

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Connecticut</b>	
COUNTY: <b>New Haven</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>68-11-06-0002</b>	<b>11/8/68</b>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**The Sterling Opera House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Northwest corner of Fourth and Elizabeth Streets**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Derby**

STATE: <b>Connecticut</b>	CODE: <b>06</b>	COUNTY: <b>New Haven</b>	CODE: <b>009</b>
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Unused</u>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
**Town of Derby Redevelopment Agency**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**59 Elizabeth Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Derby**

STATE: <b>Connecticut</b>	CODE: <b>0200</b>
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Town Hall**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Fifth Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Derby**

STATE: <b>Connecticut</b>	CODE: <b>0200</b>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:  $\frac{1}{4}$  city block

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Connecticut Historic Structures and Landmarks Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **August 16, 1966** Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Connecticut Historical Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**75 Elm Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Hartford**

STATE: <b>Connecticut</b>	CODE: <b>0280</b>
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STATE: Conn. COUNTY: Hartford ENTRY NUMBER: 68-11-06-0002 DATE: 11/8/68

**7. DESCRIPTION**

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a very fine and rare type of Victorian building for Connecticut. It is mainly a Victorian Palladian design with brick quoins and trim and concrete, stucco type walls. There are also Renaissance details in the windows and there are groupings with many Palladian windows. The cornice has brackets. The theatre seats 1250 and the acoustics are remarkably good. This building should be saved because of the great service it can lend the community. Present condition structurally sound. Endangered.

A bold and dramatic building in an eclectic manner that comes through strongest as an Italianate Renaissance style. Its scale and mass make it a dominant feature of the square and it should remain as a focal center for subsequent town planning; it can serve in any number of adaptive uses and deserves preservation for purely practical terms equally as much as for architectural terms. Cleaning of the exterior would enhance the skillful use of contrasting masonry.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century   
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Built 1889**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phi-		Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	losophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Agriculture	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Art	Landscape		Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Commerce	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-		_____	
Communications	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Conservation	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	
	Music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

(Suburban News - Shelton, Conn. 3/9/67): Constructed in 1889, the Opera House played host to the theatre's leading artists. The greats and near-greats performed on its huge stage when Derby was a cultural center and the Sterling Theatre drew crowds from up and down the east coast. John Drew, Lionel Barrymore, Grace George, Alice Fisher, Tony Pastor, Jack teagarden, Donald O'Connor, Lotte Lehmann and Frederick Schorr were some of the personalities who appeared there. John L. Sullivan, world heavyweight boxing champion and James J. Corbett who defeated him for the title made their appearances as did Amelia Earhart. Local vaudevillians either had their start or returned here having made their "name." The acoustics have been termed "perfect," "no finer in the country" and it is one of the few remaining auditoriums in which it is possible to speak from the stage and be heard anywhere in the house, without a microphone. It ranks with the old Metropolitan of New York City.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bridgeport Sunday Post (Conn.), 6/19/66  
Souvenir History of Derby and Shelton (Conn.)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	41°	19'	18"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	73°	5'	24"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

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: Herbert C. Darbee Executive Secretary

ORGANIZATION: Connecticut Historical Commission DATE: 26 May, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER: 75 Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hartford STATE: Connecticut CODE: 0280

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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:

National  State  Local

Name *Eric Hatch*  
Eric Hatch  
 Title State Liaison Officer  
 Date 28 May, 1969

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

*Grant Allen Connolly*  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

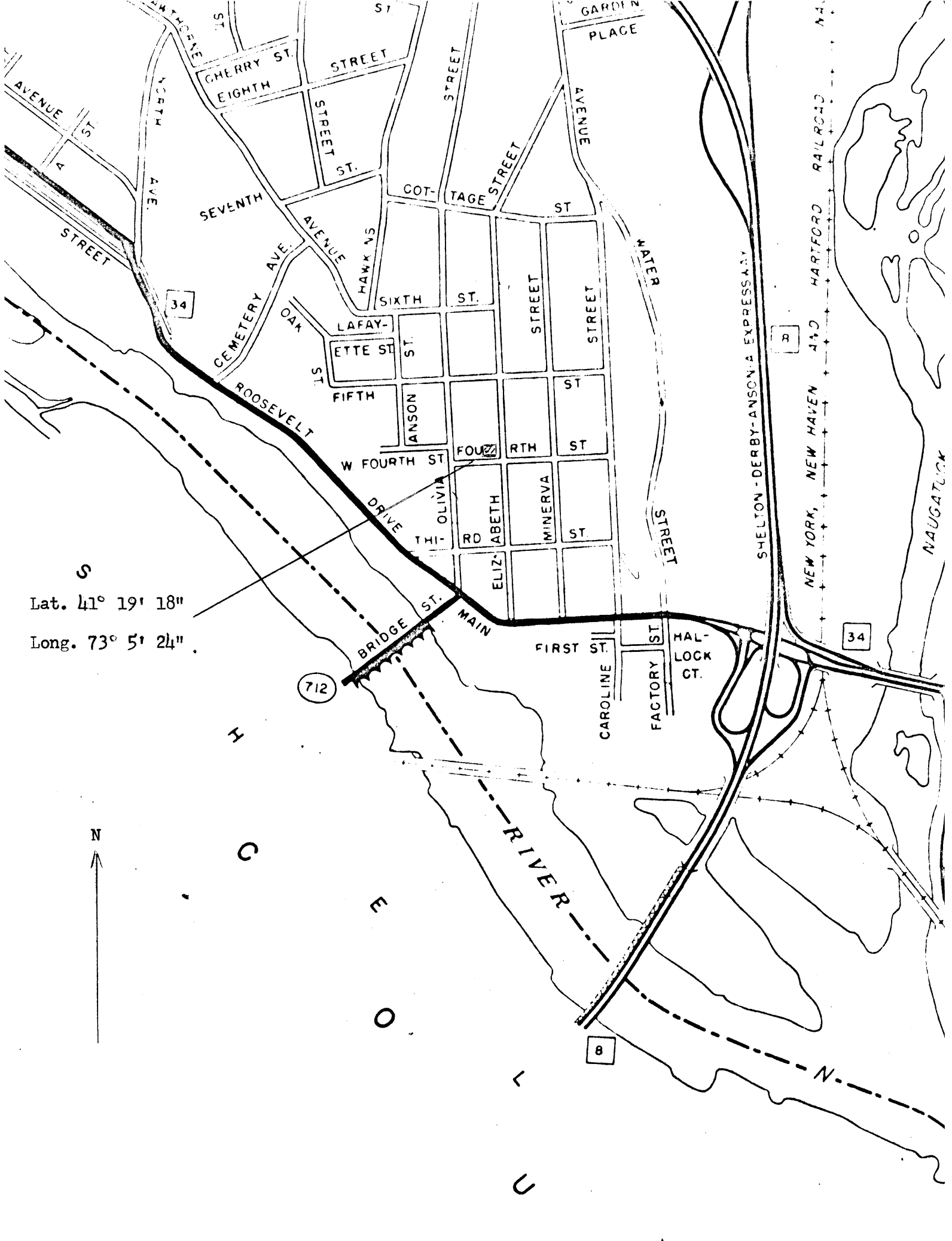
Date NOV 8 1968

ATTEST:

*William J. Murtagh*  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date NOV 8 1968

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



S  
 Lat. 41° 19' 18"  
 Long. 73° 5' 24"



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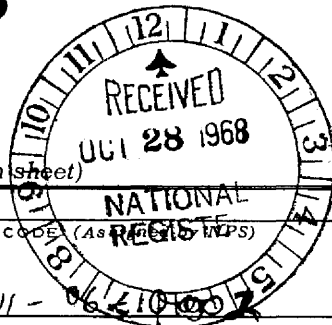
PH0010685

Form 10-300  
(July 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections - use continuation sheet)



DRAFT

1. NAME

COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (As prescribed by NPS)
The Sterling Opera House		68-11-06410-002

2. LOCATION

STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Connecticut	New Haven	Derby

STREET AND NUMBER (or District-Site boundaries)

Northwest corner of Fourth and Elizabeth Streets

3. PRESENT STATUS

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS (Street, number, town, state)

Town of Derby Redevelopment Agency, 59 Elizabeth Street, Derby, Connecticut

USE (Specify)

Unused

ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC

YES  NO

REMARKS:

4. LEGAL RECORD

LOCATION OF CURRENT PROPERTY TITLE(S) - NAME AND ADDRESS (Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.)

Town Hall, Fifth Street, Derby, Connecticut

APPROX. ACREAGE

1/4 city block

5. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

NAME AND DATE OF SURVEY (Federal, State, Local, Etc.)	NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION RETAINING SURVEY RECORDS
A. Connecticut Historical Commission Inventory - August 16, 1966	A. Connecticut Historical Commission 75 Elm Street Hartford, Connecticut 06115
B.	B.
C.	C.

6. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE IN	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
DISTRICT <input type="checkbox"/>	HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/>	NATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/>
SITE <input type="checkbox"/>	ARCHITECTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	STATE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BUILDING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ARCHEOLOGY <input type="checkbox"/>	LOCAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
STRUCTURE <input type="checkbox"/>	CULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/>	(Other) <input type="checkbox"/>	

7. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

DESCRIBE THE ORIGINAL (If known) AND PRESENT CONDITION

This is a very fine and rare type of Victorian building for Connecticut. It is mainly a Victorian Palladian design with brick quoins and trim and concrete, stucco type walls. There are also Renaissance details in the windows and there are groupings with many Palladian windows. The cornice has brackets. The theater seats 1250 and the acoustics are remarkably good.

This building should be saved because of the great service it can lend the community.

Present condition structurally sound.

Endangered.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

INCLUDE HISTORY, PERSONAGES, EVENTS, MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ETC.

This is a bold and dramatic building in an eclectic manner that comes through strongest as an Italianate Renaissance style. Its scale and mass make it a dominant feature of the square and it should remain as a focal center for subsequent town planning; it can serve in any number of adaptive uses and deserves preservation for purely practical terms equally as much as for architectural terms. Cleaning of the exterior would enhance the skillful use of contrasting masonry.

9. CERTIFICATION

FORM PREPARED BY: (Name, organization)

William J. Morris, Special Assistant to the Chairman, 75 Elm Street, Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, Connecticut

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

Ernest Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

William J. Schnitzler  
(Keeper of the National Register)

DATE

November 8, 1968

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

NAME

Eric Hatch

TITLE:

State Liaison Officer