

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic COLONIAL THEATRE
and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number THIRD AND MARKET STREETS N/A not for publication
city, town HARRISBURG N/A vicinity of congressional district 17
state PENNSYLVANIA code 42 county DAUPHIN code 043

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<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 FREDERICK L. MORGENTHAUER, III
street & number 2741 NORTH SECOND STREET
city, town HARRISBURG N/A vicinity of state PA 17110

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. DAUPHIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE
street & number FRONT AND MARKET STREETS
city, town HARRISBURG state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

REQUESTS FOR A DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR LISTING ON THE NATIONAL
title REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date AUGUST 1981 federal state county local
depository for survey records CITY HALL, HARRISBURG BUREAU OF CITY PLANNING
city, town HARRISBURG state PENNSYLVANIA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Colonial Theatre is comprised of a front, five-story, brick and wood frame, semi-detached building, and a rear brick and wood frame auditorium addition, located on the southwest corner of Third & Market Streets in downtown Harrisburg. The building's long history indicates that it not only has been physically altered on numerous occasions, but also totally changed in use from that which the building was originally intended.

The original Colonial Theatre building, which was known by several different names prior to 1912, was constructed approximately in 1836. At that time the structure was Greek Revival in design with a four columned portico over the Market Street entrance, six over six lit shuttered windows, and eyebrow windows, contained within wide fascia cornice, on the fifth story. By the 1870's, however, the facade of the building, though previously changed from its original appearance, was altered again to basically its present appearance, above the ground floor, with the construction of a Mansard roof, which built up the height of the fifth story, neo-classically treated dormer gables, bracketed cornice above the fourth story, recessed dormer windows, and pedimented window lintels which have been removed for quite some time.

In 1912, when the use of the building changed from a hotel in its entirety to a hotel/movie and vaudeville theatre, the rear portion of the building, which comprised the majority of the building's depth, was demolished and replaced with a theatre auditorium and stage area. The ground floor of the building's front portion was gutted for the creation of a lobby area, new storefront windows on the exterior (which replaced bay windows), and a marquee over the main entrance. Because the upper stories of this portion of the building were still used for hotel purposes, the entrance to this area was relocated along the South Third Street side of the building. Since 1912, the facade has undergone additional changes including the stripping of most of the window trim, the application of different and conventional facades to the storefront areas, and the installation of a newer marquee. The Market Street facade of the building is three structural bays in width, with the second floor windows on the eastern most bay and on the South Third Street facade lowered during a later alteration to approximately floor level. Two retail stores occupy the ground floor, one being at the building's corner and the other opening on to Market Street on the western side of the Theatre's main entrance. The condition of the exterior is poor because the structure has been vacant for five years and has not been maintained for a longer period than that.

The interior lobby was remodeled in the late 1930's or early 1940's and displays art deco detailing common at that time. The actual auditorium is in its 1912 appearance and is embellished with decorative plaster in a "stage set" modified Italianate Renaissance fashion, with brackets, cornices, plastered panels and arches over the false French doored entranceways which lead to the three box seats on each side of the theatre's interior walls between the balcony and stage. (The two closest boxes to the stage, one on each side, have been removed.) Two molded plaster nymphs adorn the top of the arch over the center box on either side, and are striking architectural features. Below the boxes are arched exit areas, both false and usable, over which velvet curtains are draped. The stage proscenium is bordered with varied and detailed courses of plaster designs. The auditorium accomodates approximately 1,000 seats, with 650 on the orchestra level and 350 on the rear balcony. An orchestra pit, which is currently boarded over, is located at the base of the stage's apron. The overall condition of the building's interior is poor due to water damage from a leaky roof and from fire damage which occurred several years ago.

8. Significance

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 : 1836 - 1912

Builder/Architect 1912 Cla Flin, of Detroit

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Originally built as a hotel, the structure at Third and Market Streets, Harrisburg played a significant part in the entertainment and social history of Pennsylvania's capitol city, from 1836 to 1976. During the period from 1836 to 1912, the structure operated solely as a hotel and was a prominent political gathering place. Its conversion to a theater in 1912 made it one of eight in the city at this time, and the only theater remaining today from the 1st decades of the 20th C.

The structure on the southwest corner of Third and Market Streets in Harrisburg, was originally constructed by Matthew Wilson about 1836 and was known as the Wilson Hotel. About 1853 the hotel was acquired by Herr estate and renamed the Herr Hotel. From the time of its original construction until it was purchased shortly after the Civil War by Harry Thomas, a prominent coal operator from Philadelphia, the hotel underwent several enlargements and remodelings. In 1868 the late George W. Hunter, in whose name the ownership remained until 1978 purchased the hotel from Mr. Thomas, and further enlarged the building by making substantial changes to the exterior, as it basically appears today. At the suggestion of the late General and U.S. Senator Simon Cameron who lived in Harrisburg only a few doors away from the hotel, Mr. Hunter changed the hostelry's name to the Lochiel Hotel, and it was under this name that the hotel enjoyed a reputation for political prominence during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In 1912 the Hunter estate demolished the rear portion of the Lochiel Hotel to make way for the auditorium of the Theatre. About 30 rooms with private bath remained in the existing front portion of the hotel above the Theatre lobby and adjacent retail stores. The Theatre was leased to and managed by the Wilmer & Vincent Theatre Co. from its opening on November 4, 1912 until its closing in December 1976, during which time the hotel closed to be replaced by Feller's men's shop and later offices and a bookstore, until its floors were eventually permanently closed.

Within the Harrisburg area the Colonial Theatre remains the last legitimate theatre of its kind. The Theatre still has in tact a large part of its original architecturally embellished interior, dating to 1912.

Its "stage-set" Italian Renaissance interior is characteristic of early 20th Century American attempts to apply European opera house standards to the design of vaudeville and motion picture establishments. Consequently, the Colonial Theatre represents a distinctive form of American architecture which reaches out from the stage and screen to cast even the spectators in a dazzling setting. The Colonial Theatre stands today as the last of the grand old theatres in the City of Harrisburg.

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

Star Independent newspaper, November 9, 1911 edition
Star Independent newspaper, November 2 & 4, 1912 editions
Harrisburg Telegraph newspaper, July 18, 1912 edition
Pennsylvania State Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.253 Acres

Quadrangle name Harrisburg West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	3	4	0	0	4	0	4	4	5	8	1	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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E

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Fredrick L. Morgenthaler III

organization N/A date June 15, 1982

street & number 2741 North Second Street telephone 717-232-2935

city or town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania 17110

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 9/20/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Colonial Theater
Dauphin County

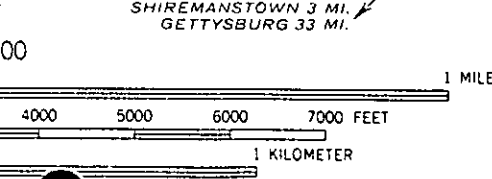
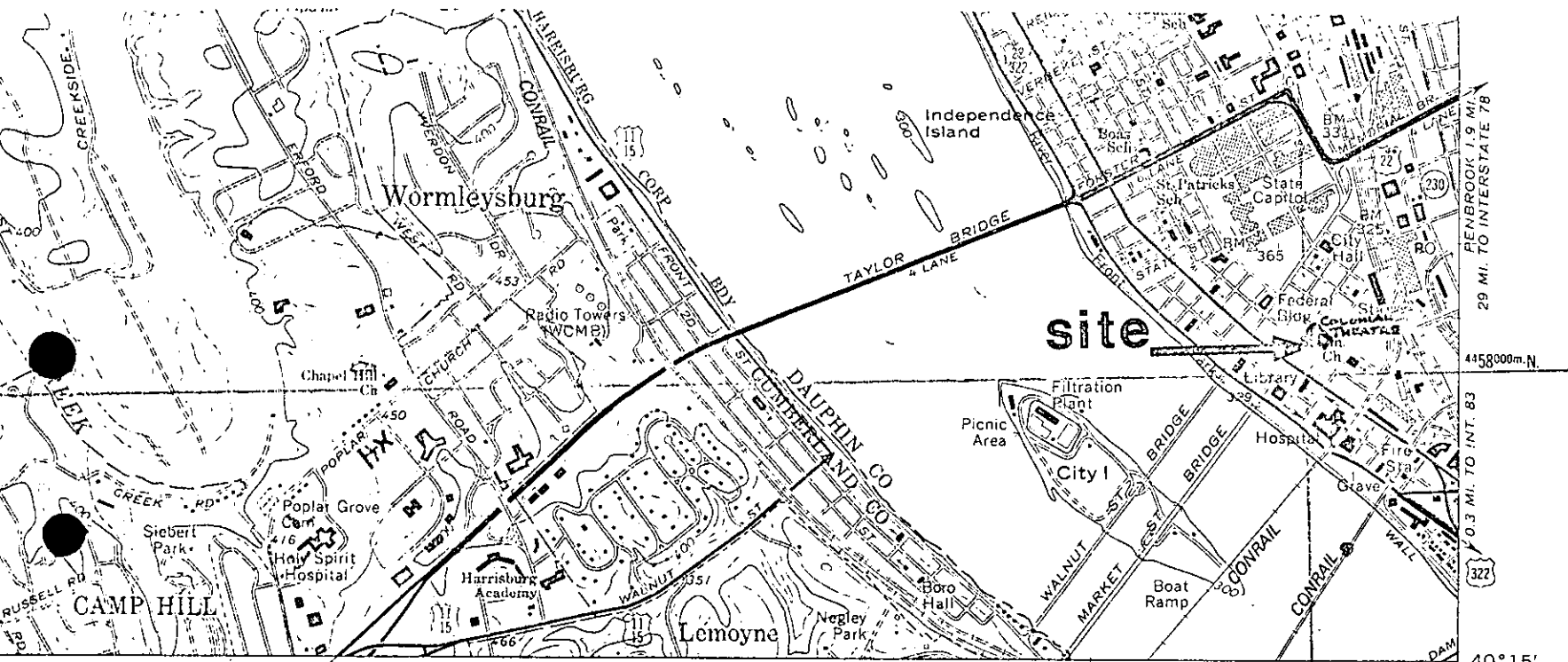
Verbal Boundary Description

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground situate in the Third Ward of the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows, to wit:

BEGINNING at the southwest corner of Third and Market Streets; thence Southwardly along the west side of Third Street two hundred ten (210) feet to the northern side of Blackberry Street; thence Westwardly along the northern side of Blackberry Street fifty-two (52) feet six (6) inches to the line of land now or late of the Estate of George Bergner, deceased; thence northwardly parallel with Third Street and along the line of the last mentioned property two hundred ten (210) feet to the southern side of Market Street; and thence eastwardly along the southern side of Market Street fifty-two (52) feet six (6) inches, to a point, the place of BEGINNING.

HAVING THEREON ERECTED a five story brick theater, store and office building known as NOS. 227-229 Market Street.

BEING THE SAME premises which James B. Redus, Jr. single man, et al, by deed dated May 23, 1978, and recorded in Deed Book U, Volume 64, page 265, Dauphin County records, granted and conveyed unto Edward M. Early.



DATUM OF 1929
 MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FEDERAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 SYMBOLS ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Primary highway, hard surface _____ Light-duty road, hard or improved surface _____
 Secondary highway, hard surface _____ Unimproved road _____
 Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

HARRISBURG WEST, PA.
 SW/4 HARRISBURG 15' QUADRANGLE
 N4015—W7652.5/7.5

1969
 PHOTOREVISED 1974
 AMS 5664 IV SW—SERIES V831

Colonial Theater
 Dauphin County
 Zone 18 E340040 N4458160

29 MI. TO INTERSTATE 78

0.3 MI. TO INT. 83

4458000m. N
 40° 15'
 76° 52' 30"
 3400000m. E
 STEELTY,
 5664 III NE