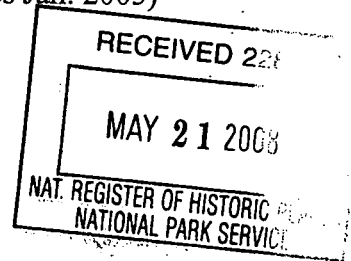


577

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 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 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 Majestic Theater

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 4126-4140 Woodward Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Detroit vicinity N/A

state Michigan code MI county Wayne code 163

zip code 48201

**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      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brian D. Muxa 5/19/08  
Signature of certifying official Date

Michigan SHPO  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this 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):

*for*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper    Date of Action

**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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Majestic Theater

Page 1 Wayne Co., MI

### Description

Built in 1914-15, the four-story tall Majestic Theater is a rectangular steel-frame building with brick side and rear walls and a four-slope truss roof with a low peak and, on either side, a broad but shallow upper slope and steep but short lower slope. The theater displays Detroit's largest and probably most colorful enameled metal panel Art Deco front. This present front was built in 1934-35 when the widening of Woodward Avenue required the demolition of the front thirty-five feet of the building, including its arcaded Italian facade. The present upper façade is finished in "Macotta," stainless steel-edged porcelain enameled steel-faced concrete panels manufactured by a company in Detroit. It displays what a contemporary newspaper account called a "riot of colors" – most prominently orange-red, with cream-color and light and dark blue accents as well. The Macotta upper façade is divided into three sections by large vertical orange-red "piers," each outlined by a cream-color band. They rise to a broad "frieze" of light blue panels trimmed with vertical accents in the other colors. Vertical columns of color – a narrow dark blue band at either side, broader cream-color band toward the center inside them on each side, and central stylized vine pattern combining elements in the front's whole color range – rise between the broad piers – three columns in the side sections and four in the center. The columns in the center section terminate at frieze level in vertical caps that, displaying the vine pattern and multi-hued color scheme, have instepping flanks and rise to a narrow flat peak. A cream-color parapet, with raised central section displaying light blue accent strips, forms the top of this brilliant-hued front. A marquee that, containing the theater's name in its front, projected over the sidewalk in front of the center section above the entrances has been removed, and, in the upper façade, a few Macotta panels are missing.

The Majestic stands along the east side of Woodward Avenue between Willis and Alexandrine in Detroit's Midtown section about one mile north of the downtown. One much altered small early twentieth-century commercial building separates it from Willis to the north. On the south the Majestic adjoins the Garden Bowl bowling alley building, and there is one additional building in the block at the Alexandrine corner. These buildings face mostly early twentieth-century commercial buildings across Woodward Avenue that form part of the east edge of the national register-listed Willis-Selden Historic District.

The Majestic Theater presents three first-floor storefronts, but these now display modern finishes. The two south storefronts now front a single restaurant space, while the northern provides entry to the former theater space. The theater proper, now used as a concert space, has been much altered since its last use as a movie theater in the 1950s, but retains some of its original fixtures and Adamesque decorative finish. The original seating was "bleacher" style, with a single broad slope of seating rising toward the rear without any balcony. A large block of this original seating remains in place, but the rear section near the building's front was removed for the Woodward widening project in the 1930s and the front end nearest the stage was cut off in the 1950s when the building was converted to a new use and the rake to the theater floor was eliminated. The former theater interior retains some of its original 1915 Adamesque finish, including a square-head

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section            7                            Majestic Theater

Page                2                            Wayne Co., MI

proscenium with much of its rosette, scroll, and cartouche plasterwork decoration and the flat ceiling dominated by a very large central oval Adamesque feature.

The Majestic Theater was designed by the Detroit architect C. Howard Crane (1885-1952) and opened on April 1, 1915. The original light and airy Italian façade featured an arcaded street level and banks of round-arch windows upstairs, below a tiled pent. The widening of Woodward Avenue in 1934 resulted in the demolition of the front thirty-five feet of the theater that included ground-floor commercial space as well as a small part of the back end of the theater seating area above it. In 1934-35 the front was rebuilt, the architects being Dearborn/Detroit architects Bennett & Straight. The remodeled Majestic ran first-run films, then third and fourth-run films, until the screen darkened in 1951. In 1956 the theater interior was renovated for use as an industrial photography studio. A church rented the theater for a short period of time. In 1978 the lobby was renovated for the Gnome Restaurant, named for the Vernor's mascot that then appeared on a large sign across Woodward Avenue at the former Vernor's ginger ale bottling plant. In 1984 the Majestic Theater was converted into a concert venue for rock and roll performances. This use continues to this day. The restaurant, redesigned and renamed the Majestic Café in 1992, also continues in operation.

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

- A Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C 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 Has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1913-1934

Significant Dates 1913, 1934

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A ; \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation N/A ; \_\_\_\_\_

Property Name/County/State Majestic Theater, Wayne Co., MI

Architect/Builder C. Howard Crane; Bennett & Straight;  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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 Buildings 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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	330280	4690660	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

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.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Majestic Theater

Page 1 Wayne Co., MI

### Significance

The Majestic Theater's importance is primarily architectural. The theater meets national register criterion C within the context of the Detroit area's Art Deco and enameled metal panel architecture for its enormous and brilliantly colorful enameled metal panel Art Deco front. An architectural and visual landmark along Woodward Avenue, Detroit's "main street," it is the largest, and probably the most colorful, enameled metal panel Deco façade in Detroit and the entire metropolitan region.

The Majestic was built in 1914-15 and opened April 1, 1915. The architect of the building as originally designed was Detroit-based theater specialist C. Howard Crane. The theater was medium-sized among Detroit's early twentieth-century movie theaters, originally seating 1651 patrons. The Majestic featured vaudeville as well as movies and also legitimate theater performed by "The Woodward Players" troupe.

The striking Art Deco façade of the Majestic Theater was constructed in 1934-35 when, because of the Woodward Avenue widening project, the front thirty-five feet of the theater, with its arcaded Italian façade, had to be removed. The demands of traffic led to plans to widen Woodward Avenue beginning in the 1920s. The massive project, finally carried out during the mid-1930s, resulted in a dramatic widening of the avenue from Adams Avenue in downtown Detroit out to Grand Boulevard, two and a half miles in all, all of it through a heavily built up urban environment. In some cases buildings were moved back, and in others the buildings were simply demolished. Most often, the buildings were left in place, but their front portions were removed and new facades installed on these older buildings.

The Majestic's present façade, sheathed in "Macotta" panels, porcelain enameled steel-faced concrete panels edged with stainless steel made by the Maul Macotta Company in Detroit, was designed by Detroit/Dearborn architects Bennett & Straight. Bennett & Straight – Lavern R. Bennett (1890-1954) and Eugene D. Straight (1898-1969) – were also movie theater specialists who designed sixty-seven theaters throughout the Midwest, many of them in the Detroit area, primarily in the 1930s and 40s. They include the Life and Crystal Theaters in Detroit, the Harbor in Ecorse, the Shafer in Garden City, the Allen Park in Allen Park and the Main Theater in Royal Oak. Few of their thus far identified Detroit area theaters have survived.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Majestic Theater

Page 1 Wayne Co., MI

**Bibliography**

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**Dearborn Guide**

"Heart Attack is Fatal to Architect," July 31, 1969.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Majestic Theater

Page 2 Wayne Co., MI

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Majestic Theater

Page 1 Wayne Co., MI

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Situated in the city of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, described as:

All that part of Park Lot 28 measuring 127.81 ft on the south line and 116.25 ft on the north line lying between the south line of Lot 28 and the south line of Willis Avenue and between the east line of Woodward Avenue as now widened and the west line of the alley east of Woodward Avenue. Excepting therefrom a parcel in the northwest corner described as follows: Commencing at the point of the intersection of the south line of Willis Street and the east line of Woodward Avenue as now widened, thence running east along the south line of Willis Street 72.11 ft to a point, thence southerly 45.62 ft to a point which is 75.13 ft from the east line of Woodward Avenue as widened, thence westerly along said line of Woodward Avenue 45.32 ft to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification**

Includes the entire property on which the theater stands.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	10	Majestic Theater
Page	13	Wayne Co., MI

**Photographs**

Photographers: Rebecca Binno Savage and Jeff Garland

Date of Photos: 02/06/07 and 02/01/08

Paper and Ink: Kodak Professional Paper and Epson Ultra chrome inks

1. Eastern view of the Majestic Theater's Woodward Avenue facade. (MI\_Wayne\_Majestic01.tif)
2. Detail of the Majestic Theater's Woodward Avenue facade's Macotta panels. (MI\_Wayne\_Majestic02.tif)
3. Interior view of the Majestic Theater's auditorium ceiling. (MI\_Wayne\_Majestic03.tif)
4. Interior view of the Majestic Theater's proscenium. (MI\_Wayne\_Majestic04.tif)
5. Interior of the Majestic Theater's proscenium and ceiling. (MI\_Wayne\_Majestic05.tif)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Rebecca Binno Savage, Senior Project Manager  
Rev. by R. O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator  
organization AKT Peerless Environmental Services date Feb. 2008  
MI SHPO  
street & number 607 Shelby Street, Suite 900 telephone 313/962-9353  
city or town Detroit state MI zip code 48226

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**Additional Documentation**

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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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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

name David Zainea

---

street & number 4120 Woodward Ave. telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Detroit state MI zip code 48201

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Majestic Theater

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Wayne

DATE RECEIVED: 5/21/08      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/09/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/24/08      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/04/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000577

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      7.2.08 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.



Majestic Theater Wayne Co. MI

Majestic Theater  
Wayne Co. MI





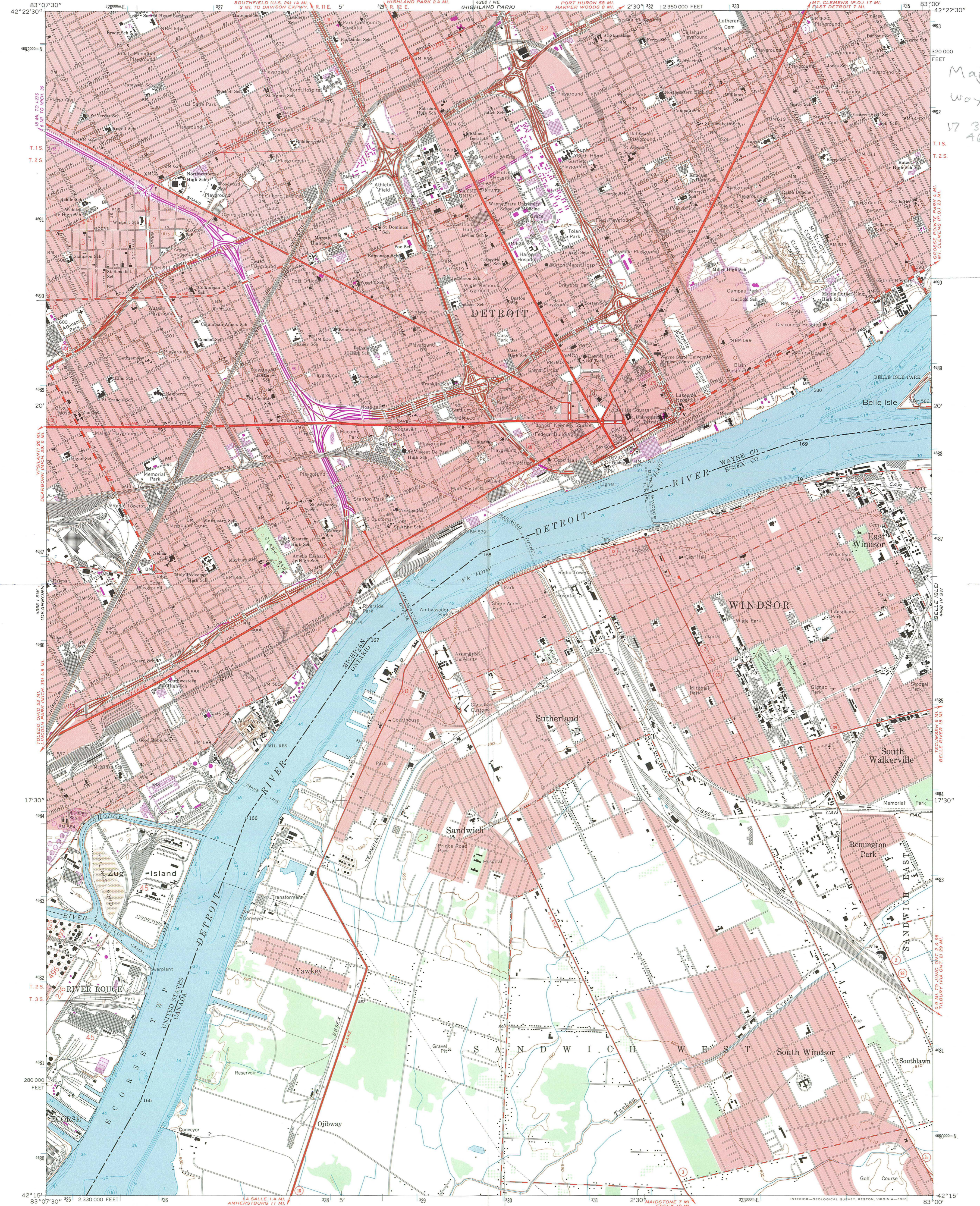
Majestic Theater Wayne Co. MI



Majestic Theater Wayne Co. MI



Majestic Theater Wayne Co. MI



Majestic  
Theater  
Wayne Co.  
MI  
17 330 280  
4690 660

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Michigan agencies  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, U. S. Lake Survey, and City of Detroit  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
Topography by planetable surveys 1938. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966-67. Field checked 1968  
Canadian portion copied in part from Windsor quadrangle (1:25 000) 1960, Army Survey Establishment, R. C. E.  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from U. S. Lake Survey Charts 41 and 412 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Michigan coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1980 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 7 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

SCALE 1:24 000  
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET  
1 KILOMETER  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET IN THE UNITED STATES AND 10 FEET IN CANADA  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS RIVER SURFACE AT FOLLOWING STAGES: LAKE ST. CLAIR—571.7 AND LAKE ERIE—568.6

THE U. S. PORTION OF THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 AND GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIVISION MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface  
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface  
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface  
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1973 and 1978. Map edited 1980. This information not field checked. Canadian portion not revised

DETROIT, MICH.—ONT.  
N4215—W8300/7.5  
1968  
PHOTOREVISED 1973 AND 1980  
DMA 4368 I SE—SERIES V862



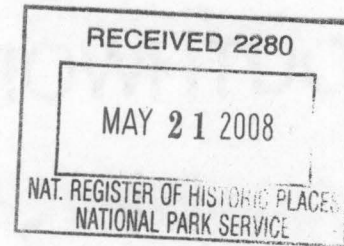


STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES  
LANSING

JENNIFER GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR



April 25, 2008

Ms. Janet Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Enclosed are National Register nomination materials for the Majestic Theater in Wayne County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register. No written comments concerning this nomination were submitted to us prior to the submission of the nomination to you.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, National Register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or by e-mail at [Christensenro@michigan.gov](mailto:Christensenro@michigan.gov).

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:roc