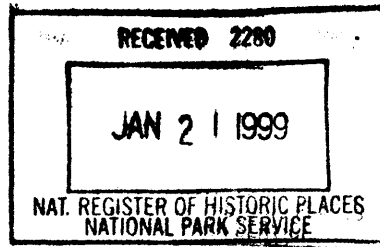


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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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 any 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 Evangeline Theater

other names/site number Sliman Theater for the Performing Arts

2. Location

street & number 129 East Main Street NA not for publication

city or town New Iberia NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Iberia code 045 zip code 70560

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jonathan Fricker

January 8, 1999

Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date
Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

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 certifying official/Title _____ 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):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

2/18/99

Evangeline Theater
Name of property

Iberia Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

 NA

 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Recreation and Culture

Sub. Theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Recreation and Culture

Sub. Theater
 Auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick, Stucco
roof Other: tar & gravel
other Glass

Narrative Description

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

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The Evangeline Theater started its life as a wholesale grocery building in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Remodeled for a movie house in 1929, the building gained its current Art Deco facade and other characteristics during a 1939/40 renovation. The two story brick building's facade is clad in stucco and pigmented structural glass. Located on Main Street in the New Iberia central business district, the facade is fully restored to its 1940 appearance.

Some elements of each era of the building's history remain. The general shape as well as three of the exterior walls are remnants of the earliest period. The interior walls of the auditorium, left exposed during the recent rehabilitation, also show evidence of the building as a wholesale grocery. A series of pockets in the brick walls denote where shelves and hangers were attached to hold the groceries and other supplies.

The 1929 remodeling of the building to house the theater has also left its mark. The vertical Art Deco Evangeline sign that still graces the front of the building is original to the theater. Incandescent lights create a flashing border around the word "Evangeline" which is spelt out in neon lights. Neon did not become generally widespread in Louisiana until the late 1930s, so the sign represents an early use of neon in the state. The high vaulted ceiling is a dominant feature of the lobby which recalls the early years of the movie house. The black and white tile floor which also represents the 1929 renovation has a Greek key border design and the word "Evangeline" in block letters.

After 10 years as a theater, the building was updated to its current appearance. The most dramatic change was to the front street facade which was completely redone. William Bowen, the architect for the project, designed the current Modernistic facade. The sharp geometry creates a sculpted look to the front of the building, which is divided into three sections: an upper register, a large marquee, and a street level entrance. The upper register is denoted by a central geometric design that peaks at the center of the building and creates a background for the original Evangeline neon sign. The sign, which was placed to one side of the 1929 building, was reused in the center to emphasize the striking verticals common to Art Deco architecture. The backdrop, composed of superimposed vertical elements, makes three short steps down to the main wall of the building. Each section is a different color and is articulated by a band of contrasting color. The colors used on the facade and marquee-- rich greens, reds, and yellows--match the color of the vertical neon sign and emphasize the striking geometry of the facade. The large marquee, with vertical neon bands of lights,

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United States Department of the Interior
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CONTINUATION SHEETSection 7 Page 2

separates the upper register from the street entrance. At the center of the marquee two bands of color curve down from a vertical central element. These curving bands meet two "wings" which shoot out along the top of the marquee. All of the elements are outlined in neon lights.

Like the upper register, the entrance displays the dynamic geometry characteristic of the Modernistic style. A wide solid band of deep red Carrara glass denotes the base of the first story. Above that, an off-white glass background is dissected by sharp beige lines which shoot up from the dark base and veer off to the right and left at different levels. Centered over the entrance doors and ticket booth is a long black glass sign with "Evangeline" in stylized white letters. Under the sign a ticket booth is sidled by two sets of double doors with large rounded glass panes and brushed aluminum fixtures.

The recent rehabilitation of the building restored the exterior, but greatly altered the interior to accommodate mixed uses. Several interior features of the 1940 renovation were saved. The lobby retains much of its 1940 flavor. The dominant feature from 1940 is a set of rounded end steps that lead to the pair of doors that originally led to the auditorium. Two new entrances to the auditorium were installed to preserve the historic staircase and to accommodate the new flat floor design of the auditorium. The light fixtures in the lobby are also from 1940. Two conical light fixtures made of a blue metal base and surrounded by a series of exposed florescent lights hang from the vaulted ceiling. One covered florescent light with decorative metal end caps and an opaque cover hangs at the top of the stairs above the original entrance doors.

Many of the original characteristics of the auditorium space were lost during a 30 year period of neglect after the theater closed in 1960. Holes in the roof and rotting floorboards allowed water and other deteriorating elements to ruin much of the interior space. The rehabilitation process which began in 1996 reworked the auditorium to stabilize the structure and to allow for mixed uses. The once slanting wood floor has been replaced with a flat poured concrete surface. A new stage, sound booth and roofing/ceiling system, along with exposed brick walls alter the original appearance of the auditorium. As in the lobby, though, several light fixtures have been restored to give a sense of the historic fixtures. The wall sconces that line the walls as well as the hanging conical light fixtures from the ceiling were part of the 1940 refurbishing.

CONTINUED

Evangeline Theater

Name of property
NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

Iberia Parish, LA

County and State

OMB No. 1024-0018

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Assessment of Integrity:

In the opinion of the SHPO, the striking Art Deco flare seen in the restored façade and the lobby establishes the building's architectural character. Although alterations exist, the integrity and uniqueness of the street façade and lobby justify its recognition as an architecturally significant building.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to 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

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.) NA

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929, 1940

Significant Dates

1929, 1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

1940 Architect: William Bowen

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- 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
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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The Evangeline Theater is of state significance in the area of architecture as a superior example of the Modernistic taste within Louisiana.

Louisiana for the most part was architecturally conservative in the late 1920s and '30s. With some notable exceptions such as the State Capitol, the state is not considered a mecca for enthusiasts of Modernistic architecture. The staff of the Division of Historic Preservation found that there were about 40 major examples in Louisiana. Major examples show a full articulation of the style where other buildings might have "hesitant touches" of the Modernistic taste—i.e., a feature here and there in contrast to intensively styled, fully developed examples such as the Evangeline.

With few exceptions, Louisiana's major examples are public buildings whose construction was made possible by federal relief funds. For example, eleven of Louisiana's sixty-four parish courthouses were constructed at this time in the Modernistic style. Other examples include schools, hospitals, municipal auditoriums, etc. The Evangeline is particularly important because there are very few major commercial examples of the Modernistic taste in Louisiana. The handful that do exist are found in large urban areas rather than a small town setting. The Evangeline is a particularly flamboyant example of the Modernistic style. Its sharp geometry, emphasized by glorious color, and use of materials such as pigmented structural glass and neon make it a classic example of Modernistic architecture.

Historical Note:

The Evangeline's history is tied with that of the Sliman family. The building was remodeled into a theater by Mr. Kalil Sliman, a Lebanese immigrant who came to Louisiana in 1896. After the 1929 renovation of the building Sliman handed the theater over to his youngest son Theodore. Theodore "Mr. Teddy" Sliman ran the movie house until it closed in 1960. The Sliman family retained ownership of the building until the mid-1990s when they donated the theater to the city to begin the process of rehabilitation. Because of Mr. Teddy's vision for the restoration of the theater, and the family's generosity toward the city, the building was renamed the "Sliman Theater for the Performing Arts."

Evangeline Theater
Name of property

Iberia Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 614080 3319740

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

__ 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

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1998

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of New Iberia

street & number 457 East Main Street, Room 300 telephone (318) 369-2300

city or town New Iberia state LA zip code 70560-3700

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Historical data on the Evangeline from the Sliman family, typescript in National Register file.

Historic photos showing the theater after the 1929 renovation and the 1940 renovation. Copies in National Register file.

Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation staff knowledge of Art Deco architecture in Louisiana.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Boundaries follow the side elevations of the building on the east and west. The curblineline of East Main is the southern (front) boundary, and the curblineline of Burke Street is the rear (northern) boundary. Property lines followed the side elevations of the building historically, as they do today. (Originally a building shared a party wall with the theater on each side.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundaries correspond to the parcel of land historically associated with the theater. They are also the current property lines.