

Plaza 8 theater may be remodeled

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The Plaza 8 movie theater in downtown Sheboygan will close after Sunday's movies as the Milwaukee-based Marcus Theatres ponders the future of the 64-year-old building.

Mark Gramz, vice president of theater operations for the Marcus Corp., said the company will do an architectural and engineering study that could result in remodeling and/or expansion from a two-screen theater to one with four or more screens.

The possibility of remodeling has some local preservationists worried.

Reynolds Honold, one of a group that had sought to preserve the theater from a late 1980s remodeling plan, said the architecture of the 1928 movie palace should be preserved.

"It would be very unfortunate if there were future construction that would destroy the integrity of the original theater," he said.

With its Spanish courtyard interior and "atmospheric" ceiling of stars and vaporous clouds, the former Sheboygan Theater, was the epitome of extravagant movie house architecture.

The theater was "twinned"—divided into two theaters—by the Marcus group in 1980 but the architectural features remained intact behind walls and above a false ceiling.

In the late 1980s, when it appeared that Marcus might expand from a two-screen to a four-screen theater, there was a flurry of local interest in restoring the old theater to its original grandeur. But there was no funding for the project.

At that time, it seemed apparent to those promoting the restoration that any expansion by Marcus would doom future efforts to return the old movie house to its glory days.

The Marcus organization is making no predictions about when it will reopen.