

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: DAW TheatreOther names/site number: 310-0024-0024

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 152 Prince StreetCity or town: Tappahannock State: VA County: EssexNot For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☐ N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DAW Theatre

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

Name of Property

<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>
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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐

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Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND

CULTURE - theater

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE BLOCK; BRICK



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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### **Summary Paragraph**

Located in the center of the Tappahannock Historic District (DHR 310-0024) in the Town of Tappahannock, Essex County, Virginia, the DAW Theatre stands on a flat site on the eastern edge of the two-block long Prince Street downtown commercial center. The theatre is a two-story, 6,059 square foot, Colonial Revival-style building with one floor and a balcony. Constructed in the latter part of 1938, it is a steel frame structure with exterior concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls, a Flemish bond brick façade with brick quoins, and a shed roof featuring a parapet. The façade includes the original marquee and cornice as character defining historic features. Designed by Virginia architect Edward F. Sinnott, the Theatre opened February 2, 1939, but suffered a devastating fire on August 27, 1949. The roof collapsed and the interior was gutted; however, the façade and exterior walls remained, as did the steel support structure of the balcony, the projection booth, and much of the lobby--notably the east side, which contained the ticket booth. After restoration, it re-opened on November 16, 1949. In 2015, the main theatre space was prepared for restoration. The seating was removed and awaited restoration in a warehouse, which succumbed to a fire and the seats were lost. New seating based on the original design is being fabricated. The screen, and other interior décor was taken down in the main theatre space, but the lobby, bathrooms and offices retain wall finishes. The exterior maintains a high level of physical integrity and interior room definitions have not changed substantially since the 1949 interior restoration. The original Sinnott-designed plan is largely intact.

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### **Narrative Description**

Located on Prince Street, historically, the main commercial and governmental center of Tappahannock, the theatre shares a party wall with a ca. 1950s-1970s, two-story brick commercial building to the west that was added by the theatre's owner, George Clanton. On the east side is a ca. 1890 residential building, one of several historic buildings on both sides of Prince Street between the theatre and the Rappahannock River to the east, including the 1680 Scots Arms Tavern and the 1760 Customs House. To the south of the theatre is the 1710 Henley House / Emerson's Ordinary. The Theatre is within the boundaries of the Tappahannock Historic District, but is not a contributing building.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Tappahannock Historic District approved in 1973 included only fourteen buildings within twenty-five acres, the newest building dating to 1850 (assumed Period of Significance from ca. 1750-1850). A subsequent draft Virginia Department of Historic Resources Historic District Survey Report dated May 1994 proposed expanded

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## Exterior

The building has an overall rectangular footprint and reads as a two-story building from the front elevation. It maintains a two-story height to the rear elevation and has a one-story addition that was completed in the later 1940s to provide more space for machinery and dressing rooms for live performances. Like most theatres from the first half of the twentieth century, there are two interior floor levels, the first floor containing the lobby, rest rooms, circulation. The projection booth, and balcony are at the rear of the auditorium space.

The building facade is designed in a Colonial Revival Style. The façade is symmetrical, three bays with a central marquee, the most prominent design feature. Flemish brick bond, used throughout Virginia in the eighteenth century and visible on other Colonial Period buildings in town, is employed on the façade. There are jack arches above each window opening. The upper façade has a brick parapet beginning just above a simple entablature. The three eight-over-eight double-hung sash windows above the marquee each have a pair of two-paneled shutters. The lower façade maintains a projecting three-bay frame storefront with large multi-light display window bays flanking the central entrance. Above the display windows is a wooden entablature with a tall, plain frieze. The marquee is topped by a wooden parapet in the form of a broken pediment with an urn-shaped finial at the break. The original small-pane glazed entrance doors and glass transom have been removed and the current (temporary) doors are solid paneled. The poster cases are damaged but remain at each side of the entrance doors. The foundation comprising the lower part of the front elevation is smoothly parged from the sidewalk to about two feet in height.

The marquee, which is original to 1939, displays ornamental art glass with “DAW” lettering in the center. Large free-standing letters “DAW” were once mounted on the sides of the marquee (the “DAW” has been restored in the current campaign of rehabilitation).

There are three hooded exhaust vents projecting from the main frieze, below the cornice. These served to exhaust the hot air and cigar and cigarette smoke that gathered at the top of the theatre. The projection booth was often the hottest area of the building, and one vent serves this space.

The main superstructure of the building is a steel frame with steel columns embedded in the exterior masonry walls. The front exterior wall is a brick veneer with CMU backing. Some penetrations have been made in the exterior wall to accommodate mechanical systems.

From the front elevation, the brick transitions to exposed CMU on the side walls of the auditorium space. The CMU is laid in a decorative pattern with alternating courses of tall and short blocks. Material aging, soil instability, and a 2011 earthquake may have caused cracks on the exterior CMU and the CMU pilasters, which contain steel columns.

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boundaries and many other contributing buildings, including the DAW Theatre, but this recommended expansion was never completed. The larger extent of the Town of Tappahannock that includes an architectural evolution post 1850 into the twentieth century is a potential boundary increase to the core area that is listed.

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There is a rear addition added sometime between 1945 and the early 1950s, built with CMU and parged with cement stucco. There are four metal casement windows and a side entrance on the east end of the addition.

The east side of the building wall has one side door and one metal casement window. The western wall is largely covered by the adjoining building.

### Interior

The theatre currently consists of the following spaces: The primary public spaces including the lobby and auditorium with low stage and balcony, stairs to the east and west of the lobby for access to the balcony, and the men's and women's restrooms. The private functional spaces of the theatre consist of the projection booth at the balcony level; two ancillary spaces on either side of the stage, and three rooms in the one-story rear addition.

The lobby was originally divided with a two-sided ticket booth on the east side and a manager's office on the west side. There were stairways on both east and west walls. The audience entrance space barely exceeded the width of the double doors leading into the seating area. The ticket booth was only thirty inches wide but extended north to south from wall to wall. The east side, with a small foyer, served the segregated balcony patrons who entered from a door in the east wall at the northeast corner. They only had access to the east stairway and no access to restrooms or drinking fountains. The west stairway was only accessible through the manager's office. With a few alterations the lobby was later remodeled slightly into a more open plan. The ticket booth was rebuilt after the 1949 fire .

The lobby and manager's office have plaster crown moldings around the ceiling, which remain, and there is a decorative round plaster ceiling opening in the center of the lobby in front of the entrance doors. It appears to have held a light fixture at one time. Six Art Deco wall sconces were salvaged from the auditorium seating area and are repairable, they date to the 1949 rebuilding. No lobby ceiling lights remain. A fan still sits in a plaster ceiling recess. There are some surviving damaged ceiling lights under the auditorium balcony.

Some original 1940s exterior and interior doors are intact, and there is some wood trim still in place. The original 1938 blueprints show a variety of wood trim details in the lobby, above the stage as a proscenium, and above doorways. Since photographs do not exist of the 1930s auditorium interior, it is not known whether these embellishments were executed to match the drawings. All of the 1930s wood fabric in the auditorium was lost in the 1949 fire. The lobby, which survived the 1949 fire, was remodeled; likely replastered and retrimmed in the 1949 rebuilding. The 1938 drawings are attached as APPENDIX along with the draft proposed rehabilitation plans prepared by Frazier Associates and GMG Theatre Consultancy.

The floor in the main auditorium space and lobby is a slab on grade floor. Raked in the auditorium space, cutouts for aisle carpeting remained after the fire and the seating was rebuilt in its original configuration of two aisles with three seating sections. The backstage area also has a concrete floor. The balcony is concrete supported on steel framing in the same configuration as before the fire. The stage is wood framed with a tongue-and-groove wood floor.

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The projection booth is located in the middle of the balcony and survived the 1949 fire. Both balcony and booth are in their 1938 configuration. The balcony was racially segregated seating until the 1960s. Stairs access the balcony and projection both from both sides of the building.

The shape of the auditorium occupies the full width of the building at the north lobby end. The walls curve inward to meet the stage and proscenium. The wall curvature creates usable back spaces (rooms) on both sides of the stage. These rooms are on two floors with access by ladder between the floors. On the east side, the first floor had a boiler room, and the second floor was equipment storage. On the west side, the first floor was labeled dressing room with another equipment storage room above. The flue for the boiler room is still located at the southeast corner of the building.

The ceiling of the auditorium has been removed. It was fireproof acoustical plaster installed by a Richmond plasterer working with a Tappahannock firm, E. P. Rowe. The original 1930s ceiling was an asbestos product made by the Celotex Corporation.

The rear one-story addition was completed in ca.1945 to the early 1950s. It extends past the west two-story wall about ten feet where there is a second rear entrance. The addition was likely planned to accommodate more of the heating/cooling systems and to make rooms adjacent to the stage more available for visiting entertainers. Some of the machinery is still in place. There are three rooms in the addition. One was for machinery/systems and the other two may have been for storage and backstage dressing/green rooms.

### Physical Integrity Statement

Historic association to the DAW's role as an entertainment venue in the pre- and post-World War II period is evident in the design and the intactness of interior spaces. While interior fabric has been lost in the auditorium area, the volume and form show a design that is more associated with theatre spaces designed in the first half of the twentieth century. Modern movie theatres are often designed without a stage and proscenium. The streamline curvature of the front section of the auditorium associates with a stylized design approach used before 1950.

DAW Theatre construction began in late 1938 and completed for opening in February 1939. The building was gutted by a fire in 1949 and rebuilt within the same year. The fire destroyed the auditorium area, including the roof and required some cleaning and updating of the front range of rooms. When the building was restored in 1949, the original outer walls were retained, including the Colonial Revival primary elevation, which survived the fire completely intact. All of the 1938-39 outer walls are intact. The primary elevation, including the marquee and molded trim are all original to 1938-39. The rear ca.1945-ca. 1950 one-story addition remains intact as built. The roof structure dates to the 1949 rebuilding. On the interior, the lobby and stairwells are structurally intact to the 1938-39 period with some updates. The 1930s ticket booth was rebuilt in 1949 and later removed in post desegregation era. In the auditorium, the balcony and projection booth survived the 1949 fire. The proscenium and stage were rebuilt in 1949. Original chairs, bolted to the floor, had survived from 1949. The seats were lost in an early attempt to renovate the building (in 2015). The walls of the theatre were covered by a loose

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fabric curtain and the masonry walls were painted. The side wall curtains have not survived. Some of the upper stage curtains survive. The 1949 stage is intact. The auditorium has lost seats, aisle carpets, ceiling cladding and some of the decorative wood trim (there was likely only minor wood trim in the 1949 rebuilt auditorium). The overall form and room definitions are intact and can still convey the overall significance of the entertainment use and architectural design. The auditorium space retains its overall form with projection booth, balcony, stage and some trim and doors.

*Assessing Integrity of Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, Association*

The location and setting for the DAW Theatre has been stable over the past fifty to seventy years. The building is in a historic district and the only major change is the addition of the building on the west side. In 1938, there was no building there. A one-story building was built in the 1940s at the corner of Prince and Water streets. A later building was built between the Theatre and the corner building by George Clanton, who added a second story over both buildings, covering the Theatre's western wall by the 1970s. The eastern wall is fully visible. A ca.1890-1900 Queen Anne style vernacular house adjoins the property line about ten feet from the eastern wall. The district on Prince Street has maintained its lower height scale. In 2023, a major fire burned eight commercial buildings facing Prince Street, on the north side of the 200 block, the next block up from the Theatre. The loss of some of the more significant commercial storefronts, the Town's most intact early 20<sup>th</sup> century row, has impacted the district and increased the value of visual coherence at the eastern end of Prince Street. The DAW Theatre and buildings on the south side of the 100 block are now more visually significant for the Tappahannock Historic District and represent surviving historic twentieth century architecture.

The DAW Theatre has a high level of material physical integrity on the exterior. The design element that has the strongest association to the Theatre's history is the 1930s primary elevation, including a stylized marquee, which has given the DAW its public/commercial identity. The interior has lost a moderate amount of designed fabric, including the seating, but the lobby retains plaster cladding and the interior walls, and the interior circulation plan is intact to the 1938 and 1949 periods.

The 1949 fire and more recent renovation campaigns have impacted the integrity of materials on the interior, but all major spaces are intact to the 1930s design. The lobby retains much of its finishes to the 1949 rebuilding.

The DAW shows the workmanship of the 1930s in the fine masonry walls and the highly intact front Colonial Revival elevation. The interior workmanship is evident in the design of the lobby space, curvilinear auditorium walls, and the overall construction of the balcony and projection booth.

The DAW's Colonial Revival design and the smaller scale of the interior spaces convey the historic feeling of a pre-World War II theatre. The comparable modern design for multiplex venues is often a larger scale venue with a large open space lobby.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

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**Period of Significance**

1938 – 1956

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**Significant Dates**

1941

1944

1949

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Sinnott, Edward Francis

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The DAW Theatre, built in 1938-39, and rebuilt after a fire in 1949, is a rare example of a pre-World War II movie and live performance venue in a rural county Courthouse town. It is one of very few surviving examples on the Middle Peninsula of Virginia.

The DAW Theatre was the entertainment center of the Tappahannock community for over six decades. It was only the second theatre building in the town's 400-year history, and the only one to remain after 1940. Its success mirrored that of its long-term owner, George C. Clanton, who also served the community for forty years as mayor. Its Colonial Revival-style architecture, well-suited to the town's historic roots, also reflected the skills and versatility of its designer, Edward F. Sinnott, a recognized theatre specialist whose Art Deco-style Henrico Theatre (DHR 043-0287) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (several of his other designs are also in listed historic districts).

The DAW Theatre is eligible for listing under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation because it represents the long span of history of the live industry and motion picture industry for a large rural region of Virginia. The DAW, located on Virginia's Middle Peninsula (six counties) was also accessible from the Northern Neck (four counties), serving two major regions as well as areas to the south and west. At one time there were ten to twenty motion picture venues that covered these two Tidewater areas, beginning in the 1920s, with a few lasting into the 1960s and 70s. Some of these venues were accommodated in pre-existing buildings and only one or two of the purpose-built theatres still survive, remodeled, though no-longer serving as theatres. For Tappahannock and the larger community, the DAW Theatre served both white and black residents by providing segregated facilities or actually segregating the events that took place at the Theatre. The significant dates are; 1941, George Clanton becomes a majority owner of the Theatre; 1944, when the movie "Stormy Weather" moved the Theatre management to allow more showings and seating for African Americans; 1949, the fire and rebuilding within that same year.

While the DAW Theatre does not retain enough interior physical fabric to be significant under Criterion C for Architecture, the association with Architect Edward Francis Sinnott (Sr.) represents an important part of the building's history and community identity. Sinnott was a prolific architect working mostly in central and eastern Virginia. He was active from 1925 up to his death in 1974. He designed residences, churches, government buildings, schools, commercial buildings, and he specialized in theatre design, designing at least nine in Virginia. While several of his theatres survive in urban areas of the state, the DAW is a rare example of his use of the Colonial Revival style for a smaller Courthouse town in a rural region of the state. Overtime the interior has lost fabric, but Sinnott gave the Theatre its branding with a very delicate Colonial Revival façade. Despite the 1949 fire that gutted the building and subsequent



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remodeling campaigns, the building retains all of the spaces and circulation areas delineated by Sinnott's 1938 drawings.

The period of significance represents the theatre's history from its construction in 1938-1939 through one of the last major remodelings in 1956, prior to a decline in the exhibition industry and the theatre's sale in 1982.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.) t

### Historic Background

The DAW was built near the southeast corner of Prince Street and Water Lane. It was named after Elias Marion Doar, Jr. (1896-1955), Harry S. Atkinson (ca. 1894-1953), and Raymond Byrd Wallace (1908-1984). The theatre was announced as seating 500 and costing between \$25,000 and \$30,000. It was to "be equipped completely and modernly throughout."<sup>2</sup>

The trio appeared to be a "marriage of convenience," as each brought needed skills and connections. Doar, the 'D,' was president and probably led the financing from his role as the local manager of the Chesapeake Corporation's pulp wood operation. The *Northern Neck News*, picking up a story from the *Rappahannock Times*, referred to him as "proving to be a very fine citizen for the town."<sup>3</sup> They also noted that he was building a \$7,000 residence on the river's shore "towards Fredericksburg." (Also designed by Edward F. Sinnott.) Shortly after the Theatre's opening in June 1939, Tappahannock formed a Chamber of Commerce with Doar as vice-president and George C. Clanton, a soon-to-be DAW owner, as secretary.

Atkinson, the 'A,' was vice president, identified as "a well-known contractor and builder here, having been in business here for several years and is one of the most prominent builders in this section."<sup>4</sup> His contribution to the project is obvious from the description.

Wallace, the 'W,' was the "working stiff" of the three and was on board to operate the projectors and run the Theatre. He also did all the wiring and electrical work. Described as "a veteran in the motion picture business,"<sup>5</sup> he had managed Tappahannock's only other theatre, the New Essex Theatre, for five years prior to the DAW's opening.

Doar, Atkinson, and Wallace, organized as DAW Theatre, Incorporated, purchased the land for the Theatre from J. L. Henley and his wife, Josephine DeShields Henley, on September 21, 1938. Henley's entire property included the Emerson Ordinary from 1710, immediately south of the current Theatre, and extended to Prince Street with Water Lane as the west border. The Henleys

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<sup>2</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 60, Number 20, September 23, 1938

<sup>3</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 60, Number 20, September 23, 1938

<sup>4</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 60, Number 20, September 23, 1938

<sup>5</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 60, Number 20, September 23, 1938

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lived in the Ordinary which had its front door on the north side facing Prince Street. (The Ordinary is one of the fourteen properties listed in the Tappahannock Historic District. It has recently been rehabilitated and reopened as the 1710 Tavern, operated by the owners of the Essex Inn, another listed property in the Historic District).

The DAW Theatre's opening led to the closure of the New Essex by April 1940. In August 1940, the DAW engaged a new manager, Harry L. Moller, who managed theatres in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Idaho, Texas, and Maryland working as an executive for a "large" theatre chain (probably Schine). Prior to that he began his show business career as a circus aerial performer and wire walker. Moller was credited with building the DAW's patronage since his arrival. He was particularly praised for his promotion skills including starting a new community event, an Easter Egg Hunt.

At the beginning of 1941 (a significant date), Doar sold his sixty percent controlling stake in the business to George Clanton, publisher of the *Rappahannock Times*, with Atkinson and Wallace retaining their shares.<sup>6</sup> Clanton announced the retention of Moller, the "popular manager," and was responsible for his promotion to Vice President two months later.

Clanton was one of the DAW's longest tenured owners / operators, serving forty-one years before the many subsequent successors leading to its current ownership.

In August 1941, the just over two-years-old Theatre underwent a "redecorating" overseen by a decorator from the Schine Theatre chain, Billy Herman of Salisbury, Maryland. The Schine Circuit controlled 174 theatres at one point in its history, twenty-seven of which are still open now with nineteen of those showing movies.

The work done at that time was lost in the 1949 fire but was described in the *Northern Neck News*, Volume 63, Number 14, August 15, 1941, at right. The panels described as "added beauty" were probably more important as sound baffles as movie sound technology continued to evolve.

Clanton did not assume any personal ownership in the 1941 transaction despite his property investments and other interests in the community. In 1945, he did announce a purchase of the vacant lot next to the Theatre on the west and announced plans to build a three-story building with retail, offices, and apartments. At the time of the fire in 1949, the lot

**REDECORATING DAW  
THEATRE THIS WEEK**

Billy Herman, well known decorator of the large Schine chain of theatres, whose home is in Salisbury, Md., is here this week going over the Daw theatre and giving it a "dressing up." Mr. Herman is a friend of Harry Moller, manager of the Daw, and agreed to spend a few days of his vacation in Tappahannock and at the same time supervise the redecorating of the attractive Daw theatre.

The building is being repainted on the front and the interior. The latest type advertising panels are being installed inside and out, large panels are being built on the walls to give added beauty to the interior, and a glass partition is being installed between the lobby and auditorium similar to the Loew theatre in Richmond. The marquee is being dressed up and improvement made in decoration wherever possible.—*Rappahannock Times*.

<sup>6</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 62, Number 38, February 7, 1941

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was still vacant. (Subsequent records suggest it was not purchased until 1950.) A one-story building is visible in a photograph from 1971, and a two-story building is there now. A popular bakery, the Sweet Shop, was on the corner in that 1971 photo.

Following the 1949 fire that gutted the Theatre's interior, Clanton and his wife, Anna, did purchase the property immediately to the west of the Theatre and built a single-story brick commercial building. Further deed and corporate research are necessary to clarify the date confusion and other matters, but it appears they bought it individually and as corporate officers of DAW Theatre, Inc., in a deed dated September 20, 1950, from L. J. Henley, J. L. Henley's son, and his wife, Alda, but it was not recorded in the Clerk's Office until August 7, 1956.

Clanton finally sold the DAW in November 1982 to Charles J. Jennings and Daniel Mullins, doing business as Hillside Enterprises, operators of the Hillside Cinema in Gloucester, Virginia, for \$79,000.

Following several years of sporadic scheduling, Hillside Enterprises sold the DAW Theatre to W. A. Cleaton and Sons in June 1989. Little information is available about Cleaton's ownership, and little advertising appeared, though the Cleaton company is identified as operating the *Rappahannock Times*.

### 1949 Fire

On August 27, 1949 (a significant date) the DAW suffered a catastrophic fire that gutted the interior. *The Rappahannock Record* reported on the blaze in its September 1 edition:

DESTROYED BY FIRE LAST SATURDAY (headline) Damage in the fire which razed the Daw Theatre in Tappahannock Saturday was estimated by the owner at from \$40,000 to \$50,000.

The owner, George C. Clanton, said the loss would remain at the lower figure if building inspectors permit the use of walls remaining standing. Otherwise, the loss will be counted at \$50,000.

Clanton said the fire was believed started by someone smoking during a radio performance which was being presented when the fire broke out Saturday morning.

The blaze started in a stage curtain and spread quickly to the ceiling, which Clanton said was the only part of the building not fireproofed.

Approximately 15 persons in the building at the time were evacuated with little trouble, he said, and the radio equipment was saved. Clanton counted everything but the walls of the theatre, which was built in 1938, a total loss.

Twelve fire trucks from ten departments prevented the flames from spreading to adjoining buildings. Fighting the fire were Tappahannock firemen and trucks from Kilmarnock, Colonial Beach, Urbanna, Deltaville, Warsaw, West Point, Montross, Hanover County, and King George.

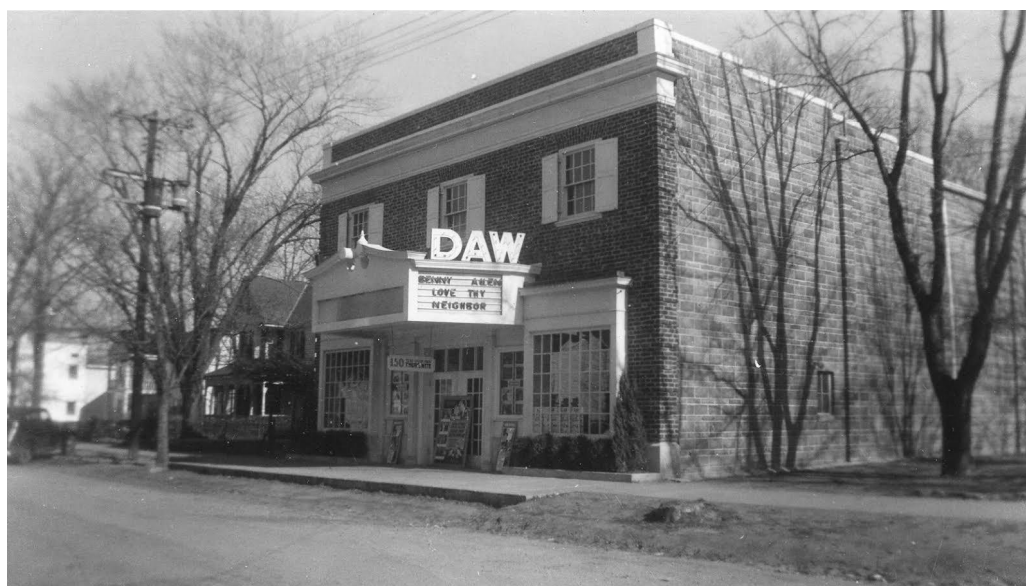
DAW Theatre

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

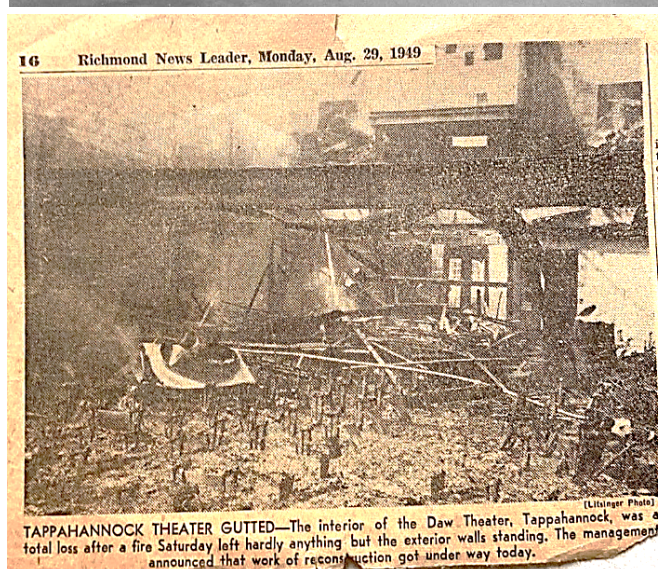
Name of Property

Clanton said the flames had gained great headway by the time fire equipment could be called. Clanton, also mayor and publisher of the Rappahannock Times, said the loss was only partially covered by insurance.

In spite of Clanton's statements of a "total loss," the exterior walls, façade, balcony support structure, projection booth, and much of the lobby survived the fire and contributed to a speedy rebuilding. There is also strong evidence that Sinnott's original 1938 plan was used for the rebuild. If not exactly, it "strongly informed" the new construction. In the newspaper clipping (*above left*), the projection booth and balcony structure are visible at the top, and the back wall of the auditorium on the far right also appears intact, suggesting the east lobby was also spared. Existing evidence shows the ticket office walls as they were initially designed on that side. The west lobby configuration cannot be confirmed.



DAW Theatre  
prior to 1949





DAW Theatre

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Following the quick rebuild, Clanton went on to add air conditioning the following spring, continuing to improve the theatre with the installation of Cinemascope in 1954, and further remodeling in 1956 and 1978. Each time, it was always promoted as the "New DAW."

*Northern Neck News*, Volume 65,  
Number 47, April 7, 1944

## New Daw Theatre Tap. Opens Nov. 16

The new elaborate Daw Theatre at Tappahannock will open on Wednesday, November 16, with one of the finest smalltown theatres in Virginia. George Clanton, owner, said this week that he had spent over \$45,000 to make the Daw complete in every respect. The opening attraction on Wednesday and Thursday will be the technicolor horse picture, "Sand". On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday the theatre will present its first big attraction "Red, Hot and Blue", starring Betty Hutton and Victor Mature.

The Daw was gutted by fire on August 27 and had to be completely rebuilt except for the walls, which were salvaged as a result of the large amount of steel construction. The building is now as fireproof as it can be made. Steel and concrete construction was used in the roof and balcony. Fireproof acoustical plaster was used on the ceilings, which is designed by a Richmond plastering concern working with E. P. Rowe, local plastering and cement contractor, and is a piece of architectural beauty surely to be admired by all.

Beautiful red carpet will be used on the floor, in the foyer and the aisles. The new American Bodiform seats upholstered with new long-pile mohair provides Daw patrons with the finest and latest in theatre seating. The new seats are 1950 model and were just released October 15th, the Daw getting one of the first shipments.

*Southside Sentinel*,  
Volume 54, Number 29,  
November 10, 1949

## Daw Theatre Plans Renovation Program

Management of Daw Theatre at Tappahannock announced this week the popular movie house will be renovated with new carpet, restroom improvements and other modern facilities in two weeks.

New automatic projection equipment has been installed to make it possible for the operator to do other jobs as well. New lighting has been installed for producing better pictures on the screen. Painting will be included and it is hoped many patrons of the theatre will enjoy its facilities.

Since 1938 the Daw Theatre, which will soon be known as the "New Daw," has strived to give local patrons new pictures as early as possible, although big film companies continue to make it more difficult to get early dates and retain the pictures in big cities as long as possible. A new stage has also been constructed and stage attractions will be presented from time to time.

## Daw Theatre Remodeling

In order to completely remodel its theatre the Daw at Tappahannock will close Monday, Dec. 17, and will open with a brand new house and new equipment on Friday, Dec. 21.

New, modern wall draperies, designed by famous Hubert Mitchell Decorators, will be installed on the entire sidewalls. Ceiling and all of the entire theatre will be repainted. A new sound system and improved projection to make a better picture will be installed.

The sound will be the new famous Atlee system which was recently installed in Radio City Music Hall at New York. The stage will have a new setting, including automatic screen curtain and a special device to spotlight various colors on the screen and curtain. Other improvements will be made.

The all new Daw Theatre will open to the public on Friday, Dec. 21.

*Rappahannock Record*, Volume  
SIXTY-SECOND YEAR,  
Number 50,  
September 21, 1978  
(Final remodeling before the  
1982 sale)

DAW Theatre

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### Criterion A: Entertainment / Recreation

The DAW Theatre is locally significant under Criterion A, in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation for its long service, 1939-1998, as a central venue for the Town of Tappahannock and a large rural area on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. While there were many small theatres that came and went in the region from the 1920s to the 1990s, the DAW provided film and live entertainment that was keyed to the interest of the community. It is a rare surviving example of a pre-World War II movie theatre with significant historic and cultural association to the Town, the County and regional community.

Programming a small-town theatre is always difficult, but it appears the DAW Theatre went out of its way to be the "Entertainment Center" of the community by bringing the best films as soon after their release as possible while also working to include a variety of live performances as well as a good number of "community service" engagements. Manager Harry Moller had begun to add live performances in 1941, in that case "Colored Amateurs" performing for cash prizes.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of its segregated balcony, the DAW was sensitive to the entire community and tried to be inclusive in its entertainment programming and community events. This was evident early on with its efforts in 1944 (a significant date) to accommodate attendance by Black audiences for the showings of "Stormy Weather." Starring Lena Horne and Cab Calloway along with Fats Waller, the film overwhelmed the theatre's staff, then managed by Anna Clanton, so they decided to offer several performances with reserved seats to ensure that everyone who had to drive miles to attend could be accommodated.

Other activities included hosting a fashion show, eye screenings, chest x-rays, and women's club meetings, among others. The theatre also hosted activities for Tappahannock's African Americans' annual Emancipation Day celebrations on April 3, as well as the Miss Corregidor Pageant in the 1970s.

As noted, there were already amateur nights occurring regularly in the theatre's early years, however, after the war, there was a new initiative to present weekly stage shows. According to an ad in the *Rappahannock Record* from September 5, 1946, the DAW had joined a "circuit" and was going to present casts of twelve to twenty people including a five-piece orchestra, chorus girls, and vaudeville acts. A story also appeared in that publication (see next page):

#### COLORED PEOPLE TO HAVE RESERVED SEATS FOR "STORMY WEATHER" AT DAW THEATRE

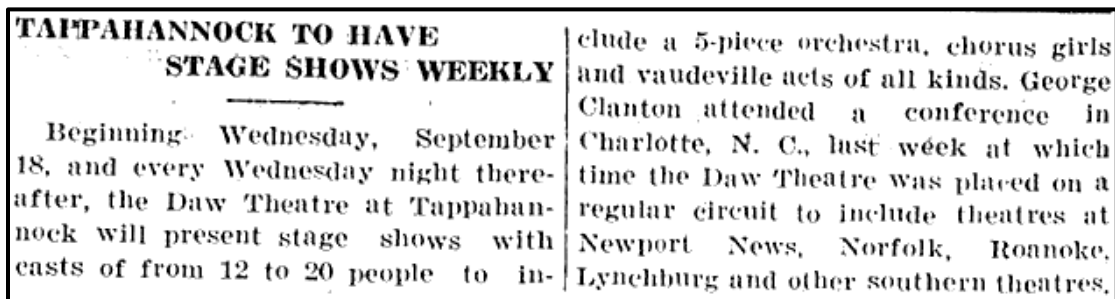
After turning away hundreds of colored people at the recent showing of "Stormy Weather" all-colored cast picture, the Daw Theatre, at Tappahannock, is bringing the sensational musical film back for a return engagement on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, April 16, 17, and 18. Anna Clanton, manager of the theatre, announces that one hundred choice seats will be sold as Reserved Seats for the colored patrons in advance, so as to assure these persons a seat after they drive many miles to see the picture. The cast of the picture includes the sensational colored actress, Lena Horne, also Cab Calloway and His Orchestra, Fats Waller and many other famous colored film stars. Reserved seats may be purchased by mail or at the Daw Theatre box office

<sup>7</sup> *Northern Neck News*, Volume 62, Number 49, April 25, 1941

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A subsequent ad appearing on September 19 talked about the enlargement of the stage, the addition of dressing rooms, and the addition of stage lighting. The stage, lighting, and dressing rooms were, apparently, lost in the 1949 fire, though it is not clear when a cement block addition that might have contained dressing rooms was added to the south wall of the Theatre. A cement block contractor, the Cinder Block Company of Richmond, Virginia, was identified as a sponsor of the opening show's ad in 1946 (the addition dates to ca. 1945-1950).

Shows did not continue weekly as advertised, but they did occur regularly and with some variety. The Theatre was still maintaining a schedule of three film changes every week, which probably had some effect as distributors hate to lose showings that are contracted. One way around keeping the distributors happy was to book live appearances by their stars, which the DAW also did, including appearances by popular western film stars of the period, Sunset Carson and Whip Williams.

A 1953 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary full-page advertisement touted the Theatre's mechanical systems and "fireproof" reconstruction but also noted that "Organizations Invited to Use Theatre Free (heading) We have always wanted our theatre to be considered a 'Community Institution' – along this line we have always invited organizations to use our theatre free of charge any hours outside of our actual operating hours. Write or see the manager for arrangements."

Film showings were always the main attraction at the DAW from its beginning, but the small market potential along with the nearness of competing larger venue theatres frequently relegated the DAW to being a second run house, i.e., not being able to show films on their opening weeks. Occasionally, this stretched out even further. Sometimes, as in 1975, it took the Theatre over a year to secure showings of the popular "Benji."

Sometimes it worked the other way as it was chosen as the first small-town theatre in Virginia to exhibit "Godfather" in 1972, and again for "Jaws" in 1975. The Theatre was also not afraid to repeat popular films as demonstrated when they brought back "Kentucky" from their original opening after the fire.

Clanton took steps to improve the Theatre's chances for receiving films by moving to "city operation" in 1949. Essentially, this meant the Theatre would have continuous showings from 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM. In larger cities, this was daily and ran longer, usually from noon to midnight, but it was limited to Saturday and Sunday in Tappahannock.

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**George Columbus Clanton** (1911–1999), DAW Theatre owner, was an important figure in the Tappahannock community for some time. Besides his ownership of the Theatre for forty-one years, he was elected mayor of the town in 1948, holding the office for forty years. His interests were diverse, including a harness racing track he built near the airport in 1946-47, the Montross Theatre built around the same time, a drive-in theatre on the road to Warsaw in 1954, a building next to his home on Prince Street built for Peoples Life Insurance Company and known as the Clanton Building in 1964, as well as his ongoing relationship with *The Rappahannock Times* and ownership of WRAR AM radio.

With Moller, he served as an officer with the Lions Club in 1942 before enlisting in the Navy in March of that year. He was honorably discharged in June 1945 after serving at Navy Recruiting Stations in Richmond, Norfolk, Newport News, and Fredericksburg. He also attended the Navy's public relations school in San Diego.

In his role as mayor, he was active in attracting businesses to Tappahannock, expanding the airport, and helping to build the Tidewater Memorial Hospital. He even contributed land for the latter project. Clanton also claimed to be the impetus for building the DAW by writing an editorial encouraging it.

In the announcement of Clanton's sale of the Theatre in 1982, the *Rappahannock Record* noted that "The Daw Theatre has been known as one of the leading small town deluxe type theatres in Virginia. For several years it sponsored live-talent stage attractions from Hollywood with such personalities as Tex Ritter, [and] the famous Carter Sisters (one of the Carter Sisters, June, was the wife of famous Johnny Cash). Fans from as far away as Norfolk came to see some of these attractions, which included the famous Ray Kinney and his Hawaiian Band from New York."<sup>8</sup>

### Architecture Overview

The DAW Theatre is one of architect Edward Francis Sinnott's (1890-1974) designs for a medium-sized Court House town, now a rare surviving example of a pre-World War II theatre. In deference to the brick Colonial and early nineteenth century buildings just a block away, Sinnott used a delicate Colonial Revival style to dress up a modern film house. An architectural style often employed by architect Sinnott in his Virginia work. The community's identity with its colonial era seat of government was not lost on the owner and architect who were aware of the Virginian sensibility and reliance on this popular style (the work at Colonial Williamsburg was getting statewide and national attention in the 1930s).

Sinnott's career began in earnest with a 1920-33 association with Luther Hartsook (1890-1943), based in Richmond, where he assisted in designing a number of private residences, church buildings, schools, and for companies, including Church Hill Vehicle Company, S.Q. Kline Company, A. Meyers & Son, Rawlings Motor Company, Tobacco Foil Company, and Yorktown Ice and Storage Company.

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<sup>8</sup> *Rappahannock Record*, Number 36, June 10, 1982



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Sinnott was born on June 27, 1890, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but moved with his family to Richmond, Virginia, around 1900. He lived there until his death in 1974.

The son of Irish immigrants, he graduated from St. Patrick's High School in 1912, then worked as a draftsman for the firm of Noland & Baskerville. He also served several years as an apprentice under architects Marcellus Wright, Charles M. Robinson, and W. Duncan Lee. He was with Lee when the United States entered World War I, during which Sinnott served in the 1st Virginia Artillery, achieving the rank of second lieutenant. Following his discharge, Sinnott began his association with Hartsook. He never received a scholarly architectural education, but Sinnott became a registered architect in 1925 and was elevated to an associate in Hartsook's firm.

Setting out in his own firm in 1934, Sinnott continued to focus on Hanover County, Virginia, school projects where he had been involved with Hartsook.<sup>9</sup>

Establishing an office at 112 East Cary Street in Richmond, many of his early designs were in the Art Deco school, including plans for the Robinson Theatre in Richmond's historic Church Hill neighborhood and the Henrico Theatre in Highland Springs, Virginia. During this period, he supplemented his income with work for the National Park Service on the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

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<sup>9</sup> At this point, historical references diverge. Wells and Dalton's *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955*, states that: *In 1929, the Hartsook & Sinnott partnership was dissolved. Hartsook's documented architectural practice ended in 1932, though he is believed to have remained in practice until 1940. The date of his death is unknown [He died January 9, 1943, in Ashland].*

*After the dissolution of Hartsook & Sinnott, Sinnott established an [sic] self-named independent practice, focusing on school and institutional projects, complemented by residential restorations. His first independent project was the prominent Southern Aid Society of Virginia (1930), located at Third and Clay streets in Richmond. Built at a cost of \$150,000, the Southern Aid Society was a significant commission. It was also Sinnott's last documented commission until ca. 1940. Like many other architects, Sinnott was likely unable to secure building commissions, as the economy slowed down under the pressures of the Great Depression. What Sinnott did during that decade is not documented, but his documented architectural output remained erratic after he resumed practice in 1940. Four projects are believed to have been completed ca. 1940.*

The Southern Aid Society building, according to its website, was constructed in 1909 as Mechanics Savings Bank, a bank chartered by African American Richmonders. It was designed by Carl Ruehrmund. The building was purchased by the Southern Aid Society in 1930 and they added a four-story "western and northern" wing "when it later became its headquarters," i.e., it is not clear when the addition was built or by whom it was designed. The Society was the first chartered non-fraternal African American-run and owned industrial insurance company in the South. There is no record of Sinnott designing the building, he may have been involved in work on the building over time. More research would need to be conducted to verify his involvement.

Both the reference book and the nomination for Highland Springs' Henrico Theatre were authored before Sinnott's papers were contributed to the Virginia Historical Society and considerable new insight to his career came to light. This report relies on the papers noted in the bibliography which, through his son's time with the firm, includes over 1,500 projects.

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Up until 1942, he also remained active with commercial building contracts, and designed prototype houses for developers Hutzler & Carr, Inc., Jones & Robins, Inc., and Laburnum Construction Corporation. Sinnott began his long-term relationship with Franklin Federal Savings & Loan during this pre-World War II period, too. In 2005, the Henrico Theatre nomination noted that the Sinnott designed Franklin headquarters building was “arguably one of the most significant surviving Art Deco commercial buildings in Richmond today.” He also restored the historic Claudius Crozet House in Richmond, Virginia, in 1940, a ca. 1815 five-bay structure built for brick mason and contractor Curtis Carter as his home. Sinnott’s work on the house included adding a Colonial-style brick doorway. He also designed wing additions in 1941 and 1952 for the 1820 Dabbs House, a two-story, three-bay, side-gable, side-passage-plan farmhouse, maintaining its period design and craftsmanship.

Sinnott closed his office between 1942 and 1945 to pursue civilian wartime employment. He took up positions with J.P. Ferguson and Company working on the Richmond Air Base, and with the National Catholic Community Service, where he served as manager of the McGill Catholic Union, originally affiliated with the Knights of Columbus, but used during wartime for housing and entertaining military personnel en route to new duty stations.

Restarting his architectural practice after the war, Sinnott increased his work with schools, including public school buildings in Caroline and Hanover Counties, where he designed the Hanover County Training School. He also designed the King William County Training School and the Sharon Indian School in that County. (The title “Training School,” in this period, is frequently synonymous with a Black, segregated school.) Sinnott also undertook more parochial school projects in the early 1950s and collaborated with a number of developers, including A.F. Barnette, H.J. Bernstein, Carter C. Chinnis, Stanley Orginz, Leon Siegel, and Morton Zedd; but most importantly, in 1958 he began his relationship with developer Paul Gordon and with Gordon's related construction firm, Pauburne, Inc.

In 1956, his son Edward, Jr., having received his architecture degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute, now Virginia Tech, became a partner in what then became Edward F. Sinnott & Son. During the period from 1958, when Edward F. Sinnott, Jr. joined the firm, until Edward F. Sinnott, Sr.'s death in 1974, the partnership saw an increase in commercial work: banks, medical offices, office buildings, and parks. In the 1960s, the firm was closely associated with real estate developer Paul Gordon, for whom they designed a number of apartment complexes and office buildings in downtown Richmond. Following his father’s death in 1974, Edward, Jr. continued operating the firm until his own retirement in the 1990s. Edward F. Sinnott, Jr. died December 2, 2005.

Sinnott is recognized for being involved in at least fourteen theatre projects, some of which were only remodelings of someone else’s original work. His reputation grew, however, and he was also asked by the Commonwealth to design a new outdoor performance venue (described as “an open-air stage”) at the state fairgrounds in 1941(no longer extant).

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### Commitment to Black Theatres

Notable among the listing of Sinnott's theatres is the number of exclusively Black theatres – a total four of the fourteen. In the 1920s, 20,000 commercial theatres across the country showed movies at least one night a week. Over 600 of these theatres operated on the “race movie” circuit alone, which is another name for the Black theatres which catered specifically to viewers of color. Weekly movie ticket sales nationwide topped 90 million by 1929, but Richmond, with its large, downtown movie “palaces,” only had five “modest” theatres, three in Jackson Ward and two on Hull Street, serving the city's Black population. Three hundred movie theatres were operating in Virginia in the 1920s, with ten percent of those catering to Blacks. By 1930, the effects of the Great Depression and the cost of converting to “talkies” had forced one third of all the theatres to close, leaving only twenty theatres serving Blacks across the state, with only two in Richmond.<sup>10</sup>

Sinnott did three projects, four if you count a second remodeling of the Booker T. Theatre, for **Abe Lichtman**. According to Cinema Treasures, a movie theatre guide, Lichtman was “a white theater owner of theaters that catered to African Americans.” His business included a mix of purchases of existing theatres and new builds, along with simply assuming operations. He was particularly active in Washington, D.C., his home base, where he bought the Howard Theatre in 1926. It was billed as the “largest colored theater in the World.” Also in Washington, D.C., was the Strand Theatre that he built and opened in 1928. The Strand was placed in the National Register on November 25, 2008.

“The Strand is also notable for its association with the man who built and owned it, Abe E. Lichtman. A white Jew, Lichtman became a nationally known advocate for equal economic opportunities for African Americans, in addition to being an influential business leader through his ties with Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt. At a time when few white business owners hired African American workers for white-color jobs, Lichtman maintained a predominantly African American theatre staff, and he was also active in sponsoring recreational opportunities for youth in the community.”<sup>11</sup>

Sinnott's work with Lichtman seems to have represented a special commitment to equality not practiced everywhere at the time. More important to the nomination, however, is the skill and integrity he brought to his craft. Not only does he already have a NRHP listing for his original Henrico Theatre design, but he is also recognized for his later restoration and remodeling work on earlier listed properties like the Dabbs and Crozet Houses. The latter two were more in the Colonial style of the DAW.

He could design for multiple facilities – theatres, schools, government buildings, residential, and commercial – while working in a variety of styles including Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Art Deco, Moderne, and even Gothic Revival. The DAW is unique in his theatre portfolio, but the design is appealing in its simplicity while fitting appropriately into a community with a 400-year history and a historic district that includes buildings from the 1700s, and early 1800s.

<sup>10</sup> *Race, Gender, and Film Censorship in Virginia, 1922-1965*, Melissa Ooten

<sup>11</sup> DC Historic Sites

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### **Rarity of Historic Movie Theatre Buildings in Virginia's Rural Tidewater Region**

The importance of the DAW to the Tappahannock community and its unique place, geographically, in the region cannot be ignored. Not counting the larger cities of Fredericksburg and Richmond, there were only two other towns within forty miles of Tappahannock with operating theatres during the DAW's Period of Significance. One was in Warsaw, eleven miles away, that closed in the early 1950s and was destroyed by fire in 1968. The other was in Montross, built by Clanton in 1947 and sharing some management and booking. It still stands but has been significantly altered, having lost its marquee and now serving as a commercial office (recreational vehicle sales office in 2018).

Based on the website CinemaTreasures.org, an extensive database of theatres across the United States, there were many theatres on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck from the 1920s to the 1950s. Many only lasted from two to ten years. In addition, the theatres in Warsaw and Montross, others were located in Urbanna, Robley, Ottoman, Reedville, White Stone, Callao and Lively. Of all of those locations, only the building in Lively survives. The Lively Playhouse is twenty-seven miles from Tappahannock and was active ten years before the DAW was opened. It operated as the Lively Playhouse from 1926-27 and reopened as the Norneck Theatre, only lasting until 1928. Essex 5 Cinemas, a local, more recent venue in Essex County, opened in 2000 and closed in January 2023.

Today, there are no theatres within forty miles of Tappahannock, and few examples like it elsewhere. Wytheville, Virginia, recently re-opened its 1928 Millwald Theatre, as did the Town of Lebanon with its Russell Theatre. A few other notable examples exist, but theatres of this size and character have not survived in significant numbers. Only two of Sinnott's Richmond theatres still exist and function as theatres.

It would be prudent to recognize the importance and the rarity of such buildings and their purpose in the communities where they still exist. The DAW is a good example of one of the many styles utilized by one of Virginia's finest architects. It is capable of being rehabilitated to show his work in its best light with the prime examples of its historic fabric welcoming the audience under its original marquee and façade.

***See Appendices for Edward F. Sinnott's 1938 drawing and a summary of his Virginia Theatre work.***

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

CinemaTreasures.org – “Your guide to movie theaters;” Robert L. Bradley, Joe Vogel, other contributors not identified: <https://cinematreasures.org/>

*Daw Theater Feasibility Study, Building Analysis*, August 2022, Frazier Associates, Staunton, VA

The DC Preservation League’s DC Historic Sites: <https://dcpreservation.org/>

*Northern Neck News*, Volume 60, Number 20, September 23, 1938

*Northern Neck News*, Volume 62, Number 38, February 7, 1941

*Northern Neck News*, Volume 65, Number 47, April 7, 1944

*Northern Neck News*, Volume 62, Number 49, April 25, 1941

Ooten, Melissa, *Race, Gender, and Film Censorship in Virginia, 1922-1965*

Papers of Edward F. Sinnott, Jr., 1920-1998; Collection Number Mss3 Si663 a FA2;  
A Collection in the Virginia Historical Society

*Rappahannock Record*, September 1, 1949

*Rappahannock Record*, Volume SIXTY-SECOND YEAR, Number 50, September 21, 1978

*Rappahannock Record*, Number 36, June 10, 1982

*Richmond News Leader*, Monday, August 28, 1949

*Southside Sentinel*, Volume 54, Number 29, November 10, 1949

*Suffolk News-Herald*, Volume 19, Number 7, January 8, 1941

*Tidewater Review*, Volume 70, Number 50, December 13, 1956

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Henrico Theatre (043-0287), Henrico County, Virginia, September 26, 2005

The Valentine, “dedicated to preserving and interpreting Richmond’s 400-year history”

Wells, John E. and Dalton, Robert E., *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955*

Note: The *Northern Neck News*, *Southside Sentinel*, and *Tidewater Review* articles cited and others were frequently reprinted from the *Rappahannock Record*. The original articles from the *Record* were not available for citation.

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 310-0024-0024

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.14829

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.928960 Longitude: -76.858110
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

DAW Theatre

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Or

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Parcel ID 32B 14 G 5

Excerpts from the legal property description: *On the south side of Prince Street, fronting for 45 feet and extending back at right angles thereto a distance of 105 feet . . . Beginning at a point on Prince Street 43.6 feet from a concrete marker located at the corner of Prince Street and Water Lane by T. H. Warner, Surveyor.*

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property's historic setting and all known associated historic resources have been included within the historic boundary.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Thomas Gerdome, President  
organization: Gerdome Management Group; GMG Theatre Consultancy  
street & number: 9639 Burning Tree Drive  
city or town: Grand Blanc state: MI zip code: 48439  
e-mail: gerdommgmt@aol.com  
telephone: 810.252.7513  
date: September 2023

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DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: DAW Theatre

City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Photographer: Thomas Gerdorn

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022; June 14, 2023

1 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; full façade view prior to 2022 painting

2 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; property to the east of Theatre prior to 2022 painting

3 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022



DAW Theatre

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

Name of Property

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; property to the west of Theatre prior to 2022 painting

4 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: Unknown

Photographer: Unknown

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From northwest facing southeast, aerial; Theatre and surrounding area prior to 2022 painting

5 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From west facing east; lower façade and marquee prior to 2022 painting

6 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From northwest facing southeast; lower façade west window prior to 2022 painting

7 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From front sidewalk facing up; upper façade west window prior to 2022 painting

8 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; entry doors with front of marquee prior to 2022 painting

9 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From northwest facing southeast; full façade view after 2022 painting

10 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From northeast facing southwest; full façade view after 2022 painting

11 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From east facing west; marquee and partial façade view after 2022 painting

DAW Theatre

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

Name of Property

12 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; entry doors after 2022 painting

13 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; lower façade east window after 2022 painting

14 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: June 14, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and view: From north facing south; lower façade west window after 2022 painting

15 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from north facing south; stage and seating area from rear of main floor

16 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from south facing north; projection booth at top of balcony on north wall

17 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from east facing west; projection booth and balcony risers above cross aisle

18 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from north facing south; east staircase up from segregated lobby to segregated balcony

19 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from west facing east; center room of concrete block addition to south wall of theatre

DAW Theatre

Town of Tappahannock  
Essex County, Virginia  
County and State

Name of Property

20 of 20: City or Vicinity: Tappahannock; County: Essex; State: VA

Date Photographed: February 27, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and view: Interior from east facing west; west side of lobby

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number APPENDIX Page 1

**Sinnott Theatre Projects**

Besides his work on the DAW, Sinnott was involved in the following theatre projects:



**Imperial Theatre**, Williamsburg, Virginia – Sinnott's first theatre project was under Hartsook in 1923-24, done for Gordon Rollo. It closed in 1932.

**Booker T. Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – Originally opened as the Empire Theatre in 1911, it was converted into a vaudeville / film house in 1915 and renamed The Strand. It was taken over by

Lichtman in 1933 and remained a cinema and performance venue for Blacks until 1974. Now renamed the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, the facility is the headquarters of Virginia Repertory Theatre. It originally sat 700.



Sinnott's work on the Booker T. didn't start until 1936 according to his papers. His first tasks were some alterations and additional men's and women's toilets. He also reinforced the south roof trusses. Alterations were extensive and included removing the boxes, work on the stage and dressing rooms, and the façade. He also moved the ticket booth and concessions in the lobby.

He did more work in 1947 when he was asked back to repair fire damage to the roof, timbers, and trusses.

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DAW Theatre

Name of Property  
Essex County, Virginia  
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number APPENDIX Page 2



**Brookland Theatre, Richmond, Virginia** – Opened on January 29, 1925, the Brookland was another of Sinnott's remodeling projects. Fred A. Bishop is identified as the original architect. It sat 634 and closed in 1957. It reopened in 1969 as an adult movie house but closed for good in 1984.

**Caroline Theatre, Bowling Green, Virginia** – A new design project for Sinnott, there are notes in his papers from 1949 with Messrs. DeJarnette and Kibler regarding changes to the lobby, manager's office, and projection booth, as well as a change in the seating layout to include 436 on the main floor and 148 in the balcony. He was doing other projects in the community at the time, including the C. T.

Smith High School. Both buildings are still there. The Theatre, on Main Street, survived the fire that consumed a large part of the downtown, but has been re-purposed into a real estate office.

**THE CARVER THEATRE**

Suffolk's newest center of attraction is the new Carver Theatre. This new movie house is rapidly nearing completion and its doors are expected to open during the middle part of the month.

This theatre is being opened for the colored citizens of Suffolk and surrounding districts. The Pitts-Roth amusement corporation will operate the new movie emporium.

Whether this theatre will remain open permanently or not depends entirely on the support given it by our local movie fans.

From a personal point of view this scribe thinks that a colored movie house in Suffolk is one of the city's greatest needs. The old "Broadway" theatre which was reopened about 3 years ago after a long period of inactivity was forced to close because of poor patronage.

**Carver Theatre, Suffolk, Virginia** – Originally opened in March 1924 as the Broadway Theatre, it was a Black theatre. Ownership at that time is not confirmed, but the Roth Pitts theatre chain acquired the Broadway by 1941 and remodeled it with Sinnott. It reopened in

January 1941 and remained open as a Black theatre until 1966 under the Pitts chain. Named after George Washington Carver, it sat 360. In 1941, the Pitts chain included twenty-seven theatres, primarily in Virginia with one in West Virginia.

There were a number of reasons for the poor support given the Broadway. We will attempt to give two or three.

As most of you who attended the shows regularly at the Broadway know, the seats were unfit for a person to sit in. The arm rests were often falling off and the occupant was often in danger of ripping a coat sleeve. The springs also protruded from some of the seats.

The heating system was another invitation to stay away from the Broadway.

During the winter months unless one went heavily blanketed with coats and sweaters he would

*Suffolk News-Herald*, Volume 19,  
Number 7, January 8, 1941



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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

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Section number APPENDIX Page 3

**Henrico Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – A 2005 National Register listing, “The Henrico Theatre, designed by Edward Francis Sinnott, is one of two surviving significant Art Deco resources in Henrico County. It is eligible for individual listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places as locally significant under Criterion C (Architecture) with a Period of Significance of 1938-1955. Located in Highland Springs, the Henrico Theatre was the most prominent and architecturally sophisticated theater in Henrico County when it opened on April 25, 1938. Despite its then-rural location, it was designed and built to be the most modern and technologically advanced theater in the Richmond area. From cutting edge materials like monolithic poured concrete, high-tech equipment like the Simplex E-7 projector and year-round air conditioning, to sophisticated streamlined design inside and out, no expense was spared. The theater was so well received that in the 1940 Architectural Record ‘Poll’ it was nominated by a distinguished panel of Richmonders to be one of the most outstanding examples of recent architecture in the greater Richmond area.”<sup>1</sup> (1938 photo)



<sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

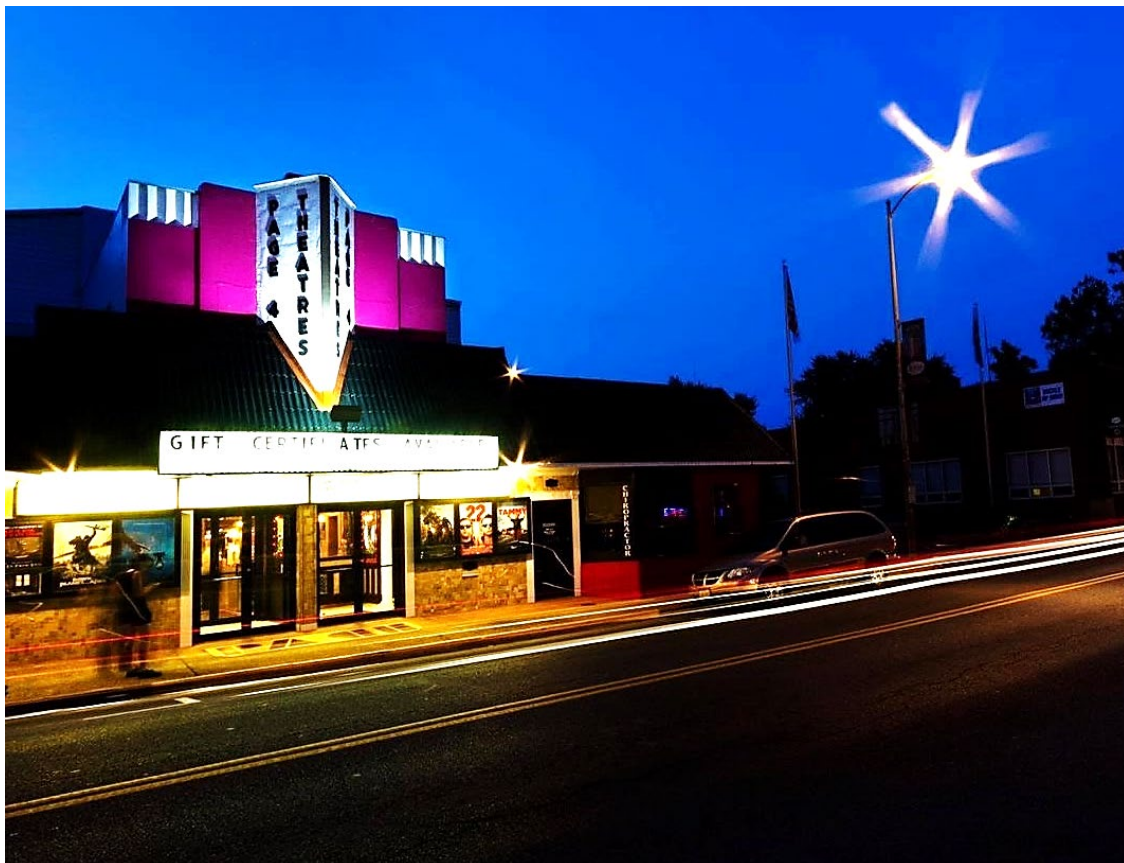
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number APPENDIX Page 4

**Page Theatre**, Luray, Virginia – Apparently a Sinnott design, the Page Theatre opened on East Main Street in downtown Luray in 1939. Featuring an Art Moderne style, it originally sat 824. More



recently, it has undergone significant changes and Sinnott's work is barely visible. In 1975, it was converted into a real estate office. Then, in 1982, it reopened as the Foxfire Theater, and later was twinned and renamed the Page Twin. In 1990, the theatre was increased to four screens and, by 2013, it had seven screens. At some point, it also acquired an Egyptian motif for the interior. The original Sinnott design is most visible behind the vertical marquee in the photographs.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
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**Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

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Section number APPENDIX Page 5

**Park Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – 1938 was a very active year for Sinnott, theatrically, including designs for the Henrico and the DAW, and this remodeling of the 1909 Lubin Theatre on Richmond's Theater Row.

The Lubin Theatre, on the left in the photograph, was a vaudeville and nickelodeon theatre adjacent to the much larger Bijou Theatre. On July 11, 1915, it was renamed the Isis Theatre, closed in 1916, then reopened later that year as the Regent Theatre. Later in 1916, it was renamed the Isis Theatre again. It closed under that name in 1929.

After lying empty for several years, it was re-opened in 1938 by Sinnott's client, the Wilmer & Vincent Corp., as the Park Theatre. The Park Theatre closed in 1953 but was renovated as an office building for Virginia Credit Union. It has since been demolished and the Library of Virginia now takes up the entire block.



The Bijou Theatre, the larger of the two theatres, opened in 1899 by former major league baseball player and entrepreneur Jake Wells. It provided “polite vaudeville” for family audiences. Harry Houdini performed there in 1900.<sup>2</sup>

**Patrick Henry Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – On 25<sup>th</sup> Street in Richmond's Church Hill area, Sinnott's role with this theatre is unclear. His papers show him

contracting with Attucks Amusement Corp. on the project, but other reports identify the theatre as part of the Pitts chain, the company he worked with on the Carver Theatre in Suffolk. Pitts was also the operator of the East End Theatre, also on 25<sup>th</sup> Street. It is possible that Pitts operated the theatre for Attucks, or that they took over the project, completely. Sinnott's role in either scenario is not known at this writing.

The Patrick Henry opened December 6, 1933, with 748 seats. The East End Theatre did not open until November 7, 1938, with 850 seats. Some reports confuse the two theatres as being the same, though they had different addresses and different opening years.

A story in the *Free Lance–Star* newspaper of Fredericksburg on its opening date, definitely identifies the Patrick Henry as a Pitts property, saying it cost \$90,000 and “is modern in design, equipment, fixtures, projection machinery, sound recording and other features. In arrangement and decoration, both inside and out, it is attractive and pleasing.” It closed in 1953 and has been demolished.

<sup>2</sup> The Valentine, dedicated to preserving and interpreting Richmond's 400-year history



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**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

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County and State

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Section number APPENDIX Page 6

The East End Theatre, designed by Henry Carl Messerschmidt or Fred A. Bishop (sources do not agree), survived and was repurposed in 2015 as apartments with a restaurant and bar. It sat empty for forty years.

**Robinson Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – A new Sinnott design for Abe Lichtman, the Robinson opened on September 29, 1937, with its namesake, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, a Richmond native, in his film, “One Mile From Heaven.” Robinson was unable to attend the opening ceremony himself (his



co-star Fredi Washington appeared in his place), but he did appear in person a few days later. In a second ceremony, he had his footprint and signature inscribed in the concrete beside the ticket booth. A plaque beside the entrance honors ‘The World’s Greatest Tap Dancer.’”

Originally seating 597, the Robinson Theater was described at the opening in an uncredited local

newspaper as having “cream California stucco with a black alberene base, trimmed in a modern design of midnight blue. There was a dazzling neon marquee. The interior decoration is strictly in the ‘Moderne’ motif, the side wall treatment being four shades of rust with a background of peach.”

The Theater was closed in 1956 and converted into a pool hall but started being used occasionally for community performances from around 1960. It showed films and hosted live entertainments including talent shows until closing again in 1980.

An award-winning historic rehabilitation of the Robinson was undertaken in the early 2000s and it reopened February 21, 2009. The Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods recognized it as the *Best Renovation by a Non-Profit* as one of the seven special Golden Hammer Award Honorees for 2009, and the U.S. Department of the Interior also identified it as “the final icon of the transformation of this section of Church Hill into a middle class African-American Neighborhood.”

The Golden Hammer award recognition said, “The Robinson Theater Community Arts Center is honored for the careful restoration that brought the Robinson Theater back as a venue for entertainment, education, and fun for the community and for Richmond.”

(Photographed June 14, 2023, by Thomas Gerdomb)

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**Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

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**Roosevelt Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – Another project with Sinnott’s involvement somewhat questionable, the Theatre does not show up in most resources, though it is reported to have originally opened in 1933. Sinnott’s work was under a contract with “P&G” and did not occur until late in his career in 1964. A Roosevelt Theatre does show up in current Richmond listings, now operated by the Broadberry Entertainment Group, however, their history of the venue only goes back to the 1980s when it was known as the Cellar Door.



**Rex Theater**, Petersburg, Virginia – Another new design project from Sinnott’s busy 1938, the Rex closed June 8, 1958, but reopened about a year later on September 24, 1959, following the closure of the only other movie theatre in town. This was also short-lived as it closed permanently on October 30, 1960, and has been demolished. It originally sat 396.<sup>3</sup>

**Walker Theatre**, Richmond, Virginia – The Walker was another remodeling project for Abe Lichtman. It originally opened in 1911 as the Little Theatre with a seating capacity of 386. Though built for motion pictures, it did have a small stage. It closed for the first time in 1920, but then had a history of opening and closing under different managements.

Lichtman took it over in 1936, renaming it the Maggie Walker Theatre for the woman who helped establish and organize the first civil rights strike by Black students and became the nation’s first woman bank president. It was later known simply as the Walker Theatre.

The remodeling contractor was James Fox and Sons, who also did the Robinson. It must have been a significant remodeling as his bill in 1936 was \$25,971.98.

The original architect for the project was C. K. Howell. A description of Howell’s drawings says that the “...facade features Corinthian columns, masks and garlands, and statuary.”<sup>4</sup> A modern photo (*below*) shows that some of this decoration survived into recent times.

<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Bradley on *CinemaTreasures*

<sup>4</sup> Joe Vogel on *CinemaTreasures*

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DAW Theatre

Name of Property

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Section number APPENDIX Page 8

The Walker closed in 1963 but re-opened on December 12, 1975, as the Edison Theater screening 'art' films. It was short-lived and was taken over by the Theatre IV Theatre Company and initially known as the Regency Theatre, but now serves as extra dressing room space and a rehearsal room for their adjacent Empire Theatre.



**Sinnott was also involved in several other projects in Tappahannock** through the late 1940s. Originally, before work on the DAW, he designed a home for DAW owner, Elias Doar. The home still stands and was recently sold for \$600,000. Situated on the Rappahannock River just north of the downtown, the home was a "reimagining" of Doar's maternal ancestors' home, "Enfield," a 1700s home that is also still standing.

He did another home plan in 1945 for the Louis Carreras family. Carreras owned U.S. Tire Sales, a tire recapping and repair service. Unfortunately, there was a dispute over his fee and Sinnott had to sue to recover his full earnings. The matter didn't settle until 1948.

He also designed a Methodist church and a yacht club, the latter of which has been replaced by the Moose Lodge.



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DAW Theatre

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Section number APPENDIX Page 9

Another big project there was for Nathan W. Bareford, who owned the local Buick dealership. The project covered five lots on the east side of Church Lane from Prince south to Duke Street, across from Bareford's home on the west side of Church Lane – about one hundred feet of frontage, altogether. The Buick showrooms and garage facilities were in the southern portion of the project while he was going to build two store fronts on the southeast corner of Prince Street and Church Lane, fronting on Prince. On May 17, 1949, the two-store-front plan was reduced to a single building but covering the entire footprint of the original plan. The building still stands with its doorways on the north side of the building and shows some of Sinnott's skills. The car dealership has been demolished.

*"Enfield"**Bareford Store*

*(Enfield photo from Karin Andrews Real Estate; Bareford from June 13, 2023, by Thomas Gerdorn)*

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DAW Theatre

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Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

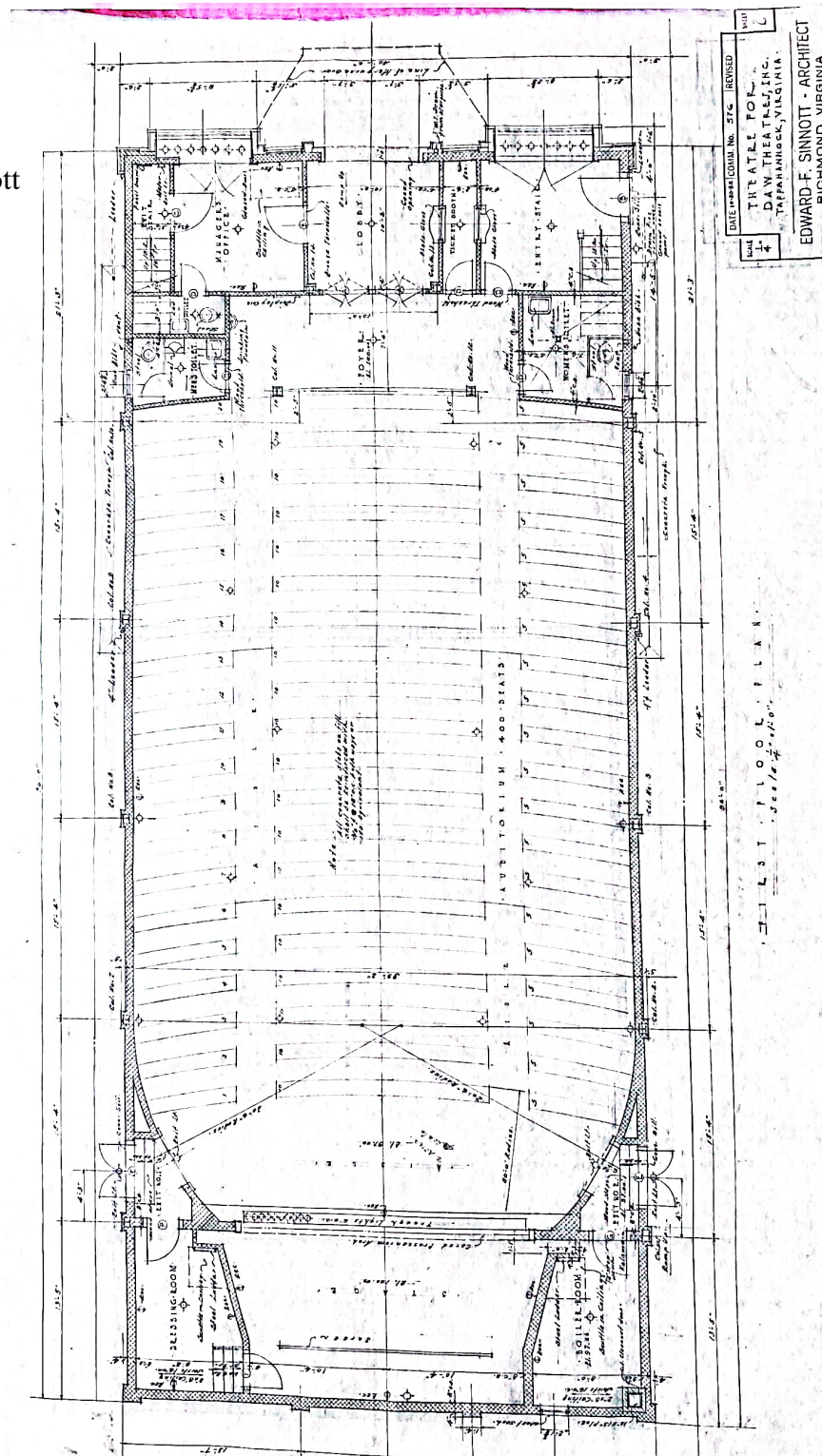
County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number APPENDIX Page 10

DAW Theatre  
Original 1938  
Drawings –  
Edward F. Sinnott

## Main Floor





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DAW Theatre

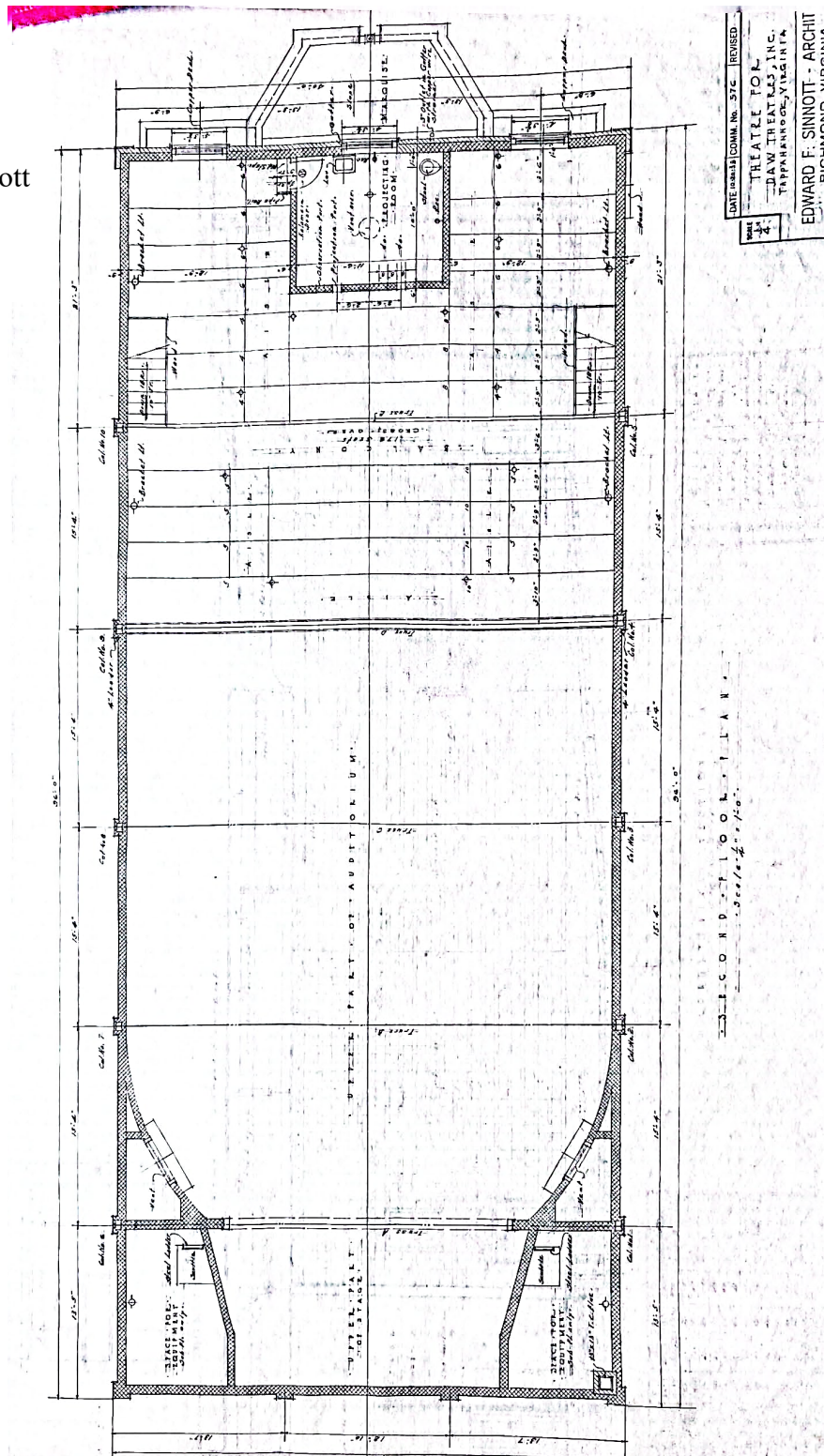
Name of Property  
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DAW Theatre  
Original 1938  
Drawings –  
Edward F. Sinnott

Balcony



United States Department of the Interior  
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DAW Theatre

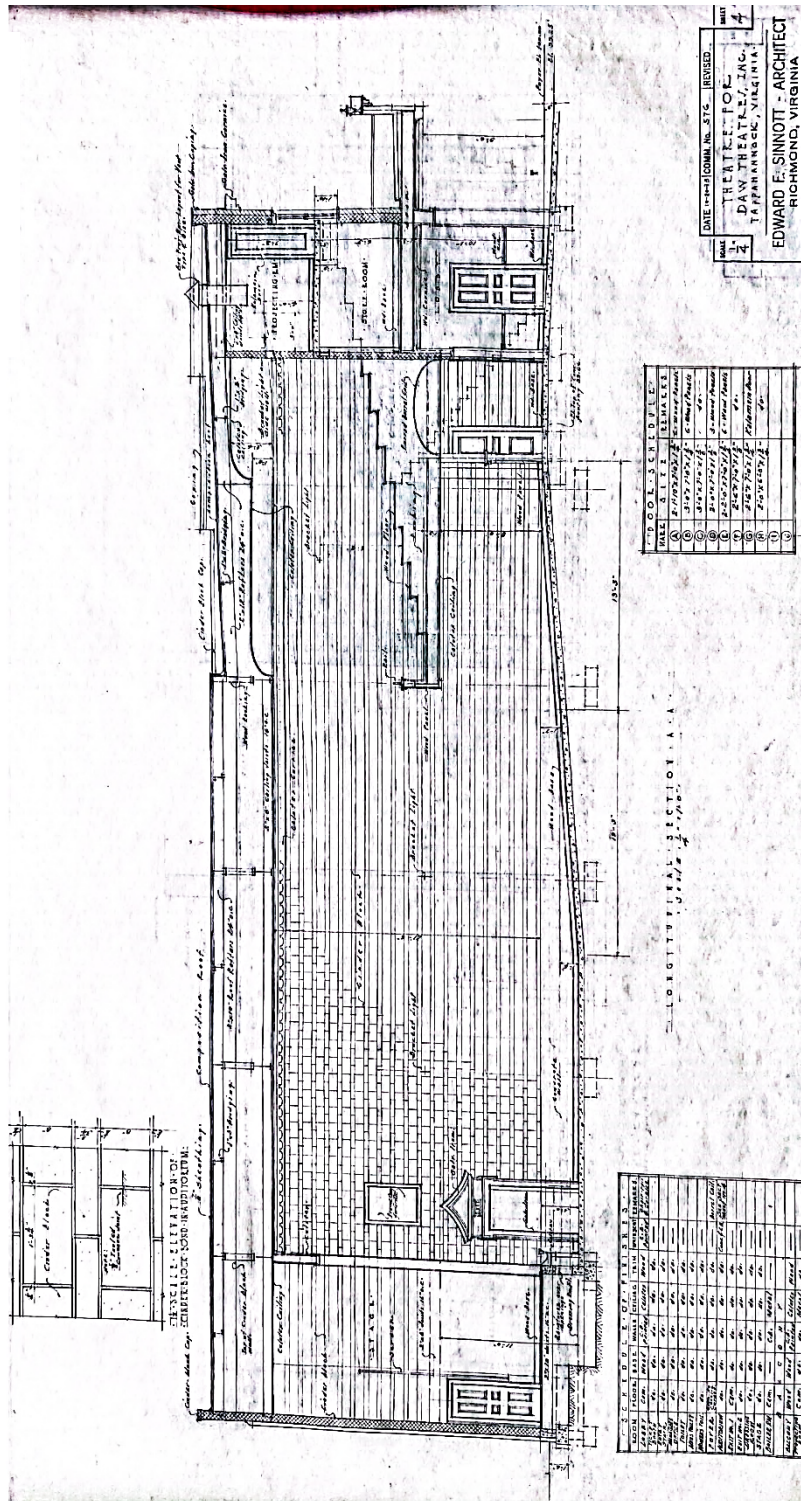
Name of Property  
Essex County, Virginia  
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DAW Theatre  
Original 1938  
Drawings –  
Edward F. Sinnott

Section  
(East Elevation)





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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DAW Theatre

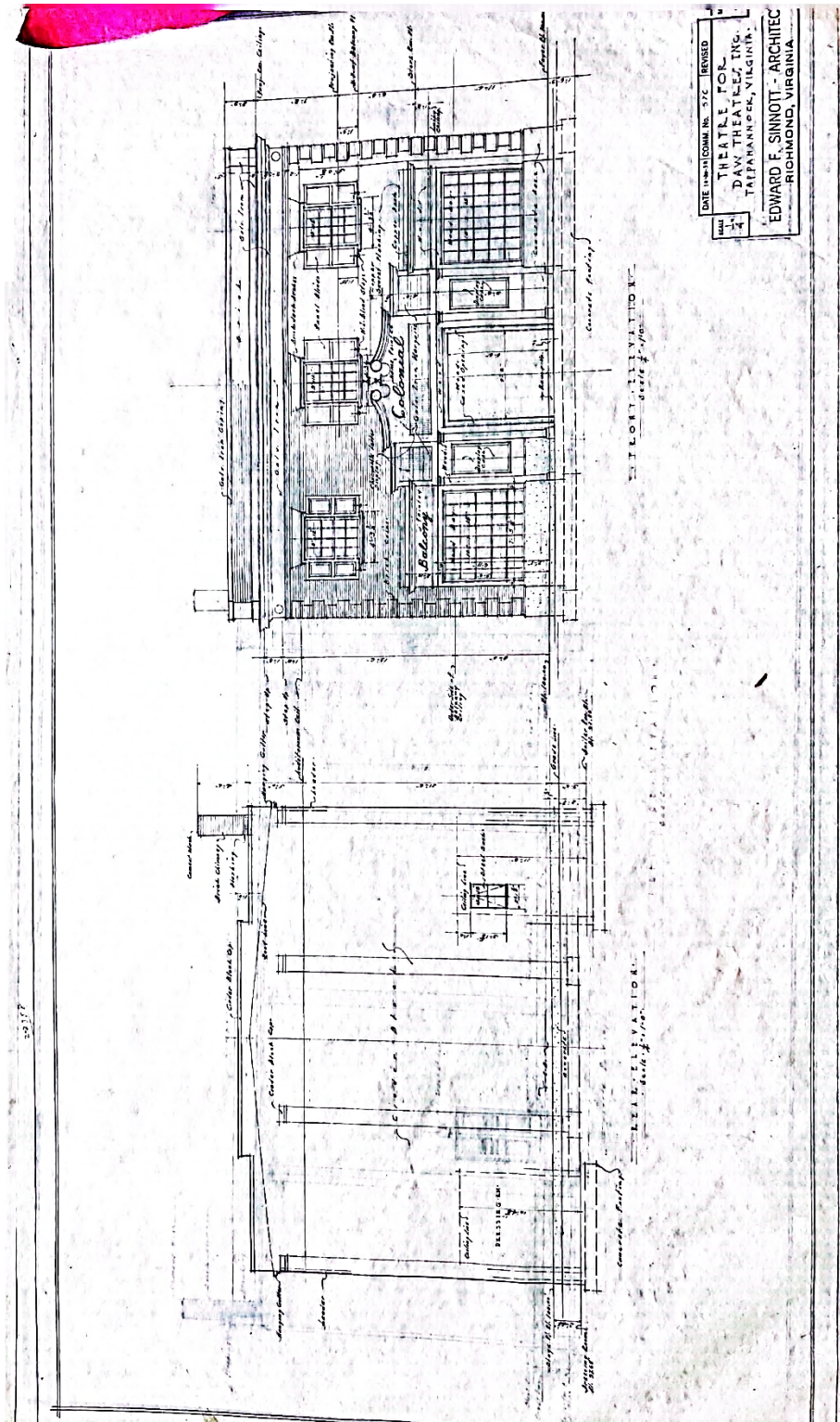
Name of Property  
Essex County, Virginia  
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DAW Theatre  
Original 1938  
Drawings –  
Edward F. Sinnott

Façade and Rear  
Wall





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DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

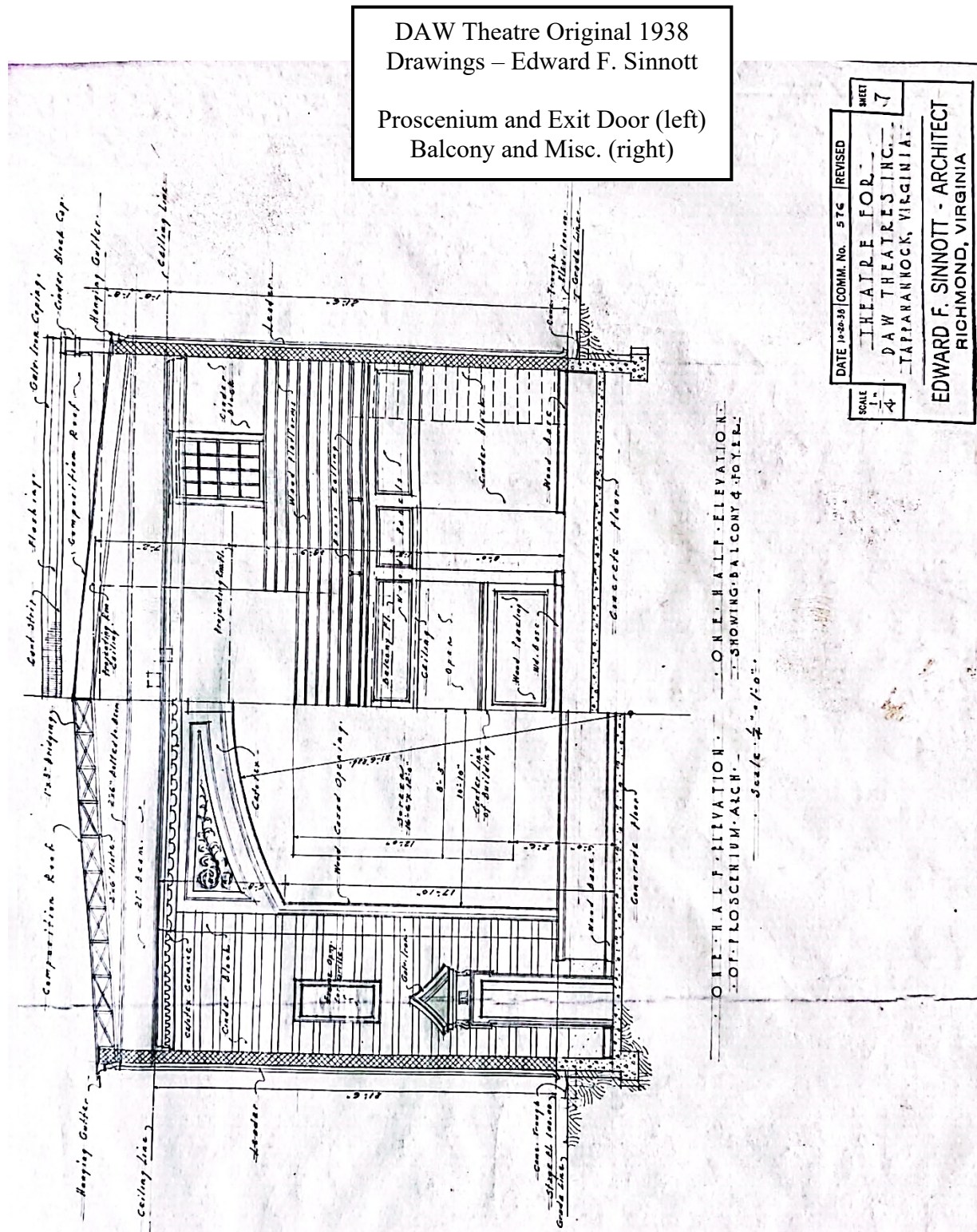
County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number APPENDIX Page 14

DAW Theatre Original 1938  
Drawings – Edward F. Sinnott

Proscenium and Exit Door (left)  
Balcony and Misc. (right)



**United States Department of the Interior**  
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

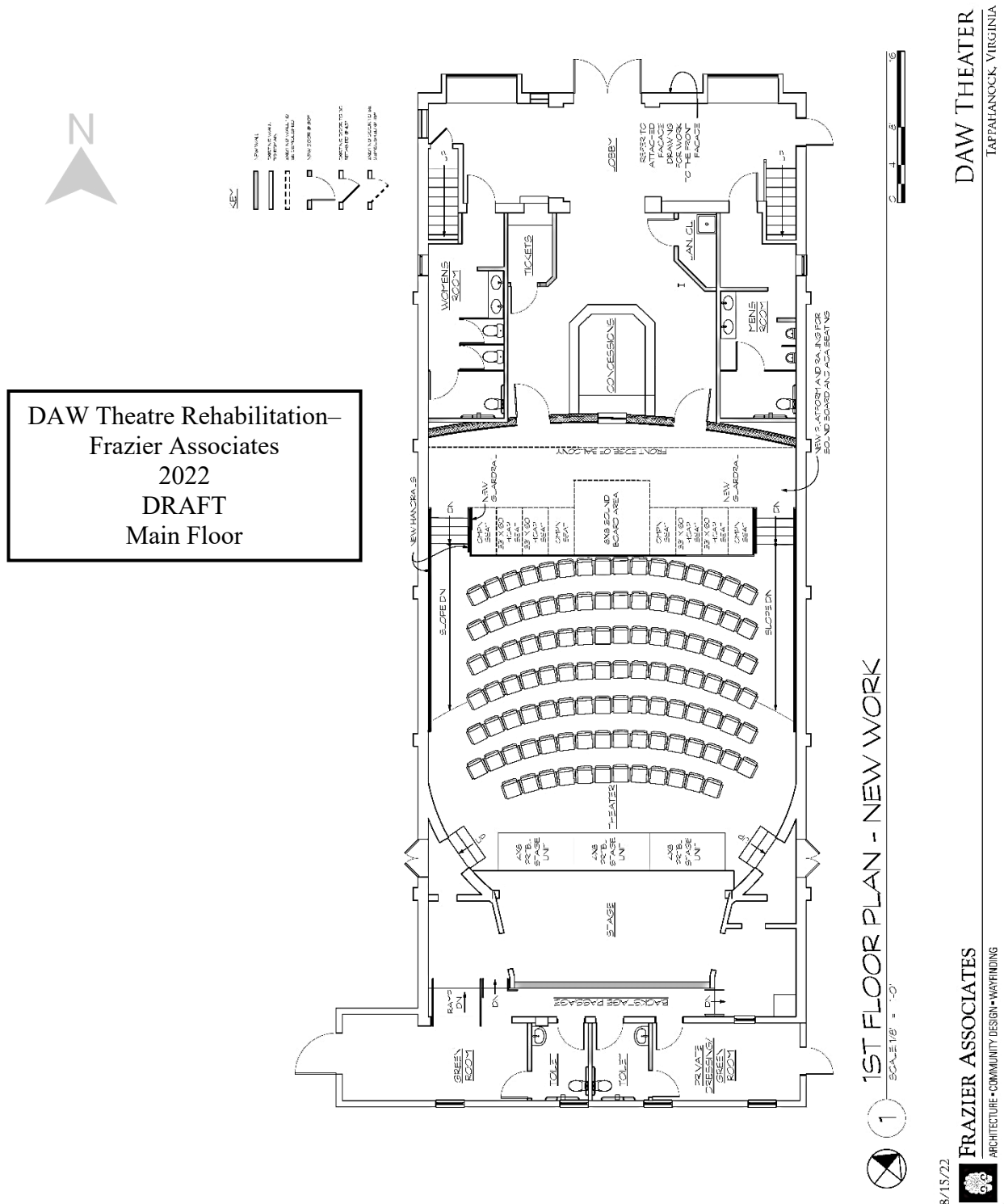
DAW Theatre

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8/15/22

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FRAZIER ASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTURE ■ COMMUNITY DESIGN ■ WAYFINDING

## DAW THEATER

TAPPAHANOCK, VIRGINIA

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

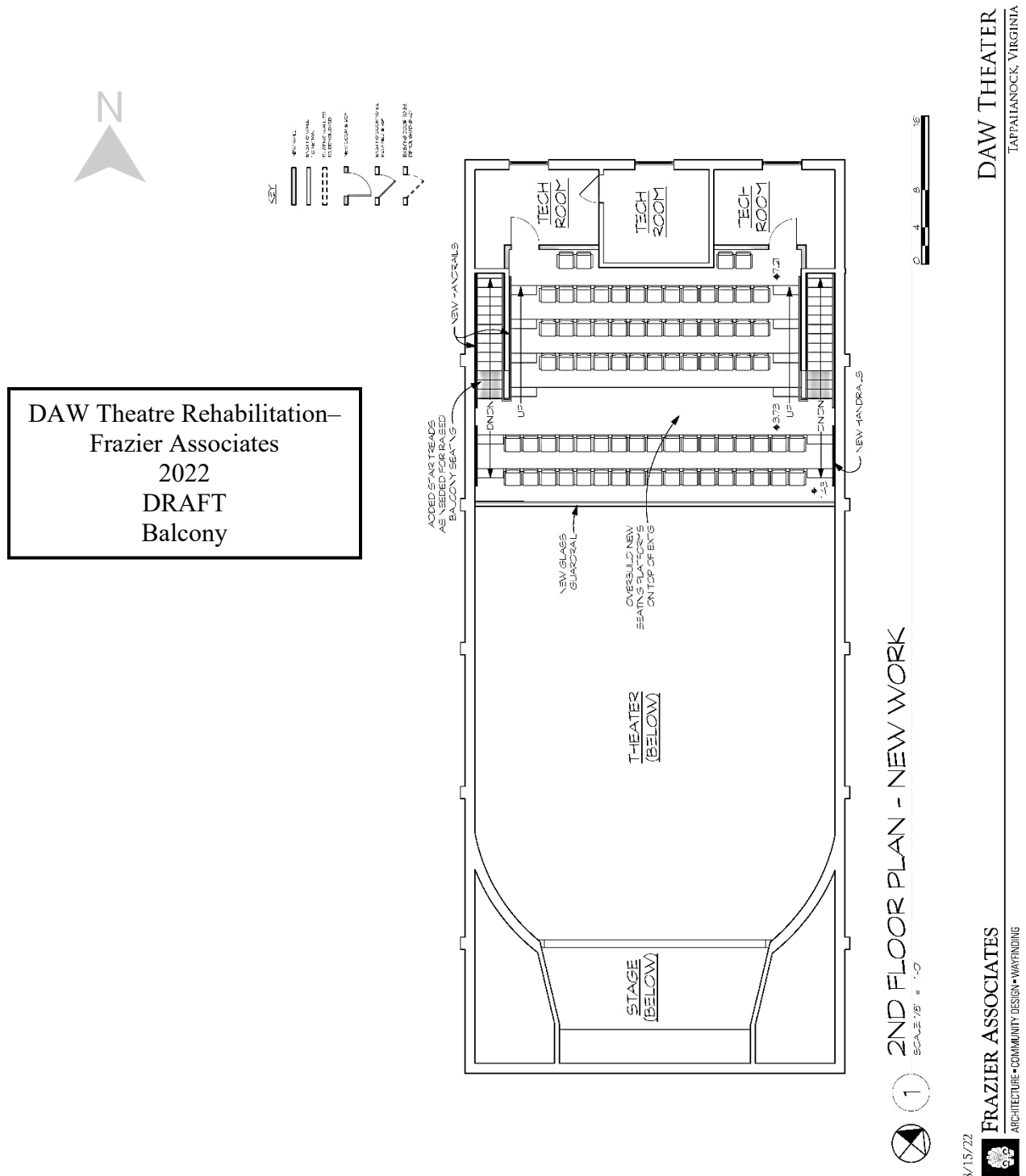
DAW Theatre

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Name of Property

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

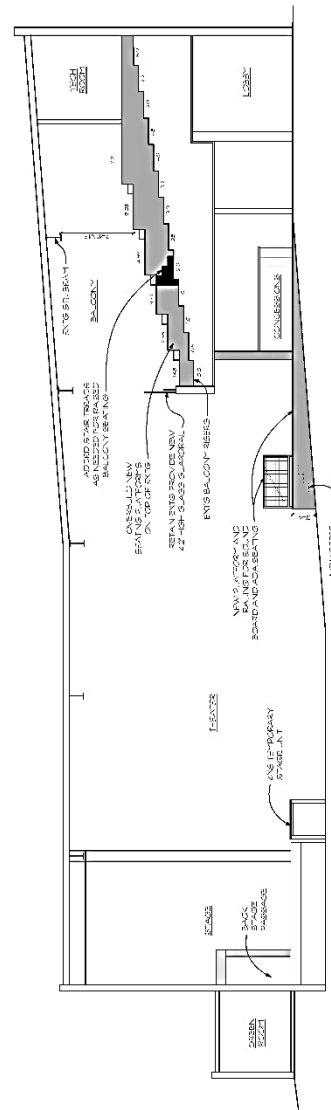
DAW Theatre

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Name of Property  
Essex County, Virginia  
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DAW Theatre Rehabilitation–  
Frazier Associates  
2022  
DRAFT  
Section (from east)



1 BUILDING SECTION  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

8/15/22

**FRAZIER ASSOCIATES**  
ARCHITECTURE • COMMUNITY DESIGN • WAYFINDING

DAW THEATER  
TAPPAHANOCK, VIRGINIA





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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_1



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_2



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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_3



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**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_4

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DAW Theatre

Name of Property

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_5



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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_6



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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_7



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DAW Theatre

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_8

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DAW Theatre

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DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_9



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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

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Essex County, Virginia

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310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_10

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 11



310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_11



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 12

310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_12

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 13



310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_13

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 14

310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_14



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 15



310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_15

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 16



310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_16

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 17



310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_17



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 18

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DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_18

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 19



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DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_19



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

DAW Theatre

Name of Property

Essex County, Virginia

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 20

310-0024-0024

DAW Theatre

2024

NR\_photo\_20



**DAW Theatre**  
**Essex County**  
**DHR ID: 310-0024-0024**





DAW Theatre  
Essex County  
DHR ID: 310-0024-0024

ESSEX

RICHMOND

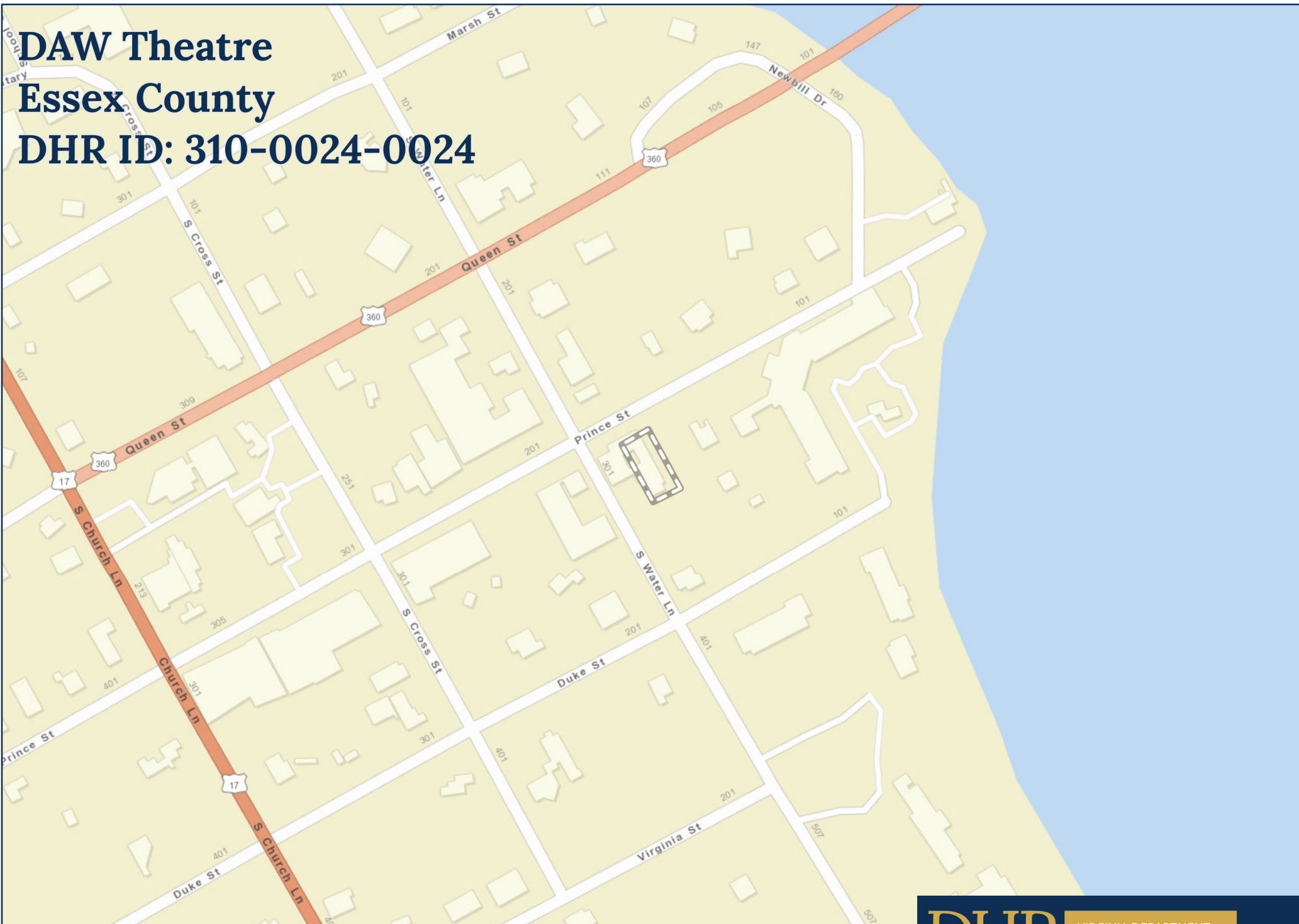
Tappahannock  
Historic District  
310-0024

Sabine Hall  
079-0015

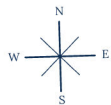
# DAW Theatre

## Essex County

### DHR ID: 310-0024-0024



Sources: VDHR 2024, VGIN 2024, ESRI 2024  
Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses.







### Legend

 County Boundaries

### STREET MAP

**DAW Theater**

**Town of Tappahannock, Essex**

**County, VA**

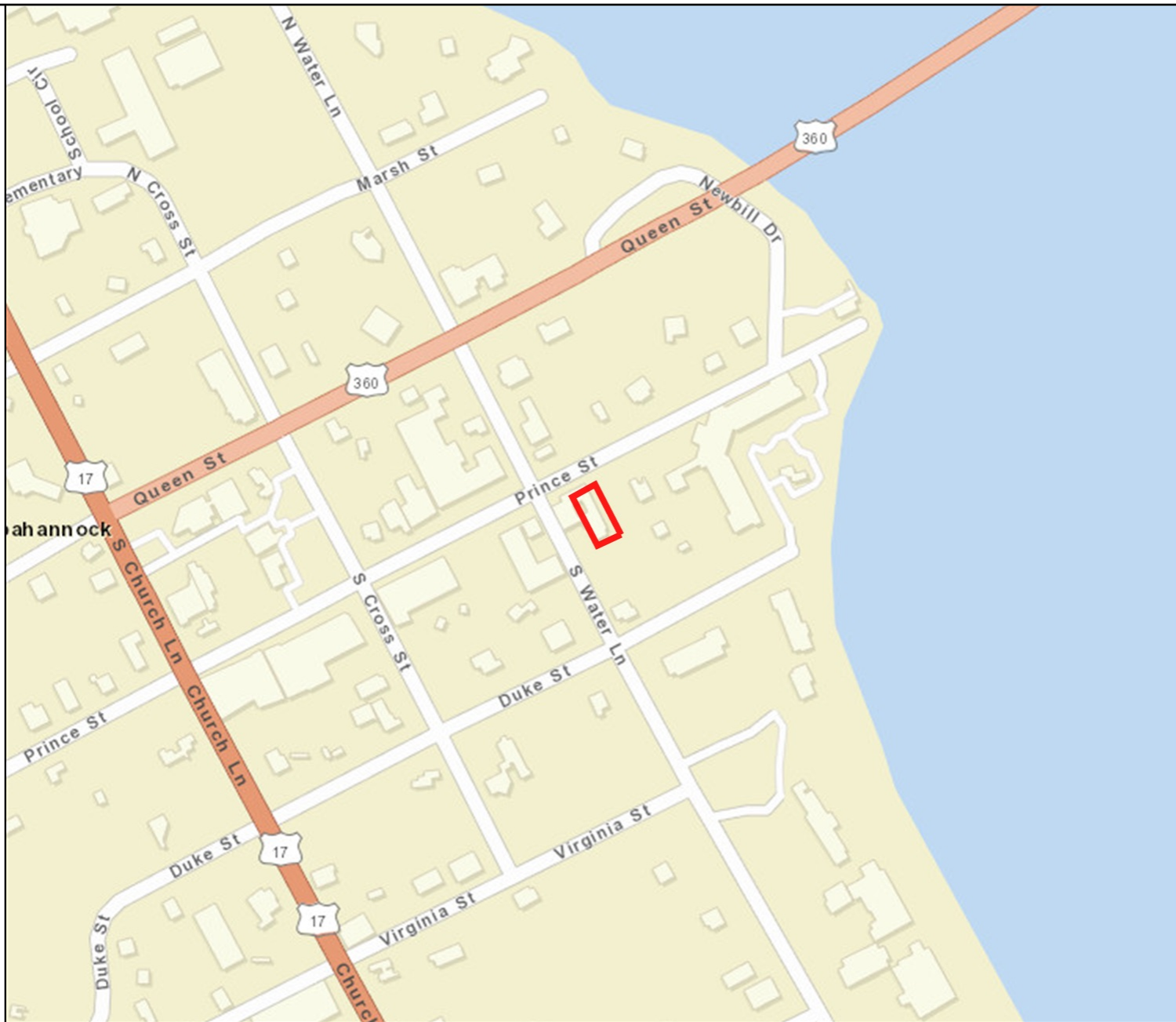
**DHR No. 310-0024-0024**

 **Nominated Boundary**



Feet

0 100 200 300 400  
1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet



**Title:**

**Date: 1/30/2024**

*DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.*

*Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.*



DAW Theatre  
Essex County  
DHR ID: 310-0024-0024



DHR

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORIC RESOURCES