NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

190

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in 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 **The Brook Theater**

other names/site number **The Brook Arts Center**

2. Location

street & number **10 Hamilton Street** ☐ not for publication

city or town **Bound Brook Borough** ☐ vicinity

state **New Jersey** code **NJ** county **Somerset** code **035** zip code **08805**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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.

Rich Boornazian Ass't Commissioner 2/27/14

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[✓] entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

for Carson N. Ball 5-5-14

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH / EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK, LIMESTONE
roof ASPHALT/SYNTHETIC RUBBER
other STEEL

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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.)

- [X] **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance
1927-1963

Significant Dates
1927, 1929, 1932, 1963

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
WILLIAM E. LEHMAN (ARCHITECT)
ALEXANDER MORECRAFT (BUILDER)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [X] University
- [X] Other

Name of repository:
BOUND BROOK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, LEHMAN ARCHITECTURAL GROUP, PC

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property **.54 ACRES**

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	539803	4490240	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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **KAT CANNELONGO, MEMBER – BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

organization **SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER, INC** date **revised January 2014**

street & number **10 HAMILTON STREET** telephone **732-469-7700**

city or town **BOUND BROOK** state **NJ** zip code **08805**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc.

street & number 10 Hamilton Street , PO Box 387 telephone 732-469-7700

city or town Bound Brook state NJ zip code 08805

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Brook Theater was originally constructed in 1927 by Alexander Morecraft as a vaudeville house in the waning years of an era of popular live stage entertainment that began in the 1880's and lasted until approximately 1932. The theater is located in the downtown area of Bound Brook, New Jersey, just off of Main Street and within close proximity to the railroad station.(see Satellite Map) It is a two-story red brick and limestone building with a steel framed roof that rises to a four-storied stage area at the northern end of the building.(see Photo #13) The Brook Theater's front façade has a slightly taller, distinctive, and triangular-shaped parapet from which the horizontal marquee and vertical blade sign[1] protrude over a recessed entrance.(see Photo #1) The auditorium, with an original seating capacity of thirteen hundred and twelve stationary chairs, is enhanced by a massive whisper dome, designed to aid in projecting sound to the four corners of the auditorium.(see Cross-section of Theater) The entire theater building is enclosed with a red brick and contrasting light-grey mortar façade that remains unchanged since its construction. It is surrounded by a seven-foot wide fire corridor on all sides except where the neighboring Morecraft Building abuts the theater along the north wall of the entrance foyer. Located on the east side of the building and just across the fire corridor is an Annex, (see Photo # 8) used as a workspace and storage for theater props. Despite numerous occurrences of flooding over the years, the building is still in possession of most of its original structural materials, both on the exterior and in the interior, and therefore, conveys significant historic integrity – a testament to the construction practices and materials of a bygone era.

The interior décor of the theater sustained minor decorative alterations as a result of the various management changes between 1929 and the early 1960's, which allowed for the individual signature company appearance of each of the managing movie companies, but thereafter settled into a somewhat standard mode of appearance that became a recognizable ingredient of the entertainment identity. In 1963, Gladys Morecraft, daughter of Alexander Morecraft, regained managing control of the theater and set out to renovate the interior décor in a manner similar to its appearance at its opening in 1927 as a tribute to her father and as an acknowledgment of its historic significance. The entire renovation was accomplished at a cost of $100,000, (see 1963 Photo of Auditorium) and remained that way until the devastating floods of 1999 and 2007 wreaked their havoc.

Outside Entrance, Marquee, Blade Sign, and East Façade

The Brook Theater still possesses its original 20-foot wide recessed entrance that fronts onto Hamilton Street (facing west) and that is, seemingly, a continuation of the 100-foot long, Flemish bond façade of the Morecraft Building.(see Photo # 2) However, the original metal-framed glass doors have since been replaced with commercial-style steel-framed glass doors as a result of the 1999 Hurricane Floyd destruction. The original wood-framed transom windows above the doors remain intact. The original floor within the recessed entrance was terrazzo, which still remains, but is in a state of severe

[1] Blade Sign – A vertically wall-mounted sign oriented perpendicular to the facade, making it easily readable from both directions. Its origins indicate it was a form of merchant identification as far back as medieval times.

deterioration and has therefore been covered with outdoor carpeting for safety measures. The stucco finish on the exterior walls within the recessed entrance are exhibiting a good degree of fracturing, although coating with a crack filler paint is undertaken on a yearly basis, while the stone wainscoting appears to be holding up well. The original mortar in some areas is deteriorating and requires repair or replacement, although the bricks themselves appear to be in relatively good condition.

The original marquee (see 1927 Photo of Marquee and Entrance) and the vertical blade sign above it, which both protruded out over the sidewalk from the façade, were initially renovated and painted red in the 1960's, when some of the ornamentation and the word "Brook" written in script was removed. It remained in place until 2009, when a truck coming out of the alley next to the entrance badly mangled the lower edge of the marquee. While effecting an effort to repair the damage, it was found that the base structure of iron and steel was badly rusted and deteriorated, with no place to which repair materials could be attached. Additionally, most of the lighting fixtures and the wiring was non-working and impossible to repair without a complete rebuild. As a result, the marquee and blade sign were reconstructed and installed in 2009 through a grant from Somerset County.(see Photo #3) Interestingly, while removing the damaged marquee, it was found, as a result of some chipped paint, that the original color of the marquee was blue, and has now been returned to its original color.

The west façade and parapet brick and limestone installation is generally unchanged but exhibits water and weather damage in some areas. The large limestone medallion that was originally installed at the top center of the façade has been replaced. The structural steel rods and chain that once anchored the marquee and blade sign to the façade have been replaced with a newer method of installation.

Entrance Foyer

The original entrance into the 45-foot long, 20-foot wide foyer was through two pair of metal (possibly brass) and glass doors located on either side of a centralized ticket booth. Today's doors remain in the same locations, but have been replaced with modern steel and glass doors that meet new fire and safety codes. The foyer floor, which ascends three feet in an easterly direction to three swinging double doors, is the original terrazzo, and the plaster walls with marble base and marble surrounding the steam radiators remain intact, although somewhat in need of repair.(see Photo # 15) On each foyer wall are three over-sized gold framed billboards with arches and beveled mirror accents. (See Photo #14) The original plaster ceiling had decorative molding clad beams that run perpendicular to the east-west run of the foyer. The ceiling, walls, billboards, and floor have been restored since the last flood in 2007. A small portion of the south wall of the foyer has been left in its deteriorated state, with the unplastered brick wall showing, but painted to match the restored plaster walls.

Foyer lighting was provided by two stained glass Tiffany chandeliers suspended from the ceiling. These chandeliers have also been restored, repaired, re-wired and re-installed in their original locations.(see Photo # 24) The six original goose-neck wall sconces were removed from the foyer sometime after the 1960's, and have not yet been found or reproduced. Three pair of steel double doors, originally painted gold, opened into the lobby. While these doors remain in place, they have been repainted to match the color scheme of the foyer and lobby walls.

Lobby

At the grand opening on January 19, 1927, upon entering the lobby, one was welcomed with a carpet that embodied a "soft, rich textured weave of a dark crimson pattern."[2] The carpet was supplied by Gimbel Brothers of New York City at a cost in excess of $4200. The lobby was 75 feet long with varying widths of 15 feet in the center to 20 feet on either end, in an east to west configuration located at the south end of the building. The most southerly section of the lobby is a 600-square foot area dedicated to separate men's and women's rest rooms, a manager's office, and an usher's room. The walls were clad with marble (see Marble-Clad Walls Photo) in a Louis XIV design, created by Vincent Marilette, a prominent interior decorator from New York City.[3] The South Wall is a 4-foot high marble balustrade that flanked the seats in the auditorium and served as a standing room opportunity for a hundred or more additional people who could look over the balustrade to view the stage. On the south wall, there existed a 22-foot wide and 7-foot deep recessed lounge area which was reported as being decorated with "a rich, gilded fireplace mantelpiece with bannerets of old France, in silk, at either side, fills the back of the lounge." [4] The lounge was furnished with period chairs and seats that matched those of the auditorium.(see 1927 Photo of Lobby Lounge) A stairway leads to the second floor above the lobby, which houses the projection booth, a cutting room, a film storage room and a rest room. From this area, also, is an access point by way of a vertical steel ladder into the attic above the grand auditorium where a wooden catwalk allows for access to the apparatus that lowers the light fixtures for maintenance. Beneath this section of the theater lies a basement boiler room, which is only accessed by way of an exterior concrete stairway. Four doors along the north side of the main lobby open into the 7,896 square-foot grand auditorium, which measures 84 feet wide, runs 94 feet long, and contains seating divided by four aisles aligned with the entry doors.

The north wall of the lobby was enclosed from the top of the balustrade to the ceiling (See Photo #17) during the 1963 interior renovation by Gladys Morecraft in order to mitigate effects of noise and lighting from the lobby and concession stand directly behind the auditorium.[5] The lounge on the south wall, although not altered structurally, had been converted to a concession stand when moving pictures became the sole form of the Brook's entertainment. The concession area has been further modified since that time to accommodate current conveniences, but is now a mismatched contrivance of cabinets and appliances, which were added to replace cabinetry and equipment destroyed in the floods of 1999 and 2007, in order to satisfy the demands of the Brook's visiting patrons.(see Photo #16) The carpet currently installed in the lobby is a commercial-use carpet that generally resembles the original pattern, until such time as a reproduction can be afforded.

Lobby lighting was provided by Tiffany stained-glass chandeliers that matched those in the foyer. The

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[2] "Brook Theater Is Now Open." *THE CHRONICLE* (weekly newspaper, Bound Brook, NJ) 21 January 1927: p.1A.
[3] "Building On Hamilton St." *THE CHRONICLE*, 23 July 1926: p.1A.
[4] "Brook Theater About Done." *THE CHRONICLE*, 31 December 1926: p.1A.
[5] Interview with George Anderson, Brook Theater board member , January 6, 2014.

chandeliers have been removed and replaced with modern light fixtures. Along the north wall there are four entrances into the auditorium. The entrances remain in the same location, but are equipped with updated steel doors.

Auditorium

Four doors along the north side of the main lobby open into the 7,896 square-foot grand auditorium (see Photo #18), which measures 84 feet wide and runs 94 feet long, and contains seating divided by four aisles aligned with the entry doors. In 1927, the auditorium of the Brook Theater had thirteen hundred and twelve seats.[6] Manufactured by *American Seating* of Michigan, they were the same seats as those used in the popular Capitol Theater in New York City. The seat cushions and backs of the large chairs were upholstered in soft blue cushioned leather. The seating was configured in three sections, yielding a center section consisting of fourteen seats per row with an aisle on each side, and flanked by a section of seats on either side that additionally had an aisle running along each wall.[7] These seats were upgraded during a 1963 renovation, and unfortunately removed after the flood of 1999. The auditorium now contains temporary seating and can accommodate 600 people.

The auditorium ceiling is made of plaster with decorative molded surfaces surrounding a central whisper dome that was constructed to project sound to the four corners of the auditorium without benefit of mechanical sound enhancement equipment.(see Photo #23) Originally, a large chandelier was suspended from the center of the dome.[8] While being decorated for a show, it crashed to the floor decades ago and was never repaired, although there is some indication that another chandelier of a different design did grace the dome for some years. There is no history of it other than the memories of some people who patronized the theater in their younger years.

The surface of the side walls is composed of acoustic plaster between eight pilasters topped with gold-painted capitals on each side. The pilasters are of a Moorish pattern, the moldings have an egg and dart pattern, while the doorway columns are embellished with acanthus leaves.[9] Most of the pilasters remain, but are in a state of deterioration or unstable condition, and those completely missing need to be replicated and applied.(see Photo #22) The top surface of the back wall is acoustic plaster, with penetration for spot lights and movie projectors. The marble balustrade and entrance doors are located directly below this area.(see Photo #19)

During the 1963 renovation, the side walls and back wall of the auditorium were clad with sound insulation padding beneath decorative cloth fabric. The Bound Brook floods of 1999 and 2007 caused severe water damage to the wall covering, causing it to be removed due to the threat of mold development. The walls remain without acoustic fabric treatment at this point.

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[6] "New Theater Ready to Open." *THE CHRONICLE*, 7 January 1927: p.1A.
[7] "Brook Theater About Done." *THE CHRONICLE*,7 January 1927: p.1A.
[8] "Theater Date is Postponed." *THE CHRONICLE*, 14 January 1927: p.1A.
[9] "New Theater About Done." *THE CHRONICLE*, 10 December 1926: p.1A.

Stage

The 2,156 square-foot stage remains unchanged and measures 28 feet deep and 77 feet wide, with a proscenium-width of 45 feet and a height of 37 feet at the highest point of the arch.(see Elevation of Stage…) An orchestra pit in front of the stage measures 35 feet wide by 9 feet deep, extends 10 feet beyond the stage into the auditorium proper, and is approximately 3 feet below the auditorium floor.(see Photo #20) It has two entrances into the trap room below the stage proper.

Stage accessories included four tiers of dressing rooms extending from the stage floor up into the loft which was fire-proof in every way, including steel doors and the iron and concrete stairway leading to them. High above the stage was a steel-grated platform upon which the scene operators worked, raising the scenery by pulleys to the space above the proscenium arch. (See Photo #21) The platform was also to be "used by electricians who operated the complicated lighting that now goes with the modern show."[10] Also hanging in the area above the arch was the movie projection screen that was approximately 40 feet wide and 20 feet high.

The proscenium arch is of Greek masonry (A method that employed clamps and dowels to keep the column components straight and tight) and was graced with ornate plaster relief, and a curtain that was described as "a bright piece of sunlight and water."[11] The entire auditorium was constructed to be fireproof. Nothing in the theater construction was flammable with the exception of the wooden stage floor. Fire hoses were coiled on racks at the emergency exits; the exits leading to a 7-foot wide alley that surrounded the exterior of the theater. The projection booth, located at the rear of the auditorium and directly over the foyer, was described as "the moving picture machines have a separate fire-proof compartment. From a separate position in this space, colored lighting effects can be shot to the stage, or special 'spots' used on the actors during the performance." Finally, there was a theater pipe organ located in the orchestra pit, stage right. The pipe organ, a Wurlitzer, was one of the finest of its time and purchased at a cost of over eighteen thousand dollars in 1927.

Water damage to the interior of the auditorium over the decades has resulted in deterioration of the historic details. Crumbling plaster of the walls and ceiling is severe in some areas, and the presence of efflorescence (a white powdery substance resulting from chemical salt crystals) on the back brick wall of the stage is an indication of water penetration and/or drainage issues. The roof has recently been replaced, resulting in a now leak-free condition. Due to the devastating floods of 1999 and 2007, the original Wurlitzer theater organ was destroyed. It has now been replaced with a similar pipe organ that has been restored by the Garden State Theater Organ Society.

Exterior Elevations

As with the façade, the remaining exterior walls, simple and unadorned in design, are in a similar condition, with some mortar deterioration and minor spalling of brick skin.(see Photos #4 and 6)

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[10] "Brook Theater About Done." *THE CHRONICLE*, 31 December 1926: p.1A.
[11] "Theater Date is Postponed." *THE CHRONICLE*, 14 January 1927: p.1A.

Additionally, the south elevation is marred by wires from telephone and cable television providers, as well as lead piping for now unknown uses.(see Photo #5) The building, otherwise, is structurally sound. Re-pointing and repair of the existing brickwork is needed.

Roof and Parapet

During its construction in 1926, the roof construction was described as "made of metal held in position by jetson [*sic*] and supported by steel girders."[12] In 2002, the roof was completely repaired and waterproofed with a torched rubber membrane. The roof now houses antenna from an AT&T Cell Tower and a similar installation for Verizon Wireless. In addition, a platform supports the 40-ton air conditioning unit atop the northeast corner of the stage roof.(see Photo #11) All efforts were made to prevent line-of-site visibility from the street level, and were reviewed by the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office.

The Annex

The Annex is a contributing building located within the boundaries of the lot that is owned by the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc, containing the theater building.(see Photos #8, 9, and 2003 Sub-division Map) Although there is no exact construction date available, based on Sanborn Fire maps, it appears to have been constructed sometime between 1902 and 1910.(see Sanborn Maps 1902 & 1910) All other construction documents and tax records were lost in a fire that destroyed the Bound Brook Borough Hall in 1946. The structure was previously used as a shop and warehouse by the L.D. Cook Lumber & Coal Company, the former owners from whom Alexander Morecraft purchased the property. Upon completion of the theater construction and subsequent commencement of vaudeville stage shows, it became a carpentry shop and warehouse to create and store stage props and miscellaneous theater supplies. Its use remains the same today.

[12] "Name Picked for Theater." *THE CHRONICLE*, 16 July 1926: p.1A.

SUMMARY

The Brook Theater was constructed as a vaudeville house in 1927, became a popular regional venue for a wide range of entertainments which drew crowds from nearby as well as the surrounding towns and counties, and has seen the likes of W.C. Fields, Jack Benny, Sophie Tucker, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Tony Bennett, and countless motion pictures. At the time of its opening, the Brook was considered by locals to be a focal point in "the hub of a splendid theater district," for although the mile-square town boasted three additional entertainment venues, albeit considerably smaller than the 1300-seat Brook, it was within a twenty-minute drive by automobile to over fifty thousand people.[1] While the first 25 years of the twentieth century evolved into the "Golden Age of Vaudeville," this form of stage entertainment experienced a rapid decline starting in 1930, due to the emergence and perfection of talking pictures.[2] Spanning the changing eras from vaudeville to talking pictures, the design of the Brook, which in many ways mimicked theaters closer to New York, easily accommodated the new form of entertainment. The Brook had already offered the new "moving" pictures as part of the larger vaudeville shows during the 1927 to 1929 period. From 1930 until 1963, under the management of first the Fox-Metropolitan Corporation and then the Scouras Theater Group, the Brook operated continuously as a performing arts center and first-run movie house. It continued to do so until the flood of 1999. The Brook remains the only theater in Somerset County surviving from the vaudeville era. Its existence within the community brought crowds of people to its doors and strengthened the role of the town within the central Jersey region. The Brook's importance to the town of Bound Brook meets National Register Criterion A for local significance in entertainment history.

Design and Construction

The Brook Theater was the creation of Alexander Morecraft, a Bound Brook resident and successful local developer and building contractor who was also the owner of the property. His company, Morecraft Building Corporation, was well known for the construction of some of the most important buildings in the town, as well as just across the Raritan River in South Bound Brook. These included the George M. Lamont residence and the George V. Lamont residence, two prominent Bound Brook business families, the William H. Fisher residence, the Parochial School and Rectory of the St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, the Bound Brook Memorial Library, the Washington High School (now known as Bound Brook High School), and the Mueller Building, all in Bound Brook. In addition, he is responsible for the construction of the La Faurette house and the South Bound Brook Fire House in South Bound Brook. [3]

Although the initial plan included a frontage of stores and offices on Hamilton Street, this part of the development did not take place at the commencement of the theater construction. [4] However, the

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[1] "Brook Theater About Done" THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 31 December 1926: p. 1-A.
[2] Stein, Charles W., *American Vaudeville As Seen By Its Contemporaries* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 109.
[3] "ALEXANDER MORECRAFT." History of Northwestern New Jersey 1927: p. 511.
[4] "Start New Theater" THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 9 April 1926: p. 1-A.

additional building, known as the Morecraft Building and also designed by the same architect, was started while the construction of the theater was in progress, and proceeded to completion at almost the same time as the theater. This second building abuts the theater building at the north wall of the entry foyer, projecting an appearance of the buildings being as one.

During the period of construction, a contest was held to select a name for the new theater. Three hundred names were submitted, most with "…not any great originality shown." Although three people actually submitted the name *Brook*, Mr. R.B. Casey won the $25 prize for having submitted it first. It was selected because it was fitting for a town that was surrounded by brooks – the Green Brook, the Middle Brook, and the Bound Brook, as well as the town of South Bound Brook across the river. It was further suggested that the theater should include a line or two from Tennyson's "The Brook" - "Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever."[5] Although the Tennyson poem was never included in the décor previously, there are now plans to finally follow through with this appropriate suggestion.

William E. Lehman, Architect

The architect, William E. Lehman of Newark, New Jersey, designed the Brook Theater. Lehman started his career as an architect in 1896 and was a prominent and prolific designer of many office buildings and theaters in the north Jersey region. While Mr. Lehman's designs generally show him as a conservative designer and not particularly innovative, he did exhibit a great deal of versatility, and tended to excel in creativity when it came to his theater designs. Lehman designed approximately 30 theaters in the general New York City area that clearly showed an understanding of the theater patrons' desire to experience a world of luxury and opulence that was usually foreign to their everyday lives. These included the Adams Theater (Shubert) in Newark (1912), the Loew's Melba Theater in Brooklyn (1915), the Proctor's Palace in Yonkers (1916), the Clairidge Theater in Montclair (1922), Carlton Theater (Count Basie) in Red Bank (1926), the Sanford Theater in Irvington (1926), the Oritani Theater in Hackensack (1926), the Maplewood Theater in Maplewood (1927), the Kingston Theater in Kingston, NY (1928), the Ritz Theater in Lyndhurst (1928), and the American Theater in NYC (no date).[6]

The architectural firm that William E. Lehman began in 1896, and which his brother, David, joined in 1912, was a noteworthy firm whose works included a multitude of buildings on the East Coast. Lehman is best remembered, however, for his designs of public buildings, residences and movie theaters in New Jersey, and did perhaps his most significant works between its time of inception and the 1930's. The firm celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1996, and continues to practice as Lehman Architectural Group, PC and Lehman Construction Corp. It remains under the ownership and direction of Thomas C. Lehman, Jr., great-nephew of the founder, William E. Lehman, and great-grandson of David Lehman.[7]

It is interesting to note that many of the design elements – particularly of the interior - found in the

[5] "Name Picked for Theater." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 16 July 1926: p. 1-A.
[6] Ebert, Roger, "Cinema Treasures" http://cinematreasures.org/architects/72 (accessed April 2, 2013).
[7] Personal interview with Thomas C. Lehman at the Brook Theater, Bound Brook, on April 20, 2013.

Brook Theater can also be found in numerous others of his projects, such as the decorative pilasters in the auditorium that exhibit a "Moresque" (Moorish) influence, the proscenium arch framework, and the egg- and-dart decorative motif of the cornice plasterwork. It was noted in the local newspaper that Vincent Marilette of New York City was the contributing interior decorator, although no compelling record of his work has been found, nor does William E. Lehman's records document such an attribution.[8]

Grand Opening 1927

Two weeks prior to the opening, *The Chronicle* noted that the Brook was such an attractive theater that "It is a question whether there is within the fifty-mile metropolitan radius one just so attractive. It is comfortable and its appointments are modernly luxurious: its decorations are in exceedingly good taste, being "Moresque"[9] in pattern, and well-balanced in the striking colors that go with it. A playhouse with the fine artistic treatment that has been lavished on the Brook must make lasting friends rapidly – it will have a pull wherever these things are appreciated and this is a splendidly appreciative district in which we live."[10]. Additionally, the *Bound Brook Chronicle* noted that "the stage of the new playhouse was of such large proportions and equipment that it was able to accommodate any New York City production." Further, it was noted that "the facilities for handling the scenery and the lighting lofts are the latest that could be secured – the duplicate of those in the newest theaters that have recently been erected in New York City."[11]

Upon completion of construction, Alexander Morecraft leased the theater to Somerset Theater Corporation, of which Meyer Cohen was president, for a period of twenty-one years. Mr. Cohen, who previously had managed the Palace Theater, an obscure theater of sorts also located in Bound Brook, would also manage the venue.[12] On January 19, 1927, The Brook opened with the following event description:

> *Bound Brook turned out en masse for the opening of the Brook Theater on Wednesday evening. Everyone of the thirteen hundred odd seats were occupied and the foyer held another hundred or so who saw the show standing behind the marble balustrade which flanks the row of seats in the auditorium. The large audience thoroughly enjoyed the five acts of vaudeville and the two pictures; and it was admiringly proud of and greatly pleased with the new theater which Alexander Morecraft built and which Meyer Cohen is managing.*
>
> *Hamilton Street, when the entertainment was concluded, looked like Broadway at eleven o'clock. Cars were parked for blocks in every direction and Chief Nash and his patrolmen had a busy*

[8] "Building On Hamilton Street." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 23 July 1926: p. 1-A.
[9] Moresque is an obsolete alternative term to "Moorish" in English, meaning having characteristics of Moorish art or architecture, MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE.
[10] "New Theater Ready to Open." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 7 January 1927: p. 1-A.
[11] "Theater Date is Postponed." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 14 January 1927: p. 1-A.
[12] "Building on Hamilton St." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 23 July 1926: p. 1-A.

three-quarters of an hour in getting the traffic moving homewards.

A special car attached to one of the Jersey Central trains brought a crowd of theatrical folk to the initial performance. They expressed themselves as being surprisingly impressed with Bound Brook's new playhouse; they spoke very highly of the first night's show. Manager Cohen came in for a whirlwind of congratulations which were either offered in person or came by wire. His desk on yesterday morning was stacked with telegrams of good wishes that had been sent by his friends and people friendly to the venture. [13]

Besides the opening ceremonies and a few brief addresses, the Brook made its debut with two short films, "The Lunatic at Large" with Dorothy Mackaill and Kenneth McKenna, and "The Tennis Wizard," as well as five acts of vaudeville.[14] After its opening, the theater continued to show first run picture shows and some of the finest New York City vaudeville acts of the era, all under the direction of Meyer Cohen.

A Period of Change

The demise of the vaudeville era was in evidence even as the Brook was under construction, and it was not long before the talking pictures diverted interest away from the vaudeville acts in favor of the new "technology" of the day. The art of film-making blossomed in the 1920's, although most of the decade saw predominantly silent films, which evolved from vaudevillian roots. By the mid-20's, movies were big business, and by the end of the decade, there were 20 Hollywood studios. In the 1920's and 1930's, the American film industry averaged about 800 film releases in a year – a remarkable feat considering that nowadays it is remarkable when production exceeds 500 films in a year.[15]

As a result, it is not surprising that in 1929, the lease of the Brook Theater by the Somerset Theater Corporation, which had nineteen years left to run, was disposed of to the much bigger Fox-Metropolitan Corporation.[16] Nonetheless, the Morecraft Building Corporation, of which Alexander Morecraft was president, retained ownership of the theater. The transition to a steady diet of moving pictures was a simple process for the Brook. Despite their preference for the new form of entertainment, patrons still wanted to experience the luxury and opulence that would transport their imagination to a myriad of sensory perceptions based on old world charm and high style, and so the Brook's design and décor needed few alterations to accommodate both the new management and the new moving pictures. The Brook opened under the new management on October 14, 1929, presenting only the new "moving pictures' which were fast becoming a favorite entertainment past-time, and residents from the surrounding areas filled the house every evening, forming lines at the box office nearly 100 feet long to

[13] "Brook Theater is Now Open." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 21 January 1927: p. 1-A.
[14] "Grand Opening." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 14 January 1927: p. 5-A.
[15] Dirks, Tim, "Film History of the 1920's," AMC Film Site, www.filmsite.org/20sintro.html (accessed April 6, 2013).
[16] "Theater Changes Hands." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 27 September 1929: no page number.

gain admittance.[17]

The Fox-Metropolitan Corporation was a part of the larger Fox Film Corporation, considered one of the "Big Five" of the major film studios at that time, and owned by William Fox. It later became 20th-Century Fox, formed through the 1935 merger of 20th Century Pictures Company and Fox, after hitting hard times as a result of the Depression and going into receivership in 1932.[18] As a result of the financial difficulties, the Skouras Theater Group, a major competitor of the Fox Corporation, took over leasing and managing the Brook from 1932 until 1963, maintaining it as a first-run movie house with periodic special presentations of concerts and numerous organists who offered evening pipe organ recitals prior to the presentation of movies. However, in January 1963, the Morecraft family decided not to renew the lease of the Skouras Theater Group because Skouras had not adhered to the terms of the lease to renovate the theater, which was now 34 years old.

A Movie Premiere

In June 1931, the Brook experienced a particularly memorable moment in time for the premiere opening of the silent film "Romance and Bound Brook." The 7000-foot mini-extravaganza, which was filmed exclusively in the town with 7500 local actors and actresses, all from Bound Brook, added an even greater degree of civic pride for the local residents who considered the Brook an extraordinary benefit to the town's status as an entertainment leader of the region. The film's leading rolls were played by high school seniors Marita Harman and Jim Kelly. The film was last shown in 1937 and was given by the producers to town officials for future showings. Sadly, it apparently burned in the Borough Hall fire of 1946.[19] Current research of the film has not yielded the identity of the film studio that produced it, nor found a print of the film itself.

The Brook Reopens

The theater closed in early January 1963 when an extensive remodeling commenced in order to spruce-up the public areas and upgrade the equipment, under the supervision of Gladys A. Morecraft, daughter of the late Alexander Morecraft. The entire interior was redecorated in white, gold, red, and honey beige. The auditorium walls were covered with maroon self-trimmed damask, and the lounge in gold damask. (See 1963 Interior Renovation) The stage proscenium valance was hemmed satin in festoon fringed with large gold and silver tassels. A new motion picture screen was installed with a pearlized finish and having the ability to change the picture size from regular to Cinemascope. New modern equipment was installed in the projection booth and the theater was equipped with new true-fidelity amplifiers and speakers. The 900 seats were deluxe loge seats and it was noted that "the new Brook is the most luxurious and most comfortable seated theater in New Jersey.[20] At the completion of the

[17] "Opening of Fox Brook" THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 18 October 1929: p. 1-A.
[18] Dirks, Tim, "Film History of the 1920's," AMC Film Site, www.filmsite.org/20sintro.html (accessed April 6, 2013).
[19] "Movie Overshadows Gloom of Depression." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 1 October 1981: p. 1-A.
[20] "Brook Theater will Re-Open." THE DAILY HOME NEWS (New Brunswick, NJ) 7 March 1963: p.

renovation, the theater was then leased to Paul Peterson of Morristown, and managed by Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Dailey.(See 1963 Opening Night…) However, following a two-year lease, Gladys Morecraft again took over operation of the theater in 1965, allowing only family-oriented entertainment. During this period, the New York chapter of the American Theater Organ Enthusiasts presented several recitals, playing the Wurlitzer pipe organ to such silent films as Charlie Chaplin's greatest silent-film "The Gold Rush." Additionally, and just recently, this author was contacted by a gentleman now living in Florida who was the organist for the Brook during this period. Mr. Chris Lytle's job was to play organ "recitals" of one-half hour in length prior to each movie show. He was in his teens at the time.

The Brook closed its doors in February 1977, after almost 15 years under the management of Gladys Morecraft, but again reopened on August 3, 1979 through a new lease from the Morecraft Building Corporation to the Andy Theater Corporation. Andrew Sullivan of Westfield, New Jersey was the president of the group and indicated that the theater would feature only "regular family movies." The theater was managed by Howard Steinberg and his wife.[21]

The Theater is Sold

Phil Neri of Piscataway purchased the theater from the Morecraft Family in September 1986. He also managed the theater and made an effort to bring live performances to the Brook by such popular artists as Jazz artist Chuck Mangione in July 1988, and Tony Bennett in July 1989. The theater ran movies on Friday and Saturday evenings.[22] Ralph Sirolli signed a 5-year lease to operate the Brook as a movie theater featuring foreign and art films. After less than two years, Mr. Sirolli asked for and was granted termination of the lease due to ill health. It closed again on October 20, 1994, at which time Phil Neri took back operation of the theater and performed a complete cleaning and a renovation.[23]

Bob Roberts of New York City, owner of the Wellmont Theater in Montclair, New Jersey, was under contract to purchase the theater from Mr. Neri in March 1995. Mr. Roberts indicated that his plans for the entertainment venue could include a renovation to divide the theater into three screens as he did with the Wellmont. The purchase was never finalized.[24]

For the next five years, there was limited activity in the theater. A non-profit organization, the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc. (SCCAC) attempted to acquire county, state, and federal grants for the purpose of purchasing the theater in order to turn it into an Arts Incubator project. However, on September 17, 1999 the east coast was hit by Hurricane Floyd, and Bound Brook and the surrounding

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1-A.

[21] "Brook Theater Re-Opens." THE CHRONICLE (Bound Brook, NJ) 2 August 1979: p. 1-A.

[22] "COMING SOON! Films will roll again at Brook Theater." COURIER-NEWS (Bridgewater, NJ) 12 November 1989: p. 1-H.

[23] "Bound Brook Landmark Plans to Reopen Soon.: COURIER-NEWS (Bridgewater, NJ) 27 October 1994: p. 1-B.

[24] "New Owner Pledges Theater Renovations – Purchase Gets Mixed Reaction." COURIER-NEWS (Bridgewate, NJ) 22 March 1995: p 1-B.

area filled with murky river water. The resurgence of the Brook suffered a major setback as a result of 17 feet of water in the auditorium and the devastation of much of the interior décor. (See Hurricane Floyd flood water level…) But although the efforts were side-tracked, this was still not the end of the line for the Brook.

In a major ceremony held on October 25, 2001, Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc. was awarded a total of $3 million from Somerset County, New Jersey, and Federal Economic Development programs. It provided an opportunity for them to purchase the theater and begin the process of rehabilitation and resumption of a cultural arts entertainment venue for the area. By way of a minor subdivision, the theater building was separated from the Morecraft Building and created as a separate and legal lot in its own right during the summer of 2003.[25] (See New Sub-division Map – 2003) On October 7, 2003, the deed was signed and the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc. became the new owner of the Brook Theater – now known as the Brook Arts Center.[26] The non-profit organization invested $2.3 million in renovating the theater's infrastructure, including a modernized HVAC system and an upgraded electric service.

On April 10, 2007, a Nor'easter storm again swept across the state, and again the Bound Brook area – and the Brook – suffered the damaging waters of the Raritan River. The stage area, electric service, and heating system were completely under water, and the equipment again destroyed. With the proceeds of flood insurance, the SCCAC managed to revive the theater sufficiently in order to bring a mixture of cultural arts and entertainment back to the central New Jersey region.

Relevance, Rehabilitation and Revitalization

From the time of its inception as a contributing element to community and regional life, the Brook has maintained the ability to draw crowds, offer diversion, and identify Bound Brook as a center of culture and entertainment. Throughout the various changes it has sustained over the years, both to its interior appearance as well as to the myriad managerial occupants, the theater has continually reminded the residents and visitors that the Brook once represented a time of challenge and the enjoyment of a profoundly innovative means of entertainment that has significantly and forever changed our way of life. But more than that, it had once served as a means of economic growth, cultural enhancement, and societal expansion for a little town surrounded by brooks, and given the respect and care it deserves, it can do so again.

Currently, the Brook Arts Center has a respectable schedule and an appreciative following, notwithstanding some areas being in dire need of rehabilitation. Despite enduring the fury of the river waters on numerous occasions, the Brook still stands, structurally intact, possessing most of its original features, and offering its historical significance as a cultural lightning rod to artists and entertainers alike. The SCCAC's goal is to bring the Brook back to its former grandeur – or as close to it as possible

[25] Bound Brook Planning Board. Minor Sub-division Resolution, Application No. 09-03, 24 July, 2003.
[26] Deed # 2003134914, Somerset County Hall of Records, Book OPR 5490, Page 613-622, recorded 27 October 2003.

– following the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings through grants, sponsorships, and fundraisers, and in the process, serve as a tool for the revitalization of a town that has experienced the murky depths of despair, and is, itself, so in need of a sense of socio-economic rehabilitation.

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Personal Interviews

Virginia Santomen – Granddaughter of Alexander Morecraft, personal communication with the author, July 22, 2012.

Thomas C. Lehman – Great nephew of William E. Lehman, email and personal communication with the author, March 15 through April 20, 2013,

Chris Lytle – Brook organist, telephone and email conversations with the author, March 27 through April 7, 2013.

George Anderson – President/Historian, Garden State Organ Society, personal communication with the author, August 7, 2013.

Newspapers

Bound Brook Chronicle, "Ground Broken on Hamilton Street This Morning," April 9, 1926; " Start New Theater," April 9, 1926; "Name Picked for Theater," July 16, 1926; "Building on Hamilton St.," July 23, 1926; "Brook Theater About Done," December 31, 1926; "New Theater Ready To Open," January 7, 1927; "Theater Date is Postponed," January 14, 1927; "Grand Opening," January 14, 1927; "Brook Theater is Now Open," January 21, 1927; "Theater Changes Hands," September 27, 1929; "Opening of Fox Brook," October 18, 1929; "Around Bound Brook," August 15, 1968; "Brook Theater Re-Opens," August 2, 1979; "Movie Over-Shadows Gloom of Depression," October 1, 1981; "Brook Theater Sold, May Try Stage Shows," September 25, 1986.

The Daily Home News, "Brook Theater Will Re-Open," March 7, 1963.

Courier-News, "COMING SOON! Films Will Roll Again At Brook Theater," November 12, 1989; "Bound Brook Landmark Plans to Re-Open Soon," October 27, 1994; "New Owner Pledges Theater Renovations – Purchase Gets Mixed Reaction," March 22, 1995.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Brook Theater is located in the Borough of Bound Brook, Somerset County, New Jersey at 10 Hamilton Street, Block 12, Lot 10.01. The boundary lines of the nominated property follow the property lines as indicated on the attached Site Plan. (See Sub-division Map 2003) The Site Plan is from a survey conducted on June 30, 2003, by Fisk Associates Engineers and Surveyors for the sub-division and subsequent purchase of the theater by the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

When Alexander Morecraft purchased the property from the Cook Lumber Company in 1926, his plan was to construct one large building that would house both a thirteen hundred seat theater and a commercial space for offices and retail. His plans momentarily changed, and the theater's construction began without the addition of the commercial space. The theater's plan was flag-shaped, with only a 20-foot wide entrance having road frontage, and the remainder of the building being nestled in behind the proposed commercial building and other existing buildings on properties that bordered the Cook Lumber Company property lines. (See Original Survey) When the commercial building, known as the Morecraft Building, was then constructed, its only point of contact with the theater building was at the north wall of the foyer. Thus it remained until 2003, when the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, Inc proposed to purchase the theater building only. The new boundaries encompassed the entire alley to the right of the entrance, and then ran along the already existing lot lines, then three feet out from the theater building and annex walls to the alley between the auditorium wall and the back wall of the Morecraft Building. (See Photo #12) At that point it again runs three feet off the theater wall to the point where the buildings abut. The property line then runs down the center of the joined wall and back to the front entrance wall.

Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property:	Brook Theater
City:	Borough of Bound Brook
County:	Somerset County
State:	New Jersey
Photographer:	Kat Cannelongo
Date Photographed:	May 3, 2013
Location of Negatives:	Brook Arts Center
Location of Digital Copies:	NJ State Historic Preservation Office

Exterior

1 of 24 West Entrance Façade with neighboring building facades – facing south.

2 of 24 Entrance and Marquee – facing southeast.

3 of 24 Entrance and south wall of foyer – facing east.

4 of 24 West wall – facing south-southeast.

5 of 24 South wall – facing east.

6 of 24 East Wall (emergency exits) – facing northeast.

7 of 24 East fire alley between theater and annex – facing northeast.

8 of 24 South end of annex – facing northeast.

9 of 24 North end and east wall of annex – facing west-southwest.

10 of 24 East fire alley between theater and annex – facing south-southwest.

11 of 24 East wall of stage – facing west-northwest.

12 of 24 West fire alley between theater and Morecraft Building – facing south-southwest

13 of 24 North and west walls of stage – facing south-southeast.

Interior

14 of 24 Foyer – facing east.

15 of 24 Foyer – facing west-northwest.

16 of 24 Lobby/Concession Counter – facing west-southwest.

17 of 24 Lobby – facing west.

18 of 24 Front of auditorium and stage – facing north-northeast.

19 of 24 Back of auditorium with Projection Room above – facing south.

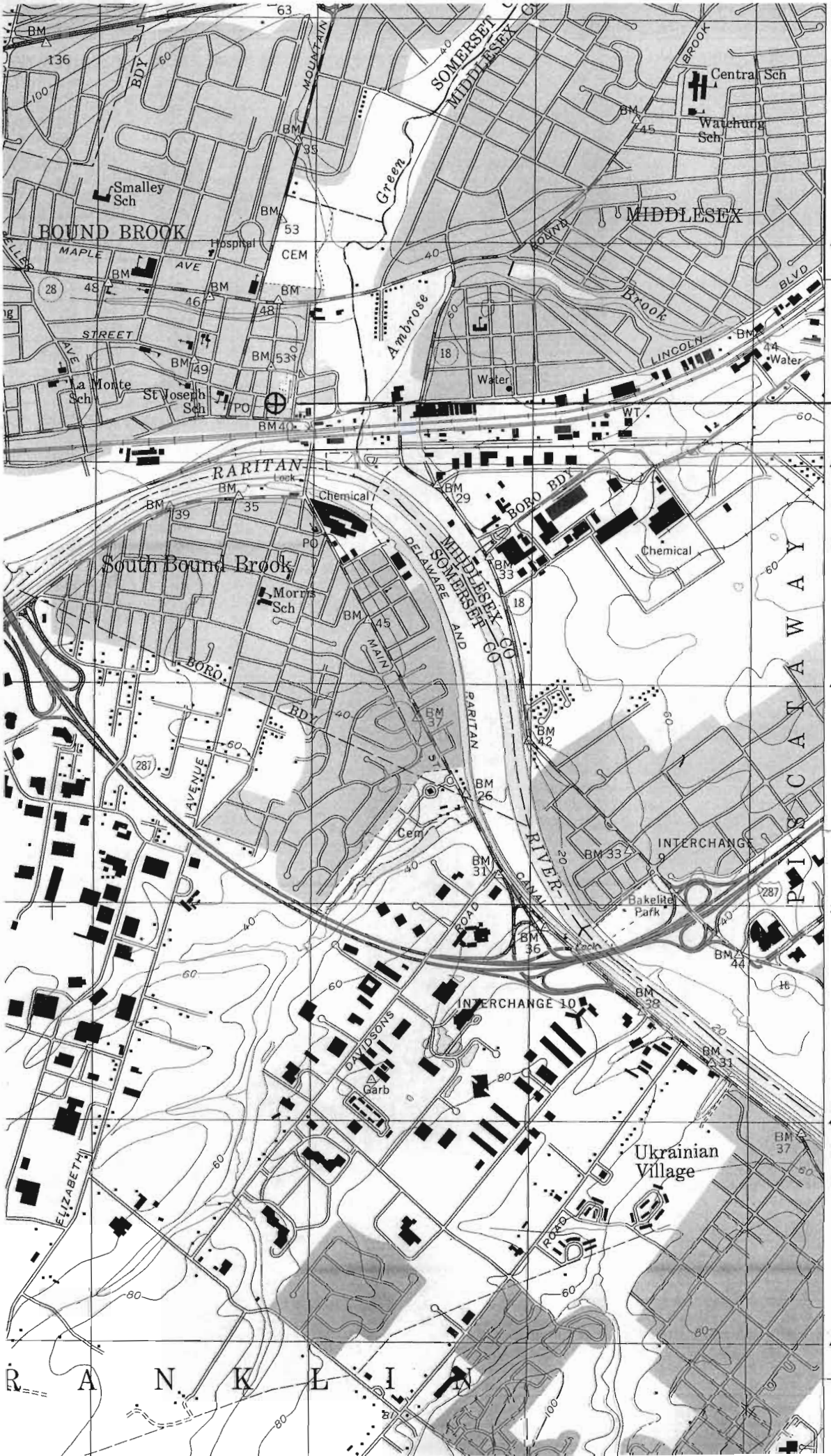
20 of 24 Orchestra Pit – facing west.

21 of 24 Stage – facing west-northwest.

22 of 24 Pilasters in auditorium – facing north-northeast.

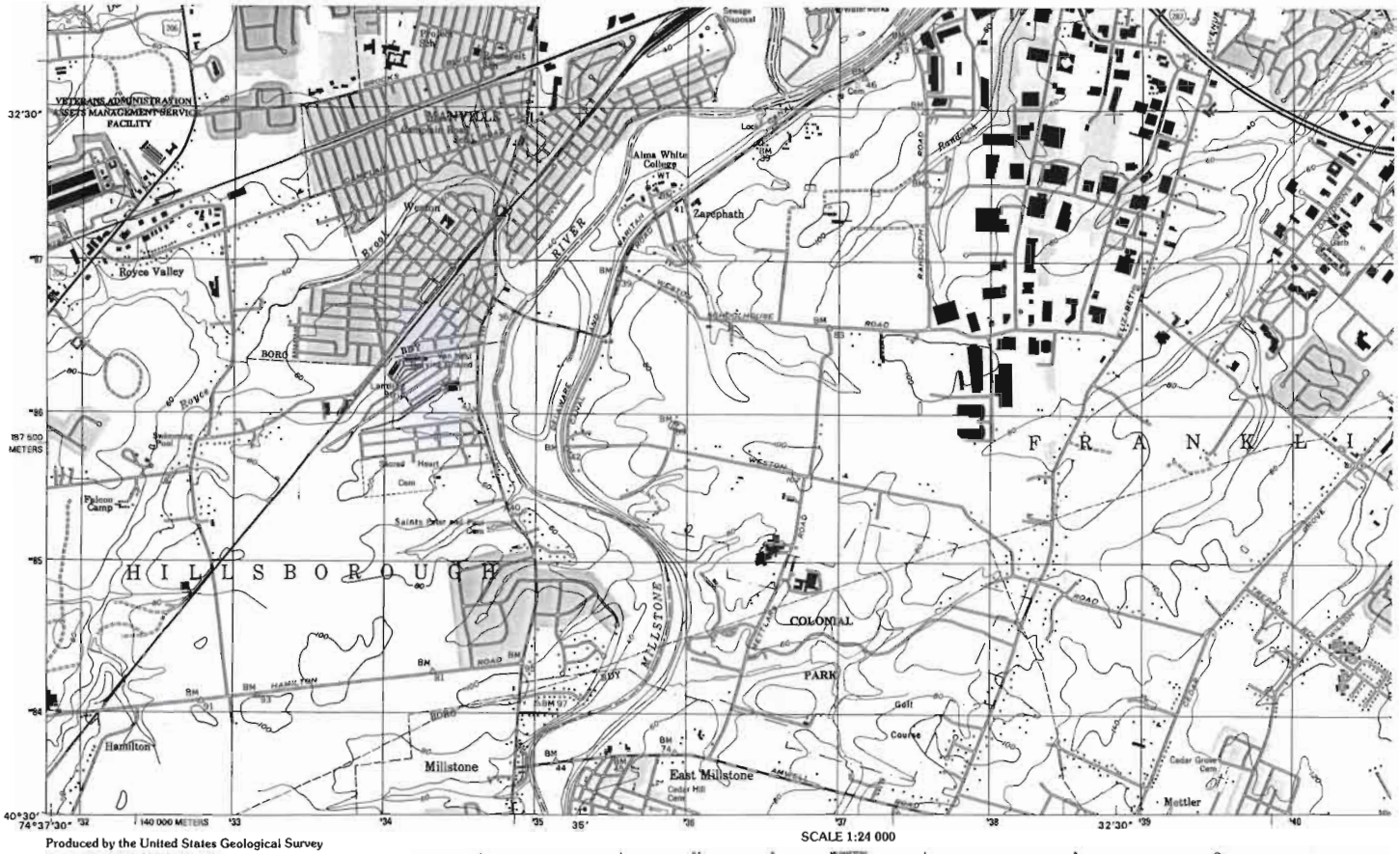
23 of 24 Whisper Dome in auditorium ceiling – facing north-northeast.

24 of 24 Original Tiffany light fixture in foyer – facing east-nort



UTM REFERENCES

- 583580 EASTING
- 4486897 NORTHING
- ZONE 18



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Topography compiled 1943. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995. Survey control current as of 1943

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18
2 500-meter ticks: New Jersey Coordinate System of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Landmark buildings verified 1943

SCALE 1:24 000

UTM GRID AND 1998 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Primary high
hard surface
Secondary h
hard surface

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

1 Gladstone
2 Bernardsville
3 Cranbury
4 Raritan
5 Plainfield
6 Rocky Hill
7 Monmouth Junction
8 New Brunswick

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

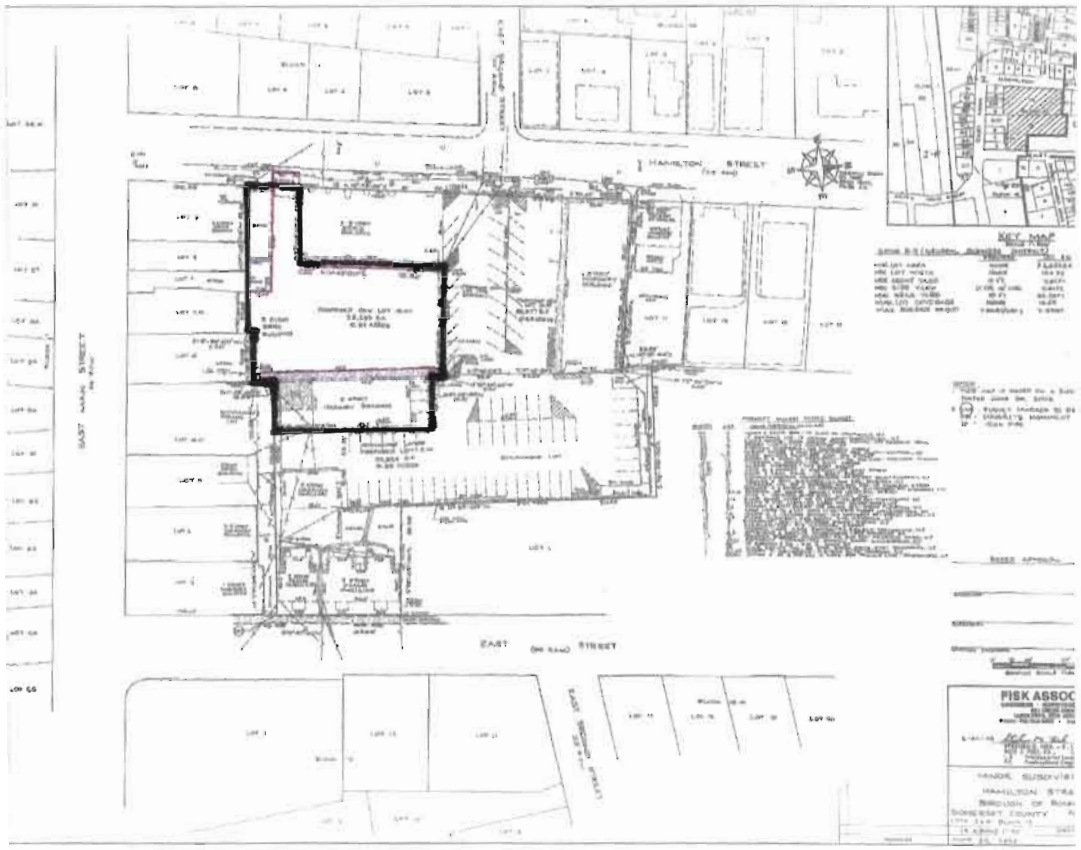
The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

Location Map – Brook Theater, also known as Brook Arts Center
10 Hamilton Street, Bound Brook, Somerset County, New Jersey

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

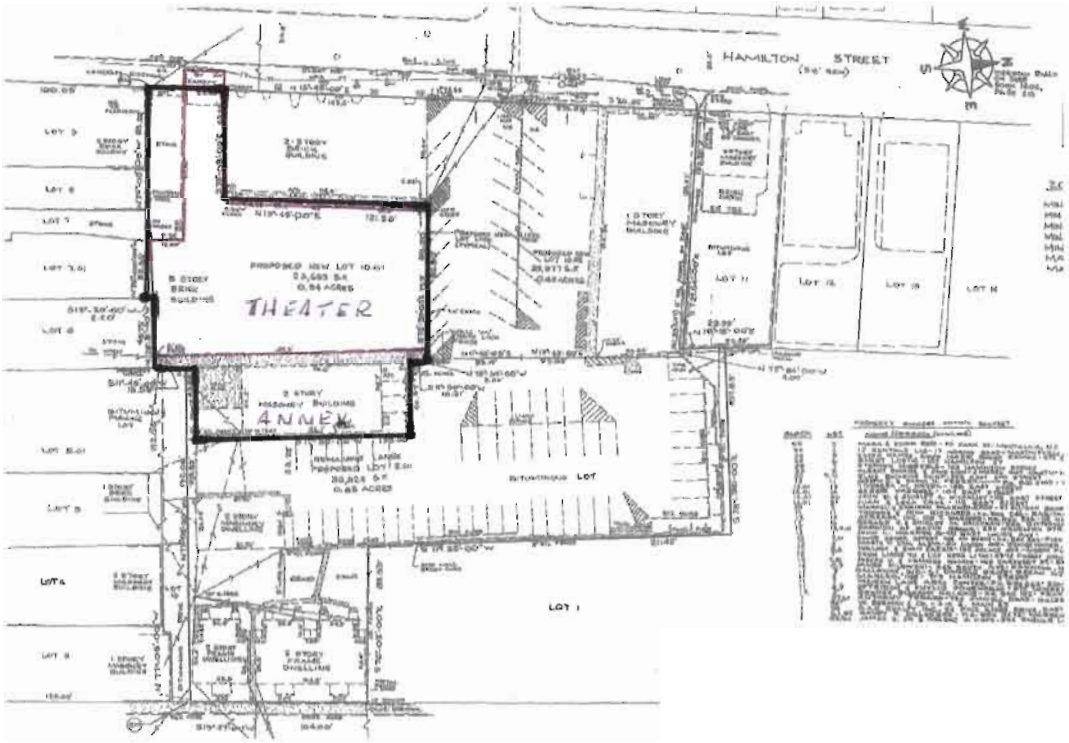
Satellite Map with Theater Location (White Roof) Noted

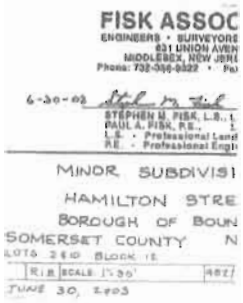
The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



New sub-division site plan showing lot boundaries in bold outline
Site Map 1 (Scanned down from original survey plan)

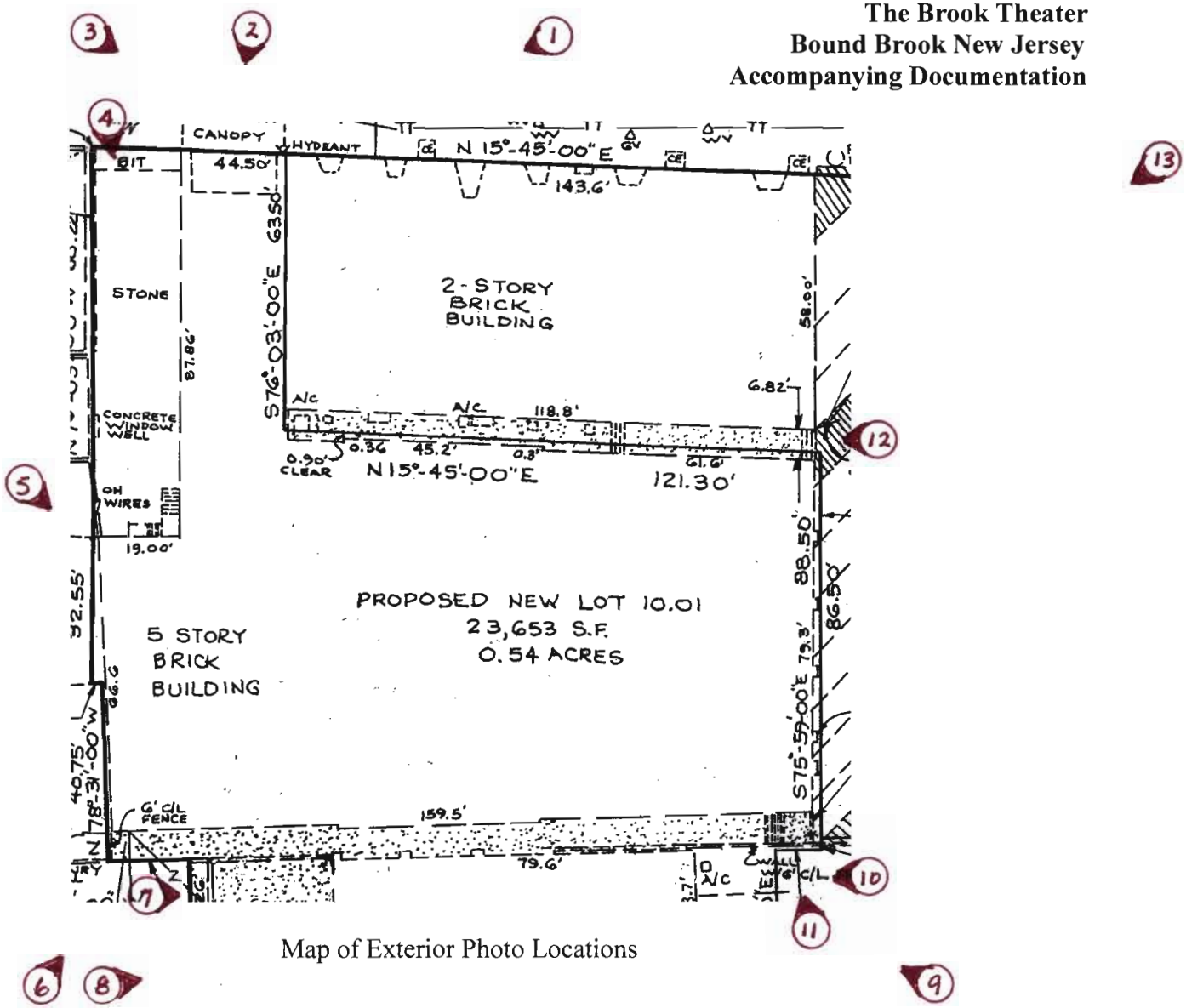
The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation





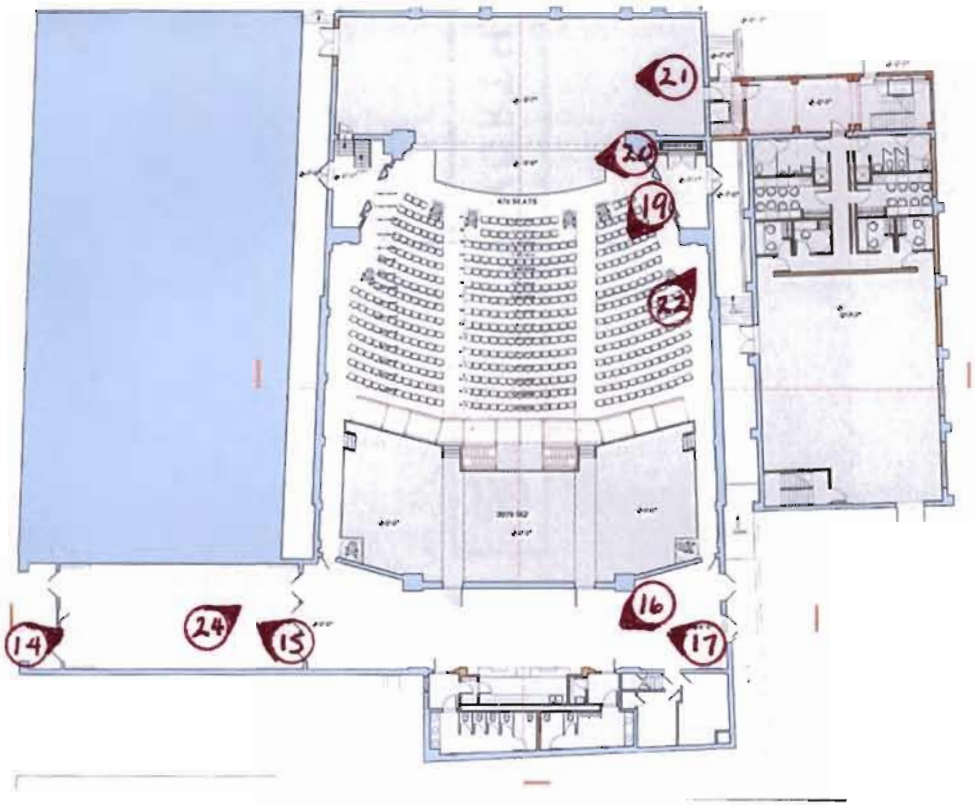
New sub-division site plan showing lot boundaries in bold outline
Site Map 2 (Enlarged section scanned down from original survey plan)

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



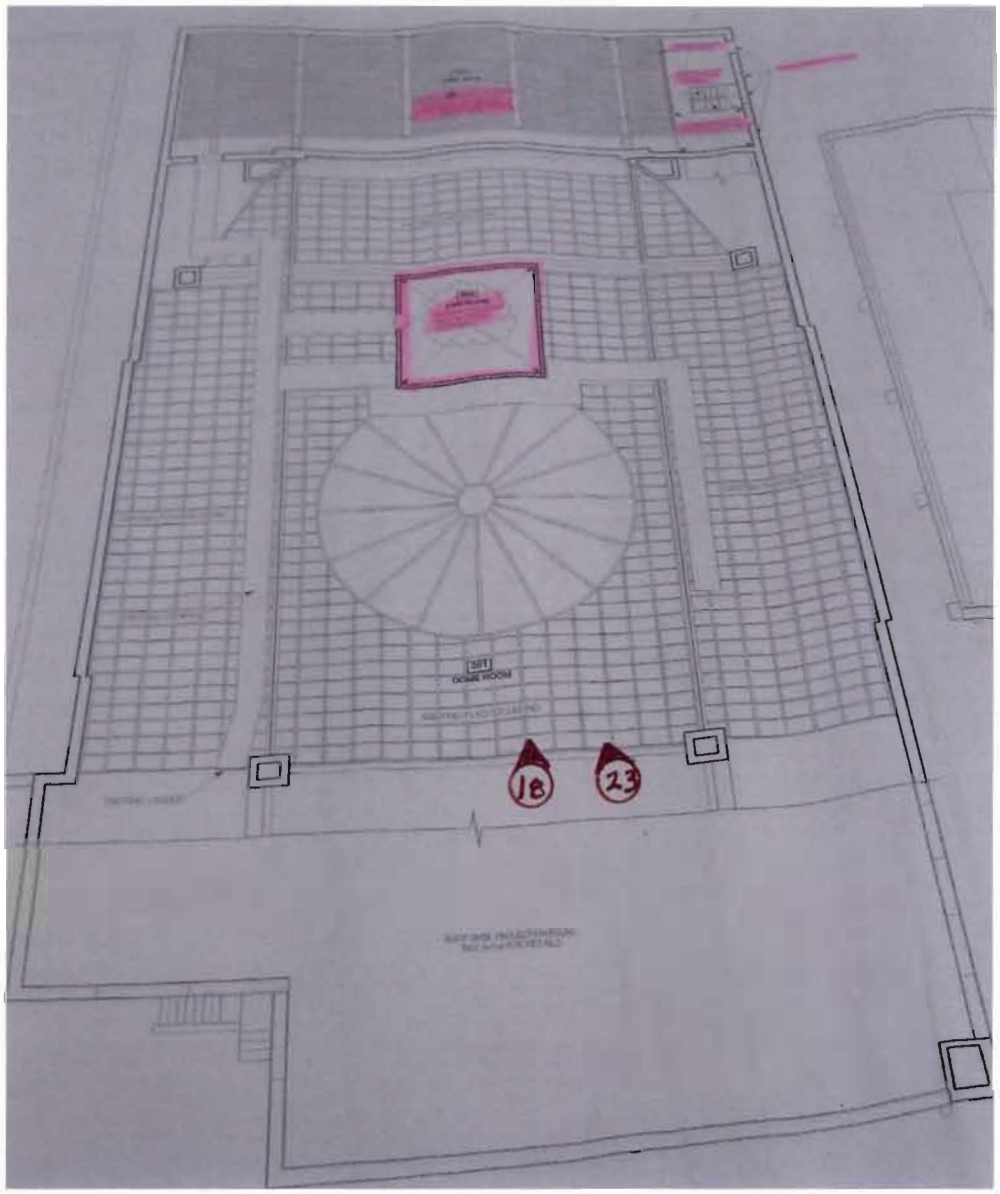
Map of Exterior Photo Locations

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

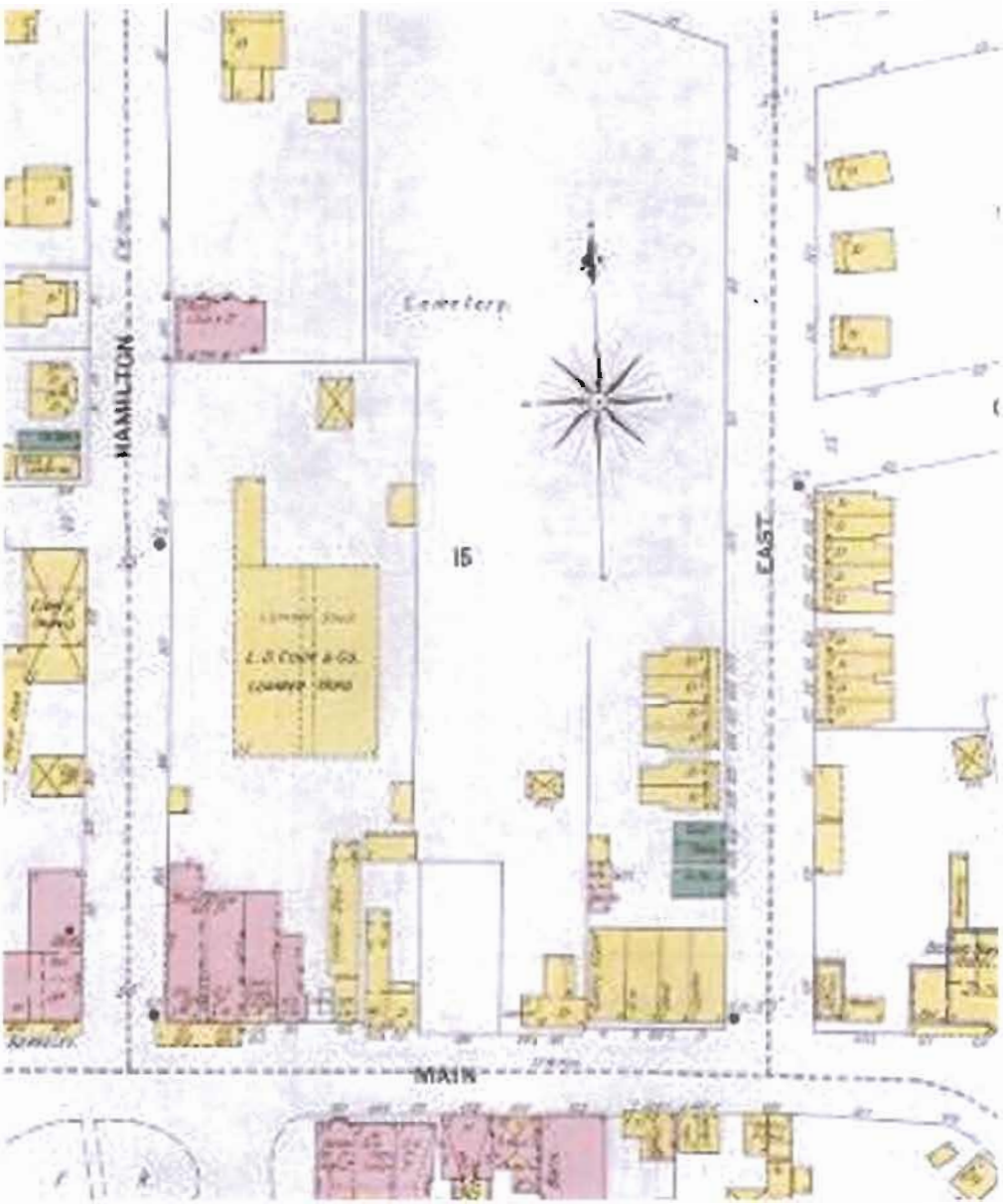


Floorplan of Interior Photo Locations

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



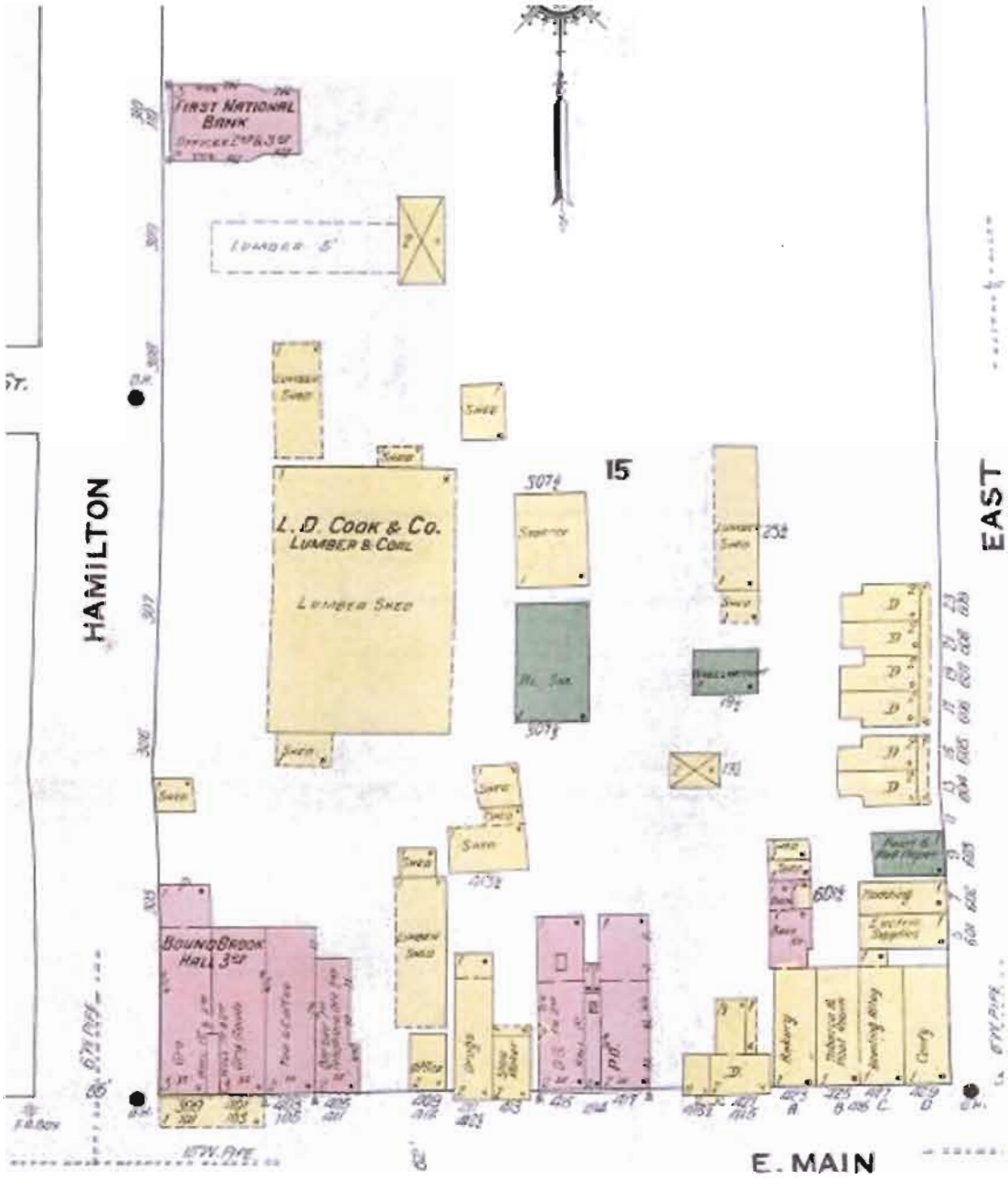
Floor Plan of Ceiling and Projection Room indicating interior photo locations



1902 Sanborn Map

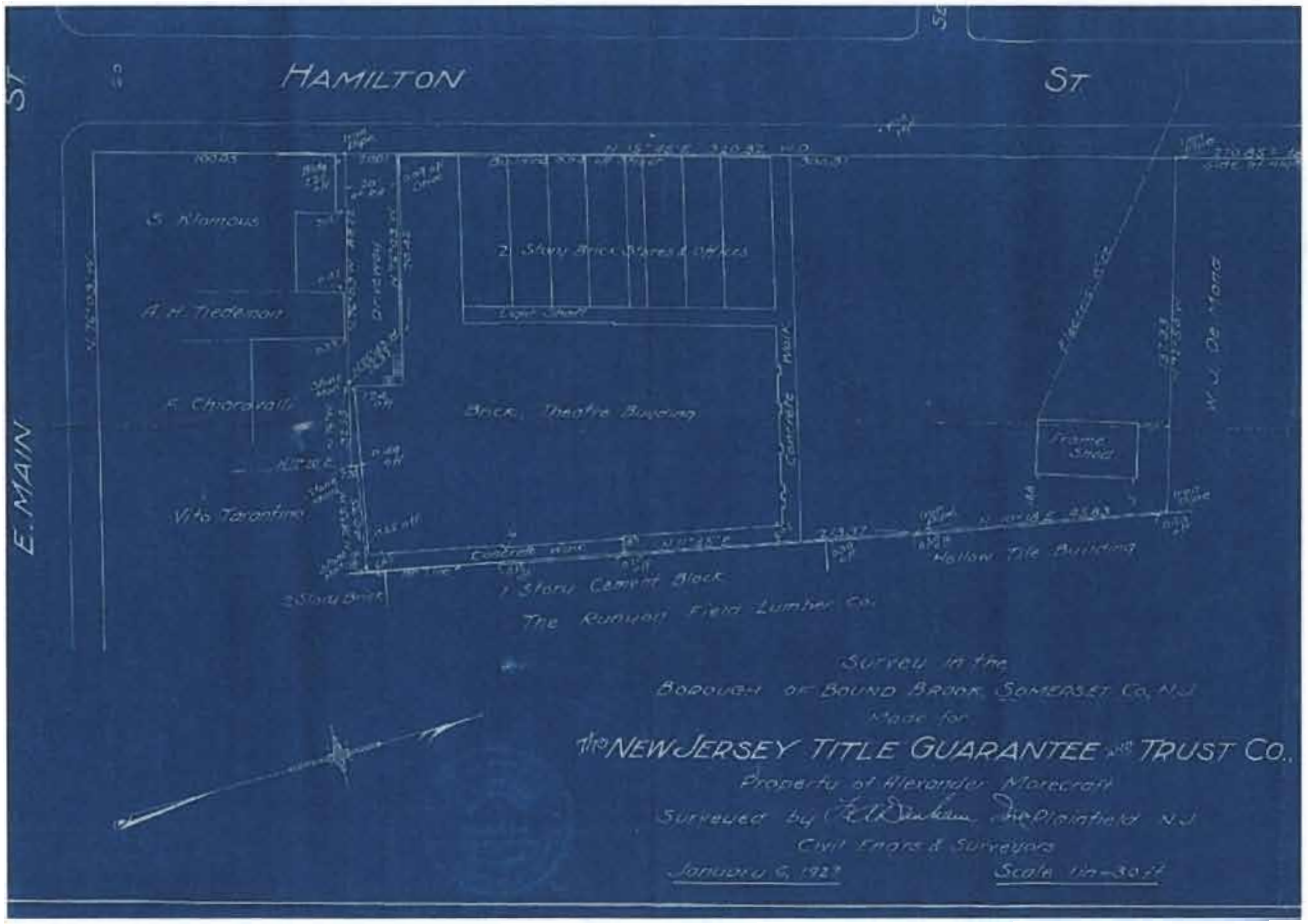
Annex not in existence at this time

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



1910 Sanborn Map

Annex located on property

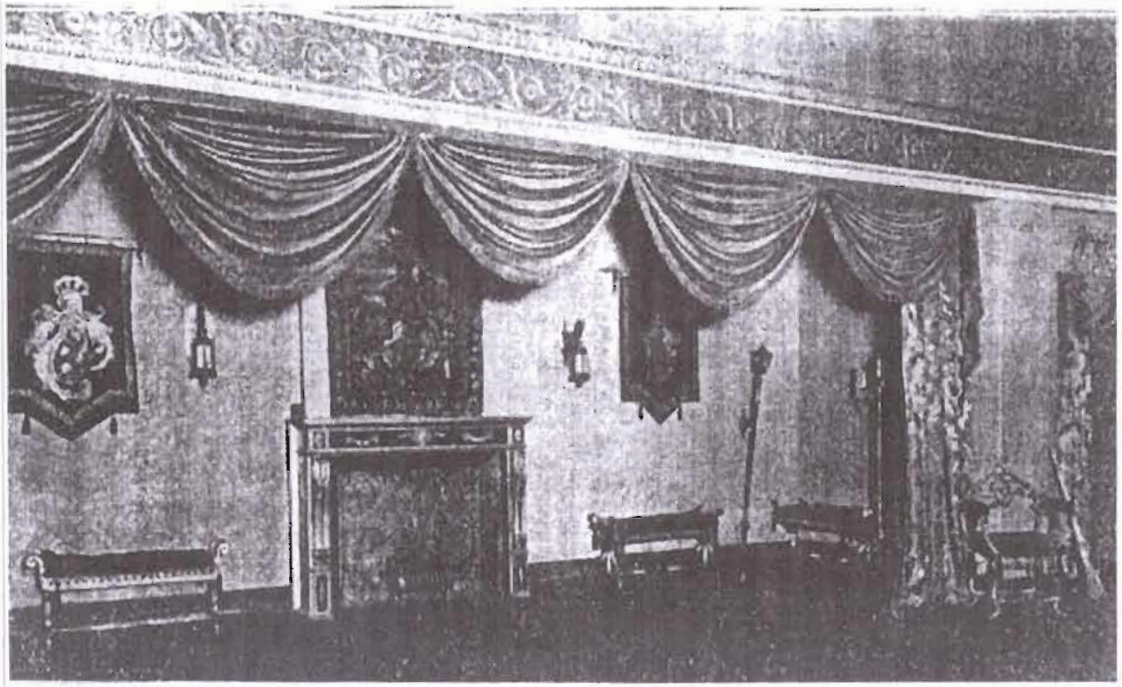


Original Survey – January 6, 1927

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

1927 Photo of Marquee and Entrance

BROOK THEATER INNER LOBBY
Jan, 1927

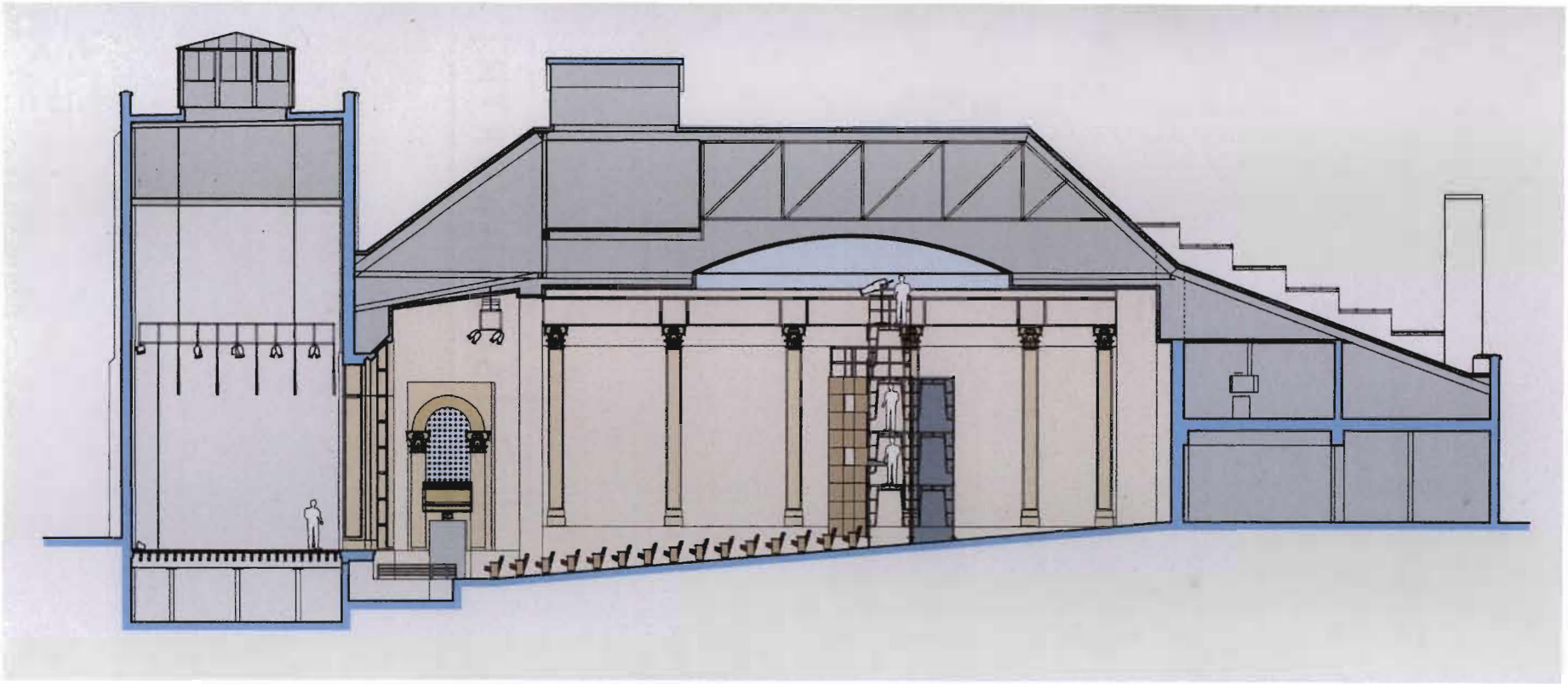


1927 Photo of Lobby Lounge

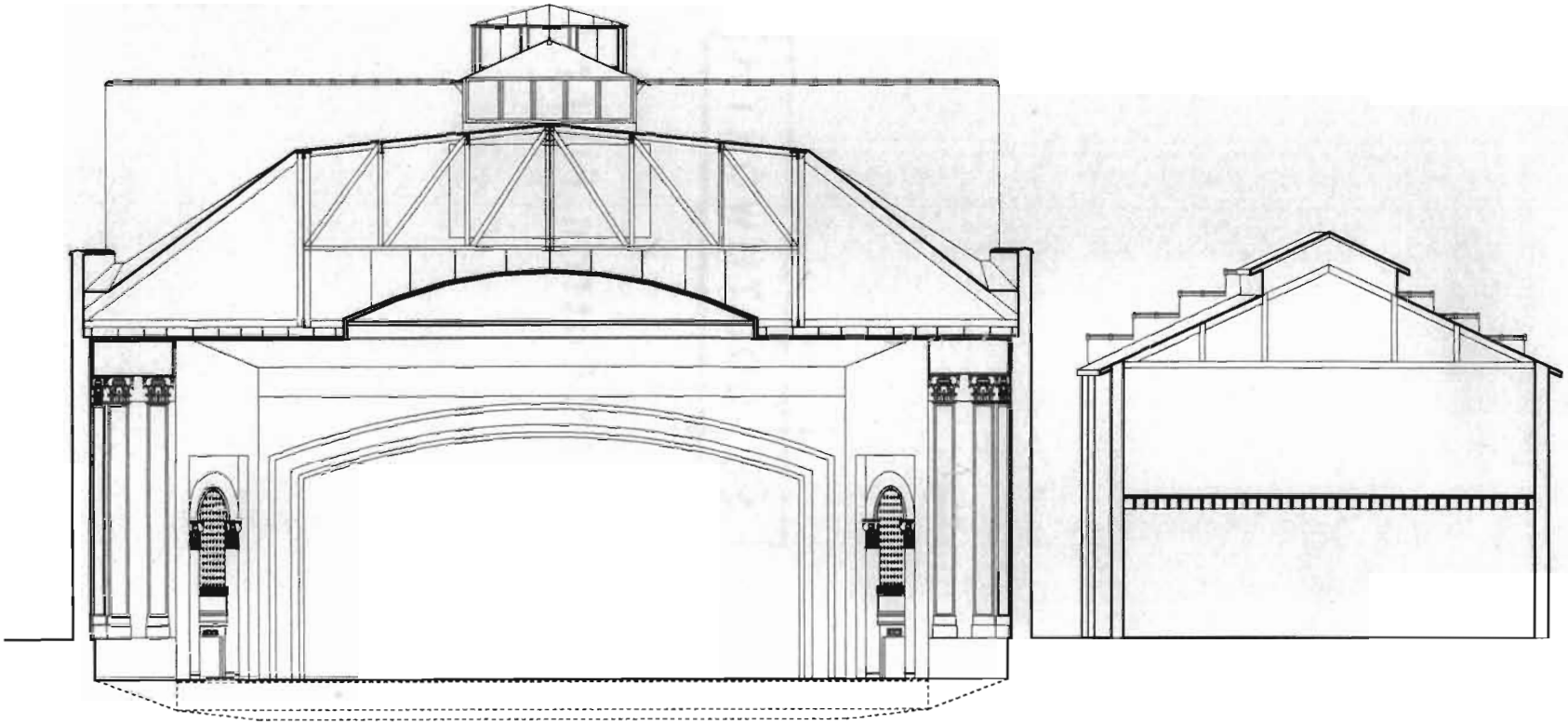
1963 Photo of Auditorium after completion of renovation by Gladys Morecraft

The Brook Theater
Bound Brook New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

1963 Opening Night of newly renovated Brook Theater by Gladys Morecraft



Cross-section of Theater prior to 1999 Hurricane Floyd



Elevation of Stage, Proscenium Arch and Whisper Dome, with Annex to right of theater

1999 Hurricane Floyd flood water level at lowest point of auditorium

Marble-Clad Walls of Lobby

BROOK
BROOK
THIS SUNDAY
Margarita's Enterprise
OPEN
OPEN

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