



Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. 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. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name lola Theater

Other names/site number Fox lola Theatre; KHRI # 001-237

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas

2. Location

street & number 202 South Washington Avenue not for publication

city or town lola vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Allen code 001 zip code 66749

3-4. Certification

The above property has been determined eligible for both the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National Register of Historic Places. The property has been documented and recorded on a National Register of Historic Places nomination form, which serves as the official register nomination for this property.

The Historic Sites Board of Review has determined that this property meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

I hereby certify that this property meets the criteria for and is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Applicable State Register Criteria: x A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title Katrina Ringler, Deputy SHPO

November 4, 2023

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State agency

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name lola Theatre

Other names/site number Fox lola Theatre; KHRI #001-237

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas

2. Location

Street & number 202 South Washington Avenue

n/a

 not for publication

City or town lola vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Allen Code 001 Zip code 66749

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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local Applicable National Register Criteria: x A ___ B x C ___ D



November 4, 2023

Signature of certifying official/Title Katrina Ringle, Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

National Register of Historic Places listed January 5, 2024

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE/Theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Spanish Revival (Exterior)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco (Interior)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: TERRA COTTA

BRICK

roof: SYNTHETICS

other: _____

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Narrative Description

Summary

The 1931 Iola Theatre is located in downtown Iola, Allen County, Kansas at 202 South Washington Avenue.¹ The two-story terra cotta and brick movie theater faces east and fills its entire parcel just south of the main public square. The symmetrical primary elevation features a centered entrance under a circa 1960 marquee and a double-height upper façade. The primary elevation exhibits revivalist architectural details popular in the early twentieth century, but the Spanish Revival dominates. Elements of this style include the tan-colored glazed terra cotta, spiraled terra cotta roping, prominent arches, low relief colored terra cotta ornament, and shaped parapet. The interior exhibits elements of the Zigzag Art Deco style seen in decorative plasterwork, mosaic tile floors, and historic light fixtures. The historic single auditorium occupies the majority of the interior. A concrete balcony extends approximately half the width of the two-story volume with a projection room at the east end. The stage and screen fill the west end of the theater. A small basement extends under the stage. The theater continues to retain historic integrity from its period of significance, 1931-1950. As a Movie Theater property type described in the *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, the Iola Theatre retains its highly intact character-defining façade, and its vestibule, lobby, auditorium, stage, proscenium, and balcony.²

Elaboration

SETTING & SITE

The Iola Theatre contributes to the character of downtown Iola, Kansas. The building sits one-half block to the south of East Madison Street (US-54 Hwy), the south street of the downtown square (*Figures 1 & 2*). Angled parking lines both sides of the wide two-lane Washington Avenue. Concrete sidewalks line both sides of the street within the public right-of-way. A narrow historic, paved alley separates the theater from historic one- and two-story commercial buildings to the north (*Photos 1 & 4*). A similar alley separates the building from one-story utilitarian buildings to the west (*Photo 4*). A one-story non-historic commercial building abuts the center of the south wall. Unlike the historic buildings in downtown with zero setbacks, a paved parking pad spans the front of this building. A large city parking lot (circa 1972) sits across the street to the east. Both the one-story building to the south and the parking lot to the east replaced historic buildings in place at the time of the construction of the theater (*Figures 3 to 5*).

EXTERIOR

The two-story masonry theater building fills its entire 42' x 120' parcel. Glazed terra cotta clads the brick building. Alterations to the exterior since its construction include the replacement of historic windows and doors

¹ Some maps label this Washington Avenue. Sanborns and current GIS maps for the county, as well as Google, label it Washington Avenue.

² Elizabeth Rosin, Dale Nimz, and Kristen Ottesen, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form (2005): F:66-F:67.

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within existing masonry openings, the replacement of the original ticket booth within the same location, and the replacement of the original marquee in circa 1960 (*Figure 6*).³ A low-slope (flat) roof covers this building behind parapets. Terra cotta coping lines the east parapet; cast stone coping lines the north and south walls.

East (Primary) Elevation

The primary elevation faces east onto South Washington Avenue (*Photos 1 & 2*). The façade features a double-height upper story over a single story. This elevation contains the Spanish Revival details that characterize the style of the building. Tiled coping lines the parapet, elaborate ornamentation concentrates at masonry openings (*Photo 3*), wrought iron chains support the marquee, and twisted roping creates arches in the upper facade, referencing spiraled columns typical of the style.⁴ A shaped center parapet recalls the ecclesiastical mission precedent out of which this style evolved. Glazed terra cotta clads this elevation. The tan blocks resemble limestone laid in a running bond.

Three bays organize the symmetrical façade. The main entry occupies the first story of the center bay. Non-historic pairs of glazed aluminum doors with fixed transoms flank a projecting ticket booth. An aluminum-framed glazed window box sits atop a painted concrete base; plywood covers the transom level within the main wall above the booth. A metal, flat-roofed marquee spans the opening above this entry system and extends over the public sidewalk to the east. Can lights pierce the underside of the marquee. The name "IOLA" appears on the north, east, and south sides above two rows of exposed bulb light sockets. Wrought iron chains connect the top of the marquee to the main wall at the historic connection points. A double-height arch, created by twisted terra cotta roping, ornaments the upper façade above the marquee and below the shaped parapet. A historic masonry opening pierces the wall below a historic terra cotta niche all within the arch. A pair of non-historic double-sash windows fills the opening. Terra cotta clads the entire opening: brackets support the sill, shaped jambs and lintels surround the opening; colored scrolls flank the opening at the sill; and small urns flank a centered, colored, floral ornament above the opening. The ornamental niche above the window features a light blue recessed center surrounded by colorful scrolls, sill, and lintel. This center bay is slightly inset from the flanking north and south bays.

The identical north and south bays contain historic masonry openings at the first story. Historically, paired, glazed doors filled the rectangular opening with terra cotta blocks filling the transom level. Plywood covers the door openings today. Tudor-inspired terra cotta arches span the entries with floral ornamentation decorating the shaped surrounds and the spandrels above the arches. Horizontal terra cotta banding adorns the wall above each door; twisted terra cotta roping extends up from these to create narrow arches in the upper façade. A single

³ Exact date of the current marquee is unknown. Date is based on materials and design, as well as the presence of the original marquee in a photo from circa 1955 (*Figure 4*).

⁴ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 522; Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 225. Whiffen uses the term Spanish Colonial Revival.

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window masonry opening pierces the lower portion of each arch; the terra cotta surrounding the openings matches that of the center bay. A non-historic double-sash window fills the opening below a historic four-lite transom. Light blue terra cotta roundels adorn the top of the arch, with the terra cotta field blocks laid to resemble stones of a segmented arch.

North Elevation

The utilitarian north elevation abuts the north alley (*Photo 4*). Tan brick with red mortar forms the east end of the elevation, intentionally relating to the terra cotta façade. Three historic masonry openings pierce this east portion of the wall. The two easternmost openings have terra cotta sills and rowlock brick lintels with terra cotta keystones. Plywood covers the first story masonry opening; a historic multi-light steel window fills the second story opening. The historic multi-light steel window to the west has brick sill and rowlock lintel without keystone. Red brick comprises the remainder of the elevation; the parapet steps down to the west. Two openings pierce the west end of the wall. A non-historic metal slab door fills a historic opening at the first story, and a large metal louver pierces the upper story.

West Elevation

The west elevation abuts the west alley (*Photo 4*). A gutter lines the top of the parapet-less wall; leaders connect to the gutter at the north and south ends. Two openings pierce the south end of this wall. Similar to the north elevation, a non-historic metal slab door pierces the first story, and a large metal louver pierces the upper story above the door.

South Elevation

The east end of this wall is also tan brick with red mortar that imitates the terra cotta of the east elevation (*Photo 1*). Four windows pierce this portion of the wall at different locations. The first story and the center east window have terra cotta sills and keystones; the other two windows, have brick sills and lintels. Two historic multi-light steel windows fill the first story and west window; non-historic sashes fill the other two openings. The remainder of the wall is red brick without any openings; the parapet steps down to the west (*Photos 1 & 5*).

INTERIOR

The auditorium dominates the interior of the Iola Theatre. Circulation and support spaces fill the east side of the building, and a narrow basement extends under the west side of the auditorium (*Figures 7 to 9*). The building has a reinforced concrete interior structure and foundation, and steel beams support the metal decked roof (*Figure 6*). The style of the interior more closely aligns with the Zigzag Art Deco, seen in the decorative plasterwork, mosaic tiles, and light fixtures. Extant historic materials include plaster (utilitarian and decorative), tiled ceilings in the auditorium, tiled floors, and light fixtures.

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The main (east) entrance opens directly into a small *vestibule* on the first floor (*Photo 6; Figure 10*). Today, this lobby spans the entire width of the building, where historically two small commercial spaces filled the northeast and southeast corners.⁵ A non-historic built-in for concessions occupies the north end with a lighted glass block ceiling above. A small ticket booth extends from the center of the east wall between the pairs of doors (*visible in Photo 7*). This historic feature contains a single door to allow access into the booth. The interior of the booth is non-historic. The historic mosaic tile floor of the vestibule is a character-defining feature of the space. A band of small rectangular black tiles frames the floor, and a black and white checkered band lines the interior side of this band. Individual black and white parallelogram tiles create a chevron pattern within the field. Three tiers of plaster create the vaulted ceiling above the vestibule. The bottom tier contains cove lighting, and raised geometric shapes below a zigzag band decorate the canted edge. Zigzag banding decorates the other two tiers. Rough-finished plaster covers the bottoms of each tier as well as the field of the ceiling. Flat plaster covers the perimeter walls of the space.

A framed opening in the center of the west wall of the vestibule leads into a small *lobby* (*Photos 7 & 8*). Historically, doors filled this opening; they were removed at an unknown date. L-shaped concrete stairs with stepped concrete wing walls fill the north and south ends of this lobby. The stairs lead up to the second-floor lobby to the east of the balcony. Three large framed half-wall openings pierce the west wall of the first floor lobby. Heavy drapes covered these openings historically (*visible in Figure 11*). Walkway openings flank the center bay of this wall, aligning with the aisles in the auditorium to the west. A non-historic faux fireplace centered in the west bay was created in 2023 by a local volunteer. Finishes in this narrow stair lobby include painted concrete floor, exposed concrete stairs, plaster walls with historic rough finish, historic plaster crown moulding with zigzag banding, and plaster ceiling. A historic light fixture (missing the decorative cover) extends from the center of the ceiling.

As previously mentioned, the *auditorium* itself dominates the interior of the Iola Theatre (*Photos 9 to 11*). A concrete balcony covers the first floor of the east half of the two-story space. A concrete and wood stage fills the west end. Inset plaster coffers decorate the ceiling of the first story under the balcony (*Photo 9*). The raked exposed concrete floor shows the locations of the historic side aisles that divided the seating (*Figures 11 & 12*). Plaster pilasters with stylized floral capitals divide the north and south walls into four bays. Inset two-story painted panels fill the bays. The surrounding plaster walls retain their historic rough plaster finishes. The front of the balcony retains its historic composite paneling set an angled grid (*Photo 11*). At the ceiling, plastered steel beams divide fields of historic dropped ceilings comprised of square panels set in an angled grid pattern.⁶ Angled wing walls flank the stage. Art Deco inspired plasterwork surrounds the portals on the lower portion of the walls (*Photo 12*). Plaster-framed openings above the portal formerly contained grilles, and the framed niches above held light fixtures (*Figure 13*). The plaster of the niches was altered slightly in the 1976-77 remodel that divided the auditorium into two theaters, but the overall design remains intact.⁷

⁵ The date of this alteration is unknown.

⁶ The material of these panels is currently unknown but could be a composite or wood.

⁷ "Truckin' on Down Washington Avenue," *The Iola Register* (31 December 1976): 8. The second theater was removed recently to restore the historic space.

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The two side portals open to narrow concrete steps that lead up to the historic *stage* (*Photo 13*). The stage area fills the width of the building. Historic wood flooring covers the east half of the stage with exposed concrete on the west. The current screen sits in front of the historic proscenium, and non-historic drapes frame the screen, hiding the historic wall. This large screen replaced the original that sat behind the proscenium. Remnants of the historic drapery remain behind the current screen. The utilitarian stage area behind the screen has exposed brick walls. The door at the south end of the west wall leads directly out to the west alley at grade.

A concrete stair at the north end of the stage leads down to the *basement* under the stage (*Photo 19*). Because of space constraints, these steep stairs have two halves that stagger the tread and riser, creating a hybrid ladder. The utilitarian space contains mechanical equipment. Exposed concrete forms the floor, walls, and ceiling (*Photo 20*).

The stairs at the east end of the auditorium lead up to the second floor. This portion of the building contains the balcony, a lobby, and support spaces and only spans the east half of the building (*Figure 9*). The stairs open directly into the *second-floor lobby*, flanking a set of six concrete steps (*Photos 16 & 17; Figure 14*). An office fills the north end of the wide landing at the top of these steps; former women's and men's restrooms fill the south end (*Photo 18*). Straight-run concrete steps lead up to the balcony from the lobby at the north and south ends of the west wall (*Photo 17*). Framed niches flank a built-in bench centered in the west wall. The tiered concrete balcony forms the ceiling of the lobby, as it did historically; plaster covers the concrete. Walls retain their historic plaster with rough finish; carpet historically covered the exposed concrete floors. The two restrooms retain their historic mosaic tile floors that match the first-floor vestibule. The plaster wainscoting is scored to resemble tile work.

The *balcony* overlooks the auditorium (*Photo 10*). The stairs from the second-floor lobby open onto a landing. A plaster half wall lines the west side of the walkway; two openings provide access to the five tiers of the west half of the balcony. Eleven tiers step up to the east. One row of non-historic seating remains on the exposed concrete floors. A plaster ceiling covers the easternmost end of the balcony; historic metal grates pierce the ceiling, and a historic Art Deco ceiling light fixture remains in place.

The north aisle of the balcony leads up to the historic *projection room* that occupies the east end of the building above the office and restrooms of the second-floor lobby (*Photo 15; Figure 8*). A historic fire door separates this room from the balcony. This mostly open room contains a raised concrete platform in the center. Plaster covers the stepped west wall; exposed brick forms the north, east, and south walls. Exposed steel roof joists and metal decking fill the ceiling.

INTEGRITY

The Iola Theatre retains historic integrity. The building remains within its historic location in downtown Iola. Despite the loss of historic buildings to its south and east, the downtown setting remains highly intact and dense. The primary façade of the theater retains a high degree of its historic design, materials, and

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workmanship. No historic masonry openings have been altered. Replacement doors and windows fill historic openings. The replacement main doors continue to flank a ticket booth that while non-historic sits in the historic location of the previous booth. The terra cotta details that give this building its Spanish Revival character remain almost entirely intact; one tile of the parapet has been lost. The current non-historic awning does not adversely impact the character of the façade. Its simple design appears to be the same size, and it uses the same attachments to the terra cotta as the historic one. The other three utilitarian sides remain unpainted brick. A few historic steel sash windows remain in historic openings.

Alterations to the interior include the removal of the two small commercial spaces to the north and south of the vestibule, the removal of seating, the exposure of the concrete floor of the auditorium, balcony, and second floor lobby, and the installation of a larger screen and drapes at the stage. The expansion of the vestibule does not affect its ability to communicate its historic size, as the floor tile and decorative ceiling remains intact. Seating options in theaters change over time, and no historic seats remained in the building for decades (though some parts have been stored on site). The historic design of both the auditorium and balcony continue to be communicated by the raked concrete on the first floor and the tiers of the balcony. Further, openings in the walls correspond to the side aisles where carpet would have been laid. Exposed concrete under the seats themselves would have been a historic condition. The removal of the second screen in the balcony restored the historic open design of the full auditorium. The installation of a larger screen and drapes at the stage appears to have been additive, hiding the historic proscenium. Historic plaster walls, ceilings, and decorative features remain highly intact despite water damage in some places. Even the historic gridded ceiling and the composite paneling on the balcony are in place. The Iola Theatre continues to communicate its historic function as a 1930s movie theater.

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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 is 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 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1931-1950

Significant Dates

1931

1950

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Churchill, B.F. [Benjamin Franklin] (architect)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance covers the year the building was constructed, 1931, and extends to 1950 when Fox terminated its exclusive association with the theater.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The 1931 Iola Theatre is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of ENTERTAINMENT and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Iola, Kansas, architect B.F. Churchill designed the Spanish Revival building for Ira D. Kelley as a movie theater, housing a single screen within an Art Deco interior. When constructed, the Iola Theatre joined two other active movie theaters in downtown Iola, and it remains the best example of an elaborately designed movie theater from the 1930s in Iola. The theater was originally locally owned and operated, but by the end of the 1930s, the Iola Theatre became affiliated with the Fox studio, exclusively showing this studio's first-run films until the late 1940s. During its lifetime, the theater changed hands several times, but it continued to operate as a single movie theater into the 1970s. In that era, a remodeling created a second theater in the balcony that has recently been removed to restore the original form of the auditorium. The Iola Theatre outlasted all other movie theaters established in downtown Iola, finally closing in 2001. The historic Iola Theatre is nominated for its association with the historic context "Historical Development of Public Entertainment in Kansas, 1854-1955," described in the 2005 *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas* multiple property documentation form.⁸ The theater meets the registration requirements of the Movie Theater property type defined in that document. The period of significance spans from the year of its construction, 1931, to 1950 when Fox ended its exclusive affiliation with the theater.

Elaboration

HISTORIC THEATERS AND OPERA HOUSES OF KANSAS

The 2005 multiple property documentation form *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas* contextualizes the history and significance of these types of properties constructed in the state between 1854 and 1955. The community halls, opera houses, conversion theaters, movie theaters, and movie palaces physically reflect the character of entertainment in communities across the state. The construction of these types of properties, especially in the early years, came after the establishment of more crucial community buildings such as town halls, churches, and schools. The presence of entertainment facilities signaled the success and permanence of the town. Movie theaters evolved from earlier community halls and opera houses constructed as dedicated buildings for live performances.⁹

Moving pictures date to the early 1890s when Thomas Edison invented a machine to demonstrate the concept. Traveling vaudeville or touring companies began to incorporate the new technology into their performances. Kansas saw its first moving picture in January 1897 when a touring opera company projected a bull fight on a screen during a performance of *Carmen*.¹⁰ Within a decade, the practice of incorporating motion pictures into

⁸ The MPDF has one historic context. Elizabeth Rosin, et al., *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, National Register multiple property documentation form (2005).

⁹ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:2.

¹⁰ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:36.

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vaudeville acts became standard practice, and by the 1910s, towns began constructing theaters dedicated exclusively to the art form.¹¹ Business owners converted existing commercial storefronts into makeshift theaters known as nickelodeons, often with folding chairs, and open lots within downtowns became “air domes” popular for showing films outside in warmer weather.¹² The popularity of movies increased in the 1920s, especially with the advent of talking pictures.

As the movie industry grew, movie chains became a reality. In the 1930s, independently owned and operated theaters gave way to regional chains owned by the five major film studios like MGM, Warner Brothers, Fox, Paramount, and RKO; of the five, only Fox and RKO operated theaters in Kansas.¹³ The studio-controlled theaters exclusively showed the films distributed by the studios. Independent theaters continued to show movies in the second run. By the late 1940s, the “Big Five” controlled 80 percent of the movie theaters in the country, causing the US government to break the monopoly through an antitrust lawsuit. Theaters formerly controlled by the studios could then show movies from the other film studios, which was seen as a win for consumers. As a result, studios decreased the number of films produced each year and charged higher prices for the distribution of these films, which increased the ticket prices 50 percent between 1949 and 1952. The price increases decreased attendance and led to the closure of several downtown theaters into the 1960s.¹⁴

Movie Theater Design

The movie theater property type developed to meet the growing popularity of the art form and to meet code requirements of the era. These increasingly elaborate buildings in downtowns successfully competed with smaller nickelodeons and converted live performance theaters. The purpose-built movie theater provided more comfortable experiences.¹⁵ The buildings responded to the surrounding context of neighboring commercial blocks. Designers adapted the two-part commercial block form into theaters by creating a first story commercial space with theater entrance and small retail storefronts, leaving the upper façade for ornamentation. Popular styles employed included revival styles such as Spanish, Colonial, and Classical, as well as Art Deco. The lighted marquee became a distinguishing feature of the movie theater.¹⁶ As the popularity of the movie industry increased, the designs of the theaters became more elaborate. Highly ornamented and showy exteriors communicated the extravagance of the interior with heavily ornamented surfaces.¹⁷

The movie theater directly responded to technological advances seen in the early twentieth century. Advances in construction techniques allowed for buildings made of structural steel and reinforced concrete, which

¹¹ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:36.

¹² Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:38.

¹³ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:42,44.

¹⁴ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:42.

¹⁵ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:40,46.

¹⁶ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:48.

¹⁷ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:49.

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improved cantilever design for larger balcony spaces and fewer structural columns within the auditorium itself. Uniform building codes by the late 1920s meant safer designs with egress and material flammability requirements.¹⁸ Technological advancements in entertainment also altered the design of entertainment facilities. Movie houses required smaller stage areas because the performances did not necessitate sets or live performances; however, the projection room became a characteristic space of these buildings. The films and projectors associated with the motion pictures posed potential fire hazards. Kansas passed fire safety laws in the early twentieth century, requiring a separation between the projector and the auditorium and stipulating that moving picture theaters could only occupy the ground floors of buildings.¹⁹

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES IN IOLA

Prior to Euro-American settlement, the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kansa, Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, and Wichita peopled the land that is now Kansas. The United States government removed additional American Indian groups to the land beginning in 1829, and new emigrant groups continued to arrive until Kansas Territory opened in 1854. The emigrant New York and Osage peoples resided in the land surrounding Iola at the time of its establishment in 1859. Iola became the county seat of Allen County in 1865, four years after statehood, and in March 1870, incorporated as a city of the third class.²⁰

The evolution of entertainment venues in Iola followed the patterns described in the previous section. Citizens of Iola quickly established schools, churches, government buildings, and businesses. The town square, bound by Jackson Avenue (north), Jefferson Avenue (east), Madison Avenue (south), and Washington Avenue (west), developed into the center of commerce, government, and eventually entertainment. One of the first entertainment venues opened in the 1887 A.O.U.W. lodge building at the northwest corner of West Street and Washington Avenue (extant) (*Figure 15*). The Iola Opera House occupied the second floor of this structure as early as 1899 with a seating capacity of five hundred.²¹

In January 1904, the three-story Grand Theater opened on the north side of Jackson Avenue, just west of the intersection with Washington Avenue (112 W. Jackson, not extant). This purpose-built brick building accommodated almost twelve hundred people.²² The population of Iola increased over 239 percent between 1890 and 1900 from 1,706 to 5,791 people, so this theater substantially added to the available space for live performances and their audiences.

¹⁸ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:4.

¹⁹ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, E:37.

²⁰ Kansas Historical Society, "American Indians in Kansas," *Kansapedia* (2020); *Ibid.*, "Allen County, Kansas," *Kansapedia* (2019); William G. Cutler, "Allen County – Part 7," *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883) [transcription] Kansas Collection Books. This paragraph intentionally seeks to acknowledge the inhabitants of the land prior to Euro-American settlement.

²¹ According to the façade, the A.O.U.W. Building dates to 1887. The 1892 Sanborn map does not call out an opera house function, but the 1899 Sanborn notes the Opera House in the second floor. Sheet 8, both years; 1905 Iola City Directory, 18.

²² 1905 Sanborn map, sheet 8; "Secure King Dodo," *The Iola Register* (28 December 1903): 1; 1905 Iola City Directory, 18.

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In 1910, the city population peaked at over nine thousand. The city directory from that year lists six theaters. Two of them, the Iola Airdome (205-211 N. Washington) and Star Dome Theatre (12 E. Jackson) were outdoor facilities (neither extant). The Grand Theatre continued to operate as the primary live performance venue until a fire destroyed the building in December 1924.²³ The Princess Theatre occupied the first floor of the three-story brick commercial building at 3 South Jefferson Avenue (extant), and the Electric Theatre occupied a storefront in a two-story brick commercial building at 5 North Jefferson Avenue (extant); both theaters showed moving pictures (*Figure 15*). The one-story, purpose-built brick Majestic Theatre at 220 South Street (not extant) hosted both live performances and motion pictures.²⁴

Three movie theaters served the 7,160 people of Iola by 1930, the year before the Iola Theatre opened. The Elite Theater, 1 South Jefferson Avenue (not extant) opened in circa 1911 as a movie theater in a one-story wood framed building. The Elite showed the first talking picture in Iola in 1912.²⁵ It closed permanently in August 1930.²⁶ The two-story brick Kelley Theatre at 207 South Washington Avenue (not extant) opened in 1923 and exclusively showed Paramount pictures.²⁷ Mr. R.H. Montgomery opened The Uptown Theater in July 1929. This theater occupied the Allen Building at 16 West Jackson Avenue (extant) (*Figure 15*), an existing building that Montgomery converted into a combination movie and vaudeville theater for approximately four hundred fifty people. The building received a new brick front and a canopy.²⁸ The Uptown Theater relocated across the square to 111 East Madison Avenue (extant) in March 1933.²⁹ This building appears to have been purposely built as a movie house (*Figure 15*) two years after the Iola Theatre opened. The Uptown remained at this location until at least 1954, according to advertisements in the *Iola Register*. In March 1936, the Kelley, Uptown, and Iola theatres affiliated with Fox, and the Kelley Theatre announced it would close in order to consolidate the Fox offerings.³⁰ The last movie theater to open in downtown Iola was The Pic at 10 North Washington Avenue (extant) (*Figure 15*). This theater opened in March 1938 within a remodeled commercial building on the east side of the square.³¹ The Pic Theatre closed in March 1959, as the owners opened the 54 Drive-In.³²

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²³ "Fire Destroys the Grand Theater Building Entailing Heavy Loss," *The Iola Register* (20 December 1924): 1.

²⁴ 1912 Sanborn map, sheets 8, 9, & 13; 1910 Iola City Directory, 23.

²⁵ "Moving Pictures That Talk," *The Iola Register* (15 January 1912): 2.

²⁶ "Old Elite Theatre to be Closed Permanently," *The Iola Register* (20 August 1930): 1.

²⁷ "The Kelley, Iola's Theatre Beautiful, to Open Next Thursday," *The Iola Register* (13 March 1923): 3. The entire issue of the paper included congratulatory ads for the new theater opening.

²⁸ "Iola's New Theater Opens Next Monday," *The Iola Register* (20 July 1929): 1.

²⁹ Congratulatory ads in *The Iola Register* (15 March 1933): 3.

³⁰ "Kelley Theater is Closed," *The Iola Register* (27 April 1936): 1.

³¹ "New Theater to Open," *The Iola Register* (5 March 1938): 1.

³² Ad., *The Iola Register* (16 March 1959): 8.

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The Iola Theatre joined the 1923 Kelley Theatre and the 1929 Uptown Theatre as the third active movie theater in downtown Iola. Local business and town promoter, Ira D. Kelley, financed the construction of the theater. Kelley (1875-1941) arrived in Iola as a baby five years after the town incorporated. By 1931, when the new theater opened, the sixty-six-year-old Kelley had built the Kelley Hotel, the Iola Hotel, and the Kelley Theatre. He held a prominent place in the local chamber of commerce, highway associations, and other civic organizations.³³ Iola trusted the Kelley name and considered the Iola Theatre his crowning achievement.³⁴

Kelley saw the need for a new, grand movie theater in Iola. He believed the new facility would boost the reputation of the town. He also saw the benefit of employing local workers in all aspects of the construction at a time of economic turmoil, the Great Depression. Kelley's continued investment in Iola, in the form of this elaborate building, was seen as a morale boost for the town, as well.³⁵

Kelley planned to adapt an earlier brick garage to the north of his Iola Hotel and to the west of his Kelley Hotel and Theatre into the movie theater. He hired local architect Benjamin F. (B.F.) Churchill to design the movie theater that he estimated would seat eight hundred people.³⁶ In mid-March 1931, the *Iola Register* reported that thirty-five workmen were in the process of removing the roof of the older building for its adaptation.³⁷ A few weeks later, however, Kelley discovered that the former garage building had been constructed sixteen inches too far to the south, and as a result, would be wholly razed.³⁸

Design and Construction of the Iola Theatre

The *Iola Register* regularly reported on the progress of construction of the new theater throughout 1931. By May, bricklayers awaited the shipment of the terra cotta for the east façade to complete the shell, and the first steel I-beam had been installed at the roof.³⁹ In mid-June, the exterior walls and the steel roof were in place, and workmen began finishing the interior.⁴⁰

Interior painting began in early July as the workers completed the plasterwork.⁴¹ Along with the plaster of the walls and ceilings, four tons of specialty plasterwork—pilaster capitals, door surrounds, and crown

³³ "Ira Kelley Is Taken By Death," *The Iola Register* (14 March 1941): 1,6.

³⁴ "Kelley One of Town Builders," *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 1.

³⁵ "Kelley One of Town Builders," 1.

³⁶ "More Men At Work," *The Iola Register* (17 March 1931): 1.

³⁷ "More Men At Work," 1.

³⁸ "Iola Theatre Plans Changed Once Again," *The Iola Register* (6 April 1931): 1.

³⁹ "A Building Delay," *The Iola Register* (4 May 1931): 1.

⁴⁰ "New Theater to be Completed About August 1," *The Iola Register* (16 June 1931): 1.

⁴¹ "New Theater to Painting State," *The Iola Register* (7 July 1931): 1.

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moulding—arrived in early July ready to be installed.⁴² The flashing sunburst marquee, constructed by a firm out of Omaha, Nebraska, arrived in early August.⁴³

In the August 12 *Iola Register*, Larry Hensler, the new manager, announced that the Iola Theatre would officially open the following Monday, August 17. Hensler noted that workers were still laying tile, which had come all the way from New York, but the leather “air cushioned” seating and “modernistic” light fixtures were installed (*Figure 16*). The lights contained three different colored bulbs—red, blue, and clear—to produce different lighting effects. The stage drapery and carpeting were to be installed by the opening. The carpets covered the concrete aisles, stairways, and second floor lobby.⁴⁴

The Iola Theatre contained several features that represented the latest advancements in movie theater design. The use of reinforced concrete and steel provided unobstructed views of the state from the 310 balcony seats and 630 auditorium seats.⁴⁵ A refrigeration system forced conditioned air into the auditorium in the hottest months.⁴⁶ B.F. Churchill, who also served as construction foreman, celebrated the new building’s fireproof character. He stated in a June 1931 interview with the *Iola Register* that “there won’t be more than 25 feet of wood in the entire building; it will be absolutely fireproof.”⁴⁷ The fireproofing extended beyond the concrete, brick, and terra cotta structure to the use of metal instead of wood lath for the plaster. The steel beams supporting the roof received metal framing boxing on which the decorative plaster was applied.⁴⁸ A masonry separation between the balcony and large projection room added to the fireproof character of the building, as well. Kelley and Churchill consulted with Western Electric to create the most up-to-date sound system for the auditorium.⁴⁹

Churchill designed the most decorative movie theater seen in Iola. The terra cotta façade utilizes revival styles common to the era with the Spanish Revival most prevalent. Features of this style include the shaped parapet, the decorative colorful terra cotta pieces surround masonry openings, and twisted terra cotta roping that creates three arches.⁵⁰ This style, which grew out of the earlier Mission style, reached its peak between 1915 and 1945; historian Marcus Whiffen notes that “Spanish architecture became a craze” in 1925.⁵¹ At least

⁴² “Plaster for Theater,” *The Iola Register* (9 July 1931): 1.

⁴³ “New Electric Signs,” *The Iola Register* (4 August 1931): 1.

⁴⁴ “Iola Theatre to Give First Show Monday,” *The Iola Register* (12 August 1931): 1.

⁴⁵ “New Theater to Painting State,” *The Iola Register* (7 July 1931): 1. Locals indicate that the theater practiced segregation until the 1960s, with Black patrons having to sit in the balcony.

⁴⁶ “New Theater to be Completed About August 1,” *The Iola Register* (16 June 1931): 1.

⁴⁷ “New Theater to be Completed...,” 1.

⁴⁸ “New Theater to be Completed...,” 1.

⁴⁹ “Theatre Sound Equipment Best,” *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 1.

⁵⁰ Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 522; Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 225.

⁵¹ Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 225.

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eighteen Spanish Revival theaters were constructed across Kansas between circa 1911 and 1931.⁵² Besides the Iola Theatre, notable extant examples include the Booth Theater in Independence, the Midland Theater in Coffeyville, and the Granada Theatre in Emporia (*Figure 17*).⁵³ These examples, which are larger than Iola's version, nonetheless share similarities with the Iola Theatre, including terra cotta cladding and decoration, decorative terra cotta around masonry openings, shaped parapets, and the use of arches.

The design of the Iola Theatre's interior matches the exuberance of the exterior. Designed in the Art Deco style, the interior epitomizes what historian William Curtis calls the consumerist theatricality of pre-1929-crash capitalism.⁵⁴ The Art Deco style is primarily one of ornamentation.⁵⁵ Stylistic features focus on geometry. Rectilinear forms dominate with geometrical curves a strong secondary motif.⁵⁶ Zigzags, chevrons, and frets meet stylized natural motifs such as fronds and sunbursts. These ornamental motifs occur in low relief most often with a flat front plane.⁵⁷ The style appears in the Iola Theatre through ornamentation, including chevron patterned floor tiles, geometric shapes on crown mouldings and light fixtures, and floral motifs at door openings. Together the exterior and interior designs achieve the ability to stimulate the emotions of the patron.⁵⁸

Early estimates called for the Iola Theatre to be completed by July 1.⁵⁹ The opening occurred only a month and a half later. The *Iola Register* dedicated nearly the entire August 14 issue to the building. Over one thousand people attended the opening night.⁶⁰ The first movie shown was an MGM production *Sporting Blood* starring relative newcomer Clark Gable.⁶¹ Manager Hensler received numerous congratulatory telegrams on the opening of the theater. At least six celebrities, all affiliated with MGM at the time, expressed their warm wishes, including Marie Dressler, Wallace Beery, Robert Montgomery, Norma Shearer, Ramon Novarro, and Clark Gable.⁶²

Operating the Iola Theatre

Ira Kelley owned the building, but he leased the theater to the Iola Theatre Corporation to manage and run the facility. Larry Hensler served as managing director, S.L. Wolfberg served as president, and a Mrs. J. Kowall,

⁵² According to the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory.

⁵³ All three are individually listed in the National Register.

⁵⁴ William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 3rd ed. (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 223.

⁵⁵ Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

⁵⁶ Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

⁵⁷ Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

⁵⁸ "Building is One of Beauty and Comfort," *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 1.

⁵⁹ "A Building Delay," 1.

⁶⁰ "More Than Thousand Attend Show Opening," *The Iola Register* (18 August 1931): 1.

⁶¹ "Iola Theatre to Give First Show Monday," *The Iola Register* (12 August 1931): 1.

⁶² "Film Stars Congratulate Larry Hensler on Opening of Theatre," *The Iola Register* (15 August 1931): 1.

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secretary-treasurer. Hensler's duties included staffing, facility upkeep, and movie selection.⁶³ Besides the opening movie *Sporting Blood*, Hensler planned to show the Warner Brothers movies *Broadminded* and *Smart Money*, and MGM's *Trader Horn* later in the summer.⁶⁴ The theater showed the movies three times a day, except on Sundays.⁶⁵ Matinee shows at 2:15 cost 25 cents (10 cents for children), and evening shows at 7:15 and 9:30 cost 35 cents (10 cents for children).⁶⁶ Hensler left the theater two months later to accept a position as a film salesman, and a new manager, Vogel Gettier, joined the theater. Gettier secured pictures from the major film studios, including MGM, Warner Brothers, Fox, and RKO.⁶⁷

Fox Midwest Theaters reached lease agreements with the Iola, Kelley, and Uptown theaters in April 1936. The Iola Theatre and Uptown Theatre, which by that time had relocated to its new building on the south side of the square, were newer structures than the Kelley, and Fox decided to close the older facility to focus on the two others.⁶⁸ From 1936 to 1950, the theater advertised as the Fox Iola Theatre, exclusively showing films produced by that studio. By 1949, the cost of seeing a movie had risen to 65 cents.⁶⁹ After 1950, advertisements for movies at the Iola Theatre included non-Fox movies, indicating that the exclusive Fox relationship ended.

After the death of Ira Kelley in 1941, the movie theater ownership changed several times. In the 1960s, the second floor was modified into an apartment for the owners.⁷⁰ In March 1975, brothers Bob Buscher and Lou Bartow purchased the theater on behalf of their company, B&B Booking Company. The brothers remodeled the interior of the theater to create two theaters, one in the balcony.⁷¹ The movie theater finally closed in 2001 when a larger theater opened at the east edge of town.⁷² The Iola Theatre served the community for seventy years, longer than any other theater in the city.

Iola Theatre as Movie Theater Property Type

The 1931 Iola Theatre, nominated under the *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, meets the registration requirements of the Movie Theater property type. Local businessman Ira Kelley constructed the

⁶³ "Here Are the Three Persons Who Will Manage the New Theatre," *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 1.

⁶⁴ "Good Quality Shows Coming," *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 9.

⁶⁵ The theater company, as well as the new manager, were served papers multiple times for violating the Blue Laws, which prohibited labor on Sundays. "Movie Manager Arrested Again on Labor Count," *The Iola Register* (1 February 1932): 1.

⁶⁶ Ad., *The Iola Register* (14 August 1931): 11.

⁶⁷ "Manager Comes to New Theater," *The Iola Register* (16 September 1931): 1. Gettier was arrested twice

⁶⁸ "Kelley Theater Is Closed," *The Iola Register* (27 April 1936): 1.

⁶⁹ The theater ran an ad in the *Iola Register* for students to purchase a "privilege card" that would admit them to a movie for 40 cents, saving 15 cents a show. (3 May 1949): 8.

⁷⁰ "Theatre Owner is a Suicide," *The Iola Register* (20 April 1965): 1.

⁷¹ "Truckin' on Down Washington Avenue," 8.

⁷² Bob Johnson, "Art Deco Grandeur," *The Iola Register* (24 December 2013): 1.

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purpose-built theater one half block south of the Iola town square. The two-story building fits within its commercial context as a two-part commercial block with elaborately designed Spanish Revival façade. Architect B.F. Churchill designed the reinforced concrete and steel structure to meet fire code requirements with brick and terra cotta exterior walls and a separate projection room. An illuminated awning extends over the first-story entrance created by recessed doors flanking a central, projecting ticket booth. On the interior, Churchill utilized the popular Art Deco style to ornament the small entry vestibule common to theaters of the era. Stairs lead up to a lobby and balcony. The raked floor of the auditorium historically contained rows of fixed seating divided by two side aisles, and the screen sat behind a curtained proscenium above the stage.⁷³

The building continues to retain the characteristics and qualities that define it as a movie theater, significant in the areas of entertainment and architecture.⁷⁴ The form of the entry lobby remains intact despite the removal of the north and south walls at an unknown date to extend the usable area. The auditorium design itself remains highly intact with its balcony, stage, and proscenium; although, no seating remains, the location and design of the seating both at the first floor and balcony remains legible through the patterning of former flooring materials. Significant secondary spaces include the second floor lobby area, whose design remains. Though post-dating the period of significance, the exterior marquee continues to announce the name of the theater and signal its historic function.

Alterations to the main façade do not adversely impact the ability of this building to communicate its historic significance. Replacement windows fill historic masonry openings, and historic transoms of the second story remain. The non-historic entry mimics the historic configuration of paired doors flanking the projecting ticket booth. The dates of these alterations are unknown, but the modifications reflect the continued use of the building as a movie theater.⁷⁵ The Iola Theatre is the best example of a movie theater property type in the city.

CONCLUSION

The 1931 Iola Theatre is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of ENTERTAINMENT and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. The Spanish Revival design is an excellent example of the movie theater property type defined in the *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas* MPDF. The purpose-built theater served as the premiere movie house in Iola from its construction in 1931 until 2001, outliving the other theaters that operated downtown. The period of significance begins in 1931 and extends to 1950 when the building's exclusive association with Fox ended.

⁷³ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, F:64-65.

⁷⁴ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, F:66-67.

⁷⁵ Rosin, *Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas*, F:67.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Cutler, William G. *History of the State of Kansas*. Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883 [transcription, 1999] Kansas Collection Books <https://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/>

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The Iola Register. Various dates. Digitized online at Newspapers.com.

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Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

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 Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Allen County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 001-237

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>37.920823</u> Latitude:	<u>-95.405916</u> Longitude:	3	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:
2	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:	4	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Allen County, Kansas Appraiser describes the boundary of the Iola Theatre property as Iola City, Block 86, North 42' of lot 6. The building occupies its entire 42' x 120' parcel on the west side of Washington Avenue, with alleys lining the north and west sides of the building.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the entire property historically (and currently) associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda K. Loughlin/National Register Section Head

organization Rosin Preservation LLC date July 2023, rev. October 2023

street & number 1712 Holmes St. telephone 816.472.4950

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.com

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

name Iola Theatre Association (contact information on file with SHPO)

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Additional Documentation

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Iola Theatre

City or Vicinity: Iola

County: Allen County State: Kansas

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date Photographed: June 2023

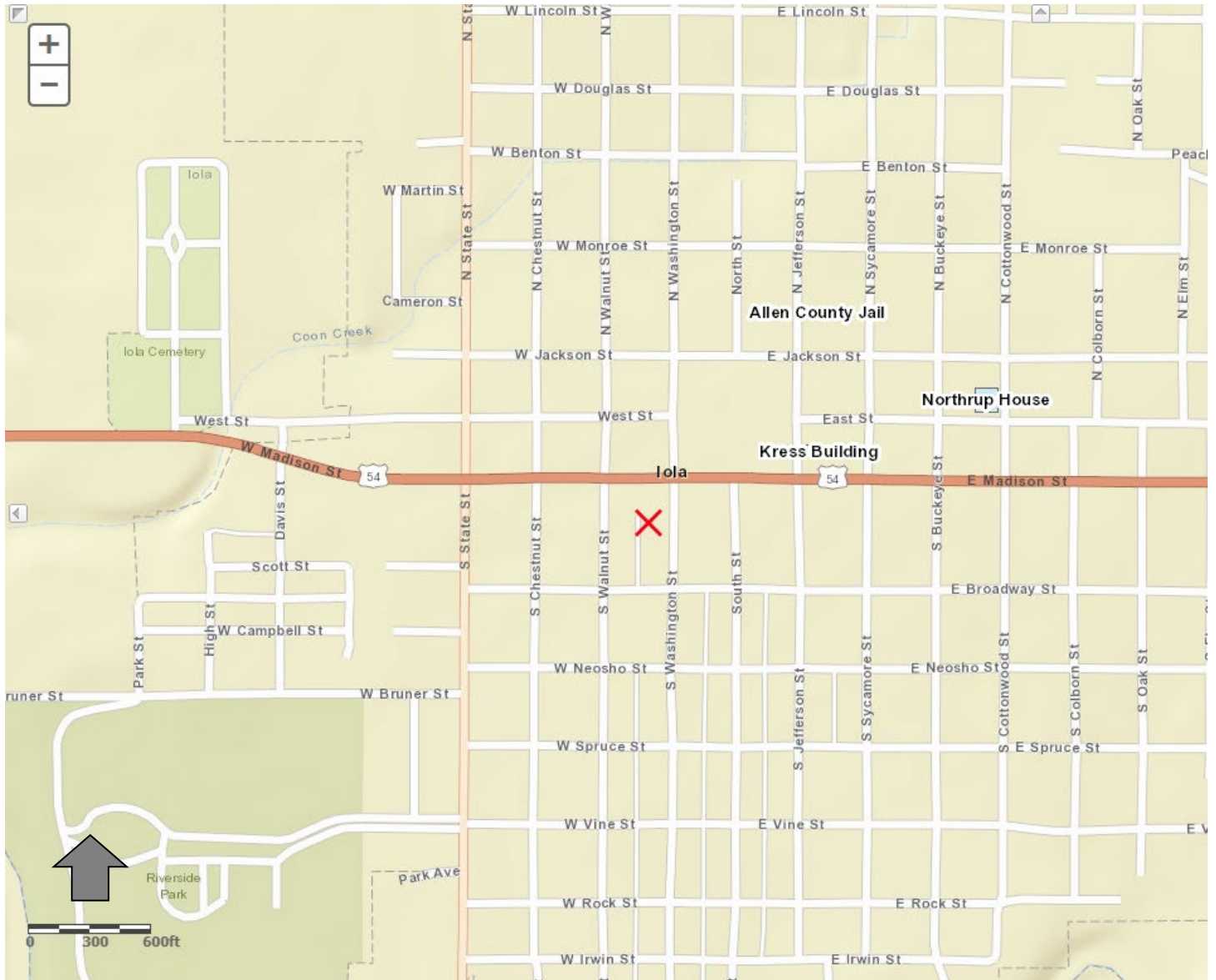
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include a description of view indicating the direction of camera:

Photo Number	View	Description
#001	NW	Looking northwest at the south and east elevations.
#002	W	Looking west at the east (primary) elevation.
#003	W	Detail of east elevation.
#004	SE	Looking southeast at the north and west elevations and the alleys they face.
#005	NE	Looking northeast at the south elevation from the west alley.
#006	N	First floor, entry vestibule, showing historic floor and ceilings.
#007	ENE	First floor, looking toward the entry from the stair hall between the theatre and the entry.
#008	SSW	First floor, looking south from the north stair in the stair hall.
#009	W	First floor of theatre, looking west from the east side under balcony.
#010	NW	Second floor of theatre balcony, looking northwest.
#011	E	First floor of theatre, looking east from the front of the stage.
#012	NW	First floor of theatre, plaster detail at northwest door.
#013	S	First floor, stage, looking south behind screen
#014	NE	Second floor balcony, looking northeast from the center of the balcony.
#015	NW	Second floor, projection room at east end of balcony, view from southeast corner.
#016	N	Second floor lobby, looking north. Bathrooms and offices to east; theater to west.
#017	SW	Second floor lobby, view from top of first floor stair. Historic light fixture in background.
#018	S	Second floor, women's restroom in southeast corner of floor.
#019	NW	Basement under stage, view of historic stair.
#020	SSE	Basement under stage, looking south from bottom of stair.

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Figure 1. Location map, showing the Iola Theatre (X) within context of Iola. Source: Kansas Historic Resources Inventory.



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Figure 3. A circa 1949 photo, showing the Iola Theatre and the Hotel-Iola to its south (not extant). The date is based on the movie advertised on the marquee. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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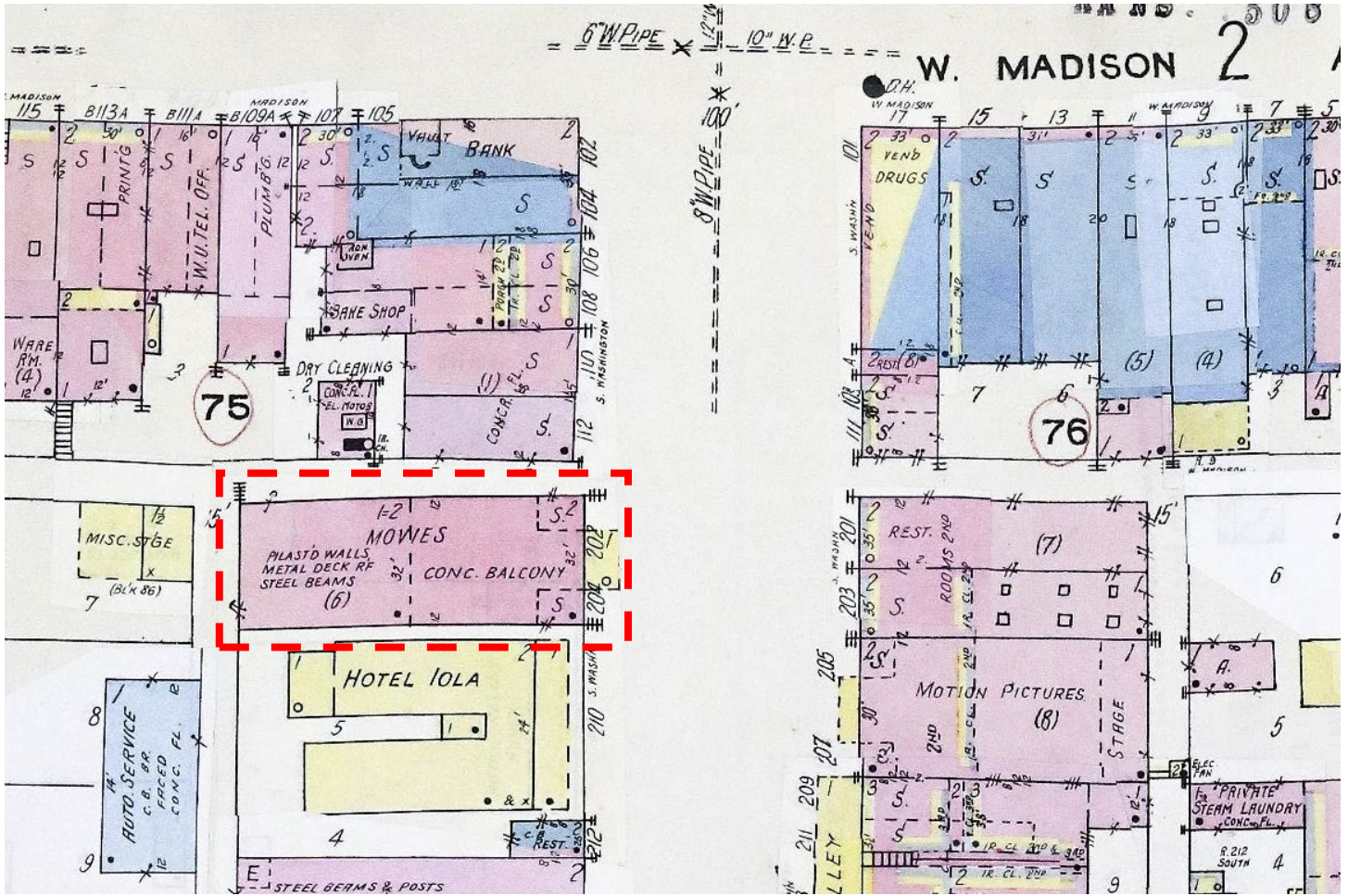
Figure 4. A circa 1955 photo, showing the Iola Theatre marquee within context, looking northeast. A paved parking lot replaced the white building, shown at right. The date is based on the movie advertised on the marquee and the model of cars shown. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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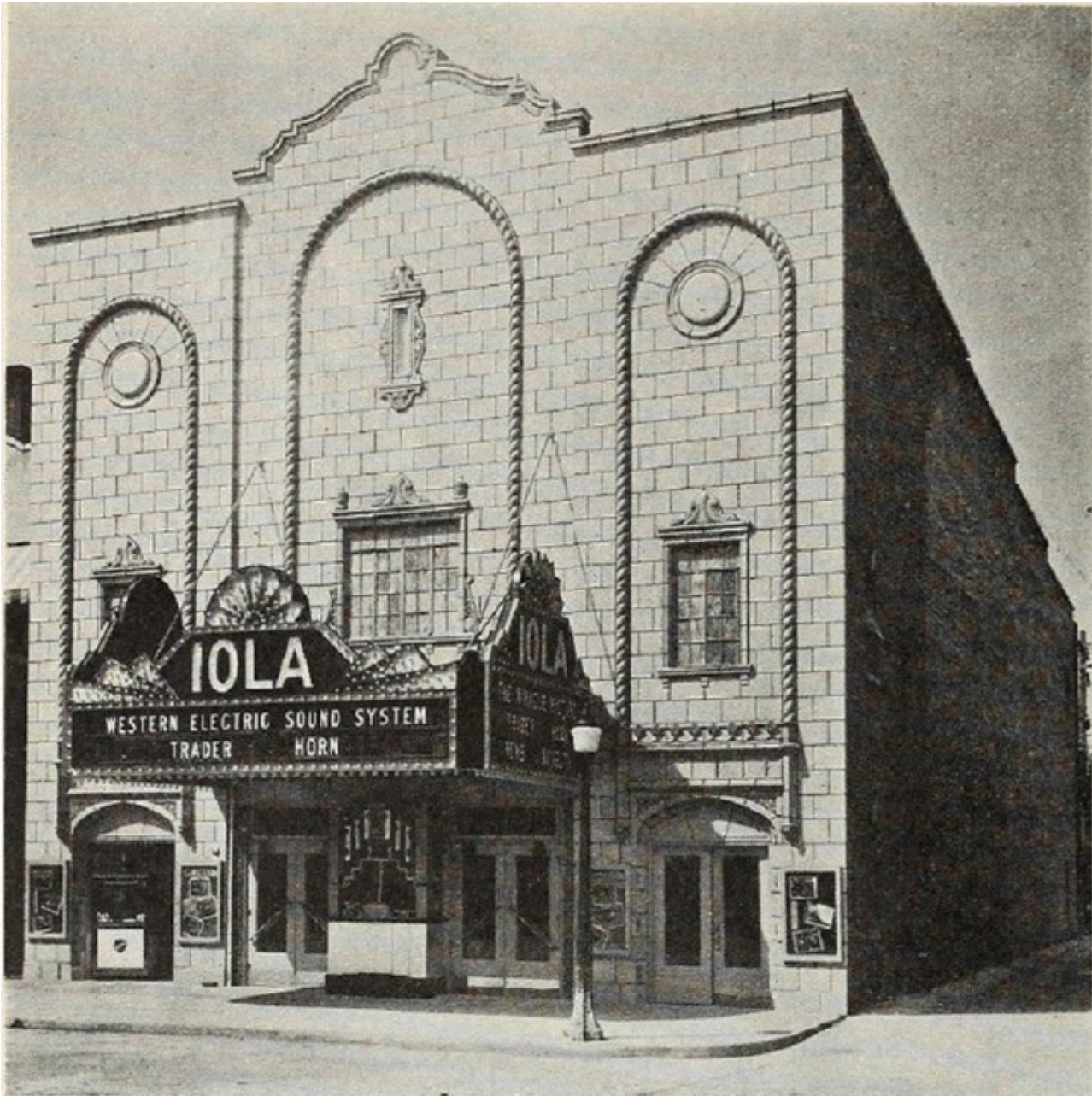
Figure 5. Snippet of the 1946 Sanborn, showing the Iola Theatre (in dashed box) across from the Kelley Theater (not extant). Source: Iowa, Allen County, Kansas, Sanborn Map Company, 1924 rev. to September 1946, sheet 4.



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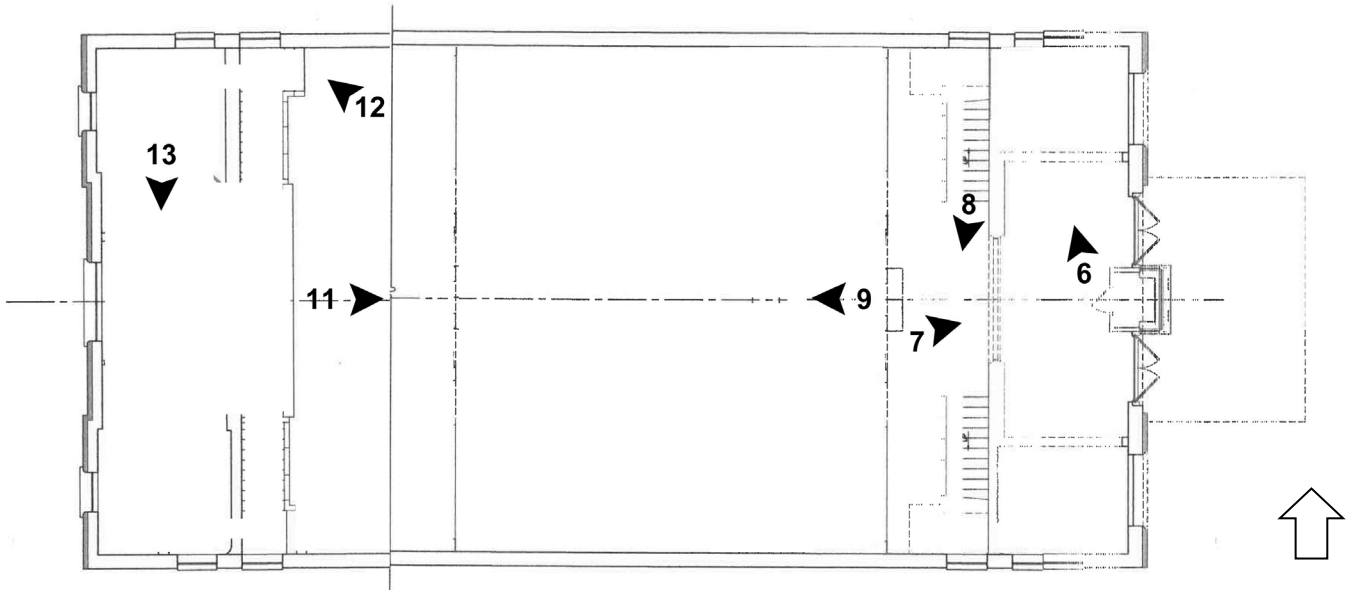
Figure 6. The Iola Theatre in the 1930s, looking southwest. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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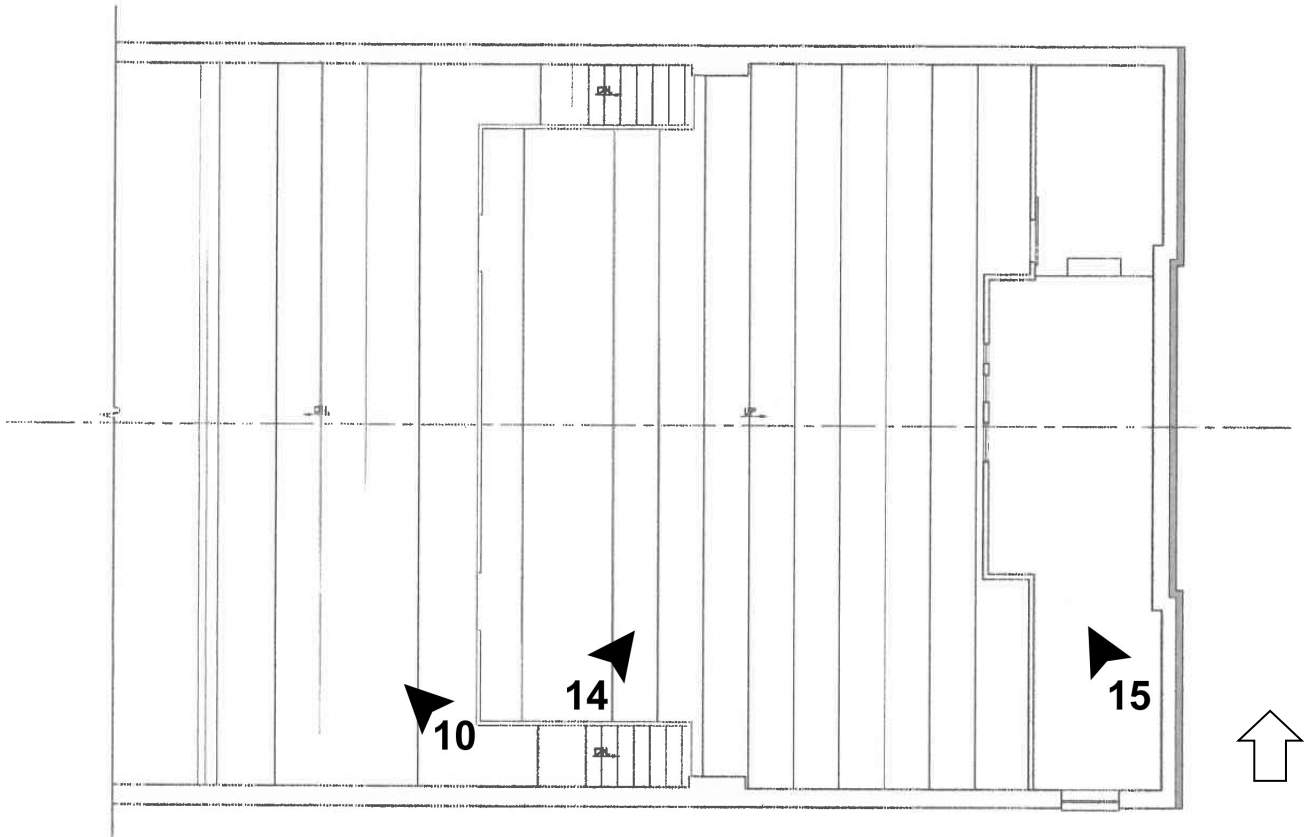
Figure 7. First floor sketch plan with photo keys. Base plan modified from plans on file with Iola Theatre Association. Not to scale.



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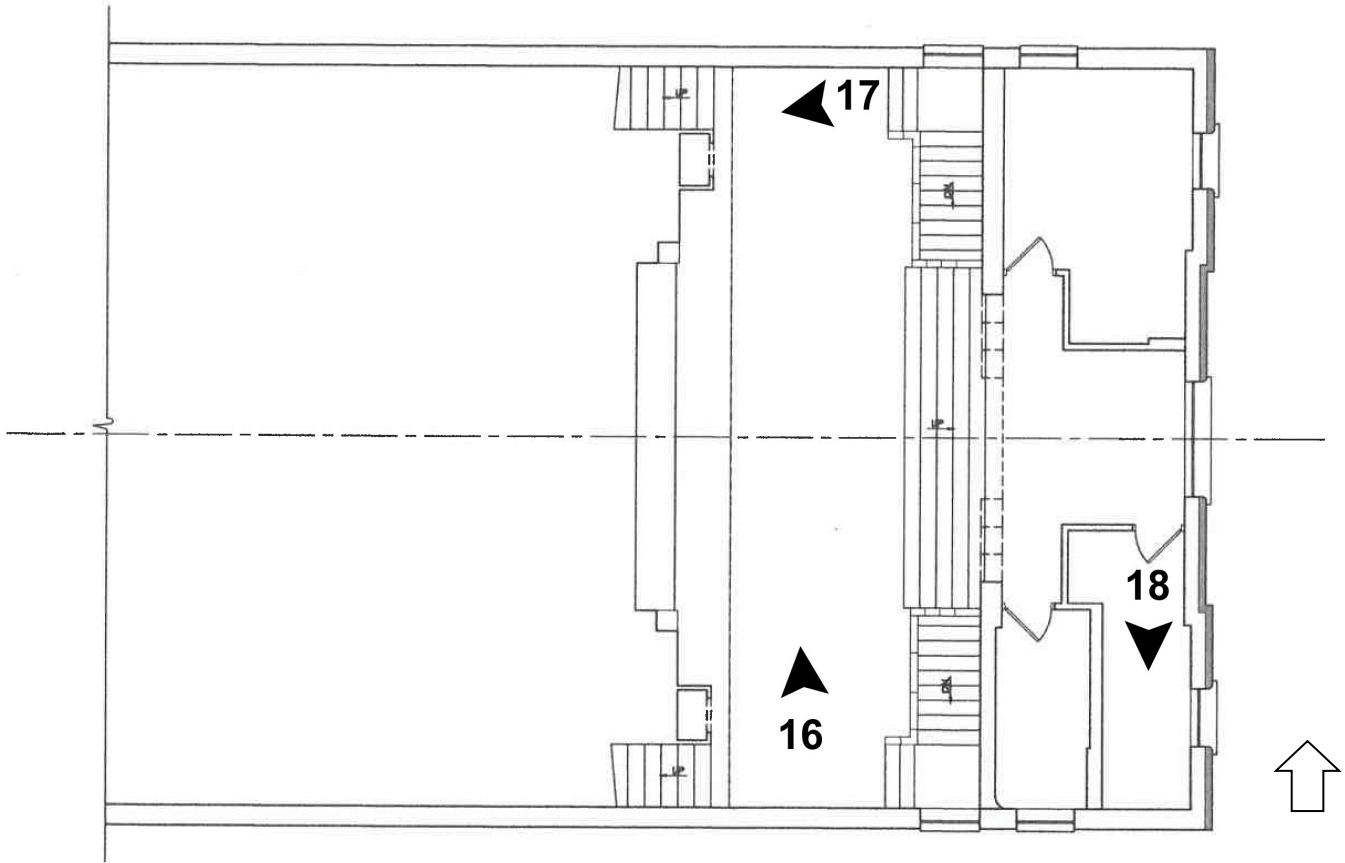
Figure 8. Second floor balcony plan and photo key. Base plan from Iola Theatre Association. Not to scale.



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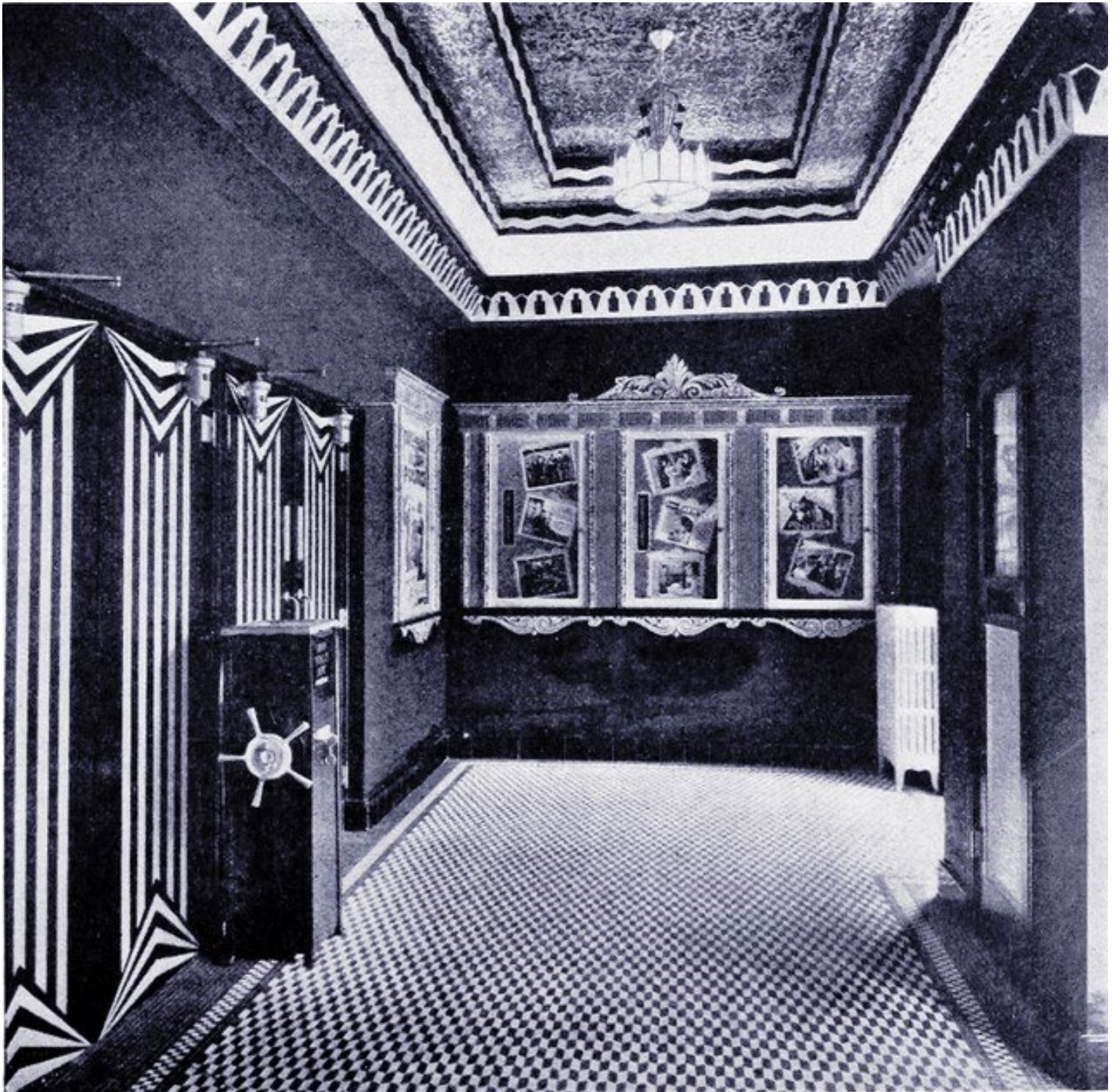
Figure 9. Second floor mezzanine/lobby plan and photo key. Base plan from Iola Theatre Association. Not to scale.



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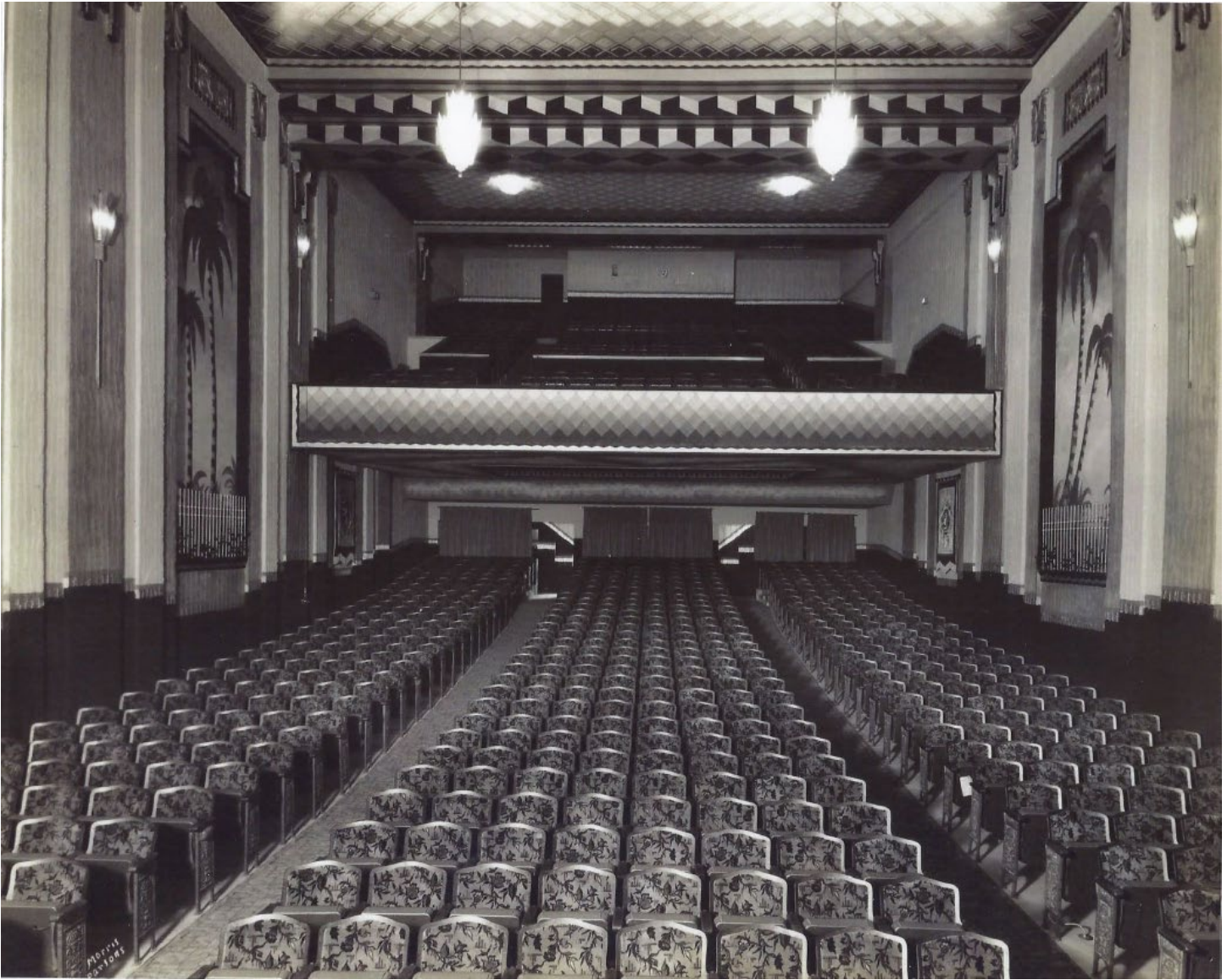
Figure 10. Vestibule interior, looking north, circa 1931. Compare to Photo 6. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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Figure 11. View of theater, looking east from the stage, circa 1931. Compare to Photo 11. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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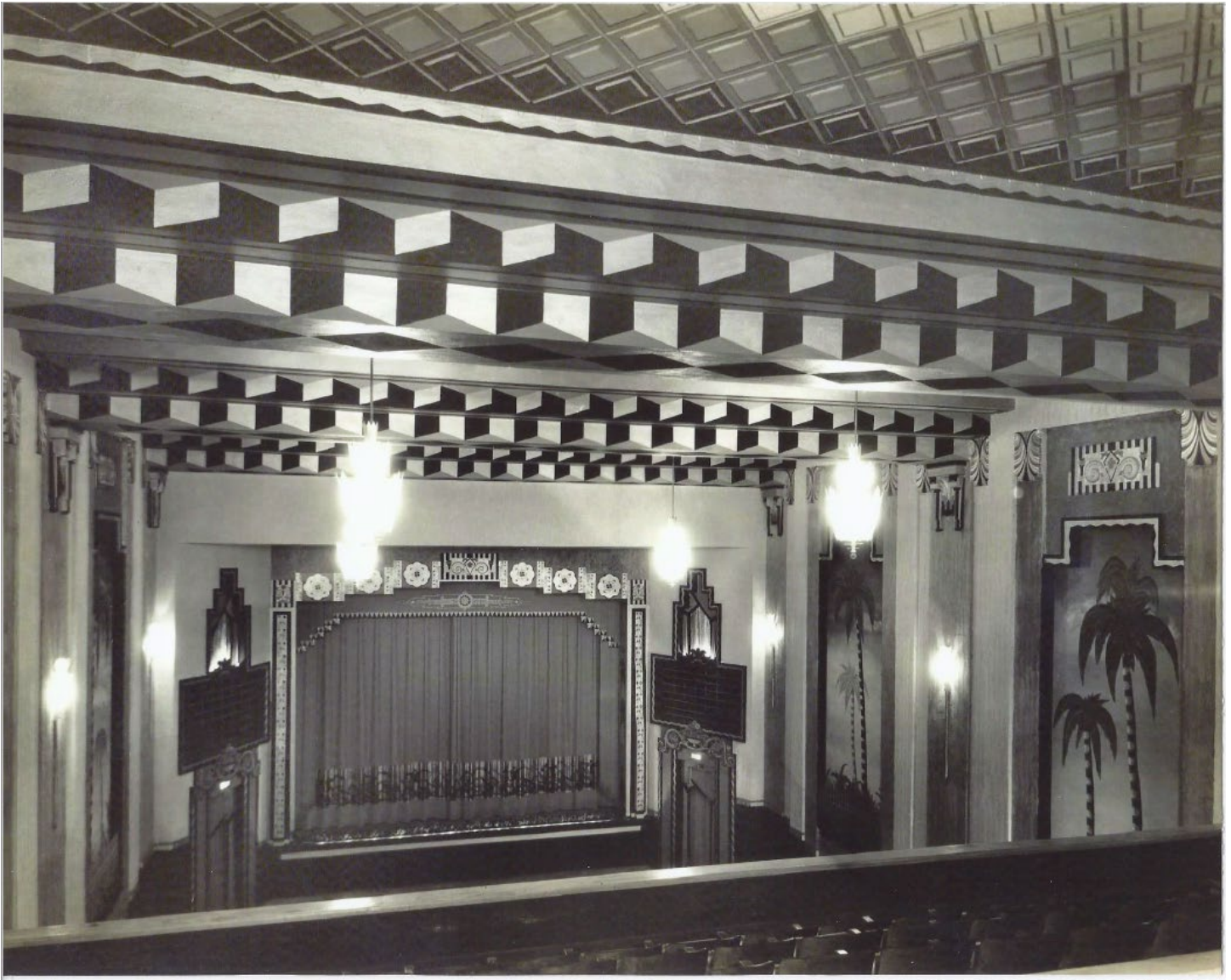
Figure 12. View of theater from the east end of the first floor, looking west, circa 1931. Compare to Photo 9. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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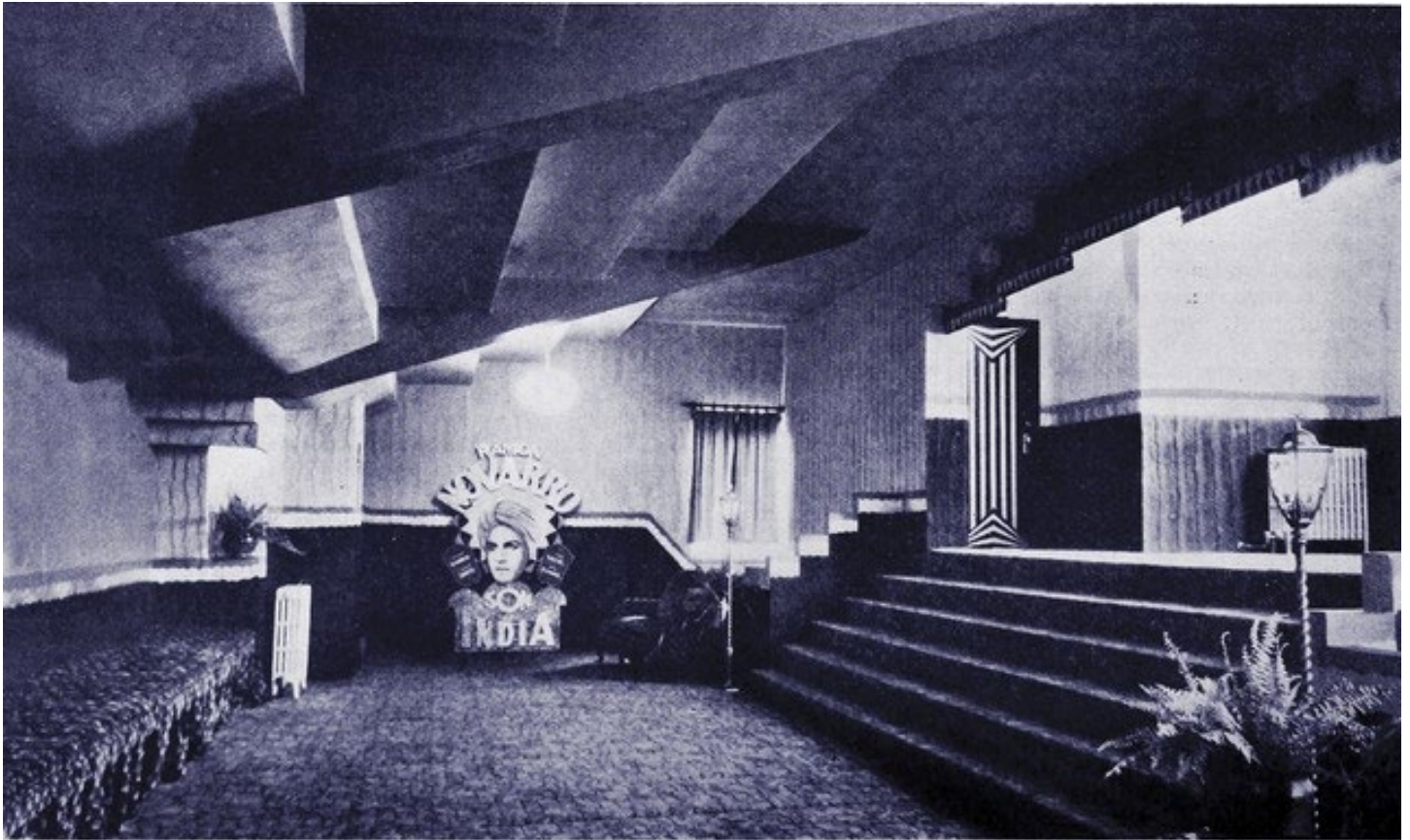
Figure 13. View from the balcony toward the stage (looking northwest), circa 1931. Compare to Photo 10. Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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Figure 14. Second floor lobby, looking north, circa 1931 (based on Ramon Novarro *Son of India* advertisement). Source: Iola Theatre Association.



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Figure 15. Examples of other extant theater venues in Iola. Photos from the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI) and Google Streetview.



A.O.W.U. Building (1887) with opera house in the second floor. Loughlin, 2017, KHRI.



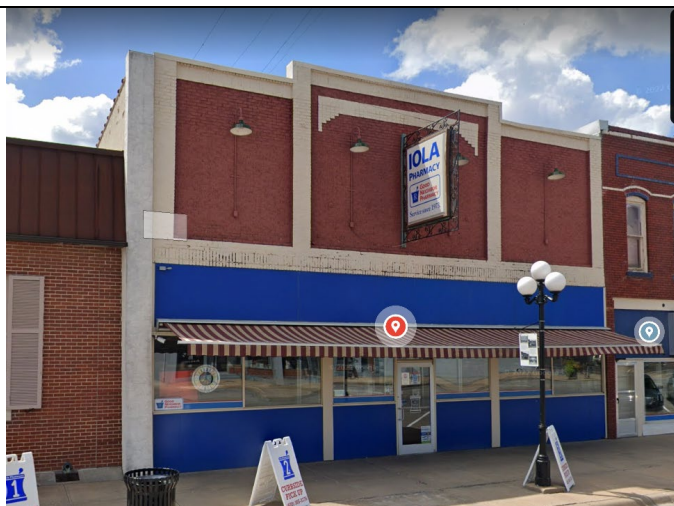
The Princess Theatre operated out of the first floor of the building to the right (3 S. Jefferson). Loughlin, 2017, KHRI.



The Electric Theatre occupied the north storefront (Jones Jewelry) in 1910. Google Streetview, 2014.



The Allen Building where the Uptown Theatre opened in 1929. Google Streetview, 2014.



The 1933 Uptown Theatre Building at 111 E Madison Ave. Google Streetview, 2022.

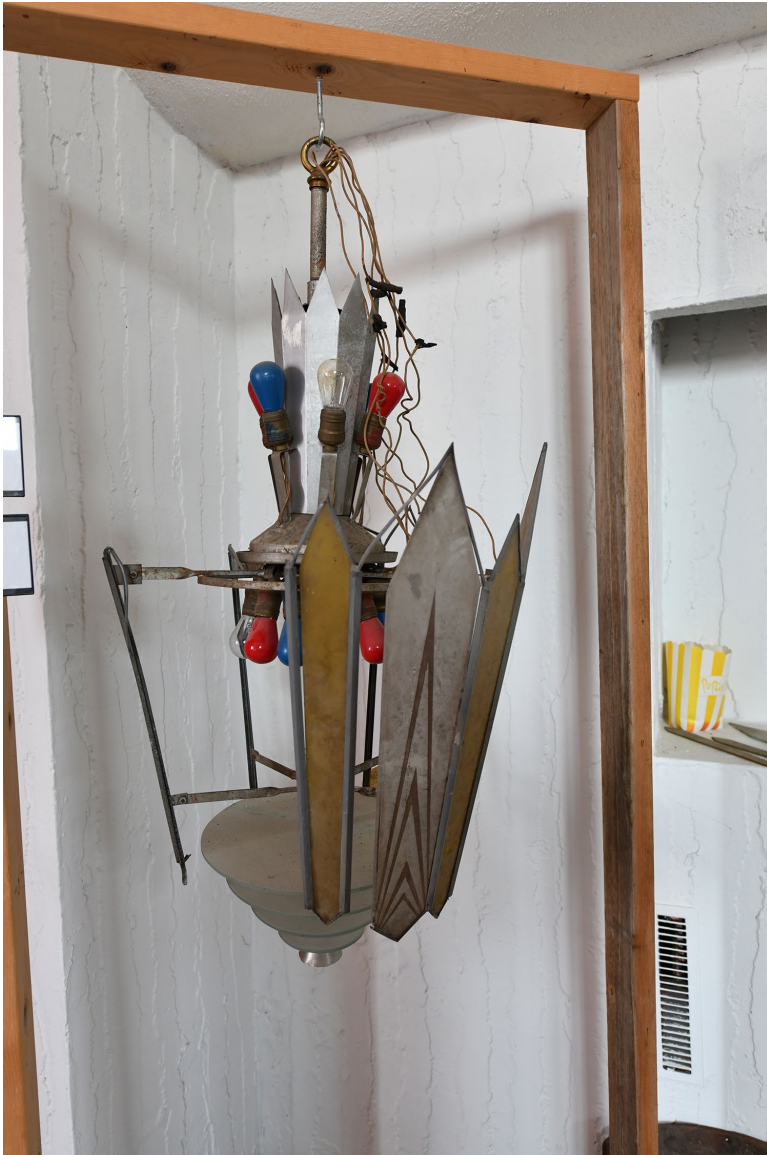


The 1938 Pic Theatre at 10 N. Washington Ave. Google Streetview, 2014.

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Figure 16. One of the historic chandeliers, which had been found on site during recent clean-up of the interior. Photo by Brad Finch, June 2023.



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Figure 17. Examples of other National Register-listed Spanish Revival theaters in Kansas. All photos from the KHRI.



Booth Theater. 119 West Myrtle Street, Independence.
1911 with 1927-28 alterations. Boller Brothers, architects.



Midland (Fox) Theater. 212 West 8th Street, Coffeyville.
1928. Clare Henderson, architect.



Granada (Fox) Theatre. 809 North Commercial Street, Emporia.
1929. Boller Brothers, architects.