



VOITH & MACTAVISH ARCHITECTS LLP, *Architecture, Preservation, Planning, & Interiors*  
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215-545-4544, voithandmactavish.com

05 May 2025

Philadelphia Art Commission  
1515 Arch St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Quintessence Theatre Group – Sedgwick Theater Renovation  
Philadelphia Art Commission Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

We are excited to be working with the Quintessence Theatre Group, the new owners of the historic art deco Sedgwick Theater in Mt. Airy, to implement much-needed repairs as well as revitalize the front façade of the building.

The Sedgwick Theater is nearing its 100<sup>th</sup> year as a landmark along Germantown Avenue. Between 2010 and 2024, the nonprofit served as stewards for the portions of the building under their tenancy – the previously enclosed exterior vestibule, entrance foyer, outer foyer, and grand foyer, within which they now produce exceptional classical theater. As the building approaches its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, however, much more restoration and stabilization of the building envelope is needed – especially at its front façade. Quintessence is now in a position as the building owner to undertake this work to ensure that the building endures long into the future.

The attached packet of information presents a scope of work to stabilize and restore the art deco façade of the central bay and the second floor of the flanking retail buildings. This revitalization work includes recreating a projecting marquee sign reminiscent of the historic marquee and a reimagined blade sign which evokes a similar aesthetic, but is distinctly unique from the historic sign, as a signal of the building’s exciting future. In addition, one historic signboard and two historic posterboards would be recreated with LED panels, rather than changeable letters or posters.

#### **Sign No. 1: Marquee**

- The marquee would be approximately 34'-7" in length by 4'-8" in height and project 10'-0" over the sidewalk over the front entrance (subject to applicable zoning approvals). The marquee would be constructed of aluminum panels and extrusions whose colors would closely approximate those of historic marquee. The aluminum construction would be supported on structural steel cantilevered from the building. Its underside would be lit using LED lights in metal coffers, illuminating the sidewalk below. The front (Germantown Avenue) face of the marquee would contain open-faced channel letters infilled with chase lights reading SEDGWICK. Each side of the marquee would contain a recessed LED display ringed with chase lights. The contents of the display would most frequently be programmed to describe events and performances happening at the theater in words, imagery, or a combination thereof.



### **Sign No. 2: Vertical Blade**

- The vertical blade sign would be approximately 28'-7" high by 3'-0" wide by 0'-10" thick and would cantilever from the building on structural steel, with wind bracing to the terra cotta piers behind and to the marquee below. The sign would be constructed of a painted lightweight steel frame ringed with chase lights. Open-faced channel letters infilled with LED strip lights would run vertically down the sign and read QUINTESSENCE. These letters would be supported on light-gauge tube cross-bracing, which would also serve to conceal the conduit running to the strip lights within the channel letters.

### **Sign No. 3: Building-Mounted Signboard**

- Mounted at the building face below the marquee, this signboard would be approximately 29'-1" wide by 3'-0" high and consist of an LED display ringed with chase lights inset an aluminum extrusion, the whole construction projecting slightly from the building. The contents of the display would most frequently be programmed to describe events and performances happening at the theater in words, imagery, or a combination thereof.

### **Signs No. 4 and 5: Flanking Posterboards**

- Flanking the reconstructed front entrance would be two recreation art deco poster cases constructed of aluminum to closely match the historic art deco poster cases; the top and bottom of the poster case would contain an art deco fan pattern of stepped aluminum pieces. Each case would have a dark bronze finish and would project slightly from the building. Inset into the aluminum extrusions would be an LED display, the contents of which would most frequently be programmed with posters for the current performances happening at the theater in digital form.

We recognize that this proposal may require one or more variances. We are preparing to apply for those variances with the City but understand from our research that Art Commission approval is required before such application.

We appreciate your review and consideration of this proposal and look forward to answering any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kevin T. King, Jr." in a cursive style.

Kevin T. King, Jr., Assoc. AIA  
Project Manager

[king@vma1.com](mailto:king@vma1.com)

(215) 545-4544 x4912



PO Box 18879  
6703 Germantown Ave  
Suite 220  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

April 14, 2025

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*Mt. Airy CDC*

*Executive Director*  
Janis Risch

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Mt. Airy Business Improvement District, I am writing in support of the exciting work planned by the Quintessence Theatre Group to renovate the historic art deco Sedgwick Theater in Mt. Airy.

For 100 years, the theater has served as an architectural landmark along Germantown Avenue. Over the past several years, the Quintessence Theatre Group has also transformed the building into a cultural hub in Mt. Airy.

We are delighted that the theater group plans not only to stabilize the façade, but to further enhance it with a projecting marquee sign that will artfully announce to the public that the Mt. Airy commercial corridor is open for business!

Thank you for your consideration,

*Janis Risch*

Janis Risch  
Executive Director



# PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

*for greater philadelphia*

April 14, 2025

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, I write in support of the Quintessence Theatre Group's proposal for the historic Sedgwick Theater at 7133-43 Germantown Avenue. As the building approaches its centennial, this project is both timely and essential to preserving a vital piece of Philadelphia's architectural and cultural history.

Designed by renowned theater architect William H. Lee and opened in 1928, the Sedgwick Theater is a landmark of Mt. Airy's commercial corridor and a rare surviving example of Art Deco theater design in the city. Since 2010, Quintessence Theatre Group has been a diligent and passionate steward of the space, reactivating the theater as a venue for classical performance while honoring its historical integrity.

Now, as the building's owners, Quintessence is prepared to take the next critical step by restoring the Germantown Avenue façade, including deteriorated brick and terra cotta, failing windows, loose Juliet balconies, and severe water infiltration issues. Their proposal to reintroduce a new marquee and vertical blade sign, elements long missing from the historic composition, will reinvigorate the building's street presence while respecting its original character.

This thoughtful and professionally guided effort, developed in collaboration with Voith & Mactavish Architects and supported by extensive historic documentation, exemplifies the kind of preservation project that strengthens Philadelphia's built environment and cultural legacy.

We strongly encourage the approval of this application and commend Quintessence Theatre Group for their ongoing commitment to restoring and celebrating one of Mt. Airy's most iconic historic assets.

Sincerely,

Paul Steinke  
Executive Director



May 1, 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Quintessence Theatre Group's first phase of the renovation of the historic Sedgwick Theater that includes the repair and restoration of the building's historic facade and a re-creation of the original Sedgwick Theater marquee and updating of the blade sign.

The Quintessence Theatre Group, now the owners of this building, has grown the creative economy of Northwest Philadelphia, providing jobs to artists, technicians, and arts administrators while also helping drive business to retail and restaurant employers along Germantown Avenue. Additionally, their ownership of this historic building will now give them an opportunity to bring this beautiful art-deco building back to life.

It is very clear that for the building to remain a viable home for this vibrant theatre group that restoration and renovation are necessary and should be supported. It is also exciting to organizations and individuals, in northwest Philadelphia, who value the importance of maintaining, restoring, and celebrating the historic buildings in our communities, that the plans include the marquee and blade sign.

Just reviewing the plans makes it clear that these transformations will bring a new level of energy and excitement to the entire Mt. Airy commercial corridor. The upper northwest neighborhoods are closely connected, especially the commercial corridors. Renewal and growth along Germantown Avenue not only benefit Mt. Airy but the Germantown and Chestnut Hill neighborhoods as well.

On behalf of the Chestnut Hill Community Association, I fully support Quintessence's renovation of the Sedgwick Theater and their plans for this first phase of renovation and restoration.

Sincerely,

Anne McNiff  
Executive Director

May 2, 2025

Philadelphia Historical Commission  
c/o John Farnham, Executive Director  
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Quintessence Theatre Group – Sedgwick Theater Renovation

To Whom It May Concern:

Mt. Airy Community Development Corporation is pleased to offer its enthusiastic support for the submission by Quintessence Theatre Group for renovation of the Sedgwick Theater. The historic Sedgwick Theater is the iconic building at the heart of Mt. Airy's commercial corridor, and its rebirth under the leadership of Quintessence has brought new vitality to our business district. Quintessence has attracted new visitors to the community with its productions, generated positive spillover effects for local merchants, and secured ownership of its physical space in order to ensure long-term stewardship of this architectural asset. The proposed restoration work will provide much-needed repairs to the building's facade while creating attractive new signage that restores its former appearance and visibility.

As the neighborhood's only CDC, with a 45 year track record of transformative projects and programs, we are committed to working with fellow organizations that advance the goals of the Mt. Airy 2025 Neighborhood Plan. Mt. Airy CDC is proud to be a partner of Quintessence, and to have committed a portion of its state RACP funds to support the construction of these plans. Their approach—combining architectural preservation with active use—is emblematic of how Mt. Airy can best leverage its history to support a thriving culture and economy. I urge your support of Quintessence's submission and look forward to seeing the completion of this exciting project in our community.

Sincerely,



**Philip Dawson**

Executive Director

Mt. Airy Community Development Corporation

215-844-6021, ext. 209 | pdawson@mtairycdc.org



**Kevin King, Jr.**

---

**From:** preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 4:24 PM  
**To:** Kevin King, Jr.  
**Cc:** erica@quintessencetheatre.org; Alexander Burns; anna@danbosinassociates.com; dan@danbosinassociates.com; John H. Cluver; Elena Ezzo; Jon Farnham; Kim Chantry  
**Subject:** Re: PHC Submission for Final Approval: Sedgwick Theater Renovations

Kevin:

The staff of the Historical Commission reviewed your submission for the Sedgwick Theater today and determined that the project can be approved administratively, at the staff level. Therefore, it will not be forwarded to the Architectural Committee for review at a public meeting. Please let us know when you are ready to submit in eclipse for a building permit so that we can look out for it and approve it in eclipse. Thanks.

Jon

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
**Executive Director**  
**Philadelphia Historical Commission**  
**preservation@phila.gov**

---

**From:** Kevin King, Jr. <king@vma1.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 4:18 PM  
**To:** preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>  
**Cc:** erica@quintessencetheatre.org <erica@quintessencetheatre.org>; Alexander Burns <Alex@quintessencetheatre.org>; anna@danbosinassociates.com <anna@danbosinassociates.com>; dan@danbosinassociates.com <dan@danbosinassociates.com>; John H. Cluver <cluver@vma1.com>; Elena Ezzo <ezzo@vma1.com>  
**Subject:** RE: PHC Submission for Final Approval: Sedgwick Theater Renovations

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Much appreciated, Kim!

Have a wonderful night.

.....  
**KEVIN KING, JR.** Assoc. AIA  
*Project Manager*

VOITH & MACTAVISH ARCHITECTS LLP  
*Architecture, Preservation, Planning, & Interiors*

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**From:** preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 4:10 PM  
**To:** Kevin King, Jr. <king@vma1.com>  
**Cc:** erica@quintessencetheatre.org; Alexander Burns <Alex@quintessencetheatre.org>; anna@danbosinassociates.com; dan@danbosinassociates.com; John H. Cluver <cluver@vma1.com>; Elena Ezzo <ezzo@vma1.com>  
**Subject:** Re: PHC Submission for Final Approval: Sedgwick Theater Renovations

Thanks Kevin. Your application has been received and we will be in contact soon with next steps in the review process.

Kim Chantry  
**Historic Preservation Planner**  
**Philadelphia Historical Commission**  
[preservation@phila.gov](mailto:preservation@phila.gov)

---

**From:** Kevin King, Jr. <[king@vma1.com](mailto:king@vma1.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 2:32 PM  
**To:** preservation <[preservation@Phila.gov](mailto:preservation@Phila.gov)>  
**Cc:** [erica@quintessencetheatre.org](mailto:erica@quintessencetheatre.org) <[erica@quintessencetheatre.org](mailto:erica@quintessencetheatre.org)>; Alexander Burns <[Alex@quintessencetheatre.org](mailto:Alex@quintessencetheatre.org)>; [anna@danbosinassociates.com](mailto:anna@danbosinassociates.com) <[anna@danbosinassociates.com](mailto:anna@danbosinassociates.com)>; [dan@danbosinassociates.com](mailto:dan@danbosinassociates.com) <[dan@danbosinassociates.com](mailto:dan@danbosinassociates.com)>; John H. Cluver <[cluver@vma1.com](mailto:cluver@vma1.com)>; Elena Ezzo <[ezzo@vma1.com](mailto:ezzo@vma1.com)>  
**Subject:** PHC Submission for Final Approval: Sedgwick Theater Renovations

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Good Afternoon:

On behalf of the Owner, Quintessence Theatre Group, we are pleased to present project documentation for exterior restoration work and a new marquee and blade sign for the historic Sedgwick Theater in Mount Airy.

We are very excited about this important step in revitalizing the historic Sedgwick and the impact it will have on that portion of Germantown Avenue. We look forward to answering any questions you may have.

All the best,

.....  
**KEVIN KING, JR.** Assoc. AIA  
*Project Manager*

VOITH & MACTAVISH ARCHITECTS LLP  
*Architecture, Preservation, Planning, & Interiors*

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**QUINTESSANCE THEATRE GROUP  
SEDGWICK THEATER RENOVATIONS**

PHILADELPHIA ART COMMISSION  
SUBMISSION

VMA

VOITH & MACTAVISH ARCHITECTS  
05 May, 2025

**QUINTESSENCE THEATRE GROUP  
SEDGWICK THEATER RENOVATIONS**

PHILADELPHIA ART COMMISSION  
SUBMISSION

Introduction and Existing Conditions	Page 3
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Proposed Drawings	Page 10

# INTRODUCTION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

## 7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE

The Sedgwick Theater, built in 1927 and designed by William H. Lee, is nearing its 100th year as a landmark along Germantown Avenue. Quintessence Theatre Group, now the owners of the building, restored the three windows in the center bay (following the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and reviewed and approved by the Philadelphia Historical Commission in 2021) that needed repair. Much more restoration and stabilization of the building envelope is needed – especially at its front (Germantown Avenue) façade. Quintessence is now in a position to restore more of the building's façade to ensure its architectural character is maintained.

All five major bays of the building are clad in buff brick accented with beige terra cotta. The ornamentation on the southern two and northern two bays is more subtle, whereas the center bay, signifying the historic (and current) theater entrance, is accentuated with decorative terra cotta-clad piers which extend vertically above the roof line. Portions of these piers are no longer extant. A small, neon sign and two-row changeable letter board signify the presence of a theater to passersby, a far cry from the historic street presence the theater used to display. Quintessence hopes to return to the grandeur of the historic marquee and blade sign as it signals the exciting new future of the Philadelphia landmark.

Currently missing from the original composition of the theater is this signage. The theater had both a marquee and a vertical blade sign above the entrance (refer to historic photographs on Page 6), neither of which are extant. The design drawings for the theater include the marquee and indicate the structural support for the blade sign, and the historic photographs clearly indicate both were present on the facade for decades. Re-introduction of these elements along with the exterior restoration scope, to be completed in tandem, would preserve the historic character of the theater and allow for its continued operation and protection for years to come. As part of a future phase of construction, the flanking first floor storefronts would be incorporated into the overall composition of the facade, removing the ahistoric awning signage and returning the street frontage to a closer approximation of its historic appearance.



Figure 1: Sedgwick Theater, Germantown Avenue facade, taken from Germantown Avenue looking NNW March 2025

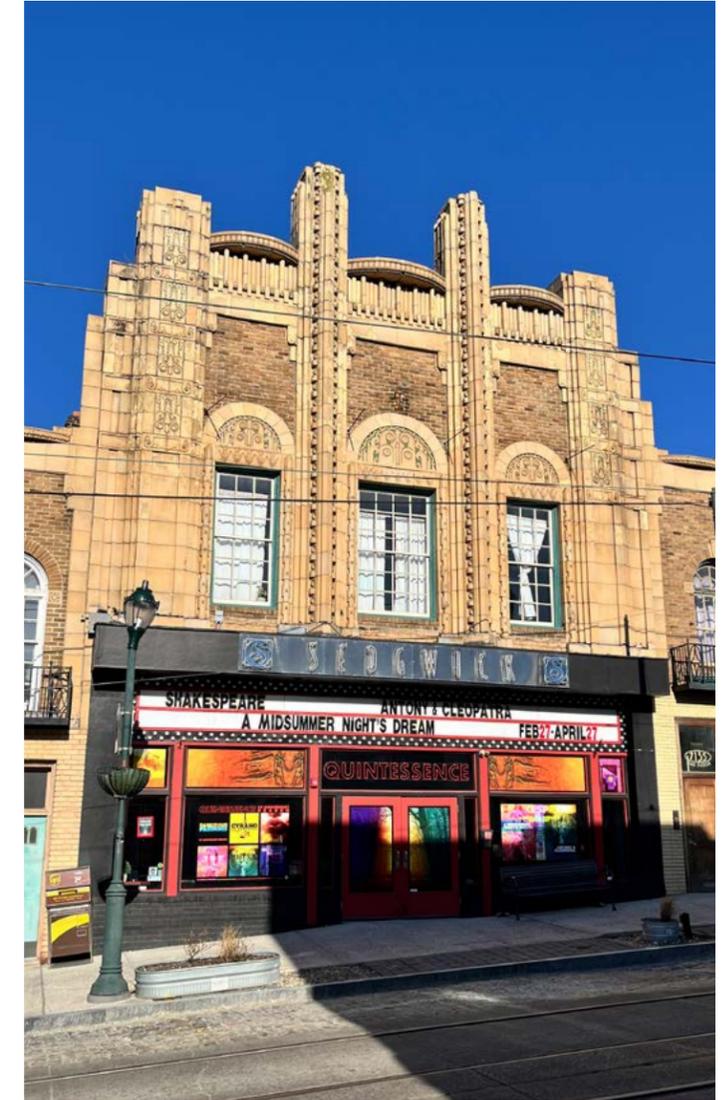


Figure 2: Sedgwick Theater, center bay of Germantown Avenue facade, taken from Germantown Avenue looking E March 2025

## CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Looking northwest along Germantown Avenue toward West Mt. Airy Ave.



Looking southeast along Germantown Avenue. West Durham Street is at the right.

*Note: Photos are stills taken from a laser scan of the building exterior conducted on April 23, 2025 by Voith & Mactavish Architects.*

## CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



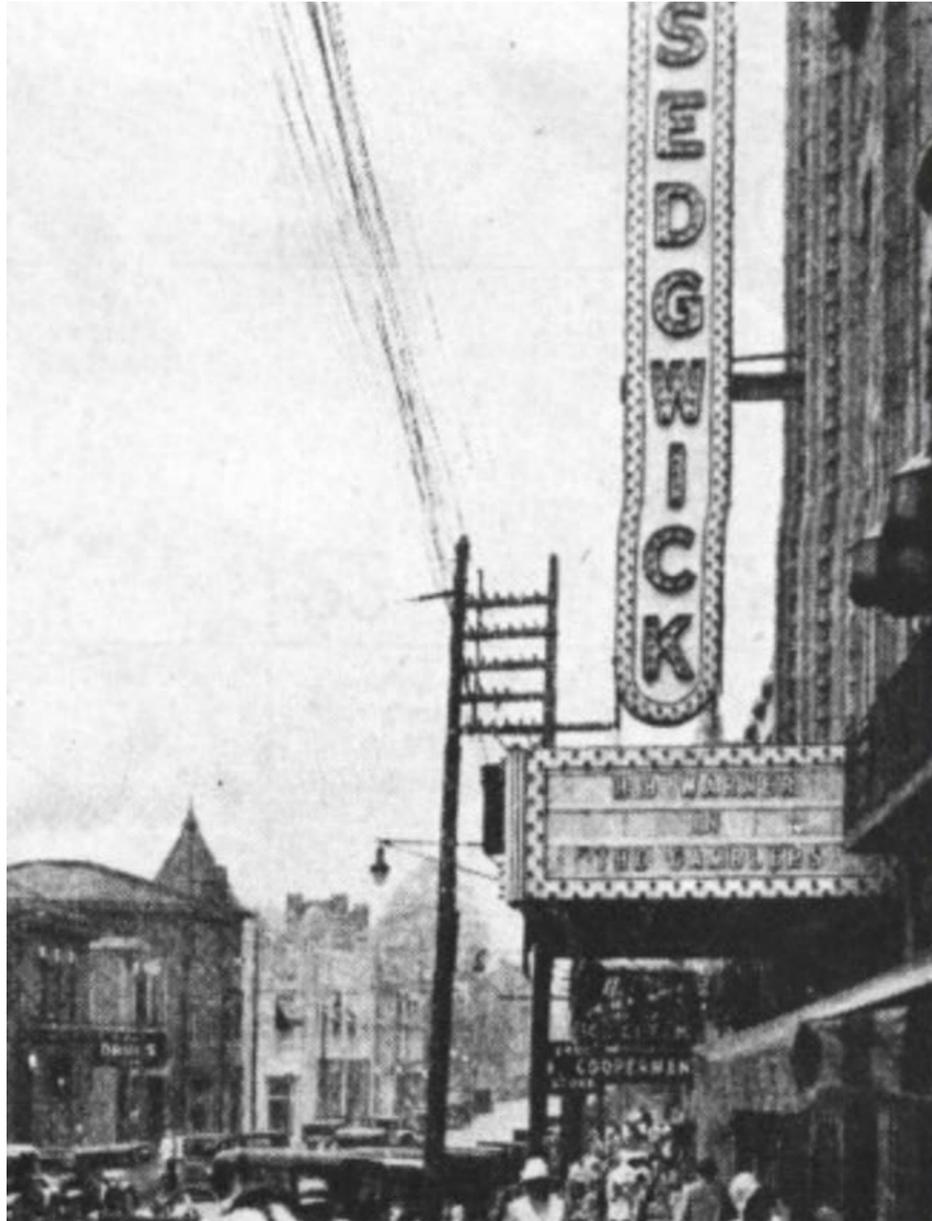
Across the street from 7133-43 Germantown Avenue, from left:

- Toska Restaurant & Brewery, 7136-38 Germantown Avenue
- FitLife Fitness Center, 7140 Germantown Avenue
- Entrance to PPA Parking Lot
- Rothe Florists, 7146-50 Germantown Avenue

*Note: Photos are stills taken from a laser scan of the building exterior conducted on April 23, 2025 by Voith & Mactavish Architects.*

# HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Marquee and blade sign of the Sedgwick Theater looking NNW along Germantown Avenue  
*Chestnut Hill Local, ca. 1930s*



Facade with marquee and blade sign at the Sedgwick Theater looking N along Germantown Avenue  
*Irvin Glazer Theater Collection, ca. 1940s*



Facade with marquee and blade sign at the Sedgwick Theater  
*Photographer and date unknown*

## HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

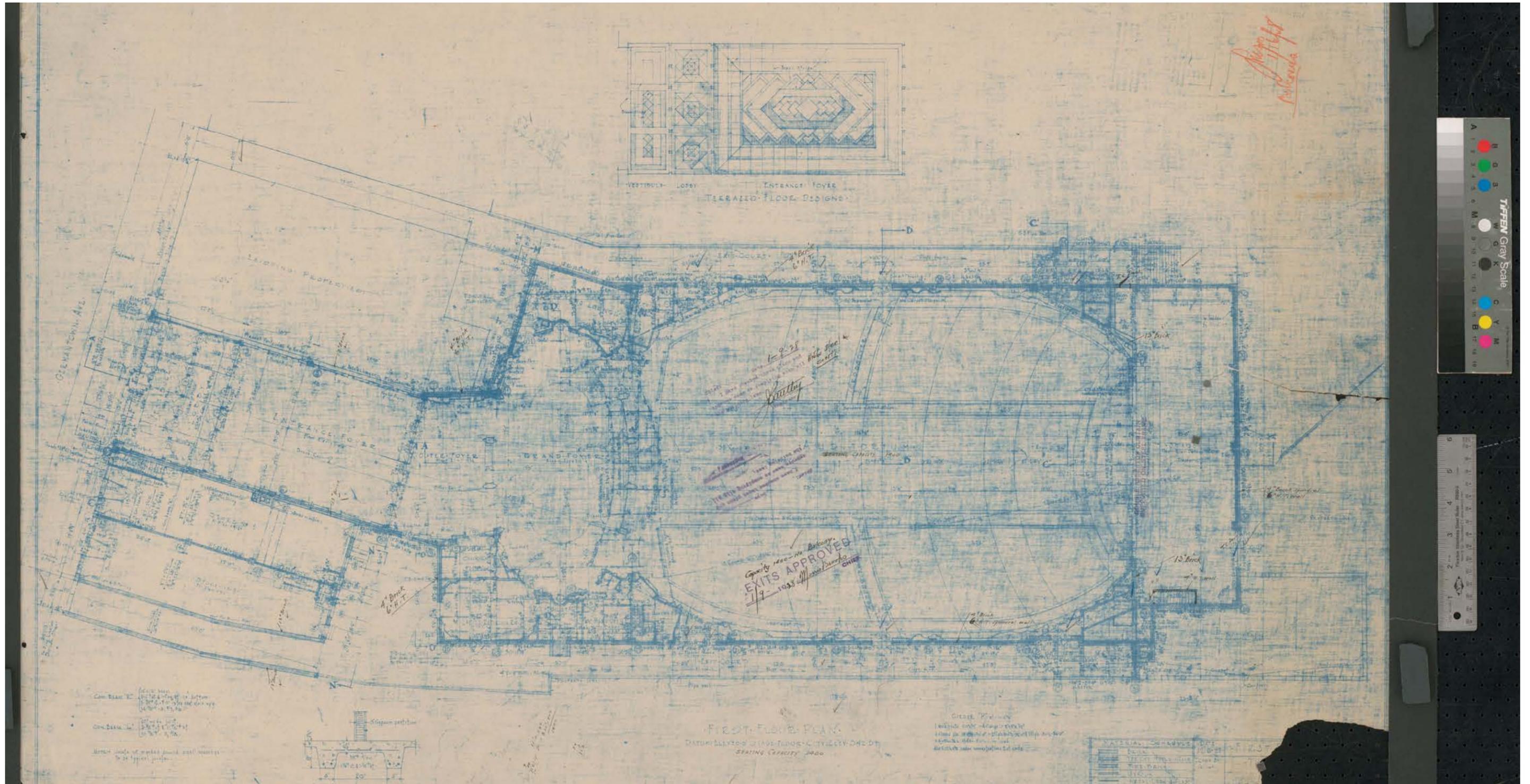
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Facade with marquee and blade sign at the Sedgwick Theater looking E across  
Germantown Avenue  
*William G. Mitchell (photographer), ca. 1928*

# HISTORIC DRAWINGS

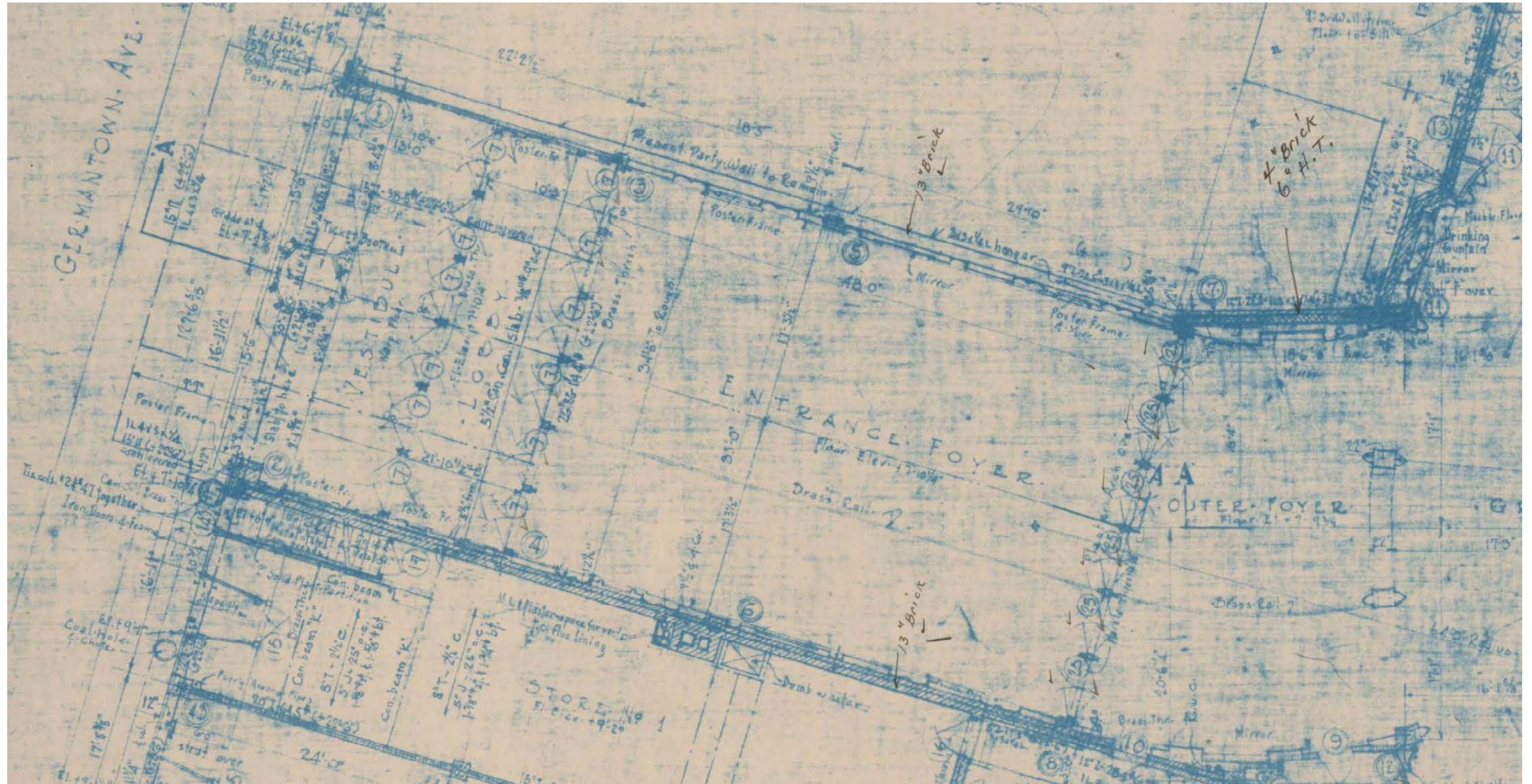
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



First Floor Plan  
1927, W. H. Lee; accessed via Athenaeum of Philadelphia

# HISTORIC DRAWINGS

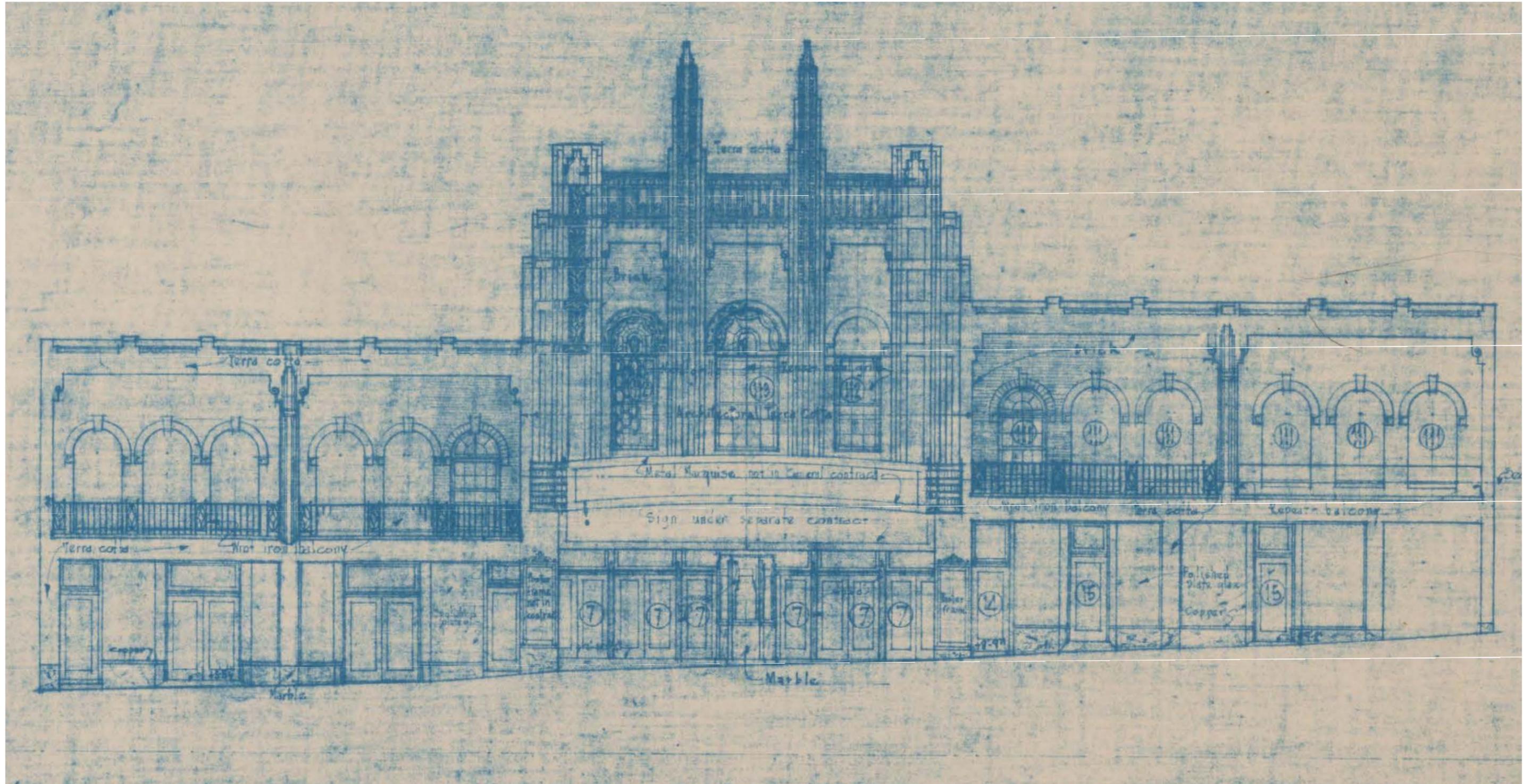
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Detail of floor plan showing original entrance sequence:  
vestibule, lobby, entrance foyer, outer foyer  
1927, W. H. Lee; accessed via Athenaeum of Philadelphia

# HISTORIC DRAWINGS

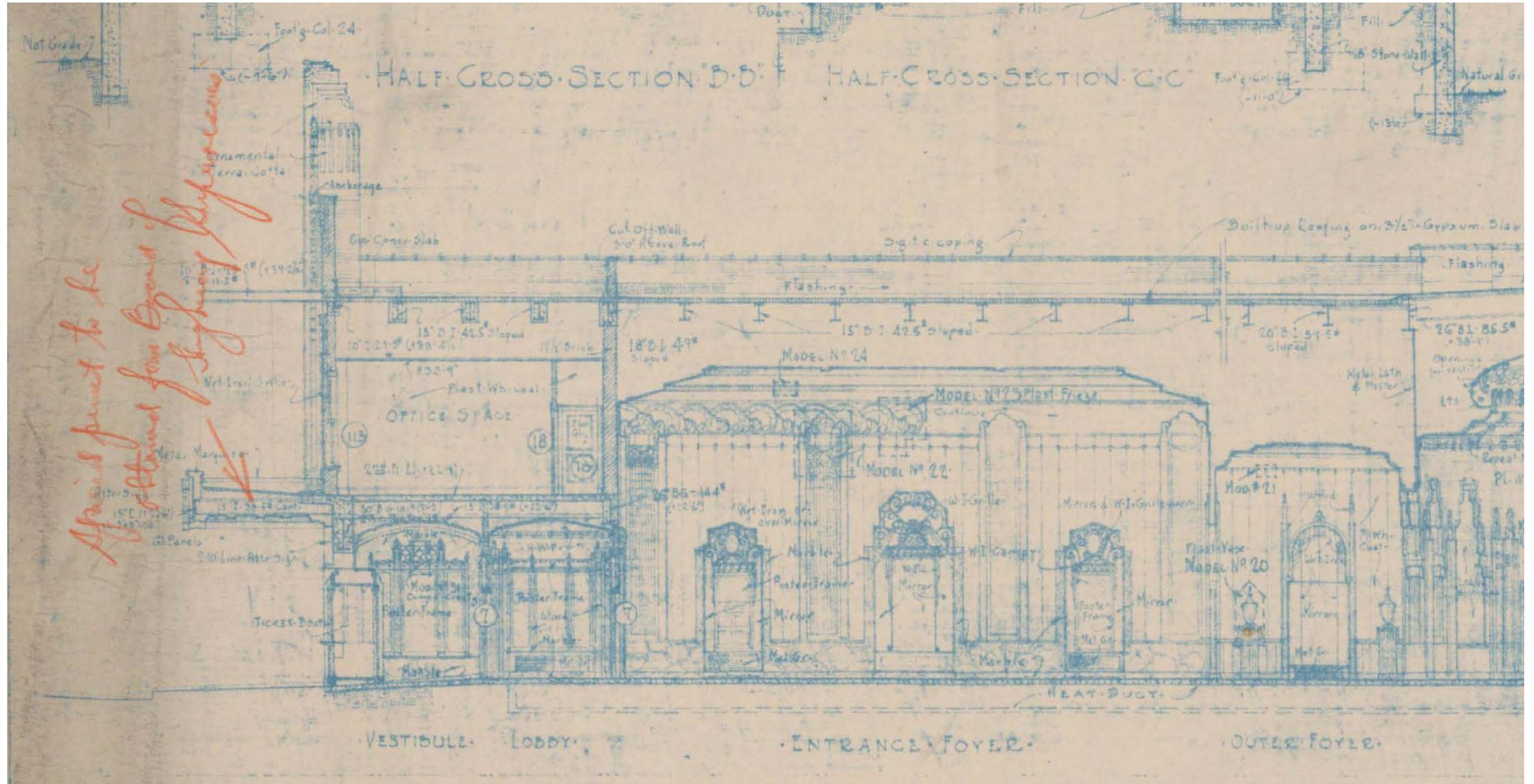
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Germantown Avenue Elevation  
1927, W. H. Lee; accessed via Athenaeum of Philadelphia

# HISTORIC DRAWINGS

7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



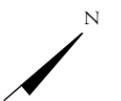
Longitudinal Section through original entrance sequence:  
vestibule, lobby, entrance foyer, outer foyer  
1927, W. H. Lee; accessed via Athenaeum of Philadelphia

# PROPOSED DRAWINGS

## 7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Proposed Site Plan  
3/64" = 1'-0"



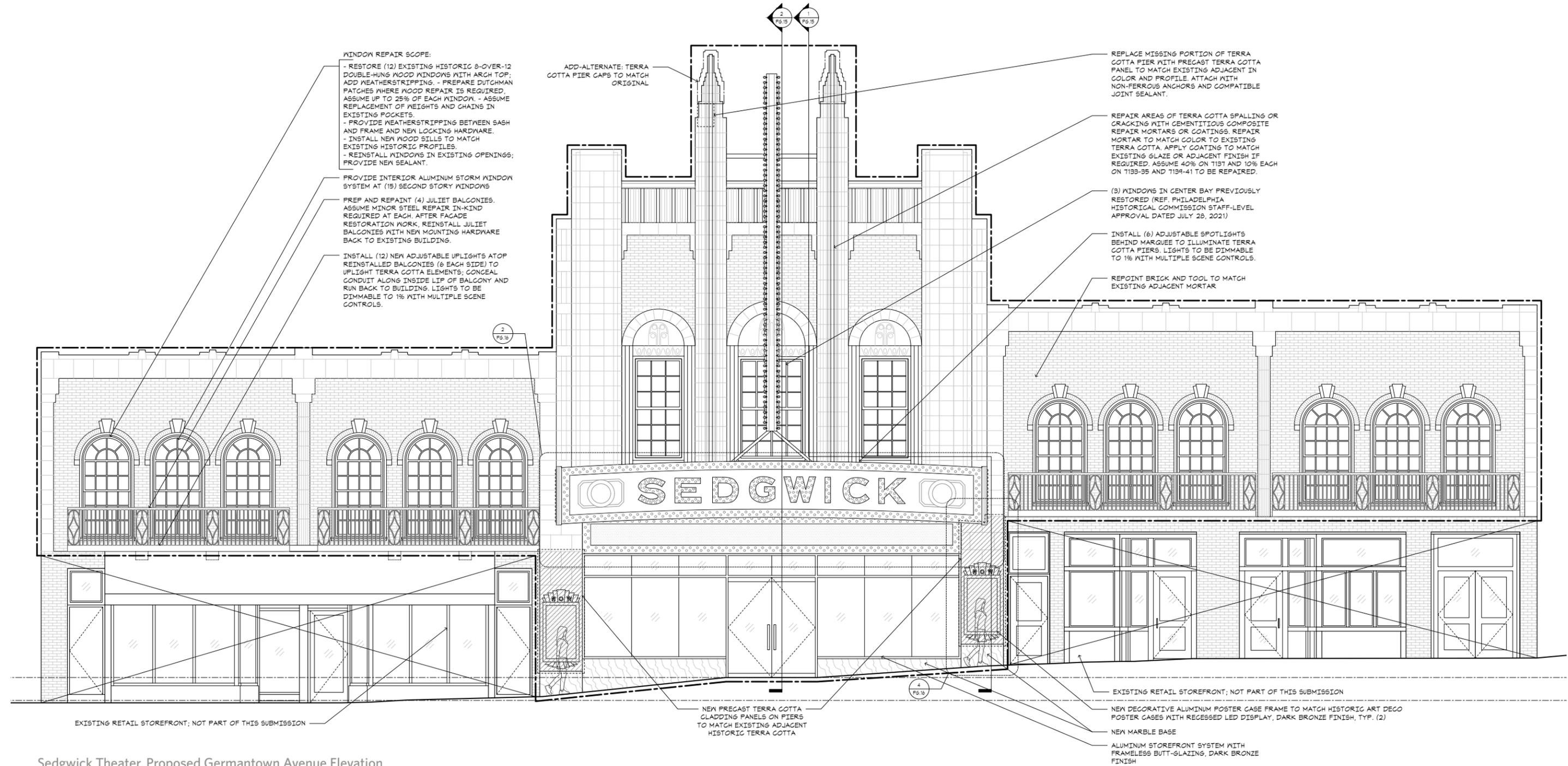
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**  
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



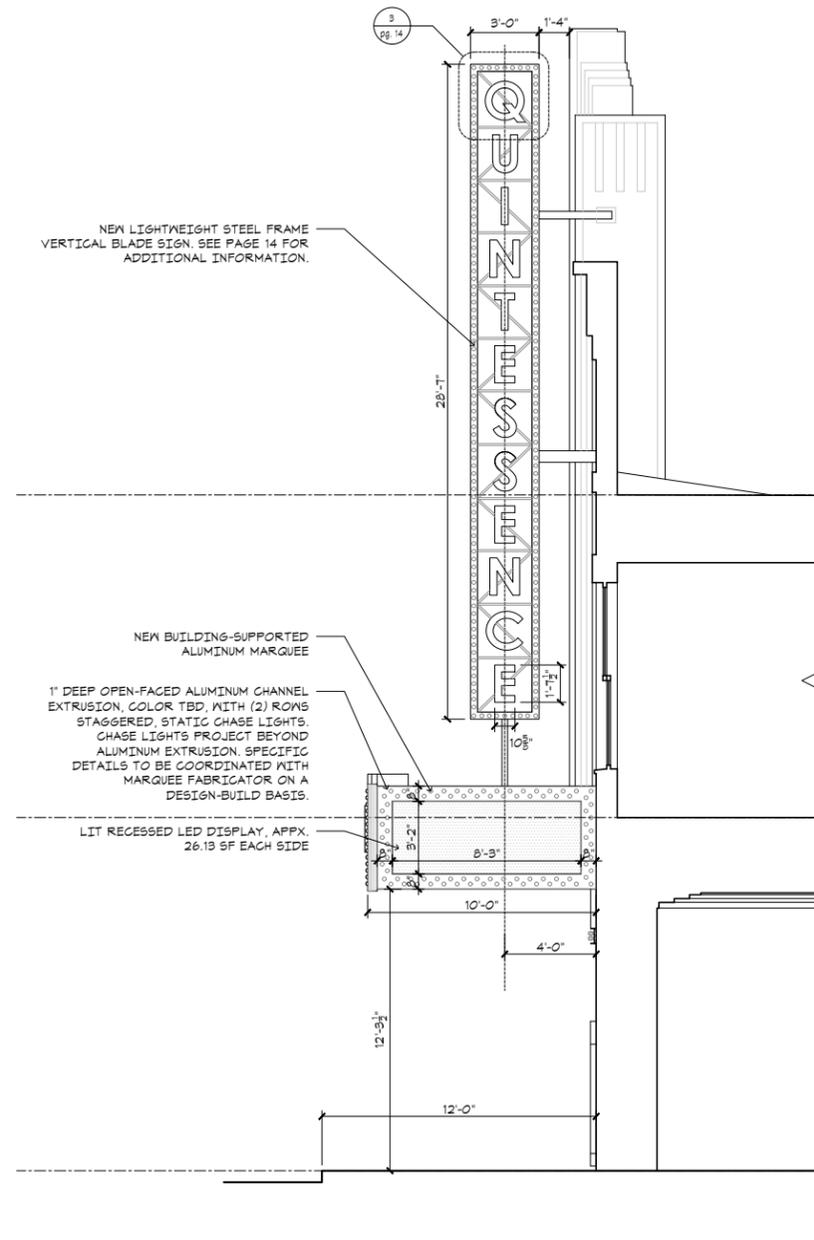
Sedgwick Theater, Existing Germantown Avenue Elevation  
1/8" = 1'-0"

# PROPOSED DRAWINGS

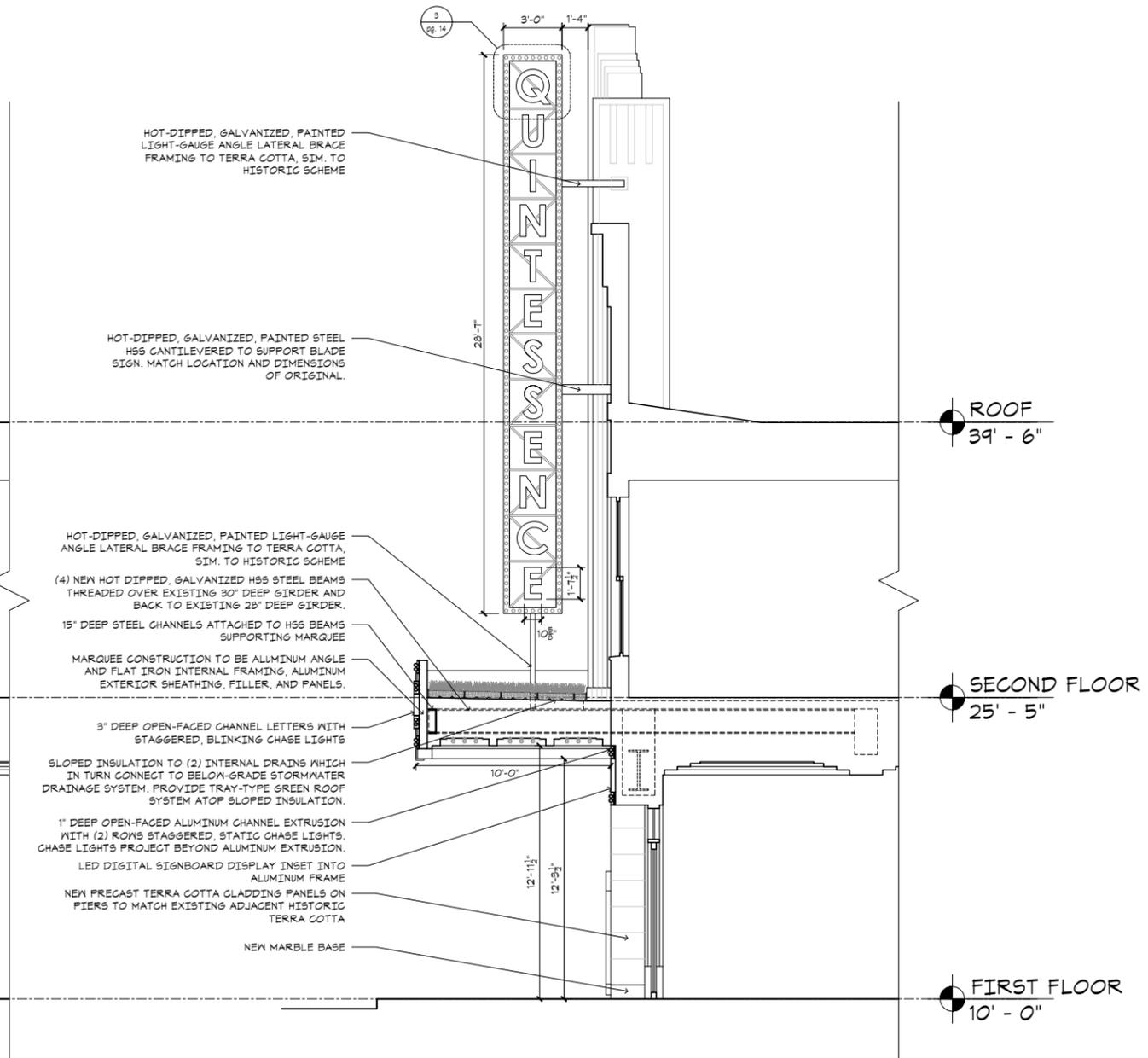
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



Sedgwick Theater, Proposed Germantown Avenue Elevation  
1/8" = 1'-0"



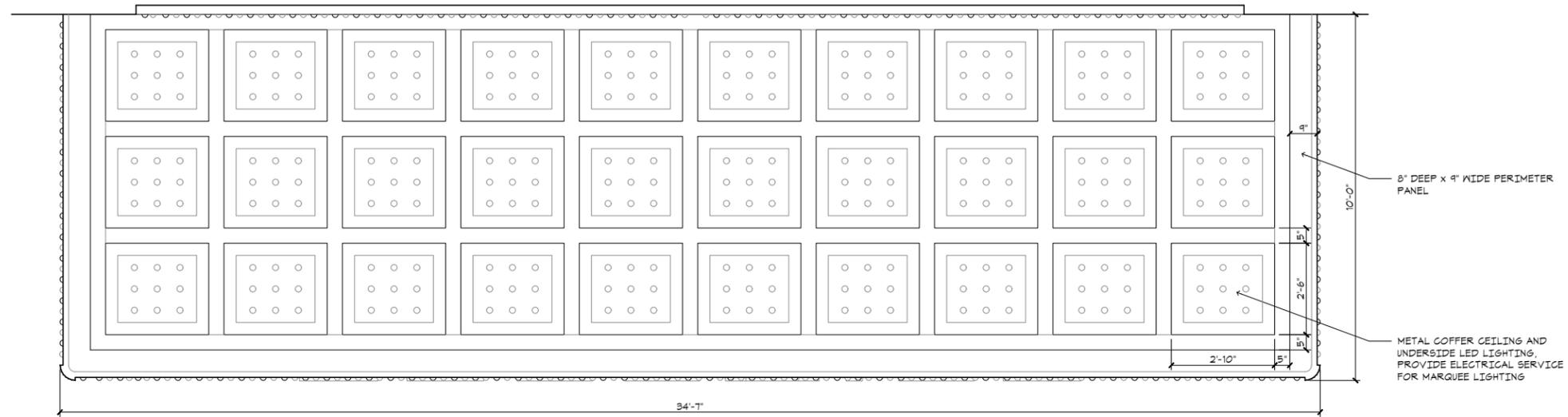
1 - Proposed Side Elevation at Marquee and Blade Sign  
1/8" = 1'-0"



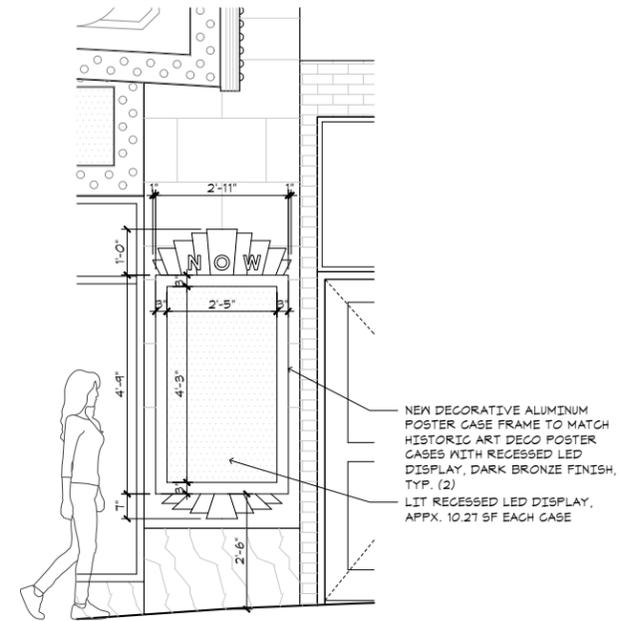
2 - Proposed Section at Marquee and Blade Sign  
1/8" = 1'-0"

# PROPOSED DRAWINGS

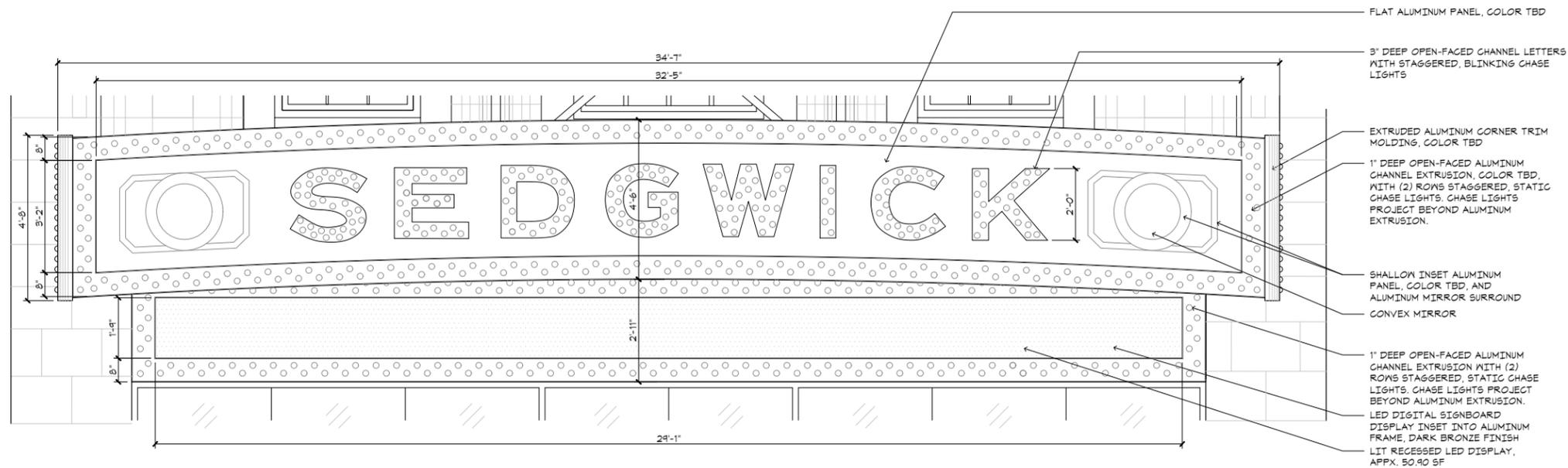
7133-43 GERMANTOWN AVENUE



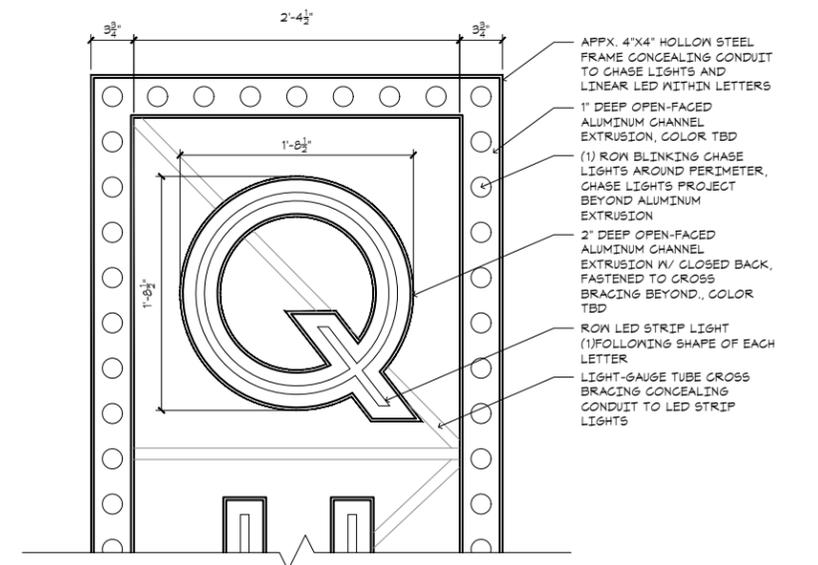
1 - Proposed Marquee RCP  
1/4" = 1'-0"



4 - Proposed Poster Boards  
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 - Proposed Marquee  
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 - Proposed Blade Sign  
3/4" = 1'-0"

Rendering of Proposed Marquee and Blade Sign

