

PH0660965

DATA SHEET ✓

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 24 1978

DATE ENTERED

MAY 24 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

RIALTO THEATRE

AND/OR COMMON

RIALTO THEATRE

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1019 - 1021 - 1023 Fair Oaks Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

South Pasadena

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

26th

STATE

California

VICINITY OF
CODE

06

COUNTY

Los Angeles

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bank of America National Trust and Savings Association

STREET & NUMBER

1335 South Grand Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Los Angeles Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

320 West Temple Street

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State of California Historic Resources Inventory

DATE

July 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State of Calif., The Resources Agency, The Dept. of Parks & Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE
California

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OWNER OF PROPERTY

- 1. Bank of America, IT & CA, Inc
Trust Real Estate Division #201, 16th Floor
100 S. Flower St.
Los Angeles 90071
Att. George Haddad
- 2. Paul M. Jabbia, Pasadena (recently deceased) - own. land.
- 3. Ed Lewis (an attorney)
1401 Century Park East, Suite 1211
Los Angeles 90067
Phon: 213-875-1301
Owns and controls the theatre. Has 99 year lease on building,
ending in year of 2001.
- 4. Kim Jong-nan, owner of
Parallela Theatre System,
1111 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, 90024
Sub-leases theatre from Ed Lewis.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The structure is a two-story reinforced concrete, brick and structural steel building with a painted stucco exterior and a terra cotta tile and composition roof. Originally designed to contain a theater, retail shops and apartments, there have been no substantial alterations to the design format from its original construction. While there have been minor modifications to the street level shop frontage, L. A. Smith's original Moorish motif is still clearly evident.

The original marquee, a two-line reader board featuring the white glass and tin changeable letters, was replaced sometime in the 20's by a larger, three-line three-face neon moderne/art deco marquee to provide a more effective space for the display requirements of the 30's.

The theatre interior presently seats 1143 people with 750 on the ground floor and the remainder in the balcony. The Southwest Builder & Contractor, 8/29/1924 said: "Theater, stores, apartments The West Coast Theaters, Inc. and C. L. Langley, associates have announced the erection of a \$250,000 theater, store and apartment building at Fair Oaks and Oxley St., South Pasadena 1600 seat theater." In all likelihood there were never more than 1300 seats. The interior is a lavish example of L. A. Smith's flamboyant eclecticism in expression of Moorish fantasy. The interior remains in good shape with no serious alterations. The stage, about 30 feet deep is adequately designed for legitimate theater with dressing rooms under and an orchestra pit out front. The scenery loft remains intact although there has been no stage performance since the early 20's.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	1924 1925	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	L. A. Smith, architect Wm. G. Reed, builder
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although L. A. Smith designed about 15 or more theatres in a very short time, the Rialto is now one of a dwindling handful remaining at this time. It is one of the best preserved examples of this prolific architect's work. It was designed in 1924 and built in 1925 by William G. Reed for West Coast Theatres. It is significant that they chose to build in South Pasadena and only leased theatres in Pasadena. When it opened in 1925, its policy was to run a feature length film and present vaudeville on Thursdays and Saturdays in addition to the Motion Picture. The Rialto was a try out stage for new vaudeville talent produced by Fanchon and Marco. Many performers entered the vaudeville circuit here, moving on to Fanchon and Marco's top house, the Paramount in Los Angeles. General admission was 30¢, loges were 40¢; children under 12 got in for a dime.

In a few years vaudeville was replaced by twice weekly matinee performances of the Charles Royal Players in such plays as "Charlie's Aunt", "Peg O My Heart" and "The Outcast", plus a feature film. In the early 30's the Rialto resumed vaudeville and succeeded in attracting the Orpheum Theater's musical conductor, a man named Frankenstein, to join the Rialto. Within a few months a backstage fire closed the theater for a few months and neither vaudeville nor live drama ever returned. For about ten years, beginning in the middle 30's, the Rialto had an interesting distinction: each year when the academy awards were announced for the best picture of the year, it was already playing at the time at the Rialto.

The original decorative art on the walls and ceilings is in remarkably good shape. The stage is still equipped with the original red and gold house curtains as well as the original asbestos curtain. The exterior vertical main sign appears to be the original.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Federated News (South Pasadena)

October 16, 1928
October 16, 1928
October 16, 1928

Pasadena Star News

October 16, 1928, p.16
October 16, 1928, p.9

Los Ang. Los Times

February 12, 1916, part V, p.1

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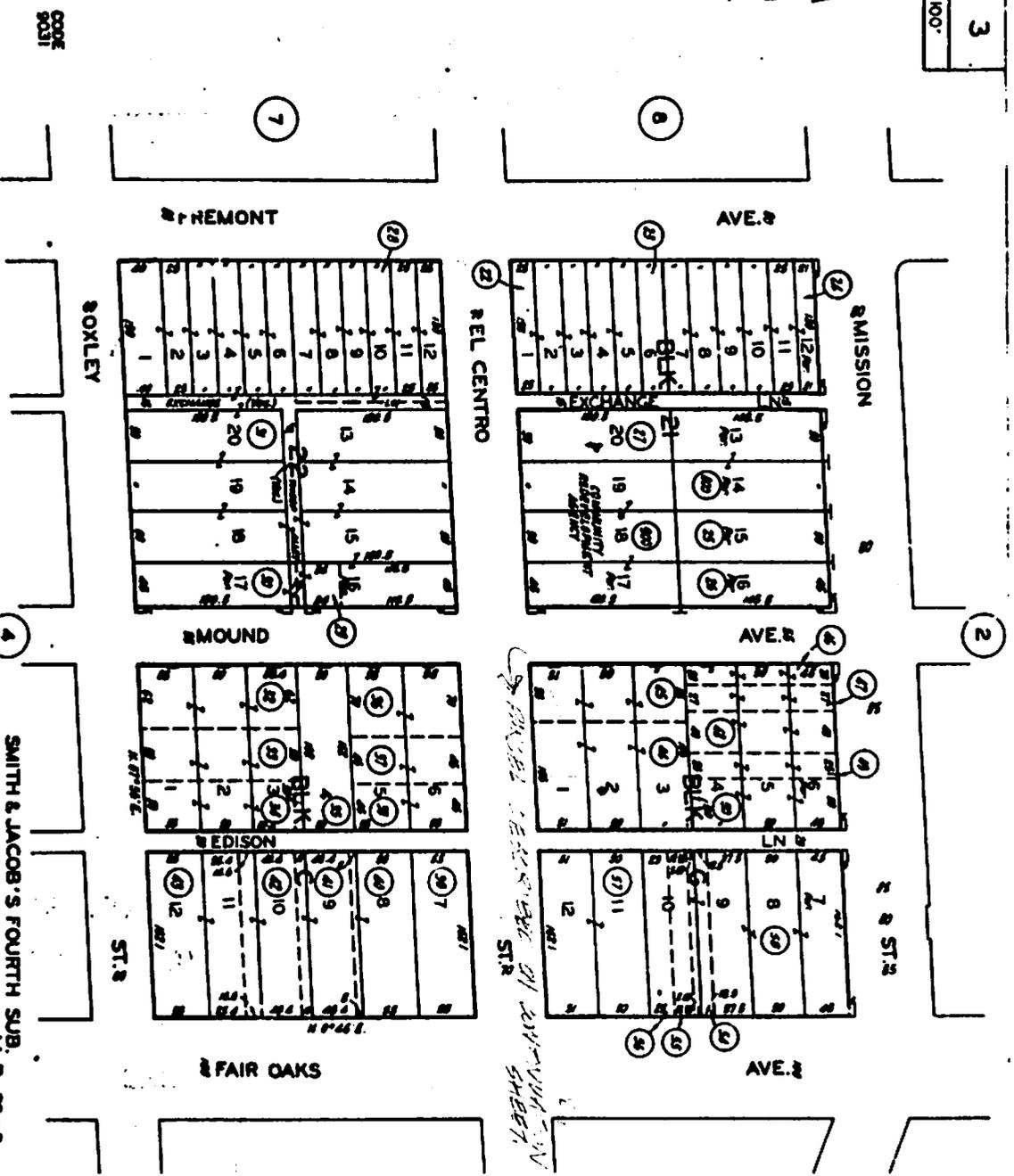
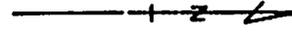
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Beginning at a point in the Northerly line of Center Street, now El Centro Street, at a point 26 feet Easterly from the intersection of the Northerly line of Center Street, now El Centro Street, with the Easterly line of Mound Avenue, as shown on said map; thence Northerly parallel with the said Easterly line of Mound Avenue to the Northerly line of said Lot 2; thence Easterly along said line 50 feet to a point distant 16 feet Westerly from the North-easterly corner of said Lot 2; thence Southerly on a line parallel with the Easterly lines of said Lots 1, 2, and 3 to the Northerly line of Center Street, now El Centro Street, 50 feet to the point of beginning.

5315 3
SCALE 1" = 100'



FOR PREV. ASSMT. SEE:
5315 - 26 & 28

SMITH & JACOB'S FOURTH SUB.
M. R. 29-3
RAYMOND VILLA TRACT NO. 1
M.B. 1-91

ASSASSOR'S 1
COUNTY OF LOS ANGL.

MAY



