

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

# Architectural Inventory Form

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Date \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Eligible-NR

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Not Eligible-NR

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Eligible-SR

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Not Eligible-SR

\_\_\_\_\_ Need Data

\_\_\_\_\_ Contributes to Eligible NR District

\_\_\_\_\_ Noncontributing to Eligible NR District

## I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource Number: 5CF289
2. Temporary Resource Number: 80
3. County: Chaffee
4. City: Salida
5. Historic Building Name: Salida Opera House
6. Current Building Name: Unique Theater
7. Building Address: 129 W. 1st St.
8. Owner Name and Address: Groy, John L., P.O. Box 479, Buena Vista, CO 81211

Parcel Number: 368132421228  
SHF Grant Number: 2001-02-004

## II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M. N.M. Township 50N Range 9E  
1/4 1/4 SW 1/4 SE 1/4 of Section 32

10. UTM Reference  
Zone 13 Easting 413541 Northing 4265581

11. USGS Quad Name: Salida East, Colo.  
Year: 1994 Map Scale: 7.5' Attach photo copy of appropriate map section.

12. Lot (s): 5-7 Block(s): 21  
Addition: Salida Original Townsite Year of Addition: 1880

13. Boundary Description and Justification:  
Boundary includes the building and the urban parcel on which it is situated.

## III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building Plan (footprint, shape): L-Shaped
15. Dimensions in Feet: Length 149 X Width 72
16. Stories: 2
17. Primary External Wall Material(s) (enter no more than two):  
Stucco
18. Roof Configuration (enter no more than one):  
Flat
19. Primary External Roof Material (enter no more than one): Asphalt
20. Special Features (enter all that apply):  
Decorative Cornice
21. General Architectural Description:

Massive two-story building with projecting cornice with molding, dentils, central pediment with brackets, and paneled frieze with short pilasters. Beneath the cornice the building has been covered with textured stucco that obscures the features of the façade. The first story is divided into stores and a central theater. At west end of façade is an inset entrance with double paneled doors. Adjacent to this (131) is a storefront with two inset entrances with doors with large rectangular lights and narrow transoms. The floor of the entrance area is covered with small tan tiles and has a fretwork tile border. Angled walls lead to the entrance area, and the display windows are metal frame plate glass

with interior columns at corners and stuccoed kickplates.

At the center of the building below the pediment is the theater, which has a stuccoed façade with concrete along the foundation. Walls cladding to the central inset entrance area are angled inward. The entrance has two sets of metal frame glazed double doors. Polychromatic tile (or linoleum) floor. There is a V-shaped hanging marquee above the entrance.

East of the theater is a storefront with a center inset entrance, metal frame plate glass display windows with interior columns and stuccoed kickplates, angled walls flanking the entrance, and tile floor at the entrance.

The east wall is red brick, with a faded wall sign.

**22. Architectural Style/Building Type:** No Style

**23. Landscaping or Special Setting Features:**

Lamppost and log bench in front of building.

**24. Associated Buildings, Features, or Objects:**

None

#### IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

**25. Date of Construction: Estimate** **Actual** 1888

**Source of Information:** Salida Mail, 1 January 1889

**26. Architect:** Unknown

**Source of Information:**

**27. Builder/Contractor:** Unknown

**Source of Information:**

**28. Original Owner:** Salida Opera House Association

**Source of Information:** Salida News, 3 January 1889

**29. Construction History (include description and dates of major additions, alterations, or demolitions):**

The footprint of the building remained basically the same on Sanborn maps between 1890 and 1945. A small section was added on the west toward the front between 1890 and 1893. A property room was added on the west north of the dressing room between 1898 and 1904. The building was stuccoed as it is now between 1941 and 1967, based on historic photographs.

**30. Original Location:** Yes **Date of Moves**

#### V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

**31. Original Use(s):** Recreation and Culture/Theater  
Social/Clubhouse

**32. Intermediate Use(s)** Recreation and Culture/Theater  
Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store

**33. Current Use(s):** Recreation and Culture/Theater  
Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store

**34. Site Type(s):** Opera House

**35. Historical Background:**

Salida's original Craig Opera House was destroyed by fire in January 1888. Concerned with the loss to the community, in June 1888 a group of local businessmen organized the Salida Opera House Association with \$30,000 in authorized capital stock. The directors of the group were: E.W. Corbin, G.W. McGovern, M.J. Collins, Peter Mulvaney, J.W. O'Connor, J.W. Wood, and W.W. Roller. Edward W. Corbin, a wholesale grocer and mayor, was the leader of the opera house effort.

This building was constructed on a 75'X150' parcel purchased from Kate Bender. Construction took place during

the latter half of 1888, and the building was dedicated on 1 January 1889. The opening evening featured twenty-four musical numbers by the Leadville string band, dancing, and a catered supper. The Salida News opined that the drop curtain was "a beautiful piece of work of art" and boasted that the \$30,000 Salida Opera House was "in every way superior to any in Colorado except the Tabor Grand in Denver." Masonic Hall was located on the second floor of the building. W.W. Roller, an active and prominent Salida businessman, was shown as the manager of the theater in the 1903-04 and 1905-06 city directories.

In 1909, the facility was renamed the Osos Grand. The new lessees (N.J. Brewer, manager, and Frank R. Powell, business manager) had operated the Osos picture show for the previous year. They rewired the building, redecorated, and improved the picture show quality. The theater featured nightly picture shows with an orchestra except when pre-empted by special attractions; each seat was ten cents. At the end of 1909, the Salida Mail applauded the advance of the theater: "As a place of amusement, instruction and innocent pastime, the Osos Grand furnishes entertainment beyond question. Its value to the community as a place of entertainment can scarcely be estimated." Over the years, the facility was used for traveling road shows, lectures, musical performances, parties, and dances.

John Cunningham was the proprietor of the Osos Grand in 1911-12. By 1922-23, the Empress and Photo Play theaters were listed in the building (at 121 and 131 W. 1st Street, respectively). F.R. Kelly was the proprietor of both. Only the Empress Theater was listed in the 1930-31 city directory, with Orrin H. Goodenough, manager. The facility was known as the Salida Theatre by January 1942, when a fire struck the building: "The flames swept through the theater floor, destroyed the sound screen and gutted all the rear of the building. Heat and smoke severely damaged the rest of the interior." The building was then owned by Frank Kelley (a former state senator) and was operated by the Atlas Theater corporation of Denver. The 1951 and 1961 city directories listed the Salida Theatre here, with James Sweeney, manager. The facility was known as the Unique Theater at the time of the 1981 historic buildings survey.

In addition to the Masonic Hall on the second floor of the building, offices and shops were also located on the first floor flanking the entrance to the theater. The 1890 Sanborn fire insurance map showed a tailor, an office, and two stores flanking the entrance to the Opera House on the first floor of the building. William W. Roller, who managed the theater, also operated a real estate, loan, and insurance company from the building and was president of the Salida Board of Trade (also located here) in the 1903-06 period. Roller, identified as a conveyancer, was still listed in the building in 1909. In 1903-04 and 1905-06, Samuel J. Spray, a civil engineer and the U.S. Deputy Mineral Surveyor, had an office here. The 1904 and 1909 Sanborn maps showed a "mineral exhibit hall" west of the entrance and offices to the east. The building encompassed numbers 125 through 133 W. 1st Street on 1904 through 1945 Sanborns.

The 1930-31 city directory showed the following businesses on the first floor: George Gaul shoe repair, Charles and Lester Zingone, tailors, and the Singer Sewing Machine Co. (Bernard B. Bellwood, manager). In 1951 and 1961, occupants included Cookie's Place (Leo Cook, owner), Helen's Beauty Shop (Helen Mazzuca, owner), and the Marchesa Accordion School (Mickey Marchesa, owner).

### 36. Sources of Information:

Chaffee County Assessor records; Salida City Directories; Sanborn Insurance Maps; Mountain Mail, 28 October 1957, 3; Salida News, 3 January 1889; Salida Mail, 2 April 1909 and 31 December 1909, 4; Salida Semi-Weekly Mail, 5 June 1900 (photo); Eleanor Fry, *Salida: the Early Years* (Salida: Arkansas Valley Pub. Co., 2001), 64-66; Denver Post, 8 January 1942; Historic building survey form, 1981; "Downtown Walking Tour," 2002; Russ Collman, ed., *Trails Among the Columbine* (Denver: Sundance Publications, 1992), 288; Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, Image No. X-13444, Denver, Colo.

## VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local Landmark Designation: No

Date of Designation:

Designating Authority:

38. Applicable National Register Criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory.

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (See Manual).

X Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

**39. Area(s) of Significance:**

**40. Period of Significance:**

**41. Level of Significance:**

**42. Statement of Significance:**

The Salida Opera House is significant for its association with the history of entertainment and culture in the city. Built in 1888 by a group of local investors, the Opera House reflected the city's commitment to the arts, included a fraternal hall, and became the longtime (and current) home of a motion picture theater. Alterations to the building have diminished its historic physical integrity.

**43. Assessment of Historic Physical Integrity Related to Significance:**

The façade of this building has undergone a dramatic remodeling, retaining only its elaborate cornice.

**VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT**

**44. National Register Field Eligibility Assessment:** Not eligible

**45. Is there National Register district potential? Discuss.** N/A

This building is located outside the existing National Register district. If added to the district, the building would be a noncontributing resource.

If there is NRHP district potential, indicate contributing status: N/A

**46. If the building is in an existing NRHP district, indicate contributing status:** N/A

**VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION**

**47. Photographic Reference(s):** 14: 23A; 15: 25, 27.

**Negatives Filed At:** City of Salida

**Photographer:** Roger Whitacre

**48. Report Title:** Downtown Salida Historic Buildings Survey, 2001-02

**49. Date(s):** September 2002

**50. Recorder(s):** R.L. Simmons/T.H. Simmons

**51. Organization:** Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

**52. Address:** 3635 W. 46th Ave.

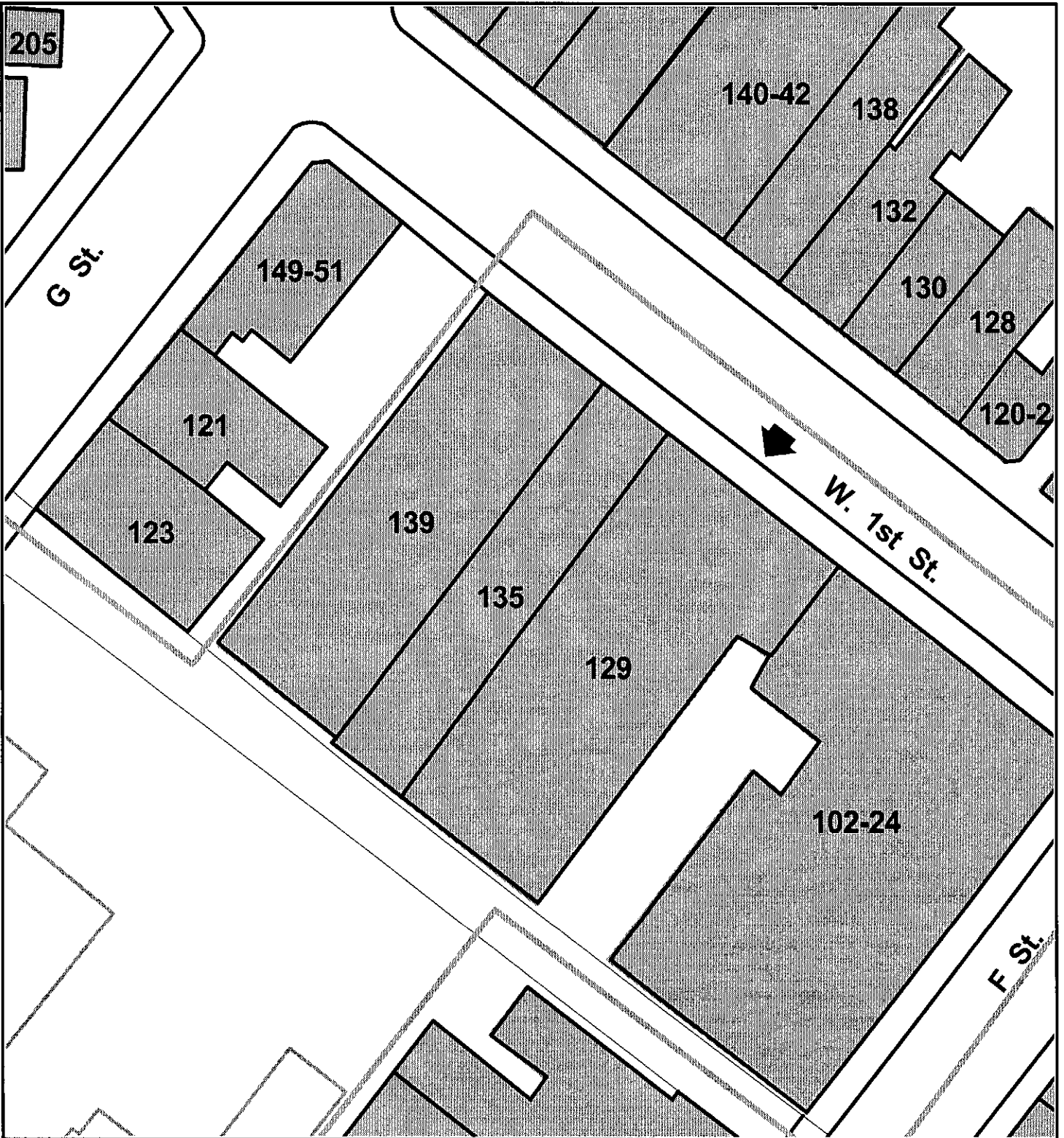
**53. Phone Number(s):** (303) 477-7597

NOTE: Please attach a sketch map, a photocopy of the USGS quad map indicating the resource's location, and photographs.

**Colorado Historical Society-Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation**

**1300 Broadway, Denver, Colorado 80203 (303) 866-3395**

Downtown Salida Historic Buildings Survey, 2001-02  
Sketch Map



129 W. 1st Street, 5CF289

