

(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



1252

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Rio Grande Theatre
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Fox Rio Grande Theatre

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 211 North Downtown Mall
CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces
STATE: New Mexico **CODE:** NM **COUNTY:** Doña Ana **CODE:** 013
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A
ZIP CODE: 88001

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kathleen Slich

Signature of certifying official

18 November 2003

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this 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): _____

Edson H. Beall

Signature of the Keeper *12/10/04*

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE/ theater
COMMERCE/ specialty store

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: WORK IN PROGRESS

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION

WALLS STUCCO; BRICK; ADOBE

ROOF ASPHALT

OTHER BRICK; CONCRETE; TERRA COTTA

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-10).

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Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

Summary

Located in downtown Las Cruces, the Rio Grande Theatre was constructed in 1926 on what was formerly known as North Main Street on the site of the old Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks lodge. The theater was an integral part, if not the central focus, of a burgeoning downtown area. Two stories in height, the Rio Grande Theatre is composed primarily of adobe. The theater's front facade is a visually striking composition of brick, concrete, terra cotta and stucco. Designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival manner, the theater's front exterior and interior feature decorative details typical of the style. Although the city block has undergone major changes over the years, in comparison, alterations to the theater have been moderate, with the building retaining the majority of its integrity of location, design, workmanship, and materials.

Description

Exterior

Located on North Main Street, now a pedestrian mall in downtown Las Cruces, the theater is a predominantly adobe constructed two-story commercial building facing east onto the street (see Photo 1). The theater's front facade is faced with red brick with a horizontal brick cornice just below the roofline. A ribbon of arches with small steel rosettes at the center of each arch and a string of dentils above, define the roofline. (The rosettes are attached to tie rods, which run to the inside wall that separates the balcony from the projection and office area. These tie rods were set in place in 1949 to reinforce the outside wall in preparation for attachment of a canopy sign onto the front of the theater.) Below the cornice, an arcade of round-arched windows with stuccoed heads and brick sills, span the facade (see Photo 2). The windows are single-hung in a six-over-six glazing pattern. The area between the arches is finished with white stucco, which stands out against the red brick background.

At the center of the facade, an arched entry set within a vestibule, serves as the theater's grand entrance. A large rosette is located on each corner of the portal, each supported by a pair of composite capitals atop raised brick shafts joined intermittently by thin concrete horizontal bands. The entrance arch is outlined with small terra cotta rosettes, while bas-relief violins, horns and foliage grace the spandrel (see Figure 7-1).¹ A decorative glazed tile pattern ornaments the arch's piers. The base of the entranceway is trimmed with polychrome salt-glazed tiles.

On either side of the arched entry are retail shops. These are nearly identical in design. A white stucco lintel runs from the entrance arch to the outside walls and crowns each shop. Below this lintel is a transom of tall vertical panes of prism glass crowning each of the shop's fixed pane aluminum frame display windows. Polychrome

¹ Images of exterior and interior details were taken with a digital camera in 2001 before the theater's ground level facade was covered for renovation. These details were not accessible when the property was photographed with black-and-white film. Details depicted in the digital images are still intact and will be restored as part of the renovation project.

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salt-glazed tiles trim the wall at the windows and the corners of the shops. A recessed entry with a glass door provides access to each shop. The shop windows border the theater entrance where advertisements or displayed goods were once visible to theater patrons.

The theater's flat, built-up roof is crowned with a tall parapet wall across its front east, north, and south elevations. The roof's front section is wider at the north and was not part of the initial construction. The original roof was a casualty of a 1933 fire that required the construction of a new roof and wall. The roof over the auditorium area of the theater is higher in elevation with a stepped parapet along its north and south elevations. The rear elevation of the building is undistinguished and consists of a stuccoed wall ornamented with a c.1970s metal marquee and three mounted lights (see Photo 3). The north and south elevations that abut the adjacent commercial buildings are made of adobe bricks finished white stucco. Where stucco has worn off, a significant amount of the original adobe brick construction is visible.

Interior

The Rio Grande Theatre's box office, a tile, glass and galvanized structure, was originally situated just beyond the theater entrance, in the center of the vestibule area (see Figure 7-2). Sometime later, the box office was moved to the north side of the front lobby against the adjacent shop window. Currently only a concrete pad reveals its former location. The Doña Ana Arts Council plans to place a reproduction of the 1926 box office in the original location. Beyond the vestibule is a rectangular shaped lobby. Inside, the lobby's south wall ends at a wooden staircase, which leads to the balcony above. A mauve rinceau design, a decorative border featuring stylized vines and fruit, is laid out in a symmetrical pattern just below the ceiling. Between the lobby and the theater is a wall that appears to mask the support columns of the balcony above.

The rear balcony extends some 15 feet over the auditorium seating area. It is split into an upper and lower seating and its ceiling reveals a border of the same mauve rinceau design present in the lobby. Above the balcony, a plaster facade decorated in a cartouche design obscures the rear most roof support. The rear of the balcony has a door that leads to the former projection and office area. The theater's front windows form the east end of this space.

The auditorium seating area consists of a large open volume with wooden trusses exposed 60 feet above the floor. Large pilasters along the north and south walls support the trusses. Between the pilasters, the plastered walls are decorated with elaborately stenciled fleur-de-lis, cartouche, and garlands (see Figure 7-3). Removable tapestries that related the history of Spanish colonization once hung in the auditorium. They were removed in the late 1940s when the original walls were plastered and their whereabouts are unknown. At the west end of the auditorium is the performance stage area. The wooden planked stage is 20 feet deep and backs to a plastered adobe wall. The original proscenium arch that once framed the stage has been removed, as well as the original seating. The Doña Ana Arts Council plans to restore the proscenium arch as part of their renovation plan.

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Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

Integrity

The original construction of the Rio Grande Theatre was altered in 1933, 1949, 1950, and later in the 1960s to repair fire damage, strengthen structural integrity, and to accommodate technical advances. As part of these alterations, the original theater marquee tower, an inverted 'L' with the word "RIO" arranged horizontally at the top and "GRANDE" vertically down the face, was removed. After 1949, a more extensive marquee obscured the front arch and created a canopy over the sidewalk. In 1950, a false front of metal screen and stucco was fastened over the façade. The Doña Ana Arts Council removed the fronting soon after receipt of ownership in 1998. Currently there is no marquee on the front of the building.

The Doña Ana Arts Council plans to rehabilitate the exterior of the Rio Grande Theatre to its original appearance and restore and renovate the interior to become a modern performance space. Their plans include adding a large orchestra pit similar to the original, which was covered over at unknown date. The rear wall will remain intact but an extension will be added to the rear of the theater to create more off-stage space. The roof and beams above the stage will be slightly altered to accommodate a fly loft. The pitch of the balcony will be increased and some of the current balcony space will be enclosed as offices. Contributing to the comfort and luxury in 1926, the lobby and auditorium aisles were covered with carpeting. Though the concrete floors are currently exposed, plans are that they again be covered with flooring. A concession stand once stood against the west lobby wall, and though the space is now empty, a new concession stand will be built in this space. And while the auditorium and balcony's original seating has been removed, and the screen removed, the Arts Council plans to replace both without jeopardizing the theater's historic interior. The Rio Grande Theatre's building space is not empty as much as it is in a state of readiness for the rehabilitation effort that is about to begin. Although components of its original interior have been altered or are missing, what remains retains sufficient integrity to communicate the historical feeling and association of the theater.

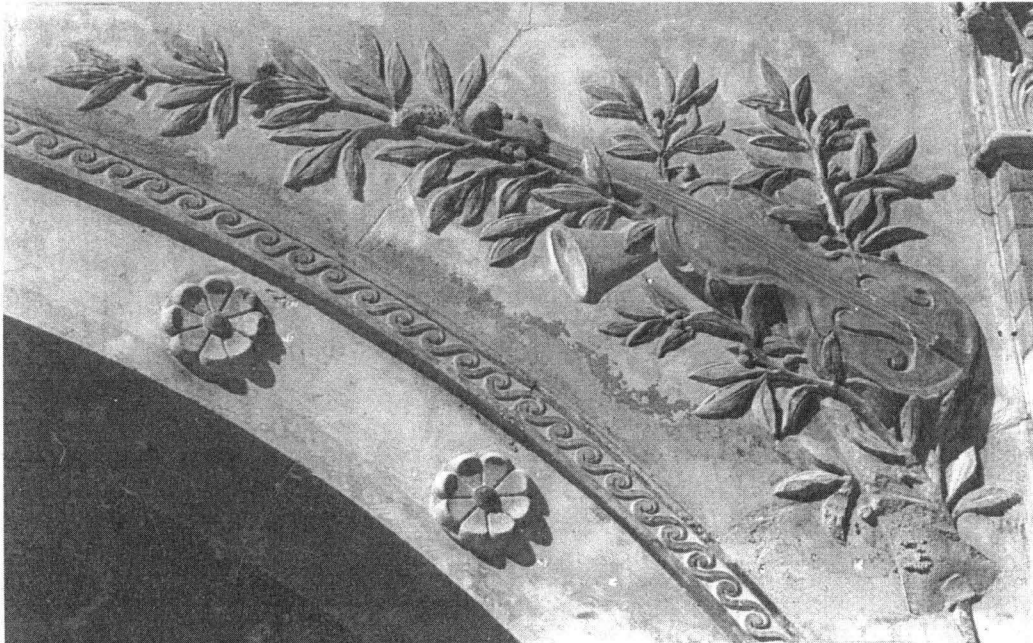
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Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

Figure 7-1 **Detail of Entry Arch, Facing West, 2001**



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Figure 7-2 Front/East Elevation Plan, Courtesy University of Texas at El Paso Library



FRONT ELEVATION
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

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Figure 7-3 **Interior Decorative Detail, Facing North, 2001**



8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE; ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1926-1953

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1926; 1929; 1933

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Thorman, Otto H. and Guy L. Frazer, architects; C.A. Goetting, builders

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-14).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-15).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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 (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance

A motion picture theater flanked by retail shops, the Rio Grande was built during the "Golden Age" of American cinema construction. Named after the region's largest river and lifeblood, the Rio Grande Theatre was designed by the prominent El Paso architect, Otto H. Thorman, of the firm Thorman and Frazer. The theater was a gathering place for the then small community of Las Cruces and instilled a sense of pride. The theater continued to serve the community, until it was closed in 1998. Now owned by the Doña Ana Arts Council, a nonprofit commission on the arts, the theater will be rehabilitated and restored for new use as a performing arts center. The theater is historically significant as an important local example of early 20th century Italian Renaissance Revival architecture and for its two-story adobe construction. Moreover, it is significant as a historic motion picture theater, and part of the William Fox owned chain of movie theaters, which was used by the film pioneer to introduce talking pictures to the public. The Rio Grande Theatre meets eligibility under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation and Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Historical Background and Entertainment Significance

The Rio Grande Theatre opened on July 29, 1926 at a well-advertised premiere of the movie *Mare Nostrum*, showcasing the many attributes of Las Cruces's first "movie palace." It became an immediate landmark on Main Street and was touted as being "as modern as has yet been installed in even the larger theaters in the cities."² The Rio Grande Theatre represented a trend in the motion picture exhibition industry: "The movie palace overwhelmed all other theaters because it combined ... live entertainment, courteous service, and generous seating capacity," as historian Maggie Valentine noted in *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk*. The small community of Las Cruces now had a theater comparable to those found in the big cities of the time.

Operated at first by the Central Theatres Corporation of Denver, the Rio Grande Theatre boasted a "washed air cooling system" that maintained a scientifically controlled temperature and was always promoted as a selling point in the weekly ads during the hot New Mexico summers. This early air conditioning cannot be underestimated in its contribution to the local psyche of the region at the time. Most likely the theater served as an oasis for the people of the area.

Though almost exclusively a venue for film exhibition, the theater did utilize its stage occasionally; the first year saw live performances of "Jiggs, Maggie and Dinty," a popular musical comedy based on George McManus's comic strip "Bringing Up Father," and "Spite Corner," a dramatic play written by Frank Craven, among others. But the moving picture still reigned supreme. The first Academy Award winner for Best Picture, *Wings*, played here in 1927. Indeed, Las Cruces missed few of the day's notable films. Moreover the theater's organ and organist were highlighted in many early advertisements as "accurately played pictures" were important during

² *Las Cruces Citizen*. July 26, 1926.

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the silent film era. These novelties and events, which were new to the local community, served as harbingers. They were intriguing but not necessarily dramatic. The true phenomenon was looming on the horizon with advent of the talking picture.

In the autumn of 1928, either through individual property purchase or corporate takeover Fox Theatres acquired control of the Rio Grande. Fox Theatres was one of the major exhibition chains of the era and was headed by the film pioneer William Fox. Fox was actually responsible for introducing organ accompaniment to silent films, and he was an early proponent of theater patron comfort.

In 1927 Fox introduced his version of a new sound-on-film system. During the Fox "Silver Jubilee" week of October 14, 1928, William Fox distributed an announcement through his patented MovieTone News to his theater network throughout the United States. To a keen audience it would have been an announcement of profound significance-- the introduction of talking pictures -- a revolutionary moment in motion picture history. The film *In Old Arizona* (1929) was the first film that allowed the people of Las Cruces to experience this new phenomenon. Recorded and projected utilizing Fox's MovieTone system, the film, directed by Raoul Walsh, pioneered outdoor sound recording in film productions.

The Rio Grande was a magical place, and its sparkle attracted the people to Main Street, the heart of the city. The advent of the "talkies" saw films of various types from instructional to canned performance: Bobby Jones's "How to Play Golf"; Will Roger's *They Had to See Paris*; and a January rerun of the Kentucky Derby. The Rio Grande served to communicate the ordinary and the significant to the people of the region. It hosted the world premiere of the "B Western," *Billy the Kid*, on Oct 12, 1930, and a marching band welcomed attendees. (The outlaw's local notoriety-he was jailed, tried and sentenced to hang in nearby Mesilla- inspired the fanfare.) Fox's own Movietone News became a weekly event of some importance. The news gave rural New Mexicans a first-hand glimpse of the world.

The theater was not just a movie house, though that was its central and most popular function. It also hosted a variety of other events: amateur nights, free matinee giveaways, community nights with discount tickets distributed by local merchants, American Legion benefits, and baby popularity contests.

The Rio Grande movie palace suffered a major calamity in the summer of 1933, when a fire forced the theater to shut down for nearly three months. The nearby Del Rio became a substitute during this time. Upon the reopening of the Rio Grande Theatre on November 7, 1933, a local citizen wrote "An up-to-date theater which is managed in the efficient way [of] the "Rio Grande" cannot help but be an asset to a town and a great source of pleasure to its citizens."³ The theater continued to provide Las Cruces with entertainment and recreation after its reopening by showcasing a variety of films. Except for the replacement of a section of the roof and some repair

³ *Las Cruces Citizen*, November 3, 1933.

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Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

work to the balcony, the theater structure remained intact. Fox Theatres did take the opportunity to add further adornments to the interior but the historical integrity was unaffected.

The movie theater continued to operate and show a regular schedule of films until 1998, when it shut down due to competition with newer movie theaters outside of the downtown area. With the generous gifts of local families and businesses, the Doña Ana Arts Council purchased and became the sole owner of the historic theater that same year. The theater was selected in 2001 by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Alliance as one of the most endangered buildings in New Mexico. Currently the Doña Ana Arts Council plans to restore and renovate the theater as a state-of-the-art performing arts center.

As a downtown attraction and a focal point for the Main Street area, the Rio Grande Theatre has lent character to the social history of the city of Las Cruces. It gave the city a theater as elaborate as that which the big cities possessed and meant people didn't have to leave their hometown for the luxury of a movie palace experience.

Architectural Significance

With the Rio Grande Theatre, the citizens of Las Cruces had a palace that was and is still unique in the Southwest. Few, if any, two-story adobe movie theaters ever existed, and few built of any adobe construction remain. The Pecos Theater in Santa Rosa, New Mexico, is the only other known motion picture theater in the state that is at least partially constructed of adobe. The ancient and regionally prominent method of adobe brick construction is simple yet highly effective. It is essentially a process whereby clay, sand, straw, and water is mixed to the proper consistency, framed by molds, and allowed to bake in the sun till it is completely dry. Held together by adobe mortar, properly made adobe bricks can be used to create walls that will last for more than a hundred years. Put aptly by the adobe preservation expert Paul G. McHenry, "Earth, used as sun dried bricks, and other forms, is the world's oldest building material. More than half the world's population today lives in some form of earth building. It is the ultimate expression of appropriate technology making use of what is closest at hand to build viable shelter."⁴ Uniquely used for a commercial purpose, the adobe construction of the Rio Grande Theatre has maintained its constitution for over seventy years.

While the Rio Grande Theatre's composition represents a rich and regionally authentic method of building creation, its bas-relief decorated front facade and its fleur-de-lis interior adornments inspire an appreciation for art. The theater's Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style, with its flat arches and molded decorations were, and remain, unique in commercial architecture in Las Cruces. (The Air Science Building (NR, 1989), at New Mexico State University, is the only other building in the area which was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style.) Playing upon the architectural motifs of the Italian Renaissance, the Rio Grande Theatre stood as an exotic attraction amidst the region's more common styles of Southwestern vernacular and

⁴ Paul G. McHenry, Jr. "History of Adobe Preservation" Adobe: Practical and Technical Aspects of Adobe Conservation, Tucson, Arizona, 26-28 March 1983.

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Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana, County, New Mexico

Pueblo Revival. The look gave the small town's center a cosmopolitan feel, as was its intent. Today it remains a solitary downtown representation of Italian Renaissance Revival design.

The Rio Grande Theatre also represents the work of noted southwest architect Otto H. Thorman (1887-1964). Born in Missouri, Thorman began his architectural career in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and then moved his office to El Paso, Texas, in 1911. The majority of his commissions occurred in the west Texas-southern New Mexico region, though there are examples of his work in Arizona, California, and Missouri. Thorman continued to practice architecture in El Paso until his death on March 11, 1964.

Thorman's career work displayed a talent for eclectic design. From Greek Revival to Prairie School, Thorman's design style varied, it seemed, with each job. His architecturally significant designs include the 1913 Mission Revival-style Goddard Hall (NR, 1988) and the 1918 Prairie influenced University President's House (NR, 1989), both located in Las Cruces, and the 1916 Georgian Revival Women's Club of El Paso (NR, 1979), the El Paso Free Library and three residences, including the handsome Georgian Revival C.H. Leavell residence, in the Historic District of Manhattan Heights (NR, 1980), El Paso. Thorman additionally designed a number of other noteworthy buildings in the El Paso area, including Kern Place School, St. Alban's Episcopal Church, the Knox Hotel, the Empire Bottling Works building, and Red Mill Camp. His numerous El Paso residential designs include the Paul Lockett Home, the Ed Lachman Residence, and the Ramsey Apartment House. Fellow architect Guy L. Frazer assisted Thorman with the design of many of their firm's commissions, and is noted also as the principal architect for the Greek Revival Hidalgo County Courthouse (NR, 1987), Lordsburg, New Mexico.

Designed to awe, the Rio Grande Theatre still stands out as a stylish representation of a bygone era. It attracts the attention of the few pedestrians who stroll the desolate old Main Street area. Its imaginative exterior is viewed with speculation as to why it sits vacant. Many local residents recall its heyday and still long to enter its grand interior. The Doña Ana Arts Council is working to rehabilitate the Rio Grande and return it to its past glory as an exciting downtown venue for positive community activity.

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Bibliography

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_____. *The Adobe Story: A Global Treasure*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

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Sharp, Dennis. *The Picture Palace*. New York: Hugh Evelyn, 1969.

University of Texas, El Paso Library. "Guide to MS 147 Otto H. Thorman Records"
<http://libraryweb.utep.edu/speccoll/thormanfinding.html> (01 May 2002).

Valentine, Maggie. *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES Zone Easting Northing
 1 13 332587 E 3576066 N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-16)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-16)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Scott A. Green

ORGANIZATION: N/A

DATE: March 2003

STREET & NUMBER: 451 North Roadrunner Parkway

TELEPHONE: (505) 496-0843

CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces

STATE: New Mexico

ZIP CODE: 88011

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see attached Las Cruces Quadrangle U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute series topographic map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-17)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Doña Ana Arts Council, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER: 224 North Campo Street

TELEPHONE: (505) 523-6403

CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces

STATE: New Mexico

ZIP CODE: 88001

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Rio Grande Theatre
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Verbal boundary description

A tract of land situate within the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, New Mexico, in Original Townsite of Las Cruces Block 8 and also being part of Block 14 of the Downtown Urban Renewal Project NMR-4, filed November 4, 1973, in Book 121, Pages 74-82, Doña Ana County records and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a chiseled arrow on the West line of the North Downtown Mall for the Northeast corner of the tract herein described; whence the Northeast corner of Block 14, Downtown Urban Renewal Project NMR-4 bears N.12°34'58"W., 133.15 feet; Thence from the point of beginning and along the West line of North Downtown Mall, S.12°34'58"E., 58.20 feet to a chiseled arrow for the Southeast corner of this tract; whence the Southeast corner of Block 14, Downtown Urban Renewal Project NMR-4 bears S.12°34'58"E., 63.14 feet; Thence leaving the West line of North Downtown Mall and partially along a building Wall, S. 78°45'48"W., 141.76 feet to a chiseled arrow on the East line of a 2 foot wide sidewalk for the Southwest corner of this tract; Thence along the East line of a 2 foot wide sidewalk, N.13°33'12"W., 55.40 feet to a chiseled arrow for the Northeast corner of this tract; Thence N. 77°37'37"E., 142.66 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.185 acre of land, more or less.

Boundary justification

The nominated boundary encompasses the entire area associated with the historic property.

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Rio Grande Theatre
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Photographs

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted.

Rio Grande Theatre

211 North Downtown Mall

Doña Ana County, New Mexico

James Hares

October 2003

Negatives on file with New Mexico SHPO

Photo 1 of 3

Front Façade

Facing West

Photo 2 of 3

Front Façade, Detail of Windows

Facing West

Photo 3 of 3

Rear Elevation

Facing Southeast

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Rio Grande Theatre
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW MEXICO, Dona Ana

DATE RECEIVED: 11/19/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/16/03
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/01/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/02/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03001352

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1.2.04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



S008 +1 T00059 P237

Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana Co.,
New Mexico
Front Facade
Facing West
Photo 1 of 3



5008 + 1 100057 P232

Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana Co.,
New Mexico
Front Facade, Detail of
Windows
Facing West
Photo 2 of 3

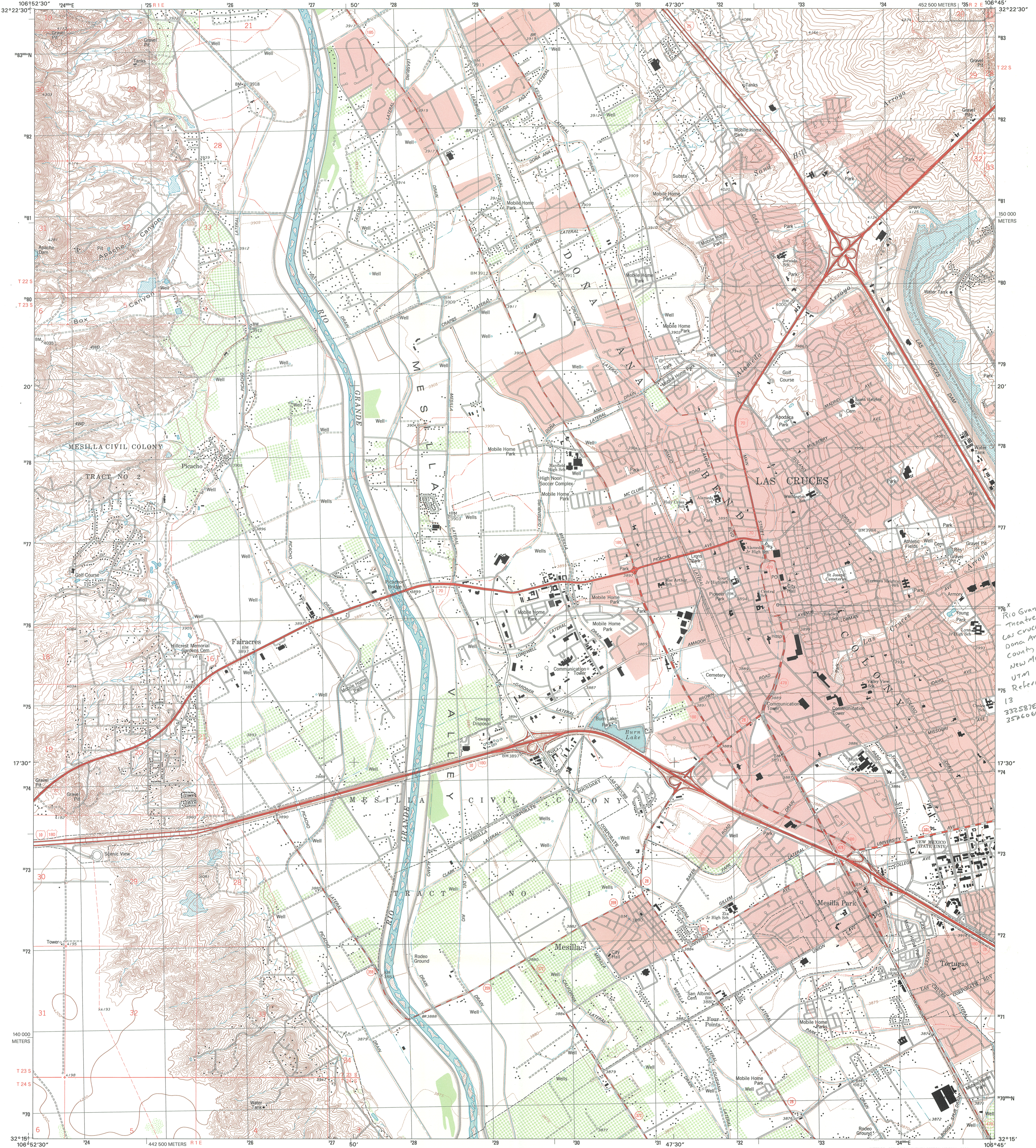


RIO GRANDE

HEALTHY
FOODS

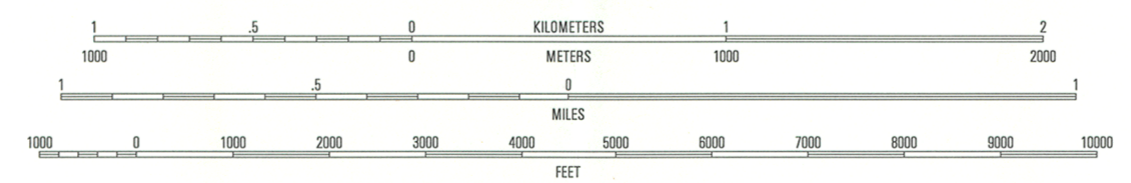
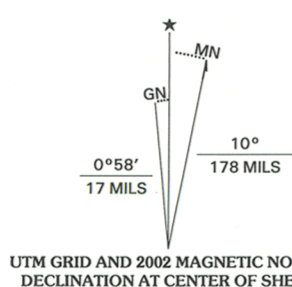
910d 290001 1- 019S

Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, Dona Ana Co.,
New Mexico
Rear Elevation
Facing Southeast
photo 3 of 3



Rio Grande
Treaty
Las Cruces,
Doña Ana
County,
New Mexico.
UTM
Reference:
13
332587E
3576066N

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1972. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1996 and other sources. Public Land Survey System and survey control current as of 1974. Boundaries current as of 2001
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 13
2 500-meter ticks: New Mexico Coordinate System of 1983 (central zone)
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geographic Survey NADCON software
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation
Houses of worship, schools, and other labeled buildings verified 1974



SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC DATUM OF 1929
(TO CONVERT ELEVATIONS TO THE NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988, ADD 2 FEET)
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

- 1 Leesburg
- 2 Doña Ana
- 3 Organ Peak NW
- 4 Picacho Mountain
- 5 Turquoise Mountain
- 6 Alton NW
- 7 Black Mesa
- 8 San Miguel

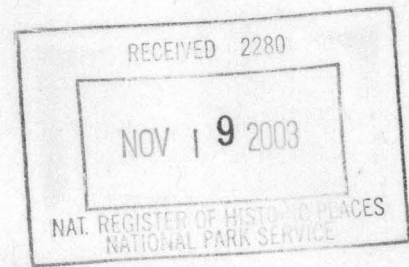
LAS CRUCES, NM
1996
NIMA 4648 IV SE-SERIES V881





STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

228 EAST PALACE AVENUE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501
(505) 827-6320



BILL RICHARDSON
Governor

November 17, 2003

Beth Boland
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, N.W. 8th floor
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Rio Grande Theatre, Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

Dear Ms. Boland:

Please find enclosed a National Register nomination for the Rio Grande Theatre, Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

The New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Commission (CPRC) voted unanimously to nominate the theater and forward it for consideration by the Keeper at their August 8, 2003 meeting. The theater is currently boarded up and awaiting a federal grant to restore and renovate it into a modern performing arts center.

Thank you for your assistance, and please call me if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

John W. Murphey
Architectural Historian

Enclosure: one National Register nomination