

227 King Street Property Report



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Introduction

Research for 227 King Street was conducted for a class entitled Historic Research Methods. The class is one of four taken during the first semester in Clemson University and the College of Charleston's joint Masters of Science Program in Historic Preservation. The program is located in the Clemson Design Center in Charleston, South Carolina. Included within the report is an architectural description of the Riviera Theatre, a brief history of Charleston, a history of the property describing when structures were erected and redesigned to fit new owners' needs at the time, a description on how the Academy of Music had a connection to the suffragette movement in Charleston, and background on both the McBee Sisters and Albert Sottile. All three individuals either had an influence on the property itself or on Charleston.

Several repositories were visited in the process of collecting data including, Charleston County's Register of Deeds, the South Carolina Room located in the Charleston County Public Library, Low Country Digital Library, the Board of Architectural Review office, the Special Collections located in the Addlestone Library on College of Charleston's Campus and many others. To analyze how the property alone developed over time, sanborn maps from 1884 to 1955 were studied to discover when pieces of land were added or subdivided. Other historic maps were obtained to help understand how Charleston as a whole changed. Vertical files pertaining to the Academy of Music, The Riviera Theatre, the McBee sisters and Albert Sottile were utilized to fill in gaps of information that could not be obtained from deeds. Old newspaper articles gave context into the activities of individuals and events of the past that may not be as noteworthy. Books such as *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's*

Architecture and Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City acted as supporting sources.

Architectural Description

227 King Street otherwise known as the Riviera Theatre is located in a dense urban environment. The property is at the corner of King and Market Streets and is on the west side of King Street. The primary façade of the building faces south, to the west is Market Street, to the east between the Riviera and a neighboring structure is an ally way, to the north located between the Riviera and another structure is a paved area. Currently the structure's use is commercial with conference, office, and retail spaces. The structure is a long rectangular mass running from south to north. From the front, the structure appears to be two stories but from the Market Street side appears three stories. The roof is relatively flat and is stone at the most southern portion of the structure. Asphalt covering protects the remaining sections of the roof. The structure has a masonry foundation and is constructed of brick and stone.

The Riviera is an excellent example of Art Deco architecture. On the sidewalk in front of the property is a whimsical pattern of colored shapes made of terrazzo directing people to the entrance and ticket booth¹. The first floor of the primary façade is five bays wide. When facing the structure from King Street on the far left there is a glass door framed at the top, bottom and sides with wood. A vertical projection with three evenly spaced vertical black stripes separates the far left section of the building from the central mass². The far left of the central mass has a storefront window flush with the face of the structure. To the right of the window is a recessed entry way with a black ticket booth at the center and glass double doors with a

¹ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 363.

² Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013, 581.

metal frame surround. There is no storefront window on the far right of the central mass. The far right of the structure exhibits the same architectural details as those found on the far left. On both the far left and right of the structure is a granite veneer represented as a water table. Cladding the entire recessed entry way is a black reflective glass. Between the first and second floor is an ornate and colorful marquee attached to the structure's vertical projections using wires. Above the marquee are five evenly spaced casement windows with a rectangular fanlight above. An ornate patterned steel grid is positioned above each casement window. Only a thin strip of stone separates the casement windows from the steel grids. Between each window is a stone pilaster that has been fluted. Directly above the steel grids is an unmolded stone belt course running the entire width of the façade. Above the unmolded belt course in the central mass of the structure are silver colored metal capital letters spelling out the name Riviera.

One the west façade are various storefronts with steel grids spanning the width of each opening. On this secondary façade high above a wooden double door is a heroic head in an Assyrian fashion.

A Brief Charleston History

In 1663 King Charles II of England granted land in the New World known as Carolana to eight of his supporters.³ These individuals were known as the Lords Proprietors, specifically John Berkeley, Sir William Berkeley, Sir George Carteret, Sir John Colleton, Anthony Ashley Cooper, William Craven, Edward Hyde and George Monck.⁴ In 1670 the first English settlement south of Virginia was established at Albemarle Point.⁵ Governor Joseph West in 1679 moved the settlement to Oyster Point for its defensive strengths.⁶ The settlement at Oyster Point was renamed Charles Town.⁷ In 1680 the newly established Charles Town was organized into a grid of streets with a central public square.⁸ This type of urban plan was modeled after the Grand Modell. Charles Town becomes a walled city in 1704 to ward off any type of Spanish attack.⁹ In 1719 the South Carolina House of Assembly petitioned to become a colony of the crown.¹⁰ By 1765 Charles Town is renamed Charlestown.¹¹

³ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

⁴ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

⁵ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

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⁷ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

⁸ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

⁹ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

¹⁰ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

¹¹ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 16-18.

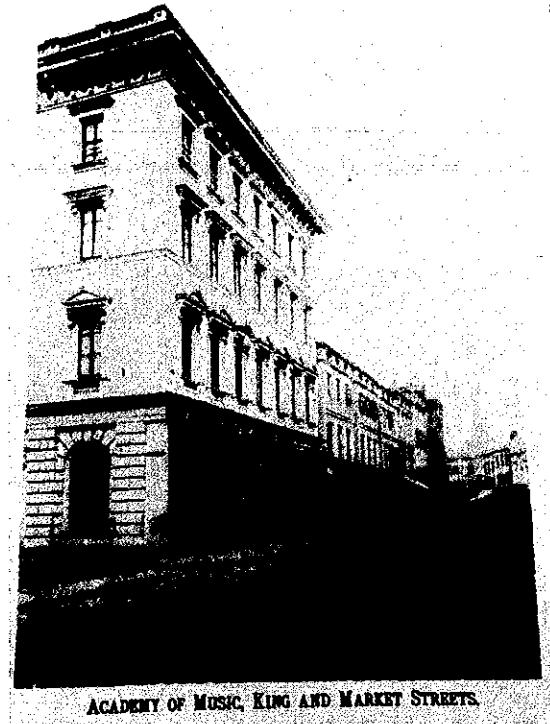
The Development of Market Street

Market Street was a small street located north of the old Market. In 1825 Market Street was extended into King Street and established the property as a corner lot.¹²

¹² Milby E. Burton, 2019, Charleston Streets, Accessed November 15.

Academy of Music

Before the Academy of Music, 227 King Street was the site of other businesses. In 1838 the Kerrison brothers Charles and Edwin L., constructed a building to be utilized as a Department Store¹³. After the Kerrison brothers sold the property to Andrew F. Browning and William W. Leman on February 20, 1852, Edward C. Jones was commissioned to design a new structure.¹⁴ This newly designed building became a dry goods business.¹⁵ The building's interior space was open at the center from the ground floor to a skylight above that lit up surrounding galleries.¹⁶ After the Civil War John Chadwick bought the property in 1869 from E.W. Marshall et al. who acted as the trustee for Leah Hart who had acquired the property through a life estate given to her by her husband Ernest Lewis Hart.¹⁷ John H. Devereux Charleston's best known architect of the late 19th century, was commissioned by Chadwick to redesign the structure and converted the



¹³ Robert P. Stockton, *The Riviera: Art Deco Architecture*, 1980, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁴ A History of the Academy of Music, Academy of Music, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁵ A History of the Academy of Music, Academy of Music, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁶ A History of the Academy of Music, Academy of Music, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁷ Charleston County. Records of the Register Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, S.C. Deed Book K15 Volume 1, p.290.

property into a theatre known as the Academy of Music.¹⁸ According to the Bird's eye map the Academy of Music was also called the Opera House.¹⁹ The Academy of Music was opened to the public on December 1, 1869 and was sixty feet wide, two hundred and thirty-one feet deep and seventy-five feet high.²⁰ Being nationally renowned for its time because of the acoustics, a mixture of live performances and motion pictures were presented at the theatre providing Charlestonians with a variety of entertainment forms. Famous artists and groups performed at the Academy of Music included Theodore Thomas's Orchestra, Maurice Barrymore, The Grau Opera, John Drew, The Booths, Joseph Jefferson, Mrs. Fiske, Lillian Russell and many others.²¹ John E. Owens bought the Academy of Music from John Chadwick in 1875 and was the owner of the property during the earthquake of 1886.²² The four story brick structure was not damaged by the earthquake. In roughly a forty-four-year period the property changed hands numerous times until coming under the ownership of the Pastime Amusement Company in 1919.²³ The property was purchased for thirty-five thousand dollars.²⁴ While the Academy of

¹⁸ Robert P. Stockton, *The Riviera: Art Deco Architecture*, 1980, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁹ Drie, C. N. *Bird's eye view of the city of Charleston, South Carolina 1872*. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <http://lcnp.loc.gov/75696567/>.

²⁰ *Charleston in 1883, Academy of Music*, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

²¹ Historical Marker Plaque, found on western wall of Riviera Theatre.

²² Charleston County. Records of the Register Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, S.C. Deed Book U16, p.174.

²³ *Charleston in 1883, Academy of Music*, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

²⁴ *Charleston in 1883, Academy of Music*, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

Music survived the earthquake of 1886, it did not escape the wrecking ball. In 1937 the structure was demolished and replaced with a new theatre known as the Riviera Theatre.²⁵

²⁵ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 363.

Albert Sottile & The Pastime Amusement Company

An important individual involved in the construction of the Riviera Theatre was Albert Sottile. Albert Sottile was the President of Pastime Amusement Company and was responsible for the demolition of the structure that housed the Academy of Music.²⁶ Albert was born in Gangi a province of Palermo, Sicily on May 5, 1878.²⁷ His initial schooling took place in public schools of Gangi.²⁸ He immigrated to Charleston at the age of thirteen in 1891 and continued his schooling at the Cathedral Parochial School under the bishop of the Romans Catholic Diocese of Charleston's tutelage.²⁹ Later he took a course in stenography and typewriting positioning himself for employment as an office boy in the office of the Commandant of the Sixth District of the Lighthouse Department headquartered in Charleston.³⁰

In the summer of 1908 Sottile began his career in the theatre business and became president of the Pastime Amusement Company.³¹ Under Albert's direction five downtown movie theatres were erected. In 1910 he tried his hand in the reality business becoming the president and founder of both the Theatres and Wentworth Reality Companies.³² He was also

²⁶ Marjorie Campbell, *Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man*, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

²⁷ Marjorie Campbell, *Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man*, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

²⁸ Marjorie Campbell, *Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man*, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

²⁹ Thomas R. Waring, *The Sottile family: Achievers from Italy*, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁰ Thomas R. Waring, *The Sottile family: Achievers from Italy*, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³¹ News & Courier, *Services Set Tomorrow For Albert Sottile*, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³² Charleston Evening Post, *Funeral Services Set Tomorrow for Albert Sottile*, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

president and treasurer of the Marilyn, Rosalind, and Carolyn Realty Companies.³³ His first theatre was located on Society Street and was called the Victory Theatre.³⁴ Other theatres operated by Sottile included the Majestic and Princess theatres once located King Street.³⁵ With his brother James he ran a small motion picture houses called Wonderland, Dreamland, and Edisonia.³⁶ By the time of the death in 1960, he built many other theatres including the Garden in 1917, the Gloria from 1921 to 1926, and the Riviera in 1939. The American, Arcade, and Avondale were purchased by him.³⁷

Albert Sottile's activities stretched into Charleston's civic sphere too. He established the Charleston Development Board and the Charleston Industrial Association.³⁸ He was a member of the Port Utility Commission and helped established a municipal airport.³⁹ He acted as director for the Dime Savings Bank, South Carolina National Bank, and the Chamber of Commerce. He also participated in Red Cross drives and established a community chest.⁴⁰ In 1950, Albert established the Albert Sottile Foundation, awarding four five hundred-dollar scholarships to two Charleston boys and two Charleston girls to assist them in acquiring a

³³ Charleston Evening Post, Funeral Services Set Tomorrow for Albert Sottile, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁴ Charleston Evening Post, Funeral Services Set Tomorrow for Albert Sottile, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁵ Charleston Evening Post, Funeral Services Set Tomorrow for Albert Sottile, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁶ Thomas R. Waring, The Sottile family: Achievers from Italy, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁷ Albert Sottile, *Theatre Owner Is Dead At 81*, 1960, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁸ Marjorie Campbell, Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

³⁹ Marjorie Campbell, Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴⁰ Marjorie Campbell, Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

college education.⁴¹ The boys would be enrolled at the Citadel and the girls would have their pick of any college in South Carolina. In 1958 he was presented a plaque for being an outstanding showman by the Theatre Owners of North and South Carolina, Inc.⁴²

⁴¹Marjorie Campbell, Sottile Exhibits Rare Trait For Show Business Man, 1988, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴²Charleston Evening Post, *Sottile Honored By Theater Group At Convention Here*, 1958, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

Riviera Theatre

Albert Sottile built the Riviera Theatre from 1937 to 1939. The theatre was officially opened to the public on January 28, 1939.⁴³ The first feature to be shown was *Secrets of a Nurse*.⁴⁴ Charles C. Benton designed the Riviera and which was Charleston's first motion picture theatre.⁴⁵ The theatre closed in 1977 and then reopened in January 1983 to show classic and foreign language films. This new venture only lasted nine months before the structure closed its doors again in November 1983. Since 1983 the property has changed hands countless times and has seen the interior be gutted and renovated attempting to find a use for it. For example, a church leased the venue for a year in 1979 and then left.⁴⁶

In 1987 the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) gave permission pending final approval for plans to transform the theatre into a retail center.⁴⁷ Final approval of the plan came with numerous stipulations including the Pastime Amusement Company had to restore the front façades marquee, the ticket box and document the interior and exterior of the structure according to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Department of the Interior.⁴⁸ Another stipulation was the scale of the door on the western end

⁴³ Robert P. Stockton, The Riviera: Art Deco Architecture, 1980, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴⁴ Robert P. Stockton, The Riviera: Art Deco Architecture, 1980, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴⁵ Jonathan H. Poston, The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997, 363.

⁴⁶ Charles deV. Williams and Arlie Porter, Riviera Is Sold To Partnership For \$1 Million, 1988, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴⁷ David Schneider, BAR Gives Nod To Riviera Theatre Redesign, 1987, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁴⁸ David Schneider, BAR Gives Nod To Riviera Theatre Redesign, 1987, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

of the theatre's south façade needed to be decreased.⁴⁹ The new plan does not include a fourth floor, but called for the addition of two projecting bays onto the south façade and added ornamentation to doors and windows on the south façade.⁵⁰

In 1988 the Pastime Amusement Company sold the property for one million dollars to the Knight/Amherst Riviera Joint Venture.⁵¹ The Knight/Amherst Riviera Joint Venture consisted of businessmen from Charleston and South Pines, South Carolina.⁵² Charles S. Way Jr. became head of the Pastime Amusement Company after the death of Albert Sottile.⁵³

Between 1988 and 1992 the Riviera saw many alterations to the interior. During this period Raymond A. Knight Jr. owned the theatre and was approved for a permit in July 1991 to gut the interior of the structure, but had another application pending where he applied to demolish the Riviera.⁵⁴ The permit pertaining to the interior allowed for wall murals, the stage surround, chairs, carpeting and floor slabs of the auditorium to be removed.⁵⁵ The gutting of the interior was approved, but Knight was not granted permission to demolish the theatre. Knight faced backlash in the form of a group called Friends of the Riviera Theatre. Friends of the Riviera Theatre was a group comprised of concerned citizens and preservationists who wanted

⁴⁹ David Schneider, BAR Gives Nod To Riviera Theatre Redesign, 1987, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁰ David Schneider, BAR Gives Nod To Riviera Theatre Redesign, 1987, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵¹ Charles deV. Williams and Arlie Porter, Riviera Is Sold To Partnership For \$1 Million, 1988, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵² Charles deV. Williams and Arlie Porter, Riviera Is Sold To Partnership For \$1 Million, 1988, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵³ Charles deV. Williams and Arlie Porter, Riviera Is Sold To Partnership For \$1 Million, 1988, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁴ Kerri Morgan and Elsa F McDowell, *Riviera Theatre Owner Gets Permit To Gut Landmark*, 1991, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁵ Kerri Morgan and Elsa F McDowell, *Riviera Theatre Owner Gets Permit To Gut Landmark*, 1991, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

to see the structure be restored and used as a theatre. John Meffert, a member of the group connects the possibility of the Riviera being torn down to the demolition of the Charleston Orphan House at Calhoun and St. Philip Streets.⁵⁶ In the same newspaper article Meffert voiced his displeasure with the possible changes to the theatre, once Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. said he was also opposed to any changes to either the exterior or interior of the structure.⁵⁷ The main road block Knight faced was finding a suitable and affordable use for the building at the time to pair with an adequate buyer. One possible solution to the problem was converting the theatre into a venue for the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, but that never came to fruition.

After years of debating on how the Riviera should be used, Charleston City Council decided to buy the structure from Raymond A. Knight Jr. for 2.3 million dollars.⁵⁸ Before selling the property to Charleston Place for ninety-six thousand dollars, the city had to repair leaks found in two heating oil tanks buried on site.⁵⁹

After Charleston Place acquired the property, they got a loan from City Council to cover the purchase price and an additional 2.4 million for renovations.⁶⁰ Charleston Place alone spent 1.4 million of their own money on renovations too.⁶¹ The first issue tackled during renovations

⁵⁶Kerri Morgan and Elsa F McDowell, Riviera Theatre Owner Gets Permit To Gut Landmark, 1991, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁷ Kerri Morgan and Elsa F McDowell, Riviera Theatre Owner Gets Permit To Gut Landmark, 1991, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁸ Robert Behre, *Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center*, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁵⁹ Robert Behre, *Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center*, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁰ Robert Behre, *Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center*, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶¹ Robert Behre, *Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center*, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

was the leaking roof. The roof became damaged because of a fire in 1992 and water it took to extinguish the blaze.⁶² Architect Bill Huey of Bull Huey & Associates did mention numerous additions and details of the interior that would be saved however. An elevator would be installed near King Street and one of the large movie projectors would be cleaned and put on display.⁶³ Most of the interior details found on the second floor would remain including murals on the theatre's side and will add two more murals to the western end of the theatre.⁶⁴ Most importantly the balcony with its seats and the Greek comedy and tragedy masks will be restored and retained.⁶⁵ Overall roughly eighty percent of the interior according to Bill Huey will be restored and preserved.⁶⁶ On the exterior six feet will be added to an existing four-foot sidewalk on the Market Street side of the property.⁶⁷ This extra footage is needed to create an arcade and new retail entrances which can be seen today.⁶⁸ Later a 3.8-million-dollar renovation took place to transform the theatre into a mix use structure with conference and office spaces along with five shops.

⁶² John P. McDermott, *Revised Riviera restoration to feature added retail space*, 1995, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶³ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁴ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁵ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁶ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁷ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁸ Robert Behre, Riviera gets new look: Renovation starts on the new retail conference center, 1996, Theatres-Riviera, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

Suffragette Connection

The Academy Music did have a slight connection to the suffragette movement in Charleston. On February 16, 1919 the theatre was the venue for an event called the Prison Special. The Prison Special was a national event where women traveled around the United States who had been jailed for advocating for equal rights for women visited cities to voice their experiences and ideas. Unfortunately, after searching various resources not much could be found about the Prison Special. There were a few articles briefly describing what the event was and how it was conducted. The same could be said for Estelle McBee who helped organize the event and was in charge of ushers for the event. Information on Estelle McBee is lacking and the only pieces of information found relating to her activities in Charleston was she was in charge of ushers at the Prison Special in 1919, she was a teacher at an all-girls school known as Ashley Hall and she was part of senior committee who assisted in raising funds for a public swimming pool by putting on a ball on the night of February 8, 1919.

Estelle does have a sister, Mary Vardrine McBee who did have significantly more information available. Mary like Estelle was involved in the suffragette movement and had a major impact on girls' education in Charleston. Before Mary McBee graduated from Columbia University with a masters in 1909, she taught at Fairmont Boarding School.⁶⁹ Mary McBee founded an all-girl school known as Ashley Hall in 1909 and was located at 172 Rutledge

⁶⁹ News and Courier, *Mary Vardrine McBee, Educator Extraordinary*, 1956, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

Avenue.⁷⁰ The piece of property was bought from the estate of Charles Otto Witte.⁷¹ Ashley Hall stood as one of the top boarding schools in South Carolina.⁷² In 1932 she received an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature from Converse College in recognition of her contributions to the education of girls in South Carolina.⁷³ Her achievements were not limited to Ashley Hall alone, but extended into other civic spheres. Mary spearheaded the movement for the Charleston Free Library and later became president of the institution.⁷⁴ Mary was part of several executive boards including Pinehaven Tuberculosis Hospital, the Free Kindergarten, Girl Scouts, the Interracial Relations Committee, the Poetry Society and the Civic Club.⁷⁵ Two other significant events were Mary founded and became the first president of the Charleston Chapter of American Association of University Women.⁷⁶ She was also the first women to serve on Charleston's School Board.⁷⁷

⁷⁰News and Courier, *Mary Vardrine McBee, Educator Extraordinary*, 1956, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷¹ News and Courier, *Mary Vardrine McBee, Educator Extraordinary*, 1956, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷² News and Courier, *Mary Vardrine McBee, Educator Extraordinary*, 1956, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷³ News and Courier, *Mary Vardrine McBee, Educator Extraordinary*, 1956, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷⁴ Bio of Dr. Mary Vardrine McBee, 1958, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷⁵ Bio of Dr. Mary Vardrine McBee, 1958, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷⁶Bio of Dr. Mary Vardrine McBee, 1958, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

⁷⁷ Bio of Dr. Mary Vardrine McBee, 1958, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.

Conclusion

The land now designated as 227 King Street has seen many changes whether it be altering the land itself through changing the built environment around it or continually building new structures.

When conducting this research there were several road blocks encountered making it difficult to either provide a complete chain of title or give information on the Prison Special that took place at the Academy of Music on February 16, 1919. 227 King Street had countless transactions throughout its history, many times the property would be transferred to an individual and then transferred to a company. The difficulty with this is because the individual would be the president of the company and this happened many times. Examples of this be Albert Sottile and the Pastime Amusement Company, Jake Wells with the Southern Exhibiting Company, and Albert Weis and the Charleston Theatre Company. There is a gap in the chain of title presented where the next earliest person to have owned the property before Flora O. Moses could not be found. Ward books in the Historic Deed Room had to be used to continue the chain of title.

Deeds were an issue because holes in who received the property were numerous and caused gaps and required other methods besides consulting the cross indexes to be utilized. The chain of title presented in this report concludes in the year 1838 with the property being owned by Moses C. Levy. The next earliest owner is not presented because when looking at every deed related to properties owned by Levy located on King Street, each one stated the

property was on the east side of King Street. This creates an issue because 227 King Street is located on the west side of King Street.

Future research on the property should focused on fleshing out the deeds and completing the chain of title. When referencing the various newspaper articles found in vertical files, there appears to be confusion on who constructed the structure on the property. Several sources credit either Andrew F. Browning and William W. Leman with building the structure the Academy of Music took over, others credit Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison. Further research on the suffragette movement and prominent women who took part in the movement in Charleston should be conducted. The lack of information on Estelle McBee and the Prison Special was eye opening. Filling in these gaps will not fully tell the story of 227 King Street, and will assist in creating a deeper and fuller history of Charleston itself.

Appendix A: Chain of Title:

8/6/1838

Grantor: Moses C. Levy

Grantee: Charles & Edwin L. Kerrison

Book/Page: V10-296

Type: Conveyance

Moses C. Levy sold the property to Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison. Charles Kerrison was a Colonel in the American army.

2/20/1852

Grantor: Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison

Grantee: A.F. Browning & W.W. Leman

Book/Page: R12-289

Type: Release

Charles and Edwin L. sold the property to Andrew F. Browning and William W. Leman. Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison built a building on the property in 1838 to act as a Department Store.

2/19/1852

Grantor: Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison

Grantee: A.F. Browning & W.W. Leman

Book/Page: R12-287

Type: Lease

Charles and Edwin L. leased the property to Andrew F. Browning and William W. Leman. Charles and Edwin L. Kerrison built a building on the property in 1838 to act as a Department Store.

1852

Grantor: A.F. Browning & W.W. Leman

Grantee: Edward Bancroft

Book/Page: T12-159

Type: Conveyance

Andrew F. Browning and William W. Leman sold the property to Edward Bancroft. Browning and Leman had converted the Kerrison building into a dried goods store.

1856

Grantor: Edward Bancroft

Grantee: James Adger

Book/Page: V13-118

Type: Mortgage

Edward Bancroft mortgaged the property to James Adger.

1858

Grantor: Edward Bancroft

Grantee: James Adger

Book/Page: E14-456

Type: Release

Shortly after Bancroft transferred his mortgage to James Adger, Bancroft sold the property outright to Adger. From this point the building is known as the Adger Building. Two lots of land were combined into one.

1869

Grantor: E.W. Marshall et al.

Grantee: John Chadwick

Book/Page: K15 Volume 1-290

Type: Conveyance

E.W. Marshall acted as the trustee for Leah Hart. Leah's maiden name was Jackson and she married a gentleman by the name of Ernest Lewis Hart. When Ernest died he left the property to his wife Leah as a life estate for her to use for the rest of her life.

5/29/1875

Grantor: John Chadwick

Grantee: John E. Owens

Book/Page: U16-174

Type: Conveyance

John Chadwick sold the property to John E Owens for forty-two thousand dollars. The deed mentioned the street was widened in 1838. This is the first deed where the property is mentioned as being the Academy of Music. The deed also states the property encompasses two lots of land. John E. Owens owned the house during the earthquake of 1861.

March 1900

Grantor: Flora O. Moses

Grantee: Otto A. Moses

Book/Page: Q22-230

Type: Will

Flora O. Moses died and appointed her son Otto A. Moses to be executor of her estate.

7/21/1900

Grantor: Otto A. Moses

Grantee: William T. Keogh

Book/Page: Q22-230

Type: Conveyance

After Otto A. Moses became executor of his mother Flora's estate he sold the property to a New Yorker by the name of William T. Keogh.

4/22/1905

Grantor: William T. Keogh

Grantee: Albert Weis

Book/Page: F24-483

Type: Conveyance

William T. Keogh a New Yorker sold the property to Albert Weis who was the president of the Charleston Theatre Company. Other lots of land are mentioned to be united onto the Academy of Music's property.

2/10/1911

Grantor: Albert Weis

Grantee: Charleston Theatre Company

Book/Page: O25-320

Type: Conveyance

Albert Weis sold but in actuality transferred the property from being in his name to his business the Charleston Theatre Company.

2/15/1916

Grantor: Southern Exhibiting Co. (Jake Wells)

Grantee: Charleston Theatre Company (Albert Weis)

Book/Page: C25-403

Type: Lease

Jake Wells is the president of the Southern Exhibiting Company.

1/31/1919

Grantor: Charleston Theatre Company

Grantee: The Pastime Amusement Company

Book/Page: C25-466

Type: Lease

3/11/1919

Grantor: Albert Sottile

Grantee: The Pastime Amusement Company

Book/Page: K29-363

Type: Conveyance

Albert Sottile died and the property was transferred over to his business the Pastime Amusement Company. The dimensions of the property at the time was fifty feet and six inches by fifty-seven feet and ten inches. The mentions that King Street was widened in 1838.

June 1937

Grantor: The Pastime Amusement Company

Grantee: Theatres Realty Co.

Book/Page: W39-48

Type: Conveyance

12/23/1976

Grantor: Theatres Realty Co.

Grantee: The Pastime Amusement Company

Book/Page: F111-81

Type: Conveyance

The deed states that various reality companies were combined into one all-encompassing entity. This entity was Theatres Reality Company and was comprised of the Carolyn, Marylyn, Rosalind and Wentworth reality companies. The Theatres Reality Company was owned by Albert Sottile.

7/22/1986

Grantor: The Pastime Amusement Company

Grantee: 227 Knight Partnership

Book/Page: Y155-214

Type: Conveyance

6/11/1987

Grantor: 227 Knight Partnership

Grantee: The Pastime Amusement Company

Book/Page: Z165-813

Type: Conveyance

12/29/1988

Grantor: The Pastime Amusement Company

Grantee: Knight/Amherst Riviera Joint Venture

Book/Page: S180-30

Type: Conveyance

8/29/1989

Grantor: Knight/Amherst Riviera Joint Venture

Grantee: Raymond A. Knight Jr.

Book/Page: E187-635

Type: Conveyance

12/31/1992

Grantor: Raymond A. Knight Jr.

Grantee: City of Charleston

Book/Page: D222-363

Type: Conveyance

1/9/1996

Grantor: City of Charleston

Grantee: Charleston Center LLC

Book/Page: B264-675

Type: Conveyance

The city of Charleston sold the property to Charleston Center LLC. Charleston LLC is a Delaware limited liability company.

Appendix B: Maps



Figure 1: G.K. Thompson, Original High Water Mark, Boroughs, Fortifications & Historic Information 1680-1849. Map. Retrieved from Charleston County Public Library South Carolina Room. Accessed November 15, 2019.



Figure 2: J.S. Nixon, Plan of the City of Charleston, Charleston Neck and its Vicinity, with the latest improvements and alterations designs as a guide to the City 1842. Map. Retrieved from Charleston County Public Library South Carolina Room. Accessed November 15, 2019.

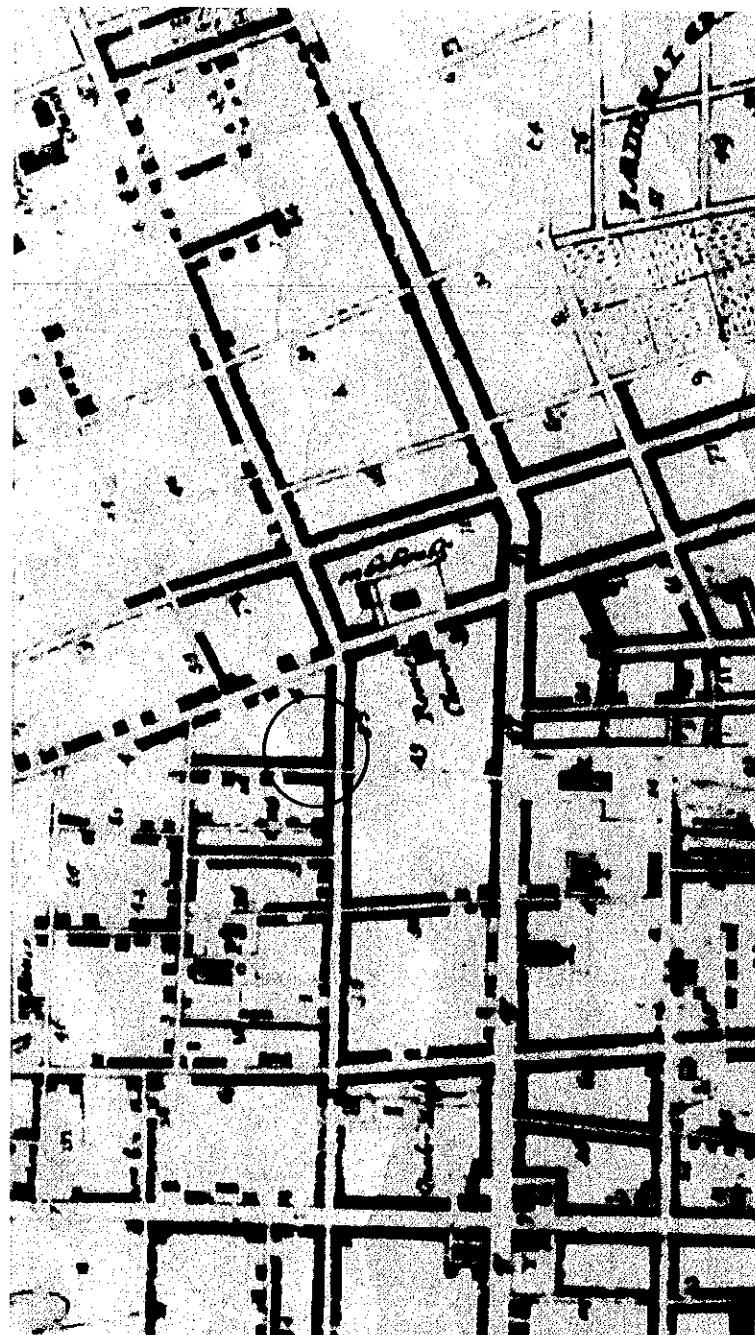


Figure 3: Plan of the City of Charleston South Carolina 1802. Map. Retrieved from Charleston County Public Library South Carolina Room. Accessed November 15, 2019.

Figure 4: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1884*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_1884, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 5: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1888*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_1888, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 6: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1902*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_1902, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 7: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1902 Revised April 1944 Volume 1*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_01_1944, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 8: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1902 Revised February 1951*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_01_1951, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 9: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, *University of South Carolina 1902 Revised 1955 Volume 1*, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.” https://fims-historicalinfo-com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/FIMSSD.aspx?m=08124_01_1955, Accessed September 28, 2019.

Figure 10: Charleston Evening Post, *Sottile Honored By Theater Group At Convention Here*, 1958, Sottile, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.



Figure 11: Selby Paul, *Two Sisters Came To Charleston*, McBee, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Room, Charleston, S.C.



Figure 4



BITION - The SANBORN MAP & PUBLISHING CO. intended with LOAD, to parties purchasing one copy of the map or Diagrams, with the mutual understanding and agreement that it is to be used exclusively by their General or Local Agent and with the further agreement that if not so used, one of the two copies will be returned to said Company.

568

SHEET

N^o. 10.

Market

MARKET

SEE SHEET NO. 11

MEETING

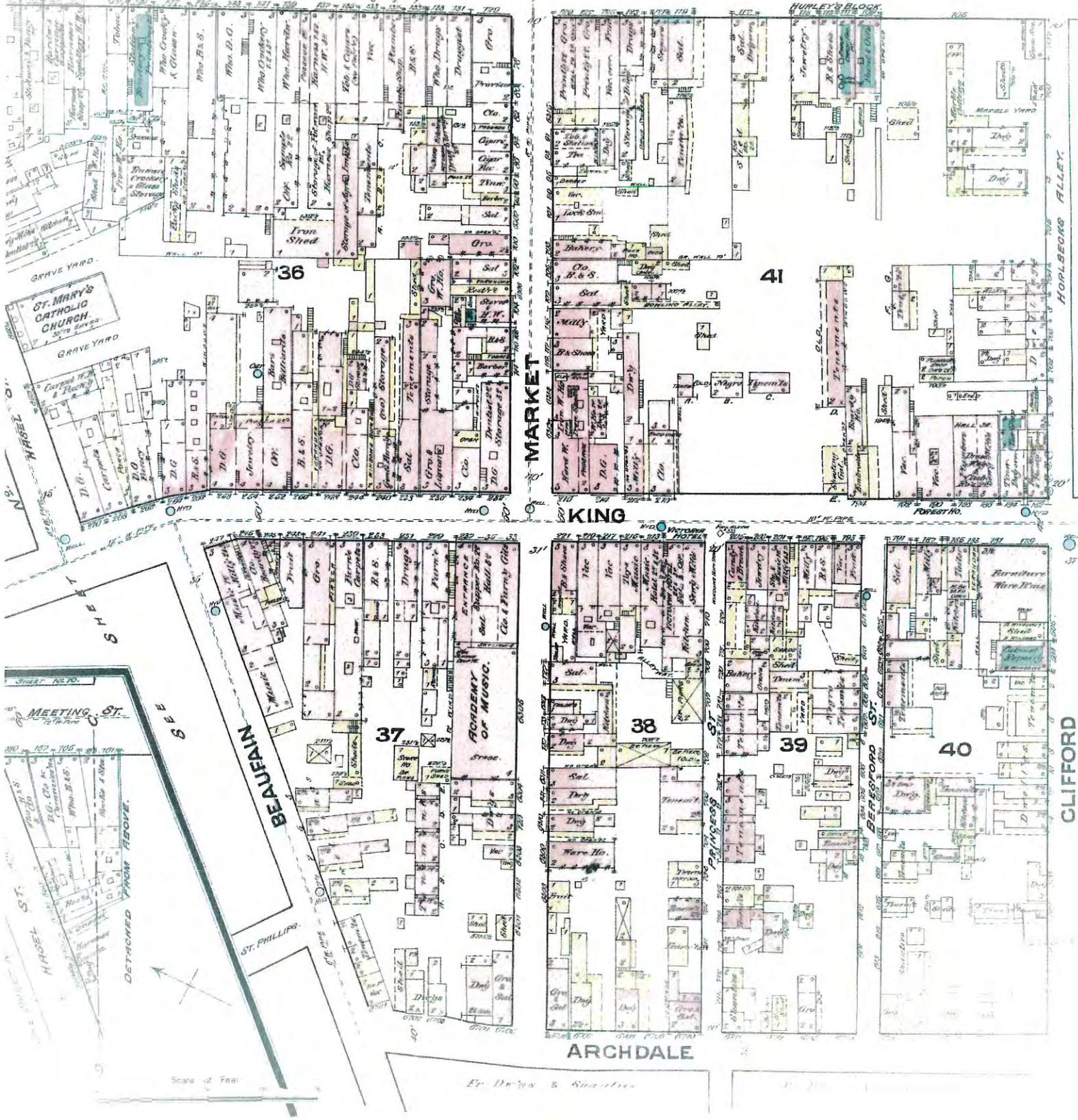




Figure 6

44

MEETING ST. S

57

43

51

WENTWORTH ET AL.

CHASELL ST. E.

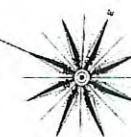
HOTEL
KING ST.

HASELL ST. E.

A historical map of a city block in New Bern, North Carolina, showing streets, buildings, and property boundaries. The map includes labels for Beaufain St. W., Market St. W., Archdale St. S., and a building labeled "PENNS & ORGANS". A scale bar at the bottom right indicates distances from 50 to 100 feet.

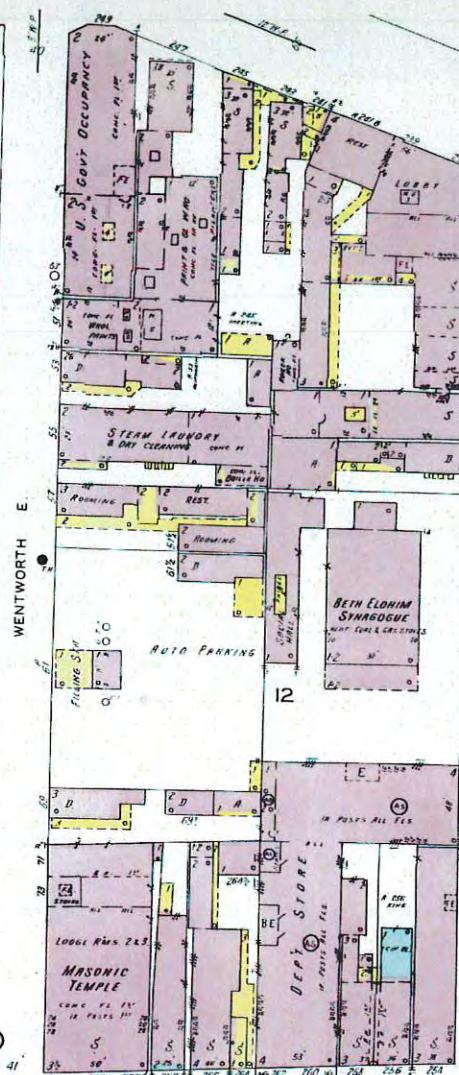
56

MARKET ST.



Scale of Feet.

43



42

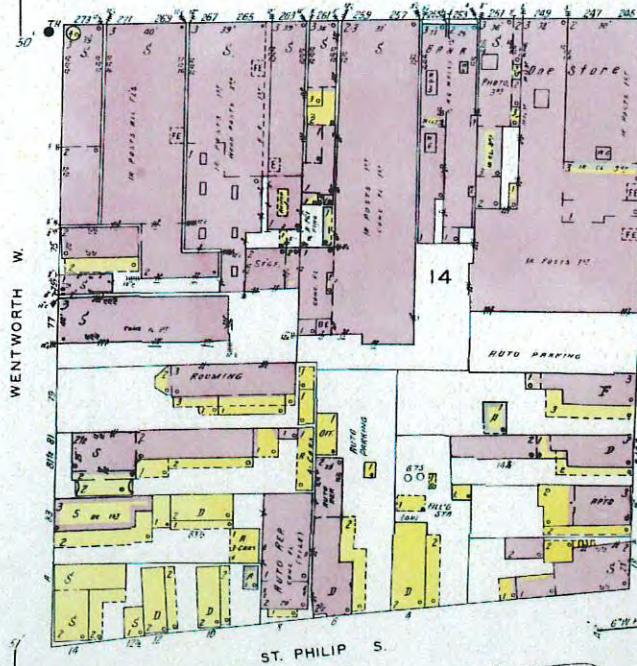
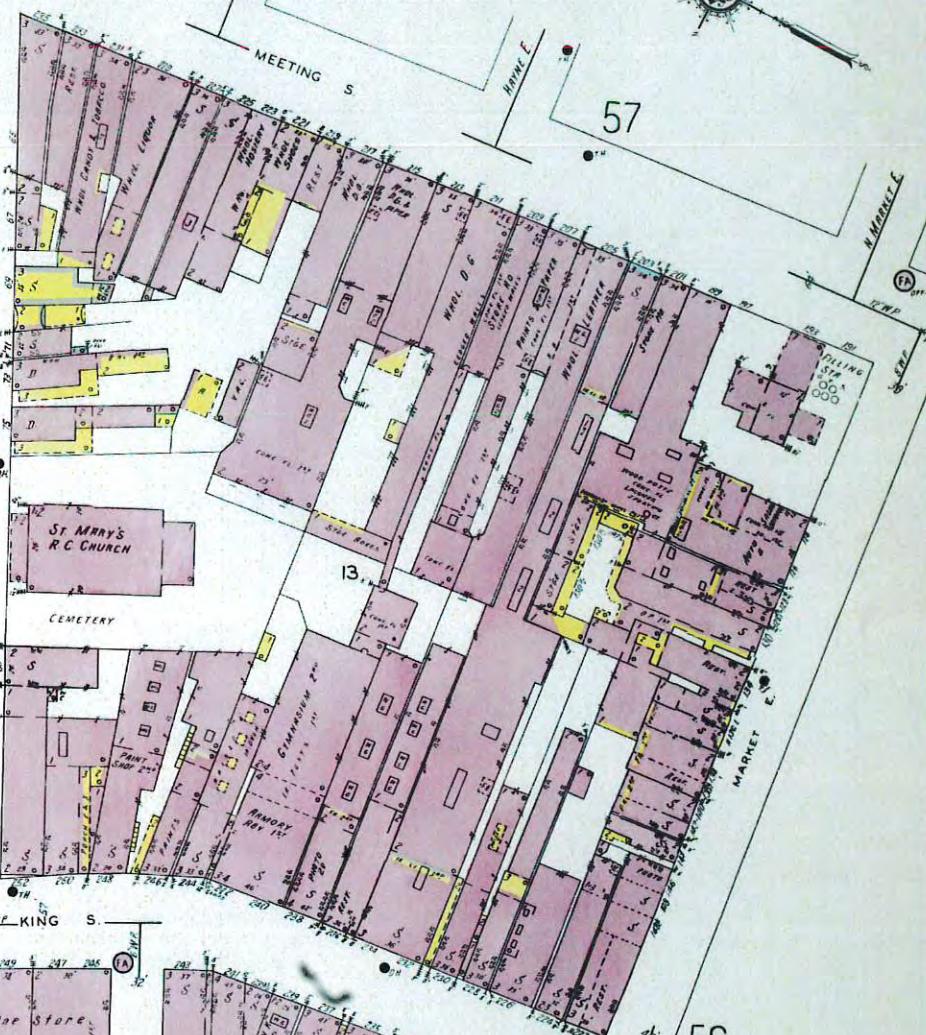
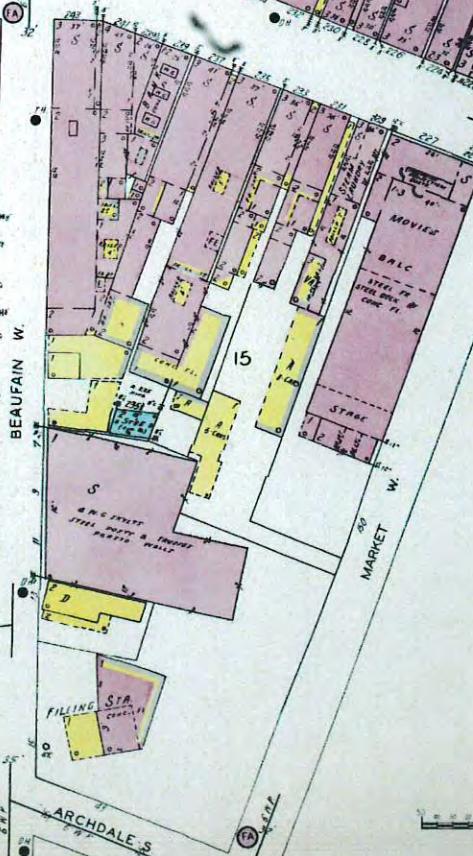


Figure 7

44



51



57

56

Figure 8



43

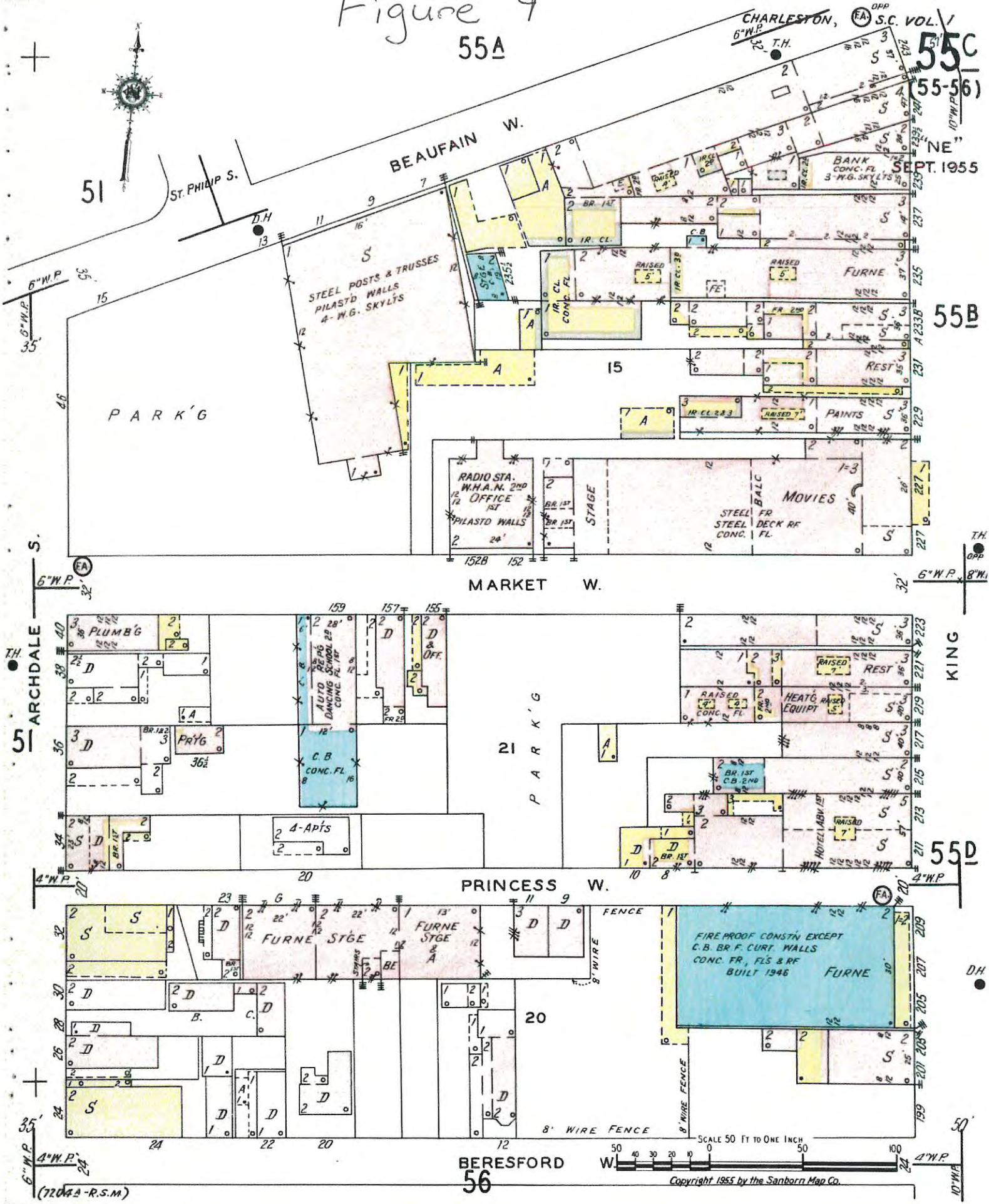
42

Architectural floor plan of a building, likely a theater, showing various rooms and sections. The plan includes:

- MOVIES** (Large purple section)
- BALC.** (Balcony area)
- STEEPLE CHASE** (Section labeled 'STEEL TRUSS', 'STEEL DECK', and 'CONCRETE')
- STAGE** (Large yellow section)
- RADIO STATION** (Section labeled 'WIRELESS', 'MICROPHONE', and 'ANTENNA')
- MARKET** (Section labeled 'STEEL TRUSS', 'STEEL DECK', and 'CONCRETE')
- W** (West) and **E** (East) orientation markers
- N** (North) orientation marker

Figure 9
55A

55A



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