

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	208 W Main St Enterprise, Wallowa County (97828)	historic name:	OK Theatre
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Vista Theatre; Theater
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	9 / 3-4 / 4100
		tnwshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	2S 44E 2
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	1.0
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	1
prim constr date:	1918	NR Status:	Individually Listed
	second date:	date indiv listed:	03/07/2012
primary orig use:	Theater	orig use comments:	
second orig use:	COMMERCIAL: General	prim style comments:	
primary style:	Late 19th/20th Amer. Mvmts: Other	sec style comments:	Art Decco / modern elements
secondary style:	Commercial (Type)	siding comments:	
primary siding:	Concrete: Other/Undefined	architect:	
secondary siding:	Wood:Other/Undefined	builder:	Samuel R. Haworth
plan type:	Theater		
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Historic Resources of Downtown Enterprise, 1888-1956 MPD	MPS	03/07/2012	2011
Wallowa-Enterprise RLS 08	Survey & Inventory Project		2008
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	03/07/2012	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:	08/30/2009	Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:	06/01/2008	Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Setting: The building is located mid-block between two commercial buildings. Facing north, the building is flush with the public right-of-way. An alley and paved parking lot are to the south. Exterior: Completed in 1918, the O. K. Theatre is a board-formed concrete building that has a high stepped front parapet decorated with squat pilasters that terminate at the top of a raised horizontal concrete coursing that forms a rectangular band above former upper window openings. Dentils decorate the bottom of the raised rectangular area. The enclosed tripartite window openings are divided into three bays separated by slender paired pilasters. The first story is separated visually from the second floor by a wide slightly raised concrete band. The lower story front is divided into three bays separated by concrete pilasters. The theater entrance and commercial storefront have been modified extensively over the years with the addition of new doors and windows, and horizontal wood siding above the window openings. A single door with transom is on the east side of the first bay, flanked by a fixed-light window. A newer marquee is above the paired double entrance doors in the center bay. A recessed single door with transom is on the west side of the third bay, flanked by a fixed-light window. A lower, one-story concrete wing is on the west side of the main theater building that was originally designed to house another business. The wing is similar in design to the main building with a high parapet decorated with areas defined by raised concrete bands. Storefront windows flanked the central door that is capped with a transom. The back (south) of building is comprised of a one-story concrete wing on the west side, and the high, three-story concrete section with no windows housing the fly system and stage. The back of the building has a wide slider window in the west, one-story wing, and the fly wall has three doors: a single door behind an aluminum storm at the west edge, a single five-panel wood door at the east edge, and a double five-panel wood door on a diagonal wall recessed on the windowless east façade. Between the two single doors is a row of wide slider windows just above the level of the pavement. The west side of the fly wall above the one-story wing is covered with vertical boarding. In front of the stage fly, a gable roof covers the theater and the one-story west portion. A large cupola, with wood louvered vents on each side, is located on the gable ridge. This appears to be part of an original venting system. Interior: Note: Access to the interior of the theater was restricted. The double front doors to the theater have wood surrounds with elongated glass panels in the center. These doors open into the ticket booth vestibule; the ticket booth is on the west side of the small room and a series of double doors are on the south side. The room has a beaded board ceiling with two beams extending north south. The double doors have elongated glass panels surrounded by wood frames. The doors open into the lobby that has doors to the theater on the south wall. The refreshment stand is on the east side of the lobby. The floor in the theater slopes down to the stage that is elevated above the floor level. Originally, there were 500 seats in the theater; this has been reduced over the years. According to oral interviews, there were two apartments under the stage area (George Justice interview). Exterior Alterations Storefronts modified and upper windows enclosed. Entrance canopy removed.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>O. K. Theatre Building The grand opening for the O. K. Theatre was held in February 1919 after a flu epidemic delayed the dedication of the theater. Plans for the new theater were started in October 1917, when A. and May Hackbarth purchased a city lot on Main Street from G. J. & Fanny Wagner for \$1.00. Hackbarth, a native of Wisconsin, began planning for the new modern theater for Enterprise. At that time, the town relied on the Opera House and the People's Theatre for entertainment. Hackbarth hired La Grande contractor and mason Samuel Haworth to construct the building (he constructed many of the buildings in downtown Enterprise). Plans for the theater were based on East Coast theater designs. In anticipation of the completion of the theater, Hackbarth leased the building in November 1918 to Portlander J. A. Van Wie to oversee the final construction phase and operate the business. Van Wie hired Howard and Vesta Goodfellows, also of Portland, to manage the new theater. The building process was slowed by the winter weather, but by December, the building was completed. The management, however, could not open the theater because of the 1918 influenza pandemic and the restriction put on public gatherings. The December 18, 1918, Chieftain newspaper reported that Van Wie prepared for the theater opening while waiting for the flu ban to be lifted. The walls were decorated, the wiring finished, chairs placed in the building, and the "picture machines" installed. The east storefront was leased for use as a barbershop, owned by W.I. Calvin, and operated by Fred Lamberson. George A. Hillstrom rented the other storefront for his plumbing shop (he used the theater's large basement for storage and a work area). The larger storeroom west of the theater had not yet been leased. The theater and storefronts were heated by steam heat, and two apartments were located in the basement. By the end of January, the flu ban had been lifted and the grand opening of the O. K. Theatre was scheduled for Saturday, January 25, 1919. The January 23 edition of the Chieftain states, "In opening the O. K. Theatre, we offer to the citizens of Enterprise and Wallowa County a complete modernly equipped comfortable theater. The first year's program we dedicate to the unparalleled photo productions of Paramount-Art-Craft Pictures . . . at a fixed price of fifteen cents for children and twenty-five cents for adults, which includes war tax." Shows were scheduled for 7:15 and 9:00 pm seven days a week except Sundays. The ad for the opening states that "Each show will consist of feature productions of not less than</p>			

five reels, and a comedy or educational of one or two reels." Large advertisements donned the papers with photographs of the stars in the ArtCraft pictures. The opening night was a success as people filled the lobby waiting to be ushered into the theater. Speakers gathered before the first show was played and owner Hackbarth was praised for erecting such a beautiful and modern building, the finest in Eastern Oregon with the only possible exception being the theater in Baker, Oregon. The January 23, 1919 Chieftain praises the theater, "The theater marks an advanced step in amusement facilities of the county. It will have 500 seats when all finished, with wide aisles, and a floor which slopes at such a degree that a child can see the stage and the screen from any part of the house. Artistic landscapes adorn the walls and the lights are decidedly pretty. The management promises that the pictures shown will be of as high order as the house itself, and the theater is bound to attract patronage from far and near." The speakers announced that Austin Haughey was the projector operator and Henry Bell, pianist. In February 1919, soon after the theater was dedicated, Van Wie announced that he would open the theater on Sundays. Petitions were circulated and given to the town council in favor of Sunday matinees. Van Wie explained that the practice was common in other Oregon towns, and no law prohibited theaters from being open on Sundays. Others worried that it would interfere with church and baseball games. The managers prevailed and the first Sunday movies were shown in late February. The theater's stage was used for many different venues. Local plays and musical productions were held at the theater, and traveling Chautauqua's and touring groups made visits to the O. K. Theatre. The storefronts along the front of the building were continually occupied. In 1927, the O. K. Men's Shop, in one of the storefronts, was remodeled when the Emporium moved into the shop. The front door was moved back a couple of feet to give a deeper window display. The following year, J. A. Williams purchased the O. K. Barber Shop from Earl Morrison; the barbershop was a fixture on Main Street for many years. In 1929, Hackbarth leased the theater to M. E. Ward, who had been living in Pendleton, Oregon. That same year, the first talking movies made their debut at the O. K. Theatre. Royal Tone sound equipment was installed, and in September 1919, the first movie was shown; the R.K.O. picture "Street Girl." The film had only opened in Portland the day before, a feature the management was proud of. A full house greeted the management the first night the talkies were shown. The "Music is reproduced beautifully and the spoken word can generally be distinguished" (Chieftain, September 19, 1929). Many first dates were held at the theater when tickets were a dime and popcorn five cents (interview with George Justice, long-time resident of Enterprise). Hackbarth continued to lease the operations of the movie theater while pursuing other business interest. He operated a plant in Echo in the early 1930s that manufactured fox and dog food as well as food for other animals. Hackbarth hired Alvah B. Stockdale and G. A. Reed to manage the theater in 1931; they changed the theater's name to the Vista Theatre in 1933. At that time, they also modernized the theater with a new screen and sound equipment. Despite the improvements, the Depression took its toll on the theater business and the building went into foreclosure at the end of the year. After legal dispute about the property were settled, James H. and Laura A. Thompson purchased the property in a sheriff's sale. James and Laura were natives of Pennsylvania and came to Oregon after 1900 with their son Harold. James, born in April 1868, was a physician who married his wife, Laura around 1897. By 1910, the couple was living in Joseph where James was working as a doctor, and by 1920, the couple had moved to Enterprise where they lived until James died on November 20, 1936. Laura owned the theater after her husband's death until the building was sold in 1945 to Anna and Alvah B. Stockdale, who were former managers of the theater. After Alvah died on March 6, 1954, the Stockdale family continued to own the property until selling the theater in the 1970s. Lloyd and Dale Stockdale also opened the drive-in movie theater in Enterprise that operated for many years. In the 1980s, under the ownership of Russell Ford the name was changed back to the O. K. Theatre. The O. K. Theatre was one of the oldest operational theaters in Oregon before it closed in December 2008. The new owners (August 2009) plan to rehabilitate the theater and open the theater for the community of Enterprise in September 2009. Chain of Title 1917-18 G.J. and Fanny to Wagner A. Hackbarth 1933 Wagner A. Hackbarth to J. H. & Laura A. Thompson 1945 James H. & Laura A. Thompson to Alvah B. & Anna Stockdale 1970s Alvah B. & Anna Stockdale to Lonnie and Marion Myer 1981 Russell Ford purchased 2001 Russell Ford to David and Lori Brandt 2009 David and Lisa Brandt to Bill and Melisa Bush

RESEARCH INFORMATION

✓ Title Records	✓ Census Records	✓ Property Tax Records	✓ Local Histories
✓ Sanborn Maps	✓ Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	✓ Interviews
✓ Obituaries	✓ Newspapers	State Archives	✓ Historic Photographs
✓ City Directories	✓ Building Permits	State Library	

Local Library: Enterprise Public Library

University Library: Wallowa Co. Historical Museum

Historical Society:

Other Repository:

Bibliography:

References Below, Ellie. "About Wallowa County: People. Places. Images." Enterprise, OR: Pika Press, 2000. "Building on Our Pioneer Spirit." Wallowa County Economic Action Team Report. May 2007. Coffman, Lloyd W. "5200 Thursdays in the Wallowas, A Centennial History of The Wallowa County Chieftain." Wallowa County Chieftain. Enterprise, Oregon. 1984. Enterprise City Plat Map, Wallowa County Assessor's Office, Wallowa County Courthouse. "History of Union and Wallowa Counties." Western Historical Publishing Company, 1902. Justice, George. Personal interview by Sally Donovan and Bruce Howard. Long-time Enterprise resident, July 2009. Oregon Death Index. Oregon Trail Press Pudgett, Keith. "The History of Wallowa County, OR." Wallowa County Museum Board. Dallas TX: Taylor Publishing Company. 1983. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Enterprise, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1917, and 1941. Sterbentz, Cathy. "Historic Downtown Enterprise, A Walking Tour." Enterprise Hometown Improvement Group. Enterprise, Oregon, 2006. United States Census. 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. "Wallowa County, A Land of Beauty and Opportunity." Enterprise Chamber of Commerce publication, ca. 1960. "Wallowa County Chieftain." Newspaper articles, 11/21/1918, 12/18/1918, 1/23/1919, 2/13/1919, 12/11/1919, 5/5/1927, 5/17/1928, 3/28/1929, 9/5/1929, 9/19/1929, 11/12/1931, 5/11/1933, and 3/6/1947. "Wallowa County Chieftain." "Wallowa County 1887-1987, 100 Years of Pioneer Spirit". February, 1987. Wallowa County Courthouse. Assessor's and Clerk's Office. Enterprise, OR. World War I Draft Registration.