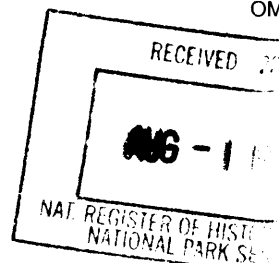


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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 an 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 Arcade Theater

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 2247-2251 Carey Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Slidell N/A  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county St. Tammany code 103 zip code 70458

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.)

Jonathan Fricker 7/22/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State of 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 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 8/29/97

Arcade Theater  
Name of Property

St. Tammany Parish, LA  
County and State

**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)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            |                 | buildings  |
|              |                 | sites      |
|              |                 | structures |
|              |                 | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | Total      |

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(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)

work in progress

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls brick, stucco  
roof tile, other: tar & gravel  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 1

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The Arcade Theater (1927) is a two-story brick commercial building with a stucco-covered section in front. Classified as having no style for the purposes of this nomination, it is located in an older section of the St. Tammany Parish town of Slidell--a section which once served as the center of town. Despite minor changes to the exterior and the gutting of much of the interior, the building is still recognizable as a historic theater. Thus, it retains its National Register eligibility.

The Arcade's rear and side walls are constructed of plain brick. A series of buttresses provide support for the side walls. The facade is divided into three bays by paneled piers which rise above the roofline. Between each pair of piers is a decorative tile roof section. On the first level, the central bay contains a recessed entrance whose opening is surmounted by a panel containing the theater's name. One-room commercial spaces with their historic tile floors intact fill the flanking bays. The facade's second level is distinguished by a band of nine, one over one windows divided equally among the building's three bays. The front portion of the building is stuccoed and is slightly wider than the auditorium which projects to the rear.

Although the building is classified as having no style, its facade does contain four decorative motifs associated with early twentieth century architecture. These include 1) the previously mentioned tile roof sections, 2) simple brackets [located beneath the tile roof] which are slightly suggestive of the Arts and Crafts style, 3) glass shop doors subdivided in a manner also reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts, and 4) multi-colored tile paving the recessed entrance and adjoining sidewalk fronting the building. The name "A. Carollo" is embedded in the tile at the spot where the entrance and sidewalk join. The windows distinguishing the shops are also of interest. They feature forty-five degree corner cuts and multi-pane transoms above large plate glass windows. However, similar transoms above the shop doors have been replaced by single panes of plate glass.

The recessed entrance contains a small ticket window located on the left side near double doors which lead to the theater's interior. The doors are currently covered by boards. The shop located to the north of the entrance connects directly to the theater space; the southern shop adjoins a hall containing a staircase to the balcony (where at one time separate seating was provided for African-Americans), a side door, and the above mentioned ticket window. This hallway connects to the theater itself. The theater's interior has been completely gutted due to major roof and related water damage which occurred over the years. As best one can ascertain from the evidence which survives, the first floor contained a one-story lobby and a two-story auditorium space with a one-story stage at the end. Although it has also been essentially gutted, the second story retains more of its historic floorplan than does the first. In addition to the

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

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stepped balcony (located above the lobby) mentioned above, it contains a small room for projection equipment and an apartment stretching across the front of the building. This space is reached by a separate door located at the southeast corner of the building and a stair located just inside the south wall. Like the auditorium space, the apartment has also been gutted.

The Arcade is currently experiencing a slow restoration. To date the roof has been repaired and made water tight, and the former second story apartment has received stud walls for its eventual use as commercial space. The new subdivision of this area does not duplicate the original floorplan. Except for the addition of large lanterns flanking the recessed entrance and the change to the transoms above the shop doors as mentioned above, the facade has been returned to its original appearance. All of the essential facade elements which identify the building as the historic Arcade Theater still exist, and any patron from the historic period would easily recognize the building if he or she were to return to Slidell today. Thus, the theater is a legitimate candidate for National Register listing because of its role as an entertainment focal point for Slidell and St. Tammany Parish.

**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** N/A  
(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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment / recreation

**Period of Significance**

1927 - 1947

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**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):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Arcade Theater  
Name of Property

St. Tammany Parish, LA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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 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 National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1997

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

**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 Kevin Jordan, President, Vintage Square, Inc.

street & number 67296 Highway 41 telephone (504) 863-3834

city or town Pearl River state LA zip code 70452

**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 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**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA  
Section number 8 Page 1

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The Arcade Theater is locally significant in the area of entertainment/recreation because of its importance as an entertainment focal point for Slidell and St. Tammany Parish. The period of significance spans from 1927, the date of construction, to 1947, the Register's fifty year cutoff. The Arcade continued in its role as an entertainment focal point past the fifty year cutoff.

The Arcade was a business project of Italian immigrant Andrew Carollo and Peter Lalumia. The latter appears to have been Carollo's friend as well as an interpreter for the immigrant, who never learned to speak English well. Lalumia and a previous partner, G. A. Baker, first purchased the property on which the theater stands in 1911. Carollo purchased Baker's half interest on September 15, 1916. Whether a wooden moving picture hall existed on the property at this time is uncertain, but such a structure is clearly shown on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1926. Carollo's daughter, Rosalea Carollo Fontana, who was born in 1906 and, thus, was an adult during the major portion of the theater's period of significance, dates the brick theater's construction to 1927. Because the 1930 Sanborn Map indicates that the wooden building had been replaced by the current masonry structure by that time, Mrs. Fontana's date of 1927 is being used in this submission.

Anthony Carollo purchased Lalumia's half-interest in the Arcade on January 14, 1930. Already the operator of a successful grocery concern located just down the street from the theater, Carollo apparently did not involve himself in the day-to-day operation of the Arcade. Instead, he rented the building to his son Russell, his daughter Rosalea, and Rosalea's husband Luke Fontana. Rosalea's memories of the theater (transcript in National Register file) describe an interior featuring red and gold draperies and plush carpeting. In the lobby scents of an "English garden" mixed with the aroma of hot dogs, popcorn, and "sweets from every country."

The family employed a number of strategies to draw patrons, including the distribution of flyers by hand. Newspaper advertisements, sometimes including a photograph of an upcoming movie's star, also helped to bring in customers. Promotions were another popular audience-building technique. For example, Thursday nights became known as "Bank Night," because on that night the theater operators held a drawing for a \$25 prize. According to Mrs. Fontana, the jackpot once rose to \$1,000 when there was no winner for a prolonged period of time. Another promotion was the practice of giving away pieces of glass to the first fifty patrons on a given night.

The family's strategies and promotions, combined with the theater's status as the only place of amusement within Slidell other than a dance hall, made the Arcade the area's family entertainment center. The theater provided a variety of entertainment opportunities, including

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA  
Section number 8 Page 2

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feature films and serials (westerns were popular), midnight shows, special matinees for school children, benefit shows for charitable organizations, beauty pageants, baby contests, and an occasional vaudeville act. One memorable performer was a man who used only his teeth and hair to pull a truck parked in front of the theater. A period newspaper documents an advertisement inviting locals to view the act of a dancer who performed in the manner of Sally Rand (a risqué fan dancer popular in the 1930s). One patron claims to have seen jazz singer Al Jolson play at the Arcade. During World War II, the newsreels run at the theater helped keep people informed about events which the radio and local newspapers sometimes failed to cover.

The theater appears to have been popular and well attended. Persons interviewed for this nomination indicate that it attracted patrons from nearby communities such as Pearl River and Lacombe, as well as from Covington, which is located over twenty miles from Slidell. And, it should be noted that this was during the Great Depression--an era of poor roads and little money for entertainment. Although the Arcade operated seven days a week, its weekend showings were probably the most popular because the theater was the only place in town to take a date. According to Helen Panks Rugan,

The Arcade Theater was considered the "Courting Place" for teenagers and we called it the Picture Show. . . . Every Saturday night we would call our friends, those who had telephones, and set a time to meet at the Arcade. The lines were long before the show, but it was always the same crowd. Each week we sat in the same seats to watch the Western series.

Families would make a night of it, completing their shopping and having diner before attending the movie. Neighbors living in houses near the theater would sit on their front porches and greet friends as they walked to the theater.

According to Rosalea Carollo Fontana, the business was not as financially successful as the filled auditorium suggested. Apparently, part of the crowd resulted from the family's policy to admit to the theater at no charge all senior citizens, school teachers, law officers, clerics, and people too poor to pay. According to Mrs. Fontana, the family used funds generated by the more financially successful grocery store to underwrite the costs of keeping the theater open during the Depression years.

It was the coming of television in the 1950s that began to displace theaters like the Arcade. Indeed, it was revealed in studies at the time that theater attendance and public library use declined markedly when television became established in a given community. This

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 3

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development, combined with the deaths of Luke Fontana in 1960 and Russell Carollo in 1962, brought the Arcade's period of service to an end. The family closed the theater in 1963.

The Arcade was not Slidell's first moving picture house, nor was it the community's last. It appears from the available evidence that a competing theater had opened by the mid to late 1940s. Nevertheless, the Arcade was the only theater in Slidell for a long period of time, as emphasized by people interviewed for this submission. As can be seen from the above narrative and testimonials, it occupied a very important niche in the lives of Slidell area citizens by providing virtually the only entertainment in the area, a place for teenagers to meet their friends in a safe environment, and an opportunity for all its patrons to escape the stresses of a very difficult era. Hence, the Arcade stands as a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish, LA  
Section number 9 Page 1

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Fontana, Rosalea Carollo, "Memories of Old Times in Old Towne," typescript, n.d.; copy in National Register file.

Interview with Mrs. Rosalea Carollo Fontana, May 21, 1997.

Interview with Mr. J. C. Naulty, May 21, 1997.

Mayfield, Bobby, "Memories of Arcade Theater," May 24, 1997; copy in National Register file.

Rugan, Helen Panks, "Memories of the Arcade Theater," May 24, 1997; copy in National Register file.

Sale documents pertaining to the Arcade Theater, dated January 14, 1930; copies in National Register file.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1911, 1926, 1930, 1945.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Arcade Theater, St. Tammany Parish

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Legal Boundary Description

A certain lot or parcel of land together with all the buildings and improvements situated thereon or in anywise appertaining and being more fully described as follows to-wit: Lot number thirteen (13) in square "A" of the Town of Slidell, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. Said lot number thirteen (13) has a frontage of sixty (60) feet on Carey Street and extends westward between parallel lines a distance of one hundred twenty (120) feet as per the official map of the Town of Slidell, Louisiana.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries follow property lines.