

## Heritage Citation



### Inala Picture Theatre

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 23 Lavender Street, Inala, Queensland 4077
<b>Type of place</b>	Cinema
<b>Period</b>	Postwar 1945-1960
<b>Style</b>	Functionalist
<b>Lot plan</b>	L17_CP848226
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — August 2014
<b>Construction</b>	Walls

The Inala Picture Theatre is a striking example of early 1950s Modernist architecture in Brisbane. Constructed in 1954, the theatre provided an important social and entertainment centre for the newly established community in Inala. The theatre was built by Boscrete, one of the major contractors responsible for the construction of houses in Inala.

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## History

The modern suburb of Inala has its beginnings in the efforts of ex-service personnel to create a self-contained community after the Second World War during a period when building shortages and restrictions made constructing a home extremely difficult.

Hock Davies and several other ex-servicemen formed the Serviceton Co-operative Society and purchased some 550 acres of land. The scheme had 160 shareholders who each paid £50 to cover the cost of buying and surveying the land. The new community was called Serviceton. Unfortunately the scheme failed due to lack of funds and the land was sold to the Queensland Housing Commission. The Queensland Housing Commission purchased approximately 1000 acres in this area at the time. The name of the suburb was changed to 'Inala' in 1954, an Aboriginal name thought to mean 'good camping place' or 'running water'. The name was changed due to the confusion that occurred within the Postal Department with another Serviceton in Victoria and the newly established one in Brisbane.

The housing shortage in Queensland reached its peak in 1947 with over 4218 families living in temporary accommodation including housing camps comprised of disused army barracks, calico and canvas tents, and even bark huts. The role of the newly established Queensland Housing Commission (est. 1945) was to provide affordable housing or rental homes for those homeless.

The Queensland Housing Commission played a major role in developing residential suburbs in the Inala area in the early 1950s in an effort to provide housing for workers in nearby industries. The urgency of constructing homes in this period by the Queensland Housing Commission necessitated the employment of building contractors to begin the work.

In the Serviceton estate five separate building contractors were initially employed to construct various styles of houses. Due to the building material shortage experienced in the immediate post-war period the styles and method of building houses saw a distinct shift from that of the interwar period.

The favoured contractors were those who specialised in pre-fabricated homes that were quick to erect and relatively inexpensive to build. Some of the contractors were European building companies. In a 1954 map detailing the Housing Commission's initial subdivisions of the estate, six building contractors were listed; A&S Taylor (timber), S & K Wright (timber), C. R. Boss (poured-in-situ concrete), Legnami Pasotti (Italian timber pre-fabs), Mokonga (E.J Taylor) (Swedish timber pre-fabs), and Concrete Developments Pty Ltd (Dutch concrete houses – precast and poured –in-situ composite).

The first area of housing development in Serviceton was between Biota Street and Azalea Street in the south-

east corner of the Housing Commission's land. The majority of these houses were concrete. These first concrete houses were built by Boscrete, a company owned by the Boss family, who came to Brisbane from Adelaide in 1949. In September 1950 *The Worker* reported that "Four hundred concrete two and three bedroom houses are to be built in Queensland by Adelaide contractor C.R. Boss, following the acceptance of his tender of ?895,000 by the Government last week"<sup>1</sup>. The pre-fabricated wall moulds were transported from various areas of Australia and the concrete was poured into the moulds on site. The Housing Commission constructed over 4000 dwellings in Inala from the late 1940s to the 1970s and provided roads, concrete curbing and channelling and other services such as shopping centres.

As the houses were quickly occupied, the population of the area rapidly increased; in 1954 there were 2517 people in Inala and by 1961 this had risen to 12,278 people. The Queensland Housing Commission recognised the lack of community facilities in the newly developed suburb and in April 1953 called for tenders to construct a picture theatre on a half-acre site on Lavender Street that had been set aside for the purpose, "A few applications had already been received for the theatre which must be of brick, concrete or other approved fireproof material"<sup>2</sup>. The successful contractor was Boscrete. In 1954 the Boss brothers were recorded in the Brisbane City Council's *Building Register* applying to construct the theatre.

In 1994 A.J. Boss, the son of C.R. Boss recalled the construction of the picture theatre for the local history publication *Inala: Our Suburb*. He stated:

"the complete ... 1000 seat theatre was constructed of reinforced concrete using the house system of formwork, was considered at the time to be the most modern and up to date suburban theatre in Queensland, with cinemascope curved screen just slightly smaller than the Regent in Queen Street".

One of the Boss brothers, C.W. Boss left the family firm to run the theatre. The picture theatre continued to be a social and entertainment centre for the community for many years. Although it is no longer used as a picture theatre, it has become a centre for worship for the community.

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## Description

The Inala Picture Theatre is a large reinforced concrete building with a striking frontage to Lavender Street. The entrance to the theatre sits to the right side of the street frontage and is complimented by a decorative, 1950s concrete feature which reaches far above the two-storey parapet. A suspended awning spans the entire front façade. A line of decorative bricks are featured along the very top of the austere concrete façade. To the left side of the street frontage are two shops which feature original stairs, doors and windows. The interior retains the theatre space. Behind the front façade, the large concrete theatre is approximately 1290m<sup>2</sup>. It has a hipped roof with a series of ventilation fans.

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## Statement of significance

## Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

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### Historical

#### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a picture theatre established in Inala as a response to the area's rapid population boom in the 1950s due to the Queensland Housing Commission's residential development in the area.

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### Rarity

#### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as an example of an early 1950s picture theatre it is uncommon in Brisbane; as a picture theatre commissioned by the Queensland Housing Commission in this period.

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## References

1. *The Worker*, 11 September 1950, p7
2. *The Courier Mail*, 16 April 1953, p3
3. *Inala: Our Suburb*, A Publication of Memories, 1994
4. Riley, G.J, *History of Our Inala and Suburbs*, 1988
5. Kaeys, Sue, *Stories of the Suburbs: the Origins of Richlands 'Servicetown'/ Inala Area on Brisbane's Western Fringe*, Queensland University of Technology, 2006
6. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificate of Titles
7. Brisbane City Council Building Registers
8. Queensland State Archives, *Companies Index*

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**Note:** This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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