

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 an 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 Huntridge Theater

other names/site number Huntridge Performing Arts Theater

2. Location

street & number 1208 E. Charleston Boulevard not for publication

city or town Las Vegas vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Clark code 003 zip code 89104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Ronald M. [Signature] SHPO 6/17/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>for</u> Signature of the Keeper <u>Christine Alice</u>	Date of Action <u>7/22/93</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

Huntridge Theater
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
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 one	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
one	_____	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

none

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement/Moderne and International
Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls concrete & brick

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

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 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

Bibliography

(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

Architecture

Period of Significance

1943-1944

Significant Dates

1943-1944

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Pioneer Construction Co.

S. Charles Lee, architect

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Nevada State Museum and Historical Society
700 Twin Lakes Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89701

Huntridge Theater
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1	6 6 7 7 5 0	4 0 0 2 8 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Richard Lenz

organization Huntridge Performing Arts Theater date February 22, 1993

street & number 1208 Charleston Boulevard telephone (702) 477-7069

city or town Las Vegas state Nevada zip code 89104

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name same as above

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

The Huntridge Theater opened for business on October 10, 1944. S. Charles Lee, a renowned theater architect, was influenced by the Moderne and International architectural styles when he designed the building. The Huntridge served as a movie house for almost five decades before its conversion to a performing arts center in 1992. Although the original landscaping has been lost, and minor changes to the interior and exterior have been undertaken, the theater retains its historic integrity.

The Huntridge Theater is located at the large, busy intersection of Maryland Parkway and Charleston Boulevard. It is currently surrounded by various commercial establishments, including car dealerships. The theater is just north of the Huntridge neighborhood, constructed during the 1940s. Originally, a bank and the post office were located next to the theater. Future plans for the Huntridge Performing Arts Center include purchasing and rehabilitating these two buildings and, to some extent, restoring the appearance of this important corner for the neighborhood.

The theater is an approximately square, one-story, brick and concrete structure with a flat roof interrupted by a tower above the marquis. The bank of glass front doors are emphasized by projecting rectangular piers which support the marquis, and above, a curved wall. The 75' high rectangular tower with flutes rises above the entrance. The tower is surmounted by a neon sign which spells "Huntridge." The building has no windows and has no surface treatments other than those which surround the entrance area. The exterior doors lead into a lobby with a concession counter; the auditorium (approximately 1000 seats) is located to the left. The projection room can be accessed by a stairway beyond the concession counter.

Alterations to the theater include paving over the original, curved driveway which lead to the theater entrance, the addition of air-conditioning units on the roof, and the replacement of the original "Huntridge" sign, which was written in script. In 1992, the interior of the auditorium was unified as originally built, reversing the division into two theaters in the 1980s. The original murals have been lost. In spite of these changes, the Huntridge Theater retains its integrity and will serve the Las Vegas for many years to come.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

The Huntridge Theater is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, for its contribution to Las Vegas recreation and entertainment, and under criteria C, for its modern style of architecture.

The Huntridge Theater was designed by S. Charles Lee, one of the country's well-known theater architects. In addition to designing more than 300 theaters throughout the United States, Lee built several theaters in Mexico. Construction of the Huntridge began in 1943, during the height of World War II. Materials and labor were in short supply due to the war; the brick and concrete shell was common to buildings of this period. The contractor for the project was Pioneer Construction Co.; several local sub-contractors were also employed. The Huntridge interiors were designed by A.B. Heinsbergen of Beverly Hills. At the time Mr. Heinsbergen was the veteran of over 376 large theaters and was recognized as the Designer of the Year by the United States Government in 1940.

The historic Huntridge Theater opened on October 10, 1944. It is believed to be the oldest operating movie theater in southern Nevada. Located on the corner of Maryland Parkway and Charleston Boulevard, it serves as the cornerstone for the Huntridge neighborhood, which includes houses and commercial buildings constructed in the 1940s. The original builder and proprietor of the Huntridge Theater was Commonwealth Las Vegas Theater, Inc., whose officers at the time of opening were C.A. Schultz, President, O.K. Mason, Vice-President and General Manager, and A.J. (Sim) Simmons who managed the Huntridge from the construction phase to its opening.

The opening films on its first day were "Hi, Neighbor" and "Hellzapoppin." The promotion for the opening of the theater included a contest to name the movie stars, with the first prize of a \$25.00 war bond and 10 guest tickets. The Huntridge Development Co., owned by prominent Las Vegas Thomas Oakey, was responsible for the contracting of the property. Mr. Oakey was also a partner in the venture. It is unclear from historic records as to when Commonwealth Las Vegas Theater, Inc., group dissolved but it is know that prior to 1951 Mr. Oakey had new partners in the property, including legendary actresses Irene Dunn and Loretta Young.

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In 1951, a 27 year lease of the Huntridge Theater was begun with Lloyd and Edith Katz of Las Vegas. Mr. and Mrs. Katz operated the Huntridge Theater, the Fremont Theater, and the Guild Theater, all located in Las Vegas. The Huntridge was operated by the Katz's until 1978 when the theater was purchased by Mr. Frank Silvaggio, a Las Vegas contractor.

During the nearly 50 years of its operation, the Huntridge has hosted many famous personalities. In March of 1947 Abbott and Costello appeared live on the Huntridge stage to present their new movie "Buck Privates Come Home." In the 1950s such artists as Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Jerry Lewis, Marlene Dietrich and Vincent Price appeared at the Huntridge in promotions for their latest movies. The Huntridge Theater, along with the Fremont Theater, was host to the world premiere of the "Las Vegas Story" in which all of the major actors in the picture were in attendance.

The Theater is also eligible for the National Register under criteria C. The building is a combination of the Moderne style of architecture and the International style. Characteristics of the Moderne style, known also as the "streamlined style," include curved corners, asymmetrical fenestration, smooth wall surfaces, and small round windows. The style was inspired by industrial design of the 1930s and eventually replaced the earlier, more ornate Art Deco style. The Huntridge Theater displays features of the Moderne style such as the rounded facade and corner, the smooth wall surfaces, the fluting on the tower, and the small "porthole" under the "Huntridge" neon sign. International style characteristics include the minimal surface decoration, the asymmetrical massing of the building, and the flat roof. The theater is one of the few buildings to survive in Las Vegas from this decade.

The Huntridge Theater is best remembered as the place to go for Saturday matinees. Thousands of Las Vegas children passed through the portals of the theater to view many Disney films which had their Las Vegas premieres at the Huntridge. Many prominent Nevadans worked at the Huntridge in their early years. Such notables as Frankie Sue Del Papa, the state's Attorney General, and others were ushers and concessions personnel at the theater. Senator Richard Bryan grew up in the Huntridge neighborhood and spent many hours in the Huntridge Theater.

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After the purchase by Mr. Silvaggio in 1979, the theater was converted to a twin theater in 1980. During the subsequent 10 years the theater was operated by a number of different individuals and companies, including United Artists Corporation. The theater began to decline in popularity in the 1980s due to the advent of multi-theater complexes and its inability to compete in the marketplace. The theater closed in 1990 after repeated attempts to find a niche in which it could survive.

In January 1992, the theater was leased by Richard and Tamara Lenz. The theater was restored to a single space and much of the original decor was maintained, including the decorative wing walls on either side of the stage, the pillars in the lobby area, and the 75 foot high "Huntridge" sign.

In a city with few landmarks over thirty years old that have not been destroyed or extensively remodeled, the Huntridge stands intact as a tribute to its time. It is filled with the memories of the local people who grew up in Las Vegas.

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Las Vegas Review Journal, October 9, 1944; December 26, 1944;
January 4, 1945 March 25, 1947.

Lenz, Richard. The Huntridge Theater Project. (Unpublished
manuscript on file at Division of Historic Preservation,
1993).

Edith Katz (former owner), personal interview.

Moehring, Eugene P. Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-
1970. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1989.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Verbal boundary description

Legal parcel number 050-051-002.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the theater.