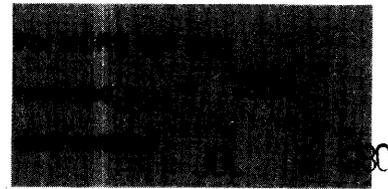


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Fairmont Opera House

and/or common Nicholas Theatre

2. Location

street & number Downtown Plaza and Blue Earth Avenue not for publication

city, town Fairmont vicinity of congressional district Second

state Minnesota code 22 county Martin code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: theatre

4. Owner of Property

name Charles L. Nicholas

street & number 123 Tilden

city, town Fairmont vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Martin County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Fairmont state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fairmont Opera House is located at the south end of a newly developed four block mall in downtown Fairmont. The building faces west at the intersection of Downtown Plaza and Blue Earth Avenue.

The structure is a two-story rectangular building with a hipped roof, brick walls, and Mankato stone trim. The front facade is composed of three bays. The slightly projecting center bay is capped by a complete pediment and defined at the sides by pilaster strips. Originally this bay included a name plate under the pediment, an open second story balcony with two large Ionic columns, and two recessed double door entrances above a short flight of stairs at the ground level. This area has been altered with the lowering of the pediment, the enclosure of the balcony area, the addition of a marquee with a sunburst motif, and the modification of the ground level to accommodate a ticket window. The side bays utilize a short parapet and a cornice with modillions which also extends across the center section. Double pilaster strips are located at the outer edges of the side bays; the original arched second story and rectangular first story windows have been bricked in. The base of the front is rusticated stone.

The north facade includes projecting sections at both the front and at the rear stage area. The front section repeats the detailing of the side front bays; the cornice extends across the remainder of the plain north facade. The south and rear (east) facades are of unornamented brick.

Alterations on the interior have included the replacement of the original horse-shoe balcony, new seating, and covering of the orchestra pit.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1901 **Builder/Architect** C.A. Dunham

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fairmont Opera House is significant as a well-preserved center of community entertainment that has remained in continuous use from its construction in 1901 to the present. Built under the direction of the Fairmont Opera House Company, a local group of investors, the building first served host to both traveling companies and local productions. By 1927, when a remodeling scheme was carried out and the theatre was rechristened the "Nicholas", the program emphasis was on motion pictures. The building has also been utilized for social, religious, and educational community functions; it remains in use today as a movie theatre. A recently formed group, Fairmont Opera House, Incorporated, has commissioned a feasibility study to restore the building and return it to a multi-use facility.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fairmont Sentinel, June 28, 1958.
Martin County Sentinel, February 14, 1902.

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1
 Quadrangle name Fairmont, MN

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A	1 5	3 8 2	1 1 0	4 8 3 4	0 3 0	B			
	Zone	Easting		Northing			Zone	Easting	Northing
C						D			
E						F			
G						H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Webster and Johnson's addition, block 3, west 121½ feet of the north half of lots one and two.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis A. Gimmetad, Supervisor, Standing Structures Survey
 organization Minnesota Historical Society date February, 1980
 street & number 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House telephone 612-296-9545
 city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

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 Russell W. Fridley
 Russell W. Fridley
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 5/22/80

For HCERS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Keeper of the National Register for W. Ray Luce date 7/2/80
 Attest: Kristin Jo'Connell date 6/30/80
 Chief of Registration