



Warner Hollywood Theatre, opened 1928 (date of photo), 2350 seats, closed

HISTORIC MOVIE THEATRES HOLLYWOOD & LOS ANGELES

BUILDING ENGINEERING SERVICES

BRIAN ROBERTS

INTRODUCTION



Grauman's Chinese, opened 1927, 2200 seats. The world's most famous historic theatre

The author, now long retired, visited Hollywood and Los Angeles on both business and as a tourist in the 1970s and 80s, viewing skyscrapers (then very few in LA), hotels and even toured a film studio, but never managed to view the engineering services in the many movie theatres.

Now, during the first months of the 2021 coronavirus pandemic lockdown, I have put together and have had privately printed just a few copies of this book containing some 60 behind-the-scenes photographs of the remains of engineering services and equipment in a few historic theatres. These services, in the largely redundant basement areas, now contain the rusting remains of air conditioning: fans, spray-type air washers, ductwork, refrigeration machines, boilers, pumps and electrical power-lighting panels. Some photographs include the modern replacement electrical panels.

Just a few of the featured movie theatres, dating from the 1920s, are still in use, some part-time, some closed, one demolished; over time a few have been converted to a nightclub, a church and one even to a jewellery store.

The photographs have been taken from the specialist websites losangelestheatres.blogspot with some additional pictures and information from cinematreasures.org, the latter having information on some 55,000 theatres (but not the engineering) across the world.

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Rita Hayworth out for a walk with Warner Theatre Beverly Hills in background

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SHRINE AUDITORIUM 1926, 6308 seats, open: pages 22 to 29
The largest in the USA, even more seats than Radio City Music Hall, New York

TOWER THEATRE 1927, 906 seats, jewellery store: pages 30 to 37

WILTERN once **WARNER THEATRE**, 1931, 1850 seats, open: pages 38 to 44

LOS ANGELES THEATRE

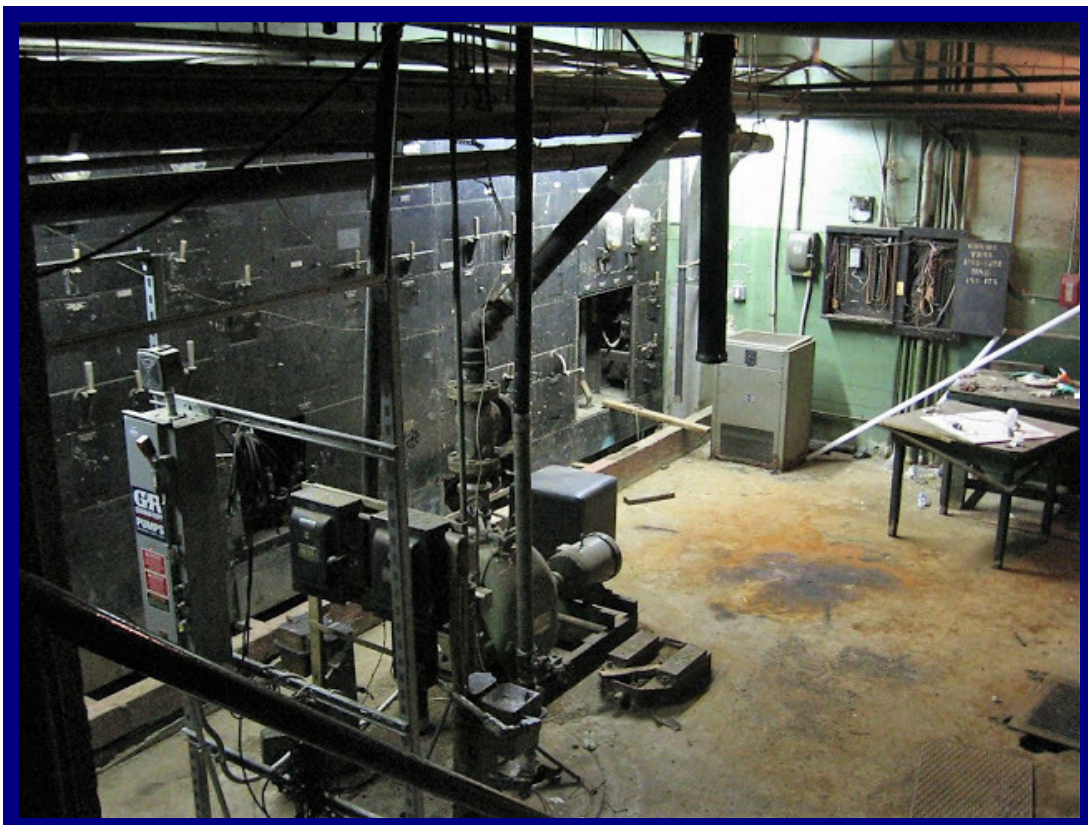


Los Angeles theatre in 1931. Opened 1927, 2190 seats
Air conditioning by Carrier

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Detail of single phase switchboard (left)



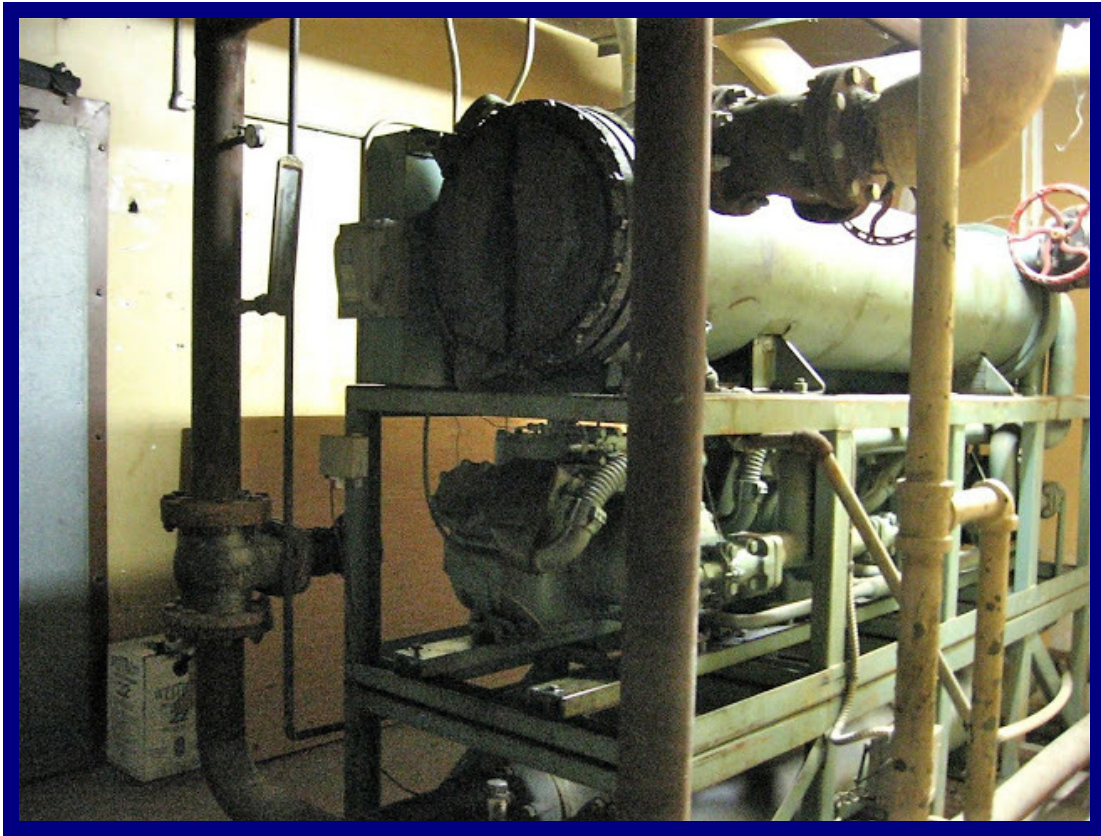
Main single phase switchboard

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Newer 3-phase switchboard

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Replacement refrigeration plant

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Main 3-phase switchboard

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



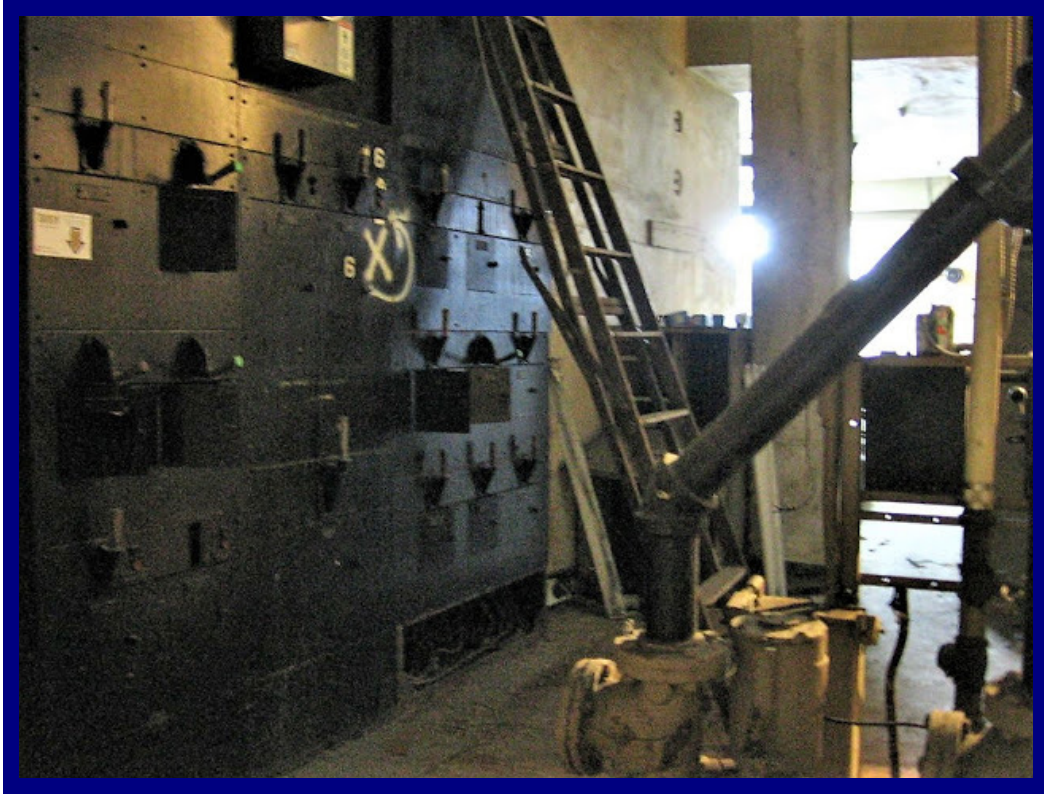
Looking past switchboard into fan room

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



The single phase switchboard

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Mechanical room switchboard



Main supply fan

LOS ANGELES THEATRE

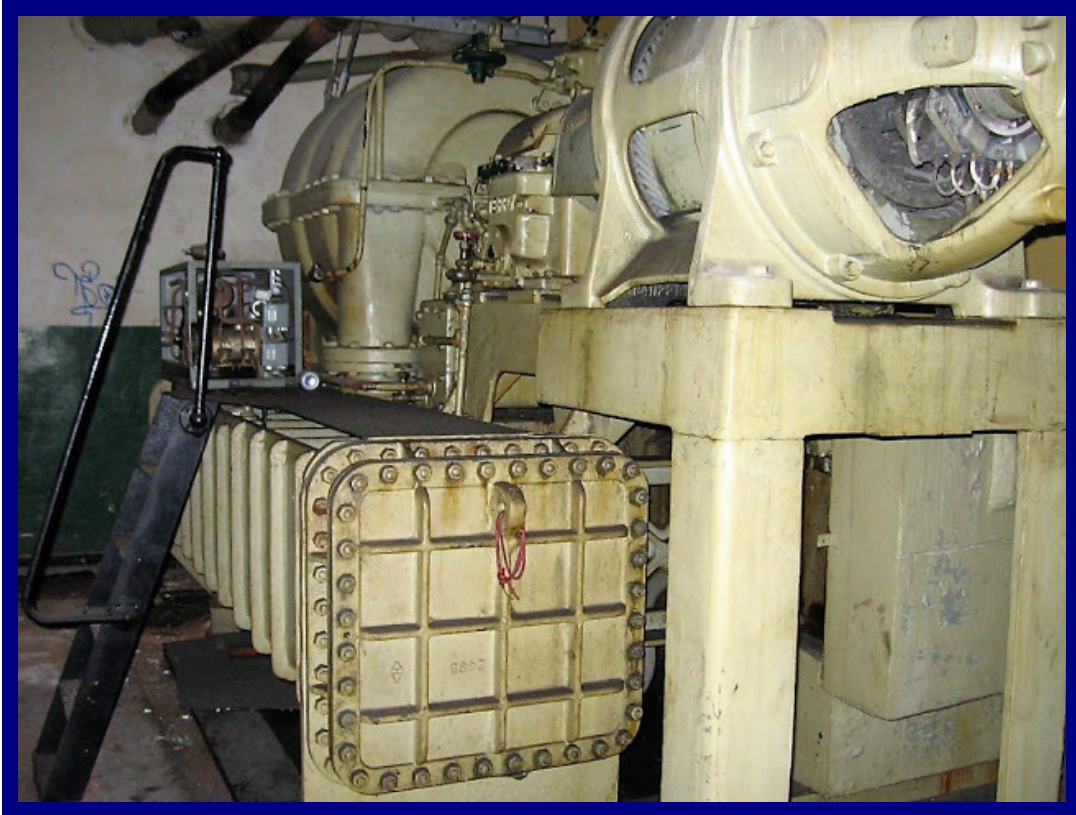


Sump pumps with section of 3-phase switch board



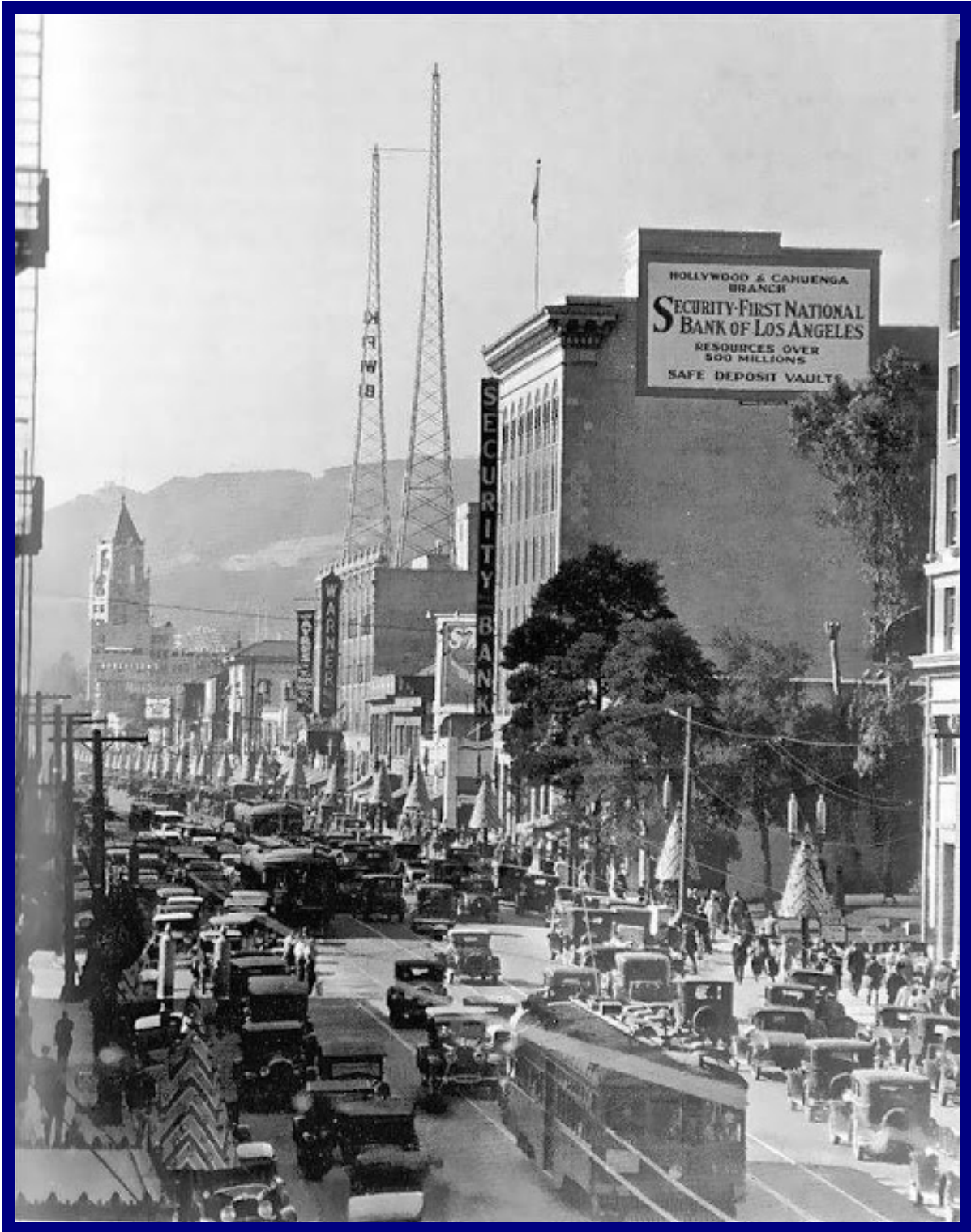
Air washer and steam coils

LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Early Carrier centrifugal chiller with square heat exchangers

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Warner Hollywood Theatre in 1930. Opened 1928. 2380 seats, closed
Air conditioned with ammonia refrigeration system

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Boiler plant



WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE

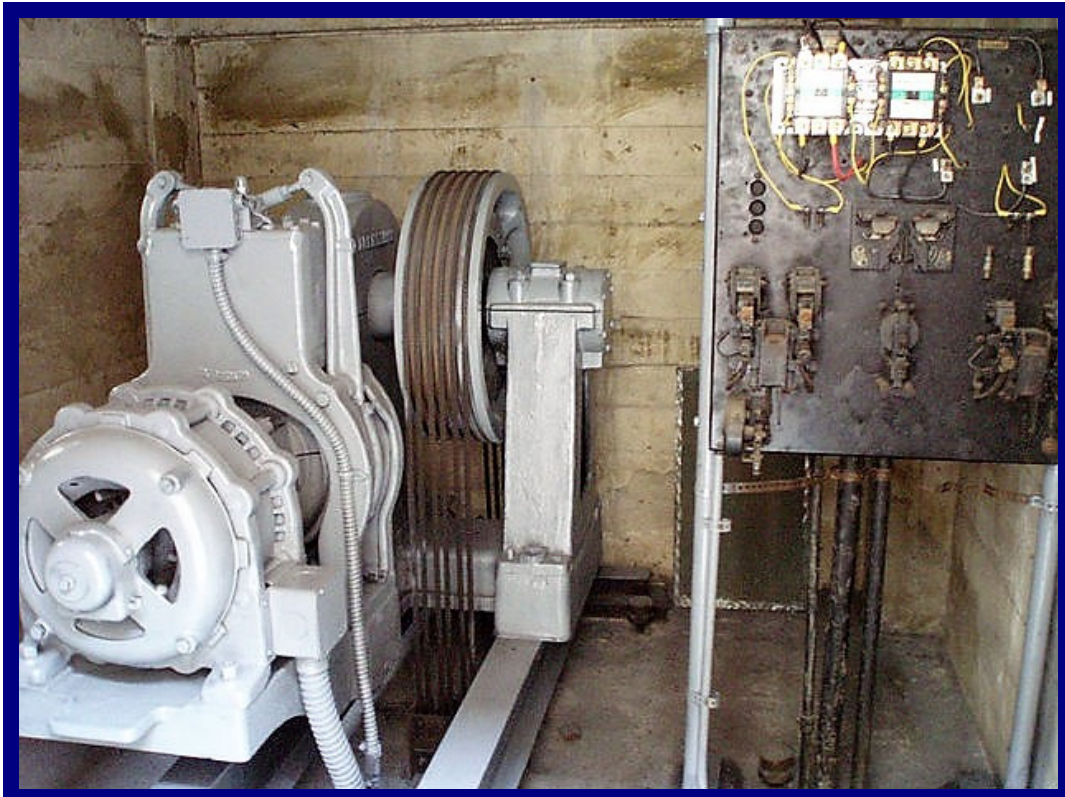


Ammonia refrigerating compressors

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Main boilers (background) with smaller unit (in front) and water heaters (left)



Elevator motor in roof penthouse

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Ductwork system under auditorium

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Fan room



Spray air washer chamber

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Fan room and distribution ductwork

WARNER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE



Refrigeration compressors



Fan and mechanical equipment control panel

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SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Los Angeles, opened 1926, 6308 seats (the largest in the USA),
Air conditioned

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Theatre switchboard

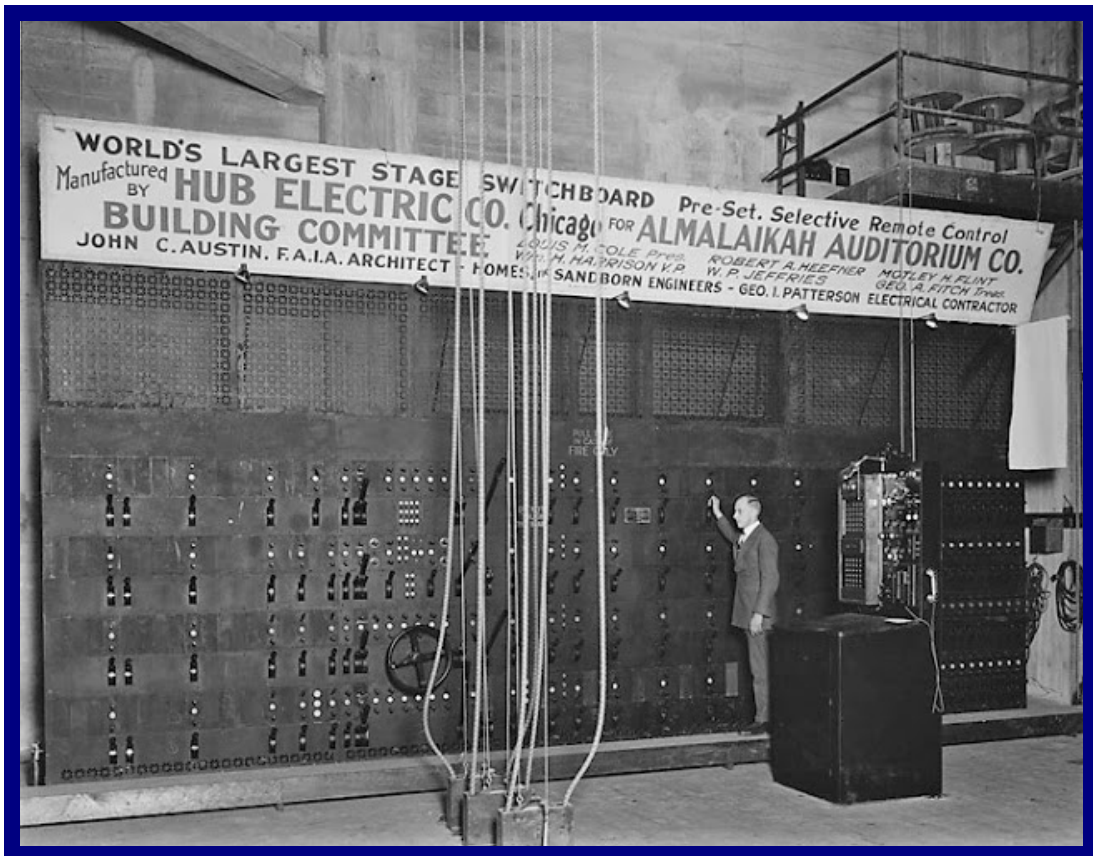


Emergency generator

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



The organ blower



Hub stage switchboard 1926

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Centrifugal supply fan



Centrifugal supply fan and water heating plant

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Boiler plant

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Theatre switchboard



Centrifugal chilled water refrigeration machine

SHRINE AUDITORIUM



Fire curtain mechanism

TOWER THEATRE



Downtown Los Angeles 1927, the year the theatre opened with 906 seats
Original air conditioning by Carrier

TOWER THEATRE



Hydraulic mechanism for organ lift

TOWER THEATRE



Looking into the boiler room

TOWER THEATRE

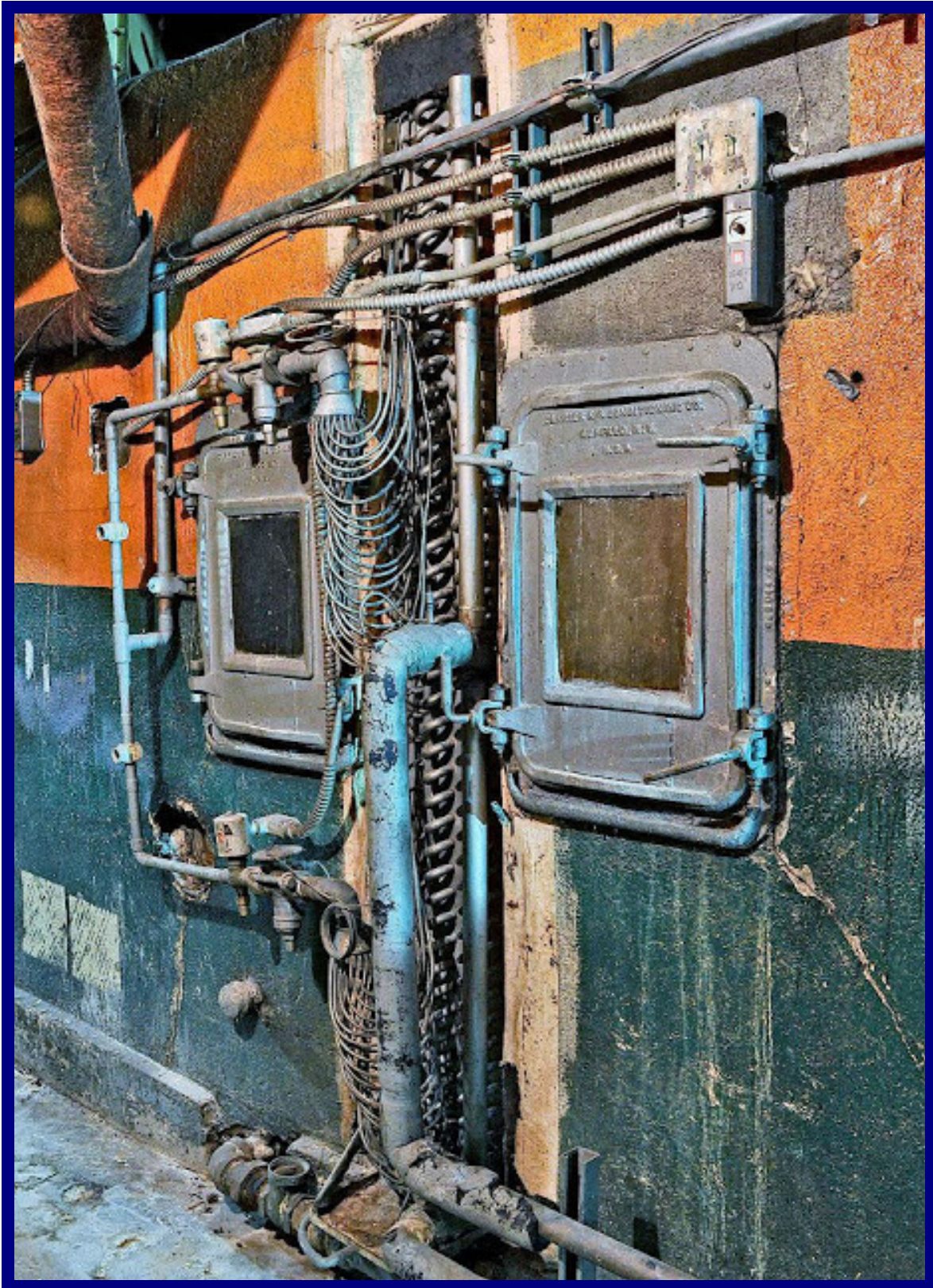


In the boiler room



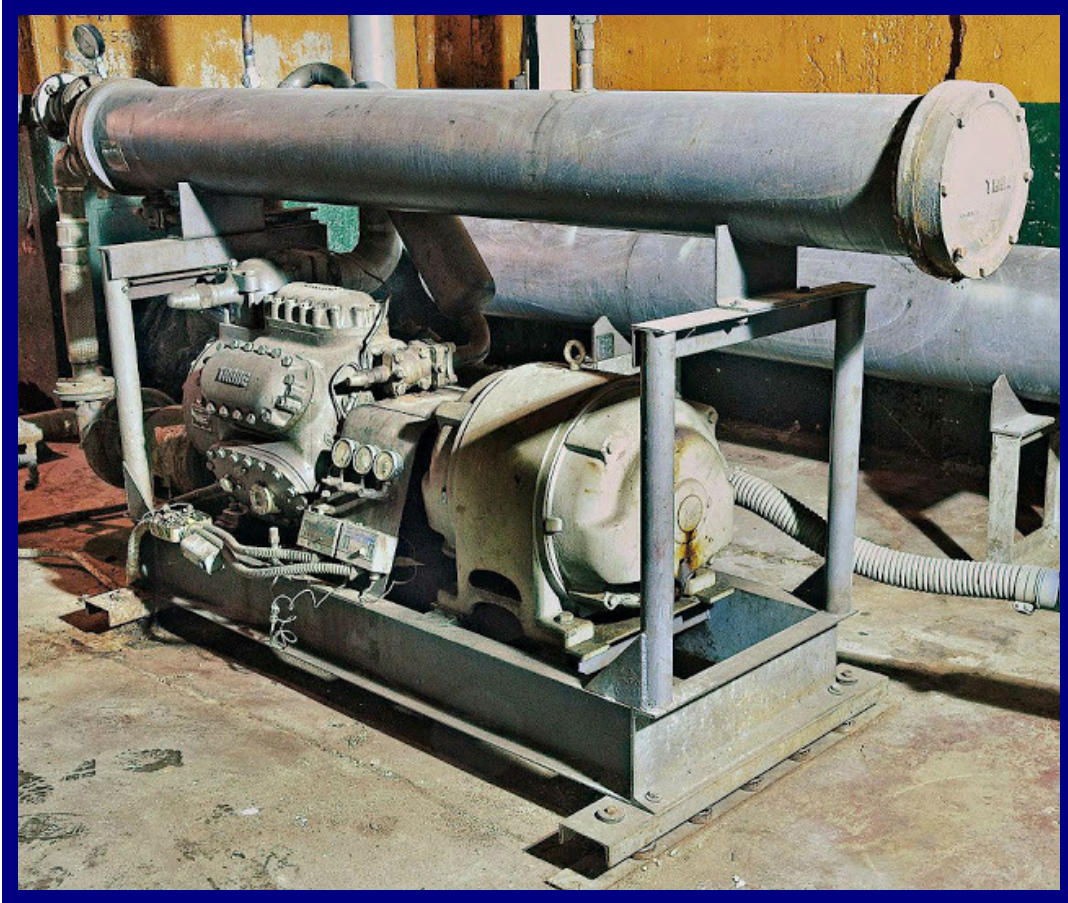
Main lighting control panel

TOWER THEATRE



Direct expansion cooling coil

TOWER THEATRE



Trane refrigeration system (original installation was Carrier)



Air conditioning plant

TOWER THEATRE



Remains of the 1927 air conditioning system

TOWER THEATRE



Mechanical equipment room

WILTERN THEATRE



Wiltern Theatre (once Warner Theatre) in the mid-1930s. Opened 1931, 1850 seats.
Originally evaporative spray washer cooling system, refrigeration added in 1984

WILTERN THEATRE



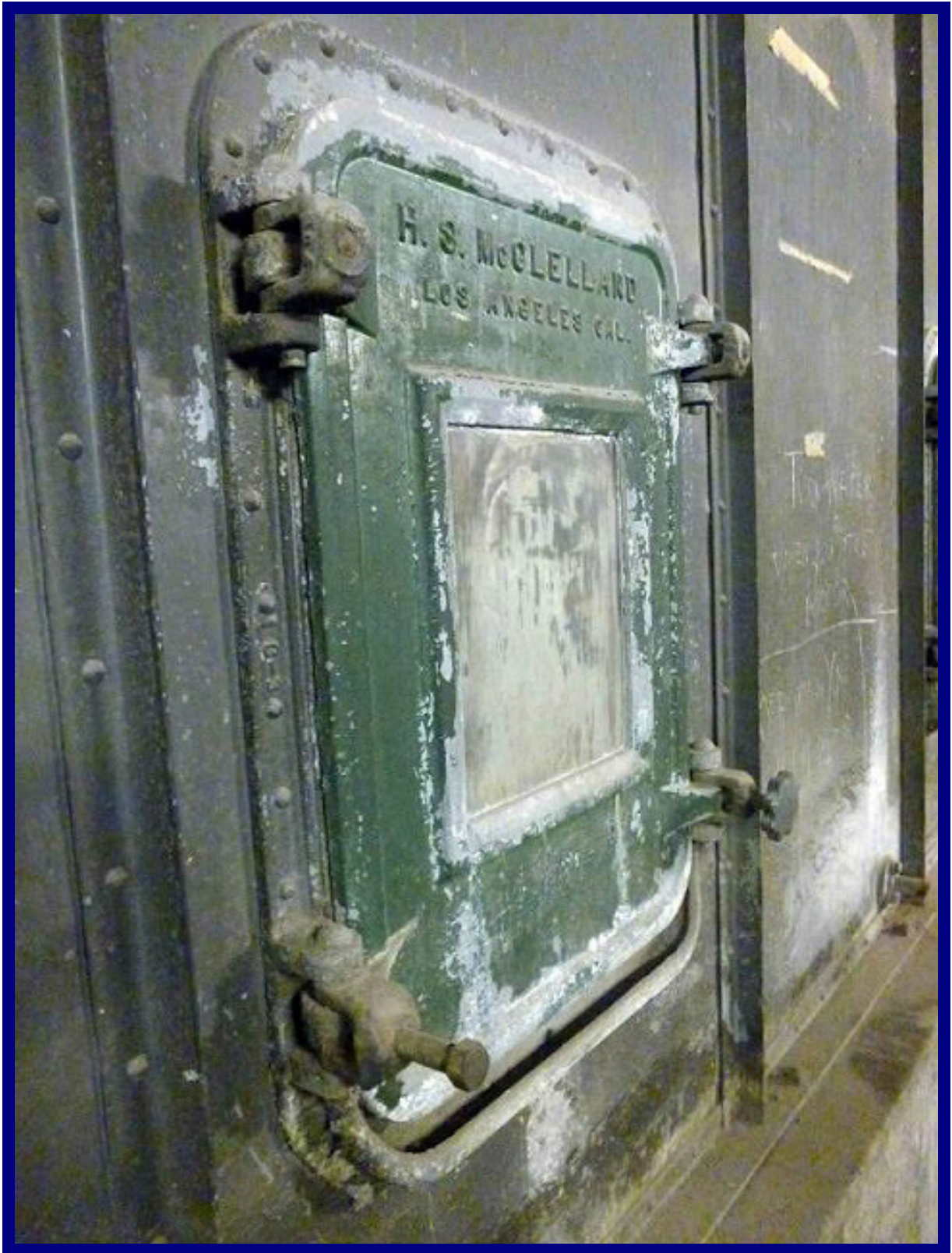
Upstairs fan room

WILTERN THEATRE



Main exhaust fan

WILTERN THEATRE

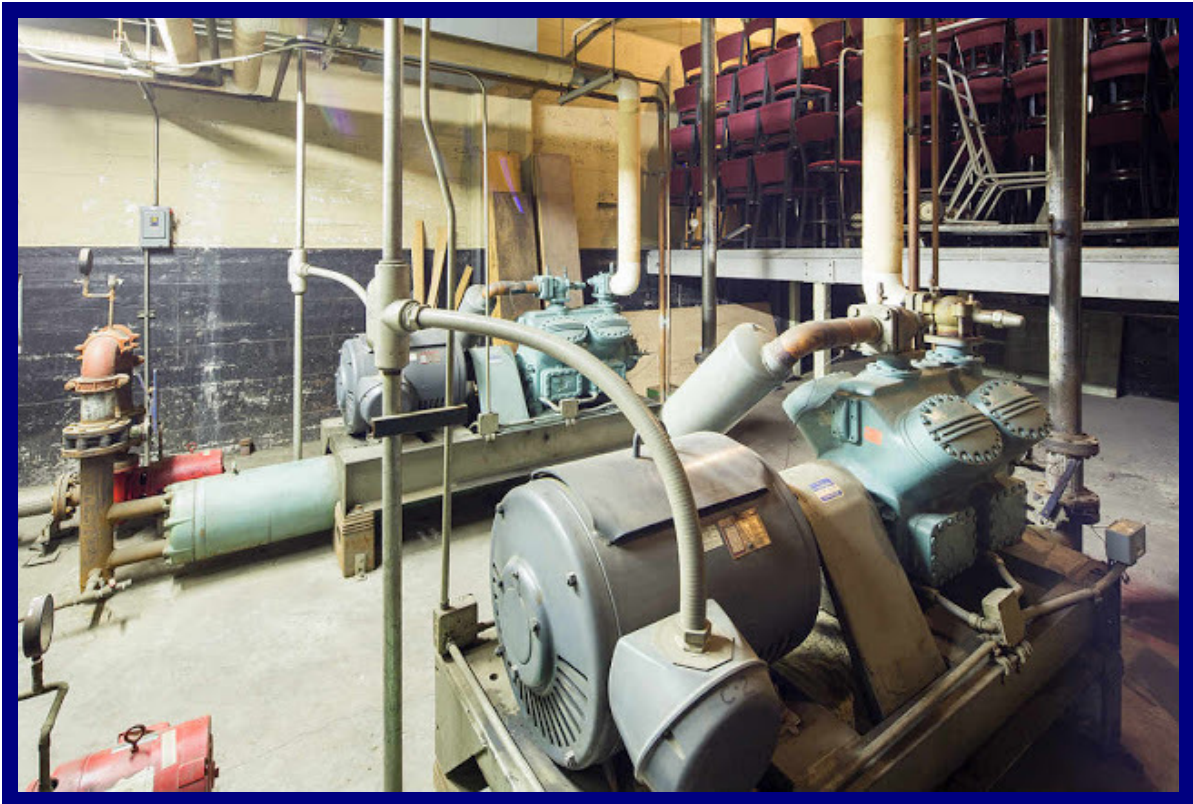


Spray washer chamber

WILTERN THEATRE



Air washer and supply air ductwork



Refrigeration added in 1984

WILTERN THEATRE



Mechanical room



Electrical switchboard

WILTERN THEATRE



Projection room control panel



Projection room