

PHON 2666

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Georgia	
COUNTY: Bibb	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-6-10-0038	DATE 6/22/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Grand Opera House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Academy of Music

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
651 Mulberry Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Macon

STATE: Georgia CODE: 10 COUNTY: Bibb CODE: 021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Comments a theater for live performances

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Bibb County (leased to Macon Arts Council, Inc.)

STREET AND NUMBER:
Bibb County Courthouse, 653 Mulberry St.

CITY OR TOWN: Macon STATE: Georgia CODE: 10

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Bibb County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
653 Mulberry St.

CITY OR TOWN: Macon STATE: Georgia CODE: 10

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: _____

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

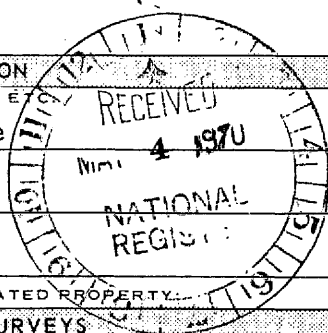
TITLE OF SURVEY:
[A Macon survey contract was made in March 1970 with Carl Feiss, FAIA.]

DATE OF SURVEY: _____ Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: _____

STREET AND NUMBER: _____

CITY OR TOWN: _____ STATE: _____ CODE: _____



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Georgia
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DATE: _____

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

April 6, 1970, the Grand Opera House was officially opened to the public by the Macon Arts Council, Inc., an organization formed to restore the auditorium to its original uses and appearance. This auditorium - the surviving remnant of the Academy of Music - was first opened to the public September 22, 1884. Today it is reached through the lobby of a seven-story office building constructed in front of the Academy in 1905. At that time, the main façade of the Academy was removed but the auditorium was saved, renovated, and opened as Macon's theater of the performing arts. About 1930 it became a motion picture house known simply as "The Grand." In 1967 when the building was about to be razed, the Macon Arts Council, Inc. was formed to save it and by 1969 the restoration was begun. Today therefore, one sees the refurbishment of eighty-six years of architectural evolution: Alexander Blair's Academy of 1884; W.R. Gunn's Grand Opera House of 1905, and Ellamae Ellis League's restoration of 1969-70.

?
Ruskinian
?

I. 1884, Alexander Blair, architect: The Academy of Music, of dark red-brick in the Ruskinian Gothic mode, was the most ambitious theatrical building ever erected in Macon. The main façade with its steep gable-ended projecting central pavilion, graced by a large multi-colored "rose-window", resembled a Gothic cathedral. In this projecting bay, an arch of wide span (resembling the main entrance of the 1905 office building) formed the entrance to the studio building, a rectangular block with a steep gable roof covered with colorful tiles. Attached to this gabled structure was the auditorium wing with exterior bearing walk about four feet thick at the bottom, stepping off to 24" at the top of a 100 foot high wall. This wing survives today and on the exterior one can clearly see what dates from 1884. Inside, in what today is called the Grand Opera House, one saw what one basically sees today: an auditorium seating 2,418 people, with 782 in the orchestra, 586 in the balcony, and 1,050 in the "peanut gallery"; a huge stage (58'x90'), an orchestra pit, and back stage a fly loft 86' high; and at the proscenium an asbestos curtain painted with a fanciful European landscape. Bare bulb lights bordered three tiers of paired boxes on either side of the stage, and both balconies. Friezes of gilded plaster work ornate and finely wrought in a rose and griffon's head motif, covered most surfaces.

II. 1905, W.R. Gunn, architect: The auditorium described above was renovated in 1905 when a seven-story office building replaced the studio part of the Academy. Through a wide lobby in the modern addition, one reached the theater now called the Grand Opera House. W.R. Gunn described himself as a "theatrical architect and practical builder." His handiwork was described February 3, 1905: "Glorious in its stateliness, commodious in every respect, exquisite in its decoration, modern in every appointment...."

III. 1970, Ellamae Ellis League, F.A.I.A.: The same commendation as above could be given Mrs. League and her staff. They have carefully restored and refurbished what was relatively well-preserved, and put back anything taken away after 1905. What they added in the way of up to date conveniences does not detract. Comfortable new seats blend well with replicas of original velvet hangings, gilded bentwood chairs, and restored gold ornamentation. The orchestra pit which had been floored over at the time the theater became a movie house, has been reopened. New stage rigging and lighting have been installed. Orchestra level boxes have been replaced, and the asbestos curtain cleaned and rehung. When this curtain rose, April 6, 1970, the restored eighty-six year old theater was ingenue, star, and great lady of the American theater clothed in crimson, white and gold.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian <input type="checkbox"/>	16th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	18th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	20th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	17th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	19th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1884; 1905; 1969-1970

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Political <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>architecture</u>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>history</u>
Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		_____
	Music <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this building's eighty-six year history is the fact that public-spirited Macon citizens from all walks of life succeeded in saving their old Academy of Music, succeeded in putting it back to its original uses and appearance.

Opened to the public September 22, 1884, the Academy of Music was owned by a stock company made up of prominent Maconites, and was by far the most ambitious theatrical building in Macon's history. When the theater reopened February 1, 1905, it was renamed the Grand Opera House. Control had passed from the original stockholders to the Atlanta theatrical production firm of L. DeGives and Son. The opening night play in the newly renovated theater was a musical comedy entitled "Glittering Gloria." All forms of theatrical production flourished on the stage of the Grand. Minstrels, vaudeville, burlesque, musical comedy, light and serious drama, concerts, amateur productions, were performed continuously. A random sample of newspaper reviews and playbills reveals the following: Will Rogers; George Burns and Gracie Allen; Keith's Vaudeville; The Gish Sisters; Rosa Ponselle; Nancy O'Neill; Lew Dockstadter's Minstrels; Madame Sarah Bernhardt; Joe Jefferson; Thomas Holden in "Ben Hur"; Robert Downing in "Talley-Ho"; Patty Rosa in "Bob and Zip"; James O'Neill in "Count of Monte Cristo"; the Milan Opera Company giving "Lucia", "La Traviata", and "Aida"; Fritz Kreisler; Lillian Russel in "The First Night"; Maude Adams in "The Legend of Lenora"; and Marilyn Miller of the Ziegfield Follies. About 1930, the Grand opened its stage to the "silver screen" and sometime in the early 1960's even this was discontinued. In 1967 and 1968 to save the about to be razed building, the Macon Arts Council, Inc. was formed under the guidance of prominent citizens, including the architect Mrs. Ellamae Ellis League. On April 17, 1968, the Bibb County Commissioners approved the Arts Council's plan to restore the theater. Work on the restoration began in September, 1969, and was largely completed by April, 1970. Much of the project's success was due to Arts Council President, Val Sheridan. Others whose names should be recorded here were: Mr. Chris Sheridan, the general contractor, who undertook to begin work and complete the restoration even before necessary funds had been raised; Mrs. Asa Marshall, III, of the Macon Junior Woman's Club; Mrs. William A. Fickling, Jr., of the Macon Junior League; and Mr. Jackson R. Holiday, of the Macon Civic Club. Restoration of the Grand Opera House was a community project with far reaching significance for the City of Macon. The chronicle of 1884, 1905, and 1970, will no doubt be joined by even more significant highpoints than have been recorded here and on the facing page.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

League, Ella Mae, FAIA. Manuscript on file at the Georgia Historical Commission. (Part seven is partially based on Mrs. League's manuscript.)
 Mitchell, William R. Jr. Personal inspections March and April 1970.
The Grand Opera House. Booklet prepared by the Macon Arts Council, Inc., in 1969.
 Trawick, Jay. Lengthy newspaper history in The Macon News, November 15, 1959.

910
 UTM
 CD

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	32	50	25
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	83	37	45
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 William R. Mitchell, Jr., Director Georgia Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION: Georgia Historical Commission DATE: April 17, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
 116 Mitchell St., S.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Atlanta STATE: Georgia CODE: 10

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Mary Gregory Gurrth
 Title State Liaison Officer, Ga.
 Date April 30, 1970

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

Ernest Allen Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

JUN 22 1970

Date _____

ATTEST:
William A. Venable
 Keeper of The National Register

Date MAY 27 1970

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Georgia	
COUNTY Bibb	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

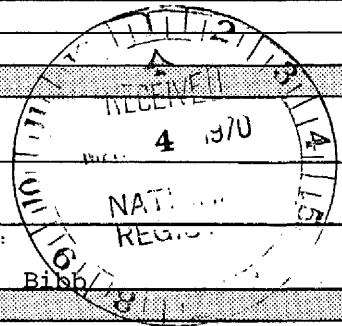
COMMON: Grand Opera House
AND/OR HISTORIC: Academy of Music

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CITY OR TOWN:
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STATE: Georgia	CODE 10	COUNTY: Bibb	CODE 021
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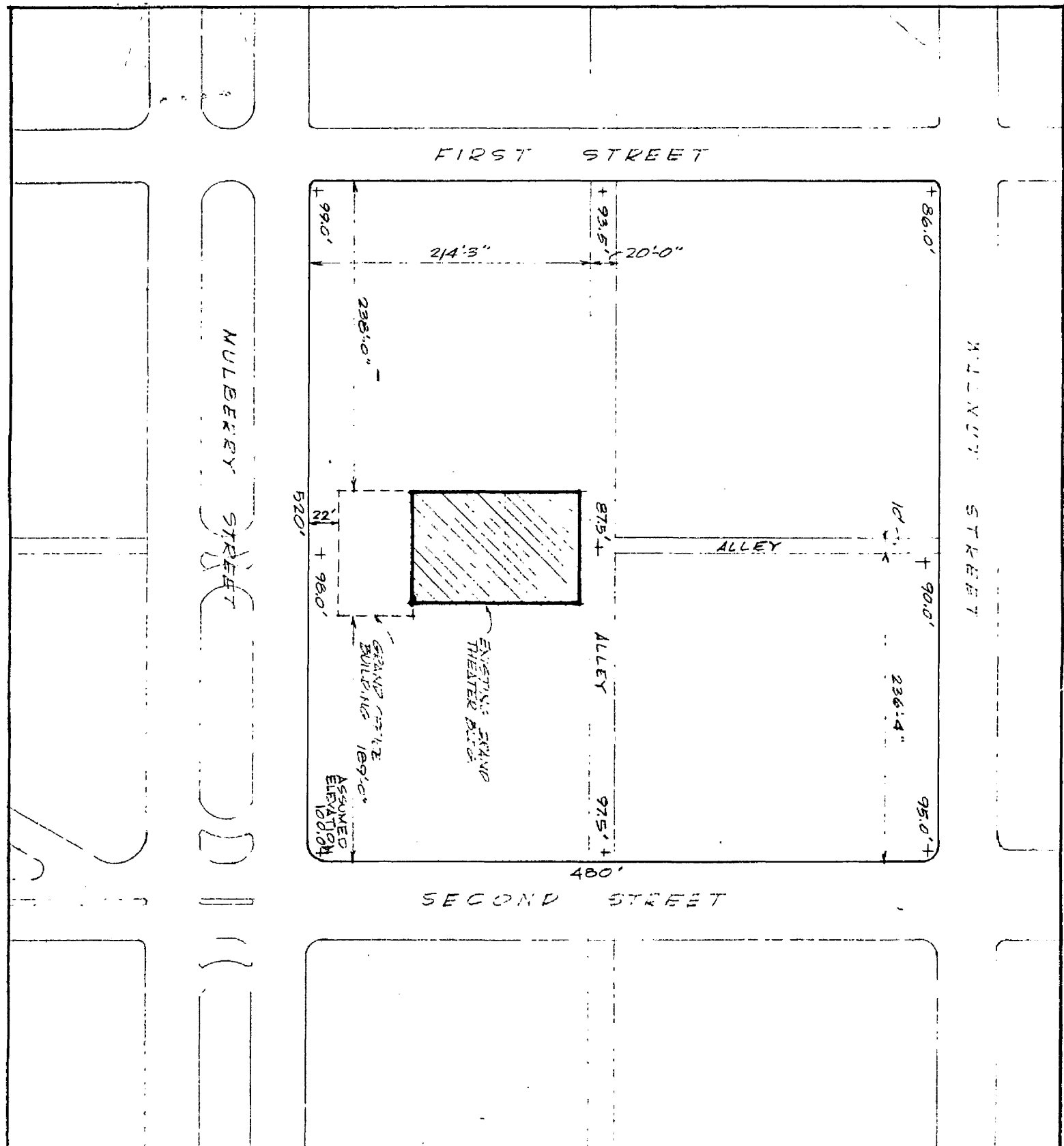


3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:
Plan-Grand Theater Block (Ellamae Ellis League, F.A.I.A.)
SCALE: 1" = 100' - 0"
DATE: Nov. 27, 1968

4. REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
 2. North arrow.
 3. Latitude and longitude reference.



PLAN - GRAND THEATER BLOCK

1" = 100'-0"