



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

919 Arctic Building Seattle Washington 98104 • (206) 625-4301

LPB-146.1/77

REPORT ON DESIGNATION/REPEALER/120 DAY PROPERTIES

NAME OF PROPERTY: The Moore Theatre and Hotel Building
1932 - 2nd Avenue

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lots 1,4,5,8, Block 46, A.A.Denny's 6th Addition.

OWNER: George J. Toulouse.
677 Dexter Horton Building
Seattle, Washington 98104

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNATION:

On November 05, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Board conducted a Public Hearing to consider the nomination of the Moore Theatre and Hotel Building as a Seattle Landmark. After reviewing the nomination and hearing testimony the Board voted to recommend designation to the Seattle City Council based on satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 102229:

Section 6(1) - has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; *and*

Section 6(3) - exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.

PROTECTIONS:

In recommending designation on the basis of the above enumerated criteria, the following specific elements were recognized for protection:

The Moore Theatre and Hotel Building

- a. the entire exterior of the building;
- b. the major interior public spaces of the theatre, in particular the lobby *and the proscenium.*

Review of any changes or improvements to the above elements of the structure other than in-kind maintenance and repair require review by the Board and either issuance of endorsements or Certificates of Approval prior to the granting of

Administered by The Office of Urban Conservation, The Seattle Department of Community Development

applicable permits by the City.

 *See TP in inventory*
Earl D. Layman
City Historic Preservation Officer

/rd

SEATTLE HISTORIC BUILDING DATA SHEET

1. Name (common or present and/or historic) MOORE THEATRE AND HOTEL
2. Street and Number 1932 - 2nd Avenue Block 46 Lot 1,4,5,8 Year Built 1907
3. Present Owner George J. Toulouse, Jr. Present Use Theatre and Hotel (and shops)
4. Interim Owner(s) _____ Interim Use(s) _____
5. Original Owner James A. Moore Original Use Theatre and Hotel (and shops)
6. Architect E.W. Houghton Builder James A. Moore
7. Assessed Value: Building _____ Land _____ Assessors File No. _____
8. Classification:
- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied | Open to Public: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object | | in progress | Hours _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened by | |
| | | demolition | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | |
9. Neighborhood Information:
- A. Compatibility With Neighborhood Structure Yes X No _____
- Use Yes X No _____
- B. Importance to Neighborhood Great _____
- Moderate X
- Minor _____
- C. Architecturally Strong Neighborhood
- Comments Many apartment-hotels
- in this section of the city.
- Other buildings are good but un-
- distinguished.
10. Special Research Sources (Be Specific, list name or item and where found)
1. Sayre, J. Willis, "Places of Theatrical Entertainment in Seattle," booklet.
2. Representative Citizens of the City of Seattle and County of King, Wash-
- ington, a volume of memoirs and genealogy. N.Y. Lewis Publishing Co. 190
3. "Coast", newspaper, v.14, p.119, August, 1907. (James Moore, p.747)
4. Seattle P-I, Dec. 18 & Dec. 29, 1907.
5. Seattle Times, 12/29/07, 11/18/14, 10/22/38, 4/11/49, 1/12/55, 4/4/55,
- 5/22/55, 9/18/56, 3/22/59, 2/25/62, 10/15/63, 2/28/65, 2/19/70,
- 4/7/70, Seattle Star, 12/30/07, 12/29/14.
11. Cross Street Reference _____
- _____ Virginia _____ Seattle Magazine, 4/70. The Argus,
- _____ Second Avenue _____ 1/4/08.
12. Photos Attached & Photographer _____
13. Physical Description: (second sheet attached)
14. Significance: (Third sheet attached)

13. Physical Description

A. Style of Architecture
Classic Interior Theater Design

B. Construction Material
Reinforced Concrete faced
with ceramic glazed brick

C. No. of Stories
Theatre and 7 stories

D. Condition
Excellent X
Good _____
Fair _____
Poor _____

E. Exterior Desecration of
Original Design

none or little X
Moderate amount
considerable

F. Architectural worth as
Example of Its Style

Exceptional _____
Excellent _____
Good X
Fair _____
Poor _____

G. Notable Features: (Be specific, i.e., detailing, craftsmanship, proportions, materials, colors, interior, etc. Refer to Guidelines of Landmarks Preservation Board).

The Moore Theatre and Hotel Building, built in 1907 of reinforced concrete, faced with ceramic glazed brick, is seven stories high. Simple exterior detailing between floors, and on window sills, is of ten terra cotta. A rather simple circle-patterned frieze and cornice are of the same terra cotta.

The main entrance opens into a small octagonal foyer with ramps (with solid brass hand rails) leading to balconies, to left and right. The original hexagonal patterned tile floor is covered with carpeting presently. The foyer drops by a wide ramp into the carpeted lobby which is rectangular with vaulted ceiling and the original brass hanging chandelier. Imported Italian marble or red-brown and cream is found in Gothic columns and walls up to open balcony height. Four classic marble figures stand at the balcony promenade level, on two sides.

The theatre itself, opening from the south(right) side of the lobby, rises the full height of the building. The domed ceiling has a 20' crawl space above it for maintenance of the original decorative lights in the dome and in the lighted arches. These individual lights need rewiring. Present seating capacity of the theatre is 1425, with the second balcony seating an additional 228 people presently closed. The stage is 71' wall to wall, with a height of 44' from fly gallery to grid. The hardwood stage floor is noted for its quality of life. The orchestra pit seats 23 musicians. Fourteen dressing rooms are located back and below stage, as is the original and still-used carpentry shop and hatch for raising props to the stage.

The hotel rooms surround the theatre on the upper floors and fill in many small angled areas. The fine original design included a separate interior side entrance into the theatre from the hotel so that the actors could avoid the press and fans. The hotel parts of the building are quite standard in design, but well built, with solid doors and large sash windows. The original heating system of the building also heated the adjacent New Washington Hotel and the Stewart Hotel across Stewart Street to the south beyond the New Washington. An underground salt water natatorium was a special feature, with "Turkish and Russian baths for men and ladies", massage rooms and dressing rooms, used into the 1950's despite the inconvenience of posts rising from the pool to support the floors above.

DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

The building is generally in excellent condition. The roof has recently been retarred. The original entrance has been slightly modified to single sets of doors, and currently there is a rainbow spectrum painted around the marquee and entrance. Gold leaf decor could be uncovered on walls and arches, and electrical work could restore the magic lighting in the main theatre. The Moore is the only theater in Seattle which remains a real "hemp house", with the lines for scenery still being pulled by ropes, by hand. Road companies are willing to work with this vestige of the past now because of the superior acoustics, fine seating arrangement, and workable theater size.

14. Significance

A. Major Significance

- ☐ Historical
☒ Architectural
☒ Engineering
☐ Cultural
☐ Geographic
☐ Archaeological

B. Level of Significance

- ☐ National
☒ State
☐ Community

C. Statement of Significance (Be specific, history, personages, events, etc.)

The Moore Theatre and Hotel Building was designed and engineered partly to accomodate anticipated crowds coming to the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909, with hotel, sports, and entertainment all available in one complex. Its design was immediately noted nation-wide, and its use made it the leading cultural house of the city.

The Moore Hotel opened in April 1907 and the Theatre portion in December. Built by James A. Moore, land developer and financier of several major office buildings, the Moore was designed by the well-known western architect E. W. Houghton. The building cost some \$350,000 with some \$40,000 worth of onyx and marble in the lobby and foyer of the theatre. Mr. Moore was simultaneously building the New Washington Hotel, the Moore, and the Moore Theatre. Each structure was built with possible adjustments for exterior grade in the basic design, since the regrading of Second Avenue was occurring at the same time. Mr. Moore had turned to construction of a theater at the urging of Mr. James Cort. Cort was manager of the Northwestern Theatrical Association, operating 135 theatres west of the Missouri, and was president of the Cort Theater Company of Chicago. Mr. Cort had been the first man to organize a vaudeville circuit in the United States, and from 1886 to 1893 had operated all the vaudeville houses on the west coast. He became manager of the Moore, and after the gala opening brought such stars to the Moore as Marie Dresslar, Victor Moore, Ethel Barrymore, John Drew, and Billie Burke. Pavlowa came in 1916, Feodor Chaliapin in 1923, and more. For a period in the 1920's the Moore was part of the Orpheum Circuit, and was briefly called the Orpheum. Cecelia Schultz became manager in 1935 and brought the theater to full potential with attractions under the Dance Theater Series, the Great Artist Series, and others. After Mrs. Schultz retired in 1949, the Moore was leased for three years as a revival center. In the 1950's audiences dwindled and shows were less regular. Boxing, road shows, revival meetings, political rallies, movies, and the rock production "Hair" have shared the fine theater in recent years.

Significance continued →

Surveyor Signature _____

Date _____

REVIEWED: _____

Historic Preservation Officer

Date _____

SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUED.

The Moore is significant not only for theatrical contributions, but also for its outstanding theater architecture. From the expensive exterior construction, withstanding both climatic and earthquake stresses, to the interior design features of exiting ramps, excellent sight lines, superior stage "life", and acoustics, the Moore is among the best example of theater architecture and engineering ahead of its time, to be found in the country. Architectural elements compliment the engineering of layout and acoustics. The Moore stands as a leader not only in cultural contributions, but in design and engineering developments, in Seattle and the United States.