



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

The place does not have the cultural heritage significance to meet the condition for entry in the State Register under section 38 of the Heritage Act 2018

1. **DATA BASE No.** 1831
2. **NAME** Windsor Theatre, Nedlands (1937)  
**FORMER NAME (or OTHER NAMES)** Windsor Cinema
3. **LOCATION** 98-100 Stirling Highway, Nedlands
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**  
Lot 123 on Diagram 10957 being the whole of the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 1452 Folio 663.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Nedlands
6. **CURRENT OWNER**  
Independent Cinemas Pty Ltd
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
  - Register of Heritage Places: \_\_\_\_\_
  - National Trust Classification: 03/12/1990
  - Town Planning Scheme: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Municipal Inventory: Removed July 2020
  - Register of the National Estate: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Aboriginal Sites Register: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Survey of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture: 01/03/1988
8. **ORDERS UNDER SECTION OF THE ACT**  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands*, a two storey masonry cinema building constructed in 1937 in the Inter-War Functionalist style, with additions and modifications c. 1980s-1990, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

with its distinctive form and central tower, the place is a landmark on Stirling Highway, albeit that much of the fabric has been modified over time;

the place illustrates the general optimism and popularity of cinema entertainment in Western Australia in the 1930s, following a period of economic depression;

the place is an austere example of a cinema designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style, that exhibits design elements typical of the style such as contrasting horizontal and vertical motifs, asymmetrical massing of geometric forms, a cantilevered balcony, as well as Art Deco style moulding and floral motifs;

the place illustrates the design work of architectural firm Baxter Cox in conjunction with William Leighton, who was well known for his many cinema and theatre designs in Western Australia; and,

the place is valued by the community as a place of cinema entertainment, and by the Art Deco Society and others who have lobbied for its protection.

The lounge area to the western section of the cinema that forms part of the 1987-1990 extension works is of no significance.

## **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 3.21 Entertaining for profit
- 8.1 Organising recreation
- 8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests
- 8.13 Living in Cities and suburbs

### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 112 Technology and technological change
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 407 Cultural activities

#### **11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history**

As an example of a suburban Perth cinema constructed in the Inter-War period, the *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* illustrates the general optimism and popularity of cinema entertainment in Western Australia in the 1930s, following a period of economic depression.

#### **11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is a good representative example of a 1930s suburban cinema, many of which were designed in the Inter-War Functionalist and Art Deco architectural styles, which reflected the hope and optimism of the period.

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* demonstrates the new functional approach to cinema design in Western Australia in the late 1930s, in which one projection unit was used for both the indoor auditorium and outdoor picture garden, which was an innovation of the time.

#### **11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;**

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is valued by the local and wider community, as evidenced by its ongoing use as a suburban cinema since its construction in 1937, and by the Art Deco Society and others who have lobbied for its protection.

**11(f)<sup>1</sup> Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;**

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is an austere example of a cinema designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style that exhibits design elements, typical of the style such as contrasting horizontal and vertical motifs, asymmetrical massing of geometric forms and a cantilevered balcony, as well as Art Deco style moulding and floral motifs.

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* with its prominent central tower is a landmark on Stirling Highway in Nedlands.

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is an example of the theatre design work of architectural firm Baxter Cox in conjunction with William Leighton who was well known in Western Australia for his cinema and theatre designs.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

Continuous use and routine maintenance over the years has kept *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* in generally good condition. There are isolated areas where the condition is fair to poor, generally in areas not in use such as behind the former proscenium arch (now removed) and inside the former ticket box.

**12.2 INTEGRITY**

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state

There have been a number of changes to the external appearance of *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* namely the tower extension, alterations to the front canopy including new signage and a new theatre in a side extension that replaced the outdoor picture garden. In addition to this there have been changes to projection and sound technologies, air conditioning has been introduced and there have been changes to the original internal finishes and details. Overall, the main building fabric has been retained with additions made that could be reversible if desired. Given the above, the place retains a moderate degree of integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.  
For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

### **12.3 AUTHENTICITY**

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* continues to be used as a cinema and as such retains a high degree of authenticity with the essential operation and layout of the building remaining the same.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage in December 2019, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands*, is a two storey masonry cinema built in 1937, in the Inter-War Functionalist style, and modified c1990. It is located on a busy intersection on Stirling Highway in Nedlands.

Noongar *boodja* (country) covers the entire south-western portion of Western Australia from Jurien Bay to Esperance. Noongar people lived in family groups and those living in and around the Perth area were collectively known as the Whadjuk. The Whadjuk relied on the ocean, the Swan River and the freshwater lakes that once lay between the coast and the Darling scarp for food and moved seasonally through across the country<sup>2</sup>. This way of life was disrupted by the arrival of colonists from 1829 onwards who established farms and settlements, often to the detriment of Aboriginal people.

Following the discovery of gold in Western Australia in the 1890s, suburbs close to Perth, such as Nedlands, experienced a dramatic increase in population due to the unprecedented rise in migration to the State. Development continued during the first decades of the Twentieth Century, with the extension of Perth's tram services through Subiaco, along Broadway to Nedlands Park and another tramline direct from Perth along Mounts Bay Road. Nedlands Park became a popular recreation area following the construction of the Nedlands Park Hotel in 1908, and the jetty and Crawley Baths.<sup>3</sup>

Further development of the Nedlands area stalled during World War I, but recovered quickly post-war with many ex-servicemen and their families settling in the area with the aid of War Service Loan Schemes. Significant development occurred during the inter-war period, with an increasing number of houses constructed, as well as recreational and sporting facilities, schools and churches. This period also saw an increase in the reliance of motorised transportation, particularly along major routes such as the Perth to Fremantle Road, which was renamed Stirling Highway in 1930.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1930s, several notable buildings were constructed along Stirling Highway including *Nedlands Post Office* (P4620 RHP), *Captain Stirling Hotel* (P1832 RHP), the two storey block of apartments the *Maisonettes* (P3227 RHP), Nedlands Roads Board Office (P13645) and the Tudor style Renkema Buildings (P13700). Adjacent to the *Windsor Theatre*, the two-storey Inter-War Functionalist Commercial Building was constructed in 1937 (P13669).

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<sup>2</sup> Kaartdijin Noongar – Noongar Knowledge, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/> downloaded on 17 October 2019

<sup>3</sup> *Nedlands Post Office (fmr)* (P4620) Heritage Assessment Documentation, Heritage Council of Western Australia, May 2013, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, Jenny., Protecting Middle-Class Suburbia: An Ideal Space for the Citizens of Inter War Perth', in *Studies in Western Australian History*, No. 17 (1997), p79, 81

In the 1930s, following the period of the Great Depression, a visit to the cinema was a popular and inexpensive form of escape from the depressed economic situation, and as a result, a considerable amount of money was invested in the entertainment business. This investment was reflected in the number of cinemas built or remodelled in this period as Western Australia began to recover economically.<sup>5</sup> In the Nedlands area, the demand for cinemas began as early as 1929, with the opening of the Claremont and Dalkeith Picture Gardens, seating 600 patrons and 300 patrons respectively.<sup>6</sup>

During the mid-1930s, rival theatre companies sought to establish a theatre in the expanding wealthy middle class suburb of Nedlands in order to compete with the new and refurbished cinemas in the city and nearby suburbs.<sup>7</sup> Mr E. P. Nelson of Claremont District Pictures, owned one of the largest 'moving picture circuits' in the State, but sold his interests in Kalgoorlie-Bolder, Wiluna and Northam to focus on other areas including Perth and Bunbury. Theatres owned by Nelson included the *Lyric Theatre, Bunbury* (P374 RHP), *Princess Theatre, Bunbury* (P5696 demolished in 1974), the *Lyric Theatre, Katanning* and theatres in Claremont, Nedlands and Swanbourne.<sup>8</sup>

Nelson had gradually been improving the quality of his theatres. Following a world tour with his family in 1936, that included the 'Continent', America and England,<sup>9</sup> to gather information on 'modern trends' in picture theatre design,<sup>10</sup> he returned to Australia with the ambition of building better suburban theatres, and from this he took his inspiration for the design of the *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands*. The chosen architectural firm for the project was Baxter Cox, who were to design the new theatre in line with the style of cinemas being built in the United States at the time, applied to a Western Australian setting.<sup>11</sup>

The original plans for *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* are signed A. R. Baxter Cox, although architect William Leighton, who joined Baxter Cox in mid 1936, and who was noted for his cinema designs, later publicly claimed the design was his, a claim maintained by Leighton's son Garry in later years.<sup>12</sup> A perspective drawing of the proposed 'Hollywood Theatre'<sup>13</sup> in Nedlands by the architect A. R. Baxter Cox was published in the *West Australian* in December 1936.<sup>14</sup> There are no written records that can confirm whether the design can be solely attributed to Leighton, however,

5 Geneve, V. 'William Thomas Leighton: Cinema Architect of the 1930s' in Bromfield, D. (ed.) *Essays on Art and Architecture in Western Australia* (Nedlands, U.W.A. Press, 1988), p. 18.

6 Bell, M. D. *Perth: A Cinema History* (Sussex, Book Guild, 1986) pp. 56-58.

7 National Trust (W.A.) *Assessment Exposition*, 1990, p. 1.

8 'Windsor Theatre – Result of Experience', *The Daily News*, Thursday 9 September 1937, p. 13.

9 'The Nelson Circuit', *Sunday Times*, Sunday 15 August 1937, p.23.

10 'Windsor Theatre – Result of Experience', *The Daily News*, Thursday 9 September 1937, p. 13.

11 Geneve, V. *Versions of Modernism*, 1991, vol. 3, p. 31.

12 'William Leighton, artist of the art deco, dies', *The West Australian*, 14 March 1990, p.26. In correspondence to the Art Deco Society of WA dated 30 July 2012, Garry H Leighton, son of William Leighton has also stated 'that to the best of his knowledge, his father was the designer and administering architect for the Windsor'.

13 *Windsor Theatre* was originally intended to be named Hollywood Theatre - Geneve, V. 'Versions of Modernism in Western Australian Cinema, 1930-1940' (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991), vol. 1, p.112.

14 Perspective drawing of the Hollywood Theatre. *West Australian*, 19 December 1936, p. 6.

by the time *the Windsor Theatre* opened in 1937, the firm had been renamed Baxter, Cox and Leighton.<sup>15</sup>

Architect William Leighton began his architectural training in 1921, at the age of 16, as an apprentice in the offices of Allen and Nicholas in Fremantle. 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. After he joined Baxter Cox in 1936, he was involved in the construction and refurbishment of a number of theatres and cinemas, including the Claremont, the Como, (later P2404 *Cygnnet Cinema* RHP), the Metro, William Street, the State Theatre, Mt Lawley (later P2425 *Astor Theatre* RHP), the Ambassadors Theatre, Hay Street, and the Princess Theatre, Fremantle.<sup>16</sup> Of these cinemas, P2404 *Cygnnet Cinema* in Como is the most similar to the Windsor Theatre in terms of layout and formal composition. In particular, both feature a distinct curvilinear form juxtaposed alongside a vertical tower and with cantilevered canopy over the entry door.<sup>17</sup>

At the time of its construction, *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* set a new benchmark in theatre design. It was built using a variety of modern materials including a 'Fibrolite' (corrugated asbestos) roof and included neon signage. The theatre had the most up-to-date Benbow projectors and Shadotone sound equipment.<sup>18</sup>

The sound revolution in films at the end of the 1920s had created a new interest in cinema entertainment, and cinema owners were forced to convert their cinemas to suit "talkies".<sup>19</sup> *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* was purpose built to feature films with sound.<sup>20</sup> The sound revolution also meant that live performers, such as pianos or members of an orchestra, were no longer required at screenings.

*Windsor Theatre* was originally intended to be named Hollywood Theatre. Popular at the time, the name 'Hollywood' was seen to symbolise wealth and glamour, and was given to a nearby housing estate. However, the name of the proposed theatre was changed to honour the abdicated king, and newly created Duke of Windsor.<sup>21</sup>

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* was officially opened on Friday 10 September 1937, by Mr A Bennett, Chairman of the Nedlands Road Board. During the opening ceremony, he congratulated Mr. E. P. Nelson for his enterprise in erecting such a fine theatre and praised the work of the architects (Messrs. Baxter Cox and Leighton) and the builders (Messrs. W. R. Ralph and Sons) were 'heartily echoed by the audience'. The opening programme included 'Three Smart Girls', Mickey

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15 'New Link in the Nelson Circuit', *The Daily News*, Thursday 9 September 1937, p.12

16 HCWA Assessment for P2065 *Piccadilly Theatre & Arcade*, December 2002, pp 7-8.

17 *Cygnnet Theatre (formerly the Como Theatre) Conservation Management Plan*, undertaken by element in October 2018, p.82.

18 *Windsor Theatre – Result of Experience*, *The Daily News*, Thursday 9 September 1937, p. 13.

19 Honniball, J. M. H. 'The Golden Age of Cinema in Perth' in *Early Days*, vol. 8, part 6, 1982, p. 44.

20 National Trust (W.A.) Assessment Exposition, 1990, p. 2.

21 Williams, A. E. *Nedlands: From Campsite to City* (City of Nedlands, 1984) p. 134; Geneve, V. 'Versions of Modernism in Western Australian Cinema, 1930-1940' (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991), vol. 1, p.112.



Mouse and Popeye cartoons amongst other offerings.<sup>22</sup> The new theatre would be operated by Independent Theatres Ltd and managed by Lionel Hart.<sup>23</sup>

The theatre's auditorium was designed to seat 1,000 people,<sup>24</sup> arranged on a single, sloping floor separated into stalls and a lounge by circulation space. This layout had previously proved successful in cinemas in Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>25</sup> Due to the popularity of outdoor picture gardens with cinema-goers at this time, *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* also incorporated an outdoor picture garden to the west.<sup>26</sup> The picture garden could seat up to 800 patrons on canvas deckchairs on a grassed area.<sup>27</sup>

Like a number of other indoor/outdoor cinemas, *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* featured a dual purpose 'bio box'. It also featured a unique and innovative system of mounting the projectors on a trolley, which could be easily wheeled in or out to service either the indoor or outdoor screen.<sup>28</sup> This innovative idea was repeated by Leighton in the design of the *Cygnets Theatre*, in Como (P2404 RHP), which was completed six months after the *Windsor Theatre* opened.

For the next 30 years, cinema remained one of the most popular forms of entertainment. However, the advent of television in the 1950s had a catastrophic effect on the cinema industry, and many cinemas in Perth and the suburbs were forced to close due to lack of patronage.<sup>29</sup>

Under the management of Lionel Hart, the *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* was modernised in 1965, in time for the screening of 'Lawrence of Arabia'.<sup>30</sup> Air conditioning was installed and alterations included new panelling to the entrance and foyer, and the installation of new chandeliers. The new air-conditioning made the indoor Auditorium more comfortable than the picture garden, which was suffering from increased traffic noise on Stirling Highway, distracting patrons at the screening of films. After 1965, the gardens were used infrequently and the picture garden screen was eventually removed in 1978.<sup>31</sup>

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* was damaged by a fire in the early 1970s, which started in an electrical switchboard located in the foyer. Damage was caused to the foyer ceiling, front entrance doors and the underside of the gallery. The entrance doors were replaced at this time with aluminium frame glazed doors.<sup>32</sup>

In 1983, Independent Cinemas Pty Ltd leased the building, the Cinema having previously closed due to lack of patronage. The building was in a state of disrepair and a limited program of repairs and renovations was undertaken to bring the

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22 *Daily News*, 11 September 1937, p. 10.

23 Ibid, Bell, M. D, p.67

24 Information provided by the current owner Roger Hunt in March 2020, states that the cinema never seated 1000 people. When purchased in 1983, there were 812 original seats.

25 *Daily News*, 9 September 1937, p. 10.

26 National Trust (W.A.) Assessment Exposition, 1990, p. 1.

27 *West Australian*, 19 December 1936, p. 6.

28 National Trust (W.A.) Assessment Exposition, 1990, p. 1.

29 Ibid, Bell, op.cit., pp 14 & 15.

30 Ibid, Bell, op.cit., p.3.

31 Ibid, Bell, op. cit., p. 67.

32 Information provided by owner Roger Hunt

building back to a usable state. It was at this time that the cinema changed its programming to become an 'Art House' venue showing independent and subtitled foreign films, which proved popular with the local community. As a result, attendance numbers slowly increased.<sup>33</sup>

In 1987, Independent Cinemas Pty Ltd purchased the building and began construction of a second auditorium seating 200 to the west on the site of the former picture garden. Cinema 2 opened in 1990 and proved to be an immediate success. A new candy bar and ticket box was constructed at this time, with the dividing wall of the original ticket office removed to enlarge an existing office space behind. In the early 1990s, the original 820 vinyl seats were removed in the original theatre (Cinema1) and the seating capacity was reduced to 500. The acoustics were also upgraded.

In 2011, the vacant adjoining shop fronting Stirling Highway was converted to house Cinema 3 and the shopfront façade infilled with a soundproof brick wall. The shop was small and was originally utilised as a cloakroom. Later it was used as an office, before hosting a variety of retail shops.<sup>34</sup> The original shallow concrete canopy over the entry doors was replaced with a new much wider canopy, with new signage above, including a new cloud shaped neon sign, all of which reflect the original Inter-war functionalist architectural style of the building. In 2020, the only remaining original Art Deco typeface lettering to the façade 'The Windsor' is painted red.

Other changes to the building include the addition of a 3 metre polystyrene clad structure to the central tower to accommodate telecommunication equipment. This has been painted to match the existing tower.<sup>35</sup> The proscenium was removed in 2019 after a horizontal section collapsed.

In March 2020, the *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* was forced to close its doors due to the worldwide outbreak of Covid19, and the subsequent restrictions on public gatherings. Prior to this, the place was still in use as a multiscreen cinema operated by Luna Cinemas, with a lease to 2035, with a proposal to further extend the cinema with conversion of the adjacent retail premise into an additional cinema.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is a two storey masonry cinema, built in 1937, in the Inter-War Functionalist style. It is located on Lot 123 (No.98) Stirling Highway, Nedlands, near the intersection with Dalkeith Road. The nearby *Captain Stirling Hotel*, built in 1935, is situated on the crest of the hill to the east of the *Windsor Theatre*. Though influenced by different styles, both buildings are recognised landmarks along this particular stretch of Stirling Highway. Commercial development dominates the streetscape with residential development located behind to the north and south.

The place was originally constructed as a cinema with an associated outdoor picture garden and a separate ticket office to the west, and a shopfront at the front

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<sup>33</sup> Information provided by owner Roger Hunt, on 30/12/2019. Confirmed by Site Visit by DPLH staff on 18/12/2019

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by owner Roger Hunt, on 30/12/2019

<sup>35</sup> Information provided by owner Roger Hunt, on 30/12/2019. Confirmed by Site Visit by DPLH staff on 18/12/2019

of the building to the east. The shop was also utilised as a cloakroom and had a second ticket box located in the shop wall. Prior to the outbreak of Covid19, and the subsequent restrictions on public gatherings, the place continued to be used as a cinema with the former shop/cloakroom now converted into an additional cinema. The outdoor picture garden no longer exists having been decommissioned in the 1970s. This area of land now accommodates an extension to the original building structure built between 1987 and 1990 that houses an additional cinema, storage, lounge and bathroom facilities.

### **Siting**

The *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is located to the north east corner of the lot which has an area of 2,532 m<sup>2</sup>. It comprises the main volume of the original auditorium, the extension, entrance foyer and former shop at the front. A bitumen car park is located to the west and south of the building with access off Dalkeith Road to the east. The place is located approximately 7km south west of the Perth Central Business District and approximately 2km west from the Swan River. The place is located along the section of Stirling Highway between Dalkeith and Mountjoy Road.

### **External Fabric**

The *Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is a large load bearing masonry building of varying heights between one and three stories, with a hipped corrugated asbestos cement sheet roof. Built in 1937 using a brick pier cavity wall construction, the place is representative of the Inter-war Functionalist architectural style and features contrasting horizontal and vertical motifs, asymmetrical massing of geometric forms and a cantilevered balcony. It comprises Art Deco style moulding and motifs, inspired by a mixture of floral and cinema themes. It has a painted render to the front and painted brickwork to the sides and rear.

The parapet of the front street façade conceals the hipped roof behind. The front facade has a masonry central tower, with two moulded stripes with a flat roof above. The tower is currently painted dark blue with the mouldings highlighted in red. The vertical detailing also includes the pattern of a Mayan flower at the top. There is an approximately 3m high extension to the top of the tower built of a frame structure clad with polystyrene in order to conceal telecommunications equipment. This extension incorporates a continuation of the vertical mouldings from the tower below and is also painted in the same colours that convincingly merges with the original structure to read as a single architectural component.

The bio box occupies the whole width of the street frontage on the upper level and was designed to allow the projector to be rolled to a different position, thus allowing the same projector to be used for either the indoor or outdoor screens. The bio box extends out from the western side of the tower in a streamline curve that features a cantilevered balcony with steel railings. The ground level windows below the balcony have been altered and now consist of two openings with frosted glass panels. Remnants of the original opening to this area is still evident with markings in the masonry. The bold geometric forms of the tower and curved structure are the buildings key architectural features.

The original main entrance to the cinema is defined at the base of the vertical tower and also delineated by masonry piers either side that provide a shallow recess. Entrance to the building is also provided via a set of three double doors adjacent to

this main entrance. All these original openings are still extant but with modern aluminium frame glazed doors having replaced the original timber boarded doors. There is an awning structure to the street frontage built in 1990 that spans the full width of the building and provides a weatherproof cover to the entrance doors and the adjacent former shop tenancy. The design of this awning is accentuated over the entrance doors with use of a stepped profile and curve that includes some signage. Although a modern addition, it blends in quite well with the overall architectural expression of the building. The original concrete canopy to this area was removed as it was deemed inadequate due to being too shallow with minimal street coverage and of a relatively low height.

Above the awning, the front street façade is painted render with simple detailing across the surface that is defined by a moulded band currently painted blue that flows into the original lettered signage of 'The Windsor', currently painted red. Below this signage there are three vertical bays recessed into the façade with a window opening to the top and bottom of each bay. Windows have either mounted air conditioning units within them or have been boarded over. There are a series of horizontal rendered bands to the parapet that are accentuated through being painted red.

The former shop and cloakroom located to the eastern side of the building is expressed architecturally as a single storey construction in comparison to the remainder of the building and also projects forward towards the street. In 2011, it was converted into an additional cinema with infill of the former shopfront to the street elevation. The external wall to this eastern side of the building is setback from the boundary by approximately 2m that facilitates a pedestrian access way to the side and rear of the building.

The rendered masonry of the street façade turns the corner to form a section of the eastern side elevation of the building. The materiality of this external wall then changes to grey painted brickwork in stretcher bond for the remainder of the elevation. There are a series of coupled window openings to the length of this façade, which originally accommodated timber louvres to allow ventilation to the main auditorium. These openings have since been infilled with flat painted panels as a modern air conditioning system now supersedes their requirement. A set of fire escape doors are located to the northern end of the auditorium with access through the façade onto a raised stepped area to provide change in level from internal floor level down to external ground level. Another set of fire escape doors are located further along the façade towards the rear that provide a second means of escape from the auditorium with level access onto the car park.

The rear south elevation has chamfered corners and has the same materiality of grey painted brickwork. There is a large intrusive mechanical air duct that penetrates this elevation (c1965). There is an air conditioning compound built against the rear wall jutting out into the car park.

The western side elevation incorporates the 1987-90 extension which is a simple two storey block set back from the rear elevation of the main auditorium. It is also set back from the street façade behind the curved component of the original building. The extension is of rendered masonry construction of simple detailing and no fenestration. An external ramped access to the outside provides egress from this part of the cinema.

## **Internal Layout and Details**

### **Ground Floor Level**

Entry into the building is off Stirling Highway through a series of aluminium double doors that lead into a double height foyer space. Walls to this area are of roughcast plaster with vertical mouldings and motifs to selected areas. The ceiling to this area has articulated cornice mouldings and floor construction is timber with carpet finish. Accessed off this entry foyer to the east is the former cloakroom which together with the adjoining shop, has since been converted into a new cinema with contemporary finishes, seating and equipment. The entry foyer flows through a series of masonry piers into a much larger foyer of the same detailing but single storey in height where there is a reception counter to the southern end. To the east of this main foyer are bathroom facilities with non-original fittings and cubicles. To the west is a lounge area that forms part of the 1987-90 extension to the original building.

Accessible from the lounge is the curved component of the building that originally accommodated the ticket box with a dividing wall through the middle, which has since been removed. This area is now used for office and storage and has a painted concrete floor with plastered walls. To the south of the lounge is a store room, accessible toilet and a route through to cinema 2 which are all of modern construction and finishes being part of the 1987-90 extension to the original building.

Behind the reception counter in the main foyer is access to an electrical switch room, which has been re-built in a concrete structure following damage to the previous original timer structure caused by a fire. To the east of the reception counter are a series of steps and entry doors that lead up to the main cinema auditorium. The floor structure to the auditorium is of timber construction supported on brick piers of diminishing heights to create the required fall for the tiered seating. The floor has a carpet finish. The seating is upholstered that replaced the original hard vinyl seats. The walls to the auditorium are a combination of plastered masonry with dado mouldings and painted brickwork. Full height fabric curtains have been installed to the full height of the walls to improve acoustic performance of the space. The original proscenium has been removed with a new screen installed in front, and a new ceiling has been installed behind the screen. The ceiling is lined with fibrous plaster with triangular ceiling light boxes and contemporary spotlights. The ceilings also have deep cornice mouldings and an original decorative ventilation grille running as a narrow strip along the central length of the auditorium. There are a number of modern ceiling grilles dispersed throughout to provide air conditioning. ..

### **Upper Floor Level**

To the rear of the main auditorium there is access to the projection room located at an upper floor level that is entered via a narrow door and stairs. This area encompasses the curved component of the building to the west and has a concrete floor with vinyl floor finish. Walls are plastered masonry with paint finish. Three window openings are located to the northern wall have been infilled to enable a complete black out. From this room there is an external door that provides access to the curved balcony facing the street and also an internal door to access an intermediate floor level below that accommodates a store room.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

#### Inter-War Theatres/cinemas

The WA Post Office Directory for 1940 lists about 100 picture cinemas and gardens around the State, which indicates the popularity of cinema during the inter-war period. The Historic Heritage database includes 103 places noted as having the use of theatre or cinema, including 37, which are entered in to the State Register of Heritage Places. This figure includes purpose-built cinemas, places that were constructed for live theatre and later converted into a cinema, drive-in cinemas, and places that have primarily shown live theatre.

#### Inter-War Theatres/cinemas

Of the overall 103 cinemas and picture gardens on the database, 40 were constructed between 1925 and 1940. This includes the following 10 registered places which were all purpose built Theatres/Cinemas, five of which were designed by architectural firm Baxter Cox & Leighton or by William Leighton himself:

- P02065 *Piccadilly Theatre & Arcade* (RHP) (1938) – a cinema and retail complex designed by Baxter Cox & Leighton in the Inter-War Functionalist style. The place retains a moderate proportion of its original/early fabric. The characteristics of the former style are concentrated in and around the original cinema.
- P02404 *Cygnnet Cinema*, Como (RHP) – is an excellent example of a cinema constructed in 1938 in the Inter-War Functionalist style. This cinema is the least altered of the extant cinemas in Perth designed by William Leighton and is still in use in 2020.
- P02425 *Astor Theatre*, Mount Lawley, (RHP) (1914) - Originally constructed in the Federation Free Classical style to a design by David McClure as a live theatre, the place was converted into a cinema in 1922. It was extensively renovated, in 1939, in the Inter-war Art Deco style to plans drawn by cinema architect William Leighton. The building once featured an adjoining picture garden venue (c.1920s).
- P02454 *Regal Theatre, Subiaco* (RHP) (1936-38) – designed in the Inter-War Art Deco style. There is some uncertainty over the origin of the design for the Theatre, which is said to have been based on a sketch by William Leighton, but the approved plans came from the offices of architect William G. Bennett.<sup>36</sup> The Regal Theatre is largely intact, with the exception of minor alterations resulting from its conversion to live theatre in the late 1970s.
- P00374 *Lytic Theatre, Bunbury* (RHP) (1905) - originally designed by Bunbury architect FW Steere and remodelled in the Art Deco style in 1937 following a fire with designs by W.T Leighton of the partnership, Baxter Cox & Leighton.
- P00154 *Beverley Town Hall* (RHP) (1938) – an Inter-War Functionalist style town hall and former picture gardens designed by William G.

<sup>36</sup>

*Regal Theatre, Subiaco*: conservation plan, by Hocking planning and Architecture, 2001.

Bennett. The place is the only known town hall in regional Western Australia to have been originally designed to include a picture garden.

- P01060 *Radio Theatre Building, Geraldton* (RHP) (1937) – a relatively intact example of purpose built Inter-War Art Deco Theatre, designed by prominent architect Samuel Rosenthal.
- P01574 *Cummins Theatre, Merredin* (RHP) (1928) – a substantially intact relocated theatre building that exhibits some of the design elements typical of theatres from this period such as a curved awning featuring neon signage and a shopfront adjacent to the main entrance.
- P03468 *Cremorne Theatre, Kalgoorlie* - constructed in 1907 with refurbishments undertaken in 1936 by Hobbs, Forbes & Partners, with elements of the Art Deco style.
- P3832 *Memorial Hall, Mosman Park* (RHP) (1921) - comprises an Inter-War Functionalist style hall and adjacent walled picture garden originally constructed as a town hall. Once completed also used as a cinema.

The following cinemas constructed in the Inter-War period are on the Heritage Council's assessment program to be considered for possible inclusion in the State Register:

- P2206 New Oxford Cinema, Leederville (1927) - constructed in the Inter-War Art Deco style and designed by architect S.B. Rosenthal.
- P3613 Plaza Theatre (fmr) & Arcade, Perth (1937) - originally designed by William Bennett in 1937, and completely reconstructed and redecorated by William Leighton in 1940. The Art Deco features that once characterised the place were removed in the 1980s.

Others Inter-War Cinemas/Theatres on the historic heritage database include the following places:

- P3615 Beacon Theatre, Beaconsfield (1937) – a two storey former cinema in the Inter-War Functionalist style that included picture gardens and shops. Now a commercial building and health centre. (Assessed below threshold 2007)
- P3611 Wembley Theatre and Picture Gardens (1937) – an Inter-War Art Deco theatre with adjacent picture gardens. The picture gardens were demolished in 1962. The theatre was damaged by fire in 1980, and only the façade remains.
- P186 Palace Theatre and Fun Gardens, Boulder (1937) – designed by architect J. Ochitree in the Inter-War Art Deco style. The place was removed from curtilage of Burt Street Precinct is to be considered for addition to Assessment Program as individual place.
- P3612 Civic Theatre, Inglewood (1936) – designed by architect J.S Steele, the theatre originally formed part of a complex, which included an adjoining Picture Garden (not extant) The former cinema which incorporated a clock tower was used for many years by the entertainer Max Kaye, then became the Civic Theatre Restaurant. In recent years,

it has been extended and adapted as apartments. . (Assessed as below threshold 2013)

*Windsor Theatre, Nedlands* is an austere example of a cinema designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style, the façade of which was modified in the 1990s to reflect elements of the style. It is therefore a good representative example of a 1930s suburban cinema, which reflected the hope and optimism of the inter-war period.

The P2404 *Cygnnet Theatre, Como* (RHP) is a highly intact and fine example of a cinema in the Inter-War Functionalist style, which is known to have been designed by William Leighton (of Baxter Cox and Leighton Architects), and is the least altered of the 1930s suburban cinemas of Perth that remain in operation. It is therefore, a more intact example of its type.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES.**

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#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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