

STATE THEATRE

The State Theatre was the last of the old movie theatres to open in New Plymouth, and was viewed as the opposition to the Mayfair and other Taranaki Amusements Ltd. run cinemas, which more or less had a monopoly down the other end of town.

OPENING... The first screening of the State cinema was on Friday evening March the 8th 1935. The film shown was 'One night of Love' starring ~~Grant~~ Moore.
Grace

BUILDING... The building was designed by George E. Tole from A.N.Z.I.A of 36 Shortland Street in Auckland, with Mr. Harry Dilger as the supervising architect for Amalgamated Theatres, the company set up by the brothers Mike and Joe Moodabe. This company leased the building off the original builders of the Cinema, Boon Bros.. Ltd. Contract builders and Timber merchants, who built the originally Gill street building for themselves.

ALTERATIONS... Originally the theatre had stalls and a gallery with two rows of seats. However later on this was altered into a dress circle, the State then seated 970. The Cinema's address changed from Gill Street to Devon St East.

CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP... A while after, Amalgamated Theatres, (changed to Amalgamated Hoyts,) bought the building off the Boon Bros..

CLOSING... Unfortunately the State began to be uneconomic to run. Just like the Mayfair Theatre it was claimed to be an earthquake risk. The building didn't comply with seismic design requirements for places of public assembly. The cinema closed in the middle of May 1990, the last screening at 8pm on a Saturday night.

This was very upsetting for three long serving employees. Usherette, Colleen Tanner, had been working there for 19 years, only slightly out doing, the Candy Bar attendant, Florence Winder (17 years) and Jean Hickling (16 years) who was the cinema's cashier. The last manager the cinema had was Mr. Michael Sambrook.

FUTURE... The building was bought by Trevor Clegg Furnishers. Mr. Clegg altered the building into a shop, and a dispensation to allow a wall of the building, projecting 350 mm into the service lane, was accepted. Before purchasing the building and making the alterations, which finished around September 1990, Mr. Clegg was operating from three rented facilities and his retail shop and was keen to expand on one site. He said he wanted to try and keep the character of the cinema building in the alterations. Today it stands as Clegg's Carpet Court.

The former owners, Amalgamated Hoyt Ltd. with a Moodabe still as a managing director, (Mr. Joseph Moodabe, living in Auckland, who now selects all the films for Top Town Cinema 4.) Had plans to develop a twin cinema complex in the Downtown arcade - a proposal abandoned when the developers, Downtown Development Co Ltd. became insolvent.

The State Cinema, when opened in the mid thirties, was the first cinema at the top of the town, previously all the picture theatres had been exclusively down the other end of Devon Street. It changed owners, and alterations have been made in the cinema building, that now stands as Clegg's Carpet Court. The cinema had a large influence on its long serving staff, some of which worked there for nearly 20 years. It was the only one of the large cinemas that didn't screen silent pictures, and was the second to last of the old cinemas to close. Having its last screening in the middle of 1990, it closed three years before the Mayfair Theatre did.



THE OLD STATE CINEMA IN
DEVON ST EAST 'CLEGG'S'
CARPET COURT
1994