Located at 206 North Beverly Drive near the northeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Beverly Drive, the Beverly Theatre was the first of six theaters built in the City. With two small shop spaces on both sides of the centrally located theater entrance, the large movie palace was designed in an exotic, fantastical blend of Indo-Moroccan, Moorish architectural styles that featured a large onion shaped dome. The opulent interior décor included colorful murals based on the stories of the Arabian Nights and a proscenium arch in the circular shape of a Chinese moon gate. The showplace was equipped with a huge Wurlitzer Orchestral pipe organ that was used to accompany vaudeville performances and silent movies. The majestic theater was designed by noted theater architect Lewis A. Smith and had its grand gala opening on May 18, 1925, before a star-studded hometown audience. Director Fred Niblo, emcee of the event, commented, “We’ve waited long for you and now you’re here. We hope you will always show us the good, clean higher type of pictures.” The first feature film shown was First National Pictures' “I Want My Man” starring Milton Sills and Doris Kenyon. As an extra bonus, the opening night program also included a film tour through the homes of nearby movie stars. While the theater still operated as a movie house the front façade was remodeled and updated over the years with more modernist treatments. Despite the various changes, the iconic roof-top dome remained. After more than 50 years, the theater ceased operation as a movie house in 1977.

A year later, the Fiorucci franchise converted the cavernous theater building into one of its retail extravaganzas. The Italian fashion label Fiorucci was founded by Elio Fiorucci in 1967 in Milan with an emphasis on curve-hugging skin-tight denim jeans and humorous cartoon graphic clad T-shirts. As a leader in the globalization of fashion, Fiorucci scoured the globe for underground trends, introducing the new affluent mass market to an eclectic mix of eccentricities from around the world. The trendy clothing brand then went global with stores in New York, Australia, Hong Kong, and beyond carrying not only Fiorucci wares, but those from other popular designers. The New York anchor store was known by some as the “daytime Studio 54” that gave space to artists and creatives, including Andy Warhol and Keith Haring. Notable patrons included Cher, Jackie Onassis, Lauren Bacall, Elizabeth Taylor, and Madonna, as well as a teenage Marc Jacobs. The Fiorucci brand was also featured alongside Halston and Gucci in the Bernard Edwards and Nile Rogers song “He's the Greatest Dancer,” a disco anthem sung by Sister Sledge.
The unique Beverly Hills store opened in 1978 with punk salespeople with Mohawk hairstyles, DJs spinning New Wave tunes, MTV music videos projected onto TV screens, and a coffee bar serving expresso and cappuccinos. On the opening night of the boutique 60 security guards had to lock arms at the store’s entrance to prevent a crowd of more than 3,000 guests from storming the doors. The Beverly Hills store was also featured in the 1980s disco film Xanadu starring Olivia Newton John. Only a few years Fiorucci moved to a different Beverly Hills location on Little Santa Monica Boulevard in 1984, and eventually to Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles. The Beverly Theatre building was then occupied by a bank. In the fall of 2005, the theater was demolished for the development of the Montage Hotel complex.

Proposed Plaque Copy:
“The Beverly Theater was designed by Architect Lewis A. Smith and built at this site in a fantastical amalgamation of architectural styles and opened in 1925 on this site. The theater was equipped with a Wurlitzer Orchestral pipe organ to accompany vaudeville performances, and early films. The theater operation closed in 1977 and became the trendy Italian fashion retailer Fiorucci before being demolished in 2005.”

Recommended Placement Location:  On Beverly Drive, where the main front entry to the theater was once located. See illustrated photograph below for details.
Photos:

BEVERLY THEATER 1925
ADDRESS AS 210-208-206 (THEATER)-204-202 NORTH BEVERLY DRIVE

BEVERLY THEATER 1926c
BEVERLY THEATER 1957

BEVERLY THEATER 1960
BEVERLY THEATER INTERIOR