

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**DRAFT**

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name The Orpheum Theatre

other names/site number N/A

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

street & number 57 S Kellogg St

☐ not for publication

city or town Galesburg

☐ vicinity

state Illinois

county Knox

zip code 61401

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: \_\_\_ **national** \_\_\_ **statewide** \_\_\_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: \_\_\_ **A** \_\_\_ **B** \_\_\_ **C** \_\_\_ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

The Orpheum Theatre

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | private          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
| 0            | 0               | site         |
| 0            | 0               | structure    |
| 0            | 0               | object       |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Italian Renaissance

LATE VICTORIAN

Second Empire with Mansard Roof

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: Limestone

walls: STONE: Limestone

BRICK

roof: STONE: Slate

other: Mansard Windows: WOOD:

Custom millwork

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

#### Summary Paragraph

The Orpheum Theatre (or “the Orpheum”) is a working theatre located at 57 South Kellogg Street in Galesburg Illinois’ downtown National Historic District, listed in 1976. In 1915, William J. Olson and Harvey Craig engaged the architectural firm of C.W. & George L. Rapp to design the four-story theatre building. The Orpheum was completed in 1916. The Rapp brothers’ design embraced a free blend of Italian Renaissance and Second Empire style of 19th century France. Interiors, designed by R.G. Chappell, were embellished with classical, baroque and art nouveau details to give the Orpheum an eclectic elegance. The theatre was originally built with 550 seats on the main floor, 500 seats in the balcony, and 15 boxes. The Orpheum was built to be fire resistant, including fireproof curtains and chairs. The theatre was considered modern in its acoustics, stage construction, ventilation system, and dressing rooms equipped with running water. The building’s walls abutted to the north and south, facing west on Kellogg Street at roughly the center of the block between the Custer Hotel (now the Kensington) to the South and the Bank of Galesburg to the North. It is now bounded by the The Kensington, which remains. To the south is a newer bank building (Old National Bank) whose parking lot and drive through now run along the Orpheum’s north side. To the east at the rear of the building is a small paved area for loading and unloading shows into the theatre. The west-facing building façade and front doors sit on the sidewalk along Kellogg Street. A half-block from the City’s Main Street, the Orpheum is located in the middle of a vibrant downtown area.

The Orpheum is in its original location, and its limestone façade, including mansard roof and original round wooden windows, is in excellent condition and largely unchanged. It was built as a vaudeville venue for the Orpheum Circuit and served in that capacity from 1916 to 1927. It then transitioned into mainly a movie house until 1982, when it was closed. It remained vacant until 1986, when a group of concerned citizens embarked on a revitalization project. The Orpheum Theatre has been running continuously since being repaired and restored, re-opening in 1988.

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### Narrative Description

#### Setting and Site

The Orpheum Theatre faces west toward South Kellogg Street, which is one of several historic, commercial streets in downtown Galesburg. The area is a broad mix of historic and more modern construction largely comprised of small business store fronts, professional offices, bank buildings and public parking lots. Most buildings are two to four stories and made of brick, although decades ago, some received modern aluminum siding treatments to their front façades. The tallest downtown buildings are the Bondi Building and the Kensington Hotel, each with seven stories. The Orpheum stands relatively tall with four stories.

The Orpheum’s is bordered by Kellogg Street to the west, the Old National Bank drive through and parking areas to the north, a public parking area to the east, and the Kensington Hotel to the south. A sidewalk separating the theatre from Kellogg Street features concrete City-maintained flower planters on either side of the front doors and a city street light at the southwest corner of the building.

The paved area to the east of the building serves as a staging area for loading and unloading show sets and equipment into the theatre’s rear stage entrances. The area to the east of the paved area is a public parking lot.

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### **Exterior Description**

The Orpheum Theatre is a vaudeville, and later a movie palace, designed in an atmospheric blend of Italian Renaissance and French Second Empire styles of the 19th century. The four-story building has a limestone block foundation and façade, while the side and rear walls are mainly brick. Facing South Kellogg Street, the theater has a two-story vestibule and entrance lobby which occupies a small portion (about 15%) of the first floor of the building. The footprint is original and rectangular and carries up the entire four stories of the building.

#### *West Elevation*

The Orpheum's primary elevation, facing west toward South Kellogg Street, features the main entrance on the first floor, in line with the building's front wall. The exterior is clad in limestone block. The three double-doors of the entrance are topped by a modest marquee and a triple-arched canopy stretching across the doors and marquee. New front doors were installed in 2023 to increase heating and cooling efficiency. An old gate to the left of the front entrance emptied fire exits to the sidewalk. It was replaced in 2026 with a fire door to comply with fire code. The canopy is a recreation of the original, replicated during the 1988 renovations to and restoration of the theatre. Short pillars that run to the base of the canopy are undecorated at the top and match the heavy-block base that runs along the entire elevation at the sidewalk level. Windows for the concession area and a fire exit door are at the far left of the entrance and windows for the theatre box and operations office are at the far right of the entrance. The first-floor windows have limestone slab sills. The fire door and far right windows are topped with graduated, five-part limestone fans.

The building façade features symmetrically balanced windows and structural bays, with limestone panels inset between the second and third story windows. The two larger second story windows have small carved limestone balconets that feature five carved limestone rounds with open centers as a balustrade just under the rail. Behind these second story balcony windows are the mezzanine bathrooms. Decorative sills anchor the third-story far-left and -right windows to provide visual balance. Behind these third story windows are from left to right: a stairwell and landing, a storage room, a bathroom and another stairwell and landing. The second story's middle three window bays are limestone to accommodate the anchors needed to hold up the triple-arched canopy covering the marquee and front doors. Six Ionic-style pilasters topped with decorative scrollwork create visual height and stretch from the bottom of the second story to the top of the third story. The double-dentil cornice directly below the roofline has a larger and well-spaced row atop a smaller continuous row, offsetting the roof and overhanging the main limestone façade. The original double-pitched, green slate mansard roof tops the building, embedded with five original round eight-panel windows. Behind these windows are storage rooms and an old projection booth.

#### *North, East and South Elevations*

The remaining walls are built of brick. Originally, the north and south walls were built abutted to the buildings on either side. The north wall was abutted to about halfway back from South Kellogg Street to the Bank of Galesburg Building. In 1992, however, the bank building to the north was demolished, and a parking lot and drive through for a new First Midwest Bank (now Old National Bank) building were constructed. The exposed brick wall on the north side was covered (about two-thirds of the way back to match the original bank building footprint) with framing and a stucco finish. This framing and stucco is the property of the bank. There is a second-story theatre fire exit door and stairs approximately in the middle of the north wall exiting through the stucco wall. The Kensington to the south maintains the same footprint as 1916, when the theatre was built, and approximately one-third of the Orpheum's south exterior wall is abutted to the Kensington. The remaining south wall is open for deliveries at the Kensington and provides a means of egress from the theatre's fire door on the first floor, at about the middle of the wall. There is another fire door at the east end of the south wall which accommodates the basement dressing rooms and stage. At one time, there was a small window at the top rear of the south wall to illuminate the theatre's cat walks. It was filled in in 2025 to better accommodate artists who request occasional total darkness on stage for their performances. The west wall contains two doors at ground

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level. The one on the north end of the wall is a fire door for the stage and basement dressing rooms. The one on the south end of the wall is an oversized double door designed to accommodate stage sets, instruments, and other equipment. The north, east and south brick walls were the focus of a 2025 masonry project to address buckling parapets and failing brick and mortar on the rear stage wall. Eroded bracing was replaced and original bricks in the failing areas were cleaned and reset into new mortar in a stunning restoration.

### **Interior Description**

The description of the interior of the theatre is divided into four parts, one for each story. There is a minor basement area under the stage, used as dressing rooms, which is also described here.

#### *Main Floor*

The main level floors are concrete throughout.

*Entrance Lobby:* Facing South Kellogg Street, the theatre entrance occupies about 15% of the main floor of the building. Divided into thirds, the center area is a two-story lobby, decorated with a handmade Austrian crystal chandelier reflected in mirrored second story walls and ornate gilded plaster work above the front doors and extending around the room to cap the concessions window and box office openings. The plaster work continues up to the open second floor walls and ceiling in a grand gesture of opulence, framing wallpapered and mirrored panels. Between the panels are set decorative fluted columns topped with gilded scrollwork. All of this is capped with coffered ceilings, trimmed in gold and anchored by a cornice with small decorative, scrolled brackets. The mezzanine lobby opens onto the main lobby at the second floor, separated by a three-foot glass balustrade, topped with a brass rail and anchored by full fluted columns crowned with gilded scrollwork. Marble pedestals support archways that lead to the main floor auditorium doors. The lobby was originally mosaic tiles. It's present carpet is dark green with a rose motif intended to recall floor fashions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and a nod to the original rose and gold decorating scheme. The combination of classical and baroque details (especially the chandelier) is designed to elicit excitement via the short transition from the front doors on the sidewalk to the magic of the auditorium in a mere 32 feet.

The north third of the entrance is the concessions stand whose service window is framed in the baroque and classical plasterwork and marble pillars of the two-story lobby. Behind this window are modern coolers and popcorn machines. The plaster walls are unadorned. The space is finished with tile floors. The main floor concessions stand has moved among three locations in the entrance lobby. Originally located in the center section, after 1988, it was placed in the south lobby. During a 2016 facelift of the lobby, it was moved to the north lobby. Immediately to the right of the concessions window is a set of stairs behind windowed doors that lead directly to the third- and fourth-floor balcony levels, bypassing the second floor.

The south third of the entrance is the box office and theatre operational offices. The box office service window is decorated with plaster details facing the two-story lobby much like the concessions stand. To the left of the window is a display case featuring early photos and historic theatre memorabilia. Inside the office, the space is divided into work stations for the theatre staff using moveable partitions and is finished with gray, low-nap carpet. The plaster walls are unadorned.

Beyond the three arches opposite the front doors in the two-story entrance lobby lies the one-story auditorium main-floor lobby spanning the entire width of the building, oriented from north to south. At each end, original large staircases decorated with large gold circular art nouveau balusters rise to the second floor, or mezzanine lobby. The floors and treads and risers of the two large staircases are carpeted in a simple geometric print with dark green background that matches the lobby carpet. Four evenly-spaced double doors open into the auditorium, corresponding to the aisles that open to the orchestra pit and stage. These doors are not original, wooden on double-swinging hinges with no

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embellishments except curved brass handles. Plaster work along the auditorium wall and ceiling beams includes gilded plaster cornices, walls also feature framed panels with period-consistent wallpaper.

The theatre's original main floor restrooms were tucked under the staircases in the north and south auditorium lobby areas. After entering into an easement agreement with the Kensington Hotel (formerly the Custer) next door in 1985, the main floor restrooms were removed in favor of a shared arrangement in the Kensington lobby for use of their restrooms, which also comply with ADA requirements. An access door was created to facilitate ingress and egress between the buildings.

*Auditorium:* The auditorium is four-stories high with a concrete floor that slopes downward from the west end toward the stage and proscenium arch on the east end. Concrete stepping of the last four rows of the auditorium seating gives way to a smooth incline for the remainder. The entire floor is concrete and smooth with the aisles carpeted in red. Looking up after walking through the auditorium doors from the lobby, the mezzanine floor above, quickly gives way to the floor of the balcony. About one-third of the way down the main floor aisles, the full four-story auditorium ceiling comes into full view. With gilded plaster details adorning the ceiling and auditorium walls, the baroque decorations of the two-story lobby carry through to the body of the theater. Four hundred seven seats in 17 rows are divided into three sections with the aisles dividing a center section from seats to the north and south. Seats on the main floor were replaced at least twice. Once prior to the 1940s and again when the theatre was restored in the 1980s. They presently feature red upholstered seats and backs. Side walls feature panel insets with period-consistent red flocked wallpaper. Detailed gilded plasterwork adorns the auditorium walls.

Main floor walls have been carefully repaired with molds taken of detail work in order to cast new plaster replacements. Painting and gilding are ongoing maintenance items and retain the elegant atmosphere of the Theatre. A Barton organ was installed in the early 1930s, but it quickly fell out of use with the advent of talkies and sound movies. The organ was originally placed in front of the stage on the north side. It was replaced by stairs leading from the auditorium floor to the stage. Organ pipes were concealed in the ceilings of the presidential boxes. These pipes were removed and covered with plaster grilles.

*Orchestra Pit and Apron:* The original orchestra pit is 28.75 feet wide and 7.5 feet deep is extant and bordered by a half wall with wooden rail on the west (audience) side. The pit floor is sunk one foot below the auditorium floor. From the pit floor to the stage floor is about 5 feet. This area can be covered by two sets of aprons/stage extension panels to enlarge the stage for performances. The first covers the orchestra pit. Additional extensions can add an additional 5 feet to the front of the stage. The maximum pit occupancy is 15 musicians. Access to the pit is achieved from the auditorium floor or via the dressing rooms below the stage.

*Stage:* The stage is original and build of three-inch tongue and groove maple planks. It retains a cutout used by Houdini for a trick where he "ran through a brick wall" during a performance in 1924. Constructed of tongue and groove boards and painted stage black, the area offers limited storage or performance wings. Eight stairs from the main floor are located at the north and south ends of the stage. The stage measures 57 feet wide from north to south (53 feet excluding the fly system). The width of the proscenium is 34 feet. The main stage measures 28.5 feet deep, with the orchestra pit cover, it is 35.5 feet. The added stage extensions achieve a maximum stage depth of 40.5 feet. The stage height from floor to the grid (bottom of the catwalk) measures 50 feet, and from floor to ceiling, it is 57 feet.

The stage rigging with 27 lines is a single purchase counter-weight fly system with an electric winch located on stage right (north). Battens are 42 feet long, and each batten can support 2,000 pounds. Many are currently used for storage, legs (side curtains), and lights. The stage area also features a grand font projection full-stage movie screen that measures 24 feet tall by 32 feet wide. Stairway access to dressing rooms from stage located to the rear of stage on the north side. Additional access to the dressing rooms is from the wings on the south side of the stage.

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The red grand drape (curtains) were replaced in the 1986-88 restoration featuring a valence, two side curtains and the main floor curtain. Nestled between the drape and the valence is a fire shield that drops in the event of fire.

### *Mezzanine (2<sup>nd</sup> Story)*

The mezzanine may be reached by taking one of the two main lobby staircases. Each staircase empties into the mezzanine lobby which spans the entire width of the theater, oriented from north to south and slightly curved to add visual interest and access to the box seating on the north and south sides of the house. In addition to the brass-topped glass balustrade overlooking the main lobby chandelier, the women's restroom is on the north end of the mezzanine lobby (directly over the concessions stand), and the men's restroom is on the south end (directly over the box office and operational offices). Restrooms were updated on the mezzanine in 1988. The south staircase continues up to the balcony level. The mezzanine lobby is decorated even more lavishly than the main floor lobby, including gilded plaster work and cornices and columns capped with detailed scroll work. A reproduction of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Florentine della Robbia frieze over the auditorium doors remains an important feature of the mezzanine level and spans nearly the entire lobby width. Ceilings are beamed and trimmed with multi-layered, gilded cornices. Original, intricate plaster work and gilding on walls, ceilings, boxes and balcony have been repaired and meticulously maintained, especially since the 1988 re-opening. The auditorium facing fronts to the mezzanine boxes feature floral motifs in gilded plaster, lending them an aristocratic air. There are 74 seats in the mezzanine's main seating, in 3 rows. The rowed seating is accessed via three wooden double-doors that match the main floor auditorium doors.

Additional seating on the second floor is accessed through single wooden doors on the far north and far south of the mezzanine lobby. Three boxes hang over the aisles and far north and south seating on the main floor. They each have a 4-seat capacity for a total of 24. They are accessed by aisles carpeted in red along the second-floor walls. Originally, there were additional boxes on the second floor. In the mid-1930s, during a major renovation, box seats were removed where the rowed mezzanine seating is now located. The president's boxes closest to the stage now function as platforms for stage lighting and are not open to the public. They retain their original decorative balustrades and fluted columns, maintaining the theatres interior formality. A former cloak room on the far south end of the mezzanine level, still featuring its half door, is repurposed as a supply closet.

### *Balcony (3<sup>rd</sup> Story)*

Accessed by the stairs leading up from the south mezzanine stairway or by the stairs behind the double glass doors next to concessions on the main floor, the third-floor balcony lobby is decidedly less ornate than the first two floors. Even so, it features gilded plaster cornices along a slightly curved wall. Originally a bare wooden floor, the present carpet is a low-  
nap brown. The balcony lobby opens onto the lower balcony seating with un-doored access delivering patrons to the middle of the balcony rows. The floors are wooden, with aisles covered in the low-  
nap brown carpet. Lower balcony seats below this access are wooden and were upgraded at least twice and feature red cushioned seats and backs. Rear balcony seating, above the balcony lobby access, is the oldest in the house, dating to before the 1940s. End-seat scroll-work still adorns the aisle-sides of the rows, but the wooden seats are narrow and well-worn with red cushioned seats and backs. These seats remain a popular seating area for their exceptional acoustics, especially during classical music concerts. The lower balcony contains 262 seats in 9 rows and is divided into thirds, with two aisles separating the center from the seating to the north and south. Additional aisles run along the walls of the lower balcony area. While the presidents' boxes on the mezzanine extend up to the third floor, their third floor balustrade is decorative.

The upper balcony seating is narrower with 132 seats in 7 rows and is accessed by additional steps located between the balcony access openings. Two functioning spotlight stations sit at the very back of the rear balcony against the north and south walls of the auditorium.

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The concessions stand on the west side of the balcony lobby was walled in during the 2016 facelift to be used as a storeroom on the third floor. The former coat room, still sporting a half door, serves as additional storage and occasional concessions stand. The single restroom in the rear of the upper balcony, originally at the top of the stairs running from the main lobby was turned into a storage closet and a combined men's/women's room was added on the west side of the balcony lobby.

*Projection Room & Storage (4<sup>th</sup> Story)*

The fourth story of the Orpheum Theatre provides access to rear balcony seating. In addition, the aisle against the far west wall behind all the seating provides access to a storage areas and a platform housing the projection room. These areas are lighted by the round windows in the mansard roof. Kerasotes Theatres installed a projection room on this level. The Kerastes projector is in storage. Newer projection machines have been installed over the years. A Vivitek digital system is in use currently. A modern digital system is installed, and will be operational with the pending installation of a new lens. This area of the theater is carpeted in the seating area, but retains bare wooden floors in the remaining storage areas and projection room.

*Basement Dressing Rooms & House Systems*

A partial basement is located under the stage on the east end of the building. Accessed by concrete stairs on the north and south sides of the stage area, these facilities were renovated in 1988 to provide a more modern space for acts to prepare and change prior to and during performances. The area is divided into dressing areas and restrooms plus a staging area and boasts brighter lighting and additional mirrors.

In the mid-1930s, air conditioning was installed, providing cooling and air exchange, making the theatre comfortable on even the hottest days. Today, the Orpheum operates a number of HVAC systems including the original boiler system, which still supplies heat to the stage radiators.

The lighting and sound systems have been continuously upgraded over the decades to accommodate the needs of moving pictures and touring acts and to address audience expectations for a professional experience. The light and sound booth is situated in the middle of seating at house left (north) at rows K, L and M, seats, 1-9 in each of those rows. A full upgrade is again anticipated for Fall of 2026. Types of lights include: spotlights, fresnels, movers, lekos. The audio system currently has two subwoofers on house left (north) and right (south) on the floor. One 9 speaker array hangs in a column from the center of the auditorium ceiling above the stage. Speakers can be added depending on performers' needs.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C

Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- |                          |   |                                                                            |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A | Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | removed from its original location.                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C | a birthplace or grave.                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D | a cemetery.                                                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure.                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F | a commemorative property.                                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G | less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

**Period of Significance**

1916, the year the Orpheum Theatre opened

1916 – 1927 as part of the Orpheum Circuit

1928 – 1982 largely as a movie house

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Architect: C.W. & George L. Rapp

Interior Designer: R.G. Chappell

Builders: William J. Olson & Harvey Craig

Construction: Monmouth-Galesburg

Construction Company

Interior carpet and drapes: O.T. Johnson

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Orpheum Theatre located at 57 South Kellogg Street, Galesburg, Illinois was completed in 1916 for William J. Olson and Harvey Craig to become a part of the Orpheum Circuit, showcasing vaudeville acts and “reels of motion pictures”. The architectural firm of C.W. & George L. Rapp designed the four-story theatre building as an “amusement palace” embracing a free blend of Italian Renaissance and Second Empire style of 19th century France.

The Orpheum Theatre is significant under National Register Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation for its role in the heyday of the Orpheum Circuit that crossed the country, creating a flow of vaudevillian entertainment from East to West and back again. Acts like the Marx Brothers, Jack Benny, Fanny Brice and other notable performers were enticed to travel the circuit when more and more Orpheum franchise theatres came on line. While on the road between New York City and San Francisco or Los Angeles, California, stage acts could make as many as 40 stops while continuously performing on the road. Galesburg’s Orpheum was a particularly popular destination as a place where performers could hone their act before moving on to the larger market in Peoria. Literally preparing to “play in Peoria”, many acts found out in Central Illinois whether they had the right stuff to travel further West.

The Orpheum is also significant under National Register Criterion C for Architecture/Design. Even the Rapp brothers, leading theatre designers for their time, considered the Orpheum one of their best works. R.G. Chappell designed the interiors with a deep rose and gold color scheme, elevating the atmosphere while also echoing the eclecticism of the exterior architectural details. While Illinois boasted as many as fourteen Orpheum franchises during the first period of significance (1916 to 1927), many were unremarkable for their design, near whistlestops along train lines to larger cities. Today, only three Orpheum Theatre’s remain in Illinois. Galesburg’s Orpheum Theatre is the only one that continues to deliver live performance and movies on its stage. It was designed to impress with its magnificent façade and again when patrons entered the two-story, chandeliered lobby. That façade has remained largely intact with minor upgrades to main level doors, and continues to amaze visitors with its grand presence in downtown Galesburg.

The period of significance for Criterion A is 1916 to 1928. In 1927, the Orpheum Circuit theatres were merged with the Keith-Albee-Orpheum Corporation at that time. In May of 1928, that company merged with Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and Film Booking Offices of America (FBO) to become the major motion picture studio Radio Keith Orpheum (RKO Pictures). The second period of significance for Criterion A is 1928 to 1982 when the Orpheum functioned largely as a movie house.

The period of significance for Criterion C is 1916, the year the Orpheum Theatre was completed.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**History of Galesburg, Illinois**

Galesburg, Illinois was founded in 1837 by Reverend Gorge Washington Gale and a group of anti-slavery advocates seeking to move from Oneida, New York. They took subscriptions to raise \$40,000 for the

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purpose of purchasing and platting a city in the West, preferably Indiana or Illinois. They eventually landed in modern day Galesburg, purchasing 10,746 acres, which extend 6 blocks north and south and 7 blocks east and west. Early settlers crafted log cabins in a temporary encampment north of the planned city center to ensure that Galesburg was built with framed houses from the start. Gale's home still exists as a private residence and landmark of those early days. Gale founded Knox Manual Labor College (later Knox College) in 1837 as well, seeking a site for a manual labor college where students could pay for their education and simultaneously receive the spiritual and physical benefits of exercise.

Also in 1837, Illinois' first anti-slavery society was founded in Galesburg. This eventually led to Galesburg being a stop on the Underground Railroad. At first the term was figurative, as escaped enslaved people found their way north via rivers, forest edges, and other forms of navigation and transport. Later, as railroads grew in the area, the confluence of rail lines in Galesburg enabled escaped enslaved people literally to stay on track while traveling north at night.

The railroads literally put Galesburg on the map. Local backers convinced the first railroad between Chicago and Kansas City to come through Galesburg. Connected to those large cities and points beyond by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q), those early first trains passed through Galesburg in 1854, starting an economic and population boom for the community. Passenger trains roared in only months later. In 1858, the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate was held on the Knox College campus at Old Main. It is estimated that over 15,000 people attended this event.

Forty-one years later, in 1899 and on the anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas debate, U.S. President William McKinley revisited the site to give a speech and take the pulse of middle America about the Spanish-American war. The President and U.S. Secretary of State John Hay conducted a presidential cabinet meeting at Galesburg's Carr Mansion on north Prairie Street, possibly the first ever conducted outside of Washington, D.C. A total of nine presidents have visited Knox College and Galesburg. Galesburg is the birthplace of poet Carl Sandburg, artist Dorothea Tanning and former major League Baseball star Jim Sundberg.

Abundant clay deposits and the local capacity to mill linseed oil (an important ingredient for making white paint) meant Galesburg paved its streets with brick and painted its houses white. Posh for its day. The 1880's brought telephones, street lights and home delivery of mail. Economic prosperity was bolstered by the railroads, and the growth of commercial enterprises made the town prosper. From the 1850's to the 1960's Galesburg's population grew steadily, from about 5,000 in 1856 to an apex of just over 37,000 in 1960. Since then, with the exit of industry and the closing of major employers (such as Outboard Marine and Maytag), the population has fallen to about 28,000 in 2026. Galesburg's population decline has remained steady over the past five years at about 1.1%.

Today's top employers are the railroad (now BNSF), OSF Healthcare, Blick Art Materials, Bridgeway (a human services organization) and Knox College. Galesburg continues to be a major railroad town, boasting the second largest train classification yard (or hump yard) in the country, processing 150 to 200 freight trains daily. A new \$50 million rail and switching business park is funded and in development. Graham Medical of Canton, IL has entered the Galesburg area with new medical services and staff. They are expanding their footprint with the building of an approved 60-unit senior housing project. Property values, previously depressed by the decades-long exodus of large employers have seen an uptick due to national housing shortages, relatively lower entry points for home buyers, and new employment

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opportunities. Remote workers, new industry activity, and retail development are attracting more people into Galesburg in recent years.

Education remains an important part of Galesburg. Knox College continues as a vibrant liberal arts college. Carl Sandburg Community College has experienced a surge in growth of students and programs in recent years. In addition, a new vocational school is readying students for medical careers and training them in skills for the trades. K-12 schools have been successfully renovated with updated technological capabilities over the past five years.

Galesburg is a mashup of people and physical spaces. Some of its earliest buildings (1830s) remain standing, downtown buildings have come and go with aged stalwarts sitting beside modern construction. The Orpheum Theatre is one such building. The Kensington to the south was constructed by the same construction company around the same time. The Galesburg Bank to the north, however, was demolished in 1992 in favor of a new one-story bank with drive-through lanes. The population has grown more diverse over time. While 70% of the population identifies themselves as White, about 13% are black. Nine percent of families are of mixed race. And about 9% are Hispanic.

### **History of the Orpheum Theatre**

#### **Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation**

Announcements appeared in the *Galesburg Evening Mail* throughout the week preceding the opening of the Theatre: "Orpheum Theatre WILL OPEN Monday Night, August 21<sup>st</sup>". No matinee was offered that first day, but tickets went on sale the Saturday prior for what would thereafter amount to daily 2:15 pm and 8:15 pm performances. Five acts were offered in addition to "two short reels" (motion pictures were a part of the Orpheum's offerings from the very start). Ticket prices advertised matinee performance balcony seats at 10 cents, main floor at 25 cents, and boxes at 35 cents. Night performances advertised gallery (far rear balcony) at 10 cents, balcony at 25 cents, main floor at 35 cents and boxes at 50 cents. The first night, 1,200 theatergoers from Galesburg and environs attended. Seating was sold out prior to the show, and late arrivals had to return at later dates. Despite there being at least seven other theatres in Galesburg, the Orpheum was deemed the most opulent. Purchasing advance tickets was recommended in those early days.

As a vaudeville house on the Orpheum Circuit, The Orpheum Theatre hosted many early stars of stage and screen, including Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Blackstone the Magician, Fanny Brice, George Burns, Harry Houdini, Al Jolson, and the Marx Brothers. The theatre boasted the finest in construction, acoustics, and accommodations. The Orpheum Circuit is a piece of American history in the theatre. An early franchise model developed to make cross-country travel appealing to popular vaudeville acts in the East, the Circuit enabled these road warriors to work twenty to forty weeks a year just on the Circuit as they made their way West and back again. The Circuit is a story of entrepreneurship, acquisition, and greed as much as it is a story of developing opportunities for talent to showcase at previously inaccessible geographies and venues. Bookings intended to draw diverse audiences: Rural and urban; male and female; Black and White; wealthy and not so wealthy. Galesburg's place on the Orpheum Circuit is an important piece of this history. Notably, women did not always find theatres savory places

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to attend. The Orpheum's opulence eliminated this barrier. In addition, while White and Black patrons were encouraged to attend, seating was segregated. Black patrons used the staircase to the right of the concessions stand bypassing the main floor auditorium lobby as well as the mezzanine. The staircase emptied onto the third floor balcony lobby and continued to the rear balcony seating area. That area was reserved for Black patrons. Notably, William Holden, while touring in 1940 to promote the film *Those Were the Days*, said he would not debut the film in a segregated theatre. Management agreed to open all seating to Black patrons, but quickly reverted after the film's run. The theatre was permanently desegregated in the 1960s.

As was the fate of most vaudeville theatres of the era, the Orpheum's splendor could not withstand the demise of vaudeville, the rising popularity of movies, and the relatively inexpensive costs of building state-of-the-art movie-dedicated theatres. In the late 1920s, Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre joined the other Orpheum Theatres to become a movie palace as part of the RKO merger described elsewhere. Even as a movie house, like other Orpheum Theatres, Galesburg still occasionally hosted big bands and other live music programs and opened its doors to community events as well. Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre represented and continues to represent the centrality of Galesburg as a hub for the performing arts.

By the late 1970s, the Orpheum was part of Kerasotes Theatres, Inc. Due to high operating costs, the Orpheum was forced to close in 1982. The theatre was donated by Kerasotes to the City of Galesburg. For a time, a local theatre group, Prairie Players, were contracted to manage the building and its stage. Eventually, this became burdensome as maintenance demands grew. Ultimately, the Knox County Metropolitan Exposition, Auditorium and Office Building Authority (DBA The Orpheum Theatre) was formed and a succession of capital campaigns raised the funds needed to restore the Orpheum to its former glory. On May 5, 1988, the curtain rose on the Henry Mancini Orchestra for the re-inauguration gala and welcomed Bo Diddley, the Doobie Brothers, Collin Raye, Glen Miller Orchestra, Mickey Rooney and the Russian National Ballet Company.

Today, the restored Orpheum Theatre in Galesburg is a unique historic venue, bringing to the stage a diverse blend entertainment from local performing arts to movies to music, comedy, dance and theatre, the purpose for which it was originally intended.

Criterion C: Architecture/Design

**Architects**

The Orpheum Theatre was designed by Rapp and Rapp, Chicago architects. Hailing from a family of architects, Cornelius Ward Rapp (1860 – 1926) and George Leslie Rapp (1878 – 1941) followed their father, Isaac Rapp (1830 – 1913) into the business. Raised in Carbondale, Illinois, the Rapp brothers rose to fame as designers of the movie palaces of the 1910s and 1920s. It has been said that because George was 18 years younger than Cornelius, and he was a fraternity man at the University of Illinois (graduating from the School of Architecture in 1899), he brought a modern sensibility to their designs. While each worked with different firms to start, by 1906 they joined forces to form the firm, Rapp and Rapp in Chicago. They went on to design over 400 structures with their signature "blended" style of

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historical revival styles like French Baroque and Spanish Revival, using exotic details to create engaging, democratic entertainment spaces.

In competition with the firms of Thomas W. Lamb and John Eberson, the three architectural powerhouses entered a figurative arms race to design the most expansive, exotic, and immersive movie palaces that were at the same time accessible to everyman. The rivalry also pushed advancements in acoustics, sightlines, and amenities. Moving away from smaller vaudeville house designs, Lamb, the Rapps, and Eberson sought to create total environments for film viewing. Their designs, of which the Orpheum in Galesburg is a potent example, featured vaulted ceilings, historic motifs, gold leaf ornamentation, crystal chandeliers, and intricate plasterwork. Theatres under this philosophy became an escape into a world of opulence and wonder designed to entice middle-class patrons through their doors. They created a new meeting place for communal experiences where, as George Rapp put it, “the wealthy rub elbows with the poor”, while surrounding patrons with luxury and refinement. Movie houses became an elevated public space, community anchors that when preserved, continue to foster the Rapp philosophy even today.

### **The Orpheum Theatre Construction**

The Orpheum Theatre was designed to be the standout theatre structure in Galesburg. At the time it was built in 1916, at least seven other theatres were featuring vaudeville, film reels or both. None of the theatres in operation when the Orpheum premiered operate as performance venues, and only two of the buildings (the Elite and Kozy) survive and are now eateries. The theatre included: The Colonial (42 S Prairie St), The Elite (53 S Prairie St), The Gaiety (111 E Simmons St), The Kozy (427 E Main St), The Plaza (85 N Broad St), The Princess (Main St), and The West (42 S Prairie St). Scant information is available for most, reflecting the rush to capitalize on the popularity of motion pictures while simultaneously oversaturating the market with movie houses. For example, the Kozy was out of business by 1917, and the Elite by 1920.

Larger and more ornate than nearly all of the other theatre extant at the time, the intention for the Orpheum was to impress with majestic architecture and luxurious interiors. Owner, William Olson also owned the Gaiety Theatre on the corner of Cherry and Simmons Street. He sought to outclass the Orpheum’s competitors and bring in the most popular acts and the most fashionable audiences. After touring the Midwest and viewing other theatres, Olson and his backer Harvey Craig knew they wanted the Rapp brothers who had built magnificent theatres in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Manhattan, and New Jersey.

Rapp and Rapp building plans on file with the City of Galesburg are dated July 27, 1915. But early that year, Craig and Olson sought bids for work on the Orpheum. Unfortunately, because Rapp and Rapp failed to send duplicate copies of the building plans to bidders, all bids were not awarded until August 1915. (Given the dates, changes may have been ongoing throughout the bidding process.) Then began the push to build. The Monmouth-Galesburg Construction company led the job.

The building plans show a formidable building constructed of limestone, copious concrete and enormous steel girders designed by a bridge builder to support the mezzanine and cantilevered balcony.

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Some sub-contractors are known. The O.T. Johnson Company on Main Street in Galesburg, Illinois supplied the carpets and drapes using over 1000 yards of velour for the stage drapes. The O.L. Peterson Estate furnished 180 chairs, and the remainder of the seating contract went to the American Seating Company. Light fixtures were by Victor S. Pearlman and Company, and Murphy Brothers got the hardware contract. Interior decorations were provided by Mandel Brothers.

As with all large projects, there were delays: the project manager, Henry Duvall, took sick; the décor required touch ups by Mandel Brothers; the insurance quote was delayed; a contractor was late in laying cement; temporary heat during the building process was unavailable; and 100 of the chairs from the American Seating Company arrived damaged and had to be replaced. The original opening date was set for April 3, 1915, but all of the above delayed opening until August 21, 1915.

With the popularity of motion pictures overshadowing vaudeville, the Orpheum's opulence gave way to shifting public tastes. By 1935, under ownership of Great States Theatres, and in order to convert the Orpheum into strictly a movie palace, the fancy French doors and brass fittings were removed, as were the seven center box seats on the mezzanine to make way for row seating. The original crystal chandelier was taken down.

### **Ownership**

The Orpheum theatre has survived several owners, but it has always been a performance and movie venue. And its architecture and design have remained largely intact. The original owners folded into the RKO (Radio-Keith-Orpheum) merger in the late 1920s. They continued to show movies and a shortened vaudeville roster until 1933, and host live music events. Subsequent operators included the Great States Theatres (1930's-1970's), Kerasotes Theatres, Inc. (1970's), a local theatre group Prairie Players (early 1980's) and the current owner, Knox County Metropolitan Exposition, Auditorium and Office Building Authority (or the Knox County Civic Center, since 1985).

### **Other Illinois Orpheums**

The Orpheum Theatre in Galesburg, IL would meet the criteria for state-level significance as the only one of three remaining Orpheum Circuit theatres in Illinois that continues to operate as originally intended. There were at least 14 Orpheum Theatres in Illinois. Only two others are currently extant. The fourteen Orpheum Theatres appear in sources ranging from Cinema Treasures online, theatre web pages, and municipal sources where the theatre is owned by the city or the town. The theatres identified were located in the following cities:

|           |           |          |                |           |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|-----------|
| Aurora    | Champaign | Chicago  | East St. Louis | Galesburg |
| Hillsboro | Joliet    | Marion   | Moline         | Ottawa    |
| Peoria    | Quincy    | Rockford | Springfield    |           |

Of these theatres, only three currently exist, Champaign, Galesburg and Hillsboro. Champaign is largely a wedding and event venue and no longer used for theatre purposes (this after it did a brief stint as a children's museum). Hillsboro was not originally an Orpheum Theatre, but was acquired for the Circuit in

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1929. Its balcony was walled off to create a second theatre, and it now exclusively shows films. Only Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre continues to offer a variety of stage, music, comedy and community acts in the spirit of the original Orpheum Circuit.

A table detailing each of the 14 theatres including location, dates opened and closed, comments and disposition appears in Figure 2. Photographs where available of all the theatres are included in Figure 1. Not all of the Orpheum Theatres on the Illinois portion of the Orpheum Circuit were palaces. Photos were not available for some of the former Illinois Orpheums in their heyday. But they all bore the Orpheum name at one time or another. Galesburg's Orpheum, while smaller, rivals the Chicago Orpheum for opulence and design.

Of the 11 non-extant theatres, several have nearly disappeared completely from the public record, and there is very little information available about them. This compounds the "scarcity" of buildings in Illinois from this famous Circuit and bolsters the significance of Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre. If we don't protect these buildings with National Historic designations, we may lose them and their histories forever, especially in economically tough cycles.

Importantly, and architecturally, Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre retains its original footprint and façade. Other original items include its two-story lobby, the mansard roof and distinctive windows, gilded plaster work, the della Robbia frieze and significantly, and the maple stage with the Houdini cut out. There is nothing like this building anywhere. Orpheum Theatres took on a number of different looks developed by a number of different architects. Even the prolific Rapp brothers, the Galesburg Theatre's architects, didn't build cookie-cutter venues. Galesburg's Orpheum's eclectic design which has been so well preserved is one of a kind.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☒ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

|   |                              |                                |   |                     |                      |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <u>40.9468 N</u><br>Latitude | <u>-90.3661 W</u><br>Longitude | 3 | <u></u><br>Latitude | <u></u><br>Longitude |
| 2 | <u></u><br>Latitude          | <u></u><br>Longitude           | 4 | <u></u><br>Latitude | <u></u><br>Longitude |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Located on the East side of Kellogg Street midway between Main and Simmons Streets

Legal Description:

S D LOTS 7 & 8 BLK 28 N 66 FT LOT 1 ALL LOT 2 & N 33 FT LOT 3 DOR APPROVED 85 48 12

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the lot description for the lot on which the Orpheum Theatre is located as shown in the Knox County IL Assessor's office. The Theatre is built to the lot line at the north and south boundaries, having previously been built abutted between two buildings. To the south is (The Kensington, formerly The Custer), to the north, the building was demolished, and the Orpheum's north boundary now sits along the Old National Bank's drive through driveway. The Theatre is built to the sidewalk to the West and has a small area for very limited parking in the rear.

## 11. Form Prepared By

|                 |                                            |           |                                 |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| name/title      | <u>Andrew Driscoll, Executive Director</u> | date      | <u>August XX, 2026</u>          |
| organization    | <u>The Orpheum Theatre</u>                 | telephone | <u>(309) 342-2299</u>           |
| street & number | <u>57 S Kellogg St</u>                     | email     | <u>andrew@theorpheum.org</u>    |
| city or town    | <u>Galesburg</u>                           | state     | <u>IL</u> zip code <u>61401</u> |

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**



Source: Google Earth. The Orpheum Theatre, 57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401  
40.9468 N -90.3661 S

- **Local Location Map**



Source: Google Maps. The Orpheum Theatre, 57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401  
40.9468 N -90.3661 S

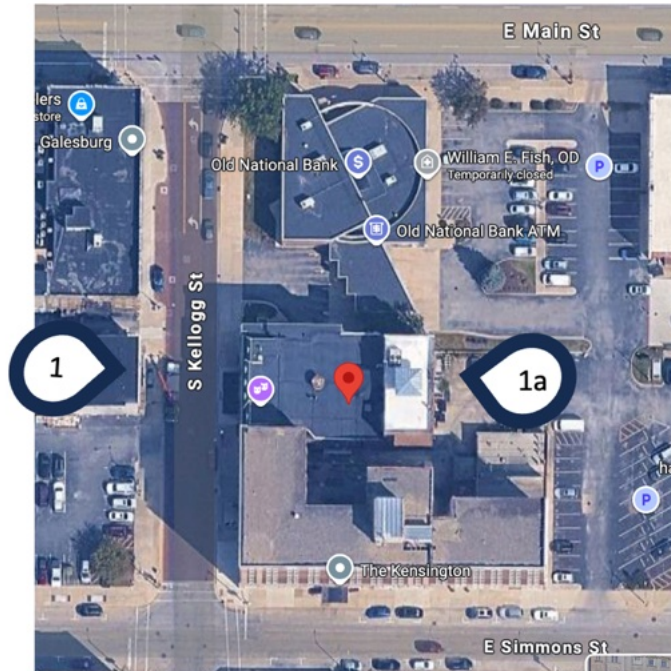
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- **Site Plan**

# The Orpheum Theatre in Galesburg, Illinois

57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401



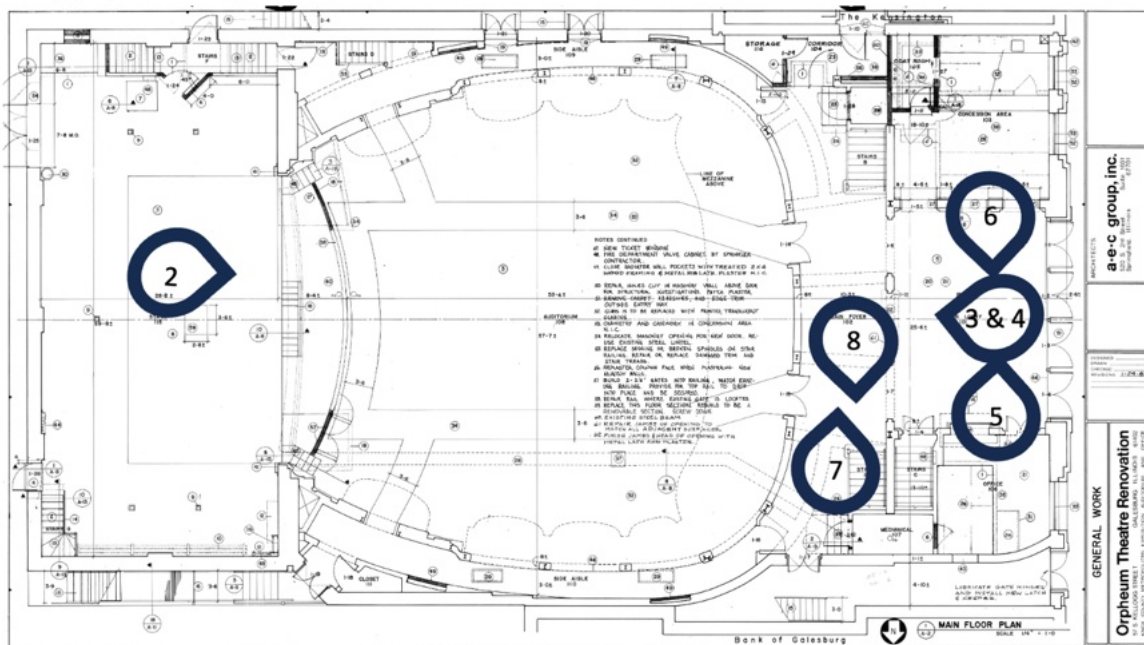
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• Floor Plans (As Applicable)

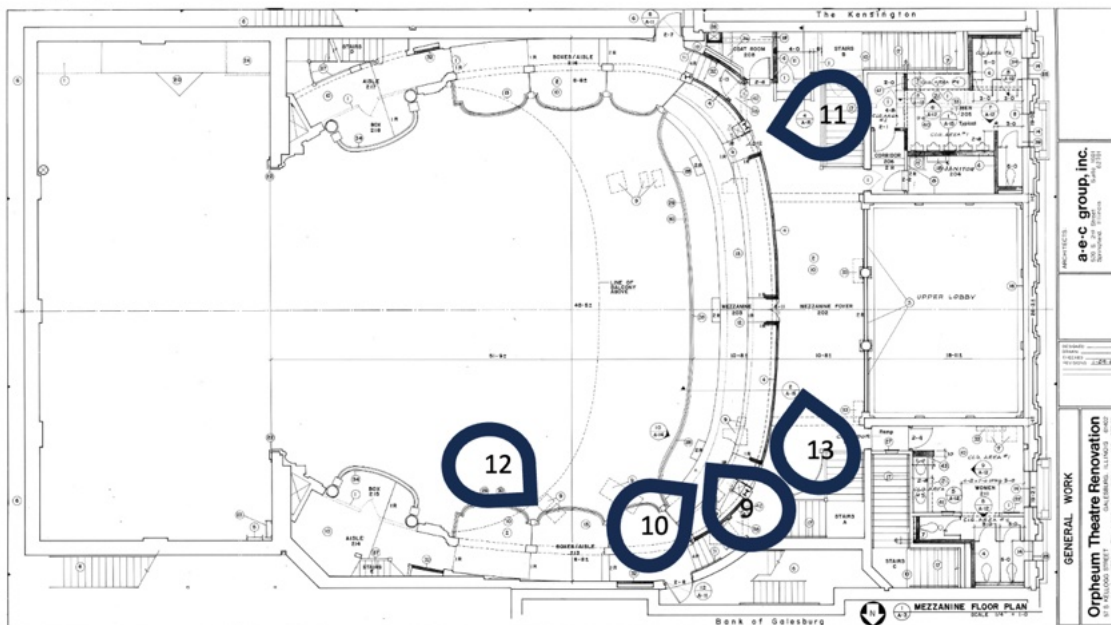
## The Orpheum Theatre Main Floor Photo Key

57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401



## The Orpheum Theatre Mezzanine Photo Key

57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401

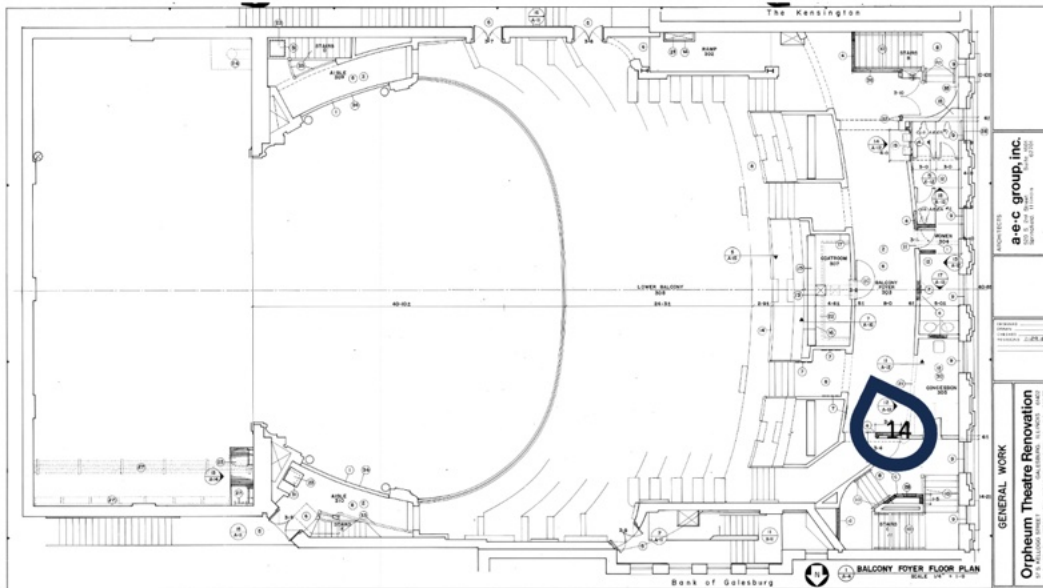


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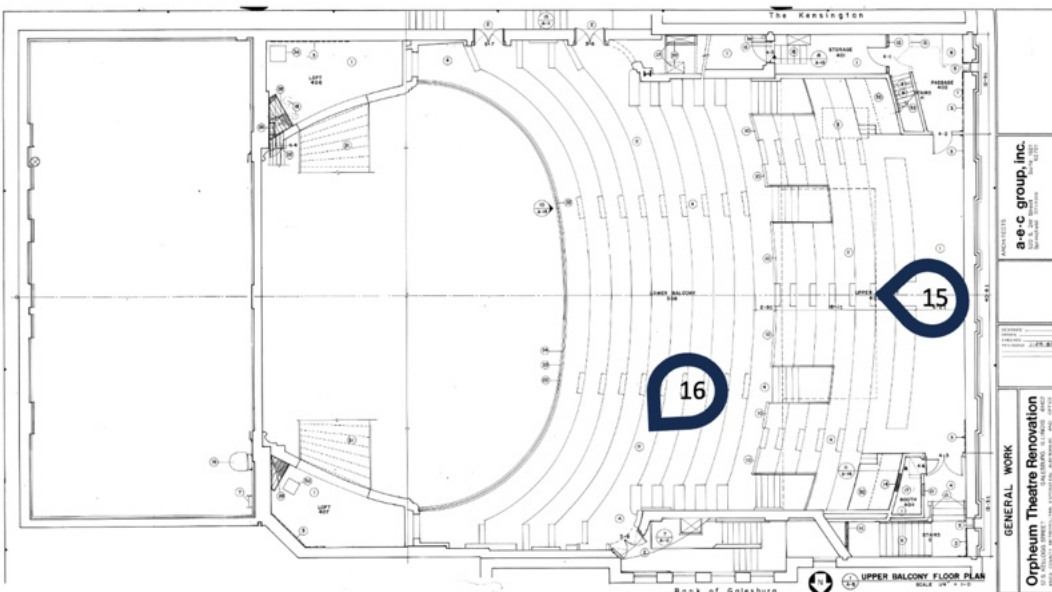
## The Orpheum Theatre Balcony Foyer Photo Key

57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401



## The Orpheum Theatre Upper Balcony Photo Key

57 S Kellogg St, Galesburg IL 61401



Dressing room level?

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- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

??

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

|                    |                     |        |       |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------|-------|
| Name of Property:  | The Orpheum Theatre |        |       |
| City or Vicinity:  | Galesburg           |        |       |
| County:            | Knox                | State: | State |
| Photographer:      | Karen Cates         |        |       |
| Date Photographed: | March 2026          |        |       |

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

### List of photos to be completed when photos finalized.

E.g. 1 of XX (IL\_Galesburg\_Orpheum Theatre\_001)

View of the front façade of the Orpheum Theatre facing East.

Dressing room pics?

### Photo 1 of XX:

View of the front façade of the Orpheum Theatre facing East.



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**Photo 1A of XX:**

View of rear wall of Orpheum Theatre, facing West.



**Photo 2 of XX:**

View from stage looking toward the back of the house at main floor, mezzanine and balcony seating.

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**Photo 3 of XX:**

Main Lobby, view from front doors looking up.



**Photo 4 of XX:**

Main Lobby, view from front doors looking down.

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**Photo 5 of XX:**  
Main Lobby, view toward Concessions.



**Photo 6 of XX:**  
Main Lobby, view toward Box Office & admin offices.

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**Photo 7 of XX:**  
Main Lobby, access doors to Theatre, gilded cornices.



**Photo 8 of XX:**

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Main Lobby, original stairways with gilding.



**Photo 9 of XX:**

Mezzanine original Box Seats, from House left looking to House right.



**Photo 10 of XX:**

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Mezzanine Seats, House center, original gilded plaster work on ceiling.



**Photo 11 of XX:**

View showing detail of original della Robbia Frieze and gilded plaster over Mezzanine Foyer door.



**Photo 11 of XX:**

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Mezzanine original box seat detail.



**Photo 13 of XX:**

Mezzanine Lobby, original della Robbe Frieze on the upper left, original gilded plaster on ceiling, pillars and Frieze.



**Photo 14 of XX:**

Third floor Balcony lobby. Originally less ornate than lower lobbies. The coat check half-door (first door on the left)

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is original. Crown molding original.



**Photo 15 of XX:**

View showing original stage, ceiling details, "President's" boxes from upper balcony.



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**Photo 16 of XX:**

Upper Balcony, detail of original gilded plaster work at exits,  
on walls and ceiling.



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

Figure 1. Photos of other Illinois Orpheum Theatres

Figure 2. Table of Disposition of Non-Extant Illinois Orpheum Theatres

Figure 3. Historic Photos of Orpheum Theatre

### Figure 1. Photos of other Illinois Orpheum Theatres



Figure 1: 1 of XX Photos

EXTANT: Champaign Orpheum Theatre



Figure 1: 2 of XX Photos

EXTANT: Hillsboro Orpheum Theatre

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Figure 1: 3 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: Aurora Orpheum Theatre



Figure 1: 4 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: Chicago Orpheum Theatre

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Here's the 1920 architectural sketch of the Erber Theatre exterior to be built in East St. Louis.

Figure 1: 5 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: East St. Louis Orpheum Theatre



Figure 5: 6 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: Joliet Orpheum Theatre

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Figure 1: 7 of XX Photos  
NON-EXTANT: Marion Orpheum Theatre



1938 image credit Retro Quad Cities via Facebook

Figure 1: 8 of XX Photos  
NON-EXTANT: Moline Orpheum Theatre

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Figure 1: 9 of XX Photos  
NON-EXTANT: Ottawa Orpheum Theatre



Figure 1: 10 of XX Photos  
NON-EXTANT: Peoria Orpheum Theatre

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Figure 1: 11 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: Quincy Orpheum Theatre

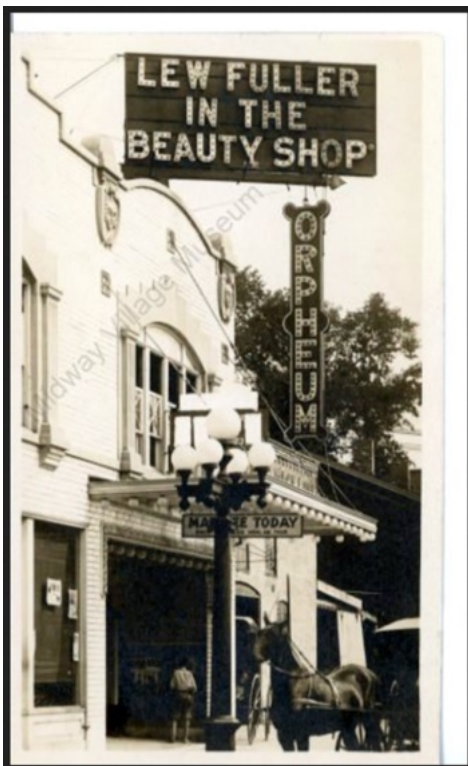


Figure 1: 12 of XX Photos

NON-EXTANT: Rockford Orpheum Theatre

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Figure 1: 13 of XX Photos  
NON-EXTANT: Springfield Orpheum Theatre

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**Figure 2. Table of Disposition of Non-Extant Illinois Orpheum Theatres**

| Location                                                     | Year Open | Year Closed                                 | Seats                | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Current Status                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aurora<br>83 E Galena Blvd                                   | 1915      | ??                                          |                      | No longer operating by 1927.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Vacant building. Very little historic information available.                                                                                                                                          |
| Chicago<br>112 S. State St at Monroe St                      | 1907      | closed as movie house in 1936/7             | 800                  | Housed in the first two floors of a 5-floor office building. In summer, ice-cooled air was blown through the auditorium. Sold to Warner Bros in 1920.                                                                                                                            | The theatre was converted into a shoe shop, a Burger King, and menswear store.                                                                                                                        |
| East St Louis<br>349 Collinsville Ave                        | 1907      | 1939                                        |                      | Opened 1907 as the Erber Theater. 6 months later, changed to the Majestic Theater. 1924 Listed as Lyric Theater. In 1929 it was re-named the New Orpheum Theater, later Orpheum Theater.                                                                                         | Historic records are sketchy as there were multiple Majestic Theatres. Another source says the Orpheum was closed in 1941. One source says the building has been demolished.                          |
| Joliet<br>232 N Chicago St                                   | 1911      | Data unclear                                | 1432                 | Became part of the Chicago-based Balaban & Katz theatre chain in 1949.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Demolished and replaced by First National Bank drive through (unconfirmed comment on website).                                                                                                        |
| Marion<br>800 Town Square Plaza                              | 1922      | 1971, reopened 1975, destroyed by fire 1997 | 1500                 | Featured a 65-foot front, arcade entrance, pressed brick, terra cotta, and a tiled lobby. 1927 first reno to upgrade sound system. 1963 Fox Midwest Theatres purchased the theatre. 1971 shut down due to safety hazards. 1975 reopened. 1997 destroyed by fire.                 | The City of Marion purchased and renovated the property, preserving the façade of the original theatre behind a new glass frontage. Reopened in 2004, it is now the Marion Cultural and Civic Center. |
| Moline<br>137 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave                            | 1916      | 1958                                        | 402                  | The building was a repurposed streetcar barn for horse drawn trolleys built in 1892. 1916 opened as a theatre. 1958 closed, building became a warehouse and apartments.                                                                                                          | In 2009 it was abandoned and stood empty until 2017. A new owner is currently working to restore it back into a theatre.                                                                              |
| Ottawa<br>Originally 804 LaSalle St, then 119 W Jefferson St | 1911      | Final close 1970s                           | 1025                 | Destroyed by fire in early 1920s (no ref), fire again in 1932. Interior had a wooden soldier and wooden horse theme. Balcony seating available. 1937 rebuild reused remaining standing walls, the surviving façade was demolished and Karlin redesigned it with "moderne" style. | The building was listed as the "former Ottawa Times" building in 2025.                                                                                                                                |
| Peoria<br>Just north of Main St on Madison Ave               | 1911      | 1927                                        | 1600 seats, 15 boxes | The abundance of theatres in Peoria and the quick turn to showing movies left the Orpheum playing catch-up, which it never did.                                                                                                                                                  | The theatre was only operational for 16 years, and then stood empty until 1952 when it was demolished to make way for a 55-space parking lot.                                                         |
| Quincy<br>620 Hampshire St                                   | 1914      | 1954                                        | 1087                 | Little info available.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Demolished in the 1960s.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Rockford<br>118 N Main St                                    | 1906      | 1937                                        |                      | Became a movie palace in 1915. Then a Kress Department Store. 1985 it became a 280-seat theatre with 100-seat basement theatre. Renamed "New American Theatre".                                                                                                                  | Theatre demolished in 1937, to build Kress Dept Store. Later used as theatre to 2006. Now owned by Rockford Public Library and rented to theatre groups.                                              |
| Springfield<br>120-124 N Fifth St                            | 1927      | 1965                                        | 2764                 | Included ballroom, magenta upholstery, pool hall and office space.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Demolished in 1965 to make room for the expansion of Illinois National Bank                                                                                                                           |

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Figure 3. Historic Photos of Orpheum Theatre



Figure 3: 1 of XX Photos

Orpheum Theatre façade with original marquee Photo undated, vehicle appears to be a 1916 Ford Model T classic touring car.



Figure 3: 2 of XX Photos

Will Open advertisement in the newspaper.

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Figure 3: 3 of XX Photos

Orpheum Theatre (middle, between Galesburg Bank Building and Custer Hotel) from corner of Simmons St and Kellogg St looking northeast.



Figure 3: 4 of XX Photos

Original lobby with tiled floors and French doors at the mezzanine level.

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Figure 3: 5 of XX Photos

Full house before 1935 (after which center seven balcony seats were removed on the mezzanine level).



Figure 3: 6 of XX Photos

Uniformed Usher

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## Owner and Local Elected Official Notification Information

*The State Historic Preservation Office is federally required to notify the property owner(s), as well as the chief elected officials of the county and municipal political jurisdiction in which the property is located.  
Please make sure the information is current.*

**Name & Address of Property Owner. If there are multiple owners, you may need to send a separate spreadsheet:**

Knox County Metropolitan Exposition, Auditorium and Office Building Authority  
DBA The Orpheum Theatre  
57 S Kellogg St  
Galesburg IL 61401

**Name & Address of Chief Elected Official of Municipality (Mayor/ Village President):**

Peter Schwartzman, Mayor  
City of Galesburg  
55 W Tompkins Street  
Galesburg IL 61401

**Name & Address of County Board Chairperson:**

Jared Hawkinson, Chairman  
Knox County Board  
200 S Cherry Street  
Galesburg IL 61401