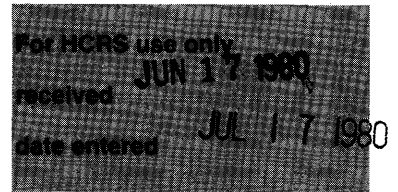


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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



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

1. Name

historic Chateau Dodge Theatre

and/or common Chateau Theatre

2. Location

street & number 15 First Street Southwest _____ not for publication

city, town Rochester _____ vicinity of congressional district First

state Minnesota code 22 county Olmsted code 109

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Minnesota Amusement Company

street & number 177 North State Street

city, town Chicago _____ vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Olmsted County Courthouse

street & number 515 Second Street SW

city, town Rochester state Minnesota 55901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historical Resources
has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1973; 1979-80 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Chateau Dodge Theatre is located in the downtown business district of Rochester. It is a large brick rectangular structure, 164 feet by 70 feet, approximately four stories tall, with a steel truss suspended ceiling. A gable roof extends from the false mansard-roofed south (front) facade to the flat-roofed proscenium loft at the rear. The north, east, and west facades are plain cream brick walls. All decorative elements are concentrated on the light orange brick primary facade. The rusticated yellow stone first floor facade is penetrated by eight eighteen-light doors and several shop windows, with a ticket booth bay at the center. A yellow and orange electrically-lighted sunburst marquee is centered above the doors. Triple round-arch windows with terra-cotta embellished spiral columns are located directly above the marquee and are flanked by four tall embellished rectangular windows. The brick is patterned in a sawtooth design above the windows. Three bullseye panels are located directly beneath three round-arch windows symmetrically placed in the raised-seam mansard roof. With the exception of some changes in the marquee area and the removal of shutters and balconies, the exterior facade retains total integrity.

The theater interior is designed in the "atmospheric" mode, including an extraordinarily elaborate plaster fantasy design reminiscent of medieval European architecture, with balconies, turrets, battlements, gates, and arches. The proscenium arch was expressed "as a bridge over a waterway silhouetted against the sky," according to J. Raymond Corwin, the designer. The ceiling was indeed designed as a sky, with a cloud machine projecting floating clouds against a sky-blue background. Twinkling lights in the ceiling simulate stars. The main floor has 927 seats while the balcony has 561 seats. There is also an orchestra pit.

The elaborately decorated lobby at the south end features a colorfully painted design on the exposed ceiling beams, sculptured pillars, a wrought iron railed mezzanine, stained glass wall sconces, and a large circular chandelier with a stars-and-moons motif. The stage house includes complete rigging and dressing room facilities. Minor interior remodeling in the late 1970s included extensive cleaning and some repainting and the substitution of new seats on the main floor. Otherwise the interior retains almost total 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 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 1927 **Builder/Architect** Ellerbe Architects (St. Paul);
 John Raymond Corwin (interior design,
 Ellerbe Architects)
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Builder: Heffron & Fitzgerald (Rochester)

The Chateau Dodge Theatre is significant for its architectural exterior design, for its extraordinary and fanciful interior design, and for its continuous use as a movie theater, following its early combined use as a vaudeville theatre. David Gebhard and Tom Martinson in their Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota describe the primary facade as being a hybrid design of French and Byzantine styles. Contemporary descriptions of the theater speak of the design as "French chateau" style. Whatever style designation might be applied, both the interior and exterior are rightly termed "atmospheric" in the language of theater style and design. The design, considered by contemporaries as avant-garde, created a mood or atmosphere of make-believe corresponding to the new motion pictures of 1920s Hollywood. In addition to motion pictures, the theatre has also hosted vaudeville and Broadway road shows, including appearances by Tom Mix, Lunt and Fontayn, Tallulah Bankhead, Monty Wooley, and, in 1954, Eddie Cantor and the Miss Universe contest.

The Chateau was designed by the St. Paul firm of Ellerbe Architects, who had designed the Mayo Clinic Plummer Building (located 2 blocks away and now a National Landmark) the previous year. In materials and tone the Chateau is compatible with the Plummer Building. In fact, the construction of the theater was actively encouraged by Dr. Charles Mayo, who participated in the ground-breaking.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Rochester, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

A

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

B

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

C

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

D

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

E

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

F

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

G

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

H

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of the east 70 ft. and south 32 feet of lot 9, and the east 70 ft. of lots 10, 11, and 12, block 32, Original Plat of Rochester.

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| state | code | county | code |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert M. Frame III, Architectural Historian/Research Historian

organization Minnesota Historical Society date April 1980

street & number 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House telephone 612-296-9074

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Russell W. Fridley

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/4/80

For HCRS use only

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

W. Ray Luce date 7/17/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Kristin O'Connell date 7/14/80

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| |
|--------------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| RECEIVED JUN 17 1980 |
| DATE ENTERED JUL 17 1980 |

Chateau Dodge Theatre

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Chateau-Dodge Theatre. Opening Night Program. 1927.

Corwin, John Raymond. Letter to Minnesota Historical Society, 15 April 1973.
Original in Chateau Theatre file, State Historic Preservation Office.

"Like a Rare Jewel." In Olmsted County Historian, Sprint 1979, pp. 1, 4-5, 7-8.

Niles, Ray L. Letter to Minnesota Historical Society, 9 February 1973. Original
in Chateau Theatre file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Salisbury, Harry A. Letter to Minnesota Historical Society, 30 January 1973.
Original in Chateau Theatre file, State Historic Preservation Office.

Severson, Harold. Rochester: Mecca for Millions. Rochester: Marquette Bank
& Trust Co., 1979. p. 139.