

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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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 Seventh Street Theater
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 313 Seventh Street not for publication
city, town Hoquiam vicinity
state Washington code 053 county Grays Harbor code 027 zip code 98550

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> </u>	<u> </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 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.

Jacob E. Sho
Signature of certifying official (Washington State)
Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
Date 7/1/87
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

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:)

Alvord Byers 8/6/87
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Alvord Byers
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture: theater

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture: theater

Rehabilitation & Restoration: work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revival

Other: Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco, concrete

roof ceramic tile, other: composition

other cast iron, wood shingles

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Seventh Street Theater is a commercial complex consisting of an 1,100 seat theater and shops. It is a detached rectangular structure occupying two city lots at the corner of Seventh and "J" Streets in the downtown commercial core area of Hoquiam. The theater, rectangular in plan, occupies the largest portion of the property's space. The remaining space is divided into commercial shops on the first floor and dressing rooms for the theater in the smaller second story area. The steel and timber framed, reinforced concrete structure rests on a solid foundation of pilings and varies in height from one to three and one-half stories. The theater, located in the taller portion, faces Seventh Street and is bounded by alleys on two sides. The lower storied commercial portion abuts the theater on the "J" Street side. The two street elevations consist of the theater facade dominated by the planar upper stories and the shop and theater exit facade characterized by the single story, large-paned glass storefronts. The structure has been moderately impacted due to the removal of the flat awning which ran the length of the street facades, blocking of the transom windows above the storefronts, and deterioration of some decorative elements; however, the remaining character-defining elements, the quality of workmanship visible from the primary and secondary facades, the theater's continued association with the entertainment theme, and the downtown location within an area of compatible older commercial properties all contribute to successfully convey the feeling of the structure as it was originally designed.

The Renaissance Revival influence is exemplified by the symmetry of the theater facade and the use of materials, ornamentation, and surface and space treatments on the interior and exterior of the structure that are typical of the style. The interior of the theater also is characteristic of another stylistic influence, that of atmospheric theaters. The Seventh Street uses projecting wall surfaces, lighting, and ornamentation in a manner recognized as "atmospheric."

Exterior of the Property:

The theater portion of the property is three stories high with the exception of the mechanical room above the projection booth at the front of the property and the flyloft at the rear where both areas are three and one-half stories high. Most of the complex is flat roofed and not visible from the street.

The roof of the theater's primary facade is hipped, broken in the center with a front facing gable which rises one-half story above the rest. The wide eaves are decorated with wooden brackets. Originally, red unglazed clay tiles covered the visible roof areas, however all but a small section of roof area has been replaced with composition shingles of a similar hue. The clay tiles are still intact on the rear portion of the gable, the balcony overhangs, and the decorative gable end of the flyloft portion of the structure.

Windows dominate the first story of the complex. The storefront windows are large iron and wood framed panes with wooden kickplates. Originally, the storefronts featured multi-paned transom windows divided into sections by cast stone mullions and recessed into

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molded cast stone surrounds. All but two transoms were blocked and covered in stucco on the exterior. The backside of the transoms are visible from the interior of the shops which do not have suspended ceilings. The only other windows in the complex are the five simple one-over-one wooden sash windows which light the second story dressing rooms and are visible from "J" Street.

The primary facade of the structure is irregular in form. Divided into four vertical bays, the theater occupies three of the bays, the central bay being wider and one-half story taller than the adjacent two. The central bay is emphasized by the roofline of the facade and the prominent groupings of decorative recesses, columns, and balconies on the upper wall surfaces. The fourth and end bay is one story in height, designed to visually relate to the larger structure, it is located on the corner of the property at the junction of the primary and secondary street-facing facades and is equivalent in width to the central bay of the theater.

The first story of the theater facade is dominated by large-paned glass storefronts between stuccoed piers. The theater entrance features a mixed use of wood, stucco, and colorful glazed ceramic tile. The upper wall surfaces are moderately textured stucco decorated with numerous cast stone and cast iron elements.

The design of the structure and use of decorative elements focus attention on the theater's main entrance which is recessed from the storefronts beneath an arched marquee projecting from the facade. Two pairs of doors on either side of the ticket booth provide access to the theater's foyer. The thick wooden decorative doors are "burnt and enriched with studded nails, and at the top and bottom with perforated lead sheets."² The ticket booth sides are encased in colorful glazed ceramic tile up to counter height. "Above this is a glass enclosure set in a twisted wrought iron frame and capped with a frieze and cornice treatment of pierced sheet lead and cast iron."³ "The ceiling is broken by a series of larger wood beams . . . [the] panels between are highly decorated with colored stencils on a gold background . . . The floor is colored marble terazzo divided into squares by brass strips."⁴

The marquee, projecting from the primary facade above the main entrance, is the width of the central bay, flat-roofed, its lower edge arched and lined with light bulbs. A decorative plaster frieze in the front face of the marquee is eroding but intact. The side letter boards of the marquee, covered by painted aluminum, are no longer visible and the flat metal awning, which attached to the sides of the marquee and ran the entire width and length of the property on its street facades, no longer exists.

The second story of the theater facade is highlighted by a wooden door with eight panels, simple surrounds, and a cast stone lentil and cartouche. The door provides access from the projection booth to the balcony spanning the central bay. The balcony, located directly above the main entrance and theater marquee, contributes to the prominence of the central bay. A cast iron balustrade is supported at either end by a rectangular cast stone pedestal and divided by two smaller cast stone balusters into three segments. On either side of the principal balcony are semicircular cast iron balconies supported by decorative cast stone consoles. Iron panels embossed with sailing ships are fitted into the tall rectangular recesses behind the two balconies. Above the panels are clay tiled hoods supported by cast iron brackets. The decorative recess in the central bay is divided into three arched segments by twisted columns. Originally, the recess was painted with a geometric pattern to replicate the pattern in the marquee and the ceramic tiles in the theater lobby; however, the area is now painted dark brown. Originally, beneath the

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eaves of both of the hipped roof portions of the structure, a plaster frieze depicting an ancient procession including chariots wrapped around each corner of the primary facade. Erosion has destroyed most of one frieze; however, the remaining frieze is intact.

Decorative treatments applied to the secondary facade continue to reflect the Renaissance Revival influence apparent on the theater facade. A series of decorative pilasters spanning the length of the upper stories of the theater, a corbelled run in the wall surface around the roofline of the flyloft area at the rear of the property, and simple cartouches applied to the wall surfaces above each transom area as well as the textured stucco wall surfaces all illustrate the stylistic influence and the contiguous design of the property.

Interior of Property:

The foyer to the theater is rectangular in plan, a shallow low-ceilinged space lodged beneath the upper ranks of the auditorium seating. It is divided into the public area giving access to the auditorium, theater office, and restroom facilities. Curved ramps with turned wooden balusters, located on either side of the main entrance, provide access to the auditorium. The ceiling panels between the wooden beams are painted to simulate grape vines. Walls are patterned stucco. Directly in front of the main entrance, three steps lower than the foyer, is the alcove housing a semicircular glazed tile fountain. Wrought iron, colored glass fixtures suspended from the foyer beams and similar sconces on either side of the fountain backplash, illuminate the area with a golden glow. A snack bar--comprised of two low counters--intrudes into the foyer at one end and is not original to the space.

The auditorium is rectangular in shape and is divided into the general seating area, projection booth, and stage. The auditorium features stadium seating; the public enters the seating at midsection from either side. The projection booth, located behind the last rows of the upper central seating area, contains the original projectors and electrical panels which control the auditorium's atmospheric lighting. In front of the stage is the semicircular orchestra pit with access to the storage rooms and basement area underneath the stage. The stage was designed to accommodate vaudeville productions and contains a large backstage area, full flyloft, and six original backdrops. Stairs located backstage provide access to the second story dressing rooms and the basement.

The auditorium boasts the ornamentation, lighting, wall treatments, and proportions which classify it as an "atmospheric theater."⁵ The ceiling of the auditorium is coved, painted in various shades of blue, and contains recessed lights--some sockets wired for intermittent flashing--in patterns that resemble constellations. The simulated evening sky complete with twinkling stars extends down behind the projected wall scenes reminiscent of the upper stories and rooftops of a Spanish village. The scenes are lit from behind with colored lights contributing to the overall atmospheric effect of the auditorium. The stucco and plaster wall scenes feature stepped pediments, curved false balconies, balustrades, iron grilled windows, and shallow arched recesses. The stage is framed in a decorative plaster band. On either side of the stage are large grillwork panels set in mission style pediments. Beneath the panels are arched doorways ornamented with twisted columns supporting shallow balconies. Imitation greenery spills from plaster urns, wraps around railings and grills, and towers beside the pediments.

The auditorium's atmospheric features are intact. The curtains, carpeting, and some of the upholstered seating has been replaced without noticeable impact. The ceiling exhibits signs of water damage due to a roof leak recently repaired by the current owners.

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The backstage, flyloft, and basement--or understage area--is virtually unchanged. The arrangement of space in the dressing room area has been moderately altered to accommodate a kitchen and full bath. Heating, electrical, and ventilation systems for the theater are intact. The current owners' plan for the property includes full restoration of all character-defining features for use as a playhouse and movie theater as originally designed. Work to date has concentrated on repairing the roof leak and water damage in the auditorium.

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/Recreation
Architecture

Period of Significance

1928 - 1937

Significant Dates

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Edwin St. John Griffin
Huntington & Torbitt Architectural Firm
(Seattle)

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

The Seventh Street Theater is the finest example of an "atmospheric" theater interior on the Olympic peninsula and possibly the state. It is also a fine example of Renaissance Revival influence as applied to a commercial structure in the city of Hoquiam. Visually and culturally prominent in the downtown area since its construction, the theater retains a majority of the rich elements and stylistic treatments which originally characterized it as a "gem of art . . . 6" [comparing] most favorably with the pretentious motion picture playhouses of Seattle." Since opening in July 1928, the Seventh Street has continued to play an important role in the cultural development of Hoquiam by providing an impressive facility for the community to enjoy variety and quality entertainment in an atmospheric setting. Periods of disuse and deterioration threatened the theater in the past and the community repeatedly renewed its support to preserve the structure. The current owners, Grays Harbor Community Concert Association, are continuing the tradition of support by planning and initiating the total restoration of the structure in use and design.

The Seventh Street Theater represents an interior stylistic treatment unique to theaters. Atmospherics, first employed by theater architect John Ebersson, transformed the interiors of movie houses into simulated open air arenas. The Seventh Street Theater adopts many of Ebersson's atmospheric techniques to successfully simulate an evening under the stars within a Spanish village. The quality of design and workmanship of the atmospheric characteristics, virtually intact in the Seventh Street Theater, qualify the property as a significant example of atmospheric theaters in the state and the most significant example in the region.

The structure is representative of Renaissance Revival architecture adapted for use in the region. The Seventh Street Theater modifies the style to fit the use and scale demanded in the community. The city of Aberdeen, immediately to the east of Hoquiam, boasts a theater from the same period originally called the Warner Brothers Aberdeen which closely resembles the Seventh Street Theater on the exterior in that Renaissance Revival architecture was the base from which the architect began his design. Each structure is a successful example of the high style applied to a theater within the same region and built within five years of one another yet each is unique and individually significant.

The Seventh Street Theater is also representative of the evolution in theater design in Hoquiam and the region. It represents a structure designed to accommodate the transition from live entertainment--vaudeville--to movies. Scale and stylistic treatments were embellished to heighten the patron's sense of fantasy and entertain larger numbers. When completed, the Seventh Street Theater was the grandest theater in the community and to

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

"The Artistic Genius." Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, cols. 1-2.
Beeson, Erle, "Beauty and Comfort are Combined in Realization of Dolan, Taylor Dreams,"
Grays Harbor Washingtonian. 8 July 1928, Sec. 1, p. 1, cols. 1-4.
Crawford, Sam L. "7th Street to Take Top Rank on Harbor in Amusement Field." Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, cols. 4-8.
Griffin, Edwin St. J. "Architect Tells of Construction of Fine Theatre." Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, col. 1.
Hoquiam American. 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, pp. 1 & 8.
Naylor, David. American Picture Places: The Architecture of Fantasy. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981.
"7th St. Theatre is Thronged at Formal Opening." Hoquiam American, 11 July 1928, n.p.

Additional photocopied news articles and photographs from regional newspapers are on file with the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

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 less than one

UTM References

A

1	0	4	3	2	6	6	5	5	2	0	2	7	4	5
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Quad Name: Hoquiam
Quad Scale: 1:24,000

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Verbal Boundary Description

Block 49, Lot 3 (LS NE 5' for the alley) and Lot 4, corrected plat of Hoquiam, Washington.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes both city lots historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kay A. Austin, Local Preservation Programs Coordinator
organization Archaeology & Historic Preservation date May 1987
street & number 111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11 telephone 206/753-4011
city or town Olympia state WA zip code 98504

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date remains as Hoquiam's only structure built to meet the needs of both live and celluloid entertainment accommodating the promise that one day films would equal or surpass the popularity of vaudeville.

The theater's period of significance spans the years from 1928-1937, the date of its construction until fifty years prior to the date of the nomination. Since 1937, the property's significance in entertainment and cultural importance declined primarily due to the advent of radio and television. From 1928 to 1937, however, movie theaters and vaudeville playhouses provided a popular source of entertainment for many communities. As Hoquiam's only major theater and a theater competitive in size and style with the theaters of the neighboring community of Aberdeen, the Seventh Street Theater best represents the cultural and entertainment theme for the community during its period of significance. An excerpt from the article describing opening day festivities indicates the community's high level of regard and enthusiasm for the "Theatre Beautiful."⁸ "Record-breaking crowds attended each performance taxing the seating capacity of the new structure twice in the afternoon and twice last night. Bowing from the screen instead of the stage, Mayor George Brault of Hoquiam officially dedicated the new playhouse. . . . The beautiful foyer . . . was enhanced by the display of scores of floral offerings from leading business and professional men of the Twin Cities of Grays Harbor, and they were there in person to add their vocal tributes and to inspect the new 'Institution.'"⁹

The concept of providing the community with a theater "incorporating the best and most modern of theatrical design and equipment" was realized by the Hoquiam Amusement Company, a company formed specifically for the purpose of constructing the theater.¹⁰ Edward Dolan, president and managing director of the United Building Company of Hoquiam, the Hoquiam Amusement Company, and the D. & R. Theatres Company, is credited with the "vision of Hoquiam's future accepted by his associates [which] resulted in the building and equipping of the Seventh Street Theater at a total cost of more than \$175,000."¹¹ Edwin St. John Griffin and the Seattle firm of Huntington & Torbitt are credited with the architectural design of the theater and O.T. Taylor, associated with Ed Dolan in the local theater companies, is regaled as the "wizard of artistic visualization whose brain conceived of the 'Theatre Beautiful' for Hoquiam and whose ideas from foundation to roof are incorporated in the Seventh Street."¹² Without further research, it is only speculative as to what degree the Seventh Street project contributed to Hoquiam's economy; however, it is documented that a vast amount of labor and materials for the theater's construction were provided by local firms.

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NOTES

1. David Naylor, American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981), pp. 67-77.
2. Griffin, Edwin St. J., "Architect Tells of Construction of Fine Theatre," Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, col. 1.
3. Griffin, "Architect."
4. Griffin, "Architect."
5. Naylor, American Picture Palaces.
6. Beeson, Erle, "Beauty and Comfort are Combined in Realization of Dolan, Taylor Dreams," Grays Harbor Washingtonian. 8 July 1928, Sec. 1, p. 1, cols. 1-4.
7. Naylor, American Picture Palaces.
8. n.a., "The Artistic Genius," Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, cols. 1-2.
9. n.a., "7th St. Theatre is Thronged at Formal Opening," Hoquiam American, 11 July 1928, n.p.
10. Crawford, Sam L., "7th Street to Take Top Rank on Harbor in Amusement Field," Hoquiam American, 5 July 1928, Sec. 2, p. 1, col. 5.
11. Crawford, "7th Street," cols. 7-8.
12. "Artistic Genius."