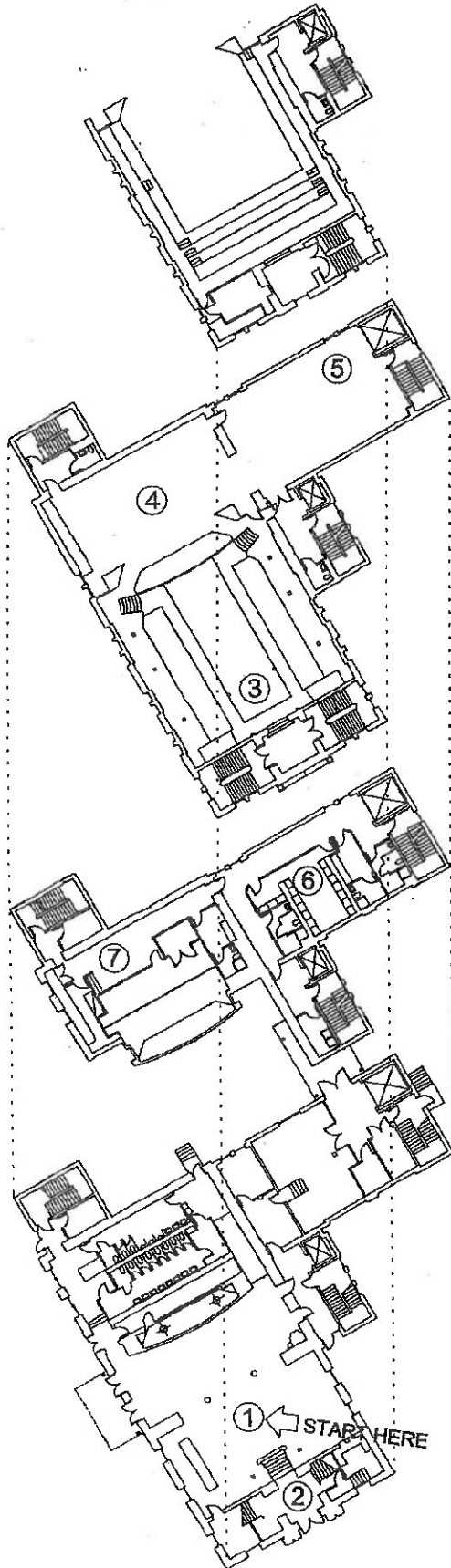


# NEWBERRY OPERA HOUSE



The Newberry Opera House was completed in 1881 at a cost of \$30,000. C.L. Norman, architect from Columbia, S.C., designed the French Gothic inspired structure. The building was designed as a place of entertainment for the local citizenry and as a seat of government for the city. The building is an excellent example of Victorian civic eclectic architecture. During excavation the original brick streets were discovered and restored. The building was constructed with brick from three local brickyards. The granite used in the construction came from a quarry approximately two miles outside of the city limits. Local craftsmen's and artisans' talents in woodworking and masonry were used throughout the construction of the original building.

The original design called for the first floor to house the fire engine room, council chambers, a clerk's office, a police office, and three jail cells. The second floor was a hall 53 by 52 feet with a stage 29 by 52 feet. The floor had an inclination of two feet four inches from the rear of the hall to the stage. In connection with the hall were a ticket office, a "green room", a cloakroom, and three dressing rooms.

The building had a tower 130 feet high topped with a garish weather vane, and the tower housed an E. Howard Tower town clock, which was 90 feet from the ground.

A gas lighting system was installed with a reflector, or "sun burner", for added brilliance. Drop curtains and seven scenes or sets for the stage were available. One scene, a landscape, survived to the late 20th century.

The Opera House quickly became known as "the entertainment center of the Midlands". On its stage appeared touring companies of New York plays, minstrel and variety shows, famed vocalists and lecturers, magicians and mind readers, novelty acts and boxing exhibitions. The Opera House was used not only by professional performers, but also by the community. Meetings, dances, college commencement exercises, and musicals were held in the auditorium.

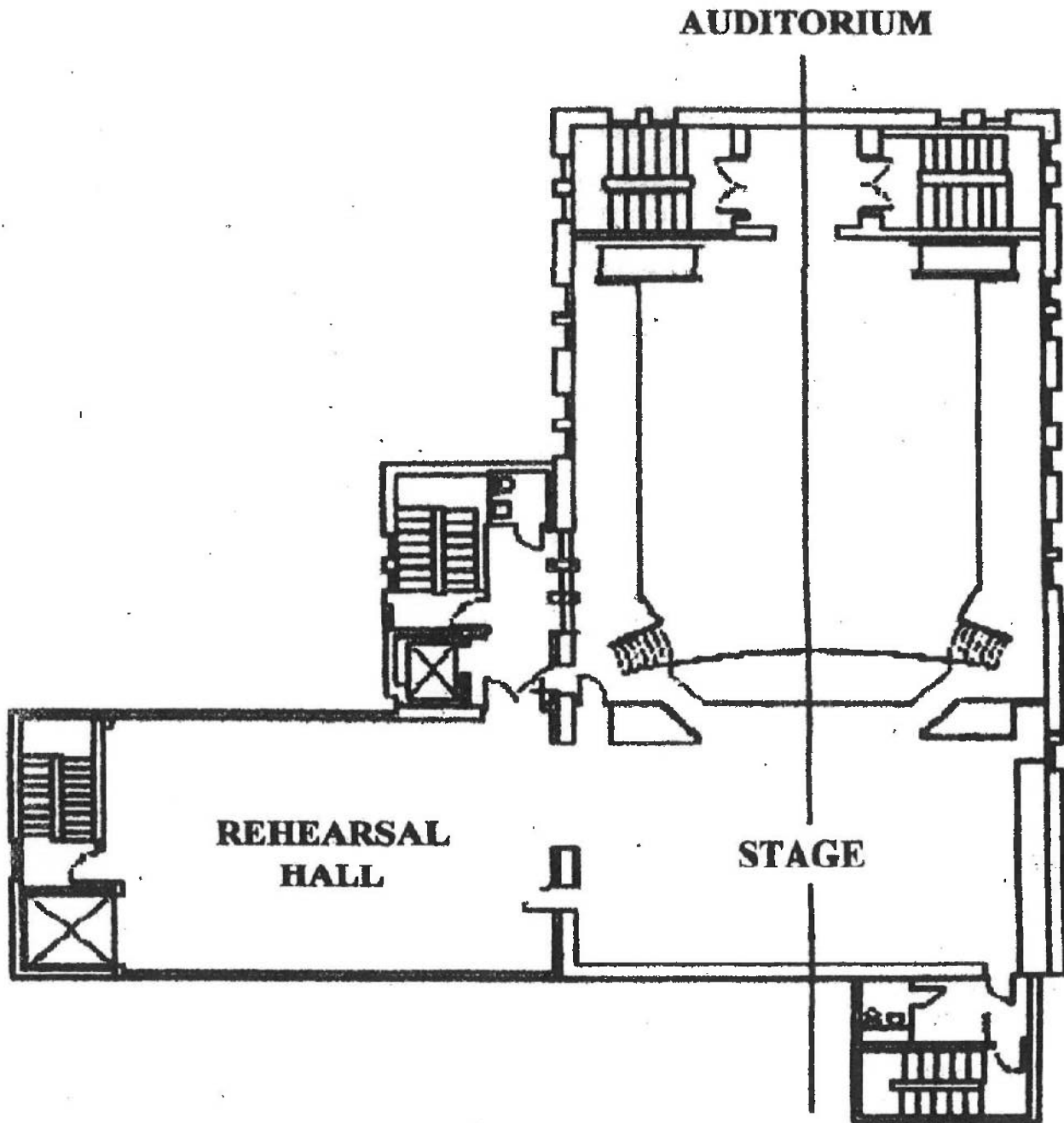
Silent "moving pictures" were shown at the Opera House in the early 1900's. A "Thomas Edison Talkie" was presented in the late teens. It used a phonograph record for sound. Slowly, movies replaced the big stage shows, and in the 1920's the Opera House was remodeled as a movie theater.

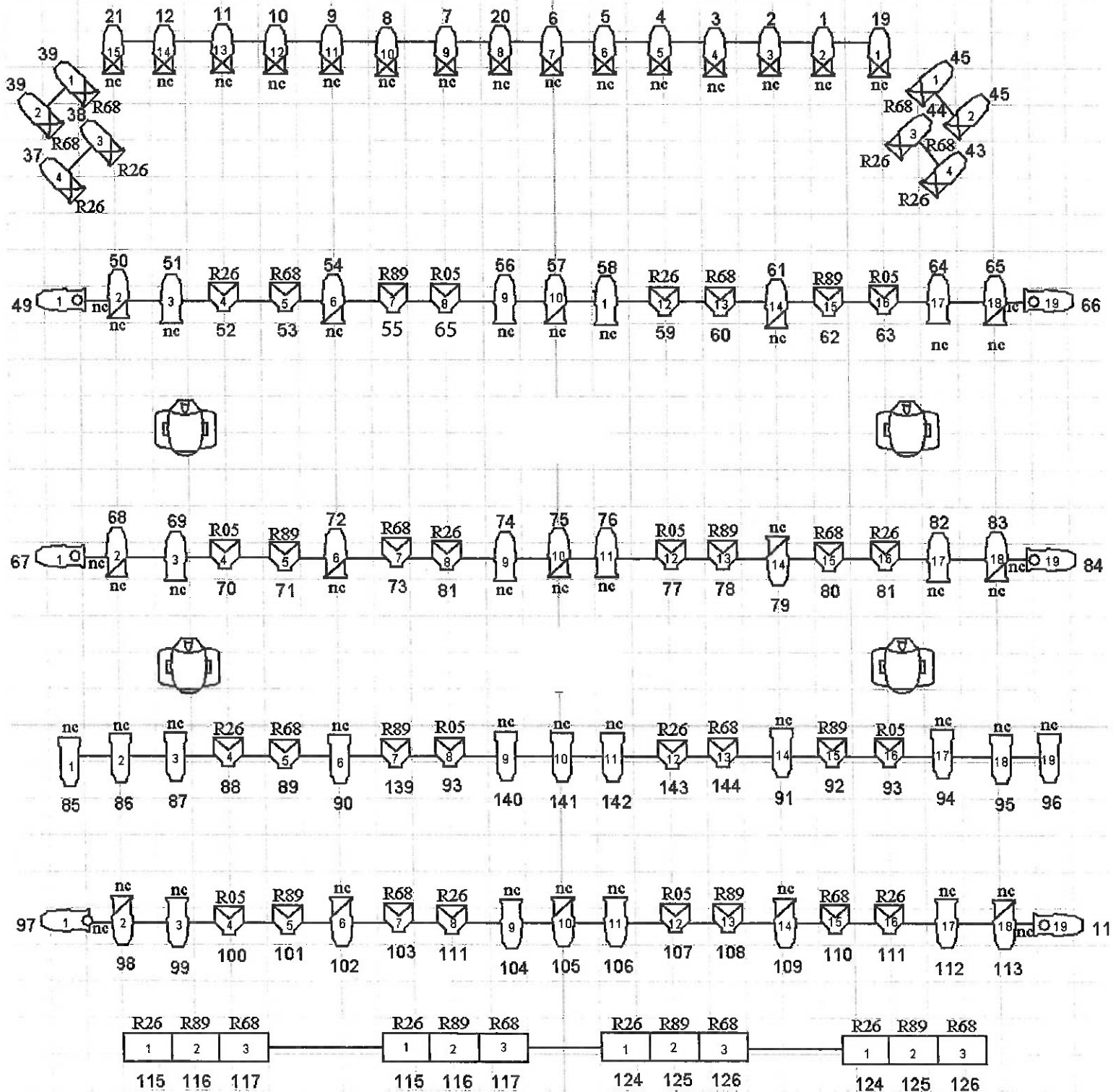
In 1952 with the showing of "The Outlaw," the Opera House was closed as a movie theater. By 1959, there was talk about tearing it down, but a public outcry stopped the wrecking ball. The Newberry Historical Society in 1969 promoted the preservation of the Opera House, as did several other community groups. In 1970 the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The City of Newberry vacated the building in 1992. The exterior restoration and window replacement were completed in 1994. The interior renovation was begun in 1996. An additional 10,000 square feet was added to the original building in order to create a full theatrical production facility. The total cost of the renovation was approximately \$5,500,000.

- ① The area that is now the Lobby originally housed city offices, including the jail. It was lowered approximately four feet from its original elevation. The phone booth was formerly the ticket booth (used upstairs) and was kept because of its sentimental value.
- ② Only the stairs on the north side are original; they were duplicated on the south side to improve access and egress. A second stair had been built (and removed) on the exterior to provide direct access to the balcony for "colored" patrons.
- ③ The auditorium seats 425, including the balcony. The wood floor is original, having been reinforced from below to allow the installation of new seats. HC seating is accomplished at the galleries. A particular challenge was lighting control, accomplished by a multilayer assembly of window, storm sash, blackout shades and shutters. The original ceiling was removed and replaced with a combination of fabric and 1-1/4" gypsum wallboard, effectively increasing the acoustical volume of the room. The original balcony was replaced to achieve acceptable sightlines. The galleries, believed to have existed originally, were added to increase intimacy, raise seat count and to meet minimal exit requirements.
- ④ A new steel frame was inserted at the stage to support rigging. The stage floor rests on neoprene pads, providing the resilience necessary to support dance programming.
- ⑤ The rehearsal room is approximately the same size as the stage and is joined to it by a pneumatically sealed sliding door. The door and structure permit rehearsal and performance to be conducted simultaneously.
- ⑥ Dressing rooms were fit into the footprint of the rehearsal room and include a handful of "star" dressing rooms as well as a larger space for cast. This level is generally closed to the public.
- ⑦ The orchestra pit was added at the level originally used for dressing rooms. After discovery of graffiti from earlier performers, the tradition was continued in the renovated facility.

*Newberry Opera House*  
*Stage Diagram*





<h1>House hang</h1>	<h2>Light Plot</h2>	<h3>Key</h3> <p>Color</p> <p>#</p> <p>Channel</p>	36° Source Four 26° Source Four 19° Source Four 36° Source Four Jr.	Wide Far Cyc Mover Gobo/iris
<p>Venue: Newberry Opera House</p>				
<p>Designer: Mary Cromer</p>				
<p>Updated: 9/1/21</p>				

# Newberry Opera House

## LINE SET SCHEDULE

Line Set – Purpose

1.	#1 Black Legs
2.	#1 Electric
3.	Projector
4.	
5.	
6.	D.S. Moving Lights
7.	
8.	#1 Black Border
9.	#2 Black Legs
10.	
11.	#2 Electric
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	#2 Black Border
17.	Black Traveler Used as #3 Legs
18.	
19.	Upstage Moving Lights
20.	#3 Electric
21.	
22.	#3 Black Border
23.	#4 Legs
24.	
25.	#4 Electric
26.	
27.	
28.	
29.	
30.	#4 Border
31.	
32.	#5 Electric
33.	
34.	#4 legs
35.	Red Traveler
36.	White cyc
37.	
38.	Video Screen