

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **SEP 11 1985**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Marquis Opera House (NeHBS #SF11-205)
and/or common Flynn Building

2. Location

street & number 1601-03 Broadway N/A not for publication
city, town Scottsbluff N/A vicinity of
state Nebraska code 031 county Scotts Bluff code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William R. and Gerald D. Tallmon, A Partnership
street & number 1601 Broadway
city, town Scottsbluff N/A vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Scotts Bluff County Courthouse
street & number Northwest corner 10th and Q Streets
city, town Gering state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date On-going federal state county local
depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society
city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Marquis Opera House is located in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, a city situated in the Panhandle region of Western Nebraska. The original building, constructed 1909-10, was erected as an "opera house block"; a two-story brick Victorian building, visually giving the appearance of three stories. The lower level housed retail space with the opera house auditorium occupying second floor. In 1916, after the opera house closed, the building was remodelled (e.g. new storefront, stucco finish and third floor added internally) to incorporate additional commercial and office space.

This remodelling gave the building its general Neo-Classical character, which it still maintains today. The present owners have plans to rehabilitate the building for use as housing and retail space.

The Marquis Opera House is located in the downtown business district of Scottsbluff, Nebraska (1985 Pop.: 14,156) which lies directly north of Gering, the County Seat of Scotts Bluff County. The rectangular-shaped brick building was originally constructed in 1909-10 as a two-story building, visually giving the appearance of three stories on the exterior. A two-story rear wing is found on the east facade. The opera house auditorium, which featured a slanted floor and high ceiling then occupied what would be considered both second and third floors. The opera house operated only a few years, due to the owner's financial troubles. After its closing, the building was extensively remodelled. Major alterations included: A third floor added internally to create more office space, giving the brick a stucco finish, and modernation of storefronts.

The west (front) and south facades are divided into four and seven bays, respectively, by brick pilasters visually supporting a massive cornice which originally displayed brick corbelling. The west (front) facade shows a stepped parapet wall upon which originally read "Opera House." The building now bears the name of "Flynn." Fenestration in the building consists of rectangular shaped window openings on the second level and segmentally arched window openings on third. The window openings on the front (west) facade and the front 2 bays on the south facade are covered with decorative brick window hoods, some also incorporating keystone ornaments. Windows on the south facade are grouped in pairs. During the 1916 remodeling, the window openings (second and third levels) on the south facade (rear 5 bays) were enlarged to align with the front 2 bays. First-level windows (south facade) have been filled in. The building originally featured a prominent recessed corner entry with large display windows to each side. The west (front) facade also featured a centered recessed entry (no longer extant) which led to the second level. The present storefront on the southwest corner, (1916) is worthy of architectural mention. It displays stone facing pierced by round arched window openings crowned with stone voussoirs and keystone ornaments. An elaborate wall sconce, also of stone, crowns the entire storefront. The remaining storefronts (west and south facades) which have undergone remodeling, are nondescript in nature and lack any architectural note.

The Opera House was constructed by L. C. Marquis with C. R. Inman serving as the contractor. The present owners have plans to rehabilitate the building for apartments and retail space.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1909-16 **Builder/Architect** C. R. Inman

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecturally significant on a local level, the Marquis Opera House represents a good example of an opera house block, a building type evident in Nebraska during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These opera house blocks were designed to incorporate office and retail space on the lower levels, with the auditorium occupying the top floor. The building was the first opera house to be constructed in Scottsbluff and remains as one of the substantial structures in the downtown business area. The period of significance (1909-16) is derived from the original construction (1909-10) and significant remodeling (1916) dates of the building.

The Marquis Opera House is architecturally significant on a local level as a good example of an "Opera House Block," a building type which was evident in the state during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The majority of opera house blocks identified thus far in the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey date prior to 1900, with many of these buildings being constructed in the 1880's and 90's. The post-1900 construction date of the Marquis Opera House reflects the later settlement patterns of Western Nebraska. Significance is related for the period of construction in its general architectural form, which still conveys the architectural characteristics of Opera Blocks around the state. Characteristics include the overall rectangular, and three story massing, a bulk not associated with office construction of the period, and in the raised parapet of the main facade. Additional architectural significance is associated with the 1916 remodeling which included the new stone entrance and the stucco finish of the walls. In combination the remodeling gave the building a general Neo-Classical character, and succeeded in changing the image from a Victorian Opera house to a modern (ie 1916) commercial structure.

The building was one of the first constructed on Scottsbluff's Main Street and has a significant History of success and failure. The building was originally constructed in two floors. The main floor level was retail sales space and the second floor was Scottsbluff's first opera house.

The history of the building begins with Lewis and Lulu Marquis, who in a partnership with C. R. Inman constructed the building. The building was not a successful venture and in 1910-11-12 several mechanics liens were attached to the property. By 1916 the interior third floor had been added and Mr. and Mrs. Marquis, along with C. R. Inman, had secured financing to continue their ownership of the building and the liens were paid and released. From 1916 to 1936 the building had financial and management problems as numerous liens and tax obligations found their way to court. In 1936 the building changed owners.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Scottsbluff South, Nebraska

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone	Easting		Northing											

C

Zone	Easting		Northing											

D

Zone	Easting		Northing											

E

Zone	Easting		Northing											

F

Zone	Easting		Northing											

G

Zone	Easting		Northing											

H

Zone	Easting		Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is described as Lots 7, 8, Block 7, original town, Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, including all historically associated real estate.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Tallmon/Technical Editor and Additions, Joni Gilkerson, Architectural Historian

organization Owner/Nebraska State Historical Society date Jan. 1985/June, 1985

street & number 1601 Broadway/1500 R Street, P.O.Box 82554 telephone (308)632-6662/(402)471-4767

city or town Scottsbluff/Lincoln state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *James A. Hanson*

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date 8-14-85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered on the
National Register

date 10-10-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number

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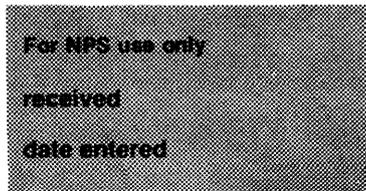
The new owner was Wade Flynn. Under his management the building seemed to be well managed and occupied. The main level housed a restaurant, a bank, barbershop and retail sales. The second level was utilized as office space for dentists, lawyers, miscellaneous offices and apartments. The third level was for the most part vacant. In the 1950's and 60's the main level remained rented but the upper levels became undesirable, apparently because of the automobile, progress, and new construction. No modern improvements were made to the building except cosmetic and basic maintenance. In 1960 Glenn Helm purchased the building and continued the basic maintenance and some cosmetic changes to the street level as different tenants came and went.

In 1979 the building was purchased from Glen Helm by Bill and Jerry Tallmon, the present owners. In an effort to convert more empty space into usable production, a new staircase was built to access the second floor and an expansion was effected to utilize the space. Realizing the historical significance of the property and having the desire to revitalize the building to modern usage, the owners have devised a long-term plan. The first step is to restore and bring the facade to standards. A second step would be to create modern spaces for modern needs in a historical setting. The building will be used for apartments and retail space.

The Opera House reflects the daring and courage of frontier entrepreneurs. It was a large structure for Scottsbluff and was the center of Broadway action. The builders were betting on Scottsbluff to grow and flourish. It did not happen for them, but the aspirations live on in this building. It should be preserved and revitalized in the spirit of Nebraska's frontier.

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Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical Ref. Item number 9

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May 14, 1909
May 28, 1909
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