

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUL 6 1976
DATE ENTERED NOV 13 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

MARYLAND THEATRE

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

21-23 South Potomac Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hagerstown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

043

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Vacant

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Gerald N. Minnick

STREET & NUMBER

305 North Potomac Street

Telephone

(301) 739-1414

CITY, TOWN

Hagerstown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21740

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washington County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

95 West Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Hagerstown

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Maryland Theatre is located at 21-25 South Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland. This 1350-seat theatre was constructed in 1915 and opened as a performing arts center on May 10th of the same year. The architects were Harry E. Yessler of Hagerstown, who also designed the Colonial Theatre across the street, and Thomas W. Lamb of New York. Thomas Lamb was one of the most prominent theatre designers of the twentieth century having designed New York's Madison Square Garden, the Capitol and Keith's Theatres, Ziegfelds and the Pythian Temple. The Maryland theatre exhibits many of these same basic design tenets. The interior designer was Arthur Brounet of New York, while the Architectural Plaster Company of New York fabricated the interior detail. George Wolfe of Hagerstown was the general contractor.

Always considered basically an interior space, the Maryland theatre was constructed in the interior of the "20" block of Potomac Street. Its main lobby was entered through an apartment block. This five story structure was destroyed by fire in 1974. No new entrance has been built to replace this, the exterior of the building consists of the brick walls (see photo). The interior of the theatre can be divided into three distinct design elements: The proscenium arch and the stage block house, the orchestra seating and the boxes, and the balcony section plus interior lobby. The overall design of the space exhibits a strong neoclassical flavor, although there are some later Art Deco additions.

Each of these spaces ^{are} framed by an arch. Large, curved pendentive areas are created between them at their meeting points. The intrados portion of the proscenium arch bears a classical motif of roundel, anthemion, palmette and arabesque forms. The extrados of the proscenium arch are beaded mouldings, twisted festoon mouldings, and flowered medallion roundel mouldings. The extrados of the other arches are a more simple running plant-form medallion moulding.

The orchestra pit was covered when the theatre was converted for motion pictures. Six tiered, curved boxes grace the orchestra seating area; three on the orchestra level and three on the balcony level. These box seats are recessed in a large, arched niche. Elaborate grills crown the interior surface of the upper vault. Ovalettes held by putti face each box. Originally, panels demarcated each box. Bentwood chairs furnished the boxes as well as the apron area of the balcony.

The balcony section is basically oval in shape. The lower seating in the balcony exhibits strong Art Deco traits, while the upper seating is similar to the neoclassical style of the orchestra seating. The lobby area is small and quite severe, yet elegant. A grand stair leads from the lobby to the offices on the balcony level and the convenience facilities. A second, smaller stair leads from this level to the upper level of the balcony.

The dressing rooms, stage offices and prop rooms are located beside the stage area and beneath the theatre floor.

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 checked="" 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 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 1914-1915

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Maryland Theatre's importance lies in the fact that it is one of the few remaining neoclassical, twentieth century theaters in Maryland and it is associated with the prominent theatrical architect, Thomas W. Lamb.

The theatre was built in 1914-1915 for a group of Hagerstown businessmen. It was designed by two architects, Thomas W. Lamb (1871-1942) of New York and Harry E. Yessler (187-1964) of Hagerstown. The interior decoration was designed by the New York decorator Arthur Brounet. The ornamental plasterwork was executed by the Architectural Plaster Company of New York. General construction of the building was handled by a Hagerstown contractor George B. Wolf.

Billed as presenting "high class vaudeville" and "supreme feature pictures" the Maryland Theatre opened on Monday evening, May 10, 1915 with live performances and a five part motion picture entitled "The Commuters." The vaudeville acts included the singing Tiller Sisters, seven singers and dancers known as the Big Surprise, and an acrobatic group named the Guzmania Trio. Speeches praising the theater and its design were given by local officials and musical selections were presented by the theater orchestra. The illusional world of the stage and screen was enhanced by the ornate interior which remains intact today.

A contemporary newspaper reported that the basic designer of the theater was Thomas W. Lamb. Harry E. Yessler oversaw its execution (The Daily Mail, May 11, 1915). Lamb was a noted specialist in theater design. Ben M. Hall in The Golden Age of the Movie Palace described him as the first major architect to make his name in movie theaters (p. 95). Among the theaters Lamb designed are the old Madison Square Garden in New York, the Hippodrome in Baltimore, and the Stanley Theatre in Philadelphia. He also designed theaters in England, Australia, India, and Egypt. A native of Scotland, Lamb was trained in architecture at Cooper Union in New York and designed his first major theater, the City Theatre in New York for William Fox in 1909. Lamb rose to a position of prominence in theatrical work after designing the Regent in New York in 1912 (Hall, p. 106).

Harry E. Yessler opened an architectural office in Hagerstown about 1905 and practiced in the city until the late 1930s when he moved to York, Pennsylvania. Yessler designed several commercial and residential buildings in Hagerstown, including the Colonial Theatre (1913-1914) which

(see continuation sheet #1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Daily Mail, Hagerstown, Maryland (8-12 May 1915).
 Hall, Ben M. The Golden Age of the Movie Palace: The Best Remaining Seats.
 New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1961.
 Washington County Land Records, Courthouse, Hagerstown, Maryland.
 Washington County Historical Society Filkes, Miller House, Hagerstown, Md.
 Withey, Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American
Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	18	26,64,8,0	319,12,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

njm

NAME/TITLE Jack L. Finglass, Architectural Grants Administrator/
 Ronald L. Andrews, Historic Preservation Consultant
 ORGANIZATION Maryland Historical Trust/
 City of Hagerstown
 STREET & NUMBER 21 State Circle/
 City Hall
 CITY OR TOWN Annapolis/
 Hagerstown
 DATE January 18, 1975
 TELEPHONE (301) 267-1438/(301) 731-3200
 STATE Maryland 21401/21740

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Alan M. Pearce

6/29/76

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ACTING

DATE

11/13/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Charles D. ...

DATE

11.10.26

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Maryland Theatre
Washington County,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

stands opposite the Maryland Theatre on South Potomac Street.

The Maryland Theatre remained in operation until November, 1973 when it was closed due to a lack of business. The front portion of the structure was destroyed by fire on February 8, 1974 and has since been razed. This section was five stories high, fronted on South Potomac Street, and contained the main lobby, offices, and apartments. The theater portion, including the auditorium and stage, remained remarkably unscathed by the fire.

The present owner purchased the property in January, 1976 and intends to refurbish the structure for use as a cultural center.