

Odeon to undergo \$69m multi-purpose makeover

# THEATRE HITS BIG STAGE

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HOBART'S historic Odeon Theatre is to be given a \$69 million metamorphosis.

Melbourne group Riverlee has lodged an application with Hobart City Council to demolish the rear of the theatre, retain the facade and redevelop the foyer into shop space, with an 11-storey office tower behind.

The office space could house up to 1850 workers.

Riverlee bought the Liverpool St building from the C3 Church in 2011. Last year the company said it was waiting for the Hobart market to pick up before redeveloping.

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GRAND PLANS: An artist's impression of the proposed redevelopment of the Odeon Theatre in Liverpool St, Hobart, above; and a historic picture of the building, left, and as it looks today, right.



## Odeon set for a \$69m metamorphosis

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Sales and marketing director Kristine Lee said the company had been focusing on projects in Melbourne during the past few years because the Hobart market had been fairly stagnant.

"However, over the past six months, we've seen more economic activity in Hobart than the last three years, which has given us confidence to revisit our project," she said.

"We are starting to feel a

good buzz again in the city of a growing economy and believe it is only the beginning."

Built in 1916, and believed to have been based on the Strand Theatre in New York, the Odeon had substantial upgrades in 1956, including changes to the Victorian facade.

The building was a 1100-seat movie theatre in its heyday and was once owned by the ABC.

It was also the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's home

for 27 years. More recently, the Odeon has been the setting for Dark Mofo events, a Queens of the Stone Age gig and Festival of Voices performances.

A spokesman from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, which includes Heritage Tasmania, said the development application was being considered by the Tasmanian Heritage Council because adjacent properties on Liverpool Street were on the

heritage register. While the Odeon has never been heritage-listed, the council and the developer previously agreed that the building did have some heritage significance.

The DPIWE spokesman said the Odeon was nominated for heritage-listing in 2010.

The Heritage Council has a policy that a nomination is not assessed while a development application is active," the spokesman said.

"As this development proposal is yet to be realised, this policy has continued to be applied."

Hobart Chamber of Commerce executive officer Steve Adermann said the project was evidence that there had been a lift in confidence in the Tasmanian economy.

"The business community seems more upbeat and positive about the future, so it doesn't surprise me that developments like this are now being pursued," he said.