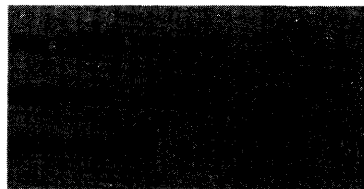


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



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

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

1. Name

historic Washoe Theater

and/or common Washoe Theater

2. Location

street & number 305 Main St., N/A not for publication

city, town Anaconda N/A vicinity of congressional district Montana First

state Montana code 030 county Deer Lodge code 023

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Henry Lussy

street & number 1818 Tammany Avenue

city, town Anaconda N/A vicinity of state Montana 59711

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Deer Lodge County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Anaconda state Montana 59711

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Washoe Theater occupies a large portion of the 300 block on Main Street in Anaconda. The main portion or auditorium area is a two-story structure, while the entry and office are one-story. The exterior is finished in striated red brick laid in interesting patterns. The parapet wall above the office and entry courts has a saw tooth line. The two-story section is divided into sections by white panels (three sets) that break up the surface. According to early photographs and the working drawings there were windows in these areas that lighted the stairways and mezzanine lounge. At street level beneath the two outside groups of panels are niches or blind arcading. The central panel section does not extend downward as far as the flanking sets and has a pattern of brick corbelling below it. Underneath this are three flattened pointed arches that frame the fire exit doors.

Little has changed on the exterior of the building. The present marquee differs from that shown in the 1936 newspaper article celebrating the theater's opening. Glass doors enclose what was once an open but roofed court between the office complex and the foyer. The interior is much the same except for a newer refreshment center.

The glass entry doors open into an enclosed entry court. The offices are to the left of this vestibule and behind the office are several rooms that serve as a mini-museum. Here are furniture, clothing, dishes, etc. that had belonged to owner Henry Lussy's grandmother, Marie Paumie Rimbaud.

Turning right from the vestibule one enters the foyer of the theater through etched glass doors. The foyer runs the full width of the building on a north-south axis. One begins to sense the magnificence of the interior from the wall and ceiling decor. The first space is an almost-square entrance lobby that accommodates the usual refreshment stand. It has a ceiling built up of receding planes painted a Cerulean blue graduated from a light blue at the walls to a deep blue in the center. According to the interior decorator, Nat Smythe, of Hollywood, this gave a sense of unlimited height. Beyond this lobby is the long formal foyer with entries into the auditorium on the left (east) side and stairs leading up to the balcony centered on the other side. The ceiling of the foyer is broken into segments rising from the pilasters spaced at intervals on the walls. A large mural by artist Colville Smythe enhances the center section of the ceiling and wall. The theme of this mural was taken from an ancient Persian fairy tale, "The Princess and the Rock." A large circular mirror has been worked into the mural's composition. The remainder of the foyer ceiling throughout the building except in the entrance lobby are covered with acoustic plaster and painted.

The domed ceiling of the theater auditorium is richly treated; it is referred to by the designer as a "roof of ornament." A mural entitled "Montana" has been painted on the plaster of the domed area. On one side is the figure of a miner and opposite are figures depicting culture, education and industry symbolizing Montana's and the world's dependence upon copper. A large chandelier hangs from the center. The entire auditorium is painted in soft pastel shades of rose, powder blue and yellow that emphasize the shallow modeling of the various mouldings. These colored areas are accented with gold, silver and copper to better define them in the subdued lighting. There is a frieze of bas-relief of ram's heads in medallions around the auditorium. This is finished

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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in eight shades of gold, as are the decorative plaster column capitals on the posts at the sides of the auditorium and in the foyer. The low areas are in matt gold and the raised areas in burnished gold. A similar treatment occurs around the proscenium arch with various portions additionally highlighted with copper leaf. The walls of the auditorium are finished in a rose beige. This color is especially effective around the groupings of the blind theater boxes on either side of the stage. No organ was ever installed, but had been included in the plans by the architect. The matt and burnished gold leaf of the proscenium arch make a very effective foil for the highly decorated turquoise blue silk plush curtain of the stage. The curtain was hand painted, it bears two deer rearing up in the center and features a gold fringe across the bottom. Red tormentors frame the curtain.

The stairs to the curved balcony rise from the foyer to a landing and split left and right, both sets leading up to a mezzanine-lounge at the head of the stairway. This is painted in a soft salmon color. Horizontal bands are graduated from light at the ceiling line to darker at the floor line; these bands are separated by silver lines, giving an effect of spaciousness. The warm salmon color is also used on the stairways and foyer. Figures entitled "Nocturne" are painted on the walls of each upper stair landing. The ceiling panels of the stairways are painted in a modern version of a classic theme of bands and head-in-medallion.

Extreme attention has been given throughout the building in the elaborate painting, bas relief, lighting fixtures and choice of decor. Even the rods holding the curtains over the auditorium doors are decorated with a leaf motif on their ends. The lighting fixtures are all original and in good shape. They are various forms of metal and frosted glass. The seats are original and need reupholstering but appear to be in good shape structurally.

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

Specific dates 1931/1936 **Builder/Architect** Gus Forseen/B. Marcus Priteca

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Washoe Theater in Anaconda, Montana is one of the most finely preserved theaters in the United States. The restrained exterior masonry ornamentation gives little indication of the elaborate and completely original Art Deco furnishing, light fixtures, beautiful silver, copper and gold leaf, and ceiling and wall murals which await movie fans on the inside. The drawings for the Washoe are dated April 1930. The Art Deco design of this 1,000 seat theater is the work of the Seattle based architect, B. Marcus Priteca. The contractor was Gus Forseen of Missoula, who also built the Anaconda Junior High School. When completed, the Washoe cost \$200,000. Although construction began in 1930-1931, the depression delayed the interior finish work until 1936 when the theater finally was able to open.

B. Marcus Priteca (1890-1971), had a distinguished career as a theater architect, beginning in 1911 with the opening of the San Francisco Pantages Theater which he designed for Alex Pantages. From that time Priteca, then 21, was to be the sole architect for the Pantages circuit, the largest privately owned vaudeville circuit in the world. In 1916 he designed the Coliseum of Seattle, considered to be the first movie palace. Other theaters designed by Priteca were a second Pantages in San Francisco, Pantages theaters in Memphis, San Diego, Fresno and Hollywood, Warner Brothers Theaters in Huntington Park, San Pedro and Beverly Hills, Orpheum theaters in Vancouver and Seattle (still standing and in use as a playhouse), and Palomar and Paramount theaters in Seattle. In all he designed approximately 150 major theaters.

The elaborate interior decoration was under the direction of Nat Smythe of Los Angeles, California. The murals on the walls and ceilings were painted by Nat and "young artist, Colville N. Smythe." The very latest in sound and projection equipment was furnished by the Electrical Research Products Corporation, distributors of Western Electric Sound equipment. Early ads extolled the fine "Mirrophonic Sound." Furnishings, draperies and fittings were obtained from the National Theater Supply Company of Slat Lake City.

The importance of theater entertainment in Anaconda is evident in the circumstances surrounding the construction of the Washoe. In 1897, the Margaret Theater was built where the Washoe now stands. Named for the wife of Marcus Daly, the Margaret was sold in 1926 and reopened in 1927 as the Sundial. After the Sundial was destroyed by fire in 1929, a group of citizens formed to build another theater in its place. One of the officers of the original Washoe company was Marie Paumie Rimbaud, the grandmother of the present owner, Henry Lussy.

The Washoe Theater was built during the period when movies were at their peak as an entertainment medium. Huge elaborate movie palaces were built to show the films. Many of these have been destroyed, but the Washoe still stands and is in operation fulfilling its original function. The original furnishings and equipment are still in place and in use. The Washoe Theatre is an outstanding example of a type of architecture that is no longer being constructed.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Marquee, 4 (1972), pp. 3-12 AIA Journal, 56, (1971), p. 62
 Montana Standard, June 21, 1930, p. 1
 Anaconda (Montana) Standard, September 24, 1936, Theater Edition
 The Anaconda Leader, September 17, 1976, p. 8
 Montana Standard, March 14, 1976, p. 15 Anaconda Copper Etchings Diamond Jubilee 1883-195
 Jubilee Committee

10. Geographical Data **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property less than one **UTM NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Anaconda, Montana Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	1 2	3 4 9 1 7 5	5 1 0 9 8 5 5	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Original Townsite, Block 57, Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10
 T4N, R11W, Section 3

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John N. DeHaas, Jr., AIA, Architect
 organization _____ date November 20, 1981
 street & number 1021 South Tracy telephone (406) 586-2276
 city or town Bozeman state Montana 59715

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marcella Shafy
 title Deputy SHPO date 3-10-82

