

# Ticket to Pride

s cinema is a proud part of the Oval precinct, which is being pushed as a contender for the UNESCO Heritage Site list this year. We decode this single-screen theatre's world charm, which holds its own in a multiplex age

ments in the way of maintaining the structure," he adds. "Since Eros is a commercial building, tenants contribute for regular repairs. It would have been difficult had it been a residential building. So, if we get help in terms of financial resources it will be very beneficial."

## Enterprise

cinema was the first enterprise to come up in 1938. While it included residential apartments initially, today it only houses businesses such as restaurants, cafes, banks and insurance offices.

So, has Eros cinema stayed the same or has it changed to modern times? "We have had to go with the change or it would have been impossible to compete with the multiplexes. We have now installed new sound systems and the Barco 2K digital projector, as multiplexes have done," says P Murlidharan, Eros cinema manager.

## Patrons

While the movie house has to move with the times, regular patrons are an unchanged aspect of Eros cinema; patrons who have enjoyed every new release in the theatre for years now. "More than 15 per cent of the crowd comprises our old patron base. Apart from them, college students frequent the theatre as many colleges are located in the vicinity," added Murlidharan.

Structurally, however, many parts of the building dating back to early days are in very good condition. "We have only just started replacement work of the original stall seats. That, too only because it would be convenient for viewers to have seats with holders."

## History

The original chairs were a product of the American Seating Company. They were installed by the Indian firm, Pen Workers

Seating Company, before the theatre began operations in 1938. Anmol Kashmiri, one of the current partners of Pen Workers Seating Company, shares an interesting fact — two chairs from the balcony area were sent to the American firm by them, as a goodwill gesture and token of appreciation for the excellent product quality. In contemporary times, there are niggling problems like a lack of civic sense amongst people that proves to be a deterrent for smooth functioning.

"Some people's lack of civic sense is capable of defiling anything, whether it is a small house or a heritage structure. Some people used to spit paan inside the hall. Almost every day, the cleaning staff at Eros would be engaged in cleaning the paan stains," says Murlidharan. The problem continued until people were checked at the entrance for tobacco products which were then confiscated from them.

**THIS ARCHITECTURE IS A BOX OFFICE HIT:** The Eros building at Churchgate. PICS/SAYED SAMEER ABEDI

