



Historic Sites Survey Inventory No. 6

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The Saenger Theater is a large, flat-roofed, brick building with a richly decorated facade (west elevation) which contrasts greatly with its strictly functional north, south and east elevations. The building's stuccoed ground-floor level is sheltered by a cantilevered metal canopy and is pierced by four pairs of modern, aluminum-frame, plate-glass doors. The facade's upper two stories are divided into five bays by engaged, rusticated, brick antae and four, stone, Ionic pilasters, all of which support a full, well-proportioned, stone entablature. Two tiers of windows occupy the three-bay, central, Ionic-pilastered section of the facade, with the lower set consisting of tall openings ornamented by stone frames, bracketed sills, and cornice heads and the upper set consisting of small, square, stone-encased openings. Above the entablature, a brick parapet is broken into five sections by simple brick piers, echoing the facade's vertical delineation by the pilastrade. Ornamenting the parapet is a molded stone coping surmounted by four stone urns. The original vertically-oriented neon "Saenger" sign is intact and still mounted in the facade's central bay. Lavish and exuberant classical detail (much of it gilt) characterizes the interior spaces.

ALTERATIONS:
 Rehabilitated in 1975 by the City of Biloxi for use as a performing arts center.

OUTBUILDINGS:
 None

LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 None

NAME: Saenger Theater
STREET NO: 416 Reynoir Street
TOWN/VIC: Biloxi
COUNTY: Harrison
BLOCK/LOT:
PRESENT OWNER: City of Biloxi
ADDRESS: P. O. Box 429, Biloxi 39530
PRESENT USE: Performing Arts Center
FORMER USE: Movie Theater

DATE: 1928-29

STYLE: Neoclassical Revival

ARCH/BUILDER: Roy Benjamin, AIA, Jacksonville, Florida, Architect; A. H. Perry Co., Inc., Jacksonville, Contractor
SOURCE OF DATE: The Buildings of Biloxi

ENVIRONMENT:
 Commercial
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
 NEIGHBORHOOD
 LOCAL
 STATE
 NATIONAL

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

An excellent example of the Saenger chains innovations in early movie theater design, the building has retained a high degree of interior and exterior integrity. At the time of its construction this building was "in the forefront of theater design" and features backstage facilities which were "the most complete (even today) between Mobile and New Orleans (Julia Guice, editor, The Buildings of Biloxi: An Architectural Survey [Biloxi: City of Biloxi, 1976], p. 101)

PHOTOS

NEG. #

SITE OR AREA PLAN WITH NORTH ARROW AND SHAPE OF STRUCTURE:

CONTINUATION:

PHYSICAL CONDITION:

N/A

THREATS:

N/A

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property, contains less than one acre. Identified on the enclosed map entitled "Individually Listed Properties," it includes the area within the red line as delineated on the Official Property Map of Biloxi, Mississippi, adopted by the city in 1976.

ACREAGE: less than 1 acre

UTM REF:

A | 1 | 6 | | 3 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 | | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 00 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE

Ken P'Pool

April 20, 1983