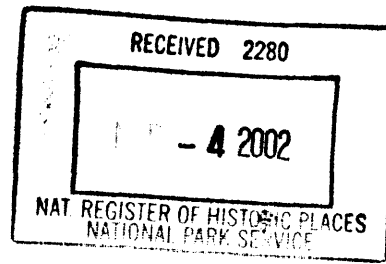


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**



310

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 **State Theatre**

other names/site number **NA**

2. Location

street & number **333 Oak Street** **NA** not for publication

city or town **Red Bluff** **NA** vicinity

state **California** code **CA** county **Tehama** code **103** zip code **96080**

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] 2/17/02
 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 of the Keeper 4/17/02
[Signature] Date of Action

State Theatre
Name of Property

Tehama County, CA
County and State

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		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Theatre

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Theatre

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **concrete**
roof **asphalt**
walls **concrete**

other _____

Narrative Description

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

State Theatre

Name of Property

Tehama County, CA

County and State

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Social History

Period of Significance

1946-1955

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Cantin, Alexander A.

Cantin, Mackenzie A.

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Tehama Co. Library, Red Bluff Branch

State Theatre
Name of Property

Tehama County, CA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	565200	4447420	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 Erin Brown

organization date 8/20/01

street & number 1509 Greenfield Street, #205 telephone 530-342-9930

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Dr. Ron Clark and Mr. Ben Sale

street & number P.O. Box 969 telephone 530-527-4311

city or town Red Bluff state CA zip code 96080

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.

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Introduction:

The State Theatre is a one story, rectangular Streamline Moderne movie theatre (and barber shop) located in the central business district of the City of Red Bluff (Tehama County). It is a cast in place, reinforced concrete building with a flat asphalt roof concealed behind a parapet wall. The State Theatre building includes a small barbershop and takes up the entire eastern half of a rectangularly-shaped, 17,250 square foot parcel. It shares the parcel with a more modern commercial building built in the 1950's and recently converted to a dental clinic. The dental clinic fills the northwestern corner of the parcel and a paved parking lot takes up the remaining southwest corner. The theatre was built in 1945-46 to replace a previous theatre that had been destroyed by fire. Because the theatre was built at the end of World War II when building materials and labor were in short supply, The façade was not complete when the theatre opened. To date the façade remains unfinished although a marquee and pylon sign were installed shortly after the building opened in 1946. As a result, it retains a good level of interior and exterior integrity, despite these additions.

Exterior Features and Physical Context:

The State Theatre parcel is a corner lot measuring 115 feet along Oak Street and 150 feet along Washington Street. The theatre building and the dental clinic share a portion of a common wall and sit flush with the Oak Street sidewalk. The dental clinic, the barbershop and the theatre entrance create a continuous row of storefronts running the length of the parcel along Oak Street. However, the dental clinic building is clearly separated from the theatre building by design style and building height.

The theatre is a reinforced, cast in place concrete building painted gray with maroon trim. It sits on a concrete foundation. The rear (south) and side (east and west) elevations are utilitarian in nature. The only decoration for these

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elevations is a maroon stripe painted along the top of the parapet wall that emphasizes changes in the wall heights. The east elevation faces an alley and has two sets of double metal doors used as emergency exits from the building. A single metal door is located at the northeast corner and leads to the "letter room." The letter room contained the marquee's surplus lettering and has an access hole in the ceiling that leads to the marquee. The rear elevation faces an alley and a parking lot. The west elevation shares a portion of its wall with the newer building. This common wall runs from the Oak Street sidewalk south. At the southern end of the common wall there is a short breezeway between the two buildings. The west elevation has three sets of metal double doors. Two sets are opposite those found on the east elevation. The doors closest to the front elevation are located in a breezeway between the theatre and the commercial building. A ramp runs from the breezeway into the parking lot. The second set of doors opens directly to the parking lot. Double doors at the southwest corner lead to a basement under the theatre's stage.

The front (north) elevation is the main entrance to the theatre and also to the barbershop. The plain concrete façade is more than two stories tall with a parapet wall that partially conceals the mildly pitched asphalt roof. The facade appears to "fold over" onto the side elevations. The theatre was under construction as World War II wound down. The demands of the war resulted in severe labor and material shortages (especially sheet metal, electrical supplies, and electricians). Because of these shortages the theatre opened without a marquee or its character-defining pylon sign. Both were added in 1947. The signage that was installed was not as elaborate as the architect had originally envisioned, but does represent a simplified version of the original design. The concrete overhang and the position of the marquee and pylon sign are located where they were originally specified. The pylon "STATE" sign is made out of sheet-metal and painted gray and maroon with "STATE" spelled out vertically in white in a Moderne font. It sits above the western side of the marquee. The original neon tubing still spells out "STATE" in flashing letters.

The marquee is original although its original letter boards were replaced in the early 1960s to accommodate more modern lettering. When the letter boards were replaced, the contractors removed a small portion of the sheet metal (the bases for the original letterboards and four small semi-circles that attached the

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letterboard to the marquee), a small portion of the neon tubing. The marquee protrudes from the façade in a triangle and both sides display coming attractions. It sits on a semi-circular concrete canopy that juts over the sidewalk. The canopy is trimmed in sheet metal painted maroon. This trim continues the length of the front elevation.

The theatre's box-office lobby takes up the eastern two-thirds of the building's front elevation. The overhang covers it and two display cases located on either side of the lobby. To the west of the box office lobby is a large picture window to the theatre manager's office. This window is original and still has its original plate glass. Next to it is a small window and the door to the barbershop. The barbershop has retained its characteristic barbershop canister signage. The entire façade is tied together architecturally with the maroon sheet metal trim and by four inches of green terrazzo base, topped by two rows of maroon ceramic tile forming a decorative base along the entire façade from the eastern display case to the western edge of the barbershop.

The box-office sits in the middle of a recessed exterior lobby. It is hexagonally shaped with a door at the rear. It sits upon a concrete base that is trimmed in green terrazzo. The bottom half of the booth is tiled with maroon ceramic tile with a double band of narrow yellow tile ringing the top. The upper half is surrounded in etched glass. There is one ticket window at the front. The box office contains its original ticket dispenser.

The box office lobby has a terrazzo floor decorated in an abstract pattern with large yellow, maroon, white, and green shapes and swirls. There are five display cases in the lobby to advertise current and upcoming attractions. Two display cases face the street and three line the box-office lobby. One display window was originally located at the eastern corner of the building. It has been boarded up. The interiors of the cases have been modified with florescent lights and aluminum trim to hold posters. There are four sets of double doors leading into the building. All doors are original to the building and are made of wood with large etched glass panels. The box-office lobby's ceiling is concrete with over thirty recessed light fixtures set in arcs in the ceiling. This lighting was installed in 1947 when the canopy was installed however, the fixtures have been refitted to accept modern lightbulbs.

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Other than the addition of the pylon sign and marquee, the exterior has not been appreciably altered since the building's construction in 1946.

Interior, Summary:

The State Theatre has two significant public spaces – the lobby and the auditorium. In addition, there are a number of private spaces – the theatre manager's office and the storerooms. The theatre's shallow stage is flanked by two small wings (one of which has a small dressing room attached). There are also two public bathrooms in the lobby.

The theatre has two separate basements – one running the length of Oak Street under the theatre's lobby and the adjacent dental clinic and another sitting under the stage and a portion of the auditorium. Double doors located on Washington Street access the basement running the length of Oak Street. This basement is shared by the theatre and the dental clinic and is where the theatre's extra seats are stored. Under the stage, there is another basement accessible either through double doors found at the southwest corner of the theatre or from inside the theatre. This basement contains many of the theatre's electrical panels and the theatre's furnace and air-conditioning system. Although these systems have been updated, both systems are original.

The barbershop has its own entrance. It consists of the main room with one barber's chair and a tiny bathroom. A small air conditioning window unit has been installed in the transom window above the door. Aside from exterior and interior repainting, the shop has not been appreciably altered since the building's construction in 1946.

Interior Features: Theatre Lobby and Adjacent Rooms:

From the four sets of double doors in the box office lobby, visitors walk into the theatre lobby. Originally these doors were paired with interior doors to keep the wind/rain from the lobby. These doors have been removed. Above the interior doorway is an elaborate neon grid system that is still intact. The lobby is semi-circular with two corridors on the east and west walls that lead into the

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auditorium. To the west of the entrance are three doors. One door leads to a telephone closet (the telephone has been removed). Another door leads to a spacious manager's office (with two closets). The third door leads to the janitor's closet.

The lobby floor is carpeted, but the current carpet is not original. In addition, the walls have been painted and the leather seating that lined the lobby perimeter has been removed. There are two large freestanding columns and seven engaged columns supporting the ceiling and balcony seats above it. Originally these columns were tiled in one-inch square silver and gold mirrored tiles. Currently the columns are covered in carpet. Inspection revealed that the tile is still in place underneath the carpet. The engaged column next to the janitor's closet is larger than the others and features an inset drinking fountain. The drinking fountain sits on a concrete base topped with cream-colored mosaic tile. It is clad in a mixture of maroon and cream ceramic tile. The backsplash for the fountain is covered in large silver mirrored tile. The lobby ceiling is composed of three "waves" of soffits that overlap into the lobby from the south lobby wall. Another soffit runs the perimeter of the lobby just below the ceiling. The soffits conceal an extensive system of original neon, most of which is still in good working condition. The ceiling is currently covered in a spray-on texture. Underneath this texture, some believe there are murals that match the murals found in the theatre's auditorium. The original light fixtures have been removed; however, the original exit signs and elaborate neon lighting are substantially intact.

The concession stand in the middle of the lobby has been relocated and substantially altered. Originally the concession stand, bathrooms and work spaces were located in the southern portion of the lobby. To reach these areas, theatre patrons walked down three steps into a sunken semi-circle. While the bathrooms and the work spaces are still in their original locations, in 1974, the concession stand was pulled forward from its original location between the two bathrooms and now sits in the lobby itself where it is more accessible to patrons. The back wall of the concession stand is lined with a soda dispenser, a sink, and a row of cabinets. The front of the stand consists of a long counter and glass display cabinet. None of these items are original to the building.

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The sunken semi-circle remains although it is now bisected by the concession stand and a supply closet that was built where the original stand was located. Decorative wrought iron lines the perimeter of this space. The floor was originally linoleum – it has since been recovered in adhesive-backed tile. The doors to the bathrooms were set on either side of the concession stand. The women's room sits on the east side of the concession stand. After walking through the door, women walk down two steps and turn a corner to enter the bathroom. There are four stalls and two sinks in the women's bathroom. The men's room is located on the west side of the concession stand. After walking through the door, men walk down two steps and turn a corner to enter the bathroom. A small supply closet is located directly in front of these steps. The men's room has one sink, three toilets and three urinals. Both bathrooms are tiled in yellow and maroon ceramic tile with mosaic tile floors and have not been remodeled since they were originally built. Both bathrooms have their original etched glass signs.

To the east of the women's restroom is a small room originally used by the ushers to change in and out of their uniforms. It is currently used as a storage room. To the west of the men's room is a supply room.

Interior Features, Auditorium and Stage:

The theatre auditorium has recently been returned to its original layout. It was designed to seat over nine hundred patrons in three seating areas (balcony, loge, and front) with a single screen and a shallow stage. In an effort to make the theatre more profitable, however, the theatre was divided into two theatres in 1980 and repartitioned again into three theatres in 1992. The current owners have removed these walls and replaced the missing seats (stored in a storage room in the basement). Removal of the partition walls caused very little damage to the interior surfaces.

The auditorium is "pie-shaped" – it runs the width of the building at the back of the balcony where the projection booth is located and narrows as it moves toward the screen and stage. Moreover, the ceiling is over forty feet above the ground at the stage. At the projector booth, the ceiling is only eight feet off the floor.

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All of the theatre's seats are original, though they have been recovered and repainted. Originally the theatre had three seating areas: a balcony, a seating area directly in front of the main screen, and a loge area separated from the other seats by "streamlined" half walls (characterized by curvilinear shapes and horizontal striping). The half walls are still in place throughout the auditorium.

The balcony area is not a true balcony – it is a stadium-style seating area at the rear of the auditorium where the slope is considerably steeper than in the "main stage" seating area. The balcony area is divided into three sections of seats divided by two aisles with wooden steps. The unpainted wood plank floors are original. There are approximately 420 seats in the balcony area. The walls retain their original murals painted on stucco. The murals depict winged stallions and naked nymphs with art deco stylized flowers and swirls. The ceiling has 4 large circular light fixtures that were originally ringed in neon. Although these fixtures have been refit to use modern lightbulbs, they maintain their original design. Each of the side walls has four side lights. These lights are original although in some, the etched glass has been replaced. Decorative wrought iron railings sit above the "streamlined" partitions that separate the balcony area from the lobby corridors and the first row of balcony seating from the aisle.

The projector's booth is centered at the back of the balcony area. It has doors on either side and is split into two rooms – a small room with lighting and electrical panels, a toilet and sink; and another room which has all the equipment needed to show and store film. Most of the equipment is original. The light fixtures are also original.

In the front half of the theatre there are approximately 440 seats. The seating is split into three sections with mildly sloping concrete aisles running between the sections. There are more elaborate murals in the front half, including one on the ceiling centered in front of the stage's proscenium. Unfortunately, when the previous owners installed the partition wall that had divided the theatre into three separate viewing areas they punched several holes in the ceiling to anchor the wall. The ceiling mural has been damaged as a result. The perimeter of the ceiling is edged with a curvilinear border that conceals atmospheric lighting.

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The walls are similar to the walls in the back half of the theatre, however, towards the stage, there are decorative vertical soffits that at one time concealed sound and lighting equipment (see enclosed photographs). The floors in the front part of the theatre are unpainted concrete.

The theatre's stage is shallow and juts into the auditorium in a semi-circle. The proscenium is unadorned. The curtains and original screen have been removed. On either side of the stage there are steps that provide direct access to the stage. In addition, stairs located in both the short emergency exit corridors lead to the stage's wings. Unlike the stairs to the stage, these steps are located behind doors. The east wing is very small (only a few square feet). The west wing is somewhat larger and has a small utilitarian dressing room attached. There is no "backstage."

Opposite the door to the west wing (across the emergency exit corridor) is another door leading to the basement that runs underneath the stage.

Other than the modifications to the lobby and particularly the concession stand, the interior of the State Theatre has not been appreciably altered since the building's construction in 1946.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction:

The State Theatre meets the National Register Criterion A as a property that represents patterns of local history in Tehama County. Built by Alexander A. Cantin, a respected theatre architect in Northern California, it opened May 24, 1946 – just two years after the original State Theatre burned to the ground. As the only motion picture theatre (until 1993) as well as the only public stage (until 1991) in the county, the State Theatre was important to the community as a regional center for entertainment and community interaction until 1955.*

Historical Background:

Red Bluff was founded in its current location on the Sacramento River in 1850. By 1854 a series of natural disasters and the efforts of a coalition of riverboat owners ensured Red Bluff's future as the year-round navigational head for the Sacramento River. With a solid commercial base, the prosperous community grew and, by the 1870 census, Red Bluff boasted 2,000 residents. In 1871, the railroad arrived in Red Bluff and in 1876 the Sierra Flume and Lumber Company set up operations. The groundwork had been laid. By the turn of the century, Red Bluff had become a commercial, transportation, and lumber hub in the northern part of the state.

The current State Theatre sits on a lot long recognized as Red Bluff's entertainment center. In the earliest days of Red Bluff, an entertainment pavilion was located on the site. It was used for concerts, speeches, and other public events. After a fire destroyed the pavilion, the Orpheum Theatre, better known as the Opera House, was built. Opened in 1908, it was operated by a group of local

* Please note that the State Theatre was the only movie theatre in Tehama County until 1991 when the tenants of the State Theatre moved their business to newly built theatres in a nearby strip mall. Although the property continued to be important in the areas of entertainment and social history after 1955, nothing of exceptional importance occurred within the last fifty years. The period of significance is, therefore, ended arbitrarily in 1955.

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businessmen who hoped to bring quality entertainment to the community. On August 31, 1928, the theatre was purchased by T & D, Jr. Enterprises, a theatre chain that owned and operated theatres throughout Northern California*. T & D Jr., Enterprises closed the theatre in September 1928 and undertook a complete renovation of the existing theatre.

The remodeling of the old Opera House took six months and when it reopened, it had a new name: The State Theatre. The State Theatre was able to show talking pictures as well as live stage acts and quickly became Red Bluff's only theatre. The community was devastated when it burned in February 1944.

With Senator Clair Engle's assistance, T & D, Jr. Enterprises was permitted to set up temporary operations in the Veterans Memorial hall. Unfortunately, the U.S. had entered World War Two and all construction resources were committed to the war effort. According to a theatre trade publication written in 1945, only a few theatres were built during the war years. These theatres were built because they were "deemed necessary for maintenance of home-front morale." (*Jay Emanuel Theatre Catalog*, 1945) The State Theatre in Red Bluff was featured in the 1945 edition of the *Jay Emanuel Theatre Catalog*. It was one of the few theatre projects that received precious allocations of building materials during the war years.

T & D, Jr. Enterprises hired A.A. Cantin to design the new State Theatre. Cantin was perhaps the best of the local theatre architects working in the Bay Area. He designed a number of theatres throughout Northern California before and after World War Two, including the Orinda Theatre (Orinda) and the Lorenzo Theatre (San Lorenzo).

Salih Brothers, the general contractor, broke ground on the new theatre on April 24, 1945. A year later, the building was unfinished, but ready to open. While the war ended in 1945, shortages continued and presented the contractor with unique difficulties in purchasing and transporting construction materials. Just a

* T&D Jr., Enterprises should not be confused with a similar chain known as the T&D Circuit. T&D Jr., Enterprises owned and operated a number of theatres including The Castro Theatre (San Francisco), and the Senator Theatre (Chico). They eventually became United Artists. The T&D Circuit, originally owned by James Turner and Fred Dahnken, was later purchased by Sol Lesser to become a part of West Coast Theatres. West Coast Theatres would later become Mann Theatres of California.

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few weeks before the theatre was scheduled to open, the seats had not arrived. Shipped from the manufacturer in Chicago they were sent through El Paso, Texas where they were off-loaded so that military requisitions could be moved. While in El Paso, the offloaded shipment was misplaced and then mistakenly shipped to Oakland, California.

Diamond Lumber was able to provide most of the needed lumber for the project, but was only able to send "dimensional lumber" which then needed to be cut down to size onsite. Certain electrical supplies were simply unavailable for civilian consumption and as a result, the theatre opened without some of its planned amenities including the built-in concessions counter. The façade, including the theatre's marquee and sign, was incomplete at the time of the opening.*

On May 24, 1946, the new State Theatre opened to the public. The souvenir program billed the theatre as "Tehama County's Entertainment Center." Local dignitaries included City Councilman Bill Bulkeley and Tom McGlynn of the Red Bluff Chamber of Commerce. T & D Jr., Enterprises president M. A. Naify was in attendance as were the company's vice presidents, R. A. McNeill and Gene Emmick. The theatre manager, C. Dale Pickell, welcomed the capacity crowd. The Red Bluff High School band played in front of the theatre while movie patrons bought their tickets to "Blue Dahlia" with Veronica Lake and Allan Ladd. Upon entering the lobby, they must have been dazzled by the neon, the murals, and the mirrored columns. The auditorium was equipped with the most modern lighting and mechanical systems, including air-conditioning.

The State Theatre opened in 1946 to the enthusiastic support of the Red Bluff community. Upon opening, the theatre became the community's primary source of family entertainment as well as the site of significant community events. In 1975, T & D, Jr. Enterprises sold the theatre to a private owner who leased the theatre to a number of operators. He split the theatre into two screening rooms in 1980 and subdivided the theatre again in 1992. The State Theatre closed in 1993. It had become outdated. The tenants built a new multiplex theatre in a nearby strip-mall. The State Theatre has been vacant since its closure in 1993.

* The proposed facade and marquee for the State Theatre were never built. Instead, the owners kept the facade as it was in 1946 and installed a less elaborate marquee and signage in 1947. Please see the attached Narrative Description for a more complete description.

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however, in 1998 it was purchased by private owners who hope to create a community arts center in the building.

Significance:

The State Theatre makes a valuable historical contribution to the City of Red Bluff. The current theatre was constructed in 1946, but was built to replace a theatre built in 1908. The site of the current State Theatre has been considered the entertainment center for Tehama County since the turn of the century. When it was built in 1946, it was the only theatre in Tehama County.

The souvenir program for the theatre's grand opening states: "It is with great pleasure that we now present to you a new State Theatre – the most beautiful entertainment center Tehama County has ever known." Ella Hendricks, a reporter for the *Red Bluff Daily News*, noted that the State Theatre in Red Bluff "is conceded to be the most modern show house north of Los Angeles." (*Daily News*, 5/24/46) Another reporter argued that "the theatre is considered to be the most modern and up to date house in northern California and promises luxurious entertainment for Tehamans for many years to come." (*Daily News*, 5/24/46)

Before television became a household fixture, a community's theatre provided residents with wholesome family entertainment, an opportunity to watch the news rather than read it, a place to meet friends, and the chance to escape the pressures of daily life. During World War Two, residents of Tehama County watched newsreels and movies in the Veterans' Memorial Hall. The Red Bluff Chamber of Commerce echoed the attitudes of the people of Tehama County when it congratulated T & D Jr., Enterprises for rebuilding saying: "since the destruction of the former building, it has become increasingly apparent that the theater [sic] fills an important and prominent position in the community and in the lives of its citizens." (*Daily News* 5/24/46)

Shortly after the United States entered World War Two, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt noted: "The American motion picture is one of our most effective mediums in informing and entertaining our citizens." (Lingeman, p.170) By 1944, "more than 90,000,000 [Americans] went to the movies every week, and yearly grosses soared to an all-time high well over a billion dollars... admissions rose an average of 33 percent..." (Lingeman, p.206) 1946, the year

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the State Theatre opened, was "the best year in the history of the industry, over four billion tickets were sold." (Valerio, p.35)

In a rural county, movie theatres played a particularly important role in community events. Families living in outlying areas generally came to town on Saturdays. While the parents ran errands and visited, their children spent the day in the theatre where they caught up with friends and enjoyed a full day's worth of movies, cartoons, and newsreels. Other than the State Theater, there was no other public entertainment venue in Tehama County where families could leave their children (many would argue that, aside from a bowling alley and the new theater opened in 1993, Red Bluff still lacks activities suitable for children and teenagers). Teenagers used the State Theatre almost exclusively for their dates. In the 1940s and 1950s, residents of Tehama County spent most of their free time and money in the City of Red Bluff. The State Theatre, the county's only movie theatre, did not face competition from the theatres of Shasta and Butte counties until the 1970s when people began to drive more often. Adults who grew up in Tehama County consider the State Theatre a significant part of their youth. Bill Cornelius, a local personality, entertained theatre supporters recently ("In The Spotlight Fundraiser" for the State Theatre, May 13, 2001) by describing who sat in different parts of the theatre. He noted that the "rich kids" sat in the loge seats, while the "young kids" sat in the front section. He then added, "you knew when a guy reached adolescence... suddenly he was sitting in the balcony and he wasn't watching a movie, he was looking at the naked ladies (on the murals)." Not surprisingly, his audience knew exactly what he was talking about.

But the State Theatre was significant to Tehama County as more than simply a movie theatre. While there were other assembly areas in Red Bluff in 1946, there was no place available for *public assembly*. Clubs like the Elks and the Freemasons had halls but they were available only for their events and for the events of individual members. There was a Veteran's Memorial Hall but that hall was reserved for veterans' activities. Most of the buildings at the County Fairgrounds had yet to be built. The community center was built in the early 1990s. The State Theatre, with its shallow stage, was designed to be a public venue as well as a movie theatre. In the absence of other public venues, the State Theatre was the only place where important civic events could be held.

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A variety of events have been held at the State Theatre since its opening in 1946. From 1946 through the 1950s, the State Theatre hosted the Red Bluff High School (the only public high school in Red Bluff) graduation ceremonies. Throughout the 1950s Santa made annual appearances to collect wish lists at the State Theatre. The theatre was often booked for speakers, vaudeville acts, and other entertainers. During the Red Bluff Round-Up, an important annual rodeo in the national professional rodeo circuit, special events were scheduled at the theatre to entertain the rodeo crowds.

More importantly, from 1947 through 1955, the annual Bull Sale parties were held at the State Theatre. Red Bluff's Bull Sale (now the Bull and Gelding Sale) is an annual event that brings ranchers from all over the world to Red Bluff. Every year these ranchers bring stock in order to buy, sell, arrange stud visits, and network. In addition to the activities taking place at the fairgrounds, a lavish party is thrown each year to welcome them. According to Robert Minch, whose father organized the Bull Sale parties that took place at the State Theatre, the parties that went on at the State Theatre between 1947 and 1955 were the biggest and most extravagant in the history of the Bull Sales. Orchestras were brought from the Warfield and Golden Gate Theatres in San Francisco (*Daily News* 1/29/1948) and top name entertainment stepped onto the stage at the State Theatre. The King Cole Trio and Donald O'Connor graced the stage in 1951 (*Daily News* 2/5/1951) and Patti Page and the Mills Brothers were among the entertainers for the 1952 Bull Sale (*Daily News*, 2/6/1952). Other performers included Tennessee Ernie Ford, Mel Torme, Charlie Barnet, and a number of vaudeville acts that included musicians, ventriloquists, comedians, and acrobats.

The State Theatre is an important element in the social history of Red Bluff and Tehama County. Built during World War II, it demonstrated the significance Americans placed upon movie theatres in their communities and the critical need for entertainment in Tehama County during World War II. However, the State Theatre is not simply important because it was built during a war. The State Theatre is important because it defined the social life of a rural county in the late 1940s and 1950s. As the social center of both the City of Red Bluff and Tehama County, the State Theatre was a place where residents could interact and be entertained. Its mix of movies and special events targeted the entire community. As the only theatre in Tehama County, it was invaluable in entertaining the County's residents. Moreover, with no other public venue available, it offered a space where any number of civic needs were met.

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Interestingly, the State Theatre has again entered the public arena. After years of neglect and vacancy, Red Bluff residents now believe that the rebirth of the State Theatre into a community arts center could trigger the revitalization of their beleaguered downtown. Early residents recognized the need for quality entertainment in their thriving community when they built the Opera House in 1908. T & D, Jr. Enterprises was encouraged to build a new theatre during the war because Tehama County residents pushed for its construction. Many now feel that the creation of a community arts center in the theatre could anticipate the revitalization of the community's historic downtown by encouraging people to visit the theatre and then to stay downtown to shop and socialize. The State Theatre continues to be downtown Red Bluff's landmark for social interaction and community entertainment.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That portion of the parcel shown as parcel number 29-035-9 in the Tehama County Assessor's Map Book that includes the footprint of the theatre.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes that portion of the parcel historically associated with the State Theatre and barber shop.

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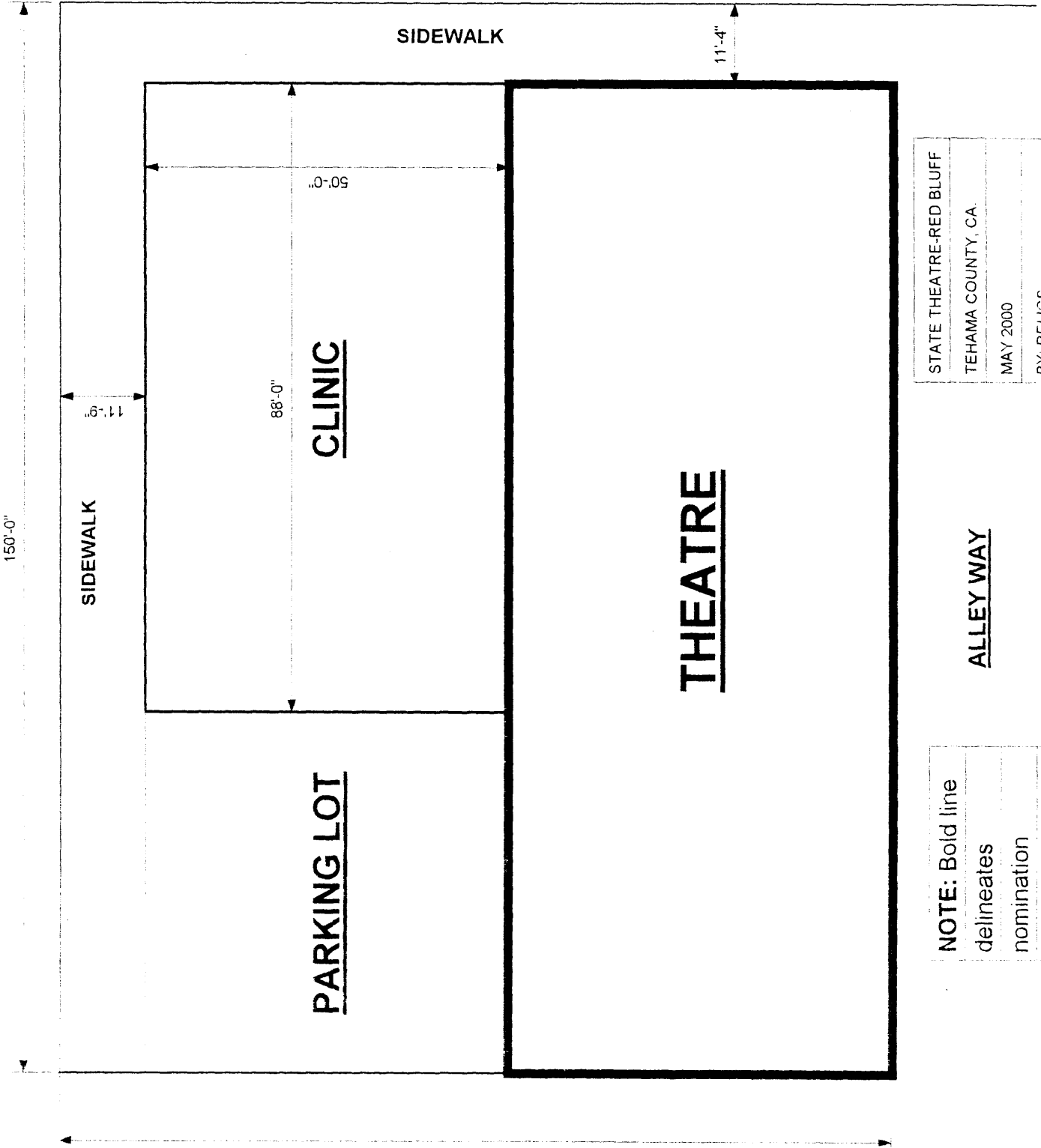
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WASHINGTON STREET
150'-0"



OAK STREET



SIDEWALK

11'-4"

CLINIC

88'-0"

PARKING LOT

SIDEWALK

11'-9"

50'-0"

THEATRE

ALLEY WAY

115'-0"

STATE THEATRE-RED BLUFF

TEHAMA COUNTY, CA.

MAY 2000

BY: RELICS

ALLEY WAY

NOTE: Bold line

delineates

nomination

boundary.