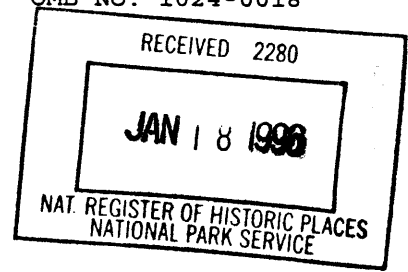


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 any 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 Alexander Theatre

other names/site number Alex Theatre

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 216 N. Brand Blvd. not for publication

city or town Glendale vicinity

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037

zip code 91203

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

12/27/95
Signature of certifying official Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

ALEX THEATRE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) _____

ALEX THEATRE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES; CALIFORNIA

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation and Culture Sub: Theater

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation and Culture Sub: Theater

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Egyptian Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof CONCRETE

OTHER, Built-up Composition Roofing Membrane

walls CONCRETE

STUCCO

METAL, Steel

other:

paving OTHER, Terrazzo

Narrative Description (refer to continuation sheets).

ALEX THEATRE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES; CALIFORNIA

=====
8. Statement of Significance
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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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance A. 1925-1945
C. 1925-1945

Significant Dates 1925
1940

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

ALEX THEATRE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Architect/Builder Lindley, Arthur G. and Selkirk, Charles R., Associates
architects, 1925
Lee, S. Charles, architect, 1940
Power, Robert E. Studios, decorator, 1925
Kinne & Westerhouse, Engineers, builder, 1925

Narrative Statement of Significance (Refer to continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Refer to continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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:

GLENDALE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
GLENDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
GLENDALE CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES RESEARCH LIBRARY,
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, S. CHARLES LEE COLLECTION

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10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property 0.5

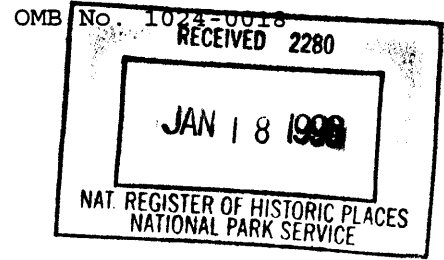
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	384450	3779200	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

_____ 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.)



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DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Alex Theatre is a two-story reinforced concrete Vaudeville and movie house completed in 1925 with a reinforced concrete and steel-framed marquee and decorative tower added in 1940. The 1925 structure has a steel framed roof and decoratively painted plaster finishes on the west (entrance) facade. The marquee and tower structure stands to the west, with painted concrete and sheet metal finishes, and decorative neon and incandescent lighting, forming an elongated forecourt in front of the earlier theater structure. The 1925 lobby and atmospheric auditorium are decorated with Greek, Roman, and Egyptian revival style elements. The 1940 marquee and tower has Art Deco motifs painted in bright tropical colors which follow the palette of decorative terrazzo at the sidewalk, though the simple supporting concrete structure exhibits Modernist style. The building fronts on Brand Boulevard, the main commercial street in the City of Glendale. Major interior renovations to the lobby and auditorium were made in 1948 after a minor stagehouse fire; those alterations were reversed during the rehabilitation and restoration work completed in 1993.

Brief Construction History

- 1923 Architects Arthur G. Lindley and Charles R. Selkirk, Associates, prepared architectural and structural construction drawings for the Alexander Theatre, a Vaudeville and motion picture house with Greek and Egyptian motifs, seating 1958 on the main floor and balcony.
- 1925 The theater opens on Friday, September Fourth.
- 1940 S. Charles Lee, Architect, completed architectural drawings for the addition of a marquee, tower, and canopy with Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and modernist motifs which was built in the forecourt space between the Brand Blvd. sidewalk and the front of the 1925 theater structure. While the theater building was not altered, a two-story retail and office building on the south half of the 50 ft. wide forecourt lot was demolished.
- 1948 A stage house fire on August 23rd causes smoke and heat damage in the auditorium. Fox West Coast Theaters completed a major redecoration in three weeks, reopening the theater on September 16th. The redecoration included generous use of drapery at the proscenium and anteprosenia; all new seating; refinishing and raising the top of the auditorium side walls; addition of large round murals in the auditorium; and refinishing and

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adding murals to the lobby walls.

1993 A major rehabilitation was completed, including restoration and adaptation for functional requirements of a live presentation theater. Movie projection equipment is restored; a movie projection screen which flies into the stage house is installed, thereby replicating the original "flying screen" capacity.

Detailed Description

The original Alexander is stylistically ambitious architecture, well executed in terms of structure, decorative arts, function, and urban context. The primarily Greek (with some Roman and Egyptian) characteristics, though adapted to new elements and relationships, reveal skillful and scholarly historicism employed in a theatrical manner. The theater was developed by theater magnate C. L. Langley in order to, in his words, "provide a good place of entertainment to keep Glendalians from going to Los Angeles and Hollywood." Langley named the theater after his young son, Alexander. Langley was interested in and wrote about Greek art history--resulting in speculation that the Greek-Egyptian motifs were inspired by a romantic image of Hellenic Alexandria, Egypt, and a nominal association with the young Alexander Langley.

The storefront scale of the forecourt entrance at the sidewalk, the forecourt processional space, and the monumental western facade successfully complemented Brand Boulevard's character as the "main street" of a commercial district of a growing community, while providing an experience of anticipation and arrival at an important place. The eastern facade of the Alexander, which is the rear wall of the stage house, was designed with a pediment-shaped parapet, paneled stage doors, and painted ornament.

The auditorium is designed in the atmospheric style. The ceiling of the auditorium is shaped, painted and lit to provide the impression of being seated outside under the sky at twilight.

Character-defining decorative features include: entrance facade with two Doric columns supporting the architrave which are archaic in simplicity and proportion; stepped pyramidal roof similar to early Egyptian royal tombs and Babylonian ziggurats; repeating stenciled anthemia at the facade; cast stone tripods and replicated cresting at the entrance parapet; cast stone portico on the Maryland Ave. stage doors modeled after the Erechtheion's north portico doorway; plated iron medallions mounted high on the walls of the west and east elevations; interior ashlar walls rendered in plaster with glazed painted finishes; plaster tripods punctuating atmospheric auditorium walls; plaster coffers with polychrome

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moldings in the foyer and mezzanine; pairs of staff Doric columns flanking the proscenium forming anteprosceia and flanking organ grilles and niches; antaefixae over Greek fret at the proscenium, and a strongly Egyptian proscenium arch with a central solar disk flanked by griffins, below solar rays extending onto the ceiling. The midnight blue ceiling overhead warms to burnt orange as it disappears behind the side "garden" walls and Greek garden landscape murals.

The theater came to be known by patrons as the "Alex" in the 1930's. There were no significant alterations before 1940, when plans were drawn by S. Charles Lee for a new marquee, 100 feet tall illuminated tower, canopy, and walkway to replace the original forecourt paving, fountain and two-story commercial structure. The new illuminated marquee letters read "Alex," manifesting the commonly used name.

The architecture of the Alex forecourt has characteristics of Art Deco as observed in the crisp geometric patterns and stylized naturalistic forms of the fluted tower with leafy base and terrazzo paving patterns. The forecourt also exhibits Streamline Moderne, a later style which often incorporated Art Deco motifs, and can be seen in the curves and horizontal lines of the ticket booth. The influence of the International Style is observed in the simple, bold, punctured concrete forms and upturned plane at the base of the tower.

A fire in the stage house on August 23, 1948 was confined by the fire curtain, but caused smoke and heat damage in the auditorium. Fox West Coast Theatres took the opportunity to provide a "new decoration job," in dealing with the "out of style" decor.

Outline of Rehabilitation Work Completed in 1993

General: The rehabilitation work can be summarized as follows a) restoration of the S. Charles Lee marquee and tower to its original (1940) condition; b) restoration of the theater facade, "portico" lobby, mezzanine, and auditorium to its original (1925) condition; c) reversal of inappropriate renovations from 1948; and d) rehabilitation to meet functional and code requirements. The building was thoroughly documented by 35mm black and white photographs prior to the start of rehabilitation; construction progress was photographed every 2 to 4 weeks during the year-long process. Selected pre-construction and mid-construction photograph negatives and prints were duplicated by the Glendale Redevelopment Agency and donated to the Glendale Central Public Library, Special Collections.

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Marquee and Tower: The 1940 marquee and tower colors and lighting were restored after review of historical photographs and drawings, review of Lee's other tower projects, oral history interviews, and paint scraping. That portion of the Lee-designed terrazzo under the marquee which had been removed in the 1970's was replicated based on historical photographs.

Forecourt: The 1940 canopy which obscured the significant 1925 theater facade was removed from the rear of the marquee and tower to the Doric columns where it engaged the facade.

Main entrance: The front facade and covered entrance were restored to the original 1925 design. The work included restoration of massive Doric columns and stenciled paint and leaf finishes at ceiling coffers. A missing plaster sunburst over the front doors was replicated. Original ticket windows which flank the main entrance to the lobby were uncovered behind poster cases. Simulated stone finishes in cement plaster, stencil work, murals, parapet cresting, sunburst, coffered ceiling, and tripods were replicated or restored.

Lobby: The two-story lobby was restored to its original 1925 condition after the reversal of inappropriate finishes and elements added after the 1948 fire. Decorative restoration includes the simulated cut-stone walls, a deeply coffered ceiling in rich colors and burnished gold leaf. The Ionic mezzanine colonnade which had been cut to half height in the 1940's was restored by replication of the bottom half of the column shafts and reinstallation of the original column bases in their original locations.

Foyer & Mezzanine: Simulated stone wall finishes and crown moldings were restored to their original 1925 design. The decorative Skouras-style lighting fixtures in the foyer and mezzanine from the 1948 post-fire renovation were retained and restored.

Auditorium: The Alexander's original "atmospheric" sky colors were restored to the original 1925 design. The sunburst and other decorative elements at the top of the proscenium arch were restored. Freestanding urns for the anteprosceia niches were replicated in glazed terra cotta based on historic photographs. Sidewall configuration and murals depicting a Greek garden wall and landscape were replicated based on site investigation and documentation. Cove lighting was rehabilitated to recreate the illusion of sunrise, twilight, and sunset. The 1948 seating which remained was retained, refurbished and supplemented with matching seat standards. A theatrical lighting slot was opened at the ceiling, near the rear of the ceiling at the balcony arch. Reversible speaker arrays and "box beams" for lighting were added flanking the proscenium as required for modern productions.

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Balcony: The undecorated balcony space was reraked with radial seating in order to provide improved sight lines.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Alex Theatre is significant by association with the civic and social development of the City of Glendale and surrounding communities, as the last remaining theater of its type in the City of Glendale and by association with the development of the motion picture industry in nearby Hollywood and San Fernando Valley communities. The Alex Theatre is a significant architectural resource as an example of the Vaudeville-movie palace genre, as a surviving theater with a forecourt, as one of few atmospheric auditoria in Southern California, and due to the marquee and tower designed by prominent theater architect, S. Charles Lee. The Alex Theatre, both before and after a 1993 rehabilitation, retains substantial integrity by virtue of location, continued use as a theater, retention of historic fabric, and replication of missing historic features.

Historic Resources Group, as SHPO representative, found the Alex Theatre eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to CFR Section 60.4, in a letter addressed to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on May 22, 1994 (attached). The DPR 523 Primary Record (attached) prepared by Historic Resources Group on October 11, 1994, includes a NRHP Status Code of 2S2 and finds the Alex Theatre significant under criteria A and C.

Criterion A. Association with Development of Glendale and the Motion Picture Industry

Association with Development of Glendale

The City of Glendale consists of approximately 30 square miles located about 6 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, wedged between the San Fernando Valley to the west and the San Gabriel Valley to the east.¹

At the turn of the century, the business district was centered at Glendale Ave. and Third St. (now Wilson). The construction of an interurban railroad line connecting Glendale to Los Angeles was a catalyst for growth of a community of

¹Teresa Grimes, in association with Leslie Heumann and Associates, Historic Context Statement, City of Glendale (City of Glendale, 1993), p. 1.

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homes.² A building boom in the 1920's is characterized by the first four story business block at the corner of Brand Blvd. and Wilson Ave. By 1945 Glendale was almost entirely improved, with a commercial center at the intersection of Brand Blvd. and Broadway. Many civic, social and religious institutions were built in the 1920's and 1930's.

The city's first motion picture theater was the Glendale Theater which opened in 1910. The Majestic opened in 1912 in a storeroom of the Central Building at Broadway and Maryland Avenue. Both closed their doors shortly after the Palace Grand opened in 1914. Located at 131-133 North Brand Boulevard, the building was erected by H. C. Jensen to the cost of \$30,000. The theater was replaced a few years later by commercial space and the building was renamed Jensen's Arcade....In 1919 another theater was constructed on South Brand Boulevard, it was named the Glendale. The Alex Theatre at 216 North Brand Boulevard opened in 1925 as a movie and vaudeville house. These motion picture theaters often doubled for civic events and performing arts venues until the Glendale Civic Auditorium was constructed in 1939 as a WPA project.³

The 1926 Glendale City Directory lists seven theaters in Glendale: The Alexander, Cosmo, Glendale, and Lincoln, all on Brand Boulevard. By 1945, the Lincoln no longer appeared, but the California, Capitol, Roxy, Temple and Vogue are added to the directory. Of these, the Temple Theater was not a discrete structure, having been located inside the Masonic Temple Building at 234 S. Brand Boulevard. Currently, only the Alex, Glendale and Roxy theaters still exist. The Glendale has little residual integrity, having been subdivided into two movie theaters, repeatedly altered, and damaged by roof leaks since vacated; the structure is scheduled to be demolished for new commercial development in 1996 according to a recent report published in the Los Angeles Times. The Roxy has little residual integrity and no stage loft, and therefore is not comparable to the Alex as a vaudeville and motion picture house. The Alex Theatre is the only historic theater with significant historical associations and architectural integrity, of any theater type, remaining in Glendale.

The City of Glendale's General Plan Historic Preservation Element includes the Alex Theatre among thirty-four sites which are recognized as "Sites of Historic Interest in the Glendale Community." These sites have been protected by a

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 18.

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preservation ordinance since 1985.

The Alex's role as a civic auditorium is represented by a variety of events which relate to the context of local and national history. Manager Charles Jones staged a Red Cross benefit in 1931 for nationwide drought relief.⁴ Between five and six thousand Glendale women attended The Modern School of Gas Cookery co-sponsored by the local newspaper and gas utility in 1938.⁵ During World War II, stars appeared at monthly war bond rallies. The \$1,000,000 in bonds sold in Glendale, mostly at the Alex, qualified the City to have a frigate built in its name, the "Frigate Glendale."⁶ Local events included benefits, children's shows, fashion shows by Glendale merchants, car giveaways, and amateur nights.⁷

The purchase and rehabilitation of the Alex Theatre by the City of Glendale makes possible the continued viable use of the building as a theater, in its original location, serving the same constituency, and encouraging the maintenance of the traditional center of commerce in which it stands. The 1925 grand opening night program stated in the dedication an objective which was clearly achieved, and has been renewed by the recent rehabilitation:

The paramount object in the erection of the Alexander Theatre was to create an artistic architectural achievement wherein to present entertainment compatible to the tastes of the people of Glendale and vicinity. If this has been accomplished, the supreme gratification of its founders will have been realized.

Association with Development of the Motion Picture Industry

When the Alexander Theatre opened in 1925, patrons came to see live Vaudeville shows and silent films. Opening night organist Frank Lanterman was favored by silent for previews because of his skills.⁸ Lanterman, later a California State Assemblyman from La Canada, served the Alexander as staff organist from 1925-

⁴Andrea Humberger, Highlights of the Alex Theatre History, (unpublished).

⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁷Idem.

⁸Idem.

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1928.⁹

Fanchon and Marco prologues, musical productions featuring elaborate sets and costumes, were performed by a chorus of "Sunkist Beauties" at the Alexander Theatre between 1927 and 1931.¹⁰

Each Prologue was a special unit and was given the name "Idea." The West Coast Theatre chain hired them and their "Ideas" for all their theatres, and Fanchon and Marco were given offices in Los Angeles. They became deeply engrossed in the staging of dance numbers in motion picture houses and presenting stage talent intact in picture theatres on the West Coast. Eventually, they spread from Coast to Coast assembling their units for traveling in cross-country tours for the Fox-Loew's State Theatres where they performed three or four times a day between their movie showings.

Before the tour began, the shows would open first in theatres in nearby towns such as Glendale, Santa Ana, Long Beach, and Pasadena. Here they would "iron out all the wrinkles" before taking the show on the road.¹¹

The Alex's location in a satellite suburban city and proximity to Hollywood made it a preferred venue for previews of major films. Previews were very important to moviemakers, who gauged audience reactions in deciding on final edits, sometimes reshooting scenes, and picking titles. Many films were previewed at the Alex from the 1920's through the 1950's, as reported in Variety.¹² Among those films are "Flying Down to Rio," "Pennies From Heaven," "A Star Is Born," "A Day At The Races," "Heidi," "National Velvet," and "Going My Way." Therefore, the Alex played an important role in the production of many significant films.

⁹Carol Osmon, "How Giant Theatre Organ Came to Lanterman Home," La Canada Valley Sun (August 31, 1972), p. 12.

¹⁰Andrea Humberger, List of Fanchon and Marco Ideas Which Played at the Alexander Theatre, (unpublished, 1990).

¹¹Joan Pizzo, Fanchon and Marco's "IDEAS" Prologues, (unpublished, 1990), pp. 1-2.

¹²Andrea Humberger, Selected Films Previewed at the Alexander Theatre, (Glendale, CA., unpublished, 1990), pp. 1-2.

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According to an assistant manager during the 1930's, "Jean Harlow and William Powell were always there."¹³

Louis B. Mayer sat in large loge seat at back of center orchestra on right, hooked up by E.P. (Electrical Products) to Doug Shearer in the booth who controlled sound. Cued volume up or down as desired for certain portions of picture. Darryl Zanuck preferred previewing his films at Alex because of acoustics."¹⁴

Elizabeth Taylor, Bing Crosby, Van Johnson, Ginger Rogers and Nelson Eddy were among the Hollywood stars who slipped into the auditorium to see their new releases. Elizabeth Taylor attended the "National Velvet" preview, her first, with her mother, and, having arrived late, stood in the aisle until someone walked out near the end.¹⁵

Criterion C. Significant and Distinguishable Characteristics of Vaudeville & Movie Palaces; Representative of the Work of S. Charles Lee

The architectural merits of both the original and the S. Charles Lee designs have long been recognized by architectural and theater historians, preservationists, movie-goers, and the general public. The two periods of design remain closely interwoven and both are very much in evidence to the architectural student and to the careful observer. As one of the more important surviving examples of grand movie palaces from the early 20th century, and one of only six extant theaters with a forecourt, the Alex now commands the attention of numerous statewide and nationwide professionals...

The Alex has been evaluated as being potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places...¹⁶

¹³Bob Caskey, Assistant Manager, 1929-1936 (taped September 23, 1989).

¹⁴Idem.

¹⁵Andrea Humberger, Highlights of the Alex Theatre History, (unpublished).

¹⁶Heumann, Gleye and Associates, Glendale Architectural and Historical Survey Final Report, (Glendale Historical Society, 1984), p. 129.

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Arthur G. Lindley, Charles R. Selkirk, Associates, designers of the original theater structure of 1925, received a number of notable commissions in Glendale, having completed the Masonic Temple, Methodist Church alterations, the Glendale Hotel, the Harrower Foundation Clinic school, Grand View Library, and City Hall annex. Lindley was a long time resident of Glendale and active member of the community. Lindley designed more than 30 Methodist Churches, and facilities for other denominations as well. In addition to the Alexander, three of the firm's surviving buildings were included in Heumann, Gleye, and Associates' Glendale Architectural and Historical Survey Final Report. The firm was significant in reference to the Los Angeles area and particularly significant with reference to the public buildings and community of Glendale.

The Alexander was one of few theaters built with an outdoor forecourt. The Egyptian Theatre (1922) in Hollywood with its long, narrow forecourt predates the Alexander. Grauman's Chinese Theatre (1927) utilizes a forecourt but its character and proportion create an enveloped outdoor courtyard rather than a processional space.

The Alexander interiors were executed by Robert E. Power Studios, then of San Francisco and Los Angeles. The firm was credited in that era with having decorated the majority of theaters in Southern California.

The theater's auditorium was designed as an "atmospherium," or atmospheric theater in a style made popular in the early 1920's by Chicago architect John Eberson. From the seminal Orpheum in Wichita, Kansas of 1922, Eberson became one of the most prominent theater architects among the second generation of movie palace architects by replacing "the standard ornate ceiling dome with a star-covered blue plaster sky."¹⁷ "The open-air illusion was enhanced by the stage-set walls encircling the auditorium, creating the feeling of being enclosed in an ancient...garden."¹⁸ The Alex Theatre is one of few atmospheric theatres which were constructed in Southern California, and one still fewer which remain.

S. Charles Lee, designer of the forecourt structures, stands among the most prominent American theater architects. After working with a nationally prominent Chicago theater architect, Lee came to Los Angeles, the birthplace of the motion picture industry, where he helped to define and develop the movie theater as a

¹⁷Naylor, David, American picture Palaces (New York, Prentice Hall Press, 1981), p. 68.

¹⁸Idem.

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building type. Lee designed more than 400 movie theaters, and more than 15,000 other structures. During his lifetime he was recognized and lauded not only as an important architect but also as a prominent member of the international business community.

S. Charles Lee's life and career coincided with the rise and fall of the American movie theatre in the twentieth century. Although the development of the movie theatre, especially in its early forms, is usually associated with a group of eastern and midwestern architects...the history of the building type, especially in the post-movie palace era, can also be explored through Lee's work, which spans the evolution from movie palace into neighborhood house."¹⁹

In 1940, the owners of the Alexander Theatre...commissioned Lee to remodel their Greco-Egyptian theatre...the building was set back from the street and remained almost invisible to passersby. Lee left the auditorium virtually unchanged but added a one-hundred-foot neon tower with a spiked starburst at the top, bringing the glamour of the theatre out to the sidewalk. A three-dimensional marquee aimed at the street targeted the passing motorist and pedestrian.²⁰

S. Charles Lee is strongly associated with the evolution of the movie theater building type and the associated styles, in particular the transition from classicism to Art Deco and Modernism. "Among the first pure art deco theaters in California was the Fox Wilshire (1930) in Los Angeles, by architect S. Charles Lee."²¹

Lee designed several theaters with a theme tower, each unique; this genre represents a small and noteworthy period of his work. The Alex design is unique among Lee tower schemes and unusual among all theaters in the composition of a tower, outdoor ticketing lobby, two-sided marquee.

¹⁹Maggie Valentine, The Show Starts on the Sidewalk, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994), p. xi.

²⁰Ibid., p. 119.

²¹Naylor, p. 141.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property 0.5

Verbal Boundary Description:

1. County of Los Angeles Assessor Parcel Number 5642-016-908.

Legal Description:

LOT 17 IN BLOCK 5 OF THE GLENDALE BOULEVARD TRACT, IN THE CITY OF GLENDALE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 5 PAGE 167 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

2. County of Los Angeles Assessor Parcel Number 5642-016-909.

Legal Description:

LOTS 7 AND 8 IN BLOCK 5 OF THE GLENDALE BOULEVARD TRACT, IN THE CITY OF GLENDALE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 5 PAGE 167 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is established by describing the three lots on which the nominated individual property was originally constructed and on which the property remains. There are no other buildings or structures on the listed lots.

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Location of Negatives: Glendale Redevelopment Agency
633 E. Broadway Suite 201
Glendale, CA 91206
Telephone: (818) 548-2005

Abbreviations: H: Designates a historic photograph.
AF: Designates an as-found conditions photograph prior
to the 1993 rehabilitation.
R: Designates a photograph after the 1993
rehabilitation.

Item No.	Frame No.	Date	Description
1.	H-1	1925	Opening night program Glendale Historical Society
2.	H-2	c. 1925	West elevation, view east (original construction; view of forecourt and 2-story commercial building with theater facade beyond) Glendale Historical Society
3.	H-3	c. 1926	West elevation, view east (original construction; view of forecourt and 2-story commercial building with theater facade beyond) Glendale Historical Society
4.	H-4	c. 1926	West elevation, view northeast (original construction; partial view of forecourt and theater facade beyond) Glendale Historical Society
5.	H-5	c. 1939	West elevation, view northeast (original construction; view of forecourt and 2-story commercial building with west theater wall beyond) University of California Los Angeles Research Library, Special Collections, S. Charles Lee Collection
6.	H-6	1940	West elevation, view northeast (S. Charles Lee-designed marquee and tower with theater facade and theater wall beyond) University of California Los Angeles Research Library, Special Collections, S. Charles Lee Collection

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| 7. | H-7 | c. 1940 | West elevation, view east
(S. Charles Lee-designed marquee and tower with forecourt and forecourt canopy beyond)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 8. | H-8 | 1948 | West elevation, view east
(Marquee and tower on day of grand re-opening after the fire)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 9. | H-9 | 1948 | West elevation, view northeast
(Marquee and tower on day of grand re-opening after the fire; night view)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 10. | AF-1 | 1992 | West elevation, view east
(Marquee and tower)
© The Walt Disney Company |
| 11. | R-1 | 1993 | West elevation, view east
(Marquee and tower)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency |
| 12. | H-10 | c. 1970 | Forecourt, west end, view east
(S. Charles Lee designed terrazzo-paving intact)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency |
| 13. | AF-2 | 1992 | Forecourt, west end, view east
(S. Charles Lee designed terrazzo removed to building line by sidewalk replacement in 1970's)
© The Walt Disney Company |
| 14. | AF-3 | 1992 | Marquee and tower, east elevation, view west
(rear marquee sign; east elevation of ticket kiosk)
© The Walt Disney Company |
| 15. | H-11 | c. 1955 | Forecourt canopy, view east
Glendale Historical Society |
| 16. | AF-4 | 1992 | Forecourt canopy, view west
© The Walt Disney Company |

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| 17. | R-2 | 1993 | Forecourt and west theater facade, view east
(west theater facade restored to 1925 condition)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency |
| 18. | H-12 | c. 1930 | Lobby, north stair, view northeast
(original simulated stone coursing and finish)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 19. | AF-5 | 1992 | Lobby and Mezzanine, north and east walls, view northeast
(finishes and murals installed in 1948 after fire)
© The Walt Disney Company |
| 20. | AF-6 | 1992 | Lobby and Mezzanine, south and west walls, view southwest
(finishes and murals installed in 1948 after fire)
© The Walt Disney Company |
| 21. | R-3 | 1993 | Lobby and Mezzanine, south and west walls, view southwest
(space, windows, features, wall and ceiling finishes
restored to 1925 condition)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency |
| 22. | AF-7 | 1992 | Mezzanine, north and east walls, view northeast
© Walt Disney Company |
| 23. | R-4 | 1993 | Mezzanine, north and east walls, view northeast
(wall and ceiling finishes restored to 1925 condition)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency |
| 24. | H-13 | 1925 | Proscenium, view east
(original proscenium decoration and grand drape)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 25. | H-14 | 1925 | Proscenium and north anteprosenium, view northeast;
print reversed
(original proscenium decoration, grand drape, partial
side wall mural and configuration)
Glendale Historical Society |
| 26. | H-15 | 1938 | Proscenium, view east
Glendale Historical Society |

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27. H-16 1948 Proscenium, view east
(Decorative features repainted, drapery installed after
fire)
Glendale Historical Society
28. H-17 1948 Proscenium and south anteproscenium, view southeast
(Decorative features repainted, drapery installed after
fire)
Glendale Historical Society
29. AF-8 1992 Proscenium, view east
© The Walt Disney Company
30. AF-9 1992 South anteproscenium and auditorium sidewall, view south
(overpainting, raised side wall, and mural installed
after 1948 fire)
© The Walt Disney Company
31. R-5 1993 Proscenium and north anteproscenium, view northeast
(proscenium decorative finishes, sidewall configuration,
atmospheric ceiling colors restored to 1925 conditions)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency
32. H-18 1938 Balcony, view west
(underside of balcony, original balcony railing)
Glendale Historical Society
33. AF-10 1992 Balcony, view west
(underside of balcony, railing, rear wall, projection
booth)
© The Walt Disney Company
34. R-6 1993 Balcony, view west
(underside of balcony, railing, rear wall, restored side
wall configuration, projection booth)
Glendale Redevelopment Agency