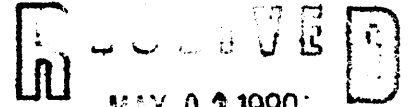


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Valley Theater
other names/site number Old Theater Mercantile

2. Location

street & number 4945 Baseline Road N/A not for publication
city, town Parkdale N/A vicinity
state Oregon code OR county Hood River code 027 zip code 97041

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	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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 [Signature] Date April 15, 1990
State or Federal agency and bureau Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

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. Entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet. 6/1/90
 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 [Signature] Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~Movie Theater~~
~~Community Theater (live performances)~~
~~Barber Shop~~

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~Work in progress~~
~~Antique Store and Theater~~

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

~~Other: Western false front; vernacular~~

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation ~~concrete~~walls ~~wood: shiplap~~roof ~~asphalt shingles~~

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

The Old Theater Mercantile, known originally as the Valley Theater, was constructed for the purpose of showing movies in a small rural community. The style of the theater is a simple false-front building, very similar to the buildings erected during the late 1800's in many rural towns in the western United States. The theater was constructed in 1937. The original design for the theater came from the owner and builder. From memory he described theaters he had seen in small neighborhoods in Portland and small towns in Oregon to three carpenters. From Mr. Sigler's descriptions, the theater was built. The three carpenters were John Salstrom of Mt. Hood, Clyde Perkins and a Mr. Young of Parkdale. The building was used as a theater until 1954, then it became a warehouse for an oil business and other storage uses until 1989. Currently work is in progress to restore the building; to partially resume its original purpose, an antique store and some form of movie and community theater are proposed.

The Old Theater Mercantile is located in Section 06, Township 1S, Range 10E, W.M. The parcel is 1100. The lot is 30' x 100'. The actual building is 30' x 70'. The legal description is: The East 30 feet of Lot 2, Thompson's First Addition to Parkdale, Hood River County, Oregon. This building is located on Baseline Drive which is the main street of the town of Parkdale. Parkdale is a very rural town consisting of less than a dozen commercial buildings, very few of which have historic significance. There exist trees, street lights, and several blocks of homes. The entire town is surrounded by apple and pear orchards. There is also a tourist railroad, the tracks of which end in Parkdale, approximately two blocks from the theater building.

The building is rectangular in shape with the appearance of two floors. The foundation and main floor is cement. The walls and roof are wood and the roof exterior is composition roofing. The roof is a simple gable. The exterior walls on all four sides consist of the original wood siding. Until recently, the facade siding was obscured by shingles. The front of the building facing North onto Baseline Drive contains most of the historically significant detail. The false-front, extending 3-4 feet above the roof, is curved at the top with two false posts on each top side. A wood awning with the original porcelain light fixtures also exists. Near the top front, a window was installed where there was once only a vent. This was installed by the second owners in the 1960's. The west-front side of the theater contained a barber shop which later became a theater snack bar. This exists as it did originally. The theater contained an entrance with a marquee. Also leaded glass interior doors still exist at the entrance to the actual viewing room.

The original floor is covered with a level wood floor. The original floor was cement and slanted towards the screen and stage area at the front. Dark blue velvet drapes hung around the stage and screen area. The foyer and main aisle were carpeted. Two restrooms were added later to the small second floor projection area. The balcony, or second floor still exists, but in disrepair. Original material on the walls was fiberboard painted orange. Today, only part of the original stage remains. The original movie screen and all wall light fixtures are present in the building. These will be restored as well as the stage. Plans are to remodel the second floor projection area to an open loft for more exterior light source and storage space.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

RENOVATION PLANS

The entire building will be stripped of old paint and repainted in the original cream color. The existing original false front and entire building is sided with tongue and groove hemlock. Trim on the windows, doors and marquee will be repaired and painted in a deep forest green.

Due to the poor condition of the front door that led to the barber shop area, a door of similar vintage will be installed. The side exit doors have also been replaced as they were hollow core interior doors put in in recent years. These will be upgraded for security and fire safety. Although the original theater boasted solid entry doors, previous owners replaced them with French doors. Due to the current state of disrepair, new French doors will be installed. With a lack of natural light in the building, French doors versus solid doors are more practical for the current use of the building yet still maintain the theme of the 1930's.

The support cables suspending the marquee will be upgraded to bring it level and insure its safety. The marquee lights will be rewired and functional.

The alcove entryway will have a windowed display case where once a framed glass case presented movie advertising posters.

The window in the lower level has been removed due to its poor condition and has been replaced with a window found on the premises and thought to be the original window. The upstairs window will also be replaced because it is severely deteriorated and will be replaced with a restored vintage window. The vent above the upper window will be repaired and the curved trim mended.

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Continuation Sheet**

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In order to obtain reasonable insurance, provide safety, and for economic reasons, the building is being upgraded to meet current building codes. These improvements are as follows:

The original fiberboard walls and ceiling have been removed. They were in poor condition and a fire hazard. The walls and ceiling will be recovered with drywall and repainted in a natural color. In addition, the walls and ceiling have been insulated. No insulation was present before in any portion of the building.

The entire building has been re-wired, which replaces the old and unsafe wiring. The original lights which lined the walls were found on the site and are being restored and replaced in their original positions (3 on the west wall and 3 on the east wall). The overhead lights were bare bulbs at the time of our purchase. There will be two ceiling fans with lights and two additional matching lights suspended from the ceiling. The fans and lights will fit the theme of the era. The fans will provide assistance with heating and cooling the building as the ceiling is approximately 24 feet high.

The plumbing has been upgraded to meet code. A first floor restroom was added sometime after the building ceased to be a theater. For convenience this restroom has been slightly enlarged to provide wheelchair access. New and vintage fixtures will be installed. The restroom on the upper level will also be upgraded.

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Continuation Sheet**

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The upstairs originally housed the projection booth and restroom. A later owner remodeled the upstairs into a small apartment. Sometime after, perhaps in the late 1970's an addition was added to that apartment. This addition was of substandard construction and falling down. This area is removed and has been reconstructed into a balcony, exposing to the visitors eye from the main floor, the projection box and unusual projection wall. The wall was made from stacked 2 x 4's, apparently to provide soundproofing. This wall will be left exposed as part of the historical significance. It may also house a projector to show silent movies as a future plan.

The original theater provided a stage in front of the screen where local theater groups performed. The original screen will be hung and a stage has been reconstructed. The stage was recessed in an alcove which has also been reconstructed in its original form.

All original fixtures, which include lights, signs, poster frames, and miscellaneous items, will be used or displayed in the building.

The original cement floor which slanted towards the stage and screen area still exist. However, in 1954, the original owners ceased operation as a theater and began an oil warehouse business. At that time a thick, wooden plank floor was installed to provided a level surface from front to back. This same floor is intact and will be cleaned and sanded.

All electrical, plumbing and building construction has been inspected and approved.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

As much as possible, the original theme and integrity of the old Valley Theater building will be maintained. In an effort to preserve its history and community significance the theater theme will be prevalent. As well as attempting to restore features and fixtures to their original appearance, vintage theater seats will be placed in front and silent movies projected on the screen. It is planned that this building will again provide community entertainment and fellowship, as well as serving as an antique store. Barbershop groups, a string quartet, and local theater groups have expressed their desire to perform on the stage. The community of Parkdale is in a revival process, both in restoration of its architecture and community spirit. Plans have been made to rebuild the original train depot and hotel and the Mt. Hood Railroad is back in operation bringing a great number of tourists to Parkdale each year. It is our hope, and that of the community, that the restoration of the Valley Theater and its historic status will provide a focal point for our small community.

8. Statement of Significance

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/Performing Arts

Period of Significance

1937-1940

Significant Dates

1937-1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

John M. (Jack) Sigler
John Salstrom/Clyde Perkins/Mr. Young

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

INTRODUCTION

The Valley Theater of Parkdale, an unincorporated town in the orchard country of the Upper Hood River Valley, Oregon, is the only motion picture theater to have operated in the community's history. It was constructed in 1937. Measuring 30 x 70 feet in ground plan, it is an example of small scale vernacular architecture with an imposing front.

The significance of the theater to Parkdale lies in the area of entertainment, under Criterion A, as the property was the rural community's first and only commercial outlet for motion pictures. Before 1937, the nearest exhibitor was 18 miles distant, in the county seat, Hood River. In the Valley Theater, film features occasionally were augmented by productions of a local theater group or traveling shows. While the local population did not far exceed 150, the theater group drew patrons from farms and orchards of the surrounding district. First-hand testimonials gathered from former residents of Parkdale attest to the need for affordable entertainment that was fulfilled by the theater during the Depression.

The one and a half story gable-roofed building of balloon frame construction is clad with shiplap siding and is longitudinally oriented on its narrow lot fronting the main thoroughfare. Its front is spanned by a high, segmental arched parapet gable terminated at the outer corners by short posts with caps and flat trim boards. The gable, too, is finished with a wood molding.

Centered in the upper facade is a three-part window added in the 1960s, the central light of which is crowned by an arcuated louvered opening. This opening lights and ventilates the projection room at the back of the balcony. The ground story facade is organized asymmetrically and retains the original wooden marquee, the fascia of which is detailed with cornice molding and rectangular inset panels. Historic views show that original openings were limited to the louvered vent and a wide, recessed porch spanning the width of the marquee. The porch contained ticket booth, wood-framed poster windows, and double-leaf entry doors. Today, the westernmost bay is pierced solely by a modest barber shop display window

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Woodall, Ronald, and Watkins, T.H., Taken By the Wind, Vanishing Architecture of the West, New York Graphic Society, Boston, Massachusetts, 1977.

Personal Interviews:

- Aubert, George and Ruth, January 15, 1990, Parkdale Resident, Orchardist
- Babson, Gorham and Ruth, January 16, 1990, Doctor, Former Parkdale Resident
- Hukari, Marian, January 15, 1990, Parkdale Resident, Writer for Local News
- Lassen, Bill and Ina, January 14, 1990, Parkdale Resident, Retired Orchardist
- Laurance, Erwin, January 15, 1990, Journalist, Former Parkdale Resident
- Runcorn, Curley, January 15, 1990, Retired Butcher, Parkdale Resident
- Sumoge, Yuki, January 16, 1990, Parkdale Resident, Orchardist
- Sigler, John M. (Jack) and Margaret, October, 1989 and January 14, 1990, Original Owner and Builder

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

Acreeage of property 0.07 acres Parkdale, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0
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6	0	9	8	2	0
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5	0	4	1	4	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 06, Township 1S, Range 10E, Willamette Meridian, in Parkdale, Hood River County, Oregon. It is legally described as the easterly 30 feet of Lot 2, Thompson's First Addition to Parkdale and is otherwise identified as Tax Lot 1100 at said location.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area is comprised of the theater built by John M. (Jack) Sigler in 1937 and the 30 x 100-foot lot which it occupies. The building itself forms two boundaries of the lot, with a 30 x 30-foot open space south of the theater's back wall. The north or front side of the building faces north and is set back about four feet from Baseline Drive, which is the main street of Parkdale.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charlene Rivers and Cheryl Laurance
organization Old Theater Mercantile date December 11, 1989
street & number 8161 Jordan Road telephone (503) 352-7362
city or town Parkdale state Oregon zip code 97041

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with plain surround. On the east side of the facade are French windows having plain wood surrounds. In recent years the building front was covered by mineral fiber shingles, but these were removed by the present owners in the course of current rehabilitation. The original shiplap siding matching that of other elevations has been revealed and is intact.

The theater interior is organized conventionally with lobby at the east front and barbershop on the west. The 214-seat auditorium has a stairway at the north end which gives access to the shallow balcony and projection room. At the south end of the 46-foot long room is a partially intact stage and, above it, a screen. Original finishes were a sloping concrete floor and fiber board ceiling and wall surfaces, now damaged. The concrete is covered by a wood floor at present. Original lighting fixtures will be reinstalled.

The theater was erected by three local carpenters at the direction of the proprietors, John and Margaret Sigler, who booked first run movies from Portland. Sigler was the town barber, and he had had experience in movie theater maintenance and operation during the silent picture era in his home town in South Dakota. The theater was operated until 1954, when the market was eclipsed by television and improved access to larger towns and cities. It was used for storage purposes afterward until 1989.

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The simple false-front style building known as the Valley Theater was built in 1937. This building is locally significant under Criterion A as the only historic rural town theater in the Hood River Valley. The false-front extending 3-4 feet above the pitched roof, is curved in the center, flanked by two posts on each side. An awning extends from the front and houses porcelain light fixtures. This design seems to be very similar to the false-front theaters, stores, and other commercial enterprises during the late 1800's and early 1900's. The owner designed the building from looking at other theaters in Portland neighborhoods and small towns in Oregon.

Another theater existed in Hood River which is 16 miles away. The Hood River Theater competed many times for booking of movies with the Valley Theater. The Valley Theater was well attended during the years it was open. The Hood River Theater no longer exists as it was removed for construction of more modern buildings. The Valley Theater exists much as it did in 1937. The exterior appearance is much the same and should be preserved as the only remaining example of a rural theater in the Hood River valley.

Originally the Valley Theater was opened in June 1937 by the owners, Jack and Margaret Sigler. The land was purchased for \$200. The theater contained 214 upholstered seats. The floor was of cement and slanted towards the screen and stage area at the front. Dark blue velvet draperies hung around the screen and stage area, the foyer and main aisle were carpeted. Two restrooms were later added to the second floor projection area.

Movies were rented from Portland - Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 20th Century Fox, RKO, Republic, Paramount and Columbia. The Siglers generally went to Portland to book the movies, but occasionally the salesmen would come to Parkdale. Valley Theater showed first run movies. The Hood River theater had problems negotiating for *Gone With the Wind*, so it was only shown in Parkdale and for only one day. *Gone With the Wind* was shown three times that day and all 214 seats were sold out for each showing. Admission to *Gone With the Wind* was \$1.50. The Siglers had to pay 75% of the sales to the company they rented the film from. Generally, 40% of ticket sales went to the rental company. The cost to see a movie in those days was 9¢ for children, 35¢ for adults. Going to the movies included 10 minutes of news reel and two "shorts", little comedies or cartoons.

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In 1937 there were in Parkdale, in addition to the theater, two general stores, a drug store, post office, a service station/garage, a barber shop and little else in the way of commercial establishments. Those businesses served the needs of commercial fruit growers and the lumber industry in the upper Hood River valley.

At the time the theater opened, the effects of the great depression were still heavily impacting the entire Hood River valley. The economy of the valley was based on apple, pear, and strawberry production, as well as the timber industry. Such an economy was extremely labor intensive. During the summer and fall, large numbers of migrant workers were hired and housed at valley ranches. Relatively low pay and lack of mobility, prevented laborers in the upper valley and many in the middle valley, from seeking entertainment in the town of Hood River or Portland. In effect, most of those in the upper valley were locked into Parkdale for all their needs.

This lack of mobility was generally true for all the citizens of Parkdale. Adults with small children, and especially teens, recalled the effect the theater had on the community. Movies were the alternative to events at the high school, which was the only other outlet for entertainment.

The Valley Theater showed a wide variety of movies of interest to the community. It was a wholesome fare. The theater operated five nights a week for most of the year, but only weekends in the winter. It drew patrons from all over the valley, though its greatest impact was on Parkdale itself.

The capacity of the theater was about 250. There was a stage which frequently accommodated traveling shows and occasionally local live theater. The theater was well attended at all times. Many personal memories of Parkdale included attendance at the theater. With low ticket prices, it drew attendance from a population severely restricted economically during the late stages of the depression, up until World War II. Even in those depression years, laborers, fruit growers and townspeople and their families, would dig deep in their pockets for the 30 cents or so to be entertained at the Valley Theater.

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The Siglers hired a projectionist and for a time their son Ron ran the projector. The Siglers' daughter, Carol, worked as an usherette as well as Millie Bloom and Iva Lou Bratton.

A local theater group performed on occasion on the stage in the Valley Theater. Among the performers were Sheldon Laurance, Erwin Laurance, Florence Ewer, Francis and Joe Smullen, Malcom and Helen McIsaac, Bill and Marcella Hazeltine, and Luella McIsaac. These evenings were called Home Talent Night.

A barber shop with Jack Sigler behind the scissors and razor strop was in the small area of the building to the right of the theater section. Jack was the first licensed barber in Parkdale. When the shop closed the Siglers turned it into a snack bar for the theater.

When Jack was asked what brought him to build and operate a theater, he told the following story:

When he was in the eighth grade, he worked in a theater in South Dakota as a janitor. He would raise the seats and sweep and also keep the fire built. He was later taught to run the projector, which at the time was a hand crank type. The movies were silent and the only sound came from the piano being played at the front of the theater. He worked in the theater all through high school. There was something about theaters he really liked and he wasn't satisfied until he had one of his own.

The current owners have purchased the building with the intention of upgrading and restoring the site as much as possible. Many original aspects of the building are still visible. The plumbing and wiring will be upgraded. The original theater lighting fixtures were found beneath an added floor. The original slanted cement floor is still intact, but has been covered with a level wood floor. The plan is to retain the wood floor since a slanted floor would not be conducive to business. The lighting fixtures will be restored and used again as originally used. One side of the original stage area was torn down. This will be restored as well as a stage replaced. Also, the original movie screen was found and if possible will be rehung. The original walls and ceiling were fiberboard, painted orange. The walls will be replaced with sheetrock. This is necessary due to the fact that the walls were so badly damaged that they could not be repaired and no insulation existed. The new walls will reflect the original shape and atmosphere of the theater. A small upstairs area which originally housed the movie projector and two restrooms was remodeled into an apartment. This area will become a balcony (use to be determined later), possibly to again house a movie projector.

SEE MAP OIS 10 06BA

CLEAR

CREEK

COUNTY

RD.

MOUNT

HOOD

R.R.

1/4 COR. SEC. 6
1/8 COR. SEC. 6

BASE

THIR

ST.

ST.

1-100

SEE MAP OIN 10E 3200

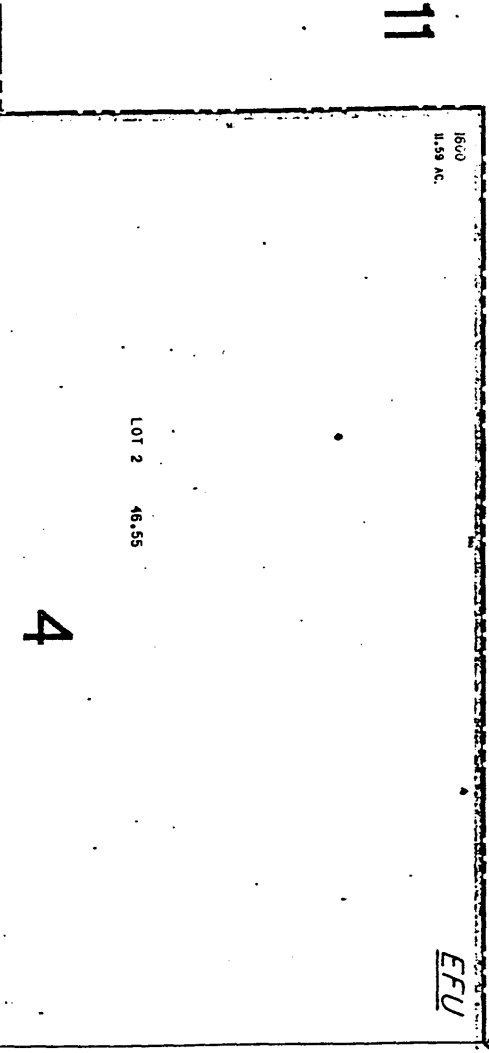
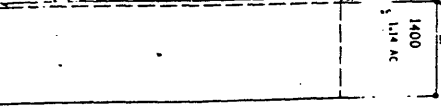
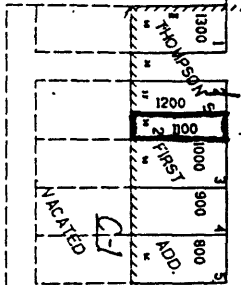
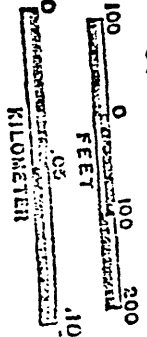
LINE

1/8 COR. SEC. 32

DR.

1/8 COR. SEC. 8

O 06AB



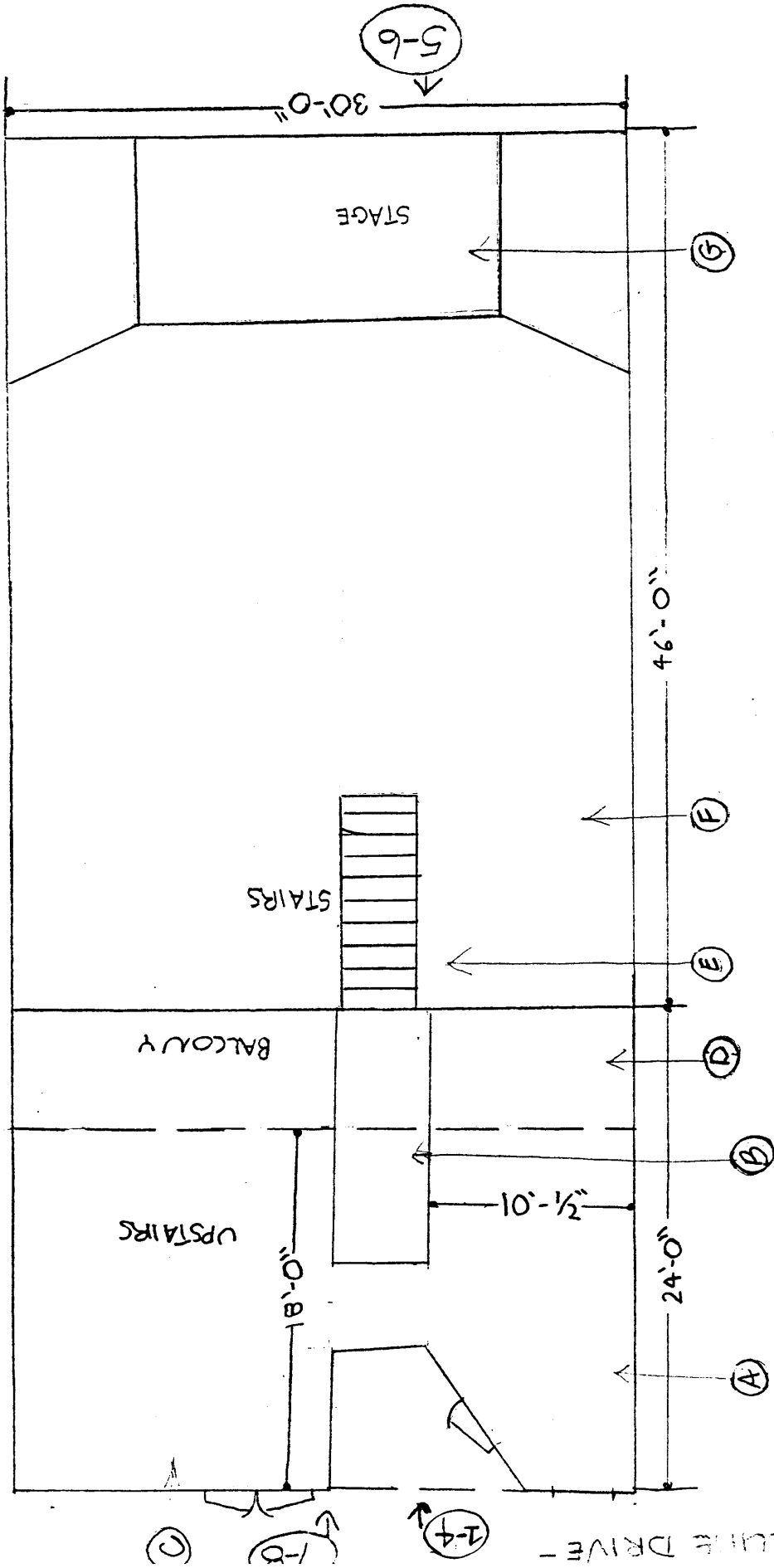
SEE MAP OIS 10 06

APPROX.

SEE MAP OIS 10E 06AC

APPROX 1/8 COR.

OIS 10 06AB



KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

- ① FRONT OUTSIDE-FACING-NORTH
- ② SAME
- ③ CLOSEUP OF THEATER AWNING
- ④ CLOSEUP OF THEATER AWNING
- ⑤ SOUTH FACING VIEW-BACK
- ⑥ SOUTH FACING VIEW-BACK
- ⑦ OLD PHOTO - FRONT
- ⑧ OLD PHOTO - FRONT

- A- BARBERSHOP AREA 10' 6" X 12'
- B- BATHROOM AREA 4' 6" X 13'
- C- LOBBY AREA 15' X 18'
- D- BALCONY/UPSTAIRS 30' X 6'
- E- STAIRS TO UPSTAIRS
- F- MAIN THEATER AREA 30' X 46'
- G- STAGE AREA 30' X 12'

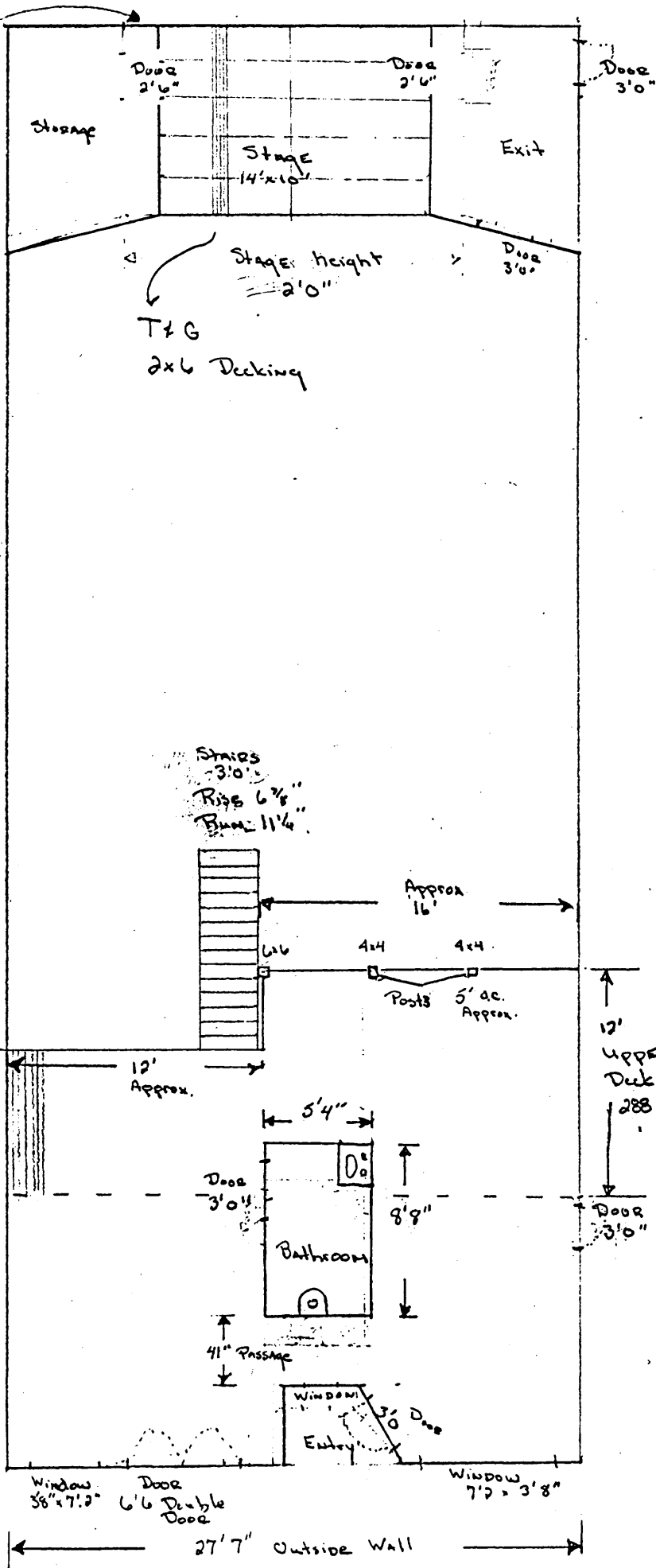
*NOTE - THIS IS A RECONSTRUCTED INTERIOR VIEW. NO INTERIOR PHOTOS WERE POSSIBLE, [NO LIGHTING, INTERIOR IN POOR CONDITION.]



BASELINE DRIVE

OLD THEATER MERCHANTILE

Stage Floor
 2x8 2' O.C.
 2x6 T&G Decking
 4x8 Beam in center



75' 8 1/2" Outside
 74' 9 1/2" Inside
 2x6 - 24" on center

2x6 Walls
 2' on center

2x6 Walls
 1' on center

POWER floor sections

Deck Height 9'6"
 2x6 T&G Decking
 Floor Joists 2x8 16" O.C.

S
 E + W
 N

27'7" Outside Wall
 26'9" Inside 2x6 Walls