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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

The Neighbourhood Movie House in Montreal 1925-1929: The Harmonious Whole

Harriet T. Kolomeir

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Neighbourhood Movie House in Montreal 1925-1939: The Harmonious Whole

Harriet T. Kolomeir

The designs of the neighbourhood movie houses in the City of Montreal were unique to the city by virtue of the interpretation by local architects of the American movie palaces and movie theatre designs in general. The neighbourhood movie house was part of an almost exclusively designed corner building complex. The size, seating capacity, and spatial arrangement of the movie house, first the single and later the stadium-type auditorium were based on the earlier models of the Beaux-Arts designed theatre, vaudeville and opera house and the neighbourhood nickelodeon.

The technological advancement of cinematography went hand in hand with the evolution of the designs and decoration of the neighbourhood movie house. It was in the surface treatment of both the exterior and interior of the Montreal neighbourhood movie house that the stage-set character of the decoration shared the magic of the film. Earlier, it was the application of the neo-classic, pseudo-Egyptian and Spanish surface decoration. The «machine-inspired designs» that were introduced at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925 and as a surface decoration on the New York skyscraper between 1927 and 1931 were expressed earlier both on the exterior and interior of the Beaux-Arts designed Théâtre OUTREMONT and LE CHATEAU.

The architectural designs and surface decoration that followed combined the new machine-made products and traditional materials which further exemplified the twentieth century phenomenon of the ever advancing machine technology.

DEDICATION

In memory of my father and mother
whose lives together travelling
between Montreal and New York
began during the era of the
talkies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Concordia University's Art History Department who understood the problems involved in collecting the research material for my thesis in Canadian Art History and allowed me the additional time I required.

A very special thanks to my thesis advisor Dr. Jean Bélisle who always made his time available to me and never let me forget that the neighbourhood movie houses in Montreal were designed for people.

Thanks are due to the City of Verdun whose administration were most accommodating in releasing their plans of the Wellington and Willibrod St. building.

H.T.K.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	The Art Institute of Chicago
BRMH	Busch Reinsinger Museum Harvard
C.M.A.	City of Montreal Archives
FUN	Fisk University Nashville
MAMP	Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
MoMA	The Museum of Modern Art, New York
NMNJ	Newark Museum New Jersey
P. Coll	Private Collection
PMA	Philadelphis Museum of Art
SMA	Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
Un. Loc.	Unknown Location
YU	Yale University

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PART I

THE BACKGROUND TO THE ART DECO STYLE OF DECORATION

The architectural design and the accompanying Art Deco style of decoration which evolved between 1925-1939 on both the exterior and interior of Montreal's neighbourhood movie houses is one expression of industrialization and machine technology. The new designs and motifs combined elements from the past and hinted at those of the future in an attempt to capture the spirit of the twentieth century.

Science and technology, urbanization, the silent film and the talkies all contributed to the advent of the neighbourhood movie house,[1] which became a part of the suburban landscape at about the same time as the rise of the movie palace phenomenon. As early as 1916 the neighbourhood movie houses that appeared in Montreal, with the idea of bringing movies closer to home, began to compete with the already established downtown theatres. After 1921, the neighbourhood movie houses were just about the only ones that were built in the city.

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[1]Benjamin B. Hampton, A History of the Movies (New York: Covici, Friede Inc., 1931), 204.
By 1918-1919 new expensive downtown theatres were not sufficient to accommodate the increased patronage at the box office. This resulted in the building of neighbourhood movie houses in residential areas.

Although many others including the Germans played a role in the movie house design that finally evolved in a smaller building type in the late 1930's, two extreme positions stand out in the 1920's and the early 1930's. On the one hand were the European avant-garde architects who were against historicism and ornament in search of a universal building type symbolically representing the machine. These «radical apostles of functionalism» were contrasted with the «guardians of classical virtue»[2] those that continued in the Beaux-Arts tradition with all of its elements,

In Montreal the architects and builders drew their inspiration from the New York architects who were traditionally trained. They in turn were influenced by the New York skyscraper architects whose surface treatment of the buildings introduced the new decorative style. Whiffen and Breeze referred to this phase as:

> The most important of the circumstnces peculiar to America that formed the character of American Art Deco was the existence of the skyscraper. In 1925 there were no skyscrapers in Europe, in America the skyscraper as a multi-storey metal-framed building had a history which went back forty years.[3]

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[2]Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, Washington Deco (Washington D.C.: Smithonian Institute Press, 1984), 19.

[3]Marcus Whiffen and Carla Breeze, Pueblo Deco: The Art Deco Architecture of the Southwest (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 9.

The apex of the jazzy style of decoration, «the Zigzag Moderne»[4] that appeared on the New York skyscraper took place between 1928-1931.

Its appearance both on and in the movie palace was even shorter in terms of time, although it continued for a brief period as a form of decoration in smaller movie theatres.

The decoration that appeared on the New York skyscraper was a combination of European and American influences which reached fruition in the hands of the American industrial designers in 1934. The later post-depression neighbourhood movie house that evolved as a small building type whose surface treatment included materials such as vitrolite, aluminum and plastic; these materials all had «extremely hard shimmering sparkling surfaces» which conveyed svelte and machine elegance in a streamlined form directed towards the future.[5]

While the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in 1925 in Paris identified it as a bonified movement and gave it one of its names «Art Deco», the pre-

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[4]David Gebhard, «The Moderne in the U.S.», Architectural Association Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 1970): 7.

[5]Wirz and Striner, 39.

figuration and sources of the movement for the most part predate this event.[6]

The Influence of the Twentieth Century Art Movements

The early twentieth century art movement ran parallel to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach to the human condition and Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Whether the artist's choice of subject followed traditional or abstract concepts of time-space and movement, they were concerned with «the idea of representing the quality or essence of a thing rather than the thing itself».[7]

Most important amongst these movements were the Cubists with their fragmentation of the object and the Futurists

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[6]Bevis Hillier, Art Deco of the 20's and 30's (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1972), 10-13.

Yvonne Brunhammer, Art Deco Style (New York: St. Martin Press, 1984), 17-18.

Wirz and Striner, 20. The author of this paper shares the opinion of Wirz and Striner in that rather than severely separating the Deco style of the twenties from the streamlined style of the thirties... «both represented discernible, related trends within a broader decorative movement, in which they overlapped.»

[7]Hillier, 27.

with their concern for dynamic movement in limitless unrestricted space. Both played an important role in influencing the Art Deco vocabulary with its symbol of the machine aesthetic.

Marcel Duchamp's painting Nude Descending A Staircase (1912 PMA) with its simultaneous movement in a cubist vocabulary caused a sensation at the Armory show in New York in 1913. In the same year, the founding member of the Futurist movement Umberto Boccioni completed his final version of Unique Forms of Continuity in Space (MoMA). This title and the work provided a clear statement of the sculptor's aim in abolishing the definite line and the closed sculpture.[8]

While Franz Marc was concerned with speed and dynamism in his stylized animal painting, Robert Delaunay in Circular Forms: Sun and Moon (1912-1913 SMA) and Franz Kupka's Disks of Newton, Study for Fugue in Two Colours (1911-1912 PMA)[9] expressed colour in motion in more abstract terms. Wassily Kandinsky's non-representational «musical» composition Improvisation 30 (Cannon) 161 (1913 AIC)[10] may have influenced Bruno Taut's housing projects after 1914 and probably had an effect on Ely J.

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[8]Peter Selz, Art in Our Times: A Pictorial History 1890-1980 (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1981), 180.

[9]Selz, 161, 162.

[10]Selz, 121.

Kahn's use of colour expressing movement in the glazed terra-cotta brightly coloured tiles toward the top of his Park Avenue office building 1927.[11]

Other artists choose the machine directly as the subject of their paintings: Kasimir Malevich in his cubist painting Scissors Grinder (1912 YU) expresses the overpowering vibration of the wheel;[12] Natalia Goncharova in the Dynamo Machine (1913 P. Coll) is concerned with unrestricted space and all encompassing movement; Fernand Léger in The Disks (1917 MAMP) admires the purity and the precision of engineering feats».[13]

Dadaists Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia treated machine-made parts as sexual apparatus in some of their works.

Aleksandr Rochenko's Hanging Construction in wood (1920 Un. Loc.), a complex interweave of open, circular wooden shapes exemplifies the three dimensional kinetic sculptures and the constructivists' concern for the time-space continuum.

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[11]Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Hagg Bletter, Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; Robinson, «Building and Architects,» 3-34; Bletter, «The Art Deco Style,» 35-82; 58.

[12]Selz, 157.

[13]Selz, 134, 135.

Similar examples were to be found in Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, whose work was to have a great impact on the Bauhaus. Included were such works as Nickel Construction (1921 MoMA) and his machine The Light Space Modular (1922-1930 BRMH) which threw patterns of light on surrounding areas combining light, space and motion.[14]

In England, McKnight Kauffer's Darby Herald poster (1920) of the Birds flying off the page, achieves another aspect of the same feeling.

The Workshops: A New Direction

The anti-historical «more austere side of Art Nouveau»[15] influenced the Art Deco Style from the beginning of the twentieth century. These were to be found in the rectilinear architectural designs and subtle ornamental decoration of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow School and the Weiner Werkstätte founded by Kolomon Moser and Josef Hoffman. The architect Adolf Loos held the extreme position of architecture without ornament, the antithesis of the later Art Deco Style of decoration. It was, however, in the simplicity of the architectural design seen in Josef Hoffman's Palais

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[14]Selz, 275, 180-181.

[15]Hillier, 13.

Stoclet in Brussels (1905-1911) that

> [t]he square [as] the dominant motif and the reticulated beading and pyramidal or ziggurat-style tower anticipat[ing] what [was to] become architectural clichés two decades later.[16]

The exterior design was complemented by the luxurious interior and the artistic contribution from members of the Wiener Werkstätte among them the geometric designed stone and glass mosaics of Gustav Klimt in the dining room.

The first decade of the century prefigured the Art Deco movement with the «emphasis laid on the close relationship that linked architecture to the decorative arts».[17] This was seen not only in the works of the Glasgow School and the Wiener Werkstätte, but also in architecture and decorative treatment in the designs of Hector Guimard in France, Henri Van de Velde and Victor Horta in Belgium and Antonio Gaudi in Barcelona.

Most important for the members of the Bauhaus was the harmonious interrelationship between the applied and fine arts as an ideology. Walter Gropius in 1919

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[16] Hillier, 20.

[17] Brunhammer, 8.

announced «rais[ing the] barrier between craftsman and artists»...so that the «architecture of the future...painting, sculpture and architecture will be indissolubly linked».[18]

Unlike the German Werkbunds[19] which from the beginning were concerned with standardization, the early twentieth century workshops in Austria and England acknowledged the reality of machine technology but continued to emulate the high level of quality attributed to the hand-crafting technique of William Morris. The Werkbunds and the later Bauhaus were directed towards standardization with the idea of mass production. With the infusion of the de Stijl members and the Constructivists in the early 1920's the Bauhaus succeeded in creating prototypes[20] for industrial design as well as contributing to innovations in poster and graphic design and topography.[21]

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[18]Brunhammer, 11.

[19]Gillian Naylor, «Modernism, An International Style» in Philippe Garner, The Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts. 1890-1940 (New York: Van Nostrand, Reinhold Co., 1979), 30.

[20]Brunhammer, 11. Marcel Breuer's Wassily armchair designed at the Bauhaus in 1926 and produced by standard Möbel in Berlin is still being produced by Knoll.

[21]Dawn Ades, Posters: 20th Century Poster Design of the Avant-Garde (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), 59-69.

The American Contribution

Influencing the style at home, along with the Aztec motifs were Louis Sullivan's «tightly organized ornamentation»[22] based on nature and F.L. Wright's «abstraction of Mayan ornaments» on «textile blocks».[23] From the beginning of the twentieth century American architects followed closely the French «esquisse» based on a traditional Beaux-Arts Education where architectural design was treated as a Fine Art and the emphasis was a bilateral unified symmetrical type building. At the 1925 Exposition in Paris all of the buildings shared the same basic design principles with the exception of Le Corbusier's «L'Esprit Nouveau Pavilion». However, Gebhard makes the point that Americans unlike the Europeans from the beginning had their machine-made designs influenced by models of specific transportation machines: in the 1920's it was the automobile and the train and in the late 1930's and 1940's it was the airplane.[24]

«Theatrical» Architecture

The theatrical character of the Art Deco vocabulary in general and more particularly on both the exterior and

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[22]Robinson and Bletter, 61.

[23]Whiffen and Breeze, 23.

[24]Gebhard, 6, 7.

interior of the neighbourhood movie house was influenced by elements which included the cinematic arts directly. This also played an important role in opening new vistas for architects and those in the applied arts.

The German expressionist architects' dramatic theatrical treatment of light and colour in stage-sets for the movies influenced the American Art Deco vocabulary the same way that the earlier Ballets Russes in 1909 with the artistry of Sergei Diaghilev and the film-set designs of Leon Bakst influenced the French vocabulary. The interior architectural stage-set designs by Herman Warm in the film of The Cabinet of Dr. Galigari 1919 with its «use of distorted space and exaggerated light» was shown in the United States, the same year that the Theatre Magazine[25] exhibited Hans Poelzig's set for Le Golem with its «use of chiarasuro lighting producing deep spatial effects».[26]

These stage-set designs by architects stimulated the editor of the American Architect (February 4, 1920) to write an article «Current News-Motion Picture Producers Recognize Efforts of Architects in Productions» stating that:

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[25]Frank Vreeland, «Worthwhile Pictures of the Month» Theatre Magazine 36 (September 1921): 175.

[26]Robinson and Bletter, 59, 64.

> The important motion picture producers are fast realizing the commercial value of good architecture. This fact is becoming evident in the recent presentation of «feature films». Among those legends which announce the various people who shared responsibility in the production of a scenario, it is becoming customary to include the name of the architect who designed the exteriors and planned the arrangement and decoration of rooms which serve as a background for the story. Architects will appreciate this recognition of their cooperation in these matters.[27]

Following the first world war, the Hollywood film moguls produced eighty percent of all the movies[28] in the world, thereby attracting many of the European designers. Despite this, it was in France that the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens introduced the

> first manifestations of contemporary architecture to the screen, inspired by principles that guided him in real life building...

His sets for Marcel L'Herbier's L'Inhumaine 1924 were composed of:

> simple, geometric volumes, combinations of plain surfaces and window openings. All decoration was eliminated and replaced by the unconcealed skeletons of reinforced

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[27]«Current News - Motin Picture Producers Recognize Efforts of Architects in the Productions», Editorial. American Architect (February 1920): 157.

[28]Michael Webb, Hollywood Legend and Reality (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, in association with Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition, April 1986 to February 1988), 3.

> concrete structures— jambs, beams, overhanging tiles: he emphasized the whiteness of the walls by surrounding the openings with dark frames.[29]

The artist Fernand Léger collaborated in the three-dimensional film-set by contributing elements similar to his paintings and in his film Ballet Mécanique (1924). He

> accentuat[ed] depth by a succession of planes of different tones decorated with the geometric shapes so dear to him: triangles, disks, semi-circles, giant holes.[30]

The German Fritz Lanz directed the fantasy future city Metropolis (1926) designed by Otto Hunte. This impression of New York City was inspired by a trip to the city in 1924:

> I first came to America briefly in 1924, and it made a great impression on me. The first evening we arrived, we were still enemy aliens so we couldn't leave the ship. It was docked somewhere on the West Side of New York. I looked into the streets— the glaring lights and the tall buildings— and— there I conceived Metropolis (1926).[31]

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[29]Leon Barsacq, Caligari's Cabinet and Other Grand Illusions: A History of Film Design, ed. Elliot Stein (New York: Graphic Society; Canada: Little Brown & Co., 1976), 43.

[30]Barsacq, 43.

[31]P[eter] Bogdanovich, Fritz Lang in America (New York: Praeger, 1967), 15.

In his «giant fantasy city» he used the «Schufftan process» which consisted of «miniatures-reflected in mirrors» technique. The sets ... were considered «surprizingly contemporary», a combination of «inventive genius and visual sense of the designers» ... and «realistic construction».

> Lang handles the lighting admirably. The iron bands encircling the Robot during the experiment in the laboratory, the flashes given off by the machines in action, the brief illuminations of the searchlights that bring to life the industrial architecture, the huge beeline of factories with hundreds of lit windows...[32]

Along with their movie stage-set contribution to the cinema was an equally dramatic treatment of light on what they termed «night architecture», an element important to the movie theatre. The Germans

> argue that the cinema depends wholly, in a technical sense on, the contrast between darkness and light: and that it has no concern with daylight effects. The cinema sleeps by day as other buildings do by night. Therefore its facade should ignore the claims of sunshine and be interpreted in terms of night, not day, architecture, because in darkness it can robe itself with a blaze of light, the hues of which are changeable at will.[33]

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[32] Barsacq, 33.

[33] Morton P. Shand, Modern Theatres and Cinemas: The Architecture of Pleasure (London: Batsford Ltd., 1930), 27.

They were directed in their architectural designs of the movie house towards practicality, new shapes and new materials earlier than their counterparts. Although Walter Gropius «Total Theatre» as a revolutionary concept in theatre in general was never realized, Erich Mendelsohn in his design of the «Universam Theatre» (1926-1928) «devised his now famous horseshoe cinema plan» from the earlier opera house design. The cinema's sweeping lines and spatial arrangement of the interior «set the highest possible standards in a period when films had just changed to sounds».[34]

Morton Shand in his 1930 book, Modern Theatres and Cinemas draws attention to their avant-garde architectural designs by stating that:

> German architects have thought out the cinema as a new and untraditional type of building instead of tinkering with adaptations and the traditional form of theatre, or aping the barbarious and suffocating magnificence of London, New York and Chicago «Palaces».[35]

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[34]Dennis Sharp, A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Architecture (New York: Graphic Society Ltd., 1972), 93.

[35]Shand, 5, 24.

PART 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MOVIE HOUSE IN MONTREAL

In 1913 long before the «talkies» and technicolour movies,

> Montreal had «nearly one hundred movie houses»... as in all other cities, the people's amusement places have revolutionized the entertainment business and placed the recreation of the theatre within the reach of every person. Montreal is favoured with as high a class of motion picture houses usually intersperced with more or less vaudeville acts, as can be found in any of the leading American cities.[36]

The movies from the very beginning in both United States and Canada[37] were a fascinating form of entertainment. Not only were they shown in the movie houses like

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[36] Prince, Lorenzo, et al., Montreal Old and New (Montreal: International Press Syndicate, no date), 401.

[37] Hye Bossin, «The Story of L. Ernest Ouimet Pioneer» Yearbook of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry Film Publications of Canada, Toronto, 1952-53, 23-43.

Hye Bossin, «They led the Way. The Motion Picture Industry Marks the Golden Anniversary of the Silver Screen» Yearbook of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry Film Publications of Canada, Toronto, 1953-54, 17-23.

Hampton, A History of the Movies.

Hilary Russell, All That Glitters: A Memorial to Ottawa's Capital Theatre and its Predecessors (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1975), 9-25.

Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Source History of American Movies (New York: Random House, 1975).

the early OUIMETOSCOPE[38] on St. Catherine East, and the CRYSTAL PALACE[39] at 1420 St. Laurent, the ARCADE[40] 1425 Alexandre de Sève 1911 and the FAMILY THEATRE[41] 2490 Notre-Dame, but also in centres in Montreal that catered to public entertainment in one form or another. They would install a «projection machine» and show a reel,[42] usually along with some other form of entertainment. By 1907, the organizers of Sohmer Park had realized the power of the movies. They could be seen in the Rose Room of the Windsor Hotel, the Monument National «avec titres français» as well as at HER MAJESTY's where in 1904 the Hauterives showed Les Contes de Perreault.[43]

John C. Green, a Canadian travelling magician at the turn of the century, who performed along with a few «reels»

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[38]Léon Bélanger, Les Ouimetoscopes: Léo-Ernest Ouimet et les débuts du cinéma québécois (Montréal: VLB, 1978), 71.

[39]Yvan Lamonde and Pierre-François Hébert, Le Cinéma au Québec Essai de Statistique Historique (1896 à nos jours) (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1981), 19-33.

[40]La Presse, March 23, 1912.

[41]Le Prix Courant, March 15, 1912. Montreal Old and New, 403.

[42]Charlotte Herzog, «The Nickelodeon Phase» (1903-c.1917) Marquee: The Journal of the Theatre Historical Society of America, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1981): 8.

[43]Bélanger, 33, 48.

described another aspect of the craze as it

> just kept going until every vacant store in Canada with benches or kitchen chairs became a 5 cent or 10 cent show. Every butcher, baker and candlestick maker became a so-called exhibitor.[44]

Balaban and Katz in their Magazine refer to the years in and around 1908 as a time when

> people were wild about moving pictures, and they actually suffered to see them. They put up with anything and everything. Poor air, discomfort, crude plays did not deter them.[45]

What was being referred to by Green and Balaban and Katz were the store-front theatres, nickelodeons, that were popular between 1903-1917 and were «part of a gradual development or evolution of the movie theatre from the primitive store (1903) to a more permanent location.[46]

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[44] John Green in Hye Bossin, Film Weekly (1953-1954): 25. Bossin quoted Green from an article which he had written in Film Weekly, July 25, 1944.

[45] «Pioneering in the Movies», Balaban and Katz Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 6, 1925): 10.

[46] Herzog, 5. Store theatres were operated successfully in New York around 1904 and the first theatre to show films as an exclusive means of income occurred at about the same time.

> The nickelodeon took certain features from all other establishments and combined them in a unique way to create and standardize a formula, or a pattern of iconographic motifs [The MARQUEE; The Location Of The Box Office; The Recessed Exterior Vestibule; The Name of The Theatre Spelled Out In Electric Lights] into one-single architectural form. This pattern has identified the movie theater in general ever since.[47]

Among these hundred movie houses in Montreal in 1913, many of them would have no doubt been these popular nickelodeons,[48] which like the later neighbourhood movie houses were conveniently located and accessible to everyone. Two of these nickelodeon type movie houses were the «CINÉMATOGRAPHE D'ARTHUR LARENTE(au 67 de la rue Ste-Catherine est»,[49] and the STARLAND on St. Lawrence Blvd., with its standard Sigmund Lubin «pressed metal fronts».[50]

Influencing the later neighbourhood movie house along with the nickelodeon and in contrast to its long narrow austere

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[47]Herzog, 5, 6.

[48]Lamonde and Hébert, 173-180.

[49]Bélanger, 84.

[50]Herzog, 6. Sigmund Lubin was perhaps the first to use pressed metal fronts to make stores look more like theatres. Russell, 24-25. They could be bought for between $1500 and $2000 and painted and strung out with electric lights.

and simple interior[51] was the elaborate pretentious interior decor of the American movie palaces[52] and deluxe theatres.[53] In general, these palaces and deluxe theatres modelled their designs on nineteenth century traditional Beaux-Arts designed vaudeville houses, music halls and legitimate theatre of which Charles Garnier's Paris Opéra (1875) was the epitome of opulence, elegance, and grandeur.

The architects of the movie theatres had to provide new interior designs in the lobbies and foyers to allow for crowd circulation as a result of the several show a day movie format which was usually accompanied by the «movie palaces»[54]

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[51]Herzog, 6. The seats, simple chairs that were usually quite uncomfortable, varied anywhere from 50 to 200 seats in the earlier years and up to 600 later.

[52]Authors differ on the exact definition of the movie palaces, generally however they are composed of specific elements which include: location in a large downtown area; could be either free standing buildings or sharing a wall with an adjacent building; a large foyer and lobby; could seat between 2000-5000 people; had a balcony and often a mezzanine; full stage house facilities; sumptuous decoration, a place for full run films and elaborate stage shows; a battery of ushers.

[53]Deluxe theatre: could be located anywhere and were similar in spatial arrangement to the movie palace, but on a much smaller scale, seating usually under 2000. The entire format being more moderate.

[54]David Naylor, American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy (New York: Van Reinhold Co., 1981), 36.

own brand of traffic cop, the usher. The ornamental and architectural decoration on the interior as well as that of the exterior was the same as

> with the builders of libraries, railway stations, government offices and private homes...inspired from architectural style-books, which contained measured patterns for the ornamental elements of every age and culture.[55]

If the pattern book did not provide an adequate choice, the designer could create his own design.

The interior of the auditorium had to provide technical elements which included a projection box and adequate sight lines for the curve of the screen to receive the three dimensional character of the film and project it back to the spectator.

The exterior of the theatre, almost always at this time, following Beaux-Arts principles would be faced with either/and brick, stone, simulated stone, terra-cotta or the like. The movie house would follow the patterns of design which included the motifs introduced with the nickelodeon

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[55] Naylor, 32, 36.

Architectural and Decorative Ornaments. The General Catalogue of Jacobson and Co., Vol. 2, New York, 1929. This book is typical of standard pattern books available to architects and designers at this time.

and eventually add both or either a horizontal and vertical marquee, usually decorated with electric light bulbs.

The palace era began about the same time as the decline of the nickelodeon[56] with the Beaux-Arts architect Thomas White Lamb's neo-classic 3000 seat New York «Strand» palace in 1914; it came to a close with Donald Deskey's 5960 seat «Radio City Music Hall» with its Art Deco style of decoration in 1932.

Canada and Montreal[57] had their palaces and deluxe theatres. Between 1913 and 1914, Lamb designed thirteen theatres in Canada, two of them in Montreal. the LOEWS in 1917 and the 3200 seat CAPITOL in 1921. [Fig. 1] Both of them had interiors in the Adam style of

> softened formal classicism with a delicate floral bas-relief around the room and on the ceiling...his typical designed flattened domes...while the side walls [had] open boxes...slung between sets of engaged columns.[58]

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[56]Herzog, 8. Herzog writes that: «The demise of the nickelodeon was hastened by laws passed throughout the country beginning about 1909, setting new standards of ventilation, seating and sanitation in theaters.»

[57]Russell, 33-44; 52-80.

[58]Naylor, 44.

The self-taught C. Howard Crane[59] working out of Detroit designed the 2500 seat PALACE (Fig. 2) which opened the same year as the CAPITOL. It is possible that this theatre in Montreal is similar if not identical to one of Crane's other theatres in some other city in North America.

> A popular trend during this period was to build a theatre in one town and, if it was successful, recreate it in another city.[60]

Montreal architects designed their own movie «palaces» as well but they did not always meet with the same success.

As early as 1907, Ernest Ouimet had build an elaborate interior decorated 1000 seat OUIMETOSCOPE for movies at a cost of $30,000[61] as part of a three-storey building at the corner of St. Catherine Street and Montcalm. Hye Bossin editor of

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[59]September 9, 1985. Information received during a telephone conversation with Jeff Montgomery, manager of C. Howard Crane's Orchestra Hall in Detroit, Michigan which was built in 1919.

[60]Pildas, Ave. Movie Palaces: Survivors of an Elegant Era (New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., 1980), 20.

Russell, 49. Russell draws attention to the fact that none of Lamb's movie palaces differed radically from the others, and it is possible that one of his Canadian theatres may have had an identical twin in the United States, or Canada.

[61]Bélanger, 25.

the Canadian Film Weekly said that the history of the «Canadian motion picture industry can no more be written [without E. Ouimet] than the history of Britain without Churchill».[62]

Similar to designs of other corner building at this time, which housed groceries stores and the like, Ouimet's three-storey building also had the Film Exchange and a seven-room flat for his family on the second floor.[63] Unfortunately by 1910, the concept of reserved seats and scheduled performance for movies was somewhat premature and by 1910 it closed.

The white glazed terra cotta faced 2000 seat IMPERIAL [Fig. 3] designed by D.J. Spence on Bleury near St. Catherine Street[64] and the STRAND on St. Catherine Street [Fig. 4] were more successful than the ST-DENIS project which followed a few years later. The 2500 seat ST-DENIS designed by Barrott, Blackader and Webster was built on St. Denis Street and de Maisonneuve in a district that was at the time considered residential. On the portico, the main facade was ornamented

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[62]Bossin, Film Weekly, «The Story of L. Ouimet» (1953-1954): 30.

[63]Bélanger, 93.

[64]«Montreal Renovated Imperial: Retains Nostalgic Charm», Famous News (September-October, 1981): 13, 14.

with «dull green Ionic pilasters surmounted with an arcade containing small shops...all of the prevailing yellow tone.» In the interior of the auditorium the walls and ceilings were decorated in «low applied relief of the Adam school and the colour ha[d] been applied in such a manner as to blend with the ornament in a harmonious golden tone».[65]

Moving Picture World on February 23, 1918 attributed the ST-DENIS theatre's failure to its being built in a «French section of town».[66] It is more than likely that the lack of success was due to competition with movie houses less than one mile away in the central downtown core as well as others built in very specific areas in the city. Lamonde and Hébert draw attention to the fact that between 1896-1920, 47.2% of the movie theatres were on St. Catherine Street, 33% on St. Lawrence, and 14.2% on Notre-Dame.[67] As a neighbourhood movie house, the ST-DENIS was more than double the size in terms of the average seating capacity devoted to the other neighbbourhood movie houses built at the same time and later.

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[65] «St Denis Theatre», Construction, Toronto (July 1916): 216.

[66] Moving Picture World, Vol. 35 (February 23, 1918): 1101.

[67] Lamonde and Hébert, 24.

In the same year that the ST-DENIS opened, the 1200 seat white glazed terra-cotta faced REGENT[68] neighbourhood movie house designed by Daniel J. Crighton[69] opened on Park Avenue near Laurier.

Crighton's education was largely through apprenticeship and night school like so many other «architects» at this time.[70]

The interior of the REGENT was originally designed with two marble staircases one on the right and one on the left. The auditorium with a vaulted dome was decorated in «plaster details» designed by Herbert Tompkins in colours of green, cerise and old gold with the «glare of the lightning softened with green and amber leaded shades».[71]

About a half a mile north of the REGENT on the same street, the 1300 seat RIALTO neighbourhood movie house

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[68]The Contract Record and Engineering Review, Vol. 30. No. 11 (April 15, 1916): 339. The REGENT had a 1200 seat auditorium: 700 seats on the main floor, 500 seats in the balcony.

[69]Information on the architectural background of Daniel J. Crighton [Appendix B, p. 177].

[70]David Dean, Architecture of the 30's (New York: International Pub. 1983), 79. «In the 20's architects were entering their profession largely through apprenticeship bolstered by night school, and their first experience beyond junior assistant was often in interior and product work design.»

[71]The Contract Record and Engineering Review. Vol. 30, No. 11 (April 15, 1916): 339.

[Fig. 5] opened December 27, 1924. Designed by R. Gariépy, with a bendedict stone façade, the movie house runs parallel to the street hugging the sidewalk. Originally the vertical torch-like electric light marquee was contrasted with horizontal cast iron and glass marquee that cut across the entire facade above the first floor and acted as a canopy to the stores while at the same time it decorated the building.

The artistic decoration of the interior of the auditorium, with the proscenium arch in white and gold designed with fretted sides and an arch that could be «illuminated by concealed lights and hung with pale coral velvet drapes» was the work of Emmanuel Briffa.[72]

Emmanuel Briffa (1875-1955) credited with having decorated over «150 theatres» or «184 theatres» in Canada and the United States, was a native of the Isles of Malta. Supposedly he studied fine arts in Italy in «the Academy of Rome», and immigrated via the States to Montreal in 1909. His first commission shortly after his arrival is believed to have been the STRAND. Briffa along with the other artists

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[72] S. Morgan-Powell, «Gossip of Stage and Studio,» The Montreal Star (Dec. 27, 1924): 6.

The RIALTO had a 1300 seats auditorium: 700 seats on the main floor, 500 seats in the balcony.

and craftsmen he hired contributed freely to the commission. Joffre Gendron who worked with Briffa from about 1935 notes that Mr. Briffa also did paintings in two churches in Montreal, the Greek Orthodox Church on St. Lawrence and Clark, and the Catholic and Syrian Church on St. Denis and Jean Talon.[73]

Unfortunately, «progress» has resulted in renovation or demolition leaving little of Briffa's original work intact. While Coulon notes that most of his drawings, sketches and rolls of hand-painted frescoes were scattered or disappeared, Gendron points out that Briffa rarely did preliminary drawings for his paintings and stencils rather sketching and creating on the spot.

Some photographs do exist although unfortunately rarely in colour. One image from the RIVOLI neighbourhood movie house shows a painted trompe-l'oeil draped and tasseled asbestos

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[73] All of the interior decoration and paintings without exception in the neighbourhood movie houses between 1925-1939 in Montreal were executed by the E. Briffa Studio.

Jacques Coulon, «Tous ces faux marbres, ces ors, ces velours, ces colonnades, c'est signé Emmanuel Briffa.» (Perspectives) Dimanche-Matin, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jan. 20, 1974): 1-5.

Dane Lanken, «The Reign of the 'Queens' draws to a close,» (The Lively Arts), The Saturday Gazette, (Oct. 13, 1973): 27.

The Monitor, Feb. 25, 1937: 13.

Interviews with Joffre Gendron: July 14, 19, August 2, 1983.

curtain signed in the bottom right hand corner, in bold print E. BRIFFA. [Fig. 6]

The 1925 Exposition preaching anti-historicism did not result in any noticeable difference. In 1926 the RIVOLI [Fig. 7], cast stone neighbourhood movie house with stores at the South West corner of St. Denis and Bélanger[74] was created by Daniel J. Crighton in the new classic Greek-style. [Fig. 8] It was similar to the white glazed terra-cotta «Rivoli» in New York designed by Lamb in 1917.

The Beaux-Arts RIVOLI facade is a closed tripartite composition that is ruled by a unit the width of one pilaster. The composition forms a play of squares: the pilaster framed central bay is stacked by two equal squares that are larger than the two stacked smaller squares in the framed side bays. [Fig. 9]

The axial Beaux-Arts interior had an elliptical-shaped inner lobby which led into a domed symmetrical Roman stadium type auditorium. By using concentric circles,

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[74]THE RIVOLI: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #343-1926 [Appendix B, p. 178]. Design of Seating and Number of Seats: 382 ground floor, 32 balcony, 200 standing (#343-1926 C.M.A. Architectural plans Theatre opened: Dec. 18, 1926. [Appendix B, p. 179].

Crighton successfully achieved an illusion of a round room within a square block, reminiscent of Palladio's symmetrical design in the sixteenth century, at the Villa Rotunda at Vicenza.

The wall elevation was ruled by the same unit as on the exterior of the building and was in keeping with the Beaux-Arts principles. Above the rusticated seating level was the piano nobile with its symmetrically arranged arch separating bays. [Fig. 10]

The auditorium was decorated in the Adam style. The trompe-l'oeil arched windows within each of the bays with a regular rhythmic spacing steadily moved towards the focal point, the proscenium with its asbestos curtain. [Fig. 11] Here then was another illusion in the elaborate draped and tasselled curtain that was painted by E. BRIFFA.

Just as the theatre decor alluded to the illusionary so did the movies. In the 1920's, the ancient past was depicted in Cecil B. de Mille's Ten Commandments (1923), the more recent past expressed in James Cruze's The Covered Wagon (1926), and the future in Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1926).

Movies from the beginning were available to everyone! Along with the rest of the accompanying program, the movie house decor was quite different from what one had left at home.

> Many nights Mama came with the whole family. Usually a certain evening each week was set aside for going to the movies, and usually they went to the same theatre every week. As the dishes were hurriedly dried and the bottles set out, nobody bothered to look at the paper to see what was playing. It really didn't matter, the picture on the screen was secondary to the total adventure.[75]

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[75]Ben Hall, The Best Remaining Seats: The Story of the Golden Age of the Movie Palace (New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., 1961), 24.

CHAPTER II

THE «EXOTIC» AND THE «ATMOSPHERICS»

Montreal and Canadian architects as was their pattern in the past continued to follow moving picture theatre trends of their American neighbours. Although Beaux-Arts principles continued to rule the movie house designs, the American movie palace moguls and their architects were constantly searching for a new cladding with which to dress their theatre's both on the exterior and inside, as an attraction to the ever-increasing movie-going population.

> The changes in style of the movie palaces were indirectly dictated by the public. Even in the early twenties there was a growing boredom with old World Styles, the country was changing fast— the postwar boom, the jazz age, flappers, prohibition —and its tastes changed just as fast. Americans wanted to live glamourous lives, and the movies began to reflect their desires. The time was ripe for the palace architects to throw away the old molds and join the spirit of the age.[76]

The discovery of the Tomb of Tutankahamen by Howard Carter in 1922 was the inspiration behind the building that year of «Grauman's Egyptian» theatre[77] in Hollywood, California about which Ben Hall said «the stage made King Tut's tomb look like the old family burial vault.»[78]

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[76]Naylor, 67.

[77]Naylor, 83.

[78]Hall, 159.

Grauman's theatre precipitated the designing of other exotic theatres in styles of ancient and distant cultures.[79]

During the following years, a variety of versions of these styles, more particularly the Egyptian style, appeared with similarities to Grauman's. Among them, «Peery's Egyptian Theatre» in Ogden, Utah (1924)[80] and Alcide Chaussé's[81] NEW EMPRESS Theatre in Montreal in 1927-1928.

The NEW EMPRESS[82] [Fig. 12]

The construction of the EMPRESS took place the same year as Canada's sixtieth birthday and the tragic Laurier Palace fire which claimed many lives and resulted in restrictive

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[79]Naylor, 83-108.

[80]Van Summerhill, «Peery's Egyptian Theatre», Marquee: The Journal of the Theatre Historical Society of America, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1974): 10-11. This theatre was designed by local architects Leslie S. Hodgson and Myral A. McLenahan.

[81]For information on the architectural background of Alcide Chaussé, see Appendix B, p. 180.

[82]THE EMPRESS: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #3217-1927 (Appendix B, p. 181]. Design of seating and number of seats: 866 ground floor, 586 balcony (#3217-1927 C.M.A. Architectural plans). Theatre opened: May 19, 1928 (The Monitor, May 18, 1928).

movie legislation.[83] In New York that same year, in the hands of Roxy Rothapel «the gaudy, enchanged phony, preposterous and lovely Golden Age of the Movie Palace reached its Kleig lit pinnacle»[84] only to be upstaged by the «talkies».

The Egyptian style complex, movie theatre, apartments and stores, opened at the corner of Sherbrooke Street and Old Orchard Avenue almost one year after construction began.

On May 18, 1928, The Monitor announced the opening of THE NEW EMPRESS as follows:

> Notre Dame de Grace has its own theatre. The opening...symbolizes the steadily growing exclusiveness of N.D.G. as a city within a city. Now with one of the finest picture houses anywhere on the continent we have amusement of our own.[85]

Claiming to be «modern in every phase with every danger of fire and panic... [being] eliminated by the inspectors»,[86] the surface treatment with its Egyptian motifs was

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[83]Bélanger, 215-223.

[84]Hall, 10.

[85]«Our New Theatre.» Editorial. The Monitor, May 18, 1928: 4.

[86]«The Empress Is Now Ready For The Initial Performance Tomorrow.» The Monitor, May 18, 1928: front page.

heightened by the electric tracer lights on its vertical and horizontal marquee which must have been an eye stopper from any angle.

The cast stone Beaux-Arts facade of the EMPRESS [Fig. 13 a & b] is ruled by a compositional unit the width of the engaged column located between the series of windows in the central bay. Chaussé has tried to convey in the rhythm of the composition the feeling of solidity and monumentality common to ancient Egyptian temples and tombs. Similar to the RIVOLI, the composition is divided as a play of squares. In the central bay a stacking of three squares is flanked on one side by the pilaster and the other side by the engaged column. The side bay with the modular unit in the centre is composed of a stacking of five squares. [Fig. 14] The flanking section and its continuation around the corner is composed of a module of two large squares repeated four times plus the fly loft. Chaussé has further divided his three-story building into two distinct halves: the first is composed of the tripartite facade with its central bay and two flanking side bays and with the corresponding storefronts below. The second half comprises the flanking corner bay to the east and the Old Orchard St. facade with the entrance to the apartments and the fly loft. The theatre facade can again be seen as divided in half horizontally with the dividing line at the centre and the entrance.

Along with the theatrical character of the design of the EMPRESS, reminiscent of the movies The Ten Commandments and Ben-Hur which were realized the same year as the neighbourhood movie house, the entrance to the movie house was similar to the gateway of an Egyptian Temple. With its two illusionary flanking pylons, and monumental framing pilasters, it can be likened to the obelisks and pylons at the Temple of Edfu in Upper Egypt 251-37 B.C.[87]

The Egyptian motif and the surface treatment in high relief, low bas relief and intaglio combined with the bulk created by the architectural design, including the recessed flanking east bay, established Chaussé's intent to entice the perspective client to the wicket of the neighbourhood EMPRESS movie house and to tempt him with what he will experience inside.

Chaussé intended that the facade be read first vertically commencing at the lower section of the pilaster, with the punctuation at eye level for posters announcing the current and coming events and terminating with the monumental two dimensional relief of the heads of King Tutankahamen at the top. The sculptural head in high relief acts as a cap

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[87]Cyril M. Harris, Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture (New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1977), 439.

to the pilaster but interrupts the horizontal hieroglyphic commentary on the frieze. The two heads force the eye across to the central panel, then downward towards the engaged columns and windows below, and finally the entrance. [Fig. 15]

There is a departure from the symmetrical and spatial arrangement of the ancient temple as one enters the lobby of the EMPRESS due to the inclined terrain and the irregularity of the corner site.

Although somewhat different from the single balcony design of the RIVOLI, the EMPRESS follows the traditional Beaux-Arts wall elevation and distribution of space in the auditorium and is ruled by the same compositional unit as expressed on the facade.

Designed to resemble the «court of an Egyptian Palace» «under a domed cerulian blue sky studded with pale stars of evening»,[88] the EMPRESS was similar in design to both «Grauman's[89] and Peery's Egyptian» theatres[90] and like the other theatres was a mass of pseudo-Egyptian iconography.

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[88]«The New Empress Theatre,» Montreal: The Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (November 1928): 392.

[89]Naylor, 84-86.

[90]Summerhill, Marquee (1974), 10-11.

With a regular uninterrupted rhythm, the symmetrically arranged side walls with their balustrated bays and trompe-l'oeil panels in painted colours of «warm rich blues and reds and gleaming silver and golds»[91] between framed pilasters capped with the Pharaoh's head, rhythmically, steadily moved towards the focal point of the auditorium, the proscenium. [Fig. 16, 17]

The proscenium was framed by pilasters with sentinel-like images of guardian protectors of the trompe-l'oeil painted dromos on the asbestos curtain. The passageway which began on Sherbrooke St., ends within the asbestos curtain only to present the spectator with another fantasy— the magic of the cinema. [Fig. 18]

Finally, after weeks of delay due in great part to the task involved in the interior decoration of the EMPRESS, it was opened May 19, 1928[92] by Mayor Houde.

For thirty-four cents the program included an eight piece orchestra, a three reel comedy Kitchen Talent, three vaudeville acts, the familiar news reels and the movie Wild Geese:

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[91] The New Empress Theatre, Journal R.A.I.C.: 392.

[92] The Monitor, May 25, 1928: front page. «... after weeks of tedious delay in completion of the electrical and interior decoration work...», the EMPRESS was finally opened on May 19, 1928.

the melodramatic story of a cruel dominating husband and father who meets his fate in quick sand and everyone lives happily ever after.[93]

«Peery's Egyptian» theatre had sculptured stone gods cradling bowls from which «wisped clouds of lighted steam»,[94] while Montreal's EMPRESS had Egyptian girls tilting vases towards a running fountain below. The fountain, a popular motif of the 1920's, «spilling its waters wantonly, unrecantably and with a musical tinkle»[95] seeming to draw the water possibly from the Nile River one can see through a window just above.

A far more popular style with theatre architects were the «atmospherics» designed by John Eberson, which were composed mainly of a combination of technical innovation, set decoration and bright colour.

Naylor in his book American Picture Palaces, describes the interior decoration of the «atmospheric» theatres as,

> extremely conducive to hosting the fantasy worlds that film makers sought

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[93]The Monitor, May 18, 1928: front page.

[94]Summerhill, 10. Marquee. Peery's Egyptian Theatre, p. 10.

[95]Hillier, 91-92.

> to create for theatre patrons. As the name implies, an atmospheric contains within its make believe walls the air of some distant and exotic outdoor arena.[96]

On the whole, the atmospheres met with «derision in England and on the continent» while Canadians followed the same route as their American neighbours.[97]

Between 1927 and 1929, a number of atmospherics were constructed in Canada mainly in the Spanish style. These included the AVALON, Ottawa (1928); the CAPITOL, Saskatoon (1929);[98] the GRANADA, Montreal (1928); the GRANADA, Sherbrooke (1929), and the MONKLAND, Montreal (1929). This pattern led Gladish in his 1930 article «Theatre Design in Canada» to write that

> ... among the so-called atmospherics houses, there are probably more of the Spanish design of architectural influence than all others put together. Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian and other effects are conspicuous by their absence.[99]

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[96]Naylor, 67-78.

[97]Dennis Sharp, The Picture Palace and Other Buildings for the Movies (London: Hugh Eveley, 1964), 74-76.

[98]Russell, 87-88.

[99]W.F. Gladish, «Theatre Design in Canada», Exhibitors' Herald World, New York (July 5, 1930): 31-32.

The SEVILLE[100] [Fig. 19] and The GRANADA[101] [Fig. 20]

The new corner movie houses with specific interior Eberson style characteristics, the SEVILLE designed by C.L. Dufort at the extreme western end of St. Catherine St., and the GRANADA designed by A.O. Doucet[102] at the eastern end of St. Catherine St., were approved for construction within nine months of one another.

They are both corner buildings with neo-classic tripartite facades, and east and west bays corresponding to the store fronts below.

The artificial stone facades of the SEVILLE and the GRANADA are both ruled by a compositional unit the width of

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[100] THE SEVILLE: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #4889-1928 (Appendix B, p. 182). Design of the seating and number of seats: Stadium type with approximately 30 rows and 980 to 1000 seats plus a small balcony. Theatre opened: March 22, 1929.

[101] THE GRANADA: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #2385-1929 (Appendix B, p. 183). Design of seating and number of seats: Stadium type; 57 rows, 1,728 seats (Gladish, 31).

[102] For information on M.E.A. Doucet (Appendix B, p. 184).

one pilaster. The composition of both Doucet and Dufort were similar to those of Chaussé and Crighton and can be divided into two distinct halves, with the emphasis on the entrance at the centre. Unlike the EMPRESS however, with the image of Egyptian solidity in the design of the facade where the pull is expressed as a drawing inward, the GRANADA and the SEVILLE both convey the illusion of an upward thrust, although this is more moderate at the SEVILLE. [Fig. 21, 22]

Similar to the RIVOLI and the EMPRESS, the rhythm on the facade of the GRANADA, and the SEVILLE is also a composition designed as a play of squares. At the GRANADA, the pilaster framed side bays are composed of three and one-half vertical stacked squares; the unframed central bay is composed of four equal larger squares below the entablature and above at the centre a module equal to the module in side bay is flanked by two smaller squares. At the SEVILLE, the tripartite facade with its framing pilasters are stacked with a module of two squares which is repeated in the three bays. [Fig. 23, 24]

At the GRANADA, the neo-classic surface ornament combined with the architectural design accentuated the central upward direction of the tripartite facade. Doucet treated the centre facade differently than the side bays. While the bays on either side of the centre are decorated with a

horizontal marquee, the central section is left uncovered. By leaving this section unobstructed above the first level, and treating only the window in the centre with a rounded pediment arch and the decorative low relief cartouche, one's eye cannot help but move directly upward to the gabled pediment and extended flag pole.

The upward movement on the SEVILLE facade is not as pronounced as at the GRANADA. Dufort has placed one square directly on top of the other without interruption or addition thereby creating a more horizontal composition. It is in slightly different treatment of the decorative elements in the central bay, the triple window, heraldic shields and the gently curved roofline that the verticality is accentuated at the centre.

In the GRANADA, the largest theatre built in Canada in 1928,[103] the interior was a bilaterally symmetrical design and was a continuation of the central axis expressed on the exterior.

While most of Montreal's neighbourhood movie houses had lobbies of modest size, Doucet had provided a large rectangular lobby of 30 ft x 87 ft (9.1 m x 26.5 m) extending the full width of the building. Prior to this, the lobby was

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[103]Gladish, 31.

> a point which was overlooked by the theatre designers a few years ago, when they felt the street was good enough for waiting crowds.[104]

Built in the depth of 90 ft x 212 ft (27.4 m x 64.6 m), the GRANADA permitted a 57 row 1,725 seat Roman stadium style auditorium

> where every seat is in front of the stage and those in the back get a screen talk and shadows just as easily as those down front.[105]

The rhythm of the «wall storey» above the rusticated level is a steady uninterrupted repetition of alternating units of coupled pilasters and bays which change in beat slightly at the rounded sweep of the concave side bays. [Fig. 25] The SEVILLE follows a regular rhythmic spacing without interruption moving towards the proscenium. [Fig. 26]

Architects and clients at this time were still uncertain as to which direction the design of the motion picture theatre was to follow. Gladish makes the point that the GRANADA designer provided for any change. He writes:

> In case the people demand something in human form for the eye and the ear... [where]... the stage is handy for the accommodation of the loud-speaker, horns for present but

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[104]Gladish, 33.

[105]Gladish, 30-33.

> it is ready for any show development. There are no near stage, or side boxes as in old theatres, but there are ornamental columns, surmounted by stone balustrades on either side of the stage which might easily be fitted with boxes...so that people might sit to be seen as well as see... if the time ever comes again.[106]

The GRANADA with its Rococo, neo-classic, and Spanish Garden-like interior decoration remained a movie house and never realized its other possibilities until it was changed to a live theatre in 1977.[107]

It was in the decorative treatment of the tree topped sky above the «stage-set» side walls that Doucet and Dufort came closest to the Eberson style of the «atmospheric».[108] The technical innovation of Briffa who having: [Fig. 27, 28]

> installed projectors in four corners of the theatre which by a system of

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[106]Gladish, 30.

[107]The GRANADA became «Théâtre Denise Pelletier, La Nouvelle Compagnie Théâtrale», and opened October 14, 1977. (Booklet by Union régionale de Montréal, Caisses Populaires Desjardins): 3.

[108]Naylor, 68. In his design of the Houston Majestic (1923), Eberson «replaced the standard ornate ceiling dome with a star covered blue plaster sky.» The twinkling electric constellations were occasionally obscured by clouds projected from a hidden Benograph majic-lantern machine...the open-air illusion was enhanced by the stage-set walls encircling the auditorium, creating a feeling of being enclosed in an ancient Italian garden...».

> revolving discs produced a panorama of constantly drifting clouds on the ceiling and to top it off, one machine projected the image of a tiny airplane which nightly flew around the ghostly sky.[109]

The MONKLAND[110] [Fig. 29]

With the steady increase in the population of Notre Dame de Grace, Alderman Bigger obsrved that the district with its

> population of 65,000 had need of another theatre, particularly as the population is increasing at the rate of 5 thousand per year.[111]

The «first building to be erected for talking pictures»[112] was the MONKLAND designed by D. Crighton. A

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[109] Dane Lanken, «The Reign of the Queen Draws to a Close», The Lively Arts Section. The Gazette, Oct. 13, 1933: 27.

[110] THE MONKLAND: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #2358-1929 (Appendix B, p. 185). Design of seating and number of seats: 1,000 ground floor, 285 balcony (C.M.A. Architectural plans).
Theatre opened: March 8, 1930 (The Monitor, March 14, 1930: 5).

[111] «Huge crowds throng New Theatre for Opening Night Last Friday Evening», The Monitor, March 14, 1930: 5.

[112] «Sound Apparatus Test at New Monkland Theatre Satisfactory in all Details.» The Monitor, March 7, 1930: 9.

corner building, it was meant to be viewed from the north east corner. However, it must have had a dramatic impact from any angle with

> the sign of the neon system 48 feet in height by 9 feet wide the largest of its kind in Montreal ... weighing over 5 tons ... [it] was erected in sections ... taking 14 men to put it in place.[113]

The MONKLAND is a two-level symmetrical Beaux-Arts closed composition having two side bays and their corresponding stores at ground level, equal to the central bay. [Fig. 30] The tripartite facade at the MONKLAND is ruled by a compositional unit the width of one engaged cabled column located within the central bay. Similar to the EMPRESS in rhythm, it can be divided into two equal halves where the massing is towards the centre and inward rather than expressed upward like the RIVOLI and the GRANADA. Also organized as a play of squares, the side bays are composed of a vertical stacking of three squares. The central bay with the modular unit at the centre is composed on either side of a stacking of three and one half smaller squares which carries through and includes the entablature. [Fig. 31]

Crighton originally proposed that the facade be faced in cream coloured brick with the idea of creating the effect

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[113] The Monitor, Feb. 28, 1930: front page.

of light coloured stucco[114] similar to a Spanish-type building. The Spanish accents included the heraldic crests, arched windows and balcony surrounds, cabled columns, cream coloured quoins juxtaposed to the brown brick. The three cast stone engaged columns are decorated with a cabled pattern and are capped with devilish creatures. These each hold a mask, one of tragedy, one music and one comedy, hinting at what one may expect in this building.

The MONKLAND like:

> Islamic palaces and private dwelling [which] tended to avoid any exterior expression of their interior brillance.[115]

Similar in spatial arrangement to the RIVOLI one first had to pass through an ellipse shaped lobby and up eight stairs in order to arrive at the single balcony auditorium.

Upon entering the single balcony auditorium at the MONKLAND, one was immediately taken with concept exercised at the Alhambra in Granada of

> a central space open to the sky which serves as an axis around which all the features are arranged.[116]

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[114]Front elevation. C.M.A. #2358-1929 Architectural plans.

[115]Oleg Grabar, The Alhambra (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 167.

[116]Grabar, 160.

In Eberson's «mix and match» stage set interpretation of the «Alhambra» in Granada was his design of the «Palace» in Marion, Ohio (1928) and the «Loews» in Arkron, both were an «intimate scale of the earlier 'Tampa' Theatre in Florida 1926». Thus his favourite Mediterranean atmospheric may have influenced Crighton's design of the MONKLAND.[117]

Eberson saw variety as the

> primary demand of an amusement loving public and worked to fulfill that demand. Great pains were taken to insure that the side walls never matched.[118]

Although Crighton follows Eberson's asymmetrical decorative style, the wall storey was a repetition of the same symmetrical Beaux-Arts spatial arrangement and balanced proportion as that which appeared in other Montreal cinemas.

The compositional unit of the cabled pilaster which ruled the exterior facade was repeated in the interior. Above the imitation stone-block rusticated level the plaster stage-set represented facades in a Spanish courtyard. [Fig.. 32, 33]

In spite of the variation, the rhythm was expressed in a regular spacing on both walls, as one's eye moved steadily

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[117]Naylor, 73-74.

[118]Naylor, 69.

towards the proscenium. The difference lay in the accent, on the east wall it fell in the centre of each window, while on the west wall the emphasis was at the outer edge of the mullion's. [Fig. 34, 35]

The design of the plaster cast roof covering [Fig. 36] both the proscenium arch and its flanking east bay was the same modular unit as that of the central bay and its flanking east bay of the exterior facade. [Fig. 37] If turned inside out, the exterior facade would complete the pattern by becoming the fourth wing of the courtyard, while overhead «the sky in miniature gave one the impression of an open air theatre.»[119]

It must be noted that Briffa is credited with executing the decoration which was seen as a «pleasant departure from the conventional design» having been decorated in «soft colours throughout with subdued lighting»[120] Crighton specified on the plan of the ceiling for the entrance hall, the ceiling and the soffit «all modelling to be done by an approved modeller to the satisfaction of the architect.»[121] Architectural design at this time was detailed and the inter-

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[119] The Monitor, March 7, 1930: 1.

[120] The Monitor, March 7, 1930: 4.

[121] Plan of the Ceiling, C.M.A. #2358-1929 Architectural plans.

pretation of the interior designer remained close to the original intent of the architect. In instances such as this however, Crighton chose to be very specific and insisted on being consulted on all details.

After an expenditure of $350,000 and ten months later than expected,[122] the neighbourhood MONKLAND movie house opened its doors.

> To a double line of patrons [that] extended for almost a hundred yards on each side of the doorway and a squad of policemen was busily engaged in preventing the total blocking of the entrance...the curtain was raised...the president addressed the audience in a talking film. In clarity and volume the reproducing appartus left nothing to be desired the voices of the speakers being heard perfectly in every part of the theatre.

Following the «Movie Tone News» was the Frolic Garden Orchestra, with a master of ceremonies, who introduced solo dancers including «an unusually attractive version of the 'Fan Dance' a sextette from the 'Follies'». Two vocal solos by «talented artists received hearty applause, to be judged by response of the audience». The Doll Dance, a technicolor talkie was shown and then...finally the feature Tiger Rose a [Canadian] tale of the Northwest Mounted Police in the far west— all in a Spanish courtyard on a cold winter night in Montreal.[123]

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[122]Gladish, 35.

[123]The Monitor, March 14, 1930: 5.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARBONNEAU CONNECTION

Although elements of the Art Deco style of decoration had appeared in moving picture houses before, among the first «pure» Art Deco theatres[124] was the «Fox Wilshire» in Los Angeles (1930)[125] designed by Charles Lee and the last movie palace and the largest to be built on the west coast with this style of decoration was the «Paramount» in Oakland, California[126] designed by Timothy L. Pleuger. This was the same year that the Empire State Building was completed, ending what came to be realized as the high point in the Art Deco style of decoration on New York skyscrapers.[127] Naylor draws attention to the fact that

> Although architects showing in the Paris Exposition of Decorative Art gave birth to the style in 1925, it took time for art deco to be absorbed by the palace architects. They did utilize the geometric form of art deco in some late 1920's theaters, but the mixed qualities of jungle primitivism and machine-inspired design that originated in the Paris Exposition were not apparent in American movie theaters until 1930.[128]

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[124]John E. Miller, «Modern Theatres of the West,» Marquee: The Journal of the Theatre Historical Society of America, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1972): 3-12.

[125]Naylor, 141.

[126]Naylor, 164.

[127]Robinson and Bletter, 43. Elements of the Art Deco style of decoration appeared earlier. However, the style attained its greatest popularity between 1927-1931.

[128]Naylor, 141.

It is not surprising to find that the largest theatre in this decorative style had been built in the state that was fast becoming the film centre of the world; Hollywood, California was at this time the focus of technological innovators and attracted members of the applied arts.

Just one year later, during the height of the Depression, «Radio City Music Hall», the largest movie theatre ever built was the «last of the big city Art Deco palaces.» With its golden arches framing the stage reminiscent of Sullivan's auditorium theatre at the end of the nineteenth century, it brought to a close the golden-age of the movie palace.[129]

The importance of «Radio City Music Hall» and the Rockefeller Center[130] complex, lay not only in its new style of decoration but in its projected overall scheme and «comprehensive planning.» This made exemplary the importance «of harmony of thought and harmony of effort» in that

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[129]Naylor, 170-172.

[130]Dennis Sharp, A Visual History of Twentieth Century Architecture (New York: Graphic Society Ltd., 1972): 15. Rockefeller Center Complex, New York. «America's largest privately owned business and amusement complex of the prewar period - began in 1931...[and it]...represents the culmination of the prewar skyscraper design and comprehensive planning.» The RKO motion picture theatre was the first of the complex to be completed in 1932 with architects (Corbett, Harrison, MacMurray, Hood and Fouilhoux).

> ... sculptors, painters, and decorators ... contribute[d] to the decorative scheme but though their work is varied, it attains unity throughout a central interpretative idea.[131]

The Bauhaus concept of working together as a team of equals was brought to fruition in Montreal with the overall scheme of Eaton's ninth floor dining room designed and decorated by Jacques Carlu[132] in collaboration with the architects of the buiilding.[133]

Carlu in the article «Tradition and Modernism» which he wrote while a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1930, addressed the problem:

> There is in fact no dividing line between architectural decoration and the applied arts the latter being links between daily life and the fine arts.[134]

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[131] L. Andrew Reinhard, «Modern Architecture a Many Sided Problem,» Construction (March-April 1934): 55-56.

[132] The Gazette, Jan. 27, 1931: 6. Jacques Carlu, Grand Prix de Rome (about 1923) Director in Architecture of the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts; Professor of Advanced Design of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

[133] Ross and Macdonald.

[134] Jacques Carlu, «Tradition and Modernism,» The Journal R.A.I.C. (May 1931): 180.

The Eaton's dining room opened the same year as the Aldred Building.[135] It was decorated with window spandrels in the new material that were manufactured from thirty-two thousand pounds of no. 43 aluminum alloy which were «highlight casted and [were] a notable decorative feature of the design». LE CHATEAU neighbourhood movie picture house, completed the end of the same year, shared the same new style of architectural decoration. A style of decoration about which Alfred H. Barr wrote:

> Only recently has the deluge of modernistic decoration from Vienna, Paris, Stockholm and Amsterdam begun to diminish, but not before our more advanced architects, already stimulated by Saarinen's success, had accepted the modernistic mode with enthusiasm and ornamented their buildings with zig zags and chevrons instead of Gothic crokets and classical moldings. The modernistic style has become just another way of decorating surfaces.[136]

In the 1920's, the Art Deco «as a style applique»[137] that appeared on the exterior and interior of the Beaux-Arts

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[135]The Aldred Building, Construction (May 1931): 147.

[136]Alfred Barr, Modern Architecture International Exhibition (1932) Museum of Modern Art, New York, p. 13.

[137]Gebhard, 17.

designed neighbourhood movie houses the OUTREMONT and LE CHATEAU was typical of the «machine inspired design» expressed in American palaces at this time.

THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT[138] [Fig. 38]

At first, the population of Outremont, which had steadily increased to 23,000 by 1928, objected to the construction of a movie house in their City of Outremont. In Histoire d'Outremont, Robert Rumilly wrote:

> Alfred Trudeau demande la permission d'ouvrir un cinéma au coin de l'avenue Bernard et de l'avenue Champagneur. Les voisins s'opposent, la présence du cinéma entraînerait, surtout le soir, une affluence d'automobiles dans les allées transversales.[139]

Eventually the citizenry succumbed to progress and René Charbonneau[140] who had already designed many homes in the

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[138]No plans, permit, etc. exist for the THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT. An information source was the Souvenir Program from the Grand Opening, Oct. 4, 1929. (Appendix B, p. 186). Design of seating and number of seats: 650 ground floor, 538 balcony.
Theatre opened: Oct. 4, 1929 (Souvenir Program: OUTREMONT).

[139]Robert Rumilly, Histoire d'Outremont 1875-1975 (Montreal: Leméac, 1975), p. 231.

[140]Information on the architectural background of René Charbonneau from an interview with his father, Mr. Gérard Charbonneau, July 31, 1986. (Appendix B, p. 187).

city was the architect of choice,

> et c'est pourquoi connaissant l'exclusivisme de sa population, il a voulu dessiner un théâtre possédant la destination, le confort, le cachet d'intimité dont ses patrons sont coutumiers.[141]

The OUTREMONT, in the City of Outremont, opened October 4, 1929, one quarter of a mile west of the RIALTO on Park Avenue. LE CHATEAU opened in the quartier of Villeray in the northern section of the city two years later, immediately across the street from the RIVOLI, both of these neighbourhood movie houses were designed by René Charbonneau with the interior decoration executed by Emmanuel Briffa. Although a more mature statement is expressed in LE CHATEAU conception, characteristics intrinsic to the style, the geometric form of Art Deco, were very much evident in the earlier building.

The THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT is a two-facade corner building. Its huge black poster-like upper case letters contrasted with the sand coloured brick on the step-up immediately identifies the movie house and introduces one element in the new style of architectural decoration. This dramatic touch on the step-up is contrasted by the subdued horizontal

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[141] Souvenir Program: OUTREMONT.

grey-beige cast stone facade with its two-dimensional decorative low relief patterns in the same material as the facade. A small vertical marquee, limited to the height of the street facade, was originally found just above the entrance to the movie house, unobtrusively tucked into the corner. The double entrance which angles the corner on two sides follows the same pattern as the stores, in each of the corresponding bays, which run parallel to the sidewalk on Bernard Avenue.

The street facade and theatre module share a wall to the east with the apartment building, while on Champagneur St. the street facade is juxtaposed to the theatre module at a point one third up the wall.

Designed to be viewed from the north east corner, the horizontal neo-classical movie house, part Babylonian fortress, part pueblo style with decorative elements of the new Art Deco style, occupies two thirds of a short block between Champagneur St. and Bloomfield Ave.

The facades are composed of a play of verticals and horizontals both in the basic design and with the addition of the decorative elements. The neo-classic symmetrical cast stone horizontal street facade is composed of a seven bay closed composition with two lateral protruding bays framing the five central bays. An eighth bay

around the corner follows the same design and flanks the massive theatre module. These bays can be divided horizontally into two equal halves with corresponding entrances to the services at ground level. The vertical cream coloured step-up theatre module is similar in design to the pattern established with the zoning laws for skyscraper set backs that originated in the United States in 1920 and was fully established in Montreal by 1927.[142] This design source however often draws other associations, among them the second and third floor levels of the «stepped or terraced Indian habitats called pueblos»[143] of New Mexico, and Arizona modelled after the stepped shape of the Aztec temple.[144]

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[142]Philip J. Turner, «The Development of Architecture in the Province of Quebec Since Confederation,» Construction (June 1927), 194.

[143]John J.C. Blumenson, Identifying American Architecture. Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms 1600-1945 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1981), 6-7.

[144]Harris, 38, 535. Aztec architecture was «An architecture emerging in the 14th century from the austere Toltec. Aztec pyramids characteristically support two temples dedicated to their major gods: parallel stairways led to a common platform on which temples were placed... Destruction of Aztec architecture by the Spanish left few remains: the Aztec Capital of Tenochtitlan is entirely buried under Modern Mexico City.»

Hillier, 45. Hillier notes that «it was the stepped shape of Aztec temples which had the greatest effect on European Art. We see it in wireless sets, in plastic buckles, in the «bureau de dame» and of course in architecture itself.»

The decorative treatment of the surface is accentuated vertically by the series of unadorned recessed straight-headed windows in alternating patterns of sevens and threes and in the pilasters separating the bays, while the horizontality occurs in the panels above and below the windows. The new architectural ornamentation is exemplified above the window in contrasting classical rounded swags and angular arrowlike tassles, [Fig. 39] in the shape of inverted chevrons a motif common to Art Deco design while below the window a more geometric design in X's and O's is introduced.

> The chevron or zigzag a motif rarely employed in the exhibition (1925) although...[it] was to be the leitmotif in many of the styles named after it.[145]

It was as early as 1921-22, that the leitmotif of triangles and chevrons, «carved by Bauhaus students» appeared on both the exterior and interior as a decoration in Walter Gropius' Sommerfield House in Berlin.[146]

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[145]Whiffen and Breeze, 6. Harris, 109. The chevron is not a new motif. C. Harris identifies the chevron as: «a v shaped stripe pointing up or down, used singly or in groups in heraldry and in uniforms: hence any ornament so shaped. A molding showing a zigzag sequence of these ornaments appears in Romanesque architecture or derivatives».

[146]Robinson and Bletter, 53. Don Vlack, Art Deco Architecture in New York 1920-1940 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 58. Interestingly Vlack draws a parallel between the «ziggurat» and the motif labelled a «chevron»: «The structured right angles had only to be modified into connected acute angles

Similar to the design of the pilaster on the facade of the OUTREMONT, the fluted pilaster, capped with a panel rather than the traditional entablature was a common feature of the new style. Whiffen and Breeze note that at the 1925 Exposition,

> The columns and pilasters, usually fluted or reeded were much used, but rarely had anything that could be taken for a capital, they might support a frieze without any architrave, ... sculptural groups, or pilasters ... but never a complete entablature; cornices were eschewed altogether.[147]

Accenting the verticality and introducing another element in the new style is the textural hand crafted treatment of the bricks on the street facade similar to the German brick style. Bletter explains the brick thus:

> ornament is usually ingrained; that is, the structural unit, the brick itself, is used to introduce decoration by varying color tonalities and by changing the normal alignment of the bricks so that they project in angular patterns from the wall. The overall impression this type of architecture produces is an earthy, hand crafted texture.[148]

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in order to increase the velocity and force of the Symbol. ... If a multitude of lightning volts are converted they form a vibrating grid.»
In this paper, the word «chevron» will be used when referring to the linear triangular motif (usually only in the ornamentation) and the «ziggurat» for the step-ups.

[147]Whiffen and Breeze, 6.

[148]Robinson and Bletter, 54-55.

Although smaller in scale, the OUTREMONT, with its projecting brick design repeating the shape of the bays of the street facade below, is treated similar to the step back principle of the skyscraper and the cubist element of simultaneous planes.

> The changing scale and setbacks of numerous angles and facets shift in what seems like arbitrary relationships, but the symmetry of the building is such that it is understood that one aspect of a building section is a mirror image of another...[149]

On the Champagneur St. side, the design of the street facade is repeated and is dramatically altered at the juxtaposing of theatre module. The increased height and massiveness of the theatre module with the textured pattern of the bricks in vertical bands within the framed panels increase the upward thrust and give a more human quality to what otherwise would have been a bulky overpowering surface. [Fig. 40]

With the addition of the new style of decoration to the traditional Beaux-Arts building, the introduction of angular and rounded patterns and the juxtaposed arrangement of the pattern, the rhythm is a combination of serial repetitiveness while at the same time becoming

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[149] Vlack, 18.

fragmentary and harmonious within the bays. With a sweeping upward movement to the step-up facade combined with the rhythm of the brickwork, there tends to be a repetition of broken beats with tranquil interludes. Around the corner on Champagneur, a rapidly accelerated version of the upward motion expressed on the Bernard St. facade is repeated in the rhythm.

In addition to the new elements, two more traditional, more rounded in design panels over the service entrances on the street facade show «the Goddess of the Movies» in high relief peering out from between two wildly twisting griffin-like creatures inviting «all» to enter. [Fig. 41]

Charbonneau's design of the OUTREMONT is similar in basic design to his later movie house, LE CHATEAU. Not only in the spatial arrangement of the interior is the OUTREMONT similar to Charbonneau's later composition of LE CHATEAU, but in the exterior design as well. It is as if Charbonneau has reversed the movie house facades, so that the step-up facade on Champagneur is the St. Denis St. facade and main entrance to LE CHATEAU, while the street facade at the OUTREMONT can be likened to the Bélanger St. facade of LE CHATEAU. [Fig. 42a & b]

The single balcony neo-classic auditorium follows the same familiar formula as the earlier buildings. There is, however, a departure from the traditional French wall, in the

overall treatment of the surfaces with the introduction of the new decorative elements, the design of the architectural ornamentation, the arrangement of the patterns, the motifs, and the atypical juxtaposition of elements which in itself is characteristic of the style. It is not surprising then to note that traditional plaster pattern books were not used for the OUTREMONT.

> All ornamentation and fixtures were made specially for the Outremont Theatre, making it truly a modern theatre, and is a credit to the City of Outremont.[150]

At first glance, the surface treatment of the wall elevation with its pilaster separating bays above the rusticated level resembles earlier movie houses. However, on closer observation, the «new style» inspired by the machine convey a feeling of jarring movement, while strange and different is rather compelling when the old and new meet in this new way. [Fig. 43]

The flat five band pilaster design is capped with a stylized floreated panel composed of a pattern of angular elongated fern leaves and rounded fruit, painted with accents of silver leaf. This panel is juxtaposed to a rather subdued traditional landscape.

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[150] Souvenir Program : OUTREMONT.

Below, a simulated stained glass arched window is overlaid with a machine-made abstract geometric design and below this again is found a simulated tiffany in a geometric vertical engineering design, like that of the Eiffel tower. Beside the window are coupled pilasters in the same banded design as found on the frame of the window, between which is painted imitation marble. A leitmotif of the French Art Deco, «the stylized fountain and flower like scrolls reminiscent of Edgar Brandt's l'Oasis»[151] appears in the plaster panels above the paired pilasters.

Instead of the familiar elements of the architrave, the same plaster molding as that on the five band fluted pilaster is repeated in a dentil-like design, acting as a frame on either side of the simple geometrically arranged paterae.

The plaster cast machine-made bands are repeated on the false beamed symmetrically designed ceiling, where they are contrasted with the hand-crafted stencil work. The five band pattern on the ceiling is broken up with the outer two bands only acting as a frame while the other three bands are designed in the ziggurat shape. [Fig. 44]

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151 Philippe Garner, «Silver, Jewellery & Metal Work,» The Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts (1890-1940): 100.

> The most important and ubiquitous motif of Deco design is the ziggurat. This shape is the major theme of Deco ornamentation...manifest[ing] itself in hundreds of permutations[152] ... as a two-dimensional decorative device ... [that is] the preeminently Deco structural form as well as the ornamental one.[153]

The ziggurat motif conveys the idea of movement both in repetitiveness and in the design. As Vlack writes:

> In as much as the angular and jagged linear progression of the ziggurat had no real beginning or end but did have correct energetic rhythm.[154]

Here we see the machine-inspired movement, expressed in a fluted, abstracted, dentil-like standardized product. The product this time is treated in a rounded form and conceals the indirect lighting while at the same time framing the deep painted silver leaf coves that cast a subdued luminosity over the room. The deep mysterious infinite energy hidden in the mirror-like refractive cavernous spaces is symbolic of the power hidden in the man-made machine. [Fig. 45]

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[152]Vlack, 57.

[153]Vlack, 77.

[154]Vlack, 59.

The rhythm leading to the focal point, the proscenium, is fragmented in the areas which jolt the eye with the juxtaposition of the contrasting elements and smoothly move over the surface with the dentil-like design. Vlack draws attention to the fact that:

> just as the ornamentation were modernistic, the materials were not used in the traditional ways either. The juxtaposition of colour, texture pattern and opulence often startled and even shocked. Not only was the rhythm of the shape jolting but the material itself added an additional impact.[155]

Charbonneau did not choose the typical «atmospheric» Eberson style ceiling that Doucet, Dufort and Crighton employed for the THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT. He worked however to create the same outdoor ambiance in the auditorium. In the Souvenir Program Book, René Charbonneau stated:

> Conçu et exécuté dans le style moderne l'architecte a voulu par des lignes et effets de lumière se reflétant sur des fonds or et argent créer une luminosité se rapprochant de l'atmosphère des jours ensoleillés.[156]

In contrast to the geometric machine-made smooth product were the paintings and the stencils found on the ceiling and the soffit as well as in other sections of the

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[155] Vlack, 92.

[156] Souvenir Program: OUTREMONT.

movie house. For example, the ceiling of the mezzanine lounge is decorated with a painted mural of rococo-style putti carrying wavy ribbons on which was written «The Confederated Amusement Ltd.» identifying the OUTREMONT as another link in this chain of movie houses. [Fig. 46]

On opening night the trompe-l'oeil asbestos curtain signed with the name of the decorator E. Briffa was raised and the OUTREMONT program began. In order of presentation:

> «Pathé Sound News»: «Local National and World News Events in Sound»; «The Toy Shop»; «A Tiffany Stalh Colour Classic in Sound»; «A Movie Tone Vaudeville Attraction»; «Go Easy Doctor»; «A George Le Maire All Talking Comedy»; presentation offering, E. Ross...Silver Toned Interpreter of Ballads songs and snatches, director of entertainments par excellence ...to entertain and present in turn...the Haunting Songs of Claire Vincent...with a voice which thrills the audiences wherever she sings; the Morenoffs «Bring to their Dance Creation the allure of Jettyva Aesthetic Dances which made her a feature of the New York «Rio Company» [and finally] ...Saucy fascination of the Petite D'Arcy Sisters in their Intriguing Specialties.»[157]

On either side of the proscenium, [Fig. 47] above the angled arched windows, two baroque theatre mask-like faces of the «Goddess of the Movies» peer out at the spectators reminding us of the past. Above the proscenium are repetitive

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[157] Souvenir Program Book, OUTREMONT.

gilt plaster cast panels of pairs of Diaghilev inspired dancing girls with swirling veils in hand. With one knee lifted and the contour of buttock revealed through a short transparent dress, they sport the new short «permanent wave»[158] representing the spirit of the «modern» age. [Fig. 48]

LE CHATEAU[159] Appendix A [Fig. 49]

In the north eastern section of the city just north of the earlier ST. DENIS theatre and on the opposite corner of the RIVOLI, the LE CHÂTEAU neighbourhood movie house opened in 1931, the same year as Timothy L. Pleuger's «pure Art Deco Oakland Paramount» in California.

The brick, cast-stone, terra-cotta faced LE CHÂTEAU is a corner complex composed of two facades that are designed to be viewed diagonally from the south. The RIVOLI, owned by the competing United Amusement Corporation, was built five

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[158]David Hillier, The Style of the Century 1900-1980 (New York: H.P. Dutton Inc., 1983), 94.

[159]LE CHATEAU: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #440-1931 [Appendix B, p. 188]. Design of Seating and Number of Seats: ground floor: 894, balcony: 516.
Theatre opened: Dec. 25, 1931 (conversation by phone with Famous Players, July 15, 1986).

years earlier and was a much more modest structure than the new massive complex.

The monumental LE CHATEAU complex brings to mind the Baths of Caracalla and like this ancient structure which was centered around varied activities, LE CHATEAU houses stores, and apartments as well as the movie house. [Fig. 50 a and b]

The two-storey Bélanger St. apartment facade was originally planned as a three-storey[160] building. The design of the apartment section can be likened to the row housing projects[161] necessitated by the steady increases in the population,[162] with the development of urbanization during the 1920's and 30's.

The step-up design is similar to the OUTREMONT, only at LE CHATEAU there is an additional step-up. When viewed from the St. Denis St. facade, the adjoining section appears as if it was a vaulted buttress to the movie house.

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[160]Bélanger St. Elevation, C.M.A. #440-1931, Architectural plans.

[161]Sharp, 112.

[162]Edgar McInnes, Canada A Political and Social History (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 530. McInnes notes that 40% of Quebec's population was centered in Montreal by 1931: 200,000 people from the rural areas emigrated to Montreal between 1921 and 1931.

Running parallel to the street, the stores on the St. Denis St. facade correspond to the bays below and flank the entrance on the ground floor while on the Bélanger St. facade they are asymmetrical.

The traditional Beaux-Arts designed LE CHATEAU is ruled by a compositional unit the width of one pilaster located in the central bay. The two lateral bays are equal to the central bay on the St. Denis St. tripartite facade. This neo-classic composition can also be divided as a play of squares: the unit framed lateral bays are composed of a series of a module of five stacked smaller squares, then the three larger ones in the centre that are capped by an eyebrow, thereby accentuating the verticality and the massing toward the centre. [Fig. 51].

The Bélanger St. facade, framed by a compositional unit at the terminating point of the building, is composed of four vertical stacked squares within the extended arch module. This is followed by a unit of three stacked larger squares equal in height to the arched module. The transitional bay at the corner framed by the modular unit is composed of a stacking of three boxes.

Horizontality is expressed by the volume of the Bélanger St. facade, in the arrangement of the pattern, the window punctuation in series of singles and doubles. When

combined however with the surrounding decorative molding, and the sweep of the arches, the verticality is emphasized.

On the St. Denis St. facade, the vertical emphasis is expressed in the basic design, in the treatment of the surface cladding, in the architectural ornament, along with the new motifs. Underlying the vertical emphasis is the energy source and power that generated this phenomenon, the machine and the mystery that lay behind it.

On the same facade, the vertical direction is expressed in the pyramidal arrangement of the windows, in the lateral bays, in the diminishing upward of the windows in the central bay and in the treatment of the pilasters in the arch within the central bay. With the inclusion of the spandrels beneath the window, the pilaster can be likened to the elongated piers of the skyscrapers which carry through to the apex, accentuating the verticality. The decorative motifs contribute to this upward direction as well. The cactus motif on the spandrel with its swirling ends, have replaced the Art Nouveau whiplash. This design leads the eye up towards the stained glass window with its sunburst motif. [Fig. 52]

The sunburst motif

> a favorite device with American architects that...filled the upper part of

> the entrance aedicule of the Galerie Lafayette pattern.[163]

at the 1925 Paris Exposition. It was also a popular motif of the thirties «a more dynamic time...the rising sun, the racing clouds and hair steaming in the wind.»[164] As early as 1912, Franz Marc had illustrated Versöhnung (Reconciliation), in Sturm, with a sun-ray motif representative of unreleased power and energy.[165] The sun can be interpreted from the theme on the facade as a source of natural power and energy combined with the modern machine-generated energy and power that helps man build his skyscrapers. Along with technology this produces apparatus for talking films for movie houses like LE CHATEAU. Waves of energy race across the bottom of the upper section of the cast-stone facade while the more linear design of the chevron, on the molding, between the masks, circles the entire building above the entablature of the first floor. Bletter note that,

> The most obvious element of Art Deco architecture is its use of sumptious ornament and lush textures and colour achieved by combining several materials such as stone, brick, terra-cotta and metal.[166]

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[163]Whiffen and Breeze, 6.

[164]Hillier, Art Deco of the 20's and 30's, 93.

[165]Hillier, Art Deco of the 20's and 30's, 27, 28.

[166]Robinson and Bletter, 37.

Both the colour and the texture in the overlay cast stone, with the gold coloured brick below, when combined with the ornamental terra-cotta molding and the figures in relief convey horizontality with the emphasis on the verticality.

The rhythm on the Bélanger St. facade is a combination of sweeping upward movement at the arching changing to an irregular beat at the step-up. The upward direction is accelerated on the St. Denis St. facade and when combined with colour, texture, pattern and design in its serial repetition and broken rhythm it expresses the new style of decoration and introduces a new beat.

In addition, there is a stage-set dramatic character to LE CHATEAU. The St. Denis St. facade is like that of Joseph Urban's design of the movie theatre for Ziegfeld in 1927, «in the form of a proscenium reflect[ing] the real proscenium within.»[167] [Fig. 53]

The clothed figures at the top of the pilaster, the monumental heads in relief and the band of terra-cotta molding which runs along the two facades in an alternating pattern of masks of tragedy and comedy between the chevron motif identify that behind this facade one can expect another drama. [Fig. 54]

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[167] Robinson and Bletter, 19.

Vlack suggests that the surface treatment of buildings like LE CHATEAU exemplifies

> the fantastic insistence on symmetry, serial repetition, and logical balance in the geometrical patterns and reliefs is justified. As most of the architectural structure or engineering is basically traditional in nature, ornamentation tended to engulf or encrust the building. There is a similarity in this case with the Gothic use of religious ornamentation, which in its abundance and iconography conveyed the idea of God. The Deco ornamentation had a similar function: to enhance or proselytize the idea of modernity.[168]

The overall theme of the unchannelled energy found in nature and in the man-made machine which was exemplified on the facade continued to be expressed in the surface treatment of the interior.

Passing through a small symmetrical lobby off which a stairway leads to the balcony, you enter the auditorium through a pair of heavily wood grained doors carved in a low relief sunburst motif. From the bottom corner of the door, suns rays like a pattern of moving waves extend across the door terminating in a swirling motif typical of the Art Deco style at this time. [Fig. 55] Above the door, the same sunburst motif appears in a rectilinear design, in a plaster cast panel.

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[168]Vlack, 60.

The single balcony Beaux-Arts designed auditorium is ruled by the same compositional unit as the exterior and follows the traditional spatial arrangement of the wall elevation. However, with the «new style» of decoration in the treatment of the wall surface and the new motifs, a new and different rhythm was introduced.

Charbonneau's design of the side wall could be seen as similar to Rapp & Rapp's «Paramount» theatre in Aurora, Illinois (1931). Naylor notes that at this time the «traditional French side wall arrangement is beautifully translated into Art Deco.»[169]

At LE CHATEAU, the flattened abstracted version of the pilaster which appeared on the OUTREMONT side wall has now been reduced to the basic form, that of a series of six individual sticks of wood on a gold painted background above and rusticated level. Within the centre of each of the arched bays a pilaster-framed stained glass window in the design of a pinnacle shaped symbol, representative of the recently completed Chrysler Building or Empire State Building,[170] extends towards the sky.

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[169]Naylor, 149.

[170]The Chrysler Building, 1928-1930 designed by Willian Van Alen, was the tallest building in the world followed one year later by Empire States Building designed by Shreve, Lamb, & Harmon.

[Fig. 56] Georgia O'Keefe's painting Radiator Building - Night, New York (1927 FUN) where the skyscraper is seen as «a gigantic monclith glowing in the night, topped by an Art Deco spire»[171] is another interpretation of this phenomenon.

Originally, painted tree tops appeared on either of the deep rust and amber coloured stained glass, while above, the wall bracket, which was a symbol of the sun, in the form of an electric light, threw radiating currents of light flashing in all directions and beamed down on the cityscape below.

Circling the inner frame of the arch there is a continuous pattern in a plaster cast of waves, similar to those on the facade of the movie house. Originally, the rest of the space between the piano nobile and the ceiling were painted with continuous bands of the same wave pattern. This pattern could be interpreted as representative of sound waves since

> radio as well as the movies were two principal forms of entertainment during the depression. Both depended on and grew out of scientific invention. Radio was powered by electricity which generated words of mysterious energy filling the air with cross currents of radiant pulsations.[172]

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[171] Selz, 259.

[172] Vlack, 59.

This radiating electric movement is carried throughout the room in the same motif but in the more angular shape of the triangle. It appears as part of the decoration on the symmetrically designed molding panels and friezes in the soffit and around the balcony. The chevron design combined with the stylized flowers typical of the Art Deco vocabulary (in the more angulated flowers which included roses, marguerites, dahlias and zinnias)[173] is in the same colour scheme as the rest of the room. Combined with the accents of medium turquoise blue and the overall warm colour scheme which was predominantly «ochre and gold», a common Egyptian influence on cinema friezes, at this time.[174]

The rhythm on the side walls is that of a syncopated jazz beat where the regular beat, that of the arches and pilasters is superseded by the other «off beat», represented in this design by the inner stained glass with its pinnacled structure. This alternating «on beat off beat» rhythm carries one's eye both horizontally and vertically joltingly from the side walls towards the swirling spiral-designed grills on either side of the focal point of the auditorium the proscenium. [Fig. 57] A jumpy rhythm created by the colour,

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[173]Martin Battersby, «The Triumph of 1925» (ed. Philippe Garner) The Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts 1890-1940, 24.

[174]Hillier, Art Deco of the 20's and 30's, 52.

combined with pattern of the triangular shaped palmettes, with its pinnacle shaped gilded stamen and stylized floreated and leaf design direct the eye around the proscenium and up towards the series of repetitive bands. These extend out onto the slightly arched ceiling joggling the eye with their staggered brick design of elongated stylized leaves. The same rhythm continues on the ceiling which until 1974 had an abstract geometric pattern which was originally painted on both the ceiling and the beams. [Fig. 58 a & b]

> All of the decoration was purposely repetitive and all conveyed the feeling that if it were not produced by the machine...It could have been.[175]

Charbonneau's treatment in the design of the surface in and around the proscenium is similar to the more elaborate version of Pleuger's «Paramount» in Oakland, California,[176] which opened only nine days before LE CHATEAU. [Fig. 59]

The American Joseph Stella's futurist painting of the Brooklyn Bridge (1917 YU) and his later painting, The Port (1920-1922 NMNJ) with its «shifting planes, luminescent perspective and vibrating rhythm..that fuses light, color, and

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[175]Gebhard, 7.

[176]Susannah Harris Stone, The Oakland Paramount (Berkeley, California: Lancaster-Miller Pub. 1982, 18, 62-63.

line into an agitated totality...»[177] conjures up a similar feeling to that expressed in the treatment of the auditorium in LE CHATEAU.

LE CHATEAU, a building much smaller than was projected opened on Christmas Day,[178] during the height of the Depression. It was a movie house that looked to the past, to the present and to the future. From the past, the fretwork - Greek key motif on some of the panels found at the ends of the «Goddess of the Movies» hair is reminiscent of the all powerful democratic ancient Classical Greek Civilization 456 B.C. [Fig. 60] The motif of the present is identifiable in the ability of man to control, understand and dominate the machine and its technology in order to build towering skyscrapers. Man's hope in the future can be found in the motif of the sun which greets us on the exterior in the traditional stained glass windows and carries throughout as an overall optimistic theme in this neighbourhood movie house at the close of 1931 and in the anticipation of the New Year.

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[177]Selz, 146, 266. The Port is from a series on modern technology and the city that Stella produced between 1920-1922 titled New York interpreted.

[178]The Office of Famous Players gave the opening of LE CHATEAU as December 25, 1931.

CHAPTER IV

THE POST-DEPRESSION NEIGHBOURHOOD MOVIE HOUSE

A new design in the form of streamlining was introduced at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition 1933-34, the same way that the «zigzag modern»[179] style of decoration was introduced at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris. In both expositions in spite of their underlying ideology of a new modern spirit, they remained loyal to the Beaux-Arts principles in their choice of architectural design. While the French had decorated their traditional buildings with new architectural ornaments and bright colours, the American architects coloured their

> jagged set back towers, monolithic pylons and rugged vertical fluting in brilliant colours of...blue, gold, orange and deep purple.[180]

It was not however the architects or the architecture that took precedcence at the 1933-1934 Exposition. It was rather the American industrial designers and the designs like that of the Streamlined Burlington Zephyr. This train was ...«light weight and efficient and designed to cut wind

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[179]Gebhard, 7.

[180]Jeffrey L. Meikle, Twentieth Century Limited Industrial Design in America 1925-1939 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), 153-158.

resistance...streamlined in materials,[181] ... with stainless steel cars «a wingless airplane on tracks»[182] «... the overall impression [one of] smooth forward direct motion.»[183]

This new streamlined aerodynamic motif with its anti-resistant concept of super speed had its roots in the forms of the fish, the cone and ideally in the shape of «a drop of water falling in still air».[184] Norman Bel Geddes, the theatre designer turned industrial designer whom Bevis Hillier labelled «the apostle of streamlining»[185] explains the phenomenon as:

> an object is «streamlined» when its exterior surface is so designed that upon passing through a fluid such as water or air the object creates the least disturbance in the fluid in the form of eddies or partial vacua tending to produce resistance. In other words an object is airfoiled in order to create a disturbance and an object is streamlined in order to eliminate disturbances in the media through which they pass.[186]

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[181]Meikle, 153.

[182]William B. Stout (as told by Julian Leggett) «Air Minded Railroading,» Popular Mechanics, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Feb. 1934): 170.

[183]Meikle, 157-160.

[184]Norman Bel Geddes, Horizons (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1932), 45.

[185]Hillier, The Style of the Century, 98.

[186]Bel Geddes, 45.

This shape conveyed the idea of speed and horizontality and was found in transportation vehicles like the Burlington Zephyr, but more directly in the new ocean liners[187] of the 1930's and in the design of airplanes.

Especially at this time Meikle observes that

> the mass of population gravitated towards objects whose surfaces seemed smooth, simple and efficient...a new style— a new packaging...this new mode of expression embodied technology as a central fact to modern life...the new style owed its forms to transportation machines whose effortless passage reflected the ease with which most people wished to glide through the Depression.[188]

By the end of the 1930's, «the curvilinear forms had nearly replaced modernistic angular forms in product design.» The stepped back motif in the radio case of the twenties and early 1930's was replaced by a «horizontally oriented» design.[189]

Along with the symbol of the streamlined machine were other dynamic motifs which included the

> rising sun, racing clouds and hair streaming in the wind...rectilinear

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[187] The Ocean Liner: Speed, Style, Symbol. Cooper Hewitt Exhibition, January 22 - April 6, 1980.

[188] Meikle, 154.

[189] Meikle, 168.

> forms which compromise the basic neo-classical characteristics [in] reaction against decadence found in the more voluptuous curvilinear forms [of the past].[190]

Although earlier, architects like the Futurist Antonio Sant'Elia in Italy with his projected Villa Olmo at Como (1913) and Mendelsohn in the sweeping line of the «Universam Cinema» (1927-1928) introduced a more streamlined form of architecture, Wirz and Striner make the point that:

> Streamlining though a functional imperative of speed that was justified in vehicules to cut wind resistance... made little engineering sense when applied to a stationary object or building. It was simply a «smart» nautical and rakish look that counted more than anything else in the 1930's.[191]

Labelled by Sharp as an «ambivalent kind of modernism»[192] it was found in building types which included bars, restaurants, service stations, dry cleaning establishments, dog and cat hospitals, medical clinics, soft drink manufacturing, plants and neighbourhood theatres.[193]

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[190]Hillier, Art Deco of the 20's and 30's, 93-99.

[191]Wirz and Striner, 20.

[192]Sharp, A Visual History of the Twentieth Century, 110.

[193]David Gebhard, «Art Deco: About Style, Not Ideology» Architecture (The Journal of the American Institute of Architects) (Dec. 1983): 43.

The choice of materials on these buildings was closely allied with those machine-made products favoured by avant-garde «International style» architects.

Barr, who earlier frowned on Art Deco designs of the 1920's, elevated products of the machine to a «platonic archetype»[194] at the Machine Art Exhibition in 1934 in New York:

> The beauty of the machine art is in part the abstract beauty of straight lines and circles made into actual tangible surfaces and solids by means of tools, lathes and rules and squares. In Plato's day the tools were simple handworker's implements but today, as a result of the perfection of modern materials and the precision of modern instruments, the modern machine-made object approaches far more closely and more frequently those pure shapes the contemplation of which Plato calls the first of the pure pleasures.[195]

Sheldon Cheney in his book The New World Architecture in 1930 drew positive reference to the machine and the future, projecting that:

> there will ultimately be machine-developed energy to solve all men's work problems, with no more labor than is involved in passing control. The elements themselves will be tamed, weather tempered, transportation become effortless, cleanliness universal, the works of the intellect and of the artistic faculties will be transported

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[194] Robinson and Bletter, 70.

[195] H. A[lfred] B[arr] Jr. Forward: Machine Art (New York: Museum of Modern Art, March 6-Apr. 30, 1934).

> instantaneously to all. Living will be speeded, concentrated, regulated as never before. ... There is no turning back. There is no hindering the swiftness of humanity's advance towards that time...[196]

In general, the larger movie houses in the United States were giving way to smaller units. However, since 1925 the Montreal movie houses were consistently designed in a more moderate size and seating capacity but both in the interior and on the exterior they could compete with any on a larger scale.

It was in the 1930's designs, a more rectilinear treatment, reminiscent of the Glasgow School and the Vienna Secessionists at the turn of the century plus the streamlined motif both in the architecture and decorative elements that the style was being directed. Wirz and Striner refer to these changes as «a new symbiosis of function and contemporary decoration [that] was leading to a glamourous display of Deco in a classic genre.»[197] Where better to experience the new style than in the neighbourhood movie house, where movie technology and Art Deco design went hand in hand.

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[196]Sheldon Cheney, The New World Architecture (New York: Longman's Green & Co., 1930), 25, 186.

[197]Wirz and Striner, 82.

THE SNOWDON[198] [Fig. 61, 62]

Unlike the earlien theatre complexes, the SNOWDON «known as the first air-conditioned theatre in operation in the province» was strictly a moving picture house designed by Crighton to be built in the center of a block on Decarie Blvd. Considered at the time the northern section of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, it was a tramway junction point surrounded by residential and commercial land for future development.[199] After a survey of the district by the United Amusement Corporation, it was deemed desirable to add a third neighbourhood movie house to the area adding to the earlier EMPRESS and MONKLAND.

From a distance, one would have been attracted to the rocket-like electric-lit marquee identifying the SNOWDON with the first three letters extending upward beyond the flat roof-line. The sleek elegant machine-made marquee in glass and stainless steel «the only one of its kind in the world "[was] built right into the steel structure of the building.»[200]

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[198] Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build do not exist for the SNOWDON. For information from other sources see Appendix B, p. 189. Design of Seating and Number of Seats: Stadium-type seating with 1100 seats. Theatre opened: Feb. 27, 1937. (The Monitor, Feb. 25, 1937: 12).

[199] The Monitor, June 11, 1936: front page.

[200] The Monitor, Feb. 25, 1937: 10.

The design of the SNOWDON theatre is different than other theatre complexes. The spacious lot parallel to Decarie Blvd. permitted a building hugging the sidewalk for its length.

The SNOWDON is actually composed of two facades side by side, one vertical and one horizontal. The vertical facade is a compressed version of the horizontal facade, which actually makes up slightly more than three quarters of the surface of the two facades. [Fig. 63]

The classical composition with the repeated pattern in the vertical facade is a smaller version of the symmetrical pattern on the horizontal facade and is ruled by a composition the width of the smaller vertical projections on the vertical facade. The rhythm is composed of a mathematical projection commencing at the perimeter of each facade and converging toward the central point. [Fig. 64]

The verticality is expressed in the ziggurat ascending design at the apex. It is emphasized with the addition of the «opaque green vitrolite», with its hard shimmering and sparkling surface[201] conveying the idea of machine inspired movement, that also covers the entire vertical facade. Contrasted with this upward direction is the horizontality in

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[201]Wirz and Striner, 35, 39.

the three band green vitrolite pattern which appeared both at the top and at the bottom of the horizontal facade and was juxtaposed to the beige stucco. Originally, this three band pattern was repeated on the vertical facade in black vitrolite in contrast to the green glass at the upper section of the facade. At the level of the marquee the three band pattern which started at the side of the vertical facade moved forward to become dividing lines on the triangular shaped marquee on which the letters for the coming attraction are spelled out. Combining rather cool colours and smooth textures in green and black vitrolite, stainless steel and off-white stucco, the elegance of the machine-made products was conveyed. According to Gebhard the three band decoration «are the most common motifs associated with moderne [and] was in common use by Wright, Purcell and Elmslie long before 1920.»[202] The same motif could be found on many buildings, among them Thomas Lamb's «Trans-lux» theatre (1936) in Washington, D.C. and on the «Standard-ized» gasoline stations built between 1934-1937[203] for Texaco that were designed by Walter D. Teagues.

Continuing to convey the frictionless movement on the exterior, one proceeded under the electric soffit towards the two pairs of stainless steel doors on either side

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[202]Gebhard, The Modern in the U.S., 9.

[203]Meikle, 125-129.

of a hexagon-shaped ticket box to the entrance foyer and large rectangular lobby. Geometrically designed terrazzo in a chevron and diagonal design covered the floors, while the walls were treated in red-toned marble and the fireplace faced with green vitrolite. Decorative ornamentation included large frameless circular mirrors applied directly to the wall, a popular decorative wall treatment at this time, which expressed the dynamism of the futurists and conveyed the idea of boundless unrestricted space.[204] [Fig. 65] Geometrically designed wall brackets in chrome and opaque glass added a cool light and were similar in design to those of Jean Perzels in France.[205] [Fig. 66]

> One of the features of the lobby [was] a 133 gold fishtank with water that is always fresh, complete with lively gold fish darting here and there among rocks and seaweed, hardly conscious that they [had] been removed from their natural environment.[206]

In order to enter the 1100 seat stadium-type symmetrically designed auditorium, one ascended eight steps. Upon so doing, one's eyes tended to focus upward towards the

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[204]Battersby, The Decorative Thirties (New York: Collier Book, 1971), 108.

Joseph Urban, Donald Deskey, Gilbert Rhode all made use of large frameless mirrors three to four feet in diameter that were applied directly to the wall.

[205]Brunhammer, 172-174.

[206]The Monitor, June 11, 1936: front page.

ceiling and automatically follow the central panel, with its repetitive pattern of geometric squares in Heerwagen Tile.[207] This led to just above the proscenium with its rounded walls, where it was repeated and continued both left and right around the perimeter framing the ceiling and leading steadily and rhythmically to the back of the room and the projection box. [Fig. 67]

The same movement continued along the side walls with the modular unit the same as that of the exterior, in the form of a reversed ziggurat occurring at the apex point where traditionally the bays would be separated. The rhythm in the side walls, with the addition of the original surface decoration, was a continuation of the restless energetic movement conveyed in the rest of the room as one's eye moved towards the proscenium. The side walls above the rusticated level were originally painted with a draped curtain effect in an attempt to create an image of machine-inspired movement and upward direction with its pseudo-curvilinear triangular design. Briffa's earlier asbestos curtain at the RIVOLI and the OUTREMONT were both painted in an Austrian drape design

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[207] The Monitor, Feb. 25, 1937: 12. The tile in a design of squares is made in units with a flange that is cemented to the surface, leaving an air chamber which cushions the sound waves and so dissipates their energy so they cannot reverberate to and from across the auditorium, as is the case with hard wall and ceiling surfaces.

similar to the painted side walls in the SNOWDON Auditorium. [Fig. 68] The dado repeated the same pattern, but with a slightly more angular design.

Vlack draws attention to this design as another form the ziggurat can take: «stretched, condensed, reversed, made circular abstracted ... [with] its parts remaining even on either side of its axis.»[208]

The concealed electric light wall brackets were in a graduated design of the sun's rays against the background of the wavy painting motif, simulating the illusion of electric currents and radioactive waves that were supposedly being transmitted throughout the room.[209] The plaster stylized cactus designs in the French manner led one's eye upward from the centre of the reversed ziggurat, where the same motifs, of the sun, its rays and the chevron, along with stylized flowers were repeated above the geometric molding in the continuous frieze on the side walls.

Common to the Art Deco vocabulary were specific animals in low relief that could successfully be integrated into an overall decorative pattern.[210] This was found in the

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[208]Vlack, 59.

[209]Vlack, 59.

[210]Vlack, 38.

hand crafted decorative ornaments over the main entrance to the auditorium which included «a futuristic panel with the word SNOWDON being formed by carvings of legendary beasts and birds.»[211] The letters in silhouetted animal forms were probably chosen by Briffa from influences that included the exotically costumed females in alphabet shapes designed by Erté as well as from the 1931 Exposition Coloniale, Paris. These animal shapes were painted in silver leaf, a colour that represents the sleekness of the machine and conveyed the same energetic movement consistent with the rest of the decor. [Fig. 69]

Other carved decorations were to be found in the Lalique style sculptural figures over the exits reminiscent here of a more curvilinear style. Hillier notes that firms like Lalique

> were unwilling to give up opalescent coloured glass which had been the material of their Art Nouveau successes; and the molded designs, whether of swooning ladies in long gowns, or just of geometrical patterns often seem nostalgic and outdated.[212] [Fig. 70]

A twenty-five cent ticket (Forty-one cents in the loges) on opening night Saturday February 27, 1937 at 8:00 p.m. entitled one to a program that included a «Big Vaudeville presentation», followed by an «excellent double bill», <u>One in a Million</u> starring Sonia Henie and Adolphe Menjou and a mystery <u>15 Maiden Lane</u>:

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[211] <u>The Monitor</u>, Feb. 25, 1937: 11.

[212] Hillier, <u>Art Deco of the 20's and 30's</u>, 134.

> cast in the role of a beautiful and clever detective. Clare Trevor matches ruses and romance with Cesar Romero, a dashing gentleman gem thief who defies detection in a sensation studded story of diamonds and daring treats and thrills and plots and counterplots.[213]

SAVOY[214]

In the small working-class town of Verdun, the SAVOY movie house which opened on Wellington and Willibrod in 1938, was originally a three-storey Beaux-Arts commercial building built in 1931.[215] [Fig. 71] Renovated by Crighton, Perry and Luke,[216] it is an excellent example of the facility with which the earlier design could be converted, both in the exterior and interior, to a movie house with the streamlined look of the thirties.

> It is not surprising that on many small-town streets modernized in the thirties

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[213] The Monitor, Feb. 25, 1931, 12.

[214] SAVOY: City of Verdun, Specification and Application for Permit to Build and Permit to Build #4251-1937. [Appendix B, p. 190].
Design of Seating and Number of Seats: Raked Seating with 831 seats (City of Verdun Architectural plans).

[215] SAVOY: City of Verdun, Permit to Build #3702-1931. [Appendix B, p. 191].

[216] Information from the McGill Graduate Record Department. Both A. Leslie Perry and Morley Luke graduated from McGill School of Architecture in 1923.

> the most impressive facade belonged to the cinema, its marquee an aluminum banded parabolic curve... Public architecture with modernistic or streamlined motifs provided sets in which people could act as if the technological future that they symbolized had arrived. Surrounded by the new architecture's polished personality, even a poor citizen could escape momentarily into the future.[217]

The SAVOY is ruled by a compositional unit the width of one pilaster, a unit established in the original design by Noseworthy.

With the exception of the theatre facade, the architects in 1938 had bricked up and modified all of the pinnacle separated bays of the commercial type structure on Willibrod. Continuing to maintain the major divisions of the step-up design more common to the 1920's, the upper two floors of the central bay of the theatre entrance were faced in stucco and decorated with vitrolite. [Fig. 72]

The framed central bay of the tripartite Wellington St. facade was composed of a module of six units; the side bays were composed of the same module with the inclusion of the terminating pilaster at either end. The accent of the closed vertical composition was similar to the massing at the

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[217]Meikle, 170.

centre of the earlier neo-classical designed RIVOLI and GRANADA. However, the accent here was somewhat different. There was a distinct upward direction within each of the side bays with the inclusion of the decorative ziggurat-shaped pinnacles, but with the addition of the smooth surfaced treatment in white stucco and vitrolite, the eye was directed towards the central bay and upward. [Fig. 73]

Below the facade was the half hexagon shaped marquee with its horizontal bands of razzle dazzle electric tracer lights and SAVOY in cursive writing with the tail of the «Y» doubling back underlining the name. Chevron-shaped waves of electricity formed a pattern framing the top and bottom of the marquee. Under the electrically lit soffit, above the geometric chevron-designed stainless steel pairs of doors, a signboard announced the current program while framed vitrolite displays on either side of doors advertised the coming attractions. [Fig. 74]

The shape of the marquee was repeated as one entered a hexagon-shaped lobby with the geometrically designed floor and ceiling with its rounded ticket booth straight ahead. Smooth surfaces and rounded walls took the shape of the overall treatment of horizontality and streamlining. This design element was often found on current steamships, pullman cars and airplanes with colqured painted bands separated by «horizontal

metallic flow lines»[218] which shaded from darker to lighter at the ceiling. [Fig. 75] The same horizontality continued in the single floor auditorium, where larger metallic bands separated the painted walls and swept uninterrupted towards the proscenium. Fluted vertical panels acted as a frame to the murals on one side, while on the other side the panel framed the proscenium. [Fig. 76]

The overall spirit was completed in the decorative treatment of the ceiling with its wavy «electric-current» design and in the cubist-designed carpet. The carpet was similar to the simultanés designs of Sonia Delaunay in the 1920's using geometric angular compositions of squares, rectangles, and triangles in primary colours.[219]

THE YORK[220] [Fig. 77]

The brick-faced YORK movie house, slightly west of the downtown central core, is part of a building complex that

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[218]Gebhard, «Art Deco Style, Not Ideology»: 55.

[219]Battersly, The Decorative Thirties, 92.

[220]The YORK Complex: C.M.A. Specification and Application to Build and Permit to Build #1059-1923; #1212-1938. [Appendix B, p. 192].
Design of Seating and Number of Seats: Stadium-type seating with 830 seats. (Conversation with York's Theatre's staff, August 1986.)

is made up of a sequence of elements including stores and apartments which run parallel to the street. This asymmetrical structure with its symmetrical bays is built on a corner lot and is meant to be viewed diagonally looking westward.

Although the three-storey building faces onto two streets and appears to be composed of two facades, it is actually one continuous uninterrupted facade. The exception to the pattern is the design of the first floor with the stores and entrance to the apartment and movie house entrance. [Fig. 78]

The YORK is ruled by a composition of odd units. The focal point, unit one: the vertical theatre bay is juxtaposed to the unit of three (two vertical and one horizontal bay) by a transitional bay with its diagonals pushing against unit one and visually reinforcing the upward movement of the movie house bay. The diminuative unit of five that is found around the corner is joined by an interrupted transitional unit composed of a pattern of corner windows and a projected brick banded horizontal pattern between the windows.

> The corner window presents a new architectural form with clarity. In as much as the steel cage construction allows the facade enormous flexibility in patterning

> the corner formerly load bearing can now be opened and cut.[221]

The vertical unit of the seven narrower bays contrast with the horizontal design introduced by the brick band design on the ground floor, and complete the composition at the theatre module on Mackay St. [Fig. 79]

The overall articulation of mainly brick facade can be seen as a blending of the zigzag and vertical emphasis common to the 1920's, combined with elements of streamlining common to the 1930's.

The upward thrust created by treatment of the windows, spandrels and the movement created by the ziggurat designed piers and mullions running uninterrupted to the apex plus the corniceless roof line

> creates a sense of exciting expectation...since there is the unconscious sense that the building could still include an unlimited number of additional stories rising endlessly into the clouds.[222]

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[221] Vlack, 78.

[222] Vlack, 80.

The horizontality is emphasized in the textural patterning of the projected bands of brick, in the metal railings and in the single uninterrupted facade hugging two streets. [Fig. 80]

The facade can also be interpreted as a composition with elements common to cubism in the simultaneous plane and the changing scale on the St. Catherine St. side and around the corner. The inclusion of the concept of collage by the introduction of the balcony, a structural and a colourful decorative element, added an accent to the facade.[223] Along with the balconies, ceramic tiles were an added accent on the Mackay St. facade. Vlack notes that:

> ... ceramic tiles were one way of introducing colour to the exterior of a building. Generally it was used with restraint as an accent.[224]

The central focus, the theatre facade with its «graduated geometric conformation terminating in a pointed protuberance», was a common motif in the 1920's and reached its culmination in 1932-1937 on the New York skyscrapers.[225] The parabolic curve of the marquee is typical of the shape

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[223]Vlack, 18-20.

[224]Vlack, 114.

[225]Vlack, 119.

found on the smaller post-Depression movie houses. Its patterns of vertical bands of electric light bulbs under the soffit direct one towards the rocket-like ticket booth. Both of these features are similar to that of John Eberson's «Penn» theatre in Washington D.C. (1935).[226] [Fig. 81]

The YORK entrance hall is at right angles to the auditorium. The futurist element of racing visual energetic movement is conveyed in the repetitive pattern in the floors and side panels and by the added treatment of the alternating frameless mirrors and wall brackets. Originally the gold leaf painted ceiling of the inner lobby along with the huge cylindrical silver coloured metal «domes» concealed the air conditioning elements[227] and created the same feeling of unrestricted machine-inspired movement. The decorative treatment of the side walls with the metallic flow lines was similar to the wall treatment at the SAVOY, only here the walls were covered with the same wood as used in the furniture, birds-eye maple and walnut.

As well as the YORK, the carpet, along with the MONKLAND, the OUTREMONT and the WESTMOUNT, was identical to the cubist rug covering the floor of the SAVOY. The decorative element on the wall directly in front of you upon entering the

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[226] Wirz and Striner, 85.

[227] The Monitor, Nov. 17, 1938: 9.

lobby was a mirror in the shape of a port hole, which suggested that the YORK theatre is an illusionary underwater rocket-like machine. [Fig. 82]

On the east side of the lobby, a flight of stairs with a shiny metal balustrade leads us upward into the cool colour toned auditorium. Once seated, there is an illusion of being in the main body of a rocket-like underwater machine that is capable of piercing through the water at great speed.

On either side of the underwater machine are illusionary «windows» through which one can see stylized subtle cool toned painted scenes which were accented by fluorescent tube lights on either side. These scenes can be interpreted as mythological themes with mermaids and sea-nymphs as protagonists. Or closer to the «modern» era, the 1920's Lalique version of the image of women as «The Spirit of the Wind» or the 1930's image of the emancipated women. One aspect of this was inspired by publications like Radcliffe Hall's novel «The Well of Loneliness». [Fig. 83 a & b]

The influence for this underwater theme may have come from the Weber and Spaulding design of the «Avalon» theatre (1929) on Catalina Island «with its underwater inspired murals above the entry doors.»[228]

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[228]Naylor, 141.

The symmetrically designed stadium type auditorium is ruled by the same odd unit composition as the exterior facade: unit one, the focal point and proscenium arch, which is flanked by two pilasters, is followed by a transitional unit which links up with two alternating murals separated by three pilasters. [Fig. 84]

The surface treatment, of the wall elevation with its lower level in large bands, horizontally sweeps down towards the proscenium, whose sides curve in with a flowing motion. This dramatic treatment of the proscenium is similar in design to the stage set character conveyed by Raymond Hood on his 1931 McGraw Hill building in New York.[229]

Verticality, along with the decorative rocket motifs that appear around the proscenium, is emphasized by the upward direction of the pseudo-pilasters forming an uninterrupted flow to the edge of dropped ceiling of which it is a part. The dropped ceiling is a repetition of the same curve that greeted us under the marquee. [Fig. 85]

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[229] Meikle, 173.

Opening night November 18, 1938, did not offer the same elaborate vaudeville show as those familiar to the pre-Depression era. For thirty-four cents, the YORK offered the just newly released movie with Pepe Le Moko (Charles Boyer) following Hedy Lamarr around the Casbah in Algiers.[230]

In the YORK «streamlined underwater rocket-like machine», one could also expect to see movies like The Silver Streak (1934) starring the streamlined «Zephyr» train «racing against time to deliver an iron lung from Chicago to Boulder Dam.»[231]

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[230]The Monitor, Nov. 17, 1938: 9.

[231]Meikle, 162.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Montreal, similarly to other cities in the Western world, enjoyed viewing the movies in structures designed exclusively for that purpose.

The heyday of the moving picture industry as a vital form of entertainment went hand in hand with the technology of speed, the airplane and mass production. Modern science did not stop here. It moved right along changing the habits of the movie-going population half way through the twentieth century by introducing television and home videos, which competed with and threatened the existence of the theatre locale.

From the 1960's movie houses in towns and cities, first mainly in North America, were faced with the problems of disuse, abuse, renovation and destruction.

Unlike the United States which have a vehicle, «The Theatre Historical Society of America» for accumulating every facet of theatre information, Canada has no central deposit. Unfortunately primary and secondary source material on Canadian theatres in general and Montreal specifically was found to be scattered, non-existent or closely guarded.

The development of moving picture technology and the industry in general was a twentieth century phenomenon that went along with the smaller neighbourhood movie house that eventually evolved after the Depression in Montreal,

Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Europe. It was probably as a result of the rapidity with which the industry was changing that a standard building type was not realized by 1939.

Earlier in the 1920's, two major positions stand out in movie theatre design, they were the overstated American Movie Palaces and the German highly technical and structurally innovative cinemas.

Following the lean years of the Depression, the styles that took precedence in North America as well as abroad were directed towards efficient functioning and economy. This included elements that concentrated on floor fall, seating radius, sight lines, the exact location of the screen and the acoustics. Generally the spatial arrangement of the auditorium in the new smaller movie house tended towards a raked floor, stadium-type or single balcony plan with the traditional wall storey.

During the years 1925 to 1929, the Montreal architects drew their inspiration from the designers of the American movie palaces and their movie theatres in general. The neighbourhood movie houses in Montreal were, however, unique to this city by virtue of the interpretation of the American designs by the local architects, mainly Alcide Chaussé, Daniel J. Crighton, René Charbonneau and the interior designer Emmanuel

Briffa. The demands of a rapidly expanding Montreal population dictated the pattern that evolved in the design and size of the neighbourhood movie house in this city.

Before 1936, the neighbourhood movie house was designed in the Beaux-Arts tradition with a vertical emphasis and was almost exclusively a corner building which housed stores and sometimes an apartment house. With the exception of the GRANADA, all of the neighbourhood movie houses in Montreal were designed with small lobbies and foyers and with a single balcony auditorium that had a seating capacity of between 1100 and 1450 seats.

The post-Depression neighbourhood movie house the SNOWDON and the McGill-educated Perry, Luke and Little design of the YORK departed from the Beaux-Arts principles in the design of the exterior. The interior, however, remained loyal to the traditional model in terms of the spatial arrangement and the wall elevation of the auditorium.

The auditorium after 1936 was a much smaller and narrower room with stadium-type seating. Although the design originally evolved from the context of theatre in general, which later came to include vaudeville and opera houses, it also shared the elements introduced in the neighbourhood nickle-odeons.

In general, buildings following symmetrical Beaux-Arts principles lent themselves easily to variations in their surface treatment which included accentuations of verticality and horizontality. The SAVOY in the City of Verdun was an excellent example of the ease with which a three-storey commercial Beaux-Arts structure could be converted both on the exterior and the interior to a 1930's small neighbourhood movie house, with the new «modern» look. This was accomplished on the exterior with the combined application of newer elegant machine-made vitrolite, the traditional stucco and the earlier basic vertical accented design of the building. The results on the inside were equally successful in the conversion of the commercial structure to a movie house with a geometrical shaped lobby and auditorium decorated with streamlined horizontal flow lines and machine-made products.

With Briffa's contribution to Charbonneau's Beaux-Arts THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT and LE CHATEAU, Montrealers were earlier introduced to the Art Deco Style of decoration in a combination of elements from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (1925) and the New York skyscraper (1927-1931). In the repetitiveness of the geometric motifs, the atypical arrangement of patterns and the unexpected juxtaposing of traditional materials, the essence of the machine, its fragmentation and dynamism were clearly expressed.

The warm colour tones of the interior of the OUTREMONT and LE CHATEAU gave way to the cooler colours and svelte elegant new machine-made products used in the futuristic interior decor of the YORK. While the exterior which included the textural treatment of the traditional brick, the cornice-less roof-line, the corner windows and the simple continuous facade design of Perry, Luke and Little expressed another aspect of the machine technology. The 1930's nautical look could be found as well in the design, colour and materials chosen by Crighton for the SNOWDON facade.

The Art Deco Style of decoration that occurred simultaneously with the phenomenon of the New York skyscraper was well suited to the neighbourhood movie house as a surface decoration. It was also representative of the North American mass style. Art Deco was symbolic of ushering in twentieth century commercialism and mass production in man-made machine products created by the new breed of industrial designers. These new ziggurat or streamlined shaped products were fast becoming desirable and accessible to the ever-increasing urban consumer population.

With the advent of urbanization and the talkies, the neighbourhood movie house came to represent for the increasing mass population a vehicle for the dissemination of information. The silver screen that brought imagery

from the past and the future also brought the present world news, the current styles and the new decorative ideas to the public.

The impact of the drama actually began in the decorative surface treatment of the exterior façade of the neighbourhood movie house in Montreal which was almost always decorated with a vertical and horizontal marquee that was accentuated by an exciting pattern of electric lights. The stage-set character expressed on the façade, whether neo-classic, pseudo-Egyptian or Spanish, continued as a surface cladding theme on the interior surface as well.

The «machine inspired designs» that appeared both on the exterior and interior of the early Beaux-Arts OUTREMONT and LE CHATEAU and the post-Depression SNOWDON and YORK was also strictly a style of decoration, not a style of architecture.

As the science of the film evolved so did the design and decoration of the neighbourhood movie house in Montreal. The stage-set character of the style both on the exterior and interior of the neighbourhood movie houses was the result of the combined effort of the Montreal architects in collaboration with those of the applied arts. Together they added a positive dimension to the neighbourhoods in Montreal, with the «harmonious whole» created by the architectural designs and style of decoration in the neighbourhood movie houses between 1925 and 1939.

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APPENDIX A

FIGURES

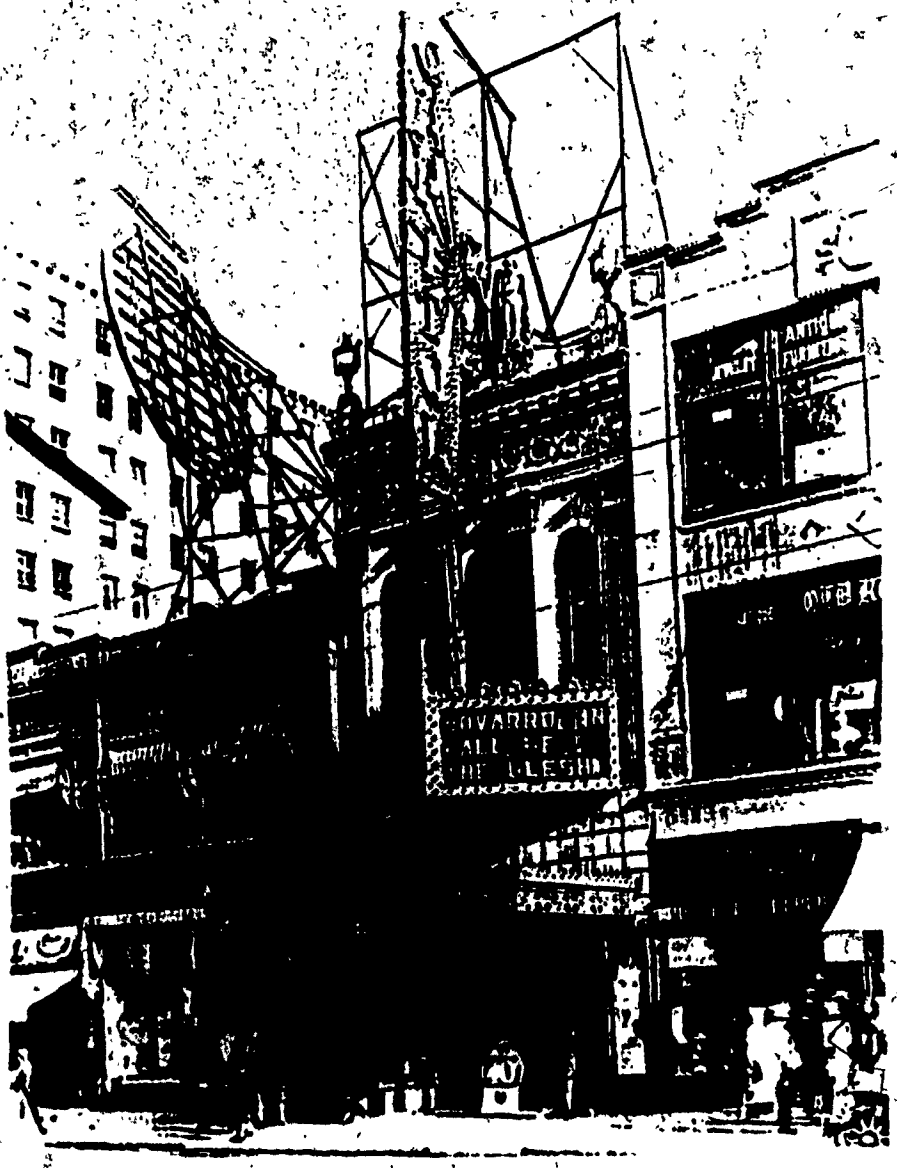


Fig. 1 CAPITOL (main facade); Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 3927, Sept. 1930.

Fig. 2 PALACE (main facade); Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 3953, Oct. 1930.

Fig. 3 IMPERIAL (main facade). Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 3937, Oct. 1930.

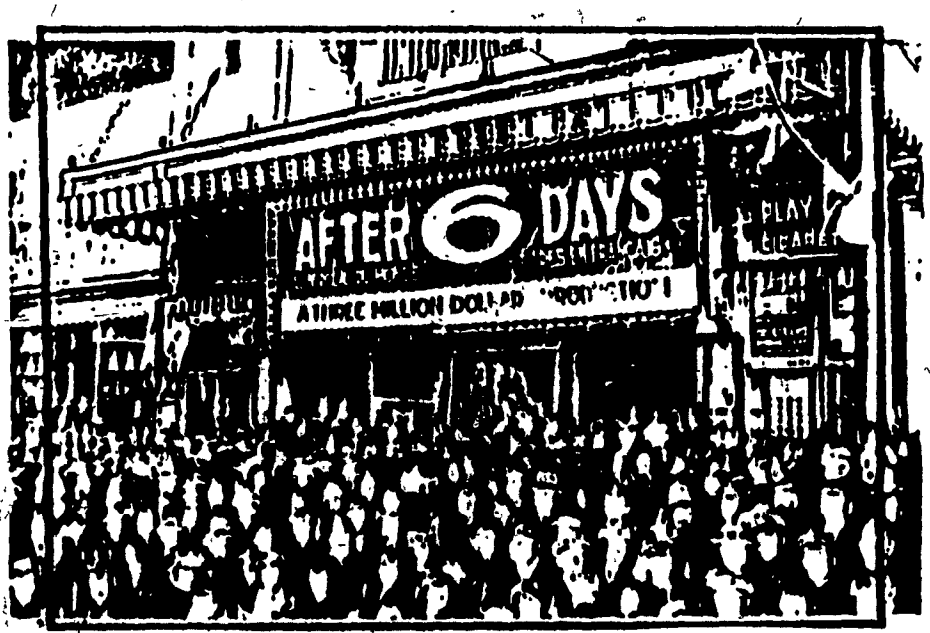


Fig. 4 STRAND (main facade); From the Collection of Joffre Gendron [not dated].

Fig. 5, RIALTO (main facade), Canada, National Film Television and Sound Archives, Neg. 3967, Sept. 1930.

Fig. 6 RIVOLI: Painted asbestos curtain, signed in the bottom right hand corner E. Briffa; Photograph by Brian Merrett [1974].

Fig. 7 RIVOLI: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

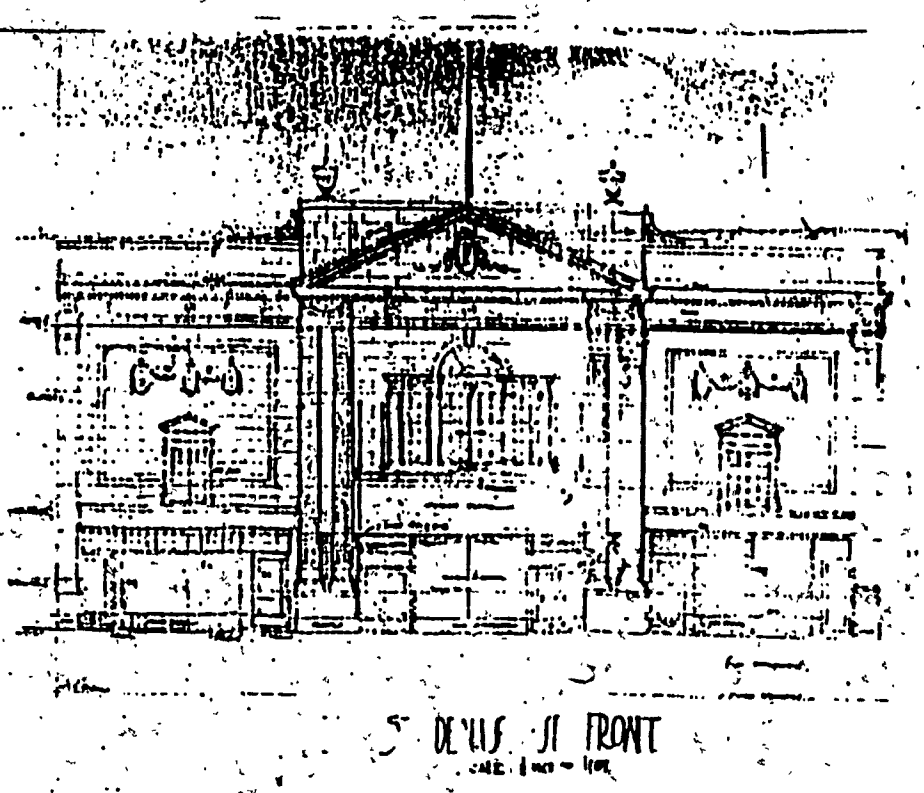


Fig. 8 RIVOLI: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans, #343-1926.

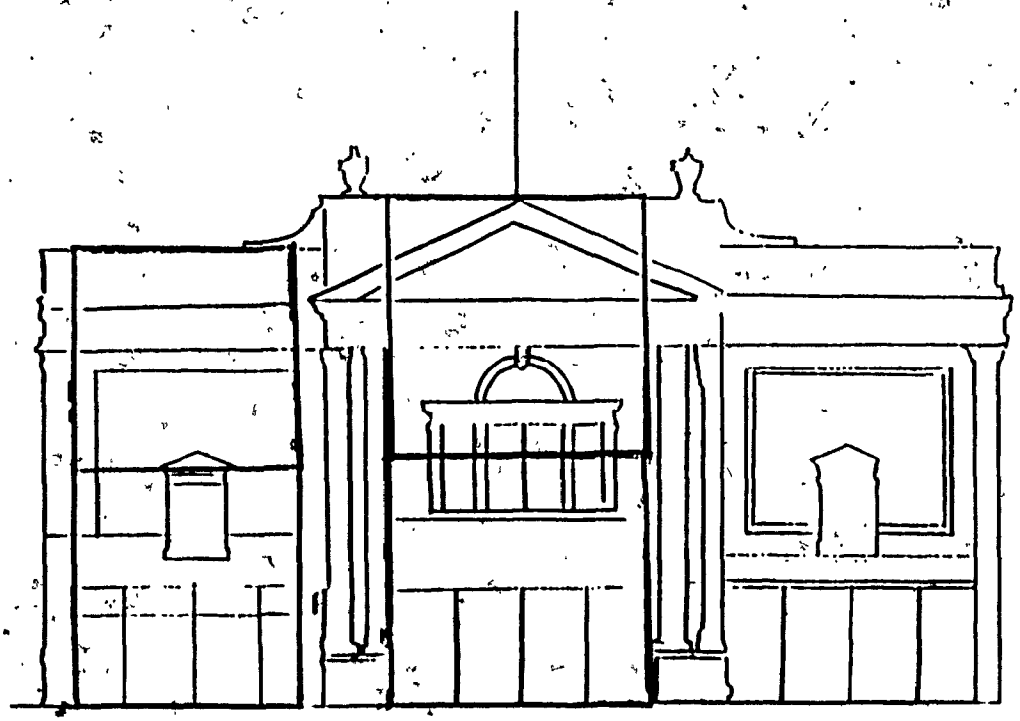


Fig. 9 RIVOLI: Composition (main facade). Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31m).

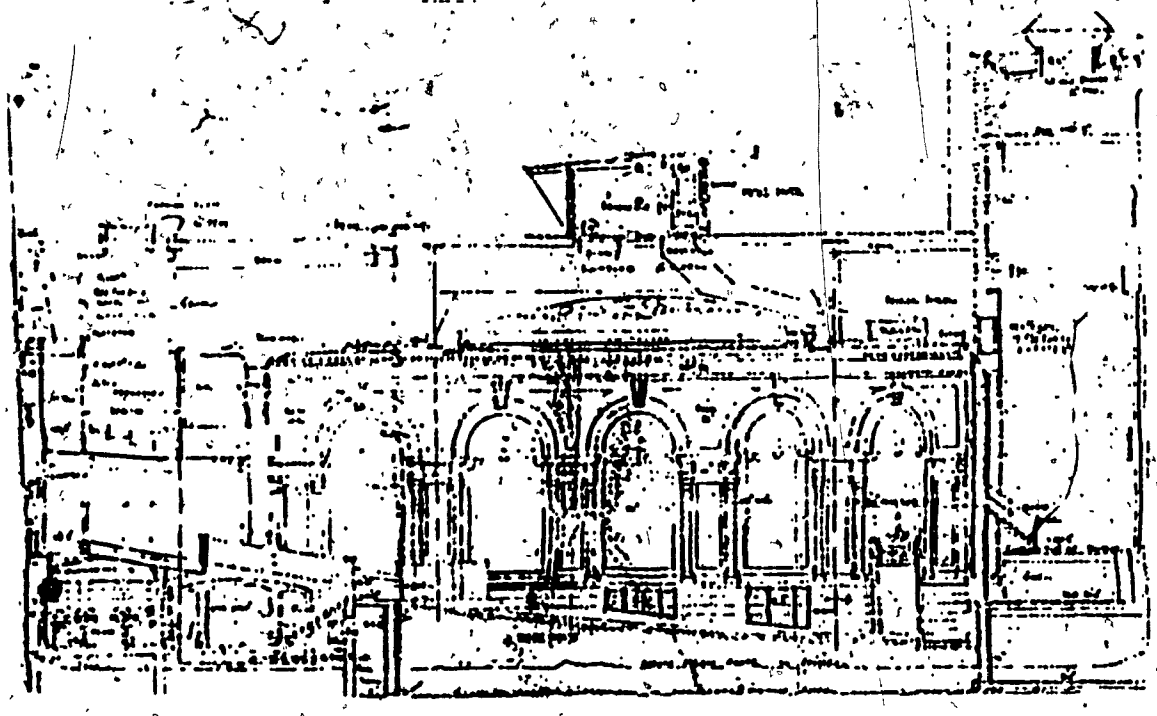


Fig. 10 RIVOLI: Wall elevation (auditorium); C.M.A. Architectural plans, #343-1926. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

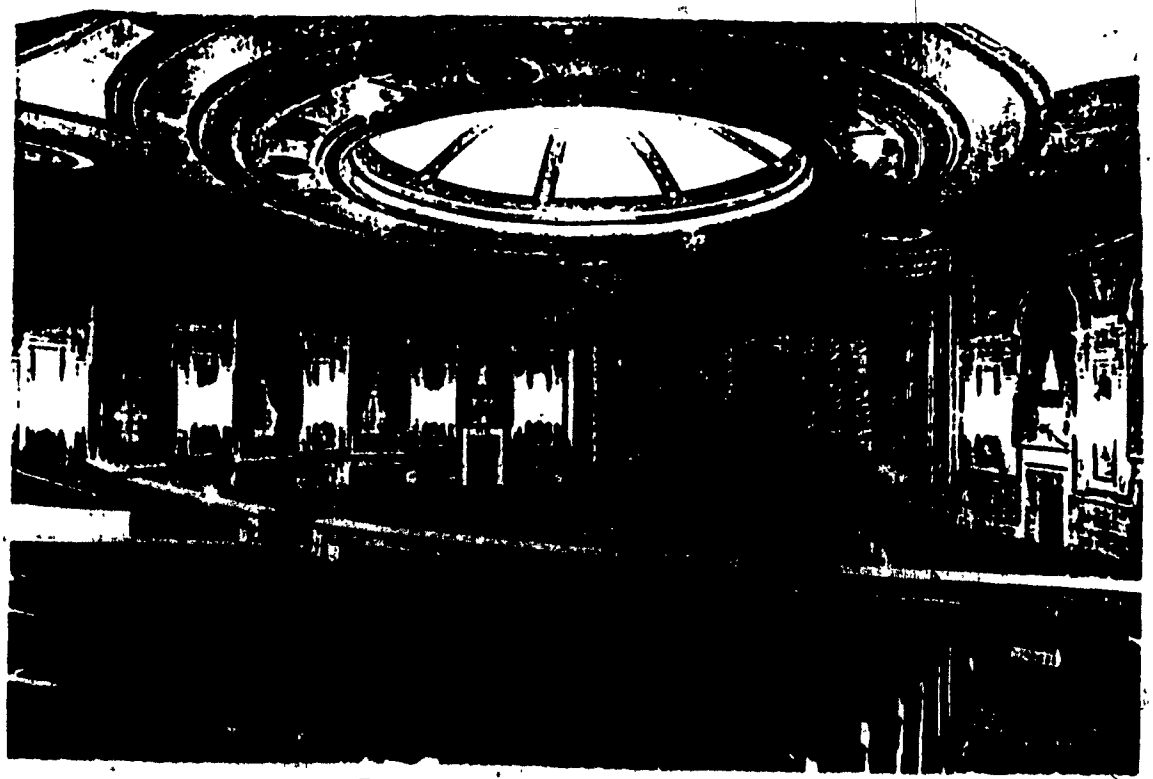


Fig. 11 RIVOLI: View of the proscenium; Photograph by Brian Merrett [1974].

Fig. 12 EMPRESS: Main facade. Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

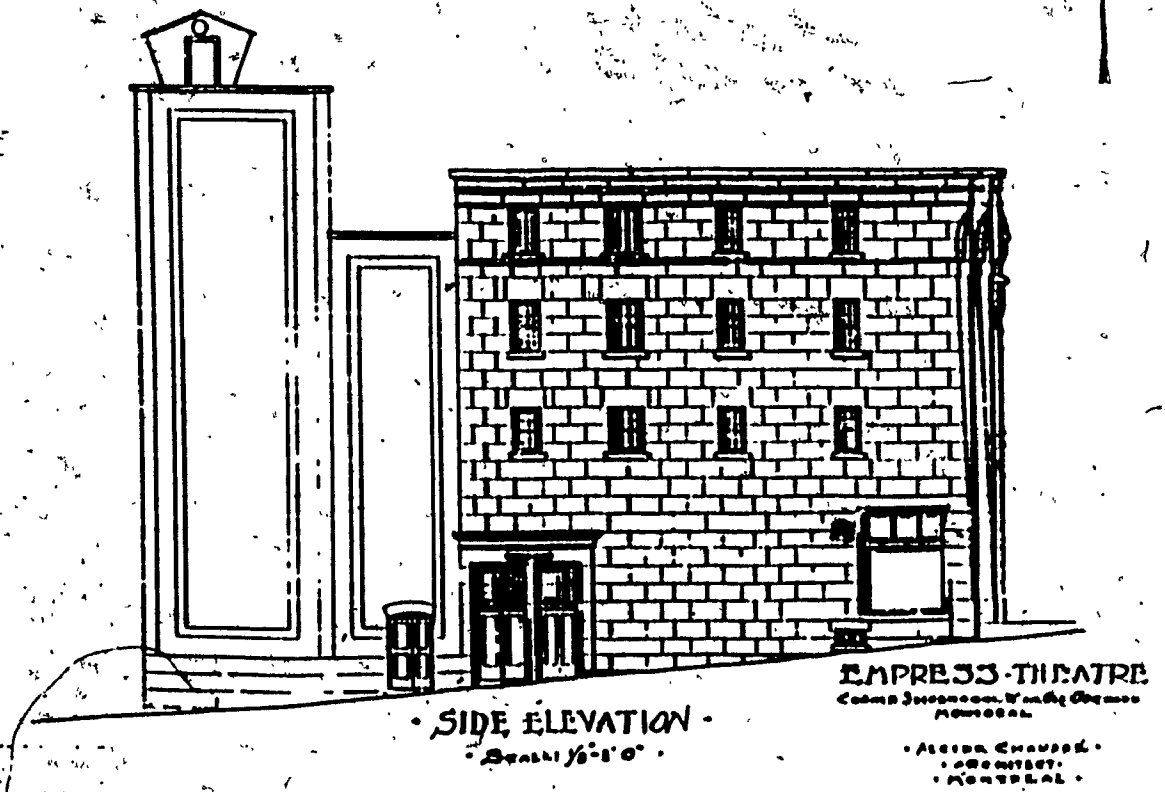


Fig. 13a EMPRESS: Facade (side elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans, #3217-1927. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

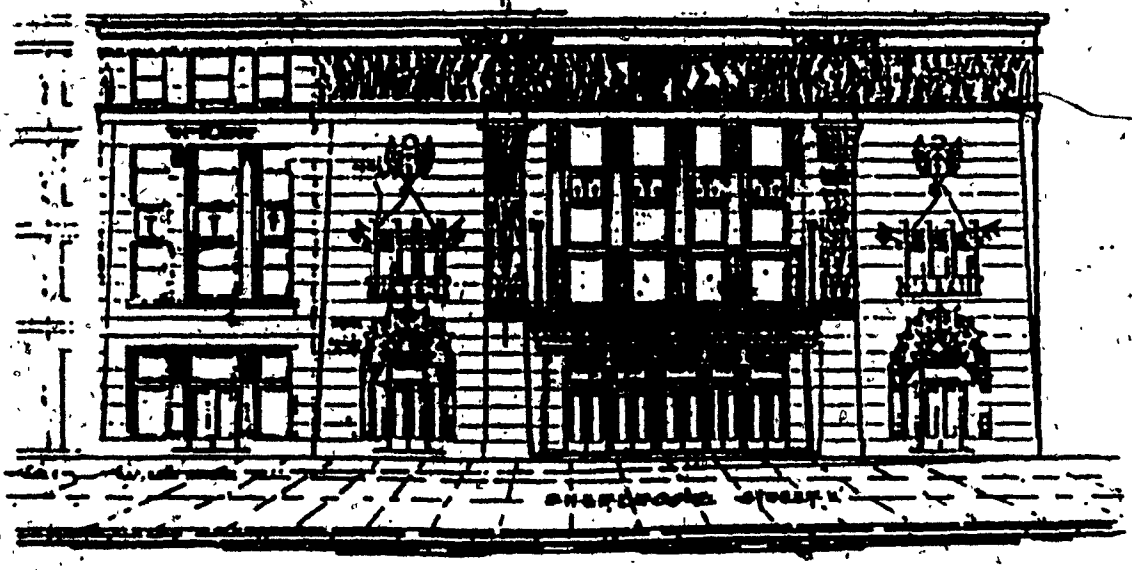


Fig. 13b EMPRESS: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans, #3217-1927. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

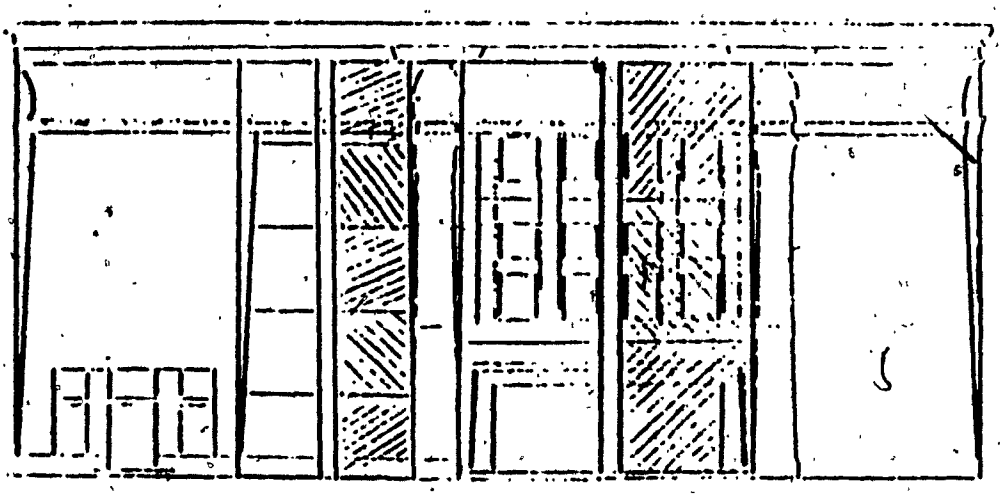


Fig. 14 EMPRESS: Composition (main facade). Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31).

Fig. 15 EMPRESS: Main facade (upper section); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

Fig. 16 EMPRESS: Composition (wall elevation, auditorium). Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

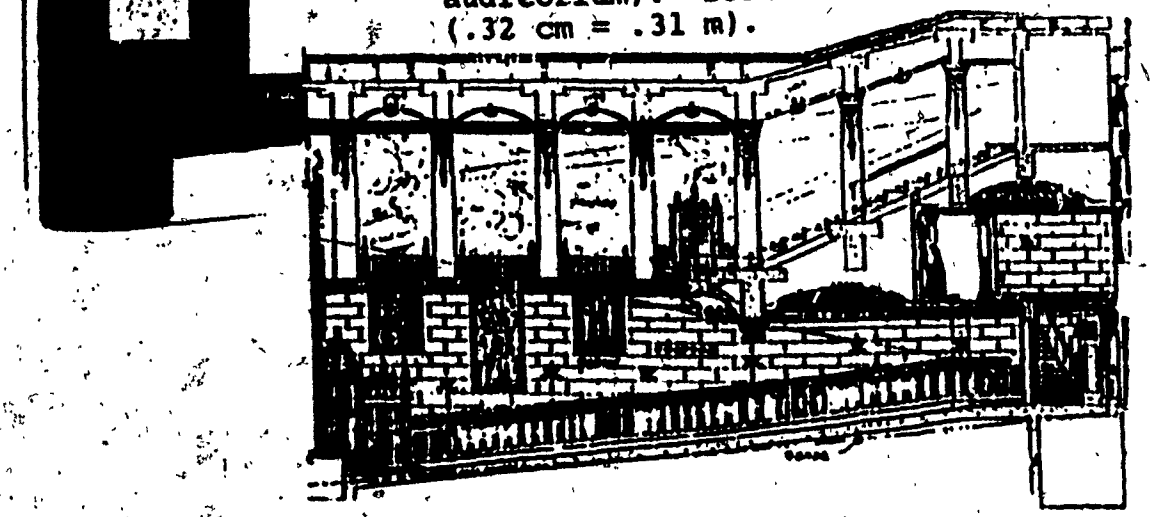


Fig. 17 EMPRESS: Wall elevation (auditorium); C.M.A. Architectural plans, #3217-1927. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

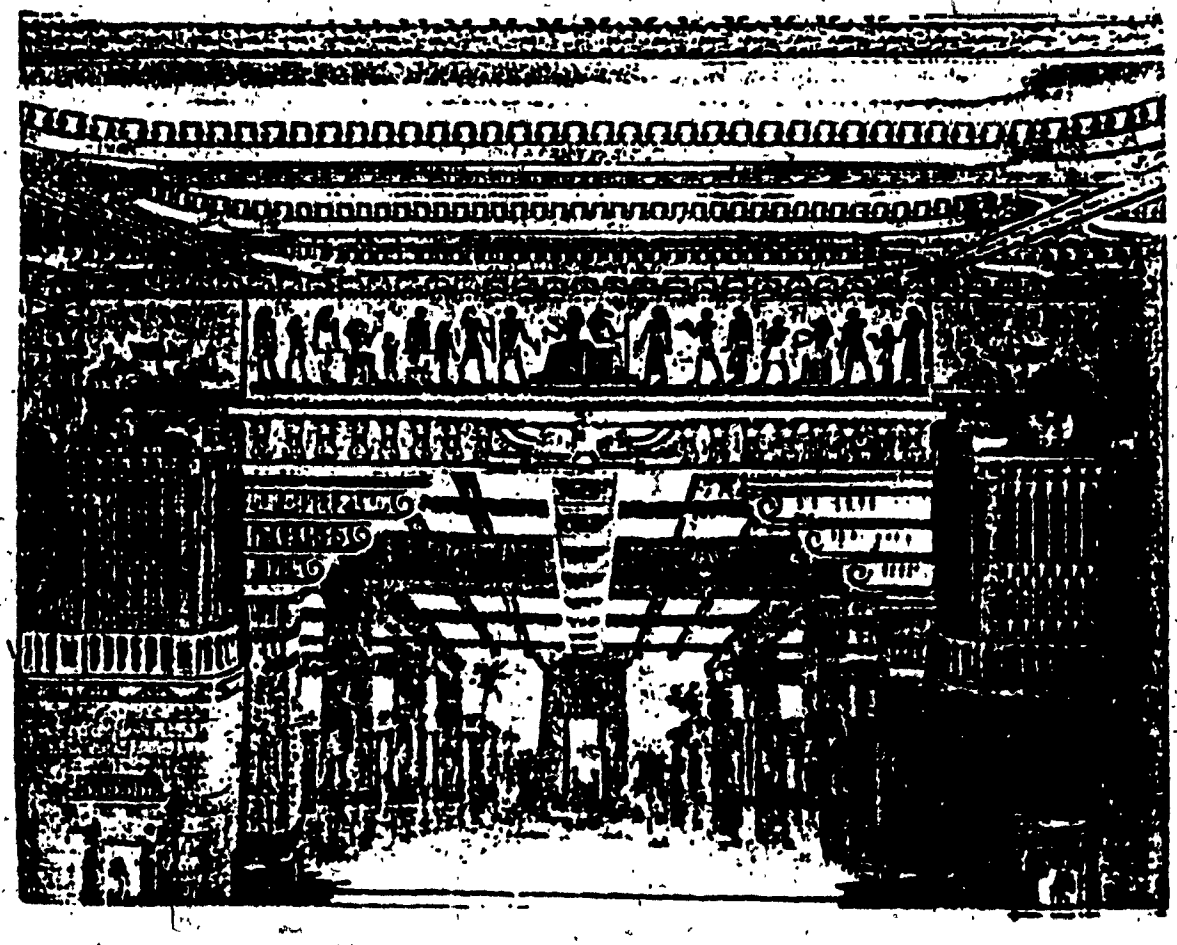


Fig. 18 EMPRESS: Proscenium arch and asbestos curtain; Photograph from the Journal R.A.I.C. Nov. 1928: 395.

Fig. 19 SEVILLE: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

Fig. 20 GRANADA: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

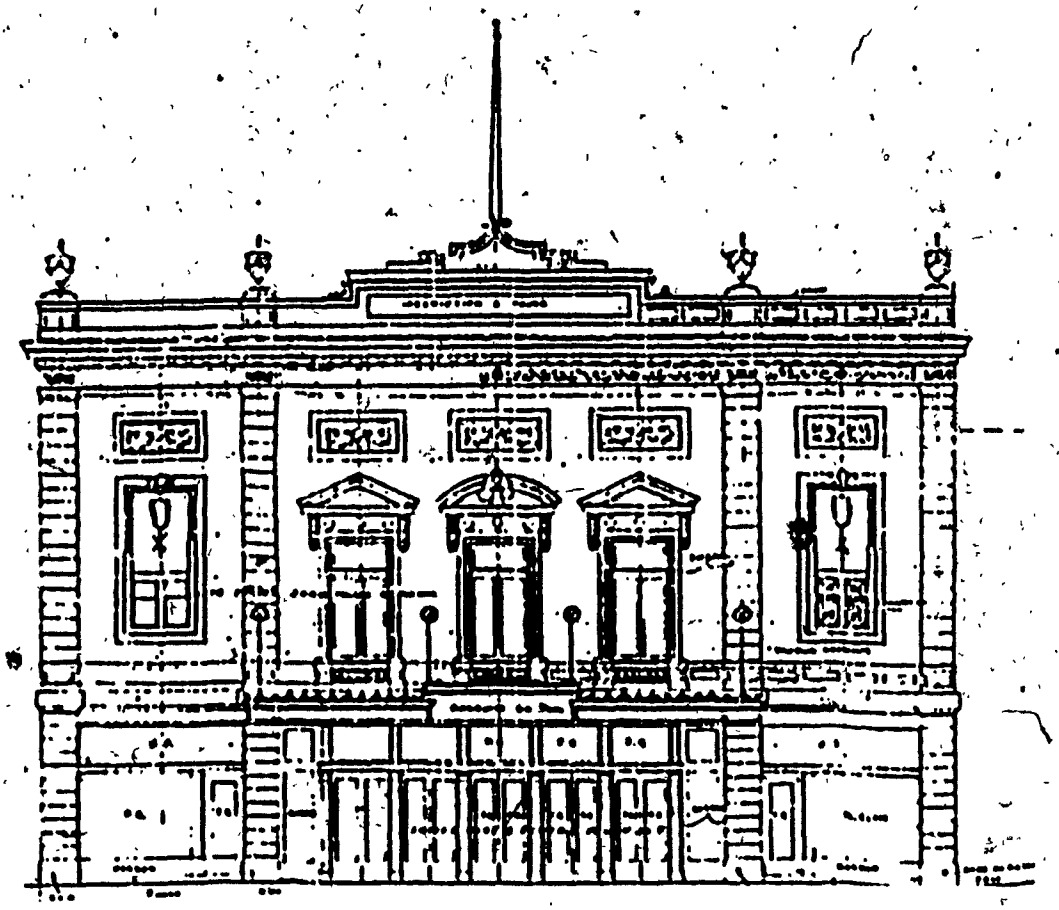


Fig. 21 GRANADA: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans #2385-1929. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

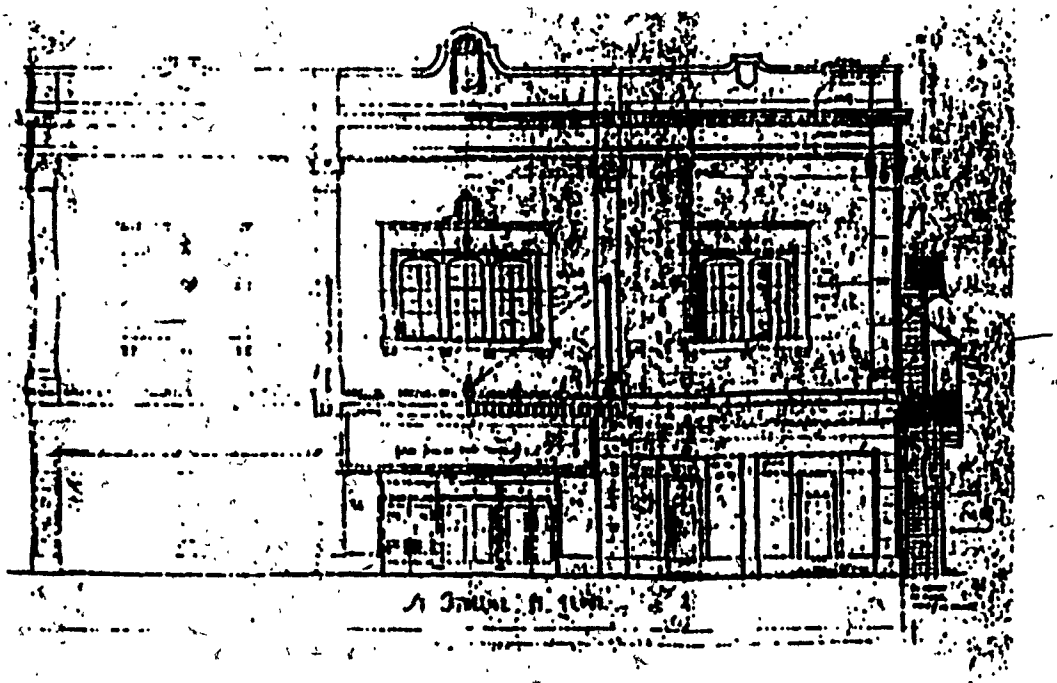


Fig. 22 SEVILLE: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans #4889-1928. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

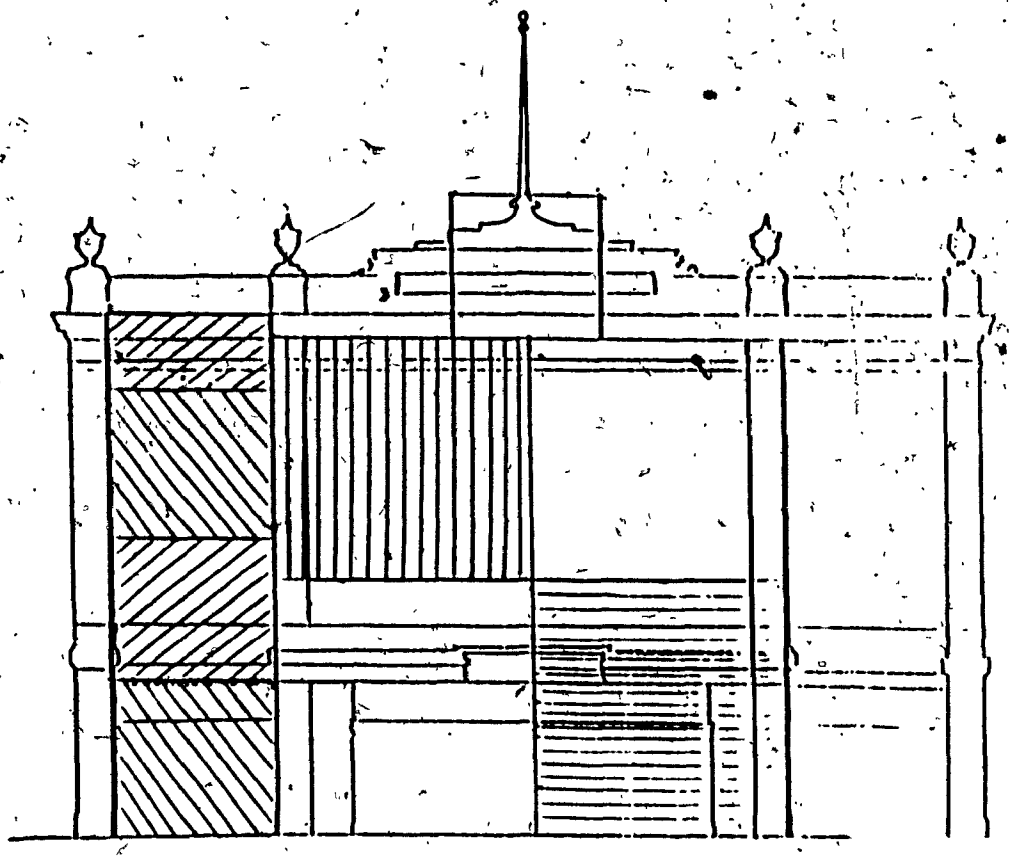


Fig. 23 GRANADA: Composition (main facade).
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

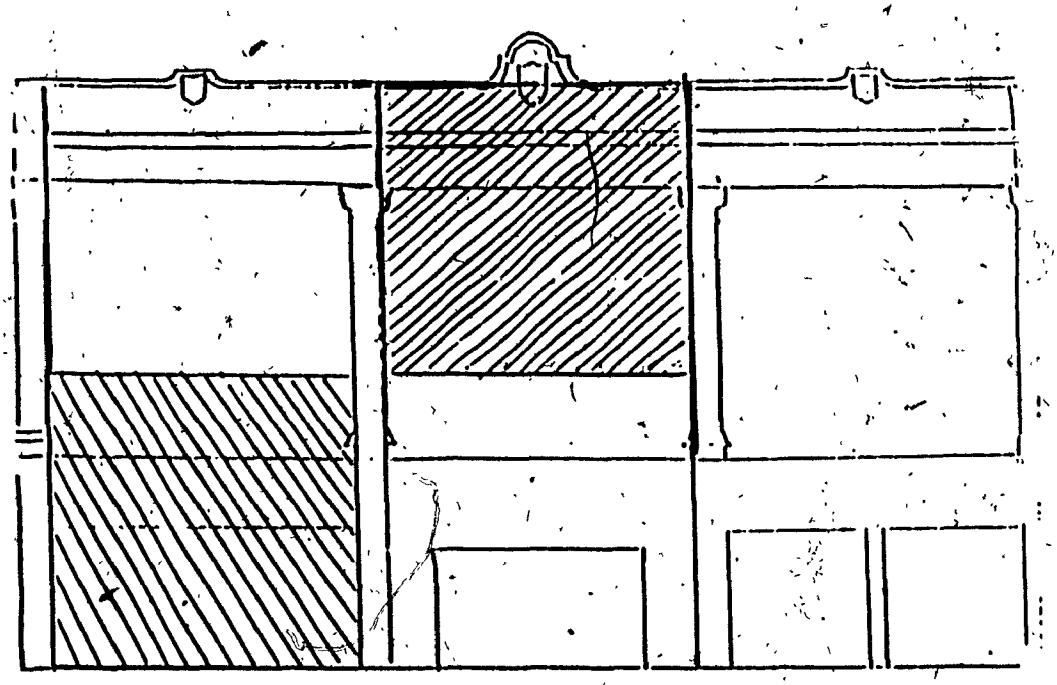


Fig. 24 SEVILLE: Composition (main facade).
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

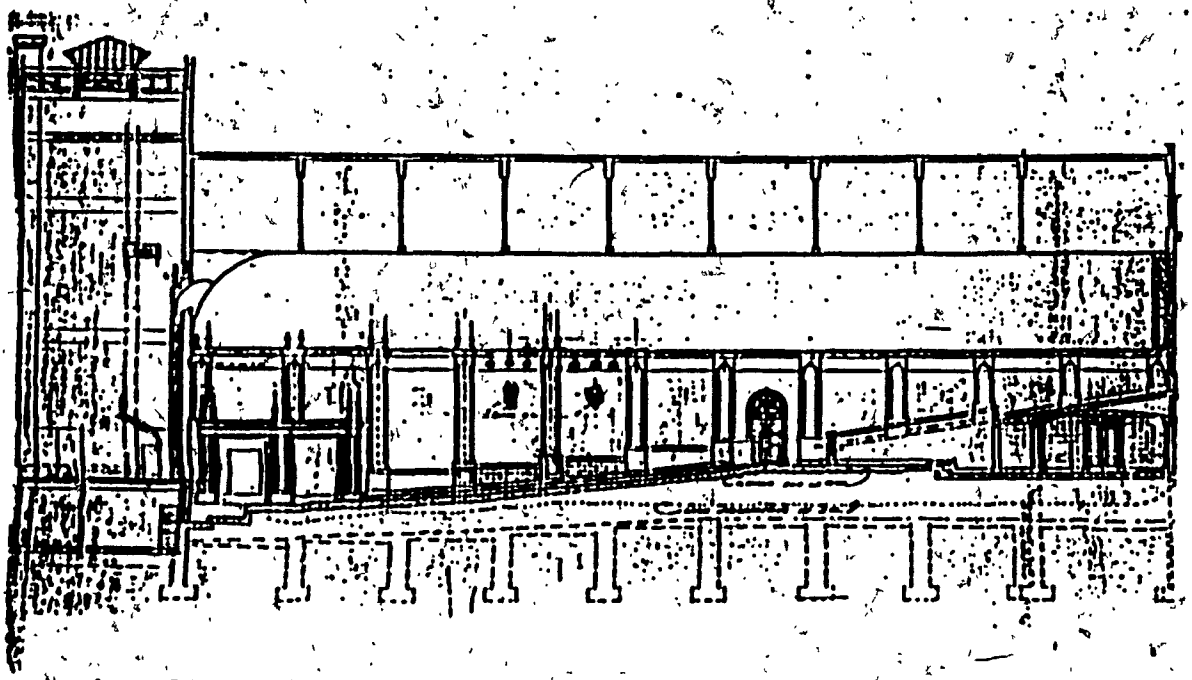


Fig. 25 GRANADA: Wall elevation (auditorium);
C.M.A. Architectural plans #2385-1929.
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

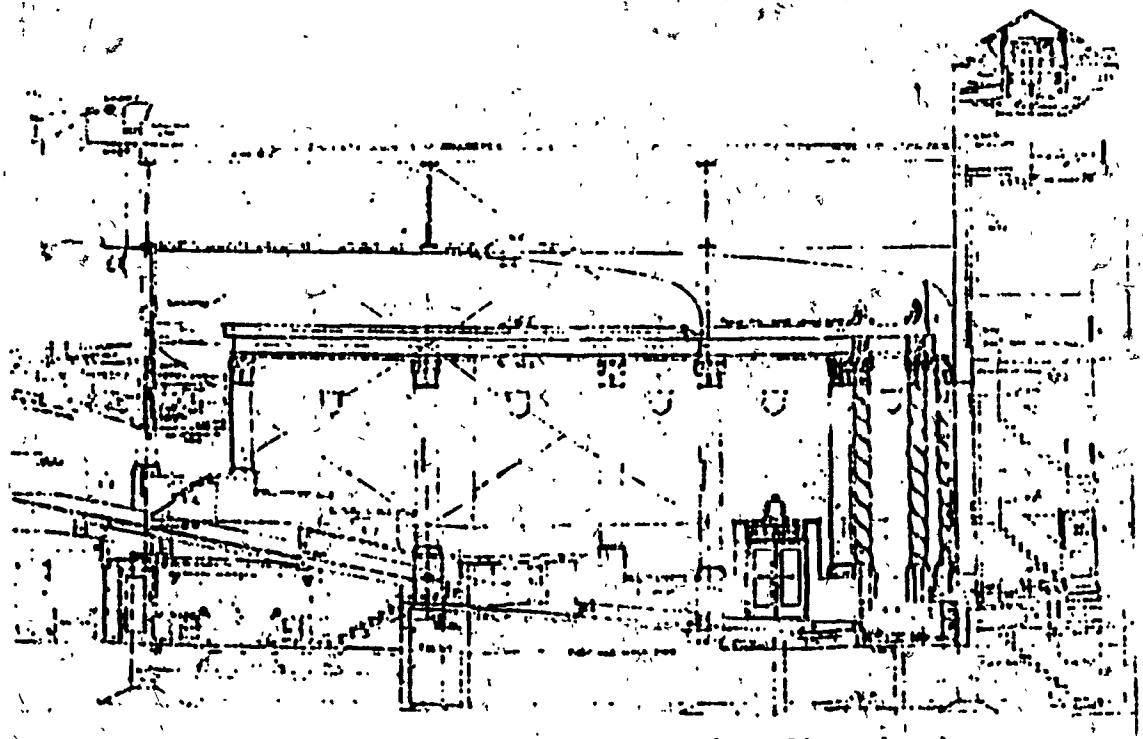


Fig. 26 SEVILLE: Wall elevation (auditorium);
C.M.A. Architectural plans #4884-1928.
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

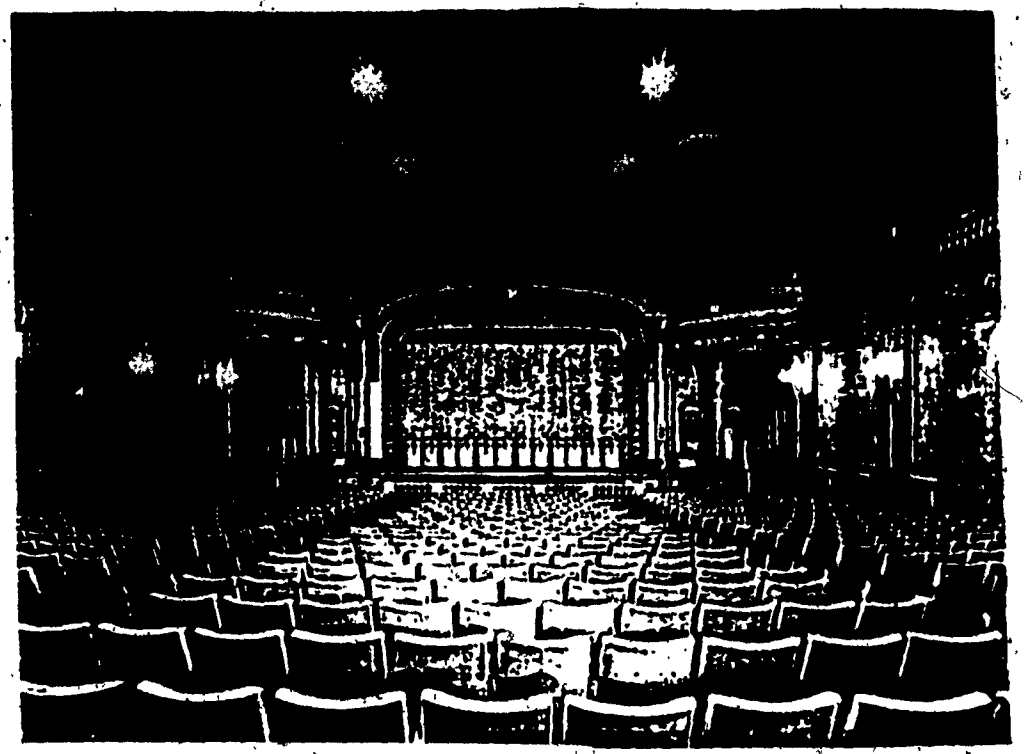


Fig. 27 GRANADA: Proscenium arch (auditorium); Photograph by Pedro Rodriguez. Dimanche-Matin, Jan. 20, 1974, p. 3.

Fig. 28 SEVILLE: View of the auditorium from the proscenium; Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 3970, Oct. 1968.

Fig. 29 MONKLAND: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

Fig. 30 MONKLAND: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans #2358-1929. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

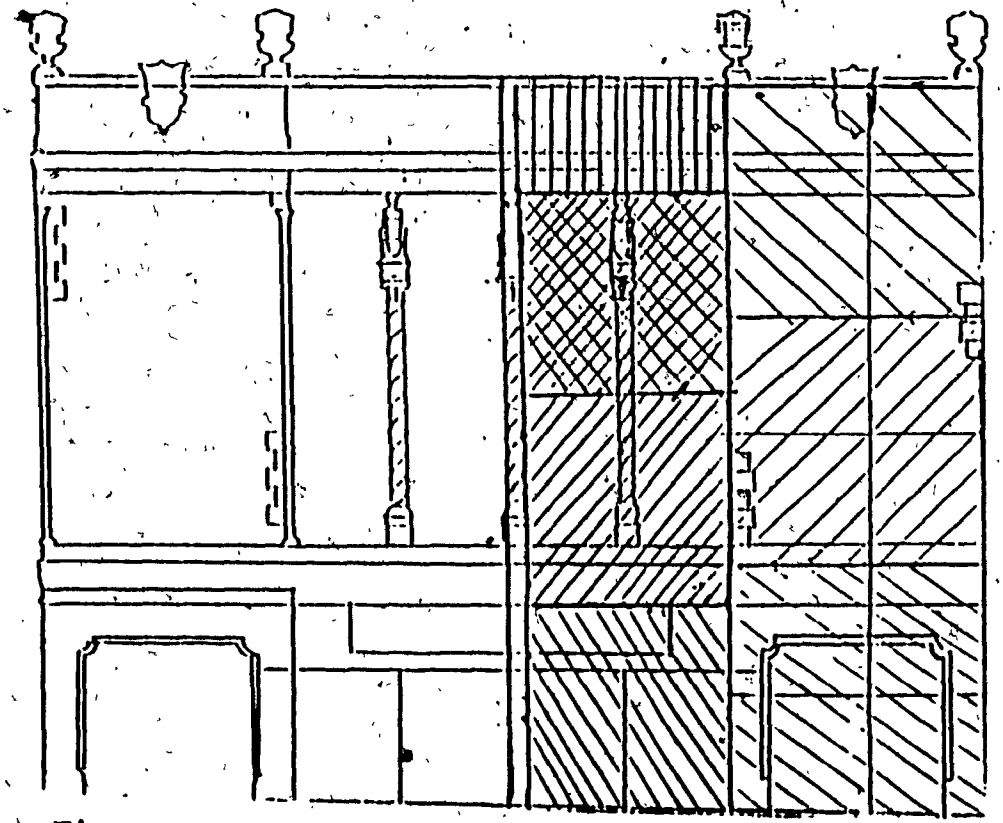


Fig. 31 MONKLAND: Composition (main facade). Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

Fig. 32 MONKLAND: West wall elevation (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. May 1985.

Fig. 33 MONKLAND: East wall elevation (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. May 1985.

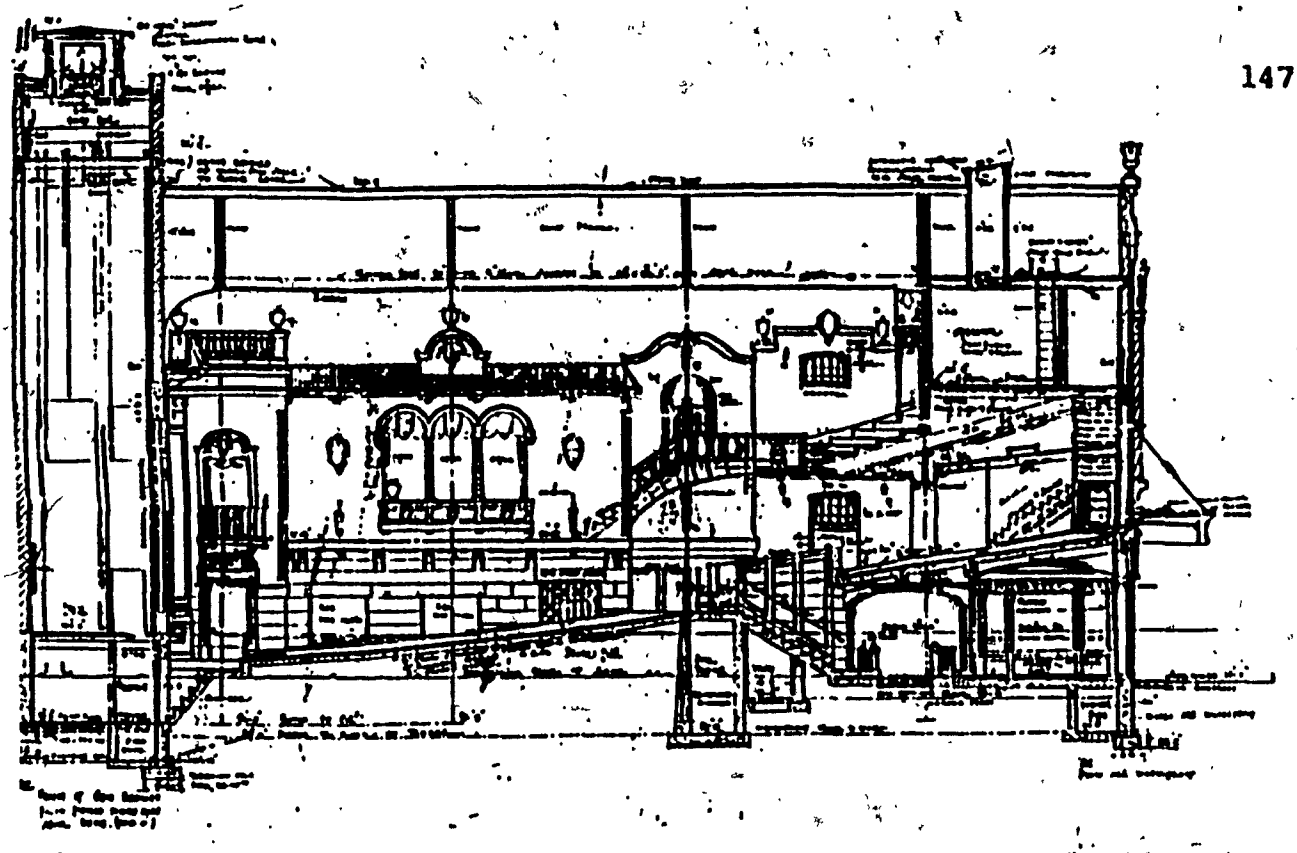


Fig. 34 MONKLAND: West wall elevation (auditorium);
C.M.A. Architectural plans #2358-1929.
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

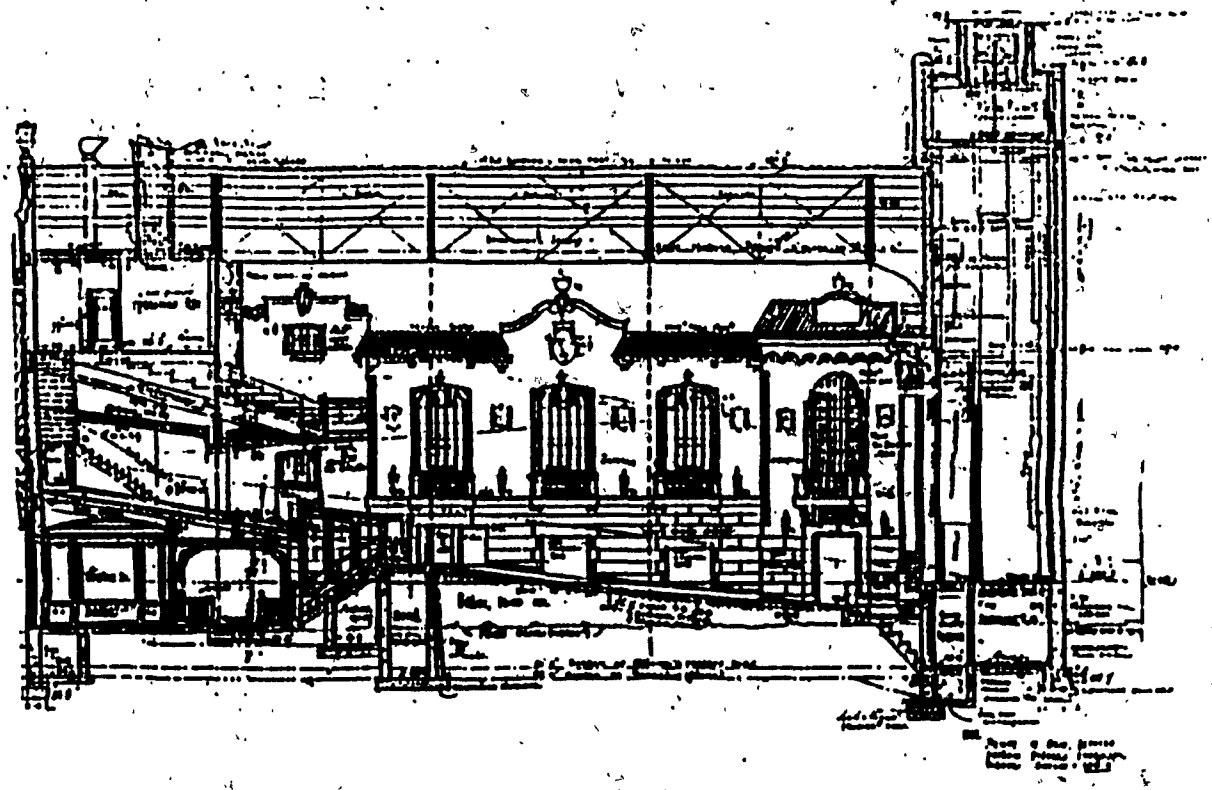


Fig. 35 MONKLAND: East wall elevation (auditorium);
C.M.A. Architectural plans #2358-1929.
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

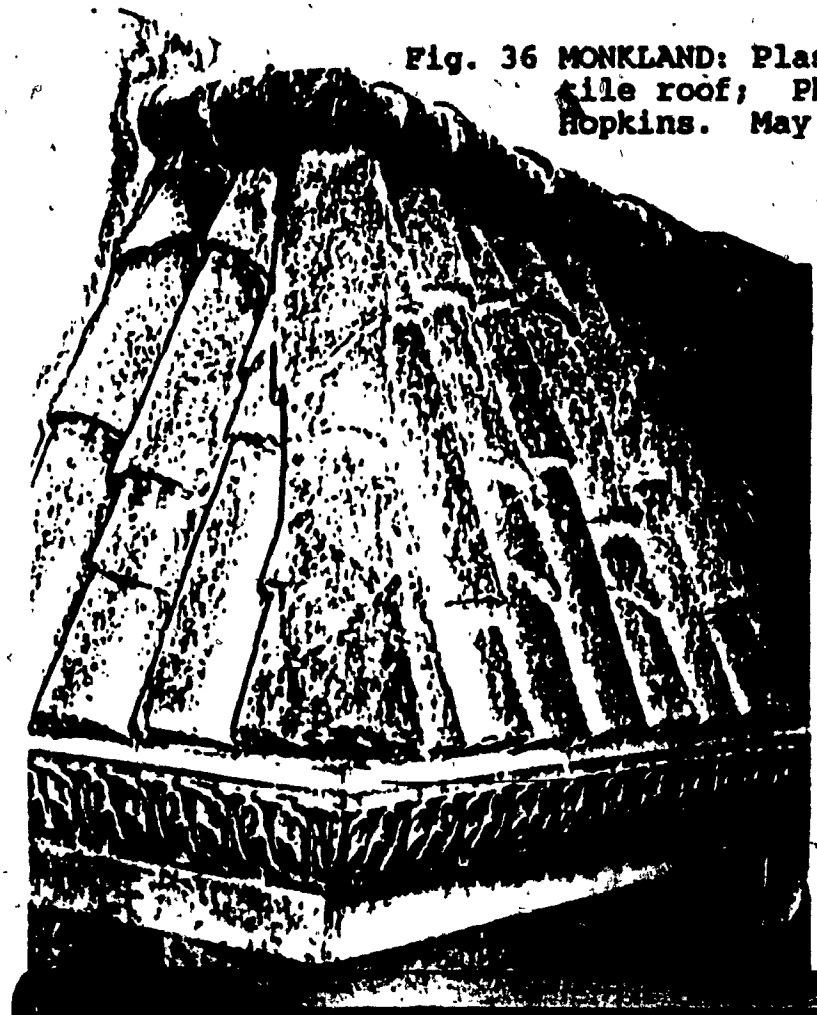


Fig. 36 MONKLAND: Plaster cast Spanish tile roof; Photograph by David Hopkins. May 1985.

Fig. 37 MONKLAND: Proscenium arch and flanking east bay; Photograph by David Hopkins. May 1985.

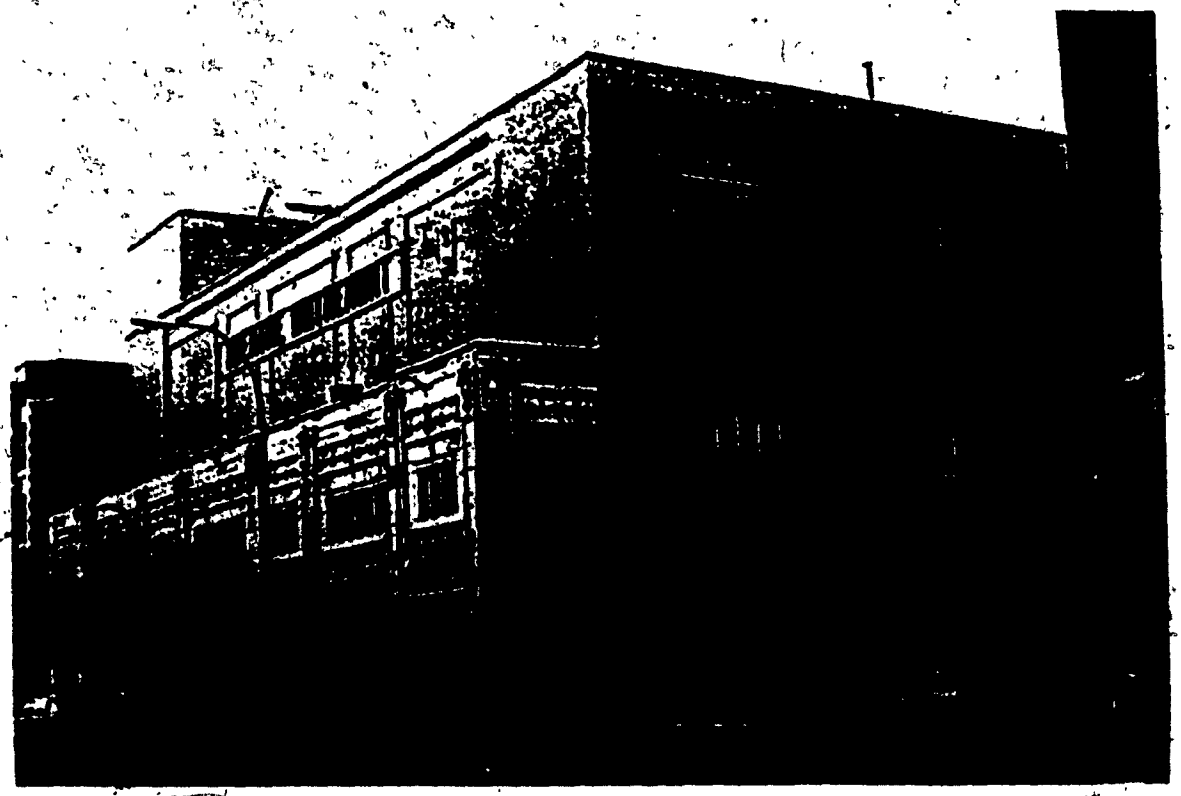


Fig. 38 OUTREMONT: Main facade and section of the side facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

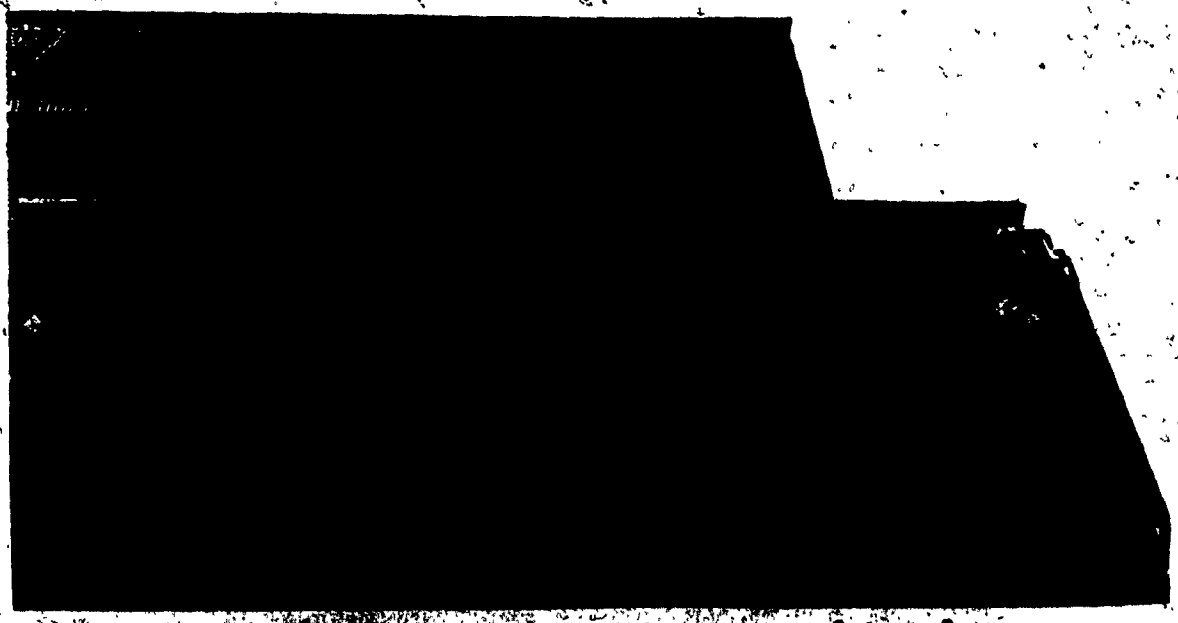


Fig. 39 OUTREMONT: Panel of swags and tassles (main facade); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

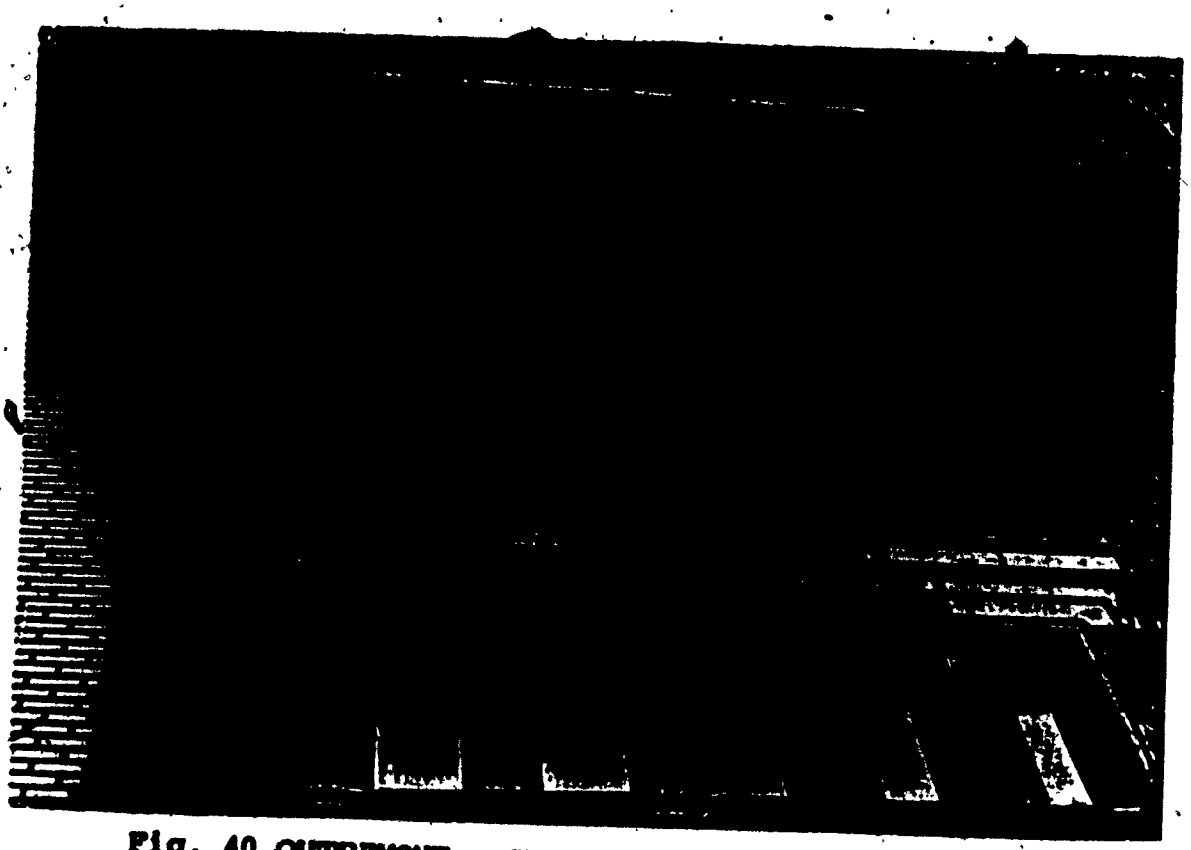


Fig. 40 OUTREMONT: Textural brick panel (side elevation); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

Fig. 41 OUTREMONT: Cast stone panel located over the service doorway; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

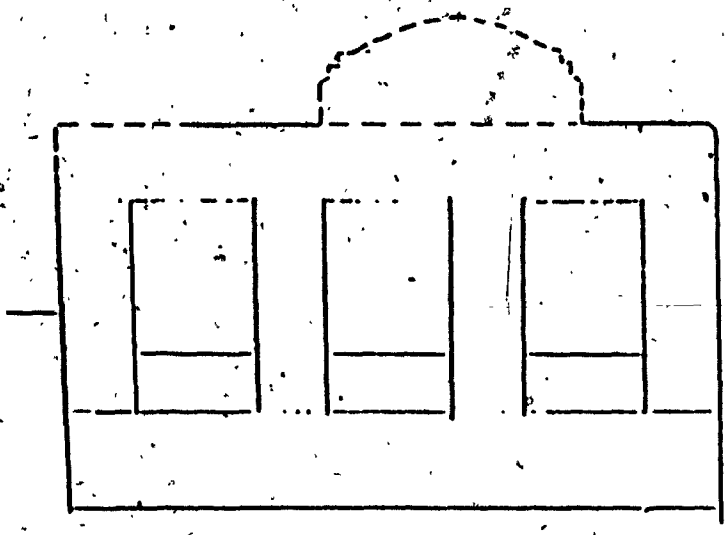


Fig. 42a Composition of the OUTREMONT side elevation taken from Architectural plans of LE CHATEAU: C.M.A. #440-1931.

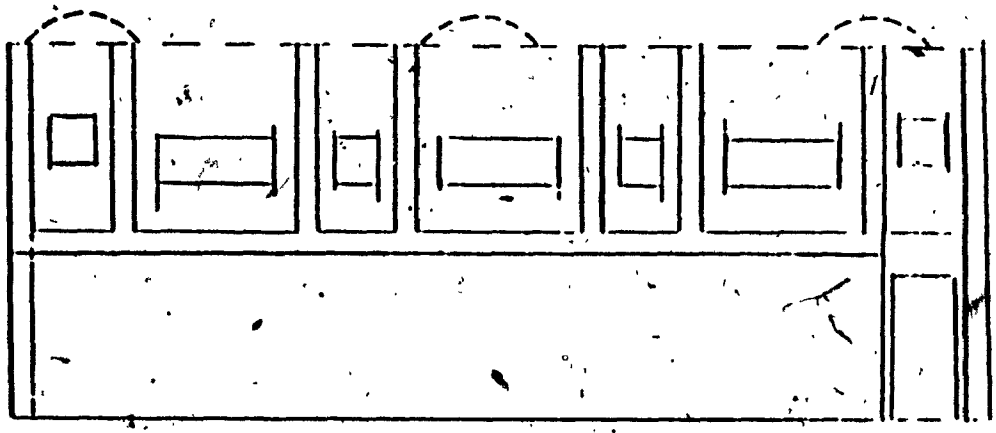


Fig. 42b Composition of the OUTREMONT main facade taken from the Architectural plans of LE CHATEAU: C.M.A. #440-1931.

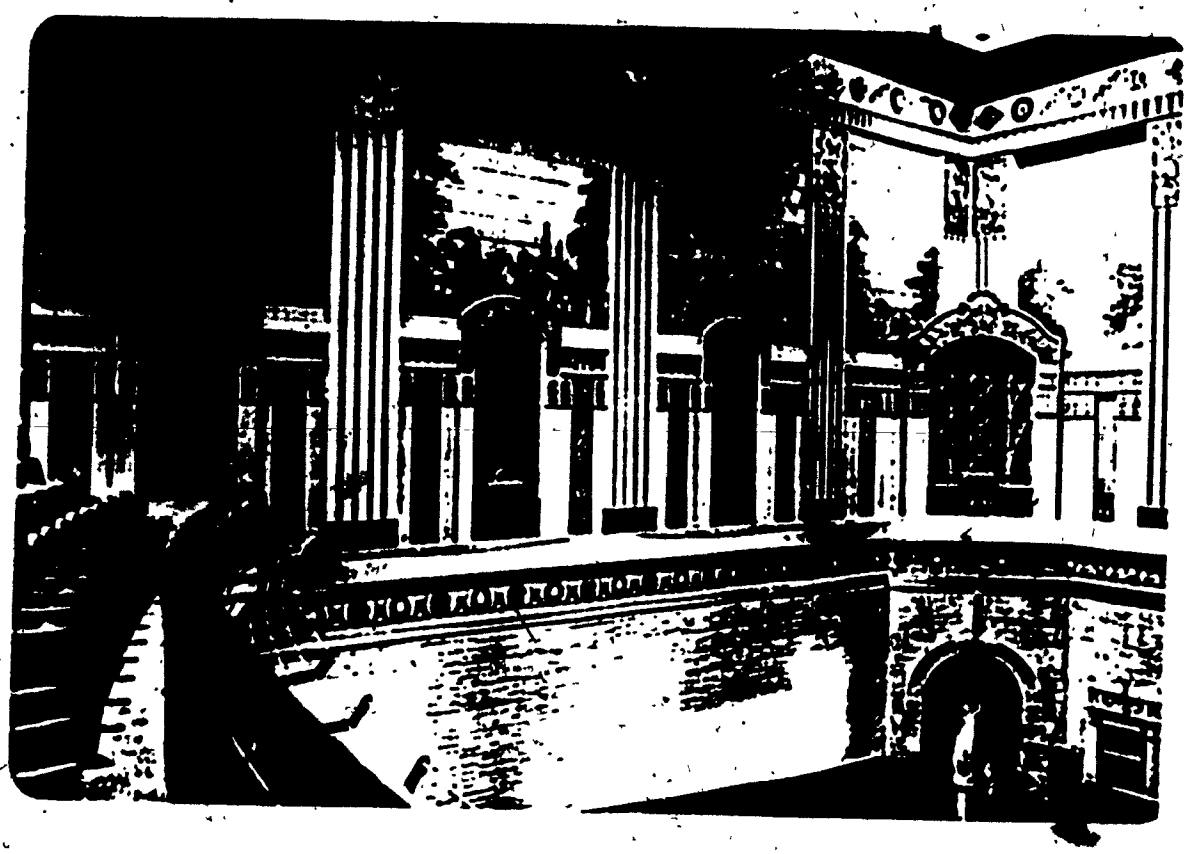


Fig. 43 OUTREMONT: Side wall (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. Oct. 1985.

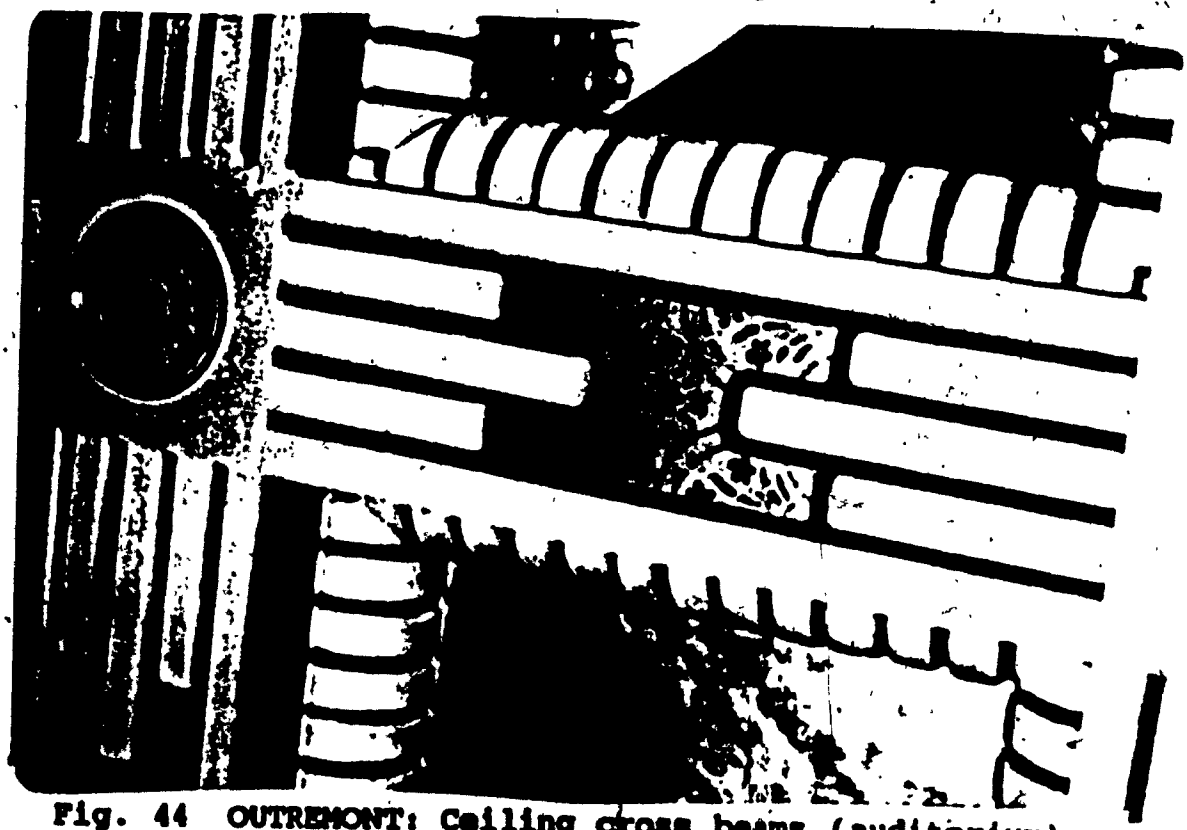


Fig. 44 OUTREMONT: Ceiling cross beams (auditorium), with the plaster cast ziggurat design juxtaposed to the stencil work; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

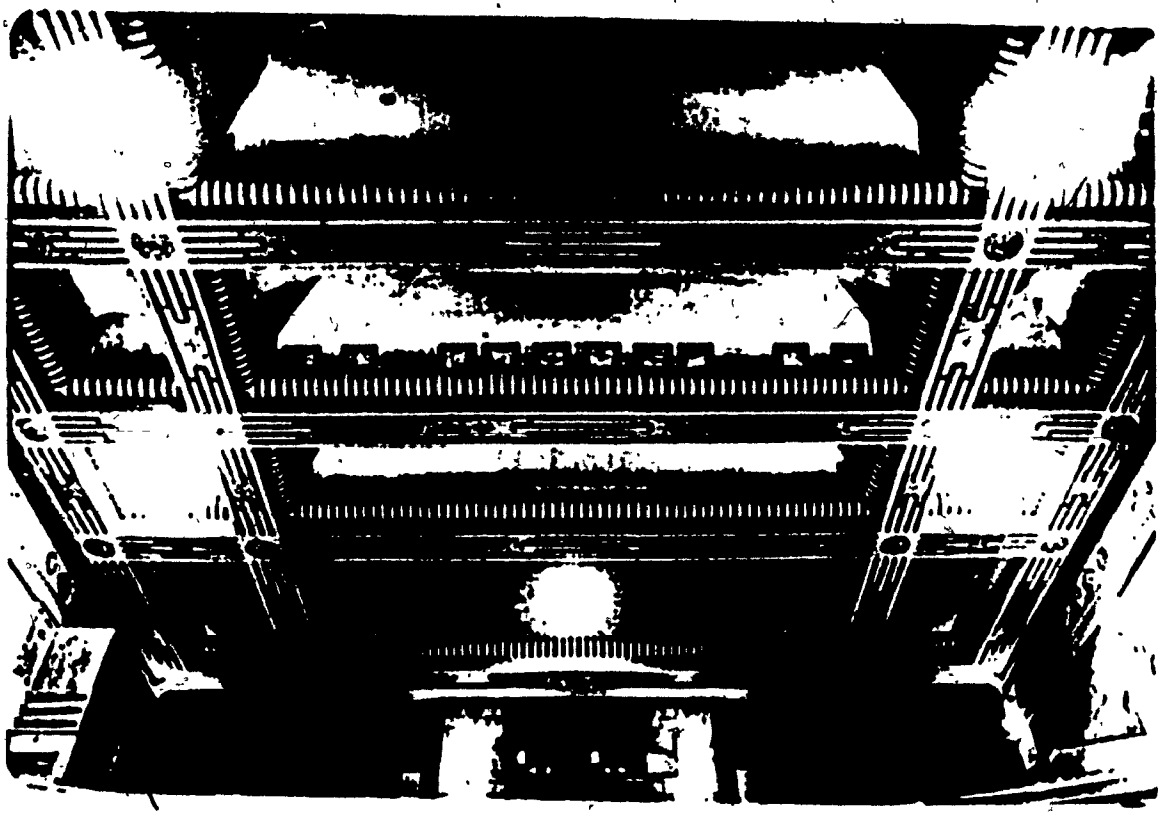


Fig. 45 OUTREMONT: Ceiling (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. Oct. 1985.

Fig. 46 OUTREMONT: Ceiling (mezzanine); Photograph by David Hopkins. Oct. 1985.

Fig. 47 OUTREMONT: Proscenium arch from balcony (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. Oct. 1985.

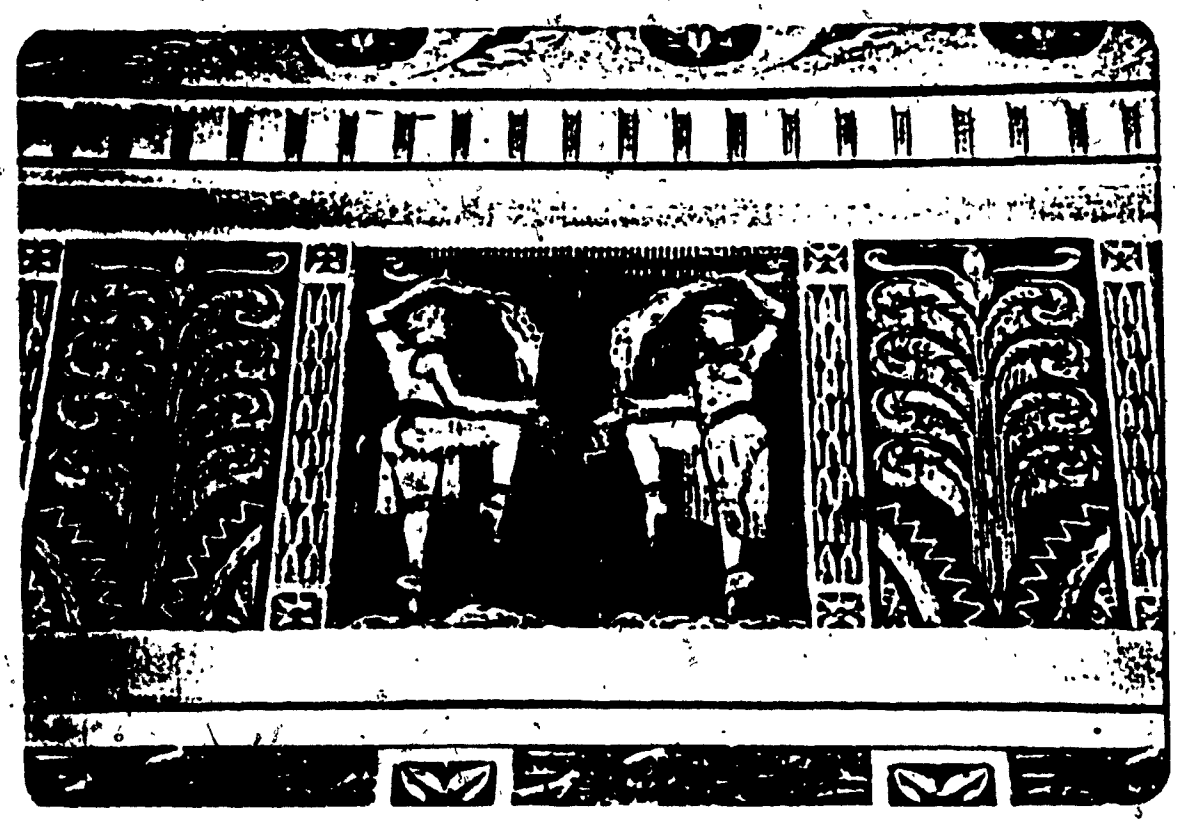


Fig. 48 OUTREMONT: Panels above the proscenium arch (auditorium); Photograph by David Hopkins. Oct. 1985.

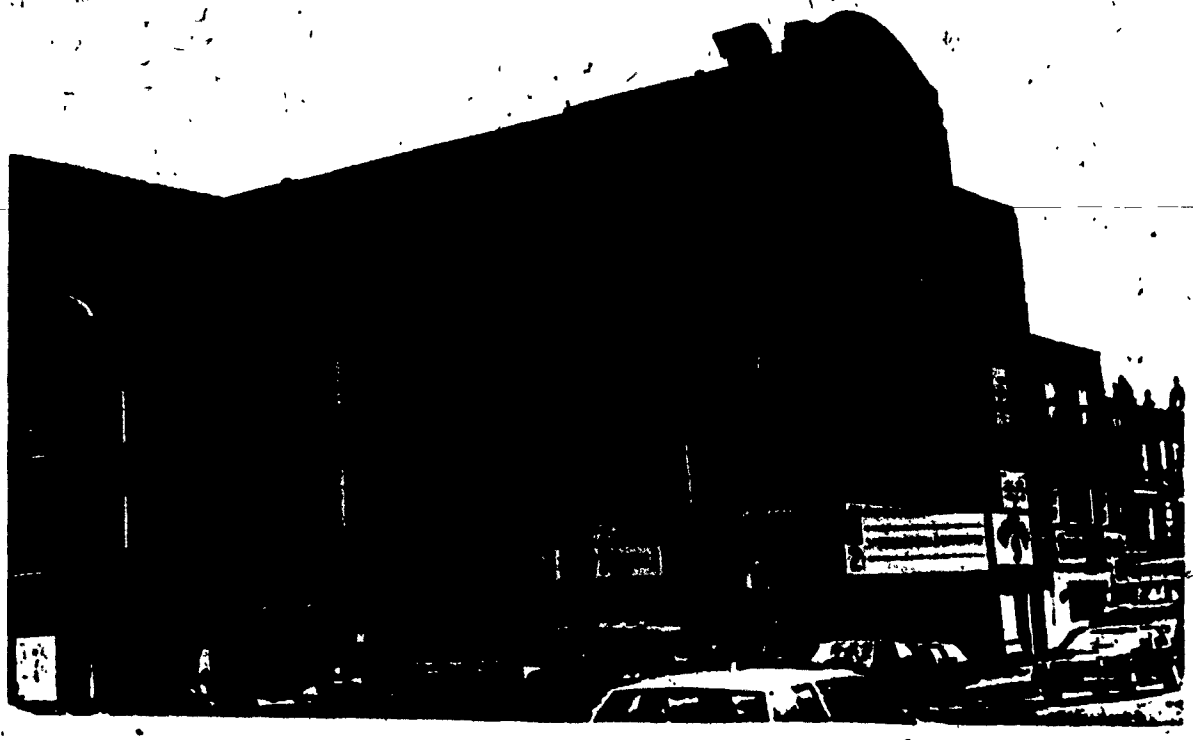


Fig. 49 LE CHATEAU: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

Fig. 50a LE CHATEAU: Facade (side elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans #440-1931. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

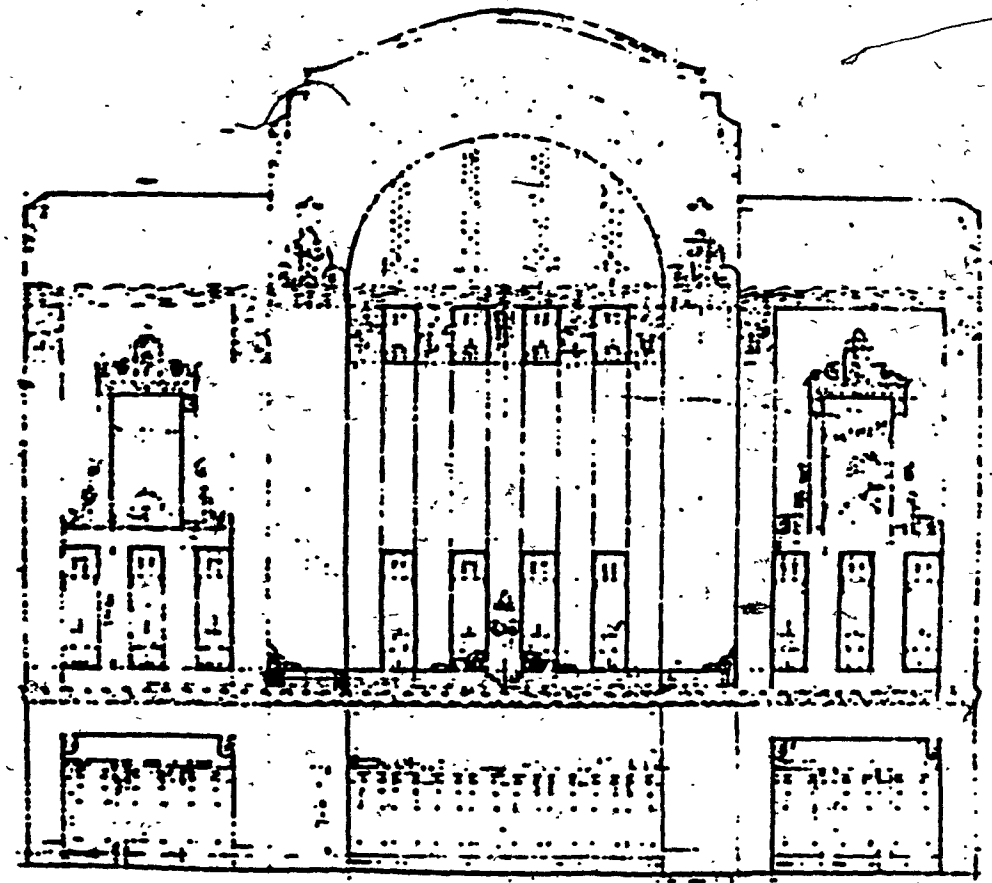


Fig. 50b LE CHATEAU: Main facade (front elevation); C.M.A. Architectural plans #440-1931. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

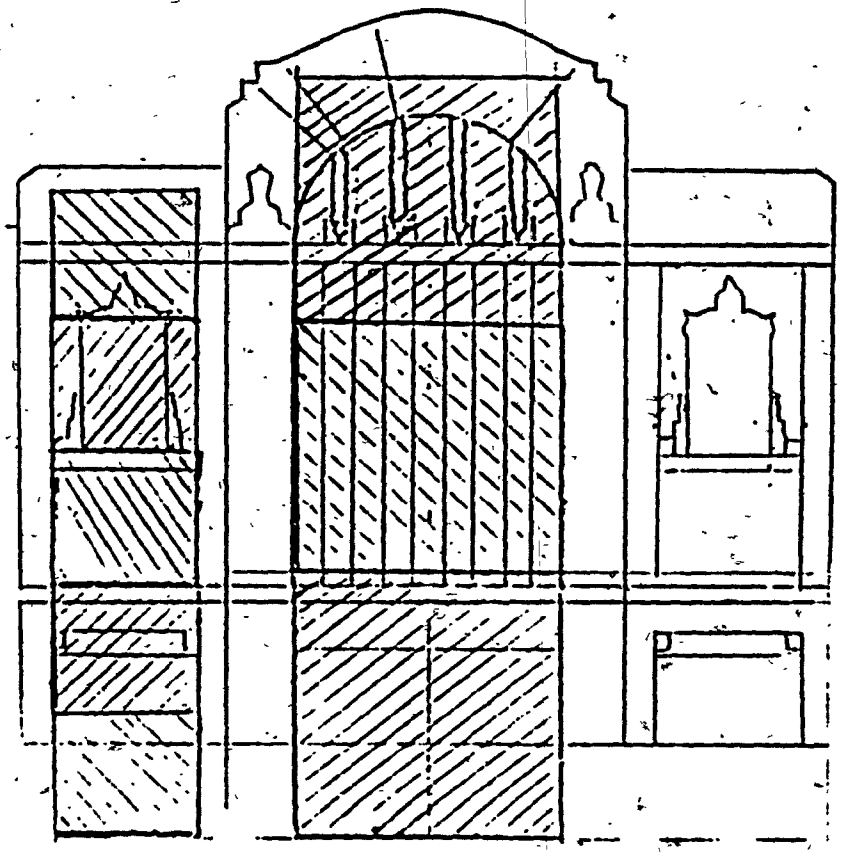


Fig. 51 LE CHATEAU: Composition (main facade). Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

Fig. 52 LE CHATEAU: Side bay with stained glass sunburst design; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. May 1985.

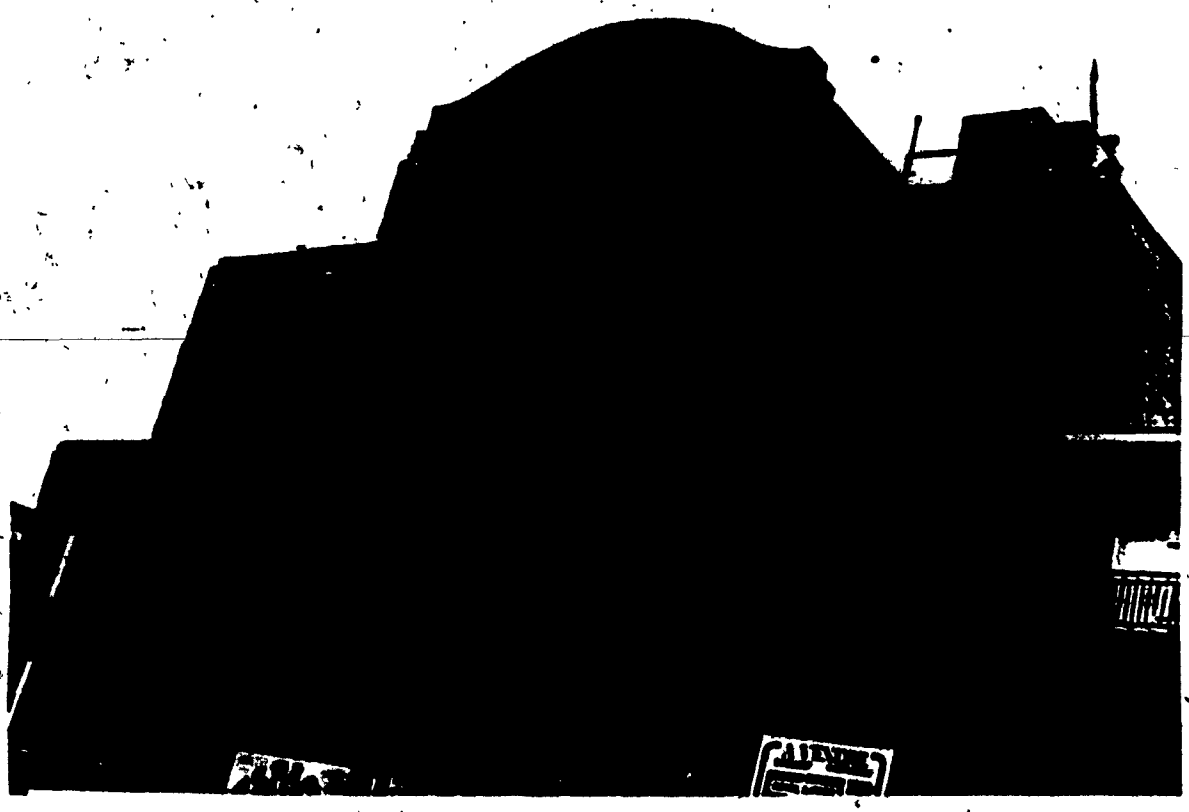


Fig. 53 LE CHATEAU: Main facade (central bay and side bays); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Aug. 1986.

Fig. 54 LE CHATEAU: Terra-cotta molding in a pattern of chevrons and masks; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1986.

Fig. 55 LE CHATEAU: One side of a pair of carved wood doors (lobby); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. May 1985.

Fig. 56 LE CHATEAU: Side wall elevation (auditorium); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. May 1985.

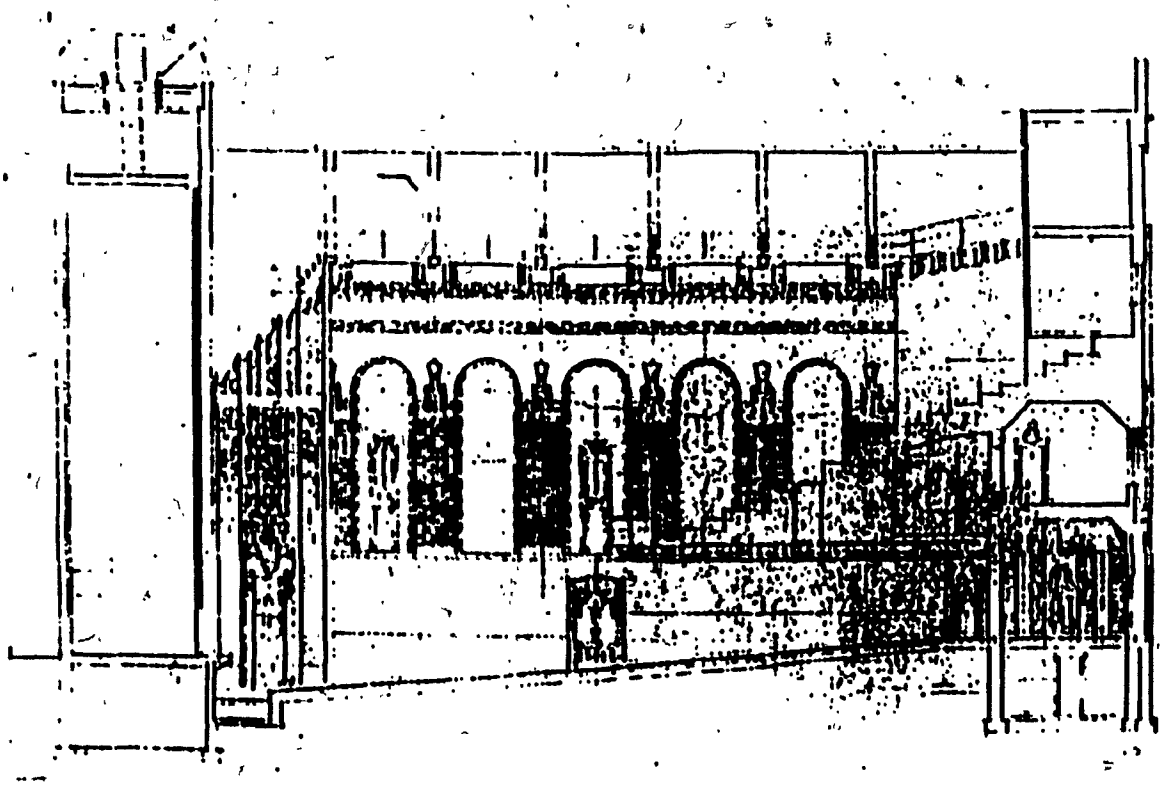


Fig. 57 LE CHATEAU: Wall elevation (auditorium); C.M.A. Architectural plans #440-1931. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

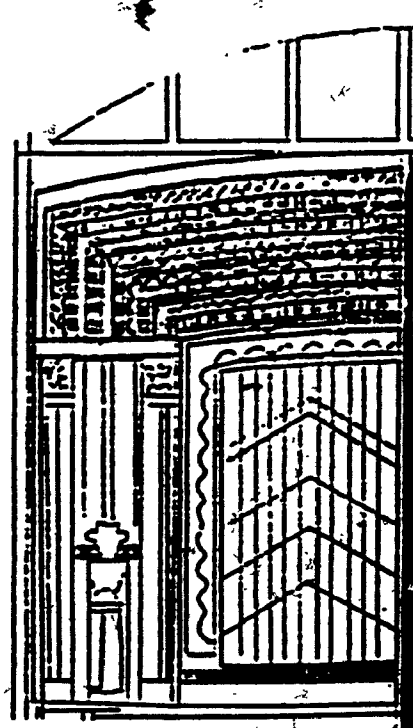


Fig. 58a

LE CHATEAU: Section of proscenium (upper right hand corner) and upper detail: C.M.A. Architectural plans #440-1931. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

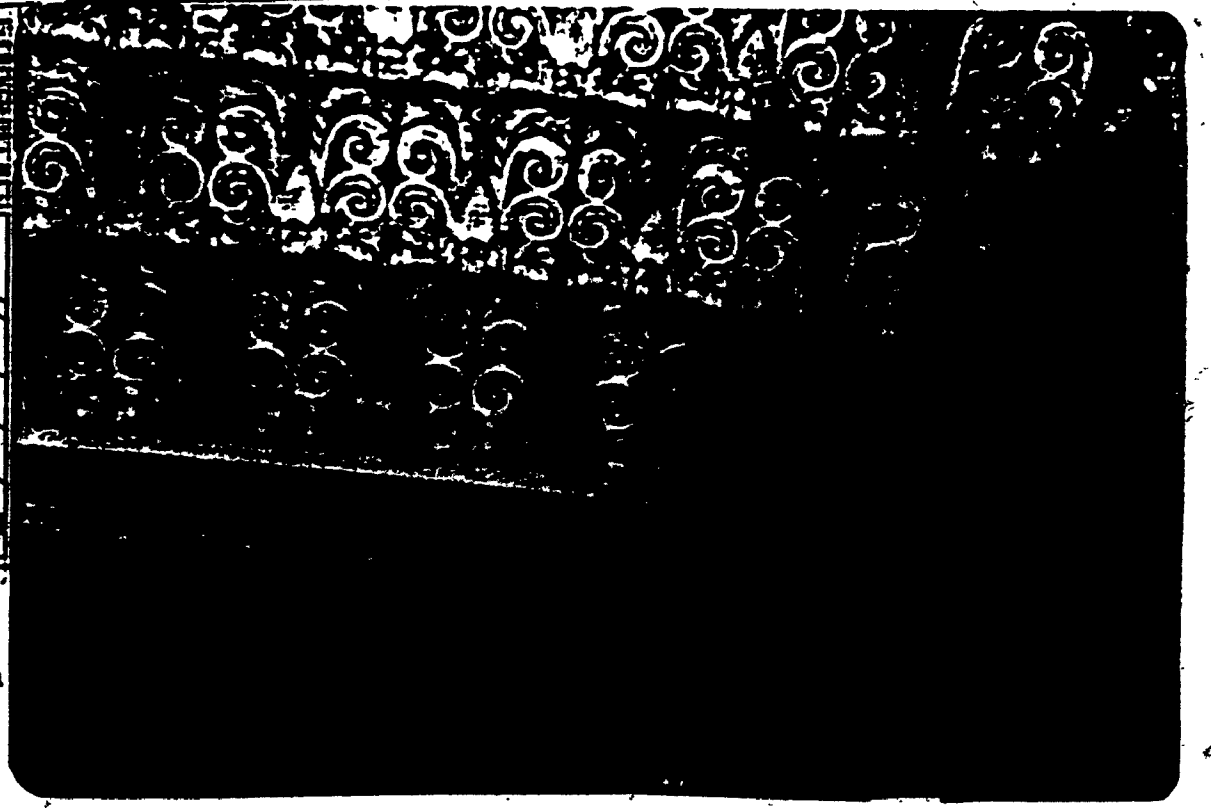


Fig. 58b LE CHATEAU: Proscenium arch (detail); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. May 1985.

Fig. 59 LE CHATEAU: Proscenium arch; Photograph by Brian Merrett [1974].

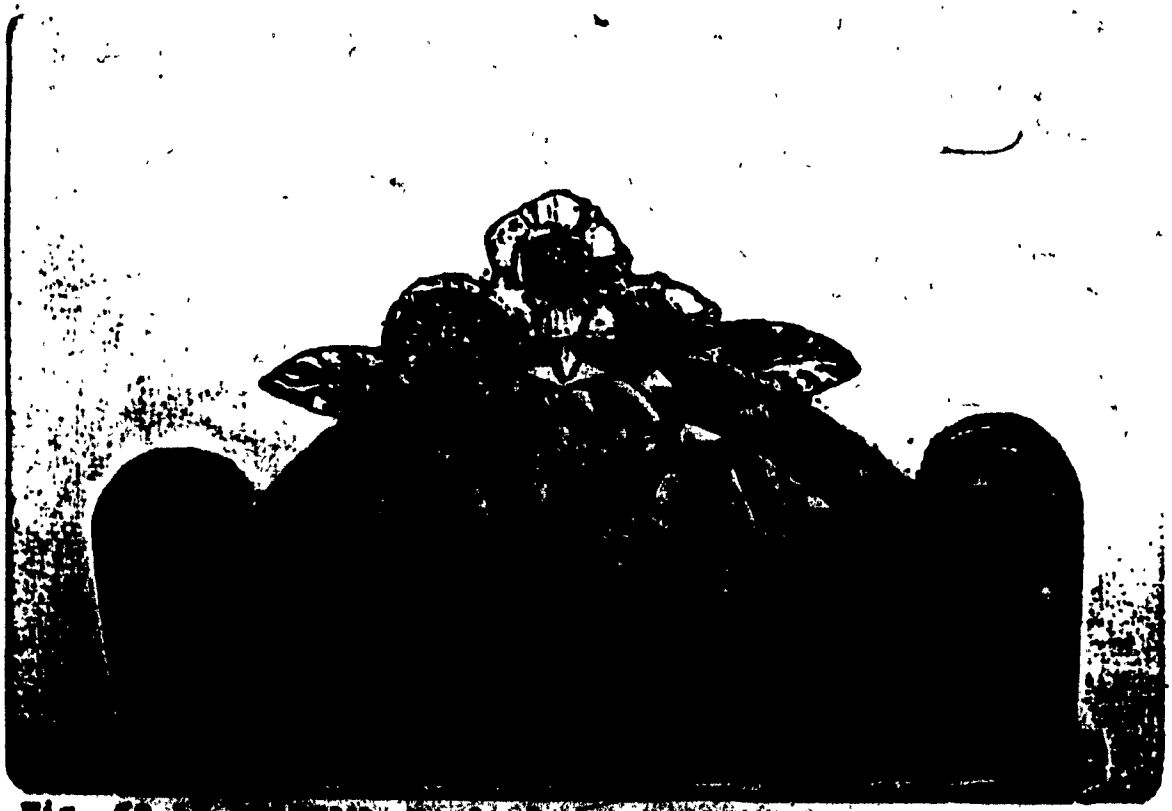


Fig. 60 LE CHATEAU: Head of the «Goddess of the Movies» (panel over exit doors); Photograph by H. Kolomeir. May 1985.

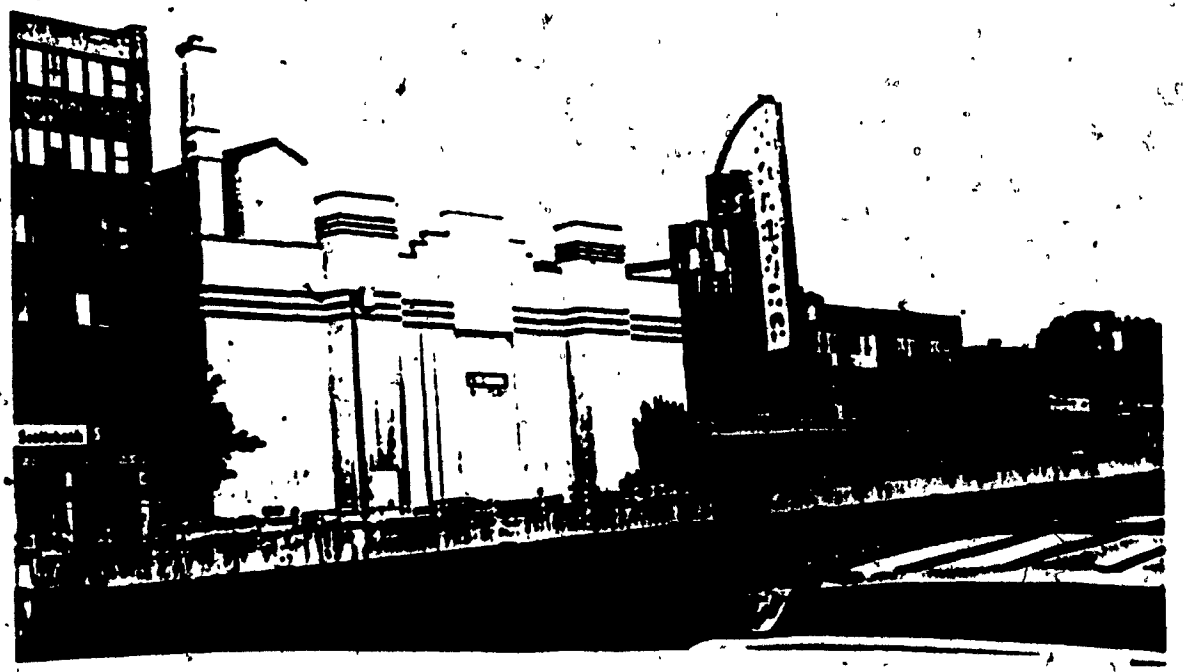
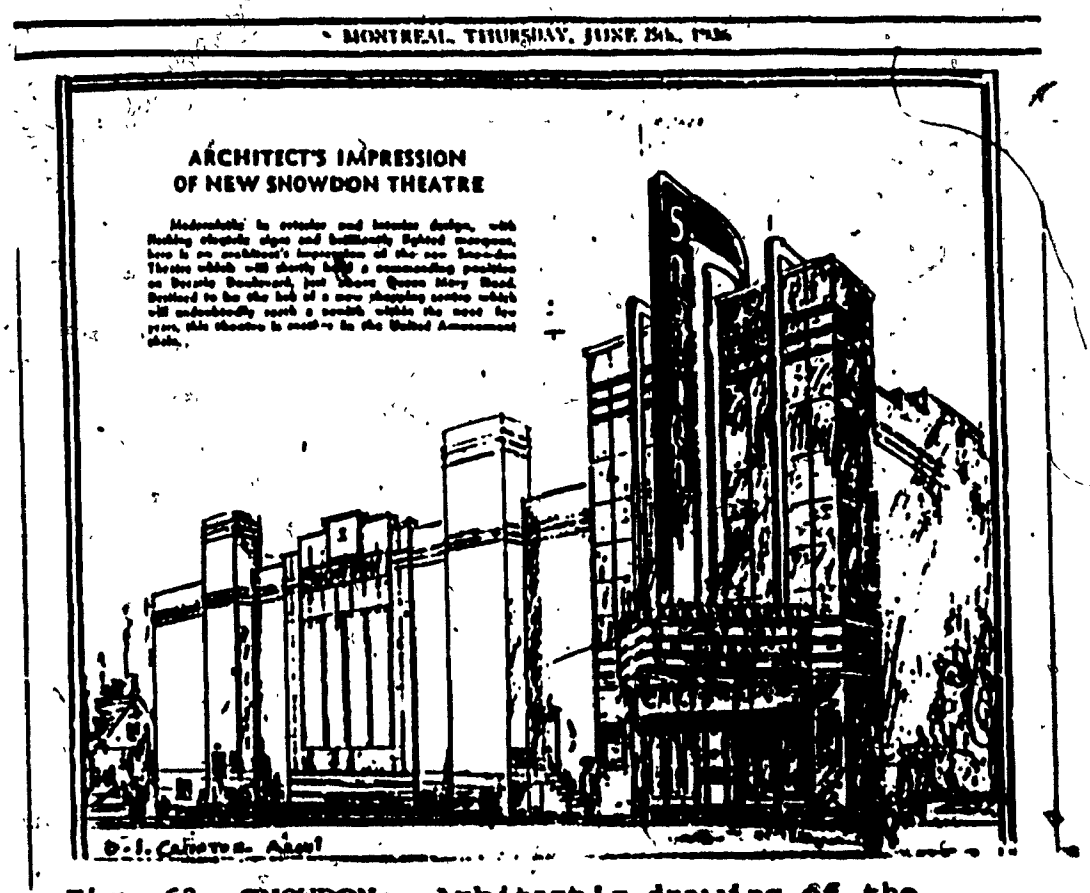


Fig. 61 SNOWDON: Main facade; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.



MONTREAL, THURSDAY, JUNE 25th, 1936

ARCHITECT'S IMPRESSION OF NEW SNOWDON THEATRE

Fig. 62 SNOWDON: Arhitect's drawing of the theatre; Photographed in The Monitor, June 25, 1936: Front page.

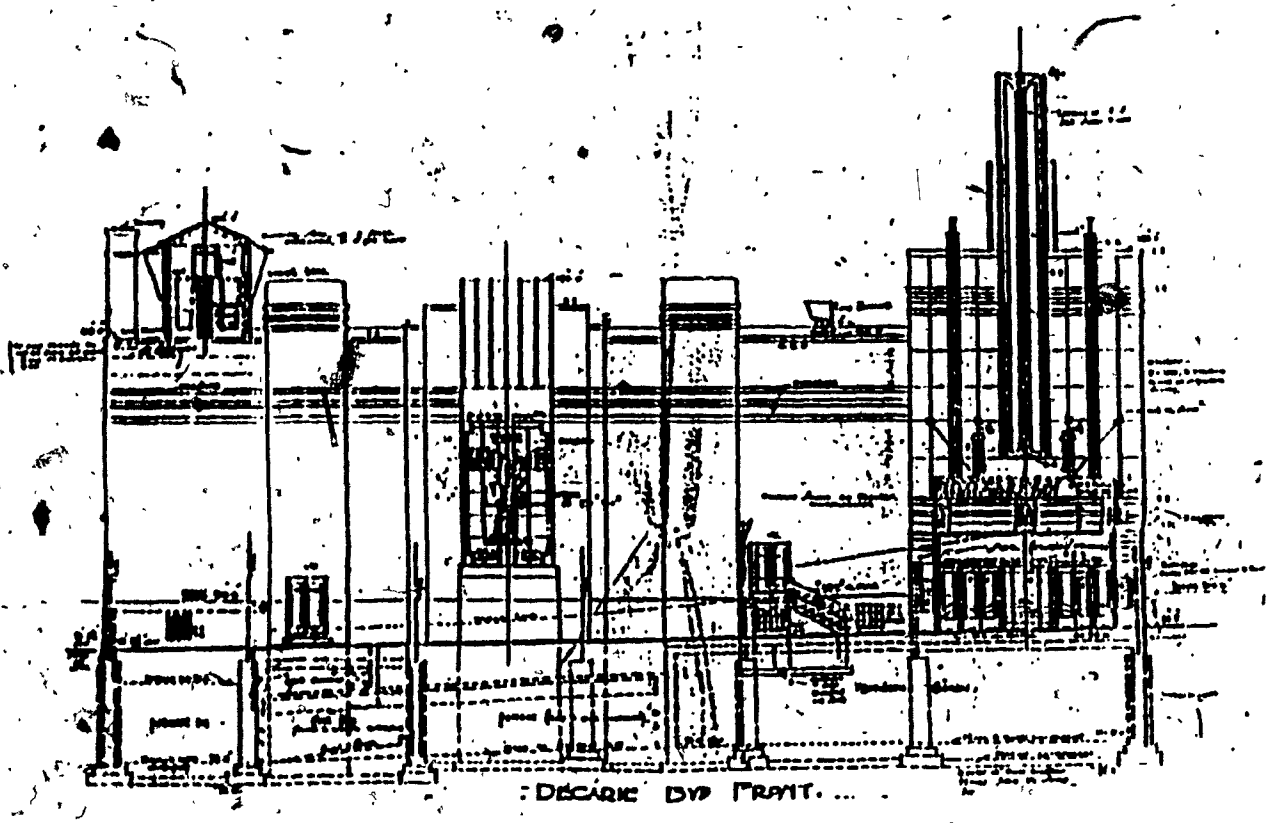


Fig. 63 SNOWDON: Main facade (front elevation).
C.M.A. Architectural plans #1991-1936.
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

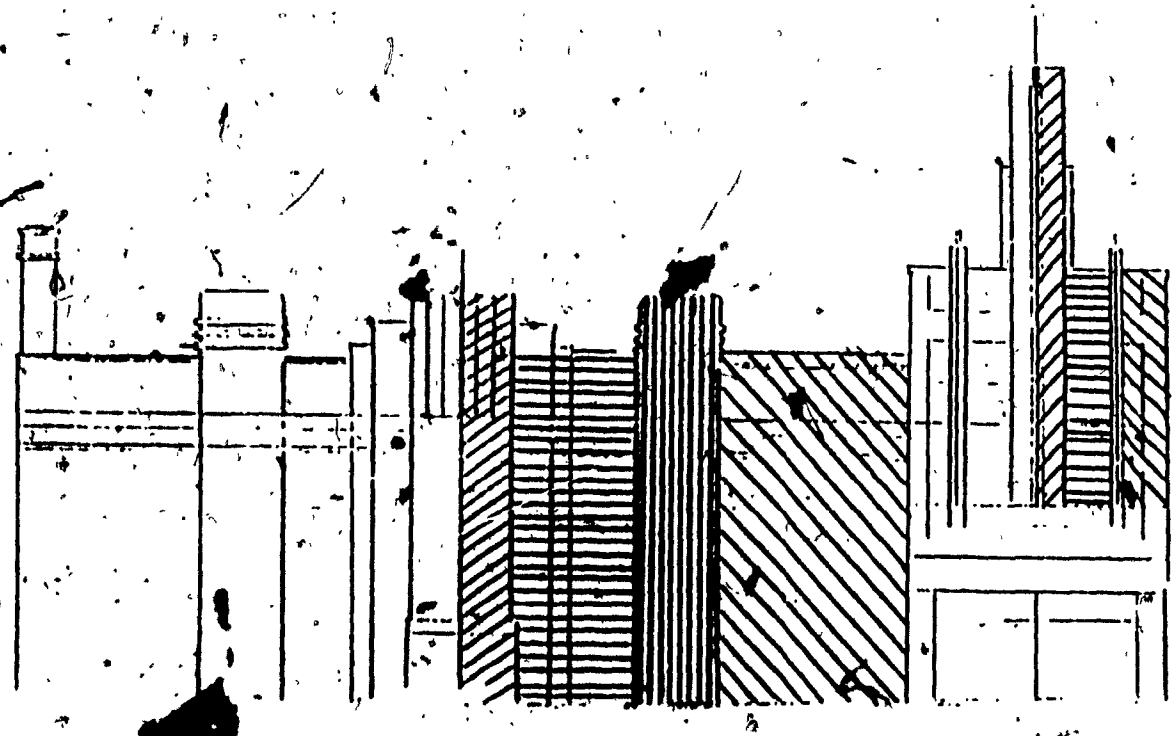


Fig. 64 SNOWDON: Composition (main façade).
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

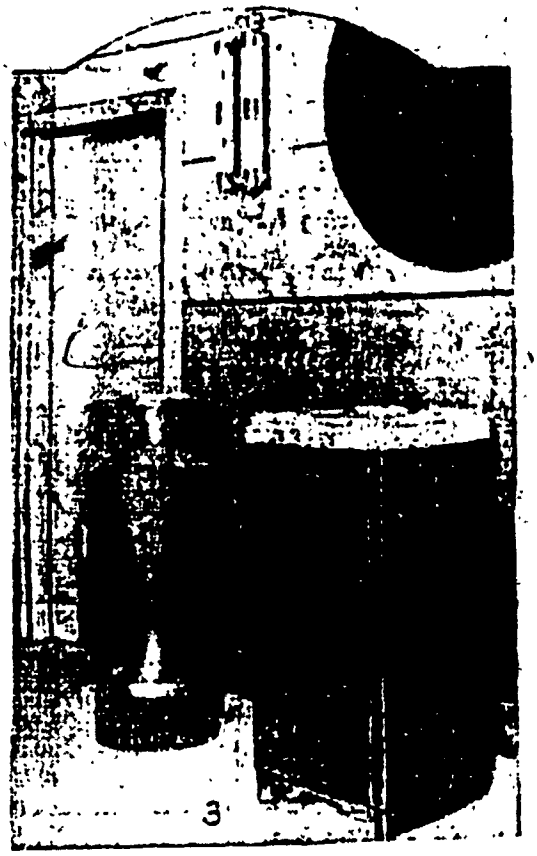


Fig. 65 SNOWDON: Lobby wall with circular mirror; Photographed in The Monitor. Feb. 25, 1937: 11.

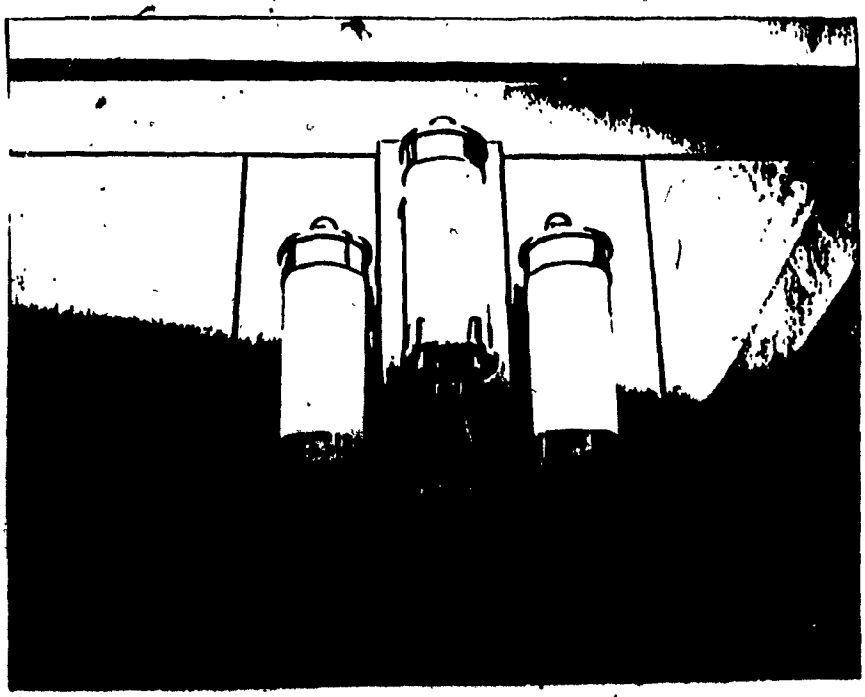


Fig. 66 SNOWDON: Lobby wall with wall bracket; Photographed in Décormag. May 1976: 34.

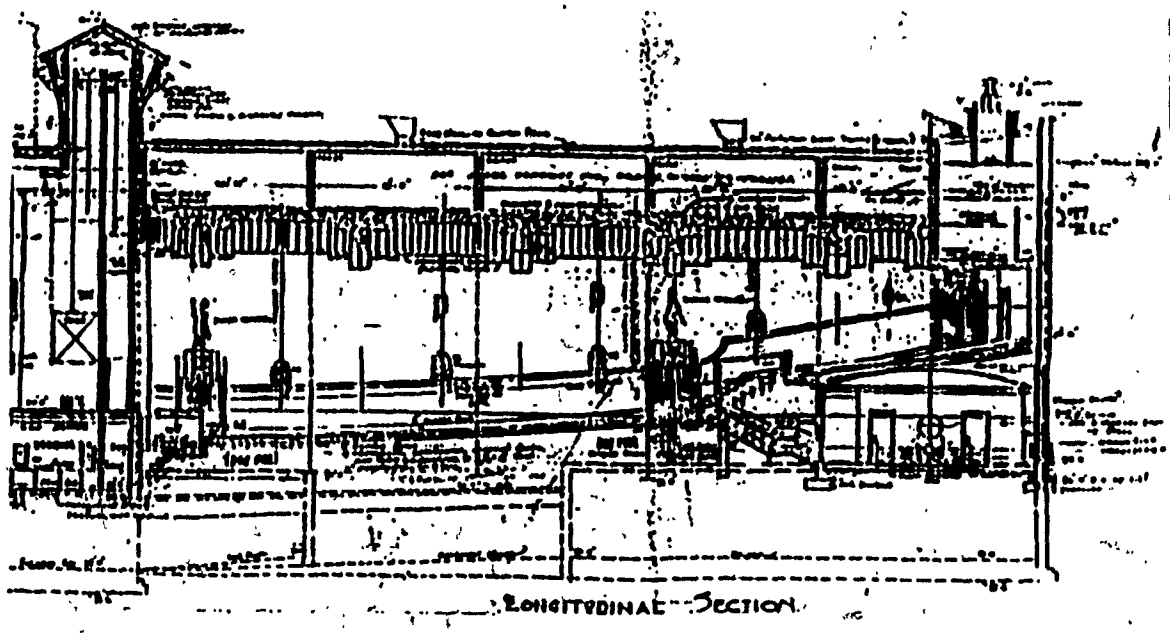


Fig. 67 SNOWDON: Wall elevation (auditorium); C.M.A. Architectural plans #1991-1936. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

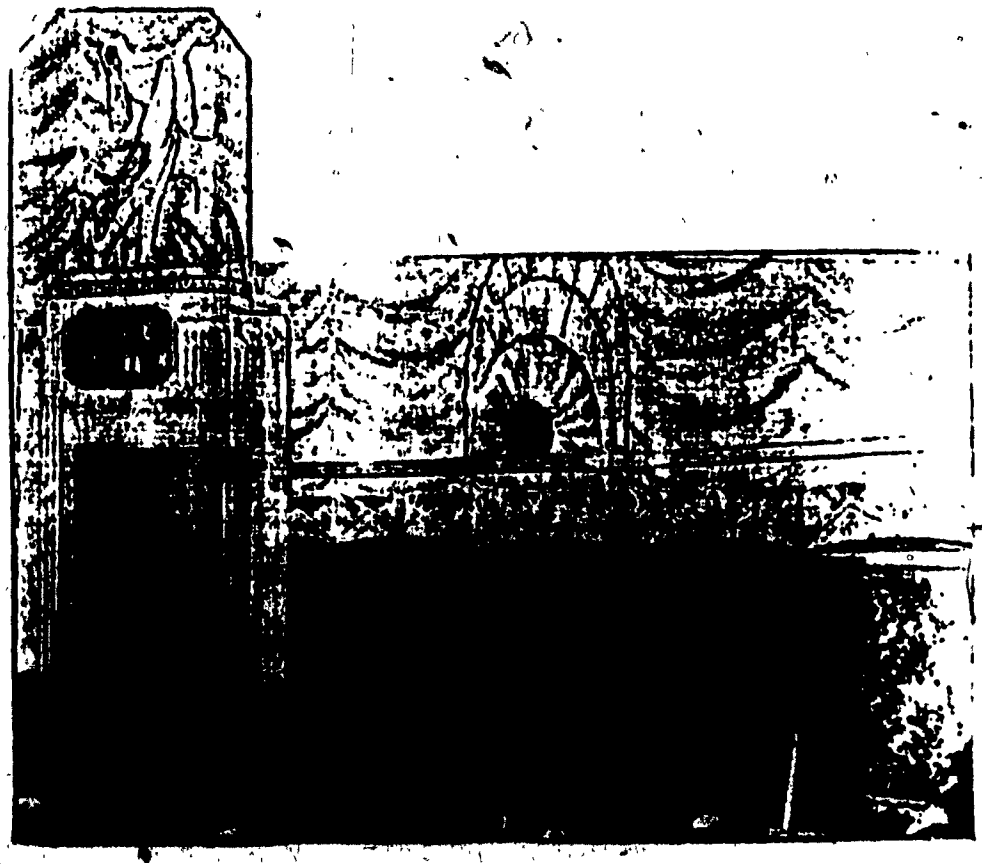


Fig. 68 SNOWDON: Side wall elevation (auditorium); Photographed in <u>The Monitor</u>. Feb. 25, 1937: 11.

Fig. 69 SNOWDON: Panel over exit door to lobby; Photographed in Décormag. May 1976: 35.

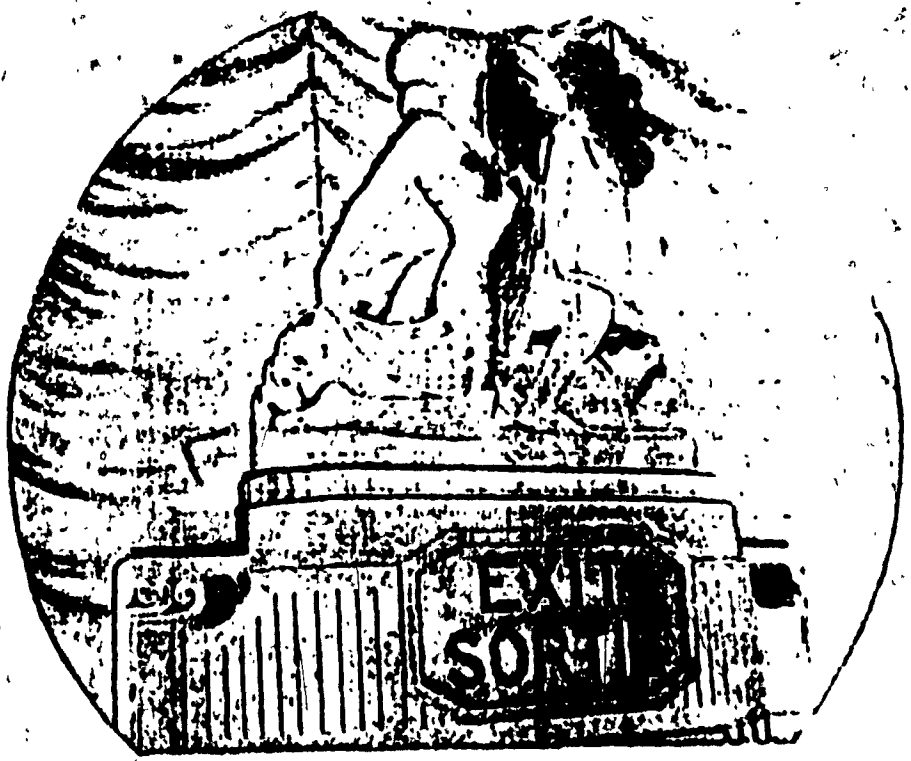


Fig. 70 SNOWDON: Lalique-style figure; Photographed in The Monitor. Feb. 25, 1937: 11.

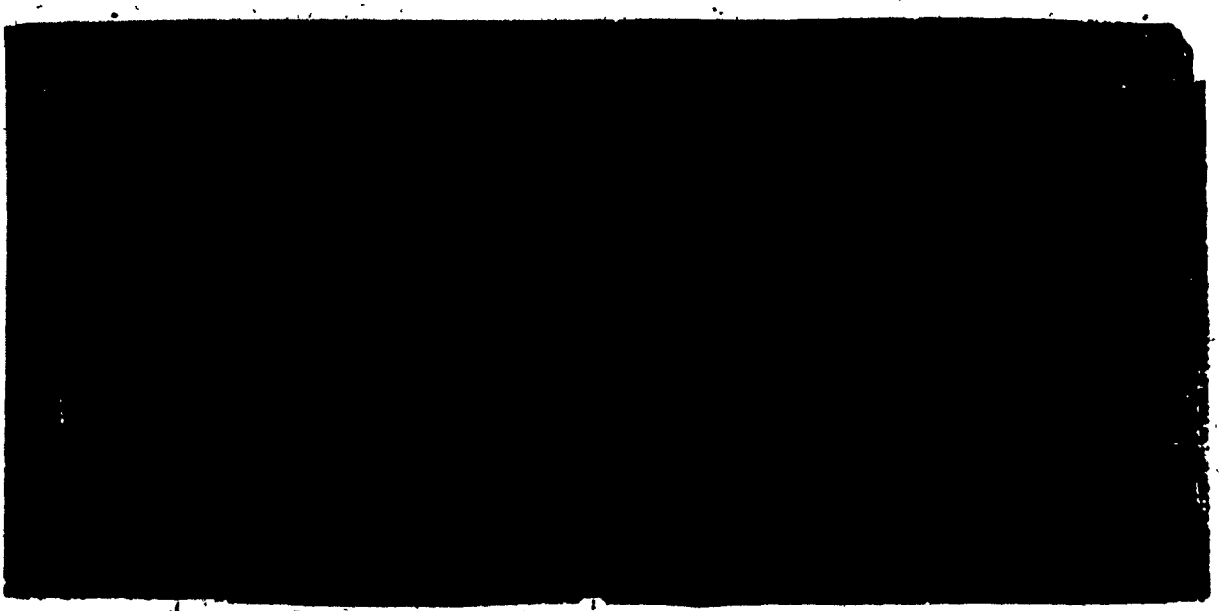


Fig. 71 SAVOY: Facade (side elevation); City of Verdun Architectural plans #3702-1931. Scale: 1/4 in = 1 ft (.64 cm = .31 m).

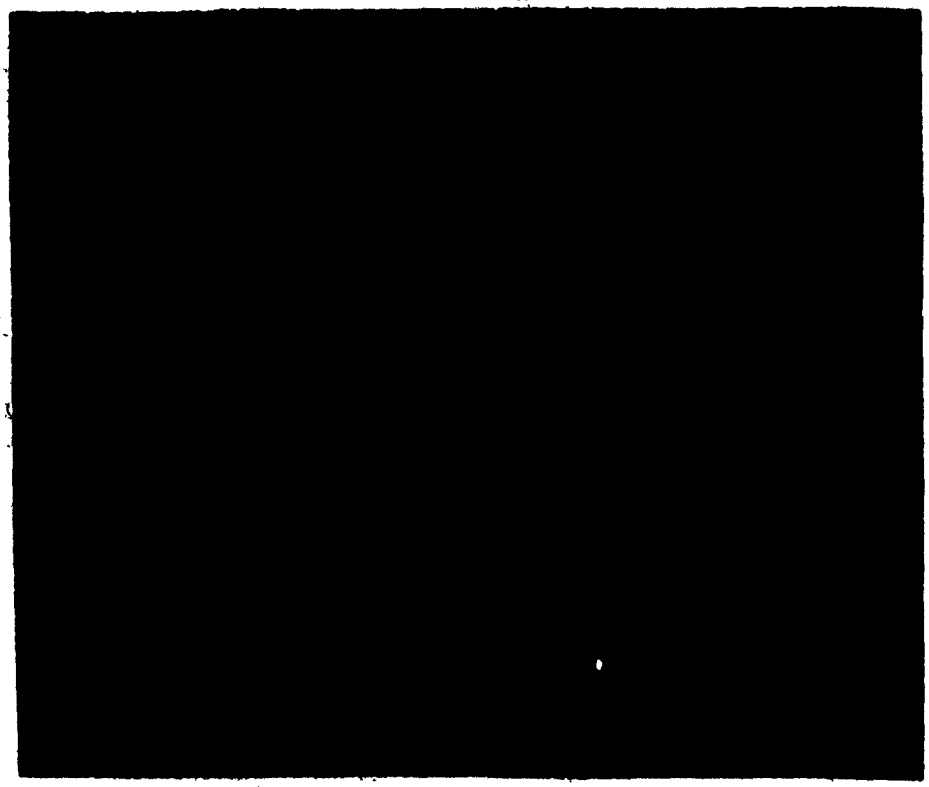


Fig. 72 SAVOY: Main facade (front elevation); City of Verdun Architectural plans #4251-1937. Scale: 1/4 in = 1 ft (.64 cm = .31 m).

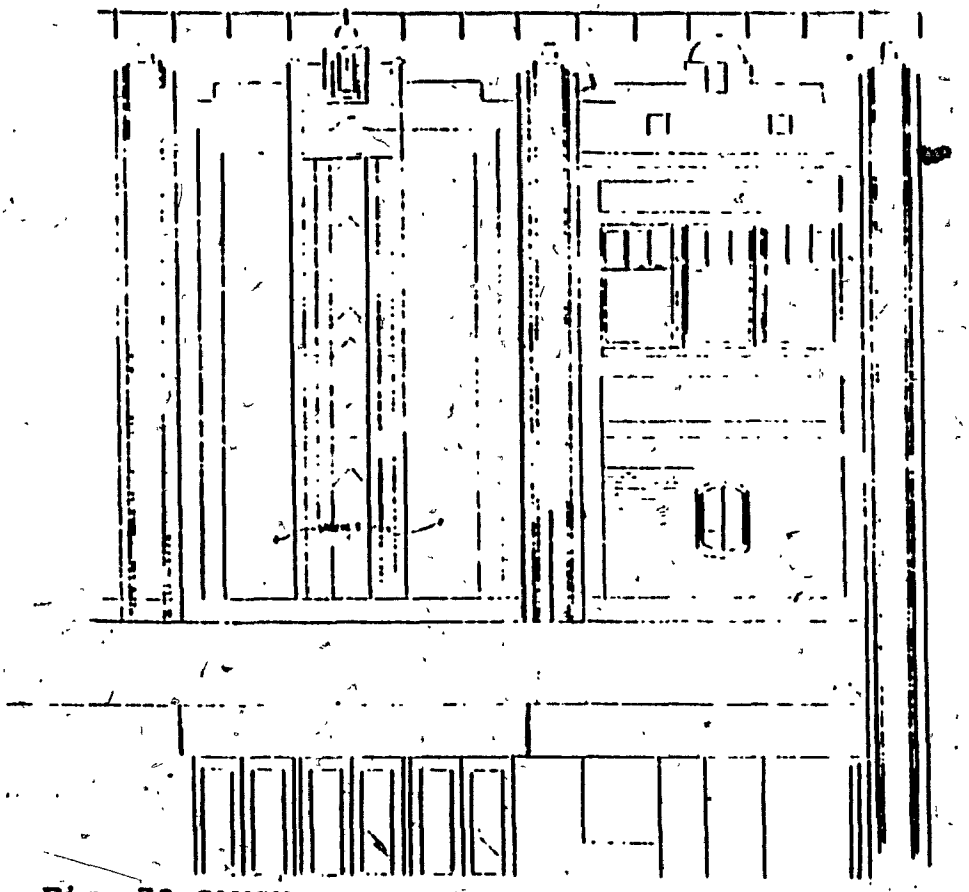


Fig. 73 SAVOY: Composition (main facade).
Scale: 1/4 in = 1 ft (.64 cm = .31 m).

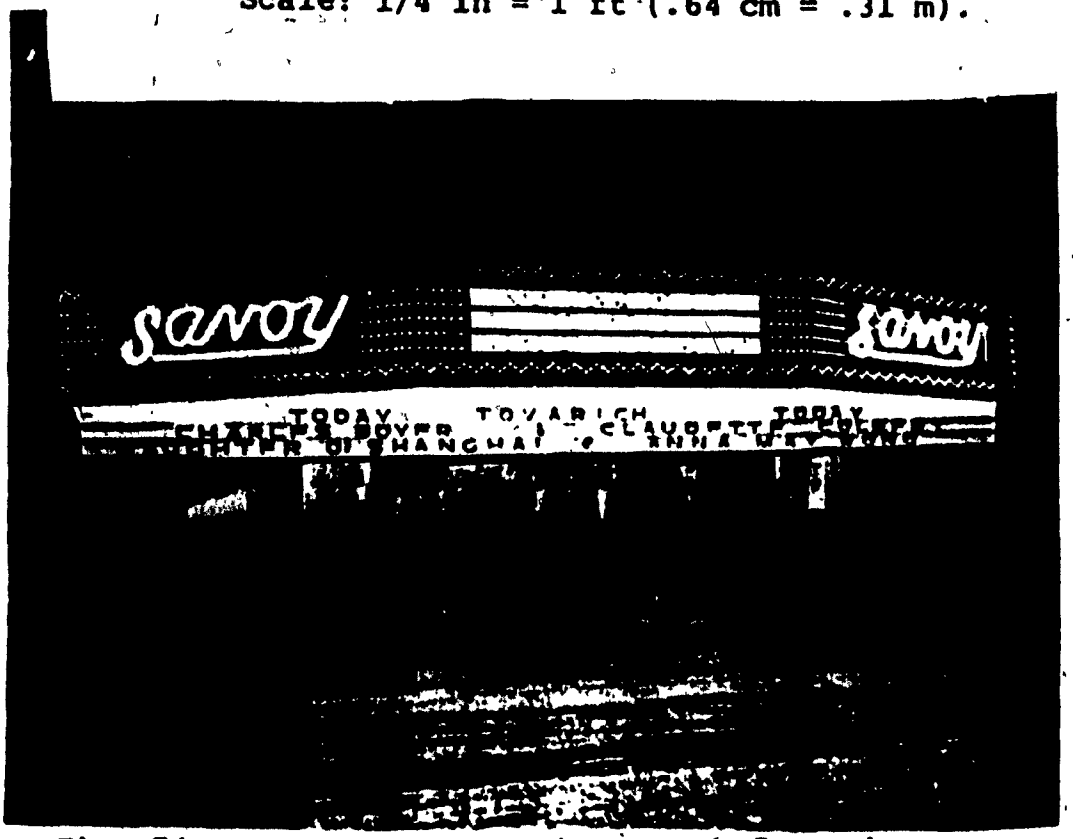


Fig. 74 SAVOY: Marquee; Photograph from the Collection of Joffre Gendron [no date].

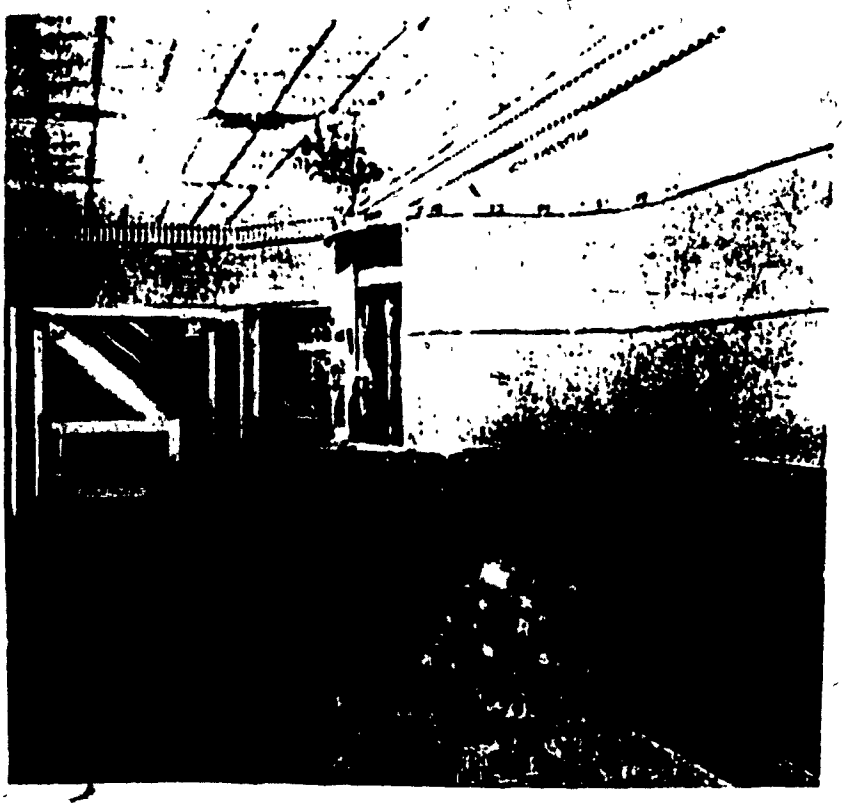


Fig. 75 SAVOY: Lobby and ticket booth; Photograph from the Collection of Joffre Gendron [no date].

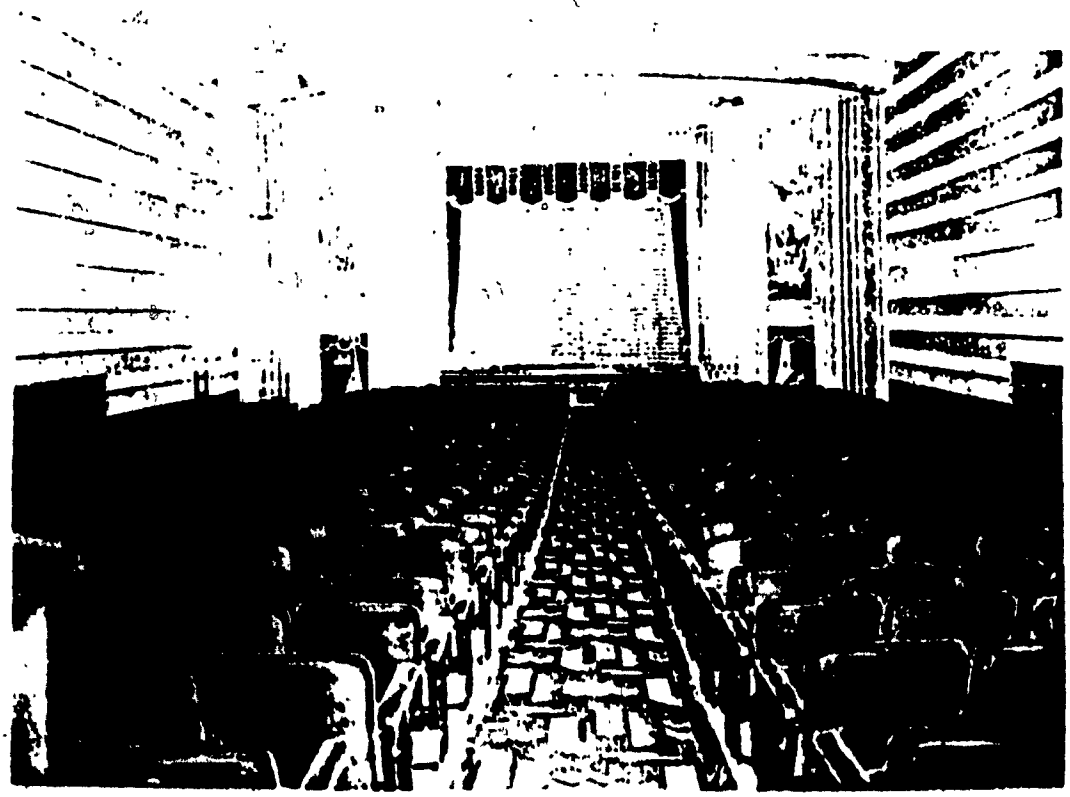


Fig. 76 SAVOY: View of proscenium (auditorium); Photographf from the Collection of Joffre Gendron [no date].

Fig. 77 YORK: Main facade and section around the corner; Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Sept. 1984.

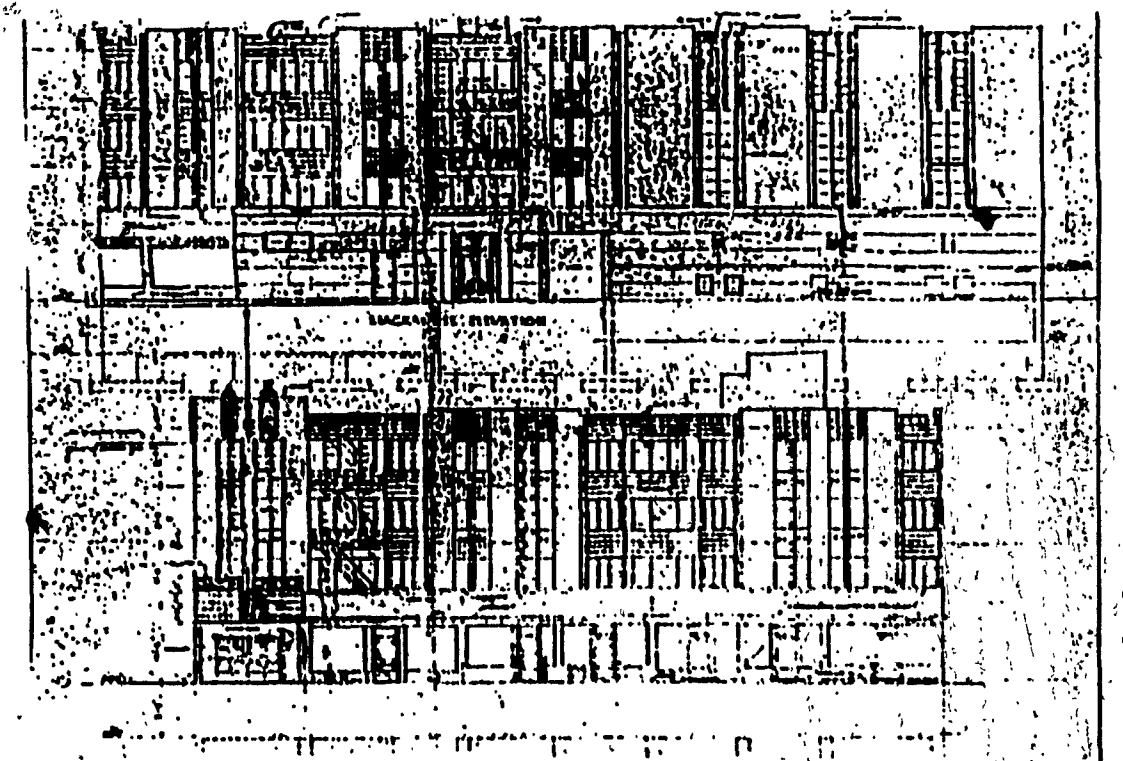


Fig. 78 YORK: Main facade (front elevation). C.M.A. Architectural plans #1212-1938. Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

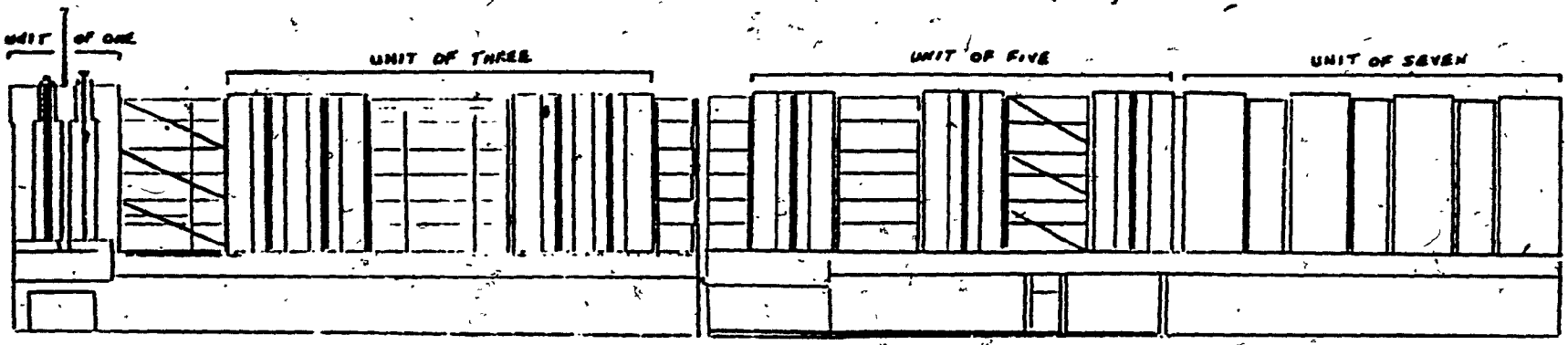


Fig. 79 YORK: Composition (main fcade).
Scale: 1/8 in = 1 ft (.32 cm = .31 m).

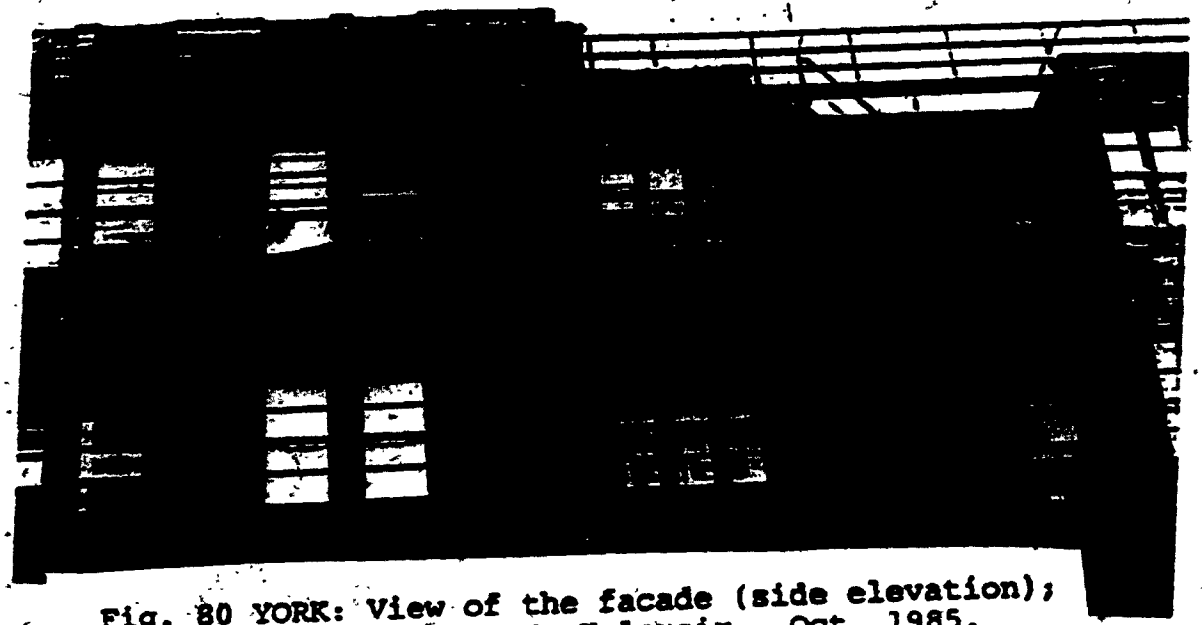
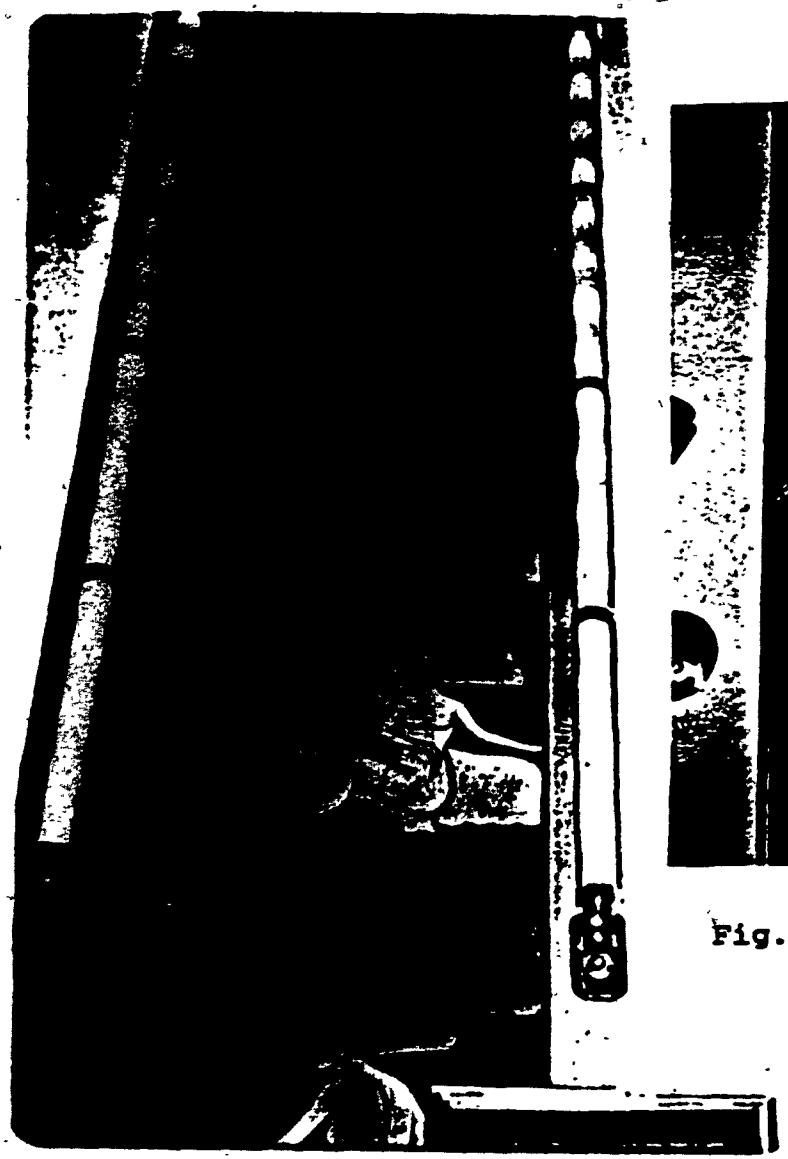


Fig. 80 YORK: View of the facade (side elevation);
Photograph by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

Fig. 81 YORK: View of soffit and ticket booth; Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 4501, Oct. 1939.

Fig. 82 YORK: Lobby and porthole-like mirrors; Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg. 4503, Oct. 1939.



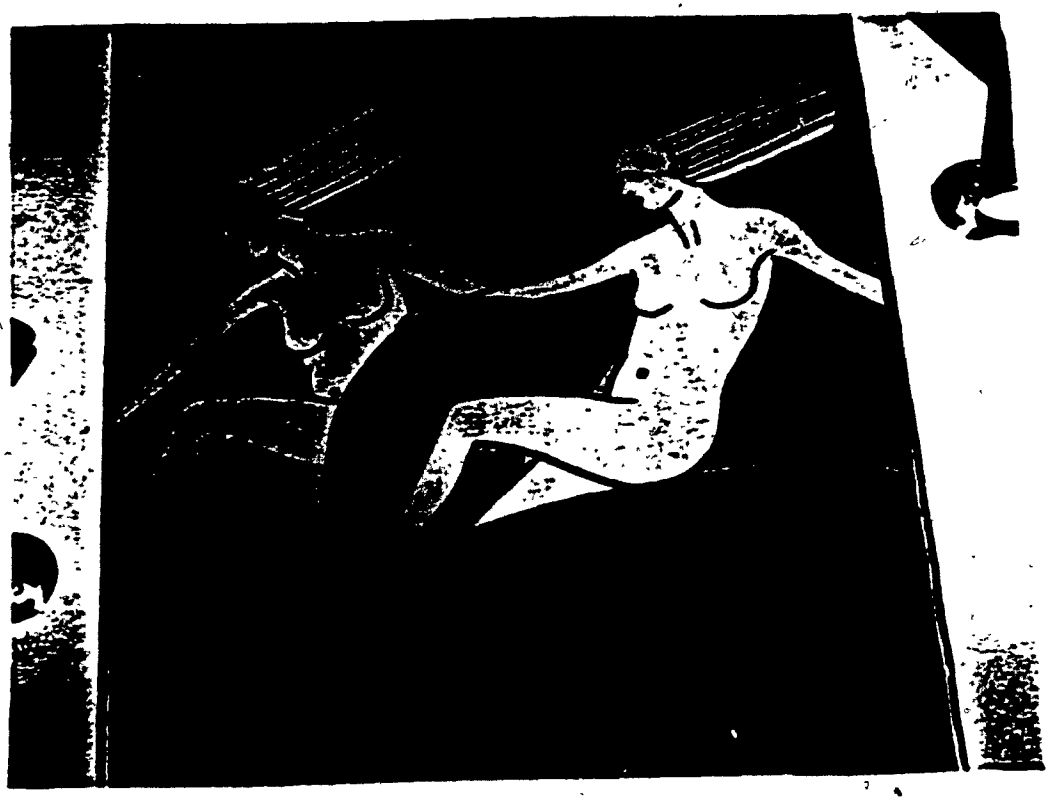


Fig. 83 a & b YORK: Painted murals, two scenes from a series of eight (auditorium); Photographs by H. Kolomeir. Oct. 1985.

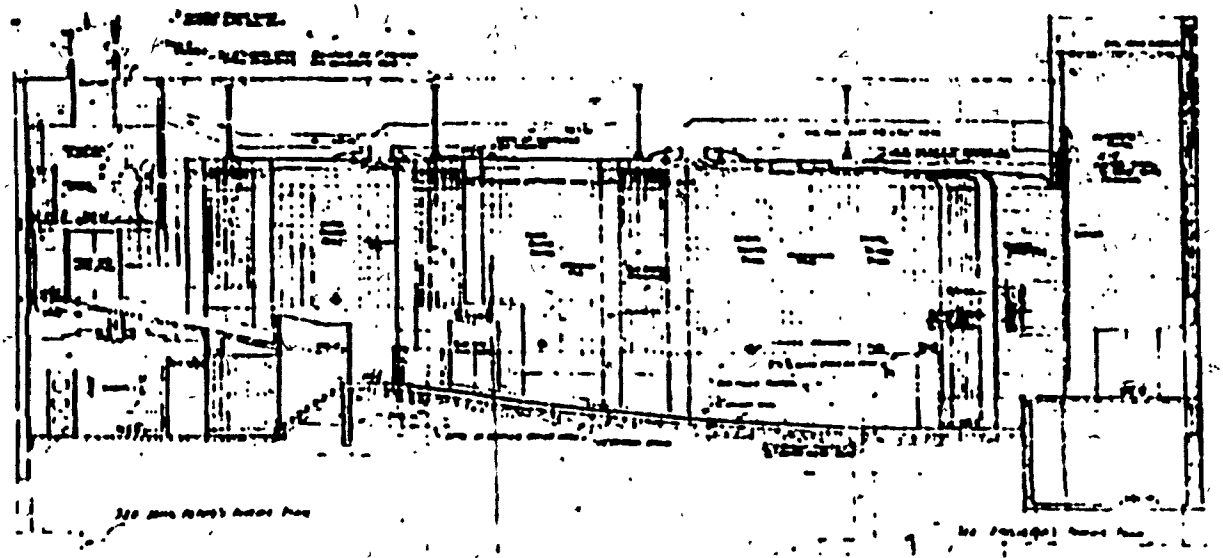


Fig. 84 YORK: Wall elevation (auditorium); C.M.A. Architectural plans #1212-1938.

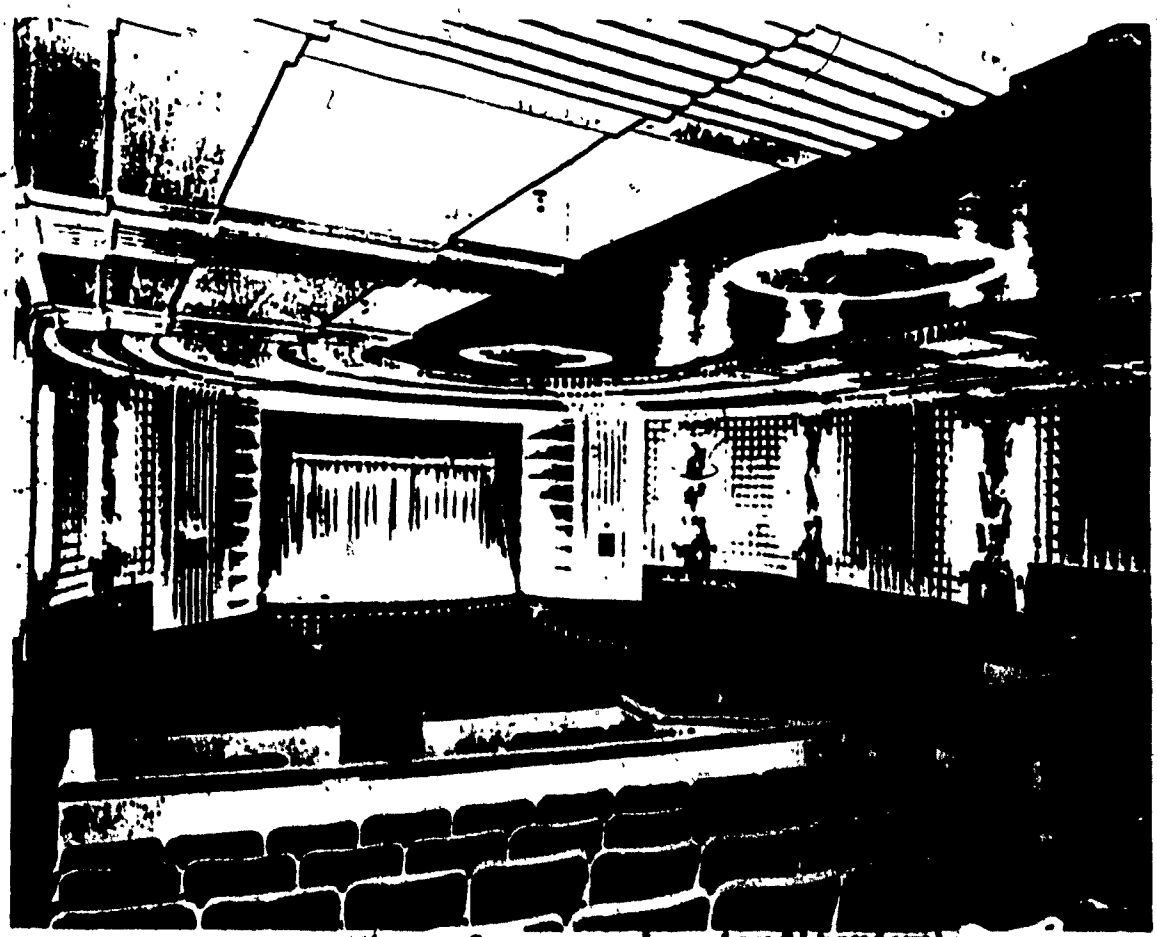


Fig. 85 YORK: View of proscenium (auditorium); Canada; National Film Television and Sound Archives. Neg: 4500, Oct. 1939.

APPENDIX B

SELECTIVE INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF MONTREAL ARCHIVES, BACKGROUND ON THE ARCHITECTS AND MISCELLANEOUS

Selective Information From:

The Province of Quebec: Association of Architects

Application for Admissions

Daniel John Crighton was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, August 23, 1886 and he died April 4, 1946. In Scotland, he attended private school in a program that led to a Teacher's Certificate (1885-1890) and at the same time was apprenticing under John Rust Junson, City architect of Aberdeen.

In Montreal, he was first an assistant at the J. Wright School, then an assistant with Perrault, Ménard and Venne, and later with Bruce Price. During the two and a half years with Price, he worked on the C.P.R. Hotels which included the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City; the Banff Springs Hotel, Calgary; Place Viger Station and Royal Victoria College. He then went on to work for Edward and M.S. Maxwell for nine years in general practice.

> As a practicing architect (he designed) the JACOBS Building (Montreal), Churches, Residences (Theatres) STRAND, REGENT, RIVOLI, SEVILLE, MONDLAND, SNOWDON and others in this city and Ottawa, Three Rivers and Sherbrooke (32 years in practice)

The RIVOLI

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #343 - February 24, 1926

Location	:	St. Denis St. and Bélanger St.
District	:	St. Edouard
Owner	:	United Amusement Corporation Limited
Architect	:	Daniel J. Crighton
Purpose of Building	:	Stores and movie theatre
Size of Building	:	92 ft front (28.1 m) 92 ft rear (28.1 m) 120 ft depth (36.6 m)
Material	:	Front cast stone; side brick

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #343-1926. Approved: February 26, 1926.
Cost: $38,000.

This letter head from The United Amusement Corporation Limited, with the dates of the theatre openings came from:

«Cinémathèque Québécoise», St. Denis St., Montreal. [acquired July 1984].

UNITED AMUSEMENT CORPORATION LIMITED

and CONSOLIDATED THEATRES LIMITED

INTER-COMPANY CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: [illegible] DATE: March 11th 1969.

To Mr. Arnott; c.c. Mrs. Whitby.

Theatre.	Seats.	Address	Date Theatre
Outremont. 21	1124	1248 Bernard Ave.W., Outremont.	Dec. 1929
Palace (ALLS)	2037	698 St.Catherine St.W.Montreal.	Year 1921
Papineau. 4	1236	4519 Papineau Ave, Montreal.	Apr.16/21
Paramount. 3	506	1[illegible] Gamble Street W, Rouyn, Que.	
Pigalle. 12	629	912 St.Catherine Street W, Montreal.	Dec.1912
Rivoli. 26	1367	6906 St.Denis Street, Montreal.	Dec.18/26
Savoy. 31	642	4470 Wellington Street, Verdun, Que.	Feb.26/38
Snowdon. 17	822	5225 Decarie Blvd., Montreal.	Feb.27/37
Seville. 24	922	2155 St.Catherine Street West, Montreal.	Mar.27/29
The Cinema, Westmount Square 67	700	One Concourse "C" Westmount Sq. Westmount.	Dec.22/67
Versailles, "Blue Room". 13	716	"Twin theatre see following line".	
Versailles, "Salon Rouge" 13	693	7265 Sherbrooke Street East, Montreal.	Sept.21/63
Van Horne. 18	825	6150 Cote Des Neiges Road, Montreal.	Jan.17/48
Westmount. 15	977	5038 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.	Built 1918
York. 31	830	1487 St.Catherine Street West, Montreal.	Nov.18/38

Selective Information From:

Journal of The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada

Vol. 22, December (1945): 269

Alcide Chaussé was born in St-Sulpice, Assumption, Québec, January 1, 1868, he died October 7, 1944. He received his preliminary training in architecture in the office of Alphonse Raza, after which he spent a couple of years in Chicago as a draughtsman.

In 1888, he was admitted to the profession in Montreal where he continued to practice. He was appointed building inspector to the City of Montreal in 1900 and in 1914 became City Architect. He relinquished these posts in 1918 when he resumed private practice and consulting work. He published the Code of Building Laws of the City of Montreal. He was a charter member of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects and became the president in 1906. One year later, he became Honorary Secretary to the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

The NEW EMPRESS

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #3217 - April 23, 1927

Location	:	Sherbrooke St. West and Old Orchard Ave.
District	:	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
Owner	:	Confederated Amusement Corporation
Architect	:	Alcide Chaussé
Purpose of Building	:	Stores, Theatre and Apartments
Size of Building	:	76 ft front (23.8 m) 76 ft rear (23.8 m), 135 ft depth (41.2 m) + 108 ft (32.9 m)
Material	:	Artificial stone and brick

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #3217-1927. Approved: July 23, 1927.
Cost: $135,000.

The SEVILLE

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #4889 - August 14, 1928

Location	: St. Catherine St. W. and Chomedy.
District	: St. Andrews
Owner	: B. Isaacs
Architect	: C. Dufort
Purpose of Building	: Stores and Theatre
Size of Building	: [information illegible]
Material	: Cast stone and brick

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #4889-1928. Approved: September 14, 1928.
Cost: $120,000.

The GRANADA

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #2385 - June 13, 1929

Location	: St. Catherine St. W. and Morgan Ave.
District	: Maisonneuve
Owner	: D.N. and N.A. Lazanis
Architect	: A.O. Doucet
Purpose of Building	: 2 stores and a theatre
Size of Building	: 78 ft front (23.8 m) 78 ft rear (23.8 m) 200 ft depth (61 m)
Material	: Artificial stone and brick

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #2385-1929. Approved: June 14, 1929.
Cost: $178,000.

Selective Information From:

LA PRESSE, June 14, 1960: 47

En 1960, A. O. Doucet est décédé à l'âge de 71 ans. Diplômé de Polytechnique (1912), il était membre de l'IRAC de la Chambre de Commerce, du Centre Commercial de l'Est.

The MONKLAND

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #2358 - JUne 7, 1929

Location	: Monkland Ave. and Girouard Ave.
District	: Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
Owner	: United Amusement Corporation.
Architect	: Daniel J. Crighton.
Purpose of Building	: Stores and Theatre
Size of Building	: 70.8 ft front (21.5 m), 70.8 ft rear (21.5 m), 120.7 ft depth (38.8 m)
Material	: Artificial stone and brick

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #2358-1929. Approved: July 4, 1929.
Cost: $170,000.

The OUTREMONT

[No Plans nor Permits exist for this theatre]

The Selective Information is from:

The Souvenir Program [Book] Grand Opening

OUTREMONT THEATRE

October 4, 1929

Location	: Bernard Ave. W., and Champagneur Ave.
District	: City of Outremont
Owner	: Confederated Amusement Corp.
Architect	: René Charbonneau
Purpose of Building	: Stores and Theatre
Material	: Desco stone

INTERVIEW WITH RENÉ CHARBONNEAU'S SON

Mr. Gérard Charbonneau (architect)

July 31, 1986

René Charbonneau was born March 2, 1881 and died in March 1969.

He attended public school until he was fifteen years old. He then went to business school and worked for the architect, Mr. Joseph Sawyer, as a draughtsman. He never formally attended Architecture School, but taught himself «all of the orders» and then passed the Architectural Association exams twice: once in 1908.

Charbonneau worked with the architects Louis N. Audet until after the First World War when he continued to work on his own as a practicing architect.

LE CHATEAU

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #440 - February 17, 1931

Location	: St. Denis St. and Bélanger St.
District	: Villeray
Owner	: Confederated Amusement Ltd.
Architect	: René Charbonneau
Purpose of Building	: Stores, Theatre and Apartments
Size of Building	: 92 ft front (28.1 m), 92 ft rear (28.1 m), 120 ft depth (36.6 m)

Permit to Build: C.M.A. #440-1931. Approved: March 14, 1931.
Cost: $210,000.

The SNOWDON

Selective Information From:

C.M.A. Architectural Plans #1991-1936

and

The Monitor, June 11, 1936, front page

Location	: Decarie Blvd.
District	: Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
Owner	: United Amusement Corp.
Architect	: Daniel J. Crighton
Purpose of Building	: Theatre
Size of Building	: 138 ft front (42.8 m) 68.6 ft depth (21.3 m)
Material	: Stucco, vitrolite

The SAVOY

Selective Information From:

City of Verdun

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build

#4251 - October 13, 1937

Location	: Wellington St. and Willibrod Ave.
District	: City of Verdun
Owner	: United Amusement Corp.
Architect	: Perry and Luke [the Architectural Plans include D.J. Crighton]
Purpose of Building	: Motion picture theatre
Size of Building	: 55 ft front (16.8 m) 125 ft depth (38.1 m)
Material	: [Originally mainly brick]

Permit to Build: #4251 - October 13, 1937.
Cost of renovation: $48,000.

The SAVOY

City of Verdun

Permit to Build #3702 - February 20, 1931

The original permit to build was approved for construction February 20, 1931, for a 3 storey, plus a basement, commercial brick building at a cost of $38,000.

The YORK

Selective Information From:

Specifications and Application to Build:

C.M.A. #1059 - April 23, 1923

The YORK Complex was built on a parcel of land that earlier consisted of a building with two stores (1923). In 1924, it was renovated to include two floors and increase in depth.

Specifications and Application for Permit to Build:

C.M.A. #1212 - April 28, 1938

Location	: St. Catherine St. W., and Mackay St.
District	: St. Andrews
Owner	: N.A. Timmin Corp.
Architects	: Perry, Luke and Little
Purpose of Building	: 6 Stores, 45 Apartments plus Theatre
Size of Building	: 124 ft front (37.8 m) 124 ft rear (37.8 m), 183 ft depth (35.8 m)
Material	: Brick

Permit to Build: CMA #1212-1938. Approved: May 3, 1938.
Cost: $250,000.