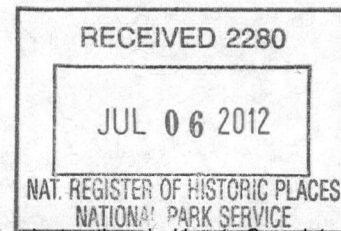


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Loew's Kings Theatre

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 1027 Flatbush Avenue [] not for publication

city or town Brooklyn [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Kings code 047 zip code 11228

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth A. Purpura DSHPD
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/27/12
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined not eligible for the National Register

[] removed from the National Register

[] other (explain) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

date of action

8-22-12

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings County, New York

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

10**TOTAL****Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**N/A**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION and CULTURE/Theater**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20thCENTURY REVIVALS/French Renaissance**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick, Terra Cottaroof Composite, Terra Cottaother (Tickets Booths) Metal - Bronze**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Loew's Kings Theatre
Name of Property
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Loew's Kings Theatre - Brooklyn, NY

Loew's Kings Theatre, constructed in 1928-1929, is located at 1027 Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. The theater was designed by the Chicago-based firm of Cornelius W. and George Leslie Rapp, prolific movie palace designers in the early-twentieth century, and construed by Thompson-Starrett Company. The imposing three-story theater's terra cotta veneered facade reflects the French Renaissance style, merging baroque- and rococo-inspired elements, while the brick veneered secondary elevations are utilitarian in nature with limited ornamentation. The building's irregular footprint and volume reflects its various internal functions. It is composed of two blocks: the rectangular grand lobby block that features the French Renaissance façade and the larger, irregular-shaped auditorium block, which also contains the inner lobby and various secondary and support spaces. The grand lobby block fronts Flatbush Avenue and connects on the east to the three-story auditorium block. This larger block is orientated diagonally from the southwest to the northeast.

The theatre is located mid-block on Flatbush Avenue — a major arterial road in Brooklyn — between Duryea Place to the south and Tilden Avenue to the north. The theatre, orientated to the west, is surrounded by small-scale commercial buildings ranging from one to three stories. Directly to the south of the theatre is a vacant lot, previously the site of a one-story building. There is no landscaping on the site.

The highly-ornamented terra cotta façade, adorning the narrow, rectangular, three-story grand lobby block, fronts directly on Flatbush Avenue. The façade with its semicircular-arched parapet rises over 40 feet in height, largely obscuring the 38-foot grand lobby block. The auditorium stands 84 feet in height with three-foot parapet walls that are stepped on the more publicly visible east and west sides, yet flat along the secondary side elevations. The section of the building housing the stage and dressing rooms, which projects from northeast corner and east elevation of the auditorium, is just over 35 feet high with a flat parapet.

Movie patrons are led eastward from the grand lobby to the inner lobby, which houses lounges for men and women, the coat check, and office space. The orchestra foyer runs diagonally (northwest-southeast), opening onto the orchestra seating in the horseshoe-shaped auditorium. The stage, dressing rooms, rehearsal rooms, additional restrooms, and stairs wrap around the northeast corner and east elevation of the auditorium, abutting the course of East 22nd Street.

Exterior

The west elevation of the narrow, rectangular mass serves as the building's primary façade and only fully articulated elevation. The west elevation's first story contains the original brass and glass storefront that is set within the full-width segmental arch opening. The frieze of the arch reads "WELCOME TO LOEW'S KINGS SHOWCASE THEATRE." The arched opening of the theatre's entrance is now fitted with a non-original rolling security gate. The storefront is slightly recessed within the arched opening with a bronze coffered reveal. An original polygonal bronze ticket booth projects from the center of the storefront. The highly ornamented ticket booth features a half-domical roof, windows glazed with etched glass, and a marble base. Single and double-leaf commercial style glass doors with brass framing and one-light transoms flank the ticket booth.

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Loew's Kings Theatre

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The original projecting metal marquee structure, with concave metal soffit, is suspended from the façade of the building by two metal cables. The soffit of the marquee features quatrefoil recessed panels edged with ogee-molding that was lit with individual light bulbs. However, in 1949, the marquee's highly ornamental face was replaced with its current, less ornate rectangular signage. The principal façade of the 1949 is in a tripartite configuration, with a central lightbox for lettering flanked by two smaller lightboxes featuring permanent signage advertising the theatre's name. All that remains today on the flanking lightboxes is the word 'Kings' in bulky plastic cursive.

Above the marquee, the cream-colored terra cotta block veneer extends the full height of the elevation and is crowned by a large parapet that rises almost a full story above the flat roof. The parapet, forming a broken segmental pediment, contains a centered terra cotta medallion pierced by a steel beam that once supported the theatre's massive blade sign. The segmental pediment caps the façade's prominent center bay, which features a full-height bas-relief panel formed from colored, irregularly-shaped terra cotta blocks. The connected blocks depict ornamental motifs, including scrolled foliage, acanthus, ribbons, trefoil with musical instruments, shields, birds, and a large mask reminiscent of Thalia (representing comedy). The bas-relief panel is set within a full-height, semi-circular arch framed by a rope, vignettes, reels, and running ornament. Shallow, full-height terra cotta pilasters flank this arch and visually support the segmental pediment. The pilasters feature bas-relief ornamental motifs such as urns, scrolls, acanthus, ovals with fleur-de-lis, and a demi-figure surrounded by snakes set in roundels with a woven basket of fruit and foliage above. Smooth terra cotta blocks, formed to resemble rusticated stone, are set between these pilasters and the corner piers of the façade. The corner piers, which also have bas-relief motifs, are crowned by freestanding square finials with acanthus, ogee molding, roundels, and fleur-de-lis set on oval medallions.

The theatre's blade signage existed with both versions of the marquee. It was removed sometime between 1983 and 1989.

The north and south elevations of the grand lobby block are treated as secondary elevations and lack fenestration. The simple red brick walls are embellished with bands of blonde brick at the corners and cornice. A one-story commercial structure obscures part of the north elevation and ghosting of a now-demolished one-story commercial building is evident on the south elevation.

The auditorium block is almost four stories tall at the theatre's fly tower, which runs diagonally from East 22nd Street at the northeast corner of the building.¹ The roof is surrounded by a parapet wall capped with terra cotta coping. A large exterior brick chimney with a squared cap is located in the southeast corner. The secondary elevations of the auditorium block are utilitarian in character and lack ornamentation and fenestration. On the front (west) and rear (east) elevations, single double-hung window openings with concrete sills primarily correspond to interior dressing rooms and offices. The window openings originally held double-hung metal sash windows, but many of the openings are in-filled with concrete block or covered by plywood. The auditorium block has four points of access. On the north and south elevations, double-leaf doors from the orchestra level lead to narrow alleys that exit to East 22nd Street. In addition, a window opening on the east elevation was

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enlarged to accommodate a single-leaf door to access the orchestra-level. On the southeast side of the auditorium, a fire exit, accessed by a metal ladder, provides egress from the mezzanine level. The exit features a single-leaf, flush metal door set under a shed roof. A large exterior brick chimney with a squared cap rises from the southeast corner.

Interior

The lavishly ornamented interior of the Loew's Kings Theatre mirrors the French Renaissance exterior. The design was a collaborative effort between the architects Rapp & Rapp and the renowned interior design firm of Rambusch Company. Because of the substantial floor-to-ceiling heights in the theatre, this building, which appears to be three stories in height from the exterior, accommodates only two interior floors: the orchestra and the mezzanine. The basement of the building is located entirely below grade.

The interior plan of Loew's Kings Theatre is a progression of contracting and expanding spaces that culminate in the large auditorium. From the exterior of the theatre, the patron moves from the public sidewalk to a modestly-sized, one-story vestibule, which then opens up into the three-story grand lobby and adjacent inner lobby. The expansive and elaborately designed lobbies transition into more modestly scaled foyers on both the orchestra level and mezzanine level that guide the patron into the theatre's auditorium. Secondary interior spaces, such as men's and women's lounges, are accessed from the foyers and continue the luxury of the primary spaces. Support spaces, including offices, dressing rooms, storage spaces, and mechanical spaces, are located in the front of the building, backstage, and in the theatre's full basement, and are minimal in their design.

Interior – Vestibule

The one-story vestibule, oriented north-to-south, extends the full width of the building's Flatbush Avenue elevation. The space is defined by two identical full-width bronze and glass storefronts to the west and east; the western storefront leads to the exterior and the eastern storefront leads to the grand lobby. Each storefront features a central ticket booth flanked by single- and double-leaf commercial-style bronze and glass doors. The ticket booth centered within the western storefront opens towards Flatbush Avenue. The ticket booth centered within the eastern (interior) storefront is no longer intact, but its pink marble base and metal support posts remain. The storefronts are set within a shallow segmental arch. The vestibule's north and south walls are sheathed in pink marble and have framed mirrors set with acanthus pattern and interior ogee molding; originally these frames held movie posters and announcements. Flanking the large mirrors are openings that house mechanical equipment, the ornamental covers of which are no longer extant. The poured concrete floor is covered with colored rubber mats that are patterned and textured to simulate rough-cut stone tiles. The mats are set within a border of red marble with metal clips that adhere at the corners to the concrete floor. The grid plan of the ceiling is formed by iron cross-beams in-filled with green glass and finished at their intersection with rosettes. The ceiling is framed by a bronze colored plaster cornice with a running ornament.

Interior – Grand Lobby

The grand lobby, accessed from the interior doors of the vestibule, extends the full-height of the theatre and is oriented west-east. Upon entry, the eastward view across the expansive grand lobby reveals two full-height

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arched openings that comprise the east side of the space. The opening to the right (south) leads to the inner lobby; the left (north) opening reveals the mezzanine- and orchestra-level foyers, the latter directly accessible. Both openings are framed by walnut Corinthian columns and are festooned with red and gold draperies. On the north wall of the grand lobby, a third full-height arched opening leads to an open stair that provides access to the mezzanine-level foyer.

The high style and elaborate detailing of the grand lobby contributes to the sense of luxury that heightens as the patron progresses through the theatre. The lobby floor is composed of white and pink marble tiles, which are set in an alternating diagonal pattern and edged by a red and black marble border. The wall treatment is divided by a wood chair rail composed of fillet, bolection, and astragal moldings. Below the chair rail is a lavishly finished red marble dado. Above the chair rail is walnut paneling interrupted by projecting full-height walnut Corinthian pilasters. The bases of the fluted pilasters are ornamented with running acanthus; an element that compliments the painted plaster capitals formed by the acanthus and scrolls. The pilasters, which are grouped in sets of three, flank full-height arched bays, two on the south wall of the lobby and one on the north wall of the lobby. The lower field of the arched bays features shallow tripartite cases that held movie posters and announcements. These walnut cases feature glass casement doors detailed with a pattern of running leaf and oval rosettes. Each case is crowned by a walnut entablature adorned with bas-relief of urns, scrolled foliage, egg-and-dart, acanthus, ogee-molded cornice with a water leaf and tongue motif, and a broken pediment with an urn. The cases retain their original brass hardware. The upper field of the arched bays houses a tripartite arrangement of tinted mirrors framed with red and gold drapery. The arch of the bay is formed by highly ornamented painted plaster that transitions into the barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling of the grand lobby. The vault of the ceiling springs from the ornate entablature visually supported by the walnut pilasters and composed of a fluted frieze framed by an ogee-molded taenia and cornice. The one-story vestibule is set within the western end of the grand lobby. The western wall, set over the vestibule, is composed of a semicircular, arched mirror flanked by additional walnut pilasters and festooned by partially intact red and gold draperies. The fanlight of the mirror is framed by painted plaster that continues the ornament of the plaster ceiling.

The grand lobby's plaster ceiling features square- and octagonal-shaped ornamental coffers dressed with rosettes, patera, foliage, scrolls, shells, and urns. Three original light fixtures, constructed of glass and metal, hang from the ceiling and correspond to the mirrors within the arched bays. The lantern light fixtures are ornamented with fleur-de-lis, prisms, pendalogues, and, at the bottom, a large round glass pendalogue hanging from a metal stem.

Interior – Inner Lobby

The inner lobby extends diagonally from the grand lobby, running northwest to southeast, parallel to the foyers. The northwest end of the inner lobby opens directly into the grand lobby, and the southeast end of the inner lobby features the grand stair leading to the mezzanine-level foyer. The space maintains the scale and architectural vocabulary of the grand lobby, including walls featuring a series of full-height arched bays flanked by walnut pilasters, a highly ornamental barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling, red marble and walnut wall treatments, and four original hanging light fixtures.

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The three bays on the northeast wall, framed by shallow segmental arches and concave imposts, open into the adjacent orchestra- and mezzanine-level foyers. The lower opening provides direct access to the orchestra-level foyer. From the upper (mezzanine-level) opening, patrons can view the inner lobby over a cast-iron balustrade. The upper and lower openings both feature red and gold draperies and are separated by decorative perforated wood panels. The southeast wall repeats the shallow segmental arched openings on the first and mezzanine levels; however, the openings are blind and separated by decorative wood grilles. The first-story blind opening has smooth walnut paneling festooned with red and gold drapery. The second-story blind opening contains mirrors festooned by matching draperies and a cast-iron balustrade.

The projecting walnut pilasters that frame the arched bays on both walls are smooth and ornamented with acanthus, cavetto molding, and scrolled motif. The concrete floors of the inner lobby are carpeted. The barrel-vaulted ceiling continues the ornamental plaster coffers seen in the grand lobby. A concession stand has been added to the southeast end of the inner lobby at the base of the stairs.

Interior – Foyers and Stairs

The theatre features a foyer on both the orchestra and mezzanine levels to provide a transition from the lobbies to the auditorium. The foyers run parallel to the inner lobby (northwest to southeast) and to the back aisle of the auditorium. In comparison to the lobbies, the foyers have similar but simplified detailing and materials. The orchestra-level foyer is accessible through a series of arched openings from both the grand lobby and the inner lobby along the foyer's southwest wall. These openings are marked at the imposts with plaster scrolled foliage and patera. Between each arched opening, a full-height mirror is set within a water leaf surround and finished at the corners with scrolled foliage and patera. The opposite (northeast) wall of the foyer houses a series of entrances to the auditorium's aisles. These entrances are fitted with double-leaf wood doors that are pierced by a porthole window within a recessed panel. Between each entrance is a decorative grouping of three nine-light, fixed sash, wood windows. The window openings, some of which have been in-filled with plywood, feature interior (foyer-side) and exterior (auditorium-side) draperies that closed during shows to reduce light and sound. The wall surfaces are treated with painted smooth wood panels and feature a combination of ornamental bas-relief plaster and fabric panels set within decorative plaster frames. The ceiling is treated with flat plaster punctuated by a series of bas-relief plaster panels ornamented with swans, vases with flowers, running ornament, foliages, and a shield with a fleur-de-lis. Each panel frames a plaster medallion in which a smaller perforated metal medallion is centered. Both medallions feature acanthus, shields with fleur-de-lis, pineapples, leaves, "whiplash" curves, waves, and stylized floral motifs. Hanging lantern fixtures were attached to the metal medallions; only one fixture remains. The cornice of the ceiling is a foliage band motif with smooth filler and guilloche molding. The foyer floor is carpeted and has an ogee-molded wood baseboard.

The orchestra-level foyer's southeast end has a high degree of detail and is marked by an ornamental coffered plaster ceiling similar in style to the lobbies. Although severely damaged in areas, the ceiling consists of oblong and octagonal panels with rosettes, patera, acanthus, foliage, and fleur-de-lis. The southeast end walls were originally treated with large fabric panels framed in plaster executed in a water leaf motif. The non-extant fabric panels were separated by full-height plaster bas-relief panels composed of two large fluted urns, scrolled foliage, rectangular medallions with foliage, patera, and a central shield, all within a water leaf frame. Two free-standing

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Loew's Kings Theatre
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stone water fountains embossed "Drink and be Refreshed" remain in the foyer. In addition, the orchestra-level foyer leads to highly ornamented secondary spaces including the coat check room, the women's lounge and oval-shaped "cosmetic" room, walnut-paneled men's lounge, administrative offices, and the enclosed straight-flight stair to the basement.

The mezzanine-level foyer is accessed by two sets of grand stairs – one located at the eastern end of the north wall of the grand lobby and the other located at the southeastern end of the inner lobby. The grand lobby stair has a half-geometrical plan with half-landings that follow the oval shaped structure of the irregular shaped building. The stair, partially enclosed, features carpeted treads and risers with minimal marble trim and circular starter steps. The closed stringer is faced in marble, matching the base of the main newel posts. The perforated cast iron balustrade is composed of scrolled floreation and a ribbon motif of metal supporting a rounded metal gripper. The central balustrade and wall rail have been removed. The light fixtures that were originally located on the console-like newel posts have also been removed. The open stair in the inner lobby stair has a quarter-turn plan. This wide stair is ornamented similarly to the grand lobby stair. The stringer is veneered in walnut and is marked by a trapezoidal-shaped opening surrounded by a wide casing with narrow ogee banding. The center of the opening holds a trapezoidal-shaped metal grate.

The mezzanine-level foyer runs parallel to the back aisle of the auditorium. As with the orchestra-level foyer, the northeast wall of the mezzanine-level foyer has seven aisle entrances fitted with double-leaf wood doors. The recessed doors have smooth reveals and soffits, but are ornately framed in a wide guilloche molding. The foyer's concrete floors are carpeted and edged with an ogee-molded baseboard. The plaster walls are covered with fabric panels set within an ornamental plaster frame with a water leaf motif. The wall features a series of narrow plaster pilasters and fabric panels with a water leaf and tongue surround, acanthus, waves and shells, and scrolled foliage. The ceiling of the foyer has a stylized cornice with fluting and acanthus. Similar to that of the orchestra-level foyer, the ceiling has floral plaster ornamentation within the rectangular and round medallions, which are all edged in acanthus. The wall sconces and hanging light fixtures have been removed. Secondary spaces accessed from the mezzanine-level foyer include the oval-shaped men's smoking lounge, women's lounge and "cosmetic" room, and enclosed straight-flight stair to projection room located above the mezzanine foyer. At the time of the survey, the projection room was inaccessible; however, historic photographs show a simple room lacking ornamentation with small square openings to the auditorium for projection equipment and lights.

Interior – Auditorium

Loew's King Theatre's expansive horseshoe-shaped, hard-topped auditorium is its most lavishly ornamented space. The three-story auditorium, located within the main block of the building and perpendicular to the foyers, has bilateral symmetry along a southwest to northeast axis. The orchestra and mezzanine levels contain 2,890 and 800 seats, respectively. The auditorium expands upon the established baroque-and rococo-inspired plaster, textile, and wood ornamental details. The focus is on the proscenium on the northeast wall, which is formed by a segmental arch, rising 60 feet, with concave imposts. The proscenium features a highly detailed frame with guilloche leaves, rope with acanthus ties, fleur-de-lis with leaves and patera, and medallions with rococo-

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inspired silhouettes. The apex of the proscenium is marked by a projecting crown. A decorative fire screen is intact.

From the proscenium, a series of distyle Corinthian columns and parabolic arches creates a colonnade that supports the vaulted ceiling. This colonnade forms the side and back aisles of the auditorium. Each of the parabolic arched bays is festooned by draperies, and the bays on the side walls of the mezzanine were originally in-filled with large painted canvas murals. The plaster ceiling of the auditorium rises from the colonnade and features ornamental octagonal and square coffers with rosettes and patera detailing. Dominating the plane of the ceiling is a deeply stepped, quatrefoil recess. The recess features more of the highly ornamental plasterwork of the ceiling.

Full-height recessed bays that house the organ chambers flank the proscenium. The highly ornamented bays are draped to partially obscure the pipes and are framed by full-height twisted pilasters with ornamental garlands. The bays terminate at the orchestra level in deep alcoves that are integrated into the side aisles. The walls of the orchestra-level side aisles feature small statuary niches and fabric panels. The shallow, horse-shaped mezzanine is supported by large square and round columns ornamented in bas-relief plaster. From the orchestra level, the mezzanine has a highly ornamented plaster soffit and fascia.

The auditorium's seating is configured into several sections by seven carpeted aisles and a single cross aisle. The orchestra pit at the base of the proscenium is marked by a closed balustrade, which features plaster and marble detailing. The seating on the orchestra level is not original.

The mezzanine continues the French Renaissance ornamentation. Fluted Corinthian pilasters are interspersed along the walls, rising the full height of the space to meet the square support beams of the ceiling. Segmental arched openings set between fluted Corinthian columns with roping at the base provide entry to the 800 balcony seats. The mezzanine retains the original ornamental cast iron stanchions with scrolled feet. The crescent-shaped balcony extends along the walls almost to the stage.

Interior – Basement

The basement of the theatre houses additional public spaces, as well as support spaces. The public spaces include an additional lounge and men's and women's restrooms. The support spaces include the meter room, usher's locker room and club, refrigeration and machine rooms, and, under the stage, storage space for lights and electrical equipment, as well as rooms for the musicians and piano and organ.

Integrity

The Loew's Kings Theatre has an extremely high level of integrity, despite not being operated as a movie theater since its closing in 1978. An alteration that has affected the integrity of design and materials is the removal of the blade sign on the façade. The interior of the theater is remarkably intact, save the removal of the wall and center balustrades on the stairs, some of the light fixtures, the projection equipment, and the organ. Intact original elements include the marble floors, ornate wall finishes such as drapery, decorative barrel-vaulted ceilings, full-height Corinthian pilasters and columns,

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Loew's Kings Theatre

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proscenium arch with stage and dressing rooms, and organ chambers with alcoves, continue to reflect the theater's original design plan and intention of the architects. Further, the retention of these materials and the workmanship required to present such a lavish high-style design reflects the building's historic function and the technologies and supplies available when it was constructed in 1928-1929.

The structure has not been altered by additions or removal of spaces, although the uses of some secondary interior spaces may have been changed. The building's intentional and continual location in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn is essential to understanding Loew's goal to expand the grandeur of the movies to the major residential centers outside of Broadway. As a visual landmark in Flatbush, the theater was designed to deliberately overshadow everything in its immediate neighborhood. The theater is no longer in use and many of its original neighboring commercial establishments have been demolished or substantially altered. Despite these alterations, the setting of Flatbush Avenue and the theater's location along this main commercial thoroughfare continues to reflect the environment in which the movie palace was constructed. Thus, the Kings Theatre has integrity of location and setting. Although it is no longer owned or operated by Loew's, and therefore no longer maintains integrity of association, it continues to express the aesthetic and historic sense of 1920s movie palaces and has a high level of integrity of feeling.

Loew's Kings Theatre

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8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave
- ☐ **D** a cemetery
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

ArchitectureEntertainment/ Recreation**Period of Significance:**1928 - 1949**Significant Dates:**1928/1929, 1949**Significant Person:**n/a**Cultural Affiliation:**n/a**Architect/Builder:**Cornelius W Rapp & George L Rapp, architectsThomson- Starrett Company, builder**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by historic American Building Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other repository: _____

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Loew's Kings Theatre – Significance

Loew's Kings Theatre, located at 1027 Flatbush Avenue in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, and constructed between 1928 and 1929, is significant as an exemplary example of a 1920s "movie palace." Movie studios constructed a great number of these palatial theaters to attract audiences through lavish or exotic surroundings that indicated wealth, romance, and adventure. The Loew's Kings Theatre, completed at the height of the movie palace boom, was one of the five "Wonder Theaters" built in New York City and northern New Jersey by Loew's Inc., one of the nation's largest theater chains. The "Wonder Theaters" were constructed to expand the grandeur of the movies to major residential centers outside of the Times Square/Midtown Manhattan Theater District. Loew's Kings Theatre's opulent French Renaissance-inspired décor, designed by leading movie palace architects Cornelius W. Rapp and George L. Rapp, was onto itself an attraction that transported audiences to other worlds. The theater's design features the trademarks of a Rapp & Rapp theater, including ornamental terra cotta tiles on the façade, a magnificent grand lobby with full-height semicircular-arched openings, Corinthian pilasters and columns, and a lavishly adorned auditorium.

Loew's Kings Theatre's is significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment as the site of Flatbush Avenue's grand movie palace, and more specifically, as one of five 'Wonder Theaters' constructed by Loew's Inc. in the New York City metro area. When it opened in 1929, Kings Theatre hosted live entertainment alongside Hollywood pictures, a relic of movies' origins in nickelodeons and vaudeville halls. The Kings Theatre was also constructed during the period in which feature-length films were first being accompanied by synchronized sound. Rapp & Rapp not only provided a visually stunning setting, but a heightened acoustic experience. *Architecture and Building Magazine* observed that "it is perhaps the first theatre to be designed particularly to meet the needs of the talking picture." The architects placed all but 800 of the 3,690 seats in a fan-arrangement on the main floor and omitted a true balcony resulting in "a vast open auditorium which offers no interrupting elements to the transmission of sound waves." In addition, echoes were eliminated through the extensive use of draperies in the bays that pierce the auditorium walls. Within a decade of its construction, the live performers at Kings were completely supplanted by celluloid actors and actresses. The demand for movies was so great that Loew's Kings Theatre ran continuous showings for up to 12 hours every day. The theater represents the emergence of movies as the nation's premier form of entertainment in the 1920s.

The theatre is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its exuberant high-style French Renaissance design and as an exceptional example of the work of architects Rapp & Rapp, who executed their design in collaboration with the interior designers at Rambusch Company. The lavish ornamentation began on the terra cotta façade, which invited movie goers to the brass vestibule and domed ticket booths and led them into the grand lobby. Rising nearly three stories in height, the lobby features full-height semicircular-arched openings supported by Corinthian pilasters and columns. The barrel-vaulted ceilings of the grand lobby and auditorium are ornately dressed with medallions, scrolls, rosettes, patera, shells, roundels, and demi-figures. The embellishments heighten at the proscenium arch, which is flanked by small alcoves in which caryatides visually support the organ chambers above. Imposing, full-height spiral Corinthian columns mark the sides of the 60-foot proscenium arch, which has a border of guilloche leaves, rope with acanthus ties, fleur-de-lis with leaves and patera, and medallions with classically inspired silhouettes. Although similar motifs, moldings, and

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materials were used, the embellishments of the French Renaissance were varied throughout the theater as a means to entertain the eye and continuously engage the senses of the movie patrons. Art Nouveau details, popular in the 1920s, were modestly infused to illustrate the designers' and theater owners' understanding of modern design and twentieth-century technology. Exaggerating historicism, Art Nouveau relied on such diverse sources for inspiration as the baroque and rococo elements of the French Renaissance. The result is a luxurious high-style movie palace that intentionally overshadows everything in its immediate neighborhood.

The period of significance, 1928 to 1949, captures the theatre's construction and opening on September 7, 1929 and terminates with the 1949 introduction of the current boxed marquee.

The Flatbush Neighborhood

Flatbush Avenue traverses Brooklyn, from Manhattan Bridge on the north to Jamaica Bay on the south, following a former Native American trail. The Flatbush neighborhood takes its name from the Dutch word *vlackebos*, or "wooded plain." Prior to the opening of Prospect Park in 1868, Flatbush retained its agricultural character that extended back to Dutch colonization in the mid-seventeenth century. The construction of the park combined with road improvements eliminated the hills that "kept the tides of population from overflowing into the flatlands of the Old Dutch Farms." Prospect Park "changed the hills of gloom into the fairest pleasure ground the world has." The arrival of the Brooklyn-Flatbush and Coney Island Railway in 1878, which extended from Prospect Park to Brighton Beach, made the area attractive to developers. By 1890, the neighborhood was crisscrossed by five trolley lines, further enticing development.

In 1894, Flatbush was incorporated into Brooklyn; by then, those who could afford it were relocating their families to the suburban environment. As Flatbush developed, the avenue served as a dividing line between the prosperous "Victorian Flatbush" to the west and working-class neighborhoods to the east. *In the Realm of Light and Air*, John Z. Lott described the pattern of development in Flatbush:

Judging from the tendencies of present development, the east side of town will largely be devoted to the erection of brick and stone flats and private dwellings. There would seem, however, to be enough restricted property on the west side, between Flatbush and Coney Island Avenues, to hold the fine character of development already started. It would seem, therefore, that the result in the future there will be a choice of high-grade detached residential sections without undue congestion, surrounded by a modern city. This done should make values in both sections referred to very high and the section very popular.

As Lott's description implies, the developers of Flatbush's western neighborhoods had a vision of a community populated by a refined and cultured Protestant middle class—a refutation of apartment living in Manhattan. This suburban ideal was fleeting, however, as Eastern European, Italian, and Jewish immigrant and first-generation families began moving into Flatbush in the 1920s. The new arrivals populated large six-story elevator high rises and four-story walkups constructed along Ocean Avenue.

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The urbanization of the 1920s transformed Flatbush Avenue, the neighborhood's main commercial avenue. Local groceries, bakeries, butcher shops, pharmacies, and hardware stores where residents did their daily shopping were joined by larger stores. Loehmann's clothing store opened on Duryea Place, just east of Flatbush Avenue, in 1921. Sears & Roebuck opened its first New York store off of Flatbush Avenue on Beverley Road and Bedford Avenue in 1925. The street was also the neighborhood's premier destination for entertainment, as a series of movie palaces were constructed: the Albemarle, the Cortelyou, the Parkside, the Patio, and Kings Theatre.

Movie Palaces

On April 14, 1894, the first motion picture debuted in New York City at Koster & Bail's Music Hall. However, until the 1910s, movies remained a novel accessory to vaudeville shows, a theatrical genre of variety entertainment. Following World War I, an entrepreneurial American film industry ushered in cinema as the nation's premier form of entertainment. The success of short silent films accompanied by an orchestra, organ, or phonograph led to the production of hundreds of full-length features every year to meet the publics' insatiable demand for this thrilling, yet affordable form of entertainment. The introduction of synchronized sound in 1927, followed soon after by accurate color, signaled the Golden Age of Hollywood. The epics, comedies, and musicals that resonated with audiences were not the only reason to go to the movie theater. According to historian David Naylor, "...the theaters were the local gathering spots, the centers of downtown nightlife. The movies provided a release for the increasing pressures of a world growing more hectic by the day. A ticket to a show was a passport to the lives and cultures otherwise beyond reach. No form of entertainment had ever been as accessible or as popular."

As the popularity of movies increased, a few of these entrepreneurial purveyors quickly expanded their operations to meet the demand. Beginning in the 1920s, local theater operators aligned themselves with Hollywood studios to eliminate competition over the same films. This collusion enabled former vaudeville men like Marcus Loew, Benjamin Franklin Keith, Edward Albee, William Fox, and Balban & Katz to create movie theater empires that extended across the country. Construction boomed in the late 1920s as these chains built multiple theaters in each of the nation's major population centers.

After the turn of the twentieth century, designers of vaudeville houses and nickelodeons derived inspiration from Baroque palaces, Mediterranean palazzos, Gothic cathedrals, and Indian and Chinese temples. However, the early movie theaters tended to reflect traditional opera halls. With vaudeville's popularity waning in the 1910s, movie theater architects began to create more lavish, even gaudy, "movie palaces." In New York City, Samuel "Roxy" Rothapfel oversaw the construction of the nation's first "movie palace," the Regent in Manhattan, in 1913. Despite criticisms that they were degrading the profession, the leading movie theater architects sought to provide the masses with the trappings once associated with the rich. George Rapp, the designer of Loew's Kings Theatre, remarked of one of his theaters, "Here is a shrine to democracy where there are no privileged patrons. The wealthy rub elbows with the poor—and are better for this contact." In addition to reflecting these lofty aspirations, the ornate exteriors of the movie palaces served the basic economic function of attracting patrons, and the dazzling and opulent interiors "[kept] the patron's mind off the fact that he is

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waiting." Passing under the marquee and through the entrance, moviegoers were greeted with cavernous lobbies with giant columns, sweeping stairs, marble fountains, statues, oil paintings, draperies, and chandeliers hanging from the gilded ceiling. In the words of Marcus Loew, "we sell tickets to theaters, not movies."

The studio chains typically hired their movie palace designers from a small group of specialized architects. These included Thomas Lamb (1871-1942), the designer of the Regent, who went on to become the top theater architect on Broadway. Lamb had a close professional relationship with Marcus Loew and designed the majority of the chain's theaters across the nation. John Eberson (1875-1954) was credited as the inventor of the "atmospheric theater," in which he replaced the traditional domed ceiling with a blue plaster "sky" complete with twinkling electric light constellations and clouds projected from a magic lantern machine. Eberson's extraordinary atmospheric effects, classically inspired decorations, and Renaissance inspired statuary transported moviegoers to outdoor auditoriums of antiquity. Following closely behind Lamb and Eberson as the nation's foremost theater architects was the firm of Rapp & Rapp, formed by Cornelius W. Rapp (1861-1927) and George L. Rapp (1878-1942). The brothers established their reputations designing theaters for Balaban & Katz in Chicago. Other prominent theater architects included C. Howard Crane (1885-1952), B. Marcus Priteca (1889-1971), G. Albert Lansburgh (1891-1939), Emile Weil (1878-1945), and the firms of Hoffman & Henon, Levy & Kline, and Weeks & Day.

Loew's Inc.

Loew's, Inc. was founded by Marcus Loew (1870-1927) in 1910. Loew, the son of Jewish immigrants, was born in tenements on the Lower East Side. After leaving school at a young age to sell newspapers, he eventually published his own weekly paper, the *East Side Advertiser*. At the age of nineteen, he abandoned print media to become a wholesale furrier and independent broker in the garment industry. In 1903, Loew entered into the entertainment industry by investing in fellow fur merchants Adolph Zukor and Morris Kohn's Automatic Vaudeville Company. The following year, Loew established his own company, the People's Vaudeville with backing from friends and family. He used his contacts in the garment industry to open penny arcades in New York and Cincinnati, Ohio. Loew hired amusement park operators Nicholas and Joe Schenk to join the People's Vaudeville after being impressed by their "scenic tour," a narrow room set up like a train car with a screen that displayed moving pictures representing passing scenery. Over the next half century, the Schenk brothers would play key roles in expanding the Loew entertainment empire.

As the popularity of amusement halls began to decline, Loew introduced projection machines into his penny arcades. The early success of these short films encouraged Loew to retrofit nickelodeons and vaudeville auditoriums into movie theaters. In 1907, he converted a former burlesque house in Brooklyn into the Royal Theatre (no longer extant) where he showed both film and live vaudeville shows. Loew quickly assumed control of several other combined vaudeville and movie theaters in New York City. In 1910, he formed Loew's Consolidated Enterprises, which later became Loew's Inc., with partners Zukor and the Schenk brothers. Within a decade, Loew's became one of the largest theater chains in the nation, with combined vaudeville and movie theaters in Atlanta, Boston, Memphis, Baltimore, New Orleans, Birmingham, and Montreal.

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In 1920, Loew's Inc. acquired the Metro movie studio from the Goldwyn Production Company. Under the direction of producer Louis B. Mayer, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, or MGM, became the dominant studio of Hollywood's golden age. Its parent company, however, remained focused on the theater expansion. By 1927, the year of his death, Marcus Loew owned 144 theaters across the nation. His sudden death from illness coincided with the advent of synchronized sound and it was left to his successor, Nicholas Schenk, to oversee the company's transition to sound. The Loew's Kings Theater was constructed under Schenk's tenure as president, which lasted until his retirement in 1957.

The Wonder Theaters

In the 1920s, Paramount-Publix began planning a series of exceptionally grand theaters for New York City. The chain completed its flagship, the Paramount, located at 43rd Street and Broadway in Times Square, in 1926. The Paramount, which was converted to retail uses in 1964, was perhaps the most opulent movie palace designed by the Rapp brothers; the Italian marble columns in its Grand Hall alone cost half a million dollars. In 1927, the studio chain began construction on the Rapp & Rapp designed Brooklyn Paramount, located at 385 Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. Fearing the increased competition, the Loew's chain offered Paramount a bargain. According to Paramount President Adolph Zukor, "When the Loew concerns found we were building our own places, Nicholas Schenck, president of Loew's, came to us and offered to take the theatres off our hands. An agreement was arrived at to this effect, and we made an agreement with Loew's by which our pictures were shown in more than forty theatres." In addition to showing Paramount movies in Loew's theaters, Schenck agreed not to build theaters in Chicago, the capital of the Paramount empire. Subsequently, Zukor transferred the blueprints for four unbuilt "Wonder Theaters" to be located in major residential centers outside of Manhattan to Loew's. Designed by the some of the nation's foremost theater architects, the Wonder Theaters were intended to extend the richness of Paramount into the surrounding Boroughs.

In addition to the Kings in Brooklyn, the Wonder Theaters included the Valencia Theater (165-Jamaica Avenue in Queens), the Paradise Theater (2413 Grand Concourse in the Bronx), and the Jersey Theatre (666 Fifth Street in Jersey City). All four extant theaters were constructed by Loew's in 1928-1929. The Spanish-style Valencia, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Paradise Theater, a New York City registered landmark, were designed by John Eberson to be the most elaborate atmospheric theaters in New York. The Jersey Theater is registered as a New Jersey Historic Site and determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The building was designed by Rapp & Rapp and features a Spanish Baroque interior, and like the Kings, an elaborate terra cotta façade. These four theaters were joined in 1930 by the 175th Street Theater at 4140 Broadway. Also deemed a Wonder Theater, the extant 175th Street Theater was Thomas Lamb's most exotic creation, featuring Indian and Chinese inspired decoration on the interior and Hindu motifs integrated into the Mayan Revival temple form of the exterior.

The origin of the term "Wonder Theater" is uncertain. According to the *New York Times*, the term had a generic use that dated to the advent of movie theaters during the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1918, an ad in the *Chicago Tribune* used it in referring to the Chicago Theater on State Street. In 1923, the *Boston Daily Globe* contained an item on B. F. Keith's plans to construct a 'wonder palace.' In 1928, a letter to the editor of

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the *Chicago Tribune* declared that for a building "to be a 'wonder theater,' it must be absolutely hideous. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Nomination for the Valencia attributes the name of the New York theaters to their Morton "Wonder" Organs. The term may have occasionally applied to other Loew's theaters in New York. For example, a 1929 advertisement in the *New York Times* listed the Pitkin and Metropolitan Theaters in Brooklyn among the Wonder Theaters. Regardless of its origins or scope, the term 'Wonder Theater' eventually came to refer exclusively to the quintet of the Valencia, Paradise, Kings, Jersey, and 175th.

Loew's Kings Theatre

The Wonder Theaters were constructed during a tumultuous time in the movie industry as studios adjusted their operations to accommodate "talking pictures" or "talkies." In October 1927, the success of *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length movie to include synchronized dialogue, led to the instant decline of silent films and the wide spread adoption of the new technology. In 1928, following an agreement by Hollywood studios to adopt the Vitaphone Process (audio synchronization), Nicholas Schenck, president of Loew's Inc., dedicated \$3 million to retrofit all of the chain's theaters for electronic amplification.

The Kings Theatre was constructed at the cusp of this new audio era. In designing the Kings Theatre, Rapp & Rapp not only provided a visually stunning setting, but a pleasant acoustic experience, as well. A profile of the Kings Theatre in the October 1929 *Architecture and Building Magazine* observed that "it is perhaps the first theatre to be designed particularly to meet the needs of the talking picture." The Kings Theatre lacked a true balcony; instead, Rapp & Rapp placed all but 800 of the 3,690 seats in a fan-arrangement on the main floor. The remaining seats were located on shallow mezzanine level. The result, according to *Architecture and Building*, "is to give a vast open auditorium which offers no interrupting elements to the transmission of sound waves." Echoes were eliminated through the extensive use of draperies in the bays that pierce the auditorium walls. *Architecture and Building* also provided a description of Kings Theatre as it appeared on opening night:

In decoration the style is given as Italian baroque and is most sumptuous and rich in color with a predominating use of red. The stage is fully equipped for the most elaborate production. By the elimination of the balcony, there is an improved location possible for the projecting apparatus and this is worked into the decorative treatment of the central bay at the rear of the theatre in an unobtrusive way.

The approach to the theatre is through a great rotunda with staircases leading to a mezzanine foyer, all of which is carried out with a rich elaboration of ornament. In addition to the decoration of the house itself, there are appropriate settings for many fine paintings and pieces of sculpture which add to the decoration and interest of the interior.

Loew's Kings Theatre opened on September 7, 1929. The cinema premier, *Evangeline*, was accompanied by a live performance by the movie's star, Dolores Del Rio. According to an advertisement in the *New York Times*, the audience was also treated to a "scintillating musical review" featuring "Frills & Fancies" off of Broadway. A

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matinee performance of the "complete de luxe stage show" cost 35 cents; the price for the evening show was 60 cents.

The theatre benefited from and contributed to the bustle along the Flatbush Avenue. Its round-the-clock operation was intended to entice shoppers. A theater brochure from October 19, 1929 touted, "Shoppers and mid-afternoon diversion seekers will delight in the knowledge that Loew's Kings Theatre is offering an especially timed mid-day show starting at 3:45 P.M. from Monday to Friday, inclusive. This matinee performance ... is scheduled to give the public ample opportunity to attend to its necessary shopping, chores, and diverse[e] duties and at the same time miss no part of the theater's entertainment."

Although designed to accommodate live performances alongside movies, Loew's Kings Theatre exclusively showed movies by the late 1930s. The organ was no longer required to accompany silent films or stage acts, and the orchestra pit was only used for special occasions. In their place were double-feature programs preceded by a newsreel and a short. The Loew's Kings Theatre operated for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. This continual operation required a large staff; the audience was served by a team of at least eighteen ushers, four captains, a chief usher, three doormen, five cashiers, six projectionists, two electricians, two stationary engineers, a janitor, and several after-hours cleaners.

Lester A. Binger, a former Loew's Kings Theatre Usher, recalled the view from his station at the "Head of Lobby:"

"...You saw the patrons coming in and their faces showed the anticipation and enjoyment at just being there. The performance had already begun for them, as soon as the Doorman had cut their tickets...The ceiling and lighting seemed to soar – stretched out in front was the Grand Staircase with the wonderful chandeliers above. Behind, on my right, was the orchestra foyer stretching for almost 150-feet with tastefully designed entry doors leading into the auditorium. These spaces were, no doubt, awe-inspiring to the hundreds of standees who very frequently had to wait patiently for seats."

The Great Depression ended the boom of theater construction and led to lower profits. Although movie theater attendance rebounded during World War II, popularity waned with the introduction of the television. In 1948, movie theaters were further hindered by the Supreme Court's decision that studio chains were unlawfully operating as monopolies by only showing company productions in their theaters. Deprived of their exclusive rights to first run films, the movie palaces entered a long period of diminishing profits and audiences. Soon, like many downtown movie palaces across the country, Kings Theatre was doomed by television, the flight of affluent city dwellers to the suburbs, and multiplexes in shopping malls.

The Loew's Corporation sold Loew's Kings Theatre to Kings Royalty in May 1978; the new owners closed the theater after one month. The building was briefly acquired by the Flatbush Development Corporation, but the title was assumed by the City of New York when a profitable reuse for the Kings Theatre was not quickly identified. In the ensuing years, several organizations advanced plans to redevelop the theater into a shopping

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mall, cultural center, or a multi-screen movie theater. Meanwhile, the building fell into severe disrepair and was threatened by demolition in 1986. Despite its dilapidated condition, Loew's Kings Theatre remained a symbol of the resurgence of the surrounding Flatbush neighborhood. Efforts by community activists and city officials saved the theater from demolition and led to ongoing efforts to identify a feasible reuse for Loew's Kings Theatre.

Rapp & Rapp, architects

In 1906, the architectural firm of Rapp & Rapp was established when Cornelius Ward Rapp invited his brother, George Lesley Rapp, to form a partnership. The brothers had first learned the trade from their father, Isaac Rapp, Sr., a carpenter-architect from Carbondale, Illinois. Cornelius lacked a formal education in architecture, but gained a basic knowledge assisting his father in the construction of the Southern Illinois Normal School in Carbondale (now Southern Illinois University). Afterwards, he oversaw the construction of courthouses, schools, and churches throughout Central and Southern Illinois. Between 1893 and 1897, Cornelius served as the State Architect of Illinois under Governor John Peter Altgeld. Unlike his brother, George received formal training in architecture at the University of Illinois. He relocated to Chicago after graduating in 1899, where he began his career as the "first assistant" to Edmund Krauss in preparing plans for the Majestic Theatre (now the Schubert). The Rapp brothers leveraged this experience to land their first independent theater commission in 1910 when they designed the Second Empire-style Majestic Theatre in Dubuque, Iowa. Although they designed a range of commercial and office buildings in Chicago, the firm's name quickly became synonymous with theaters.

In 1915, circus mogul Al Ringling hired Rapp & Rapp to design a grand theater in Baraboo, Wisconsin, the town that served as the circus' winter home. The Rapp brothers modeled the Ringling Memorial Theater on La Salle de Spectacle, the opera hall at Versailles. Palatial French opera houses provided inspiration for the Rapp brothers throughout their careers. In fact, Rapp & Rapp generally eschewed the more exotic motifs popularized by their contemporaries in favor of lavish European Renaissance inspired decorations. Chicago theater operators A.J. Balaban and Sam Katz toured Baraboo's movie palace soon after it opened. Duly impressed, they hired Rapp & Rapp to design the Central Park Theater in Chicago (1917—no longer extant), the first movie palace in that city. The success of the Central Park Theater led Balaban & Katz to hire the Rapp brothers to design additional theaters for their rapidly expanding Chicago theater empire. Among many others, the firm drafted the plans for Balaban & Katz's flagship theater, the 3,600-seat Chicago Theater on State Street in 1921. Although the brothers remained engaged by Balaban & Katz, and its successor firm Paramount-Publix, they also designed theaters for a number of other studio chains, including the Orpheum.

In *The Best Remaining Seats: The Golden Age of the Movie Palace*, Ben Hall summarized the Rapp brothers' design philosophy: "...Rapp & Rapp put one idea above all others: eye-bugging opulence. They knew... just what the public wanted in its movie palaces, but their theaters offered escape not into a world of starlight gardens or double damask dignity or temples of Vishnu; their stock was a grandeur that spelled m*o*n*e*y to the dazzled two-bit ticket holder." George Rapp expounded on the rationale for their opulence in a 1925 article:

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Do wonder, then, as the touches of Italian Renaissance, executed in glazed polychrome terracotta, or the lobbies and foyers adorned with replicas of precious masterpieces of another world, or at the imported marble wainscoting or the richly ornamented ceilings with motifs copied from master touches of Germany, France and Italy, or at the carved niches, the cloistered arcades, the depthless mirrors, and the great sweeping staircases. These are not attempts at showing off. These are part of the celestial city—a cavern of many-colored jewels, where iridescent lights and luxurious fitting heighten the expectation of pleasure. It is richness unabashed, but richness with a reason.

In total, Rapp & Rapp designed more than 400 theaters across the nation. George continued to practice under the Rapp & Rapp name after Cornelius's death in 1927, although he divided interest in the firm among several designers. The firm survived the Great Depression on its theater commissions and after George's retirement in 1938, his nephew Mason G. Rapp continued to run the firm. George died in 1942 and the firm subsequently shifted away from its specialty in movie theater design.

Conclusion/ Summary

The closing of the theater in June 1978 coincided with a period of commercial decline along Flatbush Avenue. By the late 1970s, the street was afflicted by vacant storefronts and blight. In response, local merchants and the Flatbush Development Corporation partnered to combat crime and attract businesses and housing to the street. These efforts resulted in a commercial revival along Flatbush Avenue and bolstered ongoing efforts to restore the Loew's Kings Theatre as a symbol of the resurgent corridor and neighborhood. "When the people's palace is back in the heart of our borough in its entire splendor," said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, "it will be a great day for both Brooklynites, who have walked her aisles, and for those who have yet to discover her majesty."

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.969

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Trieschmann, Architectural Historian – P. Singh, Preservation Planner, J. Liebertz, Historian – C. Buckley, Preservation Specialist (Edited: Daniel McEneny – NYSHPO)

organization EHT Traceries, Inc date June 12th, 2012

street & number 1121 Fifth Street, NW telephone

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name City of New York - Contact: New York City Economic Development Corp., Clare Newman

street & number 110 William Street, 4th Floor telephone

city or town New York state NY zip code 10038

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 2050

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Loew's Kings Theatre
Name of Property
Kings County, New York
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Loew's Kings Theatre at 1027 Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, include all of the property denoted as Block 5132, Lot 18 on NYC digital tax maps. The commercial property is bound by Flatbush Avenue to the west, East 22nd Street to the east, Tilden Avenue to the north, and Duryea Place to the south.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries represent the property historically associated with the Lowe's Kings Theatre, constructed in 1928-1929. The 42,230 square foot lot encompassing the property at 1027 Flatbush Avenue reflects the vision of architects Rapp & Rapp and the emergence of movie palaces in the 1920s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

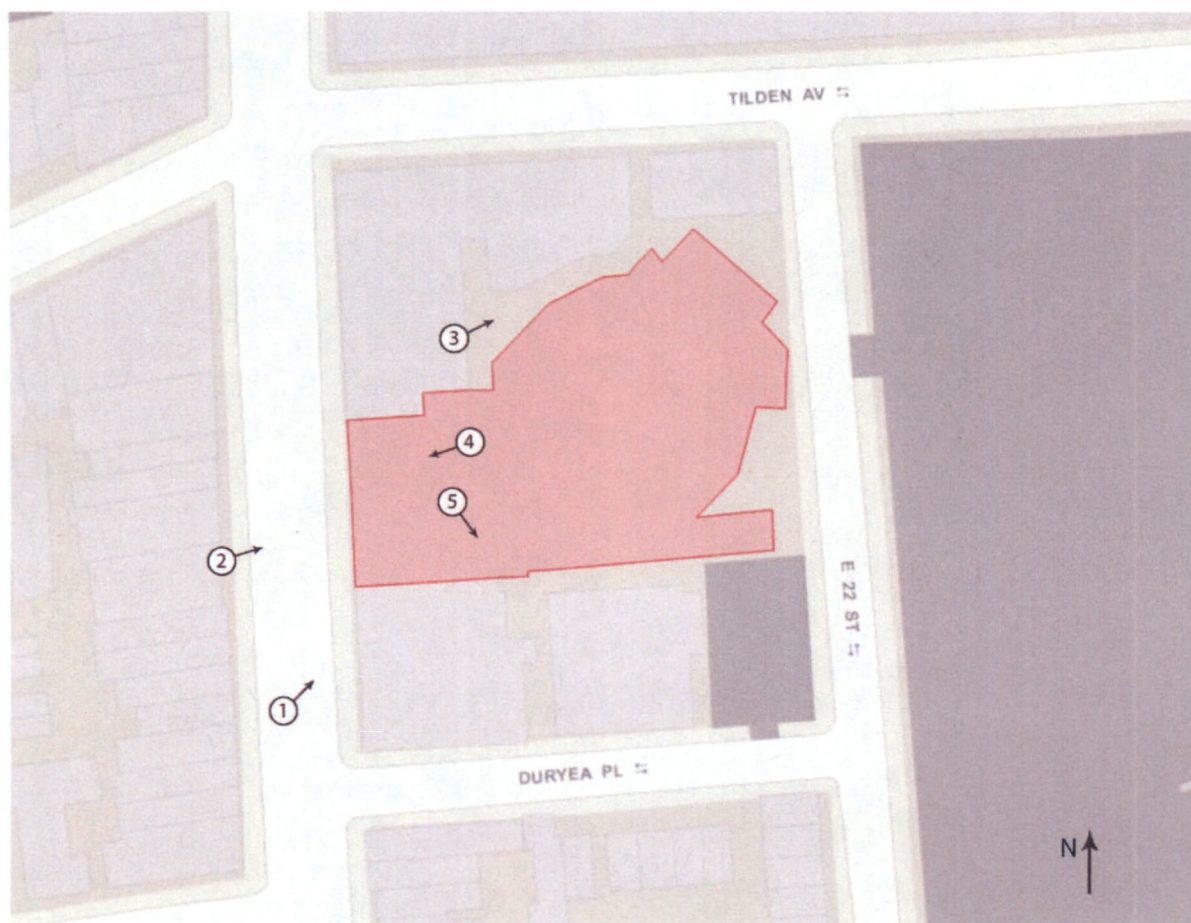
Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph Key Page 1

Exterior Photo Key: Loew's Kings Theatre:

1027 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

Image Prepared by:
EHT Tracerles, Inc.
May 2012

Image adapted from:
NY City Map 2010
Provided by <http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap>

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Latisha Allen
Date of Photographs: May 4, 2012
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Tracerles office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #1 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0001)
West façade and courtyard, camera facing northeast

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph KeyPage 2

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Latisha Allen
Date of Photographs: May 4, 2012
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #2 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0002)
West façade, camera facing east

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Latisha Allen
Date of Photographs: May 4, 2012
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #3 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0003)
Metal escape stair on north elevation, camera facing northwest

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Latisha Allen
Date of Photographs: May 4, 2012
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #4 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0004)
Rear of segmented pediment on west elevation, camera facing southeast

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Latisha Allen
Date of Photographs: May 4, 2012
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #5 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0005)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph Key Page 3

Projecting roof of stagehouse as seen from lobby roof, camera facing west

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #6 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0006)
View of audience chamber as seen from stage

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #7 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0007)
View of audience chamber as seen from rear of balcony

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #8 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0008)
View of stage and audience chamber from balcony edge

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph KeyPage 4

Photo #9 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0009)

View of seating and balcony at front of audience chamber

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #10 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0010)

View of balcony seating and ceiling as seen from middle of balcony

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs:
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #11 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0011)

View of ticket lobby with projecting ticket booth as seen from exterior doors

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #12 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0012)

View of grand lobby looking with openings to foyer beyond.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph KeyPage 5

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #13 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0013)

View of grand lobby from ticket lobby

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #14 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0014)

Hallway below mezzanine with openings to audience chamber beyond

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #15 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0015)

View of upper mezzanine

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #8 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0008)

View of stage and audience chamber from balcony edge

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photograph Key

Page 6

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #16 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0016)
Ceiling detail and railing of upper mezzanine

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #17 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0017)
Stair railing at grand foyer stair

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #18 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0018)
Grand foyer with lobby beyond, as viewed from upper mezzanine

Name of Property: Loew's King Theater
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings County
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Whitney Cox
Date of Photographs: June 28, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: EHT Traceries office 1121 5th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

Photo #19 (NY_Kings County_Loews Kings Theatre_0019)
Loge space with detailed fireplace surround

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

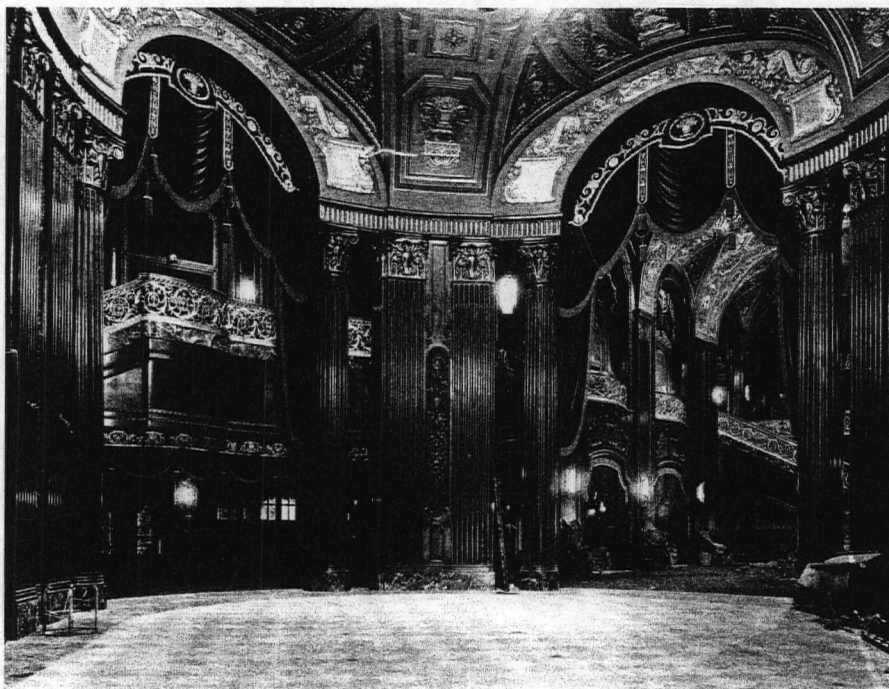
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Page 1



Southwest corner, looking northeast from Flatbush Avenue (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.



Grand Lobby, looking east from Vestibule (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

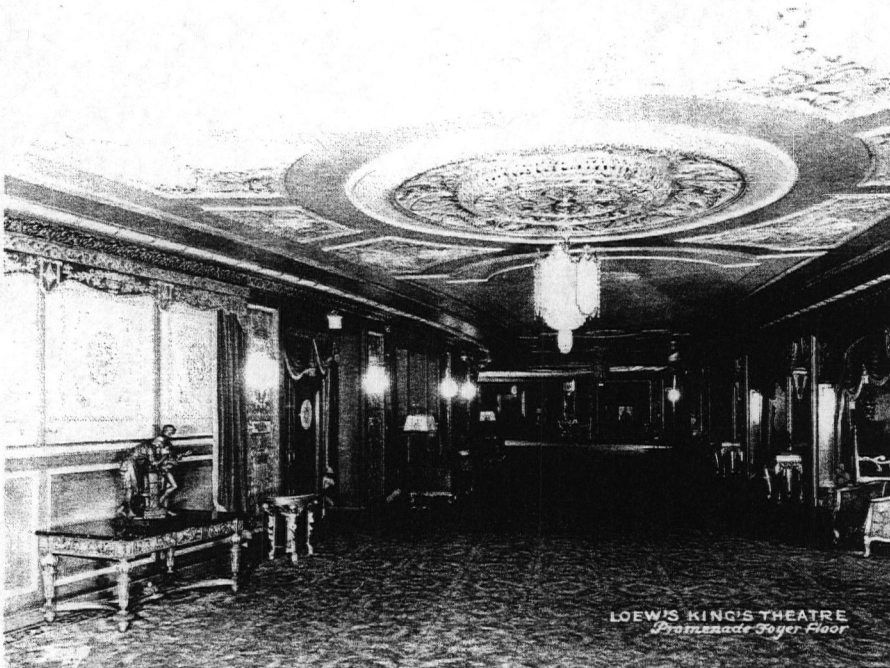
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Page 2



Inner Lobby, looking southeast from Grand Lobby (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.



Orchestra-level Foyer, looking southeast (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

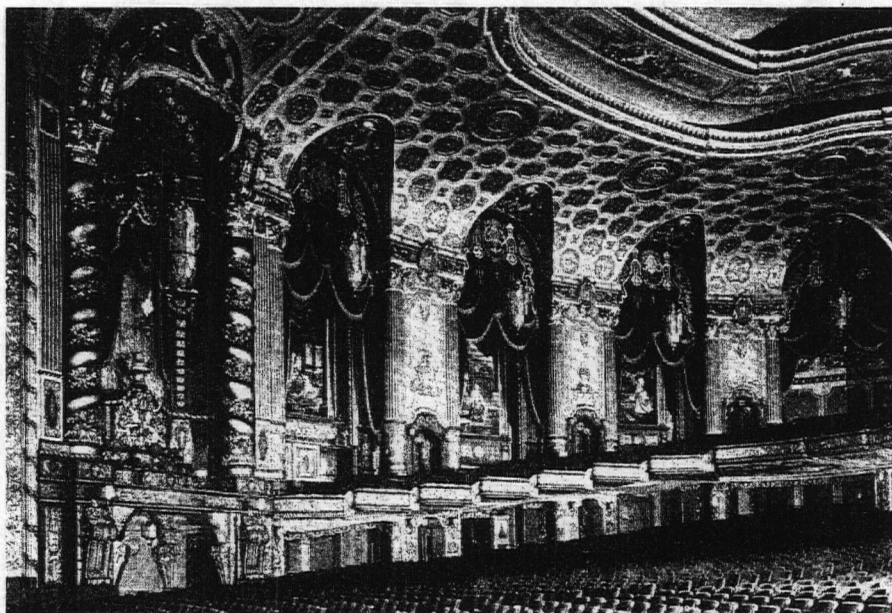
Kings, New York

County and State

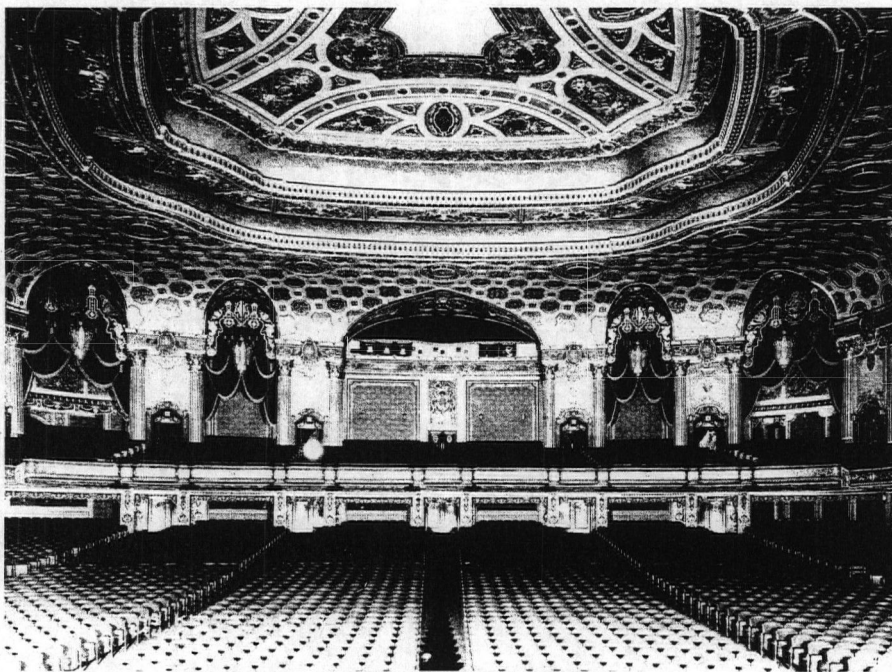
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Page 3



Auditorium, view of southeast side wall from stage (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.



Auditorium, looking southwest from stage (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

Kings, New York

County and State

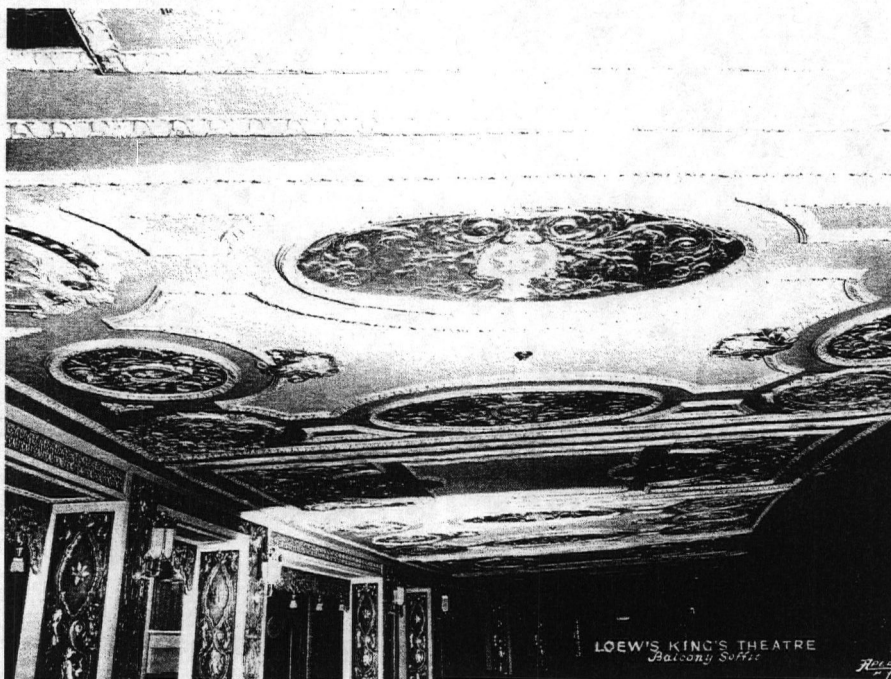
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Page 4



Ceiling of auditorium (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.



Auditorium, detail of Mezzanine soffit (c. 1929).
Image courtesy of New York Public Library.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

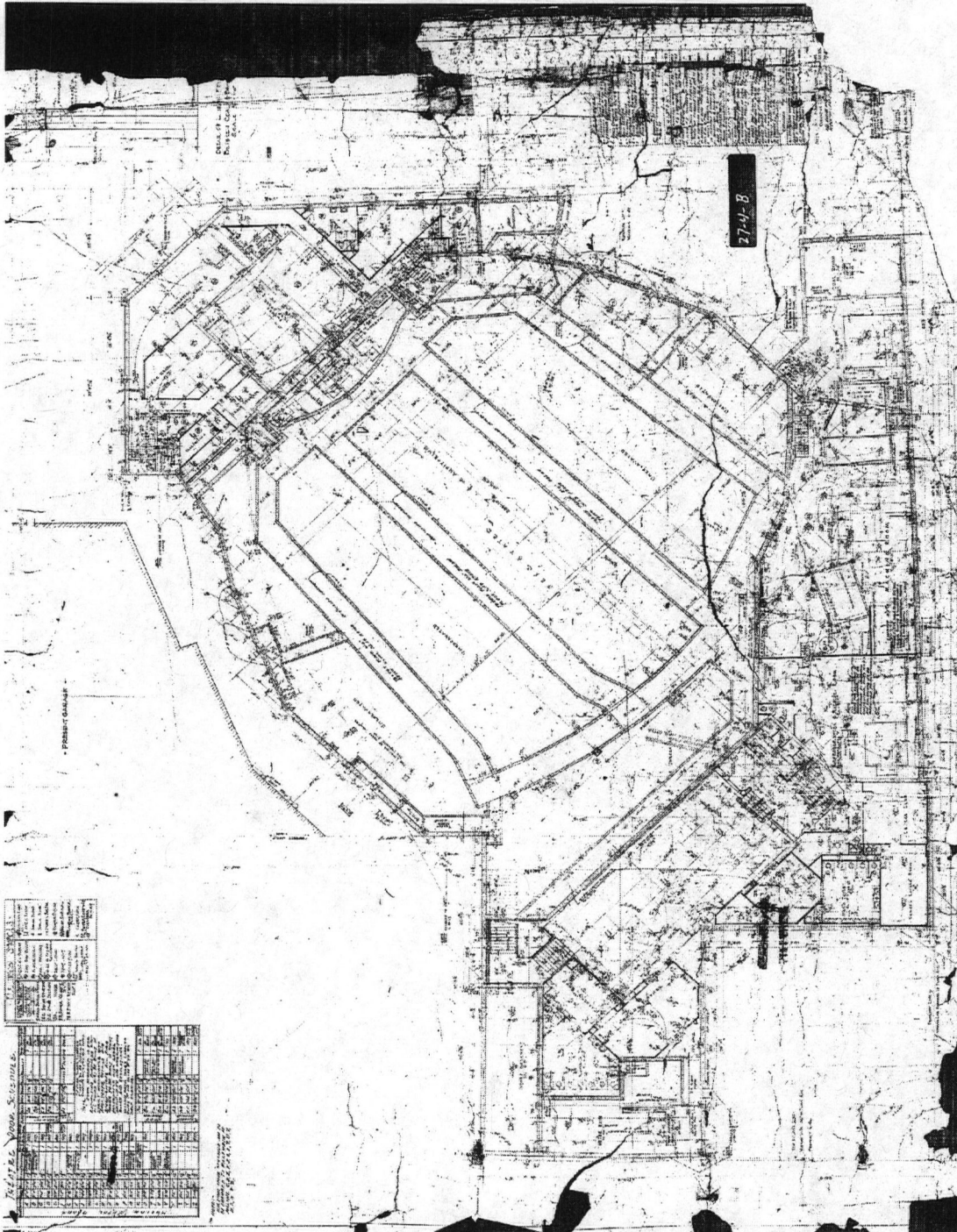
Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property
Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Original Drawings Page 1



Basement Plan, Loew's Kings Theatre, 1927-1928. Designed by Rapp & Rapp.
Image courtesy of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

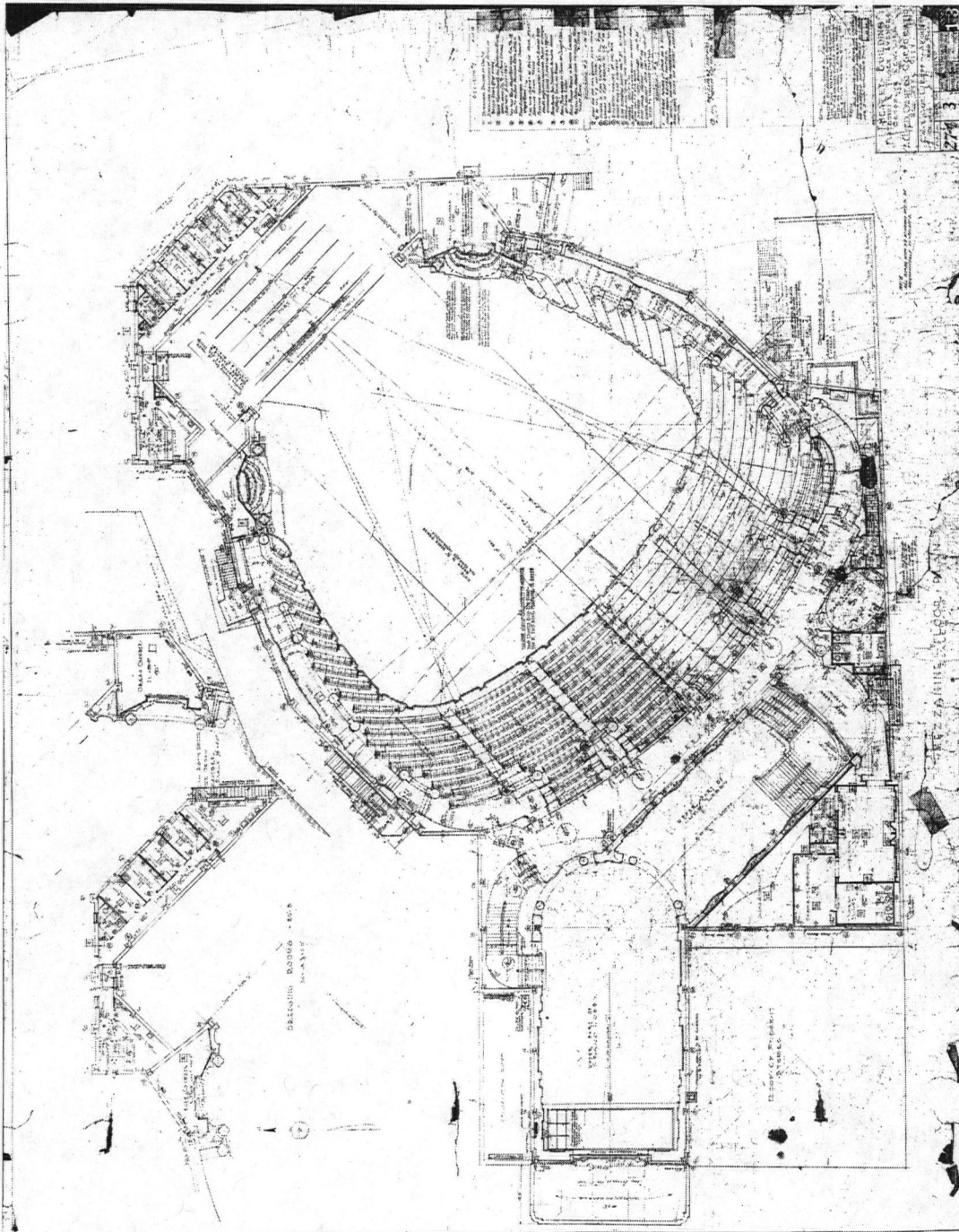
Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property
Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Original Drawings Page 2



Mezzanine Plan, Loew's Kings Theatre, 1927-1928. Designed by Rapp & Rapp.
Image courtesy of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property

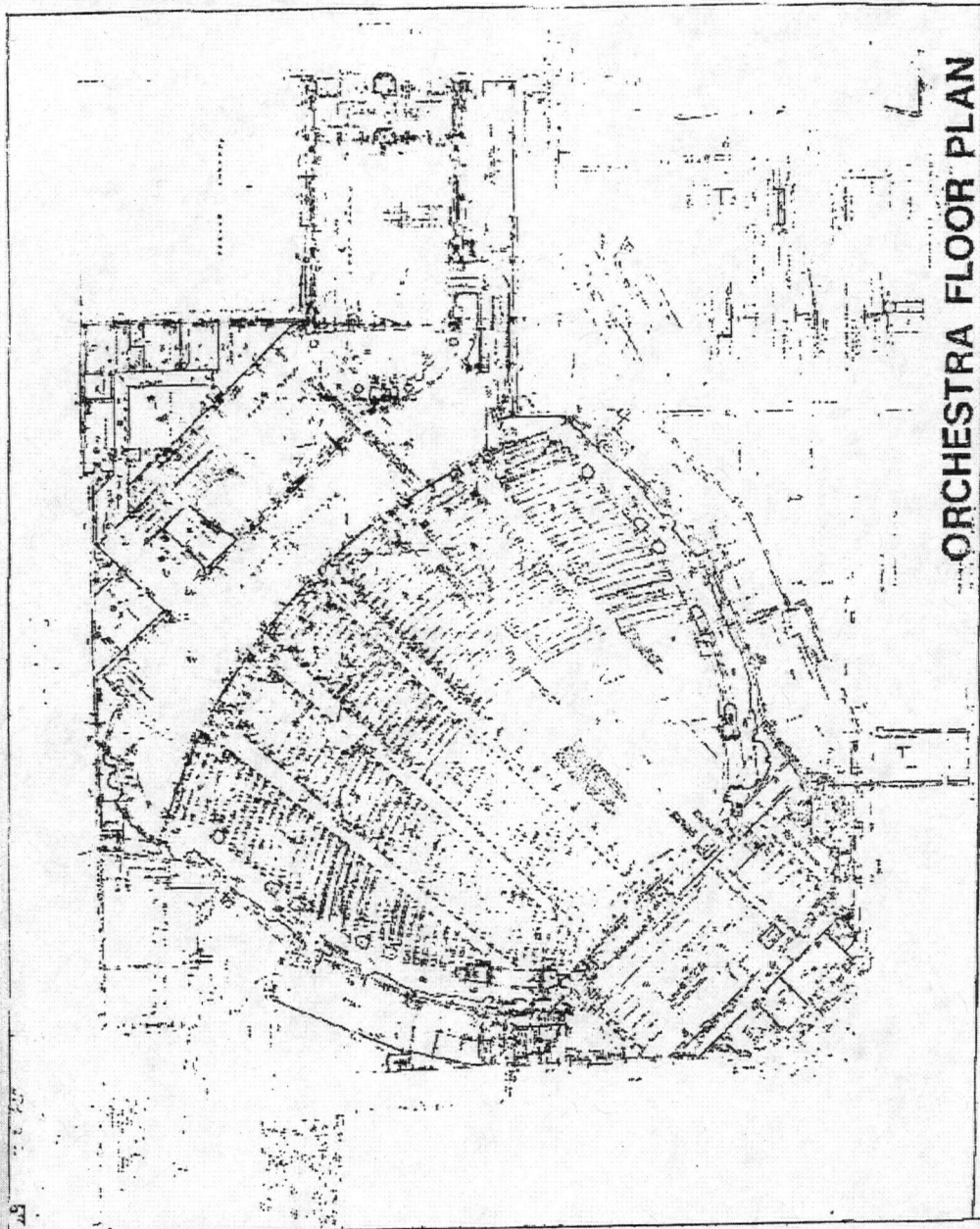
Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Original Drawings Page 3

Orchestra Floor Plan (plan 1)



Mezzanine Plan, Loew's Kings Theatre, 1927-1928. Designed by Rapp & Rapp.
Image courtesy of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

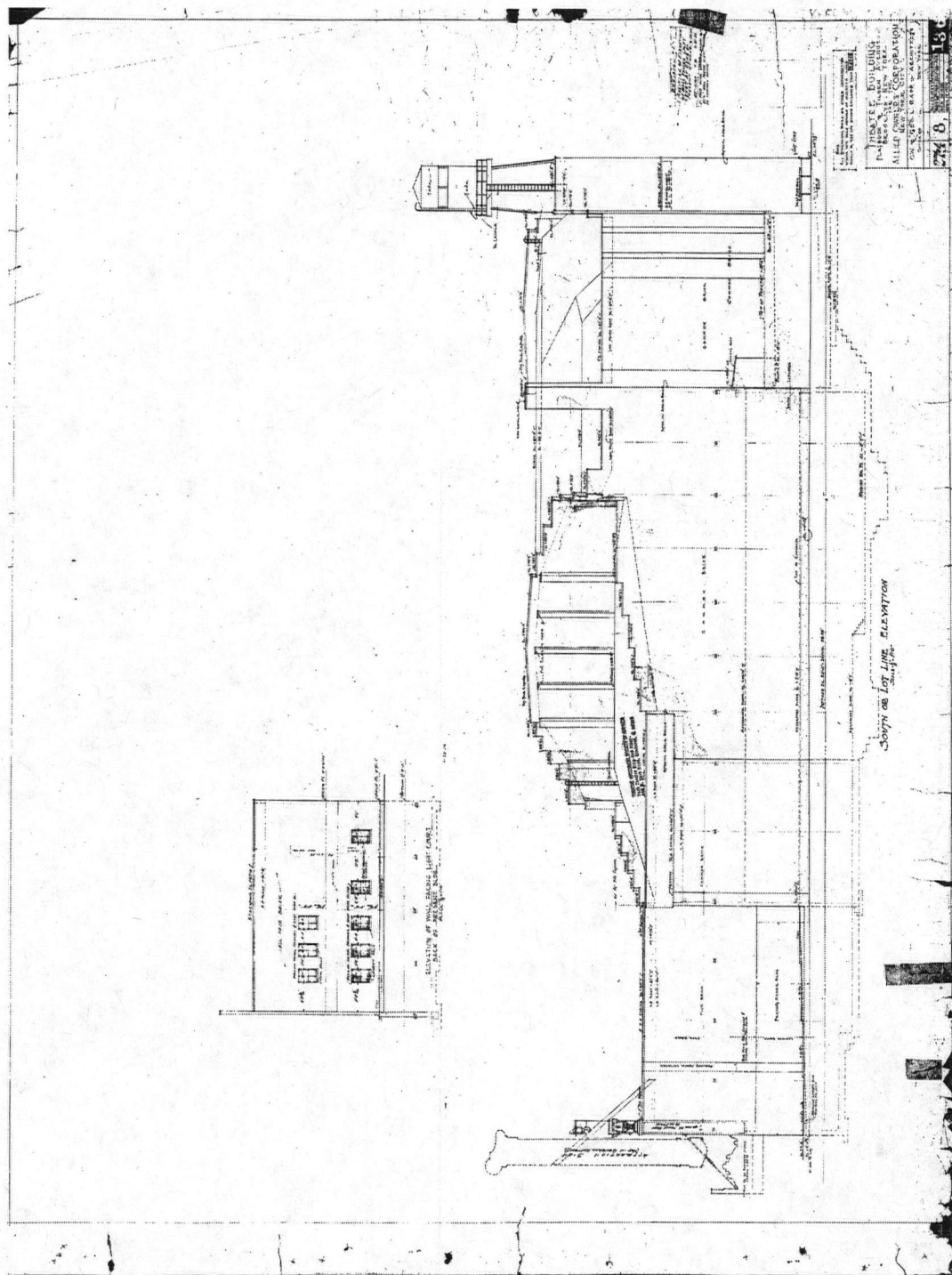
Loew's Kings Theatre

Name of Property
Kings, New York

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Original Drawings Page 4



South Elevation Section, Loew's Kings Theatre, 1927-1928. Designed by Rapp & Rapp.
Image courtesy of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

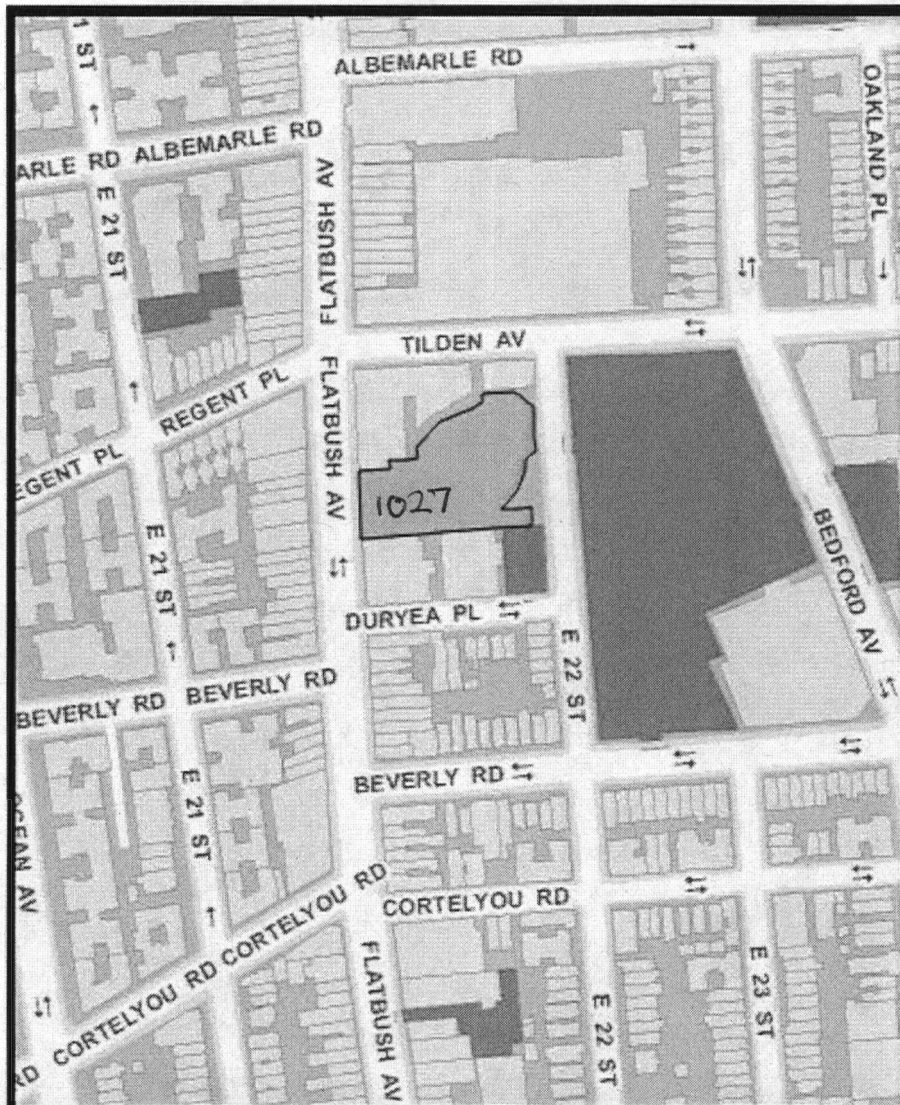
Lowe's Kings Theatre

Name of Property
Kings, NY

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 1



Location of Loew's Kings Theatre
1027 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

Image Prepared by
EHT Tracerics, 2011.

Adapted from NYC Maps, 2011
<http://www.gis.nyc.gov>

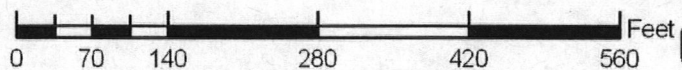


Loew's Kings Theatre
Brooklyn, King's County, NY

1027 Flatbush Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11226



1:2,000
1 inch = 167 feet
Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N



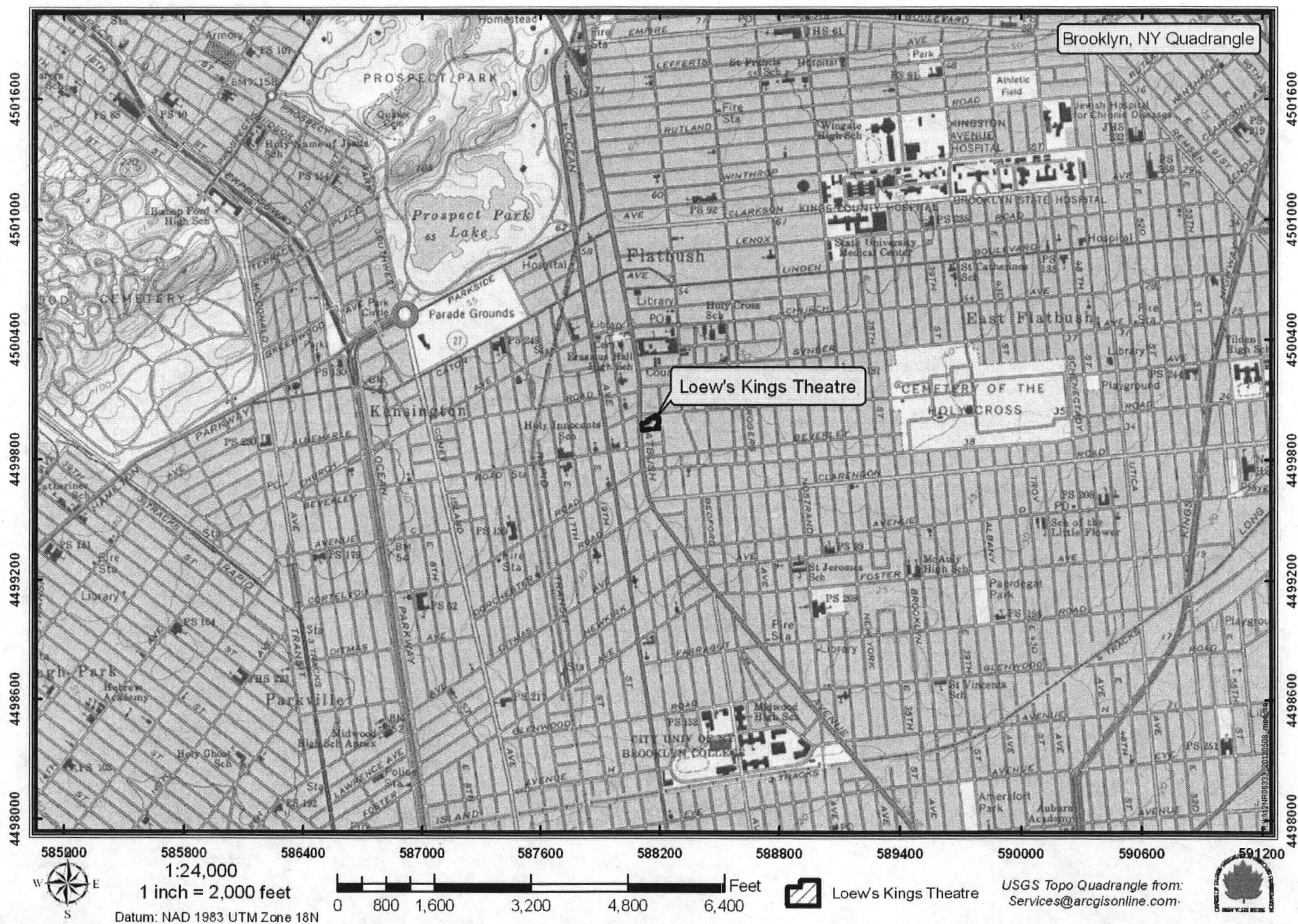
Loew's Kings Theatre

Tax Parcel Data Courtesy of:
NYC ORPS
<http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap>



Loew's Kings Theatre
Brooklyn, King's County, NY

1027 Flatbush Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11226



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Loew's Kings Theatre
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Kings

DATE RECEIVED: 7/06/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/31/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/15/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/22/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000534

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 8.22.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



NY - Kings County - Loews Kings Theatre - 0001



NY_Kings County - Loews Kings Theatre - 0002



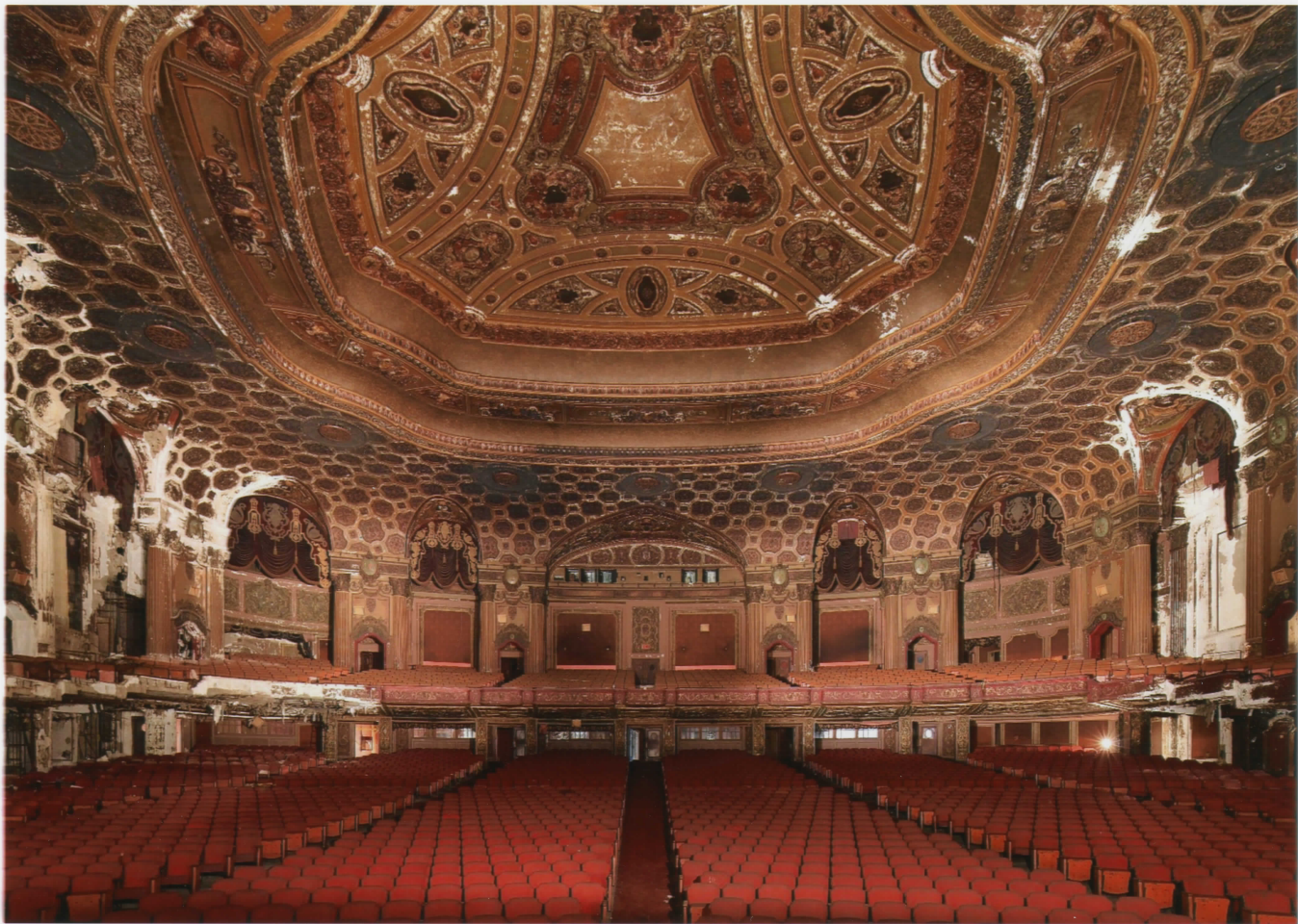
NY - Kings County - Loews Kings Theatre - 0003



NY- Kings County- Loews Kings Theatre- 0004



NY_Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0005



NY- Kings County- Loews Kings Theatre- 0006



NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0007



NY - Kings County - Loews Kings Theatre - 0008



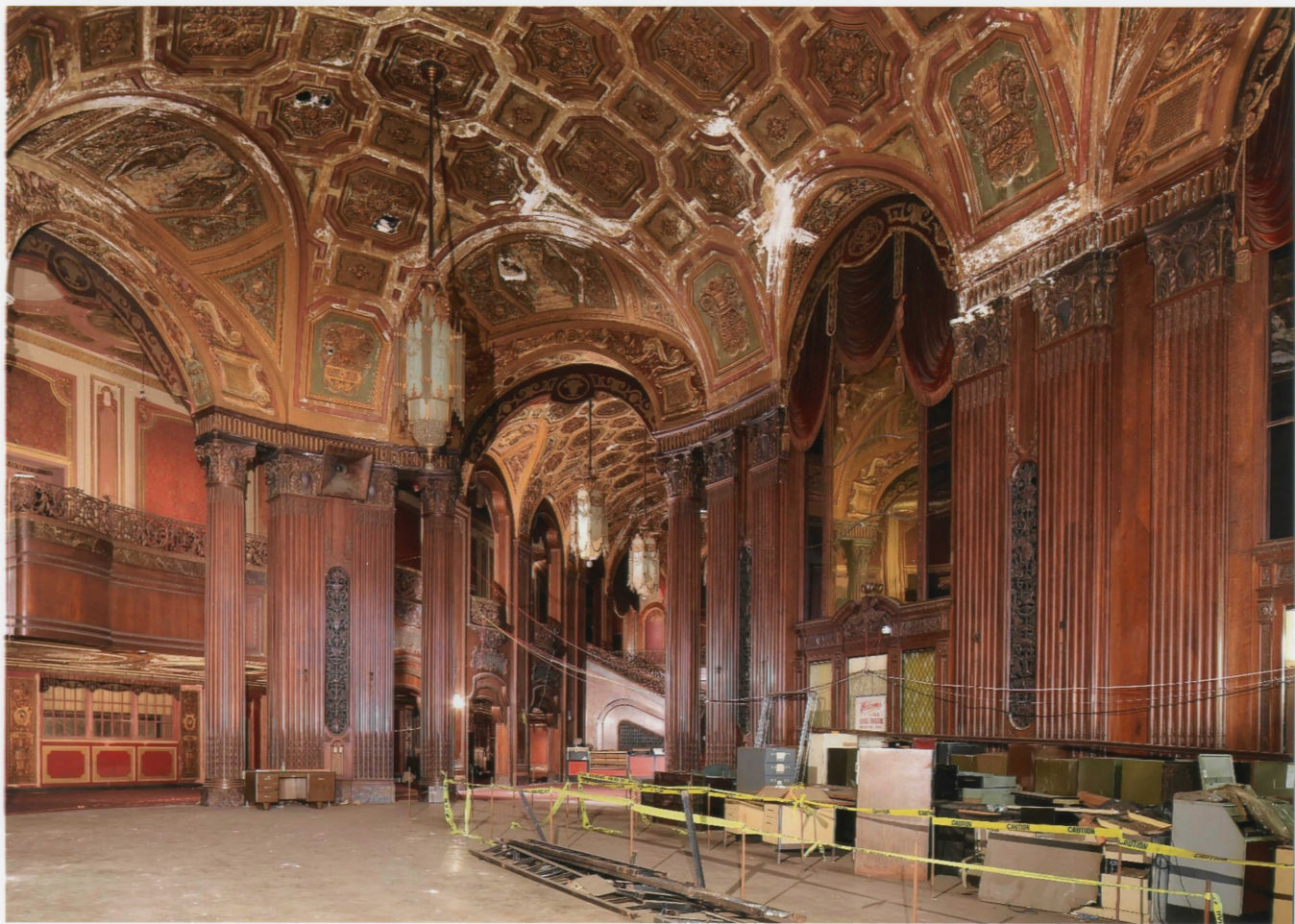
NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0009



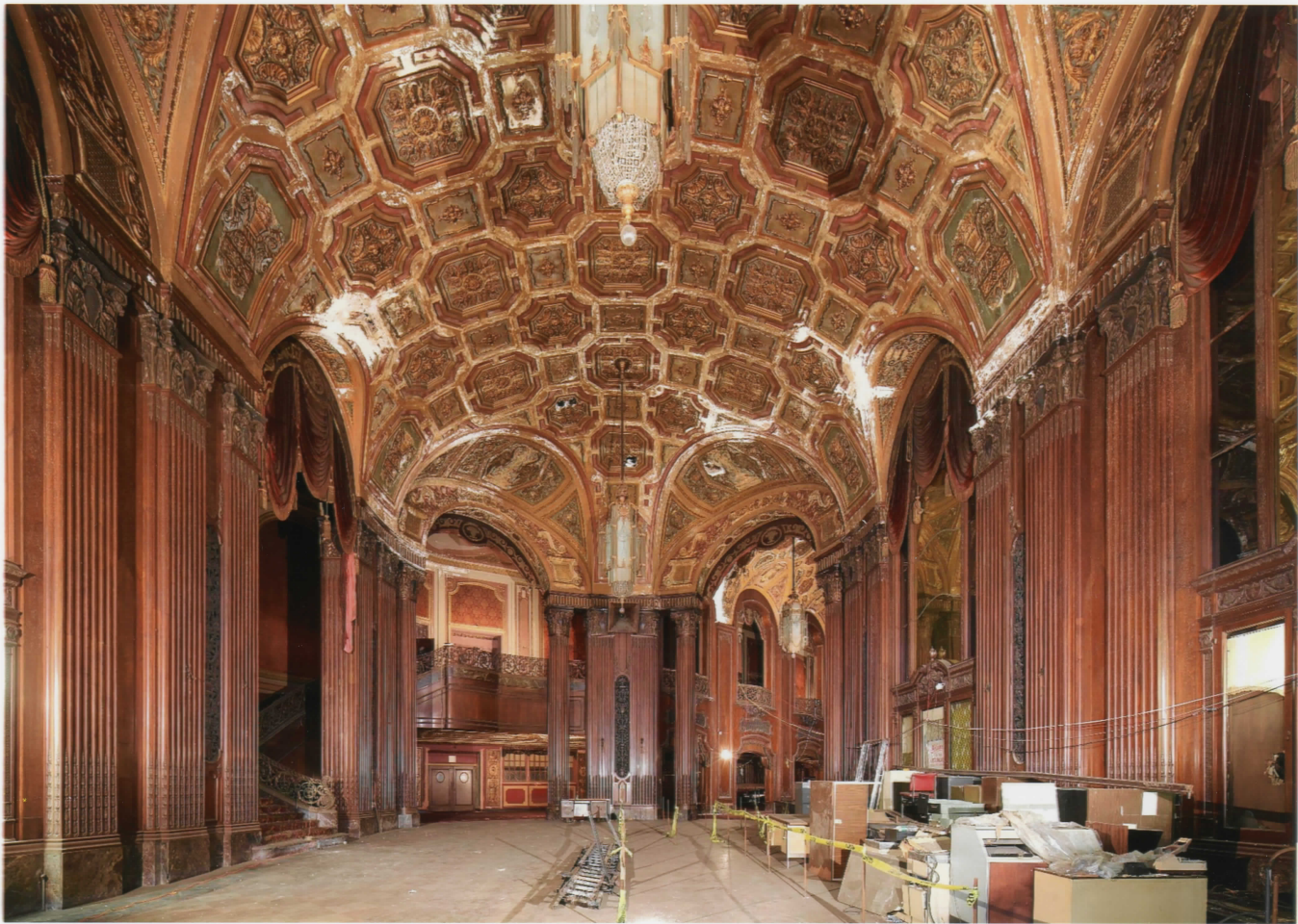
NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0010



NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-Doll



NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0012



NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0013



NY-Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0014



NY_Kings County - Loews Kings Theatre - 0015



NY_Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0016



NY-Kings County- Loews Kings Theatre-0018



NY- Kings County- Loews Kings Theatre- 0017



NY_Kings County-Loews Kings Theatre-0019



Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Robert B. Tierney
Chair

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212-669-7888 tel
212 669 7955 fax

May 10, 2012

Ms. Ruth Pierpont
Acting Deputy Commissioner
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

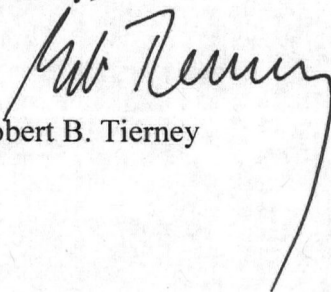


Dear Ms. Pierpont:

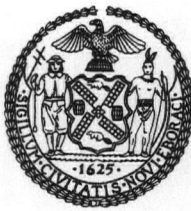
I write in response to your letter concerning the Loew's King Theatre in Brooklyn, New York. Based on the materials provided and my staff's review, I concur that the building meets the criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and the Commission supports the nomination of the Loew's King Theatre. Our review of the nomination proposal is concluded, and I waive the sixty-day comment period so that the review process may be expedited.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Tierney



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

ROBERT K. STEEL
DEPUTY MAYOR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

May 15, 2012

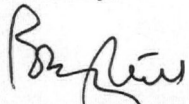


Ms. Ruth Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

The City of New York is in full support of Arts Center Enterprises efforts to list the former Loews Kings Theater on the National Register of Historic Places. The theater is an asset to both the local community and City, and its listing is critical to the theater's planned restoration and reactivation.

Sincerely,


Robert K. Steel

RKS:lg

20 COTTON RECYCLED

MADE IN THE USA

BOX 189

WATERFORD, NY 12188

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STATE PARK

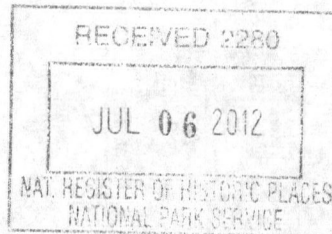




New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

28 June 2012

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following two National Register nominations to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Loew's Kings theatre, Kings County
Talachito, Essex County

Thank you for your assistance in processing these proposals. Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office