

Granada Theater  
6427-6441 North Sheridan Avenue  
City of Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1156

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
109-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIS,  
102-

**GRANADA THEATER**

HABS No. IL-1156

**Location:** 6427-6441 North Sheridan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

**Present Owner:** Senior Life Styles Corporation  
737 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 900  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

**Present Occupant:** Vscant

**Statement of  
Significance:**

The Granada Theater is the last surviving example of a movie palace designed by the architectural firm of Levy & Klein with Edward E. Eichenbaum as principal designer. The building is a superb example of the excessively ornamented architecture used for theaters during the early days of moving pictures. Both its exterior, in terra cotta, and its interior, largely in plaster and marble, were then and still are unsurpassed in their outright architectural exuberance. Furthermore, the Granada was the largest theater built for its original owners, the Marks Brothers, and remains one of the largest surviving buildings of its type in the United States.

When completed in 1926, the building had a number of notable points of importance, including one of the most elaborate heating and air conditioning systems of the period. It also had the first freespan balcony truss in Chicago and the auditorium is still the largest column free theater space in Chicago. The valance above the stage is the only surviving valance in any of Chicago's theaters.

The Granada has deteriorated badly during the past two years. It is in ruins. Its useful life is over.

**Historian:** Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, FAIA  
Hasbrouck Peterson Associates  
711 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection: 1926

Architect: Levy & Klein, Architects  
with  
Edward F. Eichenbaum, Designer

Original Plans: None found. Partial set of prints were found and used to prepare schematic floor plans included hereinafter.

Historical Narrative:

The Granada Theater was constructed in 1926 for the Marks Brothers (Louis and Meyer), who at that time were among the major theater owner/operators in Chicago. The Architects were Levy & Klein with Edward E. Eichenbaum as the principal designer.

The Theater was operated by the Marks Brothers until 1934, when it was purchased by Balaban and Katz, a Chicago based movie theater firm which operated theaters throughout the United States. Their theaters exhibited films produced by Paramount Pictures. That firm later became ABC-Great Lakes Theaters and held title to the Granada until 1973. It was then sold through a blind trust to a group who proposed to use it for rock concerts, but that use was never realized. Several other potential purchasers attempted to revitalize the Granada between 1973 and 1987. None were successful. In 1988, an agreement was reached whereby it was acquired by Senior Life Styles Corporation. They demolished the building in 1989 and plan to construct an apartment/commercial structure on the site in 1990. An earlier plan to incorporate a portion of the theater into the new structure proved to be unfeasible.

The primary reasons for the buildings historic significance are 1) its size, it is one of the three largest movie theaters ever built in Chicago, the others being the Uptown and the Chicago Theaters; 2) its elaborate design, often cited as the most ornate in the City; 3) its place as the "flagship" of the movie empire of the Marks Brothers of Chicago, who were second only to Balaban and Katz in the construction and operation of opulent movie palaces during the decade of the 1920's; and 4) its association with its designer, Edward E. Eichenbaum, who went on to design numerous other similar theaters after completing the Granada, his first theater design.

The Granada had survived in essentially unaltered condition until the past two years (1988-89), when it was left unattended and the weather and vandalism were allowed to proceed unchecked. Today, it is largely in ruins. None of the building's systems are operable and virtually any salvageable part of the interior which could be removed has been stolen.

Water infiltration has been particularly harmful and most surfaces have some degree of damage.

When the Grenada was opened in 1926, its location at a major elevated train stop and at the confluence of several bus lines, plus the presence of a large parking lot, provided all the convenience of location desired. Today, this is not enough. The theater is difficult to reach and parking is non-existent.

#### Biographical Information - The Marks Brothers (Louia and Meyer)

The Marks Brothers, Louis and Meyer, were among the first businessmen to recognize the potential of movies as a major public entertainment vehicle. They started their business circa 1910 by establishing several "nickelodeon" parlors in Chicago showing brief films to individual patrons via coin activated machines. In 1914 they built the Gold Theater (now demolished) on Roosevelt Road in Chicago. It was designed by Architect Alexander Levy with whom they established a long and mutually satisfactory relationship. This large screen theater had the capability of showing feature films to large audiences. They continued to build, own, and operate nickelodeons until the early 1920's when they embarked on a massive expansion by building several movie palaces. The largest was the Granada, but the Marbro, the Regal, the Diversey, and others, all have been razed or grossly remodeled.

The Marks Brothers were in direct competition with Balaban and Katz, the largest operators of movie theaters in Chicago. Balaban and Katz were well financed and had excellent contacts with the movie making industry, including a direct relationship with the group that became Paramount Pictures. Ultimately, Balaban and Katz won the battle with the Marks Brothers and purchased several of their properties in 1934, including the Granada Theater.

The Marks Brothers organization was renamed Marka & Rosenfield Theaters and survives today as M & R Amusement Company.

#### Biographical Information - Levy & Klein, Architects

The firm of Levy and Klein, Architects, was organized in 1924, and remained active until the mid-1930's, when the firm was dissolved. The Granada Theater was their first large movie palace and credit for its design is generally accorded to Edward C. Eichenbaum. Levy and Klein had a diverse and successful practice prior to receiving the commission for the Granada. They completed the Wacker Hotel the same year (1926) as the Granada and had been responsible for a number of other structures, often industrial in nature. (Note: A search of architectural literature failed to identify any specific industrial buildings, however, the firm is named as the architects of the Wacker Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, as noted above.) Alexander Levy had designed Chicago's Gold Theater in 1914 at the time he was practicing alone. Following that work and shortly after Levy

and Klein started practicing architecture together, they designed a number of Chicago "nickelodeon" parlors, the precursor of the modern movie theater. It was this experience which brought them to the attention of the Marks Brothers and to their largest commission to date. Following the Granada, the firm designed in rapid succession, the Marbro, the Diversey, the Century, and the Regal theaters, all of which have either been razed or completely altered from their original configuration. Edward Eichenbaum was the designer of all these structures. Messrs. Levy and Klein were the business and engineering partners of the firm.

Alexander L. Levy was born in Brookfield, Missouri in 1872. He was educated in the public schools of Brookfield, and attended the University of Illinois, where he received an A.B. degree. He then came to Chicago where he taught school for several years prior to beginning the practice of architecture. He received his license in 1897 when the Illinois Architects Act was first enacted. An early commission was the Marks Nathan Orphan Home, an organization in which he maintained a lifelong interest and served as a director for many years. He was active in community affairs which brought him to the attention of his numerous clients. Mr. Levy died circa 1955.

William J. Klein was generally regarded as the engineer of the firm, although he was a licensed architect in Illinois. He received that license in 1917. During 1918-19 he practiced in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1920 he joined the office of Alexander L. Levy in Chicago, and by 1924 he was a partner. The firm prospered for the next ten years, but was dissolved in circa 1935 when the depression had an adverse effect and Mr. Levy elected to retire. Mr. Klein died circa 1970.

Edward E. Eichenbaum was born in Cleveland in 1897. After attending school in Cleveland and graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Eichenbaum entered the office of Albert Kahn in Detroit. Following his apprenticeship with Kahn, he relocated to Chicago where he joined Levy & Klein, Architects, circa 1924. He became a licensed architect in 1928. During his tenure with Levy and Klein, he was responsible for the design of the Marbro (1927), the Diversey (1925), and the Regal (1928), all similar in scale to the Granada. He remained with Levy and Klein until the mid-1930's, when he left to join A. Epstein and Company. Later he organized his own firm and enjoyed an excellent practice. In 1976 Eichenbaum received the Marquee magazine award from the Theater Historical Society, honoring him for his theater designs. He died in 1982.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Information

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: The Granada Theater is of architectural merit based on the sophistication of its planning and

ornamentation. The building is large, seating 3,422, yet located on a relatively small site. This required the auditorium to be sited parallel to the street, with the main lobby, located at the rear of the auditorium, to be entered from the Sheridan Road side, hence an "L" shaped footprint. A strip of storefronts with office space above was built between the street and the auditorium. This compact but efficient structure was then embellished with elaborate ornament inside and out.

2. Condition of Fabric: Good (prior to recent extensive vandalism particularly on the interior). The Granada was scheduled for demolition in 1989.

3. Summary Description: The Granada Theater is nominally a three-story structure, although very high (92'), with a massive ornate terra cotta primary elevation facing west on Sheridan Road. Immediately to the left (north) of the entrance is a strip of five storefronts with two floors of rental offices above, all clad in terra cotta, and separated from the auditorium by a ten foot wide areaway. Originally, the theater was designed with a ninety-three foot wide rectangular marquee covered with literally thousands of electric lights. This was reduced in size, circa 1940, to the present smaller trapezoidal marquee. The original vertical "Granada" sign which extended nearly 130 feet high was also removed at that time. The south, east, and north elevations are essentially unadorned brick with minimal fenestration. The interior of the Granada consists of two major elements, the 3422 seat auditorium, and the public spaces to the rear of the auditorium just behind the great entrance. The auditorium consists of a column free space on the main floor with a wide balcony extending over the rear one third of seats. The balcony extends back to the upper wall of the huge public lobby space at the rear of the auditorium. The public lobby is perpendicular to the auditorium and is entered from the ticket lobby at the west just inside the entrance. From the ticket lobby, patrons can either ascend the stairs to the second floor (mezzanine) level or enter the main floor of the grand lobby. This lobby space is 153 deep and 59 feet wide, with a vaulted ceiling 59 feet high. To the left (north) are a series of doors under the second floor promenade leading to the main floor of the auditorium. At the east end of the grand lobby is a marble staircase leading to the second floor and then to the lower balcony. Stairs at either end of the second floor lead to the upper levels of the balcony of the auditorium.

Both the grand lobby and the auditorium are encrusted with elaborate plaster ornament modeled in a "moorish" style. The ceilings are coffered with both octagonal and hexagonal plastered elements. Columns are generally finished in scagliola while the floors and much of the wainscoting is in marble. Virtually every surface is ornamented. Elaborate crystal chandeliers (now missing) once served to light each of the principal spaces.

Generally, the Granada remained in reasonably good condition until early in 1988, when vandalism and water infiltration began to take its toll.

Today, much of the interior has been damaged and a great deal of original material has been taken from the building. The ravages of time have rendered all of the mechanical and electrical equipment inoperative.

B. Detailed Description of Exterior

1. Foundation. Not visible. Partial plans which have survived indicate that the foundations are reinforced concrete. There is no evidence of foundation failure.

2. Wall Construction. The exterior walls are framed with steel columns and purlins. The wall itself is brick masonry except on the west elevation where it is clad in terra cotta.

3. Structural System. The entire building is framed in steel, fireproofed with concrete. The roof is supported with steel trusses having parallel top and bottom chords. The balcony is also supported by a similar but larger steel truss and the roof over the stage is supported by smaller trusses of the same design.

4. Openings, Doorways, and Windows. The principal entrance is at the southwest corner of the first floor of the building facing Sheridan Road. The street level entrance, now completely boarded up, originally consisted of four groups of paired doors grouped in a three, two, two, three configuration with the ticket office in the center between the two sets of two paired doors. Above the canopy is a tryptic of large windows consisting of a large center window in thirteen panels, with an oval stained glass section in the upper fan portion of the arched opening. On either side of the large central window is a slightly smaller multi-paned window with a half round head, all with clear glass. Below each of those side windows is a smaller vertical rectilinear window of similar configuration. All of these windows have been seriously vandalized. Many of the panes are now broken and the central window's colored oval section is completely gone. There are other openings in the upper portion of the elevation which penetrate the facade above the roof line, but which are not glazed. Two "niches", apparently for sculpture, are located above the two side windows. All of the windows have electric light sockets surrounding them. These, along with the elaborate canopy lighting, created a spectacular scene after dark during the heyday of the theater. None of them are operative today.

There are no windows or doors in the south elevation of the Granada Theater.

The east elevation has four double doors and one single door at grade. There are nine single leaf doors serving three fire escapes. There are fourteen double hung windows, all concentrated at the south end of the structure.

The only windows at the rear of the auditorium are two small double hung windows at the second floor and lower balcony levels serving dressing rooms.

The light well or passage between the auditorium and the rear of the stores facing Sheridan Road has a number of openings on the theater side. The auditorium wall has four double doors at grade and six exit doors at upper levels leading to the fire escapes. There are seven double hung windows on this wall, concentrated at the north end. The rear elevation of the store fronts has three double doors at grade and five more doors serving the fire escapes. There are 22 double hung windows serving the second and third floors and 9 double hung windows (barred) in the rear of the stores. The second and third floor windows are all wood sash with three vertical panes in each sash.

The block of storefronts with two rentable floors above extends to the north from the primary entrance area of the theater. There are six bays including five store fronts and one passage to the rear of the site through the structure at the north end. Each street level store front has a large glass display window and a single leaf door. The doors are located on the left, right, left, and so on, of each shop. The windows in the upper two floors are classic "Chicago" windows with wide fixed center panes, double hung sash at each side and transoms across the top. The upper windows in the most northerly bays vary in that they are in groups of four double hung sash with transoms above on each floor.

5. Roof - Shape and Covering: The roof over the three-story store portion is a flat tar and gravel roof in poor condition. The main theater has an essentially flat roof over the auditorium with sloped sections around the entire perimeter. This slope varies from 15° to 25° and extends from 25' to 50' from the top of the exterior walls to the edge of the flat upper roof. The roof is clad with an asphaltic coating over a membrane. There is evidence of leakage throughout the building, but not of a particularly severe nature. (It has, however, damaged much of the interior plaster.) There is a large ventilation structure on the roof along with a water tower and various other small mechanical elements located there.

C. Detailed Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: The entrance lobby is located just south of the central ticket booth on the Sheridan Road side of the building. There is an exit lobby north of the ticket booth. From the entrance lobby, patrons moved through one of five pairs of doors into a marble floored, elaborately decorated ticket lobby surrounded by sixteen columns and having a low ceiling. The ticket lobby leads to the Grande Lobby at the south end of the auditorium. This area is 153 feet deep and 59 feet wide. The vaulted and coffered ceiling is 60 feet high at the highest point. At the left or north side of the Grande Lobby is a low ceilinged foyer leading to the auditorium through seven sets of double doors equally spaced across the

rear of the auditorium. At the east end of the Grande Lobby is a spectacular marble staircase leading to the second floor. Behind that staircase is a ladies' rest room and a stair leading to the basement. There is also a stair to the second floor and basement in the exit lobby.

The basement is essentially three separate spaces. First, there is a basement under the block of stores facing Sheridan Road, with each store having its own access stair. Second, the space under the Grande Lobby is fully excavated with the west half being devoted to mechanical equipment while the east half provides a large smoking room, as well as men's and women's rest rooms plus small ancillary rooms. The third basement area is under the stage where a storeroom, musicians' room, some electrical and mechanical rooms and the base of the orchestra pit are located. There are several large plenums or ducts under the auditorium but no habitable rooms.

The first floor auditorium space occupies about 50% of the total first floor plan. It is approximately 165 feet wide and 115 feet deep on its major axes. The space is column free except for a ring of columns around the sides and rear which define circulation space. There are five seating aisles in addition to the side and rear aisles. The stage is 32 feet deep and 98 feet wide. The mezzanine, lower balcony, upper balcony, and balcony, are constructed in a continuous "sweep" from front to rear over the main auditorium. These four spaces are defined primarily by the access levels from the rear off the various floors surrounding the upper Grande Lobby.

The mezzanine or second floor level is reached by way of the marble staircase noted earlier. There are restrooms at the east end, a promenade on the north leading to the lowest seats in the balcony through halls on the east and west. At the west end of this floor is a lounging room with a faux fireplace on the south and a stair down to the exit lobby and up to small upper level offices on the north. There are stairs at the east end of the mezzanine leading up to the lower balcony which does not have any other direct access or sight lines to the Grande Lobby. The stairs lead directly to a lower balcony lobby with access doors to the auditorium. Stairs at the east and west of this space lead to the upper balcony level where access up or down at the highest level of the theater is provided. At this level, patrons could view the Grande Lobby from above since the access hallway is parallel to that space with an open loggia. There are also some offices and ushers' rooms with locker space at the west end at this level.

2. Stairways: The grand staircase at the east end of the Grande Lobby is of white marble at both the first and second floor levels. It originally had huge white marble balusters and newel posts making up its balustrade. These have been removed by vandals. There are two marble stairs to the basement and to the upper levels from the mezzanine, all executed in marble but in a more restrained fashion. All stairs were originally carpeted except at the edges. Elaborate cast iron handrails

and newel posts were originally in place on the secondary stairs, but have been removed.

3. Flooring: The box office has a wood floor and the entrance lobby has a marble floor as does the oval ticket lobby. The Grand Lobby floors are pink Tennessee marble, highly buffed, with marble baseboards.

The other public area floors are primarily marble with carpeting in the heavy traffic areas. The floors of the auditorium on both the main level and balconies are cast in place concrete with carpeting. Offices and ancillary spaces have wood floors. The stage is floored in wood while the basement rooms below the stage are concrete. The floors in the storefronts are all wood.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes: The interior of the Granada Theater was originally finished in an extraordinarily elaborate manner. It has been vandalized to a point where today it is essentially in ruins. Nevertheless, the original design and form is still evident. Below is a description of the building with only minimal reference to current conditions.

The primary entrance to the Grande Lobby is through the Sheridson Road entry, located just to the left or south of the ticket booth. Four doors flank each side of the ticket booth, where wide piers clad with terra cotta are adorned with terra cotta poster cases with twisted Moorish columns at the sides capped with Moorish style pinnacles. The original doors (now replaced) were made of wood with glass (French oak) and had a coat of arms inset similar to the large one in the main window on the west elevation. Cast iron brackets originally supported the large twenty foot deep marquee. They were removed when the marquee was remodeled.

One enters the Granada through a ticket vestibule which has a marble floor and baseboard. An interior ticket booth is located to the south side of the vestibule. The northern entrance/exit lobby has stairs leading to and from the second floor lounge.

The oval ticket lobby off of the southern entrance area has a marble base and floor surrounded by sixteen scagliola columns fourteen feet high crowned with plaster Corinthian capitals. There is a tension ring around the room with continuous plaster ornamented panels on the frieze hung from it. The suspended plaster ceiling in the ticket lobby is slightly concave which adds elegance to the room. From the ticket lobby one enters the Grande Lobby.

The Grande Lobby is 153 feet deep 59 feet wide and rises 60 feet to its vaulted ceiling. The ceiling vault rises 40 feet from its springline. It is made of three dimensional plaster in a series of five bays between a semicircular apse at the far (east) end and a square paneled ceiling above the lounging room at the west. This room is on the second floor over the ticket room. It has a faux fireplace which is in the plateresque style.

The plaster ceilings are moulded into staggered octagonal and hexagonal coffers connected with square inset coffers with rosettes. Most of the ornament is gilded leaf which was partially restored in 1976 but is now damaged.

The piers in the Grande Lobby first floor are clad in white marble with black veins and surrounded by trim in black marble with white highlights, as side panels and front panels. The marble has recently been stripped from these piers. Cast bronze sconces, now missing, were originally mounted on these piers. Rising from these piers are six pairs of columns clad in gilded plaster which start at the mezzanine level. The column shafts have ornamented drums with leaves at the base and top with egg and dart moldings, pine cones, flowers, cameos with female figurines, and scrolls. The shaft has gilded twisted ribbons with flat raised panels rising to the capitals, which are in the Corinthian style with boy cameos attached to each face.

The capitals support a highly decorative entablature, frieze, cast iron cresting, and cove lighting to accent the ceiling. This entablature is hung from the floor behind which is a vaulted promenade level for the upper balcony of the auditorium. It is the fourth level and architecturally is a triforium to the lobby. A series of bay balconies are between the second level and the triforium. All of the upper levels, including the mezzanine, have marble balustrades supporting marble handrails.

The walls on the south elevation of the lobby are clad with large arched mirrors between the pairs of columns. The end panels are clad with textured stucco. Large curtains which are original, trimmed with multi-colored cords, hang between the column bays with golden detailing on its crimson velvet ground. The cords which hang from its edges are made of silk and the entire piece dates from the 1920's. This has all been removed by vandals during the past year. The panels on the north wall have eight foot high mirrored windows with turned mullions and panels over them, crowned by shields flanked by a pair of guarding dragons.

Originally, four crystal chandeliers hung from the high lobby vaults. All are now gone.

The secondary staircase leading to other levels from the second floor mezzanine have very elaborate detailing all done in cast iron with posts that have large carved seafish draped around them.

The main staircase in the Grande Lobby is a scaled down version of the one used at the Chicago Theater. Its first flight starts at the end of the lobby with a fifteen foot wide step that curves outward into the room and then tapers up to a width of eleven and one-half feet at the mezzanine floor. It is separated by a cast iron handrail in the center of the stair (now missing). Behind this stair are steps going down to the lower level. The main stair to the mezzanine separates at a landing, and becomes two

separate stairs which lead to the mezzanine floor. The platforms are all of marble with marble baseboards. From the second floor a similar set of stairs leads to the next level. Less elaborate stairs lead to the upper level. All the decorative elements on the upper levels are similar to those in the main lobby but are less elaborate.

The auditorium can be reached from the ground floor, second floor mezzanine level, or either balcony of the Grande Lobby. It is decorated in a manner entirely compatible with the outer Grande Lobby and exterior. The auditorium is a large pear-shaped room with a balcony extending over the rear and a huge stage in the front or north. The proscenium above the stage is highly ornamented with large rosettes gilded and placed on a ground which curves upward toward the domed ceiling. The stage is flanked by two arched niches which house statues and huge four foot tall plaster urns inside their own box seat projecting out from the sides of the stage. Very large ornate columns stand at each side of these boxes. Behind the niches are the organ pipes covered over with ornate wooden grills. Two sea dragons flank a crest at the back wall of the niches, also carved in wood. Semicircular curved front panels are attached to the front of the balcony overhang. They are ornamented with inset panels of Mycenaean floral scrolls. Classical Greek, Roman, and Louis XIV panels are used as engaged columns, as well as Tuscan twisted columns, next to shell roofed niches within the balcony walls all adorn the walls. The ceiling is a large dome more than eighty feet across with smaller inset domes all encrusted with ornamentation around the edges. Gold leaf covers most of the detailing on the ceiling. Three large arched vaults are on each side of the balcony filled with glass and back lit by blue lighting to represent the night sky.

The large dome on the ceiling is in the form of a rosette with its center being a small dome. Three colors of lights were used in the auditorium along with cove lighting which is used all around the inside of the auditorium dome and the proscenium.

The ceiling under the balcony has a large kidney shaped concave cove which follows the curve of the seating below. It has cove lighting and grilles for venting that are made of gilded plaster. Seven small concave domes are in front of this ceiling, also with cove lighting. These colors accent the gilding which adorns most of the wall surfaces and the ceiling. As noted earlier, the dome at the center of the auditorium roof is over eighty feet in diameter. Surrounding this dome, which is richly trimmed in gilded lace ornament, are 16 smaller domes which are framed with ornate gold trim details. Draperies, also original, are at the upper balconies sides, adorning large arched vaults, 3 on each side of the auditorium.

5. Doorways, Doors, and Windows: Virtually all of the original ornamental doors on the interior have been either removed or damaged beyond repair. The exterior fire doors have survived and are described elsewhere. The very large windows on the primary Sheridan Road elevation are in place, but have been heavily damaged. The doors to the stores have

survived and are in good condition, as are the windows in that portion of the building.

6. Interior Trim: The trim in the Granada was executed in marble, plaster, cast iron, and a minimal amount of wood. These elements have suffered greatly from vandalism and are virtually all missing or badly damaged.

7. Hardware: Virtually all hardware, except that of the most common type, has been removed from the Granada.

8. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment: The Granada was built with what was a "state of the art" heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system. There were, and still are, two #322 coal-fired Kewanee boilers installed in the basement. They were converted to natural gas several years ago. These boilers supplied heated water which in turn heated air which was distributed throughout the building through a system of ducts. There was also an air conditioning system complete with condensers and humidity control and a system for cleaning the intake air by washing and filtering. Fresh air was brought in through a huge vertical duct from the roof located at the southeast corner of the main auditorium. Exhausts were installed over the stage on the roof and at the east wall ten feet above grade. The conditioned air, cooled in summer and heated in winter, was distributed to the main auditorium through huge underfloor ducts and to the rest of the building by conventional ductwork.

The electrical lighting was also "state of the art" and included elaborate exterior lighting surrounding openings as well as thousands of bulbs in the marquee and in the large vertical "Granada" sign on the Sheridan Road side. The interior was also lit with thousands of individual bulbs which could be dimmed at will. Indirect or cove lighting was also used extensively. The public areas were lit with large crystal chandeliers and bronze wall sconces.

The stage equipment included several curtains which could be raised or lowered as needed and the orchestra pit had four electric lifts to elevate various portions of the pit to different levels. There was also a 360° turntable in the orchestra pit to turn the organ towards the audience during intermission.

It is unfortunate that during 1988/1989 the Granada was essentially abandoned and virtually all of the mechanical equipment has deteriorated to a point where it cannot be salvaged. Many elements have been removed from the building by vandals.

#### D. Site and Surroundings

1. Orientation and General Siting: The Granada Theater faces west on Sheridan Road. The site is a prominent one in Chicago. It is a link between Edgewater to the south and Rogers Park to the north. It is here

where Devon, Broadway, and Sheridan intersect, defining a familiar corner in the neighborhood with a monumental and yet humanly scaled structure. It is adjacent to Loyola University campus to the north and northeast, as well as an elevated train stop on the Chicago Transit Authority line which runs directly behind the theater on the east. Commercial stores are adjacent to the theater, 18 in all, 5 of which were built as part of the theater to help finance the project in 1926, when it was opened to the public. This was a common practice at the time to build commercial strips with the theater and this is an excellent example of such a development in Chicago.

Originally there was a large parking lot to the south of the Granada. That lot, however, has completely disappeared due to the realigning of Sheridan Road and the construction of apartments adjacent to the theater. There is no parking other than streetside parking in the community, and neither the theater nor the adjoining commercial properties have operated successfully for the past two decades.

### PART III. SOURCES OF PROJECT INFORMATION

Current plans call for the demolition of the Granada Theater in 1990. This historical documentation was prepared by Haabrouck Peterson Associates, Chicago, Illinois, in September and October of 1989. It is one portion of the historical/architectural recordation of the Granada Theater prepared for the present owner, Senior Life Style Corporation, which also includes photodocumentation by Thomas Yanul at Big Shot Photo Company, Chicago, Illinois, and documentation of other data including copies of original drawings, news reports, and historic photographs. The recordation conforms with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior.

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