



L A N D M A R K S
P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I S S I O N

S T A F F R E P O R T

REFERRAL
FEBRUARY 1, 2024

2274 Shattuck Avenue – United Artists Theater

Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2023-0079) to demolish an existing two- and five-story commercial theater building, originally constructed in 1932 and subsequently altered, and currently listed on the California Register of Historical Resources (APN: 057-2028-0023).

I. Application Basics

A. Zoning District: Commercial Downtown Mixed-Use (C-DMU) Corridor Zoning District

B. Parties Involved:

- Project Applicant Isaiah Stackhouse
Trachtenberg Architects
2421 Fourth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
- Evaluator Left Coast Architectural History
P.O. Box 70415
Richmond, CA 94807
- Property Owner 2274 Shattuck QOZB LLC
c/o JP Walsh
2539 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 101
Berkeley, CA 94704

C. Staff Recommendation: Consider evaluation, receive comments from interested parties, and then conclude this review. No action is required for this referral because a designation hearing for the subject property will occur at this meeting; refer to Agenda Item 8 for Landmark application #LMIN2023-0003.

II. Background

On June 2, 2023, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish a one- and five-story commercial building (theater) located at 2274 Shattuck Avenue [APN 57-2028-3], preserving the eastern façade, and to construct a 17-story, mixed-use building with 227 dwelling units and an 865-square-foot cafe. The application is eligible for streamlined review per Senate Bill 330.

The Use Permit application #ZP2023-0079 was reviewed and deemed complete by the Zoning Officer on January 4, 2024. The project is not yet scheduled for Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) consideration; see link to plans below.

<https://permits.cityofberkeley.info/citizenaccess/Default.aspx>

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) 23.326.070.C, any application for a Use Permit to demolish a non-residential building or structure which is 40 or more years old shall be forwarded to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review prior to consideration of the Use Permit for demolition. Given the lack of a current, City-wide comprehensive historic resource survey, the referral requirement is understood to address the potential for the loss of unidentified significant resources.

When such a demolition request occurs under the provisions of Senate Bill 330¹, the City would be divested of the ability to impose conditions related to historic resource preservation upon Use Permit approval. Nevertheless, the study of potential significance and the LPC referral shall be completed in accordance with the BMC requirement.

In considering the proposed demolition of a structure, the Commission will weigh the potential to meet the significance criteria for COB Landmarks and Historic Districts in the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3), which are relatively specific and appear to align with the California Register. The Commission will also weigh the potential to meet the broader COB Structure of Merit criteria, which can include structures that are neither individually architecturally distinctive nor associated with significant people or events but may qualify as contributors to identified districts, areas, or clusters. The LPC may initiate a designation or take no action based on the significance criteria, but still forward comments to the Zoning Adjustments Board for consideration in its action on the application.

Pending City Landmark/Structure of Merit application – #LMIN2023-0003

On December 6, 2023, the City received a Landmark/Structure of Merit application petition for the subject property pursuant to BMC Chapter 3.24 for *Landmarks Preservation Commission*. The requisite LPC hearing will occur on February 1, 2024; LPC will receive this demolition referral on that same day.

¹ At the time that the Use Permit application was submitted, the subject property was not a locally-designated Landmark site and not subject to BMC Chapter 3.24. If designation status were granted after Use Permit submittal date, then SB 330 would prevent the City from imposing any conditions under BMC 3.24 related to historical resource preservation on the project.

III. Historical Resource Status

In 2004, the subject building was found to be eligible for the National Register through survey evaluation (California Historical Resource Status Code: 3S).

The property was then listed in the California Register of Historical Resources in 2006 and determined eligible for the National Register by a consensus through the Section 106 process.

In 2015, a historical resources survey conducted by the City concluded that the subject building is located in a potential Historic District and would serve as an important Contributor to the district. Though it has not been established through an adjudicative action by the City, the potential District it has been identified through a SHPO-compliant evaluation and survey. For these reasons, the potential District and the subject building are cultural resources pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.(a).

The UA Theater property is surrounded by numerous City Landmark structures, including:

Table 1: List of nearby City landmarks or structures of merit

ADDRESS	LANDMARK NAME	DATE
2090 Kittredge Street	Berkeley Public Library	1930
2113 – 2115 Kittredge Street	California Theater	1914
2117 Kittredge Street	A. H. Broad House & Storefronts	1894
2200 – 2240 Shattuck Avenue	Shattuck Hotel	1909
2271 Shattuck	Tupper & Reed Building	1925
2276 Shattuck Avenue	Morse Block	1906
2277 Shattuck Avenue	Hezlett's Silk Store Building	1925
2285 Shattuck Ave.	Masonic Temple	1905
2300 – 2350 Shattuck Avenue	Corder Building	1921
2323 Shattuck Avenue	Fidelity Savings	1925
2231 Shattuck Avenue	Brooks Apartment Building	1906

These and additional City Landmarks are highlighted in Figure 1 below.

Previous evaluations

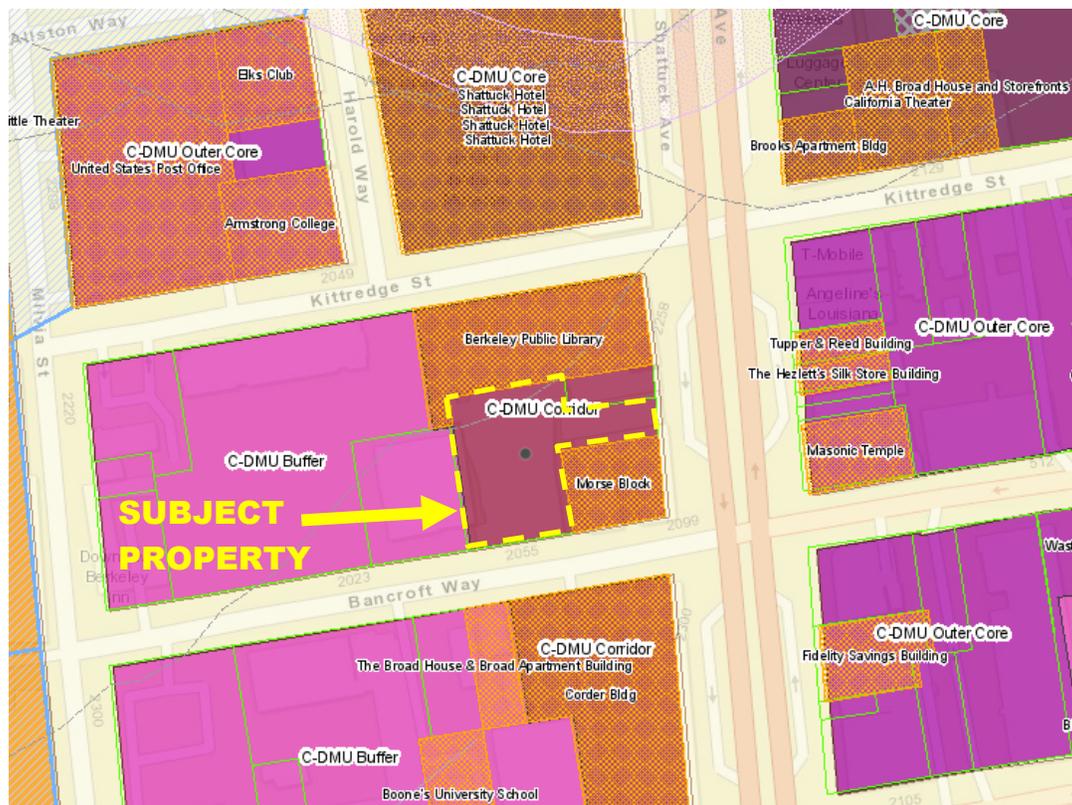
In addition to the historical resource evaluation prepared by Left Coast Architectural History that has been provided for this demolition referral and review, there have been several previous evaluations of the UA Theater property. These studies have included the following:

- 1978 DPR Historic Resources Inventory Form
- 2004 DPR Form 523L Update Sheet, produced for the AC Transit East Bay BRT Project
- 2015 DPR Form 523 A/B/L, produced as part of the Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Survey

All of these studies are compiled in the Attachment 1 of this report.

A recent Landmark application (#LMIN2023-0003) prepared by Anastasia Rose Ellis and Laura Linden of Save the UA Berkeley and was submitted to the City on December 6, 2023 and summarizes much of the information contained in these documents; see Item 8 of this agenda.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map showing nearby historic resources (City of Berkeley GIS, 2023)



	Landmarks / Structure of Merit; LM,		Parcels		Subject Property Boundary
	Features		Demolished		
	Districts		Partially Demolished		

Figure 2: Subject Property, historical image, circa 1939 (Jack Tillmany Collection, via Berkeleyside.org)

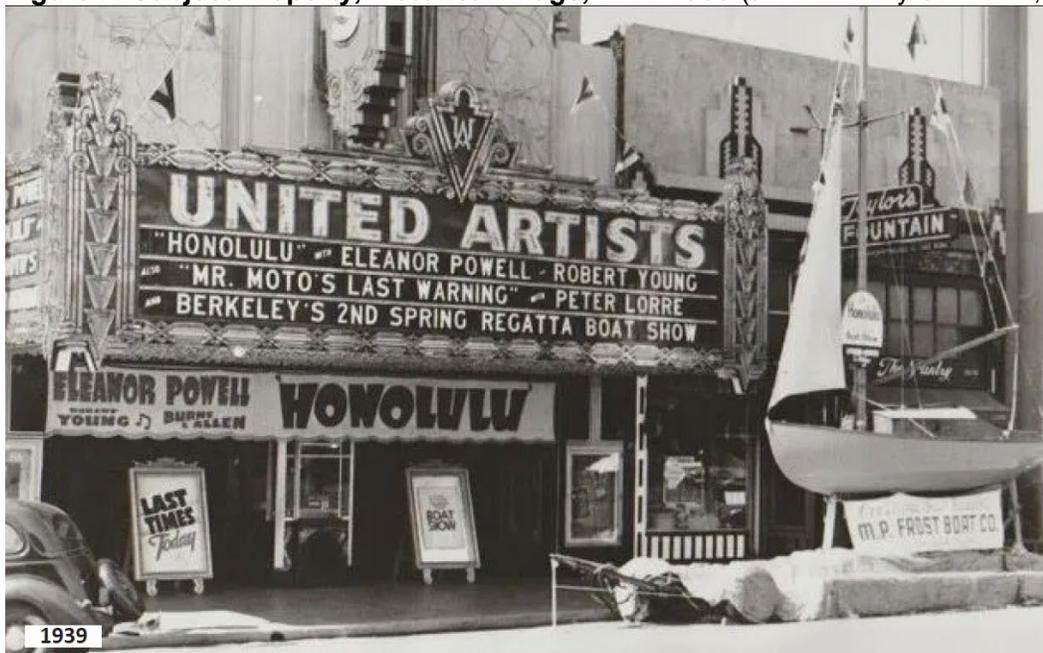


Figure 3: Subject Property, Site Conditions, 2015 (Archives & Architecture)

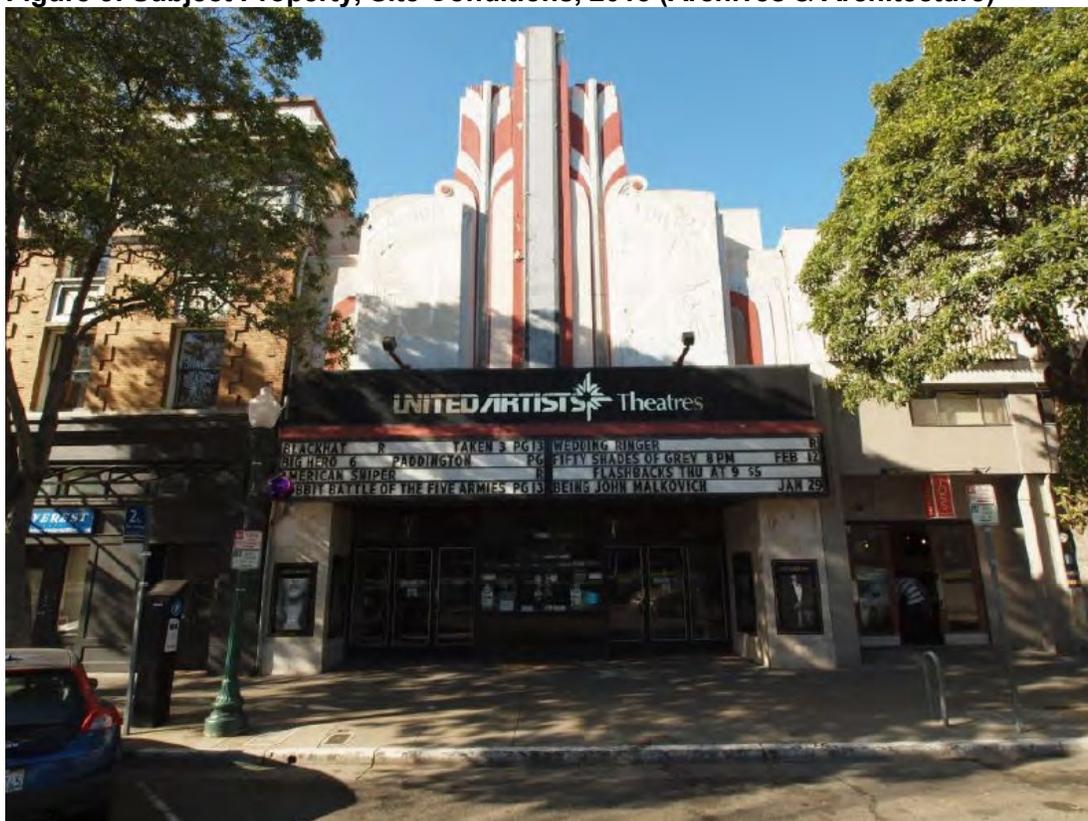


Figure 4: Subject Building – Stagehouse at Bancroft Avenue, viewed facing north, 2015 (Archives & Architecture)



IV. Property Description

A historic resource evaluation (HRE) for the subject property submitted with the associated Use Permit application was completed by Left Coast Architectural History in December 2023, which consists of a memorandum summarizing and responding to the prior evaluations of the property, a current evaluation of the property's eligibility, and the prior DPR Forms included as Appendix 3 to the memorandum; please see Attachment 1 of this report. The following description briefly derives from the information contained in the four afore listed evaluations, visual observation, as well as the City's land use archives and building permit records.

Parcel Description: The subject property is an L-shaped parcel located on the west side of Shattuck Avenue, stretching to the north side of Bancroft Way, located south of Kittredge Street and east of Milvia Street in the southern portion of Downtown Berkeley. The parcel directly adjacent to the project site at the north is a small one-story commercial building, followed by the Berkeley Public Library at the southwest corner of Shattuck Avenue and Kittredge Street. Directly to the west of the project site is a two-story commercial building, followed by a five-story residential complex, and the Downtown Berkeley Inn at the northeast corner of Bancroft Way and Milvia Street.

Building Description: The subject property is developed with a commercial theater building with its frontage on Shattuck Avenue (two-story mass with four-story false

front) and a five-story volume along Bancroft Way. The structure, completed in 1932, was designed by the architectural team of Walker & Eisen, architects, and Balch & Stanbury, architect and engineer, in the Art Deco architectural style. The concrete building has an L-shaped plan following the shape of the parcel with nearly no setbacks, with its primary (east) elevation/main theater entry façade along Shattuck Avenue and its secondary (south) elevation along Bancroft Avenue. The primary elevation features a stepped upper front façade, rising an additional 1-2 stories above the two-story theater volume (for a grander appearance of four stories). The upper façade displays Art Deco detailing, including frescoes and bas relief, with the slogans “Artistry” and “Unity” scrolled above and imagery of leaves and globes, gears and levers, musical instruments, and male and female forms. The central tower and its side panels are accentuated with stylized scrolls, arches, and plume shapes. The building base contains marble-clad piers and an aluminum storefront system under the straight marquee box (non-original). The interiors, although not a subject of this landmark evaluation under the LPO, are also documented in elaborate Art Deco designs.

The secondary elevation is a massive, windowless cast concrete façade housing the stagehouse and auditorium spaces, with vertical piers detailed into the textured concrete face and alternately projecting slightly above the roofline, connecting subtly to the Art Deco design.

Alterations include the removal and replacement of the marquee, the loss of the original and replacement blade signs, and replacement of the storefront system. The historic elements of the building appear in fair condition.

Refer to Attachment 1 for detailed descriptions of the building and its current condition.

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context²: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff and the historic consultant (Left Coast Architectural History) conclude that the period of significance for the building at 2274 Shattuck Avenue can be defined as 1932 through 1973, from the building’s completion through to the time of the first major alterations to interior and exterior.

Owing to the subject building’s location in the Downtown commercial corridor district and use as a motion picture theater, this property is linked to a historic context that is best defined as economic development with the theme of entertainment. This evaluation of the property’s historical significance therefore analyzes the significance criteria within the themes of economic development as a building type linked to entertainment, as well as architectural merit.

² National Register Bulletin #15, Item V: How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context (2002); National Register Bulletin #16A. Section III: How to Complete the National Register Registration – Period of Significance (1997).

Significance Criteria: The subject property is evaluated based on the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC 3.24). The existing building is over 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. Because they are more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23C.08.050 requires that it be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

In determining the potential significance of this property, staff has analyzed the property against the criteria of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO), BMC Chapter 3.24, which closely aligns to criteria of the California Register (CR), referencing the aforementioned evaluation; see Attachment 1.

The evaluation concentrates on possible associations with events (CR-1, BMC Sections 3.24.110.A.2 and B.2), persons (CR-2, BMC Section 3.24.110.A.4), architectural design (CR-3, BMC Sections 3.24.110.A.1.a-c and B.2.a and c), and information/education (CR-4, BMC Section 3.24.110.A.3). Staff's conclusions based on the prior 1978, 2004, and 2015 evaluations, as well as Left Coast Architectural History's 2023 evaluation, are discussed below.

CR and BMC Criteria:

Events – CR Criterion 1/BMC Criterion for *Historical Value*

The Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey (2015) recounts the growth of Shattuck Avenue as the main street of the Downtown Berkeley commercial core. The design and caliber of buildings along this corridor were illustrative of its importance as the commercial core of the city. Theaters were an important property type in the Downtown area for providing entertainment and leisure opportunities to the community. The United Artists Theater, with its decorated, vertical façade, was intended to attract patrons and pedestrian traffic via its street-facing appearance. Staff suggests that this theater is eligible under BMC Criterion 3.24.110.A.4 under historic value, as the recognizable theater continues to embody and express the history of Berkeley's economic development.

The Use Permit applicant's consultant concludes the building is not particularly important or influential because it was the result of a larger, national pattern of development rather than serving as the impetus for the pattern. However, this position does not consider the property's local-level significance, where this building is emblematic of an historical era in Berkeley economic development and is part of the fabric of a potential historic district. Similar to the findings of the 2015 Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context Statement, staff concludes that the building exhibits value as a historical building within the Downtown.

The property, therefore, appears worthy of consideration for City Landmark designation under BMC Section 3.24.110.A.4 for structures that: *embody and express the economic history of Berkeley.*

Persons – CR Criterion 2/BMC Criterion for *Cultural Value*

The research presented in the evaluations of this property do not reveal information indicating that the persons and organizations associated with this property during its historic period exhibit potential significance or made far-reaching or lasting contributions to history at the national, state or local level. The property does not appear worthy of designation consideration for the cultural value criteria of the CR or BMC.

Design – CR Criterion 3/BMC Criteria for *Architectural Merit*

The subject building was originally designed in 1932 by renowned architects and theater designers Walker & Eisen and Balch & Stanbury. The theater's Art Deco architecture represents the popularity of the style during its period of significance in the 1930s. The Art Deco style is expressed on the theater's Shattuck Avenue street frontage, through its stepped upper façade with stylistic frescoes and bas relief. The theater is located within a concentration of other historically significant structures from its period of significance and shares connections to the historic theme of commercial development with an urban core. Through its design, the United Artists Theater is linked to other Downtown period buildings, such as the Art Deco City Landmark Berkeley Public Library (in the same city block). It is one of the few remaining examples representing the theme of entertainment within the Downtown Berkeley context.

Staff suggests that the United Artists Theater is eligible under BMC Criterion 3.24.110.A.1.(c) as an architectural example worth preserving for the exceptional value it adds as part of the neighborhood fabric along Shattuck Avenue in Downtown Berkeley.

The evaluation by Left Coast Architectural History notes the exterior alterations that have occurred and removed some of the original features of the UA Theater building's primary façade along Shattuck Avenue, rendering the lower portion of the façade without distinctive Art Deco-era elements. Further, in the assessment of the structure's historical and design integrity, the evaluation finds the extant conditions lacking and cites these deficiencies as a basis for ineligibility for local register consideration.

Staff disagrees with these conclusions and finds that the building's exterior elevations possess sufficient integrity to identify the property as an early twentieth century movie house, and that the primary façade readily conveys its identity as an Art Deco-era structure above the current marquee. The building may retain a degree of integrity that could be adequate for local register eligibility whether or not it rises to state or national standards. For these reasons, UA Theater would be worthy of City Landmark designation consideration.

Information – CR Criterion 4/BMC Criterion *Educational Force*

The evaluation of this property was limited to above ground and did not involve survey or evaluation of the subject property for the purposes of archaeological information. Further, there have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigation for this parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it is not likely to yield archeological information.

National Register – BMC Criterion *National Register*

The subject property is not listed on the National Register and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

LPO Structure of Merit criteria. As discussed above, staff believes the subject property could meet the criteria for designation as a City Landmark. However, if the Commission concludes that it does not (in whole or in part), then the Commission may consider the extent to which it meets the criteria for designation as a Structure of Merit, in accordance with BMC Section 3.24.110.B.2.c. The subject building is a good extant example of the Art Deco style of architectural design that continues to convey its use as a theater house despite some exterior alterations. It serves as a contributing structure to the Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor, a potential historic district in the Downtown neighborhood, amidst numerous City Landmarks. It is located on the same block and Shattuck Avenue streetscape as the City Landmark and exemplar of Art Deco architecture in the city, the Berkeley Public Library. As such, the United Artists Theater building would meet both of the following Structure of Merit criteria:

Section 3.24.110.B.2.c – *“The structure is a good example of architectural design.”*

Section 3.24.110.B.2.d – *“The structure has historical significance to the City and/or the structure’s neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.”*

For all of these reasons, staff concludes that the building is eligible for local designation, in addition to its current California Register listing and National Register eligibility.

VI. SB330 Limitations for vested entitlement applications

As described earlier, the provisions of SB330 include several measures intended to streamline the local-level review process for housing development project proposals. The provisions do not prevent the City from designating sites for City Landmark or Structure of Merit status. However, when a development proposal for a property that is not listed on the local register has vested, then the City would be precluded from placing Conditions on the project related to preserving extant features. This means that the pending Use Permit application for demolition of the UA Theater may proceed notwithstanding the result of the Commission’s demolition referral or pending LM/SOM application. Because this demolition referral is mandated under the Zoning ordinance (BMC Section 23.306.070), staff recommends that the Commission proceed with and complete its review in accordance with the requirement, consider the extent to which the property exhibits historical value, and receive comments from interested parties and the public.

V. Recommendation

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code Section 23.326.070.C, the Commission is advised to consider the extent to which the building meets (or does not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit, conduct and then conclude the requisite public meeting for this referral from ZAB.

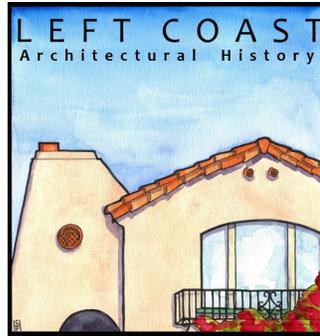
No action is required for this referral because a designation hearing for the subject property is agendaized to be heard at this meeting; refer to Agenda Item 8 for Landmark application #LMIN2023-0003.

Attachment:

1. Memorandum, prepared by Left Coast Architectural History, dated December 7, 2023, including California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Forms (1978, 2004, and 2015) as Appendix 3.

Prepared by: Reina Kapadia, AICP, Senior Planner; rkapadia@berkeleyca.gov, (510) 981-7485

Reviewed by: Fatema Crane, Principal Planner/LPC Secretary; fcrane@berkeleyca.gov, (510) 981-7410



P.O. Box 70415, Richmond, CA. 94807 • (415) 745-1906 • caitlin@leftcoastarchitecturalhistory.com

Memorandum

Date:	7. December 2023
Author:	Caitlin Hibma, Principal/Architectural Historian Left Coast Architectural History
Re:	2274 Shattuck Avenue Historic Resource Evaluation Memorandum

Introduction

This memorandum was prepared by Caitlin Hibma of Left Coast Architectural History, who is qualified under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Architectural History. It pertains to the property at 2274 Shattuck Avenue (APN: 57-2028-3) in Berkeley, California, which historically operated as a single-screen, 1,800-seat theater under the United Artists marquee. More recently it has operated as Regal Cinemas, which vacated the property in early 2023.

Executive Summary

The property was listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) in 2006, following a windshield-survey of 51 potential historic resources along a proposed 18-mile AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project (BRT Project). Both the BRT Project documentation and a 2015 Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context & Survey relied heavily on 1978 Historic Resources Inventory documentation, and did not account for extensive alterations since the completion of the 1978 documentation. None of the prior evaluations comprehensively analyzed the present condition of the building under current preservation standards and are therefore inadequate for the purposes of CEQA and local land use planning decision-making. *Specifically, none addressed the building's loss of integrity by serial alteration, damage, and destruction of its most important interior and exterior features, which would make it ineligible for listing on the California register and National Register of Historic Places (National Register) today.*

The 1978 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) documentation determined that the property was eligible for the National Register, but of course, did not address the numerous and extensive alterations made to the building since completion of the documentation 45 years ago. The documentation did note that substantial alterations had been made to the original single-screen theater even before 1978, but it did not analyze significance or the seven aspects of integrity according to current National or California Register significance criteria, as would be standard practice today. Its evaluation of National Register eligibility therefore must be reconsidered to account for both physical changes to the building and present-day evaluation criteria.

In 2004-2005, documentation for the AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project (BRT Project) was undertaken. It produced a California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) 523 Update Form, which noted that the

property was “field checked” and did “not appear to have undergone any alteration that would warrant a change in its National Register status code;” ie: the status established by the 1978 HRI documentation. The findings of the 1978 HRI documentation were referenced in the 2004 Update Form and the 1978 HRI form was appended. According to the related Finding of Effect report (2005) for the BRT Project, the evaluation process recognized the inadequacy of the evaluative procedures applied in 1978. It specified the significance criteria under which it determined the property to be eligible – National Register criteria A and C – resting entirely on the information and conclusions of the 1978 HRI documentation (aside from a visual field check of the property) and performing no independent analysis or documentation of obvious exterior alterations that had been made during the intervening 27 years. Nevertheless, as a result of the BRT Project study, the California OHP formally designated the property to the California Register by a consensus through the Section 106 process, based on the National Register finding that was made by the 1978 evaluation and reiterated by the 2004-2005 documentation.

The 2015 documentation, a component of the Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey, performed only a summary, non-itemized evaluation according to National or California Register significance criteria and the seven aspects of integrity. It relied heavily on the conclusions of earlier analyses and focused primarily on the property's significance to a potential Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District. It did not perform any detailed or itemized analysis in regard to the theater's significance or integrity in relation to a potential district, however; and never formally determined eligibility for, nor designated, a historic district in the area.

All prior documentation and evaluation of the property relies on and is iterative of the original 1978 Historic Resources Inventory documentation, which was not performed to current standards. Therefore, this Historic Resource Evaluation seeks to provide analysis to compensate for the above deficiencies, especially by providing images of current versus historical condition, summarizing alterations over time, establishing a period of significance for the property, and assessing architectural merit according to up-to-date standards.

This study finds that:

- Past documentation and evaluation of the property relies heavily on the initial 1978 documentation, which does not reflect subsequent physical alterations and was not conducted according to current standards and is, therefore, not adequate for the purposes of CEQA and current local land use planning decision-making.
- The theater's period of significance is 1932 to 1973; the date of its construction to the time when the original single-screen theater was subdivided, and underwent numerous other alterations, for conversion into a multi-plex, which substantially changed both its visual appearance and functionality.
- A detailed accounting and synthesis of building permit records and other documentation of alterations indicates that the theater has undergone substantial alterations to both its exterior and interior, with a majority of significant features altered or absent since the 1970s; some since the 1940s.
- On the theater's primary exterior frontage on Shattuck, only the upper facade remains intact. Significant features that have been altered, removed, obscured, or demolished, in whole or in part, include the lower primary facade; marquee and blade signs; open atrium and associated finishes; box office; murals and painted décor throughout; concession stand; single main auditorium space; stage, proscenium, and auditorium décor; organ and grilles; theater seats; lounges and backstage space.
- The property does not meet the eligibility criteria of the National Register for association with important events, people, architectural merit, architect, or information potential. It does not meet the eligibility criteria of the California Register for association with important events, people, architect, or information

potential.

- The property may have met the California Register eligibility criteria for demonstration of high architectural merit; however, the building has lost integrity to the extent that it cannot effectively convey that merit. That integrity was lost as long ago as 1973.
- Local criteria for eligibility as a Landmark or Structure of Merit are broad and subjective, giving the City a measure of discretion to designate a property. However, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 precludes the application of new zoning regulations – including local historic designations – once a preliminary application for a housing development is submitted.
- Assessed in its current state, the property has lost a majority of the seven aspects of integrity considered for National and California register eligibility, resulting in the inability of the property to convey its historic significance.
- Although the property is listed on the California Register, it would not qualify for listing had its loss of integrity been properly evaluated at the time of its designation (2006).

Methodology

Caitlin Hibma conducted site visits to 2274 Shattuck Avenue on 18 September and 15 November 2023 to observe and photograph the property's interior and exterior. (See *Appendix 1: Current & Historical Images*)

To minimize further confusion and rectify data concerning the historic significance, integrity, and status of 2274 Shattuck Avenue, this memorandum summarizes and synthesizes the findings of earlier studies, and provides new and additional information pertinent to current evaluation and treatment of the property; ultimately providing a conclusion as to the continued or changed historic status of the property.

Background information referenced herein was compiled from various records requests, file reviews, and other research:

- Berkeley Department of Planning & Development (Planning Department) – permit records request (June 7, 2023);
- Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) – review of records (June 15, 2023) and other records requests (Nov. 2, 2023);
- Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) – request for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project (June 15, 2023);
- California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) – request to Jay Correia (Registration Unit, Supervisor) to confirm historic status of property;
- JRP Historical Consulting, LLC – request for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project records (Oct. 24, 2023);
- Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District – public records request for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project records (Oct. 31, 2023);
- California Office of Planning & Research (OPR) – request for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project records (Oct. 31, 2023);
- California State Library - request for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project records (Oct. 31, 2023);
- Newspapers.com, the California Digital Newspaper Collection, the Online Archive of California, Berkeley Historical Society photo collection, and other online resources.

Specific sources are cited within the text and historical images that were collected are included and cited in *Appendix 1: Current & Historical Images*.

Evaluative Procedures

National Register of Historic Places & California Register of Historical Resources

The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must be found significant under one or more criteria (A-D) relating to historically significant events, people, architects or architectural merit, or information potential. It must also retain the integrity necessary to convey that significance.

The California Register is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. As with the National Register, a property must be found significant under one or more criteria (1-4) relating to events, people, architects or architectural merit, or information potential to be eligible for listing in the California Register and retain integrity.¹

Properties that are determined to be eligible for the National Register are automatically eligible for the California Register,² and eligibility for the California Register qualifies a property as a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Because the property at 2274 Shattuck Avenue was previously evaluated for both the National and California registers, the analysis presented in this memorandum provides an evaluation of the historic significance according to both registers' significance criteria, which essentially align.

Criterion A/1 (Event): Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history/California's history and cultural heritage.

Criterion B/2 (Persons): Resources associated with the lives of persons significant/important in our past.

Criterion C/3 (Architecture): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master/important creative individual, or that possess high artistic values/or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D/4 (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in the National or California Register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity according to seven aspects. Most, if not all, aspects of integrity must be met in order for the property to retain integrity, although "it is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant

¹ California Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1(c) (1)(2)(3)(4) and California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5(a) (3)(A)(B)(C)(D).

² California Public Resource Code, Section 5024.1 (d)(1).

scientific or historical information or specific data.”³

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

Feeling is the property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Berkeley Landmarks & Structures of Merit

Berkeley Landmarks and Structures of Merit are designated by the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Landmarks if they meet one or more of five criteria similar to those used for the California Register, but which elaborate on particular areas of significance. Resources may be designated as Structures of Merit if they meet general and/or specific criteria. Integrity is not considered in the evaluation for Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit eligibility.

However, Sec. 3.24.100.B of the Berkeley Municipal Code does not allow the interiors of private buildings to be designated or regulated as Landmarks or Structures of Merit. The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 further precludes the application of new zoning regulations – including local historic designations—once a preliminary application for a housing development is submitted.

Berkeley Landmarks

1. Architectural Merit:

- a) Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region;
- b) Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or examples of the more notable works of the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder;
- c) Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.

2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the City.

3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force.

³ California Office of Historic Preservation, “Technical Assistance Series #6: California and National Register Comparison (for purposes of determining eligibility for the California Register).”

4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military.

5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.

Berkeley Structures of Merit

General criteria shall be architectural merit and/or cultural, educational, or historic interest or value. If upon assessment of a structure, the commission finds that the structure does not currently meet the criteria as set out for a landmark, but it is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings which includes landmarks, that structure may be designated a structure of merit.

Specific Criteria

a. The age of the structure is contemporary with (1) a designated landmark within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings, or (2) an historic period or event of significance to the City, or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

b. The structure is compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with a designated landmark structure within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

c. The structure is a good example of architectural design.

d. The structure has historical significance to the City and/or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

Historic Status & Previous Evaluations

Via three previous iterative evaluations of the property (summarized below and included in *Appendix 3: Prior Evaluations*), the latter of which rely heavily on the initial evaluation, 2274 Shattuck Avenue has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register and the California Register. No evaluation of the property's eligibility as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit has previously been undertaken.

Based on previous eligibility determinations, the property was subsequently designated to the California Register in 2006. It is, therefore, currently considered to be a historical resource for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The property was also identified as a contributor to the potential Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District in the Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context & Survey (Archives & Architecture, 2015); however, no formal determination was made as to district's eligibility for local, state or national designation.

1978 Historic Resources Inventory Forms for Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey by Betty Marvin

The first documentation and evaluation of the property at 2274 Shattuck Avenue was undertaken in 1978 for the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey by local preservation specialist, Betty Marvin. At the time, the California Office of Historic Preservation's standard property inventory forms were known as Historic Resource Inventory forms, rather than DPR 523 Forms, as they are today. They contained generally similar information, however; and were a vehicle for recording the physical character and history of a property, while providing an evaluation

of its historic status.

The 1978 Historic Resource Inventory forms make cursory mention of the original United Artists ownership of the theater and its management by Fox-West Coast, as well as 45 years of operation as a “small town movie theater.” They describe the building as an “Art Deco movie palace behind a deceptively small and austere facade,” and relate its history and development from the time of its construction in 1932, to the late 1970s, making particular note of the building's evolution from original design intent to actual construction, including

... many delays and changes of plans, to which we partly owe its advanced glass Deco style: early reports planned a “free adaptation of Spanish Renaissance,” in other words the Moorish style of the 1920s... Plans at one time called for the Bancroft Way frontage – sheer concrete wall with just the least ridged pattern – to be decorated, but money was apparently not available.

The Bancroft Way facade was further described as “a massive irregularly shaped concrete block... with service entrances and little else.”

Original, but now altered, features were described, including the “outside atrium with 4-sided dome, tiled walls and pavement,” while note was also made of the substantial alterations that had already occurred in 1978; specifically, that the “Original 25' stage [was] closed off, lounge and smoking room remodeled, [and] 1940s bare-bulb marquee removed, in [the] change from 1 to 4 theaters, 1970-1976.” The narrative concludes that

Though some splendor has been lost in creating the 4 auditoriums, moving the box office inside (after a cashier was shot in a holdup [June 1972]), and removing the bare-bulb marquee and vertical neon sign... this is a gloriously preserved Art Deco theater...hard times for movies in the 1960s and 70s probably helped keep it intact – while the building was out of fashion there was neither money nor interest to remodel it...

The 1978 Historic Resource Inventory forms for 2274 Shattuck Avenue assigned the property a “National Register Status Code” of “3” indicating that it “appeared eligible for the National Register to the person completing or reviewing the form.” No action was taken at the time to designate the property, however. In 2003, the status code system was revised and National Register Status Codes became known as California Register Status Codes. The former status code of “3” translates to the current status codes of “3S,” “3D,” or “3B,” which all indicate eligibility for the National Register (either individually and/or as a contributor to a historic district).

2005 Update for AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project by JRP Historical Consulting

In 2004-2005, a second evaluation of the property was undertaken for the purposes of the AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project (BRT Project). The study produced a cursory DPR 523 Update Form, which noted only that the property was “field checked” and did “not appear to have undergone any alteration that would warrant a change in its National Register status code.”

Fifty-one properties addressed by the BRT Project and it seems unlikely that field verification consisted of more than windshield-level survey or that building interiors or documentation of alterations were addressed. The related Finding of Effect document does note that

Three-quarters of the previous evaluations were completed between 1977 and 1985; however, the vast majority were evaluated in the late 1970s as part of the statewide inventory completed by local governments and private organizations. At that time there was no standardization in the evaluation process and as a result, the historic resources within the architectural APE that were found to be significant often lacked clear and concise explanation of the historical importance... Only a

handful of these previously evaluated properties included references to specific criteria (Criteria A, B, C, and D). Additionally, evaluation of the property's overall historic integrity was not supplied or overlooked. As a result, many of these historic resources appear to have been altered prior to the time they were found to be historically significant. Furthermore, these forms generally lack dates for period of significance or provide periods that do not correspond with the built resources. Many do not define architectural styles or influences, and when significance is based on architectural merit, character-defining features are not provided.⁴

The Finding of Effect document also provides a chart “giving a brief explanation of the significance of each historic property and where clearly specified in previous documentation, the characteristics that contribute to that significance...”⁵ The chart notes that no period of significance was identified by previous documentation and summarizes that

The United Artist Theater building appears to be significant under Criteria A and C. Constructed in 1932, the building served as a locally operated movie theater for over 45 years. The building is also noteworthy for its Art Deco style of architecture, typified by its stepped pyramidal facade, which includes "WPA-style sculpture representing Artistry United.”

No independent evaluation or new determination of the property's historic significance or designation eligibility is provided by the DPR 523 Update form or in the Finding of Effect report. Since the BRT Project did not entail any alterations to the building – merely an alteration of its setting – a detailed re-evaluation was not necessary to conclude the BRT Project’s indirect effects would be less than significant. The BRT project's effort to field check and produce a DPR 523 Update form simply reiterated and confirmed the findings of the 1978 Historic Resource Inventory evaluation without new information or analysis. As a result of the BRT Project study, on 15 March 2006, the California Office of Historic Preservation formally designated the property to the California Register based on the National Register finding that was made by the 1978 HRI documentation and reiterated by the BRT Project documentation. In the Office of Historic Preservation's Built Environment Resources Directory, the property now bears a status code of “2S2” indicating that it is an “Individual property determined eligible for the National Register by a consensus through the Section 106 process. Listed in the California Register.”

2015 DPR Forms for Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey by Archives & Architecture, LLC

The most recent evaluation of the property occurred in 2015 as a component of the Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey authored by Archives & Architecture, LLC. Although the evaluation cites and summarizes both previous evaluations, a full set of DPR 523 forms was completed, thus creating a duplicate record.

The 2015 DPR 523 forms describe the building on a Primary Record form (DPR 523 A) and provide a list of character defining features that include the “stepped-parapet front wall; concrete wall structure and board-formed concrete rear wing with its vertical speed stripes; recessed entrance form; exterior wall frescos and bas relief; tower plume, arch, and scroll patterns; [and] original tile floor.” The last item may refer to original tile floor borders; however, no full tile floors – originally only found in the atrium – remain intact. Also of note, the characterization of the speed-striped concrete wall structure on the rear wing (i.e. the Bancroft Way facade) as character defining conflicts with the 1978 evaluation's characterization of that facade as a value-engineered feature lacking in architectural merit. The narrative goes on to state that there have been two iterations of the vertical blade sign, both associated with the original marque, all of which have been removed, and that the primary facade has been altered, namely through the enclosure of the atrium, removal of the marquee and blade signage,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

and changes to materials and features around the entrance at ground level. The only alteration noted within the summarizing section, however, is the removal of the marquee and blade sign.

The 2015 DPR 523 forms summarize and expand upon the history and context of the building on a Building, Structure, Object Record form (DPR 523 B), but devote attention primarily to summarizing the property's current historical status as established by the 1978 documentation and reiterative 2004 documentation, discussing integrity, and providing a cursory evaluation. The evaluation does not address California/National Register criteria-based analysis, but focuses generally on the property's contribution to a potential Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District and relation to the surrounding Downtown streetscape.

The 2015 DPR 523 Forms reiterate the “2S2” status code that was a result of the 2004 documentation, indicating that the property's continued eligibility for the National Register and standing designation to the California Register. It indicates that it would be a “contributor to the establishment of a historic district in the greater Shattuck Avenue area” primarily for the detailing and relationship of its commercial façade on Shattuck Avenue to the surrounding streetscape.

Physical Description & Alterations

At the time this memorandum is issued, the theater building has an L-shaped plan and is approximately two to four stories high with flat and bow-truss roof forms. The L-shaped plan consists of a two-story east-west ell that fronts on Shattuck Avenue, and a three to four story north-south ell that fronts on Bancroft Way. A separate, unrelated building is located within the interior angle of the L-shaped plan. View of the roof shows that a demising wall separates the two-story atrium and lobby portions of the east-west ell, which is separated from the north-south ell by a demising wall and change in height from two to three stories. The majority of the north-south ell is three-stories and the generally rectangular footprint of the ell narrows toward the south end, where it rises to four stories at the extreme southern end to accommodate the theater's fly loft.⁶

The primary facade faces Shattuck Avenue (east), without setback from the sidewalk. Its mass is two stories high, with parapet ornamentation that rises to approximately three to four stories. The margins of the first story are clad with non-original, large-dimension, marble tile that incorporates inset non-original poster display cases. The majority of the first story is spanned and enclosed by a non-original extruded aluminum frame storefront assembly that includes glazed entry doors on either side and an integral ticket window at the center. Above the first story is a non-original illuminated sign-board marquee that is flat and projects minimally from the face of the building. The upper primary facade is the only portion of the original facade to remain intact and features flat vertically-oriented panels that step upward toward the center. The panels have corbelled edges and feature low bas reliefs depicting half-arch, fountain, and other geometric motifs, as well as human figures and the words “Artistry” and “Unity.” The upper facade is clad with smooth painted plaster that is in deteriorated condition.

The Bancroft Way facade (south) is physically and visually separate from the Shattuck Way facade, as it faces a different direction and street frontage, making the theater's Shattuck Avenue and Bancroft Way frontages appear unrelated. The Bancroft Way facade consists of a monolithic, flat, four-story plane of unfinished board form concrete. The concrete is adorned only with vertical bands of incised lines, which terminate in subtle chevron forms at the roofline. Between the vertical bands, the roofline is very slightly corbelled. There is a low projecting bay with a service entrance approached by concrete steps on the left side of the facade. On the right side, is another projecting bay with a chain link-gated service entrance. Two metal pedestrian doors are located on the left side of the main portion of the facade, which is otherwise completely unfenestrated.

Major spaces of the interior consist of a now-enclosed atrium, vestibule, and double-height lobby within the

⁶ A fly loft an upward extension of the backstage space that allows scenery and stage elements to be lifted upward, via ropes and pulleys, facilitating scene changes.

east-west ell. The north-south ell contains two stories of auditorium space, as well as former lounge rooms, and backstage/fly loft space. The auditorium space was once a large single-screen theater, but now consists of four small auditoriums (two over two) and a “void space” (unused space at upper front of original auditorium space, forward of mezzanine). The two lounges and backstage space have also been converted into small auditoriums. In most spaces original finishes and decorative elements have been removed or painted over.

(See *Appendix 1: Current & Historical Images* for photographs.)

Alterations

Previous documentation of the theater only loosely noted alterations to the building at the time that each evaluation was made; or, in later cases, only confirmed and reiterated alterations addressed in previous documentation. The most visually apparent alterations were given the most attention, while some alterations appear to have been omitted.

The two charts on the following pages represent a comprehensive a chronological list and a graphic representation of changes that were made to the theater based on evidence from various sources and some subsequent deductions based on visual observation during site visits and related documentation. A spreadsheet of all building permits and other planning records on file with the City of Berkeley Planning Department is appended to this memorandum (*Appendix 2: Permits Chart*).

Date	Alteration	Source
1932	Theater built.	Permit
1940s (1943-1954)	Main lobby concession stand added. (Not included in original plans; presumably not original.)	S. Coleman reminiscence (BAHA)
1940s (1946-1965)	Original “United Artists” blade sign removed and replaced with Streamline Moderne “UA” version, Deco box marquee remained.	Historic photos
1940s	Lobby redecorated, decorative painting using scrolling foliate motifs introduced.	Gary Parks (FB) ⁷
Mid-1960s	Art Deco painted and/or plaster decorative elements on the ceiling in the main lobby removed or painted over; comparison of 1932 images to today show that bands of painted or plasterwork scallop and chevron patterns on lobby ceiling are now gone. Evidence of other painted patterns and motifs exist throughout the building and may have been painted over in 1940s, mid-1960s, or other periods of remodeling noted below.	Carlo Chaney (FB) ⁸
1973	Single large auditorium “twinned;” divided into two smaller auditoriums. Subdivision involved and resulted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspended ceiling installed at mezzanine level; the dividing wall between the two auditoriums - front to back - does not continue above approximately mezzanine level within void space suggesting that ceiling was installed at mezzanine level and that mezzanine was closed off/unused for a time. Void space and remaining decorative features have been obscured from view since this time. • Stage closed off, orchestra pit demolished, new partition walls/screens installed forward of orchestra pit. • Proscenium⁹ and other ornamental features and decorative painting (including lower portions of decorative organ grilles) obscured and partially destroyed up to level of new suspended ceiling. • Suspension wires for new ceiling were punched through decorative plaster work – including suspended sunburst ceiling ornament radiating from the proscenium – within void space, heavily damaging it. 	Permit Deduced
1973	Deco box marquee and Streamline Moderne blade sign removed. Flat sign board marquee (listing 2 movies) and short “UA Cinemas” projecting sign installed.	Permit, historic photo
1973	Organ removed. (Lower portions of decorative organ grilles removed to level of suspended ceiling, see above.)	Gary Parks (FB)
1973	Original theater seats replaced.	Permit
1974	Split upper level into two separate theaters.	Permit

⁷ FB = facebook. Information gathered from posts and comments on “Save the United Artists Theater Berkeley” Facebook group. Gary Parks is a local theater preservationist, expert, and author on the topic. Anthony Bruce is Executive Director of Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Carlo Chaney is a Chicago-based theater preservationist.

⁸ FB = facebook. Information gathered from posts and comments on “Save the United Artists Theater Berkeley” Facebook group.

⁹ The proscenium or proscenium arch is a framing opening that defines the stage from the auditorium. A stage apron or open orchestra pit sometimes extends beyond the proscenium into the auditorium slightly. The proscenium is often decorative. In the case of this theater, it included decoratively painted massive round columns flanking the stage and a slight arch at the top, which had a stepped profile and was adorned with decorative plaster work.

	<p>Mezzanine space divided down center resulting in 4 auditoriums; two at first floor, two at second floor. Reopening mezzanine as two additional auditoriums involved and resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partition wall/screens installed at location of mezzanine railing. • Dividing wall between auditorium spaces continued up to original ceiling (does not continue within void space). • Majority of ornamental features and decorative painting within mezzanine auditoriums removed or painted over. 	Deduced
1974	<p>Installation of wall/screens at mezzanine railing location resulted in void space at upper front of original auditorium space. Some decorative plaster work is still visible in this space but is heavily damaged and decorative painting has been painted over. Both plaster work and decorative painting are removed, damaged, or obscured throughout the rest of the original auditorium space.</p>	Observed/deduced
ca. 1974	<p>Flat sign board marquee enlarged (to list 4 movies for 4 auditoriums). Short projecting "UA Cinemas" sign removed, not replaced.</p>	Historic photo.
1975	<p>HVAC equipment and duct work installed. Ventilation ducting profuse in void area; resulted in severe damage and partial destruction of remaining ornamental plaster work.</p>	Permit Deduced
Post-1972	<p>First story of front (Shattuck) facade remodeled; cladding materials, entry assemblies, poster display cases, etc.</p>	Historic photo
1972-1978	<p>Box office moved "inside," from front facade to interior of atrium. (Unclear if box office was rebuilt with change of location. Originally box office appears to have been clad with black vitrolite¹⁰ and had gold Deco style ornament.)</p>	Historic photo, 1978 DPR
1982, 1985	<p>Ladies lounge, smoking room, and former backstage area (unclear which, when) converted to auditoriums for total of 7 auditoriums.</p>	Permits
ca.1982	<p>Two new murals painted (by John Anderson) in lobby/foyers to mimic original Heinsbergen Decorating Company mural, of which only one remains.</p>	Anthony Bruce (FB)
1989	<p>Atrium closed off from street, facade repaired, exterior remodeled. Modern aluminum frame, glazed entry assembly, incorporating box office window, installed across entry opening. (Relocated original and/or replacement box office demolished at this time). This remodeling also resulted in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First story exterior walls around entry re-clad with marble tile and new poster cases installed (original materials appear to have been black vitrolite with inlaid Deco style gold accents). • Original colored pavement and/or tilework removed from atrium floor, walls, and possibly dome; floor carpeted, walls and dome covered with sheetrock and painted. • Box office counter, main lobby concession stand, and mezzanine concession stand added/remodeled with identical aesthetics to atri- 	Gary Parks, Berkeleyside ¹¹ Deduced

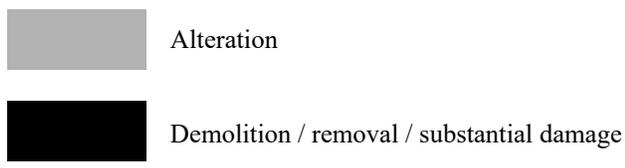
¹⁰ Pigmented structural glass.

¹¹ "The final curtain for the Regal UA, Berkeley's 90-year-old art deco movie palace," *Berkeleyside*, 12 February 2023; <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2023/02/12/regal-ua-berkeley-closure-history-memories-legacy>

	<p>um interior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decorative mirrors behind concession stand altered; lower portions removed below counter height. These and other mirrors in lobby also appear to be altered through total or partial removal of decorative metal “muntins.” 	
1992	“Reader board” marquee enlarged with additional UA logo strip at top.	Permit
1992	Add 5 A/C units and associated ductwork. Likely resulted in further destruction of ornamental plasterwork within void space.	Permit Deduced
2004	Concession stand altered.	Permits
Date unknown, recent	New low-pile carpet installed throughout, replacing original carpet (tile borders in lobby, foyers, and mezzanine retained). Numerous modern “Art Deco” style light fixtures installed throughout. Some originals remain, while ghost lines indicate removal of others.	Observed

The following chart graphically illustrates the alteration/demolition/substantial damage of original features and addition of features that have become significant over time. The significant feature is listed on the left, while columns dated by decade to the right are shaded to indicate at which point alteration (gray) or demolition/removal/substantial damage (black) of each feature took place and subsequently how long that feature, in its original form, has been absent from the property.

FEATURE	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Lower primary facade configuration, materials						Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration
Blade sign		Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Marquee					Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Open atrium						Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration
Atrium finishes & decorative features						Demolition / removal / substantial damage				
Box Office					Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Lobby murals and painted décor		Alteration								
Concession stand		Demolition / removal / substantial damage	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration			
Single main auditorium						Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration
Stage and orchestra pit					Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Proscenium and auditorium decor						Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration
Organ and grilles					Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Original theater seats					Demolition / removal / substantial damage					
Lounges and back-stage space						Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration	Alteration



National & California Registers Significance Evaluation

Because the property at 2274 Shattuck Avenue was previously evaluated for both the National and California registers, the following analysis provides an evaluation of the historic significance according to both registers' significance criteria:

Criterion A/1: *Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history/California's history and cultural heritage.*

No specific events of historical importance are known to have occurred at the property. The property fits the extremely broad context of Depression-era movie theaters and entertainment venues. During economic hard-times of the 1930s, flamboyant movie palaces and smaller theaters were built in large numbers across the nation, as a financially beleaguered populace turned to the fantasy and escapism of affordable entertainment like movies. Hollywood, its studios, stars, and stories were represented physically by movie theaters in communities across America. Theaters also provided local employment opportunities, in their initial construction and ongoing operation, that helped bolster local economies to some extent. The United Artist Theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue, built in the early years of the Depression, filled these roles within the City of Berkeley. However, it was one of many built within the same context, both within Berkeley and across California and the United States. It claims a place within that broad historical context, but does not stand out as particularly important or influential to the context, as it is one of a myriad of Art Deco Depression-era movie theaters found locally, regionally, and nationally.

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National or California registers under Criterion A/1.

Criterion B/2: *Resources associated with the lives of persons significant/important in our past.*

The property has been owned by corporate entities throughout its history, with no specific people directly related to it, either as owners, operators/employees, or in other associated roles. United Artists, for whom the theater was built, was founded by movie stars Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith; however, these celebrities had no specific relationship with the theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue, which was one of numerous United Artists theaters built throughout California and the nation. Various stars may have visited the theater in connection with films being shown; for instance Roy Rogers and stars of the film "Down to Earth" appeared in person at the grand opening of the theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue;¹² however, this was a common practice within the early film industry and those stars have no meaningful connection to this specific theater among the many that they appeared at for premiers, grand openings, and other events.

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National or California registers under Criterion B/2.

Criterion C/3: *Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master/important creative individual, or that possess high artistic values/or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

Architecture

The theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue represents the Art Deco style of architecture. The Art Deco style was popular nation-wide in the 1920s and 1930s, breaking away from traditional styles to introduce a unique, modernistic, and uplifting aesthetic to a nation that was at first focused on progress and the future, then later seeking escapist relief from the Great Depression. It was a highly decorative style and was applied primarily to public and commercial buildings. Sometimes found on large apartment buildings, it was much less common in residential de-

¹² *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 15 September 1932.

sign. Applied to a theater, the Art Deco style was an exuberant advertisement for the exciting entertainment offered by the establishment.

The Art Deco style was characterized by smooth wall surfaces, usually clad with stucco, that were profusely decorated with geometric motifs like zig-zags, stair steps, sunbursts, chevrons, stylized floral shapes, and vertical bands. Verticality was the emphasis of the style and was often dramatically expressed in towers, blade/fin walls, and other vertical projections above the roofline. The style was often embellished with color and light in the form of polychrome paint schemes and multicolored neon signage.

The theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue expresses the Art Deco style only in its upper primary facade (the lower portion having been completely altered), which is narrow but has vertical emphasis embodied in stepped rectangular panels that rise to the center. The vertical components of the stepped roofline incorporate smaller stepped and corbelled details at their edges and are adorned with stylized half-arches, fountain motifs, radiating sunburst-like scored lines, and Deco style human figures. The aesthetic may have originally been enhanced by polychrome paint and had a vertical blade sign and a marquee with chevron ornamentation, copiously outlined in neon; as well as Deco style geometric lines and shapes in the surround of the entry and within the open and visible atrium. However, by at least 1965, the facade had been painted a monochrome off-white and, over time, the marquee and signage underwent repeated replacements. Today, the paint scheme is more polychrome, but the non-original paint is faded and peeling, while blade signage has been removed entirely and the marquee is now a flat reader board. The atrium has been closed off from view and access of the street. Effectively, although Art Deco forms remain, the theater's ability to advertise its purpose – a critical function for an entertainment business – through color, light, and innate stylistic flamboyance, has been lost.

The secondary Bancroft Way facade effectively reads as a separate building due to the theater's L-shaped plan, the two facades' perpendicular orientations, and an intervening building mass. It only loosely associates with the Shattuck Way frontage in its vague Art Deco references. Its lack of ornament, sculptural definition, color, and interaction with the public realm is antithetical to the Art Deco style and the building's identity as an entertainment venue. It relates little – physically or stylistically – to the Shattuck Avenue frontage of the building. It is also an indicator of the value-engineering (lack of budget) that resulted in the original design of such a massive unadorned facade. Pertinent to the concept of the Bancroft Way facade's value engineering and lack of ornamental consideration, the National Register Bulletin addressing “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” (National Register Bulletin No. 15) states:

Art Deco detailing is not eligible under Criterion C if the detailing was added merely as an afterthought, rather than fully integrated with overall lines and massing typical of the Art Deco style...¹³

The interior of the theater was also originally designed in the Art Deco style, but many elements have been lost in the substantial alteration of the originally single-screen theater into a multi-plex; not least, the enclosure and ornamental sterilization of the originally-exterior atrium, and the removal of original features and ornament within the now-subdivided auditorium. With regard to interiors, and providing a strikingly pertinent reference to auditorium interiors like that at 2274 Shattuck Way, National Register Bulletin No. 15 states:

In some cases the loss of an interior will disqualify properties from listing in the National Register – a historic concert hall noted for the beauty of its auditorium and its fine acoustic qualities would be the type of property that if it were to lose its interior, it would lose its value as a historic resource.¹⁴

¹³ National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin (15): How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 1995; 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

Essential interior features of the theater have not only been lost or altered to a great extent, but many of those that do remain are hidden from view or have been painted over or otherwise obscured. The interior decorative features of the original single-screen auditorium that survive (though in a damaged state) are limited to the void space at the upper front of the original auditorium, which is completely hidden from view and accessible only through a small utility hatch from the fly loft. National Register Bulletin No. 15 addresses this situation by stating that eligible properties

must not only retain their essential physical features, but the features must be visible enough to convey their significance. This means that even if a property is physically intact, its integrity is questionable if its significant features are concealed under modern construction.¹⁵

Thus, although some original decorative features remain, they cannot contribute to the building's integrity and, subsequently, its ability to convey the architectural significance of the property.

The theater, as originally designed (with the exception of the Bancroft Way facade, which was not executed to original designs), appears to have been a modest example of the Art Deco style and was also one of many Art Deco style theaters locally and nationwide. Many of those still stand and are of greater architectural merit, in regard to which National Register Bulletin No. 15 states that a building that is "a modest example" of its style would not qualify as having high artistic values.¹⁶ Because it is a relatively well represented type and style locally and nationally, is modest in comparison to other theaters locally and nationally, and has lost integrity it does not appear to rise to National Register-level significance.

In its original physical state, it appears to have had adequate architectural merit to qualify it for eligibility at the California Register level; however, as discussed below, alterations have degraded its integrity to the point that it can no longer adequately demonstrate its architectural merit.

Architect

The theater was designed by architect Clifford A. Balch, who was a partner in the architecture firm of Walker & Eisen.¹⁷ According to the Cinema Treasures website and Pacific Coast Architecture Database, Balch designed at least 60 theaters in California between 1914 and 1941. His work was heavily concentrated in Southern California, although he readily worked throughout the state. He was hired repeatedly by the Fox West Coast Theater Corporation and United Artists. Although he began specializing in theater design under a previous partnership, from 1919 onward he worked under the auspices of the Southern California firm of Walker & Eisen. The firm was founded in 1919 by partners Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen. The L.A. Conservancy notes the Fine Arts Building and the Oviatt Building in Los Angeles as some of their best known work, but notes that they were extremely prolific. They designed many building types beyond theaters, but Balch appears to have been the theater specialist in the Walker & Eisen office.

Based on his prominence in the field of theater-design throughout California and the number of theaters of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, that are in his portfolio, Clifford Balch appears to have been a popular theater designer. Many of his theater designs are still standing today. The Cinema Treasures website identifies 38 Balch-designed theaters that are still extant today (of 61 total examples identified).¹⁸ Many have been adaptively re-used, but retain their architectural character, and many provide equal or better examples of Balch's work than the United Artists theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue. Additionally, Balch designed at least four other United Artists theaters using a facade design identical to that at 2274 Shattuck Avenue,¹⁹ indicating that a cookie-cutter approach was

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷ Wikipedia, "Walker & Eisen," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walker_%26_Eisen.

¹⁸ Cinema Treasures (website); <https://cinematreasures.org/architects/188?status=all>

¹⁹ United Artists Alameda Theater, 5136 Whittier Blvd., Los Angeles, 1931 (extant); United Artists Pasadena Theater, 606

prescribed by the theater company and suggesting that although Balch may have executed the original design concept, he may not have had direct involvement with the execution of the design at 2274 Shattuck Avenue, which was the third or fourth iteration of the design to be executed. Two of the identical theaters (both built the year prior to the subject theater) are still extant and appear to have equal or better integrity than the subject property.

Because it is one of many remaining Balch-designed theaters in California, including at least two others of identical design, and has lost the integrity of Balch's original design intent due to alterations, the theater does not appear to rise to a level of national, regional, or local significance for association with a master architect or important creative individual.

The property does not appear to rise to a level of significance to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. It would have been eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3, but for loss of integrity; see below.

Criterion D/4: *Resources that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

Criterion D/4 is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, this criterion typically relates to rare construction types, of which 2274 Shattuck Avenue is not an example.

Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the National or California registers under Criterion D/4.

Integrity Evaluation

In order to qualify for listing in the National or California Register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity according to seven aspects. Most, if not all, aspects of integrity must be met in order for the property to retain integrity, although

It is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information or specific data.²⁰

No assessment of integrity is required under Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit evaluation criteria, which are addressed in the next section (Berkeley Municipal Code 3.24.110).

The theater appears to be significant under one of the above California Register criteria; therefore, an evaluation of integrity is provided:

- **Location:** The theater retains integrity of location, having never been moved from or re-positioned on its original site.

E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 1931 (extant); United Artists Long Beach Theater, 217 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 1932 (demolished); United Artists 4 Star Theater, 5112 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, 1933 (demolished).

²⁰ California Office of Historic Preservation, "Technical Assistance Series #6: California and National Register Comparison (for purposes of determining eligibility for the California Register)."

- Setting: The densely urban environment of Downtown Berkeley, and adjacency of the major thoroughfare of Shattuck Avenue, has evolved over time. Development such as transportation and streetscape improvements and the construction of modern buildings has changed the character and scale of the greater Shattuck Avenue corridor and generated numerous fine grain changes in the theater's surroundings that erode integrity of setting, although it remains an urban environment.
- Materials: The theater has lost integrity of materials, having undergone exterior and interior alterations that have removed and/or covered and obscured many of its distinctive materials such as facade cladding and fenestration, tilework, painting and plasterwork, signage, and fixtures.
- Design: The theater has lost integrity of design. It retains its basic massing and exterior structural envelope, but has undergone substantial alterations to important exterior elements like the lower primary facade, marquee/blade sign, and open atrium. Substantial changes to the interior volume resulting from the division of the originally single-screen theater into multiple auditoriums and the conversion of period-indicative spaces like the lounges and stage into additional auditoriums has greatly obscured the original design intent. These changes have both diminished its visual identity as a theater – including its ability to advertise its entertainment commerce; a critical aspect of a movie theater's design – and changed its functional design in terms of use, circulation, capacity, etc.
- Workmanship: The theater has lost integrity of workmanship, because both its functional design and many of its material features have been altered. With the physical alteration and/or removal of spaces and features, the tangible materials that make them up and the ways in which they were constructed, crafted, or applied is lost. For instance, enclosure of the atrium and alteration of the configuration and appearance of the primary facade and entrance resulted in the destruction of an original ticket booth, which was built and ornamented in a way indicative of its time and use. Likewise, the skilled application of tilework, painted ornament, and decorative exterior cladding was all negated with changes to the lower primary facade and atrium interior. Similarly, subdivision of the single voluminous auditorium resulted in the removal, obscuring, and/or extensive damage of the stage and proscenium, which were constructed to certain parameters and with certain theater-specific features (like orchestra pits, fly lofts, etc.), while plaster ornamentation and decorative painting applied with certain skill and style, were wholly or partially demolished, severely damaged, and hidden from view. Thus, the workmanship – or physical treatment and application of materials and features to the specifications of the intended design – is no longer extant.
- Feeling: The theater has lost integrity of feeling as an Art Deco style movie theater, because the Art Deco aesthetics only remain in the upper primary facade, while signature features indicative of the building's intended use as a theater, such as the marquee and blade sign and a recognizable stand-alone ticket booth (rather than one integrated into a generic modern storefront assembly) are no longer extant. The lower primary facade, including the modern sign board marquee, has been remodeled in a way that dilutes the theater's original physical and visual character, and the originally open and accessible atrium has been closed off from the public realm, diminishing the impression of an inviting entertainment venue. The interior lobby retains some Art Deco decorative elements, but alterations to materials and features, there and within the auditoriums, convey only a diminished sense of an Art Deco movie palace, while the ad hoc subdivision of auditorium spaces has negated the feeling of a grand movie palace setting. Ultimately, upon approach, the exciting sense of a brightly illuminated, colorful, highly stylized, vivacious entertainment venue is no longer felt; nor is the promise of entering a gilded, luxurious, highly decorated theater, where one will sit in a voluminous space full of exotic ornamentation to indulge in a few hours of movie-watching.
- Association: The theater's loss of physical aspects of integrity, like materials, design, and workman-

ship, as well as its inability to convey the feeling of an Depression-era Art Deco movie theater means that it only minimally reflects the character that was present at the time it was built. It is able, on a basic level, to convey its significant associations with the film and theater industry of the 1930s; however, its character has very obviously been altered and it expresses the confusing associations of other eras as well.

In addition to the above, National Register Bulletin No. 15 identifies “a movie theater embodying high artistic value in its decorative features” as an example of a property that might be significant under National Register criterion C. However, for it to be eligible it "must clearly contain enough of those [distinctive] characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or other method of construction."²¹ It goes on to say that:

A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible *if* it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture or materials and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.²²

As a building that retains its basic massing and structural envelope, but has lost the lower portion of its primary facade and originally-open atrium, as well as the marquee and signage that were signatures of both its style and function, the theater is no longer a “true representative of a particular type” or style and would, thus, not be eligible.

Based on the above analysis, the property assessed in its current state has lost the majority of the seven aspects of integrity considered for National and California register eligibility, and does not conform to National Register guidance regarding retention of distinctive features, thus resulting in the inability of the property to convey its historic significance.

City of Berkeley Landmark & Structure of Merit Evaluation

Sec. 3.24.100.B of the Berkeley Municipal Code does not allow the interiors of private buildings to be designated or regulated as Landmarks or Structures of Merit. The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 further precludes the application of new zoning regulations – including local historic designations—once a preliminary application for a housing development is submitted. As a formality, and because it was not included in previous documentation or evaluation, the following evaluation of local Landmark/Structure of Merit eligibility is provided:

Berkeley Landmark Evaluation

Berkeley Landmarks are designated by the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Landmarks if they meet one or more of five criteria similar to those used for the California Register, but which elaborate on areas of significance. The following provides an evaluation of the historic significance of 2274 Shattuck Avenue according to local significance criteria:

1. Architectural Merit:

a-c. Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region; Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or

²¹ National Park Service, 18.

²² *Ibid.*, 46.

examples of the more notable works of the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder; Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.

The theater does not claim the status of first, last, or only of its type or style in the region. Although it has a place in the context of Depression-era Art Deco movie theaters, it is not a particularly significant or outstanding example of its type or style in relation to others and is heavily altered, with only its upper primary facade intact and character defining. The theater was designed by architect Clifford Balch, who was a prolific theater designer in California; however, this is one of numerous theaters he designed – many of which are still extant, including the California Theater in Berkeley. It is also one of four others of identical design to the theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue, indicating that although Balch may have rendered the initial design concept, it was applied to the subject property without great architectural consideration or direct interaction from him. Thus, the property does not possess the architectural merit (or integrity) and association with an important architect that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the City

The construction of the theater and its subsequent use history was influenced by national-level cultural and economic factors, but these were of extremely broad context and not unique to the City of Berkeley. It was built during the Great Depression and was part of a vast trend of theater construction that sought to provide affordable entertainment for a financially beleaguered public seeking the escapism of Hollywood films, while contributing jobs and income for local citizens during hard times. Another local example, the 1930 Art Deco style California Theater (2113 Kittredge St.), was not deemed eligible as a Berkeley Landmark for its cultural value, setting the precedent that the subject property also does not appear to have the locally-specific cultural value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force

The theater does not appear to have any use as an educational tool. It does not have any strong potential to convey lessons on history, as it is not associated with any important events nor is it physically illustrative of the lives, work, or activities of its owners or users. It therefore does not appear to have the high educational value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military.

The theater does not strongly embody or express unique local history, but is part of very broad nation-wide contexts pertaining to the Great Depression and the theater and film industry. In comparison to another local example – the intact primary facade of the 1930 Art Deco style California Theater (2113 Kittredge St.), which was deemed eligible as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion – the subject property was not one of the earliest moving picture theaters in Berkeley and was one of numerous theaters constructed throughout the state in the 1930s by United Artists, with no close ties to important corporate figures or film industry stars. Therefore, it does not appear to have the historic value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.

The theater is not listed in the National Register and therefore does not qualify as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

Berkeley Structure of Merit Evaluation

Berkeley Structures of Merit are designated historical resources within the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Structures of Merit if they meet general and/or specific criteria. An evaluation follows:

General Criteria

1. General Criteria shall be architectural merit and/or cultural, educational, or historic interest or value. If upon assessment of a structure, the commission finds that the structure does not currently meet the criteria as set out for a landmark, but it is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings which includes landmarks, that structure may be designated a structure of merit.

The theater claims a place in the context of Depression-era Art Deco movie theaters and Art Deco architecture in Berkeley. It has commonalities with other Art Deco buildings on its Shattuck Avenue street frontage, as well as with other theaters in Downtown Berkeley.

Specific Criteria

a. The age of the structure is contemporary with (1) a designated landmark within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings, or (2) an historic period or event of significance to the City, or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

There are numerous designated landmarks in Downtown Berkeley, including two on the same street frontage, one of which (Berkeley Public Library) is of the same age and architectural style as the theater. The theater is contemporary to the Great Depression, but that is a very broad, nation-wide historical period and not specific to the City of Berkeley.

b. The structure is compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with a designated landmark structure within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

The lower primary facade of the theater is altered and only the upper facade remains compatible in style and design with the Art Deco Berkeley Public Library that is located on the same block and street frontage. The Bancroft Way facade is not visible from the library and is incompatible in its size and scale, lack of typically expressive Art Deco styling, raw concrete material palette, and rudimentary value-engineered design.

c. The structure is a good example of architectural design.

The theater is a heavily altered example of an Art Deco style movie theater that is comparable to other extant theaters of similar age and aesthetics in the area and throughout the state. The heavily altered lower primary facade, and atypically rudimentary Bancroft Way facade, means that the theater does not represent the Art Deco style adequately to be considered a good example.

d. The structure has historical significance to the City and/or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

The theater is part of very broad nation-wide contexts pertaining to the Great Depression and the theater and film industry; however, it does not embody or express unique local history.

Conclusion

Although the property is listed on the California Register, it would not qualify for listing had its loss of integrity

been properly evaluated at the time of its designation (2006). According to the evaluation above, the United Artists theater at 2274 Shattuck Avenue has some significance in relation to California Register criterion 3 as an example of Art Deco style movie theater architecture, but has lost integrity to the point that it cannot adequately convey that significance in its current physical state. It does not appear to rise to a level of significance to be eligible for listing in the California Register under other criteria, nor for the National Register under any criteria.

An evaluation of integrity indicates that the majority of the seven aspects of integrity have been lost or greatly diminished. Physical alterations to the exterior and interior of the originally single-screen theater have caused it to lose integrity to the extent that it only basically conveys the original architectural merit for which it might be considered important.

The theater does not appear to be significant under Berkeley Landmark criteria. It has some chronological and stylistic similarities to other designated properties nearby, as upheld by the broader Structure of Merit criteria, but its altered state obscures accurate reference in this respect. Local eligibility evaluation does not consider issues of integrity; however, in a scenario where a building's significance rests on its visual similarities to nearby buildings, and its visual similarity has been compromised, it can be concluded that eligibility is, nevertheless, negated. It is reiterated that Sec. 3.24.100.B of the Berkeley Municipal Code does not allow the interiors of private buildings to be designated or regulated as Landmarks or Structures of Merit. The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 further precludes the application of new zoning regulations – including local historic designations—once a preliminary application for a housing development is submitted..

The conclusions of this memorandum differ from the conclusions of earlier evaluations, in that the property does not appear to rise to a level of significance, nor retain the integrity, to be eligible for the National Register. The evaluations concur to some extent that the property has significance at the state level for architectural merit; however, this memorandum's evaluation of significance finds it only in the property's basic physical, architectural qualities and documents a substantial loss of integrity that negates the property's ability to convey significance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



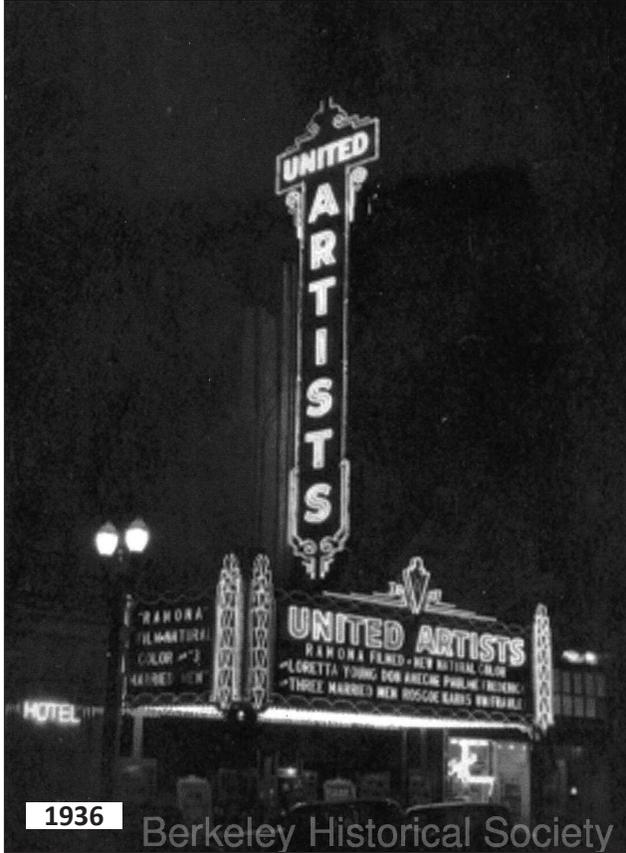
Principal/Architectural Historian, Left Coast Architectural History

Appendix 1: Current & Historical Images

Appendix 2: Building Permits Chart

Appendix 3: Prior Evaluations

Appendix 1



Berkeley Historical Society

Image 1.1 Source: Berkeley Historical Society



Image 1.2 Source: NA



Image 1.3 Source: Jack Tillmany Collection via Berkeleyside.org



Image 1.4 Source: Jack Tillmany Collection via Berkeleyside.org



Image 1.5 Source: Author

Primary facade; looking west from Shattuck Avenue.



Image 1.6 Source: Author

Primary facade; looking west from Shattuck Avenue.
Entry obscured by temporary panels.

In addition to the signage being altered & removed over the years, the upper facade has some elements painted which are not original (compare images above, with Images 1.2, 1.3, 1.4).



Lower facade & open air lobby.

Image 1.7 Source: Jack Tillmany Collection via Berkeleyside.org



Entry before temporary panels installed.

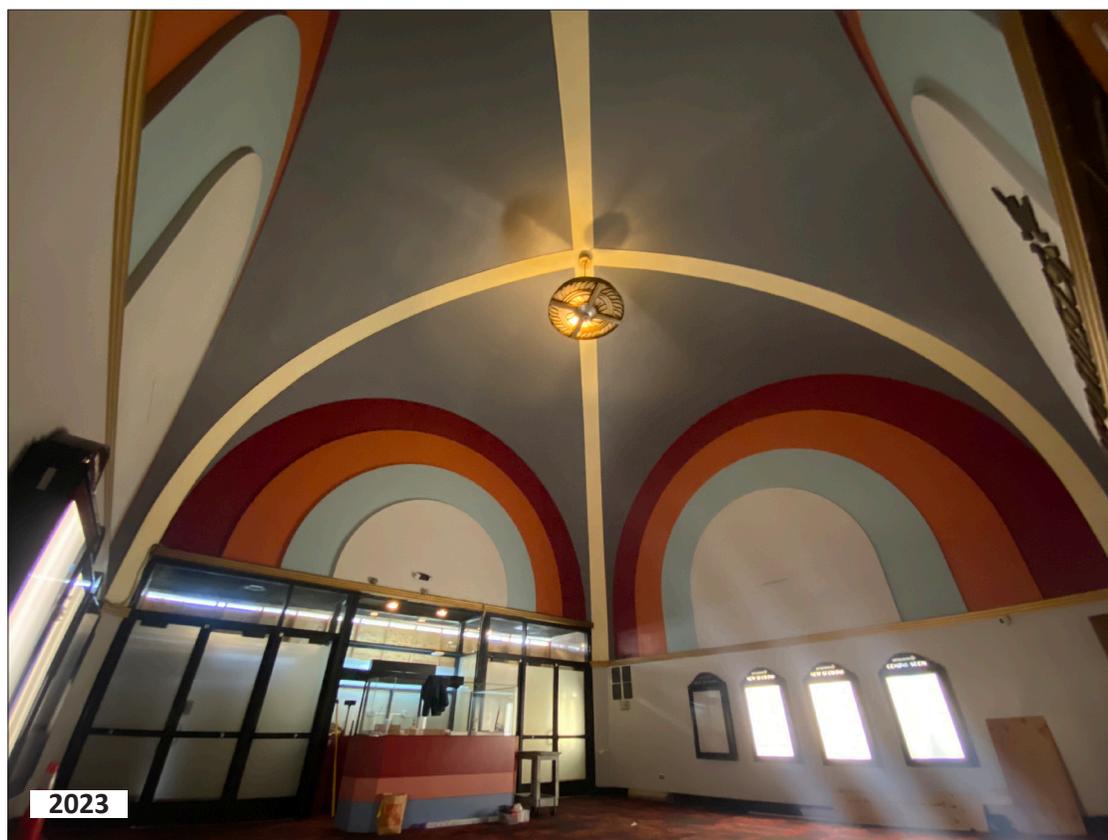
Image 1.8 Source: Berkeleyside, berkeleyside.org



Lower primary facade and marquee, open air lobby and atrium.

Image 1.9 Source: BAHA

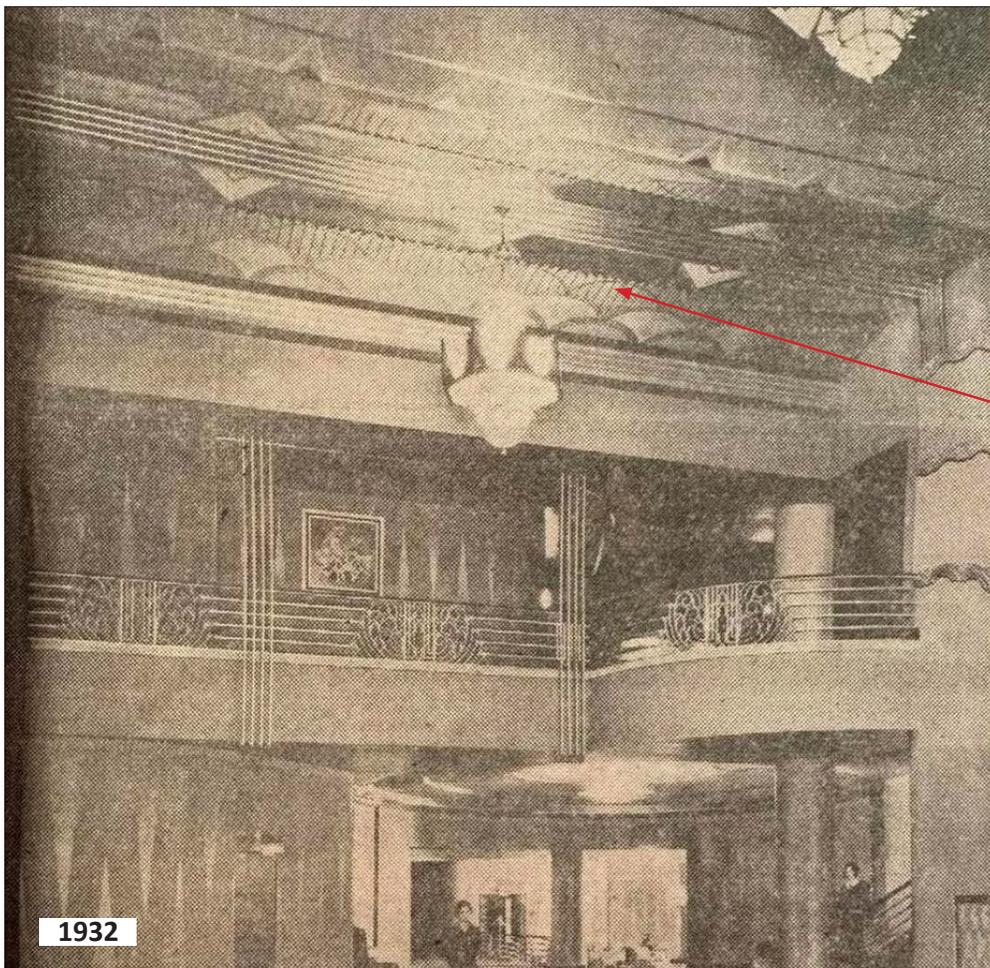
The foreground of image 1.9 shows the decorative tiled walls of the open atrium. The 1978 survey by Betty Marvin noted "outside atrium with 4-sided dome, tiled walls & pavement..."*



Atrium, looking southeast. The tiled walls & pavement have been removed.

Image 1.10 Source: Author

*1978 Historic Resources Inventory Forms for Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey by Betty Marvin

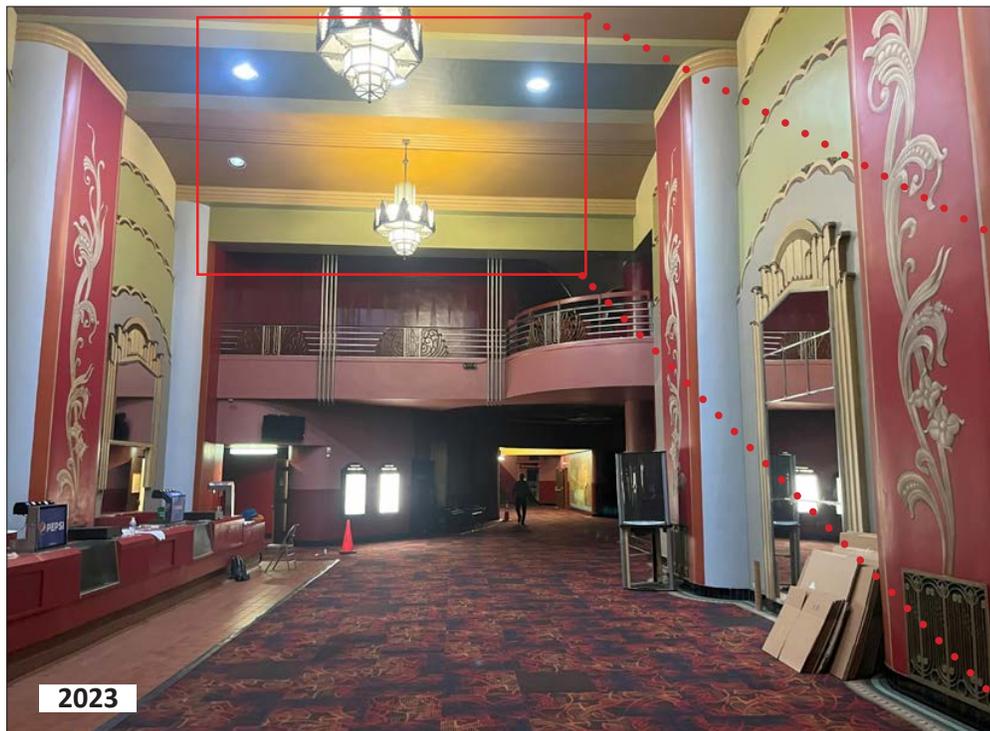


1932

Lobby

Image 1.11 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette

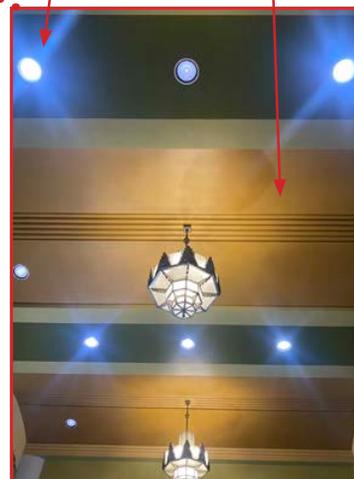
Decorative plaster ceilings removed and/or decorative ceiling painted over (available documentation unclear regarding materials, either paint or plaster or both on original ceiling). New lighting installed.



2023

Lobby, looking west toward theaters.

Image 1.12 Source: Author





1972

Lobby

Image 1.13 Source: NA

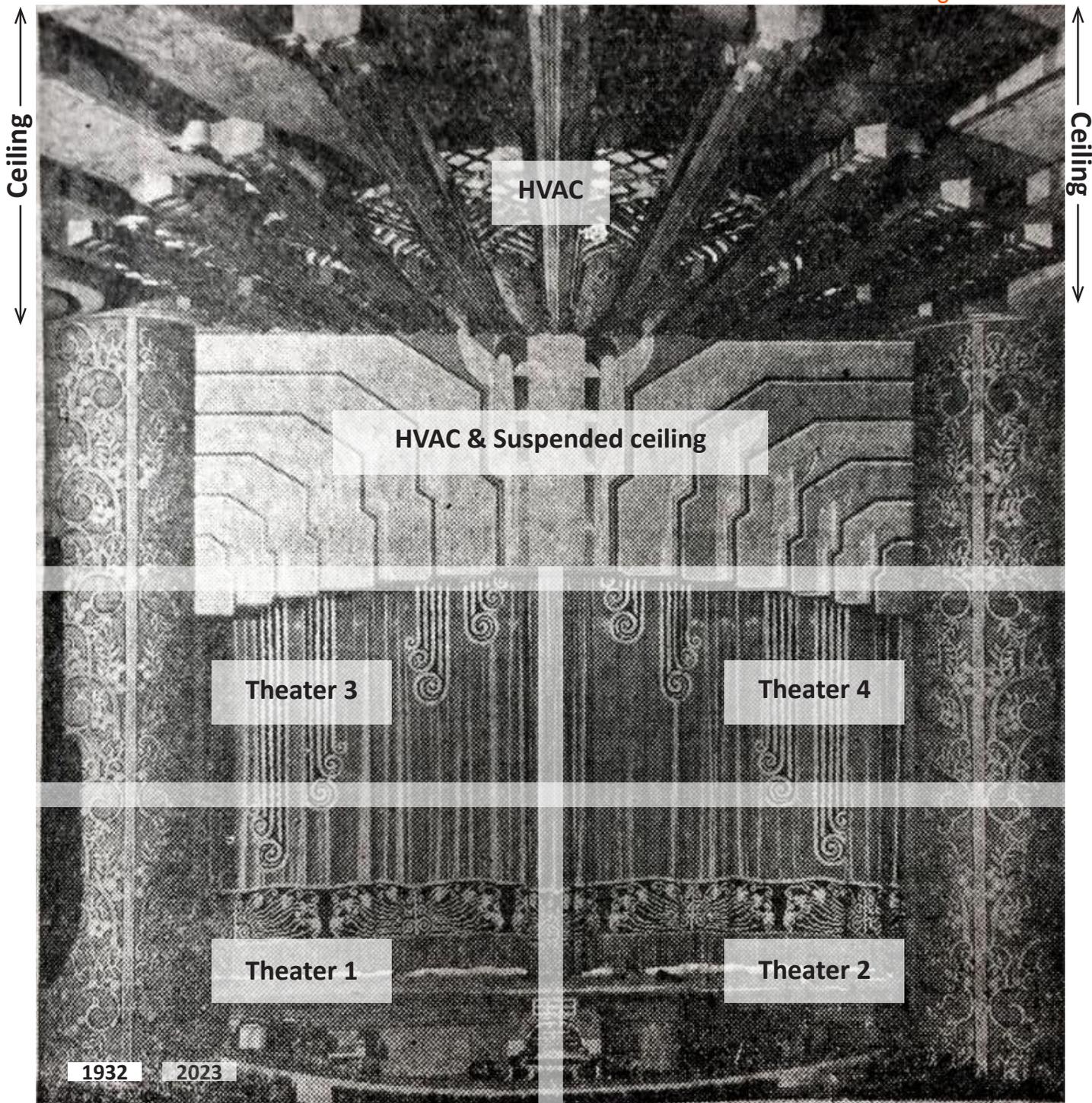
When the concession area was installed, it partially destroyed original features including the lower sections of the mirrors.



2023

Non-original concession stand along south wall of lobby.

Image 1.14 Source: Author

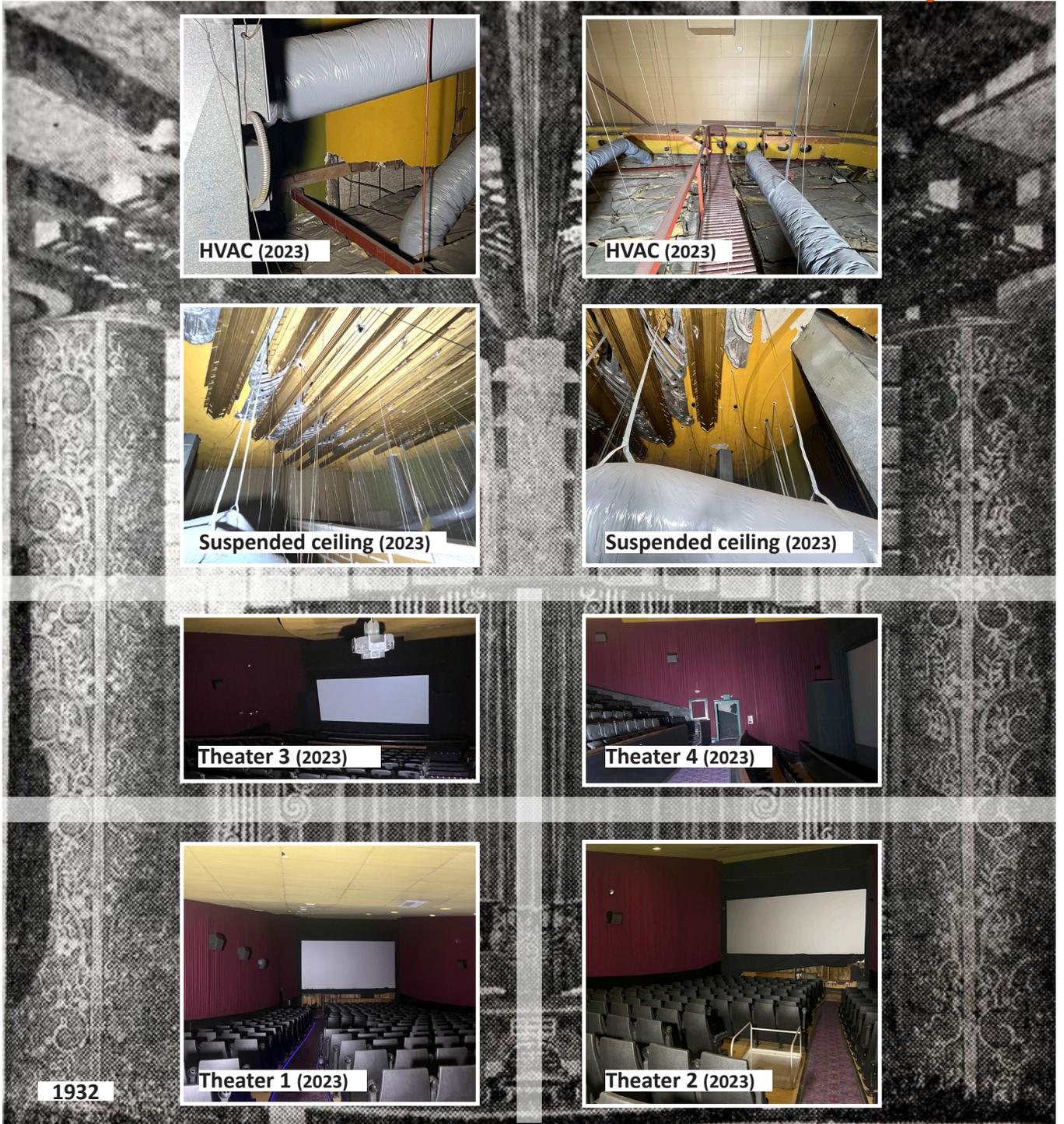


Stage

Image 1.15 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1932 | 1 single-screen theater (1,800 seats), 2 lounges. |
| 2023 | 7 screens, multiplex theaters (4 theaters in original theater, 2 theaters in lounges, 1 in stage). |

The following pages will compare the original stage and auditorium to its current condition.



Stage

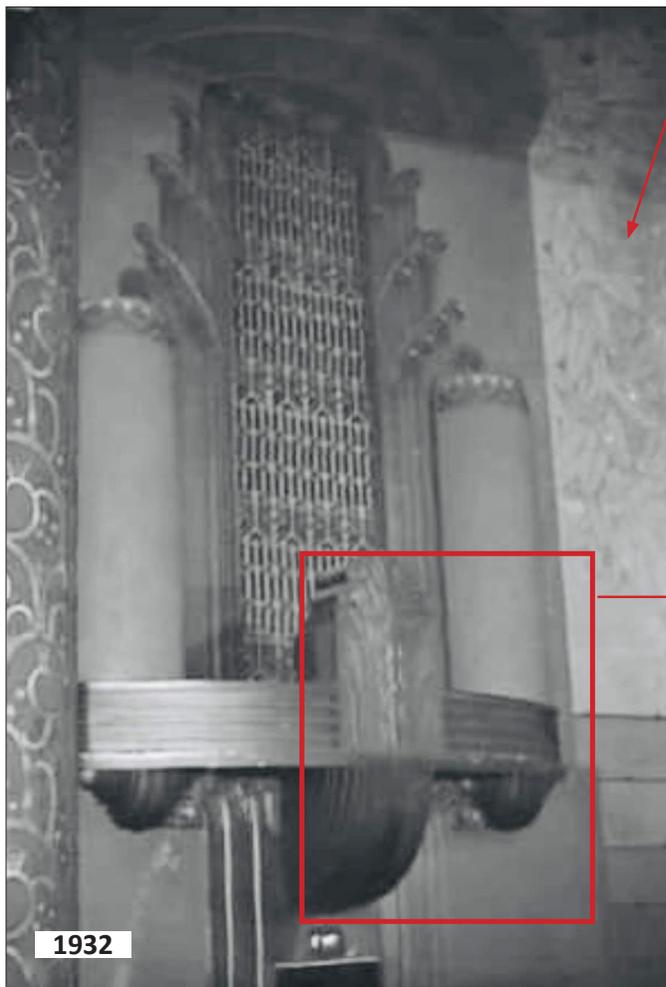
Image 1.15 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette

Theater #1: Eastern lower theater



Theater #1: Eastern lower theater

Original decorative walls painted



1932

Organ grille

Image 1.18 Source: NA



2023

Image 1.19 Source: Author

Theater #2: Western lower theater

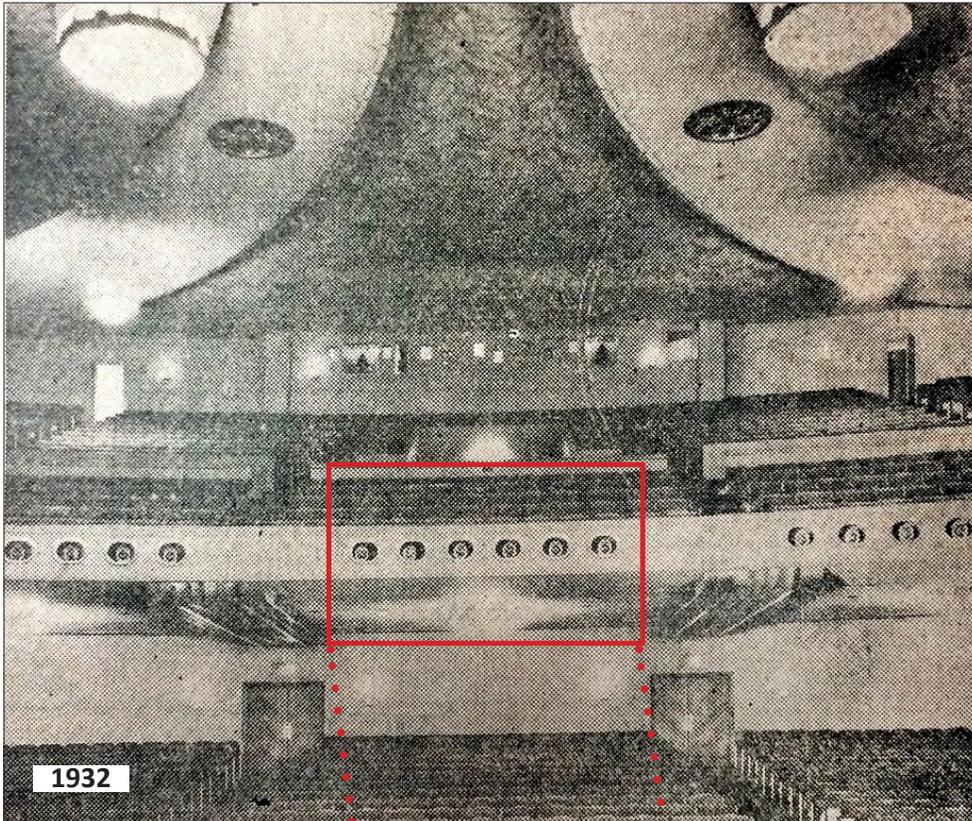


2023

Theater #2

Image 1.20 Source: Author

Theaters #3 & 4: Upper theaters



1932

Auditorium

Image 1.21 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette



2023

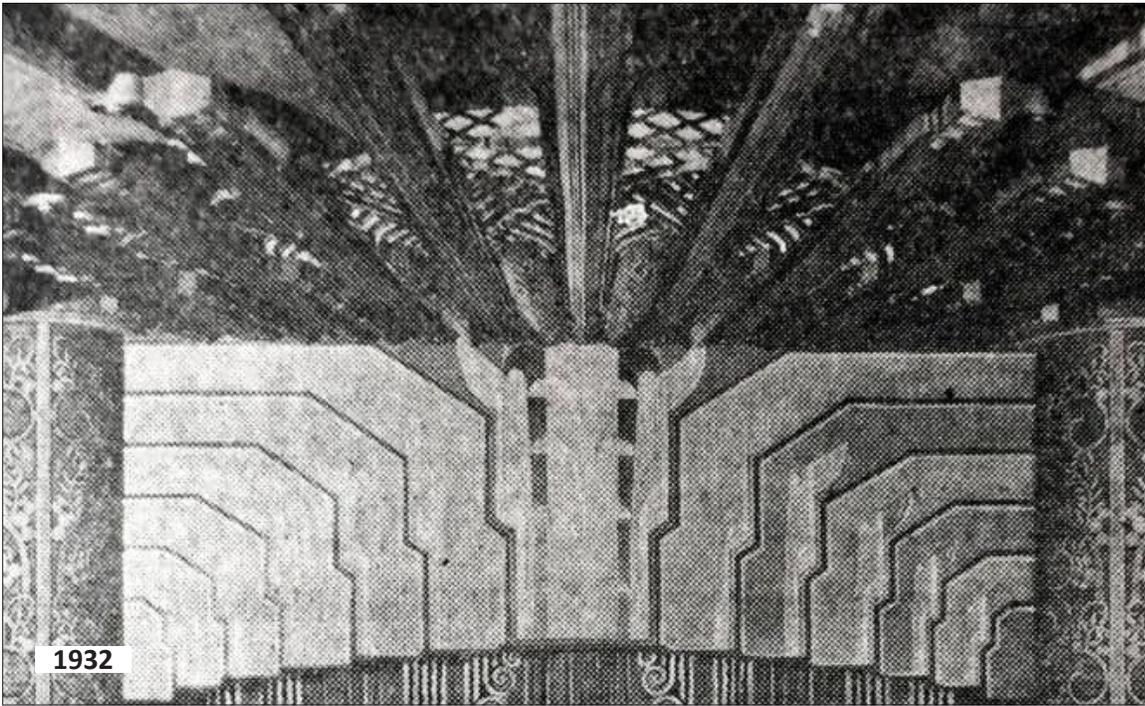
Wall for added
multiplex theaters

Added suspended
ceiling for
multiplex theaters

Image 1.22 Source: Author

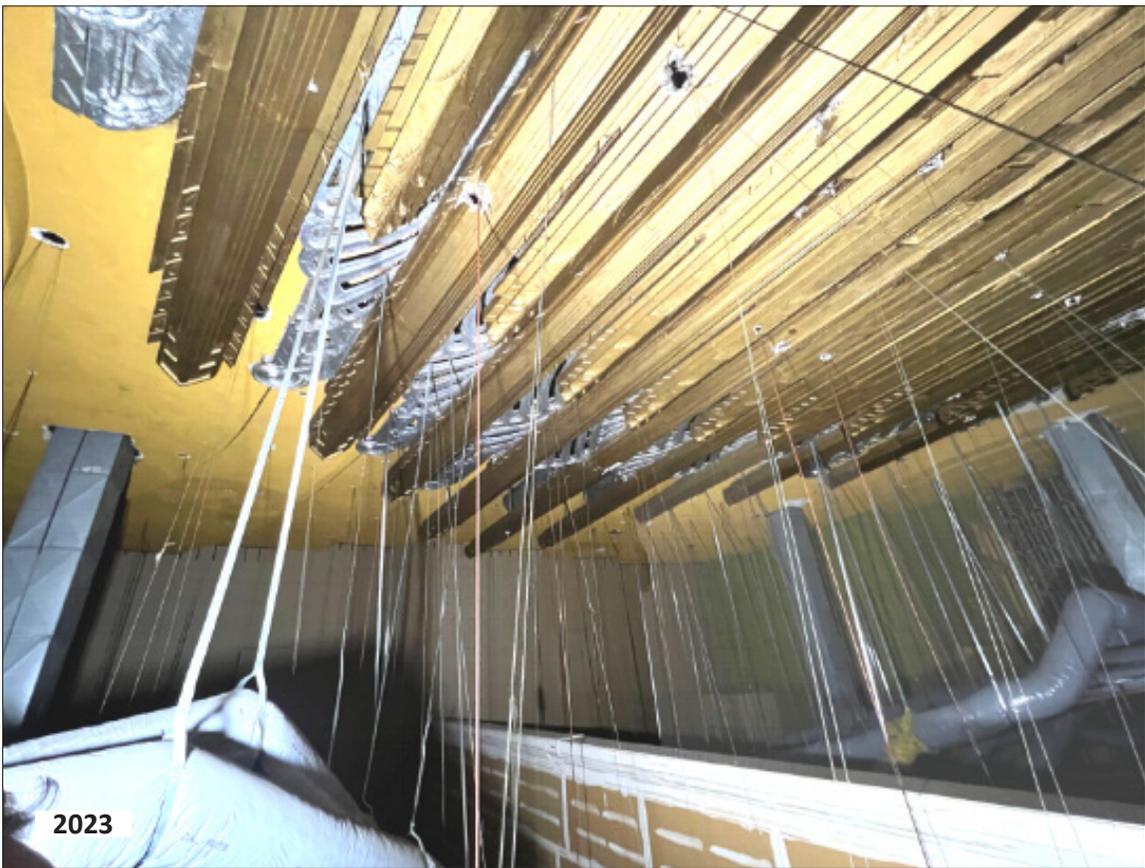
Auditorium (after alteration): the alteration of theater & balcony area can be seen in these photos.

Void in ceiling & proscenium area:



Ceiling & stage proscenium

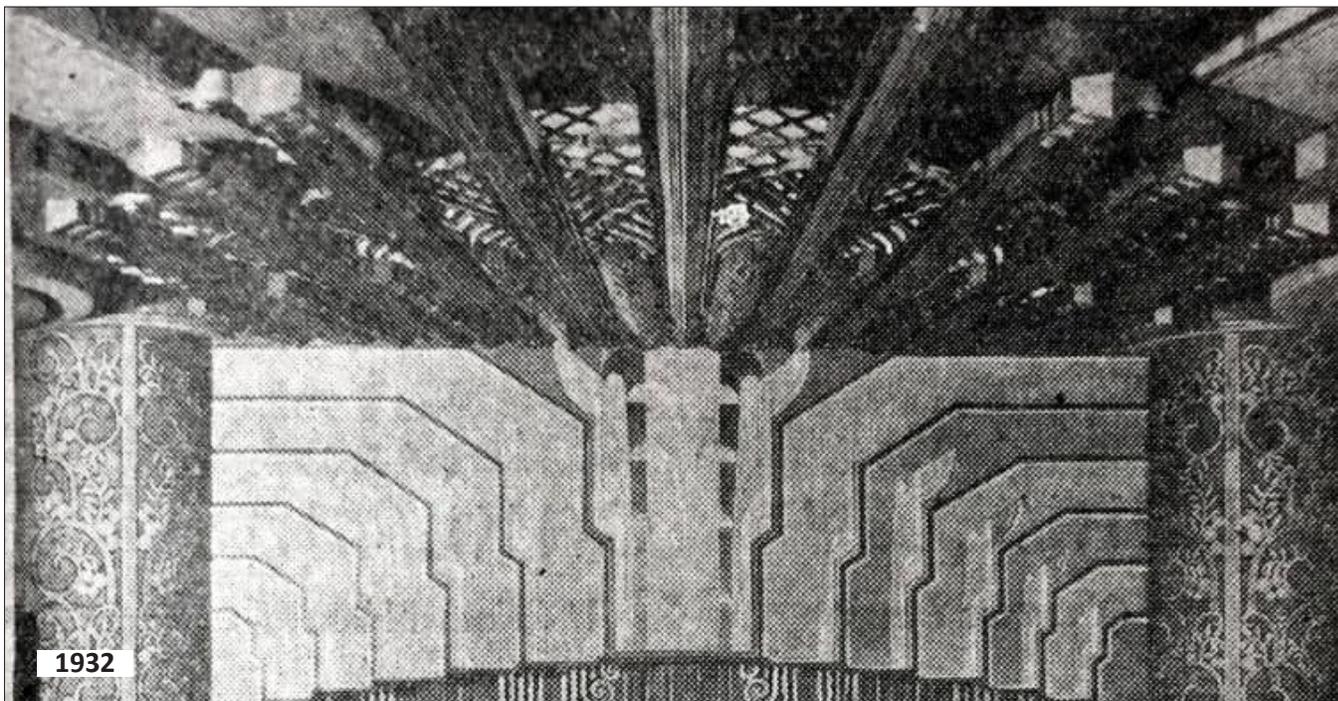
Image 1.23 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette



Ornamental plaster work partially destroyed from suspended ceiling and HVAC system

Ceiling & stage proscenium (after alteration): remaining remnants with suspended ceiling & HVAC.

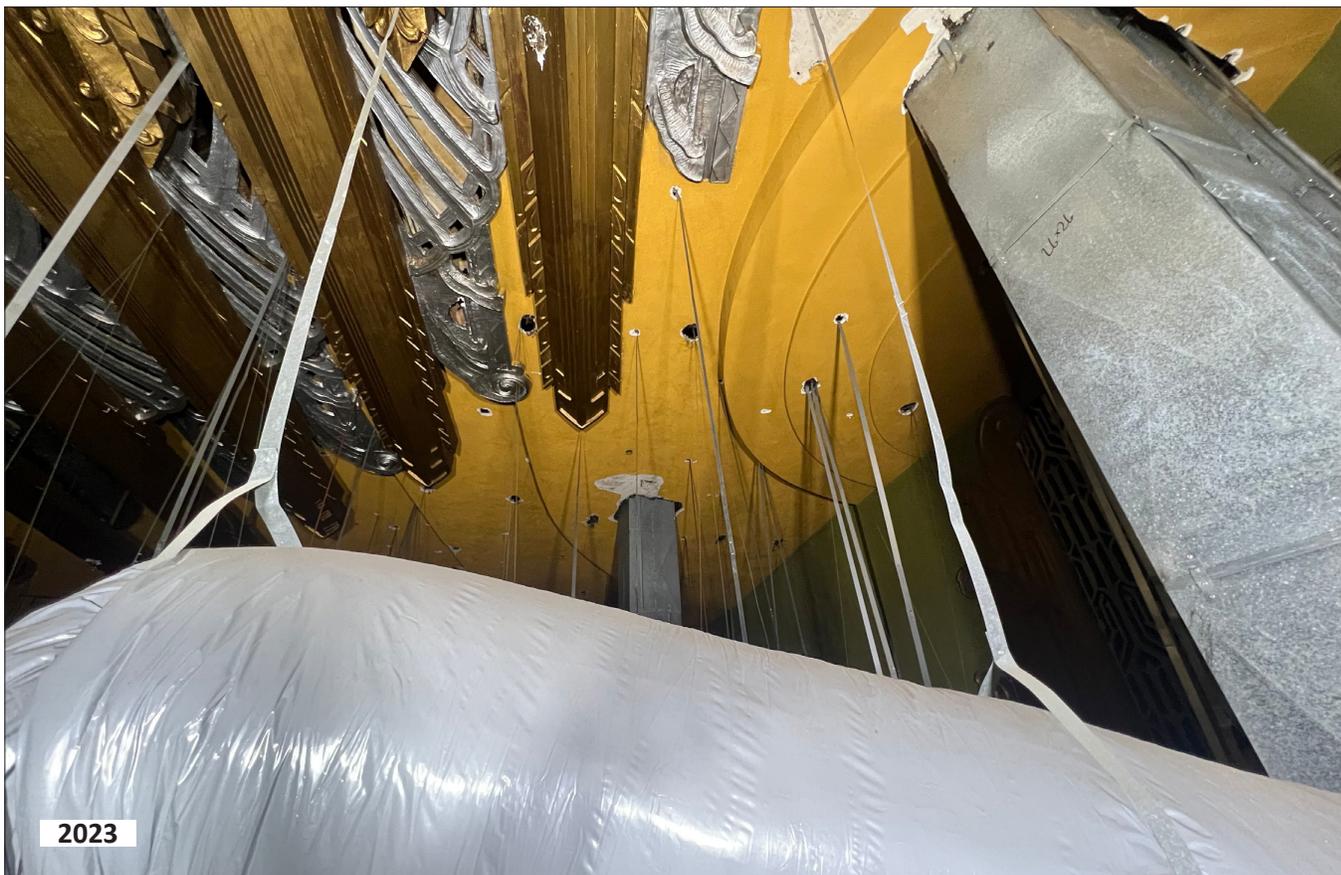
Void in ceiling & proscenium area:



1932

Ceiling & stage proscenium

Image 1.25 Source: Berkeley Daily Gazette



2023

Ceiling & stage proscenium (after alteration): remaining remnants with suspended ceiling & HVAC

Image 1.26 Source: Author



Image 1.27 Source: Author

South facade, looking norther from Bancroft Way.



Image 1.28 Source: Author

South facade, looking west from Shattuck Avenue.

“Auditorium building faces Bancroft Way, a massive irregularly shaped concrete block with service entrances & little else.”*

“Plans at one time called for the Bancroft Way frontage sheer concrete wall with just the least ridged pattern to be decorated, but money was apparently not available”*

*1978 Historic Resources Inventory Forms for Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey by Betty Marvin

Appendix 2: Building Permits Chart

(Substantial alterations in bold.)

DATE	PERMIT/A PP. NUMBER	APPLICANT/ OWNER	ARCHITECT/ CONTRACTOR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	NOTES
08/05/1931	36095	UA Theater Ltd.	Architects: Walker & Eisen with C.A. Balch; Builder: Henry I. Beller Construction Co.	Application to build a one- story- and-mezzanine motion picture theater.	
12/30/1899	36685	UA Theater Ltd.	Architects: Walker & Eisen with C.A. Balch; Builder: Cahill Bros.	Construction of 1 story plus balcony grade A Type I theater building.	
10/06/1939	475898	Fox West Coast	Camisa Bros. Roofing	Roof repairs	
06/06/1957	80822	United California Theaters	Elliot & Elliot	Roofing	
12/07/1959	80822	United California Theaters	Illegible	Roofing	
05/06/1964	100441	UA Theaters	Western Roofing Co	Install fiberglass [?] surface of [?] sheet over fiberglass base sheet recover over existing [?] roofing.	
09/04/1973	090573129	UA Theaters	Gale Santoco, Architects Dunn & Goulke contractors	Alterations per attached plans – divide into 2 theaters	Single screen use terminated; auditorium subdivided into two
09/20/1973	092073753	UA	La Verne Plumbing	WC Basin	
10/09/1973	100973072	UA	McClure Electric	Electrical	
11/05/1973	110573151	UA	Not listed	Install theater seats	
11/20/1973	110573151	UA	Modern Neon	Remove existing D.F. (?) sign marquee; install new wall sign & new projecting sign type per drawing	Major façade feature removed/ replaced
05/21/1974	052175507	UA	Dunn & Gaulke	“Splitting upper level into two separate theater”	Mezzanine subdivided in two, creating four auditoriums
08/06/1975	Illegible	UA	Dunn & Gaulke Construction Company, Inc.	Letter refers to permit obtained May 9, 1975 for theater	Likely when additional HVAC equipment installed, damaging

				alterations, regarding what appears to be insufficient ventilation and lack of mechanical permits.	remnants of covered proscenium arch
06/09/1982	913825351	UA Comm. Inc.	S. Stanovich Dunn & Gaulke Construction Co., Inc.	Add 104 seat theater in existing building, toilets, projection room	Additional interior alterations (No CEQA review?)
06/18/1982	ZP#1646	N/A	N/A	Zoning permit for additional 100-seat motion picture theater in existing building	Additional interior alterations (No CEQA review?)
03/22/1983	0324839397	UA	McClure Electric, In.	Unspecified	
08/22/1983	9879	UA	Berkeley Plumbing	Unspecified	
06/17/1983	0324839397	UA	McClure Electric, Inc.	Unspecified	
06/27/1984	ZP#5325	N/A	N/A	Zoning permit for “revised equipment support at rear of UA Theater Complex within existing footprint of building” (Associated with ZP#5021)	
01/14/1985	0320856596	UA	S. Stanovich (architect)	Construction of two motion picture theaters and projection rooms; auditoriums Nos. 6 and 7.	Additional interior alterations; no evidence of CEQA review
01/14/1985	ZP#5021	N/A	Stan Stanovich (architect)	Addition of 2 motion pictures to existing structures (exterior corridor).	
04/23/1985	0423857447	UA	Powercon Electric	Unspecified	
05/29/1985	No Record	UA	Image National	Exterior/interior Lighting at Marquee	Related to permit above. (Source: Pano)
05/29/1985	N/A	N/A	N/A	Neon signage; restrooms	
05/30/1985	0530858514	UA	Berkeley Plumbing	Plumbing Permit	
11/06/1985	1105852550	UA	Cooper Bros. Roofing Co., Inc.	Overlay previous roof with cap sheet, tar and gravel	

07/24/1992	92-069	Las Vegas Trail Theater Company	Raga Neon / Milena Rago 02/1992 Drawings by Gordon Sign Company	Sign with “gold lettering and logo on a black sign face” set above existing “reader board”. Approval specifies that “the existing red strip between the new sign face and the existing reader board shall remain red in color. It may be repainted to match the existing red color on the upper façade, if needed, for maintenance.’	Additional Exterior Alteration; No evidence of CEQA review
08/27/1992	92-0609	Las Vegas Trail Theater Company	Interstate Mechanical Systems	Add 5 A/C units and associated ductwork	
07/21/1994	N/A	Las Vegas Trail Theater Company	Raga Neon / Milena Rago	Neon signage	Additional Exterior Alteration; No evidence of CEQA review
01/23/1996	ZP#Z7082	Las Vegas Trail Theater Co.	Magnum Enterprises	Non-structural interior improvements to an existing theater to Title 24 and ADA seating and sanitary requirements.	
10/14/1997	97-4635	United Artists Theater Cir. Inc.	Excel Roofing Service	Reroofing	
10/26/1999	99-4902		Arntz Builders	“Underpinning existing foundations adjacent to library addition”	
01/19/2004	N/A	N/A	PRC Commercial	Concession Stand Alterations	

Appendix 3: Prior Evaluations

- 1978 Historic Resources Inventory Forms for Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey by Betty Marvin
- 2004 DPR Update Form for the AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project by JRP Historical Consulting
- 2015 DPR Forms for Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey by Archives & Architecture, LLC

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State of California - The Resource Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

(State use only)
 Ser _____ Site _____ Mo. _____ Yr. _____
 UTM _____ Q _____ NR 3 SHL _____
 Lat _____ Lon _____ Era _____ Sig 509
 Adm _____ T2 _____ T3 _____ Cat _____ HABS _____ HAER _____ Fed _____

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

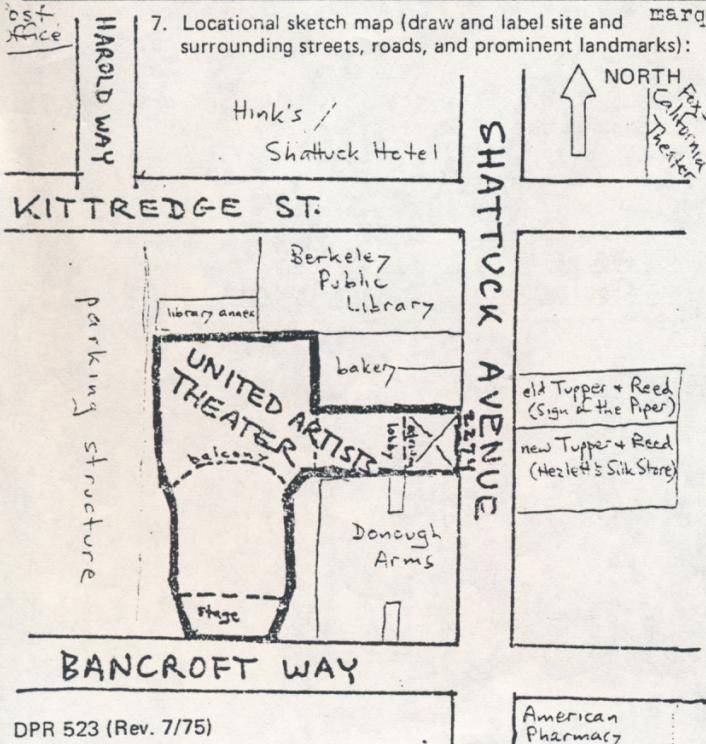
IDENTIFICATION

- Common name: United Artists Theater 10/564460/4191220
- Historic name, if known: same
- Street or rural address: 2274 Shattuck Avenue
 City: Berkeley ZIP: 94704 County: Alameda
- Present owner, if known: United Artists Theater Address: 172 Golden Gate Avenue
 City: San Francisco ZIP: 94102 Ownership is: Public Private
- Present Use: movie theater (4 auditoriums) Original Use: movie theater (1750 seats)
 Other past uses: _____

DESCRIPTION

6. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition: Large & still splendid Art Deco movie palace, behind a deceptively small & austere facade. With the library (J.W. Plachek, 1930) & the little tiled bakery/restaurant next door, forms an Art Deco group which is one of the highlights of downtown Berkeley. UA occupies an L-shaped lot (around the Donough Arms building) of which the Shattuck Ave. frontage is the smaller part & is devoted entirely to grand entrance & lobby. Auditorium building faces Bancroft Way, a massive irregularly shaped concrete block (now holds 4 screening rooms) with service entrances & little else. Facade is a stepped pyramid or widened obelisk, painted beige, with WPA-style sculpture representing Artistry United. Series of 3 lobbies—outside atrium with 4-sided dome, tiled walls & pavement; tall front lobby with mirrors & Deco floral designs in red & gold; inner lobby rambles on in more intimate style under the mezzanine. Streamlined stair & mezzanine railings; frosted glass & metal light fixtures; tropical & classical mural paintings & medallions; 1930s drinking fountains, phone booth, washroom furniture, heating fixtures. Original 25'-deep stage closed off, lounge & smoking room remodeled, 1940s bare-bulb marquee removed, in change from 1 to 4 theaters, 1970-

7. Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



8. Approximate property size: _____
 Lot size (in feet) Frontage 36' (Shattuck) 1976.
 Depth 220' (irregular)
 or approx. acreage _____

- Condition: (check one)
 a. Excellent b. Good c. Fair
 d. Deteriorated e. No longer in existence
- Is the feature a. Altered? b. Unaltered?
- Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)
 a. Open land b. Scattered buildings
 c. Densely built-up d. Residential
 e. Commercial f. Industrial
 g. Other
- Threats to site:
 a. None known b. Private development
 c. Zoning d. Public Works project
 e. Vandalism f. Other
- Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s): Nov. 1977; c. 1930

NOTE: The following (Items 14-19) are structures only.

14. Primary exterior building material: a. Stone b. Brick c. Stucco d. Adobe e. Wood
 f. Other concrete
15. Is the structure: a. On its original site? b. Moved? c. Unknown?
16. Year of initial construction 1932 This date is: a. Factual b. Estimated
17. Architect (if known): "U.A. officials in Los Angeles"
18. Builder (if known): Cahill Bros., Henry J. Baller
19. Related features: a. Barn b. Carriage house c. Outhouse d. Shed(s) e. Formal garden(s)
 f. Windmill g. Watertower/tankhouse h. Other i. None

SIGNIFICANCE

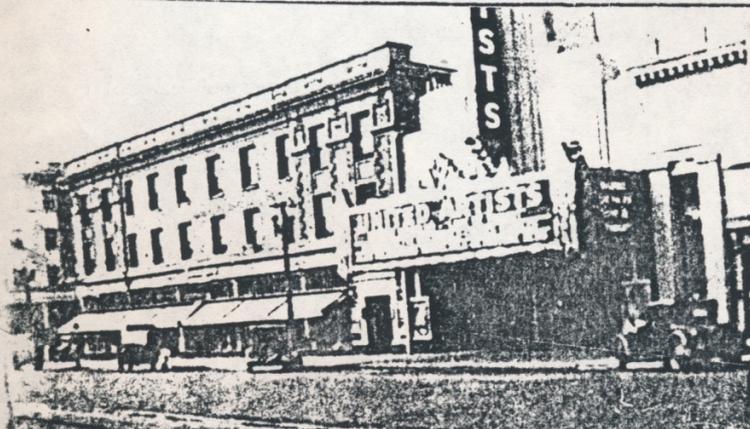
20. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site when known):
 Built 1932 as a local depression employment & amusement measure; reports on the work in progress dwelt on the amount to be spent (\$300,000), the number of jobs, & how many of the 200 workers were to come from Berkeley. Many delays and changes of plans, to which we partly owe its advanced glass Deco style: early reports planned a "free adaptation of Spanish Renaissance", in other words the Moorish style of the 1920s, like the nearby Fox-California as rebuilt 1929-30. U.A. went ahead after "extensive survey...convinced them that Berkeley was in a position to support a high class theater of the size contemplated." Plans at one time called for the Bancroft Way frontage--sheer concrete wall with just the least ridged pattern--to be decorated, but money was apparently not available. Stage, orchestra pit, & dressing rooms; space was provided for a large theater organ in the future. By the time the theater opened, management had been transferred to Fox-West Coast, which also operated the nearby UC and California theaters.

Though some splendor has been lost in creating the 4 auditoriums, moving the box office inside (after a cashier was shot in a holdup), & removing the bare-bulb marquee & vertical neon sign (to highlight the murals, & complement similar purification at the library), this is a glorious preserved Art Deco theater, comparable on a smaller scale to the Oakland Paramount. It has not been through the Paramount's spectacular peril & resurrection, but has operated continuously for 45 years as a small-town movie theater. Hard times for movies in 1960-70s probably helped keep it intact--while the building was out of fashion there was neither money nor interest to remodel it.

21. Main theme of the historic resource: (Check only one): a. Architecture b. Arts & Leisure now nostalgia fad
 c. Economic/Industrial d. Exploration/Settlement e. Government f. Military provides desire, & 4 auditoriums
 g. Religion h. Social/Education the means, to preserv it.

22. Sources: List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews, and their dates: Building permits, City of Berkeley. Berkeley Progress (Chamber of Commerce), Nov. 1931, March & Sep. 1932; Courier, Nov. 7, 1931. Daily Californian, "Multi-Theater Complexes Sweep Nation," S. Fields, Jan. 18, 1977, p. 5. interview with manager Mr. Gee, Nov. 1977. Donogh collection, B.A.H.A. Ben Hall, Golden Age of the Movie Palace, N.Y., 1961--p. 128, Roxy Th. on similar irregular lot.

23. Date form prepared: Jan. 20, 1978 By (name): Betty Marwin
 Address: 2646 Claremont Av. City Berkeley ZIP: 94705
 Phone: (415) 849-1959 Organization: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey



State of California – The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION UPDATE SHEET	Primary # _____
	HRI # _____
	Trinomial _____
	NRHP Status Code <u>3S</u>

Page 1 of 1 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference No. 01-35

*Recorded by Toni Webb *Date November 16, 2004 Continuation Update

P1. Other Identifier: c. Address 2274 Shattuck Avenue City Berkeley Zip 94704
e. Other Locational Data: APN: 057-2028-003

P3a. Description: Field check of the building in November 2004 found that it does not appear to have undergone any alteration that would warrant a change in its National Register status code.

*P8. Recorded by: JRP Historical Consulting, 1490 Drew Ave., Suite 110, Davis, CA 95616

*P9. Date Recorded: November 10, 2004

*P11. Report Citation: JRP Historical Consulting, "Historic Properties Inventory and Evaluation: East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project."

B10. Significance: Betty Marvin of Berkeley Architectural Heritage Survey previously inventoried and evaluated the United Artists Theater building in 1978 on the attached Historic Resources Inventory form. That survey found that this property appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP status code 3) for its association within Berkeley's arts and leisure historic context and for its Art Deco architecture. Subsequently, the property appears to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources and appears to be a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

*B14. Evaluator: Jessica Herrick

*Date of Evaluation: November 22, 2004



Photograph 1. United Artist building, camera facing west, November 16, 2004.

State of California – The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMARY RECORD		Primary # HRI # Trinomial NRHP Status Code 2S2
Other Listings Review Code	Reviewer	Date

Page 1 of 6 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) United Artists Theater

P1. Other Identifier :

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted *a. County Alameda
 and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)
 *b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 1993 Township & Range No data
 c. Address 2274 Shattuck Ave. City Berkeley Zip 94704
 d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S; 564365mE/ 4191413mN
 e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
 Assessor's Parcel Number: 57-2028-3;
 West side of Shattuck Avenue between Bancroft Way and Kittredge Street.

***P3a Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Although the base of the front façade has been altered over time, the United Artists Theater Building at 2274 Shattuck Ave. features a distinctive 1930s Art Deco upper façade on Shattuck Avenue and an original formed-concrete theater shell on Bancroft Way. The theater is a Contributor to the Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District. The proportions and materials of the dynamic façade design continue today to serve as a clear example of an early twentieth-century commercial/theater building in the downtown core.

The United Artists Theater is part of a setting of mostly historic buildings along the primary commercial corridor along Shattuck Avenue and the transit center that connects the city with the University of California campus.

(Continued on next page)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP10. Theater

*P4 Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
 View facing west, January 2015.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age & Sources:
 Historic Prehistoric Both
 1931, 84 years old, based on newspaper articles.

*P7. Owner and Address:
 William J. Wade Tr
 7132 Regal Lane
 Knoxville, TN 37918

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)
 F. Maggi, L. Dill, & S. Winder
 Archives & Architecture, LLC
 PO Box 1332
 San Jose CA 95109-1332

*P9. Date Recorded: March 30, 2015

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
 Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none".)

Archives & Architecture LLC: Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey, 2015.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure and Object Record Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling State Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List)

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) United Artists Theater

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi, Leslie Dill, & Sarah Winder *Date 3/30/2015 Continuation Update

(Continued from previous page)

The stepped upper front façade is notable for its Art Deco style frescos and bas relief. "Artistry" and "Unity" are featured on each side of the tower, with stylized imagery of leaves and globes, gears and levers, musical instruments, and male and female forms. The tall center of the upper façade once supported a blade sign; there have been two designs, both mounted during the period of the original projecting Art Deco marquee. The tower has curving patterns similar to plumes. The sides of the tower are accentuated with scrolls and half-arches. The base of the building includes outer piers clad in marble and a remodeled recessed entrance. An original tile floor is evident at the south side of the entrance area. The current marquee is a recent installation, flat to the building. Previous documentation indicated that the interiors were also Art Deco from the 1930s.

The building lobby leads to a large theater area with a more utilitarian exterior design. The mostly unpainted fly of the original theater abuts the sidewalk along Bancroft Way. This imposing, rectangular structure is built of cast concrete with vertical fluted speed stripes and board-formed horizontal texture. Its height is equivalent to five or six stories tall. At the east corner is a one-story exiting wing. At the west corner is a two-story wing with a driveway/service entrance.

This building serves pedestrian traffic that flows from the primary commercial strip along Shattuck Avenue to the related downtown urban uses and the University Campus nearby. The large, irregular, L-shaped parcel is approximately 36 feet wide at Shattuck Avenue and wraps around the corner building to have a wall on Bancroft. The footprint of the building covers almost the entire property, with some setbacks for egress.

Character-defining features include: stepped-parapet front wall; concrete wall structure and board-formed concrete rear wing with its vertical speed stripes; recessed entrance form; wall frescos and bas relief; tower plume, arch, and scroll patterns; original tile floor. Alterations include the recent current marquee and the loss of the blade sign.

The historic elements of the building appear in fair condition.



Lobby entry, viewed facing northwest.

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Trinomial

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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) United Artists Theater

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi, Leslie Dill, & Sarah Winder *Date 3/30/2015 Continuation Update

(Continued from previous page)



Lobby entry, viewed facing west.



Stagehouse at Bancroft Avenue, viewed facing north.

State of California – The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Primary #
 HRI #

Page 4 of 6

*NRHP Status Code 5B

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) United Artists Theatre

B1. Historic Name: United Artists Theater

B2. Common Name: United Artists Berkeley 7

B3. Original use: Film Theater B4. Present Use: Multi-screen movie theater

*B5. Architectural Style: Art Deco

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Constructed 1931-32 as a single screen auditorium. Remodeled in the 1970s to four screens, and subdivided into a total of seven screens in the early 1980s. Marquee replaced at an undetermined date.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: n/a Original Location: n/a

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a Architect: Walker & Eisen / Clifford A. Balch

b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme Arts & Entertainment Area Downtown Berkeley

Period of Significance 1932-1958 Property Type Commercial Applicable Criteria A (1), C (3)

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The United Artists Theater building at 2274 Shattuck Ave. is a local historic resource that has been found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building's significance is based on its distinctive architecture and its role in Downtown Berkeley as an entertainment venue. The evaluation for significance was prepared by Cindy Toffelmier of JRP Historical Consulting for the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project, and on March 15, 2006, OHP listed the property on the California Register of Historical Resources.

The theatre was constructed in 1931-32, and opened on September 16, 1932. Known as United Artists Berkeley 7, the multi-screen theater was originally designed as a single-auditorium theater, by Walker & Eisen, Architects, together with Clifford A. Balch. Although facing Shattuck Avenue with a modest lobby, the theater has a large auditorium structure that imposes over Bancroft Avenue with its stagehouse. Costing \$300,000 by the time of opening in late 1932, it was considered a large project during the early years of the 1930s Depression.

(Continued on next page)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) None

*B12. References:

- Finacom, S. "Berkeley's United Artists Theater Turns 75," *Berkeley Daily Planet*, 9/14/2007.
- Marvin, B., Historic Resources Inventory form, 1978.
- Naylor, D., *Great American Movie Theaters*, 1987.
- Valentine, M., *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk*, 1996.

B13. Remarks: Proposed historic district

*B14. Evaluator: Franklin Maggi

*Date of Evaluation: March 30, 2015

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder)

United Artists Theater

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi, Leslie Dill, & Sarah Winder *Date 3/30/2015 Continuation Update

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The United Artists Theatre opened with 1,800 seats, and was extensively publicized in local newspapers, an important civic event in a hard hit Depression-era city. Notable entertainers such as Bing Crosby attended the opening ceremonies.

United Artists (UA) had been founded in 1919 by movie stars Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith to make films and, as was common during this time, show them in their own corporate-owned theaters. Today, the company operates under the name United Artists Media Group (UAMG). The Berkeley UA Theater was an early link in the United Artists theater chain and considered luxurious for the time. The Berkeley Theater was similar in design to a number of Southern California UA theaters that were also the work of Clifford Balch working with Walker & Eisen.

Clifford A. Balch was an architect whose work is primarily found in Southern California. Born in Minnesota in 1880, the son of a carpenter, the Balch family relocated to Pasadena in the early 1890s. He was a partner in the firm of Balch and Stanbery, Architects and Engineer. His partnership with Floyd Edgar Stanbery specialized in movie theatres in the 1920s, but dissolved by the early 1930s.

Balch also designed theatres for Fox West Coast Theatres as well as United Artists throughout California throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, producing over 20 classic Art Deco style movie theatres across California and Nevada. He also worked on Berkeley's renovation of the T&D at this time for Fox West Coast.

The architectural partnership of Walker & Eisen was formed by architects Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen, in Los Angeles, California. The work of the firm spans many building types beyond theaters, including The Hotel Normandie, the Platt Building, and the Beverley Wilshire Hotel, all in Southern California.

Balch and the Walter & Eisen individually designed many other California theaters in addition to working as a team on Berkeley's United Artists Theater. The Berkeley theater was a standard United Artists style house for the period with deco panels on the front were labeled "Unity" and "Artistry."

Integrity

The United Artists Theater retains some of its overall historic architectural integrity in the context of the potential historic district. It has integrity of location and setting in Downtown Berkeley; integrity of its Art Deco design at the upper floor and the massive side wall; integrity of only some materials including the upper stucco design and the entire Bancroft Way massing; however, the marquee, sign, and ground floor have been altered in relatively recent times. The strength of the second-floor façade design continues to convey visual associations with Berkeley commercial/theater design in the early twentieth century. The building is readily identifiable as an historic building within the greater downtown core.

Prior Surveys

The property was surveyed in 1978, and found eligible for the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The building was reevaluated by Cindy Toffelmier of JRP Historical Consulting for the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project, and was determined eligible for the National Register through a consensus in the Section 106 process, and on March 15, 2006, OHP listed the property on the California Register of Historical Resources.

Evaluation

The building is historically significant due to its association with important patterns of development in the downtown core, and for its distinctive Art Deco architecture.

(Continued on next page)

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*Recorded by Franklin Maggi, Leslie Dill, & Sarah Winder *Date 3/30/2015 Continuation Update

(Continued from previous page)

The property remains an important contributor to the establishment of a historic district in the greater Shattuck Avenue area. The building continues to represent, at the street, commercial forms and materials that were prominent in the downtown during the period of historical significance for this building; from 1932-1958. The form and detailing of both the building and its original commercial storefronts maintain an important link to the past of downtown Berkeley.



1960s photo from Regal Entertainment.