

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 18 1982
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Grand Opera House

and/or common Fox Theater (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 1116-1128 Main Street not for publication

city, town Stevens Point vicinity of congressional district

state WI 54481 code 55 county Portage code 097

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	(see cont. sheet)	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Jeanette A. Sanders

street & number 1249 Clark Street

city, town Stevens Point vicinity of state Wisconsin 54481

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City County Building

street & number 1515 Strongs Avenue

city, town Stevens Point state Wisconsin 54481

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (continued)

title WI Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street

city, town Madison state WI 53706

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 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

Located on Main Street in the heart of Stevens Point central business district, The Fox Theater's two story pressed brick facade is an integral part of the contiguous row of 19th century commercial facades which characterize the street scape in the area. The theater's street elevation is distinguished by the unusual height and shape of its center third, and the scale and clarity of surface articulation, fenestration, and decoration.

The facade is organized in three vertical sections. The center section contains the entrance to the theater which is under a pair of oversized double hung windows with stone transoms; above is a pressed metal tympanum with Neo Grec decoration and a peaked parapet with decorative cast iron coping culminating a large finial. On either side of this center section are slightly narrower sections each having paneled pressed metal cornices over tall, thin brick machicolations which are flanked by oversized cast iron brackets at the outer edges of the building, and turrets at these sections juncture with the center portion. Below each machicolation is a pair of transom-covered oversized windows similar to the larger center units. Continuous lintels and sills are of contrasting stone. The ground floor level treatment is asymmetrical owing to the application of commercial store fronts over original details and structure, which remains intact behind these alterations. The center portion of the ground floor contains the entrance to the theater, consisting of two pair of double doors (recessed some 10 feet from the building line) together with poster display cases both facing and perpendicular to the street. Materials consist of aluminum, clear and opaque glasses, and "carara glass." Access to the orchestra level and balcony of the auditorium is through the lobby which measures 60 feet in length, 12 feet in width, and 8 feet in height. The lobby is flanked by two 8 foot-wide straight run stairs, each having two intermediate platforms which lead to the balcony. The stairs are not open to the lobby except at the bottom where access to them is gained from the lobby. A concession area is at the distal end of the lobby where the lobby widens abruptly to allow access to the two seating aisles in the auditorium. The auditorium is 70 feet in length, 45 feet wide, 40 feet in height with seating for 570 on the orchestra level and 200 balcony level seats. The stage area is 45 feet wide, 50 feet deep by 60 feet high.

The lobby and the auditorium were remodeled in 1940, at which time a "modern" scheme, then currently in vogue, of surface treatment was effected in the lobby and the walls of the auditorium. Most of the surface decoration in the lobby has been obscured by successive redecorations, but the auditorium retains the horizontal bands of muted reds and grey on plaster walls.

The original plaster ceiling with its oval medallion suggests the original classical treatment of the interior.

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

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



Continuation sheet Fox Theater-Stevens Point Item number 3, 6

Page 1 of 1

3. PUBLIC ACQUISITION:

City of Stevens Point wishes to acquire property for use in constructing a pedestrian link between Main Street and proposed mall to the north. City proposes demolition to accomplish this linkage. (see attached plan)

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

Architectural Survey and Historic Preservation Potential Analysis for Central Stevens Point, Wisconsin, Pfaller, Herbst Associates
local

October, 1980

City of Stevens Point, 1515 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481

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

Reflects the history and development of the locality/association with
Specific dates 1894² (construction) **Builder/Architect** Oscar Cobb^{1, 2} **significant person**
1894-1916 (significance)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fox Theater is not only an example of late 19th century theater design but also as one of the significant events in the history and development of Stevens Point. It was commissioned by one of the city's most prominent residents and was the focus of the social and cultural life of the early city.

Architecture. In its late 19th century commercial form the Fox Theater is an example of a period of construction. With its prominent center parapet and cast iron cornices the theater is easily identified as a survivor of late 19th century commercial design. Its center finial, oversized Romanesque tympanum and elongated brick machicolations under the cornices refer to the lingering medieval vogue of the era. Inside, the original ceiling, with its oval plaster medallion, suggests the classical mode of the original decoration. The plainer walls, stage, and seating are evidence of the early 1940's remodeling which does not contribute to the architectural significance of the whole.

The Theater's architect, Oscar Cobb, was a widely known Midwestern theater architect. He is credited with a number of grand opera houses including those in Syracuse N.Y., St. Paul MN, Minneapolis MN, and the Grand Opera House, 1885, St. Louis.

History and Development of the locality. The Fox Theater was the first facility of its kind to be constructed in Stevens Point, and until the opening of the Lyric in 1916, the only theater in the city. As such it was the focus of much of the social and cultural life of the city. Traveling companies, local charity and civic theater productions, as well as general public gatherings were regular occurrences.³ Traveling companies such as the Winninger Brothers were regularly presented.⁴ Local charity and civic theater activities included presentations ranging from baby shows through the annual presentation of a festival of dancing and song known as the Kermis.^{5, 6} Notable among the various public gatherings taking place were speeches by Eugene V. Debs and William Jennings Bryan.⁷ In a similar vein, first facilities for what was to become the Stevens Point Public Library were housed in the theater building beginning in 1895.⁸ As early as 1925, remote broadcast of events presented in the theater were a regular feature of the University of Wisconsin Education radio station, WLBL.⁷ In 1931, the station's studios were moved from their Whiting Hotel location to the large hall above the theater. In 1920 the Hardware Mutual (now Sentry Insurance Co.), then recently established, obtained office space in the opera house.⁷

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Stevens Point Daily Journal.
2. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Los Angeles Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., Henry F. Withey
3. A standard History of Portage County Wisconsin, The Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago IL

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Stevens Point

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	2	9	4	7	2	0	4	9	3	3	0	7	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 E 30F of lot 6 W 26F of lots 7 & 16 E 20F of N 88F of lot 17 S 44F of E 55F of lot 17-All in block 29, Val Brown addition. 64 sq. ft. in SE cor of E 35F of W 45F of N 88F of lot 17 block 29 Val Brown addition 211/30, 201/587

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 Jeaneatte L. Sanders - Owner

organization N/A

date 3/26/82

street & number 1249 Clark St.

telephone 715-344-2126

city or town

state

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

Richard Henry

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 6/7/82

For NPS use only

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

Barbara M. Dwyer

date 7/26/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet Fox Theater-Stevens Point Item number 8.

Page 1.

8. SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT

Association with significant person. G.F. Andrae, builder of the Fox Theater, was one of Stevens Point's most civic minded citizens. His biography indicates that Mr. Andrae was the leading merchant in Stevens Point and was also responsible for many of the commercial buildings which comprised Stevens Point's business district during his lifetime.⁹ Mr. Andrae was also instrumental in initiating construction of the city's hospital and organizing the first public library.⁸ Born in Germany in 1849, Andrae immigrated to New York in 1865, from which he went directly to Mayville, Wisconsin to join his kinsmen. A few years later, Andrae walked to Stevens Point and became a clerk in the store of Henry Hoeffler; it was not long thereafter that Andrae became a full partner. He died in 1910.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Stevens Point Daily Journal, August 12, 1893.
2. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects by Henry F. Withey, Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., Los Angeles, 1970. p. 129
3. Stevens Point Daily Journal, September 15, 1894
4. Ibid., September 2, 1909
5. Ibid., July 20, 1895
6. Ibid., September 29, 1894
7. Ibid., June 28, 1958 (Centennial issue)
8. Ibid., June 22, 1895
9. A Standard History of Portage County Wisconsin. Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago & New York, 1919. v.II p. 444-5
10. Stevens Point Daily Journal, December 31, 1931.