

# **HERITAGE INTERPRETATION PLAN**

## **CAPITOL THEATRE, 3-21 CAMPBELL STREET, HAYMARKET**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conservation Management Plan for the Capitol Theatre located at 3-21 Campbell Street, Haymarket. The Capitol Theatre is listed as a heritage item under Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the *Sydney Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012* as *Capitol Theatre including interior* (Item No. 1826) and on the State Heritage Register (SHR) under the *Heritage Act 1977* as *Capitol Theatre* (Item No. 00391).

The purpose of this Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) is to conceptualise the vision for 'interpretation' and highlight opportunities for interpretation based on the current use of the site and any future use. The implementation of the final Heritage Interpretation Plan will be developed in consultation with the City of Sydney. Final design of the interpretation will be subject to detailed design development in conjunction with the consultant and technical team as well as specialist designers (graphic, web design etc.) to integrate interpretation within any potential future development of the site.

This HIP highlights the historical and cultural significance of the subject site while also recommending interpretation themes and media. The historical themes and narratives that have been outlined in Section 5.2 has been informed by the historical research and summary provided in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared by Urbis in May 2019. This history has been included in Section 3 of this HIP.

Below is a summary of the key themes and narrative recommended for interpretation:

- Historic Use – highlighting the four key phases of the site from the New Belmore Market, to Wirth Hippodrome to the Capitol Theatre and the theatre restoration.
- Creative Endeavour – Highlights the use of the Capitol Theatre as an exceptional example of an atmospheric theatre inspired by the works of John Eberson, the atmospheric theatre designer.

This HIP also recommends a number of interpretation media including:

- Built form interpretation;
- Signage and historic markers:
- Digital media; and
- Events and ongoing access.

Detailed information has been included in Section 5.3 that links the media with the particular themes and suggests potential locations. This information is subject to any proposed changes to the Capitol Theatre. For this reason, this document should be reviewed by the City of Sydney Council and Foundation Theatres, should any future changes be proposed.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Urbis has been engaged by the City of Sydney Council to prepare the following Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) for the Capitol Theatre, located at 3021 Campbell Street, Haymarket, as part of a Heritage Floor Space Application.

The Capitol Theatre is listed as a heritage item under Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the *Sydney Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012* as *Capitol Theatre including interior* (Item No. 1826) and on the State Heritage Register (SHR) under the *Heritage Act 1977* as *Capitol Theatre* (Item No. 00391).

## 1.2. SITE LOCATION

The subject site, known as Capitol Theatre, is located at 3-21 Campbell Street, Haymarket and is legally described as Lot 20 of Deposited Plan (DP) 1014952 (Figure 1). The subject site is located in the southern end of the Sydney CBD near the area known as Chinatown. The Capitol Theatre is located in the centre of the block bound by Campbell Street to the north, Pitt Street to the east, Hay Street to the south and George Street to the west. The building has two frontages to the north on Campbell Street and to the south on Hay Street.

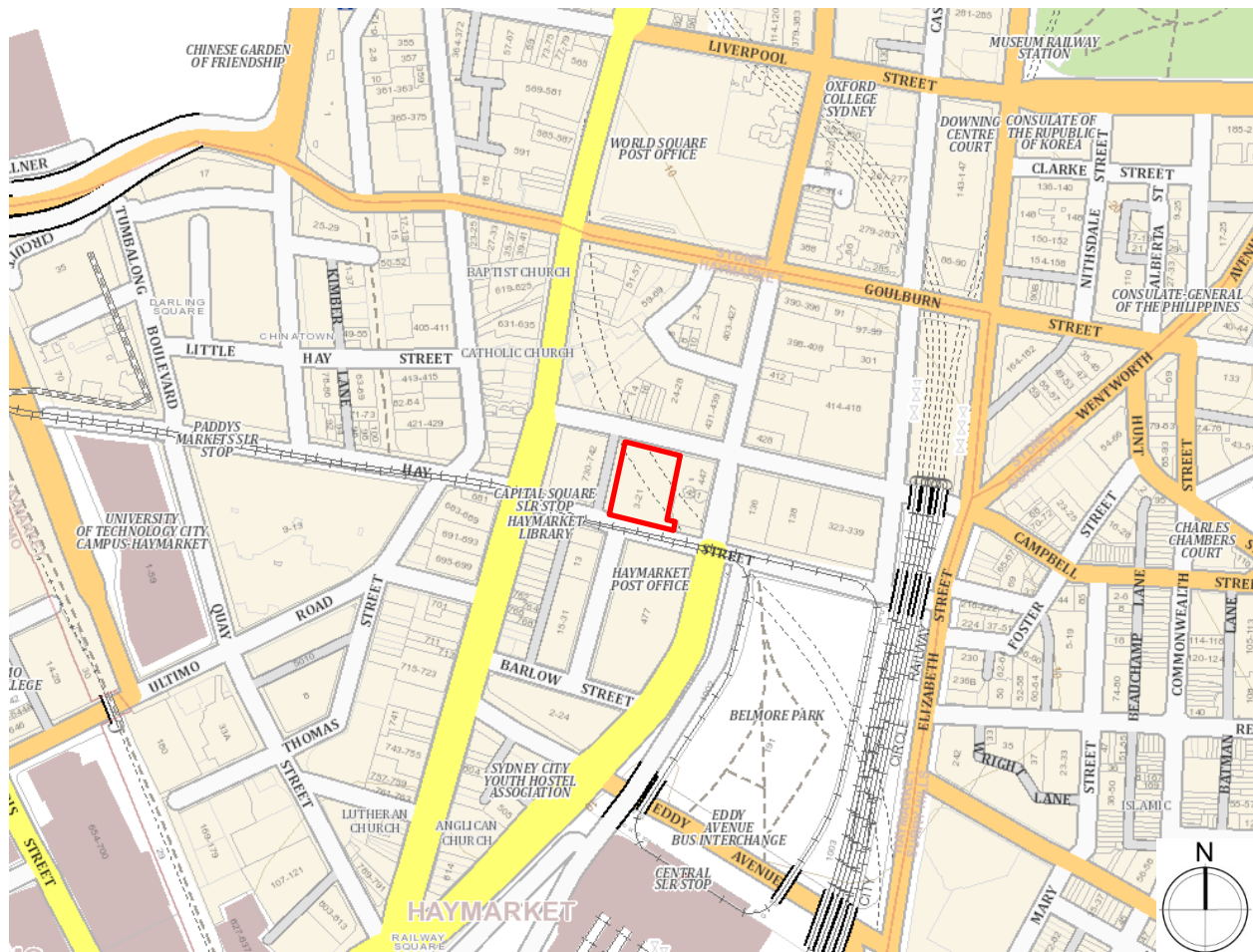


Figure 1 – Location Plan with the Capitol Theatre outlined in red.

Source: NSW LRS, SIX Maps 2018

## 1.3. METHODOLOGY

This Heritage Interpretation Plan is intended to inform and guide collaborative interpretation planning with stakeholders and relevant parties. The Heritage Interpretation Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines and relevant policy as outlined below.

### 1.3.1. Heritage Guidelines and The Burra Charter

Heritage conservation seeks to sustain the values of heritage landscapes, places and objects, individually and collectively, so that the community and visitors can continue to appreciate, experience and learn from them and about them, and so that they can be passed on to future generations.<sup>1</sup> Interpretation is an integral part of the experience of significant heritage places and the conservation and management of heritage items and is relevant to other aspects of environmental and cultural management and policy. Interpretation also incorporates and provides broad access to historical research and analysis.<sup>2</sup>

This Heritage Interpretation Plan has been prepared in accordance with the *NSW Heritage Manual*, the NSW Heritage Office *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items: Guidelines* (August 2005) and the NSW Heritage Office's *Heritage Interpretation Policy* (endorsed by the Heritage Council August 2005). The general philosophy and process adopted is guided by the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 2013 (The Burra Charter)*.

*The Burra Charter* defines interpretation as “all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance of a place*” (Article 1.17) and it may be a combination of the treatment of the fabric, the use of and activities of the place, and the use of introduced explanatory material. Interpretation should provide and enhance understanding of the history, significance and meaning of the place. Interpretation should respect and be appropriate to the cultural significance of the building (Article 25).

The NSW Heritage Office *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items: Guidelines* lists the following best practice “ingredients” for interpretation:

- 1) Interpretation, People and Culture – Respect for the special connections between people and items;
- 2) Heritage Significance and Site Analysis – Understand the item and convey its significance;
- 3) Records and Research – Use existing records of the item, research additional information and make these publicly available (subject to security and cultural protocols);
- 4) Audiences – Explore, respect and respond to the identified audience;
- 5) Themes – Make reasoned choices about themes, stories and strategies;
- 6) Engaging the Audience – Stimulate thought and dialogue, provoke response and enhance understanding;
- 7) Context – Research the physical, historical, spiritual and contemporary context of the item, including related items, and respect local amenity and culture;
- 8) Authenticity, Ambience and Sustainability – Develop interpretation methods and media which sustain the significance of the items, its character and authenticity;
- 9) Conservation Planning and Works – Integrate interpretation in conservation planning and in all stages of a conservation project;
- 10) Maintenance, Evaluation and Review – Include interpretation in the ongoing management of an item; provide for regular maintenance, evaluation and review;
- 11) Skills and Knowledge – Involve people with relevant skills, knowledge and experience; and
- 12) Collaboration – Collaborate with organisations and the local community.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Heritage Branch, Department of Planning, Heritage Information Series, Heritage Interpretation Policy August 2005, p2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 3

## **1.4. AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION**

The following report has been prepared by Keira De Rosa (Heritage Consultant). Lynette Gurr (Associate Director – Heritage) has reviewed and endorsed its content. Unless otherwise stated, all drawings, illustrations and photographs are the work of Urbis.

## **1.5. LIMITATIONS**

It is noted that the suggested content of this Heritage Interpretation Plan is indicative only and is subject to amendment prior to the implementation of the plan and graphic design.

Use of images is also contingent upon copyright permission and right of reproduction which is subject to confirmation prior to the implementation of the plan.

## **1.6. RESOURCES**

This Heritage Interpretation Plan has been prepared with reference to the Conservation Management Plan (2019) prepared by Urbis and primary research undertaken in the following repositories:

- City of Sydney Archives
- State Archives and Records
- Sydney Water/Water NSW Historical Research Facility
- State Library of NSW (Mitchell Library)
- NSW Land Registry Services
- National Library of Australia (Trove databases).

## **1.7. AIMS OF THE INTERPRETATION PLAN**

Heritage interpretation is the art of explaining the significance of a place to the people who visit it, with the objectives of promoting an understanding of its heritage values and the need to conserve it. Interpretation also involves conveying messages including the presentation of particular points of view about places and history. Interpretive methods might include, but not limited to, conservation, signage, public programs, publications, heritage trails and web sites on the internet.

This HIP will outline opportunities and recommendations for the interpretation of site and history. The historic themes and narratives have been informed by the historical research and history prepared for the Conservation Management Plan (2019), prepared for Urbis in conjunction with this document.

This HIP will also recommend interpretation media and potential locations within the subject site. It should be noted that the details that have been outlined in Section 5 are subject to change.



## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1. SITE LOCATION

The subject site, known as the Capitol Theatre, is located at 3-21 Campbell Street, Haymarket and is legally described as Lot 20 of Deposited Plan (DP) 1014952 (Figure 1). The subject site is located in the southern end of the Sydney CBD near the area known as Chinatown. The Capitol Theatre is located in the centre of the block bound by Campbell Street to the north, Pitt Street to the east, Hay Street to the south and George Street to the west. The building has two frontages, one to the north on Campbell Street and the other to the south on Hay Street.



Figure 2 – Aerial image with approximate boundaries of subject site outlined in red.

Source: SIX Maps, 2019

### 2.2. SITE SETTING

The Capitol Theatre is constructed to the lot boundaries. The building directly abuts the Manning Building to the east and Capitol Square to the west. In close proximity to the site is the Corporation Building (to the south), the Palace Hotel (to the west) and three storey terrace buildings and commercial towers on the north side of Campbell Street. The light rail line runs directly to the south of the Capitol Theatre along Hay Street. The City Circle railway line runs directly underneath the site.

The Haymarket area, particularly along Hay, George and Sussex Street, generally retains its historic fine-grained subdivision patterns, narrow frontage, informal public space and generally low scale building heights, typically around three storeys in height, which date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the area was predominantly associated with markets. However, directly to the north at Campbell Street and to the south-east toward Central Station, are of high density, mixed-use developments.





Figure 3 – Looking north-west along Hay Street, with the Haymarket Library on the left and the Palace Hotel on the right.



Figure 4 – Looking south-west from the intersection of Hay and Pitt Streets, with Capitol Theatre on the right



Figure 5 – Looking south-east from corner of Hay and George Street, with Haymarket Library and the Corporation Building (right of centre)



Figure 6 – Manning Building adjoining the site, viewed from the corner of Pitt and Campbell Streets



Figure 7 – Looking west along Campbell Street, with terrace buildings located on the right



Figure 8 – View of Hay Street elevation with Capitol Square (centre) and Capitol Theatre (right)

## 2.3. THE BUILDING EXTERIOR

The Capitol Theatre comprises of a Federation Free Classical style elevations, with additions dating to the late twentieth century. The elevation indicates phases of adaptation, reconstruction and restoration to accommodate its changing use since 1893. Fabric from each phase of its development, from the New Belmore Markets (1893), to Hippodrome (1914-1915), to theatre (1927-1928) and theatre redevelopment (1992-1995), exist within the exterior elements of the building. Due to the location of the Capitol Theatre in the middle of a block, and bound by the Manning Building to the east and Capitol Square to the west, the primary elevations visible from the public domain include the north elevation on Campbell Street, the south elevation on Hay Street, and a portions of the east and west elevations of the fly tower. The remaining west elevation is visible from within Capitol Square, which is located on the former north portion of Parker Street. The exterior of the Capitol Theatre is constructed using red face brick and rendered brickwork, sandstone, terracotta and trachyte detailing. The building has a load bearing brick structure on concrete foundations with an internal structure of cast iron posts and steel beams.

### 2.3.1. Campbell Street (North) Elevation

The public entrance to the building is located on Campbell Street. The Campbell Street elevation continues the Manning Building elevation at the ground and first floors. The elevation comprises of three levels which are regularly divided into bays by pilasters. At ground floor the brick structure of the building is rendered and painted. Trachyte plinths adorn the bases of each of the pilasters. Openings along the ground floor include entrance to the original foyer, which features eight sets of timber and glazed double leaf doors. A series of poster cases are featured either side of this entrance. Two entrances into the Box Office are located on the east side of the elevation, featuring modern glazed frameless doors. Two fire exits, with panelled timber doors, are located between the Box Office and entrance to the original foyer. A modern awning with under awning lighting is located between the ground and first floors. Tie rods support the awning with are fixed at the first floor elevation.

The first floor elevation of Campbell Street features the most detailed fabric of the elevation. Each pilaster at first floor are surmounted by moulded terracotta capitals. Sandstone string courses run across the length of elevation. The east-most portion of the elevation continues the arched openings of the Manning Building. Two large arched openings, divided by a concrete spandrel and double hung, timber framed windows are featured, with moulded brick surrounds, terracotta keystones, and moulded terracotta imposts. Moulded terracotta medallions also adorn the façade above the arched openings. The remainder of the first floor elevation is characterised by a series of five bays, with a central infilled arched opening matching that of the other arched openings, with moulded terracotta spandrels and terracotta friezes above. Four infilled stuccoed bays flank the central arched opening. Small casement windows are located above each opening. Each of these five bays are obscured by the temporary fabric theatre signage. At the western-most end of the elevation at first floor is a vertical metal sign with neon lighting reading 'CAPITOL' and neon peacock (the symbol for the Capitol Theatre).

The second floor elevation of Campbell Street has a brick pediment featuring a central semi-circular lead light window, surrounded by moulded brickwork and terracotta key stone with sandstone scroll pediment. The pediment is decorated with moulded terracotta tiles with floral motifs and features a sandstone cornice. Either side of the pediment is a brick parapet which continues the expression of pilasters from the floors below.





Figure 9 – View of Campbell Street elevation which continues the Manning Building elevation, with the Capitol Theatre elevation outlined in red.



Figure 10 – View of Campbell Street elevation which blends with the Manning Building with the Capitol Theatre elevation outlined



Figure 11 – Arched openings of Campbell Street elevation which continue from the Manning Building



Figure 12 – Pediment at Campbell Street





Figure 13 – Corner of north and west elevation



Figure 14 – Ground floor elevation of entrance to original foyer



Figure 15 – Ground floor elevation with fire doors and poster boards



Figure 16 – Ground floor elevation and Box Office entrance



### 2.3.2. West Elevation

The west elevation, located within Capitol Square, is obscured at ground floor by the series of shops built within the complex. The first floor elevation continues the detailing of the Campbell Street elevation, with brick pilasters and moulded terracotta capitals which divide the elevation into bays. The sandstone string coursing continues from the Campbell Street elevation and across the length of the west elevation. Seven blind arch openings are featured across the elevation, with moulded brick surrounds, terracotta keystones, and moulded terracotta imposts. Moulded terracotta medallions also adorn the façade above the arched openings. The second floor of the elevation continues the brick parapet from Campbell Street which continues the expression of pilasters from the two floors below.

The south portion of the elevation is the fly tower, which is visible from Hay Street. This portion of the elevation was constructed during the 1990s redevelopment works. The elevation rises to a height of around six storeys, and features indented brick banding. A large temporary poster board covers a large area of this portion of the elevation. Above is a metal and neon sign reading 'CAPITOL' with a neon peacock above. The curved metal roof of the flytower is visible above.



Figure 17 – West elevation viewed from the interior of Capitol Square



Figure 18 – West elevation viewed from the interior of Capitol Square



Figure 19 – West elevation viewed from Hay Street



Figure 20 – Flytower west elevation



### 2.3.3. Hay Street (South) Elevation

The south elevation along Hay Street continues the details of the elevations. The east portion of the elevation was constructed in the 1990s as part of the redevelopment works. The ground floor of the earlier elevation (1927) features a series of blind openings set within the bays of the pilaster. The plinths of each of the pilaster are trachyte. Sandstone arched lintels and sills decorate the smaller blind openings of the elevation. A narrow metal awning divides the ground floor from the first floor. At the first floor of the earlier elevation, are three blind arched openings with features moulded bricks, moulded terracotta keystone, spandrels and imposts. Two sandstone Juliet balconies are located either side of the arched blind openings. Above the central arched blind opening are a series of moulded terracotta garland friezes. The second floor elevation features a matching pediment to the Campbell Street elevation, with semi-circular lead-light window surrounded by moulded brick, terracotta and sandstone detailing. The pediment is enclosed by a parapet, with sandstone detailing and blind brick openings. The elevation extends to the height of the fly tower continuing the 1990s brickwork of the west elevation with indented brick bands and concrete rendered string courses. The remainder of the elevation at its east side was constructed during the 1990s and continues the brickwork of the flytower with indented brick banding and rendered concrete stringcourses. Six square openings are located at the first floor, two being blind and four with awning windows. Three metal Juliet balconies adorn the elevation at the second floor with double-leaf aluminium framed doors. A terrace with metal balustrades is featured at the third floor and steps the building back.



Figure 21 – Hay Street elevation



Figure 22 – Hay Street elevation



Figure 23 – Hay Street elevation



Figure 24 – Hay Street elevation



### 2.3.4. East Elevation

The east elevation of the building comprises fabric constructed during the 1990s, and continues the use of red brickwork with indented banding and rendered concrete string courses. At ground floor is the loading dock and stage door. At the second floor is another metal Juliet balcony with a set of double leaf aluminium doors. The third floor features the terrace. A large screen is attached to the east wall of the terrace and advertises the latest show at the theatre.



Figure 25 – East Elevation



Figure 26 – East Elevation

### 2.3.5. Roof

A new roof was installed to the Capitol Theatre during the 1990s works. The roof is divided into several sections. The main gable roof is positioned directly above the auditorium. The early gable roof over the auditorium remains below the existing roof and is clad in corrugated metal sheeting. A skillion roof extends from the gable roof to the east and extends over the new foyer and gallery. The fly tower and south-east portion of the roof feature curved roofs clad with corrugated metal sheeting. The north-east portion of the roof is flat and trafficable and covered in a waterproof membrane.



Figure 27 – Roof above east plant room and fly tower (background)



Figure 28 – Roof behind parapet on Campbell Street



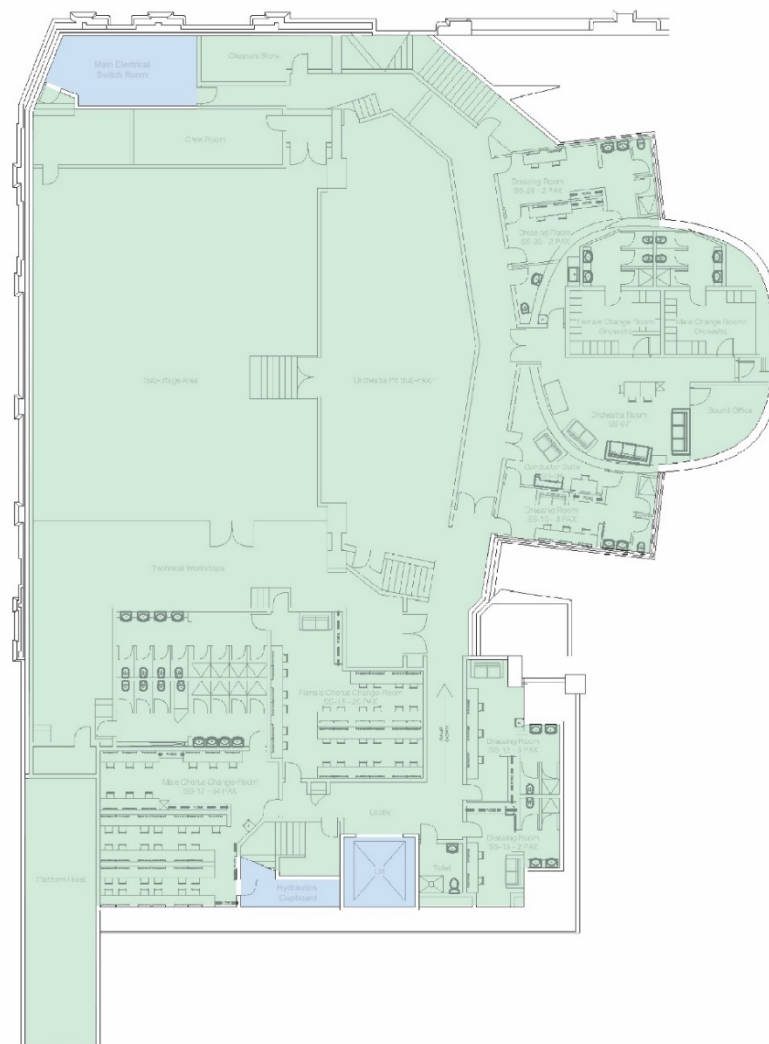
Figure 29 – North-east corner of roof

## 2.4. THE BUILDING INTERIOR

Internally, the Capitol Theatre has multiple levels including sub-stage, stage, ground, first, second and third floors. The stall and dress circle levels span across multiple levels within the auditorium. The existing floors and layout are demonstrated in the following pages 12-21. The internal spaces of the Capitol Theatre have been divided into three categories to aid in the description of the building. The three categories include Front of House, Back of House and Service Areas. These spaces within the Capitol Theatre are described in the following subsections.

The fabric of the Capitol Theatre has a detailed history of adaption, reconstruction and restoration to accommodate its changing uses. The Capitol Theatre is the last ‘atmospheric theatre’ in Australia. The atmospheric architectural style is characterised by a blue ceiling, seemingly representing the sky at night, or a “blue heaven”. The style was pioneered by John Eberson, but was implemented at Capitol Theatre by Henry Eli White in c1927, when the site was converted from a market (1893) then Hippodrome (1916) and finally into a theatre. For further information about atmospheric theatres, refer to Section 3.2.2.

Within the Capitol Theatre, there is a clear distinction between the fabric of the 1920s atmospheric theatre and the spaces which were created during the 1990s restoration and reconstruction works. The 1920s fabric of the atmospheric theatre is only located within the Front of House spaces, while the Back of House and Service Areas are new additions to the building with contemporary fabric.



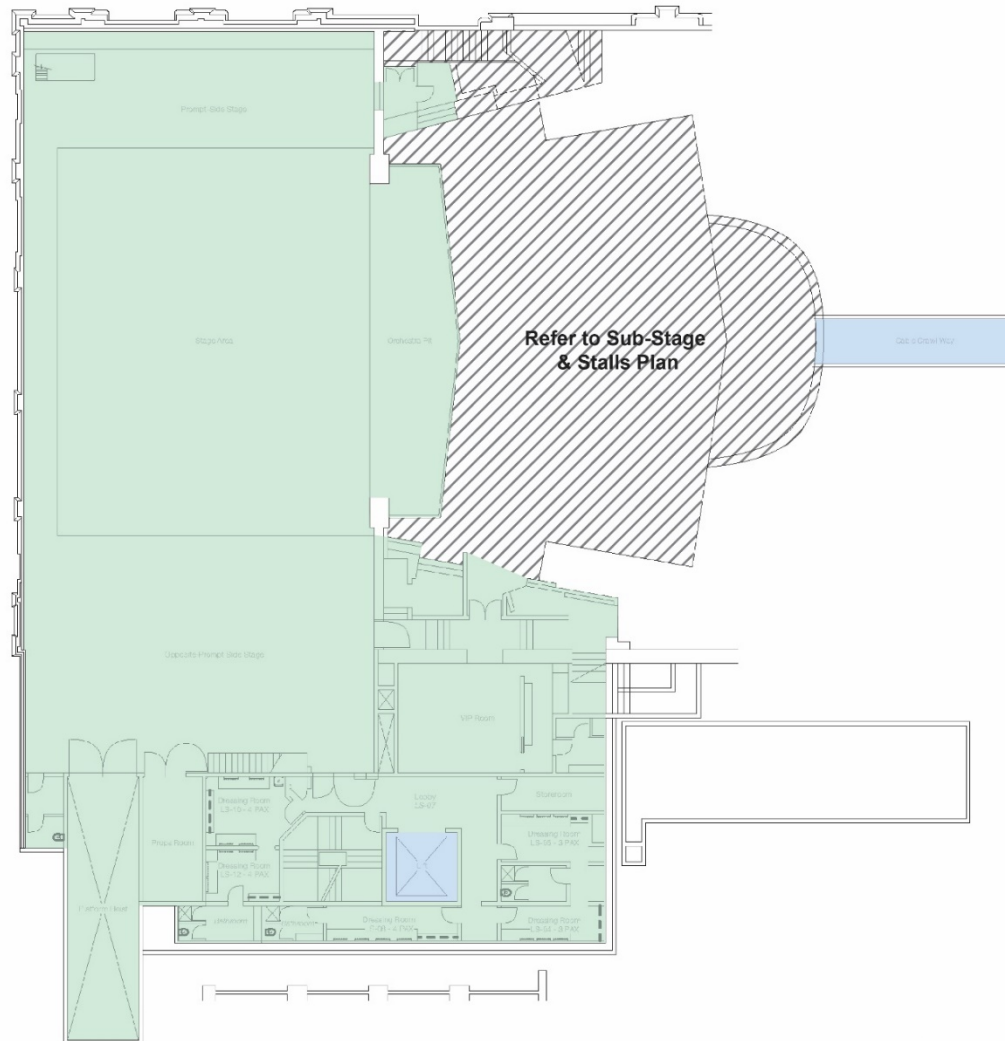
## BUILDING COMPONENTS

Sub-Stage Level

### Key

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

Figure 30 – Sub-stage level building components



## BUILDING COMPONENTS

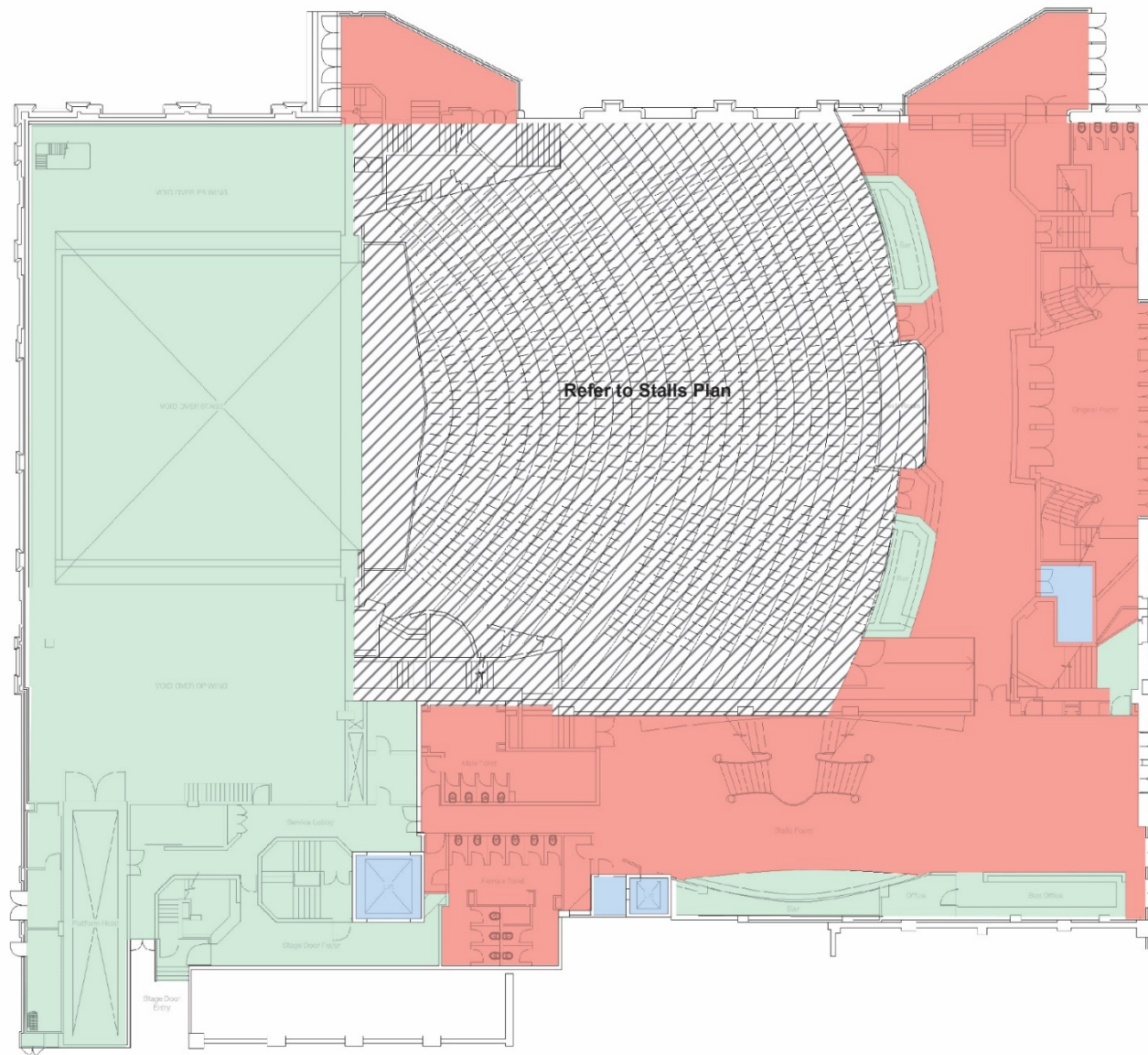
Stage Level

### Key

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

Figure 31 – Stage level building components





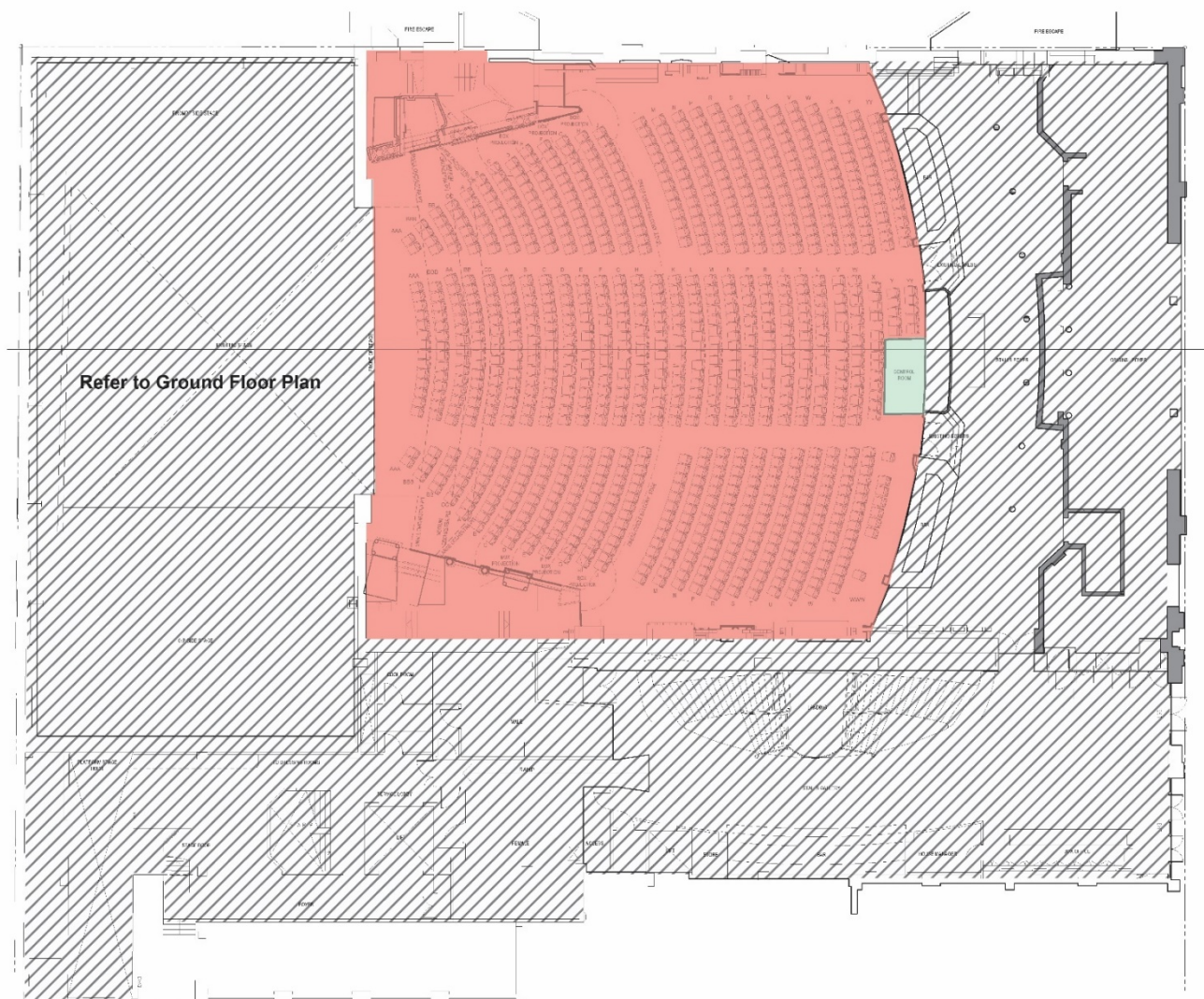
## BUILDING COMPONENTS

Ground Floor

### Key

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

Figure 32 – Ground floor building components



## BUILDING COMPONENTS

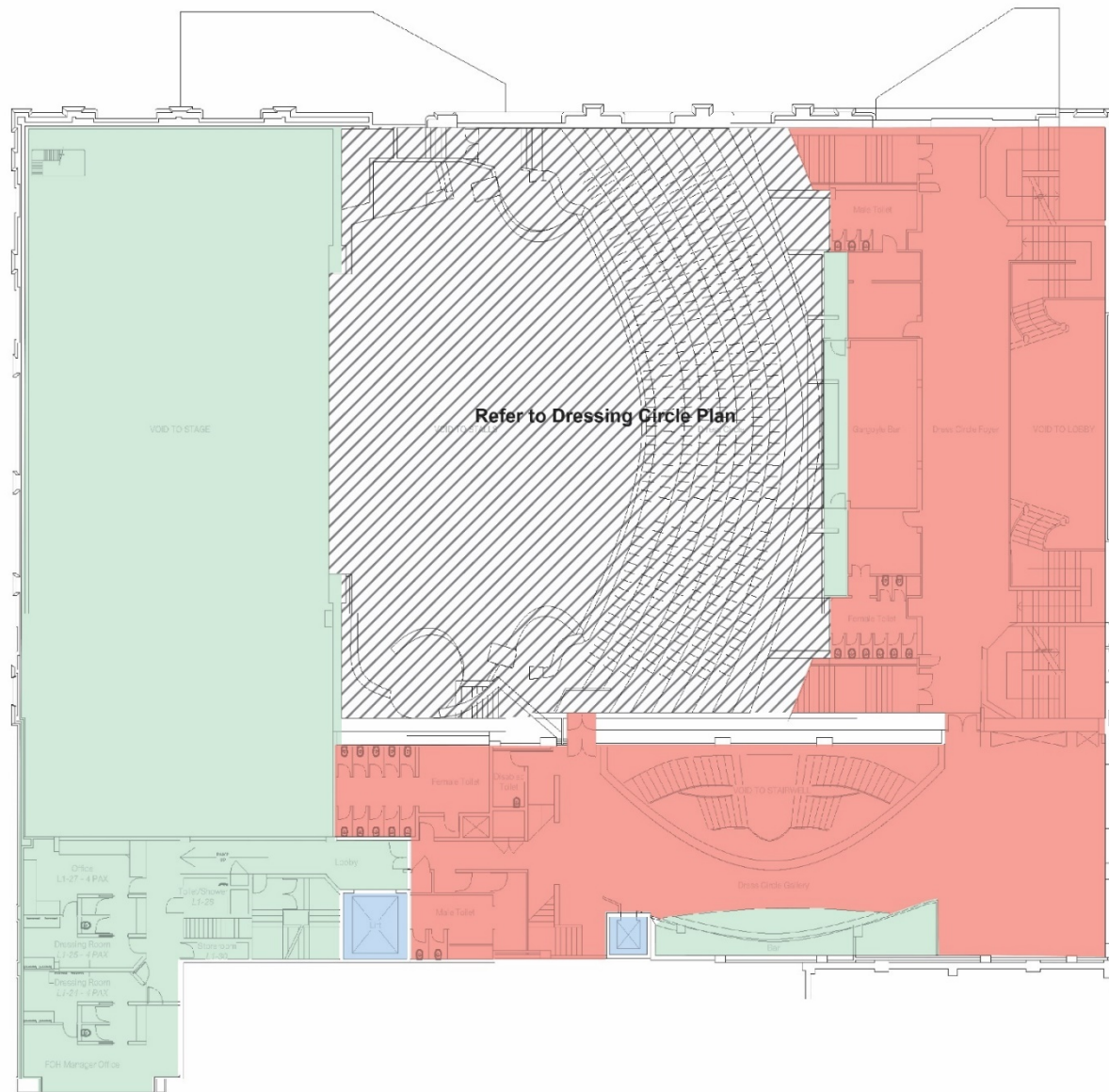
Stalls

### Key

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

Figure 33 – Stalls building components





## BUILDING COMPONENTS

### First Floor

### Key

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

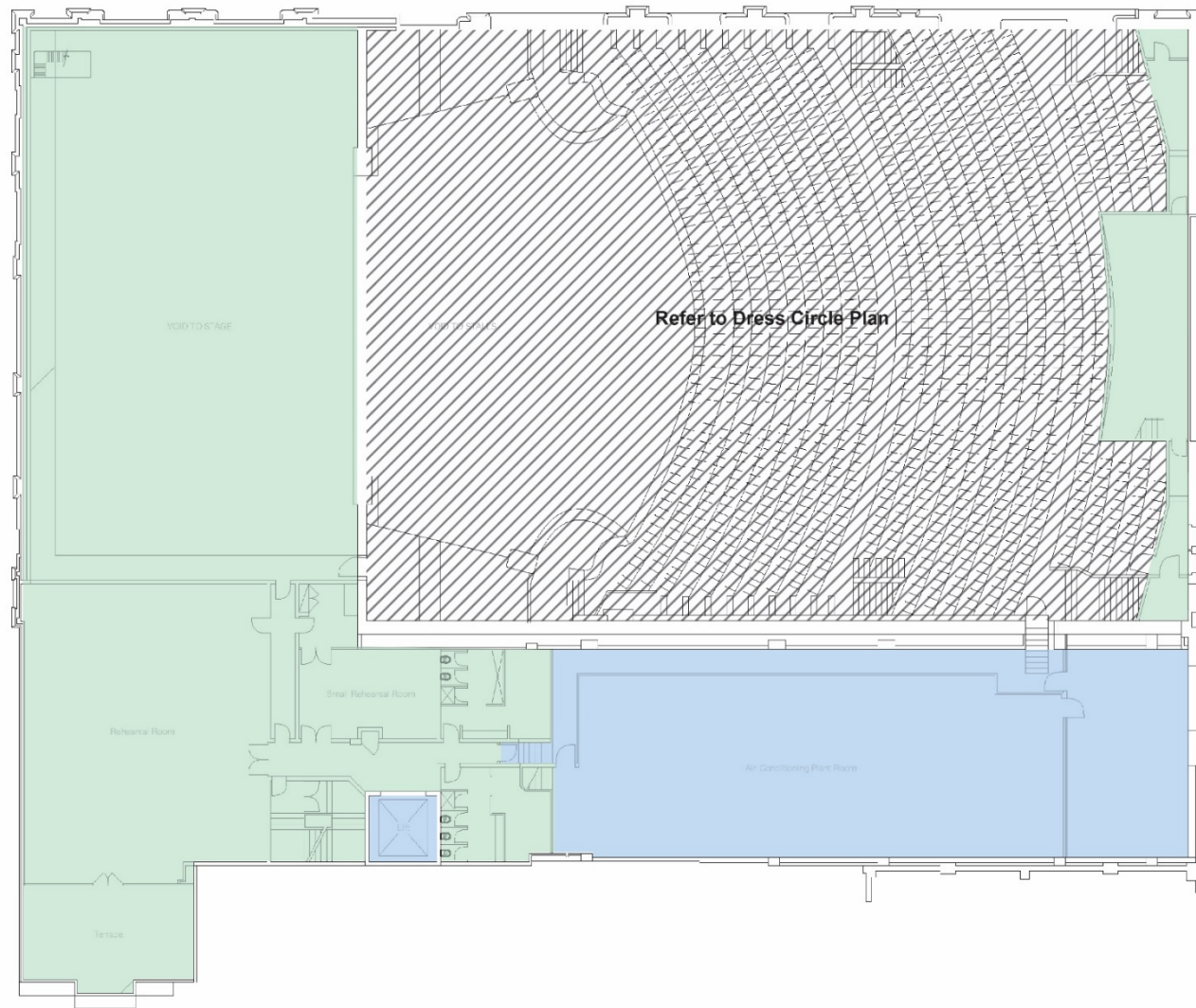
Figure 34 – First floor building components

- Back of House
- Front of House
- Service Area

## 18 SITE DESCRIPTION







## BUILDING COMPONENTS

Third Floor

Figure 37 – Third floor building components

## 2.4.1. Front of House

The Capitol Theatre retains original elements of the atmospheric theatre developed in 1927-1928 by John Eberson and Henry White. Internally, the theatre retains its original 1920s foyer, gallery and auditorium which all form part of the Front of House spaces. Whilst these elements remain, they have undergone some change throughout the twentieth century, particularly during the early 1990s restoration work which reconstructed many missing elements of the 1920s theatre.

Throughout the original 1920s interior, the atmospheric theatre features ceilings of smooth plaster painted with electric blue curving from behind side walls and embellished with lighting representing stars in the sky. All elements under the blue sky present as if they were external architectural features. Side walls are penetrated by gates, arches, temples, balconies and gables. The stylistic influence of each of the decorative features within the Capitol Theatre draws from disparate styles including Baroque, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Spanish Mission and Gothic, to name a few. However, although a mix of different styles have been adapted, the overarching design of the interiors of the Capitol Theatre represents a Venetian style designed to represent a public square in an old Italian town.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining Front of House spaces are located in a portion of the former Manning Building along the east side of the building. These were constructed during the 1990s as part of the wider redevelopment of the site which included the Manning Building, the Palace Hotel and northern portion of Parker Street.

### 2.4.1.1. Original Foyers

The original foyers of the Capitol Theatre are located in the north-west portion of the building at ground and first floor. Created as part of the 1920s atmospheric theatre and restored during the 1990s, the foyers reflect the original design and detailing of the atmospheric theatre. Access to the spaces are gained via Campbell Street by a set of eight reconstructed double leaf timber doors which open onto the ground floor foyer. Twisted columns and candelabra style lighting flank the doors and an elaborate polychrome entablature surmounts the doors. The foyer is split into two levels, one at ground floor, which leads into the original gallery, and the second at first floor, which leads into the dress circle of the auditorium. At ground floor, the floors are laid with mottled cream and brown terracotta floor tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern, with individual tiles with heraldic motifs. The walls are finished with variegated stucco and an electric blue coved ceiling is featured overhead.

Two winding marble staircases connect the ground floor to the first floor on either side of the foyer. The balustrades are constructed on timber and feature moulded metal friezes. Light posts flank the rising stairs and replica busts are featured at the staircase landings. The balustrade and lighting continues along the balcony of the dress circle foyer at first floor. Three sets of reconstructed double leaf timber doors provide access through to the gallery at ground floor. Surmounting each doorway are highly detailed arches, columns, entablature and cornice all finished in a polychromatic colour scheme. The north wall of the double height space features replica bas-reliefs and heraldic style banners.

At the dress circle foyer, the floors are laid with replica carpet with a stone flagging pattern. The walls too are variegated stucco, with inserts of niches and archways featuring replica statuary. Banners, light fittings, shields, and mirrors also decorate the walls. Below the coved ceiling is an elaborate polychromatic cornice with antefixes concealing the junction of the ceiling with the walls. Strategic lighting illuminates the ceiling from behind the cornice, giving the effect of a night sky. At either end of the dress circle foyer are the entrances to the auditorium. Each entrance is detailed with columns, decorative brackets, and a domed ceiling with polychromatic cornice and antefixes.

Within the dress circle foyer is the Gargoyle Bar located in the centre of the south wall. Delineated by a set of three reversed ogee style arches, the bar draws its name by the series of replica gargoyles which line the border of the ceiling. A small coved ceiling, painted blue, features in the centre, bordered by a small cornice with antefixes. The coved ceiling is illuminated from behind the antefixes. Replica bas-reliefs feature on the east and west walls of the space, and on the south wall is a contemporary bar area. Male and female bathrooms are located either side of the Gargoyle Bar. The bathrooms contain a mix of original, reconstructed and contemporary fabric. The anterooms to each of the bathrooms continue the reconstructed carpet from the foyer, with variegated stucco walls with mouldings, and tray ceilings. Some portions of the original ceilings remain in the air lock and cubicle spaces, however the remainder of the fixture and fittings are contemporary.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 for further description of the original design intent of the Capitol Theatre.





Figure 38 – Ground floor foyer



Figure 39 – Ground floor foyer viewed from dress circle foyer

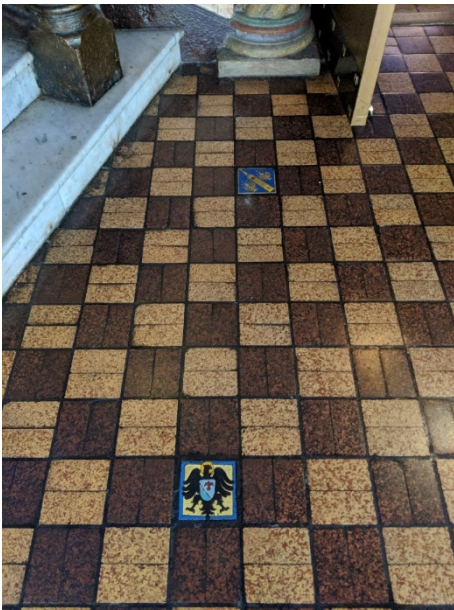


Figure 40 – Floor tiles in original foyer



Figure 41 – Detail of archways of doors through to gallery



Figure 42 – Marble stairs in original foyer



Figure 43 – Detail of staircase balustrade





Figure 44 – Dress circle foyer looking east



Figure 45 – Dress circle foyer



Figure 46 – Dress circle foyer looking west



Figure 47 – Dress circle foyer



Figure 48 – Dress circle foyer

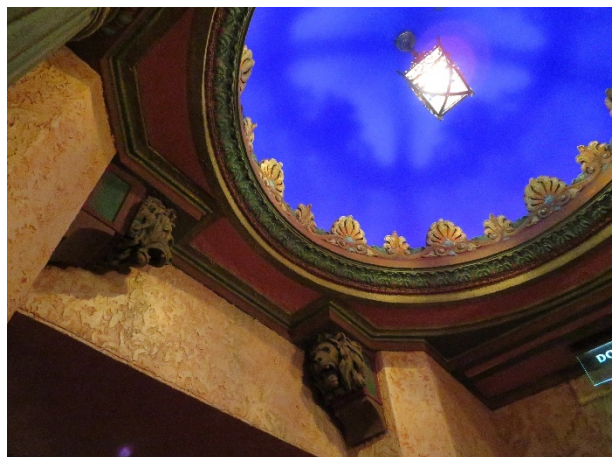


Figure 49 – Dress circle foyer





Figure 50 – Gargoyle Bar



Figure 51 – Gargoyle Bar



Figure 52 – Gargoyle Bar



Figure 53 – Gargoyle Bar back of house area



Figure 54 – Male bathroom in dress circle foyer



Figure 55 – Male bathroom in dress circle foyer





Figure 56 – Female bathroom in dress circle foyer



Figure 57 – Female bathroom in dress circle foyer

### 2.4.1.2. Original Stalls Gallery

The original stalls gallery continues the materiality of the original foyers. The stalls gallery is accessed via the set of three reconstructed timber double leaf doors which lead from the foyer. Each door opening is flanked by decorative pilasters and surmounted with an elaborate entablature in polychromatic paint finish. The stalls gallery curves from east to west, conforming with the shape of the rear of the auditorium. The space features the same carpet used in the dress circle foyer and the same variegated stuccoed wall. A series of columns divide the north portion of the space from the south. The north portion of the ceiling has a rough plaster finish with egg and dart cornices, while the south portion of the ceiling is divided into sections by an elaborate entablature with antefixes, and a smooth plaster ceiling painted electric blue, bordered by a smaller cornice. Along the south wall of the stalls gallery are two contemporary bars and a merchandise desk. To the rear of the merchandise desk is the outer wall of the technical room (located within the stalls of the auditorium) which is fashioned as the exterior of a trellised pergola. The east and west walls of the stalls gallery feature niches and arches with urn shaped lights. Along the south wall are doors which lead to the stalls of the auditorium, to the east through to the new box office and foyer and to the west to the fire exit onto Campbell Street. In the north-east corner of the stalls gallery are a pair of reconstructed double leaf doors which lead down a set of stairs to some female bathrooms. The walls of the stairway down to the bathrooms feature the same variegated stucco finish, and mouldings similar to the other bathrooms anterooms in the first floor foyer.

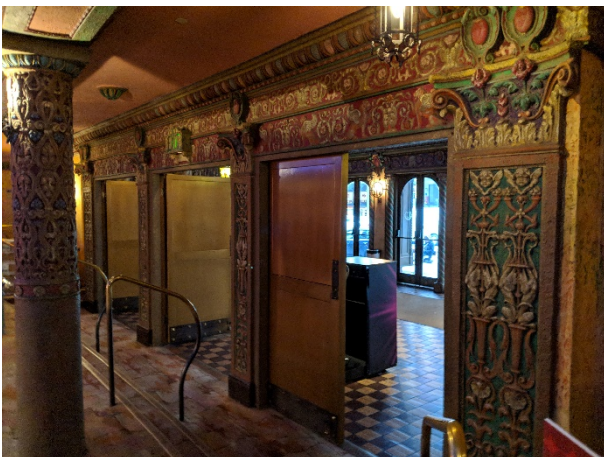


Figure 58 – Doors from foyer to gallery



Figure 59 – Stalls gallery





Figure 60 – Stalls gallery



Figure 61 – Stalls gallery



Figure 62 – Stalls gallery



Figure 63 – Stalls gallery



Figure 64 – Stalls gallery



Figure 65 – Detail of column and cornicing in gallery





Figure 66 – Female bathroom, off gallery



Figure 67 – Detail of column and cornicing in gallery

### 2.4.1.3. Auditorium

The Auditorium is split over two floors, the stalls and dress circle. It is the most elaborate space of the original atmospheric theatre. Statuary adorns the alcoves, niches, terraces and small temples that line the east and west walls of the auditorium. White pigeons rest on a gazebo and cypress trees and vines adorn the many arches, niches and alcoves. A single peacock sits atop an arch and are scattered throughout the proscenium arch moulding. A pergola spans across the rear of the dress circle, adorned with vines, while the space is drawn together by the electric blue coved ceiling which spans across the auditorium, accented by the many small lights reminiscent of the night sky. Several suspended acoustic panels adorn the ceiling and three long narrow panels are cut into the ceiling for theatre lighting.

The stone flagging style carpet is used throughout the seating areas of the auditorium. While the seats within the auditorium were installed during the 1990s works, they are designed to fit with the style of the theatre, and are upholstered in a light pink velvet fabric. The first few rows of seating closest to the stage are set on panels which can be removed and replaced as needed for the expansion or contraction of the orchestra pit. The ceiling of the stalls (the underside of the dress circle) features coffered ceiling, with decorative friezes. At the dress circle, the seating is divided into several tiers, with balustrades matching the balustrades of the foyer dividing the seating areas. Some contemporary balustrades are also used in the east and west side of the dress circle. A pair of balconies are attached to the dress circle at the its lower portion of its east and west sides. While these were installed during the 1990s reconstruction works, they match the aesthetic of the rest of the atmospheric theatre. Fire exits from the stalls and dress circle are located in the corner of each of the levels.

The focal point of the auditorium is the original proscenium arch which frames the stage with statuary, mouldings, lamps, artificial vines and doves and a series of moulded peacocks. The original spandrels of the arch were removed and reconstructed as part of the 1990s works.





Figure 68 – West wall of stalls

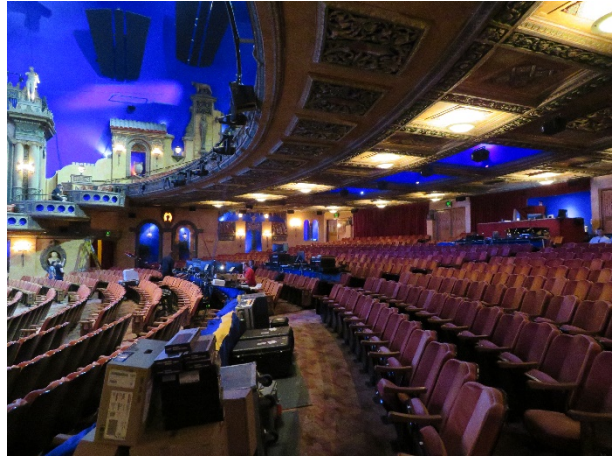


Figure 69 – West wall of stalls

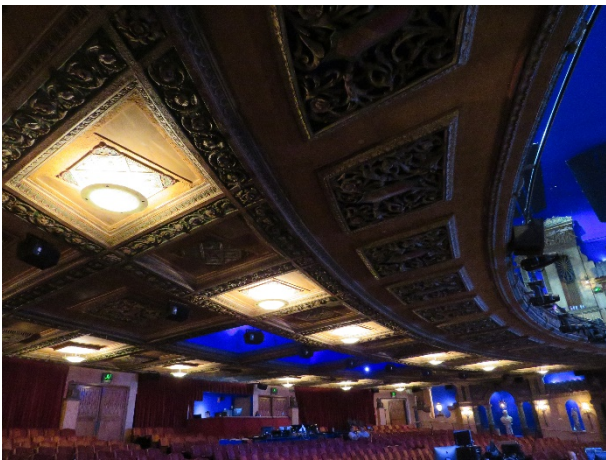


Figure 70 – Ceiling under dressing circle



Figure 71 – North wall of auditorium stalls

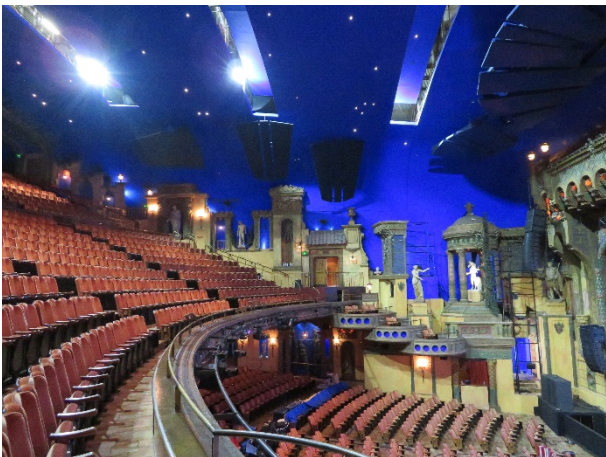


Figure 72 – East wall of dress circle

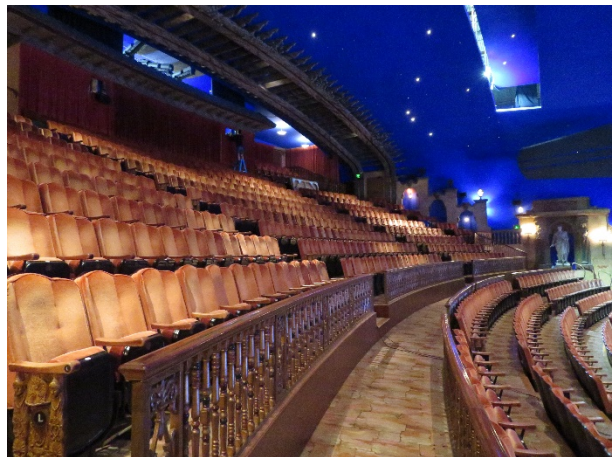


Figure 73 – Dress Circle, rear seating





Figure 74 – North wall of dress circle



Figure 75 – North-west section of dress circle



Figure 76 – North wall of dress circle



Figure 77 – East wall of dress circle



Figure 78 – View to rear of dress circle



Figure 79 – Three tiers of balconies at dress circle





Figure 80 – Proscenium arch

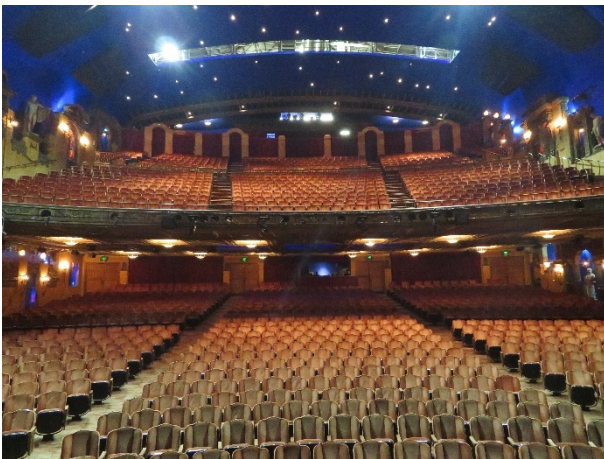


Figure 81 – View from the stage looking toward the seating



Figure 82 – View from front of stalls into the orchestra pit.