

7-24-73

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:	Vermont	
COUNTY:	Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
18	18 1973	

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Barre City Hall and Opera House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
12 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Barre

STATE Vermont	CODE 50	COUNTY: Washington	CODE 023
------------------	------------	-----------------------	-------------

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
City of Barre

STREET AND NUMBER:  
12 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Barre

STATE: Vermont	CODE 50
-------------------	------------

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
City Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
12 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Barre

STATE: Vermont	CODE
-------------------	------

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

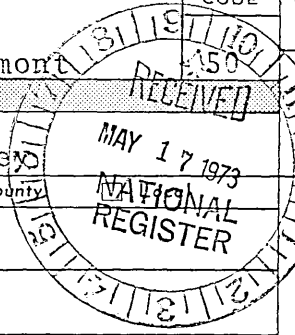
DATE OF SURVEY: 1972  Federal  State  County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Vermont Division of Historic Sites

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Pavilion Building

CITY OR TOWN:  
Montpelier

STATE: Vermont	CODE 50
-------------------	------------



STATE: Vermont

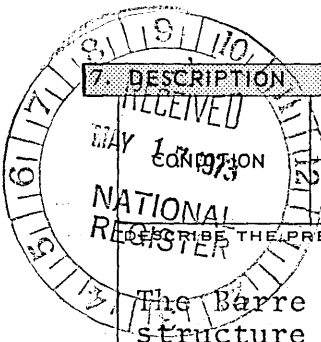
COUNTY: Washington

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Barre City Hall and Opera House is a four story rectangular structure with a stone foundation and a flat roof, located on the west side of the Barre City Square. The exterior of the building has an appliqué of Beaux-Arts Classicism masterfully integrated into the basically functional exterior design.

The visually dominant feature of the main (east) elevation is a towering three story archway with recessed iron entrance surmounted by an arcade of small, round-arched windows, A wide balcony, with an ornate wrought iron railing, bridges the arch above these windows. Behind the balcony is a large rectangular window divided into many triangular panes. At the head of the arch, a magnificent art glass fan light, executed in a floral design, crowns the entire composition. The arch is framed by stone pilasters, surmounted by a pediment with "City Hall" inscribed on the freize. The first story walls are constructed of stone with rusticated jointing. The remaining stories are constructed of brick with stone trim. Stone and brick round-arched, cast iron rectangular, iron bay and circular windows have all been utilized in the exterior design.

The shallow fourth floor or attic story, set off from the rest of the structure by a moulded stone belt course, is articulated by a series of brick pilasters. The structure is surmounted by a bracketed metal cornice.

The entrance to the police station, located along the right side of the main elevation, is the result of a subsequent alteration. All of the remaining exterior fabric is in its original condition.

The first floor is used for city offices. The remaining floors are taken up by the Opera House which is the significant interior space in the building. At the end of the Opera House is a large stage 64 feet by 33 feet flanked by an elaborately ornamented proscenium arch. Three tiered proscenium boxes flank the arch. A balcony trimmed with carved garlands extends around the entire rear of the room in the shape of a horseshoe. This balcony was probably originally cantilevered but iron reinforcements have been added, connecting balcony deck with the roof beams. The art glass fan light, located at the rear of the hall, is fully illuminated by the exterior light and consequently has immense visual impact. The hall has an elaborate pressed metal ceiling.

The wooden floor rises to the rear of the hall in stages. The seats, curtains, and other furnishings have been removed. The main interior stairway to the Opera House was destroyed when the police station was built on the first floor. Future access could be provided by construction of an exterior stairway. With the exception of these alterations, the Barre Opera House is a

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

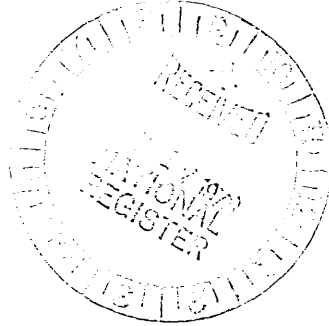
STATE	
Vermont	
COUNTY	
Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 18 1973	

**Section 7**

*(Continuation Sheet)*

*(Number all entries)*

perfectly preserved theater of the turn of the century.



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

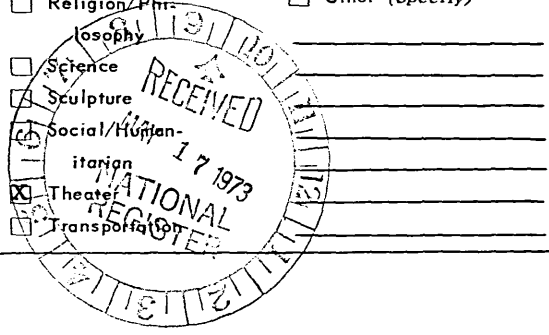
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input 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) 1899

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 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 checked="" 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

Brief History

The Barre City Hall and Opera House was designed by Lancaster, New Hampshire architect George G. Adams and built by Mason & Company, contractors, in 1899. From that year through World War I the Opera House was the scene of hundreds of theatrical events presented by leading theater companies and troupes from as far away as New York and Chicago. After the war, the theater fell into disuse due to the increasing competition of the motion picture with the legitimate stage. In 1925, the Opera House was outfitted to show movies. After another decade of occasional use for motion pictures and high school graduations, the Opera House finally closed in 1940. The facility is now used for storage.

Significance

The Barre City Hall and Opera House, along with the Barre Firehouse and several other prominent civic and religious structures surrounding the City Square, is one of the important architectural landmarks of downtown Barre. The Opera House is one of the best preserved, completely intact, late 19th century small theater interiors remaining in northern New England.

The structure represents the era which came at the culmination of several decades of prosperity and economic expansion for many Vermont towns and cities. This era, roughly from 1895-1918, was characterized by great public pride and confidence in the future. Little expense was spared to adorn the state's city centers with the finest civic architecture and public amenities. The construction of the Barre Opera House as an integral part of the City Hall symbolizes the progressive spirit and public responsiveness of city government at the time.

In view of the reawakening interest in the arts in Vermont, the Opera House is a cultural resource which is irreplaceable in view of modern construction costs. Because of the location of

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Orr, Lillian. Research Report on the Barre Opera House.  
(unpublished) 1973.

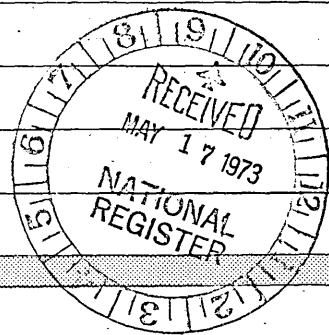
**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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	° ' "	° ' "	44°	11'	52"
NE	° ' "	° ' "	72°	30'	07"
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

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



18/699560  
4896550  
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Chester H. Liebs, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: Vermont Division of Historic Sites DATE: May 11, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: Pavilion Building

CITY OR TOWN: Montpelier STATE: Vermont CODE: 50

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: <u>William B. Finney</u></p> <p>Title: <u>Director of Historic Sites</u> <u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u></p> <p>Date: <u>May 11, 1973</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert W. Utley</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date: <u>6/18/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>Michael Ford</u> Acting Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>June 4, 1973</u></p>
--	--

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

STATE Vermont	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 18 1973

Section 8

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

the facility in downtown Barre, reopening of the Opera House could serve as a focus for the rejuvenation of the entire inner city. A citizens committee is currently working with the City of Barre to explore the possibility of reopening the Opera House so that it can be of continued service to the community.

