

# LORNE CINEMA



Lorne Cinema front elevation 2009



Lorne Cinema detail of entrance 2009



Lorne Cinema detail of foyer 2009



Lorne Cinema detail of foyer and stairs 2009



Lorne Cinema plan

## Location

76-80 MOUNTJOY PARADE LORNE, SURF COAST SHIRE

## Municipality

SURF COAST SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2230

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO61

## VHR Registration

July 8, 2010

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### What is significant?

The Lorne Cinema was constructed in 1937 and opened the same year in a central and prominent location in the popular seaside resort. It has operated continuously as a cinema since that time. It was opened by the Lorne Picture Theatre Company, which was established as early as 1915 by Lorne residents, including photographer Albert Jarratt.

The first picture theatre was subsequently built on the Lorne foreshore in 1916, and its popularity resulted in the construction of a larger theatre adjacent to it. Talking pictures were shown by the late 1920s and the decision to build the present theatre in a new location on the foreshore was made a decade later. The completion of the Great Ocean Road in 1932 encouraged tourists to the town and would have influenced this decision.

The two storey rendered concrete facade is Art Deco in style. The plain symmetrical upper facade is divided vertically into five sections with the central protruding bay incorporating a vertical name sign, flanking recessed panels with vertical members or windows, and a parapet composed of horizontal strips above. The flanking side bays are recessed at the corner of the building and are devoid of decoration except for a small window low on the facade and a horizontal decorative motif above. Shops flank the central theatre entrance.

The simple Art Deco interior of the building retains a high degree of integrity. Original finishes include terrazzo floors, geometrically patterned ceiling panels, simple metal balustrading and carpets, and fixtures such as seating and lighting.

### How is it significant?

The Lorne Cinema is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

The Lorne Cinema is of architectural significance as a modest example of a purpose-built theatre in the Art Deco style. It is a rare example of a cinema that retains the single screen format and of the Moderne style used in a rural location. The high degree of integrity of the interior and exterior of the Lorne Cinema demonstrates its continuous use as a cinema and the characteristics of this type of place.

The Lorne Cinema is of historical significance for its association with the development of one of Victoria's premier seaside resorts, particularly after the opening of the Great Ocean Road in 1932 and for its association with a major form of popular entertainment in the twentieth century. It reflects the popularity of this form of entertainment in country Victoria from the late 1930s to the 1950s.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

**General Conditions:** 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

**Minor Works :** Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted. **Exterior:**  
Minor repairs and maintenance.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

Installation and repairing of damp proofing by either injection method or grout pocket method.

Installation or removal of external fixtures and fittings such as, hot water services and taps.

**Interior:**

Installation, removal or replacement of projection and sound equipment, providing they do not adversely impact on significant elements, or involve structural alterations.

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings in appropriate heritage colour schemes, provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.

Installation, removal or replacement of screens or curtains, including cinema screens and curtains (and associated structure), curtain tracks, rods and blinds, other than where structural alterations are required.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art works.

Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed.

Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like on plaster surfaces.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation of plant within the roof space, providing that it does not impact on the external appearance of the building or involve structural changes.

Installation of new fire hydrant services including sprinklers, fire doors and elements affixed to plaster surfaces.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

Construction dates            1937,

Heritage Act Categories    Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,

Other Names                    LORNE PICTURE THEATRE,

Hermes Number                112539

Property Number

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## History

The two-storey Lorne Cinema with its rendered concrete Art Deco facade, which opened in 1937, is the only cinema in Surf Coast Shire still showing films. According to a recent study of Art Deco cinemas in Victoria, the Lorne Cinema is one of the relatively few such cinemas built in Victoria, and one of the few that have survived relatively unaltered. Moreover, it is one of only five such cinemas which still show films and one of only two in seaside towns; the other is at Portland. (National Trust Vic 1990: 1)

The Lorne Cinema was rated first in 1937-38 when it was owned by the Lorne Picture Theatre Company (c/o A.E. Jarratt) and had the exceptionally large valuation of £300. (Winchelsea Shire Rate Books 1937-38 Lorne Township, No. 1129)

The Lorne Picture Theatre Company was established as early as 1915. The partners were Albert Jarratt, photographer; J.T. Anderson, president of the Lorne Progress Association; Jack Stirling, a prominent Lorne resident; and Bill and Jim Dorman, well-known local butchers. (Jarratt 1986: 2)

According to Jarratt family records, the site in Marine (now Mountjoy) Parade on which the cinema stands, was bought from Jim Dorman. Albert Jarratt "supervised the making of cement bricks on the vacant land in preparation for the construction of a new theatre which was designed by Charlie Fraser and built by Mr Owen". Lyn Jarratt, Albert's son, helped make up the new sound system. (Jarratt 1986: 3)

Opening night in 1937 was a grand occasion in Lorne, despite some problems with the lighting and the sound system which "due to some fault in the manufacture... began to seize up not long after the interval". Lyn later told how he could remember "standing by with the oil-can for the remainder of the show". (Jarratt 1987: 3)

The late 1930s were important years for the resort town of Lorne with increasing numbers of tourists flocking there in the summer season after the completion of the Great Ocean Road. The Chalet and the Cumberland opened during the same era as the new Lorne Cinema.

The events that led to the opening of the cinema are told in the history of the Jarratt family, pioneer photographers and cinema proprietors. This history compiled by Lyn Jarratt between 1986 and 1991 is held by the Lorne Historical Society.

Albert Jarratt (1886-1962) was born at Ruby near Leongatha in Gippsland. He was the youngest of a large family of 11 boys and two girls. The Jarratts ran a butcher's shop and farm, some of the older boys working in the timber industry. Albert went to the Ruby State School but had to leave at an early age to help at home. However, the local schoolmaster, Mr Mead, took an interest in the boy and taught him about electricity and photography.

Albert became a competent photographer and found employment with a postcard publishing company in Melbourne. As a result, he travelled to beauty spots all over Victoria, much of it by foot. In 1908, he was sent to Lorne and liked it so much, he gave up his job and decided to stay there. In 1910, Albert set up a photography business at Lorne. He sold photos of Lorne and group photos of visitors to various beauty spots, such as Erskine Falls and the Phantom Falls. Many Jarratt photographs have survived, including a number made during the construction of the Great Ocean Road.

After Jarratt installed an electric light plant for his business (most probably the first in Lorne), Winchelsea Shire Council commissioned him to install street lights throughout the town. He bought a larger oil engine and generator, and a set of batteries, and ran wires from the bridge to the Pacific Hotel with poles carrying street lights. This early electric supply later went to Erskine House, Carinya, and many guest houses and private homes. Eventually, the Shire and, later, the S.E.C. took over the supply of electricity to Lorne township.

In 1915 Albert married Mary Ethel Seymour in All Saints Church with a reception at Carinya. During the same year, a travelling picture show came to Lorne. The owner was in financial trouble and offered his equipment for sale. Following its formation, the Lorne Picture Theatre Company bought him out. They built a first picture theatre on a large block of land on the Lorne foreshore, part of the Mounjoy Erskine House property. Opening night was in late 1916. This theatre showed silent films supplied at first by Jack McFarland, a friend of Jack Anderson, who owned the Yarraville Picture Theatre.

Albert was the projectionist and the original machine was a French 'Pathe', hand operated. Light was provided by a carbon arc. The audience sat on forms and a pianola provided the music. This theatre proved to be so popular, particularly during the holiday seasons, that it was decided to build a larger one alongside. It was about twice as large and had a dress circle and more comfortable seating. The old building became a dance hall known as "The Beach Hall". It is shown on the 1938 Winchelsea Shire Engineer's Plan of Lorne Township in Mountjoy Parade next to the San Toy Cafe.

By the end of the 1920s, the new picture theatre began to show talking pictures. A decade later, it was decided to build the present Lorne Cinema in Mountjoy Parade but on the south side of Grove Road.

Albert Jarratt, whose son Lyn was born in 1916, continued to run his photography business which, over the years, also sold wool, fancy goods, china and glassware, school books, pens and pencils and souvenirs. In 1932, a dwelling had been built at the rear of the shop and this became the Jarratt family's home.

Towards the end of his life, Albert began to suffer from dermatitis caused by the photographic chemicals, and handed over the film processing to his son. Albert's wife died on 19 June 1959 and he died on 1 August 1962. Lyn and his wife, Enid, who took over the running of Jarratt's Craft Shop until 1973, moved to Canberra in December 1981. (Jarratt 1986, 1987, 1991)

Ken Todd, who has been involved in the movie industry for more than 50 years, and his wife, Nanette, bought the Lorne Cinema in 1981. 'The Picture Palace on the Coast,' as it is called by Todd and his manager, Alby Petherick, the old cinema shows a range of films from Hollywood blockbusters to art and foreign language features. Films are shown for 10 months of the year and, during the Christmas to Easter season, there are up to 5 sessions a day with as many as three different movies. The Cinema attracts large numbers of tourists and

holiday-makers.

Todd claims that the Lorne Cinema is "one of the few remaining original single-screen movie houses left in country Victoria". He points out that it has never been closed, and, since the day it was opened, has been used only as a theatre. The two original projectors are on display in the foyer. The Todds also run films over the Christmas period at public halls in Anglesea and Apollo Bay. (The Echo 1996)

## Plaque Citation

This is a rare example of an intact pre-war country cinema, built in the Art Deco style in 1937 and operated continuously since then. It is one of the few remaining early single-screen movie houses left in country Victoria.

## Assessment Against Criteria

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The Lorne Cinema reflects the development of Lorne, one of Victoria's premier seaside resorts outside metropolitan Melbourne, after the completion of the Great Ocean Road in the 1930s. It is illustrative of one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the twentieth century, the cinema, from the late 1930s to the 1950s, particularly in the context of a holiday resort.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

The Lorne Cinema is a rare surviving single-screen cinema from the 1930s, particularly in a rural location.

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

The Lorne Cinema demonstrates the original design qualities of the interwar Art Deco style and is a rare surviving and highly intact example of this style for a cinema building in Victoria.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

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.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

## Extent of Registration

1. All of the building marked B1 on Diagram 2230 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 2230 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 9499 Folio 308.

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*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/>*