

Theatre and Cinema

A guided tour of locations connected with the history of cinema and theatrical entertainment in Dunedin.



Regent Theatre Interior



The Provincial Hotel in the 1860s



Theatres of Dunedin, an Otago Settlers' Museum guided walking tour, see program available at OSM.

From Dens of Iniquity to Picture Palaces - the stars, stories and scandals from the unruly gold rush to the golden era of cinema

Trail listed by: Dunedin Theatre and Cinema Trail Project

Location: Dunedin

Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Terrain level: Easy

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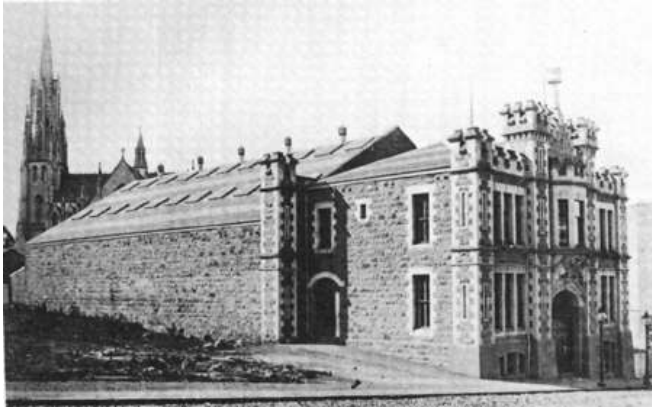
1. Otago Settlers Museum

Directions: The Settlers' Museum is located in Queen's Gardens, near the Railway Station.

Description: The starting-point of our tour, and a historic Dunedin landmark in its own right.

2. Garrison Hall

Directions: Follow your guide across Queen's Gardens into Dowling Street.



Description: A building with a fine gothic facade, once used as a venue for meetings, public lectures and other entertainment. The first full-length film seen in Dunedin was shown here.

3. The Roxy

Directions: Continue up Dowling Street and turn left into Princes Street.

Description: One of the earliest cinemas, built in 1915. The beautifully ornate classical facade is still intact.

4. Provincial Hotel

Directions: Continue south along Princes Street before turning right into Stafford Street.

Description: In Dunedin's gold rush era, many departing miners found entertainment at the Provincial Hotel. This was where the flamboyant Shadrach Jones produced the first theatrical performance to be given in Dunedin.

5. Grand Hotel

Directions: Follow your guide back to the corner of High Street and Princes Street.



Description: The last word in luxury when it was built in 1882 by the Italian architect Boldini, the Grand Hotel provided accommodation for stars like the hugely-popular Nellie Stewart. Ask your guide about the Gaiety Girls scandal.

6. Empire Cinema



Directions: Continue north on Princes Street and turn left into Moray Place.

Description: The Empire, built in 1916, is one of only a handful of examples of the "Atmospheric Style" which still exist. The exotic mural of a fantasy Eastern garden is especially noteworthy.

7. Fortune Theatre

Directions: Continue around Moray Place to the corner of Stuart Street.



Description: Originally a Methodist church (designed by the architect R.A. Lawson), this building was converted into a theatre in the 1970s. Today it remains a working theatre, with an atmosphere all its own.

8. Regent Theatre



Directions: Follow your guide down Stuart St to the lower Octagon

Description: Dunedin is fortunate that this beautiful theatre has been preserved intact. The Regent was built as a "Picture Palace" style cinema in 1928, and modelled on the Regent Theatre in New York.