

ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

SURVEY AREA NAME: Phoenix Commercial
 HISTORIC NAME: Orpheum Theater
 ADDRESS/LOCATION: 209 W. Adams
 CITY/TOWN: Phoenix
 TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 112/21/28, 29, 30, 31, 32
 OWNER: City of Phoenix
 OWNER ADDRESS: 620 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85003
 HISTORIC USE: theater
 PRESENT USE: theater
 BUILDING TYPE: Commercial/Theater
 STYLE: Spanish Colonial Revival
 CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1927
 ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Lescher & Mahoney, architects;
Hugh Gilbert, Associate Architect; and Schmidt &
 INTEGRITY: original site/altered minor
 CONDITION: original
good/maintained

COUNTY: Maricopa SURVEY SITE: 37-19
 USGS QUAD: Phoenix
 T 1N R 3E S 8 N 1/2 1/4 OF THE 1/4
 UTM Zone 12 Easting 400000 Northing 370140

Description (contd.)

ROOF TYPE: tower, hipped/ steel roof truss
 ROOF SHEATHING: Spanish tile/built up
 EAVES TREATMENT: parapet with cast stone relief
 WINDOWS: wood frame
 ENTRY: glass ticket booth, steel doors
cast concrete door leaders
 PORCHES: marquee
Hitchcock, Engineers
 STOREFRONTS: remodeled north facade

DESCRIPTION

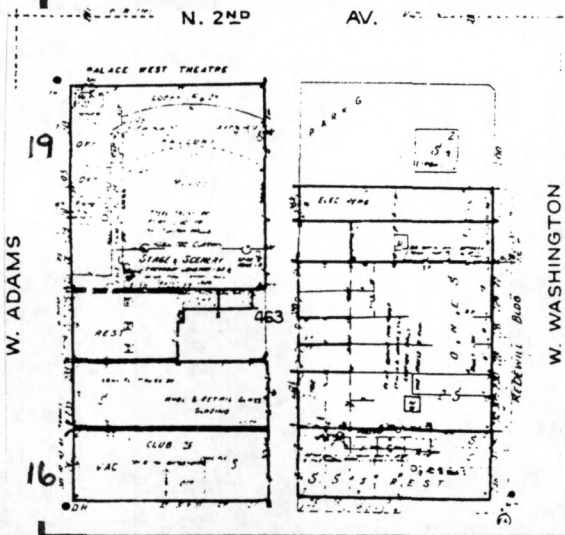
STORIES: 2B DIMENSIONS: (1) 140(w) 150
 STRUCTURAL MATERIAL: glass, wood, concrete
brick concrete bond beam (cast-in-place), steel
 FOUNDATION MATERIAL: concrete
 WALL SHEATHING: stucco

NOTABLE INTERIOR: lobby, balcony,
auditorium, stage
 OUTBUILDINGS: _____
 ALTERATIONS: acoustical tile in ceiling of
entry. Entry floor is resurfaced.

APPLIED ORNAMENT: cast stone ornament; octag-
onal tower, wrought iron deco. work above, over
 SKETCH MAP: windows, cast concrete balcony.

PHOTOGRAPH

PHOTOGRAPHER: Garrison
 DATE: August 1983 VIEW: SW
 NEGATIVE NUMBER: PC Roll A, Frame 32



ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION/ANALYSIS (annotated form):

Original building featured a brilliant beacon on the octagonal tower, and an ornate lighting pattern in the central loggia.

SIGNIFICANCE:

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE COMMUNITY PLANNING _____ ECONOMICS _____
 EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT _____ GOVERNMENTAL _____ MILITARY _____ RELIGION _____ SCIENCE _____
 THEATRE TRANSPORTATION _____ TOURISM _____ OTHER(specify) _____

HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS (be concise):

PROMINENT OCCUPANT/HISTORIC ASSOCIATION(S) Built by Phoenix architects, Lescher & Mahoney, for Harry Nace and J.E. Rickards. Nace & Rickards became partners in 1915, - and managed Arizona theaters. Sold out to Paramount in 1936.
 RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT Largest and best theater of its time. Still in use as a theater.
 CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS Built for plays, movies, & vaudeville, the theater was the cultural center of Phoenix.
 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Unique example of Spanish Colonial theater in Phoenix. Best Spanish Baroque example in Phoenix.
 MAJOR ARCH. FORM/MATERIAL Most ornate example of cast-stone ornament in Phoenix.
 ENGINEERING/STRUCTURAL Building structure was designed to be expanded from 3 - 8 stories.
 DISTRICT/STREETScape CONTRIBUTION Contributes to the character of the downtown business core.

DISCUSSION AS REQUIRED:

Phoenix's most architecturally intact and largest remaining theater. Building also contained office space.

Electrical lighting on this building was a major design consideration. Harry Nace was also an owner of the Phoenix Municipal Stadium. Arriving in Phoenix in 1910 as an acrobat with a circus, he remained for his health and built a chain of theaters. Died in 1953. See MRA text, Item 8, pages 36,37,54.

CONTEXT: ISOLATED/RURAL _____ RESIDENTIAL STREET _____ COMMERCIAL CENTRAL SQUARE _____
 CBD: OTHER: Townsite

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES: Arizona Republic: 2/3/24 2, 10:1; 8/21/25 1, 1:8; 7/9/26 1:1; 8/27/26 2, 1; 4/26/27 1, 1:8; 5/1/27 2, 4:1, 5/8/27 3, 1:1; 7/1/28 3, 3:1; 11/18/28 3, 1:3-4; 12/28/28 1, 2:1; 12/30/28 2, 7:1-4; 1/5/29 2, 6:4; 2/17/29 4:3; 7/4/30 2, 9:7; 6/2/31 2, 1:2; 1/18/32 1:8, 11/17/36 2, 2:2-4; 11/18/35 11, 1; 11/29/35 1, 10:2-3.

LISTING IN OTHER SURVEYS: Page Survey, AIA Guide to Phoenix, Army Corps Survey

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS:

LISTED _____ DETERMINED ELIGIBLE _____ DETERMINED NOT ELIGIBLE _____ NOT EVALUATED

COMMENTS/DEVELOPMENT PLANS/THREATS:

SURVEYOR J. Garrison et al SURVEY DATE May 1984 DATE FORM COMPLETED May 1984