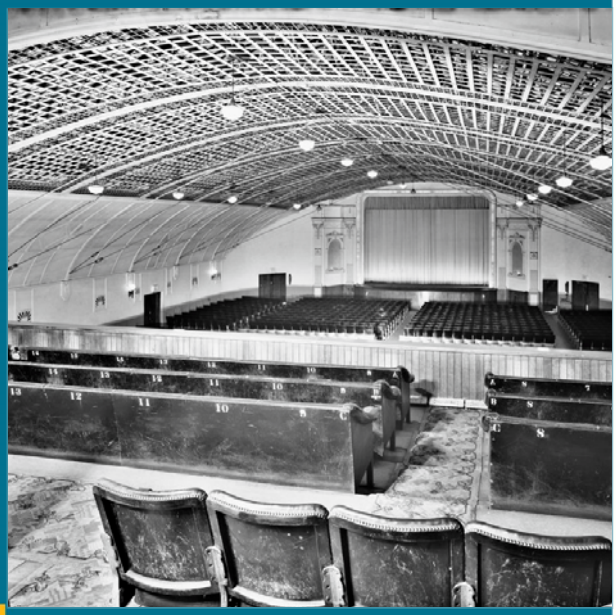
people place heritage

CONTEXT

THEMATIC STUDY OF THEATRES IN THE CITY OF YARRA

Stage 2 Report

26 September 2017



Prepared for the City of Yarra

Cover image: Interior view of Theatre, Richmond (Source: Harold Paynting Collection, State Library of Victoria)

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Report Register

This report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled *Thematic Study of Theatres in the City of Yarra* undertaken by Context Pty Ltd in accordance with our internal quality management system.

Project No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue Date	Issued to
2021	1	Stage 1 Draft Report	30 July 2015	City of Yarra
2021	2	Stage 2 Draft Report	15 June 2017	Alayna Chapman
2021	3	Stage 2 Final report	26 September 2017	Alayna Chapman

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IV

Introduction iv
Key Findings v
Additional findings v
Recommendations vi

1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Background and brief 1
1.2 Study area 1
1.3 Study limitations 1

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY 2

2.1 Introduction 2
2.2 Stage 1 –Thematic study and identification of places 2
2.4 Stage 2 – Assessment and reporting 4

3 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 11

3.1 Individually significant places 11
3.2 Recommendations 12

APPENDICES 13

A Theatres investigated 14
B Additions to the incorporated document 23
C Theatres in the City of Yarra 24
D Citations 35

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Yarra contains an extensive range of heritage assets including numerous buildings dating from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar periods, being residential, commercial, civic and industrial places, identified as either individual places or as part of a larger group or heritage precinct. The identification and protection of theatres in the City of Yarra was raised as a gap in heritage knowledge by Council in 2015, highlighted by community concern over the proposed development of the former Lyric Theatre in Johnston Street, Fitzroy. The thematic study was commissioned in June 2015 with the objective of finding out which theatres were known to exist and of those how many were still there. An important objective was to investigate the interiors of any theatres where it may be likely that something of the interior space of decoration might remain. Finally, the objective was to prepare recommendations for the protection of any places deemed to meet the threshold for a Heritage Overlay and to recommend interior controls where appropriate.

The Stage One study, undertaken in 2015, prepared a thematic history of theatre places within the City of Yarra and identified 38 places, including some that had been demolished. The study found that there were four key themes related to different types of theatres, associated with key social periods in history: These were:

- Pre 1900 entertainment places that included live theatres, Cyclorama moving image theatres and outdoor entertainment 'pleasure gardens';
- The picture palaces that began showing silent movies and later the 'talkies' and finally the post-war technicolour blockbusters;
- Live theatre venues, including the post-1960s independent experimental and comedy theatres; and
- The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and show film in halls as an expression of diversity or in some cases control what their congregations viewed.

The study also found that of the known theatres within the municipality, around seventeen have been demolished. Most of those which survive are included in the existing Heritage Overlay, usually as either a contributory or significant place within a precinct, although their identified value may not be related to their use or association as a theatre. Two places had individual Heritage Overlays, but their identified significance was not primarily related to their use or association as a theatre and their interiors did not form part of the statement of significance.

The Stage Two study has undertaken an assessment of whether the existing mechanism (inclusion within a precinct) and controls applied to each place (through the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay) is appropriate and sufficient to adequately recognise and protect the cultural heritage significance for each place identified in Stage One.

It was found that most places were adequately protected and recognised through the current mechanism and controls, but that four places required further assessment as a result of desktop research and the preliminary survey undertaken in Stage One.

The theatres assessed include:

- Austral Theatre (former) 200-202 Johnston Street Fitzroy
- Burnley Theatre (former) 365 Swan Street Richmond
- Richmond Cinema 311-317 Bridge Road Richmond

- Jubilee Pictures / Adelphi Cinema 361-365 Nicholson Street Carlton North

The survey indicated that these places may have a high level of internal intactness or integrity, relating to their use as a theatres or cinemas, which was not adequately addressed with the existing controls. This report includes an overview of the methodology, findings and recommendations of the study as well as citations for those places which are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

Key Findings

The key findings of the 'Thematic Study of Theatres in the City of Yarra' are that:

- 3 places warrant the application of internal controls due to their intact interior features:
    - Austral Theatre (former), 200-202 Johnston Street, Fitzroy
    - Burnley Theatre (former), 365 Swan Street, Richmond
    - Richmond Cinema (former), 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond
- The Richmond Cinema (former) is located in the Bridge Road Precinct (HO310) and the Austral Theatre (former) is located in Johnston Street Precinct (HO324). Both places will require an Individual Heritage Overlay applied to each site to accommodate the internal controls through the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.
- Burnley Theatre (HO286) should retain its existing Individual Heritage Overlay status, but will require additional internal controls to be activated through the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.
- One place, Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi Cinema (former) at 361-365 Nicholson Street, Carlton North was recommended for further assessment in the Stage One report as being likely to have highly intact interiors. The assessment undertaken as part of the Stage Two study found that the existing controls provided by the precinct (HO326 – North Carlton Precinct) are sufficient, and that no interior controls are warranted.

Additional findings

- There are 38 known theatre places (extant and demolished) within the City of Yarra
- 17 known theatre places within the City of Yarra have been demolished (see Appendix A.3)
- 2 places (a public hall in Richmond and Irwin Radio Theatre) had insufficient information known about them to identify the location or importance of either place
- 1 place was a very modern, current cinema complex (Village Cinema, Victoria Gardens Richmond c.2003)
- 1 place was included on the Victorian Heritage Register (St Mark's Church Hall – part of H0553 'St Mark's Anglican Church') and no changes at the local level could be made
- There are 15 theatres which did not require further assessment, and the existing controls which apply are considered sufficient (see Appendix A.4). Many of these places had a relatively short use or association as a theatre, and have other, better known associations and values which contribute to their cultural heritage significance.
- Three theatres identified in Stage One could not be located (see Appendix A.5)
- Four theatres which were purpose built as a theatre no longer retain their original use or association with the provision of entertainment.

A summary of findings is included at Appendix A

Recommendations

Table1 Places assessed as locally significant

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Identified key theme/s	Identified type	Create New Individual HO?	Are additional internal controls recommended?
1	Richmond Cinema (former)	311-317 Bridge Road	Richmond	HO310 Bridge Road Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	Yes	Yes
2	Austral Theatre (former)	200-202 Johnston Street	Collingwood	HO324 Johnston Street Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	Yes	Yes
3	Burnley Theatre (former)	365 Swan Street	Richmond	HO286 Former Burnley Theatre	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	No	Yes
4	Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi (former)1	361-365 Nicholson Street	North Carlton	HO326 North Carlton Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	No	No

[1] The internal fabric is altered and limited, although the volume remains. Does not meet threshold for interior controls when compared to other similar examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

The *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 places an obligation on municipal councils to 'conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or other specific cultural value'. Consistent with this objective, the City of Yarra has prepared numerous heritage studies to identify place and areas of cultural heritage significance.

These studies both finessed and built on the range of heritage controls and past heritage studies 'inherited' by the City of Yarra at the advent of Council amalgamations in 1994, when the former Cities of Richmond, Fitzroy, Northcote, Collingwood and Melbourne were combined into the new City of Yarra.

In the past five years, Council has undertaken to implement the findings of numerous heritage studies across the municipality, through the addition of new individual places and precincts across the municipality. Amendments C149, C157, C163, C173 and have added further individual heritage places and heritage precincts to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Yarra.

The identification and protection of theatres in the City of Yarra was raised as a gap in heritage knowledge by Council in 2015, highlighted by community concern over the proposed demolition of the former Lyric Theatre in Johnston Street, Fitzroy. In response, the Thematic Study of theatres within the City of Yarra was commissioned in June 2015 with the view to assist Council to adequately protect and celebrate this unique part of its history. The project comprised a two-part process, firstly to expand on the thematic material contained in the existing 'City of Yarra Heritage Review, Vol 1 Thematic History' prepared by Allom Lovell in 1998 and undertake a more detailed thematic study of theatres, and in conjunction with this research, identify all known theatre places within the municipality. Secondly, the Study was to undertake an assessment of these places to determine whether they are adequately protected through the existing application of the Heritage Overlay, and provide recommendations for their protection.

This report contains an overview of the methodology, findings and recommendations of this study, as well as citations of places which have been re-assessed as part of this study.

1.2 Study area

The study area for this assessment is the whole of the municipality of the City of Yarra.

1.3 Study limitations

Stage 1 of this Study investigated seventeen places from the public domain and externally. Of the four places that were recommended for further investigation, requests for internal inspections were sent to owners of the Austral, Richmond, San Remo Ballroom and Burnley theatres.

The owners of the Austral Theatre and Richmond Cinema responded and internal inspections were undertaken for these places. The interior of the San Remo Ballroom was subsequently investigated through current and historic photos that were available online. The Burnley Theatre was inspected internally in Stage 1, and the assessment in this report relies on that information.

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The 'Thematic Study of (former) theatres within the City of Yarra' report was prepared in accordance with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* and the Victoria Planning Provisions Practice Note No. 1 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2015) (the 'Practice Note').

The criteria used are Heritage Council Criteria for the Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance (HERCON). The Practice Note recommends the use of the HERCON criteria for carrying out heritage assessments.

2.2 Stage 1 –Thematic study and identification of places

2.2.1 Thematic Study

The Thematic Study was undertaken by reviewing of a range of desktop sources, commencing with the City of Yarra Heritage Review (1998) as well as a wide range of primary and secondary sources. These sources, contained in the bibliography at the end of the Stage 1 report, included for example, contemporary newspaper reports, local history work, and the cinema magazine, *Cinema Record*. The resources were drawn on to shape the thematic history and to populate a data table of cinemas in the City of Yarra.

The thematic study identified four key themes relating to theatres more broadly (than just former cinema buildings and the theme of 'cinemas') and their importance to the municipality.

These four themes relate to different types of theatre places:

- Pre-1900 entertainment places that included live theatres, Cyclorama moving image theatres and outdoor entertainment 'pleasure gardens';
- The picture palaces that began showing silent movies and later the 'talkies' and finally the post-war technicolour blockbusters;
- Live theatre venues, including the post-1960s independent experimental and comedy theatres; and
- The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and to show film in halls as an expression of diversity or in some cases control what their congregations viewed.

2.2.2 List of known theatres

Desktop research into a variety of historical sources was undertaken to create a list of potential theatre places. This was not limited to extant places, but included places which may or may not have been demolished. The nature of many of the resources (being primary and secondary source material) made it difficult to determine both the location and status (demolished or extant) of some places. Given that many theatres had also been known by more than one name, or had experienced (several) changes of use over time, the initial list created in Stage 1 had some errors and double ups.

The list was prepared from the following desktop sources:

- 'City of Yarra Thematic History' (Allom Lovell, 2008), which included reference to a number of early theatre places, some of which were extant, others demolished;
- the HERMES database (a depository for information about identified heritage places and precincts in Victoria, administered by Heritage Victoria);
- material used in research undertaken for the Thematic Study;

- consultation with the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society of Australia (CATHS).

During the course of the preparation of the Thematic Study and the list of known theatres, four types were identified as existing in the City of Yarra.

1. Live theatre from c1960s that used former industrial buildings or more recent commercial building (such as 147 Swan Street Richmond) but are now converted to other uses (e.g. residential or school), for example, the Organ Factory Theatre in Clifton Hill;
2. Former picture theatres that are now used for retail purposes (e.g. display of second-hand furniture/carpet) that retain some or all internal spaces and some internal historic fabric (Burnley Theatre, Austral Theatre, Lyric Theatre and the former Richmond/Hoyts Theatre in Bridge Street Richmond that is now BBQs Galore);
3. Former picture theatres that closed and were converted internally for commercial or residential use (for example the former National Picture Theatre in Bridge Street, Richmond) or are now façades only, such as the Merri Palais de Danse;
4. Church and other cultural institution halls and meeting places that were mostly, but not always, on the site of that institution established for cultural or religious purposes. At different times these provided a cultural focus or what the institution considered to be an 'appropriate' cultural entertainment. Catholic Church halls are an example where films or theatre created by the church or movies edited/censored by the church were shown.

2.2.3 Preliminary assessment

To make a considered recommendation as to which places (if any) required further investigation and assessment, a preliminary assessment of each of the extant theatres on the list of 'known and potential theatre places' was undertaken. The preliminary assessment was conducted through:

- Desktop research from digital on-line sources such as photographs, text and descriptions of former theatres and their interiors;
- Physical survey to 'ground truth' place addresses and whether the buildings were extant, inspect the exterior, and where possible, interior of extant places to determine their level of integrity and intactness. At this point, a decision was made as to whether the place has sufficient thematic context and physical integrity to require further consideration/assessment.

For those places where further consideration was warranted, a brief summary of the following elements was prepared:

- known history of each place
- description of each place, including the interior and exterior
- current status of the place in relation to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme.

2.2.4 Preliminary recommendations

The Stage One report for the 'Thematic Study of (former) theatres within the City of Yarra' comprised:

- A thematic essay examining the theatre places in the City of Yarra, arranged chronologically, with summary analysis outlining the findings, key themes, key styles and their application across the municipality (included as Appendix C of this report).
- A list of all known theatre places in the City of Yarra (both extant and demolished), showing their current physical status, heritage status and

recommendations for preliminary assessment in Stage 1 and further assessment in Stage 2.

- Preliminary assessments and photographs of those places which the physical survey and desktop research had indicated were worthy of further consideration in Stage 1.
- Recommendations for further work to be undertaken on four places in Stage Two of the study and more generally, by the City of Yarra as part of the broader strategic consideration of theatre places.
    - Austral Theatre (former) 200-202 Johnston Street Fitzroy
    - Burnley Theatre (former) 365 Swan Street Richmond
    - Richmond Cinema 311-317 Bridge Road Richmond
    - Jubilee Pictures / Adelphi Cinema 361-365 Nicholson Street Carlton North

2.4 Stage 2 – Assessment and reporting

2.4.1 Introduction

The Stage 1 report recommended that four places be further assessed, due to the desktop and limited physical survey work indicating that each contained fine, intact interiors of varying types, and these had not been able to be inspected during the Stage One study.

2.4.2 Contextual History

A contextual history for theatres within the City of Yarra was prepared, drawing on the thematic essay, and covering the Victorian, Edwardian, interwar and post-war periods of development of theatre places, with a particular focus on purpose-built theatres.

This contextual history was edited for use as the introduction to each citation, leaving only the pertinent sections to provide context to each place history. The contextual history can be read in conjunction with the thematic essay for a richer, more in depth understanding of the contextual history of theatres in the City of Yarra.

2.4.3 Histories

Full histories were prepared for three places and a partial history for the fourth place. For individual places, answers to fundamental questions such as when a place was created/built, for whom, by whom (builder and designer), for what purpose, and how did it change over time (both physically and in use).

Researchers drew upon the following primary and secondary sources:

- Previous heritage studies and the 1998 Thematic History
- Information gathered during the preparation of the Thematic Essay (2015) part of Stage One report
- Various cinema-related websites and digital resources
- Heritage reports (both published and unpublished)
- Local histories
- Newspapers, magazines and journals
- Parish plans
- Trove and Newspapers.com newspaper searches
- State Library of Victoria online collections of historic maps, plans and photos

2.4.4 Description

Full descriptions of three places and one partial description were prepared. This set out the context, the elements of the site with the interior and exterior discussed separately, the size and massing of the building, its materials, its stylistic influences, features of note, any alterations and condition if noted. Interiors were discussed separately to exteriors. Documentation of each place included a recent photo and any further interior phots obtained from documentary sources. As interior controls are recommended the description of the interior is an important element of each citation.

2.4.5 Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis is an essential step to determining if a place or precinct meets the local (or State) threshold for heritage significance. The 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (2015) advises that:

> … *some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area, including those that have previously been included in a heritage register or overlay.*

Comparative analysis is considered particularly important in deciding if a place is of architectural or aesthetic significance or of rarity value in a given area, but can be applied to most place types to determine their relative importance in a locality or wider area.

For the purposes of this study, comparative analysis was undertaken across the municipality in order to clearly establish a case, firstly for determining that the place overall met the threshold for local significance, and secondly, that it met a threshold for proposing internal controls.

When the place or precinct under assessment was considered to be of equal or better quality than the 'benchmark(s)' it was judged to meet the threshold of local significance and considered worthy of inclusion as an individual place in the Yarra Heritage Overlay.

As there is only one place with internal controls currently specified in the Yarra Heritage Overlay (HO464, Smith Street South Precinct, Fitzroy applied to three commercial places within that precinct including 51-53, 59-61 and 67-69 Smith Street), the interior controls 'threshold' has been tested in the following way:

Consideration of whether the interiors meet the guidance set out in the Practice Note (2015:3)

Internal alteration controls over specified buildings can be applied in the schedule by including a 'yes' in the Internal Alteration Controls Apply? column. <u>This provision should be applied sparingly and on a selective basis to special interiors of high significance</u> [emphasis added]. *The statement of significance for the heritage place should explain what is significant about the interior and why it is important.*

This study has provided the strategic background to establish that three former theatres retain significant elements of their use, either the auditorium space or decorative elements such as galleries, foyers, stairs, ceilings and other interior decoration. It has also provided the strategic background to understand their comparative rarity, given that so many former theatres are either demolished or their interiors adapted for other purposes.

2.4.6 Assessment against criteria

In accordance with the 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (2015), heritage places are identified as meeting either the threshold of 'State Significance' or 'Local Significance'. Places of Local Significance can include places that are important to a particular community or locality. Some of the places of local significance may also be important to the entire City of Yarra, but this is not essential to meet the Local Significance threshold.

The Practice Note advises that assessment of whether a place meets the local or State threshold should be determined in relation to model heritage criteria (also known as the HERCON Criteria) which are as follows:

> *Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).*

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

For each individual place and precinct, a discussion was prepared for each of the criteria that they were considered to meet the threshold of local significance.

2.4.7 Statement of significance

For each of the four places assessed, it was found that they all met the threshold for local significance for at least one of criteria. Consequently, a statement of significance was prepared, summarising the most important facts and the significance of the place.

Each statement was prepared in the format recommended by the 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (2015), namely:

What is significant? - This section should be brief, usually no more than one paragraph or a series of dot points. There should be no doubt about the elements of the place that are under discussion. The paragraph should identify features or elements that are significant about the place, for example, house, outbuildings, garden, plantings, ruins, archaeological sites, interiors as a guide to future decision makers. Mention could also be made of elements that are not significant.

How is it significant? - A sentence should be included to the effect that the place is important because of its historical significance, its rarity, its research potential, its representativeness, its aesthetic significance, its technical significance and/or its associative significance. These descriptors are shown in brackets at the end of the heritage criteria listed above. The sentence should indicate the threshold for which the place is considered important.

Why is it significant? - This should elaborate on the criteria that makes the place significant. A separate point or paragraph should be used for each criterion satisfied. The relevant criterion should be inserted in brackets after each point or paragraph. Each point or paragraph may include the threshold for which the place is considered important.

2.4.8 Mapping and curtilages

The existing Precinct Heritage Overlay for both 200-202 Johnston Street Collingwood (in HO324) and 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond (in HO310) have been applied to only part of the former Theatre buildings (see Figure 1 and 2 below).

Figure 1 Showing the current HO310 (Bridge Road Precinct) and its current application to 311-317 Bridge Road (Richmond Cinema). Red line indicates subject site, pink shading indicates existing HO

Figure 2 Showing the current HO324 (Johnston Street Precinct) and its current application to 200-202 Johnston Street (Austral Cinema). Red line indicates subject site, pink shading indicates existing HO

Figure 3 Showing HO326 North Carlton Precinct and the Jubilee / Adelphi Cinema at 361-365 Nicholson Street Carlton North

Figure 4 Showing HO286 the Burnley Theatre at 365 Swan Street Richmond,

2.4.9 Statutory recommendations

The 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (2015) states in regard to mapping:

> *The Heritage Overlay applies to both the listed heritage item and its associated land. It is usually important to include land surrounding a building, structure, tree or feature of importance to ensure that any development, including subdivision, does not adversely affect the setting, context or significance of the heritage item. The land surrounding the heritage item is known as a 'curtilage' and will be shown as a polygon on the Heritage Overlay map. In many cases, particularly in urban areas and townships, the extent of the curtilage will be the whole of the property (for example, a suburban dwelling and its allotment).*
>
> *However, there will be occasions where the curtilage and the Heritage Overlay polygon should be reduced in size as the land is of no significance. Reducing the curtilage and the polygon will have the potential benefit of lessening the number of planning permits that are required with advantages to both the landowner and the responsible authority.*

On this basis, it is recommended that:

- 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood and 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond are removed from their respective existing precincts (HO324 and HO310) to the extent of the existing Heritage Overlay applies; and, that a new Heritage Overlay and the associated HO Schedule number be applied to <u>the whole of the title</u> for each of these places, as shown in Figures 3 and 4 below.
- 365 Swan Street, Richmond will have no change to the existing curtilage of HO286, which applies to only the relevant portion of the title, where the significant building is located.

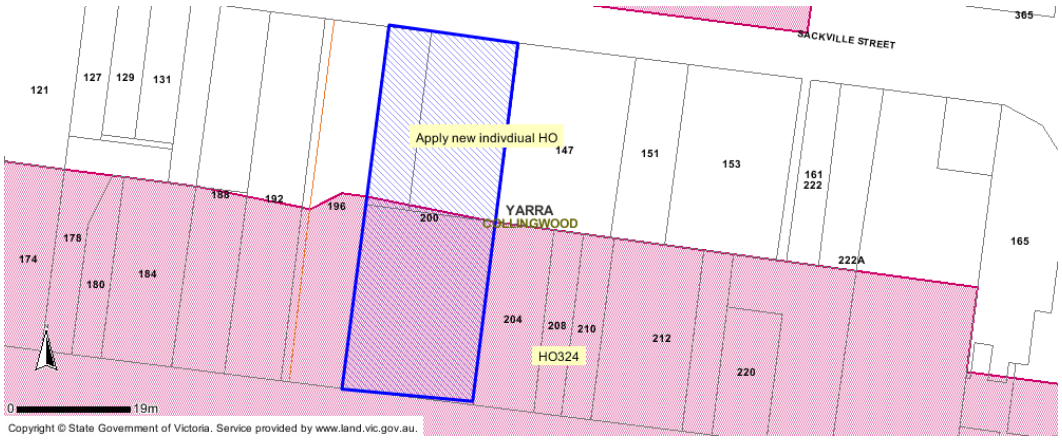

Figure 5 Remove existing HO (pink shading) from the subject site and apply new Individual HO to the area shown with blue shading

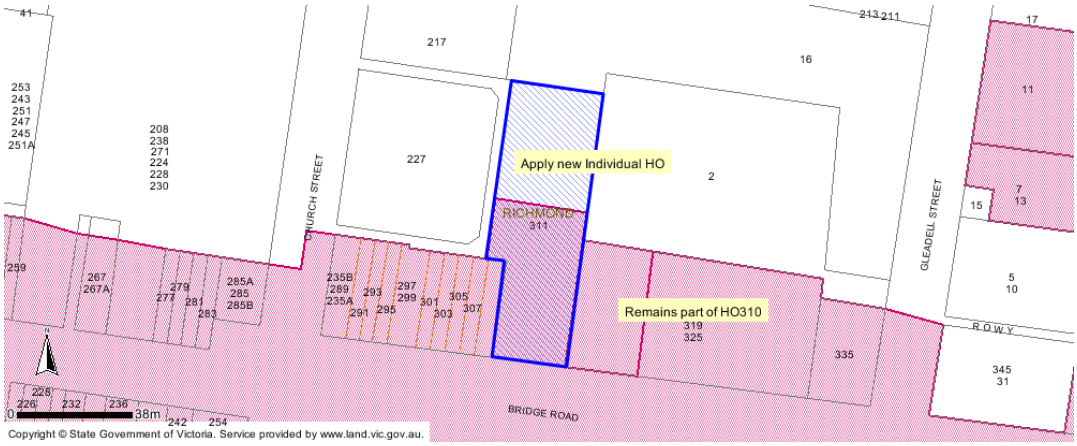

Figure 6 Remove existing HO (pink shading) from the subject site and apply new Individual HO to the area shown with blue shading

The Practice Note describes various additional controls that can be ticked in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for a place or precinct. Those which have been used in this assessment are set out below:

- External Paint Controls – to control changes to paint colours; particularly important if evidence of an early colour scheme survives; note that a planning permit is always required to paint a previously unpainted surface (e.g., face brick, render, stone, concrete, timber shingles).
- Internal Alteration Controls – to be used sparingly and on a selective basis for special interiors of high significance.
- Incorporated Plan has been adopted for the place/precinct – an incorporated plan is sometimes prepared to introduce permit exemptions for a precinct, or provide specific guidance in managing a complex site. In this case, the City of Yarra applies an Incorporated Plan to all places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. This does not introduce permit exemptions or provide management guidance, rather it stipulates the significance of each place on the Heritage Overlay of the City of Yarra.

2.4.10 HERMES entry

The 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (2015) specifies that:

> *All statements of significance should be securely stored in the HERMES heritage database.*
>
> *Where a planning scheme amendment has resulted in the addition of, or amendments to, places in the Heritage Overlay, the strategic justification (that is, heritage study documentation and statements of significance) should be entered into the department's HERMES heritage database.*

This should be done once the citations have been finalised and adopted by Council. Once the associated amendment is adopted, the records of those places added to the Yarra Heritage Overlay can be made publicly visible on the Victorian Heritage Database.

The revised statement of significance and citation for 361-365 Nicholson Street, Carlton North (Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi Theatre[former]) should be amended in HERMES, as the place will stay as a significant place within the precinct, but did not have sufficient interior integrity to warrant a separate control from that of its precinct (HO326 North Carlton Precinct).

The information contained in the assessment will prove a valuable resource for better understanding the values of this place if any development is proposed to the site.

3 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Individually significant places

Individually significant theatres include the Austral Theatre (former), 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood; Burnley Theatre (former), 365 Swan Street, Richmond; Richmond Cinema (former), 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond; and Jubilee Pictures/ the Adelphi (former) at 361-365 Nicholson Street, Carlton North (partial assessment).

All four places meet the threshold for local significance when assessed against the HERCON Criteria, and justify inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as either places which are Significant to a Precinct (and retain the same HO number as the precinct) or Individually significant (and have a separate HO number). .

Additional statutory controls in the form of interior controls are recommended for all places with the exception of the Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi (former) at 361-365 Nicholson Street, Carlton North. This place is considered Contributory to the North Carlton precinct in which it is located (HO310). It is considered that the values and fabric of this place are adequately protected.

3.1.1 Additional statutory controls

An individually significant place within a precinct may be classed as 'Significant to the Precinct' and retain the same HO number as the precinct if it has the same statutory controls as the precinct generally. If it requires different statutory controls, there are three accepted approaches.

The first is to **exclude** the place from the precinct, apply a new Individual HO number to the appropriate curtilage, and note in the Schedule the specific statutory controls which apply to this place (tree controls, external paint controls, interior controls, fences and outbuildings, prohibited use allowed etc.). The place can still be recognised as having a contribution to the precinct through the Statement of Significance for both the precinct and individual place, but two HO numbers cannot apply to the same land. This has generally been the accepted approach; particularly where internal controls apply.

The second approach is to **retain** the place within the precinct as a place which is 'Significant to the Precinct' and amend the Schedule entry for the Precinct to specify the controls – such as Interior controls apply? "Yes – 361-365 Nicholson Street, Carlton North only".

This approach has been utilised in HO464 in the City of Yarra, and has been accepted as appropriate for several years in regard to the selective application of other controls (such as Tree Controls) in precincts.

The third approach is to retain the place within the precinct, and through the existing Incorporated Plan apply the selective control to only this place. This approach was recommended by Panel for the application of Tree and External paint controls in precincts in the Shepparton C110 Panel Report, and it was suggested as appropriate for all other optional statutory controls in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

> *…it is the Panel's suggestion that this can best be approached, not be excising the properties in question from the precinct as a whole and then selectively removing the controls using the exemption ability provided by the Incorporated Plan. In the Incorporated Plan, the selective application of the additional control to properties within the precinct could either be done by providing a list of properties to which the controls do not apply, or alternatively providing a list of properties to which the controls only apply (which ever approach results in a less extensive list,*

(Panel Report Amendment C110 Greater Shepparton, p. 57)

3.1.2 Recommendation for places with interior controls in precincts

Although there are three recognised approaches with applying selective controls to places within precincts, it is recommended that the first approach be applied – to remove the two places from the existing Bridge Road Precinct and create two new individual heritage place entries in the Schedule of the Heritage Overlay, with the appropriate statutory controls applied, including interior controls.

This approach is recommended as the two places are in a well established precinct and large precinct. Notification of applying interior controls to two places within the precinct may not easily be understood by the public, and result in potential additional work for Council resolving concerns and queries from other property owners.

The other option, of using the Incorporated Plan is a possible approach, but has the potential to cause the same confusion and additional work as outlined above, with the additional complication that the City of Yarra have an existing Incorporated Document which applies to all heritage places within the City of Yarra, and does not at present have capacity to be amended to include reference to additional specific statutory controls. This may be considered in the future.

It is recommended that on the basis of the remaining auditorium spaces and internal features, that the Richmond Cinema, Austral Theatre and the Burnley Theatre warrant internal controls.

3.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that Yarra City Council formally adopt and implement the 'Thematic Study of Theatres in the City of Yarra' (2017), which comprises this report, and include this report as a Reference Document in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

Table 2 Statutory recommendations

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Create New Individual HO?	Are additional internal controls recommended?
1	Richmond Cinema (former)	311-317 Bridge Road	Richmond	HO310 Bridge Road Precinct	Yes	Yes
2	Austral Theatre (former)	200-202 Johnston Street	Collingwood	HO324 Johnston Street Precinct	Yes	Yes
3	Burnley Theatre (former)	365 Swan Street	Richmond	HO286 Former Burnley Theatre	No	Yes

APPENDICES

A Theatres investigated

A.1 Places assessed as locally significant

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Identified key theme/s	Identified type	Create New Individual HO?	Are additional internal controls recommended?
1	Richmond Cinema (former)	311-317 Bridge Road	Richmond	HO310 Bridge Road Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	Yes	Yes
2	Austral Theatre (former)	200-202 Johnston Street	Collingwood	HO324 Johnston Street Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	Yes	Yes
3	Burnley Theatre (former)	365 Swan Street	Richmond	HO286 Former Burnley Theatre	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but retain internal spaces and fabric	No	Yes
4	Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi (former)[2]	361-365 Nicholson Street	North Carlton	HO326 North Carlton Precinct	Picture Palaces	Former Picture Theatre now used for retail purposes but	No	No

[2] The internal fabric is altered and limited, although the volume remains. Does not meet threshold for interior controls when compared to other similar examples.

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Identified key theme/s	Identified type	Create New Individual HO?	Are additional internal controls recommended?
						retain internal spaces and fabric		

A.2 Known theatre places which have been demolished

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Identified key theme/s
1	Palace Theatre	Unknown	Carlton	Picture Palaces
2	Eclipse Theatre	20 Smith Street	Collingwood	Open Air Cinema
3	Bioscope Hall	Unknown	Collingwood	Pre-1900 entertainment places
4	Panorama Twin	145 Brunswick Street	Fitzroy South	Picture Palaces
5	Waverley Theatre (aka Liberty Cinema)	254 Brunswick Street	Fitzroy	Picture Palaces
6	Solway Theatre (aka Hoyts Regent; Regent Palace)	84 Johnston Street	Fitzroy	Picture Palaces
7	The Pavilion [open air cinema] (aka: Fitzroy Picture Pavilion; Fitzroy Stadium)	Unknown	Fitzroy	Open Air Cinema
8	Lyric Theatre (aka Star)	241-247 Johnston Street	Fitzroy	Picture Palaces
9	King George Theatre	Cnr. Holden Street & St, Georges Road	Fitzroy North	Picture Palaces

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Identified key theme/s
10	Palace Theatre	Unknown	Fitzroy North	Picture Palaces
11	Merri Picture Theatre	398 St Georges Road	Fitzroy North	Picture Palaces
12	The New Richmond Theatre (aka Richmond Theatre)	339 Bridge Road	Richmond	Picture Palaces
13	King Pictures	315 Burnley Street	Richmond	Picture Palaces
14	Globe Theatre	409 Church Street	Richmond	Picture Palaces
15	Oriental Theatre	6 Shelley Street	Richmond	Picture Palaces
16	Crown Theatre (aka Crown, Victoria, Valhalla (I))	214 Victoria Street	Richmond	Picture Palaces
17	Pantheon (open air cinema)	Cremorne Gardens Housing Estate?	Richmond	Open Air Cinema

A.3 Known theatre places which are extant but do not require further heritage controls

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Grading within precinct	Identified key theme	Reason no further controls warranted
Identified Type: Live Theatre from c1960-1990 using former industrial or commercial buildings, now converted to other uses							
1	Clifton Organ Factory	6-10 Page Street	Clifton Hill	HO317	Significant to the Precinct	Live Theatre post 1960s	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO317; no interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place.
2	Foresters Hall (former) (The Last Laugh Theatre Restaurant - former)	64 Smith Street	Collingwood	HO333	Significant to the Precinct	Live Theatre post 1960s	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO333, which recognises the external building form and materials as an organisational/institutional building significant to the precinct. No interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place.
3	Shop (formerly Comedy Café)	177 Brunswick Street	Fitzroy South	HO334	Significant to the Precinct	Live theatre, post 1960s	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO334; no interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place
4	Universal Theatre Apartments (Former Warehouse building	13 Victoria Street	Fitzroy	HO334	Contributory	Live theatre, post 1960s	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO334. Contributory as a former warehouse with high

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Grading within precinct	Identified key theme	Reason no further controls warranted
	formerly housed Universal Theatre) (located in former Industrial Warehouse building)						integrity. No interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place
5	Richmond Library Theatrette	415 Church Street	Richmond	No HO applies	-	Live Theatre post 1960s	There is insufficient evidence to warrant the application of a control on this building, or the Theatrette itself. The fabric does not warrant the HO as it does not meet the threshold for local significance in its own right. Social values assessment may reveal more information
6	Shop (formerly Arts Theatre)	147 Swan Street	Richmond	HO335	Non-contributory place within the precinct	Live Theatre Venue post 1960s	No external or internal fabric to be protected by the HO.
7	Irwin Rado Theatre	207-9 (?) Johnston Street	Fitzroy	HO324	Not identified	Live Theatre Post 1960s	This place cannot be located, presumed to be 207-9 Johnston Street.
Identified Type: Former Picture Theatres now used for retail purposes but retain some or all internal spaces and fabric							
8	National Picture Theatre (former)	177 Bridge Road	Richmond	HO310	Significant to the Precinct	Picture Palace	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO310, which recognises and protects the external building form and materials as a former theatre building with upper storey intact, significant to the precinct. No interior controls warranted as there

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Grading within precinct	Identified key theme	Reason no further controls warranted
							are no interior spaces or fabric related to the theme, association or use as a theatre place.
Identified Type: Former Picture Theatres that closed and were converted internally for commercial or residential use							
9	Merri Palais de Danse (Dance Palace)	392 St Georges Road	Fitzroy North	HO327	Contributory to the Precinct	-	The identified place is the 'Palais de Dance' which functioned as a Dance Hall from c.1926. The 'Merri Theatre', was located immediately adjacent, but was **demolished <u>in 1960.</u>** The existing control of HO327 is considered sufficient to protect the façade of the Palais de Danse, which is all that survives of the original Dance Hall at this address.
Identified Type: Church and other Cultural Institution halls and meeting places that were used for the display of films							
10	Central Hall/Cathedral Hall	24 Brunswick Street	Fitzroy South	HO334	Significant to the Precinct	The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and show film in halls.	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO334; no interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place. Use as a theatre place is minor, and was in association with use as a dance hall, meeting place and other community functions by Catholic Church

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Grading within precinct	Identified key theme	Reason no further controls warranted
							c1903-1960, then used as a ballroom.
11	St Mark's Church Hall	268 George Street	Fitzroy	HO158 **and** VHR H0553	Victorian Heritage Register Place	The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and show film in halls.	VHR Place = no local controls are able to be applied. There is a permit process managed by Heritage Victoria.
12	St. Luke's Hall (aka: Cinema Orient c.1960-1969)	123 St George's Road	Fitzroy North	HO327	Significant to the Precinct	The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and show film in halls.	Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO327; no interior controls warranted as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place, the use of which was short lived (c.1960-1969)
13	Wellington Hall (originally St. Joseph's Hall)	32 -38 Otter Street (fronting Wellington Road, but part of the larger Catholic Church Complex)	Collingwood	HO120	Individual Place -note: citation in HERMES applies to the		Existing fabric is sufficiently protected by HO120; no interior controls warranted <u>for its use as a theatre place</u> as the spaces does not represent the theme, association or use as a theatre place. Use as a theatre place is minor, and was in association with use as a dance hall, meeting place and other community functions

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Existing HO number and name	Grading within precinct	Identified key theme	Reason no further controls warranted
							by Catholic Church c1930-1950s.
14	Clifton Hall	83 Queens Parade	Collingwood	HO330	Significant to the Precinct	Does not fit themes identified as started as a church hall, had a long period as a cinema (c1918-83) now used as part of school	Current HO330 provides sufficient control to protect external fabric. No internal spaces or fabric related to use as theatre remains.
15	St Ignatius Hall (aka The Pumpkin Theatre)	314 Church Street	Richmond	HO315	Significant to the Precinct (mention is made of the Wesleyan Chapel and two former school buildings on this site – presumed that one of these is the hall?)	The use by churches and other cultural institutions to stage theatre and show film in halls. **and** Live Theatre Venues from 1960s	Current HO315 provides sufficient control to protect external fabric. No internal spaces or fabric related to use as theatre is known. Citation for the Chapel mentions ***highly intact interiors – but related to church function and use 1873.***

A.4 Theatre Places Identified in Stage One study which could not be located or were dismissed without assessment

No.	Place	Address	Suburb	Comment
1	Irwin Rado Theatre	211 Johnston Street	Fitzroy	211 Johnston Street Fitzroy is not a street address. No information in HERMES
2	Village Cinema, Victoria Gardens	Victoria Gardens, Victoria Street	Richmond	c.2003 modern cinema building, not significant
3	Richmond Public Hall(?)	Unknown	Unknown	c.1869 Public Hall – no other information or association is known

B Additions to the incorporated document

An electronic copy of the Incorporated Document 'Appendix 8' is provided in addition to this report. In summary, it makes the following changes:

- Removes entry at HO324 (Johnston Street Precinct) for 200-202 Johnston Street Collingwood
- Removes entry at HO310 (Bridge Road Precinct) for 311-317 Bridge Street Collingwood
- Adds new entry HO522 '200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood - Austral Theatre (former) – 121035 – 1926'
- Adds new entry HO523 '311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond – Richmond Cinema (former) -193690 – 1900'

C Theatres in the City of Yarra

Introduction

The term 'theatre' is used to refer to venues for performance, comprising a stage and an area of audience seating. Theatres may be an enclosed structure or a stage and seating in the open-air. They may be small intimate places or cavernous spaces for mass entertainment. They may be purpose-built or created in an existing building that has been adapted from a former use during particular periods; for example, in the interwar period theatres can be identified by a distinctive architectural style. Whilst the term 'theatre' pre-dates 'moving pictures' and 'talkies', the venues for screening film came to be known as 'picture theatres'. Later, after the Second World War, the term 'cinema' was introduced. Theatres provided the local population with a means of expressing and experiencing culture: to enjoy the latest visiting performers. The advent of 'moving pictures' in the 1890s introduced an experience never seen before in the Western world, and marked the beginning of a long (and continuing) period of unprecedented mass entertainment.

Long before the arrival of newcomers (colonists) to the Melbourne area, the bush provided the first theatres in the area now known as the City of Yarra. The Wurundjeri held age-old ceremonies at their traditional gathering places, which involved performance and audience engagement. The stories, songs and dances performed by Wurundjeri people have been woven into the history of their Country for thousands of years.

This brief thematic history examines the story of theatres in the area now defined as the City of Yarra — comprising Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond and their smaller hamlets — from the first makeshift music halls and the picture theatres of the early 1900s to the adapted spaces of alternative or new wave theatre in the 1960s and 1970s, and the multiplexes of modern-day cinema that emerged at the end of the twentieth century. The historic themes that have been identified here help to understand the different social and cultural meanings we can read into these structures today.

Theatre entertainment before 1900

Before 1900, there were few purpose-built theatres in the suburbs that make up the City of Yarra. The population of these suburbs immediately north of the central City of Melbourne had easy access to the large range of entertainment and attractions of the metropolis and the 'bright lights' of Bourke Street. Certainly, live theatre, vaudeville and music halls were present, but they are poorly documented and often were temporary and makeshift enterprises, operating out of hotels or private premises for short periods. One of the few public halls available for this purpose in the early period was the Collingwood Assembly Hall in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy.[3] The local town halls and private hall buildings were suitably furnished to provide makeshift venues for theatre performances or lantern slide shows. The inner suburbs of the City of Yarra were largely working class and the predominant culture was perhaps more low-brow than high-brow in the early days. Offering cheaper quarters, this part of Melbourne no doubt attracted artists and performers, who often endued somewhat precarious living conditions. High culture, including opera and musical recitals, was reserved for the city's more salubrious premises.

In the 1850s, theatre entrepreneur George Coppin boasted a remarkable array of entertainments at the Cremorne Gardens in Richmond, including the Pantheon Theatre, which was a venue for live entertainment.[4] The Cremorne Gardens were hugely popular pleasure gardens, which were a nineteenth-century predecessor of the modern-day 'theme park'. Another early popular pictorial-style entertainment was the iconic Fitzroy Cyclorama, located in Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (on a site now occupied by St Vincent's Private Hospital). Operating from 1889 to 1927,

[3] City of Fitzroy, 'The Story of Fitzroy', c.1992

[4] Mimi Colligan, 'Cremorne Gardens, Richmond: And the modelled panoramas 1853 to 1863', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 66, no. 2, November 1995, pp. 122-136.

before the invention of moving film, the Fitzroy Cyclorama was a form of early pictorial entertainment. It featured a 360-degree oil painting which provided the illusion of a moving scene, enhanced by atmospheric music and 3-dimensional props.[5] The opening display was 'The Battle of Waterloo'.[6]

Figure 7. Fitzroy Cyclorama, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy c1900-1954 (Source: Allan C. Green, State Library of Victoria)

Summary

The densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne that now comprise the City of Yarra enjoyed a vibrant cultural life from their early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. There are few surviving buildings or sites in the City of Yarra that are directly connected with the early history of theatres and live performance.

Picture Palaces

The first moving pictures were screened in Melbourne in 1896 and within ten years theatre entrepreneurs were opening purpose-built theatres for this novel entertainment.

The densely populated suburbs of today's City of Yarra were predominantly working class. There were a large number of factories in Collingwood and Fitzroy and Carlton. Collingwood was Melbourne's second-most industrialised suburb, with 128 factories.[7]

The closure of a large number of hotels in Melbourne in the early 1900s happened to coincide with the rise of picture theatres. By 1917, hundreds of inner-city hotels had been closed through the work of the Licenses Reduction Board; many of these were in the current City of Yarra. On top of the fact of fewer pubs (although still a disproportionate number in Fitzroy and Collingwood compared to the rest of suburbia) came the wartime austerity measure of 1917 of six-o'clock closing, which remained in force until 1966.[8] These factors suggest that 'going to the pictures' became an appealing alternative evening entertainment for working men.

[5] Mimi Colligan, 'The Fitzroy Cyclorama' in Cutten History Collective of the Fitzroy History Society, *Fitzroy: Melbourne's first suburb*, Hyland House, 1989, p. 179-181.
[6] Colligan, 'The Fitzroy Cyclorama', 1989, p. 180.
[7] Priestley, 1984, p. 143.
[8] Priestley, 1984, p. 158.

By 1914 the first purpose-built picture theatres were operating in Fitzroy (The Star and later Lyric), Richmond and Carlton.[9] By the 1930s there were several new theatres in every suburb.

There was a significant boom in the building of picture theatres during the interwar period. The architecture of the picture palaces loosely followed that of live theatres. Most had a large auditorium, coved ceilings, and decorative plasterwork. Stylistically, many of these theatres drew on the Art Deco style, with nods to Classical and Regency styles, Moderne, Ancient Egyptian symbolism, and other flamboyant and fanciful motifs. As Susan Priestley observed of Melbourne's showplaces, '*architectural flamboyance was expected, even demanded*'. The picture theatres of Melbourne's inner suburbs were no different.[10] Most were large, lavish and highly decorated buildings. Decorative and ornamental themes were often retrospective, focusing on a particular architectural period, and were sometimes playful or fantastical.

Many picture theatres sprang up quickly, but not all met the required health standards to be allowed to continue operating. Even behind the bright lights and glamorous facades of the grand purpose-built picture theatres, there were some unpleasant realities. Despite the luxurious fittings, there were frequent problems with fleas infesting the seating and carpets, as well as problems with the sanitary arrangements, with many theatres being notorious for the stench of urine.

The battles that waged on the mean streets of Carlton and Fitzroy between the various gangs and larrikin pushes in the 1920s did not always stay on the streets. In one instance in November 1920, gun shots were fired in the Jubilee Picture Theatre in North Carlton, triggered by an incident involving two Fitzroy gangs.[11]

During summer, outdoor, open-air pictures theatres were popular. Films were screened at an outdoor cinema on the site of what is now the Carlton Library in Rathdowne Street, and also in the open air at Victoria Park Oval, Collingwood.[12]

The Great Depression put a hold on new theatre buildings and with much of the population on the City of Yarra being working class, there was also to some extent a reduction in personal spending on leisure. Regardless, there remained a strong element of glamour about the theatre and its pull on the public imagination was enormously powerful at that time. The theatre offered escape, fantasy, excitement and glamour, which ordinary working-class life in inner Melbourne was distinctly lacking. Historian Janet McCalman explains the impact of the cinema on everyday life in interwar Richmond:

> *Even the very poor partook of the gaiety of the 1920s. The cinema led the evolution of mass entertainment as an industry. Popular entertainment began to appeal to audiences of all social classes and the working class was drawn into modes of leisure and cultural experience patronized by the more affluent. Cultural hegemony was being created by Hollywood and the poor were offered a cheap version of the popular culture that pervaded all Australian cities and towns.*[13]

Leisure time was highly regimented and predictable. From the 1920s through the Second World War and into the 1950s, Saturday night was reserved for the 'pictures'. This weekly ritual involved whole families, or couples, or groups of friends. The means of getting to the theatre at night was sometimes by tram but more often than not, it was on foot. For many, going to 'the pictures' on Saturday night was as much of a certainty as going to church on Sunday. The loyalty felt for the local picture theatre, and its social importance to the immediate community, was on par with the

[9] Susan Priestley, *Making Their Mark*, 1984, p. 158.
[10] Priestley, 1984, p. 136.
[11] *South Australian Register*, 22 November 1920; grateful thanks to Paul Beekman of the Fitzroy Residents Association for this reference.
[12] Crowe, Susan C., Carlton Community History Group.
[13] Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and private life in Richmond, 1900-1965,* Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, 1998 (first published 1984), pp. 139-40.

territorial connection that men had for the local pub.[14] Often the front of the theatre was a gathering / loitering spot on a Saturday night.

Ivy Arney recalled of her childhood in Collingwood in the 1920s: '*Saturday was the great outing of the week when we all went to the pictures.*' [15] She explains the weekly ritual and its preparation:

> *The Lyric Theatre was about a kilometre away, and great preparations were made for the outing of the week: tea was eaten earlier than usual on Saturday night to allow us plenty of time … The outing called for our best clothes. Grandma, of course, in her usual black; Mum with her hat and gloves; Dad in his suit, hat brushed, shoes shined to perfection; and me complete with hat, gloves and handbag … Into my mother's commodious handbag went a paper bag with a few pieces of fruit and a small knife. The lolly boy always came round the theatre during interval with his tray of sweets and ice creams, but it was an extravagance to buy anything when we had fruit at home.*[16]

There were usually two films separated by 'interval'. During the interval there might be some light entertainment. Until the advent of the talkies, silent movies were accompanied by piano.

To a world only recently adjusting to the novelty of electricity, with many homes boasting only one or two electric lights, the picture palace at night was a wonder of illumination.

Going to the pictures emerged as serious competition for the enormously popular Saturday night activity of dancing. Before the advent of purpose-built picture theatres, many dance halls (which were usually simply public halls or church halls) became temporary Saturday night picture theatres, before reverting back to dance venues in the 1920s.[17]

> *Other specially built cinemas were slotted in along suburban shopping centres from the late 1920s when the old moving films, played to the simple accompaniment of a live pianist or even a band, were about to become sophisticated talkies with their own soundtrack.*[18]

Before the Depression of 1929 to the mid 1930s, Melbourne enjoyed a buoyant economy, and conditions, even for the working class were modestly comfortable. Working conditions for Melbourne factory workers were generally better due to strong unions.[19] Though it was also the case that many men worked overtime or shift work and were precluded from going to the pictures. By the early 1930s, with an unemployment rate of at least 30 per cent in Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy, social life became grim for many. Many struggling families, with an unemployed father or no father at all, were simply too poor to afford this luxury. Children could also go to the Saturday afternoon 'matinee'. There would often be gifts for every child.[20]

Theatres in the 1920s and 1930s were built with many similarities to Old World theatres. They maintained the internal arrangement of timber stage platform, with timber steps leading to the stage from the stalls. Some even had an orchestra pit. Internal arrangements included ticket booths, male and female conveniences, a kiosk and often a furnished lounge area. The changes included the addition of a new-fangled screen and a projection room.

Taking the lead from Melbourne's grand city theatres, the new suburban theatres were scaled down versions of glamour and excitement. Some were designed to be able to draw back part of the roof, to allow patrons the novelty of watching the pictures under the stars. The improvement and modernisation of the city's services encouraged the mushrooming of these commodious buildings that were capable of seating hundreds of people. The widespread provision of electricity for commercial purposes through the metropolis in the early 1900s enabled the extravagant stage lighting and exterior lighting that became ubiquitous to the facades of picture

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[14] McKinlay, Brian and Bill Brodie. *Collingwood and Fitzroy Sketchbook*. Rigby, Adelaide, 1978.
[15] Ivy V. Arney, *Twenties Child: A childhood recollection*, Collins Dove, Blackburn, 1987.
[16] Arney, *Twenties Child: A childhood recollection*, 1987, pp. 26-27.
[17] Priestley, 1984, p. 158.
[18] Priestley, 1984, p. 158.
[19] Michael Cannon, *Life in the Cities*, Nelson, 1978 (first published 1974), pp. 252-53.
[20] For example, at the Richmond Theatre; see *Richmond Australian*, 26 August 1916.

theatres. While theatres relied on electricity in the 1920s, many private homes in Melbourne were not yet connected. Another key service that made theatres attractive to investors and patrons, including women, was the provision of indoor flushing toilets.

The stage was used for performers at interval – at children's matinee sessions, there would be clowns, magicians or the like. Prizes were given away. The stage was also the usual spot for the ubiquitous piano that was used to provide a live 'score'. Usually this was 'mood music'.

Movies provided a window into another world. Palatial interiors; magical, escapism; to the young folk of Melbourne's working-class inner suburbs, a night at the Lyric or the Austral must have felt like being transported to another place. The movies had the biggest immediate impact on dress, including hair styles, clothing etc. Movies impacted on language and social behaviour.

After the Second World War, movies continued to be popular. The new technique known as Cinemascope, introduced in 1954, ensured that movies remained popular into the 1960s.[21] This was the motor car era and in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs, drive-ins were opened. The City of Yarra was too built-up to establish a drive-in in the 1950s-60s. The rise of television ownership from the 1960s, however, led to the inevitable (albeit short-term) decline of movie theatres.

Figure 8. Richmond Cinema (Hoyts) c1944, Bridge Road, Richmond (Source: State Library of Victoria)

The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses, second-hand dealers (e.g. Swan St Auctions).

In the 1980s there was a revival in going to the pictures and celebration of the retro / vintage component of this experience – e.g. the Valhalla in Richmond, where the continuous screening of the Blues Brothers in the 1980s/90s developed a cult following.

[21] Priestley, 1984, p. 342.

Many theatres were earmarked for demolition during this period, leading to some heritage battles – e.g. the Valhalla in Richmond, or at the least, regret at the loss of these places was expressed by the local and wider communities.

The destruction of the old was followed by a style of cinema and the development of multiplexes. Cinema Nova was established in Lygon Street, on the site of the former Pram Factory in the 1990s. This grew from five screens to eight screens in 1999.[22] A Village Cinema complex opened in the new Victoria Gardens retail development in Burnley in the early 2000s.

Summary

The City of Yarra had a large number of picture theatres, both those purpose built and those that operated in converted premises. Surviving examples include the Lyric (or Star) Theatre in Fitzroy, the Austral Theatre in Collingwood, Burnley Theatre in Richmond, and the San Remo Ballroom (Adelphi Theatre) in North Carlton.

Theatres as places of diverse cultural expression

Cultural and religious groups used theatres as places of cultural expression and also of cultural prohibition.

The Catholic Church made use of the large theatre buildings to popularise its political messages, especially under the reign of Dr Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, from 1913 to 1966. Dr Mannix spoke at many venues in the City of Yarra in relation to issues relating to the Catholic Church, Catholic education, Irish nationalism and, during World War 1, on the anti-conscription movement. He addressed an enthusiastic audience, for example, at the Cinema Theatre in Richmond in 1918.[23]

Catholic lectures were also held at Central Hall in the 1910s and 1920s. In 1904, not long after opening a play was performed at the Cathedral Hall, 'The Youthful Martyrs of Rome'.[24] Catholic films were also screened at the parish halls of St Joseph's in Collingwood, and St Ignatius in Richmond. A film about the life of the popular St John Bosco screened at Central Hall, Fitzroy, in 1938. This coincided with the beginning of the Movement (Catholic Social Studies Movement), which played a powerful role in the censorship of films by the Catholic Church. As well as screening their own religious films, the Catholic Church permitted the screening of 'appropriate' commercial films in their church halls. The Church set down strict censorship rulings on commercial films, many of which contained content that the Catholic film censorship authorities considered inappropriate for Catholics. The Melbourne Catholic paper, the *Advocate*, recommended which films were permissible for Catholics to see.

The arrival of immigrant groups to Melbourne led to the establishment of ethnic-based theatre groups and cinemas. Multi-function cultural centres also served as performance space and sometimes as places to screen films. One example was the Melbourne Kadimah, which moved to Carlton in 1915 where there was a strong and active Jewish community. A new building was erected for the Kadimah in 1933, which boasted a large theatre hall with more than 400 seats.

Before the great influx of European migrants to Melbourne after World War II, there was already an emerging interest in European films. In 1937 the Savoy Theatre opened in the old Temperance Hall in Russell Street (built 1872), with a line-up of solely European films'.[25] In the post-war period, migrant groups sought films in their own language, and to serve this need, the Italian community ran Cinema Italia in Clifton Hill. An Italian theatre group performed at Central Hall in Fitzroy from the late 1940s through to the 1960s. The Greek community also operated a 'Greek Theatre' at the National Theatre building in Richmond.

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[22] *Cinema Record*, 25 August 1999.
[23] *Advocate*, 31 August 1918.
[24] *Advocate*, 3 December 1904.
[25] Priestley, 1984 p 342.

Figure 9. Kadimah, National Jewish Library c1941, Carlton North (Source: Lyle Fowler, State Library of Victoria)

Cultural expression through theatre and performance has also been an important element of Aboriginal cultural life in the twentieth century, with various Aboriginal music groups and theatre companies finding audiences around Carlton and Fitzroy. One Aboriginal theatre group shared a space with the Australian Performance Group at the Pram Factory in Drummond Street, Carlton, in the 1970s-80s.[26]

Summary

There is a rich history of diverse cultural expression in the City of Yarra, and this is reflected in the large number of buildings that have been used for the theatre or films of particular ethnic, cultural or religious groups. Examples include Central Hall, Fitzroy (VHR H1967), and the former Kadimah in Carlton (Individually significant in HO326, North Carlton Precinct).

New Wave Theatre Scene: 1950s, 1960s, 1970s

With their close proximity to the melting pot of ideas and culture that was Melbourne University and the local impact of post-war European immigration on cultural and intellectual life, the suburbs of Carlton and Fitzroy became important as the focus for Melbourne's, if not Australia's, alternative theatre scene. Whereas the early picture palaces of the twentieth century crammed many hundreds of people into large theatres to be fed mainstream, or 'pop' culture, the alternative scene of the 1960s and 1970s was centred around small intimate spaces that presented a counter-culture. This was a movement that celebrated social and cultural diversity.

While there was a decline of movie-going in the 1970s and 1980s, there was at the same time a significant growth of 'live theatre' around Carlton and Fitzroy, especially in small venues that constituted adapted existing structures. One of the most significant of these alternative performance spaces was La Mama (outside the City of Yarra).

Betty Burstall founded La Mama Theatre ('named after a New York alternative venue') in 1967 in a former Carlton shirt factory. Here, 'the APG [Australian Performance Group] first came together, before moving to the nearby Pram Factory in 1970. But the success and influence of

[26] Bill Garner, 'Carlton Theatre' in Peter Yule (ed.), *Carlton: A history*, 2004

the APG is more a story for the 1970s.'[27] Circus Oz, an experimental circus troupe, had its origins at the Pram Factory in Drummond Street, Carlton, in the 1970s, and has recently 'returned home' to the City of Yarra, with new headquarters at the former Collingwood Technical School.

In parallel to this local revival in theatre was the emergence of an avant-garde film-making movement in Carlton in the mid 1960s. Inspired by the French New Wave film movement, film-making in Carlton preceded the Australian film revival by several years.[28]

Other small new wave theatre venues included the Universal Theatre in Fitzroy which operated in a former factory in Victoria Street from the 1970s until the early 2000s and was the genesis of successful works such as *Wogs Out of Work*. Another theatre space was the former Organ Factory in Clifton Hill. The Handspan Theatre Company was a puppetry theatre group established in 1977 in Fitzroy. Described as a 'professional, experimental and mainly adult theatre company', the group operated from a studio at 108 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy.[29] Makeshift theatres for live performance were also accommodated in public halls and church halls. In Carlton these included the Boy Scout hall in Shakespeare Street and Carlton Hall in Princes Street.[30]

> *In addition to new wave theatre, a significant new comedy scene was emerging by the 1970s, which was centred around Fitzroy and Collingwood. The key figure here was New Zealand born John Pinder, known as 'the father of Australian comedy', who opened the Flying Trapeze Café in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy in the early 1970s. Melbourne comedian Rod Quantock noted: It is difficult to over estimate the impact that this one small venue had on the cultural life of Melbourne.31*

Pinder subsequently opened The Last Laugh Theatre Restaurant in 1976 in Smith Street, Fitzroy, in a two-storey bluestone building that had been originally built as the Collingwood Foresters Hall in 1868. Upstairs, Pinder ran a second comedy venue called Le Joke. Other outlets included the Comedy Cafe in Fitzroy, which operated from the late 1970s until 1992, and in the 1980s the Prince Patrick Hotel in Collingwood.[32]

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[27] Rickard, 2004, p. 23. [see fn 9]
[28] Bruce Hodsdon, 'The Carlton Ripple and the Australian Film Revival': http://tlweb.latrobe.edu.au/humanities/screeningthepast/23/carlton-australian-revival.html accessed 27 July 2015. See also Adrian Danks, 'The Melbourne University Film Society', Seamus O'Hanlon and Tanja Luckins (eds), *Go! Melbourne in the Sixties*, Melbourne Publishing Group, Beaconsfield, 2005.
[29] Helen Thomson, 'Handspan Theatre' in Brown May and Swain (eds), *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, 2005: http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00685b.htm; Wikipedia entry on 'Handspan Theatre': https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handspan_Theatre, accessed 27 July 2015.
[30] Susan C. Crowe, Carlton Community History Group.
[31] Willis, Gary, '1980 – the Flying Trapeze Café', *Gary Willis Art Archive,* http://www.garywillis.com.au/index.php/art-archives/1972-1982-post-medium-practice/1980-the-flying-trapeze-cafe, accessed 27 July 2015.

[32] Melbourne Theatre History, accessed online, http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/siryan/academy/theatres/..%5Ctheatres%5Cmelb_others.htm, accessed 27 July 2015.

Figure 10. The Organ Factory, Page Street, Clifton Hill c1982 (Source: John T. Collins, State Library of Victoria)

The gentrification of the inner suburbs in the 1980s threatened the survival of the alternative theatre scene, as rents rose and artistic, low-income residents were forced out. Some former live theatre venues survive, where the building has been retained and adapted for other uses, for example The Last Laugh in Smith Street, Collingwood.

Summary

There is a significant history of new wave (or alternative) theatre activity in the City of Yarra, which thrived in the social reforming decades of the 1960s and 1970s.Surviving examples of this use include The Last Laugh in Smith Street, Collingwood, and the Organ Factory in Clifton Hill.

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D Citations

Former Richmond Cinema

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

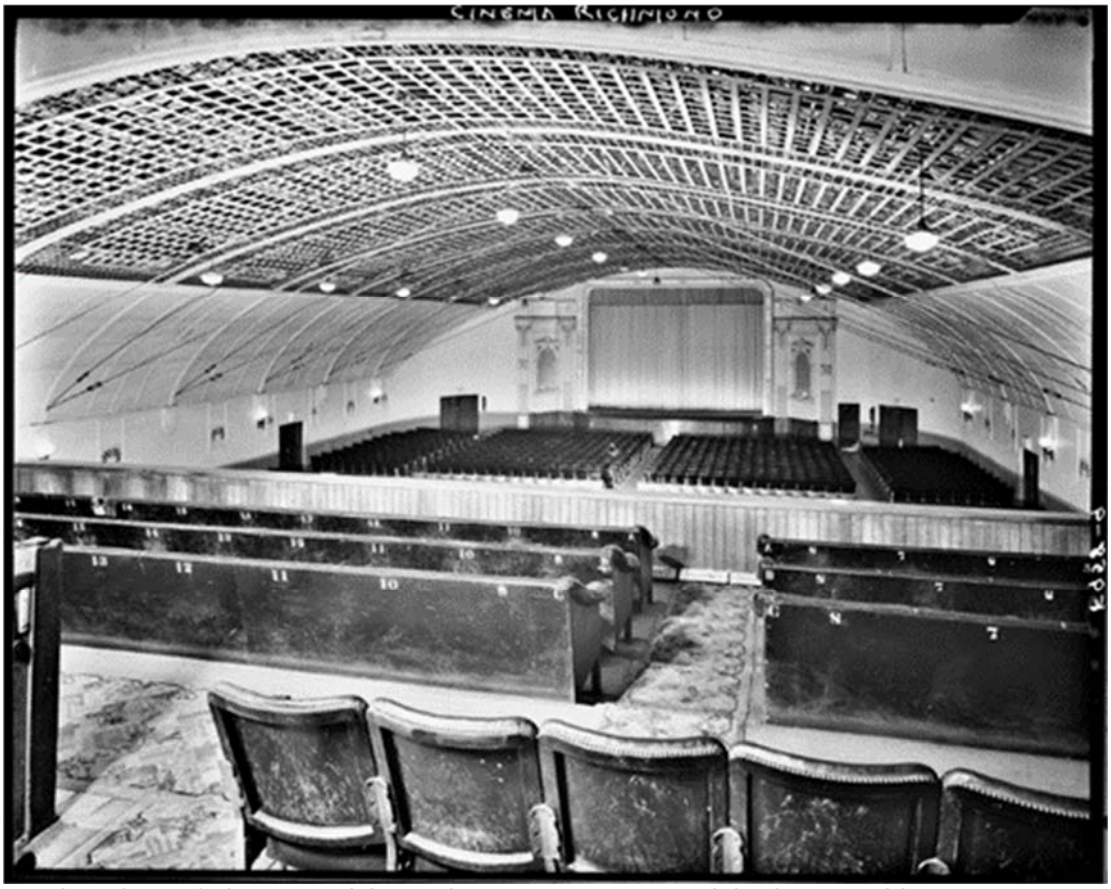
Address: 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond

Name: Former Richmond Cinema	**Survey Date:** 2016
Place Type: Residential / Commercial / Community	**Architect:** Gawler and Drummond
Grading: Significant	**Builder:**
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	**Construction Date:** c.1888, conversion.1917

The former Richmond Cinema (rear), 311-317 Bridge Road, Richmond (Source: Context Pty Ltd, 2015)

Interior of the Richmond Cinema showing the distinctive metal lattice ceiling (Source: City of Yarra, 2016)

Richmond Cinema (Hoyts) c1944, Bridge Road, Richmond (Source: State Library of Victoria)



Interior view of theatre, Richmond, Source: Commercial Photographic Co., ca.1930-ca.1969, Harold Paynting Collection, State Library of Victoria

Historical Context

The densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne that now comprise the City of Yarra enjoyed a vibrant cultural life from their early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. Before 1900, there were few purpose-built theatres in the suburbs that make up the City of Yarra. The population of these suburbs immediately north of the central City of Melbourne had easy access to the large range of entertainment and attractions of the metropolis and the 'bright lights' of Bourke Street. Certainly, live theatre, vaudeville and music halls were present, but they are poorly documented and often were temporary and makeshift enterprises, operating out of hotels or private premises for short periods. One of the few public halls available for this purpose in the early period was the Collingwood Assembly Hall in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (City of Fitzroy, 1992).

The local town halls and private hall buildings were suitably furnished to provide makeshift venues for theatre performances or lantern slide shows. The inner suburbs of the City of Yarra were largely working class and the predominant culture was perhaps more low-brow than high-brow in the early days. Offering cheaper quarters, this part of Melbourne no doubt attracted artists and performers, who often endued somewhat precarious living conditions. High culture, including opera and musical recitals, was reserved for the city's more salubrious premises. By 1914 the first purpose-built picture theatres were operating in Fitzroy (The Star and later Lyric), Richmond and Carlton (Priestley,1984,158). By the 1930s there were several new theatres in every suburb.

There was a significant boom in the building of picture theatres during the interwar period. The architecture of the picture palaces loosely followed that of live theatres. Most had a large auditorium, coved ceilings, and decorative plasterwork. Stylistically, many of these

theatres drew on the Art Deco style, with nods to Classical and Regency styles, Moderne, Ancient Egyptian symbolism, and other flamboyant and fanciful motifs. As Susan Priestley observed of Melbourne's showplaces, '*architectural flamboyance was expected, even demanded*'. The picture theatres of Melbourne's inner suburbs were no different (Priestley,1984,136). Most were large, lavish and highly decorated buildings. Decorative and ornamental themes were often retrospective, focusing on a particular architectural period, and were sometimes playful or fantastical (Context,2015:5).

The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses and second-hand dealers for example Swan St Auctions (Context,2015:7).

The Great Depression put a hold on new theatre buildings and with much of the population on the City of Yarra being working class, there was also to some extent a reduction in personal spending on leisure. Regardless, there remained a strong element of glamour about the theatre and its pull on the public imagination was enormously powerful at that time. The theatre offered escape, fantasy, excitement and glamour, which ordinary working-class life in inner Melbourne was distinctly lacking. Historian Janet McCalman explains the impact of the cinema on everyday life in interwar Richmond:

> *Even the very poor partook of the gaiety of the 1920s. The cinema led the evolution of mass entertainment as an industry. Popular entertainment began to appeal to audiences of all social classes and the working class was drawn into modes of leisure and cultural experience patronized by the more affluent. Cultural hegemony was being created by Hollywood and the poor were offered a cheap version of the popular culture that pervaded all Australian cities and towns (McCalman cited in Context, 2015:5).*

History

The Richmond Cinema was erected in 1888 as the Richmond Skating Rink ('Roller Skating' 1888, p.8). A change of ownership a year later saw it renamed to the Victorian Crystal Palace and converted to a 'promenade concert room' and place of general entertainment ('The Victorian Crystal Palace' 1889, p.2). From c.1900-16 it operated as Crystal Palace Skating Rink, and was converted to a picture theatre in 1917. The conversion was designed by architects John Stevens Gawler (1885-1978) and Walter Drummond (1890-1930). From 1917-19 it operated as the All British Cinema (Cinema and Theatre Historical Society 2017).

The Catholic Church made use of the large theatre buildings to popularise its political messages, especially under the reign of Dr Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, from 1913 to 1966. Dr Mannix spoke at many venues in the City of Yarra in relation to issues relating to the Catholic Church, Catholic education, Irish nationalism and, during World War 1, on the anti-conscription movement. He addressed an enthusiastic audience, at the Cinema Theatre in Richmond in 1918 (*Advocate* 31 August 1918, cited in Context, 2015:8).

Operated by the Hoyts chain of theatres from 1917, it was variously known as The Cinema, Richmond; the Richmond Cinema; and Hoyts Richmond Cinema with a vast capacity of 2406 seats. It ceased operating in 1958 and became a car showroom. It currently operates as a retail outlet of the franchise Barbeques Galore. (*Cinema Record*, 2002, pp. 12-15)

Gawler & Drummond architects
Gawler & Drummond architects designed a range of domestic, industrial, commercial and church buildings, as well as buildings for the University Campus, including the Grainger Museum (1935-39). Other noteworthy examples are the McRorie house in Camberwell (1916) and the Deaf and Dumb Society's Church at Jolimont (1929). In 1941 the practice changed its name to Gawler & Churcher after partnering with Eric Churcher (1892-1858). Gawler was also active in local politics and served as a council member of the Shire of Nunawading, and later of the City of Box Hill (1927-51). In 1948-50 he was the president of the Municipal Association, and 1949-53 he was a part-time member of the Victorian Housing Commission (Lewis 1996).

Description & Integrity
The former Richmond Cinema is located mid-block on the north side of Bridge Road between Church and Gleadell streets. The Richmond Town Hall is located one building to the east. The principal façade and single storey volume to Bridge Road has been highly modified. The rear section is divided into two gabled volumes. The buildings are constructed in red brick with engaged buttresses to the side elevations, all over painted, and supporting a corrugated iron roof.

The building is currently in use as a showroom by 'Barbeques Galore' which provides limited access to the public. However, the original spatial volume of the theatre and its vaulted ceiling can still be appreciated. The original lattice metal sheeting to the ceiling is visible as you enter the building from the rear (and is partially hidden by the showroom storeroom). The decorative mezzanine level balcony is extant supported on original slender circular steel columns. The balcony has been infilled. The metal lattice ceiling has been retained since the cinema's days as an ice skating rink. Part of the ceiling has been plastered and has a geometric pattern outlined in plaster strapping.

Comparative Analysis
The picture palaces that began showing silent movies and later the 'talkies' and finally the post-war technicolour blockbusters are identified as one of four themes that are associated with theatres in the City of Yarra.

The picture palace of the interwar period is a building typology that is now threatened. Picture palaces demonstrated particular characteristics during the interwar period, associated with the advent of 'talkies'. Their characteristics include large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. Picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

The City of Yarra had many picture theatres, both those purpose built and those that operated in converted premises. There are few surviving buildings or sites that are directly connected with the early history of theatres and live performance. There are six picture palaces remaining in Yarra of which four retain some internal spaces, decorative detail and early finishes (San Remo Ballroom, Austral, Burnley and the Richmond Cinema). Of these four only the San Remo retains its use as a venue. A fifth theatre, the National is now a highly adapted external envelope although quite like the Austral in its external street elevation. The Merri Palais de Danse is only a façade (Context, 2015).

The thematic study of theatres has shown that these buildings are increasingly rare, contain highly adaptable spaces leading to their frequent use for other purposes. The study has also shown that the retention of the interior decoration of theatres is quite rare. The interior of the Richmond Cinema retains its auditorium space and gallery (although in

modified form) and this is still readable as an internal spatial volume. The metal lattice ceiling is of interest as an unusual feature, and highly probably a remnant of the building's first use as a skating rink.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay,* Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The former Richmond (Hoyts) theatre is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The Richmond Cinema is historically significant as a converted former ice skating rink. The picture palace and purpose-built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. Amongst other places in Yarra, it is historically significant for its role in the popularisation of political messages on anti-conscription by Dr Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop (1913-1936) during World War 1.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The former Richmond Cinema is one of only six picture palaces surviving in the City of Yarra and one of four with surviving interiors. Others include the San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Theatre), Burnley Theatre and the Austral Theatre.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (research potential).

NA

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The Richmond Cinema (formerly Hoyts) demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of 'talkies'. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The former Richmond Cinema is aesthetically significant for its interior, specifically the main auditorium space and the decorative mezzanine level balcony supported on slender circular steel columns. The auditorium space and metal latticed ceiling, associated with the use as a skating rink, and with decorative plaster panels in a geometric design to the edges of the vaulted ceiling, are aesthetically significant. The history and use of the building as a

skating rink and a picture palace is best demonstrated by the interior volume, form and ceiling decoration.

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

NA

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

This criterion has not been assessed, however it is likely that there are people who remember attending the Richmond Cinema prior to its closure. The place may hold a special attachment for them and be socially significant to a particular group.

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Yarra's history (associative significance).

NA

Existing Statement of Significance

No statement exists as it is currently a contributory place within the Bridge Road Precinct (HO310).

Revised Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Richmond (Hoyts) Cinema built as an ice skating rink c.1900 and converted to a cinema in 1917, situated at 311-317 Bridge Road Richmond and including the interior auditorium is significant.

How is it significant?

The former Richmond Cinema is historically and aesthetically significant to the City of Yarra. It has rarity value as a former ice skating rink and a 'picture palace'.

Why is it significant?

The former Richmond (Hoyts) theatre is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The Richmond Cinema is historically significant as a converted former ice skating rink. The picture palace and purpose-built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. Amongst other places in Yarra, it is historically significant for its role in the popularisation of political messages on anti-conscription by Dr Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop (1913-1936) during World War 1. (Criterion A)

The Richmond Cinema (formerly Hoyts) demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of 'talkies'. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling, reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury. (Criterion D)

The former Richmond Cinema is aesthetically significant for its interior, specifically the main auditorium space and the decorative mezzanine level balcony supported on slender circular steel columns. The auditorium space and metal latticed ceiling, associated with the use as a skating rink, and with decorative plaster panels in a geometric design to the edges of the vaulted ceiling, are aesthetically significant. The history and use of the building as a skating rink and a picture palace is best demonstrated by the interior volume, form and ceiling decoration. (Criterion E)

Grading and Recommendations
Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Yarra Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours *Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*	No
Internal Alteration Controls *Is a permit required for internal alterations?*	Yes
Tree Controls *Is a permit required to remove a tree?*	No
Victorian Heritage Register *Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*	No
Incorporated Plan *Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?*	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions *Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted *Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place *Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?*	No

Identified By
The Richmond Cinema is partially included in HO310 Bridge Road Precinct and identified as contributory to the precinct.

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Priestley,S., 1984, *Making Their Mark*
Sportsman, 15 August 1888, 'Roller Skating'

Former Austral Theatre

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

Address: 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood

Name: Former Austral Theatre	**Survey Date:** 2015
Place Type: Commercial	**Architect:**
Grading: Significant	**Builder:**
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	**Construction Date:** 1921

The former Austral Theatre, 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood (Source: Context Pty Ltd, 2015)

Part of the plaster ceiling in the main auditorium, 2004
Source: *http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/31537/photos/42277*

The gallery with ornate balcony with plaster festoon decoration, 2004
Source: http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/31537/photos/42278:

Historical Context

The densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne that now comprise the City of Yarra enjoyed a vibrant cultural life from their early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. Before 1900, there were few purpose-built theatres in the suburbs that make up the City of Yarra. The population of these suburbs immediately north of the central City of Melbourne had easy access to the large range of entertainment and attractions of the metropolis and the 'bright lights' of Bourke Street. Certainly, live theatre, vaudeville and music halls were present, but they are poorly documented and often were temporary and makeshift enterprises, operating out of hotels or private premises for short periods. One of the few public halls available for this purpose in the early period was the Collingwood Assembly Hall in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (City of Fitzroy, 1992).

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The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses and second-hand dealers for example Swan St Auctions (Context,2015:7).

History

The Austral Theatre, later Austral Picture Theatre at 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood was built in 1921 for Winifred Kenny, Picture Proprietor of Northcote. It was operated by Robert McLeish (who is also associated with the Rivoli, Camberwell) and has other historical associations with operators C. Hore and John and Maria Lyris, confectioners (HERMES 10408). The Austral Theatre was the fifth in the chain of theatres across Melbourne controlled by Robert McLeish. The theatre, with a seating capacity of 1600 was opened on September 15, 1921 and closed in 1959 (Catrice,1991:41) It became an importers storage building, before becoming its current use as a carpet store.

An article in *Table Talk*, 29 September 1921, p. 41 describes the building:

> "It is in the most modern style of architecture, the seating, ventilation, lighting and the bio-cabin and machines being on the most approved lines, while the interior decorations – of which landscapes form a distinct feature – are carried out artistically (Austral Theatre, nla.gov.au, accessed 25 May 2017)."

Note: research undertaken to locate an architect and or tender notice has not been successful. Sources used have been Cinema Files at Prahran Mechanics Institute Library, Miles Lewis Architectural Index and Trove.

Description & Integrity

The former Austral Theatre is located mid-block on the north side of Johnston Street between Gold and Hoddle streets. The two-storey building with gabled roof has a rendered façade which features a stripped back Greek revival style. The façade is divided into five bays, with 'AUSTRAL' is still visible on the parapet of the central bay between a double moulded cement cornice, obscuring the hipped corrugated iron roof. The inner flanking bays have a pair of square windows inset below the lower cornice moulding. The outer bays have a pair of deep strip openings surmounted by projecting mouldings with an ornate decorative motif (victory wreaths) set above. Small square ventilation openings are set above the cantilevered verandah, continuous across the width of the building. The central entrance bay has been replaced with anodised aluminium glazed entrance doors and is flanked by two large shopfront windows bays. The building has rear access and a carpark accessible from Sackville Street.

Interior

The original plaster chandelier above the entrance and decorated ceiling in a Neo-Baroque highly ornate style are visible as you enter the building's foyer, with stair leading from this space to the gallery. The original men's toilets are intact with urinals and sinks. The vaulted auditorium is largely intact with the ornately decorated ceiling with regularly placed round cameo vents and arches over the entire auditorium. The foyer retains its form and detail in plaster decoration, as does the auditorium. The balcony to the gallery or circle is 'swag-bellied' and highly decorated with plaster festoons. The space of the auditorium with its large span arched ceiling can be appreciated.

The Austral is currently in use as a carpet retail store, 'Carpet World' which provides some access to the public. The following description of the interior is provided by Robert Mann.

> *The entrance foyer and ground level shop fronts are very much intact. The original plaster chandelier above the entrance and decorated ceiling (in a Neo-Baroque highly ornate style) are visible as you enter the building.*
>
> *The original women's and men's toilets are still intact with urinals and sinks boarded up and out of harm's way.*
>
> *…..the ornately decorated ceiling with regularly placed chandeliers and round cameo vents arches over the entire auditorium. Along the side walls of the auditorium are regularly placed panels which are flanked by fluted Corinthian columns which rise to support the decorated ceiling.*
>
> *The original circle is also intact minus the seating. The outer face of the balcony there is highly ornate and is covered in plaster swirls and fern-like decorations.*
>
> *The proscenium is not visible as an apartment has been built over it, however I was told that large parts of it are intact. The only part that was visible was the large panels which flank the stage, they are decorated with reclining classical Greek figures and are flanked by columns and topped with decorative friezes.*
>
> *This theatre is remarkably intact and is a wonderful example of the type of theatre that was once so common in Melbourne*. (Cinema Treasures, contributed by Robert Mann)

Comparative Analysis

The picture palaces that began showing silent movies and later the 'talkies' and finally the post-war technicolour blockbusters are identified as one of four themes that are associated with theatres in the City of Yarra.

The picture palace of the interwar period is a building typology that is now threatened. Picture palaces demonstrated particular characteristics during the interwar period, associated with the advent of 'talkies'. Their characteristics include large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. Picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

The City of Yarra had many picture theatres, both those purpose built and those that operated in converted premises. There are few surviving buildings or sites that are directly connected with the early history of theatres and live performance. There are six picture palaces remaining in Yarra of which four retain some internal spaces, decorative detail and early finishes (San Remo Ballroom, Austral, Burnley and the Richmond Cinema). Of these four only the San Remo retains its use as a venue. A fifth theatre, the National is now a highly adapted external envelope although quite like the Austral in its external street elevation. The Merri Palais de Danse is only a façade (Context, 2015).

The thematic study of theatres has shown that these buildings are increasingly rare and contain highly adaptable spaces leading to their frequent use for other purposes. The study has also shown that the retention of the interior decoration of theatres is quite rare. The interior of the Austral Theatre retains its auditorium space, gallery and proscenium, foyer stairs and toilets. The layout is highly discernible and many of the decorative elements exist.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay,* Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The former Austral Theatre at 200-202 Johnston Street is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The picture palace and purpose-built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. The Austral theatre is historically significant for its association with Robert McLeish who operated five venues across Melbourne including the fashionable Rivoli in Camberwell.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The former Austral Theatre is one of only six picture palaces surviving in the City of Yarra and one of four with surviving interiors. Others include the San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Theatre), Burnley Theatre and the Richmond Cinema.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (research potential).

NA

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The former Austral Theatre is historically significant as it demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of 'talkies'. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The former Austral theatre is aesthetically significant for its stripped back Greek revival style demonstrated by the articulated cement rendered façade with applied mouldings and stepped parapet. The interior is significant for the layout including the foyer with stairs to the gallery (circle), toilets, and the main auditorium space. The foyer, swag-bellied balustrade, auditorium ceiling, walls and the proscenium are aesthetically significant for their ornate plaster detailing incorporating a variety of classical motifs including columns, figures and festoons. The history and use of the building a picture palace is best demonstrated by the interior volume, form and interior decorative elements.

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

NA

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

This criterion has not been assessed, however it is likely that there are people who remember attending the Austral Theatre prior to its closure. The place may hold a special attachment for them and be socially significant to a particular group.

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Yarra's history (associative significance).

NA

Existing Statement of Significance

The Austral Theatre, later Austral Picture Theatre at 200-202 Johnston Street, Collingwood is historically and architecturally significant to the City of Yarra.

It was created in 1921 for Winifred Kenny and has other historical associations with persons such as Robert McLeish, C. Hore and John and Maria Lyris. The place has a fair integrity to its creation date (ground level changed; part interior existing). Fabric from the creation date at the Austral Theatre, later Austral Picture Theatre is locally significant within the City of Yarra, compared to other similar places from a similar era.

The Austral Theatre, later Austral Picture Theatre is significant as a Greek revival style, rendered theatre facade with a stepped parapet, Victory wreaths on flanking pylon forms. The first owner, McLeish, was linked with the Rivoli and other significant cinemas. It has local social and historic significance as a former long-term public building.

Revised Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Austral Theatre at 202 Johnston Street Collingwood including the interior foyer and auditorium is significant.

How is it significant?

The former Austral theatre is historically and aesthetically significant to the City of Yarra. It has rarity value as a 'picture palace'.

Why is it significant?

The former Austral Theatre at 200-202 Johnston Street is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The picture palace and purpose-built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. The Austral theatre is historically significant for its association with Robert McLeish who operated five venues across Melbourne including the fashionable Rivoli in Camberwell. (Criterion A)

The former Austral Theatre is one of only six picture palaces surviving in the City of Yarra and one of four with surviving interiors. Others include the San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Theatre), Burnley Theatre and the Richmond Cinema. (Criterion B)

The former Austral Theatre is historically significant as it demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of 'talkies'. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury. (Criterion D)

The former Austral theatre is aesthetically significant for its stripped back Greek revival style demonstrated by the articulated cement rendered façade with applied mouldings and stepped parapet. The interior is significant for the layout including the foyer with stairs to the gallery (circle), toilets, and the main auditorium space. The foyer, swag-bellied balustrade, auditorium ceiling, walls and the proscenium are aesthetically significant for their ornate plaster detailing incorporating a variety of classical motifs including columns, figures and festoons. The history and use of the building a picture palace is best demonstrated by the interior volume, form and interior decorative elements. (Criterion E)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for internal controls in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Yarra Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours *Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*	No
Internal Alteration Controls *Is a permit required for internal alterations?*	Yes
Tree Controls *Is a permit required to remove a tree?*	No
Victorian Heritage Register *Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*	No
Incorporated Plan *Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?*	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions *Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted *Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place *Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?*	No

Identified By
Included as a significant place in HO324, Johnston Street Precinct

References
Catrice, Daniel,1991. 'Cinemas in Melbourne, 1896–1942'. MA in Public History thesis, Monash University
City of Fitzroy. 'The Story of Fitzroy', typescript, [c.1992?], available online through Yarra Library Local History page: http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Libraries/Local-history/
Context, 2015, City of Yarra Thematic Study of Theatres, prepared for the City of Yarra
National Library of Australia website, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146317739
CinemaTreasures website: http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/australia/victoria/melboure
HERMES 10408
Priestley,S., 1984, *Making Their Mark*

Burnley Theatre

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

Address: 365 Swan Street, Richmond (Burnley)

Name: Burnley Theatre	**Survey Date:** 2015
Place Type: Commercial	**Architect:** Bohringer, Taylor & Johnson
Grading: Significant	**Builder:** F.L. Walton
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	**Construction Date:** 1928

Former Burnley Theatre, 365 Swan Street, Burnley (Source: Context Pty Ltd, 2015)

Proscenium arch in the former Burnley Theatre Source:
http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/15829/photos 2004 – 2006

Plaster ceiling and early decorative colour scheme, Burnley Theatre. Source:
http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/15829/photos 2004 – 2006

Interior balconies, Burnley Theatre Source: http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/15829/photos 2004 – 2006

Proscenium arch, Burnley Theatre (Source: Context, 2015)

Historical Context

The densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne that now comprise the City of Yarra enjoyed a vibrant cultural life from their early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. Before 1900, there were few purpose-built theatres in the suburbs that make up the City of Yarra. The population of these suburbs immediately north of the central City of Melbourne had easy access to the large range of entertainment and attractions of the metropolis and the 'bright lights' of Bourke Street. Certainly, live theatre, vaudeville and music halls were present, but they are poorly documented and often were temporary and makeshift enterprises, operating out of hotels or private premises for short periods. One of the few public halls available for this purpose in the early period was the Collingwood Assembly Hall in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (City of Fitzroy, 1992).

The local town halls and private hall buildings were suitably furnished to provide makeshift venues for theatre performances or lantern slide shows. The inner suburbs of the City of Yarra were largely working class and the predominant culture was perhaps more low-brow than high-brow in the early days. Offering cheaper quarters, this part of Melbourne no doubt attracted artists and performers, who often endued somewhat precarious living conditions. High culture, including opera and musical recitals, was reserved for the city's more salubrious premises. By 1914 the first purpose-built picture theatres were operating in Fitzroy (The Star and later Lyric), Richmond and Carlton (Priestley,1984,158). By the 1930s there were several new theatres in every suburb.

There was a significant boom in the building of picture theatres during the interwar period. The architecture of the picture palaces loosely followed that of live theatres. Most had a large auditorium, coved ceilings, and decorative plasterwork. Stylistically, many of these theatres drew on the Art Deco style, with nods to Classical and Regency styles, Moderne, Ancient Egyptian symbolism, and other flamboyant and fanciful motifs. As Susan Priestley observed of Melbourne's showplaces, '*architectural flamboyance was expected, even demanded*'. The picture theatres of Melbourne's inner suburbs were no different (Priestley,1984,136). Most were large, lavish and highly decorated buildings. Decorative and ornamental themes were often retrospective, focusing on a particular architectural period, and were sometimes playful or fantastical (Context,2015:5).

The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses and second-hand dealers for example Swan St Auctions (Context,2015:7). The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses, second-hand dealers (eg Swan St Auctions).

History

The former Burnley Theatre opened on 21 May 1928 as a single screen picture palace. It was built by F L Walton Pty Ltd to the design of cinema architects Bohringer Taylor & Johnson. When opened, the theatre featured seating for 1170 people, a dress circle, theatre side boxes, an elaborate ceiling dome and decorated proscenium. The stage had an orchestra platform and dressing rooms. The projection room was adapted in 1929 to accommodate sound in talking pictures.

The Burnley Theatre was, to the locals:

> '*the answer to all our prayers we thought it was the most wonderful structure. The theatre was particularly popular with courting couples: We used to sit up the front, but occasionally, if we had a girl, we'd go up into the Dress Circle and people would say*, "*They must have plenty of money to be able to go upstairs". Up in the Dress Circle with their box of Old Gold chocolates half a crown they were then. That was what you did if you wanted to impress a girl'*

The building remained in use as a theatre until 9 July 1958. until its conversion to a furniture warehouse and auction room soon after. It still operates as Swan Auctions (Allom Lovell,1998:341)

Bohringer Taylor and Johnson

Bohringer Taylor and Johnson were prominent cinema architects in the interwar period and were associated with the Union Theatre chain. Hoyts and Union Theatres were the two major cinema companies, having been started within two years of each other in 1909 and 1911 respectively. By the 1930s Hoyts was operating seven city cinemas, thirty suburban venues and several country cinemas. Union Theatres (later Greater Union Organisation) was an even larger enterprise, controlling 80 cinemas Australia wide by 1921 (Bertrand, 1987:106-9)

Cinemas designed by Bohringer Taylor and Johnson include:

- Forum and Rapallo cinemas at 150-162 Flinders Street Melbourne in 1928 (HO653, H0438) in conjunction with American cinema architect John Eberson (HERMES 9831)
- Horsham Theatre, 37-41 Pynsent Street Horsham,1926 (HO27, H2225), also built by F.L.Walton of Brighton (HERMES 11281)
- Astor, St Kilda in 1936 (VHR H1751), by R. Morton Taylor (HERMES 1818)
- Rex Theatre 47-53 Vincent Street Daylesford. 1929 (HERMES 5283)
- Prince Regent Theatres at Hamilton, Sale and Lakes Entrance
- Theatre Royal, Bairnsdale

Charles Bohringer also designed a number of NSW cinemas including the Homebush Theatre and the Capitol Theatres at Tamworth, Armidale and Wagga Wagga.

Description & Integrity

The former Burnley Theatre is located on the north-east corner of Swan and Edinburgh streets. It is a large gabled building of brick construction. The double-storey rendered Swan Street facade is in a simplified Neo-classical style and is set forward of the main volume of the theatre with shopfront windows below and the windows of the former lounge area above. There are three large openings at ground floor level, all infilled with recent aluminium-frame windows, and the wider central opening is flanked by engaged Tuscan columns. The first floor is also divided into three bays, separated by coupled engaged Tuscan columns. The wider central bay comprises three pairs of double-hung sash windows, each pair with a cement rendered Adam style decorative arch above. The end bays each have a pair of double-hung sash windows, also with decorative arches. The columns support a simple entablature and plain parapet, surmounted by a central pediment bearing the name of the theatre in raised letters. A cantilevered awning is supported from the building above the ground floor. The west elevation, to Edinburgh Street, is of plain brickwork with regularly spaced brick piers. The brickwork has been painted, and a colourful painted mural has been recently added at ground floor level (HERMES 10387).

Interior

Parts of the original shopfront windows remain to the Swan Street frontage. Inside the original plaster decorated ceiling is visible in the foyer of the building. The vaulted auditorium is remarkably intact with the ornately decorated ceiling with regularly placed round cameo vents arches over the entire auditorium. The proscenium with filigree grille, stage area, and theatre side boxes are largely intact with decorative plasterwork. The boxes have semicircular balconettes flanked by fluted columns with Corinthian tops and festoon applied moulding to the balustrades.

The ceiling features a circular recessed ‘dome’ feature forward of the gallery. The paint scheme is of particular interest for its age and subtle colouring. The gallery balustrade is decorative, matching the degree of ornamentation in plasterwork elsewhere. The building

is currently in use as an auction house, ‘Swan Auctions’ which provides limited access to the public.

Since its conversion to an auction room the auditorium has been used as a showroom and the dress circle as a storage area. The auditorium and lobbies are largely intact, and the walls retain their original textured buff-coloured stucco finish, and details highlighted in various complementary colours.

Comparative Analysis

The picture palaces that began showing silent movies and later the ‘talkies’ and finally the post-war technicolour blockbusters are identified as one of four themes that are associated with theatres in the City of Yarra.

The picture palace of the interwar period is a building typology that is now threatened. Picture palaces demonstrated particular characteristics during the interwar period, associated with the advent of ‘talkies’. Their characteristics include large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. Picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a ‘cathedral for entertainment’ — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

There are few surviving buildings or sites in the City of Yarra that are directly connected with the early history of theatres and live performance. The City of Yarra had many picture theatres, both those purpose built and those that operated in converted premises. There are six picture palaces remaining in the City of Yarra of which four retain some internal spaces and early finishes (San Remo Ballroom, Austral, Burnley and the Richmond Cinema). Of these five only the San Remo retains a use like its historic use. The National Theatre is now primarily only an adapted external envelope although quite like the Austral in its external street elevation) with major adaptive reuse and internal change. The Merri Palais de Danse is only a façade (Context, 2015).

The thematic study of theatres has shown that these buildings are increasingly rare and contain highly adaptable spaces leading to their frequent use for other purposes. The study has also shown that the retention of the interior decoration of theatres is quite rare. The interior of the Burnley Theatre retains its auditorium space, balconies, gallery and proscenium. The layout is highly discernible and many of the elaborate decorative elements exist with an early (if not original, colour scheme).

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay,* Department of Planning and Community Development*,* revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

The former Burnley Theatre at 365 Swan Street Richmond is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The picture palace and purpose -built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. The Burnley Theatre is historically significant for its association with Union Theatres Ltd., the forerunner of the present Greater Union Organisation.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The former Burnley Theatre is one of only six picture palaces surviving in the City of Yarra and one of four with surviving interiors. Others include the San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Theatre), Austral Theatre and the Richmond Cinema. Of the four, the Burnley Theatre has the most intact interior.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Yarra's cultural or natural history (research potential).

NA

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The Burnley Theatre is a fine example of a picture palace and is an interwar cinema with high architectural quality. The theatre is also significant for its design by the prominent architectural firm Bohringer, Taylor & Johnson who specialised in theatre and cinema design in the interwar period. . It demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of ‘talkies’. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a ‘cathedral for entertainment’ — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The former Burnley Theatre is aesthetically significant for its exterior form and articulated Neo-classical frontage to Swan Street featuring pairs of engaged Tuscan columns, entablature and parapet and sequence of sash windows with decorative rendered ‘fanlights’. Another attribute of aesthetic significance is the way this part of the building expresses the lounge area of the cinema. The Burnley Theatre is of aesthetic significance for its highly intact interior featuring the foyers and lobbies, auditorium, gallery, proscenium and balconies. Attributes also include the decorative plasterwork to walls and ceilings, and the ornate and subtle colours of an early, if not original colour scheme.

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

NA

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

This criterion has not been assessed, however it is likely that there are people who remember attending the Burley Theatre prior to its closure. The place may hold a special attachment for them and be socially significant to a particular group.

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Yarra's history (associative significance).

NA

Existing Statement of Significance

The former Burnley Theatre is of local social and architectural significance. Until its closure in 1958 the theatre was popular with the residents of Richmond as a social gathering place. The Swan Street façade, although not of individual importance, contributes to the streetscape and is a notable local landmark.

Revised Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Burnley Theatre at 365 Swan Street Richmond, including its interior, built in 1928 and designed by Bohringer, Taylor & Johnson architects is significant.

How is it significant?

The Burnley Theatre is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Yarra. It also has rarity value.as a picture palace.

Why is it significant?

The former Burnley Theatre at 365 Swan Street Richmond is historically significant as one of several suburban picture palaces in the City of Yarra. Picture palaces were immensely popular in the interwar period as places of entertainment. The picture palace and purpose -built theatres built from about 1914 provided entertainment for the working classes where live theatre had traditionally and previously catered for the middle and upper classes. The Burnley Theatre is historically significant for its association with Union Theatres Ltd., the forerunner of the present Greater Union Organisation. (Criterion A)

The former Burnley Theatre is one of only six picture palaces surviving in the City of Yarra and one of four with surviving interiors. Others include the San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Theatre), Austral Theatre and the Richmond Cinema. Of the four, the Burnley Theatre has the most intact interior. (Criterion B)

The Burnley Theatre is a fine example of a picture palace and is an interwar cinema with high architectural quality. The theatre is also significant for its design by the prominent architectural firm Bohringer, Taylor & Johnson who specialised in theatre and cinema design in the interwar period. . It demonstrates particular characteristics of the picture palace associated with the advent of ‘talkies’. This includes large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a

ground level entry. These picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury. (Criterion D)

The former Burnley Theatre is aesthetically significant for its exterior form and articulated Neo-classical frontage to Swan Street featuring pairs of engaged Tuscan columns, entablature and parapet and sequence of sash windows with decorative rendered 'fanlights'. Another attribute of aesthetic significance is the way this part of the building expresses the lounge area of the cinema. The Burnley Theatre is of aesthetic significance for its highly intact interior featuring the foyers and lobbies, auditorium, gallery, proscenium and balconies. Attributes also include the decorative plasterwork to walls and ceilings, and the ornate and subtle colours of an early, if not original colour scheme. (Criterion E)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Yarra Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours *Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*	No
Internal Alteration Controls *Is a permit required for internal alterations?*	Yes
Tree Controls *Is a permit required to remove a tree?*	No
Victorian Heritage Register *Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*	No
Incorporated Plan *Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?*	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions *Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted *Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place *Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?*	No

Identified By
The Burnley Theatre is currently on the Heritage Overlay (HO286).
References
Allom Lovell and Associates, 1998, City of Yarra Heritage Review
Bertrand, Ina. 'David and Goliath: 'The Grand Theatre Company and the National Exhibition Chains' in T. O'Regan & B. Shoesmith eds. *History on/and/in Film. Perth: History & Film Association of Australia*, 1987
https://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/hfilm/BERTRAND.html, Accessed 21 September 2017,

Catrice, Daniel,1991. ‘Cinemas in Melbourne, 1896–1942’. MA in Public History thesis, Monash University
City of Fitzroy. ‘The Story of Fitzroy’, typescript, [c.1992?], available online through Yarra Library Local History page: http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Libraries/Local-history/

Context, 2015, City of Yarra Thematic Study of Theatres, prepared for the City of Yarra

National Library of Australia website, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146317739

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HERMES 103087
National Trust file B7017
Priestley,S., 1984, *Making Their Mark*

San Remo Ballroom (Jubilee Pictures/Adelphi)

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

Address: 367 Nicholson Street, Carlton North

Name: San Remo Ballroom (former Jubilee Pictures and Adelphi Cinema)	**Survey Date:** 2016
Place Type: Commercial	**Architect:**
Grading: Significant within North Carlton Precinct (HO326)	**Builder:**
Extent of Overlay No change to existing HO	**Construction Date:** 1912, 1922 (current building)

The former Jubilee Theatre, now San Remo ballroom, 367 Nicholson Street, Carlton North (Source: Context Pty Ltd, 2015)

Italian Historical Society Image Collection: Interior views of San Remo Ballroom, 365 Nicholson Street, North Carlton, 1967

Interior of the San Remo ballroom Source: https://www.film.vic.gov.au/choose-victoria/locations/san-remo-ballroom

Historical Context
The densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne that now comprise the City of Yarra enjoyed a vibrant cultural life from their early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. Before 1900, there were few purpose-built theatres in the suburbs that make up the City of Yarra. The population of these suburbs immediately north of the central City of Melbourne had easy access to the large range of entertainment and attractions of the metropolis and the 'bright lights' of Bourke Street. Certainly, live theatre, vaudeville and music halls were present, but they are poorly documented and often were temporary and makeshift enterprises, operating out of hotels or private premises for short periods. One of the few public halls available for this purpose in the early period was the Collingwood Assembly Hall in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (City of Fitzroy, 1992).

The local town halls and private hall buildings were suitably furnished to provide makeshift venues for theatre performances or lantern slide shows. The inner suburbs of the City of Yarra were largely working class and the predominant culture was perhaps more low-brow than high-brow in the early days. Offering cheaper quarters, this part of Melbourne no doubt attracted artists and performers, who often endued somewhat precarious living conditions. High culture, including opera and musical recitals, was reserved for the city's more salubrious premises. By 1914 the first purpose-built picture theatres were operating in Fitzroy (The Star and later Lyric), Richmond and Carlton (Priestley,1984,158). By the 1930s there were several new theatres in every suburb.

There was a significant boom in the building of picture theatres during the interwar period. The architecture of the picture palaces loosely followed that of live theatres. Most had a large auditorium, coved ceilings, and decorative plasterwork. Stylistically, many of these theatres drew on the Art Deco style, with nods to Classical and Regency styles, Moderne, Ancient Egyptian symbolism, and other flamboyant and fanciful motifs. As Susan Priestley observed of Melbourne's showplaces, '*architectural flamboyance was expected, even demanded*'. The picture theatres of Melbourne's inner suburbs were no different (Priestley,1984,136). Most were large, lavish and highly decorated buildings. Decorative and ornamental themes were often retrospective, focusing on a particular architectural period, and were sometimes playful or fantastical (Context,2015:5).

The post war period saw the adaption of old theatres for commercial purposes; owing to the large cavernous space they offered, they were adapted as storerooms and warehouses, auction houses and second-hand dealers for example Swan St Auctions (Context,2015:7).

History
The site of the San Remo ballroom began as a bicycle school and Jubilee roller skating rink. The Jubilee Picture Palace opened in on the site in1912 and operated until 1922. In 1922 the present building was enlarged and rebuilt as the Adelphi Theatre which operated as an independent cinema until 1967. At this time, it was converted to the San Remo ballroom which still operates. (North Carlton Precinct HO326 citation):

Description & Integrity
The former Jubilee Picture Theatre is located on the north-west corner of Nicholson Street and Lee Street, Carlton North. The large two-storey building is constructed in red brick with a hipped corrugated iron roof. The asymmetrical façade is rendered brick and features stripped classical details. The cantilevered verandah is continuous across the full width of the building and features a segmental arch over the entrance to match the broken window opening above. This multi-paned timber-framed window is flanked by three circular openings and the southern bay has three strip windows. The façade is capped by a stepped parapet. The wide glazed entrance is flanked by shopfronts with segmental arched shop glazing. An additional two bays have been added to the southern part of the elevation

incorporating a new shopfront. The side and rear elevations are visible from the secondary streets and show extensive ventilation systems.

Interior

The building is currently in use as the San Remo Ballroom which provides access to the public as a space to hire. Some elements of the foyer may date to the period the building was in use as a theatre, and There have been many alterations and refitting of services to the interior.

Comparative Analysis

The picture palace of the interwar period is a building typology that is now threatened. Picture palaces demonstrated particular characteristics during the interwar period, associated with the advent of 'talkies'. Their characteristics include large open internal spaces to assist view lines to the screen, vaulted ceilings, mezzanine levels and bio boxes over a ground level entry. Picture places generally exhibited a neo-classical and art deco styling reflecting in a sense of the place being a 'cathedral for entertainment' — as a special part of the community sense of place at the time when entertainment was a luxury.

The interior of the San Remo Ballroom appears to retain its large auditorium space and foyer. When comparing interior pictures from 1967 and recently, it appears that the interior has been refitted. It is difficult to tell how much of the original structure, finishes etc. are underneath the interior decoration and without more extensive investigation interior controls do not appear to be warranted.

Assessment Against Criteria

The current assessment of the San Remo ballroom at 367 Nicholson Street as a Contributory place within the North Carlton Precinct should be retained.

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The San Remo Ballroom, built in 1912 as the Jubilee Picture Palace, and converted to the Adelphi Theatre in 1922 until 1967 as part of the North Carlton Precinct..

How is it significant?

The San Remo Ballroom is of local significance as a Contributory place within the Carlton Precinct. No interior controls are recommended.

Why is it significant?

Current assessment to be retained.

Grading and Recommendations

Retain as a place in the North Carlton precinct

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Yarra Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours *Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*	No
Internal Alteration Controls *Is a permit required for internal alterations?*	No
Tree Controls *Is a permit required to remove a tree?*	No
Victorian Heritage Register *Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*	No
Incorporated Plan *Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?*	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions *Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted *Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place *Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?*	No

Identified By
Carlton, North Carlton and Princes Hill Conservation Study 1984, Nigel Lewis and Associates and Context 2015.

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