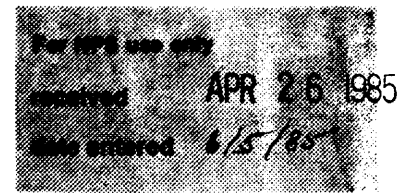


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

Historic Resources of
Downtown South Bend



Continuation sheet

Item number

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The Blackstone or State Theater
212 South Michigan
141-56196-598
d. 1919

OWNER: Frank C., Geraldine, Ida P.
and Burton E. Toepp
(4/9 interest)
727 E. Jefferson Boulevard
South Bend, Indiana 46617
and: Mr. Jason Lindower, Controller
(5/9 interest)
St. Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Description:

Photo #63, 64; Building #34

The Blackstone Theater, located mid-block on the downtown mall (Michigan Street between Jefferson and Wayne) is a four-story, Neo-Classical structure of brick and terra-cotta. The first floor contains four small shops and the theater entrance which, along with the marquee, have been modernized. The second floor consists of a row of double-hung windows which form a base for the loggia above. The loggia rises up to the height of four floors and is supported by four sets of paired fluted columns with one column at each end. The loggia is framed by pilasters and an entablature. The wall behind the colonnade is composed of panels of brick and terra-cotta within a diagonal basket weave pattern framed by pilasters and an entablature. Above each diagonal patterned panel are embossed terra-cotta panels heralding the performing arts. Flanking the loggia are simple, double-hung windows with elaborate terra-cotta surrounds. Below each window is a balconette and above is an exaggerated lintel containing a jester's face in place of a keystone.

Significance:

The Blackstone Theater was initiated in 1918 by businessmen from Chicago. Incorporation was filed in 1919 and 99-year leases were acquired on Lots 56 and 57 of the Original Plat. In September, 1919, the city issued a building permit and the Ralph Sollitt and Son Construction firm began construction on the theater designed by Henry Newhouse, of Chicago.

The fireproof structure cost \$500,000, seated 2,500, and boasted one of the largest and most complete film booths in the United States, equipped with Cimplex Company motion picture projectors. The theater also offered a nursery for children whose parents were attending the performance.

The theater's name was changed to the State Theater in 1931, after being purchased from receivership. It remained in business until 1978. Architecturally, the Blackstone Theater is an outstanding example of a Neo-Classical theater and the only one extant in the downtown area. Designed for motion pictures and vaudeville shows, it contains many of the features typical to theaters built during the early 20th century, including lavish interior, ornate plaster work, abundant use of terra-cotta, and special services such as the nursery and shops.

UTM Reference: 16/562440/4613690

Acreage: Less than one acre

Legal: South 1/2 Lot 57 and 20.8 feet North side Lot 56, Original Plat
of South Bend
Parcel #18-3003-0048 and 18-3003-0047