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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 14 1992

NATIONAL
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Fromberg Opera House

other name/site number: American Legion Hall

2. Location

street & number: Harley Avenue

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Fromberg

state: Montana code: MT county: Carbon code: 009 zip code: 59029

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maude Hefy SHPG 12-11-92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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

 see continuation sheet
 removed from the National Register
 see continuation sheet

 other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick Anders

Date of Action

1/28/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: Buildings	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> building(s)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Properties in Fromberg	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Recreation and Culture: theater

Current Functions:

Vacant: not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Other: One-story gable-roofed

Materials:

foundation: concrete
 walls: stucco
 roof: asphalt
 other: clapboard & wood shingles

Narrative Description

The Fromberg Opera House is located in Fromberg, Montana, a small rural community in the southcentral portion of the state. The building is located about one block north of the business district and stands at the southwest corner of the intersections of Harley Avenue and C Street. The Opera House was built in 1908 in a vernacular style embellished by detailing typical of Victorian-era architecture. In 1940, the building was partially remodeled and became the American Legion Hall.

The one-story building is rectangular in plan, rests on a newer concrete foundation, and is topped by an asphalt-shingled gable roof. The exterior walls were refinished with stucco in 1940; several holes in the stucco reveal the original clapboard siding beneath. The stucco finish only extends a few feet into the gables, leaving much of the original treatment in the ends intact. An elaborate pattern of rectangular, scalloped, and diamond wood shingles accent the south gable; they frame the top of a round opening altered with the American Legion emblem. The north gable is sheathed with clapboard siding and has a round window with a quatrefoil wood-sash, infilled with boards. Much of the original detailing at the roof also remains, including: wide eave overhangs with beaded soffits, decorative cut rafter and purlin tails, and crown and fascia molding. Some original windows also remain. They predominately are narrow, two-over-two, double-hung wood-sash with board surrounds trimmed by crown molding; windows on the south are further accented by eyelet-like decoration. The original main entry to the building was likely centered on the south wall but is now covered over by stucco. On the east wall towards the south is a pair of slab doors; this doorway was added in the mid-1910s when the building was used as a motion picture theater. Other entries included a paneled door on the east wall towards the north end, and a half-light paneled-door on the north end of the west wall. Another door on the north wall has been boarded over.

The Fromberg Opera House retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Although the exterior walls have been stuccoed, many of the building's key stylistic elements remain evident such as the elaborate shingle detailing in the front gable, quatrefoil-sash window in the rear gable, roof and window trimmings, and most original window units. Furthermore, the building still clearly exhibits its original form, massing, and scale.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/recreation

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1908-1918

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1908, 1915

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Fromberg Opera House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the "Historic and Architectural Resources of Fromberg" multiple property listing. The significance of the building is established locally under the historic context of "Religious, Educational, Civic, and Social Activities in Fromberg, 1906-1925," and meets registration requirements developed for the associated property type "Religious, Educational, Civic, and Social Buildings." It is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the growth and emergence of Fromberg in first two decades of the twentieth century. The building retains sufficient integrity to demonstrate significance.

The Fromberg Opera House derives significance under Criterion A as an important reflection of the town's social and cultural development during its historic boom period (1906-1918). The Fromberg Opera House was the first public, social facility in town and served as the principal gathering place for entertainment and recreational activities in the community for over thirty years. The building was constructed by a group of town promoters in 1908 to host plays by professional troupes that traveled from town to town by train. It also quickly became used as a public hall where town and rural residents could socialize at dances and celebrations. At times the building functioned as a roller skating rink and in 1915 it offered the first glimpse at motion picture entertainment in Fromberg.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bronn, Firman M. Jr. "A History of Theater in Montana." Ph. D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1963.

Fromberg Herald. 7 & 9 January 1912, 2 February 1913, December 1916, and May 1916.

Republican Picket Holiday Supplement. 1909.

R.L. & Polk Co's. Directory of Billings and Red Lodge; Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater and Big Horn Counties. 1912, 1914, 1916, 1918, and 1922.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Fromberg. 1907, 1912, and 1927.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other - Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	663850	5028530

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses all of Lot 11 of Block 10 of the Dudley First Addition to Fromberg (SW¼ SE¼ SE¼ Section 17, T05S, R23E).

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot historically associated with the Fromberg Opera House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mary McCormick (Erika Kuhlman of the Fromberg Historical Society did the initial research and wrote the first draft in 1989.)

organization: Renewable Technologies, Inc.

date: April 1992

street & number: 511 Metals Bank Building

telephone: 406/444-7715

city or town: Butte

state: MT

zip code: 59701

Property Owner

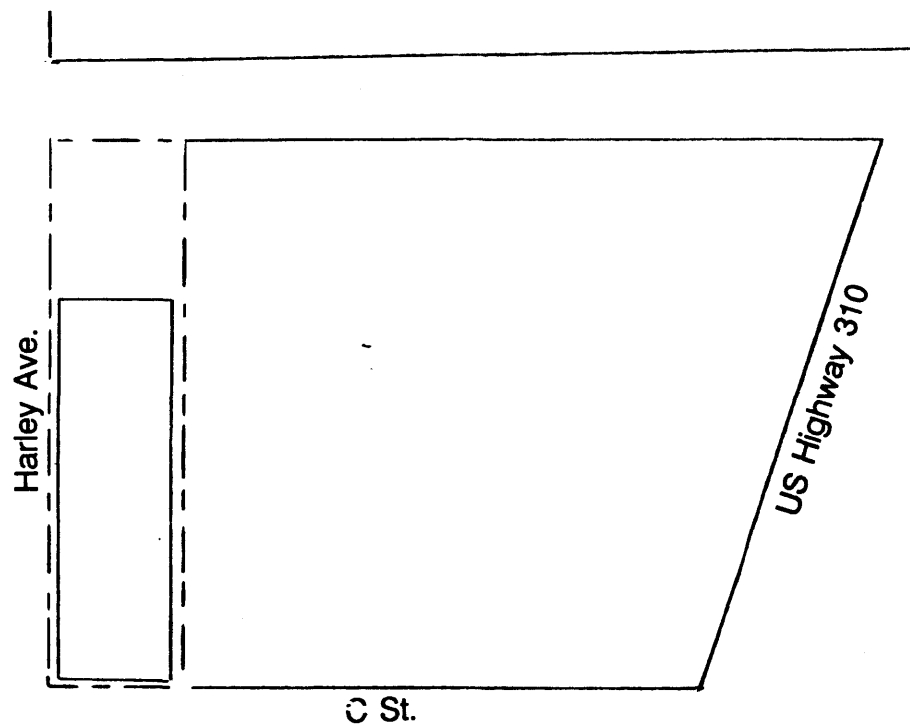
name/title: Clarks Fork American Legion #71 c/o Richard Pierce

street & number:

city or town: Joliet

state: MT

zip code: 59041



Fromberg Opera House

Fromberg, Montana

**Lot 11, Block 10
Dudley First Additon**

National Register Boundary:



**Scale: 1 inch = 50 feet
August 1992**