

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 12 1986**
date entered

SEP 11 1986

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

1. Name

historic Waldo Theatre

and or common

2. Location

street & number Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Waldoboro,

N/A vicinity of

state Maine

code 23

county Lincoln

code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Medical</u>
			<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

4. Owner of Property

name Edward B. Kitfield, M.D.

street & number Cross Point Road

city, town North Edgecomb,

N/A vicinity of

state Maine 04556

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lincoln County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Wiscasset,

state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located in the center of the village of Waldoboro, the Waldo Theatre occupies a prominent site next to the old Custom House (now Waldoboro Public Library (N.R.)). The surrounding buildings are residential structures dating from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. This area has not been surveyed for historic district potential.

The theatre is a two story brick building with a gable roof. The narrow gable end of this rectangular structure supports a pedimented portico with Tuscan columns. The main entry consists of double doors enframed by pilasters supporting a pediment with a swan's neck pediment. The windows consist of 6/6 double-hung sash.

The interior of the theatre remains unaltered. It includes a large stage, movie screen and rows of seats. Any ornamentation is quite minimal and somewhat suggestive of the Art Deco style. The primary significance of the building, however, is in its original character as a theatre.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1936 **Builder/Architect** Benjamin Schlanger, New York

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Unique among small town movie theaters in Maine, the Waldo Theatre was designed specifically for motion picture showing and employing, for its time, all the latest techniques in construction. The typical movie house in small Maine communities then and now is an already existing hall or auditorium renovated for movie projection.

Built by the Cooney family of Waldoboro in the depths of the Great Depression, the building was designed by Benjamin Schlanger, a well-known New York architect, who specialized in theater design. Schlanger trained at Columbia University and the Ecole des Beaux Arts before establishing his own practice in 1931. At the time the movie craze was sweeping the country providing as it did an inexpensive escape from the rigors of hard times. The Waldo Theatre was highly successful during the thirties and forties and continued showing films through the mid-fifties when it closed for a time. It was then used briefly as a Masonic Hall and from time to time was the scene of various live theater activities. In 1980 it was bought by the present owner who turned the annex on the left-hand side of the building into medical offices and provided the theater rent free for various theatrical projects. Now unused, purchase of the building is being contemplated by a party interested in developing it as a center for a broad based arts program.

The construction of the theater is important in a number of respects. It is certainly one of the first envelope (building within a building) structures to be built and when warm air is circulated between the inner and outer partitions, human bodies can provide much of the necessary space heat on even the coldest winter day. Using steel, concrete, plaster, and metal laths, Schlanger built a space between the inner and outer walls wide enough for a person to walk through. A sophisticated ventilation system directs hot air down and cold air up and assures a complete change of air every few minutes.

Comprised largely of steel concrete and brick, the building is essentially fireproof. It can accommodate 400 patrons, nearly half of whom sit in an expansive balcony. Indirect lighting in a choice of three colors can be cast upon the walls changing the mood of the interior at the flip of a switch. Schlanger also reversed the traditional movie house plan by slanting the floor down from front to back and tilting the seats so patrons could watch the elevated screen without craning their necks. Also provided were seats of varying widths and also some with headphones for hard of hearing persons.

Shortly after it opened, the Waldo Theatre was described by the Association of Motion Picture Owners of America as one of the best designed small theaters in America.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lincoln County News, July 3, 1986.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1
Quadrangle name Waldoboro West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	9	4	6	9	9	8	0	4	8	8	2	3	7	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map U4, Lot 125

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian/Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1986

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

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 *Frank A. Beard* date 8/5/86

title S.H.P.O.

For NPS use only

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

for Allores Byer date 9-11-86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration