

Property #: 1114208004**Historic Site Credit:** [Mount Clemens Public Library](#)**Website Administrator:** [Rochester-Avon Historical Society](#)**Address****Street:** 31 N Walnut Street**City:** Mount Clemens**County:** Macomb**ZIP:** 48043**Latitude:** 42.5978839**Longitude:** -82.8790416**Current Name:** Emerald Theatre**Historic Name:** Macomb Theatre[\[slideshow\]](#)**Evaluations****Contributes to:****NR Eligible:****Contributing:****SHPO Evaluation:****Resources on Property Status****Historic Use:** Recreation and culture: Theater**Current Use:** Recreation and culture: Theater**Owner Type:** Private**Photo****Filename:** newmarquee2016.jpg**Roll:****Frame:****View:****Credit:** Mount Clemens Public Library**Caption:** Macomb Theatre, east elevation, 2016**Main Building****Foundation:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Roof:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Period of Significance:**Area of Significance:**

1. Architecture
2. Performing arts
- 3.

Wall:

1. BRICK
- 2.
- 3.

Other:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Arch/Builder: C. Howard Crane - architect**Date Built:** 1921**Architectural Classification:****Material Notes:****Description:****Other Buildings/Features:****Significant Persons:**

1. Crane, Charles Howard, 1885-1952.
2. Kendrick, Frank J., 1880-1938.

Statement of Significance:

This property is significant as a local example of the work of renowned architect C. Howard Crane, designer of the Radio City Music Hall in New York and the Fox Theater and Orchestra Hall in Detroit.

References:

1. Elizabeth C. Cady to Frank J. Kendrick, August 23, 1919, lots 4 and 12 and parts of lots 3 and 13, block 6, Original Plat of the Village (now City) of Mount Clemens, Macomb County Record of Deeds, liber 179, page 424.
2. Frank J. Kendrick and Edith Kendrick his wife to Macomb Theatre Company, July 22, 1920, lots 4 and 12 and parts of lots 3 and 13, block 6, Original Plat of the Village (now City) of Mount Clemens, Macomb County Record of Deeds, liber 186, page 496.

3. "New Macomb to Stage Varied Attractions," Mount Clemens Daily Leader, July 22, 1921, p.1, col.7.
5. "The New Theater to Open Monday: Wonderful Work Accomplished," Mount Clemens Monitor, July 22, 1921, p.1, col.4.
6. "Society Packs New Theater at Opening," Mount Clemens Daily Leader, July 26, 1921, p.1, col.7.
7. "Krim Obtains Macomb Lease," Mount Clemens Daily Leader, October 28, 1926, p.1.
8. Thomas, Charles. "The Last Picture Show: Landmark Macomb Theater Shut; Young Rowdies Share the Blame," Macomb Daily, June 6, 1980, p.2A.
9. Kehetian, Mitch. "White House Salutes Rededicated Theater," Macomb Daily, May 14, 1981.
10. Thomas, Charles. "Macomb Theater Gets Facelift," Macomb Daily, April 26, 1982.
11. Hotts, Mitch. "Macomb Theater For Sale, Again," Macomb Daily, October 3, 1984, p.1A.
12. Holmes, Jennifer. "Macomb Theatre on Comeback Trail--Again," Detroit Free Press, January 16, 1986, p.1B.
13. Driskell, Bill. "'New' Macomb Theater Observes 65th Birthday," Macomb Daily, July 16, 1986, p.3A.
14. Walker, Donna. "Dinner Theater Still Battling to Stay Afloat," Macomb Daily, September 28, 1988 p.3A.
15. Hotts, Mitch. "Nightclub in Future for Macomb Theater," Macomb Daily, August 30, 1991, p.3A.
16. Puls, Mark. "Mt. Clemens Hopes High-Tech Dance Club Makes Downtown Jump," Detroit News, January 19, 1996.
14. Hotts, Mitch. "Revamped Emerald Theatre to see name change, could house Hall of Fame," Macomb Daily, January 5, 2013.
17. Hotts, Mitch. "Everything's coming up Emerald," Macomb Daily, September 14, 2001.
18. Hotts, Mitch. "Revamped Emerald Theatre to be renamed Macomb Music Theatre," Macomb Daily, January 6, 2013.
19. Hotts, Mitch. "Former Emerald Theatre to go on auction block," Macomb Daily, August 21, 2015.
20. Hotts, Mitch. "Royal Oak businessman John Hanna buys the former Emerald Theatre," Macomb Daily, February 8, 2016.
21. Hotts, Mitch. "Historic Emerald Theater to open in December," Macomb Daily, November 14, 2016.
22. Hotts, Mitch. "Renowned street artist creates mural for Mount Clemens eatery," Macomb Daily, November 20, 2016.
23. Hotts, Mitch. "Mount Clemens Emerald Theatre gets new sign, more acts," Macomb Daily, December 6, 2016.
24. Hall, Christina. "Stunning Mt. Clemens mural carries powerful message," Detroit Free Press, January 2, 2017.

Surveyor's Comments:

Lot 18, Assessor's Plat #25 of the City of Mount Clemens
 Original property description: lots 4, 12, 3, and 13, block 6, Original Plat of the village (now city) of Mount Clemens

History:

The Macomb Theatre was the brainchild of Frank J. Kendrick of Mount Clemens, who, along with several other local men, saw the need in Mount Clemens for a theatre in addition to the Bijou. The men formed the Macomb Theatre Company with Frank Kendrick as president, Harry M. Widrig as resident manager, and Louis F. Wolf, William E. Koehler, William Wagner, Jacob Malbin and John Guenther as board members.

The company's original intent was to create an additional movie venue in downtown Mount

Clemens, with more capacity than the 700-seat Bijou. A site on Walnut street was acquired and plans for a 1,000-seat movie palace were undertaken. Unsatisfied with the work of a local architect, the company turned to C. Howard Crane of Detroit, the designer of Detroit's Orchestra Hall and Radio City Music Hall in New York. Crane and his associates convinced the company to provide a stage for vaudeville acts, and the design of the theatre changed accordingly. The new theatre would seat 1,035 on the main floor and an additional 600 in the balcony. The stage area was equipped with fly galleries for scenery, dressing rooms for performers, and spot and flood lights of the latest design. A massive Hillgren & Lane pipe organ was specially manufactured for the Macomb Theatre.

Local contractors for the construction were Schott Bros. and Weber of Mount Clemens. L.F. Wolf Hardware installed the plumbing, heating and ventilating apparatus; Modern Electric performed the electrical installation. Carpets were laid by F.W. Krauseneck, and building materials were supplied by Kendrick & Bruel and R.C. Ullrich Hardware. The cost of construction was \$300,000, with an additional \$60,000 spent on furnishings. Decorating was done by Max Goldberg of Detroit, and the Daily Leader marveled at the splendid appointments of the house: "Massive pilasters resplendent with rich colorings, and ornate designs, and with bronze caps, support a well-proportioned entablature, on which rests the arched ceiling. Gold pilasters enrich the sides of the theater, the entire color scheme being in blue, green, gold and grey. The ceiling is paneled with plaster relief work and mural paintings by a renowned decorative artist and are inserted in the plaques."

The newspaper further noted that the main curtain was of deep blue silk velour with a huge letter "M" in gold at the bottom.

The Macomb's stage was devoted primarily to vaudeville acts at first, but motion pictures and road attractions were also regular features. The opening act on July 25, 1921, was the Jimmie Hodges Musical Comedy Company offering the musical farce Pretty Baby. The movie attraction was Charles Ray in Scrap Iron. Mount Clemens turned out in great numbers and filled every one of the 1,635 seats for the theatre's premiere performance.

The Macomb continued to offer vaudeville and road shows well into the 1930s, and in the face of the decline of live theatre became a successful first-run movie house. The theatre was briefly closed in 1953, then was purchased by former usher Robert Vickrey, who operated it as a movie theatre catering to the interests of teenagers for almost three decades. In June, 1980, beset by youthful vandals and stiff competition from multi-screen movie complexes at Lakeside and Macomb Malls, the Macomb rang down its final curtain as a movie house after running its last picture, Kramer vs. Kramer.

An attempt to return the Macomb to its former glory was made when the Macomb Council for the Performing Arts purchased the building in 1981 and restored it for use as a live theatre. The Council was recognized by the federal government for funding the restoration with local donations. Godspell was the inaugural performance at the rejuvenated Macomb Theatre, but its troubles were far from over. The theatre was closed in June 1984 to restructure its debt, and the Council was forced to offer it for sale in October 1984.

Another live theatre project was undertaken in 1987 when the building became the Great Lakes Dinner Playhouse, but that venture folded after only a year. In 1991, new owners of the building converted the once-grand Macomb Theatre to the Club Hollywood nightclub, and in 1997 the nightclub's name was changed to JD's Macomb Theater. The year 2000 saw the building's restoration and reopening as the Emerald Theatre. The Emerald closed in 2013 and the building

reopened as the Macomb Music Theatre.

In 2016, the building was purchased by Royal Oak developer John Hanna, along with the adjacent restaurant property at 27 N. Walnut. Hanna planned a Mexican restaurant for the building at 27 N. Walnut and commissioned muralist Fel3000ft to create a mural 66x30 feet on the side of the theatre building overlooking the patio area of the restaurant property. The mural was created in November 2016.