

PH0013145

8th Congressional District
Williamson S. Stuckey

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Georgia	
COUNTY: Pulaski	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAR 1	1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Hawkinsville City Hall-Auditorium

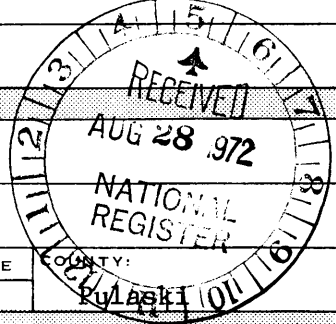
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Old Opera House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Corner of Lumpkin and Broad Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Hawkinsville

STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13** COUNTY: **Pulaski** CODE: **235**



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Theater</u>
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Hawkinsville

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Hawkinsville** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Clerk of City, City Hall Office

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Hawkinsville** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Georgia**

COUNTY: **Pulaski**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: **MAR 1 1973**

DATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

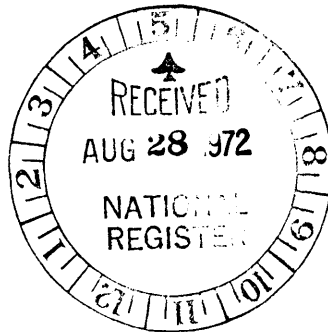
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

For most central and southern Georgians, the building and operation of the Hawkinsville Old Opera House in the early twentieth century was their first opportunity to see commercial live theater entertainment.

The Old Opera House, used simultaneously as a City Hall and theater in downtown Hawkinsville, is a brick building with many rooflines and heights, brick pilasters and cornices; numerous, variously shaped windows (some with heavy stone trim on the upper part); and a heavy keystone arch defining the entrance way. One unusual exterior feature is the marble cornerstone carved in the shape of an open, turned back book.

W. R. Gunn, the architect for the opera house, guaranteed perfect acoustics and seating arrangements. The pine wood stage floor, 75 feet in length and 60 feet deep, is considered a legitimate size and accommodates full cut scenery of standard dimensions. The stage curtain of canvas and handpainted in oil, is 75 feet wide and 18 feet high. This curtain and all scenery pull into the fly loft in one piece without having to be rolled up. The fly loft holds eight sets of scenery, each with a set of ropes so that complete scenery changes can be made in five minutes. Backstage are three tiers of dressing rooms. A wide double door, large enough to admit live horses or a concert grand piano gives access to the stage; a trap door on stage can be used in Shakespearean productions.

The 576 seats are in good condition and are equipped underneath with metal racks for gentlemen's hats. Each seat is marked by aisle and row with metal markers. On the lower of two tiers of balconies, is a curved, solid brass guard rail. Corinthian columns support this lower balcony. The lighting consists of 200 ten-watt bare bulbs that are set in the plaster ceiling around a central brass medallion fixture that also acts as a ventilation mechanism.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1907**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) History
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	Aug 28 1972
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	NATIONAL HISTORICAL REGISTER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hawkinsville City Hall Auditorium, or Old Opera House as it is usually called, was built in 1907 and brought cultural entertainment and noted speakers to Central Georgia for the first time. Hawkinsville was on the "road show" circuit which included Savannah, Macon, Americus, Atlanta, Columbus, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. Before its erection only those persons that could afford the time and expense of a train trip to Atlanta or New York were able to see theater productions.

According to records from 1907-18 back issues of the Hawkinsville Dispatch and News, one production company after another would play Hawkinsville, often week after week. Tickets for all good shows were sold on a reserve seat basis one week in advance. Choice seats for all good shows were \$1.50, and many productions were sold out leaving only standing room. The towns of Pineview and Finleyson, (two cities one mile apart) and Hawkinsville developed a friendly spirit of rivalry as to the town that would purchase the most seats for the better productions. One production company was glad of the opportunity to stop and play Hawkinsville as it broke the long train ride from Atlanta to Jacksonville and Miami, Florida. Several production companies performed for a full week, with change of plays and scenery each night. During 1915 and 1916 many of the productions were so well known, that the W. and T. and the Florida Southern railroads ran special excursion trains featuring low round trip fares. The W. and T. went from Sandersville through Dublin, Georgia, to Hawkinsville, and the Florida Southern brought visitors from Ashburn, Georgia, to Hawkinsville.

Some of the outstanding productions that appeared in the Old Opera House were the "Apollo Concert Company and Bell Ringers;" "The Great Catastrophe" by the N.G.A. Music and Dramatic Company; "Shepherd of the Hills" produced by Gaskell and MacVittys; "The Little Millionaire" featuring a cast of thirty and a half players (the half being the baby); the "Fortune Hunter" featuring Juanita Archer; "The Goose Girl Freckles;" "Bought and Paid For", A William Brady Production; "The Third Degree;" "Ingomar;" "The Arrival of Kitty;" "The Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet"; "September Morn;" "Wedded and Parted;" Coburn's Minstrels; and Hardy of Laurel and Hardy. In 1913, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Nichols of New York were featured in a joint recital. Mr. Nichols, a tenor, had recently performed in Paris and London.

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alderman, Dr. Louis C., Jr. Middle Georgia College President, July 19, 1967. Letter. Chautauqua Assembly Program, April 29-May 6, 1897. Pulaski Cou. Hist. Comm. Program-Pictorial Magazine, June 12, 1915. Pulaski Co. Hist. Comm., S. A. Way, Hawkinsville, Georgia.

Churchill, Allen. Remember When, Golden Press, Inc. p. 178.

Hawkinsville Dispatch and News 1906-1972.

Heart of Georgia Planning and Development Commission, Sept. 1967.

Kimberly, Mr. and Mrs. Carl T., Historical Comm., Pulaski Co Dev. Beard. Presented first draft of manuscript for National Register Nomination Form; on file at Georgia Historical Commission.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE					
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	32	16	54	83	28	05
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"						
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"						
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"						

UTM
17/267501
3574250

CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
William R. Mitchell, Jr., Director, Georgia Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION: **Georgia Historical Commission** DATE: **July 26, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:
116 Mitchell Street, SW

CITY OR TOWN: **Atlanta** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

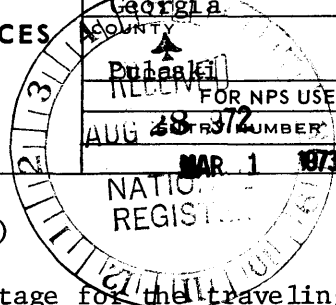
12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Mary Gregory Just</u></p> <p>Title <u>State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date <u>August 11, 1972</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert H. Utley</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>3/1/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>W. M. Minter</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>2.27.73</u></p>
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Georgia	
COUNTY	Pulaski	
RECEIVED FOR NPS USE ONLY		
AUG 28 1972	NUMBER	DATE
MAR 1 1973		



(Number all entries)

8. Significance (Old Opera House, Hawkinsville)

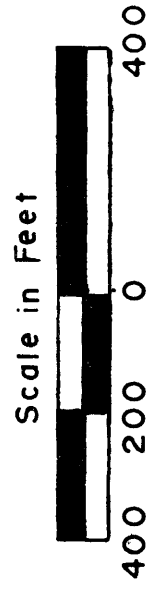
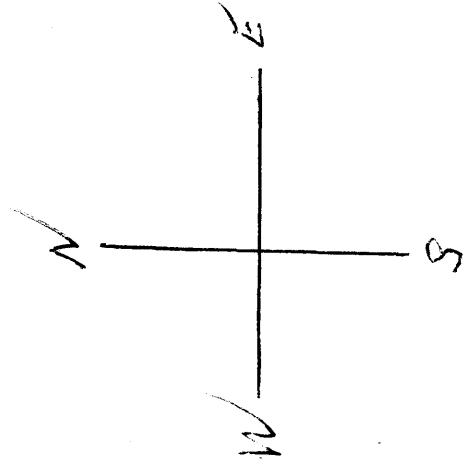
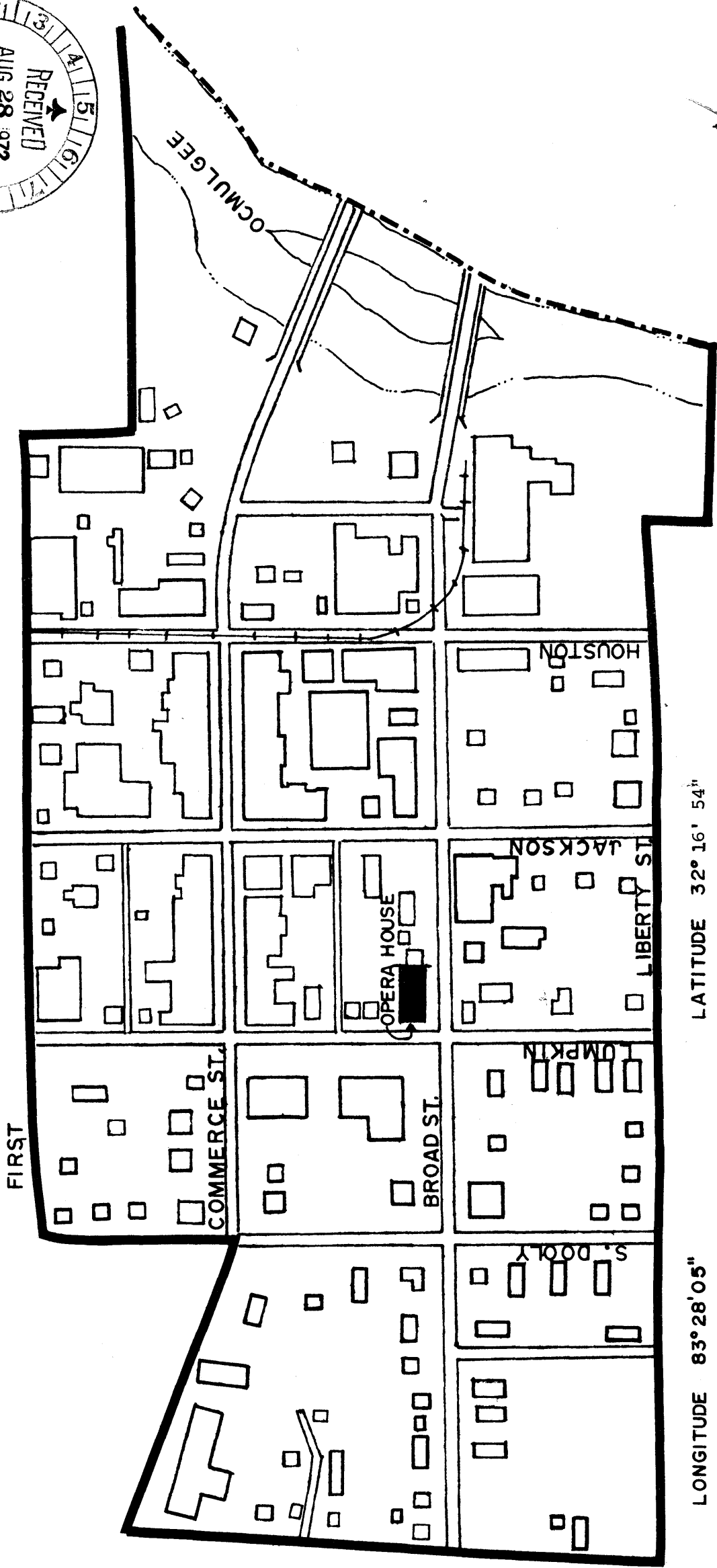
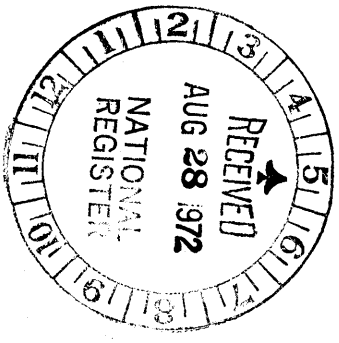
In 1916 the Old Opera House was also the stage for the traveling Chautauqua. On one occasion the first U.S. Senator from Oklahoma, the Honorable Thomas P. Gore, was the attraction and later Ex-Governor Robert Broadnax Glenn from North Carolina made his appearance in the show.

The Old Opera House building is representative of an age of popular commercial live theater and vaudeville entertainment. Many buildings of a similar kind were built throughout the United States at about this time, but few remain in their original state today. The opportunity to find one of these buildings virtually unaltered is quite rare.

W. R. Gunn, the designer of the Hawkinsville Old Opera House, two years earlier had been in charge of the renovation of the Macon Grand Opera House (which is on the National Register.) Little is known about him; the unusual turned back book-like cornerstone lists him as an architect from Macon; the original contractor's sign lists him as of Macon and Atlanta. It is known that he promised the Old Opera House would have perfect acoustical qualities and seating arrangement which he fulfilled with excellence. From every seat in the house one can see and hear clearly without strain. He also designed the opera house with a large legitimate stage size that could accommodate bulky equipment, a high full fly loft for immediate change of scenery and three tiers of dressing rooms for the performing actors. Thus, it is apparent that he was a theater architect, as he proclaimed himself to be.

Architecturally, the Old Opera House presents several points of interest. At a time when Louis Sullivan, with his "form follows function" dictum, was designing his small banks in the Midwest, here in Middle Georgia was an architect who whether consciously or because of economic restraints designed in a functional, almost brutally honest style. In the Old Opera House, a combination city hall-auditorium building, no attempt has been made to hide the functions and necessity of variously shaped windows and roof heights. Gunn has followed Sullivan's message in spirit, but not in detail, for none of the Sullivanesque ornament appears. The Old Opera House is a bare, warehouse-like opera house and what classical details occur are there merely to define voids and functions such as the entrance arch or the five bays of the front facade windows.

The Old Opera House has been used as a city hall, theater, library, club house and temporary church when necessary. It still has the largest seating capacity in Pulaski County and the arrangement of the seats and the general acoustic qualities of the space are very good. The opportunity exists for providing an intimate theater, civic and museum facility, while at the same time preserving something unique to the town and to the period.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

HAWKINSVILLE, GEORGIA