

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 16 1988
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Algeria Shrine Temple

and or common Helena Civic Center

2. Location

street & number Corner of Neill and Park Avenues

n/a not for publication

city, town Helena n/a vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Lewis & Clark code 049

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Helena

street & number 316 North Main

city, town Helena n/a vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lewis & Clark County Clerk and Recorder's Office

street & number 316 N. Park Avenue

city, town Helena state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	n/a
<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

The Algeria Shrine Temple is located across from a city park in downtown Helena at the intersection of Neill, Park, and Benton Avenues. Completed in 1921 at a cost of nearly \$200,000, the Shrine Temple is of Moorish Revival style architecture and features a single minaret that reaches a height equivalent to 17 stories. The minaret towers above all other city buildings and is well known as a distinctive landmark on the city's skyline.

The building is composed of two major blocks, with a compatible addition constructed on the east elevation toward the rear in 1938-39. Over 200,000 pounds of reinforcing steel and 100,000 cubic feet of concrete was used in the construction of the Shrine Temple. Over one million bricks face the load-bearing concrete walls, 245,000 of which are of three colors laid in intersecting patterns. The Shrine Temple has a 66,030 square feet of floor space, 244 doors, and only 86 windows. A particularly interesting feature of the building is the 1170 feet of underground and concealed passages, tunnels and ducts that make a network throughout.

The facade of the Shrine Temple rises to a height of six stories, with a central entrance marked by an recessed, exaggerated Moorish arch measuring 35' wide and 50' high. Mosaic-style painting, some of which is still in place, and three decorative blind Islamic arches enliven the upper portion of the recessed Moorish arch, above five arched double-door entrances. A pair of massive, square towers flank the entrance. The tower to the east is capped by an onion dome, while the one to the west features a minaret rising 175'. The minaret is finished with an elongated onion dome, and a stairway composed of 140 steps climbs to an observation platform near the top. When the building was in the ownership of the Algeria Shrine, a crescent and star finial graced the top of the minaret, but this feature has since been removed.

The exterior walls of the building are finished with red brick at the first floor level, with buff-colored and earth-tone brick set in intricate diamond patterns on the upper walls of the front portion of the building. Within in the recessed, Moorish arch of the front facade, above the arched side entries, and at the base of the minaret are found tightly woven, intersecting patterns of colored brick. Polychromatic brick detailing also enlivens the door and window surrounds, and is banded at the parapet level in a diamond pattern. Originally, relief brick corbelling and a crenelated cap to the coping finished the parapet. These latter parapet details were lost as a result of the damage caused by the 1935 earthquakes. On the rear elevation, ten circular, leaded glass windows are set high on the exterior wall and decorated with colored brick set in 8-pointed stars.

Inside the ten paired entrance doors is the foyer, with a conference room at one end and offices at the other, set off by French doors. Double doors to the central auditorium and open walkways to the side aisles of the auditorium lead off from the foyer. The auditorium is 125' wide and 128' long with a balcony set within the raised front section of the building. Originally designed to seat 2,608 people, the auditorium now provides fixed seating for 2,000. The barrel vaulted roof of the auditorium is supported by steel arches set in the side walls, starting 20' above ground level and rising to a total height of 48 feet,

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allowing for a clear span with no interior support post or pillars. Each of the steel roof arches weighs ten tons. The stage at the north end of the auditorium is set within a proscenium and measures 45' wide by 27' deep, and accommodated seating for 300 state Shrine committeemen. Now used as the Helena Civic Center, the auditorium stage has been extended 12' and is Helena's largest public facility for concerts and performing arts. The rear section of the building accommodates a 7,000-square-foot banquet hall and ballroom, with a maple dance floor measuring 75' by 150', which is large enough to accommodate 1,500 people at an exhibition, 500 couples dancing or 700 people at a banquet or conference. Wide, raised side aisles surround the dance floor and a raised stage is set at the east end of the room. Off the banquet room is a commodious kitchen measuring 25' by 50'.

The Algeria Shrine Temple experienced considerable structural damage as a result of a series of severe earthquakes of October, 1935. Contrary to popular perception, the 175' minaret did not topple. However, overall damage was estimated as likely to exceed \$40,000. The Temple stood in a state of disrepair for the next few years because the Shrine Order lacked the funds to finance the necessary reconstruction. The October 18th earthquake ripped a 40-foot section of coping off one wall. The entire upper portion of the east wall fell in a single strip during the October 31st quake, leaving a four-foot gap below the roof, in addition to destroying more of the decorative coping. Interior damage to plaster was extensive.

The Shriners met with city officials as early as January, 1936 in an attempt to convince the city to purchase the building for a civic center. In 1937, Nobel J.J. (Jack) Haytin and some associates proposed that the repair of the temple building be made a community project. Haytin became chairman of a citizens' committee for that purpose and the necessary money was raised as well as sufficient donated labor and materials to complete substantial repairs on the ballroom within 34 days. The ballroom remained in high demand by the community for a variety of events and provided much needed income for the financially strapped Shriners. After lengthy negotiations, a contract between the Algeria Shrine Temple Association and the City of Helena was finally reached in July, 1938 and the Temple was sold for \$46,500.

By March 1939, the City of Helena had completed the construction of the fire station addition on the northeast corner of the building. Although large overhead doors were cut into the facade of this addition, the polychromatic diamond brick pattern that was used on the exterior walls matches that of the original portion of the building. In 1976, a second story was added to the back of the fire station. City offices occupied the Shrine Temple until the 1970's when offices were removed to the newly renovated U.S. Federal Building. A city-sponsored board was formed to raise funds for necessary building improvements and to market the auditorium and ballroom for community and cultural events. Recent improvements to the building include new carpeting, the installation of water

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service for a fire sprinkler system, updated rest rooms to meet handicap code, extensive acoustical improvements in the auditorium, and completely new auditorium seats. The building is now known as the Helena Civic Center and is patronized by 75,000 to 100,000 people each year.

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 checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1919-1921 **Builder/Architect** G.S. Carsley and C.S. Haire, architects
N.T. Lease, contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Algeria Shrine Temple is an important and unusual example of Moorish Revival architecture, aptly expressive of the exotic associations engendered by the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. The building also gains significance as the largest and most often used public hall for major cultural and political events in Helena, Montana since its completion in 1921. Plans and specifications for the Temple were prepared by two local members of the Order, George S. Carsley and Charles S. Haire, both architects of considerable significance in the history of the State. Roscoe Hugenin served as the supervising architect. Carsley conceived of the new Temple as more than just a place for the Shrine to meet, have their offices and store the Order's abundant paraphernalia. The building was designed to serve as a civic center for the city of Helena - the role it continues to fulfill today - with a public auditorium that could seat over 2000 people and an ample ballroom and banquet hall. Over the years, the Temple became the traditional scene for inaugural balls, presidential addresses, and political conventions, as well as more pedestrian entertainments such as professional wrestling matches, boxing tournaments, and big band dances, in addition to the Shrine's state-wide annual meetings. At the time the Algeria Shrine Temple was built, it was the only Shrine Temple between Minneapolis and Seattle and its auditorium ranked as the ninth largest in the nation.

The choice of the Moorish Revival style for exterior decoration, and especially the use of a 175-foot minaret to lend the building distinction, befits the fanciful and grandiose proclivities of the Ancient Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Few buildings of this style were erected in the West, making the Algeria Shrine Temple significant in a statewide context. The architects credited with the design of the building, George S. Carsley and Charles S. Haire, have achieved positions of prominence in Montana history. Carsley was born in 1870 in Wisconsin and lived in Helena for a few years before he received his architectural training at the University of Minnesota. In addition to maintaining his own private practice in Helena, Carsley worked in association with Cass Gilbert, who had his main office in New York City. For over 20 years, Carsley supervised Gilbert's Montana projects and the two designed a number of buildings in partnership. Charles S. Haire is likely Montana's most important and prolific architect of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In partnership from 1906-1925 with J.G. Link, the firm of Link and Haire maintained offices in Helena, Billings, Missoula, Butte and Lewistown, Montana. The firm gained the commissions for by far the largest share of the county courthouses, schools, hospitals, commercial buildings, and residences of any architectural firm working in Montana.

The Shrine Temple also stands as a late reminder of the importance of the contributions of the Masonic Orders to the social history of Montana. The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine was organized in New York

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Helena, MT

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	2	4	2	0	4	0	0	5	1	6	0	5	0	0
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

Getchell and Child Addition to the City of Helena, Montana Tracks J-K-L
The lot measures 473' x 269'.

T10N R3W Sw $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 30

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 Marilyn Evans, Manager, Helena Civic Center

organization City of Helena

date 10/15/87

street & number Corner of Neill and Park Avenues

telephone (406)442-9920

city or town Helena

state Montana 59601

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marella Shufy

title SAPO

date 3-11-88

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

for *Beth Grosvenor Boland*
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/14/88

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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in 1872 and the first Shrine Order was chartered in Montana in Helena in 1888 at a time when there were only 7100 members nationwide. The founders of this new Order of Free Masonry emphasized the social aspects of the fraternity and their rites and extravagant costuming reflected an Islamic flavor, adopted by the founders after visits to the Near East and North Africa. The Helena Temple was constructed in 1920-21, at time when the Order assumed new social responsibilities, specifically assistance to children afflicted with polio. In 1920, the resolution to found the first Shrine children's hospital was passed at the national conference in Portland, and Helena Shrine member Edward C. Day played an important role. Dr. O. M. Lanstrum, also from Helena, served as the medical advisor for the hospital planning committee and on the Board of Directors of the first hospital in Shreveport, Louisiana. With this renewed sense of purpose, the Shriners experienced a dramatic increase in membership and activity nationwide. Fifteen of the 18 existing Shriners' Hospitals for Crippled Children were built and in operation before 1927. All services at the Shriners' hospitals remain free of charge, paid for by the Shriners' endowment fund, and no insurance or public tax monies are accepted.

Three separate Masonic Orders in Helena shared space in the Masonic Lodge building at 104 Broadway until the Shrine and the Scottish Rite together moved their offices to the newly renovated Consistory-Shrine Temple on Jackson St. in 1915. It quickly became apparent that the new Temple was not large enough for the rapidly growing Shrine. Success in paying off debt of Consistory encouraged the organization to proceed with plans for the construction of a larger building. Excavation for the Algeria Shrine Temple began in autumn 1919 and was completed by contractor N.T. Lease of Great Falls in the spring of 1920. An elaborate celebration was staged on June 19, 1920, attended by W. Freeland Kendrick, Imperial Potentate of the Shrine, who stopped in Helena en route to the Portland conference. He arrived on the Great Northern Railway in the private car of Louis W. Hill, chairman of the board of directors of the railroad. The cornerstone was laid by W.L. Parmelee of Butte, who was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Montana, A.F. and A.M., while the addresses were delivered by Kendrick and Edward C. Day, Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Scottish Rite in Montana.

Progress on construction advanced rapidly and the ballroom was designated as the site of the inaugural ball honoring Governor Joseph M. Dixon the following January. President Warren G. Harding spoke from the auditorium stage shortly after completion in 1921. Unfortunately, the Algeria Shrine undertook construction of their new Temple on the heels of the unusually prosperous years of the First World War, which was followed immediately by a long-lasting, economic depression in Montana. Also, in 1922, the Al Bedoo Temple in Billings was chartered, which drew away about 700 of the 2,000 members of the Helena Shrine. Although the Helena Algeria Shrine Temple was completed in 1921 at an original cost of \$192,370, this figure became much larger as the Shriners experienced financial difficulties in keeping up 7% interest payments. The final cost of building was estimated at \$365,000 by the Shrine and at \$350,000

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according to the City of Helena. A good part of the outstanding mortgage was forgiven by the Union Bank and the city's purchase price of \$46,500 in 1938 cleared the title to the building.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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"The Helena Civic Center: Myths and Realities of Two Different Buildings," Jack
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the State Historic Preservation Office)

Interview with Jack Haswell by Patricia Bick, Helena, Montana, February 3, 1988.