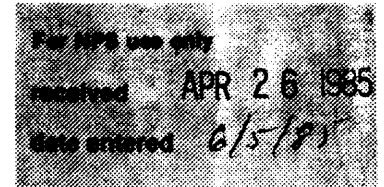


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Historic Resources of
Downtown South Bend

Continuation sheet

Item number

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The Palace Theater
(Now Morris Civic Auditorium)
211 North Michigan
141-56187-598
d. 1921

OWNER: Pat Martin, Manager
Morris Civic Auditorium
211 N. Michigan
South Bend, Indiana 46601

Description:

Photo #55-57; Building #30

The Palace Theater is located on a section of North Michigan that has been closed to through traffic. To the north of the theater is the Northern Indiana Gas and Electric Company Building (Building #31) and on the south it is connected to the matching Palace Building or Palais Royale (Building #29). Located in front (east) of the Palace Theater is a small plaza containing a fountain and sculpture.

The Spanish Renaissance structure has a terra-cotta block base on the first floor and light colored brick on the upper floors of the four and five-story building. The building is embellished with terra-cotta that has been tinted in pastel shades of orange, green, yellow, cream and blue. There are five entrances on the main (east) facade, each surmounted with multi-pane transoms and surrounded by foliated multi-colored terra-cotta. The wooden doors on the southernmost entrance have been replaced with modern aluminum doors and the entrance is covered with an awning. A modern marquee and aluminum sign panel is placed above the first floor.

The end bays have round-arched windows with transoms surrounded by terra-cotta columns and entablature on the second floor. On the fourth floor level at the end bays is a terra-cotta cartouche containing the letter "P" surrounded by terra-cotta that forms a blind window.

The center three bays are lighted by round-arched windows extending three stories high. The windows are divided into 18 multi-paned sections and flanked by tinted terra-cotta pilasters. The center three bays of the building extend into a fifth floor that contains three round-arched casement windows with transoms and terra-cotta surrounds.

Significance:

The Palace Theater was designed by architect J. S. Aroner of Chicago, and was built in 1921 by the Ralph Sollitt Company, also of Chicago. The Sollitt Company, which established a regional office in South Bend in 1919, is still a major contracting firm in South Bend.

Upon opening in October, 1922, the theater showed moving pictures and was also the new home for the Orpheum Theater, a vaudeville theater that had opened in 1910. The first sound movie to be shown in the Palace Theater was in 1929 and the last vaudeville show was performed on March 1, 1930.

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Downtown South Bend

Palace Theater (continued)

Architecturally, the structure is an outstanding example of a theater built during the transition from vaudeville to motion pictures. It is decorated with the lavish ornamentation that was typical of early 20th century theaters.

The Palace Theater is one of South Bend's few examples of the Spanish Renaissance Revival architecture and is the only theater that has remained in continuous use in the central business district of South Bend.

UTM Reference: 16/562390/4614110 Acreage: Less than one acre

Legal: Lot 4 and 42 feet North Side Lot 5 Original Plat of South Bend
Parcel #18-1002-0043