

## ***Louisville Historical Commission Agenda***

***March 2, 2016***

***Louisville Public Library Meeting Room***

***951 Spruce Street***

***6:30 PM***

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of agenda
- IV. Public comments
- V. Approval of January 6, 2016 regular meeting minutes– *see attached draft*
- VI. Discussion/Direction/Action – Review and comment on 817 Main Interpretive Plaques – *see attached history of 817 Main and memo from Lauren Trice*
- VII. Report from the Museum Coordinator
  - A. Approval of Deeds of Gifts from donors
  - B. Advice sought on donations of other artifacts being offered
  - C. Museum Coordinator’s written report – *see attached memo*
  - D. Museum Master Plan
    - i. Schedule update & business plan update
    - ii. Request for revision of recently adopted Collections Management Policy - *see attached memo*
    - iii. Update on provisions of recently adopted Visitor Policy
    - iv. Update on Historic Structure Assessment application process
- VIII. Chairperson’s Report
- IX. Election of Vice Chair (postponed from last meeting)
- X. Commission Request for Capital Funding to Submit to the City: 5-year Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget requests (2017-2021). (This item is to be discussed by boards and commissions at their March 2016 meetings.)
- XI. Planning for annual City Council Study Session (April 26, 6:30 PM, Library) (Chairperson) – *see attached Council Communication*

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- A. Seeking interested members to participate in Study Session planning subcommittee
- B. Encouragement for all Historical Commission members to attend the Study Session on April 26
- XII. Items of common interest with the Historic Preservation Commission: reports from HPC liaison and from HC liaison to HPC (Paula Elrod)
  - A. Designation of alternate liaison to Historic Preservation Commission for 2016 (requested by liaison Paula Elrod)
- XIII. Louisville History Foundation update
- XIV. Commission comments & discussion items for next meeting
- XV. Close meeting & adjourn

## ***Louisville Historical Commission Minutes***

***January 6, 2016  
Louisville Public Library Meeting Room  
951 Spruce Street  
6:30 PM***

- I. **Call to order; introductions of new Commission member & the new City Council liaison:** Commission Chair Dan Mellish called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. Dan Mellish introduced one new LHC member, Gordon Madonna and new City Council liaison Jay Keany. All LHC members and guests re-introduced themselves and welcomed the new members.
- II. **Roll Call:**

**Commission Members Present:** Dan Mellish, Lynn Koglin, Paula Elrod, Gordon Madonna, and Jon Ferris

**Commission Members Absent:** Betty Scarpella and Julie VanLaanen

**City Representatives Present:**

Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator

Jay Keany, City Council liaison

**Other Individuals Present:**

Lynda Haley, Historic Preservation Commission liaison
- III. **Approval of agenda:** Members approved the agenda.
- IV. **Public comments:** None
- V. **Approval of November 4, 2015 regular meeting minutes & December 16, 2015 minutes from meeting on Museum business planning:** All minutes were approved with the addition of Megan Huelman to the minutes as having been present for the December 16, 2015 meeting on Museum business planning.
- VI. **Approval of Designation of Places for Posting of Notice of 2016 Public Meetings:** The list of places for posting of notice in 2016 was approved.
- VII. **Distribution of 2016 Open Government & Ethics Pamphlet:** All LHC members received copies of the Open Government & Ethics pamphlet. New members were asked to sign an affidavit agreeing that they received the pamphlet.
- VIII. **Approval of 2016 Meeting Dates & Location:**

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***City of Louisville***

LHC members approved the proposed meeting schedule for 2016, which is to meet at 6:30 PM on the first Wednesday of each odd-numbered month in the first floor meeting room of the Louisville Public Library.

**IX. Report from the Museum Coordinator:**

**A. Approval of Deeds of Gifts from donors:**

The Commission voted to accept the following 6 donations:

1. Barbara Hesson – American Legion cape worn by Mae Goodhue in Labor Day parades.
2. Curtis Vogt – two caricature maps of Louisville from 2000.
3. Dave Ferguson – serving bowl originally from the U.S. Navy that was used by women at the St. Louis Church for serving annual fundraising dinners.
4. Tony Draper – 1975 Centaurus yearbook.
5. Jim Hartnagle – wooden Carnation cereal box addressed to “L. Eberharter Louisville Co” at the Eberharter store on La Farge Ave., likely from 1915-16.
6. Fred Stones – pay phone used in Boulder County.

**B. Advice sought on donations of other artifacts being offered: None**

**C. Museum Coordinator’s written report:** In addition to her written report that was included in the meeting packet, Bridget reported that Megan Huelman has put together a student outreach project about phones. She visited a second grade class at Louisville Elementary School and brought phones for the students to touch and dial.

**D. Museum Master Plan:**

- i. **Schedule:** As discussed in the November Commission meeting, the Museum Master Plan is currently planned to be ready and presented to the Historical Commission at its March meeting for approval. It is hoped that the Commission would then be able to have a study session with City Council to discuss it, and in May present to City Council for approval.
- ii. **Business Plan update:** Louise Stevens of ArtsMarket was selected by the City to put together the Business plan. She had meetings with local businesses, DBA representatives, Chamber representatives, Historical Commission and Foundation members, Museum volunteers, and City staff to get feedback for the business plan. Bridget reported that the business plan draft is expected to be completed in the next week or so.

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**iii. Interpretive Plan update & request for approval of three policies:**

- 1. Discussion/Direction/Action – approval of revised Collections Management Policy:** Three changes were made to the collections management policy since the November meeting: In the Procedures of Acceptance section, it is a priority for each item entering the Museum's collection to be given a number. In Method of Disposal section, states that the Museum is excluded from the City of Louisville's Purchasing Policy of Disposal of Surplus Property Policy, and the funds received from any deaccessioned items sold will be put into the City's general fund and spent within a reasonable time period on the development and care of the collections. The Commission approved one additional change, which is to state in the policy that when items are deaccessioned, the items "should first be offered" to the donor or donor's heirs. All changes were approved.
- 2. Discussion/Direction/Action – approval of updated Visitor Policy:** Bridget stated that she was asked to look over the Library's code of conduct and make changes to the Visitor policy. In particular in the inappropriate behavior guidelines of the Visitor Policy, openly displaying a weapon was added. The Commission approved the policy draft with the addition of prohibiting vaping in the Museum as well. Jay Keany suggested that Bridget check to make sure that the policy may legally list the open display of weapons in the list of inappropriate behaviors.
- 3. Discussion/Direction/Action – approval of new Volunteers Policy:** Modeled on the Library policy. The Volunteers Policy was approved.
- 4. Scheduling of subcommittee meeting to discuss revisions and additions to the Master Plan:**  

A meeting will be set up sometime in late January early February to go over the Master Plan draft. Dan, Paula, and Gordon volunteered to be a part of the meeting.

**X. Chairperson's Report**

- A. Commission attendance at Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 budget retreat & at future budget meetings:** Dan asked Commission members to attend the upcoming City Council budget retreat as a presence for the Historical Commission. Gordon volunteered to be at the retreat and give a statement

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to the City Council to voice the Commission's views and concerns on the City's decisions on the 2016 budget and the needs of the Museum. Dan offered to prepare a statement.

- XI. Louisville Citizen Survey for 2016 – phrasing of question regarding the Museum:** At the November meeting, Heather Balser invited the Commission to submit possible questions to include in the citizen survey. Bridget provided the Commission with the 2012 survey questions and results. In the survey, the Museum was in item 23 about rating the importance of aspects Louisville's character. Bridget stated that Beth Barrett has suggested that a question about the Museum be placed with the Dept. of Library & Museum Services section of the survey. The Commission approved of requesting such a question, and also approved of requesting a question asking citizens if they would support adding the Museum (for both capital and operational funding) to benefit from the Historical Preservation Fund tax that is due for renewal, similar to the phrasing of question 24 on the 2012 survey.
- XII. Pioneer Award update:** Paula reported that the plaque had been completed and Ted and Carolyn Manzanares were notified of receiving the award. Paula will be presenting the award at the Chamber of Commerce Banquet.
- XIII. Items of common interest with the Historic Preservation Commission: reports from HPC (Lynda Haley) and from HC liaison to HPC (Paula Elrod):** Lynda reported the HPC approved their Preservation Master plan in 2015, and with the Master Plan a "period of significance" of 1955 and earlier was added.
- A. 2016 Liaison to Historic Preservation Commission:** Paula volunteered to continue to be the liaison with the HPC but asks that there be an alternate to go to the meetings. Commission decided to continue this at March's meeting.
- XIV. Election of officers for 2016 (officers assume duties upon election):** The slate of officers elected for 2016 were: Dan Mellish, Chairperson, and Jon Ferris, Secretary. These appointments were approved. The Commission decided that the election of Vice-Chairperson will be held at the March meeting.
- XV. Louisville History Foundation update:**
- At the last History foundation meeting Tammy Lastoka was elected as a director and Treasurer, and Paula Elrod was voted in as a director. Paula is the second liaison from the Historical Commission, in addition to Dan Mellish. The Foundation discussed finding a focus for promoting the Museum and directing future fundraising with three key points: education, preservation, and access.
- XVI. Commission comments & discussion items for next meeting:** None.
- XVII. Close meeting & adjourn:** The LHC meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2016.

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## **Historical Report**

### **817 Main Street, Louisville, Colorado**

According to the Boulder County Assessor's website, the property at 817 Main Street is owned by BLT Enterprises LLC and occupies the south 5 feet of Lot 10 & the north 20 feet of Lot 11, Block 5, in Original Louisville. Until the late 1930s, the address for this location was 320 Main.

This building, which is over 100 years old, represents a vibrant and important part of Louisville's history. It served the community as a movie theater (and, at times, a live theater) for nearly seventy years. This long run even extended into the late 1970s, which was a time when most small town movie theaters in the United States had disappeared. This theater (first called the Isis, then the Rex) brought popular movie culture to Louisville. As noted in a 1995 article in the Boulder Daily Camera, "The Rex was a large part of Louisville history because it was one of the central meeting grounds for much of the century." For many decades, it was the only theater in town.

The history of the Rex is also significant for its strong representation of Louisville history and demographics. From 1927 to 1972, members of Louisville's Italian community owned and operated the theater. In addition, a number of its owners were coal miners either prior to or at the same time as their ownership of the theatre.

Following this long history as a movie theater, the building came to have a role as part of Louisville's history as a restaurant town by being the location of a popular Mexican Restaurant, Senor T's, for about thirty years.

### **The Development of Original Louisville**

Online property records for Boulder County show that Louis Nawatny, who platted Original Louisville in 1878 and named it after himself, transferred part of Lot 10 and all of Lot 11 to Charles Weil in 1880.

Due to the fact that this parcel includes parts of lots rather than entire lots and due to the limitations of doing research in the online property records, which do not describe which part of a divided was being transferred from owner to owner, the earliest section of the chain of ownership could not be completed. It is possible that eventually, research of documents at the Boulder County Recorder's Office itself will be able to fully reveal this chain. Based on the online records, early owners of the property appear to have included such prominent Louisville residents as Joseph Youk, David and/or Jane Carlton, Martin Zurich, and attorney J. Vaughan Sickman.

Whatever the particular identities of the early owners, there is no question that the 800 block of Main Street (then called Second Street) was developed early in Louisville's history. The earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Louisville, for 1893, shows that every lot of the west side of the 800 block of Main Street was already developed with at least one building, all of them dwellings. A dwelling is shown straddling Lots 10 and 11,

as 817 Main currently does. It is possible that some part of the early dwelling on Lot 10 and 11 was incorporated into the current building when it was built.

### **Date of Construction of the Current Building at 817 Main**

Two different records from the Boulder County Assessor's Office give the different dates of 1900 and 1910 as the date of construction for the current building.



Photo 1, Louisville Historical Museum, E-M N-5

Also relevant to this inquiry of when the building was constructed is Photo 1, which shows a building in Louisville being built by H.H. Fischer. The granddaughter of this well known local family that was engaged in building construction stated to staff at the Louisville Historical Museum that this photo shows the construction of this building at 817 Main in 1898 and that H.H. Fischer is shown on the far right. However, this identification of the building in the photo and the separate issue of the date of the photo have not been independently verified. It should be noted that the 1900 Sanborn map for Louisville shows a dwelling that looks identical to the dwelling shown in this location on the 1893 Sanborn map. It is possible that this photo shows the construction of the building, but that it was not in 1898.

The billiard hall that occupied the building before it became a theater is shown on the 1908 Sanborn map.

It can be concluded that the date of construction for this building is circa 1900-1908.

## Early History as a Billiard Hall



Photo 2, Louisville Historical Museum E-B N-19

The records at the Louisville Historical Museum for Photo 2 state that it shows the interior of this building at 817 Main when it was a billiard hall. This was stated to be in “1907 or 1908.” Mike Wisek, who would later work as a movie projectionist for the Isis and Rex Theatres, is stated to be pictured in this photo. Verification that this photo in fact shows the building at 817 Main was not located.

The 1908 Sanborn fire insurance map for Louisville reveals a billiard hall in the correct location to be this building. It shows as a rectangular building situated right on the street. Unfortunately, the identification of the lot numbers is not accurate on the 1908 Sanborn map (and is inconsistent with the 1893 and 1900 Sanborn maps and with current property descriptions and County records) and should not be relied on for this part of Main Street in terms of the accuracy of the legal description.

### Ownership by Otto Todd and Janie Beveridge Todd; Isis Theatre; 1908-1918

Otto and Janie Todd acquired this property in 1908 and owned and operated a business here until 1918. Otto Todd, born in Wisconsin in 1875, was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He passed away in 1929. Janie Todd, born in Illinois in 1884, had lived in Louisville since her childhood as a member of the Scottish Beveridge family. She passed away in 1965.

Otto Todd is believed to have initially operated a billiard hall in this location. By the time of the census in 1910, however, he was listed as the operator of a moving picture theatre, and by 1911, according to a Louisville directory, he was the proprietor of the “Isis Theatre.” Thus, it was Otto Todd who began using the building as a movie theater. Films were projected from the front of the building to a screen at the rear.



Photo 3, 817 Main circa 1915, Louisville Historical Museum E-N N-8

Photo 3 shows the front of this building, most likely at the time that it was owned and operated by the Todds. A poster for the 1915 film *Anna Karenina* is being displayed in this photo.

**Ownership by Walter Dugan and by James Carper; Beginning of Rex Theatre, 1918-1927**

Walter Dugan purchased this property in 1918. By 1920, he was operating it under the name of the Rex Theatre.



Photo 4, Rex Theatre c. 1919, Louisville Historical Museum E-B N-9

Photo 4 shows the facade of the building from circa 1919, based on the poster for the 1919 film *Gambling in Souls* that is being displayed at the left rear. Dugan, the owner, and Mike Wisek, the projectionist, are pictured in this photo, according to the Museum's records.



Photo 5, Main Street scene c. 1919, Louisville Historical Museum E-C N-12

Photo 5 shows the Rex Theatre on the left. This photo shows a poster that is also shown in Photo 4, and so is also believed to have been taken in around 1919.

From 1920 to 1927, the building was owned by James Carper, who is also listed in directories for that period as the manager of the Rex.

According to an account printed in the August 1994 issue of the *Louisville Historian* and entitled "Movie Theaters in Our Town," live piano music for silent movies was performed in the theater in the 1920s, some of it performed by Mary Ferrari Franchini.

## **Ownership by Santino Biella and Continued Operation of Rex Theatre, 1927-1945**

In 1927, Santino Biella purchased this property and continued the operation of the Rex Theatre with his wife, Mary Zarini Biella. They owned and operated it until 1945.

Santino Biella was born in Italy in c. 1885. He was a coal miner prior to owning the Rex Theatre. He passed away in 1957. Mary Zarini Biella was born in Louisville in 1894 of Italian parents and died in 1966. The couple lived with their children in the 800 block of La Farge Avenue, almost directly west of the theater that they operated. (This was also the block where Mary had grown up.)

Santino, or Sandy, ran the business side and Mary sold tickets. According to the 1994 *Louisville Historian* article, which was assembled and edited by Sandy and Mary Biella's niece, Eileen Schmidt, "Shortly after Sandy and Mary Biella became owners of the Rex, the movie industry was booming and the Rex became a first-run facility. This meant that the movies were shown in Louisville at the same time they were being viewed in Denver and other larger cities. This was very important because people didn't have the means of traveling to the larger cities just to see a movie." The Biellas acquired a player piano that used punched paper rolls. Hazel Zarini Harris, Vito Romans, and others performed the role of operating the player piano.

The article goes on: "Mr. Biella offered part-time jobs, such as dusting the seats, sweeping the front lobby, sweeping the theater, and other work necessary to maintain the building to the young people of the community." The motion pictures were remembered as changing three times a week: "One movie was shown on Sunday and Monday, one on Tuesday and Wednesday, no movies on Thursday, and a different one on Friday and Saturday." Biella also instituted a Saturday matinee.

A Louisville resident from this time period recalls going to movies at the Rex Theatre in the 1920s and 1930s. He remembers a central aisle and the fact that the early sound system was not consistent for all areas of seating. He also recalls Sandy Biella trying to get noisy children to stay quiet during the movie showings.

Charles and Christine Zarini's candy store (now gone) right next to the Rex Theatre to the north was a convenient spot for audience members to buy candy before the show. Charles Zarini was the brother of Mary Zarini Biella and brother-in-law to Sandy Biella. Later, the Biellas started their own concession stand at the Rex.

Photos 6, 7, 8, and 9 show Main Street with the Rex Theatre included. The photos are believed to date from the 1920s.



Photo 6, Main Street, Louisville Historical Museum E-B N-10



Photo 7, Main Street, Louisville Historical Museum E-C N-6



Photo 8, Louisville Historical Museum 90-11-05C



Photo 9, Main Street, Louisville Historical Museum 2000.005.001

A colorfully painted canvas curtain (Photo 10) from the Rex Theatre that was enjoyed by Rex Theatre and Senor T's customers until Senor T's closed in 2008 dates from the early ownership of the theatre by Santino Biella. The canvas is strongly believed to have been created in the period of the late 1920s, during the silent movie era, and it displays advertising for twenty-two different downtown Louisville businesses that operated at the time. (The Zarini candy store next door was one of the businesses advertised on the curtain.)



Photo 10, Rex Theatre movie curtain, Louisville Historical Museum

As the 1994 *Louisville Historian* article notes, “[The Rex] also hosted other forms of entertainment such as plays presented by a group of local amateur actors, talent shows, [and] baby contests ...” One of these plays from circa 1927-1930 is pictured in Photo 11. The painted canvas curtain can be seen at the top of the photo, and player piano rolls can be seen on the stage. It is likely that the piano sat just out of the picture below the stage.



Photo 11, Louisville Historical Museum 2003.009.001

## Ownership of the Rex Theatre by Carmen and Ann Romano, 1945-1972

Carmen Romano was a projectionist at the Rex Theatre during the ownership of Sandy Biella, and he and his wife, Ann, ended up owning and operating it beginning in 1945. During the day, he worked as a coal miner in area coal mines and even became a mine superintendent.

Carmen Romano was born in Italy in 1906 and moved to the Louisville area in 1922. He died in 1993. Ann DiFrancia Romano was born in Superior in 1907. She passed away in 1999.

Carmen's skills as a mechanic, electrician, and plumber were useful in the business. A narrative about Carmen Romano written by his brother, Lewis, stated that Carmen made the marquee and "he was always on the ladder changing the billboard for coming new shows." Records at the Museum indicate that the Romanos also improved the building by installing restrooms. Carmen and Ann would drive to Denver every week to pick up a new film. They also are remembered for their efforts to quiet noisy young people in the audience.

Photos 12 and 13 show the Rex Theatre in the 1940s.



Photo 12, Louisville Historical Museum 2009.017

Photo 12, from 1946, shows that the building still had the large "Rex" sign at the top, but the marquee had been built.



Photo 13, Boulder County Assessor photograph of 817 Main, 1948

Photo 13, from the 1948 Boulder County Assessor's card, shows the building at a similar time.

Later, the "Rex" letters were removed from the top of the facade.



Photo 14, Louisville Historical Museum

Photo 14 shows the building in 1957.



Photo 15, Louisville Historical Museum

Photo 10 shows the Rex Theatre to the left in 1965.

### **Ownership by Daryl and Beth Decker, 1972-77**

The last operators of the Rex Theatre were Daryl and Beth Decker. They continued the practice of showing family oriented films at the Rex. According to the 1994 *Louisville Historian* article, the price of admission under the Deckers' ownership was 50 to 75 cents.

## **Senor T's Restaurant and Ownership by Ted and Carolyn Manzanares, 1977-2008**

Carolyn and Ted Manzanares established Senor T's Restaurant in 1972 on the east side of the 700 block of Main Street. In 1978, they opened the restaurant at 817 Main. The restaurant served such Mexican food dishes as burritos, quesadillas, chimichangas, tamales, and chile rellenos. Prior to opening, they made some alterations to the building.



Photo 16, Louisville Historical Museum

Photo 16 shows the building in 1979, after Senor T's Restaurant began to occupy this location.

In an interesting twist, Carolyn Manzanares is a member of the Mangus family whose clothing store was advertised at the top of the Rex Theatre movie curtain.

Following the closing of the Rex Theatre, two seats and the Rex ticket stand for customers to deposit their tickets in were donated to the Louisville Historical Museum. In 2010, Ted and Carolyn Manzanares donated the Rex Theatre movie curtain along with sconces and a clock that were used in the theater.

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, obituary records, and historical photographs from the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum.

Bridget Bacon, Louisville Historical Museum  
April 2010

## Memorandum

**Date:** March 2, 2016  
**To:** Historical Commission  
**CC:** Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator  
**From:** Lauren Trice, Planner I  
**Subject:** Rex Theater Interpretive Plaques

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On December 1, 2015, City Council approved a request to amend the Grant of Conservation Easement in Gross for the Rex Theatre at 817 Main Street.

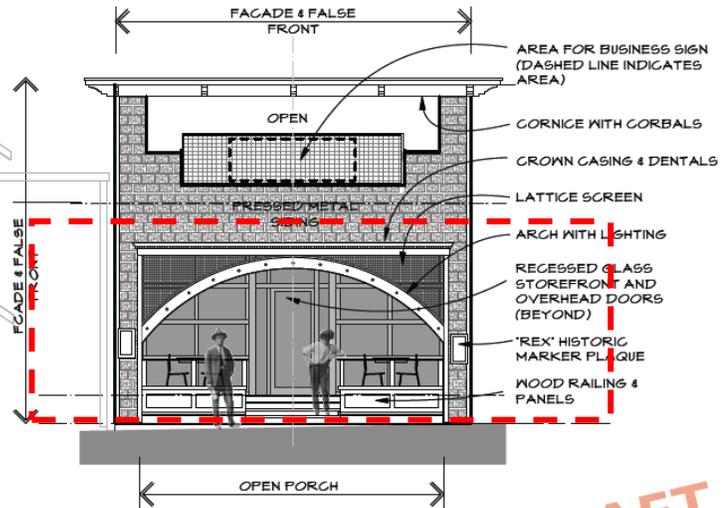


*817 Main East Elevation Current Photo*

The amendment restores the façade of the structure to better reflect the appearance of the building in early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The proposed design restores the recessed entry from the early 20th century Rex Theatre and allows for more flexibility with building signage, such that future businesses can change the sign as long as it fits within the intended sign field.



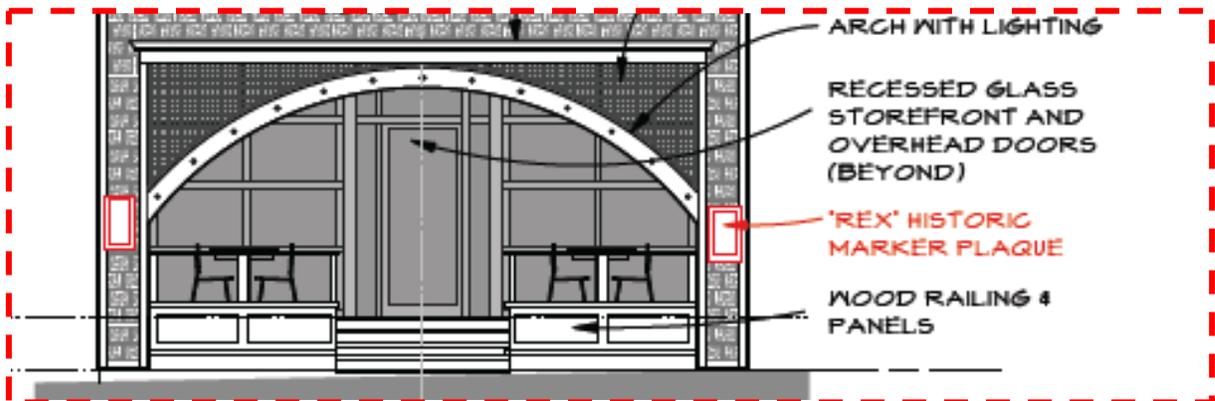
Historic Photograph  
(circa 1919)



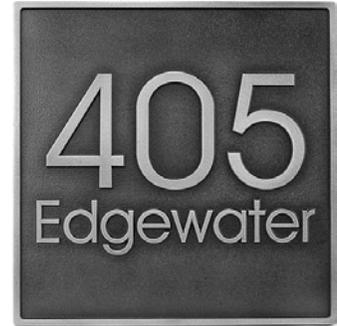
Street Facing Facade  
1/8" = 1'-0"

**DRAFT**  
11/18/15

As part of the amended conservation easement, the applicant will install interpretive plaques on the façade of the structure. City Council Resolution No. 87, Series 2015 states, "The language and design of the plaques are subject to review and approval by City Staff and the Historical Commission prior to installation".



The applicant proposed that the two signs be 10"x20" and cast in pewter. The plaques do not include images. Each plaque will include approximately 170 words about the history of the building.



Planning staff is requesting the Historical Commission recommend 340 words (or two sets of 170 words) for the interpretive plaques. Planning staff has edited down the full history to the following **draft** language:

Plaque 1 (168 words)

The history of the building at 817 Main Street represents the story of Louisville and the community's changing demographics. From 1927 to 1972, members of Louisville's Italian community owned and operated the building as the Rex Theatre. In addition, a number of its owners were coal miners either prior to or at the same time as their ownership of the theatre.

Following this long history as a movie theatre, the building came to have a role in Louisville's reputation as a restaurant town. The building was the location of a popular Mexican Restaurant, Senor T's, for about thirty years.

The colorfully painted canvas curtain from the Rex Theatre that was enjoyed by Rex Theatre and Senor T's customers until Senor T's closed in 2008. The canvas curtain, created during the silent movie era, displays advertising for twenty-two different downtown Louisville businesses that operated at the time. The curtain, along with other items from the Rex Theatre, can be seen at the Louisville Historical Museum at 1001 Main Street.

Plaque 2 (130 words)

The building at 817 Main Street, over 100 years old, represents a vibrant and important part of Louisville's history. It served the community as a movie theater, live theatre, and community gathering space for nearly seventy years. For many decades, it was the only theatre in town.

The theatre (first called the Isis, then the Rex) brought popular movie culture to Louisville. In 1927, when Santino Biella purchased this property Louisville residents were able to view movies at the same time they were viewed in Denver. The movies were accompanied by a player piano. Biella also offered part-time jobs to young people in the community. The building was used as a movie theater into the late 1970s, a period when most small town movie theaters in the United States disappeared.

Attachments:

- Rex Theater History

## Memorandum

To: Historical Commission  
From: Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator  
Date: February 23, 2016  
Re: Museum Coordinator's Report

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Paula Elrod presented the Pioneer Award to Ted and Carolyn Manzanaras on behalf of the Commission at the Chamber of Commerce banquet in January. Paula recognized Ted and Carolyn for their operation of Senor T's restaurant and support of community activities.

The City plans to honor Dave Ferguson for his years of service on the Historical Commission at the City Council meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Commission are invited to attend!

The Winter 2016 issue of *The Louisville Historian* with its lead article about "Tiny Houses with a History" was mailed to members in early February. I will lead a Brown Bag presentation and discussion on this topic on Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> from noon to 1 PM in the Library meeting room. Also, Megan Huelman will give a program on "Color and Design in Historic Textiles" on Thursday, April 7 at 7 PM in the Library meeting room.

In order to reduce confusion about the changing hours of the Museum, it was decided in late January to have consistent open hours year-round instead of changing the hours twice a year. So instead of changing the hours soon, we'll continue with the current hours of 10 AM to 3 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, plus we'll open the Museum for a few additional monthly hours for the First Friday Art Walks (starting with the Art Walk on Friday, April 1). We're delighted that the Museum is part of the Louisville Arts District and looking forward to planning some special programming during the Art Walks.

This year's City of Louisville's volunteer appreciation event for City volunteers, which includes Historical Commission members, is being tentatively planned for September.

The Louisville History Foundation ended 2015 with 705 total paying memberships as of 12/31/2015, including 87 new paying memberships that came in over the course of 2015. In 2015, the Foundation brought in \$11,750 in membership dues and \$14,715 in donations.

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Museum Visitors Report (these statistics represent visits to the Museum itself, and not inquiries that come in by email or phone): December 2015 visitors: 225; 2015 total visitors: 2913; January 2016 visitors: 207; 2016 YTD: 207.

# Memorandum

To: Historical Commission  
From: Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator  
Date: February 23, 2016  
Re: Revisiting Collections Management Policy adopted Jan. 2, 2016 to request a revision of the provision on permissible methods of disposal

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At the Jan. 6, 2016 meeting of the Historical Commission, I presented a Collections Management Policy for approval. I modeled the draft on approved collection management policies of other museums, including the collections management policy that was adopted by the Golden City Council for the Golden History Museums.

The section stating the deaccessioning policy, which covers the situations under which items may be permanently removed from the collection, laid out permissible methods of disposal of deaccessioned items. At the Jan. 6 meeting, the Commission approved the draft of the policy except for making the following additional revision. Under “Methods of Disposal,” instead of the policy stating:

“Items may be returned to the donor or donor’s heirs if the item was a gift and if the donor’s identity is known,”

the Commission felt that the policy should instead state:

“Items should first be offered to the donor or donor’s heirs if the item was a gift and if the donor’s identity is known.”

Because of wanting to fully understand the ethical and legal issues involved, I researched this aspect of the policy following the January meeting and found that there is some consensus among museum professionals that there should generally not be a provision in a Collections Management Policy stating that a museum should first offer a deaccessioned item back to the donor or the donor’s heirs. According to some, it is a well-intentioned idea that could have unforeseen consequences. Some of the reasons for revising this provision in our Museum’s policy are:

- It would put the Museum in a difficult position if there is more than one heir that would like to have the item, or if the donor and/or heirs are difficult to identify and reach.

- The donor may have taken a tax deduction when donating the item to the Museum, putting the Museum in a difficult position if the policy were to require the Museum to offer the deaccessioned item back to the donor or the donor's heirs.
- Requiring in the policy that deaccessioned items first be offered back to the donor or the donor's heirs could inadvertently send the message that the donor still has some control or legal interest in the item, which would go against the other provisions of the Collections Management Policy that state that the donor is making a complete transfer of ownership when donating the item.
- If the Museum is required to return the deaccessioned item to the donor or the donor's heirs and they then sell the item, that would deprive the Museum of the opportunity to sell the item and be able to spend the proceeds on the development and care of the collections (which is a permissible method of disposal under the policy).
- Many museum collection management policies do not allow deaccessioned items to be offered to the donor or the donor's heirs under any circumstances, even as one permissible option for disposing of the item.

I am bringing up these considerations now in order to respectfully request that the Commission revisit this provision of the Collections Management Policy and consider revising it to state that "Items may be returned to the donor or donor's heirs ...." as one of several permissible options for methods of disposal, as opposed to stating that "Items should first be offered to the donor or donor's heirs ...."

This would give the Museum staff the most flexibility in deciding on appropriate methods of disposal for different items that may be deaccessioned in the future. Also, stating it as one permissible option would still allow the Museum to offer a deaccessioned item to the donor or the donor's heirs if that is determined to be the most appropriate method of disposal for a particular item being deaccessioned.

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT – (INSERT BOARD/CSMN NAME)**

**DATE:**

**PRESENTED BY:**

- 1. LIST HIGHLIGHTS AND SUCCESSES OF THE PAST YEAR:**
- 2. LIST PLANS/GOALS FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS:**
- 3. IN WHAT AREAS DO YOU NEED CITY COUNCIL INPUT/FEEDBACK?**
- 4. DOES THE BOARD THINK TERM-LIMITS FOR BOARD MEMBERS WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA OR A BAD ONE?**
- 5. DOES YOUR BOARD HAVE PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS REGARDING MEMBER ABSENCES AT MEETINGS?**
- 6. DOES YOUR BOARD HAVE AN INFORMAL POLICY ABOUT ABSENCES FROM MEETINGS?**
- 7. DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY COUNCIL?**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discussion

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1.

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**