in generally good condition with no major structural problems visible. Some staining and joint erosion can be seen at the rusticated base of the building and spalling is occurring at the ramp preceding the office entrance. General deterioration is evident on the marquee above the theater entrance including several missing metal panels.

The condition of the interior of the theater and office building varies from space to space. The lobby and foyer preceding the auditorium are both in fair condition. Moisture stains are visible on the ceiling of the foyer while the bronze paint which covers aluminum leaf is chipping in spots. The plaster walls in the foyer and west stairs leading from the lobby to the balcony level are similarly showing signs of deterioration such as cracking.

The mezzanine promenade also shows signs of chipping plaster, loose ceiling tiles and loose side wall light fixtures.

The auditorium and balcony are in generally good condition with no major structural failures apparent. Some broken plaster and poor wall repair exists in the area where the side loges were removed.

The office building is in good condition although none of the fabric is original and the basement restaurant and ballroom are in a totally dilapidated state.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The Earle Theatre and Office Building, located on the northeast corner of 13th and E Streets, N.W., is a modified rectangle in shape; 153 feet along 13th Street and 113 feet on E Street. Slightly projecting piers divide the facades into 18 bays along 13th Street and 13 bays on E Street, providing vertical emphasis to the ten-story building. A chamfered edge at the southwest corner orientates the building to the diagonal of Pennsylvania Avenue, thus visually relating the Warner to such monumental buildings as the Willard Hotel and the District Building. Occupying lot 39 of Square 290, the building covers almost the entire site with the exception of a small alleyway at the northeast corner. The plan takes advantage of the sloping topography to accommodate a mixture of uses. Using the various grade levels of the site, the building plan incorporated a ballroom and restaurant in the basement with entrances at the southwest corner flanking the main office entrance; a theater and auditorium (with stage support spaces) accessed through a higher ground level entrance at the northern end of 13th Street; and office space in floors 6 through 11 with entrance, lobby, and elevator core in the tower at the corner of 13th and E Streets. This resourceful use of the site was cited in The Exhibitor's Trade Review as a successful example of the new trend in theater architecture and urban planning. The plan was also noted for its skillful accommodation of multiple diverse uses.
2. **Foundations:** The Earle Theater and Office Building sits on a foundation of pile clusters with pile caps topping these clusters at the perimeter. The interior load of the theater is supported by spread footings under the orchestra floor. The smaller bays required by the offices in the upper floors are supported by a grid of structural columns. The load of these columns is carried by the large/full-floor height trusses over the theater.
3. **Walls**

Principal Facades: The principal facades of the building along 13th and E Streets consist of a simple base of grey granite stone, a rusticated terra cotta first floor level and richly decorated terra cotta walls in an off-white, matte finish above.

The organization of the facades follows the tripartite composition of the classical column, a practice common to early 20th-century highrise design. The facades are organized into base, shaft, and capital sections. The various entrances to theater, office, and retail spaces are contained in the one-story rusticated base level. A string course separates the base from the floors above. The shaft portion of the building includes floors two through nine, encompassing both theater and office spaces. This section of the facade is carefully designed to balance the vertical piers of the bays with the horizontal division of the eight floors. The piers project slightly to strengthen the overall verticality of the building and complement the rising tower. In contrast, the richly decorated panels below each window serve to reinforce the horizontal lines of

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the floors. The bas-relief decoration of these panels varies to avoid monotony and establish a subtle rhythm. The ornamentation of the third and tenth floor panels are the richest, containing a pair of eagles flanking a vase and encircled with festoons. The panels of floors four, six and eight consist of a large central diamond superimposed on a background of fleur-de-lis and diamonds. Floors five, seven and nine feature a medallion with the profile of a helmeted head against the same diamond-patterned background. The shaft section of the facade is terminated at the base of the tenth floor as the horizontal panels extend across the piers to create an entablature. The tenth floor, which composes the capital, continues the rhythm of the lower floors but introduces more elaborate decoration. The vertical piers become richly carved with stylized Ionic capitals and a lion's head above. Paired shells adorn the lintels above the windows. A simple cornice is crowned by a parapet wall. Decorative finials originally accented the west and south facades above the parapet walls.

This classically-ordered facade design is interrupted by the expression of the interior theater space and the tower element rising at the southwest corner. In addition to the obvious elements that advertise the theater function of the building - marquee, entrance doors, signs, and poster frames - the interior space of the building is articulated on the facade through the use of blind arches. A simple diamond pattern fills the flat wall surface between the piers which continue the height of the building. These four-story blind arches begin at the second floor and incorporate the ornate horizontal panels of the third floor. Careful not to dominate the facade, this blind-arch motif occupies only that portion of the exterior facade that directly relates to the interior theater spaces (14 of the 18 bays along 13th Street; 7 of 13 on E Street).

The chamfered corner tower at the intersection of 13th and E Streets encompasses the two bays of the chamfered corner, and the first four bays of the two facades. Stucco was applied over the rusticated terra cotta at the first floor of the chamfered corner in the 1980s, but the tower above remains relatively intact. Narrow piers extend between the second and third bays of both facades and between the two corner bays. These piers disappear entirely at the tenth floor as the transition to the large arched windows of the tower begins. At the tenth floor, the two bays of windows become one central window flanked by elaborately carved pilasters. The piers on either side of bays one and four become the giant order pilasters of the tower, projecting beyond the tenth floor and interrupting the cornice line at these points. These pilasters have a raised outline design and stylized Ionic capitals. The tower consists of a large, single-arched window at the corner and large Venetian windows on the adjacent facades. The spandrel spaces contain richly carved ornamentation between smaller Ionic pilasters and an entablature with bas-relief ornamentation. The tower was originally accented with the same parapet wall treatment and decorative finials found on the other facades.

Secondary Walls: The exterior walls to the north and east are secondary facades and unornamented. Terra cotta quoins at the corners mark the transition from the elaborately designed facades along 13th and E Streets to the secondary walls above the adjacent buildings. These walls are covered in face brick, with common brick used

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below the rooflines of the adjoining buildings. Face brick is also used in the alley and court elevations. Other than the addition of two staircases at the east end of the light courts (D.C. Permit to Repair #B216208, 23 April 1973), these secondary walls have not been significantly altered. A sign reading "Earle Theatre" is painted on the east wall.

4. **Structural systems, framing:** The original building is a ten-story building framed with steel, concrete, brick and terra cotta-type slab tile. It sits upon a solid granite base and is sheathed in terra cotta. The lateral system is a semi-moment connection. The facades act as shear walls.

The 11th-story addition is similarly of steel and concrete construction with the support beams visible in the open plan of the 11th story.

5. **Balcony and poster frames:** Other exterior features of the theater include a cast iron balcony and metal poster frames along 13th Street. The balcony is located at the second floor level, extending from the sixth through the thirteenth bay along 13th Street. A cantilevered concrete slab forms the base, while cast iron piers support a cast-iron roof covering the balcony. The balcony was designed with an elaborate metal cresting along the roofline and slender, paired pilasters that correspond to the piers of the facade. This decorative metal cresting has since been removed.

Poster frames with metal surrounds can be found to the left of the theater entrance and between two sets of emergency exit doors located along 13th Street.

6. **Chimneys:** N/A

7. **Openings**

- a. **Doorways and Doors:** The Earle Theatre and Office Building has numerous entrances to accommodate its various activities. There are two main entrances: the office entrance at the corner of 13th and E Streets and the theater entrance at the north end of the 13th Street facade. Entrances to the basement ballroom and restaurant area are located on 13th and E Streets, respectively, to either side of the corner office entrance. Secondary entrances include three sets of emergency exits for the theater along 13th Street and two service/backstage entrances located on E Street at the southeast corner and in the alley at the northeast corner.

The office entrance, located in the chamfered corner and tower portion of the building, is a large, arched opening. The voussoirs of the arch are decorated with shells, repeating the motif found in the lintels of the tenth-floor windows. The spandrel is carved with bas-relief designs, including two round portrait plaques in the corners and a panel for inscription. Ionic pilasters with engaged columns flank the opening. The engaged columns are scored to correspond with the

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original rustification of the ground level. Rising three-quarters the height of the pilasters, the columns are topped by stylized light standards. These standards continue above the string course into the second floor. The original doorway consisted of a central revolving door with two single side doors, all within a bronze and marble frame.

The theater entrance is located on 13th Street at the north end of the site. It consists of a signboard, a sheltering marquee with ticket booth and large glass double doors. The doors open from the street directly into the entrance lobby. The entrance doors were originally trimmed in granite.

The theater and office entrances have received many alterations. The inscription over the office entrance was changed in 1947 when the building was renamed the "Warner Building." This inscription was changed again in 1985 to read "Plaza One" (D.C. Permit to Repair #B305949, 30 January 1985). New entrance steps and a handicap ramp were added at this time (D.C. Permit to Repair #B301588, 30 May 1984). The sign over the theater entrance has changed numerous times to reflect changes in the name of the theater or in response to the changing tastes. Originally reading "The Earle," new signs have subsequently read "Warner Bros. Earle" and finally just "Warner." The original theater marquee was replaced in 1940 (D.C. Permit to Repair #238153, 31 October 1940). The existing marquee is marked by a simple metal band, reflecting the Streamlined-Moderne style of the time. The steel-riveted structure of the original marquee exists underneath the metal casing of the present marquee; however, the original cast iron ornamentation has been removed. The ballroom entrance on 13th Street, N.W. was remodelled in 1939 with a new marquee designed by noted theater architect John Ebersson (D.C. Permit to Repair #219774, 27 January 1939). Subsequently, this marquee was removed and the small window grille, which was originally used for ticket sales for ballroom events, was closed and covered over by stucco.

Entrances to the ballroom and restaurant are located below grade at the basement level and to either side of the office entrance. The entrance to the ballroom has received many alterations and is presently a simple, unadorned opening, deeply recessed from the building plane. The entrance to the restaurant on E Street, N.W. has been altered in a similar fashion. A copper marquee was added in 1927 (Permit to Repair #6555, February 21, 1927), but, based on an analysis of historic photographs, it appears that this marquee has been removed. The present entrance is indicated by a steeply-pitched mansard-style copper marquee. The doors to all of the entrances have been replaced with double glass doors with metal casing.

Three sets of fireproof double doors exit from the balcony-level seating of the theater onto the exterior balcony along 13th street. Three sets of emergency

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exits serve the orchestra level of the theater and open directly onto 13th Street. These exit doors are utilitarian in nature and unadorned on the exterior.

b. Windows and shutters:

13th and E Street Elevations: Three-over-three vertical light, double-hung metal sash windows are located above richly decorated panels at each story of the theater/office building. The windows are utilitarian in character. The contrasting decorative panels alternate each level. Paired shells adorn the lintels above the windows of the 10th floor.

Tower: the tower consists of a large, single arched window at the corner and large Venetian windows on the canted side facade.

Secondary Elevations: Windows on the alley and court elevations are of utilitarian design with metal sashes and brick sills.

8. Roof

- a. **Shape, covering:** The original roof, designed to accommodate a 1500-seat outdoor theater and garden, is flat and now covered with a composition material. The 11th-story addition extends along the northern section of the original roof, but leaves the southern part open. This new roof is an open-web steel joist system. The elevator penthouse and other utility structures occupy this area. The 11th-story addition is set back from the building plane and also has a flat roof. The roof material is not visible.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** A simple cornice is crowned by a parapet wall with pressed tin acroteria and pedestal blocks which originally carried decorative metal finials, designed to be 18" high. These finials have since been removed. Pipe railing and a five-foot safety net originally surrounded the roof for the protection of those enjoying the roof garden.
- c. **Tower and penthouse:** The tower is located along the southern edge of the roof. The north and east facades of the tower, before the 1927 addition, were brick with the outline of double arches flanked by terra cotta pilasters. These arches can still be seen on the east elevation. A panel of glass located on the north wall of the tower served as a rear-projection screen. The roof of the tower is flat with a terra cotta cornice above a garland and griffin frieze. Other structures on the roof include the penthouse for the freight elevator and the covering for the stage vent.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor Plans:** The Earle Theatre and Office Building was planned as a mixed-use project providing space for commercial offices as well as the entertainment functions of theater, dancing and dining. As a combined commercial office building and a place of entertainment, the Earle had to respond to the specific programmatic design requirements of the various uses, as well as the stylistic traditions of the distinct building types. The resultant plan was resourceful, taking advantage of the irregular grade of the site to incorporate the various uses at different levels. The various divisions of space, still existing today, include the theater areas, the office area, and the basement ballroom and restaurant.

Theater Spaces

The theater itself is further divided into separate parts including an entrance lobby, foyer, mezzanine promenade, auditorium, stage, stage support places and public service spaces. As indicated by the blind arcades of the exterior facades, these spaces are located on floors one through five of the building.

The entrance lobby, square in plan, provides access from the exterior of the building along 13th Street to the foyer which precedes the auditorium proper. The two side walls of the lobby are divided into three arches, the arched openings to the right providing space for the ticket windows. A ticket booth is located in the first bay, with one window serving the interior lobby and another window offering tickets to those outside. Beyond the lobby is the foyer of the theater--a grand barrel-vaulted space, 70' long and 30' feet high. A monumental staircase at the end of the foyer leads to a mezzanine space and then to the balcony seating. At either end at the mezzanine level are the men's and women's lounges. Openings in the south wall of the foyer lead directly to the auditorium and orchestra seating. The space beneath the stairway, entered through a segmental arch, contains a cloakroom, telephone booths, manager's office, an exit door, and additional access to the auditorium.

The auditorium is a large volumetric space defined by a powerful sense of curved forms adorned with lavish plaster decorations. The line of the deeply cantilevered balcony and the once existing side loge boxes divided the space into two zones which originally provided for 2500 seats, each with an unobstructed view. The seats were originally arranged in four sections with a center aisle and four flanking aisles. The seating was re-arranged in the 1950s to accommodate the cinerama presentations and now consists of three sections and no central aisle. The side loge boxes were also removed at this time (D.C. Permit to Repair #A47729, 23 September 1953).

The stage, measuring approximately 40' wide and 30' deep from curtain line, was reportedly "so arranged that it may be readily transformed to accommodate any event, from pictures to grand opera" ("Making the Theatre Site Pay", Exhibitors Trade Review (June 7, 1923), p.262). Designed for the vaudeville and limited stage shows of the

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1920s, the original plans provided for only a minimal area to serve as stage left. The original stage and orchestra pit have been altered numerous times to accommodate changing uses. In 1927, a platform was built on the stage and the orchestra pit raised (D.C. Permit to Repair #4760, 7 December 1927). This change affected sight lines from some of the seats. Subsequently, the orchestra pit has been altered to include a movable platform so that the floor can be raised and lowered (D.C. Permit to Repair #219041, 15 December 1938).

The stage support spaces are located to the east of the auditorium with access from E Street, N.W. and the rear alley. This area included the watchman's room, phone booth, green room, freight elevator, property room, musician's room, janitor's closet, toilets, and animal room. Additional dressing rooms are located in this same area on the upper floors.

The public service spaces include the cloak room and phone booths under the grand staircase of the foyer, the men's and women's lounges and ushers' room on the mezzanine level, and toilet rooms located at the rear of the balcony. These spaces have been remodelled, although some of the original tile and fixtures exist.

Office Spaces

The office component of the building is located above the theater in floors six through eleven. Although the office spaces were clearly removed from the extravagant design of the theater, early descriptions of the project reported that "the interior of the office part will be of ornate design" (Evening Star, 10 January 1923, p.2).

The entrance lobby for the office building is located in the southwest corner of the building. Upon entering the lobby, a small vestibule containing a stairway is located immediately to the right. Three high-speed elevators are located to the left. The middle elevator serves all eleven floors, including floors two through five which contain only one office on each floor, due to the theater. The other two elevators serve only floors six through eleven, the main office floors. A directory board and mail chute were also located in the lobby. The lobby has been remodelled several times. The original bronze entrance with revolving glass door flanked by two single swing doors has been replaced with a modern glass double door. New elevators were installed in 1965 (D.C. Permit to Repair #B131837, 6 July 1965) and the original lobby ceiling was replaced with an acoustical and glass tile suspended ceiling (D.C. Permit to Repair #B132111, 23 July 1965). The lobby was altered again in 1984 (D.C. Permit to Repair #B3900836, 2 March 1985). Of the original fabric, only the mail chute is intact.

The office spaces of the building occupy the entire plan of floors six through eleven. The second through fifth floors, for the most part occupied by the theater, include a small office suite in the chamfered corner space at the southwest corner. E-shaped in plan with large three-over-three steel sash windows, the offices are provided with natural light and air. The main office floors are utilitarian in design with flexible office

arrangements available within the grid system of the structural columns. An early description of the project predicted that "the (original) five upper floors will be subdivided into thirty-three individual offices and twelve suites of offices" (ibid, p.2). The plans do not indicate specific office arrangements above the sixth floor. Presently all individual office partitions have been removed and the office floors are open in plan.

The service spaces of the office building include the elevator core, toilet rooms, emergency staircases, mechanical rooms, and freight elevator. The main circulation and service core is located in the southeast corner with three elevators, elevator lobby, stairs, and toilet rooms provided on each floor. The mechanical rooms are found on each floor midway along the south wall. The freight elevator, located in the southeast corner, serves all eleven floors and the basement. Two emergency staircases have been added along the east end of the light courts (Permit to Repair #B216208, April 23, 1973).

Basement Ballroom and Restaurant

The ballroom is located in the basement level with access from either the 13th Street entrance or the restaurant space along E Street. Stairs descend to a small circular lobby space where the ticket booth, phones, and men's check room are located. A women's check room is located immediately to the left upon entering the ballroom. The ballroom has a capacity of 1,000 and is rectangular in plan with an elliptical dance floor. The area of the dance floor is defined by the structural columns of the orchestra floor of the theater above. The spaces surrounding the dance floor are terraced, providing space for tables. The north wall accommodates a center platform for a small band with utility rooms (smoking room, musicians' room, electrical and fan rooms) located to either side.

The restaurant, with entrance from E Street, N.W., is located along the south wall. This dining area, which is intact, provided seating for 300 persons. The kitchen, situated along the east wall, services both the ballroom and the restaurant. These spaces have been remodelled numerous times and are presently vacant.

2. **Stairways:**

A total of six major stairways are located in the theater/office building complex. The main staircase of the theater can be found at the east end of the foyer ascending to the mezzanine level, while a smaller, enclosed stair leads directly from the west end of the entrance lobby to the same mezzanine floor. The main stair is L-shaped and made of concrete with marble borders on either side. A simple marble handrail and marble balusters with open panels of crossed bronze rods enclose the stairs. A similar balustrade occupies the edge of the mezzanine level. Another stair, complemented by three elevators, is located in the lobby of the office building. This stair, to the right

of the office entrance door, ascends onto the roof and continues into the tower where the elevator mechanisms are located. Two emergency staircases have been added along the east end of the light courts of the entire structure.

The former restaurant and ballroom space in the basement of the building contains three major stairways. In the southwest corner of the building, a stair leads from the basement up to E Street. A stairway located in the southeast corner of the building leads from the basement level down to the former boiler rooms. A stairway on the east side of the building leads up to the alley.

3. Flooring

Theater Lobby: Linoleum tiles over terrazzo

Theater Foyer: Concrete floor with marble border covered with a solid red wool carpet.

Mezzanine Promenade: Concrete floor covered with red wool carpet

Balcony and Vomitories: Concrete floor covered with a geometric wool carpet of red, white and black with stylized floral medallions

Restaurant: Terrazzo floors

Office: Granite floors in entrance lobby; marble stair risers and treads

4. Wall and Ceiling Finish

Theater Lobby: The lobby is appointed with beige marble paneled walls and a decorative plaster ceiling with a circular panel of low-relief decoration framed by square panels with inset fluorescent light boxes. The two side walls and the doorway leading into the foyer are covered with mirrors overlaid with a metal framing divided into panes. Metal banding surrounds the poster boards.

Theater Foyer: The walls of the foyer are sheathed in a brown-veined grey marble from the Ozark Mountains. Marble pilasters with simple gilded caps rise the full height of the foyer along the north wall with corresponding piers to the south. At the mezzanine level along the south wall, gilded horizontal panels with rich classical ornamentation run between the piers. Between the pilasters to the north, the walls were originally covered with what was referred to in 1924 as tapestry panels in a "Continental" pattern, designed especially for the theater. The fabric was a large scale damask with a 27" repeat, most likely woven in cotton and silk. Today the panels are covered with red cotton velour.

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The barrel-vaulted ceiling is richly decorated. The center of the barrel vault features circular panels inset with alternating diamond and circular medallions of heavy decorative grille-work. The grille-work is designed in patterns of alternating urns and cherubs. A design of two kneeling horses flanking an urn occupies the spaces between these circular panels. A series of rectangular panels runs along the sides of the barrel vault. Octagonal medallions, with classical figures playing a lyre and a trumpet, adorn the center of these panels. A pair of winged griffins flank the medallion and festoonery completes the surrounding spaces. These rectangular panels are framed by heavy molding and surrounded by a border of classical decorative motifs. A gilded frieze containing griffins, urns, and various musical instruments runs below the barrel vault.

At the east and west ends of the foyer, the arched space beneath the barrel vault utilizes the device of a Palladian motif, to introduce a large arched mirror flanked by pilasters and tapestry panels, now covered by red cotton velour panels. The ornamentation of the ceiling continues in the spandrel spaces. A classical female figure pouring water onto a kneeling griffin is featured in this space. The frieze of the side walls continues into the space. Three 1940s, metal light fixtures, replacing the original crystal chandeliers, hang from the ceiling.

Mezzanine Promenade: The lower barrel-vaulted ceiling of the mezzanine is carefully designed so as not to compete with the impact of the foyer vault. Decorative bands of gilded carvings correspond with the rhythm of the piers from the foyer. On this mezzanine level, acoustical tile and modern fixtures have been inserted between the decorative banding of the ceiling. The panels of the south wall are wall-papered with Virginia hunt scenes, a treatment which is not original.

Auditorium: The large volumetric space of the auditorium is defined by a powerful sense of curved forms adorned with lavish plaster decoration. At the lower level, the wall is articulated by a series of paired black marble pilasters with gilded Corinthian capitals. Between the two pilasters the wall originally contained a narrow vertical strip of gilded decoration. Gray granite wainscoting with a black marble baseboard runs between the pairs of pilasters. Above this wainscoting, the wall surface was originally curtained and draped with a gilt plaster valence. This treatment of the lower wall was consistent throughout the auditorium. On the upper regions of the wall, pilasters enframe arched spaces, draped to appear as openings. Pendentives extend from the piers, and visually support the large flattened dome of the ceiling. This ceiling features a circular domed space which originally accommodated a large crystal chandelier. Smaller, circular lights of green and gold stained glass surround the central dome. The ceiling beneath the balcony was treated in a similar manner with a shallow, elliptical domed space. A proscenium arch frames the stage with three bands of ornate plasterwork in a rinceau pattern and sets the tone for the lavish decor of the auditorium. A three-manual Kimball organ was located in an alcove to the right of the proscenium arch.

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Offices: Although the office spaces are clearly removed from the extravagant design of the theater, early descriptions of the project reported that "the interior of the office part will be of ornate design" (Evening Star, 10 January 1923, p.2). At present, the office spaces are vacant and the historic fabric is removed.

Restaurant: The former restaurant space is located on the south side of the building in the basement level. The space is currently utilitarian in character as much of the historic fabric has been removed. The walls and ceilings of the space are treated with a heavy stucco. The restaurant is directly accessed from an entrance on E Street.

5. **Openings**

a. **Doorways and Doors:**

Theater Lobby: A total of five sets of double doors originally opened from the entrance lobby into the grand foyer. Today, four sets of large glass replacement doors pierce this wall. An arched opening to the north of the entrance leads to the enclosed west stair which ascends directly to the balcony level of the auditorium.

Foyer: Besides the four doors leading from the lobby to the foyer, the foyer has a number of other openings. Four large openings between piers in the south wall lead directly into the auditorium and provide for easy circulation of large crowds, while a supplemental opening from this space into the auditorium is located beneath the monumental stairway, through a segmental arch. A rear exit door is located at the east end of the foyer.

Auditorium: A small door at the northwest end of the auditorium leads into the ticket booth at the entrance. Three sets of fire doors pierce the west wall opening onto 13th Street.

Vomitories: A door off the west vomitory leads to the exterior balcony located on 13th Street and a door off the east vomitory opens onto a fire escape.

Office building: The original bronze entrance with revolving glass door flanked by two single swing doors was replaced with a modern metal and glass double door.

Former Restaurant/Ballroom: Entrance to the former restaurant and ballroom are located on E Street and 13th Street. The original doors were replaced with metal and glass doors.

b. **Windows:**

The only windows in the theater spaces are located in the women's and men's lounges. The window in the women's lounge is blocked-up.

Windows in the office building are regularly spaced on the interior as on the exterior. They are slightly recessed, but have no decorative trim or other enframements.

6. **Decorative Features and Trim:**

Foyer: Architraves of the doors piercing the wall between the foyer and lobby are decorated with gilded wood relief. Wood pilasters carry a decorative wood frieze above the doors on this elevation, while no decoration occurs at the lobby elevation. Simple wood trim enframes the panels on the north wall in the foyer which originally contained tapestries. The balustrade at the mezzanine level consists of an open design of five, crossed, wrought-iron rods flanked by smaller panels with a gilded urn. The handrail is wood.

Vomitories: The door architrave leading from the east vomitory to the fire escape is highly decorated in wood. A series of moldings enframe the opening and carry a garland frieze above.

Auditorium: Decorative diffusers are located on underside of balcony and around the edges of the central dome. The design of the diffusers is in keeping with the design of the original dome light fixtures in the auditorium.

7. **Hardware:** The only original hardware consists of the push bars on the metal fire doors opening off the west wall of the auditorium to 13th Street and the door knob of the door leading from the north wall of the auditorium to the ticket booth. Most other doors and their hardware have been replaced.

8. **Mechanical Equipment**

- a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The Earle has a central built-up air handling unit. Cooling is provided by direct expansion refrigeration coils; heating is provided by electrical resistance heat. Both the heat and cooling devices are located in the air handling unit. Supplementary electric cabinet heaters are placed in grills at the floor level at various points in the theater and lobby.

b. **Lighting:**

Foyer: Original stained glass exit lights under main staircase and on west wall.

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Auditorium: Cove lights are located in the dome and are surrounded by yellow stained glass circular lights. Yellow and red stained glass dome lights are recessed on the underside of balcony. Original stained glass exit lights can be found on both the upper and lower levels of the auditorium against the east and west walls.

East and West Vomitories: Etched glass "bowl" ceiling fixture; stained glass exit lights .

- c. **Plumbing:** The Warner plumbing system is connected to the city sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water supplies.
9. **Original Furnishings:** The original seats, made by the American Seating Company and covered in a patterned fabric on the chair backs and leatherette on the seats, were replaced in the 1950s. The Kimball organ was removed to its present location at the University of Maryland. The stage curtain was made of the same damask fabric as the wall panels and the drapery in the alcoves of the auditorium.

D. Site:

1. **General setting and orientation:** Located on the northeast corner of 13th and E Streets, N.W., the Earle Theatre and Office Building occupies a unique position in Washington. With its rectangular form along 13th and E Streets, the building responds to the commercial grid system of the city while recognizing the monumental scale of L'Enfant's plan in its chamfered corner tower facing Pennsylvania Avenue. This siting enabled the Earle to relate to the shopping and early movie houses along the F Street corridor as well as to the more grand and prestigious establishments such as the Willard Hotel and the National Theatre fronting Pennsylvania Avenue. This location remains advantageous today.

The topography of the site at 13th and E Streets played an important role in the design of the building. Its steep slope to the south dictated the placement of the stage at the south end, allowing the rake of the auditorium to follow the natural fall of the land. This topography was in part responsible for the success of the combination theater/office building venture as its slope allowed varying entrance levels for the different activities (most importantly the separate theater and office entrances).

2. **Historic Landscape Design:** N/A
3. **Outbuildings:** N/A

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Architectural drawings:** See Appendix A
- B. **Historic Views:** See Appendices B and C
- C. **Interviews:** See attached list of **Individuals Consulted.**

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#10, 1983; Hegelsen, Terry. Grand Drapes; Tormentors & Teasers
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Wilson, J. Victor. "Strand Theater, New York; Mr. Thomas Lamb,
Architect," in The American Architect, September 23, 1914. pp. 182-186

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(report)

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NEWSPAPER INDEX

Source Code:

P - Washington Post
S - Washington Star
DN - Washington Daily News
T - Washington Times
TH - Washington Times Herald
WAA - Washington Afro-American

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>HEADLINES</u>
4/30/21	S	1	\$1,500,000 Theater Plan Outlined Proposed Vaudeville Theater To Cost \$1,500,000
1/10/23	S	2	Backs \$1,500,000 Building Project
11/20/24			First Program Christmas Day
12/26/24	S	13	\$2,500,000 Earle Opens Tomorrow
12/26/24	P	10	New \$2222,500,000 Theater Will Open Tomorrow
12/28/24	S	16	Earle Theater Formally Opens
12/28/24	P	2	Capital's Newest Playhouse Opens With Pleasing Bill
12/28/24	T	14	New Earle Theater Opens Doors
12/28/24	TH	6	Earle Opens Doors With Splendid Bill
5/31/25	P	2	Earle Roof Opens Soon for Films
6/14/24	P	2	Earle Roof Opens With Fine Films
8/8/26	P	F-1	A Choose(sic) Comedy At The Earle Two Russians Top Bill At Earle
8/26/26	P	2	Theater Managers Make Peace Offer To Movie Workers

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11/29/27	S	2	Earle To Become First Run Theater
7/24/28	S	4	Deal Involves Earle Theater
7/29/28	S	2	Flashes From The Screen 9/1/36
9/1/36	P	16	Earle Theater Policy Change Not Permanent
10/29/36	H		Payette To Supervise 45 Warner Theaters
2/27/38	P		200 Dig Up Copies In Monday's Post Treasure Hunt
4/24/40	DN		Earle Learns Find A Hotel For A Horse Is No Cinch
7/27/40	P		Cooling System Share Honors With Holdover Bill
9/16/40	DN		Circulating Library In Earle & Tivoli To Lend Hit Books
9/23/40	DN		Patrons Deplete Earle's New Library
12/10/41	DN		Three Theaters Tune In FDR Three Do Not
12/15/42	S		WLB Approves \$7.50 A Week Pay Increase For Roxyettes
9/11/43	TH	10	Roxyettes Submitted To Check Up On 5th Birthday
7/11/45	S	A-14	Earle Goes Back To Films, No Stage Show On Aug 16
7/11/45	TH	16	Earle Theater To Give Up Stage Shows On August 16
7/29/45	P	12S	Perhaps, After All, Some Attend The Film Houses To Enjoy Motion Pictures

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8/14/45	P	13	Roxyettes Bow Out In A Blaze Of Glory
11/23/46	DN	17-A	The Movies Were In Short Pants Then
8/22/47	P		Any Day Now Earle Theater Will Get Rebirth As Warner
9/6/47	S	B-20	You Will Go To The Warner Sep 11 After 23 Earle Years
9/11/47	S	A-22	Life With Father (Beginning with this engagement the Earle Theater will be known as the Warner)
2/21/50			Five Downtown Theaters & Tivoli Are Hit By Engineers Strike
1/10/53	S	B-14	First 3-D Film Set For Warner On January 29
10/9/53	P		It's Some Show At The Warner
10/9/53	S	A-26	Even Steady Old Thursday Wobbles Out Of Order
11/1/53	S	E-1	On Cinerama's Eve: A Drastically Remodeled Warner Theater Ready For Spectacular New Tenant
11/6/53			Trade Board Honors Cinerama Co. At Premiere Here
11/6/53	P		Officialdom Sees Cinerama In "The Premiere" At Warner
12/4/53	DN	50	Cinerama Doing So-So; Film Making Money But Warner's Hasn't Had To Hang Out SRO Sign
6/3/54	P	29	Folks Still Hold Onto Those Seats
7/6/55	S	A-30	Booking Dilemma

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7/6/55			President Finds Seat Easily At Movie House
9/29/55	S	C-6	Man & His Planet Still Are Dazzling
9/30/55			Two Premieres: Our Town Looked Like Hollywood
1/16/58	S	A-24	Cinerama's Opens 4 A Dazzling Voyage
10/17/58	S	B-14	"Windjammer Newest Of Mammoth Movies
1/22/60	S	D-9	"Ben-Hur" Gets A March Date At The Warner
2/4/61			President Goes To Movies, Slipping In Unobserved
2/15/62			Nazi Picketeer Arrested At Film
7/6/63	S	A-10	"Cleo" Sets Record Here & Everywhere
6/27/63			Harry Anger (Obituary)
5/24/69	P		Movie Patrons Flee From Odor
6/1/69			Stink Bomb Suspect Arrested in DC Theater
2/2/71	S	B-1	Downtown Fire
8/17/71			Warner Theater To Close After Shows Tonight
8/18/71	P		Warner Theater Being Sold
8/20/71			Group Purchases Warner Building
no date			Relic Of The Past: New Warner Theater Cinerama Screen Masked Down

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4/3/72	S	E-5	The End Of The Line For Ol' Redhead (Arthur Godfrey)
4/21/73	P	E-1	Warner Building Leased to U.S.
9/7/73	P		Warner Back In Show Biz

SOURCES CONSULTED

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS/ INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

American Film Institute Library, Washington, DC
American Institute of Architects Library, Washington, DC
American Society for Theater Research, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Avery Architectural Library, New York University, New York, NY
B'hend and Kaufmann Archives, Washington, DC
Columbia Historical Society, Washington, DC
Detroit Historical Society, Detroit, MI
Detroit Public Library, Detroit, MI
Free Library of Philadelphia, Theater Collection, Philadelphia, PA
League of Historic American Theaters, Washington, DC
Library of Congress, General Prints & Photograph Division, Washington, DC
Martin Luther King Library, General Washingtoniana Collection, Washington, DC
Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York, NY
National Museum of American History, Washington, DC:
 Division of Domestic Life
 Division of Community Life
 Archives
National Museum of the Moving Image, Queens, NY
National Trust for Historic Preservation Library, Washington, DC
Philadelphia Athenaeum, Philadelphia, PA
Philadelphia Historic Preservation Group, Philadelphia, PA
Philadelphia University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Princeton University, Firestone Library, Princeton, NJ:
 Marquand Library
Society of Architectural Historians, Philadelphia, PA
Theater Historical Society, Chicago, IL
Washington Theater Legacy Project, Washington, DC

INDIVIDUALS

Henry Howard Brylawski, son of original Warner Theatre owner, Washington, D.C.
Grant Collins, historian and archivist, Music Hall, Detroit, MI
Conrad Schmitt, present-day decorating company, New Berlin, WI
Kathy Crawford, current manager of Warner Theatre, Washington, D.C.
Irwin Glazer, theater historian, Philadelphia, PA
Sam L'Hommedieu, operator of Warner Theatre, Washington, D.C.
Peter May, former assistant manager, Warner Theatre, Washington, D.C.
Jeffrey Montgomery, project manager, restoration of Orchestra Hall, Detroit, MI
Andrew Craig Morrison, theater historian, Philadelphia, PA
William Morrison, theater historian, Princeton, NJ
Martin MacNamara, Architectural Historian, Foundation for Architecture, Philadelphia, PA
Nancy Schwartz, expert witness 1986 Warner Landmark Hearing, Washington, D.C.
Louis Wiltse, architect, C.H. Crane's successor firm, Detroit, MI
Joe Zanea, owner Majestic Theatre, Detroit, MI

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E. Likely sources not yet investigated: N/A

F. Supplemental material: See Appendices attached to the end of the report.

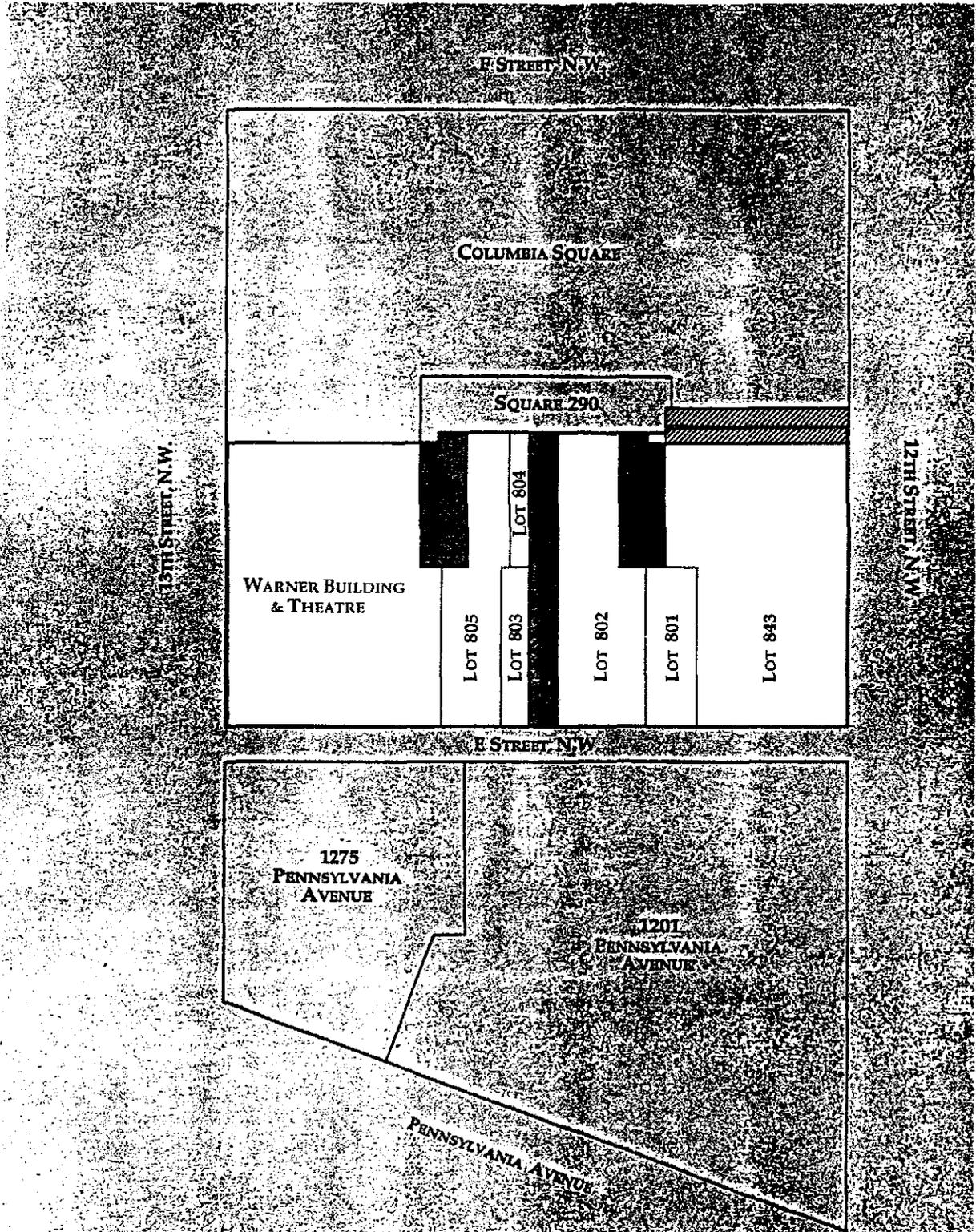
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The District of Columbia received an Urban Development Action Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the rehabilitation of the Warner Theatre and Office Building, and the construction of two-story rooftop addition and an adjacent office addition. Since the building was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the project was subject to a Section 106 Review. A Memorandum of Agreement between the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development and the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office was executed on July 11, 1989. Although the building, including its interior and exterior, is a D.C. Landmark, it is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Prepared by: Alison Stone Blanton
Kimberly Prothro Williams
Elizabeth Updike Jiranek

Title: Architectural Historians
Affiliation: Traceries
Washington, DC
Date: January 1990

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KEY:

-  ALLEY TO BE BUILT ON
-  BASEMENT ACROSS PRIVATE PROPERTY

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Index to Drawings

Appendix B: List of Historic Photographs

Appendix C: Developmental Chronology

APPENDIX A: Index to Drawings

All of the drawings are in the possession of the owner of the Warner Theatre: The Kaempfer Company, 1250 24th Street, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20037. The drawings will be stored in archival boxes.

1923-24

NUMBER

PLUMBING AND ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

A01	Foundation Plan
A01	Diagram of walls of adjoining building
A02	Basement floor plan
P&D A01 (7541)	Orchestra plan
P&D A03	Mezzanine plan
P&D A04	Balcony floor plan
P&D A05	Attic floor plan
P&D A06	6th floor plan
A07	6th floor plan
P&D A07 (7541)	6th-10th floor plans
A08	7th-10th floor plans
P&D A08 (7541)	Roof plan
A09	Roof and tower plans
P&D A09 (7541)	Plumbing riser diagram
*A10	13th Street elevation
*A11	E Street Elevation
*A12	Alley elevations
*A13	North elevation
*A14	Longitudinal section
*A15	Cross section
*A16	Cross section through stage
*A17	Details of elevators
*A18	Lobby/Foyer elevations
A19-A20	(Missing)
A20A	Revision to sheet A20--new dome and ceiling light panel
A21	(Missing)
A22	(Missing)
A23	(Missing)
A23A	Stairs and office lobby
A24A	Window head, jamb and sill details
A25	Miscellaneous details (typical doors, elevator doors, lobby cornice, etc.)
A26	Toilet layouts (2 copies)
A27	Lobby details

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A28 13th Street elevation details
A29 Elevations of dance hall
A30 (Missing)
A31 Stair details
A32 Exit fire tower stair
A32A Fire escapes
A32B Fire escapes
A34 Foyer (monumental) stair details
A35 (Missing)
A36 (Missing)
A37 Theater boxes, plans
A38 (Missing)
A38A Elevator door elevation and section
A39 Corner entrance elevation and plan details
A40 North wall basement and mezzanine plans and sections
A41 Cast iron details (full scale)
A42 Cast iron details (full scale) (2 copies)
A43 (Missing)
A44 Vomitory plans and elevations
A45 (Missing)
A46 Vomitory plan details
A47 Vomitory elevation details
A48 (Missing)
A49 East end of foyer details (2 copies)
A50 Main ceiling, plaster details (full scale) (2 copies)
A51 East end of foyer details
A52 Plaster details
A53 Orchestra elevation and plan details
A53A Orchestra framing plan
A54 (Missing)
A55 Orchestra pit details
A56 Marble work details
A57 Plaster work details
A58 Plaster work details
A59 Wood work details
A60 (Missing)
A61A Corner entrance interior details
A62 (Missing)
A63 (Missing)
A64 Elevator door elevations and details
A65 Dance hall foyer plan
A66 (Missing)
A67 Details of piers at entrance
A68 Details of drinking fountain
A69 Detail of jamb and pilaster in foyer/ dance hall

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A70 Lobby foyer plan and elevations; exterior ticket window elevation
A71 (Missing)
A72 Details of ticket window and announcement frame (both interior and exterior)

1927 ONE STORY ADDITION

1 of 5 Floor plan
2 of 5 Elevation and sections

1923-24

HEATING DIAGRAMS

H1	Basement floor plan
H2	Auditorium floor plan
H3	Mezzanine floor plan
H4	Balcony floor plan
H5	Attic floor plan
H6	6th floor plan
H7	7th-10th floor plans
H8	Roof plan
H9	Details

1923-24

FOUNDATION BORINGS

F1	Boring Samples
F1a	Boring Samples
F1b	Boring Samples

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The following is a complete list of historic drawings of the Warner Theatre and Office Building found in the Building Manager's Office on the premises:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Size</u>
01	ND	Piling and Footing Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
2	ND	Basement Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
3	ND	Orchestra Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
4	ND	Mezzanine Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
5	ND	Balcony Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
6	ND	Attic Plan	1/8"	15"x18"
7	ND	Plan, 6th Floor	1/8"	15"x18"
8	ND	Plan, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th Floors	1/8"	15"x18"
9	ND	Roof and Tower Plans	1/8"	15"x18"
10	ND	13th Street Elevation	1/8"	15"x18"
11	ND	E Street Elevation	1/8"	15"x18"
12	ND	Alley Elevation	1/8"	15"x18"
13	ND	North Elevation	1/8"	15"x18"
14	ND	Longitudinal Section	1/8"	15"x18"
15	ND	Cross Section	1/8"	15"x18"
16	ND	Cross Section Through Stage	1/8"	15"x18"
17	ND	Details of Elevations Floors	1/8"	15"x18"

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18	ND	Lobby, Foyer, Mezzanine, Promenade	1/4"	29"x36"
20A (Revisi on to Sheet 20)	ND	New Dome and Ceiling Light Panel	NS	26"x16"
23A	3/10/24	Plan of Stairs from Street to Rest. and Entrance to Woman's Toilet	NS	17"x21"
24	ND	(Untitled): Lines and Dimensions of Auditorium	NS	25"x34"
24A	1/12/24	Detail of Sills on 13th and E Streets Elevation	NS	30"x29"
25	ND	Door Details	3/4"	33"x38"
26	ND	Toilet Layouts	1/2"	31"x36"
Part of 27	3/19/24	Plan Trough Granite Base of T.C. Pilaster	3/4"	17"x16"
28	ND	Exterior Details	1/2"	29"x36"
29	ND	Elevations: Dance Hall	1/4"	29"x42"
31	ND	Stair Details	1/2" and 1- 1/2"	30"x36"
32	ND	Exit: F.T. Stair	1/2"	30"x36"
34	ND	Detail: Foyer Stairs	1/4"	29"x35"
37	ND	Plan: East Wall Boxes	1/4"	27"x37"

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38A (revision to 38)	4/10/24	(Untitled): Half Elevation and Section of Doors	3/4"	18"x23"
39	6/25/23	Details: Office Building and Dance Hall Entry	1/2"	29"x36"
40	2/24/24	Plan: North Wall, Basement and Mezzanine	1/4"	30"x38"
41	7/2/23	Detail Cast Iron Rail and Radiator Enclosure, Foyer and Mezzanine	FULL	30"x51"
44	1/8/24	Details of Vomitory Mezzanine Promenade	1/4"	16"x20"
46	2/4/24	Vomitory Details	3/4"	18"x40"
47	2/5/24	Vomitory Details	NS	29"x39"
49	2/9/24	Details of East End of Foyer	3/4"	17"x31"
50	2/25/24	Details of Plaster Main Ceiling	Full	32"x47"
51	2/26/24	Details of East End of Foyer	3/4"	18"x40"
52	2/27/24	Plaster Details: Wall Sections and Balcony Soffit	NS	33"x50"
53	2/29/24	Orchestra Details	NS	33"x50"
56	3/5/24	Details of Marble Work	NS	32"x47"
57	3/6/24	Plaster Details	NS	32"x47"

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58	3/5/24	Plaster Details: Detail of Large Pilaster in Auditorium	NS	32"x47"
59	3/7/24	Miscellaneous Wood Details	NS	???
61	4/8/24	(Untitled): Plan, Section, Elevation of Entrance	NS	27"x26"
64	4/8/24	Section Through Door and Head/Detail of jambs	NS	30"x52"
65	5/14/24	Plan Showing Entrance Foyer and Serving Room in Dance Hall	1/4"	15"x30"
66	2/16/24	Detail of Orchestra Pit	3"	29"x27"
67	7/17/24	Half Plan Through Piers Between Doors	NS	36"x65"
68	9/17/24	Details of Fountain	Full	42"x44"
69	9/17/24	Detail, Part Plan, Showing Jamb and Pilaster in Foyer Dance Hall	Full	24"x22"
70	9/22/24	Elevation and Section Showing Grille and Ticket Window	NS	33"x76"
70A	10/2/24	(Untitled): Lobby: Elevations and Plan	NS	30"x42"

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72	10/6/24	Details of Exterior Ticket Window and Announcement Frame	Full	49"x42"
(NN)	ND	Details: Cast Iron Doors to Lobby	Full	39"x45"
(NN)	ND	Alcove for Organ Console and Announcement Frame	1/4"	1-1/2"x7"
(NN)	1/24/23	Diagram of Walls of Adjoining Buildings	1/8"	21"x33"
(NN)	1/25/24	(Untitled): Plan, Elevation of Fire Escapes	NS	18"x16"
(NN)	1/25/24	(Untitled): Plan, Elevation of Fire Escapes	NS	18"x16"

APPENDIX B: List of Historic Photographs

LC = Library of Congress

Exterior Views

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
1921	13th Street Elevation	<u>Evening Star</u> , 30 April 1921
c.1925	General Exterior View	LC-F82-622 National Photo Co. Collection, Lot 12359 6B-6-D.
c.1927-38	Corner at 13th and E Streets Earle Building Entrance	District of Columbia Preservation League Files
1929	Aerial Night View of Theater from National Press Club	LC Geographical Files, Washington Views
c.1929-31	13th Street Elevation	District of Columbia Preservation League Files
1934	Marquee and Balcony	<u>Marquee</u> , 1980. vol. 12.
1935-67	Corner at 13th and E Streets	LC-A7-5821 Joseph Allen Collection
1936	Marquee	Washington Post Company
1940	Marquee	District of Columbia Preservation League Files
1941	Theater Entrance	District of Columbia Preservation League Files
1947	Theater Entrance and Marquee	The Washington Post Company
1952	Theater Entrance	District of Columbia Preservation League Files

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Interior Views

1924	Foyer, Opening Day	Theatre Historical Society <u>The Exhibitor</u> , 3/1/25 <u>Architectural Forum</u> , 6/25
1924	Stage Curtain, Opening Day	The Exhibitor, 3/1/25
1925	Auditorium, North Wall	Theatre Historical Society <u>The Exhibitor</u> , 3/1/25
1925	Auditorium, West Wall	Theatre Historical Society <u>Architectural Forum</u> , 6/25
1935	Foyer-Group Portrait of Ushers	Courtesy of Mr. Howell (3rd usher from right in front row)

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APPENDIX C: Construction Chronology

4/1921 The Cosmos Theatre Co. announces plans for a grand movie palace to be named The Cosmopolitan. The proposed building at 13th and E Streets, N.W. is estimated to cost \$1.5 million.

1/1923 A new scheme for a 10-story combination 2,250 seat theater and office building designed by C. Howard Crane and Kenneth Franzheim is presented.

7/1923 Excavation work begins.

3/1924 Erection of structural steel work up to 7th floor authorized. (D.C. Permit to Repair #7496, March 18, 1924)

6/1924 Permit to Build issued to Cosmos Theatre Co. (D.C. Permit to Build #10592, June 5, 1924)

11/1924 Julian Brylawski announces that the name will be changed to the Earle Theatre.

12/1924 The Earle Theatre opens.

6/1925 The Earle roof theater opens.

9/1926 Sign erected reading "Earle" (5'X30'). (D.C. Permit to Repair #2889, September 22, 1926)

2/1927 Copper marquee erected on E Street coffee shop. (D.C. Permit to Repair #6555, February 21, 1927)

6/1927 Construction of 11th story addition. (D.C. Permit to Repair #660, July 23, 1927)

12/1927 Alterations to stage (cutting apron, raising orchestra pit, platform on stage). (D.C. Permit to Repair #4760, December 7, 1927)

12/1928 Alterations to lobby and relocation of box office. (D.C. Permit to Repair #119060, December 17, 1928)

1/1929 Erect metal sign with interchangeable letters. (D.C. Permit to Repair #12084, January 18, 1929)

1/1931 Erect metal sign: "Warner Bros. Earle". (D.C. Permit to Repair #138969, January 5, 1931)

1/1932 Build addition to present machine booths. (D.C. Permit to Repair #149508, January 8, 1932)

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12/1938 Erect movable platform in orchestra pit (organ?) (D.C. Permit to Repair #219041, December 15, 1938).

10/1940 Remodel, repair and redecorate interior, replace marquee (D.C. Permit to Repair #238153, October 31, 1940).

9/1945 Movies only policy.

11/1946 Repaint 4 signs - all read "Earle" (D.C. Permit to Repair #290541, November 18, 1946).

8/1947 Erect 5 neon signs - all read "Warner" (D.C. Permit to Repair #298313, August 21, 1947).

9/1953 Cinerama conversion: 3 projection booths, film inspection room, remove mezzanine side boxes and decrease seating from 2,200 to 1,400 seats. (D.C. Permit to Repair #A-47729, September 23, 1953).

10/1962 Install sound barrier wall between lobby and auditorium. (D.C. Permit to Repair #B-93040, October 17, 1962).

1968 Last showing of a major first-run movie, "Hello Dolly."

1973 Interior alterations, removal of chandeliers in auditorium. (T.P. Productions, Ted Powell). Build two new stairs. (D.C. Permit to Repair #B-21620 and B-216208, April 23, 1973).

1977 \$100,000 restoration including extending stage over orchestra pit (Cellar Door Productions).

1984 Remodel office lobby, new exterior steps and handicap ramp (D.C. Permit to Repair #B-3900836, March 2, 1984 and #B-301588, May 30, 1984).