

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1104

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Columbia Township Auditorium
other names/site number Township Auditorium

2. Location

street & number 1703 Taylor Street not for publication
city or town Columbia vicinity
state South Carolina code SC county Richland code 079 zip code 29201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Mary W. Edwards 8/15/05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson H. Beall 9/29/05
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Columbia Township Auditorium
Name of Property

Richland County, South Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Resources Associated with Segregation in
Columbia, South South Carolina, 1880 - 1960

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Georgian Revival

Foundation Brick

Walls Brick

Roof Concrete

Other Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses High artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance Within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
 Ethnic Heritage-Black
 Architecture
 Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1930-1955

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lafaye and Lafaye (George E. & Robert S. Lafaye, Architects)
 Heslep, John C., Company (Contractor)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Columbia Township Auditorium
Name of Property

Richland County, South Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 497419 5762985
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Justification

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James Fennell, with the assistance of the SHPO Staff
Organization Public History Program date November 30, 2004
street & number University of South Carolina telephone (803) 777-6398
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29208

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Richland County
street & number 2020 Hampton Street telephone (803) 929-6000
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29204

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

The Columbia Township Auditorium, most often called simply Township Auditorium, is located at 1703 Taylor Street, at the corner of Taylor and Henderson Streets near downtown Columbia, South Carolina. It is a three-story massive rectangular brick Classical Revival building featuring a large entrance pavilion, and though it has had some alterations since its construction in 1930, it retains a high degree of integrity.

As with other Classical Revival buildings, the Township Auditorium is rectangular and has a symmetrical façade facing southeast. The foundation is made of brick and concrete.¹ The main part of the auditorium is constructed of brick.² A cast stone, rusticated lower level with five centrally-located arched entries accessed by stone steps provides the visual basis for the piano nobile, or second story main level and the building's projecting classical frontispiece. The arched entryways are rusticated with radiating voussoirs and keystones. Flanking the entrances are single one-over-one light windows. On the upper levels of the building's frontispiece is a monumental limestone Doric order colonnaded loggia.³ The loggia's flanking towers or pavilions are of brick trimmed with rusticated stone quoins. Five doorways with shelf architrave lintels and upper windows within the loggia, as well as the pavilions' windows on both upper levels are accented with limestone as well. A classical iron balustrade adorns the loggia. The entire frontispiece features a full limestone entablature and parapet with bracketed or scrolled ornament. Upon the entablature's frieze is incised the name COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP AUDITORIUM.

The building also features several belt courses, the first of which is a limestone base watertable. At the west corner of the rusticated and brick frontispiece is the building's cornerstone, with architects Lafaye & Lafaye and builder J.C. Heslep incised upon its western exposure. The second beltcourse delineates the principal floor or piano nobile, and an additional one at the cap of the building's frontispiece wraps the entire building's upper level. A raking limestone cornice delineates the massive peaked gable's parapet and wraps the entire building. Additional limestone quoining accents the building's monumental façade.

At the southern end of the building's Henderson Street [western] elevation is a secondary entrance with double-leaf door, sidelights, cornerlights, transom and limestone surround that also encompasses the second floor tripartite window. This entrance is accessed by a double flight of stone and brick steps with decorative iron balustrade. Gooseneck lamps, attached to the building, flank and light this entrance. Tripartite windows, similar to that on the second floor, are located on the third and fourth levels of the projecting secondary entrance pavilion. Simple one-over-one, double-hung windows occur along the western and eastern elevations' main entry level, while much of the fenestration on the upper levels of the auditorium's western and eastern walls has been infilled with brick. A basement level is discernable from the Henderson Street elevation.

¹ Township Auditorium (Columbia, S.C.) Architectural Drawings and Plans, 1929, Lafaye Associates Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

² Sanborn Map Company, Fire Insurance Maps of Columbia, South Carolina, Microfilm edition (New York: D.A. Sanborn), 1956.

³ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

The northwest [rear] elevation features a massive stage apparatus tower that rises well above the auditorium's roofline. This structure has a flat roof and does not feature any belt courses, limestone copings or fenestration. Two-story dressing room sections occur to either side of the stage apparatus tower. These contain single and paired windows, as well as access doors. On the northeast side, the belt courses continue. Two sections of the building protrude on this side as well. Large cargo bay doors are also visible on this elevation, as is a massive square chimney for the boiler.

Inside at basement level, a large banquet room and several sequestered spaces can be found. Four storage rooms, an assembly room, and a former boiler room are all on the basement level. The boiler room is no longer used. The other rooms still serve the same purpose as in the past. The bathrooms in the basement that were segregated by race were converted into storage rooms in the 1980s and no longer have any toilets or sinks.

Inside on the first floor, the lobby and hallway are separated from the auditorium itself by a masonry wall. Upon entering the Township, an office that serves as the box office is to the left. After entering the second set of doors, one enters the lobby. The lobby surrounds the auditorium on the southwest and southeast sides. The building has a rectangular auditorium and proscenium arched stage. The stage is composed of wood and has a width of seventy-seven feet and a depth of thirty-five feet. The seats are on a graduated platform on the floor of the auditorium. In front of the stage is an orchestra pit that reaches a depth of around one and a half feet below the auditorium floor.⁴

A semicircular balcony lines the back and side walls. Likewise, the side door on the southwest side was used by African-Americans to enter the auditorium. A ticket window on the southwest side was the ticket window for African-Americans. It has been covered with cement, as have several other windows; however, the ticket counter itself remains and the window's outline can still be seen. The main ticket window is still intact and has not been infilled. Renovations to the air and heating system were made in 1998 and the graduated platform and seating was added in 2001.⁵

Despite the minor changes that have occurred, the building's exterior and interior still retain integrity as do the exterior and interior spaces used to segregate the races for the first forty years of its history.

⁴ Drawings and Plans, Lafaye Associates Papers.

⁵ Township Auditorium, "Township Technical Facts," online at <http://www.thetownship.org/towntech.htm>, accessed 30 November 2004.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

The Columbia Township Auditorium is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the social and recreational history of Columbia, and by extension of the state of South Carolina, and as an example of the partition of public spaces during the segregation era, a period in which the building was strictly segregated for its first forty years, and also under Criterion C as an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture and as a notable design of the significant Columbia architectural firm of Lafaye and Lafaye.

In 1928, Richland County voters approved a bond referendum to build a municipal auditorium, but plans stalled when the amount approved was too low and when plans for a community center to be built in conjunction with the auditorium were dropped. Plans for the auditorium were further complicated when the site first chosen for it was a lot on Hampton Street occupied by the boyhood home of Woodrow Wilson. After the American Legion and citizens of Columbia and the rest of state objected, the home was saved to become a house museum and a new site was chosen nearby at the corner of Taylor and Henderson Streets.

The Township Auditorium was designed by the prominent Columbia architectural firm of Lafaye and Lafaye, headed by brothers George E. Lafaye (1878-1939) and Robert S. Lafaye (1892-1972). Construction, with an estimated cost of \$300,000, began in the fall of 1929; the auditorium was completed in the spring of 1930 and described by one local historian as a "memento of the ambitious 'boom' years that preceded the financial depression of 1929."⁷ The building is an excellent example of a Georgian Revival public building of the period between the World Wars, featuring a symmetrical façade, Doric columned portico, belt course, rusticated arches and quoins, and is one of the most notable designs of the firm of Lafaye and Lafaye. Other notable Lafaye and Lafaye designs of the period include the National Loan and Exchange Bank Annex, a Neoclassical design (1925); the Barringer Hotel (1930), and the State Office Building (1939), all in Columbia, and the Hartsville Community Center and Community Market (1935), an Art Deco design in Hartsville, Darlington County.⁸

With a seating capacity of between 2,500 and 3,500 for most of its history, the Township has hosted thousands of events—perhaps most notably, concerts, featuring orchestras, choirs, high school and college or university bands, and singers and bands playing all sorts of music including classical, pop, rock and roll, jazz, blues, gospel, country, bluegrass, rap, and alternative music. It also featured regular wrestling and boxing matches for many years, and hosted comedy concerts as well. The auditorium has also hosted many political

⁷ Helen Kohn Kennig, *Columbia: Capital City of South Carolina 1786-1936* (Columbia: Published for the Columbia Sesquicentennial Commission by the R.L. Bryan Company, Printers, 1936), p. 214.

⁸ Russell Maxey, *South Carolina's Historic Columbia: Yesterday and Today in Photographs* (Columbia: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1980), p. 144; John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), p. 337; John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The South Carolina Architects 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: The New South Architectural Press, 1992), 94-98.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

rallies and conventions as well as other events such as high school graduations, reunions, conventions, and other meetings.

During the segregation era, from 1930 to the late 1960s, the policy of the Columbia Township Auditorium was the same as most other public entertainment venues in the Jim Crow South: Whites and blacks could attend the same events, but with certain restrictions. For most performances whites would enter the auditorium through the facade entrance, purchase tickets from the main ticket counter, and sit in seats on the first floor, blacks would enter the building by a side door on the southwestern elevation, purchase tickets from a separate "colored" ticket counter to the side of the main lobby, and sit in the second floor balcony. If the performers themselves were black, then black patrons could sit on the auditorium floor and whites were required to sit in the balcony, keeping the two groups segregated. In addition, there were separate coatrooms and restrooms for white and "colored" patrons, with the coatrooms and restrooms for blacks significantly smaller than those for whites. When legal segregation in public accommodations ended in the late 1960s, black customers were allowed to use the same entrance, ticket counter, seats, coatrooms, and restrooms as anyone else.⁹

One interesting aspect of the Township's history and association with the practice of segregation is that numerous political and activist groups holding rallies and meetings there from the 1940s into the 1960s either opposed segregation and "Jim Crow laws" or advocated their continued use. In 1946 the Southern Youth Legislature, an organization of 1,000 African-American students sponsored by the Southern Negro Youth Congress, met at the Township and passed resolutions calling for an end to racism, lynching, segregation, economic discrimination. As one observer optimistically described the meeting, "Change is the order of the day, and there are no limits to change. . . . That is the meaning of the Southern Youth Legislature."¹⁰ It would be almost another twenty years, however, before those changes began to occur to any significant degree. After the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education* which eventually led to the end of segregation in public schools after the Court called on states to act "with all deliberate speed", white politicians and citizens across the South formed the Citizens' Council of America (with local organizations often popularly known as "White Citizens' Councils" to fight what the end of segregation, which they preferred to call "integration." In 1956 4,000 members of the South Carolina Association of the Citizens' Council held its annual meeting at the Township, featuring fiery speeches against integration by both of South Carolina's United States Senators—Olin D. Johnston and J. Strom Thurmond—as well as by United States Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi and Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives Solomon Blatt.¹¹

⁹ Drawings and Plans, Lafaye Associates Papers.

¹⁰ Howard Fast, "They're Marching Up Freedom Road," *New Masses* 61:6 (5 November 1946), 20, available online at <http://www.trussel.com/hf/plots/t500.htm>, accessed 30 November 2004.

¹¹ Neil R. McMillen, *Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 74; Moore, p. 420.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

Select Bibliography

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- Fast, Howard. "They're Marching Up Freedom Road," *New Masses* 61:6 (5 November 1946), 20, available online at <http://www.trussel.com/hf/plots/t500.htm>, accessed 30 November 2004.
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- The State* (Columbia, S.C.), various issues, 1961-2004.
- Township Auditorium (Columbia, S.C.) *Architectural Drawings and Plans*, 1929. Lafaye Associates Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.
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- Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton, eds. *The South Carolina Architects 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary*. Richmond: The New South Architectural Press, 1992.

Columbia Township Auditorium

Name of Property

Richland County, South Carolina

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Columbia Township Auditorium" on the accompanying Richland County Tax Map, Number 11403, Parcel 8, Lot 1, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the historic auditorium and the city lot on which it is located.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 11

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Columbia Township Auditorium
Location of Property: 1703 Taylor Street, Columbia
 Richland County, South Carolina
Name of Photographer: Beth Wiedower
Date of Photographs: 19-20 November 2004
Location of Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Façade
2. Detail, Ticket Office
3. Detail, West Elevation
4. West Elevation
5. North/Rear Elevation
6. East Elevation