

constructed in 1938

Vogue Theater · 381-383 River Street



ARCHTECT – Pereira and Pereira of Chicago

The Vogue Theatre was built in 1938 and views as “ultra-modern in every respect, the last word in design, luxuriously fitted with every convenience with the finest project and sounds systems.” It was a northern Michigan variation on an Art Deco theme with a deeply recessed entry that led to a modernistic lobby and a theatre with 935 seats. The building is 42’ x 182’ including canopy.

The exterior of the building presented a dramatic contrast to its Victorian neighbors with its strong horizontal and vertical lines and its general simplicity. Walls of reinforced concrete were faced with cement plaster and a two-color brick veneer. The River Street façade featured a large canopy with a freestanding sign and another large sign running vertically up the right side of the façade. There was no marquee. The deeply recessed entry led to a modernistic lobby with resilient rubber flooring, indirect lighting, a mirrored ceiling, and walls of figured wood depicting scenes in honor of Manistee’s heritage. To the left of the theater entrance, at the street corner, stood a twenty-two feet by forty-five feet retail shop with a single corner door and a large show window in each of the two street facades. Two industrial –type metal windows above the canopy allowed light into the theater offices and served as the only fenestration above the first floor level.

The Vogue had been unoccupied since 2005 and had fallen into disrepair after many years of neglect and deferred maintenance. In late 2010 the Vogue property was purchased by the DDA and initial steps were taken to stabilize the physical structure. The DDA, along with other community stakeholders, began pursuing a community-based non-profit model for the rehabilitation of the property. In June of 2011, the DDA turned over ownership of the property to the newly-formed 501c3 charitable non-profit organization The Historic Vogue Theatre of Manistee (HVTM). The capital campaign began shortly thereafter, the contractor was selected in 2012 and rehabilitation began concurrent with fundraising in October of that year.

The theatre opened for business on December 7, 2013. The community now is able to enjoy going to the movies in Manistee seven days a week including a Saturday kids’ morning matinee that costs 35 cents (the same ticket price when the Vogue opened in 1938).

Manistee Commercial Historic District – listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places