

LISTED 09/13/91

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rialto Theater
other names/site number Resource # WR2018

2. Location

street & number Race and Spring Streets
city, town Searcy
state Arkansas code AR county White code 145 zip code 72143

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources, White County, Arkansas
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Cathryn A. Buford
Date: 5-13-90
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[] entered in the National Register.
[] determined eligible for the National Register.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreational/ Movie Theater

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreational/ Movie Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement/ Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

brick

roof tin

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lightle, W. H.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

Searcy's Rialto Theater, located on the corner of Race and Spring Streets on the courthouse square, has been in continuous operation since it was first constructed in the early 1920's. The theater underwent extensive remodeling in 1940, at which time the present brick and stucco facade and Art Deco style marquee and signage were added to the front elevation. Because of these alterations, the building's eligibility is being considered from the date of its 1940 renovations, rather than from the period of its original construction.

The one-and-a-half story, rectangular floorplan is of brick construction that has been covered with stucco and brick wall material. This smooth wall surface, along with the stepped, vertical projections above the roofline, are two of the Art Deco features exhibited by the building. However, its most notable design elements reminiscent of the Art Deco style are the neon-lit marquee and signage spelling out the theater's name. The five-colored, 67-foot sign had 300 feet of neon tubing when it was installed in November of 1940, making it the largest neon sign in White County.

Although there is not an actual porch, the marquee provides a flat-roofed shelter over the building's entrance. The ticket window and two display windows on the front (south) elevation are newer, single-pane stationary windows; the doors allowing access to the interior are also new aluminum and glass models replacing the original six-pane wooden french doors. The building's foundation is made of cast concrete, and its flat, parapeted roof is covered with the original rolled tin.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

Significance

The Rialto Theater, which has stood on the courthouse square since the mid-1920's and has been in continuous operation since that time, is being submitted for listing on the National Register under Criterion C with local significance. It is one of only a few structures in White County that possesses Art Deco details; it is the only such theater to possess this type of architecture; and its neon marquee, which still illuminates each evening, is the largest and most elaborate in the county.

The structure stands on the site of another theater that was torn down in 1923 to make way for this one. The original builder, W. H. Lightle, died during the building's construction, and his sons, J. E. and J. B. Lightle, finished the project the following year.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Acreage of property: Less than one

UTM References:

A 15/614835/3901400

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 20, Ten Acre Donation to the Town of Searcy.

Boundary Justification:

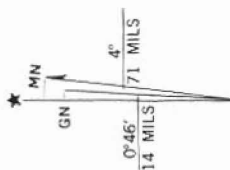
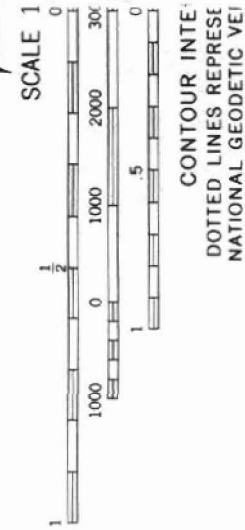
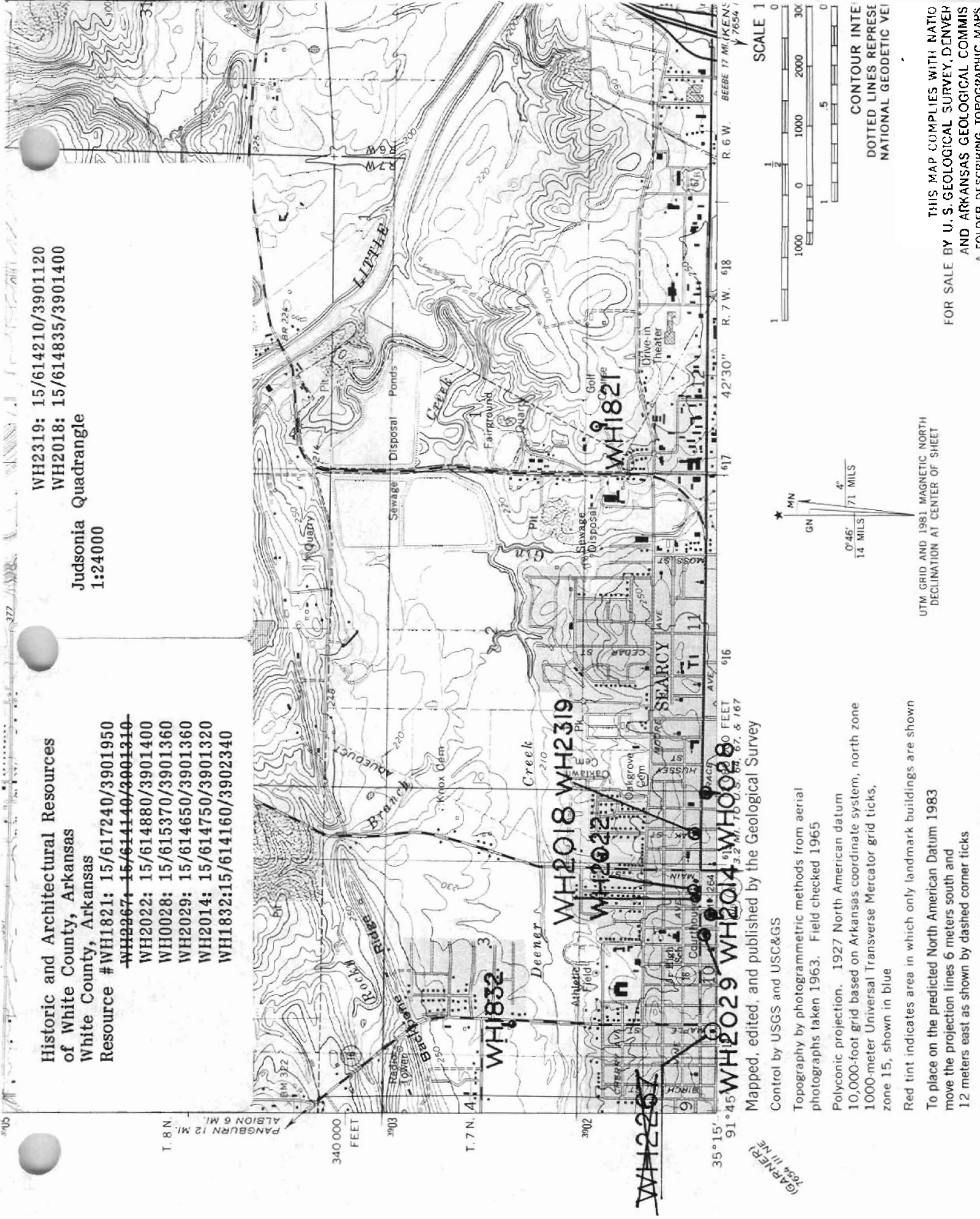
This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.



**Historic and Architectural Resources
of White County, Arkansas
White County, Arkansas
Resource #**

- WH1821: 15/617240/3901950
- ~~WH2267: 15/614140/3901310~~
- WH2022: 15/614880/3901400
- WH0028: 15/615370/3901360
- WH2029: 15/614650/3901360
- WH2014: 15/614750/3901320
- WH1832: 15/614160/3902340

WH2319: 15/614210/3901120
 WH2018: 15/614835/3901400
 Judsonia Quadrangle
 1:24000



UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Control by USGS and USC&GS
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 15, shown in blue
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
 move the projection lines 6 meters south and
 12 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIO
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
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