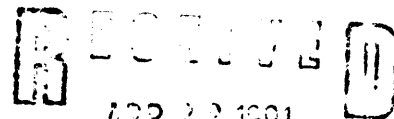


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Sequim Opera House

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 119 N. Sequim Ave.

not for publication

city, town Sequim

vicinity

state Washington code WA

county Clallam

code 009

zip code 98382

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

**Entered in the  
National Register**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Melora Byers

5/28/91

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Recreation & Culture: auditoriumCurrent Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Commerce: specialty store

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other: commercial vernacularfoundation wood  
walls wood: weatherboardroof tar  
other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sequim Opera House is a wood frame commercial building located in the center of downtown Sequim on the northern Olympic Peninsula. Built in 1906, the structure is one of the largest and last extant of the town's first generation of commercial buildings, and still retains sufficient integrity to convey its associations as the community's original entertainment venue.

The Opera House is located on the west side of Sequim Avenue, the city's original "Main Street," one lot north of the intersection of Washington Street (Highway 101). Although the location was the focal point of commerce in the early 20th century, most business activity now stretches along Highway 101. The buildings that formed the historic core on Sequim Avenue mostly have been altered or demolished. Immediately south of the Opera House, the historic Sequim Trading Company stands in greatly modified form and the historic Hotel Sinclair has been replaced by a modern bank.

The Opera House is a two story structure built on a rectangular plan with no projections. The structure measures approximately 60 feet across the front (east) facade and 110 feet deep. The building is a free standing structure abutted on the south by the frame Trading Company building and on the north by a one story nonhistoric commercial building faced in brick with a shingled roof. Behind the Opera House is an open parking area leading to Seal Avenue.

The Opera House rests on a concrete and wood post and pier foundation and rises to a hipped roof, with a pent skirt overhanging the second story. The roof is covered with composition shingles and has boxed eaves. The building is sided in narrow clapboards, with corner boards and a plain frieze below the cornice.

Fenestration across the east facade and north side elevation is composed of the original regularly spaced wood frame windows. Windows on the upper story are paired two-over-two double hung sash units with wood sills and entablature hoods. Windows on the first story of the south wall are the original four pane fixed glass units, with surrounds. The gable end on the street elevation features a small louvered opening. The rear and north side walls of the building have no window openings.

The ground level storefront includes a center entry with paneled double-leaf door beneath a multi-light frosted glass transom. An entablature hood, with dentils, was placed above the entry in the 1980s. The entry is flanked by large tripartite display windows. The display windows feature paired and single plate glass lights beneath multi-light transoms. The windows are framed by sills and entablature hoods. Historic photographs indicate that the front windows were enlarged to their present configuration sometime shortly after original construction, perhaps in the 1910s.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1906-c. 1930

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Austin, Builder

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Built in 1906-07 by a leading Dungeness area merchant, the Sequim Opera House was the first center of entertainment in the small Olympic Peninsula town. From its premiere program in 1907, the hall was a venue for musical events, concerts, dances, public meetings, and civic gatherings. Opened the year the town's first plat was officially filed--and six years before the town was incorporated as a city--the Opera House was one of a handful of pioneer civic structures in the young community. Today the building is the best preserved of the extant early commercial structures, and one of the few reminders of Sequim's historic "Main Street." The building retains good exterior integrity and the original interior auditorium with stage.

**Historical Background:** Located on the prairies of the Dungeness Valley, the townsite of Sequim was first homesteaded in the 1850s by John Bell, an Englishman who arrived in Washington Territory from Victoria, British Columbia. In 1854, Bell claimed 160 acres, including the southeast corner of what would become the center of the town (the future intersection of Sequim Avenue and Washington Street). In the following years, adjacent claims at the site were taken by John Brown (who claimed the northeast corner of the Sequim-Washington intersection), Matthew Fleming (the southwest corner) and William Webster (the northwest corner). The farms of the region raised potatoes, wheat, oats, peas, and hay.

The first business to locate at the crossroads was a grocery operated by William Horner, who opened his small shop at the northeast corner in 1892. Shortly thereafter, the Farmers Hall was built, erected by volunteer labor on land donated by Bell. Other small businesses opened nearby later in the decade including Huff's grocery, a millinery, and blacksmith.

But the real growth of the town followed the establishment of an irrigation system which opened in May, 1896, and soon watered thousands of acres. As the area grew in the early 20th century, acreage near the crossroads was sold off for commercial concerns. Probably the largest new business was the Sequim Trading Company owned by Dungeness businessman Charles Franklin Seal and located at the prominent northwest corner of the Sequim Avenue-Washington Street intersection. In 1906-07, Seal built the adjacent Opera House, and in 1908 Joseph Keeler built the Sinclair Hotel--the town's largest structure--just south of the Trading Company. The three buildings formed an active commercial center.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

*Dungeness: the Lure of a River*, Sequim Bicentennial Committee: Port Angeles, 1976.  
Historic photographs from the Bert Kellogg Collection and historical information (including programs) from collection of Harriet Fish.  
*Jimmy Come Lately: A History of Clallam County*, edited by Jerfis Russell, Clallam County Historical Society: Port Angeles, 1971.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>492470</u>	<u>5325000</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 4, Block 4, Central Plat of Sequim.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the Sequim Opera House.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title	<u>Information from Harriet Fish, edited by L. Garfield</u>		
organization		date	<u>February 1991</u>
street & number	<u>P.O. Box 900</u>	telephone	<u>(206) 452-9195</u>
city or town	<u>Carlsborg</u>	state	<u>Washington</u> zip code <u>98324</u>

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To the south of the storefront is a one-story entryway to the enclosed stairway that rises against the side of the building and leads to the second story hall. The entry features a solid paneled door, beneath a transom window. An open rear staircase (since removed) originally led to the hall from the Seal Avenue elevation, and the panelled doors to the outside are still intact. A sliding door on the rear elevation provides access to the first floor retail space.

The interior of the Opera House retains some of its historic character particularly on the upper level. The lower storefront level is an interior design shop and features a large open space, with a rear storeroom. The upstairs hall, accessed by the side stairway, is a large open space with a raised stage at the west end. The stairhall features the original drop siding and leads to two sets of double-leaf doors which open into the interior hall. The hall features the original fir flooring, tongue and groove siding, and 16 foot ceilings faced in tongue and groove boards. The stage against the west wall is raised approximately two feet above the floor. The room is currently used for storage and has been divided by plywood partitions and wire mesh into two rows of storage lockers. These lockers could be removed without damaging the historic fabric or character of the hall.

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The opening of the Opera House coincided with the commercial development of the city. In 1907, the initial plat of the town site was filed, creating one long block that ran down the east side of Sequim Avenue from Washington to Fir streets. A second plat was filed in 1907, and in 1911 the Central Plat was filed, which included the west side of Sequim Avenue (including the lot of the Opera House). In 1913, with a population of about 600, the town was incorporated as a fourth class city. At that time, the community was characterized by a variety of one and two story wood frame buildings, many with false front parapets. In recent decades, as the community has grown and commercial activity stretched along Highway 101, many of the historic business houses have been altered or demolished. Today, only a few reflections of the original commercial section survive intact, including the original Sequim Town Hall of 1914 (State Register) and the Opera House.

When the Opera House was built, it was one of the largest structures in town. Seal contracted Austin Smith in late 1906 to build the structure next door to his mercantile. Smith, who had come in Sequim in 1904, built a two story building with retail space on the ground floor and a large auditorium with stage above. Lumber for the new building came from the newly-established Keeler-Priest Lumber Company mill in Sequim.

On June 15, 1907, the Opera House opened to the public. The premiere performance was a "grand musicale" featuring a lengthy program of performances by local residents, musical societies, choral groups, and an orchestra. It was the first in a series of musical and other entertainment events that ran for many years. A surviving program from November, 1913, for example, describes a typical evening's entertainment: a "Grand Concert and Ball" with a lengthy program that required the management to request that no encores be allowed because of time constraints. The program was followed by a dance in the hall.

The Opera House was used for a wide variety of community purposes through the 1920s. Dances were held there, as were class graduations and silent movies. Meanwhile, the store downstairs was used variously as an agricultural implements dealership and furniture store. Although it is not known when use of the Opera House was discontinued, it is believed to have been less active after 1930. Today, it is one of the last reminders of the historic nucleus of downtown Sequim.