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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tivoli Theater
other names/site number 141-597-49032

2. Location

street & number 208 North Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Mishawaka N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46544

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 2/10/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Tivoli Theater
Name of Property

St. Joseph IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the county)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater

RECREATION/CULTURE: Music Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

VACANT

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS:

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

TERRA COTTA

roof ASPHALT

other METAL

GLASS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1924-1947

Significant Dates

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rupert, E. P., architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Mishawaka-Penn Public Library, Mishawaka

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	568360	4612340
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Adrian Scott Fine, Field Coordinator

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date 9-5-97

street & number 520 East Colfax Avenue telephone 219/232-4534

city or town South Bend state IN zip code 46617

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Mishawaka

street & number 600 East Third Street telephone 219/258-1625

city or town Mishawaka state IN zip code 46544

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Tivoli Theater
St. Joseph County, Indiana

Narrative Description

The Tivoli Theater is the last remaining historic theater in the city of Mishawaka, located on a half acre site at the northern edge of the downtown with frontage on Main Street. With a seating capacity of 1,500, the Tivoli was built in 1924/25 for a combination of vaudeville and photoplay use (photocopy 1). In 1929 the Tivoli Theater was wired for sound with DeForest Sound equipment and converted to a full-time use for the "talkies." The Tivoli represents the most decorative theater built in Mishawaka and the only link remaining to the community's role in the "Golden Age" of motion picture entertainment. Some primary features of the Tivoli Theater's exterior include the combined use of polychrome architectural terra cotta ornament and brown brick masonry; a massive arched window opening with circular art glass element; and, Classical motifs including paired pilasters, rosettes and stylized capitals. Notable interior features include the two-story lobby space with barrel vaulted ceiling and staircases flanking each side; the vertical stacked dressing rooms at stage left; and, the impressive auditorium with an undulating, horseshoe balcony. As with many historic theater buildings, the Tivoli Theater has suffered a lot of use. The primary exterior alteration is the removal of the ornamental, projecting marquee. However, few theaters built in the 1920s retain their original marquees today. Although in a deteriorated condition, nearly all of the original interior elements, including orchestra pit with surrounding balustrade, are intact.

Originally when the Tivoli Theater was constructed, buildings were located at each side and to the rear of the theater. The Tivoli, both by its highly decorative front facade and location in mid-block, was the focal point of the 200 block of North Main Street. Today, the Tivoli Theater is visible on three sides; the structures to the north and east have been demolished and Front Street, originally running in a east-west direction, has been realigned to curve into north Church Street (along the rear of the theater). The north and east sides of the theater are now highly visible and were never intended to be seen. Both facades are very plain and feature no exterior details or expression (photo 2). The auditorium is the largest component of the building's mass with several exterior entrances and access to the rear by a north-south alley. The auditorium roof is visible at the front facade and rises approximately ten feet higher than the front portion of the theater; the stage roof rises another ten feet at the rear facade.

Front facade

The Tivoli Theater is visually divided into three primary sections on the front facade, delineated most notably by the specific use: auditorium and entrance lobby; three retail storefronts; and, multiple office suites on the second floor. The theater entrance is the

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Tivoli Theater
St. Joseph County, Indiana

primary architectural emphasis of the exterior (photo 3). It features the highest concentration of terra cotta ornament, decorative art glass, and expansive window openings. It is also the only portion of the structure which was designed with a vertical orientation. This is visible in the massive, central arched window, front-facing gable parapet wall, and corner piers of various pilaster elements and panels which "frame" this portion of the facade by running from the ground floor to the cornice. Although no longer remaining, originally two large terra cotta domed structures with lanterns were located atop each side of the parapet wall at this location. Adding to this vertical emphasis is an angle-iron brace which extends beyond the parapet wall above this portion of the facade and originally was the support for a vertical, marquee sign (installed by 1930s) which has since been removed (photocopy 4).

Vaudeville and motion picture theaters of the 1920s were designed to attract audiences by their distinctive facades—both during the day and at night. Theater designers used the latest technology in electric lighting to more effectively promote and advertise new shows and movies. Tracer, chaser, and stud lights were most commonly used. The Tivoli features stud lighting set within terra cotta square rosettes which outline the arched window. Stud lighting was also used extensively on the projecting marquee. In addition, early photographs show five lanterns which were placed upon evenly spaced terra cotta urns at the roof parapet.

The theater entrance is visually divided into three bays. At the second floor, two small, fixed-sash windows with 16 lights each flank the central arched window which acts as the main focal point. Each small window is topped with a terra cotta arch featuring polychrome floral elements. Rope molding and square rosettes with stud lights frame the steel-framed, arched window. Set within the large arched window is a round art-glass window with a "T" monogram and two smaller, concentric arches outlined in a leaded glass design (photos 5, 6).

The ground floor of the theater entrance has been consistently the most altered section of the building. When constructed, the entrance featured a large projecting marquee divided into three sections on the front with the "TIVOLI" name at the center and outlined in stud lighting. The two flanking panels and sides were used for sign boards announcing plays, movies, or amateur night and were also outlined in stud lighting. The marquee was additionally supported by four iron chains which were attached to hooks that still remain on the facade. The original entrance featured a central ticket booth with carved pediment above, a series of entrance doors to each side, and leaded-glass transoms with round art glass inserts. In a 1930s photograph of the Tivoli Theater, the marquee was

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Tivoli Theater
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unchanged, however the entrance had been redesigned in a streamlined, Art Moderne style. The ticket booth was reduced in scale and featured curved glass, more entrance doors were added (total of 8) to each side, and the decorative transoms were replaced with clear glazing (photo 4). A period photograph of the 1930s also shows that elements of the original ticket booth, including pediment, appear to have been reused in an advertising sandwich board on the sidewalk in front of the theater. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the ornamental marquee had been removed and the entire portion of the first floor of the theater entrance was framed-in and covered with sea green porcelain enamel panels. A faux field stone wall and aluminum doors were also installed. Today, the porcelain panels have been removed and the terra cotta details are intact (photos 7, 8).

Storefronts and office suites

The storefronts and office suites are delineated almost as a separate wing and reflect characteristics of relatively simple 1920s storefront design. Each storefront features a large plate glass window with transom and terrazzo base molding and steps. A single door with transom framed in terra cotta ornament at the northern-most corner of the front facade provides access to the second floor office suites (photo 9). Terra cotta is the primary unifying element of the front facade with several stringcourses; a projecting cornice entablature; paired pilasters; and, parapet coping. Placed at the top of piers and centered above paired windows are various polychrome terra cotta details including eagles, rosettes, egg and dart and rope moldings, stylized capitals, running leaf and floral ornaments, and crests (photo 10).

The interior retail and office spaces of the Tivoli Theater building are extremely functional in appearance in comparison with the theater's interior. Each storefront is nearly identical, featuring wood floors, pressed tin ceilings with cornice moldings, decorative floor grills, built-in seating at the windows, and small bathrooms in a rear corner. At some point, possibly for the same business to occupy more than one space, all three storefronts were connected with an opening through the interior party wall. A closed staircase with terrazzo stair treads leads to the second floor office suites. An L-shaped hallway provides access to each suite and is provided natural light through two, pitched skylights. An independent storage room and bathroom also feature similar skylights. Offices borrow natural light from the hallway with glazed wall partitions and doors of textured, figured glass. There are two independent offices, an interior area for secretarial or support staff, and a large office area which overlooks onto Main Street. The second floor was last known to have been occupied by an architectural firm in the 1960s (blueprints cover many of the walls).

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Tivoli Theater
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Interior

The Tivoli Theater interior is appointed in all the characteristics commonly associated with picture palaces constructed during the 1920s. Many of the Classical elements featured on the exterior are carried over into the interior of the lobby, hallways, and auditorium. A detailed description of many of the theater's interior appointments were included in a May 21, 1925 article in the *South Bend News-Times*. It described the thickly carpeted Axminster rugs leading down the aisles and the "richly upholstered" seats in blue leather.

The theater patron's first experience was the grand lobby, a space which is fully two stories high, and although not a large area, gives the visual impression of great volume. The 1921 newspaper article described the lobby as an impressive space. Lobbies were designed to draw people into the theater, to create the illusion of wealth and fantasy, to cause excitement, and, most importantly, to keep the theater patron's mind off the fact that he/she was waiting. The lobby was also part of a grand progression through spaces for the patron which started with the decorative exterior facade and culminated with the auditorium.

Corresponding with the massive arched window in the lobby is a barrel-vaulted ceiling with plaster cove molding. Cove lighting may have been used in the lobby in the Tivoli, providing an indirect, uniform lighting effect projecting onto the vaulted ceiling. This type of lighting was often used in 1920s theaters to highlight architectural details in a soft effect and create a "mood" or atmosphere for the waiting patrons. Flanking each side of the lobby are two staircases leading to the upper hallway and balcony. At the top of the two staircases are a projecting balcony and landing which overlooks the lobby space. It likely provided patrons the opportunity to see who was attending the show and a chance to look out the arched window onto Main Street. The stair balustrade is wrought iron with square newel posts. Egg and dart moldings outline the edges of the closed stringers. Round rosettes were once located between each baluster although only one remains today. Gray patterned terrazzo is used for the sloping lobby floor and the stair treads. Plaster, cornice moldings and staircase moldings still feature an early decorative finish in various shades of red, green, and gold. Creating the effect of a false balustrade is a three part, wood balustrade located in front of the three window openings and spanning the entire width of the lobby. Additional decorative features of the lobby include ornate moldings along the perimeter walls which originally outlined four oval medallions (two remain today) containing different dancing women. Stylized festoons are located to the side of each medallion (photos 11, 12).

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At some point in the 1960s or later, a suspended, drop ceiling was installed in the lobby and one of the staircases was completely blocked off. The iron, stair balustrades were also framed in and encased in faux field stone. In the last two years, these alterations have been removed and the decorative elements described above are intact, although in deteriorating condition. One discovery during this process was a concession stand area located beneath the south staircase. It is unknown whether this feature is original or a subsequent change, perhaps made during the 1930s remodeling. Reportedly there was also a chandelier located in the lobby although no information is known on its original location or design. Additional access to the basement and mechanicals is provided from a closed stairway under the north staircase. A nursery was originally located in the basement at this location.

Two identical hallways lead from the entrance lobby on the first floor and the balcony landing off the second floor. Each features ornate plaster cornice moldings with egg and dart motifs. Originally the relatively low ceilings had six round, plaster medallions on each floor, although only four remain on the second floor today. Water faucets are located in the southwest corner of both floors. Separate men's and women's restrooms are located off the hallway on the first floor. The only change made to the hallways has been the installation of faux field stone to a portion of the walls, however plaster cornice moldings were retained and remain in good condition.

Access to the closed staircase leading to the projection booth and manager's office is off the second floor hallway. Because of the flammable qualities of early types of celluloid film and projection equipment, the projection booth features fireproof doors and openings into the auditorium. A small shower and sink located in the booth are indications of the long hours required for a projectionist at some point in the theater's history.

The auditorium space of the Tivoli Theater was designed in the traditional "hard top" approach with seating for 950 on the first floor and 450 in the balcony (photocopy 13). Unlike atmospheric theater designs which often incorporated twinkling stars, clouds and city scenes, the hard top was designed primarily for acoustical purposes using domes and classical decoration primarily. The north and south walls are identical. Each features plaster, arcade moldings with grouped pilasters, medallions with vases, and richly decorated cornice entablatures. The wall treatment is rather formal in design and features panels of varying sizes. Originally the panels had either wallpaper or murals. A Chicago artist by the name of F. Myers was initially commissioned to paint murals on the walls and ceiling. The horseshoe-shaped, cantilevered balcony has a curved, undulating low wall with brass rails and elaborately decorated plaster surfaces of floral moldings and motifs

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(photo 14). The balcony soffit is highly enriched with six, evenly spaced medallions. The rear wall of the auditorium has four entrances on the first floor and three entrances on the balcony level. Ornate grills with exit signs are located above each opening. Chairs which remain today appear to be original or from the 1930s.

The auditorium features a plaster "shell" which provides greater acoustic perfection and masks echo. The ceiling's, central elliptical semi-dome is outlined in a plaster, cove molding with an ornate medallion in the center. When the theater opened, the auditorium was described as having "{s}pecial lighting effects including a huge silvery dome, around the edge of which are concealed a system of colored lights" (*South Bend News-Times* 1921). A chandelier originally hung from the center of the dome. Although no longer in place, the chandelier still remains and features approximately twenty separate arms with a finish in gold, red, and deep blue. At each side of the dome are two round, ornate grills providing ventilation. Fresh air and a primitive form of air conditioning for the auditorium was provided by "mushroom" openings located on the floor and evenly spaced under seats.

The proscenium arch is framed by two, ornamented pilasters with stylized, Corinthian capitals that visually support the Classical entablature. Circular medallions decorate the front of the arch. An orchestra pit is located directly in front of the stage and is partitioned off by a curved, decorative wood balustrade. At each side of the stage are two additional exits to the rear of the theater. Each exit features an archway with rope molding. Above the exits are arched organ grills, balconettes with balustrade, richly ornamented brackets and sculpture, and four pilasters with Corinthian capitals. A separate staircase from the exit on each side leads to the balcony seating area and two storage rooms. The working performance area of the stage is 35' by 28.' Two separate stairways at stage left and stage right lead downstairs to mechanical rooms. Six, vertically "stacked" dressing rooms are located at stage left and, combined, are a full two stories. Each floor has a hallway and wood balustrade overlooking the stage area. Most of the dressing rooms feature original sinks and graffiti from the short time when the Tivoli Theater was used for vaudeville. Some of the original backdrops remain, depicting early street scenes and local advertising. One backdrop was provided by Twin City Studios of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Tivoli Theater was renamed the Cinema Arts and, like many theaters during this period, began a new use as a pornographic theater. Two major changes occurred to the auditorium during this time. The entire "house" was repainted black. It is unknown if any of the original murals survived up until this time. The other

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alteration was the construction of an enclosed, partitioned platform space with individual booths. The platform was built over a portion of the south seating area. The platform has since been removed and the auditorium opened to its original size.

The Tivoli has endured some changes, negligence, and deterioration over the years, but still retains sufficient integrity to portray its architectural significance. The grandeur of the Tivoli Theater is readily apparent in its overwhelming scale, excessive detail inside and out, and position of importance as the last remaining historic theater in downtown Mishawaka, Indiana.

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Tivoli Theater
St. Joseph County, Indiana

Statement of Significance

The Tivoli Theater, located at 208 North Main Street in downtown Mishawaka, Indiana, is a significant example of a 1920s era theater and movie palace. The architectural design incorporates Classical-inspired elements differentiating the theater space and entrance from the combined office and retail use. Designed by Chicago architect E. P. Rupert, the Tivoli Theater represents the need in the 1920s for a premier theater in Mishawaka and the involvement of many civic leaders of the area. Some of Mishawaka's most distinguished early residents and entrepreneurs helped support the building of the Tivoli Theater. Mishawaka needed a first-class theater in the 1920s for several reasons. The existing theaters were inadequate both in amenities and prestige. Mishawaka and its nearest neighbor, South Bend, have always had a natural rivalry. The Tivoli Theater was designed to compete with South Bend theaters and touted as surpassing other theaters when it was built.

Built originally for vaudeville use, the Tivoli Theater also represents the transformation of a live production facility towards motion pictures and the advent of sound technology. Since it was constructed in 1924/25, the Tivoli Theater has remained a prominent landmark of the community and Downtown Mishawaka. Today it represents the last remaining historic theater building in Mishawaka. In the 1995 Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for the City of Mishawaka, the Tivoli Theater was rated as an Outstanding resource listed in the proposed Mishawaka Downtown Historic District (141-597-49032). As with many historic theater buildings, changes have occurred to the Tivoli Theater since its opening in 1925. Despite these changes, the Tivoli Theater does retain the level of integrity necessary to portray the sense and feeling of the original design. The Tivoli Theater building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

Historical Background and Significance

In 1925, the year the Tivoli Theater opened to the public, the population of Mishawaka was 22,000. Approximately five other vaudeville theaters were in operation at that time in the city and another six theaters were open in nearby South Bend. The Blackstone (2,200 seats/1921) and Palace (2,700 seats/1922) theaters in South Bend were both larger and more opulent than the Tivoli Theater. In Mishawaka, most of the other existing theaters were built in the 1910s or earlier and nearly all had seating for only 1,000 or less. The Century (600 seats/1909) and Temple (500 seats/1915) theaters in downtown Mishawaka were the oldest in the community, had minimal seating capacity, and were both created from remodeled, existing buildings. Backers of the Tivoli Theater not only intended to build a first class facility for Mishawaka but also one which would rival theaters in South Bend. A

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May 21, 1925 article published in the *South Bend News-Times* on the opening night stated, "the Tivoli, while not the largest theater in this section, is unsurpassed by any theater anywhere for intrinsic beauty, and it is wholeheartedly asserted that Mishawaka indeed has a theater of which it may be most justly proud."

One year before the opening of the Tivoli Theater, local civic leaders formed the Mishawaka Theater Corporation to manage and oversee the construction of the theater building. Fifteen individuals were listed on the incorporation papers. With the exception of Reuben Levine of Chicago, Illinois, the general contractor for the project, all the men were either from Mishawaka or South Bend. Some backers for the theater included the then-mayor Duncan J. Campbell, the theater manager-to-be Oscar J. Lambiotte, and prominent business entrepreneur Adolph Kamm. Also listed were Henry and Mary Buckel, the owners of the property and residence at that site (structure moved); for their interest, they were paid 1,000 shares of common stock of the 10,000 available.

The opening of a new theater was a cause for public celebration and "hoopla" in the 1920s and Mishawaka's Tivoli Theater was no exception. Reportedly built for \$275,000 with the management declaring their policy of "furnishing the last word in theater entertainment," the Tivoli Theater opened to a crowd of 2,500 to 3,000 people for two separate showings. That night, theater manager Oscar J. Lambiotte declared "Mishawaka has attained entertainment independence." The opening bill included three vaudeville acts, a photoplay feature, a brief statement by Mayor Campbell, and an opening address by then-postmaster and president of the local chamber of commerce, Ralph W. Gaylor. Commenting on the name of the theater, the TIVOLI, Mr. Gaylor noted that these letters in reverse order spelled, "I love it." Noting the absence of the "e" in Tivoli, Mr. Gaylor said, "but where there is real love a little thing like the absence of an "e" doesn't amount to much...and the people of Mishawaka should love this theater" (*South Bend News Times*, 1925). A full-page advertisement on the day of the opening announced that everybody in Mishawaka should spell the Tivoli backwards (I-LOV-IT) and that the "show was as good as the theater." Following the close of the two shows, a banquet was held at the Hotel Mishawaka for one hundred guests, including officers, directors and stockholders of the corporation, city officials, clergy, and civic leaders.

A rendering, presumed to have been by architect E. P. Rupert, of the front facade of the Tivoli Theater was published in the *Mishawaka Enterprise* on the opening day (May 21, 1925). Many of the area newspapers described in detail the features of the Tivoli Theater, including the wall and ceiling murals by Chicago artist, F. Myers, the two-story entrance

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Tivoli Theater
St. Joseph County, Indiana

lobby with flanking staircases and barrel-vaulted ceiling, and the special lighting effects in the main theater "house." One of the more unique features of the Tivoli was a children's nursery located in the basement, beneath the lobby where mothers could leave their children while attending a show. Much attention was paid to the \$22,500 Marr-Colton-Wonder pipe organ, two Starr grand pianos, and the 10-piece orchestra. The construction was touted as "near fire-proof as engineering skill could devise" and the climate control system was claimed to have been designed to "keep the interior temperature at an even degree the year round" (*South Bend News-Times*). At a time when residential air conditioning was the exception, the theater was often the best place to "escape the heat."

The peak construction years for theater and movie palaces were between 1925 and 1930. Buildings were usually completed within one year, with workers still on the job up until the opening date. Less than a month before the Tivoli Theater opened, the name of the theater had just be chosen and workers were rushed to finish plaster work and install the projecting marquee.

The Tivoli Theater represents a purely American building type of the twentieth century and a new approach to architecture. It was designed not to "fit in" or to be ordinary, but rather to be *the* attraction on Main Street and constantly draw attention. With the growing consumer-oriented society of the 1920s coinciding with the "million dollar theater era," designers of theaters thought the recipe for success was "bigger and better" (Marquee, 1982). Theaters of the 1920s generally defy any one architectural style classification and are better described as "eclectic." Like many theaters, the Tivoli was designed with excessive ornament and details. Because theaters were usually built strictly for economic profit, a marketing theory of the time assumed that if there was too much to see in only one visit, the theater patron would continue coming back. To earn additional income, many theaters like the Tivoli were designed as mixed-use facilities, including both retail and office functions. The Tivoli features three separate retail storefronts (210, 212, 212½ North Main Street) and a series of office suites on the second floor. Some early tenants of these spaces included the management offices for the Tivoli, Western Union, Singer Sewing Machine, and the United Cigar Stores Company.

Several trademarks of the 1920s theater design are present on the Tivoli Theater. Architectural terra cotta was a primary ingredient, allowing an architect the freedom to design ornament and details without limits or constraints. Terra cotta was relatively light weight, fireproof, inexpensive, durable and versatile in color possibilities. The Tivoli Theater

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features polychrome terra cotta eagles, crests, egg and dart and rope moldings, garlands, rosettes, and floral, stylized capitals. Another device used for many theater designs of this time period was the introduction of innovative lighting techniques, both on the interior and exterior. Chaser and stud lights were used to outline the marquee and central arched window of the Tivoli Theater. Originally the Tivoli also featured five lighted lanterns located atop evenly spaced piers at the roof line. Inside, the ability to control lighting affected the overall performance. A lighting contractor was often brought in to choose lighting tailored to the specific space. Transition lighting was introduced and indirect or cove lighting used, especially around a central dome. The Tivoli featured a silvered dome with "vari-colored" lights and a central chandelier reportedly costing \$3,500. Different colors were used to identify a specific feature of a movie, such as red for a newsreel or amber for intermission. The lobby also played an important role in theater design by acting as a distraction for the waiting patron and helping to draw in people from the sidewalk. The lobby of the Tivoli Theater features a two-story space, staircases flanking both sides, decorative iron railings, richly ornamented moldings, and a barrel vaulted ceiling. The theater patron could stop on the landing and overlook the activity in the lobby or look out towards Main Street through the large arched window. Seeing a live act or movie at the Tivoli Theater was an experience. Everyone was welcome and treated to first class service. In 1928, the Tivoli Theater had established a policy called "Courtesy is Law" where twelve young women were ushers and followed a strict dress code with uniforms.

The Tivoli Theater experienced many changes during the late 1920s. In 1928 alone, there was a change in management of the Tivoli Theater three times. By December of that year, a newspaper article announced that Elmer Vosburgh was the new manager. As part of Mr. Vosburgh's duties, he oversaw the redecoration of the house in the Tivoli Theater and introduced a new management plan carried out, at that time, by all Publix and Balaban and Katz theaters. Five principal strategies promoted by Balaban and Katz included, "opening theaters in key locations; using grand architecture; providing air conditioning; offering splendid service; and, presenting live entertainment" (Marquee 1993). Mr. Vosburgh intended on showing only the best shows at the Tivoli Theater and stated, "{t}he cheaper pictures are taboo as far as we are concerned" (*South Bend News-Times* 1928). Vaudeville acts at the Tivoli Theater were also slowly phased out. In a ten year period between 1920 and 1930, nearly seventy percent of vaudeville theaters across the country closed or were converted with the growing popularity of motion pictures (*The American Theater*).

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An important year at the Tivoli Theater was 1929; there was another manager in place and a minor fire started in the foundation of the stage. Most importantly, the Tivoli Theater was now operated by the Columbia Picture Corporation of Chicago and reopened for "talkie" pictures. Sound equipment first came to Mishawaka at the newer but smaller Northside Theater, however the Tivoli Theater was generally credited at the time with the best sound. It reopened to a capacity crowd for the showing of Cecil B. DeMille's feature, "The Godless Girl." By the 1930s, the Tivoli Theater, like many theaters at this time, was struggling to operate at a profit. In 1931 and 1932, the city directories listed the retail storefronts as vacant. During this time, the Tivoli Theater also went through a court-ordered receivership process.

History After Period of Significance

Up until May of 1958, the Tivoli Theater continued to operate as a motion picture facility. Dwindling profits forced the management to close the Tivoli Theater, which at the time, was the only remaining theater in downtown Mishawaka. In 1925, the year the Tivoli Theater opened, there were a reported 19,489 theaters in operation; in 1958, only 16,000 were in operation (*Film Daily Year Book*). Vacant for two years, the Tivoli Theater reopened in 1960 with a new type of use including a combination of live wrestling and movies. At this time, Gloanna Enterprises, Inc., operators of the theater, undertook a major remodeling of the exterior and interior. One result of this was the removal of the projecting marquee and the erection of a new lower-story facade at the theater entrance. The new front, originally planned to span the entire facade, consisted of sea green, porcelain enamel panels, an aluminum flat awning, and aluminum doors. By 1968, the Tivoli Theater was open only on Friday and Saturday nights. Several years later, the Tivoli Theater was operated by Amer-Amusement Corporation of Durland, Michigan, renamed the Cinema Arts theater, and began showing X-rated films. This use continued until 1991 when the Cinema Arts closed. During this time period, additional changes to the building included a remodeled lobby with dropped ceiling, faux rock walls, and an enclosed staircase. The walls and ceiling of the house were painted black, covering all the original murals, and a platform with booths installed in one area over the seats.

In 1992, the Tivoli Theater was purchased by the City of Mishawaka with plans to demolish the building. The local nonprofit organization, Beiger Heritage Corporation, and the Mishawaka Historic Review Board began looking for a developer to restore the theater. Today, much of the later alterations to the Tivoli Theater have been removed and several improvements made. Despite the harsh use of the Tivoli Theater in the last 40 years, a majority of the original features of the building are intact and restorable. The Tivoli Theater

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does retain sufficient integrity to portray its significance as a unique building type and its role as a important historic resource of Mishawaka. The future of the Tivoli Theater is currently unknown.

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Tivoli Theater
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Verbal Boundary Description

See attached map. The address for the Tivoli Theater is 208 North Main Street, Mishawaka, Indiana. The legal description for the Tivoli Theater is more particularly described as:

Lot Number Six (6) on Main Street as shown on the Original Plat of the Town of St. Joseph Iron Works now the City of Mishawaka, together with the South half of the vacated alley lying North of and adjacent to said lot

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the original boundaries of the Tivoli Theater.