

BUILDING TITLE: Regent Theatre **BUILDING ADDRESS:** 74-80 Brown Street
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: A || B || C |X| D || E || **BUILDING TYPE:** cinema
DESIGNATION: HBR Reg No File # AHC File # NT File # Class || Rec ||
CONSERVATION AREA: Gray Street Commercial area **LEVEL OF STREETScape SIGNIFICANCE:** 1 || 2 | 3 |X|
STYLE: Free Classical Revival

CONSTRUCTION DATE & ALTERATIONS:

1. 1927
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Sources:

1 *Argus*, 6 September 1927 and
Hamilton Spectator, 6 Sept 1927

MATERIALS:

Roof: corrugated iron
Walls: rendered brick
Dressings: cement render
Plinth: brick
Windows: timber dhs
Paving:
Other:

SURVEY DATE: 15/5/91 **NEG FILE:** 10/29 **REPORTER:** tfh

INTEGRITY: E || G |X| F || P || **NOTABLE FEATURES:** scale and classical detailing

CONDITION: E || G |X| F || P ||

SIGNIFICANCE: Major cinema in Hamilton and dominant element in streetscape

ALTERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Appropriate: Rec **Inappropriate:** Rec
minor changes to facade

O=reinstate original design S=reinstate sympathetic alternative R=remove RAM=remove by approved method

SIGNIFICANT OWNERS/TENANTS:	ARCHITECTS/BUILDERS:	TITLE:
land to D Cameron, 18/2/52	Frank G Richardson, architect (?)	Sec CA
Combined Victorian Theatres Limited	W T Stephens, contractor	2 20

COUNCIL COMPUTER #

MORE INFO OVER |X|

HAMDS136

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.

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC THEMES

Sport & Recreation: Theatres & Movies
Evolution of the Town: 1920s

ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS

Hamilton Town Hall (Patterson's Town Hall Pictures - 1940s)

REFERENCES

Garden, Don, *Hamilton*,
RVIAJ, November 1929, p 104.
Argus, 6 September 1927.
Hamilton Spectator, 6 September 1927.

FOOTNOTES

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- 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.