

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100003577

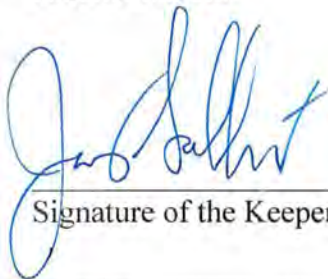
Date Listed: 3/25/2019

Property Name: Tibbits Opera House

County: Branch

State: MI

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

3-25-2019

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Resource Count

The Tibbits Opera house is previously listed as part of the Coldwater Downtown Historic District, therefore the resource count is 0 contributing resources.

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Tibbits Opera House

Other names/site number: Tibbits Theater

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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



2. Location

Street & number: 14 South Hanchett Street

City or town: Coldwater State: MI County: Branch

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B X C ___ D

	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Deputy SHP</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	

Signature of commenting official:	Date

Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

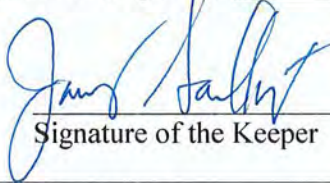
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) _____


Signature of the Keeper

3-25-2019
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE: music facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE: music facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete, Stone, Tile

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Tibbits Opera House is located in downtown Coldwater, Michigan, a community of approximately eleven thousand people. The building is situated one block from the main thoroughfare, Chicago Road. Originally nestled between other nineteenth century structures in the urban fabric, the building now stands a little more to itself, with open space surrounding it. Barton S. Tibbits financed the original building, designed by preeminent Detroit architect Mortimer L. Smith. Subsequent owners made moderate changes to the structure. However, during its iteration as a movie house from 1934-1954, most of the building's extravagant Second Empire façade and the dome were stripped away, and what remained was encased under an Art Deco façade. It was vacant until the Coldwater Players purchased the building in 1958. They had the Art Deco façade removed in 1965, and mothballed the exterior with a simple brick veneer, as they raised funds for its reconstruction. The execution of the reconstruction was completed in 2013, bringing back the Second Empire façade.

Narrative Description

Introductory Note

The Tibbits Opera House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource in the Coldwater Downtown Historic District that was entered in the National Register in July 1990. The 1990 nomination noted that:

the theater once had a highly florid façade of Romanesque inspiration beneath a mansard roof. Today the ornamental detailing is entirely gone, replaced by an utterly barren modern facade, but the theater retains its original Victorian auditorium intact... Few of the historic commercial buildings in the proposed downtown district have suffered as much as the Tibbits from facade renovations,

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Since the time of that nomination the façade of the Tibbits Opera House has been restored. The narrative description of this nomination provides extensive detail on the path from construction, to modification, and, ultimately to restoration.

Setting

The city of Coldwater has relatively flat topography, with the Sauk River running through the south side of it. The downtown area is densely settled with commercial buildings lining most of the city streets. The Tibbits Opera House is located at 14 South Hanchett Street in Coldwater, Michigan, just off Chicago Street, the main commercial street. The building sits on Lot 160, in the North East ¼ North East ¼ of Section 21 of Branch County. By serendipity, it was constructed by the son one of the city's cofounders, Barton S. Tibbits, and sits on land that was originally owned by the other cofounder, Joseph Hanchett. Through a long chain of ownership, a portion of Lot 160 was sold to Barton S. Tibbits for the sum of three thousand dollars on November 10, 1881. This lot was opposite a large cigar factory owned by Tibbits, which is now a parking lot.

The main facade of the theater faces east on Hanchett Street. There is a narrow parking lane on the north side of the building, which separates it from a twentieth-century structure. Originally, there were one-and two-story shed, warehouse, and commercial structures located here, which are now gone. The former alley on the south side of the Tibbits Opera House now contains a modern building addition from 2005 at the center of the side of the building, housing an accessible entrance, an elevator, concessions, and accessible restrooms. Nearby is a metal covered fire escape toward the front of the building, which extends from the upper floor to the sidewalk. This upper floor exit first appeared on the 1908 Sanborn map. Further south of this alley is a gravel courtyard, which features an electronic sign near the sidewalk to promote the theater's events, a one-story building, and a parking lot. At the rear of the building to the west is a municipal green space and parking lot, established in 2003.

Exterior

The rectangular Tibbits Opera House is 125 feet long and fifty-six feet wide. The front is fifty feet tall, and the dome extends an additional twenty feet. The height at the top of the mansard is maintained through the auditorium, stage, and back stage areas. At the rear, the height of the building drops to approximately twenty-six feet at the two-story dressing room area. There is a small one-story exposed concrete block addition on the rear of the building proper, where toilet facilities were historically located.

The secondary walls are constructed of red and orange common brick in a common and running bond. There are a few instances of infilled window openings on the upper level on the south and west walls. One can see the shadows of previous adjoining structures that had been attached sometime in the past on the north wall, which had and continues to have no openings. Some of the brick on the rear part of the south wall, and part of the two-story west wall has been parged and painted gray. It appears that a tall, double door was added to the south wall to access the backstage area, perhaps to accommodate tall sets.

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The reconstructed front façade is breathtaking in the restored opulence of its design and detailing. One is reminded of a Roman triumphal arch, with the bold use of three arches on the front, with the central arch taller than the other two. The rich red brick walls in a running bond and the gray roofs contrast with the white detailing that surrounds the major features. It is topped with a dome-like central feature.

Because of the meticulous reconstruction of the Tibbits Opera House's facade, it appears as it did when the building opened in 1882, and reflects its original Second Empire architecture. The brick and stone on the façade is mostly original, with the exception of approximately 750 bricks that required replacement in the reconstruction process. The current metal decoration is made of copper instead of galvanized metal to promote longevity, which is unnoticeable since it is painted in historic colors.

The building has a symmetrical façade, with the central entrance section protruding out approximately twelve inches, creating a central tower-like element, flanked by two side sections. This "tower" is topped with a Second Empire square-plan convex mansard roof, commonly referred to as the dome. The dome design, and that of the mansard roofs below and on each side of it, include a pattern of imbrications (overlapping tiles) consistent with the original dome. The letters "B", "S", "T" are spelled out in the tiles, the initials of Barton Smith Tibbits. A twelve-inch-tall gray cresting outlines the small deck area atop the mansard roof's lower slope, and features a twenty-foot-tall flagpole. The flat roof over the rest of the building is elastomeric and located behind parapet walls. It is unseen from the ground. All of the decorative metal work on the front façade is painted ochre cream, based on paint samples taken from original metal work and analyzed in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Standards for Reconstruction*.

Metal cornices and frieze with egg and dart patterns are located at the top of a mansard roof on either side of and also across the top of the tower protrusion. A heavier cornice lies below the bottom of the mansard roofs, which are interrupted by the central "tower." It is supported by a series of decorative corbels, which appear as modillions due to the pattern of light and shadow they form. The mansard roof spanning the front is terminated at each end with a decorative pilasters that extend from the top of the mansard roof to the bottom and even with the bottom of the metal cornice. At the bottom of each of the two copings at the corners of the building, two paired corbels support pedimented crests, each containing a circular flower blossom. A Griffin caps the front end of each roof pilaster, one facing north and the other south.

The central "tower" brickwork extends above the mansard to the bottom of the dome. Between the top of the brick and the dome is the same heavy cornice, frieze and decorative corbels seen at the bottom of the mansard roofs. A metal pediment interrupts this cornice and frieze at the center. Within it is a half-domed niche that holds a gold-painted bust of William Shakespeare (the original was bronze). Rounded arch moldings featuring a radial motif appear at the corners of the "tower" protrusion, both on the front and sides. Again, the cornice is supported by decorative corbels.

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The second floor of the façade contains symmetrical fenestration centered above the building's main entrance. In the center, under a wide decorative Roman arch, are three sets of narrow double-hung, one-over-one windows stacked two tall. Each set is flanked with a Composite column beside the top windows, and rests on a pilaster beside the lower windows. The top windows are arched. The Composite order columns are reconstructions of the original 1882 columns. A circular cartouche located directly above the center window displays the 1882 date. It is flanked with decorative scrolling replicated in the style and form of the late-Victorian era. The triple windows are surmounted by a full rounded arch window hood that bears the name "Tibbits' Opera House" in gold lettering. The large window hood is also dressed out with a classic egg and dart pattern. In the brickwork, the Roman arch is flanked on each side by tri-partite pilasters, which sit on monolith piers, and are topped with decorative cartouches which contain a three-leaved plant. Two courses of the brick are painted white at the top and bottom of the tri-partite pilaster, to simulate sandstone capitals and bases that create a stringcourse. All metal work on the front façade recreates the original, based on measurements made from salvaged original metal work, historic photographs, and physical evidence left on the brickwork.

On the second floor, flanking each side of the wide Roman arch, are paired narrow double-hung one-over-one windows, separated by a decorative Composite order column. These are centered over the flanking openings on the first floor. The outside edges of the windows are framed with Composite order pilasters. Directly above the paired windows are Roman arched transom windows, which spring from brick piers; taller brick piers, which extend above the top of the Roman arch, rise beside these piers. They, too, have two courses of painted bricks which simulates sandstone. Centered above the transom windows is a rondel window surrounded by decorative scrolling. A large full arched window hood finishes and tops the paired fenestration, and a bi-partite pier sitting on a monolithic one is located at each corner of the building next to the Roman arch.

The first-floor main entrance consists of two pairs of entrance doors at the center, separated by a classical metal column. They are protected by a precisely replicated decorative metal balcony above, supported by massive consoles on each side. The same style of console, though reduced in scale, visually supports the cornice above the central entrance doors. A pair of period brass lamps adorns the corners of the balcony; each features a female figure holding a light globe. They are of the same era and closely resemble the originals, and like the originals, they were converted from gas to electric power.

The third of the façade protruding from either side of the central protruding entrance, has two bays. Historically, a door was located at the right-hand bay of the north set. This provided access to the business located in the basement of the building. Sometimes the opening next to it was a door, and sometimes it was a window, as seen in historic photographs. On the south set of bays, one opening held a pair of doors, and the other was a window. Some historic photographs show the doors on the left, and at other times on the right. All the wood entry doors were recreated with substantially heavier material to better withstand the climate, to accommodate the customized panic hardware required for modern code compliance, and to meet the Secretary of Interior's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Standards for Reconstruction*. The doors on the front façade are painted "hunter green," which was discovered to be the

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historical color in a paint analysis; this was completed in 2002 with a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Both sets of flanking openings have complete, original rectangular transom windows, and scrolled wood framing fills in the decorative segmental arch of brick soldier coursing, capping each bay. All doors have large narrow panel glass insets with raised panel decoration below.

The first-floor entrance level of the Tibbits Opera House is located approximately two feet above street grade. The top landing is composed of modern brick pavers laid out in a diagonal grid pattern, and document donors who participated in the reconstruction of the structure. Two brick half-walls with decorative handrails flank the steps and landing, and feature brick in a running bond capped with sandstone, matching the exterior of the building proper. The stone foundation walls under the structure are original.

Radical changes to the Tibbits Opera House's façade were made in the 1930s. Under the ownership of the Schulte Amusement Company, the building was converted to a "modern" movie theater. The central dome and mansard roof were removed. A vertical brick parapet was constructed at the bottom edge of the roof where the mansard had been, squaring it off. The balcony and almost all of the protruding, exuberant metal decoration was removed, and the second-floor windows infilled with block.

In place of the Second Empire facade, an Art Deco movie house façade was constructed. It consisted of block-like white colored tiles in a running "bond," extending from the flat roof to a base expressed in black tile, approximately five feet tall. Four horizontal lines in black tile were delineated on the façade and at the top of the roof. A two-story vertical marquee sign was installed at the center of the building, with "TIBBITS" spelled out in vertical letters. Two protruding pilasters, also covered in white tile, were located on either side of the marquee, and broke the horizontal lines of the black tile. The black tile was also used to "window frame" the area of first floor fenestrations. A horizontal, lighted canopy, complete with marquee signage on three sides, was hung on the building, overhanging and protecting the doors. The two outer-most doors, not under the canopy, were surmounted by black tiles in a stepped-pyramid motif. It was an attractive Art Deco façade, but it was achieved at the great cost of destroying or covering most of the original façade. The building functioned as a movie theater until 1954, when it became vacant.

The Coldwater Players purchased the opera house in 1958. In 1963, the current owners, the Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, purchased the building and executed an interim remodeling to mothball the exterior of the building, until a true reconstruction could be completed. They removed the Art Deco façade, marquee, and lighted canopy. They also exposed, then re-sealed, the original large second floor windows, expressing the location of the openings, then refaced the façade in brick. A temporary, pseudo-mansard roof was added to the front façade, as well as a small projecting sign bearing the name "Tibbits Opera House" over the central entrance doors.

The Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council initiated a capital campaign in 1998 to reconstruct the building to the original period of significance (1882-1934). They based the work

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on historical documents and remaining building fabric and followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction. To qualify for grants, an addition to the theater was constructed in 2005. This houses an elevator, accessible entrance and accessible restroom. Additional work at this time included repointing the brick on the north, south and west exterior walls.

In 2009, the first major piece of the reconstruction completed was reproducing the tiled dome on top of the building. The townspeople reported that all activity in the town seemed to halt, as they watched the dome being lifted into place. The rebirth of this landmark feature provided joy and inspiration to the community to continue the work.

The 1960s brick facing was removed from the façade in 2011, revealing the remains of the Mortimer L. Smith –designed façade. Throughout most of 2012 and the early part of 2013, all of the elements of the original façade were reconstructed. The existing brick was cleaned, repaired, or replaced. The windows and doors were reconstructed, echoing the original craftsmanship. All of the ornamental architectural façade details were accurately recreated in metal and then painted, to fully reconstruct the Second Empire façade. This restoration was completed in 2013.

Interior

The original interior of the Tibbits Opera House was described in a newspaper article in the *Coldwater Republican* newspaper, published two days before the grand opening on September 21, 1882:

The Interior - Is approached through the grand entrance, about two feet above the street level, [the lobby is] 13 feet wide and 25 feet long. Out of this room open the box office, manager's private office, smoking-room, and the two broad, easy stairways leading to the

Dress Circle [the first balcony] - Where the utmost pains have been taken to render the arrangement of seats so fine that an unobstructed view of the stage can be obtained from any seat in it, so that no one need hesitate about taking a seat there [the seats were arranged in a horseshoe shape].

The upper balcony was accessed by the Promenade. This was a walkway that began at the top of each stair from the first floor and directed patrons toward the front of the building and in front of the windows on the facade. As they walked, patrons could see out the windows and be seen from the street below. Turning toward the stage, patrons took a small run of steps at the center of the building to a landing. From there, two sets of curved steps continued in opposite directions, at right angles to the center steps, accessing to the upper part of the balcony seats. Evidence of this arrangement exists in the interstitial space at the back of the existing balcony. The 1882 newspaper description continued:

The Auditorium [ground floor] - Was entered through spring doors covered with dark terra-cotta leather with gold trimmings and [was] 56 by 57 feet [in size], The

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parquet [a term for ground floor] and parquet circle were in the shape of an amphitheater [horseshoe shaped], and the elevation between tiers of seats is sufficient to give an excellent view of the stage from any part of the auditorium. The space on each side of the proscenium opening is occupied with private boxes. The orchestra pit is located in front of the stage, and lowered below the parquet, so that the musicians will not interfere with the view of the audience. The parquet and parquet circle, and the parquet and the orchestra are separated by an ornamental railing.

The Stage - is 34 feet wide and 53 feet long and is 36 feet from floor to rigging-loft. The scenery and set pieces are complete and beautiful... On the stage level and at the rear is a hall nine feet wide, out of which opens a greenroom, star and two other dressing rooms and a scene-room 21 feet high. On the second floor are four large dressing rooms. Below the stage is a room for the orchestra, a band-room, and a large room fitted up for the accommodations of minstrels. At the sides of the stage are fly galleries, and the rigging loft is supplied with complete and complicated machinery with which the scenery is shifted and handled. The stage is fully equipped with painted-bridge and movable frames, five sets of grooves, trap doors, and every other convenience for production of all kinds of scenic effects...

Seating

The parquet and parquet circle are seated with patent folding chairs, known as the grand opera chairs, and upholstered in dark cardinal plush. Each chair contains in the back the monogram, B.S.T. The dress circle is also provided with folding chairs of the latest patterns all being provided with foot-rests, hat and umbrella racks. The house contains 1,000 chairs.

The Decorations and Upholstering

Throughout the house are rich and harmonious in coloring and design. The walls are colored in cameo tints relieved with dashes of color in conventional figures and bordering of panels, which produces a warm sunny effect and gives the auditorium a bright and airy appearance, which is very pleasing. The aisles and boxes are covered with elegant body Brussels carpet, the stairs and lobby with heavy matting, while the green room star and other dressing rooms, are handsomely carpeted and furnished with two carpets, one green and one cardinal, and a handsome set of furniture in black walnut gilded, and black and gold upholstery. The boxes are draped with curtains of cardinal silk plush, with linings of old gold, and are trimmed with very broad antique lace of handsome pattern. The lambrequins are trimmed with gimps and rich silk fringe and looped with heavy cords and tassels. The railings of the parquet, dress circle and boxes, are upholstered in cardinal plush bordered with a pure gilt molding. The box fronts are in cameo tints finished in green and gold in the style of Renaissance and ornamented with large beveled plate glass mirrors. The sides of the auditorium are in solid color down to the brilliant dado just above the wainscoting. The facing of

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the dress circle is in cameo pink, with conventional figures in cardinal and gold, and green and gold.

In the center of the proscenium arch, is a portrait of Shakespeare and on either side are panels in lava shades, bordered with bands of cardinal red. Above the portrait and against a background of light summer sky, is a group of cherubs, gracefully posed, representing music and the drams. The large cove surrounding the auditorium is beautifully ornamented with vases of flowers, bouquets and conventional vines and figures. The most noticeable feature of the ceiling decorating is that of the dome, which is a model of beauty and artistic skill. Surrounding the sunlight chandelier suspended from the center are cunning little cherubs in a circle bearing trailing garlands of flowers. The delicate coloring of the background brings out the figures in strong relief so one may almost imagine them floating in a space and inhale the odor of their fragrant burden. It is impossible to give a description of the decorations, which will convey an adequate ideas of their beauty. They must be seen in order to be appreciated.

Just three years after the grand opening, Tibbets was financially forced to sell his opera house, and Joseph Henning purchased it. During the Henning era of ownership (1885 – 1904), few changes to the interior occurred. He had the front of the basement remodeled to house a restaurant and saloon. The saloon apparently was a losing proposition, and it was converted into a tearoom, run by his wife and two daughters. Henning also installed a ten-pin bowling alley, which existed for an unknown amount of time. Drop curtains advertising businesses were added to the stage in 1886 and 1893. Joseph Henning's daughter, Huldah, first helped her father manage the theater, then eventually took on the total responsibility herself.

The Henning-Jackson era (1904 - 1919) began when Joseph Henning sold the theater to his daughter Huldah Henning Jackson and her new husband, John T. Jackson. They incorporated several changes. In the lobby, the box office and ticket racks were enlarged and redesigned. For the stage area, the wing space was increased. Several systems updates were made, including the installation of electric fans, a redesign of the scenery mechanisms, the addition of drapes, and an upgrade to the electrical service.

The mayor of Coldwater suddenly closed the opera house in 1904 until Jackson received a Certificate of Safety from the Board of Building Inspectors, ensuring that all fire safety concerns were met. Jackson added a sprinkler system and a fireproof stage curtain; the exit doors were modified to swing outward for ease of exit. This may have been when the exterior stair was added to the south wall. The temporary closure and increase in safety measures were probably in response to the great Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago in 1903, in which more than six hundred people, mostly mothers with their children, died during a matinee performance, due to inadequate fire and safety protection in the theater.

Dennis Vanes' ownership of the building (1919 - c. 1934) included additional changes. He had a large Barton Theater Pipe Organ installed in the original box seats area onstage, with the keyboard located in the orchestra pit. On the ground floor, he provided space for wheelchairs in

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the auditorium, and rearranged the horseshoe-shaped seating pattern of the opera chairs to create three sections of seating that all faced the stage. This is the pattern that exists today.

The most radical interior remodeling occurred during the Schulte Amusement Company's ownership (c. 1934-1958), when the building was converted to a movie theater. In the lobby, the stairs to the balcony on the north side were removed to provide space for a popcorn machine and candy counter on the first floor, seen as a necessity for the movie theater.

In the auditorium, the grand opera chairs were replaced with new theater seats. The chandelier was taken down and placed in storage, and the pipe organ was removed and sold. To improve sight lines, the six columns in the auditorium that supported the balcony (assumed to be slender iron columns) were removed. The balcony was then supported from above by vertical steel rods, which support the balcony through the ceiling and attic. The rods connect to the roof beams, transferring the weight of the balcony to the outer walls. The historic locations of these columns are indicated by the residual inverted stepped pyramidal capital at the balcony ceiling, and the corresponding decorative consoles.

The upper balcony area was remodeled to accommodate the projector room. The promenade area was eliminated, and in its place, aisles and steps provided access to the upper balcony area. Other parts of the promenade have been enclosed and used for storage. A center set of steps was also placed in the middle of the upper balcony to provide additional access to the seats. In the center of the upper balcony near the ceiling, a rectangular projector room was constructed, with windows which look out over the auditorium. To protect the projector from vibrations created by the patrons, the projector room floor was covered with a thick layer of concrete. The weight of the concrete has caused surface cracking of the sloped underside of the balcony, which can be seen from the ground floor of the auditorium (the concrete has since been removed). The movie theater functioned in this layout until 1954. It was vacant from 1954 to 1958.

The Coldwater Players owned the building from 1958 to 1963, and refurbished the interior for community use. The building had been condemned by the city in 1960, so initial work included addressing the public safety issues. In 1961, a new boiler room was built, old partitions removed from the basement, and the seats were cleaned and painted. The downstairs dressing rooms, lobby and staircases also received a fresh coat of paint.

The Tibbits Theater Foundation acquired the building in 1963, and modifications ensued. In the lobby, a mural was painted on two walls in 1964 by Alfred Parke. The box office remained in its original location, but it had been updated to meet current technological needs and code requirements. Next, repairs included forty thousand dollars' worth of plumbing and electrical work, installing a sprinkler system, and installing a heating and air-conditioning system. In addition, the stage was repaired and reinforced, and the dressing rooms updated. Plastering and painting initiated the long and continuing process of restoring the original appearance of the theater auditorium.

The final phase of this eight-year process included installing new carpeting, chandeliers in the balcony, and a new orchestra pit railing. The auditorium walls were covered with red flocked

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wallpaper; an area of the original wall paper is exposed and framed for historical purposes. Red metal-framed theater seats, upholstered with a red fabric, were installed and the fixed seating in the opera house was reduced to 526. This occurred primarily in the balcony, where fixed seats were removed to improve sight lines and assure patron safety, due to the steep pitch of the floor. The projection room was converted to a spotlight booth, and the vertical steel balcony support rods are used as light trees for theatrical lighting. This brought the total expenditures to 250,000 dollars.

The proscenium arch is original, and features the original configuration of the boxed seats. The stage is the same size, but the electrical and lighting systems have been updated. Portions of the original hemp line fly system still exist on stage right. The orchestra pit is original in size and shape, and is used by musicians for live performances. Along the ceiling and across the proscenium, a strip of paint documents the original colors used in the Tibbits Opera House when it opened in 1882. The colors are based on a paint analysis performed in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's *Guidelines and Standards*. The Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council plans to restore the opera house's original interior color scheme in future endeavors.

Today, the basement houses the mechanical and electrical equipment, as well as the patron restrooms, an art gallery, a gift shop, concession space, a small kitchen, storage rooms, and the theater's "green room." The original room configuration of the basement is unknown.

Integrity

The facade of the building, through a careful, documented reconstruction using qualified professionals, has reestablished its integrity from the 1880s. The remaining original fabric of the building was retained, and replacement of missing elements was done using the same or similar materials, which were painted historic colors. The other outer walls, of common brick, have remained intact and are in good condition. Along with the new roof, they maintain the architectural envelope of the building. The interior is in good working condition. It is currently a synthesis of several different periods, from the original stage, to the changes which occurred when it was a movie theater, and modifications for its modern use as a safe, appropriate stage theater. The organization will next turn its focus to the restoration of the interior, in its future planning.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Entertainment and Recreation

Period of Significance

1882-1934

Significant Dates

1882

1934

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Tibbits, Barton S.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Mortimer L. of Detroit, architect

Saxton, E. B., architect/construction superintendent

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Tibbits Opera House is significant under National Register Criterion A at the local level as the leading local gathering place for events of all kinds from the time of the building's completion in 1882 through the end of the period of significance in 1934. Constructed at a time when live performances were a primary form of entertainment across the United States, the Tibbits Opera House provided a wide variety of entertainment to the city of Coldwater and the surrounding community in the form of plays, concerts, speeches, and even wrestling matches.

Tibbits Opera House is also significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Barton S. Tibbits. Tibbits was one of Coldwater's leading businessmen in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Engaged in a number of ventures, including the manufacture of cigars, road carts, and oil stoves. In addition to his business enterprises and funding the construction of the opera house, Tibbits also served as mayor of the city for a short time. Tibbits obituary stated that "no one in the history of Coldwater engineered such large business establishments and employed such large numbers of workmen." The Tibbits Opera House is the last remaining building related to Tibbits, and therefore uniquely able to demonstrate his impact on the city of Coldwater.

The building is also significant under Criterion C at the state level for its association with Mortimer L. Smith, a member of the Smith family architectural dynasty, which founded the firm in 1855 in Detroit. The firm later became SmithGroup JJR, a nationally renowned architectural firm, which is the second oldest in the country, and at the local level, as the last extant opera house of the three smaller opera houses designed by Mortimer L. Smith in the Late Victorian Second Empire style, which were influenced by his design of the Detroit Opera House. Financed by its namesake, Barton Smith Tibbits, the building was sold just three years after its completion. It subsequently had a series of owners, as the entertainment arts changed from stage performances, to silent films, to "talkies." The Period of Significance is its construction date, 1882 to 1934, when it was converted to a movie theater. The transition from the Tibbits Opera House to The Tibbits movie theater involved a radical façade demolition and rebuilding, while the interior evolved more slowly, with periodic upgrades. The Tibbits Opera House was listed as a contributing structure in the National Register Coldwater Downtown Historic District in 1990. Today, the façade appears in its original Second Empire style, after a painstakingly meticulous reconstruction of the original façade.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Introductory Note

The Tibbits Opera House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource in the Coldwater Downtown Historic District that was entered in the National Register in July 1990. The 1990 nomination recognized the architectural significance of the interior of the opera house, stating that “despite its [then] bland modern exterior... its sloping floor, horseshoe balcony, and arched proscenium, is one of the best preserved of its period in Michigan.” The 1990 nomination did not, however, address the entertainment and recreation significance of the opera house, nor the significance of Barton S. Tibbits. This nomination adds additional information about the architectural significance of the property as well as documents its significance in the entertainment history of Coldwater, Michigan, and documents the significance of Barton Tibbits, from who the theater derives its name. It should also be noted that the 1990 nomination did not include photo-documentation of the opera house, likely due to its “bland” exterior.

The Early Days

In the early 1800s, the southwest Michigan wilderness was inhabited exclusively by the Potawatomie tribe. Potawatomie Chief Topinabee, one of the chief signers of treaties in the Midwest, sold the land, including Branch County, to the United States federal government in 1821. For several years afterward, the Potawatomie lived among the Caucasian settlers. However, by 1829, the original plat map of Branch County shows the establishment of an Indian Reservation in Section 20, about two miles west of the present-day city.

The village’s first Caucasian settlement, a trading post established by Joseph Godfrey, dates from 1822. Caucasian settlement of the area progressed rapidly after the construction of the Chicago Military Road by the federal government. The road, laid out more or less along the course of the old Sauk Indian Trail which connected the present sites of Detroit and Chicago, was constructed through the village in the late 1820s. Later referred to simply as the Chicago Road, it became the town’s main street. In its early years, it carried a great volume of immigrant traffic, and served as the primary gateway for white settlement across southern Michigan in the 1830s and 1840s. Today, it is part of US Highway 12, which runs from Detroit, Michigan, to Aberdeen, Washington.

The Reverend Allen Tibbits and Joseph Hanchett platted the village in 1831, originally calling it Lyons, to commemorate the Reverend Tibbits’ birthplace of Lyons, New York. The first improvements took place the following year. The town was renamed Coldwater in 1833, in reference to the refreshingly cool waters of the Sauk River, which runs through the city on the southern and western sides of the town, and connects to a chain of lakes. In 1837, the growing

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settlement was incorporated as a village, and became the seat of Branch County in 1842. In 1861, Coldwater became a city.

Coldwater's early citizens had a strong interest in the arts and literature. The city was the home of a Shakespeare Club and the Lewis Art Gallery in the 1870s. The art gallery was privately owned, and boasted that it had the largest collection of paintings and statuary in continental North America, a specious claim to be sure. In any case, the gallery was free and open to the public every Saturday beginning in the 1870s. The Coldwater Free Public Library was founded in 1880, and by 1890 the library was home to over 8,072 volumes, all contained within a new library building. The influx of people who traveled to and from Coldwater in the late nineteenth century afforded its citizens the opportunity to stay informed on the latest artistic trends in fine art as well as cultural entertainments

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The Railroad's Impact

In 1851 the Michigan Southern Railroad completed its important east-west line from Detroit as far west as Coldwater, and two years after that the line was extended to Chicago. The railroad's direct connection between Chicago and the East Coast was probably the single most important factor in Coldwater's growth in the nineteenth century.

Railroads were imperative to the expansion and migration of the American people across the continental United States. New towns sprung up along the railway lines, each giving opportunity for people to find their "American Dream." One visible sign of a town's prosperity was its ability to produce and or to host live entertainment and cultural events. A stage theater therefore became a necessity for any progressive town.

Because railroads provided opportunities for performance companies and theaters to schedule performances in advance, smaller towns along the railroad, such as Coldwater, were opened to far greater entertainment options than those towns not along rail lines. Theaters and opera houses were remodeled to accommodate the demands of the performers. Consistent stage design, as well as scenery backdrops painted on canvases instead of rigid boards, enable performers and the sets to travel between local theaters easily. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries defined the golden era for American opera houses and stage theaters. Coldwater became a natural stopping point for companies to present a performance, as they traveled between Chicago and Detroit.

Barton S. Tibbits' Vision

The founder of the Tibbits Opera House, Barton Smith Tibbits (1841-1899), was the first of several owners of the theater. Mr. Tibbits was born on March 1, 1841. He was the youngest son of the Reverend Allen and Caroline M. Tibbits, who were among the founders of the city of Coldwater, Michigan. During the Civil War, Barton Tibbits (age twenty-one) served four years and eight months in Company G, First Michigan Calvary of the Union Army, until the close of the war. Tibbits participated in many battles, including Gettysburg.

After returning to Coldwater in 1865, Tibbits became a prominent businessman in the city. He married Eunice W. Newcomb (1843-1901) in 1867, and a son, Charles Ralph, sometimes called Ralph C., was born in 1869.

Tibbits was first employed as the secretary of the American Cigar Company, then established a cigar manufactory, Tibbits & Co. circa 1868, and then the B. S. Tibbits company circa 1870. The Tibbits company was reportedly the largest in the state outside of Detroit. In 1868 Tibbits filed for copyright for a label for the "Crown Jewel" cigar, which was claimed to be "manufactured from the Best Havana Tobacco." In 1870, Tibbits again filed for copyright for a label for the "Big Bug" cigar, made with the same tobacco. Tibbits' company was one of several operating in Coldwater in the 1870s through the 1890s, including: the Coldwater Cigar Company, the American Cigar Company, the A. A. Wood company, the George W. Bowker company, the F. A. Fairbanks company, Goodrich Brothers, the A. J. Pierce company, and O'Shaughnessy & Co.

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Tibbits' cigar operation was the largest of these as measured by employment and production. According the 1882 Coldwater city directory, B. S. Tibbits cigar factory employed sixty-six people. The second, American Cigar Company, employed forty-four. The rest appeared to be smaller operations, by employee count. The 1879 *History of Branch County, Michigan*, states that the Tibbits company produced 1,900,000 cigars to American's 1,600,000. The O'Shaughnessy and Fairbanks companies produced 425,000 and 300,000 cigars, respectively.

In 1880 he built the three-story B.S. Tibbits factory on Hanchett Street (across the street from the site of the future opera house, now a parking lot). From that time on, he was closely associated with every large industry and building in Coldwater, including a skating rink, a cart factory, and a oil stove foundry. He was elected mayor of Coldwater in 1881, serving a single, one-year term.

In early 1881 the Michigan Armory Hall burned to the ground. Prior to the fire it had been used for the community's leading meeting and performance space. In June 1881 the local newspaper put forth a challenge to build an opera house in Coldwater to replace it. H.C. Lewis, a local art dealer, former mayor, and businessman, claimed he was ready to build the structure on the corner of Hudson Street and Chicago Road (US Highway 12). Yet, Tibbits, known as an astute businessman, proceeded to outmaneuvered Lewis by securing land on Hanchett Street (across the street from his cigar factory) for the construction of the opera house.

Buildings which housed the performance arts were often called "opera houses" during this era, though operas were rarely performed. Theaters, and the actors and actresses who performed in them, were thought of by some people, and by church people in particular, as being of low moral character. This may have been because the church was not the exclusive social gathering place in a community with a theater, and the church could not exclusively control the social message. Instead, the opera house was a secular space. It provided the crossroads of the community, with a diverse group of people attending a variety of performances: theatrical, musical and oratorical. In addition, the term "opera house" was used to lend the building a degree of sophistication, a step up from being called a "hall". A community knew it was progressive when it had an opera house.

Tibbits hired Mortimer L. Smith, the architect from Detroit who had designed the Detroit Opera House (c. 1869) and the Ypsilanti Opera House (c. 1880), to design the new Coldwater Opera House. Tibbits was commended for his selection of the architect. In November 1881 the newspaper stated that the architect was to arrive in a few days, the plans would be made, and the work would begin. Later in the month, the land was purchased and the brick was under contract. Mortimer L. Smith arrived in the city and was instructed by Tibbits to proceed with the drawings. Excavation of the site began shortly thereafter. Work on the foundation began in March 1882. With the exception of several weeks lost on account of winter weather, the construction of the opera house progressed rapidly.

Though he was touted as an astute businessman, the construction and management of the opera house proved to be financially taxing for Tibbits. The building was projected to cost eighteen

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thousand dollars, of which Tibbits paid fifteen thousand dollars. Many of the bondholders in Coldwater considered it to be a financially risky investment and would not contribute extensive funds toward the building project. The final cost of constructing the opera house, as reported in many statewide papers, was twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand dollars.

The dedication of the Tibbits Opera House was on September 21, 1882, and occurred with much fanfare. There was a parade and fireworks in celebration of the premier performance at the Tibbits Opera Theater, which featured *The Maid of Arran* (based on a book of the same title) on September 21 and 22, 1882. The play was written by L. Frank Baum, before he wrote the more famous *Wizard of Oz*. The author/playwright himself, performing under the name Louis F. Baum, played the lead role of Hugh Holcomb in the opening performance.

According to the theater dedication article printed on September 22, 1882, in the *Coldwater Republican*, a crowd assembled near the opera house to see the gentlemen and ladies in full dress arriving for the opening night. Honored guests outfitted in their finest garb, the architect, and a citizens' committee were in attendance. They proclaimed resolutions of the generosity and courage that was shown by Tibbits in taking on what some of them have perceived as a financially risky endeavor. The resolutions and introductory remarks were read before the performance, including compliments and thanks to Tibbits. He was called on stage for remarks, in which he extended thanks to Mortimer L. Smith, among others, in the construction of the building.

During the first three years of the Tibbits Opera House's existence and under the management of Barton Tibbits, one hundred eleven plays were performed. In general, three types of companies appeared on the opera house stage: combination companies, repertoires, and miscellaneous. Combination companies generally gave only one-night performances. Most of these one-night performances were considered theatrical dramas or comedies.

The second type of company to appear was repertoires, which often gave multiple performances and stayed for a week at a time. One of the repertory performances that attracted good audiences was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Well-known performers appearing in Detroit were often persuaded to come to Tibbits Opera House to perform. Among them were Roland Reed, Maggie Mitchell, Thomas Keene, and Viola Allen, all of whom were considered big name actors and actresses of the day.

Lastly, miscellaneous performances included concerts, vocal entertainments, lectures, and elocutionists. In addition, vaudeville acts, wrestling matches, commencement exercises, and political orations also graced the stage. For example, General William H. Gibson once rented the building to address citizens on the political issues of the day.

Amateur productions were also performed on the opera house stage. In 1883, Professor George W. Klock directed a group of local residents in a production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Barton Tibbits understood the need to have multiple types of paying performances at the building, in order to generate income to pay the costs incurred in building and running the building. Although

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privately owned, the venue functioned more like a public institution for the city under the tenure of Barton S. Tibbits.

Despite its regular use, the opera house was not able to sustain itself economically. After it opened, the construction cost overruns and low attendance forced Tibbits to sell his beloved building in 1885, and at half the cost of its construction. Tibbits later said that his selfishness in being the first person to build an opera house in Coldwater and the sacrifices he made to his other businesses to do so had perhaps cost him the opportunity to become a millionaire. Another tragedy occurred in 1897, when his only child Charles Ralph died.

Barton S. Tibbits himself died on August 24, 1899. His obituary portrayed him as a genial, soulful man, generous to the poor and to his loyal friends, family, and comrades. The funeral was held at the opera house, and it was attended by the Bon Ami Social Club, the Grand Army of the Republic men, and the city council. Tibbits' coffin was laid out on the stage and was nearly completely covered with roses from the mourners. His wife Eunice died of influenza (according to her death certificate), in 1901.

Subsequent Owners

Joseph Henning, a saloon owner in Coldwater, purchased the financially strapped building from Barton S. Tibbits on June 24, 1885. Initially, Tibbits was going to stay on to manage the house, but over time several managers worked at the opera house. Henning's daughter, Huldah Henning, then helped her father manage the business at the tender age of thirteen. Under her management, the Tibbits Opera House joined the Michigan Theatrical Circuit in 1886. Joseph Henning then made nineteen-year-old Huldah Henning the full manager of the Tibbits Opera House in 1891. At that time, a female opera house manager would have been rare, but by all accounts her management style worked well with the local patrons. Under Huldah Henning management, 244 professional plays appeared on stage.

During the Henning era, visiting stars included the Czech actress Francesca Janaushek, Sol Smith Russell, Roland Reed, and Maggie Mitchell. Rhea, the French actress Hortense-Berbe Loret (1843-1899), also graced the Tibbits Opera House stage. Henning offered musical and vocal entertainment between 1888 and 1894, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra and famed singer Mademoiselle Augusta Ohestrom. The University of Michigan Glee and Banjo Clubs appeared on stage in 1893 and 1894. Many lecture series and minstrels also performed at the building during the Henning years. Governor Russell A. Alger and Robert Frazer discussed political questions of the day. Wrestling matches, a popular event in Coldwater, were also held during this time.

Combination companies, at least fifteen repertory companies, and various other types of performances graced the opera house stage during Henning's ownership, but still the opera house operated at a loss. The relocation of Henning's saloon and bowling alley to the front basement of the building also proved to be a financial disaster. He held it for nine years until July 14, 1904, when he sold it over to his daughter Huldah Henning Jackson and her husband John T. Jackson, whom she had married in 1893.

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Together, Huldah Henning Jackson and John T. Jackson managed the Tibbits Opera House, and it prospered. John Jackson was the first actual theatrical person to manage the enterprise, and the Jacksons made it their full-time occupation. They streamlined management by inventing a rack showing the seating in the facility, which made distribution of bundles of tickets easy. They also upgraded the electrical systems, installed fans for comfort of the audience, and installed a steel fire curtain on stage, all to update the opera house to current building standards and to make it more attractive and safe for its patrons.

Under the Jackson management, the Tibbits Opera House continued to host many of the same types of programming as under previous eras of management, while also bringing new variety to the stage as well. Theater genres included melodramas, pastoral plays, Irish dramas, and combination plays. American dramatist Charles Hoyt and American playwright Clyde Fitch were popular playwrights. Prominent actors and actresses who appeared on the opera house stage during the Jackson era included Thomas Keene, Otto Kruger, and Otis Skinner. Over 375 professional companies and plays graced the stage during this period. Amateur productions were staged there as well.

Musical performances included the Chicago Marine Band, the Mexican Troubadours, and the Boston Ladies Symphony Orchestra. John Philip Sousa and his band performed five times between 1897 and 1914. The more unusual activities scheduled at the opera house included wrestling matches and commencement exercises.

Speeches and lectures were given at the Tibbits Opera House during the Jackson period. Governor L. M. Shaw of Iowa, and Governor John T. Rich and Senator J. C. Burrows of Michigan delivered speeches in the fall of 1894. Vice Presidential Candidate Adlai Stevenson delivered a political speech at the facility in October 1900. By the turn of the twentieth century, the opera house had not only hosted its namesake's funeral in 1899, but also hosted a memorial service for President McKinley in 1901.

The Jacksons owned and managed the theater until 1919, when they sold it to Dennis Vanes, the manager of the Venetian Theater in Coldwater. On October 6, 1925, Vanes sold the building for forty-seven thousand dollars to Nick Pappas. After making only one payment in a year, Pappas, the former proprietor of the Dawn Theater in Hillsdale, Michigan, sold the building back to Vanes on July 24, 1926, at the close of a show.

As the twentieth century progressed, performance arts evolved. Live theatrical performances declined in popularity, as the silent movie industry, followed by the talking movie industry, blossomed. They both captivated American audiences, to the detriment of opera theaters. By 1914 and the approach of World War I, opera theater owners found it hard to keep their doors open. Many had closed due to lack of patronage and the difficulty in obtaining performance companies. As a result, many of the buildings had fallen into disrepair, had burned, or had been demolished. Except for an occasional vaudeville act, live performances at the Tibbits Opera House ended with the advent of moving pictures. Remodeling of opera houses, such as the

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Tibbits Opera House, occurred in an attempt to keep them financially viable. This is what spared the building for the future, as one of the few surviving opera houses to still operate in Michigan.

Radical Revision: Movie Theater

In 1934, Vanes sold the Tibbits Opera House to Schulte Amusement Company of Detroit, Michigan. This is when the extreme changes to the building's façade occurred. The facade was stripped of most ornament and fenestrations were infilled. It was refaced with tile in Art Deco mode to convert it into the Tibbits Theater, a movie theater. The Coldwater city directories in the early 1930s indicate that Vanes was still the proprietor of the building, but in the 1937 directory, it was noted that the Schulte Amusement Company both owned and managed it. A warranty deed in the amount of one dollar was not signed until May 10, 1944, suggesting that a private land contract effected the transfer of the building from Vanes to Schulte Amusement Company. This company owned and operated the Tibbits Theater as a movie theater for fourteen years. Then from 1954 to 1958, the building was vacant.

Community Theater

On December 5, 1958, the Coldwater Players contracted to purchase the movie theater from the Schulte Amusement Company. The city fire inspection and building inspector condemned the building in 1960, threatening its demolition, so money was the first priority to correct these public safety deficiencies. Next, funds were targeted to renovate and update the interior to make it usable as a community theater.

Later that year, an anonymous donor gave a fourteen-thousand-dollar gift that sparked the "Save the Tibbits" campaign. This resulted in the formation of the Tibbits Theater Foundation Inc. in 1962. Mr. V. M. Stilson was elected the new president of the foundation. The Foundation purchased the structure on September 12, 1963 from the Coldwater Players and the Schulte Amusement Company (at the time of the 1963 purchase, the two companies apparently had joint financial and legal interests in the Tibbits Theater). The Tibbits Theater Foundation has since changed its name to the Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc., and is the present owner. In 1964 a mural was painted on two walls of the lobby by Alfred Parke. It depicts the prominent performers who had appeared at the opera house over its 136-year history.

Repairs in 1973 involved the mechanical and electrical systems, as well as the stage. They created a reasonable space for the initial performance: the Grand Old Opry of Nashville, Tennessee, a country music performance; the Sweet Adelines International presented their fall show; and the Coldwater Civic Players performance of *Pure as the Driven Snow*. One hundred twenty-five thousand dollars had been spent in this work. For his efforts, Mr. Stilson was honored for his leadership in storing the Tibbits.

The final step in this initial eight-year process included installing new carpeting and new seats, a new floor and chandeliers in the balcony, a new orchestra pit railing, and completion of the rewiring. The basement lounge was then available for community meetings and catered dinners, as well as for art programs and exhibitions. This brought the total expenditures to

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250,000 dollars. The plan in general was to have plays in the summer and concerts in the winter. In addition to donations, the remodeling costs were funded by the refinancing of the theater's mortgage, with all local banks sharing equally in carrying the added loan. It was truly a community effort to restore The Tibbits Opera House to operational condition.

Historic Reconstruction

The Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council initiated a comprehensive reconstruction campaign. Developed by Kessler Associates, Inc., Architects, of Detroit. The goal of the master plan is to reconstruct and restore the Tibbits Opera House to its original form. The process included assessing the current condition of the structure, researching the historic documents that existed, and analyzing the existing material for anachronisms of that period. Kessler Associates determined that the original drawings of the Tibbits Opera House no longer existed. Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls, the name of the founding architect's firm at this time, did not have any drawings or documents in their archives. In spite of that, a multi-phase plan was developed for the reconstruction, which took place from 2009 to 2013. A total of 3.3 million dollars was raised and invested into the theater, including plans for complete reconstruction.

Phase One consisted of numerous studies, gathering of documentation, and design development drawings for the work. The Kessler report noted that it was imperative to respect the original design by undertaking all reconstruction work guided by the Secretary of Interior's *Standard for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. A site plan and floor plans were developed from measurements taken from the existing building and the site.

In Phase Two, an addition was constructed to the south of the theater, which included an elevator and barrier-free toilet facilities, as well as a snack bar. It was constructed in 2005. In November 2008, the Foundation was awarded a 500,000-dollar grant from the Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byway Program to help fund the façade work. The group continued fundraising for an additional 450,000 dollars to complete the project. The historic cupola or dome was reconstructed in February 2009, which was a symbolic milestone in the reconstruction process. Residents report that all activity in the city seemed to stop, as everyone watched as the dome was lifted into place.

Phase Three included the reconstruction of the façade, which occurred from 2009 to 2013. The 1960s brick façade that replaced the Art Deco one was removed in 2011, revealing what remained of the original 1880s front. In addition to the old brickwork, the design team found that more original materials remained they had expected: window transoms, iron columns, metal work, scroll work, and stone details. This helped to reduce the estimated cost of the project. The original openings which had been revealed were then boarded up, to protect the historic fabric until the work started later that year.

Over two thousand anchor holes were repaired in the original brick and stone façade, and over 750 bricks were replaced. The mortar used a lime mixture that was consistent with the mortar used on the original brickwork, as was noted in the historic newspaper of the time.

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Measurements were taken directly from the original old metal cornice that remained, and photographs of the original façade were used to develop drawings for recreating the lost portions of the metal cornice. The original metal cornice on the Tibbits Opera House was steel, as noted in the 1884 *Sanborn Insurance Maps*, and confirmed by the existing original fragments. The reconstructed metal cornice, fabricated by Grand River Builders of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is made of copper. This choice was made because copper better tolerates the harsh outdoor environment. The reconstructed cornice was painted with the same color and texture of paint found on the original façade, which was documented by paint analysis.

The exterior doors were reconstructed out of mahogany based on the existing original doors, and then painted with the same color as the original doors, according to Brian Black of Grand Rivers Builders. The window reconstruction was based on existing original window parts and original photographs. The reconstruction of the front entrance is consistent in size to the original entrance but utilizes modern materials and adheres to current building standards regarding the rise and run of the steps into the building.

In 2013 the Tibbits Opera House received one of that year's Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation. Today, it continues the tradition of live stage performances by professional stock companies, as it has done since it re-opened in 1966. It operates as a multi-functional facility, hosting live vocal and instrumental concerts, community organized plays, dance programs, travelogues, pageants, and other community events. Contemporary artists such as Michigan actor Jeff Daniels and Melissa Manchester have performed on its historic stage. Future restoration work will now focus on the interior of the theater.

Mortimer L. Smith, Architect

Mortimer L. Smith (1840-1896), the architect of the Tibbits Opera Theater, was part of the Smith family architectural dynasty of Detroit. It consisted of three generations: Sheldon, Mortimer L., and Fredrick L. Smith. Mortimer was a teenager when he came to Detroit with his family, headed by his father, Sheldon.

Originally from New Hampshire and New York, Sheldon Smith (1818-1868) was a self-taught architect who began practicing with his brother Oliver Smith in 1847 in Jamestown, New York. Sheldon moved his family to Sandusky, Ohio around 1850. He practiced architecture and taught design, art, and architecture at the Academy of Design, which he established. His son Mortimer was exposed to these topics through his father.

Sheldon Smith moved his family and architectural practice to Detroit in 1855, as opportunities arose in this rapidly-growing city. Smith is considered a pioneer architect in Detroit and the founder of the current firm, SmithGroup JJR, of Detroit. The firm is the second oldest architectural firm in the country, and had been in continuous ownership by subsequent generations of the Smith family architects, until the turn of the twenty-first century.

Mortimer, Sheldon Smith's son, was born in 1840 in Jamestown, NY, one of two children born to the family. Neither Sheldon nor Mortimer Smith, although accomplished architects of their

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day, had a formal education architecture. Mortimer followed his father into the architectural field and trained under him. At age twenty-one, he joined his father's architectural firm in 1861 as a partner. At the time, the firm was called Sheldon Smith & Son.

It was at this firm that Mortimer (perhaps with Sheldon's participation) designed a watershed structure for Mortimer's career, the Detroit Opera House, which opened in 1869. Designed in the French Renaissance style, it was five stories tall and twelve bays wide. The mammoth structure featured elements that Mortimer would use in the design of his subsequent smaller opera theaters: a mansard roof with a central tower-like dome, a decorative element at the base of the center of the dome, bold cornices to define the floors, and Roman-arched windows. Interestingly, the J.L Hudson Company, the legendary department store in Detroit, located its first store on the first floor of the Detroit Opera House from 1881 to 1891. The building burned to the ground in 1898, and was later rebuilt, designed by Mason and Rice of Detroit.



Detroit Opera House c. 1885. Photo courtesy of Burton Historical Collection Detroit Public Library.

Sheldon Smith did not live to see the opening of the Detroit Opera House, as he died in 1868. Mortimer L. Smith took over the firm and operated it under his name. It was during this period of his sole proprietorship that Mortimer designed the Tibbits Opera House, among others.

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All three of the subsequent opera houses designed by Mortimer L. Smith were based on the Detroit Opera House. The first of the smaller opera houses to be constructed was the Ypsilanti Opera House, completed in 1880, just before the Tibbits Opera House. It featured the characteristic mansard roof with a dome, cornices, and Roman-arched windows, though at a smaller scale than the Detroit Opera House; it was two stories tall and five bays wide. The building was demolished after it took a direct hit from a tornado in 1893.



Ypsilanti Opera House c. 1885. Photo courtesy of Ypsilanti Historical Library



Tibbits Opera House c. 1885. Photo courtesy of Branch County Library Archives



Stone's Opera House, Flint, c. 1915. Photo courtesy of Tibbits Opera House Archives

The Stone Opera House in Flint was completed shortly after the Tibbits Opera House, in 1883. It, too, had the mansard roof, a dome, cornices, and Roman-arched windows. It was demolished around 1922 for construction of The Flint Journal Building by Albert Kahn, leaving the Tibbits Opera House as the sole survivor of Mortimer Smith's opera house designs. Historical photographs of the three opera houses reveal their many similarities.

In addition to opera houses, Mortimer L. Smith designed several landmark buildings in Detroit. The Woodward Avenue First Baptist Church was opened in 1887. It was in the Victorian Gothic style of architecture. Though its façade had been impacted with the widening of Woodward Avenue in 1936, it remained until a fire in 1986 destroyed the building.

The James Scott Residence at Peterboro Street and Park Avenue, also called "The Peterboro Castle" and the "Spite House," was constructed in 1887. It was designed by Mortimer L. Smith in the Richardson Romanesque style for James Scott, whose estate funded the Scott Fountain on Belle Isle. As of 2018, the house is undergoing rehabilitation.

Tibbits Opera House

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After the J.L. Hudson Company business outgrew its rented space in the Detroit Opera House, the company commissioned Mortimer L. Smith to design their first building in 1891. It was an eight-story structure located at Farmer and Gratiot. Fortunately for the Hudson Company, the relocation occurred prior to the Detroit Opera House burning in 1898. This first building acquired many additions, which eventually gave it a main façade on Woodward Avenue, where it existed until the vacant Hudson's Department Store complex was imploded in 1998.

Mortimer's son, Fredrick L. Smith (1862-1941), also became an architect, joining the firm in 1888 for a period of training, just as his father had joined his grandfather's firm. The practice was then known as M. L. Smith & Son. The pair would go on to design many prominent buildings in Detroit and beyond.

The eight story Home Savings Bank, on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Griswold Street in Detroit, was an M. L. Smith & Son design. It opened in 1894 to house the bank and other offices in the building, included the architect's firm. The building was demolished around 1913 for construction of a larger building, with the merger of the Home Savings Bank and the Wayne County Savings Bank.

Mortimer L. Smith and his son Fred were the architects of the Michigan Building for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, held in Chicago, Illinois. The building was designed in the Queen Anne style of architecture. As with all the buildings at the exposition, it was meant to be a temporary structure, and was demolished after the exposition.

In addition to architecture, Mortimer was an accomplished fine arts painter. He was famous for his landscapes, especially winter scenes. He taught painting and drawing, as well as drafting. He was a vital force in Detroit's arts community, exhibiting works in venues including the Detroit Art Loan Exhibition (for which he also designed the exhibition space), Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Detroit Art Association. His works were also shown at the Cincinnati Industrial Exposition, National Academy of Design, and Michigan State Fair. Today, the artist's works may be seen at the Detroit Institute of Arts and University of Rochester's, Memorial Art Gallery.

After eight years in partnership with him, Fred Smith continued the firm after his father's death in 1896, becoming its president upon incorporation. He acquired two engineers as partners, Henry Field and Theodore Hinchman; the firm name was changed to Field, Hinchman & Smith in 1903. Henry Field left the firm for other opportunities, and Maxwell Grylls became the new partner. With this personnel change, the firm was renamed Smith, Hinchman & Grylls in 1907. This firm was responsible for design of many of Detroit's landmark buildings, and changed its skyline. Later, it became known as SmithGroup in 2000, then for a time SmithGroup JJR, and SmithGroup again in 2018.

Finale

The Tibbits Opera House is significant as a surviving example of the nineteenth century American opera houses and similar auditorium buildings designed for theater and other public

Tibbits Opera House

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meeting and performance spaces that were once found in a great many cities across the country. In the years after the Civil War, communities in Michigan, and across the country, sought to project an image of a forward-looking, prosperous community. Second, to a church or town hall, theaters and opera houses provided a community with “a permanent nondenominational structure dedicated to the town’s betterment.” According to state gazetteers, the number of opera houses, theaters, and public halls increased from twenty-one in 1875, located mainly in principal cities, to some 275 by 1897.

The Tibbits Opera House is one of several such buildings that survive throughout Michigan, some of which have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including: the 1866 Croswell Opera House in Adrian, 1903 Ramsdell Theatre in Manistee, the 1900 Calumet Theatre in Calumet, the c. 1891 City Opera House in Traverse City, and the 1895 Vermontville Opera House in Vermontville. Others, such as the 1881 Howell Opera House, are resources in National Register-listed historic districts. The Tibbits Opera House stands out as the only extant French Second Empire style opera house in the state, as one of the state’s more elaborate remaining opera houses, and as one of a few that are still used for live performances. In addition to the meticulous restoration, the opera house retains its original proscenium, and once provides live performances for in Coldwater.

The Tibbits Opera House is also significant as the result of the vision and determination of one of Coldwater’s most prominent citizen at the time, Barton S. Tibbits, who brought the building into existence. In summary, from the September 19, 1882 edition of the *Coldwater Republican*:

’Render Unto Caesar’ - First of all our thanks are due to Mr. Tibbits, through whose untiring efforts the work has been accomplished, a building solid and strong where for the first time in Coldwater a play can be properly placed upon the stage and comfortably enjoyed by the audience.

The building provided more than just “opera” to the community in and around Coldwater. The plays, concerts, and lectures brought culture to this area of Michigan, and many famous people graced its stage.

Lastly, the Tibbits Opera House is a significant representative of the work of Mortimer L. Smith, a prominent architect in his time and significant in the history of Michigan architects, and is the last surviving example of his few opera house designs.

Tibbits Opera House
Name of Property

Branch County, Michigan
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register, as part of Historic District
 previously determined eligible by the National Register, contributing building to NR
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Tibbits Opera House

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Tibbits Opera House
Name of Property

Branch County, Michigan
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.31 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.940649 | Longitude: -85.004197 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 160, in the City of Coldwater, part of the NE ¼ NE ¼ of Section 21, Township 6 South, Range 6 West, Coldwater Township, Branch County, Michigan.

The metes and bounds are described as follows: COM 125 FT S ALG E LI HANCHETT ST FROM S LI CHICAGO ST TO BEG TH W PAR WI CHICAGO 140 FT TH S PAR WI

Tibbits Opera House
Name of Property
HANCHETT ST 72 FT TH ELY PAR WI CHICAGO ST 140 FT TH NLY TO POB SEC 21
T6S R6W (Lot 1)

Branch County, Michigan
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The Boundary Justification is based on the current property description, which is the same as the original description for the parcels on which the opera house is located.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Debra Ball Johnson, Historical Architect, Architectural Historian, Architect
(additional research information by Belinda G. McGuire)
organization: Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
city or town: Lansing state: MI zip code: 48909
e-mail: johnsond70@michigan.gov
telephone: 517-241-0242
date: July 1, 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Tibbits Opera House
Name of Property

Branch County, Michigan
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Tibbits Opera House.

City or Vicinity: Coldwater.

County: Branch.

State: Michigan.

Photographer: listed.

Date photographed: Various dates, listed.

Descriptions of Photographs, number, including description of view indicating direction of camera: listed.

1 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0001.JPG. Photographer: unknown. Photograph courtesy Tibbits Opera House. Date Photographed: c. 1885. Looking west. Original Late Victorian/Second Empire façade.

2 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0002.JPG. Photographer: unknown. Photograph courtesy Tibbits Opera House. Date Photographed: c. 1950. Looking west. Art Deco movie theater façade, original removed or covered.

3 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0003.JPG. Photographer: unknown. Photograph courtesy Tibbits Opera House. Date Photographed: 2011. Looking west. East façade with temporary brick to mothball structure, temporary "surface mansard" applied to roof.

4 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0004.JPG. Photographer: unknown. Photograph courtesy Tibbits Opera House. Date Photographed: 2011. Temporary brick façade removed to reveal damaged original facade. Reconstructed dome restored to the roof.

Photographer: Debra Ball Johnson

Date Photographed: 2018-04-25

5 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0005.JPG. Looking southwest. East and north facades.

Tibbits Opera House

Branch County, Michigan

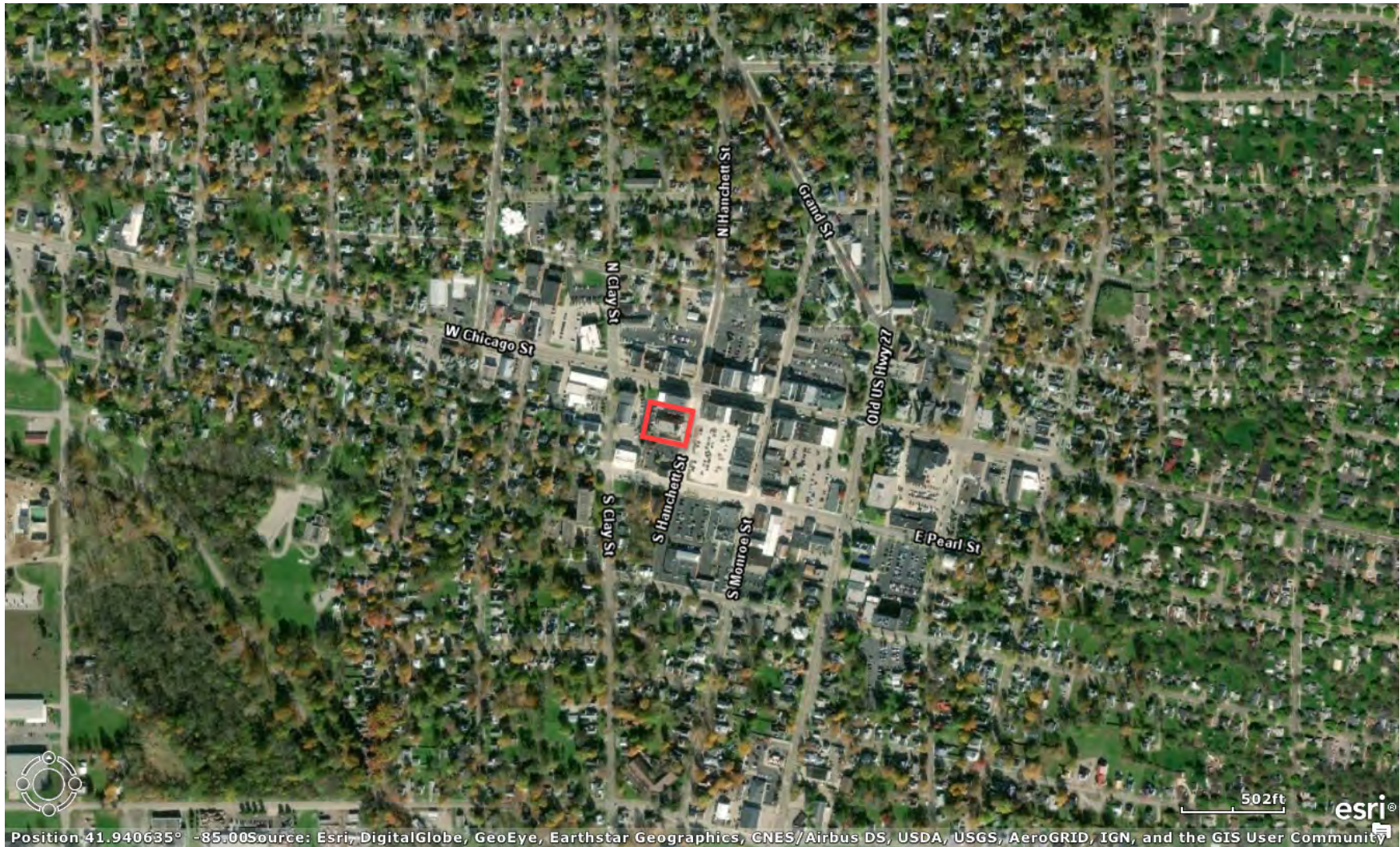
Name of Property

County and State

- 6 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0006.JPG. Looking west. East façade.
- 7 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0007.JPG. Looking northwest. East and south facades.
- 8 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0008.JPG. Looking east. West façade.
- 9 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0009.JPG. Looking south. North façade.
- 10 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0010.JPG. Looking west. Lobby mural on west wall, south portion.
- 11 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0011.JPG. Looking west. Lobby mural on west wall, north portion.
- 12 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0012.JPG. Looking north. Lobby mural on north wall.
- 13 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0013.JPG. Looking west. Stage from balcony.
- 14 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0014.JPG. Looking east. Auditorium from stage.
- 15 of 15. MI_Branch County_Tibbits Opera House_0015.JPG. Looking south. Console and column capital at balcony edge, former location of column.

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Tibbits Opera House

14 South Hanchett Street, Coldwater, Branch County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 41.940649 / -85.004197





Tibbits Opera House

14 South Hanchett Street, Coldwater, Branch County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 41.940649 / -85.004197





TIBBITS' OPERA HOUSE

1882

THE BLACK VIPER
MAY 11

THE BLACK VIPER
MAY 11

THE BLACK VIPER
MAY 11



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Auditions: 1st & 2nd Floor
Auditions: 1st & 2nd Floor
Auditions: 1st & 2nd Floor

Poster with text and images



HELP
RESTORE
TIBBITS!

TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE





TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE
1882



TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE

1882



TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE

SPOTLIGHT ON TEEN TALENT



TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE





BEN GR...
LEW BACKSTADER
CHARLES FROHMAN
JOSEPH JEFFERSON
MAUDE ADAMS
JOSEPH... OTTO
WILLIAM GIL...

ADAM WILLIAMS
TOM MITCHELL JR
INDIS VANCE
UNIVERSITY AND ANNA DEE CLUB
TECHNICAL PLAYERS
IT HAD TO BE CHILDREN'S THEATRE
AMERICAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

ADAM WARRSLOD
ANNE COTTEY
PATRICIA MERINA
"CLEBANK" STRINGS
KAL WARRING
BOB NEUHART
MICKY RANNEY
JAN RANNEY

WYNE KING
HENRY L. SCOTT
JOHN AND BOB GRIFFIN
"VIRGINIA SANDRINA"
JOE INCHIA
JEFF DANIELS


No Outside Food or Drink


Open in Elevator lobby

TIBBITS
TIBBITS



CHARLES FROHMAN

JOSEPH JEFFERSON

HENRY WOODRUFF

De WOLFE

JOHN L. SULLIVAN

CHICAGO MARINE BAND

MAUDE ADAMS

JOSEPH CARNER

CHAUNCEY OLCOTT

OTTO KRUGER

FAY TEMPLETON

McINTYRE & HEATH

KATHERINE GERMAINE

WILLIAM GILLETTE

De WOLFE HOPPER

OTIS SKINNER

HERMANN THE GREAT

CHARLES A. LOVER

ETHEL BARRYMORE

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

CHICAGO SYMPHONY

LAWRENCE REA

EDDIE FORD

NOR...

ALFRED PARKE











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Tibbits Opera House

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: MICHIGAN, Branch

Date Received: 2/14/2019 Date of Pending List: 3/7/2019 Date of 16th Day: 3/22/2019 Date of 45th Day: 4/1/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003577

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 3/25/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: An outstanding example of Second Empire designed by one of Detroit's more notable architects. The Opera House demonstrates significance independent of the district it was previously listed in. It individually meets Criteria A, B, and C for its important association with George Tibbits, for its role as an entertainment venue, and for its outstanding architecture. The facade was carefully reconstructed following a master preservation plan, and hte building meets the criteria exception

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A, B, and C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
LANSING

EARL J. POLESKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RECEIVED 2280
FEB 14 2019
MAY 11 11 11 AM '19

February 11, 2018

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Tibbits Opera House (Additional Documentation), 14 South Hanchett Street, Coldwater, Branch County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Disc one contains the nomination file, signed cover page, and any correspondence. Disc two contains photographs of the nominated site.

All owners and appropriate elected public officials were notified and provided at least thirty (30) days to comment on the above proposed nomination in accordance with National Register regulations. All written comments concerning this nomination, submitted to us prior to our forwarding this nomination to you, are included in the correspondence file on disc one.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 373-1979 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Martha MacFarlane-Faes
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

MMF/taw