Apollo Victoria Theater and Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

By Dakota Payette
Apollo Victoria Theater
Origins of the Theater

- Built in 1930s by two architects
  - Ernest Wamsley Lewis
  - William Edward Trent
- Only a cinema when it first opened
- Was called New Victoria Cinema
Original Architecture

• Fake organ pipes
• Mermaid theme
  • Shell features
  • Outwards facing columns
  • Lighting in theater
  • Centerpiece in ceiling

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Original Entrance

- Two different entrances
  - Left and right side of main staircase
  - Reduced the lines outside the theater
- Vaulted ceiling with skylight
  - Replaced by chandelier in renovations

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Conversion from a Cinema to a Musical Theater

• Second World War took a toll on the theater
  • Had to close down

• Low income for rest of the 1940s
  • Set for demolition in 1950s
  • Saved by live theater shows

• Closed down in 1975 for theater to be converted
  • Got rid of old cinema screen
  • Replaced by larger stage than before
Renovations of 2006

• Replaced many features that had been lost during the 1975 renovations
  • Chandelier centerpiece was taken away in main entrance
  • Installment of the naked women statue at center of staircase
    • Painted over with a hue of green for Wicked
  • Modern weave carpet installed through theater
    • Gave the mermaid feeling back to the theater
• Theater had been restored to its former glory
Gallery of Apollo Victoria Theater

Main Entrance to Theater

Main Staircase

Stage inside Theater
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
Original Theater of 1663

- Original building built in 1663
  - Site is still in use today
- Underwent minor renovations in 1666 to keep up with safety regulations
- Survived the Great Fire of London in 1666
- Tragically burned down in 1672
  - Public wanted a new theater to be built
New Theater of 1674

• Once wrecked from burned theater was removed, work began on new theater
  • Took two years to removed the wreckage and rebuild the theater

• Grand reopening of the theater happened in 1674

• Stood for over 100 years
Theater of 1794

- Theater torn down in 1791
  - Rebuilt a bigger theater in its place
  - New theater opened in 1794
- Assassination attempt of King George III
  - Frequent visitor of theater
  - James Hadfield created a master plan to kill the king
    - Plan ultimately failed
- Tragedy would strike in 1809
Theater that Stands Today

• Fire ripped through the old theater, burning it to the ground
• Benjamin Dean Wyatt as hired to design and build the new theater
  • Construction started after charred remains were removed
  • Reopened in 1812
• Redesigned the interior of the theater
  • Delicate carving, sculpting, and woodwork went into the new design
• Made the stage wider and deeper than it had been before
• Installed fourth row of upper seating
Design of New Theater

- Very upscale
- Marble support columns
- Feel of royalty in theater
- Intricate design on walls
  - Attention to fine detail on walls
Gallery of Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

Side Wall and Box Seats  Main Foyer of Theater  Centerpiece inside Theater
Comparison of Architecture

Apollo Victoria Theater
- Mermaid theme
  - Large columns and shells
- Family oriented
- Repeating columns on side wall
- Large dragon hanging over stage
- Exterior is bold with green neon lights

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
- Royalty theme
- Upscale and wealthy oriented
- Attention to detail
- Formal red curtains and white exterior walls
- Fancy chandeliers hanging in staircases
Comparison of Architecture through Photos

Apollo Victoria Theater: Main Centerpiece

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane: Main Centerpiece
Comparison of Architecture through Photos

Apollo Victoria Theater: Stage

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane: Stage
Comparison of Architecture through Photos

Apollo Victoria Theater: Side Wall of Theater

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane: Side Wall of Theater
Comparison of Architecture through Photos

Apollo Victoria Theater:
Main Staircase

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane:
Main Staircase
Comparison of Architecture through Photos

Apollo Victoria Theater: Exterior

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane: Exterior