

NEW AMSTERDAM THEATER, first floor interior consisting of the lobby, entrance foyer, promenade foyer, reception room including fireplace and built-in seats, the auditorium, the stage, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer descending to the basement lounges, the staircase leading from the reception room to the ladies' lounge, the staircases at the end of the promenade foyer leading up to the first balcony floor; the basement interior consisting of the smoking room known as the New Amsterdam Room including the fireplace; the first balcony floor interior consisting of the promenade, the first balcony, the upper part of the auditorium, the upper part of the stage house, and the staircases leading up to the second balcony floor interior; the second balcony floor interior consisting of the second balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and the ceiling, the upper part of the stage house and skylight; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, doors, elevator doors, murals, sculptures, panels, and staircase railings; 214 West 42nd Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1902-1903; architect Herts & Tallant.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1013, Lot 39.

On January 9, 1979, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the New Amsterdam Theater, first floor interior consisting of the lobby, entrance foyer, promenade foyer, reception room including fireplace and built-in seats, the auditorium, the stage, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer descending to the basement lounges, the staircase leading from the reception room to the ladies' lounge, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer leading up to the first balcony floor; the basement interior consisting of the smoking room known as the New Amsterdam Room including the fireplace; the first balcony floor interior consisting of the promenade, the first balcony, the upper part of the auditorium, the upper part of the stage house, and the staircases leading up to the second balcony floor interior; the second balcony floor interior consisting of the second balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and ceiling, the upper part of the stage house and skylight; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, doors, elevator doors, murals, sculptures, panels, and staircase railings (Item No. 5). The hearing was continued to March 13, 1979 (Item No. 4). Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Sixteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation. One witness spoke in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The New Amsterdam Theater, built in 1902-03 for the theatrical producers Klaw & Erlanger, was for many years one of the most prestigious Times Square theaters and home of the famous Ziegfeld Follies. Designed by the noted theater architects, Herts & Tallant, the New Amsterdam Theater achieved distinction both for its functions and for

its artistic program. More than just a theater, the structure was planned, at the request of Klaw & Erlanger, to incorporate two performing spaces with an office tower to house their varied theatrical interests. Even more importantly, however, the New Amsterdam is a rare example of Art Nouveau architecture in New York City, and, as such, is a major artistic statement by Herts & Tallant. Working in conjunction with sculptors, painters, and other craftsmen, they used the Art Nouveau style to carry out a dual theme--the representation of the spirit of drama and the theater and the representation of New Amsterdam in its historical sense as the City of New York. The interior was planned as an entity to carry out these themes, and the unity of design in Art Nouveau style makes the New Amsterdam one of the outstanding interior spaces in New York City. Also of importance are the technical innovations which helped make the New Amsterdam one of the most prestigious Times Square theaters.

The Clients

By the beginning of the 20th century, New York's theater district had moved uptown to the Times Square area, continuing a northward shift which had prevailed throughout the 19th century, and many theatrical producers commissioned new theaters to meet an expanding need. Among them were the producing partnership of Klaw & Erlanger.

Marc Klaw (1858-1936) and Abraham L. Erlanger (1860-1930), both of whom had served as advance agents and managers of touring companies, joined forces in 1886 to buy the Taylor Theatrical Exchange, a New York booking agency. By 1895 the Klaw & Erlanger agency was the second largest in the nation, controlling nearly 200 theaters. In 1896 they joined with Charles Frohman, Al Hayman, Samuel F. Nixon, and J. Frederick Zimmerman to organize the Theatrical Syndicate. The Syndicate avowed its intention of bringing about needed reforms in the booking of shows, but in the process created a monopoly with exclusive control of bookings for more than 500 theaters throughout the country. The firm of Klaw & Erlanger was made responsible for all attractions presented in theaters controlled by the Syndicate. Beginning about 1910 the Syndicate was challenged by the growth of the organization of the Shubert brothers, and it was formally dissolved in 1916. Klaw & Erlanger retained its dominant position as a booking agency, and the partners continued their roles as managers and producers. It was in the role of producer that Klaw & Erlanger purchased, in 1902, a parcel of property west of Seventh Avenue and extending through the block between 41st and 42nd Streets and commissioned the noted firm of theater architects, Herts & Tallant, to design a multi-use theater structure, incorporating two theaters and a ten-story office tower to house their booking and producing enterprises.

The Architects

By 1902 Henry Beaumont Herts (1871-1933) and Hugh Tallant (1870-1952) had begun to achieve a reputation as theater architects. Herts, the son of Henry B. Herts who had established the decorating

firm of Herts Brothers, had studied at the Columbia University School of Mines, while Tallant received two degrees from Harvard College. They became friends while students at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and worked together on student projects. Also a talented painter, Herts exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1898. Returning to New York, the two formed the firm of Herts & Tallant in 1900 which quickly began to achieve a reputation in theater architecture. In addition to the New Amsterdam, other theaters which the two designed were: the Lyceum (1903, for Daniel Frohman, brother of Charles Frohman, a member of the Theatrical Syndicate), the Liberty (1904, also for Klaw & Erlanger), the Gaiety (1909, now the Victoria), the Folies-Bergere (1911, later the Fulton and now the Helen Hayes), the Booth (1913, Henry B. Herts alone), the Longacre (1913, Henry B. Herts alone), the Shubert (1913, Henry B. Herts alone), all in Times Square; and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (1908). In the New Amsterdam, they pioneered the use of cantilever construction to create theater balconies without supporting pillars that would obstruct the vision of those in the lower seating area. This innovation is generally credited to Herts.¹ The partners were also talented acousticians, and Tallant wrote extensively on the subject.² Careful attention to fireproof construction and extensive stage facilities were other hallmarks of Herts & Tallant theaters. Tallant also wrote a series of articles on "The American Theater: Its Antecedents and Characteristics."³ As an architect Tallant was especially anxious to understand the precedents offered by Greek, Roman, and Renaissance theaters and to incorporate these precedents into the firm's designs. The firm dissolved in 1911, and each partner went on to other architectural associations.

The New Amsterdam as a Playhouse

Construction of the New Amsterdam Theater began in the summer of 1902, but political difficulties arose in 1903. The ornamental protions of the building were designed to project beyond the building line, and the Manhattan Borough President ordered work stopped. Klaw and Erlanger asserted that the owner of the adjacent property, former Parks Commisser Samuel McMillan, was exerting his influence because they had refused to buy McMillan's property. The partners noted that a number of new buildings, including several theaters, projected beyond the building line and that the New Amsterdam should not be discriminated against. In response to the controversy, the Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance allowing ornamental projections four feet beyond the building line. Thus the exterior of the New Amsterdam Theater was able to be completed as planned.⁴

The New Amsterdam Theater officially opened on October 26, 1903, with a production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream accompanied by Mendelssohn's incidental music, additional music by Victor Herbert, and starring Nathaniel C. Goodwin as Bottom.⁵ While home to serious drama in its early years, the New Amsterdam quickly became very highly regarded as a musical comedy house. Among early productions there were: George M. Cohan's Forty-five Minutes from Broadway with Fay Templeton and Victor Moore; Her Own Way with Maxine Elliott and Charles Cherry; Richard III and Peer Gynt, both starring

- Richard Mansfield; the American premiere of Franz Lehar's The Merry Widow in 1907; Sardou's The Sorceress with Mrs. Patrick Campbell; Kitty Gray with Julie Sanderson; The Pink Lady of 1911 and The Little Cafe, both starring Hazel Dawn; Margaret Schiller with Elsie Ferguson; and Irving Berline's first musical, Watch Your Step, in 1914, starring the dance team of Vernon and Irene Castle.

In 1913 Florenz Ziegfeld (1869-1932), the world-famous theatrical producer, began an association with the New Amsterdam Theater which lasted until his death. Ziegfeld had entered the entertainment business in 1893 at the Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition. In 1896 he introduced Anna Held to the American stage in A Parlor Match; this was quickly followed by a series of lavishly mounted musical comedies. Their success led him to produce a 'revue' which he called The Follies of 1907. The show proved so popular that he produced a new Follies each season for over 20 years. The stage facilities of the New Amsterdam were ideal for these productions, and Ziegfeld presented the Follies there between 1913 and 1920, from 1922 to 1925, and in 1927. Among the notable performers Ziegfeld featured in the Follies were Ann Pennington, originator of the Black Bottom dance, comediennes Fanny Brice and Ina Claire, Ed Wynn, W.C. Fields, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, and Marilyn Miller. Beginning in 1915 Ziegfeld used the rooftop theater of the New Amsterdam to produce his Midnight Frolic. Ziegfeld also produced other shows at the New Amsterdam, even after he opened his Joseph Urban-designed Ziegfeld Theater in 1927 on Sixth Avenue.

Other productions added to the luster of the New Amsterdam: Sunny (1925) and Rosalie (1928), starring Ziegfeld's discovery, Marilyn Miller; Whoopee (1929), a Ziegfeld production starring Eddie Cantor; Trelawney of the Wells (1927) with John Drew, Pauline Lord, Helen Gahagan, Estelle Winwood, and Peggy Wood; The Bandwagon (1931) with Fred and Adele Astaire; Irving Berlin's Face the Music (1931) with Mary Boland; also in 1931, Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory productions of The Cherry Orchard and Alice in Wonderland; Jerome Kern's Roberta (1933) with Fay Templeton and Bob Hope; and George White's Scandals of 1936 with Bert Lahr, Eugene and Willie Howard, and Rudy Vallee. Othello (1937) with Walter Huston was the last legitimate theater production at the New Amsterdam.⁷

With the onset of the Depression, many Broadway theaters fell onto hard times and were converted for use as movie houses. The New Amsterdam proved no exception. The mortgage on the property was foreclosed in 1936.⁸ The building was sold in 1937, and the new owner began showing motion pictures in the theater. Ironically the first presentation was a film version of A Midsummer Night's Dream, echoing that opening night of 1903.

The Building and its Design

The New Amsterdam had opened to widespread praise for its facilities, innovative features, and beautiful design. Stylistically the theater is a rare example of Art Nouveau architecture in the United States. Critic Theodore Waters headlined the New Amsterdam as "A Triumph for the New Art."⁹ While the Art Nouveau style had been popularized in France and Belgium in the last years of the 19th century, where Herts and Tallant surely must have discovered it firsthand, the style was little used in the United States. Most French-trained American architects preferred to use the classical forms they had learned at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Herts and Tallant, too, were adept at using Beaux-Arts forms, but the design for the New Amsterdam Theater offered them an unparalleled opportunity to create a total unified statement--one of the fundamental principles of Art Nouveau--expressing the excitement and artistry of the theater.

The form of the building resulted partially from the constraints of the site and partially from the requirements of Klaw & Erlanger. The major portion of the building, located on 41st Street on a site approximately 150 x 100 feet, houses the two theaters. However, Klaw & Erlanger wished to have the theater entrance on the more important 42nd Street, so they purchased a narrow piece of property 25 x 100 feet facing on 42nd Street. This enabled the architects to create a major entrance, and to build above the entrance the tall office tower which was desired by Klaw & Erlanger to house their booking and producing activities.

From the open-air vestibule on 42nd Street one enters the long narrow lobby of the New Amsterdam which passes beneath the office tower. On the left are bronze office doors and elevator doors. All are exceptionally handsome and decorated with curvilinear floral motifs which are characteristic of Art Nouveau design. To the right are mirrored panels. All are flanked by terra-cotta pilasters and surmounted by terra-cotta panels--all adorned with intricate floral and foliate motifs. These were designed by Max and Fritz Neumark of Bremen and executed by Grendellis and Ricci, the architectural sculptors who also carried out ornament on the exterior of the building. Forming a frieze below the dark wood coffered ceiling are a series of twelve ivory-colored terra-cotta panels by sculptor Roland Hinton Perry. The panel over the vestibule entrance depicts a scene from Faust. Above the door to the entrance foyer is a panel representing Greek drama--perhaps indicative of Hugh Tallant's interest in ancient theater sources.¹⁰ On the east wall are depicted five scenes from Shakespeare: Macbeth and the witches; the Battle of Bosworth Field from Richard III; Hamlet and his father's ghost; Rosalind watching Orlando in the Forest of Arden from As You Like It; and Titania and Bottom from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Five panels on the west wall show scenes from Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle operas: Alberich in the lair of the Rhine maidens; Siegfried's battle with the Dragon; the awakening of Brunnhilde by Siegfried's kiss; the death of Siegfried; and the fulfillment of the ring.

Roland Hinton Perry (1870-1941), the sculptor of these romantically-conceived and executed panels, had studied in Paris between 1890 and 1894 at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and at the Academie Julien and the Academie Delacluze where he discovered that his talents lay in the field of sculpture rather than painting. Upon returning to the United States he received the commission for a series of bas-reliefs in the Library of Congress in Washington. Following the success of that work, he received a second commission for the fountain of Neptune in the Library of Congress, completed in 1897. Other notable works, in addition to that for the New Amsterdam, were: the spandrels of the temporary Dewey Arch on Fifth Avenue (1900); the statue Pennsylvania for the dome of the state capital at Harrisburg (1904); the Benjamin Rush statue in Washington, D.C. (1904); statues of General George S. Greene (1904) and General Wadsworth at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; the New York monument at Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga, Tennessee (1907); the lions for the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, Washington, D.C. (1908); and a war memorial at Syracuse, New York.

From the lobby one passes into the entrance foyer which now serves as an area for the sale of refreshments. Full-size panels by Perry, depicting New Amsterdam of the 17th century and New York of about 1900 have been replaced by mirrors. But the arch above the lobby doors is still filled by a plaster relief panel depicting the theme of Progress. Designed by architect Hugh Tallant, it was modelled by St. John Issing, ll the craftsman who designed a frieze depicting Folklore and Fantasy which originally adorned the outer vestibule. In Tallant's design, Progress is represented in shades of blue and gold by a female figure flanked by intricate floral and foliate ornament. Moldings with similar motifs outline the arches on the end walls. The entrance foyer was originally surmounted by a stained-glass dome with figures and flowers and entitled "The Song of the Flowers." The ceiling now has gold-painted vaults.

The entrance foyer leads into the promenade foyer which extends across the full width of the auditorium. Its groin-vaulted ceiling is adorned with moldings of floral design, including the lily and lotus--flowers favored by the Art Nouveau movement for their sinuous qualities. Above the 41st Street exit doors at the south end of the promenade foyer is another relief sculpture by St. John Issing depicting a sylvan scene.

Through a large arch at the center of the promenade foyer is the reception room. This room with its vaulted ceiling is decorated in shades of mauve and gold. Intricate floral moldings adorn the arches and the ceiling vaults. The fireplace of Caen stone and Irish marble on the rear wall is carved with sinuous floral patterns, characteristic of Art Nouveau. The three niches in the mantel-piece once held busts of Shakespeare, Virgil, and Homer. The room is panelled with carved oak wainscoting, rising to a height of 12 feet, with built-in seating. Each oak panel depicts curvilinear stylized tree forms which enclose a painted portrait medallion--once 38 in all, representing "Lovers of Historical Drama." These were executed by

William Frazee Strunz.¹² Filling the arches formed by the ceiling vaults at each end of the reception room are murals by George Da Maduro Peixotto with the themes of Inspiration and Creation, depicted by allegorical figures. Stylistically they are closely related to the work of William Blake, an important source for Art Nouveau painters.

Peixotto was born in Cleveland and studied at the Royal Academy of Dresden, and in Paris with Meissonier and Munkacsy. He won the silver medal of the Royal Academy of Dresden and was a member of the Societe' des Artistes Francais.

At each end of the promenade foyer are staircases leading up to the balcony, and continued at first balcony level, and down to the basement lounges; another staircase leads from the reception room down to the ladies' lounge. The steps of these staircases are of Cremona marble from Maryland, and they are lined by green terracotta balustrades finished in a double-glazed process known as faience. The panels of the balustrades depict naturalistic flowers and vines with figures of animals from the tales of LaFontaine, Alsop, and Hans Christian Anderson. The newel posts are adorned with heads of Shakespearean characters. Carved oak arches at the staircase landings have similar motifs. Thorbjorn Basso (1878-?), a Norwegian architect, is credited with the staircase design.

Basso, born in Christiania (now Oslo), studied architecture in Norway and London. He came to the United States in November 1901 and worked for various architectural firms, including Herts & Tallant while the New Amsterdam Theater was under construction. It is not known how long he spent in the United States.

At the basement level, the smoking room, known as the New Amsterdam Room, is placed between the ladies' and men's lounges. Set about three feet below grade, it is reached by stairs leading from the lounges. While rectangular in shape, the room is dominated by an elliptical colonnade supporting a dome. The smooth columns are of Caen stone and are linked by carved ribbon-like forms at capital level. A bronze grille at the center of the dome depicts the figure of a winged youth--obviously inspired by the allegorical mural figures in the eight panels lining the dome. These are the work of Peixotto and are similar in style to his murals in the reception room. Encircling the base of the dome is an inscription from As You Like It: "I had rather a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad." The walls of the room are panelled in Flemish oak and lined with leather seats. The fireplace is of Caen stone and gray washed brick and is inlaid with Cluny tile. The hood is decorated in curvilinear Art Nouveau inscriptions by Henry Mercer. Above the panelling are sixteen murals representing "the principal events and epochs in the development of New York from the old city of New Amsterdam, from the landing of Henry Hudson, to the present date."¹³ Among them are: Eric the Iclander discovering Vinland, Henry Hudson entering the North River, Stuyvesant reaching Manhattan, the British fleet taking New Amsterdam, the Dutch recapturing New Amsterdam, Bradford setting up his printing press, and the British army sailing from New York after the Revolution.

The designs of these murals are credited to Blanche Ostertag, James Wall Finn, and Edward E. Simmons.¹⁴ James Wall Finn (d. 1913) also did murals for the Hotel Knickerbocker at Broadway and 42nd Street and for the residences of Colonel John Jacob Astor at 840 Fifth Avenue and of Thomas Fortune Ryan at 858 Fifth Avenue. Edward Emerson Simons (1852-1931), the best known of these three was influential in developing the art of mural painting in the United States. Among his important murals are those for the Massachusetts State House, the New York County Court House, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Manhattan), the Minnesota State Capitol, and the Library of Congress.

Returning to the first floor, one enters the auditorium from the promenade foyer. A carved wood balustrade separates the two spaces, and it is interestcd by carved wood piers rising to meet the groin vaults of the promenade foyer ceiling. The carved floral and foliate motifs on the balustrade and piers are again characteristic of Art Nouveau.

The auditorium was designed to seat about 1800 people on three levels--the main floor and two balconies. It is elliptical in plan and section--a form which was pioneered in American theaters by Herts & Tallant and was considered to enhance a theater's accoustical properties.¹⁵ The curved walls rise to the domed ceiling and flow into the proscenium arch. Intricate plaster and carved oak moldings, designed by Fritz and Max Neumark and modelled by St. John Issing, outline the ring of the dome and the arches framing the walls and the proscenium. Carved oak wainscoting with floral motifs lines the lower portions of the walls at the main floor level and the balconies. Elongated female figures flanked by floral motifs are placed as a centerpiece in the dome. The proscenium is also embellished with sixteen peacocks amidst vines, all tinted a dark green and modelled by St. John Issing.

The arch above the proscenium is filled with an allegorical mural painting representing drama, by Robert Blum and Albert B. Wenzell. The figures are personifications of Poetry, Truth, Falsehood, Tradition, Love, Melancholy, the Supernatural and Superstition, Death, Chivalry, Romance, and the Greek gods of poetry and song.¹⁶ Art Nouveau in style, the mural is characterized by the accentuation of shape and outline, the two-dimensional quality of composition, elongated figures, the predominance of female types, and floral motifs.

The mural was the last work of Robert Blum (1858-1903). Born and raised in Cincinnati, Blum studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Coming to New York in 1878, he quickly became successful as an illustrator for Scribner's and St. Nicholas magazines. In the 1880s he developed his artistic skills in the production of pastels, pen and ink drawings, and watercolors, but in the 1890s he began to focus his efforts on mural painting. Among his important commissions in that area were two large murals for the Mendelssohn Glee Club in New York. A close friend of many actors and

a member of the Players Club, Blum had a special interest in executing a mural for the New Amsterdam. Following Blum's death from pneumonia, the mural was completed by his assistant and co-worker, Albert Beck Wenzell (1864-1917). Wenzell had studied in Munich and Paris, returning to New York in 1890 to take up an artistic career. He was a prolific illustrator as well as a muralist.

Also for the New Amsterdam Wenzell painted the two panels flanking the proscenium. These display Virtue, a female figure holding a crown and a flaming heart, and Courage, a male figure with a sword and shield.

When the New Amsterdam opened, the color scheme was described as predominantly a silvery green with contrasting pinks, mauves, lilacs, red, and gold. According to one critic, "the result is a subdued yet gay effect like a meadow in Springtime sowed with daisies, violets, and flowers of slightly stronger hue."¹⁷ This general pastel effect has been largely preserved and continues to enhance the Art Nouveau elements of the interior.

Originally rows of boxes at the levels of the first and second balconies were hung from the arches forming the side walls. Each box was intricately decorated to represent a different flower. The boxes were removed after the theater began to show movies, but this is virtually the only major alteration to take place on the interior.

The balconies are cantilevered and the second is stepped back from the first. Tension rods suspend the second balcony from the ceiling. Because no columns are needed for support, there is an unobstructed view from all seats. This view in conjunction with the elliptical form of the auditorium helps to create a sense of intimacy which belies the large space of the theater.

In addition to artistic and spatial effects, the architects incorporated many technical features to make the New Amsterdam the finest possible theater. These included a sophisticated ventilation system for heating and cooling, a vacuum cleaning system, complete fireproofing, and double-wall construction with fifteen-foot wide interior fire galleries between the auditorium walls and the outer walls of the building to facilitate exiting in case of fire.

The greatest technical efforts were reserved for the stage which measures 60 by 100 feet. The area below was excavated two stories below grade to accommodate a series of bridges, or elevators to move the stage, operated by twelve electric motors. The whole stage could be lowered to a depth of 33 feet. Other elevators were used for raising and lowering sets and led to the dressing rooms and the carpentry shop. Behind the stage proper is the fly gallery. This was rigged up with a sophisticated system of counterweights for raising and lowering backdrops. An electric switchboard set at one side of the stage controlled all stage and house lighting. These technical innovations facilitated the production of lavish musicals, and were

one factor in attracting Ziegfeld and his Follies to the New Amsterdam. While the stage facilities have not been utilized since the house began showing movies, they still survive.

The interior of the New Amsterdam is a rare example of Art Nouveau architecture in New York City. A major artistic statement by Herts & Tallant, it was designed as an entity to convey the spirit and the excitement of the theater. The extensive use of murals and sculpture intensified the dual theme--the representation of the theater and the representation of New Amsterdam. The Art Nouveau ornament and the color scheme contribute to the overall effect. All aspects of the interior were carried out under the program and supervision of the architects. However, a unified artistic statement was not enough; to make the New Amsterdam the best possible theater, the architects designed it with the most innovative and best possible technical facilities. Its survival not only allows us to see a unified artistic statement in a rare architectural style but also evokes the spirit and history of the theater.

Report prepared by Marjorie Pearson,
Director of Research, with research
assistance from Ruth Selden-Sturgill,
Research Department.

Typed by Loretta Burnett

FOOTNOTES

1. New York Times, March 28, 1933; Joel Lobenthal, "The New Amsterdam Theater," The Theatre Historical Society Annual, No. 5 (1978), 2.
2. Hugh Tallant, "Hints on Architectural Acoustics," The Brickbuilder, 19 (May 1910), 111-116; (July 1910), 155-158; (August 1910), 177-180; (September 1910), 199-203; (October 1910), 221-225; (November 1910), 243-247; (December 1910), 265-270. Hugh Tallant, "Architectural Acoustics," The Brickbuilder, 22 (October 1913), 225-228.
3. Hugh Tallant, "The American Theater: "Its Antecedents and Characteristics," The Brickbuilder, 23 (December 1914), 285-290; 24 (January 1915), 17-22.
4. The controversy is detailed in newspaper clippings in the Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, Reel 12, N.C. 459.
5. Newspaper clipping in Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, Reel 12, N.C. 459.
6. Lobenthal, p. 14.

7. Lobenthal, pp. 7, 9.
8. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds, Liber 3927, page 199.
9. Theodore Waters, "The New Amsterdam Theatre, A Triumph for the New Art," clipping in Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, Reel 12, N.C. 459.
10. See footnote 3 and page 3.
11. Issing appears in Trow's Directory of New York (1903) listed as "John J. Issing, modeller,"
12. Nothing is known of Strunz. He is listed in Trow's Directory of New York (1903-05) as an artist.
13. The Theatre Historical Society Annual, No. 5 (1978), 14.
14. Ibid. cites Simmons and Finn, while a newspaper clipping in the Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, Reel 12, N.C. 459, cites Ostertag, Simmons, and Peixotto.
15. New York Times, November 1, 1903 Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, Reel 12, N.C. 459/.
16. For a detailed description of the program see newspaper clippings in the Erlanger Collection Scrapbooks, Reel 12, N.C. 459, and Bruce Weber, "Robert Blum and the New Amsterdam Murals," The Theatre Historical Society Annual, No. 5 (1978), 24.

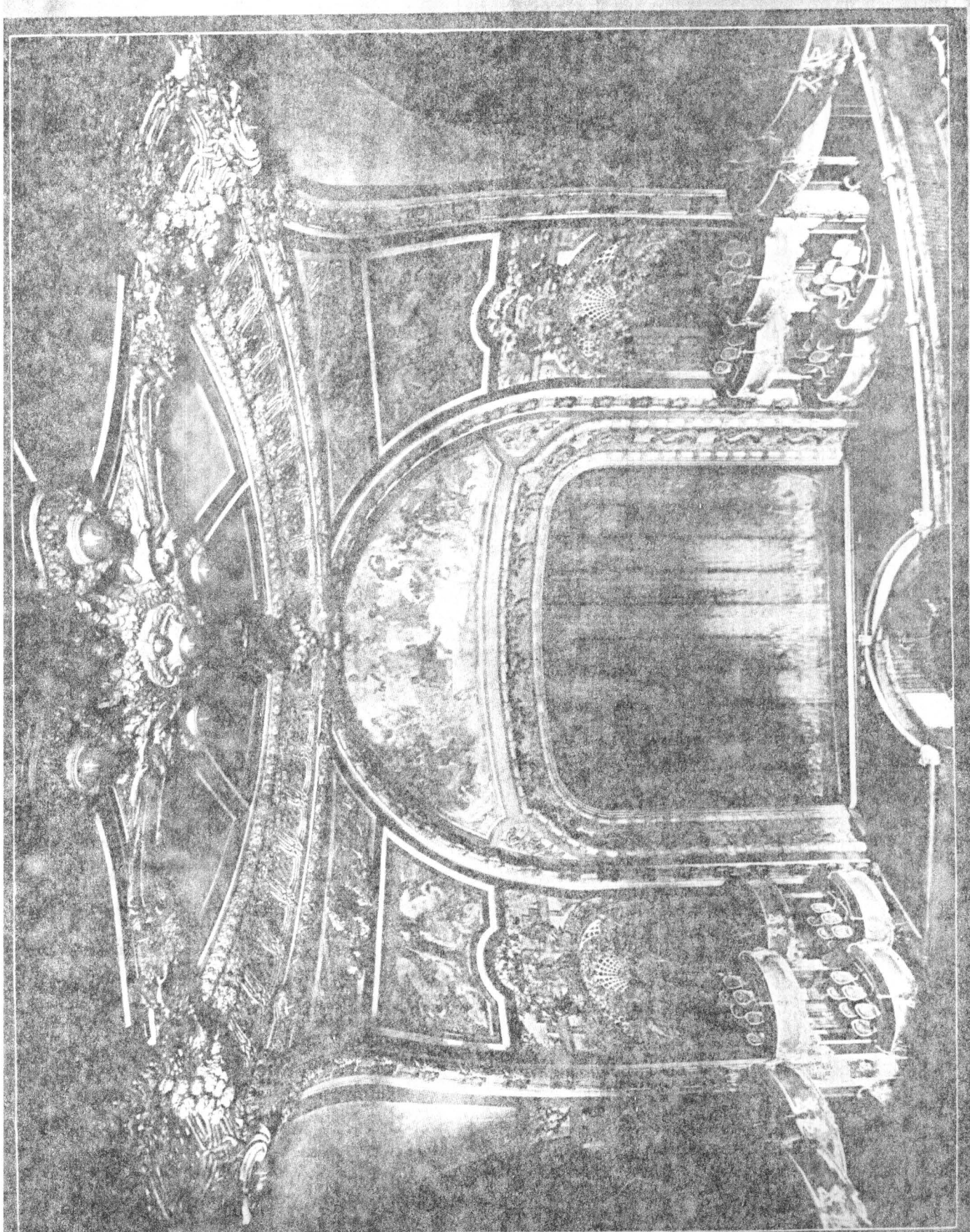
FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the New Amsterdam Theater, first floor interior consisting of the lobby, entrance foyer, promenade foyer, reception room including fireplace and built-in seats, the auditorium, the stage, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer descending to the basement lounges, the staircase leading from the reception room to the ladies' lounge, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer leading up to the first balcony floor; the basement interior consisting of the smoking room known as the New Amsterdam Room including the fireplace; the first balcony floor interior consisting of the promenade, the first balcony, the upper part of the auditorium, the upper part of the stage house, and the staircase leading up to the second balcony floor interior; the second balcony floor interior consisting of the second balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and the ceiling, the upper part of the stage house and skylight; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, doors, elevator doors, murals, sculptures, panels, and staircase railings; have a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City, and the Interior or parts thereof are thirty years old or more, and that the Interior is one which is customarily open and accessible to the public, and to which the public is customarily invited.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Interior of the New Amsterdam Theater is a rare example of Art Nouveau architecture in New York City; that as such it is a major artistic statement by the noted theater architects Herts & Tallant; that working in conjunction with sculptors, painters, and other craftsmen, they used the Art Nouveau style to carry out a dual theme--the representation of the spirit of drama and the theater and the representation of New Amsterdam in its historical sense as the City of New York; that the ornament, sculpture, murals and color scheme are intrinsic parts of the overall scheme; that many notable artists worked on various aspects of the interior; that it was designed with innovative and extensive technical facilities to make the New Amsterdam the best possible theater; that the New Amsterdam was built for the noted theatrical producers Klaw & Erlanger; that many notable theatrical personalities, especially Florenz Ziegfeld, have been associated with the New Amsterdam; and that the survival of the Interior of the New Amsterdam not only allows us to see a unified artistic statement in a rare architectural style but also evokes the spirit and history of the theater.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly Chapter 63) of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Interior Landmark the New

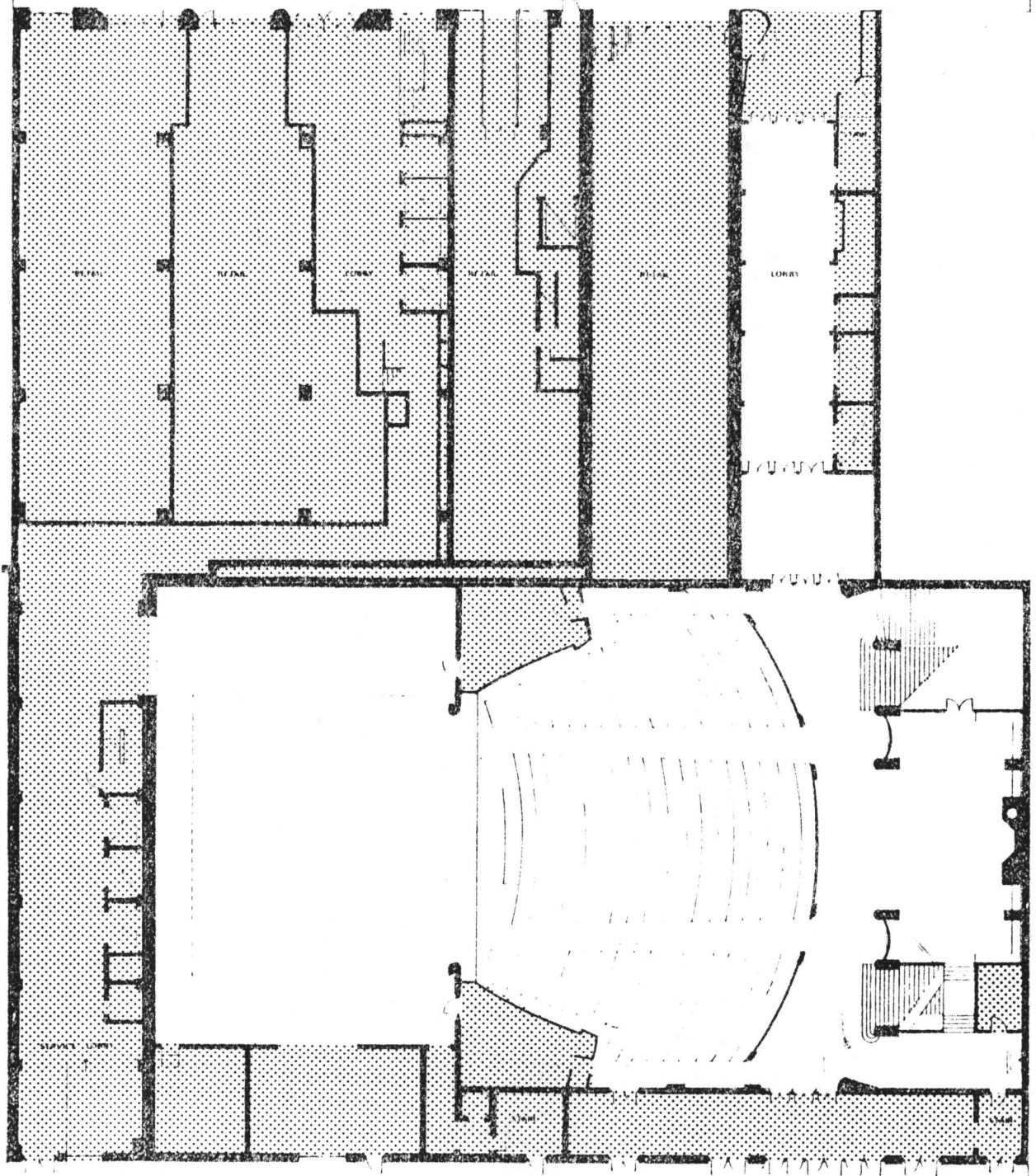
Amsterdam Theater, first floor interior consisting of the lobby, entrance foyer, promenade foyer, reception room including fireplace and built-in seats, the auditorium, the stage, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer descending to the basement lounges, the staircase leading from the reception room to the ladies' lounge, the staircases at the ends of the promenade foyer leading up to the first balcony floor; the basement interior consisting of the smoking room known as the New Amsterdam Room including the fireplace; the first balcony floor consisting of the promenade, the first floor balcony, the upper part of the auditorium, the upper part of the stage house, and the staircases leading up to the second balcony floor interior; the second balcony floor interior consisting of the second balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and the ceiling, the upper part of the stage house and skylight; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, doors, elevator doors, murals, sculptures, panels, and staircase railings; 214 West 42nd Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1013, Lot 39, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.



NEW AMSTERDAM THEATER INTERIOR

Auditorium

42nd STREET



41st STREET

NEW AMSTERDAM THEATER

Ground Floor Interior
214 West 42nd Street

Herts & Tallant

1903