NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90) OMB No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

DEC 06 1993

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

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.

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 Palace Theater
other names/site number N/A
2. Location
street & number 210 North Main Street not for publication N/A city or town Crossville vicinity N/A
state Tennessee code TN county Cumberland code 035 zip code 38555
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide _X_ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date Date
Signature of certifying official/Title 12/1/93 Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
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/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

hereby certify that this property is entered in the National Register	Hupy Lapsle	Entered in the
See continuation sheet.		7
determined eligible for the National Register		
See continuation sheet.		
determined not eligible for the		
National Register		
removed from the National Register		
other (explain):		
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Classification		
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mership of Property (Check as many boxes as ap	oply) _	
private		<u>, </u>
X public-local public-State		
public-Federal		•
tegory of Property (Check only one box)		
X building(s)		
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o not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
Contributing Noncontributing		
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USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Palace Theater Cumberland County, Tennessee

6. Function	Ti			
b. Function	n or use			
Historic F	unctions (Enter categories from ins	structions)		
	RECREATION AND CULTURE	Sub:	Theater	
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Current Fu	nctions (Enter categories from inst.	ructions)		
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7. Descript	tion			
	ral Classification (Enter cate		instructions)	
MODER	RN MOVEMENT: Art Moderne/A	rt Deco		
				
				
Materials ((Enter categories from instructions)			
founda				
roof	WOOD Shingle and METAL			
	STONE: Crab Orchard			
	BRICK			
other				
	CONCRETE Block			

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

See continuation sheets

Palace Theater Cumberland County, Tennessee

Significant Dates

1936-38

Cumbe	rıan	a Cou	nty, Tennessee 4
8. St	atem	ent o	f Significance
			ional Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria ty for National Register listing)
-	X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
-		В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	X	С	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.
Crite	ria (Consid	derations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) N/A
-		A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
-		В	removed from its original location.
-		С	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.
Areas	of S	Signi	ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION ARCHITECTURE
Perio	d of	Sign	ificance 1936 - 1943

Palace Theater	Ρ	al	.a	ce	Ί	'h	e	a	t	e	r
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Cumberland County, Tennessee

8. Statement of	Significa	NCE (continued)		
Significant Per	SON (Complete N/		rked above)	-
Cultural Affili	ation	N/A		
Architect/Build		th, Eston, arc		
continuation sheets.)		gnificance (Expl		of the property on one or more
9. Major Biblio	graphical	References		
Previous docume	ntation on	file (NPS) N	/A	or more continuation sheets.)
requested. previously previously designated recorded by	listed in determined a National Historic	the National Re eligible by the Historic Lando American Build	egister he National Reg mark	#
Primary Locatio State Histo Other State Federal age Local gover X University Other Name of reposit	ric Preser agency ncy nment	vation Office	toric Preservat	tion
10. Geographica	l Data			**************************************
	(Place additionally U.S.G.S Quantum Easting 16 678)	al UTM references on a	a continuation sheet) ille, TN 109 NE Zone Easting N 3 4	

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.)

Palace Theater Cumberland County, Tennessee

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lauren E. Batte and Carroll Van West

organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

date May 12, 1993

street & number P.O. Box 80, Middle Tennessee State University

telephone 615-898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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 City of Crossville, c/o Neta Wisdom

street & number City Hall, Main Street

telephone 615-484-8493

city or town Crossville

state TN zip code 38555

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.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section num	mber	7	Page	7
Palace The	ater			
Cumberland	Co.,	Tennesse	е	- -

VII. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Palace Theater stands at the northwest corner of Main Street and First Street in Crossville, Cumberland County, Tennessee. Built in 1936-38 by William Garrison, and designed by architect Eston Smith, the long rectangular theater has not been altered over the years, serving the community up until 1978 when a larger mall movie theater replaced it. In addition to movies the theater was the site of Grand Ole Opry traveling performances and appearances by film stars in its early history. Currently in deteriorated condition, with a partially collapsed roof, the theater has been purchased by the city of Crossville and plans are underway to restore the building following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

The building is an interesting statement of both architectural style and recreational use for the small town. The architect, Eston Smith, made use of a locally important stone found in the nearby vicinity of Crab Orchard, Tennessee, to decorate the exterior of theater. Crab Orchard stone has played a prominent role in the built environment of Cumberland County from the late nineteenth century to the present. With the Palace Theater the architect and owner employed this local favorite in a blend of popular early twentieth century architectural styles, Art Deco and Art Moderne. Art Deco's versatile designs decorated buildings through applied ornament and were also very popular for both household and luxury items. While Art Deco was popularized through mass production its high style designs were used more exclusively by the very wealthy. This led to a popularization of the forms by the larger public.

At the same time Art Deco was finding increased popularity, the Art Moderne style was finding its appeal with the American public. Although similar in style and time period, Art Moderne can be distinguishedd from Art Deco by its use of forms. Where Art Deco may be applied ornament, Art Moderne is characterized by a streamlined, simplistic massing of construction elements often with a curvilinear shape. While Art Deco's decorative elements are applied, Art Moderne style is defined by the shape of the construction The design of the Palace Theater is an occasion where elements of these two styles can be seen together. The shape of the building is based on standard geometric forms rather than the curvilinear shape of Art While they are not curvilinear, the elements are massed together in a straightforward though dramatic presentation with a simplistic design characteristic of Art Moderne. As previously stated Art Deco is distinguished by applied ornament and popularized by mass produced forms. In the Palace Theater this use of applied ornament can be seen in the applied stonework done in geometric patternings and the simplistic detail of the marquee. The interior of the Palace Theater displays more of the characteristic Art Deco patterns.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section num	nber	7	Page	8
Palace Thea	ater -			
Cumberland	Co.,	Tennessee		

The east or front facade is characterized by a Crab Orchard stone veneer in a simple but decorative geometric pattern. The stones are laid in a horizontal pattern with vertical stones inset creating a contrasting The front facade is not flat but rather has four distinct sections in three distinct vertical planes. The rear section is the main auditorium and provides the backdrop for the other three sections. middle section projects beyond the auditorium section with two flanking sections that stand in front of both the rear -and middle sections. the three front sections of the facade, excluding the auditorium portion, is a tall rectangular shape with multiple windows. The flanking sections are two stories in height while the central and rear, or auditorium section, are three stories. The combination of large blocky rectangular portions, windows all with a vertical orientation, and vertical stone patterns give the building a sense of height and stature, characteristics typical of Art Deco architecture of this period. Prominent on the building is a movie marquee probably added between 1938 and 1942.

- The first floor of the front facade has a four pane metal casement window over blank stone inset in the south vertical block balanced by a door of the same height in the north vertical block, which flank the front entrance that is set back from the front of the building. Two sets of double wood doors with center glass panels and brass handrails sit on either side of a three sided black carrera glass ticket booth with windows on the top half on each side. Crab Orchard stone laid in long narrow rectangular stones with large display areas for movie posters finish the exterior of the first The movie marquee sits above the entrance between the first and second floors. The marquee has a black background with metal decorative strips and lettering. Rounded on the corners the marquee is as wide as the inset front entrance, approximately two-thirds the width of the building. The metal, decorative strips run horizontally accentuating the rounded ends with two sets of vertical strips set from the end approximately one quarter of the width of the entire marquee. A top crest of four strips centers the marquee on the building.

The second floor has five windows, one on each flanking block and the other three on the center projecting section. All of the windows are surrounded by vertical stones. On the flanking sections the twenty light metal casement windows have a section of vertically set blocks both above and below the windows. The three windows of the central section are double six light metal casement windows separated by metal lintels from a twelve light window above. On the third story of the central section, above the second story windows, are three sections of vertically laid stones with eight pane metal casement windows above.

The north elevation of the building faces an adjacent building and little of this side is visible from the street. The north and south elevations

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section :	number	7	Page	9
Palace T	heater			
Cumberla	nd Co.,	Tennessee	}	•

mimic each other in configuration and window detail. The south elevation of the building faces First Street. The two story section at the rear of the front facade has three long vertical windows above three smaller square windows. This section of the front facade is covered in vertically laid Crab Orchard stone. The main portion of the building, being the auditorium space, has a brick veneer on the sides and rear with a poured concrete foundation. Located at the rear of this elevation is an emergency exit, slightly shorter than the main auditorium, covered in a vertically laid Crab Orchard stone veneer.

The west or rear elevation of the building is brick with Crab Orchard stone quoins. The rear facade has emergency exits and several different vertical block sections which house the stage and dressing room areas of the theater. At the upper level of the rear elevation is a metal landing and fire stair descending to the ground level. The vertical block sections of the rear facade is shorter than the main auditorium and has the same poured concrete foundation as the rest of the building.

The interior of the theater has been damaged by water which entered the building from a deteriorated roof. The damage extends to the seating and balcony but those features are slated for a compatible replacement in the upcoming renovation. The stage has remained partially covered and is free of significant damage, although the curtains and screen are gone. The interior clearly retains the spatial qualities of a theater through its lofty open space, the intact stage area, and the decorative motifs found along the walls. The flooring, like the foundation, is poured concrete and the walls are concrete block.

Art Deco is the operative term to use when describing the interior of the Palace Theater. The interior side walls are recessed panels delineated by the concrete blocks that step forward towards the auditorium creating vertical columns. These large rectangular areas continue the geometric massing of the exterior on the interior. Set in the center of these recessed panels are bulls' eye wall sconces. The stage and emergency exits are set off by a similar working of the concrete blocks that create a vertical patterning similar to the decorative patterns of the exterior. Air conditioning and ventilation units have been placed above the rear exits which flank the stage.

Flanking north and south of the lobby are women's and men's restrooms, respectively. In addition, north of the lobby is the staircase to the second and third floors. South of the first floor lobby is a small office that is connected to a room accessible from the balcony stairs. On the marquee level, or second floor, is an open gallery space that was once used as a second snack counter area, flanked by a staircase and closet to the

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	7	Page	10
Palace Theater			
Cumberland Co.,	Tennessee		

north and a small meeting room to the south. The balcony level, or third floor, contained only the balcony and the projection room. This general office/service area at the front of the theater has suffered water damage but not to the degree found in the general seating area.

The decorative geometric forms used on the exterior and interior of the Palace Theater reflect both the Art Deco designs popular during the 1930s and 1940s and the concepts of massing so characteristic of the Art Moderne style of this same period.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 11
Palace Theater
Cumberland Co., Tennessee

VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Palace Theater in Crossville, Cumberland County, Tennessee is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for recreation and culture and Criterion C for architecture. Constructed with Crab Orchard stone from 1936-38, and designed by architect Eston Smith, the Palace Theater has been an important architectural landmark in Crossville, serving as a center for entertainment and community identity since its opening. As one of the prominent downtown buildings, it anchors the south end of town at the corner of Main Street and First Street. The original plat for Crossville oriented the city lots facing along the north-south Main Street, now U. S. Highway 127. The Palace Theater follows this plan and faces Main Street.

The Palace Theater has significant associations with the history of recreation and culture in Crossville. On November 21, 1938, its original builder and owner, William Garrison, invited the public to the theater's first movie, "If I-Were King." County Judge G. L. Burnett praised Garrison for his efforts: "The Palace is a creation of art and beauty, a dream of loveliness on the edge of ugliness for your comfort, pleasure, and amusement." Built during the same years that the nearby Cumberland Homesteads project was under construction, the theater provided recreational opportunities for the hundreds of CCC and WPA workers who participated in the Homesteads project. Noted for its distinct architectural styling, the theater is also important to Crossville residents as a center of community activity. It has been the location of films, plays, live radio broadcasts, appearances by film and music stars, and war bond drives. While it is currently unoccupied the town has bought the building with plans to restore it to its former prominence as an architectural landmark and a center of community entertainment.

Local and national film and music personalities including Kitty Wells, Smiling Eddie Hill, Bubbling Buddy Bowman, and Bob Steele performed on this stage in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In the 1940s, traveling road shows from the Grand Ole Opry held performances at the Palace Theater. It was during this period that many of the Grand Ole Opry stars, including Roy Acuff and His Smoky Mountain Boys, Rachel Oswald and Uncle Dave Macon, performed on this stage.

In addition to being a center of musical entertainment and the location of appearances by film stars, the Palace Theater was the site where many of the citizens of the community participated in local war efforts during World War II. Advertisements for these activities at the Palace Theater appeared often in the local paper from 1942 - 1944. War bond drives were held at the theater to raise money to support the country's participation

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	12
Palace Theater			
Cumberland Co.,	Tenness	see	

in the war. The local Boy Scouts also made the Palace Theater the center of their war time collection drives. The management of the theater allowed the scouts to collect scrap for the war effort in exchange for admission to special Saturday night movie showings. The theater was the site of the Civilian Defense training sessions as well.

In addition to its role as a cultural and social center in Crossville, the Palace Theater has been an important architectural landmark for the small city. The building is faced with Crab Orchard stone, a mature Cumberland County stone used in a number of buildings in the Crossville area. This building material has been a significant contributor to the area economy since the late nineteenth century.

During the late nineteenth century the railroad arrived and created an important economic link for Crossville. The railroad was also important in developing the Crab Orchard stone market. The railroad enters Crossville from the northwest passing through town on an east-west axis. After leaving Crossville the railroad proceeds southeast along U. S. 70 to Crab Orchard at the base of the Crab Orchard Mountains where the stone of the same name is mined. Crab Orchard stone has varying colors of light reds and pinks that blend to beige tones and brown tones with some green and gray hues as well. The stone takes many construction forms including rubble and ashlar cut building stones as well as veneer stones and shingles for finishing work.

The popularity of Crab Orchard stone as a building material began with the second courthouse for Cumberland County in the county seat of Crossville. The county erected the courthouse (NR 5/90), designed by architect J. F. Bowman of Knoxville, in 1886 - 1887 using Crab Orchard stone. At this same time the county laid out formal sidewalks of Crab Orchard stone. This 1886 courthouse served the county until it burned in a 1905 fire. Rather than repairing the courthouse for government use, the county renovated the burned building as the first county high school. The third courthouse to serve the county uses Indiana Limestone as its principal construction material.

By 1933 companies were mining 34,660 tons of Crab Orchard stone. During the Depression period the use of Crab Orchard stone as a source of income was particularly helpful to local residents. The availability of the material, combined with its versatility, distinctive beauty, and the recognition that the material brought to this rural county gave Cumberland County residents a certain pride in the material. All of these factors made the material a prime candidate for new buildings in the county seat.

The 1930s popularity of Crab Orchard stone also owes a legacy to two very different sources of inspiration, Scarritt College in Nashville and

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	13
Palace Theater			
Cumberland Co.	, Tenness	see	

Cumberland Homesteads just south of Crossville. Scarritt College (NR 8/20/82) in Nashville is an impressive Tennessee campus with its primary buildings constructed of Crab Orchard stone. Built in 1925 - 1928 following a plan by Nashville architect Henry Hibbs, the campus and the architect helped to revitalize the late nineteenth century popularity of Crab Orchard stone. Henry Hibbs was a notable local architect who later designed several Tennessee buildings for New Deal programs but earned early fame with Scarritt College. In 1929 he was awarded the American Institute of Architects gold medal for his design of Scarritt College. Hibbs' award winning use of Crab Orchard stone made the material popular with architects across the region.

Scarritt's original campus of five buildings, all in Crab Orchard stone, made an impressive mark upon the capital city. The Gothic Revival style dominates the buildings, but they also possess a modern, streamlined look which reveals the influence of architectural styles being popularized in the early twentieth century. This same modernistic interpretation can be found at the Palace Theater. A-sense of geometry and verticality distinguishes both the Palace Theater and Scarritt College as early twentieth century designs which both employ material indigenous to Tennessee.

Just prior to the construction of the Palace Theater in downtown Crossville an important New Deal project, Cumberland Homesteads (NHL 9/30/88), was being constructed in Cumberland County. These two construction projects would have made a significant impact upon this small town during the Depression and the association between the two would have been quite strong. The similarities between the Palace Theater and Cumberland Homesteads extended beyond the close constructions dates. Both sites have a similar interpretation of Art Deco and Art Moderne architectural styles which employed Crab Orchard stone veneers and served important functions in the struggling community. While Cumberland Homesteads provided housing and economic opportunities for area residents, the Palace Theater provided recreational activities and served as a center for community identity.

Cumberland Homesteads was one of several Subsistence Homesteads experiments sponsored by the federal government as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Established to provide decent, quality, homes and a subsistence income to dislocated miners, unemployed lumbermen, and poor farmers the Subsistence Homesteads plan, part of the Resettlement Administration, changed the landscape of many regions. Envisioned as sites for the federal government to experiment with various reforms, Subsistence Homesteads inspired great enthusiasm from organizers of the New Deal programs, such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Rexford Tugwell who showed great enthusiasm for the plans. Construction work on Cumberland Homesteads began in 1934 and by July of that year, when Eleanor Roosevelt visited, almost

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	14
Palace Theater			
Cumberland Co.,	Tennessee		

20,000 acres had been cleared, some crops were growing, and residents were working on their new, faced with Crab Orchard stone, homes while their barns served as temporary living quarters. By employing Crab Orchard stone the Federal government made the buildings of the Subsistence Homesteads project more familiar to local residents and thus more welcoming. Additionally, the choice of Crab Orchard stone conveyed a sense of endorsement by the highest political office in the country.

The Cumberland Homesteads project also brought to Crossville's doorstep other architectural styles associated with the New Deal. These styles were an unique interpretation of the earlier Art Deco designs, referred to as WPA Modern. Noted for symmetrical masses, very blocky in form, and geometrical configurations, the overall scale of these new forms created an impact upon the landscape. While the New Deal had varying impacts on towns across the nation, most programs brought this new architectural interpretation to the cities and towns affected by the programs. The Palace Theater was not a federally sponsored building project, but it its Crab Orchard stone facade and modernistic design reflects the designs being popularized around the country by the reformers who created the Cumberland Homesteads. Clearly the design for the building was influenced by New Deal trends in architecture and favorably received in Crossville.

Crossville had often used Crab Orchard stone to distinguish its important downtown buildings and continued to do so into the Depression era with the popular architectural styles of the early twentieth century. The Palace Theater designed with a blend of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles and a 1937 Colonial Revival post office updated Crossville's downtown architectural styles while maintaining the continuity of the local building stone by employing a Crab Orchard stone veneer. It seems that Crab Orchard stone had become so popular by the 1930s that several downtown building owners employed it to inexpensively add a distinctive local flavor to their buildings. A Crab Orchard stone veneer would have been particularly attractive to owners during the Depression; allowing them to create a more expensive and current look for their buildings at a cheaper cost.

The unusual Art Deco inspired styling of the Palace Theater eventually brought the property to the attention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation when it undertook a national survey of significant historic theaters. In his survey, Great American Movie Theaters, published by the National Trust in 1987, author David Naylor designated the Palace Theater as the only architecturally compelling theater outside of one of Tennessee's major four urban areas. The patterned stonework on the exterior of the building, the blocky sense of verticality, and the bull'seye wall scones on the interior distinguish this building as a representative example of the Art Deco style, as interpreted in a "New Deal" context during the 1930s.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 16
Palace Theater
Cumberland Co., Tennessee

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(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	9	Page	17
Palace Theater			
Cumberland Co.,	Tenness	ee	

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 18
Palace Theater
Cumberland Co., Tennessee

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

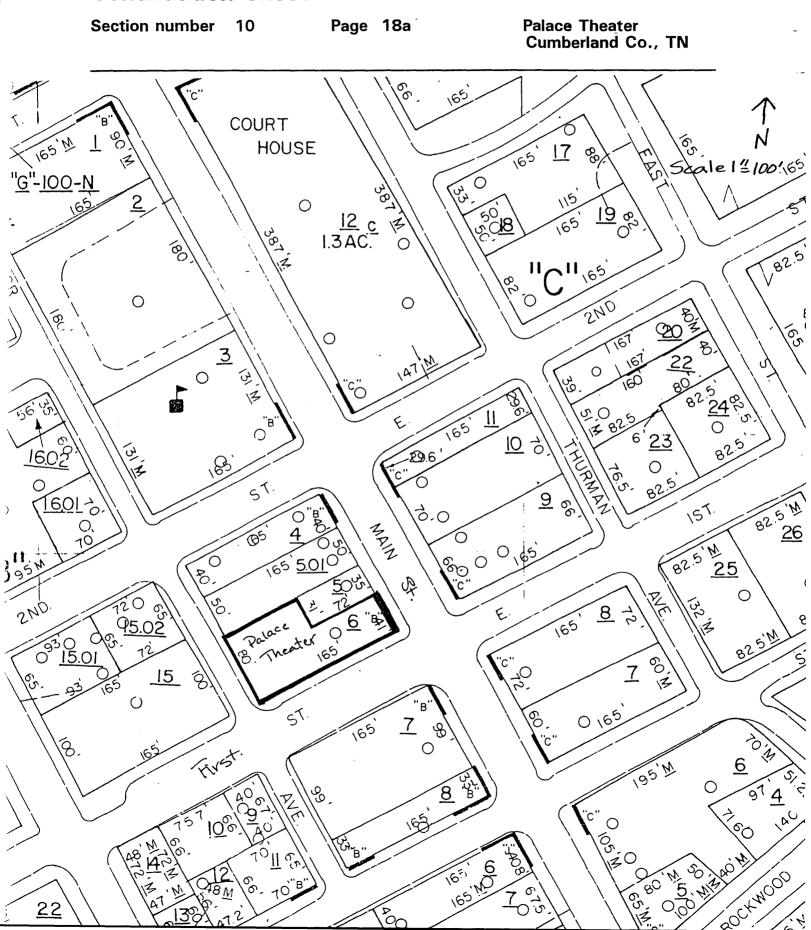
The boundaries of the nominated property begin at the southeast corner of parcel no. B-6 on tax map 113-C. The southeast corner of the property is also the northwest corner of Main Street and First Street. From this northwest corner the boundary proceeds north along the west side of Main Street forty-one feet. It then turns west proceeding seventy-two feet before turning north for thirty-one feet to the property line between parcel B-5 and B-5.01. The boundary follows this tax parcel line ninety-three feet to the east side of Rector Avenue where it then proceeds south for eighty feet to the north side of First Street. The boundary then proceeds one hundred and sixty-five feet to the beginning point.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the boundaries of the legal tax parcel upon which the Palace Theater sits. No other property has been included because no other property is closely associated with the Palace Theater building.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photos Page 19
Palace Theater

Cumberland Co., Tennessee

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Palace Theater

Crossville, Cumberland County, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: October 1992 and May 1993

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

Nashville, TN 37243

East facade, facing west

1 of 12

East facade, entrance detail, facing west 2 of 12

Ticket booth, entrance doors, facing west 3 of 12

South elevation, facing north 4 of 12

South elevation, facing northwest 5 of 12

West elevation, facing east 6 of 12

North elevation, facing northeast 7 of 12

North elevation, facing southwest 8 of 12

Theater interior, facing northwest 9 of 12

Theater interior, facing northeast 10 of 12

Art Deco wall sconces, facing north 11 of 12

Art Deco wall sconces, facing north 12 of 12