

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

For NPS use only

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

received **AUG 24 1987**
date entered **SEP 25 1987**

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

1. Name

historic Selby Opera House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 3409 Main Street

___ not for publication

city, town Selby

___ vicinity of

state South Dakota

code 046

county Walworth

code 129

3. Classification

Category

___ district
 building(s)
___ structure
___ site
___ object

Ownership

public
___ private
___ both
Public Acquisition
NA in process
___ being considered

Status

occupied
___ unoccupied
___ work in progress
Accessible
 yes: restricted
___ yes: unrestricted
___ no

Present Use

___ agriculture
___ commercial
___ educational
 entertainment
 government
___ industrial
___ military
___ museum
___ park
___ private residence
___ religious
___ scientific
___ transportation
___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Selby

street & number 3409 Main Street, P. O. Box 346

city, town Selby

___ vicinity of

state South Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walworth Register of Deeds

street & number 4304 Fourth Avenue, P. O. Box 199

city, town Selby

state South Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

See Continuation Sheets

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Section number 7 Page 1 Selby Opera House

Situated at the corner of Main Street, the Selby Opera House is a large rectangular two-story brick building rising from a masonry basement and capped by a gambrel roof. The symmetrical composition of the front facade reflects the Classical Revival style that was often utilized in the early Twentieth Century. A projecting cornice supported by dentils is located beneath the unadorned entablature. The words "Opera House" are inscribed directly below the cornice.

Fenestration along the front (west) facade includes five one-over-one rectangular sash windows on the upper floor and four modern replacement windows on the lower level. The original rectangular openings of the lower level windows are clearly visible. All window openings on the front facade have stone lintels and sills. In addition, there are four windows along the north facade and five along the south facade. An open concrete stairway of four steps leads to the front entrance, which has double doors and is capped by a stone lintel. To the right of the stairway is an outside entrance to the basement, and to the left is a wooden handicap access ramp.

The interior is composed mostly of a large two-story high auditorium with a stage. At the front of the building are located a foyer and several small rooms for restroom facilities, storage, and office space. In the 1940's the auditorium was enlarged, and in the 1960's the office space was remodeled; however, division of space within the building has not been altered since initial construction. The auditorium retains its original hardwood floors.

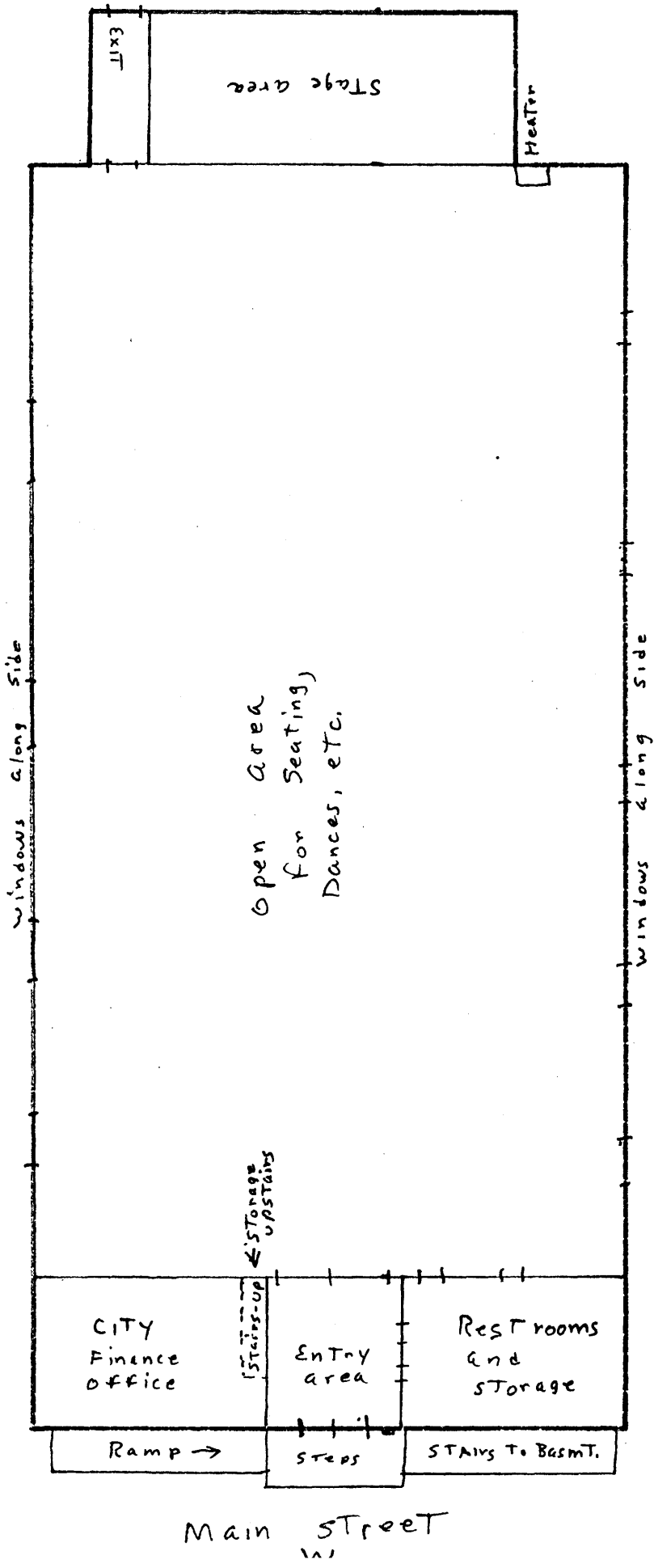
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Section number 7 Page 2 Selby Opera House

Sketch plan on reverse side

2



Building is 46 X 110
 Basement 44 X 50 Plus restrooms
 and kitchen storage

Sketch plan by
 F. Clement

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 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1909 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Selby

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

1	4	4	2	0	4	5	0	5	0	3	9	4	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries of this property are contained within the legal description as recorded in the Register of Deeds office, Walworth County Courthouse: Lots 11 and 12, Block 8, of the Original Plat of Selby, Walworth County, South Dakota.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

(with technical assistance by John E. Rau, State Historical Preservation Center, P. O. Box 417, Vermillion, SD, 57069, ph: 605-677-5314)
name/title Fritz Clement

organization Selby Historical Committee date July 1, 1987

street & number 4110 Sixth Street telephone 605-649-7345

city or town Selby state South Dakota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

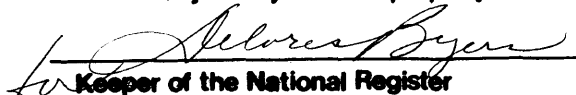
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, SHPC date 8-20-87

For NPS use only

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

 date 9-25-87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Significant in the area of theater, the Selby Opera House has for over seventy-five years served as the primary entertainment facility in Selby and the surrounding community. Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan, the property relates to the context labeled: V. Depression and Rebuilding, C. Civic Improvements and New Government-Related Activities.

At the turn of the century, when the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad extended its line from Bowdle, South Dakota, to the Missouri River, several new communities were established along the route, including Java, Selby, Glenham, and Evarts. Platted in 1900, Selby grew to be the largest of these settlements and became the seat of government for Walworth County. In 1908, the Selby Development Company formulated plans for a brick building to house the city's entertainment activities. Constructed at a cost of \$12,000., the resultant Selby Opera House opened to the public on March 27, 1909. At the time, it was the largest building in the community. In 1914, after a successful bond issue election, the City of Selby purchased the building from the development company. Over the years since, it has been leased to private managers for service to the people of the region as both a movie house and a live entertainment center.

In 1913, the "Idle Hour Circuit" included Selby in its itinerary, thus providing the community with movies twice a month. Less than a year later, a film projector was purchased for the Opera House making it possible for shows to be held every Saturday night. Walter Ress installed a Vitaphone in 1930, and Selby now had its first talking motion pictures. Shortly before World War Two, plans were proposed for remodeling the aging building. On March 25, 1942, thirty-three years after its initial opening, the Selby Opera House was reopened, featuring its enlarged and improved auditorium. In April of 1946, the building was equipped with what was reported to be the first RCA movie equipment in South Dakota.

In addition to being the community's movie theatre, the Opera House served as a community play house, a dance hall, a roller skating rink, and a public meeting place. Local schools frequently used the auditorium for assemblies, concerts, pageants, and basketball games. The Modern Woodman Lodge and the American Legion Post held meetings and festivals in the building.

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Until 1951, the Opera House also served as the local telephone office. A small room in the front of the building housed the switchboard and provided sleeping quarters for the night operator. When the telephone switching system was moved to Mobridge, that space was used for restrooms and for storage. The city offices have long been and continue to be housed in another small room at the front of the building. In the 1960's, the offices were remodeled, but the division of space within the Opera House was not altered.

The Selby Opera House has a rich history as its community's only entertainment center. It continues to serve area citizens as a meeting place and as a governmental office. Plans are being formulated to return the building to use as a permanent theater facility.

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Clement, Fritz. "Some Highlights of the Selby, South Dakota, Opera House." Unpublished paper. November 5, 1986. Copy in State Historical Preservation Center files.

Clement, Fritz, ed. Selby, South Dakota, 1900-1950. n.p., 1950.

Clement, Ida K., ed. Selby, South Dakota, 1900-1975. n.p., 1975.

Walworth County Centennial History Book, 1883-1983. n.p.: Walworth County Historical Committee, 1983.

The Selby (South Dakota) Record.