1 NAME
HISTORIC
Alhambra Theatorium
AND/OR COMMON
Alhambra Theatre

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
50 Adams Avenue
CITY. TOWN
Evansville
STATE
Indiana

3 CLASSIFICATION
<table>
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4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Alan N. Shovers
STREET & NUMBER
305 Union Federal Building
CITY. TOWN
Evansville
STATE
Indiana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Vanderburgh County Recorder
STREET & NUMBER
Civic Center Complex
CITY. TOWN
Evansville
STATE
Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
National Register - Determined Eligible
DATE
26 May 1977
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
National Register of Historic Places
CITY. TOWN
Washington, D.C.
### DESCRIPTION

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Alhambra Theater, situated at the northeast corner of Parrett Street and Adams Avenue, was built in 1913 by Louis Wallenberger and Henry Heilman. It housed, at that time, a 350 seat theater with cigar and confectionary shops in the front (Adams Avenue elevation).

The building comprises two sections: a facade block two stories high, three bays wide (approximately 50') and one bay deep; and theater extension three bays wide and three bays deep, divided by pilasters. The mass of the facade block was originally balanced by a marquise over the entrance to the theater which has since been removed. The walls of the facade are finished in yellow and brown brick with limestone trim. The brown brick is glazed and is used in the ornamental patterns such as in string courses, horseshoe-arched windows, and the header bond panels over the windows in the central bay. The walls of the theater extension are common brick.

The main elevation was originally divided into three voids on the first floor, a central recessed entrance flanked by shop windows of approximately the same dimensions. The arched glazing has since been removed and the first floor has been sheathed in limestone. The second floor bays contain compound window units, tripartite in the central bay and paired in the two faces of the end bays. The convex hipped roofs in the end bays are currently sheathed in saphalt or asbestos shingles, and the flat areas are presumably built-up roofing.
The Alhambra Theatre represents an important passage in Evansville's history in several regards. First, the building furnishes an important insight into the later work of one of the city's major architects. Next, the theatre presents one of the city's few examples of pre-World War romantic eclecticism. And last, the Alhambra symbolizes the ascendency of motion picture entertainment in Evansville.

The "Alhambra Theatorium" was dedicated on Saturday afternoon, 27 September 1913, and designed by Frank J. Schlotter. A native of Evansville, Schlotter (1864-1943) began his architectural career in the local office of Reid Brothers. James and Merritt Reid (1851-1943 and 1854-1932, respectively) were nearing the peaks of their professional lives in 1882 when Schlotter joined them at the age of eighteen as an apprentice draftsman. After four years together, the Reids were on their way to San Diego and construction of the Hotel del Coronado, and Schlotter embarked his own career. (In 1896, Schlotter purchased the remains of the Reids's Evansville practice.)

Schlotter was not a stranger to architectural exoticism. The Moorish motifs of the Alhambra recall the horseshoe arches and pepper pot domes of his work from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Schlotter produced some of the most vivid Queen Anne residences in the entire city. Homes in the Riverside district (National Register, 1978) such as 606 S.E. First (1896) or 810 S.E. First (c. 1897) illuminate the origins of Schlotter's eclecticism. The domical belfry of his 1888 Hose House #10 was an even earlier example of Schlotter's fondness for bizarre forms.

The audiences in attendance at the opening of the Alhambra, however, took the theatre's alien look in stride. Movie theatres sought to create a total environment of escape and entertainment, and theatre designers such as John Eberson (1875-1954) developed a specialty in the 1920's by producing an architecture of fantasy and atmosphere.
The Alhambra would be built of "buff and dark brown mission brick" along the lines of "a Moorish castle." The roof would be surmounted by two domes in "Arabian style," and the interior would be carried out "in keeping with the Moorish design." The folding seats, pressed metal ceiling, and scounces combined to evoke a sense of faraway places.

The speedy construction of the Alhambra may have set a record. The announcement of Schlotter's plans was made in late March of 1913. One month later, a rendering of the facade was published, and on 25 May 1913 the awarding of the contract for construction was reported. The contractors, Scarborough & Davis, broke ground soon after for the $18,000 building. In late June the newspaper declared that the Alhambra was "rising quickly" and added that the optimistic owners, Louis Wollenberger and Henry Heliman, planned a mid-July opening. Despite its taking another two months to complete, the Alhambra's 120-day course of construction was nevertheless remarkable.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Evansville Courier, February 17, 1977, p.17.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre
QUADRANGLE NAME: Evansville South
QUADRANGLE SCALE: 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Goodsell's Enlargement, Block One, western 75 feet of lots 45, 46, 47, 48.

STATE COUNTY

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Laurie R. Hammel, Joan Marchand, and Douglas L. Stern
DATE 25 May 1979
ORGANIZATION Department of Metropolitan Development
STREET & NUMBER Rm. 304 Civic Center Complex
CITY OR TOWN Evansville

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL __ STATE __ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
DATE
"To Build Theater." Evansville Journal-News,


"To Build Theater." Evansville Journal-News, 23 May 1913.