

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203

HISTORIC BUILDING INVENTORY RECORD

project name: Grand Junction Downtown Survey

county: Mesa city: Grand Junction

state ID no. 5ME 7032 temporary no.

current building name: Avalon Theatre

address: 645 Main, Grand Junction, CO 81501

owner: City of Grand Junction, 250 N. 5th St., Grand Junction, CO 81501

township: 1S range: 1W section: 14, NE 1/4, SW 1/4 ???

historic name: Avalon Theater

USGS quad name: Grand Jct., CO 1962 N3900-W10830 X 7.5' 15'

district name:

block: 116 lot(s) 11-15 addition: City

yr. of addition

film roll by: Marty Alexandroff no.

negative nos. 6942-5; 6837-8

location of negatives: City of Grand Junction

date of construction: 1922 estimate ___ actual

source: 1992 Historic Building Inventory Form

use: commercial present commercial historic

condition: ___ excellent X good ___ fair ___ deteriorating

extent of alterations: ___ minor ___ moderate X major

describe: new facade added

style: Commercial/Classical Revival

stories: 2

original moved date(s) of move:

materials: Brick

square footage: 16,575

National Register Eligibility:

Individual: yes no

Contributing to district: yes no

local landmark designation: _____ name _____ date

associated buildings? yes type:

if inventoried, list ID nos.

architectural description: Two-story brick structure with recessed entry with modern glass doors and signage in transom area. A metal shed roof is over the entrance. A large metal sign projects from the second level. Three vertical, rectangular windows are on either side of the entrance. The east side of the building has a metal ladder to a second level painted wood door. There are double painted wood doors on lower level and a stage entrance door at the rear of the building on the alley.

architect: Frank W. Frewen (Mountjoy & Fewen)

source: 1992 Historic Building Inventory Form

original owner: Grand Junction Theatre Company

source: 1992 Historic Building Inventory Form

builder/contractor: Winterburn & Lumsden

source: 1992 Historic Building Inventory Form

theme(s): Plateau Country/commercial

construction history: (description, names, dates, etc. relating to major additions or alterations to original structure)

Originally built in 1922, the facade was remodeled in 1947.

historic background (discuss important persons and events associated with this structure)

A group of prominent businessmen began to promote the concept of a theater facility during 1921-22 and formed the Grand Junction Theater Company to construct the theater. The site at 7th and Main Streets was the site of the original Grand Junction Town Company owned by George A. Crawford. A plaque in the theater interprets the site. Known as the Avalon Theater, many famous artists performed there in the early years. With the onset of motion pictures, the theater accommodated the change in the 1920s and 1930s. The Avalon was leased to the C. H. Cooper Company in 1933 and sold to the Cooper Foundation in 1946 following financial troubles. It has been used mostly as a movie theater since, though local events were also held there. It remained one of two theaters downtown until the 1970s and closed in 1989.

The Avalon Theatre was built as a result of community effort spearheaded by then Daily Sentinel publisher Walter Walker. Opened in 1923, the theatre featured silent movies and served as an early civic auditorium. It also presented many famous stage stars including Mary Pickford, Ethel Barrymore, and Al Jolson, and played host to John Phillip Sousa's band, the poet Carl Sandburg, and evangelist Billy Sunday. Later, as part of the Cooper chain, the building served primarily as a motion picture theatre. The Avalon Committee, which recently purchased the building for a performing arts center, is in the process of restoring the original Beaux Art facade. (LR 1994)

significance: (check appropriate categories and briefly justify below)

<input type="checkbox"/> architectural significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> historic significance:
<input type="checkbox"/> represents the work of a master	<input type="checkbox"/> associated with significant persons
<input type="checkbox"/> possesses high artistic values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> associated with significant events or patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> represents a type, period or method of construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contributes to an historic district

statement of significance:

Contributing; The Avalon Theater is the only remaining structure, though it is only partially intact, to represent the early cultural aspirations of the frontier town of Grand Junction.

references (be specific)

1992 Historic Inventory Form

surveyed by: Marty Alexandroff affiliation: Winter & Company

date: July, 1994

plan shape 	architect Frank W. Frewen (Mountjoy & Frewen)	original owner Grand Junction Theatre Company
	source Daily Sentinel May 9, 1922	source Daily Sentinel, 1922
	builder/contractor Winterburn & Lumsden	
	source Daily Sentinel May 9, 1922	theme(s)

construction history (description, names, dates, etc. relating to major additions or alterations to original structure)
 The Avalon Theater building was built in 1922 by the Grand Junction Theater Company (William J. Moyer, James H. Rankin, Ollie E. Bannister, Clyde H. Biggs and Watler Walker were the original incorporators). It was planned as a performing arts center and all purpose community meeting place with the stage able to convert to a ball room and a kitchen to cater banquets. The building underwent interior changes to accommodate motion pictures during the 20's and 30's but in 1947 a drastic change continued yes no

historical background (discuss important persons and events associated with this structure)
 Grand Junction's history reveals an early interest in the performing arts. As early as 1882-83, there was the Armory Hall, a log building where dances and plays were held and after 1883, the Mandel Opera House. Various buildings housed public events from the 1893 Park Opera House and the new auditorium, a drafty, uncomfortable building with poor lighting.

 In the early part of the century, the Grand Valley was a fast growing commercial center, and home of a burgeoning fruit growing industry. The east-west line of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad passed through and often stopping for the night in Grand Junction, which was a hub of railroad traffic in western Colorado. Many travelers stayed the night in the hotels located near the railroad depot including performers continued yes no

significance (check appropriate categories and briefly justify below)

architectural significance: <input type="checkbox"/> represents the work of a master <input type="checkbox"/> possesses high artistic values <input type="checkbox"/> represents a type, period or method of construction	historical significance: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> associated with significant persons <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> associated with significant events or patterns <input type="checkbox"/> contributes to an historic district
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statement of significance
 The Avalon Theater is the only remaining structure, though it is only partially intact, to represent the early cultural aspirations of the frontier town of Grand Junction. Walter Walker and the city leaders who saw the need for a center for entertainment and cultural events on such a sophisticated scale when the town was a small, fairly isolated western frontier town, must have had a grand vision. The Avalon has remained significant throughout the cultural history of this community and is now being considered for restoration to its former use as a Performing Arts Center.

 continued yes no

references (be specific)
 Sanborn Maps of Grand Junction, Colorado 1886 to 1926 (Museum of Western Colorado)
 Grand Junction News Supplement, May 17, 1884 and May 3 1884
 Grand Junction News, March 8, 1884 (Mesa County Library)
 Mesa County Assessor's Office
 Daily Sentinel Articles, May 9, 1922, January 6, 1923
 "Book of Attractions--A History of Grand Junction's Entertainment, 1912-1949)
 by Marion Fletcher

 continued yes no

surveyed by Angeline Barrett	affiliation City of Grand Junction	date March 12, 1992
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NOT FOR FIELD USE
 ELIGIBLE
 DET. NOT ELIGIBLE
 NOMINATED
 CERTIFIED REHAB
 DATE _____

Historic Building Inventory Record

project name		county	city	state ID no.
		Mesa	Grand Junction	
current building name		owner		
Cooper Theater		Aircadia Investment		
address		P.O. Box:209		
645 Main Street		Colorado Springs, CO		
Grand Junction, CO 81501		township 1S	range 1W	section 14 SE ¼, ¼
historic name		USGS quad name		
Avalon Theater		Grand Junction 1962 yr. X 7.5' 15'		
district name		block	lot(s)	addition yr. of addition
		116	11-15	
film roll	negative nos.	location of negatives		date of construction
by A. Barretto.	6	City of Grand Jct		1922 estimate 1922 actual
paste photograph here.				source
				Daily Sentinel
				use
				movie theater - closed present
				performing arts theater historic
condition				
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorating				
extent of alterations				
<input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> moderate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> major				
describe: brick facade added to cover original facade; interior change to accommodate movies				
style		stories		
Classic Revival		2 with balcony and basement		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original <input type="checkbox"/> moved
materials		square footage		date(s) of move:
brick and terra cotta		16,575		
architectural description				National Register Eligibility
The original Avalon Theater was built after the Classic Revival Style popular in the early part of the century. In a newspaper description of the new building plans, February, 1922, the Avalon building is described, "It will easily be one of the most attractive theaters in the Rocky Mountain Region". Photographs of the Avalon show three classic arched windows, capped by a frieze and a series of brick columns surrounding and between the windows. Two colors of brick were used to build the front and provide a decorative interest. A large canopy				Individual: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
				Contributing to district:
				<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
local landmark designation				
				name _____ date _____
associated buildings?				<input type="checkbox"/> yes
type				
if inventoried, list ID nos.				
additional pages				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes		<input type="checkbox"/> no		

significance: (check appropriate categories and briefly justify below)

____ architectural significance:
____ represents the work of a master
____ possesses high artistic values
 X represents a type, period or
method of construction

____ historic significance:
____ associated with
significant persons
 X associated with
significant events
or patterns
 X contributes to an
historic district

statement of significance:

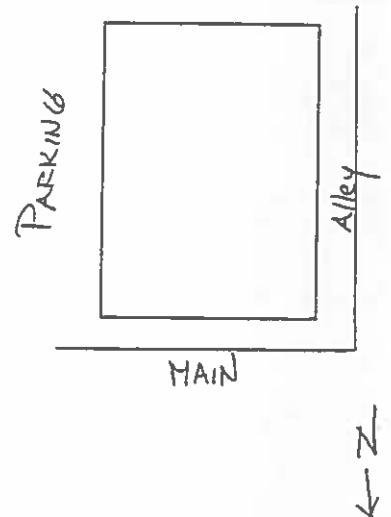
Contributing; alterations have taken on significance. They convey the continuing vitality of the street.

references (be specific)

1992 Historic Inventory Form

surveyed by: Marty Alexandroff
date: July, 1994

affiliation: Winter & Company



The AVALON THEATER

Architectural Description (cont.)

stretched out over the entrance. This facade was destroyed in a remodeling that took place sometime in 1947. The side and rear walls of the building remain intact but the old Beaux Arts facade was changed to a plain 60' high brick facade to "modernize" the appearance. The interior was also altered. From "blue velvet curtain...walnut and gold of the seats were enhanced with brown leather upholstery...the beautiful proscenium arch" of the 1922 building to "...about all that will be left of the original structure are the outside walls and a major portion of the huge balcony". Daily Sentinel 6-27-47.

Construction History (cont.)

to the exterior facade and the interior occurred under the ownership of the C.H. Cooper Company. The building now exists in its "modernized" form, a huge blank brick wall with an uninteresting neon sign advertising it as the Cooper Theater. Ceramic tile faces the bottom of the street side of the building where the movie billings are advertised.

Historical Background (cont.)

between engagements in Denver and Salt Lake City. This made possible an opportunity for the people of Grand Junction and surrounding towns to have first rate entertainment.

A group of prominent businessmen began to promote the concept of a theater facility during the years 1921-22. They formed the Grand Junction Theater Company and began in 1922 to construct a theater at the corner of Seventh and Main Streets (This was the site of the original Grand Junction Town Company owned by George A. Crawford, who drew up the articles of incorporation for the City of Grand Junction, and promoted it in its early years. The Daughters of the American Revolution designated the site a local landmark in 1924, with the dedication of a plaque that is still in the theater.) Walter Walker, publisher of the Daily Sentinel, acted as manager.

Some of the artists who performed at the Avalon Theater were: actresses Mary Pickford and Ethel Barrymore; Al Jolson and Company; John Phillips Sousa's Band; poet, Carl Sandburg; evangelist Billy Sunday to list the more famous.

When the motion picture industry began in the 20's and 30's to dominate the entertainment industry, the Avalon accommodated the change. Silent films featured musical accompaniment by the best local musicians and later the interior was altered to enable the showing of larger screened movies. The Avalon was leased to the C.H. Cooper Company in 1933, following financial troubles and subsequently sold to the Cooper Foundation in 1946. It has been mostly a movie theater ever since, though many local events such as high school graduations, musical recitals, Chataquas were held there through the years. It remained one of two theaters until the 1970's and closed in 1989.

COOPER



COOPER





THE AVALON





THE AVALON





