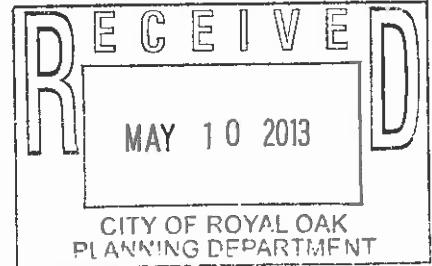


**THE BALDWIN THEATRE  
415 S Lafayette Avenue  
Royal Oak, Michigan**



**FINAL REPORT**

**January 25, 2013**

By ordinance dated December 19, 1994 the Royal Oak City Commission established the Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee in accordance with Michigan's Local Historic District's Act, Public Act 169 (1970), as amended.

**Boundaries**

**Property Description:**

T1N, R11E, SEC 21 ASSESSOR'S PLAT No 20, LOT 5 Exc 111 Ft, Also Exc BEG AT SE LOT COR (ALSO BEING SW COR OF LOT 6), TH N 88-56-13 W 4.82 Ft, TH N 01-20-13 E 21.89 Ft, TH S 88-39-47 E 4.71 Ft, TH SLY ALG E LINE OF SD LOT 5 TO BEG, ALSO W 38 Ft OF LOT 7 BLK 20 1-14-05 FR 008

**Tax Item No.:** 63-72-25-21-236-016

**Percentage of Historic and Non-historic Resources**

The percentage for historic resources is 100%.

***Non-Historic contribution:*** Additions to the historic portion comprise 37% of the present overall footprint.

**Charge of the Study Committee**

The Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee is charged with the mission of identifying, researching, and studying potential historic sites and districts within the city

of Royal Oak. The research results are reported to the City and State in compliance with Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act PO 169 of 1970, as amended in 1992.

### **Members of the Study Committee**

Ruth G. Cleaveland

Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Commission

Member, Roundtable of Royal Oak Historical Organizations

Tammis Donaldson

Registered Architect

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Robert R. Duchene

Vice-Chair, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Teacher, United States History

Dr. Jim Keiller

Psychologist

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Marc Sackin

Secretary, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

Colleen Corey

Member, Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee

### **Historical Significance**

**Significant Features:** 1922 performing arts theater; architect Frederick D. Madison; history of the Stagecrafters organization founded in 1955; 1922 Barton Organ; Neoclassical interior

In June of 1922, the 7000 citizens of Royal Oak were debating the benefits of constructing an elevated railway that would extend to 8 Mile Road. Forster and Sons had a special on scratch feed for hens and the City Treasurer, William Brons, had suffered a home burglary in which the perpetrators had entered by way of a skeleton key.

But the big news in Royal Oak was the June 22 gala opening of the Baldwin Theatre. The debut film was "Reported Missing" featuring Owen Moore. Fourteen months of planning and construction had produced what the Royal Oak Tribune pronounced the "best appointed playhouse in Michigan, outside of Detroit". It was, the Tribune glowed, "a masterpiece" that was "a monument to the growth and strength and progress of our city". The brilliantly lit theater was said by the Royal Oak Tribune to bring a "Fairy Wonderland" to mind. The Baldwin was not at all the first movie house in Royal Oak – that distinction belongs to the "Idle Hour" located at 305 S. Main, which had debuted December 6, 1912 – but Royal Oak was very pleased with its new film palace.

Conceived and built by the Citizens Theatre Company and managed by Fred Beardsley, the Baldwin Theatre seated 1400 and featured "frescoed walls, majestic chandeliers and tinted ceilings". The sign over the entrance had more than 500 electric lights to amplify the excitement. Located at the corner of Washington and Fifth Streets, the new theater was named after the Company's treasurer, John H. Baldwin.

A Royal Oak High School student named Clarence Folland won \$50 in a competition to name the new theater. It is unknown if young Clarence actually knew John H. Baldwin, born 78 years earlier in Otsego County, New York. The youngest of 13, John H. had moved to Pontiac in his 30's and worked on the farm associated with the State Hospital there. In 1889, John bought his own farm on Crooks Road north of 14 Mile. 21 years later, John gave up farming and devoted himself to business and ultimately banking. At the time of the theatre's opening, John was President of the First State Bank of Royal Oak and one of the prime movers behind the creation of this theater.

The Baldwin Theatre soon became an entertainment center rather than just a movie theater. During the 1920s, Royal Oak students performed an operetta named "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" there. A "whirlie girlie" musical review entitled "Royal Oak

Scandals of 1924" earned rave reviews in the Royal Oak Tribune. A Detroiter by the name of Marian Berdan conducted dance classes there in 1922. But the Baldwin especially prided itself on its vaudeville. A 1929 ad proclaimed the Baldwin the "only theatre in Royal Oak playing vodvil every day".

On the stage of the Baldwin could be found comedians, acrobatic midgets, trained dogs, magicians, singers, yodlers, hoop rollers, roller skaters, escape artists and hand-to-hand balancing acts. An act calling itself 'Serra and Serra' performed "Feet Flirtology" and in 1922, a "big dancing contest" was held that promised "a loving cup", the gift of a film star named Irene Castle. And the 1920s being the Jazz Age, in 1928 the 'Jazz Pirates' featured "14 Hotsy Totsy Jazz Pirate Girls".

Part of the allure of the new Baldwin Theatre was its \$12,000 Barton Concert Organ. Music had become an important part of the film experience and this magnificent organ joined the Bush and Lane Piano and the Baldwin Theatre Orchestra in presenting a complete entertainment experience. The organ was manufactured by the Barton Organ Company of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, a major organ creator of the era. Founded by Professor Dan Barton of Amherst, Wisconsin, the company focused on the Midwest theater market, so much so that the company was generally reluctant to ship its instruments further than a Pullman train car could travel in one night. Perhaps for this reason, only about 250 Barton theater organs were built between 1918 and 1931. A special feature of the Baldwin's 1922 Opening Night was Professor Barton's appearance to play his own organ.

The Baldwin's organ, which is still operational, creates a natural stereo sound since the pipes are located in shallow chambers on either side of the auditorium. The organ is powered by a 3 horsepower blower and the electrical switching system is located in a separate room. The organ has two ranks of pipes with shutters in front of them. These shutters control the volume of sound emitted. For instance, when they are nearly closed, the organ sound can be as low as a whisper and when the shutters are fully opened, the sound is monumental. Percussion stops can imitate a wide variety of other musical instruments accompanying the volume selected by the organist.

Organ recitals were only one part of what could be a long night of entertainment at the

Baldwin. Once the feature film was shown, up to 7 vaudeville acts might take the stage to be followed by a 'Pathé' news reel and a performance by a Theater symphony of 7 – 12 musicians. A November 1924 show started at 2:30 in the afternoon and ended at 11 at night. Even in the 1920s, the adult admission of 25 cents and the child's admission of 10 cents must have seemed a good value. And by 1923, the Baldwin must have seemed an especially attractive destination in summer months as the boasted it was the "coolest in the state" by being "20 degrees cooler inside".

Apparently cool air was not the only attraction of the building. In May of 1924, the Royal Oak Tribune reported that burglars had tried to cut the alarm wire but failed and been forced to flee. The newspaper described an earlier and more successful attempt two months previous, when the safe was "blown with nitroglycerin and more than \$1400" was lost.

The prime attraction during the Roaring Twenties at the Baldwin were the movies. Films from that era featured the big names of the day such as Clara Bow, Lon Chaney, Buster Keaton and Rudolph Valentino. A milestone in film technology was reached in May of 1929 – the first "talking picture" was heard as well as seen at the Baldwin. In "Coquette", the Royal Oak Tribune exulted that Mary Pickford's voice "possessed the flawless diction of culture and the finished smoothness of poise and experience".

But another critical change had happened earlier than that. In November of 1928, the theater was sold by John, Jay and Harry Merritt to Mabel W. Baldwin, daughter of the banker after whom the theater had been named. Mabel had had the distinction of being the first woman elected to a Royal Oak city commission in 1921. After redecorating, Ms. Baldwin apparently had a change of heart and sold the theater to Louis and William Kimmel on March 8, 1929 in exchange for the Royal Theater. Three days later, the Royal closed, a 10-year closing being a provision of the deal. The Baldwin went to some length to reassure customers that "Ladies' Free Chinaware Night" would be continued.

In 1936, sole owner Louis Kimmel made his own décor changes, which included a new entrance ("done in Chinese red, silver and blue" the Tribune reported) and a 57 foot 'Washington' sign, topped by a neon ball. A new ticket office was also built in the center

of the entrance. French doors from the old theater were removed to carry out "a modernistic motif". The new theater, now the 'Washington' opened October 6, 1936.

### The Washington Theatre

The Washington Theatre entertained the families of Royal Oak through the Great Depression with movies like "Dead End" (January 1938). It provided distraction from the anxiety of World War II with fare such as "Big Noise", starring Laurel and Hardy (January 1945). Family features such as "Lady and the Tramp" (February 1955) and "The Mummy" (February 1960) reflected changes in the popular culture of the day as did "Easy Rider" (January 1970). The building also doubled as a community bomb shelter in the 1950's. Later restoration teams reported finding barrels of crackers and water in the building.

The building had progressively begun to show its age and on January 6, 1976, the Washington Theatre closed due to its general state of disrepair. Then owner Harvey Farber spent \$40,000 to redo the front of the building with aluminum, modify the underside of the marquee, paint the interior and repair seats. A decision was also made to permanently close the balcony.

A week before Christmas 1976, the remodeled Washington Theatre opened with a showing of "Marathon Man", a film that was not first-run but was described by Mr. Farber as "current". This policy of exhibiting so-called "B" movies was designed to keep ticket prices low. Films at the Washington could be viewed in the mid-seventies for \$1.25 rather than the more common \$3.50.

Ticket prices perhaps were too low. By June, 1984, the City of Royal Oak had taken over the building due to non-payment of utility bills and taxes. Within days of that closing, a fire described by Fire Marshall Roy Pingilley as "definitely set" and "not of natural origin" severely damaged the stage area of the theater. Damage was estimated in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range. Owner Jeffrey Dunn was described in the Royal Oak Tribune as in "shock". Mr. Dunn exclaimed, "I was up all night over it".

In addition to the burnt theater, two adjacent sites had suffered fire damage in separate incidents. City officials were obviously concerned. The Downtown Development

Authority had purchased the site in June of 1994 for \$98,000 and was exploring alternative uses of the building, including a "nostalgic theme" restaurant combined with a classic film theater. City officials feared the theater would become a venue for "X-rated" film. Many in the community saw no reasonable path other than tearing down the venerable building and installing a parking garage.

### **Stagecrafters**

About this time, a community theater troupe from Clawson called Stagecrafters was proposing an idea to the City Commission. Their idea was to lease the 4th floor of Royal Oak's municipal parking structure and build a 250 seat theater on it. Their vision was of a \$250,000 steel building housing a theater complete with full-glassed window views of downtown Royal Oak.

Founded in 1956 by 14 theater enthusiasts, Stagecrafters first set up at Clawson Elementary to show "Blithe Spirit", then shifted operations in 1961 to Page Junior High in Madison Heights. At this time, the group was meeting in a former chicken coop to plan its future. In 1968, the organization purchased an old church at 176 Bowers in Clawson and opened their first full season there in 1975. Stagecrafters had added a program for youth called Rag-A-Muffin Players and had formed an association with the "Company of Ten" theater group in St. Albans, England. Funded by ticket sales, fund-raising drives and donations, the group's success meant it had outgrown the 120-seat church site and its bold plan for the parking structure theater showed energy and ambition. But the parking structure idea was viewed as problematic by city officials.

City Planner Lew McDaniel had another idea. Collaborating with Harold Robinson, the Stagecrafters' attorney/actor, a plan was developed to form an agreement between the DDA and Stagecrafters to have the theater renovated and run by the non-profit group and not by the city. Stagecrafters would purchase the building in order to perform plays and other artistic activities. Using insurance money, some generous loans from the National Bank of Royal Oak and funds from the sale of the church building, Stagecrafters would perform the restoration. The stage area would need to be rebuilt, a new roof would need to be installed and electrical and plumbing systems brought up to code. Stagecrafters, in addition, proposed to build a new entrance, a ticket booth and

later to open the balcony into a second stage for studio productions.

By November of 1984, the building, icicles and all, was Stagecrafters' for \$70,000. The interior of the theater was in bad shape. Besides the fire damage, the interior walls were covered with draperies covering years of deterioration. A commitment was made to stage a play on the Baldwin Stage by September of the following year. An estimated half a million hours of restoration, done largely by volunteers, were devoted to patching plaster, painting floor-to-ceiling panels, installing 372 refurbished seats, installing carpeting, creating a two-level lobby and hanging a crystal chandelier donated by a local furniture company. Costs were estimated by Hal Robinson to run to \$300,000. Former Stagecrafters President Al McMillan described the rebirth of the theater as "a miracle".

Almost a year of hard work culminated in Opening Night, the September 20, 1985 production of "Music Man". Despite the faint odor of paint and problems with electrical lights resolved 15 minutes before curtain time, the production was well-received. Then-President Laura Campo described the re-birth of the Baldwin as "a true labor of love".

The Stagecrafters organization has prospered in its newest location. Season ticket sales have quadrupled, membership has more than doubled and its commitment to youth has continued with "Stagecrafters' Youth Theater". And in September of 1994, representatives from the DDA and Stagecrafters met on stage before a full house and burned the mortgage.

A number of highly successful theater careers began with the Stagecrafters company, including the Tony-award winning actress Sutton Foster, film actress Kristen Bell and Tony-award winning Broadway producer Jeff Sellers. Season after season of successful production has resulted in numerous awards and distinctions including Stagecrafters being selected Best Community Theater by Hour Magazine for five consecutive years.

For decades the Stagecrafters have provided a continuous program of theater lovingly produced and thoughtfully executed. This creative and energetic group has enriched the local community with not only their historic preservation of a building in serious decline but also their ongoing artistic collaboration. This marriage of community art with

an authentic respect for the past is a wonderful success story that should inspire further restoration efforts.

### Architectural Description

The Baldwin Theatre cost \$125,000 to build in 1922. The original function of the theater was performing arts, changed to film and then reverted back to performing arts when Stagecrafters purchased the building. It was designed by Frederick D. Madison, born in Kingsley, Michigan in 1888. Mr. Madison was a graduate of Traverse City High School and then the Detroit School of Design. He became a licensed architect in the State of Michigan with the license number 208. Mr. Madison started a private practice with offices in the Wayne Oakland Bank Building at the corner of Fourth and Main in Royal Oak. Originally partnered with C.A. Hubbell, Mr. Madison struck out on his own under his own name.

Mr. Madison's profile is considerable in Royal Oak. Besides the Baldwin Theatre Building, he was the architect for the First State Bank of Royal Oak, the Royal Oak Savings Bank, the Detroit Musician's Building, and the Detroit Federation of Labor Temple. In addition, Mr. Madison designed the Longfellow, Parker, Oak Ridge, Washington, Big Beaver (Troy), Stiles (Troy) and Franklin Schools. Perhaps two of his most prominent buildings were the Royal Oak High School (now Royal Oak Middle School) and the 1927 Washington Square Building, which was the first skyscraper in Royal Oak. By the time of his death in 1969, Mr. Madison had changed the face and skyline of Royal Oak and southern Oakland County.

Originally Mr. Madison's Baldwin Theatre building was a block long, stretching between Washington Avenue and Lafayette Avenue in downtown Royal Oak. The major portion of the theater is on the Lafayette side of the block and there was a "leg" that connected the auditorium to a lobby on Washington Avenue where pedestrians would enter. Washington Avenue is the second main street in Royal Oak and is lined with store fronts.

The original auditorium portion of the 1922 theater is constructed with masonry bearing walls with an exterior of brick veneer. The roof is essentially flat. The original main

auditorium and stage was a proscenium style with a proscenium arch. The seats are arranged in arc rows with main seating and a balcony. There is an orchestra pit, a large fly loft, and organ room. Dressing rooms, green room and stage prep rooms can be found backstage.

Renovations by the Stagecrafters group included extensive plaster repair of the neoclassical auditorium, detailed painting of the plaster ornamentation, restored theater seats, new electrical service and fire protection, new theatrical lighting and rigging system, new lobby, handicapped bathrooms, new studio theater, and addition of an attached technical building. Because of the demolished lobby on Washington Avenue, the new pedestrian entry is now on Fifth Avenue. The later 1982 and 1985 additions are constructed in scored concrete block and metal siding.

The Baldwin Theatre originally seated 1200 people. The Stagecrafters group reworked the auditorium seating by taking over the balcony and turning it into a black box studio theater. The current main theater seating is for 372 people with the black box studio theater having a capacity of 125.

The auditorium is decorated in the neoclassical style with columns and swags. The decoration is painted blue with gold highlights. On either side of the stage is an upper panel with the Greek god Pan. Pan is described in Wikipedia as "in Greek religion and mythology as the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks, nature, of mountain wilds, hunting and rustic music, as well as the companion of the nymphs. Pan has the hindquarters, legs, and horns of a goat, in the same manner as a faun or satyr. The ancient Greeks also considered Pan to be the god of theatrical criticism."

The original marquee was on 422 Washington Avenue. Beyond the marquee at the street was the lobby, the "leg" of the building to the auditorium. The first marquee had a vertical sign with the name "Baldwin" and a decorative canopy with the listing of the current production. It bore a large design, the Royal Oak Tribune reports, "showing a fountain of water issuing from the mouth of two lions and flowing down the side. When the sign is turned on, the changing lights give the illusion of flowing water". In 1936, as the Baldwin morphed into the Washington, the marquee changed as well, but the first visual documentation is in the 1950s. A 1957 photograph shows the sign with the name

"Washington" placed vertically on a steel frame and a horizontal half-circle band listing the event. The current marquee was installed in 1996 and is on the corner of the building at Lafayette and 5th Avenue with the name "Baldwin Theatre" running vertically and the current event running horizontally.

### **South Elevation (5th Avenue)**

Original red brick, the brick base has been painted a creamy white color, it is about 5 feet high from the sidewalk and bordered by an existing soldier course of brick. The upper portion of the building also has a brick soldier coursing with square and diamond details. At the top of the fly tower is an original smoke door. Modern additions include new main entry awning and a metal clad enclosed exit stair. The brick has been painted the creamy white in an area surrounding the new main lobby entry.

### **West Elevation (Lafayette Avenue)**

Original red with a painted brick base. An original wood service door faces the street. Modern addition includes a scored off white concrete block two story building.

### **North Elevation (Alley)**

Modern additions with scored off-white concrete block and metal panels.

### **East Elevation**

Zero setback with adjacent modern high rise

### **Summary (Statement of Significance)**

**National Register Criteria:** The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

#### **CRITERIA A "Broad Patterns of our History"**

- Theaters were, and are, a symbol of the community
- Commitment to the arts

- Significant nationally – manifested locally

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past

CRITERIA B "Frederick D. Madison"

- Frederick D. Madison is a locally significant architect in Southeast Michigan

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

CRITERIA C "Baldwin Theater Architecture"

- Theaters are architectural landmarks
- Historic theaters have multiple roles in communities
- They provide versatile venues for local arts programs, as well as nationally touring performances
- They are integral aspects of cultural tourism

### Bibliography

Royal Oak Building Department

1956 Michigan Bell Telephone Directory

Stagecrafter archives

Historic Theaters of Michigan, by Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan

American Institute of Architects, application for membership 1942

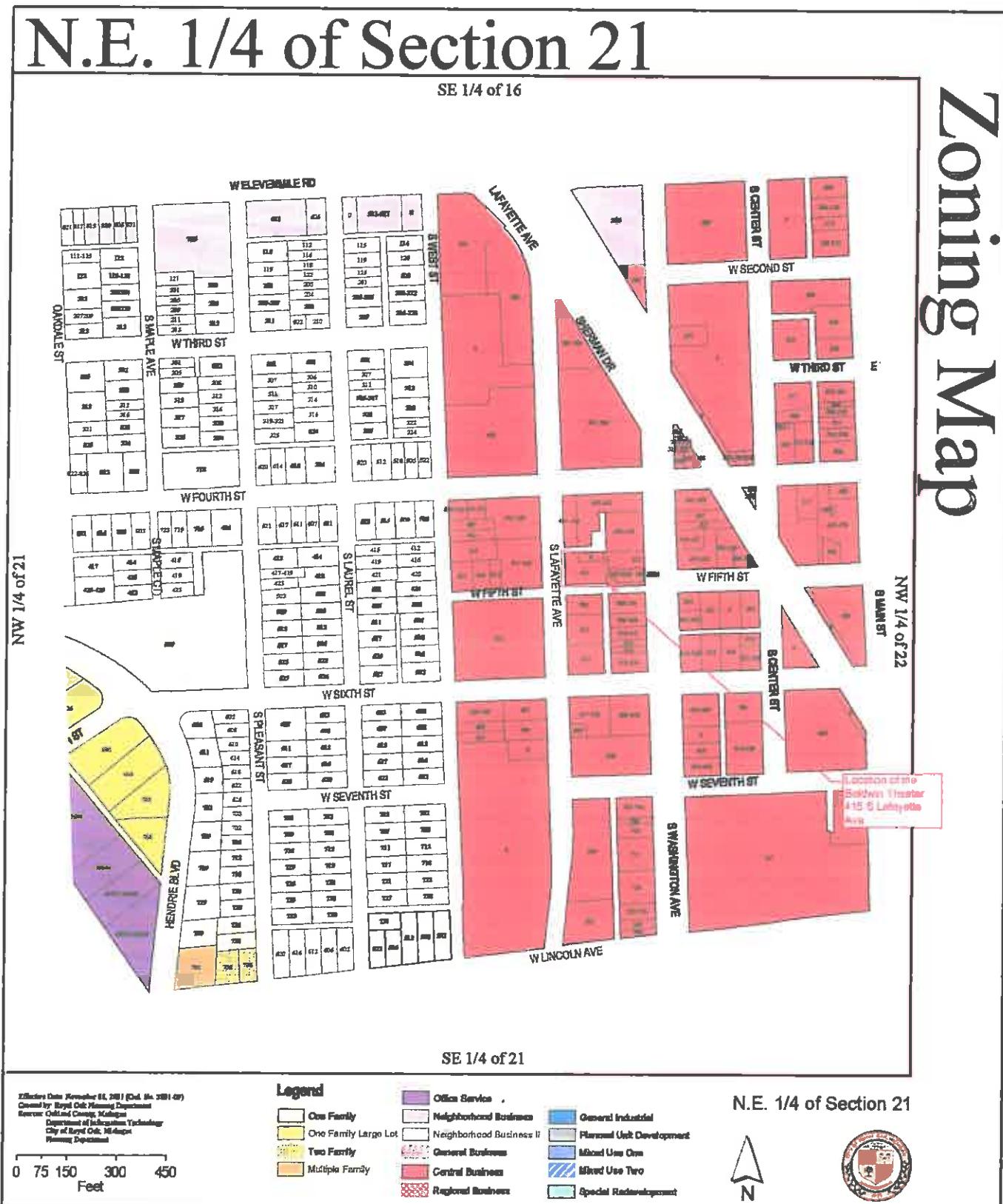
Royal Oak Tribune newspaper

Washington State Historic Theaters Survey and Physical Needs Assessment

The Movie Houses of Royal Oak: 1912 - 1941, Edmund A. Schwager, December 1990.

Twigs and Acorns, David Penney and Lois Lance, Little Acorn Press, 1996.

# Zoning Map



# On-Street Public Parking

within the Central Business District  
City of Royal Oak, Michigan



## On-Street Meters in High Demand Area

**10:00am - 4:59 pm**

(50 cents / Hour)

Nickel - 6 Minutes

Dime - 12 Minutes

Quarter - 30 Minutes

**5:00 pm - 12:00 am**

(75 cents / Hour)

Nickel - 4 Minutes

Dime - 8 Minutes

Quarter - 20 Minutes

\* Post Office meters (50 cents / 30 minutes)

## All Other On-Street Meters

**10:00 am - 12:00 am**

(50 cents / Hour)

Nickel - 6 Minutes

Dime - 12 Minutes

Quarter - 30 Minutes

2 Hour Limit, All On-Street Meters

On-Street Hang Tags - Restricted to Specific Locations

\$9 / day - Construction Parking

Hang Tags Available at the City Treasurer's Office



Created by: Royal Oak Planning Department  
Created Date: August 16, 2010  
Reviewed by: City of Royal Oak, Michigan  
Reviewed Date: August 16, 2010  
Oakland County, Michigan  
Department of Information Technology  
Photography based on O.C. Aerial Photo.

### Legend:

- High Demand Area
- Approximate Building Footprint
- Curb Outline

- Railroad R.O.W.
- Closed Public R.O.W.

### Not To Scale

**Notes:**  
This map is for informational purposes only  
and should be viewed in light of the surveying.



ADDITION 1986 784 s.f.	ADDITION 1992 - 876 s.f.	ADDITION 1986 610 s.f.
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THEATER BUILT 1922  
10,165 s.f. (INCLUDES LOBBY)

THEATER LOBBY DEMOLISHED 1982  
2,280 s.f.

415 S. LAFAYETTE AVE.

422 WASHINGTON AVE.

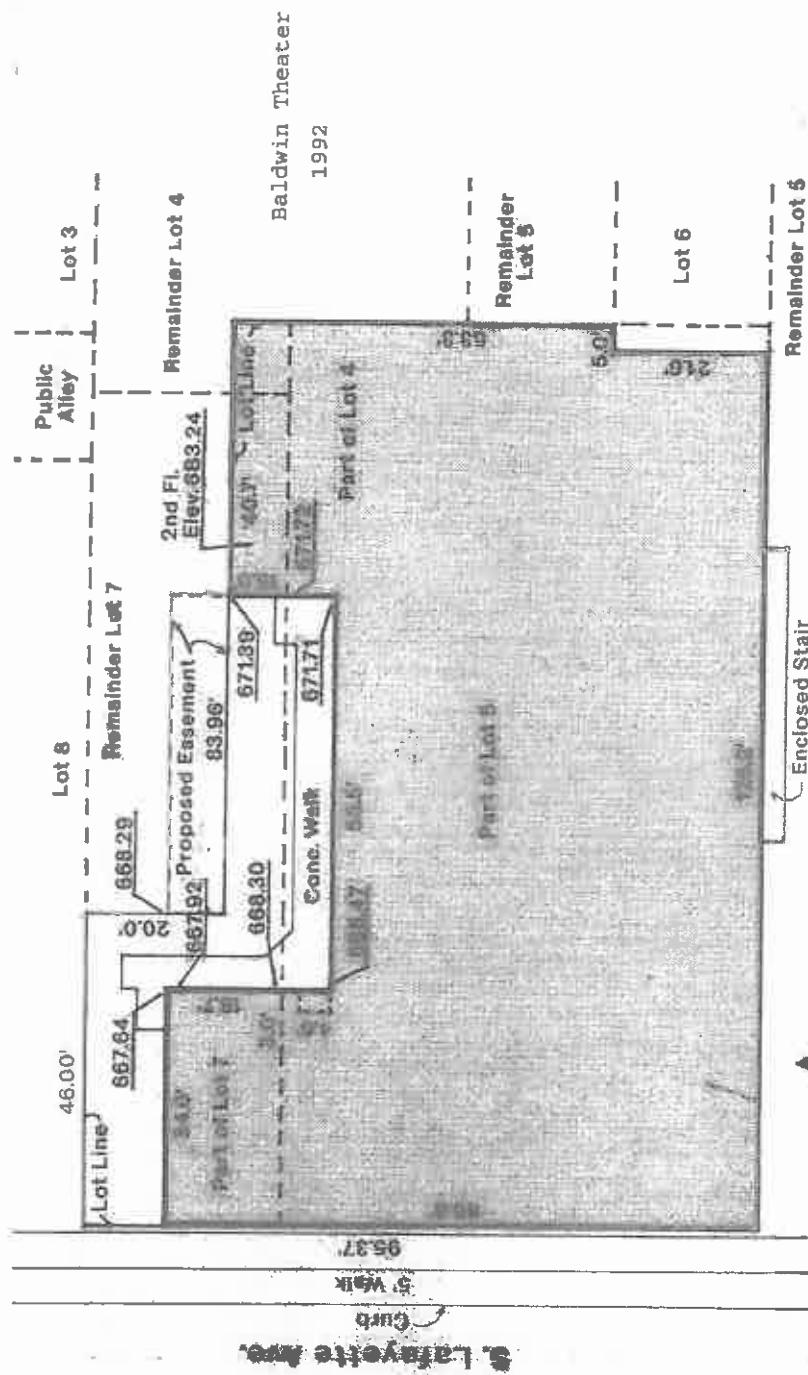
$$\begin{array}{r}
 10,165 \\
 + 784 \\
 + 610 \\
 + 876 \\
 \hline
 12,435
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{r}
 12,435 \\
 - 2,280 \text{ (DEMO)} \\
 - 784 \text{ (LESS THAN 50%)} \\
 - 610 \\
 \hline
 876
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{r}
 \\
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 \hline
 7,885
 \end{array}$$

FIFTH STREET  
(PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC ONLY)

7,885 ÷ 12,435 = 0.63 × 100 = 63% CONTRIBUTION  
(BASSED ON BUILDING FOOTPRINT)

BUILDING DIAMETER (BALDWIN THEATRE)  
SCALE: 1" = 20'

11-21-2011  
6-14-2011



## **Site Plan 1<sup>st</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Fifth Street Mall**

Property Information: [View](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Print](#) [Email](#)

1029 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak, MI. (Order No. 176285, 9-27-91)  
Property ~~Under Construction~~ from survey of Guilford Survey Co.

Legal description on record at Royal Oak City Hall: 25-21-236-108 West 38.0 Ft. of Lot 7 and Lot 5 except the East 111 Ft. Block 20, Assessor Plat No. 20, of Sherman Stevens Plat, City of Royal Oak, Oakland County, Mich., as recorded in Liber 53, pages 33 and 33A, Oakland County Plat Book No. 1.

Legal description as surveyed: South 8.0 ft. of the West 11.51 ft. of Lot 4; Lot 5 except the East part measuring 110.89 ft. on the North lot line and 111.15 ft. on South Lot line, also except the East 2.0 ft. of the South 21.6 ft. of said Lot 5; Lot 7 except the North 20.0 ft. of the East 80.47 ft.; Block 20, Assessor's Plat 20, of Sherman Stevens Plat, City of Royal Oak, Oakland County Michigan. Plat recorded 1/16/93, Deed #23-324.

Perched to be conveyed; East 8.0' of West 46.0 ft. of North 29.0 ft. of Lot 7, Block 20, Assessor's Plat No. 20, of Sherman Stevens Plat, City of Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan. 160.0 Sq. Ft. Plat recorded in Liber 53, page 33-334, Oakland County Records.

Proposed extension: A permanent extension for the construction, use and maintenance of a second story overhanging extension over that part of lot 7 described as the South 8.5 ft. of the North 20.0 ft. of the West 44.0 ft. of the East 72.47 ft. thereof, said extension to start at elevation 681 ft. <sup>ft. 44.0</sup>



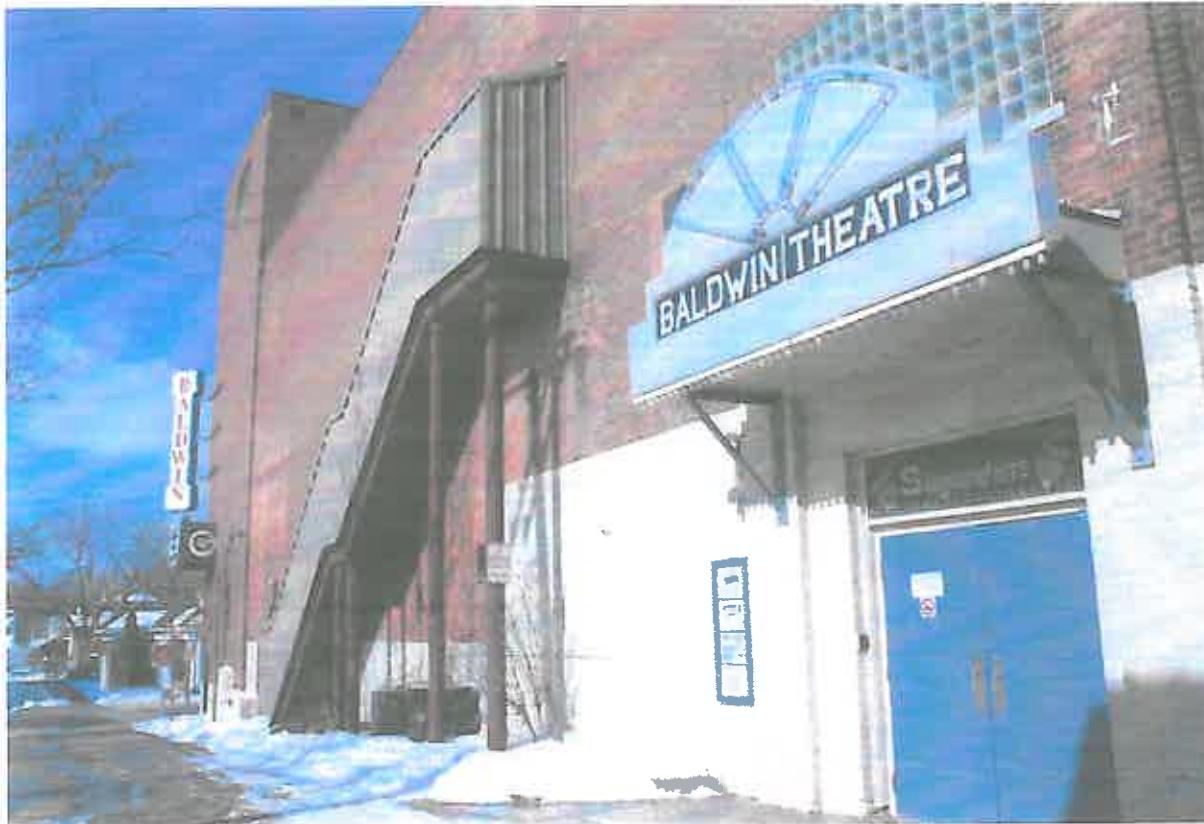
(“Baldwin Theater on Washington Avenue marquee, demolished)



(1957 rendition of the “Washington Theater” on Washington Ave. marquee, demolished)



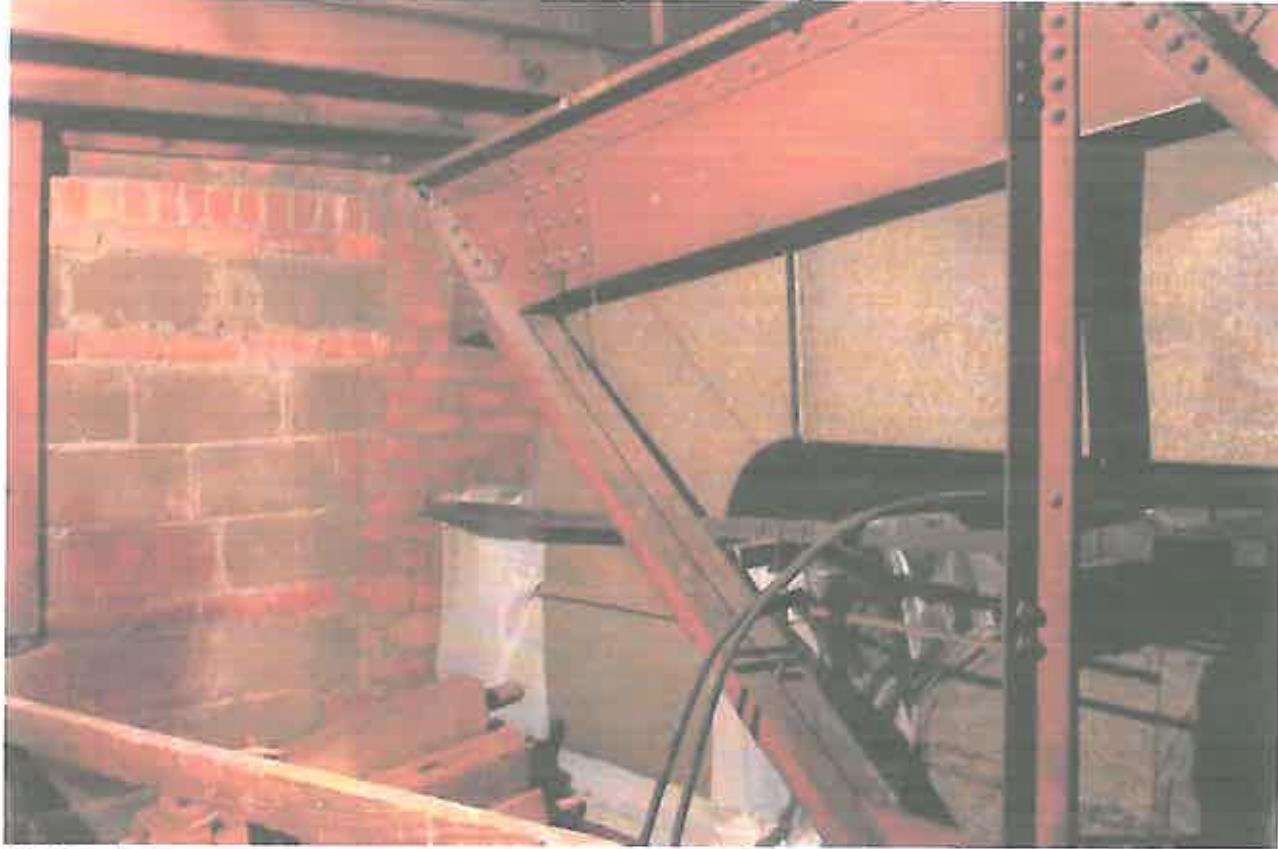
(Current lobby)



(Current marquee and lobby entry)



(Ghost of where the connection to the lobby on Washington Ave.)



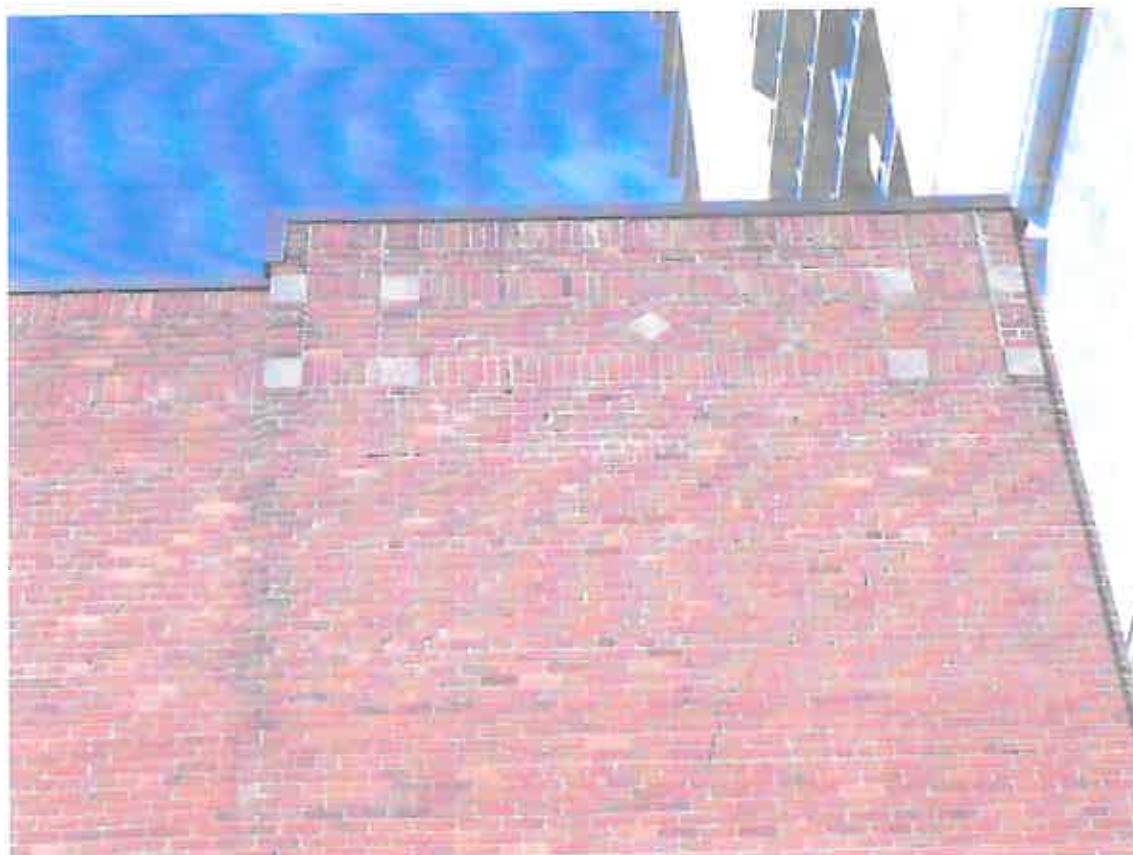
(Attic photo showing masonry bearing walls, steel girder, and wood roof joists)



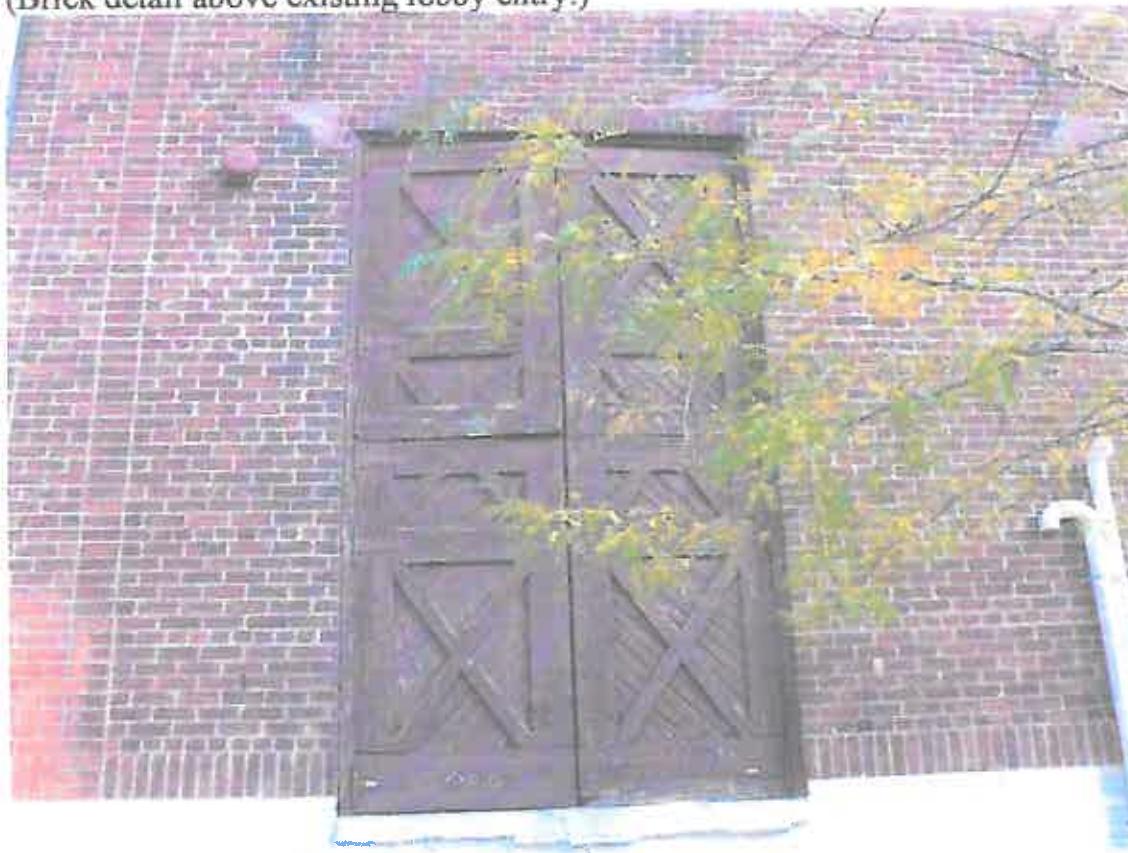
(Corner of Lafayette (West elevation) and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (South elevation).)



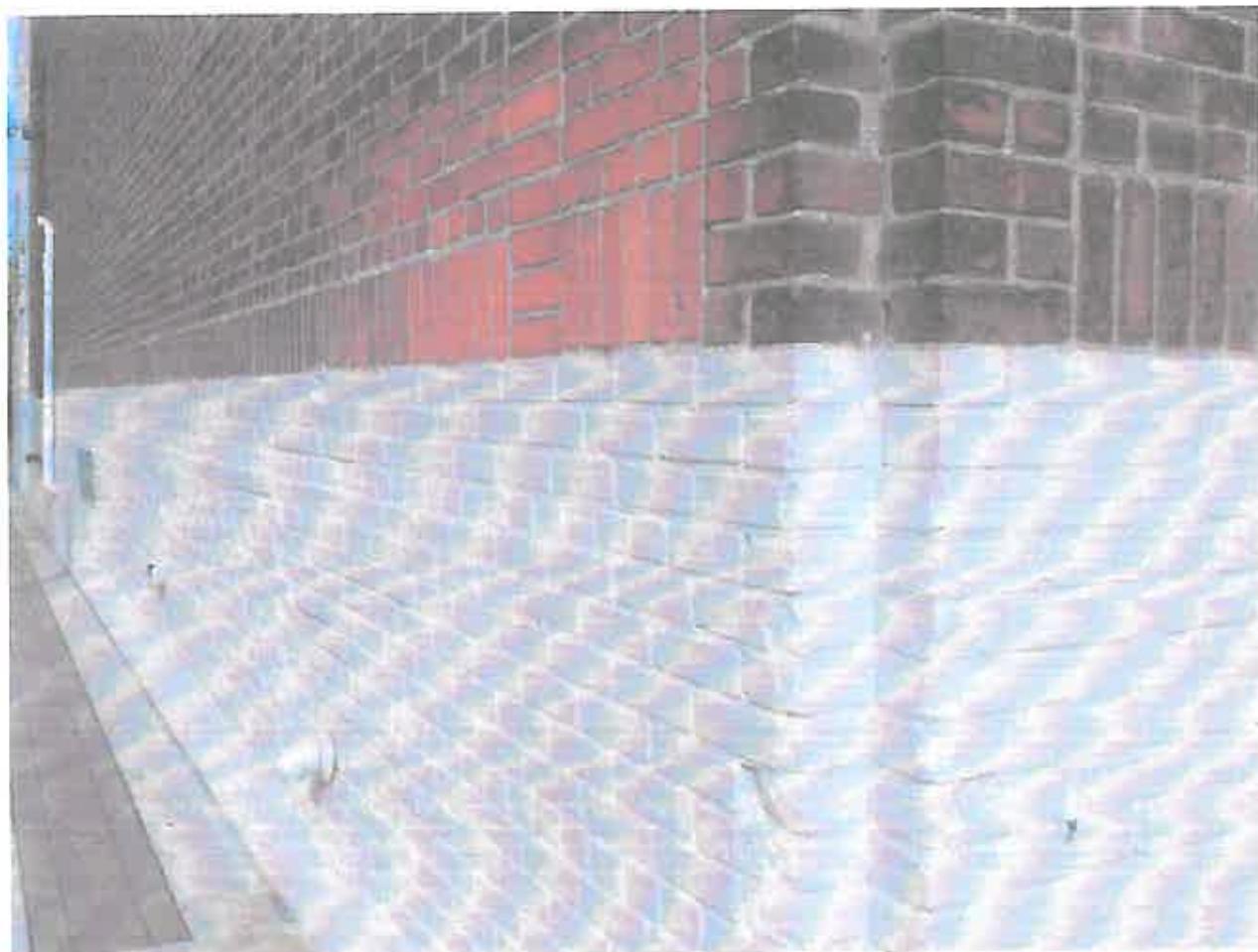
(Alley elevation to the north. This elevation has modern addition.)



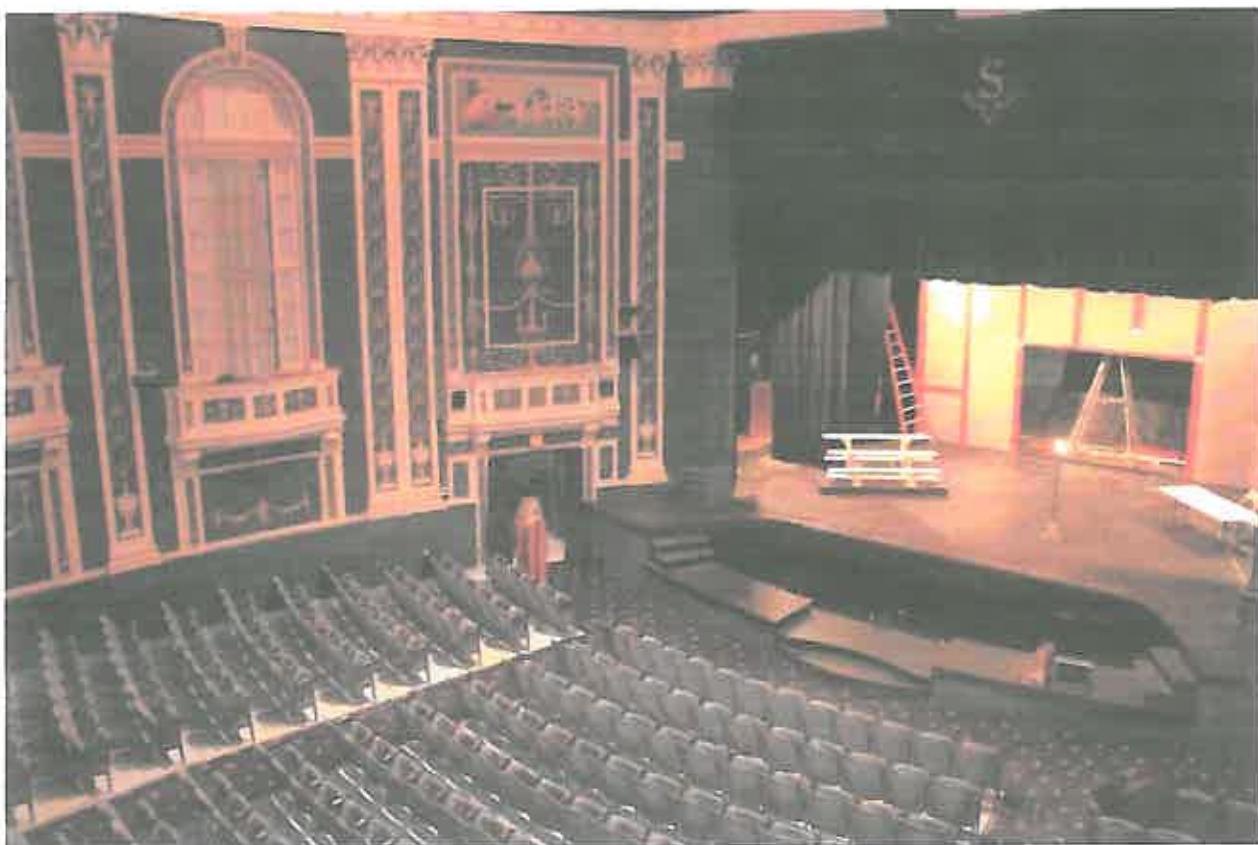
(Brick detail above existing lobby entry.)



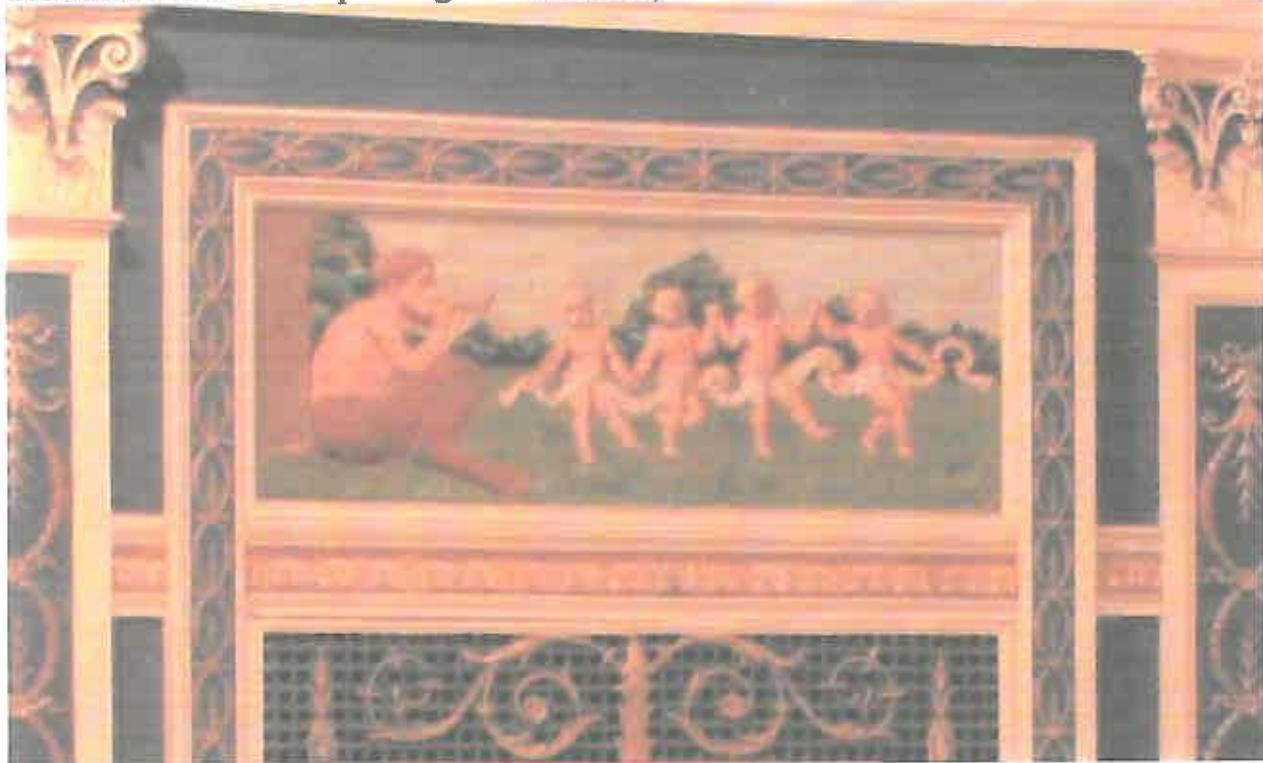
(Service doors on Lafayette (not in use).)



(Base detail)



(Auditorium, with proscenium stage and arch, orchestra pit, seating placed in an arc, and neoclassical decorative paintings on the walls.)



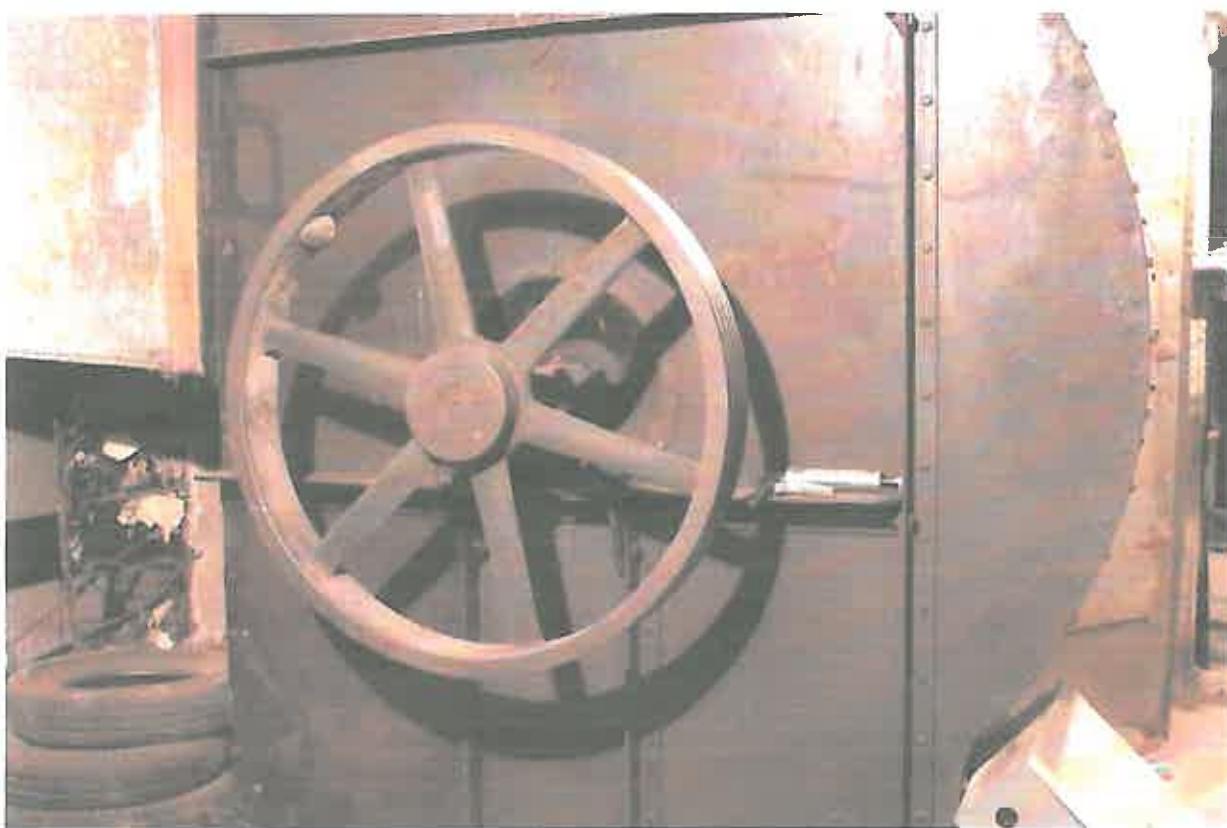
(Decorative painting of Pan and Nymphs)



(Gridiron in fly loft)



(Looking down fly loft to stage)



(Original ventilation system. New roof top HVAC in current use.)



(Allis Chalmers Texrope Drive at the wheel of the original ventilation system)

14  
HOTSY  
TOSY  
"JAZZ  
Pirates  
Girls"

SUNDAY

—ON STAGE—

"THE JAZZ PIRATES"

Come early for Bargain Matinee—1 to 4—15c and 25c



Some of The Girls in "The Jazz Pirates"

Opening Sunday at the Baldwin



ON SCREEN—  
Friday, Saturday—June 22-23

**TIM M'COY**

"RIDERS OF THE DARK"

Always News—Comedy—Pictures—Music  
Comedy—"What Women Did For Me"



Manager Yale Melz in front of the Washington Theatre. (Tribune Photo)

Washington Theatre Remodeled 12/17 1976

## RO 'Grand Old Lady' To Re-Open Wednesday, If City Says Okay

by JOHN MICHALAK  
Tribune Staff Reporter

One of Royal Oak's grand old ladies of entertainment — the Washington Theatre — is scheduled to re-open Wednesday with a new facelift and at prices of her "good old days."

Maybe.

Community Development Director Lewis E. McDaniel of Royal Oak says the re-opening will go on as scheduled only if the building passes a city code inspection scheduled Tuesday.

Chief Inspector Leslie Watch said the City won't allow the opening if building and fire code inspections aren't approved.

### Going Ahead —

But theater owner Harvey Farber, 19111 West Ten-Mile, Southfield, isn't apparently too worried. He has placed

newspaper ads announcing the opening.

Farber said he's spent about \$40,000 to remodel the theater which first opened 56 years ago as the Baldwin Theater.

He said a decision was made about two months ago to go ahead with the remodeling.

### 'Big Decision'

The theater was closed Jan. 6. "It was a big decision on our part on whether to reopen," Farber, age 39, said.

"I still don't know if we can make money there. A lot of local people say they want the theater. Whether we stay open will depend on their support."

"I've always had a liking for Royal Oak. It's one of the few areas left where parents can feel safe letting their children go to the show."

"We will try to do what we

can to show movies that will bring people to the theater."

Farber said remodeling wasn't a major overhaul. "We've redone the front of the building with aluminum. There is a new underside to the marquee, and new lights."

### Cut Rate Prices

Theater manager Yale Melz said the entire building has been repainted inside. Broken seals have been repaired or replaced. The balcony will be closed off.

Farber said doors are scheduled to open at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday.

Admission will be 25 cents on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, popcorn at 15 cents and lemonade at five cents.

After that, regular prices will be \$1.25 for all seats at all times.

# Theater group restoring a 'grand old lady'

By CHERYL BELLER  
Tribune Staff Writer

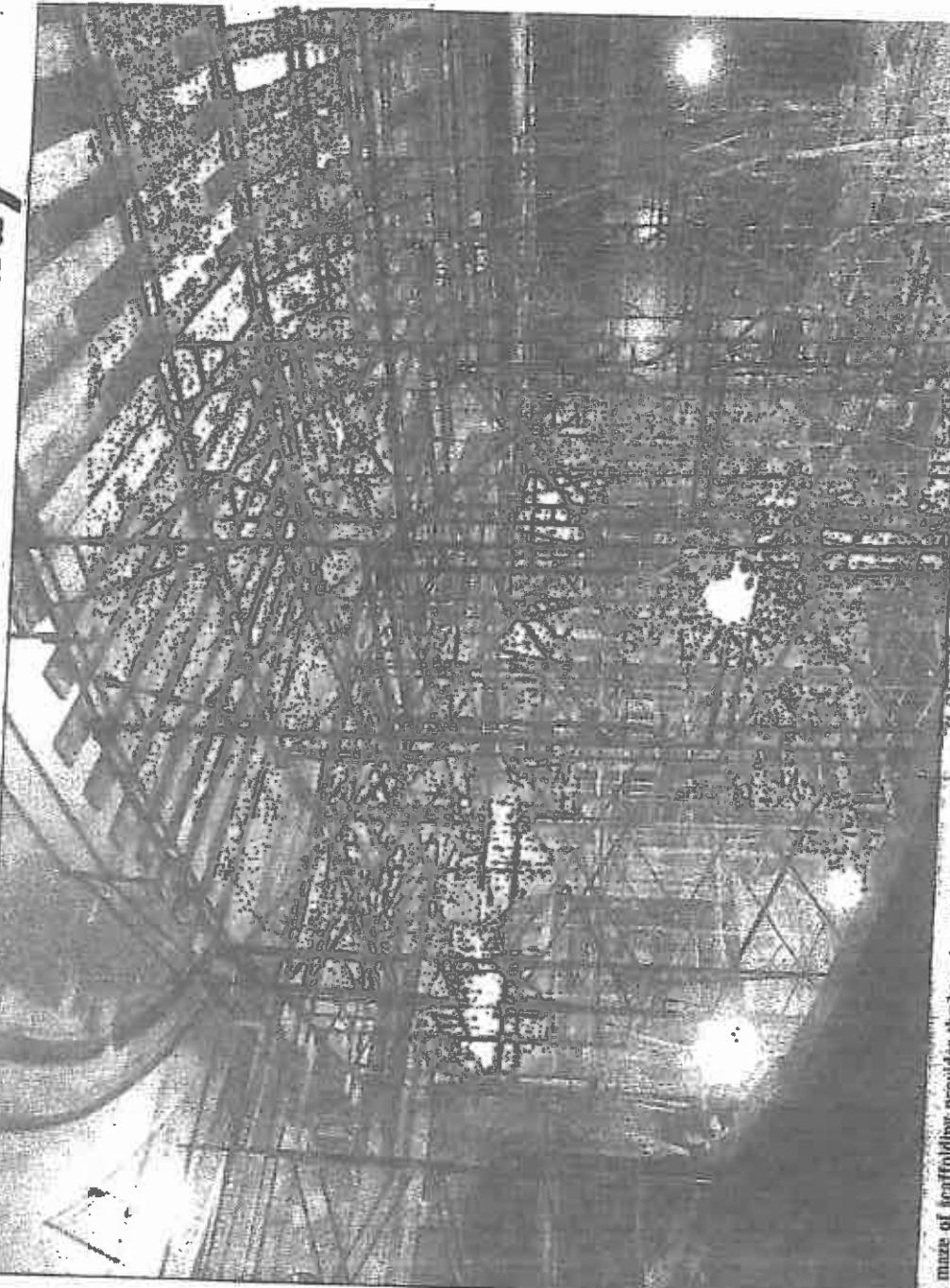
A grand old lady — the 1920's style Washington Theatre in Royal Oak — is coming back to life, thanks to a local theater group which purchased the fire-damaged structure and is now restoring it.

Cracked and damaged interior surfaces are being scraped, patched, primed and painted by dozens of volunteers from Stagecrafters who have opted for tackling the ambitious project themselves rather than hire outside contractors.

The non-profit community theater group plans to spend \$200,000 on the restoration which includes major interior and exterior reconstruction and a new entrance off the Fifth Street Mall (between Washington and Lafayette). Funds for the project are coming from a number of sources, including a \$125,000 loan from the National Bank of Royal Oak, \$50,000 from a fire insurance claim and \$25,000 from the sale of Stagecrafters' Clawson building.

Members have been asked to donate \$100 and 100 hours of their time for the project.

"This building has a personality — almost like a human being. When we first walked in, the building hated us. We turned on the furnace and couldn't shut it off — the furnace blasted arctic air. It froze the pipes, caused them to burst, and it flooded the place. It



A maze of scaffolding provides the base for volunteers working to restore the Washington Theatre to its former glory. Members of the Stagecrafters have been working on fixing up the Royal Oak landmark and hope to have it ready for productions by early fall.