

Architecture team aids in theater

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In the North Louisiana town of Oak Grove, the [Fiske Theatre](#) has been a distinctive landmark since its construction in 1950. Now, thanks in part to work by students and professors from the Tulane School of Architecture, the theater has been named to the [National Register of Historic Places](#).



With its distinctive neon and Ultra-Moderne Art Deco styling, the Fiske Theatre is the pride of West Carroll Parish in North Louisiana, and now a historic landmark. (Photo from the Fiske Theatre)

The project began when the theater's operator, Adam Holland of Holland Entertainment, contacted Tulane, searching for lost blueprints of the Fiske, one of the state's few remaining small, mid-century theaters. With support from architecture dean Kenneth Schwartz and a Dean's Fund for Excellence grant, the architecture team traveled to Oak Grove in the spring of 2013 for historic research on the theater.

Adjunct faculty member Andrew Liles and professor John H. Stubbs, director of the Preservation Studies Program, led the work by Gabrielle Begue and MaryNell Nolan-Wheatley, students in the master's program, and architecture undergraduate Jack Waterman.

“What a life lesson, that less than a semester of research and documentation by three students can cement a place in our nation's narrative,” Liles says. “We, of course, were just the catalyst; the theater and West Carroll Parish are the steady stalwarts, blazing over 60 years of trail. We simply contributed a small but significant chapter.”

The [students](#) worked largely the entire spring semester, with the MPS students doing preliminary historical research and the architecture student mocking up plans and elevations for on-site measurements.

They documented the entire building, then spent the semester completing a narrative on the region and the theater's history, while Waterman finished architectural plans for the Fiske.

This fall, their work complete, the team members helped get state-level approval for the historic listing, and the Fiske earned its national designation in late January.

Still an active theater owned by the West Carroll Chamber of Commerce, the Fiske shows movies Thursdays through Sundays.