

Site Inventory Form

State Historical Society of Iowa

Inventory # 77-06764



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ingersoll Theater

Other names/site number: 77-020-598, Ingersoll Dinner Theater

2. Location

Street and number: 3709 Ingersoll Ave

City: Des Moines County: Polk

Legal description:

5. Classification

Category of property

Number of resources within property

Building(s)

Contributing

Non-contributing

1

0

building(s)

0

0

site(s)

0

0

structure(s)

0

0

object(s)

1

0

total

Name of related project report or multiple property study

HADB 00-231 Schwenk, Sally Fullerton, 2010 - Historic Movie Theaters of Iowa

HADB 77-019 Maves, John, 1976 - Des Moines Heritage: A Survey of Significant Architecture

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater/movie theater

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater/playhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement: Moderne

Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials

Foundation: Concrete / Poured

Walls: Brick

Roof: Synthetics / Rubber

Other: Stone

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

						Criteria				Considerations							
Opinion	Source	Year	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	F	G				
Opinion of eligibility	Consultant	1975															
Contributing in potential district	Consultant	2010	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N				

Criteria legend: A: property is associated with significant events, B: property is associated with the lives of significant persons, C: property has distinctive architectural characteristics, D: property yields significant information in archeology or history.

Criteria considerations legend: A: owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes, B: removed from its original location, C: a birthplace or 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

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

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Construction date

built in 1940

Architect(s)

Wetherell and Harrison, Des Moines, IA

Builder(s)

Tri-States Theater Corp. - A.H. Blank

10. Geographic Data

UTM References

Zone

Easting

Northing

15

444398

4604055

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Continuation Sheet

Narratives

This building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to a commercial historic district. Interior investigation would be required to determine if sufficient integrity remains inside from the historic movie theater period for it to be individually eligible for its entertainment associations.

This building has three asymmetrically arranged façades, as defined by the three distinct wall panels of the upper façade. The original, metal, art deco theater marquee is illuminated with individual incandescent light bulbs, neon tubing, neon lit individual letters which spell "INGERSOLL" and features a back-lit signage display with "DINNER THEATER", "RESTAURANT & KITCHEN" in large applied letters. The marquee is centered above two sets of double-leaf recessed, aluminum entrance doors, which are surrounded by small glazed ceramic tile, glazed ceramic panels and applied rock fascia. The main façade (south façade) along Ingersoll Avenue also exhibits three distinct rectangular forms above the marquee with the tallest form on the SE corner that is covered with a cementitious stucco coating. The center section is recessed and exhibits original tan brick with 8 vertical, green-glazed brick course stripes, and the final form on the SW corner exhibits original tan brick with 3 green-glazed horizontal brick course stripes along the top edge of the form. An exterior ticket window, and two poster signage locations are located on the SE and SW corners of the structure. The West façade is easily seen from the Ingersoll Avenue right of way and thus exhibits original, multi-colored glazed structural clay tile. The North and East facades face a rear parking lot and alley and thus exhibit original standard red structural clay tile and egress doors. The interior of the structure was inaccessible at the time of survey, and thus the condition and integrity were uncollected. This structure is currently vacant and has been vacant since 2004 and should be considered at risk.

Built in 1939 by the Tri-States Theater Corporation, president A.H. Blank hired Wetherell and Harrison as the architects for the new theater in 1938 which cost \$35,000 and featured state of the art construction methods. The Ingersoll Theater opened October 5th, 1939 and is listed as a movie theater on the 1939 and 1956 Sanborn Maps which indicate the theater has steel beams, a large lobby, triangular shaped marquee which extends over the sidewalk along Ingersoll Avenue and a large lobby and auditorium spaces with plaster walls. The theater was converted to a dinner theater in 1976 which was run by Mr. Charles Carnes for the next 28 years until it closed in 2004. The building inspired some local business entrepreneurs to develop plans for a revitalization and renovation of the structure, but the development plan fell through in 2007. The building is currently owned by Andrew Lee of Des Moines, and has been vacant since 2004