

**State Theater**  
**685/687 Central Avenue**  
**Designated September 1991, HPC #91-02**



Constructed in 1924, the State Theater is an outstanding example of Beaux Arts style architecture. At the time of its construction the State Theater's 6000 sq.ft. made it one of the largest banks in St. Petersburg. Its original use as the Alexander National Bank lasted only two years until Jacob Alexander died in December of 1926. During 1927 the building was partially occupied by the Gregory Electric Refrigeration Company, but by 1928 sat vacant. The building was purchased by the Fidelity Bank and Trust Company in July of 1929. The stock market crash in October of that same year was too much for the local economy and the Fidelity Bank, like most St. Petersburg banks, was forced to close. After Fidelity's liquidation in 1931 the building was used for a succession of small office tenants until 1949 when it was remodeled into the State Theater.

Neel Reid was the architect who designed the original building and was also responsible locally for the Alexander Hotel. In 1949 the building was remodeled by another notable architect, Archie Parrish of St. Petersburg.

The facade of the State Theater is a symmetrical composition of three bays. The bays are defined by engaged pilasters expressed as a series of quoins above a projected water table base topped by an ionic capital with an attached swag. The facade is topped by a projected cornice with a simple entablature. Above this is a parapet divided into three corresponding bays divided by projecting pilasters. Each of the three main bays contains a pair of ionic columns on a block base supporting a banded arch with an engaged keystone with an acanthus motif. The space between the sides of the three arches and the engaged pilasters is filled by a stylized bas relief eagle. The original fenestration was removed at the time of the 1949 remodeling when the openings at the side bays were filled and a contemporary projecting marquis was added at the central bay above the theater doors. A later renovation into a concert venue included the installation of glass blocks at the two side arches.