

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 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 Ruby Theater
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 135 East Woodin Avenue not for publication
city, town Chelan vicinity
state Washington code WA county Chelan code 007 zip code 98816

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Movie Theaters in WA State MPD

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.

James E. Johnson
Signature of certifying official
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

8/21/91
Date

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

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Autawicott & Coe 10/7/91
 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Recreation & Culture: theaterCurrent Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Recreation & Culture: theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls concrete, stuccoroof composition
other metal, wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ruby Theater is a 1913 stuccoed concrete structure, rectangular in plan, measuring one bay in width (29.4'), and 75' deep. It occupies one lot mid-block along the main thoroughfare within the downtown commercial core of Chelan. The two story building abuts adjacent properties of similar height, materials, setback, and age. However, the Ruby is distinguished within the block and the commercial core as a whole by its projecting marquee with decorative lighting, the suggestion of Renaissance Revival style, and high degree of integrity.

Although the original appearance of the Ruby as constructed by local builder Herbert R. Kingman has been altered, changes to both the interior and exterior occurred during the period of significance and reflect the evolution of film entertainment and the Ruby's continuing function as the principal movie theater in the region. More recent modifications have not significantly impacted the theater's character defining features.

The theater houses a 184 (originally 250) seat auditorium, proscenium with stage and screen, horseshoe balcony, projection booth, and lobby and meets the classification of a combination house property type identified in the Movie Theaters of Washington MPD.

Exterior of the Property: The primary facade is symmetrical; the texture of its stuccoed surface varied and painted. Shallow recessed panels further distinguish the facade by giving the appearance of a single bay framed by piers and divided horizontally by the marquee, fenestration, and cornice. The dominate feature is the projecting marquee which spans the width of the building, a simple wooden extension with a central round arch and anchored to the facade with metal guy-wires. The underside of the boxed marquee is fitted with bare bulbs in porcelain fixtures (15 rows of 5 lights each).

Above the marquee are casement windows with mullions, a centered two sash window paired on either side by single sashes all set within a recessed textured panel. Above the windows is a narrow smooth surfaced recessed nameplate panel. The simple shaped metal cornice is painted in contrast.

Beneath the marquee at street level, the smooth surfaced piers frame the arcade and recessed entry. The arcade consists of three arches with ticket booths and entrances located at both ends within the arcade itself. Alterations have compromised the appearance of the entry. Originally the main entrance was located in the center. The center arch was enclosed as a snack bar to service both the lobby and street traffic and the entrance was relocated to either side.

8. Statement of Significance

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

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1913-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kingman, Herbert R.

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

The Ruby Theater is a notable landmark among Chelan's downtown properties, visually prominent because of its location and distinctive appearance and historically significant for its enduring association with entertainment. Completed in 1913, it represents the efforts of local builder Herbert R. Kingman to provide the isolated Washington community with a safe, comfortable, and stylish theater. Its design embodies the characteristics of the combination house property type identified in the Movie Theaters of Washington MPD. The simplistic exterior and decorative interior reflect the changes and embellishments applied throughout the period of significance to attract and entertain patrons. The Ruby is the only remaining functioning historic theater within the region and with the exception of a two-year period has provided both film and live entertainment for nearly 80 years. The only other theater within the vicinity, located six miles away in Manson, has suffered extensive loss of integrity as a result of conversion to commercial offices. All the Ruby's character defining features are in good repair as a result of an ongoing program of maintenance, restoration, and rehabilitation. Current use includes first run movies and theatrical productions.

Historical Background: Chelan theaters that predate the Ruby include the Gem and the Auditorium. The larger of the two, the Auditorium, provided live and film entertainment and accommodated community dances and functions. It was destroyed by fire shortly after the Ruby opened in 1913. The first film theater in Chelan was the Gem, located in a storefront. The manager of that concern relocated his business into the Ruby and the structure was converted to a commercial use. No evidence of its former use as a theater is detectable.

Area of Significance--Entertainment: The Ruby Theater is the sole remaining intact structure which represents the importance of film and live entertainment to the inhabitants of Chelan. Since its construction in 1913 and with the exception of a two-year period, the theater has served as the major movie theater in the region for nearly 80 years.

In 1913, of the three theaters in Chelan, the theater built by Herbert Kingman soon to be named the Ruby was the newest and best equipped. Harry Potter relocated his theater business from the Gem and became the first manager of the Ruby, named after his baby daughter. Competitive from the moment it opened its doors, the Ruby successfully supplanted the Auditorium in providing the first run movies.

 See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chelan Valley Mirror, 3 July 1974, Supplement Vol. 1, Number 1.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than 1

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>723280</u>	<u>5302670</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
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C	Zone	Easting	Northing
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D	Zone	Easting	Northing
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

East 29.4' of Lot 18, Block 30, Townsite of Chelan, Chelan County Washington

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Ruby Theater.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	<u>Kay Austin</u>	date	<u>May 1991</u>
organization	<u>Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation</u>	telephone	<u>(206) 753-9109</u>
street & number	<u>111 21st Avenue SW, MS: KL-11</u>	state	<u>WA</u>
city or town	<u>Olympia</u>	zip code	<u>98504</u>

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Interior: The lobby is a shallow space running the width of the theater. The entry into the auditorium is to the left and right of center through arched doorways. Stairway access to the balcony is adjacent to doorway. The central span of wall backing the auditorium features a shallow recessed arched panel which mimics with plaster--as do the other lobby wall surfaces--the exterior treatment of the facade.

The auditorium is a narrow rectangular space comprised of smooth surfaced plaster over cement walls, a flat ceiling sheathed in pressed tin with a rosette pattern, and bordered by a plaster and metal cornice with concave molding. It is accessed from the rear by two side aisles and features central seating exclusively.

An attenuated horseshoe balcony projects above the last few rows of seating and curves along the side walls toward the front rows anchored by tie-rods to the ceiling supports. The balcony is boxed and faced in tin embellished with arabesque patterning. The exposed concrete floor slopes gradually down to the proscenium. The stage is elevated and framed by a gilded proscenium--a curved plaster molding decorated with a richly floriated design of ropes and oak leaves. The stage itself is approximately 12' deep and fitted with a non-historic thrust stage which extends 12' beyond the proscenium. Stage floor lighting and trap door access are intact. Historic scenic drops have been removed to the local museum. On either side of and level with the stage are doors for access to backstage and stairs to the mechanical and storerooms below stage. Curving stairs accessing backstage are intact beneath the thrust stage ramps. Ventilation and heating equipment are intact below stage as is the stored early sound accompaniment equipment featuring metal disks.

The projection booth is located at the rear of the balcony and includes a vestibule and concrete encased booth. Equipment within the booth includes an early rewinder and current projection equipment. The earlier arc-light projectors were removed and stored in 1989. Also located at the rear of the balcony on either side of the booth are the restrooms. Alterations include the above mentioned thrust stage installation, removal and storage of scenic drop and arc-light projectors, and in addition the removal of all historic seating and light fixtures.

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In 1918, Harry Potter and his wife were killed and management reverted to the owner. Kingman sold the property in 1919 to an Omak barber, Mr. Kelsey. Kelsey and his family moved to Chelan and reopened the theater on March 8 with "Poor Little Rich Girl" starring Mary Pickford. Operating the theater as a family business until 1937, the Kelsey's are largely responsible for evolution in the appearance of the Ruby. A succession of managers began leasing the property from the Kelsey family in 1937 and in 1972 the theater closed and was sold. The Ruby reopened in 1974 and is currently owned and operated by Ruby Enterprises.

The Ruby meets both the general movie theater registration requirements and combination house property type registration requirements outlined in the Movie Theaters of Washington MPD. The Ruby successfully conveys its historic character in both physical and associative ways as structure built to house both live and film entertainment. It retains integrity of location, setting, scale, massing, exterior cladding and trim. The specific characteristics which distinguish it as a combination house from the exterior are also maintained: its prominent facade, projecting marquee, recessed entryway and ticket booths. In addition, it lacks the obvious representation of a style or mix of styles conveyed in the later palace-era theaters but reflects a more substantial and carefully designed structure than the earlier nickelodeons. Its impression of Renaissance Revival influence is conveyed through the shallow recessed arches and patron appeal through the dazzling flash from its marquee. Alterations to the fenestration, projecting marquee, and entryway which occurred within the period of significance reflect the evolution of the Ruby's function as a viable movie theater.

The interior retains integrity, including original floor plan, wall materials, proscenium, stage, horseshoe balcony, projection booth, mechanical equipment (heating, ventilation, and stage), ornamentation, and wall and ceiling decorative treatment. The overall impact of these features is an enhanced environment for entertainment, a key distinction from nickelodeons. As with the exterior stylistic treatments, the ornamentation applied to the interior is less of a distinct style or mix of styles as the later palace-era theaters. Alterations to the interior include impacts to seating, lighting, floor coverings, projection machinery, and stage size. However, the principal features associated with the auditorium and lobby are intact.