

Spotlight on Scotland's Cinemas



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Front and back cover: The Playhouse, Perth.



• SPOTLIGHT ON SCOTLAND'S
Cinemas



HISTORIC  SCOTLAND

Radio City, Kilbirnie



Foreword



Cinemas are now an increasingly rare part of Scotland's towns and cities. While changes in technology, particularly the advent of television, have affected this distinctive legacy, we are fortunate to retain a number of exceptional examples of cinema architecture. Constructed in a variety of engaging and exuberant styles, they add much to our country's rich built heritage and townscapes.

In 2007–08 Historic Scotland undertook a thematic study of Scotland's historic cinema buildings in conjunction with the Cinema Theatre Association. The Cinema Theatre Association proposed a number of cinemas for listing and also suggested that we review some existing listed cinemas. As a result of this, more cinemas have been protected by listing. We have also upgraded the category of listing of a number of existing listed cinemas and updated list descriptions where necessary.

In carrying out this thematic study we found much to celebrate about Scotland's historic cinemas. Although we can only feature a small selection of these fascinating buildings in this booklet, I hope that you will enjoy getting to know more about these distinctive buildings.

Malcolm Cooper
Chief Inspector
Historic Scotland Inspectorate

*The Britannia Music Hall in the
Trongate, Glasgow, opened in 1859.
It started showing moving pictures in
August 1896. The intact auditorium
still remains inside the building.*



The first moving pictures

When Stan Laurel stepped on to the stage at the Britannia Music Hall in Glasgow in 1906 to begin his career in comedy, it is unlikely that he could have envisaged just how popular films would become. Moving pictures were first shown in the United Kingdom from around 1896; Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen all hosting film shows in that year. Films were short and were usually little more than sideshows to other attractions. The majority weren't what we would think of as a film today with a strong storyline and lots of separate scenes, but were instead simple shots of everyday activities. Such was their novelty though that they very quickly became immensely popular. Existing halls and variety theatres, such as the Britannia, were keen to incorporate these early films into their live variety line-ups, and many existing buildings were adapted at this time.

By the early 1900s, some shops and workshops were also being converted to show pictures to keep up with the demand. The earliest structures specifically constructed for the purpose of showing films were large tents, some with very elaborate decorative facades, that formed part of travelling fairground shows. At that time the film used was highly flammable and was a particular danger in these converted and temporary venues. As a result, safety provisions were brought into force on New Year's Day 1910 in the form of the Cinematograph Act. The Act required the construction of projection rooms separate from auditoria, leading directly to the advent of the first true purpose-built cinemas.



Green's Cinematograph in the Gallowgate, Glasgow in 1908.

Image supplied courtesy of the Fairground Society



This 1933–42 Ordnance Survey map shows just how many cinemas or ‘picture theatres’ could be supported even in this small area of Glasgow’s city centre. In the 1930s Glasgow had more cinemas per head of population than any other city in the world.

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Why did cinemas become so popular so quickly? They provided novelty and escapism for the whole family, unlike more traditional venues such as pubs. They were warm and, at their most basic, provided very cheap entertainment. For those living in crowded accommodation they could even provide relative quiet and a sense of escape. The programme changed very frequently, sometimes as much as every three days, and older films were often re-run. They were a way of seeing world events – newsreels screened before the main feature provided a visual supplement to newspapers and radio broadcasts in the era before television. For the owner, whether using an existing space or a purpose-built structure, they soon proved to be a near-instant money spinner.

In the short period before the outbreak of the First World War it is thought that as many as 3,500 cinemas may have opened in the United Kingdom. Although very few of these early examples survive, Scotland is fortunate to retain a number. This was the silent era when the better cinemas provided some musical accompaniment, such as a piano, and the best had their own house orchestra. Intertitles, frames with text, were shown between scenes as a vehicle for short pieces of dialogue and to help to explain the plot.

A new cinema architecture

One of the most important of the early purpose-built cinemas is the Hippodrome in Bo'ness, which opened in March 1912. Conceived by local resident Louis Dickson and designed by local architect Matthew Steele, the plans for the building are dated October 1911 and are clearly marked 'Picture Palace', giving weight to its claim to be Scotland's oldest surviving purpose-built cinema.

Matthew Steele (1878–1937) was born in Bo'ness. After training in Glasgow he returned to the town to set up an independent architectural practice in 1905. He had a huge influence on the architectural character of Bo'ness and his work can be found across the town. He developed an idiosyncratic style which is perhaps best seen in his Masonic Lodge of 1909 in Stewart Avenue. He was also responsible for much of the town's local authority housing, including the 1930s flats at Corbiehall.

The Hippodrome, Bo'ness when it opened in 1912.

Image courtesy of Scottish Screen Archive at National Library of Scotland



The Hippodrome, Bo'ness today.

Dickson was a showman and filmmaker and he required a venue to show his local topical films as well as one which could potentially cater for live acts. Steele designed an unusual circular auditorium on an awkward corner site, and his interest in up-to-the-minute design can be seen in the curving lines and white-painted render.

The Hippodrome continued in use as a cinema until the 1970s when bingo took over. It closed in the 1980s and remained disused until recently. With funding from Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, amongst others, this fascinating building has been carefully restored by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust and it is now in the care of Falkirk Council. It is intended that it will once again show films in conjunction with a wider use as a community venue.

May 1913 saw the opening of the Picture House in Hall Street, Campbeltown. Still showing films today, it was designed by the prolific cinema architect Albert V Gardner. It is a unique example of a Glasgow Style cinema and it was recently recognised as a nationally important building as part of the thematic study.

The staff at the Picture House in Campbeltown continue to welcome film goers today. Russell Carroll, company director and general manager (front row, right) describes the interest of the building: "When the cinema first opened in 1913 there was no screen at all and the images were projected on the back wall. The films at that time were silent so there was no need for speakers either.

"The wee houses on either side of the screen date from the 1930s when the original architect returned and designed them. I would like to see them restored, making them come to life when the audience is entering the building. For the moment one of them is serving as my office."

The Picture House, Campbeltown





The rare interior of the Picture House, Campbeltown

Image supplied by courtesy of the Cinema Theatre Association.

The distinctive design is based on concentric ovals and the building is an outstanding feature in Campbeltown's seafront. In 1935 Gardner returned to update and refurbish the interior in the then fashionable 'atmospheric' style. Part of this work included the construction of two small fantasy theatre box-type structures in a Spanish/Mexican style on either side of the auditorium. They still survive today and are thought to be the only remaining examples of their type in Scotland. Not purely decorative, they currently disguise the manager's office and a storeroom.

In Glasgow the Hillhead Picture Salon opened for business in October 1913. Known later as the Salon, it is designed in a Classical style more typical of the early cinemas which generally took their inspiration from Edwardian theatre design. It was a consciously upmarket cinema. Designed by Brand & Lithgow, it has an exceptionally rare and very decorative interior. Its corner dome and fine neo-Classical exterior decoration hint at the high quality of the interior. The ceiling treatment in particular is very special. One of only two Scottish cinemas known to have been constructed using the fireproof Hennebique Ferro Concrete System, the curved concrete beams are decorated with elaborate plasterwork. After various later incarnations, the building reopened in July 2007 as The Salon restaurant with most of the original ceiling restored and revealed.



The former Salon Cinema was described in the Scottish Cinema Record of 1913: “In the aristocratic neighbourhood of Hillhead, we are to have a luxurious picture house...Seating accommodation will be provided for 500 persons. The building... will be handsomely furnished. A pretty colour-scheme of rose de barry and blue has been adopted...The best pictures the world can supply will be projected in the most up-to-date fashion. Mr Herr Iff’s celebrated orchestra will provide the music, an attraction in itself.”



A detail of the restored ceiling of the former Hillhead Picture House, Glasgow.

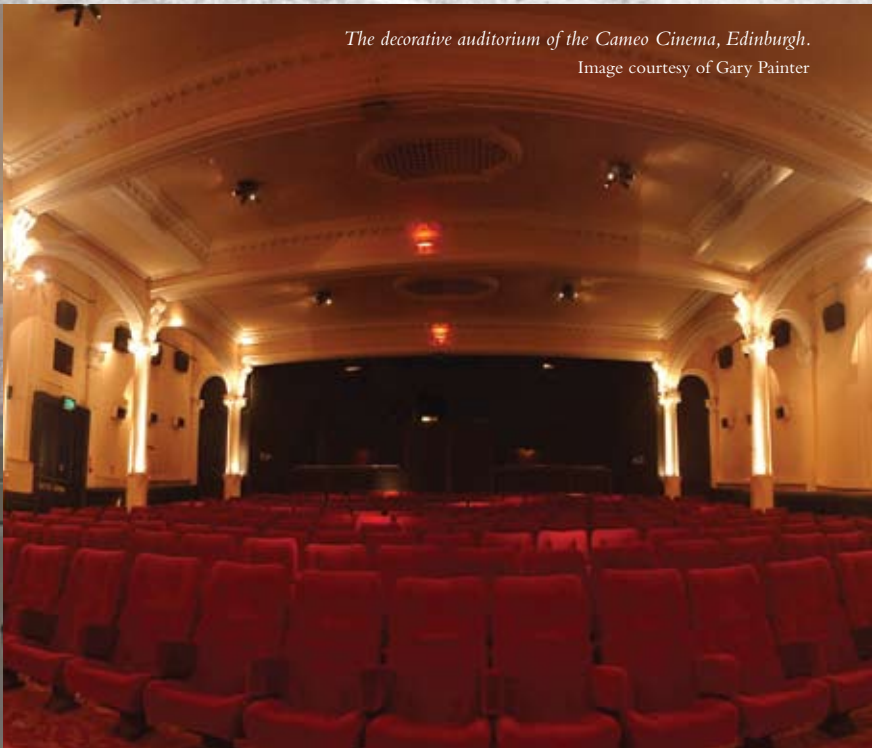
Image supplied courtesy of the Cinema Theatre Association

Scotland’s tenements gave rise to a particularly Scottish form of cinema known as a ‘back court’ cinema. These were inserted behind tenements and the entrance was usually through a shop-front type opening on the ground floor. A back court cinema could utilise earlier structures or be purpose-built with some larger examples even blocking out much of the light for the surrounding flats. The best remaining example is the 1914 Cameo Cinema in Home Street, Edinburgh which was constructed to the rear of an 1897 tenement block. Known originally as the King’s Cinema, it is thought to be the last remaining back court cinema in Edinburgh and retains much of its stunning original interior decoration.



Queuing to enter the Cameo Cinema

Image courtesy of Scottish Screen
Archive at National Library of Scotland



The decorative auditorium of the Cameo Cinema, Edinburgh.

Image courtesy of Gary Painter

The arrival of the talkies

By the end of the 1920s cinema design was changing with the arrival of the talkies. Alfred Hitchcock's 1929 film *Blackmail* is considered to be the first all-talkie British film and the Coliseum in Eglinton Street, Glasgow was the venue for Glasgow's first showing of a talking picture in January of that year. The elaborate plasterwork and ceiling domes of older buildings could interfere with sound quality and created unsuitable reverberations. In the 1930s acoustic specialists began to be commonly employed at the design stage to make sure that the talking pictures were heard comfortably by all. Before the advent of the talkies, films were often projected onto a simple plaster screen. These screens were removed for pictures with sound, and speakers were incorporated behind a new screen. Only one example of an original plaster screen is thought to survive in Scotland. It is found in Casselbank Street in Edinburgh in a building which was originally constructed in 1885 as a Turkish bath. You can see its original use displayed in the architecture with its miniature onion domes and Moorish details. The building has, however, undergone a remarkable series of re-uses. It was converted to a cinema in 1920. This was a short-lived venture and it was converted to its current use as a place of worship in the 1930s. As the cinema closed before the conversion to sound, the plaster screen has remained intact.

The former Turkish bath in Casselbank Street, Edinburgh. The rare plaster screen remains in the interior.



Diversity in design

The variety of cinema design in the 1920s and '30s was huge. Unlike Victorian and Edwardian theatres, which were often built in Scottish towns and cities by architectural talent from England, such as Frank Matcham and C J Phipps, Scotland's cinemas tended to be designed by local architects for local chains and independently run cinemas. This was in contrast to England where a few house architects produced a large proportion of cinemas for a small handful of circuits. A number of Scottish architects became prolific cinema specialists in their own right, many of them rarely working outside of Scotland. As a consequence, their body of work was largely unique and stylistically distinct from cinemas built elsewhere in Britain. The architectural styles or themes used by these architects were very wide and often acted as a form of street advertising in their own right.

Particularly individual in its exterior treatment was the now-demolished Viking in Largs. Designed by James Houston and opened in 1939, it celebrated the 1263 Battle of Largs where the Scots triumphed over the Danes. Here a replica prow of a longship stood in a pool of water at the fortress-like front entrance. An imaginative 'portcullis' which held the letter display advertising films could be lowered when the building was closed.

Architects Charles McNair and Robert Elder

began formally in practice together in 1936 working from an office in St Vincent Street, Glasgow. With an assured handling of the streamlined Art Deco style they became one of the leading exponents of cinema architecture. Elder was the principal designer, with McNair focussing on handling the client side of the business. Amongst many others, they designed the former Lyceum in Govan and the former Ascot in Anniesland.



The Govan Lyceum by McNair and Elder photographed in February 1939.

Reproduced courtesy of Glasgow City Archives and Special Collections



The now-demolished Viking Cinema, Largs

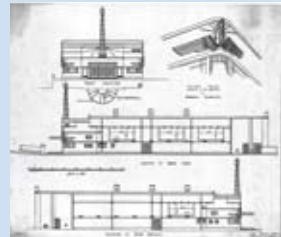
©RCAHMS

Houston also designed Radio City in his home town of Kilbirnie. Its 62ft-tall central 'radio' pylon had a flashing beacon at the top and was flanked by flashing neon zigzags and chrome eagle wings. As well as instantly creating a landmark in the town, it was intended to give the illusion that the film was being beamed in live to the cinema. A replica mast was installed when the building was restored as a community centre in 2002–04.

While some cinema architects created a little bit of fantasy on the street to entice the viewer, Gillespie & Scott, the architects of the New Picture House in North Street, St Andrews, chose a unique mixture of the modern and the traditional. This local practice took inspiration from Fife's architecture to



Radio City, Kilbirnie today



The original plans for Radio City, Kilbirnie.

©RCAHMS (Houston and Dunlop Collection)

create their distinctive building which continues to function as a cinema. Opened in 1930, its street elevation is resolutely East Neuk in style with its projecting harled entrance porch topped with a crowstepped gable and pantile roof. However, if you look carefully behind this you



can see a semicircular tower flanked by two square-plan towers, which is much more typical of 1930s design. A special interior feature links the building even more closely with its locality. Decorating the auditorium are watercolour panels commissioned from a local artist, Ada Walker. They depict scenes from around the town including the cathedral, castle and golf course, as well as the cinema itself.



A watercolour panel in the auditorium of the New Picture House

During wartime it wasn't only civilians who needed to boost their morale with visits to the cinema: the forces required to be entertained too. Most large military sites provided entertainment for their troops. Near Crail in Fife is the best-preserved example of a Second World War naval airfield in Scotland. It is remarkable for its survival and completeness as well as the rarity of some of the individual buildings.



A 1993 view of the combined cinema and gymnasium at Crail Airfield, Fife.

©Crown copyright RCAHMS

The 'domestic' side of the airfield contained the accommodation blocks as well as recreational buildings. Buildings often had a dual purpose to make them as efficient as possible and the cinema here was combined with a gymnasium. Built around 1939–40, it is a simple building designed to be constructed quickly and cheaply. Composed

of rendered brick, it contains a functional timber ticket booth in the foyer space with flanking doors which lead to the dual-purpose auditorium and gymnasium space. The cinema would have been a vital tool not just for entertainment but also for education.

Although the cinema at Crail Airfield was constructed rapidly, the record for the most quickly constructed luxury cinema may be held by the 1933 Playhouse in Perth. It was designed by Alexander Cattanach with Thomas Bowhill Gibson as consultant. With a seating capacity of around 1,700, it was the flagship for Caledonian Associated Cinemas and was built within only 9 weeks.

Alexander Cattanach (1895–1977)

studied at the Glasgow School of Art and served in both the First and Second World Wars. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in WWII. He was the architect for the Caledonian Associated Cinemas chain which once owned over 30 cinemas across Scotland. He often collaborated, as at Perth, with the Edinburgh-based cinema architect Thomas Bowhill Gibson. The Perth

Playhouse was designed complete with a café and two integral shops. Cattanach also designed houses, hotels and shooting lodges throughout Scotland during his career.



Super-cinemas

Another type of cinema to emerge around this time was the 'super-cinema'. They were designed to maximise audience numbers and to create a pleasant viewing experience. Like the atmospheric interiors, the inspiration for these huge auditoriums came from America where 'movie palaces' had taken off in the 1920s.



The magnificent columned interior of the Green's Playhouse in Renfield Street.

Reproduced courtesy of Glasgow City Archives and Special Collections

Brothers Bert and Fred Green were particular exponents of these enormous buildings. Originally from Preston, they learned the moving pictures trade from their father's travelling show. Green's Playhouses were famous for their scale and Corinthian-columned interiors. The Greens employed the architect John Fairweather, who had toured America on their behalf, to design their cinemas. Their now-demolished Playhouse in Glasgow's Renfield Street opened in 1927 and was the largest cinema in Europe at that time. It was designed to seat an incredible 4,368 patrons. A night out there didn't always just mean seeing a film or the newsreel, though, as the building also provided other entertainment. The Playhouse incorporated a ballroom which could host over 1,000 dancers on the top floor as well as a tearoom and even a putting green. The 1938 former State Cinema in Great Junction Street in Leith, built by the housebuilder James Miller & Partners, was also designed with a multiple leisure use in mind. It had four shops, two billiard saloons and a skittle alley as well as the cinema itself – a forerunner of today's multiple entertainment venues with everything on one site.



The impressive auditorium photographed in 1973.

©Crown Copyright: RCAHMS

John Fairweather was also the architect for the Playhouse (not related to the Greens' chain) in Edinburgh. It is a rare example of a purpose-built cine-variety theatre of this size, designed to be able to stage large-scale live variety shows as well as films. The Playhouse opened on 12th August 1929 with both talking and silent films on the bill. Contemporary advertising billed it as 'Scotland's Super Picture Theatre'. Clever use of the steeply falling ground level means that the theatre with its original seating capacity of 3,048 is deceptively large, and that the circle level is unusually entered at ground level, with the balcony at first floor and the stalls at basement level. Its opulent interior remains substantially intact and the spectacular auditorium is notable not only for its scale but also for its lavish decoration.

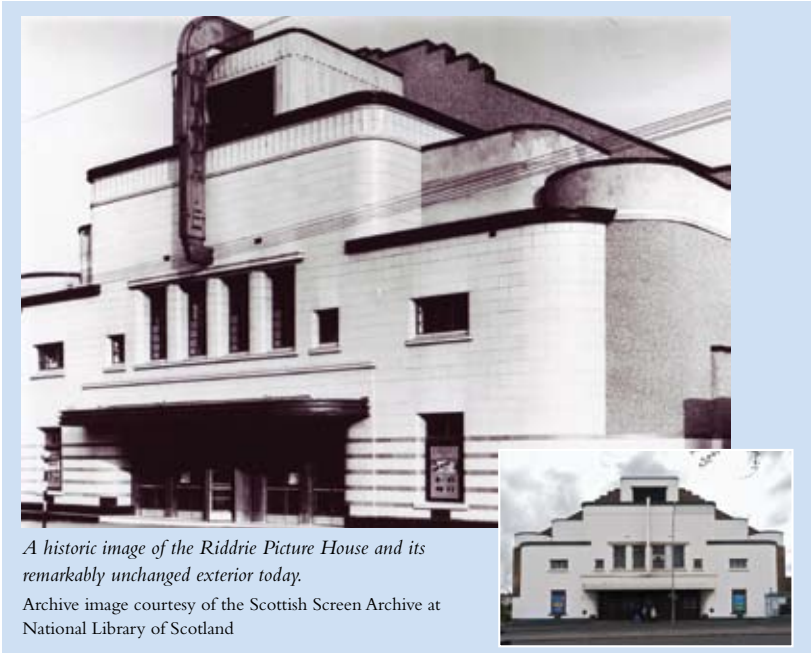


The Edinburgh Playhouse



The Glasgow Film Theatre, formerly the Cosmo

Scotland's first arthouse cinema was started by George Singleton of the Glasgow-based Singleton chain of cinemas. He spotted a gap in the market and opened the Cosmo in 1939, the first purpose-built arthouse cinema to open outside London. Now known as the Glasgow Film Theatre, its brick exterior and stepped entrance tower designed by James McKissack and W J Anderson form a distinctive part of Rose Street, and it remains a popular destination for film lovers to this day.



A historic image of the Riddrie Picture House and its remarkably unchanged exterior today.

Archive image courtesy of the Scottish Screen Archive at National Library of Scotland

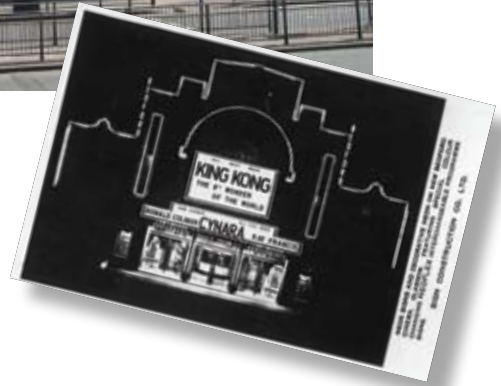
In 1950 the Singleton chain acquired the streamlined Art Deco Riddrie cinema in Glasgow and renamed it the Vogue. This superb example of 1930s cinema architecture, also designed by McKissack, is one of the best-preserved and most complete suburban super-cinemas in Scotland.

The Riddrie Picture House was built for George Smith and James Welsh. Welsh was Housing Convenor for Glasgow Corporation and later the Lord Provost of Glasgow between 1943 and 1945. Riddrie's Corporation housing was conceived immediately after World War I and the construction of 1,074 houses was completed in 1927. Amenity structures were soon seen as integral to these early housing schemes and the Riddrie Library of 1935–8 was the first permanent library to be built in a council housing development. Post-war shortages of building materials may have delayed the construction of non-essential buildings and probably account for the later dates of the amenity buildings. The Riddrie cinema opened in 1938 and is arguably one of McKissack's best surviving designs. After conversion to a bingo hall in 1968 the Riddrie was briefly re-invented in 1990 when it featured as a cinema again in the film *Silent Scream* starring Robert Carlyle.



The former New Bedford Picture House, Glasgow in its present use as the Carling Academy music venue, and an image taken around 1933 of its neon lighting scheme.

Postcard image supplied courtesy of the Cinema Theatre Association.



Night architecture

It wasn't only a matter of how cinemas looked during the day that was important. As the majority of their patrons would be visiting at night, the development of neon lighting helped to further advertise their street presence. The former New Bedford Picture House in Glasgow was designed by Lennox & MacMath and opened in 1932. Its neon-lit exterior outlined the essential parts of the building's form to create a dramatic piece of night architecture.

New lighting techniques were also being developed for the interior of cinemas. The Capitol in Aberdeen's Union Street opened in 1933 and was the first cinema in Britain to be designed from the outset to incorporate a full Holophane lighting system in the auditorium. This allowed for a staggering 17,000 colour combinations to be projected onto the ceiling or walls in time to music as a form of entertainment in its own right.

Changing times



A 1930s view of Glasgow's Coliseum.

©Newsquest (Herald and Times). Licensor www.scran.ac.uk.

Cinema building was halted by the Second World War. In the early 1950s wartime building restrictions were lifted, and most cinemas opened at this time were the conclusion of projects conceived or begun just prior to the War. The 1960s saw new entertainments competing with cinemas. Televisions became more widespread and a change in gaming legislation meant that many cinemas were converted to bingo halls. In a bid to attract audiences, new technologies were invented with better sound and bigger and wider screens. The Coliseum in Glasgow was radically altered in 1963 to become Scotland's first (and only) 'Cinerama' theatre. This involved the installation of a huge curved screen, with three separate projectors working in tandem to produce an image on the enormous 90 x 30ft screen. It was not a lasting success and normal film use was soon resumed. Many cinemas were also subdivided in the 1960s–80s in an effort to provide more screens with more choice. The first Scottish example was the ABC in Edinburgh which was split into three screens in 1969, becoming the first tripled cinema in Europe. By the late 1980s and early '90s the out-of-town multiplex had become the norm for new-build cinemas.

The future

Although cinema-going has changed dramatically since its pre-War heyday, many listed cinema buildings are continuing to adapt to modern film show requirements and others have been converted to new uses.

The former Regal Cinema in Bathgate has again become a valuable community asset. Bathgate's Regal Community Theatre was founded in 1995 and provides a venue for a wide variety of arts events. Designed by the Fife-based architect A D Haxton and opened in



Bathgate's Regal Cinema became the Regal Community Theatre in 1995.

1938, it is a good example of an Art Deco-style town cinema. The interior was designed by John Alexander of Newcastle who was known for his flamboyant decorative plasterwork. Flanking the stage are a pair of plaster panels designed by Alexander and depicting semi-naked charioteers. The panels delayed the opening of the cinema by a few days while local officials decided if they were fit and proper for public exhibition. Happily they were deemed appropriate and these rare survivals continue to be an important part of the building's special interest.

Following the conclusion of the cinemas thematic study we now have an in-depth understanding of the building type and an invaluable record detailing the importance of our cinema architecture. The informative listings and contextual material available will help local authorities to manage change sensitively so that these buildings can have a progressive and sustainable future.



Margaret Hardy, Chairman of the Board of Management at Bathgate's Regal Community Theatre, explains the importance of the former cinema: "For those of us in Bathgate who are proud of our heritage, it is a great delight to see our seventy year old 'picture house' becoming revitalised. Hard work by a team of dedicated volunteers over the last thirteen years has seen us go from strength to strength.

"Thanks also to an interested, committed West Lothian Council who have invested and are continuing to invest to make sure that the grand old lady moves forward in the 21st century as a Community Theatre of which the people of Bathgate can be justly proud."



One of the plaster charioteers photographed before its installation over the exit door of the Regal Cinema in Bathgate.

©RCAHMS (Haxton and Watson Collection)



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How to find out more about listed buildings and cinemas

You can search to find out whether a building is listed and download the list description from our website at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk. There is also a wealth of useful information about listing including booklets which are free to download.

Pastmap allows you to search for all of Scotland's listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and gardens and designed landscapes by map. See www.pastmap.org.uk.

Find out more about the Cinema Theatre Association from their website at www.ctascotland.org.uk. Another valuable resource is the superbly illustrated Scottish Cinemas Database at www.scottishcinemas.org.

The Dictionary of Scottish Architects at www.scottisharchitects.org.uk covers the years between 1840–1940 and it is currently being expanded to include the period up to 1980. You can search by architect or building and get to know the people behind the designs through the many architect biographies.

Acknowledgements

Historic Scotland would like to thank the owners and occupiers of the cinemas assessed during the thematic study. Their contribution to our knowledge of this fascinating building type has been immeasurable. We also extend our thanks to Gordon Barr and Gary Painter of the Cinema Theatre Association for their assistance with the project.

Access

The majority of buildings featured in this booklet are listed buildings. Although many can be seen from the street, inclusion in this booklet does not imply that such properties have public access. Please respect an owner's privacy when examining our cinema and other built heritage.

Opposite: The Playhouse, Edinburgh

Text and Images

Text by Elizabeth McCrone.

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Who are we?

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. We are charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment. Amongst the duties of Historic Scotland's Inspectorate is to compile and maintain statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. We have a dedicated listing team which researches and assesses listing proposals.

You can contact the listing team at: hs.inspectorate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Historic Scotland Inspectorate
Listing Team
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Tel: 0131 668 8600



Edinburgh's Dominion Cinema.

What is listing?

Listing recognises a structure's special architectural or historic interest and secures its protection under law through the planning system. It aims to protect a building's special character and interest. This is important not only to safeguard the building itself, but also to ensure that its special character is taken into account when changes are made through the planning system.

Listing is intended to inform development and to support the change process as well as to reinforce sustainable development and, where possible, enhancement and regeneration. The system operates under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

The lists are primarily used by planning authorities and heritage professionals, but they also have value as a bank of information which is of benefit to a broad audience ranging from local historians and genealogists to community groups and schools.

Why are historic buildings special?

Our historic environment is an irreplaceable resource. Historic structures are a highly visible and accessible element of Scotland's rich heritage. Covering a wide range of functions and periods, together they chart the history of the nation. They cross all boundaries of life, from education to recreation, defence, industry, homes and worship. Much of Scotland's social and economic past and its present is expressed in these exceptional buildings. Listed buildings can include structures from great country houses to modest croft houses, tenements to toll houses, and police boxes to primary schools. They can date from the early medieval period up until the 1970s. They need not necessarily be 'buildings' but could be bridges, dovecots or statues. Whether urban, rural, industrial, public or residential, they all contribute to their particular area and to Scotland as a whole. They are integral to Scottish culture and provide a unique record of our history. We aim to help to protect and manage this national asset in a sustainable way through listing to meet our needs today and in the future.

What are the listing categories?

There are around 47,000 listed buildings in Scotland, comprising around 1% of the country's building stock. Both the interior and exterior of a building is listed regardless of the listing category. Listed buildings are assigned one of three categories to identify their particular level of interest:

Category A – buildings of national or international importance, either architectural or historic, or fine little-altered examples of some particular period, style or building type. These make up about 8% of the total.

Category B – buildings of regional or more than local importance, or major examples of some particular period, style or building type which may have been altered. Category B is currently the largest group with about 51% of the total.

Category C(S) – buildings of local importance, lesser examples of any period, style or building type, as originally constructed or moderately altered; and simple, traditional buildings which group well with others in categories A and B. This group numbers about 41%.



*A detail of the exterior of the former Salon Cinema,
Glasgow.*

Cinemas

Spotlight on Scotland's

In living memory a common feature in Scotland's towns and cities, cinemas are now an increasingly rare part of our streetscapes. Constructed in a variety of engaging and exuberant styles, they add much to our country's rich built heritage.

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