

60-120-4100-54

Listed in the NR. 4-29-82

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Taborian Hall

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Ninth and State Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Little Rock

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

2nd

state Arkansas

code

05

county

Pulaski

code 119

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

- public
- private
- both

Public Acquisition

- N/A in process
- N/A being considered

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress

Accessible

- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Gem Theater Corporation

street & number P.O. Box 3354

city, town Little Rock

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number 405 W. Markham

city, town Little Rock

state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural Resources in I-630 Corridor has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November, 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

city, town Little Rock

state Arkansas

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Built in 1916, Taborian Hall exhibits the influence of the early twentieth century interest in Classical proportions and details. Here, this vocabulary distinguishes a structure that, in its heyday, was truly a multi-purpose facility architecturally related to the Classically influenced commercial architecture that appeared in Arkansas, and throughout the country, beginning in the last years of the nineteenth century. Sited on a corner lot on Ninth Street, once a bustling center of business and social activity for the Black community, the three-and-one-half-story, nearly symmetrical flat-roofed structure once dominated a streetscape of one and two-story commercial buildings. Taborian Hall, although touched by deterioration, remains prominent in this area of Little Rock where little historic fabric has survived the impact of urban renewal and adjacent freeway construction. The building's masonry construction is reflected in its brick veneer walls which are enriched by sparingly applied Classical decorative features. Of particular interest are the bracketed and dentiled cornice that caps the building and the segmental pediment that articulates its principal entrance. Unfortunately, virtually no original interior fabric of the building survives.

ELABORATION

Like many commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the composition of Taborian Hall establishes a strong relationship of an anchoring base, a functional shaft and a crowning cornice. A complementary rhythm is created by the articulation of its symmetrical three-bay principal (south) elevation with brick pilasters which terminate in simple, stylized cast stone capitals. The pilasters support pairs of brackets which carry the broadly overhanging box cornice that wraps around to the east and west sides of the structure. Although this cornice appears to cap the facade, a high parapet wall rises above it creating an unexpectedly lofty elevation. The base of the building is defined by a shallow cast stone cornice that runs between the first and second stories of the facade. These features retain much of the integrity of their original fabric.

Historically, the first floor of the facade was distinguished by awning shaded storefronts with central, single leaf entrances in the wider corner bays. While the original storefronts no longer exist, the solid/void pattern they established remains visible in its original proportional relationship. Directly above the storefronts, bands of header bricks create the impression of an unembellished frieze in the brick wall. The storefronts flank the building's central, recessed principal entrance. A strong statement of entrance is made by the segmental pediment on freestanding Ionic Columns that spans the facade's center bay, framing the exterior entrance vestibule. Two doors with single lights over panels under a single transom composed the double-leaf entrance. Unfortunately, the original doors are presently in a sad state of deterioration. Fenestration of the upper stories of the Taborian Hall facade is simple, dictated by its three-bay arrangement. The second and third stories of the narrow center bay contain pairs of rectangular one-over-one double-hung windows while the wider end bays contain a tripartite arrangement of a wide, almost square (originally two-over-two) windows flanked by narrow one-over-one windows. Articulated concrete sills add further definition to the fenestration. Although many of the existing windows are not original to the structure, the historic delineation of the openings remains

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unaltered. Decorative panels in the brick wall formed by slightly projecting courses of header bricks articulate the structural definition of the third floor, also creating a rich shadow effect on the relatively flat facade, and corbeled brick string courses define the attic story. Small rectangular vents pierce the attic wall and four round openings add interests to the parapet wall. The coping of the parapet appears almost as a shallow cornice, clearly terminating the facade.

Taborian Hall's side elevations, its east wall which fronts on State Street and its west wall which faces a narrow alley, reflect closely the delineation of the facade. The brick pilasters, cast stone details and brick string courses that enliven the facade also relieve the long side walls but the building's crowning cornice wraps around only the southern bay of each side elevation. These seven-bay elevations are almost identical with the following exceptions: the north three bays of the west elevation project and the north end bay of the east elevation originally featured two storefronts. Unobtrusive doorways offered secondary means of access to the building. Fenestration of the side elevations consists of pairs of double-hung windows in each bay. The design of the rear (north) elevation is consistent with the other three sides of the building. Here, in the absence of a cornice, the attic story is quite visible and its round window openings are noteworthy. Brick string courses traverse the third floor elevation. Currently, a one-story commercial structure (circa 1960s) abuts the rear of Taborian Hall.

With virtually no original fabric surviving, it is nearly impossible to assess the interior character of the building during its period of greatest significance. Presumably, the interiors of the first floor stores, including a pharmacy and restaurants, and upstairs offices were simply detailed, typical of the utilitarian commercial architecture of the period. Unfortunately, no physical descriptions of the building's ballroom have come to light.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

Specific dates 1916 **Builder/Architect** Simeon Johnson, Contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Taborian Hall is one of the few remaining buildings that recall the era when West Ninth Street, between Izard and Broadway Streets in downtown Little Rock, was the hub of black business activity. This commercial area began developing in the 1890s and continued to thrive until the 1950s. Prominent among the business establishments in this four block area were fraternal organizations. These fraternities provided important social and civic outlets for Little Rock's black community. More significantly, they made available basic insurance protection for the community that was generally neglected by the insurance industry. Many of the fraternal groups in the state located their central headquarters on Ninth Street. As such, the Arkansas Chapter of the Knights and Daughters of Tabor, a national black fraternity, began construction in 1916 of their new state headquarters, Taborian Hall. It is interesting to note that Taborian Hall was financed by capital from the black community and was constructed by a local black contractor, Simeon "Sim" Johnson. Taborian Hall housed businesses and professional offices as well as serving a social and civic oasis. The hall's ballroom was the scene of performances by well known entertainers, including Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Earl Hines. Today, as a result of the 1960s urban renewal objectives and the contemporary construction of an adjacent freeway, very little original fabric of this once prosperous black commercial area survives, emphasizing the significance of preserving Taborian Hall as a valuable historic resource.

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1. Fletcher, Linda P., The Negro In The Insurance Industry, Report #11, Philadelphia:1970, University of Pennsylvania Press.
2. "Inter'al Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor", Arkansas Democrat, August 31, 1981, p. 54.
3. "Ninth Street Eyesore Once A Showcase For Black Commerce", Arkansas Democrat, July 22, 1979, p. 2E.
1919
4. "No More 'Down On The Line'", Arkansas Gazette, October 9, 1977, Section C p. 1.
5. Polk's Southern Directory Company, Little Rock City Directories, 1881 - 1920.
6. "West Ninth Street Is Decaying", Arkansas Democrat, July 22, 1979, p. 11E.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Little Rock, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	15	5	6	15	9	10	10	3	18	4	14	4	12	10
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

Zone	Easting			Northing										

D

Zone	Easting			Northing										

E

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H

Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

East 67½ feet of Lots 7 & 8, block 228 Original City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ethel Goodstein, Architectural Historian/Donald R. Brown, Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date August 17, 1981

street & number Suite 500, Continental Building telephone (501) 371-2763

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas

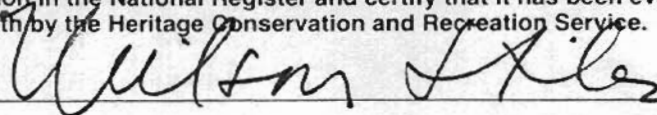
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title

date 3/22/82

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

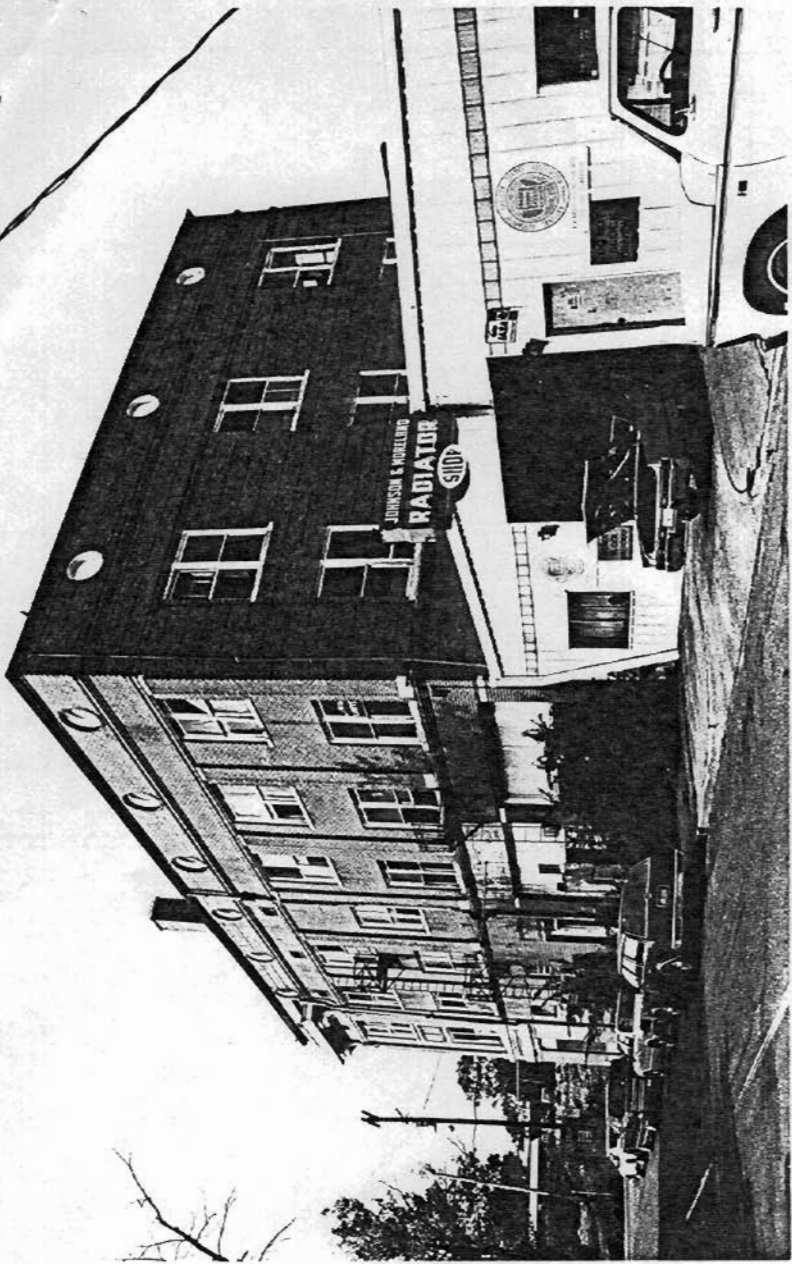
date

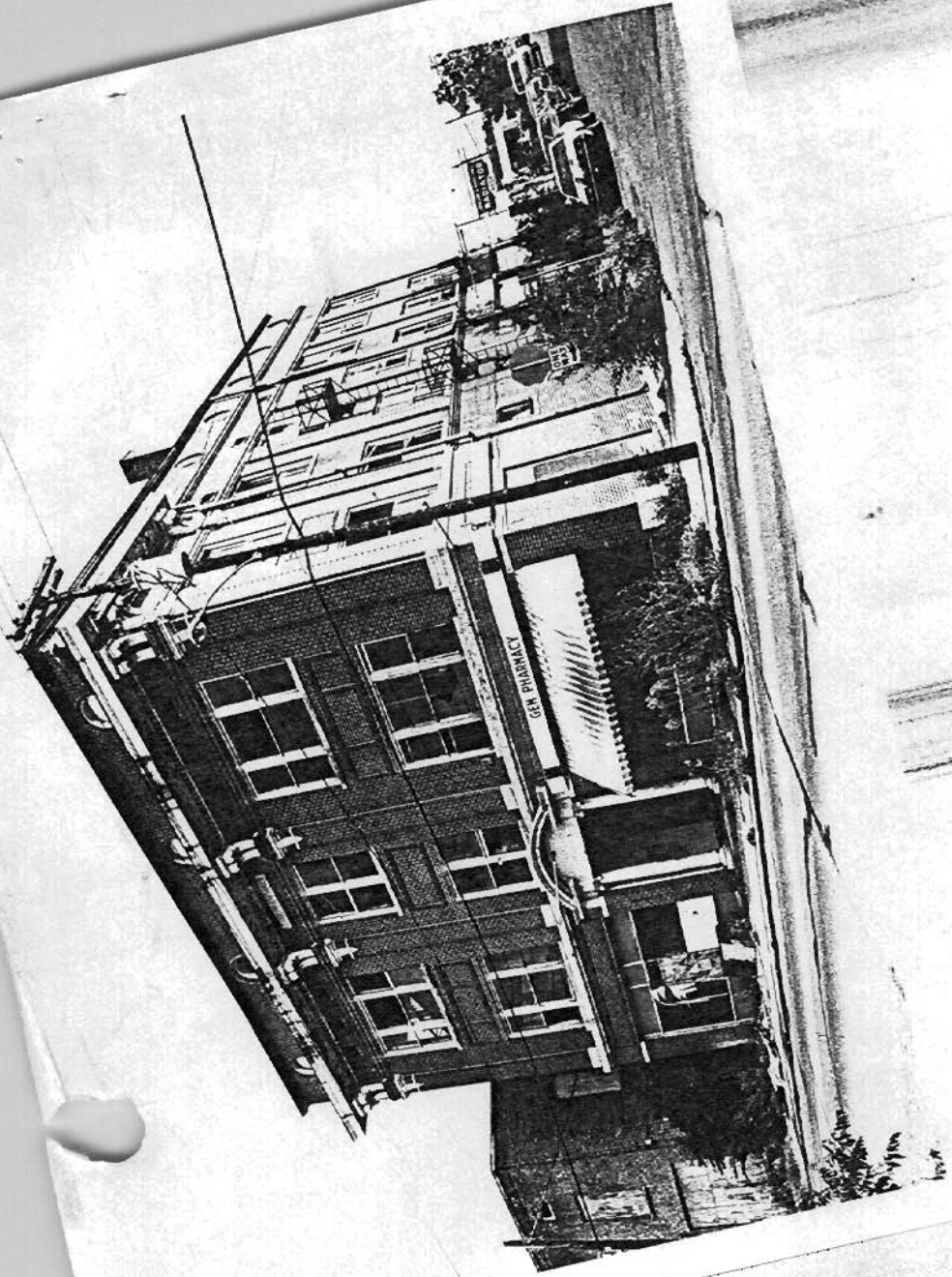
Keeper of the National Register

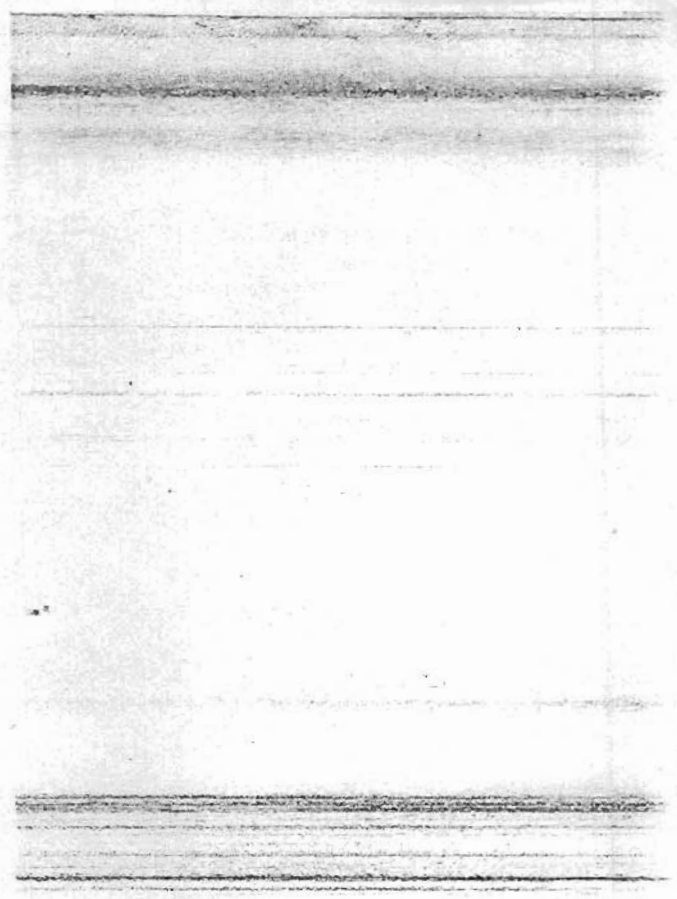
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration







LITTLE ROCK QUADRANGLE
 ARKANSAS

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
 1:24000
 1.7 MI. TO NORTH TERMINAL
 0.5 MI. TO JUNG. U.S. 69
 INTERCHANGE
 92°15'
 34°4'

AREA PLANNING
 PULASKI COUNTY

IVESVILLE 10 MI. WOODLAND HEIGHTS 2.9 MI. 17°30' 1910000 FEET 564

5

Taborian Hall
 Little Rock, Pulaski Co., Ark.

Quadrangle Name: Little Rock, Ark.
 Scale: 1:24000
 UTM Reference: 15 565900 / 3844420

