Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1	NAME					
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	AND/OR COMMON				•	
	The Ha	waii or The Hawai	i Theatre (prefe	erred)		
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6	Honolu REPRESEN	TATION IN EX	ISTING SURV	EYS	Hawaii 968	303
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	Honolu	lu			Hawaii	

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE CHECK ONE	
EXCELLENT		UNALTERED		SITE
G00D	RUINS	X_ALTERED	MOVED	DATE
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Hawaii Theatre (Hawaii Theatre) is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of South Pauahi and Bethel Streets in Downtown Honolulu and abuts the Chinatown Historical District (NRHP No. 80:14:9986). The surrounding urban fabric consists of a low-rise (2-4 stories), relatively dense commercial area, with buildings constructed of brick, concrete and wood. The Hawaii Theatre fits well with the overall scale and materials of the area.

The theater is a rectangular building, measuring 120 feet wide on Bethel Street and 133 feet long on South Pauahi Street. The structure of the building is a reinforced concrete skeleton frame with concrete and hollow tile curtain walls and concrete footings set on solid coral foundations. The exterior wall finishes vary from cement plaster, granite and glazed terra cotta tile veneers to concrete scored in imitation of coursed masonry work and finished with cement stucco. The original exterior walls were tinted gray in imitation of natural stone. The interior wall finishes are cement plaster, exposed concrete, wood veneer and stucco. The floors are mostly concrete covered either by carpeting, vinyl tile, or left exposed, except for the hardwood stage floor and the wood flooring of the proscenium boxes and the gallery. The roof is composed of 2 low hipped sections with steel truss frame, finished with asphaltic built-up roofing material. There are monitors at each ridge of the 2 roof sections--one over the auditorium and the other over the upstage area.

The interior of the theater is basically composed of five major areas: a) the stage basement, b) the stage/preparation areas, c) the main auditorium area, d) the mezzanine lobby level, and e) the gallery. The stage basement is presently used for storage. The stage/preparation area has four tiers of dressing and rehearsal rooms on either side of the stage. The height from the stage basement to the stage roof is 85 feet. The main auditorium area is 75 feet in height. The mezzanine lobby level is located beneath the gallery and consists of restrooms on either sides and lounging areas along the lobby. The gallery consists of 3 levels of balconies and the projection room at the top of the upper level balcony.

The eclectic building is primarily Beaux Arts in design, with an observed symmetry, paired Corinthian columns and pilasters, and Roman-arched window openings. The heavily emphasized Art Deco elements which consist of generously applied ornament, were added at a later date.

A detailed outline and description of those architectural and decorative elements is as follows:

I. Exterior Elements

- A. Front Elevation (Bethel Street)
 - 1. Two store fronts are located to the north; one store front and the
 - b theater box office are located to the south at the street level.
 - 2. Marquee: galvanized metal, Art Deco design, neon illuminated with exposed incandescent light bulbs and painted fret patterns on the soffit.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	ECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799		ENGINEERING	<u>X</u> MUSIC	XTHEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
_X1900-	COMMUNICATIONS		POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		
				(Architect)
SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1922	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT Marshall Webb,	or Emory and Webb,
	1922	Constructed		ring Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Hawaii Theatre (Hawaii Theatre) completed on September 2, 1922, is significant because of its excellent architectural and interior design, craftsmanship, and detailing. The theater is a rare example of eclectic architecture that was relatively common to this area of Honolulu prior to World War II, very little of which is extant. The theater, historically, had two primary functions. During its early years it was both a live center for the performing arts and a motion picture theater, its dual uses gradually shifted, and in later years it functioned solely as a motion picture theater. It is the oldest theater still remaining in Honolulu and the State of Hawaii that was originally planned, built and used as a legitimate theater and concert hall.

In March, 1920, the Honolulu architectural firm of Emory and Webb was commissioned to do the design plans. On June 9, 1921, a construction contract was awarded to Pacific Engineering Company, another Hawaiian company. Great pride was expressed that "the finest theater in Honolulu...is a home product."¹ Construction was completed on September 2, 1922. Official opening of the theater was held on September 6, 1922, and was attended by Governor Wallace R. Farrington and members of the Territorial government, and social and ethnic circles.

The theater was built at a cost of a half million dollars and was ranked with the most modern theaters in America for that period.² It was equipped with air conditioning, indirect lighting, a fire/emergency exit system, wicker chairs in the balcony and a seating capacity for 1,726 persons, and was the largest and the first modern theater in the Territory of Hawaii. The building employed a double cantilever system for balcony construction, the first time that this structural system was used in Hawaii.

The theater is an exotic combination of architectural and decorative elements, varying from classical Greek and Roman to jazzy Art Deco, which exemplified the contemporary views of "art" and "culture" for that period. The interiors, particularly, were richly and ornately decorated in a formal Beaux Arts tradition, with many Art Deco elements applied at a later date. A large allegorical mural, "Glorification of Diana", was painted directly above the proscenium arch by Lionel Walden. A large mosaic dome done by Gordon Usborne, and the first and second floor interior plans were designed by Homer Merrill. The interior decorations and ornamental work were designed by architect Marshall Webb and made by Julius Rosenstein, sculptor. The theater was also significantly notable for attracting only first-rate films and theatrical productions, Hollywood and Broadway actors and actresses, such as Marget Anglin and Blanche Bates. The pioneers of old and contemporary Hawaiian music and the greats of the Territory of Hawaii's musical and theatrical history played or worked the theatrical circuit of the Hawaii Theatre, such as John DeMello, Johnny Alameda, Johnny Kuna, Lena Machado, Jesse Kalima, and the Kalima Brothers. Cultural musical productions were also very

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources. <u>City and County of</u> <u>Honolulu, State of Hawaii, Significant Buildings Inventory Worksheet</u>. <u>Honolulu, Hawaii:</u> State of Hawaii Archives, 1966.

The Honolulu Advertiser. New Hawaii Theatre section, September 6, 1922, pg. 2.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY <u>.36 (15,865 sq.</u> ft.) UTM REFERENCES

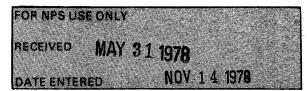
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies parcel No. 14 of Tax Map Key Plat No. 2-1-03 and located at the intersection of Bethel and Pauahi Streets. It is rectangular in shape, as shown on the accompanying survey plat map.

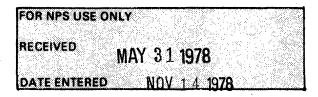
LIST ALL ST	TATES AND COUNTIES	FOR PROPERT	IES OVERLAPPIN	IG STATE OR COUN	TY BOUNDARIES
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650 South K	ing Street			STATE	
Honolulu				Hawaii	96813
NATIO	NAL	STAT	E	LOCAL _	<u>}</u>
As the designated Stat hereby nominate this	te Historic Preservation	Officer for the N h the National R			66 (Public Law 89-665), valuated according to the
STATE HISTORIC PRES	ERVATION OFFICER SIGNA		me L.	Seleman a	<u>~</u>
	State Preservati	on officer		DATE	May 22, 1978
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cotta tile. Entry flooring: marble tiled and scored with cross-hatching, Entry ceiling light fixture: galvanized metal, Art Deco designed with exposed incandescent light bulbs.
Entrance doors: four, with double swing action; which later in the 1900's, were redesigned and veneered in stainless steel, Art Deco.
 Facade: a) Pilastersfour sets of two each, coupled and designed in the Corinthian Order. b) Pateraetwo on the frieze above the coupled pilasters on the facade ends c) Building nametitled "Hawaii Theatre" and incised with letters on the architrave over the center Roman arch. d) Windowsthree sets of Roman arched design with ornate metal framework in the archways, each with an ancon at the top of the extrados, and subdivided into three panels: a light window in shape of a sunburst located at the intrados; three cartouches in the mid-panel; and a louvered metal screen, one story in height at the lower panel; there are two windows on either side of the Roman arches, of which the top windows have vermiculated lintel.
<u>rth Elevation</u> (South Pauahi Street) Police/fire alarm box: housed in a cast-iron box and pedestal, and located on the corner of South Pauahi and Bethel Streets (Ca. 1900). Street canopy: galvanized metal construction with acanthus-edged soffit
 panels and a patera-shaped light receptacle in the panel center, and is two-thirds the length of South Pauahi Street frontage. Facade: a) Exit doorsa total of four, painted metal with double swing action. b) Windowsa total of 19, fully recessed, in two levels with a hierarchy of order and, 1) six windows are metal-louvered; 2) one window is screened with a "pothos-vine" concrete grille and is located adjacent to the South Pauahi Street exits; 3) on the left hand of this elevation the central window is hooded, while on the same level but on the right hand a small balcony with french doors denotes the "star's" dressing room; and 4) three bays of windows, each are located in the second level center, coupled and with a wood latticework screen.

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Description CONTINUATION SHEET

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C. South Elevation

1. Facade:

- a) Exit doors--a total of four, metal construction, of which three are double swing action exit doors.
- b) Windows--a total of 37, fully recessed, designed and located to maximize natural lighting in the dressing rooms and the main auditorium;
 - 1) nine windows are metal-louvered and located on the ground level; and
 - 2) at the left hand corner, four rows of three large and two small windows repeat the four interior levels of dressing rooms.
- 2. Fire escape stairway: cantilevered, and extended from the ground to the gallery level.
- D. West Elevation
 - 1. Facade: the top section of the wall is blank and finished in smooth cement plaster; the bottom one and one-half story abuts another building.
- II. Interior Elements

A. Stage Basement

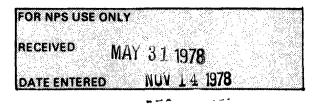
- 1. Theatrical paraphenalia (in storage):
 - a) Robert Morton organ pipes,
 - b) Cast-iron aisle seat panels, and
 - c) Two half-size marble statues:
 - 1) two nude male wrestlers, and
 - 2) a semi-clad dancing gypsy.
- B. <u>Stage/Preparation area</u>
 - 1. Stage curtain: original, red velvet with Corinthian design and patterns.
 - 2. Stage floor: original hardwood flooring.
 - 3. Stage rooms: four tiers of dressing/rehearsal rooms located on each side of the stage.
 - 4. Electrical/mechanical systems:
 - a) The original light bridge and electrical room,
 - b) The "fly" system (flies and theatrical lights), and
 - c) The electrical switches for the Robert Morton organ.
 - 5. Marquee letters: light-weight metal alphabets located in three rows of shelves near the stage side exit door.
 - 6. Marquee posters: numerous silk screened and hand-painted posters of past events.

C. <u>Main Auditorium area</u>

1. Entrance lobby:

- a) Side lights--located on either side of the lobby with bas-reliefs depicting the head of a female figure, possibly of "Eastern" origin.
- b) Wall mirrors--lead camed in the center of sunburst bas-reliefs, located on either sides of the entrance doors and at the lobby ends.

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Description CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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c) Wall panels -- (numerous and located throughout the lobby)

- 1) one bas-relief with an "ocean" theme, approximately two feet by three feet in dimensions, and located on the ticket booth wall;
- 2) another bas-relief approximately one and one-half foot square in dimensions, depicting a floriated scene, and located in the theater manager's office;
- 3) bas-reliefs and applied mouldings casted in cement plaster varying from zigzag and chevron to fret patterns and located on the lobby walls and over the entryways.
- d) Wall finishes -- (done on the walls throughout the lobby)
 - 1) murals of frets and "pre-Columbian" patterns; and
 - 2) cement stucco walls finished with an applied checkerwork patterns.
- e) Electrical system--(located on the wall next to lobby entrance and in the ticket office)
 - 1) intercom box and switches finished in its original black matte color; and
 - 2) chrome-finished ticket machines.

2. Main auditorium floor:

- a) Rosettes--of a decorative wood design and located on the soffit of the mezzanine level balcony.
- b) Aisle seat panels--cast-iron construction and of a decorative and floriated design, located at the end seat of every row abutting the aisle.
- c) Console organ--classified as a Robert Morton unified orchestral electric organ and located in front of the center of the stage.
- d) Proscenium box and organ pipe chamber--one of each, located on both sides of the stage next to the proscenium columns with one on the bottom and top, respectively.
- e) Proscenium arch--designed in the Corinthian Order with clustered columns, piers, and located on each side of the stage.
- f) Mural--a Lionel Walden original ("Glorification of Diana") located on the cove ceiling above the proscenium arch.
- g) Dome--located on the ceiling of the main auditorium, surrounded by rosettes, and covered by a mosaic mural by Gordon Usborne.
- h) Wall screens--done in delicate arabesque and located on both sides of the stage at the organ pipe chambers at the gallery level.

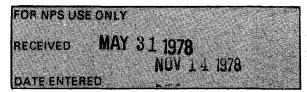
D. <u>Mezzanine lobby level</u>

1. Similar elements as the entrance lobby.

E. <u>Gallery</u>

1. Mezzanine balcony: double-cantilevered, with three levels of balconies and with column-free, unobstructed viewing on the main auditorium floor.

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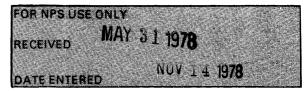


Description CONTINUATION SHEET

PAGE 4 ITEM NUMBER 7

- Windows: three clerestory levels with a hierarchy of order, each with 2. tableau curtains and floriated hoods over the windows and exits.
- 3. Wall panels: four bas-reliefs, two sets of two panels each stacked one above the other, and located on the gallery wall closest to the proscenium columns; the panels depict:
 - Top panel--semi-nude female figures. a)
 - b) Bottom panel--(two distinct dramatic figures) 1) "Hamlet" (on the left wall), and
- 2) possibly "Caesar" (On the right wall).
 4. Projection room: located on the upper balcony level.
 - a) Movie projectors--three Super Simplex/Ashcraft Suprex arch-lamp model (last patent date April 20, 1939).

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Significance CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

prevalent at the "Hawaii" such as Hawaiian musical variety shows, ukulele, slack key and steel guitar concerts, and hula (men and women) demonstrations and exhibitions.

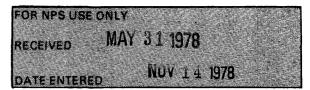
In spite of its 55 years of use, the Hawaii Theatre still retains sufficient integrity, significant architectural design and the feeling of its historical past. The first major program of alterations included: a) renovation of the gallery "retiring" rooms into the main offices for Consolidated Amusement Co. (prior to 1930); b) renovation of the original marquee and installation of the present sleek marquee (during the 1930's); and c) replacement of wicker chairs with cushioned vinyl seats for the first and second levels of the balcony (after 1945). In 1970, a second renovation program was instituted at a cost of \$50,000. They included: a) new interior painting (gold, light creme and yellow); b) further renovation of the marquee; c) replacement of the old vinyl tile floors with new carpeting; d) reduction of seating capacity from 1,726 to 1,200; e) renovation of the restrooms; f) removal of theater entry bollards; and g) removal of the upper balcony seats, which were cane wicker chairs.

Though the theater has been slightly altered, it still retains much of its original fabric and character. The alterations and renovations have been minor and do not diminish its significance, but were undertaken to maintain a continuum from the day of its construction to its present theatrical use. The Hawaii Theatre is comparable to the elaborate theaters built on the mainland during that period. There is no other theater like it in the City of Honolulu and in the State of Hawaii.

¹"Honolulu's New Playhouse: A Triumph," <u>Paradise of the Pacific</u>, October, 1922, Vol. XXXV, pp. 18-21.

²New Hawaii Theatre section, <u>The Honolulu Advertiser</u>, September 6, 1922, pg. 2.

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Major Bibliographical References
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

The Honolulu Advertiser, September 7, 1922.

The Pacific Commercial Advertiser, September 29, 1920. Second Section, pg. 2.

Paradise of the Pacific. "Honolulu's New Playhouse: A Triumph," October, 1922, Vol. XXXV, pp. 18-21.

