

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 16 1984  
date entered JUN 14 1984

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

1. Name

historic Park Theatre

and/or common Park Theatre

2. Location

street & number 130 Moraine Ave. n/a not for publication

city, town Estes Park n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Larimer code 069

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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Richard & Ola L. Stanger

street & number 4560 W. Evans Avenue

city, town Denver n/a vicinity of state Colorado 80219

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Larimer County, Larimer Courthouse Registry of Deeds

street & number 200 West Oak

city, town Ft Collins state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Colorado Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver state Colorado 80203

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 Park Theatre is located to the immediate east of Moraine Avenue in the main commercial district of Estes Park. The small tourist-oriented community has a dramatic setting in a valley of approximately six miles in length which serves as the gateway to the Rocky Mountain National Park. The theatre, which dates to 1913, is a frame structure, L-shaped in configuration, dominated by a massive 80-foot tower, built in 1926.

Three distinct roof levels characterize the building: (1) the west section, which dates to around 1922, comprises the projection room. It is multi-level and has a balustrade edging the roofline. The recessed section on the northwest corner was formerly the ticket booth, which was moved to the tower section in the 1926 renovation; (2) the flat-roofed section directly to the rear (south) of the tower is part of the original 1913 building; and (3) the long extension to the east which composes the auditorium is part of the original 1913 structure, and has a slightly arched curved roof.

Small windows are found at the upper level of the west wall, on which side the projection booth is found. Four windows are placed on the south wall, separated by frame strips. The eastern wall of the auditorium, which extends just above the roofline, contains three small openings.

The most distinctive element of the building is the 80' tower which is basically a "shell" and used only for storage. Placed within the front (north) wall of the tower is a giant arched opening with multi-paned glass (recently scraped of its paint). The arch, the distinctive architectural features of the structure, is basically a neo-classical Palladian motif, tripartite window. Wide mullions separate the sidelights and extend around the semi-circular fanlight of the central section above a horizontal mullion. Filling the arch are eight additional voussoired lights above the central fanlight feature set with a full rondel light with neon. The whole arched design is recessed. Just above the arch is a rectangular recessed panel containing the name of the building. Just below the arched opening and above the marquee, is a balcony, with the same pattern railing as is found on the rest of the building. The marquee, part of the 1926 addition, has vague oriental references, seen in the detailing of the corner elements.

At the four corners of the tower are minature towers, with arched openings and small false balconies on the face of each outside corner. Attached to each of the cubicals are flag poles with lights fixed at the top of each.

The lobby of the theatre features some wood trim, dating to the 1920s Neo-classical remodeling, including cornice molding and trim around the concession area--door and window frames are separated by pilasters. Walls are lathe and plaster. The auditorium has sloped flooring and acoustical cellulose boardwalks.

Additions to the theatre include a concession stand reconstructed in 1968 and a door to the adjoining building.

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

**Specific dates** 1913 ; 1922;1926      **Builder/Architect** J.R. Anderson,Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

With its 80-foot tower enriched with extravagant Neo-classical detailing, the Park Theatre constitutes one of the most prominent historic commercial structures in the tourist community of Estes Park and represents the influence of "movie palace" auditorium in a small community by providing literally a stage set for advertising.

The town, located at an elevation of 7,547 feet, is set in a picturesque valley surrounded by the Rocky Mountains. The land composing the town was purchased in 1872 by the Earl of Dunraven, a British lord who intended to use the 14,000 acre parcel as a private hunting reserve. Two years later, he leased the land to J.G. Evans who began building hotels, cottages, and good roads. These holdings were sold in 1895. The town of Estes Park, named after Joel Estes, an early settler in the area, was founded by John Cleave in 1900 and was incorporated in 1917.

The theatre dates to 1913 and the early days of the development of Estes Park. It was designed by architect J.R. Anderson for a group of prominent businessmen,<sup>1</sup> which also included Anderson as part owner. The building is said to have been constructed in pieces in Longmont, Colorado, and transported to Estes Park for erection.

Ralph Gwynn, a theatre projectionist from Denver, purchased the building in 1922 and proceeded to make the first major alterations in the structure. A large lobby was added, which necessitated moving the projection booth back 12' (forming the west section of the building). New updated projection equipment was installed, which incorporated a method by which the light beam from the projector passed through the lobby and through a window into the auditorium—thought to be a unique method of projection.

In 1926, a second phase of remodeling was initiated by Gwynn. An 80' tower featuring a high glazed arch accented by neon lighting was added, which proved a dramatic method of advertising.

In a town composed of primarily one and two-story buildings, the Park Theatre is one of the prominent structures associated with the community's past.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In 1913 the owners are listed as the Estes Park Town Co., with J.R. Anderson as president. They sold to Alma and C.H. Bond in September 1913.

<sup>2</sup>The most noted historic landmark of Estes Park is the Stanley Hotel (listed in the National Register 1977), a frame building on the north edge of Estes Park.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Personal interviews with Hazel Balwin, Estes Park; Victor & Helen Walker, former owners of the theatre, Estes Park; Meyer, son of the contractor who constructed the theatre, Estes Park.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .25 approximately

Quadrangle name Estes Park

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	4	5	5	6	2	0	4	4	6	9	4	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

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D 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

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

state	code	county	code
n/a			

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ola L. Stanger; Sharon Stanger Seeley

Edited: Gloria Mills

organization West Evans Amusement Company

date July 28, 1983

street & number 4560 W. Evans Avenue

telephone (303) 934-0261/(303) 586-4195

city or town Denver

state Colorado

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Barbara Seider*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5-4-84

### For NPS use only

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

*for* *Allore Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-14-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet Park Theatre

Item number 10

Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

Assessor's Description

Lot 42, Riverside Second Subdivision in the Town of Estes Park  
Larimer County, Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a point whence the Northwest corner of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 25, Township 5 North, Range 73 West of the 6th P.M., bears North 15 00' West 230.3 feet; thence North 81 16' East 85 feet; thence North 8 44' West 90 feet to the center of Fall River, thence along the center of Fall River about 85.6 feet intersecting a line running North 8 44' West from the point of beginning, thence South 8 44' East 80 feet to the point of beginning; and also lot 35 of Riverside Second Subdivision of Riverside Second Subdivision in the Town of Estes Park, Colorado, Larimer County, Colorado.