



Palais Royal Pictures 297 Moorabool Street

History

According to the *Geelong Advertiser* 28 May 1926 the Palais Royal was designed and built by Howard R. Lawson, a South Yarra architect and building contractor. Lawson was heavily influenced by American approaches to design and utilised innovative building techniques. Construction work began in 1926, utilising steel roof principals and posts salvaged from an older entertainment complex known as the 'Joy Ark' at Eastern Beach. The *Geelong Advertiser* 6 June 1926 reported the half finished building had suffered a partial collapse injuring one worker. Completion of the structure was delayed some weeks. The interior was finished in fibrous plaster with rich mouldings. The Palais was designed to host large meetings and public entertainments. In 1927 it was used as a film house and centre for public dances. In the present day the building is the headquarters of the Geelong Football League and still provides a public entertainment function serving as a Bingo Centre.

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Description

The Palais Royal Pictures building is a double storey brick and stucco Art Deco structure with unusual details. The facade has a high degree of integrity and is divided into three main bays separated by vertical piers. The central bay features an entrance portico with timber framed openings at ground level and brick mouldings along the edge of the canopy facing the street. Above there are sash windows with twelve panes. The roof is a large hip with terracotta tiles and ridge details, and the eaves are supported by narrow paired brackets attached to the facade. Above this roof a simple parapet conceals an unusually large corrugated iron gable that runs the length of the building in keeping with its original use. On either side of the central bay narrow double storey parapets anchor the building and are decorated with geometric mouldings. Other decorative elements include large lights on both parapets, and tiled steps leading to the entrance.

Significance

The Palais Royal Pictures Building has architectural and historic significance at a local level. It is a rare example of Art Deco architecture with unusual details for the Geelong area. The building has a high degree of integrity retaining its characteristic siting, form, and Art Deco details including the entrance portico, decorative geometric mouldings and unusually large gabled roof that runs the length of the building in keeping with the original function. The building has historic and social importance and has been used as an entertainment complex since construction.