



ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Monumental brick construction; four stories occupying one-half block. Front facade divided into three sections: a projecting central pavilion with a giant horseshoe-arch entrance supported on fluted columns, scalloped cornice, and slightly pedimented parapet; and two corner pavilions having recessed flat-arch entrances framed by freestanding columns and elongated horseshoe-arch fenestration above, which rise through 2 floors. There is a profuse linear and sculptural terra-cotta decoration on the two street facades (south and west). Two entrances are located on the side (west) facade, one that leads into the theater and a second of paired horseshoe arches for the Shriner's lodge.

ALTERATIONS:

ADJACENT BUILDINGS:

LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Temple Theater was erected in 1924 by the Hamasa Shriners, but because of a shortage of funds the auditorium was unfinished until the building was leased by the Saenger movie chain in 1927, which completed the interior at a cost of \$135,000. In addition to movies ("photo-plays"), the Saenger Temple Theatre also had comedies, news weeklies, reviews, scenics and novelties, including travelling vaudevilles. At its opening dedication it was called "Mississippi's finest theater" and Meridian became "one of the headlines of progressive large cities in the field of entertainment" (although the city already held this position due to the Grand Opera House). The original seating capacity has decreased from 1760 to 1634. The stage was reportedly larger than any in the U.S., with the exception of the Roxy in New York, at the time the theater was completed.

NAME: Temple Theater
 STREET NO: 2318 8th St.
 TOWN/VIC: Meridian, Mississippi
 COUNTY: Lauderdale
 BLOCK/LOT: Ragsdale Block 66, lots 11-16
 PRESENT OWNER: Hamasa Building Association
 ADDRESS 2309 9th St. Meridian
 PRESENT USE:
 FORMER USE: Theater, lodge
 DATE: 1923-1927
 STYLE: Moorish Revival
 ARCH/BUILDER: Emile Weil
 SOURCE OF DATE: Cornerstone
 ENVIRONMENT: Commerical
 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
 NEIGHBORHOOD
 LOCAL
 STATE x
 NATIONAL

PHOTOS

NEG. #

FILE OR AREA PLAN WITH NORTH ARROW AND SHAPE OF STRUCTURE:

CONTINUATION:

PHYSICAL CONDITION:

Good

TREATS:

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Ragsdale block 66, lots 11-16.

CREAGE: About an acre

TM REF:

A	116	339820	3153119190
	ZONE EASTING		NORTHING
C			
B			
	ZONE EASTING		NORTHING
D			

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE

Jody Cook

18.5

February, 1979