

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 7 2001

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Royal Theater
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 301 East Main Street

city, town Hogansville () vicinity of
county Troup code 285
state Georgia code GA zip code 30230

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- () private
- (x) public-local
- () public-state
- () public-federal

Category of Property:

- (x) building(s)
- () district
- () site
- () structure
- () object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard C. Luce
Signature of certifying official

5-3-01
Date

for W. Ray Luce
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain:
- see continuation sheet

Patrick Andrews 6/21/2001

Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Recreation and Culture: theater

Current Functions:

Government: city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Stucco
roof	Asphalt
other	Brick

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Royal Theater, built in 1937, is an Art Deco-style movie theater built on Main Street in the small town of Hogansville in Troup County, Georgia. Designed by the Atlanta architectural firm Tucker and Howell of Atlanta, the Royal is a large, freestanding rectangular block with plain brick sides and rear elevations and a monumental Art Deco façade. The white stucco façade features two flat-roofed towers and a taller center tower capped with a stepped-pyramidal roof. The center tower is adorned with incised geometric pattern. The smaller flanking towers are banded at the top. The steel finial that topped the center tower is missing but similar steel sculptures remain in niches in the side towers. The main entrance is composed of four sets of double doors below the main tower.

In the mid-1960s, the theater was renovated. The original wood doors were replaced with glass and aluminum doors, glass cases for movie posters were added inside and out, and a new concession stand was added to the lobby. The glass cases and concession stand have since been removed. The marquee was drastically altered after 1980.

The most substantial changes have occurred on the interior, which was historically composed of lobby and offices spaces in front, an 800-seat auditorium to the rear and a balcony and projection booth above. When the Royal was altered for use as City Hall, the back half of the theater was divided into small offices and city council chambers. The front portion of the theater with the stage and seven rows of curved, sloping seats survives intact. The upper-level balcony, projection booth, and restrooms are also intact.

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Section 7--Description

The theater retains many of the historic spaces used by African Americans during segregation. These include the upper balcony and bathrooms. The African-American entrance is still visible on the north side of the building, although it has been filled with brick. Above this side entrance are stenciled the letters "COL," remnants of the word colored.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Entertainment/Recreation
Social History and Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance:

1937-1950

Significant Dates:

1937 – Lam Amusement Company built the Royal Theater.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Tucker and Howell

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Royal Theater is significant in the area of architecture at the state level as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style. Its bold massing, monumental scale, and incised geometric detailing are unusual for a small-town theater in Georgia. The theater's architects, Tucker and Howell of Atlanta, designed the Georgia state prison in Reidsville and buildings at the University of Georgia and the Atlanta Zoo. McKendree A. Tucker began his career in the prominent firm of Hentz, Adler and Shutze. In 1929, Tucker formed a partnership with Albert Howell that continued until 1968. In

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

their first two decades, the firm designed over twenty theaters mostly in the South and especially in Georgia. In the late 1940s, the firm designed drive-in theaters for LaGrange and Newnan. The firm designed buildings in a variety of styles popular in Georgia, such as Colonial Revival, English Vernacular Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Stripped Classical, and Art Deco.

The Royal Theater is also significant in the area of entertainment/recreation at the local because it represents a local interpretation of large movie palaces that were popular throughout the nation in the 1920s and 1930s in which westerns and serials were shown as matinees and dramas were featured in the evenings. The Royal was not only a local landmark but pulled in movie-goers from surrounding towns until it closed in 1980. It was the only theater in Hogansville.

The Royal Theater is significant in the area of social history and black ethnic heritage at the local level because it retains many of the spaces used only by African Americans during the period of segregation in the South from the end of the 19th century until the 1960s. The so-called "Jim Crow" laws dictated that in public places blacks and whites used separate facilities. These included separate entrances and seating areas, restrooms and water fountains, and seating on buses. Facilities for African Americans were nearly always inferior to the accommodations made for whites. Segregation affected nearly every aspect of the public life in cities, small towns, and rural counties throughout the South. After segregation ended with successes won by blacks during the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, barriers separating whites from blacks were removed or converted to other purposes. Within a few decades, evidence of segregation in public places had mostly disappeared. "Whites Only" and "Colored" signage is especially rare. Movie theaters often represent the last physical vestiges of segregation because of their balconies that were dedicated to African-American patronage. The Royal Theater is an excellent representative example of Georgia's segregated past because of its balcony and restrooms for blacks but also because of its side entrance marked with stenciled letters that read COL[ORED].

National Register Criteria

A and C.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1937 with the completion of the Royal Theater and ends in 1950 (the fifty-years-of-age cut off) to include the period when the building operated as a theater.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The theater occupies the entire National Register property. There are no other buildings, structures, sites, or objects associated with the nomination.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Royal Theater in Hogansville was built in 1937 by O. C. Lam, owner and operator of the Lam Amusement Company. Lam built theaters throughout Georgia, including nearby LaGrange. These theaters served not only as movie houses but also featured stages and dressing rooms for live performances. The Royal opened with *Sing Me A Love Song*, starring Zasu Pitts. Later films included *Kissin' Cousin* with Elvis Presley, *Samson and the 7 Miracles of the World*, and *Ride Rangler Ride*, starring Gene Autry.

In 1952, the screen in the Royal was altered to accommodate 3-D movies. Ten years later, Lam sold the Royal to Fred and Raymond Jabaley. The Jabaleys made minor alterations and then sold the theater to Ralph Mathews and Ralph Howard in 1977. Attendance continued to decline and only B-movies were shown on weekends because box-office receipts from the small crowds could not pay for first-run movies. The Royal closed in 1980 and remained unoccupied until 1984 when it was donated to the city to serve as City Hall.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Craig, Robert M. *Atlanta Architecture: Art Deco to Modern Classic, 1929-1959*. Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 1995.

Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources. *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in their Landscaped Settings*. Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1991.

Strain, Jane M., ed. *History of Hogansville, 1830-1970.*, n.d.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- 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 #**

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 0.25 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 694670 Northing 3672220

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot historically associated with the Royal Theater.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian

organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

street & number 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W.

city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303

telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** April 15, 2001

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) (x) not applicable

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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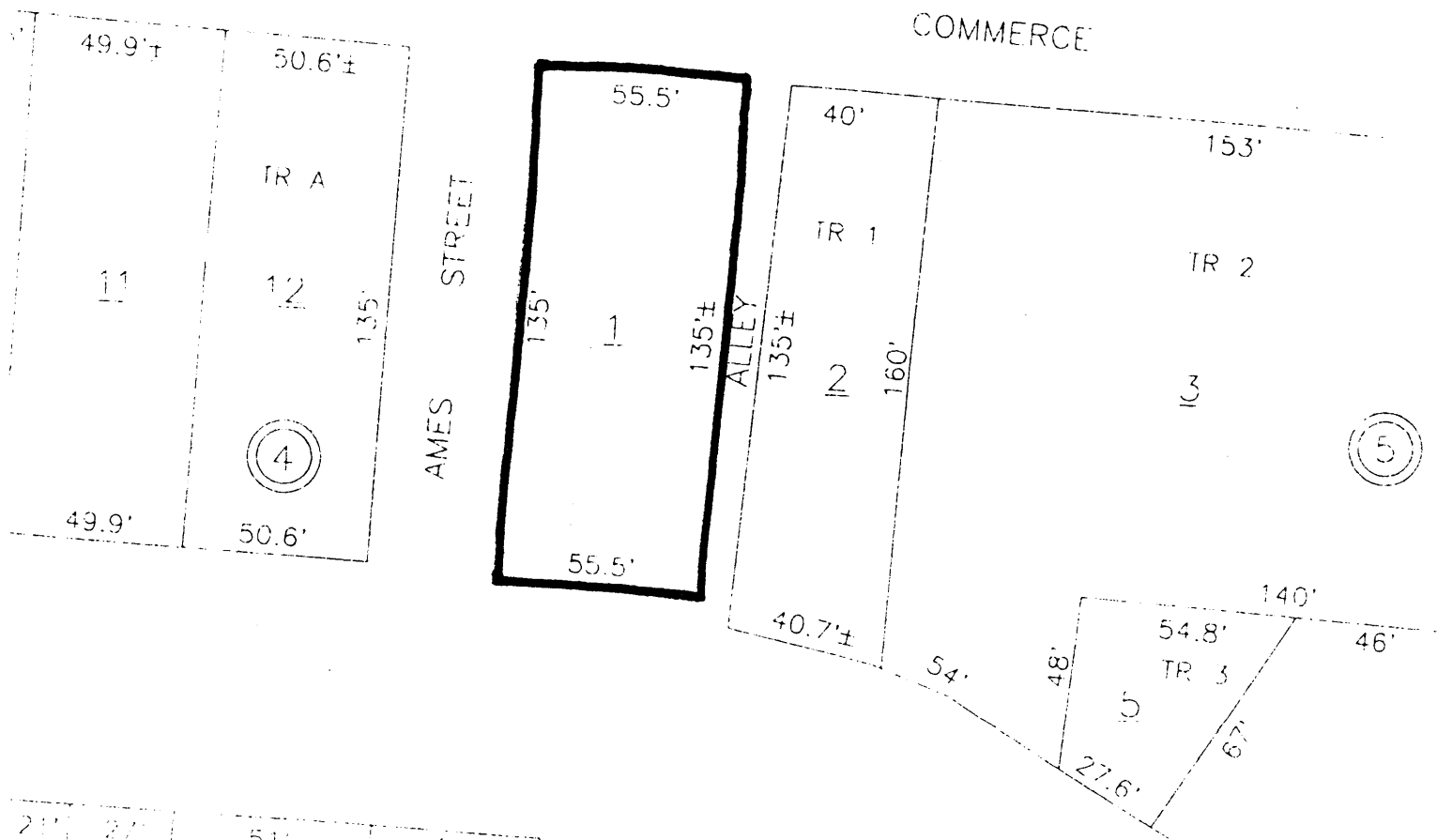
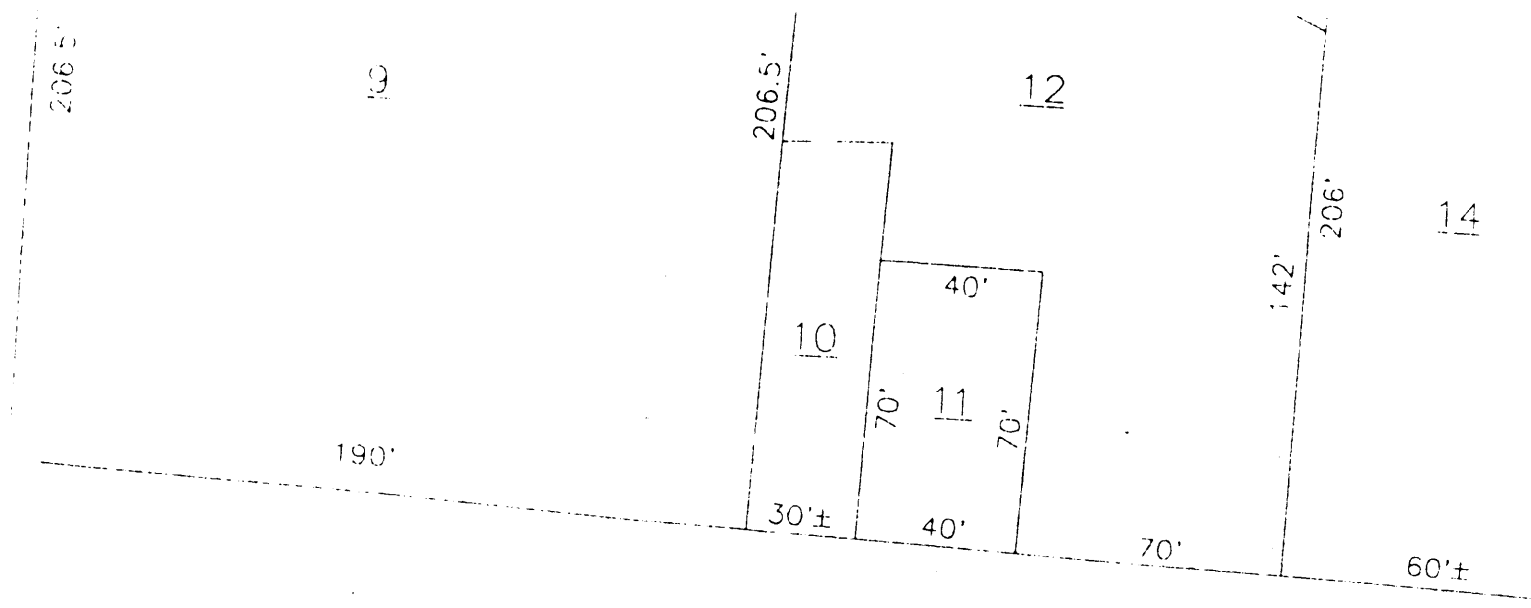
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Royal Theater
City or Vicinity: Hogansville
County: Troup
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: December 2000

Description of Photograph(s):

1. Main façade, photographer facing north.
2. Main façade and west side, photographer facing northeast.
3. Main façade and east side, photographer facing northwest.
4. East side and rear, photographer facing west.
5. Rear and west side, photographer facing southeast.
6. "Colored" entrance, photographer facing east.
7. Interior, lobby.
8. Interior, auditorium.
9. Interior, auditorium.
10. Interior, auditorium.
11. Interior, upper balcony.
12. Interior, upper balcony, projection booth.
13. Interior, upper balcony, interior of projection booth.
14. Interior, upper balcony, restrooms.



Royal Theater
 Hogansville, Troup County, Georgia
 Sketch Map
 National Register Boundary
 Scale: 1" = 60'

