

Minutes

Hybrid Platform
57 E 1st St

Date: June 6, 2023 Time: 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brandon Benzing, Chair
Jocelyn Skogebo
Bruce Nelson
Russ Haughey
Ty Utton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jim Babos, Vice-Chair
BJ Parsons

STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Kopaskie-Brown
Charlotte McDermott
Michelle Dahlke
Maura Jackson
Lyndsay Hertzig

GUESTS:

Michelle Donovan
Vic Linoff

(*Board members and staff participated in the meeting through the use of telephonic and audio conference equipment.)

1. Call Meeting to Order.

Chair Benzing

At 6:02 pm we call the June 6, 2023, Mesa Historic Preservation Board meeting to order.

2. Approval of the minutes from the May 2, 2023 Historic Preservation Board meeting.

Chair Benzing

Are there any corrections on the minutes? Do we have a motion to approve?

Boardmember Nelson

I make a motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting, May 2nd.

Boardmember Utton

I'll second that.

AYES: Benzing-Skogebo-Nelson-Haughey-Utton

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Babos-Parsons

3. Conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Board on the following case:

- a. **ZON23-00384 "The Nile"** (District 4) 105 West Main Street. Located on the south side of Main Street, west of N. Center Street (0.17± acres). Rezone from Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay (DC-DE) to Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay and a Historic Landmark Overlay (DC-DE-HL). This request will establish a Historic Landmark Overlay on the property.

Staff Planner: Maura Jackson

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Summary:

Historic Preservation Coordinator Maura Jackson presented case ZON23-00384. See attachment 1.

Chair Benzing

At this point, does anybody have questions for staff? Maura, my first question is the conditions that were on that, that was just to adhere to all the building codes and additional or previous zoning regulations, right?

Maura Jackson

It's a standard condition requiring they comply with all city development codes and regulations.

Chair Benzing

Do we have any other questions for staff on this one?

Alright, I call for the applicant to say a few words. If you'll just state your name and address.

Applicant, Michelle Donovan displayed a PowerPoint presentation. See attachment 2.

Chair Benzing

Do we have any questions for the applicant?

Boardmember Utton

I actually had a question for staff, when the marquee is done, and they want to put it on, will they have to go through a process with the Board to get that?

Maura Jackson

Chair and Boardmember Utton, if the building, as it is now, is designated a Historic Landmark, any changes to the exterior would need a Certificate of Appropriateness. That sounds like something we would work together on. But yes, if they were to restore the marquee, it would need a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Chair Benzing

Thank you. Do we have any public testimony at this time?

Okay, so next we want to open it up for discussion. To me, I think this is a no brainer. We probably all agree on this Board. Is there any objection to it? I think it's fantastic. I think what Michelle is doing is fantastic for downtown. On a side note, thank you so much for hosting our little event last month. If we are in agreement, to approve we'll need a motion. With that motion, please read the whole description as written.

Boardmember Haughey motioned to recommend approval with conditions of ZON23-00384 to City Council. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Nelson.

AYES: Benzing-Skogebo-Nelson-Haughey-Utton

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Babos-Parsons

4. **Discuss and summarize the Mesa Historic Preservation Month event that was held on May 13, 2023, and discuss ideas for Mesa Historic Preservation Month 2024, including a similar event.**

Chair Benzing

Any recommendations for what we can do moving forward? It was a smaller event. We had the families of one of the applicants. It was one of the gals that did the nice artwork. I'd say there was about 20 - 25 people there. It's a good start. Next year it can grow. I think directional signage will be the number one thing to recommend. It seems like there was a lot of wandering. I think The Nile was a nice place to have it. Mr. Linoff who got roped into doing a side presentation with Mr. Peters, did a very nice job. Do we have any other feedback?

Boardmember Haughey

I think next time, I don't know how we can contact more teachers and students, but what did we have like three applicants?

Chair Benzing

We ended up having four. We had two essays and two art. I know our main contact from a couple years, she had moved up out of the teaching position into an administrative position and lost her grip on her classroom. So yeah, she was very good.

Boardmember Haughey

Well, there's probably a contact in the Mesa School District level. Somebody that handles all of the different programs.

Chair Benzing

We did reach out and we did the Peach Jar, which is the school's digital flyer that goes out monthly. But it's hard when it's not written into the curriculum. Sometimes it has to get ahead of the curve and get out there earlier.

Boardmember Skogebo

Also, the art programs as well.

Chair Benzing

I think the art one has the biggest room to grow because the young lady that attended the event and then went to the City Council meeting, she really got a lot out of it. I think if we promote that one, we'll get a lot more than even the essay contest. I think that one is a fun one for the kids to get behind. It's not as mentally daunting of a task as the videography one for the high schoolers. I have grade schoolers and writing is the last thing that they want to do.

Boardmember Haughey

History classes might be good too.

Chair Benzing

That would be a good one.

Boardmember Skogebo

The quality of what we did receive was amazing.

Chair Benzing

Are those still on view in the Planning office?

Michelle Dahlke

Yes. I'm proudly displaying them in my office. We're looking for a more visible display, perhaps in the lobby or behind our counter where we assist customers. We'd like to display it throughout the year so that people can see it.

Boardmember Nelson

So, we're going to expand the tour the next time, is that the goal?

Chair Benzing

It is. Into a different tour, right?

Boardmember Skogebo

I might suggest starting with the tour, as it happens to fall into the month of May.

Chair Benzing

You don't necessarily have to loop back around. You can have a destination to go to. Maybe it can make things a little bit longer. Not as condensed. I think it was a very positive first step, and then we just keep moving forward.

Boardmember Nelson

Is there a way to set up some kind of shuttle for people?

Chair Benzing

That is something we talked about in the past. I guess that depends on if the next time we can get know, sponsorships so we can cover the cost of it. There's nothing currently in the HP budget for that. But we have talked with Councilmember Duff, she has a certain stipend that she wants to use to help really promote Preservation month as well. We could potentially do a joint venture. That could be a conversation, about the stipend. Can we utilize some of that to shuttle people? So, I think it's open.

Boardmember Skogebo

As far as you mentioned about getting it into the curriculum, it might be important for us to reach out in August. When the teachers are planning the year.

Chair Benzing

A lot of that's, I guess, to have a topic by then too. Which has been the challenge.

Mary Kopaskie-Brown

So, start thinking now.

Boardmember Skogebo

Is that something we should add to the agenda for July?

Chair Benzing

We can add it at the end for future agenda items. It seems like this is something that should probably stay on the agenda for the next few months. Just in case things trickle in, ideas and such, so that we have the opportunity to discuss it.

Does anybody have anything else to add to this item number? That event is always hard. The year before, when we had a lot more applicants and winners for the writing contest, we packed the conference room in City Hall before the Council meeting with the families of the applicants. So, it seems like that's going to be the major draw. Even next year for preservation month. Hopefully, we can keep adding more and more people, but I think it's good.

If we have no other comments on item number 4, we move to item number 5.

5. Hear reports from Board Members of current events related to historic preservation.

Chair Benzing

Do we have anything at the moment?

Boardmember Skogebo

I do. The 2050 General Plan is continuing. I don't know if you guys have had a chance to go onto the website for Tomorrow's Mesa. It's on MesaListens.com. There's a secondary questionnaire that's on there. I would encourage you all to go on and share that with anyone that you know, that could speak to it. And then there's going to be, over the summer, some interactive events and they're based on district. So, if you go on that same website, for example, there's one in district four at the Luster Building. That's trying to get as many people in the public out to learn more about it and why it is important.

Chair Benzing

Is that happening in June? I guess they're all different dates.

Boardmember Skogebo

They are. So, end of June through end of July.

Chair Benzing

Okay. Great.

Boardmember Skogebo

Maybe we could share that through email or if you guys know the website.

Chair Benzing

Have you guys picked up a little sticker flyer at the event?

Boardmember Nelson

I've been there.

Chair Benzing

Great. Moving on to item number 6.

6. Historic Preservation Officer's Updates.

(The items in the Historic Preservation Officer's updates are not for Board discussion and no Board action will be taken on the updated items.)

Michelle Dahlke

Mr. Chairman and Board members, we do have a few updates. One is that the Historic Preservation Office has a summer intern. Her name is Lyndsay and she's in the audience with us. Hopefully you get a chance to interact with her more throughout the summer. We're really pleased to have her here with us. We think she'll help us do great things.

Another update, just to remind the Board, this is our Chair's last meeting. And we'll miss him very much. As a token of our appreciation, we do have some Main Street Sweets cookies for you to share with your fellow Board members. We thank you so much for your long service. There is a plaque that's coming from the Mayor's office as well as a card.

Chair Benzing

Hopefully it doesn't go up on the City Hall wall.

Michelle Dahlke

You'll have it for your own display in your den, office, or in your family room.

Chair Benzing

Okay, thank you very much.

Michelle Dahlke

Thank you. Did you have any else Maura?

Maura Jackson

No.

Michelle Dahlke

Okay. That was it.

7. Items from citizens present.

Chair Benzing

Do we have anything from any citizens present?

8. Future agenda items.

Chair Benzing

Future agenda items we have . . .

- Discussion about the writing/art/video contest and possible discussion topics next month.
- Keep on the May Historic Preservation Month event, at least for another month, to discuss any ideas that populate over the next month.
- And then you're going to put on voting for Chair and Vice-Chair when Vice-Chair Babos is back next month.

9. Adjournment.

Chair Benzing

The next HP meeting will be July 11th, 2023. That's the end of the agenda. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Boardmember Skogebo

I motion to adjourn.

Chair Benzing

Do I have a second?

Boardmember Utton

I'll second that.

Chair Benzing

This meeting is concluded at 6:32 pm. Thank you, everybody.

AYES: Benzing-Skogebo-Nelson-Haughey-Utton

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Babos-Parsons

**A recording of the meeting is available upon request. Please contact the Planning Department with questions, 480-644-2385.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
 STAFF REPORT**

**June 6, 2023
 Case Number ZON23-00384**

Project	The Nile – Historic Landmark Designation	
Request	Rezone from Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay (DC-DE) to Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay and Historic Landmark Overlay (DC-DE-HL)	
Applicant’s Name	Michelle Donovan - The Nile	
Property Owner	CK Properties LLC	
Project Location	105 West Main Street Located south of Main Street and west of S. Center Street	
Parcel Number	138-42-046	
Project Area	0.17 +/- acres	
Council District	District 4	
General Plan Designation	Downtown (Station Area, Transit Corridor)	
Existing Zoning Designation	Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay	
Staff Planner	Maura Jackson, Historic Preservation Advisor/Planner Michelle Dahlke, Principal Planner	
Staff Recommendation	Approval with conditions	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Board recommend that City Council approve the Rezone to include a Historic Landmark Designation with the following **Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.

HISTORY

On **July 14, 1883**, the City Council approved the annexation of 631± acres of land, including the project site (Ordinance No. 1).

In **1924**, the Nile Theater was constructed and opened for business on the project site.

On **July 16, 1987**, the City Council approved the creation of new zoning districts within the downtown area, formerly referred to as the Town Center Area, including the subject site, from R1-6 BIZ, R-2 BIZ, R-2 HRZ BIZ, R-2 PAD-BIZ, R-3-BIZ, R-3 HRZ-BIZ, R-3 PAD-BIZ, R-4-BIZ, R-4-HRZ-BIZ, and various others, to TCC, TCR-1, TCR-2, TCR-3, TCB-1, TCB-2 (Case No. Z87-040, Ordinance No. 2254).

In **2011**, the City Council approved a Zoning Ordinance update which included renaming the various Town Center (TC) zoning district names to the current Downtown District (D) naming convention.

On **November 7, 2011**, the City Council approved the establishment of a Downtown Events Overlay along the Main Street Corridor, including the subject site (Case No. Z11-017, Ordinance No. 5065).

On **August 8, 2017**, the Design Review Board reviewed a request to remove a colonnade in front of the building and remove the 1960 stucco façade. The Planning Director subsequently approved the request on September 12, 2017.

BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting a rezone of the project site from Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay (DC-DE) to Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay and a Historic Landmark Overlay (DC-DE-HL) (Project). This request will designate the Nile Theater as a Historic Landmark.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals

The General Plan Character Area designation on the property is Downtown within a Transit District character overlay, and a Station Area sub-type. Per the General Plan, the focus of the Downtown Character Area is the creation of a pedestrian oriented, transit-rich environment activity center. The goal for the Character Area is to make it a people-friendly area that offers options for housing, employment, shopping, entertainment, and events.

The Transit District character type overlays the Downtown Character type with a focus of encouraging a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops. The Station Area Sub-Type applies to development within ¼ mile of a light rail station or 1/8 of a mile of a transit or major bus transfer station that will have more intense development than the associated corridor and are expected to transition into an urban building form.

Chapter 4 of the General Plan, "Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods," incorporates general policies and strategies for historic preservation within Mesa in order to preserve historic structures and neighborhoods as physical vestiges of the past. The designation of the Nile Theater as a Historic Landmark meets the purpose of the goals of the General Plan by recognizing the significance of this historic structure within the community.

Zoning District Designation

The subject site is zoned Downtown Core with a Downtown Events Overlay (DC-DE). Per Section 11-23-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the Historic Landmark Overlay district will be used in conjunction with the underlying zoning district of DC-DE.



According to Section 11-23-4 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, to be eligible for a Historic Landmark Overlay District, a building, structure, or object must display exceptional historic, visual, or architectural significance, and at least one of the following exists:

1. It meets the criteria for historic sites adopted by the State of Arizona through the State Historic Preservation Office; or
2. Any part of it is 50 or more years old; or
3. It substantially meets the following criteria for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places adopted by the Secretary of the Interior, copies of which shall be on file in the Office of Historic Preservation:
 - a. Value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.
 - b. Location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.
 - c. Identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.
 - d. Identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation.
 - e. Value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.
 - f. Distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The building located at 105 West Main Street, historically known as the Nile Theater, is over 50 years of age and substantially meets the criteria for Historic Landmark designation as listed in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance. The Ordinance requires that properties meet one of three eligibility requirements for such designation; however, the Nile meets more than one.

History of the Nile Theater

The Nile Theater was constructed in 1924 as one of the many Valley theaters owned and developed by Harry Nace. Nace arrived in Phoenix in 1910 as an acrobat with a circus and remained in the Valley for his health and built a chain of theaters. Nace partnered with J.E. Rickards in 1915 and managed thirty-six theaters throughout the state. Their company was sold to Paramount in 1936 (Orpheum Theater Arizona State Historic Property Inventory form, 1985). The construction of the Nile Theater inspired the construction of other theaters within the Valley, and four years later, the Orpheum Theater was built in Phoenix.

The Nile Theater was built with locally kilned Lehi brick, and the original decoration present on the Nile Theater was representative of the Art Deco style with Egyptian motifs, similar to common Period Revival styles of entertainment venues of the time.

Although many of those characteristics are no longer present, the building continues to contribute to the character of the downtown Mesa business core. It was the first movie house in Mesa as well as the first “air cooled” building in Arizona. It currently operates as a music venue with a coffee shop.

The Nile Theater is a two-part commercial block located between two buildings in downtown Mesa. It consists of brick (Lehi brick) construction with three bays which are accentuated by the varied parapet. The lower level features a glazed storefront and the upper features nine windows with three per bay. All but the center window are 10-light casements. Although these are non-original windows, they are historic in age. Originally, there were three entries and a banding of glass block with vents that were later obscured by a larger marquee.



The distinctive Egyptian theme of the Nile Theater can be attributed to the discovery of the tombs of Tutankhamun which had occurred in 1922 just before construction of the theater. This discovery ignited a global interest in Egypt and was reflected in many architectural designs, such as Period Revival and Art Deco/Nouveau styles, which incorporated Egyptian elements in the United States through the early 20th century. During the 1920s, it was common for entertainment venues to be designed in an Exotic or Period Revival style evocative of far-away lands. Although the building itself does not present characteristics associated with Egyptian motifs, they were present in the original signage and entry marquee as well as in the theater name.

An awning has been added where the original marquee sign was placed, and the box office centered on the original entry has been removed. This middle section was integral for the original front façade as it helped distinguish three bays on the lower level. The theater entry was in the middle bay flanked by retail spaces.



The signs on the building evolved throughout time, with the flat electric sign above the upper level being replaced with a perpendicular neon sign. The marquee also underwent changes. It was enlarged by the 1940s, spanning over the entire width of the façade. Currently, painted signage has replaced both. A renovation of the façade was done between 2018 and 2019. With the exception of the marquee and the box office structure, the building today looks very much the way it did in 1924.

Historic District and Landmark Overlay District Criteria

Criteria	Consistent	Inconsistent
It meets the criteria for historic sites adopted by the State of Arizona through the State Historic Preservation Office; or Staff Analysis: The criteria for the National Register of Historic Places have been adopted for the Arizona Register of Historic Places.	X	
Any part of it is 50 or more years old; or Staff Analysis: This building is 99 years old.	X	

Criteria	Consistent	Inconsistent
<p>Substantially meets the criteria for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places adopted by the Secretary of the Interior, copies of which shall be on file in the Office of Historic Preservation.</p> <p>Staff Analysis: The criteria set forth within the Mesa Zoning Ordinance are slightly different from the currently adopted National Register of Historic Places criteria.</p> <p>A. Value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.</p> <p>Staff Analysis: The construction of the Nile Theater inspired the construction of other theaters within the Valley. The Nile Theater was one of the many Valley theaters owned and developed by Harry Nace who, partnered with J.E. Rickards, managed thirty-six theaters throughout the state.</p> <p>B. Location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.</p> <p>Staff Analysis: The Nile was the first movie house in Mesa as well as the first “air cooled” building in Arizona.</p> <p>C. Identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.</p> <p>D. Identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation.</p> <p>E. Value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.</p> <p>Staff Analysis: The Nile Theater is a two-part commercial block building type located between two buildings in downtown Mesa. It consists of brick (Lehi brick) construction with three bays which are accentuated by the varied parapet. Although the building no longer exhibits original stylistic elements, the building continues to contribute to the character of the downtown Mesa business core through the building type. It is possible that the elements of the original style could be reconstructed.</p> <p>F. Distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>X</p> <p>N/A</p>	

Based on the analysis, Staff finds that the Proposed Project is consistent with Chapter 4 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan and Section 11-23-4 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Staff Report

Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3 – ~~Application Narrative~~ Project Narrative



CANVA STORIES 400

CNFFILM F400



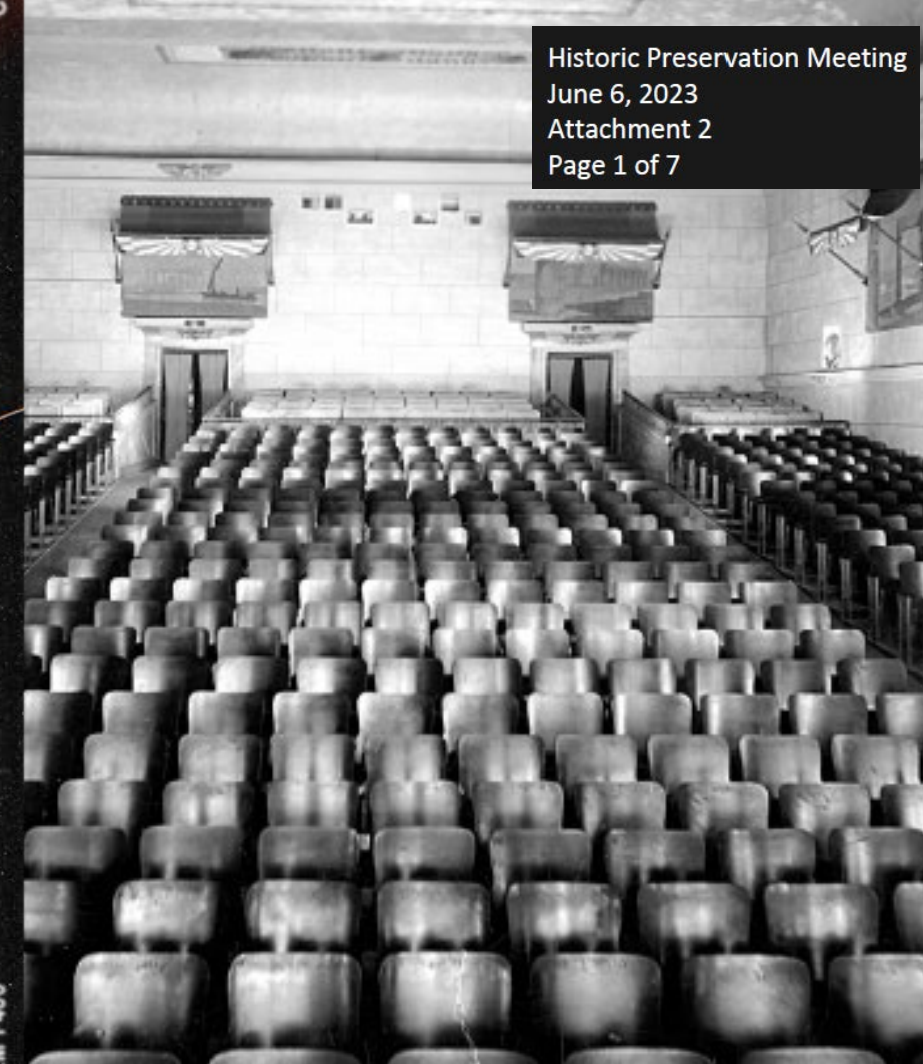
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CANVA STORIES ▲ 14

THE NILE THEATER

HISTORIC LANDMARK

Presented by Michelle Donovan



Historic Preservation Meeting
June 6, 2023
Attachment 2
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CNFFILM F400

CANVA STORIES 400



CANVA STORIES ▲ 14

Why It Qualifies



Age

The Nile was built in 1924 making it 99 years old.



Community

The Nile was built to bring people together to enjoy the arts together. It still is doing that 99 years later.



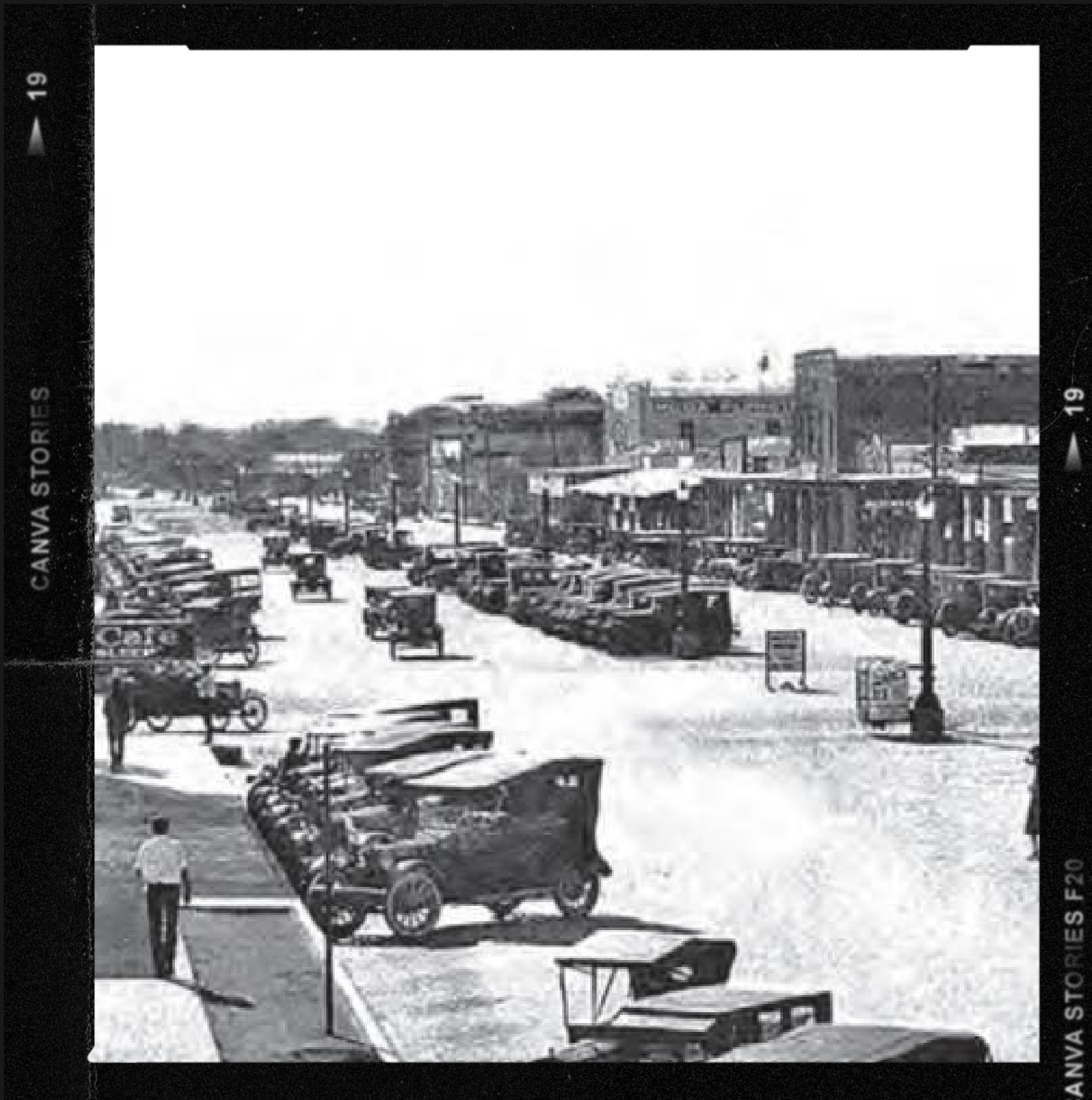
Influence

The Nile set the bar for theaters in Arizona in 1924. It influenced the building of several other theaters in the area.



Style

The Nile was named for and made in the vein of the Egyptian Art-deco era craze of the 1920's.



Est. 1924

The Nile Theater opened September 2, 1924

The Nile Theater will turn 100 years old next year. It is one of the most visibly historic buildings in Downtown Mesa. In 2018 The Nile underwent a facade improvement to remove the concrete collonade that was added in the 1980's to reveal the original brick from the 20's. A parapet was constructed to mimic it's original design and was adorned with a handpainted mural that reads "The Nile Theater est. 1924".



Community

100 Years of Bringing People Together

The Nile opened as a movie house/theater and has been many things over the years. Though it's original use may not be exactly what it is used for currently, The Nile continues to be a place for people from the community to gather. From concerts, yoga, movies, weddings, and more - The Nile brings thousands of people to Downtown Mesa monthly. The Nile is a place people consider a staple in their community. This gathering also benefits the rest of the area with patrons spending money at local bars and restaurants. The Nile is an important to the heartbeat of downtown.



Joe E. Rickards and Harry Nace

Pioneers of the Arizona Theater Scene

Rickards & Nace not only built The Nile, they were also the architects behind The Rialto, The Stand, and The Orpheum. At the peak of their career, they had built 20 theaters all over Arizona. They built beautiful, opulent theaters that houses movies, plays, and more all over the state. The Orpheum in Downtown Phoenix is still standing and was built after the two completed The Nile. It has been said the completion of The Nile gave them the confidence to go forward with larger projects that created theaters across Arizona. And where there is art there is culture.



Egyptian Art Deco Craze

1920's Architecture & Imagery

The Nile was built 2 years after the discovery of King Tut's Tomb. The world was enthralled with Egyptian imagery and The Nile was aptly named. From the name to the Pharaoh heads inside and the giant Egyptian marquee on the top the building - The Nile was drenched in the Egyptian Art Deco aesthetic that was so popular in the 1920s. Today, it is still called The Nile and Egyptian imagery is still used on merch in the coffee shop and theater.

Uniquely Mesa



01 First Air Cooled Building

Tunnels were built under the theater where fans would blow on block of ice to cool the patrons in the Mesa heat.



02 Locally Kilned Bricks

The Nile was constructed of brick made locally by Tiffany's Lehi Brick Kiln Company