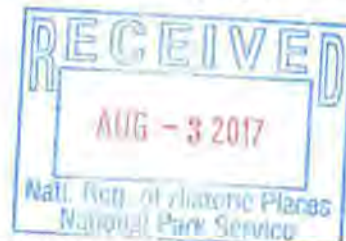


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name CRANDELL THEATRE

other names/site number QUIRINO'S CRANDELL THEATRE

name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 46-48 MAIN STREET

city or town CHATHAM

state NEW YORK code NY county COLUMBIA code 021 zip code 12037

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Michael P. Lynch Deputy SHPO 7/26/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

9/18/17 Alexis A. Burnatley
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: theatre

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: theatre

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: concrete
 walls: stucco, brick

 roof: membrane
 other: glass, metal, wood

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Crandell Theatre, located in the Village of Chatham, Columbia County, New York, is a 1920s-era building which was erected for live vaudeville performances and photoplays but was soon thereafter modified to accommodate the screening of motion pictures with sound, a use which continues to the present day under the auspices of the Chatham Film Club. First opened on Christmas Day 1926, the nominated building was modified the following year to accommodate a larger stage area on its rear, or western, side. By 1929 the first motion pictures with sound, “talkies,” were being shown there. The theatre, which today seats 534 patrons at principal floor level and in a rear balcony, was erected in fireproof fashion with terra cotta block and brick load-bearing masonry with detailing rendered in a Mediterranean Revival idiom, described by some sources as Spanish Renaissance. Louis L. Wetmore, an architect based in Glens Falls, New York, who at that time was affiliated with fellow architect Milton Crandell, is credited with the theatre’s design. The Crandell Theatre’s stucco-clad facade fronts on Main Street, the remainder of the exterior being generally of utilitarian characteristics; the principal entrance, centrally located, is flanked by small commercial spaces. The main entrance gives way to a vestibule with ticket window, beyond which is the lobby, which accommodates the venue’s concessions area, restrooms, and balcony staircases. The theatre proper has sloped seating arranged to face the original stage and proscenium arch; the latter serves as an enframement for the large movie screen. Principal character-defining features include the blind arcades which span the side walls, large faux ceiling beams, the proscenium arch, and the projecting windowed bays which are elevated and which flank the stage. While the gallery retains original seating, the seating at first-floor level is not original. The interior exhibits characteristics which associate it with the so-called “atmospheric theatre” type of the 1920s, which was meant to provide the theatre patron with a physical environment remote from their day-to-day experiences. The Crandell Theatre continues to maintain an important position on Main Street in Chatham and remains an active part of contemporary life and culture in present-day Columbia County.

Narrative Description

Location & Setting

The Crandell Theatre occupies a prominent position on Main Street in the Village of Chatham, Columbia County, New York; its physical address is 46-48 Main Street. The nominated building is located within the village’s historic commercial core, situated on that section of Main Street (State Route 66) which is bounded to the northeast by the Central Square traffic circle, which Tracy Memorial Village Hall (S/NRHP listed 2016) fronts on, and to the southwest by Main Street’s intersection with Park Row. To the immediate east, behind those buildings which occupy the east side of Main Street, is an active railroad right-of-way which crosses Main Street south of its intersection with Park Row and from there passes by the east side of Union Station (S/NRHP listed 1980/1974 respectively) before continuing out of the village on a southwesterly route into the adjacent Town of Ghent. The Main Street commercial quarter is characterized by architectural stock of mid-to-late nineteenth century character. To the immediate south of the theatre is located a wood-frame Greek Revival-style building with gable-front orientation; directly across the street are three attached three-story brick mixed-use buildings of distinctive Italianate-style character. Similar such mixed-use brick commercial buildings are also present along both sides of Main Street moving southwards, the majority of which exhibit Italianate-style characteristics along with expressions of other contemporary design modes. The nominated theatre is an important visual component of this part of Main Street and conspicuous by virtue of its street-front awnings, marquee, and beige hued stucco-clad facade. It has assumed this important and conspicuous position in Chatham since its completion in the 1920s.

Overview

The Crandell Theatre first opened to the public in 1926 and was enlarged the following year; it is a two-story self-contained building of load-bearing terra cotta hollow-tile and brick construction with both wood and steel framing components. The theatre, which has seating for 534 patrons (inclusive of a 112-seat balcony), was

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built above a concrete foundation on a rectangular plan and was oriented so that the principal elevation faces to the east—tending slightly to the northeast—and fronts on Main Street. Only the Main Street façade and rear elevation are clearly visible to view, the longer side elevations being partially obscured by adjacent buildings; portions of these elevations are nevertheless visible from Kinderhook Street, at the building’s rear. The side elevations largely present as concrete-parged wall panels punctuated by intervening structural brick piers, while a portion of the building at the rear is now covered with corrugated metal sheathing. The Main Street façade is divided symmetrically into three bays, with glazed storefronts with corresponding awnings flanking the recessed entrance bay at first-story level. It is finished with beige-hued roughcast stucco with contrasting brown detailing; the stucco returns around both the northeast and southwest corners of the façade, as does the principal cornice, before giving way to the concrete parging which characterizes most of the remaining side elevations. Dual entrances provide access to the interior and lead into the vestibule—where the ticket booth is located— and from there the central lobby, from which the main floor of the theatre is accessed, along with the rear upper balcony, via two sets of staircases, and men’s and women’s restrooms. The main floor’s theatre seating is divided into three sections by two aisles and faces the projection screen, which is centered within the proscenium arch. The floor slopes downward towards the original stage area in characteristic theatre fashion, as it does in the gallery. Beyond the proscenium arch is a general use area which once functioned as the back stage, inclusive of dressing rooms, during an earlier period of the building’s history when it still played host to live theatre events. Interior wall and ceiling finishes generally consist of roughcast stucco, matching the exterior treatment of the facade. The architectural character of the interior is that of a 1920s “atmospheric theatre,” the detailing being of Mediterranean Revival derivation and somewhat modest in character. Blind arcades are present and align the side walls within the main volume of the theatre, and the ceiling is spanned by large faux beams with corbelled ends that run from side wall to side wall. The proscenium arch is of an elliptical type and is flanked by projecting windowed bays, one of which originally served as an organ loft, these features being preeminent among the theatre’s interior architectural detailing. Although the seating at floor level is not original to the building, that which is located in the rear balcony is. Other original features include the wall sconces along the walls in the theatre, in addition to lighting and other treatments which are present in the lobby. The building retains any number of features which speak to its earliest period of use in the mid to late 1920s.

Exterior

The façade of the Crandell Theatre is symmetrically composed into three distinct bays. At first-story level the outer bays are occupied by glazed storefronts with corresponding awnings, these flanking the entrance bay, which features two sets of glazed metal doors which are deeply recessed and which have corresponding shouldered arches with segmental heads. Five-light transoms occupy the space above the doors within the head of each arch. There are additionally doors to either side of the recessed bay which lead directly into the commercial spaces flanking the entrance bay, these also having shouldered-arch heads and being fitted with divided-light glazed wood doors. Situated between the main entrance doors and those leading into the commercial spaces are pressed metal glass-front cabinets of Neoclassical inspiration in which posters and other such theatre-related ephemera are displayed; they are affixed to the wall. At the second-story level there are three window groupings, each of which consists of paired square-headed windows hung with six-over-one wood sash with corresponding aluminum storm windows; those in the outer bays are more closely spaced in relation to one another than the pair that occupies the center bay, which is more widely spaced. The façade presents relatively straightforward design characteristics with a strong rectilinear effect provided for by the straight parapet and the applied mouldings, which reinforce the bay divisions. Countering this rectilinear effect are the two shouldered entrance arches, the small consoles which are present in the upper corners of the large first-story bays, and the curvilinear console-form decorative work that terminates the central section of the parapet, it being punctuated by small finials. A moulded wood cornice marks the transition between the upper section of wall and the parapet, which in the center bay is divided into four unembellished square-shaped panels. Suspended above the center entrance bay, between the first and second story, is the theatre’s marquee,

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which replaced an earlier version of more decidedly Art Deco design that is known from historic-era photographs. The present incarnation reads "Quirino's Crandell Theatre," a name which reflects the theatre's ownership for nearly 50 years by the Quirino family, which purchased it in 1960 and maintained ownership until 2010, at which time it was purchased by the current owner, the Chatham Film Club.

The side elevations are utilitarian in character and exhibit a similar overall treatment, that being expanses of concrete-based parging punctuated by expressed brick piers, excepting a portion of the wall near the rear west elevation, where there is corrugated metal sheathing which returns around the sides from the rear elevation. On the south side there are three windows and three doors located near the southeast corner, the door closest to Main Street being of a glazed and paneled type and having a decorative hood. Moving east to west, these doors provide access to a staircase between the first and second floor; to the south commercial space; and directly into the lobby. As for the north elevation, there are three windows and one door, the latter providing direct access to the lobby. The rear elevation is currently covered with corrugated metal siding, which extends the full height of the building and, as noted, returns a short distance around the side elevations.

Interior

The principal doors lead into a narrow vestibule, with the ticket window being on the right (north) wall. The walls have a roughcast stucco finish punctuated by blind arcades with corresponding pilasters; these are defining panels with scalloped wood trim in which theatre information is displayed, excepting one, which is given over to the small round-arched ticket window. The vestibule's ceiling has a series of closely spaced boxed beams aligned on a north-to-south axis with stucco applied to the interstices; a circular electric lighting fixture is suspended from the ceiling. The vestibule opens up into the central lobby by way of two sets of paired doors which are set within shouldered arches and which have surface-mounted hardware on their outside face. The concessions counter is situated in a central location opposite this doorway. Situated along the east wall in the lobby are two sets of flanking staircases which provide access to the rear balcony. Of an open stringer type, these staircases are situated within arched portals, the arches being of a shouldered type and springing from octagonal piers which also function as newel posts to receive the metal hand-railing. Beyond these stairs, to the north and south, are men's and women's restrooms. As for the ticket booth, it is accessed from a small door located on the north wall of the vestibule. The walls and ceiling in the lobby have a roughcast plaster finish and the various arched portals have corresponding sections of frieze above them. Red carpeting covers the floor and portions of the two balcony staircases.

The main portion of the theatre features three ranges of seats separated by side aisles; the larger central section is 11 seats wide, the narrow outer aisles are four seats wide. These seats are a later retrofit, unlike the seating in the balcony, which is original. Large blind arcades with corresponding curtains align the side walls, and large faux beams span the ceiling from side to side, aligned so as to correspond with the position of the pilasters from which the individual arches of the arcade spring. A moulded cornice is present above the arcades. The walls have a roughcast stucco finish while the interstices between the ceiling beams have a smoother finish and are punctuated by vents and flush-mounted circular lighting fixtures. Centered against the rear wall is the proscenium arch, which now serves as an enframement for the movie screen; in front of it is the original orchestra pit. The proscenium arch is of a low segmental type, the arch springing from Solomonic, or helical, columns; at the center point of the arch is a shell motif. To either side of the proscenium arch the walls are angled and they accommodate, at floor level, large segmental-arched openings which, like the large arches of the arcade, are hung with red curtain. Above these arches are large consoles which sustain projecting bays, each of which has a tripartite arrangement of narrow round-arched windows with corresponding rectilinear grilles, above which are smaller rectangular-shaped vents. On the opposite side, above the paired entrances from the lobby, is the elevated balcony. The balcony has a plain front and rectilinear railing; below it are a series of faux beams with curved ends, aligned in such a way as to suggest that the gallery bears upon them. In

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the balcony is the projection booth, which is centrally located. Other noteworthy details within the theatre include the electric lighting fixtures, which are mounted to the pilasters of the blind wall arcades.

Behind the screen and proscenium arch is an area formerly given over to the stage and dressing rooms and which now largely serves as a storage space. This area is largely unfinished and visible therein are portions of the building's terra cotta, brick and steel structure. Walls in this area have been spray foamed for purposes of heat retention and the walls and ceiling largely present as a matrix of dimensional lumber to which the foam was applied.

The two commercial spaces that flank the main entrance are partitioned differently within. That on the south side of the plan consists of a single open volume with an enclosed staircase situated on the south wall; the latter feature provides access to a narrow north-to-south corridor at second floor level to the east of which open three rooms, these corresponding with the paired window openings on the façade. There is a bathroom located on the north end of this hallway, which lacks communication with the balcony area of the theatre to the immediate west. In addition to the door on the north wall which opens into the recessed entryway of the theatre, there is additionally a door on the south wall which opens onto the south alley (and one which provides direct communication with the staircase to the second floor from the outside). As for the north commercial space, it is partitioned so as to be square in shape and has a second smaller room behind it, which is partially given over to the ticket booth, which projects into this space.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1926- 1967

Significant Dates

1926; 1927; 1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wetmore, Louis L.; architect

Ryan, M.E.; contractor (original 1926 building campaign)

Moore, John; contractor (stage enlargement 1927)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The cited period of significance, 1926 to 1967, is initiated with the construction of the theatre and terminates at the 50 year cut-off mark, given the building's continued use as a theatre to that point. It has functioned continuously as a theatre and place of public entertainment since its completion.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Built in 1926 and expanded the following year, the Crandell Theatre remains an architecturally and historically significant resource located in the Village of Chatham, Columbia County, New York. Erected through the efforts of Chatham native Walter S. Crandell and designed by the Glens Falls-based architect Louis L. Wetmore, the nominated theatre speaks to a number of local, regional and national themes and in large measure survives as built, notwithstanding changes made to further its continued use as a movie theatre to the present day. The theatre was originally erected as a venue for both live vaudeville performances and the screening of photoplays, which were in large measure filmed theatrical productions; however, by 1929, the Crandell Theatre had been retrofitted with new equipment in order to screen motion pictures with sound, or “talkies,” the first of which—*The Broadway Melody*—was shown that year in Chatham and other upstate New York locales. As such, the building’s early history spans a significant transformative moment in American culture and entertainment, from the earlier period of vaudeville performances and photoplays into the modern motion picture age. Its construction can be viewed as part of a period of improvement in Chatham, as during the early part of the twentieth century the village increasingly shed its provincial roots as new architecture and infrastructure was introduced, including the Morris Memorial Building (1910) and Tracy Memorial Village Hall (1913), both important works of civic architecture erected through the munificence of prominent families. The construction of the Crandell Theatre formed a visible part of this new era of improvement in Chatham and, like the other two buildings, was backed by a prominent local family, the Crandells. Its completion was widely celebrated by Chatham residents, who viewed it as further evidence of local progress and development. The building is being nominated in association with NRHP Criterion A, in the area of Entertainment/Recreation, given its association with important cultural themes both locally and nationally and specifically those relating to the transitional period between live vaudeville entertainment and photoplays to the age of the motion picture with sound. It is also being nominated in association with Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a largely intact example of 1920s-era theatre design which exhibits traits linking it to the so-called “atmospheric theatre” type. It is being nominated at the local significance level.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Overview

The Village of Chatham is contained within the eponymously named town, which was formally organized in 1795 from lands previously contained within the adjacent Columbia County towns of Canaan and Kinderhook. Known earlier in its history as Groat’s Corners and later yet as Chatham Four Corners, Chatham village assumed its present name in 1869; it was described in the 1878 history of Columbia County as “[a] flourishing incorporated village.”¹ A modest mercantile center during the first part of the nineteenth century—it was mentioned only in passing in Spafford’s 1824 state gazetteer, in the larger entry for the town—the village’s growth was greatly accelerated by the development of railroad infrastructure in the second half of that century: “The growth of the place was slow and unimportant until it became a railroad center, since which it has assumed a substantial and village-like aspect.”² By the 1870s the Boston & Albany, New York & Harlem, Hudson & Boston, and the Harlem Extension railroads all maintained stations in Chatham, and more than 100 trains moved through it daily, marking it as a place of no small importance in the regional transportation and commercial affairs of Columbia County. Chatham was officially incorporated as a village in 1869 under the name “Chatham Village,” since another place within the town already bore the name “Chatham.” The first election was held in April of that year and village officers were elected, among them trustee William A. Woodbridge, the first to serve as presiding officer.³ Prior to the construction of Tracy Memorial Village Hall,

¹ *History of Columbia County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts & Ensign, 1878), 291.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 291-92.

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located a short distance to the north of the nominated building on Main Street, official village business was conducted in an edifice purchased in the 1870s for that purpose.

During the early part of the twentieth century the village increasingly shed its provincial roots as new architecture and infrastructure was introduced, the importance of which was not lost on local residents. The construction of Tracy Memorial Village Hall, completed in 1913, brought a new formality to the center of civic government in Chatham. Funding for this building, along with a maintenance fund for its continual upkeep, was provided by the locally prominent Tracy family as a memorial to Albert E. Tracy, who died in 1910. It was one of two important civic buildings which were presented as gifts by prominent local families in this period; the other, the Morris Memorial building, was dedicated for use in 1910, its costs borne by Jane Cady Morris in honor of her late husband. The construction of Crandell Theatre in the mid-1920s formed an important part of this new era of improvement in Chatham, as it was built to a higher architectural standard and backed by a prominent local figure, Walter S. Crandell. Its completion was widely hailed as a significant milestone in the village's cultural history and one which Chatham residents took significant pride in. As one observer noted, its completion marked "another step forward in the march of progress."⁴

The Crandell Theatre remains an important touchstone to local and regional culture and recalls a period of transition, as it was erected at a time when motion pictures with sound were soon to overtake live vaudeville performances and silent pictures as the premier form of American public entertainment. Built in 1926 to accommodate live theatre and photoplays, it was within three years of completion retrofitted for the screening of moving movies with sound. While vaudeville entertainment remained popular with American audiences during the 1920s, by the end of the nineteenth century early predecessors of the motion picture were being advanced, setting the stage for the industry's rapid rise in the early twentieth century. By the later 1890s antimoscope shows, a precursor of the motion picture, were being shown at Cady's Opera House (Cady's Hall variously) in Chatham.⁵ In November 1907 this venue screened what was likely the first movie ever to be shown in Chatham, *The Life of Christ* by Sublime Movie Pictures; due to popular demand, it was screened again four days after the premiere. As noted in a 1970s account, Cady Hall was "a popular theatre in its day where amateurish productions and traveling shows delighted Chathamites for years. Later, movies were shown here..."⁶

Prior to the construction of the Crandell Theatre silent movies were also shown locally at the Windsor Theatre, which, like the nominated building, also accommodated live theatrical entertainments. In 1917 the theatre screened "10 Big Reels of Photo-Plays De Luxe" for five and 10 cents, among these "dramas, scenic, news, comedies, and cartoons," with Charlie Chaplin being featured in what were termed "his funniest side-splitting hits" as noted in the *Chatham Courier* in May.⁷ That month, just a few weeks following American entry into the First World War, National Preparedness Day was marked in Chatham with the screening, at Cady Hall, of movies which depicted "our Boys on the border, our Dreadnaughts in action, and the Mobilization of our forces when war was declared." That summer the Windsor Theatre opened its summer season with both vaudeville performances and "5 Reels of Photoplays."⁸

In 1920 considerable buzz attended the village when director John S. Lopez cast and filmed the silent movie *The Devil's Confession* in Chatham, the cast of which included both professional actors and local Chatham

⁴ "Chatham's Handsome New Theatre Auspiciously Opened Christmas Day, *Chatham Courier*, 30 December 1926.

⁵ "Film and Filmmakers in Columbia County: TIMELINE," courtesy of the Chatham Film Club.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

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residents who won parts in the movie through the audition process; the film company had come to Chatham at the suggestion of Mrs. Floyd Buckley, who had appeared in a number of silent films under the pseudonym Lillian Ward. "All business on Main Street halted as the camera men cranked and Director Lopez shouted through a megaphone," it was noted; "Horseman thundered down the street, guns fired, women screamed, and Chatham basked in the glory of Hollywood."⁹ This movie was screened the following year, first in New York City and later in Chatham, though it received a lukewarm reception. Chatham residents "were greatly pleased by the movie work of their fellow townsmen and women and by the beautiful scenery shown but many have expressed the opinion that the plot is weak and shallow."¹⁰ During the early 1920s movies continued to be screened in Chatham, at the Allen Theatre (formerly Cady Hall), the Senate Theatre, and at the high school auditorium. In 1922 Iroquois Productions, a moving picture company, purchased the Caxton Building in Chatham and during this period filmed in the surrounding countryside of Columbia County and leased the exhibition hall at the county fairgrounds in Chatham for use as a studio to construct interior sets. The company's first silent picture, *The North Woods Vengeance*, was released the following year as *The Devil's Partner*, written and directed by Caryl Fleming.¹¹

With the growing influence of motion pictures on contemporary American culture came a desire to erect new, purpose-built theatres which could accommodate both vaudeville entertainments and movies. In 1923 William H. Housman of Pittsfield, Massachusetts purchased land in Chatham with the intent of erecting a modern theatre with accommodations for 600 patrons, which was noted as requiring considerable nerve in a village of 3,000 residents. The news was celebrated by the *Chatham Courier*, which in its November 8 issue printed, above its own banner, "UP-TO-DATE PLAYHOUSE IS TO BE BUILT ON CENTRAL SQUARE."¹² This effort, however, failed to materialize as promoted, and it was not until the Crandell Theatre was opened that Chatham finally had a theatre and movie house of truly modern character and accommodation.

In 1925 Walter S. Crandell, a banker and Chatham native who owned a farm there and who also resided in Bronxville, first announced that he was exploring the idea of building a theatre, store and office building on the property known as the Crandell Homestead on Main Street. The building, as the *Courier* opined, "...will be a monument to Mr. Crandell's loyalty to and love for the village where he was born and where he grew to young manhood."¹³ The proposed theatre was described thus:

Plans have been prepared and they contemplate a structure 138 feet long by forty-five feet wide, fronting on Main Street and extending well toward Kinderhook Street...

The material [Crandell] is considering for the building is terra cotta hollow tile with concrete exterior. The structure is to be two stories high, the lower front portion to contain the theatre entrance and, on either side, a store twenty-five or more feet in depth. It is planned to provide offices above the stores. The theatre portion will occupy approximately 113 feet by 45 feet in the rear, the entire building, in addition to being modern in every respect, to be absolutely fireproof. The theatre will seat 500 persons...

The location is ideal, probably best in the village, for the purpose Mr. Crandell has in mind and it is hoped nothing will interfere with his plans.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Chatham Courier*, 8 November 1923.

¹³ "W.S. Crandell Obtaining Bids on Theatre, Store and Office Building," *Chatham Courier*, 19 March 1925.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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The completion of the new theatre, in time for its grand opening on Christmas Day 1926, was greeted with widespread local fanfare; the *Courier* noted that it was “auspiciously opened” as over a thousand persons attended the performances that day, which included the first picture screened there, the photoplay version of Jules Verne’s novel *Michael Strogoff*. State Assemblyman Henry M. James, along with Major Albert S. Callan, publisher of the *Chatham Courier* who was speaking on behalf of the Chatham Improvement Association, delivered dedicatory remarks to celebrate the occasion prior to the evening performances.

Chatham’s handsome new playhouse, the Crandell Theatre, located on Main Street, opened its doors for the first time on the afternoon of Christmas day and while the matinee crowd was not a large one, yet it was an audience that was quick to grasp the significant fact that they were seated in a theatre that would make many a large city green with envy, and rightly so, for the Crandell theatre is a most beautiful one that Chatham can proudly point to as another step forward in the march of progress.

At the night performances, the theatre was packed with an enthusiastic audience that had nothing but praise for the man who has given to this village an edifice that will long stand as a memorial to his great thoughtfulness, and that man is Walter S. Crandell of Chatham and New York.¹⁵

The theatre was leased to Louis Fisher and C. Dayton LaPointe, who at that time were also operating the Orpheum Theatre, formerly Cady’s Hall, and who by the account of the *Courier* “need no introduction to the people of Columbia county.”¹⁶ “[Dayton] LaPointe has been identified with moving pictures in Chatham many years and [Louis] Fisher is the owner of a chain of several theatres in the northern part of the state.”¹⁷

In addition to serving its basic function as a place of entertainment, the theatre also served as a venue for fundraisers for civic causes. In 1927 the Crandell Theatre hosted the screening of *The Fire Brigade* for the benefit of the Columbia County Fireman’s Association. The *Courier* noted the “...tremendous scope of the photoplay, which is true to life and real...Twenty engines were used and fourteen buildings were destroyed in making the big fire scenes.” It was also noted that the production contained “some of the most beautiful Technicolor photography ever shown.”¹⁸ It was also in that year that the Crandell Theatre’s management donated the use of the building for the showing of a movie to aid victims of the Flood of 1927, which devastated many areas of Vermont in November of that year.¹⁹

In September 1927 it was announced in the *Courier* that Walter Crandell was in consultation with his architects regarding the enlargement of the stage at the theatre, which required the enlargement of the building at the rear and about five weeks of construction work. The enlargement was in large measure conceived for the accommodation of large productions that were at that time only playing in large cities like New York. Crandell, it was reported, was “planning all the details of building a stage that will be on a plane with some of the biggest theatres in the country and when completed it will have all the equipment and size capable of putting on many large shows of all kinds.”²⁰ The work was described as follows:

The new stage will be twenty-one feet deep, twenty-two feet high and twenty-six feet wide at the proscenium opening. The distance from wall to wall is forty-five feet. On each side of the stage in the rear will be dressing rooms, equipped with all toilet facilities and including steam heat and electric lights.

¹⁵“Chatham’s Handsome New Theatre.”

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸“Film and Filmmakers in Columbia County.”

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰“Theatre Stage Being Enlarged,” *Chatham Courier*, 29 September 1927.

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On top of the stage roof will be an automatic ventilator, 10 x 16 feet, which works automatically in case of fire. The stage and its equipment will be absolutely fire proof in every way...

On the southwest corner of the theatre near the rear of stage will be a stage door of ample proportions which is to be used for entering with large trunks and huge scenery of traveling shows that will play the house the coming winter.

A new system of stage lighting will be installed and with the new drape scenery it will make the theatre one of the best in this part of the state.²¹

George Coffin and John Moore were awarded the contracts for this work, and motion pictures continued to be shown in the evenings as work progressed. It was also announced that the managers, Fisher & LaPointe, were busy with lining up new entertainments; "They are in conference with one of the best vaudeville agencies in the country to book acts for the coming theatrical season in Chatham."²²

The year 1929 was a momentous one for the Crandell Theatre, as it marked the theatre's transition from photoplays and other silent movies to motion pictures with sound. This was not an isolated incident specific to the Chatham theatre, but one which was occurring at a regional level. C. Dayton Lapointe, one of the managers, announced in July of that year that "the very latest talking and sound-making devices will be installed... giving the patrons of this popular playhouse the very latest in talking and sound pictures."²³ In October of that year the theatre screened *The Broadway Melody*, which was touted by the *Courier* as "100% talkie-singing-dancing."²⁴ This movie was shown in theatres throughout the larger Capitol District region of New York in 1929, as noted in newspaper accounts published in Troy, Albany, Schenectady and Saratoga Springs, among others; it was the first "talkie" to be screened in theatres located there and in Chatham. *The Saratogian*, published in Saratoga Springs, noted that *The Broadway Melody* was "the first big feature talkie picture for the section... The picture is, of course, an all-talkie one," and the account further indicated that "The installation of the talkies at the local theatre is already meeting with great success," as it was in other regional theatres.²⁵

In 1961 the Crandell Theatre was purchased by Anthony H. Quirino, who continued to operate it until 1985, at which time his son, Tony Quirino, assumed ownership and management. News of the purchase was announced in the *Courier*:

The Crandell Theatre, Chatham, has been purchased by Anthony Quirino, Chatham, who has announced a new program schedule.

Mr. Quirino said the Crandell will be a "first run" theatre and will be open nightly with matinees on Saturday, Sundays and Wednesdays.

Title to the theatre passed from C. Dayton LaPointe, Chatham, a pioneer in the movie industry. Mr. LaPointe was the original manager of the Crandell Theatre and leased it to the Schine Circuit in 1946. Mr. Quirino had sub-leased the theatre from 1954 to 1960 when it returned to Mr. LaPointe's control.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³"Film and Filmmakers in Columbia County."

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"Broadway Melody," *The Saratogian*, 18 June 1929.

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The new owner said he plans to repaint the interior of the structure and make other improvements.²⁶

The Quirino family maintained ownership until 2010, at which time the theatre was purchased by the current owner and operator, the Chatham Film Club. This organization was formed in 1998 and began hosting special matinee screenings of art, independent and foreign films monthly. In 2000 the Crandell Theatre hosted the first Film Columbia Festival, and in 2013 the theatre converted to a digital projection system with three-dimensional capability.

Louis L. Wetmore, Architect

The architect of the Crandell Theatre was Louis Leavitt Wetmore (b. 1884) who, between 1919 and 1936, maintained an active architectural practice in Glens Falls, New York.²⁷ His father, John L. Wetmore, moved to Boston, Massachusetts, from New Brunswick, Canada, after the Civil War; he was a cabinet maker and carpenter by trade who specialized in the construction of two-family houses in the West Roxbury area of Boston. It was noted of Louis L. Wetmore that “An interest in building and an understanding of construction was central to [his] early life...”²⁸

Wetmore attended the architectural school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (“M.I.T.”) and completed most all of the requirements of the formal degree program prior to leaving due to financial pressures. While at M.I.T. Wetmore met Laura Bemis, of Glens Falls, and the couple wed in 1911. Wetmore’s visits to Glens Falls to visit with Bemis’s family were influential in his decision to eventually base his practice there. Prior to his relocation there in 1919 he had gained considerable experience following eight years of experience in architectural offices in Boston and New York, among them those of McKim, Mead & White and York & Sawyer. He additionally found employment with William Welles Bosworth, whose firm was selected to design the new M.I.T. campus at Cambridge, and served as the supervisory architect during the construction of the new complex. Following the completion of this project he remained in Boston and gained employment with the Olmsted Brothers, established by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and his brother, John Charles Olmsted. In this period Wetmore and his family resided in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, during which time he was overseeing work on Crocker Field Park, a large recreation facility that was being constructed there under the direction of Olmsted Brothers. It was with this background and experience that Wetmore relocated to his wife’s hometown of Glens Falls.²⁹

In 1920 Louis L. Wetmore, in partnership with fellow architect Milton Crandell—possibly a relation of Walter S. Crandell, the principal figure behind the construction of the Crandell Theatre—purchased the architectural firm of Harold McDowell, located on Glen Street in Glens Falls, and operated as McDowell Associates. In 1923, with the closing of this office, the two men initiated a new partnership, Wetmore & Crandall, which continued until 1928, at which time Crandall opened his own independent office; he continued in independent practice until 1936. During this latter period Wetmore’s work included a number of movie theatres, schools, and houses. While some projects were executed in Glens Falls, the bulk of the commissions were for projects in other cities and villages in northern New York. Wetmore’s known commissions, executed alone or otherwise in partnership with Crandell, included schools in Horicon and Warrensburg and

²⁶“Quirino Purchases Crandell Theatre,” *Chatham Courier*, 19 July 1961.

²⁷Nancy H. Somers to Quirino family, 22 December 2003; this correspondence included “The Architectural Practice of Louis L. Wetmore,” a typescript by Louis B. Wetmore, Wetmore’s son and Somers’s uncle, in which he provided a brief sketch of Wetmore’s family and architectural practice; it was edited by Ralph Parks, a Rochester, New York architect and Glen Falls native who worked for a time in Wetmore’s employ. Louis L. Wetmore was Somers’s grandfather, and his association with the project is also confirmed in a newspaper account published in *The Times-Union*, Albany, 14 July 1926, under Chatham news items.

²⁸L.B. Wetmore, “Louis L. Wetmore.”

²⁹Ibid.

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movie theatres in Granville, Hudson Falls, Chatham, and Mechanicville, all in New York. His practice continued until commissions largely disappeared in the face of the Great Depression, which by 1936 forced the closure of his practice. In 1944 he returned to the Boston area and there worked in various architectural offices, among them that of Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch & Abbott. Wetmore died in April 1959.³⁰

In addition to his work as an architect, Wetmore showed a decided civic-minded bent and was concerned with the welfare of the Glens Falls community and the city's physical development. He was a strong supporter of civic planning and zoning and in the later 1920s arranged a visit to Glens Falls by Herbert Swan, a nationally recognized zoning consultant. Wetmore's intent was to familiarize the community with the possibility of guiding the development of the city through judicious planning and zoning activities.³¹

Architectural Analysis

The nominated theatre is representative of the so-called "atmospheric theatre" type, which became popular during the 1920s. Foremost among those architects who were responsible for the proliferation of this theatre type during this era was John Eberson (1875-1954), who was of European birth and who immigrated to the United States in 1901. Eberson learned the rudiments of opera house and movie theatre design while working with the Johnson Realty and Construction Company and in 1923 designed what he considered his first atmospheric theatre, the Hoblitzelle Majestic Theatre in Houston, Texas; by the end of that decade he had designed upwards of 100 such theatres, typically rendered in unusual exotic architectural styles. As noted by historian Scott Hoffman, atmospheric theatres were meant to forgo conventional theatre designs in favor of those which could transport patrons "to an exotic European courtyard or garden."³² With the dawn of the Great Depression the atmospheric theatre became a place where patrons could leave the circumstances of their lives, albeit briefly. In the case of the Crandell Theatre, the prevailing motif was of Mediterranean origin, described by some as Spanish Renaissance. Large arcades, over-scaled ceiling beams, and the windowed bays flanking the stage and proscenium arch gave the interior its exotic architectural character and formed the environment in which patrons took in theatre and motion picture performances. Louis Wetmore was apparently enamored with his work on the Crandell Theatre, given that in 1926 he was advertising locally in the *Courier* as a Glens Falls-based architect "specializing for eight years in the designing of theatres."³³ Clearly he was intent on capitalizing on the success of this new and much celebrated local theatre and parlaying into theatre commission work in other communities.

Foremost among the practical considerations for the theatre was its fireproof construction, which was touted in contemporary accounts for both the original 1926 building campaign and the subsequent stage enlargement of the following year. It was also clear that the building's projectors, Walter S. Crandell principal among them, desired that the building would be perceived as "modern"—unlike some of the older venues which were in use locally—and capable of holding its own when compared with those theatres located in larger cities such as New York. Although built for a commercial and recreational function it was nevertheless a building which the community took considerable pride in, as a sign of progress and modernity.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²John L. Hoffman, *A Theatre History of Marion, Ohio: John Eberson's Palace and Beyond* (Charlotte, NC: The History Press, 2015).

³³Advertisement, *Chatham Courier*, 1926 (specific date not known).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“Film and Filmmakers in Columbia County.” Chatham Film Club, undated.

History of Columbia County, New York. Philadelphia: Everts & Ensign, 1878.

Hoffman, John L. *A Theatre History of Marion, Ohio: John Eberson’s Palace and Beyond.* Charlotte, NC: The History Press, 2015.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre (.22 acres)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>615622</u>	<u>4691079</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for this NRHP nomination is depicted on the enclosed mapping, which is entitled “Crandell Theatre, Chatham, Columbia Co., NY.” It contains .22 acres of land. The mapping was drawn at a scale of 1:24,000, 1:12,000 and 1:3,000.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary reflects historic circumstances and corresponds with the narrow rectangular lot upon which the theatre was built in 1926. No additional or “buffer” land has been included within the nomination boundary.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Krattinger
organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation date May 2017
street & number PO Box 189 telephone (518) 268-2167
city or town Waterford State NY zip code 12188
e-mail William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Photographs by William E. Krattinger, July 2016

TIFF file format, original digital files maintained at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford, NY 12188.

- 001 EXTERIOR, view showing façade
- 002 EXTERIOR, south flank elevation showing brick piers and stucco panels
- 003 EXTERIOR, entrance doors to theatre and adjacent commercial spaces
- 004 INTERIOR, view in lobby showing balcony staircase, stucco wall treatment and cornice
- 005 INTERIOR, theatre, view looking towards proscenium arch
- 006 INTERIOR, theatre, view looking back towards gallery
- 007 INTERIOR, theatre, view towards proscenium arch from rear balcony
- 008 INTERIOR, theatre, detail of original seat end in balcony
- 009 INTERIOR, theatre, detail view showing period wall lighting fixture

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Chatham Film Club
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

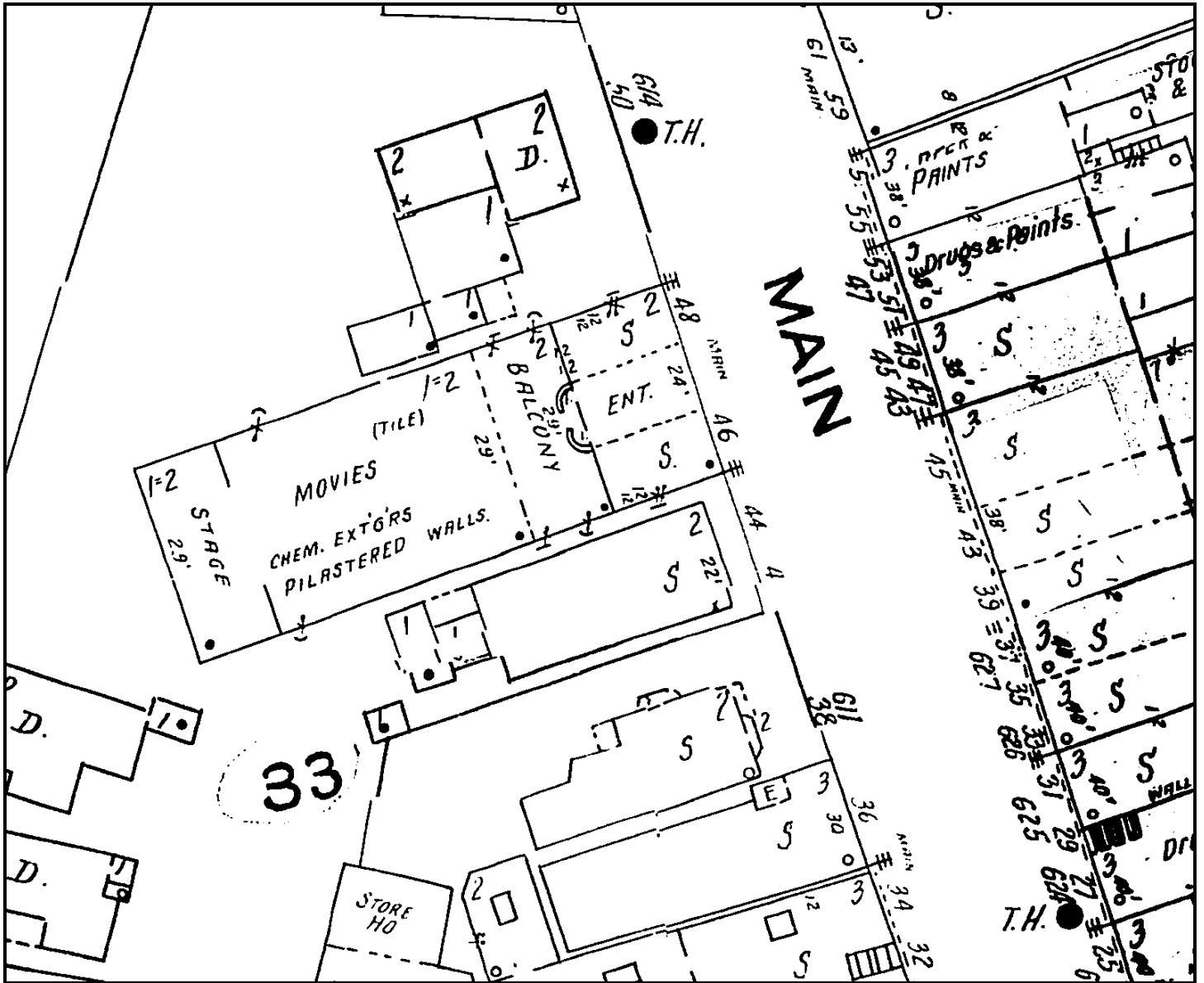
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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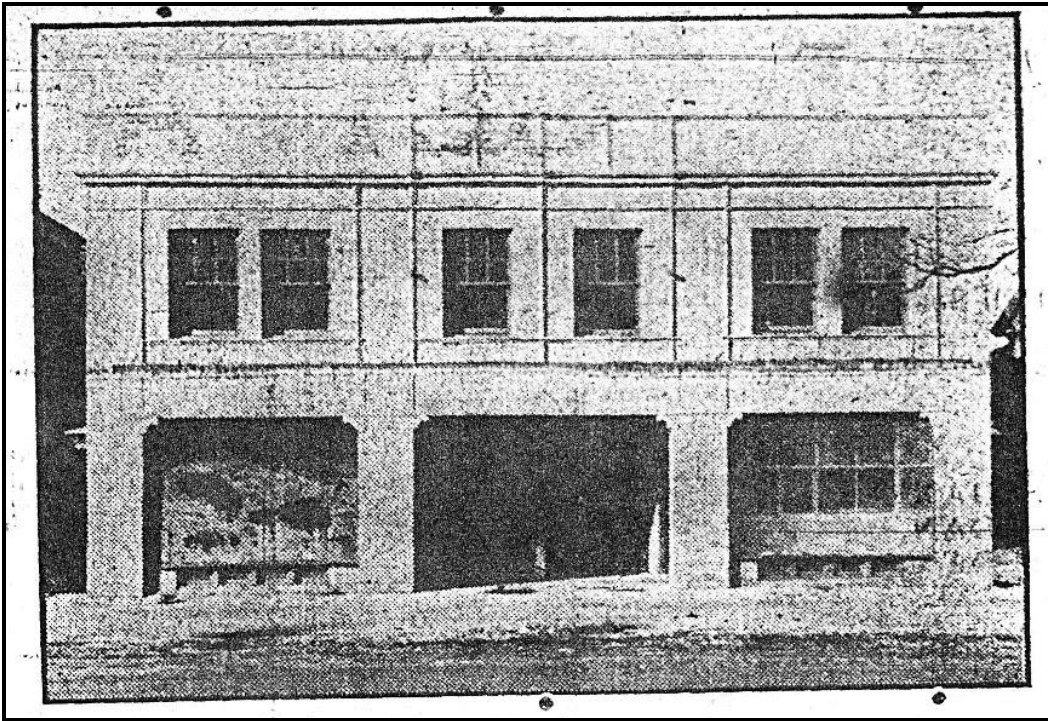
ABOVE, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1945

CRANDELL THEATRE

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ABOVE & BELOW, historic images (above 1927; below, undated view with earlier marquee)

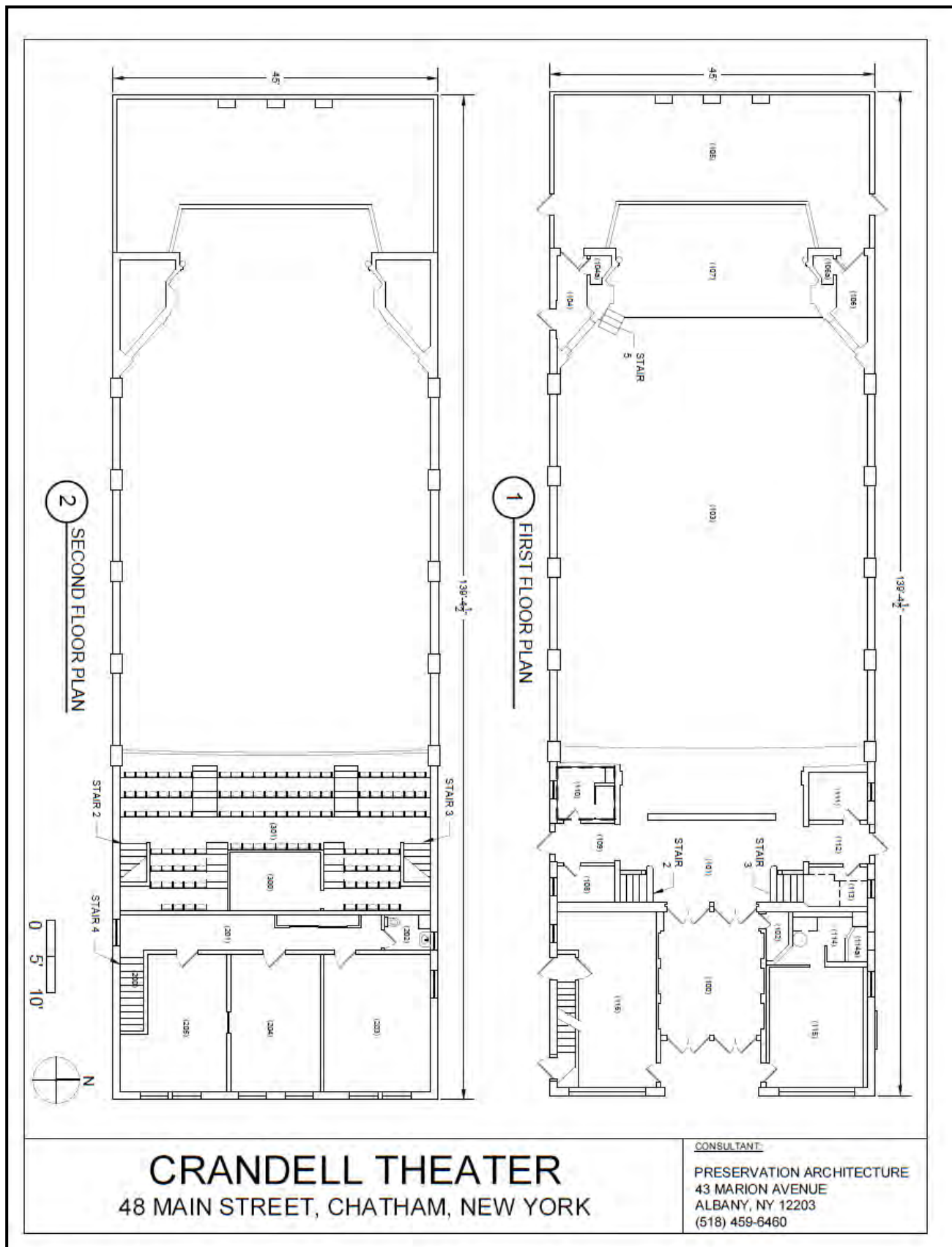


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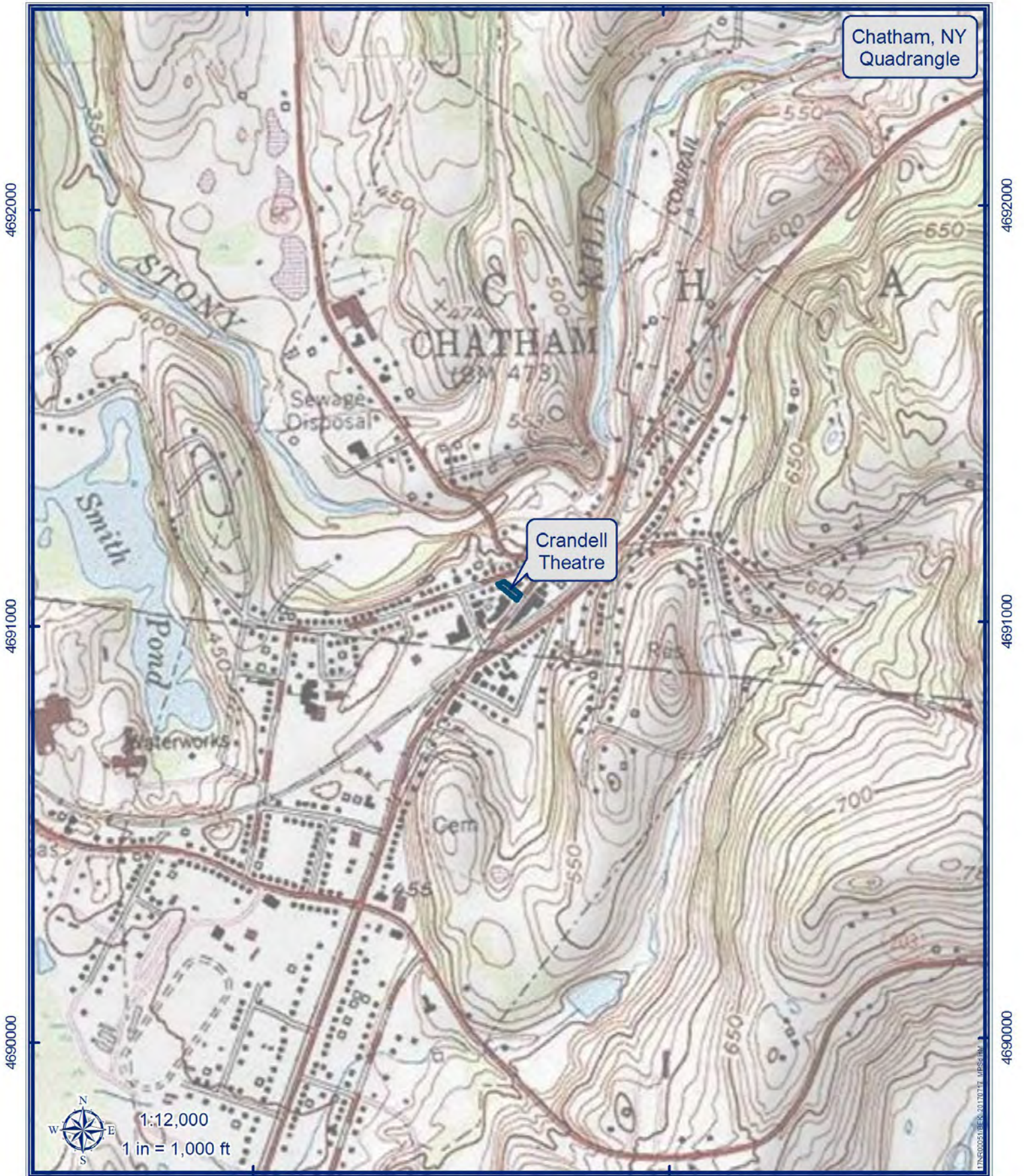




Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



Chatham, NY
Quadrangle

Crandell
Theatre



1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft

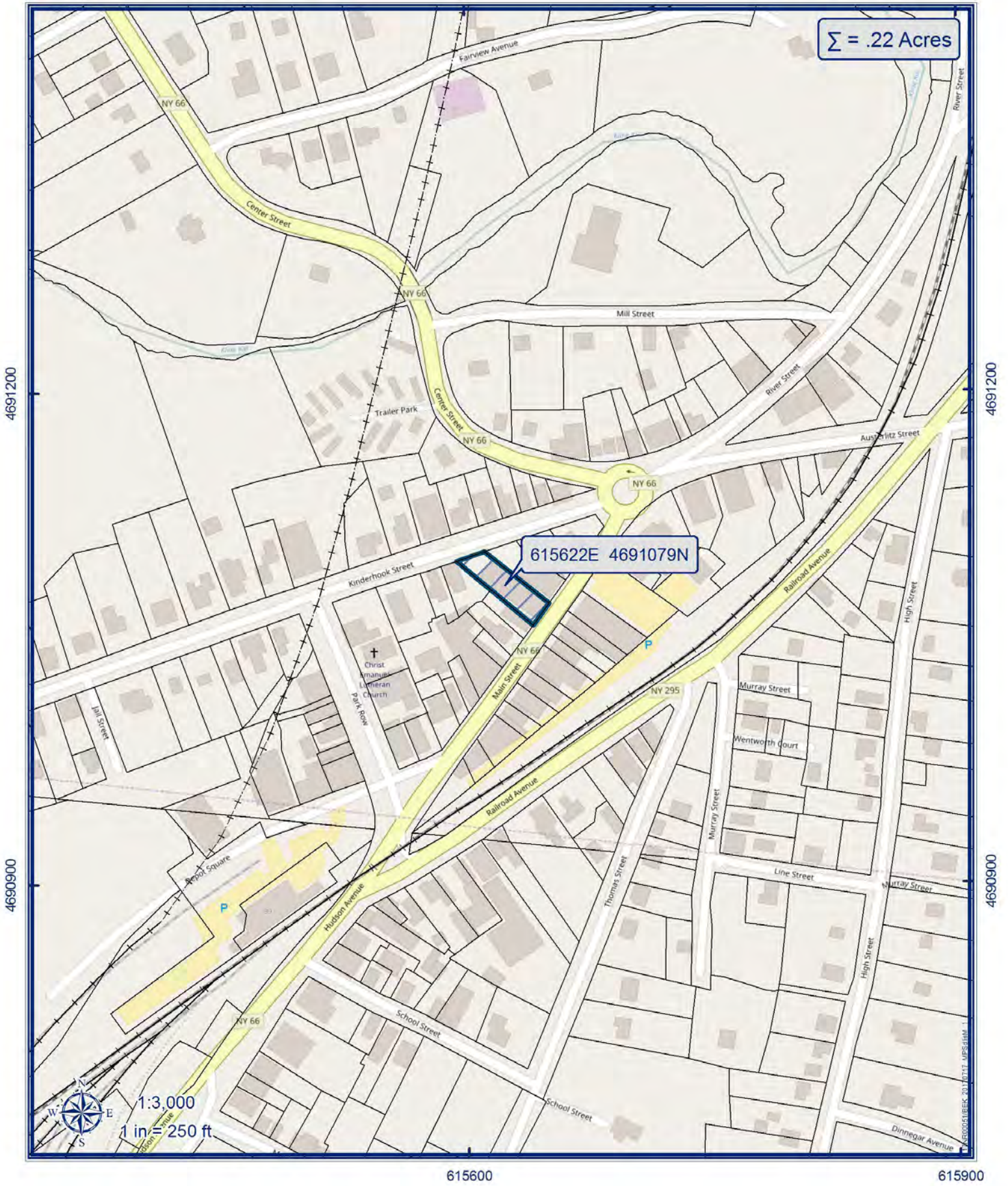
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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



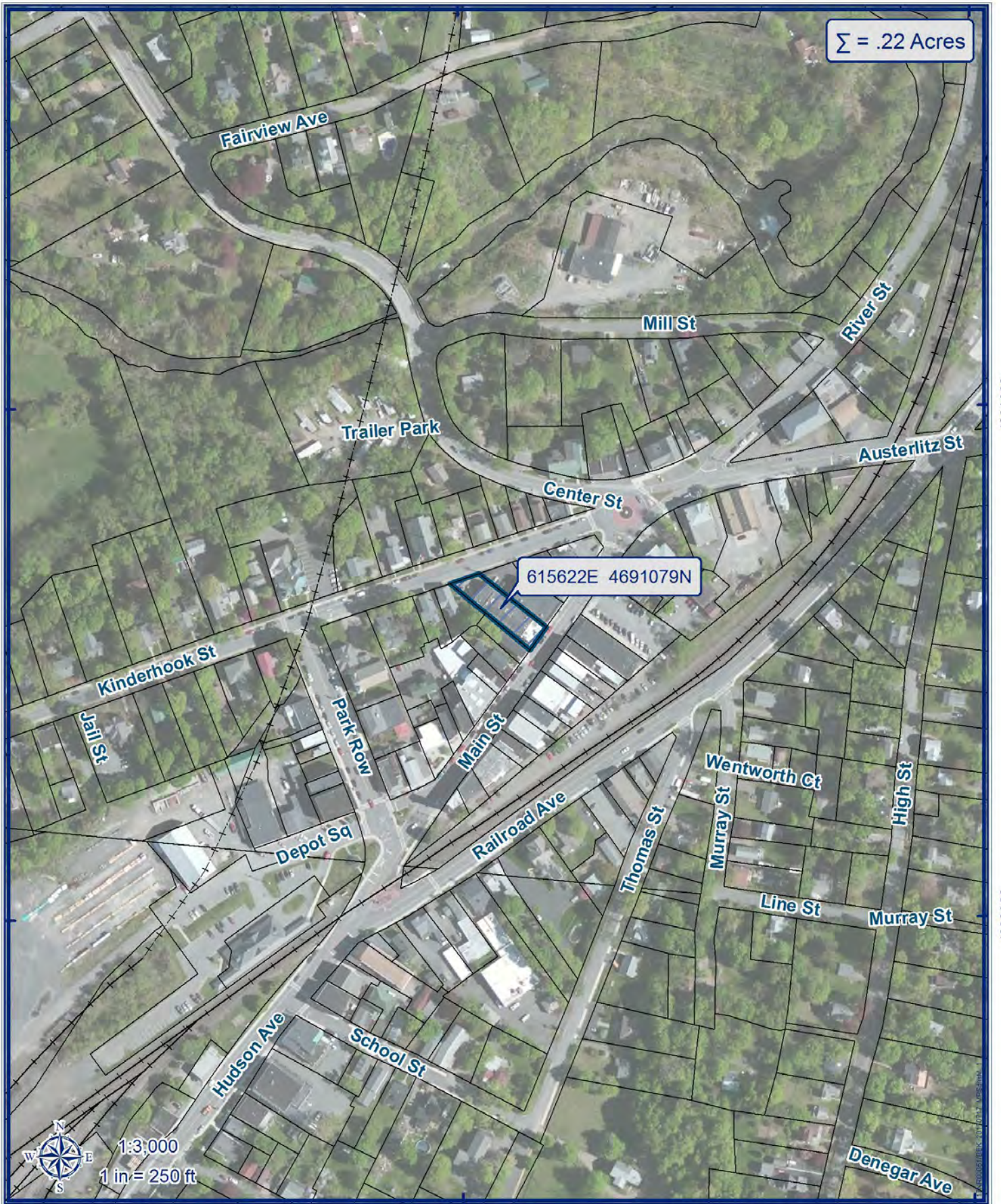
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



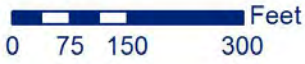
$\Sigma = .22$ Acres

615622E 4691079N

1:3,000
1 in = 250 ft

615600 615900

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter





Quirino's Crandell theatre

COMING
DARK HORSE

For
Pets
Sale

LIBRARY

COMING
MAGICAL
PLAYS





NO SMOKING

RENOVATIONS

Press



For Details on the Call
Domestic Locations

MEN

FILMCOLUMBIA











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/3/2017 Date of Pending List: 9/1/2017 Date of 16th Day: 9/18/2017 Date of 45th Day: 9/18/2017 Date of Weekly List: 9/21/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 9/18/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



28 July 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

- Gumaer Cemetery, Orange County
- Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station (Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve), Herkimer County
- Sagamore Apartment House, Onondaga County
- St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Chemung County
- Crandell Theatre, Columbia County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office