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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 Stevens Opera Block

other names/site number Delmont Opera House, Stevens Hall

2. Location

street & number Main Street

not for publication

city, town Delmont

vicinity

state South Dakota

code

SD

county

Douglas

code

043

zip code 57330

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.

A. G. Fisher
Signature of certifying official

11/4/88
Date

South Dakota SHPO
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:)

Alvora Byers Entered in the National Register

12/20/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Specialty store
RECREATION/Theatre

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS/ Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick

roof Asphalt
other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Situated on a prominent commercial corner along Main Street in the City of Delmont, the Stevens Opera Block is a large two story brick building that rises from a poured concrete foundation. It is capped by a sloping flat roof covered with asphalt rolled roofing material. Dimensions of the building are 100 feet in length and 50 feet in width. The south (front) facade and part of the east facade are wrapped by a narrow poured concrete string course marking the division of floors. Both street facades feature a narrow cornice of poured concrete supported by brick corbelling. An inset cast concrete plaque with the words "OPERA BLOCK" in relief adorns the top of the center of the south facade. The original wood and glass first-story store fronts have been replaced by wood and brick infill; however, the location of door openings has not been altered. On the upper level, paired and single elongated rectangular windows have been covered with wood panels. Poured concrete lintels and original window openings remain unchanged. A metal fire escape nearly covered with vines and bushes projects from the center of the west facade.

Interior division of space remains as originally designed. The majority of the space is occupied by a retail grocery store (originally a hardware store) along three-fourths of the south and east walls. A small printing office (originally a barber shop) fills in along the west wall. The rear one-third of the building originally served as an auto garage; however it is now being used as storage space for the grocery business. A hand-powered elevator, no longer in service, is located in the center of this rear division. All interior walls except for those in storage rooms are plastered. Access to the upper story auditorium is gained via a long straight stairwell located along the east interior wall. The stairwell is accessible from either the retail store space or from a door on the east facade. Retail spaces have been remodeled for modern use.

Although deteriorated through neglect in recent years, the auditorium space retains much of its historic integrity. In 1950, a fire destroyed the stage and dressing rooms, which were not replaced. The original hardwood floor is intact and in fair condition.

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)

Commerce
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1911 - 1938

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lytle, C. R., Construction Company

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

1	4	5	6	7	9	8	0	4	7	9	0	6	7	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Quad.: Delmont, Scale: 1:24000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is bounded by the legal description as recorded in the Douglas County Register of Deeds Office: Lots 2 and 3, Block 2, Original City of Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is based on legally recorded lot lines of the parcel historically associated with the nominated property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Strid (s/technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO Staff)

organization building owner date August 30, 1988

street & number Box 213 telephone 605-779-2061

city or town Delmont state South Dakota zip code 57330

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Section number 8 Page 1

Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, the Stevens Opera Block is significant in the areas of commerce and entertainment/recreation. Since its construction in 1911 and 1912, the building has continually housed vital businesses in the small rural center of Delmont. In addition, for most of its history the auditorium served as the community's pre-eminent theatre and gathering place. It is one of the few remaining brick commercial buildings on Main Street. Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan, the nominated property relates to the historic context labeled: V. Depression and Rebuilding, A. 2. Changing Urban Patterns/Rebuilding Commercial Centers.

Douglas County was created by the territorial legislature in 1873. However, white settlement there did not begin until 1879, when Mary Donley and her son Michael filed on adjacent claims in the southeastern corner of the county, near the present townsite of Delmont. Soon, as the Great Dakota Boom evolved, thousands of people of both old-American and immigrant stock rushed in to homestead the once vacant land. The county was officially organized in 1882, and the City of Delmont was founded three years later. Although it did not win the seat of county government, Delmont did become, and remains today, a thriving rural commercial center in the midst of southeastern South Dakota.

In 1911, a partnership of local businessmen under the name of the Delmont Hardware Company began construction of a fine new building to house their retail venture. The general contractor was C. F. Lytle Construction Company of Sioux City, Iowa. Completed in January 1912, the building offered retail facilities for two businesses and a community opera hall. Local publicists bragged that the new building featured steam heating, full electrification, was fitted for city water, and was "in every way modern". Initially, the large space was occupied by the owners, the Delmont Hardware Company and the small space by a local barber. The original investors soon went bankrupt, and the firm was purchased by J. W. Stevens in 1913. Stevens soon moved to Mitchell but left his sons in charge of the store. Although not always located in this space, the Stevens Hardware Store remained in business in Delmont into the 1960s. Over the years, the building has housed many other local enterprises including several groceries, a merchantile store, an auction house and a young peoples club room. Currently, it is occupied by Dick's Market, managed by building owner Richard Strid, and the Delmont Record, the local newspaper.

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Section number 8 Page 2

The upper level auditorium was generally known as "Stevens Hall" for most of its life and served as the town's entertainment center. Innumerable shows, plays, dances, bazaars, parties, movies, and political rallies were held there. During its first two decades, the Stevens family showed silent movies on a regular basis in the hall. The school, churches, and other local organizations often rented the space for large assemblies. In 1927, Lawrence Welk and his orchestra played to a packed house. For a short while it was the home the local American Legion post, and in the fifties it was used as a roller rink. Although now vacant, the auditorium is in fair condition. Except for lacking the original stage and dressing rooms, destroyed by fire in 1950, it retains its historic integrity. The current owner has long-range goals to restore the hall to some type of local assembly or recreation room, but no plans have yet been formulated.

The period of significance of the nominated property extends from its dates of construction in 1911 and 1912 to 1938, the established 50 year cut-off date for the National Register.

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Section number 9 Page 1

Abstract of Title. Lots 2 and 3, Block 2, City of Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota.

Delmont (South Dakota) Record. various issues from 1911 to 1913.

Douglas County History and Centennial Observances, 1961. Stickney, SD: Argus Printers, 1961. pp. 57-58, 99, *passim*.

Karolevitz, Robert F. Douglas County: The Little Giant. Armour, SD: Douglas County Historical Society, 1983. *Passim*.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number photos Page 1

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

1.

Stevens Opera Block
Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota
by John Rau
May 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
South and east facades, camera facing northwest
Photo No. 1

2.

Stevens Opera Block
Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota
by John Rau
May 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
North and east facades, camera facing southwest
Photo No. 2

3.

Stevens Opera Block
Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota
by Richard Strid
April 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
Interior of opera hall, camera facing south (front)
Photo No. 3

4.

Stevens Opera Block
Delmont, Douglas County, South Dakota
by Richard Strid
April 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
Interior of opera hall, camera facing north (rear)
Photo No. 4