

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NCRS use only

received

10-6-80

date entered

NOV 26 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Republic Theater (preferred)

and/or common Falls Theater

2. Location

street & number 806 Dearborn Street _____ not for publication

city, town Great Falls _____ vicinity of congressional district Fifth

state South Carolina code 045 county Chester code 023

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Great Falls, Inc.

street & number 400 Dearborn Street

city, town Great Falls _____ vicinity of state South Carolina 29055

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Chester _____ state South Carolina 29706

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1980 (update) _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia _____ state South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located in Great Falls, South Carolina, the Republic Theater was built in 1921-1922 by the Republic Cotton Mills. The theater is thought to be the only facility of its architectural and historical type in Chester County.

Exterior: The Republic Theater is a rectangular block set on a closed foundation of limestone-colored stucco. The walls are constructed of light colored brick laid in stretcher, common, and diaper bond. The original roof was flat and consisted of tar and paper; however, this roof has collapsed competely, and at this time there is no covering over the building. The facade has a large segmental arch entrance framed by a terra-cotta bundled bay leaf torus, and soldier and rowlock surrounds with terra-cotta impost blocks. The facade is laid in diaper bond except for the parapet which is laid in common bond and topped with terra-cotta. A molded terra-cotta cornice which projects from the facade follows the curve of the arch and wraps around to the right elevation. The cornice is denticulated and has ornamental pendants and modillions. Two small rectangular windows with rowlock surrounds and terra-cotta corner blocks flank the entrance arch. The area beneath the arch is divided into two stories. The lower story is brick and has two double entrances with metal doors. In the center is a boarded-up area which was once the ticket booth area. The original doors were wooden with ten mirror panes and a transom above. The second story of this area is concrete with one central window. This is where the marquee was located.

Interior: The interior of the theater has deteriorated greatly due to the collapse of the roof. The auditorium is full of the fallen roof and other debris. The wall covering is falling off and the pilaster capitals have crumbled. Originally, the theater had a two hundred seat auditorium, a lobby, restrooms, a projection room, a balcony, and a manager's office. The auditorium had a sloping concrete floor, a twenty-three foot stage with proscenium arch and two dressing rooms, which are largely intact but deteriorated. The walls of the auditorium were decorated with applied plaster molding around the furnace outlets and raised pilasters with Corinthian capitals.

Surroundings: The Republic Theater is located in a commercial setting in the downtown area of Great Falls. Flanking the building to the front is Dearborn Street. To the left and right of the theater are two commercial buildings, one two-story and one one-story. To the rear of the building is a gravel lot which is included in the nominated acreage. Across from the theater is a building complex which was also designed by the J. E. Serrine Company and was built ca. 1921.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1921 **Builder/Architect** J. E. Serrine & Company

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located in the town of Great Falls, South Carolina, the Republic Theater was built by Republic Cotton Mills in 1921-1922. The theater is significant for its association with local industry, theatrical entertainment, and for its fine architectural detail which distinguishes it as a local landmark.

In 1917 Republic Cotton Mills commissioned J. E. Serrine and Company, a Greenville, South Carolina, architectural firm, to complete architectural plans and specifications for the Republic Theater. Construction of the theater was completed in 1922. In 1946 Republic Cotton Mills sold much of its property, including the theater, to J. P. Stevens and Company, Inc. In 1949 Standard Amusement Company, Inc. of North Carolina purchased the theater from J. P. Stevens. Later that year, the theater was sold to Wayne Theaters of North Carolina. In 1978 Wayne Theaters donated the Republic Theater to the town of Great Falls after slow business forced the theater to close its doors for the last time in 1974.

Although the Republic Theater has been vacant for six years, the town of Great Falls recognizes the need to preserve this important historic site. In 1978 the town council established the Great Falls Historic Preservation Committee and authorized preparation of a National Register nomination for the theater as the committee's primary objective. In addition, the town has formulated long-range plans for the renovation of the theater for use as a local community center. Much local support has been forthcoming for the project and several local organizations and public agencies have expressed an interest in sharing the facility. Fortunately, the original plans for the theater are available to aid in restoration.

Industry: During the early 1900's, Republic Cotton Mills of New Jersey established a thriving textile industry in a rural area of Chester County which later developed into the town of Great Falls. Republic Cotton Mills, like many other textile manufacturers during the "New South" era, provided basic necessities and facilities to the surrounding mill village. In 1913 Republic Cotton Mills constructed the Old Falls Theater to provide the mill workers and their families with a permanent entertainment facility for traveling shows and silent movies. The Old Falls Theater, demolished during the 1920's, was the first theater in Great Falls. Due to the theater's popularity, Republic Cotton Mills had initiated plans to construct a larger and more attractive facility as early as 1917. In 1921-1922 the new Republic Theater was constructed according to architectural plans and specifications prepared by J. E. Serrine and Company of Greenville, South Carolina. This theater was the only building of its function or quality built by an industry for this region.

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Great Falls, S.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	5	1	0	0	9	8	3	8	2	4	8	7	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing									

B

Zone		Easting				Northing									

C

Zone		Easting				Northing									

D

Zone		Easting				Northing									

E

Zone		Easting				Northing									

F

Zone		Easting				Northing									

G

Zone		Easting				Northing									

H

Zone		Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary for the Republic Theater nomination is shown as the orange line on the accompanying property tax map of Chester County entitled "Map No. 202-10" and drawn at a scale of 200 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes all significant buildings and structures.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Walker, Architectural Historian Pamela L. Zagaroli, Catawba Council of Governments

organization S. C. Department of Archives and History date September 10, 1980

street & number Post Office Box 11,669 telephone 803/758-5816

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title SC SHPO date 9/25/80

For HCERS use only

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

date 11/26/80

Keeper of the National Register

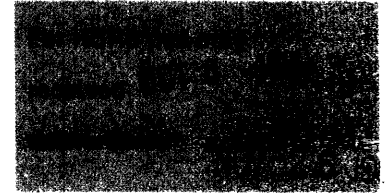
Attest:

date 11/24/80

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

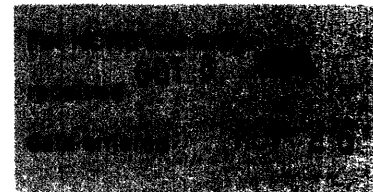
Page 1

Theater: The Republic Theater played an important role in providing entertainment and recreation for the people of Great Falls. Between the 1920's and the 1930's, the theater provided a variety of shows such as silent films, the first "talkies," minstrel shows, "blackface," and magic acts. The first movie to open at the theater was "The Kid" starring Charlie Chaplin. Films released by major distributors such as Paramount, Universal, and First National were purchased by the theater for approximately ten to twelve dollars apiece. Tickets to moviegoers sold for thirty-five cents each until the Great Depression. Attendance at the theater dwindled during the depression and postwar years due to economic circumstances and the advent of television and car use; consequently, the Republic Theater closed in 1974.

Architecture: The Republic Theater's significance is derived from its survival as the focal point of the downtown area in Great Falls. The Republic Theater is the most distinctive building in Great Falls due to such fine architectural details as the terracotta moulding and diaper bond brickwork.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Bibliography

Chester, S. C. Chester County Courthouse. Deed Books 329, pp 327-336; 366, pp. 459-460; 365, pp. 71-72; 490, pp 107-109.

Columbia, S. C. South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Letter from the Honorable Glenn Bennett to Mr. William J. James, Executive Director of Catawba Regional Planning Council, 12 July 1978.

"Great Falls Has Grown Over the Years." The Great Falls Reporter, 3 January 1979, pp. 6-c, 7-c.

Great Falls Historic Preservation Committee. "Suggested Property for National Register Information Sheet" 1 September 1978, 2 pages.

Great Falls, S. C. Personal Papers of L. W. Pittman.

Greenville, S. C. Blueprint in possession of Potter-Shackelford Construction Company, Inc. J. E. Serrine and Company. "Moving Picture Theater, Republic Cotton Mills, Great Falls, S. C." (ca. 1917-21.)

Pittman, L. W. Great Falls, S. C. Interview, 19 April 1979.

"Report Made on Old Theater." The Great Falls Reporter, 21 February 1979, pp. 1-c, 2-c.

Rock Hill, S. C. Catawba Regional Planning Council. "Inventory and Survey form," 31 October 1979, 11 pages.