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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Property

historic name Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number intersection Adams Blvd. & Arizona St., Louisiana Tech University N/A not for publication

city or town Ruston N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Lincoln code 061 zip code 71272

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jon Fricker 1/14/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker Date
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 2/20/98

Howard Auditorium
Name of Property

Lincoln Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
"The 1930's Building Boom at
Louisiana Tech University "

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & culture / Auditorium
Education / college

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & culture / Auditorium
Education / college

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls brick
roof asphalt
other concrete

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet

Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

Louisiana Tech's Howard Auditorium (1939-40) is a huge three-part facility consisting of a Modernistic auditorium at the center with a sizable two story classroom building to each side. The classroom wings are in a low-key traditional neo-Williamsburg style more typical of other 1930s buildings at Louisiana Tech. Also, like other 1930s buildings on campus, the auditorium's red and brown brickwork produces a textured effect. The facility spreads across the south side of the campus' original quad. Howard has received only minimal alterations since construction on both the exterior and interior.

Howard Auditorium has a distinctive composition and massing. The flanking classroom wings, connected to the rear of the auditorium by two story hyphens, read as independent buildings, each under its own hip roof. Also, their facades do not face the same direction as the auditorium, but instead are at right angles to the auditorium facade (see aerial view). The auditorium culminates in a gently curving facade pierced by three massive square head openings. Each interior space is clearly articulated on the exterior. To the rear, towering above the rest of the building, is a hipped roof section marking the fly gallery. The auditorium space itself is a rectangular mass under a separate roofing system -- a flat roof with a skirt (see aerial view and overall view). The side walls of the auditorium are pierced with a band of five narrow vertical windows (apparently to enable multiple uses for the facility). Staircases on each side of the facade are marked by lower sections, each with a tall, massive opening like those on the facade. Also clearly articulated are one story hallways on each side of the auditorium leading to the previously mentioned hyphens. Noteworthy details on the exterior of the auditorium include panels in enameled aluminum above the major openings depicting a stylized musical form (perhaps a lyre), cast concrete surrounds emphasizing openings, and Modernistic light fixtures.

The classroom wings are reminiscent of small manor houses found in colonial Virginia. Distinguishing features include their overall form (i.e., a fairly unadorned hipped roof building, in this case with three small dormers front and rear) and certain details such as jack arches over the windows with prominent keystones and brown and red brick to provide a textured effect. Each classroom wing has three prominent cast concrete openings, one on the facade and one on each side. All are articulated as round arches with flanking pilasters and a crowning entablature. "Music" is inscribed in the entablature of the opening on the facade of one wing, while "Drama" is found on the facade of the other wing.

The interior of the auditorium (with originally a seating capacity of 2500 to 3000) is a *tour de force* of curving forms in the Streamlined Moderne taste. Curves and undulations are everywhere; there is seldom a straight line. Spreading across the front of the auditorium space is

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Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

a linear lobby featuring the slight curve of the facade on one side and an undulating wall to mark the rear of the seating space. Above is a boldly curving ceiling. Regrettably, its original plaster surface has been covered in a modern aluminum material with a ribbed pattern, although the all important shape is still there. On each side of the lobby is a staircase set at a very slight angle (undoubtedly because of the curving facade wall). As the stair turns to ascend to the balcony the walls curve boldly. The staircase's brushed aluminum balustrade features a simple geometric pattern, culminating in an eye-catching spiral newel post.

The auditorium space is a particularly consummate interpretation of Streamlined Moderne curving forms. Its full impact is best experienced first-hand rather than via a narrative description. The ceiling swoops upward from the stage in a grand dramatic gesture. Multiple layers emphasize and carry the curving forms to the rear where there is a sinuous balcony balustrade. The walls at the side of the stage undulate in a marked fashion and the stage itself has an elaborate, boldly curving shape with curving steps to each side.

As would be expected, the interiors of the classroom wings are functional and mundane in comparison, although they are not without interest. For example, their hallways feature a curving form as they connect to the halls on the sides of the auditorium. Floors are of beige and brown terrazzo, and there is a tall wainscot done in cream colored tiles with a black tile trim. The western wing consists of classrooms and offices off hallways, while the middle of the eastern wing is taken up with a small secondary auditorium with a simple curving proscenium.

Alterations since the building was completed in 1940 have been relatively minimal. They include:

- (1) As previously mentioned, the ceiling of the lobby has received a modern treatment. Also at this time new light fixtures were installed in the lobby.
- (2) The classroom wings retain their original character with the exception of celotex ceilings.
- (3) The auditorium has new seats.
- (4) The windows on the classroom wings have been replaced, and while the replacements replicate the six over six appearance of the originals, they have snap-in muntins.

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Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, LA
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Assessment of Integrity:

When one considers the size of Howard Auditorium and the wealth of original character-defining features which survive, it is well preserved indeed. The auditorium building, easily the most significant part of the facility, is unchanged on the exterior and has received only one notable change on the interior -- the 1970s looking shiny aluminum covering on the lobby ceiling. While this is unfortunate, it is only one change, and very importantly, the significant aspect of the lobby ceiling survives -- its distinctive curving shape.

8. Statement of Significance

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 whose 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years 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)

architecture

education

Period of Significance

1939-40

Significant Dates

1939-40

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architects: Neild, Somdal & Neild

Contractor: Nathan Wohlfeld

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Howard Auditorium
Name of Property

Lincoln Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	5	3	3	1	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing			

3

Zone	Easting			Northing			

2

Zone	Easting			Northing			

4

Zone	Easting			Northing			

See continuation sheet

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

name/title National Register staff (assisted by Phi Alpha Theta Chapter, Louisiana Tech)

organization Division of Historic Preservation date September 1997

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous 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 Louisiana Tech University, Office of the President

street & number P. O. Box 3168 telephone 318-257-3785

city or town Ruston state LA zip code 71272

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 listings. 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 20503.

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Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, LA

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Howard Auditorium is of local significance in the area of education because it is an important component of a major chapter in Louisiana Tech's history, the great construction boom of the 1930s which increased the physical plant by one-third, including numerous major buildings. See the multiple property cover form "The 1930s Building Boom at Louisiana Tech" for a fuller statement of significance. Additionally, Howard Auditorium is of statewide architectural significance as a superior example of the Streamlined Moderne taste. It is among about ten to twelve major examples of the style within Louisiana.

A distinct strand within the overall Modernistic movement, Streamlined Moderne has as its signature curving fluid forms. This sleek, sophisticated style which symbolized motion could be seen across America beginning in the 1930s and continuing into the early '50s -- from major urban examples (largely institutional, such as Wright's Johnson Wax Building) to small diners. However, Louisiana for the most part remained architecturally conservative, and as a result, with some notable exceptions, the state is not regarded as a mecca for scholars and fans of Modernistic architecture, whether it be Art Deco or Streamlined Moderne. Of the latter style, there are some ten to twelve major examples. Major examples are defined as good-size buildings convincingly and intensively articulated in the style, in contrast to low-key buildings which might best be termed "hesitantly Streamlined Moderne." Of course, Howard Auditorium is among this handful of landmarks. The building's subtle slightly curving facade only begins to prepare the viewer for the multitude of boldly curving forms on the interior.

Historical Note:

Howard Auditorium was completed in 1940 at a cost of \$540,536. It is named for Harry Howard, the college's first graduate (1897).

Bibliography -- See multiple property cover form bibliography.

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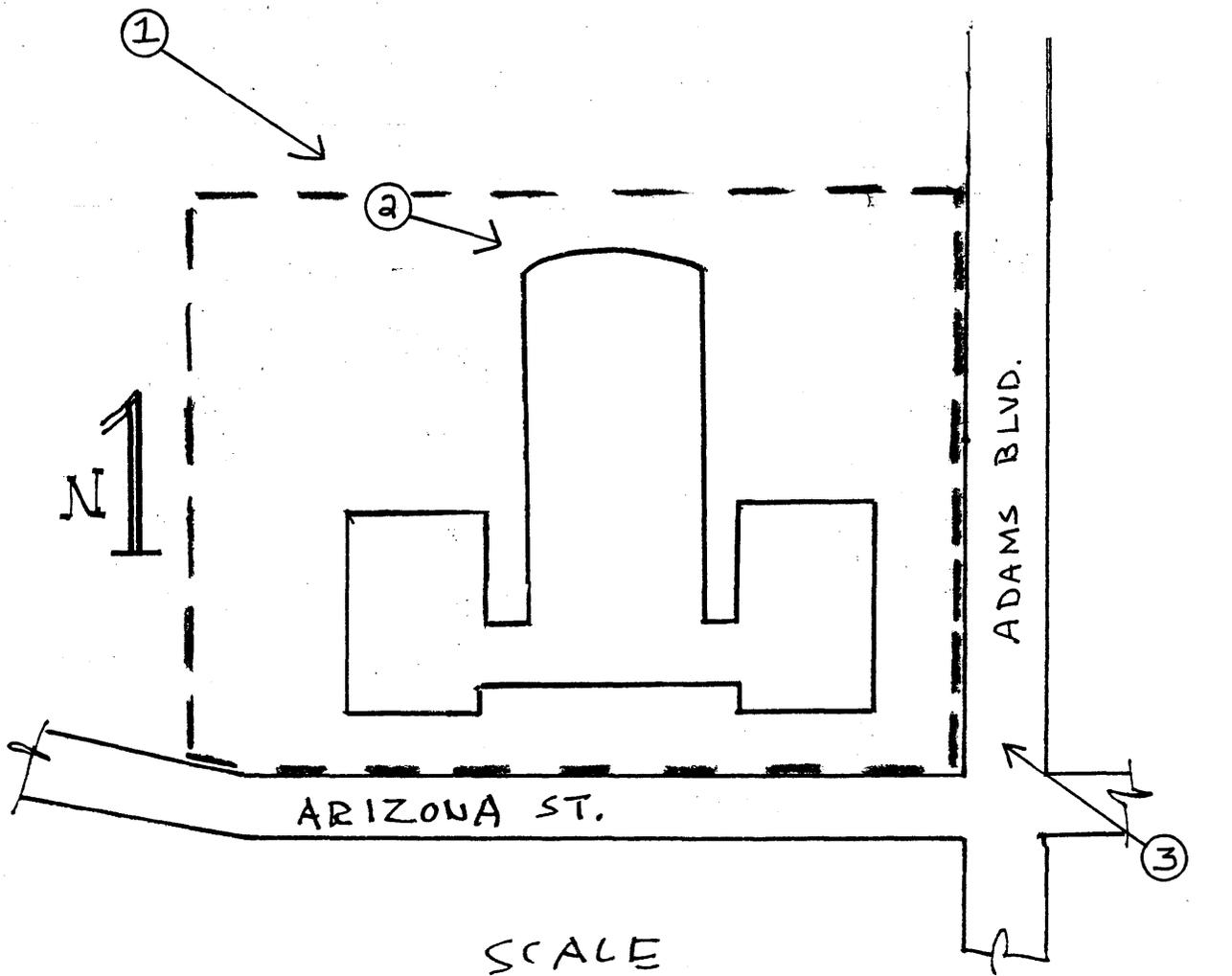
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Howard Auditorium, Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, LA

Section number 10 Page 1

Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to discretely encompass the nominated resource. For a largely modern college campus where only certain buildings were being nominated, following property lines obviously was not an option. The old campus quad mentioned in Part 7 is being included as the setting for Keeny Hall, which is also being nominated as part of the Louisiana Tech multiple property submission.



SCALE
1" = 100'

--- BOUNDARY

HOWARD
AUDITORIUM

Louisiana Tech University
Lincoln Parish, LA

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HOWARD AUDITORIUM AERIAL VIEW (Louisiana Tech University), Lincoln Parish, LA
1941

