

VICTORIA THEATRE

8-10 Perkins Street, Newcastle NSW

Victoria Theatre (Former) is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register in recognition of its significance to the people of New South Wales. It is possibly one of the oldest purpose-designed grand performance spaces surviving in Australia. The interior is significant, comprising a four level fly tower and galleries, original stage, two level auditorium, and Grecian flourishes which feature gold ceiling motifs and a grand proscenium arch. It provides a rare reminder of the design and interior decoration of theatres of the era.



History

The Victoria Theatre opened in 1876, but was partially destroyed by fire in 1890. It was rebuilt in 1891 to a design by James Henderson, a prolific local architect. Henderson is attributed the neo-Grecian decorative scheme which he applied inside the three level auditorium and to the front façade. A large stage house and small first class hotel were added to the front and seating for 1700 people. The dress circle alone could accommodate 500 people. The stage was 13.7metre wide, 11.6metres deep and 16.8metres high. In 1942, Hoyts converted the theatre for movies and in 1955 Cinemascope was installed.

Heritage Status

The Victoria Theatre is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register and subject to the protections and provisions of the NSW Heritage Act 1977. The NSW Heritage Council is a consent authority for any potential changes. Heritage Council can ensure the building is protected from harm through minimum maintenance standards.

The future

A sensitive conservation & restoration approach is required when thinking about the future of this grand building, beginning with the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan. The large internal volume and significant interior are important aspects of its heritage value, and may be the starting point for restoring the Victoria Theatre to a beautiful and grand heritage building.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/development/index.htm>

<http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/Explore/History-Heritage/Our-rich-cultural-heritage>