REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES -

ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

HERITAGE COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

11.   ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)
- 3.19   Marketing and retailing
- 3.21   Entertaining for profit

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)
- 405   Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 308   Commercial and service industries

11. 1   AESTHETIC VALUE[*]

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade retains some of the aesthetic characteristics of the Inter-War Functionalist style. The cinema, in particular, is a fine example of this style, which was common in the design of cinemas constructed in the 1930s. The place's refurbishment in 1984 introduced aesthetic characteristics which are good examples of the Late Twentieth-Century Post-Modern style. (Criterion 1.1)

The creative excellence of the remodelling of the *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* in 1986 was recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (WA Chapter). It was considered that the selection of materials and attention to detail enhanced the existing ornamental character. (Criterion 1.2)

The tower, consistent colour scheme and dominant arcade entry statements make the place a distinctive element and landmark within both the Hay and the Murray Street streetscapes. (Criterion 1.3)

The stage-set like appearance of *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* is common in retail architecture and contributes to the commercial qualities of Hay and Murray streets. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2.   HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* in 1938 reflected the optimism and the desire for enjoyment and entertainment that prevailed at the end of the Depression. Piccadilly Theatre was one of a number of theatres and

---

[*]   For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* , Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

cinemas constructed in the Inter War style in Perth and suburbs during this period. (Criterion 2.2)

Piccadilly Theatre was fitted out with the most modern features and was the first theatre in Western Australia to be air conditioned. (Criterion 2.2)

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is associated with 1930s mining entrepreneur Claude de Bernales, cinema architect William Leighton, and sculptor Edward Kohler. (Criterion 2.3)

The creative excellence of the 1984 refurbishment of *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* by architect Ian Tucker, was recognised when the work received the 1986 Architecture Design Award for Renovated Buildings, awarded by the Royal Australian Institute of Architecture (WA Chapter). (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

----

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is valued by the local community for its associations with entertainment and social activity. (Criterion 4.1)

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade contributes to the community's sense of place, having been part of the Hay Street and Murray Street shopping and entertainment streetscapes since 1938. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

----

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is representative of styles of architecture popular for cinemas in the 1930s and retail architecture of the late twentieth-century. (Criterion 6.1)

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is representative of Inter-War Functionalist and Late Twentieth-Century Post-Modern styles. (Criterion 6.2)

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is representative of the design work of architect, William Leighton, a noted cinema architect. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is in good condition and the place has been well maintained.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade has a high degree of integrity. The place retains the function for which it was created in the 1930s, although additional cinemas have been incorporated in the structure and the arcade and street facades have been remodelled.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Although the retail arcade no longer exhibits the superficial fabric and character of the 1930s building, sufficient detailing and fabric from the earlier stages of construction remain at the upper levels, particularly in the cinema, to ensure the place has moderate authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Taylor Architect.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade was constructed in 1938, in Inter-War Art Deco style.[1] The place was designed by architects Baxter Cox and Leighton for Claude de Bernales, and incorporated part of the buildings already existing on the site. In 1984, *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* underwent extensive refurbishment under architect, Ian Tucker.

During the gold boom years of the late 19th and early 20th century, the commercial centre of Perth was largely rebuilt, with more substantial buildings reflecting the State's new wealth and its growing population. Photographs of Hay and Murray streets show streetscapes of two and three storey buildings, generally constructed in Federation Free Classical style. Among them were Freedmans' Chambers, 700-704 Hay Street, and Collins House, 231-233 Murray Street. These two buildings were situated on part of Perth Town Lot F13, which was to become the site of *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade*.[2]

Town Lot F13 was subject to subdivision. As well as being divided in lengthways from Hay Street to Murray Street, the eastern half was further divided, one half fronting Hay Street and the other fronting Murray Street.[3] From 1895, both the Hay Street frontage and the Murray Street frontage of Town Lot F13 had a number of owners and uses, and was also redeveloped at various times..[4]

The 1895 shop and dwellings located on the Hay Street frontage[5] were replaced, or occupied, as shops by 1900[6] In 1902, this land was purchased by Abraham, Harry and Solomon Freedman. In 1904, Freedman's Chambers was constructed on the property, comprising two shops, nineteen offices, and

---

[1] Apperly, R., Irving, R. and Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present,* Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1989, pp. 188-191.

[2] *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1930; DOLA Diagram 926, 20 September 1898 & Diagram 1687, 19 November 1902.

[3] DOLA Diagrams 926, 20 September 1898 & Diagram 1687, 19 November 1902.

[4] Certificates of Title Vol. 156 Fol. 46, 20 October 1898, 3 November 1898; Vol. 30 Fol. 121, 11 November 1889, 9 January 1897; Vol. 276 Fol. 108, 17 June 1903, 2 March 1908; City of Perth Rate Books, 1895-1910.

[5] City of Perth Rate Books, 1895.

[6] City of Perth Rate Books, 1900; *Wise's Post Office Directories,* 1900-1905. Street numbers were introduced c. 1900.

a basement, portion of which was occupied by the company's clothing and drapery business.[7]

The Murray Street frontage was purchased by Kalgoorlie doctor, John O'Meehan in 1903 and, by 1910, the site was occupied by a warehouse leased to Beath, Schiess & Felstead, warehousemen.[8] In 1920, the Murray Street property was purchased by the Freedman brothers under the name of S. Freedman & Company.[9] (Street numbering changed at this time, with the Hay Street premises getting its current street numbers of 700-704 in 1910, and Murray Street being numbered 231-233 by 1915.)[10]

In 1935, Claude de Bernales' Australian Machinery and Investment Company Limited purchased Freedman's Chambers and Collins House.[11] Claude Albo de Bernales migrated to Western Australia in 1897, at the age of 21, drawn by the gold boom. He established himself as a machinery salesman, and did well, his charm and his appearance (handsome, tall, always well-dressed) being major assets. By 1911, he was a member of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines, managing director of the Kalgoorlie Foundry (which manufactured mining plant) and a director of Hoskins Foundry, Perth. He became a mining promoter and, between 1932 and 1935, he formed twenty new companies in London and sold gold leases, and acquired control of Great Boulder Proprietary Gold Mine. Some of his ventures failed, but his proportion of successes was better than average for the mining industry, and he was hailed as Western Australia's greatest ambassador in the 1930s.[12]

Claude de Bernales also purchased a piece of land on the south side of Hay Street, stretching to St George's Terrace, and on that site he constructed London Court, an arcade which resembled a 16th century English street. After the opening of London Court in July 1937, Bernales turned his attention to the property at Lot F13. He set up Piccadilly Arcade Pty Ltd and engaged architects Alfred Baxter Cox and William Leighton to design a theatre and shopping arcade for the site.[13]

The construction of *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* utilised part of the existing buildings on the site.

> The work of constructing the new building comprised the [partial] demolition of Freedman's Building and the remodelling of Collins House, which consisted of two storeys and a basement. The first floor and the basement of Collins House was left, but the ground floor was remodelled and converted into portion of the arcade from street to street. The main façade and that in the right-of-way on the western side was remodelled. From the back of Collins House, which occupied about one-third of the length of the site, the work is all new with the exception of the front and side walls of Freedman's Building; the front has been remodelled on modern lines.

7   Certificate of Title Vol. 30 Fol. 121, 23 December 1902; City of Perth Rate Books, 1900-1905; *Wise's Post Office Directories,* 1900-1910.

8   Certificate of Title Vol. 276 Fol. 108, 17 June 1903; City of Perth Rate Books, 1905-1910; *Wise's Post Office Directories,* 1910.

9   Certificate of Title Vol. 657 Fol. 196, 6 March 1920; *Wise's Post Office Directories,* 1910-1920.

10   City of Perth Rate Books, 1910-1915.

11   Certificates of Title Vol. 657 Fol. 196 & Vol. 1020 Fol. 913, 8 May 1935.

12   *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, MUP, Melb., 1981, Vol. 8 1891-1939, p. 264-265.

13   Certificates of Title Vol. 657 Fol. 196 & Vol. 1020 Fol. 913; *Building and Construction*, 11 February 1938, p. 6.

> Heavy foundations were laid for the new building work. Construction is of steel frame, with reinforced concrete floors and brick walls.[14]

The contract for *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* went to local firm General Construction Co, and the sub-contractors, supplying bricks (Metropolitan Brick Co), timber and joinery (Hampton Timber & Hardware P/L), shop fronts (Arcus Ltd and Wunderlich), terrazzo flooring (Venetian Terrazzo Ltd), furniture (Boans), etc, were all West Australian companies.[15] This had also been the case for the construction of London Court.[16]

Piccadilly Arcade opened early in February 1938.

> Providing another facility for pedestrian traffic and characterised by a number of novel features, the Piccadilly Arcade is an addition to Perth's buildings which enhances the beauty of the city and reflects great credit on those concerned in its conception and construction. Extending from Hay-street to Murray-street, the new arcade permits of quick progress between these two thoroughfares and its pleasing combination of modernity, utility and beauty will be readily appreciated by both the populace of Perth and visitors.
>
> [Piccadilly Arcade] consist[s] of 37 shops and a theatre which, like the shops and the arcade, is constructed to a thoroughly up-to-date design… The shop fronts are strikingly designed and the use of chromium-plated extruded bronze and coloured vitrolite adds to the graceful effect. The sweep of line in the Arcade is artistically diversified. Midway in the Arcade, the height of the ceiling increases, so providing a variation which eliminates any possibility of monotonous repetition. Past this break in the line, the height returns to the previous dimension.[17]

Piccadilly Theatre opened a month later, on Thursday 10 March 1938.

> The opening ceremony of the new Piccadilly Theatre was performed on Thursday night by His Excellency Sir James Mitchell, when a gala performance was presented to the audience, the proceeds of which were devoted to the funds of the Children's Hospital building scheme… Embracing features new to Perth, the Piccadilly Theatre was completed in approximately seven months… The theatre has been…leased by the Grand Theatre Co. Ltd, of which Mr James Stiles is managing director, and which company also controls the Grand Theatre and the Theatre Royal in Perth, and the Princess Theatre in Fremantle.[18]

The Theatre was not the largest in Perth, seating only 1100, while the new *Hoyts Plaza* seated 1300, but its décor and amenities drew admiration. The foyers were profusely decorated with red and gold roses, pink gladioli and 'exquisite' vari-coloured dahlias, reflecting the 'special event' that theatre going represented at the time. The ladies boudoir came in for special attention as did the theatre attendants.[19]

> Off the dress circle foyer is a delightful ladies boudoir replete with mirrors, lounge chairs, smokers' stands and toilet requisites, a luxurious spot which must appeal to the modern woman to whom such things are so essential. The colour scheme here, too, is artistic and on the cream walls are quaint mural sketches.

14 *Building and Construction*, 11 February 1938, p. 6.
15 ibid, pp. 4-5 & 11 March 1938, pp. 4-9.
16 Colebatch, Hal *Claude de Bernales: The Magnificent Miner*, Hesperian Press, Perth, 1996, pp. 111-114.
17 *Building and Construction*, 11 February 1938, p. 4-5.
18 ibid, p. 4.
19 *Building and Construction*, 11 March 1938, p. 4; *West Australian*, 11 March, 1938, p. 14.

The theatre attendants are smartly uniformed, the girl ushers' attire being specially smart and attractive. Their short black wool de chine frocks are finished down the front of the bodices with two rows of white pearl buttons, and over them are worn short white silk linen cape-coat effects rather suggestive of a military nurse's cape. White gauntlet gloves, one tucked into the waist, lend a trim finishing note. Attendants at the sweet counter in the foyer wear bright blue and white uniforms with blue halos with Piccadilly in gold lettering.[20]

Building and Construction gave a detailed description of the theatre, emphasising the modernity of the Art Deco features.

The cantilevered structure above the theatre entrance is faced in black glass and is a striking feature. On this is carried the theatre name in chrome letters. From the arcade to the lower foyer above the walls of the staircase are finished in black and white agate vitrolite, fluted mirrors, and mirrors on which are modern sandblasted designs. The ceiling of the staircase is finished generally in mirrortiles and mirrorsheet. The decorative scheme in the lower foyer incorporates flush moulds. Two isolated piers are passed on entering the stalls, which are faced entirely in vitrolite. The upper foyer and mezzanine foyer which serve dress circle patrons, have been treated so as to form one united group, with an imposing and wide flight of steps linking the two. The decorative scheme in the foyers is in deep ivory tinted with pastel shades and various flush moulds of silver. A panel of sandblasted etchings on mirrored plate are set up at the western end of the foyer. The lighting of the upper foyer is provided by means of a raised dome, while laylights provide the necessary illumination for the mezzanine foyer. This lighting, with striplite wall brackets, gives a feeling of spaciousness and comfort. A fairly long approach to the upper foyer on the same level is a feature of the plan, the walls and ceiling adjacent to the lift being finished entirely in silver, with coloured figure sketches. The ladies boudoir opening off the left approach is finished throughout in silver, with etched motifs sketched in scarlet and blue.

There is an island ticket box, handsomely finished in black and chrome-plated metal, while the booking office is provided adjacent to the main stairway, and opposite this the 25-passenger lift provides easy access to all foyers from the arcade level. The two large showcases are provided on the western side of the theatre entrance on the arcade level for the display of theatre advertisements…

The ceiling of the theatre entrance, or lobby, continues in an unbroken line to the front of the street awning, so that passers by on the footpath immediately come under the arcade ceiling. Two small steps in the awning ceiling are provided with changeable illuminated programme signs, which confront people using the Hay-street footpath from either direction. The face of the awning is also provided with a changeable letter illuminated programme sign… The frontage of the building is adorned by a beautiful Neon Sign, built by the Neon Electric Co… to the design of the architects. The sign incorporates the new Daylight White tubing over chromium letters, which is flashing alternately with Marine Green tubing. The general illumination of the entrance is provided by two continuous chromium and glass box type fittings, one 27 ft long and the other 14 ft long, and, as a feature, a 5 ft. diameter stack of sandblasted plate forms the principal lighting fixture diagonally opposite the main stairway.

Modelled figure panels in the main ceiling over the crossover and on the side walls of the stalls add interest to the auditorium. The general design of the auditorium relies on continuity of line, with a rhythmic movement in the opposing cross bands at the centre… The whole design of the auditorium has been worked out to provide elimination of visible lights and to give a diffused light restful to the eye. The main ceiling has six lines of concealed lighting illuminating the auditorium by reflection. The design of the proscenium is such as to blend the whole by colour treatment into the auditorium wall treatment, and is floodlit from the balcony front, accenting the beauty of detail and silver accenting of moulds… The focal point

20   *West Australian*, 11 March, 1938, p. 14.

> in the auditorium is provided by a beautiful green-gold curtain side floodlit to accent its beauty. A second silver curtain will ultimately be provided...

> Throughout the auditorium the chairs provide something unique in the way of theatre seating, the lounge chairs being high backs and shaped to give added comfort. The covering of the chairs is a departure from the usual drab and over practical theatre chair cover. The carpeting [imported] and furnishing throughout the foyers and approaches has been given special consideration, each piece of furniture being designed by the architects to fit its position in the completed scheme. Specially designed flower stands have been provided to accommodate large masses of blooms, which it is intended to use as the basis of the foyer decoration.

> Jarrah has been largely used in the construction of this modern theatre while light coloured sycamore and maple timber have been used for embellishments. The Piccadilly Theatre is the first theatre in Western Australia to be air conditioned (as distinct from mechanical ventilation) and is thus brought into line with the latest theatres in the Eastern States and overseas.[21]

The 'modelled figure panels' referred to were bas relief friezes of dancing girls and 'Atlas type' figures which were moulded by Perth sculptor Edward Kohler.[22] Edward Kohler (1890-1964) studied sculpture in France and Belgium between 1928 and 1932. He joined the Ajax Plaster Company on his return to Perth and through them, and their association with Wunderlich, he produced a number of bas reliefs for Perth buildings in the 1930s, including the UWA Agriculture building, Emu Brewery, and Karrakatta Crematorium, as well as Piccadilly Theatre. His statues include the Talbot Hobbs memorial on Riverside Drive, Brother Paul Keaney at Bindoon Catholic Agricultural College, and Brisbane's George V memorial. He also produced numerous religious statues and carvings.[23]

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade was designed in Inter-War Functionalist style, the modern architectural style which reflected the hope and optimism that prevailed following the end of the Depression. During a short building boom in the late 1930s a number of movie theatres, and business and commercial buildings, were constructed or remodelled along Inter War Functionalist lines.[24]

Architect William Leighton began his architectural training in 1921, as an apprentice in the offices of Allen and Nicholas, Fremantle, at the age of sixteen. In 1928, he worked for Bohringer, Taylor and Johnson on the *Ambassadors Theatre*, Hay Street, before undertaking work for them, and for others, in Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand where he specialised in theatre design.[25] In 1936, Leighton returned to Perth and joined Alfred Baxter Cox. In this partnership, Leighton was involved in the construction and refurbishment of a number of theatres and cinemas, including the

---

[21]   *Building and Construction*, 11 March 1938, pp. 4-9; copies of original drawings accompanying National Trust assessment prepared by Art Deco Society of WA, 1994.

[22]   *Traces of the Past. The National Trust Register of the Built Heritage of WA*. CD-ROM, n.d.

[23]   Taylor, Robyn, 'Edward F Kohler, Perth Sculptor 1890-1964', In Bromfield, David (ed) *Essays on Art and Architecture in Western Australia*, UWA Centre for Fine Arts, 1988, pp. 1-7.

[24]   *Building and Construction*, 1937-1938; Thorne, Ross *Cinemas of Australia via USA*, Uni. of Sydney, 1981.

[25]   Geneve, Vyonne, 'William Thomas Leighton Cinema Architect of the 1930s' In Bromfield, David (ed) *Essays on Art and Architecture in Western Australia*, UWA Centre for Fine Arts, 1988, pp. 13-20.

Windsor Theatre, Claremont, and the *Como*, (later *Cygnet)* in Como, the *Metro,* William Street, the *State Theatre*, Mt Lawley (which became the *Astor),* the *Ambassadors Theatre,* Hay Street, and the *Princess Theatre*, Fremantle. After serving in the armed forces during World War Two, he worked for the PWD for twelve months, before entering into a partnership with Hobbs and Winning in 1945. In that partnership he worked on the Fremantle Harbour Administration Building and Overseas Passenger Terminal, the Amphitheatre for the War Memorial at Kings Park, Bethesda Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital, and Bible House in St George's Terrace. With his architect son, Garry, he also designed eleven drive-in theatres, including the *Lakeway*, *Melway, Eastway, Highway, Beachline, Parkline, Starline* and *Metro.*[26]

There are obviously some similarities, and repeated Art Deco motifs, in Leighton's theatres. A mask motif on the façade of the Piccadilly Theatre is repeated on the wall of the outer vestibule of the *Windsor Theatre.*[27]

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade remained under the ownership of Piccadilly Arcade Pty Ltd until 1978, when it changed hands a few times. In 1983, the owners Australian Fixed Trust (Permanent Trustee Nominees, Canberra) made a decision to restore *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade*, and it was closed for refurbishment. Perth architect, Ian Tucker, was responsible for the work. The place reopened in March 1984.

> A transformation has taken place in the heart of Perth, and what was a "quaint elderly lady", Piccadilly Arcade, is now a stunning achievement for architect Mr Ian Tucker's skill.
>
> The $2 million facelift has made the arcade an inviting place to shop or browse, with soft lighting and an elegant Art Deco style. Pink and salmon shades highlight the beautiful pink and grey Portuguese marble paving and bay-windowed stores… Major changes to the Piccadilly Theatre have created room for three more stores and a brilliant vaulted glass entrance from the Hay Street Mall….
>
> With the extensive renovations that have been carried out, the Piccadilly is once more at the forefront of Perth's theatres. Seating capacity is less than the older premises, but luxurious comfort awaits, and the atmosphere is conducive to enjoyment of cinema… The original stage curtain is retained still glistening and adding credence to the old adage that if you buy quality, it lasts.[28]

Ian Tucker was born in Perth in 1946, and studied architecture at Perth Technical College and the University of Western Australia, where he worked with Peter Parkinson. After graduating in 1971, he worked with Leighton Contractors. He undertook a number of overseas study tours, and developed a private practice primarily in commercial architecture. Ian Tucker won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (WA Chapter) 1986 Architecture Design Award for Renovated Buildings with his work on *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade*.[29] The jury comments were:

> The cinema and arcade have been remodelled and rejuvenated with the existing art-décor forms being freely interpreted as a motif. The architect has developed a consistency in the use of design elements throughout the shopping arcade while emphasising the definition of each shop with projecting display windows, dividing

---

[26]   ibid.

[27]   Geneve, Vyonne, 'Versions of Modernism in Western Australian Cinema, 1930-1940'
         (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991), vol. 1, p.114, quoted in
         HCWA assessment *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands.*, p. 7.

[28]   *West Australian,* 19 March 1984, p. 39-41.

[29]   *The Architect*, Vol. 26 No. 3, 1986, p. 25.

black columns and black patterning in the floor tiling. Decorative lighting has been used to reinforce the pattern of the architectural elements.

The jury considered that throughout the project, the selection of materials and the attention to detail respond to and enhance the existing ornamental detail and character.[30]

In an interview following the award, Ian Tucker stated:

I think that what we have created at Piccadilly is a stage set in which people enjoy going shopping. That's basically what we set out to do... I don't think that anything that I do will last more than 10 or 12 years. Maybe little bits will carry through in time. We throw away everything else, we may as well throw away our buildings. In five years Piccadilly will be out of fashion.[31]

Following the refurbishment, *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* was purchased for a reported $9.9 million by Alistair Norwood, owner of the Jeans West company.[32] In 1992, *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* was purchased by current owners Winston Holdings Pty Ltd, Su-Rama Holdings Pty Ltd and Ayoman Pty Ltd, as tenants in common.

Piccadilly Theatre has been developed into a three-cinema complex in the 1990s. It is reported to have a ghost, claimed to be a former manager.[33] The shopping arcade continues in its commercial function.

13. 2   PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade is a low-rise, masonry building which extends between the Hay and Murray Street malls in the Perth city centre. A retail arcade at street level provides a thoroughfare between the two malls with retail tenancies located either side of a central passage. A laneway occupies a portion of the site in the north-west corner providing service access from and fire-escape egress to Murray Street. Basement areas include service and storage facilities but are not continuous under the length of the building. Three cinemas with a common foyer space are located in the upper levels at the Hay Street end of the building.

Some fabric remains from buildings existing on the site prior to the main development of the *Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade* which opened in 1938. The place was remodelled in 1983-84 and a further two cinemas were added in the 1990s. The building retains stylistic characteristics of each of these periods and is representative of both the Inter-War Functionalist and Late Twentieth-Century Post-Modern styles[34]. The characteristics of the former style are concentrated in and around the original cinema and include the geometric curved massing with an emphasis on horizontal and vertical stream lining as exhibited in the parallel line motifs, stylised lettering, bas-relief ornamentation and the selection of materials such as chrome handrails and vitrolite cladding. Characteristics of the later style are evident in the pedestrian arcade and entry statements. Ornamental arches which unexpectedly disappear into the ceiling are an allusion to classical architecture, with a 'twist'. Other characteristics

---

[30]   ibid, p. 43.

[31]   ibid,, pp. 25 & 32.

[32]   *Western Mail*, 6-7 September 1986, p. 61.

[33]   *West Australian*, 15 March 2000, p. 7.

[34]   Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, pp. 188-191 & 264-267.

include some stepped profiling; glazed barrel vault and grid-like, curtain wall glazing; and the pastel colour scheme.

The building structure is principally of rendered and painted masonry wall construction, with concrete floors. The roof is not visible from the street but is comprised of a number of sections. Gable ended corrugated sheet metal cladding cover the greatest proportion of the roof but the middle section includes a portion of fibre cement cladding. A skillion roof and glazed barrel vault also form part of the roof structure. The upper level of the arcade at the Murray Street end has areas of timber floor and a decorative, pressed metal ceiling which are likely to be part of the early buildings on the site.

The place has prominent entry statements over the arcade openings at each mall. The Hay Street end is a roughly symmetrical composition with a central section comprising a glazed barrel vault over the arcade opening, with a curtain wall of reflective glazing, divided with grid-like mullions above. Italicised lettering, 'The Piccadilly' and a bird emblem stand just proud of the glazed surface. The symbolism of this motif is unclear. To each side of this glazed section are masonry elements displaying vertical emphasis in relief in the render and a horizontal cornice frieze. A round bas-relief mask has been applied to the east masonry element.

The elevation steps back to reveal a further facade set-back from the street at the upper level. A curved tower with a central vertical strip window is the dominant form in this composition while the remaining facade contains three glass block windows, wide horizontal coursing in the render, stylised lettering and a frieze along the parapet.

The Murray Street entrance features a more modest version of the barrel vault used at the upper arcade opening. The modelling of the facade has a strong horizontal emphasis with parallel lines in the render, a band of fenestration and a parapet cornice frieze stretching across the width of the building. The proportions of the four windows which have narrowly spaced horizontal metal mullions contribute to the stream lined effect. Stylised lettering, 'The Piccadilly' is located centrally above the band of windows.

The tunnel-like interior of the arcade has a rhythmical quality created by consistency in construction detail of the individual tenancies and the use of repetitive elements along the length of the arcade. The floor has a moderate incline to Murray Street and is paved with marble tiles. A similar material is used in the plinths of the retail outlets. Above, the clear glazing of the projecting shop fronts is framed on four sides with painted metal tubes which assist in defining the individual tenancies. The suspended ceiling features a series of partially revealed, semi-circular arches along the length of the arcade. These purely decorative items, having no structural function, were introduced in the 1983-84 remodelling of the arcade. The arches are incomplete with the upper segments appearing to be above ceiling level. There are a number of changes in ceiling level as the arcade falls towards Murray Street and a greater portion of the arch is revealed where the floor to ceiling dimension reaches its maximum height. The use of the arch is an allusion to a classical, semi-circular arch form and is a characteristic of the Post-Modern style where historic references are incorporated into the structure, in this case as ornamentation and often with an unexpected 'twist'.

Approximately half way down the length of the arcade, access is provided to the neighbouring building to the west and to the service laneway to Murray Street via an external stair. A dome is located in the ceiling above this pivot point in pedestrian traffic. Basement service rooms are accessed by a staircase

concealed behind locked doors towards the upper end of the arcade on the east side. Another more public staircase at the lower end of the arcade provides access to the basement and also to the few upper level tenancies and staff toilets. The front tenancy above Murray Street and rear tenancy stretch across the width of the arcade with a central passage dividing the remaining tenancies. The Hobby Shop at the rear is a two-level tenancy with an internal staircase. At the upper level, the pressed metal ceiling and timber floor of the showroom may be evidence of the earlier structures on the site constructed in the early twentieth-century. Doors, windows and masonry construction within this area are also characteristic of this period. A rear work room with sloping ceiling appears to have been enclosed and created from a former verandah. Windows from this area look onto the rear wall of the theatre.

The theatre is entered via a staircase on the west side of the arcade close to the Hay Street Mall. Finished with hard reflective surfaces including chrome handrails, marble floor tiles, and wall cladding of black vitrolite, smoked panels and mirrors, the staircase leads to an intermediate level giving access to the upper level tenancy above the Hay Street Mall and the two secondary cinemas. It is understood that this tenancy now occupies the space of a former cinema lounge. The main cinema foyer is located up a further flight of stairs. This is a largely open space with the 'Candy Bar' and ticket office and some seating located to the sides of the room. The space features curved geometric forms and highly modelled ceiling, all typical of the Art Deco period. A graduated pink paint scheme has been applied to the bands of plaster of the wall surfaces with darker colours at floor level shifting to lighter colours at the ceiling. Light fittings and furniture are sympathetic to the 1930s period of construction.

The place is well maintained in accordance with the high public use of the place both as pedestrian traffic en route through the city and cinema patrons. It is possible that more original fabric remains behind current surfaces having been concealed in the remodelling of the place in the 1980s. This is difficult to determine without more intrusive investigation.

13. 3   COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Piccadilly Theatre and Arcade was one of a small number of commercial complexes constructed in the Perth city centre in the late 1930s, among them *Hoyts Plaza Theatre and Arcade* and *London Court Arcade*.

The Piccadilly Theatre is one of a number of theatres and cinemas designed by William Leighton in this period. Others were the *Windsor Theatre*, Nedlands, and the *Como*, (later *Cygnet*) in Como, which were both under construction in 1937-38. *The Regent Metro* (1927), in William Street, redeveloped as the *Metro* (not extant), the *State Theatre* (c. 1914) in Mt Lawley, which became the *Astor*, the *Ambassadors Theatre* (1929) in Hay Street (not extant), and the *Princess Theatre*, Fremantle, were all refurbished by Leighton in the late 1930s in Art Deco style.

13. 4   REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment prepared by Art Deco Society of WA.

13. 5   FURTHER RESEARCH

Further drawings may be located within Perth City Council Archives.