

**ATTACHMENT B**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION  
PART 1 – EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**NPS Office Use Only**

NRIS No:

**NPS Office Use Only**

Project No:

**Instructions:** Read the instructions carefully before completing application. No certifications will be made unless a completed application form has been received. Type or print clearly in black ink. If additional space is needed, use continuation sheets or attach blank sheets.

1. **Name of Property:** Washington Theater Building

Address of Property: Street 841-853 East Washington Boulevard

City Pasadena County Los Angeles State California Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Name of historic district: N/A

National Register district     certified state or local district     potential district

2. **Check nature of request:**

certification that the building contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district (or National Register property) for the purpose of rehabilitation.

certification that the structure or building, and where appropriate, the land area on which such structure or building is located contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes

certification that the building does not contribute to the significance of the above-named historic district.

preliminary determination for individual listing in the National Register.

preliminary determination that a building located within a potential historic district contributes to the significance of the district.

preliminary determination that a building outside the period or area of significance contributes to the significance of the district.

3. **Project contact:**

Name Mary Jo Winder

Street 1609 Fair Oaks Avenue #2 City South Pasadena

State California Zip 91030 Daytime Telephone Number 626-664-9464

4. **Owner:**

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I own the property described above. I understand that falsification of factual representations in this application is subject to criminal sanctions of up to \$10,000 in fines or imprisonment for up to five years pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security or Taxpayer Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**NPS Office Use Only**

The National Park Service has reviewed the "Historic Certification Application – Part 1" for the above-named property and hereby determines that the property:

contributes to the significance of the above-named district (or National Register property) and is a "certified historic structure" for the purpose of rehabilitation.

contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic structure" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980.

does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.

Preliminary determinations:

appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely not be listed in the National Register.

appears to contribute to the significance of a potential historic district, which will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

appears to contribute to the significance of a registered historic district but is outside the period or area of significance as documented in the National Register nomination or district documentation on file with the NPS.

does not appear to qualify as a certified historic structure.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

National Park Service Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

National Park Service Office/Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

See Attachments

HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

Washington Theater Building

Property Name

PART 1

NPS Office Use Only

Project Number:

841-853 East Washington Boulevard, Pasadena, CA

Property Address

**5. Description of physical appearance:** The Washington Theater Building is a two-story, seven-bay lower/nine-bay upper, rectangular plan, symmetrical structure with a three-story, multiple-bay structure attached at the East rear of the building. It is sited on an interior lot off a commercial district just west of where North Lake Avenue intersects East Washington Boulevard. The unreinforced masonry building of brick construction has a south-facing front elevation that has a wide center opening surmounted by a rectangular marquee and three wide springing arch-topped openings to either side. Upper fenestration consists of nine openings, bracketed at the top, that have twelve-light fixed windows flanked by eight-light casements — all windows are industrial metal. Red English bond brick is exposed on the wall below the upper story window sills and continues around the corner for one bay on the east elevation. This wall, which shows evidence of sandblasting, was originally covered with stucco. The openings have four-row brick header-bond arches. A Spanish-tiled pent roof surmounting the façade is supported by flattened decorative wood brackets. Upper story window openings separated by wide fluted panels and a triple belt course below the upper windows that continues onto the east side elevation for the length of one bay are alterations that occurred in 1937. The wide center bay forms a deeply recessed forecourt with a centered polygonal ticket booth at the front. The floor of the forecourt retains its polychromatic terrazzo design, which appears to be from the 1937 alteration. Playbill case openings (1937 alteration) on either side of this bay are covered with wood panels. Three-bay storefronts flanking the theater bay consists of a recessed opening where entries to the shop spaces are located and plate glass windows on either side. These storefronts lack any original features or features from the later 1937 alteration. All transoms are covered with wood panels, however there is evidence of vertical muntins on at least one of the covered transoms.

The exterior wall of the building's west elevation retains its original exposed red brick. This elevation has only one window opening near the front of the building with its original multi-light metal window.

The east elevation is dominated by the three-story apartment structure that is set back from the front two-story elevation. Its walls are stucco-clad and they are punctuated with deeply recessed window openings with multi-light metal casements or multi-light fixed windows surmounted by multi-light hopper windows. The apartment building is relatively unadorned except for a molded belt-course below the third story windows, simple shields regularly spaced along the wall between second and third stories and two cross-pattern openings on first floor. A stair tower projecting above the roof line is ornamented with molding surmounted by relief medallions. The east elevation has a fire escape and first floor windows have metal grilles. The north (rear) elevation has similar openings and another fire escape on the east end and brick walls and a curved roofline over the theater structure on the west.

Poor condition of the exterior of the building is due to deferred maintenance and damage to storefronts on the primary façade. The building is currently totally unoccupied; the theater has not operated in several decades and is severely damaged by water penetration and bird infestation, however, its 900 seat space retains its original auditorium and lobby spaces and features including stage and proscenium with ornamental relief design and other plaster details around the stage and side walls.

Date of Construction: 1925

Source of Date: Building Permit

Date(s) of Alteration(s): 1937; circa 1960

Has building been moved?  yes  no If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Statement of significance:** The Washington Theater building is significant and eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of social history and entertainment/recreation because of its function as a movie theater combined with contemporary mixed uses for commercial/office spaces and living units in a single development. It is the only existing building in Pasadena from its period of significance that demonstrates such a multiple use function. It is important as a reflection of the substantial influx of population in Pasadena between WWI and the Great Depression, the city's growth and expansion of residential areas north and east of the original city boundaries and the community's response to the cultural, social and recreational needs of that new community. It has two periods of significance — 1925, the year of its original construction date; and 1937, when the building's theater and storefronts were significantly altered using a Streamline Moderne motif. The Washington Theatre building is a locally unique multiple-use building that represents the cultural and social themes of Pasadena from the mid 1920s to the late 1930s. Its original design exhibits the emerging preference for Spanish Revival styles in both commercial and residential architecture during the period.

Once home to only the Gabrielino native American tribe, followed by Spanish missionaries and recipients of expansive Mexican land grants, the land that was to become a city known as Pasadena began its irreversible change to an intensively settled community in the late Nineteen Century. In 1873, a Midwestern group called the San Gabriel Orange Grove Association purchased land that was part of the Rancho San Pasqual, and by 1875 their land was platted into saleable lots that formed the original city. When the intercontinental railroad reached Southern California in the 1880s was experiencing a land boom that attracted some of the country's wealthy investors and enterprising agriculturists. By the 1890s, the citrus culture and tourist economies were firmly established in Pasadena. As in similar communities in Southern California, the climate of warm sunny days almost year-round, attracted people seeking a healthier environment and recreational benefits afforded by this mild climate. Pasadena became an attraction for numerous wealthy industrialists, many of who built mansions where they spent winters away from harsh eastern and Midwestern winters. It became by the end of that century, an established center of wealth and culture. By the turn of the century, the City had annexed land to the north and east of its original boundaries to accommodate the 10,000 who became permanent residents. Growth continued into the next decades as the City boundaries expanded further east and north; by 1920 the population rose to 45,000 as the boundaries expanded further north and east and west to include most of what is the current City of Pasadena. It is this expansion that drove the development of the Lake/Washington intersection as a commercial district with a 900-seat movie theater to provide residents with convenient shopping and entertainment opportunities.

On April 3, 1924, the Pasadena Star News ran an article headlined "Work is Begun on Large Theater, Office and Apartment Building for Northeast Section." The article included a drawing of the proposed building by architect, Clarence L. Jay, and photographs of its developers, Barney Judge and W. M. Patch. It stated that the building, which would house, besides a theater, "four stores, 22 offices and 30 furnished apartments" would cost \$250,000. The theater had already been leased to West Coast Theaters, Inc. On May 14, 1925, one day before the opening of the theater, Mr. Patch was quoted in the Pasadena Star News, "One of the main reasons for the establishment of a theater in the district is the fact that approximately 20,000 people in the northeast section of this city (F. C. Groves, a pharmacist at the southwest corner of Lake and Washington, was also quoted that the "northeast section has trebled in the past four years) have readier access to a community center at Lake avenue and Washington street than to any other section of Pasadena . . . Another main consideration . . . is the prospect of extensive road developments, which will see Washington street as a main connecting link between Monrovia and Glendale. These developments which are now under consideration, will place Washington street on the map only second in importance to Colorado street." An adjunct article headlined "Project Seen Important to Area" declared it was at that time, "one of the biggest projects that has been consummated in any of the outlying business centers of Pasadena." That issue of the Pasadena Star News devoted much attention to the opening of the theater and included a quotation from the West Coast Langley Theaters spokesman giving reasons for and methods used in selecting the site for the venture. It also announced the selection of the program, the premiere showing of "Eve's Lover" with a description of its filming on the location of

the Baker Iron Works in Los Angeles. . . film titled "Hard Boiled," organ entertainment, and presentation of the stars of the Warner Brothers films. The theater was equipped with . . . st in lighting and projection technology. After sc . . . ine films for neighborhood children attending the nearby Longfellow Elementary School were planned.

Contemporary commercial uses in the Lake/Washington district were already established in 1925 when the theater opened its doors. The suitability of the mixed use building was touted by Mr. Gianetti, president of the Hogan-Finance and Mortgage Company, a firm that was actively involved in development of this building, as well as many residential areas in northeast Pasadena and the adjacent city, east Altadena. Mr. Gianette believed the "incorporation of the apartment house in the plan still further adds to the advantages enjoyed by the new building . . . the kind of building . . . is the best type of building for the locality . . . the apartment house is meeting a need in a locality which has rapidly developed in recent years."

The shops and offices of the Washington Theater appear to have been fully occupied during the building's early history. Up through at least 1951 businesses in the building included restaurants, beauty shops, realty offices, a confectionary, women's clothing shops and physician offices. Some of these businesses appear to have been successful as they remained in the same location for many years. The only evidence of occupancy of the apartment building upon its opening in 1925 was an article in the Pasadena Star News (the same issue that announced the building's opening) about the new manager of the theater, Cobe H. Wartman, who was taking an apartment in the 30-unit building. City directories only listed residential occupants starting in 1938—at that time only eight residents were listed. Most of the rooms may have been let to tourists as this pattern continued up until the early 1950s, when most of the units appeared to have permanent residents.

In 1937, the two-story front elevation was updated with a new modern façade. The theater and shop walls were clad in Vitrolite panels, shop windows were changed, neon and ornament were added to the marquee, panels were added between second story windows (probably covering original medallions) and the terrazzo forecourt floor was covered—the ticket booth may also have been changed at that time. In later years, subsequent changes were made to this façade. In 1959, a permit was issued to remove Vitrolite and re-plaster. This is probably when the brick wall was exposed and the arched window openings restored. It is possible that the Vitrolite attachment damaged the original plaster and that the project to plaster was not undertaken, rather the original plaster was completely removed and the brick sandblasted.

The Washington Theater continued operation under that name until 1968. After a year of sitting vacant, it became the Cinema 21 Theater, which in operation until 1976. It was probably around this time that the building began its demise. City of Pasadena building permit records document inspections about that time showing that the building had many code deficiencies and that its electrical wiring had not been updated since its construction in 1925.

Although the Washington Theater building has suffered continuous deterioration through the last three decades, its importance to the City as a reminder of what it represents, why it was built, and the lifestyle of Pasadena's residents in the 1920s and 30s. Even though the building's two-story front elevation was has been altered, it retains most of its original features and some features of its 1937 remodel.

## 7. Photographs and maps.

Attach photographs and maps to application

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Continuation sheets attached:  yes  no