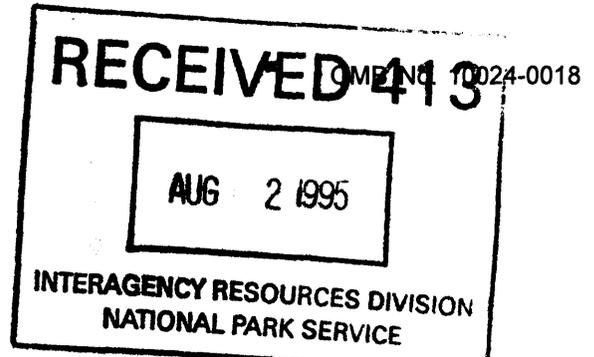


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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. Name of Property

historic name Ogden Theatre  
other names/site number 5DV2609

### 2. Location

street & number 935 East Colfax Avenue [N/A] not for publication  
city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity  
state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80218

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer July 27, 1995  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined eligible for the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date 8/31/95  
Edson B. Beall  
Entered in the National Register

Ogden Theatre  
Name of Property

Denver County, CO  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS  
OTHER/Mediterranean Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other CERAMIC TILE  
TERRA COTTA

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Ogden Theatre  
**Name of Property**

Denver County, CO  
**County/State**

### 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography**  
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

#### Periods of Significance

1917 - 1940

#### Significant Dates

1917

#### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Edbrooke, Harry W.J.

#### Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

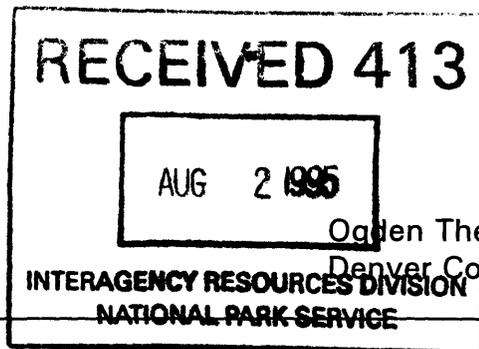
Denver Landmark Preservation Commission



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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Ogden Theatre is a two-story brick building trimmed in the Mediterranean style, with Renaissance Revival details. It is located in Denver's Capitol Hill. The building fronts south on East Colfax Avenue. Capitol Hill's main thoroughfare is Colfax Avenue, a segment of U.S. Highway 40, which extends from the eastern suburb of Aurora, through Denver, and westward through Lakewood, to Golden. Colfax claims to be the second longest street in the country, second only to Figueroa Street in Los Angeles.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of Colfax comprises an extensive, nationally well-known commercial district. Denver's Ogden Theatre is part of that district.

The two-story brick, Mediterranean-style building is constructed over a stone block foundation. It has a flat roof with tiled parapet. The facade (south elevation) is bracketed by a pair of multi-sided corner towers with hipped tile roofs. The bracketed cornice extends into a frieze. The frieze contains decorative tiled panels and a medallion flanked by cherubs on the center bay. The medallion has at its center a monogram containing the letters "I, A, C", for International Amusement Company. There are modern plate glass doors, windows, and clerestories on the ground-story and a marquee flush with the facade above. Each tower contains filled openings with a surround of pilasters and an architrave with frieze decorated with urns and dentils on the first story. There are rectangular showcases on the sides of the corner towers on the first story. The second-story contains casement windows with transoms, a swag frieze and a pediment with a medallion and scrolls. Finally, there is a panel with grotesque and scrolls between the first and second-story windows surrounds.<sup>2</sup> Alterations to the facade of the building are minor and include the relatively new plate glass doors and windows, a modern marquee and new exterior paint.

The west elevation, fronting onto the alley, and the east elevation, accessible by a narrow walkway, are similarly constructed of tan brick in running bond divided by a series of brick pilasters. A number of original window and door openings exist although many have been partially infilled with brick and modern casement windows. A few window opening have been fully infilled leaving only the original stone sills.

The rear (north) elevation is composed of red brick totally without ornamentation. A large vehicular roll-up door occupies the center of the first-story. The opening is partially filled by cinder block on the top and brick on the sides. Two former windows are bricked in with only the stone sills remaining. A former pedestrian entry to the west of the vehicular door is also bricked in with only the segmental arched header and the concrete stoop remaining. A square, brick chimney raises from the northeast corner of the building. The top of the chimney and the top of the rear gable parapet are trimmed with terra cotta.

The interior has been remodeled. In 1970, heating and air conditioning systems and drapes were replaced. In 1993, the interior was redesigned, removing theater seats to accommodate concert hall tables. However, the original stencil-paintings on the terra cotta walls have been carefully reproduced

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and the original proscenium arch and plaster stage backdrop are intact and minor water damage has been repaired. Above the stage in the center is a medallion with the International Amusement Company monogram, similar to the one found on the building's exterior.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ogden Theatre is qualified for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and Criterion C, because the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and represents of the work of a master.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Ogden Theatre, built in 1917, is significant for its historical association with the Denver motion picture exhibition industry. It is also important for its association with local theater men, John Thompson and Henry A. Goodridge and for its geographic association with Denver's historic Capitol Hill neighborhood and the development of the commercial district along Colfax Avenue, of which it is a part. A historical overview of motion picture theaters nationally, and the early history of Denver's theaters, including those of Capitol Hill, provides a framework for understanding the Ogden's historical importance.

#### Historical Context of Motion Picture Theaters

In 1889, Thomas Edison and George Eastman collaborated in the perfection of frame-lined celluloid film, the key to motion pictures, with the result that hand-cranked kinetoscopes designed by Edison were in use across America with three years. In this age of legitimate theater and vaudeville, movies were first viewed as a novelty.<sup>3</sup>

In 1903, the first feature-length movie, The Great Train Robbery, was produced. The trademark of the early years was exciting adventure movies and melodramas. By the early 1920s in the post-World War I era, the motion picture industry had become big business. The first sound films were produced in 1927. This innovation provided a new dimension to motion pictures and resulted in the birth of the Hollywood musical. The Depression years saw the maturation of motion pictures, with complicated dramas and sophisticated comedies. In the 1930s, newsreels, such as Movietown News, were introduced. Their significance to a world without television was largely undiminished through the 1940s. In a few short decades motion pictures had become the primary form of popular entertainment. Movie theaters served also as social gathering places and as centers of downtown nightlife.<sup>4</sup>

#### Architectural Context

Movie theaters' ancestors were nickelodeons and vaudeville houses, which were built around 1900. These were in the Art Nouveau style, often had oversized terra cotta decorations on richly designed

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fronts, but little interior decoration. Nickelodeons were usually family businesses operated in simple storefronts. In fact, the first building devoted purely to showing movies is thought to be a shop in Pittsburgh in 1905.<sup>5</sup> Vaudeville houses were larger than nickelodeons and proved to be a boon for movies, which were featured as second billing in these houses and eventually took over as top billing.

In terms of American theater design, the most direct influence came from the European opera houses and music halls of late 1800s, such as Charles Garnier's Paris Opera (1875). The first movie theaters followed their more modest American counterparts.<sup>6</sup> These movie palaces were designed to provide showplaces with rich trappings, but unlike the opera houses, accessible to all. Theaters were built to express the romantic aspects of architectural design and while the exteriors were used to draw people, they were rarely as opulent as the interiors. The latter included ornate lobbies, playrooms, lounges, backstage rooms for diverse functions (dressing rooms, music rooms), and orchestra pits with organs.<sup>7</sup>

The peak construction years for motion picture theaters was from 1925-1930.<sup>8</sup> One of the results of the Crash of 1929 was that there was less money available for investment. In the 1920s studio chains were formed. In various parts of the country, local architects were hired to design theaters of the same quality as those of architects Thomas Lamb and George and C.W. Rapp in New York and Chicago. The majority of the theaters of the 1920s were designed in accordance with established styles. Fantasy styles (Aladdin) and then exotics (Egyptians, Mayans) followed the opera house-like palaces,<sup>9</sup> until in 1925 the Paris Exposition of Decorative Art gave birth to Art Deco. This showed up in American theater design as an economic measure, but deteriorated within a few years.<sup>10</sup> Most theaters of the later Depression were smaller and simpler in design, e.g., the Centre in Denver.<sup>11</sup>

In an effort to prevent a decline in attendance during the Depression, many theaters offered special events, such as raffles for groceries and other items, and World War II saw an upsurge in attendance. However, theaters built during the 1940s and 1950s tended to be less expensive and elaborate than the 1920s movie palaces. Drive-in theaters enjoyed popularity during this era, however, as large numbers of people moved to the suburbs and the automobile gained ever greater importance. The low point for movie theaters came in the 1960s when small shopping mall theaters came into fashion. Downtown theaters had been in trouble since the 1950s when affluent citizens had begun to move to the suburbs. Many downtown theaters, as well as other historic buildings, were demolished during this period and those theaters that survived often were divided in to smaller theaters. Only one, the Paramount survives in downtown Denver as a movie palace. In the 1970s, a trend to convert some of the older theaters to other entertainment uses began. This trend continues today.<sup>12</sup>

### Early History of Denver's Motion Picture Industry

Curtis Street was Denver's early Theater Row. In 1881, Horace W. Tabor opened his Tabor Grand Opera House. Built at a cost of \$750,000, the opera house first featured Emma Abbott's troupe singing

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the opera "Mauritania" and for the rest of the century, the world's best actors and productions played there.

In the early 1900s, there were numerous theaters in Denver, both downtown and in the neighborhoods. They were used variously for everything from peepshows to girlie, variety, and burlesque shows, as well as vaudeville and stock theater. As was occurring nationally, movies originally were seen as a novelty, an added attraction, used between other types of shows and as second billing. As their quality increased, they eventually became the primary entertainment.

The Tabor Opera House was later named the "Colorado," and featured live stage shows with movies in 1922. In 1929, Harry Huffman, the Denver movie theater magnate, gained control of the theater and renamed it the "Tabor." In the mid-1930s, variety acts, including personalities such as the Gumm Sisters and Donald O'Connor, were featured, along with a chorus line of Taborettes. The theater was luxurious, with Belgium carpets, French tapestries, Japanese cherry wood. Its 1500 seats were upholstered in red plush. Unfortunately, by the 1960s, it was featuring B grade movies and in 1964, it was torn down.<sup>13</sup>

F.O. Browne, secretary of the Paris Theater Company of Denver, in 1915 wrote an article about the economic impacts of Denver's moving picture industry, which was published in Colorado Factory Facts. He reported that the first theater in Denver to feature moving pictures, in combination with vaudeville acts, was opened in 1897 by Dick Turpin. It was a remodeled old store located on 16th Street between Curtis and Arapahoe streets, across from the Tabor Grand theater.<sup>14</sup> Forrest "Trees" Johnson, veteran theater employee and author of Denver's Old Theater Row, has noted that the first commercial theater used strictly for movies was purportedly the Nickelodeon owned by Gus Heck. However, its name connotes at least mixed uses. The theater was in a converted store building on the first floor of the St. James Hotel. The screen was a cotton bed sheet on the back wall and folding chairs were used. Admission was five cents for a 20 minute show. Heck discontinued the operation in 1903, due to poor business.<sup>15</sup>

The Novelty Theater at 1632 Curtis opened in 1903 and was Denver's first theater with electric lights. It offered a variety show with black-face comedians and vaudeville. Owner Harry Lubelski soon added two-reel movies. The theater, later known as the Isis, was torn down in 1912-1913 so that its owner could build the larger Strand.<sup>16</sup>

The first six-reel movie was Sarah Bernhardt in "Queen Elizabeth," which was shown at the Princess Theater, which opened at 1620 Curtis in 1909. The theater, which was later renamed the Victory in honor of World War II, was torn down in 1951.

By 1915, there were 13 theaters lining both sides of Curtis Street.<sup>17</sup> Batschelet has noted that the same year, Thomas Edison called Curtis Street, the "best lighted street in the world." Curtis Street, Denver's

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Theater Row, became known as the second "Great White Way."<sup>18</sup> By World War I, vaudeville and movies had replaced the earlier variety shows.<sup>19</sup>

The Orpheum Theater opened at 1537 Welton in 1903. Part of the Keith-Orpheum vaudeville circuit, such stars as Sophie Tucker, George Jessel, Will Rogers, the Marx Brothers, and Al Jolson appeared there. In 1913, the first sound movies, not talkies, appeared at the Orpheum. The original theater was torn down in 1930 and rebuilt in 1932 as a combination movie-vaudeville billing.<sup>20</sup>

At about the same time, the Denver and Paramount theaters were built in downtown Denver. The Denver Theater was built in 1928 at 510 16th Street and featured a rising platform for the organ, the first wide picture screen, and the latest sound equipment.<sup>21</sup> The Art-Deco style Paramount Theater opened across the street in 1932, on the site of an earlier theater. Rapp and Rapp's plans for a similar Paramount theater in Aurora, Illinois were circulated around the country. The Paramount in Denver was copied from Rapp and Rapp's designs by Temple H. Buell, who had earlier worked for them.<sup>22</sup>

F.O. Browne of the Paris Theater Company, further reported in 1915, that since the first showing of a moving picture in Denver at Elitch's gardens in 1897, the moving picture theater industry had grown rapidly into an important industry and that Denver had not only kept pace with other cities, but had advanced faster than many of similar size and importance. By this time, Denver served as a distribution point for film manufacturers and there were 12 large firms located in the City. Browne noted that in 1915, Denver had 50 movie theaters, with a combined 35,000 seats, that employed at least 300 people. He further reported that movie theater admissions were garnering \$10,000 weekly and estimated that everyone who rides a streetcar to the theater, 60,000 a week, spends \$.30, which covers the streetcar fare, theater admission, and cost of refreshments.<sup>23</sup>

### Denver's Neighborhood Movie Theaters

While horsecars were the principal means of transportation in the early days of Denver's neighborhoods, this was a relatively expensive operation. In the mid-1880s, Denver installed cables down Colfax and other thoroughfares, creating one of the most complete systems in the nation. This was soon supplanted by the electric trolley, the transit system that was dominant in Denver until 1950. The ease and economy of commuting brought large numbers of people into Capitol Hill. Housing and neighborhood commercial centers developed in close proximity to the streetcar routes.<sup>24</sup>

While the downtown Theater Row was the focus for early theaters, including those that eventually showed movies, the various neighborhoods also had theaters, usually smaller versions, built along the major traffic arteries.<sup>25</sup> Like the downtown theaters, the earliest of these were used for vaudeville and other live entertainment. However, in the decade from 1910 to 1920, theaters built for the primary purpose of showing moving pictures were built in Denver's neighborhoods.

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Several of Denver's old neighborhood moving picture theaters still stand. The best-known of these are Capitol Hill's Bluebird and Esquire, South Broadway's Mayan, Gothic, and Webber, and North Denver's Federal, Oriental, and Egyptian theaters. Of this group, only the Bluebird, Webber, and Egyptian theaters were built in the decade from 1910 to 1920,<sup>26</sup> while all of the remainder are more recent, dating from the 1920s to as late as 1930, the peak movie theater construction years.<sup>27</sup> Of these old theaters, only the Esquire and the Mayan are presently used for traditional movies, although these theaters have been subdivided for use with multiple screens to make them more profitable. The Gothic is presently used for rock music concerts, the Webber features pornographic movies and adult live entertainment, the Egyptian, after a stint as the Holiday, a Spanish-language movie theater, is now the home of a Peruvian restaurant. The Bluebird, Federal, and Oriental are now unoccupied.

### Capitol Hill Movie Theaters

Capitol Hill was historically one of Denver's premiere neighborhoods and remains today a vital, integral part of the Queen City. Capitol Hill's Ogden Theatre, located on its main transportation artery, East Colfax Avenue, has long been considered a Capitol Hill landmark.

Henry Cordes Brown, the man who built the Brown Palace Hotel, played a key role in the establishment of Capitol Hill. An early Denver pioneer, a carpenter, Brown took advantage of federal land policies and in 1864 preempted four 40-acre tracts of land located between 11th and 20th avenues from Broadway east to the alley of Grant and Logan streets. The land, which was adjacent to the original Denver city limits, became known as "Brown's Bluff" and was considered a wasteland.<sup>28</sup> However, by the 1870s, largely through Brown's efforts, development had reached Capitol Hill and land values soared as the area became known as the home of many of Denver's wealthy and the state Capitol was eventually built there. The cornerstone was laid in 1890.<sup>29</sup>

The advent of streetcar transportation in the 1870s and the Panic of 1893 ensured that Capitol Hill would not be merely a wealthy enclave, but home to a diverse population. For many years, Capitol Hill was a streetcar suburb. Simultaneously, the Panic of 1893 led to property divisions as former millionaires sold off excess land, with the result that many apartment houses were built.<sup>30</sup>

From this early background, Capitol Hill grew to encompass several neighborhoods, with beautiful parks and numerous churches, schools, hospitals, entertainment facilities, and commercial establishments. Thomas J. Noel commented in his Foreword to Phil Goodstein's Denver's Capitol Hill, that, "In many aspects--social political, religious and architectural--Capitol Hill has been Denver's pacesetter for the past century. That neighborhood's characters, buildings and institutions reflect Denver history as a whole."<sup>31</sup>

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In the Capitol Hill neighborhood, theaters of the early 1900s included the Colfax at 710 East Colfax Avenue, the Eleventh Avenue at 1084 Broadway, the Seventeenth Avenue at 1231 17th Avenue, and the York at 2221 East Colfax.<sup>32</sup> Although theaters, such as the York, eventually showed moving pictures, the first structure in Capitol Hill that was built specifically for showing movies, was the Thompson (Bluebird) Theater, also known briefly as the Adams Theater, at 3315-17 Colfax.<sup>33</sup>

The theater was built by John Thompson in 1914. Thompson was a successful retail grocer, self-made man who had arrived in Colorado in 1880 and worked at manual labor until he could save \$20 to open a store. His grocery store, at 1117-1135 15th Street, eventually employed 50 people and occupied four floors. There were rooms for the manufacture and preparation of food, candy kitchens, sausage making, coffee roasting, egg candling, and proper tobacco storage.<sup>34</sup> In 1915, Thompson brought in veteran theater man, Henry A. Goodridge, from Alamosa to manage the theater for him. The 1916 and 1917 City Directories list Thompson first as president of the theater and then as manager, while Goodridge is listed first as secretary and then as assistant manager of the operation.<sup>35</sup> The theater later became one of the holdings of the International Amusement Company and in 1922 was sold to Harry Huffman, who renamed it the Bluebird.<sup>36</sup>

This was the first of three Capitol Hill theaters in which Thompson was involved. Two of the three, the Thompson and the Ogden which three years later, were designed by well-known architect Harry W.J. Edbrooke, nephew of Frank Edbrooke, Colorado's premier 19th century architect.

The Thompson was built as a plain masonry building, with decorative features recently described as Victorian/Art Deco transitional. Its interior has walls of lath and plaster construction, with terra cotta decorations. There is a plain lobby, with narrow stairways on each side to the balcony, where there are small restrooms.<sup>37</sup>

The first theater was so successful that Thompson and Goodridge, under the auspices of the International Amusement Company, opened a second theater in Capitol Hill, the Ogden, in 1917. Located at 935 East Colfax, this theater was of masonry construction, in the vernacular Mediterranean Style.<sup>38</sup> In 1927, Thompson's company built a third theater, the Hiawatha (Esquire), in Capitol Hill at 590 Downing Street. This was a single story brick building. The building permit application was filed by theater manager G.B. Ashworth and lists the as architect Jim Hieder<sup>39</sup>

In 1926, the Aladdin Theater opened at 2010 East Colfax Avenue. This theater, built by Denver movie theater magnate Harry Huffman and designed by the architectural firm of Ireland and Pau,<sup>40</sup> was a prime example of theaters designed around a fantasy theme. Elaborately styled after the Taj Mahal, this luxurious building contained a lounge, a nursery, and cloak room.<sup>41</sup> Its exterior was of brick and terra cotta. The building had a domed roof, while the ceiling of the movie house had thousands of lights, sparkling like stars in the sky. The stage's proscenium arch was flanked by bubbling fountains.<sup>42</sup>

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All three of Thompson's theaters stand today, although, as noted, only the Esquire still functions as a movie theater. Unfortunately, although the Aladdin continued to be a profitable first-run theater into the 1980s, it was demolished in 1984, despite considerable local opposition.

### The Ogden Theatre

Following their successful venture in the Thompson Theater, John Thompson and J.A. Goodridge embarked upon the building of a second theater, a relatively grander theater in what was then the posh Capitol Hill neighborhood proper. On October 19, 1916 a building permit was issued to the International Amusement Company, of which Thompson and Goodridge were two of the principals, for construction of the theater's foundation. The permit lists Joseph Meyers as the contractor and H.W.J. Edbrooke as the architect.<sup>43</sup> Ground was broken and excavation began only to be discontinued a few weeks later when the foundation's walls, never braced, collapsed. A second permit for a brick theater and part basement was issued on March 14, 1917.<sup>44</sup> A few months later the building was completed.

The Ogden opened on September 6, 1917, with Douglas Fairbanks in "Wild and Woolly." Its owners described the theater as being the best appointed, most convenient of all theaters with the most comfortable seats and best ventilation.<sup>45</sup> Like the Bluebird, however, it was assumed that people would walk to the theater or use public transportation. Despite the fact that an early photograph touting the theater's opening shows two automobiles out front, this innovation did not yet play an important transportation role for most of the public, so there was no planned parking.

The theater initially played second run films, such as "Poor Little Rich Girl," and others for a period of one week each. Also like the Bluebird and other theaters of the times, the films were supplemented with vaudeville shows several times a week, and later by newsreels.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1920s, the Ogden was updated, first with the addition of a new marquee and entrance doors, and later by the addition of a new pipe organ.<sup>47</sup>

By 1940, Fox International Theaters had taken over management of the theater, although it was still owned by the International Amusement Company and its daily operations continued to be managed by H.A. Goodridge.<sup>48</sup> In 1964, Goodridge died at the age of 94 and the International Amusement Company sold holdings, that included the Ogden, Esquire, and Leadville theaters, to a private investment firm. Fox, however, continued to manage the Ogden and Esquire, as well as several other Denver theaters until it sold out to National General Corporation.<sup>49</sup>

The Ogden was closed briefly in 1970 for interior remodeling. The refurbishing included a new screen, new projection and sound systems, a new heating and air conditioning system, and new seats and drapes. Another new feature was a 150-seat loge section in the balcony to provide ample leg room. National General Corporation announced at the time that the theater would be managed by DeWayne

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Beslisle, a former manager of Denver's Mayan Theater and that the theater would operate on a continuous performance policy. The first attraction was the first-run film, "Women in Love," from the novel by D.H. Lawrence.<sup>50</sup>

In the 1970s, the progressive deterioration of the Capitol Hill neighborhood was reflected in the Odgen's revenues. Unable to sell first-run films any longer, National General sold the Odgen, along with many of its other theaters to Ted Mann of Denver. Mann Theaters attempted several new programs at the Odgen in an effort to revive business. These included the American Film Theater and a format of classic films. Only partially, successful, the Odgen was soon forced to play films on a multiple run or sometimes X-rated films.<sup>51</sup>

In January, 1977, the Odgen was taken over by Parallax Theater Systems, soon renamed Landmark Theaters, joining a California-based group specializing in repertory movie theaters. Parallax initiated a series of weekly film changes, first three times and then seven times weekly, and the theater became a dynamic entity once again.<sup>52</sup> However, its revived success was relatively short-lived. The theater closed in 1990 after a seven-year decline in attendance and despite the continued popularity of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show," which had played Saturday midnights for almost 13 years and brought in more than \$50,000 in 1989. In its last five years, the Landmark, which also operated the Vogue, Esquire, and Mayan theaters, switched programming policies at the Odgen from daily changes of movies, such as "Lawrence of Arabia," to a program of art films and product or event-centered programs, such as The Gay Film Festival. While the popularity of videotape rentals, lack of parking, and a deteriorating Colfax Avenue are the commonly cited reasons for the theater's decline, Landmark's marketing director David Swanson noted that "Colfax on the Hill" had actually improved in the five years since 1985. Prior to its closure, the Odgen was Denver's oldest operating theater.<sup>53</sup>

The Odgen remained closed for three years, until Denver concert promoter Doug Kauffman, himself a musician, bought it, planning to renovate the theater as an 1100-seat performance center with valet parking. This was the second venture of Kauffman's company, Nobody in Particular Presents, which had earlier renovated the Gothic Theatre on South Broadway for live-music presentations. The Odgen, which was planned to cater to an upscale audience, presents an eclectic mix of musical offerings.<sup>54</sup>

The resurrection of the old movie palace into a concert hall required the investment of \$550,000. The renovations included the addition of several tiers, for nightclub tables and seating, covering the theater's original sloping floor. There is a curving 45-foot oak stage, a dance floor, and three bars. The exterior of the building has been repainted a warm beige, with purple and green trim. However, as Kauffman has reported, every effort was made to preserve the architectural integrity of the original structure. The original stencil paintings on the interior terra cotta walls, for example, have been painstakingly reproduced. Also, when the movie screen was removed, a beautifully carved plaster backdrop with flowers and cherubs, probably an original fixture, was revealed. This was carefully restored. The Odgen reopened on September 2, 1993 with a performance by War, a 1970s rock group.<sup>55</sup>

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The Ogden Theatre compares well with other remaining neighborhood movie theaters built prior to 1920. It larger than most neighborhood theaters of this period, such as the Bluebird, and far more ornate. While more modest than some of the downtown theaters of the same period, the Ogden was built in the tradition of the movie palace, prior to the period when theme and fantasy- style theaters, such as the Mayan, were emphasized. The theater is also in better physical condition than many of the existing neighborhood theaters (e.g, the Webber), even those built in the 1920s (e.g, the Gothic) and 1930s.

In summary, the old theater of John Thompson and H.A. Goodridge, one of the early neighborhood theaters of Denver, lives on. Further, while it no longer shows motion pictures, the alterations have in no way detracted from the building's ability to convey the feeling and association of an early neighborhood movie theater in the period from 1917-1940.

### ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Ogden Theatre has architectural significance for two reasons: it is a fine example of the Mediterranean Style, combined with Renaissance Revival details, in a commercial building and it is associated with prominent architect Harry W.J. Edbrooke.<sup>56</sup>

The theater's architecture is described above (see Narrative Description). Its context within Harry Edbrooke's career is discussed below.

There are two common threads that bind the early history of the Bluebird and Ogden theaters in Capitol Hill: John Thompson and Harry W.J. Edbrooke. While John Thompson had a major role in financing and building the two movie houses, as well as the Esquire, the Bluebird and Ogden were designed by prominent Denver architect Harry Edbrooke.<sup>57</sup>

Harry Edbrooke (1873-1946) was born in Chicago, joining a family of well-known architects. His father, Willoughby, and uncles, Frank and George, were all architects. Among his numerous accomplishments, Willoughby went on to design prominent buildings at Notre Dame, the old Washington D.C. Post Office, and others. He designed the Tabor Block at 16th and Larimer in Denver and the Tabor Opera House at 16th and Curtis, the latter described as the finest building for theater purposes in the country. His uncle Frank E. Edbrooke came to Denver to supervise its construction and went on to become one of Denver's most highly acclaimed architects.<sup>58</sup>

After attending the University of Illinois for two years, Harry continued his education at the Armour Institute of Technology where he mastered the rudiments of architecture, graduating in 1898. He worked as a draftsman for architects William K. Fellows and Howard Van Doren Shaw in Chicago before opening his own office in 1904. In 1908, his uncle Frank invited him to join in his Denver practice. Harry accepted and stayed until his uncle's retirement in 1913, at which time he established an independent practice.<sup>59</sup> Withey and Withey, in their Biographical Dictionary of American

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Architects, have credited Harry as the designer of the First National Bank Building, at 820 17th Street and the Gas and Electric Building at 910 15th Street, but as Noel and Norgren have reported in Denver, The City Beautiful, these structures were built in 1910 and the building permit applications carry the name of Frank E. Edbrooke and Company.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, if Harry had an association with these projects, it was under the aegis of his uncle's firm.

Independently, Harry Edbrooke later designed several buildings in Denver. These include, in addition to the two capitol Hill movie theaters, the W.H. Kistler Stationery Store at 1636 Champa, the A.T. Lewis Dry Goods Company building, later known as the Denver and Rio Grande Building, at 1531 Stout, a country home for John C. Shaffer, and an apartment building for Dr. J.H. Tilden.<sup>61</sup> He also designed the Valverde and Adams Street (Harrington) schools, the Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist building, and the Rexall Drug Store (Rainbow Grocery) at Colfax and York.<sup>62</sup>

Edbrooke, who was a member of the Colorado Chapter of the Institute of American Architects, served for a year as advisory architect to the state of Colorado. Stone's History of Colorado describes Edbrooke as having "...attained eminence in his profession, actuated ever by a laudable ambition that has promoted close study and has led to most desirable results."<sup>63</sup>

The range of architectural styles used in Edbrooke's building designs is fairly eclectic and several examples of his expertise remain on the Denver landscape. Examples of the Mediterranean style used in the design of the Ogden Theater are also embodied in the Valverde school and Rexall Drug Store mentioned above. Nowhere, however, is affinity for this style more creatively expressed than in the Ogden Theatre, where the attention to detail and decor, both on the exterior and interior, is notable. Further, the building retains its integrity of setting and design, and recent alterations have done little to detract from its integrity of materials and workmanship.

## CONCLUSION

The Ogden Theatre, located on East Colfax, just a few blocks east of the state Capitol, has been described variously by the newspaper media as, "...the familiar Ogden Theatre...",<sup>64</sup> "...the venerable Ogden Theatre...",<sup>65</sup> "... a Capitol Hill landmark...",<sup>66</sup> and "... a Denver landmark..."<sup>67</sup> In recognition of its historical, architectural, and geographical importance, the theater has recently been designated a Denver Landmark.

The Ogden Theatre meets Criterion C of 36 CFR 62.4, for its association with the development of the motion picture theater industry in Denver. The building also meets Criterion C, because it is representative of a type, period or method of construction (Mediterranean Style)<sup>68</sup> and represents the work of a master (Harry Edbrooke).

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The Ogden Theatre is historically important for its association with the motion picture theater industry. Built in 1917, the theater was in the vanguard of the emerging theater business, whose peak construction years were 1925 to 1930. Locally, the Ogden has importance as one of the early neighborhood motion picture theaters, a second wave of development that followed a decade or so after the initial wave of downtown movie theaters. The theater is also important for its association with John Thompson, as one of three Capitol Hill theaters that he was instrumental in building, and with his colleague, H.A. Goodridge, who operated the Ogden for most of its history. Geographically, the Ogden is locally important because it is a recognized landmark of Denver's Capitol Hill and associated with the commercial development of Colfax Avenue. Architecturally, the theater is a fine example of the Mediterranean Style in a commercial application and important as a masterpiece of prominent architect Harry Edbrooke.

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### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Colfax on the Move," City Edition 18-25 January 1984, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Rebecca Herbst, Historic Building Inventory Record, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

<sup>3</sup>David Naylor, American Picture Palaces, The Architecture of Fantasy (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1981) p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 17

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-37.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 60, 67. See also, Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful and Its Architects, 1893-1941 (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 141. Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful and Its Architects, 1893-1941 (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 174-182.

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<sup>13</sup>Forrest "Trees" Johnson, Denver's Old Theater Row, The Story of Curtis Street and its Glamorous Show Business (Denver: Bill Lay, LITHO Printers) pp. 42-46.

<sup>14</sup>F.O. Browne, "The Economic Side of the Moving Picture Industry in Denver," Colorado Factory Facts (Aug, 1915): 15-16.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>17</sup>Forrest "Trees" Johnson, Denver's Old Theater Row, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Ralph J. Batschelet, The Flick and I (Smithson, New York: Exposition Press, 1981), p. 86.

<sup>19</sup>Forest "Trees" Johnson, Denver's Old Theater Row, pp. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>22</sup>David Naylor, American Picture Palaces, p. 219.

<sup>23</sup>F.O. Browne, "The Economic Side of the Moving Picture Industry In Denver," Colorado Factory Facts (Aug. 1915): 15-16.

<sup>24</sup>Phil Goodstein, Denver's Capitol Hill, pp. 21-22.

<sup>25</sup>Forrest "Trees" Johnson, Denver's Old Theater Row, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 17 December 1964, pp. 117-118; Rocky Mountain News, 24 January 1994.

<sup>27</sup>Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful, pp. 131; Denver Directories, 1924-1931; Colorado Directory, 1929.

<sup>28</sup>Phil Goldstein, Denver's Capitol Hill, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-8.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>31</sup>Thomas J. Noel, "Foreward," in Denver's Capitol Hill (Denver: Life Publications, 1988).

<sup>32</sup>Forrest "Trees" Johnson, Denver's Old Theater Row, p. 50.

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<sup>33</sup>Phil Goodstein, Denver's Capitol Hill (Denver: LIFE Publications, 1988) p. 110.

<sup>34</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 17 December 1964, pp. 117-118.

<sup>35</sup>Denver City Directories, 1916, 1917.

<sup>36</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 17 December 1964, pp. 117-118.

<sup>37</sup>Denver Landmark Application, Bluebird Theater, 22 February 1994.

<sup>38</sup>Phil Goodstein, Denver's Capitol Hill, p. 111; Denver Building Permit No. 2282, 19 October 1916; Denver Building Permit No. 437, 14 March 1917.

<sup>39</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 2154, 2 May 1917.

<sup>40</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 1591, 7 April 1926.

<sup>41</sup>Denver Post, 29 October 1976, p. 30.

<sup>42</sup>Denver Post, 30 April 1982, p. 24. See also, Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful.

<sup>43</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 2282, 29 October 1916.

<sup>44</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 437, 14 March 1917.

<sup>45</sup>Moving Picture Theaters - Denver, News Clippings File, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, Denver.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 6293, 4 December 1926; Denver Building Permit No. 3187, 10 June 1927.

<sup>48</sup>Moving Picture Theaters - Denver; Denver City Directories, 1940-1950.

<sup>49</sup>Moving Picture Theaters - Denver; Rocky Mountain News, 17 December 1964, pp. 117-118.

<sup>50</sup>"Denver's Ogden Theatre Gets a Complete Facelift," Denver Post, 11 June 1970, p. 49.

<sup>51</sup>Moving Picture Theaters - Denver.

<sup>52</sup>Phil Goodstein, Denver's Capitol Hill, p. 113.

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<sup>53</sup>"Ogden Theatre to Close May 26'" Rocky Mountain News, 25 April, 1990, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup>"Revival Set for Colfax Landmark," Rocky Mountain News, 5 June 1993, p. 48A; "Ogden Theatre to Host New Music Experience," Denver Post, 21 June 1993, p. 1F.

<sup>55</sup>"Old Theater is Ready for the Curtain to Rise Again," Rocky Mountain News, 2 September 1993, p. 4A.

<sup>56</sup>Rebecca Herbst, Historic Building Inventory Record, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

<sup>57</sup>Denver Building Permit No. 2282, 19 October 1916; W.F. Stone, ed., History of Colorado (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), p. 220.

<sup>58</sup>W.F. Stone, ed., History of Colorado, p. 220-222; Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren Denver The City Beautiful, p. 196.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), p. 189; Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful, p. 196.

<sup>61</sup>W.F. Stone, ed., History of Colorado, p. 220.

<sup>62</sup>Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver The City Beautiful, p. 196.

<sup>63</sup>W.F. Stone, ed., History of Colorado, pp. 220-222.

<sup>64</sup>Moving Picture Theaters - Denver, News Clippings File, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, Denver.

<sup>65</sup>"Last Picture a Horror," Rocky Mountain News, 27 May 1990, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup>"Ogden Theater to Close May 26," Rocky Mountain News, 25 April 1990, p. 64; "Revival Set for Colfax Landmark," Rocky Mountain News, 5 June 1993, p. 48A.

<sup>67</sup>"Old Theater is Ready for the Curtain to Rise Again," Rocky Mountain News, 2 September 1993, p. 4A.

<sup>68</sup>Rebecca Herbst, Historic Building Inventory Record, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, 1987.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries include all of lots 1 and 2, 13, and 14 through 20 in the Park Avenue/Morgans/Colfax Addition in the City and County of Denver.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nomination includes all the land historically associated with the Ogden Theatre.

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### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

All photographs below were taken by William H. Tate on April 12, 1994. Photo negatives are on file at Tate Enterprises Unlimited, Inc., 1390 South Paris Court, Aurora, Colorado 80012.

<u>Photograph #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	The Ogden Theatre, facing north.
2	Detail of medallion, facing north. Note monogram: IAC (International Amusement Company).
3	Corner tower, facing north-northeast.
4	Rectangular showcase, facing northeast.
5	Tower window treatment, facing north.
6	Interior columns and stencil painting, facing east.
7	Stage and backdrop, facing north- northeast.
8	Detail showing medallion, facing north.

All photographs below were taken by Dale Heckendorn on July 1, 1995. Photo negatives are on file at the Colorado Historical Society, Denver, CO 80203.

<u>Photograph #</u>	<u>Description</u>
9	East tower on corner of south and east elevation, view to the northwest.
10	West tower on corner of south and west elevation, view to the northeast.
11	West elevation, view to the south.
12	West elevation, view to the south.
13	Rear (north) elevation, view to the south.
14	East elevation, view to the south.

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