

Gift Slip

My gift to Working Capitol is

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ \$100

☐ \$500

☐ \$1000

☐ other \$

Please make your cheque payable to *Working Capitol*

Please charge my

☐ Visa

☐ Bankcard

☐ MasterCard

card no:

Signature

expiry date

My name and address for upcoming events at The Capitol Theatre is

☐ Please send me information on making a Bequest to *Working Capitol* in my Will

18 October, 1999

In 1924, the Capitol Theatre represented new ideas in architectural structure and design. Architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin helped create what is today a landmark building. The Walter Burley Griffin Society of America salutes RMIT University for saving one of the Griffins’ and the City of Melbourne’s greatest treasures.

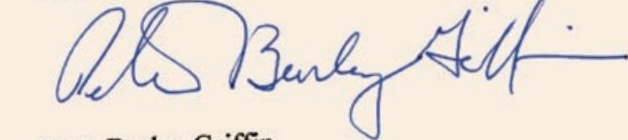
Over the years there have been many people involved in the effort to save the Capitol Theatre. Much of the credit goes to the architectural historians who have helped raise the public’s awareness about historical preservation. These include, but are not limited to Australians James Weirick, Peter Y. Navaretti, Jeffrey John Turnbull, and Anne Watson, plus Americans Dr. Paul Kruty and Dr. Paul Sprague. Thanks also to Adrienne Kabos and the Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc. – Sydney, the University of Melbourne and fellow Griffin enthusiasts.

Historical preservation is best accomplished when there is cooperation between public and private interests. The leadership shown by the State of Victoria with their heritage funding and by TXU with their corporate sponsorship establishes the standard for others to follow.

The Walter Burley Griffin Society of America recognizes the importance of preserving the Capitol Theatre. It is my pleasure to announce that the Society will contribute \$2,000AU to help launch the Working Capitol Funding Campaign to restore the Capitol Theatre to its original grandeur.

We applaud all of your efforts and anticipate great success with this Campaign.

Best wishes,



Peter Burley Griffin
President



The void and ceiling above original stalls
1924



Looking from main foyer through void to original ceiling
1999

“The Capitol Theatre... is the Griffins’ best known and most popular work. Less obvious than the ceiling but really of greater architectural interest, the lounges, galleries and foyers leading to the auditorium.”

Robin Boyd: Victorian Modern - 111 Years of Modern Architecture in the State of Victoria (1947)

RMIT University purchased the Capitol Theatre in May 1999

RMIT University is committed to re-establishing the Capitol Theatre as an exciting and energetic venue in the cultural landscape of Australia.

RMIT University recognises the high level of affection and knowledge regarding the Capitol Theatre within the community.

RMIT University invites you to participate in the process of taking this important landmark into the next millennium.

RMIT University plans to undertake a series of refurbishments, which seek to reveal the splendour of the Theatre and upgrade existing facilities.

RMIT University has to date:

- Installed state-of-the-art audio visual and sound equipment.
- Installed additional safety systems.
- Commenced general repairs to seating and flooring.
- Commenced the process of providing disabled access to the Theatre.

RMIT University has secured funding from the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund for the refurbishment of those areas of the Theatre listed on the Historic Buildings Register, Register of the National Estate and the National Trust.

RMIT University is seeking broad community support through contributions to the *Working Capitol* Fund. These contributions will go towards structural improvements to the stage, screen, fly tower, curtain and seating. We would also seek to redesign the arcade entry and reinstate the original Wurlizer Organ.

RMIT University sees the Capitol Theatre project as an exciting opportunity to work in partnership with the community, government and industry.

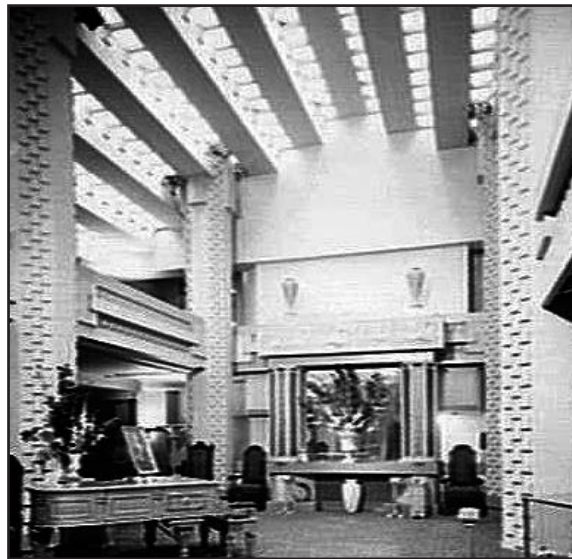
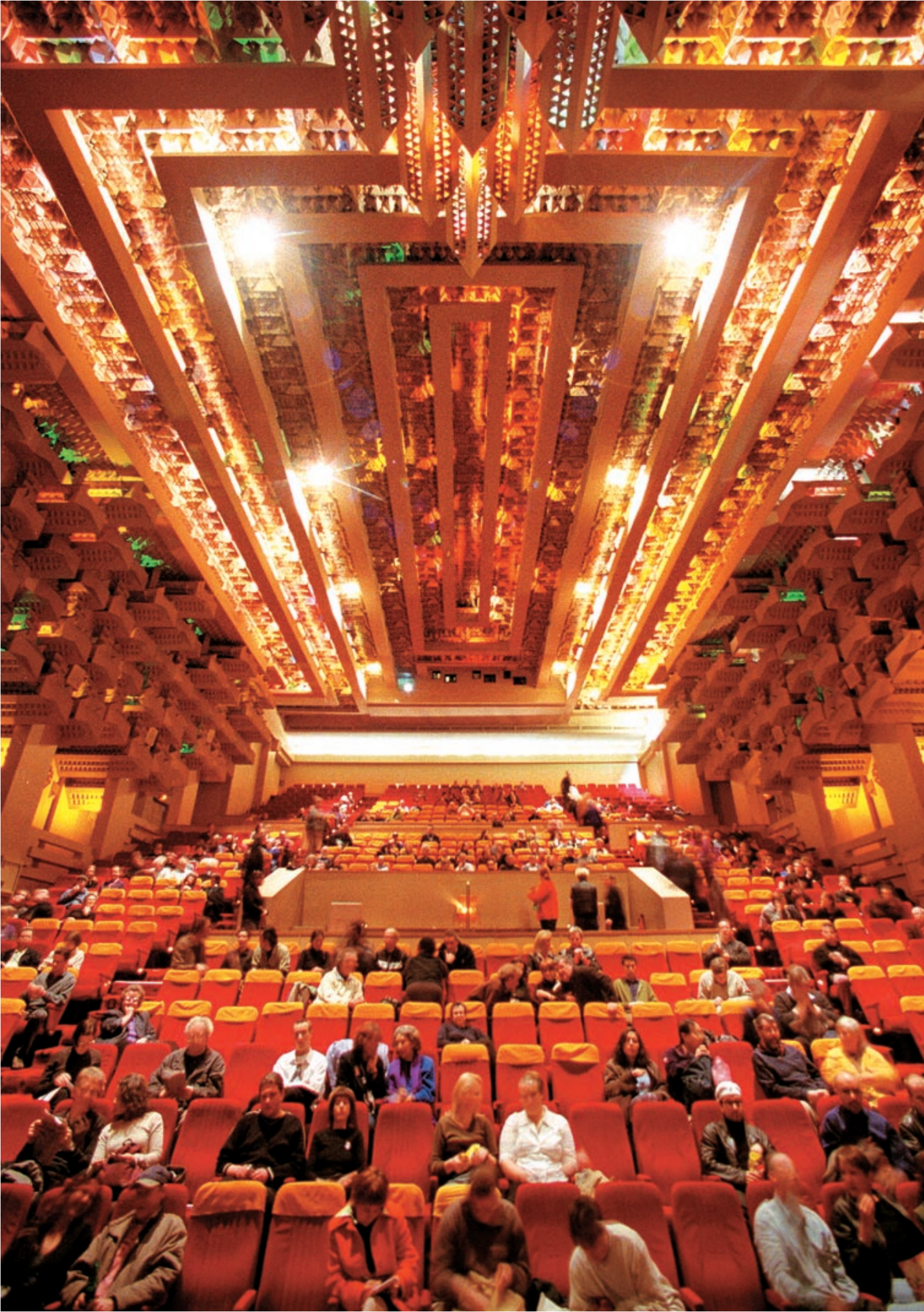
The Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund believes this project is an outstanding project that deserves the Fund’s support.

The Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund is supported by the City of Melbourne and the Department of Infrastructure of the Victorian Government.

The City of Melbourne supports the Capitol Theatre refurbishment project as part of its commitment to the development of the City and in particular the Swanston St precinct.



WORKING CAPITAL



Original lower dress circle
1924



Lower dress circle currently used for storage
1999



The Men's Smoking Room - Upper Dress Circle
1924



The Men's Smoking Room - Upper Dress Circle
1999

“The civilization of a people is expressed in many of its arts, recorded most permanently in its structures.”

Marion Mahony Griffin: speech to National Council of Women (Oct 1915)

In the early 1920's, Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin, in association with architects Peck and Kempter, were asked to design Capitol House, Swanston Street, Melbourne.

It was to be a ten storey building comprising offices, shops and cafes, with the main feature being the Capitol Theatre.

The construction of Capitol House was revolutionary, using only steel and concrete for the entire building. The newly patented Knitlock construction system, developed by Walter Burley Griffin and David C Jenkins was used.

The Theatre opened on November 7, 1925. At the time, it was described as “The Theatre Magnificent”, a “triumph” and a building of “extraordinary beauty”.

The concept behind the Theatre was also unprecedented, being created to provide a complete entertainment complex. With its many different spaces and sensory experiences, it was an imaginative tour de force.

In the Theatre's heyday patrons came to the films, and enjoyed the music, theatrical performances, food, drinks and stylish surroundings.

The ceiling of the auditorium was a highlight, with thousands of coloured globes set in plaster crystalline shapes providing spectacular lighting effects.

Capitol House is the greatest achievement of the Griffins. Originally from Illinois, they had come to Australia in 1914 having won an international competition to design Canberra.

Although their vision for Canberra was never fully realised, the Griffins are now considered to have greatly influenced the direction of Australian architecture.

They were great innovators, incorporating ideological, philosophical and spiritual beliefs into their work. Generations ahead of their time, they were concerned with unifying the constructed and natural environment, liberating perceptions of space and developing new technologies.

The Griffins' contribution to 20th century architecture has only recently begun to receive the recognition it deserves. Many of their designs have been demolished. It is vital that remaining examples of their work are preserved.

The Capitol Theatre has survived many precarious years thanks to the efforts of many dedicated people, most recently, the **Working Capitol Group**.

Working Capitol

RMIT University is committed to re-establishing the Capitol Theatre as an exciting and energetic venue in the cultural landscape of Australia.

The 1960s renovation of the Capitol Theatre has made a full restoration impossible, but there is still great scope for a refurbishment so it can once again be a centre of architectural and artistic appeal.

RMIT cannot achieve this alone.

The **Working Capitol** fund has been created as a way for community members who are passionate about the Capitol's future to become involved in the task of securing the Theatre for future generations.

All contributors to **Working Capitol** are partners in the Capitol's future.

As a sponsor of the Theatre you will be:

- invited to regular tours of the Capitol to keep up to date with the ongoing refurbishment program
- a guest at special events at the Capitol

All funds contributed to **Working Capitol** are tax deductible. All gifts will be administered by the RMIT Foundation, all of which will be used towards the Capitol Theatre refurbishment. RMIT University will meet the administrative costs of the fund.

Please tear off the donation slip and send it with your cheque, money order or credit card details to:

Working Capitol
RMIT Foundation
Reply Paid AAA4352
PO Box 12492
Melbourne, Victoria 8006
Australia

or fax donation slip with your credit card details to:
Facsimile: +61 3 9925 2548

