

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Temple Theatre

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 120 Carthage Street not for publication

city, town Sanford vicinity of

state N.C. code 037 county Lee code 105

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input 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 Temple Theatre Company, Inc.

street & number 120 Carthage Street, P.O. Box 1391

city, town Sanford, vicinity of state NC 27330

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lee County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number (Deed Book 337, Page 995)

city, town Sanford state NC 27330

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 type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input checked="" 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> renovation in progress | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Temple Theatre, a fifty foot-by-ninty-two foot, two-story, brick building erected in 1925, presents an impressive, three-bay, southeast facade to Carthage Street in downtown Sanford. Blending elements of the Colonial Revival and Art Deco styles and decorated with cut stone details, the facade is dominated by the full-width sweep of the unadorned entablature above the first floor which arches at the central bay to enclose a decorative cut stone panel. Directly below this arch is the recessed entrance, sheltered by a cantilevered, chain-supported marquee. The entrance foyer, floored with colored (green, grey-green, light brown, white, black, and blue) hexagonal tiles laid in a decorative pattern, originally contained two pairs of doors and the bayed front of the ticket office. This foyer will be enclosed during the renovation and incorporated into an expanded, more functional interior lobby. Flanking the marquee and distinguished by decorative brickwork with stone details at the corners are the former refreshment stand in the northeast bay (originally, there was no direct access from the theatre's interior to the refreshment stand) and the former office in the southwest bay. Both former fronts will be fitted with large plate glass windows. An unusual, horizontal stone ornament with a central classical garland swag flanked by square windows (which illuminate the balcony's projection room) highlights the second level. Flanking this are two, three-part false windows composed of brick laid in a basketweave pattern with stone corners; the central section of each is overlaid with a metal, diamond-patterned screen. Forming the crown of the building, four feet from the top, is a classically-detailed stone entablature with a modillioned cornice.

The building is joined on each side by adjacent, post World War Two, brick commercial buildings, two stories on the southwest and one story on the northeast. A Coca-Cola advertisement remains on the northeast elevation; it is fitting that the builder of the Temple Theatre, J.R. Ingram, Sr., started the local Coca-Cola bottling franchise in 1907 and that his son, J.R. Ingram, Jr., donated the building for its current renovation. Across the rear elevation, which fronts onto an alley and parking lot, a twelve-foot deep, three-story addition is being constructed in brick to provide additional storage, workshop areas, and a rear stage space. The building's flat roof was given added support with the addition of metal beams in the spring of 1983.

The new lobby will be completely different from the old one. The expanded lobby will have a central ticket/concession area and twin, quarter-turn stairs will rise along the side walls from the front of the building to the balcony. Small restrooms will be tucked beneath the stairs.

Entrance into the double aisle main floor of the theater will again be through two double doors. The theater's size, only forty-two feet from the stage to the rear wall and only thirty feet to the overhang of the balcony, is expressly suited for the intimacy of legitimate theater. The colorful sweep of the stage's segmental proscenium arch is composed of successive bands and moldings of gold, blue, gold, light chocolate brown, dark coral, and chocolate brown. These colors compliment well the gayer colors--cream, flesh, rose, bright pink, and gold--of the embossed metal ceiling, which has intervening bands and an anthemion frieze. Adding further to the interior's noteworthy decor are the four, large (twelve feet-by-twenty-five feet) stenciled (on plaster) panels along the side walls. A repeating design composed of Victorian urns, medallions, and luxuriant intertwining foliage all surrounded by a stylized floral border, the stencil's brown and maroon hues lend a restraining tone of sobriety to the otherwise colorful interior. These stenciled panels, visible once again after being obscured in the 1950s by acoustical tiles (added to deaden the acoustics

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for improved movie listening), have been damaged, severely in places, but will eventually be restored. Other prominent features of the interior include the deep, bayed orchestra pit that spans the full width of the stage (twenty-four feet), the sizeable balcony, several Art Deco wall light fixtures, and the original piano. An unusual combination piano-organ-mandolin, the instrument, built by the Reproducto Company of Chicago, has two keyboards of eighty-eight and sixty-one keys, and eight stops: Diapason, Flute, Quintadena, Tremulo, Piano Only, Mandolin Off, Release, and Record. It is currently not in playing condition.

The stage area, forty-eight feet wide and twenty feet deep, is joined by two wide doors to the new addition in the rear. The ground floor of the addition will contain office space, the main floor will serve as a rear stage during performances, and the upper floor will house the scenery, props, and costume departments. Underneath the stage, bathrooms and dressing rooms are being built and through this area is the only access to the orchestra pit, which can comfortably accommodate fifteen musicians. There is a single set of recessed stairs leading from the west corner of the main floor down to the dressing area and to a rear exit. The theater will be outfitted with completely new seats.

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 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 checked="" 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 1925

Builder/Architect Joe W. Stout Co./Eric G. Flanagan

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Temple Theatre, a 450 seat performing theatre and movie house erected in 1925, is a handsome example of the modest, well-designed theaters erected in the early twentieth century across the United States. Built to cater primarily to the traveling vaudeville and road shows, it later saw exclusive use as a movie house. The large, eclectic brick building, displaying elements primarily of the Colonial Revival and Art Deco styles, is especially noted for its elegant interior. Colorful tones of cream, flesh, pink, rose, coral, maroon, gold, brown, and blue enliven the proscenium arch, the embossed metal ceiling, and the large, intricate stenciled panels on the side walls. Presently undergoing an estimated \$375,000 renovation, the Temple Theatre will soon regain its leadership role in the performing arts and legitimate theater in Sanford.

Criteria Assessment

A The Temple Theatre is an excellent and typical example of the modest theaters built in small towns throughout the United States during the 1920s which enabled the residents to be entertained locally by traveling vaudeville and road shows and by the emerging motion picture industry.

C An interesting combination of Colonial Revival and Art Deco forms and details, the Temple Theatre exhibits the visual excitement and the vivid colors that were the hallmark of the finer performance halls of the 1920s. The large stenciled panels in the interior are especially significant.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Opening to a full crowd on March 2, 1925, the Temple Theatre fulfilled the desire of J.R. Ingram, Sr., its owner and the owner of the local Coca-Cola Bottling Company, "to provide for Sanford a building where high class entertainment could be and would be staged and thrown on the screen. On erecting this modern theatre he (Ingram) had spared no expense to make it an up-to-date playhouse..."¹ A theater of the Temple's size and elegance was a source of great pride for Sanford, a young, expanding town of only 3500 which had been laid out along the Chatham Railroad about 1872 and incorporated in 1874.² The Sanford Express, in its coverage of the gala opening, included the remarks of the president of the Sanford Chamber of Commerce:

Heretofore we have had to leave home to have an evening of real entertainment, but now a place has been made where entertainment of the right kind can be secured. The new theatre is one of the worthwhile things which Sanford should feel proud of and to which the people should give their support.³

"The evening's entertainment was the movie 'Janice Meredith', a high class patriotic picture featuring the American Revolution."⁴ Other attractions during the opening week were Buster Keaton in "The Navigator" and Tom Mix with "Tony, the Wonder Horse And Duke the Dog" in "Teeth". Professor Leo L. Freemant conducted the Concert Orchestra.⁵

The Temple Theatre, designed by architect Eric G. Flanagan of Henderson and constructed by the Joe W. Stout Company of Sanford,⁶ was built as a theater for performers and not as a movie house, as its acoustics and wide, shallow stage construction suggest. Vaudeville shows, the typically American type of variety shows that were so popular in the early twentieth century, were on the decline during the theater's early years and were eventually replaced by the road shows, special events carrying just one theme. While these road shows may have been the featured events during the early years of the Temple, the cultural appeal of the motion picture was widespread and increasing. Although the opening week consisted entirely of motion pictures, on March 13 the Temple hosted its first show, "Models of 1925", billed as a comedy and starring Myra Brown and Johnny Getz.⁷ Traveling shows were booked about every other week by A.H. and W.B. Qualls of Burlington, the first lessees; in between a pianist would accompany silent films from the orchestra pit. The dual role of the theater for these occasional road shows and movies (later talkies) continued (although the road shows decreased in numbers) through two succeeding lessees until the Second World War, after which the showing of movies was almost exclusive. In 1950 Henry Vann and R.P. Rosser formed a partnership to run the Temple as a movie house, which they did until it was taken over by the Stewart-Everett chain in 1960. In the 1960s, with the rise of the suburbs and the growing popularity of suburban movie theaters, the Temple Theatre, once the showplace of Sanford and Lee County, closed.⁸

Vacant (except for short-lived boutiques in the former refreshment shop and office), the theater fell into a threatening decay. In December 1981 J.R. Ingram, Jr.,

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the son of the builder, donated the Temple Theatre to the Lee County Recreation Foundation, Inc., which in turn deeded the property to the newly-organized Temple Theatre Company, Inc.¹⁰ The future home of the performing arts in Sanford and Lee County in addition to two community theater companies, the Temple Theatre is currently undergoing an extensive renovation (estimated at \$375,000) which will convert the Temple, once again, into a modern first class performance hall while maintaining the building's architectural integrity. Using funds raised primarily through small, local donations, the renovators hope for another grand opening in late 1983. The restoration architect is Frank DeStefano of Architecture, Inc. of Sanford.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Large Crowd Attends Opening of Temple Theatre", The Sanford Express, March 6, 1925.
- 2 William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 439.
- 3 op.cit., The Sanford Express.
- 4 ibid.
- 5 Reprint of pre-opening ad, The Sanford Herald, March 2, 1982, p. 1.
- 6 Larry Hamilton, "Theater to be restored for use of the community" The Sanford Herald, January 6, 1982, p. 12A.
- 7 Larry Hamilton, "Temple celebrates 57th", The Sanford Herald, March 2, 1982, p. 2.
- 8 Hamilton, op.cit., The Sanford Herald, January 6, 1982. The original piano remains in the building, although in unplayable condition. It is an unusual combination piano-organ-mandolin with two keyboards of eighty-eight and sixty-one keys and eight stops: Diapason, Flute, Quintadena, Tremulo, Piano Only, Mandolin Off, Release, and Record. It was built by the Reproducto Company of Chicago.
- 9 ibid.
- 10 Lee County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 337, Page 995.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hamilton, Larry. "Theater to be restored for use of the community", The Sanford Herald.
 January 6, 1982, p. 12A.
 Hamilton, Larry. "Temple celebrates 57th", The Sanford Herald. March 2, 1982, p.2.
 "Large Crowd Attends Opening of Temple Theatre", The Sanford Express, March 6, 1925.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 0.11
 Quadrangle name Sanford Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UTM References

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 7 | 6 6 5 2 1 0 | 3 9 2 7 7 1 0 | B | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property to be nominated is the Temple Theatre lot at 120 Carthage Street in Sanford, North Carolina. It is shown as Parcel Number 6053 on Sheet 32Q of the Lee County Tax Department. A copy of that tax map is attached.

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

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|
| state | N/A | code | county | N/A | code |
| state | | code | county | | code |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tom Butchko
 organization Preservation Consultant date June 6, 1983
 street & number P.O. Box 2193 telephone (919) 934-4092
 city or town Smithfield state North Carolina 27577

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

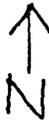
national state local

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 William S. Price, Jr.

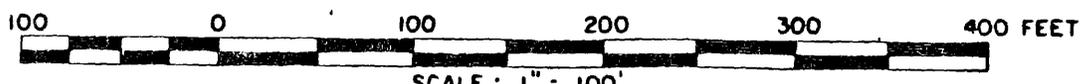
title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 14, 1983

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 date _____
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration



THE TEMPLE THEATRE
 120 Carthage Street
 Sanford, North Carolina
 Lee County

Parcel Number 6053
 Sheet 32Q
 Lee County Tax Department

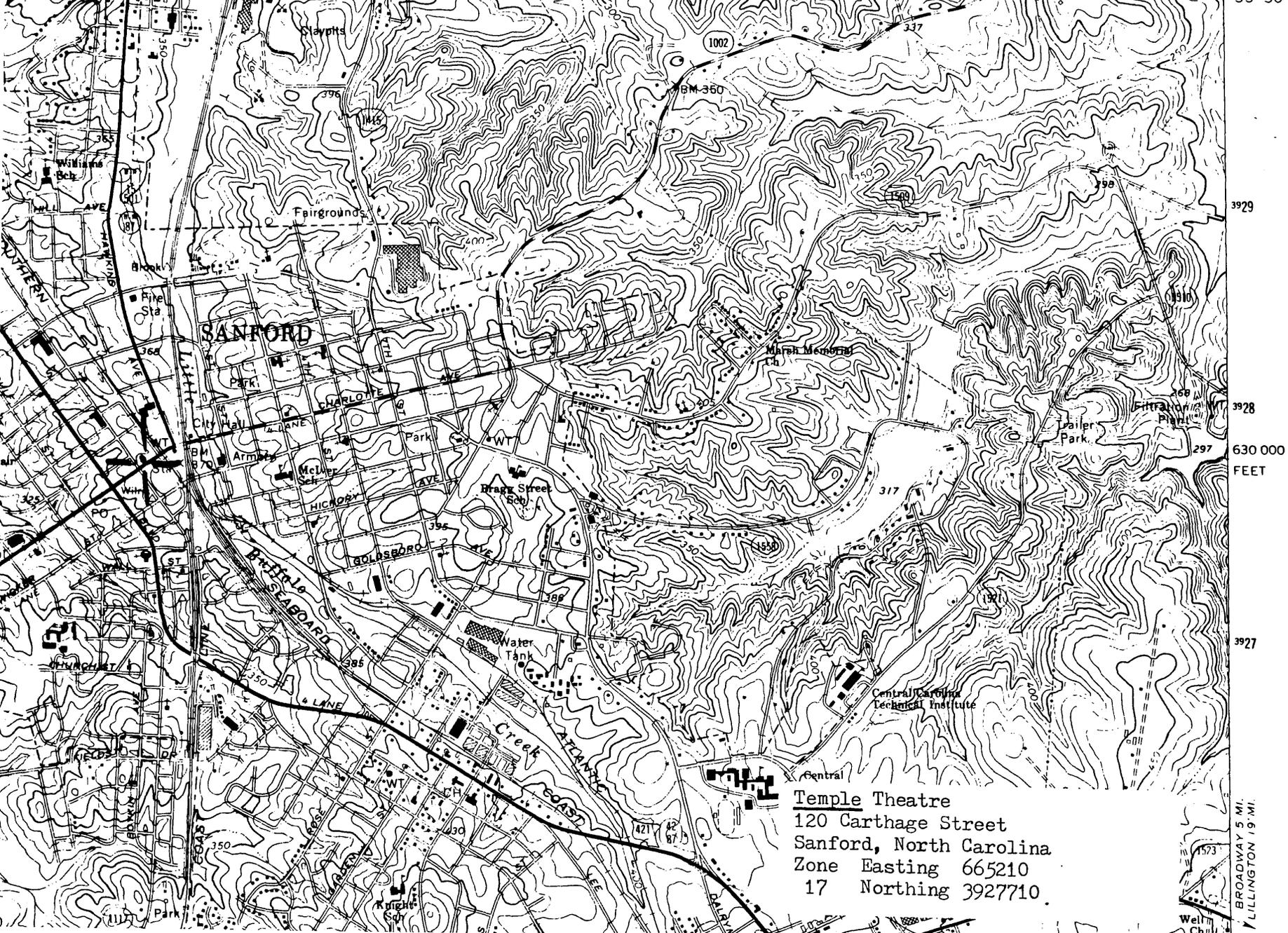


GRID BASED ON NORTH CAROLINA STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM
 SOUTH ZONE 1927 N. A. DATUM

SANFORD QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA—LEE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5155 II SE
(MONCURE)

SW NJ 665 666 10' 667 668 669 1 960 000 FEET 79°07'30" 35°30'



LE 4

Temple Theatre
120 Carthage Street
Sanford, North Carolina
Zone Easting 665210
17 Northing 3927710

BROADWAY 5 MI.
WILLINGTON 19 MI.

