

BETTER HERITAGE INFORMATION SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with either the *South Australian Heritage Act 1978* or the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.

The information contained in this document is provided in accordance with s14 (6) and s21 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.

REGISTERED NAME: Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

KNOWN AS: Piccadilly Theatre (known as The Piccadilly)

ADDRESS: Karna Country
181-189 O'Connell Street
North Adelaide 5006
CT 5545/271 F183783 A511 CT 5560/395 F183699 A427
Hundred of Yatala

CONFIRMED IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE REGISTER:

11 September 1986

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Piccadilly Theatre demonstrates the evolution of motion pictures as a new form of mass entertainment in the twentieth century. Built in 1940, it was the penultimate purpose-built picture theatre constructed during the interwar period, and along with the Capri Theatre (former New Goodwood Star Theatre) (SHP 10670), represents the pinnacle of development of interwar picture theatres in South Australia.

The Piccadilly Theatre is an outstanding example of interwar streamlined architecture, articulating many of the key attributes of the style such as clean, parallel lines, circle

motif, and horizontal emphasis with vertical relief. The Piccadilly Theatre demonstrates the ultimate evolution of the style in South Australia.

The Piccadilly Theatre is also associated with D. Clifford Theatres Limited, an innovative and influential family-owned exhibition company which was responsible for establishing high standards for film exhibition and introduced numerous innovations in architectural expression, technology and comfort. A leader in the film industry in South Australia, D. Clifford Theatres Limited grew to be one of the largest picture theatre operators in South Australia during the first half of the twentieth century.

RELEVANT/INDICATIVE CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The Piccadilly Theatre demonstrates historic themes associated with developing social and cultural life, in particular the participation of South Australians in leisure and recreation.

In South Australia, cinema emerged as a dominant form of mass entertainment from around 1907. Cinema-going boomed during the 1920s, and by the end of the decade most communities in South Australia possessed a venue for screening motion pictures, ranging from large, purpose-built picture theatres and town halls in urbanised centres to small rural halls retrofitted with projection facilities. As well as providing a popular leisure activity, 'Going to the pictures' was a regular social occasion and played an important role in community building, especially in regional areas.

Commonwealth building controls introduced during the Second World War brought an end to the construction of purpose-built picture theatres in South Australia, marking the end of the technological and architectural development of them. Built in 1940, the Piccadilly Theatre was the penultimate purpose-built interwar picture theatre constructed in South Australia. Along with the Capri Theatre (former New Goodwood Star Theatre) (SHP 10670), built the previous year, the Piccadilly Theatre represents the pinnacle of development in South Australian interwar picture theatres.

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics

The Piccadilly Theatre is an outstanding example of interwar streamlined architecture, demonstrating a high degree of aesthetic, creative and technical accomplishment. Interwar streamlined architecture emerged in South Australia during the mid-1930s. The development of the style peaked during the early 1940s before being curtailed

by the introduction of Commonwealth building controls during the Second World War. Built in 1940, the Piccadilly Theatre was one of the last major buildings of any kind constructed in the style in South Australia, and along with the Capri Theatre (former New Goodwood Star Theatre) (SHP 10670), built the following year, demonstrates the ultimate evolution of the style in South Australia.

The Piccadilly Theatre finely articulates many of the key attributes of interwar streamlined architecture, namely:

- bold massing of simple geometric shapes,
- clean lines, rounded corners and minimal decoration,
- plain surfaces and light-toned cement (originally painted),
- horizontal emphasis, achieved through features such as the street awning, horizontal facade banding and the arrangement of the Childers Street elevation windows, with cantilevered concrete hood moulding,
- contrasting vertical relief, expressed through the bullnose tower feature with concave fluting and chevron-shaped windows, and vertical banding on Childers Street elevation,
- parallel line motif, notably in the façade, foyer ceiling details and architraves,
- circle motif, notably in porthole auditorium window openings, curved auditorium wall bands, bullnose tower floor plan and Childers Street elevation windows,
- wrap-around bands and rounded corners,
- long cantilevered awning element (without clutter of supporting brackets or stays),
- steel casement window frames,
- roofs concealed by parapets,
- architecturally integrated lighting, notably extensive use of toughed indirect lighting in foyers and auditorium.

The Piccadilly Theatre also demonstrates a high degree of technical accomplishment and attention to detail in construction, including high quality rendering, fibrous plaster work, joinery, metalwork, and tiling.

While the Piccadilly Theatre has undergone many changes over the years including removal of original fabric and reinstatement of recreated fabric, the exterior and foyer interiors remain highly intact. Considerable original fabric of the original auditorium walls, ceiling and proscenium are also hidden behind later work. While these changes have had some impact on the heritage values of the Piccadilly Theatre, they have not diminished the place's architectural integrity to the extent that its heritage values can no longer be understood and appreciated.

(g) it has special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance

The Piccadilly Theatre is associated with D. Clifford Theatres Limited, a family-owned South Australian company which grew to become one of two dominant film exhibitors in interwar and early post-war South Australia. D. Clifford Theatres Limited shared an effective duopoly in the Adelaide suburbs and large regional centres with rival exhibitor Ozone Theatres Limited, which prevented dominant interstate exhibitors from establishing meaningful footholds in South Australia. D. Clifford Theatres Limited shaped public experiences and expectations of cinema-going during the interwar period, establishing high standards for film exhibition and introducing numerous innovations in architectural expression, technology and comfort, especially during the silent film era prior to 1929.

D. Clifford Theatres Limited was responsible for building and/or adapting many picture theatres in the city and suburban and regional South Australia. Nine picture theatre buildings purpose-built by D. Clifford Theatres Limited remain in South Australia. Five demonstrate a high level of intactness and integrity, namely the Woodville Town Hall (1927, LHP), Thebarton Theatre (former Thebarton Town Hall) (1928, SHP 10645), the Vogue Theatre, Unley (1939, LHP), the Piccadilly Theatre, North Adelaide (1940) and the Capri Theatre (former New Star Theatre), Goodwood (1941) (SHP 10670).

The Piccadilly Theatre was the penultimate theatre purpose-designed and built by the company prior to the introduction of building restrictions in 1941 and along with the Capri Theatre (former New Goodwood Star Theatre), North Adelaide (SHP 10670), opened in 1941, the Piccadilly Theatre represents the pinnacle of picture theatre development by the company during the interwar period in South Australia.

For these reasons the Piccadilly Theatre is considered to have a special association with D. Clifford Theatres Limited and the vital role the company played in providing recreational opportunities in the city and suburban and regional South Australia through the medium of moving pictures.

SITE PLAN

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496



141 Goodwood Road, Goodwood 5034



Piccadilly Theatre (CT 5545/271 F183783 A511, CT 5560/395 F183699 A427 Hundred of Yatala)

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LEGEND

-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place
-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)

Physical Description

The Piccadilly (Piccadilly Theatre) is a three-storey steel and reinforced concrete-framed interwar picture theatre with brick infill walls. The theatre has a main auditorium set back from and running parallel to O'Connell Street and a dominant corner facade fronting the O'Connell Street and Childers Street corner.

The façade features a two-storey bullnose stairwell tower attached to the south-eastern corner. The theatre has three corrugated steel roofs covering the main auditorium, with box gutters and parapets to the northern, eastern, southern and part of the western sides. A smaller hipped roof, also with box gutters and parapets, covers the bullnose tower.

Additional external features include:

- rendered façades, featuring vertical and horizontal bands on the Childers Street elevation, and broad concave flutes to bullnose tower,
- steel-framed chevron-shaped windows wrapped around and ascending the bullnose stairwell tower, following the elevation of internal stairs,
- blue and mauve enamel fins arrayed around the tower (now painted),
- steel-framed windows with circular, rectangular and semicircular elements arranged in two rows on the Childers Street elevation, glazed with amber glass,
- a cantilevered reinforced concrete hood moulding over second-storey windows on the Childers Street elevation,
- four rectangular steel-framed windows at bio box (projection room) level on the Childers Street elevation,
- street awning with pressed metal soffit and fascia, wrapped around O'Connell Street and Childers Street elevations,
- three sets of paired, glazed double entry doors arrayed around corner under awning,
- three shopfronts under awning on O'Connell Street,
- large porthole openings in auditorium side walls (7 each side, now bricked in),
- Piccadilly sign comprised of vertical fin attached to bullnose tower (not original fabric).

Main internal spaces of the theatre comprise:

- a vestibule and adjoining foyer, accessed through glazed doors from street,
- an upper foyer, accessed from the foyer via a flight of stairs, including curved or spiral staircase in two-storey bullnose tower, leading to upstairs auditorium,
- a bar area (originally three self-contained shops facing O'Connell Street),
- a ticket box in foyer (one remaining of two symmetrical ticket boxes),
- downstairs toilets (fit-out not original fabric),
- powder bar, accessed from upper foyer (partial recreation),

- upstairs toilets, accessed from powder bar,
- large upstairs auditorium (originally upstairs section of single auditorium), with tiered seating,
- two downstairs auditoriums (originally downstairs sections of single auditorium, each with tiered seating,
- bio boxes upstairs (original) and downstairs (not original fabric).

Additional internal features include:

- chequered terrazzo in vestibule (c.1950s, not original fabric),
- fibrous plaster ceilings with indirect lighting troughs in stalls and circle lounges, with associated conventional light fittings,
- helical wall sconce light fittings in upstairs and downstairs foyers,
- fibrous plaster fireplace in upstairs foyer,
- chromed welded steel grille to remaining ticket box,
- chromed welded steel stair rails,
- chromed welded steel balustrade in upstairs foyer,
- terrazzo skirting to curved or spiral staircase,
- carpets in stalls and circle lounges (recreation from original pattern),
- 'Plasco' wall texture in foyers,
- remnant fibrous plaster indirect lighting coves and troughs in upstairs auditorium,
- remnant fibrous plaster decoration to upstairs auditorium ceiling and side walls, including roundel features on porthole window covers and perforated grilles to ceiling,
- substantial original fibrous plaster ceiling, side wall and proscenium decoration (obscured by subsequent internal works),

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Original exterior and interior materials and material finishes including fibrous plaster, tiles, terrazzo, chrome, and enamel,
- Original fittings, including light fittings, joinery, doors and door fittings, stair rails, mirrors, ticket box window and door fittings,
- Remaining elements of original fibrous plaster auditorium ceiling, side wall and proscenium (obscured behind later internal works).

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Air-conditioning system,
- Auditorium partitioning and downstairs projection room,

- Digital projection equipment, speakers, projection screens, masking and curtains,
- Fixed 35mm projector and platter,
- 2020s bar fit-out,
- External and internal LED lighting installation,
- Vertical 'Piccadilly' sky sign,
- Downstairs toilet fit-out,
- Two passenger lifts.

History of the Place

Interwar picture theatres

During the interwar period (1914 – 1945), cinemas were usually described as theatres or picture houses. The term 'cinema' was not commonly used before the 1960s. Motion pictures were first screened in South Australia from 1897 but cinema did not emerge as a dominant form of mass entertainment in South Australia until after 1907. Cinema-going boomed during the 1920s and by the end of the decade most communities in South Australia possessed a venue for screening motion pictures, ranging from large, purpose-built picture theatres in urbanised centres to small rural halls retrofitted with projection facilities.¹

'Going to the pictures' was a popular weekly outing for many South Australian families, and in 1938 alone, the equivalent of 'every man, woman and child' attended the pictures fifteen times.² As a regular social occasion, the subject of films shown was 'immaterial' and many families had permanent bookings in preferred seats.³ The manager of the theatre typically appeared to greet patrons downstairs 'in a dinner jacket,' in some cases disappearing upstairs at showtime to start the projectors rolling.

A typical theatre programme always began with 'God Save the King' followed by a newsreel, a serial or cartoon and a feature. Intermission offered an opportunity to socialise in a foyer or lounge, visit the soda fountain or dash across the street to a confectioner (with police on duty outside suburban theatres to prevent this practice). Many suburban theatres were built near public transport routes,⁴ and the length of the programme was often timed to end shortly before the departure of the last train or tram.

By 1930 two local family-owned companies had grown to dominate South Australian film exhibition, namely Ozone Theatres Limited and D. Clifford Theatres Limited (see below), the latter operating theatres under the Star banner. The Ozone and Clifford companies followed similar trajectories over the course of their respective histories. Both were founded by newsagents; both expanded rapidly through the 1920s,

absorbing competing interests; both expanded into regional South Australia by the end of the decade; and both obtained large, lucrative city venues by 1940.⁵

The strength of the Ozone Theatres/Clifford duopoly meant that dominant interstate exhibitors Hoyts and Greater Union Theatres⁶ did not gain any significant foothold in suburban or country South Australia until the post-war period, when both firms were absorbed, Ozone Theatres by Hoyts and Clifford by Greater Union.

Prior to 1929 motion pictures screened in South Australia did not typically have a synchronised soundtrack, however, most were accompanied by live music, and it was not unusual for suburban theatres to employ their own small orchestras. 'Talkies,' motion pictures with a synchronised soundtrack, arrived in early 1929 and rapidly displaced silent cinema. The expense of wiring for sound combined with the Depression⁷ meant that no new, purpose-built theatres for screening talkies were built in South Australia prior to economic recovery in the mid-1930s.

The arrival of drive-in theatres in South Australia from 1954, eroded attendance at traditional picture theatres.⁸ Later, following the introduction of television in South Australia in September 1959, attendance at suburban and country picture theatres dwindled and many had closed by the early 1960s. A few suburban theatres survived the decline in conventional cinemagoing into the 1980s by screening foreign-language and R-rated films.

D. Clifford Theatres Limited

With financial assistance from his mother Delia (b. c.1863 – d. 1921),⁹ Adelaide newsagent Daniel (Dan) Clifford (b. 1887 – d. 1942) acquired a small film exhibition business called Star Pictures and subsequently acquired freehold the Star Theatre on Henley Beach Road at Torrensville.¹⁰ He soon rebuilt the theatre at a cost of £7,000,¹¹ followed by the Hindmarsh Town Hall at a cost of £4,000, the latter in an arrangement with the Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh which included a long-term lease.¹²

Clifford rapidly acquired numerous other picture theatres and in mid-1922 he gave up his newsagency business to focus on film exhibition.¹³ Star Pictures Limited was registered in November that year under the *Companies Act 1892*¹⁴ with a nominal capital of £70,000.¹⁵ The company's inaugural directors were Dan Clifford, his sisters Mary Gordon (nee Clifford) and Ellen Walkley (nee Clifford), his brother James and hotel keeper John Pierce.¹⁶ The company name was changed to D. Clifford Theatres Limited on 11 April 1923.¹⁷ In May 1923, Clifford opened his first purpose-built theatre, the Norwood Star Theatre at a cost of over £20,000.¹⁸ Further purpose-built theatres followed during the mid- to late-1920s.

Clifford also negotiated agreements to build and lease large new picture theatres associated with the municipal buildings at Woodville (1927) and Thebarton (1928). By

1931, D. Clifford Theatres Limited was the largest South Australian suburban exhibitor operating twelve theatres.¹⁹

In 1928, Clifford attributed the success of his business to 'giving the public ... the best films offering with due comfort,' which he believed led them to patronise local theatres.²⁰ D. Clifford Theatres Limited lead in the introduction of numerous architectural and technological innovations, such as polychrome and indirect interior lighting effects, provision of extensive internal circulation space, stadium-style auditorium seating, double 'love seats'²¹ and side boxes.

The expense of wiring theatres for sound for the 'talkies' combined with the onset of the Depression, and D. Clifford Theatres' 'aggressive' building campaign during the 1920s resulted in the company experiencing financial difficulties.²² It was 1936 before business recovered and Clifford entered into an agreement with the Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh to build and lease a new picture theatre as part of an upgraded civic building. Over the next few years D. Clifford Theatres Limited purchased and/or renovated and/or leased several picture theatres (see chronology). From 1939, D. Clifford Theatres built three new purpose-built picture theatres, namely the Vogue Theatre, Kingswood (1939), the Piccadilly Theatre, North Adelaide (1940) and the New Goodwood Star Theatre (1941).

Dan Clifford died on 10 December 1942 aged 54.²³ At the time of Clifford's death, D. Clifford Theatres Limited operated 20 city, suburban and country picture theatres. In October 1946, D. Clifford Theatres Limited was acquired by Sydney-based Greater Union Theatres Limited for around £300,000, considered 'the biggest theatre deal in the history of South Australia' at the time.²⁴ Afterwards Greater Union Theatres traded in South Australia as the Clifford Theatre Circuit and its venues were gradually rebadged as Odeon theatres from the early 1950s.²⁵

Piccadilly Theatre

In 1939 D. Clifford Theatres Limited commissioned Adelaide architects Evans, Bruer & Hall, in association with Sydney theatre specialists Guy Crick and Bruce W. Furse, to design a new purpose-built picture theatre at North Adelaide. The Corporation of the City of Adelaide approved plans for the new theatre on 6 May 1940.²⁶ Adelaide structural engineers Hurren, Langman and James consulted on the project and the theatre was built by Norwood-based builder R. J. Nurse at a cost of £26,000. The new theatre was named the Piccadilly Theatre, for both Piccadilly Circus in London and the small Adelaide Hills town of Piccadilly, which Clifford visited regularly while he lived at Mount Lofty.²⁷ The Piccadilly Theatre opened on 23 October 1940.²⁸

Innovative features of the Piccadilly Theatre included roof-mounted natural-draught 'Syphonator' ventilation units, designed to replenish the auditorium with a complete supply of fresh air in nine-minute cycles; a streamlined auditorium ceiling; extensive

Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register on 11 September 1986

The South Australian Heritage Council endorsed this BHI - SSHP on 7 December 2023

use of indirect rose-pink, blue and green neon lighting in the foyers and auditorium, with faders enabling various colour effects and transitions;²⁹ porthole auditorium window openings with mechanically operated pivoting covers, facilitating additional ventilation; gas radiator heating, provided by the largest gas heating plants in South Australia at that time; upstairs and downstairs powder bars; and 'Plasco' textured wall finish in the foyers.³⁰

Clifford commissioned a mural of Piccadilly Circus, London, designed by Adelaide artist Frederick Millward Grey and executed by Frank Hussey.³¹ The mural was painted onto a wall in the bullnose tower, opposite the dress circle staircase, and measures 10 feet by 9 feet.³²

Internally, the theatre walls were painted 'varying cream colours', while the auditorium porthole window cover details are inferred to have been painted cream on a blue ground.³³ A milk bar was located in the first of three shops facing O'Connell Street, with access from the theatre via a doorway in the vestibule. The vestibule floor was covered with rubber in a pattern featuring a large red star, while the foyers and auditorium aisles were carpeted. The custom-made carpet featured a circle motif in a fawn colour on a red ground and was manufactured by James Templeton & Co. Ltd, London. The same pattern was later used again at the former New Goodwood Star Theatre (SHP 10670). The auditorium dress circle featured double 'love seats', a feature of all purpose-built Clifford theatres from the mid-1920s onward.³⁴

Decoration of the powder bars was devised by Dan Clifford's sister Mary Gordon (nee Clifford) and comprised 'powder blue' carpet, pale blue walls, embossed with a formal design in silver,³⁵ large wall-mounted mirrors with sandblasted decorations, ruched curtains, and chromed metal dressing tables with glass tops.

A landscaped garden was established alongside the theatre facing Childers Street (then known as Barton Terrace),³⁶ and special parking was provided at the rear for prams and bicycles.³⁷ Externally the theatre was painted pale cream and blue.³⁸ The exterior of the theatre also featured night-time floodlighting and a horizontal sky sign arrayed on the roof above the northern side of the bullnose tower. The sky sign was comprised of 3-foot-high enamelled sheet metal letters, lined with neon tubes on their front faces and spelling out the name Piccadilly.³⁹

R. J. Nurse was responsible for various aspects of the build including reinforced concreting; masonry and brickwork; joinery; plastering; carpeting; and painting and decorating. The latter was supervised by Nurse's in-house painter and decorator W. L. Weaver.

In March 1947, along with other former D. Clifford Theatres Limited venues, the Piccadilly Theatre was acquired by Greater Union Theatres Limited.⁴⁰ In 1956-1957,

new shops and an awning were built on the north-eastern side of the auditorium facing O'Connell Street. Sometime after the acquisition of the theatre by Greater Union, a black, red, brown and cream chequered terrazzo floor was laid in the vestibule.

From March 1967, the venue was renamed the Forum Cinema following minor renovations.⁴¹ Around this time the F. Millward Grey mural was covered with a stud wall and decorated with an enlargement of Veduta dell'Arco di Costantino (View of the Arch of Constantine), an engraving by Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

After negotiating the sale of the former Piccadilly Theatre to the Wallis Group, Greater Union closed the venue on 26 February 1983. That year the Wallis Group spent \$800,000 renovating the venue. Key changes made to the former Piccadilly Theatre in 1983 included:

- removal of the downstairs timber foyer floor and replacement with lower slab floor,
- removal of northern ticket box,
- western entrance from foyer to auditorium bricked in with new access toilet installed,
- opening enlarged between downstairs foyer and adjacent former shops,
- removal of downstairs auditorium floor,
- installation of new tiered, concrete auditorium floor below original floor level,
- stage and part of fibrous plaster proscenium removed to accommodate new, wider screen,
- new escape door openings each side of proscenium,
- auditorium porthole windows bricked in,
- replacement of original O'Connell Street shopfronts,
- replacement of main entrance vitrolite with orange ceramic tiles,
- removal of rooftop 'Syphonator' natural draught ventilators,
- new downstairs toilet fit-outs.⁴²

Development approval included permission to insert a partition in front of the dress circle, thus splitting the auditorium into two smaller auditoriums, however Wallis deferred these plans. The former Piccadilly Theatre reopened on 16 November 1983 as the Piccadilly Cinema.⁴³

On 11 September 1986 the former Piccadilly Theatre was entered in the South Australian Heritage Register. In 1989, Wallis divided the former Piccadilly Theatre's auditorium into three smaller cinemas, one upstairs and two downstairs, under a Heritage Agreement which included a package of conservation works. These works, supervised by Ian Campbell Architects, included:

- repairs to terrazzo entry doorsteps,
- removal of orange tiles around main entry and rendering and repainting of entry piers to resemble banded vitrolite,
- recreation of three O'Connell Street shopfronts to original design and specification,
- recreation of entrance display cases,
- repairs to or recreation of internal architraves,
- alterations to northern wall of main foyer to disguise air conditioning duct,
- installation of reproduction carpet, based on design of original 1940 carpet, in foyers and auditorium,
- recreation of upstairs ladies powder bar,
- external repainting informed by colour scrapes.⁴⁴

On 15 November 1990, Wallis reopened the former Piccadilly Theatre as a three-screened triplex cinema, known as Piccadilly Cinemas.⁴⁵

On 6 June 2021 Wallis closed the former Piccadilly Theatre for renovations, including conservation works, and reopened the rebranded venue as The Piccadilly on 9 December 2022. Works undertaken in 2022 included:

- installation of two passenger lifts between downstairs foyer and upstairs foyer, and downstairs foyer and upstairs auditorium,
- installation of powered access doors to entrance,
- new candy bar and adjacent redeveloped bar in area formerly occupied by three shops,
- new lighting under awning,
- external and internal repainting,

Subsequently the Millward Grey mural received conservation treatment from Artlab Australia, funded through a \$14,000 City of Adelaide Heritage Incentives Scheme grant. The restored mural was unveiled on 31 March 2023.

Chronology

Year	Event
1897	First motion pictures are screened in South Australia.
1907	Cinema emerges as a dominant form of entertainment in South Australia.
1913	The Government of South Australia passes the <i>Places of Public Entertainment Act 1913</i> .
1917	July, Daniel (Dan) Clifford acquires the Torrensville Star Theatre.
1921	Dan Clifford acquires the Greater Wondergraph Company Limited's suburban picture theatres at Goodwood, Unley and Semaphore.
1922	Dan Clifford gives up his newsagency business to focus on film exhibition.
1922	November, Star Pictures Limited is registered under the <i>Companies Act 1892</i> . April, Dan Clifford opens rebuilt Port Adelaide Star Theatre.
1923	11 April, the name of Star Pictures Limited is changed to D. Clifford Theatres Limited. May, D. Clifford Theatres Limited opens its first purpose-built picture theatre, the Norwood Star Theatre. August, Dan Clifford leases the Ideal Theatre, Kadina, his first country venue. November, D. Clifford Theatres Limited opens the Parkside Star Theatre.
1925	D. Clifford Theatres Limited opens the Capitol Theatre, St Peters.
1928	D. Clifford Theatres Limited opens the New Star Theatre, Unley and the Capitol Theatre, Mount Gambier.
1929	Films with a synchronised soundtrack, known as 'talkies,' are first screened in South Australia.
1931	D. Clifford Theatres Limited is the largest South Australian suburban exhibitor, operating twelve theatres.
1936	New Hindmarsh Town Hall opens, including a picture theatre built for D. Clifford Theatres Limited.
1938	South Australians accrue 9 million theatre attendances from a population of 598,000. April, D. Clifford Theatres Limited acquires its first city theatre, the former Central Theatre in Wakefield Street, reopened as the New Star Theatre.
1939	D. Clifford Theatres Limited commissions Adelaide architects Evans, Bruer & Hall, in association with Sydney theatre specialists Guy Crick and Bruce W. Furse, to design a new purpose-built picture theatre at North Adelaide.

- December, D. Clifford Theatres Limited acquires three allotments on O'Connell Street North Adelaide, the future site of the Piccadilly Theatre.**
- 1940 6 May, Corporation of the City of Adelaide approves plans for new Piccadilly Theatre at North Adelaide.**
- 23 October, the Piccadilly Theatre opens, seating 1437.**
- 1941 8 October, New Goodwood Star Theatre opens
- 1942 D. Clifford Theatres Limited operates 20 city, suburban and country picture theatres.**
- 10 December, Dan Clifford dies aged 54.**
- 1946 October, D. Clifford Theatres Limited is acquired by Sydney-based Greater Union Theatres Limited for around £300,000.
- 1947 Ownership of the Piccadilly Theatre is formally transferred to Greater Union Theatres Limited.**
- 1954 South Australia's first drive-in theatre opens.
- c.1953 A black, red, brown and cream chequered terrazzo floor is laid in the Piccadilly Theatre vestibule.**
- 1956 New shops and an awning are built on the north-eastern side of the auditorium facing O'Connell Street.**
- 1967 Piccadilly Theatre is renamed the Forum Cinema following minor renovations. The F. Millward Grey mural is covered with a stud wall.**
- 1983 26 February, Greater Union closes the Forum Cinema (former Piccadilly Theatre) after negotiating the sale of the property to the Wallis Group.**
- The Wallis Group spends \$800,000 renovating the former Piccadilly Theatre, supervised by Campbell & Appleton Architects, but defers plans to twin the auditorium.**
- 16 November, the former Piccadilly Theatre reopens after renovations on as the Piccadilly Cinema.**
- 1986 The former Piccadilly Theatre is entered in the South Australian Heritage Register.**
- 1989 Wallis converts the former Piccadilly Theatre into a triplex under a Heritage Agreement that includes a package of conservation works supervised by Ian Campbell Architects (see history for details)
- 2008 Painting to exterior of building, awning, soffit, fascia, doors, windows and rendered walls (DA/888/2007)

- 2009 Upstairs toilet renovation; replacement of urinal Vitrolite with Corian, new ceramic cisterns and blackwood toilet seats (DA/0847/2009).
- 2021 6 June, Wallis closes the former Piccadilly Theatre for renovations including conservation works (DA 22017715).
- 2022 9 December, Wallis reopens the former Piccadilly Theatre, rebranded as The Piccadilly.
- 2023 31 March, restored F. Millward Grey mural is unveiled.

References

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"New Goodwood 'Star' Theatre Opened" in *Builder* 16 October 1941

"New Star Theatre at Goodwood" in *South Australian Homes and Gardens* 1 December 1941

"Clifford Theatres Ltd. Sold for About £300,000" in *Narracoorte Herald* 7 October 1946 p. 3

Advertising in *Advertiser* 28 January 1950 p. 12

"First Drive-In Theatre To Open Tomorrow" in *Advertiser* 27 December 1954 p. 9

Websites

Genealogy SA Database <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/>

Archival

CT 1411/173 SAILIS

CT 1141/174 SAILIS

CT 1713/117 SAILIS

Letter from J. C. Womersley, Manager, State Heritage Branch, to Andrew Campbell, Ashton Campbell Design Architects, 16 September 1988 Attachments 1 and 2, DEW Files

SITE DETAILS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide

FORMER NAME:	Piccadilly Theatre; Forum Cinema; Piccadilly Cinemas		
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Three-storey picture theatre		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1940		
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 20 March 1985 Provisionally entered 12 September 1985 Confirmed 11 September 1986		
CURRENT USE:	Picture theatre/cinema 1940-Present		
ARCHITECT:	Evans, Bruer and Hall in assoc. with Guy Crick and Bruce W. Furse 1940		
BUILDER:	R. J. Nurse 1940		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Adelaide City Council		
LOCATION:	Street No.:	181-189	
	Street Name:	O'Connell Street	
	Town/Suburb:	North Adelaide	
	Post Code:	5006	
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title	CT 5545/271 F183783 A511;	
	Reference:	CT 5560/395 F183699 A427	
	Hundred:	Yatala	

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



Piccadilly Theatre c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



Piccadilly Theatre July 2023

Source: National Trust of SA/Facebook

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



Downstairs foyer c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



Downstairs foyer c.2022

Source: National Trust of SA/Facebook

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



Upstairs foyer c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



Upstairs foyer c.2022

Source: National Trust of SA/Facebook

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



Staircase to dress circle c.1940, note the mural.

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



Staircase to dress circle c.2022

Source: Wallis/Facebook

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



F. Millward Grey mural c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



F. Millward Grey mural c.2023

Source: Wallis/Facebook

PHOTOS

Piccadilly Theatre

PLACE NO.: 13496

181-189 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide



Auditorium c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files



Powder bar c.1940

Source: D. Darian Smith/DEW Files

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- ¹ Dylan Walker, *Almost an Institution: Sustaining Rural Exhibition in South Australia (1897-1935)* (August 2017) pp. 3, 21; Heritage Matters Pty Ltd, "Jaffas Down the Aisles: A Survey of Cinemas in Country Victoria" (June 2008) p. 9
- ² Alison Painter, "Entertainment: the changing scene" in Bernard O'Neil, Judith Raftery and Kerrie Round (eds), *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the history of South Australia, 1933-1968* (1996) Adelaide SA: Association of Professional Historians Inc. p. 298
- ³ Alison Painter, "Entertainment" p. 298
- ⁴ Dylan Walker, *Almost an Institution* p. 64
- ⁵ "Rise of Dan Clifford, News Vendor to Theatre Owner, Twelve Years' Progress" in *News 6* January 1928 p. 8; see also John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory...* (1991) Goodwood SA: Theatre Organ Society of Australia, South Australian Division Incorporated
- ⁶ Heritage Matters Pty Ltd, "Jaffas Down the Aisles" p. 13
- ⁷ Dylan Walker, *Almost an Institution* pp. 81-85
- ⁸ "First Drive-In Theatre To Open Tomorrow" in *Advertiser* 27 December 1954 p. 9; Alison Painter, "Entertainment" p. 299
- ⁹ CT427/158
- ¹⁰ "Rise of Dan Clifford" in *News 6* January 1928 p. 8
- ¹¹ "Rise of Dan Clifford" in *News 6* January 1928 p. 8
- ¹² John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory* p. 52
- ¹³ "Mr. Dan Clifford, Energetic Entertainer, Controller of Picture Theatres." in *Daily Herald* 25 August 1922 p. 4
- ¹⁴ "Companies and Societies." in *Register* 30 November 1922 p. 1
- ¹⁵ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory* p. 52
- ¹⁶ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory* p. 53
- ¹⁷ "Companies Registered ... South Australia ... Change of Name" in *Daily Commercial News and Shipping List* (Sydney NSW) 2 May 1923 p. 5
- ¹⁸ "Star Theatre Enterprise. Norwood's Picture Palace." in *Mail* 19 May 1923 p. 9
- ¹⁹ Dylan Walker, *Almost an Institution* p. 15
- ²⁰ "Rise of Dan Clifford" in *News 6* January 1928 p. 8
- ²¹ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory* p. 56
- ²² Dylan Walker, *Almost an Institution* pp. 86-87
- ²³ Genealogy SA Database <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/>
- ²⁴ "Clifford Theatres Ltd. Sold for About £300,000" in *Narracoorte Herald* 7 October 1946 p. 3
- ²⁵ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory* p. 68
- ²⁶ Danvers Architects Pty Ltd, *Piccadilly Cinema, North Adelaide Conservation Study* (April 1989) Adelaide: Danvers Architects Pty Ltd p. 2
- ²⁷ "How New Theatre Got its Name" in *News* 22 October 1940 p. 7
- ²⁸ "New Piccadilly Theatre Opens Tomorrow Night, Modern Structure at North Adelaide Cost £26,000" in *News* 22 October 1940 p. 6
- ²⁹ "New Star Theatre at Goodwood" in *South Australian Homes and Gardens* 1 December 1941 p. 44
- ³⁰ "The Piccadilly, Adelaide, S.A." in *Building* 24 March 1941 pp. 36-37; "New Piccadilly Theatre Opens Tomorrow Night"
- ³¹ "The Piccadilly, Adelaide, S.A."
- ³² "How New Theatre Got its Name"
- ³³ "New Piccadilly Theatre Opens Tomorrow Night" notes the porthole window covers were blue; at the Capri Theatre (former New Goodwood Star Theatre) (SHP 10670), opened the following year, the porthole window cover decorations were painted cream on a blue ground.
- ³⁴ "New Piccadilly Theatre Opens Tomorrow Night"
- ³⁵ "The Piccadilly, Adelaide, S.A."
- ³⁶ "The Piccadilly, Adelaide, S.A."

³⁷ "Perambulators Can Be Parked" in News 22 October 1940 p. 7

³⁸ "The Piccadilly, Adelaide, S.A."

³⁹ "New Piccadilly Theatre Opens Tomorrow Night"

⁴⁰ CT 1411/173; CT 1141/174; CT 1713/117

⁴¹ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory...*

⁴² Letter from J. C. Womersley, Manager, State Heritage Branch, to Andrew Campbell, Ashton Campbell Design Architects, 16 September 1988 Attachment 2, DEW Files

⁴³ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory...* p. 68

⁴⁴ Letter from J. C. Womersley, Manager, State Heritage Branch, to Andrew Campbell, Ashton Campbell Design Architects, 16 September 1988 Attachment 1, DEW Files

⁴⁵ John Thiele and Ross Lange, *Thanks for the Memory...* p. 68