

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JAN 27 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 16). 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 Bagdad Theatre  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 3708-26 S.E. Hawthorne  not for publication  
city, town Portland  vicinity  
state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97214

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Contributing | Noncontributing |
| 1            | _____           |
| _____        | _____           |
| _____        | _____           |
| _____        | _____           |
| 1            | _____           |
|              | Total           |

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic and Architectural Resources  
of Eastside Portland

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  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of certifying official *[Signature]* Date January 23, 1989  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  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.  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]* Entered in the National Register 3/8/87

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE; Theatre

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE; Theatre

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Tile

other Glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Bagdad Theater is perhaps the most prominent building along the Hawthorne commercial strip in the Sunnyside neighborhood. Located on the northwest corner of the block at the intersection of Hawthorne and 37th, the theater's unique Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style design is unlike that of any other theater in the city and the Multiple Property area.

The theater fills its entire lot with room for only a small drive-in alleyway found along the east side. The building, rectangular in plan, is constructed on a concrete foundation. Under the north and south ends of the structure are partial basements. The height of the building varies; the north elevation rises some three-and-one-half stories, the middle portion drops down to the third floor, and the south elevation stands at five stories. A truncated hip roof of red Spanish tile covers the northern half of the structure and crowns the main mass of the theater. Several different level shed and hip roofs, also of red tile, extend over the various appendages which project from the wall on the western elevation. The portion of the roof directly over the theater has a flat roof, as does the five-story section on the south end. Off of the northwest corner of this rectangular five-story section on the southern end is a tall chimney.

The structural system of the building consists of reinforced concrete, covered on the exterior with stucco. Both the south and east elevations have an unfinished appearance, as they are essentially only formed concrete walls with little embellishment besides the doors that pierce them, and the sections of overhanging eaves with mock rafters below.

The front, or north elevation of the building has three divisions. The first floor level is composed of the theater and commercial storefronts on the north and east elevations. Display windows, with bulkheads, occupy each of the storefront bays and are surmounted by multi-paned transoms. Small hoods of red tile project over the three window sets on the north elevation and they have decorative wood semi-circular brackets. On the northeast corner is a double door with single panes and a fanlight transom above. The second level has six

See continuation sheet

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multi-paned casement windows surmounted by blind arches in the center region. Below each of these windows is a small wrought-iron balconet. Flanking these windows to the west is a square, multi-paned casement, and to the east lies a rectangular opening filled by two multi-paned windows with a wrought-iron balconet below. The separation between the second and third levels is highlighted by decorative arched molding. The third level is pierced by six enclosed square windows. An overhanging eave with exposed mock-rafters ornaments the top of the elevation.

The western elevation is quite complex due to its many different levels and wall extensions. Two shops with recessed entries and display windows on either side line the lower level. The window bays are treated in the same manner as those on the north, they have red tile hoods with brackets. On the northern end is the glassed-in entry for the theater, above which is a square volume with hip roof and three, multi-paned casements. A two-and-one-half story rectangular volume to the south of the main entrance has blind arches above the multi-paned windows, and separates the entrance from the rest of the western elevation. The second level is broken by three recessed balconies; the back walls are lined by several multi-paned, paired windows with fanlight transoms above. The roofs that slant from the main theater wall over the extensions are hip and shed, covered by red tile. The various wall surfaces on the second level have some small, square casement windows. Three of the volumes on the west side have different roof forms - flat, gable and hip are all present. The band of decorative arched molding continues above the second floor roof line. A curved roofline of red tiles caps this elevation.

The noticeable alterations consist primarily of the projecting marquis over the theater entrance, and the new aluminum framed windows that enclose it. The exterior of the Bagdad Theater is much the same as it was originally.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The auditorium and hall are essentially as constructed, although projection booths and partitions have been added in order to create three separate movie-viewing spaces. These spaces are the first floor, the balcony of the auditorium, and the former stage area.

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The hall and the auditorium have concrete walls which have been stenciled, painted and otherwise decorated to simulate a building from the Mediterranean region. Animal and mythological creature motifs as well as trompe d'oeil wall tiles and arches have been employed. Less decorated wall areas have been given a sponged or mottled appearance. Arches separate the ramp to the balcony from the remainder of the hall.

Original lighting fixtures in the auditorium and hall are ornate and appear to be of wrought iron. The stage area, as noted above, has been converted to a small auditorium, although original stage components such as the light panel and catwalks are intact.

**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

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1927

Same

Significant Dates

1927

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thomas & Mercier

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

The Bagdad Theatre, constructed in 1927, is locally significant under criterion C as a well-preserved example of a 20s-era movie house. It was designed by Thomas and Mercier Architects and constructed by Christman and Otis Development Company for Multnomah Theatres Corporation. It is the only large-scale movie house remaining in the surveyed area. The Oriental Theatre, the only other theatre of this type, was demolished in the 60s. The date of construction for the Bagdad was established by newspaper articles and confirmed by City of Portland building permit records.

During the 20s Portland's streets would slowly become engulfed with vernacular auto-centric architecture in a variety of shapes and forms. Movie theatres with elaborate neon signs, drive-in restaurants, and illuminated billboards proliferated on the cityscape. Architects designed fanciful, dramatic buildings to catch the eye of passing motorists. Exotic "theme" styles and flashy marquees were popular for theatre designs and Moorish, Egyptian and Mayan motifs appeared on the exterior of Portland's movie houses in wild profusion.

Designed by Thomas and Mercier--a local architectural firm that designed a number of Art Deco and Exotic Revival style buildings throughout the city--the Bagdad Theatre was built in the finest tradition of the movie palace. The prominent building, covering four lots, consists of a rambling, multi-level plan with a variety of roof forms covered with red tile. A profuse array of window shapes punctuate the exterior walls including long, multi-light casement windows with blind, arched transoms and wrought iron balconets, and fixed sash

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Continuation Sheet**

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windows with decorative muntins. The stuccoed walls are further embellished with an arcaded beltcourse around the main volume of the building. Attention is drawn to the building and its corner entrance by the massive marquee illuminated by neon lights in the shape of stars and the moon; and the name "Bagdad" spelled out both vertically and horizontally, outlined with neon lights. The pinnacle of the marquee is crowned with an onion-shape motif characteristic of Byzantine architecture.

The interior of the theatre carries on the exotic character of the exterior with equal enthusiasm. It features a 700-foot lobby with fan-shaped archways, vaulted ramps, and extensive stenciling. A 12-man orchestra pit, which has been covered over, is located at the foot of the stage, and the original catwalks, light panel, and dressing rooms are still intact. Massive ceiling lamps with filigree globes which light the auditorium and lobby are also of note. Here the architects employed motifs associated with the Mediterranean and Byzantine styles.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- . City of Portland Building Bureau microform and card files.
- . City of Portland Bureau of Planning, Portland Historic Resource Inventory, 1983.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one acre Portland, Washington-Oregon 1:62500

**UTM References**

A 10 529350 5039650  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Elsmere addition, Lot 1 & 2, Block 1  
Lot 11 & 12, Block 1

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Taxlot lines

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

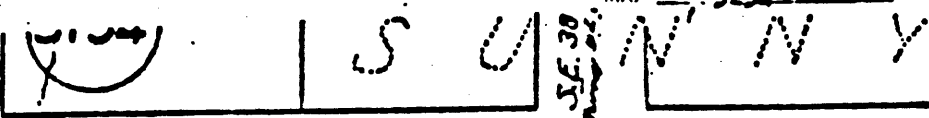
name/title K. Zisman, J. Koler, J. Morrison, B. Grimala, A. Yost  
 organization Hawthorne Blvd. Business Association date August 15, 1988  
 street & number 615 S.E. Alder telephone (503) 234-4801  
 city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97214

The sketch below is made solely for the purpose of assisting in locating said premises and the Company assumes no liability for variations, if any, in dimensions and location ascertained by actual survey.

SUBDIVISION ELSMERE

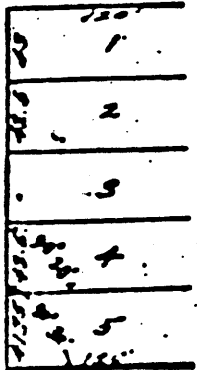
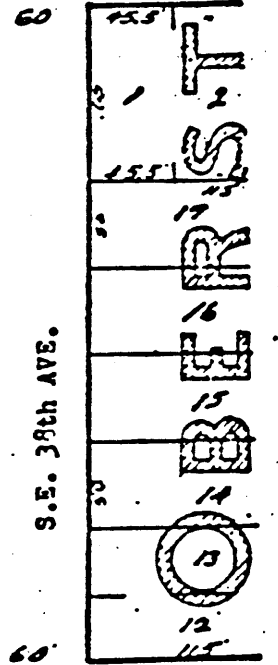
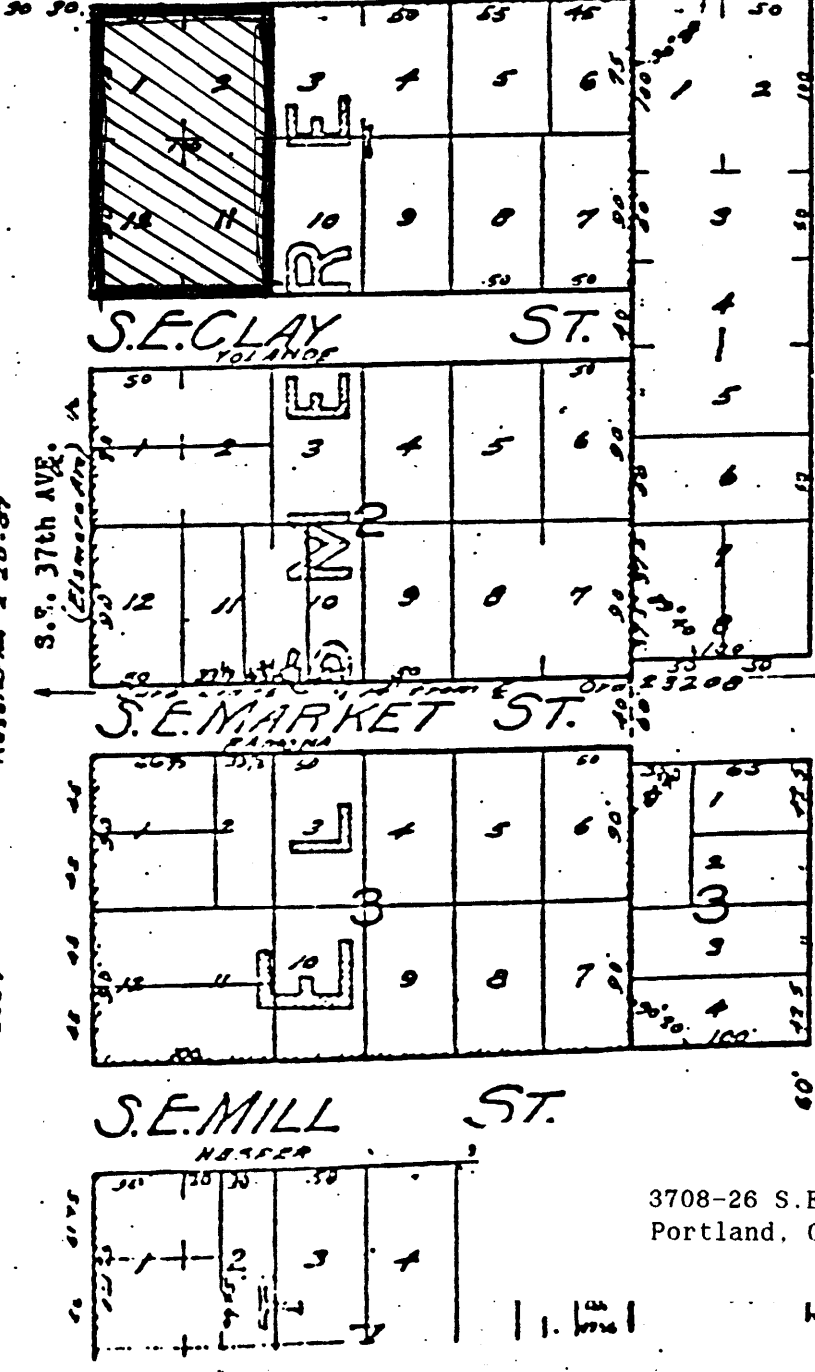
MAP 323h

S.E. 3



20 Rods  
S.E. HAWTHORNE BLVD.

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 138'<br>0.20 Ac.  | 137'<br>0.22 Ac.  |
| 121'<br>0.08 Ac.  | 1216'<br>0.09 Ac. |
| 150'<br>0.08 Ac.  | 1213'<br>0.10 Ac. |
| 121A'<br>0.09 Ac. | 1199'<br>0.09 Ac. |
| 1213'<br>0.09 Ac. | 1199'<br>0.10 Ac. |
| 1261'<br>0.08 Ac. |                   |
| 1185'<br>0.08 Ac. |                   |
| 1182'<br>0.08 Ac. | 1185'<br>0.14 Ac. |
| 333'<br>0.05 Ac.  | 1181'<br>0.09 Ac. |
| 374'<br>0.05 Ac.  |                   |
| 1179'<br>0.03 Ac. | 1180'<br>0.09 Ac. |
| 1778'<br>0.11 Ac. | 1177'<br>0.09 Ac. |
| 0.09 Ac.<br>177A' | 1176'<br>0.10 Ac. |
| 230'<br>0.11 Ac.  | 1175'<br>0.10 Ac. |
| 173'<br>0.10 Ac.  | 1172'<br>0.10 Ac. |
| 1170'<br>0.08 Ac. | 1171'<br>0.08 Ac. |
| 1167'<br>0.08 Ac. | 1169'<br>0.04 Ac. |
| 1166'<br>0.08 Ac. | 1167'<br>0.04 Ac. |



3708-26 S.E. Hawthorne  
Portland, OR 97214





#H-11

PORTLAND EASTSIDE MPS  
MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Historic view, Bagdad Theatre, Pld. Jan. 1928  
3708-3726 SE HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD

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only. It is not to be copied for resale.

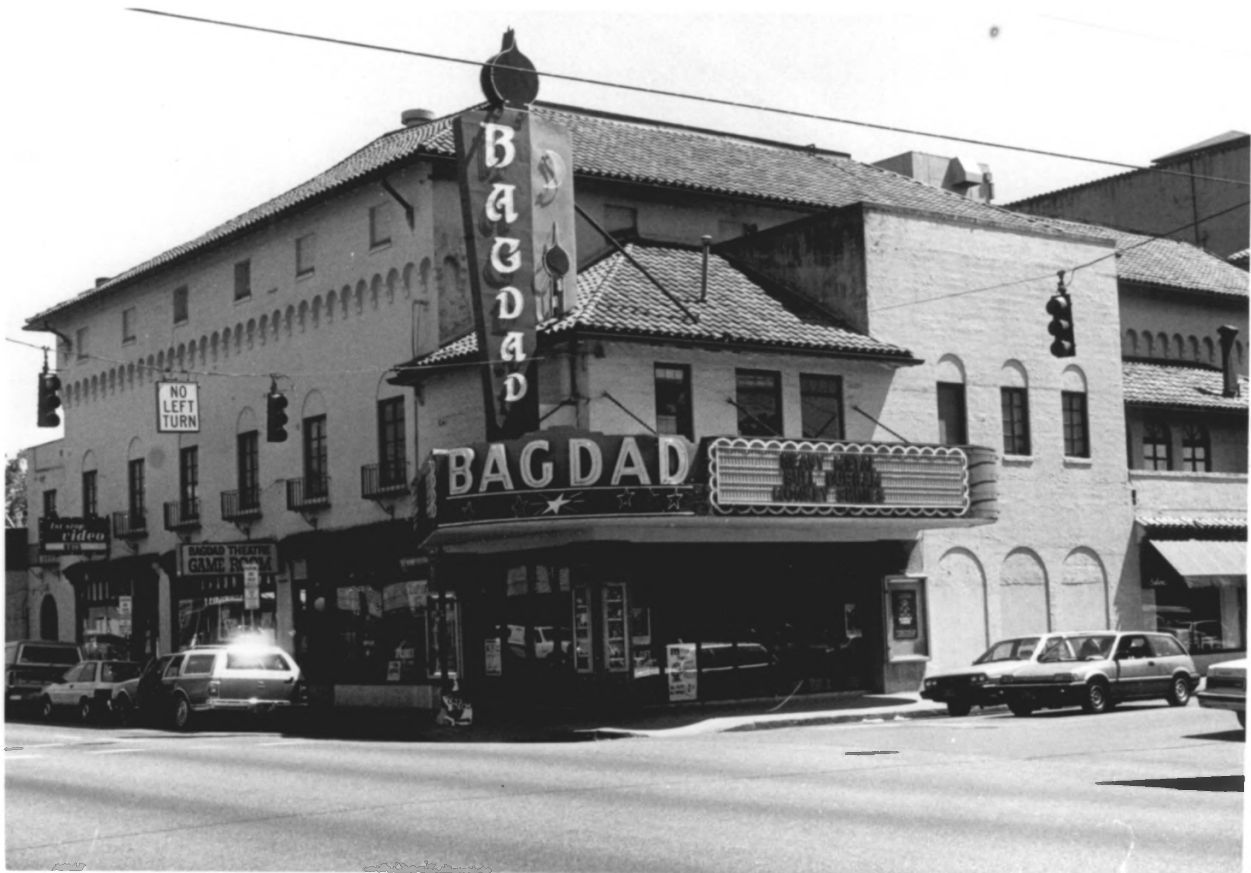
# 1 OF 5

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File # 1861



- 1 Bagdad Theater / 3708-26 S.E. Hawthorne
- 2 Portland, Oregon ; Multnomah County
- 3 Smith, Patrick
- 4 August 1988
- 5 Roll S-23 # 30
- 6 Looking southeast at north and west elevations
- 7 # 2 OF 5



- 1 Bagdad Theater / 3708-26 S.E. Hawthorne
- 2 Portland, Oregon, Multnomah County
- 3 Smith, Patricia
- 4 August 1988
- 5 Roll 5-23 # 33
- 6 Close-up: Looking east at theater's  
main entrance
- 7 # 3 OF 5



- 1 Bagdad Theater / 3708 - 26 S.E. Hawthorne
- 2 Portland, Oregon, Multnomah County
- 3 Morrison, Jane
- 4 July 1988
- 5 Roll J-3 # 15
- 6 Interior of main theater
- 7 # 4 of 5





- 1 Bagdad Theater / 3708-26 S.E. Hawthorne
- 2 Portland, Oregon, Multnomah County
- 3 Morrison, Janie
- 4 July 1988
- 5 Roll J-3 # 19
- 6 Interior view of lobby
- 7 # 5 OF 5