

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Fayetteville

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Carolina Theater

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

443 Hay Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7th

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE
037

COUNTY

Cumberland

CODE

051

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

R.L. Pittman Investments Attn.: Dick Taylor

STREET & NUMBER

Grace Pittman Building

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28301

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2039

CITY, TOWN

Fayetteville

STATE

North Carolina 28302

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator, City of Fayetteville

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

DATE

March 31, 1982

STREET & NUMBER

Division of Archives and History, 109 E. Jones St.

TELEPHONE

1-919-733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina 27611

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Carolina Theater was built in 1927 on a corner lot in the 400 South Block of Hay Street. The downtown area was still the center of commercial and recreational activity which made the site both visible and accessible. It was built during the prosperous, carefree days before the stock market crash and ensuing depression and helped to satisfy an entertainment craze. It is distinguished by "Moorish architecture" so highly lauded by period newspaper reports.

The basic, oversize two-story brick rectangular form of the building is dressed at the front with terra cotta, clay, brickwork, and decorative stone or concrete friezework. A hint of the Moorish detailing wraps around to the highly visible east side. Although the front facade is now obscured by a metal grid, its unusual, most distinguishing features survive intact.

These features decorate the front third of the east side, which is most visible from busy Hay Street. Above ground level, which contains arched exits, a triptych-like pattern is formed on the forward face by raised dark brick. Within the large panels of the triptych, oversized diamond shapes are created by dark headers set into the brick. At the center of the diamonds are cross-like motifs comprised of a combination of dark headers and stretchers. Windows intersect the panels near their bases.

The most notable features of any of the Carolina Theater's decorative components follow the side and front roofline. There, lacy ornamental terra cotta is applied in a continuous band which is delineated by decorative molding strips above and below. The delicate quality of the ornamental work is repeated and reinforced by modillions beneath the overhanging eaves which have four petal floral cutouts on their end faces. A Mediterranean theme is carried through the false mansard roof above which is covered with curved red clay tiles.

The more recent cover which sheathes the front facade is in itself an eye-catching mid-1950's construction. On ground level, turquoise metal sheathing panels cover the front and part of the side. A glass and metal marquee liberally adorned with small globular light bulbs spans the face. It is flat except for a triangular projection located directly above the front center entrance. Covering the theater's face all the way up to the roofline is a grid-like metal mesh screen. It bears the name "Carolina" in script across it.

Access to the theater is permitted by a front central entrance. It is flanked on either side by shops currently unoccupied (they are merely partitioned off the main block floor space). Past the ticket booth is a foyer opening into the main seating area, which is roomy and spacious and retains hints of its early plushness and elegance. At the front of the sloping floor is the stage, and at the second level rear is the balcony, projection room and restrooms.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

LOCAL

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1927

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Carolina Theater was built in 1927 in the wake of the movie-going craze which swept the country during the prosperous years preceding the stock market crash and the depression. Most large and middle-sized and many small communities boasted a motion picture theater which featured the latest in silent films and, after the late twenties, talkies. Fayetteville was no exception after the Carolina, which featured the latest "Moorish architecture", was built. The theater had a reputation for elegance with its terra cotta detailing, ornamental modillions, and clay tile roof treatment, posh interior, usher service, and variety entertainment. It served a recreation and entertainment function which was then and for several subsequent decades in great demand.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The building of the Carolina Theater in Fayetteville is another manifestation of the movie-going and entertainment craze which was part of a larger movement sweeping the nation in the prosperous years prior to the stock market crash and ensuing depression.

C. The Carolina Theater exhibits unusual detailing described in period accounts as "Moorish" features, which include lacy ornamental terra cotta band along the roofline, ornamented modillions, and a red-clay roof cover. Its exterior features are intact despite a superficial grid which now covers the front facade.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The building of the Carolina Theater in 1927 took place during prosperous mid-twenties era which witnessed a dramatic increase in available entertainment and recreational activities nationwide. Movies with comedy, romance, and Western themes were popular and every large city and many small and medium-sized towns had a theater where sometimes three or four of these films were shown weekly. Early theaters were elaborate affairs with ushers, doormen, plush interior appointments, and, frequently, live stage performances during intermissions. The Carolina Theater was one such "picture palace" built during the late 1920s movie-going craze.¹

The theater's opening was a major local event and received coverage and publicity through the Fayetteville Observer. According to newspaper reports, it was scheduled for opening on 15 September, but did not actually open its doors until a month later.² The movie house was run by Publix Saenger Theaters of North Carolina, an affiliate of Publix Theaters Corporation of New York and Saenger Theaters of New Orleans, as a most progressive one of its type. It boasted of pleasing Moorish architecture, a seating capacity of 900, a lobby with a fountain, a children's nursery complete with an attendant, modern projection equipment, upholstered seating, stage sets, an organ and climate control.³ A full third of the structure was occupied by the elegant foyers with two small stores flanking and the rest by seating and projection equipment. It is interesting to note that the Carolina Theater was flanked to the west by a miniature golf course, making the southwest corner of Hay and Pittman streets a local recreational center.⁴

A formal program for the theater-opening, complete with singing, live organ music, poetry-reading, movie releases, and inaugural program was planned and conducted on 17 October 1927. The purpose of the new theater was to bring to Fayetteville the "best in motion pictures", and the opening picture featured Lon Chaney in The Unknown.⁵ Later, Man, Woman, and Sin and When a Man Loves were featured. The titles, although provocative, did not necessarily reflect a racy subject matter; instead, the "sensational society films" were designed to draw crowds.⁷

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre.

UTM REFERENCES

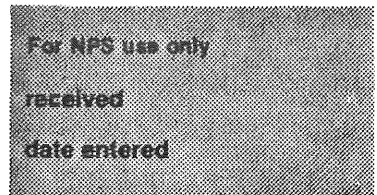
A	17	69,29,60	3,88,09,1,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 1, Block E, Map 78-2-3-3, Cross Creek Township, as outlined in red on map. See map section.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Carolina Theater
Continuation sheet

Significance/
Historical
Background

Item number 8

Page 3

Reference Notes :

¹Robert Sklar, Movie - Made America: A Social History of American Movies (New York: Random House, 1975), 86, hereinafter cited as Sklar, American Movies; Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1931), 101, 167.

²Fayetteville Observer, 1 August 1927, 17 October 1927.

³Fayetteville Observer, 1 August 1927.

⁴Sanborn Insurance Maps for Fayetteville, North Carolina, paper copies from the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1930.

⁵Fayetteville Observer, 17 October 1927.

⁶Fayetteville Observer, 2 January 1928.

⁷Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, Middletown: A Study in American Culture (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 266.

⁸Sklar, American Movies, 86, 152-153.

⁹Fayetteville Observer, 21 October 1978.

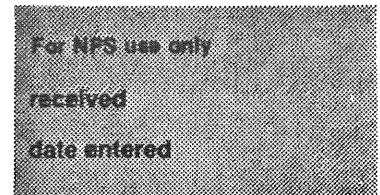
¹⁰Fayetteville Observer, 21 October 1978.

¹¹Fayetteville Observer, 20 October 1978; 21 October 1978.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Carolina Theater Bibliographical
Continuation sheet References



Item number

9

Page

2

Allen, Frederick Lewis. Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the
Nineteen-Twenties. New York City: Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1981.

Fayetteville Observer, 1 August 1927; 17 October 1927; 2 January 1928;
20, 21 October 1978.

Lynd, Robert S. and Helen Merrell. Middletown: A Study in American
Culture. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.

Sanborn Insurance Maps for Fayetteville, North Carolina: 1930.

Sklar, Robert. Movie-Made America: A Social History of American Movies.
New York: Random House, 1975.



2 30 PM SUN

TV PASTOR
REV CHARLES YOUNG
REVIVAL
8 PM

PM SUN

CAROLINA SODA SHOPPE

CAROLINA SODA SHOPPE