

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Missouri Theater and Missouri Theater Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**STREET & NUMBER 112-128 South 8th Street  
713-721 Edmond Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

St. Joseph

VICINITY OF

#6 - Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Missouri

029

Buchanan

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

## OWNERSHIP

## STATUS

## PRESENT USE

☐ DISTRICT☒ PUBLIC☒ OCCUPIED☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ BUILDING(S)☐ PRIVATE☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ STRUCTURE☐ BOTH☐ WORK IN PROGRESS☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

☒ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ OBJECT☐ IN PROCESS☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ BEING CONSIDERED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ NO☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of St. Joseph

STREET &amp; NUMBER

11th and Frederick Streets

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64501

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

5th and Jule Streets

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. Landmarks of the City of St. Joseph

DATE

1974, 1978

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Missouri State Historical Survey  
1979  
Office of Historic Preservation  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City

state  
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Missouri Theater in downtown St. Joseph, Missouri, faces south and measures 76'6" (north and south) by 139' 9" (east and west). The two story Missouri Theater Building which abuts the theater on the east measures 63'6" (north and south) by 139'9" (east and west). These buildings are connected by a doorway at the theater's mezzanine level. Originally, additional connecting doors were located at orchestra and mezzanine levels.

The buff terra-cotta and red and blue enameled tile faced exterior of the Missouri Theater owes its character to Moorish prototypes. Its three-bayed primary facade is dominated by Art Deco piers, a central horse-shoe arch and other Moorish inspired polychrome and trefoil arched embellishment. The original marquees and arcuated parapet once emphasized the verticality of this design more than the present arrangement (see photo #2).

The Missouri Theater Building abuts the theater on the east. Its brick exterior is richly ornamented with varied motives in applied terra-cotta at the unaltered second floor level. The first floor level has been altered through the modernization of its storefronts.

This theater's interior offers an excellent example of a single balcony with mezzanine house of the "atmospheric" genre. The patron first enters the lobby, which is faced with variegated turquoise, buff, brown and maroon tiles, and proceeds into the auditorium where an exotic fantasy beneath the desert tent of Persian kings awaits. A plaster tent canopy is suspended from the ceiling, which evokes blue skies dotted with fleecy clouds. Surrounding embellishment includes double bull capitals on the engaged columns of the coves on those flanking the proscenium arch and on those adorning the elaborate pierced organ screens. In addition, pacing, winged human-headed lions in plaster relief, which flank the proscenium at orchestra level, heraldically disposed, winged horses along the frieze which surrounds the proscenium, the guilloche band which edges the canopy, the frieze of kneeling ibexes which runs beneath the organ screens and across the loge apron, the frieze of bowmen and charioteers which runs around the entire auditorium at cornice level and the stepped and crenellated parapet above all derive from motives commonly found in the arts of ancient Persia, Babylon and Assyria. Specifically, the ideas for these designs were taken from stone sculpture and reliefs found at the ancient sites of Susa, Persepolis, Nimrud and Nineveh, dating from ca. 900 B.C. to ca. 500 B.C. They have been executed here in ornamental plaster and staff in colors of buff, pale green, pink and taupe. In addition murals depicting views of ancient Persepolis once adorned the cove walls but were over-painted at an unknown date.

The Missouri Theater was constructed as a movie house. Provision for stage shows was made, however, in its large stage, 52' wide by 28' deep by approximately 70' high, its five dressing rooms, its orchestra pit for a forty piece orchestra, a fly gallery with forty-four counterweighted lines and a resistance type dimmer board for control of house and stage lighting.

Alterations to the Missouri Theater include installation of a snack bar in the foyer (1947), loge and lobby renovation and installation of rocker seating (1960) and the removal of the original marquees, art glass and parapet decoration from the primary facade (1960's).

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1927

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Builder: W.J. Assenmacher  
Architect: Boller Brothers

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Missouri Theater in St. Joseph, Missouri is significant as a prime example of a pre-Depression era movie palace with extravagant interior decoration of Near Eastern inspiration, designed by the noteworthy Midwestern theater architects, the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, Missouri. It is important to the local citizenry and has been declared a local landmark by the city.

The Missouri Theater was constructed by Joseph Goldman, a local attorney and theater promoter, through the Capital Building Company of Lincoln, Nebraska. After construction began, Capital leased the property to Paramount-Publix Theaters Corporation which completed the construction. The general contractor for this construction was the W.J. Assenmacher Company of Lincoln, Nebraska, a firm specializing in theater construction in the Midwest. The architects, the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, were responsible for the designs of many Midwestern movie palaces including the Neo-Rococo Missouri Theater in Columbia, Missouri, the Neo-Baroque Lincoln Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska and the Spanish Colonial Texas Theater in San Antonio, Texas.<sup>2</sup>

The adjoining Missouri Theater Building was constructed immediately after the completion of the theater, and both were ready for their grand opening on July 25, 1927. This opening was modest with only one newsreel, one short and a feature, "Rough House Rosie", starring Clara Bow. More elaborate shows with orchestral reviews and vaudeville acts were not included in the program until the fall of 1927.<sup>3</sup>

From the time of its opening until the end of World War II, when St. Joseph's entertainment district moved to the eastern suburbs, the Missouri Theater was the prime first run house in town. It was closed as a movie house in 1970, but a succession of owners allowed the performing arts access to the theater. In 1976, Town Hall Center, Inc. was organized by a group interested in saving the building from possible demolition or conversion into a multi-cinema facility. This organization purchased the theater for \$125,000 in October of the same year and was active in booking professional shows into the theater and securing local promoters to back them. Subsequently, the local citizenry voted for a bond issue of \$750,000 for the purchase and renovation of the theater as a city center for the performing arts. The city took possession of the building on April 24, 1978 and the firm of Patty, Berkebile, Nelson and Associates was hired as renovation architects, with Lawhon Construction Company under contract for the work. The first phase of renovation will include a new roof, complete rewiring, installation of new seating, refinishing of the stage floor, restoration of the lobby and the primary facade to their original conditions, installation of a restroom for the handicapped and construction of a new concession stand on the mezzanine. Additional funds will be sought to provide a new 80 circuit dimmer board and patch panel, the rejuvenation of the fly gallery, the restoration of the adjoining storefronts on the Missouri Theater Building, a new sound system, carpeting and many other items and services. The theater restoration has been the impetus for the organization of a group of local citizens into a chapter of the American Theater Organ Society. The primary aim of this chapter is to secure a Wurlitzer organ to replace the \$150,000 original which was removed from the theater in the 1960's.<sup>4</sup>



FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

FOOTNOTES

1. The nomination of this theater to the National Register of Historic Places is currently pending.
2. R.W. Sexton and B.F. Betts, eds., American Theaters of Today (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1927), pp. 114-116, 136-138.
3. St. Joseph [Missouri] News Press, July 24, 1927.
4. Data on the current status of the Missouri Theater is taken from the draft National Register Inventory-Nomination Form, completed by Tom Carneal of Northwestern Missouri State University, March 27, 1979 and Glen Walker, "Missouri Theater-All is Not Roses", St. Joseph Magazine, March, 1979, pp. 9-10.

# 1 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Data exempted from draft National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the Missouri Theater completed by Tom Carneal of Northwest Missouri State University, March 27, 1979.

. St. Joseph [Missouri] News Press, July 24, 1927.

. Sexton, R.W. and B.F. Betts. American Theaters of Today. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1927.

# 2 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME "St. Joseph North, Mo.-Kans."

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 341490 4403220

B         

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South 20' of lot 6, all of lots 7 and 8, blk 8, Smith's first addition to the City of St. Joseph.

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

# 1 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Noelle Soren  
Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation  
Department of Natural Resources

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

# 2 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DATE

TEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

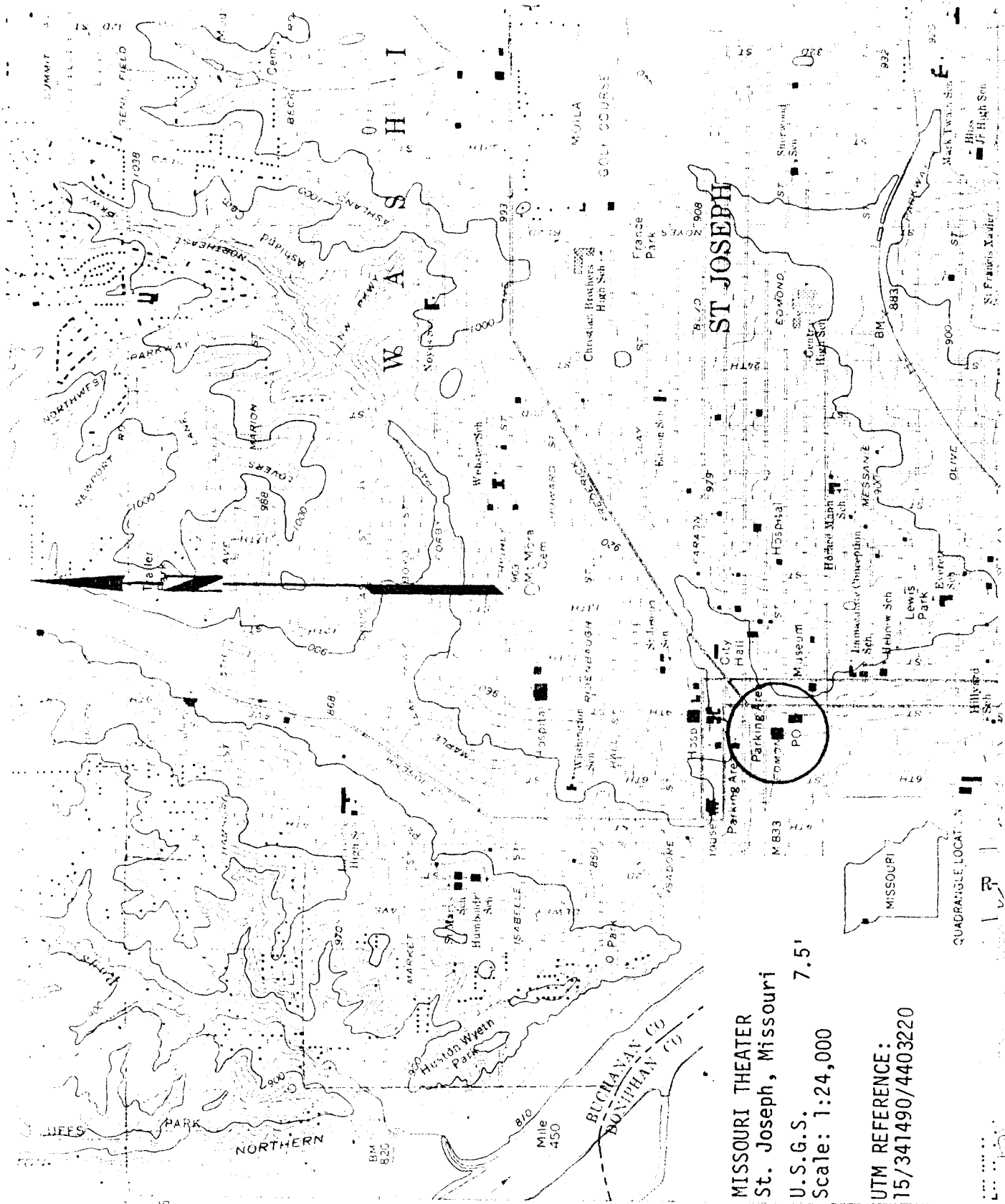
ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

1

4. Walker, Glen. "Missouri Theater-All is Not Roses", St. Joseph Magazine,  
March, 1979, 9-10.



MISSOURI THEATER  
St. Joseph, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5'  
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCE:  
15/341490/4403220

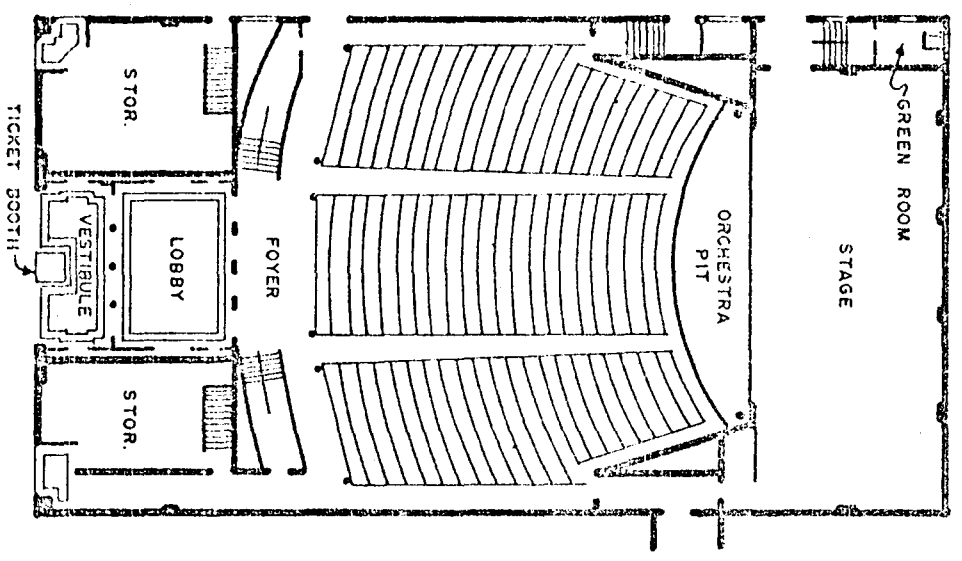
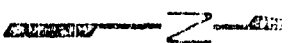


QUADRANGLE LOCAT. N

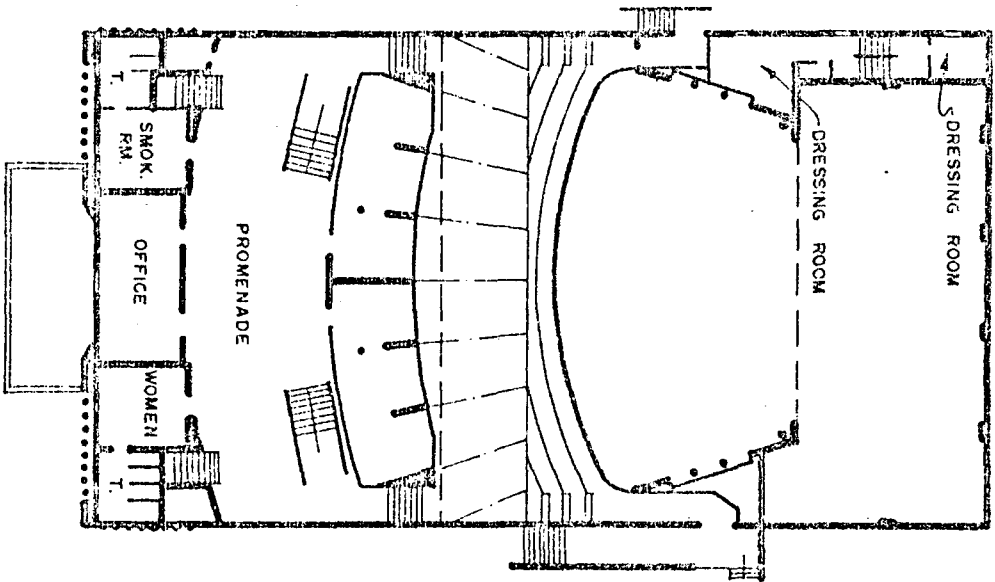
# MISSOURI THEATER ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

BOLLER BROTHERS, ARCHITECTS

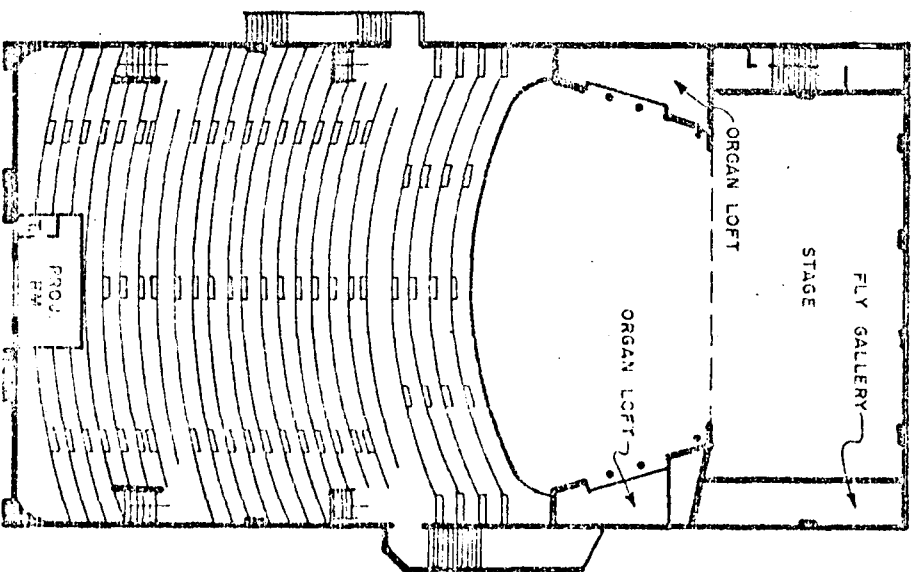
NOT TO SCALE



**ORCHESTRA**  
(SEATING 850 PERSONS)



**MEZZANINE**



**BALCONY**  
(SEATING 750 PERSONS)

MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING

#400

COUNTY: Buchanan

LOCATION: St. Joseph

OWNER: City of St. Joseph

ADDRESS: 11th & Frederick Streets  
St. Joseph, Mo

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.: July 20, 1979

DATE SENT TO D.C.: August 16, 1979

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.: August 20, 1979

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER: October 11, 1979

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED  
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The Missouri Theater in St. Joseph, Missouri is significant as a prime example of a pre-Depression era movie palace with extravagant interior decoration of Near Eastern inspiration, designed by the noteworthy Midwestern theater architects, the Bolter Brothers of Kansas City, Missouri. It is important to the local citizenry and has been declared a local landmark by the city.

MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI #1 of 14  
THEATER BUILDING

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Andrew Q. Lord  
December, 1978

Office of Tom Carneal, Northwest Missouri State  
University, Maryville, Mo. 64468

View to north of primary (south) facade just  
prior to the beginning of restoration. The  
theater is primarily a sandy-buff with coral,  
ultramarine and black highlights.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

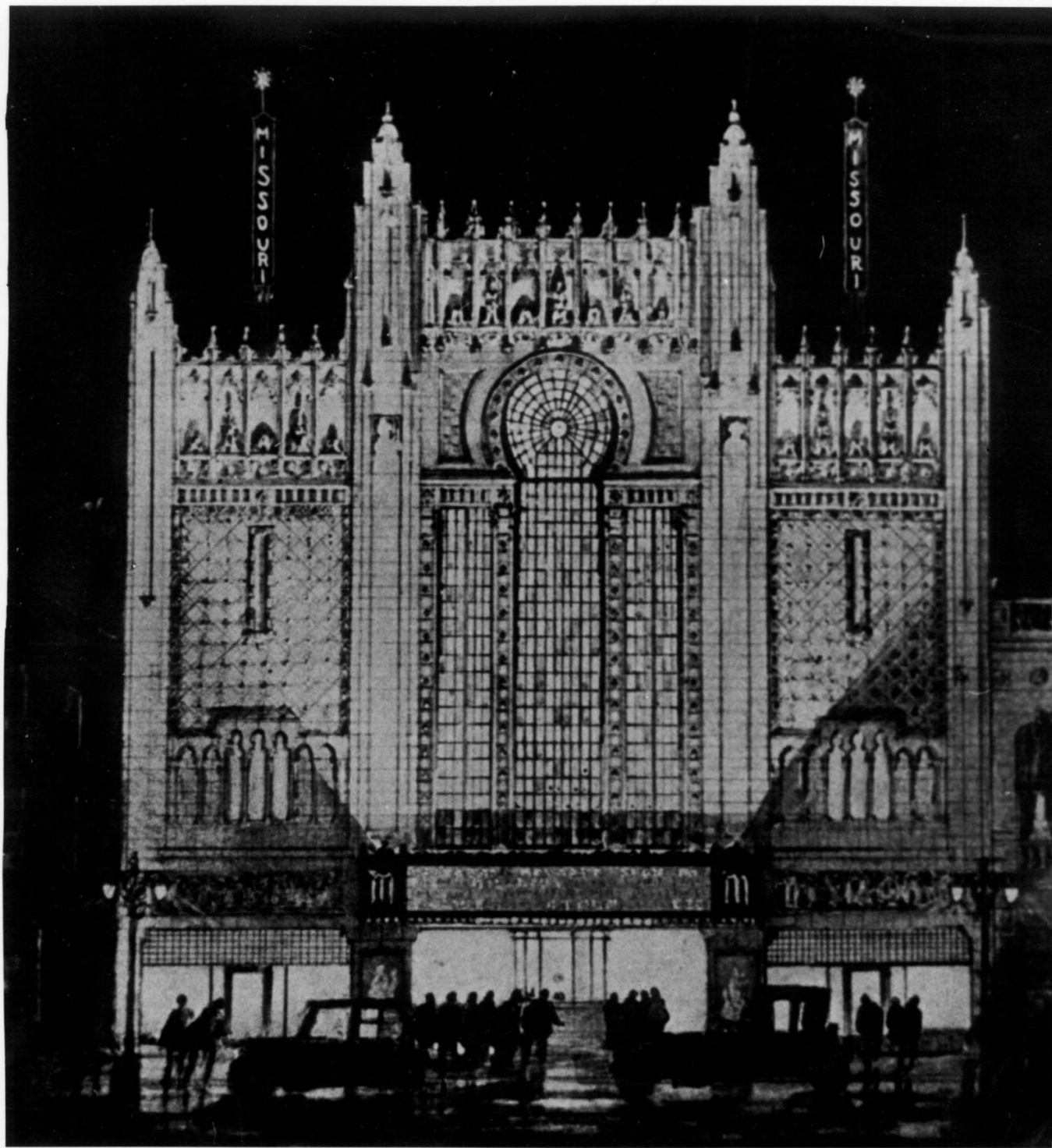
#2 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: R.W. Sexton in American Theaters  
of Today (1927), p. 137.

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

Architect's original drawing of the primary  
facade of the theater as it was intended to  
look. The central embellishment within the  
horse-shoe arch was of art glass and the highly  
decorated parapets on all three bays were of  
terra-cotta. These features along with the two  
vertical marquees will all be restored under  
the current plan.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#3 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
May, 1979

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

View to the northwest of the theater and the  
theater building. Note that restoration is in  
progress on the theater facade. The canopy en-  
circling this building will be removed.



MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#4 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

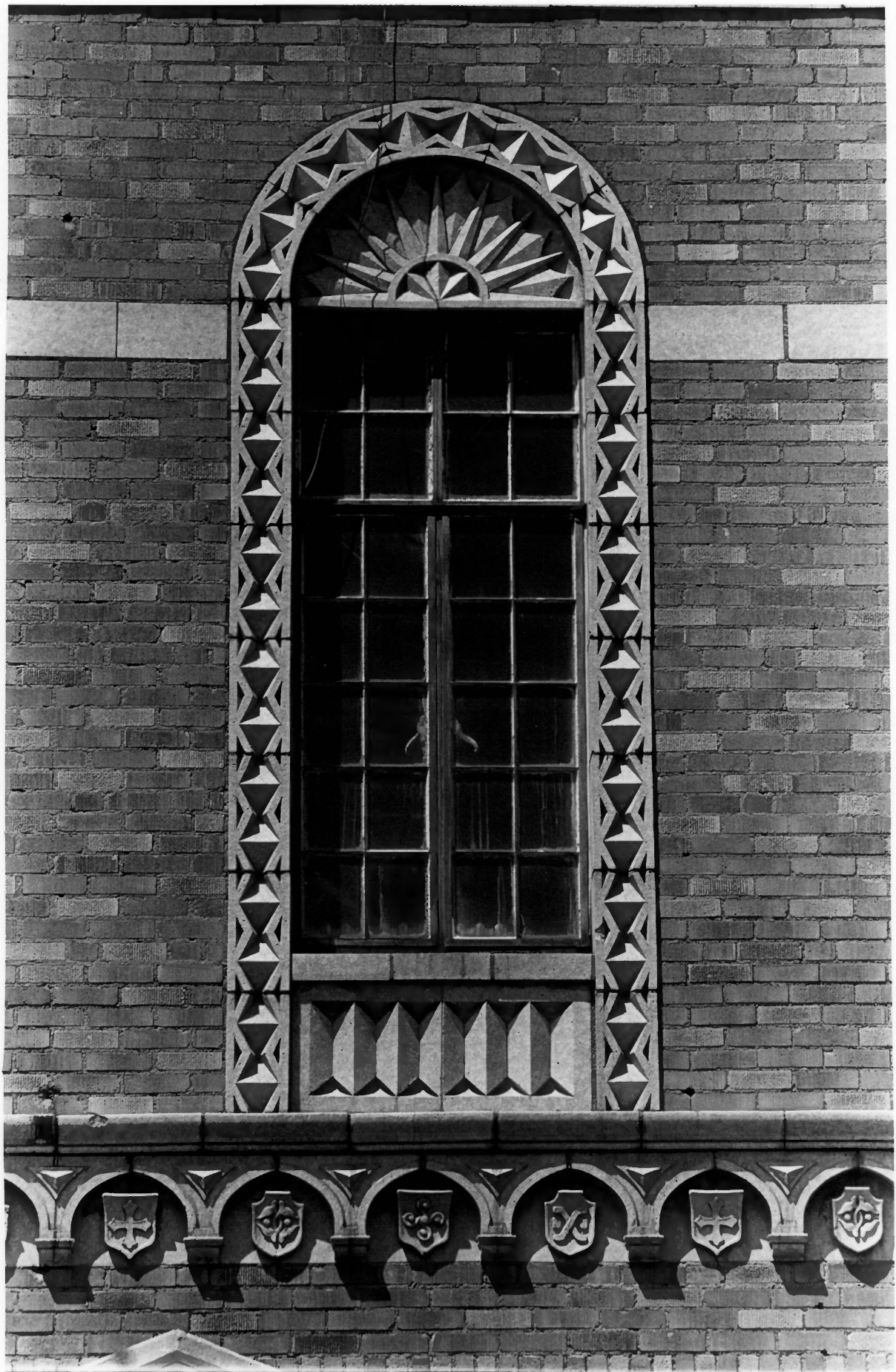
Photographer: Noelle Soren

May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 116,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 64501~~

South facade of the theater building, detail of  
the terra-cotta embellishment surrounding the  
windows on the second floor.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI #5 of 14  
THEATER BUILDING

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Andrew Q. Lord  
December, 1978

Office of Tom Carneal, Northwest Missouri State  
University, Maryville, Mo. 64468

Missouri Theater, first floor, entrance foyer,  
west wall. This wall was revealed during the  
current restoration after having been concealed  
for many years. Its upper portion is in shades  
of tan, brown, yellow and coral while the  
surrounds of the Moorish arches are in ultra-  
marine tiles. The lower portion of the wall  
is in shades of ultramarine, brown, grey, black  
and tan. Note the moldings in the recessed  
ceiling.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#6 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Andrew Q. Lord  
December, 1978

Office of Tom Carneal, Northwest Missouri State  
University, Maryville, Mo. 64468

View to west, mezzanine foyer of the theater.  
Walls here are in shades of sandy tan, beige  
and brown with pastel painted decoration on the  
swirled lintels, floral inspired capitals and  
resetted moldings.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#7 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren

May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 123,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 64102~~

Mezzanine foyer of the theater, view up into  
ceiling recesses showing the array of decoration  
in shades of pale green, pink, gold, tan and  
taupe.



MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#8 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren

May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 172,  
Jefferson City, Missouri 64102~~

View to north of auditorium from rear rear of  
balcony.



MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#9 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 174,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 64102~~

View to south of auditorium from center stage.





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#11 of 14

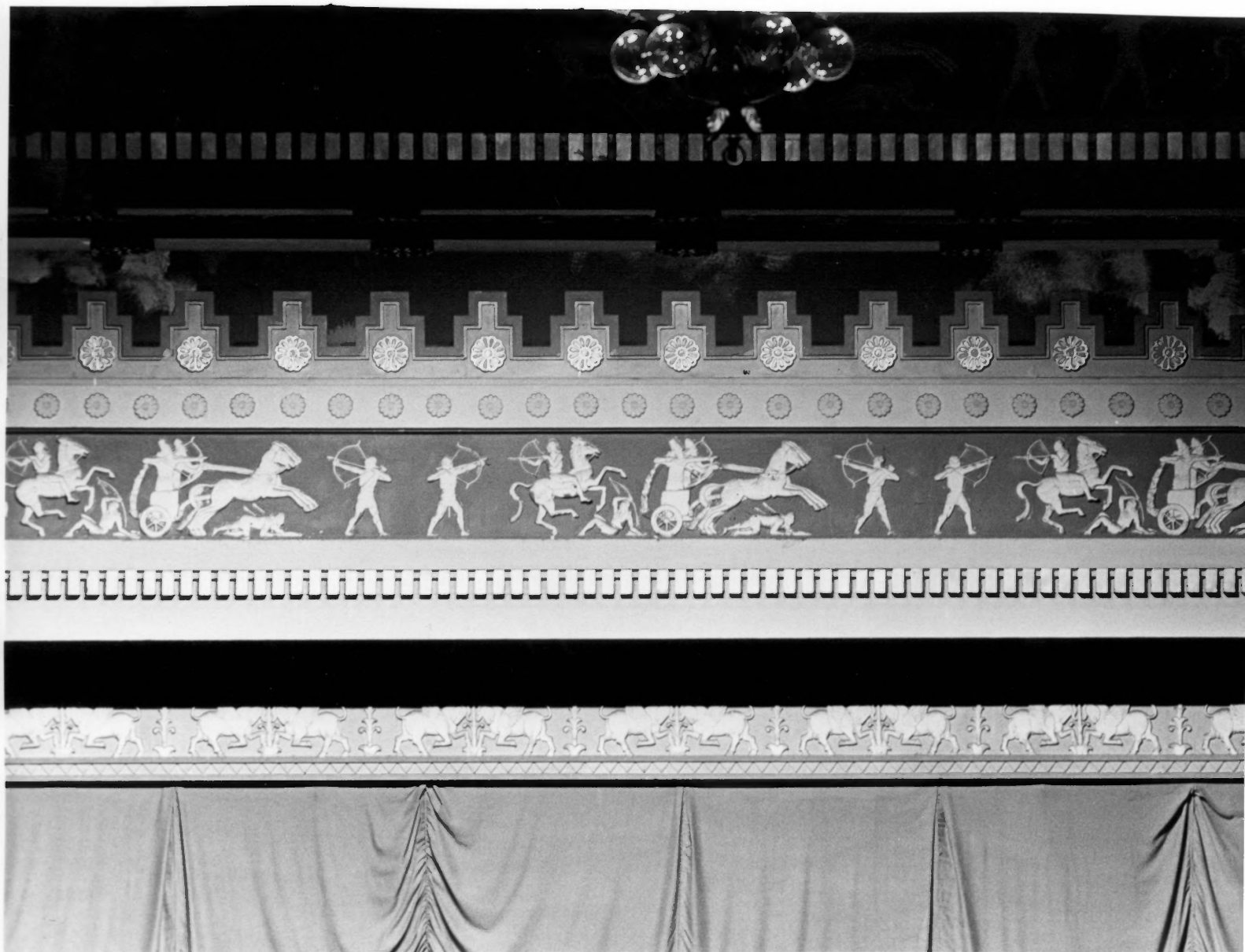
8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren

May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102~~

View to north, detail of proscenium arch.  
Parapet with stepped crenelles derives from the  
parapet surrounding the grand staircase to the  
Royal Audience Hall at Persepolis (ca. 500 B.C.)  
in modern Iran. The warrior frieze which is  
done in gold on Pompeian red ground derives  
from the relief of King Assurnasripal hunting  
lions (9th century, B.C.) from Nimrud in  
modern Iraq.



MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#12 of 14

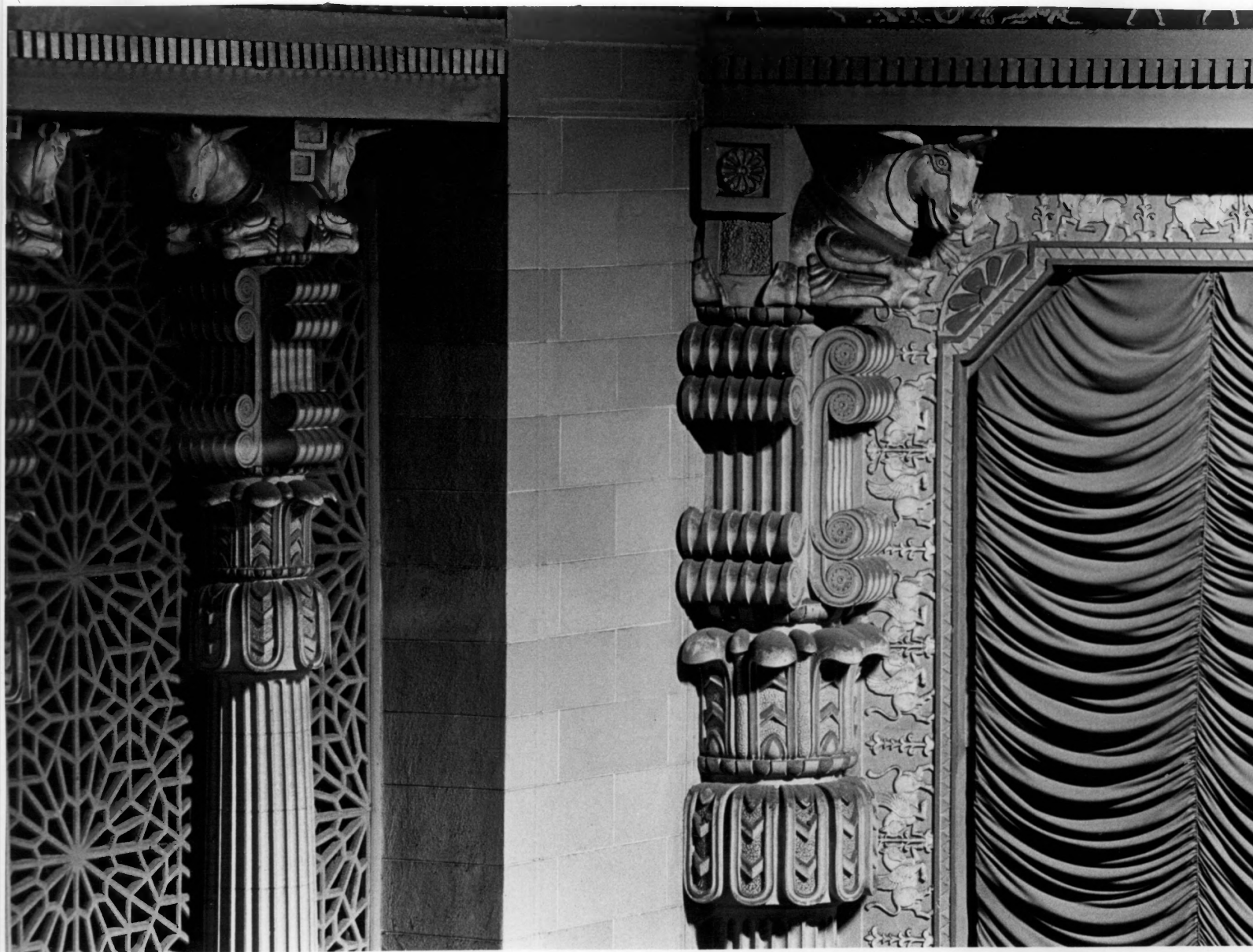
8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 170,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101~~

View to northwest, detail of proscenium arch.  
These double bull capitals are copies of those  
from the Royal Audience Hall of the palace of  
Artaxerxes II at Susa in modern Iran (ca. 375  
B.C.)





MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

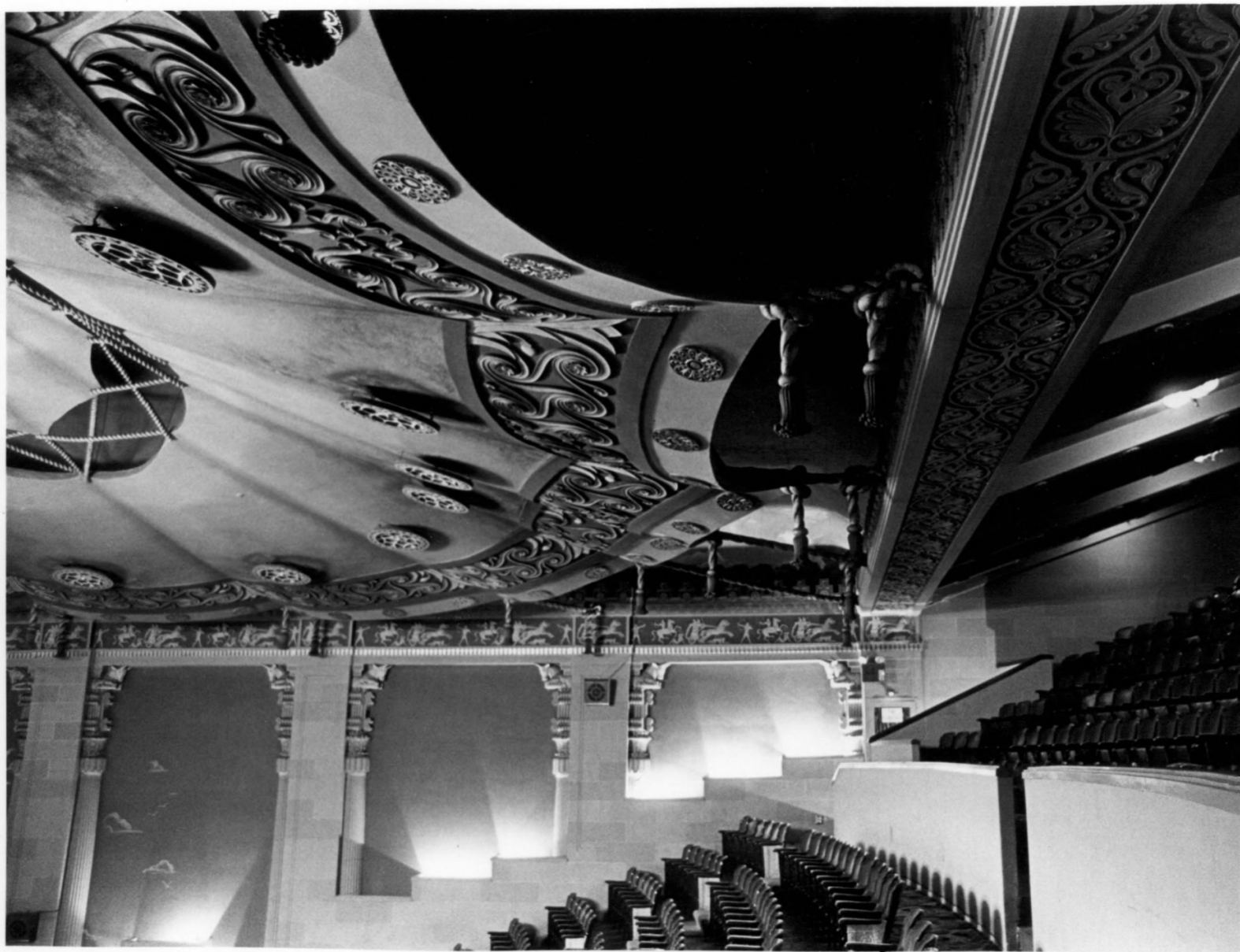
#13 of 14

8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 136,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102~~

View to east in theater balcony showing the  
suspended plaster tent with its moldings and  
rosettes in detail. The suspension wires are  
very faintly visible above the canopy. Note  
the Art Deco lighting arrangement in the coves  
where scenes of Persepolis were once painted.



MISSOURI THEATER AND MISSOURI  
THEATER BUILDING

#14 of 14

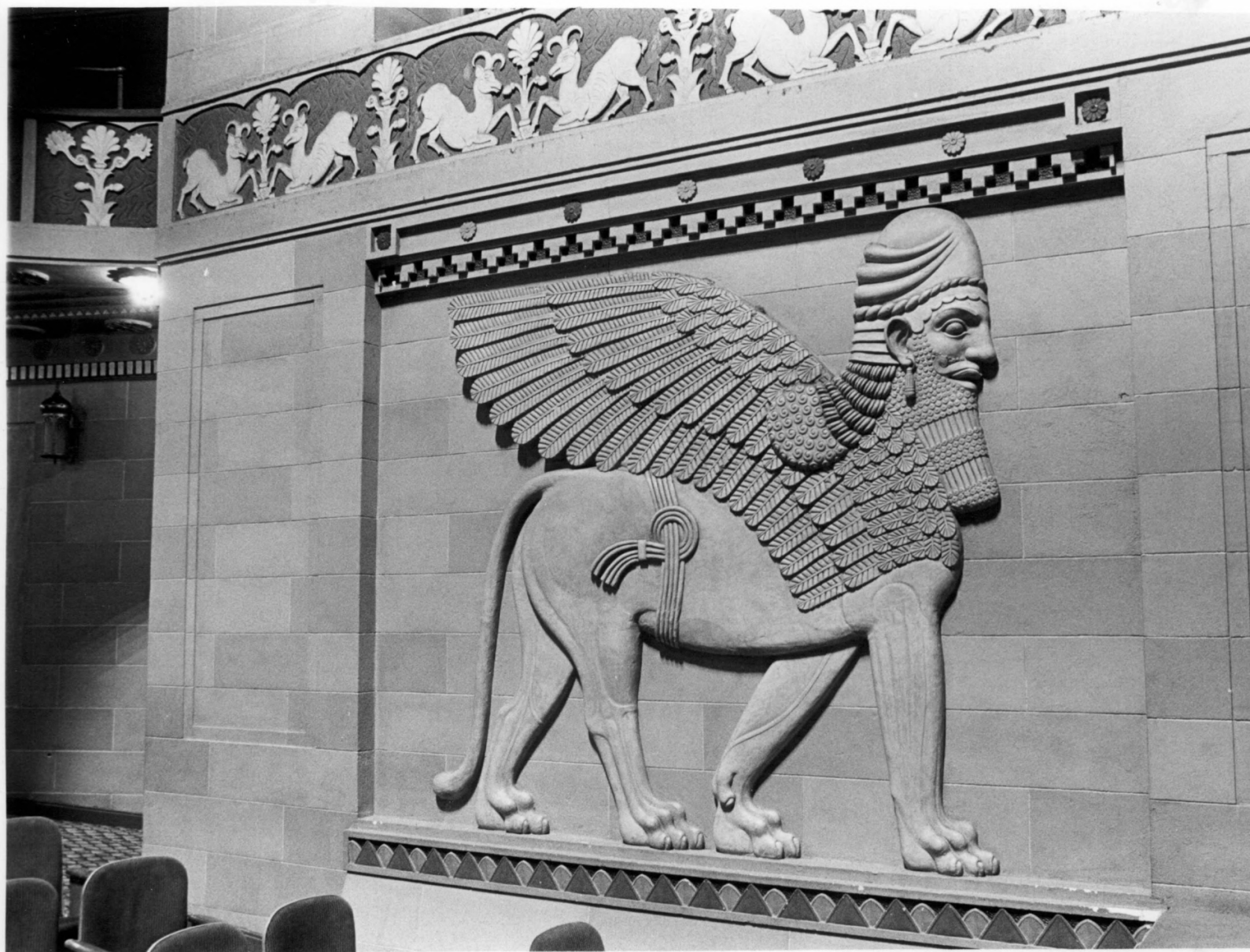
8th and Edmond Streets, St. Joseph, Buchanan  
County, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
May, 1979

~~Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 175,  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102~~

Detail of lower section of organ screen on the  
west wall. This winged man-lion is strikingly  
similar to the figures guarding the entrance to  
the Palace of Sargon at Khorsabad (ca. 720 B.C.)  
but those two figures are half bull rather than  
lion. The frieze above depicts a common Near  
Eastern heraldic motif here done in gold on  
a background of Pompeiian red.





EXTRA  
PHOTOS

