OVERVIEW:
The historic Jeffery Theater is located at the crossroads of what was once the bustling heart of the South Shore business district located at the northwest corner of 71st Street and Jeffery Blvd. adjacent to the Jackson Park Highlands Landmark District of fine historic homes. Built in 1923 it was opened as a vaudeville venue and movie house.

HISTORY:
The Jeffery Theater was originally constructed as a vaudeville house but also featured a single movie screen when it opened in 1924. The building also includes storefronts and apartments along 71st Street.

It was located in the heart of the South Shore commercial center between Eucline Ave. and Jeffery Blvd. with the adjoining South Shore National Bank and later ShoreBank and successors abutting the east wall of the theater.

It was designed by architect William P. Doerr in a neo-classical style with a tall vertical neon sign that was visible down the length of 71st Street. It once boasted a fine marquee as well.

In the late 1990s, the building was purchased by ShoreBank. They remodeled the former theater interior into offices and added a drive-
THREAT: 
In 2010 the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation closed Shore Bank as a failed institution. Its assets and deposits were assumed by a newly chartered institution.

This month news broke that the property, which has been on the market, is under contract for sale and development as a McDonald’s. The loss of the historic façade of the Jeffery Theater together with its storefronts and apartment building would undermine the commercial “small town” feel of 71st Street and may negatively impact the Jackson Park Highlands Chicago Landmark District directly to the north.

While the loss of the theater’s auditorium space means that much of the original building has been lost, its façades and lobby still retain much original historic fabric and ornamentation and remain important features and community landmarks in the once-bustling commercial district.