

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Princess Theatre Building - Amendment

and/or common Princess Theatre

105-055-67075

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 206 North Walnut Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Bloomington N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Monroe code 105

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Michael Pollack, Princess Associates

street &amp; number 3280 Inverness Farms Road

city, town Bloomington N/A vicinity of state Indiana 47401

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse, Recorder's Office

street &amp; number Kirkwood Avenue

city, town Bloomington state Indiana 47401

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indiana Historic Sites and  
Structures Inventoryhas this property been determined eligible? See Continuation Sheet  
☒ yes ☐ nodate 1979, 1986 105-055-67075 federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Princess Theatre building at 206 North Walnut Street in Bloomington was constructed in 1892 as a commercial structure in an attached row of commercial structures in downtown Bloomington. The building is rectangular in plan, two stories high and three bays across in the front. Originally faced with brick, the front facade was faced with the current white glazed terra cotta in 1923. The original brick is visible on the rear facade. The building has a flat roof.

The front facade is flanked by full-height pilasters (photos #1 and 2). The ground floor has a wide, flat arched opening which stretches between the two pilasters. The arch has curved corners and rests on two decorative terra cotta brackets, which face inward. The northern half of the ground floor inside the arch is a recessed foyer with the original 1923 quarry tiled floor. At the rear of the recessed area is a wide doorway which contains three double leafed, wood frame entrances, each leaf having a single glazed panel, and each double door having a six light transom above, the overall transom being triangular in shape. An original dentiled cornice molding surrounds this recessed entrance area. The southern half of the ground floor is only slightly recessed and is a recently constructed, wood frame facade with four narrow bays (photo #2). The northernmost bay has a 14-light, wood frame door with an 8-light transom above. The remaining three bays each have 24-light, wood frame windows above and a single wood panel below, with a planter box underscoring all three. While the tiled floor and main entrance are historic, the southern part of the ground floor was reconstructed, based on historic photos.

Above the ground floor arched opening is a rectangular terra cotta panel which stretches between the two pilasters, and on which is a new oval shaped sign bearing the name "Leslie's ITALIAN VILLA" with decorative floral panels on either side of the oval (photos #1 and 2). Above this panel are the six second floor windows, which are divided into three bays by two pilasters the height of the windows. The windows rest on a simple sillcourse. Each bay has paired, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash, separated by a thin terra cotta strip. The lefthand windows in the second and third bays have been replaced with two-over-two, double-hung sash windows (with horizontally-oriented lights). Above the windows is a simple molded lintel course. Above the lintel course is another flat terra cotta panel which bears the letters "PRINCESS THEATRE," inscribed in blue. Above this panel is a terra cotta cornice molding with modillions separated by rosettes on the under side of the cornice. Above the cornice is an ornately decorated terra cotta parapet. On either end, the pilasters project above the parapet a few feet, and are adorned with polychromed, terra cotta fruit clusters and topped with a terra cotta cornice molding decorated with acanthus leaves. This same acanthus leaf cornice molding runs across the top of the entire parapet. Decorative terra cotta scrolls are located in the corner where the pilasters project above the parapet and where the central portion projects above the rest of the parapet. On this central portion is an elaborate terra cotta cartouche with the letters "P T" and floral scrollwork in relief. The central portion has a gently curving top, the acanthus leaf cornice molding and a single, centrally placed anthemion acroterion.

The rear elevation is the original rear wall of the 1892 structure. The wall is of common bond brick, which is painted red. There are four bays across the first floor. The southernmost bay has a single leaf metal door approximately four feet off the ground. This doorway has a stone lintel, and a wood platform with steps leading down to the ground. In the second bay there are two protruding brick wing walls about six feet deep, which rise one and a half stories, are covered with a flat roof,

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1892, 1913, 1923 **Builder Architect** John Nichols

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Princess Theatre building is significant for its elaborately decorated terra cotta facade. Information in the Monroe County Historic Sites and Structures Inventory suggests that it is the only example of a total facade of terra cotta in the city of Bloomington and Monroe County. The white glazed terra cotta with polychromed sculptural decoration was produced by the Indianapolis Terra Cotta Company, which produced terra cotta for many of Indiana's finest buildings. The Princess Theatre building is important for its beauty and architectural contribution to downtown Bloomington.

The building was originally built in 1892 by S.K. Rhorer. It was a simple brick, two-story, commercial building, which housed S.K. Rhorer and Sons, Boots and Shoes in the northern half of the building (206 North Walnut) from 1892 until circa 1903, and in the southern half of the building (204 North Walnut) from 1915 to 1920. Various clothiers and shoe stores occupied the two ground floor retail spaces until 1913, at which time the building's owner since 1907, Robert Harris, converted and enlarged the northern half of the building to create the Princess Theatre. Harris employed a local architect of some note, John Nichols, to design the theatre. Nichols (1859-1929), a native of Bloomington, was the city's only architect. He was commissioned to design many local buildings, including several commercial buildings on the Courthouse Square (still standing), the Von Lee Theatre (still standing), and the Harris-Grand Opera House (no longer standing). He also designed many Bloomington residences, including his own at 820 North College Avenue, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The terra cotta facade was added in 1923 when Harris employed Nichols again to refurbish the Princess Theatre. The terra cotta is primarily glazed white with some polychromed sculptural decoration. The terra cotta was produced by the Indianapolis Terra Cotta Company, who produced terra cotta for such notable buildings as the Indiana Theatre, the Circle Theatre and the Wm. H. Block Co. Building, all in Indianapolis. The words "PRINCESS THEATRE" are etched in a slightly recessed panel across the facade above the second story windows. A cartouche bearing the letters "P.T." and surrounded with floral decoration adorns the parapet. On both sides of the parapet are polychromed, vertical clusters of sculpted fruit.

While the space at 206 North Walnut became the theatre lobby after 1913, the space at 204 continued to house various commercial enterprises, with two periods of vacancy in the 1960's, until 1985. The second floor space of 204 also housed various businesses throughout the years, many of which were theatre related, such as a music school, a dance school, and an office of the International Alliance of Theatrical, Stage Employees, and Moving Picture Operators.

In 1982, the theatre was purchased with plans to renovate the Princess to its 1923 condition. These plans were thwarted in 1985 when the back wall of the theatre collapsed, necessitating the removal of the entire theatre portion. The original 1892 structure remained, and was purchased by the current owner and restored. The building now houses a restaurant and several apartments.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bloomington Daily Telephone Special, Saturday, March 10, 1923

Sunday Herald-Times, October 24, 1982.

Leffler, Robert. "The Princess Theatre," Flier, 1986.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bloomington, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

## UTM References

**A**

Zone	Easting	Northing
16	540340	43343000

**B**

The figure shows three empty coordinate grids. The first grid is labeled 'Zone' and has 2 vertical lines. The second grid is labeled 'Easting' and has 5 vertical lines. The third grid is labeled 'Northing' and has 5 vertical lines. Each grid is a rectangle with a horizontal line at the bottom and a vertical line on the left, with the labels 'Zone', 'Easting', and 'Northing' centered below each grid respectively.

C

D

E 

F 

**G**

H 

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Part of Lot #229, commencing at a point 52 feet north of the southwest corner of said lot; thence north 40 feet; thence east 66 feet to the east line of the lot; thence south 40 feet; thence west to the point of beginning.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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### 11. Form Prepared By

**name/title** Cynthia Brubaker

**organization** Indiana Division of Historic Preservation  
and Archaeology

date April 22, 1987

**street & number** 202 North Alabama Street

telephone 317/232-1646

city or town Indianapolis

state	Indiana	46204
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## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

**The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:**

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state        X   local

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.

**State Historic Preservation Officer signature**

title Indiana Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-29-87

**For NPS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

### Keeper of the National Register

**Attest:**

**date**

### Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number 6. & 10. Page 1 Princess Theatre Building

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The Princess Theatre was listed in the National Register on June 16, 1983. The theatre portion of the building collapsed in 1985. This is a re-nomination of the remaining portion of the building, with a redefinition of the statement of significance and a boundary decrease.

Item 10 - Geographical Data

The U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle Map was submitted with the original National Register nomination. The UTM Reference has not changed.

The boundary has been decreased to eliminate the parcel where the theatre portion of the building stood.



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Section number 7. Page 2

Princess Theatre Building

and enclosed with wood lattice work to form an enclosed space. These wing walls were built as part of the 1923 theatre addition. In the third bay there is another single leaf metal door, several feet below ground level, with steps leading down to it. In the fourth bay, which is wider than each of the other three bays, is a large (12' x 15') stained glass window with a six-light, wood frame protective window over it. This large window fills the 1923 theatre entrance opening.

The second story has five evenly spaced bays, which each contain one window opening with original (1892) stone lintels and sills. The windows are new, each having a wood frame with a small transom light above, and a one-over-one, double hung sash below.

Interior

The ground floor has been remodelled into a restaurant and the second floor into apartments. The parameter walls and their plaster are original and have been incorporated into the new interior design. The original plaster ceiling molds and decorative cornice and medallion moldings have been restored. No other original interior features remain.

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Section number 8. Page 3 Princess Theatre Building

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The Princess Theatre was listed in the National Register in 1983, with the nomination's statement of significance focusing on the importance of the theatre. Although the 1913/1923 theatre structure to the rear is now gone, the building still retains enough historical/architectural integrity in the original 1892 structure and the 1923 terra cotta facade to meet the National Register Criterion C. The rear wall reveals the character of the original structure. The intact terra cotta facade is significant as the public facade of the theatre (the rest of the theatre was never visible from the street) and as the only all-terra cotta facade in Bloomington.