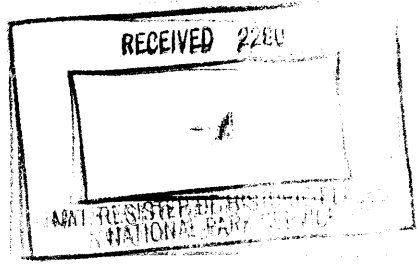


1234



(Oct. 1990)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Odeon Theater
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 123 South Second Street
CITY OR TOWN: Tucumcari
STATE: New Mexico **CODE:** NM **COUNTY:** Quay **Code:** 037
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A
ZIP CODE: 88401

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.)

Katharine Stieh

Signature of certifying official

27 November 2006

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this 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): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action
1.17.07

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: *Movie Theaters in New Mexico, 1905 to 1960*

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater (movie theater)

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater (movie theater)

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION: CONCRETE

WALLS: BRICK

ROOF: ASPHALT

OTHER: CERAMIC TILE

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-6).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION; ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1936-1956

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1936

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: N/A

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-7 through 8-8).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-9).

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 #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES Zone Easting Northing
 1 13 615917 3893534 (NAD83/WGS84)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The south 37 ft. of Lots 21-24 of Block 3 of the Original Tucumcari Townsite, Tucumcari, Quay County.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the theater.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: David Kammer, Ph.D.

ORGANIZATION: consulting historian

DATE: June, 2006

STREET & NUMBER: 521 Aliso Dr. NE

TELEPHONE: (505) 266-0586

CITY OR TOWN: Albuquerque

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 87108

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see attached *Tucumcari, N. Mex.* USGS quadrangle map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-10)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS N/A

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Ramon Martinez

STREET & NUMBER: 123 South 2nd Street

TELEPHONE: (505) 461-0100

CITY OR TOWN: Tucumcari

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 88401

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

Description

The Odeon Theater is a two-story rectangular building with a concrete foundation, stucco-faced clay tile walls, and a flat roof with a slightly stepped parapet. Opened in 1936, the building includes a number of Art Deco elements including the use of glass blocks, decorative geometrical molding on its façade, a fluted vertical column rising above the parapet, and the Art Deco style lettering of a wall-mounted neon sign. A recessed entry is slightly inclined with a ticket booth located along its north wall. Previously two small commercial spaces flanked the recessed entry, but in the 1950s a small concession counter with an office behind it was located in the north commercial space and a restroom was added in the south space. A stairway along the south wall of the lobby leads to the balcony and projection room. The auditorium and balcony seat 360. A splayed proscenium frames the stage, and paired fire exits flank the stage at its base. Except for the change to the two commercial spaces during the period of significance, the Odeon Theater has few alterations and retains a high degree of integrity as to location and setting, design, materials and workmanship.

Located in Tucumcari's downtown commercial district a few blocks from the town's railroad depot, the Odeon Theater is situated at the corner of a block lined with one and two-story commercial buildings. Generally unaltered and some with slightly recessed commercial entries, the buildings form a street wall characteristic of downtown districts in many New Mexico communities. With each building offering a slightly different parapet, the theater with its decorative fluted column rising above its parapet and with an L-shaped wall-mounted neon sign with "Odeon" spelled in Art Deco-inspired letters above the marquee is a distinctive landmark (Photo 1).

A two-story building with a slightly stepped parapet extending along the side walls, the theater is fronted by a broad sidewalk only partially covered by a rectangular marquee with an underlying signboard listing the theater's current movie. The vertical sides of the marquee are painted red as is the wall-mounted sign, and both employ decorative neon tubing.

The façade is a two-part commercial block. The second story has four symmetrically placed narrow vertical metal casement windows, the center two lighting the projection room. Art Deco details include a keystone molding over each of the two outer windows and a series of ten vertical moldings near the center of the façade flanking the wall-mounted sign. The sign is mounted onto a fluted column that is in relief to the façade wall and that extends above and over the parapet (Photo 2). Two sets of guy wires extending from the facade stabilize the sign. The south side of the building contains a large wood frame suggestive of previous use as a billboard.

The ground floor facade consists of a slightly inclined tiled recessed entry flanked by two walls on which metal-framed poster boxes are located (Photo 2). The lower walls consist of red tile, and a ticket booth accessible from the office is located along the north wall of the recess. Prior to the early 1950s, the two spaces flanking the recessed entry functioned as commercial uses, housing various businesses including a new stand,

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Section 7 Page 6

Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

soda fountain and an insurance agency. During the period of significance, however, the south space was converted into an enlarged restroom, replacing a small restroom located under the south stairway leading to the balcony and projection room. At that time large glass block panels located along the façade and the south wall replaced earlier commercial windows. The north commercial space was converted to a theater office fronted by a small concession stand. The compact lobby faces on the back wall of the auditorium. A faux brick partition wall separates the concession stand from the north entry to the auditorium.

Entry to the auditorium is from two flanking doorways. The balcony slightly overhangs the entry and the back row of seats. The concrete floor slopes toward the stage, and aisles are covered with carpet. The ceiling consists of cork tile and the walls are green with a gold wainscoting. Vertical two-part Art Deco-inspired fixtures are located periodically along the walls. The balcony fronts the projection booth and seats 90. Typical of older theaters when the carbon arcs of projector lamps sometimes ignited nitrate-based film, the projection booth has a metal door, and the casement windows normally remain open during showings to cool the booth. Much of the equipment in the projection booth, including the Simplex XL 6570 and 6568 projectors dates to the opening of the theater.

Measuring approximately 37 by 70 feet, the auditorium seats 270. A splayed proscenium approximately eight feet in width frames the shallow stage. Within the aqua green tapered frame are fire exits flanking the gold-trimmed stage and a set of vents located above the fire exits connected to a new forced-air cooling system. Three wall radiators heated by the theater's original boiler system situated in a partially excavated basement beneath the stage are located along each of the side walls.

With a seating capacity of less than 400, its auditorium unchanged, and its façade having undergone only minor alterations, the Odeon Theater retains a strong feeling of a pre-World War II motion picture theater. Its association with popular taste in theater design during the 1930s is particularly compelling with its modest but well-articulated use of Art Deco details, rendering it the best remaining example in New Mexico of a theater embodying that style.

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Section 8 Page 7

Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance

The location of the Odeon Theater marks the oldest site for movie entertainment in Tucumcari dating to the first airdome in 1908. Other indoor theaters, however, soon eclipsed the airdome, culminating with the construction of the H-H Theater in 1917. As was the case in many New Mexico communities, local entrepreneurs undertook theater construction, often adding additional theaters if economic conditions permitted. In Tucumcari the Hurley family illustrates that practice, operating several theaters before constructing the Odeon Theater during 1935-36. Constructed during a time in which relatively few new theaters were opening, the theater offers a façade with a modest but compelling range of Art Deco details, drawing them together with the fluted column rising above the parapet at the center of the building. The theater is significant for its role in providing entertainment in Tucumcari and as a largely unaltered example of a theater embodying Art Deco details and is eligible under Criteria A and C, meeting the eligibility requirements of the *Movie Theaters in New Mexico, 1905 to 1960* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Context

Following the designation of a post office in 1902, Tucumcari's commercial center grew along a platted grid situated at an oblique angle south of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad depot. In 1908, an empty lot at the northwest corner of Second and Center streets became the site of the town's first movie theater when an airdome constructed by a company from Dalhart, Texas, showed films during the summer and fall. During the next decade, several small indoor theaters opened, some closing shortly thereafter, others succumbing to fire. The most notable of these early theaters was the Masonic Opera House, also known as Evans Opera House, which opened in 1913. Now demolished, the building seated over 1,000 and served as a site for vaudeville, films, basketball and local musical productions (Whittington 48). The site of the former airdome, however, remained a gathering place for the community with summertime carnivals and roller skating occurring there.

In 1915 the motion picture theater business in Tucumcari assumed a degree of greater permanence when the Hurleys, a prominent business family, became involved in the theater business. First operating the New Theater and then, in partnership with Gene Hawkins, Arch Hurley constructed the H-H Theater on Main Street in 1917. In 1921 Hurley obtained entire ownership of the theater, renaming it the Princess Theater and turning over its management to his son, Milas Hurley (Whittington 49). Over the years, the theater suffered the misfortune of fire on two occasions, burning in 1943 and, after being repaired and reopened, again in 1962 after which it was never repaired. The concrete foundation and stone frame of the building continue to stand a block north of the Odeon Theater.

It was the initial success of the Princess Theater and the optimism regarding agriculture in Quay County that accompanied the construction of the Arch Hurley Irrigation District fed by waters from nearby Conchas Dam that prompted Milas Hurley to consider adding to the family's theater holdings in the mid-1930s. Inspired

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Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

by the widespread use in France of the Greek word, "odeon," denoting a theater and also attracted to the five letter word for the economy of constructing a neon sign, he so named his new theater (Whittington 50).

Constructed during 1935-36, the theater opened on May 16, 1936. Typical of the way that Hollywood nurtured film distribution as key to the industry's survival, the Hurleys received congratulatory telegrams from luminaries including Frank Capra and Mary Astor. Despite the celebration surrounding the event, the residents of Tucumcari were slow to adopt to the name Hurley had selected and simply referred to the theater as the New Theater.

A harbinger for the Quay County Courthouse, constructed as a Public Works Administration project in 1939, the theater introduced the community to the Art Deco style. Its simple white façade, embellished with a modicum of symmetrically-placed moldings articulating a central fluted column was unlike any other storefront in the commercial district. With one of Tucumcari's earliest neon signs affixed to the column, the Odeon became a beacon signaling that Hollywood's films were now available in an up-to-date theater. The interior, appearing much as it does now, offered patrons a modern air-cooling system, cushioned seats, and contemporary sound and projection systems. Despite these amenities, the popular perception in Tucumcari until fire destroyed the Princess Theater in 1962 was that the Odeon, occasionally showing Spanish language films, was secondary and that a dichotomy existed between the "elite" Princess Theater and the Odeon serving "all us poor folks" (Martinez).

As discussed in *Movie Theaters in New Mexico, 1905 to 1960*, the plans of many theaters of the era included two small commercial spaces flanking the recessed entry to the theater. Over the next 15 years, the businesses located in the Odeon Theater were often those typically found near theaters, including a soda fountain and news stand, which offset the need initially for the theater having its own concession stand. In the early 1950s, however, when those businesses closed and the lobby area underwent alteration, a concession counter was added.

During the 1960s as many theaters lost business to the growing popularity of television, the Commonwealth Theater chain assumed operation of the Odeon. It was during this decade that the current owner, Ramon Martinez, first began working there as a projectionist. When the Commonwealth chain closed the theater, Mr. Martinez decided to operate the theater, purchasing the building from the Hurley family. Nearly a half century later, he continues to operate the theater, performing with his small staff the entire range of tasks necessary to run a theater, including hand-operating the stage curtain for each performance. The only remaining theater in downtown Tucumcari, the Odeon retains a high degree of integrity largely as a result of Mr. Martinez's effort to preserve the theater as he first knew it when he began working there.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

Bibliography

Martinez, Ramon. Interview with David Kammer, Oct. 18, 2005.

Tucumcari City Directory. Oklahoma City: Lloyds National Directory Company, various years, 1948-1961.

Whittington, Debra Ann. *In the Shadow of the Mountain: Living in Tucumcari*. Tucumcari: Sundowner Gallery, 1997.

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Section Photo Page 10

Odeon Theater
Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico

Photographic Log

Information pertaining to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Odeon Theater

Tucumcari, Odeon Theater, New Mexico

Photographer: David Kammer

Date: December, 2005

Location of negatives: New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office

Photo 1 of 2

Front (east) facade

Camera facing northwest

Photo 2 of 2

Sign, marquee and entry

Camera facing northwest