

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 9 1985
date entered MAY 9 1985

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

1. Name

historic EMPRESS THEATRE

and or common

2. Location

street & number 9104 W. 2700 South not for publication

city, town Magna vicinity of

state Utah code 049 county Salt Lake code 035

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Leo W. Ware

street & number 2913 E. 3370 South

city, town Salt Lake City vicinity of state Utah 84109

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Salt Lake City and County Building

street & number 400 South State Street

city, town Salt Lake City state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This is a 1 story one-part commercial block type building that is constructed of brick and has a flat roof. The design is essentially Neo-Classical, although some Beaux Arts influences are in evidence. The most distinctive features of the building are its pressed tin dentiled cornice and decorative curvilinear gable on the parapet. At the center of the gable is a rectangular panel framed by rosettes and topped by scroll work and a flag pole. There are swags and garlands on the frieze above the recessed front entrance. The facade is broken up into three bays by brick piers. The entrance bay is highlighted by ornate, pressed tin spandrels at both corners. These spandrels appear to be inspired by the Beaux Arts style. The brick piers have vertical recessed panels, a decorative motif that is carried over on horizontal panels on each of the side bays. Narrow transom lights are found above the openings on each of the side bays. The building is currently vacant but remains in good condition and retains its historical integrity.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1917 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Empress Theatre, built in 1917, is both historically and architecturally significant. The design of the building, a combination of Neo-classical and Beaux Arts styles, makes it the most outstanding example of high style architecture in Magna. Though not a premier example of the Neo-classical style in Utah, the Empress Theatre is one of a number of distinctively styled theatres in small Utah towns that are dominated by relatively plain commercial buildings. Historically, the Empress Theatre is one of the oldest and best preserved commercial buildings in Magna, and it is the oldest theatre in the community.

The Empress Theatre was built on Main Street in Magna in 1917 by the Western Theatre Corporation, about which nothing is known. The theatre was owned by Western Theatre Corporation only until October 1918, when it was sold to Thirza A. Hemingway, also an unknown. During Hemingway's years of ownership, 1919–23, the theatre was listed in the city directories only in 1919 and 1923, indicating that it was not in operation for 3–4 years. Frank Burgner, who bought the theatre in 1923, owned and operated it until 1932, after which it was owned for three years by State Building and Loan Association. From 1931 through 1935 the theatre was once again left vacant, as indicated by the city directories. George and Alice Smith bought the Empress Theatre in 1935 and operated it for almost 20 years. The building has been virtually unused for the past 30 years.

At the time of its construction the Empress Theatre was the second theatre in Magna. The other theatre, the Palace Theatre, operated from 1914–17, but its location is currently unknown. Two other theatres also operated in the town during the period from the 1920s through the 1940s, the Rialto (1921–26) and the Gem (1927–44+). Only the Gem remains and it has been significantly altered.

The Empress Theatre was constructed during the period of greatest growth in Magna, the 1910s–20s. The Utah Copper Corporation was established in 1903, incorporating numerous small mining operations into one large one, and soon after erected the Magna and Arthur concentrators near the site of Pleasant Green, which several years later became known as Magna. The Empress Theatre was one of a number of buildings that were erected along Main Street during the decades of the 1910s and '20s, creating a substantial commercial district. Most of those buildings have been left vacant and neglected over the past 20–30 years, however, as the prime commercial district has shifted further west and south and the depressed local economy has dried up most businesses in the old Main Street area. The Empress Theatre is one of the best preserved of the older commercial buildings along Main Street, and it is easily the most sophisticated in terms of its architectural design. Most of the remaining buildings in the area are relatively plain, nondescript commercial buildings.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hulse, Irene. From Rags to Riches. Tooele, Utah: Tooele Transcript Press, 1964.
Polk City Directories.
Salt Lake County Recorder's Office. Title Abstract Records.
Sanborn Insurance Map Company. "Magna P.O.," 1916, 1931.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Magna

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>12</u>	<u>406440</u>	<u>4507060</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point 122 feet E of the SE corner of East Ave., being the avenue running N and S on the E side of Le Cheminant Subdivision; said point of beginning also described as being E 155 ft. from the SE corner of Lot 1 Le Cheminant Sub.; thence E 35 ft., N 116 ft., W 35 ft., S 116 ft. to point of beginning.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Roper/Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society

date February 1985

street & number 300 Rio Grande

telephone 801-533-6017

city or town Salt Lake City

state Utah

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

A. Kent Powell

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 28, 1985

For NPS use only

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

for [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 5-9-85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date