



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

919 Arctic Building Seattle, Washington 98104 - (206) 425-4501

LPB-143.1/77

REPORT ON DESIGNATION/REPEALER/120 DAY PROPERTIES

NAME OF PROPERTY: The Paramount Theatre
901 Pine Street
Seattle, Washington 98101

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lots 3,4,5,6, Block 31, Heirs of Sarah A. Bell's
2nd Addition.

OWNERS: Paramount Building Corporation
300 Securities Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNATION:

On November 6, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Board conducted a Public Hearing to consider the nomination of the Paramount Theatre as a Seattle Landmark. After reviewing the nomination and hearing testimony (see also Seattle Historic Data Sheet, copy attached) the Board voted to recommend designation to the Seattle City Council based on satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 102220:

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; or

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

Section 6(4) -- portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNATION: (cont.)

Section 6(5) - embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering specimen.

PROTECTIONS:

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

- The Paramount Theatre -
 - a. The major interior public spaces including the entrance foyer, proscenium lobby, balcony lobby, proscenium and balcony.
 - b. The exterior of the building including windows, sign and marquee.

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 applicable permits by the City.

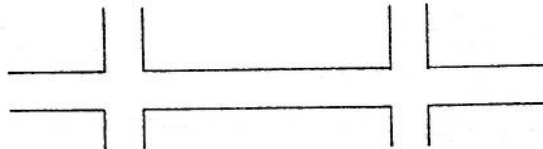

Earl D. Layman
City Historic Preservation Officer

EDL:rdg

082677

Landmarks Preservation Board

Seattle Historic Building Data Sheet

1. Name (common or present and/or historic) Paramount Theatre (SEE ATTACHED REGISTER NOMINATION FORM)
2. Street and Number _____ Block _____ Lot _____ Year Built _____
3. Present Owner _____ Present Use _____
4. Interim Owner(s) _____ Interim Use(s) _____
5. Original Owner _____ Original Use _____
6. Architect _____ Builder _____
7. Assessed Value: Building _____ Land _____ Assessors File No. _____
8. Classification:
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied | Open to Public:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hours _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object | | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened by demolition | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | |
9. Neighborhood Information:
- A. Compatibility With Neighborhood
- Structure Yes _____ No _____
- Use Yes _____ No _____
- B. Importance to Neighborhood
- Great _____
- Moderate _____
- Minor _____
- C. Architecturally Strong Neighborhood
- Comments _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
10. Special Research Sources (Be Specific, list name or item and where found)
- _____
- _____
- _____
11. Cross Street Reference
- 
12. Photos Attached & Photographer _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Washington
COUNTY:	King
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Paramount Theatre
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 901 Pine Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: #7 - Honorable Brock Adams	
STATE Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: King	CODE 033

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: A. H. Clise, Paramount Building Corp of Seattle Inc.			
STREET AND NUMBER: 300 Securities Building, 3rd at Stewart Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	STATE: Washington	CODE 53	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: King County Administration Building, Assessor's Office			
STREET AND NUMBER: 4th Avenue and James Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	STATE: Washington	CODE 53	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: None			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: _____ _____			
STREET AND NUMBER: _____ _____			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Washington
King

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)		(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Paramount Theatre of Seattle, along with a sister structure in Portland, is a variation of the Paramount Theatre in New York City. Seattle's Paramount was designed by Northwest architects Marcus Pritteca and F. J. Peters. Financing was arranged through the W. S. Hammond Company (New York) by L. N. Rosenbaum of Seattle. Adolph Zukor, a well-known leader in the film industry at the time, assisted in the development.

Standing from five to eight stories high, this dominant rectilinear structure covers nearly half of a city block. Construction began in 1926, and little expense was spared. The theatre opened on the night of March 1, 1928.

The front of the building stands eight stories high whereas the remaining sections are five stories. The front facade borders Pine Street and the long side faces 9th Avenue. The main entrance has a central box office flanked on each side by three multipaned double doors. Another similar set of doors behind these form an entry lock. A triangular marquee projects over the front, and three large semi-circular windows rise above the entrance. The remainder of the first story facing Pine Street is occupied by a cafe and tavern.

Rows of windows are located on the higher stories on two sides of the building. Balustrades, cartouches, multipaned windows, decorative trefoil arches, frieze bands, fancy cornices and cresting distinguish the building and create a light textured appearance against the dark red brick.

The lower two stories on the 9th Avenue side are covered with stone tile, which is accentuated by cartouches, decorated frieze bands, ornamental cornices, and three large semi-circular archways. Wrought-iron fire escapes form a maze-like texture against the red brick on the rear portion of this side.

The back of the building has a faded advertisement painted on the upper portion which advertises the Paramount Theatre. While the majority of the theatre is well executed, the alley side is typical "alley," with various loading docks, fire escapes, and utility outlets.

The interior of the theatre is done in blues, golds, and browns creating a rich luxurious decor. Entering the foyer from the entry lock, stairs curve down from the first story balcony along beige and black panelled marble walls. Ironwork railings capped with wood complete the elegance of these stairways. A large crystal and gold chandelier is suspended from the ceiling of the three-story foyer and is eye level with the first story balcony.

The foyer extends into an area with a lowered ceiling where another chandelier hangs from the coffered roof. This area leads into the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Washington	
COUNTY	
King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

#7 - Description
Paramount Theatre

four-story grand foyer where two more crystal and gold chandeliers hang from the rose, green, and gold decorated ceiling.

The north or Pine Street wall consists of five mirrors separated by marble panels, and the opposing wall across the foyer is a series of arches leading under the first story balcony to the auditorium. More balconies occur for three more stories fronting on the grand foyer and reflected by the mirrors. Walls are generally gold and have panels defined by molding strips. Archways have hanging drapery which soften the interior. The auditorium's decorative inverted domes, balconies, curtainings, and deeply carved surfaces create distortion-free sound. Seating is increasingly steep the further away from the stage. Twin bronze and crystal chandeliers flank the stage and weigh 1,900 pounds each, contain thousands of crystals, and require a total of 3,600 watts. The whole aura of the interior is one of richness and extravagance, where believing in make-believe becomes possible.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☒ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1928

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry

osophy

☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art

Architecture

☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature

itarian

☐ Communications☐ Military☒ Theater☐ Conservation☒ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Paramount Theatre is representative of an era in showmanship when the design and decoration of the movie house was an integral extension of the aura of make-believe that was produced on the stage and screen. No expense was spared to create this fantasy for the American public. Ben Hall, in his book The Best Remaining Seats (1961) has stated:

It was a brief era, as golden ages go, swept in on a floodtide of splendor, fantastic architecture, music, laughter and dreams. It began and ended in the decade that lay between Prohibition and Depression and it brought pleasure and escape from boredom to a whole generation of Americans who wanted desperately to believe in make-believe.

Marcus Pritteca, already known for his adroit construction of Pantages Theatres, adapted Seattle's Paramount design from a Paramount Theatre in New York City. Pritteca's design skillfully allowed the patron to observe increasingly more of the elaborate building as the patron proceeded through the showhouse. In effect, the visual architecture was intended to be no small part of the theatrical impact.

The Paramount opened March 1, 1928, just before the great "Crash" and depression. Thus, after the end of the 1920's, there was no money to continue backing this style of theatre construction. Over the years, theatres of this type have all but disappeared from most large American cities. Seattle, however, still has a number of these elaborate showhouses, among which the Paramount is one of the more outstanding. Furthermore, an original pipe organ, built by Wurlitzer expressly for the Paramount, is still intact and in excellent condition, largely due to the efforts of the American Pipe Organ Society.

In the field of entertainment, the Paramount has always drawn outstanding performers and productions. An example would be the elaborate Fanchon and Marco Revues of Vaudeville. Currently it is the center for modern rock concerts, although lately the Paramount has seen the return of symphonies, organ concerts, and road shows.

With excellent acoustics, an extravagant interior, and a well-executed exterior, the Paramount Theatre remains today as a fine example of bygone architecture and stands as a tribute to the talent of Marcus Pritteca.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hall, Ben. The Best Remaining Seats. New York: C. N. Potter, 1961.

Krahl, Bob, authority on theatres and sound engineer for stage shows.

Seattle Times, February 19, February 21, February 23, and February 29, 1928.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		47 °	36 ' 49 "	122 ° 19 ' 47 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Erma Gain (Mrs. Fred S.)		DATE April 27, 1973
ORGANIZATION		
STREET AND NUMBER: 4505 Lake Washington Boulevard N.E.		
CITY OR TOWN: Kirkland	STATE Washington	CODE 53

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name

Charles H. Oseggaard

Title

Director - Washington State
Parks & Recreation Commission

Date

March 13, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date