
Her Majesty's Theatre



B5110 Her Majesty's Theatre

Location

199-219 Exhibition Street,, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B5110

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0641

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 2008

This Moderne styled theatre, housed in an altered 19th century shell designed by Nahum Barnet, is the second known large-scale use of this European style surviving as an Australian interior and the earliest surviving example to utilise most of the style's eventual palette of finishes and forms.

As such it heralded the countless Moderne styled cinemas which proliferated in the late 1930s. Complementary to the new cherubless decor were the technological innovations announced at its 1934 opening. It was the first theatre to employ an acoustic consultant (H. Vivian Taylor) and reflected this in its good acoustics and through the extensive use of veneered ply wall cladding. It appears to be the first to provide air conditioning (heating, cooling and humidity control) for a large interior in Victoria and the first in the state to achieve magical lighting

effects on a cyclorama from a new compact control board (now dismantled), which was made by Siemens but developed by J. C. Williamson's engineer. The architects were C. N. Hollinshead and Albion Walkley, leading Australian theatre specialists. This was the J.C.Williamson national flagship for nearly 40 years. Within three years of the 1934 opening the theatre had successfully staged musical comedy, grand opera, Gilbert & Sullivan opera and ballet. It was to become the Melbourne home of the Borovansky Company for 17 years and was also used for the early seasons of the Australian Ballet and the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company (now the Australian Opera). It is however as a musical comedy venue that Her Majesty's has been most successful: more than 100 musicals have played there since 1934, from "White Horse Inn" to "Song and Dance" via "Oklahoma!", "My Fair Lady", "Camelot" and "Chorus Line" -a lineup probably unequalled in any other theatre in the world.
Classified: 20/02/1986

Hermes Number 64877

Property Number

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>