

Submitted to the Toronto Preservation Board on July 12, 2023

REGENT THEATRE REVIVAL

A contemporary performance venue and cultural facility @ 551 Mt Pleasant Rd

Toronto Preservation Board: PB 8.9
Request for Consideration: Conditions of Approval

July 13, 2023

ERA

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Heritage Value and Rationale

- **Conserve substantial intangible value** by continuing the site's century-long theatre use
- Adapt the site for **long-term use as a contemporary live performance venue and cultural facility**
- Begins in 1927 as an early 20th-century main-street movie theatre, but **is distinct as the home of the mid-century Crest Theatre**, an institution in emergence of Canadian theatre scene
- Tangible expressions of value include: **typological main-street theatre features** on Mount Pleasant; **interior art and plasterwork** evoking 1920s culture and recreation



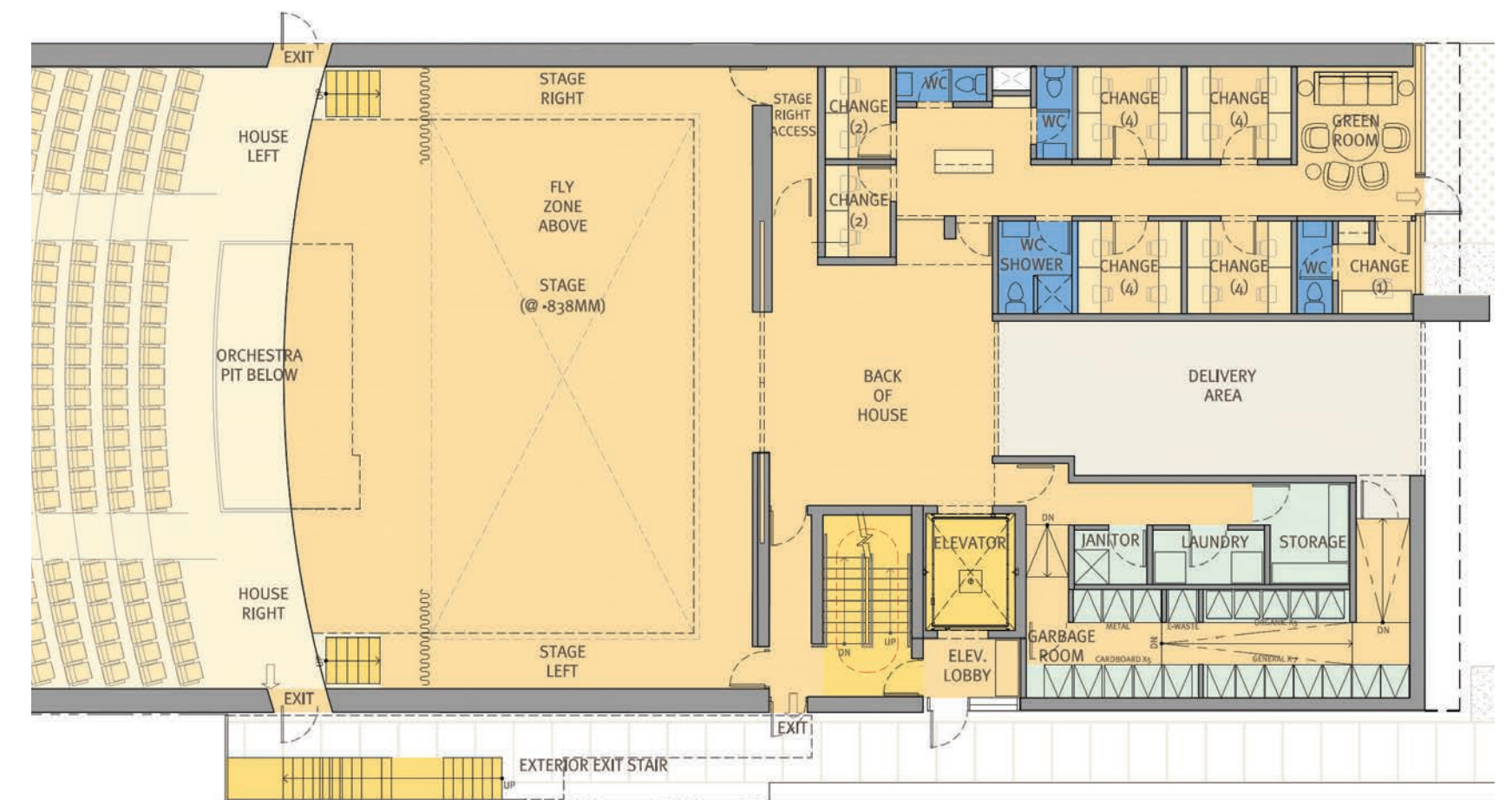
Above: Regent Theatre Archives, c. 1927 / Below: TPL, 1964

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Programmatic Needs

- Adaptation required to accommodate **programmatic needs of a 21st-century live theatre**, e.g.:

- Orchestra pit
- Fly-tower for modern mechanical systems
- Barrier-free access for performers and audience
- Mezzanine seating with views of full stage
- Back-of-house like rehearsal space, dressing rooms
- Public-facing activation beyond evening showtimes
- ... and more



ground floor concept, east end of building (HPA, 2023)

- **Solution:** spatial reconfiguration, including *new interior floor levels*

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Mitigation: Salvage and Interpretation Strategy

Objective: To pepper the rich 1927 interior design character as art throughout the building, so visitors might experience the theatre as an historic place.



site photos by Nathan Cyprys, 2022



section: interior window view from community / rehearsal space (HPA, 2023)

CONDITION #1: ORNAMENTAL PLASTER CEILING

Background



Left: Toronto Archives, n.d. / Centre and Right: Nathan Cyprys, 2022

CONDITION #1: ORNAMENTAL PLASTER CEILING

Proposal and Rationale

Proposal: To recast the ornamental ceiling in the publicly-accessible second-storey bar, a preferable location due to...

- the planned height of the second-storey ceiling and its similarity to the original lobby condition



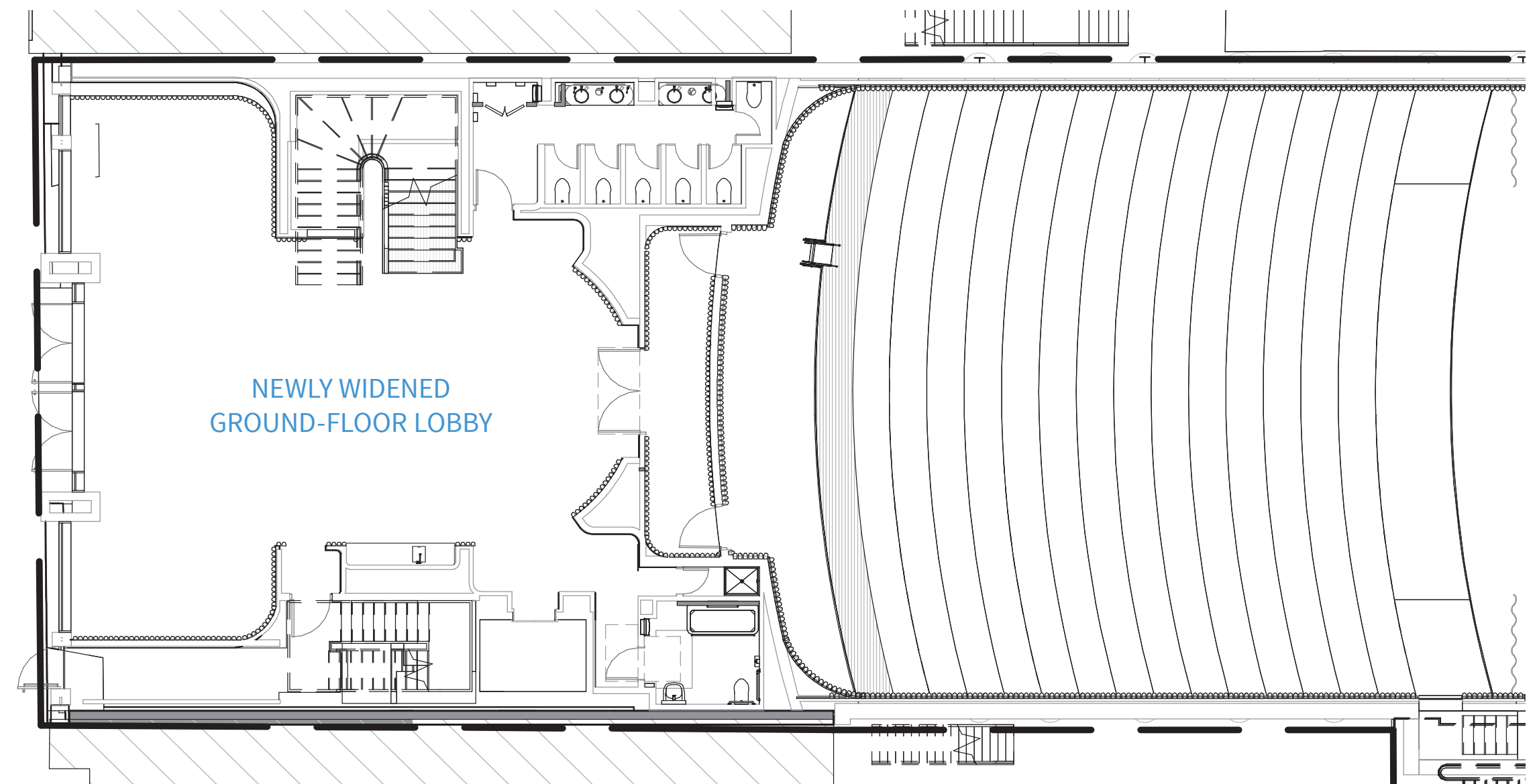
rendered view: ceiling in second-storey bar space (HPA, 2023)

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- the planned height of the second-storey ceiling and its similarity to the original lobby condition
- the intimate scale of the second-storey bar space, compared to the larger-scale new entrance lobby



Proposed Ground Floor Plan, West Portion (ERA, 2023)

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- the planned height of the second-storey ceiling and its similarity to the original lobby condition
- the intimate scale of the second-storey bar space, compared to the larger-scale new entrance lobby
- the opportunity inject 1927 design character into the upstairs spaces



One of two massive triptychs on the auditorium walls, proposed to be installed as art in the ground floor lobby (Nathan Cyprys, 2022)

CONDITION #1: ORNAMENTAL PLASTER CEILING

Proposal and Rationale

Proposal: To recast the ornamental ceiling in the publicly-accessible second-storey bar, a preferable location due to...

- the planned height of the second-storey ceiling and its similarity to the original lobby condition
- the intimate scale of the second-storey bar space, compared to the larger-scale new entrance lobby
- the opportunity inject 1927 design character into the upstairs spaces; and
- anticipated impact of steam, humidity and food prep from the ground-floor lobby cafe



rendered view: ceiling in second-storey bar space (HPA, 2023)

CONDITION #2: FACADE STONE DETAILING

Background: Mid-Century Ground Floor Alteration

c. 1927



Regent Theatre Archives, annotated by ERA

1964



Toronto Public Library, annotated by ERA

CONDITION #2: FACADE STONE DETAILING

Proposal: Cohesive Ground-Floor Upgrade, Restoration Above



Rendered view by HPA, March 2023

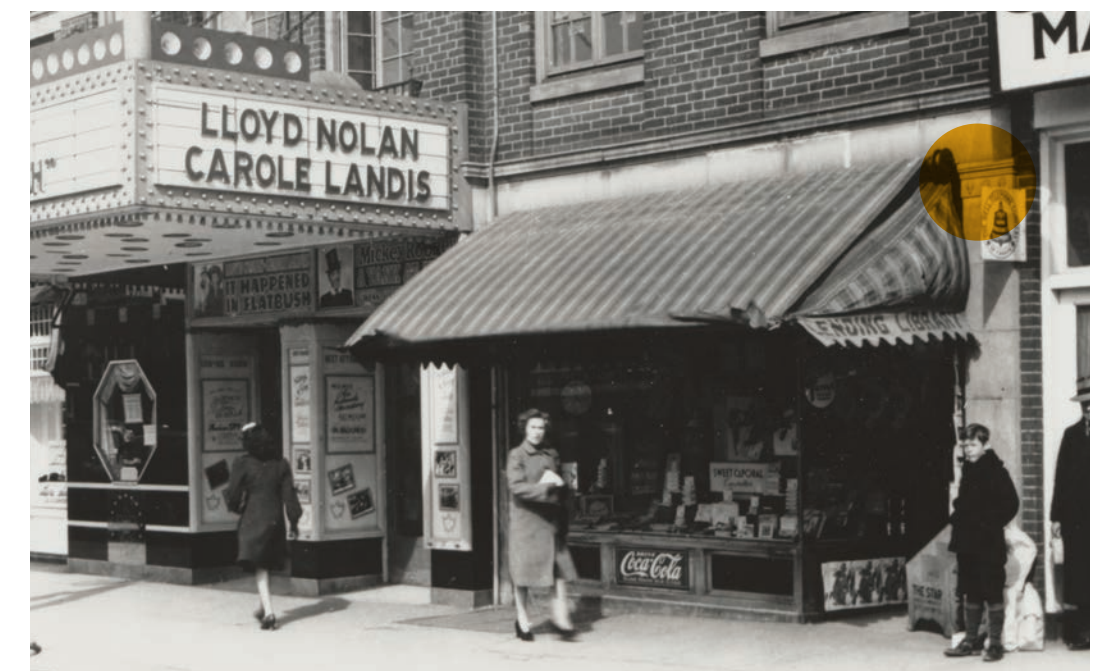
CONDITION #2: FACADE STONE DETAILING

Condition of Approval and Proposed Response



Above: Rendered view by HPA, March 2023 / Right: 1942 Belsize Theatre, Toronto Archives (both annotated by ERA)

Condition: “Conserve the stone detailing on the extant piers, including the ‘teardrop’ forms on the capitals and the stone detailing on the concentric planes on the north entrance surround.”



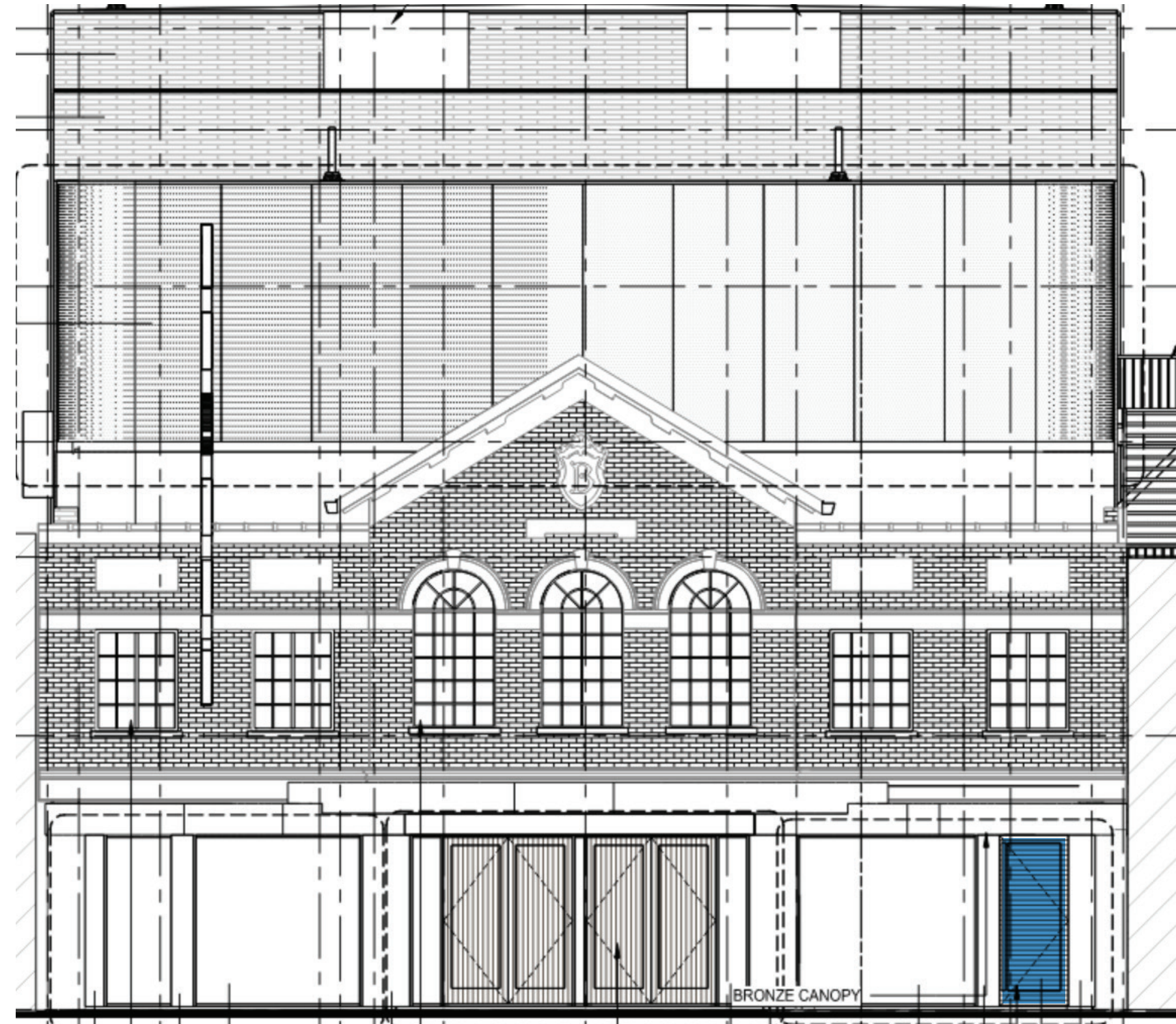
Proposed Response: Truncate new canopy’s width to end inside the capitals, and restore damaged teardrops.

CONDITION #2: FACADE STONE DETAILING

Condition of Approval and Proposed Response



Nathan Cyprys, 2022



NORR, June 2023, annotated by ERA

Condition: “Conserve the stone detailing on the extant piers, including the ‘teardrop’ forms on the capitals and the stone detailing on the concentric planes on the north entrance surround.”

Proposed Response: Exclude the stone detailing on the north entrance surround, as secondary entrance to be located at south end.

SUMMARY

Request to TPB

Remove condition b(2)ii: ~~Conserve the original plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars and astrological symbols in the entrance lobby in their current locations, generally.~~

Replace condition b(2)i with proposed alternative: Conserve the ‘teardrop’ forms on the extant stone capitals at the north and south edges of the building’s principal facade.