

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FILE  
COPY

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

DEMOLISHED

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fox Theatre  
other names/site number Music Hall Theatre (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 702-710 Olive Way  not for publication  
city, town Seattle  vicinity  
state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98101-1849

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	— buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	— objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Movie Theaters in WA State MPD

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Jacob E. [Signature] 8/13/91  
Signature of certifying official Date

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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. \_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: theater

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:  
Spanish Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls concreteroof other: built-up tar  
other cast-stone

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Music Hall Theatre is a picture palace constructed in an exotic Moorish-Spanish Renaissance Revival design and opened in 1929. Built during the era of the grandiose American vaudeville and movie palaces, the Music Hall is one of the last survivors. In a city that once had dozens of historic theaters from the period, only five remain in downtown Seattle.

The Music Hall Theatre is located on a half-block site owned by Music Hall Theater, Inc. The half-block is bounded by an alley on its eastern side, Stewart Street on the north, Seventh Avenue on the west, and Olive Way on the south.

Total square footage of the half block is 35,895 square feet, measuring 286.09 feet along Seventh Avenue side; 199.43 feet along the Stewart Street elevation; and 119.21 feet along the Olive Street facade. A parking lot currently occupies the northern portion of the half block; that lot measures 113.01 feet along Seventh Avenue, and 119.43 feet on Stewart Street for a total square footage of 13,431 square feet. It is not included in the nomination. The southern portion of this slightly irregularly-shaped block is the site of the Music Hall Theater. The structure's footprint has a length of 173.08 feet on its Seventh Avenue side, and a width of 119.21 feet on Olive Way facade. The structural footprint occupies 22,464 square feet of its half-block site.

Opening as the Fox Theatre in 1929 and closing as the Emerald Palace in 1988 (with numerous name changes in between) the theater now commonly known as the Music Hall is built in an architectural style sometimes called Moorish Revival - Spanish Renaissance or Spanish Baroque.

The theater's north side is a blank wall bordering the parking lot. Its eastern or alley side is relatively blank on its northeastern portion, which is where service entrances to the fly tower and stage are located. An iron fire escape is also attached to the alley wall area. As it nears the sidewalk on Olive Way, at the point where the south auditorium wall begins rising, the alley wall facade becomes increasingly more decorative, thereby complementing the theater's two major facades which front Seventh Avenue on the west and Olive Way on the south.

The theater's main entrance dominates the mid-section of the Olive Way facade. Centrally located in that entry area is a ticket booth with Moorish stylings (most notably the arched windows surrounding the booth's upperhalf, and the decorative iron grillwork crowning the top of the multi-sided booth). Two lighting fixtures in a Baroque Moderne idiom hang from the east and west sections of the ceiling. Two sets of large double doors complete the main entrance area.

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Retail spaces articulated by large bay windows flank both the east and west sides of the entrance area on Olive, and front the entire Seventh Avenue facade. Originally there were a total of ten retail spaces, and all were entered from the street only. However, in the late 1970's (at which time the Music Hall was converted to a dinner-theater operation), a large kitchen was installed at street level, taking out much of the original retail space on the southwest corner to mid-block of the Seventh Avenue facade.

This latter facade also has a second story extending from the southern corner to mid-block, plus another smaller second-story section located next to the south wall of the fly tower. Six to seven office units (depending on how the space is subdivided) occupy these second floor areas. A secondary entrance to the theater is located at the base of the fly tower.

The exterior has three different height levels. The lowest portions rise above the Olive Way entrance and retail areas, and also include the retail level and second-story areas of the Seventh Avenue facade. This lowest level is 22 feet high on both Seventh and Olive. Set back from these low facades, the auditorium's dramatic roofline rises 60 feet above sidewalk level, and the north fly tower crowns the theater with a height of 70 feet.

Exterior Facades: Constructed in the midst of an era celebrating American's grand and gaudy vaudeville and movie palaces, the Music Hall reflects the era of its creation inside and out.

Unlike some of its counterparts, which abut and/or were built completely inside of other structures, the Music Hall is a free-standing theater. Consequently, whereas the lavish interiors of these latter theaters are usually juxtaposed to conservative exterior facades cladding the larger structures next to/in which they reside, the Music Hall has exterior facades which are ornately decorated on the Seventh, Olive, and southeast alley walls.

Reflecting the era's not-even-the-sky's-the-limit theatrical design, the Music Hall's exterior facades (facing southeast, south and west) are encrusted with ornamentation made of cast stone, a fine-aggregate concrete cast to look like cut stone, and attached with mortar, wires, and straps to the reinforced concrete walls. Plainer sections of the wall are plaster or stucco on concrete. The outer walls and basement foundations are of sufficient strength that decades ago this building, along with other local theater structures, was chosen as a Civil Defense bomb shelter.

The upper central sections of both the Stewart and Olive facades, above the retail and entrance areas, display four colossal engaged columns. Each column is crowned by a massive round urn which projects approximately ten feet above the roofline. Enormous stained and leaded glass windows are located between each column, and each window reflects warm greens, golds, reds, and amber-browns, adding

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color to the beige-gray outer walls of the theater. The windows' stained glass panes are rectangular and subdivided by carved muntins.

On the Olive facade the top section of each stained glass window is bordered by arched, richly detailed, cast-stone grillworks of voluted design. Such spiral or scroll-like ornamentation also covers each column's capital and entablature. The same patterns are repeated on all columns on both Seventh Avenue and Olive Way. Seven identically shaped balustrades support the railing of a small balcony extending along the base of the Olive Way columns and windows.

Two free-standing windows, framed with the same cast-stone voluted ornamentation as the other windows facing Olive, are located near the southeast and southwest corners of the Olive Way facade, and also near the northwest and southwest corner sections of the facade on Seventh.

The bottom sections of these two Seventh Avenue windows rise above the second-story office units on that side of the building. However, the two windows on Olive Way each rise above a balcony. These balconies, which are identical, are each three-sided. On each side there is a cast-stone medallion (numbering six in total) featuring the profile of a Pilgrim father. The Pilgrim medallions on the exterior and two ship hull balconies on the interior are remnants from initial plans by the theater's developers to call it the Mayflower.

The north fly tower has a pitched gabled roof, with some cast-stone ornamentation along the top area of the tower's walls. Each corner of the tower on the Seventh Avenue side has an engaged column topped by a cone-shaped urn ornament. The tower's Seventh Avenue wall also features a large octagonally-shaped window, centered below the roofline and framed with voluted ornamentation.

Cast-stone ornamentation also clads the parapets running along the roofline of the office units near the northwest and southwest corners of Seventh Avenue, and it clads the parapets atop the Seventh Avenue, Olive, and alley facades. Ornamental iron grillwork decorates door pediments and sconces on the Seventh Avenue side and, especially, those elements located in the main entrance area on Olive Way.

Over the decades the marquee above the Music Hall's main entrance has changed frequently in conjunction with frequent changes in the theater's operation. When it opened in 1929, the theater's Olive marquee was relatively narrow in width and length. Instead, the main signage was large, vertical, and located on the corner of Seventh and Olive. That sign had neon tubing and incandescent "changing lights" which gave the effect of lights in motions. The theater was then called the Fox, and that sign stayed in place approximately four years.

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From 1934 through the early 1960's the theater's signage was the largest and brightest ever. A much larger and gaudier vertical neon/incandescent sign replaced the earlier Fox version and boldly proclaimed "John Hamrick's Music Hall" up and down Seventh Avenue and Olive Way. No signage was placed in the central marquee area directly over the main entrance. Instead, a second rectangular electric sign was located on the southeast corner of the Olive facade.

From the mid-1960's through the mid-'70's the theater gained yet another large, brightly lit vertical sign. Unlike its predecessors, though, this sign (advertising the Seventh Avenue Theater) had revolving parts. During that time a large electric marquee also appeared above the length of the main entrance area.

From 1977 through the present time all vertical and rectangular neon/incandescent signs were removed from the theater facades, and the central marquee was restored to its low-key, Fox-era dimensions and location directly above the main entrance. During its dinner theater days as "Jack McGovern's Music Hall," the theater's marquee displayed the Music Hall logo in a swirl of letters set on a back-lit stained glass motif reminiscent of the large ornamental windows decorating the Seventh and Olive facades.

During its last dinner theater venture, the theater's marquee remained approximately the same size, and in the same central, over-the-entry location; this time, however, the McGovern panels were replaced with bright green back-lit plastic panels proclaiming the name Emerald Palace. There is also a relatively small reader board above the retail space on the southwest corner of Seventh Avenue.

Beneath the encrustation of detail that characterizes the Music Hall Theater's outer facades, the very form of the structure clearly conveys its function. The entry, auditorium, and fly tower are all clearly definable from the outside by even the most casual observer. Consequently, the Music Hall is not merely architecture, but also a piece of sculpture designed to celebrate the concept of "theater".

Interior: After gazing up at the fantastically-ornamented outer facades while approaching the theater, then passing through the front doors to the Music Hall's interior, the theatergoer makes a transition from the oversized detailing of the exterior facade to the more intimate, yet no less grandly detailed, interior areas. Plaster ornamentation and woodwork adorn the inner walls, while yards of patterned carpets and tiling cover the floors. The suspended plaster ceilings are deeply articulated throughout the structure representing moldings and carvings reminiscent of the Baroque period.

More specifically, after passing through the Music Hall's front doors, the theatergoer enters a lower-ceilinged foyer which, in turn, opens into a grand high-ceilinged lobby space with walls plastered and patterned to look like stone.

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In the foyer, unadorned planar expanses of white "stone" walls provide strong contrast to the patterned carpet and tile floor coverings. They also contrast sharply with the numerous filigree and glass lanterns hanging from the ceilings and walls, and the over-sized pieces of Spanish-styled furniture. The ceiling area consists of large partitions made of the same white "stone" material as the walls. Located at regular intervals along the length of the ceiling, these partitions are interspersed with ceiling areas covered by dark wooden beams. This contrasting pattern is repeated from one end of the ceiling to the other.

These white ceiling partitions have an arched pattern representative of Moorish architecture. The patterns (which generally resemble variations of the Moorish multi-foil arch) are repeated in foyer entrances to such other areas of the theater as the main lobby, mezzanine and balcony areas, plus the finely furnished (in mostly Baroque style) men's and women's lounges and smoking rooms.

The foyer entryways are simply cut into the plain white walls and, in keeping with that simplicity, are unadorned by any kind of ornamental framing. Two notable exceptions to this simplicity are the columns flanking each side of the entrance to the lobby. Each of the two intricately carved, dark wooden columns is identical, with a mythical ram-like creature guarding the bottom of the shaft, while a large spread-winged bird figure crowns the top.

The main lobby area is larger and more formal than the foyer, with large stiff-backed chairs and carved benches furnishing the room. Lighting fixtures match those in the foyer, and the lobby also has the same unadorned entry areas cut into the walls (although columns with relatively simple ornamentation frame the lobby entrances).

The similarities end there, however, because unlike the foyer, the lobby area has an ornate ceiling decorated with dark intricately carved and painted wooden beams, interspersed with ceiling sections stenciled in a dark-pattern-on-a-darker-background design.

Even with its more formalized furnishings, the lobby is a warmer room than the foyer. For unlike the stark white of the foyer, the lobby area is done in warmer brown, beige and gold tones. But the lobby's most striking and "warming" effect is that provided by outside daylight or night streetlights shimmering through the massive stained glass windows, and bathing the room in a changeable palette of cream, green, brown, gold and russet hues.

Certainly the theater's foyer and lobby areas set the mood for the Music Hall's main architectural event - the main auditorium. While the rest of the theater is grand, the auditorium area is grandiose, clearly designed to draw the theatergoer ever further into a fantasy environment.

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Making one's entrance into the main auditorium, the theatergoer is immediately aware of the overwhelming abundance of plaster ornamentation adorning the ceilings, upper wall areas, the balcony front paneling, and seating sections. Basically, the ornamentation is the culmination of all the decor a theatergoer has experienced between the front door and main auditorium floor.

For example, the broad beams transversing the ceiling area from rear to front auditorium exaggerate the Moorish multi-arch patterns found in the foyer area, although the auditorium beams explode in a riot of teal, russet, red, gold and cream colored waves, swirling gracefully along the beam's elaborately voluted surfaces. Likewise, while the lobby ceiling beams and ceiling surface designs are intricate and ornate, they also are darkly colored and therefore quite subtle. Their counterparts in the main auditorium, though, elaborate on the lobby designs to a significant extent, cover much broader expanses, and are highlighted by the auditorium's decidedly brighter color scheme.

The ceiling and upper wall areas of the auditorium are covered with plaster and carved wood bas relief seashells, gargoylesque capitals atop decorative wall columns, and a variety of floral petals and fern leaves, swirls, scrolls, spirals and whorls. The resulting contrast between recessed and protruding, smooth and textured surfaces creates the shapes, patterns and shadows that encourage visual speculations for the theatergoer sitting in a seat waiting for the performance or movie to begin.

Spectacular as these ornamentally encrusted areas are, though, the Music Hall's most famous decorative features are the two ship hull balconies which jut out opposite one another, near the stage area, on the auditoriums' east and west walls respectively. These balconies, which measure approximately 30 feet in height, have elaborately carved keels and ornate prows. Each balcony abuts the base of an intricate grillwork panel which is topped by a stylized ship's steering wheel. The two hulls and their panels are flanked by columns whose shafts are carved in the style of those found in the foyer, and whose capitals could be interpreted as variations of the large round urns decorating the exterior facades.

Most of the elaborate carved and painted shapes in the theater are decorative plaster over wire and mesh. For example, the ceiling is plaster on wire mesh suspended from the roof trusses and wires. It is estimated to be approximately three-fourths to one and one-half inches thick and, like most older ornamental plaster, is probably very fragile. The ornamental brackets between the ceiling and walls in the auditorium are built-up plaster on wire mesh backed by steel. Each bracket is 18 feet high. The three-story high ship hull balconies are constructed of built-up plaster on wire mesh.

When opened in 1929, the theater had 1,214 seats on the sloped floor of the main auditorium, with perhaps one thousand additional seats in the balconies and loges. When converted to a dinner-theater operation, capacity was reduced to 1,750 seats.

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The square footage of these various seating sections (which remains the same regardless of whether a movie or dinner theater configuration is used) is as follows: main auditorium 23,616 square feet, mezzanine balcony 11,738 square feet, upper balconies 7,752 square feet. Total square footage for all these areas is 66,722 square feet.

From anywhere in the auditorium, the theatergoer can view the stage area which is framed by a large 44-foot-high proscenium arch. That arch replicates the curved Moorish multifoil lines and intricate grillwork that decorate beam and ceiling areas throughout the main auditorium. Since the Music Hall originally was built for stage shows, it has a complete stage house with space for flying props and scenery to the height of 70 feet. All stage facilities were modernized, and the counter-weighted scenery was completely re-rigged in 1967.

A well-equipped basement area exists beneath the main auditorium. With a total of 23,616 square feet, the theater's basement includes dozens of dressing rooms, a complete workshop for building props, and rehearsal space which is large enough to accommodate an entire dance troupe; or else it can be subdivided into smaller, individualized spaces. The numerous mirrored walls and panels are still in place.

In fact, the Music Hall's versatile stage and basement facilities were designed to be integral parts of one another. As a result, this theater offers stage personnel and performers - and ultimately its audiences - numerous special benefits. For example, the Music Hall's orchestra pit has three hydraulic lifts capable of lifting the entire orchestra to the stage level in three sections. The area behind the orchestra rehearsal room under the stage is a scene painting shop with a 44 foot ceiling (the same height as the proscenium arch over the stage floor). And in the rear stage area there are two trap doors which, when opened, allow completed sets of scenery to be flown directly from the floor beneath the stage into the fly rail above the stage. This is important because when scenery can be built in the same facility in which it is being used, it ensures the backdrops will be designed to fit that stage's specific dimensions. Another advantage of having an in-house scene shop is the avoidance of having to pack and transport sets from one location to another. These moves can be costly and risk damaging the scenery pieces. The Music Hall may be the only stage with this capability in the entire Seattle-Tacoma area.

All of dozens of dressing rooms are located one floor beneath the stage. This is an essential feature for stage personnel who provide wardrobe and makeup for the on-stage actors and actresses, because they have so much work to do for a period of several hours under the intense pressure of a live performance. There is also a dancer's rehearsal warm-up area on the same level. The close proximity of this rehearsal space to the dressing rooms is important because the dancers can go directly from rehearsal to wardrobe/makeup in minimal time, thereby conserving their energy for the performance.

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The Music Hall has a complete kitchen and laundry on premises which is both convenient and cuts cleaning costs for theater tenants. The Music Hall's alley access doors are larger than those found in most comparable facilities, and are sheltered by canopies, thus easing the loading of even the largest pieces of scenery.

Other details about the Music Hall include an 85 foot high grid on the stage with more than 55 line sets, and a stage big enough to handle large-scale Broadway productions and industrial shows.

Modifications: Despite the theater's numerous owners and operations, there have been relatively few structural modifications since 1929. Changes that have occurred have been relatively minor, and mostly reversible.

Aside from the exterior marquee modifications, an overview of the interior changes is as follows:

In 1950 and 1953, two building alterations are listed in city building permit records. These alterations are listed as "alter lobby", and "alter building" respectively. Theater historians believe refreshment stands may have been added to these two areas, because such stands usually were not part of original 1920's theater designs. They were, however, standard additions in the 1950's and 1960's.

During 1964 - 67 when the Music Hall was being remodeled for its Seventh Avenue Movie Theater period, the original pipe organ (which had been used for silent movies, recitals and some stage performances) was removed; use of the upper balcony was eliminated; and the building's retail space on the southwest corner of Seventh and Olive was altered for restaurant use.

The McGovern dinner - theater concept in the late 1970's precipitated \$1.4 million worth of alterations to the interior. Changes included tiering the orchestra level, and replacing the theater seating on the orchestra and mezzanine levels with banquettes and tables; a bar was added on the mezzanine, and the flat portions of the auditorium and lobby walls were repainted. The entire theater was re-carpeted in the new color scheme of red, gold, and purple. A sound system and new lighting instruments were installed, and an old grand piano found on the property was covered with mirrored squares, then brought up on the organ lift for shows.

In its final dinner-theater operation in 1987, the Music Hall's color scheme was changed to emerald green (to symbolize the new Emerald Palace name). The theater's interior was cleaned, and some flat walls in the auditorium area were painted mint green; public areas there and in the entry/foyer areas were re-carpeted in emerald green, and a thrust stage was added in the main auditorium.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1929-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ford, Sherwood D., architect  
Peterson, Hans, builder

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Music Hall Theatre is significantly associated with the golden age of the American picture palace, reflecting an era when movie theaters were designed to envelope the audience in a setting as fantastic as the films unfolding on screen. Designed in an exotic Moorish-Spanish Renaissance Revival idiom, with sculptural exterior cast stone ornament and fanciful interior decor, the Music Hall has remained remarkably well preserved since its opening in 1929. Of the five remaining grand picture palaces in Seattle, the Music Hall is distinguished by the degree to which its theater function is reflected in its exuberant exterior. As such, it is an outstanding example of its type and period, one of the grandest picture palaces in the state, and meets the registration requirements established in the Movie Theater of Washington State.

Historical Background: The date was April 14, 1929, six days before the grand opening of Seattle's newest "show house". The Seattle Sunday Times entertainment section commemorated the event with banner headlines, photographs, glowing descriptions of the "film fairy palace" and a page filled with congratulatory ads and messages.

The promise of those headlines was fulfilled five days later when the Fox Theatre opened to great public fanfare. Rave reviews were accorded the building's architecture and its premier motion picture, Broadway Melody. According to a review in the Seattle Daily News, the theater "vies in beauty with its plays."

Even though Seattle was considered quite a movie town, with dozens of theaters already to its credit by the late 1920's, the Fox rivalled the city's other theaters in grandeur, and its importance was reflected in the choice of opening feature. Broadway Melody was among the first musical comedies of the screen and featured several technological breakthroughs. It was brought to Seattle specifically through the efforts of William Fox himself, the head of the movie studio and theater chain bearing his name.

The theater's opening night was an unqualified success. But that there would even be an opening -- much less a successful one -- was not always assured. Even before it was completed, the theater's history had been plagued with fluctuating finances, changes in ownership (each with its own version of new and improved management), and even name changes.

In the mid-1920s, the original investors, Real Estate Investment Company along with Seattle architect Sherwood D. Ford, planned an opulent new theater to be built at the corner of Seventh Avenue and

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Olive Way. Its was to be named the Mayflower, in honor of the ship that carried the Pilgrims from England to America.

The Mayflower theme was to be depicted through the use of two ship-hull balconies placed opposite one another on the east and west interior walls of the main auditorium, and also through cast stone medallions located on the theater's exterior, each featuring the profile of a Pilgrim father.

On July 13, 1927 Seattle's Department of Buildings received an application to construct the theater and the city granted a permit less than three weeks later on August 8, 1927. But by then the developers had already begun constructing the foundations, anxious to open the following year.

But as the structure neared completion in 1928, the Real Estate Investment Company ran out of funds and architect Ford was charged with fraud. These events left the project in limbo until William Fox bought the property and renamed it the Fox Theatre.

Disruptions in construction could account for the contradiction between the concept of a Mayflower theme and the reality of a theater which is built in the architectural style of the Moorish-Spanish Renaissance Revival. Yet architect Ford's name is the only one that appears on any city permit records, design drawings, tax registration records, or landmarking documents. And fortunately the Mayflower's hulls could be translated into the hulls of Spanish galleons.

Despite his obvious misfortunes during the theater project, Sherwood Diemer Ford was a prominent local architect. Ford was born in England in 1872, worked for John Graham in Seattle in the early 20th century, and entered a partnership with James Webster in 1914. Later he set up his own firm, during which time he designed the Music Hall Theatre as well as other notable landmarks including the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle (1930) and the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla (1928). In 1929, Ford was elected president of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He died in 1948. Clearly, the Music Hall was the major design of his career.

Ford's design for the Music Hall was firmly within the aesthetic tradition of movie theaters of the era, in which architects incorporated elements of exotic locales depicted on the movie screen into the decor of the theater. The result was an ever-increasing profusion of architectural styles representing the Far East, Middle East, Europe, Latin cultures, and ancient Babylon. Ford's eclectic interpretation of Moorish and Spanish Renaissance themes was among the most exotic and grandiose in the city.

Later history: William Fox and the Fox West Coast Theatres Corporation retained ownership of the theater until 1934. During that time tenants included the Washington State Theaters organization (1929-32), and John Von Herberg (1933-34). During this latter period the Clise Agency, a local property

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management-real estate development firm, bought the theater and Clise family members retain ownership to this time.

Sometime during 1933-34, the Fox Theatre temporarily became the Roxy. Then in 1934, John Hamrick leased the building and renamed it John Hamrick's Music Hall Theatre. That lease was to last nearly thirty years until 1963. During the first two decades at least, the theater operated successfully as both a movie and live performance facility.

In fact, many major theatrical events made their Seattle debut on the Music Hall stage during these decades including the Seattle Civic Opera Association's 1935 production of Verdi's The Masked Ball under the direction of Sarah Albert Truax, a well-known Seattle actress who also had a successful career in New York. A year later, influential Austrian director-producer Max Reinhardt presented his acclaimed production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream on the Music Hall stage. The notable cast included Dick Powell, James Cagney, Joe E. Brown, Olivia de Havilland, Victor Jory, Mickey Rooney, and Billy Barty.

During the 1940's the Seattle Symphony performed special performances and two full seasons at the Music Hall. The orchestra performed with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1940 and 1942, and played its 1941-42 and 1942-43 symphonic seasons at the theater.

In 1964, Sterling Recreation Organization bought out John Hamrick and took control of his properties, including his lease at the Music Hall. SRO remodeled the facility over the next several years (although local concert promoters, including Northwest Releasing, sometimes used the theater for a variety of productions during that period). Then, when remodeling was completed in 1967, SRO reopened the Music Hall under the name Seventh Avenue Theatre, and proceeded to operate it as a movies-only facility for the next ten years.

However, in October 1977, the theater was once again closed, renamed, and reopened as a dinner theater called Jack McGovern's Music Hall. For the next several years, the theater was operated by local restaurateur and nightclub owner McGovern and his partnership N & M Enterprises with investors William F. Niemi, Sr. (president of the Eddie Bauer sportswear retail chain), and his son William F. Niemi, Jr. (head of the Reinall Boats Company).

In May, 1980, after a \$1.4 million renovation of the Music Hall's interior and two years of escalating financial losses, Mr. McGovern filed for bankruptcy. Twice more Mr. McGovern attempted to revive his dinner-theater operation. During one of those attempts he was involved with a new investment group, Evergreen Entertainment. Despite the infusion of new funding, all these efforts were doomed to failure, and in 1983, Jack McGovern's Music Hall closed its doors.

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During 1983 and 1984, Paramount Theatre owners Norman Volotin and Eulysses Lewis (with some help from the Evergreen Entertainment group) attempted a revival of dinner theater at the Music Hall. But that venture failed as well, leaving the building dark most of the next three years except for a few special events such as stage performances or trade shows.

In 1987 Janie Carr of Bellevue remodeled the interior with green-furnishings and re-opened the dinner theater as the Emerald Palace. Unfortunately, both the food and the show opened to mixed critical reviews in the local press, and that format was scrapped after only a few months. In June 1988, the theatre most familiarly known as the Music Hall closed its doors for the last time.

Although the Music Hall structure survives intact, the adjacent blocks have changed dramatically in the decades since World War II. On the Music Hall block, for example, the St. Lawrence apartment building was razed decades ago, as were the adjacent shops and restaurants fronting Eighth Avenue and Olive Way. (In the late 1970's this eventually became the site of the Marsh & McLennan Building.) The L-shaped building adjoining the theater on the north parcel was abandoned during the 1960's and razed in 1970 for a parking lot which, after some operational changes, eventually became the current Dollar Rent-A-Car facility.

Because of its prominent size, silhouette, and architectural style, the Music Hall remains a distinctive feature of the downtown cityscape and one of the area's finest examples of theater architecture, fully expressed on both exterior facades and interior space.

9. Major Bibliographical Referen

"Music Hall Theatre," City of Seattle Landmark Nomination Form, Office of Urban Conservation.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

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 1

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>550040</u>	<u>5273380</u>			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting
C	Zone	Easting	Northing	D	Zone	Easting

						Northing
						Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is described as Lots 1-4, Block 5, Bell Addition, City of Seattle, exclusive of the surface parking lot on the northern part of the half block. Said parking lot is described thusly: beginning at the northeast corner of Stewart Street and Seventh Avenue, proceed 119.43 feet east along the south curblin of Stewart Street; proceed to Seventh Avenue, proceed north to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

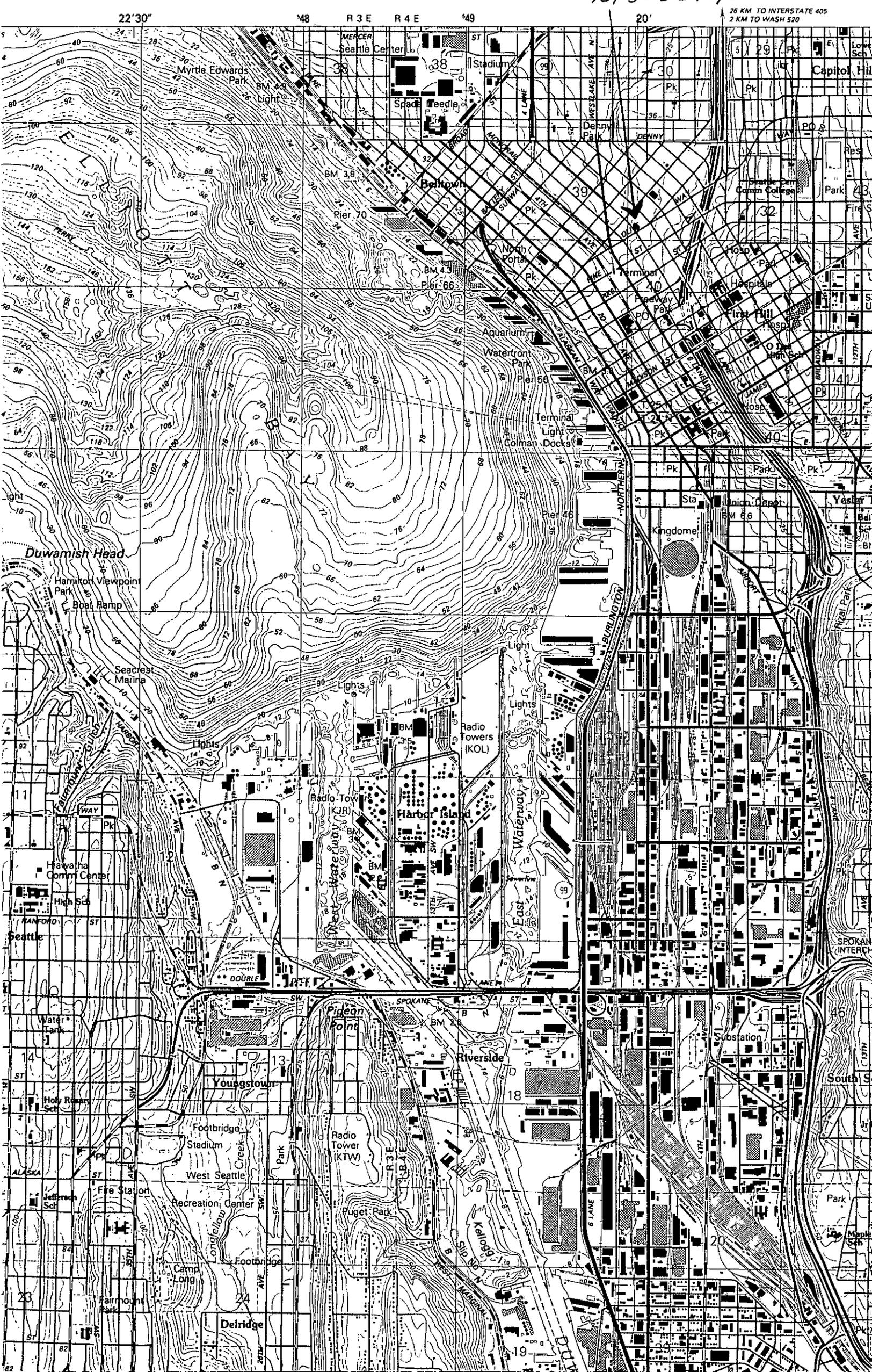
The nominated parcel includes the structure historically known as the Fox (Music Hall) Theater. It does not include the northern half of the half-block which is a surface parking lot historically unrelated to the theater.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	<u>Karen Kane (significance statement edited by L. Garfield)</u>		
organization	<u>Allied Arts of Seattle</u>	date	<u>June 25, 1990</u>
street & number	<u>107 S. Main Street</u>	telephone	
city or town	<u>Seattle</u>	state	<u>WA</u> zip code <u>98104</u>

Seattle, King Co., WA  
UTM References:  
101550040/5273380





Music Hall Theater

Seattle, King Co, WA

Photo by K. Kane, 4/91, Neg. at OHP

View of facade, looking N (detail)

Photo # 1 of 4



Music Hall Theatre

Seattle, King Co., WA

Photo by K. Kane, 4/91, Neg. at OAH

View of facade, looking NW

Photo # 2 of 4



Music Hall Theater  
Seattle, King Co., WA  
Photo by K. Kane, 4/1/91, Neg. at OHP  
View of facade, looking NE  
Photo 3 of 4



Music Hall Theater

Seattle, King Co., WA

Photo by K. Kane, 4/91, neg. at OAHF

View of rear and west elevation,  
looking SE

Photo # 4 of 4