

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 16000359


Date Listed: 6/13/2016

Property Name: Ace Theatre

County: Miami-Dade

State: FL

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

6-13-2016

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Criteria

Criterion C is hereby deleted. The criterion is checked in Section 8, but is not justified in the narrative nor reflected in the areas of significance.

Section 8: Criteria Considerations

Criteria Consideration "G" is hereby checked.

The nomination does not explicitly address the criteria consideration; the end of the period of significance is 1973 and is a justifiable and logical ending point. The theater remains a rare, surviving resource from Coconut Grove's segregated past, and as such meets the exceptional importance standard.

The Florida State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED 2280

APR 29 2016

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 ACE THEATRE

other names/site number Florida Master Site File #DA14112

2. Location

street & number 3664 Grand Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Miami N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33133

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.)

Alisse Lotane 4/21/16
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Signature of the keeper

Date of Action

Jane Schubert

6-13-2016

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(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/Theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Masonry Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco

walls Stucco

roof Tar & Gravel

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 36) 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

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

Period of Significance

1930-1973

Significant Dates

1930

1973

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	7	4	9	4	7	2	8	4	5	7	1	4
	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 Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2016

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 ACE Development Company, Inc.

street & number 12605 Southwest 93rd Avenue telephone 305.235.3351

city or town Miami state Florida zip code 33176

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 amend 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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The ACE Theatre is a single-screen movie theater located at 3664 Grand Avenue in the Village of Coconut Grove (aka Coconut Grove or the Grove) in the southernmost section of the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County. The theater, rising the equivalent of two-stories, is a Masonry Vernacular building with Art Deco elements. The symmetrical building contains 7,397 sq. ft. of interior space and consists of three bays. The central first bay is recessed and contains three opening entrances. A concrete and steel metal canopy/marquee projects out over the sidewalk and the parapet is prominent. At the extremities of the canopy/marquee, the name of the theater, "ACE", sits perpendicular; the metal letters are painted yellow with red edges. The ticket booth is still present on the exterior of the building. The access for the ticket taker is inside the theater's lobby. A ventilation window is located on the second story of each side bay. The building is painted with two cream vertical stripes at the central bay. Two "L" shape stripes in cream color bordered in red gives movement to the façade, the streamlined design details are consistent with the Art Deco style common in the 1930s. Despite some minor deterioration, the building retains its character and integrity. The owner, Ace Development Company, Inc., currently seeks to rehabilitate and renovate the building, which is easily the most recognizable landmark in the historically African American section of the Coconut Grove.

SETTING

Coconut Grove lies in the southernmost section of the City of Miami, which serves as the seat of government for Miami-Dade County, Florida. The current population of Miami is approximately 400,000. The population of Miami-Dade County is approximately 3 million. The primary corridors in Miami and the county run through Coconut Grove: Grand Avenue, Douglas Road (SW 37 Avenue), U.S. 1 (South Dixie Highway), 27th Avenue, South Bayshore Drive and Main Highway. The Metro Rail, the county's rapid transit system, has three stops in the Grove: Douglas Road and U.S. 1; 27th Avenue and U.S. 1; and Vizcaya Station near Rickenbacker Causeway (adjacent to U.S. 1).

The theater, located 5 miles south of Downtown Miami, is on Grand Avenue, in the historic African American section of the Grove (aka Black, West Grove or Village West). It is the oldest, most visible and well-known landmark on Grand Avenue. The theater is 5 blocks west of Coco Walk, a destination retail/commercial district in the heart of the Grove's business district. The theater is 5 blocks south of U.S. 1 on the north, and 4 blocks east of U.S. 1 on the west. It occupies the south side of Grand Avenue on an interior lot within the block bounded by Douglas Road (SW 37th Avenue) on the west and Plaza Street on the east. Several small commercial buildings lie to the east, west, and north of the theater. There is a 25 sq. ft. vacant lot located on the east side of the building that is a part of the theater's property boundaries.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The ACE Theatre illustrates how elements of Streamline Modern and Art Deco styles that flourished in Miami-Dade County during the 1920s and 30s were applied to masonry buildings with smooth stucco exteriors that became the common vernacular in South Florida. Art Deco was first applied to public and commercial buildings in the 1920s.¹ For projects on a tight budget, a rectangular building block could be embellished with appendages that made it fashionable. Visual interest could be further enhanced by stretching linear forms horizontally and vertically throughout the building, often accomplished with bands of brick, canopies, or copings.²

Exterior

The main (north) facade of the ACE is symmetrical and is punctuated by a central bay, with three entrances into the interior of the building (Photo 1). The front facade is the single most significant feature that defines the building's historic architectural importance. The stucco reveals bands and the central element rising above the roof line are suggestive of the Art Deco style, as well as the ceramic tile base and vertical signage. The stucco is in fair condition. The original marquee, signage, and tile base are in disrepair. Two maroon and yellow bands run along both sides of the main facade, running horizontally beneath the stepped parapet toward the center of the facade then descending to the top of the marquee. Two large air vents are found on the facade to either side of the center line and supplied air to the mezzanine/projection room. Two smaller air grilles made of cast iron showing a filigree pattern were originally a functioning device supplying air to the lobby. Three lighted poster-sized display windows are missing the glass and electrical elements. Two playbill areas are found on the east and west walls of the building but are missing their glass electrical elements (Photo 2). The two metal vertical "ACE" signs (Photos 3-4) add to the Art Deco style element. The original neon tubes outlining the letters are missing. The concrete and metal marquee is original; however, the under part of the marquee has been replaced with plywood to prevent injury to pedestrians. The marquee is in significant disrepair and the electrical fixtures that light the marquee are inoperable.

The east elevation is bounded by a 25 sq. ft. grass lot (Photos 5-7). Two drainage pipes are located on the east facade and run vertically from the roof into the ground. Another drainage pipe is situated next to an air vent on the main facade.

In the building's rear, south elevation, two doors, one on the southeast and southwest side, provide entry from the exterior of the building to a second level (Photos 8-9)). These doors were used to access the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air condition) system that is no longer operable. There is another exit door that leads

¹ "Historic Styles/Art Deco Style 1925-1940", <http://www.wentworthstudio.com/historic-styles/art-deco/> (last visited Mar. 15, 2015).

² Ibid.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

from the mechanical room of the east side of the building (Photo 10). The restrooms and mechanical room are located on the east elevation of the building in a small one-story extension that is 7' x 37' and projects from the main body of the theater, and has its own roof. The original color of the exterior of the theater is unknown. However, when Wometco sold the building in 1979, it was painted a pinkish color, bordered by the maroon-colored and greyish tiles (Photo 11).³

Interior

Auditorium

There are two entrances on either side of the concession area (east and west sides) that open into the auditorium. Upon entering the auditorium, the seats face south, which is where the stage and picture screen are oriented. The auditorium is the central space of the building. The auditorium seated between 300-400 people. The original picture screen, (Photo 12) which is framed from Dade County Pine, is still intact.. The auditorium's poured concrete floor slopes gently to a drain in the center section of the theater, before creating a landing at the base of the stage and two rear exit doors. The seating was divided into three sections, with the center section ending at a poured concrete stage/platform. At one time a 10' x 22' wooden thrust stage, which was accessed by wooden stairs on both sides of the stage, was present. The stage deteriorated due to water intrusion from the roof and was removed. Additionally due to water intrusion, only a few of the original seats were salvageable (Photo 13)). The roof structure has large steel beams spanning the width of the space supporting reinforced columns. The beams support a wood framed deck and roof, and are in good condition.

Behind the picture screen which hangs from the sides of the theater, is a small space that contains the audio speaker system, which sits on the concrete platform/stage. The rear wall behind the stage has some concrete spalling present in certain sections. Two wooden ladders are attached to the east and west sides of the rear south wall behind the platform/stage. These ladders provide interior access to the HVAC system, which is housed in two small rooms that are the equivalent to the height of a second floor. Two "Exit" doors are located in the rear of the theater (Photo 14) on the southwest and east sides of the building. The Exit doors are painted a reddish color. Above each entry way for the "Exit" doors are metal air vents for the HVAC system.

The auditorium's interior ceiling is the equivalent of two-stories (24' H). The theater's interior ceiling and light fixtures were partially removed when the roof system was replaced. Acoustic material covered the auditorium's ceiling and there is evidence that a sprinkler system was present. The remnants of acoustic tiles covered the east and west side walls and formed an arched design that started at the auditorium's entrance. On both side walls are remnants of the theater's interior scone lights that were placed above the acoustical tiles (Photo 15).

³ Photo source <http://www.sffl.comcastbiz.net/page176.html> (last visited Apr. 11, 2015).

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

First Floor/Lobby

The first floor contains 5,466 sq. ft. of interior space. Spaces within the first floor include the auditorium, lobby, office, ticket booth, restrooms, mechanical room, and stage. Concrete spalling is present in the slab above the mezzanine/projection room (lobby's ceiling) and the beam above the concession area. Due to a long-term lack of maintenance and the subsequent failure of the roof, most of the original interior features deteriorated, including light scones, acoustical materials, and the seats. The three exterior front entrance doors open into the lobby, which housed a small concession stand that is no longer present. The floor of the lobby is poured concrete, which was covered with vinyl tiles.

On the east side of what was the lobby are the restrooms. The female restroom consists of two stalls, one sink, and a powder room (Photos 16-17). The male restroom is accessed from a door through the lobby and consists of one stall, two urinals and a sink (Photos 18-20). Some of the original green tile is missing and the plumbing fixtures are inoperable. The ceiling has to be replaced due to water intrusion. There is a small janitor's closet inside the male restroom. The mechanical room is accessed through a separate door in the rear of the male restroom. The ceiling has to be replaced due to water intrusion. A door leads from the mechanical room to the exterior of the building. All of the electrical elements are inoperable.

On the west side of the lobby is a small office with a sloped ceiling as a result of a stair case that leads to the mezzanine/projection room (Photos 21-22). Inside the office is the small storage closet. An interior office space in the theater reveals a window that suggests that at one time the west side of the building was adjacent to vacant land or that a former structure was not built contiguous to the theater. Access to the ticket booth is from the west side of the lobby. Between the office and the ticket booth is a concrete staircase that leads to the mezzanine/projection room (Photo 23).

Second Floor/Mezzanine/Projection Room (1,931 sq. ft.)

The second floor or mezzanine/projection room consists of three rooms with a poured concrete floor, which was covered by vinyl tile. The mezzanine/projection room sits directly above the first floor lobby, concession stand, office, ticket booth and women's powder room.

The first room is at the top of the landing and was probably used for storage. A toilet and sink are present, but inoperable (Photos 24-25). The projection room is rectangular and occupies the bulk of the second floor. Entry into the projection room is through a doorway. The projection room's north wall has a rectangular shaped indentation, which probably housed an air conditioner unit. The south wall, which faces the picture screen, has five square openings that were used for the projection equipment (Photo 26). There is a toilet and a sink in the projection room which are inoperable. The third room was probably used as a small office or storage space. This room has a door (Photo 27) that leads out to the exterior roof of the restrooms and mechanical room.

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Section number 7 Page 5

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

ALTERATIONS

A new roof was installed in 1993, after Hurricane Andrew. Having the same slope as the original flat roof, the new roof rests below the parapet of the original I-beams, and is not visible from the street level. The drainage pipes on the east facade have been removed due to deterioration. The two access doors to the HVAC service area were removed and the doors covered with plywood.

The theater's original color scheme has been changed over the years. Evidence indicates that the original color was a shade of pink, which was complimented by the maroon and greyish tiles that form the base of the front façade. The theater was painted its current color scheme, white, yellow and red, sometime after 1992. The metal frame outlining the marquee was removed due to deterioration and replaced with plywood. The marquees under carriage and the electrical features were also removed as safety measures to prevent injury to pedestrians. The exterior tile that covered the entry way into the theater has been removed.

The auditorium's ceiling was partially destroyed due to water intrusion from the roof. Water intrusion also destroyed the seats and many of the wall scones and lighting fixtures. The interior tiles that covered the lobby have been removed. There is evidence that a thrust stage/platform extended from the concrete platform beneath the picture screen out into the auditorium and covered several rows of center aisle seats. A 1951 Billboard article stated that Wometco would have to construct a stage at the ACE in order to accommodate a planned "Negro vaude circuit."⁴ Overall, the ACE Theatre is intact and possesses a high level of integrity, including design, workmanship, setting, association, feeling and location. The exterior has significant material integrity, having remained almost entirely unchanged since its construction.

⁴ "Plan Negro Vaude Loop In Florida", *Billboard*, August, 18, 1951.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The ACE Theatre was built c. 1930 is significant at the local level under Criterion A and in the areas of Entertainment and Recreation, Social History, and Ethnic Heritage (Black). Its history is associated with events and people that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of South Florida and American history. The development of the theater contributed to the unique history, social, cultural and economic development of the African American section of Coconut Grove and Miami. The ACE is one of the last remaining theaters built, owned and/or operated by Wometco Enterprises (formerly the Wolfson-Meyer Theatre Company) that has not been repurposed. Built during America's Jim Crow era, the theater provided entertainment for black communities throughout Miami-Dade County. The ACE is the most visible and well-known landmark on Grand Avenue and in the West Grove. As a result, the ACE Theatre's application for local designation as a historical landmark was approved on July 1, 2014.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Compared to the oldest, continuous city in America, St. Augustine, Florida, which was founded in 1565 as a European and African American settlement, the City of Miami is relatively young. On July 28, 1896, 344 voters, one-third of whom were African Americans or of Bahamian descent, incorporated the City of Miami.⁵ Several of these African Americans lived in what was then known as "Colored Town" or the black section of Coconut Grove, (aka "Black Grove" or "West Grove"). The City of Miami's anniversary is celebrated with little homage being paid to these African American incorporators, many of whom were pioneers in the city and surrounding areas. Often nothing more than a footnote in history books, the Black Grove is intertwined in the historical landscape of the city, county and state.

Many of the houses and buildings that were architecturally unique to "Colored Town" succumbed to neglect and disinterest. The "shotgun houses" and Bahamian-style homes hosted illicit drug parties and consequently were razed as blighted and abandoned structures. Other buildings were demolished to make way for new construction.

Consequently, with the exception of G.W. Carver Elementary and Middle Schools, the Mariah Brown house, which has yet to be restored, Odds Fellow Hall, the E.W.F. Stirrup house, and the Charlotte Jane Memorial Cemetery,⁶ the ACE is one of the last physical reminders of Black Grove's history.

⁵ Dorothy Jenkins Fields, Ph.D., *Overtown: Reclaiming a Sense of Place*, http://www.theblackarchives.org/?page_id=2177 (last visited June 1, 2014).

⁶ "Coconut Grove's Historic Village West Enclave, Places to See in Miami," <http://www.miamian beaches.com/places-to-see/coconut-grove/coconut-grove-village-west> (last visited June 1, 2014), Appendix B, News Articles - Coconut Grove. The ACE is also located two blocks from MacFarlane Homestead in the City of Coral Gables, which is also known as the Black Gables, and is listed on the National Register. See <http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/2011/story-of-the-day/the-black-gables.html>.

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Section number 8 Page 2

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

In 1909, F.W. Hahn built Miami's first real theater, The Lyceum Theater. It was constructed of reinforced concrete. The stage was forty feet square with an orchestra pit. There were four boxes, 700 seats on the main floor and 300 in the balcony (reserved for Negroes). On October 4th, opening night, a racial conflict occurred. The Metropolis ran an editorial, "A Disgraceful Affair," which began with a quote from a letter signed "Colored Citizen."

Editor Metropolis:

The citizens of Colored Town beg to have you mention in your paper that we highly appreciate the kind invitation and the grand treat given to us at the new theater Monday night, but are more than sorry to have to state that we cannot afford to continue to show our appreciation by patronizing the enterprise. We can't afford to buy a new suite of clothes every day after the play, made necessary by the stains of rotten eggs and stones and other missiles thrown at us in the dark, such as were thrown into crowds of our people coming home Monday night.⁷

The paper's editor printed the following response:

It is a reproach upon the white race that such an occurrence as that recited in this communication should take place and it is a reproach upon the Miami police force that nothing has been done to find out the perpetrators of this act. The good behavior of the Negroes in Miami is frequently remarked upon by visitors...The Negroes were invited to patronize the theater, an institution that we all want to succeed. The gallery of the theater has been reserved for their use and it is so arranged that they do not come in contact with whites in reaching the gallery.⁸

Unfortunately, nothing seems to have been done to atone in any way for the mistreatment that blacks had suffered. This racial animus could have foreseeably prompted Wometco to build and operate "colored only" theaters.

The ACE was built circa 1930-1940 as a "colored only" theater by the Wolfson-Meyer Theater Company and served as a local movie theater for West Grove residents until 1978. The Wolfson-Meyer Theater Company, founded in 1924-25 by Colonel Mitchell Wolfson⁹ and his brother-in-law Sydney Meyer, started with three movie houses in Miami: the Temple, Lyric and Lincoln, later renamed the Ritz, and two in West Palm Beach:

⁷ Marina Novaes, The ACE Theater – Designation Report, City of Miami – Historic and Environmental Preservation Department, 9-10, July 2014, <http://egov.ci.miami.fl.us/Legistarweb/Attachments/76306.pdf> (last visited Mar. 1, 2015), Appendix C, Designation Report.

⁸ Id.

⁹ Col. Mitchell Wolfson (1900-1983) was one of the founders of Miami Dade Community College, now known as Miami Dade College. The downtown campus, Wolfson Campus, is named in his honor. Col. Wolfson was also the first Jewish Mayor of Miami Beach. He is known throughout Miami for his dedication to education and the arts.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 3 ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

the Grand and Dixie.¹⁰ In 1926, the company built its first theater, the Capitol.¹¹ The company soon became one of South Florida's corporate giants, Wometco Enterprises, diversifying its business interests to include television broadcasting (WTVJ, Channel 4), vending, Coca-Cola Bottling, cable television, and tourist attractions – including the world famous Seaquarium.¹²

Celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 1950, Wometco had 30 theaters throughout South Florida and the Bahamas.¹³ From 1925 to 1950, Wometco either built, owned and/or operated eight “colored only” theaters in South Florida. Six were in Miami: the ACE, Bunche, Capitol (formerly the Harlem), Carver, Lyric and Ritz; and two in West Palm Beach: Dixie and Grand.¹⁴ Of the six in Miami, the ACE is the only “colored” theater built by Wometco that remains standing. Wometco did not build the Lyric¹⁵ and Carver Theaters, and the Carver was not originally built to serve a “colored only” audience.¹⁶

The ACE is significant for its association with the social and political history of African American communities in and around Miami and the county. The ACE is located in Miami's oldest black neighborhood. During Miami's “separate but [un]equal” era, blacks managed to cultivate a thriving and close-knit community that centered on black-owned and operated businesses, schools and churches. As the only public entertainment facility opened to blacks in the Grove, the ACE was an integral part of that community, which Wometco supported.¹⁷

¹⁰ *Wometco Chain Marks 25th Anniversary*, *supra* note 1. The Lyric, Ritz, Grand and Dixie were operated as Negro theatres. See Appendix D, Negro Theatres, The Film Daily Year Book (1941-1955).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Wometco Enterprises, Inc., <http://wometcoenterprises.com/> (last visited Jan. 2, 2015); *Wometco Chain Marks 25th Anniversary*, *supra* note 1.

¹³ *Wometco Chain Marks 25th Anniversary*, *supra* note 1.

¹⁴ See Appendix D, Negro Theaters, The Film Daily Year Book (1941-1955). Wometco also operated four Negro theatres in the Bahamas: Cinema, Nassau, Meres, and Rainbow Gardens. Appendix D, Negro Theaters, The Film 1953 Daily Year Book.

¹⁵ Located in Miami's historic Overtown section, The Lyric Theater, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is the oldest standing theater in Miami. It was built in 1913 by Geder Walker, an African American businessman from Georgia. *History of Overtown's Lyric Theater*, <http://www.theblackarchives.org/lyric-theater/history-of-overtowns-historic-lyric-theater/> (last visited Feb. 5, 2015). According to a Miami Daily News article, Wometco either took over the operations of or bought the Lyric sometime in 1925, *supra* note 1.

¹⁶ The Carver, aka the Center Theater, was located on 6050 NW Seventh Avenue. It opened in 1940 catering exclusively to white patrons. The Film Daily 1941 Year Book kept a separate listing of Negro Theaters. The Center is not listed as a Negro theater. See Appendix D, The Film Daily 1941 Year Book, 801, 902, 938.

¹⁷ Wometco recognized the unique relationship a movie theater has with its surrounding community. When the Capitol Theater, 322 NW 14th Street, formerly the Harlem Theater, closed in 1973, Stanley Stern noted that Wometco makes hard decisions when it closes neighborhood theaters. “A theater is part of the community and you have a responsibility to the community. But you get to a point when your business sense says no [when a theater is no longer profitable].” *Death for Capitol Theater*, MIAMI NEWS, 5 & 8A, July 25, 2973, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2206&dat=19730725&id=6dglAAAIBAJ&sjid=ivMFAAAAIBAJ&pg=3574,1642754&hl=en> (last visited Mar. 14, 2015); Appendix A, News Articles – Wometco Enterprises, Inc.

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The ACE tells not only the story of the African American community in the Grove, the City of Miami, and Miami-Dade County, it also tells the story of America.

By preserving historic sites that tell the story of African Americans in this country we draw attention to the contributions of both ordinary and extraordinary people. Such stories might otherwise be lost because urban renewal and out-migration of blacks destroyed or led to abandonment of many African American communities. By saving African American landmarks we can simulate revitalization and foster interest in places that today seem to exist without history or meaning.¹⁸

In 1909, there were approximately 112 African American theaters in the United States.¹⁹ That number eclipsed in 1955 to between 1045 and 1065, with the highest number being in Florida, 114 theaters.²⁰ Movie theaters, primarily in the South, that catered to Negro audiences were either built exclusively for Negroes or were segregated by partitions. Segregation in public accommodations and recreational facilities was an important feature of African American life post-reconstruction and throughout the 20th century.²¹ Where segregation did not extend to separate facilities for blacks and whites, certain sections of the theater were designated as being for “whites only” and other sections (most often the balcony or less desirable rear seating) for “colored” patrons.²²

These segregated areas took on derogative terms such as “buzzard’s roost, crow’s nest, and peanut gallery.”²³ Some theaters operated a “midnight” show policy exclusively for Negroes.²⁴ Some theaters split the week between days for white and days for black audiences.²⁵

“African American theaters were often smaller and lower quality. It was rarer, for instance for an African-American theater to be air conditioned, and in the early years of cinema it was less likely for an African-

¹⁸ Brent Leggs, et. al, *Preserving African American Historic Places*, 2, National Trust for Historic Places, (2012), available at http://www.preservationnation.org/forum/library/public-articles/PB_AfricanAmericanSites.pdf (last visited June 1, 2014).

¹⁹ Arthur Knight, *Black Moviegoing and Its Context in the Small-Town US South* in *EXPLORATIONS IN NEW CINEMA HISTORY: APPROACHES AND CASE STUDIES*, 230 (Richard Malby, et, al, ed. (Wiley Publishers, 2011)); see also Appendix D, Negro Theatres, *The Film Daily Year Book*, (1941-1955).

²⁰ Knight, *supra*.

²¹ Richard Gil & Justin Marion, *Segregation, Discrimination, and Film-Entry: Evidence from Post-war African-American Movie Theaters*, 7, Aug. 2014, available at <http://www.econ.upf.edu/docs/seminars/gil.pdf> (last visited Jan. 10, 2015).

²² Robert R. Weyeneth, *The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematic Past*, 19, (Oct. 1, 2004), *THE PUBLIC HISTORIAN*, 27(4), 11-44, available at http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist_facpub (last visited Jan. 10, 2015).

²³ *Ibid.* at 19.

²⁴ Knight, *supra* note 16, at 231.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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American theater to have sound.”²⁶ Although, Negro theaters were lower in quality in several aspects than their white counterparts, i.e. air conditioning, cleanliness, and technology,²⁷ these theaters, because of segregation in many Southern towns, were the only places “where mostly everyone could go and enjoy themselves...[They were] the major form of entertainment that [Black] people looked forward to daily and on weekends.”²⁸

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Utilitarian in form with Art Deco characteristics, the ACE has the conventional features of small, modest theaters built exclusively to provide entertainment to a “colored only” clientele. One of the ACE’s distinguishing features is that, unlike theaters in other parts of Florida and the South, Negro patrons did not have to use a separate entrance for designated seating in the rear of the theater or a separate staircase to access designated seating in the balcony.

Although the ACE’s genesis began in the days of legally sanctioned segregation, people’s memories of the ACE are as rich and colorful as the Technicolor pictures that once lighted its screen. George Washington Carver Sr. High School held graduation ceremonies²⁹ and proms at the ACE. Imagine the pageantry of students walking down Grand Avenue on a hot June day in their caps and gowns into the welcoming confines of the ACE. Or imagine teens swooning to the Do Wop sounds of The Drifters and the Platters at the proms. When the ACE’s screen was silent, the auditorium reverberated with the electric guitars of gospel bands,³⁰ rhythm and blues, and soul singers. And for singers who finger-snapped to songs of love and loss on Saturday nights, church revivals saved their souls on Sunday mornings.

During wartime, the ACE was prepared to shelter the Black Grove. With U-Boat warfare stepped up in the Caribbean, particularly on the South Florida coastline, Wometco ensured that all of its theaters took safety measures for its patrons, because the “show must go on.”

²⁶ Gil, *supra* note 18, at 2.

²⁷ *Id.*, at 1.

²⁸ Survey and Research on Grand Theater, Oct. 8, 2000, *see* note 11, *Gone Today, Black Theaters Were the One Time ‘Place to Be’*, CHARLOTTE POST, June 5, 1986, <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&crgrandtheater.htm> (last visited Dec. 15, 2015); *see also* Knight, *supra* note 16, at 232.

²⁹ *News About Miami’s Negro Community: Carver Grads*. MIAMI DAILY NEWS, 5-C, June 11, 1949, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2206&dat=19490611&id=83kzAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=dukFAAAAIBAJ&pg=5021,769414&hl=en> (last visited Mar. 14, 2015); *Miami Community News*, MIAMI DAILY NEWS, 9-C, June 7, 1950 <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2206&dat=19500607&id=vWA0AAAAIIBAJ&sjid=pesFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4335,3186087&hl=en> (last visited Mar. 14, 2015), Appendix E, News Articles – ACE Theatre.

³⁰ *Gospel Program at Ace Theatre*, THE MIAMI TIMES, 8, Mar. 14, 1964, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00028321/00154/8?search=ace+theatre> (last visited Jan. 23, 2015), Appendix E, News Articles – ACE Theatre.

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For example, the Wometco chain of stands is pretty much in the pink of condition as regards protective measures, -- blackouts, air raids, fire-fighting, et al --, thanks to the enterprise of the circuit's co-owners, Mitchell Wolfson and Sidney Meyer....Not only are the Wometco safety plans finely delineated on paper, but the organization to carry them out is painstakingly achieved....It is like a small but finely equipped army....Each warden and attache has received solid training, -- being realized by the Messrs. Wolfson and Meyer that their theaters lie in a decidedly exposed area....In Miami itself, the holdings consist of the Capitol, Mayfair, Miami, State, Rosetta, Center, Biltmore, Tower, Grove, Strand, Harlem, Lyric, Ritz and Ace, while in hard-by Miami Beach are the Lincoln, Plaza, Surf and Cameo, plus the Grand and Dixie in Palm Beach...To give you some idea of the thorough preparations, there are, of course all kinds of safety equipment devices and accessories, to protect property and life...But the payoff is that even needles wherewith to play the emergency phonographs, designed to provide entertainment during air raids, should all other musical mechanisms fail, have been thought of and purchased!³¹

The ACE served as a refuge for those needing secure and safe shelter during hurricanes. In 1948, the ACE was used as a hurricane shelter.³² During the Cuban missile crisis, as Miami opened its arms to thousands of Cuban refugees, the ACE was one of the designated fallout shelters in "Colored Town," should Fidel and his cohort Khrushchev decide to bomb Miami from an isle 90 miles to the south.

During the sixties, the ACE treated its patrons to closed-circuit telecasts of boxing matches³³ and featured movies such as "Hercules Unchained," "Imitation of Life", "The Valley of the Dragons", "Big Sky", "Spread Eagle", and "Rage of the Buffalo"³⁴ On Teacher Work Days, Wometco, along with Coca-Cola Bottling Company, sponsored free admission passes for students in the Grove. Teachers doled out the passes as rewards for good conduct, good grades and perfect attendance, or to encourage students who were destined for Silver Oaks (the juvenile detention center) to stay on the right track.

The ACE provided a constructive outlet for students who would have roamed the streets. It was the surrogate babysitter for parents who worked. It was a central component of a village that raised its children.

When Jim Crow's wings no longer blanketed Miami, blacks were allowed to go to white theaters. Ironically, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, while opening doors quickened the closing of others. Blacks from the Grove

³¹ The Film Daily 1941 Yearbook, 4, Feb. 24, 1941, Appendix A, News Articles – Wometco Enterprises, Inc.

³² [The Motion Picture Herald, 44, Oct. 2, 1948, Appendix A, News Articles – Wometco Enterprises, Inc.](#)

³³ *World Heavyweight Championship Return Bout: Ingemar Johansson vs Floyd Patterson*, THE MIAMI TIMES, 8, June 18, 1960, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00028321/00220/10x?search=theatre> (last visited Jan. 3, 2015), Appendix E, News Articles - ACE Theatre.

³⁴ *Movie Thoughts*, THE MIAMI TIMES, 9, Apr. 4, 1964, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00028321/00159/8?search=theatre> (last visited Jan. 3, 2015) Appendix E, News Articles - ACE Theatre.

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branched out and patronized newer venues in Suniland (now Pinecrest), Dadeland, and downtown Miami. Single screen movie theaters quickly became *passé*, yielding to multiplex theaters. Determined to support the West Grove community, Wometco reopened the ACE as a movie theater in 1973, after having closed it for a couple of years.³⁵ But “colored” theaters were no longer profitable. Unlike the Capitol Theater, however, which succumbed to the wrecking ball in the name of urban renewal,³⁶ Wometco sold the ACE in 1979 to Harvey Wallace, a local black businessman in the Grove. Mr. Wallace’s family has owned commercial property on Grand Avenue since the 1940s and were pioneers and business people in the West Grove community, having been in South Florida since 1921. Because of Mr. Wallace’s ties to the Coconut Grove community, Wometco hoped that he would preserve the theater. He died before his vision to develop the ACE into a Bahamian-style marketplace or a mixed-use, residential/retail structure, with a smaller auditorium for cultural and entertainment purposes, materialized.

The ACE is owned by the ACE Development Company; the principals are Mrs. Dorothy Wallace and Dr. Denise Wallace. Mrs. Wallace, like her husband, has a long history of civic and community involvement in Miami-Dade County. A Missouri native, she migrated to Miami after marrying her college sweetheart, Harvey, lured by the promises of swaying palm trees and orange groves. Her career as an educator spans more than 30 years. She began as a substitute teacher at Carver Sr. High School and later accepted a permanent position at Mays Sr. High School in Goulds. Breaking barriers is not anything new for Mrs. Wallace. In 1963, she was one of two black women to integrate the University of Miami’s School of Education, graduating with a Master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling. In 1972, she was appointed administrator for COPE Center South, an alternative school for pregnant teens and teen parents. In 1997, the school board renamed the school Dorothy M. Wallace COPE Center South. In 1980, she was the only black delegate to the Republican National Convention from Dade County. She has served as Secretary of the Dade County Republican Executive Committee, Financial Secretary and Committee Chairman of the Florida Black Republican Council and President of the All-American Republican Council. Governor Jeb Bush appointed her to serve on various committees. See Appendix C, Designation Report.

Dr. Denise Wallace has more than 20 years of experience as an attorney, specializing in complex commercial litigation and higher education law. She has served as an Assistant City Attorney (City of Miami), Sr. Assistant Florida Attorney General, General Counsel for Palm Beach State College, and Vice President of Legal Affairs & General Counsel, Dillard University. Having served as the Vice Chairperson of the Coconut Grove Village Council, she has extensive knowledge and experience in community development. She has participated in numerous studies on the revitalization of the West Grove. See Appendix C, Designation Report.

³⁵ *ACE Theatre in Grove Reopened by Wometco*. JEWISH FLORIDIAN, 6-B, Sept. 28, 1973, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/02330> (last visited Mar. 1, 2014), Appendix E, News Articles – ACE Theatre.

³⁶ *Death for Capitol Theater*, *supra* note 14, Appendix A, News Articles – Wometco Enterprises, Inc.

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Mrs. Wallace and Dr. Wallace share their husband/father's dream to preserve the ACE and to make it once more a viable part of the Coconut Grove community.

Although many community residents have fond and sentimental memories of the ACE, few would want to attend the theater as it was decades ago. Theaters as entertainment facilities have changed. Today theater owners realize that patrons want comfort and amenities. They want food, beer and wine as part of their entertainment experience. They want restrooms large enough to accommodate them during intermissions. They want to come early and linger after the show with their friends. They want their entertainment to be a much more social experience. They are more likely to want facilities that invite everyone into a social atmosphere than the fixed seating halls of the past.

In 2008, the owners of the ACE applied to have the theater designated as an historic site by the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental and Preservation (HEP) Board. The final hearing was held on July 1, 2014. Community members, several of them who once worked at the theater, and other concerned citizens came to Miami's City Hall to support the owners' application for historic designation. Many people gave impassioned personal recollections of their fond memories of the ACE. See Appendix A, Designation Report. The ACE, which had been silent for decades, spoke through the voices of the ticket takers, those who sold popcorn and hotdogs, those who participated in graduation ceremonies and proms, those who came to meet boyfriends, and those who simply wanted to see a movie. Everyone wanted to remind the members of the HEP Board that the ACE should not be forgotten. In fact, that is the purpose of historical preservation. "Preservation contributes much to a forgetful society. It empowers black youth by revealing historical themes besides slavery, including entrepreneurship, civil rights, entertainment, sports, education, and political activism."³⁷

Dr. David White, one of the sixty-eight students known as the Crusaders whose graduation was held at the ACE in 1949, shared his memories of the ACE. "As a little boy it was 10 cents to attend the ACE Theatre and as a teenager we paid 25 cents; ticket sales were by Carnet Johnson. We saw mostly Westerns featuring John Wayne. I remember one time they put me out [of the ACE] because I was infatuated with a young lady who didn't want to be bothered. So I learned not to bother people if they didn't want to be bothered."³⁸

For Lorraine Dean (aka Shane) Bethel, who worked at the ACE as a teenager, the ACE has a special place in her memories. It was the place, as a teen, where she had dates with her future husband. "I recall having 30 minutes break. The ACE stayed crowded and I had to be home by 10 p.m. After the movie everyone would gather at the Rainbow Inn. One night close to 10 p.m., I cut my foot running home through the alley behind the Inn. The scar still remains. The best thing about the ACE was meeting the people who came there."³⁹

³⁷ Leggs, *supra* note 15.

³⁸ *Id.*, at 21.

³⁹ *Id.* at 17.

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For Annette Wallace Turner and other students, the ACE was their math tutor. “If you couldn’t count your money, [Bobbie Sands] would give your money back to you. You had to know how to count your money before you could purchase a ticket.”⁴⁰

Shirley McClane remembers the ACE as the place where she learned skills that helped her mature from a shy, introverted teen to a young, confident woman. Being allowed to work as ticket taker and concession attendant helped her excel in math and allowed her to polish her customer service skills, which later helped her when she went to work at Eastern Airlines.⁴¹

Bobbie Sands, who worked the ticket booth and concession stand from 1962 until sometime after 1973, when the ACE closed, remembered seeing James Brown at the ACE. “Uniforms were not required, but when you worked the concession area you were required to wear a little white jacket. To see the Tammy Show featuring James Brown, the line was down the street to the fish market and sometimes down to Bethel Williams Funeral Home. And I remember Lover’s Lane was in the back row of the theater.”⁴²

The Black Grove, once known for good times and mayhem, the ACE Theatre’s neon lights, mom and pop businesses, and a bustling pedestrian community, is struggling, like so many black neighborhoods, to find renewed economic life. There have been many studies by the city and county on how to revitalize this area without gentrifying it.⁴³ Florida International University and the University of Miami have used the ACE for design projects.⁴⁴ Several community groups and civic-minded individuals support the restoration of the ACE,⁴⁵ seeing it as vital to the revitalization of the “Black Grove”, and a beacon of pride for a community that has been plagued by dreams deferred.

For Coconut Grove’s black community, the ACE signifies much more than an aged building. The ACE is a part of their lives and fetches good memories of a time when they did not have the mobility to go out and about as everybody else, good memories that kept this community united and strong to fight for equal rights and a better future.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Novaes, *supra* note 4, at 16.

⁴¹ Oral interview of Shirley McClane, Feb. 18, 2015.

⁴² *Id.*, at 18.

⁴³ Excerpts - Grand Avenue Vision Plan, *available at* <http://www.miamigov.com/planning/docs/guidelines/GrandAveVisionPlan.pdf> (last visited Mar. 12, 2015; Appendix B.

⁴⁴ *Arch*, The University of Miami School of Architecture Newsletter, Summer 2002, 6, <http://arc.miami.edu/images/uploads/Summer02.pdf> (last visited Dec. 27, 2007); The School of Architecture at the University of Miami, CUCD Past Projects, ACE Theater Complex, 2, *available at* [Articles\12- CUCD Past Projects-PROJECT LIST 1992-1995.pdf](#)(accessed on Dec. 27, 2007), Appendix E, News Articles – ACE Theatre.

⁴⁵ Excerpts - Grand Avenue Vision Plan, *supra* note 40.

⁴⁶ *Id.*, at 12.

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ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
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Section number 10 Page 1

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

From Homestead Amended PB B PG106, Lot I0&W I/2Lot 9 Blk 26
Parcel Number: 01-4121-007-4150

Boundary Justification

The above boundary description encompasses all of the historic resources associated with the historic ACE Theatre.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. ACE Theatre
2. 3664 Grand Avenue, Miami (Miami-Dade County), Florida
3. Denise Wallace
4. January-March 2015
5. 3391 Florida Avenue, Miami, FL 33133
6. Front (North) Facade with Marquee and Signage, Looking South
7. Photo 1 of 27

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the following photos unless otherwise indicated

6. Front Facade, Lighted Playbill, Looking East
7. Photo 2 of 27

6. Signage and Marquee, Looking South
7. Photo 3 of 27

6. Signage and Marquee, Looking East
7. Photo 4 of 27

6. Front and East Facade, Looking South
7. Photo 5 of 27

6. East Side of Theater, Grass Lot, Looking South
7. Photo 6 of 27

6. East Side of Theater, Looking North
7. Photo 7 of 27

6. Rear of Theater and East Side Exit Door, Looking West
7. Photo 8 of 27

6. Rear of Theater, East Side Exit Door, Looking South
7. Photo 9 of 27

6. Exit Door that Leads from the East Side of the Building
7. Photo 10 of 27

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National Park Service**

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Section number Photos Page 2

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. Historic Front Facade, circa 1979

7. Photo 11 of 27

6. Auditorium Original Picture Screen, Looking South

7. Photo 12 of 27

6. Auditorium, West Side Exit Door, Looking South

7. Photo 13 of 27

6. "Exit" Door, Looking North

7. Photo 14 of 27

6. Auditorium, Scone Light Fixture, Looking West

7. Photo 15 of 27

6. Women's Restroom, Sink, Looking North

7. Photo 16 of 27

6. Women's restroom, Stall #1, Looking South

7. Photo 17 of 27

6. Men's Restroom, Urinals, Looking West

7. Photo 18 of 27

6. Men's Restroom, Sink, Looking South

7. Photo 19 of 27

6. Men's Restroom, Stall, Looking South

7. Photo 20 of 27

6. Office, Closet, Looking North

7. Photo 21 of 27

6. Office, Window on West Wall, Looking West

7. Photo 22 of 27

6. Staircase Leading to Second Floor Mezzanine and Projection Room, Looking West

7. Photo 23 of 27

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Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 3

ACE THEATRE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

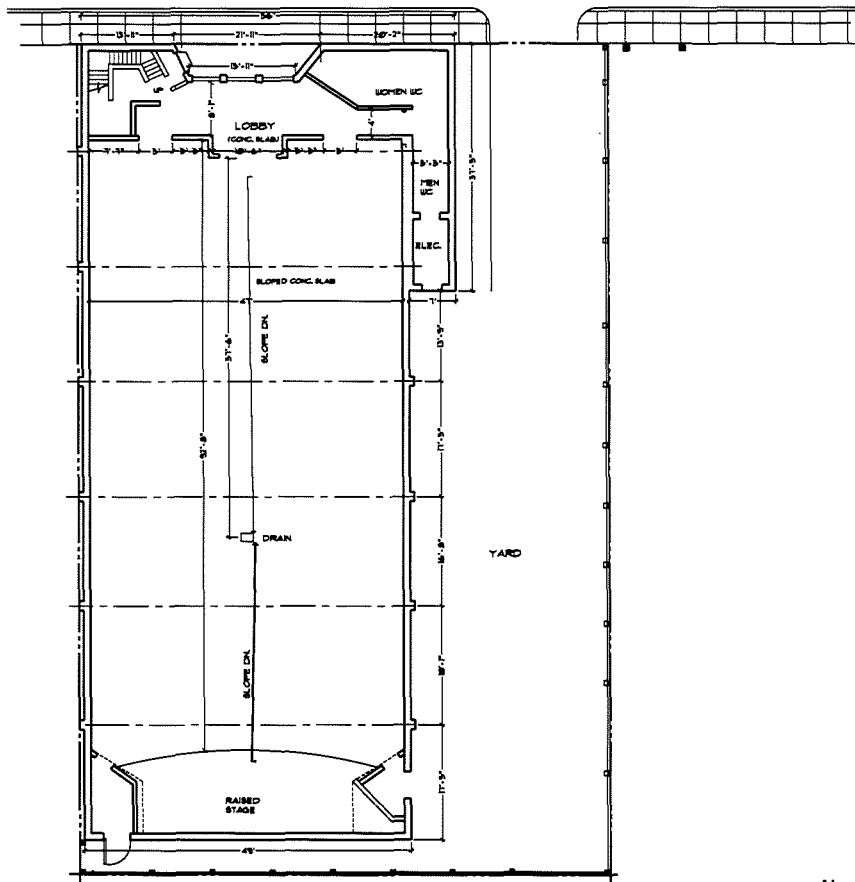
6. Second floor, Mezzanine Landing, Restroom, Looking North
7. Photo 24 of 27

6. Second Floor, Mezzanine Landing, Restroom, Looking East
7. Photo 25 of 27

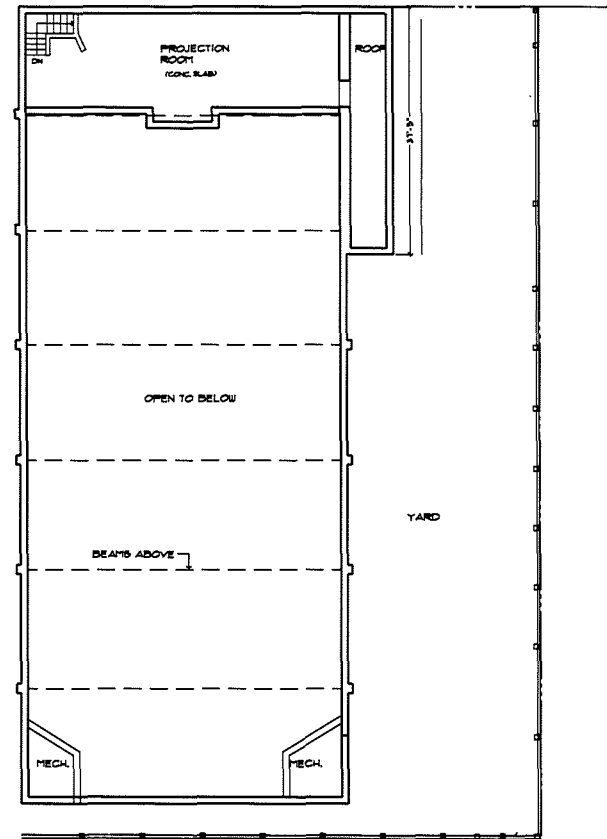
6. Projection Room, Looking South
7. Photo 26 of 27

6. Door Leading into Storage Room, Second Floor, Looking Eastt
7. Photo 27 of 27

GRAND AVE.



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR 4 SITE PLAN



EXISTING MEZZANINE PLAN

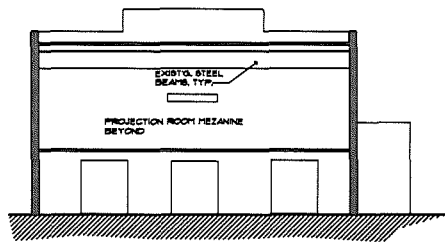
10-10-2007

ACE THEATER ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

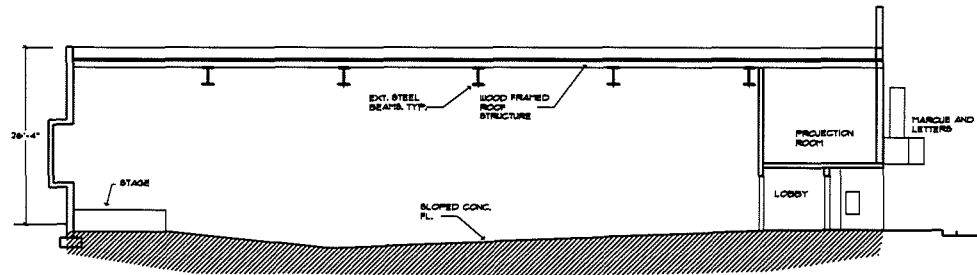
CITYSCAPES GROUP
PLANNING & DESIGN
10 NW 105 ST
Miami Shores, FL.
1-877-875-0206

EXISTING
FLOOR PLANS
1/8"=1'-0"

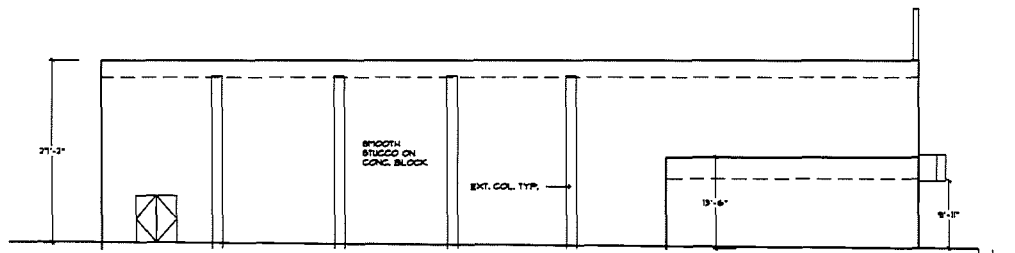
A-1



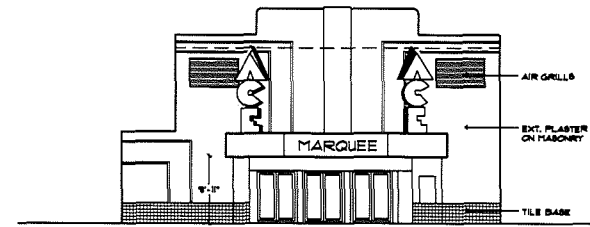
EXISTING CROSS SECTION THRU
THEATER LOOKING NORTH



EXISTING SECTION THRU THEATER LOOKING WEST



EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING NORTH (FRONT) ELEVATION

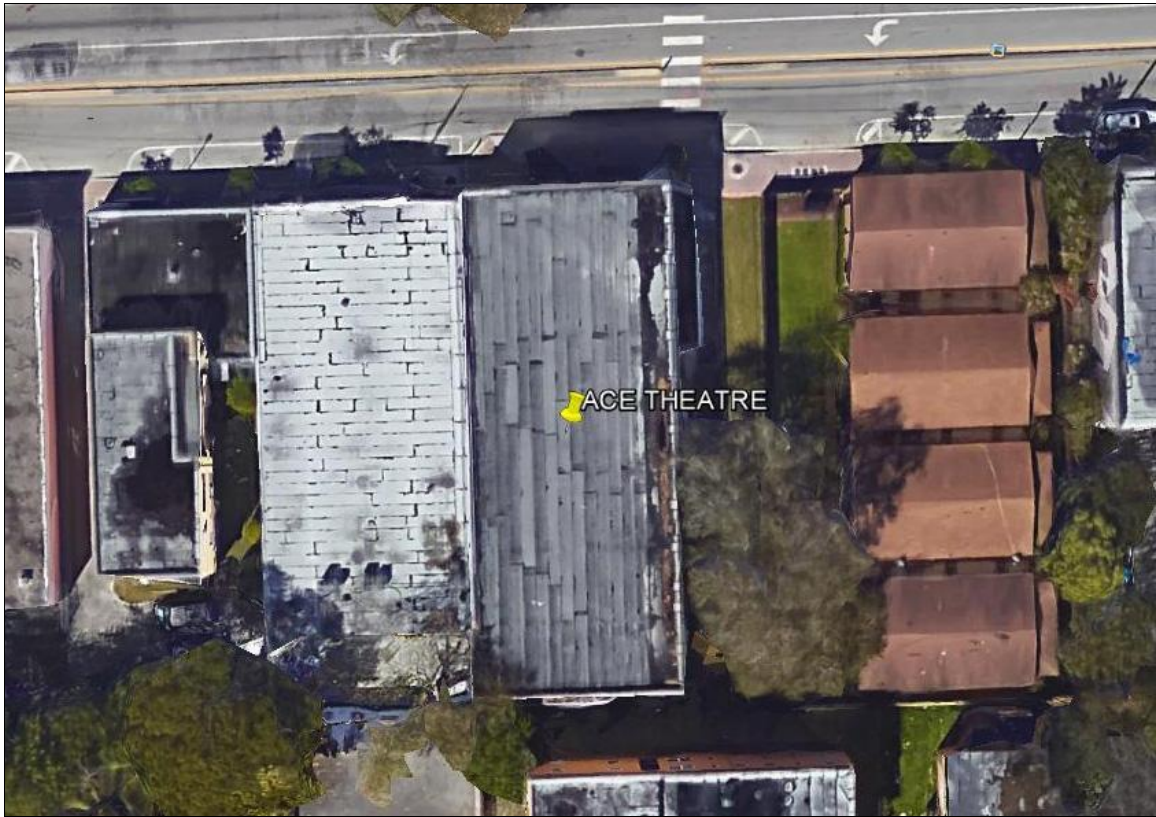
10-10-2007

ACE THEATER ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

CITYSCAPES GROUP
PLANNING & DESIGN
10 NW 105 ST
Miami Shores, FL.
1-877-815-0166

EXISTING
SECTIONS/ELEVATIONS
1/8" = 1'-0"

A-2



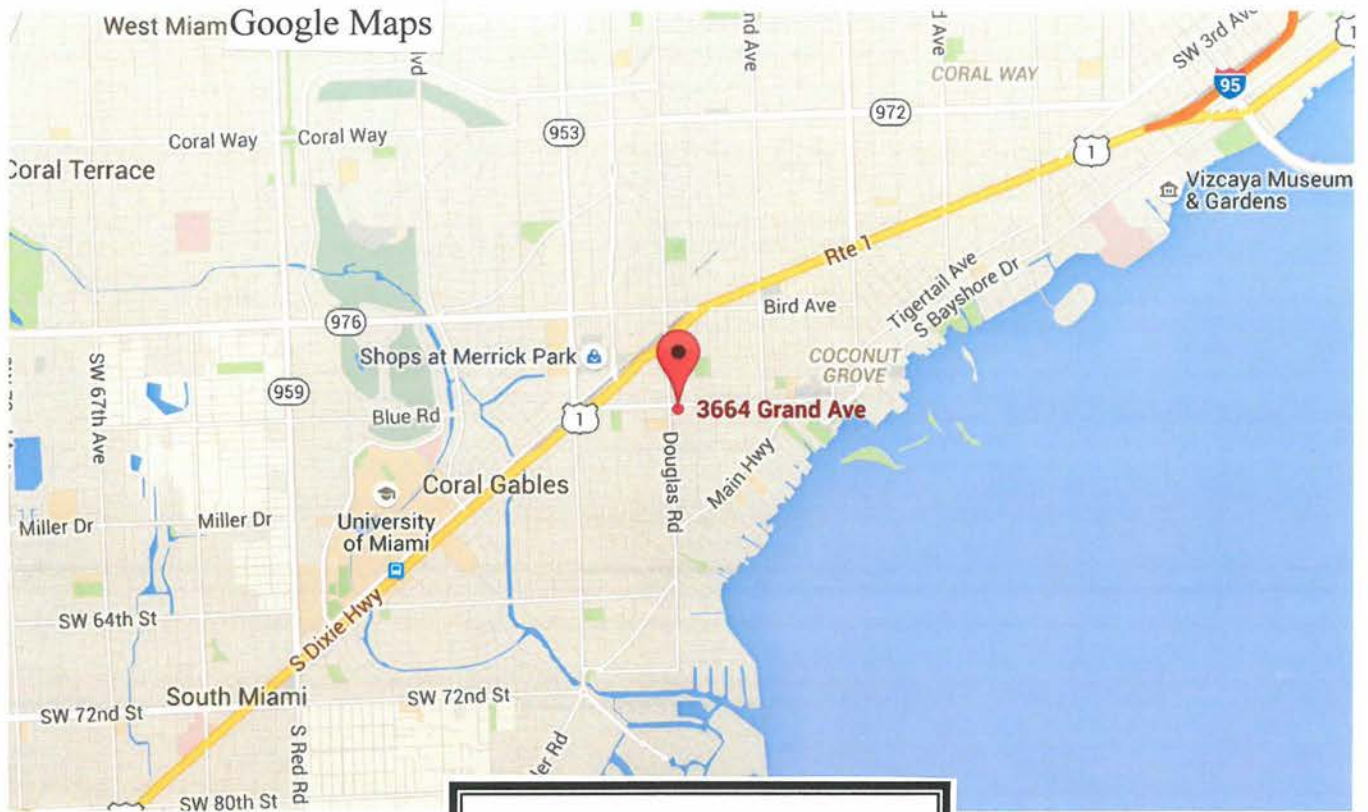
ACE Theatre, 3664 Grand Avenue, Miami (Miami-Dade County), Florida

**Latitude: 25.727449°
Longitude: -80.252840°**

UTM References

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	574947	2845714





ACE THEATRE
Miami, Dade County, Florida

LOCATOR MAP























































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Ace Theatre

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Dade

DATE RECEIVED: 4/29/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/14/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000359

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 6-13-2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Locally significant Theatre - served as the only venue for African-Americans in Coconut Grove - All-around entertainment venue, Live acts as well as movies were featured

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER J. Galdon DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

City of Miami



DANIEL J. ALFONSO
City Manager

January 11, 2016

Desiree Estabrook
Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation
Division of Historical Resources
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: The Ace Theater, 3664 Grand Avenue, Miami, FL

Dear Ms. Estabrook:

I am pleased to send this letter in strong support of listing the Ace Theater on the National Register. The property was locally designated by Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board on July 1, 2014 by Resolution HEPB-R-14-030 (see attached).

The ACE Theater was built circa 1930 by the Wolfson-Meyer Theater Company and served as the local movie theater for the West Grove residents into the 1950s; the theater was the only entertainment facility to serve the black community in Coconut Grove during the segregation era.

The ACE Theater has significance as it relates to the historic heritage of Miami and possesses integrity of setting, feeling, materials, design, association, and location. The property is eligible for designation as a historic site under the criterion (3) as numbered in Sec. 23-4 (a), of Chapter 23 of the City Code.

(3) Exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community;

The ACE Theater is associated with the social history of the black community of Miami-Dade in the segregate era.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information at this time.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Megan Cross Schmitt



RECEIVED 2280

APR 29 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

April 21, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **ACE Theatre (FMSF #8DA14112), in Dade County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bob Jones at Robert.Jones@DOS.myflorida.com or (850) 245.6349, if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alissa Slade Lotane".

Alissa Slade Lotane
Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation
& Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Ace Development Company, Inc.
12605 SW 93rd Avenue
Miami, FL 33176
786-385-2245



June 1, 2016

Mr. James Gabbert
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Washington, D.C.

Re: The Ace Theatre
3664 Grand Avenue, Miami, FL 33133
16000359

Dear Mr. Gabbert:

This letter is in support of the Ace Theatre's nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. I am Dr. Denise Wallace, President of Ace Development Company, Inc., owner of the Ace Theatre. Although the application supporting the nomination sets forth in great detail reasons why the Ace Theatre is locally significant in the area of recreation and culture under Criterion A: association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, I would like to express why listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Register) is being sought.

In 2012, I relocated to New Orleans and discovered that the City and the State of Louisiana have a vibrant and progressive historical preservation movement. I was surprised to find out how the private owners and sought and obtained listing on the Register for theaters, which include movie theaters. After visiting the Carver and Seanger Theatres, I realized that preserving the Ace Theatre could contribute to the history of Miami and Coconut Grove. As I child, I spent my Saturday afternoons watching movies at the Ace. And although the theatre was built as a segregated facility, I did not realize until recently that with the contemplated upscale development slated for the immediate area, the theatre will be one of the last physical vestiges of Jim Crow's legacy. And yet, the segregated nature of the theatre cannot diminish the special memories that I and other people have about the theatre.

As owner of the theatre, I plan to restore the theatre, as much as possible, to its historical state. As you can see, the marquee is still intact and so are the neon signs. It is unfortunate that the original seats were removed, however, seats have been replaced in theatres that have been restored. The interior of the theatre is not as ornate as some of the movie places that have been listed on the Register, but efforts will be made to retain as much of the interior designs as possible. At the local hearing to have the theatre designated historic by the City of Miami, I was surprised by how many local community members were supported preserving the theatre, and they are waiting for theatre's neon signs to once again light up the night sky.

Sincerely,



Dr. Denise Wallace
President

Ms. Barbra Sands
3571 Hibiscus Street
Miami, FL 33133

June 4, 2016



Mr. James Gabbert
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Washington, DC

RE: Ace Theater
3664 Grand Avenue, Miami, FL 33133
16000359

Dear Mr. Gabbert:

My name is Barbara Sands. I am supporting the Wallace family in their desire to have the Ace Theatre listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I worked at the Ace theatre off and on from 1960 until it closed in 1978. I worked at the ticket booth, and the concession stand. As a teenager and later a young adult growing up in Coconut Grove, which is the oldest black neighborhood in the Miami, I attended many events at the theater, not only movies. I had my high school prom at the Ace. I also saw James Brown and his band. Other stars came to the Ace, such as Ike and Tina Turner.

This theater has meant a lot to African Americans in Coconut Grove and Miami Dade County. People from as far as Homestead and Florida City, which are more than 30 miles away, would come to the Ace on Saturdays to see the movies and other events, because the other movie theaters were segregated.

I have lived in black section Coconut Grove for seventy-seven and attended George Washington Carver Elementary and Senior High Schools. The Grove is quickly changing and many of the buildings that were once black only have been torn down. The Ace Theater is one of the few buildings left that was built during segregation that served as entertainment and meeting black for the black community.

Please vote to have theater listed on the National Register.

Thank you.

Barbara Sands
305-442-8724 home; 305-496-7175 cell

Ms. Lydia Major
3420 Oak Avenue
Miami, FL 33133

June 6, 2016

Mr. James Gabbert
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Washington, DC

RE: Ace Theater, 3664 Grand Avenue, Miami, FL 33133
16000359

Dear Mr. Gabbert:

I am writing this letter to express my support for the having the Ace Theater, located in the historically black section of Coconut Grove, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although, I never attended the theater (I was six years old when it closed) I grew up listening to relatives tell stories about the movies they saw at the theater and how they would go there for gospel shows and to see boxing matches. My family is one of the original Bahamian families that helped settle Coconut Grove. I have visited other cities, New Orleans and New York City, and have seen how the African American movie theaters in these cities have been preserved and renovated to serve the community. I think it is great that the Ace theater is going to be renovated and will highlight the history of the African American community of Coconut Grove.

Yours very truly,



Lydia Major
786-558-5692.



Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board

Resolution: HEPB-R-14-030

File ID 14-00552

July 1, 2014

Item HEPB.3

Ms. Lynn B. Lewis offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

A RESOLUTION OF THE MIAMI HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD, APPROVING THE FINAL LOCAL DESIGNATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL HISTORIC SITE AT 3664 GRAND AVENUE FOR THE ACE THEATER.

Upon being seconded by Mr. Jorge Kuperman, the motion passed and was adopted by a vote of 7-0:

Mr. Timothy Barber	Yes
Mr. David Freedman	Yes
Mr. Gary Hecht	Yes
Mr. William E. Hopper, Jr.	Yes
Mr. Jorge Kuperman	Yes
Ms. Lynn B. Lewis	Yes
Mr. Gerald C. Marston	Absent
Mr. Hugh Ryan	Absent
Mr. Todd Tragash	Yes

Megan Ann Schmitt
Megan Schmitt
Preservation Officer

15 July 2014
Execution Date

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE)

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned authority, Megan Schmitt, Preservation Officer of the City of Miami, Florida, and acknowledges that she executed the foregoing Resolution.

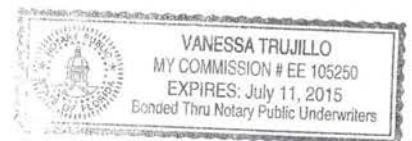
SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS 15th DAY OF July, 2014.

Vanessa Trujillo
Print Notary Name

Vanessa Trujillo
Notary Public State of Florida

Personally know 2 or Produced I.D. _____
Type and number of I.D. produced _____
Did take an oath _____ or Did not take an oath 2

My Commission Expires:



COCONUT GROVE JULY 2, 2014 2:29 PM



Former West Grove theater named historic site

HIGHLIGHTS

Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board designated the ACE Theater on Grand Avenue as a historic site Tuesday.

by Jackie Salo

Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board designated the ACE Theater on Grand Avenue as a historic site Tuesday.

For residents in the West Grove, the ACE Theater is a relic of the years of segregation. The movie theater, which was built circa 1930, was the only one to serve the black community in the Grove in the 1950s.

The building has since lost its luster, and stands as a shell of what it once was. The marquee has not lit up for years, and the pink facade that once distinguished the theater was painted white.

Plans to restore the theater never came to fruition and the rooms that housed sold-out audiences remain abandoned.

But the theater, albeit empty, has not been forgotten.

Many longtime West Grove residents turned out for the historic preservation board's meeting to share memories of dates, first jobs and even proms inside the theater.

"This was much more than a movie place," said Denise Wallace, president of ACE Development, which owns the building.

For Wallace, the testimony from community members were emotional. Her family has owned the building since her late father purchased the theater from Wometco Enterprises in 1979, but she did not initially realize the significance the theater had.

"It took me some time to realize that for some people it represents so much of their lives," Wallace said.

She was surprised to see there were board members equally as moved by the testimony.

Board member Timothy Barber commended the Wallace family and other advocates for their work to preserve the theater.

“I teach a class in American History, and sometimes kids these days have trouble understanding the past,” Barber said. “It is hard for them to see what colored people had to go through. When I see people like the Wallace family try to preserve this history, I am grateful. ... I am in tears up here.”

The board voted unanimously to approve the theater as a historic site. This designation validates what the Wallace family has felt for years.

“You will hear from my family and the community that the theater is already being called historic,” Wallace said. “It has been called historic by community members, and interestingly enough it has been called historic by the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.”

Wallace says she also hopes to pursue historic designation on the state and national levels. With these designations, she says it will open the door to more grants so they can restore the theater to a vibrant community center.

“With the historical designation, we are not only celebrating the antiquity of the theater, but its future as well,” said board member Gary Hecht.



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COMMENTS