

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: South Carolina | |
| COUNTY: Sumter | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | MAY 24 1973 |

1. NAME

COMMON:
Sumter Town Hall/Opera House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Academy of Music, Opera House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Sumter

STATE: **South Carolina** CODE: **045** COUNTY: **Sumter** CODE: **085**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" 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) |

Yes:
 Restricted
 Unrestricted
 No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Sumter

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall, P. O. Box 1449

CITY OR TOWN: **Sumter** STATE: **S. C.** CODE: **29150** CODE: **045**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Sumter** STATE: **S. C.** CODE: **29150** CODE: **045**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Santee-Wateree Regional Historic Preservation Plan Regional

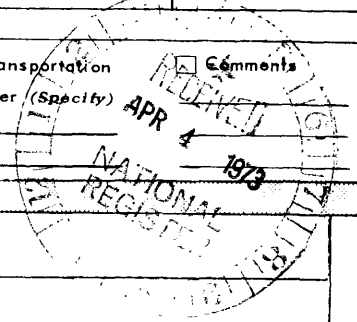
DATE OF SURVEY: **June 30, 1973** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Santee-Wateree Regional Planning Council

STREET AND NUMBER:
36 East Calhoun Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Sumter** STATE: **S. C.** CODE: **29150** CODE: **045**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

MAY 24 1973

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

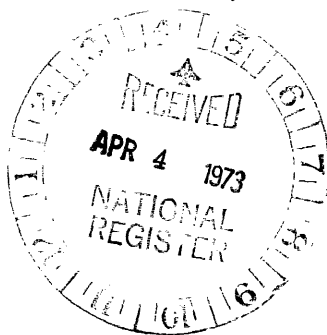
(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior: The first Town Hall/Opera House in the city of Sumter was constructed in 1872. The building was destroyed by fire twenty years later but was replaced by a new Town Hall/Opera House in 1893 built on the original site. An early description of the existing structure was recorded in the Charleston News and Courier on December 20, 1895: The Town Hall /Opera House "is built of brick, with a strikingly handsome front of Cumberland buff stone, Ashler finish, laid with dark red cement, and is four stories high. A large arched entrance and plate glass windows add to the front of the building which is 58 x 132 feet...The tall clock tower is 100 feet high...The building is owned by the City and was built at a cost of \$35,000.00." The outside stone and marble used in the construction of the existing building were imported from France. The clock tower, accessible only by ladder from the fourth floor, gives the entire building a height of 100 feet. The tower is made of brick and Cumberland buff stone. The four-faced clock is operated by weights, and the bell, cast in 1894, is still in use. The architecture of the Town Hall/Opera House is Richardsonian Romanesque.

Interior: In 1936 remodeling of the structure occurred. The first floor, including the stage, became a movie theatre, and the second floor, formerly used as the opera house, was converted to office space. Several rooms, including the recorder's court, were added to the rear of the building as well as several first floor offices. Today the third floor houses a commercial concern while the fourth floor or attic has been closed off. Among the items stored in the attic are old stage equipment for opera productions, furniture, and the original door to the "buzzard's roost." The latter was the local name assigned to the area of the opera house which contained the cheapest seats - those furthest from the stage.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

5. SIGNIFICANCE

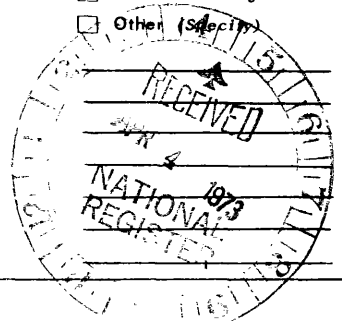
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1893**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" 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) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Architecture: Dr. Harold Coolidge, Architectural Historian of Clemson University evaluates Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, of which the Sumter Town Hall/Opera House is an example: "Most of the ... Southern examples of this period have been obliterated. They were rare to begin with; Richardson's period of greatest influence came when the South had very little money to spare for good architecture. Then our sectional bias for what is mistakenly called 'Colonial' has ...until recently made post-bellum architecture a blind spot for the majority of conservationists."

The Sumter Town Hall/Opera House is one of the most outstanding structures of downtown Sumter. The clock tower serves as a focal point for the entire area. Restoration of the Town Hall is a major part of Sumter's plans to convert North Main Street into a downtown mall.

Music: The original Town Hall/Opera House became known as the "Music Hall", and the existing structure was sometimes referred to as the "Academy of Music." Many singers, including Sumter's Clara Louise Kellogg, performed in the Opera House which at one time seated 1,000 people.

Political: The Town Hall offices represent the first permanent home of city government in Sumter. In 1912 this city became one of the first municipalities in the United States to permanently adopt the council-manager form of government, and the Town Hall continued its role as a center for political activity.

Theatre: Sumter's first theatre was located on the second floor of the Town Hall. Built before the age of motion pictures, this structure housed many of the traveling road-shows that toured the country in the late nineteenth century.

One of the few remaining examples of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, the Sumter Town Hall/Opera House has served as a center of both entertainment and political service for the citizens of the Sumter area.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gregorie, Anne King. History of Sumter County. Sumter, S. C.: Library Board of Sumter County, 1954.
 Stubbs, Thomas M. "History of Claremont Lodge, No. 64." Newspaper files from Sumter Daily Item, 1872-1873.
 Santee-Wateree Regional Planning Council. Santee-Wateree Historic Preservation Plan and Inventory. Sumter, S. C., 1972. pp.45, 81.

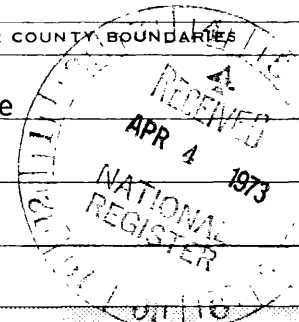
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| 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 TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 33° 55' 15" | 80° 20' 31" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.326 a

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| None | | None | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Braxton Matthews (Mary Ann Eaddy - Archives)

ORGANIZATION: City of Sumter (also Santee-Wateree Regional Planning Council) DATE: March 28, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 1449, City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Sumter STATE: South Carolina CODE: 29150 045

12. 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Charles E. Lee
 Title Director, S.C. Department of Archives and History
 Date March 29, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/24/73

ATTEST: Wm J. Smith
 Keeper of The National Registry

Date 5 23 73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS