

WASHINGTON

**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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

1. Name

historic Galva Opera House / Blue Ribbon Temperance Hall

and/or common Galva Opera House

2. Location

street & number 334-348 Front Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Galva N/A vicinity of congressional district 19th

state Illinois code 012 county Henry code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied—1st Fl.	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress -	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible 2nd Fl.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William E. Frymire DDS

street & number 212 NW 1st

city, town Galva N/A vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Henry County Courthouse, Recorder's Office

street & number 302 S. State

city, town Cambridge state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Structures—Henry County
title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state IL

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Galva Opera House Building (Photograph #12), measuring approximately 66' wide and 80' deep, has two floors and a basement totaling over 15,000 gross square feet.

The First Floor consists of three shops plus the entrance lobby and stairs to the Second Floor. The Second Floor contains the auditorium, stage, lavatories, serving kitchen, dressing rooms, and storage areas, all of which make up the Galva Opera House. (See Floor Plans)

Construction is of red brick masonry bearing walls with parapets and cast iron interior columns supporting heavy wood framing and sloped roof trusses. The First Floor and Basement are divided into three bays by masonry walls at the shop party walls. The Basement walls are brick. The floor in some areas is dirt and in some areas concrete. The ceiling height is approximately 7'. The Basement area is used for storage and mechanical equipment.

On the First Floor the original Front Street shop fronts were sheltered by a wood canopy over the elevated wood sidewalk. (Photograph #2) Photographic and pictorial evidence is inconclusive about the actual storefront construction but an early drawing shows brick exposed between the three shops and no continuous transom. (Photograph #1) Sometime before 1915, the wood canopy and walk were removed to be replaced by concrete sidewalks and a limestone cornice/glass transom and canvas awnings. (Photograph #4) This stone cornice remains but the transoms have been covered with signage and a new aluminum flat canopy has been added. (Photograph #5)

The Front Street cornice is elaborate brick work with a row of dentils (2 bricks wide and 6 bricks deep) then a row of sawtooth vertical brick and then three brick beltlines approximately 12" apart, the lower beltline being revealed only about 1/2" out from the wall and the middle beltline revealing out a full brick with half brick dentils protruding below it. (Photograph #5)

The tall, proportioned 4 over 4 double-hung windows on both the Front and Main Street facades disclose the high ceiling of the Second Floor. (Photographs #5 and #6) Windows on Front Street have a segmental arch at the top and are 10'-6" in height. The sill and the cornice of each window are cast iron. The crown of the cast iron arch has a small keystone symbol as the cornice is all one piece. Matched abbreviated brackets drop below the cornice and sill on each side of the window. (Photograph #7 and #11)

The 8' high double entrance doors with glass transom to the lobby and ticket office are on the east side and open into a courtyard that runs the full depth of the building and is approximately 20' wide. (Photograph #5 and #6) It should be noted that the building depth of 80' is also the block depth so the First Floor shops are also entered from Main Street along the rear of the building. The courtyard is paved with brick in the center and landscaped on each side against the buildings.

The Main Street elevation has a broken cornice in brick along the top of the wall very similar to the brick cornice on Front Street. Three tall, slender, double-hung 4 over 4 wood windows similar to those on Front Street are on the Second Floor having the same cast iron sill without the cast iron cornice. On the First Floor are doors to the shops flanked by the same tall slender windows which allowed a small amount of display on this second front for the shops. The northeast shop had only one window and a door as the rear stair to the dressing rooms above took some space from this shop. Above the center window on the

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Second Floor is a fanlight wood window with a portion of the brick Roman arch revealed out from the wall a full brick. This revealed portion is tied into the brick cornice. A protruding winch beam is cantilevered out from the rear wall over the east second floor window apparently needed to bring in large stage trunks or pieces of scenery for the traveling shows. A fire escape and door from the Second Floor were added in recent years at the west end of the Second Floor.

The small lobby on the east side of the First Floor is entered from the courtyard and contains a ticket window. To the left of the entrance, a pair of doors leads to a wide stair that ascends to the auditorium on the Second Floor. To the right of the exterior entrance and opposite the main stair is the actors' vestibule and exterior entrance. Off of this vestibule is a 3' wide stair that ascends to one of the dressing room areas to the right of the stage on the Second Floor.

The auditorium is on the Second Floor, measuring approximately 63' wide and 61' deep. Structurally the area is divided into three bays (Photograph #10). The center bay is a continuous Tudor vault, from the front wall to the stage wall. The proscenium arch is only a faint suggestion of a Tudor arch. (Photograph #9) Cast iron columns support Warren trusses that run from the front bearing wall to the rear wall. The side walls are three and four wythe thick. The cast iron columns (Photograph #9), reeded with slightly flared top, are spaced about 20' apart; two columns in each line are exposed. The third is enclosed in the stage front wall.

The raised center portion fits between the open center panel of the Fink trusses running perpendicular to the Warren truss. Tension rods, exposed, give evidence of these cross trusses supporting the roof. The cross trusses are modified Fink trusses constructed of solid heavy timbers in the top chord and vertical chords. The bottom chord is built up from full size 2 x 14's spiked together.

The Warren trusses are also constructed of solid heavy timbers.

The flat portions of the ceiling on each side of the center vault are 17' high. The center vault is 23' to the highest point. Strips of low wattage light bulbs approximately 8" apart border the break line where the vault meets the flat ceiling. Early photographs of the auditorium show chandeliers suspended down the center of the auditorium equipped with gas jets. This was the means of lighting the hall until around 1900 when electric lights were offered in Galva.

Interior finishes are plaster on wood lath walls and ceiling and hardwood floor. The existing hardwood floor appears to have been laid over the original floor, due to its connection with the column bases, when the auditorium seats were stored and the area used for roller skating.

A canvas curtain hangs at the proscenium arch. While it is in need of preservation, the advertising slogans and pictorial scenes are still very readable. The curtain is in the preservation plans laid out by the Board of Galva Opera House, Inc. A small scuttle type door in the middle of the stage allows access to the considerable area under the stage.

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Under the stage, about 7 theater type chairs were found with cast iron arms supported with a 45° angle bracket that meets the arm in an inside scroll. The wood seat is contoured and the curved back has a leather panel for the comfort of the patron.

The construction dates have been verified by newspaper stories. The heavy timber trusses also testify to the late 1800 period of construction. Early pictures of the auditorium do not show it empty, always with action on the stage or an overview of a full house audience. Thus, architectural details at the proscenium and around the entrance stairs are not completely available as yet. The window and door trim, the vaulted ceiling, stairs, and lobby as well as the stage all appear to be original construction.

Ornament on the walls may have been a painted type with stencils for borders and cornices, covered in the 1950's repainting. Perhaps there were painted pilasters flanking the stage - research continues on this.

However, all the main elements remain and are still in functioning condition save the canvas curtain which requires immediate preservation work. On the exterior, only the three shop fronts have been altered since 1915 and the aluminum awning replaces the original wood covered walk. The entrance courtyard appears to be the same size as before and the Opera House entrance almost as built (Photograph #3 and #5) The architectural integrity of the Galva Opera House Building generally remains.

The Board of Directors has plans to return the store fronts and transoms on Front Street to their pre-1915 architecture and replace the aluminum awning with canvas awnings. (Photograph #4)

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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 1878 **Builder/Architect** Price & Payne, Galva (Builders)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Opera House in Galva is part of the history of the town.

Captain J. C. Bontecou, a temperance leader, roused the people of Galva to form a club to further the cause of total abstinence - 888 men and women signed the pledge. After organizing, there followed the need for building a club room and hall for the group. Early in 1878, written reports on their meetings indicate they settled on a "substantial brick edifice on the Square, an ornament to the town and the pride of every member of the club".

It was decided to construct the hall with stores on the First Floor. Capital stock was issued, 750 shares at \$10 each for a total of \$7,500. Three vacant lots were purchased east of Union Block for the site. Contract for construction was awarded September 7, 1878, to Messers. Price and Payne, whose bid was \$6,015. The opening performance was Lady of Lyons on Christmas evening 1878.

By 1886 the Blue Ribbon Temperance Hall had become the Galva Opera House. The Opera House was on the circuit of many leading stock companies. Galva's location on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad afforded many one night performances in the Opera House. Noted stage personalities of the time played such as Flora DeVoss, playing in "The Girl from Out Yonder" (Photocopy #1 and #4); Minnie Castle and the Basye Standard Dramatic Company (Photocopy #2); and John E. Dvorak in "Merchant of Venice" (Photocopy #3). In 1886 the Dora Wiley Opera Company presented "The Mikado".

The Galva Opera House was also used for locally inspired shows. Audran's comic opera "Olivette" was presented in April 1892.

The folding seats for the auditorium were grouped together with wood cleats across the backs and on the feet of the chairs. This allowed for easy moving of the seats to a storage room so the auditorium could be used as one open space. In the 1920's, the Opera House was taken over by a local citizen, Fred Brown, and used for roller skating and traveling medicine shows. The public schools began using it in the 1920's also. Such activities as junior and senior class plays, basketball games, and graduation exercises all took place in the Opera House auditorium up until the time the Galva High School gymnasium/auditorium was built in 1932. The American Legion used the auditorium for local talent shows, Boy Scout meetings, and dances during this same period. Public dances held by the Galva Fire Department (Photocopy #4) and the Galva Municipal Band were also held once a year in the Opera House.

In the fall and winter of 1934, a Chicagoan, Philip Smith, married a Galva girl and took over the Opera House auditorium and started a regular program of roller skating for the community. The auditorium was still available for other uses and some of these were merchandising shows when lots would be drawn for a free washing machine or similar item.

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In 1952 the Galva Lions Club, formed in 1947, took over the Opera House and installed a serving kitchen in the east dressing room, updated the plumbing in the two lavatories, and installed gas heat. They also painted the Hall at this time. The Lions Club hoped to create a community hall for Galva but the enthusiasm died out in 1957 and the Opera House was closed and remained dark for many years.

In 1981 the Galva Opera House, Inc. group was formed and is engaged in fund raising to restore and preserve the Opera House today. Temporary electrical service has been installed so events can be held for the public while fund raising goes ahead.

Dr. William Frymire bought the entire building and sold to the Galva Opera House, Inc. the Second Floor and First Floor lobby and stairs for a nominal sum. Galva Opera House, Inc. has an option to buy the entire building at a later date, if they wish.

Thus, the Galva Opera House Building is significant to Galva, Illinois. From its beginnings as a Temperance Hall through the era of vaudeville, medicine shows, and local events, this building and its Opera House was a part of the community's cultural and social life.

August 25, 1981

ADDENDUM

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FORM
GALVA OPERA HOUSE

Item 8. Significance

Sixth Paragraph, Fourth Sentence
Sentence now reads:

"The public schools began using it in the 1920's also."

Change to read as follows:

"The public schools began using the Temperance Hall as early
as 1883 for graduation exercises."

Fifth Paragraph
Add the following sentence:

"Galva's first motion pictures were shown at the Opera House
in January 1900."

9. Major Bibliographical References

Picturesque Galva, Illinois, published by The Galva News, 1893
 Galva News, 1914, Reprint of Advertisements on Coming Attractions, Galva Opera House, 1886, 1897, and 1914
 Galvaland News, March 1981, Reprint of April 4, 1878, article
 Presenting the Historic Galva Opera House, Galva, Illinois, published by The Galva Opera House, Inc., 1980

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 80' x 80' [LESS THAN 1]
 Quadrangle name Galva Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>15</u>	<u>7148160</u>	<u>5761180</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot Four (4), except the East 20 feet thereof, of Block Forty-three (43) of the Original Town, now City, of Galva, Henry County, Illinois.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie H. Kenyon/Larry D. Davis - Architects ; Amy Ulrich - Researcher
 organization Kenyon and Associates, Architects date July 8, 1981
 street & number 735 N. Knoxville Avenue telephone (309) 674-7121
 city or town Peoria state Illinois 61602

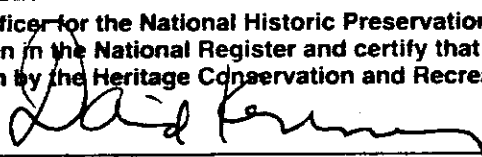
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



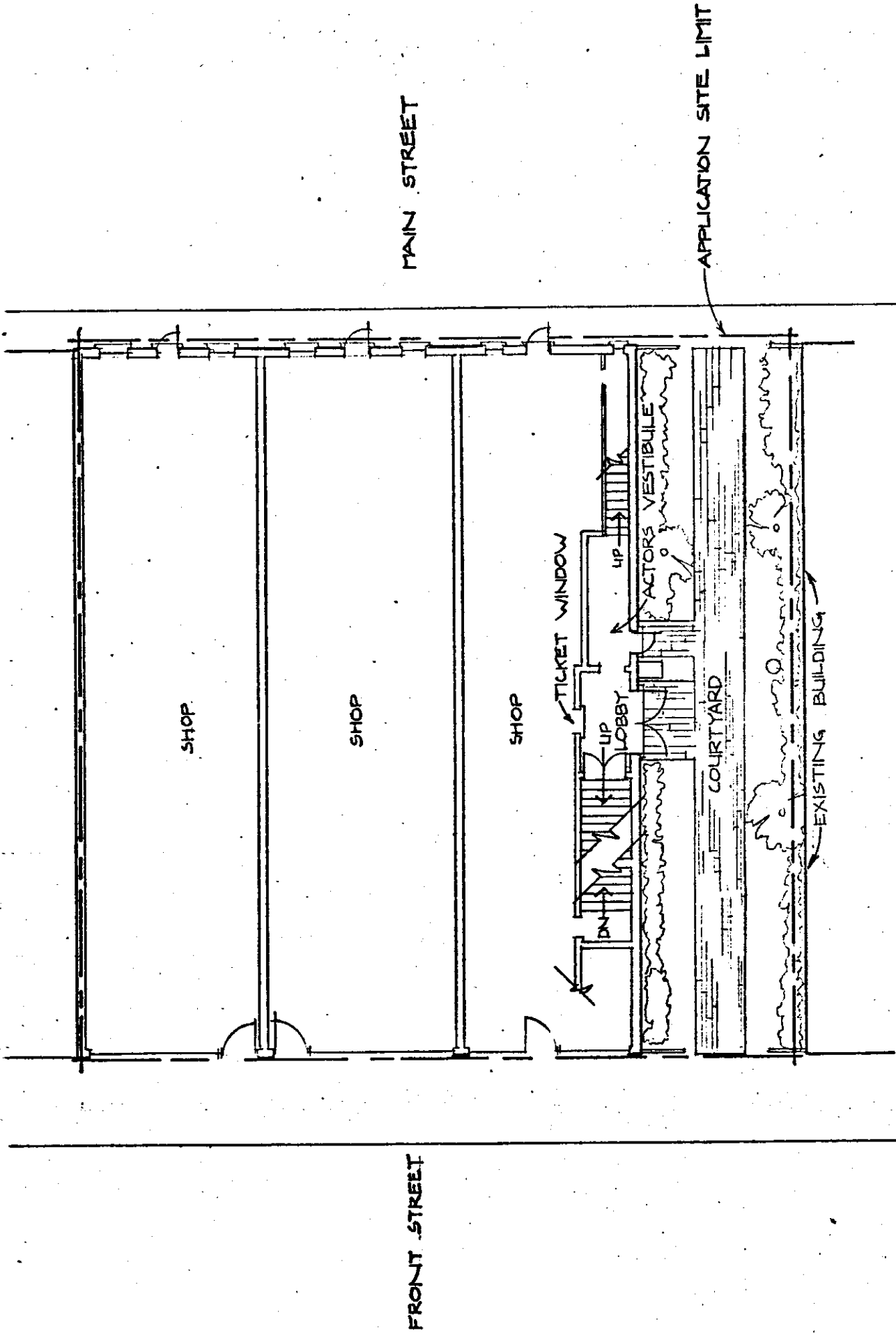
title

Director

date

9/25/81

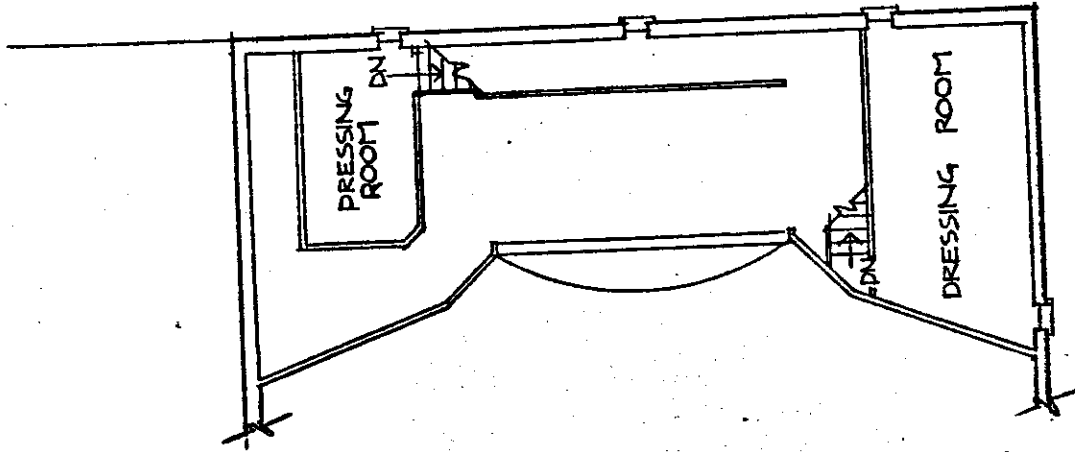
For HCERS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date
Keeper of the National Register
Attest:
Chief of Registration
date



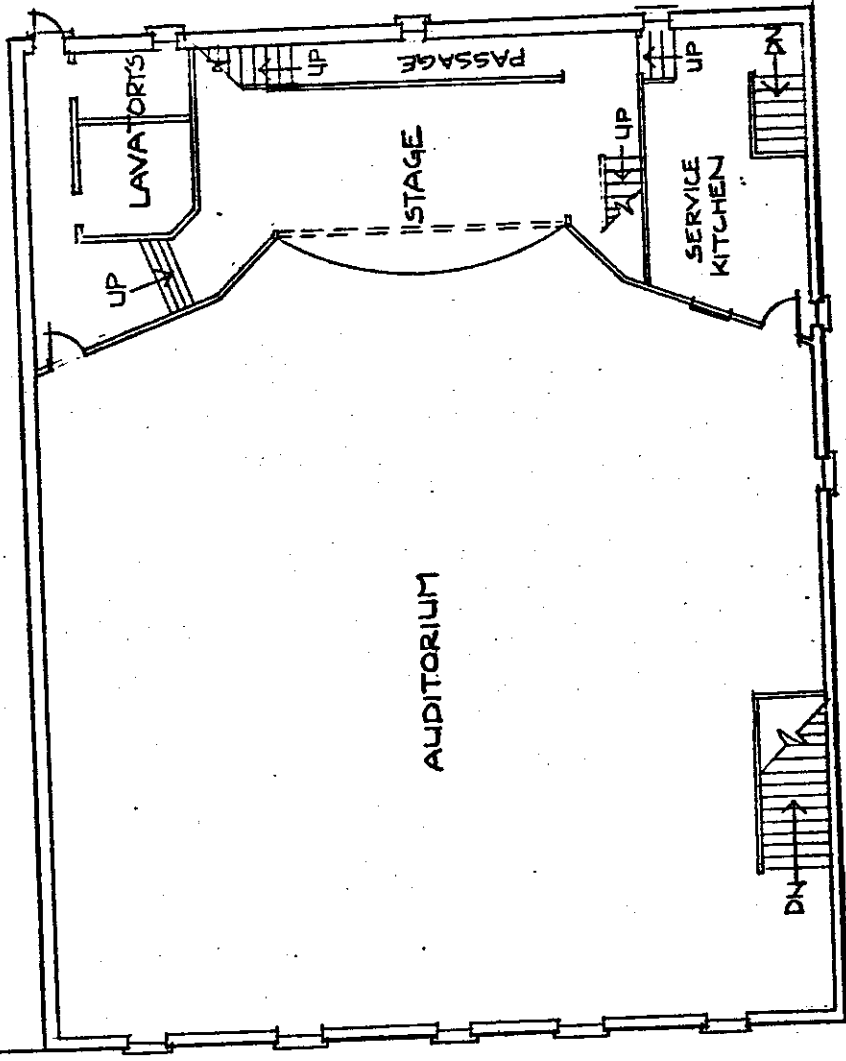
GALVA OPERA HOUSE

SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0" 0 4 8 FEET

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



THIRD LEVEL



GALVA OPERA HOUSE
 SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0" 0 1 4 FEET
 SECOND FLOOR PLAN