

# PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Resource Name or #: State Theater

P1. Other Identifier: Majestic Theater

\*P2. .Location: \*a. County Solano

b. Address: 710 First Street

\*c. City: Benicia Zip 94510

d. UTM: N/A

e. USGS Quad: Benicia T2N R3W MDM

\*f. Other Locational Data (APN #): 89-341-23

\*P3a. Description

This is a classic movie theater building with a restrained Art Deco façade. The building is rectangular in plan with a large rectangular front façade. The facade is dominated by the marquee and the semi-circular roof over double entrance. The building has a flat roof behind a plain false front that gives the illusion that the building is more than two story. Fenestration consists of small double hung windows arranged on either side of the marquee on the upper story. The entrance is slightly recessed with double ticket windows in the center of the building. The entrance area is clad with stone veneer that has a linear patterning. The lower front wall of the building, including the ticket/entrance area is veneered with a green marble. Double entry doors are placed on either side of the ticket booth. The semi-circular roof is finished with a wide copper strip with the theater's name emblazoned in raised letters. The canted marquee is divided by a sculptural projection with neon tubing. It is executed in the same stone materials as the entry.

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP6

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District

P5b. Description of Photo:

Front façade, view east

P5. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



\*P6. Date Constructed/Age: Circa 1917/1940

Prehistoric  Historic  Both

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Robert Reichert  
526 Bay View Dr.  
Martinez, CA 94553  
Benicia, CA 94510

\*P8. Recorded by:

Carol Roland  
Roland-Nawi Associates  
4829 Crestwood Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

\*P9. Date Recorded: 11-20-05

\*P10. Type of Survey:  Intensive

Reconnaissance

Other

Describe Eligibility Evaluation

\*P11. Report Citation: none

\*Attachments:  NONE  Map Sheet

Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and

Object Record  Linear Resource Record

Archaeological Record  District Record

Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record

Artifact Record  Photograph Record

Other (List):

## BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

\*Resource Identifier: Majestic Theater

\*NRHP Status Code: 3D

B1. Historic Name: Same

B2. Common Name:

B3. Original Use: Movie Theater

B4. Present Use: Performing arts center

\*B5. Architectural Style: Arte Deco

B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown

Date: N/A

Original Location: same

\*B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: unknown

B9b. Builder: unknown

\*B10. Significance: Theme: Benicia Downtown District Period of Significance: 1847-1940

Property Type: Commercial Applicable Criteria: A / C

The theater was originally constructed in 1917 as a movie house to show silent films. It was converted to “talking pictures” in 1932 and showed the *Jazz Singer* as its first sound feature. In 1940 Elias Jeha purchased the theater and remodeled the façade in the style of movie theaters of the day. This remodel was undertaken within the period of significance of the Historic District. The theater closed in the 1970s. It retains its appearance from the 1940s and is one of the only examples of Arte Deco in Benicia. The 1986 historic survey indicated that the interior of the theater has integrity to its original 1917 construction. The interior of the theater was not surveyed for purposes of this survey. However, prior to any alterations to the interior, a thorough historic review should be conducted. The theater contributes to the Downtown Historic District and should be considered for Landmark status because it is the city’s only early movie theater.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: N/A

B12. References: McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred Knopf (1986); Brueggemann, Robert. *Benicia Portrait of an Early California Town: An Architectural History* (San Francisco: 101 Productions (1980); Woodbridge, Sally and Cannon Design Group. *Benicia, California: Downtown Historic Conservation Plan*. City of Benicia, 1990; Sanborn Map Benicia, CA. 1886; 1986 Benicia Historic Inventory form.

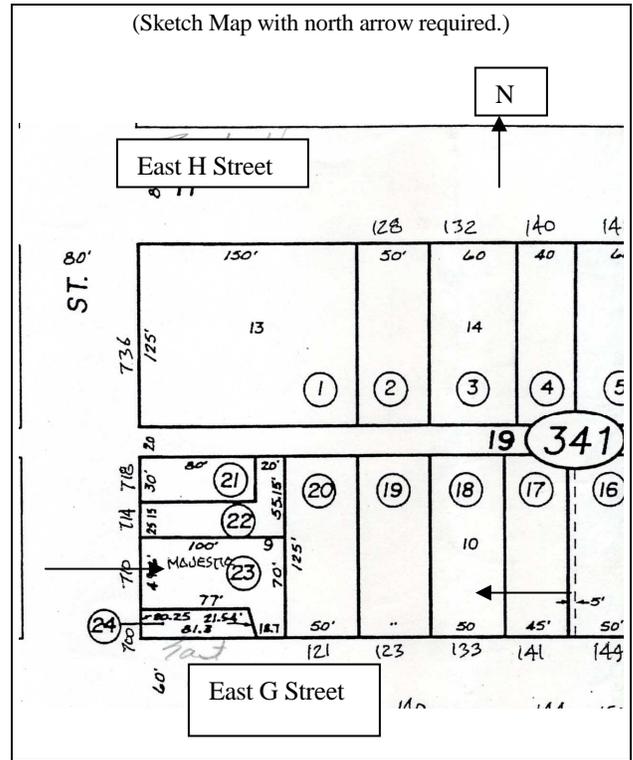
# BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Remarks: N/A

**B14. Evaluator:** Carol Roland, Ph.D.

Roland-Nawi Associates: Preservation Consultants  
4829 Crestwood Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

**B 15. Date of Evaluation:** 11-22-04



(This space reserved for official comments.)