

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska	
COUNTY: Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
1001	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Astro Theater

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Riviera Theater

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2001 Farnam Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Omaha

STATE: **Nebraska** CODE: **31** COUNTY: **Douglas** CODE: **055**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Creighton University

STREET AND NUMBER:
2500 California Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Omaha STATE: **Nebraska** CODE: **31**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Register of Deeds, Douglas County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
18th & Farnam Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Omaha STATE: **Nebraska** CODE: **31**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE OF SURVEY: **1971** Federal State County Local

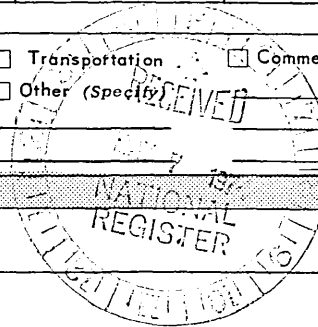
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Lincoln STATE: **Nebraska** CODE: **31**

This nomination is located in the Second Congressional District

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Nebraska
COUNTY: Douglas
ENTRY NUMBER 1001
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Opened in 1926 as the Riviera, the 2,776 seat theater was noted for its lavish stage shows, combined with movies. It was one of the highly elegant entertainment facilities of the time. In the lobby there were rosebuds afloat in water fountains and goldfish swimming in the aquarium. In the theater portion, the vaulted ceiling had an artificial sky effect. Recessed lighting behind small holes sparkled like stars. Artificial clouds and doves hanging from the ceiling further enhanced the effect.

The orchestra pit was on an elevator. It emerged from below the stage with the whole orchestra for the stage show and would recede when the movie was about to start. The organ was imposing and superb.

In 1929 the building was sold, becoming the Paramount Theater. During the years of depression, there were no more stage shows. The lower lobby was converted into a miniature golf course to attract customers. In the 1960's there were extensive interior remodeling and all the gingerbread trimmings were removed.

The building is of steel-frame structure and rectangular in shape. The Farnam and Twentieth Street sides are faced with glazed bricks arranged in diamond patterns. On the other two sides, common bricks are used. The entrance, located on the northeast corner, is further defined by the metal marquee. The focal point is the copper dome topping the tower directly above. The structural ribs of the dome arranged in geometric patterns are exposed. The tower has balustrades, cornice, and ornate glazed terra-cotta tile copings. On the two exposed sides of the tower are two semi-circular balconies enclosed by glazed-tile screens of elaborate Moorish detail. Below there are also five Romanesque windows on

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
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(Number all entries)

Description (cont'd)

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each side with glazed-tile balconies. A smaller dome of the same pattern is atop the north and east facades.

The most outstanding features of the building are the free-standing columns supporting griffons, three each on the north and east sides. The griffons are of a Greek version while the Corinthian columns have shafts of Islamic ornamentation. It is an extraordinary combination of Classic and Moorish features.

In the lobby, similar columns support the second floor. The center of the lobby is open to the second-floor lobby, thus visually connecting both levels. The doorways are segment arched and the walls are tapestried. The second-floor lobby walls are glazed tile and the ceiling is stucco. After so many remodelings, all the original gingerbread wood trimmings in the theater proper are removed. There are some sculptured terra-cotta plaques on the ceiling below the balcony level and ornate pediments above the arched doorways. The interior is mainly of modern design.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **completed in 1926**

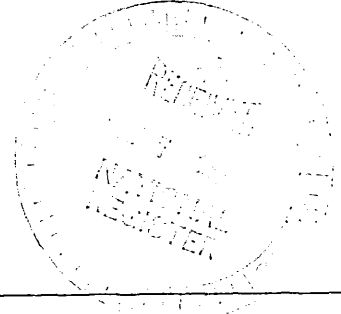
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural styles of eastern origin were never popular in the United States. Interest in Egyptian architecture reached a high point in the 1830's, and only a handful of buildings were erected in that style, mostly on the east coast and in the Southern states. Islamic styles had an even smaller influence. Its features were only occasionally executed in the few Mohammedan mosques built in this country. Moorish ornaments, noted for the intricate geometrical or floral surface decorations in painted stucco, mosaic, glazed tiles, or shallow relief carving, were sometimes used in buildings. The Riviera Theater is one of a few buildings in this part of the country possessing such a unique combination of both Moorish and Classical styles.

Opened in 1926, the Riviera Theater was one of the most elegant entertainment facilities of the time. After television was introduced the cinema industry in the Omaha area declined and many theaters had also cut into the downtown theater business appreciably. Still standing today, the Astro Theater is a reminder of that glamorous motion picture era.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files, Nebraska State Historical Society.
 Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780.
 Pegler, Martin. Dictionary of Interior Design.
 Giedion, S. Space, Time and Architecture.

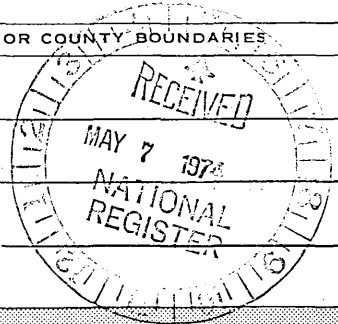
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	41°	15'	27"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	95°	56'	32"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Persijs Kolberg, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society DATE: _____

STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Martin O'Keefe

Title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

Date 4/18/74

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. R. Martensen
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 8/13/74

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 8.1.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS