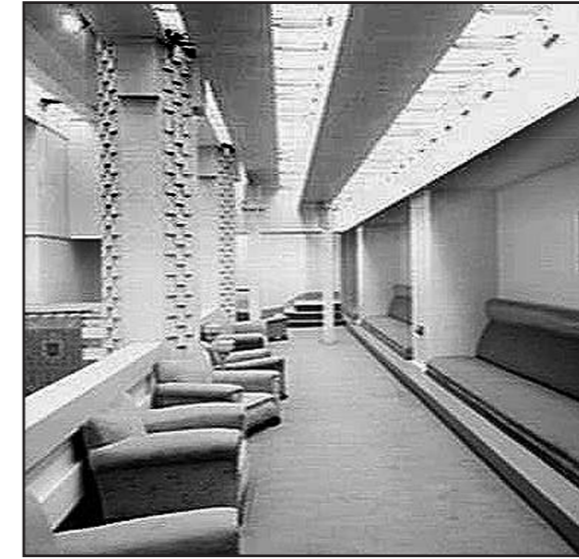


Original lower dress circle  
1924



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

