

Review of Information Discussed During June 18, July 1, 9, 23 and 30, 2020 Walk-Throughs of The Loew's Jersey Theatre

The following is a compilation of information discussed during five walk-throughs of the Loew's Jersey Theater on June 18, July 1, 9, 23 and 30, 2020. It was prepared by Colin Egan of FOL, with assistance from Eric Holtermann of HMR Architects. It is based on notes taken by FOL during the tours, and is a best effort to represent what was said on those occasions. Note that some additional info was added when, in the course of transcribing notes, it seemed necessary to better flesh-out particular subjects. This review is provided as a courtesy to potential respondents. FOL, Mr. Egan, HMR and Mr. Holtermann shall not be liable for any unintended omission or misstatement. This review is not intended to supplant the HSR referenced both in it and in the RFP concerning the Loew's that was issued by JCRA. All potential respondents to the RFP remain responsible to carry out their own due diligence with regard to the Loew's.

- **Background**

The Loew's Jersey opened on September 28, 1929, and was built and operated by the Loew's Theatre Corporation, which had created and wholly owned MGM Studios. At the time of the Loew's construction, the largest of the American movie studios either were owed by, or owned major theatre chains that had originally been created as vaudeville circuits. The Loew's is a Movie Palace, a distinct kind of theatre building built by the major theatre chains/movie studios in the 1920s and into the early 1930s. The Palaces were typically vary large, and their builders deliberately copied European palatial and ecclesiastical architecture, and later also employed stylized and fantastic designs intended to represent "exotic" Venetian, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian and Native American themes), all to create grand and luxurious spaces that could be enjoyed by people of even very modest means. The experience of these spaces was seen as being a critical part of the show itself, and a key marketing strategy.

Belying their name, Movie Palaces were typically built with full stages for live productions as well as projection facilities for film because at the time vaudeville (or variety) stage shows were presented as a double bill with movies. The Palaces typically presented the biggest and most popular acts of their particular circuit.

The Loew's Jersey cost \$2,000,000 to build in 1929 and was called "the most lavish temple of entertainment in New Jersey"; indeed, among a lavishly ornate class of building, it is one of the most ornate. Through the mid-1930's it presented double bills of live stage shows and movies; Bing Crosby, Jack Benny, Burns & Allen, Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington are among the late vaudeville-era stars who performed at the Loew's. Though live shows ceased in the mid '30s at the Loew's and most Movie Palaces due to their high cost in the Depression and the vast popularity of the then new "talking" pictures, the Loew's Jersey continued as a successful first run house through WWII, the post-war years and well into the 1960s. It was an iconic local venue and landmark.

In 1973-74 the Loew's was converted into a triplex in an attempt to better align with the changing nature of the movie exhibition business. But the opening by the Loews Corporation of several new multiplex facilities in nearby Secaucus beginning in the late 1970's, and an ill-considered policy at the

time by Jersey City regarding how to renew Journal Square led eventually to the Loew's being sold to a developer, closed and scheduled for demolition in Spring, 1987.

Friends of the Loew's began as a group of concerned citizens who came together to try to stop the demolition of the Theatre, and called instead for the Loew's to be restored and reopened as an arts and entertainment center in order not only to preserve a local landmark, but to create an anchor for economic and cultural revitalization. FOL built popular support and at length convinced the City to reverse its policy and adopt the goal of reopening the Loew's to help revive Journal Square. At FOL's urging, in 1993 the City purchased the Loew's from the developer that had planned to tear it down; the cost was just \$325,000. FOL helped secure a \$1,000,000 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust which the City matched to pay for basic work needed to stabilize the shuttered Loew's. Soon, however, it was determined that this funding was not enough even for that limited purpose, and there was no funding at all available for the additional work needed to reopen the Loew's.

To overcome this paucity of funding, FOL created an ambitious program of volunteer labor to carry out repairs to help stretch the limited grant funding and also undertake work for which no money was available. In 1997, new boilers, a new electric service and new sewer ejectors were installed, and other basic infrastructure upgrades and repairs were made. In 1998 a major exterior rehabilitation was undertaken, including installation of a new roof and significant exterior masonry repair; it was in the course of this restoration that HMR Architects began its work for the Loew's. Other work that has been accomplished from that time forward includes: initial restoration and a second; later overhaul of the marquee; removal of most of the alterations made for the triplex; repair and reactivation of most interior circuits; repair and reactivation of plumbing fixtures, including the public restrooms; restoration of some original surfaces and cleaning of many more; rehabilitation of the theatre seating; utility refinishing of some dressing rooms; reactivation of the stage rigging system; restoration of the original orchestra pit lift; reinstallation of the organ and reactivation of the organ lift; rebuilding of the projection booth; installation of new stage dimmers, DMX, and digital control interface; installation of a small but permanent house sound system; creation of an FOH tech position; and more.

Beginning at the end of 2001 FOL reopened the Theatre, though use was limited by the need for further renovations. In the years since, however, FOL's operations have steadily grown, and the volunteer-based program of renovations has continued and become a key means of community involvement. Programming includes community events, classic and independent film screenings, book signings, school events, multi-cultural and affordable programming and a limited number of larger commercial concerts. Additionally, FOL has established the Loew's as a popular venue for weddings and other private events.

Several years ago, FOL and the City began to explore ways to secure more funding for the Loew's, carry out more restoration and improvement work, and increase large commercial programming. The result is the RFP issued in June by JCRA.

- **Historic Status, Regulations & Review Process**

The Loew's Jersey Theatre is listed on the New Jersey State Register, has been deemed eligible for the National Register, and is also individually listed as a Jersey City landmark. As such, all work will be

subject to review and approval by the Jersey City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the NJ Historic Preservation Office (NJHPO) and the NJ Historic Trust (NJHT), which holds a preservation easement on the property through 2023. Accordingly, proposed work will be reviewed and approved by all 3 entities for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Buildings.

The Loew's Jersey is clearly one of the most visible landmarks and important ongoing preservation and restoration projects in the State of New Jersey, and over the years it has attracted considerable public interest and publicity. It's fair to say, therefore, that the NJHPO, NJHT and JC Landmarks Preservation Commission are cognizant of, and justifiably interested in the Loew's to an extent not just bounded by their regulatory oversight roles.

In terms of the approvals process for work at the Loew's, following review and approval by the local Jersey City Preservation Commission, the NJHPO and NJHT will review proposed work to determine whether or not it constitutes an encroachment. (While the NJHT easement is in effect through 2023, in practice the NJHT and the NJHPO will generally coordinate between agencies, so that only one will be the primary contact for a given project.) In making this determination, the NJHT/NJHPR will consider the opinion of the Jersey City Preservation Commission as well as draw their own conclusions with reference to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards about efforts proposed for the preservation of significant historic features and fabric.

HMR will make every effort to satisfy NJHT/NJHPO requirements so that proposed work is deemed "not an encroachment". Where proposed work is determined to be an encroachment, further approval must be sought from the Historic Sites Council, which meets only six times a year.

If Federal tax credits are sought, the NJHT/NJHPO will coordinate with the National Park Service for tax credit review and approval. Tax credit application Part I, II and III will need to be prepared and submitted by the applicant.

Because the Loew's Jersey must be preserved and experienced as a great landmark AND also be a functioning performance venue, HMR believes the Loew's project should be considered a "rehabilitation", rather than a "restoration" project. Restoration, in preservation terms, demands an even higher standard of preservation work, such as in a museum. In a "rehabilitation" project such as this, allowances will be made, up to a point, for modern interventions necessary for the successful operation of the Theatre. However, historic character must be retained, requiring restoration, rehabilitation or replacement of historic fabric, features and finishes determined to be significant. The willingness to consider allowances for modern interventions, and the extent to which they are made will depend on: the quality of the planning and design; clear evidence that thorough evaluation of the potential impact on the history and character of the Theatre has been made by preservation professionals; the clarity of the explanation for the need for a given modern intervention; and the effectiveness of proposed ways to mitigate any negative impact.

In matters not necessarily related to historic preservation, the New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode will greatly assist planning practical, cost effective renovations.

- **Structure & Construction**

All of the main portion of the Loew's Jersey -- i.e., the lobby, auditorium as well as the dressing room and mechanical areas -- is a steel frame structure, with no bearing walls. The only exceptions are the one story attached (but original to the building) former retail area on the south east corner (JFK Blvd by the JSQ Concourse/Esposito walkway) and also the small two story addition/annex immediately behind and connected to the former retail space; this addition is believed to have been built in the 1970s. Only those two areas have bearing walls. The steel framing of the main portion is encased in concrete or other masonry everywhere except the main roof trusses, which are not covered by any material. Also, the roof decks in all of the main portion of the Loew's, as well as the marquee, are concrete, with only the attached former retail space and the two story annex to it having wooden roofs. And except for the stage floor -- which is wooden on wood beams -- and the floors of the two story annex to the former retail space -- the first floor of which is plywood on top of furring strips laid on top of a formerly outdoor concrete sidewalk/pad that is built over the basement coal bunker; the second floor of which is plywood on standard wooden joists -- all of the floors in the main portion and even the original attached former retail space are concrete.

Original Exterior Walls The exterior walls are typically three wyth thick, consisting of finish brick or decorative terra cotta on the outside, and either red brick or terra cotta speed tile in the inner layers. As is typical with buildings of similar age, steel beams were not flashed and often embedded in masonry exterior walls. The resulting rust jacking -- cracking of masonry walls due to the pressure from within caused by expanding rust scale on steel beams -- is a recurring theme.

Late 1990s Exterior Restoration The exterior was inspected, repaired in places, and partially repointed in the late 1990s. Repaired damage included expansion cracking that occurred in lieu of original control joints, failed mortar between coping stones, various freeze-thaw damage, corroded lintels over windows, and a major crack and displayed masonry at the top of the chimney. Not surprisingly, a major focus of this cycle of work was undoing damage from rust jacking by opening cracked masonry, cleaning, repairing as needed, and flashing (as best as possible) the underlying steel. Also at that time, the terra cotta clad cupola surmounting the Seth Thomas moving figure clock of St. George and the Dragon, located at the top center of the front façade, was completely dismantled and the underlying steel structure rebuilt and flashed. The great majority of original terra cotta was maintained, even where doing so required pinning in place or, still more aggressively, removal, epoxying back together, and re-installation. However, a small amount of damaged terra cotta had to be replaced by cast stone.

Though the Loew's exterior masonry appears to remain in acceptable condition overall, given the time that has passed since major work was last done to it, a thorough inspection should be carried out. As with any structure of similar age and construction to the Loew's, additional rust jacking from steel members encased in the masonry walls inevitably develop that will have to be periodically dealt with. At this time, it can at least be assumed that a percentage of mortar joints will need to be re-pointed, including all joints in the coping stones, and at least some in the terra cotta façade. And there are several places on the inside of exterior walls that show moisture when it rains; for at least one of these

areas, basic inspection of the outside has not shown a likely cause; these will require further investigation and ultimately pointing/sealing when the source of leaking is finally found.

Annex The exterior of the small, two story store annex is composed of cinderblock covered in brickface stucco. As noted above, the annex has a wooden roof and wooden floors (aside from the stage, these are the only wooden floors in the building). The annex is built on walls that line the old in-basement coal bunker, and the annex's wooden first floor is built up over what had been exterior concrete paving prior to construction of the annex. There had been a long-existing crack extending to the top of the rear wall of the annex that was thought to have been caused by a combination of poor attachment to the adjacent original Theatre wall and also by rust jacking from a steel lintel over a window there; this crack was repaired a few years ago. The repair involved removal of the window and lintel, partial reconstruction of the wall and improved means of attachment to the adjacent original Theatre wall, plus other reinforcement. The leaking annex roof was also replaced at this time. The interior of the annex is presently used for storage and has utility finish.

All work to the exterior will be subject to historic preservation requirements, reviews and approvals.

Interior The majority of interior walls and ceilings in the public spaces of the Theatre are a shell -- ornamental plaster on wire mesh lath suspended on steel C channel and angle iron framing that's built anywhere from a few inches to many feet off of the back side of exterior walls and roof. A relatively small portion of the interior walls in public spaces are plaster applied to either red brick or terra cotta speed tile. The ornamental plaster walls in the public spaces are, over-all, in remarkably good condition for their age, but not unsurprisingly there is some damage owing to age and, in some areas, past leaking. Repair of ornamental plaster will have to be done in accordance with preservation guidelines.

The walls in the basements and projection booth are mostly brick/speed tile, with plaster applied in the dressing rooms and booth. Ceilings in the first level of dressing rooms were plaster on suspended metal lath, though all of these were badly damaged by leaking while the Loew's was closed, and have been removed. The ceiling in the large rehearsal room in the subbasement is suspended plaster, and was partially damaged by leaking and dampness when the Theatre was closed. Ceilings in the lower dressing rooms and most utility rooms are plaster applied directly to the underside of the concrete floor, above.

It is believed that most or all of the ornamented ceilings in public spaces have never been repainted. Evidence suggests that one extensive and at least somewhat sympathetic re-painting of walls may have been carried out at some time in the Theatre's life (good guesses as to when would either be right before WWII when the effects of the Depression had been left behind or the late 1940s when other improvements were known to have been carried out). Following that, repainting seems to have been done somewhat haphazardly, but fortunately in many cases this repainting did not cover original metal finishes, which are aluminum leaf glazed to look like gold, copper or bronze. The walls on either side of the first floor of the auditorium had been overpainted very badly, so FOL repainted them in what a preservation specialist working with HMR determined to be the original colors. The HSR subsequently documented original colors for many of the wall and trim surfaces in the Loew's. Every surface that has not already been cleaned by FOL should be assumed to have a coating of nicotine, dust, popcorn grease and soot from the old coal- and later oil-fired boilers. Cleaning, repainting, reapplication of metal leaf, and all work related to decorative interior surfaces will have to be done in accordance with preservation guidelines.

- **Roofs**

The Loew's Jersey has six different roofs: i) lobby; ii) auditorium (aka high); iii) stage house; iv) marquee; v) original attached store; and vi) store annex.

The lobby, auditorium and stage house roofs are all concrete decks supported by steel beams / trusses. The lobby roof is a modified hip with shallow valleys; the auditorium roof is a modified hip with very steep valleys; the stage house roof is flat. On all three it is believed that there are two underlying layers - one coal tar and one 90lb - under the EPDM membrane that was installed 20 years ago. There is a layer of high density foam insulation (not sure of the thickness) between the 90lb and EPDM layers. Counterflashing and reglet is used to terminate the roofing on perimeter parapet walls. Mushroom-style vents of various sizes are installed on all three roofs; some to all of these vents should be replaced due to age. There are a total of ten drains across all three roofs; most of the drain covers/strainers date to the EPDM installation; a few are more recent. Some of the interior leaders from the roof drains include original lead and cast pipe, and some of the more easily reached drain pipes have been repaired with no-hub or PVC. Inspection of all the roof leaders should be part of planning for a major restoration. There are no major leaks in any of the three roofs, but depending on the amount of rain and the direction/force of wind, moist spots are sometimes seen in isolated areas on the underside of the concrete decks and minor leaks sometimes occur at the perimeters. In the heaviest of rain, minor dripping occurs near the pinrail in the stage right wing; this is probably due to moisture getting under the stage house roof membrane, following the roof pitch to a drain located in the area over the pinrail, and seeping in through old roof penetrations there that once allowed pipes to pass through the roof to a rooftop water tank.

The EPDM on all of the roofs is now at the end of its expected life and needs to be replaced.

The marquee roof is a concrete deck over steel beams that cantilever from the front façade. It is flat on two ends and arched in the middle -- matching the contour of the underlying soffit. There are four tie rods that extend from the marquee roof back to the front façade that provide additional support and stability for the cantilever; the lower portions of two of these rods, where they connect to the underlying steel marquee beams, were replaced within the last year. There are two drains on the marquee roof. The membrane and drain covers/strainers on the marquee were replaced within the last year, and can be considered new.

The roof on the original attached one story former retail space is a wood deck, and covered with an old, deteriorated bitumen coating. This roof membrane must be replaced. The area is served by one drain, which needs a new cover/strainer. There are two HVAC package units on this roof, both serving portions of the former retail area; both of those units are over 20 years old and will need to be replaced.

The roof on the two story annex is a wood deck. It is flat, but pitched by sloped insulation to a hanging gutter that in turn drains onto the original attached store roof, below. This wooden deck, insulation, membrane and gutter were replaced within the last few years. The roof covering is an EPDM membrane.

- **Sprinklers**

As built, the Loew's was partially sprinklered - in both levels of the dressing room area and on stage. That original system also included a fire line connection to the municipal water supply (this connection

was decommissioned when the Theatre was closed in 1986 in prep for demolition), and an exterior siamese inlet at the front of the building. None of the sprinkler system has functioned since the building was closed in prep for demo. The HSR recommended that all of the extant sprinkler system be replaced. This would include a new fire line connection and meter from the existing municipal water supply pipe in the front basement (which was replaced several years ago, and was reportedly sized to accommodate a future fire line connection). Based on a code review at the time the HSR was prepared, some additional areas will need to be covered by sprinklers -- including, though not necessarily limited to, the front basement (mechanical equipment areas), projection booth, internal fire tower stairway, and service/egress way alongside the main floor of the Lobby. However, the Auditorium and Lobby likely will not require the addition of sprinkler coverage. Refer to the HSR for more info. Note that this info is subject to change upon updated code review.

- **Standpipe**

As built, the building was equipped with a wet standpipe system that included more than 20 hose stations throughout and two exterior siamese inlet connections, one in the front of the building, the other at the rear, a pump, and a fire line connection to the municipal water supply (this connection was decommissioned in 1986 in prep for demolition). Within the last year, the extant standpipe system was isolated from the former fire line connection to the water supply, and the bulk of the system was inspected, repaired, tested and reactivated as a dry system. It is assumed that the standpipe system will eventually have to be restored to wet functionality -- meaning a new pump, new fire line and meter connected to it from the extant municipal water supply pipe in the front basement; but this requirement must be confirmed by an updated code review. Whether restoration to a wet system is necessary or not, however, the portion reactivated this last year as dry may be considered "done" regardless.

- **Electric Service & Circuits**

As built, the Loew's had six transformers to step primary power down to 208/120. The original post-transformer service was 5,000 amps across three phases. The original switch gear equipment was an open type with knife switches and cartridge fuses. It fed multiple subpanels throughout the building, some with Edison-style fuses and toggle switches, others with cartridge fuses and knife switches. Several of each kind have been replaced, and additional subpanels have been added, but several Edison and cartridge fuses subpanels also remain in service.

When the building was reactivated in the late 1990s, the old transformers were removed, and secondary 208/120 power was brought directly in from the utility company. New switchgear was installed in the front part of the room where the old transformers had been.

The new service switch is rated at 2000 amps, three phase -- though it's not clear at this time what size feed and CTs the utility company provided in the late 1990s when the Theatre was reopened and the new service put in place (meaning it may be less than 2000 amps).

The new main switchgear presently directly powers four subpanels, and also an inverter described below, and the old original knifeboard switchgear which is now essentially a subpanel that in turn continues to power some feeds and subpanels downstream, including power for the stage and marquee.

The busbar in the new switch gear is supposed to be able to be extended into an additional cabinet, if needed.

What size service is needed for full functionality will have to be determined. It has been assumed that given the efficiency of modern lighting and motors, the present 2000 amp three phase service switch capacity would be adequate (so long as the utility company matches its rating) for everything EXCEPT air conditioning -- but this needs to be confirmed. It is not clear at this time whether the utility company would allow a second service dedicated to AC, or whether the present service switch would have to be replaced with larger, and the feed to it upgraded to match.

Virtually all original wiring, of all amperage, is in black pipe conduit. Most of the original wiring is still functioning; where it is not, the typical reason is water infiltration and damage during the period the Theatre was closed.

Previous code reviews have indicated that if a fire pump is needed for a new sprinkler system and/or restored wet standpipe system, the electric power feed for the pump will have to either be a separate dedicated service, or be carried by lines that are encased in concrete.

- **Inverter & E Lighting**

Emergency lighting in the Loew's originally consisted of about 26 lighting-only circuits distributed throughout the interior, including in stairwells, the seat aisle lights, EXIT signs, fire hose cabinets, exterior lighting over all side egress doors, the dressing room area, and even utility areas in the front basement. These circuits were originally connected to a transfer switch which, in the event of power failure, automatically shifted the circuits to power drawn from racks of lead acid batteries in the basement. At some point in the building's life, those batteries were replaced by a 3,000 watt generator, which was inadequate and also was no longer operational when the Theatre was reopened. Within the last year, as a distinct part of the contract that also included the reactivation of the standpipe system, a new inverter was installed in the rear portion of the area where the old primary step down transformers had once been located. Also as part of this work, a new subpanel board for the original emergency lighting circuits was installed, with spare room for adding more emergency/inverter powered lighting circuits if necessary. The inverter is now on, meaning power to all the E circuits is constantly drawn from the inverter, and as a consequence, in the event of a failure of utility company power, there would not be even a momentary outage of lighting connected to those circuits. A manual switch allows for switching the emergency circuits over to line power. As of this writing, none of the original emergency lighting circuits are known to not be functioning.

In addition to the original emergency lighting circuits, there are presently stand-alone battery pack E light units installed in various locations, all of which need to be replaced or at the least have their batteries replaced.

It should be noted that past code reviews have found a need for additional emergency lighting to be installed to meet current requirements; this should be double checked during an updated code review. Whether more stand-alone units or central battery units, or new connections to the inverter, or a combination of different methods will be employed to meet additional E lighting needs will have to be determined.

- **Balcony Use**

The balcony in the Loew's has not been used for public seating during performances since operations resumed under FOL's management in 2001. This is NOT due to any structural concerns regarding the

balcony structure itself. Rather, the most significant reason the balcony is not currently in use is the need to repair the exterior fire escapes that lead from the space. The extant doors and panic/fire hardware from the balcony to the fire escapes also must be replaced.

Other safety issues involved in reopening the balcony include: installing additional emergency lighting; improving ambient lighting, especially on steps; re-creation of the original wooden hand rail along the front edge of the balcony (ongoing by FOL); and installation of additional safety hand rails down the center of steps and guard rails in line with steps at the front of the balcony.

In practical terms, the ongoing restoration of the balcony seating and also of the original balcony balustrades must also be completed. For many years these projects have not been given higher priority by FOL in the recognition that even after all seating and balustrades are restored, the balcony cannot be used until the fire escape repair and other safety issues are also taken care of; however, in recent years FOL has focused more attention and manpower on projects to restore and reassemble the seats and restore balustrades in the balcony

Cleaning and restoration of dirty and peeling painted surfaces and replacement of rotted and torn or missing draperies and valences in openings and in the faux boxes lining the sidewalls must also be addressed.

Balcony "Boxes" Built into the each of the side walls of the balcony are what appear to be private opera-style seating boxes, as were customary in the design of older legitimate (live) theatre buildings. However, all of these positions are faux -- meaning that they are plaster facades that were installed to LOOK like the front of theatre boxes in order to give patrons the sense of being in a grand old opera house or theatre, but they are NOT accessible and there is NO seating behind them. In fact, six somewhat smaller "boxes" (three on each side wall) are built close to the exterior masonry wall, with no space behind them. The two larger "boxes" that flank the proscenium are in fact the front of the organ chambers, meaning behind them are large rooms containing the 1,800 pipes, plus other effects of the Loew's organ.

- **Access To Balcony**

The primary access to the balcony is through six passageways/stairs that lead from the lobby, three each on the north and south sides. From the second level of the Lobby, two passageways lead to the lowest balcony crossover, which is between the loge (or front) seating and main balcony (or middle) seating sections of the balcony. From the third level of the Lobby, two passageways and a short set of steps lead to the middle balcony crossover, which is between the main balcony (or middle) and upper balcony seating sections. Also from the third level of the Lobby, two staircases continue up to the top balcony crossover, which is at the rear of the upper balcony seating section. The only access to the balcony that is not directly through public spaces is from the fire tower stairwell that rises from the service/egress corridor that parallels the main floor of the Lobby to the projection booth suite. One doorway leads from this stairwell to the middle balcony crossover, and a second doorway leads to the top balcony crossover.

- **Alterations From 1970's Era Triplex Conversion**

The Loew's auditorium was divided into three spaces to serve as a triplex in 1973-74. This entailed abandoning seating on the first floor of the auditorium between the front edge of the balcony and the

orchestra pit, building a wall across the auditorium from the floor up to the front edge of the balcony, and a second wall at right angles to the first up center aisle of the auditorium first floor. For this second wall, the seating and concrete floor risers on either side of the center aisle were demolished, and an approximately one foot wide gouge was cut in the ornamental plaster ceiling under the balcony, directly over center aisle. The doorway from the first floor of the lobby into the auditorium at center aisle was sealed, and a new room for projection was constructed across the rear of the first floor of the auditorium, from the house right doors from the lobby, across the former center aisle doorway, to the house left doors from the lobby. Heating vents in the first floor of the auditorium were sealed with cement and replaced by two large openings that were cut into the original floor under the new projection room built at the rear of the auditorium; this was apparently done in an effort to control sound migration.

The foreshortened spaces under the balcony on the left and right of center aisle became two cinemas using the new projection room built at the rear of the auditorium and small screens hung in front of the false wall constructed from the first floor of the auditorium up to the front edge of the balcony. The balcony was a third cinema that used the original screen, and original projection booth.

FOL dismantled most of the tri-plex era renovations but we chose to retain much of the room added for projection, but bisected it to re-open center aisle. The original seating in this area was perched on high risers which if restored seemed to hold out the possibility of inviting trip and fall accidents; also, with ancillary room at a premium in the Loew's, removal of the created space did not seem wise. This decision left two rooms on either side of center aisle. The room on house right retains a PD panel installed for the projectors and related equipment, etc., and also a toilet that was installed to conform to projectionist union rules; this space is now used as a tech work and store room behind the tech platform FOL built at the rear of the first floor of the auditorium. The other room on the house left side of center aisle is used for concession and other storage.

The scar that the triplex alterations created in the ceiling over center aisle remains, and will have to be restored, but FOL has restored much of the other damage from the triplex work, including scars on the side walls and balcony front. We restored the seating and concrete floor risers on either side of the first floor center aisle that had been destroyed to facilitate construction of one of the non-original aisles there, and we are currently replicating the hand rail on the balcony edge that was destroyed to make way for one of the other non-original triplex wall. We reopened the cemented closed floor vents in the area between the front edge of the balcony and the orchestra pit; the vent holes in the floor under the balcony remain sealed in favor of the holes that were cut as part of the triplex renovations, pending further consideration of air flow.

- **Seating**

As built, the Loew's had 3,187 seats, with roughly two thirds on the first (orchestra) floor of the auditorium and on third in the balcony. What the restored seating capacity will be is somewhat dependent on the final determination of ADA seating positions, whether removable seating is used in sections on the first floor, and a few other considerations, but will likely be at or near 3,000.

The original seating installed in the Loew's was manufactured by the American Seating Company, was made of cast iron framing, and was generally typical for theatre seating of the era. A version of this seating was manufactured up until relatively recently by Country Roads Seating Co. for use in older

theatres (Country Roads was acquired by Irwin Seating). What was not typical, however, was the highly ornate cast iron end standards (the "cap" facing the aisle on the first and last seats in every row) installed in the Loew's; these may have been custom designed for the Wonder Theatres. The width of the seats varied, as is customary in theatre seating, to achieve the staggered placement intended to ensure no patron is seated directly behind another. The seating in the loge -- the front section of the balcony which is often considered to have "the best seats in the house", and at the Loew's was sold at a premium ticket price -- was wider and more padded than the rest of the Theatre's seats. The Loew's seats were originally upholstered in plush velour, although few if any of the seats retained this covering when the Theatre was closed.

After the triplex conversion, the seats on the first floor of the auditorium from the front edge of the balcony to the orchestra pit -- which could no longer be accessed by the public -- were ripped out and thrown away. But the bulk of the original seating remained in use until the Theatre was closed. Later, a quick survey by FOL found that the seating was in bad condition: non-matching fabric coverings were haphazardly scattered throughout; much of the fabric was worn or soiled or covered with mold from the years the Theatre had been closed and unheated and unventilated; many seat bottoms sagged badly or had springs breaking through the surface; wooden armrests had lost all their finish; cast iron frames were rusty, and some were cracked; etc.

As part of the work that reopened the Theatre, all of the extant cushioned seat parts (from the auditorium first floor and balcony) were reupholstered professionally, with spring bottoms replaced by high density foam. FOL in-house forces removed the upholstered parts and reinstalled them after reupholstery, and in between restored the bulk of the extant seat parts of all of the seating on the first floor. This involved cleaning, priming and painting seat frames with epoxy paint; welding cracked frames back together; re-anchoring loose frames; shot blasting and refinishing in urethane paint the ornate seat end standards that had been badly over-painted through the years; and refinishing the wooden armrests, which were found to be made of maple, including many exhibiting the desirable birdseye grain. The work also included restoring much of the aisle lighting built into the end standards. After nearly 20 years of renewed, albeit limited, Theatre operations, this restored seating remains in over-all good condition, except for a detached veneer on a number of the plywood seatbacks.

The original seats that were removed and disposed of after the triplex conversion have been replaced in the two sections on either side of center aisle with long-term temporary seating comprised of Irwin Citation chairs that were purchased used. Temporary replacement seats have not been installed in the far house right and left sections where original seating was removed.

The reupholstered parts for the balcony seating mostly remain in boxes. Until recent years, FOL had not prioritized work on the balcony seating because of the inability to have public occupancy there due to code issues. Over the last few years, however, most of the seating in the loge section has been restored.

Future options regarding seating will need to be considered during planning for restoration, including the viability of removable seating in the area where original seating was removed, which would need to include storage solutions.

- **Asbestos**

Asbestos assessment and abatement was carried out over 20 years ago with an emphasis on the front mechanical areas of the basement in preparation for the installation of the new boilers and related valves, etc. This was done in compliance with applicable NJ regulations at that time. Trowel-on coatings as well as pipe wrappings were completely removed from the old boiler room (this was the only area in the building to have significant amounts of trowel-on applications). Wrappings were removed from the new boiler and fan rooms. Wrappings in good condition were encapsulated in other areas of the front basement. Wrappings in good condition, but not encapsulated, remain on steam pipe risers on two stage house walls, and in several other non-public areas. It should probably be assumed that some additional wrappings may exist on pipes that are not visible or easily accessible behind walls or above ceilings. When renovations were being done in the dressing room area years ago, several stacks of closed heavy plastic bags containing old pipe wrappings were found with some other debris in a room off of a corridor there. It appeared that the bags had been in the room for multiple years. After a few bags were inspected, it was assumed the bulk contain the same material so no additional bags were opened, and the room was not renovated. It is kept closed and locked. The bags will need to be properly disposed of before any work is done in the room.

It should be noted that replacement insulation was not installed in all areas where the old asbestos wrap was removed. New insulation in those areas, as well as on all water supply piping needs to be installed.

It should also be noted that most of the original, higher ampacity electrical conductors are wrapped in an insulation which, while not tested, is assumed to be asbestos given the age of the building.

- **Lead Paint**

Given the age of the Loew's, it can be assumed that virtually all walls and ceilings have coatings that contain lead, either on the surface or under more recently applied coatings. One exception is believed to be the exterior marquee soffit (ceiling), which was stripped down to mostly bare metal 25 years ago. The extant top coating there was applied just two year ago, and is in good condition.

- **Existing Wall Tapestries & Draperies**

The fabric wall coverings throughout the Loew's and the heavy velvet valences and draperies hanging in archways and other openings are original, which is to say 91 years old. They are installed with tacks and nails and therefore removal without damage is not likely. Dry rot is more typical on draperies hung in coves, etc. in the auditorium, while fabric in the lobby seems less likely to exhibit it. Cleaning efforts have generally been restricted to careful, thorough vacuuming. Test cleaning with a few different compounds was tried, without notable result. In addition to the likely need to replace rather than clean the extant wall coverings and draperies, there is also the need to recreate coverings and draperies in areas where they were originally installed, but are now missing. Ornate fringe and tassels surviving on extant draperies can probably be salvaged and re-used.

- **Boilers**

The twin A.O. Smith cast iron section steam boilers were installed in 1996 - 97, and equipped with Power Flame gas burners. A main condensate / water feed tank and also a remote tank that collects condensate from the rear portion of the building and pumps it back to the main tank were installed with the boilers. The boilers and condensate / feed tanks are in generally good working order, but also are

now more than two decades old. (Note that water observed on the floor of the boiler room is NOT caused by a leak in one of the boilers but by a crack in a large diameter roof leader drain pipe that passes through the boiler room horizontally. The crack extends for multiple feet and, due to evidence of previous attempts to patch it, appears to be quite old. This pipe will need to be replaced as part of any large scale restoration project.)

- **Heat**

Steam is sent from the boilers to cast iron radiators to provide perimeter heat located in the outer lobby, service / egress corridor alongside the lobby, stage, rigging loft, dressing room area, projection booth and organ chambers. (Temperature - as well as humidity - is important in maintaining proper tune in the organ pipes, and so radiators made up of multiple sections of pipe were installed in the organ chambers in recent years to replace original but inadequate and no-longer working electric heaters. The organ chamber radiators are NOT shown on the original blueprints.) All radiators on the lower dressing room level froze and broke while the Theatre was closed, and were replaced after the new boilers were installed. Some corroded sections of radiator supply piping, and many more sections of corroded condensate lines were replaced after the new boilers were installed; there have been only a few instances of needing to replace additional piping since. Virtually all radiator steam traps were replaced at that time, but some of those traps have begun to stick in recent years and are being changed as needed. The perimeter heating system is in generally good operating condition.

The bulk of the interior of the Loew's is heated by forced air (more about that air handling system below). Steam is sent to a bank of pre-heat (or main) coils located in an air handling area in the basement; steam is also sent to remote reheat coils in the extensive ductwork system. The main heat coils are in good shape, but several of the reheat coils have leaks and need to be replaced. Some corroded sections of supply piping, and many more sections of corroded condensate lines servicing the coils were replaced after the boilers were installed; there have been only a few instances of needing to replace additional piping since. Virtually all steam traps on coils were replaced after the boilers were installed, but some have begun to stick in recent years and are being changed again as needed.

- **Air Conditioning**

The Loew's Jersey was built with an integrated central air conditioning system. The coolant was carbonic gas (or CO₂), which had been developed as a safe alternative to the potentially lethal toxicity and explosiveness of ammonia-based systems. The original compressors and related controls for this system survive in remarkably good condition in the front basement, and are protected elements. A second generation AC system was installed in 1949; it consisted of banks of freon compressors and coils located in the air handling area behind the house fan, and a cooling tower on the lobby roof. This system was in apparent poor repair when the Loew's was closed in preparation for the planned demolition, and though still in place, has not functioned since. The abandoned components of the 1949 air conditioning system are not considered historically significant and are not required to be preserved.

The HSR assumes that the huge old boilers (originally coal-fired), located in a room immediately next to the current boiler room in the front portion of the basement, will be removed, and the cleared space along with the adjacent former coal bunker area will be used for new AC equipment, likely a chiller-based system.

See below for info regarding the need to provide air conditioning to the dressing rooms and organ chambers.

- **Air Handling & Distribution, Controls, Etc.**

Both the original and 1949 air conditioning systems used the same distribution system -- house fan, ductwork, plenums, return booster fan, fresh air intake -- used for heat.

Air distribution is accomplished by a single large, single speed house fan (supply) located in the basement and connected to an extensive system of ducts that are very large in the basement and get progressively smaller as they rise through the building. The ductwork is sheet metal without insulation either outside or inside. (A surviving original but now abandoned control once allowed variable speed control for the fan.)

The fan turns freely on its bearings, but some years ago its motor began to vibrate while in operation, and its motor starter is not operating smoothly; both the motor and motor starter need to be replaced, and at that time variable speed control for the fan should be installed. The fan is located immediately in front of an air handling area that includes the main steam heat coils, abandoned air conditioning coils and compressors, and fresh air intake louvers. Those louvers, replaced when the boilers were installed, presently operate manually but should be automated.

The air handling system includes two large plenum areas.

One plenum is comprised of a wedged shaped space under the orchestra (first floor) of the auditorium, beginning in the basement from the area under the doors leading from the lobby into the auditorium -- at that point, the plenum is more than 12 feet high -- and extending all the way forward to the orchestra pit wall -- at which point the plenum is only a few feet high. The plenum space has a concrete floor and "ceiling", which is the underside of the auditorium's concrete floor.

This plenum space is divided into two sections by a plaster partition with two hatches, which appears to be original, running across the width of the plenum at roughly the line of the front edge of the balcony in the auditorium above. The space behind this wall -- about the first two thirds of the basement plenum, measured from the area under the doors to and from the lobby -- is for return air. As built, return air was originally drawn down through cast iron mushroom vents in the orchestra floor of the auditorium under the balcony. When the auditorium was divided into a triplex in 1974, those mushrooms openings were sealed with cement (probably in an attempt to control sound transfer from one cinema to another), and replaced by two large rectangular holes cut in the original floor under the triplex projection booths that were constructed at the time at the rear of the auditorium's orchestra first floor. In either case, the orchestra floor's return air is pulled by the back draught of the house fan through a large shaft that runs from the plenum to the air handling area where the house fan is located. Return air is mixed with fresh air if the air intake louvers are open, heated again by being drawn through the main heat coils, a then pushed back through the ductwork by the fan.

The front third of the partitioned basement plenum is for air delivery. A duct in that part of the plenum is open ended, and air is pushed by the house fan into the space and then up through mushroom vents opening to the seating area between the front line of balcony and the orchestra pit on the first floor of the auditorium.

The second plenum is for return air from the balcony, and is comprised of most of the interior space of the balcony. Return air is pulled down through cast iron mushrooms located in the balcony floor into this plenum inside the balcony, and then down through ducts to the basement plenum, where it is pulled back by the house fan's return draught to the air handling area. A booster fan located in the basement helps pull this return air down from balcony. It appears that as built, this booster fan could also exhaust presumably overly-warm return air from the balcony out through a vent located in the north side wall of the Theatre; this functionality ended, however, when the store building immediately next to the Loew's on the north side was built in the 1950s.

When this original exhaust function was lost, a new fan was installed in the room directly under the projection booth, at the top of the balcony. This fan pulls air through openings installed in the top rear wall of the balcony, and expels it out through a converted window overlooking the lobby roof. This fan and ductwork is not connected to the main air handling system.

There is only limited duct distribution in the dressing room area; warm and chilled air is ducted to the hallways and rehearsal room, but not into individual dressing rooms. In winter, steam radiators provide heat in the dressing rooms. In warm weather, some cool air was probably drawn in from the hallways under short-cut doors and through dressing rooms by exhaust vents in each room -- but this was obviously not very efficient (or effective, most likely). Presumably, the primary means of warm weather ventilation in the dressing rooms was open windows. Air conditioning will have to be added to the dressing rooms.

Air conditioning must also be provided to the organ chambers because temperature and humidity control will significantly aid keeping the instrument in tune and overall maintenance.

Automatic valves and dampers, mostly pneumatic in operation, intended to create temperature zoning and also regulate temperature were not restored to functionality when the new boilers were installed, and as a result, heating in the Loew's currently runs wide open, and is either "on" or "off". The HSR notes that the valves and dampers need to be reactivated or replaced and likely augmented to restore temperature zoning and automatic control.

Except for the now abandoned cooling tower of the 1949 air conditioning system on the lobby roof, there is no rooftop HVAC equipment serving the main theatre building. (There are two rooftop HVAC package units serving the former retail space and annex.)

Though this can be re-examined, the HSR assumes that new AC equipment will be connected to the existing fan and ductwork distribution system, and also that heat will remain principally a steam based combination of forced air and radiant heat using the existing distribution system, with repairs and some upgrades. This is so for several reasons: changing heat/air conditioning generation and distribution to a rooftop-down system would likely require excessively intrusive construction and permanent alterations to protected interior ceilings and walls in order to facilitate replacement of existing ducts to accommodate the reversal of air flow direction, construction of additional ducts and piping, and the possible need to insert new exchanges/grills into highly ornamented surfaces; a rooftop location might also give rise to sound transfer and vibration dampening concerns in an acoustical space that are avoided with the present basement location of HVAC equipment; and rooftop equipment by its nature creates the potential for roof leaks which could be extremely damaging given the highly ornamented

design and suspended plaster construction of the Loew's auditorium and lobby ceilings, and the difficulty/cost involved in reaching the ceiling to make repairs.

In addition to the house fan and return booster fan for heating / air conditioning, there are two additional fans and duct systems that vent, respectively, the existing public restrooms and the dressing room area. The bearings and possibly also motors for each of the two fans for these two systems need to be replaced.

- **Stage Related**

Dimensions: Average (the stage is raked) of 35 ft deep from apron to rear wall; 80 ft max wide wall to wall, but note that in both wings the stage width is partially foreshortened by staircase bulkheads; the proscenium opening is 50 ft wide x 30 ft high. Black legs are typically used to narrow the opening some and thereby provide additional wing space.

Dressings: We currently only have limited stage dressings: a new, automated traveler, three serviceable backdrops, and some serviceable black legs and teasers. A used (in good condition) grand drape has been donated, but not yet hung. There are no mid-stage travelers. The original, ornate pelmet over the stage opening is only partially intact; a portion was recently replaced and another piece was removed due to dry-rot. The pelmet will have to be recreated, reusing the extant fringe, tassels, jeweled glass, etc. Fortunately the steel frame on which the pelmet is hung appears to be in good shape, and its rigging is operational.

Rigging: The original arbor and wire cable counterweight rigging system is intact and operating, with some jammed lines. It has a total of 46 linesets. The pinrail is located in the stage right wing. The headblocks appear to be a Peter Clark design that used, in effect, sections comprising multiple blocks, as opposed to each block being an individual unit as is more typical today. The existing rigging does not extend all the way to the rear stage wall, meaning that there are no linesets in the last approx. ten feet of stage depth, upstage. This is probably due to the fact that the stage door, an auxiliary load-in door next to it, and stairwells down to the dressing room and up to the rigging loft are enclosed in a masonry bulkhead structure in the rear stage right corner -- where the pinrail could otherwise have been continued to provide linesets over the last ten feet upstage, to the rear wall. One possible solution to this problem would be to install double purchase linesets to the rear wall, with a pinrail located on top of the previously described bulkhead in that area. This could be done either as an add-on to the existing rigging system or as part of a new system.

There is distinct fleeting (angling) of lines from headblock through sheaves due to the rake of the stage, which makes jumping and jamming more likely. Whether the existing rigging is renovated and retained or replaced, mule blocks to eliminate this fleeting should be installed.

Minimal renovation of the existing rigging would also include replacement of handlines, cleaning and lubricating head blocks, replacement of cables (will need longer to accommodate mule blocks), replacement of at least some sheaves, and installation of wire cable clamps and thimbles at all cable attachments to batons. Replacement of the existing single pipe batons with double hung design would probably be advisable.

The rigging loft is accessed by a structurally sound and relatively convenient switchback staircase that ascends from a stairwell directly off of the stage (convenient when compared to a ship's ladder as was

typical for theatres of the era, or a circular staircase as was also sometimes installed). The rigging deck is made of inverted steel C channels attached to very large structural beams that support the rigging system. The decking and beams are sound, and have the benefit of affording pick points for dead hanging or rigging chain hoists practically anywhere that could be wanted. In FOL's operation, chain hoists and dead hanging have been used at times when the weight of the truss or other object to be flown was likely heavier than the capacity of the existing rigging system, or needed to be flown in the last ten feet upstage where rigging does not currently exist.

Floor: The existing sprung stage floor is worn and cracked and splintered in places; it will need to be repaired or replaced. There are several small wooden trap doors in the stage floor, but all are sealed at this time. A large trap door, used to raise and lower equipment between the stage and the trap room below, is functional.

Load-In: The main load-in door is located in the stage rear wall; the opening is 10 ft wide x 8 ft high with a metal rolldown door (interior soundproofing barn doors should be added). The load-in door opens onto a 9 1/2 ft wide sloped walkway that is at the western edge of the building, and is also part of the emergency egress path out of the Theatre's northern side. It leads on a reasonable incline up to a gate spanning the walkway; the distance to the gate from the load-in door is just 16 ft. and opens onto the foot of Magnolia Avenue. On the stage-side (inside), the load-in door is 4 ft above the stage floor; on the outside, there is a step up from the sloped walkway to the load-in door that is between 1 1/2 and 10 1/2 inches high. The sloped walkway is NOT built directly on ground, but is actually part of the building and also serves as the roof of dressing rooms below, so trucks cannot drive on it. The Theatre (and therefore sloped walkway) is built to the western property line, and the neighboring parking garage structure is built immediately next to it and runs parallel to the entire length of the sloped walkway, so until and unless plans to redevelop the garage are carried out, it is not possible to re-configure the site to allow trucks to directly back up to the load-in door. Fortunately, the existing arrangement has proved to be workable for even large commercial concerts. Trailer trucks can make the turn onto Magnolia Ave. from Tonnelle Ave., and are able to line up on Loew's property in the 15 ft wide open space between the Theatre's southern wall and the 10 ft wide public easement known as Journal Square Concourse West / Esposito Way that runs along the extreme southern property line. Equipment is wheeled to, and down the sloped walkway. A custom-fit shallow ramp is put down on the walkway side of the load-in door to cover the variable height step there, and a longer, steeper ramp is set up to lead down from the door to the stage floor, enabling direct passage of carts, cases, etc. from truck to stage, and vice versa.

A second load in position is located in the southern stage house wall, immediately next to the stage door at the rear south west corner of the building, at the foot of Magnolia Avenue. It is a 42 inch wide single leaf door that opens into the bulkhead located at the rear stage right corner of the stage. A second equally wide door is in line with the first eight feet inside the bulkhead, and opens from the bulkhead to the stage, at a height of 58 inches above the stage floor. When this opening is used a ramp is set up or items are passed down to a stagehand on stage level.

Orchestra Pit: The original orchestra pit elevator is in good working condition, and is a protected element. It is 31 ft wide by a max of 12.4 ft deep. The lift is driven by four large screw jacks that move in tandem via a worm drive powered by a large original electric motor. There are access doors into the pit from a hallway off of the trap room under the stage; working interlocks prevent operation of the lift if one of its access doors is not closed. The orchestra lift drops low enough to have an orchestra perform

while a show is presented on stage; can rise to meet the height of the orchestra level (first) floor in the auditorium, from which a gate opening leads through the orchestra pit railing; and can rise all the way to stage height. Because of this full length of travel, the lift can be used as a thrust stage, and also to bring equipment, props, flight cases, etc. up to the stage or down to store under the stage -- provided two alterations are made:

i) The height of the original, extant footlights and the trough in front of them obstruct smooth passage from the lift to stage and vice versa, so the original footlights would have to be replaced with a modern fold-down model. Because this would be a significant alteration involving an original element -- the footlights -- it would have to be approved by state and local preservation regulatory agencies; HMR would be aided in making the case for this change by the fact that it would help support the retention and continued use of the orchestra lift, and would also preserve the historic lighting effects of footlights by installing fold-down replacements; and retaining at least a section of the original footlights for display would also be helpful.

ii) One of the access doors to orchestra pit and also the hallway between the access doors and the trap room would have to be reconfigured to allow for direct passage of items from the lift to the trap room for storage.

Crossover: Two stairwells, one each in the stage right and stage left wings, are linked by a hallway in the first basement level of dressing rooms. As a consequence, the stairs and hallway function as a stage crossover.

Fire Code: The Loew's Jersey was built in accordance with the old fire codes for theatres that called for a fireproof separation (curtain) to drop down and close the proscenium automatically in the event of fire so as to seal the stage off from the auditorium, allowing the audience to evacuate safely. A large smoke vent that opens automatically in the event of fire was also required to be located on the roof directly over the stage in order to draw smoke and flames up and away from the auditorium. And the stage was to be protected by sprinklers and, in most cases, also a water wash along the proscenium line. At the time the HSR was written, a code review determined that the Theatre could continue with its existing design under the old code, and was not required to be reconstructed to conform to the new code; while it is not believed this has changed, an updated code review should be made to confirm this.

The metal and glass structure originally installed as the smoke vent on the stage house roof was badly deteriorated and removed when the current EPDM roof was installed more than 20 years ago. A temporary covering was put in its place. This in turn must be replaced with a new structure containing smoke hatches that are designed to open automatically in the event of fire via fusible links and also connection to a smoke and fire detection/alarm system. (Note that to avoid operational problems whenever fog machines are used in a show, the kind of smoke detection used on stage, in the air handling system, in the auditorium, and possibly in the lobby as well should be able to distinguish between stage effect fog and actual smoke from a fire.)

The original asbestos curtain is in place and intact, though the system of fusible links, etc. designed to cause it to drop automatically in the event of fire is not operational and needs to be repaired. The fire curtain's rigging and related equipment needs to be overhauled (rails cleaned, handline replaced, etc.), connected to an automatic smoke detection and alarm system when one is installed, and retrofitted with stops to slow the curtain's decent just enough to avoid injury to anyone standing directly under it.

The last review of relevant regulations showed that asbestos curtains in good condition can be retained for use in New Jersey theatres; this should be checked again for any subsequent regulatory changes.

As noted previously, the original sprinkler system was deactivated when the building was prepped for demolition and remains inactive now; it needs to be replaced throughout the building, including on and over the stage.

- **Stage Lighting & Audio**

Lighting: The original stage lighting dimmer board is still located in the wings on stage right, with connected relays in a basement vault room directly below. As designed, it also controlled most of the house lighting. Though previously reconditioned and used for some years by FOL, the old board is now deactivated except for a few utility work light circuits that remain energized through it. The board is a protected historical element that cannot be destroyed or otherwise disposed of, but can be documented, carefully disassemble, relocated, reassembled and connected for display to at least some of its relays (also relocated) at a location to be determined in the Loew's where it will be seen as a historical display by the public, at least on guided tours.

To replace the original stage dimming and control, FOL installed two Strand racks in the basement with a total of 192 dimmers controlled by DMX. The original circuits -- including house lighting -- were intercepted and connected to the new dimmers; additional dimmers not assigned to existing lighting are presently accessed through stage floor hatches, though the plan has been to eventually install permanent socapex connections in the stage right wings for these extra circuits. All dimmable circuits are controlled via hard wired DMX from a tech platform that was created FOH, at the rear of the first floor of the auditorium. We are currently using a Martin interface for lighting control.

FOL's present lighting inventory is regrettably sparse, meaning that most lighting, cabling, etc. is rented for large productions. The original four overhead lighting strips (also called boarders), each with repeating red, white and blue lighting separately dimmed, are in place and functional, though of limited use in modern productions. We presently have very limited breakout wiring in the rigging for specials, etc. However, original dimmable circuits in the porthole-like FOH lighting positions in the balcony rail (front edge of the balcony, facing the stage) are functional, and have been updated with modern stage pin connectors. Along with two or three spotlight positions in the projection booth, these port hole positions in the balcony rail were the only FOH stage lighting positions originally built into the Loew's. While the balcony is not open for public seating, it is serving, in effect, as a very large light bridge with ellipsoidals set up on stands across the front of the balcony, a spot light, a few movers, and make-do box boom positions on poles at either side of the balcony front. Except for the movers and spot which use constant power, all these ad-hoc balcony positions make use of the existing dimmable circuits in the balcony rail porthole positions. The HSR assumes the need to install a light truss and permanent box booms. Presently, we have two spotlights installed in the projection booth, but for most productions, we use the temporary spot position at the balcony rail.

Presently, tie-in to power lighting equipment brought in for productions (additional dimmers and intelligent fixtures) is done via a 400 amp 3 phase fused disconnect in the dressing room area basement, located in the room with the new dimmers off of the trap room. Cables are passed down from the stage through a small metal hatch. Our longer rang plan has been to install a 400 amp disconnect on stage, along with a new PD panel for constant-on circuits.

An original and 800 amp, 3 phase feed in good condition provides power for stage lighting, from the old knife switch board that was the original switchgear, but is now a subpanel fed from the new switchgear. Presently, this feed is only supplied with 400 amps; this is not due to concern about the condition of the feed, but rather was the result of budgetary limitations at the time the new switchgear was installed. Note that, as built, a subpanel fuse board located in the stage right wing is tapped off of this 800 amp stage feed to supply power to the dressing room area. The rise of LED stage lighting has obviously reduced power requirements, so during planning for renovations, it should be considered whether the existing stage feed is adequate for modern needs and also modern power needs in the dressing rooms (our guess is probably not); or alternatively, whether removing the power load for the dressing rooms by installing a new feed and subpanel dedicated to that purpose would mean the existing 800 amp 3 phase stage feed would then be adequate for modern stage needs (that seems at least plausible).

Audio: There was no functioning house sound system for live productions in the Loew's when it was reopened. FOL has since permanently installed both analogue and digital audio snake runs between the stage and tech platform at the rear of the auditorium. Both ends of both snakes are modular, meaning they are designed to be used for FOL productions with FOL's own equipment, or by outside productions using equipment brought in for a particular show. FOL's present in-house mixer is a 40 channel Cadac board (on a wheeled stand that enables it to be unplugged and moved to the side when needed to make way for a rental board). At this time, FOL has installed audio amps and speakers for PA and small concert/performance use. In addition to mics, cables, monitors, etc., larger performances must bring in amps and speakers which are typically stacked on either side of the stage, though some shows have flown them with hoists from the rigging deck. A 100 amp three phase fused disconnect was installed in the stage right wing for audio use. This disconnect is connected to a subpanel dedicated to audio use; that subpanel powers the mixing board and effects on the tech platform, as well as specifically identified convenience outlets on the stage which are reserved for audio use. Ground and related audio problems stemming from house-supplied power has fortunately NEVER been an issue at the Loew's; but out of an abundance of caution, and to accommodate some tech riders, our plans have called for the eventual installation of an isolation transformer on the feed to the audio subpanel.

Tech Platform: The FOH tech platform at rear of house, stage left of center aisle, is 21 ft wide x 9 ft deep, and has proved spacious enough to accommodate the Cadac board, an outside board, our lighting control board, an outside lighting board, and a calling position.

Misc: Traditional ClearCom has been permanently installed between the tech platform and stage and projection booth, with temporary cable runs to the balcony rail when spotlight operation or projection is done from there. The system is being expanded to include one or two positions in the lobby and/or office for management/emergency communications, and to the dressing room area.

- **Organ**

The Loew's, like most theatres designed in the 1920s for presenting movies and live shows, was built with a pipe organ to provide sound for silent movies and either augment or sometimes replace orchestras for stage shows (actually, the Loew's jersey opened shortly after the end of the silent era, but the plans for the organ predated that). It is a full wind instrument, with 1,800 pipes located in two large rooms (called "organ chambers") behind the large pendant lights in the auditorium hanging to the left and right of the proscenium arch. Wooden shutters (called "swell shades") are fitted into openings from

those chambers into the auditorium; these shutters are opened and closed while the organ is played to control the volume. Unlike church organs, theatre organs have the ability to modulate the air pressure going to distinct pipes, which in turns allows for a wider range of notes and sounds than more traditional organs. Like other theatre organs, the one in the Loew's has pipes that are tuned to sound like other wind instruments, as well as pipes tuned so as to create sounds that are reminiscent of some string instruments. Additionally, the organ chambers also contain drums, castanets, cymbals, cow bells, car horns and other noise makers which are hit, shook, banged or otherwise caused to make sounds by pneumatic actuators. Essentially, a theatre organ such as the one in the Loew's is an analogue sound synthesizer.

There is a large turbine in the basement that provides air (called "wind") to the organ pipes. The massive console for the organ has four keyboards (called "ranks"), and is permanently installed on a distinct lift, that also rotates, next to the orchestra pit lift. The organ lift goes down to a position at which the organist can accompany a movie being shown but not block the audience's view of the screen - though even at its lowest, the console is still partly visible - and can also rise to stage level when the organist is featured in a solo performance.

The organ became a distinct and very popular part of going to the Loew's Jersey; it continued in use for pre-show music and audience sing-alongs (some of which were broadcast on a local radio station) until shortly after WWII, long after most other theatres had stopped using their organs, and the Theatre's organist was a local celebrity.

The present organ is a twin to the one originally installed in the Loew's; it was one of five identical organs installed by the Loew's Corporation in the five "Wonder Theatres" it built in the late 1920s. Our Loew's was one, and the Loew's Paradise on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx was another. The Loew's Jersey's original organ was removed when the building was converted to a triplex in 1974, and was eventually installed in the Arlington Theatre in Santa Barbara, CA., which is associated with UCLA. The Paradise's organ had been removed several years before the one in our Loew's, and was stored in a Chicago warehouse for decades. It was acquired by the Garden State Theatre Organ Society over twenty years ago, brought to the Loew's Jersey in two tractor trailer loads, completely restored and installed. Making even more clear how identical the original and successor organs in the Loew's Jersey are, during the restoration of the latter - which had originally been installed in the Paradise - it was discovered that the console and one or two pipes were labeled "Loew's Jersey" -- meaning they had been intended to come here 91 years ago, but had been mixed up in the factory.

Identical to the original, and as such a key element of the historical intended experience of the Loew's, the organ is a protected element, which means not only that it must be preserved but also must be protected from damage during both renovations and operations.

The organ is particularly susceptible to damage from construction-related dust contaminating its turbine, wind lines, valves and pipes. Erecting critical barriers, wrapping components, and possibly using negative air pressure are among the protective steps that will have to be taken during construction, and coordinated with the Garden State Theatre Organ Society.

The organ console must be protected from physical damage, as well as dust, during construction and also, later, during operation. During construction, plywood and plastic sheathing will likely be adequate. Operationally, during load-ins and outs, prep and strike, and performances, if there is a potential for

dust, spills, splatter or physical contact -- Gallagher smashing watermelons invariably comes to mind whenever we talk about this -- the organ console will have to be lowered in the pit and covered appropriately (something that is dustproof and waterproof, padded, and can absorb or deflect impacts, but is not so unsightly that it can't be left in place during show). For instances where the orchestra lift is to be used as a thrust stage, a removable platform/cover will have to be designed and fabricated to be set up as needed over the organ/organ pit.

- **Two Level Dressing Room Area, Incl. Large Rehearsal Room**

Thirteen dressing rooms of varying sizes, the trap room, three other rooms, and three restrooms are located in the building's rear basement and sub-basement. A large rehearsal room -- a relatively unusual feature in theatres of the Loew's era built for both movie exhibition and live shows -- is also located in the sub-basement. The rehearsal space could be used for a variety of purposes, including craft services, wardrobe, storage, etc., in addition to rehearsal. Because the rehearsal room is partly under the trap room, which in turn is below the stage, new trap doors and a winch would allow equipment, etc. to be able to be raised and lowered directly from the stage to the rehearsal room.

Currently, a portion of the first level of the dressing room area has been renovated to utility finish. Two dressing rooms have showers. One restroom is presently operational in the area. Note that a new three or four inch copper water supply pipe has been run to the dressing room area from the domestic water service connection located in the front of the building. This new pipe replaced the original, badly corroded and ecluded galvanized water supply pipe. Hot water is presently supplied by a local electric hot water heater in the dressing room area.

The balance of the first and all of the second floor of the dressing room area needs to be renovated, along with upgrading the condition of the previously renovated rooms. One unusual feature of the dressing rooms at the Loew's is that most have windows overlooking the adjacent PATH train yard on the Theatre's north side. The windows are Kalamein in construction, double hung, and unfortunately in very poor condition and will have to be replaced. When the Loew's was built, electrical appliances were just beginning to be developed, so not surprisingly not many convenience outlets were provided in the dressing rooms, and because live stage shows at the Loew's stopped by the mid-1930s, additional electric circuits were not added. In recent years, a few new circuits have been installed in the dressing room area, but a significant electrical upgrade there is needed. There is currently no ADA access to the dressing room area. The HSR includes one possible approach to address this.

- **Projection Facilities**

The Loew's Jersey has a very large projection booth for theatres of its age. Actually, it is a suite of rooms that includes the main projection area, a room with rectifiers to power the projectors, a film inspection room, another work room, a restroom, a room for the projection exhaust fan, and a room that houses the exhaust fan for the public restroom and also is used for parts and equipment storage. The main projection area, film inspection room and other work rooms were gutted when the Theatre was closed and prepped for demolition. There was no projection equipment left except for two derelict Brenograph special effects slide projector racks, which are original to the building and are protected elements. All projection equipment presently in the Loew's was installed and is owned by FOL. This includes two FP-20 Kinoton studio-grade 35mm projectors, two Norleco 70mm projectors, an antique Vitaphone projector (an example of the first widely used "talking" film projector, and similar to the kind of projector installed

in the Loew's when it opened), a digital projector, Sony sound processor, modern digital sound amps, Altec tube amps, a restored Perspector Sound processor, two spotlights, plus various film inspection, make-up, repair, and re-wind equipment.

FOL's long term intent is to install a track system that will allow the various projectors and spotlights to be easily moved into and out of place in front of the booth ports pointed toward the stage.

FOL had not yet acquired a digital projector when the HSR was written and suggested constructing a housing and port with ventilation for a digital projector on the front edge of the balcony. Subsequently, FOL successfully installed and operated digital projection from the Projection Booth, obviating the need for a separate, remote digital position.

A new movie screen was installed by FOL when the Theatre reopened; it is a white (not silver/gain) 50 ft wide x 24 ft high sheet, and is in good condition. The screen is hung on a massive wooden frame that fills the stage opening and was installed when the Loew's was retrofitted for wide-screen presentation in the 1950s. This frame is rigged separately from the stage rigging, and is raised and lowered by a hand line in the stage right wing. The frame has movable masking on its top and sides to accommodate different projection aspect ratios, but due to dry rot of the masking material, this is not functional at this time and will need to have the fabric replaced.

As is the standard for film presentation, movie sound is provided through a separate audio system from that installed for live performances. Presently, the Loew's still uses the three large, wheeled Altec "Voice of The Theatre" speaker cabinets that are kept on stage and are wheeled to positions behind the movie screen as needed. To overcome the need to take up the space on stage these require, it is assumed that new movie audio speakers designed to be flown will be permanently rigged so as to be able to be lowered immediately behind the screen.

- **Ambient Lighting**

In the public areas of the Theatre, extant lighting is a combination of surviving original fixtures and temporary replacements installed where original fixtures were missing. It is believed that most of the missing fixtures were taken shortly after the Theatre was closed in prep for demolition. The HSR catalogues most of the missing fixtures and notes where examples of what is missing are still present in the Loew's. Among the most notable are the hanging crystal lined baskets which were originally hung throughout the first and second floors of the Lobby. Each has four medium base bulb sockets. There are actually two slightly different versions, and fortunately examples remain of both. All of the surviving hanging basket fixtures show signs of age or misuse, particularly the one of two design types which requires the basket to be removed for re-lamping, as opposed to the other design which is open-topped and therefore can be reached down into for re-lamping. Examples of problems with these extant fixtures include broken or entirely missing strands of crystal, rusted ribbing on some of the baskets, and broken or otherwise non-functioning bulb sockets. Beaded swags and some other ornamentation that had been applied in addition to the crystal basket strands and which are visible in early photos are missing from all the surviving basket fixtures.

Four sconces in the oval portion of the lobby remain in place and in generally good condition, although like the hanging basket fixtures, they have lost beaded swags and other ornamentation visible in early

photos. Each sconce is powered by an individual circuit, all of which are now controlled by manual (not DMX) dimmers.

An ornamented newel post lamp is installed at the base of the grand staircase in the lobby. It is in generally good physical condition, though a piece of its lower stalk was damaged in an attempt to steal it when the Theatre was closed many years ago. This damage does not impact the functionality or physical stability of the fixture, however. Like the hanging basket fixtures and the four sconces in the oval portion of the library, the newel post lamp has lost beaded swags that were once attached to it.

The main chandelier in the lobby appears to remain mostly unaltered, in part thanks to restoration by FOL of its hanging brass wire strands of crystals which were found to be disintegrating. While the great majority of brass wire was replaced, just a small number of crystals need to be replaced in the course of the re-stringing. Most or all of the bulb sockets work. Overall, the chandelier is in very good condition. There are four lighting circuits in the chandelier, which have been made manually dimmable (not DMX) and it has a total of approximately 5,000 watts of incandescent light. It is lowerable for re-lamping and cleaning from a manual winch above the ceiling in the lobby attic. The winch, chain and manual connections all are in good physical and working condition.

Three fairly large hanging fixtures that were originally installed in the ceiling of the Musician's Salon -- the large area over the entrance doors on the promenade (or second) level of the Lobby -- are believed to have been removed some time in the 1970s or early 1980s after public access to that area of the lobby had been blocked. These fixtures were lowerable for cleaning and re-lamping from winches above the ceiling in the attic; the winches were taken with the fixtures.

Hanging fixtures that were once in the outer lobby are gone; two of these positions were converted (probably in the 1970s) to high hats, while the third now has a temporary fixture hanging from it.

Pink glass flush-to-the-ceiling lights are other examples of fixtures that are either entirely missing or for which only one or two remain.

In the auditorium there are two large hanging pendant lights flanking the proscenium. FOL thoroughly cleaned, polished and re-lamped these fixtures for the first time in what is believed to have been decades. Most of the original clear and colored glass beads, some in the shape of grapes, remain in place. A cracked piece of tinted and textured glass on one has been epoxied. All of the light sockets work. Overall, the two pendants are in good condition. They lower for re-lamping and cleaning, although not all the way to the orchestra floor, but rather to platforms in the faux opera boxes that serve as the fronts of the two organ chambers in which the lights hang. They are lowered by means of two winches (one for each) that area accessible from the auditorium attic. The winches, chains and manual connections are in good physical and working condition. The fixtures are controlled through the stage lighting interface (DMX).

High hat fixtures were installed in the ceiling under the balcony in the auditorium when the Loew's was converted to a triplex. FOL retained these lights when the bulk of the triplex alterations were removed. They are presently controlled through manual (not DMX) dimmers.

The original side wall sconces under the balcony in the auditorium were missing; temporary replacements are in their place, and are controlled by two manual (not DMX) dimmers.

Cove and dome lighting and side wall sconces in the balcony remain in place and are controlled by the stage lighting interface (DMX). The cove lighting was originally a three color incandescent system; under the balcony on the first floor of the auditorium re-lamping of the coves requires setting up ladders in, around and over the fixed auditorium seating, but domes in the high ceiling are re-lamped through portholes accessible from the auditorium attic. At some point, probably in 1949, neon was installed to replace the incandescent cove lighting, and while some of it remains functional, the neon does not provide adequate illumination.

The Loew's was apparently originally intended to have a large central chandelier installed in the main dome of auditorium's high ceiling; a platform is located in the attic over the center of dome where a winch was to be located, and electrical conduit was even installed to the platform. However, no opening in the center of the dome was made for the chandelier's chain or electric tether, indicating the decision to omit the chandelier was made during construction, prior to completion of auditorium's decoration. The reason for this apparent late decision not to install a chandelier in the auditorium is not known, although similar omissions are not unknown in the case of other theatres built in the era of the Loew's.

Aisle lighting is provided from sockets installed in the original ornamented cast iron end aisle seat standards. These alternated (left, right, left, etc.) down the aisle of the auditorium first floor and also the steps in the balcony. Interestingly, as originally built, this aisle lighting extended on the first floor of the auditorium from each of the doors leading in from the lobby but stopped at the forward edge of the balcony. The area from the edge of the balcony to the orchestra pit never had aisle lighting.

Wiring to most of the end aisle standards on the first floor was replaced because of the notably aged condition of the original; it is expected that this will also be done to the seating in the balcony as restoration of seating there proceeds. Most of the original aisle lighting presently works, except for the center aisle of the auditorium's first floor where all the wiring for the lighting was destroyed as part of the remodeling done to convert the theatre to a triplex; though FOL restored the concrete risers and flooring and seats at these positions, the wiring for end aisle lighting has not yet been re-installed. Also a portion of the lights in the extreme right aisle on house right on the auditorium first floor do not work because new conductor was not able to be pulled into the existing conduit there.

In fixtures that do not need to dim and also in which the bulb is not clearly visible, FOL had for years used tungsten-colored CFLs. More recently we have begun to switch over to LEDs, which should eventually allow -- provided the correct dimmers are installed -- the remaining tungsten bulbs to be replaced.

Lighting in the non-public areas was originally all bare bulb incandescent. Many of the old circuits still function, except in isolated areas where water infiltration had occurred while the Theatre was closed. In many areas, FOL installed florescent fixtures or, alternatively, installed CFLs in the extant sockets. Conversion to LED is ongoing as needed.

Where original fixtures are missing, they will have to be replicated by copying surviving units, or if such examples are not available, from photos as best as possible. In many cases, surviving original lighting -- especially the surviving hanging baskets in the lobby, which seem to have especially suffered from poor handling over the years -- will need some degree of restoration, including rewiring. The lobby chandelier, lobby side sconces and large hanging pendants in the auditorium will probably only require modest restoration and may not need to be rewired.

Throughout the building, assessments must be made as to the need to augment the original lighting to conform to modern expectations and safety standards and/or to highlight the Theatre's extraordinary architecture; this is especially true of the auditorium, where at the least aisle lighting will have to be restored to the center aisle and extended in each aisle to the orchestra pit on the first floor, and where a large central chandelier is likely the only practical way to achieve sufficient and diffuse lighting in the balcony. But adding ambient and architectural lighting will involve some historic preservation consideration as well; in past experimentation with lighting in the Loew's has sometimes dramatically altered the look and even feel of different spaces, which if made permanent would constitute a possibly unacceptable change to the original intent and experience of the Theatre's design.

Known Condition of Existing Lighting Circuits All of the original lighting circuits -- actually, ALL electrical power conductors of all amperages -- in the Loew's are run in black pipe conduit, junction and switch boxes, etc., that still conform to modern standards. Some circuits are individual, meaning they have their own neutral, while some share neutrals with one or two other circuits - again, still in conformance with modern practice and standards. Experience has shown mixed results in terms of attempting to pull out existing conductors from original conduit in the Theatre to replace with new. When conductors have been successfully pulled out, except in the relatively few instances where there had been damage and shorts due to water infiltration while the Theatre was closed, inspection often found that the old conductors appeared to be in generally good condition with the exception of portions on the end where they were spliced in device or junction boxes; this was typically most pronounced when the boxes were above lighting fixture and therefore subjected to heat that caused the old-type wire insulation to dry out; this is not an uncommon phenomenon with old wiring installations.

- **ADA**

The good news in terms of accessibility is that there are no barriers from the curb outside to the first floor of the auditorium, and though the slope of the orchestra (first) floor of the auditorium is steeper than would be allowed for new construction, it is existing and therefore grandfathered. But there are also some problems regarding accessibility: There is no barrier-free access to the stage or dressing room area. And while the total number of ADA-related seating can be easily accommodated on the first floor in terms of quantity, a strict interpretation of ADA requirements may suggest that persons with mobility challenges should be able to experience areas of the building that are currently only accessible by stair -- the lobby's promenade (or second floor) and third floor levels and even the first crossover of the auditorium are examples of such areas. Moreover, though there is one accessible restroom on the first floor, additional accessible restroom capacity is needed, and since there is no space to add such facilities on the first floor, they will have to be installed on other floors, which in turn means those floors will have to be accessible.

The HSR grappled with the challenge of lining up an elevator run in a building in which the layout changes radically from floor to floor, and also in which there is a pronounced separation of users in terms of patrons and performers and where each respectively needs to be.

Other ADA issues that must be given consideration include signage, site impaired directional info, appropriate heights for sales counters, etc.

- **Existing Public Restrooms & The Need For Additional**

There are just two original public restrooms, one each for men and women, in the Loew's. They are located on the promenade (second floor) level of the lobby, and both comprise decorative lounge rooms in addition to toilet rooms. They have been restored to a utility finish, with marble stalls and surviving original ceramic tile walls uncovered under many layers of paint. All of the toilets in the two restrooms have been replaced, and all Flushometer valves have either been replaced or rebuilt. One of two original pedestal sinks is missing from each restroom. A new three or four inch copper water supply line was run from the domestic water service connection in the front basement to the twin red brass water supply risers serving the two restrooms; these red brass risers were installed in 1949 to replace original galvanized water piping, and are in excellent condition.

Although not necessarily unusual for the era, the fact that a 3,187 seat theatre was built in 1929 with one restroom having just seven toilet stalls for women is rather breathtaking. The men fared a bit better, again not entirely remarkable for a building from the Loew's era, with six stalls but more than ten urinals. One ADA unisex restroom was added in relatively recent time immediately off of the first floor of the lobby. But clearly, more restroom capacity must be added for women, and also some for men. That is a challenge in a landmark building in which existing decorative finishes and even layout must not be significantly altered, and in which available "extra" space is in short supply. The HSR identifies a strategy by which several stalls may be added to the existing Ladies' Room, and also two areas in which new restrooms may be constructed. One of these areas is to be carved out of the basement plenum, and was in fact shown in earlier versions of original plans for the Theatre as containing additional men's and ladies' room suites. (It is not clear why those plans were changed; issues due to the height of ducts in the area and/or cost concerns are possible explanations.) The other area identified by the HSR for additional restrooms is the room under the projection booth at the top of the balcony.

- **Attic Spaces**

There are two large discontinuous attic spaces in the Loew's: one over the lobby and the other over the auditorium. In both spaces, the massive steel trusses supporting the roof are visible, as is the underside of the roof when you look up, and the top (reverse) side of the plaster shell when you look down. In some areas, it's possible to see the gap between the interior shell and the exterior masonry walls. Both have permanent, built-in lighting. And both have metal catwalks. In the attic over the lobby a catwalk leads to a ladder going up to the platform where the winch for the lobby chandelier is located. Extending from that platform, a catwalk leads to where winches were once located for the now-missing fixtures in the second level lobby area over the main entrance doors. In the attic over the auditorium, catwalks encircle all three domes to enable re-lamping through covered porthole openings. Catwalks also lead to two ship's ladders that go down to platforms where the winches are located for the auditorium pendant light fixtures that flank the proscenium. Some, but not all of the roof drain leaders can be reached with minimal effort from the attic spaces. There is no combustible construction in either attic.

- **Basements**

The Loew's has two levels of basements. The dressing rooms and related stage support spaces are located in both the first- and sub-basement levels in the rear of the Theatre. The building's mechanical equipment, i.e., HVAC, electrical service, inverter, etc., is located in the first level of the front basement. Literally between the mechanical area in the front, and dressing room area in the rear of the first

basement level is the large, sloped plenum space under the auditorium; a hallway connects the front and rear areas.

There is also an unfinished sub-basement extending under much of the front and plenum areas of the first level of the basement, up to a wall on the other side of which lies the finished dressing room portion of the sub-basement in the rear of the building. This unfinished sub-basement is accessed by a utility staircase extending down from the current boiler room in the front of the first level basement. Much of the "floor" of the unfinished sub-basement is old coal ash, apparently dumped there during the years the original boilers were coal fired. The southern side of the space appears to be sloped back-fill from the Theater's construction. We've sometimes described this unusual space as having the look and feel of an abandoned, half-finished subway station. A crawlspace actually extends from the unfinished sub-basement to an even lower level, under a portion of the sub-basement dressing room area to provide access to steam and plumbing pipes there. The unfinished sub-basement houses abandoned condenser pipes of the original CO2 air conditioning system, and also a second set of abandoned CO2 compressors. Part of the return air ductwork also runs through the unfinished sub-basement, as does some steam condensate piping and associated traps, and also drain pipes. At least one sewer cleanout is accessed in the unfinished sub-basement.

The unfinished portion of the sub-basement in the Loew's is certainly a large area, but unfortunately it has never been apparent to FOL how it could practically or cost-effectively be finished and made use of. Of course that question can be given renewed examination as part of planning for large scale restoration and renovation work.

- **The Marquee & Other Signage**

The underlying steel structure of the marquee is made up of steel beams cantilevered on a right angle from the Theatre's façade, with rods tied back on an angle to steel in the façade for additional stability. The connections of two of the rods to the cantilevered beams were recently replaced; at that time the condition of the beams was seen to be very good. The roof deck of the marquee is concrete, and a new modified bitumen roof was installed within the last year.

The original marquee face was in the French Style, meaning it arched up in the center, and was apparently made of copper -- which due to its malleability and resistance to corrosion was used in outdoor applications for which aluminum would likely be used today. It used stencil-type lettering, meaning cut out and back-lit. Original stained glass corners were replaced at some point in time with a neon design.

This original face was completely replaced in 1949 with the present marquee design. Nothing of the original remains except for the soffit, or underside, which is unchanged and still has dozens and dozens of working light bulbs in it (and still shows how the original marquee curved upward in the middle). The current marquee is made out of stainless steel, galvanized steel and porcelain enameled steel, plus white milk glass and now also lexan. It uses silhouette style letters hung on a stainless steel track in front of three (one on the front and two on the sides) large, lighted sign boxes; the center box is covered by the milk white glass, while the side boxes have the lexan. The boxes are presently lit by high output florescent tubes, though originally row upon row of incandescent bulbs were used (the heat given off must have been enough to bake bread!). There are chaser light circuits surrounding each of the sign boxes, as well as outlining the bottom perimeter of the marquee. The sign box on the front is flanked on

both ends by neon lettering that says "Loew's Jersey" in flashing cycles that light the first, then second, then both words, over and over again. All but two of the chaser light circuits work (we are working to determine where the problem is in each of the two), and the red neon names still flash. One of the mechanical flasher units for the chase circuits was replaced two years ago. The sign boxes were re-lamped a few years ago, though the ballast for one set of florescent tubes has recently stopped working and needs to be replaced. Most all of the bulb sockets in the marquee soffit still light. Two LED fixtures have been added under the soffit to provide light when the bulbs in the soffit are not lit.

No marquee lettering was left in the Theatre after it was close. FOL acquired a limited stock of lettering in two sizes from other theatres. Unfortunately, letters designed to work on the current marquee's track are no longer made, so additional letters can only be acquired when found used for sale.

Historic preservation regulations will require that either: i] the present marquee be largely retained in shape and appearance, with the possibility that some modern modifications will be allowed (ex: replace the current sign boxes with LCD panels that would obviate the laborious task of hanging letters while greatly increasing the range and style of messages that can be displayed); or ii] the original marquee be recreated in substantially the same design, proportions, appearance, etc., with the possibility that some modern modifications will be allowed (ex: LCD screens in lieu of the stenciled, back lit lettering).

The Loew's was built with a vertical sign (also called a "blade" sign) on the north west corner of its front façade. In fact, the north tower on the building is taller for that reason. The sign was enormous, and the weight and wind drag must have been substantial indeed. The sign was removed in the 1960s. In the early years of the effort to save the Loew's, FOL heard anecdotally that the vertical sign had been removed because it was deteriorating. Some years later, we were told directly that this was so by the man who was the manager of the Theater at the time. Some time after that, during the exterior restoration work done in the late 1990s, interior inspection of the north tower showed that the heavy steel that had been built into that tower to support the vertical sign (the steel was not related to holding up the tower itself) had literally rusted away from years of leaking in the tower. This means that unless the tower is completely disassembled, the rotted steel all replaced, and then the tower rebuilt, the vertical sign cannot be re-installed. Prior to the discovery of the disintegrated steel, FOL had considered the possibility of hanging a large banner in place of the vertical sign; but because the steel damage is so extensive, and the likely wind drag on a decent-sized banner would be significant, we concluded this idea was likely not practical, and so did not pursue whether it would even be acceptable under historic preservation guidelines. An engineering review, in addition to historic preservation review, would be needed to consider this idea again.

There was a changeable letter sign, apparently not backlit, originally installed in an arched area over the main doors. And there was a relatively small, non-illuminated sign over the exterior front of the former retail space, plus probably also painted-on signs in the retail windows.

Additional permanent signage will likely not be approved under historic preservation guidelines.

There is historic precedent for temporary banners and other temporary signage being hung from the underside of the marquee.

- **Ancillary Space**

Though the Loew's is obviously a large building, available space to convert to meet new or expanded needs is surprisingly scarce. The ornate public areas must be largely preserved intact, so for the most part cannot be significantly altered, closed off, etc. And there are not really a lot of existing non-public spaces that aren't already in use in ways that will have to continue. For instance, all of the dressing room area will likely be needed for large production related needs, and most of the areas in the front basement presently dedicated to mechanical equipment will need to remain so. And unlike some other theatre buildings of its age, the Loew's was not built with attached multiple retail spaces or offices intended for rent for non-theatre purposes that might now be able to be integrated into theatre operations.

Aside from the original attached former retail space and its annex, which will need to be renovated as for ticket sales, office space for the commercial operator, and office and storage space for FOL, the known existing ancillary spaces that may be considered for renovation to meet one or another operational needs are:

- two rooms (one significantly smaller than the other) in the front basement near one of the two stairwells from the first floor of the lobby were originally used as usherette and usher changing rooms; depending on final plans to add restrooms in that area of the basement, these rooms may be available to resume their original uses or be re-purposed;
- the two rooms that were created from bisecting the projection space that was built as part of the triplex conversion, located at the rear of the first floor of the auditorium on either side of center aisle; these rooms are currently in use for storage and also tech support.
- a small office off of the promenade (second floor) level of the auditorium;
- presently inaccessible space behind walls of the north and also south lobby promenades (lobby second floor); these spaces might be usable for storage provided preservation regulations would allow access to them to be cut in ornamented walls; also, the spaces are currently open on top and would have to be enclosed to meet fire code requirements;
- two spaces, one part of the lobby attic and the other part of the balcony plenum wedge, that are accessible from the area of the third level of the lobby; these two spaces would have to be enclosed to meet fire code;
- a fairly large area, essentially in the lobby attic over the north lobby promenade (lobby second floor) that was completely inaccessible as built and remained so until FOL cut an access opening into it from a third floor landing of the north lobby staircase; (this area is completely unfinished and would require modification of the supports holding up the ceiling over the north lobby promenade below, as well as need construction of floor and wall surfaces; before any of this is planned, an evaluation will be needed to be made of potential occupancy limits and associated egress requirements for the space).

Part of the front portion of the basement plenum is identified in the HSR as a site for additional restrooms and also storage. Similarly, a room under the projection booth is identified as a site of additional restrooms.

The original boiler room and adjacent old coal bunker are expected in the HSR to be the site of a new air conditioning plant.

And as noted elsewhere in this review, the front two thirds of the sub-basement is a large and unfinished space; however, as also noted, the ability to create access to this area and the cost effectiveness of renovating it into useful space needs to be carefully considered.

- **"Landlocked"**

The Loew's building takes up virtually all of its lot. The only open areas are on the south side, where a ten foot wide pedestrian passageway runs the length of the southern property line. This walkway is created by a perpetual easement in the property deed that was created by the Pennsylvania Railroad when it sold the lot to the Loew's Theatre Corporation. The purpose of the easement is to maintain forever a walkway for the benefit of persons using what was then the joint Pennsylvania and Hudson & Manhattan Railroad station across what was then Hudson Boulevard, and is now the Journal Square Transportation Center. The ten foot wide walkway must be kept open to pedestrians at all times.

Along much of the southern side, between the inward edge of the walkway easement and the south side wall of the Theatre, is a 15 foot wide open strip of land that serves two critical functions: It ensures a clear path from the numerous emergency egress doors on that side of the Theatre; and it also provides vital space for trucks during load-ins and outs.

What appears to be an open alley behind the stage on the western side of the property is not actually built on grade. Instead, it is a set-back in the building structure and a roof over dressing rooms below. It exists to create a rampway that is part of the emergency egress out of the Theatre on the northern side of the auditorium (including much of the balcony on that side). The main load-in door in the rear stage wall also opens onto this space, as noted elsewhere in this review, but because the ramp is not built on grade, trucks cannot be driven onto it during load-ins and outs.

A privately owned, multi-deck parking structure abuts the Theatre on the west side, meaning that as long as the garage stands, there is no opportunity to reconfigure the ramp or load-in situation, or -- conceivably -- expand the stage. A redevelopment plan to construct housing and possibly some retail space on the garage site has been adopted, and it includes schematic proposals to create a shared loading doc. But details, including how shared space would be scheduled, must be worked out, and presently there is no specific timeline for proceeding with the redevelopment.

- **The Clock**

Surmounting the front façade of the Loew's is a large Seth Thomas mechanical clock. Above the clock face is a terra cotta clad cupola (with underlying steel frame) in which are set moving figures of St. George with lance in hand and mounted on a horse, and his mythical nemesis The Dragon, plus two bells and associated external strike hammers. When functional, the dragon moves upward, with mouth opening and closing (there's a red bulb in The Dragon's mouth to simulate fire at night); St. George responds by thrusting his lance forward, after which The Dragon goes to a low position, presumably "slain". While this is happening, the bells ring out the time. This mechanical ballet happens every fifteen minutes. It is one of only a handful of moving figure clocks on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.

And it is all driven by the mechanical clockwork -- what can only be described as a magnificent, Rube Goldberg-like piece of machinery: a giant traditional clock mechanism that is essentially a huge version of what's inside an old bedside alarm clock. That clock mechanism is housed in a small enclosed but unheated space behind the clock face and directly under the "floor" of the cupola on which the figures

of St. George and The Dragon stand. The clockwork's gears move a rod up and down that makes The Dragon rise and fall, and cables attached to other gears pass up through sleeved holes in the cupola floor, attach to the figures, and are what moves St. George's arm, open and close The Dragon's mouth, and cause the hammers to strike the bells. The only electrically powered elements of all of this are motors that move short weight trains back up after the figures move, every fifteen minutes.

Years ago FOL confirmed that the clock was made by Seth Thomas and that the current -- over 20 years ago, now -- company bearing that name had both record of the clock's order and full plans for it in its archive.

The clock had apparently stopped working many years before the Theatre was closed; this was clear not only from the evident long dormancy of the clock mechanism but also from the fact that the figures had been bolted into place, perhaps out of concern for their stability. Bracing had also been put around sections of the clock cupola's terra cotta cladding, apparently to prevent it from falling off. And the wooded hands had been pointing straight down and partially missing for as long as most area residents could remember.

During the late 1990s restoration, the clock mechanism and figures were entirely removed and taken off site for restoration by a tower clock professional. The cupola was completely stripped down to the underlying steel, which was repaired/replaced as needed and flashed. (At this time, it was discovered that the two large clock bells had been hard-bolted to the cupola's steel frame, with no means to attenuate vibration. Because of this, FOL wondered if vibrations from the bell ringing might have contributed, over an extended time, to the cracking and loosening of the cupola's terra cotta cladding. After being entirely removed, the pieces of that terra cotta cladding were cleaned and laid out like a huge jigsaw puzzle for thorough inspection. Cracked pieces were pinned and epoxied and then all of the pieces were reassembled over the repaired steel cupola frame.

The clock mechanism was completely cleaned, restored and reinstalled. The internal armatures of St. George and The Dragon were cleaned, repaired and rust-proofed. New wooden hands were made and installed. New hammer-strikers for the bells were made, and the two large bells were reinstalled. Though the tower clock professional had initially not shared FOL's concern about the need to dampen vibrations from the struck bells, he eventually added some rubber for this purpose; but in fact FOL remains concerned about this, and believes even better means of vibration isolation should be considered. After the clock and its cupola were restored, some moisture was sometimes noted on the copper-lined floor of the clock mechanism room, probably from rain infiltration through the segmented glass clock face and/or through the rod and cable penetrations in the cupola floor.

The clock performed flawlessly for years after the restoration, but eventually began to stop at what initially seemed to be unpredictable and unrelated intervals. Eventually, it was determined that the new wooden hands had warped, and because of this were periodically rubbing and stopping against each other. New hands were made and installed, but did not grip properly for operation. By that point, the clock mechanism also needed thorough cleaning and checking. Unfortunately, the tower clock professional who had restored the clock was retired by that time, and an initial search for a suitable replacement did not yield results. In the time since, FOL has unfortunately been taken up with other, even more pressing issues, and has not yet further pursued the clock issue. But the clock is a spectacular and historic original element that should be reactivated again, and it is in overall good shape, especially compared to its pre-restoration condition.

A better attachment of the new metal hands, an overall inspection and cleaning, and performing whatever maintenance is determined to be needed are the known issues regarding the clock, with possibly further attention paid to the issues of vibration from the bells and also moisture in the clock mechanism room. New exterior lighting for the figures and internal lighting behind the glass clock face is also needed.

- **Miscellaneous**

- Upon close inspection, the central portion of the ornate bronze frame around the mirror on the southern wall in the outer lobby has hinges on one side. This is because the mirrored glass is actually not original. As built, the ornate frame was a back-lit sign box for posters. In recent years, an opening was made in the brick wall behind the mirrored glass to accommodate a future ticket window from a portion of the adjoining former retail space.

- The half terrazzo / half carpet floor in the central, oval portion of the first floor of the lobby is not original. As built, that space was fully carpeted with only a narrow marble boarder around the circumference. There were also floor ducts just inside each of the four sets of doors from the outer lobby that were sealed when the terrazzo floor was installed. The modification probably dates to the 1950s or early 1960s, and may have been intended to provide a more suitable floor surface in front of the concession counter. In addition to being more practical around a concession counter, the terrazzo floor now makes a good dance floor for wedding receptions in the Lobby. The original carpeting was a traditional floral design, primarily red with blue, yellow and other touches of color. The carpeting installed with the terrazzo used stylized "L"s as its main pattern, accompanied by small dots. It too was predominantly red. Samples of both styles of carpet were retained. The present carpet is 23 years old office grade, and is at the end of its useful life.

- When the Loew's was built, it was not equipped with a concession counter. At the time, the Loew's corporation (and probably the other major theatre chains/studios) thought snack eating was not appropriate behavior for the experience they were trying to create and market in their movie palaces. We're not sure exactly when a concession counter was installed, though a good assumption is during the Depression when all theatre chains needed to boost revenue. The concession counter that was in the Loew's when it closed in prep for demolition was made of orange and white Formica on the outside, and its interior was filthy, saturated with popcorn grease and soda syrup. The left-behind popcorn machine and other concession equipment was old and caked with grease, etc. All of this was disposed of. The current popcorn machine is owned by FOL, and the concession counters -- which are faux-painted to look like the marble wainscoting in the Lobby -- were originally made for a film shoot at the Theatre. They are on wheels, and can be moved out of the way. However, the area where they are typically set up -- along the northern side of the oval portion of the lobby -- was where the old built-in concession counter stood, and as a consequence the floor there is unfinished and uneven. This will have to be addressed in a major restoration.

- Between the two restroom suites on the promenade (or second floor) level of the lobby, the original design included an ornamental fountain with a large marble basin that was lined with mosaic tile, set into a large niche that was also decorated with marble and mosaic tile. Goldfish reportedly swam in the basin in the Theatre's first years. At some point, probably in the 1970s, in the course of constructing a

concession stand on the second floor, the front portion of the fountain basin was sledge-hammered out, and a false wall was constructed blocking off the niche. FOL eventually demolished this unsightly concession counter, and removed the false wall to re-expose the niche. Though the marble fountain basin is unfortunately broken, the marble and mosaic walls of the niche are in remarkably good condition. Presently, a temporary covering created for a TV production that was filmed in the Loew's in January conceals the damaged basin, but the fountain is a key architectural element that will need to be restored.

- Netting can be seen over a portion of the high ceiling in the auditorium. It was hung to protect against plaster falling from an area that was badly damaged by a failed roof drain located in the attic space immediately above that was reportedly leaking during the last years of the Theatre's operation prior to be closed. Evidence of an old attempt to catch and divert leaking rain water were found by FOL. The drain has since been repaired. The damaged section of ceiling will need to be repaired.

- All sewage, not just limited to that from the restrooms located below grade but also including that from the second floor public restrooms, is piped to a duplex sewer ejector pit in the sub-basement of the dressing room area, and pumped up and out through a sewer line that crosses through the plenum under the first floor of the auditorium and exits the building near the foot of Magnolia Avenue on the south side; the main house trap is located under a concrete step landing that leads up from the front of the first floor of the auditorium to one of the egress doors on the Magnolia Avenue side.