#### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1458

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Nar	me of Property							_	
Histor	ic name Th	ne Audit	orium D	Dance 1	Hall				
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2. Loc									
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THE AUDITORIUM DANCE HALL		PIERCE C	OUNTY , WA	Page 2 of 4		
5. Classification						
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)  X private	Category of Property (Check only one box X building(s)	(D	o not incl. previously	ces within Property y listed resources in the count.) on-Contributing		
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6. Functions or Use		<del></del>				
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		roof	Asphalt			
		other	Stone			

**Narrative Description** 

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET** 

THE	AUDITORIUM DANCE HALL	PIERCE COUNTY, WA	Page 3 of 4
3. Stat	ement of Significance		
	able National Register Criteria	Areas of Significance	,
Mark "	x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the	(Enter categories from instruc	ctions)
property	for National Register listing.)	Entertainment/Recrea	ation
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	made a significant contribution to the broad patterns		
	of our history.		
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons		
<del></del>	significant in our past.		
С	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics		
•	of a type, period, or method of construction or		
	represents the work of a master, or possesses high	Period of Significance	
	artistic values, or represents a significant	•	
	and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	1922-1957	
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D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.		
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A	owed by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.		
	religious purposes.		
В	removed from its original location.	Significant Person	
		(Complete if Criterion B is ma	irked above)
С	a birthplace or grave.		
D	a cemetery.	<b>Cultural Affiliation</b>	
E	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.		
F	a commemorative property.		
G	less than 50 years old or achieving significance	Architect/Builder	
	within the past 50 years.	Borhek, Roland E. (arci	hitect)
	·		
	ive Statement of Significance  the significance of the property.)  SEE CONTINUA	TION SHEET	
<u>`                                     </u>		TION SHEET	
	or Bibliographical References		
	<b>graphy</b> e books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form	.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEE	Т
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Previo	ous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of addi	
	preliminary determination of individual listing	X State Historic Pres	
	(36 CFR 67) has been requested	Other State agency	:y
	previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National	Federal agency Local government	
	Register	University	
	designated a National Historic Landmark	X Other	
	#	Name of repository:	
	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Tacoma Public Library	
	Record#		
	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record#		

THE AUDITORIUM	DANCE HALL		PIERCE COUN	TY , WA	Page 4 of 4	
10. Geographical	Data	***				
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Boundary Justific	ation					
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11. Form Prepared	i By					
	Grulich and Caroli	ne Gallacci				
	rulich Architecture		vices (	date Augus	st 4, 2007	-
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city or town	Tacoma		state W	'A zip co	ode 98402	_
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Continuation She	ets					
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Photographs						
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Additional items Check with the SHPO	or FPO for any additional it	ems.)				
Property Owner	(Complete this item at the re	equest of the SHPO or FP	O.)			
name TF	RAP Enterprises LLO	C (Attn: Nancy T	urner, Ass	istant Adminis	strator)	
street & number	P.O. Box 31516		telephone	253-383-109		_
city or town	Seattle	state	WA	zip cod	e 98103	_
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THE AUDITORIUM DANCE HALL PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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#### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

Constructed in 1922, the Auditorium Dance Hall sits near the southwest corner of Fawcett Avenue and S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street in Tacoma, Washington. The site is flat and the building spans the depth of lot to a rear alley which is located approximately 12 higher than Fawcett Avenue. The nominated building is primarily one large interior space with a shallow stage and a proscenium wall at the west end of the building. A balcony encircles three of the interior walls.

The building's primary façade is designed as a three-part symmetrical composition featuring a large central semi-circular arch above a central entry projecting slightly forward of the remaining plane of the façade. This entry is flanked by subordinate wings of stucco clad concrete walls forming a composition of few windows and cast concrete decorations in a running vine motif.

The exterior of the building has only the one primary façade, which is along Fawcett Avenue, its east elevation. The central element serves as a portal to the interior, and is formed with a large archway and a slightly recessed entry with a decorative band of a climbing vine design framing the arch.

The central portion of the façade rises above the sidewalls to a stepped parapet with a stepped raked gable. This pylon-form entry is anchored by a slightly projecting wall base. The sides of the pylon are decorated with a narrow recess with a bas-relief of a figurehead with a palmette crown at the top of the recess and a narrow wood double-hung window at the base.

The original entry doors have been lost to previous remodeling attempts. The spandrel above the door suggests there was once a projecting marquee or canopy. No historic photograph was found to illustrate this feature. In the central portion, a large three-part window is located. This window, though altered, retains major proportions of the original window. The frame and dividing mullions have survived. The sash is composed of fixed and operable units. Some of the units are damaged but intact, while others have been damaged and covered with security panels.

The north and south wall sections of each side of the central portion of the main façade are symmetrical with a double door near the building corners, and with a band of windows adjacent to doors. The doors have been replaced with solid security doors but maintain original transoms above. The transoms are seven light fixed wood sash units. The adjacent windows are small wood windows with three light transoms above.

The upper portion of the walls contains a single line of fixed rectangular wood windows separated by a decorative cast stone feature between the window units. A small square of cast stone is located below the above noted cast stone feature. Above the windows is a slightly projecting cornice inscribed with the climbing vine motif.

The remainder of the building is featureless with a common wall with the adjacent building on the north elevation, a blank windowless stucco clad wall on the south elevation, and a featureless stucco clad wall on the west elevation. This rear elevation, the west side, is on the alley and once had openings that have been abandoned and are mostly sealed with concrete block masonry. Two small windows are located

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OMB No. 1024-0018

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at the upper portion of the wall. One window, though deteriorated, remains, and the other has been covered with a security panel.

The interior has undergone some alterations and is in poor condition. Most of the interior alterations have been due to demolition, and the deterioration caused by lack of maintenance and abandonment. The proscenium wall and shallow stage are the major features of the interior and the focal point of the large open ballroom space. Above the main floor is a suspended narrow balcony that encircles the ballroom area. The balcony is wood framed with tiered floors. It is anchored to the perimeter walls and project into the ballroom. Steel rods suspended from the bottom chord of the roof trusses support the balcony edge overlooking the dance floor. Large sections of the balcony have been removed by previous owners. The proscenium wall and the balcony edge are fabricated with wood details using classical forms. The details of the proscenium include a classical Roman inspired entablature with a projecting cornice.

The roof is a truncated barrel vault shape behind a stepped parapet. The roofing is asphalt with a plank wood substrate placed over steel framed bowstring trusses which form the vaulted roof.

The auditorium once had a suspended plaster ceiling which was later covered with acoustical tile. Much of this ceiling has been removed in earlier renovation attempts. The floor has large sections of plywood, as well as areas of hardwood strip flooring, and large areas of holes exposing wood timber framing over a crawl space.

The spaces behind the proscenium are small spaces stripped of all features. There is no remaining evidence of previous use, including restrooms, to be found. The walls are featureless with smooth plaster surfaces.

#### **Architectural Integrity**

The exterior has been slightly altered since its construction in 1921. The primary façade (east elevation) is intact with the exception of the doors providing access from Fawcett Avenue. The windows as well as door framed and transoms are intact with a few broken glass panes. The only significant change to the façade is in the color schemes. Over the past 80 years there have been four different color schemes painted on the building. The existing doors are secured to the original frames and serve to deter vandalism and unauthorized entry.

The south elevation with one opening for a double service door remains intact and unaltered. The stucco surface is deteriorated and is damaged showing large fractures in the stucco and concrete masonry.

The interior of the Auditorium building has deteriorated significantly over the past 20 years. In the 1930s, after the Manley-Thompson Ford Agency building located adjacent to the Auditorium was converted into the Crescent Ballroom, the interior was altered through openings cut into the shared wall thus connecting the two buildings.

Following World War II, the Crescent Ballroom continued in operation until around 1990. Over the past 20 years, there have been several attempts at establishing new uses for the building that have failed. And with every attempt, the original building was modified with demolition efforts that changed the

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various features of the building. Damaged interior areas include the interior walls, floor, and ceiling, as well as the proscenium wall and associated spaces, along with the balcony. Large areas of the original balcony have been removed and currently the entire balcony structure is unsafe and subject to potential collapse.

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#### **SATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Auditorium Dance Hall is eligible for the National Register Criterion "A" as a resource that embodies the Entertainment/Recreational history of the City of Tacoma. The building, constructed in 1922 after a fire destroyed the original Germania Hall then located on the site, is associated with the early development of a core area of Tacoma which was unintentionally developed as a location for recreational, sports, fraternal and political activities. Noted Tacoma architect Roland Borhek to design a multipurpose building that accommodated both commercial exhibitions, dancing and musical performances for nearly 70 years. In 1930, the north wall of the building was opened to the first floor of the Manley-Thompson Ford Agency building located next door, thus providing additional space. The combined buildings were renamed the Crescent Ballroom. Upon it's completion, the nominated building served as a popular place for dancing at a time when Tacoma had few spaces available for this kind of activity. The period of significance begins in 1922, the date of construction of the building and ends in 1957, the 50 year cut off date.

The site of the nominated building was originally home to Germania Hall, built in 1889. The land for the hall was leased to the organization from Anton Huth, a German immigrant who undoubtedly understood the importance of his fellow countrymen having a place where immigrants could meet. Huth was also one of Tacoma's early entrepreneurs known specifically for his Puget Sound Brewing Company (1888) and the Carlton Hotel (1909), along with vast land holdings located throughout Western Washington. When Huth died on September 5, 1916, wife Agnes became trustee of these holdings and as far as can be determined, the so-called Anton Huth Estate continued to retain ownership of the land while developing the dance hall that was then leased to an independent operator.<sup>1</sup>

By 1911, the Loyal Order of the Moose had acquired a lease for the former Germania Hall and a year later this organization opened its doors to the Pierce County Republican Party convention. By this time too, the Fraternal Order of Eagles had constructed its hall across Fawcett Avenue from the Moose, suggesting that this part of downtown Tacoma was gradually developing into a complex of meeting places.<sup>2</sup> (At the May 1912 convention local Republicans supporting former President Theodore Roosevelt split from the party, marched out of the Moose Hall, and reconvened in the Eagles Hall to join others in the nation forming a third – Progressive – party.)

As both Germania and Moose Hall, the previous building on the site was used for activities outside the domain of the fraternal organizations. In 1889, for example, the basement of the Germania Hall became a meeting place for the Tacoma Militia (a forerunner of the National Guard). In 1891, American Federation of Labor head Samuel Gompers lectured on the rights of labor. The Loyal Order of Moose allowed Mary Harris "Mother" Jones to speak in their hall in May of 1914. Jones as a labor radical was well-known as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See, Pierce County Clerk, Probate File No. 10712.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Tacoma Daily Ledger, November 12, 1911 and May 12, 1912.

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"the most dangerous woman in America," at that time and had recently been released from house arrest in West Virginia because of her support of striking coal miners.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of World War I, South Thirteenth Street and Fawcett Avenue was informally planning itself into a zone of public and private entertainment, a type of use that continued after the Moose Hall was destroyed by fire in November of 1921. By this time the building had become home to the Tahoma Dancing Academy and had been renamed Tahoma Hall.<sup>4</sup> Within a year of the fire, work had begun on a new building authorized by the Anton Huth Estate then administered by D.K. Derrickson of the Pacific Brewing and Malting Company. Derrickson retained Tacoma architect Roland E. Borhek to design the auditorium.

Borek was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1884, was educated in Boston, and worked for several east coast architects before joining the firm of A. Warren Gould of Boston. When Gould established a Seattle office in 1905, Borhek joined the firm's office there as head draftsman. His work in Seattle included designs for the American Savings Bank and the Empire Building. Two years later he moved to Tacoma and joined the architectural firm of Heath and Twitchell, where he was credited with the design of the National Realty Building and the First Church of Christ Scientists at North Division and I Streets across from Wright Park.

Borhek had demonstrated his design abilities and a command of classical architectural forms and detail by this time, and in 1910, decided to establish his own firm. Among his early designs were the Capital Theater, a building recognized for its design quality and patron comfort, and Tacoma's Rialto Theater in 1918, one that also received public acclaim for its quality of design and for all the modern improvements in theater art. Following his design of the Auditorium Dance Hall in 1921, Borhek designed both Jason Lee and Stewart Intermediate Schools in 1925. The Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects presented Borhek an Honor Award in 1927 for his design of the Jason Lee School.

Roland Borhek was a strong spokesman for the architectural community, serving as president of the Tacoma Society of Architects in the 1920s. He was active in the Washington State Chapter of the AIA, serving as vice president and president in 1930 and 1931. He continued his service to the Washington State Chapter for several years as president or vice president of several committees until his retirement in 1942. Borhek died on May 7, 1955.

Borhek's new Auditorium Dance Hall was to be state of the art, reported the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* on November 13, 1921. "To make the auditorium useful for exhibitions, as well as dances and shows," said the reporter, "it has been arranged so that the entrance doors and ticket offices in the center can be entirely removed so as to allow the entrance of automobiles and other large exhibits of that kind." The Auditorium Company, with E.W. Wesley as president, was given the lease on the building.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Tacoma Daily Ledger, June 6, 1889, March 22, 1891, and May 31, 1914.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Little is known about the Tahoma Dancing Academy apart from a *Tacoma Daily Ledger* reference on January 1, 1922 announcing the opening of The Auditorium Dance Hall. Tacoma city directories only list it from 1920 to 1923, suggesting that it had a very short life.

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Dancing was the mainstay of the Auditorium as Tacomans entered the "Roaring Twenties." Women became flappers, and the automobile provided freedom never known before for young people. The Tahoma Dancing Academy remained in the Auditorium until 1923, and became one of several dance schools located in the city designed to teach both men and women the intricacies of the fox trot, Charleston, and other dance crazes of the era. The Auditorium was the first such hall in Tacoma that catered to this changing focus of American culture, and kept its status as the most popular dance hall into the middle decades of the twentieth century. While most of the bands and entertainment were initially local, periodically a traveling band would pass through the city. In June of 1923, Rudolph Valentino and wife Winnifred, thrilled a capacity crowd at the Auditorium with the couple's tango orchestra.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1930s, The Auditorium Dance Hall was beginning to outgrow its space. When the automobile agency located to the north became vacant, a decision was made to link the two buildings on the first floor so as to provide a new entry, lobby, lounge, restrooms and a concession stand. At that time the business was renamed the Crescent Ballroom. Competition along the street might have guided the decision. In 1926 the Greenwich Coliseum had been constructed a block away on South Thirteenth Street. Designed as both a sports arena and a dance hall, the Greenwich was to become the Auditorium's major competitor in Tacoma. The 1930s decade too saw a change in musical style heard first on the radio and phonograph records, and then live through the establishment of traveling band circuits. The new "Big Band" sound that emerged in turn required a new kind of dance hall. In 1934, the Century Ballroom, located in Fife east of Tacoma, began to attract such band leaders as Guy Lombardo, Kay Kaiser, and Duke Ellington. Places such as the Century were also competitors for the Crescent Ballroom.

There is some confusion as to what happened next in terms of the Auditorium Dance Hall and what became known as the Crescent Ballroom after the two were linked by openings in their shared wall. According to Tacoma city directories, from 1922 to 1942 the Auditorium was listed as a separate entity as was the Crescent Ballroom from 1936 to 1942, when the two buildings were combined under one address using the Crescent Ballroom name. Newspaper advertisements, however, always called the dance hall the Crescent, as when the Phil Harris Orchestra performed there in 1937. Jimmie Lunceford, known for his consistently "swinging and showy live performances" provided "5 jazz mad hours" at the Crescent in 1940.7 By October of 1941, plans were underway to construct a United Service Organization (USO) center diagonally across South 13<sup>th</sup> Street from the Crescent with its opening held on February 7, 1942.8

Use of the building as an entertainment venue continued for another forty years. More than two generations of dancers crowded the Crescent Ballroom dancing under it's large three-foot mirrored ball prior

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Tacoma News Tribune, June 2, 1923.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room, Building Index for 407 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The Greenwich Coliseum was demolished in 1975.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See, http://www.swingmusic.net. *Tacoma News Tribune*, March 15, 1940.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room, Building Index for 415 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

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to its closure in the 1980s. Sammy Carlson (basses for Rock n'Roll band The Regents) in 2000, best explained the importance of the building for both the World War II and Rock and Roll eras. "Hey, they can't tear down the Crescent Ballroom. That is where Dad met this really cute Swedish girl (Mom) in 1942. It is also where I went to my first live rock band gig with the Wailers. Pat O'Day almost beaned me with a 45 record he threw into the crowd. Besides I consider the Crescent Ballroom the true epicenter of the NW rock and roll expression." O'Day, who "was the Pied Piper of Northwest rock" and traveled with Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin, considered the Crescent such "an important part of Northwest history it should be saluted every time it was passed." In addition to the Wailers, other 60s legends who performed at the Crescent included the Corvettes, the Fleetwoods, Leslie Gore, the Kingmen, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and Bobby Vee.

By the end of the 1980s however, changing venues led to the end of the Crescent Ballroom as a top venue for most bands. Both Seattle's Kingdome (1976) and the Tacoma Dome (1983) allowed large numbers to watch (but not dance to) major musicians. In addition, dancers themselves started to prefer the smaller nightclub, bar, or tavern atmosphere to the former facilities that could easily hold over a thousand people. In 1964, Fife's Century Ballroom ceased operations. In 1975, Tacoma's Greenwich Coliseum was demolished. In 2000, Thurston County's Evergreen Ballroom was destroyed by fire.

In the mid to late 1980s, the Crescent Ballroom saw a resurgence of use as home to a variety of alternative rock bands. During this time, Seattle's restrictive teen-dance ordinance, pushed the alternative hard rock and early grunge scene to Tacoma. Venues such as the Crescent Ballroom and Community World Theater hosted landmark performances by seminal bands such as Soundgarden, Green River, Malfunkshun, Melvins, and Nirvana. When the Northwest music scene began to break nationally, bands migrated north, and the focus shifted toward Seattle.

Today, the Auditorium Dance Hall/Crescent Ballroom is one of the few surviving buildings in the region that can tell the story underlying the history of dance halls and ballrooms in the Pacific Northwest. As a venue for Duke Ellington and his orchestra for the 1940 Daffodil Ball; to host to some of the best rock and roll groups of the 50's such as the The Kingsmen, Paul Revere and The Raiders; and eventually as the location of groundbreaking performances for Gunge bands of the 1980s such as Soundgarden and Nirvina, the nominated buildings direct connection to the growth of a variety of musical styles and genre is truly unique.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> In 2005 the Crescent's 50 pound, 75 inch circumference mirrored ball, which watched over the crowd on the dance floor, was installed in the Manitou Community Center (4851 South Tacoma Way).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Benjamin Benschneider, "Pat O'Day: From rocking our world to on the rocks and back, he keeps rolling." *Seattle Times*, July 30, 2006. http://pnwbands.com.

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#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room, Pierce County Building and Housing Index; Obituary Index. Photograph Archives.

Seattle Times, 2006.

Tacoma City Directories, 1920-1945.

Tacoma Daily Ledger, 1889-1942.

Tacoma News Tribune, 1923; 1940.

http://pnwbands.com.

NOTE: an attempt was made to contact individuals, including Pat O'Day, who might be knowledgeable with regards to the interior layout of the Crescent during its time as a ballroom. As of this writing there have been no responses.

#### United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

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#### **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:**

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

The Auditorium is located in Section 5, Township 20N, Range 3E: lots 4 and 5 of block 1310, New Tacoma Addition. Located at 1308-1319 Fawcett Avenue, it shares parcel number 2013100010 with the building located at 1302-1306 Fawcett Avenue.

#### **Boundary Justification:**

The boundary for the Auditorium Dance Hall building includes lots 4 and 5 of block 1310, New Tacoma and is justified as the portion of the property upon which the nominated building sits.

The Auditorium Dance Hall: Tacoma, WA UTM 10 542176E 5233143N (NAD83/WGS84)



Pierce County Home Assessor-Treasurer Home Parcel Search Sales Search Recorded Documents Permits

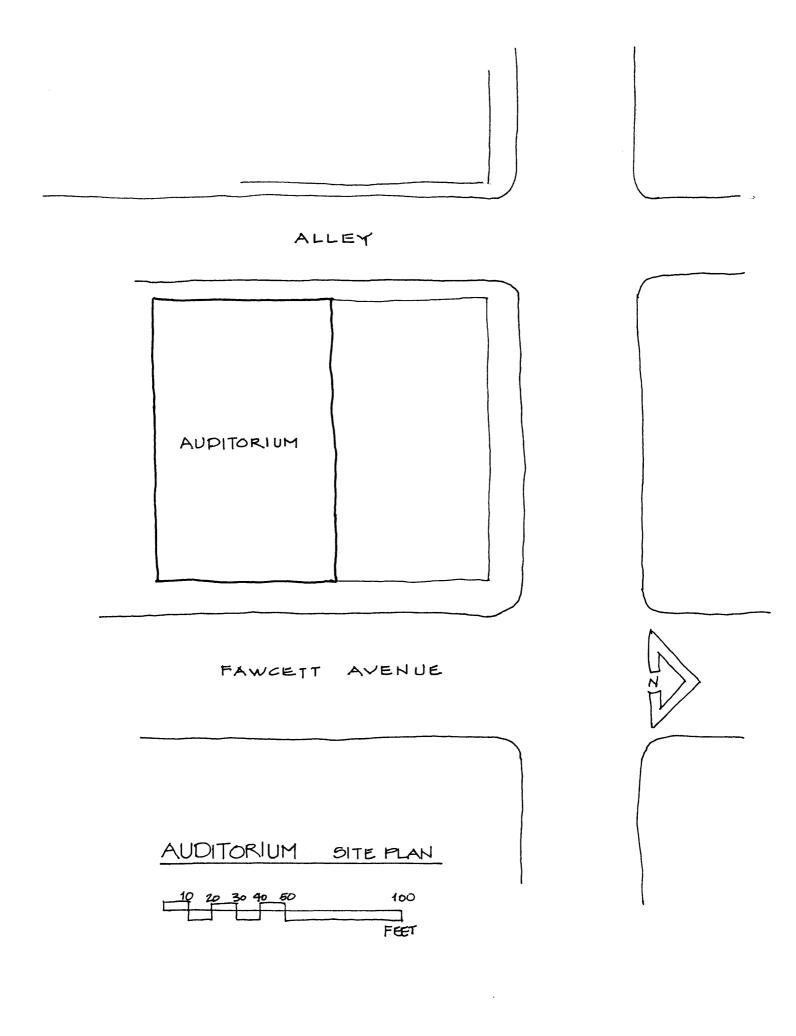
Summary Taxes/Values Land Buildings Sales Map

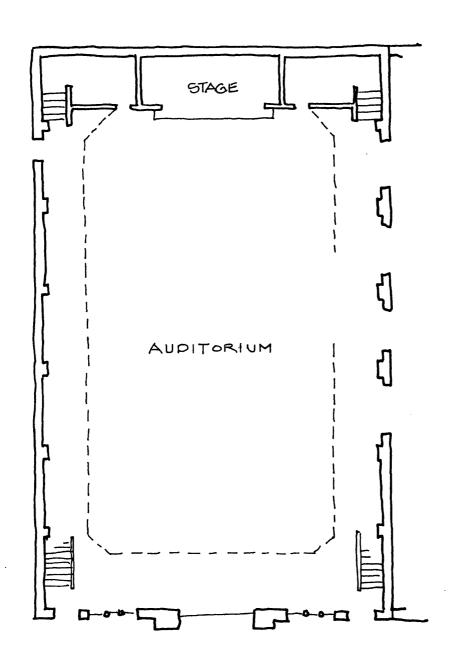
#### Parcel Map for 2013100010

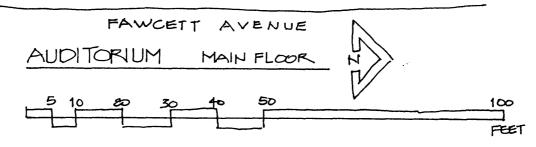
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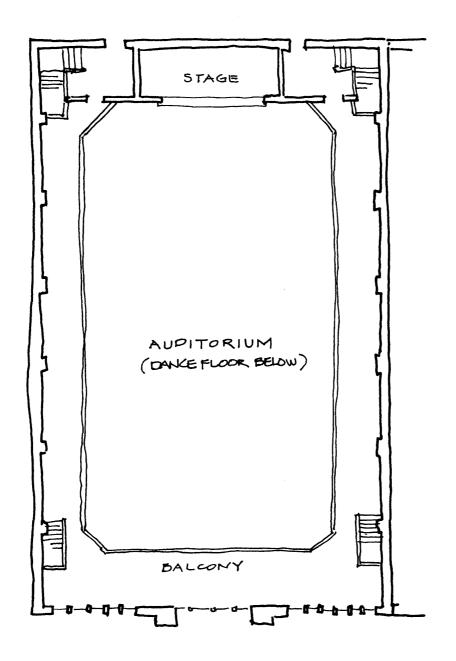
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For additional mapping options, visit Public GIS					

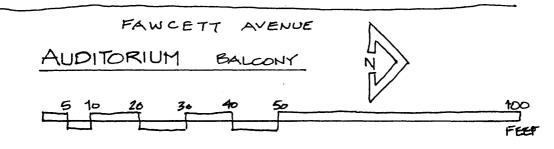
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**Tacoma Public Library** Collection: Marvin D. Boland Collection Series: G25.1 -

(Unique: 31797)

Date: 12-18-1922

Description: Five unidentified entertainers, with bobbed hair and wearing flapper costumes, surround an unidentified man in a tuxedo on the dance floor of the Auditorium at 1308-10 Fawcett Avenue, Known as simply the "Auditorium Girls", they were part of the holiday stage show.

**Tacoma Public Library** Collection: Marvin D. Boland Collection Series: G25.1-004

(Unique: 31796) Date: 12-18-1922 Description: The holiday entertainment in December of 1922 at the Auditorium included vaudeville numbers by the "Auditorium Girls," (pictured). The five ladies in short dancing costumes with bloomers and ornate hats are posed in front of the stage, which holds a Baldwin piano.





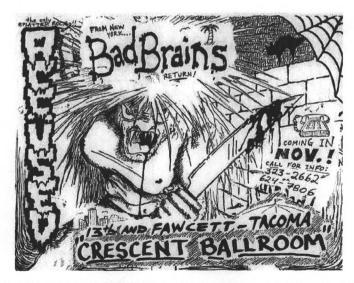
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Tacoma's **Solitudes** on stage at the Crescent - May 1964 Photos Courtesy of Rudy Bachelor



Hard rock band **Accused** and **Bad Brains** on stage at the Crescent Ballroom – C. 1988 Photos Courtesy of http://www.splatterrock.com/flyers2.html

## Known bands that have played at The Crescent Ballroom

Accused Anthem **Bad Brains** Beachcombers Little Bill and the **Bluenotes** Blue Caps **Butthole Surfers** Cherokee Jack Corvettes D.R.I. Duane Eddy **Dynamics** Dr. Know The Fathoms The Fleetwoods The Frantics

Gabriel George Neal Girl Trouble Leslie Gore Green River Jan and Dean Jean Vincent and the Blue Caps The Kingsmen Jimmie Lunceford Machine The Melvins Nirvana Painted Willie Poison Idea Quebec Paul Revere & The Raiders

Raymarks Regents The Reverbs Saint Vitus Searchers The Solitudes **Sonics** Soundgarden Statesmen Sugarloaf Tiny Tony & The Statics **Titans** The Viceroys U Men **Bobby Vee** Wailers