"The Capitol Theatre... is the Griffins' best known and most popular work. Less obvious than the ceiling but really of great architectural interest, the lounge, galleries and foyer lead to the auditorium."

Anna Royal-Stilwell Melville, in Times Higher Education in the State of Victoria (1999)

RMIT University has received funding from the Australia Heritage Fund for the restoration of the Capitol Theatre. The works are being carried out in preparation for the return of the Capitol Theatre to its original glory.

RMIT University purchased the Capitol Theatre in 1965 for $2 million.

RMIT University is committed to restoring the Capitol Theatre to its former glory and ensuring the cultural heritage of the theatre is preserved.

RMIT University acknowledges the High Court of Australia for their contribution to the restoration of the Capitol Theatre.

RMIT University wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the Melbourne Heritage Foundation to the restoration of the Capitol Theatre.

RMIT University is grateful to the City of Melbourne for their continued support and the City of Melbourne for their contribution to the restoration of the Capitol Theatre.

The Melbourne Heritage Foundation is proud to support the restoration of the Capitol Theatre and the City of Melbourne for their contribution to the restoration of the Capitol Theatre.
“The civilization of a people is expressed in many of its arts, recorded most permanently in its structures.”

William Henry Grace

In the early 1980s, Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Stoddart Griffin, in association with architect Frank patch, were chosen to design Capital House, Stanley Street, Melbourne. It was to be a ten-storey building containing offices, shops and restaurants, with the main feature being the Capital Theatre.

The construction of Capital House was marked by using only the finest materials for the entire building. The materials were to be highly visible in the finished product. The contract was monitored by Walter Burley Griffin and Paul Cadshott was used as the architect.

The theatre opened in November 1935. At the time, it was referred to as “The Theatre Magnifique”, “a triumph” and a “model of outstanding quality.”

The concept behind the theatre was to provide a complete entertainment complex with its many different spaces and sensory experiences. The theatre made a great impact on the life of the city, and enjoyed the musical, theatrical performances, food, drinks and style of surroundings.

The ceiling of the auditorium was a highlight, with thousands of amber lights set off by the ornate crystal chandeliers providing spectacular lighting effects. Capital House was an international achievement for Griffin. Designers from France, Italy and America had come to Australia to make its architectural design in response to the Australian cultural challenge.

The Griffin’s decision to follow the philosophy of architectural and artistic appeal was the key factor in the success of the Capital Theatre. Griffin’s designs were not only beautiful but functional, and his philosophy on architecture was put into practice on the theatre.

Working Capital

M&F: University is committed to realising the Capital Theatre as an exciting and sensitive venue in the cultural landscape of Australia.

The Griffin Foundation of the Capital Theatre has made a substantial donation to capitalise Rehabilitation in the Theatre to ensure its vital role as a centre of architectural and cultural appeal.

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