

DATA SHEET PH0099961

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California
COUNTY: San Diego
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE MAY 28 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: The Spreckles Theatre Building
AND/OR HISTORIC: Spreckles Theatre

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 123 W. Broadway			
CITY OR TOWN: San Diego		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 41	
STATE: California	CODE: 06	COUNTY: San Diego	CODE: 073

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY <small>(Check One)</small>	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE <small>(Check One or More as Appropriate)</small>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum 	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) offices

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

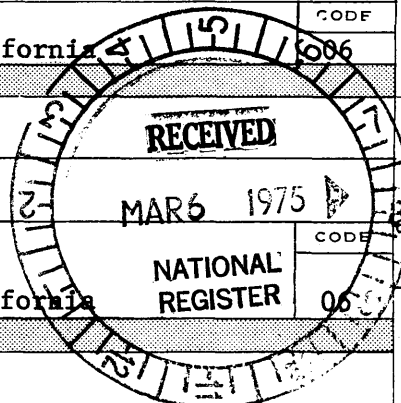
OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Jacquelin Littlefield			
STREET AND NUMBER: c/o Spreckles Building 123 W. Broadway			
CITY OR TOWN: San Diego		STATE: California	
		CODE: 006	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: County Recorder's Office			
STREET AND NUMBER: 220 W. Broadway			
CITY OR TOWN: San Diego		STATE: California	
		CODE: 06	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: August, 1971 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: District of Columbia	
		CODE: 11	



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: California
COUNTY: San Diego
ENTRY NUMBER: MAY 28 1975
DATE: 11

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Slight	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This 6-story office and theatre building reflects similar construction and composition of commercial structures built throughout the United States in the early part of the 20th century. The influence of the "Chicago School" is quite evident in this building with its strong rhythm of structural bays and openings which become mere panels between the vertical and horizontal members. The building also follows the compositional lines of tall buildings as exemplified in the works of Louis Sullivan.

The Spreckles building contains similar elements found in Chicago's Auditorium Building, designed by Adler and Sullivan in 1887-89, a noteworthy example of a multifunction building. As in the Chicago example, the Spreckles Theatre is enveloped within the main structure of the building, but is a separate formal and functional entity.

The beautiful Baroque theater is especially noteworthy. Its space is unencumbered by pillars or columns which would interfere with the lines of sight. The auditorium measures 88' x 76' with a stage of 88' x 52'. The seating capacity was 1915, specified by John D. Spreckles to his architect, Harrison Albright, to commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal and the upcoming Pan-American Exposition of 1915. The orchestra had 768 seats, the balcony 428, the family circle 294, and the gallery 425. All parts of the theatre, including balconies have separate exits into the streets, independent of the office spaces. All exits were within 18' of each 100 people in the theatre. The building was provided with the ultimate in mechanical equipment for heating and ventilating. Fireproofing was given careful attention. Not only was the theatre functionally independent of the rest of the building, but also was separated by heavy concrete fireproof walls. A heavy steel and asbestos curtain separated any stage fires from the rest of the building.

The decorative motifs of the building are in the Baroque style. Allegorical painting, over the proscenium arch depicts Neptune bringing prosperity to San Diego. Paintings also exist in the main auditorium, ceiling with a large medallion depicting dawn and four smaller medallions with motifs of "air", "water", "earth", and "fire", executed by Emil T. Mazy of Los Angeles. Pedrora onyx was used in finishing the walls, ceilings, stairways and lobby. The auditorium was resplendent with marble statuary, intricate carvings (all in ivory and gold) and crystal chandeliers.

The building was constructed of a steel reinforced concrete frame with concrete panel infills and concrete slab floors.

There are 8" clay tile walls within the office building. The building was designed to be fireproof and earthquake proof, in accordance with engineering practices of the period.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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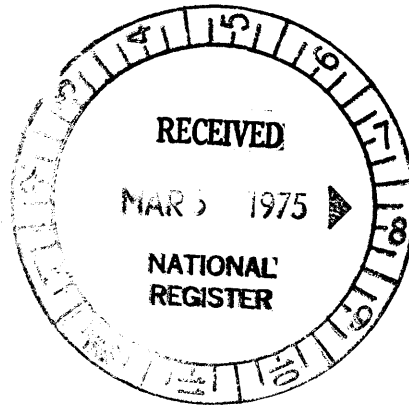
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE California	
COUNTY San Diego	
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(Number all entries)

7. (Continued)

The building is basically unaltered; however, there has been a certain amount of change, especially at the ground level with modernization of commercial rental space and the present movie theatre use of the auditorium. Attempts have been made to keep the building maintained. Partial restoration was undertaken in 1964. While the building lacks some of its former grandeur, it could easily be brought back to its former glory.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Construction completed in 1912

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Spreckles Building and Theatre, designed by Harrison Albright, were destined to play an important role in the cultural development of the City of San Diego. It was commissioned by John D. Spreckles in 1911 to commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal and the upcoming Pan-American Exposition to be held in San Diego in 1915. Construction was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$1 million. The building is significant because it expresses the "coming of age" of San Diego with the creation of a building following the precedents founded in the Chicago school. While the architectural details differ from its probable model, the Auditorium Building, the concept is the same. An office building surrounds the theatre which is a functional entity in itself. The Spreckles Theatre was lauded for its fine acoustics by the eminent San Diego architect, Irving Gill, and it is still considered the finest in acoustic qualities of any auditorium or theatre in San Diego.

The building reflects its period in San Diego and American architectural development. It was embellished in the Baroque style, significant because it dates a few short years before the 1915 exposition and had not yet been influenced by the Spanish Revival style which was so strong in the southwest after that date. Emil T. Mazy's allegorical paintings in oil are among the finest in Southern California.

The theatre was the magnificent setting for many of San Diego's cultural events. The list of prominent artists (See listing attached) in the entertainment field who appeared at the Spreckles is myriad. It is amazing that a town the size of San Diego could provide and support such a cultural palace. The building is notable not only for its quality but for being one of the first efforts made in San Diego of bringing the best that money could buy in the form of artists, builders, etc., from other parts of the United States. This is a significant fact to subsequent San Diego development, and a precedent which set the architectural quality for many later structures.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

MacPhail, Elizabeth C., "The Story of New San Diego and of its Founder Alonzo E. Horton", 1969.

Research report of the Downtown Committee of the Historic Sites Board, by Joan Middaugh, 1971. (Attached)

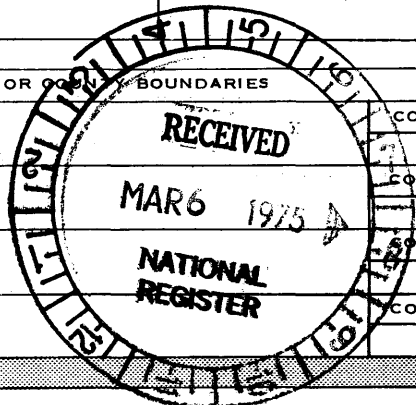
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . "	0 . "		32° 42' 55"	117° 09' 42"	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.2 Ac.**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



UTM
11/48476
369535
HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
John D. Henderson, A.I.A.

ORGANIZATION: **Historical Site Board - City of San Diego** DATE: **9-25-74**

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Administration Building

CITY OR TOWN: **San Diego** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: **State Historic Preservation Officer**

Date: **JAN 2 1975**

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

[Signature]
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **5/28/75**

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: **MAY 22 1975**