

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 29-00095 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 29-03685
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Capitol Theater
 other names/site number Downtown Survey Map # DT-57

2. Location

street & number 211-213 N. Third
 city or town Burlington vicinity, county Des Moines
 Legal Description:(If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original City Block(s) _____ Lot(s) Lot 366 N 20.63' & Lot 367 S 30'4"

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property		
	If Non-Eligible Property	If Eligible Property, enter number of:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Enter number of:	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	— buildings	<u>1</u>	— buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site	— sites	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	— structures	—	— structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object	— objects	—	— objects
	— Total	<u>1</u>	— Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).
 Title Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of "East" Downtown Burlington, IA Historical Architectural Data Base Number 29-034

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>08A2 movie theater</u>	<u>08A theater</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>08C Art Deco</u>	foundation <u>not visible</u>
_____	walls (visible material) <u>07 terra cotta</u>
_____	roof <u>not visible</u>
_____	other <u>13A glass block 03 brick</u>

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	A Property is associated with significant events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Des Moines Address 211-213 N. 3rd Street Site Number 29-00095
City Burlington District Number 29-03685

Criteria Considerations

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

05: Commerce
02: Architecture

Significant Dates

Construction date 1937 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation 2012 restoration

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect Wetherell & Harrison
Builder Carl A. Nelson

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve Frevert, commission member Rebecca L. McCarley, consultant, Davenport
organization Burlington Historic Preservation Commission date 23 January 2013
street & number City Hall, 400 Washington Street telephone 319-753-8158
city or town Burlington state Iowa zip code 52601

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____

See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.

Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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Capitol Theater
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7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story theater facing N. Third St to the east. The building is composed in an Art Deco / Moderne style with strong vertical accents. The façade is composed of glazed terra cotta in yellow, burnt orange, and two shades of red/brown. Metallic gold glazed terra cotta is used across the top of the first floor openings and for the façade's upper ribs. The center of the upper façade has three vertical glass block window slits set in a ribbed projection. An additional glass block window slit is located at both sides of the façade. The front of the building is dominated by the V-shaped metal marquee that extends over the sidewalk, restored in 2005. "Capitol" is spelled out in individual letters on either side, and the letters and marquee are lit with neon tubes. The sign portion of the marquee is internally lit and surrounded by individual incandescent bulbs; individual red plastic letters are used to spell out show information. An additional internally lit sign area extends above the entries to the theater. A three sided ticket booth with terra cotta below and windows above is located at the center of the first story. The two pairs of entry doors (reproductions of the original design) have matching asymmetrical glass. The glass of the original entry door to the concession area has a similar shape, with diagonal panes dividing the upper portion. The only window on the first floor, other than in the doors, is adjacent to this. There are four display cases on the storefront for posters. There are three casement windows in the second story lobby area; these are not really visible above the marquee.

There are adjoining buildings to the north and south. The alley side (west) is of common brick. There is no visible foundation. The interior has been connected to the building to the south (left) (now the Capitol annex).

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Capitol Theater was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 for its architectural significance under Criterion C. The Capitol Theater also appears to contribute architecturally and historically to the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District. The construction in 1937 was at the start of several major construction projects in the late 1930s with community leaders working together to reenergize the local economy. The Art Deco / Moderne design is unique in Burlington, and it retains a high level of integrity.

The Capitol Theater was designed as a movie house by the Des Moines firm of Wetherell & Harrison for Central States Theater Corporation, which leased the property. The Capitol opened on July 1, 1937. The theater was remarkable for its polychromatic terra cotta exterior, stylish Art Deco detailing, and state of the art air conditioning system. The Central States Theater Corporation already operated the Palace Theater in the block to the north on N. 3rd Street and the Iowa Theater a block over on N. Main, as well as a number of theaters in other towns. They saw a need for a modern theater in Burlington, and local leaders worked with them to gain a theater twice as big as they originally planned. The article on the opening on July 1, 1937 noted that the façade was clad in a combination of terra cotta and structural glass in shades of burgundy and brown, with an electric marquee. The interior was decorated with a terrazzo floor, wood veneer on the walls, stainless steel trim, and acoustical tile ceiling. The theater boasted the latest type of movie screen, modern heating and air conditioning for

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comfort, rest rooms, and a lounge (“New Theater Opens Doors on Thursday,” *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, June 30, 1937, 1, 9). The Art Deco / Moderne design is unique in Burlington, and the 1996 National Register of Historic Places nomination notes that it is a textbook example of those modes as applied to movie theater design. It was designed by Roland T. “Tip” Harrison of the Des Moines architectural firm of Wetherall and Harrison, and it was one of eight theaters designed for the Central States Theater Corporation between 1936 and 1939. Only the Capitol Theater in Burlington and the Charles Theater in Charles City retain such an incredibly high degree of integrity of the exterior façade. The theater was built by the local contractor Carl A. Nelson Company (Meck 1996: 8:2). Additional information on the history and architecture of the theater can be found on the National Register of Historic Places nomination.

Central State Theaters undertook a major remodel for their other downtown theater in 1948, the Palace Theater at 312-318 N. 3rd Street (see State Site #29-00097). They again hired architects Weatherall & Harrison of Des Moines for this modern theater project, which clad the façade in “cast stone” (concrete) panels. In 1951, there were five theaters in Burlington: Palace Theater (312-318 N. 3rd Street, extant), Arion Theatre (210 N. Main, extant), Capitol Theater (211 N. 3rd St, extant), Zephyr Theatre (in former Masonic Temple at 420 Jefferson, extant), and Burlington Drive-In Theatre (Agency Rd). Over the next decade, two of the four downtown theaters closed. In 1970, the Capitol Theatre (211 N. 3rd St) and Palace Theater (312-318 N. 3rd Street) continued to be listed, with the Burlington Drive-In Theatre (Agency Rd) and Players Workshop Theatre (1431 Grove) operating elsewhere in town. Central States Theaters closed the Capitol Theater in downtown in 1977, opening two large theaters (West I and II) in West Burlington. To squelch possible competition, Central States continued to pay the Capitol’s lease for nine more years but let the theater building deteriorate. The Palace Theater, more recently upgraded, was then the last downtown theater in operation. In the late 1980s, the large auditorium space was divided into two theaters, Palace I and II. In 1991, the Palace Theater was the only downtown theater listed, with the two theaters in West Burlington and the Burlington Drive-In Theatre (Agency Rd) also showing movies in town. Central States Theaters then opened a six-plex at Westland Mall, with the Palace Theater showing second-run movies for \$2 in 1995. However, that plan did not prove viable, and the Palace Theater also closed downtown in December 1995 (“Palace Theater,” *Hawk-Eye*, December 10, 1995, 3A).

The Capitol Theater was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in November of 1996. A Friends group was formed in 2003 with the intention of bringing back the theater, either by owning and operating it, or offering resources and help to a new owner. Eventually, the Capitol Theater Foundation was formed and purchased the theater in March 2005. The next month, they purchased the adjacent building to the south as an annex for additional lobby space, restrooms, dressing rooms, offices, and storage. The restored marquee was relit in November 2005. In 2010, Downtown Partners, Inc., Burlington’s Main Street program, obtained a \$1 million I-Jobs grant from the state of Iowa for the theater’s restoration. This major financial award, along with a Historic Sites Preservation Grant from the state historical society, state historic rehab tax credits, and private fundraising, enabled the \$3 million restoration of the Capitol Theater and annex to be completed in spring 2012.

The restoration of the Capitol involved all new electric, HVAC, plumbing, carpeting, seats, and sound and projection systems. The building was reroofed and the terra cotta exterior repaired. Inside, the

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concession counter and ticket booth were reconstructed, walls were replastered and painted based on the original colors, and the lobby's colorful terrazzo floor was repaired. In the auditorium, damaged acoustic tiles were repaired or replaced, and the stage was extended to facilitate live performances. The annex was rehabbed for a gallery and gathering space, restrooms, dressing rooms, offices, kitchen, and storage; the original maple floors and tin ceiling were uncovered and restored. The Capitol Theater and Performing Arts Center held its grand reopening on June 1 and 2, 2012, thirty-five years after the theater had gone dark.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories, Burlington, Iowa, various dates. On microfiche at the Burlington Public Library

Deed records, per transfer books at Des Moines County Auditor's Office.

Downtown Partners, Inc., a Division of the Greater Burlington Partnership, Burlington, Iowa. Collection of collected historic photographs of downtown Burlington.

Newspapers, various titles and editions. Particular special editions utilized:

- Burlington Evening Gazette*, March 24, 1906
- Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 10 November 1936, pp. 1-2
- Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, September 2, 1938
- Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 4, 1942
- Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 10, 1962
- Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 4, 1976

Perspective Map of the City of Burlington, IA. Milwaukee, WI: American Publishing Co., 1889.

Portrait and Biographical Album of Des Moines County, Iowa. Chicago: Acme Publishing Company, 1888.

Sanborn Map Company. "Burlington, Iowa," Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1892, 1900, 1931, 1952.

Smith, Claudia, and Marie Landon. 1976 survey of sites in Burlington. Iowa Site Inventory forms prepared on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, IA.

Vertical files. Files on business/industry as well as individual businesses. Burlington Public Library, Burlington, Iowa.

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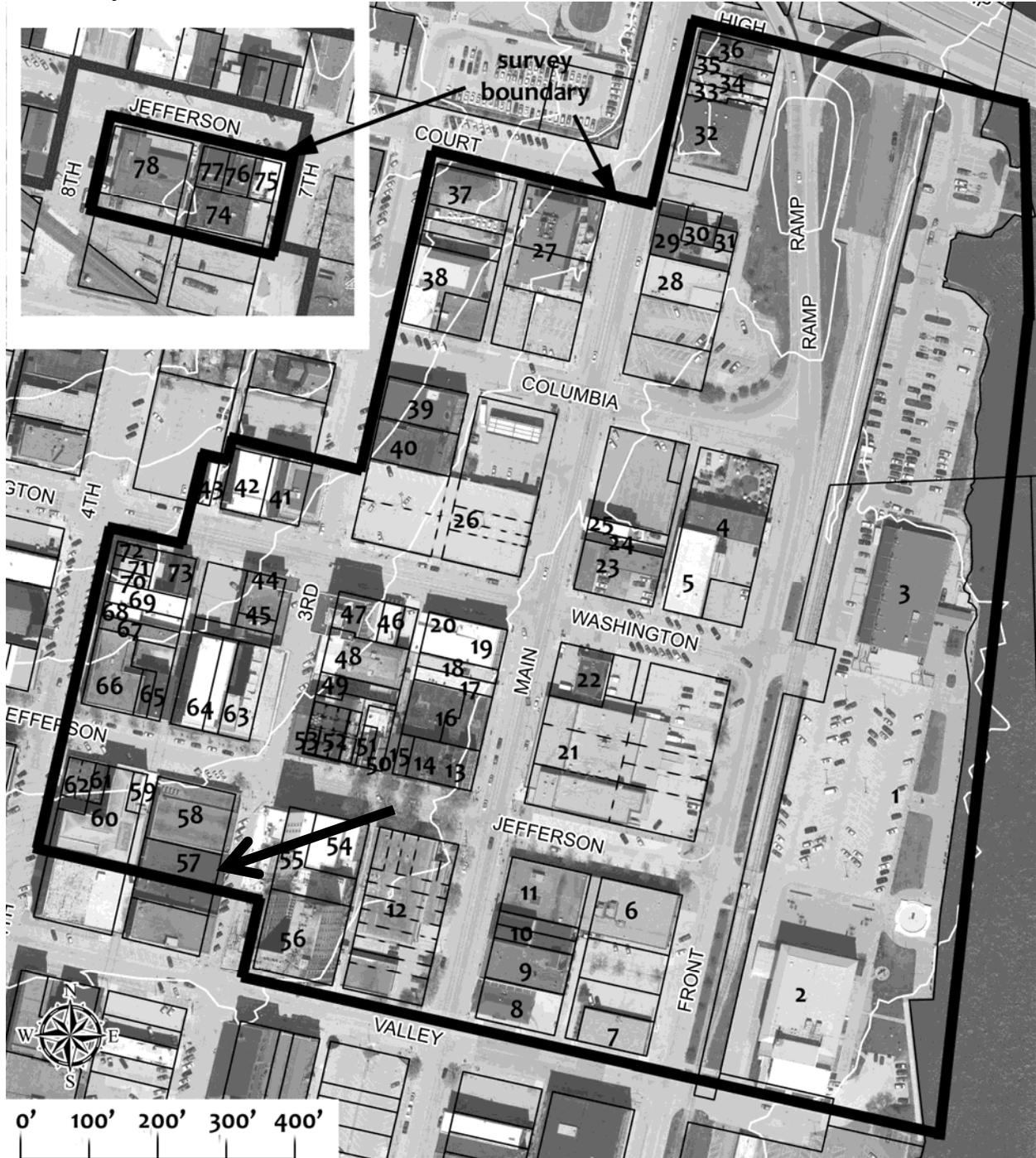
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Location map



Base aerial photography by Aerial Services Inc for Des Moines County GIS Commission, March 2010.

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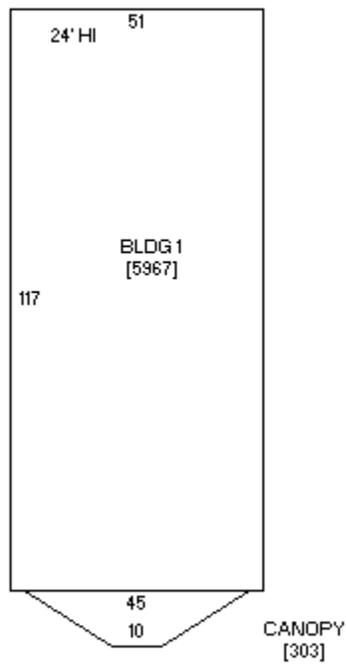
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Building plan (from assessor's website)



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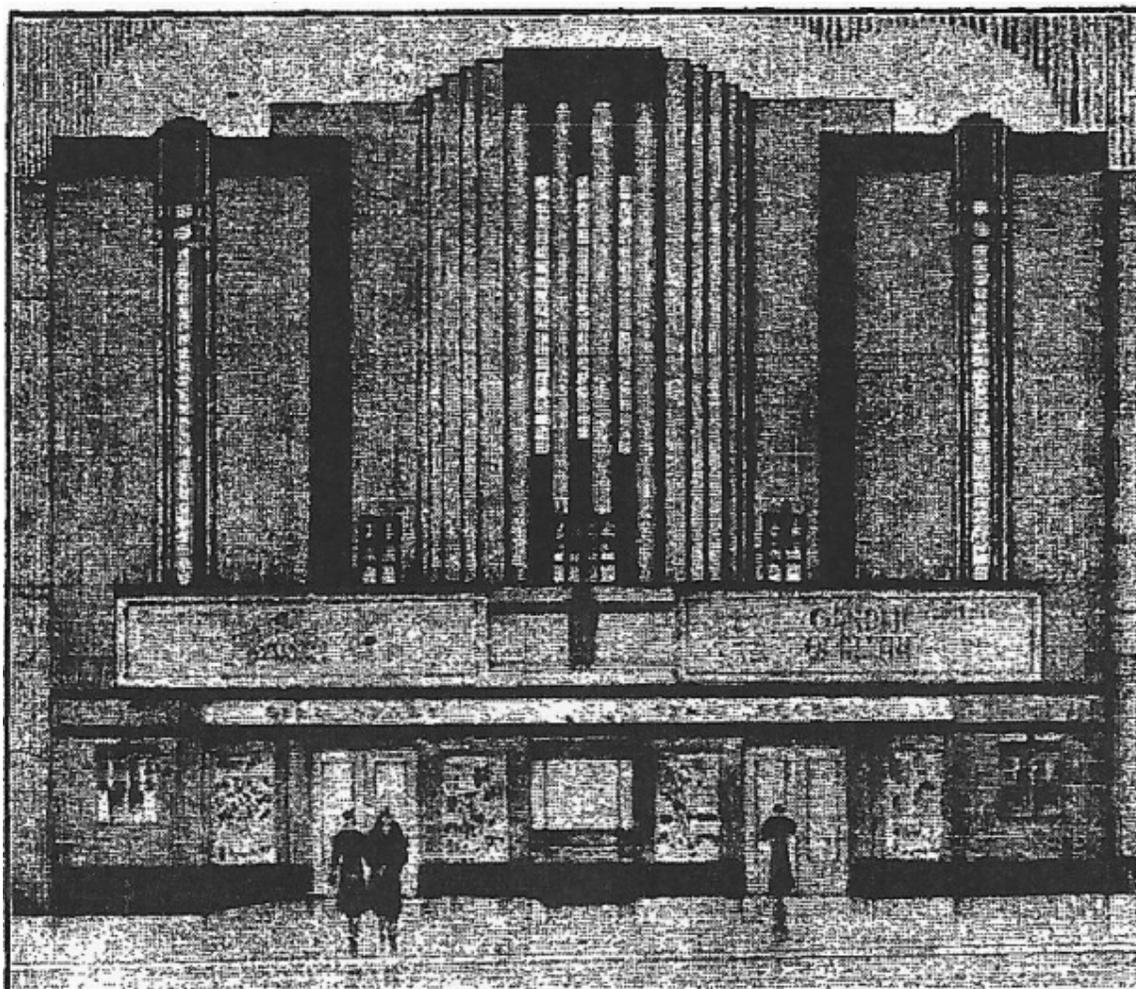
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Historic images



Sketch of Capitol Theatre (*Gazette*, December 29, 1936, 1).

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View of building in February 1982 (American Classic Images)

Online at [http://americanclassicimages.com/
Default.aspx?tabid=141&txtSearch=CATAdvancedSearch1%2c15%2c3%2c438&ProductID=27203](http://americanclassicimages.com/Default.aspx?tabid=141&txtSearch=CATAdvancedSearch1%2c15%2c3%2c438&ProductID=27203)

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Digital photographs



Photograph 29-00095-001 – East elevation, looking southwest (McCarley, June 20, 2012)