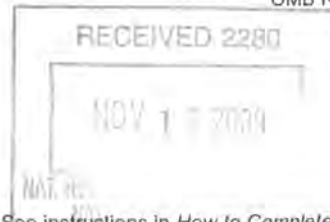


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1116

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: The California Theatre

other names/site number: The California Theatre of the Performing Arts (present name)

2. Location

street & number: 562 West Fourth Street not for publication N/A

city or town: San Bernardino vicinity N/A

state California code CA county San Bernardino code 92401 zip code

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

[Signature] 10 NOV 2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
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): _____

[Signature] 12-22-09
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- 1. Recreation & Culture: Theatre, Auditorium, Music Facility
- 2. Social Civic: Public gatherings, e.g. charitable events.

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- 1. Recreation & Culture: Theatre, Auditorium, Music Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th Century Revivals: Mission-Spanish Colonial (Eclectic)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete

Roof: Asphalt, Terra Cotta

Walls: Concrete - on façade overlain with stucco

other:

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheet: Section 7, Page 1.

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SECTION 7: NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION¹

The California Theatre is a rectangular building whose footprint dimensions are 168.5' x 113'. The building is constructed of steel-reinforced, poured concrete covered by stucco on three of four exterior walls and plaster finish on the interior. The site is located mid-block on Fourth Street, between "E" and "F" Streets, in the City of San Bernardino, California. The front (south facing) façade is the only side of the building possessing the distinctive Spanish Eclectic architectural features because commercial buildings have abutted the theatre to the east and west, while the rear (north facing façade) faced an alley way and parking areas. A commercial building still stands to the west, with a narrow walkway separating it from the theatre. The building to the east was demolished many years ago, and the exposed side is now used for banners announcing future performances at the theatre (this will be detailed below). The theatre is located in the commercial core of the city. When the theatre building was opened in 1928, six small shops occupied the first floor street frontage on along Fourth Street; three shops on either side of the theatre entrance. This 6-way segmentation of the first floor is carried through on the upper levels of the front façade and is detailed below.

The overall integrity of the structure remains the same as it looked when built, with the following three exceptions. First, the original horizontal marquee just above the theatre's entrance has been replaced by one of the same size which is backlit. Also, the original marquee had a large vertical member which extended above the upper parapet wall and spelled "California." The latter has been removed and allows an unobstructed view of the façade's architectural detail. Next, all six shops have been removed from the first floor street frontage and their space is now used by the theatre. The shop space to the east of the entrance is occupied by the theatre offices, while the shop space to the west of the entrance is occupied by the Will Rogers Room. In the latter, refreshments are served during intermissions in performances and is not open when performances aren't taking place. Lastly, the original second story balustrade, originally made of cast masonry, has been replaced by one of wrought iron.

The California Theatre also contains a unique contributing resource, the only Wurlitzer Style-216 theatre organ (Opus 1850) remaining in its original location. Opus 1850 is located just in front of the west end of the California Theatre's stage and its dimensions are: height, 49"; width, 62"; depth, 52".

¹ The source used in referencing architectural features in this description is Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) pp. 33-61.

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The southward facing, West Fourth Street, front façade of the theatre possesses two-stories plus an ornate central triangular pediment which rises another story.² Decorative tile work covers the entire length of the parapet wall. The façade is designed symmetrically, and can be divided into three sections: a central portion, which is the most elaborately articulated architecturally, includes the entrance bay, above which is the marquee, then a second story, and finally the pediment. There are two adjacent façade sections, on the east and west of the central section that are described in detail below. Looking at the central portion, on the first floor or street level, there is the entrance which is approximately 30' wide with a detached ticket booth, approximately 8' in diameter, that is covered with arabesque-shaped metal decoration.³ The entrance is paved with 2 inch square red tile. Above the entrance is the backlit marquee that projects 10' from the building wall. Immediately above the marquee, on the second story, is a line of 9 slender arched openings with windows recessed within them. These arches are separated into groups of three, each group 99" wide, by four pilasters that extend vertically from the marquee, through the series of arched windows, then the pediment, and continue above the parapet wall, and finally terminating 3' above the parapet with ornate pinnacles. Between these pilasters, above the series of arched windows, the central segment possesses a pediment heavily ornamented with cast masonry. The pediment extends another story above the series of arched windows, and ends with a tiled cornice which is penetrated by the four pilasters that terminate with decorative pinnacles. The underside of the tiled cornice contains decorative fluting along its entire length. Finally, there are two crests containing arabesque shapes at the midpoint of the pediment, which decorate the space between the adjacent pilasters.

The two outer pilasters also provide the boundary between the central façade section and the west and east façade sections. Looking at these two outer façade sections, the distinctions begin at street level with the six former store fronts. The glass fronts of these shops have been replaced by murals containing reproductions of Edgar Degas' paintings of dancers. These six store fronts provide divisions that continue onto the second story by six wide basket-handled arches that stand behind the wrought iron balustrade. Under each of these arches is a set of three paired French doors, each pair is 45" wide; the middle pair open inward behind the balustrade. These doors have 2x5 glass sashes. Above the arched second story is a 2' frieze which is topped by a tiled cornice.

² See photos 01-03, Continuation Sheet – Section 10

³ See Photo 09, Continuation Sheet Section 10.

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Behind the pediment cornice, and covering just the middle section of the building, is a red tiled steeply pitched roof which is mostly obstructed from pedestrian view. This tiled section extends rearward approximately 34', the remainder of the roof is flat, except for the rear fly loft which protrudes almost four stories in the rear section of the building. Indeed, the highest point of the roof, towards the rear or north end of the building, is 84' and houses the backstage rigging and fly loft; while the remainder or front portion of the roof is 67' high.⁴ A large mural of Will Rogers was painted on the east side of the fly loft by local artist Ken Twitchell in 1995. Most of the east side of the theatre is occupied by six 16' x 44' banners promoting this year's major performances at the California. For example, the first banner shows Maestro Carlo Ponti, Jr., son of actor Sophia Loren, who has conducted the San Bernardino Symphony since 2001. Under these banners, the surface is stuccoed. The north side of the theatre includes the freight door on the northeast corner, and the stage door on the opposite corner.⁵ A canopy overhangs the tops of these entrances and extends along the entire north side. The north side's surface is stuccoed. The west side of the theatre is mostly obscured by adjacent buildings and is a blank wall of poured concrete.⁶ However, one can see on the western side of the high fly loft, another Ken Twitchell mural of Will Rogers.

The Opus 1850, Style-216 organ is the contributing resource contained within the California Theatre. The organ's console is made of dark mahogany; its dimensions are: height: 49"; width: 62"; depth: 52". Looking directly at the keyboards and switches that the organist operates, starting from the uppermost feature, one sees an arc of red, white and yellow tabs that are just under the console top, which encircle the keyboards. These tabs are called "stop tabs." Just below this arc, are two additional rows that are also "stop tabs." These stop tabs are what produce the individual sounds, i.e. the red tabs are pushed to produce the reeds, the trumpet, post horn, obo, etc; the white tabs produce the flutes, tibia, and the strings; the yellow tabs are also string and flute stops -- but with yellow tabs there is a sharpened or shimmering sound as if there were massed strings or flutes. The organist pushes these stop tabs to derive the combination of sounds he or she wishes the organ to produce. Just below the two rows of colored stop tabs are two manual keyboards, with the common ebony/ivory colors, on which the organist plays the individual sounds they have chosen with the stop tabs. The two keyboards allow the organist to play two contrasting sounds, i.e. they can play the melody on the upper keyboard and the accompaniment on the lower. Along the front of each manual keyboard there are ten yellow

⁴ See photos 05-07, Continuation Sheet, Section 10.

⁵ See photos 06-07, Continuation Sheet, Section 10

⁶ See photos 04 and 07, Continuation Sheet, Section 10

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buttons, approximately 1" in diameter, called "pistons." These pistons allow the organist to pre-set the combination of stop tabs they will be using. An organist does not typically manipulate the stop tabs during a performance, rather they "pre-load" the combinations of stop tabs onto a series of pistons, then press a particular piston at the appropriate time during the performance. At the base of the organ there are three large petals the organist operates with his or her feet. The far right petal is the "crescendo" petal which does just that, i.e. produces a crescendo using the notes being played. The two petals to the left of the crescendo petal control the two sets of "swell shades." which are similar to venetian blinds which can be closed or opened to reduce or increase the sound level produced from the organ's sound chambers (these will be elaborated below). To the right of the crescendo petal there are two levers that, when operated produce a bass drum roll and a crash cymbal that is used to end a musical piece. Lastly, below the three large petals are 32 wooden "sticks" that produce 32 notes, i.e. ranging through 2 ½ octaves, which are also operated by the organist with their feet.

All the above are components of the organ console and are operated by the organist. However, there are other components to the organ which the tabs and petals of the organ activate. Behind the organ, under the stage, is a 3½' diameter fan operated by a 5 hp motor within a box approximately 2 ½' deep, which blows a constant flow of air through two metal tubes leading to the two organ instrument chambers, one on each side of the stage, that contain the instrumentation that actually produces the organ's sound. These two chambers are located about 2 ½ stories above the audience. The chamber on stage right/audience left contains the main electrical relay box connecting the organ's keys, stop tabs, petals, etc. with the devices producing the actual sounds – this is in fact the "brains" of the organ. The electric relay box looks like an old telephone switch board with hundreds of wires connecting the organist's keys, petals, etc. with the sound devices. This relay box is approximately 6" in height, 2 ½' in width, and 6" in depth. The remainder of the space in these two rooms is filled with racks containing the hundreds of metal tubes and valves and leather bellows that produce the organ's sounds. These two rooms are connected to the auditorium where the audience is seated by two openings that appear to the audience as two elaborately decorated grills about 2 ½ stories high on the walls on both sides of the stage. The "swell shades." mentioned above, are behind these decorative grills, and can be opened or closed by the organist to increase or decrease the sound levels coming from the instrument chambers.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for 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" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1. 1928 – 1950

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Perrine, John Paxton (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets for Section 8, Pages 2 – 5.

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):

- 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:

10. Geographical Data

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SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The California Theatre is nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places under the register's first criterion for its association as a center of Entertainment/Recreation for the City of San Bernardino during Hollywood's "Golden Age" of movie making, i.e. from the theatre's opening in 1928 until 1950. During those years, the Fox Film Corporation held several movie "world premiers" at which the starring actors, directors, writers, major corporate executives, among others, were present. The theatre was also used to "screen test" several films for assessing audience reaction.

The Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation located the California Theatre in San Bernardino because of the city's importance as a key population, finance and commercial center for the Inland Empire region (the region composed of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) in the early decades of the twentieth century. So the Fox West Coast Theatre corporation took advantage of the city's size and accessibility to a large market area in positioning itself as a major entertainment provider for the Inland Empire. Thus the association between the California Theatre and Hollywood's "Golden Age" began.

In August 1928, the California Theatre was opened by the Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation. The theatre was lavishly designed in Spanish Eclectic style⁷ by John Paxton Perrine⁸, a prominent architect noted for designing theatres in this opulent Spanish Classic Revival style. Other theatres designed by Perrine include: the Lincoln Theatre in Los Angeles, the California Theatre in San Diego, and the Fox Redondo Theatre in Redondo Beach (all of the latter have been closed, and the San Diego and Redondo theatres have been demolished).⁹ Not only did the corporation provide first-class architectural design, a seating capacity of 1750, every opportunity was taken to provide for the comfort of theatre-goers of the day, e.g. plush seating and deluxe air-conditioning.¹⁰ To underline the importance of the occasion, on opening night the president of the Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation, Mr. Harold B. Franklin, and vice

⁷ Although this application is not being made to recognize the California Theatre's architectural significance, the architectural importance of the theatre is verified in: Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, AIA, Inc. *Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, San Bernardino, California, 1991*, Volume 3, p. 18.

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the information contained here is from Mike Hughes, "Theatre of the Stars," in *The California Theatre: A Movie Palace in Renaissance* (San Bernardino Civic Light Opera Association, 1983).

⁹ Website: "Cinema Treasures: John Paxton Perrine," accessed June 29, 2009.

¹⁰ Opening night program, August 15, 1928. A copy of which is available in the archive reserves, Pfau Library, California State University, San Bernardino.

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president, Mr. Howard Sheehan, were in attendance, as well as actors Janet Gaynor (1928's academy award winner) and Charles Farrell, both of whom were starring in that evening's movie performance of, "Street Angel."¹¹

The direct association of the California Theatre with Hollywood's "Golden Age" is demonstrated by the theatre being the venue for several movie "world premiers." These premiers include: "Biography" starring Ann Harding and Robert Montgomery,¹² and "After the Thin Man" starring William Powell, Myrna Loy and James Stewart. This movie was the sequel to "The Thin Man" that also starred Powell and Loy.¹³ In addition, the California Theatre was used to "screen test" films to assess audience reactions. For this purpose, classic films such as the original "King Kong" and "The Wizard of Oz," were first seen by audiences at the California Theatre.¹⁴ One source concluded, "In its day, San Bernardino was second only to Los Angeles as a major center for motion picture presentations."¹⁵

In addition to its large seating capacity, lavish architecture, and comfort, the theatre was built by the Fox West Coast Corporation for live performances as well as motion pictures – thus providing a complete entertainment platform. Because of the theatre's regional significance, it was selected as the site to develop and perfect new skits by the Fancho and Marco troupe, a national vaudeville company, before the troupe moved on to deluxe venues, such as Los Angeles' Paramount, Loew's State or the Pantages in Hollywood. In fact, the opening night's program lists one of these.¹⁶

The link between the California Theatre and Hollywood in its "Golden Age" is also demonstrated by a charity benefit for the Salvation Army held at the theatre on June 28, 1935. One of the stars appearing that evening was popular humorist Will Rogers, in what proved to be his last public appearance before leaving on a airplane tour of Alaska with his friend Wiley Post. The two would perish when their plane went down near Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15, 1935. However, Will Rogers was just one of a dozen stars appearing at the theatre's June 28th benefit; others included: the evening's Master of Ceremonies, Leo Carillo; Buddy Rogers; Ray

¹¹ *San Bernardino Sun*, August 15, 1928, p. 11. In addition, photos of the opening night's program are contained among the old photographs section of this application.

¹² *San Bernardino Sun*, November 28, 1934, p. 9.

¹³ *San Bernardino Sun*, December 29, 1936, p. 5.

¹⁴ San Bernardino Symphony Association, *2008-2009 Season Commemorative Program*, p. 5.

¹⁵ Tom Green, "San Bernardino's Movie Houses," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 23, 1972, p. B5.

¹⁶ *Op cit.*, Opening Night Program

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Milland; Buster Crabb; Jane Withers; Alice Fay; cowboy musical group the "Sons of the Pioneers," featuring vocalist Roy Rogers, among others.

As a sign of its gratitude to Will Rogers and remembering his tragic death, the Salvation Army placed a bronze plaque in the lobby of the California that reads:

"IN MEMORY: In this house on June 28, 1935, our beloved friend Will Rogers made his last stage appearance to help provide funds for relief of human needs. The Salvation Army, December 18, 1936."

After Hollywood's "Golden Age," the theatre remained, and remains today, a major regional center for live entertainment. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Los Angeles Philharmonic made regular appearances at the California Theatre.¹⁷ Other stage and screen actors that have appeared at the California include: Tom Mix, Fannie Brice, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, the Three Stooges, David Niven, Tab Hunter, John Ireland, Sylvia Sydney, and the Four Freshman. Carol Burnett and Rock Hudson starred in-person in the play "I do, I do," before taking the show to the Huntington Hartford in Hollywood. Lucie Arnez, daughter of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnez, made her first professional stage appearance in "Cabaret" at the California. John Carradine starred in Archibald MacLeish's "JB," with Elia Kazan directing.¹⁸ In August 1969, the National General Cinema Corporation, then the parent corporation of Fox West Coast Theatres, sold the California to San Bernardino's Civic Light Opera Association (CLO), which changed the theatre's name to The California Theatre for the Performing Arts in the late-1960s. The CLO continued stage plays and musical venues until transferring ownership to its present owner, Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Bernardino (RDA). Through a wide-range of restorative activities, the RDA has sought to maintain the feel of luxury that the original builders of the theatre had in mind when the facility was built. Performances of the San Bernardino Symphony and of two dozen performances by national touring theatre groups draws season ticket holders from across the Inland Empire.

A contributing object is contained within the California Theatre: the Style-216, Opus 1850 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. West Coast Theatres' Southern California Division placed organs in their theatres because they provided a more varied film accompaniment than a piano, without

¹⁷ *San Bernardino Sun*, October 1, 1950, p. 5, with Alfred Wallenstein conducting; *San Bernardino Sun*, with John Barnett conducting; *San Bernardino Sun*, January 23, 1963, p. B2 and February 28, 1968, p. B2, with Zubin Mehta conducting

¹⁸ *San Bernardino Sun*, February 7, 1961, p. B4.

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the expense of an orchestra. The main purpose of the Style-216, Opus 1850 was to provide the necessary accompaniment to silent films. Of course, as silent films were replaced by “talkies” in the early 1930s, that function no longer existed. But the enjoyment of the organ at movie performances did not end, and was a source of enjoyment for the California Theatre for the remainder of Hollywood’s “Golden Age.” Usually, a night at the movies meant “double features,” with a 20 – 30 minute intermissions. During that time, organ performances were common, and the Opus 1850 increased the quality of the evening’s movie performances. Also, the movie premièrès were gala events, and the Opus 1850 enriched those events by filling the theatre with exotic sounds and music. In 1910, the Wurlitzer Company had acquired the rights to produce the Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra organ that was equipped to produce orchestral sounds far beyond previous pipe organs. During the early 1920s, Frank Lanterman, later to achieve political prominence as a California state senator, as the head organist for the Fox West Coast Theaters’ Southern California Division, felt, “...that the earlier Wurlitzer Style-215 theatre organ lacked the ‘crack’ to be satisfactory in the chain’s new theatres then being constructed, and requested the Wurlitzer Company make a series of organs specifically modified to his specifications. The result was the Style-216 theatre organ.¹⁹ Wurlitzer replaced the Style-215 Kinura with an English Horn, and adding couplers and a crescendo – thus creating the Style-216.”²⁰ “Crack” in Mr. Lanterman’s vocabulary meant “gusto,” because the Kinura has a thin “buzzy” sound, like a mosquito, while the English Horn is much more aggressive, i.e. like a fanfare trumpet.²¹ With “couplers” the organist can play two different sounds on the same note, e.g. an octave coupler with a middle “C”, can be simultaneously played with a low “C”. Couplers allow the sound to be “bigger.”²² With the ranks and added couplers Style-216s could potentially produce over a million sound combinations.

Of all the organs built by Wurlitzer, only thirteen were Style-216. It’s clear that Fox West Coast Theatres were an important enough customer that Wurlitzer was eager to accommodate this rather small, specialized order. Of those thirteen, only three remain in existence, and only California Theatre’s Opus 1850 remains in its original location.²³ Also, only one of the Style-216s was located outside of West Coast’s Southern California Division, thus the style is closely

¹⁹ James Henry, “Wurlitzer Style-216: The Biggest Little Wurlitzer,” *Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society*, 48:4 (July/August, 2006), pp. 2-6 & 23-24.

²⁰ James Henry, “Wurlitzer Style-216: The Biggest Little Wurlitzer,” *Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society*, 48:4 (July/August, 2006), pp. 2-6 & 23-24.

²¹ *Op cit.* James Henry interview.

²² *Ibid.* James Henry interview.

²³ *Op.cit.*, James Henry, “Style-216: The Biggest Little Wurlitzer...”

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associated with the region. Of the other two existing Style-216s, Opus 1320, originally installed in the Senator Theatre in Oakland, California in 1926, is intact and in storage. It's been reported that the instrument will be restored and installed in the restored San Jose Fox in San Jose, California.²⁴ The third Style-216 instrument, Opus 1276, was originally installed in the Hippodrome in Taft, California in 1926. A subsequent fire destroyed the organ's console, but the main chest as well as the pipe work survived. After storage for several years, the remnants of Opus 1276 were placed in a Style-210 console and was installed in the Granada Theatre in Bakersfield, California.²⁵ Of the remaining Style-216s, all their original theatre locations are known and their Style-216s are no longer present – this from representatives of the American Theatre Organ Society, the group which maintains records on these early theatre instruments.

Presently, due to age and lack of maintenance, the Opus 1850 is only 50% playable. The RDA has applied to National Parks Service for a "Save America's Treasures" grant, however, because the California Theatre is not on the National Register, the application has not been successful. Other options are being pursued in the meantime to properly restore and maintain the organ, and ensure the Opus 1850 will continue to enrich the lives of our residents for many more years.

²⁴ Website: "Californiawurlitzer.com," accessed October 10, 2008.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, James Henry, "Style-216: The Biggest Little Wurlitzer..."

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Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, AIA, Inc., *Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, San Bernardino, California, 1991*, Volume 3, p. 18. Copies are available in the City of San Bernardino's Development Services Department.

Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation, *Opening Night Program: The California Theatre*, August 15, 1928. Available in the archives section of the Pfau Library, California State University, San Bernardino.

Tom Green, "San Bernardino's Movie Houses," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 23, 1972, B5. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

James Henry, "Wurlitzer Style-216: The Biggest Little Wurlitzer," *Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society*, 48:4 (July/August, 2006), pp. 2-6 & 23-24. Available from Mr. Bud Coffey, Mayor's Office, City of San Bernardino.

Interview information obtained in San Bernardino from Mr. Allen Mitchell, Theatre Manager with the Civic Light Opera, on September 10, 2008 in San Bernardino, (909) 266-7913 (cell). Transcript available from author of this submission, James L. Mulvihill.

Interview information obtained in San Bernardino from Mr. Bud Coffey, Consulting Executive Director for the Sturgis Center, on January 26, 2009, (909) 384-5133. Transcript available from author of this submission, James L. Mulvihill.

Interview information obtained from Mr. James Henry, theatre organ expert, on January 25, 2009, (714) 615-9484. Transcript available from author of this submission, James L. Mulvihill. Refer also to internet site: "Wurlitzer Style 216," accessed January 24, 2009.

Interview information obtained from Mr. Joseph Henson, Production Manager for California Theatre (909) 885-8263, on October 13, 2008 in San Bernardino. Transcript available from author of this submission, James L. Mulvihill.

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San Bernardino County, CA

Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

Mark Muckenfuss, "80 Years of Music," *The Press-Enterprise*, September 27, 2008, p. C1. Copy available at the Riverside City Library, Riverside, CA. Mike Hughes, "Theatre of the Stars," in *The California Theatre: A Movie Palace in Renaissance* (San Bernardino Civic Light Opera Association, 1983). Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, August 15, 1928, p. 11. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, June 28, 1935, p. 4. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, November 28, 1934, p. 9. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, December 29, 1936. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, February 7, 1961, p. B4. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, October 1, 1950, p. 5. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, January 23, 1963, p. B2. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

San Bernardino Sun, February 28, 1968, p. B2. Copy available in the California Room, Norman Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

Walter C. Schuiling, *San Bernardino County*. (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984). A copy of this book is available in the Feldhym Library, San Bernardino, CA.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 12

The California Theatre
San Bernardino County, CA

Website: "Cinema Treasures: John Paxton Perrine," accessed June 29, 2009.

Website: Californiawurlitzer.com," accessed October 10, 2008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 13

The California Theatre
San Bernardino County, CA

SECTION TEN: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA.

Verbal Boundary Description: San Bernardino County Assessor's Parcel Number:
0134-131-10

Boundary Justification: The California Theatre, since its construction, has been associated with this parcel and assessor's number, and can be seen on enclosed sketch map.

Photo References:

Mo.	Day	Time	Exp./Frame	Subject/Description	View Toward	Accession #
08	23	10:00 A.M.	01	Front façade, taken from Fourth Street	Northwest	Ca_Sanbernardiocounty_caltheatre1.tif
"	"	"	02	Detail of front facade	Northwest	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre2.tif
"	"	"	03	Detail of pilaster at southeast corner of facade	Northeast	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre3.tif
"	"	"	04	Front façade and west side elevation	Northeast	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre4.tif
"	"	"	05	East side elevation with large posters of coming performances	West	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre5.tif
"	"	"	06	East and north side (rear) elevations	Southwest	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre6.tif
"	"	"	07	North side (rear) and west elevations	Southeast	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre7.tif
"	"	"	08	Detail of ticket booth at front entrance	Northwest	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre8.tif
"	"	"	09	Opus 1850, Style 216 Wurlitzer Organ	Northwest	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre9.tif
"	"	"	10	Opus 1850, Style 216 Wurlitzer Organ keyboard detail	North	Ca_Sanbernardinocounty_caltheatre10.tif

California Theatre
Name of Property
Acreage of Property: 0.5 acres.

San Bernardino, California
County and State

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	472840	3730840	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	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: James L. Mulvihill, PhD (Consultant)

organization: Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Bernardino ("RDA") date: July 20, 2009

street & number: 201 North "E" Street, Suite 301 telephone: (909) 744-2662, (909) 663-1044

city or town: San Bernardino state CA zip code 92401

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: Provided with original application packet dated September 10, 2008.

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: Provided with original application packet dated September 10, 2008.

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items: CD submitted with initial application packet containing additional photos.

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Bernardino ("RDA") (ATTN: Mr. Don Gee)

street & number 201 N. "E" Street, Suite 301 telephone (909) 663-1044

city or town San Bernardino state CA zip code 92401

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.



Prepared By: ProCite Rani
 Printing Date: July 13, 2009
 File: PIGIS Data/MXD/Area Map/California Theatre Sketch map.mxd
 City of San Bernardino EDA



Sketch Map City of San Bernardino California Theatre of the Performing Arts

0 50 100 200 300 400 500 Feet



California Theatre of the Performing Arts
 Assessor's #: 134-131-10
 Address: 562 W 4th Street
 San Bernardino, 92701
 San Bernardino County, California



SOUVENIR PROGRAM
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
AUGUST 15, 1928

WEST COAST
CALIFORNIA
THEATRE

FOURTH, BETWEEN E AND F STS.

The finest and Largest in the Orange Belt

TWO PROGRAM CHANGES WEEKLY

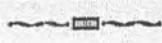
FIRST THREE DAYS

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday

FIRST RUN FEATURE PICTURES

AND ON THE STAGE

FIVE ACTS OF VAUDEVILLE



LAST FOUR DAYS

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

FIRST RUN FILM FEATURE

WITH

FANCHON & MARCO "IDEA"

Matinees at 2 p. m.
Evenings at 7 and 9.
Continuous on
Saturdays, Sundays
and Holidays.

MITCHELL'S
MELODY
MAKERS
At All Shows

OLLIE WALLACE, MASTER OF CEREMONIES

CALIFORNIA
THEATRE
SAN BERNARDINO
CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA THEATRE

Foreword

A little more than three years ago, West Coast Theatres, Inc., having confidence and great faith in the future development of San Bernardino as the metropolis of the Orange Belt, opened what was then the finest theatre in the territory. The West Coast E Street Theatre is still one of the splendid and leading theatres of the Pacific Coast.

Tonight, however, the dedication of the California Theatre, the largest and finest playhouse in the Inland Empire, shows that the faith of West Coast Theatres in the future of San Bernardino was not misplaced and is a renewal of its confidence in this territory.

Our pledge ever has been and always will be the finest screen and stage entertainment, presented to you in a comfortable, homey atmosphere and with the courteous attention that is characteristic of the more than 300 West Coast Theatres from the Mexican to the Canadian borders on the Pacific Coast.

HAROLD B. FRANKLIN,
President and General Manager
West Coast Theatres, Inc.

CALIFORNIA THEATRE



WILLIAM FOX
President Fox Film Corporation



W. T. SHEEHAN
Vice-President and General Manager
Fox Film Corporation



HAROLD B. FRANKLIN
President and General Manager
West Coast Theatres, Inc.

CALIFORNIA THEATRE



GENERAL INTERIOR VIEW OF NEW CALIFORNIA THEATRE

Policy of California

THE California Theatre policy will be two changes of program weekly. For the first three days, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, a feature picture and five acts of Vaudeville on the stage will comprise the main units of the program.

For the last four days of the week, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, a feature film and a Fanchon and Marco "Ides" on the stage will be the main units of the program.

Mitchell's Melody Makers, with Ollie Wallace as leader and master of ceremonies, will be featured at all performances.

Except on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, when the program will be continuous from 2 to 11 P. M., there will be three shows daily; a matinee at 2 P. M., and two evening shows at 7 and 9 o'clock.

Special Ladies' Matinee will be held every Wednesday at 2 o'clock. Junior Matinees will be held on Saturdays at 2 o'clock.

CALIFORNIA THEATRE
SAN BERNARDINO CO
CA

CALIFORNIA THEATRE

Leave Your Fan at Home!

Manufactured Weather

MAKES

"Every Day a GOOD Day"

AT THE

CALIFORNIA

A Carrier Conditioned Theatre

WHEN you enter the California, breathe deeply—you are in an atmosphere of Manufactured Weather; a scientifically healthful atmosphere maintained at the ideal condition of temperature humidity and air purity for your health and comfort. This condition prevails every day in the year, regardless of the season, outdoor weather, or the size of the crowd. During the Winter the air is humidified and warmed to just the proper temperature. During the Summer, Carrier Centrifugal Refrigeration operates with the same system to cool and dehumidify the air, eliminating completely that muggy discomfort of dog days. Carrier Engineers, for 25 years the leading specialists in air conditioning in tobacco factories, textile mills and literally hundreds of other industrial processes, have now extended this service to theatres, offices, hotels and public buildings for the health and comfort of people. We are proud to have given Manufactured Weather to the new California.

WE GLADLY SEND INFORMATION TO THOSE INTERESTED
IN AIR CONDITIONING IN INDUSTRIAL WORK
OR FOR CONDITIONS OF COMFORT
WRITE

Carrier Engineering Corporation

NEWARK, N. J.

New York Philadelphia Boston Chicago
Cleveland Washington Kansas City Los Angeles

CALIFORNIA THEATRE

Program

UNIT ONE

"The Rookies"

Drum

Overture by
Mitchell's Melody Makers

UNIT TWO

AROUND THE WORLD

with

FOX NEWS

UNIT THREE

West Coast Theatres

present

FANCHON and MARCO'S
"MONKEY SHINES" IDEA

featuring

CHAZ CHASE

International Unique Comique

Cal Norris and His Girl Friends

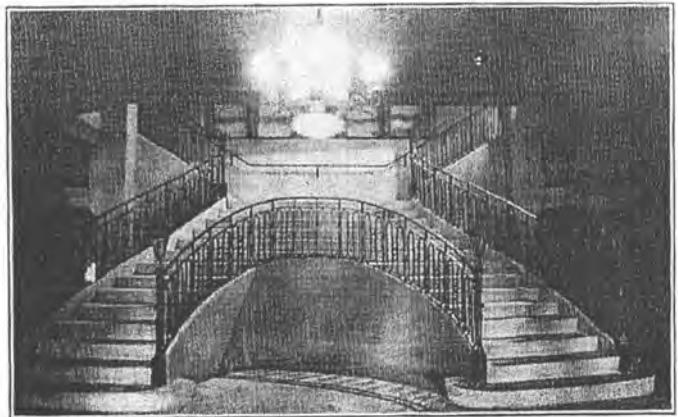
Billy and Sally

Dorothy Adair

Vilma Bushman

and the

Centipede Beauties



CALIFORNIA THEATRE

Program
Continued

UNIT FOUR

CALIFORNIA THEATRE
Through Arrangements With
WILLIAM FOX

presents

"STREET ANGEL"

with

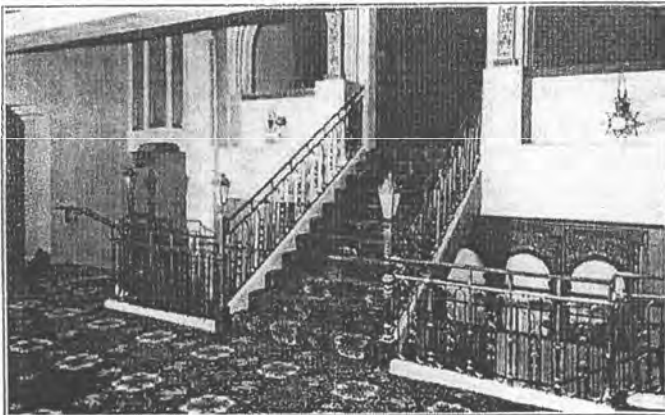
JANET GAYNOR

and

CHARLES FARRELL

UNIT FIVE

Exit March



CALIFORNIA THEATRE
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
CALIFORNIA



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY California Theatre, The
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, San Bernardino

DATE RECEIVED: 11/12/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/01/09
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/16/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/26/09
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09001116

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12-22-09 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

California Theatre
San Bernardino, San Bernardino County
Staff Evaluation
Page 1 of 2

The California Theatre, located in the commercial core of the city of San Bernardino, is a two-story-plus, rectangular building constructed of steel-reinforced, poured concrete covered by stucco on three of four exterior walls and plaster finish on the interior. The distinctive Spanish Eclectic style front (south facing) façade is designed symmetrically with a central portion and two adjacent façade sections. The central portion is the area most elaborately articulated architecturally. The central portion contains the entrance bay, which is paved with 2 inch square red tile and topped by the marquee. A detached ticket booth that is covered with arabesque-shaped metal decoration sits in the middle of the entrance bay. Sitting above the marquee, the central section's second story features a line of 9 slender arched openings arranged in groups of three that are separated by pilasters and is heavily ornamented with cast masonry. An ornate central triangular pediment rises above the second story and ends with a tiled cornice which is penetrated by the four pilasters that terminate with decorative pinnacles. There are two crests containing arabesque shapes at the midpoint of the pediment. Each of the flanking façade sections contain three storefronts, which have been converted to theater use. The glass fronts of these shops have been replaced by murals containing reproductions of Edgar Degas' paintings of dancers. The second stories of each flanking façade section are divided into three, mimicking the first floor divisions. Three paired divided light windows, the middle being French doors, stand behind wrought iron balustrade.

Alterations to the building include the replacement of the marquee, the replacement of storefront windows, and the replacement of the second story balustrade, originally made of cast masonry, with wrought iron. Despite these alterations, the building retains a high degree of architectural detailing.

The nomination includes a contributing object, a Wurlitzer Style-216 theatre organ (Opus 1850), which remains in its original location.

The California Theatre is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A for association with the entertainment industry in San Bernardino during Hollywood's "Golden Age" of movie making. The period of significance is 1928, the date of construction, until 1950. During those years, the Fox Film Corporation held several "world premiers" at which the starring actors, directors, writers, major corporate executives, among others, were present. The theatre was also used to "screen test" several films for assessing audience reaction. The Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation located the California Theatre in San Bernardino because of the city's importance as a key population, finance and commercial center for the Inland Empire region (the region composed of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Fox West Coast Theatre Corporation took advantage of the city's size and accessibility to a large market area in positioning itself as a major entertainment provider for the Inland Empire. Thus the association between the California Theatre and Hollywood's "Golden Age" began.

**California Theatre
San Bernardino, San Bernardino County
Staff Evaluation
Page 2 of 2**

The California Theatre is nominated on behalf of its owner, the City of San Bernardino.

Staff recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine The California Theatre meets National Register Criterion A at the local level of significance and recommend the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register.

Cynthia Toffelmier
Historian II
September 29, 2009



CALIFORNIA

**CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S
OLIVER
SEPT 13 14**

**TICKET
SALES
ONE THEATRE**



CALIFORNIA
CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S
OLIVER
SEPT 13-14

TICKET
SALES
885 5152

CALIFORNIA
CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S
OLIVER
SEPT 13-14

Infant Dance
Theatre





CALIFORNIA

CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S
OLIVER
SEPT 13 14

TURKEY
SALES
895 5852

MEMORANDUMS
FIVE
THEater

San Bernardino Symphony
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts
Carlo Ponti Jr.

 For information, please call (909) 643-2293
 Brought to you by the Economic Development Agency
 of the City of San Bernardino

Theatrical Arts International
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts
**DIRTY BOOTS
 SCOURDRELS**

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 of the City of San Bernardino

Sinfonia Musica
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts

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 of the City of San Bernardino

Theatrical Arts International
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts
CATS

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 of the City of San Bernardino

Most Dance Theatre
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts
Autism Art

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 of the City of San Bernardino

Theatrical Arts International
A City of Arts Presentation
CALIFORNIA THEATRE
For the Performing Arts

 For information, please call (909) 643-2293
 Brought to you by the Economic Development Agency
 of the City of San Bernardino







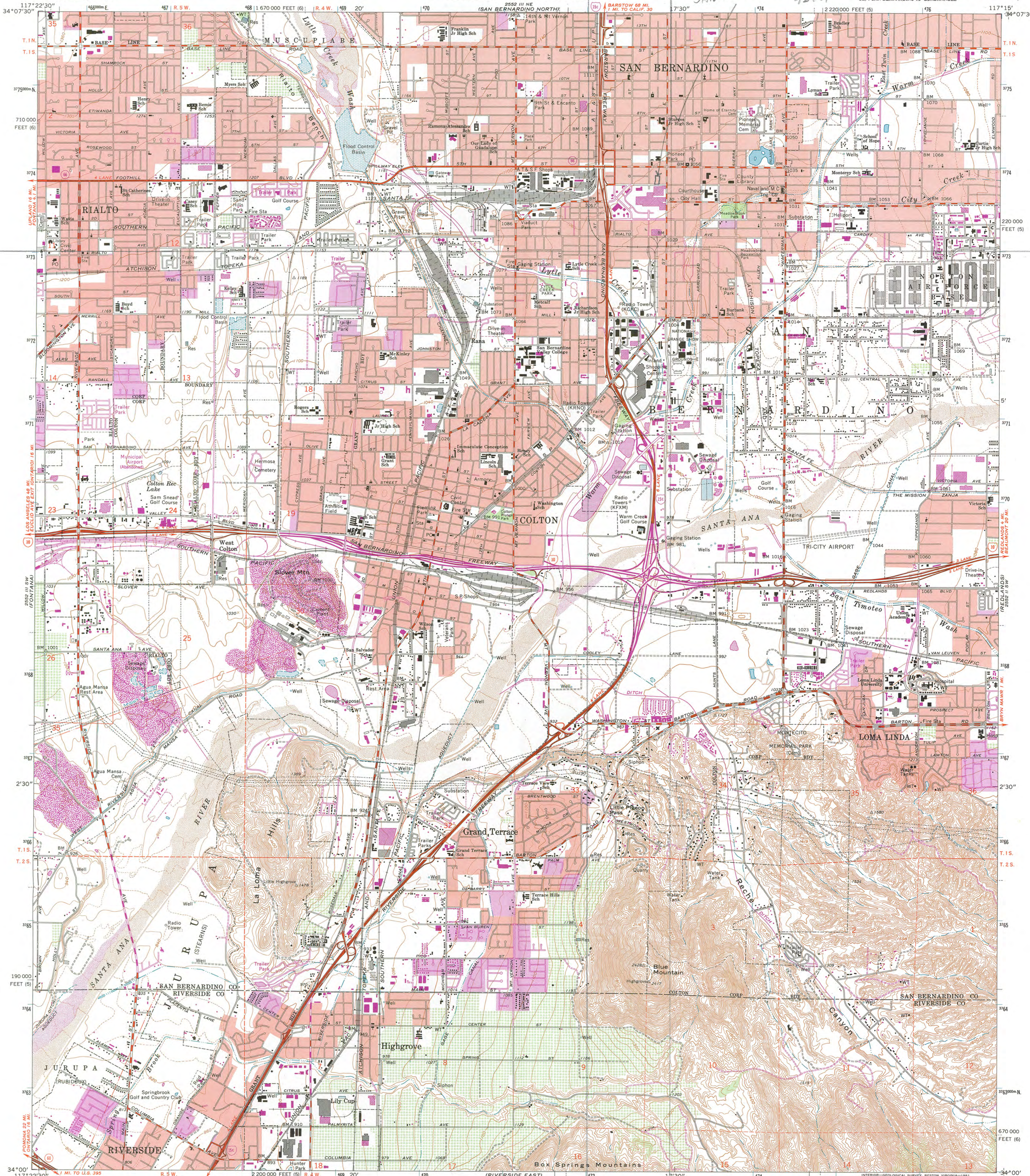


562

WEEKLY
T SQUARE
Starts October 2000
with the Best
of the Best
from the
Best of the
Best

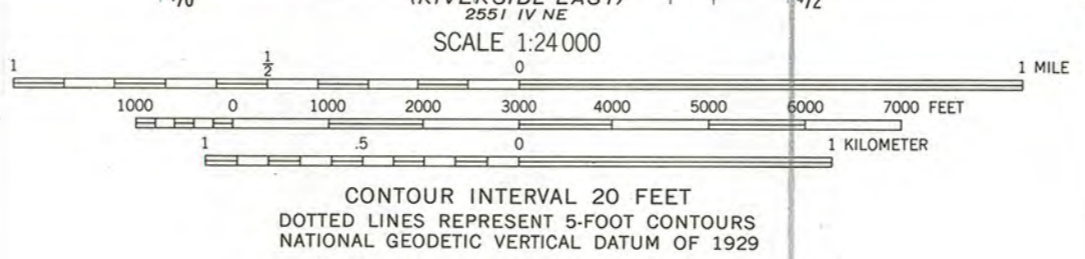






Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1952 and planimetric survey 1936-1938. Field checked 1954. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967. Polyconic projection 10,000-foot grids based on California coordinate system, zones 5 and 6 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 11, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 1 meter north and 83 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1979 and other source data This information not field checked. Map edited 1980 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION Heavy-duty Light-duty Medium-duty Unimproved dirt Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route



SAN BERNARDINO SOUTH, CALIF. SE/4 SAN BERNARDINO 15 QUADRANGLE N3400-W11715/7.5

1967 PHOTOREVISED 1980 DMA 2552 III SE-SERIES V895



**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

P.O. BOX 942896
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov



November 10, 2009



Ms. Jan Matthews, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **California Theatre**
San Bernardino, San Bernardino County, California
National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Matthews: *Jan*

Enclosed please find the **California Theatre** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in San Bernardino, San Bernardino County, California. On October 30, 2009 the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Cynthia Toffelmier of my staff at 916-653-5789.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures