



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

February 4, 2019

Determination of Historic Significance for Historic Resources Funded through CPA

Historic Resource Information	
PROPERTY NAME:	Allen -Charette Building/Capitol Theatre
PROPERTY LOCATION:	1418-1440 Acushnet Ave.
PROPERTY AGE:	Constructed 1920
PROPERTY TYPE:	Commercial Building



The Allen-Charette/Capitol Theatre at 1418-1440 Acushnet Avenue is a two-story brick block that occupies the northern two-thirds of the frontage on the east side of Acushnet Avenue between Deane and Bullard streets.

The Allen-Charette building, housing the Capitol Theatre, first-floor retail space, and second-floor office space, was built in 1920. The front façade contains six street-level storefronts a long row of windows for offices above that concealed the 1580-seat Capitol Theater running the full length of the building in the rear. The southernmost storefront originally served as the entrance and promenade to the theater lobby, which is indicated by the stone sign block cast with "Capitol" in the parapet above the second story.

Thomas J. Charette partnered with George W. Allen Jr. in building the Capitol Theatre and became the largest owners and managers of theatres in the city. The 1580-seat Capitol Theater was their largest when it was built. It is likely that the building was designed by LeBrode & Bullard, New Bedford architects and mill engineers. The interior designer of the theater is not known.

The building combines retail, office and theater functions in a compact, two-story urban building. Exterior decoration is modest and economical; the theater interior was designed in a restrained Neoclassical style focused primarily on the stage proscenium. The interior of the theater is intact with the exception of the sloping floor, which has been cleared of its seats and flooring.

The Allen-Charette/Capitol Theatre is significant for its historical association with and contribution to the rapid development of the Acushnet Avenue commercial corridor that took place at the turn of the twentieth century in response to the spread of textile mills and the subsequent exploding population of mill workers in the North End. It has historical associations with the growth and development of the entertainment industry over the twentieth century. It contributed to the explosion of movie house establishments in New Bedford during the first quarter of the twentieth century, a development that was mirrored in cities across the country. Additionally, the Capitol Theater building is significant for its associations with the ethnically diverse population of the North End.

The Allen-Charette/Capitol Theater building is architecturally significant as a representation of a mixed-use American commercial style building and is as one of the few surviving theater buildings in New Bedford. The Capital Theatre interior has undergone alterations, but retains much of its architectural detail, including the stage proscenium.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has concurred with the Preservation Planner's CLG Opinion that the Capitol Theatre is eligible for listing in the National Register. **SEE ATTACHED CLG OPINION.**

CPA HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Historic Resource Information	
PROPERTY NAME:	Allen -Charette Building/Capitol Theatre
PROPERTY LOCATION:	1418-1440 Acushnet Ave.
PROPERTY AGE:	Constructed in 1920
PROPERTY TYPE:	Commercial Building

YES	NO	Buildings and Structures
Cultural or Historic Association:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, industrial, political or social history of the City of New Bedford.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with one or more important persons or events.
Architectural/Design Quality:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses distinctive design or physical characteristics in terms of period, style, or method of building construction.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with a famous architect or builder.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses high artistic values.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource has architectural significance, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.
Integrity:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource retains integrity.

YES	NO	Vessels, Real Property, Documents, and Artifacts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is a complete set of materials or records.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource illustrates the site of an important historic event.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource identifies a person or group of persons who have impacted the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, industrial, social, or political heritage of the City.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource represents the work of a master craftsman, artist, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses high artistic values.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource can be used to inform an area of scholarship.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource retains integrity.

YES	NO	NBHC Determination of Significance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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