





Regent Theatre Redevelopment

Dunedin

Heritage architects Oakley Gray Architects were engaged by the Otago Theatre Trust and the Dunedin City Council to assist with the redevelopment of the 1800-seat Regent Theatre, situated in the Octagon, Dunedin. This iconic building was in poor condition, the stagehouse needed more height to accommodate touring shows, and there were several areas of non-compliance with the Building Code.

The new work included a new stage and a 64 line flying system, a raised stagehouse ceiling, enlargement of the existing dressing room block, a new sprinkler system and extensive electrical upgrading. The orchestra pit was modified, new heritage-style seating was installed in the auditorium, a lift installed, and additional rooms created in the basement. New axminster carpet was purpose-made for the project, and installed in the public areas.

The auditorium had a category 1 Historic Places Trust rating, and Oakley Gray worked closely with the Historic Places Trust during the redevelopment to ensure any new work was sympathetic to the original. As one condition of the Resource Consent, a conservation paint

expert (Laurence Le Ber) was employed to undertake an examination of the existing paintwork, and make recommendations. He took paint scrapings and samples, identified the original colour scheme, paint application methods and techniques, and made recommendations for the new painting. The entire auditorium was birdcage scaffolded, to allow the painting and sprinkler installation to be carried out.

The project took 10 months overall, and has restored the Regent Theatre to its former glory.

The Regent Theatre is a much-loved Dunedin institution, and it was extremely important to respect the community and restore the building as carefully as possible, while making sure it functions in the 21st century.

The colour scheme of the auditorium was selected to match as closely as possible to the original 1928 colour scheme, as agreed with the Historic Places Trust. The conservation expert spent close to a week in the building, laboriously identifying the many different shades and hues.

The colour palette is extensive including **Resene Buff**, **Resene Cashmere**,

Resene Double Spanish White, **Resene Tradewind**, **Resene Quarter Colins Wicket**, **Resene Horizon**, **Resene Opium**, **Resene Bone**, **Resene Tom Tom**, **Resene Akaroa**, **Resene Viola**, **Resene Tsunami**, **silver** and gold leaf. Existing decorative friezes are finished in Resene Multishield+ clear finish. The stage floor is finished in Resene SpaceCote Flat tinted to **Resene Black** with Resene Cemseal on the concrete orchestra floor. **Resene Sisal**, **Resene Bone White** and **Resene Parchment** were used in exterior dressing areas.

The age and condition of the auditorium meant that great care was needed in the cleaning down of the existing paintwork, and application of the protective glazes and new colours. The overall project was very demanding, with an extremely high level of services (electrical, mechanical, etc), and the usual challenges which come with restoring historic buildings.

The project was in the local media throughout the construction period, and it was consequently very satisfying to deliver a wonderful building back to the Dunedin public at the completion of the project.







Architectural specifier: Oakley Gray Architects www.oakleygray.co.nz
Building contractor: Amalgamated Builders Ltd www.abl.co.nz
Client: Dunedin City Council, Otago Theatre Trust www.dcc.govt.nz
Painting contractor: Wrens
Photographer: Bill Nichol

