

ADDRESS: 1826 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Aldine Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sam's Place Realty Associates LP

Nominator: Kevin Block, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1826 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Aldine Theatre, constructed in 1921, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the theatre has significant character, interest, or value as one of the last remaining first-run movie palaces in Philadelphia. Under Criterion E, the nomination explains that the Aldine was the work of prominent local builders William Steele & Sons. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Aldine represents the commercial development of Chestnut Street in the prestigious Rittenhouse Square neighborhood after the turn of the twentieth century.

Following the submission of the nomination and notification to the property owner, the nominator uncovered additional information not presented in the nomination, which is posted on the Historical Commission's website as additional information.

The Committee on Historic Designation previously reviewed a nomination for the property in March 1986 and recommended against designation owing to the loss of architectural integrity of the interior and the front doors. The Historical Commission adopted the recommendation of the Committee at its April 1986 meeting and declined to designate the property. The staff notes that the interior of the property is not under consideration, and that the Historical Commission routinely designates properties that have alterations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1826 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.



NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 1826 Chestnut St

Postal code: 19103-4902

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Aldine Theatre (Viking Theatre/Cinema 19/Sam's Place)

Current/Common Name: CVS Pharmacy

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: convenience store/pharmacy

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1910 to 1960

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1921

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: William F. Lotz (attributed)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: William Steele & Sons

Original owner: Felt Bros. Amusement Co.; Stanley Co.

Other significant persons: _____

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☒ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☒ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Preservation Alliance for Grtr. Phila. Date 7/6/2020

Name with Title Kevin Block, consultant Email patrick@preservationalliance.com

Street Address 1608 Walnut St, Suite 1702 Telephone 215-546-1146

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 7/6/2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 7/16/2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 7/20/2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Sam's Place Realty Associates LP

Address: 1826 Chestnut St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19103

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

Nomination for the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

June 2020



Figure 1. The Aldine Theatre building; current site of CVS Pharmacy, Store #1064. Photo credit: Kevin Block, June 2020.

The Aldine Theatre

(Also known as Viking Theatre; Cinema 19; Sam's Place; CVS Pharmacy)

1826 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

5. Boundary Description

The boundary description of 1826 Chestnut Street is as follows:

Beginning at the southeast corner of 19th and Chestnut Streets, the rectangular property boundary contains in front or breadth along Chestnut Street approximately 101 feet, and extends of that width between parallel lines southwestward approximately 135 feet (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Parcel map from Philadelphia Water Department, 2019. Boundary in red.

6. Physical Description

The Aldine Theatre building at 1826 Chestnut Street is a rectangular steel and concrete structure with a chamfered corner entrance that is faced with brick, terra cotta, and limestone. Constructed in 1921, the structure is now approaching its centennial. Despite several interior renovations, its original exterior remains in good condition.

The exterior of the building was designed in a natty Classical Revival style with Georgian detailing, including festoon panels, brick and terracotta floriated pilasters, and a wrap-around dentilled cornice. The first floor base of the building is faced in large rectangular cuts of limestone. Each window bay on the *piano nobile* features its own cornice with dentil molding. The scored common-bond red brickwork on the building exterior is meticulous and produces a softened, textured appearance (Figure 3). From the street level, the roof trusses of the building's steel structure are not visible (Figure 4).

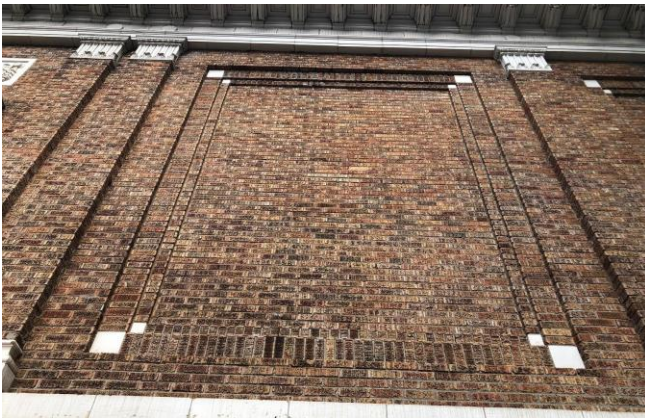


Figure 3 (left). Scored brickwork of the Aldine Theatre's facade. Image taken by Kevin Block, June 2020.



Figure 4 (right). Outline of the Aldine Theatre's structural steel truss is visible underneath the waterproof roofing material. Image taken from Google Earth, June 2020.

The main entrance to the Aldine Theatre building is the chamfered corner that faces the intersection of 19th and Chestnut streets (Figure 5). Above a marquee that hangs from the building on four steel rods, there is a large window bay with four four-pane square windows and four eight-pane rectangular windows (Figure 6).



Figure 5 (left). The main entrance to the Aldine Theatre building, looking southeastward from the northwest corner of 19th and Chestnut streets. Image taken by Kevin Block, June 2020.



Figure 6 (right). Detail of the corner window. Image taken by Kevin Block, June 2020.

The northern facade of the Aldine Theatre runs along Chestnut Street (Figure 7). The base includes six window openings with eight-pane bar windows. One of the window openings (farthest to the east) has been covered in limestone. The *piano nobile* is made up of four bays and a 1-1-3-1 window layout. For each one-window bay, the ten-pane window is capped by a fanlight. In the middle bay, the three windows are capped by two four-pane windows. All but the eastern-most bay is framed by coupled pilasters; it is a symmetrical layout with an additional bay on the eastern side of the building. The windows on this facade allow a generous amount of light into what would have been the Aldine Theatre's lobby.



Figure 7. The northern facade of the Aldine Theatre building. Image captured from Google Maps in October 2019.

The western facade of the Aldine Theatre runs along 19th Street (Figure 8). The *piano nobile* features brick and terracotta pilasters that separate seven window bays into a symmetrical 1-0-3-0-1 distribution, although only the northernmost window on this facade includes--and has ever included--an actual window with fanlight. The window bays on the southern side of the building, including the base windows, are filled with brick because the interior of this side of the building was the theater and stage. Originally, the Aldine Theatre covered these bays and sometimes the recessed brick panel bays on either side of them with printed advertisements. At the corner of the two brick panel bays there are square tiles. Originally, neither the northern nor the western facade required street lights because pendant globe lights hung from the top of each bay. There is some marble rustication near the entrance to the building, but it appears as though this is a consequence of renovation. At the southern end of the western facade there is a service door to the rear of the original stage.



Figure 8. The western facade of the Aldine Theatre building. Image taken by Kevin Block, June 2020.

7. Statement of Significance.

The building formerly known as the Aldine Theatre and currently occupied by CVS Pharmacy has significant character, interest and value as one of the last remaining first-run movie palace in the City of Philadelphia. As such, the building represents Philadelphia's participation in the Golden Age of Hollywood (1910-1960; the proposed period of significance for this nomination) and the development of the American entertainment industry. Opened in 1921 by Fred D. Felt and Maurice Felt of the Felt Brothers Amusement Company, the Aldine Theatre was built by one of Philadelphia's most prolific general contractors, the William Steele and Sons Company, and it is one of the few buildings that Steele and Sons constructed in the downtown commercial district. Finally, in a period when some members of Philadelphia's conservative elite still questioned the cultural value of motion pictures, the Aldine Theatre's location at the perimeter of the prestigious Rittenhouse-Fitler neighborhood marks the commercial development of Chestnut Street after the turn of the century and the persistent challenge of integrating the popular arts with the fine arts.

The property therefore meets the following criteria for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as established in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance §14-1004 (1):

- a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

7-1. Movie Palaces in Philadelphia

Criterion A) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past.

In Philadelphia, the evolution of the movie palace as a distinct architectural typology occurred in four stages, beginning in the 1880s and culminating around 1940, roughly two decades after the construction of the Aldine Theatre in 1921. By 1940, the movie palace became a staple of urban American life. After providing an overview of this evolution and the industrial organization of the motion picture exhibition market, this nomination will describe the four stages of development with specific reference to movie palaces in Philadelphia, including the Aldine Theatre.

It is important to first note that the evolution of the movie palace typology in general was *not* a process of steadily increasing scale. The exhibition of moving pictures to a working-class and immigrant audience began in large Vaudeville stage theaters, sometimes ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 seats. The scale then drastically shrank as the exhibition of moving pictures separated from the Vaudeville stage and was relocated to small nickelodeons (100-300 seats), the temporary structures of fairgrounds and amusement parks, and even single-viewer “peep shows.” The scale of exhibition then expanded once more with the construction of the first purpose-built theaters around the turn of the century. When the exhibition of silent motion pictures matured into a full-fledged industry in the 1910s, the consolidation of the market and the influx of investment capital associated with the first theatre chains led to the rapid development of large, elaborately decorated movie theatres that appealed to a mass-audience. These movie palaces were equipped with 1,000 to 3,000 seats (in a few instances reaching the gargantuan scale of 5,000 seats), orchestra pits, pipe organs, multiple concession bars, a full staff of ushers, and bright, electrically-powered streetside marquees. After the 1940s, the movie palace typology steadily declined alongside mass-suburbanization and the rise of the multiplex. By the 1980s, operating a movie palace became close to financially impossible.¹

Some of the large theaters built in the late 1910s and 1920s, such as the 1,300-seat Aldine Theatre, were originally called “movie palaces” because the architectural design of their exterior borrowed from the tradition of the Italian Renaissance *palazzo*. To accommodate a mezzanine level above the sloping orchestra floor of the auditorium and the large picture screen, the designer laid out the elevation of the theater with a base and a *piano nobile*. Theatergoers entered the foyer of the movie palace at the base

¹ Charlotte Herzog tracks the emergence of the movie palace from its Vaudeville origins in “The Movie Palace and the Theatrical Sources of Its Architectural Style,” *Cinema Journal* 20, no. 2 (1981): 15–37. See also Ina Rae Hark, ed., *Exhibition, The Film Reader*, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001); Robert F. Irving, “Movie Palaces of the '20s: Gone with the Wind,” *Inland Architect* 21 (February 1977): 16–21. For a general overview of the movie palace as an architectural typology, see Ben M. Hall, *The Golden Age of the Movie Palace: The Best Remaining Seats* (New York: C. N. Potter : distributed by Crown Publishers, 1975); Maggie Valentine, *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theatre* (London: Yale University Press, 1996).

level and those who were seated in the mezzanine ascended a half story.² Soon the term became loosely idiomatic, a convenient way to refer to the largest and most ornate theaters in a given city, some of which could be found in high-rise office buildings.

With the consolidation of the motion picture industry after the turn of the century, the handful of dominant theater chain companies organized the exhibition business in their respective markets into a tiered distribution system. In most cities, the tiers radiated from the downtown entertainment district. Motion pictures premiered for a week or two in “first-run” movie palaces like the Aldine Theatre. When the buzz of opening weekend subsided, the features then moved to smaller, less ornate second-tier theaters for another week or two before continuing to the third- and fourth-tier neighborhood theaters in or beyond the city perimeter. At third- and fourth-tier theaters, the feature film was only one part of a total social experience that included seeing the news, eating concessions, sitting in air-conditioning, and the privacy of a dark room. In short, going to the movies became a social necessity rather than a luxury, even during the Great Depression, and the exhibitors profited off of this new American habit. The tiered system insured that the theater company in control of the regional exhibition market recouped both the big profits of opening weekend and the long tail of the total box office over the course of 3-6 month period. If a film did poorly at a first-run theater such as the Aldine, the exhibition company might pull it from the system so as not to occupy precious screen time down the company line.³ (For a table of Philadelphia's theater tiers, see Figure 29 in this nomination's Appendix).

The development of movie palaces in Philadelphia helped to establish rather than follow this basic model of historical change and industrial organization. The first stage in the development of the movie palace was, in a sense, pre-architectural; enterprising individuals set up their machinery in jerry-rigged spaces. Before the turn of the century, in the era of the Lumieres' cinematograph and Edison's kinetograph, American film pioneers such as Siegmund Lubin (1851-1923) exhibited their own motion pictures on the Vaudeville stages and in the nickelodeons of Philadelphia's first popular theater district, which agglomerated around 9th and Arch streets, southwest of Franklin Square. In most parts of the world, photography and motion picture technology was still rudimentary before the turn of the century, but in Philadelphia it was developing rapidly. The Franklin Institute and the University of Pennsylvania were leading centers in the study of optics and the city's glassmakers made Philadelphia a leading producer of stereopticon and magic lantern slides. Because of these industrial advantages, film exhibition developed faster in Philadelphia than in many other areas of the country.

² “At the Aldine Theatre, two marble grand stairways led from the marble lobby upstairs to the loge seating and restrooms. The auditorium ceiling had a crystal dome through which colored lights filtered. On the orchestra floor, there were raised level box seats which ran the entire length of the auditorium. The mezzanine had four rows of seats. A twenty piece orchestra and a 3 manual, 27 rank Moeller pipe organ accompanied silent movies, and in the talkie era, played between the shows.” “Sam's Place One and Two,” Cinema Treasures, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200618163704/http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3358>.

³ For a clear explanation of movie exhibition tiers in Philadelphia, see Catherine Jurca and John Sedgwick, “The Film's the Thing: Moviegoing in Philadelphia, 1935–36,” *Film History* 26, no. 4 (2014): 58–83, <https://doi.org/10.2979/filmhistory.26.4.58>. On the social experience of going to the movies, see Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures: A History Of Movie Presentation In The United States*, First edition (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

The second stage of the movie palace's development began with the improvement of film and projection technology and an increase in the amount of feature films in circulation, which was necessary to maintain a steady distribution flow of new material. After a decade of itinerant peddling, in 1897 Lubin exhibited his first motion picture at Brandenburg's Dime Museum at 9th and Arch streets, in Philadelphia's first theater district (Figure 9). Two years later, Lubin opened the Cineograph Theater on the midway amusement grounds of the 1899 National Export Exposition in West Philadelphia (near the current Penn Museum, off Convention Avenue), which scholars believe to be the first structure ever built for the explicit purpose of exhibiting motion pictures (Figure 10). In 1902, Lubin opened Lubin's Auditorium at 215-219 N. 8th Street and by 1906 he was also operating the 1000-seat Bon Ton Theatre, previously the Gayety Theatre, at 237-245 N. 8th Street. Lubin's vertically integrated production-distribution-exhibition motion picture business quickly expanded into one of the first regional theatre chains in the country and almost single-handedly created a second theatre district on Market Street east of City Hall. By 1908, Lubin built the Victoria Theatre (926 Market St.), the Palace Theatre (1214 Market St.), and the Savoy Theatre (1211 Market). Many of Lubin's theaters were designed by the architect Franz C. Koenig, a fellow member of Philadelphia's German-American community.⁴



Figure 9 (left). Bradenburgh's Dime Museum at 9th and Arch streets, which included a cineograph after 1897 where Lubin exhibited some of his first moving pictures. Image from Phillyhistory.org. Free Library of Philadelphia.

Figure 10 (right). Lubin's Cineograph (1899), according to Linda Woal "Possibly the world's first structure erected expressly for the presentation of motion pictures." Image from Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

⁴ Linda Woal describes Lubin's amazing career in "When a Dime Could Buy a Dream: Siegmund Lubin and the Birth of Motion Picture Exhibition," *Film History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 152–65.

The development of the movie palace entered a third stage with the consolidation of the exhibition market. In 1910, so as to avoid government antitrust oversight, the motion picture industry decided to break up vertically-integrated companies like the Lubin Manufacturing Corporation and legally separate the production, distribution, and exhibition markets. When market segmentation occurred, Lubin decided to remain a producer of films and sell his 100-theatre chain to Jules and Stanley Mastbaum of the Motion Picture Company of America, which after 1918 became the Stanley Company. Market segmentation was meant to provide independent exhibitors such as Alexander R. Boyd and the Felt Brothers, who negotiated a contract to become the exclusive exhibitors of United Artist films in Philadelphia, with an opportunity to compete with the large chains. For a brief moment, these independent theater companies built movie palaces in new and more fashionable entertainment districts, such as the cluster of theaters along Chestnut Street, where the Karlton Theatre (constructed in 1921 at 1412 Chestnut St.), the Aldine Theatre, the Boyd Theatre (constructed in 1928 at 1908-1918 Chestnut St.), and later the Trans Luxe Theatre (constructed in 1934 at 1519 Chestnut St.) were all located. To distinguish themselves in a competitive field, these independents employed an eclectic array of architectural styles. The Aldine was known for its proper Classical Revival styling; the Karlton for its unusually dark interior⁵; and the Boyd (Figure 11) and Trans-Lux (Figure 12) were known as art deco masterpieces. From 1910 until 1932, 275 movie theaters opened in Philadelphia.⁶ Not all of them were movie palaces, but these palaces were central nodes in the wider system.

⁵ "The Karlton, a beautiful new theatre just completed by Hoffman Heenon, architects, on Chestnut street, east of Fifteenth, will open October 17. It contains some of the distinctive features which Alexander R. Boyd originated in the Arcadia, although of a much darker interior color scheme than ever before attempted in any other house in this city. The Karlton is built of concrete and brick, having a white marble front, on a site of 230 by 54 feet. It has only one floor and is approached by a handsome vestibule from Chestnut street. The vestibule has an attractive terrazzo floor border in mosaic of geometrical forms of marble. Walls and ceilings are richly ornamented with plaster work. The lobby is provided with beaded panels, every alternating one accommodating a beveled mirror. Display frames are for the spaces not occupied by the mirrors. Marble pilasters of a light color decorate the walls of the foyer and mark a distinct contrast with the dark green shade of the walls, which blends in with the entire Empire style of decorations throughout. Delicately designed ornaments picked out in old rose and a delicate shade of gray are prominent in the dark green tapestry on the walls. Leather covered panels are placed at the lower portion of the walls.

The heating and ventilating systems have been installed by Hoffman and Heenon as one unit. No radiators are required. Two Simplex machines furnish the projection. A Kimball four manual organ and an Ampico electric piano will supply the music. The Karlton will be run under the direction of the Stanley Company of America." "Philadelphia," *Moving Picture World*, November 5, 1921, 92.

⁶ Shawn Evans, "Historic Movie Theaters of Center City," The Philly History Blog, February 9, 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/202006222020959/https://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2011/02/historic-movie-theaters-of-center-city/>.

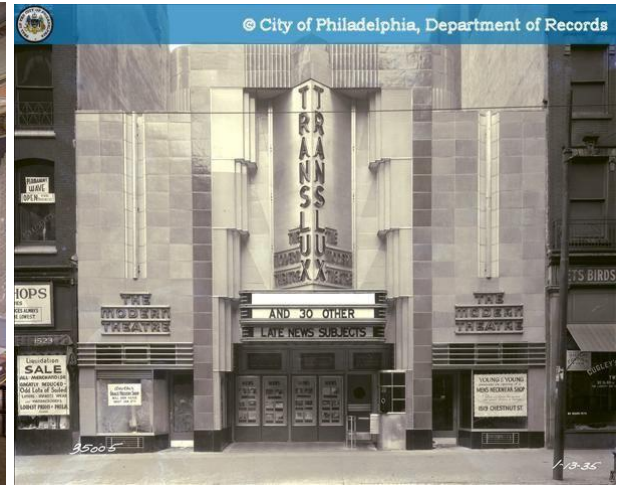
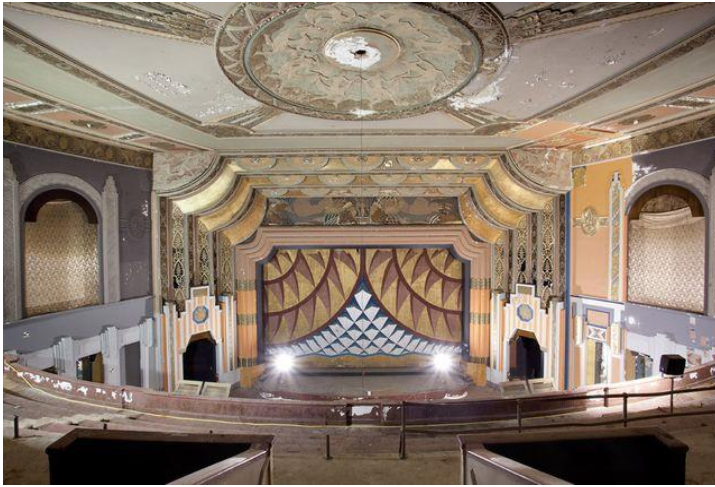


Figure 11 (left). The interior of the Boyd Theatre prior to demolition. Image uploaded by Matt Lambros on November 13, 2011. <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/1209/photos/30429>.

Figure 12 (right). Exterior of the Trans-Lux Theatre. City of Philadelphia, Department of Records.

The era of the independent theater company only lasted around 15 years, however. The Stanley Company manipulated the local real estate market through the aggressive actions of its company affiliate, the Jules Mastbaum Real Estate Corporation, in order to create a “film combine” that effectively prevented independents from expansion and competitors from entering the regional market. In 1922, only a year after the Felt Brothers opened the Aldine as Philadelphia’s premier first-run theater, they sold it to the Stanley Company and retired from the exhibition business. *Moving Picture World*, a movie trade journal based in New York, ran the headline: “Stanley Gets a Strangle Hold on the First-run Situation.”⁷ William Fox, owner of the California-based Fox Theatre chain, was also blocked from expanding in the mid-Atlantic market and built a giant theatre at 1600 Market Street out of spite (Figure

⁷ “Stanley Gets Strangle Hold on First-Run Situation: Aldine Acquisition Said to Have Resulted in Settlement with Fox,” *Moving Picture World*, August 19, 1922, 561. The article read as follows: “With the passing of the Aldine Theatre from the Felt Brothers to the Stanley company of America, the first run situation in Philadelphia again settled down to the perplexing problem that film interests faced several years ago. With the acquisition of the Aldine Theatre, the Stanley interests are in absolute control of the first run situation in the Philadelphia territory...Incidentally the most powerful weapon of the Stanley company is the Jules Mastbaum Real Estate Corporation, through which most of the theatre deals have been consummated. As a result of this affiliation, the Stanley circuit is enabled to protect its territory from hostile invasion. Several vain efforts have been made by various outside interests to establish theatres in Greater Philadelphia, to be operated in opposition to Stanley, but each time they found themselves bucking against the seemingly impregnable Jules Mastbaum Real Estate Corporation, which through its subsidiaries and friendly association with less important real estate operatives, holds a strong strategic position.” The article then reports on the Felt Brothers’ retirement. “The career of these brothers has been meteoric. They first attracted attention in Film Row last fall when they opened the Aldine Theatre in Wilmington, Del. Soon after they took over the Aldine in Philadelphia, which opened last November; the Parkway in Wilmington, the Duquesne in Pittsburgh, switching later to the Shubert in Pittsburgh and finally the Ambassador in Philadelphia. The Ambassador was taken over on a lease basis by Nixon-Nirdlinger. The Parkway in Wilmington was closed, while the Aldine in the same city was abandoned. Later they disposed of all their Pittsburgh interests and now comes the transfer of the Aldine to Stanley.”

13). Mastbaum, an art aficionado who founded the Rodin Museum on Benjamin Franklin Parkway, died in 1926. To memorialize his career, the remaining executives at the Stanley Company began plans to open the Jules Mastbaum Memorial Theatre at 20th and Market streets, which at 4,717 seats would be, by far, the largest and most expensive theater in Philadelphia--too large, in fact, to consistently operate (Figure 14).⁸ In 1928, Warner Brothers acquired the Stanley Company's 250-theater empire, as well as the Boyd chain. The merger of Warner Brothers and the Stanley Company marked the fourth and final stage of the development of the movie palace in Philadelphia. From 1930 until roughly 1960, there was little new construction of large theaters and practically all of the movie palaces were operated under the Stanley-Warner banner.

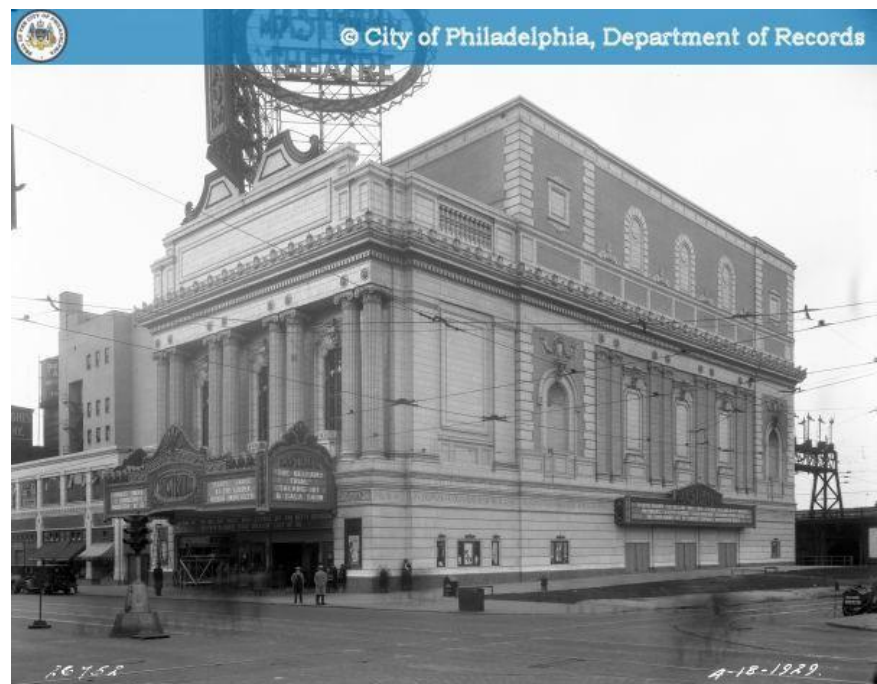
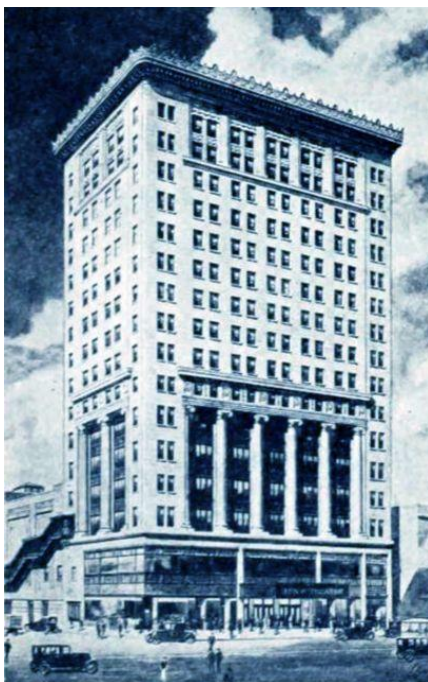


Figure 13 (left). Architect Thomas W. Lamb's 1922 architectural rendering of the Fox Theatre (1923) at 1600 Market Street, near City Hall. The 2,423-seat theater was built within a 17-story commercial office building. It was demolished in 1980. Image from Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Figure 14 (right). The Jules Mastbaum Memorial Theatre (1929). Image from City of Philadelphia, Department of Records.

⁸ "Costing five and a half million dollars to build, the Mastbaum Theatre's interior was incredibly lavish, with marble, murals, gold leaf, leaded glass, tapestries, statues, paintings, and Czechoslovakian and other crystal chandeliers. A Carriage Lobby led to the Grand Lobby, which had a Fountain Lobby. There was a Grand Foyer, a main lounge downstairs, and elevators to all 8 levels. The auditorium had three balconies, a 4-manual Wurlitzer organ which was opened by organist Stuart Barrie, and both the largest chandelier and the largest fire curtain in Philadelphia...The February 28, 1929 gala opening presented stage entertainment, the world premier of the Warner Bros. movie 'Sonny Boy' starring Davey Lee, a 75 piece pit orchestra, a choral ensemble of 50 and a corps de ballet of 32. At times, the Mastbaum Theatre packed them in, but overall lost money because it could not bring in large enough audiences compared to the size and costs of the place." Howard B. Haas, "Mastbaum Theatre," Cinema Treasures, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200619151142/http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/1207>.

Within the history of the development of movie palaces in Philadelphia, the Aldine Theatre was not superlative. It was not the oldest, the largest, the most expensive, the most ornately decorated, or the most technologically advanced. It is, however, enduring, perhaps because it's moderate size made it amenable to adaptive reuse. After the Boyd Theatre was controversially demolished in 2015, the Aldine Theatre became Downtown Philadelphia's last remaining - and intact - first-run movie palace (the former Prince Theater, now the Philadelphia Film Society, at 1412 Chestnut St continues to exhibit films but has been significantly altered). While the interior of the building has been renovated to serve the purposes of CVS, the original exterior remains mostly intact. It stands as a representative of both independent theater companies such as the Felt Brothers Amusement Company and the dominant player in Philadelphia's movie industry, the Stanley Company. What's more, the exterior of the Aldine Theatre is a clear illustration of the movie palace typology's connection to the Renaissance tradition of *palazzo* architecture.

7-2. Built by William Steele & Sons

Criterion E) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;

The Aldine Theatre is the work of Philadelphia's preeminent turn-of-the-century general contractor, the William Steele & Sons Company, which by 1921 included a full-service design department that was led by architect William F. Lotz. Lotz, who left Steele & Sons in 1924 to start his own contracting firm, is likely responsible for the design of the Aldine Theatre.

Steele & Sons specialized in constructing industrial buildings. The firm was founded by William Steele (1839-1908; Figure 15), an Irish immigrant to Philadelphia who began his career as a carpenter and house builder. In 1886, William was joined by his eldest son, Joseph (1865-1957), and formed the William Steele & Son, Carpenters and Builders. Early projects were mainly homes and stables, but closer to the end of the century the father-son duo began to complete factories, boiler houses, and office buildings. In 1895, Joseph M. Huston, the architect representing the Presbyterian Board of Publications and Sabbath School Work, contracted Steele & Son to construct the 11-story Witherspoon Building at 1319-23 Walnut Street. The Witherspoon Building was Philadelphia's first steel skyscraper (Figure 16). The success of this impressive building and its association with the effective use of steel and fireproofing technology would lead Steele & Son into a period of non-stop activity after the turn of the century, when John Lyle Steele (1871-1948) joined his father and older brother in the family business.⁹ Industrial Philadelphia required manufacturing facilities and warehouses with large open spans that were safe for workers and the goods they produced. Steele & Sons became expert in the use of the steel truss and poured concrete, which made these facilities possible. The company was also business savvy. As one historian notes, it marketed "The Steele Idea," an early version of the design-build concept. "'Often they purchased the site, designed and erected the structure, bought and installed the equipment for what they advertised as a 'Steele Design-Centralized Responsibility Building.' The fee: 10% of cost.'"¹⁰

By 1921, when the Felt Brothers Amusement Company decided to open its first Philadelphia theater (the original Aldine Theatre was in Wilmington), the reputation of Steele & Sons was set. The company was one of Philadelphia's premier builders. In 1908, Ben Shibe, the owner of the Philadelphia Athletics

⁹ Steele & Sons' early mastery of fire-resistant building technology led to their receiving the small, but high-profile subcontract from Daniel Burnham to install a fireproof vault inside of the Wanamaker Building. "William Steele & Sons Company and Thomas Little & Sons have plans posted for a large fire vault to be erected in the new Wannamaker building at Thirteenth and Chestnut streets. The vault will be about four stories high. 46x90 feet. It will be of concrete and granite fireproof, the exterior being covered with cork. Plans and specifications by D.H. Burnham & Co., architects." "Building and Real Estate Note," *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 22, no. 20 (May 15, 1907): 309.

¹⁰ Carl G. Karsch, "Five Generations of Builders," Carpenters' Hall, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200614165953/https://www.carpentershall.org/steele-family>.

had contracted Steele & Sons to construct the club's new steel and reinforced-concrete ballpark at 21st and Lehigh streets in North Philadelphia (Figures 17 and 18).¹¹ Shibe Park was state-of-the-art when it opened, and its exterior proved that Steele & Sons could design and build to entertain the masses. Compared to a spartan brick stadium like the University of Pennsylvania's Franklin Field (1895), Shibe Park was lavish. One baseball historian remarked that fans thought it resembled a French palace.¹² In 1912, Steele & Sons also built a 1,000-seat theatre at 333 Market Street. Given their vast experience and the fact that all new movie palaces were then built around steel structures, it is not surprising that the Felt Brothers gave the million-dollar contract for the Aldine Theatre to Steele & Sons.¹³

After constructing the Aldine Theatre, Steele & Sons went on to complete much larger projects, including the Broad Street Subway line (opened in 1928), the Market Street National Bank at 13th and Market streets (1931), and the Terminal Commerce Building at 401 North Broad Street (1929-1931), the largest commercial building in the country at the time of its construction. The Aldine Theatre was a small part of Steele & Son's vast portfolio, but it demonstrates the essential features that made the company's work so well-regarded in the period of significance for this nomination, including steel and concrete fireproof construction and competent decorative detailing.

¹¹ "President B.F. Shibe of the Athletic Base Ball Club, on Monday last, completed a deal with Joseph M. Steele, of William S. Steele & Sons' company, builders, 1600 Arch street, by which the club secures the largest and most available site in Philadelphia, upon which will be erected the most complete base ball plant in America. The lot is bounded by twentieth and Twenty-first streets and Lehigh avenue and Somerset street, measuring 485 feet east and west and 520 feet north and south, containing 252,200 square feet--a greater area than is contained in any other ball park in the country. Upon this site the Athletic Club purposes erecting a mammoth pavilion to seat in the neighborhood of 10,000 persons. The bleachers will have a seating capacity of 13,000. It will be constructed of reinforced concrete and steel, as will the rest of the improvement, exclusive of the wall by which the park will be enclosed, which will be of brick, and will embody every known device to insure the comfort and safety of the patrons. About \$500,000 will be spent on the proposed improvements. The William S. Steele & Sons Company has been awarded the contract." "Architect's Notes," *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 23, no. 9 (February 26, 1908): 131. For more on the construction of Shibe Park, see Bruce Kuklick, *To Every Thing a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Rich Westcott, *Philadelphia's Old Ballparks*, First edition (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

¹² "Outside the grandstand, an ornate brick facade had huge arched windows separated by Ionic pilasters, decorative friezes with baseball motifs, and gabled dormer windows on the upper deck's copper-trimmed green-slate mansard roof. Figurative sculptures in terra cotta of Shibe and co-owner/manager Connie Mack peered out over the main entrances. Other entrances were decorated with the letter 'A' carved in Old English script...The iconic feature of the exterior was the domed tower at the corner of 21st and Lehigh. It contained offices for Shibe's sons, Jack and Tom, who managed the team's business operations. A domed cupola topped off the tower and housed Connie Mack's 'Oval Office.'" James Lincoln Ray, "Connie Mack Stadium (Philadelphia)," Society for American Baseball Research, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200614163721/https://sabr.org/bioproj/parks/connie-mack-stadium>.

¹³ "Moving Picture Theatre, Nineteenth and Chestnut streets, Philadelphia. Architects, William Steele & Sons Co., 1600 Arch street, Philadelphia. Owners, Felt Brothers, 5408 Walnut street, Philadelphia (Aldine Theatre). Brick, terra cotta, limestone and steel, 1 story and balcony and basement, 101x135 feet, slag roof, cement and maple floors, metal lath, waterproofing, dampproofing, iron work and stairs, floor hardener, fire doors, rolled steel sash and skylights, tile, marble and terrazzo work, electric light, steam heat, concrete foundations. Contract awarded to William Steele & Sons Co., 1600 Arch street who will be read for sub-bids in 3 weeks." "Moving Picture Theatre," *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 36 (1921): 272.

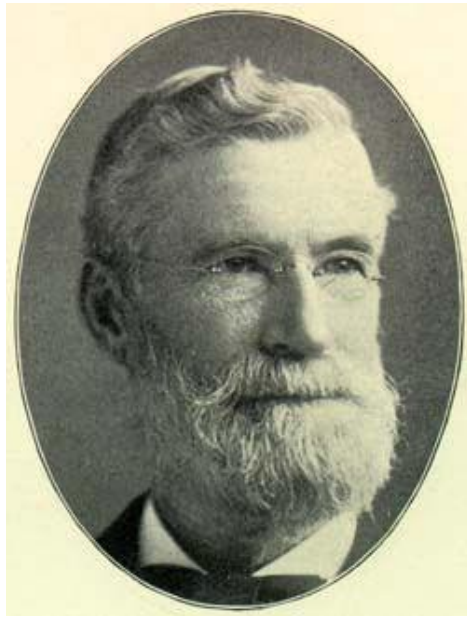


Figure 15 (left). William Steele (1839-1908). Image from Moses King's *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians* (New York: Blanchard Press, 1901), p. 63. Posted on Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Figure 16 (right). Steele & Son's Witherspoon Building (1895-1897). Philadelphia's first steel skyscraper. Image from the Presbyterian Historical Society.

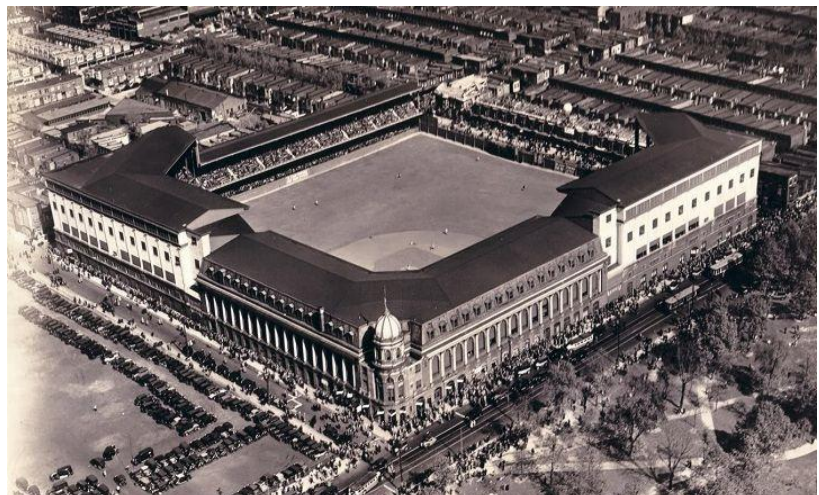


Figure 17 (left). Exterior of Shibe Park, soon after construction. Image from the Library of Congress.

Figure 18 (right). Aerial photograph of Shibe Park. Image from <http://www.thisgreatgame.com/ballparks-shibe-park.html>.

7-3. Commerce and Culture Around Rittenhouse Square

Criterion J) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

The history of the Aldine Theatre exemplifies the cultural and social tensions that existed in the first half of the twentieth century between the “Proper Philadelphia” community of Rittenhouse Square and the commercial development of the Center City west of Broad Street. The design of premier, first-run movie palaces like the Aldine Theatre marked the aspiration of their owners to make the motion pictures a respectable pastime in a period when some members of the social elite and more conservative religious authorities still questioned the value of popular culture. The Aldine Theatre was in this way a transitional institution, extending the development of the 1800 block of Chestnut Street westward while bridging the city’s cultural hierarchy as a representative of both the best and the worst that the film industry’s Golden Age had to offer. The tensions between commercial development and respectable culture have structured the twentieth-century history of the Rittenhouse community.

The Aldine Theatre offers a bookend to the commercial development of the 1800 block of Chestnut Street. Residential construction began around Rittenhouse Square in the 1830s. By the 1850s, the 1800 block included elegant four-story Italianate row homes and the brownstone Tabernacle Baptist Church. In 1866, David Jayne, a wealth druggist-turned-real estate developer acquired the final open parcel on the block at 1826 Chestnut Street. He hired John McArthur Jr., later the architect of Philadelphia’s City Hall, to design him a palatial mansion in the Second Empire style (Figure 19). The commercialization of Chestnut Street west of City Hall occurred in the 1890s and 1900s with the extension of the trolley car line. In 1896, the Professional Building replaced two rowhomes on the north side of Chestnut Street (Figure 20). It was an eleven-story office building for physicians and dentists that was designed by the Wilson Brothers architecture firm. In 1902, the eight-story, Beaux-Arts-style Belgravia Hotel replaced the Tabernacle Baptist Church at 1811 Chestnut St. And in 1907, a building for the Oliver Bair Company, a funeral home, was constructed at 1818 and 1820 Chestnut Street (Figure 21), now the site of Boyds Philadelphia clothing company.¹⁴ Just a short walk away from the upper-class world of Rittenhouse square, the 1800 block of Chestnut Street became an enclave for professionals and professional services.

¹⁴ Information about the development of the 1800 block of Chestnut Street comes from The Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff and Laura DiPasquale, “Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object: 1824 Chestnut Street” (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Historical Commission, February 6, 2020), <https://www.phila.gov/media/20200211095247/1824-Chestnut-St-nomination.pdf>.



Figure 19. Jayne Mansion, southeast corner of 19th and Chestnut. Site of the Aldine Theatre prior to 1921. Image from City of Philadelphia, Department of Records.



Figure 20 (left). Professional building. Image from Philadelphia Architects and Builders, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Figure 21 (right). The Oliver H. Bair Building. Later Boyd's clothing store. Image from: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/499125571177817131/>

The corner of 19th and Chestnut streets was also near one of the city's cultural centers. In 1876, the year of the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia's most famous publisher, J.B. Lippincott, acquired the former 1851 mansion of Phoebe and Dr. James Rush at 1910-1914 Chestnut Street and converted it to the Aldine Hotel, eventually expanding all the way to 1922 Chestnut Street (Figures 22 and 23). The name of the hotel was associated with the literary and graphic arts. It was meant as a reference to the Venetian printing office of Aldus Manutius, a Renaissance publisher of Latin and Greek classical texts, and possibly *The Aldine*, an art journal that began in New York in the late 1860s and was known for printing high-quality lithographic images. Like the Jayne Mansion, the Aldine Hotel was designed in the exuberant Second Empire style, with mansard roofs covered by decorative iron grillwork. One newspaper clipping held by Philadelphia's Free Library described the Aldine Hotel as "a commodious and commanding edifice" from which Mrs. Dr. Rush, who remained in the building after its conversion, "sought by the exercise of a generous and refined hospitality, to make her house the social centre of Philadelphia."¹⁵ Although there would be nothing explicitly Second Empire about the Aldine Theatre, its name and restrained Classical Revivalist design were part of a coherent marketing strategy. In all likelihood, the Felt Brothers wanted their theatre to fit into and reinforce the cultural atmosphere of the neighborhood. The architecture of the Aldine suggested that by the beginning of the 1920s, motion pictures were distant from their Vaudevillian past and had become a more refined form of entertainment.

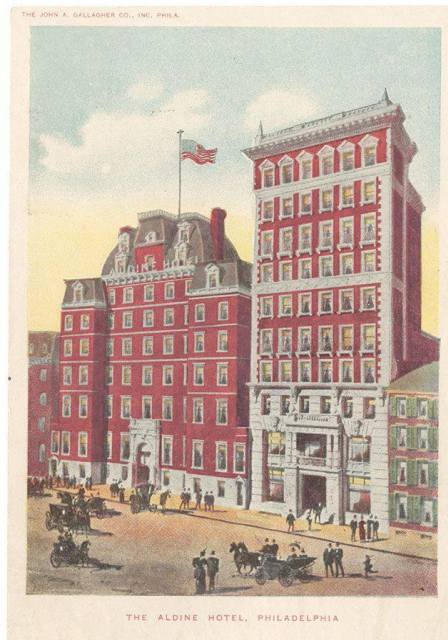


Figure 22 (left). A photograph of the Aldine Hotel, looking westwards down Chestnut Street. Image from the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Figure 23 (right): A colored postcard of the Aldine Hotel. Image from the Free Library of Philadelphia.

¹⁵ Yarnall & Cooper - Architect, "Aldine Hotel," n.d., Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia, <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/47136>. The Aldine Hotel was demolished around 1927 and was replaced by the Boyd Theater.

Initially, the Felt brothers were careful about programming and promotion for their new theater. For example, when the Aldine debuted its first feature, *The Three Musketeers*, the Felt brothers invited local clergy to attend a private screening and assure the public that the theater was not exhibiting salacious content (Figure 24).¹⁶ This is significant in light of the constant threat of censorship laws throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the movie boycott of 1934 that was led by Cardinal Dougherty and the Catholic Church (which shut down Philadelphia theatres from March until July of that year), and the fact that regular Sunday film screenings were banned throughout the state of Pennsylvania until November 1935.¹⁷ The exclusive exhibition rights that the Felt's held with United Artist also helped to strengthen the association between the Aldine and cultural excellence. A promotional booklet from 1922 entitled "Aldine Presentations" (Figure 25) declared the theatre, after only a year of service, "a Philadelphia institution." "Aldine patrons are assured the best in pictures, and standards of excellence already established will be fully maintained in the future," the booklet copy read. "The same care will be taken in selecting the bill to surround the feature and the same painstaking preparation of the musical settings and accompanying concerts will be observed. In short, no stone will be left unturned to make the Aldine Theatre a temple devoted to the best interests of the amusement loving public." The Stanley Company also made an effort to cater to those members of the Rittenhouse clientele who sought to avoid the indecency of waiting with the box office crowd. In 1923, the Aldine Theatre became the first movie palace for which it was possible for customers to reserve seats in advance (Figure 26).¹⁸

¹⁶ "Douglas Fairbanks' film version of *The Three Musketeers* has, United Artist says, won the unqualified endorsement of the clergy of Philadelphia, who also put themselves on record as heartily approving wholesome motion pictures as a logical medium for the moral education of the public.

Several hundred ministers of every denomination of Philadelphia, their wives, family members and friends, recently attended a private showing of *The Three Musketeers* which is still playing to capacity audiences in an extended run at the new Aldine Theatre.

Prior to the screening, David Barton, a Philadelphia lawyer, speaking against the unfit in pictures, called attention to the fact that *The Three Musketeers* presented a very convincing example of an art whereby the intrigue of a French court of the Sixteenth Century could be shown in a manner that would not affect the sensibilities of the most exacting. During an informal discussion of the picture following the showing, the ministers agreed that there was not an objectionable feature. "*The Three Musketeers* is a laudable example of the motion picture art," says Rev. Charles M. Boswell. "Not only is the picture a graphic description of the intrigue of those days, but it is edifying throughout," was the opinion of Rev. Francis M. Kirkman.

Rev. John A. Goodfellow, for nearly fifty years rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kensington, praised the moral of the picture very highly. So did Richard Ormiston, who attended the performance as representative of the Church Home of Pennsylvania. Mr. Ormiston will submit a report to the Church House. "Philadelphia Ministers Highly Praise 'The Three Musketeers,'" *Moving Picture World*, December 17, 1921, 796.

¹⁷ Jurca and Sedgwick, "The Film's the Thing," 64.

¹⁸ "The Stanley Company of America is trying out a policy of reserved seats at the Aldine Theatre, located in the heart of the socially exclusive residential section. It is one of the most attractive houses in the Stanley Circuit and it will be the first picture theater in this city ever to be conducted along this plan." "To Try Out Reserved Seats at Philadelphia Film House," *Moving Picture World*, December 22, 1923, 694.

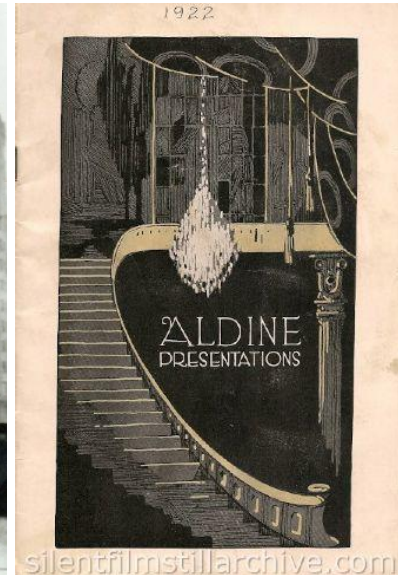


Figure 24 (left). The Aldine Theatre around December, 1921. The marquee advertises *The Three Musketeers*, for which the Felt brothers invited local clergy to attend an advanced screening. Image from Philadelphia Architects and Builders, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Figure 25 (right). The cover of the 1922 booklet that refers to the Aldine Theatre as “a Philadelphia institution” and a “temple.” Image from the Silent film Still Archive, <https://bit.ly/2YeJqBW>.



Figure 26. The crowded line to the Aldine Theatre box office. Ticket reservations were possible after 1923. Image from “Foolish Wives’ Wakes Up Philadelphia!,” *The Moving Picture Weekly* 15, no. 5 (March 1, 1922): 33.

But as much as the Felt Brothers and the Stanley Company sought to improve the respectability of film exhibition, they also did whatever was necessary to drive theater-goers into the seats. One publicity stunt orchestrated by the Stanley Company's promotional agent involved having young women distribute 50,000 chocolate bars from the H.O. Wilbur & Sons Company around Center City with a notice for the new film *Rich Men's Wives* included in the candy wrapper. "Six girls, who had youth and good looks, were costumed in gold colored satin from the top of their heads to their knees--from there down to the ground there was black silk. The girls, clad in their colorful suits--they were knickerbocker affairs with capes and caps--went about Philadelphia carrying baskets of the chocolate 'Food for Thought' and distributing the confection with notable generosity."¹⁹ In 1924, the Aldine's operators covered the theater's window bays with eight-by-ten foot advertisements for the film *Beau Brummel* (Figure 27). They were the largest colored photographs ever printed to that point in time and made the Classical Revival architecture of the building but a framing device. Philadelphia's Art Jury, the predecessor of the Art Commission, would soon enforce strict standards for commercial signage.²⁰ In 1928, the Aldine Theatre also exhibited *The Singing Fool*, one of the first talkies that featured Al Jolson, a white actor who was especially popular with women moviegoers, as a blackface minstrel.²¹ A large advertisement of Jolson in blackface hung over the Aldine's marquee. It promised that viewers would be able to "See and hear him!" (Figure 28). Blackface minstrelsy began in the nineteenth century as a popular art form that appealed to white working-class audiences in both the urban north and the rural south.²² By the late 1920s, the Hollywood system had brought it to Philadelphia's most elite neighborhood.

Like all of Philadelphia's movie palaces, the Aldine Theatre attempted to make motion pictures a culturally legitimate art form. Movie palaces, however, were essentially commercial ventures. Beyond the architectural facade, they exhibited a product that tried to appeal to the broadest possible public. What made the Aldine Theatre remarkable was its location at the end of the 1800 block of Chestnut Street. There the tension between culture and commerce was especially high.

¹⁹ "Philadelphia Fed on Free Chocolate," *Exhibitors Trade Review*, October 21, 1922, 1357.

²⁰ Evans, "Historic Movie Theaters of Center City."

²¹ On *The Singing Fool* and Jolson's popularity, see Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*, Reprint edition (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 73–120.

²² Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*, New Ed edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1977); Eric Lott and Greil Marcus, *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).



Figure 27. Advertisements for *Beau Brummel* (1924) covered the Aldine Theatre. They were then the largest color prints ever produced. Image from "Record Enlargements Made for Brummel Run," *Moving Picture World* (August 2, 1924: 391).



Figure 28. In 1928, the Aldine Theatre exhibited *The Singing Fool*, one of the first talkies, starring Al Jolson as a blackface minstrel. City of Philadelphia, Department of Records.

7-4 Conclusion

The building constructed as the Aldine Theatre at 1826 Chestnut Street merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, satisfying Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. The building embodies the movie palace typology and Philadelphia's important contribution to the development of the American entertainment industry, satisfying Criterion for Designation A. The building is also the work of the Steele & Sons firm, one of Philadelphia's premier general contractors in the early twentieth century, satisfying Criterion for Designation E. Finally, the building is part of Rittenhouse community heritage as a symbol of the tension between culture and commerce.

Bibliography

Repositories:

Philadelphia City Archives
Athenaeum of Philadelphia
Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Database

Newspapers:

The Moving Picture World
Moving Picture Weekly

Works Cited:

- "Architect's Notes." *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 23, no. 9 (February 26, 1908): 131.
- "Building and Real Estate Note." *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 22, no. 20 (May 15, 1907): 309.
- Evans, Shawn. "Historic Movie Theaters of Center City." The Philly History Blog, February 9, 2011. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200622020959/https://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2011/02/historic-movie-theaters-of-center-city/>.
- Gomery, Douglas. *Shared Pleasures: A History Of Movie Presentation In The United States*. First edition. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.
- Haas, Howard B. "Mastbaum Theatre." Cinema Treasures. Accessed June 19, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200619151142/http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/1207>.
- Hall, Ben M. *The Golden Age of the Movie Palace: The Best Remaining Seats*. New York: C. N. Potter : distributed by Crown Publishers, 1975.
- Hark, Ina Rae, ed. *Exhibition, The Film Reader*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Herzog, Charlotte. "The Movie Palace and the Theatrical Sources of Its Architectural Style." *Cinema Journal* 20, no. 2 (1981): 15–37.
- Irving, Robert F. "Movie Palaces of the '20s: Gone with the Wind." *Inland Architect* 21 (February 1977): 16–21.
- Jurca, Catherine, and John Sedgwick. "The Film's the Thing: Moviegoing in Philadelphia, 1935–36." *Film History* 26, no. 4 (2014): 58–83.
- Karsch, Carl G. "Five Generations of Builders." Carpenters' Hall. Accessed June 14, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200614165953/https://www.carpentershall.org/steele-family>.
- Kuklick, Bruce. *To Every Thing a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Lott, Eric, and Greil Marcus. *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- "Moving Picture Theatre." *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 36 (1921): 272.
- "Philadelphia." *Moving Picture World*, November 5, 1921, 92.
- "Philadelphia Fed on Free Chocolate." *Exhibitors Trade Review*, October 21, 1922, 1357.
- Ray, James Lincoln. "Connie Mack Stadium (Philadelphia)." Society for American Baseball Research. Accessed June 14, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200614163721/https://sabr.org/bioproj/parks/connie-mack-stadium>.

- Rogin, Michael. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Reprint edition. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.
- Cinema Treasures. "Sam's Place One and Two." Accessed June 18, 2020.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200618163704/http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3358>.
- The Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff, and Laura DiPasquale. "Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object: 1824 Chestnut Street." Philadelphia: Philadelphia Historical Commission, February 6, 2020.
<https://www.phila.gov/media/20200211095247/1824-Chestnut-St-nomination.pdf>.
- "To Try Out Reserved Seats at Philadelphia Film House." *Moving Picture World*, December 22, 1923, 694.
- Toll, Robert C. *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*. New Ed edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Valentine, Maggie. *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theatre*. London: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Westcott, Rich. *Philadelphia's Old Ballparks*. First edition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.
- Woal, Linda. "When a Dime Could Buy a Dream: Siegmund Lubin and the Birth of Motion Picture Exhibition." *Film History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 152–65.

Appendix

Theater	Run	Seats	No. of films screened (33 weeks)	Mode no. of feature films per week	Max run (days)	Max weekly revenue for 33 weeks (\$)	Mean weekly revenue for 33 weeks (\$)	Coefficient of variation (weeks)	Max film revenue (\$)	Mean film revenue (\$)	Coefficient of variation (films)	Percentage of films that earned above the mean	
												(11) mean	(12) mean
Aldine	1st	1416	19*	1	23	15,864	6,646	0.43	33,793	13,154	0.68	41	69
Boyd	1st	2338	26	1	16	22,125	10,332	0.40	38,569	12,577	0.59	31	58
Earle	1st	2750	33**	1	7	31,099	13,179	0.37	31,099	12,782	0.38	42	55
Stanley	1st	3009	27	1	19	23,493	11,320	0.45	54,940	14,187	0.84	33	66
Karlton	2nd	1005	32	1	24	6,404	2,429	0.54	23,728	3,121	1.26	30	62
Keiths	2nd	2300	30	1	13	6,130	3,115	0.45	9,068	3,179	0.69	34	61
Orpheum	2nd	1693	35	1	9	5,291	3,437	0.25	5,583	3,195	0.37	47	61
Palace	2nd	1100	34	1	9	6,480	4,428	0.23	7,323	4,186	0.30	50	61
Stanton	2nd	1486	27	1	21	10,165	4,678	0.37	20,403	5,407	0.78	21	47
State	2nd	3059	57	2	7.5	6,516	4,081	0.29	6,516	2,399	0.62	45	69
Victoria	2nd	987	49	2	7	4,476	3,196	0.19	5,127	2,063	0.55	45	69
Kent	3rd	1910	111	3	4	5,096	3,494	0.19	2,951	1,014	0.69	45	67
Logan	3rd	1924	58	2	7	4,875	3,371	0.22	4,875	1,856	0.62	41	66
Oxford	3rd	1600	88	3	4	3,513	2,179	0.19	2,382	742	0.75	37	70
Park	3rd	1735	113	3	4	3,816	2,813	0.17	2,365	795	0.58	44	68
Strand	3rd	1690	68	2	7	4,080	2,508	0.22	3,059	1,189	0.50	41	61
Fairmount	4th	1344	122	3 or 4	3	2,790	2,073	0.14	1,635	558	0.55	45	67
Family	4th	547	197	6	2	3,569	2,730	0.11	1,000	454	0.35	29	42
Grange	4th	499	123	4	5	1,453	1,146	0.18	979	307	0.63	46	71
Harrowgate	4th	1150	175	5	3	1,603	1,064	0.14	737	204	0.68	41	69
Holme	4th	1364	138	4	3	1,981	1,327	0.21	1,166	312	0.72	45	73
Imperial 2nd Street	4th	1040	198	6	3	1,160	947	0.12	396	154	0.54	39	61
Imperial 60th Street	4th	1474	140	4 or 5	3	1,908	1,369	0.16	944	317	0.62	45	72

Note: Unless thirty-three weeks is specified in column heading, figures capture all films screened in the sample set of cinemas programmed at least once during that period (week ending November 16, 1935, to week ending June 27, 1936), including playdates both before and after.

*The Aldine closed for the summer on June 20, 1936

**excludes single midnight screening of *The Ghost Walks*

Figure 29. Table from Jurca and Sedgwick (2014, p. 67) showing the distribution of Philadelphia's movie circuit in 1933 and highlighting the Aldine Theatre's market position atop that circuit.



Figure 30. Stanley Warner sold the Aldine Theatre in 1953. In July of 1954, after remodelling, it reopened as the Viking Theatre and remained as such until 1963. This nomination does not discuss later periods of the building's usage (including operation as Cinema 19 and Sam's Place One and Two) because they are beyond the period of significance, which ends in 1960.