National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

| | | OMB No. | 10024-0018 |
|-----|------|-----------------------------|------------|
| | | RECEIVED 2280 | |
| 363 | | FEB 7 1999 | |
| | NAT. | REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES | : |
| | | | |

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

| 1. Name | of Pro | perty |
|---------|--------|-------|
|---------|--------|-------|

historic name Capitol Theatre

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

| street & | anumber 118 South | First Str | eet | | | | | [|] not for p | ublication N/A |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------|-------|---|------|-----|-------------|----------------|
| city or | town Union City | | | | | | | | 🗆 vi | cinity N/A |
| state | Tennessee | code | <u></u> | county | Obion | c | code | 131 | zip code | 38261 |

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

| □ request for determination of eligibility meet Historic Places and meets the procedural and ☑ meets □ does not meet the National Rep □ nationally □ statewide ☑ locally (See | I Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this A nominal ts the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Regis professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the prop gister criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant e continuation sheet for additional comments.) Market State Ton Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission | ster of |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| In my opinion, the property 🔲 meets 🔲 do additional comments.) | es not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for | |
| Signature of certifying official/Title | Date | |
| State or Federal agency and bureau | Λ | |
| 4. National Park Service Certification | | |
| I hereby certify that the property is: eritered in the National Register. See continuation sheet determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet determined not eligible for the | Constant Con | Date of Action |
| National Register removed from the National Register. | | |
| <pre>other, (explain:)</pre> | | |
| | αμαρική | ······ |

| Obion County, TN | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| County and State | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count) | | | | |
| Contributing Noncontributing 1 buildings sites sites structures objects | | | | |
| 1 0 Total | | | | |
| Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0 | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) VACANT/NOT IN USE | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation CONCRETE walls BRICK, CARERRA GLASS roof ASPHALT other GLASS, METAL | | | | |
| | | | | |

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity who's components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- **B** removed from its original location.
- C moved from its original location.
- **D** a cemetery.
- **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- **F** a commemorative property
- **G** less than 50 year of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
 #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1927 - 1947

Significant Dates

1927, 1939

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked) N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

П

Architect/Builder

Conradi, Joseph, architect

Other Name of repository:

Other State Agency

Local Government

Federal Agency

University

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

County and State

| Capitol Theatre | | Obion | County, TN | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------|----------|
| Name of Property | | County a | Ind State | |
| 10. Geographical Data | | | | |
| Acreage of Property Less than one acre | | | | |
| UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) | Union City, | TN 427 | NE | |
| 1 16 315620 4032880 Zone Easting Northing 2 | 3 | Zone | Easting ee continuation sheet | Northing |
| Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) | | | | |
| 11. Form Prepared By | | | | <u> </u> |
| name/titleJudi M. McIntyre | | | | |
| organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation | | date | May 1998 | |
| street & number Box 80 MTSU | te | elephone | 615 898 2947 | |
| city or town Murfreesboro | state | TN | zip code37 | 132 |
| Additional Documentation | | | | |
| submit the following items with the completed form: | | * | ······································ | |
| Continuation Sheets | | | | |
| Maps A USGS map (7.5 0r 15 minute series) indicating | the property's loca | ation | | |
| A Sketch map for historic districts and properties | having large acre | age or nu | merous resources. | |
| Photographs | | | | |

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

| Property Owner | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.) | |
| name Masquerade Theatre, Inc. | |
| street & number P O Box 1414 | telephone 901 885-2300 |
| city or town Union City | state TN zip code 38281 |

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____7__ Page ___1_

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Capitol Theatre is located within a commercial block on the east side of South First Street, Union City, Obion County, Tennessee. The plain, functional two-story brick theater was originally built in 1927 and extensively renovated in 1939 into an Art Deco style building. The Art Deco theater has a rectangular shape, measuring sixty-five feet by one hundred and twenty feet. The building has been vacant since 1991 and has experienced minor water damage to the ceiling above the balcony. The roof was replaced in 1996, and the original concrete flooring and brick walls remain in good structural condition. The theater's significant 1927 and 1939 architectural elements and decorative motifs have remained intact. The theater is currently undergoing restoration by a local theater group based on surviving historic photographs. While most interior plans call for restoration to its original 1927 appearance, the owners do not plan to remove existing interior or exterior Art Deco features.

The west facade of the two-story theater contains the main entrance. According to surviving historic photographs, the Capitol Theatre's original exterior appearance was functional and consistent with its original purpose of showing a variety of attractions. The exterior of the original two-story building was red brick with six brick arches on the second floor. Only the upper half of the center seventh bay contained a six-pane casement window. Instead of the current solid brick first floor facade, the 1927 building contained four conventional storefront windows, two on either side of the ticket booth.

Owners covered the seven second-story brick arches with black Carerra glass in 1939. Two vertical, parallel, orange stripes accent the center of each black glass arch. The current exterior retains its original 1927 concrete foundation, common bond brick walls, and flat asphalt roof with stepped parapets on only the north side. Inset in the center of the first floor, pairs of 1990s wooden double doors now flank the ticket booth. The original 1927, solid brick walls protrude from either side of the ticket booth and doors. While the Carerra glass dates to 1939, the current owners will retain this feature.

The original theater had two small marquees. An oblong marquee encircled with white lights protruded from the front, and a smaller rectangular marquee extended from the side and faced north. The theater's 1939, rectangular, Art Deco marquee currently covers the ticket booth and entranceway into the lobby. The metal marquee forms a canopy over the sidewalk by extending out from the building approximately eight feet. Characteristic of Art Deco, the marquee is bright orange with the theater's name printed in white lettering on the front and sides. A horizontal white stripe above and below the theater's name accent the marquee. A lighter orange and yellow arched "sunburst" or "sunrise" design with white accent stripes forms the upper portion of the marquee. Although white bulbs lined the theater's smaller 1927 marquees, the current marquee has no white bulbs or neon lights and has recently been repainted to its 1939 colors to match the Carerra glass.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

The Capitol Theatre's second major renovation, from 1947 to 1955, temporarily altered the Art Deco appearance of the theater. In November 1947 the Capitol Theater installed a tile floor covering to the outside entrance area. In the mid fifties, the theater covered the first floor facade, including the windows with pale green square tile and placed two movie poster cases on each side of the ticket booth in the approximate location of the original windows. From the mid fifties to 1996, the exterior remained in this condition - tile covering the entire first floor and black Carerra glass with double vertical orange stripes decorating the seven, second story brick arches.

In the process of covering the first floor facade with tile, the theater tiled over the original African-American entrance. African Americans previously entered through an exterior arched doorway to the left of the ticket booth and ascended a dark, narrow staircase to segregated seats on the northern side of the balcony. Whites entered through double doors to a lobby on the right side of the ticket booth and sat on the main floor or on the southern side of the balcony. The balcony was divided into two sections by a high wooden partition. the narrow staircase still exists, but the theater removed the partition during desegregation in the 1960s.

The theater shares its north elevation with an adjacent one-story commercial business. Current owners lease and plan to purchase this business to use as office space and dressing rooms when the Capitol Theatre reopens. A solid concrete wall with stepped parapets can be seen from First Street (front of building) from South Depot Street both the stepped concrete wall and the solid brick wall outside the stage area (rear of building) can be seen.

In the center of the first floor of the east elevation stands a pair of metal double doors used as back stage doors for the movement of props and other theater equipment. On either side and slightly above the center doors are two large square windows filled in with concrete blocks. An air conditioner sits below a vent in both of these filled -in windows. The second floor of the east elevation is a solid brick wall.

The theater shares its south elevation brick wall with a two-story adjacent commercial business on the west with a one-story commercial business behind it. None of the south elevation can be see from first street. A solid brick wall can be seen from South Depot Street.

The Capitol Theatre retains the majority of its historical integrity. Its interior space division, walls and significant decorative elements from both the 1927 original construction and the 1939 Art Deco renovation currently remain intact. The main entrance leads into the central lobby that according to 1927 newspaper descriptions contained a small office and a wooden stair case with a simple wood banister leading to a balcony on the south side of the lobby. A men's and women's restroom stand on the north side of the lobby. The center of the lobby remained empty and open as a gathering place for theater visitors. Two single doorways on the east wall of the lobby lead into the theater. These elements remain intact today. The major change to the lobby occurred in 1939, when owners added a concession stand to the east wall of the lobby between

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

the two doorways. They later replaced the 1939 stand with a larger stand in the 1950s. This 1955 installation was removed in 1995. A portion of the 1927 plaster ceiling in the lobby survives and the remainder of the lobby ceiling will be restored to match it. Currently, the lobby is empty with its original 1927 concrete floor and plaster walls. The original 1927 wooden staircase, the office walls, and the restroom walls remain, but the restroom fixtures have been removed awaiting installation of modern facilities.

The original 1927 concrete flooring remains in the lobby and the main theater. The main theater floor is currently empty. According to Mike Dickerson, spokesperson for Masquerade Theatre, plans call for painting the floor of the main theater dark gray and carpeting the aisles, lobby, and fore-stage with red carpet as it originally appeared in 1927. The original chairs of both the main floor and balcony of the theater have been removed. Current renovation plans call for 364 new red cloth seats with wood backs and arm rests, similar to those found in the theater in 1927.

In 1939 the theater underwent renovation with the addition of a new screen, new seats, movie projector equipment, and brighter lamps. The theater retained its original red carpeted aisles and red velvet stage curtains with gold fringe. On the walls, geometrically shaped Art Deco Cellotex panels replaced the original 1927 square, padded, bright red silk panels. In circa 1955 owners painted a pastel green, blue, and white cloud pattern on the solid, geometric panels along the side walls. The panels with the cloud pattern remain largely intact today. In between the panels, spaced approximately every six feet along the length of the side walls, stand 1927 pilasters with decorative molding and capitals. During the 1939 renovation, square plaster encasements covered the pilasters. The pilasters remain intact beneath the encasements, except for minor spots of missing molding that can be easily replicated. Masquerade Theatre plans to cover the panels and the pilasters with red taffeta fabric similar to the original 1927 red silk walls, leaving the 1927 columns and 1939 Art Deco swirl motif panels undisturbed beneath until funds are sufficient to restore the columns to their 1927 condition. All efforts will be taken to preserve the historic interior treatments of 1939 and 1955.

In an effort to combat diminishing audiences since the 1978 opening of the Volunteer Twin Cinema, located south of the downtown area at 1413 South Home Street, owners temporarily closed the Capitol Theatre on March 16, 1981. They added a dropped ceiling, rows of fluorescent lighting, and a center wall, dividing the theater into two theaters. Older floodlights were suspended from the ceiling in front of the balcony and stage. The Capital Theatre operated as a twin cinema from June 1981 to August 1991.

Currently no steps exist leading from the main floor to the stage, but the wooden stage along the east wall remains largely intact with its original curtain hardware. An early theater visitor observed the original interior appearance, "The stage was framed in gold leaf, the frame made of molded plaster with shapes of garlands, fruit, and ropes. Theatre masks of comedy and tragedy were on

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

the top panel above the stage."¹ The stage measures forty-eight feet wide by thirty feet deep and hangs nine feet over the new orchestra pit. In spring 1997, Masquerade Theatre, Inc. poured a concrete orchestra pit similar in shape, but larger, than the original. The original 1927 orchestra pit held only a six-piece orchestra. The new one holds a twenty-piece orchestra.

Plans include restoration of the back stage area to its 1927 condition. The original ceiling above the stage and wood fly system is intact. 1927 electrical wiring and hardware remain intact on the south wall of the stage. It will have to be updated but the hardware as much as possible will be retained to show this feature. Dressing rooms once existed beneath the stage, but to avoid continued water build-up and flooding in this area, current owners filled the area beneath the stage with four hundred tons of sand and capped it with concrete. Metal double doors centered behind the stage exit the back of the theater.

The balcony has an inclined, stepped wooden floor and is currently empty. A modest cast iron railing stands next to simple wooden inclined steps. Seats have been removed from the balcony. Long range plans call for twenty-four red seats to be installed where wooden benches once stood for colored patrons. The same 1939 Art Deco decorative panels on the main floor continue on the north and south walls of the balcony and will be covered with red taffeta fabric. A simple plaster room stands against the rear wall of the balcony and is divided in half. The north side served as the projection booth, and the south side was used for storage. Minor water damage exists in the ceiling of the balcony.

A dark, narrow, wooden staircase descends from the north side of the balcony and is currently blocked on the first floor. Before 1960s desegregation, African Americans entered from an outside entrance on the north side of the ticket booth and ascended this staircase to segregated seating in the balcony. They had no restroom facilities. When the theater covered the entire first floor exterior with tile in the 1950s, they covered over and blocked the entrance to this staircase.

Despite the missing chairs on the main floor and in the balcony, the missing stairs to the stage, and the minor water damage to the ceiling above the balcony, the theater retains much of its integrity. The theater is structurally sound. Original 1927 exterior walls and interior theater and lobby walls remain intact, and current owners plan to restore the interior to the 1927 period. The 1939 Art Deco marquee and black and orange Carerra glass will remain on the exterior. Interior Art Deco swirl patterned panels run the length of the north and south walls and will remain

¹ Bill Bennett and Bill Roper as quoted in R. C. Forrester, Footlights & Flickers: The History of Theatre in Union City (Union City, TN: Masquerade Theatre, 1997), 53; 50.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

beneath red curtains resembling those in 1927. While Art Deco features will remain on the exterior and beneath curtains on the interior, the original 1927 columns will be featured on the interior when funds allow their restoration.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____8_ Page ___6___

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Capitol Theatre on 118 South First Street in Union City, Obion County, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the development of mass entertainment and recreation in Union City. The Capitol Theatre is Union City's only extant historic theater, one that living residents of the city associate with their youth. The other theaters were short-lived and closed by 1927 when feature films became common. When Union City residents who were teenagers or adults between 1927 and 1978 (the opening of the Volunteer Twin Cinema) think of popular culture and entertainment, they think of the Capitol Theatre. Since it was the city's only theater between 1927 and 1978, one of very few sources of mass entertainment a small town like Union City had, and until the arrival of television, the only source of films and newsreels in this northwest Tennessee town. As the largest auditorium in the city, it also served as a community center for plays, concerts, and other entertainment/ recreation events, especially in the years prior to the construction of Central School and the Union City Armory in the late 1930s. The theater is also Union City's finest example of Art Deco commercial architecture.

Tony Sudekum, original owner of the Capitol Theatre, opened his first theater in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1907. Before his death on April 29, 1946, his Crescent Theatre Chain comprised four hundred movie theaters in six states. In 1961 Reelfoot Amusement Co. (Charles L. Jackson and Ferris Penn) purchased the Capitol Theatre from Crescent Theatre Chain, which continued under various owners after Sudekum's death. In 1969 Malco of Memphis (M. A. Lightman) bought the theater. In 1977 Lightman sold the theater to E. B. "Buzz" Tanner, Bob Terrell, and Philip Scarborough.

Opera houses and movie theaters began to play a major role in the lives of Union City residents soon after the city's establishment in 1854. As early as the late 1860s Union City opened its first vaudeville theater, Brackin Hall, across from the Mobile and Ohio Railroad and east of the original train depot. The city opened eleven vaudeville theaters and opera houses along South First Street prior to the opening of the Capitol Theatre on April 11, 1927. These eleven theaters include Wade's Opera House (1883-1892), Walker Opera House (1889-1903), Reynolds Theatre (1903-1939), Lyric Theatre (c.1908-1912), the Francis Airdome (1915-1917), Gem Theater (c.1912-1915), The Crescent (c.1912), People's Idle-Hour Summer Theatre (c.1913), and Jimmy's Playhouse (1921-1927).

Of these eleven late nineteenth and early twentieth century theaters, the Capitol Theatre remained open for the longest period, sixty-four years, and serves as Union City's only intact Art Deco theater. The Capitol Theatre's significance in the dissemination of movies and newsreel is clear because, no other theater operated in Union City from 1927 to 1978, and only Jimmy's Playhouse showed movies like the Capitol Theatre did, and Jimmy's Playhouse closed the year the Capitol Theatre opened.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____8 Page ___7

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

The Capitol is also eligible under criterion A because it served as a community auditorium for Union City residents when no other auditorium existed and as the center of social life for many of Union City's young generation. In addition to vaudeville acts, musical comedies, road show attractions, "talkies," and movies, the Capitol hosted a variety of entertainment and community activities such as high school plays, talent shows, beauty pageants, magic acts, mind readers, and hypnotists.

The Capitol Theatre is important to Union City's history of recreation because it sponsored numerous events to benefit the community. During the 1930s the Capital Theatre showed films of the "Blue Ribbon Parade" held annually for four years in the 1930s along First Street in front of the Capitol Theatre. The Obion County Health Department held the parade to promote children's vaccinations. Since the late 1920s, county health officials had eagerly sought to establish a modern public health program, enlisting the assistance of government agencies and private foundations, such as the Commonwealth Fund of New York. The Blue Ribbon contests, designed to reward children for participating in public health initiatives, were a major way of publicizing public health programs, and county officials eagerly used the theater to reach the largest possible audience. The early success of the public health drive in Union City convinced local, state, and federal officials to support the city's bid to have the Public Works Administration to build a public health facility in 1939.

Commercial interests in Union City also took advantage of the Capitol's large auditorium. On July 15, 1932, Union City's local merchants sponsored a drawing for a free wedding held at the Capitol Theatre. The wedding package included wedding rings from Andrew's Jewelry, flowers, loaned wedding attire from Morgan-Verhine, and a honeymoon at Davy Crockett Hotel. On February 7, 1937, the Capitol Theatre held its first Sunday show, a benefit that raised \$113 for victims of the Mississippi River Flood of 1937. The theater showed several free films with a canned good donation to the needy who had been devastated by what was then the worst flood in the state's twentieth century history. Other humanitarian events at the theater included the "Toy Matinee" of December 23, 1937, when the owners admitted children free if they donated a free toy for needy families for Christmas.

The Capitol Theatre also provided a temporary escape from the economic troubles of the Depression. Union City resident Bill Bennett remembers, "Saturday meant the Capitol. Saturday afternoon shows were a tradition. That was just what you did." Resident Bill Roper writes, "In fall and winter the Capitol was our escape from school, cold weather, depression, and hard times."²

The Capitol Theatre is significant to Union City's recreational history because the theater brought fame and excitement to the town. Several Hollywood movie stars appeared in person at the

² Ibid., 26-27.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

Capitol Theater during the late 1930s and early 1940s including Spencer Tracy and Gene Autry and his horse Champion. To commemorate the importance of this visit, the new owners plan to display an autographed photograph of Gene Autry in the newly renovated lobby of the Capitol. Viewers of the photograph will reminisce about the many Saturday matinees at the Capitol watching a newsreel, two short comedies or cartoons, a main feature, and the sequel to the previous Saturday's serial.

The Capitol Theatre's first major renovation coincides with the 1939 landmark year in the history of the movie industry. The same year Hollywood released all-time great films such as "Gone With the Wind" and the "Wizard of Oz," a more architecturally distinctive Art Deco appearance replaced the Capitol Theatre's original unadorned, functional, exterior and opera house-like interior. In its Art Deco appearance, the Capitol Theatre continued to prosper during the 1940s, especially as it provided an entertainment and recreational outlet for World War II air cadets stationed at Embry-Riddle Field (now Everett Stewart field) to 1945.

In an effort to combat diminishing audiences after the 1978 opening of the Volunteer Twin Cinema located south of the downtown area at 1413 South Home Street, owners temporarily closed the Capitol Theatre in March1981 and reopened it as a twin cinema from June 1981 to August 1991. The theater remained closed until 1994.

On June 30, 1994, Masquerade Theatre, Inc., a non-profit community theater supported by the Tennessee Arts Commission and public donations, purchased the Capitol Theatre, partially with a grant from the State of Tennessee, and began demolishing the 1980s partition that divided the Capitol into two cinemas. In September 1996 they installed a new roof and began restoring the front exterior by removing the tile placed over the original brick. The intention of Masquerade Theatre, Inc. is to restore the theater to its historic appearance and utilize it as a live community theater to promote local artists including painters, writers, dancers, orators, and musicians. Since its formation in 1989, Masquerade Theatre has sponsored eighteen musical productions in other local venues and is eager to begin production in the Capitol Theatre. For its unique role as a community center and its association with the development of mass entertainment and recreation for early to mid-twentieth century Union City residents, the Capitol Theatre is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It meets the registration requirements set forth in the Multiple Property Nomination for Historical and Architectural Resources of Union City, Tennessee.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dickerson, Mike. Interview conducted by Judi M. McIntyre, June 3, 1997.

- Forrester, R. C. *Footlights & Flickers: The History of Theatre in Union City*. Union City: Masquerade Theatre, 1997. (A collection of period newspaper articles, oral interviews, diaries, and ephemera)
- Poppeliers, John, S. Allen Chambers, and Nancy B. Schwartz. *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture*. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1983.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

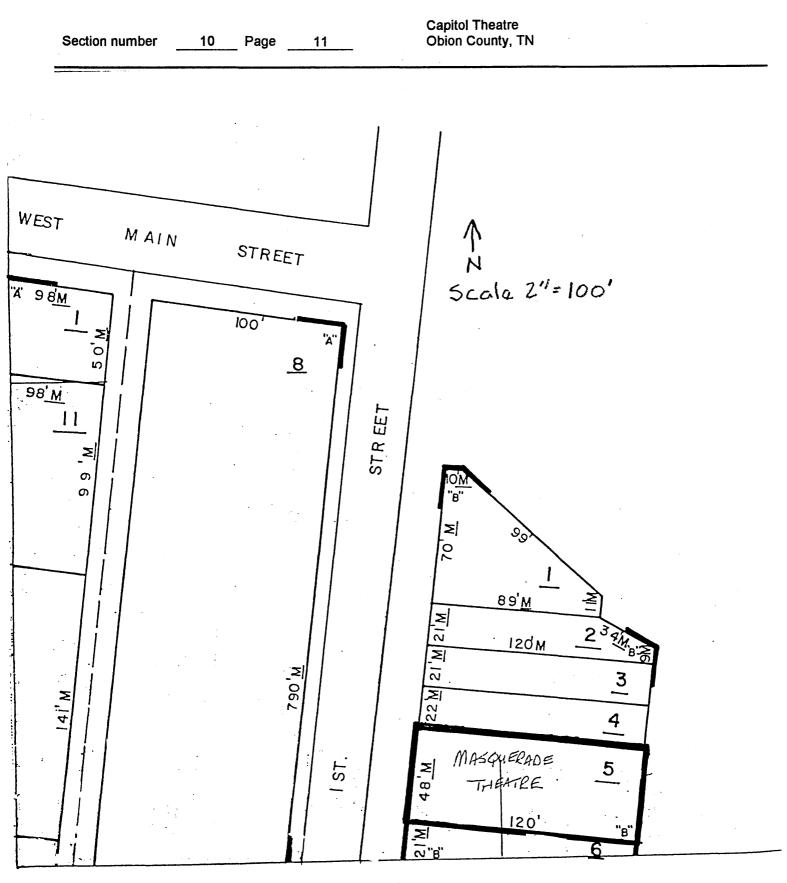
Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundaries correspond to parcel 5 on the attached Obion County Property Tax Map 48LD-B-5-00, Obion County Tax Assessor's Office, Union City, Tennessee.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the city lot that has historically contained the Capitol Theatre since its construction in 1927.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 12

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Capitol Theatre 118 South First Street Union City, Obion County, TN

Photographs by: Carroll Van West
MTSU Center For Historic PreservationDate:April 1997Negatives:Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, TN 37214

West façade, facing northeast 1 of 15

West façade, facing southeast 2 of 15

East and north elevations, facing southwest 3 of 15

Theater interior, floor, facing west 4 of 15

East and north elevations, facing southwest 5 of 15

North interior wall, facing east 6 of 15

Detail north interior wall at balcony, facing north 7 of 15

North interior wall, facing southeast 8 of 15

Detail, north interior wall at balcony, facing north 9 of 15

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 13

Capitol Theatre Obion County, TN

Balcony, facing north 10 of 15 Office and projection booth, facing south 11 of 15

Projection booth, facing south 12 of 15

North stage wall, facing north 13 of 15

South stage wall, facing southeast 14 of 15

Power boxes, north stage wall, facing north 15 of 15

