

Historic Fort Worth offering tour of Ridglea Theater

Posted Sunday, Jul. 25, 2010

By SHLACHTER, NISHIMURA & BAKER

More than 70 people have signed up for Historic Fort Worth's tour of the Ridglea Theater on Camp Bowie Boulevard on Thursday to raise awareness about a possible demolition of part of the historic building.

"We want to do this tour to make people aware of this building and see it," said John Roberts, a local architect and Historic Fort Worth member who will conduct the tour.

The theater opened in 1950 in Fort Worth's Ridglea neighborhood. In recent years, it's been leased to a business that hosts rock music concerts. But its former owner lost the building in a bankruptcy sale, and the new owner is working on redevelopment plans.

The redevelopment could involve demolishing a large part of the theater and an adjacent retail and office building.

Historic Fort Worth has placed the property on its Most Endangered Places list and is campaigning for it to be saved, but there are no protections on the property to prevent demolition.

The theater is identified by an iconic 70-foot stone tower and is designed in a Spanish-Mediterranean style. The original interiors remain, according to Historic Fort Worth.

The owner, FixFunding in Dallas, has been working with Bank of America to put a branch location in the building. Diane Wagner, a bank spokeswoman, said the bank has not committed to the project.

"We are still conducting our due diligence," she said.

The tour begins at 5:30 p.m. It costs \$10 but is free to Historic Fort Worth members.

To register, call Corry Smith, the group's communications director, at 817-336-2344, ext. 100 or e-mail Corry_Smith@historicfortworth.org.