

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

**1. Name**

historic Empire Block

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 21-37 SW Emigrant Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Pendleton N/A vicinity of congressional district Second

state Oregon code 41 county Umatilla code 059

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Bert and Patricia Ardnt

street & number 104 SE 5th Street

city, town Pendleton N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97801

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Umatilla County Courthouse

street & number 216 SE 4th Street.

city, town Pendleton state Oregon 97801

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Oregon Statewide Inventory  
of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Empire Block is a 70 x 100-foot two-story brick masonry building in the Italianate Style located at the northeast corner of SW Emigrant Avenue and SE 1st Street, in the central business district of Pendleton. Its ground story contains four 20-foot shop bays fronting on Emigrant Avenue. Toward the west end of the principal, or south facade, is a 9-foot stairway entrance bay, and an 8-foot service shop bay is at the east end. Each store has basement space with partition dividers corresponding to the main floor plan. It was planned that the second floor would be an opera house, and the wide stairway was designed for access to it. During construction, however, the prospective opera house operator left the project following a dispute with the proprietors, whereupon a 16-room boarding house (bawdy house) with community baths and toilets was substituted. A 7 x 15-foot outside stairway is located at the building's northeast corner. It appears that the 50 x 100-foot two-story building was constructed in 1907 and that later a 20 x 100-foot one-story brick structure was added to the north. The precise construction date of the addition is unknown, but the enlargement is thought to have been carried out within 10 years of original construction.

Stylistically, the Empire Block is a late example of the Italianate commercial style and is compatible with the High Victorian Italianate Hendricks Building of 1897 adjacent to it on the east. The second story facade of the Empire Block is articulated by pilaster strips of brick at 20-foot intervals rising without interruption to a height slightly exceeding the parapet coping. Window openings are fitted with paired double hung sash under a single segmental arch head outlined by a continuous architrave molding and belt course which is interrupted only by the pilasters. It is in the configuration of these mullioned windows, the frieze created by a blind arcade corbeled from the main wall plane, and the bold, round-arched portal of the stairway entrance bay that the building reflects some characteristics of more up-to-date Chicago Romanesque architecture.

The construction date over the stairway portal arch is 1907. The architect is unknown. The building generally is structurally sound, but during the 1970s the owner's property manager was required by the local building official to make poured concrete reinforcement repair to two front columns and to run steel rod turnbuckle cross ties through the center of the building at the second floor line and at the second story ceiling line to reinforce structural stability. Today, the building is vacant except for the Olympia Cigar Store Cafe and Bar in the SW corner of the ground story and Bob's Shoe Shine Parlor in the easternmost shop space.

### Site

The Empire Block is located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 10, Township 2 N., Range 32 East, W. M., and is more specifically described as occupying the following site.

Lot 8 and the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of Lot 9, Block F, Reservation Addition in the city of Pendleton, County of Umatilla, State of Oregon, EXCEPTING the north 5 feet of the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of Lot 9.

The rectangular building is oriented with its long axis east to west, with all commercial stores and second floor stairway fronting SW Emigrant Avenue. Only the Shamrock Card Room (now closed) in the basement was reached off SE 1st Street. A 10-foot alley runs the length of the building on the north side. On the south side of Emigrant Avenue, opposite the Empire Block, is a muffler shop. A tri-cinema is

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under construction at cater corners to the building, and to the west is a residence. The Empire Block is one block west of Main Street.

Pendleton's commercial Main Street is but four blocks long, running from Frazer Avenue adjacent to the railroad tracks on the south to the Umatilla River on the north. All of Main Street continues today as a viable and active commercial district undergoing change as it meets the competitive challenge of new shopping centers west and south of town. Though once aswirl with activity, South Main Street has in more recent years been passed over for reinvestment, and the buildings have attracted tenants less capable of paying higher rents. Within the last year, the Bowman Hotel a block to the south on Frazer Avenue (entered in the National Register in November 1980) has undergone refurbishing, including careful brick cleaning and painting and installation of awnings and street trees. The Bowman Hotel project has substantially improved the image of South Main Street and has attracted new tenants. Furthering this activity, Walter Brownfield had the exterior bricks on the Matlock-Brownfield building judiciously cleaned, and tenants of the Masonic Temple continued the street tree plantings along Main Street and Emigrant Avenue.

Basic Shape, dimensions

The Empire Block is an all-brick one and two-story commercial building measuring 100 feet on Emigrant Avenue and having a depth of 70 feet. The building was constructed as a 50 x 100-foot two-story structure. A one-story 20-foot brick masonry addition to the north is believed to have been constructed sometime within 10 years of original construction.

Structural details

Compared with six other vintage buildings in the neighborhood cluster, the Empire Block is the only building with a concrete foundation -- all others are basaltic rock.

Wall construction is local Weston brick set in lime mortar. The roof is built-up hot tar, sloping from south to north for drainage.

Exterior Features

Second story openings are paired one-over-one double-hung sash windows under a single segmental arch head. Similar windows are on the west (1st Street) side. Other one-over-one double-hung sash windows are found in the north elevation.

The street facades are further articulated by pilasters of brick, continuous architrave molding and belt course, and a shallow arcaded frieze corbeled from the main wall plane.

Internal space, alterations

Except for the 9-foot stairway entrance bay and the 8-foot east end service shop, the four story fronts are of equal size measuring 20 feet each. Each store has a depth of 50 feet plus the 20-foot annex for a total area of 1,400 square feet. The space north of the main staircase is partitioned on center line to the stairway for use

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by the corner store and next store east. All stores front on Emigrant Avenue and have an exit door to a 10-foot alleyway along the north side of the building. Each rental space except the easternmost store has stairway access to a correspondingly partitioned basement space. Basement space beneath the SW corner store is reached by an exterior stairway on the west end, off 1st Street. The second floor presently has 16 sleeping rooms, 12 of which have outside windows on south, west and north sides. There are four central rooms with no natural light source. Along the east wall of the building are four personal hygiene rooms measuring 6' x 8', two with bathtubs and two with water closets and lavatories. The four central rooms are separated from the outside rooms and bathrooms by an encircling 4-foot hallway. The second story rooms have undergone considerable alteration which included lowered ceilings, forced air heat ducts, flush panel doors, plumbing fixtures, and floor coverings. These alterations are believed to have occurred in the late 1950s.

It is believed that the original second floor room configuration, except for several new room connecting doorways, was similar to the existing plan.

Though there have been adaptive use alterations on the ground story from time to time as businesses or tenants changed -- such adaptations as storage room construction, walk-in cold rooms, counter layouts, and dropped ceilings -- there has been no major alteration to the basic plan. In fact, though boarded over, all but one of the original store fronts remain intact under later coverings.

Original finish

As was typical of the era, throughout the first and second floors the original interior finish was painted plaster over brick or wood lath and soft fir floors. Remodeling has included various applications of sheet rock, celatex acoustic ceilings, and tile or linoleum floors.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1907 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Empire Block, a brick masonry building erected in two-story and single-story sections between 1907 and 1917, is one of a small, homogeneous group of commercial buildings in the Italianate Style arrayed along South Main Street and Emigrant Avenue in downtown Pendleton, the governmental seat of Umatilla County in the wheat-growing and cattle range country of Oregon's Columbia Plateau. A component of one of two pairs of contiguous historic buildings in the cluster, the Empire Block is situated a block north of the Bowman Hotel of 1906, a substantial National Register property with a 200-foot frontage on Frazer Avenue overlooking the Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Station. The initial section of the Empire Block, built in 1907, was a 50 x 100-foot two-story volume fronting Emigrant Avenue and adjoining the west end wall of the Hendricks Building (1897). Its proprietors were Henry Schwarz and the Brothers Greulich, owners of the Empire Meat Company. The Empire Block owed its inspiration to the vitality of Pendleton's base livestock industry and the success of the proprietors' meat business. Within the next ten years, a 20 x 100-foot single-story section was added on the north side of the building. Three of the building's five shop fronts on Emigrant Avenue were superficially altered in recent years, but intact shop fronts typical of the turn of the century, having central entries recessed between display windows with wood bulkheads and generous top lights, remain on either side of the second story stairhall entrance bay with its round-arched portal. With its brick exterior, its segmental-arched second story windows framed by a continuous architrave molding and belt course, and its blind parapet arcade corbeled from the main wall plane, the Empire Block embodies the distinctive characteristics of late Italianate commercial architecture which pervaded small towns and large in the American West in the years preceding the First World War. A well preserved example of its type and style, the Empire Block possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with the historic social and commercial life of Pendleton.

Before laws controlling gambling, liquor and prostitution were instituted, many establishments in western towns were essentially designed to serve range workers and travelers by providing food, and drink, baths, barber and delousing services, games of chance, and other entertainment. Such was the life style of the range country, and the Empire Block, constructed in 1907, is typical of the turn-of-the-century commercial buildings which housed these services and pastimes.

The Empire Block was built for owners of the Empire Meat Market, located to the north, a prosperous business operated by bookkeeper Henry Schwarz and three Greulich Brothers, including John, the cattle buyer, Frank who ran the slaughterhouse, and Charles, who ran the store. The store still stands, though altered, on the same block, adjacent to the north wall of the Hendricks Building. Schwarz and the Greulich half brothers were Pendleton businessmen of pioneer stock who contributed much to the growth and shaping of this eastern Oregon trade center. When the Empire Meat Company was dissolved and assets distributed to the partners, Frank Greulich was awarded the Empire Block, which

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was ultimately inherited by his daughters, Evelyn Held of Corvallis, and Laura Harr of Sacramento.

Though tenants have changed, use of the main floor has always been commercial shops and bars. The basement under the SW corner shop was a card room. The second floor initially planned as an opera house was converted at time of construction to a rooming house and was operated as a bawdy house. The property has been used for most of these purposes to the present day. However, because the absentee owners were little compelled to reinvest in the structure's improvement, the building grew increasingly vacant. At the time of sale to the present owners in 1981, only two tenants remained, the Olympia Cigar Store Cafe and Bar (since 1942) in the corner shop and "Shoe Shine Bob's" shine parlor at the east end of the building, a business in operation at that location for 25 years.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Macnab, Gordon, A Century of News and People in the East Oregonian. 1875-1895, East Oregonian Publishing Company, 1975.  
 Umatilla County Historical Society, A Backward Glance, E.O. Master Printers, 1981.  
 Eardley, Jim, "More Changes for Downtown," Pendleton East Oregonian, Sept. 30, 1981  
 Conversations with local residents.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Pendleton, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

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5	0	5	8	7	9	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Empire Block is located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 10, T. 2 N., R. 32 E., W. M. It occupies Lot 8 and the southerly 20 feet of Lot 9 in Block F of the Reservation Addition to Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon. The site is otherwise described as Tax Lot 12800.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bert Arndt  
 organization Sommerville House Research date September 11, 1981  
 street & number 104 SE 5th Street telephone 503/276-7071  
 city or town Pendleton state Oregon 97801

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation date April 15, 1982

For HCERS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6/1/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration