

WALL STREET

Theater seeks classic marquee

Similar to sign it had long ago

By Robert Koch

NORWALK — The newly renovated Wall Street Theater could cast a familiar historic image on the outside.

A metal framework is in place above the entrance of the theater at 71 Wall St., ready to carry a marquee similar to those in place on the building during the last century.

"It's a modern replication of the historic sign that was here in the olden days," said Wall Street Theater developer Frank Farricker. "We can put upcoming shows and sponsors on it."

The theater opened in 1915 as a

vaudeville house, transitioned into a movie theater in the 1930s, and much later became a rock venue and a dance club. It has had several names, beginning with The Regent and The Norwalk in its earlier days, and more recently The Marquee, The Globe and The Roxy.

The Norwalk History Room at the Main Library has at least two images of the theater's former facade with a marquee. In a 1955 photograph, the sign welcomes visitors to a "Cinemascope" showing of "Green Fire" starring Grace Kelly and Stewart Granger. A 1930s postcard shows the building as The Regent. The message on the



Contributed photo

The theater was known as The Regent in its early years.

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Wall Street Theater developer Frank Farricker

sign, however, isn't readily discernible.

How the new marquee will look remains to be seen. Whatever Wall Street Theater Co. puts forward must undergo architectural design review by the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

Wall Street Theater hosted its grand opening May 15, welcoming
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Above, the Norwalk Theater in 1955. Below, the Wall Street Theater.

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more than 400 people for performances by eight Broadway stars, including Betty Buckley and Siobhan Dillon, as well as local talent. Farricker said performances are continuing.

Local musician Tim Currie and "Suns of Walrus" are scheduled to perform Friday evening. Upcoming events include Karaoke Night on June 30, Mandy Gonzalez on Oct. 2, and Buckley returning on Nov. 4, according to the theater's website.

The theater renovation, which Farricker said ran approximately \$12 million after factoring in the purchase price of the property, has not been without problems.

The Morganti Group, a Danbury-based contractor that spearheaded the reno-



vation, has filed mechanic's liens totaling nearly \$2.4 million against Wall Street Theater Co. over unpaid bills.

"Morganti is committed to doing everything possible to recover those monies because the vast majority of that money is owed to the subcontractors," said Louis

R. Pepe, the Hartford attorney representing Morganti. "These subcontractors jumped through hoops to complete this project in the timetable that owner had and achieved that objective."

— Staff writer Mike Horyczan contributed to this story