
Rivoli Theatre

Location

196-200 Camberwell Road,, HAWTHORN EAST VIC 3123 - Property No B6862

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1524

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 3, 2008

The Rivoli Theatre, designed by the noted cinema architects Taylor & Soilleux, and completed in 1940, is of architectural, technical and historic, significance at the State level.

The Rivoli is one of the most sculptural and inventive examples of moderne architecture in Melbourne. Popularly known as Art-Deco, the stylistic influences on the Rivoli are more precisely described as a combination of jazz Moderne and Streamlined Moderne.

This style is strongly associated with cinemas, and the Rivoli is architecturally the most unusual and distinctive of the small number of jazz or streamlined moderne style cinemas remaining in Victoria. The exterior is unusually boldly modeled, and the interior features the extensive use of curves and circles, and unique patterned plasterwork (in the form of overlapping leaves in the wall panels, and mechanical cogs in relief in the ceiling of the main auditorium). This remains largely intact despite subdivision of the area under the balcony to create a second cinema in 1968.

On a technical level, it was the first cinema in Victoria to employ the "suspended and floating" method of internal wall construction, where the ceiling and walls of the main auditorium were structurally independent of the main structure, and were shaped as required to provide the best possible acoustics.

Historically, the theatre is important for its association with the major form of popular entertainment in the early 20th century. As an elaborate, almost sumptuous venue for mass entertainment, it has been used and enjoyed by thousands of people, and is still widely known and enjoyed for its decoration and atmosphere.

The Rivoli is the last large decorative cinema built in Victoria, reflecting the decline of cinema as a mass entertainment after WW11. This decline is further reflected in the subdivision of the auditorium into two smaller

cinemas in 1968, only the second such example in Victoria (the first being the State (now Forum cinema). Perhaps due to this subdivision, it is now one of the very few cinemas of architectural distinction that still fulfils its original function, with a regular and popular film-screening program. The Rivoli is also significant for its association with the architects H V Taylor & Soilleux, who designed the most significant examples of moderne style cinemas in Victoria. H Vivian Taylor was also a noted acoustic specialist, and a consultant for numerous cinemas. It is significant for its association with Robert McLiesh, a prominent figure in the film industry in Victoria from the 1910s to the 1940s. The Rivoli was the flagship of his chain.
Classified: 01/11/1998

Other Names Rivoli Twin,

Hermes Number 64761

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/>