

Regent Theatre



27215 Regent Theatre

Location

74-80 Brown Street HAMILTON, Southern Grampians Shire

Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

SIGNIFICANCE: Major cinema in Hamilton and dominant element in streetscape

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Regent Theatre
Brown Street

The former Prince Regent Theatre, opened in September 1927, (i) has local significance for its architectural interest and for its historical importance as a major entertainment centre for Hamiltonians in an exciting decade with increasing leisure opportunities and activities. The pictures became so popular that Hamilton was able to support two theatres. For several years in the 1920s regular shows were held at the town hall, where 'talkies' made their first appearance in September 1929. (ii) However, the Prince Regent Theatre, built two years earlier

by a local contractor, W T Stephens, using mainly local workers, and designed by a Melbourne architect who specialised in picture theatre construction, (iii) became a serious rival. The owners of the new theatre, The Combined Victorian Theatres Limited, planned to use the building not only for movies but for J C Williamson plays. (iv) From c1932 the Prince Regent Theatre reigned supreme as a movie house, one of its shows, the Marx Brothers' *Monkey Business*, being regarded as the 'funniest film seen in Hamilton'. (v)

The Regent Theatre is a typical example of the free Classical Revival style used for cinemas in the twenties and predates the more sophisticated architecture of the Depression and post-Depression booms in film-going. The alternative was the exotic styles of the great metropolitan cinemas although the regent is exotic enough with its combination of Adamesque and Mannerist details. Despite its conversion the building remains substantially intact and is in good condition. It is a critical element within the streetscape because of its complex forms and large scale.

FOOTNOTES

i *Argus*, 6 September 1927; *Hamilton Spectator*, 6 September 1927.

ii Garden, Don, *Hamilton*, pp 219-220.

iii This unidentified architect may well have been Frank G Richardson, of Richardson & Wood, architects, who, according to the *RVIAJ*, November 1929, p 104, constructed about twenty picture theatres between 1912 and 1929.

iv *Argus*, 6 September 1927.

v Garden, Don, *Hamilton*, p 220.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - City of Hamilton Conservation Study, Timothy Hubbard with Carlotta Kellaway & Michael Looker (plus Francis Punch), 1991;
Construction dates	1927,
Architect/Designer	Richardson, Frank G.,
Hermes Number	27215
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

MATERIALS:

Roof: corrugated iron

Walls: rendered brick

Dressings: cement render

Plinth: brick

Windows: timber dhs

Paving:

Other:

NOTABLE FEATURES: scale and classical detailing

LEVEL OF STREETSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE: 1 || 2 | 3 | X |

Historical Australian Themes

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC THEMES

Sport & Recreation: Theatres & Movies

Integrity

INTEGRITY: G

Physical Conditions

CONDITION: G

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/>