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## Former Northcote Theatre



B7007 Northcote Theatre



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### Location

212 - 220 High Street,, NORTHCOTE VIC 3070 - Property No B7007

### Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

### Level of significance

State

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2287

### Heritage Listing

National Trust

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 15, 2005

The Northcote Theatre, built in 1912, and designed by early cinema architect F.G. Richardson, is of State significance for its historical, social and architectural values.

Historically, it is significant as the oldest purpose built cinema surviving largely intact in Melbourne. It is also amongst the few to survive in any form from the earliest period of cinema construction in Victoria before WWI. The Barkly Theatre, Footscray, is the most comparable cinema, opening two years after the Northcote in 1914. It is significant for its association with Robert McLeish, who operated a number of companies and cinemas in Melbourne in the 1910s, and who was remembered as "the father of the Victorian Motion Picture Industry" when he died in October 1953. The theatre is also important for its association with the architect, F.G. Richardson who designed a number of the early cinemas in Melbourne, of which only the Northcote survives.

Architecturally, the facade of the Northcote Theatre is notable as an early example of what became a typical format for cinemas, namely the use of classically derived, but simple and flat applied decoration, with a central arch as the main focus. The removal of the original cast-iron verandah is unfortunate, but does not detract from its significance. The relatively plain interior is notable for being substantially unaltered, and the dress circle, which retains some seating, is one of the earliest to demonstrate the cantilever principle of construction.

Socially, the Theatre is important for its association with cinema, by far the most popular form of entertainment in the early twentieth century, and provided entertainment to the people of Northcote for 40 years.

Classified: 08/11/1999

Hermes Number 65465

Property Number

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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/>*