

421 Rivermont Ave



Categories	Misc., Lower Rivermont
Address	421 Rivermont Ave.
Property Name	The Ellington
Date Built	1930
Architect	Clark & Crowe
Contractor	--
Function	Theater
Style & Architectural Description	Classical Revival. 1-story, 3-bay wide, 11-bay deep, gable-roofed, brick theater building. Parapet. Central pedimented portico set in antis has smooth Ionic columns. Entrance flanked by tall 10-pane french windows flanked by engaged columns and topped by pediment. Rear portion of building is 2 stories with full basement.
Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1930-1962 Little Theater of Lynchburg • 1962-1984 C.G. Robertson and W. & Gentry Harvey (during 1963-1985 Hill City Lodge No. 183 occupied the building) • 1984-2018 Wale (during 1986-1997 this was The Ellington Building/Playhouse, from 1999 the Ellington Fellowship Playhouse) • 2018-Present: Across the Bridge LLC

Anecdotal Information

This building is significant in the history of arts in Lynchburg. A theater group was formed in Lynchburg in the 1920s to encourage the staging of dramatic (as opposed to vaudeville) productions. The Lynchburg Little Theater staged performances in downtown Lynchburg, but in 1928 plans for a new theater on Rivermont Avenue were prepared by the well-known architectural firm of Clark & Crowe. The building, originally designed as a frame theater, was completed in brick in 1931. The Little Theatre was the precursor of the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center which has since merged with the Academy of Music to become the Academy of Fine Arts on Main Street. At a later date, the theater closed and the building served as a Masonic lodge. Since 1984 the building has housed The Ellington, a performing arts venue. Closed for several years, developer Tony West has proposed converting the Ellington into fifteen apartments. This is part of an exciting redevelopment of the entire area of Lower Rivermont which includes renovating 301, 401, and 405 Rivermont and 427 and 429 Blackford Street while providing parking behind the Rivermont properties. According to a story in the 10 June 2020 News and Advance, written by Rachael Smith, "Kandise Powell, West's property manager, said the plan is to revitalize the whole block and add amenities for all renovated

properties, like a pool, fitness center, electric vehicle charging station and grilling area. She said it will take a couple of years to complete the project." As of Nov. 15, 2024, this project has been completed.

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