

# RIVOLI THEATRE



RIVOLI THEATRE SOHE  
2008



RIVOLI THEATRE SOHE  
2008



RIVOLI THEATRE SOHE  
2008



h01524 1 rivoli camberwell  
front facade



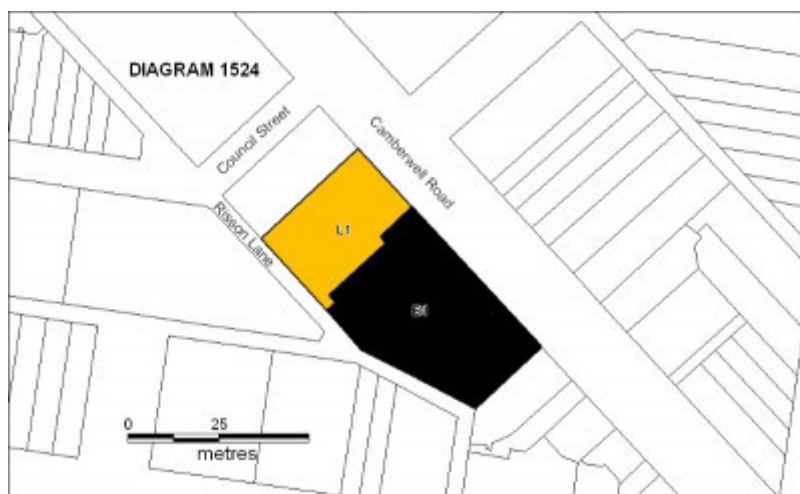
h01524 rivoli camberwell  
cinema1 detail



h01524 rivoli camberwell  
rear3



h01524 rivoli camberwell  
upstairs foyer2



h01524 rivoli camberwell plan

---

## Location

200 CAMBERWELL ROAD HAWTHORN EAST, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1524

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO482

## VHR Registration

February 10, 2005

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 17, 2005

### What is Significant?

The new Rivoli Theatre was built in Camberwell Road, Camberwell and was opened by the Mayor of Hawthorn, Joseph Pridmore, on 11 October 1940. It replaced an earlier Rivoli Theatre which had opened in 1921 on the east side of Burke Road. Robert McGleish, a notable figure in Melbourne's cinema history and the manager of the original Rivoli Theatre, was responsible for the construction of this new large decorative cinema, which was designed by architects H Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux.

A large number of cinemas were built in suburban Melbourne in the 1930s, after the advent of talkies in 1929. Such architectural firms as H Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux became specialist cinema designers, taking acoustic requirements into consideration, and designing for large cinema chains such as Hoyts and Union Theatres. Many of their designs incorporated such distinctive features as a large auditorium with dress circle and stalls, separate foyer spaces, ticket boxes, toilet facilities, milk bars providing refreshments, a crying room, roof garden and separate ground floor shops. The Rivoli Theatre included all these features.

Like most cinemas built in the 1930s, the architects adopted the Moderne style in their design of the Rivoli. The facade is of polychromatic banded brickwork, incorporating a range of coloured bricks in pale pink to coloured oatmeal, alternate horizontal bands of orange brick and dividing lines of dark heelers. The facade is dominated by a vertical fin, originally bearing the theatre name, which divides the facade into two sections. To the east a balcony is flanked by a curved wall, and to the west the auditorium wall is angled away from the road to provide a roof garden at the upper level. At ground level, below a cantilevered verandah, the facade was originally lined

with deep cream and orange ceramic tiles.

The luxurious interior of the theatre building incorporated a lower foyer with a circular ticket box and a dramatic circular stair which led to a large, luxurious lounge above. The roof garden was accessed from this upper foyer. The auditorium itself was of two levels, and the architects adopted a 'suspended and floating' interior surface for the walls and ceiling of the original auditorium; an innovation in cinema design. Plaster veneer walls and ceiling were therefore constructed independent of the main structure. Grilles in sweeping streamlines were applied to the walls for both decorative and acoustic reasons, and all lighting was concealed, largely by fibrous plaster troughs and coves.

The Rivoli Theatre survived the post-war decline in cinema patronage, however, since its completion various alterations have been made, the most significant occurring in 1968 and again in 1999-2000. In 1968 the large auditorium was divided horizontally into two cinemas, resulting in an upper and lower cinema. The original plasterwork was retained in the upper auditorium and the proscenium brought forward and a new plaster pelmet created. The original stage and proscenium remained intact behind this new screen. All of the original fabric was removed from the lower auditorium and the original crying room was converted into a bio box. The milk bar, accessed from both the foyer and the street, was altered and the space enlarged to form a larger coffee lounge, and the circular ticket box was removed from the lower foyer.

The Rivoli Theatre underwent extensive alterations and additions in 1999-2000. Prior to this, the bathrooms on both levels, the foyers, circular staircase and upper lounge and the upper auditorium remained largely intact and these were generally retained, and in some cases restored, at this stage. A large addition was constructed to the west of the building containing an additional six cinemas. New bathrooms were installed in the space that contained the original stage and proscenium, however some original elements survive. Access stairs for all upper cinemas were accommodated in the vicinity of an original shop. Externally orange and cream tiles were reinstated to the lower facade and a Rivoli sign reinstated on the upper fin.

### **How is it Significant?**

The Rivoli Theatre is of architectural, historical and social significance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it Significant?**

The Rivoli Theatre is of architectural significance as an intact and distinctive example of the Streamlined Moderne style which was highly fashionable in the design of commercial buildings in Melbourne in the 1930s. It includes an impressive display of decorative brickwork externally and plasterwork internally. It is one of three Melbourne Moderne cinemas from this period which retain a high degree of integrity. The earliest, the Astor, East St Kilda, (1936, H1751), designed by RM Taylor, remains the most intact and importantly it retains its original single auditorium space, with original decorative finishes and fittings. The Sun, Yarraville (1938, H679), designed by Cowper, Murphy and Appleford, is relatively intact externally, while the interiors have been damaged and subsequently restored. It now houses a complex of smaller cinemas.

The Rivoli Theatre is of architectural significance as the most intact surviving example of the work of specialist cinema architects, H Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux in Victoria. Nationally Taylor and Soilleaux were architects, or acoustic consultants, for more than five hundred cinemas and theatres. The only other cinema architects producing a comparable body of work were the Sydney firm of Crick and Furse, who did not produce any work in Victoria. Of the ten Melbourne cinemas designed by Taylor and Soilleaux, seven have been demolished and three remain in various states of intactness. Only the shell of the Orient cinema in Heidelberg (1933) remains and the foyer of the Windsor cinema, Windsor (1936) has been demolished. The Rivoli cinema remains the most intact of Taylor and Soilleaux's cinema designs.

The Rivoli Theatre is of historical and social significance due to its association with one of the most popular forms of mass entertainment of the twentieth century. It is significant as a largely intact example of a cinema building from the late 1930s, one of a prolific number constructed throughout Victoria, particularly in the 1930s.

## **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 the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved 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 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 declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration 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 carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

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.

All works to the staff and services area on Levels Ground to Two provided they do not impact on the remnant original proscenium.

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.

Installation, removal or replacement of fixed non-original seating.

### **Roof Garden:**

Regular garden maintenance.

Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings, structures, ornaments, drainage and irrigation system.

Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.

### **Multiplex cinema extension**

Any interior works to the non-registered building within L1 (multiplex cinema extension).

Any works to the rear facade of the multiplex cinema extension.

Construction dates	1940,
Architect/Designer	Taylor, Vivian H & Soilleaux,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	5411
Property Number	

---

## **History**

The new Rivoli Theatre was built in Camberwell Road, Camberwell and was opened by the Mayor of Hawthorn, Joseph Pridmore, on 11 October 1940. It replaced an earlier Rivoli Theatre which had opened in 1921 on the east side of Burke Road. Robert McGleish, a notable figure in Melbourne's cinema history and the manager of the original Rivoli Theatre, was responsible for the construction of this new large decorative cinema, which was designed by architects H. Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux.

A large number of cinemas were built in suburban Melbourne in the 1930s, after the advent of talkies in 1929. Such architectural firms as H. Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux became specialist cinema designers, taking acoustic requirements into consideration, and designing for large cinema chains such as Hoyts and Union Theatres. Many of their designs incorporated such distinctive features as a large auditorium with dress circle and stalls, separate foyer spaces, ticket boxes, toilet facilities, milk bars providing refreshments, a crying room, roof garden and separate ground floor shops. The Rivoli Theatre included all these features.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the building marked B1 on Diagram 1524 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1524 held by the Executive Director and described in Certificates of Title Volume 10515 Folios 614, 615, 617 and 618.

*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/>*