

Public comment for 1910 Chestnut Street

Preserve Boyd Theatre marquee

From joe cesa <joe1phillypa@gmail.com>
Date Thu 5/21/2026 6:58 AM
To preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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It's been recently reported that Pearl Properties--owners of the apartment built on the ruins of the Boyd Theatre, wish to withdraw from their agreement to preserve the historic theatre's marquee--one of the few remaining elements of the theatre. Here is the article:

https://www.inquirer.com/real-estate/commercial/boyd-theatre-marquee-historical-preservation-pearl-properties-20260520.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawR7wjtleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjlwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEei7n77VcHEnda1piaqBtsYhWuFKVqYneupzyLRRcORhWA9s-hjy-5jTaqSS0_aem_KfuM0FUz9Ou216TwBdKU9g

They made an agreement, they should be held to it. In my opinion, they made a meagre attempt to "restore" the marquee; now they wish to back away from even this poor gesture. When is America's most historic city going to live up to its title and preserve the remaining bits that make it unique from big box bland majority?

Joseph Cesa
citizen, taxpayer, voter

Boyd Theater, 1910 Chestnut St - Proposed Facade Redo for May 26

From Karen Colizzi Noonan <karencolizzinoonan@gmail.com>

Date Thu 5/21/2026 10:34 AM

To Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@Phila.gov>

Cc Howard B Haas <HowardBHaas@aol.com>

 2 attachments (531 KB)

MacArthur CVS Washington DC.jpg; State Thr Target Ann Arbor MI.jpg;

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Please acknowledge receipt of this email:

Dear Ms. Chantry,

I've become aware of the proposal to remove the marquee and vestibule walls of the former Boyd Theater, located at 1910 Chestnut St. in Philadelphia. Please allow me to speak to the detriment of such a move:

As a theater architecture historian with 30+ years of experience there is strong precedent for reusing the facade and incorporating it into any new business that eventually occupies the space. In my 10 years as a former President of Theatre Historical Society of America, this situation has presented itself where former theater buildings are re-used following the end of their public performance era. I visited the Boyd in person and am aware of its particular importance to the community.

While the current marquee "only" dates back to a 1950s reconfiguration, it is still an important piece of Chestnut Street's history and should be retained to support 20th century architectural history. Philadelphia is steeped in early American history, yet that story does extend into the more "modern" era as well.

A retained facade, honoring the building's history, can be a tribute to the past as well as a useful modern advertising method.

Attached are two photos that show successful incorporation into existing facade development. Many others exist, but they do serve to illustrate the creativity and respect that these projects demonstrate.

I urge your commission to consider the historical importance of the streetscape of Chestnut Street and retain the facade including the marquee and the vestibule walls to be incorporated into any reuse plan.

Karen Colizzi Noonan
Former President, Theatre Historical Society of America (2003-2013)
Current Theater Historian & Consultant
147 High Street Geneva, New York
Contact: 315-945-7445

c.c. Howard Haas/Friends of the Boyd

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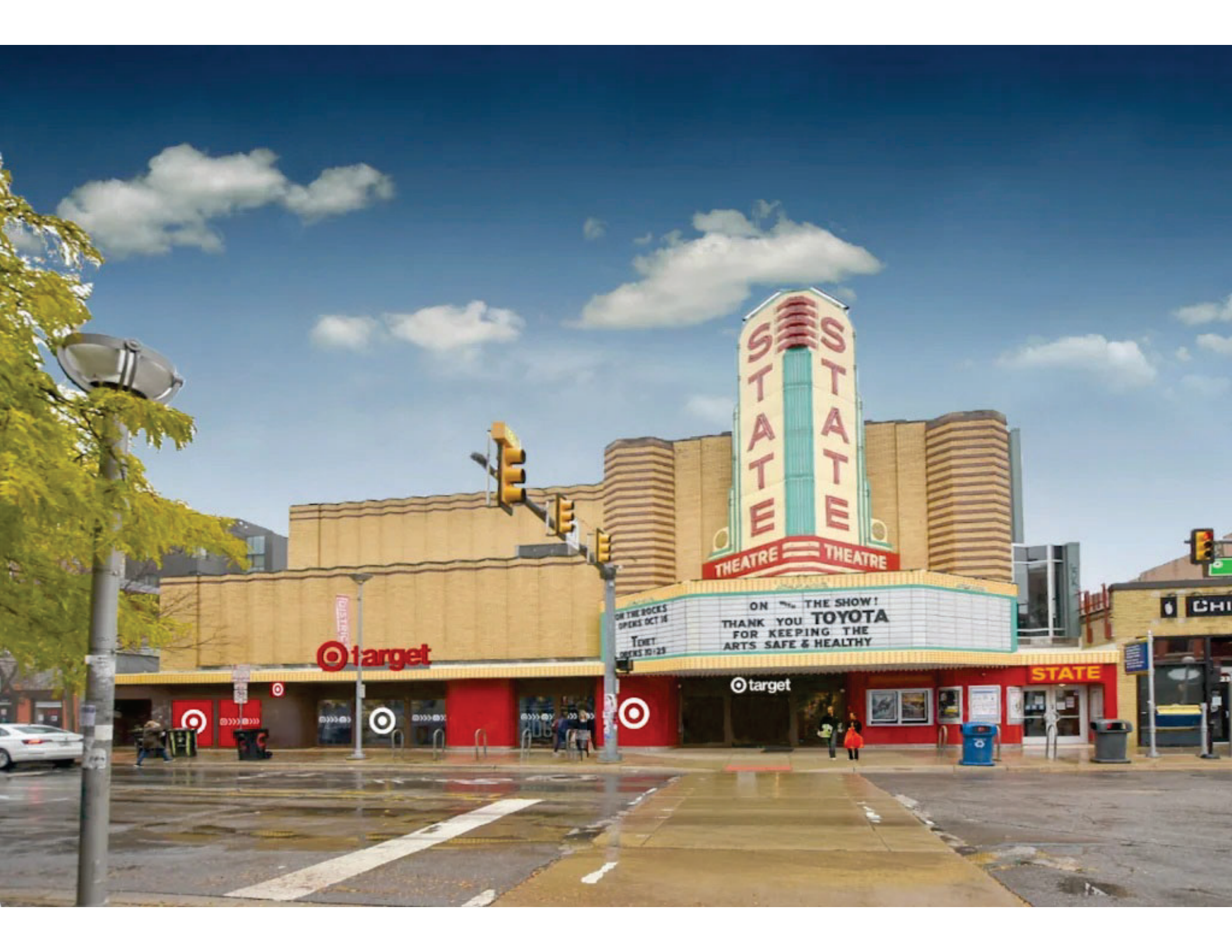
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1910 Chestnut St, for May 26

From howardbhaas@aol.com <howardbhaas@aol.com>

Date Thu 5/21/2026 11:17 AM

To Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@Phila.gov>; psteinke@preservationalliance.com <psteinke@preservationalliance.com>; jayfar@jayfar.com <jayfar@jayfar.com>

 8 attachments (3 MB)

Photo Eight, Boyd ironwork at Vestibule.JPG; Photo Five, Boyd 1928, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.jpg; Photo Four 1405 Locust, 2023-07-15 H Haas.jpg; Photo One, Boyd 1957, Friends of the Boyd.jpg; Photo Seven, Boyd Vestibule Walls.JPG; Photo Six, Boyd 1971 Friends of the Boyd.jpg; Photo Three, 1519 Chestnut, 5-21-26 H Haas IMG_8614.jpg; Photo Two 1529 Chestnut, 7-22-21 H Haas.jpg;

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Dear Ms. Chantry and the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission::

Friends of the Boyd, Inc., the nonprofit organized in 2002 to save the Boyd Theater, **asks the Philadelphia Historical Commission to deny the property owner's request** regarding 1910 Chestnut St, to remove the marquee and vestibule walls.

A marquee is always a defining characteristic of a historic movie palace. In 1953, the support beams of the original 1928 marquee were reused for the current "Cinerama" marquee, designed by prominent architect William H. Lee. The Boyd was famous and popular as the only theater in the region for Cinerama films, and the marquee remained in use until the theater's 2002 closure. When IPIC Theaters obtained a demolition permit, they stipulated at PHC they would keep the Boyd's front and restore the marquee to 1928. The current owner used the demolition permit to demolish the auditorium, but obtained PHC approval to keep the current marquee, which they beautifully refurbished pursuant to the 1950's photo we shared, attached Photo One.

A grandfathered, heritage marquee is viewed as an asset, for advertising purposes, to commercial tenants, including at the two former movie theaters on the 1500 block of Chestnut, Arcadia (1915 to 1978) now Five Below 1529 Chestnut St, and Trans-Lux later Eric's Place (1934 to 1993) 1519 Chestnut St, now Foot Locker. The Fox Locust (1927 originally for movies, to 1980) 1405 Locust St is now Estia restaurant. Attached photos Two thru Four. Bankroll did not fail at the Boyd because of the marquee!

Lists by Andy Molholt, Philadelphia, PA of Philadelphia former movie theaters with non religious tenants and retaining their marquee, and by Ken Roe of London UK of same that he recalls in California are below my signature. As PHC notice was provided right before the Memorial Day holiday, our efforts for Tuesday's hearing are hampered, but we may provide more in the future.

The 1928 **Vestibule walls**, designed with the rest of the Boyd, by prominent architects Hoffman-Henson, **are elegant**, iron with decorative features, glass, and granite. They are an iconic, original look of the Boyd. **They stretch further into the building** than the applicant's

photos show. Attached are 1928 and 1971 photos, and closeups, Photos Five thru Eight except the decorative glass has been replaced. **When the current owner obtained permission from the PHC to add new doors and glass to enclose most of the Boyd's vestibule, the PHC stipulated at the hearing that despite the new entry, the exterior vestibule walls remained Exterior legally protected!** The vestibule walls were originally for very small retail stores in both sides of the Boyd's entry, and Bankroll did not fail because of those walls. The vestibule also has the original beautiful Art Deco terrazzo floor, which protected, also should stay. Please visit the Boyd and view the Vestibule area and see how a commercial tenant won't refuse to lease the huge Boyd space due to these features!

The recent PHC approval to cut larger windows at the Drexel building at 15th & Walnut seems minor in comparison. **The Boyd's marquee is integral to its facade and its removal would be like removing a nose from a person's face, a butchered look!** The Boyd's marquee has also been a feature that has distinguished Chestnut St since 1928.

Friends of the Boyd continue to have many supporters in Philadelphia and the region. We respectfully ask you to deny the application to remove the Boyd's marquee and vestibule walls. Please leave 1910 Chestnut St intact.

Kim- can you please email me receipt of this public comment?

Sincerely,
Howard B Haas, Esq.
President, Friends of the Boyd, Inc.

LIST BY ANDY MOLHOLT OF FORMER PHILADELPHIA MOVIE THEATERS RETAINING MARQUEE, EXCLUDING RELIGIOUS REUSES

*Bromley Theater
5810 Old York Road
[Bromley Theatre in Philadelphia, PA - Cinema Treasures](#)
Currently, Precious Baby Learning Academy

*Esquire Theater
5717 N Broad Street
[Esquire Theatre in Philadelphia, PA - Cinema Treasures](#)
Currently, Dollar Tree

* Hollywood Theater
2846 N 22nd Street
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/40848>
Currently operating as Best Nail Beauty Supply.

* Holme Theater (AKA The Pennypak)
8045 Frankford Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/9141>
Currently operating as a Dollar General.

* Jeffries Theater
344 Conarroe Street
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/14750>
Currently operating as Roger Ross Plumbing.

* Lancaster Theater

4545 Lancaster Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/65407>
Currently operating as Quickie Radiator & Storage.

* Lawndale Theater (AKA The Abbey)
6613 Rising Sun Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/20822>
Currently operating as Early Learning Children's Academy.

* Locust Street Theater (AKA The Fox Locust)
1411 Locust Street
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/22730>
Currently operating as Estia, a Greek restaurant.

* President Theater
2304 Snyder Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/9679>
Currently operating as the Grand Yesha Ballroom.

* Rio Theater
2011 Frankford Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/26878>
Currently operating as Stationary Engravers.

* Tyson Theater
7043 Castor Avenue
<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/23294>
Currently operating as LN Flooring Corp.

Hopefully this is helpful!
Let me know what else I can do to help!!!
- Andy
267 342 3498

-Andy Molholt
<https://ambymoho.website>

LIST BY KEN ROE OF LONDON, UK, of US former movie theaters in California he recalls that retain their marquee. He edits the worldwide cinematreasures.org website

Email 5-21-26 from Ken:

There must be quite a few which have retained their marquee's.
From the top of my head.....
In California,

Los Angeles
Downtown on Broadway there is:

Rialto Theatre, now Urban Outfitters clothing store with neon retained and used.
Roxy Theatre, Retail
Cameo Theatre, Retail
Arcade Theatre, Retail

Tower Theatre, Apple Store

Studio City

Fox Studio City Theatre, Bookstar store

There must be quite a few which have retained their marquee's.

From the top of my head.....

In California,

Los Angeles

Downtown on Broadway there is:

Rialto Theatre, now Urban Outfitters clothing store with neon retained and used.

Roxy Theatre, Retail

Cameo Theatre, Retail

Arcade Theatre, Retail

Studio City

Fox Studio City Theatre, Bookstar store (I think the neon is still in use?)

San Diego

Loma Theatre, Barnes & Noble book store (again I think the neon is used)

Santa Monica

Mayfair Theatre, Shoe Palace store

Oxnard

Vogue Theatre, Discount Store

Ken

San Diego

Loma Theatre, Barnes & Noble book store (again I think the neon is used)

Santa Monica

Mayfair Theatre, Shoe Palace store

Oxnard

Vogue Theatre, Discount Store

Ken



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Photo by E. C. LUKS #

BOYD THEATRE PHILADELPHIA PENN. ~ from IRVIN R. GLAZER Collection # PA

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on the Roof"

Sam Eric

Sam Eric

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