NO SACRIFICE IN SUNSHINE,

WALTER LIBERTY VERNON : ARCHITECT 1846-1914

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August 2010
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Doctor of Philosophy

2010

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Noni K. Boyd
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This thesis traces the emergence of the Free Style, advocated by the designers of the Art and Crafts Movement, in the public architecture of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. From 1890, when the English-trained architect Walter Liberty Vernon was appointed Government Architect, the formality of neoclassical architecture, favoured by a succession of Colonial Architects, vanished in favour of less monumental designs that revived traditional building arts, often employing colonial Australian forms. I have traced the evolution of the architectural work of Vernon and the Government Architect’s Branch (GAB) of the NSW Public Works Department from the Queen Anne Revival through the Federation style to the Arts and Crafts Free Style. I have also traced Vernon’s early work, beginning with his initial training in London and his work in Sydney in the 1880s. Vernon’s design work shows him to have become an advocate of the utopian socialism promoted by the leading theorists of the Arts and Crafts Movement. A strong social consciousness can be seen in the buildings designed by the GAB under Vernon, with a focus on the design of well-lit, well-ventilated, simply furnished and unornamented public buildings.

It is not simply in the handcrafted detailing of the state’s public buildings that the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement are apparent. I also aim to show how the improvements to the overall planning of institutions and the changes in the architectural style of public buildings reflect the social conscience of the Movement, whilst creating a designed environment. Vernon’s application of the ideals of the Art and Crafts Movement stretched far beyond designing individual highly-crafted buildings, encompassing the emerging disciplines of town planning and the Garden City Movement. In NSW the Free Style became the style of institutional reform, employed not only in the design of hospitals and asylums, but also in the design of workers’ housing and educational facilities across the state, including in the widespread urban renewal and suburban improvement undertaken in Sydney post 1900. Vernon’s legacy to the state of NSW is a series of elegant public buildings that employ the traditional arts of building; schools, hospitals and asylums, post offices, courthouses, police stations and workers’ housing.

Noni Boyd, August 2009
ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the text or appear on architectural drawings.

A/TAS  Tasmanian State Archives
ADB  Australian Dictionary of Biography
AGNSW  Art Gallery of NSW
ANG  Australian National Gallery
AONSW  Archives Office of NSW (now State Records)
AO Map  Map held by State Records
AO Plan  Plan held by State Records
ASN Co.  Australian Steam Navigation Company
CBD  Central Business District
CRS  Council Record Series
DG  Dixson Galleries (State Library of NSW)
DMR  Department of Main Roads
DPWS  Department of Public Works and Commerce
ES&A  English Scottish & Australian
GAB  Government Architect’s Branch
HHT  Historic Houses Trust of NSW
HVV  Hugh Venables Vernon
Jno Barr  John Barr
LCC  London County Council
MIA  Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area
ML  Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW)
MLMSS  Mitchell Library Manuscripts Collection
MS  Manuscript
NAA  National Archives of Australia
NLA  National Library of Australia
NSW  New South Wales
NSW HO  New South Wales Heritage Office
NT  National Trust
NZDB  New Zealand Dictionary of Biography
PCO  Permanent Conservation Order
PWD  Public Works Department
PXA, PXD  Abbreviations used to denote picture collections by the State Library of NSW
ABBREVIATIONS

RAIA  Royal Australian Institute of Architects
RIBA  Royal Institute of British Architects
RMIT  Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RPAH  Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
SAHANZ Society of Architectural Historians of Australia
and New Zealand
SB    Special Bundles
SCC   Sydney City Council
SCRA  Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority
SHFA  Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority
SHT   Sydney Harbour Trust
SIPD  Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline
SIT   Sydney Institute of Technology
SLNSW State Library of NSW
SLVIC State Library of Victoria
SPAB  Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
St    Saint
TAS   Tasmania
USYD  University of Sydney
V&A   Victoria & Albert Museum
VIC   Victoria
WHF   William Henry Foggit
WLV   Walter Liberty Vernon
WA    Western Australia
WM    William Moyes
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Harriet Edquist for her continuing support and encouragement throughout the preparation of this thesis. Our debates regarding a wide variety of ideas, not all of which made it into the final study, as well as the cross pollination with her other ‘history and theory’ stream students has been invaluable in refining what was a very large topic, and a very extensive body of work. Her detailed knowledge of the period, and Australian architecture generally, was invaluable. I would also like to thank Peter Downton for his insightful comments on the various drafts and my panel members including Hannah Lewi and Doug Evans who provided invaluable information about the work of Vernon’s contemporaries in other states.

I am very greatful to the staff of Heritage Design Services, NSW Department of Commerce (formerly the PWD) who provided me with copies of studies and photographs of buildings, in particular Bruce Pettman, Mary Knaggs, Matthew Devine, Laila Elmoos and her predecessor Barbara Henery. I would also like to thank the staff in the plan room. The staff at the NSW State Records office were very helpful in my search for elusive architectural drawings by the GAB and the Resumed Properties Branch.

I would like to thank my colleagues who constantly fed me information of buildings designed by Vernon (or attributed to him). Anne Higham and Jacqui Goddard provided access to the listing cards compiled by the RAIA and the National Trust. Kerime Danis
and Rosemary Melville permitted me to accompany them on inspections of buildings that normally I would not have been able to get into. A number of my colleagues generously provided me with copies of their conservation studies of sites with Vernon-designed buildings and I would particularly like to thank Pam Jeffrey and Roy Lumby. Zeny Edwards was kind enough to provide me with copies of her research on the Vernon family and their art and weapons collection.

I would also like to thank Jean Rice and John Dymond for providing the vehicle for my road trips to look at public buildings in NSW, from the Queensland border all the way down the coast to Sydney and from Broken Hill across inland NSW to Sydney, as well as to Kenmore near Goulburn, Tumut and Kosciuszko National Park.

I would also like to thank my father and my partner Laurie Pizzuti, as well as my friends Jean Rice, Anne Higham, Pam Jeffrey, David Park, Christine and Antoinette Ravkin and Sarah Jane Brazil for their continued encouragement. Unfortunately my mother died earlier this year and did not see my study completed. Finally I would like to thank Christine Ravkin for proof reading for me and Scott Roberston for letting me print the seemingly never ending series of drafts in his office.

Noni Boyd
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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

I began researching this thesis whilst working in the Government Architect’s Office of the New South Wales Public Works department, (now part of the Department of Services) writing conservation plans that traced the design and alterations to government buildings and institutional complexes across the state. It soon became apparent that the output of the Government Architect’s Branch (GAB) between 1890 and 1911, during which time Walter Liberty Vernon held the position of Government Architect, was not well represented in the published histories of the achievements of the NSW Public Works Department (PWD). The Department’s official histories are dominated by accounts of engineering works and the neoclassical work of the various Colonial Architects. During his term in office Vernon made a very significant contribution to public architecture in NSW and he also played an important role in the introduction of the new discipline of town planning and the ideals of the garden city and the garden suburb.

Aims

This thesis aims to redress this balance by examining the work of Walter Liberty Vernon in detail, explaining how he introduced a new public architecture to NSW, a public architecture that embodied the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement. My study traces the transition from Colonial to Government Architect and the transition in the work of the GAB under Vernon’s guidance from the Federation style, the acclimatised local variant of the Queen Anne Revival, to the more innovative Free Style advocated by the leading London-based
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designers and theorists of the Arts and Craft Movement. I have structured the first half of the thesis chronologically. I have traced Walter Liberty Vernon’s family connection with Arthur Lasenby Liberty, the founder of Liberty’s of London, and his architectural education during the 1860s. The architectural debates of the time are also discussed, in order that his early design work and his travels in search of authentic vernacular buildings can be understood in the context of the changes in architectural thought that occurred in England during the second half of the nineteenth century. Vernon’s early work in England and South Wales is also considered as he introduced a similar architectural vocabulary and a new form of suburban planning to NSW.

Two chapters trace Vernon’s architectural work in Sydney following his arrival in late 1883 until his appointment to the position of NSW Government Architect in 1890. By transplanting and experimenting with the Queen Anne Revival and Shavian English Domestic Revival, he made a substantial contribution to the changes in taste and architectural philosophy in NSW. His partnerships are also examined, his first partnership with the well-respected, English-trained architect William Wilkinson Wardell and, following Wardell’s retirement due to ill health, his short lived second partnership with another English-trained architect, Richard George Howard Joseland.

The internal changes within the Public Works Department that resulted in the alteration of the position of NSW Colonial Architect to that of Government Architect are also examined. Between Vernon’s appointment to the position of Government Architect in
1890 and his visit to London in 1897, the output of the Government Architect’s branch shows a considerable degree of experimentation with the Queen Anne Revival style, evidence of a search for an appropriate architectural expression for public buildings across NSW. The characteristics of this experimentation are examined. Vernon’s study tour of mid 1897 and the changes in architectural thought that had occurred in London in the decade since his previous visit are also examined. The Federation style, which Vernon and his branch helped to create, was not an avenue that he and his senior designers chose to pursue following his return from London in 1897.

The second half of the thesis discusses how the progressive architectural ideas, and the extensive urban renewal and city improvements, that Vernon had observed during his study tour of 1897 were applied to the resumed areas, the different building and institution types and different climate zones of NSW. Public architecture was no longer simply concerned with colonial administration, but now encompassed education, health, welfare and accommodation of those whom William Morris termed ‘common fellows’. The GAB’s Free Style designs for hospitals and asylums, schools, fire stations and model workers’ housing are considered, showing how the progressive architectural ideas that Vernon had observed in London were applied to the design of the state’s institutions.
Peter Moroney’s essay Walter Vernon: A Change in the Style of Government Architecture outlines the change in character of the work of GAB under Vernon.1 To date this change in public architecture has been identified but not analysed in detail. I have investigated this change in considerably more detail and have outlined the reasons for it. The buildings that best exemplify the change have been identified and described.

Literature and Archival Review

This study begins with a literature and archival review, that identifies the gaps in the current body of published material on the output of the NSW Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon. In addition to the available written material, I have made an extensive search for plans, photographs, heritage listings and unpublished reports that describe the buildings and institutional complexes that Vernon designed. I have included his early work in England and the buildings he designed in Sydney prior to his appointment to the position of NSW Government Architect in 1890 in order the the context in which he worked can be explained.

To date little has been published that details the changes in public architecture in NSW during the 1890s, or considers the early use of the Federation style for public buildings. Three undergraduate studies trace Vernon’s work, none of which has been published: Peter Moroney’s Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, 1890-1911 (1974);2 Diane Jones’ Walter Liberty Vernon, Architect

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1846-1914 (1977)\(^3\) and Elizabeth Gibson and Julie McKenzie’s study: 
Walter Liberty Vernon 1846-1914 (1989).\(^4\) These studies primarily 
concentrate on Vernon’s work in metropolitan Sydney, and the more 
substantial court houses in the larger country towns across NSW. 
The country hospitals and asylums, school buildings, staff housing, 
model workers’ housing and the smaller post offices, police stations 
and court houses are barely mentioned. It is amongst these buildings 
that the transition from the neoclassical favoured by the series of 
Colonial Architects to the Federation style and on into the Arts and 
Crafts Free Style is most apparent.

In England

Vernon trained in England during the mid 1860s, worked in South 
Wales and ran an architectural practice in Hastings, Sussex for over 
a decade before moving permanently to Sydney, Australia. Jones 
and Moroney have both traced Vernon’s architectural works in 
Hastings, identifying surviving examples. In searching for more detail 
regarding his early work in England and South Wales, I have been 
in contact with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) who 
supplied biographical information on Vernon and his cousin Arthur 
Vernon, who was also an architect. Nikolaus Pevsner’s county by 
county survey of English buildings identifies works by the firm of 
Habershon and Pite that Vernon may have been involved with, as 
well as works by Arthur Vernon.

\(^3\) Diane Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon, Architect 1846-1914, 
B. Arch Thesis, University of NSW, 1977

\(^4\) Elizabeth Gibson, Julie McKenzie, Walter Liberty Vernon, Architect 1846-1914, 
unpublished ASR. University of Sydney, 1989
Vernon’s major Hastings work, the Claremont buildings (Brassey Institute), has been attributed to his cousin Arthur who remained in England. The librarian at Hastings and Hastings City Council provided information regarding the location of Vernon’s office and the surviving buildings he designed in the Hastings – St Leonard’s area and I have visited a number of these. The English and Welsh National Monument Records both provided citations for the listed buildings designed by the Vernons.

To gain a wider understanding of Walter and Arthur Vernon’s architectural training, and contemporary architectural thought, I have consulted architectural lectures given by Sydney Smirke to students at the Royal Academy.\(^5\) Ruskin’s writing, particularly *The Stones of Venice* and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* dominated English architectural thought for over half a century, underpinning the design ethics of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The changes in architectural philosophy that led to the Arts and Crafts Movement are explained first hand by Thomas Graham Jackson in his *Recollections* and in the monographs on Philip Webb by William Richard Lethaby and Charles Canning Winmill by his daughter.\(^6\)

William Morris’ *News From Nowhere*, his published lectures and his pamphlets written on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), as well as the biographies by J. W. Mackail and Fiona M’Carthy, were invaluable in gaining an understanding.

\(^5\) These lectures were published in *The Builder* in 1862.

of the underlying philosophy and the utopian socialism adopted by members of the Arts and Crafts Movement. SPAB still uses the manifesto written by Morris to guide their work to this day.\(^7\)

Charles Eastlake’s *Hints on Household Taste* and his *History of the Gothic Revival* promoted the work of younger designers, Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield, and furnishings by William Morris.\(^8\)

I have also been in contact with the Royal Academy in London who provided me with the catalogue entries for their annual Summer Exhibition. The English architectural journals illustrated the designs exhibited each year at the Royal Academy, including drawings by Vernon and his future colleague, Sir John Sulman. These periodicals were widely available in Australia, allowing practitioners to keep up-to-date with contemporary architectural developments. Vernon was later able keep up with developments in London via his two cousins Arthur Liberty and Arthur Vernon. From Arthur Liberty he could learn of the changing taste in interior decoration from the Aesthetic Movement to the Art Nouveau.

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A reprint of the work originally published in London by Longmans, Green and Co. in 1899

Fiona McCarthy, *William Morris, a Life for Our Time*, London, Faber and Faber; 1995


INTRODUCTION

Liberty’s transition from promoting the Aesthetic Movement to promoting the Art Nouveau is outlined in the studies of Liberty’s by Alison Adburgham and Stephen Calloway and in Stafford Cliff’s The English Archive of Design and Decoration.9 Studies of the designers employed by Liberty, in particular Archibald Knox and the Silver Studio, show designs with which Vernon was clearly familiar.10 It was through Arthur Vernon, however, that Walter kept up with estate planning, model workers’ housing and the development of the Garden Suburb. The housing designed for Letchworth Garden suburb was included in housing handbooks by James Cornes, W. Thompson and Sydney White Cranfield, all of which were published by London-based publisher B. T Batsford.11 These were available in public libraries in Australia almost immediately they became available.

The Vernon Papers

The Vernon family papers have been donated to the Mitchell Library by the family and have been catalogued by Zeny Edwards and Robert Staas. The papers contain the family’s own genealogical research, which I have supplemented using English Census records, now available on line, and biographical information provided by RIBA and the Hastings Library. The Vernon papers are extensive, and include

11 Sydney White Cranfield, and Henry Ingle Potter, Housing for the Working Classes, London, B. T. Batsford, 1904
W. Thompson, Housing of the Working Classes, the Housing Handbook, London, B.T. Batsford, 1910
correspondence relating to the family’s investment properties, as well as press clippings and ephemera compiled by Walter in his scrapbooks. The papers also contain articles on the buildings at Sydney University and a lithographed copy of the drawings of the Fisher Library (now the McLaurin Hall).

Sketches by both Walter and his son Hugh Venables Vernon are included in the Vernon papers. The Mitchell Library also holds their collection of architectural photographs and the photographic inventory of Walter’s art and weapon collection, a collection that has now been dispersed. The architectural photograph collection, incorrectly described in the catalogue as being Tudor buildings and Persian Architecture, contains views of traditional and contemporary buildings in England and Scotland and street scenes of Cairo.

The Vernons’ substantial architectural book collection was donated to the School of Architecture at the University of Sydney by Hugh Vernon, however the collection no longer survives intact and there is no record of the titles donated. The Mitchell Library holds the official report of Vernon’s study tour and the published transcripts of talks given by Vernon and Sulman to the Australian Institute for the Advancement of Science. Vernon wrote very little about his design philosophy; his occasional papers were more general, outlining his views on the direction the profession was taking.

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12 Vernon family pictorial material ML PXA 876
For the photographic inventory of Vernon’s art collection see the glass plates at ML ON 226
The Australian National Gallery in Canberra, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston, Tasmania each hold part of the Vernon collection of antique weapons.

13 Vernon family pictorial material ML PXA 876 Volume I
INTRODUCTION

From Royal Engineers to the Colonial Architects

The transition within the Australian colonies from public works being designed and supervised by the British Royal Engineers to locally appointed Colonial Architects has not been studied in detail and there is little published information on the designers or the institutions built in each state. The Royal Engineers were far more prolific in their output that the initial colonial architects. Building materials were produced locally using techniques developed throughout the colonies. Standard building forms were also applied that had been developed in other colonies. In the mid nineteenth century the Colonial Architects were individual architects working with little assistance. By the end of the nineteenth century the various state Public Works Departments contained the largest architectural offices in Australia.

The colonies were administered separately from each other. The Colonial Architect’s offices were set up differently, with different powers and responsibilities. In NSW the Colonial and later the Government Architect were not permitted to accept private commissions whereas in Victoria this was acceptable. There does not appear to have been much contact between the various Colonial Architect’s offices during the nineteenth century however large projects were sometimes tendered in other states as well as in NSW and competitions were advertised in other states. After the depression in the 1890s the amount of contact between states increased, in order to obtain a promotion officers moved from state to federal agencies or from state to state.
Design Attribution

It was (and still is) customary for the Colonial or Government Architect to be credited with all of the designs emanating from his office. There are often no other signatures other than the Colonial Architect on the designs prepared during James Barnet’s term in office and it is difficult to determine who else was involved in designing the major public buildings. It would appear that some of the English-trained architects assisted with the design of public buildings in NSW during the 1880s however their role cannot be fully defined. Under Vernon there is more indication of the individual designers involved. The initials in the corner of the drawings indicate who was responsible for developing the design. There are also two signatures, the architect in charge of the design office and the Government Architect. Peter Reynolds has shown that the designs produced were a team effort, with Vernon working back alongside his senior designers.14 Some of the buildings listed in Heritage Registers have been attributed to various design architects within the GAB without having consulted the drawings which would have indicated who had actually been involved.

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The NSW Government Architect

The mandatory report by the Government Architect in the Annual Report of the PWD gives some indication of Vernon’s design intentions, as does his report of the findings of his study tour in 1897. In the absence of a catalogue raisonné of Vernon’s work, I have used the list of expenditure on public buildings compiled by Gibson and Mckenzie as a starting point to identify the surviving buildings across NSW designed by the GAB whilst Vernon was in office (included in the Appendix). Due to the vast geographic area of the state, it has not been possible to confirm the survival of all of the buildings designed during his term in office. Certain of the buildings continue to be used as police stations, court houses, gaols and mental institutions and access to the building complexes, and their plans, are restricted for security reasons. Many of the smaller public buildings in country towns have been sold and are now privately owned. Their original use has not been correctly identified in heritage listings. Some of the buildings have even been moved.

Vernon’s role in ensuring that the GAB remained a design office has been traced by Peter Reynolds in his PhD thesis: The evolution of the of the Government Architect’s Branch of the NSW Department of Public Works, 1788-1911. His thesis concentrates on the arrangement of the office and how the designs were produced, rather than analysing the completed buildings. The design of Australian penal establishments, including the institutional buildings built to house the

15 Walter Liberty Vernon, A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia, contained in Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. Melbourne Meeting 1913, pp. 548-565 ML 506 A
‘convict establishment’, has been traced by James Semple Kerr.17 These complexes continued to be used for institutional purposes and have been extended and improved by the successive Colonial and Government Architects including Vernon. A number of the complexes that were commenced under Governor Macquarie continue to be utilised by the NSW Government today.

The extensive series of records relating to the construction of public buildings is split between the former Public Works Department (now the Department of Commerce) and official state archives, NSW State Records. The *Government Architect’s Annual Report* from 1890 to 1912 survives, including photographs of some of the completed buildings. The entire drawing collection of the PWD has been microfilmed and the majority of the original drawings destroyed. Selected drawings of the major public buildings, particularly court houses, were retained and transferred to the NSW State Records prior to the destruction of the originals. Some of the drawings, such as the majority of the output of the Resumed Properties branch, appear to have been transferred to the Housing Board however these drawing do not appear to have survived. The few drawings of Workers’ housing designed by the GAB that made their way to the Sydney Harbour Trust drawing office and then the Maritime Services Board are now held at State Records.18


18 Architectural Plans and Drawings, The Rocks and Millers Point, from the Maritime Services Board, SRNSW AO Plans 2953-3157. The last two are unidentified and are sketch designs for Daceyville not The Rocks.
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The original drawings by the PWD that were retained by State Records are primarily by the successive Colonial Architects rather than by the Government Architect. Sketch plans for school buildings can be found in the schools bundles, however these have not been catalogued in the list of plans held by the NSW State Records (the AO, or Archives Office, Plan series). Many of the state's more substantial public buildings were photographed on completion; the smaller country buildings were not. These images can be found in the Government Printers Collection now held in the Mitchell Library. The original glass plate negatives are held at State Records and some are now available online. School photographs have been indexed separately and are not on line.

Major institutions such as Kenmore Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Sydney University retain archival collections that include original and lithographed architectural drawings. The University has an incomplete series of hand coloured drawings of the faculty buildings designed by the GAB and some of their furniture designs. The majority of the furniture designs for public buildings in NSW do not appear to have survived.

Graham Jahn's guide to Sydney architecture includes many of the major public works designed by the GAB under Vernon’s guidance.19 Most of the more substantial buildings are still in use for the purpose for which they were intended, whilst others have been adaptively re-used. In his more recent publication on twentieth-century architecture in Wollongong, Irving has included both Garrawarra

19 Graham Jahn, Sydney Architecture, Watermark Press, Sydney, 1997,
Hospital (formerly the Waterfall Sanatorium) and schools designed by the GAB. Public buildings in Newcastle designed by the GAB, including the Boatmen’s Row, have been included in Barry Maitland and David Stafford’s *A Guide to Newcastle Architecture*.  

Detailed studies of individual hospital sites have been undertaken during the process of transfer or sale by the State Government, however these studies are not all publicly available. In contrast English Heritage have published two comprehensive surveys of building types: hospitals and barracks. Vernon’s own comparisons between English and Continental institutions and NSW, was presented to the Minister for Public Works in 1897.  

The extensive survey of NSW court houses, undertaken by Peter Bridges, identifies key aspects of the differences between the work of James Barnet, the Colonial Architect, and Vernon. Bridges identifies important buildings designed by the GAB under Vernon, but confines his discussion to the individual court houses, not looking at the impact of the public building groups on the character of country towns across NSW nor the extent to which new materials and forms were introduced. His essay on James Barnet in Howard Tanner's *Architects of Australia* also makes comparisons between the designs of the two architects.  

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21 Vernon, Mr. W. L. FRIBA, Government Architect, *Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe*. Report No. 22 From the Printing Committee, November 1897  
In his recent study of the role of the Colonial and Government Architect in the development of Sydney, the former Government Architect Chris Johnson dismisses the work of Vernon as being an eclectic a mixture of styles. Rather Johnson praises what he terms the civic decorum of Barnet’s work. Barnet discussed the progress that he considered had occurred in Australian architecture in an article published in the RIBA Journal in 1899. By 1890 Barnet’s work was considered old fashioned and there was much discussion in the local architectural press in the late 1880s and 1890s regarding an appropriate architecture for Australia. Philip Goad outlined this developing nationalism in Australian architecture in a lecture given at the Powerhouse in Sydney in conjunction with the Lucien Henry exhibition held in mid 2001.

**Contemporary Published Sources**

London-based journals, that included drawings of institutional complexes, had long been available in Australia; the technical papers of the Royal Engineers and *The Builder* both having been published since the 1840s. It was not until the 1880s that local architectural periodicals emerged in Australia. Major public buildings were often illustrated in *The Illustrated Sydney News* or the *Town and Country Journal*. The local architectural periodicals have been an important source for architectural debates, competition designs and illustrations of buildings in their original form. The local periodicals included the *Australian Builders’ and Contractors’ News, The Building and Engineering*


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Journal, Building, the Journal of the Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) later titled Art and Architecture and Salon.

In Sydney debates about Town Planning and Garden Suburbs appeared in The Lone Hand. Discussion of the public buildings designed by Vernon continued for at least a decade after his retirement, particularly in articles by Florence Taylor in Building. The discussions only included the major public buildings in Sydney and, more occasionally, the larger court houses. More mundanely, tender notices appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald and in the case of public buildings, in the Government Gazette.

It was not uncommon during the nineteenth century for architects to specialise in a designing a particular building type and many of the London-based architects published detailed studies that were widely used in the colonies. Studies such as Edward Robson’s 1874 work on school architecture, Henry Burdett’s studies of cottage and pavilion hospitals and the studies of workers’ housing mentioned earlier could all be found in Australian public libraries. European authors were also highly influential: the 1890 study of Modern English architecture by the French architect Paul Sedille and the volumes by the German diplomat and anglophile Hermann Muthesius: Das Englische Haus and his international study of modern country

26 Edward Robert Robson, School Architecture, Being Remarks on the Planning, Designing, Building and Furnishing of School-Houses, with more than 300 illustrations, John Murray London, 1874
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houses (*Das Moderne Landhaus*) were widely read.\(^{27}\) Sedille’s work contains drawings already published in the English architectural press, providing an indication as to architects and buildings that were highly regarded at the time.

Walter Crane and John Dando Sedding both published essays discussing the revival of traditional English designs, techniques and materials.\(^{28}\) The reminiscences of one of the London County Council (LCC) architects, Charles Canning Winmill, published by his daughter, discusses not only the design work by the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, but the contact the younger London-based architects had with Philip Webb during the 1890s. Lethaby’s monograph on Webb, initially published by *The Builder* in 1925 is not commonly available in Australia, whereas his works on symbolism, *Architecture Mysticism and Myth* and his study of Sancta Sophia in Constantinople (Istanbul) were well known.\(^{29}\) Lethaby’s discusses the work of many of Webb’s contemporaries including Butterfield and Shaw. Sulman’s list of recommended reading, compiled in 1904, gives an indication of the professional library available to members of the NSW chapter of the Institute of Architects.

Translation by Janet Seligman
Muthesius, Hermann, *Das moderne Landhaus und seine innere Ausstattung*, 320 Abbildungen moderner Landhäuser aus Deutschland, Österreich, England und Finnland mit Grundrissen und Innenräumen, Munich, Verlagsanstalt F. Bruckmann, 1905


In addition to reminding readers of Oakeshott’s drawings of Renaissance architecture Sulman recommended a number of other texts. Architects were encouraged to study Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc’s *Dictionnaire* and the English translation of his lectures, William Richard Lethaby’s study of Sancta Sophia in Constantinople and William Eden Nesfield’s *Specimens of Medieval Architecture* as well as a number of other lavishly illustrated books in English, French, Italian and German. Very few of the books Sulman recommended remain in widespread use. With the exception of an early edition of Sir Banister Fletcher’s *History of Architecture*, the Stanton Library in North Sydney (the public library that inherited the NSW Chapter’s professional library) does not have these texts. The State Library of NSW grew out of the personal collection of its benefactor, David Scott Mitchell however they do hold some early works on ancient monuments and architectural tours including Mitchell’s own copy of the *Antiquities of Great Britain*.

31 John Sulman, Article entitled *Architecture Considered Historically* that outlining the book collection held by the NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects, Journal of the Institute of Architects, 1904
33 The Mitchell library still holds David Scott Mitchell’s copy of the *Antiquities of Great-Britain : illustrated in views of monasteries, castles, and churches, now existing / Engraved by W. Byrne from drawings made by Thomas Hearne; with descriptions in English and French*, London, published by the Authors, 1786-1807
Style Names

The Gothic Revival has been the subject of many studies, including Eastlake’s original study that gave the style its name, and the use of the term to describe buildings designed in the nineteenth century that utilised motifs drawn from much earlier Gothic buildings is now widespread. The Queen Anne Revival style also drew on earlier buildings, and has been defined in *The Dictionary of Ornament* as a search for a style without specific associations [that] led a number of young English designers to examine the simpler domestic architecture and decoration of the 17th and 18th centuries. It represented in part a conscious reaction against the Gothic Revival and strict academic classicism... because its sources were various, and several of the architects who worked in the Queen Anne style also worked in the more vernacular vein, the so called Old English...

At the time it was acknowledged at the time that the sources were either Queen Anne or Old English architecture however to distinguish between the original style and the nineteenth century work that drew on earlier designs, the term revival is now added to the nineteenth century designs.

The Old English style is often referred to as Shavian Old English as one of the principal exponents of the style was the London-based architect Richard Norman Shaw. Likewise the Romanesque Revival is often referred to as Richardsonian Romanesque when

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the work employs similar motifs to those used by Henry Hobson Richardson in America. The Free Style is a more recent style name. The best examination of the term is by Alaistair Service in his work on Edwardian Architecture.

The need for a term to embrace the wide variety of attempts at an original style has long been felt by historians. The buildings concerned are usually clearly not Art Nouveau by any reasonable definition, nor are all of them the products of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Late Victorian and Edwardian architects used a number of terms including ‘naturalistic style’ and ‘English vernacular’, but most of all they talked of ‘free design’, of a ‘free style’ and of ‘free’ versions of a particular historical style. During the 1960s and 1970s British historians have therefore increasingly used the term Free Style for the varied work of this period which experimented with new architectural forms’.35

Apperly, Irving et al have classified the style as Federation Free Style, however buildings using similar details and a similar palette of materials can be found in London, Sydney and Auckland. I have therefore used the term Free Style without the addition of an Australian time period. I have also used the term Queen Anne Revival to describe the buildings designed by the English-trained architects in Australia in the 1880s and early 1890s, prior to the emergence of the local variant, the Federation style. This distinction has been applied in heritage register listings in Victoria and NSW.

where the term Queen Anne Revival is used to denote designs that had recognisably English origins.

Recent Studies
In looking at the transition from the Gothic Revival to the Queen Anne and English Domestic Revivals that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century I have studied monographs on the work of individual architects including George Devey, Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. I have also consulted general surveys of Victorian and Edwardian architecture by James Stephens Curl, Colin Amery and Gavin Stamp and Alastair Service. Service’s London 1900 is particularly useful in providing information on building types such as schools. Jones and Woodward’s guide to London Architecture identifies the surviving London buildings by Webb, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo and Smith and Brewer as well as the public housing designed by the London County Council. The early work of the LCC has been included in a comprehensive study of the development of the London Suburbs introduced by Andrew Saint.

Alan Crawford, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995
Sheila Kirk, Philip Webb, Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture, Chichester, Wiley Academy, 2005


RIBA have published an excellent survey of the architectural offices working in the Arts and Crafts manner. M. H. Baillie Scott’s *Houses and Gardens* has been reprinted, as have the essays by Parker and Unwin, originally published in the American magazine *The Craftsman*. More recently both Queen Anne Revival and Arts and Crafts houses have been opened to the public, including Philip Webb’s masterpieces Standen and the Red House, Baillie Scott’s Blackwell and Norman Shaw’s Craigside. The influence of the artistic set in Chelsea: Oscar Wilde, James McNeil Whistler and Edward Godwin and Wilde’s role in disseminating the idea of the ‘House Beautiful,’ has been the subject of a recent exhibition at the Geffrye Museum in London. Godfrey Rubens has examined Lethaby’s design work and his influential writing and teachings in detail.

The broad studies of the Arts and Crafts Movement by Gillian Naylor, and by Wendy Kaplan and Elizabeth Cumming, both provide a good overview of the development of the movement, concentrating largely on the British Isles, although regional variations in the United States of America and Europe are identified. The most comprehensive study of the development of the Art and Crafts Movement is by

41 Margaret Richardson, *Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, RIBA drawings series, London, Trefoil Books, in association with the Royal Institute of British Architects, Drawings Collection, 1983


Peter Davey in his *Arts and Crafts Architecture*.\(^{46}\) Davey looks at the design of modern country houses and their gardens including the work of Armas Lindgren, Herman Gesellius and Eliel Saarinen in Finland and Frank Lloyd Wright and Irving Gill in America, the Arts and Craft City and the design of churches. Most of the published studies do not consider urban renewal, concentrating instead on the English developments: the Garden Suburb and the Garden City. American examples are occasionally included in the studies of the Arts and Crafts Movement; Southern Hemisphere buildings and garden suburbs and model suburbs are not.

Published general studies of the Arts and Crafts Movement have concentrated primarily on houses and the occasional church; there is very little consideration of public buildings in material published whilst Vernon was working and in more recent publications. Adrian Tinniswood in *The Arts and Crafts House* briefly looks at the development by the younger designers of a social conscience and the involvement of the Arts and Crafts designers in SPAB.\(^{47}\) With the exception of the work of the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh, public buildings have been largely ignored in studies of the Arts and Crafts Movement.\(^{48}\) The work of Mackintosh's Scottish contemporaries are less well known, including the work of Robert Lorimer who regularly corresponded with the Brisbane-based architect Robin Dods. Essays on the work of Arts and Crafts architects such as James MacJlan, who worked in both Scotland and England, and the early works of Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo, can be found in the *Rationalists and the Anti Rationalists* edited by

\(^{48}\) Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995
Denis Sharp. Nicola Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming have traced the development of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edinburgh and Dublin. Works in other British regional centres, such as the remarkable schools designed by Edgar Wood in Manchester, remain little known today.

The Arts and Crafts movement did not begin in isolation, nor did it end suddenly. James Kornwolf has traced the romantic influence from America, in particular the work of Henry Hobson Richardson on the work of Baillie Scott. It is the prolific architectural writer Nikolaus Pevsner in his Pioneers of Design who traced a continuous thread from the writings of Morris to the early designs of the Modern Movement. The concept of modernity in architecture was not new; it can be traced back to Eastlake’s study on the Gothic Revival and the writings of Viollet-le-Duc. General studies of the changes in architectural style in the late nineteenth century tend not to mention what was happening in the colonies.

Australia

Brian Andrews’ study of the Gothic Revival in Australia does not include the ‘modern’ Gothic work of Vernon in NSW and there has been little discussion of the attempt by local architects to design in the spirit of the Gothic. Australian-based architects were well

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Aware of the changes emanating from London and the eastern seaboard of the United States of America and were familiar with the terms ‘Queen Anne’ and ‘Romanesque’. The exception to this lack of study is the paper on *The influence of the American Romanesque on Australian Architecture* by Myra Dickman Orth.54 Orth also touches on the debate about suitable building types noting Sulman’s preference for Mediterranean forms rather than the verandah. Richard Apperly, in his Horbury Hunt Lecture given at the University of Sydney in 1991, described the importance of the early buildings designed by Vernon, particularly his introduction of the ideas drawn from the work of Richard Norman Shaw to Sydney.55

Individual houses in the Queen Anne Revival style, as well as later Arts and Crafts work in Sydney, have been studied in detail, including the essay on Brent Knowle in Robert Irving’s *Fine Houses of Sydney* and Zeny Edward’s study of the Fairfax residence Caerleon in Bellevue Hill designed by the English architect Maurice B. Adams.56 Edward’s *Six of the Best, Architects of Ku-ring-gai* includes the residences of Sulman, Walter and Hugh Vernon and Richard George Howard Joseland.57 The series by Barker and Elven tracing the domestic architecture of the Hornsby Shire includes George Oakeshott’s own house and works by Edward Jeaffreson Jackson.58

55 Richard Apperly’s Horbury Hunt Lecture Notes (1991) held by the Heritage Design Services, NSW Government Architect’s Office (now part of the Department of Commerce).
INTRODUCTION

The published studies of the Arts and Crafts Movement that have been undertaken in Australasia concentrate primarily on the decorative arts rather than architecture, with a particular focus on Australiana and the work of the exiled French artist Lucien Henry.\(^{59}\) Christopher Menz, of the Art Gallery of South Australia, has studied their extensive collection of William Morris designed fabrics and ceramics in detail, describing the background to their importation and use in Adelaide.\(^{60}\) There is no similar study for Sydney. In his overview of the Art Movement in Australia, Andrew Montana looks at designs by Joseland, Vernon and Sulman, however he does not explore Vernon’s Liberty connection.\(^{61}\) Pioneers of Modernism, Harriet Edquist’s recent study of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Australia, has helped to redress this balance considerably, tracing the origins of the movement, discussing the influential practitioners and identifying major works throughout the country.\(^{62}\)

The transition from the Queen Anne Revival to the Arts and Crafts in Australia has been the subject of many in depth discussions between the author and Edquist, who has long been working to establish the Australian context of the movement. The English-trained architects made a substantial contribution to the development of the movement in Australia, through their works, publications, debates at architectural associations and drawing clubs.


\(^{60}\) Christopher Menz, *Morris and Company, Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts Movement*, Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia, 1994


INTRODUCTION

Transition From Federation To Free Style

Since the term ‘Federation Architecture’ was first used by the art historian Bernard Smith in his study of the architectural character of Glebe, there have been numerous publications that discuss buildings constructed in the decade before and the decade after Federation as being a distinctly Australian form of architecture. Trevor Howells has compiled a series of essays that outline the situation in each of the states in his Towards the Dawn, Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915.\(^{63}\) The essay on Sydney concentrates on domestic architecture and only includes one example of Vernon’s work: Lidcombe Hospital. The role of Vernon and the GAB in acclimatising the Queen Anne Revival style during the 1880s and early 1890s, helping to create a local variant, the Federation style, is not discussed.

The work of the architectural profession in the years leading up to World War I was taking a different path, diverging from the Federation style favoured by speculative builders towards the adoption of the Free Style of the Arts and Crafts Movement. This transition is evident in Sydney in the work of Richard Joseland, George Oakeshott, George McRae and Edward Jeaffreson Jackson, however there have not been any published studies on the work of these NSW architects or a detailed examination of the architecture employed in the extensive rebuilding of resumed areas of inner Sydney post 1900 by the series of specially created State Government agencies and the Sydney City Council (SCC).

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The historian Joy Hughes and architectural historian Peter Reynolds have re-examined John Horbury Hunt’s body of work, which had been the subject of an earlier study by J. M. Freeland. Known examples, as well as buildings attributed to Hunt, are included in the publication accompanying the exhibition: *John Horbury Hunt Radical Architect*. There is little comparison with the work of Hunt’s contemporaries and at least one of the buildings in the study is more likely to have been designed by Vernon. Ursula de Jong identifies buildings, both extant and demolished, and surviving drawings from the partnership of Wardell and Vernon in the mid 1880s. De Jong has attempted to place Wardell’s work in an international context, examining the work he undertook prior to his arrival in Australia as well as his works in Melbourne and in Sydney. A further series of papers that traced his work were presented as a centennial event however the paper on his Sydney work was not included in the published papers as it had not been completed.

More recently the work of the Melbourne-based architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear has been the subject of a PhD and a detailed monograph by Harriet Edquist. Edquist has discussed the development of Desbrowe-Annear’s designs and those of his staff.

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members. She also touches on the work of the ex-patriot architects who settled in Melbourne, particularly the designs and writings of Walter Butler. The English-trained architects such as Butler did much to inform their colleagues of English architectural developments.69

Butler’s garden designs have been the subject of a paper given to the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) at their conference in Tasmania in 1999.70 Some of Butler’s work in NSW is identified in the RAIA Register of Twentieth Century Buildings and in the National Trust Register however this is by no means a comprehensive coverage.

**Heritage Registers**

Howard Tanner has included Barnet, John Horbury Hunt and Robin Dods but not Walter Liberty Vernon in his survey of Australian Architects.71 In contrast to the work of Barnet, Vernon’s country buildings are not well represented in the state’s heritage registers. During the preparation of this thesis I had access to the register of Twentieth Century Buildings compiled by the RAIA and the National Trust Listing Cards. The inventories of heritage buildings prepared by the individual government agencies and the National Trust Register have concentrated on identifying substantial masonry buildings, particularly examples of Colonial Georgian and Victorian architecture. The RAIA NSW Chapter Heritage Committee did not include the majority of the timber court houses on their heritage register. This series of elegant buildings had been identified by

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69 Butler, Walter, *Modern Architectural Design*, bound with *The Architecture of Healthy Homes*. Both papers were originally published in the Building, Engineering and Mining Journal in 1902. ML 720.4B

70 Katrina Place, *An Englishmen Abroad, the Arts and Crafts Gardens of Walter R. Butler*, SAHANZ Launceston and Hobart 1999.

the researcher but was rejected by the committee.\(^7\)\(^2\) A number of the smaller scale timber court houses, some of which are now police stations, have been included in Terry Naughton’s extensive photographic survey of NSW Court houses.\(^7\)\(^3\)

The PWD’s register of historic public buildings also does not include many of the more domestic scale public buildings designed by the GAB. The survival rate of the timber buildings in NSW is much lower than that of the masonry buildings and a number of the more substantial timber complexes, particularly the hospitals, have disappeared. School buildings have a much higher survival rate, although these buildings are now being sold.

The National Trust Register and the RAIA Register are the most comprehensive source of images of buildings across the state, representing the work of highly committed volunteers. Most comparative studies of buildings remain as unpublished reports, held by the National Trust or the NSW Heritage Office or federal government agencies such as the Department of Defence. The National Trust’s comparative studies of Post Offices and of Fire Stations, undertaken with National Estate Grant funding, only considered the metropolitan examples, as did Peter Tonkin in his study of the development of the design of NSW schools.\(^7\)\(^4\) This lack of detailed comparative studies has made it much harder to place Vernon’s work in a state and national context than in the

\(^7\)\(^2\) The cards, including photographs, of the rejected buildings have been retained by the NSW Chapter as a record.

\(^7\)\(^3\) Terry Naughton, Places of Judgement in NSW, Sydney, The Law Book Company, 1987

\(^7\)\(^4\) Peter F. Tonkin, School Buildings, Volume II, 1880-1908, unpublished thesis, date and university are not listed on Volume II.
international context. Unfortunately the National Estate Grant program is no longer in place and comparative studies of building types at a national level are rarely commissioned or made public.

Vernon’s Contemporaries

The main source of comparative information on public buildings in Australia remains the Illustrated Register of the National Estate prepared in the 1970s, which is now available as a searchable database on the Internet. The work of Vernon’s contemporary George Temple Poole is included in the Register of the National Estate and is the subject of a published monograph by Ray and John Oldham and a doctoral thesis by Ingrid H. van Bremen.\(^\text{75}\) Van Bremen looks at the Arts and Crafts threads in the work of the architects whom she terms the Eastern Exiles, noting how colonial forms and local materials were employed to give a ‘unique regional flavour that contributed to a town’s sense of place’.\(^\text{76}\) I have visited a number of examples of Temple Poole’s surviving work in Western Australia (WA).

Patrick Bingham-Hall’s photographic essays of architecture in Brisbane and Perth illustrate changes in architectural taste during the period Vernon was working in NSW.\(^\text{77}\) A number of Dod’s buildings are illustrated, including the Lady Lamington Nurses home (1897)

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\(^\text{75}\) Ray and John Oldham, *George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897*, Nedlands, University of Western Australia Press, 1980

\(^\text{76}\) Ingrid H. van Bremen, *The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia, Government Buildings under the Direction of G.T. Poole 1885-1897*, University of Western Australia, 1990

\(^\text{77}\) van Bremen, *The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia*, p. 248


and St Brigid’s Church at Red Hill (1914). Temple Poole’s work is included in the volume on Perth architecture. Surviving buildings from this period in Melbourne have been described in Philip Goad’s *Guide to Melbourne Architecture*.78

A number of student theses that trace individual architects works are held at the University of NSW, including the work of E. J. Jackson and R. G. H Joseland. John Sulman’s work is the subject of a PhD by Zeny Edwards. Outside of entries in architectural guidebooks to Sydney, the work of John Burcham Clamp, Edward Jeaffreson Jackson, Richard George Howard Joseland, Rutledge Louat, George Oakeshott, Edwin Orchard, James Peddle, the Vernons and Bertrand James Waterhouse remains largely unknown. Ian Stapleton has been working to identify the surviving works Edwin Orchard. The work of B. J. Waterhouse has been the subject of an exhibition at the Mosman Gallery and is now being studied in further detail by Andrew Howell. Many of Orchard’s works have been incorrectly attributed to Waterhouse due to their similarity in style.

**City Planning**

Camillo Sitte’s work on town planning was widely known and was discussed in English treatises on town planning by Mawson and Triggs. H. Inigo Triggs study of *Town Planning, Past, Present and Possible* was influential in Sydney. Both Vernon and George Sydney Jones had copies of this work in their personal libraries.79 In these works the illustrations were as influential as the text, if not more

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so. The essays in *Australian Metropolis*, edited by Robert Freestone, discuss the impact of both the Garden City Movement and the City Beautiful Movement on the major cities in Australia. With the exception of Freestone’s work on model communities, the parallel development and implementation of the utopian socialist ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and Australasia has not been studied in detail. There is no published study that discusses the designs of public housing in Australia by the various state housing commissions and agencies such as the Sydney Harbour Trust. Many of the drawings of the designs by the Sydney Harbour Trust survive, in the NSW State Records, part of an accession from the Maritime Services Board that has yet to be catalogued. The architectural drawings included by James Kerr in his conservation plans for sites in Sydney Harbour are amongst these numerous bundles of plans.

To date there has been no published study that outlines Vernon’s role in urban and suburban planning in Sydney. While his role in the initial planning of Canberra is mentioned briefly by Peter Harrison, the primary focus has been the work of the Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin. In contrast studies of Australian town planning by George Taylor and Sulman discussed Vernon’s role in the initial planning of Canberra. The State Records of NSW hold the series of plans prepared during the Royal Commission into the Improvement of Sydney and her Suburbs in 1909, including Vernon’s scheme. Later studies of town planning have concentrated primarily

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81 SRNSW Accessions from the Maritime Services Board including A3681 and A 3881
82 George Augustine Taylor, *Town Planning For Australia*, Sydney, Building Ltd, 1914
John Sulman, *An Introduction to the study of Town Planning in Australia*, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1921
on the proposals by Sulman rather than the completed designs by the GAB, a trend started by Sulman himself with his own study on Town Planning, in which he neglected to mention that the PWD’s role in the design of Daceyville.

**Research Method**

My research method has been to initially compile information on the buildings chronologically and then identify particular trends or themes in the work and the point at which the designs change markedly. The list of buildings compiled from the PWD Annual Reports by Gibson and Mckenzie was used as a starting point, as were the photographs on the listing cards held by the National Trust and the RAIA. The buildings that best exemplify the themes were visited and have been included in this study. The output of the GAB under Vernon was considerable and so it was not possible to cover or visit all of the buildings designed by the branch. Contemporary and historic photographs have been used to show the original intention of the design and its current form. My conclusions have been drawn from material collected during site visits, from the study of archival materials, including plans and photographs, and contemporary accounts and more recent analyses of the designs by architectural historians. Vernon wrote very little about his own work and was always very modest when he described it.

As NSW Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon changed the course of public architecture in NSW, producing a remarkable series of highly crafted, socially responsible buildings designed with the health and welfare of the users in mind. A testament to the
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The quality of the designs is that a large proportion of the public buildings designed during Vernon’s time in office continue to be used.
CHAPTER 2 : THE EARLY YEARS 1846 - 1866

This chapter aims to set the scene, considering Walter Liberty Vernon’s upbringing, his family connection with Arthur Lasenby Liberty, the founder of Liberty’s of London, and his architectural education during the 1860s. Contemporary architectural debates are also discussed, in order that his early design work and his travels in search of traditional buildings can be understood in the context of the changes in architectural thought that occurred in England during the second half of the nineteenth century.

During the mid nineteenth century, the reaction against the monotonous, over-ornamented and poorly constructed buildings that cluttered industrial townscapes corresponded with an increasing interest in the picturesque forms and details of traditional English buildings. Three years before Vernon started his architectural training in London, John Ruskin had lectured on Modern Manufacture and Design to the Mechanics Institute of Bradford, advising that

...the circumstances with which you must surround your workmen are those simply of happy modern English life, because the designs you have now to ask from your workmen are such as will make modern English life beautiful... but for us there is the loftier and lovelier privilege of bringing the power and the charm of art within the reach of the humble and the poor...1

Ruskin’s words articulate what Vernon strove to achieve throughout his career as an architect, in his private work and later in the design

of public buildings for the country towns and metropolitan areas of New South Wales. Vernon’s public buildings were designed to improve the quality of life of the inhabitant, be they schools, hospitals, asylums, staff or public housing. Urban renewal ensured that ‘dark satanic mills’ built during the industrial revolution were replaced with light and airy model factories; garden suburbs and model workers’ housing replaced dense, crowded and unsanitary inner city slums; gardens replaced the walls of the state’s austere colonial Georgian institutions.2

Childhood

Vernon’s upbringing strongly influenced his design philosophy, as well as that of his cousins Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843-1917) and the architect and estate surveyor Arthur Vernon (1845-1926). Walter, the second of the four children of Robert and Margaret Vernon, was born in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire in 1846. Located in the Chilterns, a range of low hills separating Oxford from Windsor, High Wycombe continued to be the home of his parents, and his elder brother Robert and his cousin Arthur Vernon for the remainder of their lives.

In the 1840s the town was a centre of traditional chair-making, furniture that Liberty would later popularise, selling copies in his London department store.3 Plain but functional, largely devoid of decoration yet highly crafted and beautifully made, the furniture reflected the wider philosophy of the craftsmen who made them. Few designers today understand how radical it was, during the Victorian

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2 William Blake, Jerusalem, written in 1804
era, for natural colors and dyes to be used and for handcrafted furniture to be sold in Regent Street, one of the major shopping streets of London. Walter and Arthur Vernon’s architectural training served to further encourage an appreciation of craftsmanship.

Walter’s mother, née Margaret Liberty, whose maiden name Walter retained, was the aunt of Arthur Lasenby Liberty. When Walter was five Arthur Liberty came to live with his family; Arthur’s parents were busy establishing their lace warehouse in Nottingham, then a major lace-making centre. The appreciation of design that the cousins possessed was in a large part due to the influence of Margaret Vernon, who took the children up to London to visit museums where treasures such as the Layard Marbles from Ninevah were on display. The cousins were also taken to see local archaeological excavations.4

Great pleasure was taken in the discovery of a large Roman Villa at the foot of Keep Hill on Lord Carrington’s land. The pavement of one room was perfect; a female head in each corner and cave canem at the entrance worked in quarter inch tesserae.5

The architect William Burges recorded the Roman pavement discovered at Wycombe Abbey in 1859, one of the series of projects Burges undertook for Robert Carrington between 1858 and 1865.6 If Vernon had not met Burges at High Wycombe, or

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4 Margaret Vernon’s recollections are quoted in Peter Moroney, Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, 1890-1911, unpublished thesis, p. 3
5 Hugh Vernon, Obituary of W. L. Vernon. Vernon papers Ml. MSS 6571 Box 3
seen the elaborate servants' wing that Burges designed for the Carringtons at Gayhurst (figure 2.3), he would have become aware of his work whilst studying in London. Robert Carrington's death in 1868 unfortunately halted these projects. The similarities in the detail of the tower with Vernon's designs for the Claremont buildings (Brassey Insitute) in Hastings and the Broken Hill Post Office indicate that he was familiar with Burges' work at Gayhurst.

The Vernon family had a longstanding connection with the Carrington family. Walter's grandparents, Michael and Catherine Vernon had lived at Cressex Farm, Marlow Hill near High Wycombe since the 1820s in a property leased from the Carrington Estate. Group portraits of the Carringtons in the Vernon family collection indicate a closer relationship between the families than that of landlord and tenant. Charles Robert Carrington held the post of Governor of NSW between 1885 and 1890 and on his return to England advocated that the Australian colonies become an independent nation.

Walter's grandmother Catherine Vernon (née Davenport) was a descendant of John Davenport, one of the Puritan founders of Newhaven in America. The English branch of the Davenport family continued to reside at Bramhall Hall, a substantial Elizabethan manor.

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7 The Abbess's Room at Gayhurst in Buckinghamshire commenced in 1858 is believed to be the earliest painted interior designed by William Burges to survive. Jeremy Cooper, Victorian and Edwardian Furniture and Interiors, From the Gothic Revival to Art Nouveau, London, Thames and Hudson, 1998 plate 142.
8 At the time of Charles Robert Carrington's death in 1928 the Carrington Estate consisted of some 23,000 acres (9,308 hectares) of land, mostly in Buckinghamshire. This land was largely tenanted. ADB Online edition, Carrington, Charles Robert (Marquess of Lincolnshire) 1843-1928, accessed 15 July 2006.
9 ML PXA 876 Volume 1 Photographs collected by W.L. Vernon includes loose photographs of Bower Hayes and group portraits that include Lord Carrington and Sir Phillip Rose & their party.
10 Family tree compiled by Hugh Vernon. Copy held by Zeny Edwards.
house near Stockport, Cheshire until the 1870s (figures 3.23 & 3.24). The Vernon family was proud of their long family tradition of non-conformist worship; the extensive family tree compiled by Hugh Venables Vernon, a founder member of the Australian Genealogical Society, bears a handwritten note in the margin by Walter; ‘always been non-conformist, WLV’. Margaret Vernon, Walter’s sister, believed that the Puritan ethics of the Davenports were ‘inbred in her father and uncle’s characters’.

Schooling

Walter and Arthur Vernon attended the Wycombe Grammar School where Walter succeeded in winning two prizes in 1860. The cousins’ drawing ability must have been noticed whilst they were at school. Walter was sent to London to serve his articles with the architectural firm of Habershon and Pite, rather than entering his father’s profession of banking.

11 The Vernon papers at the ML contain some of Hugh Vernon’s genealogical research. ML MSS 6571. Although Zeny Edwards notes that Hugh was known to his friends as Ven, he used his full initials H.V.V. on drawings and on his bookplate. I have used his given name Hugh in this study to avoid confusion.

12 Margaret Vernon’s recollections are quoted in Moroney, Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, 1890-1911, p. 2.

13 Vernon Papers ML MSS 6571/4 Scrapbook newspaper cutting recording Wycombe Grammar School prizes 50 years ago (1910 cutting) Walter Liberty Vernon had won 2 prizes. The subjects for which the prizes were awarded were not identified.
Arthur Vernon commenced training as a surveyor, his father’s profession, but soon transferred to architecture. The role of surveyors in the nineteenth century differs from today, involving the layout and control of the character of the suburban developments that were undertaken on estate lands under a 99-year lease. Design control was necessary in the absence of town planning regulations; architects had to submit their work to the estate surveyor for approval. The desire to control the character was intended to protect the investment and improve the estate, rather than to provide amenity for the tenants, and the quality of the designs varied considerably. Many estates retained the services of an architect, a commission that often passed from father to son. Walter’s mentor William Habershon and Arthur Vernon both inherited such estate work, Walter did not.

Walter came from a family with connections with progressive and philanthropic men, including Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister from 1868 until 1880 and his advisor Sir Phillip Rose. Arthur’s father, George Vernon acted as estate surveyor for Disraeli’s Hughenden Estate from 1849, shortly after the estate was purchase. The manor house was redesigned by the London-based architect Edward Buckton Lamb in 1862-63. Arthur Vernon then served his articles in Lamb’s architectural practice in London. An ‘extravagantly original Gothic Revival architect’, Lamb had debated the concept of the Gothic Revival with Ruskin whilst he was writing The Stones of Venice.14

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After completing his studies Arthur returned to High Wycombe, taking over his father’s firm, including managing the Hughenden Estate until 1880, shortly before Disraeli’s death. In the surviving correspondence from the Vernons to Disraeli and his wife is correspondence regarding the new gate house (1871) and alterations to the house (1875). In late 1883 he took over the office that Walter had established in London. Arthur designed mostly secular buildings in the Queen Anne and English Domestic Revival styles. The main focus of his work continued to be estate work; a copy of his book on estate fencing is in the Vernon papers in the Mitchell Library. Arthur was also active in local politics, serving as Mayor of High Wycombe and acting as an agent for Liberty. Like his cousin Arthur, Walter started his architectural career with estate work however he did not continue on this path.

**An Articled Pupil**

In 1862, at the age of sixteen, Vernon was articled to the London-based architect William Gilbee Habershon (c.1818 - 1891), of Habershon and Pite, where he remained for the customary four years. The Habershons undertook extensive estate work, predominantly in South Wales. Following Matthew Haberson’s death in 1852, his
two sons William Gilbee and Edward Habershon continued the family practice. Amongst their designs was a scheme for an Anglican cathedral for Adelaide, South Australia, prepared around 1854 (figure 2.4).²⁰ By 1860 the two brothers had gone their separate ways, Edward Habershon went into partnership with Mr. Brock whilst his brother William established a partnership with Alfred Robert Pite that lasted from 1860 until 1878.

Habershon and Pite were not one of the leading Gothic Revival practices, nor was their work well regarded by the younger, more fashionable, architects. William Eden Nesfield, describing a sketching trip with Richard Norman Shaw in 1862, commented that Broadwater Church in West Sussex was ‘a most abominable church done by a twelfth century Habershon no doubt’.²¹ Vernon was clearly familiar with Habershon brothers’ work in Sussex; he was to use the name of Bovington near Hove, where they had designed a church, for one of the houses in his Neutral Bay Estate.²² Despite criticisms of the firm’s architecture, the Habershons clearly provided their articled pupils with a good grounding in design and detailing, retaining the most promising pupils on staff. William Emerson (later Sir William), Vernon and Alfred Pite’s son, Arthur Beresford Pite, all served their articles with Habershon and Pite in London, each spending their

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²⁰ The initial grand scheme by William Butterfield was not built either. In the late 1860s a third design, again by Butterfield, was prepared. It was this design, modified by the local architect Edward John Woods that was finally built. Butterfield designed the font and the reredos (which have been relocated to the Lady Chapel) and church plate.

²¹ Nesfield quoted in Andrew, Saint, Richard Norman Shaw
²² Entry for a Church at Bovington, Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy Exhibitors, Royal Academy, London, 1904. Entry for W.G. Habershon
early years in the firm’s Welsh branch office in Newport. Beresford Pite, Emerson, and Vernon all went on to design substantial buildings in the colonies.\(^{23}\) Robert William Edis, later the president of the Architectural Association, had also served his articles with Habershon and Pite but was slightly older than Vernon and their time in the office did not overlap.

Unlike Vernon and Emerson, Beresford Pite remained in England. From 1881 until 1897 he worked in London with John Belcher, initially as an assistant and later as a partner. A founder member of the Art Workers’ Guild, Pite taught architecture at the Central School of Design from 1896; his friend William Richard Lethaby, who coordinated the course, taught ornamentation and design. One of the photographs in Vernon’s collection is of an unidentified church that is probably Pite’s work.

Emerson commenced his articles the year before Vernon, leaving Habershon and Pite to work with Burges on the design of the Bombay Art School. He worked in India for many years before returning to London in the mid 1880s. Emerson’s views as president of RIBA were well known in the colonies. His paper ‘The necessity of official control over architecture in towns and cities’ given in London in June 1900 at the General Congress of Architects was quoted by

\(^{23}\) Arthur Beresford Pite designed the Namirembe Cathedral in Kampala, which was finally completed in 1918. The design has some similarities with Pite’s design for Christ Church Brixton, designed between 1896 and 1899 but not built until 1901-02. The first design for Namirembe Anglican Cathedral is illustrated in Service, Alastair, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design, 1890-1914, Thames and Hudson, London, 1977, plate 151. The Side Elevation of Christ Church Brixton is illustrated in Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, RIBA drawings series, plate 87.
John Barlow, the editor of the *Journal of the NSW Institute of Architects* in his 1904 article on *The City Beautiful*. Emerson’s belief in the need to control architectural character reflected his experience in designing estate buildings.

**Comparative Sculpture**

Unfortunately Walter’s student work has not survived, but his comment that he spent long hours studying in museums in South Kensington does. Following his retirement in 1911, he outlined his views on architectural education. Students of architecture, he believed, should be

…taken to museums of ‘comparative sculpture’ such as the initiative of [Eugene Emmanuel] Viollet-le-Duc created in the Trocadero; and in default of similarly arranged institutions at home [Sydney] to the sculpture galleries of the British and South Kensington Museums…

An illustration of the Architectural Museum that appeared in *The Builder* in 1854 shows the room crammed from floor to ceiling with

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24 John Barlow, *The City Beautiful*, in the *Journal of the Institute of Architects of NSW*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 1904. Note that in the first year the publication was simply called the *Journal of the Institute of Architects of NSW*, it became *Art and Architecture* in 1905.


26 The museum Viollet-le-Duc created is now known as the Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine and is located within the Palais de Challiot in Paris. The castings of entire sections of buildings remain an integral part of the Museum’s collection.

WALTER LIBERTY VERNON
Noni Boyd © Final Version August 2010
plaster casts, a number of which had been donated by Ruskin (figure 2.5).  

The Architecture Museum did not want to dictate designs or to create a school of designers. They wanted to improve the quality of the man who was to carry out the designs, to teach the workman to train their hands, to cultivate their minds, to interest them in what they were doing, so it might be carried out with love, truth and feeling.  

Ruskin had long been a supporter of the Architectural museum, donating plaster casts taken from French cathedrals and the Doge’s palace in Venice. The forerunner of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A), the Museum of Manufactures, established by Henry Cole in the early 1850s, contained ‘ornamental art of all periods and countries’. The museum’s architectural casts, largely of Gothic details, were from an existing collection that had been established by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The casts Scott collected were displayed at the V&A from the late 1850s until 1869 when

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27 Figure 38, Architectural Museum, Westminster; Builder, 1854

28 *The Builder*, 15 March 1862

29 Brooks, *John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture*, p. 147

they were transferred to a separate architectural museum.\textsuperscript{31} The V&A continued to collect substantial architectural casts, which were displayed in the Architectural Courts (now known as the Cast Courts) that opened in 1873.\textsuperscript{32}

Thomas Graham Jackson recounts that it was common for architects to send their articled pupils to sketch in the South Kensington museums and in Westminster Abbey.\textsuperscript{33} Philip Webb, whose ‘sketch books from 1859 to 1861 are full of details of stained glass, tiles, small objects and painted details’, William Morris and William de Morgan all made frequent visits to South Kensington.\textsuperscript{34} The detail, colour, materials and workmanship were studied rather than stylistic attributes, which was left to the antiquarians. Oscar Wilde, during his 1882 lecture series, told his American audiences how popular the reference collections were, describing

\begin{quote}
  …the scene in the South Kensington Museum in London on Saturday night, where artisans are to be seen, notebook in hand, gathering ideas to be used in their next week’s work. A good museum would teach your artisans more in one year than they would learn by means of books and lectures in ten years.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Both Walter and his son Hugh spent time in the South Kensington museums; the Vernon family papers Hugh sketch

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} The Architectural Association donated the separate Architectural Museum collection back to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1916.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Anna Jackson, Editor, \textit{V & A: A Hundred Highlights}, London, V & A Publications, 1996 pp. 24-25
\item \textsuperscript{33} Basil H. Jackson, Editor, \textit{Recollections of Thomas Graham Jackson, 1835-1934}, London, Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 70
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
labelled ‘SK Museum’ dating from the late 1890s. Richard George Howard Joseland, who would later work with both Walter and Hugh Vernon, ‘spent most of his spare time sketching old buildings and at the South Kensington museum’. Walter Crane believed that

The quiet influence of the superb collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the opportunities of study, open to all, of the most beautiful specimens of mediaeval, renaissance [sic] and oriental design and craftsmanship of all kinds must not be forgotten.

Vernon’s interest in traditional buildings and their details stemmed from his initial architectural training in London during the 1860s when the influence of Ruskin was at its height. He believed in first-hand study of the detailed construction of buildings, and was never merely interested in architectural style. Lethaby stressed the importance of understanding the craft of building, which he believed was evident in the work of William Butterfield and Philip Webb during the 1860s, rather than the preoccupation with style that dominated architectural debates in the mid nineteenth century.

The critical work of [A.W.N.] Pugin was continued on a higher plane and universalised by Ruskin into a general philosophy of Art. Architects now had a theory, but they repudiated it and

36 Hugh Venables Vernon, Sketchbook, ML PXA 876 Volume 3
37 The Cyclopaedia of N.S.W. (illustrated) : an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations ; an epitome of progress. Sydney, McCarron, Stewart & Co., 1907
Biographical information on Richard George Howard Joseland, pp. 418-19
38 Walter Crane, The English Revival in Decorative Art, from his series of essays William Morris to Whistler, Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, London, G. Bell & Sons, 1911, p. 57
put their faith into learning about past styles and designing for show, instead of in the practice of sound human building for service.\textsuperscript{39}

Throughout his career Vernon rarely mentioned style and his body of work can be described as being ‘sound human building for service’. When discussing architectural education in Melbourne in 1913, following his retirement, he commented that

In Australia we labour under the single disadvantage that our students have no artistic traditions to mould them, and no access to the monuments wrought by the masters of our profession in Europe, the East and to some extent in America, illustrations of which are available in unlimited quantities for study, lack the one great essential, that of training the eye to proportion - and in a drawing or a photograph we lose much of the indescribable charm and dignity of old masterpieces, whether the breadth and vigour of the Norman French, the classic grandeur of the Italian Renaissance, the intricacy and detail of the Taj…I fear too many aspiring younger architects are turned out with a superficial knowledge of style only.\textsuperscript{40}

Vernon, accompanied by his cousin Arthur Vernon, traveled widely in search of traditional buildings.

\textsuperscript{39} Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 66
\textsuperscript{40} Vernon, A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia, pp. 548-565
In my younger days in London we were taught that it was essential in mastering the subtle art of proportion, the disposition of enrichment and ornament, the effect of light and shade, construction and the analysis of the principles guiding a masterpiece of design, that the student should take his measuring rod and rule and set out the whole or parts again on paper from his actual observation, a method resulting in great advantage to his subsequent drafting efforts. I can remember nothing more enjoyable than our weekly occupation, office all day, and long hours at the [Royal] Academy or South Kensington, with lectures and classes in the evening, with a bit of original designing at odd moments, and weekend excursions to some delightful old fane or old-world village for sketching. It may be imagined not much time was left for barracking at football or tennis, nor do I remember that we felt very acutely the loss of those privileges.41

The Habershons had long had an interest in the vernacular and encouraged their pupils to study the traditional arts of building. Matthew Habershon’s series of drawings of the Ancient Half-Timbered Houses of England had been published in 1836.42 The RIBA curator, Margaret Richardson, believes that it was Edward Godwin, through

41 The term fane is no longer widely used, the Oxford Dictionary noting that it is a Middle English word meaning temple. By the 1890s fane appears to have come to mean a parish church, T. G Jackson in his essay Architecture a Profession or an Art, described ‘humble fanes in which life pulsates even more strongly than in our cathedrals’.

Vernon, A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia, pp. 548-565

Microfilm copy in the SLNSW
his competition tasks, who encouraged Arthur Beresford Pite’s ‘early interest in the vernacular’. Like Vernon, Beresford Pite may already have had this interest, stemming from his work with Habershon and Pite during the 1870s.

**Penshurst, Kent**

Although Walter wrote little about the influences on his work, there are places in the Chilterns, South Wales, Sussex and Kent with which he must have felt a strong connection, or which influenced his work, as he named streets and houses in his Sydney subdivisions after them. Of the British place names employed by Vernon, the name that gives the greatest clue to his architectural philosophy is Penshurst. Andrew Saint notes how influential the estate buildings in the village of Penshurst in Kent were on Richard Norman Shaw’s work, with his first ‘Old English’ cottage designs appearing in August 1862, the same month he had sketched both the manor house and the picturesque village. Shaw’s traveling companion William Eden Nesfield also began to incorporate motifs drawn from the English vernacular into his estate work (figure 2.6).

The recent estate buildings in the village designed by George Devey adjacent to Penshurst Place, ‘a typical well-preserved manor house’ dating from 1341, influenced the younger generation of architects.

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43 During the early 1880s the design competitions for the British Architect Art Club were both set and critiqued by Godwin. Richardson, *Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, RIBA drawings series, p. 107

44 Vernon used place names from the Chilterns, where he was raised, place names from South Wales where his wife’s family were from, and where he first worked as an architect, and place names from Hastings in Sussex where he and his family lived during the 1870s.

45 Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, p. 26
and architectural students during the 1860s. Shaw’s 1862 sketchbooks include a drawing of the cottages Devey designed in Leicester Square adjacent to the churchyard. Vernon’s photograph collection includes an interior of the Great Hall of Penshurst Place and the Leicester Square estate cottages that Shaw had sketched.

Devey’s estate work at Penshurst, begun in the late 1840s, started the revival of English domestic architecture and vernacular techniques that continued to influence the design of residential architecture for decades. It is now difficult to distinguish between the nineteenth century estate buildings and earlier vernacular buildings; Devey’s details have now acquired the intended patina of age. Devey, who had been trained by the watercolourist John Sell Cotman,

46 The Great Hall of Penshurst Place is illustrated in Sir Banister Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, London, B.T. Batsford, 1948, p. 404 and illustrations on p. 399
48 ML PXA 876 Volume 1 Photographs collected by W.L. Vernon page 29 (top) Baron’s Court Penshurst (Bottom) Baron’s Hall page 31 (top) Village of Penshurst
49 Devey designed the Leicester Square cottages (1848-51), Gateway Lodge (1858) at the entrance to the Penshurst Churchyard, the Butchers Shop (circa 1860) and Ashour Lodge (circa 1861). In the grounds of Anthony Salvin’s Gothic Revival South Park he designed the home farm buildings (1851) and the lodge (1853-54).
...was the first to transform his predecessor’s idle interest in Kentish Cottages into an active enquiry into the methods and materials of their construction, and Penshurst was the first place to see that knowledge, stimulated no doubt by Pugin’s remarks on structural honesty and tradition in architecture put into place.50

Devey did not publish his drawings (figure 2.7) so his work must have been learnt about through word of mouth.51 His carefully crafted vernacular buildings leading to the village churchyard continued to be photographed and sketched by architects and artists until well after 1900 (figure 2.8). Sydney-based artist Lionel Lindsay visited both Hastings and Penshurst during his visits in 1902 and 1926, one of the resulting sketches is of the Leicester Square cottages.52 Vernon’s choice of Penshurst as the name for his Neutral Bay house is more likely to reflect the influence of Devey’s work than the Elizabethan manor house. His second property, Wendover, South Hornsby, was named for the Carrington’s estate of Wendover where the manor house and the rectory had been designed by Devey.53

51 Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, RIBA drawings series, p. 11
52 The Mitchell Library holds sketches of Penshurst and Hastings in Sussex drawn by Lionel Lindsay; the Penshurst sketch is from a similar point of view as the photograph in Vernon’s collection. Sketches by Lionel Lindsay of Hastings, Ryde, Rye and Penshurst in England 1902 and 1926. ML PXA 966
53 Wendover Manor and the Vicarage at Wendover in Buckinghamshire were designed by Devey for the Carrington Estate during the mid 1870s. Jill Allibone, George Devey, Architect 1820-1886, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 1991, illustrated p. 95, Catalogue Raisonné Vicarage (1871-1873) p. 163 Manor House (1876-1877) p. 171
All Tried to Be Modern

The Vernon cousins undertook their architectural training at a time when there was a growing interest in traditional English building, ornamentation and furniture. Led by Morris, this trend, described by Crane in his essay on *The English Revival in Decorative Art*, is evident in Vernon’s early work in Sussex and in the design and furnishing of his two family houses in Sydney: Penshurst and Wendover.54 Ruskin’s *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, first published in 1849, described the ‘ordinary dwelling houses built to last and built to be lovely, as rich and full of pleasantness as may be,’ precisely the type of house Webb had designed and Morris had furnished.55 Lethaby articulates what he considers Webb had been trying to achieve with the Red House, designed for Jane and William Morris in 1858 (figure 2.9).

Architecture to Webb was first of all a common tradition of honest building. The great architectures of the past had been noble customary ways of building, naturally developed by craftsmen engaged in actual works. In a word,


architecture is building traditionally... The works of Morris and of [Edward] Burne-Jones have often been spoken of as 'mediaeval' but they were not intended to be, nor were Webb's. All tried to be modern.56

At the time of its completion only Morris’ immediate circle of friends knew of the pioneering design. By 1862 other London-based architects were aware of the Red House and visitors that year included William Burges and the Habershon's former pupil Robert Edis.57

The perceptive comments of the exiled Saxon architect Gottfried Semper, writing of the 1851 Great Exhibition, an exhibition with which he had been closely involved, foreshadow an important movement in architecture and design in the late nineteenth century: the Arts and Crafts Movement.

But while our industrial art continues to advance and economise in such an aimless fashion, it also unconsciously serves to accomplish the noble task of destroying traditional design through its own way of treating ornament.58

This sentiment was echoed again in 1908, at the height of Arts and Crafts Movement’s influence, by Adolf Loos in his essay Ornament and Crime.59 A wider awareness of Morris’ reaction against established middle-class taste amongst the London-based architects

56 Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 119
58 Gottfried Semper; extract from Science, Industry and Art, Harrison, Wood & Gaiger, Art in Theory, 1815-1900, p. 336
and designers coincides with the year that Vernon commenced his architectural training. Furniture designed by Webb, Morris and Burne-Jones was exhibited at the International Exhibition held in London in 1862. Handcrafted exhibits, a conscious reaction against the mass-consumerism and the machine-made goods exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and imported wares from Japan, never before publicly exhibited, were on display.

Burges, who reviewed the Japanese Court of the International Exhibition in 1862, admired the craftsmanship, which achieved a level of skill he believed to have been lost in England. Burges, who reviewed the Japanese Court of the International Exhibition in 1862, admired the craftsmanship, which achieved a level of skill he believed to have been lost in England. The impact that the Japanese Court had on Arthur Liberty is well documented; he became the first regular English importer of Oriental ceramics and fabrics. Christopher Dresser, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and James McNeill Whistler, and the architects Burges, Nesfield, Godwin and Shaw were all avid collectors who frequented Liberty’s showroom.

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60 William Burges, *The International Exhibition in Gentleman’s Magazine (GM) cxxii* (1862) 3-12, 663-76 and *The Loan Exhibition, GM cxxi* (1862) 32-41 and *The Japanese Court GM cxxiii* (1862) pp. 243-54

61 Calloway, *Liberty of London, Masters of Style and Decoration*, pp. 22-26
Walter’s interest in oriental ceramics may also have begun at the 1862 exhibition where ‘the mine of wealth and of everything curious in the Empire’, including the spoils from the looting of the Summer Palace [in Beijing], were on show. Vernon’s collection of ceramics included the Triton charger, a large platter hand painted by William de Morgan, and the ‘white crackled china Chinese Jar looted from Summer Palace by Colonel Harrison’.

It was not only a fashion for Oriental objets d’art that resulted from this Exhibition; Crane noted

…English decorative art too began to assert itself after this exhibition. There was a most interesting group of furniture and examples of interior decoration of all kinds shown by the Ecclesiological Society, among which, I think, there was an early work of J. [John Pollard] Seddon the architect, Pugin, William Burges, Philip Webb, William Morris and E. Burne-Jones.

One saw in the work of these men the influence of the Gothic Revival and the study of mediaeval art generally. Their painted furniture and rich embroideries had previously only been seen by close friends.

Vernon and his fellow students sent to sketch in the V & A Museum would no doubt have seen the newly completed Green Dining Room,

63 Valuation of Furniture and Chattels in the Estate of W. L. Vernon, 1914. Vernon Papers, ML MSS 6571 Box 2
64 Walter Crane quoted in, Adburgham, Liberty’s A Biography of a Shop, p.12
'a typical Morris room [that] was given to the British Public to dine in...’65 This early interior by William Morris and the Firm carried out ‘the intention of the Museum’s founder, Henry Cole, to create a museum that was itself a work of art’ (figure 2.10).66 The detail of the plasterwork was by Philip Webb and his working drawings survive in the museum’s collection (figure 2.11).67 Architects frequented the Green Dining Room which had become ‘a meeting place for all those wishing to be seen as both fashionable and artistic’.68 It was here that Beresford Pite first met Lethaby.69

65 Walter Crane, The English Revival in Decorative Art, in his William Morris to Whistler, Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 54
67 Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 44 and illustrated in Gere and Hoskins, The House Beautiful, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior, plate 42
68 Linda Parry, William Morris and The Green Dining Room, Magazine Antiques, August 1996.

Figure 2.10
Phillip Webb, The Green Dining Room in the V & A Museum, South Kensington, 1865-1868

The paint work has been cleaned, revealing the intended colours. A section has been left untouched on the RHS

Figure 2.11
Philip Webb, working drawing for the plaster, decoration for the Green Dining Room, 1866
Only it is not Gothic

Vernon’s detailed knowledge of the English vernacular is critical to an understanding of his subsequent work. He trained at a time when the study of English vernacular buildings was encouraged as part of the wider debate about the restoration of Gothic and Medieval architecture. Contained in the debates about restoration, rather than the mainstream architectural lectures, was the advice of the leading Gothic Revival practitioners. George Edmund Street believed that the ‘majority of young architects did not devote as much time to as they ought to the architecture of their own country’.70 The lectures, and the comments by leading architects who attended, were published in The Builder allowing the profession to also follow the debate.

By 1862 details revived from traditional English buildings were being consciously employed in the design of urban buildings, particularly by Webb in his design for a row of shops in Worship Street, Islington (figures 2.12 and 2.13) and by Butterfield at the church of St Alban the Martyr in Holborn.71 Like Webb’s earlier Red House, the Worship Street shops were not simply a revival of details; rather the design evoked the spirit of the Gothic. Peter Davey notes that these shops (which survive today) marked the transition from the country to the city, using a building type common to both.72 In comparison to the Venetian Gothic Revival compositions that were prevalent

70 On the Conservation of Ancient Monuments and Remains. Read by Mr. George Gilbert Scott, R.A. to RIBA. Published in parts in The Builder, commencing January 11 1862. With comments by other architects including George Edmund Street.
71 The church was bombed in 1941 however fragments were salvaged and incorporated into a new church designed by Aidan Gilbert Scott in 1947.
in Victorian commercial architecture, Webb’s unornamented design, inspired by traditional English buildings, would have appeared revolutionary.

In the mid 1860s changes in design philosophy began to be discussed outside of Morris’ immediate circle. Warrington Taylor commented to Edward Robson in 1865 that:

We live in an age of railways and hence men think that they must take the most prominent bits from every style and country. They forget that those peculiar types are expressive of feelings and sentiments foreign to this land… I think Ruskin ought to have dwelt more on England than Italy. Butterfield and Webb are English. No one save Butterfield and Webb has conceived an architecture suited to our times being a further development of what has gone before. All the rest of the British builders simply copy the old, late or early but copy it is.73

In a lecture to the students of the Royal Academy in 1862 Sidney Smirke questioned the revivals, cautioning against the use of forms directly derived from historic sources:

... the modern tendency to repeat and perpetuate old forms; and thus to live as it were upon the wits of our predecessors; or, I might say, to feed upon the réchauffées of the past, is a mischievous tendency when carried to excess; destructive of progress and leading inevitably to debasement. I would not then, have you look with an undiscriminating reverence on the architectural production of past times; let those productions be ever judged with reference to their age, and to the contingent circumstances of their existence.74

The use of the cookery analogy is appropriate as the term réchauffées means ‘reheated leftovers’. Burges likewise cautioned against copying, as ‘copies want spirit. They are dead bodies and do not live’.75 Lethaby later distinguished between the work of the revivalists and modern work, a distinction that Smirke was just beginning to articulate. Lethaby understood the difference between the Gothic original and contemporary work:

The bandying of catchwords seems to have prevented the experts from seeing that a name was not the same as a thing, that you could not have an ancient building put up tomorrow, that age and authenticity are essentials.

74 Sydney Smirke, Royal Academy Lecture III, published in parts in The Builder in 1862, Volume XX p. 130
75 William Burges quoted in Brooks, John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture, p. 209
of historical art, and that weathering and evidence of age are necessary for our reverence. What we call a pyramid might be built at anytime but it would not be the pyramid. What architects still today go on calling a ‘Gothic Window’ can be supplied by any stonemason, only it is not Gothic.76

Despite pleas by Viollet-le-Duc for a rational architecture that reflected its time architects continued to shoehorn modern functions, municipal or government offices, railway stations and post offices within historical forms, covered with historical ornament, a trend evident in England, America and throughout the colonies. Viollet-le-Duc advocated an ‘architecture of our time’ based on a clear understanding of the functional requirements.

But to stick Greek Doric columns on the first storey of a railway station, engaged between Roman Arches … a sign of contempt rather than of respect for Art. Who would be gratified if we were to go and engrave lines from Homer on the walls of a warehouse?77

During the years that the Vernon cousins were training in London, the idea that architecture could once again be living art emerged. Edward Godwin, in his review of the 1867 Architectural Exhibition, condemned the

76 Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 144-145
restless wandering to and fro from the ends of the earth, trying Italian Gothic one year and French Gothic the next, experimenting with the Renaissance today and may be the Egyptian tomorrow, is the sort of thing no doubt enticing to a young antiquary who had studied well the history of art, but which the young architect should, nay must, eschew, if he desires once again to see architecture return to a growing, living art.  

Amongst the London-trained architects dislike of réchauffées lasted for decades. The English-born Melbourne architect Walter Butler expressed a similar sentiment in 1902: ‘we are in a sea of doubt and mystery, tossed one day like a cork into the wave of Gothic and the next buffeted back into the shoals of the Renaissance’.

The Tyranny of Palladio

The difference in the architecture of James Barnet, the Colonial Architect of NSW, and Vernon (his successor) reflects the decade in which each undertook his architectural training. Barnet had followed Smirke’s advice to study architectural drawings of Greece and Rome in the British Library. The next generation of architecture students were not interested in the drawings of classical monuments. Thomas Graham Jackson recalled

…a revolt from the tyranny of Palladio and the Five Orders drove us in our youth to the extreme of medievalism. Classical tradition was exploded and the revival of Gothic

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78 Edward William Godwin, The Architectural Exhibition, 1867 in Building News 17 May 1867, p. 337
79 Walter Butler, Modern Architectural Design, ML 720.4B, p. 5
architecture was hailed as the opening of an era of liberty and an escape from the fetters of precedent and prescription...\textsuperscript{80}

Jackson continued

The five orders of classic architecture were scoffed at. We never made the pupils draw them, and in fact I have never in my life drawn them as they used to be drawn. Pure Palladian classic was regarded as mere pedantry - the cheap mechanical reproduction of the orders and proportions out of pattern books...\textsuperscript{81}

Morris succinctly expressed this prejudice with the quip ‘do you suppose that I should see anything in Rome that I cannot see in Whitechapel?’\textsuperscript{82} Thomas Graham Jackson was slightly older than the Vernon cousins and had set up his own practice in 1862, choosing not to remain with George Gilbert Scott with whom he had served his articles. In hindsight this would prove a wise choice; Scott’s reputation became tarnished during the battle of the styles in the 1860s, ‘young men of discernment knew, after he had consented to design the Foreign Office in the Italian style his integrity was less certain’.\textsuperscript{83} Walter Crane likewise advocated abandoning the neoclassical:

\begin{flushright}
81 Jackson, Recollections of Thomas Graham Jackson 1835-1934, p. 55
82 McCarthy, William Morris, A Life for Our Time, p. 327
83 Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, p. 16
\end{flushright}
The whole drift of his [Ruskin's] teaching is towards the sincerity of Gothic Freedom in the arts and is a strong protest against Academic convention and classical coldness.\footnote{Walter Crane, essay entitled The English Revival in Decorative Art, in his William Morris to Whistler, Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 50}

This was a debate that would continue for decades. In 1904 readers of the Journal of the Australian Institute of Architects were asked

How many of us have passed dreary years of the best of our lives studying the architectural recipes of Vitruvius, Vignola, busy with purblind analytical eyes with modules, and parts and fractional hair-splitting on mouldings, caps, entablatures and frigid orders...\footnote{Anon, Lucien Henry : An Appreciation in Journal of the Australian Institute of Architects, Volume 1, 1904, p. 73}

Vernon would later articulate a similar preference for the ‘individuality and rich effects not obtainable in the colder and more unbending lines of the pagan classical’.\footnote{Walter Liberty Vernon, The Fisher Library, Hermes, October 1909.}

The Hards and the Softs

Lethaby despised the work of the revivalists, architects ‘producing professional office-made versions of the art of any century which passes as art itself’, dividing his London colleagues into two categories which he labelled the ‘hards’ and the ‘softs’.\footnote{Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 146} The ‘softs’ were the architects who had achieved a high degree of acclaim through their exhibited drawings such as Shaw. The ‘hards’ were the architects that
he admired, architects such as Webb and Butterfield who worked out their ideas through building.

Vernon can also be categorised as a ‘hard’, concentrating on the utility of a building, its materials and its workmanship. He was never one to resort to réchauffées or the architectural pattern book, preferring to build using traditional details, gleaned from his own detailed knowledge of historic buildings in England, Europe and later in the colonies. This focus remained with him throughout his career and his partners and senior designers were of a similar mind, having received similar architectural training.

During the 1860s Webb had attempted to rid his designs of ‘style’, deliberately employing English vernacular building techniques. Webb’s design for a London townhouse was what the followers of Ruskin and Morris believed that English architects should strive for:

You don’t want any style, you want something English in character...Style means copyism, the test of good work would be the absence of style.88

Nikolaus Pevsner considers the townhouse for George Howard at No. I Palace Green to be ‘in town architecture the counterpart of the Red House’, describing Webb as the most brilliant exponent of the English Domestic Revival (figure 2.14).89 Not only was the building more accessible than the Red House, but also the architectural debate now included the older generation of practitioners. The

88 Warrington Taylor to E. R. Robson quoted in David Watkin, English Architecture, Thames and Hudson, London, 1979 p.177
89 Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design, From William Morris to Walter Gropius, p. 60

Figure 2.14
Philip Webb, townhouse for Mr George Howard at No. I Palace Green, Kensington, London, 1868-1870
decoration had to be added in order for the design to be approved. Webb recounts that the architects asked by the Metropolitan Board of Works to give an opinion were 'unable to discover what actual style or period of architecture I have used. I take that to be a sincere compliment' 90

Arguments between progressive architects like Webb and Godwin and the Metropolitan Board of Works over the designs for townhouses in Chelsea and Kensington continued for many years. Other architects soon followed Webb’s lead. Mark Girouard notes that Edward Robert Robson’s designs for Board Schools in London in the early 1870s are an attempt to follow Webb’s ‘absence of


Figure 2.15
Edward Robson, design for the Angler’s Gardens Board School, Islington, London, 1873
style’ (figure 2.15). Warrington Taylor hoped that Webb’s 1868 design for offices at No. 19 Lincoln’s Inn Fields would have ‘its right moral effect on future generations’ (figures 2.16 and 2.17). Lethaby, writing in 1925, commented that Warrington Taylor’s view was now considered to be ‘curious, what has ‘art’ and ‘architecture’, people ask, to do with moral effect?’ For the designers of the emerging Arts and Crafts Movement, design was associated with moral choices. The deliberate use of truthful materials and the employment of details that were crafted rather than mass-produced were design choices that, if not exactly moral, were at least highly politically correct.

The rise of England as a manufacturing nation during the reign of Queen Victoria resulted in industrial processes replacing handmade details, in a little over half a century many of the traditional arts of building disappeared. Speculative builders used render to conceal poor quality brickwork, abandoning time consuming techniques such as rubbed brick voussoirs. Morris had witnessed the disappearance of many traditional craft techniques during his own lifetime, believing the process had started in the eighteenth century. He experimented with dyeing techniques, interviewing workers who could remember dyeing silk using traditional methods and vegetable-based dyes. Morris lamented that ‘mechanical toil will sweep over all the handiwork of man and art will be gone’. The Society for the

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91 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900, p.69
92 Warrington Taylor quoted in Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 90
93 Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 90
95 Morris, William, Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation, Lecture delivered...
Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and new craft guilds were established to revive handcrafting and ensure the continuation of the traditional English building arts.

The use of details revived from English domestic architecture in the early designs of both Walter and Arthur Vernon indicates that both were aware of the architectural debates occurring in London whilst they were students. Throughout Vernon’s career, he employed the traditional building arts that the Habershons had taught him. His cousin Arthur’s design work did not continue along the Gothic Revival path taken by his mentor E. B. Lamb; Arthur employed his extensive knowledge of traditional buildings in designing estate buildings. Their commissions, which were executed separately, included cottage hospitals, board schools and philanthropic institutes, indicating that both had a well-developed social conscience that would remain strong for their entire careers. Walter initially worked as an estate architect, but soon progressed to designing suburban housing for the newly emerging middle class and commercial buildings in a similar manner to his London-based colleagues.
CHAPTER 3 NEWPORT AND HASTINGS, 1867-1883

This chapter considers Vernon’s early work in England and South Wales. The surviving designs from the beginning of his career show that, although he was working in the provinces, he was keeping up-to-date with architectural trends emanating from London. There is only limited evidence of the use of traditional details in Vernon’s work in South Wales, largely due to the lack of buildings that can be directly attributed to him. In contrast, in his Sussex work there is substantial evidence of an interest in the local vernacular and the careful application of details drawn from traditional buildings, details he would subsequently employ in New South Wales. Surviving examples of his early work are examined in this chapter.

Once he had completed his articles, Vernon continued with Habershon and Pite, working in their branch office in Newport, South Wales, from 1867 until 1870. Their Newport office was almost entirely dedicated to designing buildings for the Tredegar Estate, the extensive land holdings of the wealthy Morgan family. Following the death of Matthew Habershon in 1852, the Morgan family had retained his son William as their estate architect. In contrast to the entry in the *Cyclopedia of New South Wales*, Vernon was not the most senior member of staff. John Follet Fawckner (1828-1896) had been in charge of the branch since 1857.

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1 The use of the name Tredegar for towns and suburbs across South Wales gives some indication of the scale of the Morgan family estate.
2 Anon, *The Cyclopedia of N.S.W. Architecture*, Biographical entry on W.L. Vernon, p. 409
3 By 1872 Fawckner had become a partner and the firm was renamed Habershon, Pite & Fawckner. Alfred Pite left the firm in 1878 and it became simply Habershon and Fawckner. The Welsh National Monument Record, CADW, provided their partnership details.
The surviving accounts for the firm of Habershon and Pite list

340 accounts with clients for work in England and Wales, particularly London and Ramsgate, including churches and chapels (mostly non-conformist), parsonages, schools, villas, cottages, country houses, bakeries, shops and YMCA hostels.4

Vernon was an ideal choice for the position in Newport; he was already familiar with the maintenance and repair of buildings on the estates managed by his uncle.

Although Vernon makes no mention of this phase of his career, and there is no specific mention of him in the Habershon and Pite papers, it is possible to identify some of the projects that he may have assisted with.5 The Cardiff estates of the major landowning families, the Butes, the Windsors and the Morgans, were being subdivided for middle class villas and smaller scale terrace housing for ‘artisans’. Tredegarville, on the Newport Road in eastern Cardiff, was developed between 1857 and the 1870s as a middle class housing estate. The high standard set by the houses designed by Habershon and Pite for the Tredegar Estate was not matched in the Bute or Windsor estates.6 This suburban housing was characterised by

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4 Biographical information on W. L. Vernon supplied by RIBA, 1999
5 The Welsh National Monument Record has no listings of buildings designed by an architect named Walter Liberty Vernon. Their records are not searchable by architect and they have been unable to provide a detailed list of the buildings designed by W. G. Habershon, or the firm of Habershon and Pite. The archivist has also indicated that she is unaware of any detailed studies of the work of the Habershons. Information supplied by Penny Icliffe, archivist for CADW Welsh National Monuments, 1999
...homogeneity and high structural standards ... as much in the ‘artisan’ areas as in those intended for the middle classes. Pennant sandstone was the normal walling material, with Bath stone for dressings, but red brick and local sandstone were also called into play.\(^7\)

Vernon may have been involved in the design of the terraces in Richmond Road, Cardiff, an area developed from 1868 onwards (figure 3.1). He was to put his experience in designing suburban layouts in South Wales to good use, initially in Hastings and St Leonards and later in the Neutral Bay Estate in Sydney. His later involvement in the urban renewal of The Rocks and Millers Point, the planning of Canberra and the Daceyville Garden Suburb show model suburban development was an interest he retained throughout his career.

A change in the style of suburban housing designed by Habershon and Pite can be seen in suburban Newport; by 1870 random stonework and brick banding had appeared, which contrasted with

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\(^7\) Newman, The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan, p. 185
the Italianate villas the firm had designed in the 1850s. Vernon may also have been involved with the ‘restoration and improvement’ of Plas Machen, a substantial farm house owned by the Tredegar family at Lower Machen, undertaken in 1869. An engraving of the house prior to its restoration shows a rambling manor house with a triple gable (figure 3.2), a detail later employed by both Lethaby and Webb.

Historic photographs of the Welsh mining town of Tredegar show the now demolished Progressive Club and Institute (figure 3.3). The clue that Habershon and Pite may have designed this building is the detail of the shopfront. Vernon employed similar timberwork in the verandah of Bovington in Neutral Bay in 1887 and in the garden pavilions at Kenmore Hospital built in the mid 1890s. The roughcast to the first floor and the brick quoins and rubbed brick arches were details used by Vernon in Sussex and in NSW. Today

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9 This work, undertaken in 1869, has been attributed to the estate architects Habershon and Pite. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p. 371

10 Engraving of Lower Machen, Plas Machen, 1801

the combination of brick and roughcast can be seen in the housing surrounding Markwick Gardens at St Leonards, Sussex and at Bovington in Neutral Bay, Sydney (1887), the Maclean Post Office, Maclean (1892), the Bourke Court house, Bourke (1899) and Glebe Fire Station (1907) (also in Sydney).

Vernon was lucky to have spent his early years in South Wales where many interesting projects by London-based architects were under construction. Vernon was clearly familiar with Burges’ rebuilding of two ruined castles: Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch for the eccentric Marquis of Bute (figures 3.4 and 3.5). The Fisher Library (now Maclaurin Hall) in the main quadrangle of Sydney University is topped with a muntz metal fleche, a scaled down version of the fleche Burges added to Cardiff Castle. In addition to his work in Cardiff, Vernon would have known of Burges’ illustrations for Henry Clutton’s Domestic Architecture of France and his series of Architectural Drawings published in 1870.12 Vernon certainly knew of Clutton’s work as his photographic collection includes a view of the Great Hall of Battle Abbey, near Hastings. In 1857 Clutton substantially

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12 Henry Clutton, Remarks, With Illustrations of Domestic Architecture of France from the accession of Charles VI to the demise of Louis XII, London, Day and Son, 1853
remodeled the surviving portions of the medieval Abbey creating a substantial Gothic Revival house. John Pritchard and John Pollard Seddon restored Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff. The cathedral was on the architectural itinerary, Henry Hobson Richardson visited it in 1882 and photographs survive in his collection (figure 3.6). Architects visited Llandaff Cathedral to admire the surviving Norman architecture and beautifully crafted modern work including new stonework, the altarpiece by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the sculptures by Thomas Woolner and altar hangings designed by Webb. At Llandaff

…the surviving mediaeval fabric [was] uncovered, completed where fragmentary and where necessary boldly supplemented to Pritchard's own design, with a full set of fittings by the best artists and craftsmen obtainable.

13 ML PXA 876 Volume 1 Vernon Photographic Album page 27
The top view is of the Great Hall of Battle Abbey. The Abbey had been erected from the 1070s to the 1090s to mark the spot where Harold had been killed in 1066. The abbey was one of the institutions disbanded by Henry VIII and was used as a residence until the mid nineteenth century when it was substantially remodeled by Clutton. The property is now under the control of English Heritage.

14 A number of Richardson's collected photographs of buildings including Durham and Llandaff Cathedrals are illustrated in Margaret Henderson Floyd, Henry Russell Hitchcock, A Genius for Architecture, New York, Monacelli Press, 1997.

15 May Morris recalled that Webb had designed the embroidery for the altar at Llandaff. Lethaby, Philip Webb and his Work, p. 40

Pritchard and Seddon’s approach of carefully adding new work contrasts with the destructive mid nineteenth century restorations that Morris detested which removed stylistic anomalies, some of which later proved to have been original details. Seddon was

...by far the most original of the Gothic Revivalists; for though amongst the strongest in his love for and belief in the revival, he was always a modern rather than a revivalist... and in his work it was impossible to trace the origin of the detail to any particular mediaeval style or building. In this respect he was certainly before his time. While others were content to produce copies more or less of ancient details, he went far deeper and sought to look behind at the reasons that prompted mediaeval form...17

Vernon is likely to have been familiar with Pritchard and Seddon’s work in South Wales, much of which is ecclesiastical. John Sulman certainly knew of this work, his sketch of the stile to the churchyard at Llanvair Discoed survives.18 The church had been rebuilt in 1746 incorporating fragments from a mediaeval church.19 Pritchard and Seddon added the ‘tall and elegant west bell gable’ to the church in 1854.

18 Stone Stile at Llanvair Discoed Church in Monmouthshire, 1870, Pen and Ink drawing Loose Items, Sir John Sulman Pictorial Material ML PXA 963
19 Entry on Llanvair Discoed in Newman, The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan, p. 361-362. The Church was substantially reworked in the early 1880s. The inscription that was once on the stile has been recarved in the porch.
The similarity of the restrained detailing of traditional Welsh manor houses such as St Fagan’s Castle (figure 3.7), which dates from the early sixteenth century, to the work of Charles Francis Annesley Voysey may be no coincidence as he was articled to Seddon. Pritchard and Seddon used bold roof forms and tall chimneys, carefully employing stonework of contrasting textures traditionally found in the Welsh vernacular. Such bold roof forms and the use of contrasting stone textures can later be found in Vernon’s work, particularly in his public architecture from 1890 onwards.

High Wycombe

In Newport, Vernon met his future wife, Margaret Anne Jones of Stow Hill. The couple were married in August 1870 at the Dock Street Chapel, Newport and moved back to High Wycombe shortly after. Vernon’s return to England was probably undertaken on the advice of his doctor. Some indication that the selection of South Wales had also been made because of Vernon’s delicate health is that the location was one selected by convalescing patients. Sulman spent a few months in Monmouthshire recovering from pleurisy in 1870. The climate of South Wales did not suit Vernon; he was prone to bronchial infections that could easily have led to a more serious illness.

Walter returned briefly to High Wycombe where he designed commercial premises for his brother Robert, located at the corner of High Street and Crendon Street. The Cyclopedia of New South

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20 Margaret Vernon née Jones survived her husband Walter by 5 years, dying at Hastings Road, Warrawee in 1919, both are buried at Gore Hill Cemetery
21 Anon, The Cyclopedia of N.S.W. Biographical entry on W. L. Vernon p. 409
22 Newspaper Clippings, Vernon Papers, ML MSS 6571

WALTER LIBERTY VERNON
Noni Boyd © Final Version August 2010
Wales noted that Vernon had ‘strangely enough, amongst his early clients the Earl of Beaconsfield and Lord Brassey’. The author was clearly surprised that Benjamin Disraeli, the Earl of Beaconsfield and Prime Minister of England, would select a young and relatively unknown architect to undertake work for him. Vernon is likely to have been involved in the design of the gate lodge in 1871.

Both men shared a lifelong concern for the reform of living and working conditions. Disraeli’s novel *Sybil*, published in 1845, raised a wide range of social issues,

> Drawing on the report of the Child Employment Commission… the debates of the Factory bill… and his own visits to the north of England in 1843 and 1844, he rendered in vivid scenes and poignant description the condition of the working masses which at that moment stood at the centre of national attention. He touched on conditions of factory labour, on children’s employment… on working-class housing and sanitation, on the impact on family life of children’s and women’s labour, on incest, infanticide and infant mortality…

Trafford’s well-ventilated factory and the village surrounded by gardens described in *Sybil* were the inspiration of the model workers’ housing at Saltaire, Port Sunlight and Bourneville.

23 Anon, *The Cyclopedia of N.S.W.* Biographical entry on W.L.Vernon p. 409
24 Mr Vernon’s letter regarding estate management, Hughenden Manor Estate, Estate Papers Buckinghamshire Archives D47/21
26 Chapter 8 of *Sybil* describes a visit to Mr.Trafford’s factory, Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil*, London, Penguin Classics, 1985, pp. 224-235
Hastings and St Leonards

Walter’s stay in High Wycombe was short lived; he soon accepted a position with Charles Moreing. Moreing was primarily an estate surveyor; which would account for the lack of records at RIBA. The only surviving works by Moreing and Vernon that I have been able to identify are a park, Gensing Gardens, and the substantial terrace in Warrior Gardens, both of which are in St Leonards.

The choice of a coastal location was deliberate, made in the hope that Vernon’s health would improve. Doctors could only recommend fresh air and a change of climate for diseases such as tuberculosis for which there was no known cure. Hastings, on the south coast of England, was a location chosen by many doctors for their patients to convalesce. Vernon is likely to have wished to work where changing aesthetic taste stemming from London was both evident and accepted, rather than in a provincial backwater.

The picturesque old town of Hastings was popular with the artistic set and it was here that the Vernon family lived in the early 1870s (figure 3.8). The 1871 census records that Walter and Margaret Vernon were living at 9 Mount Pleasant Crescent in Hastings, Walter’s architectural practice was located at No. 4 Trinity Street, just a short distance from the site of the Claremont buildings (Brassey Institute) and the Railway Station.

27 Advice from Antonia Brodie, RIBA that RIBA have no records of an architect named Moreing. The principal buildings I have managed to locate include the design of a substantial Gothic Revival house, Ingress Abbey built in 1833 on the Thames at Rotherhide, reputedly built using stones salvaged from Old London Bridge, and the rebuilding of the south lodge of Eynsham Manor. Towards the end of his career Moreing was involved with suburban layout and design of Queen Anne Revival style townhouses in the Day Estate in South Kensington.

28 The 1871 census records their residence as being 9 Mount Pleasant Crescent, Hastings. The census also records that the Vernons had a domestic servant, Susannah Joseph, who had been born in South Wales.
The Vernons are likely to have been aware of the artistic set that lived in Hastings. Warrington Taylor, one of the initial members of Morris’ firm, moved to the town in 1866 after contracting tuberculosis. Jane Morris convalesced there in 1870. Coventry Patmore, art critic and author of the classic poem of Victorian domestic virtues, The Angel in the House also resided in Hastings. Patmore was a member of Morris’ Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) founded in 1877. James McNeill Whistler's mother, the subject of his famous painting, on advice from her doctor, moved to Hastings in 1875.

Living in Hastings did not mean that Vernon was isolated from the architectural work of his London-based colleagues. Hastings and nearby St Leonards already contained churches designed by Habershon and Brock, Samuel Teulon (figure 3.9) and Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. During the 1880s Arthur Bloomfield, James Brooks, Butterfield, Richard Herbert Carpenter, Basil Champneys and John Loughborough Pearson were at work building or restoring churches in the twin towns.29

29 Lethaby, Philip Webb and his Work, pp. 67-70 and Brooks, The Gothic Revival, p. 72
Brooks’ St Peters Church in Boham’s Road, St Leonards may have been underway at the time of Vernon’s departure in mid 1883 (figure 3.10). The two architects knew each other; Brooks nominated Vernon for his RIBA fellowship in 1886. From 1869 until the mid 1870s Butterfield restored two Hastings churches: All Saints Church, All Saints Street and St Clement in Croft Road. Other Sussex buildings were clearly influential, the Anglican College of St Nicholas at Lancing, designed Richard Cromwell Carpenter in 1848 and completed after his death by his son Richard Herbert Carpenter, is considered to be ‘nearer to Pugin’s vision than any of his buildings’ (figure 3.11).

Hastings and St Leonards were once separate, each with a distinctive architectural character. St-Leonards-on-Sea was developed from the later 1820s until the 1840s by James Burton and his son Decimus (figure 3.12). Ruskin hated it, commenting that he

never saw a place I thought so in every way unfit for human domicile, a whitewashed brickfield, a symmetrical desolation, a Babylonish abortion of rectilinear solitude, a melancholy


Vernon’s Claremont buildings can be seen in the background. His architectural office was located in Trinity Street which led past the church to the Claremont buildings.
of the wilderness without its liberty. I have lived in many horrible places, in Leamington, Bath and Cheltenham, not to speak of sundry weeks of headache and gaslight in London. But I think I could not live in St Leonards.32

The majority of the surviving work by Vernon is located in the area between the Old Town of Hastings and the part of St Leonards designed by the Burtons. In the 1870s the residential development altered in scale and architectural character. The architectural vocabulary set by the Burtons was abandoned in favour of a more contemporary suburban architecture modelled on Bedford Park, Chelsea and Kensington. Ian Nairn notes that

Remarkably early does the turn to the so-called Queen Anne emerge in Sussex; the turn with which one usually connects with the names of Nesfield and Shaw.33

Moreing and Vernon’s work in the early 1870s appears to have introduced the Queen Anne Revival to Hastings and St Leonards, experimenting with both the terrace form and the suburban villa.

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32 Ruskin to Prout, quoted in Brooks, John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture, p. 6
33 Nairn, and Pevsner, Buildings of England: Sussex, p. 72
Warrior Gardens

Stephan Muthesius believes that ‘Warrior Gardens in St Leonards, with its multitude of stucco-covered porches, gables and bays is probably the most spectacular of the Victorian terraces’ in England.\(^34\) The terrace dates from the early 1870s and was constructed on a sloping site between Gensing Station (now Warrior Square Station) and the substantial Warrior Square development on the foreshore dating from the 1850s (figures 3.13 and 3.14). Moreing and Vernon’s design has been carefully composed, with larger residences terminating the view from the foreshore. No attempt was made to create a level site, rather the terrace slopes down a hill.


Figure 3.13
George Bacon, Plan of Hasting and St Leonards, 1890

Warrior Square Gardens, the Gensing Pleasure Grounds and Markwick Gardens are all shown on this extract from George Bacon’s map. The location of Warrior Gardens is shown in red.
In contrast to the identical Georgian terraces in the adjacent Warrior Square, and the remainder of the Burton’s St Leonards, the houses in Warrior Gardens were built in face brick. As the terrace was a speculative venture, Warrior Gardens had to appeal to current middle class taste. Merchant’s houses and guild houses in the Low Countries appear to be the source of the architectural motifs used. (figure 3.15) Although mouldings and dentils have been used extensively, there are none of the repetitive bands of enrichment that Ruskin, and later Loos, despised for their lack of craftsmanship. The metal work to the front fences is wrought rather than cast. It was largely due to Ruskin that progressive architects disliked cast iron, casting was a technique he considered to be ‘barbarous’ and it was always ‘distinguishable, at a glance, from wrought and hammered work’.

It was the construction of back-to-back terraces that was to lead to the calls for reform and the establishment of minimum standards for terrace houses. Warrior Gardens is at the opposite end of the scale and was an attempt to improve a standard building type. The terrace

houses in Warrior Gardens are large, even by London standards, with a basement set half a storey below the street surmounted by three floors and an attic with dormer windows. John James Stevenson’s designs for London townhouses, such as those in Pont Street, Chelsea of 1876 (figure 3.16) are of a similar scale and character to Warrior Gardens.36 The bay windows to the ground and first floor let more light into the principle rooms than the standard London terrace or the majority of the terraces in St Leonards.37 In 1871 Banister Fletcher had published designs for model workers’ dwellings, including an example that featured a two-storey bay window.38

The use of the two storey bay windows at Warrior Gardens is an example of the attempts to reform the standard terrace plan, introducing more sunlight and fresh air. In the absence of planning controls, these improvements reflect the personal concerns of the designers. Vernon owned the long-term lease of three of the dwellings, which he retained, along with two houses in St Johns Road to the rear, as an investment after migrating to Sydney.39 Frank H. Humphreys, who purchased Vernon’s architectural practice in 1883, rather ineffectually managed these investment properties on his behalf.40

36 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The ‘Queen Anne Movement’, 1860-1900 plate 87
37 The classes of London houses are explained and illustrated in Muthesius, The English Terraced House.
38 Banister Fletcher, Model Houses for the Industrial Classes: Being a review of the defects of existing model lodging-houses, and containing registered designs from which buildings have been erected by the author; together with registered plans for the adaptation of existing dwelling houses for letting in flats. To which are added many useful hints to investors in small house property on purchasing and management and a general view of the necessary clauses which should be contained in a new act of parliament. Longmans, Green & Co. London, 1871 One example is illustrated in Muthesius, The English Terraced House, plate 110
39 Vernon’s papers in the Mitchell Library indicate that he held the long-term leases of Nos, 4, 6 and 7 Warrior Gardens. MSS 6571 Vernon Papers Box 3.
40 ML MSS 6571 Vernon Papers Box 3 contains accounts for the Hastings Properties.
Gensing Pleasure Gardens

In the early 1870s Moreing and Vernon won the design competition for the layout of the Gensing Pleasure Gardens, which were officially opened in July 1872 (figure 3.17). It may have been this competition success that resulted in Vernon establishing his own architectural office. By 1874 the family were living in Clytha House, Gensing Gardens, on the new road to London, where they remained until at least 1881. Vernon’s increasing success as an architect may have been the reason that other family members relocated to Sussex.

Walter’s elder sister Margaret married George Francis Griffin, a

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41 The information board in Gensing Gardens notes that the park was purchased for the town and opened by the Mayor in July 1872. The competition for the layout was won by Messrs Moring [sic] and Vernon, who built some of the houses in Warrior Square. The site was originally known as Gensing Wood. The layout was implemented by the Borough Surveyor William Andrews and the gardener, Mr Palmer.

42 The surviving records are contradictory; RIBA lists him as working on his own in Hastings from 1872, the English census of 1871 records that he was already a sole practitioner. The *Cyclopedia of New South Wales* entry notes that he spent a year in Malta. Malta had an extensive English naval station, with buildings designed by the Royal Engineers; civil architects were not usually employed. The dates have not been confirmed and there is no mention of this sojourn in the Vernon papers.

43 The street numbering has now changed and I have not been able to identify Clytha House, Gensing Gardens, No. 5 London Road occupied by the Vernons. Census records show that Olive Maud Vernon (born in November 1874) and Hugh Venables Vernon (born in February 1877) were both born at Clytha House, Hastings; their older sister Margaret Evelyn, born in September 1872, was not.
leather merchant in 1868 and by 1876 the Griffins had moved to Hastings.44 His younger sister Alice moved to Ore, possibly after their mother’s death in 1878 and Robert Davenport Vernon, the only family member to remain in High Wycombe was married in St Helens Church, Ore in 1880. He continued to reside in the family home, Bower Hayes, until his death in 1912.45

Walter was a member of the Robertson Road Congregational Church, the Temperance Movement and a Liberal Party Member of the Hastings Town Council.46 His membership of the Temperance Movement indicates a concern for the living and working conditions of the working class that can be seen in his later designs for workers’ housing. In his study of the development of the Queen Anne Movement, Mark Girouard outlines an

Enthusiasm for temperance and education... [that] tended to take the progressives of the 1870s and 1880s into local Government. Finally, like the aesthetes they looked at the Victorian city with distrust. The same people who sat on School Boards and local Councils founded coffee taverns or campaigned for free libraries were likely to endeavor to bring the country into the city, by creating parks or planting trees and to keep the city out of the country by preserving commons and open spaces.47

44 In 1881, when the census was taken, both Vernon sisters Margaret and Alice were living at St Helens, Ore.
45 Information on the Vernon family tree compiled by Phil Young. Margaret Griffin, Walter’s elder sister, returned Bower Hayes after Robert’s death, dying there in 1924.
46 Bibliographic Information provided by the Hastings Library, Sussex, 2001
47 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, Sweetness and Light, The ‘Queen Anne Movement’, 1860-1900 pp. 5-6
Gensing Pleasure Gardens was such a scheme, created from the surviving remnant of the Gensing Woods, below which the rail tunnels from St Leonards to Hastings had been dug. The extensive park, which is flanked on three sides by substantial housing, is set well above the level of the London Road. A picturesque lodge was built in the northeastern corner and a tropical garden was planted to take advantage of the warmer coastal climate (figure 3.17). This garden, with its curved drive, is a complete contrast with the formal park in Warrior Square.

In contrast to the ‘whitewashed brickfield’ of St Leonards that Ruskin despised, Vernon’s domestic work in the new suburban areas to the north and west of the town continued the controlled residential development that he had been involved with in Wales. A rapid transition in architectural style and building type is evident surrounding Markwick Gardens, a second park located to the north of Gensing Gardens. The development began like Warrior Square with Markwick Terrace fronting a fenced park intended to be accessible only to the residents (figure 3.18).
The suburban housing east of Markwick Gardens that uses motifs drawn from the vernacular, as well as motifs found at Bedford Park such as the gable to the brick dormer to the house on the LHS in Figure 3.20
The terrace form was soon abandoned in favour of a Bedford Park style of suburb, with picturesque architect designed villas and semi-detached houses that employed an eclectic combination of motifs drawn from traditional English architecture. Each house was set back from the street and small front garden established. The palette of materials was the same as Bedford Park, employing brick or roughcast to walls, timber for the joinery, half timbering and the verandahs, terracotta tiles (for roofs and tile hanging), combined with the occasional use of stone trims. The homogeneity of the area today would indicate that the use of materials had been controlled by a covenant. It is highly likely that Vernon was involved with this suburban development, as the surviving residences have many similarities to his later work in NSW. None of the individual house designs appear to have been repeated. Details such as half-timbering to gables, roughcast above a face brick lower storey, Figure 3.21
Architects not identified, suburban housing, Markwick Gardens, St Leonards, East Sussex. Possibly circa 1880
small paned upper sashes painted white and the occasional use of stone trims all appear. Today the substantial Queen Anne Revival houses and commercial buildings lining the new London Road and the substantial villas and semi-detached houses near Gensing and Markwick Gardens give the area a similar character to that of Bedford Park.

Working on his own, Vernon began to design picturesque modern country houses and commercial and public buildings influenced by the progressive work of Burges, Godwin, Nesfield and Shaw, the architect friends of his cousin Arthur Liberty. The influence of Burges and Godwin can be seen in Vernon’s use of the Gothic details derived from secular buildings; the influence of Shaw and Nesfield can be seen in his use of traditional Sussex building materials and revived building techniques such as rubbed brickwork. Shaw’s work was widely published during the 1870s. Architects would also have known of the enclave of artists houses in the Melbury Road area of Holland Park designed by Burges, Shaw and Webb from 1875 onwards.

Specimens of Architecture

The similarity of the use of details drawn from the English vernacular that can be found in the work of Devey and Liberty’s architect friends and in the work of the Vernon cousins during the 1870s show the results of each architect’s travels. Their detailing shows the results of close inspection rather than copying from the architectural source books. Vernon’s sketchbooks do not appear to have survived; however his papers contain a sketch of an ‘old building’ in Bourne
Vernon’s book collection included many of the works that detailed the construction of Gothic buildings recommended by Charles L. Eastlake in his Study of the History of the Gothic Revival first published in 1872. Specimens of Gothic Architecture from the Parish Churches of Lavenham in Suffolk and Brandon’s Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages could be found in the Vernons’ library, as could A Manual of Gothic Mouldings by F. A. Paley, Batty Langley’s Gothic Architecture, Christian Architecture in England by John Britton and Examples of Gothic Architecture by Augustus Pugin. The extensive collection contained 300 volumes, of which a considerable number are likely to have been architectural, although Walter was also very fond of Charles Dickens, who like Karl Marx, mounted vitriolic attacks on the industrial cities of England. Hugh Vernon presented ‘more than forty volumes’ of architectural books to the School of Architecture at the University of Sydney in 1930, most of which are no longer in the library’s collection (figure 3.22).

Vernon’s interest in the technique of photography is also evident; one of his purchased views was of Laycock Abbey in Wiltshire, the residence of pioneering photographer William Fox Talbot. Due to technical difficulties in reproducing the images it would be some time before photographs were regularly included in the library.

Figure 3.22
Hugh Vernon, bookplate, 1930

The bookplate reads ‘this book is one of more than forty volumes presented to the University of Sydney School of Architecture in October 1930 by H. Venables Vernon’
architectural periodicals. Instead architects collected individual prints as part of their professional library, the American architect Henry Hobson Richardson collecting over 3,000 images including views of Llandarff Cathedral and Bramall Hall near Stockport (figures 3.6 and 3.24). An indication of traditional building arts that Vernon admired can be gained from his photograph collection. The French writer Paul Sedille, in his study outlining the development of English architecture published in 1890 lists Bramall Hall (figure 3.23) and Little Moreton Hall (figure 3.24) as being the most remarkable of

53 A number of Richardson’s collected photographs of buildings of Normandy, England and Wales are illustrated in Floyd, Henry Russell Hitchcock, A Genius for Architecture, 1997. Bramhall Hall is illustrated in Plate 20

54 The album bears the initials of Hugh Vernon but are more likely to have been collected by Walter, either during his visit in 1887 or progressively compiled from his student days onwards.
the half-timbered Cheshire manor houses. Vernon had images of both in his collection; his photograph of Bramhall Hall (now known as Bramall Hall) was framed and hung amongst his prized weapons and paintings, reflecting his family connection with the Davenports. John Nash included Bramall Hall, the elaborate half-timbered home of the Davenports until the 1870s, in his series of drawings: The Mansions of England in Olden Time. Eastlake in the 1870s noted the continued popularity of Nash’s drawings amongst architects.

Vernon’s purchased views included substantial country houses such as the Elizabethan Longleat and Hardwick Hall and the Jacobean Hatfield House. His choices were well informed; the interiors of Hardwick Hall are still acknowledged as being remarkable, retaining not only their decoration, but also the tapestries and fittings. A number of the examples in his collection are half-timbered: Little Moreton Hall, the Rows at Chester and the half-timbering with herringbone brickwork of the cloisters at Windsor Castle. Not all of the examples were historic, from the 1850s onwards commercial buildings in Chester were designed in a similar manner to the medieval rows. Today it is the nineteenth century examples designed by local architect John Douglas that predominate (figure 3.25).

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56 The house survives today but was modernised in the late nineteenth century and some of the details ‘improved’. Its earlier configuration can be seen in John Nash, The Mansions of England in Olden Time A.D. 1839, in four series. London, Thomas M’Lean, c. 1839
57 Eastlake, Gothic Revival, p. 237
58 David Watkin, English Architecture, Thames and Hudson, London, 1979 p. 89
59 ML PXA 876 Vernon Family Photographic Material Volume 1
60 The Pevsner Architectural Guide to Cheshire notes that today 95% of the buildings in the Chester Rows are Victorian.
Mid nineteenth century works such as Devey’s Penshurst village buildings mentioned earlier, Joseph Paxton’s Mentmore (for Lord Rosebery) and the eclectic Normanhurst, built for the Brassey family, Henry Clutton’s Great Hall at Battle Abbey, near Hastings, the Dining Hall, Trinity College, Cambridge and Parham Park in Sussex (the latter two complexes were both altered by Anthony Salvin) are included in Vernon’s album. His interest in contemporary work is evidenced by the view of recent commercial buildings by Nesfield, John Brydon and Butterfield in Saffron Walden. Vernon has no views of Shaw’s work in his photo collection, but does have a view of a building Shaw is known to have used as a source for the now destroyed New Zealand Chambers in London, Sparrowe’s House at Ipswich built in 1567 (figures 3.26 and 3.27).

Studying the same vernacular buildings that Shaw used as a source indicates that Vernon knew what had inspired the work of his London colleagues. By 1890 the use of the English vernacular as a source of architectural details was well known internationally. In the 1870s the use of traditional details drawn from secular English buildings was far less common, primarily occurring in work of Liberty’s architect friends, and in the work of his Vernon cousins. Walter produced a number of substantial designs in the mid 1870s, which resulted in the selection of one of his designs for 1879 architectural exhibition at the Royal Academy in London.

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62 ML PXA 876 Volume 1 Photographs collected by W.L.Vernon page 15 View of Saffron Walden and page 41 Little Moreton Hall
63 Sedille, L’Architecture Moderne en Angleterre, p.82
The Dudley Road House (1876)

In 1876 Vernon designed a substantial house in Dudley Road, Hastings for Captain Brown. Asymmetrically composed, with a jerkin head roof clad with plain terracotta tiles, and a three-storey bay window overlooking the garden, the Dudley Road house appears very substantial when viewed from the road below. Constructed of face brick with simple stone lintels and sills, the building has a Gothic flavour but is not fully Gothic Revival in style. Rather the house is an example of the Shavian English Domestic Revival that draws heavily on the local vernacular. Bands of dark brickwork and fish scale tile-hanging to the gable relieve the composition (figure 3.28).

Tile-hanging is a detail common in Kent and Sussex; Shaw’s sketch of a typical tile hung cottage survives in the RIBA collection (figure 3.29). Vernon used a wider palette of materials than the current London fashion for ‘red brick and red tile’ that Godwin believed

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64 Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, RIBA drawings series, p. 10

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Shaw’s sketch is of a typical tile-hung cottage with a jerkin head roof.
Figure 3.30
Edward Godwin, residence,
Bedford Park, Chiswick, 1876

Figure 3.31
Arthur Mackmurdo
Halcyon
House, Enfield, London, 1873

Figure 3.32
George Devey
Vicarage Wendover,
Buckinghamshire, 1873
lacked originality. Details employed in the Dudley Road house continue to appear in Vernon’s domestic work in Sussex and again in NSW. Vertical tile hanging with fish scale tiles, terracotta ridge tiles and finials, plain terracotta roof tiles as well as contrasting brick colours continually reappear in the designs of suburban residences and gate lodges until around 1900.

The design for the Dudley Road House shows that Vernon had become a skilled designer and was keeping up with architectural developments emanating from London. His design is comparable with the residences Godwin had designed for the model suburb of Bedford Park (1876) (figure 3.30), Arthur Mackmurdo’s Halcyon House at Enfield (1873) (figure 3.31) and the Vicarage at Wendover by Devey (also 1873) (figure 3.33). In contrast to Vernon’s design, which fitted into the local context, utilising motifs drawn from the local Sussex vernacular, the houses designed for Bedford Park and Enfield combined different regional motifs and transplanted them to the London suburbs.

The form of the house has many similarities with No. 1 The Avenue, at Bedford Park, designed by Godwin in 1876 and published in the Building News in December that year. The designs by Godwin and Vernon both feature a three-storey bay window to the side elevation.

67 The Vicarage at Wendover is Jill Allibone, *George Devey, Architect 1820-1886*, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 1991, Figure 70.
Illustrated in Girouard, *Sweetness and Light, The 'Queen Anne Movement'*, 1860-1900, plate 151
and a bay window below the main gable. Both also employ a band of
darker brickwork below the first floor windows. No. 1 the Avenue
has a gable treatment that is far less elaborate than the Gothic
Revival bargeboards employed at the Dudley Road House. Devey’s
Wendover Vicarage likewise employs banded brickwork, a three-
storey bay window and elaborate brick chimneys (figure 3.32).

Even before he set up his London office in 1880 Vernon was well
versed in the work of his London contemporaries, particularly
Liberty’s architect friends, and is likely to have already visited
the suburban development at Bedford Park. In March 1877 the
Architectural Association visited the suburb to view the modern
residences inhabited by ‘progressive or artistic families’.68 The
subdivision, with houses designed by E. J. May, Godwin and Shaw,
also contained an inn, church and clubhouse (figures 3.33 and 3.34).
The interiors of the residences were as carefully controlled as

68 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The ‘Queen Anne Movement’, 1860-1900, p. 160
and 171.
the exteriors; a range of suitable Morris-designed wallpapers had been selected from which the tenant could make their choice. The interiors of the community buildings contained designs by Godwin and Morris and hand painted tiles by William de Morgan.69 The planning of the houses was also up to date; for health reasons the houses were designed without a basement kitchen. In Georgian town houses the ground floor was raised above the street and the areas occupied by the servants were below ground level. In Victorian houses the areas occupied by servants were located at the rear and were on the same level as the remainder of the house.

Bedford Park was not the only contemporary housing that Vernon may have visited; in the 1870s the redevelopment of Chelsea was much discussed in architectural circles. Godwin made sure that his deliberate avoidance of revived motifs was public knowledge.70 The studio houses in Tite Street designed by Godwin in the mid 1870s continued the use of motifs drawn from the English vernacular that Webb had employed in the townhouse in nearby Glebe Place of 1869. Many of the fashionable Chelsea residences, including the controversial White House Godwin designed for James McNeill Whistler (figure 3.35), contained furnishings supplied by Liberty.

Liberty’s of London

In 1876 Arthur Liberty, with some assistance from Shaw, opened a department store that supplied all the necessary items for the ‘house beautiful’.71 The two well-known architects (possibly Shaw

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69 The Morris & Co. decorations to the Tabard Inn survive today.
70 Godwin to the British Architect quoted in Bendix, Diabolical Designs, Paintings, Interiors and Exhibitions of James McNeill Whistler, p.150
71 Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, p. 49
and Nesfield) and the three distinguished painters (including Rossetti and Whistler) that Godwin recalled having waited in Liberty’s in December 1876 for a new shipment to arrive are all likely to have been familiar faces to Vernon.\(^{72}\) Liberty had built up an established clientele amongst the London artists, supplying the hand painted porcelain, kimonos, muslins and silks that contributed to the exotic atmosphere depicted in Whistler’s paintings (figure 3.36). Crane recalled the ‘striking effect of these works among the commonplaces of the usual mixed [Royal Academy] exhibition. They struck new notes’.\(^{73}\)

The restrained furnishings of the ‘house beautiful’ were, as Crane explains, a reaction against established Victorian taste that had been occurring since Vernon was an architectural student.

The art of Morris and those associated with him was really but the outward and visible sign of a great movement of protest and reaction against the commercial and conventional conceptions and standards of life and art which had obtained so strong a hold in the industrial nineteenth century.\(^{74}\)

Vernon’s purchase of the Triton Charger indicates that he knew, and admired, the work of Morris and his circle of designers (figure 3.37).\(^{75}\) Crane described these large platters or chargers as ‘the choice ware of William de Morgan, gleaming from the sideboard’.

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\(^{72}\) Calloway, Liberty of London, Masters of Style and Decoration, p. 31

\(^{73}\) Walter Crane, in his essay, The Apotheosis of the Butterfly in From William Morris to Whistler, papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 265

\(^{74}\) Crane, Walter, in his essay, William Morris and his Work in From William Morris to Whistler, papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 21

\(^{75}\) The Vernon family have donated the Triton Charger to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.
in his lecture on the revival of the English decorative arts. De Morgan had been experimenting with lustreware since 1873-84 and Persian colours in 1975 and he continued to use these techniques throughout the 1880s and 1890s (figure 3.38). It would appear that Vernon purchased the Triton Charger around 1880, shortly after it was made. He may have purchased the platter directly from de Morgan’s pottery in Chelsea however there is no record of the purchase in the Vernon papers. Alternatively the purchase was made at Liberty’s however Liberty’s first catalogue did not appear until 1881 and other early records have not survived. The surviving views of Vernon’s own domestic interiors indicate that he continued to obtain contemporary furnishings from Liberty’s whilst living in Australia and that he progressively added to the collection of ceramics and art works that he had begun as a young man.

76 Crane, Walter, The English Revival in Decorative Art, from his series of essays William Morris to Whistler, Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 55.

77 Westminster Archives hold a number of the surviving early records of Liberty’s, including the first catalogue produced in 1881. LBY/1932.
Hillside / The Upland (1880)

Vernon designed a substantial modern country house, The Upland, Chown’s Road, Ore, near Hastings for the solicitor Frederick Langham in 1879.\textsuperscript{78} The set of hand coloured drawings labeled ‘Hillside’ in the Mitchell Library are a copy, prepared in 1883 to bring to Australia to show prospective employers or clients.\textsuperscript{79} The Langhams did not adopt the house name that appears on Vernon’s drawings, possibly as there was already a Shavian house called Hillside at Groomsbridge in Sussex.\textsuperscript{80} The group of houses Shaw designed for Groomsbridge was well known, illustrations having appeared in the architectural press.\textsuperscript{81}

The plans for The Upland show the library, dining room, drawing room and morning room arranged in the Shavian manner around the central stair hall, a planning device that Vernon continued to employ in the design of larger residences in NSW. The bedrooms occurred above the principal rooms, accessed from a gallery surrounding the stair hall. The kitchen and scullery were located at the other end of the house. A glazed conservatory was located adjacent to

\begin{tablenotes}
\item[78] Frederick Langham, the Solicitor Clerk to the Justice of the Borough of Hastings, is recorded in the 1881 Census as residing at The Upland, Ore, with his wife Elizabeth, his three sons Frederick, Edward and Perry, his daughter, Lillian, a cook, a housemaid, a nursemaid and a coachman.
\item[79] ML PXD 384 folios 1 - 9 are the drawings of the house, folios 10 - 11 are the drawings of the stables.
\item[80] Groombridge, Sussex, located five miles from Penshurst, was developed by the Goldsmith’s Company who offered each property on a 99-year lease. Between 1866 and 1871 Shaw designed a series of buildings, in 1866 Glen Andred and a school and church were commenced for the artist Edward Cook. The same year Shaw designed Leyswood for his cousin James Temple, one of the directors of the Shaw Savile shipping line. The third house, commenced in 1870 was Hillside built for the explorer William Oswell.
\end{tablenotes}
the drawing room, and a verandah placed adjacent to the morning room and the library. This design shows that Vernon was using the verandah in his domestic designs prior to his exposure to colonial architecture.

The form and plan used by Shaw and Vernon was derived from vernacular half-timbered ‘hall-houses’ such as Little Hall, Lavenham, Suffolk built in the 1390s (figure 3.40). No one building was the inspiration for the design, rather the general characteristics of the typology were employed. Elements drawn from the traditional ‘hall-house’ house that appear in Shaw’s work at Leyswood (1870), and subsequently in Vernon’s work, include the jettied gable adjacent to the main entrance and the use of a double height hall internally. The modern ‘hall-house’ contained a series of separate rooms with discrete functions: bedrooms, a dining room, drawing room and morning room; the vernacular originals did not. Shavian details such as the tile-hung gable, the plain terracotta tile roof with a terracotta ridge cresting, and the tall ribbed brick chimneys had already been employed in the Dudley Road house.

The term modern country house is commonly used to describe architect-designed country houses dating from the second half of the nineteenth century. The term was coined by Herman Muthesius who included a number of English designs in his study Das Modern Landhaus (The Modern Country House) first published in 1905. Amongst the 320 buildings Muthesius included were a number of English examples, including houses designed by Baillie Scott and Voysey, as well as German and Scandinavian examples.

Vernon’s decision to bring a copy of the drawings of Hillside to Australia to show to prospective clients predates Maurice Adam’s exhibition of designs for a house in the Southern Highlands for the Fairfax family. It is interesting that he chose his modern country house design rather than one of his commercial buildings or the Claremont Buildings.

The Claremont Buildings (1876-77)

Vernon’s second major client Thomas Brassey, for whom he designed the Claremont Buildings in Hastings in 1876, was a respected authority on naval matters and later held the position of Governor of the state of Victoria. Following its opening in 1877, the Claremont Buildings (which later became known as the Brassey Institute after the benefactors) received considerable attention in the architectural press. One of these published drawings is presumably the drawing Vernon exhibited in 1879 in the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy in London (figure 3.41).

The Claremont Buildings appears to be inspired by secular Gothic buildings such as the Palais de Justice at Rouen and Viollet-le-Duc’s restorations of French town halls. Hastings was proud of its Norman heritage, and it is not surprising that Norman architecture was used as a source. English architects were much more knowledgeable than many of their French counterparts in Gothic architecture, having travelled widely studying details. The success of English

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83 Engravings appeared in The Builder and in Building News in late 1879.
1879 1169 Claremont Buildings
The emphasis of the visits by the English architects to Europe changed from the religious to the secular; Banister Fletcher’s illustrations to his architectural textbook, such as the House of Jacques Coeur in Bourges, reflect this growing interest in secular Gothic. Vernon’s choice of style was also in response to Holy Trinity (1851-1859), designed by Samuel Teulon, that the Claremont Buildings overlook (figures 3.9 and 3.42).

The tower is not centered on the street; rather it is placed to the left, so that it could be viewed with the series of gables to Holy Trinity in the foreground. The gable to the central bay window is of a

The success of the English entrants is outlined by Eastlake in a footnote. Eastlake, Gothic Revival, footnote to p. 317
similar height and proportion as the gables to the church, continuing the rhythm. The church roof was clad with plain terracotta tiles, however a complex profile was created using metalwork, a metal cross terminating the apse roof. The higher roofline of the tower was also accentuated by an elaborate cresting. The church was intended to have a tower, the base of which was built and forms the porch. Had the tower been completed the body of the church would have been framed between its tower and the tower of the Claremont Buildings.

Vernon’s tower can be seen as one approaches from the old town. The medieval Old Town was further east, following the winding Bourne or Old London Road located in a narrow valley to the east of the ruins of Hastings Castle, a site that permitted little expansion. The removal of White Rock in the mid nineteenth century had allowed the medieval town of Hastings to expand west towards the more recent town of St Leonards. The railway station and Vernon’s office were located in this new area of town, which was rapidly developing into the main civic precinct. The construction of a new Town Hall, designed by H.Ward in 1881, followed the completion of the Claremont Buildings.

Whilst the use of truthful materials, the high degree of craftsmanship and use of Gothic motifs stem from Ruskin’s writings, the form and planning of the Claremont buildings clearly exhibit the principals advocated by Viollet-Le-Duc.87 The position of the main stair within the tower and that of the main hall, on the upper floor, are all in the same position as in Viollet-Le-Duc’s illustration of ‘equilibration’.

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87 Peter Moroney, Walter Vernon, a Change in Style of Government Architecture in Bradley, Australian Art and Architecture, Essays presented to Bernard Smith, p.46-47
A similar view dating from the late nineteenth century can be seen in figure 3.9.

Viollet-le-Duc believed there were two truths in architecture:

We must be true in respect of the programme and true in respect of the constructive process. To be true in the programme is to fulfil exactly, scrupulously, the conditions imposed by the requirements of the case. To be true in the constructive process is to employ the materials according to their qualities and properties.

89 Jean-Paul Midant, Au Moyen Âge avec Viollet-le-Duc, Paris, Parangon, 2001, p. 32
90 Viollet-Le-Duc, Lecture X from Lectures on Architecture, p. 448
Figure 3.43
Viollet le Duc, the principle of Equilibration', 1872

Figure 3.44
Viollet le Duc, restoration of the St Antonin Hotel de Ville, St Antonin Noble Val, Tarn et Garonne, 1843

The drawings show before and after.
Vernon’s careful planning of the Claremont Buildings is expressed externally, the stair tower, the ground floor reading room, the first floor committee room, the offices behind the arcade and the schoolroom above are all evident in the pattern of fenestration, designed to meet the specific daylight requirements of each room (figure 3.45). The provision of such an extensive range of community facilities by the progressive Brasseys was unusual for the 1870s, as both healthy outdoor pursuits, such as rowing, and education were combined. The building actually contains two separate premises, the Institute with its distinctive tower and the printer’s premises with a traditional shopfront next door (figure 3.46). In the entrance foyer of the Institute is a mosaic frieze representing a portion of the Bayeaux tapestry (figure 3.47). Black and white photographs showing the detail of the tapestry, which depicted the Battle of Hastings, had been exhibited at the Albert Hall and subsequently in

91 The Bayeaux Tapestry, which in its entirety was 70 metres long, depicts the story of Harold and the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
The original colours of the tapestry: blue, green, yellow ochre, grey and red were replicated in the mosaics in the Claremont building by the English tile makers Simpson & Co. Only the inscription and the figures are shown, not the decorative border.

Godwin had previously used carved scenes from the signing of the Magna Carta in his Northampton Town Hall, as well as modern images, depicting the town’s fire brigade. This carving was as Ruskin advocated, ‘there should not be a single ornament put upon great civic buildings without some intellectual intention’. The Battle of Hastings in 1066 was a significant event not only in Sussex, but also in the course of English history and it is not surprising that motifs from the tapestry were selected to decorate the entrance porch. The

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92 The black and white photographs were exhibited in the Royal Albert Hall in 1873 prior to their exhibition in the Architectural Court of the South Kensington Museum, the museum also purchasing a section of the tapestry. The photographic record is now held in the British Library, having been presented to the British Museum.

93 The Builder Illustrations Index for 1877. The tile work within the Institute was made by an English company, Simpson and Sons, Tile Manufacturers.

94 Ruskin quoted in Brooks, John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture, p.203
published view of the Claremont Building in Building News has owl finials; the symbol of knowledge used by Viollet-le-Duc in the main elevation of his Paris residence built in 1862-63. The decoration of the adjacent printing works was likewise purposeful rather than simply ornamental, recording important people in the history of printing (figure 3.48).

Built for the citizens of Hastings, and entirely funded by the Brassey family, the Claremont buildings was not the only philanthropic project the Brassey family was involved in. Lord Brassey and his son were, in 1907, officers of the Co-partnership Tenant’s Housing Council, as were Edward and George Cadbury and Ebenezer Howard. One project that this council promoted was Hampstead Garden Suburb. The Vernon cousins’ commissions were largely from self-made, progressive men such as Brassey and Disraeli, rather than the landed gentry; and many of the commissions had a social purpose. Arthur exhibited designs for board schools at High Wycombe at the Royal Academy in 1874 and in again in 1877, as well as the

95 Illustrated in Françoise, Goy-Truffaut, Paris Facades, Un Siècle de Sculptures Décoratives, Paris, Hazan, 1989 p. 72
96 The Brassey Institute as the building is now known is now the Hastings City Council Library and is a Grade II listed building.
97 Hampstead Tenants Limited, Cottages with Gardens for Londoners, Advertisement for the Co-partnership Tenants Housing, c. 1907. No page number.
High Wycombe Cottage Hospital in 1877. Walter exhibited the Claremont Buildings in 1879. Walter and Arthur Vernon used similar architectural motifs during the 1870s, however there is no evidence that the pair collaborated on designs.

**Town and Country**

Vernon practised in Hastings for a decade, designing a number of substantial buildings that contributed to the character of the expanding town, including the now demolished Royal Concert Hall, premises for the Hastings Electric Light Company and a Sunday School and Hall for the Robertson Road Congregational Church. The Robertson Road Hall, a restrained Gothic Revival composition, survives today and is located close to the Claremont buildings. Its design was illustrated in the 1879 *Congregational Yearbook*, adjacent to its location.

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98 Graves, *The Royal Academy Exhibitors*, entry for Arthur Vernon
1874 1163 New Board Schools, High Wycombe
1877 1075 New Board Schools, High Wycombe
1178 Cottage Hospital, High Wycombe

99 Current views of the Robertson Road Sunday School and Hall supplied by the Hastings Librarian from their file on Vernon. The Royal Concert Hall has been demolished however the library retains newspaper clippings showing Vernon’s designs.
to a building designed by Sulman.  In his work in Sussex, Vernon followed Shaw in utilising the English Domestic Revival for houses in the suburbs and the countryside and the Queen Anne Revival in town. By the mid 1870s he had adopted the Queen Anne Revival for commercial buildings, a style that his London counterparts were using for educational buildings, professional chambers and townhouses.

One of Vernon’s early compositions, the Hastings Electric Light Company building of 1877 was based on the detail of secular buildings, of which there were some good examples nearby, such as Peacock’s School (the Old Grammar School) in the town of Rye dating from 1636. The use of Dutch gables had begun to appear in the design of residential buildings in London in the 1620s. The use of the motif at Peacock’s School is considered ‘remarkably early’ for a building outside of the metropolis. The elliptical window in

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100 The Congregational Church, Congregational Year Book, 1879
London, Published for the Congregational Union of England and Wales, by Jackson and Walford. 1879, p. 414


102 Nairn, and Pevsner, Buildings of England: Sussex, p. 598
the gable reappears in Vernon’s design as a round window, with four stone voussoirs separated by cut and rubbed bricks, a technique revived by George Bodley and Nesfield in the early 1860s. The carefully designed brickwork of Hastings Electric Light Company building is comparable with the work of Vernon’s contemporaries in London, however Vernon was careful to use local motifs that were already part of the architectural vocabulary of the picturesque towns along the Sussex coast.

A London Office

His increasing success in Hastings and St Leonards resulted in Vernon establishing a second office in London. Once one of his designs had been published and he had gained his diploma from the Institute of Surveyors in 1880, he set up an office at 26 Great George Street near Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. Initially the London office appears to have been run solely by Walter; Arthur Vernon is not listed at this address until his cousin was en route to Sydney in 1883. The popularity of this part of London with architects was probably due both to the quality of the townscape and the concentration of professional institutes. The substantial Georgian townhouses were utilised by architects as combined offices and residences (figures 3.54 and 3.55).

103 Gavin Stamp has pointed out that William Richard Lethaby is in fact wrong in stating that the Palace Green townhouse by Philip Webb was the first building to revive 'cut-and-rubbed' brickwork, both Nesfield and George Bodley had also been using this vernacular technique in the 1860s.

104 Arthur’s letter of introduction gives his office as being 26 Cockspur Street, Charing Cross. Vernon Papers, ML MSS 6

105 The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Institute of Civil Engineers remain in Great George Street today.
Other architectural offices were located close by. John Pollard Seddon’s home and office were at No. 1 Queen Anne’s Gate. Charles Voysey set up his office at No. 8 Queen Anne’s Gate in 1881, moving round the corner the following year. Queen Anne’s Gate, commenced in 1704, retains its homogenous architectural character today; Great George Street was largely redeveloped in the late nineteenth century. An indication of the Georgian townhouses that once characterised this part of London can be gained from Halsey Ricardo’s 1887 sketch of the proposed remodeling of No. 8 Great George Street (figure 3.55) and the one Georgian building that survives, now part of the Institute of Chartered Surveyors (figure 3.54). The building that once housed Vernon’s office no longer survives.

The range of commissions that Vernon received shows his Sussex practice to have been a successful one. He was confidently working in the Shavian manner, as is evidenced by the substantial modern country house, The Upland and the smaller suburban residence

106 Hitchmough, C. F. A. Voysey, p. 25
107 Described as the ‘best and most complete street of regular houses of its date in London’ by Jones and Woodward; the houses predate the emergence of architectural pattern books and their decoration varies from house to house. Jones & Woodward, A Guide to the Architecture of London, entry K3
108 Illustrated in Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, RIBA drawings series, plate 88
for Captain Brown. In contrast to his estate work in Wales which was predominantly domestic, he designed a range of building types, employing a different architectural vocabulary for his commercial buildings than for his residential buildings, just as his London colleagues were doing. The terrace in Warrior Gardens, undertaken in partnership with Moreing and Vernon’s designs for the Dudley Road House, The Upland and the Hastings Electric Light Company Building show the application of current architectural ideas from London, helping to disseminate the Queen Anne Revival and the Shavian English Domestic Revival styles in Sussex however Vernon was careful to use motifs that had traditionally been employed in the area.

Vernon’s social consciousness is evident, reflected in his design for the Claremont Buildings and his involvement with the Temperance Movement. The provision of light and air is evident in the use of the verandah at The Upland, the light wells, oriel and bay windows at the Claremont buildings and the use of bay windows in his residential designs. By 1879 Vernon’s architectural work had come to Shaw’s attention, the Claremont buildings was one of the designs Shaw included in the annual architectural exhibition held at the Royal Academy in London. The exhibition and publication of the design would have resulted in many further commissions for Vernon. Despite the beneficial climate of Hastings, his continued poor health resulted in his doctor advising him to move, permanently, to a warmer and drier climate. He selected Sydney, selling Clytha House and his architectural practice in early 1883.
The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) provided Sulman with advice regarding the state of the architectural profession in Australia. He claimed that he had been given an unofficial responsibility to ‘clean up the mess and impose on the wild colonials the standards of England’. If Vernon received similar advice about the lack of professional ethics in the colonies it did not deter him. Vernon’s family connections, his previous body of work and his prominent clients are politely alluded to in his letters of introduction, the assumption being that Australian readers would be aware of the importance of these men. His Wycombe connections were stressed, referring to the Vernon family’s long association with Charles Robert Carrington, who would soon become Governor of NSW, and Disraeli.

The London office was transferred to Arthur Vernon although Walter continued to list both the London and Sydney offices on his letterhead until his appointment as NSW Government Architect in 1890. Presumably he had an arrangement with his cousin that he could return if he was unable to obtain sufficient work in the colonies. The remainder of Walter’s architectural work is however in NSW. Although he had been working in the provinces, he was a progressive architect and his work was of a standard that compared well with the work of his London-based colleagues and through his family connections he remained well versed in changes in architectural taste.

110 Lord Carrington was Governor of NSW from 1885 until 1890, during which time Vernon was appointed NSW Government Architect.
111 RIBA Bibliographic Information: Arthur Vernon
Arthur retained the London office until around 1902.
Figure 3.56
Richard Norman Shaw, Lowther Lodge, Kensington, London, 1873-75

Lowther Lodge is now the headquarters of the Royal Geographical Society

Figure 3.57
Richard Norman Shaw, Albert Hall Mansions, Kensington, London, 1879-81

Located adjacent to the Royal Albert Hall, this building contained substantial apartments
Whilst not able to compete with the rapidly expanding mercantile cities of London, Glasgow or Manchester, Sydney was becoming an important colonial city with many opportunities for a young architect. Illustrations of some of the new public buildings had appeared in the *The Builder*, including the proposed General Post Office in Martin Place and the completed first stage of the Sydney Town Hall.\(^\text{112}\)

When Vernon left London the city was no longer a city of stone or stuccoed buildings, but was a city of red brick and terracotta.\(^\text{113}\) Shaw’s red brick buildings in Kensington: Lowther Lodge (figure 3.56) and the Albert Hall Mansions (figure 3.57) characterised the new London, just as the Smirke brothers’ Royal Mint, Customs House and their series of additions to the British Museum had characterised London when James Barnet was a student.\(^\text{114}\)

Vernon had been directly involved in a similar transition in architectural style in Hastings and St Leonards. Markwick Gardens and the Dudley Road house show the implementation of a new type of suburban development, and a new palette of materials, based on the picturesque Bedford Park model. Red brick was the predominant material used in the new residential architecture in the suburbs and in commercial architecture in town. This new residential architecture was designed for a new type of client, the professional man who sought to live in a healthy suburb, well away from the

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\(^\text{112}\) Both of the designs described in *The Builder* were attributed to the NSW Colonial Architect, James Barnet, incorrectly in the case of the Sydney Town Hall which was designed by in stages by a series of City Architects.

\(^\text{113}\) Colin Amery and Gavin Stamp have traced this change in architectural taste in London, led by Shaw, which occurred during the reign of Queen Victoria. Stamp and Amery, *Victorian Buildings of London 1837-1887, An Illustrated Guide*, pp. 12-16.

industry and pollution that characterised the rapidly expanding cities of the Industrial revolution.

The English trained architects who arrived in the Australian colonies during the 1880s sought to implement a similar transition, changing the pattern of suburban development from the repetitive terrace form to the picturesque, and highly individual, suburban villa or semi-detached house. Commercial architecture was now based on motifs drawn from secular buildings that once had a similar function, such as the merchants houses, market buildings and town halls of the Low Countries, rather than the monumental architecture of Greece or Rome. On his arrival Vernon continued to work in a similar manner to his Hasting work, designing modest commercial buildings. He introduced the new Bedford park type of picturesque suburban villa development to Sydney.
CHAPTER 4  TRANSPLANTING ENGLISH STYLES

These next two chapters trace Vernon’s architectural work in Sydney following his arrival in late 1883 until his appointment to the position of NSW Government Architect in 1890. By transplanting and experimenting with the Queen Anne Revival and Shavian English Domestic Revival, he made a substantial contribution to the changes in taste and architectural philosophy in NSW. The three Sydney residences designed during 1883-85, Vernon’s own house Penshurst in Neutral Bay, Craithes near Penrith, and Hestock in Hunters Hill and a commercial building, Royle’s Chambers, are examined. These designs mark the start of his search for a suitable architectural vocabulary for NSW. The characteristics of the model suburban development surrounding Vernon’s residence are also examined.

The Vernon family arrived in Sydney in November 1883. Walter was not the first member of the Vernon or Davenport families to emigrate to the Australian colonies; his uncle John Davenport Vernon had joined the Victorian gold rush, arriving in 1853. Sir Samuel Davenport, the prominent Adelaide merchant, orchardist and politician, was Walter’s second cousin. Noting the similarity in climate with southern Europe, Davenport had acclimatised the olive in South Australia. The surviving letters of introduction show that Adelaide and Melbourne also considered. Although the climate would have been suitable for Vernon’s health, Adelaide was then a much smaller city with limited possibilities for a talented young

1 After unsuccessful attempts at gold mining, he established Vernon and Campbell, produce merchants.
2 Hugh Vernon, Obituary of W. L. Vernon, Vernon Papers ML MSS 6571, Box 3
3 26 letters of introduction to Colonists on behalf of Vernon and his family from English business men and acquaintances. Vernon Papers, Mitchell Library, MSS 6571, Box 3
architect. Of the other English colonies, India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) would not have been a good choice for someone already in poor health and Canada, New Zealand and Tasmania could not provide a consistently warm climate.

The first of the wave of architects who arrived in NSW during the 1880s had been John Francis Hennessy who had trained with Burges and Eastlake. After briefly working in America Hennessy, who was then only 27, arrived in Sydney in 1880. Vernon was the second arrival. Edward Jeffreson Jackson, who had served his articles in London with William West-Neve, arrived in late 1884, working briefly for the Colonial Architect on the design of the Medical School at the University of Sydney before setting up on his own. Sulman followed in 1885 in the hope that the change of climate would help improve his wife’s health; unfortunately this was not to be the case. Joseland arrived in Melbourne, via Auckland, in 1887, moving to Sydney a year or so later. Only one of the recent arrivals did not train in London, the Edinburgh-trained architect George McRae, who arrived in 1884 and, like Hennessy, commenced working in the City Architect’s office. George Oakeshott, who reached Sydney in 1891, did not establish his own practice; he commenced work in the Government Architect’s Branch (GAB), later transferring to the Commonwealth Department of Works.

Shaw’s selection of the work of Vernon, E. J. Jackson, Joseland, Oakeshott and Sulman for inclusion in the influential annual architectural exhibition held at the Royal Academy indicates that
these architects had all achieved some standing in their profession.\footnote{The Royal Academy, in May 2003, advised that the Academy did not retain the material exhibited, works were returned to the individual exhibitor. To date the drawings by the English trained architects exhibited at the Royal Academy in London prior to their relocation to Australia have not been fully identified.}

Many of the exhibited architectural designs, including drawings by Vernon and Sulman exhibited in the late 1870s, were also well received in the architectural press. The English-trained architects continued to design in the same manner as they had in England, transplanting the Queen Anne Revival and the Shavian English Domestic Revivals to NSW. A similar trend occurred in the other states and can be traced in the work of George Addison, Walter Butler, Henry Kemp and George Temple Poole.

Slate roofs with terracotta ridge tiles and finials, half-timbered gables, tile-hanging, verandahs with turned timber columns, and windows with small panes of coloured glass; clear identifiers of the Federation style in Australia, are all details that Vernon had employed during the 1870s. Sulman had also been working in this manner; his design for a modern country house at Dorking (figure 4.1), exhibited at the Royal Academy and published in The Architect in 1877 featured...
half-timbering, small paned windows and terracotta crests. The designs sent out from England by John Pollard Seddon for Alton at Mt. Macedon and by Maurice Bingham Adams for the Fairfax family (figure 4.2) transplanted contemporary architectural ideas. The Federation style has its origins in the architectural ideas emanating from London that these architects transplanted in the Australian colonies in the 1880s.

**Penshurst: A Modern Country House**

Richard Apperly believes that there was no distinction in America or England between the Shavian ‘Old English’ and the ‘Queen Anne’. This was not the case in Vernon’s work in Sussex nor is it the case in his work in NSW during the 1880s. Continuing to follow Shaw’s lead, Vernon utilised the Queen Anne Revival style for commercial buildings and modest suburban residences, and more occasionally

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6 Graves, *The Royal Academy Exhibitors*, p. 302
   Entry for John Sulman 1005 House Dorking

the English Domestic Revival style for substantial modern country houses, including Penshurst in Neutral Bay designed in 1883 for his family. Construction began in early 1884 and the family resided at Penshurst from 1885 until the early 1890s, when they relocated to a smaller house on the opposite side of Wycombe Road also designed by Vernon.

Penshurst marked the starting point of an important transition in architectural style and interior decoration that occurred in NSW during the 1880s. Vernon led this change in taste in Sydney, Penshurst being one of the earliest modern country houses in Australia to be designed in the Shavian manner (figure 4.3 and 4.4). The design marks the start of experimentation in domestic architecture in NSW with forms and construction techniques consciously drawn from the anonymous English vernacular rather than from the two architectural

8 Photographs of the house taken by the National Trust shortly before its demolition in 1968 were included in an exhibition mounted by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, *For the public good: crimes, follies and misfortunes: demolished houses of New South Wales.* James Broadbent, *For the public good: crimes, follies and misfortunes: demolished houses of New South Wales,* Glebe, N.S.W., Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1988. A series of publicity photographs of the house and its extensive grounds, including the vine covered grotto, appeared in the advertisements for the auction of the Penshurst Estate in February 1913, and are pasted in Vernon’s scrapbook. Mitchell Library ML MSS 6571 Vernon Papers Box 3

9 Apperly in his 1991 Horbury Hunt lecture describes Penshurst, as a very early example, perhaps the first in NSW, of Shaw’s ‘Old English’ architecture. As yet no earlier examples have been discovered in NSW.
styles that dominated mid nineteenth debates: the Italianate and the Gothic Revival. Certainly it is a very early Australian example of the 'house beautiful', designed to display the extensive Vernon family collection of antique weapons, art works and ceramics. The design of Penshurst is clearly influenced by the work of Liberty’s architect friends, continuing the manner in which Vernon had been working in Sussex.

From the surviving photographs it would appear that Penshurst was similar in plan to The Upland designed by Vernon in 1880. Two of the major rooms faced east towards Shellcove, North and South Head, the third faced southeast, with a view towards Government House on the opposite side of the harbour. E. J. Jackson’s Hollowforth (figures 4.5 and 4.6), built on Kurraba Road below the Neutral Bay Estate in 1892, has a similar plan arrangement and orientation, the entrance to the central hall is likewise from an entry court to the west and the three main rooms face the harbour. Orienting the principal rooms towards the view that sloped away from the house was the traditional placement of an English country house, a placement that was employed with much success by Shaw and subsequently by the Arts and Crafts architects, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott and Edwin Lutyens. Vernon would repeat this same placement with his 1890 design for Leura at Bellevue Hill.
Shaw divided his modern country houses such as Broadlands at Sunninghill, Berkshire (figure 4.8), into two distinct sections, with the principal rooms arranged around a hall and a separate wing containing the kitchen and servants accommodation. The main entrance was from a rear court, generally marked by a half-timbered jettied gable, the principal rooms overlooked the garden. This planning is clearly evident in Shaw’s Grim’s Dyke of 1870-72, where the kitchen wing canted away from the principal rooms. The design of Grim’s Dyke at Harrow was well known, the floor plans were published in Viollet-le-Duc’s *Habitations Moderne*. Later the home of W. S. Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan, Grim’s Dyke continued to be an influential design, appearing in the architectural periodicals until World War I (figure 4.7).11

The choice of the site and the orientation of Penshurst were deliberate, sea air was considered to be essential for convalescence during the Victorian era. Prior to the adoption of Joseph Lister’s germ theory, many believed that plants purified the air and hospitals

were surrounded by extensive landscaped gardens. Sunlight was also believed to be beneficial to convalescing patients, hence the provision of wide verandahs to English cottage hospitals. Vernon applied the same principles for the siting and ventilation of a cottage hospital to the design of his family home. Health was a personal concern of the émigré architects, the search for a healthier environment being the reason for their crossing the equator in search of a new beginning.

As a direct result of the Health Exhibition held in London in 1884 ‘healthiness’ emerged as an important factor in domestic design. The NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects took up the cause, a health and building survey was undertaken and a Sanitary Conference was held in 1885. The Melbourne-based architect Walter Butler’s paper: The Architecture of Healthy Homes, presented to his Victorian colleagues in 1902, concluded that

Our healthy home, then, is to be one of sunshine and of pure air; and is to be surrounded by as beautiful garden as its simplicity, or its richness demands; in short a home in which we may live in a perfect state of health, both as regards our minds and our bodies.

The description fits both Penshurst and Vernon’s second Sydney house: Wendover, both of which were surrounded by extensive grounds. Residences designed by the other ex-patriot architects were also designed to be light and airy, Joseland’s own house Malvern, in Wahroonga, built in 1900 had its

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12 Royal Australian Institute of Architects, NSW Chapter Records
1885 Sanitation Conference Report, ML MSS 4167
13 Walter Butler, The Architecture of Healthy Homes, p. 15
verandahs so placed as to face the four points of the compass,
so that one may sit or sleep outside in all weathers.\textsuperscript{14}

Arthur Streeton’s \textit{Sydney Harbour from Penshurst}, painted in 1907, one of a number of his idyllic views of the bays surrounding the Sirus Cove artists’ encampment he frequented, shows the view of the heads from the sleeping balcony of Penshurst (figure 4.9).\textsuperscript{15}

Open on three sides, the first floor sleeping balcony was located on the southern corner of house where extensive views of the harbour and cooling sea breezes could be gained. At ground floor level the rooms all opened, via French doors, onto the return verandah. The placement of the doors and windows allowed through breezes in the principal rooms. Bovington in Shellcove designed by Vernon in 1887 employs French doors and balconies in the bedrooms, where sash windows would normally have been used, allowing a much greater flow of air and more sunlight, as well as views towards Shellcove.

The source of the sleeping porch is likely to have been an American innovation; it is not a feature of English or colonial Georgian architecture. There are some similarities between Vernon’s design

\textsuperscript{14} Richard Howard Joseland describing the design of Malvern in \textit{Art and Architecture}, 1905

\textsuperscript{15} When Streeton painted this view Penshurst was the home of Leonard Dodds, an avid collector of paintings and one of the initial investors in the Neutral Bay Estate. One of the catalogues of Dodd’s collection can be found in the Mitchell Library ML 91/1449.
for Penshurst and designs of marine villas by the American architect Alexander F. Oakey and the partners Potter and Robertson published in *The American Architect* between 1876 and 1880. All of these substantial dwellings were designed with a similar configuration of two-storey verandah and sleeping porch.\(^{16}\) Henry Hudson Holly had adapted the English Queen Anne Revival style to 'American wants and climate', publishing a series of designs for 'modern dwellings' in 1878.\(^{17}\) Vernon understood how, by careful siting and the addition of a verandah, English Georgian forms and plan layouts had been adapted to suit the hot climate of the colonies and he did likewise, adapting a Shavian modern country house to suit the heat of Sydney. He combined an extensive verandah and first floor sleeping porch with forms and details drawn from a mediaeval hall-house: half-timbered jettied gables; elaborate chimneys and projecting oriel windows (figure 4.10).

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The long construction period for Penshurst indicates both a high degree of craftsmanship and that materials were shipped from England, as was to occur with the building materials for Caerleon at Bellevue Hill by Adams. The terracotta roof tiles, hand-painted ceramic tiles, the embossed wallpaper and coloured glass employed at Penshurst were probably all imported. It was to be some time before the materials employed in the Queen Anne Revival style and its local variant, the Federation Style, were made locally; the main impetus for the local production being World War I, when steel, wire, asbestos sheeting, and terracotta could no longer be obtained from England or Europe.18

The roof of Penshurst was originally clad with flat terracotta tiles, a traditional roofing material favoured by the Arts and Crafts architects.19 The walls were of rockface sandstone, giving both a sense of solidity and a texture and patterning of light and shade that smooth ashlar does not. This texture contrasted with the ‘architectural deceit’ employed for typical Victorian villa or terrace: render lined as ashlar.

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18 An undated catalogue by James Hardie and Co. for Asbestos Sheets and Slates notes that they were the sole importer of ‘fibro-cement’. The catalogue dates from around 1912 as it illustrates the buildings surrounding the parade ground at Duntroon built in 1911. James Hardie began local production of fibro-lite at Camellia in 1917. The name is a combination of two imported products, fibro-cement and asbesto-lite. The sole importer of Asbestolite was F.A. Spriggs. Catalogues for both can be found in the Mitchell Library Q991.1/1. The BHP Rolling Mills at Newcastle commenced production of wire and steel in 1913, followed by Lysaghts in 1921. Wunderlichs began local production of Marseilles tiles during the First World War.

19 The tiles can be seen in the views of the family on the terrace below the house. The roof was later replaced with Marseilles tiles that can be seen in the photos taken shortly before the house was demolished. Loose photos in ML PXA 876 Volume 2.
The restrained interiors of Penshurst were furnished in the Aesthetic manner. The view of the main hall shows a timber paneled dado and a tile lined fireplace, an archway and the base of the stair (figure 4.11). The floor is parquetry, covered in Persian carpets. Oriental decorative elements abound, Japanese fans on the mantle piece, a silk screen and porcelain vases. Vernon’s inventory lists blue and white Japanese pilgrim vases, a Chinese lacquer cabinet, and Chinese bowls, likely to have been purchased from Liberty to furnish Clytha House. The collection was supplemented by purchases made during Vernon’s later travels in India and Indonesia. Above the paneled dado in the hall is an embossed wallpaper; probably Japanese ‘leather wallpaper’ upon which were displayed antique weapons and artworks.

20 Valuation of Furniture and Chattels in the Estate of W. L. Vernon, 1914. ML MSS 6571 Box 2
From 1875 Liberty’s supplied embossed leather wallpapers, or kinkarakami, made not from leather but from thick Japanese washi paper.\textsuperscript{21} These wallpapers, first exhibited at the 1862 exhibition in London, had many similarities with Morris’s pattern designs and were often used in combination with his fabrics. Godwin believed leather paper to be ‘one of the most interesting modern imports from Japan’.\textsuperscript{22} The paper was also considered to be healthy. Vernon’s use of leather paper coincides with Rottmann, Strome & Co.’s prizewinning exhibit at the Health Exhibition in London (figure 4.12). Lyon and Cottier had used ‘highly embossed Japanese leather’ in George Verdon’s residence in the E.S. & A Bank in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{23} The hall at Penshurst was far more restrained than the contemporary interiors in either Sydney or Melbourne. Frills and trims are noticeably absent, the mantelpiece remarkably uncluttered, and there was no

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} The use and manufacture of Japanese Leather Paper is described in the exhibition catalogue Kinkarakami, the Art of Japanese Leather Paper. The technique has been revived in Japan. Yasuko Suga, \textit{Ueda Takahi and the Art of Japanese Paper}. Kinkarakami Institute, May 2007
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Godwin’s description of a visit to Liberty’s is quoted in Kinkarakami Institute, \textit{Kinkarakami, the Art of Japanese Leather Paper}, p. 13
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Robyn Riddett, \textit{A Building ‘Worthy of the City’, Sir George Verdon, William Wardell and the Melbourne Gothic Bank} in Ursula De Jong (Editor), \textit{William Wilkinson Wardell : The Architect and His Era : Centenary Papers}, Geelong, School of Architecture and Building, Deakin University, 2000, p. 117
\end{itemize}
valence. The upholstery was simple; there were no fringes, frills or tassels. The ceiling is also remarkably plain for the 1880s, lining boards divided into panels by battens. Terry and Oakden’s 1885 illustration of a ‘dining-room corner’ (figure 4.12) and Joseland’s illustrations for a dining room and a drawing room of 1888-1890 are all more elaborately decorated than the hall of Penshurst.24 An 1891 photograph of Fairwater in Double Bay, designed by John Horbury Hunt, shows a very cluttered interior, in which three patterns of wallpaper compete (figure 4.14).25

Vernon’s art collection included engravings by Lord Leighton, Alma Tadema and John Millais and views of Hastings and Venice. Other works were by well-known Sydney artists, William Lister Lister and Julian Ashton whom he would have met at the NSW Art Society. The sunray pattern used to display the weapons over the chimney piece was repeated when the collection was moved to Wendover in 1895 (figure 4.16). A radiating trophy of weapons such as this was the inspiration of the sunburst logo adopted by the Australian Imperial forces, the blades of the swords and bayonets of Major Gordon’s original design were replaced with the rays of the sun.26

The artistic display of Vernon’s weapon collection is not dissimilar to the armory at St James’ Palace in London designed by Morris and Webb in the late 1860s (figure 4.15).27

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26 The origin of the rising sun badge used by the AIF is given at www.anzacday.org.au/education/tff/risingsun.htm and www.diggerhistory.info/pages-badges/rising_sun4.htm. The original design was by Major Joseph Gordon of the South Australian Permanent Artillery and the badge was selected as the Army General Service Badge in 1902.


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The furniture included an oval table: ‘black oak with leaves, original, Stuart, about 1670’. Three of the Chippendale chairs were original, the other two, the inventory notes, had been copied from originals in the South Kensington Museum. The simplicity of Chippendale furniture was much admired by Liberty’s architect friends. Diana Bendix notes that

In 1872 Godwin decided to refurnish his London apartment with graceful, light eighteenth century furniture with elegant silhouettes, such as Chippendale chairs. It was less expensive than new furniture and indicated his rejection of typical Victorian furniture stuffed with horsehair and trimmed with tassels and fringe. Whistler shared this attraction to aristocratically reserved Regency décor, usually small in scale and based on Sheraton, Adam and Chippendale designs ...the revival of light slender furniture was an anti-philistine reaction. Whistler and Godwin stressed restraint, economy and decorum in their homes as a statement against the disorderly excesses of middle-class taste.

The copying of furniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum shows that Vernon been studying the collection and that he was following the Chelsea aesthetes in rejecting High Victorian excesses in preference for the ‘house beautiful’. Other items in his collection indicate an interest in elegant interiors, his print of Madame Recamier

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28 ML MSS 6571 Box 3 of the Vernon papers includes the inventory of Art Works and Antique Weapons at Wendover. ML ON 266 contains the glass plate negatives of the photographs in the inventory.
29 Valuation of Furniture and Chattels in the Estate of W.L. Vernon, 1914. ML MSS 6571 Box 2
30 Bendix, Diabolical Designs, Paintings, Interiors and Exhibitions of James McNeill Whistler, p.106-107
reclining, a copy of the painting by Jacques-Louis David that hangs in the Louvre in Paris, was hung next to the fireplace. The overmantle is reminiscent of the furniture designed by Liberty’s architect friends in the mid 1870s. Godwin’s design for a piano with carved whorls or ‘pies’ had been published in 1874.31 Such motifs could also be found in the work of Nesfield and Shaw. Eastlake illustrated Japanese inspired motifs designed by Nesfield for Farnham Royal in his study of the Gothic Revival.32 Shaw likewise used ‘pies’ (as Andrew Saint calls the segmented whorls) in his design of a chimney piece for Sutton Place of 1875, and hand painted blue and white Dutch tiles.

Walter Crane’s illustration of a fireplace used as the frontispiece of The House Beautiful is very similar to the chimney pieces Vernon designed for Penshurst and Bovington (figure 4.17).33 Likewise the illustrations for children’s books by his brother Thomas have a similar quality to Vernon’s interiors. The fireplace tiles at Penshurst had previously been identified by Zeny Edwards as hand painted tiles by De Morgan, similar to those employed by Adams at Caerleon.34 The patterns are not similar to any of De Morgan’s designs and are more likely to be landscape scenes traditionally made in Delft.35

31 William Watt, a furniture manufacturer published a catalogue in 1877 that included designs by Godwin, as did his 1878 stand at the Paris Exhibition. Godwin’s piano design is illustrated in Cooper, Victorian and Edwardian Furniture and Interiors from the Gothic Revival to Art Nouveau, p.129.
33 Charlotte Gere and Lesley Hoskins, The House Beautiful, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior, plate 106, Frontispiece ‘My Lady’s Chamber’ wood-engraving by Walter Crane for The House Beautiful by Clarence Cook, 1878
34 Zeny Edwards, The Triton Charger, A New Acquisition with an Interesting Provenance, National Galley of Australia Magazine, November to December 1994
35 The fashion for tin glazed wares manufactured in the Dutch town of Delft started in the 1600s with the production of copies of Chinese ware imported by the Dutch East India Company. The production of handmade Delftware was revived in the nineteenth century and continues today.
Hand painted tiles from Delft feature extensively in the fireplaces of Tredegar House in Wales, with both seventeenth century originals and nineteenth century copies, probably added by Habershon and Pite, surviving. The fashion for blue and white was not limited to the tiles, Crane noted that “blue and white Nankin, Delft, or Grès de Flandres routed Dresden and Sèvres from the [china] cabinet”. Vernon's collection included such blue and white ware, as did the collections of the Shaw and Nesfield, probably all of which was supplied by Liberty (figure 4.18).

Photographs of Penshurst, taken in April 1968, shortly before the house was demolished, shows that leadlight windows were used to the main jettied gable. Coloured glass was used in halls to create a glowing light that complemented the polished timberwork. The Linley Sambourne House in Stafford Terrace, Kensington, London retains its interiors dating from 1874. In this townhouse, which is now open to the public, the overall character and the quality of light in each room can still be appreciated. The parquetry flooring, oriental carpets, chimney piece displaying oriental ceramics, William Morris wallpapers and curtains and the leadlight bay windows all remain much as they were when completed. This is the same effect that Vernon was seeking to achieve. The surviving interiors of this period, namely the entrance hall of Bovington in Shellcove Road,

36 The Delft-tiled fireplaces are illustrated in Newport County Borough, Tredegar House, Pilgrim Press, Derby, 1998, p. 4 & p. 15
37 Walter Crane, William Morris and His Work, from his series of essays William Morris to Whistler, Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 20.
38 Inventory item 189, Valuation of Furniture and Chattels in the Estate of W.L. Vernon, 1914. ML MSS 6571 Box 2
39 Photographs of Penshurst taken shortly before its demolition, National Trust of Australia (NSW).
40 Gere and Hoskins, The House Beautiful, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior, Morning Room fireplace p. 76 and the bay window p. 112
Leura in Bellevue Hill and the Chalet in the grounds of Government House built in 1891 (figure 4.19), all employ coloured glass in a colour-way favoured by the Aesthetic Movement, with shades of mustard yellow, burnt orange and brown. Similar glazing is shown on Vernon’s drawings of the stairhall and the glazed conservatory of The Upland.

Contemporary with Penshurst is the 1884 advertisement for the Melbourne firm Cullis Hill,

It has long been the custom in artistic circles to mingle our English furniture and fittings with some of the choice forms and colourings of oriental art... the softened brilliancy of the colourings, the perfect symmetry of the older outlines, and the great amount of labour which is bestowed upon the numerous specimens of furniture and bric-a-brac imported from the East affords us opportunities of composing chromatic effects... one or two bits of colour; such as a Kashmir hand

41 Very little of the coloured glass at Leura survives, the house having been severely damaged by fire c. 1909. The entrance porch and the dining room now have clear glass.
Figure 4.20
William Morris, First Floor drawing room
Kelmcott House, Hammersmith, London, undated view

Morris resided at Kelmcott House from 1879 until 1896

Figure 4.21
Richard Norman Shaw, dining room, Shaw residence, Ellerdale Road, Hampstead, London, 1874
painted table, of a Cairene settee, a Turkey rug or a Japanese screen, 
endow an apartment with a brilliance of colour.\(^{42}\)

Vernon’s design for Penshurst represents a significant stage in the development of domestic architecture in Australia, being a very early example, in NSW, of the ‘house beautiful’, an architect designed modern country house filled with elegant furniture, art works, oriental ceramics and carpets and other exotic items from Liberty’s. In comparison with the interiors of Shaw’s own house in Ellerdale Road (figure 4.21) and photographs of Morris at home at Kelmscott House in Hammersmith (figure 4.20), Penshurst had a very restrained interior; foreshadowing the more austere Arts and Crafts interiors of the 1890s such as Webb’s Standen, and Broadleys and Blackwell in the Lake District by Voysey and Baillie Scott respectively.\(^{43}\) The design is much closer to the return to simplicity; to good materials and sound workmanship, to rich and suggestive surface decoration and simple construction forms\(^{44}\) that Walter Crane described as having first appeared in the interiors of artistic homes furnished by Morris & Co.

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\(^{42}\) Cullis Hill’s advertisement quoted in Montana, *The Art Movement in Australia*, *Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900*, p. 116

\(^{43}\) Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, plates 141-143

\(^{44}\) Fiona Macarthy, *William Morris, a Life for Our Time*, Plates 104 – 108 show interiors of Kelmscott House in Hammersmith

\(^{44}\) Crane, Walter, in his essay, *William Morris and his Work in From William Morris to Whistler*, papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal, p. 17
The buildings discussed in the text are highlighted:

1. St Augustines Church (demolished)
2. St Augustine’s Vicarage
   (no longer the vicarage but extant)
3. 60 Shellcove Road, Bovington (extant) 8.
4. 49 Wycombe Road, Tendring (extant)
5. Penshurst (now demolished)
6. 23 Wycombe Road, St Julians (altered)
7A & 7B. Group of houses fronting Wycombe Road
          built as a speculative venture for Jones
8. Clytha House, house rented by the
    Vernon family whilst Penshurst
    was under construction (now surrounded by
    buildings)
9. Lanorth (not identified as a heritage item)
10. 68 Wycombe Road, Dartmouth (extant)
11. Merstham (not identified as a heritage item)
From 1885 until his appointment as Government Architect in 1890, Vernon designed a model suburb surrounding Penshurst (figure 4.22). His previous experience as an estate architect had taught him how to control the subdivision, in the absence of town planning regulations, so as to maintain both a high standard of building and the character of the suburb. The English type of estate subdivision was employed, the land leased for a 99-year term, with the estate owner, John Cooper, requiring that good and substantial buildings be erected. Although a number of examples remain evident, such as Canberra and Glebe, the 99-year model was not widely adopted in Australia. Freehold titles were, and continue to be, preferred for residential buildings.

Vernon may not have designed all of the houses in the estate; the lessees could, if they wished, select their own architect; however

45 The first tender, for the erection of a house in Wycombe Road, was called in September 1885.
46 Cooper’s requirements are outlined in Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon, 1846-1914, p. 16.
their plans had to be to his approval.\textsuperscript{47} He appears to have designed the majority; the villas illustrated in the prospectus bear his signature. Many of these villas were a speculative venture by Edward Lloyd Jones, a partner in David Jones for whom Vernon had already designed a new city store. His subsequent partner William Wardell commented that not only was Vernon the architect for the project but that during their partnership a great deal of office time and materials had been expended on it.\textsuperscript{48} The terrace Llanorth and the villa Merstham were amongst the first residences constructed, their leases dating from September 1886, with the requirement that a house be built within a year. The semi-detached form of Llanorth was not repeated in the subdivision and the form remains uncommon on the lower North Shore of Sydney.

The block plan of the first stage of the Neutral Bay subdivision (1885-1888) includes the houses built for Jones facing Wycombe Road, a number of which flank the drive to Penshurst: namely Chartridge; Hollington; Caerau; Desboro (to the north) and Missenden; Ruperra; Bulverhythe and St Julians (to the south) (figures 4.22, 23 & 24).\textsuperscript{49} Although the Jones family were from Wales the majority of the names of the villas have a particular association for Vernon, suggesting that

\textsuperscript{47} Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon, 1846-1914, p. 22
\textsuperscript{48} Wardell’s Letter Books, Volume II, 4 September 1889, ML MSS 10
\textsuperscript{49} The prospectus is undated however it shows the buildings constructed as the result of leases signed up until November 1888, but not those signed in 1889. The sale of the Penshurst Estate in 1913 included a number of these properties as Jones had leased the land from Vernon. ML Q 981.1
he was responsible for the design and the naming of each house.50 He also renamed Cooper Street, the principal street, Wycombe Road after his birthplace. Jones’ death in a train crash in the 1894 ended the speculative venture at Neutral Bay, a venture that had already been curtailed by the depression in the early 1890s.

The Neutral Bay Estate had the added advantage of being close to the sea; the residences were orientated towards the views and the health-giving sea breeze. The houses above Shell Cove had extensive verandahs to their rear; with a view east over the inlet, the houses fronting Raymond Road faced south, with a view across Port Jackson towards the city. The aim of the subdivision was:

   to develop and maintain what will undoubtedly be the model and favorite suburb for families with moderate means, but desirous of pleasant surroundings.51

A tennis court, boathouse and a Whist clubroom were proposed, the harbourside swimming baths were to be provided by the Council. The inclusion of sports facilities shows that Vernon intended that the

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50 The names of picturesque towns and castles in South Wales that the streets and suburbs of Newport had already been named for were selected for the houses built for Jones. Caerau is a small town to the west of Cardiff containing a mediaeval church and an iron-age hill fort. An ancestor of the Morgan family of Tredegar was John Morgan of Ruperra Castle. Ruperra and Caerau are streets in Newport as are Allt-yr-yn (Alteryn) View and Allt-yr-yn Avenue. The suburb of St Julians is located on the opposite side of the river Usk. The houses for Jones were also named for picturesque Chiltern villages near where Vernon grew up: Missenden and Chartridge. Bulverhythe is the suburban development Vernon was involved with in Hastings. Vernon may also have selected the names of the houses for the other investors. Tendring may have been named for the now demolished Tendring Hall in Suffolk, an illustration of which was published by John Soane. Bovington is a village in Sussex with a church designed by the Habershoms.

51 Prospectus of the Neutral Bay Land Company 1889, ML Q 981.1
Figure 4.25
Walter Liberty Vernon,
Tendring, Neutral Bay, Sydney
circa 1885-88
Vernon’s sketch of Tendring appeared in the Neutral Bay Land company prospectus

Figure 4.26
Walter Liberty Vernon,
Bovington Neutral Bay, Sydney,
circa 1885-88
Vernon’s sketch of a house similar to Bovington appeared in the Neutral Bay Land company prospectus.

Figure 4.27
Walter Liberty Vernon,
Bovington, Neutral Bay,
Sydney, circa 1885-88
Recent view of Bovington taken from the grounds
residents of his model suburb pursue a healthy lifestyle. Swimming was only just beginning to emerge as a recreational pursuit, rather than simply bathing, and seawater baths could be found in many of the inlets of Port Jackson. Lawn tennis was a relatively new sport in the 1880s, one that was rapidly gaining in popularity with women as well as men. The planned inclusion of shared sporting facilities foreshadows later garden suburb layouts such as the Appian Way in Burwood with its central tennis court.\textsuperscript{52}

Vernon did not only use suburban villa forms, some of his designs for the Neutral Bay estate are based on the fashionable artist’s townhouses in the London suburb of Chelsea. The townhouse form had been widely used in Sydney in the 1840s but had fallen out of favour by the 1870s, replaced by large terrace houses. In contrast to terrace housing, town houses could be designed individually or in pairs, giving the desired individual character to each residence. Others are an interpretation, using Queen Anne Revival details, of the more traditional bay fronted villa already very popular in Sydney. The more conservative designs are the series of villas designed for Jones. A survey of these houses today shows that many of the original features survive, albeit with paint covering the face brickwork, roughcast and shingles (figure 4.36 & 4.39). The variety of house designs and the irregularity of the overall layout of the estate contrasts with the rows of terrace houses in Glebe and Paddington. The wide variety of house forms was one of the novelties of Bedford Park and Markwick Gardens.

\textsuperscript{52} I have not come across any earlier examples in New South Wales of subdivisions that include shared sporting facilities. Facilities such as tennis courts were usually private, as at Mt Wilson.
The more unusual designs were for Vernon’s individual clients. Bovington, No. 66 Shellcove Road (figures 4.26 - 4.27), and Tendring (4.25 & 4.28), on the corner of Wycombe Road and Harriette Street, are both early examples of the use of Queen Anne Revival style in Sydney. Unlike the majority of the houses in the first stage which were Jones’ speculative venture, Bovington was designed for Captain Moseley and his wife who ran a private girls’ school. Today Bovington retains its roughcast finish to the first floor, brick trims to the windows, unpainted face brickwork to the ground floor and its joinery, the only house of the first stage of the subdivision (1885 to 1888) that today has its brickwork unpainted.53 Tendring retains its curved gables with a brick coping (albeit with the face brickwork and the roughcast painted cream). Bovington also retains original interiors, including the turned timber balustrade to the staircase, timber chimney breasts and Aesthetic Movement transfer printed tiles (figures 4.29 - 4.30).

53 Heritage assessments have failed to pick up the significance of the houses designed by Vernon for the Neutral Bay Estate, describing what was amongst the most modern housing built in the State between 1885 and 1890 as typical Federation housing of the from after the depression of the 1890s. The houses have been ‘Victorianised’, their red brickwork and roughcast painted and timberwork replaced with iron lace painted in ‘heritage colours’, Indian red or Brunswick green rather than the white.
The combination of brickwork and roughcast at Tendring and Bovington have some similarities with a house at Temple Ewell in Kent designed by Vernon’s fellow articled pupil Beresford Pite in 1888 (figure 4.32). In the work of Vernon and Beresford Pite these details are likely to be drawn from the Welsh vernacular; details each would have seen whilst working for Habershon and Pite. Introduced by the émigré English architects in the 1880s, the combination of roughcast and face brickwork came to be used for villas, modest suburban houses and workers’ dwellings throughout Australia in the years leading up to World War I. The combination even appeared in terrace housing, gables were added in an attempt to provide more variety to the composition.

Vernon appears to have been the first to use the combination of facebrick and roughcast in NSW, a combination of materials that was subsequently adopted by Jackson in his 1892 house for Doctor Capper in Miller Street, North Sydney (figure 4.31).54 Sulman used the combination in his design for Upton Grey, Warrawee of 1897.55 It is a combination that continues to appear in Vernon’s work, employed in staff housing in parks and hospitals and in the modest house he designed in the Eastern Suburbs in 1913 following his retirement (figure 4.33).56 It is a combination that can first be seen in the suburban housing at Markwick Gardens in St Leonards and in published illustrations of Bedford Park.

54 The building has been substantially extended and is now the North Sydney Council Chambers. B. J. Waterhouse’s sketch of the house in its original form is included in William Paul Tullock, Edward Jeaffreson Jackson, B Arch Thesis, University of NSW 1982, Volume 2
55 Harold Cazneaux’s photograph of Upton Grey is included in Zeny Edwards, Warrawee, Sydney, published by the author, 2000 p. 13
56 Drawings and correspondence regarding Vernon’s last house, Bramhall, New South Head Road, are held in the Mitchell Library. ML Vernon Papers, MSS 6571. The house has been demolished.
The lantern slides of suburban housing in Sydney shown at the Franco-British Exhibition in London of 1908 and the illustrations to accompany the Western Australian Workers’ Housing Act both show that roughcast above brickwork was promoted as a suitable detail for workers’ housing in Australia. The combination could also be found in workers’ housing in England and Wales, at the Oakdale Model Village, designed by A. F. Webb and built by the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company in 1910 and the competition designs and the housing for Letchworth Garden City. It was a combination adopted by the London County Council for a number of their housing estates in the London suburbs.

The Flemish gable and the round window to Tendring, and the octagonal turret to the house opposite are similar to the details of the artists houses in Tite Street in Chelsea designed by Robert Edis.

57 The lantern slides of progress in NSW shown at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition in London are held by the NSW State Records Office. These slides include numerous views of Broken Hill, recent housing on Sydney’s North Shore and agriculture.

Model dwelling, illustration from The Workers’ Housing Act of Western Australia, which appeared in Salon, December 1913.

58 Newman, The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire, p. 459-460

and Godwin and illustrated in The British Architect in 1880 (figure 4.34).\(^{60}\) Three of the buildings depicted were the work of Godwin, the pair of townhouses to the left, the building with the octagonal turret designed for Slingsby Bethell (but not built) in the centre and the controversial White House, designed for Whistler, to the right. The more conservative Flemish gabled townhouse was the work of Robert Edis.\(^{61}\) Oriel windows, rubbed brick arches and circular windows, double hung sash windows with small panes to the upper sash and the simple white painted balusters used by Godwin can all be found in Vernon’s work in Neutral Bay (figures 4.35-4.36).\(^{62}\) Photographs taken in 1913 for the sale of Vernon’s Penshurst estate show elegant timber balustrading with simple horizontals and verticals to the two-storey verandah of the house adjacent to the drive to Penshurst (figure 4.37 & 4.38)).\(^{63}\)

Vernon’s model suburb, like Bedford Park and the later Hampstead Garden Suburb contained a church, his perspective of St Augustines and the rectory appear in the prospectus (figure 4.39).\(^{64}\) A sketch published in the Illustrated Sydney News in 1889 shortly after the

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\(^{60}\) This illustration originally published in 1880 continued to be popular, appearing in Sedille’s study of Modern English Architecture published in 1890.

\(^{61}\) Unfortunately Godwin’s townhouses in Tite Street have been substantially altered, the distinctive turret shown in the published view no longer survives, and the White House has been demolished. The Flemish gable to the townhouse by Edis has also been altered.

\(^{62}\) Paint scarpes to the Rangers Residence at Centennial Park of 1899 revealed that the joinery was in fact white. Bovington, Shell Cove (c. 1887) and the gazebos at Kenmore Hospital and the police residence at Maclean dating from the 1895-96 retain their white joinery.

\(^{63}\) A number of these details have been altered and iron lace substituted.

\(^{64}\) Reynolds, Muir, and Hughes, John Horbury Hunt, Radical Architect 1838-1904, p. 83

There is no archival evidence to suggest that Hunt was the architect. The design has been attributed to Hunt by Hughes and Reynolds based on its similarities with his other timber churches, however the building is more likely to have been designed by Vernon as his sketch of the building appears in the prospectus.
The current St Augustines Vicarage, located adjacent to the church, was designed by E. J. Jackson in 1901, assisted by James Peddle. The Vicarage designed by Vernon is located on the corner of Raymond and Wycombe Roads. The double bay fronted residence turned its back on Raymond Road; the wrap around verandah facing south towards the harbour. Vernon’s perspective shows a ground floor similar in detail to Bovington, with an ogee curve to the verandah roof and solid timber brackets, small-paned windows and face brickwork. The upper storey, also of face brick, featured two half-timbered gables facing the harbour and a third facing east towards the heads at the entrance to Port Jackson.

A view of St Augustine’s Church at Neutral Bay was published in the Illustrated Sydney News, 5 September 1889. A more substantial brick church, designed by Joseland and Gilling, was constructed during the 1920s replacing the original timber church which was demolished.

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Cremorne Pastoral

Vernon’s model suburban development predates Morris’ descriptions of ideal suburbia in *News from Nowhere*, his utopian view of London in the future first published in installments in 1890. Morris’ vision for London was that

the soap-works, with their smoke vomiting chimneys were gone, the engineers works were gone, the lead-works gone...66

In their places:

Both shores had a line of very pretty houses, low and not large, standing back a little way from the river; they were mostly built of red brick and roofed with tiles and looked above all, comfortable, and as if they were, so to say, alive and sympathetic with the life of the dwellers in them. There was a continuous garden in front of them, going down to the water’s edge, in which the flowers were now blooming luxuriantly, and sending delicious waves of summer scent over the eddying stream.67

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The lower North Shore contained none of the evils of the industrial city, there were no slums or polluting factories, merely a series of large waterfront estates that were being progressively subdivided for picturesque suburban residences for professional men who commuted into the city (figure 4.42). Until the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the early 1930s there was no direct road link to the inner city, the lower North Shore suburbs were served by ferry. A ferry ride to work, Vernon noted, was far preferable, and healthier, than traveling by tram. Residents at Neutral Bay have already (without the intolerable dust and noise of the tram and train) arrived at home in the midst of surroundings that have no equal on any of the suburban lines.68

The conventions that had governed the design of houses for the middle class in the Victorian age were discarded. Vernon’s picturesque harbourside suburban development was a deliberate departure from

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68 Neutral Bay Land Company Prospectus c. 1888, section on the locality (no page numbers)
ML Q 981.1
the terrace house subdivisions of the 1870s and early 1880s. The foreshore of Sydney Harbour, from Neutral Bay to Clifton Gardens, became a favored site for highly crafted architect-designed houses. Penshurst and the surrounding model suburb designed by Vernon in the 1880s and nearby Hollowforth by E. J. Jackson of 1892 started this trend. After the turn of the century a series of houses designed by local proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, James Peddle, Samuel G. Thorpe, John Burcham Clamp (figure 4.43) and Bertrand J. Waterhouse were built in Shellcove Road, below Penshurst.69 Edwin Orchard designed a series of Arts and Crafts houses throughout Cremorne and Mosman. Clamp built three houses, including his own residence, the Laurels, overlooking Mosman Bay and the 100-foot foreshore reserve that Streeton had depicted in *Cremorne Pastoral* (figure 4.41)70. The Neutral Bay Estate houses, whilst not on the waterfront, were set amongst ‘wooded heights, deep gullies [where] charming views are intact’.71

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69 Ailsa (No. 35 Shellcove Road) by Waterhouse and Lake was constructed in 1908, Brent Knowle (at No. 31A), also designed by Waterhouse followed in 1914. 1918 saw the construction of The Cobbles by Peddle and Thorp (No. 49 Shellcove Road) and St Ange at No. 13 Shellcove Road by Waterhouse. With the exception of Penshurst, all of these houses survive.

70 The 100-foot waterfront reserve to Cremorne Point is still a public reserve.

71 Neutral Bay Land Company Prospectus c. 1888-89 (no page numbers)

ML Q 981.1
Bedford Park near London (figure 4.44 & 4.45), although a speculative development, was the forerunner of the garden suburb; the buildings were planned within a garden setting so as to provide a healthy living and working environment, even for the servants. Morris had added a moral dimension, equating killing trees with murder in his lecture entitled *The Beauty of Life* given in Birmingham in 1880.

Again I must ask what you do with the trees on a site that it going to be built over? Do you try to save them, to adapt your houses at all to them? Do you understand what treasures they are in a town or suburb? Or what a relief they will be to the hideous dog-holes which (forgive me!) you are probably going to build in their places? I ask this anxiously and with grief in my soul, for in London and its suburbs we always begin by clearing a site till it is as bare as a pavement: I really think that almost anybody would have been shocked if I could have shown him some of the trees that have been wantonly murdered in the suburb in which I live...

...But here again see how helpless those are who care about art or nature amidst the hurry of the Century of Commerce.72

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In the published version of the lecture Morris added a footnote, giving one example where this was not the case:

The little colony at Bedford Park, Chiswick, [where] as many trees have been left as possible, to the boundless advantage of its quaint and pretty architecture.\(^{73}\)

That Bedford Park, and the later garden cities and suburbs, were healthy was conclusively proven by their consistently low death rates, the annual death rate at Bedford Park was remarkable, less than six per thousand.\(^{74}\) In 1888 the death rate in the Sydney was 19.74 per thousand in the suburbs, the city death rate was marginally lower. This rate reduced during the early 1890s, but remained twice that of Bedford Park.\(^{75}\) Model suburbs and garden cities continued

\(^{73}\) Morris, The Beauty of Life. in Kelvin, William Morris on Art and Socialism, p. 50

\(^{74}\) John Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, Sydney, Government Printer, 1921 p. 43

\(^{75}\) In contrast the average death rates in NSW in 1876 were 28.87 per thousand in the city, 20.79 per thousand in the suburbs and 16.05 per thousand in the country. By 1888 the death rate in NSW had improved, 18.09 per thousand in the city, 19.74 per thousand in the suburbs and 11.5 per thousand in the country. A. J. C. Mayne, Fever, Squalor and Vice, Sanitation and Social Policy in Victorian Sydney, Santa Lucia, University of Queensland Press, Scholars Library, 1982, Appendix 3
to achieve a much lower figure. Letchworth Garden City, Sulman noted, had an average of 6.4 per thousand, a similar figure to Bedford Park and half the English national average.76

**Art Furnishings**

Another similarity with Bedford Park was that the villas of the Neutral Bay Estate were intended to be the ‘house beautiful’, furnished with Art Furniture and Liberty fabrics. The prospectus recommended David Jones and Turberville and Smith, later Turberville, Smith, Norton & Co. as suitable suppliers (figure 4.47). Given the involvement of one of the partners of David Jones in the venture, it is hardly surprising that their store was recommended as a supplier of Art Furniture and furnishings figure 4.46).

Liberty’s Art silks were popular in Sydney and Melbourne prior to the arrival of the Vernon family. By 1886 Turberville and Smith were advertising themselves as ‘the new English Art furnishers’ and the firm was recommended as a supplier by Vernon in his estate prospectus.77 It is possible that Vernon also had a hand in arranging a new Sydney agent for his cousin’s ‘Art’ lines. This arrangement may have been finalised during his visit to London in 1887, as by 1888

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76 Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. 43
Turberville and Smith had become the Sydney agents for Liberty’s. In Sydney, as in London, Liberty’s Art ranges were marketed to the members of the artistic community. Turberville, Smith, Norton & Co. advertised Liberty Art Silks and other Art fabrics, as well as eastern brassware in the NSW Art Society catalogues, a society of which Vernon was a member.\(^7\)

Liberty began to manufacture fabric in England, rather than relying on imports, the quality of which was noticeably declining, hiring Godwin to head his couture section in 1883. The colours used in Liberty’s fabrics admired by the Aesthetic Movement remain recognisable in Liberty fabrics today: the ‘Persian Pink; Venetian Red; terracotta; yellow ochre, sapphire, peacock blue, sage, olive, willow green and drab, colours that were ‘subtly beautiful and attractive to aesthetes’\(^7\)

The surviving photographs of the interiors of Vernon’s two Sydney houses: Penshurst and Wendover indicate that the cousins retained a connection throughout their adult lives, as much of the furniture,\(^7\)

\(^7\) Advertisement for Turberville, Smith Norton & Co, the sole agents of Liberty’s Silks and Art Fabrics in the 10th Annual Exhibition, Art Society of NSW. AGNSW
\(^7\) Bendix, Diabolical Designs, Paintings, Interiors and Exhibitions of James McNeill Whistler, p 29
wallpapers and ceramics appears to be from Liberty's (figure 4.49).\textsuperscript{80} In the 1880s Liberty's favoured colours were so well known that Gilbert and Sullivan lampooned them in the popular press and on stage. This satire would not have been lost on George Temple Poole, who prior to his departure for Perth to take up the position of Government Architect in Western Australia, 'never missed a first performance as he found their [Gilbert and Sullivan's] satirical wit, in words and music, very much to his taste'.\textsuperscript{81} Similar set and costume designs were employed in the Australian productions; illustrations of the Mikado staged in 1885 show almost identical authentic Japanese costumes to the costumes Liberty had provided for the London production (figure 4.48).\textsuperscript{82}

Vernon and Temple Poole are both likely to have met Godwin however Vernon is unlikely to have socialised with the Chelsea artistic set. Unlike his Liberty cousin, who was not only divorced but had remarried a divorcee, he led a conservative life in Hastings. His contact with the artistic set is likely to have been at Liberty's showroom and at exhibitions, rather than the dinner parties which Temple Poole, a bachelor, frequented. Temple Poole is known to have met both the actresses Lily Langtry and Ellen Terry; Godwin had designed interiors for both women.\textsuperscript{83} If they had not met in London, Vernon and Temple Poole would have met during the initial stages of the planning of the new Federal Capital.

\textsuperscript{80} The Liberty order books for this period do not survive, nor are there any papers relating to the ordering of furnishings for Vernon's houses in the surviving papers in the Mitchell Library.

\textsuperscript{81} Oldham and Oldham, George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897, p. 6

\textsuperscript{82} Compare the cover illustration to the Australian Sketcher, 10 March 1886 with the illustration of the English costumes in Calloway, Liberty of London, Masters of Style and Decoration, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{83} Oldham and Oldham, George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897, p. 6
Hestock: A picturesque and harmonious effect

Prior to entering into the partnership with Wardell, Vernon invited tenders for a number of commercial and residential buildings, of which only two houses, Craithes near Penrith and Hestock in Hunters Hill are known to survive. Hestock, a picturesque cottage built within the grounds of Passy in Hunters Hill, was commissioned about 1885 by Mr. Garrick, a Sydney-based Champagne merchant.84

Built on the banks of the Lane Cove River, the shingle-roofed two-storey cottage features two steep asymmetrical gables (figure 4.50). A verandah and bay window, with a third smaller gable, front the river. The construction of picturesque cottages within the grounds of the substantial houses of Hunter’s Hill had been occurring for many years, giving the suburb the appearance of having been planned as a garden suburb. There were no actual controls in place.

The distinguishing features of the design, the bay and oriel windows and the half-timbering to the gables, were accentuated by Vernon’s sketches, as was the overall form. The choice of the worm’s eye view was deliberate, emphasising the gables and chimneys and the

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84 Passy, the former residence of the French Consul, was built by the Jouberts in the 1850s.
complexity of the composition. Shaw did likewise, often depicting his buildings rising up from the landscape, anchored by the chimneys. In this design of Hestock the traditional building crafts are evident in the use of rockfaced sandstone and a shingled roof; there is no ornament other than the brackets to the verandah (figures 4.51-4.52). The use of locally available building materials, in this case sandstone, the careful placement of the cottage on the site and the retention of the bush setting show that Vernon was well versed in Morris’ teachings. Hestock demonstrates a move away from the more complex Shavian compositions towards the simple but carefully crafted cottages that would soon characterise the garden suburb. Morris lecturing in London in 1881 reminded his listeners that

Simplicity of life, even the barest, is not a misery, but the very foundation of refinement: a sanded floor and whitewashed walls, and the green trees and flowery meads and living waters outside…”

Vernon’s sketch, which was not published until 1888, shows Hestock resting on naturally occurring rock ledges within a bush setting, rather than surrounded by formal landscaping.86 Hestock has retained this setting, the house can still be glimpsed from the opposite bank of the Lane Cove River. In the favorable review by De Libra (James Green) that appeared in the architectural press in 1888 the simplicity of the design was praised.

Simple and unpretending… [an] excellent specimen of what picturesque and harmonious effect can be produced, with very little ornament, by artistic treatment of the main features of cottage architecture.87

Hestock was built at the height of the boom of the 1880s and its simplicity set it apart from contemporary houses. An idea of current taste can be seen in Johnston Street Annandale, where Sir John Young built a series of residences including the Gothic Revival style Abbey and Charles Blackmann built an italianate House: Oybin.

Craithes: An Exercise in Transplanting Styles

Craithes, the residence for Mr. Single at Penrith, was designed shortly after Vernon had set up his Sydney architectural office, with tenders called in June 1884.88 The single-storey house, originally set within extensive grounds, is, like Penshurst, an eclectic combination of motifs (figure 4.53). Here Vernon combined motifs drawn from the Queen Anne Revival: corbelled face brickwork to the eaves; a curve from a Flemish gable to the main chimney; face brickwork and white joinery with a curved mullion to the central fanlight; with

86 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 18 August 1888
87 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 11 August 1888
the typical return verandah of High Victorian villas. An Aesthetic Movement fan pattern was employed in the cast iron lace. The unusual roof form may have been adapted from the roof form of the well known existing residence: Throsby Park at Mossvale built in the mid 1830s.

The use of face brick, brick corbelling and the shingling to the gable are motifs that were to be repeatedly employed by Vernon once he became NSW Government Architect, as is the use of the verandah. This house marks the start of the acclimatisation of the Queen Anne Revival style in NSW, a trend that would eventually lead to the suburban Federation villa. Vernon was one of the first architects to transplant the Queen Anne Revival style to Australia; Craithes predates Maurice Adams’ reworking of Harry Kent’s design for Caerleon in Bellevue Hill by two years.

The house was the subject of a permanent conservation order (PCO) and is now on the NSW State Heritage Register. At the time of preparing the National Trust Listing and the PCO the architect had not been identified.
The Arrival of the Queen Anne in Sydney

In addition to the architects who arrived in Australia in the mid-1880s that were already familiar with the Queen Anne Revival, the style was also requested by clients who had seen examples in London. Apperly has identified Caerleon in Bellevue Hill (figure 4.54) as the first use of the Queen Anne Revival style in NSW, quoting a discussion in the architectural press of the late 1880s that asserts that the design by Adams for the wealthy Fairfax family was ‘an almost solitary instance’ of the use of Queen Anne Revival style in Sydney.\(^9^0\) Caerleon was by no means a solitary use of this style; it was also being used by a number of local architects. By 1886 Vernon had completed Craithes at Penrith and Royle’s Chambers in the city and had begun to design villas for the Neutral Bay Estate. Wardell had completed the substantial warehouse and offices for the Australian Steam Navigation Company fronting Circular Quay (Figure 4.63) and Hunt had designed the Darling Point Meat Service in 1884, utilising face brick and relying simply on the mouldings to relieve the composition (Figure 4.68). A number of the early commercial examples, including Royle’s Chambers and the butcher’s shop in Darling Point, have been demolished.

\(^9^0\) Apperly, Richard, A Controlled Near Chaos, in Howells, Towards the Dawn, Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915, p. 25
James Fairfax, whilst visiting London, asked Adams to transform Harry Kent’s design into a more fashionable residence (figure 4.56). Adams added Queen Anne Revival style details that can also be seen in his design for a pair of houses for Mr. Dollman in Newtown Road, Bedford Park designed around 1880 and the houses illustrated in his Artists Homes, a Portfolio of Drawings published in 1883 (figure 4.55).91 Fishscale tiles, casement windows, a circular window to the gable and a pedimented bay window with a Serliana motif can be seen at Bedford Park and at Caerleon. Adams’ design was later criticised by Joseland for not being an appropriate response to the Australian climate, Adams having never visited Australia.

Noting that although it was the best example of modern English Queen Anne in Australia, it was designed by an Englishman for an English climate and was ‘essentially an English residence’.92

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91 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900, plate 156. Two houses, including Studio House for J. C. Dollman, Newton Road, Bedford Park, Maurice B. Adams c. 1880. Plate 157
92 Maurice Bingham Adams, Artists’ Homes, A Portfolio of Drawings including the houses and studios of eminent painters, sculptors and architects [with descriptive notes]. London, B.T. Batsford, 1883
93 Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand, 13 August 1892

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Figure 4.55
Maurice B. Adams, pair of houses, Bedford Park, c. 1880

Adams designed this pair of houses, one of which was a studio house, for Mr. J. C. Dollman. He also designed the Chiswick School of Art and the Parish Hall at Bedford Park.

Figure 4.56
Maurice B. Adams, Entrance porch to a house lately built at Belle Vue [Bellevue Hill, Sydney], 1888

Adams included this drawing in his Examples of Old English House and Furniture published in 1888.
Joseland’s Ruskinian sensibilities are also evident here; the design did not utilise locally available building materials, materials having been specifically imported for the residence. The design included an extensive ground floor verandah but not sleeping porches. Had Joseland seen Alton at Mt Macedon he may have made the same comment.

**Alton, Mt Macedon, Victoria (1879)**

As had occurred in Sydney in the late 1870s, wealthy businessmen commissioned English-based architects to design residences however by the mid 1880s there were a number of English-trained architects whose work was becoming well known and commissions began to be awarded locally. The London-based architect John Pollard Seddon, previously mentioned in connection with his work in South Wales, designed the first stage of Alton at Mt Macedon for George Verdon in 1879 (figure 4.57). By 1885 the house had been extended considerably, continuing the original palette of materials which included fish-scale terracotta tiles, slate roofing with a terracotta ridge, tall brick chimneys and trefoils to the dormers. With the possible exception of the tile-hanging, these motifs, including the...
verandah, can all be found in the parsonages designed by Pritchard and Seddon in Wales.

Designed as a picturesque cottage for a rural estate, Seddon’s design for Alton uses the palette of materials made fashionable by Shaw and Nesfield for estate buildings. Varnished Australian and New Zealand timbers were used throughout the interior showing…scant courtesy to painters, plasterers and professional house decorators, the only material in their line allowed on the buildings at Alton being oil and varnish to preserve the woods used in paneling and wainscoting the vaulted roofs and walls of the principal rooms.93

George Verdon intended to set an example

Sir George believes very strongly in the use of our native ornamental woods for the lining of rooms, and has so treated his drawing room at Alton in the hope that others who may see and like the result may adopt the same plan.94

Not all of the characteristic materials of traditional English buildings could be widely obtained in Australia so elements such as terracotta tiles were generally imported, although the tile-hanging at Alton is believed to have been made locally. The English-trained architects working in Australia sought to use a similar palette of materials in their work as it was now common to transport building materials.

93 Hortensis [William Sangster] in The Australian, 17 January 1885
94 Hortensis from the same article quoted in Riddett, A Building ‘Worthy of the City’, Sir George Verdon, William Wardell and the Melbourne Gothic Bank, p. 118
In the late 1880s the use of contemporary architectural styles imported from England could also be seen in the work of the recently arrived architect Henry Kemp who had worked with Edis in London. Kemp’s drawings of traditional English manor houses and Adam’s own designs for the Fairfaxes were included in Adams’ *Examples of Old English Houses and Furniture* published in 1888. Kemp, who arrived in Australia in 1886, became a partner in Oakden, Addison and Kemp and the firm produced a number of substantial Queen Anne Revival style buildings before the depression in the 1890s halted the construction of substantial two storied houses. *The Australian* credited Addison, Oakden and Kemp with the introduction of terracotta tile-hanging in Victoria in the late 1880s; the author appears to have been unaware of Seddon’s work at Mt Macedon.

**The Demon Fashion**

James Barnet and Sulman both criticised the direct transplantation of the Queen Anne from Bedford Park to Sydney. Although he had travelled to England in the mid 1880s, Barnet’s criticism demonstrates his complete lack of understanding of Shaw and Nesfield’s revival of the traditional English building arts. In 1899 he complained that:

> the wave of the demon fashion has reached Australia from Bedford Park. There are many fine specimens of this fascinating but on the whole mean-looking, make-believe, picturesque cottage

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95 For more detail see the essay on Victorian Architecture in *Howells, Towards the Dawn, Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915.*
96 The entrance porch to Caerleon is illustrated in Montana, *The Art Movement in Australia,* p. 213
97 The Victorian Heritage Register notes that Alton is believed to be the first use of tile-hanging in Australia. The Register of the National Estate entry notes that in *The Australasian* in 1889 it was the suburban examples by Addison and Kemp in Melbourne and Maurice Adams at Caerleon in Sydney that were credited as being the first use of tile-hanging in Australia.
mode of building with its bits of rough masonry… dangerous wall shingles, useless gables… horseshoe windows and great arches, all surmounted by blazing red tiles from France.\textsuperscript{98}

Sulman was also very condescending in his comments that appeared in the \textit{Building and Engineering Journal} on the 1st September 1888:

The average Sydney building is in brick covered with cement, in the style prevalent 20 or 30 years ago near London, but with the addition of verandahs. It is only for the good city work that we can afford stone. As for the rest, there are a few Queen Anne and other picturesque residences being erected, but we have neither the labour, the material nor the climate to render this kind of work generally popular.\textsuperscript{99}

Either Sulman had not seen the work of his colleagues or he was simply twisting the truth to suit his argument. The latter is more likely, as other unreliable commentaries on the local architectural scene were penned by him during the 1880s.\textsuperscript{100} Although Sulman criticised the use of the Queen Anne Revival, believing that ‘in neither the Gothic nor the Queen Anne was the style of the future to be found’, he continued to use the palette of materials of the style, particularly terracotta and face brickwork.\textsuperscript{101} His comments partly

\textsuperscript{98} James Barnet, \textit{Architectural Work in Sydney, New South Wales, 1788-1899}, published in the Journal of RIBA, Volume IV, No. 17 1899

\textsuperscript{99} The \textit{Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand} September 1 1888, commenting on an article by John Sulman in \textit{The British Architect}, July issue.

\textsuperscript{100} His article in English AA Notes of July 1887 so enraged Hunt that he brought it to the attention of the members of the NSW Institute, demanding a correction be published. Freeland, \textit{Architect Extraordinary, The Life and Work of John Hunt 1838 -1904}, pp. 144-145

\textsuperscript{101} John Sulman, \textit{An Australian Style in Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News}, 14 May 1887
echo Godwin’s defense of his design for Whistler’s Chelsea studio house, except that Godwin’s design was ‘not Gothic, nor Queen Anne nor Palladian’.  

Details of Sulman’s competition winning design for the Thomas Walker Hospital are Queen Anne Revival in style, as are the nearby stables and elements of the now demolished Home for Gentlewomen in William Street, all of which were built for the philanthropic Walker family. Overall the composition and planning of the main block at the Thomas Walker Hospital is Italianate. Sulman believed that

> We must have a basis to start upon, and that basis, in Australia at any rate, we shall find not in Gothic, a stone style developed under the misty skies of Northern Europe; nor in the Queen Anne, a red brick style full of quaint conceits and pretty details; but rather in the broad, simple treatment of the stucco buildings of Italy.

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102 Godwin to the British Architect quoted in Bendix, Diabolical Designs, Paintings, Interiors and Exhibitions of James McNeill Whistler, p.150

103 Sulman, An Australian Style in Australasian Builders and Contractors News, 14 May 1887
Vernon’s domestic and commercial work in the 1880s shows that he did not agree with Sulman. In NSW the Queen Anne Revival continued to be popular until the depression of the early 1890s.

The Queen Anne Revival proved to be much more popular than the English Domestic Revival. Only the largest houses employed motifs such as half timbering. The limited use of half timbering may have been for practical reasons, the use of plaster to the infill panels was not durable. The technique was used in more sheltered locations such as the gables. By 1889 considerably more than a ‘few’ Queen Anne Revival style houses had been erected in Sydney, Melbourne and in the cooler climate areas: the Southern Highlands, the Blue Mountains and Mt Macedon. The picturesque houses Sulman referred to probably included Anglewood at Burradoo, the Belgravia Hotel Medlow Bath (figure 4.58) and the two Fairfax residences, Caerleon and Yarrawanga.¹⁰⁴ Yarrawanga (now Woodside), a less elaborate version of Adam’s design for a modern country house for James Fairfax exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1884, was built at Mossvale in the Southern Highlands (Figure 4.2).¹⁰⁵ Inner Newcastle still contains examples of Queen Anne Revival style townhouses constructed of timber, as well as substantial brick town houses in Newcastle East (figure 4.59) and commercial buildings designed by Frederick Menkens (figure 4.60). The substantial hospital ward at Wallsend, with its central Flemish gable, has been demolished.

¹⁰⁴ The Belgravia Hotel is illustrated in Pictorial Memories of the Blue Mountains. The house was destroyed by bushfire in 1922. Yean Cottage on the Anglewood Estate at Burradoo is believed to be a copy of Queensmead at Windsor designed by Maurice Adams in 1883-84. Both the original and the copy are extant.

¹⁰⁵ Graves, The Royal Academy Exhibitors, Entry for Maurice Adams
Weigall House and the suburb of Penshurst

A particularly fine example of a modern country house, Weigall House (now West Maling), on King Georges Road in Penshurst, Sydney, was designed by the relatively unknown Hurstville architect Charles Herbert Halstead in 1888-89 (figures 4.61 & 4.62).\(^{106}\) Built for Albert Bythesa Weigall, the headmaster of Sydney Grammar School, the design is widely believed to have been by an unidentified English architect, possibly Shaw or Adams, with the supervision undertaken Halstead.\(^{107}\) Halstead tendered the components of the job separately such as the pyrmont stone weatherings, external face brickwork and the plastering from February 1888 onwards.

Little is known of Halstead’s work in Sydney however like Vernon and Sulman he was a recent arrival from England.\(^{108}\) The house features elaborate brick chimneys, half timbering and verandahs. It may well be Halstead’s work, as the details are a combination of

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\(^{106}\) Halstead practised in the Hurstville area from the late 1880s until at least 1915. Other local works include the 1915 Hurstville and District Friendly Society Dispensary, 17 McMahon Street, Hurstville. Other buildings designed by Halstead include the Euobodalla Shire Chambers and The Briars at Wahroonga (1895).

\(^{107}\) The State Heritage Register Listing lists the designer as ‘Norman Shaw (likely to have influenced its design).’ SHR Listing for West Maling (Revival Life Centre) 663-665 King Georges Road, Penshurst

\(^{108}\) Biographical information supplied by the RAIA NSW Chapter.
motifs used by Shaw and by Adams. Given that the house has a series of verandahs to the ground and first floors, including to the main front, the design is likely to have been prepared locally.

A model suburb, to be known as Penshurst, was intended to surround the substantial house. It is no coincidence that estate subdivision surrounding Weigall House contains English place names that can also be found in Vernon’s work and in his photograph collection: Penshurst and Laycock. The depression of the early 1890s resulted in the postponement of the scheme and part of the land surrounding Weigall house was resumed for use as a reservoir. The road names remained in place and the intended model suburb gave its name to the present suburb of Penshurst. Halstead continued the garden suburb concept eventually undertaking a small subdivision himself.\(^{109}\) He worked from his home in Penshurst Avenue, forced by the lack of architectural commissions during the 1890s depression to supplement his income by growing roses.

**Royle’s Chambers (1884)**

In July 1884 Vernon tendered two premises in Bond Street, a shop and office for G. Cowles and Chambers for Royle and Co.\(^{110}\) Today none of the small-scale early nineteenth century buildings in the street survive, all have been demolished to make way for commercial buildings including Harry Seidler’s Australia Square. The absence of an architectural periodical in the early 1880s meant that praise for Vernon’s designs for Hestock and later Royle’s Chambers did not

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\(^{109}\) The Penshurst Conservation Area DCP prepared by Kogarah Council identifies the various estate subdivisions within the present suburb of Penshurst including the Halstead Estate.

\(^{110}\) Tender notice for new chambers in Bond Street for Messers Royle,
SMH 18 July 1884
appear for some years. In 1891 architectural critic De Libra praised Vernon’s design for Royle’s Chambers as

a happy little attempt to nationalise this style [the Queen Anne Revival]… Solid piers of well-pointed red brickwork, surmounted by stone cornices, pediments, and other ornamental features, contain between them, and within large archways, slightly bayed out window fronts, the upper part of each window being composed of the small square paned and broad white sash bars peculiar to the reign of the tea-drinking lady monarch.\textsuperscript{111}

The art and architectural critic James Green, or J G de Libra, was also a recent arrival. He clearly understood that contemporary English architectural styles were being transplanted. The Queen Anne style became popular for commercial buildings, the \textit{Building and Engineering Journal} commenting that Joseland’s competition entry for a town residence in Melbourne was of the style of the building so much in vogue in the recent re-building and extension of London and now being introduced in the Australian colonies, [is] exemplified by Messrs. Dalgety’s new premises in Bourke-street, Melbourne, and new premises in O’Connell-street and Bond-street Sydney.\textsuperscript{112}

The Bond Street example is likely to be Royle’s Chambers. The O’Connell Street buildings were probably the four-storey chambers for the Hon. Septimus Stephen designed by Coward and Bell and built in 1888.\textsuperscript{113} Vernon’s Queen Anne Revival style buildings are

\begin{footnotes}
\item[111] \textit{Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News}, 19 April 1891
\item[112] \textit{Building and Engineering Journal}, October 13 1888.
\item[113] Illustrated in the \textit{Australian Builders and Contractors News} 21 May 1887
\end{footnotes}
less fussy than the Chelsea townhouses designed by his London colleagues, omitting cast terracotta details that even Hunt in 1884, at Cloncorrick in Darling Point, resorted to. Vernon preferred to use brick or sandstone. The Australian Steam Navigation Company (A.S.N.Co.) Headquarters (figure 4.64) designed by Wardell shortly before Vernon joined the firm, was the most substantial of the warehouses fronting Circular Quay and its stepped Flemish gables were prominent in views from the harbour. The style also came to be popular for hotels, as is evidenced by the former British Seamen’s Hotel on the corner of Argyle and Harrington Street in The Rocks built around 1886 and the more substantial Crown and Anchor in George Street.

Progress in the Other Colonies

In the mid 1880s the Queen Anne Revival style began to appear in other Australian colonies, influenced by recent architecture in London rather than in Sydney. In Western Australia George Temple Poole employed details drawn from the contemporary domestic architecture in England, as evidenced by the porch and window joinery of the picturesque Albany Cottage Hospital commenced in 1887 and the elaborate dormers to the Treasury Building, completed in 1890. The style was present in domestic architecture in Western Australia from the mid 1880s. Woodbridge at Midland designed in 1885 by J. Wright is an eclectic composition with a face brick tower with pediments in the Queen Anne manner; two restrained face brick gables and a more typical two-storey cast iron lace verandah.

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114 Illustrated in Reynolds, Muir, and Hughes, John Horbury Hunt, Radical Architect 1838-1904, p. 33.
By 1885 commercial buildings in Adelaide were being designed in this style, a direct result of a visit by an architect from the local firm of A.J Murray to London in 1883. In Melbourne George de Lacy Evans employed Flemish gables for his Niagara Lane warehouses of 1887. The Australian Property and Investment Company Building in Melbourne (1887-88) (figure 4.66), attributed to Henry Kemp of Oakden, Addison and Kemp, was the tallest building in the Australian colonies in its day. Here Flemish gables were added to a substantial multi-storey office building, in a similar manner; only with many more stories, to Shaw’s commercial architecture in London that Kemp was familiar with. The scale is similar to buildings in New York and Chicago rather than London or Manchester where Kemp had trained.

George Addison, of Oakden Addison and Kemp, was based in Brisbane. Addison’s work in the late 1880s was keeping up with London, as can be seen in his designs for The Mansions, a group of six townhouses, and in his competition winning design for the former Queensland Museum (the Exhibition building) (Figure 6.7). The skill with which Addison uses light and shade in his compositions, and the complex three-dimensional forms, show his work to be much more than simply a revival. The Exhibition building was described as being a ‘modern treatment of the round arch Romanesque’ in the article on Brisbane architecture that appeared in August 1898.

116 Katrina McDougall, A Preference for Stone, South Australia in Howells, Trevor, Editor, Towards the Dawn, Federation Architecture in Australia, 1890-1915, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, p. 129

The restrained South Brisbane Town Hall, the result of a competition winning entry by John Hall and Sons in 1889, is a complete contrast to the series of rendered Italianate town halls built in suburban Melbourne and Sydney and in the booming towns of Ballarat, Bendigo and Broken Hill during the late 1880s. Robin Dod’s competition winning design for the Lady Lamington Nurses Home at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the first stage of which was built in 1897, also exhibits some of the characteristic elements of the Queen Anne Revival, featuring banded brick chimneys and a tile roof (figure 9.31).

Hunt had long been using elegantly detailed face brickwork and his preference for truthful materials was well known. Harry Kent recounted that it had been Hunt who had nurtured his ‘love of good brickwork’. Hunt’s Butchers Shop and Residence at Edgecliff in Sydney of 1884 (figure 4.68) shows him experimenting with ‘London Queen Anne’, a radical departure from the Gothic Revival he employed for Farmer and Co. a decade earlier. The now demolished Butchers Shop was contemporary with Vernon’s designs for Royle’s Chambers and has more similarities with Webb’s restrained work than the London Queen Anne of Shaw and J. J. Stevenson.

In designing for the Sydney City Corporation George McRae employed the Queen Anne Revival style. Two buildings he designed in 1887 in this style survive, the Corporation Building in Hay Street,
arguably the finest surviving example of red brick and terracotta ‘London Queen Anne’ in inner Sydney (figure 4.67), and the temporary fruit market, now known as the Corn Exchange, on the corner of Sussex and Market Streets.

By the time Vernon had been appointed Government Architect, the Queen Anne Revival style was in use throughout Australia. The style was primarily used as it had been in England, for residences, commercial buildings and schools. Many of the architects who employed the style had worked or been trained in London, producing buildings that are still in use today. The 1892 design, by Sherrin and Hennessy, for the second stage of Santa Sabina at Strathfield, has been described as ‘the pinnacle of Anglo-Dutch revivalism during the short period of Queen Anne influence on the Catholic diocese’.120 The depression of the 1890s had a severe impact on architects, many never received the same scale of commissions again. Elaborate school buildings and large modern country houses were no longer commissioned.

Vernon and the other English-trained architects working in the Australian colonies in the 1880s acclimatised contemporary English architecture to suit the extremes of the Australian climate. Many of

the characteristics of Vernon’s architectural work in Sussex continue to be apparent in his architecture in Sydney during the 1880s, particularly the truthful use of materials that stemmed from Ruskin’s writings. Just as Moreing and Vernon had introduced contemporary architectural styles and a new form of suburban development to Hastings and St Leonards, Vernon introduced the picturesqueness, variety and the need for architectural control that were the basis of the Bedford Park type of suburban planning to Sydney. He dispensed with a number of the conventions that had governed domestic architecture during the 1870s. Individual cottages, villas and semi-detached housing replaced the terrace favoured by the speculative builder. It was no longer necessary for the main entrance to a house to address the street, regardless of the orientation of site. Nor was it necessary to use a rigid grid of regular allotments.

The depression of the 1890s halted these experiments in suburban planning, however the seeds had been sown. Once the economy improved the villa type of suburb replaced the terrace house and the Federation suburb came into being. The Federation style has its origins in the acclimatised Queen Anne Revival style buildings designed by the English-trained architects working in the Australian colonies in the 1880s and early 1890s. As well as his domestic projects, Vernon worked in partnership with William Wilkinson Wardell and then Richard George Howard Joseland. This work is discussed in detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5 PARTNERSHIPS 1884-1889

This chapter traces Vernon’s architectural work in partnership with the well-respected, English-trained architect William Wilkinson Wardell and, following Wardell’s retirement due to ill health, his short lived partnership with another English-trained architect, Richard George Howard Joseland. Wardell, the local RIBA representative, was an ideal choice of partner; he had been practising in Sydney for many years and had a wide range of clients, having completed an extensive array of buildings in England, Victoria and NSW. This chapter shows how Vernon and the other recent arrivals continued to work in the manner in which they had been working in England, seeking to implement the recent developments in architecture. Many of their proposals remain unbuilt, although a number of competition designs survive.

The recently arrived ‘young English gentlemen’ were not entirely welcomed by local architects; John Horbury Hunt believed they lacked practical experience in the craft of building.1 Sulman and Vernon had seen their designs exhibited at the Royal Academy and each had a number of completed buildings to their name in England. Hunt was particularly critical of the recent arrivals who continued their RIBA membership but did not participate in the local Institute. The long established Sydney architects probably did not want to have to compete with the influx of younger, more fashionable architects in design competitions, where it was possible to win with a good drawing style rather than a practical knowledge of buildings.

Hunt was very vocal about this matter, advising the young architect, Percy Owen

not to imagine that ‘picture drawings’ produced ‘for the benefit of a client’s aesthetic wife or charmingly talented daughter’ were any substitute for ‘serious drawings’ and documents, and especially to do better than the sort that at present were produced by many of the practicing profession – ‘dangerously written specifications, impractical detail and imperfectly delineated drawings’.2

Hunt came to tolerate the new arrivals, except for Sulman whom he despised. Vernon made more than one attempt to keep the peace between Hunt and the ambitious Sulman, who tried to take over control of the local institute, believing ‘they should start with the idea that all is right and not all wrong’.3 J. M. Freeland’s study of Hunt’s career details how, on more than one occasion, Vernon intervened to stop the squabbling at institute meetings.4 His ability to deal with both Hunt and Sulman would later stand him in good stead.

2 Building and Engineering Journal, 14 September 1889
3 Building and Engineering Journal, 10 August 1889
The Palladians

Vernon was a member of the Palladian Club set up by Sulman, as was Wardell. The club was not initially intended to be an alternative to the local Institute of Architects; rather it was a monthly book club established to discuss material sent out from London. Hunt, who was most definitely not a member of Sulman’s club, was likewise keeping up with international developments via the periodicals, compiling designs he liked into scrapbooks arranged by building type.5 Other members of the local institute of architects were also keeping up to date. In September 1888 it was noted that in the Institute’s rooms the professional ‘library is slowly increasing and the proceedings of the RIBA and English and Continental periodicals are now always to be found on the tables for the use of members’.6

There was no mention of American periodicals; the focus was on the work of English designers. By the early 1890s this focus had changed to include the Richardsonian Romanesque, a change probably due to arrival of Edward Raht and the publication of a monograph on Richardson’s work, illustrated with sketches, plans and photographs, that appeared in 1888.7 During 1886, the year of Richardson’s death, an exhibition of his work was held in London.

Vernon was characteristically even handed; in addition to taking over some of the RIBA duties from Wardell, he was a member of the Council of the local Institute of Architects and a member of both

5 John Horbury Hunt’s collection of scrapbooks and newspaper clippings is held in the Mitchell Library ML MSS 7087
6 Building and Engineering Journal, 1 September 1888
Sulman’s Palladian Club and the Sydney Architectural Association. He and Sulman would later share the role of local RIBA representative, a role Wardell undertook from 1883 until his ill health forced him to seek a replacement. Vernon did not become a fellow of RIBA until resident in Australia, Wardell and two London based architects, Arthur Cates and James Brooks supported his fellowship nomination in 1886.8 Brooks had recently designed a church in Hastings and would have been familiar with Vernon’s work there. Cates had previously supported Wardell’s RIBA nomination, the two men remaining friends despite their geographical separation.9 Hunt and Cates, who in the early 1890s was vice president of RIBA, also corresponded but probably never met.10

**Under the Name and Style of Wardell and Vernon**

Less than a year after Vernon’s arrival in Sydney, Wardell invited him to enter into partnership. There is very little work that is directly attributable to Vernon during the 1880s.11

Mr. W. W. Wardell begs to announce that he had admitted Mr. W. L. Vernon as a Partner in his practice as an Architect and Civil Engineer, and that on and after the 1st of October 1884, the practice will be carried out under the name and style of Wardell and Vernon12

Wardell’s wide range of commissions in Victoria and throughout

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8 Biographical Information on Walter Liberty Vernon provided by the Royal British Institute of Architects (RIBA).
9 Wardell was both a fellow of RIBA and a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers (M.I.C.E). He became an associate of the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1858, shortly before sailing for Melbourne. Ursula De Jong, *William Wilkinson Wardell, His Life and Work*, Melbourne, Monash University Department of Visual Arts, 1993 chronology on p. 9
11 Anon, *The Cyclopedia of N.S.W.*, Biographical Entry on W. L. Vernon p. 409
12 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 October 1884
NSW necessitated regular and extended absences from his Sydney office, hence the need for a junior partner. He served on advisory boards and Commissions of Inquiry, including providing advice to the Auckland Harbour Board in New Zealand. His decision to take on a partner was probably largely due to the practicalities of supervising this wide geographical spread of work, which included substantial buildings such as the Australasian Steam Navigation Company Building (A.S.N.Co.) fronting Circular Quay in Sydney and two Roman Catholic Cathedrals, one in Melbourne, the other in Sydney. The A.S.N.Co building was one of the largest buildings constructed in Sydney during the mid 1880s and today the staggered Flemish Gables and the tower still dominate the approach to Circular Quay via the water (figures 4.64 & 5.1).

Wardell, a staunch Roman Catholic, had designed substantial Gothic Revival churches prior to his emigration to Australia, rather than the secular buildings that characterise Vernon’s early years in practice. Brian Andrews believes that Wardell’s work compares favorably with the two leading mid nineteenth century Gothic Revival architects, William Butterfield and Richard Cromwell Carpenter. By the end of the 1850s only Butterfield remained in London; Carpenter, whose work at Lancing has already been mentioned, was dead and Wardell was working in Melbourne. Charles Eastlake in his history of the Gothic Revival includes Wardell’s churches at Brook Green, Clapham, Greenwich and Poplar, designs he believed to be ‘model works in their day, and equal, if not in some cases superior, to any similar structures erected for the Establishment [Church of England].”

13 Andrews, *Australian Gothic, The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s*, p. 76
14 Eastlake, *Gothic Revival*, p. 346
In 1858 Wardell obtained, via competition, the position of Clerk of Works and Chief Architect to the colonial government of Victoria.  Three years later he became Inspector General of Public Works, a role that permitted him to continue to maintain a private practice. In contrast the Colonial Architects of NSW, and subsequently the Government Architects, were not permitted to accept private commissions. The Public Works Department was the largest architectural firm in Victoria, and the only other offices of a similar scale were the Public Works departments in the other Australian colonies. Wardell had an enormous task, all drawings and specifications prepared by his officers were approved by him. This allowed him to control the standard of the designs prepared by his officers. A similar hierarchy of approval existed in NSW and it is often difficult to determine who the design architect was.

Described by Henry Russell Hitchcock as the ‘ablest of the Roman Catholic architects working in the tradition of Pugin’, Wardell began designing St Patrick’s in Melbourne in 1858, an involvement that continued until his death. Even before his relocation to Sydney in 1878, he had designed St Mary’s Cathedral and St John’s College at the University of Sydney. The design of two major Roman Catholic Cathedrals was a considerable achievement for a sole practitioner and the buildings are considered to be amongst the finest Gothic Revival churches in Australia.

15 Ursula De Jong, William Wilkinson Wardell, His Life and Work, Melbourne, Monash University Department of Visual Arts, 1983 p. 11
16 Henry Russell Hitchcock, quoted in Andrews, Australian Gothic, The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s, p. 76
Church design was Wardell’s passion; St Michael’s chapel at Rookwood (1886) (figures 5.2 & 5.3), with its curved apse and decorative door hinges is probably substantially his work, and has many similarities with Butterfield’s well known series of drawings: the Instrumenta Ecclesiastica.17 The design remains little known, and was not included by Andrews in his comprehensive study of Australian Gothic. The details involved a high degree of workmanship in the carefully laid slates to the apse and in the curls of wrought iron emanating from the hinges.

Such elegant detailing was not just confined to the firm’s ecclesiastical work. Wardell could also design competently using the classical architectural vocabulary, however he is less well known for these works, which include Government House in Melbourne. After nineteen years of service with the Victorian Department of Public

17 Paul Thompson notes the William Butterfield was effectively the editor of the Instrumenta Ecclesiastica. The first volume was published in parts between 1844 and 1847 and contained designs for metalwork, grave crosses, lecturns, font covers, church chests, chairs &c. Some large scale designs including Lych gates were also included. Thompson, William Butterfield, plate 22 Cemetery Chapel,
Works he was one of a number of senior public servants dismissed from office for political reasons. In Victoria and in NSW the private sector architects wanted the substantial public buildings to be put out to competition. This resulted in continued criticism of the Colonial or Government Architect no matter who was in office. In Wardell’s case, criticism also came from the ambitious architects within his own branch.18

Although soon exonerated by a Select Committee, Wardell chose to leave Melbourne, no doubt believing that his reputation had suffered irreparably and that he would not obtain substantial commissions.19 He had been relieved of his duties in January 1878 and by June he had relocated to Sydney and had taken on temporary staff. His move, *The Bulletin* pointed out, was ‘good news to those who have been persecuting him with bitter hatred for many years’.20

The ecclesiastic work that had dominated his private practice in Melbourne would no longer be his major output; rather his work would include company headquarters, warehouses, banks, gentlemen’s clubs and town mansions. Vernon appears to have been involved in detailing secular buildings, a preference that can be found throughout his career. It would appear that Vernon also supervised the Sydney buildings, and occasionally the Melbourne works, whilst Wardell was traveling further afield.

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19 De Jong, *William Wilkinson Wardell, His Life and Work*, p. 9

English Scottish & Australian Banks

By 1885 the partnership of Wardell and Vernon had two major projects in Melbourne: an office and bank manager’s residence for the English, Scottish and Australian (E.S.&A.) Bank in Collins Street (figures 5.4 & 5.5) and Cliveden, a town mansion for Sir William Clarke. The winner of the competition for the design of a new E.S.&A. bank in Collins Street was the English architect John Pollard Seddon, mentioned previously in connection with Llandarff Cathedral and the country residence, Alton at Mt Macedon, the latter designed for the bank’s manager George Verdon. Seddon’s design was not proceeded with and the commission was awarded to Wardell.21 Wardell had already completed the Adelaide Branch of the E.S.&A. Bank, the interiors of which were decorated by Lyon and Cottier.22

The Melbourne bank’s interiors were a collaboration between Wardell and the firm of Lyon and Cottier, with the decorative work undertaken by Andrew Wells who would later become Lyon’s partner. Vernon had little involvement; he was in London whilst the bank was under construction. Although Lyon and Cottier had long been supplying Art Furniture to Australian clients, Wardell commissioned Joseland to design furniture for the bank manager’s


22 John Lamb Lyon, a stained glass artist trained in Glasgow had been working in Melbourne since 1861. In 1873 he went into partnership with fellow Scotsman Daniel Cottier and the firm opened branches in Sydney and New York. Lamb managed the Australian operations. The firm of Lyon and Cottier were responsible for decorative schemes in a number of prestigious buildings including the Lands Department and Government House in Sydney.
residence. It is possible that the commission was made because Lyon was traveling overseas.\(^{23}\) The Aesthetic Movement interiors of George Verdon’s town residence within the E.S.&A. Bank in Collins Street, Melbourne, with its varnished wainscoting, plain glazed tiles to the fireplace, embossed Japanese ‘leather’ wallpaper and Morris & Co. fabric would have been more to Vernon’s taste than the ornate Gothic Revival style friezes and the painted ceilings of the banking chamber below (figure 5.6).\(^{24}\)

During the 1880s Wardell designed a series of suburban and country branches for the E.S.&A. Bank. The Sydney headquarters, designed by Edmund Blacket in 1857, was derived from Italianate palazzi.\(^{25}\) Although he designed a number of banks in NSW for other banking companies in the Italianate style, Wardell did not follow Blacket’s choice of style for the E.S.&A. banks, utilizing variations of the crow-stepped gable as well as Gothic Revival details. The use of the crow-stepped gable may have been to create a distinctive Scottish character, thus differentiating the bank from its non-Scottish competitors.

\(^{23}\) John Lamb Lyon also traveled overseas in 1886, visiting the firm’s branches in New York and Glasgow and Daniel Cottier’s home in London, noting the interiors he had seen. Cottier had decorated sumptuous interiors and designed furniture for a number of wealthy New York bankers including Joseph Decker and Frederick Stevens. His work was well known on both sides of the Atlantic, mentioned in Clarence Cook’s essays describing The House Beautiful and in Mrs Hawies’ descriptions of artistic houses in Chelsea. His overseas trip is described in detail by Montana, *The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900*, p. 143-44, based on John Lamb Lyon’s notes ML MSS 1381/1. See also Max Donnelly, Cottier and Company, Art Furniture Makers in Magazine Antiques, June 2001.

\(^{24}\) Detailed photographs of the interior of the residence can be found in Montana, *The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900*, colour plates between pages 144 and 145.

\(^{25}\) Now demolished, the bank in George Street is illustrated in Morton Herman, *The Blackets, An Era of Australian Architecture*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1977, figure 12.
Ursula de Jong has identified three E.S.&A. banks with stepped gables built between 1883 and 1885: Berry (then known as Broughton Creek) (figure 5.9), Camberwell (Victoria) (figure 5.7) and Wollongong (figure 5.8). The Camberwell branch has been altered but the original drawings survive showing the gable continued on over the doorway, as occurs at Berry. De Jong notes that these ES&A banks have a ‘warmth and domesticity usually associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, in contrast to the cool austere classical examples…’ which are the banks Wardell designed at Petersham, Wagga Wagga and Grenfell.

The move away from monumentality that Peter Reynolds believes stems from the Sydney Architectural Association during the early 1890s can be seen in the work of Wardell and Vernon in the 1880s. Wardell, like Butterfield, was using carefully crafted details drawn from the vernacular in his urban work. Vernon learnt from
the architectural vocabulary that Wardell used for secular buildings. He learnt how to make the most of corner sites; the ‘balanced asymmetry’ of the banks designed by Wardell would continue to be evident in Vernon’s work.\(^2^9\) Understanding how to co-ordinate large-scale commercial work would serve him well in his position as Government Architect, as Wardell’s work in the 1880s included some of the most substantial commercial buildings and warehouses constructed in Sydney.

Cliveden

It is also Wardell rather than Vernon who is credited with the design of the substantial Melbourne mansion of Cliveden for the Clarke family in 1885 (figure 5.10).\(^3^0\) In *The Australian* it was recorded that at Cliveden ‘beauty is never allowed to conflict with utility, every object is fitted for its use, in which adaptation lies the very essence of the beautiful’.\(^3^1\) The overall result, although also intended to be a house beautiful, contrasted with the deliberately restrained interiors of Vernon’s own home Penshurst, designed some five years earlier.

\(^{29}\) De Jong, William Wilkinson Wardell, His Life and Work, p. 58
\(^{30}\) Montana, The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900, p. 151
\(^{31}\) Montana, The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900, p. 152
Whilst Vernon may not have played a large role in the interior of Cliveden, the inclusion of a large entrance hall, oak stair and fireplace, in what is essentially a neoclassical house shows the influence of modern country houses planned by Shaw that Vernon was familiar with. One of the bedrooms at Cliveden in Melbourne was furnished with white enameled furniture, a finish popularised in the model bedrooms designed by Edis for the London Health Exhibition.32 Traditional English buildings were also the source of the design for the garden elements. The alternate designs for a tennis pavilion for Sir William Clarke, presumably for Cliveden, appear to be Vernon’s work (figure 5.11). The tennis pavilion is similar in character to Lethaby’s sketch of a cupola ‘showing the influence of Wren’ of the town hall at Guildford, in Surrey that dates from 1683 (figure 5.12).33

32 Robert Edis’ designs are illustrated in Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900, plate 122
33 Rubens, William Richard Lethaby, His Life and Work 1857-1931, p. 271

Figure 5.11
Attributed to Walter Liberty Vernon, Design for a tennis pavilion for Cliveden, Melbourne, mid 1880s

Figure 5.12
William Richard Lethaby, Watercolour of the Town Hall, Guildford, Surrey, 1883

The building dates from 1683
The Roberts Hotel (1886)

The descriptions of the elaborate interiors of the now demolished Roberts Hotel in Sydney (figure 5.13), designed by Wardell and Vernon in 1886, shows a preference for self-coloured materials that can also be found in the interiors of the E.S.&A. Bank in Melbourne. Mosaic tiles (smalti) by Salviati of Venice were used in panels in the oak bar, cedar was employed for the staircase, marble tesserae were used to pave the corridors and the parquet flooring was composed ‘entirely of colonial choice woods – viz beanwood, rosewood, yellow-jack and satin-wood’. The interiors of the Roberts Hotel show the move away from the painted decoration employed in the E.S.&A. Bank in Melbourne in favour of the self-coloured or ‘truthful’ materials that could be found in Seddon’s work at Mt Macedon and in Vernon’s residence, Penshurst.

Figure 5.13
Wardell and Vernon, The Roberts Hotel, George Street., Sydney, 1886

The hotel was demolished to make way for Grace Brothers

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34 Australasian Builders and Contractor’s News, 14 January 1888
It was largely due to Lord Lanyon that the technique of making smalti or glass mosaics was revived in Venice by Salviati. The tiles were used extensively in English interiors, both churches and public buildings.
The preference for local timber and Australian marbles shows the growing nationalistic feeling, and pride in colonial workmanship, that emerged in the years leading up to the Centennial of 1888. Vernon’s interiors would continue to be characterised by the use of self-coloured materials, particularly timber wainscoting, plain glazed tiles, Italian mosaics, geometric tiles and coloured marbles. The Roberts Hotel was also very technologically up-to-date; it was lit by electricity throughout and contained passenger lifts and an elaborate system of ventilation designed by the engineer Norman Selfe. The inclusion of up-to-date building services and new technologies that would continue to be evident in Vernon’s work may have been the result of informal discussions between the pair. From 1895 Vernon and Selfe were neighbours.

To London Via Calcutta

In addition to his career as an architect, Vernon served as a volunteer in the Australian Mounted Regiments, joining the NSW Lancers in 1885. He rose through the ranks until he attained the position of Colonel in the 2nd Light Horse Brigade in 1907. Some of his hand drawn maps and designs for campaign equipment survive. Vernon undertook one extended overseas trip whilst in partnership with Wardell, visiting Calcutta, Cairo and Naples in late 1886 en route to Aldershot in England where he took part in manoeuvres with his regiment. The return leg was via the United States of America.

Vernon does not appear to have visited America again; there is

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35 Selfe had pioneered the use of hydraulic passenger lifts in Sydney.
36 Selfe designed a second highly eclectic house, Giliagaloola in Pennant Hills Road circa 1893, moving from Amesbury in Ashfield where he had been living. Both houses survive.
37 An album of photographs held in the Mitchell Library includes photographs of W. L. Vernon, H. V. Vernon and P. V. Vernon at camp and at ceremonial events. ML PXE 716 v.2
38 Moroney, Walter Vernon, A Change in Style in Government Architecture, in Bradley, Essays on Art and Architecture presented to Bernard Smith, p. 47
no mention in his 1897 report to the Minister of Public Works of American architecture. One of Vernon’s photographs is of the Camel Sewars of the Bengal Cavalry Regiment, taken in November 1886. Calcutta, in West Bengal, is not on the direct route to London; his visit may have been to see the work of his colleague, and fellow articled pupil, William Emerson who had been working in India for some years.39

Vernon’s visit to Cairo may have co-incided with that of Arthur Liberty and his wife who toured extensively in North Africa. In the early 1880s the fashion in London for the Japanese was waning, replaced by an enthusiasm for Moorish interiors. It was Liberty who is credited with having started this fashion; he traveled widely in Spain and North Africa in search of handmade carpets, carved timber screens, furniture and brassware for his store.40 An interest in Arab craftsmanship is evident in the photographs of Cairo that Vernon purchased, he selected views of traditional houses, fountain courts, mosques and souks.41 There are no photographs of well-

39 Emerson, who left Habershon and Pite to work for Burges, had been sent to India with Burges’ drawings for the Bombay Art School, a design that proved to be too expensive and was not built as such. He continued to practise in India designing the Girguam Church (1870-73), the Arthur Crawford Market (1865-71) and the Market Fountain (1874), All Saints Cathedral in Allahabad (1869-93), Muir College (1872-78) and Bhavnagar (Bhownugger) Tahhtsengi hospital (1879-83). Emerson also entered competitions including the Berlin Parliament House of 1872 and the Liverpool Cathedral competition of 1903. He returned to London in the late 1880s designing a town house in Queen’s Gate, Kensington in 1890 but continued to undertake commissions in India, including the Victoria Memorial for Calcutta designed in 1903. Emerson designed a number of major hospital buildings in England including the Clarence Wing of St Mary’s Hospital in Paddington, London (1898-1901) and the Royal Caledonian Asylum, Herefordshire (1903-21).

40 Bendix, *Diabolical Designs, Paintings, Interiors and Exhibitions of James McNeil Whistler*, p. 176

41 The photographs Vernon purchased are part of a series of views of Cairo taken by George Lekegian. The majority of these photographs are of Cairo including a *musharabeyeh* in Rue Barb-el-Vazir; a banded stone mosque in Rue Barb-el-Charieh, traditional shopfronts and a view of the Souk Karia, interiors of the Mosque El Chouri and Mosque El Bordeni. ML PXA 876 Volume 1, *Architecture Folios 64, 66-68 and 70-72.*
known tourist attractions such as the Nile temples or the pyramids. A number of items in Vernon’s collection appear to have been purchased during this trip: an Indian dagger; a folding tray table in repoussé work; a hammered brass rice bowl; a hammered copper charpoy; an engraved brass ‘lota’ and an antique sacred water bottle in copper; from Adam’s Bridge.\textsuperscript{42} What characterises these purchases is their all having been hand crafted. Whilst in Naples he may have purchased two bronze lizards and a bronze jug with a hippocampus handle, listed in his inventory as being antiques from Pompeii. The fourth item from Pompeii, an earthenware jug, had been acquired in England.\textsuperscript{43} The interest in finds from archaeological excavations was one that Vernon shared with Liberty. Liberty’s sold reproductions of metallic glazed glassware based on examples excavated from Pompeii and Herculaneum.

**Contemporary Architecture in England**

Vernon is known to have looked at contemporary architecture in London during this visit; in 1897 he advised the Minister for Public Works on the substantial additions to the St Martin Le Grand General Post Office complex that had been constructed since his

\textsuperscript{42} Item 296 Tray Table with metal circular top, repoussé design on six carved ledged [sic] folding base, Indian 3 pounds, 10 shillings, B297. Bowl, brass hammered 12-inch rice bowl, Indian, 2 pounds, 298 Pot, 18-inch hammered copper charpoy pot with brass weldings, Indian, 1 pound, 299 Lota, Brass Lota richly engraved, Indian, 1 pound 10 shillings, 300 Water Bottle, Antique copper sacred water bottle from Adam’s Bridge, Indian two pounds.

Copy of Inventory of the collection of Walter Liberty Vernon held by Dr Zeny Edwards

\textsuperscript{43} 194 Bronze Jug, Bronze Jug with Hippocampus handle, from Pompeii, Antique 1 pound 202 Jar, Earthenware, with two handles, formerly in Tottenham Collection, 2 pounds 10 shillings 236 Bronze Two (2) lizards, Pompeii 1 pound. These lizards may be the fire dogs that can be seen in the photographs of Wendover.

Copy of Inventory of the collection of Walter Liberty Vernon held by Dr Zeny Edwards
last visit. He is also likely to have looked at the buildings that his cousin Arthur Vernon had designed. Although the building has been modified, evidence of the original configuration of the Faversham Cottage Hospital in Kent designed by Arthur and constructed in 1887 survives (figure 5.14). Similarities with later designs by Walter indicate that he either saw the building, or the drawings for it, whilst in England. The two-storey building was constructed in a former brickpit, with a bridge connecting the street to the main entrance at first floor level, a device later used by Walter at the Boatmen’s Row in Newcastle, NSW. Roughcast is used, as is elaborate face brickwork to the central porch and chimneys. The fretwork and turned timberwork to the gables of each ward are Queen Anne Revival in style.

Shaw’s major London works, the Alliance Offices in St James, Lowther Lodge and the adjacent Albert Mansions in Kensington, as well as the Swan House in Chelsea, had been completed before Vernon left for Australia, as had the nearby series of studio houses in Chelsea.

44 Vernon, Mr. W. L. FRIBA, Government Architect, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe. Report No. 22 From the Printing Committee, November 1897, p. 6
45 National Monument Record, Faversham Health Centre, Stone Street, Faversham NBR 101433
designed by Godwin. On his return from England there is little noticeable change in Vernon’s work, other than the use of motifs drawn from a more recent design by Godwin, the Tower House, a multi-storey group of artist studios in Tite Street built in 1884 (figure 5.16). Similar details to Godwin’s Tower House appear in Vernon’s 1889 design for Killarney in Mosman, particularly the triangular brick pediment to the tower (figure 5.15). Although Godwin was now dead, the influence of Liberty’s architect friends continued to be evident in Vernon’s work.
PARTNERSHIPS 1884-1889

Vernon and Joseland

Vernon obtained the lease for land in Neutral Bay surrounding his house the same day that he announced his partnership with Wardell.46 This development caused some friction between the partners, as Wardell’s letter books reveal, however the eventual dissolution of the partnership was due to Wardell’s ill-health rather than any architectural or business disagreements. Towards the end of the 1880s Wardell became ill, leaving many of the responsibilities of the office to Vernon. Whilst in partnership with Wardell, Vernon had the opportunity to witness the construction of substantial commercial buildings as well as finely detailed sandstone churches. The projects were of a larger scale than most of his previous work.

Wardell’s son Herbert Edmund Wardell was admitted to the firm as a partner in May 1887, an appointment that coincides with Vernon’s visit to England. The partnership between Wardell and Vernon was formally dissolved in February 1889. Herbert formed a brief partnership with Edward Jeaffreson Jackson in the early 1890s however the pair did not manage to obtain a single commission.47 Wardell continued his long-standing involvement, assisted by Herbert, with the design of St Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney until his death in 1897.

In 1889 Vernon took on Joseland as a junior partner however the partnership was very short-lived, disrupted by Vernon’s decision the following year to take up the post of NSW Government Architect.

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46 Diane Jones has traced the series of leases for the Neutral Bay Estate in her study of Walter Liberty Vernon, 1846-1914, B. Arch Thesis, University of NSW, 1977, pp. 15-28

Joseland had served his articles with Messers Haddon Brothers, architects and surveyors, a firm that undertook extensive estate work in Malvern and Hereford. He then sought work in London, specialising in the design of accessories of architecture such as mosaics, furniture, stained glass and metal work for churches. It was probably this interest in church fittings that first brought the young architect to Wardell’s attention, resulting in the commission to design furniture for the bank manager’s flat in the E.S.&A. bank in Melbourne.

Like both Wardell and Vernon, Joseland had left England due to ill health. Seeking a warmer climate, he initially selected Auckland where he spent six months before trying Melbourne. In addition to designing furniture, Joseland entered architectural competitions and his drawings were published in The Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News. His competition design for a town residence in Melbourne for the Hon. J. G. Beaney M.D. was a Queen Anne Revival style residence that featured red brick for main walls with stone mouldings and pargetry, a traditional technique of decorative external plastering revived by Nesfield and Shaw but rarely used in Australia. The ‘picturesque outline’ provided ‘relief to monotonous drab cement of Melbourne Street architecture by combinations of red brick, buff-coloured stone and white woodwork...’ Joseland finally settled in Sydney in 1888 where he was to remain and entered into partnership with Vernon.

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48 Anon, The Cyclopedia of N.S.W., Biographical Entry on R. G. H. Joseland, pp. 418-419
49 Montana, The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900, p. 149
50 The description survives, the drawings are not included in the copy held by the ML Building and Engineering Journal October, 13 1889
Figure 5.17
W. L. Vernon and Howard Joseland, City Bank, corner of King and Sussex Streets, Sydney, 1889-90

This sheet of details was published in the *Australian Builder’s and Contractor’s News* in January 1890.
The two partners, who clearly had similar architectural tastes, were to enter a number of competitions, in which they achieved considerable success.

**The City Bank (1889-91)**

The detailed designs for the competition winning City Bank premises were published in January 1890 however the bank was not completed until May 1891 (figure 5.17). The building, located on the corner of King and Sussex Streets, contains a bank and a post office, each with a separate street entrance. Unlike most Sydney city buildings, the bank was designed with a side lane allowing windows to three elevations. The task of designing post offices usually fell to the Colonial Architect and the combination of a bank and post office is uncommon in NSW.

The City Bank is a rare example of a Queen Anne Revival style building constructed entirely in sandstone, rather than the customary red brick, and the design contrasts with Vernon’s other commercial work (figure 5.18 - 5.20). The choice of material was probably made by the client; stone had long been the preferred building material for banks in the Australian colonies, embodying stability and permanence. Wardell and Vernon had already designed the Gothic Revival style E.S.&A. bank in George Street North in Sydney sandstone.

The carved swags are motifs that Vernon had used before, at the Hastings Electric Light Company. Internally marble tiles were used for the floor, with polished cedar joinery to the stairs. Elements of the design are similar to the Newtown Post Office of 1894, although

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51 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, January 1890
52 Although the use has changed the lettering to the façade survives.
the Newtown Post Office was a cheaper and less ornamented building. Both designs appear to be based on the secular buildings of the north of Europe, buildings that Shaw had long been using as a source for his commercial work.

Above the Post Office was the substantial residence of the Postmaster, with a drawing room, dining room and six bedrooms, including one small bedroom for a servant. Vernon and Joseland placed the kitchen on the second floor rather than in the basement, there were to be no unhealthy basement kitchens here. The dining room was below, on the first floor. The bathroom and WC were also on the second floor, adjacent to the roof terrace, placed to ensure adequate ventilation.

In contrast, the bank included offices on the first floor, with a kitchen, housekeeper’s sitting room and two bedrooms on the second floor. The bank manager was clearly intended to be a bachelor; he was provided with a housekeeper but not a dining room or drawing room or numerous bedrooms. Each major room had an oriel window, to the dining room and main bedroom of the postmaster’s residence and to the housekeeper’s sitting room and the main office of the bank. The Post Office drawing room does not have an oriel window, the dining room, regularly used by the family, does. In the flat above the bank it is the housekeeper, not the bank manager, who gets the benefit of the extra daylight.
Rus In Urbe

Vernon’s continued interest in model suburbs is evident in the partners’ success in the competition for the design of a model suburb for the Kensington Estate in 1889. Captain J. Broomfield, of the Kensington Freehold Corporation, sought to build a model suburb, along the lines of Bedford Park, adjacent to the recently laid out Centennial Park and Moore Park. The areas surrounding these parklands, which protected Lachlan Swamp and Busby’s Bore, the source of Sydney’s water supply, were subdivided for housing from the late 1880s onwards. The model suburb was intended as a complete contrast to the dense terrace housing found in Paddington and Surry Hills. A separate municipality was to be established in order that the character of buildings could be carefully controlled. Joseland and Vernon, in association with a firm of surveyors Oxley and Mocatta, received first prize for their model suburb Rus in Urbe or countryside in the city.53 Their title expressed the overall intent of the scheme.

Mary Eliza Haweis’ Rus in Urbe, or Flowers that Thrive in London Gardens and Smoky Towns, published in 1886, may also have inspired the name of their scheme. Mrs Haweis, who had begun the fashion for descriptions of London artist’s residences in the early 1880s with her series of articles for The Queen, wrote widely on dress, decoration and the artistic house. A Chelsea resident, her book on gardens was inspired by her attempts to cultivate the garden at Tudor House, No. 16 Cheyne Walk, a house previously occupied by Rossetti. Arthur Liberty supplied furnishing fabrics for the Tudor House being supplied, free of charge in 1883.54

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53 Building and Engineering Journal, 22 June 1889
54 Gere and Hoskins, The House Beautiful, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior, p. 65
George Taylor believed Vernon and Joseland’s unbuilt design for a *rus in urbe* in Kensington to have been ‘Australia’s first garden-suburb’ (figure 5.21). Architect-designed subdivisions such as the Neutral Bay estate that Vernon controlled had already implemented garden suburb type planning, but on a much smaller scale. Sulman, who understood what Vernon and Joseland were trying to achieve, praised the design of *Rus in Urbe* in his first article on Town Planning published in 1890 and again in *Salon* in August 1913. The scheme was re-exhibited in the November 1913 Town Planning Exhibition alongside the Griffins’ design for Canberra. Sulman believed that

So far but little has been attempted in Australia on these lines. Adelaide is noteworthy for its parklands and fine squares, and Melbourne for its broad tree planted main avenues, while all the capitals possess open spaces near the centre of the cities, used as botanic gardens or parks, these are a distinct advantage; but in the suburbs, except for the occasional park or reserve, but little has been done.

Some twenty odd years ago an enterprising syndicate offered premiums for the laying-out of an area of land at Kensington, near Sydney, and the winning design showed features that were a great advantage on anything so far attempted. But the time was not right and financial stringency intervened, so that the area was cut up in the usual chequer board fashion to screw

55 George Augustine Taylor, *Town Planning For Australia*, Sydney, Building Ltd, 1914 p. 102
57 Town Planning Association of NSW, *Display Catalogue*, Sydney, Town Planning Association, 1913
the last penny out of the estate. This attempt at better things should not, however be forgotten.58

*Rus in Urbe* included wide boulevards, curved streets, central public spaces and recreational facilities including tennis courts. A regular building line fronted the main square, with the smaller groups to the lesser streets containing varied setbacks. The tram lines were set in a large boulevard, described as such, separated from the buildings by a line of trees. Planned European-style wide, tree lined boulevards dating from prior to World War I are uncommon in Australia, most colonial cities were laid out using the regimented grid which has military origins. The wide boulevard form (or parade) is more commonly associated with memorial avenues such as Anzac Parade in Sydney and Ballarat Avenue of Honour however some of the major routes into the city of Melbourne such as St Kilda Road were improved to form elegant boulevards in the nineteenth century. The


Figure 5.21
Vernon, Joseland, Oxley and Mocatta, *Enlarged Plan of the Squares, Rus In Urbe, 1889*
A birds eye view is shown in Figure 11.27
broad avenues in the Kensington Model Suburb also have similarities with the master plan for Port Sunlight, commenced in 1888.

The proposed development was on a much broader scale than the suburban development surrounding Penshurst in Neutral Bay. There was much discussion in the architectural press of Rus in Urbe and the drawings were published, showing a series of Queen Anne Revival villas, similar to contemporary British examples but with verandahs. A second competition for the detailed design of the housing was held, a competition won by Joseland. Vernon was now Government Architect and was unable to enter private competitions. The depression of the early 1890s resulted in the abandonment or postponement of progressive suburban housing schemes, including the model suburbs at Kensington, Neutral Bay and Hurstville.

**The City Avenue**

Vernon and Joseland also entered the City Avenue competition, a competition for the design of a row of new buildings to be constructed by the City Avenue Company in Pitt Street south of the GPO. Of the 36 designs submitted, theirs was one of five publicly exhibited. The competition was surrounded by controversy and did not proceed, however a description of their work survives:

> In the elevations we have excellent examples of Queen Anne, with perhaps a slight Jacobean feeling running through them.59

With the use of the Queen Anne Revival for commercial buildings came a change in the scale of the city. In inner Sydney single and two-storey colonial Georgian commercial buildings and residences were
being replaced by multi-storey Queen Anne Revival style buildings containing shops on the ground and first floors, with commercial chambers above. Townhouses were no longer so fashionable, as most professional men preferred to live in the suburbs. Queen Anne Revival style commercial buildings were once quite prevalent however many were demolished after World War II, casualties of the lifting of the 150-foot building height restriction.

In Sydney the use of the Queen Anne Revival style was not limited to the English-trained architects; local architects including Varney Parkes soon adopted the style for city buildings. Parkes’ Royal Naval House in Grosvenor Street survives; his Sydney Permanent Freehold Land and Building Society chambers fronting Queen’s Square, the original home of the Queen’s Club, have been demolished.60 When adding a wing to Royal Naval House in 1907 (figure 5.22), Vernon continued the architectural vocabulary set by Parkes, both architects drawing on contemporary London architecture.


Figure 5.22
Varney Parkes, Royal Naval House, Sydney, 1890

The taller addition to the RHS was added by the NSW Government Architect in 1907
Figure 5.23
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890
This view show the principal northern front of Leura. The gable to the RHS is a later addition.

Figure 5.24
Unknown photographer, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1907
This view of Leura showing the original configuration of the northern elevation and its single gable.
Leura, Bellevue Hill (1890)

Leura, a substantial marine villa built at Bellevue Hill for Edward Knox in 1890 is probably the last collaboration between Vernon and Joseland. The substantial two-storey brick house retains its splendid setting and panoramic views of Sydney Harbour; the curved drive passes below the front of the house. The characteristic Shavian planning is evident in the arrangement of the principal rooms, which overlook the harbour, around the substantial stair hall (figure 5.25 & figure 5.29). The small gable that marks the entrance and the main stair hall are Gothic Revival in character; employing restrained Gothic style tracery to the large window that lights the stairhall and to the front door (figure 5.27). The stairhall has been altered; the ceiling and the upper rooms were unfortunately destroyed in a fire in 1909. The original configuration is shown in figure 5.24. A new roofline,

Figure 5.25
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890
View of the main stairhall of Leura (LHS)

Figure 5.26
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890
Detail of the dining room fireplace.

Figure 5.27
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890

Figure 5.28
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890
Detail of the incised curve to the solid brackets to the verandah.

Figure 5.29
Vernon and Joseland, Leura, Bellevue Hill, 1890
1943 Floor Plan. The billiard room to the top right is a later addition.
with an additional gable was built (figure 5.23). The generous two-storey verandah employs cast iron columns, providing the necessary strength for the added height (figure 5.28).

A number of the original decorative details survive, such as the wave motif to the dado rail, the blue and white transfer printed tiles and the fern and sunburst detail to the grate in the dining room (figure 5.26). The decorative motifs used are similar to the interior schemes designed by Lucien Henry, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.31. Details such as paneled timber ceilings and soffits and the incised Japanese style curves in the solid brackets to the first floor are details that appear in Vernon’s later domestic designs, the former in his own house at Wendover and in the postal chamber of the Newtown Post Office and the latter in the staff residence in the grounds of Callan Park. Further evidence that the house is largely Vernon’s work is a surviving tender analysis held by Woollahra Council. Completed by ‘Mr. Vernon’, the list included prices from two of the builders engaged to build a number of the residences in the Neutral Bay Estate.61

It is likely that the detailed supervision of the construction of Leura was undertaken by Joseland; the house was not completed until 1891, by which time Vernon had been appointed NSW Government Architect. Of Vernon’s surviving work prior to this appointment, it is this design that marks the watershed between the London-influenced Queen Anne Revival and Shavian English Domestic Revival and the

61 This house has previously not been identified as being Vernon’s work. The tender notices were not published. The tender analysis was discovered on file at Woollahra Council, City Plan Heritage, Conservation Plan for Leura, Bellevue Hill, Unpublished Report, 2006
more restrained local variant of the style: the Federation style. It was the domestic scale public buildings designed by Vernon and the GAB in the 1890s that helped to spread the Federation style across the state however he had already being using a similar architectural vocabulary before his appointment to the position.

Figure 5.31
Lucien Henry, Design for a Sideboard, Sydney, late 1890s

Henry’s design includes a number of Australian motifs including the waratah, firewheel and the lyrebird. Note also the use of the sun and the wave motifs, both of which can be found at Leura. See Figures 5.26 & 5.30.
Colonial Architectural Debates

By 1889 there was a growing feeling of nationalism in the arts, literature and architecture that emerged from the commemoration of Cook’s voyages of discovery and the celebrations to mark the centennial of the establishment of the Australian colonies. Colonial timbers, building and decorative stones were all proudly displayed at the various intercolonial exhibitions and began to be used in buildings in preference to imported materials. Today the Powerhouse Museum retains a number of the examples of colonial marbles and timbers that were once included in the collection of the Technological Museum.

Australian motifs began to be employed in the design of municipal buildings and parks, a trend led by the exiled Parisian artist Lucien Henry. Polished colonial timbers could be found in the joinery and

Figure 5.32
Illustrations of the use of the Waratah from Baker’s *The Use of Australian Fauna in Applied Art.* 1915
ceilings of municipal town halls, examples of which can still be seen in Glebe and Sydney Town Hall today. The elaborate wrought iron work of the Centennial Hall, added to the Sydney Town Hall in the late 1880s, and the gates to Redfern Park both include Australian plant motifs in the decoration, the former designed by Lucien Henry, the latter attributed to Varney Parkes. The stained glass in Sydney town hall was also Australian in theme, commemorating Cook’s discovery, whilst the new Centennial hall commemorated the centennial of the foundation of Sydney.

Henry intended to publish his designs that employed the waratah and firewheel (stenocarpus) however the work was never finalised. Baker’s 1915 handbook for Technical Students, The Use of Australian Fauna in Applied Art, illustrates some of Henry’s designs. The carved stone friezes to the Sydney Institute of Technology in Ultimo employed Australiana motifs to both the substantial Technological Museum (Building C) and the adjacent High School (Building A) built in the early 1890s. William Kemp’s use of Australiana in the carvings to Buildings B and C follows a trend set by Alfred Waterhouse with the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. Waterhouse used naturalistic carvings externally and painted images of flora and fauna internally, including some Australian examples. Kemp likewise uses Australian flora and fauna in the carved external panels and floral motifs, including the waratah and flannel flower, inset into

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63 Henry’s series of designs incorporating Australian motifs was the subject of an exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum: Visions of a Republic, The Work of Lucien Henry, Paris Noumea and Sydney.
64 Richard Thomas Baker, The Use of Australian Fauna in Applied Art, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1915. This handbook was one of the Technical Education Series that includes Baker’s handbooks on the use of Australian timbers and Ornamental Stones.
the leadlighting of the main stairhall of the Technological Museum (Building C).

The debate was not simply about the use of Australian motifs in place of neoclassical elements, it was also about discarding the orders of architecture in favour of more relevant motifs. The *Building and Engineering Journal* supported this nationalistic trend.

> As we in Australia, are also awakening to a national decorative art of our own in which the Waratah, Stenocarpus, Banksias and other of our native fauna will replace the stereotyped Corinthian, and other Greek decorations, an art in which common sense and broader intelligence will carry the day over a narrow pedantism fettered with traditions, which have nothing in common with us…

The writer has used very similar wording to T. G Jackson, who had sought to ‘escape from the fetters of prescription and precedent’ of neoclassical architecture. The recently arrived architects, Vernon and Joseland, McRae, Hennessy and Sulman in NSW, Addison in Queensland, Henry Kemp in Melbourne and Temple Poole in Western Australia had largely thrown off the fetters of the neoclassical tradition. Discarding the orders was not yet widespread in public architecture but was clearly evident in Henry Hobson Richardson’s work in America and could be seen in the technological institutes designed by William Kemp in Sydney, Bathurst and Newcastle.

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65 *Building and Engineering Journal*, 29 June 1889
66 Jackson, *Recollections of Thomas Graham Jackson 1835-1934*, p. 58
Norman Selfe’s first house, Amesbury in Ashfield, which he largely designed himself, was illustrated and described in *The Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News* in May 1888 (figure 5.33). Terracotta panels, with lyre birds sculpted by Henry, were employed on the exterior. Selfe had replaced the repetitive cast iron lace with timber spindles and fretwork.

The verandah and balcony which are without any ironwork whatever are Australian in character.

The gardens are depicted as containing Australian plants: Norfolk Island pines and ferns.

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67 Amesbury, 78 Alt Street, Ashfield survives however the extensive grounds have been subdivided. The house is a heritage item, listed on the Ashfield LEP and the State Heritage Register.

68 *Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News*, 5 May 1888
Vernon and Joseland similarly tried to achieve changes in architectural taste through their built work and their competition designs. In the late 1880s their designs and a number of favourable reviews had appeared in the local architectural press. Ideas emanating from London that the English-trained architects had applied to domestic and commercial architecture in NSW during the 1880s would soon be applied to the design of public buildings.

Vernon’s work in Sydney had been of a larger scale than any of his work in Hastings. Prior to his appointment as NSW Government Architect he had completed a number of city buildings including a new store for David Jones, commercial buildings in Bond Street, a public house in Redfern as well as the recent City Bank undertaken with Joseland. It was probably his recent competition designs that were the reason behind his selection for the position, as these demonstrated him to be a progressive architect keen to implement new ideas in the city. Sydney was a very competitive city then, as it is now, and wanted to be one of the leading colonial cities in the Empire. Colonial institutions were to be demolished to make way for new metropolitan buildings, markets, pavilion hospitals and public halls and libraries.

Vernon was persuaded to accept the position of NSW Government Architect by Sulman and the Minister for Public Works in late 1890. His motivation to take on the role reflects his strong social conscience and his desire for the ‘improvement of this city’ that is evidenced in his designs for model suburbs, commercial buildings and the redevelopment of Pitt Street.  

69 W.L. Vernon, on his plans for his retirement in The Sunday Times, 8 September 1912
CHAPTER 6  COLONIAL TO GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

This chapter discusses the internal changes within the Public Works Department that resulted in the alteration of the position of NSW Colonial Architect to that of Government Architect, the position to which Vernon was appointed in late 1890. The state of play in the other Australian colonies is briefly discussed. This chapter also traces the expansion of the GAB following the depression of the early 1890s when Vernon hired young architects and focused on design excellence, rather than, as the Minister intended, supervising architectural competitions. The concentration on design excellence allowed contemporary architectural ideas to be implemented in public architecture across NSW.

By 1890 the output of the Colonial Architect’s Office did not reflect the changes in architectural philosophy that the younger members of the profession, particularly the recent arrivals from England, were well aware of. During the 1880s there had been much criticism of Barnet who had occupied the position since 1862. John Horbury Hunt, in a letter to the Under Secretary for Public Works written in June 1890, described Barnet’s work as ‘unskillful in design, wasteful in material… our public buildings bristle with waste of this kind’. ¹ Sydney’s private architects, Hennessy, Hunt, Sulman, Vernon and Joseland and the Wardells were keeping pace with overseas architectural developments, the Colonial Architect’s Office was not. Architects lobbied the Minister for Public Works, seeking that the design of major public buildings be given out on a competitive

¹ State Records, formerly Archives Office of NSW, Special Bundles, SB 4/6263
John Horbury Hunt to the Under Secretary for Public Works 21 June 1890.
basis; many commercial buildings and philanthropic institutions were already being designed in this manner.\(^2\)

In 1890 the Minister for Public Works altered the position from Colonial Architect to Government Architect; intending the role become a supervisory one, overseeing design competitions and documentation prepared by private sector architects. The Minister did not consider any of the initial 40 applicants suitable for the newly created position of NSW Government Architect.\(^3\) He agreed to the

…substitution in place of that gentleman, [Barnet] whose ability and integrity I am perfectly willing to admit, of a younger and more modern man, who will supervise the competitive plans and specifications of other men.\(^4\)

The position of NSW Colonial Architect was established by Governor Macquarie, who appointed Francis Greenway, an architect transported for forgery, to the position in 1814. The Colonial Architect’s role was to design buildings for the administration of the Colony, primarily court houses and post offices. Lachlan Macquarie’s aide-de camp, Lieutenant John Watts, also designed civil and military buildings for the fledgling colony, including the Military Hospital on Observatory Hill (figure 6.1), basing his designs on the work of the

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3 Anon, The Cyclopedia of N.S.W., Biographical entry on W. L. Vernon, p. 409
4 State Records, formerly Archives Office of NSW, Special Bundles SB 4/6263 Cabinet Papers, Bruce Smith, Minister for Public Works, 6 May 1891
Royal Engineers in the West Indies where he had previously served.\(^5\)

From the mid 1830s the Royal Engineers served in Australia, designing buildings for the convict establishments in NSW, Tasmania and on Norfolk Island. Trained in practical building methods, the Royal Engineers were responsible for the design and construction of military buildings and infrastructure throughout the British Empire.\(^6\)

The spread of new technologies and standard designs was achieved through their published papers and by the engineers who traveled the world in the course of their duties. The influence of their standard designs can be traced in institutional buildings throughout the Australian colonies until the 1860s.\(^7\)

British institutions also formed the model for the design of colonial institutions, also influencing place names and layouts. Bedlam Point on the Parramatta River below the Tarban Creek Asylum (later the

\(^5\) Now the National Trust Centre, the building was substantially altered, and the encircling verandah infilled by Mortimer Lewis when the building was converted into the Fort Street School. The original form can be seen in *Historic Sydney as seen by its Early Artists*, Sydney, Doubleday, 1993 plate 15.

\(^6\) An idea of the training that the Royal Engineers received can be found in C. W. Pasley, *Outline of a Course of Practical Architecture* first printed in 1826. The lectures remained in use until at least the 1860s when they were reprinted. C. W. Pasley, *Practical Architecture*, Donhead St Mary, Donhead 2001 (Facsimile edition).

\(^7\) James Semple Kerr has traced many of the prototypes in his studies of Australian penal establishments: *Design for Convicts* and the exhibition catalogue: *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*. 

Figure 6.1
Edmund Blacket, sketch of the Military Hospital, Observatory Hill, Sydney 1842

The building was substantially altered in the 1850s by Mortimer Lewis and converted into the Fort Street School. It is now the National Trust centre.
Gladesville Asylum) is named for the infamous lunatic asylum in London. Mortimer Lewis, the Colonial Architect, ‘took the general idea for Tarban Creek [Asylum] from an establishment at Dundee’.8 By 1840 Lewis was collaborating with Major George Barney, the Commanding Royal Engineer, over the design of Darlinghurst Gaol, a design based on English prototypes advocated by the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline (SIPD).9 The separate facility for boys at Safety Cove near Port Arthur in Tasmania was modelled on the Parkhurst prison for boys on the Isle of White.10

Two of the Governors of NSW, Sir George Gipps and Sir William Thomas Denison, began their careers in the Corps of the Royal Engineers, and continued to take an interest in the design of the state’s public buildings. Under Denison’s guidance, technologically advanced buildings and civil engineering works were constructed in Australia during the 1850s. Equal in scale and complexity to projects constructed in England, technological advances were employed that had been outlined in the Royal Engineer’s journal.11 Standard drawings were held in the Royal Engineers Offices in Sydney and in Hobart (figure 6.2).12 Henry Ginn, the first Colonial Architect in Victoria, had been a clerk of works with the Royal Engineers Department in NSW before he accepted the position of Clerk of Works in Port Philip. His father had also been a clerk of works with the Royal Engineers.

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9 Kerr, Out of Sight, Out of Mind, plates 45 and 46.
10 Kerr, Design for Convicts, p. 142-143.
11 W.T. Denison had edited this journal in the early 1840s, contributing papers explaining new building techniques including the use of concrete.
12 The Royal Engineers drawings from the Hobart Office were transferred to the Tasmanian Public Works Department and can be found in the Tasmanian Archives Series PWD 266. A list of the transferred drawings is held at PWD 249. A list of the drawings held by Major George Barney in the Sydney Office is held in the Public Records Office in London. PRO WO 55/855.
Edmund Blacket, when he commenced his term in 1849, requested one assistant, indicating that the role of the Colonial Architect was relatively small. In contrast to the extensive work being undertaken by the military engineers, the output of colonial architect in the 1850s was limited. By the time Barnet took office in 1862 the staff, who now looked after 324 public buildings, had increased to nine. When Vernon commenced his term in office in late 1890 he inherited a staff of 64 and 1351 public buildings to maintain. Under Vernon the office continued to expand.

When convict transportation was halted in the 1840s, the responsibility for the government of the colony of NSW was handed over to the Legislative Assembly and the Royal Engineers transferred to other colonial outposts. Some elected to resign their commissions and remain in Australia; former military engineers dominated the fledgling Public Works Department (PWD) formed in 1857, and for decades the separate branches designed buildings as well as civil structures.  

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13 Morton Herman, *The Blackets, An Era of Australian Architecture*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1977, p. 27  
The design of fortifications and lighthouses was transferred from the Harbours and Rivers branch of the PWD to the Colonial Architect during Barnet’s term in office. Schools and Technical Colleges were the responsibility of the Architect for the Department of Public Instruction. At the University of Sydney the Colonial Architect designed the first stage of the Medical School (figure 6.3). The role of the Colonial Architect also included the design of furniture for public buildings and official residences; furniture having been made by the convict labour force in the government controlled lumberyards. This trend continued under the Government Architect however the furniture rarely remains in the building it was designed for and the majority of the drawings do not appear to have survived. The state’s court houses are the exception; many of the courtrooms and judges chambers retain their original cedar furniture.
During the nineteenth century, English institutions continued to be used as a model for colonial institutions, both state and charitable. The extensive Callan Park Lunatic Asylum at Rozelle is modeled on northern hemisphere examples; the Medical Superintendent, Dr Frederick Norton Manning, accompanied by the Colonial Architect, visited overseas institutions to study their layout in detail. The plan of Carrington Convalescent Hospital at Camden, designed by Harry Kent in the late 1880s, is almost identical to Ernest Turner’s model cottage hospital illustrated in Burdett’s study of cottage hospitals in Great Britain, Ireland and America (Figures 6.5 and 6.6). No modifications were needed to suit the Australian climate; the design already included verandahs.

Architectural Priests

The 1880s were a time of great prosperity in Australia. Elaborate public buildings that are clear indicators of economic conditions and High Victorian taste, such as Barnet’s regional court houses at Goulburn and Bathurst, continue to be used today. The general output of the Colonial Architect’s Office during Barnet’s term in office indicates a preference for the Italianate. His occasional essays in the Gothic Revival, such as the mortuary stations at Redfern and the Rookwood Necropolis (figure 6.4), are known internationally, having been included in James Stevens Curl’s Victorian Architecture.16

15 Model Pavilion, Fever, General or Convalescent Hospital designed by Ernest Turner, illustrated in Henry Burdett, Cottage Hospitals, Cottage Fever and Convalescent, their Progress, Management and Work in Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of America, London, Scientific Press, 1896. The Carrington Hospital and its extensive grounds survive today, and are used as an aged care facility.

16 The Rookwood Necropolis Receiving Station was dismantled and re-erected in Canberra where it now serves as All Saints Anglican Church, Ainslie. The building when in use as the receiving station is illustrated in Andrews, Australian Gothic, The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s, plate 13, Stevens Curl, Victorian Architecture, p. 279.
Figure 6.5
Harry Kent, Plan of the Carrington Convalescent Hospital, Camden, late 1880s.

Figure 6.6
Ernest Turner, Model Pavilion, Fever, General or Convalescent Cottage Hospital, 1870s.
For substantial public buildings, the neoclassical was generally preferred in both Victoria and Queensland. The ‘grand classical pile’ that is the Brisbane Treasury Building, completed in 1889, was the work of the Melbourne architect John James Clark. Clark, who trained in the Melbourne Public Works Department, designed public buildings in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia in partnership with his brother George, who was an engineer, or with his son. His work was wide-ranging and included lunatic asylums, hospitals, railway stations, customs houses, treasuries and mints. For 18 years Clark worked for Wardell. The pair collaborated on the design of Government House in Melbourne, which, unlike the Sydney example, was designed locally. Wardell’s preference was clearly the Gothic Revival; Clark’s preference was for the neoclassical.

The competition entries for the new Queensland Museum in 1888 introduced a wider range of stylistic choices. In the banded stone and red brickwork of the prize-winning design by George Addison a new palette of materials for public buildings emerged (figure 6.7).

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17 Bingham-Hall, A Short History of Brisbane Architecture, p. 32
18 ADB entry Clark, John James (1838-1915)
In Sydney this same palette of materials could be found at Leura in Bellevue Hill, designed by Vernon in 1890 and would soon be employed in public buildings.

In the late 1880s public architecture in Melbourne was more progressive and varied than in NSW, and a range of influences can be seen in the design of educational buildings. The Former Working Men’s College (RMIT), the first stage of which was designed by Terry and Oakden with Nahum Barnet in 1885 is Gothic Revival in style, as is the substantial second stage to La Trobe Street designed by Oakden, Addison and Kemp. In contrast to the Gothic Revival style of the main quadrangle of Melbourne University, the former Teachers College (1888-1891) by Henry Bastow and John Marsden of the Victorian Public Works Department is a red brick Queen Anne Revival style building with Flemish gables (figure 6.8). The plan, which segregated male and female students, was based on the English co-educational teachers training college, Homerton College.

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19 The overall masterplan has been attributed to Oakden, who taught at the Working Men’s College. Goad, Melbourne Architecture, p. 63

Figure 6.8
Henry Bastow and John Marsden, Public Works Department, the former Teacher’s College, University of Melbourne, 1888-1891

This building is now the School of Graduate Studies.
Such segregation was standard in educational buildings in England and in Australia at all levels, a trend that continued well into the twentieth-century. The Queen Anne Revival style had been used in London and in Cambridge for educational buildings since the 1870s. Marsden also designed a number of post offices in this style including Elsternwick, whilst Bastow employed the style for primary school No. 2798 at Richmond and the infants school at Glenferrie Primary School.

It would appear that of the Colonial and Government Architects in the Australian colonies, it was Temple Poole, working in Western Australia, who was the most progressive, having been working in London in the early 1880s prior to his arrival in Perth in 1885. In Western Australia the preference had long been English sources rather than the Italianate. This preference is evident in Richard Roach Jewell’s design for Government House in St George’s Terrace, Perth of 1859, a ‘simple imitation of Tudor brickwork and cornice’

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20 Goad, Melbourne Architecture, p. 69
The towers resemble those of Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. Temple Poole’s Queen Anne Revival style addition to the nearby Government Buildings continues the English architectural vocabulary initially selected by Jewell, but is no imitation (figure 6.10). The additions are reminiscent of Nesfield’s reworking of the main front of Kinmel Park. Nesfield’s sources are recorded; he and his client had visited Hampton Court together.

In NSW it was clear to the private sector architects such as Hunt, who closely followed international architectural developments, that Barnet’s year abroad in 1885 had not substantially altered his architectural ideas. Barnet was aware of, but disliked, current London architecture, particularly the Queen Anne Revival, remaining strongly influenced by the styles that had been prevalent in the London in the mid nineteenth century. Like so many of his mid nineteenth century contemporaries he had completely misunderstood The Stones of Venice.

22 Richard Road Jewell, quoted in Oldham, George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897, p. 111
24 Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900, p. 45
25 Barnet, Architectural Work in NSW 1788-1899
Most of them, when Ruskin tried to illustrate the universal laws by *The Stones of Venice*, seem to have thought that he meant they were to set up puerile imitations at Exeter and Edinburgh of Venetian elevations as represented in the book illustrations.26

Morris and Lethaby both believed that the Italianate was not suitable for use in England; it was anti-national and had resulted in the death of the traditional art of English building.

The new way of building imported into these lands was no longer a customary art growing up from the bottom and out of the hearts of the people. It was a ‘taste’ imposed on the top as part of a subtle scheme for dividing off the gentility from the servility. In England, Italian Art (so-called) became a badge of the superiority claimed by traveled people, especially those of the grand tour; over the people at home. It was an Architecture of Aristocracy provided by trained middlemen of ‘taste’, who now wedged themselves in between the work and the workers, who were consequently beaten down to the status of mere executioners of patterns provided by a hierarchy of architectural priests. So fully was the myth of the foreignness of ‘culture’ accepted that the national arts were flattened out and destroyed in the name of gentility, learning and ‘taste’. The practical building artist was thus terrorized into accepting the belief that his ‘betters’ knew mysteries and correctitudes and that his part was but to do and obey in working out their whims, but so it was and remains.27

In the eyes of Hunt and other private sector architects, one of these despised architectural priests was the NSW Colonial Architect.

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26 Lethaby, *Philip Webb and his Work*, p. 84
27 Lethaby, *Philip Webb and his Work*, p. 64
Barnet’s idea of good taste can be seen in the design of the General Post Office in Martin Place in Sydney (1866-1874) (figure 6.11), a design derived from the arcaded palaces of Venetian merchants, and the smaller Italianate court houses and post offices across the state, such as the Goulburn Post Office of 1881 (figure 6.12). At the end of his term in office Barnet’s architecture was seen by many of his colleagues as old fashioned and, more importantly, did not represent the search for a distinctly Australian architecture. His work was precisely the type of design that Lethaby had criticised as being ‘the professional office-made versions of the art of any century’. \(^2^8\) In the local architectural press Barnet’s body of work was likened to a flock of sheep, in that it was almost impossible to tell one design from another. \(^2^9\) Critics complained that his additions to the Australian Museum (figure 6.13) were

> Crowded with heavy pillars which waste and obstruct light, the internal walls are broken by angles and recesses, there is

\(^2^8\) Lethaby, Philip Webb and his Work, p. 146  
\(^2^9\) Buildings and Engineering Journal, 11 August 1888 p. 97
a useless gallery above the second floor, and there is, in every part of the building, abundant evidence of the architect’s desire to subordinate utility to ornament.30

Barnet continued to subordinate utility to ornament and was replaced by Vernon, an architect whose work was considered by Sulman and the Minister for Public Works to be progressive.

Vernon’s Appointment

In May 1890, although the newly created position of Government Architect had already been advertised, the Minister for Public Works appointed a panel of prominent Sydney architects to give advice regarding the salary and duties. The members were Benjamin Backhouse, Hunt, George Allen Mansfield, Thomas Rowe, Sulman, Vernon and Wardell, all of whom had designed substantial Sydney buildings. Mansfield thought the salary too low, and Vernon did not ‘appear to entertain the idea of appointing a supervising architect’.31

30 Criticism of the design of the NSW Parliament, quoted in the Entry on the Australian Museum in Jahn, Sydney Architecture, p. 51
31 State Records (former AONSW) Special Bundles SB 2/889 Reorganisation of the Government Architects Office
Jamest Barnet, extensions to the Australian Museum, College Street, undated scheme, circa 1860s

Barnet’s grandiose scheme for additions to the Australian Museum, of which only the portion fronting College Street was built (RHS). The section shown in black is the original portion of the museum. The Barnet wing was completed in 1868.
Supervising the design work of others would not have been personally or professionally satisfying. Although he had previously supported the concept of architectural competitions, this support would have been to secure a good design outcome, in preference to the giving out of the commission to a business associate, as so often occurred in NSW.

Mansfield, Rowe and Backhouse had all practised in Sydney for many years and were unlikely to have been offered the position due to their respective ages. Hunt, born in 1838, Vernon, born in 1846, and Sulman, born in 1849, were the most likely contenders. Wardell was nearing retirement and was not well. Vernon had considerable experience in designing public buildings in Sussex, including the now demolished Royal Concert Hall and the Claremont buildings. He had exhibited a public building at the Royal Academy, whereas Sulman had exhibited private residences and churches.

Vernon had the added advantage of having been in partnership with Wardell, an architect whose long experience with the design of public buildings in Victoria and NSW that the NSW Government clearly valued. Wardell had given advice regarding the carvings on the GPO, carvings many considered to be scandalous, and his opinion was sought regarding the alteration of the role of the Colonial Architect. Following Vernon’s appointment as Government Architect, Wardell’s advice was still sought. As he was also a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, he served as a juror in the design competition for the Pyrmont Bridge.
Initially the position of NSW Government Architect was offered to Sulman, who had no wish to give up his lucrative private practice for a relatively poorly paid government position, and it was he who suggested Vernon be approached. The other architects advising the Minister appear to have remained unaware of these behind-the-scenes negotiations. Sulman’s ulterior motive in suggesting Vernon for the position is also likely to have been aimed at furthering his own architectural career. Vernon, as a fellow RIBA member, would not tolerate the manipulation of competition outcomes. Reading between the lines in J. M. Freeland’s study of the development of the architectural profession in NSW, and his monograph on Hunt, Vernon appears to have been the one person agreeable to both Hunt and Sulman.32

Sulman had been fueling the long running battle between F. C. Jarret, the editor of *Building and Engineering Journal*, and Hunt.33 Jarret, somewhat outrageously, printed a suggestion that the senior members of the profession should oust Hunt as president of the Institute of Architects. Rowe, Mansfield, Wardell and Vernon responded; noting that not only was Hunt their president but also that he was a personal friend and was being unfairly maligned. The editor, revealing his bias, decided the best treatment for their reply was to ‘consign it to the waste paper basket’.34 These changing professional allegiances would ultimately lead to the demise of


Sulman’s alternative architectural association, the Palladian Club. Joseland and Hunt both helped to organise the inaugural Arts and Crafts Exhibition held in November 1892, indicating that past differences between Hunt and the younger English architects had largely been resolved.\(^{35}\)

Vernon publicly supported architectural competitions.

The [architectural] profession generally was to be invited to make this an occasion for the pointing out, both to the city authorities and Government, that the time had arrived when, in the interest of the people generally, the best talent procurable should be engaged upon all future public buildings, and that this can only be obtained by open competition by men of standing here.\(^{36}\)

Given his stated views, and his recent competition successes, it is no wonder that he did not initially apply for the position. In mid 1890 he was persuaded to change his mind and was appointed Government Architect of New South Wales on the 1\(^{st}\) August. The profession noticed that not only was Vernon appointed at a higher salary than that advertised, but also that he had not initially applied for the job. The *Cyclopedia of New South Wales* noted that he was ‘then earning an income in excess of what the appointment carried’.\(^{37}\) It is unlikely that he made the decision for financial reasons, as the full effect of the crash of 1890 had yet to be felt.

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\(^{35}\) Montana, *The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900*, p. 221

\(^{36}\) *Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News*, 22 February 1890 p. 174

Before he would accept the position, Vernon held extensive negotiations with the Minister for Public Works:

I should also like the opportunity at any convenient period after five years service of obtaining six month leave of absence on full pay, with the double object of rest and keeping myself abreast of the advance in matters connected with my profession in England and elsewhere.  

He clearly wished to remain a modern man and not suffer the fate of his predecessor. By including official board memberships and allowances he managed initially to obtain the same salary with the PWD that he had been earning in private practice. Following his first year in office he was not paid the salary or allowances promised, nor did he receive his leave entitlements. The surviving correspondence reveals that the matter was resolved by a Parliamentary Committee, who awarded him a year of leave on full pay at the end of his term. This was an unusual award to make; six months paid leave being the norm. The salary Vernon had requested was £1,200 pounds, considerably more than that of Temple Poole in Western Australia.

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38 ML MSS 6571 Letter from WLV to the Minister for Public Works regarding the position of Government Architect. 24 July 1890
39 ML MSS 6571 Box 3, Transcript of the Parliamentary Committee findings.
40 Oldham, George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897, p. 2
Joseland continued their recently established architectural practice. The two men remained friends and Walter’s son Hugh served his articles with Joseland during the 1890s before serving in the Boer War. On his return to Sydney in 1901 Hugh worked for the newly established Sydney Harbour Trust; an agency whose design output was not directly controlled by his father, where he could gain experience in the design of public buildings without any allegations of favoritism. He designed the Harbour Master’s residence on Goat Island (figure 6.15) and may have also designed the now demolished timber ferry wharves at Circular Quay. By 1903 Hugh was in partnership with Joseland, a partnership which lasted until World War I. In 1916 he rejoined his regiment. On his return Hugh did not rejoin the firm, preferring to work on his own. Joseland took on a new partner, the English-trained architect Frederick Charles Glynn Gilling. Walter and Hugh do not appear to have ever collaborated on a project, however the similarities in their work indicate shared views. A number of buildings designed by Joseland and Vernon in 1913, such as the Sargood’s Warehouse in York Street, have been attributed to Walter (figure 6.14). The incorrect attributions are largely due to both of the Vernons and Joseland strictly adhering to the truthful use of materials, detailing brickwork and sandstone in a similar manner.41 All three architects had become proponents of the Free Style.

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41 The two partnerships were different in title, the more senior partner being listed first. Vernon and Joseland was the partnership with Walter during the late 1890s, Joseland and Vernon was the later partnership with Hugh.
Accepting the position of Government Architect, combined with the severe depression of the 1890s, had an impact on Vernon’s finances. During 1895 when their new house Wendover at Normanhurst on the upper North Shore was being built, the Vernon family moved to a smaller house in the Neutral Bay Estate, changing the name of the house from Merstham to St Helens. The house is one of the series of Wycombe Road houses designed by Vernon as an investment for E. L. Jones. Penshurst was retained and leased until its sale in 1913 shortly before Vernon’s death. The correspondence between

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42 Hugh Vernon’s Sketch Book ML PXA 876 Volume 4
43 Vernon included the sale brochure in his scrapbook. Box 3 Vernon papers ML MSS 6571
Walter and Arthur Vernon makes mention of the poor state of Walter’s finances, the long depression in Australia was compounded by the poor management of the Hastings investment properties by Frank Humphreys.44 Walter was in debt to his cousin Arthur, who, by 1895, had taken over the management of the Hastings properties. To finance the building of Wendover, the most substantial property, No. 6 Warrior Gardens, had been sold, presumably to the ‘Misses Backhouse’ who had an option to purchase the house.45 By 1912 Vernon had also sold the second most valuable property, No. 4 Warrior Gardens. This sale is also likely to have been to finance a building project, a five bedroom house fronting New South Head Road in the Eastern Suburbs, intended for his retirement.46

The Government Architect’s Branch (GAB)

With the exception of Wendover, his new house at Normanhurst, Vernon designed public buildings from 1890 until his retirement in 1911. As NSW Government Architect he was not permitted to take on private commissions. By 1911 the distribution in the responsibility for the design of public buildings in NSW had altered considerably, and new specialist building types (such as experiment farms, science faculties and cancer wards) had emerged. The responsibility for the design of public schools, technical institutes, public hospitals and major railway stations had been transferred to the Government Architect.

44 Correspondence with Arthur Vernon, Box 3, Vernon papers ML MSS 6571
45 Half Yearly Accounts, Box 3, Vernon papers ML MSS 6571
46 The drawings of this residence survive in the Vernon papers, the house appears to have been demolished. The design was approved by Woollahra Council in August 1913. Vernon did not live to see it completed. ML MSS 6571
Barnet’s work was always hierarchical, the architectural form, the scale of the building and the extent of ornament was an expression of the status of the building within its parent department, and the status of the public servants who occupied the building. This hierarchy could also be found in the work of the Royal Engineers, many of whose responsibilities the Colonial Architect took over; the accommodation provided for different classes of military officers was reflected in the size and grandeur of their quarters. Such a hierarchy of accommodation survives in the Australian armed forces today.

Vernon was well aware of military hierarchies, attaining the rank of Colonel in the Australian Mounted Regiments, however departmental hierarchies were not an important factor in his work. The Broken Hill Court House was not a major court house, and was designed with a verandah to part of the main facade (figure 6.16). In the public buildings designed under Vernon the institutional hierarchy in NSW is far less evident than in designs of the Colonial Architects; designs were now driven by the need to provide sunlight.
fresh air and good ventilation for all of the occupants. The generous arcade of the court house at Hay and the arcaded courtyards at the Bourke and Wagga Wagga court houses were designed to keep the building cool rather than to indicate the status of the court within the hierarchy of NSW justice system. Peter Bridges has noted that although Barnet employed the arcade and colonnade in the design of post offices and court houses

These devices were more stylistic than functional and are not used in places where they were much more needed, as at Broken Hill, Dubbo or Balranald. He never adopted such planning devices as the shaded walkways, cross-ventilated rooms and open courtyards which his successor, Vernon, was to use to such practical effect.47

There is only one major building by Barnet that gives an ‘indication of the awareness of the impact of climatic conditions on architectural design’ and that is Grafton Court House where the wide colonnade has been attached to what is essentially a Palladian composition (figure 6.17).48

47 Bridges, James Barnet 1827 –1904 in Tanner, Architects of Australia, p. 76
48 Bridges, James Barnet 1827 –1904 in Tanner, Architects of Australia, p. 76
Architectural Competitions

When the change in the role of the Colonial Architect was made, it was intended that competitions be held for all buildings costing in excess of 5,000 pounds. Vernon drew up the rules, which were vetted by the same architects who advised the minister on the role of the Government Architect. Vernon had

Taken the office with the utmost consideration and diffidence, because there was to be a departure from the established order of things, and that the new creation was to be in touch with the profession, and to work with it. Probably there were very good reasons why the old order of things were as they were; but in the future the occupant of the position, as at present constituted, would work with the profession in the work of designing and erecting public buildings.49

Only three architectural competitions were held. The initial competition for Grafton Gaol had run smoothly; as did the construction. The second competition, for the design of a country lunatic asylum, was a disaster. The prolonged battle, from 1891 until 1894, over the design of the Rossiville Hospital (later known the Kenmore Hospital) near Goulburn resulted in Vernon establishing the Government Architect’s Office (GAB) as a design office, rather than administering the work of others. Vernon’s victory in the ‘glorious battle of Kenmore’ was celebrated in a poem read at the Branch’s annual picnic that he kept in his scrapbook.50

49 Building and Engineering Journal, 9 August 1890 p. 273
50 Vernon’s Scrapbooks ML MSS 675 I Vernon Papers, Box 3
Sulman and Power, who had been announced the first prizewinner of the Rossiville Hospital Competition in 1892, were not awarded the commission to undertake the detailed design, as the Minister of Public Works sought to award the commission to his business associate John Kirkpatrick. The attempt to manipulate the competition outcome showed that Vernon, supported by Hunt and the medical expert Dr Norton Manning, could not control the fairness of the competition when it was the Minister for Public Works himself who sought to override the competition results.

The judging panel had initially awarded Kirkpatrick’s design second prize, a decision supported by the Architect to the Commissioner of Lunacy in England. When he could not persuade the judges to alter their decision and accept Kirkpatrick’s design, William Lyne, the Minister for Public Works, sent the designs to England for a second time. Dr Norton Manning refused to alter his decision; he was not prepared to accept a design whose layout was not up-to-date in medical terms. Hunt and Vernon likewise would not alter their verdict; neither architect was prepared to accept a design each believed to be inferior. Sulman had been correct in his assessment of Vernon’s ethics when it came to architectural competitions, however this was not a stance that pleased the politicians.

By the time the revised advice from the Commissioner of Lunacy reached Australia, a new Minister for Public Works was in office. At his insistence the Government Architect prepared a composite scheme, selecting the best features of each prizewinning design. A

51 Sir John Sulman, Papers including correspondence, scrapbooks, diaries, note books and lecture notes, 1869-1932 ML MSS 4480
Scheme For Rossiville, Building and Engineering Journal, 30 July 1892
similar ministerial demand occurred following the competitions for the Pyrmont Bridge and the Federal Capital of Canberra. Designing by combining elements of competitions schemes was clearly not what Vernon had intended his role to be. Having not been in office for long, he accepted the task for Kenmore. When it came to the design of Canberra he was, George Taylor recalled, instrumental in the abandonment of the composite scheme.\textsuperscript{52} Percy Allan’s design for the Pyrmont Bridge is likewise not a composite of the mediocre competition designs, but an elegant, contemporary design that reflects developments in bridge design in England, Europe and the United States of America.\textsuperscript{53}

Reynolds notes that

Interestingly it was Vernon himself who motivated the Minister’s rejection of architectural competitions. By submitting a well-reasoned proposal to the Minister that the Government Architect’s Branch could, for less than half the cost, accomplish the same work performed by the competition winner, Vernon was able to convince the Minister that the Government could produce its buildings without outside assistance.\textsuperscript{54}

In the depressed economy of the 1890s Vernon’s suggestion that his branch could design public buildings for less cost than by competition was welcomed by the Minister for Public Works.\textsuperscript{55} The

\textsuperscript{52} Taylor, George Augustine. \textit{Town Planning For Australia}, Sydney, Building Ltd, 1914 p. 57-58

\textsuperscript{53} The competitions designs, and Allan’s final design are now held by the NSW State Records

\textsuperscript{54} Reynolds, \textit{The Evolution of the Government Architect's Branch, NSW PWD, 1788-1911}, p. 326

\textsuperscript{55} ML MSS 6751 Vernon Papers,
Lists of courthouses designed by Vernon and Barnet
competition expenses and fees for the construction of Grafton Gaol, Vernon had noted, amounted to £1,352 pounds whereas the cost of undertaking the work in-house would have only been £440 pounds (figure 6.18). The substitution of brick for render or stonework contributed to this cost difference, however the selection of brick was not undertaken primarily for cost reasons, it was also an aesthetic choice. Presumably his buildings were also cheaper than the elaborately ornamented Richardsonian Romanesque buildings designed by William Kemp, the Architect for the Department of Public Instruction. Kemp’s successor James Sven Wigram likewise detailed less ornamented buildings reflecting both changing architectural taste and the depressed economy of the 1890s. Privately Vernon believed that the

Monopolizing of great works that are handled by private means in other countries restricts to an appreciable extent the field of architectural and engineering possibilities.

Sulman, in persuading Vernon to accept the position of Government Architect, was expecting that he would win competitions and receive substantial Government work. What he was not expecting

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56 NSW Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1894-95 Volume VI p. 1275
57 Building, 12 August 1911 p. 46
was that Vernon would persuade the newly appointed Minister that the design work could be done in a more cost-effective manner in-house. Had he listened to Vernon’s earlier comments regarding the position, Sulman might have realised that Vernon did not support the idea of a supervising architect and had quite plainly said so.\textsuperscript{58} For ‘hards’ like Vernon and Hunt, who worked their ideas out through building, the supervision of the designs of others would have been untenable.

Sulman was unable to participate in the Grafton Gaol competition as the Minister had asked him to adjudicate. A third competition, for the Hawkesbury Agricultural College at Richmond was held on behalf of the Department of Mines and Agriculture. This was to be the last external competition held during Vernon’s term in office. The designs for a new Mint at Dawes Point (which did not proceed), Central Railway Station, the Registrar General’s Office and the State Library were all prepared using a competitive process, with senior designers in the GAB each preparing a scheme. Private sector architectural firms were not involved.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{58} State Records (former AONSW) Special Bundles SB 2/889
Reorganisation of the Government Architects Office.

\textsuperscript{59} The internal competitions for the design of major public buildings in Sydney is traced in the chapter on the Government Architects Branch from 1890 until 1911 in Reynolds, The Evolution of the Government Architect’s Branch, NSW PWD, 1788-1911.
The Sydney Architectural Association

The economic depression in the early 1890s had a disastrous impact on the architectural profession in Australia, forcing many Sydney and Melbourne architects to close their offices. Some relocated to Western Australia, whilst others such as Samuel Hurst Seager and John Smedley left the country. The GAB, largely immune to the economic conditions that decimated the private architectural firms, continued to produce a steady flow of buildings, although staff numbers were reduced through retirement. Another casualty of the depression was the local architectural clubs: the Palladian Club and the Sydney Architectural Association folded, the local chapter of the Institute of Architects was the only association to survive.

The demise of the Palladian Club was not entirely due to the depression. Members, unhappy with the change in focus from a book club to a political vehicle for their ambitious leader, disbanded the club whilst Sulman was traveling overseas in 1892. Formed in January 1891, the Sydney Architectural Association was dominated by the London-trained architects: Edward Jeffreson Jackson, Richard Howard Joseland, Arthur Stanton Cook, Vernon and the first president, New-Zealand born Samuel Hurst Seager. Oakeshott was not a founder member; he arrived in Sydney some months after the association had been formed.

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60 The impact of the 1890s depression on the architectural scene in Melbourne is described in Edquist, Harold Desbrowe-Annear, A Life in Architecture. Ian Kelly has traced the architects designing houses in Perth between 1890 and 1915, many of whom headed west with the discovery of gold, in his Masters thesis, Ian Phillip Kelly, The Development of Housing in Perth 1890-1915, M. Arch thesis, University of Western Australia.


62 Building and Engineering Journal, January 1891
The Sydney Architectural Association sought to implement the changes that its founder members had observed in architecture in London. The local architectural press noted that at the Association ‘facilities for the study of civil architecture’ had been established. The debate was largely about the city buildings. Vernon and Joseland’s competition design for the Australian Club was exhibited at the May 1891 meeting and again at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition held in November the following year. Formed to provide a forum for ‘discussing, practicing and providing information on architecture in its most direct aspect of the designing of buildings’.

Peter Reynolds believes that the Sydney Architectural Association ‘assisted with the movement away from monumentality’. In NSW the move away from monumentality, which coincides exactly with Vernon’s appointment and the establishment of the GAB in late 1890, was primarily evident in public architecture, as the depressed economy resulted in few domestic or commercial commissions. This trend was already evident in the design work of Wardell and Vernon and examples have been given in the previous chapter.

It was not just in the design of post offices, as Reynolds asserts, that a less monumental architecture emerged in NSW. Under Vernon’s guidance the move away from monumentality that could already be seen in his domestic and commercial architecture in the 1880s can be traced in the designs of hospitals, schools, court houses,

63 Building and Engineering Journal, January 1891
64 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 5 November 1892, p. 224
67 Refer to the chapter on Walter Liberty Vernon from Reynolds, The Evolution of the Government Architects Branch of the NSW Department of Public Works, 1788-1991
police stations and post offices across NSW. These informal designs for public buildings were not well known amongst the profession as the more revolutionary buildings were set within existing institutional complexes or in remote county towns. It would become evident in the later criticisms of the designs of the GAB, including John Barlow and George Sydney Jones’ criticisms of the designs for the new parliament house and the Art Gallery, that the profession was largely unaware of much of the branch’s progressive design work outside of the Sydney metropolitan area.

Reynolds believes that the Sydney Architectural Association ‘fostered the introduction of an architecture that had evolved from the contemporary Queen Anne Revival in Australian domestic work.’68 With the exception of the series of suburban schools designed by William Kemp, that were based on the design of London Board schools, the move away from monumentality that is evident in the output of the GAB in the early 1890s is not nearly so evident in the work of the other Association members during the lifespan of the organisation.

I have not been able to find any Sydney works by Seager. Other than Hollowforth at Kurraba Point, the residence for Dr Capper (now North Sydney Council Chambers) on the lower North Shore and a series of warehouses, Jackson did little architectural work during this period (Figures 4.32 and 6.19).69 Joseland continued to design housing for the model suburb at Kensington that he had begun in partnership with Vernon, a project that ultimately was not built, as

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69 William Tullock has noted that it was the design of warehouses that kept Jackson going during the depression and that from 1894 until 1899 he did not maintain an office. Tullock, Edward Jeaffreson Jackson, University of NSW, 1982
w Walter Liberty Vernon

well as designing more substantial houses such as Cossington in the Neutral Bay Estate.

By 1894 Joseland was the president, Seager having returned to New Zealand to take up a teaching position. Having previously taught at the South Kensington School of Art, Seager was an ideal choice of department head for the Canterbury College of Art in Christchurch, overseeing the department established to instruct both men and women in the ‘principles of architectural and decorative design’.70

Although born in New Zealand, he had studied and worked in London and traveled widely in Europe and is credited with the introduction of the Queen Anne Revival to Christchurch during mid 1880s.71 The remainder of Seager’s architectural work was undertaken in New Zealand; he achieved considerable success following his return to Christchurch. In the early 1930s he retired to Turramurra on the upper North Shore of Sydney, where his Sydney Architectural Association colleagues had all built their houses. His friends and colleagues from the Association were, however, no longer alive.

70 Ann Calhoun, The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870-1940, Women Make Their Mark, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 200 p. 64
71 NZDB Seager, Samuel Hurst 1855-1933, Builder, Draftsman, Architect, Town Planner

Figure 6.19
E. J. Jackson, Dr Capper’s House, North Sydney, 1892

This view shows the house as it appears today, in its extended configuration. The original configuration is shown in Figure 4.31. The former residence is now used as the North Sydney Council Chambers.
A Design Office

The buildings designed by the GAB in the early 1890s echo T. G. Jackson’s views presented in his essay in *Architecture, A Profession or an Art*:

For architecture to live again it must permeate every class of building. Time was when ugly building was not. In those days there were no architects as we understand them: or rather everyone who had to do with a building was an architect. And for architecture to live again she must cover the whole field of building as she once did; we must get rid of the distinction between architectural and non-architectural building. Architecture is simply the way of building well and beautifully, and this is the art which as a nation we have lost...

...Under the professional system what becomes of this vast field of ordinary building work? What provision is made for improving that? It is far more important to society to have the everyday buildings comely than to have a few good buildings floating in a tide of abominations.72

In the work of the GAB under Vernon every public building was intended to be a well-designed building, no matter what the scale or purpose. Once Vernon had established his branch as a design office with a constant flow of commissions for public buildings, he was able to employ younger, more progressive, and highly talented...

72 Lethaby, Philip Webb, His Life and Works, p. 82
designers. He advised his fellow Sydney Architectural Association members, that he intended to ‘steadily pursue artistic excellence’. Initially he preferred to appoint English or Scottish trained architects, who had previously exhibited or published their drawings, however this was to change as the local standard of architectural education improved.73

In the absence of a local School of Architecture, Sulman gave lectures in architectural history at the Sydney Institute of Technology (SIT) from 1887 onwards, as well as occasional lectures at the School of Engineering and later the School of Town Planning at the University of Sydney.74 Hunt took great pains to point out that Sulman was not, as he led his English colleagues to believe, a professor.75 The depression of the 1890s halted plans to establish a chair of architecture at the University of Sydney, this did not occur until after World War I when Leslie Wilkinson was appointed. PWD Cadets, including Cobden Parkes who would eventually attain the position of Government Architect, attended the architectural course at the SIT, a course co-ordinated by James Nangle and Alexander Martin.76

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73 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 11 April 1891
74 The entry on Sulman in the 1906 Who’s Who notes that he had been the Peter Nicoll Russell lecturer in Architecture since 1887. Russell’s bequest also funded the construction of the school of Engineering at the University of Sydney.
76 Undated reminiscences held by the GAB, believed to be by Cobden Parkes.
Throughout his term in office Vernon strove to ensure that the GAB remained a design office. Oakeshott was the first new appointment made, his drawing ability being well known, the results of his traveling scholarship, *Detail and Ornament of the Italian Renaissance*, had been published in 1888.77 By the end of 1894, when the worst of the depression was over, Vernon was able to take on six new staff including Gorrie McLeish Blair, John Barr; who was to become the branch’s Gothic specialist, Arthur Stanton Cook, Henry William Truefitt and Victor Wilshire. The positions were highly sought after, with 50 of the 72 applicants asked to sit the practical examination set by Vernon.

Arthur Stanton Cook had trained in London and had gained extensive experience in the design of public buildings whilst working in the London School Board Offices and with Thomas Collcutt and Henry Saxon Snell.78 Collcut specialised in town halls and Snell was well known internationally for his designs for metropolitan hospitals. Cook was involved in the detailed design and supervision of major buildings including the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney and additions to Government House.

Gorrie McLeish Blair and John Barr both remained in the GAB until the 1920s, continually competing against each other in internal design competitions. There could however only be one

77 Sulman, in his 1904 article on architectural books held in the library of the NSW chapter of the Institute of Architects notes that of Oakeshott’s drawings was held. George Oakeshott, *Detail and Ornament of the Italian Renaissance*, London, B. T Batsford, 1888
Government Architect, and the appointment of Blair as Acting Government Architect in mid June 1923 appears to have sparked Barr’s resignation. Barr then set up his own architectural practice and spent many years working on the design of the spires for the Anglican Cathedral in Melbourne, a church originally designed by Butterfield in 1878.79

A series of highly skilled architects worked under Vernon before entering or returning to private practice. These architects include Frank I’Anson Bloomfield, Frederick George Castleden, William Moyes, Cobden Parkes, Ruskin Rowe and Bertrand Waterhouse.80 Jackson had briefly worked for the Colonial Architect on the design of the first stage of the Medical School in the mid 1880s. Unable to obtain enough work in private practice, he eventually accepted a permanent position in the GAB circa 1901 and was involved with the detailed design of Challis House in Martin Place (figure 6.20) and the Female Penitentiary at Long Bay Gaol.

Vernon altered the internal hierarchy that had existed under the Colonial Architect, abolishing the ‘room’ system of assistant architects each with their own staff in favour of a single drawing office, under the control of the ‘designing architect in charge of the drawing office’.81 The initial design architect was George Oakeshott; on his resignation

79 The NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects minute books record that the Chapter Council wrote, in March 1925, to congratulate Barr on his winning the competition for the completion of St Paul’s, Melbourne. NSW Institute of Architects, Chapter Minute Books, March 1925. Philip Goad’s guide to Melbourne Architect incorrectly identifies the architect of the spires as James Barr: Goad, Melbourne Architecture, 1999, p. 51
80 Undated reminiscences held in the GAB, believed to be by Cobden Parkes
81 The alterations are described in more details in the chapter on Vernon in Reynolds, The Evolution of the Government Architects Branch of the NSW Department of Public Works, 1788-1991
in 1902 Edward Drew was appointed. The design architect position survived until the 1930s, the last holder of the position being Cobden Parkes. Drew, an English trained architect, had commenced working in the Colonial Architect’s office in 1883 and was one of the staff inherited by Vernon. He remained with the GAB until circa 1915. The designs for schools, fire stations, and a number of the buildings within The Rocks Resumed Area all bear his signature. In addition a Principal Assistant Architect was appointed as Vernon’s deputy; a position held for many years by George McRae, formerly the City Architect. These changes were finally implemented in 1897.

By hiring or transferring talented young designers and draughtsmen into his section, by holding internal design competitions, and by ensuring that the branch kept up with international developments through lectures and official and unofficial study tours Vernon ran an architectural office that focused on design quality. Under his leadership the branch operated as a hierarchy of designers, rather than divided by building types as it is today. In contrast the London

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82 The English-trained architect Edward Drew had joined the PWD in 1883, having previously worked in Dunedin, NZ. He had served his articles with the London-based architect Thomas Verity whose specialty was the design of theatres.
County Council (LCC) was structured by building type, with new divisions, such as fire stations, established as the need arose. During his term as Government Architect Cobden Parkes restructured the GAB in a similar manner, based on what he had observed during a study tour to England in 1938. Although he had visited the LCC in 1897, Vernon chose not to restrict his senior designers to a particular building type.

Vernon’s management of the GAB as a hierarchy of designers resulted in the high standard of design, in both metropolitan Sydney and in country towns. Even the most utilitarian of buildings was subjected to two levels of design approval. The output of his branch was a close collaboration between Vernon and his senior designers. Although he retained overall control by approving all drawings issued, Vernon gave his handpicked designers freedom in their detailed design work. When Blair, Barr, Truefitt and Oakeshott stayed back to work on competition designs he would often work late with them.83

A house drawing style or layout was not rigidly enforced and the drawings that survive are carefully composed works of art. In each case the drawings are signed by two designers and initialed or monogrammed by a third. The initials or monogram indicate who prepared the drawing, often those of a relatively senior designer, such as Barr or the Scottish trained William Moyes, who is reputed to have trained with Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow. The two signatures are the approval of the designer in charge of the drawing office and Vernon. When Vernon was away on site his

deputy, George McRae would sign the drawings. The requirement for his approval of drawings continued to be the mechanism Vernon employed to ensure that the designs emanating from this office kept up with international architectural developments. This design control had allowed him to immediately abandon the neoclassical and introduce a more contemporary public architecture.

Although Vernon was introducing major changes in public architecture within the GAB, debates about contemporary architecture continued to revolve around the design of major public buildings in Sydney. During his term in office very few major neoclassical buildings were constructed, primarily the Art Gallery of NSW, the Mitchell Wing of the State Library, the first stage of the Central Railway Station and Newcastle Post Office. The much-criticised scheme for a new Parliament House was not to eventuate.

The criticisms of the Art Gallery of NSW do not acknowledge that the building is an anomaly in the output of the GAB. G. S. Jones believed architecture should not merely be an ‘imitation of the dead past’, commenting in 1909 that:

We have a fine and costly building in the Art Gallery. Its general composition is good, and its detail refined, but the whole might have been done vastly better centuries since by a Greek or Roman architect. As a design it is admirable, but as a piece of modern architecture it fails simply because it is not modern. 84

This criticism of Vernon’s work is a little unfair, and is a criticism

84 George Sydney Jones quoted in Conrad Hamann, The Architecture of George Sydney Jones 1865-1937 from the RAIA NSW Chapter biographic file: George Sydney Jones
that could not have been leveled at the majority of his work, which deliberately did not contain réchauffées. G. S. Jones, in seeking an architecture ‘of our own time’, reflects what Viollet-le-Duc had sought decades before, in his essay on nineteenth century architecture.85 A Greek or Roman architect would have achieved better as they would have been working within a tradition not yet lost.

Throughout his term as Government Architect, Vernon was careful to ensure that his buildings were useful and did not subordinate utility to ornament, as his predecessor had done. On the rare occasions that he employed the neoclassical, the elements were cleverly composed, temple fronts were carefully sited in the landscape and details were beautifully carved. The temple front of the State Library overlooks the Botanic Gardens and the harbour, and is the only public building in the street to not have its main entrance from Macquarie Street. The temple front of the Art Gallery forms a backdrop to the domain where major public events were, and continue to be, held. Although Barnet’s wing to

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85 Hamann, The Architecture of George Sydney Jones 1865-1937
the Australian Museum overlooks Hyde Park, the entrance does not have the generous steps of the Library or Art Gallery. Barnet’s concern was, as he informed readers of the Illustrated London News, to design a ‘handsome and imposing mass of building’.  

Vernon’s Monopoly

Private architects, in particular John Barlow, abhorred Vernon’s monopoly on the design of public buildings, and there would continue to be public criticisms of the design of major public buildings during his term in office. Ironically it seems to have been Hugh Vernon’s complaint regarding Barlow’s column Architectural Grievances in Art and Architecture that sparked a debate at the Institute of Architects during 1908 as to whether the Government Architect’s position had originally been intended as merely a supervisory one. The Chapter Council would not publish a rejoinder unless documents were produced to show what the original intention of the appointment had been.


87 Barlow, John, Architectural Grievances in Art and Architecture, No. 5 of Volume IV 1907
Walter tried to keep out of the debate and did not respond to the requests from the Institute of Architects, forcing the Institute to seek an interview with him. Barlow produced ‘a number of extracts from professional papers published contemporaneously with Mr. Vernon’s appointment as Government Architect’ which he believed backed up the views he had expressed in his article.88 In the interview with the Institute Walter ‘intimated his desire that the matter should be dropped’.89 Barlow had no intention of letting the matter drop, as he had long been seeking competitions for major public works.

The Institute decided to send a deputation to the Minister for Public Works ‘to secure public competition for important government works’.90 The deputation ‘had met with such an unsympathetic reception’ and were informed ‘that their suggestion had been declined’.91 A new course of action was adopted by Barlow. The costs of the GAB producing designs in-house were asked for in Parliament. Vernon resigned from the Institute of Architects in May 1910 in protest at their questioning the figures that he presented to Parliament. The Council of the Institute of Architects expressed their ‘satisfaction at the Minister’s decision’ to ‘call for competitions for the principal public buildings in future’ that was reported in both the Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.92 No competitions were forthcoming. In 1911 Vernon reminded the Minister that

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88 NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects Minute Books, May 1908
89 NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects Minute Books, June 1908
90 NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects Minute Books, July 1908
91 NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects Minute Books, May 1910
92 NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects Minute Books January 1911
it has almost invariably happened that the history of competitions in NSW has been the history of failures, intrigues, recriminations and general dissatisfaction.\footnote{Vernon quoted in Reynolds, The Evolution of the Government Architect’s Branch, NSW PWD, 1788-1911, p. 374}

Instead of giving the work to the private sector, he recommended returning the responsibility for school design to the Department of Public Instruction.

‘All Skite Romanesque and Queen Anne’

With Vernon’s appointment the direct application of the designs of English institutions ceased, however the GAB continued to keep up with international developments in architecture. Vernon recorded visits to London by his senior staff in the annual reports; in the case of his own study tour a report was provided to the Minister. The abandonment of the neoclassical and the Gothic styles in Great Britain and the United States of America, particularly the work of Richardson on the eastern seaboard, influenced public architecture in Australia during the 1890s. Oakeshott, or Oakey as he was known, gave in-house lectures to the branch staff; his lecture on the Romanesque is likely to have been the Richardsonian variety. Mr. Wally Ellard entertained his colleagues at their annual picnic with the following ditty, which Vernon kept in his scrapbook,

\begin{quote}
Wrapped up in our \textit{Builders} and \textit{Architects}

Their pages we eagerly scan

Oakey’s lectures are having some grand effects

We all skite Romanesque and Queen Anne\footnote{ML MSS 6751 Box 3 Vernon Papers, Walter Liberty Vernon’s Scrapbook}
\end{quote}
Figure 6.23

A view of the completed courthouse was included in the PWD Annual Report in 1901.

Figure 6.24

Parkes Courthouse as it currently appears.
The GAB’s preference for the Richardsonian Romanesque and the Queen Anne can be seen in the court houses designed between 1891 and 1896; in the Queen Anne Revival style of the Hay Court House (figure 6.26) and the Banco Court in Sydney (figure 6.25) or the Richardson Romanesque of the court houses at Parkes (figure 6.23 - 6.24) and Bowral (figure 6.27). The selection of style depended on the availability of building materials and the size of building; the Queen Anne Revival was used for smaller, domestic scaled building. Following the precedent set by Richardson, the Romanesque was employed for larger scale buildings, particularly when good building stone was available locally.

In some respects the old order that Vernon had alluded to continued; the GAB remained a design office rather than becoming simply an administrative one. What changed was the underlying design philosophy; a concern for the health and comfort of the everyday worker emerged and the provision of sunlight, fresh air and ventilation became paramount rather than a concern for official hierarchies. Once Vernon had completed the buildings commenced under

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95 Building and Engineering Journal, 9 August 1890 p. 273
his predecessor; he was free to exercise his personal preference for truthful materials and details drawn from the vernacular. He immediately began to experiment with acclimatising the Queen Anne to suit country NSW, combining the hallmark details of the style with forms and details drawn from colonial architecture. In all but the most major public buildings the neoclassical was abandoned in favour of a more humane public architecture, an architecture with a more domestic scale and character that was carefully designed to not only respond to the climatic variations found in NSW but also to complement the existing architectural vocabulary.

Figure 6.26
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Hay Courthouse, 1892

Figure 6.27
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Bowral Courthouse, 1895
CHAPTER 7  TRANSFORMING THE QUEEN ANNE REVIVAL STYLE

Between Vernon’s appointment in 1890 and his visit to London in 1897, the output of the GAB shows a considerable degree of experimentation with the Queen Anne Revival style, evidence of a search for an appropriate and contemporary architectural expression for public buildings across NSW. The characteristics of this experimentation are examined in this chapter. This chapter also discusses Vernon’s study tour of mid 1897 and the changes in architectural thought that had occurred in London in the decade since his previous visit.

Vernon immediately sought to differentiate the output of the newly formed GAB from the work of his predecessor. In the early 1890s he was the leading NSW exponent of the emerging local variant of the Queen Anne Revival that today is known as the Federation style. Rather than employing the neoclassical for public buildings, he continued to experiment, as he had been doing since his arrival in Sydney, with acclimatising the Queen Anne Revival style to suit NSW. By 1890 the Queen Anne Revival style had become popular for both commercial and residential buildings in Sydney and Newcastle. In contrast to London, where a combination of brick and terracotta continued to be employed for buildings of this style, the characteristic motifs of the style in NSW were detailed to employ locally available materials: brick, render, roughcast, sandstone and more occasionally timber shingles or terracotta. This use of a wider range of materials stems from Vernon’s work in Sussex, and today it can still be seen in the suburban villas surrounding Markwick Gardens in St Leonards.
Newtown Post Office (1891)

Peter Reynolds has identified a suburban Sydney post office built in 1892, the Newtown Post Office, as the first public building recognisably designed by Vernon; a Shavian composition rather than the Italianate favoured by his predecessor.1 Located on the corner of King Street and Erskineville Road, the two-storey post office is constructed of red brick and sandstone and features a corner oriel window and Flemish gables (figures 7.1-7.3). The reason for the placement of the clock tower on the side street is not evident until one walks south from the University of Sydney; the clocktower rises above lower scale commercial buildings lining King Street. Had the tower been placed on the corner it would have been less visible from the commercial strip as King Street curves towards Newtown railway station. Already evident in the design in Vernon’s design for the Claremont buildings (Brassey Institute) in Hastings was the asymmetrical placement of a tower, providing changing vistas rather than terminating an axial view. Distant views, with the tower rising above the commercial strip, could be obtained in both cases.

The large arched windows to the ground floor denote the postal chamber; the now infilled archway to the first floor formed the balcony of the Postmaster’s residence. The design of the Newtown Post Office contains motifs subsequently used more successfully by Vernon, a tower creating a local landmark and the large arched windows to the ground floor denoting the public chamber. The use of a large arched window signifying the publicly accessible section of the building can be found in the design of the majority of suburban and country post offices and police stations by the GAB during the 1890s. A number of Vernon’s other post office designs from this era are less derivative compositions than Newtown, particularly the post office tower at Broken Hill, the post office at Maclean on the north coast and the suburban Sydney examples at Hunters Hill and Burwood.

Vernon used elements drawn from secular European buildings, combined with innovations introduced by Shaw in his commercial architecture in London in the early 1880s. In the Newtown Post Office, where the arched windows to the public chamber first appear, the detail is very similar to Shaw’s commercial work, particularly the Alliance Assurance Offices constructed in 1882-83.
The use of an arched window to the ground floor of a commercial building was uncommon in England until the precedent set by Shaw in Pall Mall. The small panes in the top sash of the ground floor arched windows, the use of brick and stone banding and the carved soffit to the oriel can all be found in the design of the Newtown Post Office. Shaw’s design was well known; Lethaby’s perspective was exhibited at the Royal Academy and subsequently published in the Building News in 1882 (figure 7.4). The offices were under construction whilst Vernon was working in London; St James Street was just across the park from his office in Great George Street, Westminster. Today the stone and brick of Shaw’s design still contrasts with the series of gentlemen’s clubs in Pall Mall.

The source for the architectural motifs employed by Shaw in his commercial architecture in London and Liverpool, and in his later designs for New Scotland Yard (1887), was the secular architecture of Germany and Holland that he had observed during his extended study tour in 1855. Shaw’s commercial architecture, particularly his use of motifs from the Low Countries, was influential in commercial architecture throughout the Australian colonies, with Shavian motifs employed by the architects who had trained or worked in London.

The Altenburg Rathaus or townhall (1562-64) (figure 7.6) that Shaw

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4 Stamp and Amery, Victorian Buildings of London 1837-1887, An Illustrated Guide, Entry 81 Alliance Assurance Offices, built 1881-82. Lethaby’s drawing is included with the entry.
5 Alliance Assurance Offices in Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, p. 424
6 Andrew Saint has pieced together the towns Shaw visited during 1855 from the surviving correspondence. Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, Note 29 to Chapter 1 p. 441. The original scheme and the revised scheme for New Scotland Yard are illustrated in plates 201 – 202. The characteristic corner oriel window appears in both schemes.
visited may also be the source of the tower of the Newtown Post Office, the placement of the tower in relation to the corner of the building, and its form, are similar.\(^7\)

The Australian Property and Investment Company Building in Melbourne, built in the late 1880s to the designs of the English-trained architect Henry Kemp, is clearly influenced by Shaw’s work (figure 4.66).\(^8\) Samuel Hurst Seager’s prizewinning design for the Christchurch Municipal chambers also appears to include motifs drawn from European town halls and market buildings. Dods, in his Isles Love & Company Auction Mart of 1899, uses a characteristic Flemish gable, loading bay doors and wall ties combined with an arch at ground floor with a pronounced keystone.\(^9\) Neville Lund notes that Dods’ familiarity with Shaw’s work stems from their friendship that developed in the early 1890s when both architects were working in London.\(^10\) Like Shaw, the English-trained architects working in Australasia all drew on the details of secular buildings they had observed or sketched during their travels in Europe. Sulman’s sketches of Holland and Italy survive, he had a good eye for detail: the town hall (de Waag), the excise tower (Accijnstoren) (figure 7.7) and the tower of the nunnery in the Dutch town of Alkmaar, sketched by him, are all now listed as monuments.

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\(^7\) The Altenburg Rathaus (or townhall) of 1562, which Banister Fletcher illustrated as an example of the German Renaissance in his earlier editions, includes a corner oriel, a Flemish gable and a clocktower. Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, 1948. The illustration appears on p. 725 of the 1948 edition. It has been omitted in later editions.


\(^9\) Illustrated in Lund, Robin Dods 1868-1920 in Tanner, Architects of Australia, p. 93. Description of original configuration, Brisbane Courier, 4 Jan 1899. The building has been demolished.

Hunters Hill Post Office (1891)

In Hunters Hill Vernon employed an arcade to the lower storey of the two-storey face brick Post Office fronting Alexandra Street. (figures 7.8-7.9) The date and the royal crown, carved into the central keystone modestly indicate the public entrance; the remaining keystones are plain. Similar plain brick arcading such as this can be seen in the Board schools designed by Edward Robert Robson, John James Stevenson and Basil Champneys in London in the 1870s. The source may however have been a colonial example. An arcade, with rubbed brick arches, could be found at the Liverpool Hospital designed by Francis Greenway in 1822. Greenway’s work, mentioned in the 1907 Cyclopaedia of New South Wales, continued to inspire Sydney architects such as William Hardy Wilson and Kent and Budden during the interwar years.11

Many nineteenth century public buildings contained staff accommodation, a feature Vernon generally articulates by the use of domestic scale windows and balconies. The differentiation between the place of work and the residence, evident in the pattern of fenestration, contrasts the output of the GAB from public buildings designed by the successive Colonial Architects. At the Hunter Hill Post Office the public chamber and the accommodation both face the river. A small garden forms a forecourt to the public entrance. The private entrance is from the side street. Barnet rarely employed a forecourt for smaller scale buildings and the arcade was usually directly accessible from the street. Vernon rarely used the arcade in the design of public buildings for suburban Sydney and country NSW, preferring to use a colonial form, the verandah.

11 For an analysis of this influence see the introduction to James Broadbent and Joy Hughes, Francis Greenway Architect, Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1997.
Broken Hill Post Office (1892)

The changes in architectural taste implemented by Vernon were not restricted to Sydney, designs by the GAB for country towns show a higher degree of experimentation with forms and materials than their metropolitan work of this period. Broken Hill, a remote town close to the border of NSW and South Australia, owes its existence to the mineral deposits discovered in the late nineteenth century. The group of public buildings occupies the central block in Argent Street, the main commercial street. At one end of the block is the court house by Barnet; at the other is the post office commenced by Vernon (figure 7.10). Between these two corner buildings are three public buildings: the Technical Institute and Museum, the Police Station, and the only building not designed in NSW: the Broken Hill Town Hall. The court house does not have the generous colonnades employed in the larger court houses at Grafton and Bathurst or the arcade employed at Goulburn, the design reflected the lowly status of Broken Hill in the hierarchy of NSW court houses.

Figure 7.10
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Broken Hill Post Office and tower, 1892
The dramatic Post Office tower marked a distinct change in architectural taste in Broken Hill (figure 7.11). The sharp contrast between the ornate rendered detail of the Town Hall, built circa 1890 to the design of Wittal and Wells of Adelaide, and the restrained face brick tower of the Post Office, built in 1892, shows the extent of the change that had occurred in architectural thought in the GAB under Vernon’s guidance. A new palette of materials been introduced for public buildings, the *Building and Engineering Journal* commented on.

The Queen Anne of suburban London reappearing on the saltbush plains of western NSW. Only the deep shade of the verandahs relieves the harshness of the burnt-red bricks.

Launceston Post Office (1885-1889), attributed to the English-trained architect Alexander North, with its corner tower, banded stonework and ribbed chimneys, likewise shows the change from the use of render and cast ornament to face brickwork and stone for public buildings (figure 7.12). The choice of materials for the post offices at Broken Hill, Launceston and in suburban Sydney was deliberate, reflecting the influence of contemporary London architecture that was evident in the designs for city buildings exhibited at the Sydney Architectural Association.

Symmetry was no longer a consideration and the main element of the Broken Hill Post Office was the corner tower derived from European precedents to which a two-storey verandah was added.

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12 Australian Heritage Places Inventory – Broken Hill Town Hall (Register of the National Estate).
13 *Building and Engineering Journal*, 7 April 1894
Like the campaniles of Verona and Venice, described by Banister Fletcher as ‘civic monuments’, the Post Office tower marks the centre of the town and can still be seen today silhouetted against the Line of Lode.\footnote{Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, p. 278} The detail of the tower has many similarities with the romantic mid nineteenth century reconstructions of medieval castles and fortified cities by Burges in Wales and Viollet-le-Duc in France.\footnote{William Burges reconstructed Cardiff Castle and Castel Coch in South Wales for the Bute family. Viollet-le-Duc reconstructed Pierrefonds and Carcassone as well as preparing schemes for many smaller scale reconstructions} The clocktower of Cardiff Castle, intended by Burges to be a ‘handsome object at the present entrance of the town’ had been designed whilst Vernon was working in South Wales.\footnote{William Burges quoted in Newman, The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan, p. 199} In America Richardson was employing similar towers, which may have been influenced by the drawings of unbuilt schemes by Burges in his possession.\footnote{Richardson’s collection included Burges unbuilt design for the London Law Courts. Floyd, Henry Hobson Richardson, A Genius for Architecture, plate 78}
The concern for townscape evident in Vernon’s early design work continued to be evident in the output of the GAB in the early 1890s. The tower of the Broken Hill Post Office shows the extent to which the public buildings designed by the GAB dominated country towns in NSW (figure 7.13); prominent buildings were more often than not the post office and the court house rather than a church or cathedral. Axial views were abandoned in favour of a single tower that formed a landmark; intended to be viewed from a series of different viewpoints. The inclusion of clock towers in the design of post offices or court houses built on a prominent intersection in the centre of a township could already be found in the work of James Barnet. Vernon continued to employ towers, although he often did not place them directly on the corner; rather they were carefully placed to enliven both the composition and the surrounding townscape, as can be seen at Parramatta and Wagga Wagga.
Although the Building and Engineering Journal believed the design of the Broken Hill Post Office to have been transplanted directly from London, the addition of the two-storey verandah shows the process of acclimatisating the Queen Anne. Rather than employing an arcade, Vernon employed a deep two-storey verandah, a typical feature of country hotels, notable examples of which can still be found in Argent Street. The verandah shades the entire ground floor and the upper verandah shades the rooms in the base of the tower (figure 7.15). The shaft of the tower is vented, thus reducing the internal temperatures by creating an updraught. Drawing the heat up through a tower is a technique used in desert buildings, which Vernon may have observed in his travels.

The Queen Anne Revival style can also be seen in the detail of the timberwork, the brackets of the verandah are solid, similar to those employed at Bovington and in St Leonards (figure 7.14). The photographs of the public buildings in Broken Hill exhibited at the Franco-British exhibition in London in 1908 show that the balustrade was originally composed of simple uprights. The remoteness of

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18 NSW State Records – Lantern Slides Exhibited at the Franco-British exhibition (1908). A number of views of Broken Hill were exhibited including views of Argent Street and a detailed view of the Post Office tower.
the town and lack of nearby timber supplies led to the widespread use of corrugated iron and pressed metal in Broken Hill, resulting in the distinctive local vernacular for which the town remains known today. The lack of rainfall permitted the external use of decorative pressed metal panels and ripple iron in buildings ranging in scale from tiny miner’s cottages to the public buildings. The deeply coved eaves of the verandah to the post office tower were constructed of sheet metal rather than plaster.

Irwin House (1891-92)

In his design for Irwin House at the Newington Asylum (now Silverwater Gaol), Vernon combined English institutional planning with colonial forms. Whilst still a Queen Anne Revival style building, Irwin House shows how Vernon was refining the design of his public buildings to suit the Australian climate, employing details that were drawn from Eastern sources. Built in 1891-92 as staff quarters, the building was constructed, as the other asylum buildings had been, within the extensive landscaped grounds of Blaxland’s Newington House on the banks of the Parramatta River at Silverwater.19 Today the house and its surviving grounds are within Silverwater Gaol. Irwin House and its immediate garden survive, but are rarely seen, the building and garden have been completely surrounded by the recent Metropolitan Remand Centre.

Figure 7.16
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Irwin House, Newington Asylum (now Silverwater Gaol), Silverwater, 1891-92
permanent hospital, built for the inmates of the asylum, was also Queen Anne Revival in style however the design was nowhere near as revolutionary as that of Irwin House. The single-storey temporary timber ward pavilions, with wrap-around verandas, photographed in 1893 by Bolieau do not survive, although identical wards can still be found at Lidcombe Hospital (the former Rookwood Asylum) (figure 9.30).20

The design of Irwin House repeats a brick pavilion with a prominent roof slope and central ribbed chimney, a motif with some similarities to the Nesfield’s Temperate House Lodge. Built in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew near London in 1866, this lodge was one of the first London examples of the emerging Queen Anne Revival style, a design Vernon may have seen whilst still a student. The same source had been used by Alexander North for the design of gate lodge to City Park in Launceston (1887-88), indicating that the buildings at Kew were well known to architects working in the colonies. Within the Kew Gardens is the ‘Dutch House’ (Kew Palace) of 1631 (figure 7.18), one ‘of the type Shaw and Nesfield had learnt to appreciate’.21

Motifs drawn from Nesfield’s work at Kew also appear in the gate lodges to Tredegar House in Wales designed by Vernon’s mentor William Habershon in 1879.22 At Newington, the form of Nesfield’s pavilion was modified to suit the Australian climate by the addition of a colonial broken-back roof that continues over the wrap-around verandah.

20 Views of Newington House and the hospital are included in Bolieau, Sir Francis, Photographic Album of the Bolieau Family’s Voyage from England to Australia in 1894-95, NLA
22 Newman, The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire, entry on Tredegar House, p. 577

WALTER LIBERTY VERNON
Noni Boyd © Final Version August 2010
The overall placement of Irwin House is a marked departure from the axial institutional planning long employed by the state’s Colonial Architects. At the time of completion Irwin House was not illustrated in the PWD’s Annual Reports and remains little known. Although symmetrical in plan, the building was not placed on axis, rather is set on the diagonal within a square garden, with a circular carriage-drive to the front. The setting of the hospital buildings and staff quarters in gardens well away from the asylum wards marks the start of the move away from the severe walled institutions, designed by the Royal Engineers for the convict establishment, to a belief in the beneficial effects of a garden setting. At Irwin House, as at Penshurst in Neutral Bay, Vernon set the building back from the street, surrounding it with extensive gardens (figure 7.19).

The symmetry of Irwin House is not the result of a concern with architectural style, rather it conforms to established English hospital and asylum planning in which males and females were placed in separate halves. In the centre were the shared facilities such as
chapels, dining rooms, consulting and operating rooms and the matron’s accommodation. Hunt’s competition-winning plan for the Armidale and New England Hospital of 1878 similarly employed a symmetrical plan that separated the functions. Foreshadowing English sanatoriums of the 1890s, Hunt’s intended pavilion layout resembled the wings of a butterfly (figure 7.20). When built a more conventional layout was adopted. Irwin House was planned on similar lines.

The need for fresh air in hospitals had been set out by Florence Nightingale in her Notes on Hospitals, a publication widely used to guide the planning of private and state hospitals throughout Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Both sunlight and fresh air were believed to be highly beneficial to health. Nightingale believed that

> Natural ventilation, or that by open windows and open fireplaces,

is the only efficient means for procuring the lifespring of the sick

– fresh air.

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23 The plans and elevations are included in Hughes, Muir and Reynolds, Horbury Hunt, Radical Architect, 1838-1904, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, pp. 96-97

24 Florence Nightingale, Notes on Hospitals, London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1863, p. 16
Figure 7.21
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Irwin House, Newington Asylum (now Silverwater Gaol), Silverwater, 1891-92

Plan of Irwin House showing the two separate wings, the central dining facilities and the circular driveway
It was soon realised that fresh air was necessary to protect the health of nursing staff, who were now accommodated in separate nurses homes rather than, as Nightingale initially proposed, in the adjacent room to their patients. This lack of separation had led to the death of nursing staff from infectious diseases. Breezeways rather than corridors connected the two accommodation wings of Irwin House with the central dining room, reflecting a concern for health of the inhabitants (figure 7.21). The breezeway is a traditional form used to connect the separate kitchen blocks of colonial Georgian houses such as Old Government House at Parramatta. Generally constructed of timber with a shingle roof these covered ways rarely survive today however in Vernon’s day the form was much more prevalent. Another re-interpretation of this traditional form can be seen at Government House in Sydney. A covered way connects the Chalet, built in 1891, with the main house (figure 7.44). In colonial Georgian architecture the separation of the kitchen from the remainder of the house was to prevent the spread of fire. In hospital planning the separation was to prevent the spread of foul air or miasma, believed to be the means by which disease spread, a belief that persisted in hospital planning until World War I.

The overall plan of Irwin House, the geometric pavements, the deliberate emphasis placed on the porch and the use of motifs with an Eastern origin indicate a familiarity with Lethaby’s *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* published in 1891.25 The footprint is set on the diagonal within the square of the garden. Each group of four chimneys forms a diamond in plan, placed in the centre of four

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rooms forming a square. The square within a diamond within a square is a motif found in the marble paving of St Marks in Venice. Lethaby had devoted an entire chapter of *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* to the marble ‘pavements like the sea’ found in Venice and Istanbul (figure 7.22) Similar decorative motifs can be found in the design of Irwin House.

That Lethaby’s writings were well known locally is due to the London-trained architects who came to Australia who knew him personally and admired his ideas. The Melbourne-based architect Walter Butler’s friendship with Lethaby began whilst Butler was working in England.26 Architects continued to be interested in Lethaby’s writing in the years leading up to World War I and his work was taken up in the United States of America, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Griffins are known to have admired his work. The influence of Lethaby’s writings on symbolism can clearly be seen in memorials designed by Butler and Desbrowe Annear in Melbourne and by the short-lived partnership of Griffin and Clamp in Sydney.27 Lethaby’s 1894 study of Sancta Sophia in Constantinople (Istanbul) was one of the texts recommended by Sulman and a copy had been purchased for the library of the NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects.28 It was the ‘sound common-sense building and pleasurable craftsmanship’ of Sancta Sophia that Lethaby admired and described for his readers.29 Vernon’s photograph collection, particularly his views of Rosslyn (Roslin) Chapel near Edinburgh and the mosques of Cairo, indicates

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26 Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Australia*, p. 21
28 Sulman, John, Article outlining the book collection held by the NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects, Journal of the Institute of Architects 1904
29 Lethaby and Swainson *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople, A Study of Byzantine Building*, Facsimile edition, original published in 1894 p. vi
that he was interested in Eastern architecture and symbolism. Unlike the other exponents of Lethaby’s work in Australia, Vernon applied the ideas to the design of public buildings rather than memorials. Whilst not yet completely free of references to past architectures, the design of Irwin House shows that, under Vernon, the GAB had begun to employ highly crafted details that Lethaby advocated, rather than details from Ancient Greece or Rome. The geometric tiles to the verandah, the waves in the timberwork to the gable and the incised lines in the verandah post were all executed by hand. These details are no longer recognisably the revival of traditional English details; rather motifs with an Eastern origin are used. The wave motif employed in the gables (figure 7.23) is similar to the curved timbers found in the transoms of mediaeval monasteries in Japan such as the Jizodo at the temple or Shofukuji built in 1407 (figure 7.24) and the pavement illustrated by Lethaby (figure 7.22).
Irwin House was not the only building designed by the GAB in the 1890s where Japanese style motifs can be found. In the lodge built in the grounds of the Callan Park asylum in the mid 1890s a motif similar to a Japanese ‘wooden nose’ is used (figure 7.26). The gates to Bourke Court House also use this motif and bear some similarity to Lethaby’s illustrations of temple gates. There is no record of Vernon or his senior staff having visited Japan, their knowledge of traditional details would have been from books on Japanese architecture and gardens.

Burges’ pupil Josiah Conder is widely believed to have been the first western-trained architect to work in Japan (figure 7.25). Conder is better known internationally for his studies illustrating Japanese landscape gardening and flower arranging, first published in the early 1890s, than his buildings. He was not, however, the first Western-trained architect to work in Japan. The Australian-born architect and watercolourist John Smedley had traveled widely in Japan and China from 1869 onwards, returning periodically to Sydney during the
1870s and 1880s. Smedley worked as an architect in Yokohama from 1872 to 1876 and again from 1878 until an earthquake destroyed the city and its economy, forcing him to return to Sydney in search of work. He had co-ordinated the Japanese exhibit for the 1877 Intercolonial Exhibition in Sydney, which was the first time that Japanese crafts had been publicly exhibited in Australia. A Japanese Court was included in International Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1880. John Smedley’s watercolours of Japan had been exhibited at the Art Society of NSW during the 1880s and the Japanese crafts were exhibited at the international and intercolonial exhibitions held in Sydney and Melbourne (figure 7.27). Vernon’s visit to Borobadur towards the end of his term in office indicates that he maintained an interest in Asian architecture.

Vernon and Smedley were amongst the architect members of the Art Society of NSW whose work was exhibited in the mid 1880s, Smedley exhibiting his watercolours of Japan and Vernon his sketches of Sydney. Other Art Society members including William Kemp, the architect for the Department of Public Instruction, and the exiled French designer Lucien Henry were also interested in

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32 RAIA NSW Chapter Bibliographic Information John Smedley
33 Vernon’s article on Borobadur is contained in his papers in the ML MSS 6571
new forms of ornament and their application to buildings.\footnote{Catalogues of the Fifth and Sixth Annual Exhibitions of the Art Society of NSW, 1884 and 1885, ML} By the 1890s books illustrating Japanese architecture and gardens began to appear, some of which Lethaby quoted, noting that in ‘Mr. Bing’s recent book on Japanese art it is remarked that everything is symbolical in the architecture of Japan’.\footnote{Rubens, William Richard Lethaby, His Life and Work 1857-1931, p. 80} Japanese architecture was admired by the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement both for the high degree of craftsmanship and for the continuity of the use of traditional forms and details, the meaning of which was widely understood by all levels of society. The use of Japanese motifs was shortlived, vanishing along with the Queen Anne Revival around the turn of the twentieth-century.

Lethaby ‘demand[ed] that the symbolism of modern architecture be comprehensible, rational and egalitarian’.\footnote{Introduction to Lethaby, Architecture, Mysticism and Myth, Solos Press, 1994, p. 16}

Old architecture lived because it had a purpose. Modern architecture, to be real, must not be a mere envelope without contents… if we would have architecture excite and interest, real and general, we must have symbolism, immediately comprehensible by the great majority of spectators.\footnote{Lethaby, Architecture, Mysticism and Myth, Solos Press, 1994, p. 156}

At Irwin House, the design is egalitarian, all of the accommodation provided for the staff is identical. It is also a very comprehensible design, the central porch clearly identifies the main entry and smaller gables to the verandah denote secondary entrances. Access to the bedrooms was from the verandahs, a device frequently used by the Royal Engineers and one that was to continue to be employed by the GAB for the barracks built at the experiment farms (experimental
agricultural stations) established in almost every climate zone of the state. The rationality of the plan derives from the separation, for health reasons, of the functions. The rationality of the form derives from the selection, for reasons of climate control, of the colonial broken-back roof and wrap around verandah.

**Hay Court House (1892)**

The most substantial court house built in country NSW in the early 1890s was the Hay Court House (figure 7.28). Completed in 1892, the earlier court house designed by Barnet was relegated for use as the Hay Council chambers. Vernon’s design shows him to be once again experimenting with aclimatising the Queen Anne. The central placement of the courtroom employed by all of the Colonial Architects was followed, with a sweeping roofline that continues to form a wide return verandah, designed to fully shade the external walls of the offices that flank the courtroom. The wide eaves shade the shallow brick arches of the encircling arcade; in the intense heat of the Hay plain this degree of shading was a necessity. Sweeping rooflines and wide verandahs were more characteristic of the elegant American variant of the Queen Anne employed on Long

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38 Bridges, Peter, *Historic Court Houses of NSW*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1986. Caption to the view of Hay Court House, p. 102
Figure 7.29
NSW Colonial Architect, James Barnet, Goulburn Court House, Goulburn, 1887

Figure 7.30
George McRae, City Architect, Elevation of the Corporation Building, Hay Street, Sydney, 1893-94

Refer also to Figure 4.67
Island by McKim, Mead and White and the Japanese-inspired railway stations designed by Richardson in Massachusetts than Shaw’s work in England.

The main façade, which is roughcast with brick quoin to the first floor and face brick below, has a carved coat of arms flanked by round windows. The combination of brick and roughcast reappears in the design of court houses throughout Vernon’s term in office; Hay Court House and Maclean Post Office are early examples of the combination being employed for public buildings. At Hay the decorative detail to the balustrade, formed by omitting bricks so as to cast a shadow, was a device that had also been previously been employed at the Newtown Post Office. This use of light and shade to form a rhythm, rather than balusters, is highly sophisticated detailing showing that the use of details such as Italianate balusters with a recognisable historic source had been completely abandoned. Hay Court House is a complete contrast to the ornate boom style architecture of the late 1880s, epitomised by the elaborate court houses at Bathurst and Goulburn. Goulburn Court House is illustrated opposite.

To understand the changes that Vernon implemented in public architecture in NSW in the early 1890s one has only to compare George McRae’s designs before he entered the GAB with the output of Vernon’s office during the same period. Only the occasional trace of the ornate cast terracotta or carved stonework which characterised McRae’s designs for the Sydney Municipal Council: the temporary market building in Sussex Street of 1887 (figure 7.31-32), the Corporation or Municipal Buildings in Hay Street (1893-94)
Figure 7.31
George McRae, City Architect, Temporary Markets, Sussex Street, Sydney, 1887

The temporary market building in Sussex Street in its original configuration

Figure 7.32
George McRae, City Architect, Temporary Markets, Sussex Street, Sydney, 1887

The temporary market building as it appears today, the ornate roofline has been altered

Figure 7.33
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Maclean Courthouse, 1892

Late nineteenth century view of the court house

Figure 7.34
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Maclean Courthouse, 1892

Recent view of the court house
(figure 7.30) and the Queen Victoria Building (commenced in 1893), can be found in the buildings designed by the GAB in the 1890s.\footnote{The temporary fruit market was later used as the Corn Market. The elaborate roof has been altered and the gables, turrets and dormers removed.}

Following his appointment McRae followed Vernon’s lead, moving away from monumentality.

**The Maclean Public Buildings Group (1892-96)**

The court house at Maclean and the adjacent post office and police station, constructed between 1892 and 1896, show the informality made possible by the use of the Queen Anne Revival (figures 7.33-7.40).\footnote{The courthouse, constructed in 1892, is the first building in the group to have been completed, followed by the Post Office in 1893 and the Maclean Lock Up (now the police station) in 1896.} The courthouse was the first building to be constructed, it was completed in 1892, followed by the post office in 1893 and the lock up (now the police station) in 1896. Maclean court house, which faces the river, is a typical NSW court house in form, a symmetrical composition with a central two-storey courtroom, flanked by single-storey offices including the judge’s chamber. The GAB’s design clearly articulates the two different uses, the courtroom has no ground floor windows to the street, whilst the side offices have paired verandah posts, with cast iron lace between, and domestic scale windows. This is one of the last uses of cast iron lace on a building, from now on the metalwork was hand worked, either wrought, clipped or woven.

Overall the composition (which was originally face brick) is Queen Anne Revival in style. The two blind niches to the courtroom are reminiscent of the London work of J. J. Stevenson particularly his 1873-75 townhouse at 8 Palace Gate, Kensington.\footnote{This residence is illustrated in Girouard, Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900, plate 32}
The Maclean Post Office is the first building that you come to by road. The two-storey building utilises the same palette of materials that can be found in the suburban houses near Markwick Gardens in St Leonards and Bovington in Neutral Bay, red brick with roughcast above. Once again the public and private sections of the building are clearly articulated, with an arched window to the street denoting the postal chamber. Bricks form the quoins, truthfully expressing the size of each brick rather than imitating stone block sizes as in the earlier design for Hay. Corbelled brick work rather than rendered stringcourses are employed; the sills, the plinth and the sloping course to the top of the plinth are also brick. The upstairs rooms contained paired double hung windows to the main elevation, allowing a larger amount of light into each room than usual. The palette of materials, the upper sash with small panes and the lower sash with a single pane, have been transplanted directly from suburban England, and can be found in Godwin’s designs for Bedford Park and in the suburban villas surrounding Markwick Gardens.
At Maclean a balcony for the residence was located to the rear of the building, giving a view of the river (figures 7.35 and 7.36). Historic photographs show that originally the post office had a two storey verandah to the street. At Hunters Hill Post Office the balcony was placed to the south where a view of the river can be gained. In both cases careful consideration was given to the characteristics of the site, ensuring views, sunlight and a breeze. The Maclean Post Office, and the contemporary metropolitan Sydney post offices in Annandale, Burwood, Enmore, Camperdown, and Homebush show that the use of historic ornament had been abandoned in favour of highly crafted, traditional details throughout the state.

**Vernon the Vandal**

The change in public architecture soon became apparent to the former Colonial Architect who considered the Government Architect’s additions to buildings that he had designed whilst in office to be vandalism. Peter Bridges noted that

> …after his retirement Barnet remained active in public life…he continued to speak out on matters which concerned him and was completely out of sympathy with the radical changes that were taking place in the architectural scene.⁴²

Even in his critique of Sydney architecture, published in the RIBA journal in 1899, Barnet was out of date.⁴³ By the turn of the century

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Figure 7.37

Figure 7.38
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Police station, Maclean, 1896

This is one of the most intact combined police stations and residences, retaining its original joinery, coloured glass and face brickwork.

Figure 7.39
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, South Broken Hill Post Office, Broken Hill, late 1890s
Vernon had largely moved away from acclimatising the Queen Anne, although the GAB continued for some years to use the standard design for country police stations and post offices developed in the mid 1890s. On the rare occasions that the GAB repeated a design the repetition reflected that the client requirements, the climate zone and the locally available palette of materials were the same. Repetition of a standard type occurs from the mid 1890s in the design of small country police stations and post 1900 in fruit packing sheds (at the Experiment Farms) and school classroom blocks. McRae was to continue this trend post World War I, repeating his design for a timber court house and police station at Byron Bay and Finley.44

Craignairn in Wahroonga, designed by Joseland and Vernon, ‘showed a welding of English design with modifications to suit Australian climatic conditions’.45 The design was well received and was included by William Hardy Wilson in his 1919 study of Australian domestic architecture (figure 7.40).46 Joseland’s analysis of his design also applies to the highly crafted domestic-scale public buildings produced by the GAB prior to 1897. The earliest buildings in NSW that have been classified by the National Trust as being examples of the newly emerging acclimatised Queen Anne style, or Federation style as it is now known, are not residences, but are the public buildings of a domestic scale and character built in country NSW such as Macksville Court House built in 1892-93 and the series of lockups and police stations built between 1895 and 1902.

44 The drawings for both police stations are held in the Plan Room of the Department of Commerce, formerly the Public Works Department Plan Room.
46 Cazenaux’s photographs for Hardy Wilson’s study of domestic architecture in Australia are held in the Mitchell Library: ML PXD 731
Figure 7.41
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSw
Government Architect, Tumut
Police Station, Tumut, 1896

Figure 7.42
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSw
Government Architect, Mount
Victoria Post Office, Mount
Victoria, 1901

This view of the post office at Mt Victoria, as it appeared when completed, was included in the PWD Annual Report.

Figure 7.43
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSw
Government Architect, Mount
Victoria Post Office, Mount
Victoria, 1901

Surviving details of the porch to the residential half of the Mt Victoria Post Office.
The police stations at Maclean, Foster, Tumut and Junee are identical, whilst the police station at Armidale of 1901 is a larger version of the standard design (figure 7.41). The distinguishing feature of this standard design was the use of one verandah to the side entrance and a second verandah to the front, separated by a gable with an arch headed window. The two separate verandahs gave entry to the two different sections of the building, the residential half, accessed from the front verandah and the public office, accessed from the side verandah. The arched window to the main gable identified the section of the building accessible to the public. Previously, in public architecture in NSW, the main entrance to a building had invariably been placed in the centre of the main façade to the street. A similar form was occasionally used for police residences in Victoria, however the surviving examples such as the Penshurst Police station date from 1914.

A variation of this standard design was used for country post offices, the Post Offices at Mount Victoria (1896), Howlong (1898) and Berrigan (1901) and South Broken Hill (undated) (figure 7.39) all feature the same placement of domestic quarters and an arched window to the public chamber (figures 7.42-7.43). If local materials were available the design was varied, the Mount Victoria example was constructed of local stone, the Howlong and Berrigan examples are brick. In each case there was no carved ornament to denote that these were public buildings. The turned verandah columns and the solid valance, as well as the slate roof with a terracotta ridge, employed for the country police residences and post offices are all details that Vernon had been using in his domestic work in Sussex and in Sydney.

Each of these buildings has been listed on the National Trust Register however the similarities in design, evident in the photographs of each, have not been identified. This is not an exhaustive list, other examples may survive.
The standardised design for a single-storey brick police station or post office served to disseminate the acclimatised Queen Anne Revival throughout the state. The Tumut police station (1896) (figure 7.40) was built by a Sydney builder rather than by a local contractor, indicating a mechanism by which stylistic details were spread. After the depression of the 1890s the gable, the small paned upper window sash with coloured panes and the combination of face brick and roughcast were adopted by the speculative house-builder. Many examples of this scale and character of residence can be found in the Sydney suburbs of Mosman and the garden suburb of Haberfield.

Whilst the staff housing and domestic scale public buildings designed by the GAB are early examples of the transmutation of the Queen Anne Revival style into Federation style architecture, these smaller scale works were rarely mentioned or photographed for inclusion in the PWD’s Annual Reports. The only published example is the most elaborate example, the Mount Victoria Post Office, illustrated in the annual report for the year ending June 1897. By the time that the design was published, the output of the GAB had changed, a direct consequence of Vernon’s visit to London. A comparison between Tumut police station (figure 7.40), designed in 1896 before Vernon’s study tour, and the Carrington Post Office (figure 7.44) built in 1898 show that the standard design had been refined and simplified, with the arch simply denoted by darker brickwork, devoid of mouldings or keystones.

48 Tumut Police Station: NT Listing Card. The building is still used and is part of the police station complex located in the main street of Tumut. The face brickwork has been painted.

49 The illustrations to the Annual Report of the Department of Public Works 1896-1897 are in a separate section to the Government Architects Report.
The Chalet, Government House (1891)

The Chalet, designed by Vernon to sit immediately adjacent to the Gothic Revival Government House designed by Edward Blore, is a substantial timber residence built to accommodate the Governor’s Chief of Staff (figure 7.45). A two-storey timber villa with a deliberately asymmetrical brick chimney and oriel windows, the Chalet continues the series of picturesque lodges built in the Domain, rather than following the Gothic Revival style of the main house. The lower floor is clad with board and battens, the upper floor and the oriel are shingled. The tumbled brickwork to the chimney, a vernacular detail found in the Low Countries and in traditional Sussex houses, is a detail that continues to appear in Vernon’s work including at the Nurses Home at the James Fletcher Hospital in Newcastle built around 1910. The covered way and verandah are clad with the plain terracotta tiles that Vernon had already used for the roof of Penshurst; the main roof was clad with Marseilles tiles.

Figure 7.45
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Chalet, Government House grounds, Domain, Sydney, 1891

This view of the house taken shortly after completion also shows the breezeway that links the staff residence to Government House.
The published view of the paneled stair hall of the Chalet shows the design to be the ‘house beautiful’ promoted by Oscar Wilde (figure 4.19). Wilde advised his listeners that paneling in a hall was preferable to wallpaper, recommending ‘toned green or grey glass with little bright spots of pure colour which give a more subdued light, a pleasing blending of colours, and a sense of quiet and repose’. The glowing light from the leadlight windows would have complemented the timberwork to the stairhall of the Chalet, a device Vernon had already used at The Upland in Ore and at Penshurst in Neutral Bay.

Timber was an unusual choice for a residence in the Governor’s Domain, which contained a series of Gothic Revival style lodges built of Sydney sandstone. In contrast to the lodge designed by Mortimer Lewis at the entrance to Government House, a copy of a lodge by Wyatt in the Windsor Great Park, Vernon’s design was a unique composition. Like Seddon’s Alton at Mt. Macedon, the design is in the tradition of English estate buildings translated into timber. Andrew Montana believes that design to have been inspired by the ‘American’ Swiss Chalet however the source is far more likely to the contemporary English estate buildings. Swiss chalets were popular as picturesque architectural elements and were often utilised in the planned vistas created in English style landscaped gardens.

50 Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 2 May 1891
51 Oscar Wilde, The House Beautiful, in The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p. 918
52 The origins of the design of the Macquarie Street Lodge to Government House have been traced in the Conservation Plan for the Conservatorium of Music by the Heritage Group of the DPWS. The building no longer occupies its original site and its orientation has been altered.
The design was more substantial than a garden pavilion or dairy and elements inspired by contemporary buildings also appear. The use of light over the main stair, and the continuation of the baluster to support the landing, has many similarities to the staircase designed by Lethaby at Flete manor house in Devonshire. The light and airy house for the chief of staff is a deliberate contrast to the series of formal rooms within Government House opposite. The provision of light and fresh air that is evident in the design of The Chalet continued to be evident in Vernon’s domestic architecture, a direct result of his concern with health.

**Vernon’s Study Tour**

Not wishing to suffer the fate of his predecessor, Vernon had included a study tour as a condition of his appointment. He spent July and August of 1897 visiting public buildings in England and on the Continent, during which time he sought to

> make myself acquainted with the progress in architecture during the last ten years, particularly with reference to technical details and improved methods of building.

This would imply that Vernon had spent time looking at modern buildings in 1887 when he visited England to participate in training exercises at Aldershot. In London, Paris, Edinburgh, Brussels,

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54 Illustrated in Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, 1976, plate 162
55 He must have returned almost directly afterwards as his published report outlining the visit was presented to the Under Secretary for Public Works in November 1897, Vernon, Report, p.1.
56 Aldershot is notable for its extensive collection of barrack buildings, construction of which began in the 1850s.
Copenhagen and Stockholm he visited the types of buildings that the GAB was currently engaged in designing. Unlike Barnet, who had traveled to Europe in 1885, Vernon chose not to visit Italy, which was not the place to visit if you wanted to see progressive, modern public buildings. During his visit to London, Vernon noted the planning, day lighting ventilation and sanitary improvements of recent public buildings. In the recently completed work of the London County Council (LCC), and the projects still on the drawing board that he was shown, he would have seen the newly emerging Free Style and he

had the advantage of having obtained plans and sketches, and promises of more should they be at any time required.  

Designs for Police Stations were not prepared in-house, private architects, including Shaw, were commissioned. Vernon believed that in the design of police stations his branch could hold its own:

this class of building here [in NSW], is at least equal in most respects to that erected under the London County Council…

I closely examined the whole of the plans of such metropolitan and suburban police stations as had undergone alterations or had been erected during the last few years

57 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p.2

58 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p.4
There was now a general tendency to give the exterior of buildings a less forbidding look and cold classical appearance than formerly, and in the case of several of the suburban ones, they presented very similar appearances to many of the more recent ones erected in the country districts of this colony. It is gratifying to be able to report that, as a whole, the New South Wales modern police buildings compare most favorably with those in England, and in some respects I am of the opinion, are superior.59

This less forbidding appearance to public architecture had been the hallmark of Vernon’s public architecture to date, and the trend can be seen in the post offices and police stations already discussed and in the design of the court houses at Bowral, Hay, Katoomba, Macksville, Maclean and Parkes.60 These experiments in seeking a suitable public architecture, designs that did not rely on carved ornament, do not appear to have been seen by Sydney-based architects as the designs were not published.

With Katoomba Court House, designed in 1895, Vernon broke with a tradition that can be traced in the work of the series of Colonial Architects that had proceeded him. The court house was asymmetrical, with a single wing of offices rather than offices that

59 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, pp. 4-5
60 Illustrated in Bridges, Historic Courthouses of NSW, p. 93
flanked a central courtroom. Visitors approached the court house from the side, seeing the offices first (figure 7.46). The addition of the Banco Court to the Supreme Court in Sydney and the new courthouse at Bowral likewise broke all the established rules (figure 6.25). The Banco Court is a complex three-dimensional composition, carefully designed to complement St James Church and the existing court buildings designed by Greenway and Alexander Dawson, allowing their complex roofscapes to still be seen from Hyde Park.

Bowral Courthouse was built of random coursed rockfaced trachyte quarried locally (figure 6.27). The stonework to the perimeter wall is as well detailed as the building and also employs two colours of stone and random coursing. The use of colours and textures rather than ornament recalls the work of Pritchard and Seddon in Wales and is a complete contrast to the George Street North Police Station designed by Barnet in the 1880s, with its carved lion bearing a truncheon in its mouth. The substantial additions to the Courthouse at Parkes are also constructed of brick, with a sandstone trim (figures 6.23-24). Stylistically the building employs Romanesque motifs in a very restrained manner.
Essential To A Good Building

Vernon was very impressed with the recently completed New Scotland Yard on the Victoria Embankment of the Thames designed by Shaw (figure 7.47). After visiting the building and inspecting the ‘large number of plans’ he told the Minister he believed it to be a ‘thoroughly useful building and a success’.\(^6\) He was particularly impressed by the provision of natural light in every room and in all of the corridors. Discussion of the usefulness of a building, and the provision of day lighting, rather than any discussion of architectural style is typical of Vernon. Shaw’s design had been criticised in the popular press, resulting in a letter signed by the leading architects of the day who believed

\(^{6}\) Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 5
of the public buildings erected by the Government in London during the present generation it is the one of which London may most justly be proud.\textsuperscript{62}

In his defense Shaw explained his design philosophy,

My aim has been to have less of what I should call ‘style’, and more of what I should call ‘character’. Style gives us what we have already got many examples of, viz dull copies of Italian palaces, medieval buildings &c. and they are generally found to be unsuited to their purpose, ill lit and from an artistic point of view, dead and so failures.

In the old days it was very different. A style was then a living art, the result of character. Now with us it is a mere reproduction and for many years we have all recoiled from it and have been trying to get more individuality and character into our buildings, often failing lamentably, but surely on the whole better and more interesting than that dead old stuff.

The regulation modern building has generally a show front, or fronts, but round the corner or in any part supposed not to be seen it is made plain and common, if not hideous. I dwell on New Scotland Yard as being a genuine building, in which we have no sham or shew [sic] fronts, all is of the same quality and in the court it is the same. In order to secure this, a quality that I consider essential to a good building, I have reduced the ornamental features to a minimum, relying on the bulk and outline to give the desired character. Had

\textsuperscript{62} The architects included Butterfield, Crane, T. G. Jackson, Lethaby and Webb Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, p. 271
I sacrificed what I believed to be a sound principle I might have put more ornament on the shew fronts, and so possibly have made it more attractive to a certain class of mind.\textsuperscript{63}

The architectural debate in London was now about the design of utilitarian public buildings. Vernon, in commenting on the usefulness and natural lighting of New Scotland Yard, would appear to have been following these debates. The wide corridor ran around the internal courtyard, a planning device later widely used by Vernon in his educational buildings. England’s climate required that the corridors to be enclosed rather than the arcades or colonnades used in the courtyard buildings in Europe. Vernon visited a number of post offices, including the new buildings at the General Post Office at St Martin-le-Grand (figure 7.48) and the Bloomsbury Post Office. He notes the changes that had occurred at St Martin-le-Grand since his last visit, indicating that he had been looking at public buildings before his appointment as Government Architect.\textsuperscript{64} He inspected plans for suburban and country town post offices, some already executed and others in the course of erection, and I have obtained from him a large number of departmental drawings of the most recent details in fittings for offices, which I have placed in the departmental library.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{63} Saint, Richard Norman Shaw, pp. 270-71

\textsuperscript{64} The GPO at St Martin-le-Grand had been designed by Robert Smirke in 1825 and completed in 1829. The General Post Office North was completed in 1894 and contained the Central Savings Bank and the Postmaster General. The substantial new block was designed by Sir Henry Tanner, Chief Architect for HM Office of Works, in the classic style.

The Victorian Dictionary (Online edition) - Victorian London - Communications - Post- General Post Office

Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 6

\textsuperscript{65} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 6.

These plans have not been located.
In addition he visited county and municipal lock-ups in Buckinghamshire, Sussex and Monmouthshire, as well as visiting his family.\(^6\) He probably visited recent works by his cousin Arthur Vernon and his fellow articled pupils: Emerson, who had returned to London in 1896, and Beresford Pite.\(^6\) The photograph of an unidentified church in Vernon’s collection is likely to be Beresford Pite’s work.\(^6\)

**On The Continent**

On the continent Vernon was looking primarily at large-scale public buildings, art galleries, exhibition buildings and houses of parliament, as it was proposed to erect a substantial parliament house to replace the colonial buildings lining Macquarie Street. A new exhibition building was also proposed; the Garden Palace, designed by Barnet, had been destroyed in a spectacular fire in 1879.\(^6\) Neither of these

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\(^6\) His brother Robert still lived at the family home in High Wycombe near Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire, his wife’s family lived in Newport in Monmouthshire, South Wales, and his sister Margaret still lived near Hastings in Sussex.

\(^6\) Rubens, William Richard Lethaby, His Life and Work 1857-1931, p. 70

\(^6\) From 1881 until 1897 Beresford Pite worked with John Belcher; initially as an assistant and later as a partner.

\(^6\) The view of an unidentified church is held with the views of Cairo in ML PXA 876 Volume 1 Folio 69

\(^6\) Official records and the collection of the Technological Museum, including exhibits from the Intercolonial exhibition held the previous year were also destroyed.
major projects eventuated, however the designs of the proposed Parliament House survive. Vernon visited Antwerp, Brussels (including the Colonial Exhibition at nearby Tervuren) (figure 7.49), Copenhagen, Hamburg, Paris and Stockholm. His continued interest in the vernacular is evident, he commented in his report to the Minister on the traditional villages erected in the exhibition grounds in Stockholm, Brussels and London.  

Vernon was ‘able to compare both our classes of building and the mode of construction of those adopted in England and on the Continent’; in Paris and Brussels he would have seen the elegant use of structural steelwork.  

It was not just the GAB who kept up with technological developments, the engineers within the PWD pioneered the use of structural steelwork in NSW. The steel swing span and wrought iron caisson of the Pyrmont Bridge was prefabricated near Brussels in 1899-1900, steel production being in

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70 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 10 - 12

71 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 2
Figure 7.50
Percy Allen, NSW PWD, Pyrmont Bridge, 1896-1900

The central swing span of the Pyrmont Bridge which was prefabricated in Belgium in the late 1890s.

Figure 7.51
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, The Electric Light Station and Workshop, 1909
its infancy in Australia (figure 7.50).\textsuperscript{72} From 1904 Vernon collaborated with the other divisions within the PWD over the designs for a new Sydney railway terminal, a design that made extensive use of steelwork in the three-pin arch to the \textit{porte-cochere} and the roof over the concourse. The \textit{porte-cochere} employed a similar arch to the now demolished \textit{Palais des Machines} in Paris built, like the Eiffel Tower, for the 1889 Paris Exhibition.\textsuperscript{73}

The electric light generating stations that Vernon visited may have included the station that powered the Eiffel tower and the exhibition buildings on the \textit{Champs du Mars}. By 1897 a number of English towns were also lit by electricity. On his return the GAB designed a powerhouse for Sydney’s street lighting, however the station was never commissioned and the rockface sandstone building was substantially extended in height to bring it up to the level of George Street North (figure 7.51).\textsuperscript{74} The Mining Museum has occupied the extended building since its completion in 1910.

By the late 1890s, when economic conditions had improved, a divergence in architectural style occurred in NSW, the speculative suburban house builder adopted the cheaper and easier to construct elements of the Queen Anne Revival, developing what is now widely termed the Federation style house. The acclimatisation of

\textsuperscript{72} The manufacture and erection of the bridge is traced in the \textit{Conservation Plan, Pyrmont Bridge}, Otto Cserhalmi & Partners 2005.

\textsuperscript{73} For a discussion of the sources of the design of Central Station refer to the Comparative Analysis in the \textit{Conservation Plan for Central Station}, DPWS Heritage Group 1998

\textsuperscript{74} The building still operates as the Mining Museum. Copies of the drawings of the original scheme to Hickson Road, and the substantial addition that created a George Street entrance are held by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.
the Queen Anne Revival was not an avenue pursued by the GAB after Vernon’s return from London, yet this is when most Federation style architecture occurs, particularly in the design of speculative suburban housing and in the suburban shopping centres of these new suburbs. Following the precedent set by the NSW Government Architect, progressive architects across the state adopted the Free Style, employing traditional highly crafted details, many of which were drawn from the English vernacular.

Once the depression was over, the public building program recommenced in both metropolitan Sydney and in country towns. If the townscape already had an established architectural character then this architectural vocabulary continued to be used. In general the fussiness of the Queen Anne Revival was abandoned in favour of the Free Style, following the trend that Vernon had observed in the public housing designed by younger, more progressive architects of the LCC and in the private residences designed by the architects his cousin Arthur Liberty employed as product designers.
CHAPTER 8 RE-INTERPRETING AUSTRALIA’S COLONIAL ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

Three distinct types of Free Style public buildings emerged following Vernon’s return from London. The first type can be found in the arid inland and warm coastal areas of NSW. These buildings are characterised by the use of building forms drawn from colonial Georgian architecture. The second type is found in the colder parts of NSW, areas similar, in winter at least, to the climate of England and Wales. These buildings are small-scale public buildings that employed locally available building materials and forms drawn from picturesque rural buildings found in the northern hemisphere, as few colonial precedents existed. The third type, found in Sydney and the larger regional towns of Newcastle and Goulburn, are the larger urban Free Style compositions, constructed of brick and sandstone. This chapter discusses the first two types. The third type is discussed in the following chapters.

Peter Moroney, in his essay Walter Vernon, a Change in the Style of Government Architecture, believes that Vernon’s

...architectural preferences were mainly formed and to some extent set: he had been liberally exposed to the British scene, had travelled on the continent and had practised his profession for more than ten years in Hastings; it was only left for Richardsonian influences and climatic conditions to modify his ideas.¹

¹ Moroney, Walter Vernon, A Change in Style in Government Architecture, in Bradley, Essays on Art and Architecture presented to Bernard Smith, p. 47
This analysis applies to the first few years of his term as Government Architect but was certainly not the case after his return from London in late 1897, when there is a distinct change in the output of his branch. The larger scale attempts to acclimatise the Queen Anne, such as the court house at Hay and Irwin House at Newington, were not repeated. The public buildings designed following Vernon’s return from London show that he had matured as an architect. His work is no longer Shavian in derivation, although Shaw’s work still impressed him and the occasional motif appeared.

The search for an appropriate architecture for the different regions of NSW is far more complex than simply a consideration of environmental control, and is part of the search for a distinctly Australian architecture. Vernon believed in regional variation, noting that

We people of British origin are apt to bring our insularity with us, and we live, move and build and have our being (or try to) by exactly the same methods whether it be in Hobart, Brisbane or Port Darwin. We are oblivious to the 30 degrees of latitude over which this island continent extends and that the conditions of climate differ comparatively as much between Normanton and Warnambool as they do between St. Petersburg and Cairo and yet we apparently and inconsistently assimilate our modes of living and the construction of our dwelling houses and public buildings over this vast area…2

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2 Vernon, Review of the Existing Condition of the Profession, pp. 548-65
Under Vernon, the output of the GAB exhibits what Kenneth Frampton calls critical regionalism. There are distinct differences in the buildings designed for the arid outback of NSW, the cold climate areas of Bowral and the Blue Mountains and the coast.³ Rather than trying to impose a single style, these architectural differences reflect different site conditions, a preference for the use of locally available building materials and the regional variations in climate. In 1904 in the new journal of the local chapter of the Institute of Architects, which later became known as Art and Architecture, George Taylor also advocated designing for the Australian climate.

Let us surround ourselves with designs of our own time period. Our houses should be in tune with our climate and our requirements, and the same feeling should dominate our decorations.⁴

Climate remained a preoccupation of Taylor’s, in 1914 he noted that

Climatic conditions considerably determine the type of dwelling, and where, as in Australia, sunshine rules all year round, our architectural type should be simple and open.⁵

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⁴ George Taylor, A Plea for National Character in Architectural Decoration, in Journal of the Institute of Architects, Volume 1, 1904, p. 31
⁵ Taylor, Town Planning For Australia, p. 95
Vernon, when reviewing the state of the architectural and engineering professions in Australia in 1913, discussed the idea of an Australian style of architecture.

Let us take care that Australian works shall be of the best of their kind, and fit to take rank, based on the best methods and developed, if you will, into a distinctly Australian style, in which the varying climatic conditions of the cities shall have a marked influence.6

Vernon’s description fits what his branch had long been trying to achieve. In the Italianate buildings designed by Barnet, the provision of natural light and air and climate control were secondary considerations, as was the use of local building materials. At the end of his term in office, Barnet replaced the first Dubbo Court House, built in 1862, with a substantial Italianate composition. The earlier building, with its verandah to the main courtroom and side offices was demolished7. Such typically Australian buildings would inspire Vernon’s work, not the palazzi of Italy or his predecessor’s neoclassical compositions.

In 1899 a wide verandah was added to the Balranald Post Office (figure 8.1), a building also originally designed by Barnet (figure 8.2). The addition was a

remarkable example of his [Vernon’s] skill in adapting the Federation style, of which he was a leading exponent, to

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6 Vernon, Review of the Existing Condition of the Profession, pp. 548-65
7 Bridges, Historic Court Houses of NSW, Illustrations of the 1862 courthouse and the 1890 courthouse appear on page 58.
a vernacular form in common use. The result is a building harmonising with the traditional country town street pattern of wide verandah covered footpaths, most of which have now disappeared.8

To Vernon the neoclassical was not part of the living tradition of building in country NSW. He preferred to use the verandah, a colonial form, rather than the arcade or colonnade; verandahs were practical and were a traditional form with precedents in every country town. Sulman, writing in 1887, sought the opposite

Amongst the public buildings of the colony on which so much expense has been spared we may naturally expect satisfactory examples of loggia treatment, nor are we wholly disappointed. The Post Office arcades will occur to every one, and from their size and massive treatment alone will command respect.9

In his paper The Architecture of Cities presented in Christchurch in 1896 Sulman advocated ‘arcaded shelters carrying superstructures in place of the ubiquitous verandah’.10 The two commercial buildings in the heart of Canberra designed by Sulman around 1920 show that two decades later he still advocated the arcade.

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8 RNE Entry for Balranald Courthouse (via the Australian Heritage Places Inventory)
9 John Sulman, Verandah and Loggie II, Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 21 May 1883
10 Sulman discusses his advocacy of the arcade in his preface. John Sulman, An Introduction to the study of Town Planning in Australia, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1921
Under Vernon’s guidance, the use of the arcade in public architecture was abandoned in favour of colonial architectural forms. The two-storey hospital or barrack, with its wide wrap-around verandahs, developed by the Royal Engineers in the 1820s, was used as the model for hospital and asylum wards and student accommodation. A single-storey variant was employed for Land Board Offices, hospital wards and smaller country court houses. The colonial homestead form was employed for medium sized country post offices and staff housing at the experiment farms. On the rare occasions that the arcade was used, it was used in a colonial manner, forming a cool and solid base to a building. Examples of arcaded ground floors can be found in the military and public buildings in the Caribbean designed by the Royal Engineers.

Pages of the Past

The rapid rate of disappearance of Sydney’s colonial Georgian buildings was of concern to Walter and Hugh Vernon; their papers include copies of Frederick Watson’s illustrated newspaper articles on Disappearing Old Sydney. In Australia the concern was primarily with substantial and elegant Colonial Georgian houses that were being demolished to make way for commercial buildings and suburban housing. By the late nineteenth-century Sydney had changed its character; gracious harbourside villas were now surrounded by speculators’ subdivisions and a number had been demolished. Vernon and Temple Poole, the Government Architects of NSW and WA, were at the forefront of a developing consciousness of the value of recording and retaining Australian colonial architecture. Their interest in the colonial vernacular appears to have developed in parallel; both architects had developed an

11 A map of colonial buildings in Sydney by Hugh Vernon can be found in the Vernon papers, as can research concerning Francis Greenway ML MSS 6571/4
appreciation of vernacular buildings during their training in London. John Henry Harvey of the Victorian Public Works Department also collected photographs of colonial buildings and his collection, which includes many images of NSW, is now held in the State Library of Victoria.\footnote{12}

Vernon instigated the comprehensive recording of the colonial buildings in the resumed areas of The Rocks and Millers Point prior to their demolition or alteration (Figure 11.5). A systematic record of Australia’s buildings, Temple Poole believed

\textit{should, on the contrary, be the pleasure and wish of many who have traditional, or indeed ordinary, intelligent interest in those old days.}\footnote{13}

A concern for vanishing colonial buildings was also developing amongst artists in the years leading up to World War I. Following the Observatory Hill resumption in 1900, Lionel Lindsay, William Elliot Johnson and Julian Ashton sketched and painted the colonial buildings in the ‘Old Rocks’ (figure 8.3).\footnote{14} Lindsay continued to return to the area to sketch; some of his images record buildings demolished to make way for the Sydney Harbour bridge in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It may be no coincidence that the first of the series of colonial Georgian Revival houses by William Hardy Wilson was

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure_8_3}
\caption{Lionel Lindsay, Officers Quarters, Kent Street, Sydney, 1912}
\end{figure}

\footnote{12} A number of John Henry Harvey’s views of the resumed areas of Sydney have been wrongly dated to the 1930s. They show buildings in Hart Street and Windmill Street that were demolished between 1904 and 1908. SLVIC, J.H. Harvey collection.; \textit{Scenes in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia.}

\footnote{13} Temple Poole, George, \textit{Presidential Address}, Western Australian Institute of Architects published in \textit{The Salon} in August 1913

\footnote{14} A number of the photographs William Elliot took in 1904 have been copied by the Mitchell Library. His paintings of The Rocks and Millers Point are almost identical to his record photographs.
Merion, a house designed for Lindsay and built in 1911. The same year Temple Poole, as President of the Western Australian Institute of Architects, had given an address to members that was published in *The Salon*, commenting that:

> To most of us it may appear as being anticipatory of age, and superogatory, to undertake a recording and preserving a record of the fast disappearing structures and buildings of an earlier century. We may also be aware that there was little or no inherent merit in these simple structures produced by the unconventional exertions of pioneer settlers, and the unwilling band of soujourners of the early days. These are not treasures, although a few have a measure of sincerity which holds them immeasurably superior to the paltry pretences surrounding them. Still, they make a page of the past, which should not be lost to the readers of the future.

During his study tour Vernon would have seen how detail of demolished urban buildings was inspiring the design work of the emerging younger generation of architects in London. A reaction against what Morris called the ‘devouring hideousness and squalor of our great towns, and especially of London’ had emerged in architectural circles. One of the architects who had recognised that London was rapidly losing many of its traditional buildings was Vernon’s mentor William Habershon, whose *Records of Old London Vanished and Vanishing* appeared in 1888. It was the Society for the

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16 Temple Poole, *Presidential Address*, Western Australian Institute of Architects published in *The Salon* in August 1913

Protection Ancient Buildings (SPAB) that had been long promoting the importance of studying historic buildings. By 1890 SPAB had over 400 members, including the leading architects and designers of the Arts and Crafts movement. SPAB’s 1896 conference, held in conjunction with the LCC, concentrated on London’s architectural heritage; the organisers believed that

‘Londoners are by no means well informed as to the architectural treasures they possess’.18

Out of this conference arose the idea to undertake a comprehensive survey of the architectural heritage of London. During their voluntary work for the Survey of London Charles Robert Ashbee, and LCC designers who assisted him, came to understand the traditional arts of building and similar highly crafted details began to appear in their Free Style compositions.19 Ashbee’s design for 38-39 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, London of 1899 used the combination of brick with roughcast above that was described in The Builder as being ‘old London Style’ (figures 8.4 & 8.5).20 Lethaby had long believed that a detailed knowledge of traditional building crafts was essential

Whenever, if ever, the art of building becomes real again it will be refounded on delight in structure, knowledge in materials, practice of craftsmanship and the impulse towards experiment and invention…21

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19 Ashbee, assisted by a number of volunteers, including architects from the LCC, began this immense task in the early 1890s By 1913 four volumes had been published, Bromley-by-Bow, Chelsea (parts 1 and 2), St Giles in The Fields and Lincoln’s Inn Fields.
20 Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, p. 84
21 Lethaby, Philip Webb and his Work, p. 123-24
In London the leading designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement used Georgian buildings as a source, the style was a ‘valid vernacular’, complementing the existing streetscapes. In NSW the valid vernacular for institutional buildings was the state’s colonial Georgian architectural legacy.

**Type 1: re-interpreting the Colonial vernacular**

Vernon had acquired a detailed knowledge of the colonial Georgian institutional buildings, many of which continued to be used by the State Government. In his time almost all of the institutional buildings designed by Lieutenant Watts and Francis Greenway survived and many were still in use (figure 8.6). The Vernon papers reveal that Walter and Hugh Vernon studied Macquarie era buildings in Sydney and Parramatta in some detail; Hugh’s sketch of the Lancer Barracks in Parramatta survives. With the Sydney T-square club, Hugh sketched modest colonial buildings including the stables to Rangers

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23 Sketch of the Lancer Barracks at Parramatta, February 21 1899. The next sketches were drawn near Melbourne and at Capetown, indicating that Hugh was en route to serve in the Boer War.
Hugh Venables Vernon Sketchbooks ML PXA 867 Volume 6
in Neutral Bay. Walter applied this detailed knowledge of NSW’s architectural heritage in the design of public buildings for country towns in NSW.

The series of regional Land Board Offices built across NSW during the 1890s were all designed in response to the Australian climate. Construction began in 1894 with the Land Board office at Moree, followed by East Maitland in 1895, Bourke, Dubbo and Hay in 1896, Forbes in 1898 and Tamworth in 1899. In the arid areas of NSW the choice of building materials was very limited and the timber and corrugated iron used at Hay and Bourke were probably shipped from Sydney.

Corrugated iron had replaced both terracotta and slate as the preferred method of roofing public buildings in country areas, primarily as it was easier and cheaper to transport. The long sloping roofline Vernon favoured was accentuated by the use of corrugated iron, rather than the fussier profile created by Marseilles tiles, flat terracotta tiles or shingles. The English style flat terracotta roof tiles that he had used at Penshurst in Neutral Bay were difficult to obtain and were only used for small-scale public buildings, such as the railway stations at Newtown and Redfern and municipal band rotundas like the example at Observatory Hill.

24 Old Stables, Rangers, Neutral Bay, Jan 25 [1899], this sketch has previously been attributed to Walter, but may be, like the sketch of the Lancer Barracks, Hugh’s work. ML PXA 867 In 1913 a Mosman resident requested that NSW Chapter of the Institute of Architects oppose the demolition of Rangers to make way for suburban housing. The protests were to be in vain and the picturesque house built by Oswald Bloxham in 1844 was demolished.
Two of the early designs for the Land Board Offices, the offices at Hay and Dubbo, were constructed with corrugated iron walling and roofing (figures 8.7 - 8.9). These experiments in acclimatising the Queen Anne Revival, whilst employing an easily transportable material, were not repeated, probably for purely practical reasons, these offices would have been unbearably hot in the summer and cold in the winter. In its original form the Dubbo Land Board office consisted of four corner pavilions with vented gables, separated by a two-storey verandah.25 Located in the centre of the town, the design still contrasts with the masonry commercial buildings that surround it. The verandah detail has subsequently been continued across the main elevation to provide additional shade. The simple handrail to the first floor, and the turned columns and solid brackets below are the characteristic features of Vernon’s work that have already been identified in his domestic design.

25 Illustrated in the NSW Public Works Department, *Annual Report for the year ending June 1897*. 

Figure 8.7

Figure 8.8
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Land Board Office, Dubbo, 1896

Figure 8.9
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Land Board Office, Dubbo, 1896
Following his return from London, attempts at acclimatising the Queen Anne Revival were abandoned in favour of using forms drawn from colonial precedents. The design intention of the Land Board Offices was outlined in a discussion in 1901 of the design for Tamworth. Vernon’s aim had been to provide ‘good lighting for rooms and shade and coolness for the hot climate’. Modestly he described the new Land Board Office at Tamworth as being ‘upon somewhat original lines’, indicating that he was implementing changes in public architecture in NSW (figure 8.10).

The Land Board Office at Forbes (1898) is a transitional design, employing similar windows and roof for the portion of the building that extends to the street as can be found at Hay and Dubbo (figure 8.10). A wide wrap around verandah was added that shaded the walls during the heat of the day. The effectiveness of the verandah can be seen in the figure 8.11. The form employed for the Land Board Office at Bourke, a long, low pavilion raised above the ground, with an encircling verandah, demonstrates a detailed understanding of the colonial buildings that NSW inherited from the convict establishment.

26 Vernon, Government Architects Report in NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1901
27 Vernon, Government Architects Report in NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1903
as institutional buildings. Walter and Hugh Vernon’s knowledge of military barracks such as Lancer Barracks at Parramatta designed by Lieutenant Watts and the Victoria Barracks designed by Major Barney were an indirect result of their having served in the Australian Mounted Regiments.

The Officer’s Quarters at the Lancer Barracks in Parramatta, with its sloping roof that continues in an unbroken line over the verandah, is one of the group of buildings Watts designed surrounding the parade ground. Two single-storey buildings with verandahs flank the larger two-storey soldiers barrack. Such symmetrical planning was typical of the British army barracks and has its origins in the first permanent barrack near the Scottish border; the Ravensdowne barracks at Berwick-on-Tweed designed by Nicholas Vanburgh around 1720.28 Watt’s design for the Lancer Barracks (figure 8.12) may have influenced the design of the series of single-storey court houses built along the coast of NSW, as well as the single-storey pavilions used in country hospitals and the Land Board Office at Bourke designed by the GAB. Cox and Lucas credit Watts with ‘the introduction of the verandahed public building to Australia’.29

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28 Ravensdowne Barracks are now used as an army museum and art gallery.
Like his patron, Governor Macquarie, Watts had previously served in the West Indies and was clearly familiar with the two-storeyed pavilion designed by the Royal Engineers employed as the standard barrack or hospital, as he used the form in Sydney and Parramatta.\textsuperscript{30} In contrast to the Rum Hospital, ‘a grand if somewhat crudely executed scheme which predates the arrival of trained architects in Australia’ that employs a two-storey colonnade, Watts used elegant chamfered timber posts at the Lancer Barracks.\textsuperscript{31} Paired posts mark the entrance, a device also found in the Western Land Board Office at Bourke. Another clue that colonial Georgian buildings were used as a source by the GAB was the transition in window sash designs in the late 1890s from the small panes of coloured glass in the top sash used in the Queen Anne Revival to the colonial Georgian arrangement of either six or nine equal panes of clear glass to both sashes.

The Land Board Office at Tamworth, designed after Vernon’s return from London, is different from the earlier designs, employing the courtyard first used in the 1899 design of the Bourke Court House.

\textsuperscript{30} For a detailed discussion of the design of the only surviving example of Watt’s hospital designs, the Military Hospital on Observatory Hill see Otto Cserhalmi & Partners,\textit{Conservation Plan for the National Trust Centre}, Unpublished Report 2000.

\textsuperscript{31} Cox and Lucas,\textit{Australian Colonial Architecture}, caption to plate 290 p. 137 and plate 290
and repeated in Wagga Wagga Court House completed in 1902. Neither the Forbes or the Tamworth Land Board Offices are raised above the ground; these towns do not experience the same climatic extremes as Bourke (figure 8.13). Photographs of the Land Board Office at Tamworth taken by the National Trust clearly show how well the external verandahs worked in shading the offices (figure 8.10).³² The Land Board Office at Moree likewise draws on colonial buildings, a wide stair led to the generous verandahs that encircle the two side pavilions.

The wide variety of Land Board Offices designed in the 1890s shows that a considerable degree of experimentation with forms and materials was occurring. Unlike the country police residences, where the same form was employed on the North Coast at Maclean and at Tumut in the Snowy Mountains, a standard form had not emerged. Here it is an appropriate response to climate that was sought, to ensure working conditions remained bearable during the summer. The similarity in each design is the use of a hipped roof with vented gables.

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³² State Records Office, Photographs of Public Buildings in NSW, Forbes Land Office
The Maitland example (1897), with its Palladian symmetry and recessed porch to the ground floor, is atypical of the series of Land Board Offices (figure 8.14). Recessing the central bays to form a deeply shaded porch is a Palladian device often found in the planning of colonial houses and in the series of Greek Revival court houses by Mortimer Lewis and Alexander Dawson. The design may be in response to the elegant series of colonial Georgian buildings constructed in and around Maitland including the Greek Revival style Aberglasslyn (1836), attributed to John Verge, and the recessed porch of Dalwood built by George Wyndham in the early 1830s. There is no wide verandah or internal court in the design, as there was no precedent for these forms in this area.

Vernon revived the careful crafting of public buildings that Greenway had managed to achieve, his knowledge of details such as rubbed brick arches would have been obtained from the colonial Georgian buildings demolished to make way for new commercial and public buildings in the Sydney CBD (figures 8.15-6.16). The new store for

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33 Illustrated in the NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1897
34 James Broadbent believes the house to be by Verge as it as many similar details to Elizabeth Bay House. He notes that no documentation has been discovered to confirm this attribution. Broadbent, James, The Australian Colonial House, Architecture and Society in NSW 1788-1842, Horden House in Association with the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1997 pp. 200-202.
David Jones, designed by Vernon upon his arrival, replaced the Jerusalem warehouse; the design has now been attributed to Greenway (figure 8.16). Likewise the extensions to the Royal Naval House, designed in 1907, replaced the Calcutta Tea Warehouse originally designed by Greenway for the Howe family circa 1816 (figure 5.22).

Greenway had used a recessed porch when converting the Thistle Inn in George Street North for the Bank of New South Wales in 1822 (figure 8.14).

The recessed porch, the use of a series of rubbed brick arches to the ground floor and the plain sandstone string courses employed in the East Maitland Land Board Office are all details that can be found in Greenway’s institutional buildings such as Liverpool Hospital and the Supreme Court built next to his St James Church in Sydney. Such carefully detailed brick arches can be found in John Soane’s work, designs that Greenway used as a source. Similarities with Soane’s work such as the rubbed brickwork, the use of clerestories and Diocletian windows can be seen in Vernon’s work, but not, like Greenway the copying of entire façades. The design of the nearby Greta Court House also shows the influence of colonial interpretations of Palladian planning (figure 8.17). The lunette window to the pediment of the George Street elevation of the Jerusalem Warehouse, the four centered arch to the arcade and the shadow line created at the eaves are all similar to the details employed at in the design of the Greta Court House.

35 Broadbent and Hughes, Francis Greenway, Architect, Catalogue Entry 81, Jerusalem Warehouse
36 Broadbent and Hughes, Francis Greenway, Architect, Catalogue Entry 50, House for George Howe
37 Broadbent and Hughes, Francis Greenway, Architect, Catalogue Entry 59, Bank of NSW
It was not only in the designs for Land Board Offices that the GAB was attempting to design for the extremes of the Australian environment. In the design for the court house at Wagga Wagga Vernon believed that he had set ‘a standard for buildings of this character in a semi-tropical climate’. Today the court house, completed in 1902, continues to operate as such. The design contrasts with the typical two-storey Victorian commercial buildings lining the main street. Wagga Wagga has a colonial town plan, with two differently oriented grids placed, like Adelaide, on either side of the river. The post office is on the southern side of the lagoon; the court house is on the north, constructed on a sloping site in the main street. In most country towns in NSW the public buildings were deliberately placed in the same block.

The orientation of the court house is also unusual, the courtyard faces the main street and the entrances to the court room are from the side street where two generous staircases literally flow like lava.

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38 Vernon, Government Architects Report in NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1903
Figure 8.19
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Court House, Wagga Wagga, 1902

Figure 8.20
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Court House, Wagga Wagga, 1902

Wrought iron work to the dock of the Court House, at Wagga Wagga
out across the pavement. The tower, which forms a local landmark, is also placed on the side street (figure 8.18). As at Broken Hill, a tower is used as a townscape element, marking the building and the centre of the town. The design has been carefully composed to shade the Diocletian windows of the two-storey courtroom. The roof is pan iron, with the series of ridges creating a regular rhythm. Voyseyesque brackets are used to the wide eaves. Externally brick and roughcast are employed, with brick employed for the plinth, the arches and the quoins and to divide the composition into bays. A breezeway separates the internal court from the street (figure 8.21).

The tower is almost entirely of brick, with strong verticals accentuating the height. Internally face brick was used in the courtroom, and the elegant internal furniture and the dock, with its curled wrought iron, is still in use (figures 8.19 & 8.20). A comparison between the interiors of the Banco Court, completed in 1895, designed before Vernon’s study tour, and the Bourke and Wagga Wagga Court Houses designed after his return shows the abandonment of the use of cast ornament in favour of carved or wrought work.
Bourke Court House (1899)

The most unusual of the court house designs, and the design most suited to the heat, is the substantial Bourke Court House (figure 8.22), where the use of the fountain courtyard first appears. Designed shortly after Vernon’s return from his study tour, Bourke Court House is a complex Free Style composition, employing traditional English construction techniques, Eastern motifs and colonial planning innovations. The design combines motifs drawn from Voysey’s recent domestic work with a cool fountain court derived from Islamic architecture, a device widely used in Islamic architecture. Vernon had traveled in Spain and North Africa where the use of cool fountain courts or patios was common and his photograph collection includes examples in Cairo.

The Bourke Court House design is very different in its choice of materials, and in the way in which the climatic extremes are dealt with, from the earlier series of Land Board Offices.
The design Vernon believed was

A somewhat new departure in planning with a view of meeting the special requirements of the great heat of the Bourke Climate. An internal and an open court-yard is provided for shade, while the corridors surrounding the court-room itself on all four sides are carried uninterruptedly across the building, thus giving through ventilation in all directions.  

In plan the standard arrangement of a courtroom flanked by corridor and offices has been altered, adding a courtyard fronting Oxley Street (figure 8.23). Cross-ventilated offices open onto two sides of the garden court; the side corridor to the courtroom forms the third side, the traditional placement of a corridor next to the courtroom. Vernon makes one change to the traditional courtyard form; the fourth side is enclosed by a breezeway above street level. By leaving one side of the court open Vernon managed to ensure that the courtyard remained airy, following Nightingale’s belief that closed

Figure 8.23
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Bourke Court House, Bourke, 1899

The courtyard of the Court House, Bourke photographed shortly after its completion.

39 NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1900, p. 57
courts were unhealthy, trapping foul air. Rear courts, separated by a change in level or a ha-ha, had already been successfully used at Kenmore Hospital.

To design for a hot climate, architects turned to the architecture of Spain and her colonies for inspiration. Walter Crane praised the ‘Spanish Gothic’ Ponce De León Hotel at St Augustine, Florida, completed in 1888 to designs by the New York firm of Carrère and Hastings (figure 8.24). That Crane believed the building to be ‘Gothic’ shows that the Arts and Crafts Movement had accepted a wide range of interpretations, following on from Webb’s Red House design that was Gothic in spirit. The Ponce De León hotel is a complex composition that includes elements drawn from a number of sources; the two central towers are derived from minarets such as the Giralda in Seville (now the bell tower of the Cathedral). The open corner turrets to each wing have similarities to the chatries marking the corners to Bourke Court House. The wide breezeways, which connected the two wings, were furnished as outdoor rooms.

40 Florence Nightingale in Notes on Hospitals gives the example of enclosed courts at Hôpital Necker in Paris. Her belief that courtyards trapped foul air did not achieve widespread acceptance in European hospital planning and today courtyards can still be found within the Necker hospital.

At Bourke Court House the combination of brick and roughcast used by Vernon at Bovington and the Maclean Court House appears again, combined with exposed rafters supported on metal brackets at the eaves in the Voyseyesque manner. Small traces of the Queen Anne Revival style can still be found, particularly the terracotta coat of arms and small-paned windows to the upper sashes. There is no overtly symbolic ornament that would have served to indicate that the building was a court house.

In its detail the Bourke Court House is a highly crafted building.42 Great care has been taken with the design; the unornamented terracotta vents below the eaves have the same plain grid as the timber valence to the courtyard. In this building the aesthetic purity that is evident in contemporary London work can be seen. Every last detail, down to the astragals has been designed (figure 8.25). The astragals are clipped into the form of a wave; the use of a water motif for a downpipe is particularly appropriate.

42 In the State Heritage Register and Register of the National Estate the detailed design of this building has been attributed Oakeshott however many any of the aspects of the design correspond with Vernon’s travels in search of the vernacular, rather than Oakeshott’s travels in search of the Renaissance.
The detail of the eaves brackets, astragals and the rainwater heads at the Bourke Court House has many similarities with Voysey’s recent work; the shallow dome of the corner towers is similar to his 1895 design for a clock. Following Vernon’s return from London, wrought iron eaves brackets similar to those used by Voysey in his domestic designs, including the Tower House at Bedford Park built in 1894, can be found in a number of designs including Wagga Wagga and Bourke Court Houses, Temora Post Office and the dormitory block of the Agricultural College at Bathurst (now part of Charles Sturt University).

Wendy Hitchmough has noted the similarity between Voysey’s designs for household items and his designs for buildings, the form of the clock is similar to the shallow dome over the entrance to the archway of the Greyfriars Stables, near Guildford in Surrey built in 1895.

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43 Voysey’s designs for metalwork are illustrated in Hitchmough, C. F. A. Voysey plates to pages 61 & 62
44 Hitchmough, C. F. A Voysey. The design, as it appeared in the architectural press, is illustrated on p. 37 (illustration 8).
1897. Vernon’s familiarity with Voysey’s designs would have been via architectural journals and via his cousin; Voysey’s furniture, wallpaper and fabric designs were on sale in Liberty’s store in 1897. The Art Workers’ Guild in London manufactured his metalwork designs: rainwater heads and door and window furniture.

The detail of the wrought ironwork above the timberwork to the gates, the use of the square courtyard and the chatris marking the corners of Bourke Court House all have similarities with the illustrations in Lethaby’s *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*. The use of motifs drawn from Lethaby’s work, and his idea that symbolism must be comprehensible to all, has already been discussed in relation to the design of Irwin House at Newington. The wrought iron balustrade continues across the top of the main gates at Bourke Court House and is a detail similar to the gates of Buddhist temples such as the gate to the East Toran, Sanchi Topi that Lethaby used to illustrate his text (figure 8.26). Similar shallow domes can also be found in fountain canopies and mosques in Istanbul and Cairo. In his 1894 study of Sancta Sophia, Lethaby detailed the construction of the church’s distinctive shallow domes.

Following the publication of Lethaby’s two books in the early 1890s, motifs of Eastern origin could be found in the Free Style work of British architects, however few of these designs were built. Lethaby’s work provided forms and motifs from a wide range of monuments.

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45 Illustrations of the Clock and Greyfriars can be found in Hitchmough, C. F. A. Voysey, p. 51 and 83


47 Plates 4, 34, 40, 42-44 from Lethaby and Swainson’s *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study of Byzantine Building*, Facsimile edition, original published in 1894
that could be applied to the design of public architecture. More importantly, his drawings depicted majestic buildings that had mostly not been designed in the classical tradition. The competition design for the Glasgow International Exhibition by Honeyman and Keppie, rendered by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1898, drew on eastern forms, employing a series of shallow domes above the side aisles. Lethaby himself employed a series of shallow domes in his unsuccessful competition design for Liverpool Cathedral of 1902-03.

In Great Britain, and in Australia, the use of Eastern motifs was short-lived, however these designs foreshadow the work of Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens at New Delhi, where ‘occasional touches of India’s own vernacular styles’ can be found. In California the Spanish Mission style evolved,

the Spanish colonial past was idealised in much the same was as the English colonial past; as a simpler time when a spirit of community prevailed, people lived in harmony with nature and took pride in working with their hands.

In Vernon’s work the nationalistic trend continued, with details and forms continuing to drawn from Australia’s colonial architectural legacy. The use of motifs from Eastern architecture was not an avenue that the Government Architect pursued after Federation.

48 Mackintosh’s presentation drawing is illustrated in Alan Crawford, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995 p.49
49 Lethaby’s competition design is illustrated in Davey, Peter, Arts and Craft Architecture, Phaidon, London, 1980 p. 76
51 Cumming and Kaplan, The Arts and Crafts Movement, p. 124
Wellington Post Office additions (1904)

By 1906, when Vernon’s work is discussed in the Architectural section of the *Cyclopedia of New South Wales*, it was recognised that work of the GAB contributed substantially to the character of country towns across NSW.

It may be urged that the architectural taste of the Government Architect has little, if any, influence on the country provided his buildings are substantial and convenient. But Vernon’s regime has disproved this. The public buildings constructed in many of our country towns from his plans have done more to educate local taste in architectural matters than would be supposed. Take, for example, the South Coast country township of Nowra. The court-house post-office and police barracks there are in a style such as the traveler remembers to have seen in many other country towns but they suggest their purpose, and have certainly done much by the artistic stability of their effective brickwork, to suggest that even cottage residences might be built in something more artistic than weatherboard and galvanised iron.52

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52 Anon, *The Cyclopedia of N.S.W. (Illustrated)*, Architecture, Biographical entry on W. L. Vernon, pp. 410-411

**Figure 8.27**
Unknown designer, Police Station, Wellington, mid nineteenth century

**WALTER LIBERTY VERNON**
Noni Boyd © Final Version July 2010
The simple vernacular structures of country NSW inspired Vernon's public architecture. The now demolished slab building that served as the Wellington police station employed a similar colonial roof form to that of the substantial two-storey addition to the front of the Post Office added by the GAB in 1904 (figures 8.27 & 8.28).\textsuperscript{53} The change of materials in country towns was necessary for practical reasons, slab construction was not watertight, vermin proof or fireproof. In contrast to Barnet's additions to Richmond Post Office, undertaken in the late 1880s, in which a cast iron lace verandah was added over the arcade, Vernon's design continues a traditional building form employed in country NSW.\textsuperscript{54}

In conception the additions to the Wellington Post Office have some similarity with colonial Georgian architecture. The solid ground floor with its arcade contained the official functions and the airy, upper level with its French doors designed to catch the breeze, served as the Postmaster's residence, a similar division of functions as in a Sydney merchants townhouse of the 1830s or 1840s. It was a

\textsuperscript{53} A photograph of the now demolished Police Station can be found in the collection of official photographs of public buildings in the Government Printers Collection, ML GPO I

\textsuperscript{54} The view in the GPO collection shows the building before the additions, NAA Album of post offices shows the additional storey and the verandah.
device that Greenway employed at Springfield at Potts Point (figure 8.29), a design which

has an undefined ‘colonial’ or possible Mediterranean character about it, in that it appears to be a direct or sensible response to a warm climate, but is not typical of the early colonial houses of NSW where columned verandahs and trellis work were generally used rather than masonry arcades and two-storeyed verandahs were uncommon.55

The use of verandah over an arcade is not a typical Australian form, but is a device that Temple Poole also employed, indicating that a wide range of colonial architecture was being used as a source for the design of public buildings. It is a form that the Royal Engineers had used for military purposes, the strong base designed to protect munitions and valuable stores.

**An Elegant Simplicity**

The elegant simplicity of vernacular buildings, and their appropriateness as a source of hand crafted details, would later be advocated by Muthesius in his *Das Englische Haus*.

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55 Springfield, Potts Point, Sydney built 1830, demolished

Broadbent and Hughes, Francis Greenway, Architect, p. 101
A movement opposing the imitation of styles and seeking closer ties with simple rural buildings which began over 40 years ago, has had the most gratifying results. 56

Vernon, Joseland and Temple Poole had long been studying colonial buildings, noting the suitability of the wide verandah to the local climate. 57 Joseland writing about the current state of domestic architecture in 1892 told readers that

It is often the absence of any apparent effort, and the utter modesty and eminent suitability of the house for a dwelling in this climate that is so pleasing. In the simple square hipped roof or deeply overhanging eaves, wide verandahs and balconies, with their stout and well proportioned posts, we have evidence of the architect or builder to provide, above all things, a comfortable dwelling, and not, as seems to be the case later on, to make a display of his own vulgar ingenuity and untutored ideas. 58

Even Sulman, who advocated the loggia in preference to the verandah admitted that

56 Muthesius, The English House, (Das Englische House), p. 10
57 Montana, The Art Movement in Australia, Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900, p. 208
58 Richard Howard Joseland, Domestic Architecture in the Building and Engineering Journal, 13 August 1892, p. 63
I am inclined to think that the verandahs attached to, or forming part of, dwellings erected in the earlier days of the colony were better fitted for their purpose than those of recent times. In the first place they formed an integral part of the design of the building to which they were attached, as the columns were usually of sufficient substance to harmonise with the solidity of the walls and the roof of the main building as a rule included the verandah in its area.  

Many of the designs by the GAB from 1897 onwards for country towns across the state are characterised by the use of a wide wrap-around verandah and the rooflines found in the typical Australian colonial Georgian homestead. Timber was used for public buildings on the north coast of NSW, a major timber getting area, and also in the Riverina, in the south of the state. In the design of the Moulamein Court House of 1899, and in the design of the series of combined police stations and court houses at Wardell (1899) (figure 8.30), Alstonville (circa 1899) (figure 8.31), Batemans

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59 Sulman, Verandah and Loggie II, in Australasian Builder’s and Contractor’s News, 21 May 1883
Bay (1900) and Ulladulla (1902) the colonial vernacular was the source of the design. More examples of this type of building may survive, as examples such as the former courthouse at Coffs Harbour are now simply residences. The design is characterised by the separation of the residential portion and the court or police office. A sweeping roofline continues to form a wide verandah, shading the walls. None of these building have any trace of the neoclassical ornament and the symbols of justice that Barnet was so fond of.

The Kurnell Accommodation House (1901)

At the Kurnell Accommodation House, built around 1901 for visitors to the site of Captain Cook’s landing on the exposed southern side of Botany Bay, the fussiness of the Queen Anne Revival is noticeably absent (figure 8.32). The long sloping roof is built of corrugated iron and the walls were clad with weatherboards. The accommodation house is sited on a slight rise and today retains a panoramic view of the whole of Botany Bay, including Bare Island and La Perouse.

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61 The building is now under the control of the NPWS. Monuments had been constructed on the site from the 1870s, when the obelisk commemorating Cook’s landing was built; however it was not until Federation that the land came into public ownership.
Although constructed of timber and employing colonial forms, the accommodation house has similarities with Voysey’s domestic designs for houses at Swanage, Hampstead and Frensham, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1896; designs that were much discussed in the architectural press.\(^6\) This elegant re-interpretation of the colonial Georgian style homestead provides a marked contrast with speculative suburban housing of the same date. Turned timberwork has been omitted in favour of simple balusters and posts.

In his analysis of Sancta Sophia in Istanbul, Lethaby noted that ‘forms and results directly depended on present circumstances and then ordinary materials.’\(^6\) Ordinary materials: corrugated iron and weatherboards were employed, materials that were only considered suitable for temporary buildings in England but were commonly employed in the colonies. Very few of the architects working in Australia in the 1890s drew on the colonial vernacular as a source

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62 Graves, A, The Royal Academy Exhibitors, Royal Academy, London, 1904, entry for Voysey
63 Lethaby and Swainson, The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople, A Study of Byzantine Building, p. vi
and in the majority of cases the buildings were public. Dods in Queensland, Temple Poole in Western Australia and Vernon and James Sven Wigram (of the Department of Public Instruction) in NSW were fulfilling Lethaby’s aim of creating a living architecture, an architecture that responded to the extremes of the Australian climate. The re-interpretation of the colonial vernacular utilised ordinary materials commonly available in country Australia: local stone, brick, corrugated iron and timber.

Type 2: Picturesque Cold Climate Buildings

In the late nineteenth century Australia’s cold climate areas were popular in the summer; their milder climate providing a welcome relief from the heat. In an age that believed disease was spread by foul air, locations such as the Blue Mountains and the Snowy Mountains were popular for their air quality as well as the picturesque scenery. Limestone formations in caves were particularly popular. As there were no towns nearby to the cave reserves, accommodation houses were established at Abercrombie, Jenolan, Wombeyan and Yarrongobilly in NSW and Yallingup in WA. In NSW the reservation of karst areas for recreational purposes occurred in the 1880s, predating the establishment of chases and national parks. In NSW package tours to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko in Snowy Mountains and natural wonders such as the Jenolan Caves were developed, with detours to scenic beauty spots such as the Explorers tree and the panorama of the Vale of Clwydd from Mount York in the Blue Mountains. Picturesque colonial buildings such as Hartley Court house were also included on the itineraries.
Between 1898 and 1910 accommodation houses designed by the GAB were built at Jenolan Caves (in the Blue Mountains) (1898, 1907), at Captain Cook’s landing place at Kurnell (1901), on the Snowy River at Thredbo (1906), and at the Yarrangobilly Caves near Tumut (1908) (figure 8.33). The sanatorium on the road to the summit to Mount Kosciuszko was also used as tourist accommodation. The extensive Chalet at Mount Buller in Victoria and Caves House at Yallingup in WA were also built by state governments and package tours to these scenic beauty spots were developed.

Snowy River House (1906)

Snowy River House, a summer lodge for fishermen and tourists, erected by the NSW state government around 1906, was promoted as overlooking ‘a rippling trout stream’. Tourists not interested in fishing were encouraged to visit the ‘magnificent mountain waters’.

Advertised in tourist bureau posters as a ‘country bungalow’, the

64 The GPO Collection contains views of the accommodation house at Jenolan Caves, Yarrangobilly Caves, on the Snowy River and on the road to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko.

65 Section on scenic tours and resorts in Oline Richards, *Public Parks and Recreation Reserves in Western Australia*, in Georgina Whitehead, *Planting the Nation*, Melbourne, Australian Garden History Society, 1991 p. 44

66 Tourist poster with rates, Snowy Mountain House, ML GPO1 11013 circa 1906
accommodation house soon became known as the Creel (figure 8.34). Built on the banks of the Snowy River, near the original confluence with the Thredbo River, what survives of the fishing lodge is now under the waters of Lake Jindabyne. Used by recreational fishermen as an unofficial club house, the principal guests were Joseland and his fellow NSW Rod Fishing society members.

In America the railway companies, whose lines carried tourists to areas of scenic beauty, built picturesque chalets in the Yosemite Valley and at the Grand Canon. These designs followed a theme; Swiss chalets were employed in mountainous areas and rustic log cabins recalling the exploits of the pioneers of the Wild West were built at the Grand Canyon. In his study of the changing attitudes towards nature, Peter Coates’ comments that the national parks developed in parallel to increasing suburbanisation, ‘none wanted to trade permanently the benefits of modern life for the charms of existence in rude nature’. The poems of Banjo Paterson likewise describe an ideal, rather than a particular historical figure; the Man from Snowy River combines tales of the exploits of the stockmen of the high mountain plains.

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67 A creel is a traditional woven wicker basket.
68 Joseland was a keen fly fisherman, publishing a book on the subject, something he did not do for his architectural interests. Often described as ‘the father of trout fishing in NSW’ for his continued efforts to establish the sport in NSW Joseland founded the NSW Rod Fisher’s society in 1905 and served on the council until his death in 1930. At their first meeting the Society voted to establish trout hatcheries in the Duckmaloi River near Oberon, on the Snowy River near Thredbo and at Robertson in the Southern Highlands. Government hatcheries were also established and it was not long before these rivers were well stocked with trout obtained from New Zealand.
The benefits of modern life could be found in the accommodation houses designed by the GAB. Although constructed of timber, these buildings did not employ traditional slab or log construction. Such picturesque techniques were not weathertight and required continual maintenance. The long low fishing lodge, with its wide verandah, is similar in character to the Kurnell Accommodation House and the timber accommodation block erected at the Experiment Farm at Grafton. The internal planning is likely to have been similar to the Grafton example with the dining room in the central projecting bay flanked by bedrooms opening onto the wide verandah.

In the smaller scale accommodation houses at Kurnell and the Snowy River colonial forms were the inspiration, the wide verandahs employed as seating areas so that guests could enjoy the views. The buildings were all carefully sited to enhance the visitor’s appreciation of the scenery. None of these buildings dominate the landscape. At Jenolan the road passed through a cave to get to the accommodation house, at Kurnell the accommodation house was situated on a rise overlooking Cook’s landing place. The sanatorium on the road to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko (later a hotel) overlooked an artificial lake and commanded a substantial panorama of the Monaro.
Jenolan Caves House (from 1898)

The extensive limestone cave network at Jenolan (or Fish River as it was then known) was developed by the NSW Government as a tourist attraction and resort in the mid 1880s. The caves were initially reached via the bridle path, known as the Six Foot Track, that wound down through the Megalong Valley from Katoomba. Although the Jenolan Caves were under the control of the Minister for Mining, the task of designing a more substantial and fireproof guesthouse, to replace the original timber guesthouse destroyed by fire in 1895, fell to the Government Architect.

The first stage, completed in 1898, is a small rockface limestone building with an austere main gable to the road and a series of small gables to the side elevation (figures 8.35 & 8.36). It is now encompassed within the larger hotel complex that is still operating as Jenolan Caves House. When enlarging the complex in 1907-09, Vernon chose to add a wing in the main valley, perpendicular to the original building, thus creating a picturesque composition. McRae’s substantial half-timbered accommodation wing and dining room, added in 1914, was designed to tower over the earlier stages.
The general appearance of the first stage of the Jenolan Caves Guesthouse indicates that the building was designed after Vernon’s return from London. The long narrow building, which follows the narrow tributary valley, is similar in character to traditional Welsh vernacular architecture, employing local stone Vernon noted ‘in the simplest manner possible’.70 The design was British in inspiration, similar he believed to, ‘…the best type known in the tourist districts of England, Scotland and Wales’.71 Unlike much of NSW, the landscape, and the cool, damp and misty climate of Jenolan Caves, has strong similarities with Wales. Primarily due to the isolation of the caves, locally quarried limestone was used to construct the guesthouse, rather than the more commonly employed Sydney sandstone.

Vernon noted that

A considerable sum of money has been expended in the erection of the first portion of an important hotel at Jenolan Caves, for the accommodation of the increased number of visitors and tourists proceeding there. The undertaking was an extremely difficult one,

70 W.L. Vernon to Alexander Oliver, 18 September 1900, State Records (AONSW) 4/885.4
71 Vernon, Government Architect’s Report, in NSW Public Works Department, Annual Report for the year ending June 1898 p. 54
an in its isolation from the material and railway carriage necessarily
made building operations of an expensive character. It was found
necessary as well as desirable to erect the buildings in local mountain
limestone obtained partly by excavation near the site and partly by
quarrying elsewhere. The result of its use is highly satisfactory.⁷²

The use of local limestone is particularly appropriate at Caves House
as it accommodated visitors to the extensive system of limestone
caves within the surrounding hills. Morris’ romantic description of
the vernacular limestone buildings of the Cotswolds, written in 1881,
could also be a description of the first stage of Caves House:

Everything about it is solid and well wrought, it is skillfully planned and
well proportioned... ’tis in fact beautiful, a work of art and a piece of
nature... Solid and well built, nor are its materials far fetched, from the
neighbouring field came its walling stone; and from the top of the hill they
are quarrying...⁷³

The extent of the transition in Vernon’s work following his return
from London is best understood by comparing the design for the
Jenolan Caves House, completed in 1898, with the public buildings in
the Blue Mountains designed just before his study tour: The Mount
Victoria Post Office, completed in 1896, although also built of local
limestone, uses motifs drawn from the Queen Anne Revival: small-

⁷² Vernon, Government Architect’s Report in the Public Works Department Annual
Report for the year ending 30 June 1900, p. 157

⁷³ William Morris, The Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation, a lecture delivered
before the London Institution in March 1881. Kelvin, William Morris on Art and
Socialism, p. 62
paned windows, turned timberwork and slate roofing with terracotta ridge cresting (Figures 7.41 and 7.42). With the exception of the use of small panes in the upper sash, there is no trace of the fussiness of the Queen Anne Revival style in the design of Caves House. Likewise in his metropolitan work, Vernon abandoned the fussiness of the Queen Anne in favour of the more austere Free Style.

**Hotel Kosciuszko (1909)**

The road to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko was completed in 1909, as was the substantial accommodation complex located between Jindabyne and the summit, designed by the GAB. Initially intended as a sanatorium, the complex was operated as the Hotel Kosciuszko from its completion until its destruction by fire in the early 1950s. Tourists visited the high alpine pastures and peaks of the Snowy Mountains in the summer; government tourist bureau posters advised prospective visitors that they could now travel from ‘Sydney to the Summit in the Sun’. The route was initially via the South Coast;

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74 The staff accommodation block survived the fire and is still operated as a ski chalet known as Sponars. The walls of the hotel were packed with sawdust as insulation, a detail that contributed to the rapid spread of the fire that destroyed the main block. The road to the summit has been upgraded but still passes by the artificial lake in front of the hotel.
Figure 8.38
Unbuilt scheme for a stone accommodation house on the slopes of Mt Kosciuszko

Figure 8.39
Elevation of the Hospice Kosciusko
Canberra was not yet a reality. Completed in 1909, the Immigration and Tourist bureau described their new hotel as 'handsome', the interior arrangements and fittings reflect great credit on the Government Architect Colonel W. L. Vernon who…took a keen personal interest in everything connected with it.

In 1902 GAB had designed shelter sheds for Mt Kosciuszko, the design of which has not been located. The initial scheme for an accommodation house prepared circa 1907, was designed entirely in stone (figure 8.38). A second larger scheme for a hospice was prepared and it was this scheme that was built (figure 8.39 & 8.40). Constructed of timber, with a large sandstone arch marking the main entry, the Hospice Kosciuszko was designed to cater for patients all year round. The siting of the complex, in a valley overlooking a small lake, with the backdrop of a tree-clad hill behind, is reminiscent
Figures 8.41, 8.42 and 8.43
Views of the interior of the Hotel Kosicouszko
Top Ballroom
Centre Dining Room
Bottom Billiard Room
of the Lake District. Early photos of Wombeyan Caves House and Jenolan Caves houses show the buildings similarly nestled in a valley. The idea that the building would be a hospice or sanatorium did not last long, and the building soon became Hotel Kosciuszko.

In order that the extensive views could be maintained, the site was terraced, the tennis courts were located below and to the side of the main building. The grounds also contained a formed toboggan run and golf links. The large terrace created in front of the hotel was widely used in the summer and in the winter. The buildings were of a varying scale, with the staff accommodation to the rear rising above the main block. The staff block survived the fire and is still used as accommodation today.

Vernon noted that recent buildings in the European Alps influenced his design. These must have been published examples as he does not have appeared to have visited the area; he does not provide any clue as to the locations. Sanatoriums had emerged as a distinct building type and contemporary English sanatoriums, including an unbuilt design by Voysey and the substantial timber Maunsley Sanatorium, are of a similar scale and character to the Hotel Kosciuszko. Half timbered gables were the distinguishing feature. The bedrooms in the three main elevations of the hotel are denoted by the use of half-timbered gables. McRae added another wing after the Great War; however he followed the existing architectural vocabulary.

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79 Section on the Hotel Kosciuszko in Gatis Gregors, A Survey of the Southern NSW Alpine Architecture, B.Arch Thesis, University of Sydney, 1979

80 South Devon Sanatorium (unbuilt) illustrated in Hitchmough, Wendy, C. F. A Voysey, Phaidon, London, 1995 plate 3

and the addition appears seamless. When adding to Jenolan Caves House, McRae also used a half timbered motif, building a tall block that is similar to Voysey’s published design for the Tower House in Bedford Park.

A series of photographs of the Hotel Kosciuszko’s interior survive (figures 8.41 - 8.43). Applied decoration was absent, stained timber was prevalent and the generous fireplaces in large rooms are reminiscent of the halls of English manor houses. Taking a holiday in the mountain air was an activity that fitted well with the healthy lifestyle promoted by the emerging Garden City Movement; the sparse furnishings of the hotel were in keeping with the simplicity Morris advocated. Well into the 1920s the NSW Government Tourist Bureau’s guest house and tourist hotel guide promoted what it termed ‘holiday, health and tourist resorts’.

The Kangaroo Valley Court House (1901)

The move away from the Queen Anne Revival towards a more austere Free Style architecture is particularly apparent in the tourist accommodation and the small-scale court houses built in the cold climate towns following Vernon’s return from London. The use of motifs drawn from traditional rural buildings of England and Wales continued in the design of small-scale public buildings in NSW until World War I. At the Kangaroo Valley Court House, completed in 1901, the principle feature of the design is an unornamented gable (figure 8.44). In this case the gable is asymmetrical, continuing over the archway that led to the main entrance.

81 NSW Government Tourist Bureau, Holiday, Health and Tourist Resorts in NSW, NSW Government Printer, 1924-25
In complete contrast to the temple fronts of neoclassical NSW court houses by the Colonial Architects Lewis, Dawson and Barnet, Vernon concealed the entrance to the courtroom from the street. There is no carved ornament to indicate that this is a public building and it is of a domestic scale and character, continuing the trend towards less forbidding public buildings that Vernon had discussed in his 1897 report to the Minister.\(^82\) Little further development of the town occurred after the court house was completed and today the building retains its rural setting and the picturesque backdrop of the valley can still be appreciated.

The use of an uneven gable, one arm of which continues almost to the ground, is a vernacular motif employed in Great Britain and can be found in the farmer’s house on the Glenlyon Estate designed by James Maclaren around 1889.\(^83\) It is a motif also used in a rural setting by Baillie Scott at the White Lodge at St Mary’s Convent, Wantage (1898-99) and by Voysey at Walnut Tree (1890) and

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\(^82\) Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 4-5

\(^83\) Illustrated in Service, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design, 1890-1914, plate 9
Greyfriars (1896). In Great Britain such motifs were confined to rural domestic architecture. In NSW they were applied to public architecture with the intention of creating less monumental buildings, following, as Vernon advised the Minister for Public Works the general tendency to give the exterior of buildings a less forbidding look and cold classical appearance than formerly that he had observed during his study tour. As with Richardson’s gaol buildings at Albany in New York State, it was the solidity of the rockface stonework that implied a sense of impending confinement.

The public buildings that were designed as a re-interpretation of colonial Georgian forms benefited from Vernon’s detailed knowledge of buildings that were a practical responses to the frequent climatic extremes in NSW. The highly crafted buildings produced by the GAB were specifically designed to provide pleasant living and working conditions, even in areas where the temperature frequently reached over 40 degrees celcius. The use of locally available building materials, traditional forms and details in the Arts and Crafts manner was initially far more evident in public architecture than in domestic architecture in NSW. The use of simple, elegant details, and the truthful use of materials, would remain evident throughout Vernon’s term in office and is a characteristic of the designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement internationally. Forms based on colonial buildings continued to be used by the GAB until World War 1, particularly in the design of hospitals.

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84 Baillie Scott’s design is illustrated in Service, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design, 1890-1914, plate 30
Voysey’s design is illustrated in Hitchmough, Wendy, C. F. A Voysey, Phaidon, London, 1995 page 48 (Walnut Tree Farm) and p. 82 (Greyfriars)
85 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, pp. 4-5
CHAPTER 9  NO SACRIFICE IN SUNSHINE :
HOSPITAL DESIGNS 1890 -1912

In this and the following chapters the GAB’s Free Style designs for hospitals and asylums, schools, fire stations and model workers’ housing are considered, showing how the progressive architectural ideas that Vernon had observed in London were applied to the design of the state’s institutions. Public architecture was no longer simply concerned with colonial administration, but now encompassed education, health, welfare and accommodation of those whom Morris termed ‘common fellows’. This chapter considers the emergence of the Free Style in the design of hospitals and asylums in metropolitan, suburban and country NSW following Vernon’s return from his study tour.

Whilst London retains the occasional Free Style public building these buildings remain, as they were when completed, isolated examples.1 The use of the Free Style was predominately for domestic architecture and public housing; it was only occasionally employed for art galleries, hospitals, and libraries and commercial buildings. In contrast NSW retains a wealth of public buildings designed between Vernon’s return in 1897 and his retirement in 1911 that can be classified as belonging to the Arts and Crafts Movement. These highly crafted Free Style buildings, that embody the teachings of Morris and Lethaby, were designed with a similar aesthetic purity as the buildings designed in London by the LCC and the architects that Liberty employed as product designers.

1  Davey, Arts and Crafts Architecture, Chapter 11, The Lost City.
Hospital Planning in NSW

In NSW it is in public architecture, particularly in the design of buildings for the Department of Health, that the transition from the Queen Anne Revival to the Arts and Crafts Free Style is evident. The transition occurred initially in the design of individual buildings rather than in the overall site planning. Hunt, Sulman and Vernon were all familiar with Florence Nightingale’s advice on hospital planning. Based on her experience in the Crimea, Nightingale developed a series of principles for hospital designs in the 1860s, demanding light, ventilation and fresh air. Her principles continued to be used in the planning of hospitals in Great Britain and the colonies until the 1920s. The identifying features of wards planned according to Nightingale principles are the arrangement of the windows between the beds and the separate ‘sanitary towers’, located at the end of the wards, containing toilets and bathrooms.

Australian-based architects were familiar not only with Nightingale’s published handbooks, but also with international examples of recently completed hospitals. Both Sulman and Vernon were members of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, presenting the occasional paper. Sulman’s paper: Notes on the Construction of Hospital Wards, presented in 1893, outlined the findings of his visits to overseas hospitals undertaken whilst he was preparing the detailed design for the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital. He illustrated the typical window detail that forced the air to circulate as Nightingale demanded.²

² John Sulman, A Note on the Construction of Hospital Wards, A paper presented to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1893.
Nightingale’s persistence in demanding good hospital planning and healthy locations had led to hospital designs, including designs for additions to Sydney hospital, being submitted to her for approval.\(^3\) One of the earliest designs to incorporate her requirements was the Catherine Hayes Hospital at Randwick designed by Hunt in 1866-67, whilst he was working in Blacket’s office (figure 9.1). International designs were widely studied via architectural periodicals and visited; the aim was to incorporate what Vernon termed ‘the best features’ into the design of institutions in NSW. His report to the Minister outlines these ‘best features’, innovations in planning, lighting, heating and ventilation.\(^4\)

A preoccupation with the provision of sunlight can be found in the hospitals and mental asylums designed by the GAB under Vernon, in Sulman’s competition entries and in hospital designs dating from the 1890s. Sulman’s belief in the benefits of sunlight was not confined to the design of hospitals:

\(^3\) Nightingale’s fight to ensure that London’s hospitals were well sited and planned is outlined in Hugh Small, Florence Nightingale, Avenging Angel, London, Constable, 1998 pp. 148-150

\(^4\) Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe. Report No. 22.
Of equal importance is natural lighting and sunlight. It is quite appalling, from a health point of view, to realise what a large proportion of city workers carry on their duties in artificial light. When their work is finished the daylight is gone, except in the summer, and, but for the weekends, they are debarred from life-giving, germ-destroying sunlight.5

In 1893 he commented that 'every ray of sunshine... is of so much value', a view he qualified, 'however here in Australia we have almost too much sunlight.'6 An early advocate of Lister's work, Sulman informed his Australasian colleagues that in England 'modern investigations have proved that direct sunlight can be efficient in destroying germs of disease'.7 The importance of sunlight was a belief that Vernon and Sulman shared, evident in Vernon's comments on the hospitals that he visited during his study tour.8

When comparing Morningside Hospital in Edinburgh and Claybury Asylum near London with the layout of Kenmore Hospital near Goulburn, then under construction, Vernon advised the Minister that at Claybury

...there appears to me to be a sacrifice in sunshine in some of the enclosures and courtyards, as well as a want of direct lighting to some of the rooms and wards.9

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5 John Sulman, An Introduction to the study of Town Planning in Australia, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1921 p. 35
6 Sulman, A Note on the Construction of Hospital Wards, 1893
7 Sulman, A Note on the Construction of Hospital Wards, 1893
8 When built Claybury, Woodford was in the county of Essex. Due to boundary changes the former mental hospital now falls within the London Borough of Redbridge.
9 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7
Claybury Asylum at Woodbridge, Essex, designed George T. Hine in 1887-88 but not completed until 1893, was the ‘first large-scale echelon asylum’ built in England (figure 9.2 & 9.3). Hine became an expert in planning hospitals, designing a further 11 hospitals and asylums along similar lines. An article describing Claybury appeared in The Builder in 1892, the plans having already been published in 1889. Its design reflected the modern treatment of lunacy [that] demands also more provision for the embellishment of the asylum than is to be found in the barric-like interiors of our older institutions. Hence the interior of Claybury is almost palatial in its finishings, its pitch-pine joinery, marble and tile chimney pieces, and glazed brick dados, so much so that some of the visitors rather flippantly expressed a desire to become inmates.10

Vernon made no comment about the opulence of Claybury, but did so in regard to Morningside in Edinburgh whose

10 The Builder 30 July 1892
furnishings were on a scale equal to many high-class hotels. I could see at once that nothing of this kind is likely to be required in NSW, unless perhaps on a most limited scale.\textsuperscript{11}

Rather he admired, at Morningside, the general ‘appearance of fine houses scattered through the well timbered grounds’.\textsuperscript{12} In NSW the staff housing and the ward pavilions were now arranged in a landscape setting, rather than in the severe axial layouts Barnet employed.

Vernon’s view that many of the recent designs for English hospitals and asylums were inferior to Australian examples is evident in his report; ‘one misses the highly cultivated gardening and shrubbing we are accustomed to’ in NSW.\textsuperscript{13} The use of ha-has at asylums, rather than palisade fencing or walls, that allowed patients an uninterrupted view of the landscape, appears to have been due to reforms introduced by the NSW medical adviser Dr Norton Manning. Vernon noted that ‘the ha-ha fences to these enclosures, so universal in NSW, are very little used in English Asylums’.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7
\textsuperscript{12} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7
\textsuperscript{13} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7
\textsuperscript{14} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7
English hospitals were often built within the grounds of existing residences, benefiting from existing landscaped gardens. The planting in hospital grounds, deliberately used to screen buildings such as morgues and laundries, was undertaken in the belief that trees purified the air. The concept of the therapeutic garden had emerged in institutional planning in England and Australia during the 1880s; the garden setting of hospitals and asylums was designed to benefit recuperating patients, providing a calming setting. Petting zoos, with farm animals and kangaroos, were established and cricket pitches were laid out, intended for the use of the patients. Identical rustic cricket pavilions were built at asylums at North Parramatta, Newcastle and Gladesville; the example at North Parramatta survives.15

The director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney advised on suitable plantings for hospitals and asylums across NSW, and plants from the Botanic Gardens’ own nurseries were supplied.16 At the North Parramatta Lunatic Asylum the airing courts of the now demolished timber Female Division were planted with rare specimens from as far afield as Chile. The gardens were created using the male patients as a labour force; gardening proved to be both therapeutic and enjoyable. For many years Kenmore Hospital supplied a rare species of plum to commercial plant nurseries.

15 Views of the pavilion in its original configuration that can be found in the GPO Picture Collection at the ML show the flat terracotta roof tiles and the tree trunks used as posts. Lunatic Asylum - Parramatta - Recreation Grounds
16 Lists of plants supplied to institutions and local councils can be found in the records of the Royal Botanic Gardens held at the NSW State Records.
Dr. Manning, who served with Vernon on the judging panel for the Kenmore hospital, may have suggested international examples for him to visit. Vernon also relied on his family connections and knowledge, visiting the Brompton Hospital for Consumption. The Brompton Hospital, the first purpose-built hospital for tuberculosis in England, had been commenced in 1844. The hospital chapel had been constructed in 1849-1850 to the designs of Edward Buckton Lamb, the architect with whom his cousin Arthur had been articled. The more recent wards contained such modern innovations as subways and lifts designed to carry beds. Wide heated corridors filled with daylight were also used as day rooms.¹⁷

In the Female Convalescent Ward at Gladesville Hospital, designed by the GAB in 1892, the corridors were not used as day rooms, rather a separate day room was provided with a generous curved bay window and an open corner turret, separated by an arcade (figure 9.4).¹⁸ This ward block contrasts with the austere asylum buildings designed by Mortimer Lewis in 1836-38. In designing asylums, the Colonial Architects had adopted many of the features of the institutions designed for convicts by the Royal Engineers, making no provisions for the comfort of the inmates. At Newington and North Parramatta the inmates ate their meals in covered mess sheds in the yards all year round, just as the convicts had.

A break away from the symmetry and formality of the nineteenth century institution, in favour of a more informal garden suburb type.

¹⁷ Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 8
¹⁸ The original drawings for this building showing the room uses survive. Former PWD Plan Room: Mental Hospitals – Gladesville Hospital MH 3/242
can be seen in the hospitals designed by the GAB from the mid 1890s onwards. Thomas Mawson, whose writings Vernon was familiar with, had designed the masterplan for Port Sunlight that included a central, formal avenue and more informally planned groups of houses separated by gardens. This central axis flanked by more informal groupings was employed in NSW hospital layouts, with a village green forming the heart of the complex at the Kenmore Hospital, Lidcombe Hospital and the James Fletcher Hospital in Newcastle. In the latter, formerly a barracks, additional buildings were arranged around the edge of the existing parade ground dating from the 1840s.

Mawson, the author of The Art and Craft of Garden Making, was an early advocate of master planning and the newly emerging discipline of town planning. Vernon may have first come across his work in South Wales when he visited his wife’s family in 1897. In 1892 Mawson had won the competition for the design of Belle Vue Park, a 35-acre park given by the Tredegars to the citizens of Newport.

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Davey, Arts and Crafts Architecture, note on p 181
Mawson’s layout and his planting scheme for Belle Vue has been recreated by Newport Council, Gwent, Wales
Figure 9.5
NSW Government Architect, Kenmore Hospital, Kenmore, from 1895

- Tower
- Quarters for Matron and the Medical Superintendant
- Village Green
- Administration Block
- Ward pavilions with garden courts

Figure 9.6
NSW Government Architect, Lidcombe Hospital (formerly Rookwood Asylum), from 1893

- Ward pavilions
- Village Green
- Recreation hall
In addition to designing the gardens surrounding Voysey’s Moorcrag (1899) and Baillie Scott’s Blackwell (1902) on Lake Windemere, Mawson designed masterplans for cities, universities, urban parks and national parks in Europe, Canada and the United States of America.\(^ {21}\)

He achieved considerable success in international competitions, preparing a prizewinning design for the gardens of the Palace of Peace in The Hague. A prolific designer, who worked on both sides of the Atlantic, he established offices in Lancaster, London, Vancouver and New York.\(^ {22}\) Mawson was one of the new breed of crusading architect/urbanist/town planners who traveled widely giving illustrated lectures promoting the planned city, campus or suburb.

Following Mawson’s lead, the GAB began to masterplan campuses and hospital complexes in NSW. The masterplan for the University of Sydney (figure 9.7), which followed the contours, was later criticised and abandoned initially in favour of a layout by the Griffins (1916) and later by Wilkinson’s American-influenced Beaux Arts masterplan (1920) (figure 9.8).\(^ {23}\) The masterplans for the country asylums and hospitals at Kenmore, Morrisset and Lidcome took the site characteristics into consideration and the overall layouts were no longer symmetrical, Vernon created a picturesque townscape rather than a regimented institution (figures 9.5 & 9.6).

\(^{21}\) Thomas Mawson & Sons scheme for Calgary is held in the Canadian Architectural Archives.

\(^{22}\) 14,000 of Mawson’s garden designs, town planning schemes and architectural projects survive. The Cumbrian Archives Service in England holds a substantial collection. A list of the gardens that Mawson designed in the Lake District can be found at www.visitcumbria.com/mawson.htm.

\(^{23}\) Some of early campus layouts for the University of Sydney survive in the University’s archives. The 1910 layout by the GAB does not survive however a later masterplan by McRae includes both the constructed buildings and the larger Physics school that did not eventuate. A copy of the Griffin scheme is held. Wilkinson’s scheme is held. The plans by the Griffins and Wilkinson have been included in the photographic survey of the development of the Campus over the last 150 years.
Figure 9.7
George McRae for the NSW Government Architect, Site plan, University of Sydney, Camperdown, 1910

KEY
Grey = existing buildings
Brown = science chools designed by the GAB between 1900 and 1910

Figure 9.8
Leslie Wilkinson, masterplan for the University of Sydney, Camperdown, around 1920,
Kenmore Hospital

Nowhere is the transition in the work of the GAB from the acclimatised Queen Anne Revival to buildings that are clearly Arts and Crafts in inspiration more apparent than at Kenmore Hospital, near Goulburn, a psychiatric hospital set in extensive landscaped grounds planted with rare specimen trees (figure 9.9).24 The detailed design of a major institutional complex such as Kenmore Hospital was a contrast to the court houses, police stations and post offices that characterised the output of the Colonial Architect until 1890 and the GAB in the early 1890s. Although individual buildings had already been designed under Vernon’s guidance for the state’s hospitals and asylums, these were built within the existing severe institutional layouts inherited from the convict establishment. Much of Vernon’s work in the 1890s was in changing this severe institutional character making the environment far more pleasant and healthy for both staff and inmates.

24 Many of the rare plantings such as the cork tree no longer survive, however the plum trees, for which the hospital was widely known in horticultural circles, can still be found in the grounds.
At Kenmore the typical pavilion hospital layout was softened, a village green flanked by the centralised kitchen and recreation facilities replaced the central axis, the tower was characteristically placed to one side (figure 9.5). At Claybury the recreation hall and main water tower occurred on the central axis (figure 9.2). Two of the original wards at Kenmore were separate from the V shaped arrangement of ward pavilions, following the contours of the site. The arrangement of buildings following the existing contours is typical of the layouts prepared by the GAB and is a complete contrast to the symmetrical layout and terracing of Barnet’s Callan Park Asylum at Rozelle in Sydney, commenced in 1877 but not completed until the mid 1880s (figure 9.10). Under Vernon’s guidance the high walls and paved yards of the colonial Georgian and Victorian institution were omitted in favour of a garden setting, amongst which the new buildings were carefully placed.

In their detail the ward pavilions designed by the GAB in the late 1890s were more humane than the ward pavilions designed by Barnet that can be found at the Gladesville Asylum, the Former Female Factory at North Parramatta (the Parramatta Asylum) and at the Callan Park Asylum. Barred windows, which made patients feel that they were a prisoner, were omitted in favour of triple casement windows that could be opened but were too narrow for a patient to climb (or jump) out of (figure 9.11). This detail, evidence of a desire to provide a pleasant everyday environment, was not confined to Kenmore, but was also employed in new accommodation blocks within the former Female Factory.

Vernon had been instructed by the Minister to combine the three prizewinning schemes for the Kenmore Hospital, including designs by Sulman and his rival John Kirkpatrick, to form a new design.\textsuperscript{26}

The overall layout, which was to be repeated at Bloomfield near Orange post World War I, is largely en echelon and is planned about the central village green. The village green is surrounded by both patient facilities and staff facilities, including the duplex containing the Medical Superintendent and Matron’s residences, the combined chapel and recreational hall, the rear court of the Administration building and the dining hall.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{26} First Prize by Sulman and Power; Second Prize John Kirkpatrick and Third Prize G. D. Payne, Reynolds. Refer to Reynolds, The Evolution of the Government Architects Branch of the NSW Department of Public Works, 1788-1991, p. 322

\textsuperscript{27} Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe. Report p. 7
One major difference between the revised layout of Kenmore, prepared by the NSW Government Architect, and Sulman’s competition winning design for the Thomas Walker hospital at Concord in Sydney is that Sulman designed the main front of the Thomas Walker hospital to overlook the Paramatta River. At Kenmore it is the patient’s airing courts to the rear of the ward blocks that have extensive views, looking out across the cricket pitch (figures 9.12 & 9.13). The duplex for the matron and the medical supervisor likewise has this view. This is a similar placement to English country houses, where the garden front, and main living areas, are orientated to the view.

Although the design combined the three competition entries, there are many aspects that show Vernon’s hand. The curved drive, which follows the site’s contours, leads past the picturesque staff residences to the Administration Block, residences that are like the estate gate lodges designed by Devey, Nesfield and Shaw. The Administration building is terraced into the hillside; the airy rear court, like the courtyards of the court houses at Bourke and Wagga Wagga, is three sided and is set above road level. Vernon followed Nightingale’s advice and avoided enclosed courts; the rooms in the side wings are not accessed from a corridor, but open directly onto the rear court. The two main staircases are placed in bays at either end of building and are naturally lit. Typically the stair would have been placed in the central hall adjacent to the main entry.

28 Sulman and Power, The Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, Concord, circa 1890-93, ML PXD 593 (5 drawings)
Vernon’s lack of regard for official hierarchy is evident in the provision of a similar standard of accommodation for the Matron and the Medical Superintendent (figure 9.14). The building containing their separate apartments is on axis with the main block, separated by the village green. The medical superintendents were generally provided with a substantial residence within the grounds of the hospital, whilst the matron was usually provided with either a small cottage or a flat in the Administration building.

The two buildings flanking the Administration block, the Staff Amenities (originally the Nurses Home) (figure 9.15) and the Pharmacy and Engineering block (originally the Male Attendants home) (figure 9.16) show the transition in architectural thought that was occurring within the GAB in the mid 1890s. The Nurses’ Home employs motifs drawn from the Queen Anne Revival and is similar to the series of country post offices and police stations discussed previously. The Male Attendants’ Home, built in 1897, with its sloping buttresses, is a simpler and more austere Free Style building.
The detailed design of buildings for Kenmore Hospital shows the architectural ideas that Vernon was grappling with in seeking to design modern public buildings built according to the modern science of building, omitting réchaufées. The transition from the Romanesque Revival style carved detail of the Administration Block to the highly crafted but unornamented detail of the male attendant’s cottage occurred within a short space of time, between 1895 and 1897 and co-incided with Vernon’s visit to London. The Queen Anne Revival continued to be used occasionally for domestic scaled buildings in country towns and, rarely, if the overall character of the townscape demanded it, the style was used in urban areas. For the remainder of building types the more austere Free Style was adopted.

Re-Interpreting The Colonial Georgian Insitution

Towards the end of his term in office Vernon oversaw the design of a series of major ward buildings built within existing hospital complexes. The Victoria and Albert Memorial pavilions were added to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; a ward block was added to the Royal North Shore Hospital and the ward block of the hospital at Windsor (formerly the Convict Barracks) was substantially upgraded. The Mansfield Brothers had designed the initial layout of the Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH), the teaching hospital attached to the University of Sydney, in 1870. The hospital’s pavilion layout was well known internationally; the block plan was included in Henry Burdett’s 1893-94 survey of major world hospitals.29

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29 Henry Burdett’s survey Hospitals and Asylums of the World of 1893-4 classified the different types of pavilion hospitals. The plans were prepared by Keith Young & Henry Hall. A copy of the volume of plans is held in the RPAH archives.
Today only one building from the original layout remains; the administration block that still serves as the main entrance to the hospital. As was typical of schools and hospitals in the mid to late nineteenth century, the male and female halves were separated by the centralised facilities including the administration block, which also contained the Matron’s quarters, and the now demolished chapel.

In its original configuration, the pavilion hospital was set in extensive landscaped grounds that overlooked Orphan School Creek, with extensive views across to the partially completed quadrangle and Great Hall of the University on the ridge opposite as well as to the surrounding University colleges.

Standard Nightingale planning can be seen in the layout of the Victoria and Albert Memorial pavilions at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital designed by the GAB and constructed shortly after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 (figure 9.17). These two substantial ward pavilions, with their sanitary towers, continue the pavilion hospital layout designed by the Mansfield brothers some 30 years before.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\) Volume of Plans, Burdett, Henry, *Hospitals and Asylums of the World*, The drawings were prepared by Keith Young & Henry Hall in 1893-1894
The standard form of the ward pavilions was altered by the GAB, who omitted the verandah to the elevation of the new pavilions fronting the carriage drive.\(^{31}\) This alteration was probably made for practical reasons, the verandahs facing the gardens to the rear would have been much more suitable for patient use that those facing the noisy and dusty road.

In the GAB’s design for the memorial pavilions at RPAH the use of colonial forms is evident, the buildings are similar in scale, and similar in their restrained use of pediments, to convict barracks and commissariat stores designed by the Royal Engineers for the Australian penal settlements. The convict barracks, such as the Female Factory at Parramatta and the Hyde Park Barracks in Macquarie Street, were the equivalent of the Georgian style county workhouses that became the source of the design of English hospitals in the years leading up to World War I.\(^{32}\)

The use of the colonial Georgian was not only found in design of the facades: symmetrical forms were employed by the GAB if the internal planning demanded symmetry, as occurred in hospital wards and admission blocks complexes which had separate male and female halves. On the eastern seaboard of the United States of America

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\(^{31}\) The pavilions and the chapel originally located to the rear of the Administration block have been demolished. The pavilions added by the GAB survive, although the southernmost pavilion has been substantially extended and a perpendicular wing added.

\(^{32}\) James Kerr has traced the similarity between the country work houses and convict barracks in the Australian colonies in his two studies on architecture of the Australian penal establishment: *Design for Convicts and Out of Sight, Out of Mind*. Substantial convict barracks are a form that was not built in the other English penal colonies, hulks were generally used instead.
an interest in the colonial past was influencing the design of both institutions and residences. Charles Platt’s work at Harvard was well known amongst architects in Australia.

The Newcastle Club was designed by Robin Dods around 1918 whilst he was in partnership with Spain and Cosh (figure 9.18). The building, which he did not live to see completed, appears to have been based on colonial precedents. The Newcastle Club has many similarities with the austere buildings designed by the Royal Engineers for the convict establishment such as the Convict Barracks at Parramatta (figure 9.20) and the Commissariat Store on Norfolk Island (figure 9.19). The curved entrance stair below the portico shows Dod’s skill in re-interpreting the colonial vernacular. Likewise Hall and Dods’ design for the first stage of the Maryborough Town Hall has elements that are drawn from colonial architecture. The location of the first floor windows near the eaves has some similarities with Brisbane’s long-demolished convict barracks.

33 Barry Maitland, David Stafford, A Guide to Newcastle Architecture, RAIA Newcastle Division, Newcastle, 1997 p. 95
34 An artists impression of the barracks at Brisbane survives, the caption reads ‘no really good representation of this interesting old relic of convict days appears to have been preserved, but this picture is approximately accurate, and was drawn by Mr. E. P. Trewern, of the Public Works Department, from old and inferior representations of the structure which appear in photographs of early Brisbane.’ John Oxley Library image 31216
Waterfall Sanatorium

The sites of the sanatorium designed by the GAB at Waterfall near Sydney, the sanatorium at Mt Kosciuszko and the private sanatoria in the Blue Mountains designed by G. S. Jones were carefully selected for their air quality. By the 1890s it had been realised that it was not altitude that aided patient recovery, but simply 'a plentiful supply of fresh air'. The polluted London air was evident to Vernon, who commented to the Minister that in NSW that TB hospitals would have been better sited.

The Waterfall Sanatorium, now known as the Garrawarra Hospital, was a purpose-designed tuberculosis sanatorium located between Sydney and Wollongong commenced during 1906-1907. The complex steps down the hill, with each building commanding an

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35 The sanatorium designed by George Sydney Jones and its associated landscaping partly survives, although the site has been subdivided. The surviving buildings have been identified in the recent surveys of heritage buildings in the Blue Mountains undertaken for the Blue Mountains City Council.


37 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 7

38 Expenditure first appears in the 1906-1907 PWD Annual report. The hospital is no longer a Tuberculosis hospital but it is now an aged care facility known as the Garrawarra Hospital. The original hospital complex remains including the Administration block and the Nurses Home, as does the staff housing and a number of the individual open-sided chalets added in 1914.
extensive view across the Royal National Park to the sea (figure 9.21), taking full advantage of the sea breezes that formed part of the treatment. The Royal National Park, the first in Australia and one of the first National Parks in the world, had already been established when the hospital site was selected.

At Waterfall the steep site was used to advantage, the centralised facilities, the administration block, and the nurses home all step down the hill, accessed from the porte-cochere via breezeways. Extensive gardens were laid out and a series of pathways created for the use of the patients. The separate residences for staff were grouped near the entrance, in a garden suburb layout. The Administration Block (figure 9.22) and the Nurses home (figure 9.23) were built of brick and roughcast, the palette of materials typically used by Vernon for modestly-scaled suburban buildings. Motifs drawn from the vernacular, such as the cat slide roof, were employed to create a picturesque composition.

At Waterfall the GAB employed a pavilion form derived from the standard military hospital or barrack developed by the Royal Engineers between 1810 and 1825 and used in the Australian colonies by Macquarie, Watts and Barney. Vernon would have been familiar with the colonial era civil hospital designed by Watts and built on the banks of the Parramatta River, as it was demolished in the early 1890s to make way for a new hospital block designed by Sulman (figure 9.24).

39 From 1914 small timber chalets designed by McRae were constructed throughout the grounds for daytime use.
The Waterfall Sanatorium is one of the few complexes where interior photographs of the recently completed building were taken, evidence of the high levels of day lighting in the wards. The exposed timber trusses of the Dining Room recalls the colonial Georgian institutional interiors such as the substantial stone mess hall built for the convicts on Cockatoo Island in the 1850s.

It was not only the British who developed a hospital pavilion for the tropics surrounded by verandahs, historic postcards show that the Canal Comission hospital at Colon in Panama, built by the French, consisted of a series of two-storey pavilions surrounded by verandahs and linked by breezeways. The breezeway and ward pavilions at the Waterfall Sanatorium and the now demolished two-storey timber barracks at the Experiment Farm at Wollongbar both show similarities with the Colonial hospitals that utilised the standard tropical hospital form, as well as similarities with the breezeways and verandahs of the later colonial hospitals such as the French example at Colon (figures 9.24-9.25).40

40 The building remains on the National Trust Register but has been demolished.
Vernon modified colonial forms to include Nightingale’s sanitary improvements but did not adhere strictly to her planning requirements; the sanitary towers were confined to the rear so that views from verandahs would not be obscured.

A similar palette of materials to that employed for the Administration Building and the Nurses Home at Waterfall was employed for the Matron’s residence and the Nurses Home at the James Fletcher Hospital in Newcastle, giving the buildings a domestic scale and character. The complex was originally the Newcastle soldiers’ barracks, designed by the Royal Engineers at the same time as the

Figures 9.25
Unknown designer, Canal Commission hospital, Colon, Panama, 1903

Figure 9.26
Victoria Barracks in Sydney, and it contained two substantial barrack blocks with verandahs facing the sea. The matron’s residence (figure 9.27) and the two-storey nurses’ home were built adjacent to the gatehouse, on the opposite side of the parade ground. The barracks were retained and used as wards. The small original hospital block was used as the Medical Officer’s residence. The terraced parade ground formed a village green, and sports field, for the hospital. The cricket pavilion dating from the 1880s was identical to the rustic pavilions at the North Parramatta and Gladesville asylums however the walls were later infilled to form a clinic.

Although set within what was once an austere barracks complex, the additions by the GAB introduced a more domestic scale to the complex. The staff accommodation was separated from the ward pavilions by the parade ground. The internal configuration was pleasantly detailed to provide sunlit staircases and sitting rooms (figure 9.28) and views out to sea. A garden was established surrounding the staff quarters. Although the hospital did not deal with infectious diseases, the provision of a healthy living environment, full of light and air, remains apparent.
Lidcombe Hospital  (The Rookwood Asylum)

Lidcombe Hospital retains its series of elegant timber pavilion wards built around a village green, the construction of which commenced in 1893 (figure 9.6 & 9.29). Architectural historians have been unsure where to place the timber buildings designed by the GAB at Lidcombe. Richard Apperly believed that the elegant timber ward pavilions display a clearly anachronistic use of earlier forms and materials: a low wide-spreading homestead hipped roof, extensive structural and decorative use of timber in place of brick and the reversion to corrugated iron.41

The use of the wide verandah is not an anachronism, rather it is evidence of the continued search for an appropriate Australian architecture that draws on the colonial precedents that the Vernons had been studying.42 In colonial institutions the use of the wide verandahs was reserved for the soldiers and the officers not the inmates and the convict barracks were arranged around bare yards used to muster the convicts. The arrangement of the series of ward pavilions

41 Richard Apperly, A Controlled Near Chaos, NSW, in Howells, Towards the Dawn, Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915, caption to fig 29 p. 38
42 Research by Walter and Hugh Vernon into Francis Greenway and the origins of the town of Sydney can be found in the Vernon papers in the Mitchell Library.
pavilions around a village green shows an attempt to provide the asylum inmates with a pleasant environment. In the mid 1890s, when the construction of the Rookwood Asylum commenced, the use of a rigid pavilion layout was standard in hospital and asylum planning in England, Europe and America.

As in the hospitals designed by Hall and Dods in Queensland, and the Land Board offices designed by the GAB, the wide verandah was employed as a means of climate control. Australian designs for naturally ventilated hospital wards were well known internationally; the Brisbane hospital wards by Hall and Dods were praised by Alfred Saxon Snell in the Building News in 1915 and mentioned in the instructions on model hospital planning for wartime issued by the English War Office. Following his return from London in the mid 1890s, Dods began drawing on colonial vernacular forms, producing one of his finest works, the Lady Lamington Nurses’ Home in 1897 (figure 9.30). A detailed description of the nurses and their new home appeared in the Queenslander in July 1889 and their healthy regime was commented upon. The provision of cool, fresh air was an important consideration in Queensland and outback NSW.

At Lidcombe Hospital, the Waterfall Sanatorium and Windsor Hospital, Vernon created what Robin Boyd later described in Dod's work, 'a stylistic elegance within the framework of the vernacular'.

Working within the framework of the colonial vernacular was

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43 A standard hutted hospital plan was published in the Building News on 17 November 1915 accompanied by the description of an illustrated lecture given by the expert hospital designer Alfred Saxon Snell. The article cited the open air principles used at an Australian Hospital, Brisbane Hospital by Hall and Dods. Dods had worked briefly for the Imperial War Office in the 1890s in London.

44 The Lady Lamington Nurses Home, The Queenslander, 1 July 1899

45 Lund, Robin Dods 1868-1920 in Tanner, Architects of Australia, p. 89
more widespread in the late 1890s than is generally believed and is particularly apparent in the design of hospitals. As with Vernon’s work, Dod’s sources do not appear to have been simply the local Queensland vernacular. His competition winning design for the Nurses Home, and his later naturally ventilated hospital wards, are a remarkable re-interpretation of the colonial Georgian hospital pavilion employed by the Royal Engineers throughout the tropics.

Not all of the timber buildings designed during Vernon’s term in office survive, and it is difficult to determine how widespread the use of colonial forms in NSW was. The use of long, low single-storey timber pavilions had already commenced prior to Vernon’s appointment, with a series of timber pavilions built at the Coast or Isolation hospital in the 1880s. Timber buildings added to the complex during Vernon’s term in office also survive. The timber pavilions at the Rookwood Asylum (Lidcombe Hospital) were illustrated in the 1895-96 Annual Report. The identical pavilions at the Newington Asylum have been demolished, only the permanent staff quarters (Irwin House) (figure 7.25) and the Queen Anne Revival style

46 The photographs of the wards in the Bolieau collection at the NLA are either of the Rookwood Asylum or identical pavilions were used.
NLA, Photographic Album of the Bolieau Family’s Voyage from England to Australia in 1894-95.
masonry hospital block remain. Timber ward buildings were used at the Plague Hospital at Stockton (later Stockton Mental Hospital) near Newcastle, a hospital commenced following the outbreak of the plague in Sydney in 1900.\(^\text{47}\) Oakeshott used timber pavilions with external breezeways during the major additions to the Quarantine Station on North Head undertaken by the Commonwealth following their acquisition of the site in 1910.

The use of the colonial buildings as a source for the design of smaller scale hospitals continues to be found in Vernon’s work following his retirement. The Scott Memorial Hospital at Scone, ‘a modern country hospital’ once again combines colonial vernacular with traditional English detailing, in the form of three gables.\(^\text{48}\) To the rear of the gabled front section are the wards, with their half-hipped roof. Constructed of ‘brick with stone dressings and rough cast upper faces’, the kitchen, laundry and operating facilities were separated from the main block by covered ways.\(^\text{49}\) The main ward block was designed with sleeping verandahs to one side, with verandahs providing shelter to the other. The separate Nurses Home ‘standing

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47 Newcastle Public Library holds photographs of the now demolished timber hospital buildings at the former Plague Hospital at Stockton (later Stockton Mental Hospital).
48 Scott Memorial Hospital, The Scone Advocate, Friday 4 July 1913 p. 2
49 Scott Memorial Hospital, The Scone Advocate, Friday 4 July 1913 p. 2
apart’ was designed with an ‘outlook over the extensive and beautiful vale in which the town of Scone sits’.\textsuperscript{50}

The use of a vernacular form, and the combination of roughcast and brick, appears in Vernon’s work following his retirement, when he was freer to exercise his personal design choices. It is clearly due to his influence that these materials and roof forms were continually employed for public buildings. Colonial forms continue to appear in his work following his retirement, but are not so prevalent in the later public buildings designed by McRae or Oakeshott. His former staff occasionally used pavilions with generous verandahs, as can be seen at the Quarantine Station on North Head, designed by Oakeshott in 1910-12, the Flowers Wards at the Coast Hospital, designed by McRae and completed in 1917 and the Manly Peace Memorial Hospital of 1926 (also at North Head) (figure 9.31) designed by Blair:

The selection of a colonial form for a building intended to be a memorial to the Scott family was highly appropriate, the Scott brothers Robert and Helenus had both been amateur architects with

\textsuperscript{50} Scott Memorial Hospital, The Scone Advocate, Friday 4 July 1913 p. 2
an ‘interest in planning and vernacular forms’. Vernon, in his research on colonial architecture may have come across Glendon, the Scott brother’s residence near Singleton. He had already designed one memorial to a Scott family member; the Mitchell Library housed the Australiana collection of their nephew David Scott Mitchell.

The choice of architectural style from which to select motifs was dependent on the existing character of the townscape. The colonial Georgian provided the source of motifs for institutional buildings, complementing both the existing convict-built buildings and the symmetrical mid nineteenth century pavilion hospitals. At the University of Sydney the Gothic architectural vocabulary set by Blacket was followed in additions to the main quadrangle and in the additions to the medical school. Likewise with the Registrar General’s building, the Gothic Revival was used, to complement St Mary’s Cathedral opposite, the original cathedral designed by Pugin had been demolished and a much larger church designed by Wardell erected. In Grosvenor Street the Queen Anne Revival was used, continuing the architectural vocabulary that Parkes had set in 1890 with his design for Royal Naval House (Figure 5.22).

**Improving the Female Factory**

In the improvements to the layout of North Parramatta Asylum, built as an extension of the convict Female Factory, and in the new hospital at Morrisset, informal garden suburb type planning can be seen. The Female Factory at North Parramatta had already been

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51 Dr Broadbent’s analysis of the Scott’s designs, which are held in the Scott Papers in the Mitchell Library, can be found in Broadbent, James, *The Australian Colonial House, Architecture and Society in NSW 1788-1842*, Horden House in Association with the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1997
extended considerably by the addition of substantial ward pavilions
designed by Barnet. Vernon progressively added a number of new
facilities, commencing with the substantial Medical Superintendent’s
residence fronting the road that skirted the hospital and Parramatta
Gaol. Previously staff had been accommodated in cottages built
between the male and female divisions, providing little separation
between work and leisure.

By demolishing the main block of the Female Factory, originally
designed by Greenway, Barnet had created a formal central axis.
The small pavilions to the rear and front of the main Female Factory
block were retained. Within this axis Vernon inserted a large top-lit
kitchen block in 1896, whose roof lantern and chimney were visible
across the artificial lake created by damming the river. He made no
attempt to mirror this building on the other side of the axis (figure
9.34). The front and north sections of wall that had once confined
the notorious female inmates were removed and replaced with the
Visitor’s block 9.33) and a single-storey accommodation wing.

The replacement of the infamously unscaleable perimeter wall with
a pleasant visitor’s block, the establishment of gardens rather than
barren yards and the use of triple casement windows rather than
Figure 9.34
Francis Greenway, NSW Colonial Architect and the NSW Government Architect,
Block Plan of North Parramatta Hospital for the Insane, formerly the Female Factory,
commenced 1820s

Block plan showing the buildings added to the asylum complex by the GAB.

C  Visitors Block
K  Kitchen Block
P  Ward Block
S  Staff Canteen
W  Female Admissions
X  Administration Block
Y  Male Admissions
bars reduced the feeling of imprisonment, all reflected the transition in the institution from asylum to mental hospital. A staff dining room, with a wide terrace, pergola and gardens, and the picturesque cottage to the rear to accommodate the waitresses, were also built adjacent to the cricket ground.

A separate section, for classifying the new inmates, was built well away from the Barnet wards and original Female Factory buildings. The Admissions complex, constructed in 1908 – 1910, followed the curve of the river, with single-storey male and female wings (figures 9.35 & 36) flanking a central Administration building (figure 9.37). These pleasant buildings were intended for the reception and classification of mental patients. The concern to provide for sunlight and circulating fresh air in the wards can be seen in the use of fanlights above the verandah as well as large windows below. Their design, and that of the Visitor’s Block, reflects contemporary

52 The original detail of the wall included quoin blocks however these proved useful footholds, allowing the inmates to scale the wall. Following a number of drunken sprees in the Parramatta township the quoins were reputedly cut back to leave the internal face of the wall smooth. A small section of the original perimeter wall of the Female Factory survives.

53 Included in the illustrations section of the Report of the NSW Department of Public Works for the Year Ended 30 June 1909.
trends in England, the deliberate asymmetry of the Free Style was vanishing in favour of the symmetry of Georgian Architecture. At North Parramatta this was an appropriate style to use, following the precedent set by Greenway. Similar admissions complexes were built at Kenmore, Gladesville, Rydalmere and, following World War I, at Bloomfield near Orange.

Windsor Hospital alterations (1911)

Whenever possible the GAB adapted the colonial institutional buildings to suit modern requirements, it was only rarely that the buildings were demolished. At Liverpool and at Windsor the convict barracks had been converted into hospitals. In 1911 the former Convict Barracks at Windsor underwent its second major transformation, with sanitary towers containing toilets and bathrooms added to each ward in accordance with Nightingale’s principles (figure 9.38). The re-use of a colonial barrack, rather that its replacement with a more modern building, shows Vernon’s skill in adapting existing colonial Georgian institutions. Original features of the design, such as the cross-ventilated dormitory wards were retained, as their generous dimensions remained suitable for use as a hospital ward. In the colonial era barrack and hospital

Figure 9.38
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government, Windsor Hospital, alterations, 1911
wards employed a standard floor plan; Standish Lawrence Harris’ record drawings show that the layout of the military hospital on Observatory Hill was repeated at the nearby Wynyard Barracks.\textsuperscript{54}

The cast-iron lace added to the main façade of Windsor Hospital during the mid nineteenth century was replaced with timberwork with a Voyseyesque cutout motif. To reflect the locality large river pebbles were embedded into the façade and into the piers to the entrance gates (figure 9.40), rather than the roughcast more widely employed by the GAB. The township of Windsor, sited on a rise that followed the Hawkesbury River, was deliberately sited so as to withstand floods. The use of local materials meant that the buildings fitted well into the existing townscape. The use of materials and forms of a more domestic scale and character also made the institution appear less forbidding.

Likewise Temple Poole’s York Hospital employed materials collected locally, with large pebbles embedded in the gable rather than the smaller river pebbles typically used in roughcast (figure 9.39). The popularity of river pebbles is likely to be derived from the American \textit{Craftsman} magazine, where river stones were often depicted in massive stone chimneys and piers to porches. The use of river pebbles in paving and in building is rare in England, although examples can occasionally be found in traditional buildings in the Thames Valley and in the Lake

\textsuperscript{54} The floor plans drawn by Standish Lawrence Harris held in the ML show that the Wynyard barracks repeated the floor plan of the Military Hospital four times, creating the large barrack block. Some evidence of this standard layout can be seen today in the military hospital on Observatory Hill (now the National Trust Centre. The drawings are contained in S.L. Harris’ report to Commissioner Bigge, ML C255
Figure 9.41
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect,
Block Plan of Morisset Hospital, Morisset, 1908

Figure 9.42
NSW Government Architect, Morisset
Hospital, Morisset, from 1908

Recent aerial view of Morisset Hospital showing the drive, the Duck Hole and the series of buildings arranged in a landscaped setting.
The designers of the Arts and Crafts movement revived traditional English techniques, including the embedding of sharp pebbles or knapped flints. Edward Schroder Prior’s Voewod (Home Place) of 1903-04 is the most elaborate example. Prior used a range of local pebbles and flints to create elaborate diaper patterns that were based on traditional Norfolk buildings.

Hospital Colonies

Morrisset Hospital is the most revolutionary of the mental hospital designs prepared under Vernon’s guidance; the symmetrical layout used throughout the nineteenth century for hospitals and asylums was completely abandoned in favour of a layout that followed the contours and the lakeshore (Figures 9.41 & 42). It is probably because it was a mental hospital that the design of Morrisset was not publicised, accommodation for committed patients and prisoners had, as Kerr pointed out, long been ‘out of sight, out of mind’ in NSW.

Based on a Belgian example, the Geel Colony, the English variant of the hospital colony emerged in the 1880s to accommodate epileptic patients. Colonies were of a more domestic scale and character than pavilion hospitals and were designed to accommodate male and female patients capable of performing useful work such as gardening and farming (for the men) and sewing and laundry (for the women).


56 For a discussion of such accommodation see James Semple Kerr, Out of Sight, Out of Mind, S. H. Ervin Gallery, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney, 2000.
The construction of a new mental hospital on the shores of Lake Macquarie began in 1908, and the complex was laid out, according to the express wishes of the Inspector General of the Insane Dr. Sinclair, as 'a community of homes'. In NSW a lake or river frontage was a traditional placement for mental hospitals; patients were transferred to the series of institutions along the Parramatta River by boat. This method of transport was preferred, as it was smoother, quieter and the patients remained calmer. Oakeshott’s drawings of the elegant timber boat shed at Gladesville Hospital, with its covered landing platform allowing for patient transfer, survive (figure 9.43 & 9.44).

Sulman’s elaborate watergate at the Thomas Walker hospital was designed for the same purpose. Both the watergate and main hospital building behind were designed to be seen from the river.

At Morisset a curved drive skirted the Duck Hole, following the banks of Poumalong Creek and the shores of Lake Macquarie. The hospital buildings were arranged informally, the female pavilions look out across the lake and the male pavilions overlook the ‘duck hole’ and the sports ground. A curved group containing the three dormitories for male patients capable of farm work was located near the extensive vegetable gardens. A separate dormitory was provided for the females capable of laundry work. The cottages for Matron, the Medical Officer and the Nurses also follow the curve of the road; the houses for the Medical Superintendent and the Inspector General were built on the lakeside. The extensive recreational facilities included a cricket ground, bowling lawn and tennis court.

57 Dr Sinclair’s requirements were cited in the Government Architect’s Report contained in the Report of the NSW Department of Public Works for the Year Ended 30 June 1909.

58 Former PWD Plan Room: Mental Hospitals – Gladesville Hospital MH 3/270
The en echelon layout of Kenmore was abandoned at Morrisset and the curved road and evenly the spaced buildings have many similarities with Raymond Unwin’s layout for Hampstead Garden Suburb. Another similarity with Parker and Unwin’s work is the detail of the individual buildings at Morrisset, which have similarities with their design for a hamlet included in The Art of Building a Home. The pavilions at Morrisset are substantial brick buildings, utilising details drawn from the English and North European vernacular; the gambrel roof is reminiscent of traditional Dutch farm buildings (figure 9.45). The use of vernacular motifs drawn from farm buildings is appropriate for a colony hospital where farm work occurred. In Holland suburban layouts inspired by English garden suburbs used similar rural forms, derived from the local vernacular.

Today Morrisset Hospital retains its layout, many of the original buildings and the substantial grounds. In the accommodation provided, and in the activities undertaken by patients, the underlying philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement is evident; the patients at Morrisset lived a simple, healthy life in the countryside. Photographs survive

59 A version with Henrietta Barnett’s comments is illustrated in Standish Meacham, Regaining Paradise, Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement, Yale University Press, Newhaven, 1999 plate 40. A watercoloured version can be found in Davey, Arts and Craft Architecture, p. 185.

60 Illustrated in Meacham, Regaining Paradise, Englishness ad the Early Garden City Movement, plates 15 and 16.
showing the wide verandahs where the female patients worked in the fresh air. The layout of the Morrisset Hospital designed by the GAB in 1908 has many similarities with English colony hospitals; it was ‘typical for such colonies to be laid out with buildings on sweeping curves, in a effort to soften their institutional appearance.’

St Ebbas Hospital, Epsom, designed by the LCC’s Asylum Engineer in 1900, ‘had an attractive appearance, reminiscent of Garden Suburb Arts and Crafts, an association encouraged by giving each villa the name of a tree’.

The GAB’s informal hospital layout for Morrissett was unprecedented in NSW and predates English examples by many years. English Colony hospitals dating from before World War I, such as the Manchester Epileptic Colony at Sandlebridge, typically employed the central village green like Kenmore and Lidcombe Hospitals. Post war English examples have more informal layouts, the competition winning layout of the Meanwood Park Colony near Leeds by H. Carter Pegg and J. M. Sheppard prepared in 1928 has many similarities with the layout at Morrissett designed two decades before, both the male and female homes were arranged in a curve. The buildings were arranged in the grounds of the existing manor house, Meanwood Hall, which was adapted to accommodate patients. Following the publication of Burdett’s world study of hospitals that included the Mansfield’s design for Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney, Australian hospital

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61 Lake Macquarie Public Library holds a series of views of the hospital that are now online in PictureAustralia.

62 RCHME, English Hospitals 1660-1948, A Survey of their Architecture and Design, Caption to Figure 180

63 RCHME, English Hospitals 1660-1948, A Survey of their Architecture and Design, p. 177-178

64 RCHME, English Hospitals 1660-1948, A Survey of their Architecture and Design, p. 180 and fig 180
designs were occasionally mentioned in international architectural periodicals.65 Hermann Muthesius believed that the main achievement of the Arts and Crafts Movement was 'modern country houses'.66 The London-based architect Halsey Ricardo would have preferred it if Muthesius had not focused solely on housing:

He takes our houses as an essential sign of the times. We would prefer to be judged by our schools, hospitals, asylums and public buildings.67

The revolutionary hospital layouts designed by the GAB following Vernon’s return from London remain largely unknown. In their design, the quality of the built environment was an important consideration and great care was taken to provide a therapeutic environment, full of sunlight and fresh air; as well as the provision of a more humane scale and character. Once the GAB had made the transition to the use of Free Style at Kenmore Hospital, the Queen Anne Revival was rarely used. The Free Style became the style of institutional and social reform, employed not only in the design of hospitals, but also in the design of workers' housing and educational facilities across the state. Townscape remained an important concern, in both the design of individual buildings inserted into an existing setting and in the design of new institutional complexes.

65 Henry Burdett, Hospitals and asylums of the world : their origin, history, construction, administration, management, and legislation. London, Churchill, 1891
66 Hermann Muthesius, Das Englische Haus and the Modern Country House (Die Bedingung deg unde die anlage des modernes landhäuses).
67 Service, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design in Britain 1890-1914, p. 106
CHAPTER 10  MISSIONARIES OF SUNLIGHT : URBAN RENEWAL 1890 - 1912

This chapter looks at Vernon’s involvement in the extensive urban renewal and suburban improvements undertaken in Sydney during his term in office. Following on from the urban renewal that he had seen in London, the GAB adopted the Free Style for its metropolitan work, establishing an architectural vocabulary that was eventually followed by the private sector architects. This chapter, and the following chapter, consider the introduction of the Free Style in metropolitan Sydney and the accompanying urban improvements, as well as the introduction of garden city and the garden suburb concepts implemented after Vernon’s return from London in 1897.

The transition from the Queen Anne Revival to the Free Style that followed Vernon’s return from his study tour in 1987 soon became evident in metropolitan Sydney. New public buildings were often accompanied by urban improvements such as the widening of streets or the creation of public forecourts and squares, reflecting the emergence of the new discipline of town planning. Where there was no overriding architectural character to influence the choice of architectural vocabulary the Free Style was used, employed in designs for new specialised buildings such as the Health Board offices in Macquarie Street as well as for the traditional types of public buildings such as police stations. The GAB led the introduction of the Free Style in metropolitan Sydney, a style that replaced the Queen Anne Revival as the preferred choice for commercial buildings. It would be some years before architects in the private sector adopted a similar design approach.
‘Gardening and Town Planning’

In an interview given on his retirement, Vernon admitted to having two passions: gardening and town planning. The former he exercised in his leisure time, the latter he had long pursued in a professional capacity. He commented that

> I don’t think a man could have a better hobby than the improvement of this city, especially if he has had experience that should make his advice invaluable.¹

Vernon’s and Sulman’s interest in town planning can be traced back to their early work in Australia. Sulman’s pioneering paper on the need for town planning, written in 1890, advocated a new type of city layout with wider streets and generous open spaces. His advice was ‘widely distributed amongst members of parliament, government officials and municipal authorities’.² It would be many years before a new approach was adopted; the colonial grid continued to be used in the layout of cities and towns until Federation. Neither Vernon nor Sulman subscribed to Camillo Sitte’s view that

> For America, Australia and other unopened lands, the grid iron for the time being still suffices. Wherever people are concerned merely with colonizing land, live only for earning money, and earn money only in order to live, it may be appropriate to pack people into blocks of buildings like herring in a barrel.³

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¹ W. L. Vernon describing his plans for his retirement in the *Sunday Times*, 8 September 1912 p. 23
² Preface to Sulman, *An Introduction to the study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. XV

Sitte’s *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstleischen Grundssteuen* was originally published in Vienna by Carl Grasener in 1889. The first English translation appeared in 1945.
Sulman despised colonial town planning; the grid of streets and chequerboard pattern of development, designed to maximise profit, showed no concern for townscape or topography. Such layouts were a grid, Roman in origin, redesigned in the eighteenth-century by the Royal Engineers for use in the colonies. The local chapter of the Institute of Architects formed its own City Improvement Committee, whose members included James Nangle and G. S. Jones. In Vernon’s view

…the planning of any new township, or the improvement of an existing city, the laying out of a park – the waterscape and its surroundings, should be dealt with only by taking advantage of all that has recently been learnt and acted upon in older communities, and as exemplified under the designation of “The Principles of Town Planning”, with regard to which is its accompanying common sense, and true artistic insight is so well dealt with in the works of Mawson, Triggs, the Liverpool Society and other modern writers on the subject.

The designers Vernon listed were British; no mention is made of the work of Daniel Burnham, Frederick Law Olmstead or other well-known American designers.

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4 RAIA Chapter Council minute books for 1906
5 The Liverpool reference is likely to be referring to the Liverpool School of Architecture headed by Patrick Abercrombie, the author of Modern Town Planning in England. The journal he edited, The Town Planning Review, began in 1910.
Walter Liberty Vernon, A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia, contained in Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. Melbourne Meeting 1913, pp. 548-565. ML 506 A
His personal library contained Mawson’s *Civic Art Illustrated, Studies in Town Planning, Parks, Boulevards and Open Spaces* published in 1911 and the earlier *Town Planning, Past & Present and Possible* by H. Inigo Triggs. In *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* Sitte commented that

> today nobody is concerned with city planning as an art, only as a technical problem. When, as a result, the artistic effect no way lives up to our expectations we are left bewildered and helpless, nevertheless, in dealing with the new project it is again treated wholly from a technical point of view, as if it were the layout of a railroad in which artistic questions are not involved.

In England, and in Sydney, members of the newly emerging profession of town planners were either architects or landscape architects who followed Sitte, believing city planning to be an art. In his illustrated keynote address in the session on *Town Planning and Garden Cities and Suburbs* given in May 1914 Raymond Unwin discussed his views on the art of town planning. Although using the term city beautiful, he was not talking about the *Beaux Arts* city planning of the American *City Beautiful* Movement. Nor was he talking about the formal planning taught at the *Ecole de Beaux Arts* in Paris.

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Included on the handwritten list of books in the Box 1 of the Vernon papers. ML Vernon Papers, MSS 6571/1

7 Camillo Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, p. 85
Rather

It is this comprehensive handling of the great problem of city development which we mean by the art of Town Planning. I call it an art because it is both expressive and creative. It is only when a city attains a certain degree of civic consciousness, when sufficient civic spirit pervades the community, for it to have ideals and aspirations as a corporate body, it is only then that the comprehensive view of city planning emerges without which Town Planning would be impossible.

As it is the function of the architect to study the needs of his clients, to provide for his convenience and his comfort, and finally to create out of that provision a building which shall be true to its expression and beautiful in its proportion. He must find in the needs of the community an opportunity for creating beauty by the disposition of its parts. He must bring them into proper relation by emphasising the centres of civic life and culture, and by harmonising the individuality of its parks and buildings which the actual expression of different tastes and points of view requires, by means of an all-embracing unity of plan and effect which is the actual expression of unity of the city.

Following his retirement, Vernon wrote an article for The Daily Mail, posing the question The City Beautiful, Have We Got It?9 Throughout his career Vernon’s work had been aimed at improving the quality of the built environment.

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8 The text of Unwin’s illustrated address is included in the findings of the conference session on Town Planning & Garden Cities and Suburbs, Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial League Health Conference held at the Imperial Institute, London May 18th to 21st 1914 p. 46

9 Walter Liberty Vernon, The City Beautiful, Have We Got It? The Daily Mail in 1913 Copy pasted into Vernon’s scrapbook. ML Vernon Papers, MSS 6571/20
‘Missionaries of Sunlight’

Sulman believed himself to be ‘a sort of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness’ but Sydney was not the intellectual wilderness he would have us believe; his circle of like-minded colleagues was well aware of contemporary developments. George Taylor, the first president of the Town Planning Association, nicknamed the Australian advocates of the newly emerging discipline ‘missionaries of sunlight’. The inaugural council included Taylor, Vernon, Sulman, G. S. Jones, Clamp and the recently arrived American architect Walter Burley Griffin. Local writers on the subject of worker’s housing, Professor Robert Irvine and the Sydney City Alderman John D. Fitzgerald, were also council members.

Those unsuccessful in obtaining a seat on the council included the architects James Nangle and William De Putron; the engineers Charles Caswell and John Bradfield, Richard Stanton, the developer of Haberfield and Rosebery, the artists William Lister Lister and Norman Carter and the Director of the Botanic Gardens. Another unsuccessful candidate was Alfred Spain, Robin Dods’ Sydney partner. Dods did not stand for council, however his views on Town Planning had recently appeared in *Salon*. Alderman Fitzgerald noted that a great and increasing number of people in Australia are asking ‘what is the meaning of the new town-planning crusade which has so long engaged the activities of State and Municipal Authorities and private speculation and philanthropists in Europe.’

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11 Professor Robert Francis Irvine was the first Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney.
13 John Daniel Fitzgerald, *Town Planning and the City Beautiful in Lone Hand*, May 1, 1914, p. 389
Sydney's missionaries of sunlight sought
to improve our cities. We desire to build towns better. We
feel inspired, as missionaries of sunlight, to preach the gospel
of pure air and clean living; and, with a 'clean slate', we have
the opportunity no other nation has today, the building of a
capital city on virgin soil.

We can build it as a model city and its sweetness will spread;
for a garden city is a hundred times more useful, because of
the inspiration it creates. It gives an example for others to
copy. The moral effect of the city beautiful is limitless.  

By the time Taylor published his views Vernon was dead.

Had Colonel Vernon been spared, his achievements in town
planning would no doubt be equal those in other spheres of
activity. As it was he was right in the forefront of the Town
Planning movement in NSW, having been one of the first
Councilors of the Association and one whose experience and
time were fully given in the preliminary work.

The term 'missionary of sunlight' also alludes to a well-known
prototype, the model village established by William Hesketh Lever at
Port Sunlight for his soap factory workers. Local writers Fitzgerald,
Sulman and Taylor all frequently cited, and illustrated, Port Sunlight
and other English models including Hampstead Garden Suburb and
Letchworth Garden City (figure 10.1).

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14 Taylor, Town Planning For Australia, p. 10
15 Taylor, Town Planning For Australia, p. 57
Figure 10.1
Exhibition Road, Letchworth Garden City, postcard, undated early 20th century

The houses in Exhibition Road (now Newells Road) were built for the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition

Figure 10.2
Richard Stanton, Tresider Avenue, Haberfield, Sydney, from 1905

Tresider Avenue which lies within subdivision four of Stanton’s Haberfield Estate. The subdivision occurred in 1905 however the construction of dwellings did not commence until circa 1915

Figure 10.3
DMR, Aerial view of Haberfield, Sydney, 1943

This view of Tresider Avenue, Haberfield Estate shows the completed houses and the street trees
The design of suburbs was of concern to both the Government Architect and progressive architects like Joseland who had publicly commented on the poor standard of speculative development in Sydney. The English-trained architects sought to improve the quality of suburban housing and were influential in promoting the transition in the style and form of suburban houses from the estate subdivisions filled with monotonous ‘Paddington’ terraces to the single and semi-detached individually designed houses of the Federation suburb.

Taylor believed Vernon and Joseland’s unbuilt design for a *rus in urbe* in Kensington to have been ‘Australia’s first garden-suburb’. From the mid 1880s architect-designed estate subdivisions such as the Neutral Bay estate, Penshurst surrounding Weigall House and the later subdivision of the Sunnyside Estate in Hunter’s Hill, with its series of Federation style houses in King Edward Parade designed by Henry Budden, introduced the Bedford Park model of controlled suburban development in a garden setting. This type of estate subdivision was the forerunner of the Federation suburb.

Vernon and Joseland’s competition design for Kensington was not built and it has largely been forgotten. Richard Stanton’s Haberfield is widely believed to be the first garden suburb in NSW and the first five houses in Stanton Road date from 1903. The suburb was developed was on a much larger scale than the estate subdivisions of the late nineteenth century (figures 10.2 & 10.3). The style and

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16 Joseland’s article on ‘Domestic Architecture’ was written for the *Australasian Builders and Contractors News* and was reprinted in the *Centennial Magazine* in September 1890.

form of the houses employed the acclimatised Queen Anne Revival style that the English-trained architects working in Sydney had long been experimenting with. For many years Stanton employed John Spencer Stansfield to design suitable houses for his model subdivision. Construction continued until the early 1920s by which time the suburb was no longer fashionable and a new and somewhat cheaper house type, the Californian bungalow, had emerged.

**Wendover, Thornleigh**

The Sydney-based architects, who advocated improvements in the standard of suburban housing, set an example with the design of their own residences, choosing to live amidst the bushland of the Upper North Shore, far away from the polluted city. Although not officially planned as a garden suburb, the suburban development of Wahroonga and Thornleigh near Hornsby, where Vernon, Joseland, Sulman and Oakeshott moved following the depression of the early 1890s, achieved similar qualities.

Wendover, the second Sydney residence designed by Vernon for his family, was built on the eight and a half acres of bushland in Pennant
Hills that the Vernons had purchased in 1889.\(^\text{18}\) Construction appears to have been commenced in 1895 (figure 10.4). Nearby was the eclectic Gilligaloola, the residence of Norman Selfe completed in 1893 (figure 10.5).\(^\text{19}\) Vernon, Sulman and Selfe all chose the English Domestic Revival when designing for their families. Sulman’s own residence Ingleholme in Wahroonga, built in 1896, featured half-timbered gables.\(^\text{20}\) Nearby Sulman built Addiscombe, a more modest house intended for his parents, in a similar style.

In the design of Wendover, a far more modest house than either Penshurst or the Sulman family residences, the simplicity of life advocated by Morris is evident. Photographs of the extensive gardens and garden pavilions survive.\(^\text{21}\) The house was a sprawling

\(^{18}\) Further detail regarding the purchase of the land at Wendover can be found in Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon. A substantial residence with similar gables survives today on Pennant Hills Road that may have once been a gate lodge.

\(^{19}\) Drawings of Old Gilligaloola, Hornsby (residence of Norman Selfe), prepared in the 1920s by J. A. Kethel, ML PXD 501

\(^{20}\) The house was substantially extended in 1916, however the gables survive intact. Refer to buildings designed by John Sulman, a selection in Edwards, *Six of the Best Architects of Ku-Ring-Gai*, pp.21-26

\(^{21}\) Documents concerning ‘Wendover’, Pennant Hills Road, Normanhurst 1890-1908; including surveys, correspondence and photographs (photocopies) of interiors. Vernon Papers ML MSS 6571/4
single-storey residence with a series of half-timbered gables, a detail that Vernon had employed in the Chalet adjacent to Government House and the Boatmen’s Row in Newcastle. For a number of years Vernon lived closer to his work and he is listed as residing at ‘Natova’ in Annandale Street, Darling Point in 1902. The Vernon family returned to Wendover to live permanently around 1905 and the house was redecorated with the latest Art Nouveau style wallpapers.

Joseland designed Malvern for his family in 1900. A firm believer in the benefits of fresh air, Joseland and his family slept all year round on the wide verandah, screened with canvas blinds. The photographs of Vernon’s house at Wendover show a similar wide verandah fitted with blinds. Oakeshott was the last of the architects to design a house for his family. Strathnoon in Hornsby was built in 1906-07, after he had left the GAB to take up the position of NSW Director of Works for the Commonwealth. Oakeshott cultivated his own vegetables and fruit in the extensive kitchen garden and orchard to the rear of the house.

The English-trained architects were not simply concerned with the built environment, but were also involved with the protection of

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22 A Federation style house built within the grounds of the now demolished mansion Como survives today. The house has been altered and the architect is not listed in the State Heritage Inventory. Further research may reveal the designer.

23 The house was illustrated in Art and Architecture in 1905 Edwards, Six of the Best Architects of Ku-Ring-Gai, p. 47-48.

24 Joseland described his intentions in planning Malvern in Art and Architecture in 1905

25 ML Glass Plate Negatives ON 26 in particular ON 226/10 which the verandah and a canvas blind

26 Strathnoon, Barker and Elven, Houses of Hornsby Shire, Volume 1, The Large Houses 1886-1926, pp. 68-71
scenic areas. As Government Architect, Vernon served as a trustee for Jenolan and Yarrangobilly Caves and for the ‘chase’ or reserve at Mt Kosciuszko. He also served on the Tourist board, advising on the establishment and design of state-controlled tourist resorts. Eccleston Du Faur sought to protect local areas of scenic beauty bordering his own residence Pibrac, campaigning for the establishment of the Ku-ring-gai Chase parklands. Joseland was one of the park’s first trustees and was instrumental in the establishment of the Creel fishing lodge on the Snowy River. Sulman was involved with the laying out of suburban parks near to his home in Wahroonga.

Workers’ Housing in Sydney

The architect designed estate subdivisions were all suburban, aimed at the middle class. The majority of the working class lived in cramped housing in the inner ring of suburbs that surrounded the centre of Sydney. Unlike London, where the estate surveyor controlled the architectural character of housing, dwellings in Sydney ranged in size, style and durability. Profit rather than a concern for the health and welfare of tenants drove the provision of workers’ housing.

From the 1840s until the depression of the 1890s terrace housing was the predominant housing type in inner Sydney, speculative builders constructed terrace after terrace of varying scales and quality. Industry was interspersed with the housing in the inner suburbs of Surry Hills, the Redfern Estate, Chippendale, Balmain and Newtown. The terrace form was not limited to Sydney, and can be found in the other Australian colonies. It was a form that the architects with Arts and Crafts sensibilities sought to improve upon.
Joseland, following Morris’ lead, abhorred the

Hideous stretches of terraces and wildernesses of villas in painted brick or cement, decked up with meaningless ironwork and atrocious ornaments.27

Examples of such ‘hideousness’ could be found in all of Australia’s cities, particularly Sydney and Melbourne (figure 10.6 and 10.7)).

At Prince Albert’s command, Henry Roberts designed model dwellings for the 1851 Great Exhibition in London (figure 10.8).28 Robert’s published designs were influential throughout Great Britain, and to a lesser degree, the colonies. The Stephen’s Building in Windmill Street, widely believed to be the first block of flats in Sydney, has a similar configuration of balconies as Roberts’ model workers housing. The block, designed by J. A. Kethel, the architect son of a local wharf owner, had only recently been completed when the area was resumed in 1900.

27 Joseland’s article on Domestic Architecture written from the Australasian Builders and Contractors News and was reprinted in the Centennial Magazine in September 1890

28 Robert’s model housing was subsequently re-erected as the lodge to Kennington Park where it remains today. Jones & Woodward, A Guide to the Architecture of London, p.335. The original design is illustrated in Curl, Victorian Architecture, figure 37.
The Artizans’, Labourers’ and General Dwelling Company (AL&GDC) built substantial estates of modest workers’ housing across London, commencing with the Shaftesbury Road Estate in Battersea of 1872-1877 designed by Robert Austin. Containing over 1,000 houses, the estate was managed in a similar manner to a company town, no public houses or churches were permitted. The population density was also strictly controlled, subletting was not permitted. The houses were of a higher standard than the minimum by-law terrace.

Until the 1890s few Australian architects concerned themselves with designing residences, as Vernon had, for ‘persons of modest means’. Prior to the establishment of the State Housing Commissions in the early twentieth-century, model workers’ housing was rare in Australia. John Claudius Loudon’s *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, which was widely used in the colonies, contained designs for model workers’ cottages, examples of which had been built in London. Colonists used Loudon’s encyclopedia to help plan their homesteads and gardens, rarely building a similar standard of housing for their workers. Loudon recommended Manning’s portable timber cottages, however these were used as temporary official residences in Australasia, not workers’ housing. La Trobe’s cottage in Melbourne is an example of a prefabricated residence buildings supplied by Manning.

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29 Vernon’s description of his intended purchasers is taken from the Neutral Bay Estate prospectus, undated, no page numbers, c. 1888.
31 La Trobe’s cottage has been relocated into central Melbourne. A larger version built to serve as Government House in Auckland has now been demolished.
In the penal colonies, the convicts were either accommodated in barracks or assigned to landholders. In Sydney convicts in possession of a ticket-of-leave erected rudimentary cottages with little regard for official attempts to implement a regular town plan. The 1837 Building Regulations outlawed timber construction in the Sydney metropolitan area but did little to prevent the construction of cramped substandard housing for the working classes in the back streets and lanes surrounding the city centre. The elegant town houses in The Rocks and Millers Point were architect-designed, the small scale terraces in the back lanes were not. The publican William Long, who owned Tusculum at Potts Point, also owned numerous substandard houses in The Rocks, the majority of which were condemned in 1901. Long’s concern was with profit and not the quality of the built environment where his tenants lived. The services of an architect had been sought when additions were proposed at Tusculum.

The notable exception to the unplanned development of worker’s’ housing in Sydney during the mid nineteenth century are the glebe lands in Edgecliff and Glebe. As there was not sufficient land surrounding the inner city churches of St James and St Phillips for a glebe, land grants were made further afield. In 1874 the Church of England began subdividing their extensive grants, offering 99-year leases. Covenants controlled the standard of building however these regulations were designed more to prevent fire than to control the design quality. Timber houses were not permitted. The resultant housing was built by speculative builders and the terrace house form predominates.
The establishment of the series of small municipalities surrounding Sydney was accompanied by a desire to regulate building construction. The terrace house remained the predominant form however more picturesque examples of row housing began to emerge, some of it architect-designed. Following English models, investment companies dedicated to building workers housing emerged in the boom years of the 1880s. Building Societies dedicated to building workers’ housing were also established. The Northumberland Building Society, a society that had been specifically established for the purpose of building workers’ housing, constructed the series of cottages in Eddy Street in Newcastle in the 1890s (figure 10.9).  

Wardell and Vernon designed workers’ housing for the Commercial Building and Investment Company (CBIC) in Bayswater. While these dwellings have not been located, the modest terraces in Newtown designed by Vernon in the mid 1880s survive. It is not known if the artisans’ housing designed by Harry Kent and Horbury Hunt discussed in the Building and Engineering Journal of July 21st 1888 were ever built. The Sydney suburb of Beaconsfield, named after Disraeli’s estate and laid out in 1884, was advertised as ‘the working man’s model township’. Today the area retains a pocket of workers’ housing, hidden within an industrial area. The surviving housing is of the terrace form.

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32 National Trust Listing for the Eddy Street Residences. This housing is included in Maitland and Stafford, Newcastle Architecture, A Guide, p. 58

33 Artisans Dwellings, Mr. Kent and Mr. Hunt. Building and Engineering Journal, July 21 1888

34 Beaconsfield, in Anne-Marie Whitaker, A Pictorial History of South Sydney, Sydney, Kingsclear Books, 2002 p. 98
In contrast, at Thebarton in Adelaide, South Australia, the Adelaide Workmen’s Homes Company, funded by a bequest from Sir Thomas Elder, constructed model workers’ dwellings between 1902 and 1909 (figure 10.10). Designed by Charles W. Rutt, the houses employ the South Australian vernacular technique of brick quoins to random coursed walls. Rutt’s design relies on careful detailing rather than extensive ornament to enliven the composition. The designs for the Newcastle and Adelaide examples are closer to model housing designed by Henry Roberts than the architect-designed estate subdivisions Vernon was familiar with. In rural Victoria workers’ housing was provided in fruit growing areas during the 1890s.

NSW does not appear to have developed the same level of philanthropic organisations, charities or co-operatives devoted to providing housing for the working classes that could be found in Amsterdam, London, Manchester and Paris. That is not to say that Sydney did not have philanthropists, the support for charities and hospitals was widespread. Of the few examples of housing

constructed, even fewer examples survive today. Dame Eadith Walker, who funded the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, also funded the St Bernard's home for Gentlewomen in William Street (figure 10.11). This building, designed by Sulman, was demolished during World War I as part of the widening of William Street.36

The majority of the discussion regarding workers’ housing was focussed on more suburban forms. Sulman had long advocated housing Australian workers ‘under healthy conditions’ however the schemes he illustrated, including the Garden Village for Industrial Workers on Botany Bay and Daceyville, were of garden suburb type rather than the higher density forms such as his St Bernard’s home or the tenements later built by the PWD.37 Taylor also advocated the garden suburb and both men’s writing has the evangelical quality common amongst advocates of model workers’ housing.

36 For a discussion of the buildings demolished during the widening of William Street see Max Kelly, Faces of the Street, William Street, Sydney 1916, Sydney, Doak Press, 1982
37 Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 46
Surround a home with slums said Sir William Lever and you produce moral and physical weeds and stinging nettles.
Surround a home with a garden, and you produce the moral and physical beauty of the flower and the strength of the oak.38

The Workmen’s Dwellings Company was established to provide housing in inner Sydney in the late 1890s.39 John Dwyer had been running a ‘residence’ in The Rocks from 1895, and sought to provide an enlarged and improved facility in a series of Harrington Street warehouses. The residence was to include single rooms, a luggage store, restaurant, a barbers shop, a reading room, a repairing room (for clothes and boots) and a shop that sold tobacco, stationery and fruit. The proposal did not proceed as the State Government resumed the entire area in December 1900. There were few precedents upon which to base the urban renewal of The Rocks and Millers Point, to date there was only one block of public housing in NSW, Boatmen’s Row in Newcastle. The majority of the housing designed by the GAB during the 1890s was staff housing, designed in a similar manner to English estate housing.

**Boatmen’s Row (1893)**

The Boatmen’s Row, one of the earliest examples of public housing in Australia, was designed by the GAB in the early 1890s. Public concern at the poor standard of accommodation provided for the Nobby’s Beach lifeboat crew led to the construction of the terrace of 16 houses on public land in Newcastle East, adjacent to

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38 Lever quoted by Taylor, George Augustine, *Town Planning For Australia*. Sydney, Building Ltd, 1914 p. 27
the treacherous entrance to Newcastle harbour and the convict-built breakwater to Nobby’s Head. Built in stages from 1893, the Boatmen’s Row contained 8 mirror-image pairs of houses that fronted a small park (figures 10.12 - 10.14). Stepped to follow the slope of the land, the centre of the composition was marked by two half-timbered gables. Constructed of face brick, with a shingled oriel window to the ground floor and a double-hung sash window above, these houses were very different in overall composition and detail from the typical Victorian terrace-house that the English-trained architects abhorred.

The attention to detail, the use of truthful materials such as shingles, face brick and sandstone contrasts with the mass-produced cast-iron and cast cement ornament employed in the monotonous speculative terraces built in Australia during the 1870s and 1880s. The oriel windows, uncommon in Australian terraces, have a continuous roof that may originally have been shingled. In a traditional terrace this oriel would be a bay window, however the Boatmen’s Row, due to the slope of the site, has a basement level. Vernon disliked leveling sites, preferring to incorporate the slope into his designs. The lower

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40 Boatmen’s Row continued to be occupied by the staff of the Maritime Services Board until the board was disbanded and the housing transferred to the Department of Housing.
area provides ventilation to the basement, a device common in larger town houses in England and more rarely in Australia. Each terrace has a bridge to the front door.

The design of the Boatmen’s Row, like the earlier model suburb at Neutral Bay, is an attempt at improving modest housing that is clearly based on picturesque English estate housing. A continuous roof over a bay window can be found in the artisans’ terraces designed by Devey for the Spencer Estate in Northampton in 1876 (figure 10.15). Devey’s design, ‘which would have surpassed Bedford Park as a garden suburb’ was not built, however an illustrated prospectus was issued. Vernon had already used the bay window, a device

41 The sale poster, perspectives, plans and elevations for the Spencer Estate, Northampton are held in the RIBA drawings collection. Illustrated in Hitchmough, C. F. A Voysey, page 23.
advocated by architects including Baillie Scott, Banister Fletcher and Sydney White Cranfield as means of increasing the daylight in the living room, in the terrace in Warrior Gardens in Hastings designed 15 years earlier. The Boatmen’s Row is almost identical to an English example of model workers’ houses included in Potter and Cranfield’s *Housing for the Working Classes* (figure 10.16), but was designed well before this series of plans was published in 1904, suggesting that other prototypes of modest workers’ housing than Devey’s unbuilt scheme existed.42 The design is contemporary with the model workers’ housing constructed at Port Sunlight; similar half-timbered gables can be found in the houses built in the early 1890s.43

The group is also comparable with the interesting variants of the terrace form dating from the late nineteenth century that can be found in Balmain, Glebe and Hunters Hill. The architects of these buildings remain largely unidentified however their work is characterised by attempts at creating a varied streetscape, these designs feature half-timbered gables, roughcast and face brickwork as well as the use of timber and shingles, rather than cast-iron lace, to

Figures 10.17
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Ranger's residence, Centennial Park, 1899

Figures 10.18 and 10.19
the verandahs. The carefully considered rhythm of their facades, the use of the traditional building arts, and truthful materials advocated by the Arts and Crafts Movement contrasts this terrace with their monotonous 1870s and 1880s counterparts.

**Staff Housing**

Vernon’s study tour to England revitalised his use of regional motifs, particularly tile-hanging common in Sussex, motifs that were being employed in the design of model workers housing at Port Sunlight. In the design of the picturesque pair of staff residences in the Domain, built in 1898, the Gate Lodge at Kenmore Hospital (figure 10.20) and the Ranger’s residence in Centennial Park built the following year (figures 10.17 - 10.19), Vernon was able, once again, to draw on his extensive experience as an estate architect. The main gatehouse to Kenmore Hospital, constructed in 1899 when the road to Goulburn was relocated, is a pure example of Shavian ‘Old English’ or the English Domestic Revival. The pair of cottages built in the Botanic Gardens (figure 10.21) has a number of similarities to the designs for Port Sunlight such as the cottages designed by Ernest Newton in 1897 (figure 10.22), particularly the use of casement windows and the use of tile-hanging to the gable. Double-hung windows were the norm in domestic architecture in NSW.
Figure 10.21
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Cottages, Botanic Gardens, Sydney, 1898
The view of the staff cottages appears in the Annual Report of the Public Works Department

Figure 10.22
Ernest Newton, workers’ housing, Port Sunlight, 1897
A Suitable Architectural Vocabulary for Urban Renewal

In Sydney it was in the inner city and in the existing suburbs where the improvements to the layout were made by the architects with an interest in the new discipline of town planning. Urban renewal was undertaken, rather than the laying out of new towns and suburbs as had occurred at Port Sunlight, Letchworth and Hampstead. The architects who established the Town Planning Association in NSW were the progressive architects who embraced the Free Style. During the years leading up to World War I Free Style became the architectural style employed for urban renewal in Sydney by the Government Architect and for commercial architecture by private architects. Designs by the GAB, such as Darlinghurst Police Station of 1897 and the Health Board offices of 1898, predate by nearly a decade the adoption of Free Style for commercial buildings. Peter Davey has described the urban Free Style buildings built in London as being ‘the corners of a country house brought to the city’ commenting that

At its best, Arts and Crafts architecture knew no differentiation between public and private buildings and none between provision for the rich or the poor.  

He believes the Arts and Crafts city to have

Been a city with a human face; gentle, witty, occasionally dramatic, kind to its surroundings and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

44 Davey, Arts and Crafts Architecture, p. 153
45 Davey, Arts and Crafts Architecture, p. 153
The English-trained architects noticed that a change in architectural style was occurring, Walter Butler in his 1902 paper *Modern Architectural Design* commented that

in Sydney during the last few years, many really charming domestic and street buildings have been erected, that bear the influence of this modern character.  

Alastair Service notes that at the end of the nineteenth century London-based architects preferred not to use terms such as the Gothic Revival, most of all they talked of ‘free design’, of a ‘free style’ and of ‘free’ versions of particular historic styles.  

This was also the case in Australia. Vernon used the term ‘free treatment’ in 1912 to describe his recent work at the University of Sydney.  

**The Health Board Offices**

The Health Board offices in Macquarie Street, constructed in 1898, (now part of the Sir Stamford Raffles Hotel) mark the emergence of the Free Style in metropolitan Sydney. The substantial brick offices have their main front to Macquarie Street and a corbelled chimney and oriel to Albert Street. The base of the building, designed to cope with the steeply sloping site, is of rock face sandstone, as are the string courses. Small traces of the Queen Anne Revival survive, the

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Oriel retains its small panes to the upper sash; the remainder of the sash windows appear to have been altered. Traces of Richardsonian Romanesque can also be seen, in the stone arches to the stair at the northwestern corner of the building.

The Health Board offices is an accomplished Free Style composition, and it is very different in character from the attempts to acclimatise the Queen Anne that characterised the output of the GAB prior to Vernon’s study tour (figure 10.23). Like the Glasgow School of Art, the Health Board offices are constructed on a steep site, with a main entrance at the upper level. Mackintosh was in the process of designing the School of Art during 1897 when Vernon visited Scotland but the building was not constructed for another decade. The influence is more likely to be the work of established Scottish architects particularly James MacLaren. David Walker has traced the influence of MacLaren’s work in Edinburgh and Stirling on Mackintosh’s early work.49 MacLaren’s design for the substantial new wing and Observatory at Stirling High School was well known and was illustrated in Sedille’s study of Modern English architecture (figure 10.24).50 Service notes that

The tower itself has a Richardsonian feeling for irregular forms at the top, as if it were a rock outcrop reflecting the nearby great rock of Stirling Castle.51

51 Service, Edwardian Architecture, p. 42 and plate 36
A Scottish influence was noted when the Health Board building in Macquarie Street was completed, de Libra commented on the ‘Scottish tinge of composition in the picturesqueness of the skyline’.\(^52\) Vernon had visited Edinburgh primarily to look at hospitals but may have seen the recently completed Ramsay Gardens and Well Court (a workers’ housing complex) (figure 10.25) where the revival of the Scottish vernacular was evident.\(^53\) The similarity in the design of the Health Board offices in Sydney with contemporary Scottish work rests in the picturesque composition, carefully designed to respond to the sloping site, the use of details drawn from unpretentious, traditional buildings and the use of sandstone.

The source of the details for the Heath Board Offices was no longer the merchants houses and town halls of Northern Europe that Shaw had been using, rather the oriel windows, prominent chimneys and crenellations could be found in traditional English buildings found in Vernon’s photograph collection. In ‘old building’ Sedding believed ‘that you get the handicrafts at their fullest and their best; an old English house or church, was in the old days, the garden of the arts and crafts’.\(^54\) Likewise the influence of the robust Norman buildings that Richardson so admired is also evident, particularly in the use of rock faced sandstone to the rear staircase. The freedom from established architectural precedent that Richardson had introduced

52 de Libra (James Green) The Fine Arts of Australasia, Their Progress, Position and Prospect in the Australian Art Review, 1899 pp. 19-21
53 A perspective of the court is included in Walker, The Early Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, in Richards, Pevsner and Sharp, The Anti-Rationalists and the Rationalists, plate 5
54 John D. Sedding, The Handicrafts in the Old Days, A Lecture Delivered in January 1890 at the Whitechapel Guild of Crafts, 27 Little Alie Street, Whitechapel, in Sedding, Art and Handicraft, p. 78
to public architecture is evident, the details were inspired by historic examples however the form and planning of the building were thoroughly modern.

Richardson who had died in March 1886, was well known to his English counterparts. An exhibition of Richardson’s work had been held in London the year of his death. In 1888 the RIBA President described what he felt to be the main characteristics of Richardson’s work.

These peculiarities appear to be chiefly the discarding of the orders, the Romanesque feeling, admirable planning, appearance of strength and solidity; the value put on the mere wall surface when attainable, the treatment of this surface by various coursing of stonework and the contrast between tooled and rough surfaces; the use of coloured materials, especially stone of different hues, battered bases, sparing use of string courses, the introduction of strong voussoirs, the rounding of salient angles and a leaning towards circular forms on plan.

The details of the Health Board Offices required a high degree of craftsmanship in both the brickwork and the carved stone elements. Darker brickwork was employed to the window heads, a detail that would be widely used in Federation style domestic architecture, shops and warehouses. Like the Banco Court, the Health Board

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56 1888 Presidential Address, RIBA, *Journal of the RIBA, Volume 4, 1888*
building has exquisite carvings employing neoclassical motifs, where they would have been used in English architecture, to the base of the oriel window (figure 10.26). The only clue that it was a public building was the carved seal of the Board embedded in the chimney and the carved coat of arms over the main archway (figure 10.27). The new Heath Board Offices established the architectural vocabulary that continued to be employed by GAB in the urban renewal within the resumed areas of Sydney. The Free Style also architectural vocabulary for new public buildings in the inner ring of suburbs surrounding the city centre.

**Darlinghurst Police Station (1898)**

Darlinghurst Police Station, built in 1898, is another early example of the use of Free Style in Sydney (figure 10.28). The external appearance of the building is less forbidding than Barnet’s gates to Darlinghurst Gaol (now East Sydney Technical College) on
the opposite side of Forbes Street. Vernon deliberately omitted symbolic ornament, rather the rockface stonework provided the necessary sense of stability, permanence and incarceration. Once again there is no trace of Northern European mercantile buildings that had influenced Shaw during the 1880s and Vernon’s designs prior to his visit to London. It is a design that reflects contemporary public buildings in England and America such as Baillie Scott’s Castletown Police Station and Richardson’s urban buildings. James Kornwolf has traced the influence of drawings by Richardson and others in the American architectural periodicals on the romantic forms used by Baillie Scott.57 A photograph of the elegantly detailed rockfaced ashlar and voussoirs of Pittsburgh Gaol was included in Van Renselaer’s monograph on Richardson.58

One of the major achievements of the Royal Commission into the Improvement of Sydney held in 1909 was the widening of two of the approach roads to the City from the east, William Street and Oxford Street, achieved by compulsory resumption of land. Vernon may have had such city improvements in mind when he designed

Figure 10.29
Birmingham City Commissioners, Municipal meat market and Abattoir, Birmingham, 1897

The new municipal markets and slaughterhouse, built by the Birmingham City Commissioners, had been completed in 1897. It was one of a series of purpose built market buildings erected in the late nineteenth century to replace the markets that had been established in a moated manor house in 1817. The complex was redeveloped for a second time in the 1970s. The area is still known as the Bull Ring.

Figure 10.30
Walter Liberty Vernon, Darlinghurst Police Station, Darlinghurst, 1898

Figure 10.31
Walter Liberty Vernon, Plans and Elevations of Darlinghurst Police Station, Darlinghurst, 1898
Darlinghurst Police Station for a triangular site adjacent to the Darlinghurst Court House a decade before (figure 10.30-31). The police station is set well back from the alignment of Oxford Street, taking its cue from the set back of the temple front of Darlinghurst Court House.

The use of curved forms by Vernon may be a combination of the continuing influence of Richardson’s public architecture and contemporary English public buildings. The municipal Meat Market and Slaughterhouse in Birmingham, with its curved corner and candle snuffer roof, was illustrated in the PWD’s Annual report of 1899-1900, a photograph probably supplied by Vernon (figure 10.29).\(^59\) The main entrance to the Darlinghurst Police station, identified by the use of rockface ashlar, is Richardsonian in character as is the entrance to Albany Court House by Temple Poole (figure 10.32).\(^60\)

Darlinghurst Police Station and the Health Board offices are carefully designed to relate to the existing scale of the city, which in the 1890s still had many colonial Georgian buildings. The scale of the Health Board offices is a complete contrast to the overpowering Lands Department and Chief Secretary’s buildings in nearby Bridge Street designed by Barnet. It is no wonder that Barnet found Vernon’s work so difficult to comprehend, as it simply did not follow the neoclassical architectural vocabulary. It was no longer necessary for public architecture to include symbols of justice. The stone base and the use of buttresses give a feeling of solidity of the composition.

\(^59\) Illustrated in the Annual Report of the Public Works Department for the year ending June 1900.

\(^60\) Illustrated in Oldham and Oldham, George Temple Poole, Architect of the Golden Years, 1885-1897, plates 30-32. Plate 32 shows the building in 1956, before many of the original details were altered.
Figure 10.32
George Temple Poole, Albany Court House, Albany, Western Australia, 1896-1898

Figure 10.33
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Pyrmont Post Office, 1901

Figure 10.34
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Pyrmont Post Office, 1901

The Pyrmont Post office as it appeared when completed
The composition of the Darlinghurst Police Station is unsymmetrical, the stair tower occurring opposite the main entrance. The position of the stair is made evident by the use of windows with different sill heights. The round windows employ rockface voussoirs. The plain walls and vents of the two single-storey cell ranges remain evident from the street, however the cell ranges have subsequently had a second storey added. The male and female cells were separated by small exercise yards.

In the inner ring of Sydney suburbs the GAB continued to employ a restrained form of Richardsonian Romanesque, as can be seen at the Pyrmont Post Office of 1901 (figure 10.33 - 10.34). The two main facades and the return wall to the east are rock face ashlar, with a gable to Harris Street, the main thoroughfare. The building line follows the splayed corner, with an archway at ground level providing entrance to both the postal chamber and the residence above. Moulded stringcourses, hood moulds and a dentil course are employed, somewhat of a rarity in Vernon’s work post 1897.

The unusual corner forms employed in Darlinghurst and Pyrmont created points of interest within the predominantly mid nineteenth century street pattern and building stock. Typically corner buildings were public houses or shops, denoted by a small splay to the corner. The solid masonry buildings designed by the GAB are evidence of the newly emerging city, one that did not strictly adhere to the colonial grid.
Metropolitan Fire Stations

The output of the GAB between 1902 and 1908 shows the extent to which the branch was following English trends. Fire stations were a new building type, they did not rely on architectural ornament to indicate their use; the large engine house doors indicated the function of the building. Shaw had alluded to this functionalism with his comments on the competition design by Smith and Brewer for the Mary Ward Settlement in London, commenting that the building looked like what it was (figure 10.35).\textsuperscript{61} The functions within the building and the resulting pattern of fenestration allowed the building to be read; the design was for an architecture parlante.

Euston Fire Station, located close to the London railway station of the same name and designed by Charles Canning Winmill of the LCC was built on a small site hence its multi-storey arrangement. The engine-house is clearly discernible, marked by the large engine house doors (figure 10.37). The domestic sections are evident by

\textsuperscript{61} Shaw quoted in Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, RIBA drawings series, p. 140
the use of oriel windows. A similar expression of the domestic areas within a building can be seen in the larger of the metropolitan fire stations at Glebe, Annandale and Woollahra in Sydney. Testimony to the success of the designs by the GAB and the LCC is the continued use of many of the fire stations designed prior to 1910.

The Glebe Fire Station (1906) (figure 10.36) is the first of the series of Metropolitan fire stations built between 1906 and 1908. Other stations using a similar architectural vocabulary were constructed in Arncliff, Botany, Leichhardt, Neutral Bay, Rozelle and Woollahra. The Drummoyne example was illustrated in the PWD Annual Report in 1909-1910. The residential portion of Glebe Fire station is clearly articulated by the porch to the side entrance and the pattern of fenestration. Voyseyesque motifs are used, roughcast walling, tapered chimneys, circular windows and a bracketed canopy to the porch. In my view the design of Glebe Fire Station is much more successful than Winmill’s attempt to utilise Voyseyesque motifs at the Hampstead Fire Station of 1901.62

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62 The caption reads Fire Station, West End Lane, Hampstead, London 1901 by the L.C.C.‘s Architect’s Department (Fire Section architect, Charles Winmill). A successful adaptation of Voysey’s domestic manner to a public building.

Service, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design in Britain 1890-1914, plate 125
The choice of Voyseyesque motifs also reflected contemporary English designs for model workers’ housing. A number of the details of the residential portion of Glebe Fire Station can be seen in the designed submitted in the Cheap Houses Exhibition held at Letchworth Garden City in 1905 (figure 10.38). The use of details from model workers’ housing shows the GAB’s concern to provide suitable accommodation for the firemen. This competition is discussed in more detail in the next chapter that deals with workers’ housing.

Darlinghurst Fire Station 1908-09

The widening of Oxford, William, Macquarie and Elizabeth Streets was progressively undertaken, improving traffic flow into the city. One of Vernon’s last major works, Darlinghurst Fire Station of 1909-10 was designed with the proposed widening of William Street, and the construction of the overhead bridges between Kings Cross and Darlinghurst, in mind. Darlinghurst Fire Station is the culmination of Vernon’s design work and is a particularly fine example of a building carefully inserted into an existing townscape (although the


Figure 10.38

V. Dunkerley, competition design for a pair of cottages, Letchworth Garden City, 1905

This competition design for Letchworth Garden City that uses similar motifs to the series of metropolitan fire stations including roughcast, round windows and door canopies suspended with metal rods.
surrounding buildings no longer survive) (figure 10.39). Constructed on a triangular site, at the intersection of Darlinghurst Road and Victoria Street the residential portion and the engine house are clearly articulated and the chimney is used as an expressive element. As with the earlier Darlinghurst Police Station a curved corner was employed however in the case of the fire station the curve is solid at street level and open above, providing extensive 180 degree vistas over the planned improvements to William Street (figure 10.40).

Jahn believes the work of Mackintosh influenced this building, presumably comparing the curved corner to the curved stair towers of the Scotland Street School (1903-1906).\textsuperscript{64} The overall complexity of the composition owes more to free style buildings in London designed by the LCC than the work of Mackintosh in Glasgow. William Moyes, who trained under Mackintosh, did not start working in the GAB until 1906. There is no noticeable change in the completed buildings of the branch following his appointment, however there is a change in drawing style. Mackintosh’s influence can be seen in the architectural drawings produced by the GAB during the last years of Vernon’s term in office.

\textsuperscript{64} Jahn, A Guide to Sydney Architecture, Entry for Darlinghurst Fire Station.
The Improvement of Sydney and its Suburbs

In his role as Government Architect, Vernon had a considerable involvement with the re-design of The Rocks, Millers Point and the area between Hay and Devonshire Streets where the new railway terminal was to be constructed. Concern regarding the layout of the city of Sydney led to a Royal Commission with the mandate to
diligently examine and investigate all proposals that may be brought forward for the improvement of the City of Sydney and its suburbs; to fully inquire into the whole subject of the remodeling of Sydney…\(^{65}\)

The Commissioners, none of whom were architects, advocated

widen existing streets, and opening up fresh avenues of communication, and generally to make such suggestions as to the ornamentation and improvements as will tend to add to the attractions and beauty of the city and adjoining suburbs.\(^{66}\)

Vernon’s proposal sought to improve traffic flow, widening a number of existing streets to form boulevards. Unlike a number of the proposals, he does not show the wholesale demolition of the inner suburbs considered by many to be slums.

\(^{65}\) Report of the City Improvement Board in Annual Report of the Public Works Department 1907/08.

\(^{66}\) The Commissioners included the Members of the Legislative Council and Assembly, including the Mayor of Sydney and the former Minister for Public Works, Mr. O’Sullivan. Mr. Gorman of Hardie and Gorman represented Real Estate interests. Two prominent engineers, Norman Selfe and Robert Hickson were also amongst the Commissioners. No architects were appointed.
Peter Harrison believes that none of the improvements suggested by either Vernon or Sulman were adopted. One aspect of Vernon’s scheme, a diagonal street, now Wentworth Avenue, connecting Belmore Park and Hyde Park was constructed following his retirement. Sulman also gave evidence to the Commission, having largely retired from his architectural practice to concentrate on advocating the need for town planning and the Garden Suburb. Neither of his grandiose schemes, for Belmore Park and Circular Quay, was adopted. Taylor in *Town Planning For Australia* claims that

> Nothing was done! The report, that great work that so many eminent men had given their time and skill to prepare - was pigeon-holed. And be it remembered that the services of the commissioners and witnesses were given to the nation without reward other than satisfaction that something would be done to beautify the city. The authorities slept!  

Harrison agrees, ‘it was clear, that in Sydney at least, ideas for the City Beautiful had to take second place to the City Commercial’. The authorities were not all sleeping, some improvement schemes did proceed, including the widening of Macquarie Street, driven by the Government Architect. The proposed new Parliament House was not however proceeded with.

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68 Taylor, *Town Planning For Australia*, p. 43
69 Harrison, *Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect*, p. 15
The pioneer of the improvement in Macquarie Street was undoubtedly Mr. W. L. Vernon, FRIBA, and it is many years since he first mooted what then seemed like an impossible project.70

The buildings lining Macquarie Street all had substantial forecourts; it was a relatively simple matter to relocate the guardhouses and fence lines closer to the buildings, indicating an overall concern to retain the character of the townscape. The two smaller hospital pavilions were retained, one part of the Parliament House complex, the other part of the Mint and a Venetian inspired campanile, similar to the towers of Broken Hill Post Office and Wagga Wagga and Parramatta Court Houses was proposed (figures 10.41 & 10.42).71

The substantial hospital wards designed by Thomas Rowe around 1890 had already replaced the central portion of the Rum hospital. The tower to Macquarie Street did not eventuate.

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70 Salon, July-August 1912 p. 29
71 The Parramatta Court House has been demolished, only the tower survives. Its original configuration can be seen in Standish G. Goodin’s photograph of the Court House and Woolpack Hotel from his Presentation Album of Parramatta views taken in 1898. ML Pic Acc 6603/1
George Street North

In George Street North the new Coroners’ Court and Morgue was constructed between the Sailor’s Home and the Mariner’s Church, a set of steps replaced the steep street that had lead down to the waterfront (figure 10.53). On land that had once been part of Robert Campbell’s extensive wharf complex, an Electric Power station was built, intended to power street lights. Rapid changes in technology resulted in the station not being commissioned and the building was substantially extended to form the Mining Museum, with additional storeys taking the building to above the level of George Street North (figure 10.43 - 10.46). The Mining Museum remains one of the most substantial Free Style buildings constructed in Sydney. In this building Richardsonian motifs are also included, the substantial archways to George Street North allow light to penetrate rooms built below street level.

The entire commercial strip lining the western side of George Street North, from the intersection of Globe Street to Charlotte Place (Grosvenor Street), was rebuilt (figure 10.47). The more substantial colonial Georgian sandstone warehouses, including Unwin’s Stores
Figure 10.45
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Mining Museum, Elevations to George Street North and Ferry Road (now Hickson Road), The Rocks, 1908-1910

Figure 10.46

Recent view of the arches to George Street North which allow light to penetrate the windows built below street level
and those at Campbell’s Wharf were retained. Substantial multi-storey shops and warehouses were designed, some of which housed firms that had previously occupied premises in The Rocks. The area around Sydney’s first Gaol, in the vicinity of the Commissariat Stores and the state Lumber Yard had developed a commercial character by 1820. Joseph Fowles’ elevations, prepared in the late 1840s record the facades lining George and Harrington Streets and the nature of the businesses. The GAB chose to retain this zoning, locating the factory buildings in the vicinity of Essex Street and building workers’ housing areas traditionally occupied by housing.

The urban renewal scheme for The Rocks and Millers Point was segregated to provide main thoroughfares, as Sitte recommended, and lesser streets and pedestrian lanes (figure 10.53). Essex Street, a steep street leading up to the ridge was lined with new shops, model factories, warehouses, of which only two buildings designed by the GAB survive today; the factory and dwelling on the corner of Gloucester Street (1909) (figures 10.49 & 10.51) and the corner shop at the intersection with Cumberland Street (1911) (figures 10.48m 10.50 & 10.52). The nearby State Clothing Factory has been demolished (figure 10.55). The buildings decrease in scale from the substantial commercial buildings lining George Street North in the valley. When viewed from the west the new buildings step down the hill, creating a picturesque skyline.

Private architectural firms also designed buildings within the resumed area, employing the architectural vocabulary set by the Government Architect.

72 A number of the commercial buildings, such as the row of shops and residences on George Street north were demolished during the 1980s as part of the urban renewal by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority. The surviving blocks of workers’ housing have been transferred to the Department of Housing.

73 ML Small Picture File – Essex Street contains before and after views in The Rocks and Millers Point, including views looking down Essex Street, taken in 1917.
Figure 10.48
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW
Government Architect,
Shop and Dwelling House at the
Corner of Cumberland Essex
Streets, The Rocks, 1911

Figure 10.49
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW
Government Architect, Model
Factory, corner of Gloucester
and Essex Streets, The Rocks,
1909
The northern facade of the model factory and dwelling, designed by the GAB in 1909 follows the slope of Essex Street (figure 10.49). As with the earlier design of the Health Board offices, the slope of the site was utilised, creating a picturesque composition with the same combination of brick and roughcast previously used for suburban housing and country post offices. Vertical elements such as the stair tower are expressed in brick and the sill heights denote the landings. Motifs previously employed in residential architecture appear in the gable, denoting the flat on the upper floors. Similar gable vents appear in E J. Jackson’s house for Doctor Capper in North Sydney built in the early 1890s. Jackson may have had an involvement in the detailing of the buildings before his departure for America. The factory contains a basement storage area, a showroom at ground floor level, a workroom on the first floor and a residential flat on the second floor, with a roof terrace drying area. The pattern of fenestration denotes the different functions, with the large arched windows previously employed for public chambers in post offices used for the showroom and the workshop.
Figure 10.53

Robert Hickson, J. Davies and Walter Liberty Vernon [Rocks Resumed Area Advisory Board],

Plan shewing the proposed rearrangement of streets in Rocks Resumed Area, Sydney, 1903

KEY

CC  Coroner’s Court
MFD  Model Factory & Dwelling
MM  Mining Museum
RET  Nineteenth century stores and shops that were retained

RNH  Royal Naval House additions
S  Shops
Site 1  Site of Lower Fort Street tenements
Site 2  Site of Gloucester Street tenements
SCF  State Clothing Factory
SDH  Shop & dwelling house
WD  Worker’s Dwellings
Regular lots had been created north of the St Patrick’s complex and multi storey warehouses or factories were to be constructed, of which the model factory and dwelling on the corner of Essex Street was the first. The surviving photographs of the factory, which extended from Harrington to Gloucester Street, show that it had a very similar scale and architecture character to the urban renewal carried out by the LCC that Vernon had observed whilst in London (figures 10.54 and 10.55).

Garden beds and palms were planted in the centre of Essex Street (now substantially altered) and an elaborate fountain and garden constructed at the intersection of Cumberland Street and George Street North (figure 10.50). The location of the planting in the centre of Essex Street was as Triggs advocated, ‘to shade the street...”
without interfering with the light and air of the adjacent houses and obstructing their view'. The provision of wide avenues and garden beds had previously been confined to wealthy suburban streets in Sydney, rather than in industrial areas. In the Rocks Resumed Area, later known as the Observatory Hill Resumed Area, town planning ideas were employed for reasons of public health and to improve the quality of the townscape. The redevelopment did not only include model factories, commercial buildings, shops and public buildings, substantial groups of model workers' housing were also built from 1906 until 1912 designed by the Government Architect.

The buildings designed to be inserted into existing streetscapes by the GAB were carefully composed so that their facades and their overall form added to the character of the townscape. Complex forms were employed for which there was no precedent and each building responded both to the character of the site and to the range of functions that were contained within. The Free Style buildings designed by the GAB as part of the planned improvement of the city of Sydney are still in use today, although in many cases the scale of the surrounding townscape has altered.

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74 Triggs, Town Planning Past, Present and Possible, p. 267
CHAPTER 11  FROM INDUSTRIAL DWELLINGS TO GARDEN SUBURBS : MODEL WORKERS’ HOUSING

This chapter follows on from the discussion of Vernon’s interest in the newly emerging discipline of town planning, and looks at his concern with urban renewal in more detail. Australian cities had rapidly expanded in an unplanned and unregulated manner during the nineteenth century and, like the cities of the Old World, had developed slums. Sunlight and gardens, elements missing from the unregulated urban landscape of the industrial revolution, were now of the utmost importance. This chapter considers the model workers’ housing built in The Rocks and Millers Point designed by the GAB.

Australia saw itself as a rapidly emerging nation, whose cities would soon rival those of England. Alderman Fitzgerald of the Sydney City Council quoted the Earl of Rosebery in his May 1914 article on Town Planning and City Beautification, ‘you cannot rear an imperial race in the slums’.1 Australia participated in international discussions regarding slum clearance in the years leading up to the Great War:

Australia is generally supposed to be free from those evils which necessitate town planning, slum abolition and open space preservation; but a judicial examination of the facts shows that in Australia, as in other countries, defective housing has become fairly common, objectionable slums, perhaps not the very worst type of slums, have made their appearance, and, with the exception of the city, open-air spaces have not been provided.2

1 John D. Fitzgerald, John D, Town Planning and City Beautification in Lone Hand, 1 May 1914 pp. 389-92
2 James Barret’s paper was given by Dr Perrin Norris, Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial Health Conference, held at the Imperial Institute London, May 18-21, 1914. p. 61
Mr. Culpin, of the Garden City Movement, agreed:

In regard to Australia we have been told that there are no slums there. It was upon the urgent representation of the ministers of various religious denominations in Australia, and of various societies there, and in consequence of the horrible photographs we had in our office of Australian slums that we took up work there.³

The record photographs of cleansing operations in The Rocks held in the Mitchell Library, the photographs of The Rocks taken by Norman Selfe and the photographs in the Sydney City Council’s Demolition Books give a good indication of the images sent to England (figures 11.1 and 11.2). Images of the areas to be redeveloped were made into post cards, indicating a desire to remember what the colonial city had been like.⁴ Public health would become an important issue in the early twentieth century, following an outbreak of the plague in 1900. Within the in Sydney areas compulsorily resumed by the State Government, the lower density, semi-detached forms

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³ Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial Health Conference, p. 70
⁴ The photograph of taken circa 1901, shortly before the substandard housing was demolished, and the hand coloured postcard in the ML SPF dated 1907 are exactly the same image and date from 1900-1901.
advocated for garden suburbs could not be applied: the terrace and the tenement or industrial dwelling, similar to municipal housing in London and Manchester were, by necessity, employed. It widely accepted that model workers’ housing would be built, indicating how widely the work of the LCC and other progressive English municipal councils was known. In November 1900 is was reported that in the Rocks the rookeries dating from the early days of the colony, irregular streets, narrow alleys, and crowded neighbourhoods should be swept away under the provisions of the [resumption] scheme. We may hope to see, following the example of the improvements made be the London County Council, new ‘thoroughfares or at least wider and straighter ones driven through this congested area, and green reserved spaces occupying the place of those crowded corners.

Vernon, and his fellow Resumption Advisory Board members, had no local precedents to study, high-density workers’ housing does not appear to have been built in any other Australian cities prior to World War I. Whilst in London in 1897, Vernon visited the newly completed Tait’s Gallery [Tate Gallery] built on the site of the Millbank Prison (figures 11.3 and 11.4). The ‘outline plan’ for the adjacent municipal housing estate, approved by the LCC the previous year, may have been amongst the drawings he was shown when he visited their architectural office. Vernon would have seen

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5 Tenements are multi-storey buildings generally containing two or more flats per floor. The plan layouts often reflect the common practice of renting out individual rooms.
6 SMH 3 November 1900
7 Vernon, Report Submitted in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe. p. 10
how a high density could be maintained by building multistorey blocks separated by gardens. Unlike the Tate Gallery, that had three courtyards, the housing blocks are all narrow blocks, planned without courtyards or light wells.

Despite decades of agitation regarding sanitation, it took a major outbreak of the plague in Sydney in 1900 to force the Government into action. Vernon reported that

As an indirect result of the plague visitation (upon which it was necessary to expend large sums of money, some portions of which were dealt with by this branch) a large area of the older portion of Sydney has been resumed from private ownership and placed under two newly constituted authorities, the Harbour Trust and The Rocks Resumption Advisory Board.⁹

⁹ NSW Government Architect’s Report in the Annual Report of the Public Works Department for the year ending June 1901, p. 33
All of the land to the north of Charlotte Place (now Grosvenor Place) including working class areas of The Rocks and Millers Point, the commercial strip of George Street North, and the Walsh Bay wharves was resumed.
Although they protested, the Sydney City Council were not given a major role in the extensive urban renewal. The Sydney Harbour Trust undertook the re-building of the wharves in Walsh Bay and the construction of Hickson Road, including construction of the workers’ housing in the newly created High and Dalgety Streets. From 1901 until the establishment of the Housing Board in 1912 the remainder of the workers’ housing with the resumed area comprising The Rocks, Millers Point and Observatory Hill was designed by the GAB on behalf of the Resumed Properties Branch.

The Resumed Properties Branch

The Resumed Properties Branch, a separate section within the PWD that reported to Vernon, was formed in 1901. An office was set up in George Street, near the New York Hotel. Their initial task was to inspect all of the dwellings in the resumed area. Measured drawings of the substandard buildings intended for demolition were prepared by the GAB, some of which survive (figure 11.5). Between 1901 and

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10 ML X981.1/3 Plans and Photographs of Buildings Demolished in The Rocks, NSW Government Architect’s Branch. Unlike London, where the comprehensive surveys of the historic buildings of the city were published, this early attempt at systematic recording of Australian colonial architecture remain unpublished.
1902 the substandard housing stock was photographed, indicating that Vernon believed in the use of photography as a means of recording urban areas. Likewise R. H. Broderick, the City Architect required that buildings intended for demolition be photographed (figure 11.6). Ruskin had pioneered photographic recording of architectural details in the 1850s. Photography, he considered, was a rare antidote to the ‘mechanical poison that this terrible nineteenth century has poured upon men’.

Once the recording of the building stock had been completed, timber and half-timbered rubble walled buildings were demolished; neither construction type provided adequate fire protection. The majority of the single-storey buildings were also demolished, whether masonry or not, as a higher population density was required. Well constructed masonry terraces such as Susannah Place in Gloucester Street, The

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11 The NSW Department of Public Works Album of 124 Photographs of The Rocks, and another album with the title, Old Rocks, held in the Mitchell Library are probably the photographs Vernon commissioned. The Government Architect’s Report of 1901-2 includes £250 pounds for photographs of Old Sydney.

12 The photographs are compiled in date sequence in the Demolition Books held in the SCC Archives.

Rocks, built in 1844 and the 1850s Jobbins Building opposite, were retained, upgraded and leased. Although little detail is provided in the Annual Reports, it is likely that it was Vernon who made the final decision as to which buildings were retained.

**Genius Loci**

In the 1870s Charles Eastlake regretted the loss of mediaeval Paris during the construction of Haussmann’s boulevards, lamenting that modern Paris is fast losing - if, indeed, it has not quite lost - the romantic interest which once attached to its _genius loci_. The quaint irregularly built streets, the overhanging corbelled stories and high-pitched gabled fronts...have suddenly disappeared before the rapid and extensive improvements...\(^{14}\)

In contrast to the redevelopment of Paris and the grandiose American City Beautiful schemes, Charles Ashbee advocated ‘little by little from within’, retaining vernacular buildings, which provided historical continuity and gave a sense of place.\(^{15}\) Under the chairmanship of Varney Parkes, the City Improvement Board proposed to demolish entire blocks, in a similar manner to the larger public housing schemes designed by the LCC. Although adopted by Parliament their ambitious scheme did not proceed and the task of redeveloping the area fell to the Government Architect. The workers’ housing designed by the GAB in The Rocks and Millers Point was designed to fit into an existing urban layout, the memory of the past was not totally lost.


The urban renewal of Millers Point and The Rocks was undertaken ‘little by little’, with blocks of workers’ housing carefully interspersed within the existing housing stock. Vernon oversaw the designs of the model workers’ housing, commercial buildings and factories for the resumed area. Outside of his control were the public houses, designed by the architect retained by the brewing company to which each public house was tied. The existing pubs were re-built, retaining their name but not their original site. Triangular sites, formed by the re-alignment of the streets, became the sites of the Australian, Glenmore and Mercantile hotels.

The urban improvements in The Rocks mark the start of Vernon’s role in the ‘improvement’ of Sydney. He was one of the new breed of architect/town planners who followed Camillo Sitte in seeking improvements in quality of the built environment for all inhabitants of the city, not just the wealthy. Sitte’s work was also adopted by the architects in the private sector. Both Vernon and G. S. Jones owned Trigg’s study of Town Planning, which discusses Sitte’s insistence on the ‘importance of preserving or even creating an irregularity in public places’.16

Triggs advised that the

Efforts of municipalities should not be confined to matters of hygiene only, but should be directed towards providing everything possible to relieve the dull monotony of towns by preserving spots of beauty, by providing not only wider streets but better open squares and places, with more sculptures, fountains and tree-planting. 17

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16 Triggs, Town Planning, Past, Present and Possible, pp. 279-280
17 Triggs, Town Planning, Past, Present and Possible, p. 5
The character of the townscape was retained, the more substantial of the colonial Georgian houses, and the larger scale mid-Victorian terraces in The Rocks and Millers Point were kept, whether monuments or not. Artists came and sketched the remnants of the colonial city. Hardy Wilson’s published sketches include buildings in Lower Fort Street that the Resumed Properties Branch retained, as well as the substantial tenements on Bunkers Hill that were demolished. Paintings and sketches by artists including Julian Ashton and later by Lionel Lindsay record the lanes and buildings in The Rocks and Millers Point that have now vanished (figures 11.7 and 11.8). It was Ashton, who ran an art school in King Street, who encouraged local artists to paint en plein air and he arranged for an exhibition of views of ‘Old Sydney’ to be held at the Society of Artists’ rooms in Pitt Street in March 1902. The artists did not protest at the loss of the colonial buildings.

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18 Hardy Wilson’s sketches of the buildings in Millers Point and Bunkers Hill were published in 1919 however a number of the drawings had to have been prepared before 1912 as the buildings were demolished when Cumberland Street was realigned.
The Cheap Cottages Exhibition

Whilst the model workers’ dwellings in Windmill Street in Millers Point in Sydney were under construction a series of exhibitions were held in England that promoted the garden suburb as a model for workers’ housing. Ebenezer Howard, Edwin Lutyens and Arthur Vernon were patrons of the Cheap Cottages exhibition held at Letchworth in 1905, indicating that workers’ housing had become an important consideration for architects and estate surveyors.19 Many of the large estate owners were also patrons, including Lord Brassey and Lord Tredegar. Lord Carrington had been involved in the planning stages of the exhibition, which had initially been proposed by Mr. J. St. Loe Stratchey, proprietor of the Country Gentlemen, Land and Water magazine.20

Morris had long advocated the simple lifestyle of the English countryside, despising the ugliness of the ubiquitous suburban development that surrounded historic town centres, the

19 Arthur Vernon represented the Institute of Surveyors, having been a past president.
20 The Cheap Cottages Exhibition, Letchworth Garden City, July to September 1905.

The Commemorative Book presented to the 12 Duke of Devonshire to mark the centennial of the exhibition includes reprints of articles and photographs from the exhibition. The patrons are listed.
Inevitable blue slate roof, and then the blotched mud-coloured stucco, or ill-built wall of ill-made bricks of the new buildings; then as we come nearer and see the arid and pretentious little gardens, and cast-iron horrors of railings, and miseries of squalid out-houses breaking through the sweet meadows and abundant hedge-rows of our old quiet hamlet.  

The ‘Cheap Cottages’ competition, and the resulting exhibition, was influential in promoting good design on a modest scale, with full size prototypes containing suitable, modestly priced furniture erected, the forerunner of today’s display village (figures 11.9 and 11.10). 

The first exhibition held in 1905 proved so popular that a second exhibition was held in 1907. Such housing is today referred to as affordable housing, the term cheap is now associated with lower standards and inferior materials.

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21 Morris, William, Architecture in Civilisation Reprinted in Kelvin, William Morris on Art and Socialism, p. 60-61

22 Letchworth Garden City held its centenary in July to September 2005 and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation republished the initial booklet which includes a plan showing the location of the exhibition houses in Exhibition Road, Norton Road and Icknield Way. Some 120 cottages were constructed, many of which survive today. Master plans and photographs of the houses when first completed are in the collection of the First Garden City Heritage Museum at Letchworth.

23 For a discussion of the word ‘cheap’ see the article on the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition published on the web at http://www.tomorrowsgardencity.com/node/88/print accessed 3 May 2009
Baillie Scott, and an architect better known for his designs for substantial country houses, P. Morley Horder, contributed articles and illustrations for the catalogue. Morley Horder’s then assistant, Leslie Wilkinson, would later win a competition for model workers’ housing in Sydney with his design for Way’s Terrace in Pyrmont. The housing designed for the early garden suburbs was not all cottages, there was considerable interest amongst the leading architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement in improving the ubiquitous terrace house. Baillie Scott’s *Houses and Gardens* (1906) contained designs that improved on the minimum by-law terrace. He advocated placing the principal rooms to face the sun, rather than the typical terrace form that employed the same plan on both sides of the road.

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27 Baillie Scott *Houses and Gardens*, section on Arts and Crafts Interiors, p. 140-42
In America Gustav Stickley also promoted modest, well-designed houses, publishing articles by Barry Parker in *The Craftsman* intermittently from 1902 until 1912.\(^{28}\) In addition to promoting his own furniture designs, Stickley included designs for modestly priced suburban housing that could be ordered ready cut from his workshop. Designs from *The Craftsman* were influential in Australia in the years leading up to World War I, the magazine was published from 1901 until 1916. Harwood, Hugh Vernon’s modest house at Warrawee, designed around 1907 featured a shingled main gable and a large, American style porch, details that could be found in the bungalows illustrated in *The Craftsman* (figure 11.12).

Many of the garden suburb designs were for semi-detached cottages and the terrace form was also employed, although the form of the building was considerably more varied than the typical row of houses found towns across Great Britain. Despite its title Raymond Unwin’s 1902 Fabian Tract *Cottage Plans and Common Sense* contains designs for terraces (figure 11.11).\(^{29}\) Parker and Unwin believed that a terrace

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\(^{28}\) Barry Parker’s series of articles including *Building for Light and Air and Light in Buildings* have been reprinted in Dean Hawkes, Editor, *Modern Country Homes in England: The Arts and Crafts Architecture of Barry Parker*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986

\(^{29}\) Raymond Unwin, *Cottage Plans and Common Sense*, Fabian Tract, 1902
strictly designed to meet local by-laws lacked sunlight, ventilation and a proper garden, and was almost as bleak and cramped as the slum dwellings it was designed to replace. Unwin also believed town plans should be

based on a proper regard for all the needs of the community,
we shall learn again to make our cities as beautiful as they will
be healthy and convenient.\textsuperscript{30}

Unwin’s call for a designed environment that was healthy, convenient and beautiful is evident in the urban renewal of The Rocks and Millers Point. The attempt to create a varied streetscape is evident in the model housing in Windmill Street designed by the GAB.

\textbf{Model Dwelling Houses, Windmill Street (1906-08)}

Designs for five-storey tenement blocks fronting Argyle Place and in the disused quarry along the western side of Kent Street were prepared, described as being ‘almost as architecturally imposing as the Victoria Markets [QVB] or the Post Office’ and Models were

\textsuperscript{30} The text of Unwin’s illustrated address is included in the findings of the conference session on Town Planning & Garden Cities and Suburbs, Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial League Health Conference held at the Imperial Institute, London May 18th to 21st 1914 p. 46
The local population did not like the proposal and the City Improvement Board’s proposal for a high-density housing scheme with tenement blocks did not eventuate. Varney Parkes, the chairman of the City Improvement Advisory Board, informed the residents that overseas examples of workers’ housing had been studied however none ‘would meet the requirements of the colony and a completely new type of flat had to be designed to cater to the needs of the residents’. The exact overseas examples remain unknown, however the work of the LCC at the Millbank Estate was well known.

A new and far less ambitious scheme was prepared by Vernon, Hickson and Davies of the Public Works Department in 1903. Colonial Georgian buildings to Argyle Place and Kent Street were retained, both for their townscape qualities and their high standard of construction, requiring little upgrading to return them to a habitable condition. The substandard and largely single-storey housing fronting Windmill Street in Millers Point, was replaced by a terrace of ‘32 model dwelling-houses’ designed by the GAB in 1906 (figure 1.13).  

31 Daily Telegraph, 7 January 1902  
33 The terms for the workers housing are taken from the Government Architect’s Reports by Vernon in annual reports of the Public Works Department.
The sheer number of residents needing to be rehoused resulted in the construction of higher density blocks, often termed ‘industrial dwellings’, were then built in Gloucester Street and Lower Fort Street in 1910, carefully inserted into the existing townscape.

The model dwelling houses in Windmill Street, completed in 1908, have some similarities with the Boatmen’s Row constructed in Newcastle, with further modifications to suit the Australian climate.34 Once again the English by-law terrace was the starting point for the design. The sheer scale of the Windmill Street terrace has resulted in the composition being more varied than in Newcastle, however the elevation of the terrace is once again a mirror image and is varied by gables. Two different internal layouts are used, the first is the typical terrace house layout, with a verandah to the first floor, which alternates with a gable with a deep recessed balcony or sleeping porch at first floor level, shaded by a hood (figure 11.14). The bay window previously used at the Boatmen’s Row in Newcastle was omitted. William Henry Foggitt, who would later become the architect for the NSW Housing Board, detailed the terraces in Windmill Street.

The model dwellings are constructed of face brickwork with liver-coloured brick arches, wrought iron balustrades and brackets to the gable hoods; the jettied gables are lined with pressed metal sheeting. Although this was probably a cost cutting measure, the use of pressed metal externally was more commonly associated with workers’ cottages in the arid areas of outback NSW. The roof was clad with corrugated iron rather than tiles, a roofing material

34 NSW Government Architect’s summary in the Annual Report of the Public Works Department for the year ending June 1908 p. 4
ceiling height and below the windows to the living room, forcing air circulation. On the first floor are three bedrooms, required, for moral reasons, to separate the male and female children and their parents. There was no variation in unit size; spare rooms were intended to accommodate fellow workers, a factor that largely accounted for the residents’ dislike of the proposed housing.

_Cité Ouvrière_

The engineer Norman Selfe proposed a Haussmann-influenced scheme, a substantial _cité ouvrière_, that would have involved the demolition of all of the buildings in The Rocks, the realignment of the streets and the construction of multi-storey apartment blocks similar to those in Paris or Barcelona. Eliel Saarinen in his second prize-winning scheme for Canberra proposed blocks of a similar European scale for the new Federal Capital. Selfe’s scheme was not adopted (figure 11.16); the more substantial buildings were retained and upgraded by the newly created Resumed Properties branch of the Public Works Department. The street layout was regularised to a degree and sites set aside for workers housing and model factories (figure 10.53).

The sheer number of workers needing to be re-housed resulted in the abandonment of the two-storey terrace form (which as of a

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35 Salon July-August 1912. Saarinen’s coloured presentation drawings of his scheme are held in the NAA (Canberra), Series A710 and report CP 487/6.
similar scale and character to the English garden city examples) and the construction of multi-storey industrial dwellings in Lower Fort Street in Millers Point and Gloucester Street in The Rocks. In Paris whole city blocks were being redeveloped which became known as *cité ouvrière*, or workers’ cities. In the Rue de Prague, near the site of the Bastille, the substantial *cité ouvrière*, built around 1905, was funded by the Rothschilds with the intention of improving the material existence of workers by providing healthy, hygienic and low cost workers’ housing. A design competition had been held, with schemes produced that encompassed the whole block (figure 11.17).

The workers’ housing designed by the GAB within the resumed area had a similar aim, but was funded by the state. In Holland there was a strong Art and Crafts influence in the public housing designed by the architects of the Amsterdam School. The revival of traditional brickwork can be seen in the housing built in extension areas of Amsterdam from 1912 onwards. Vernacular details can also be seen in the designs for the garden suburbs in Amsterdam that commenced in 1917 and in Delft. The high density workers’ housing in Sydney designed by the GAB, which predates these European examples, also included traditional crafted details.

Figure 11.16
Frederick A Franklin, sketch plan of building areas as re-arranged, The Rocks, Sydney, 1901

This is one of a number of illustrations in Norman Selfe’s report on the proposed remodelling of The Rocks area submitted to the Legislative Assembly in 1901.
Industrial Dwellings

Of the output of prominent Arts and Crafts architects working in London, Waterlow Court designed by Baillie Scott in 1908-09 in the Hampstead Garden Suburb remains the best known example of housing of a higher density (figure 11.18). Unlike the majority of his colleagues who primarily designed houses for the expanding middles class of professional men, Baillie Scott designed a wide range of workers’ housing, a number of the designs of which were published. Due to the influence of the Garden City Movement higher density forms were rarely used in England or in Australia.

The practice of clearing insanitary areas has handicapped local authorities, compelling them to secure new accommodation for re-housing on very dear land, & as a consequence, to make the most of a small area by building block dwellings. In this way various companies to a great extent, and local authorities to a small extent, have housed some 250,000 persons in London in more or less objectionable homes of this kind.36

Tenement buildings were disliked for a number of reasons: there was no room for gardens and children were often exposed to all manner of vices that, were they living in a separate houses in the

36 W. Thompson, Housing of the Working Classes, the Housing Handbook, London, B.T. Batsford, 1910, p. 67
suburbs, they might have remained unaware of. The buildings were walk-ups, which did little to relieve the exhaustion of the manual labourers who lived in them. Mr. Adams informed the Imperial Health conference in London, the NSW government had been building houses for the occupation of as many as half a dozen families each, but that is only in the very congested areas.\textsuperscript{37}

Between 1908 and 1910 the GAB designed a single block of waterside workers dwellings in Gloucester Street and a group of four blocks in Lower Fort Street. The Gloucester Street tenements, completed in 1910, were built below the level of the re-aligned Gloucester Street, retaining the original lower pavement (figure 11.19).\textsuperscript{38} The façade is kinked to line up with the adjacent terraces, which were retained and upgraded. Once again the palette of materials Vernon favoured was used: face brickwork and roughcast. Steel beams were employed to support the external walkways to the upper flats.

The provision of external stairs and walkways to access flats was not new; Henry Roberts had long been employing external walkways in his model housing designs in London. An exposed walkway was considered healthier than an enclosed corridor. The staircases to the upper entrances to the Lower Fort Street industrial dwellings

\textsuperscript{37} The comments on Sydney were made by W. C. Adams made at the conference session on Town Planning & Garden Cities and Suburbs, Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial League Health Conference held at the Imperial Institute, London May 18th to 21st 1914.

\textsuperscript{38} NSW Government Architect’s Report in the Annual Report of the Public Works Department for the year ending June 1910, p. 28 notes the Shops to George St North and Workmen’s Dwellings in Lower Fort and Gloucester St. AO Plans 2988, 2989 and 2990 (Workmen’s Dwellings in Lower Fort Street).
and the Sydney Harbour Trust terraces to Dalgety and High Streets may have been drawn from Amsterdam, where the first floor flats often share an external staircase. Most of the English examples employed the terrace house form, each house having a front door at ground level and an internal staircase.

In the Lower Fort Street industrial dwellings, designed by the GAB at the same time as the block in Gloucester Street, a European influence can also be seen (figures 11.20 and 21). In the cité ouvrière in the Rue de Prague the continuous Parisian street frontage established by Haussmann was abandoned, allowing side windows. Gardens were established in the centre of the block. Vernon did not employ a continuous frontage in the Lower Fort Street blocks in order that windows could be provided to all four elevations (figure 11.22). The proximity of the blocks to each other is also more reminiscent of European examples, such as the co-operative housing in Amsterdam built just before World War I, than the English examples where the blocks were more widely spaced.
Figure 11.20
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Workmens’ Dwellings, Lower Fort Street, 1910
Ground and first floor plans

Figure 11.21
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Workmens’ Dwellings, Lower Fort Street, 1910
Elevations to Lower Fort Street
In 1912 Frederick Foster Hall, the manager of the Resumed Properties Branch, became the manager of the newly created Housing Board. Other staff from the PWD also transferred, including W. H. Foggitt. The Board’s responsibility extended beyond the resumed areas and into the 1920s their work in Daceyville and Gladesville continued the Arts and Crafts principals employed by the GAB in the urban renewal of The Rocks and Millers Point. The initial houses at Daceyville were the result of a competition which was won by S. G Thorp. Thorp’s designs were adopted by the Housing Board and built, as were a range of other house types designed in house using a similar palette of materials: brick, roughcast and shingles.

The careful insertion of buildings into the surrounding townscape, and the high standard of design applied by the Housing Board, created in Millers Point and The Rocks a ‘brave new standard for slum dwellers’. Improvements were not limited to housing, a fountain, garden beds and public toilets were included in the reworked intersection of York Street north, and a garden was created on the roof of the adjacent warehouse (which was below street level).

The Boundary and the Millbank Public Housing Estates in London

…form the most conspicuous and celebrated evidence to support the claim that the LCC’s output up to World War I is one of the greatest achievements of the Arts and Crafts Movement in English Architecture. The socialist philosophy of Morris and the architectural ideas of Lethaby and Philip Webb had finally been put into practice as urban design.40

The urban renewal in The Rocks and Millers Point, designed the GAB from 1902 until 1912, can likewise be described a great achievement of the Arts and Crafts Movement, applying the teachings of Morris and Lethaby and the deliberate lack of style advocated by Webb. The extensive land resumption, and the accompanying urban renewal was unprecedented in Australia. The Government Architect was closely involved in the urban renewal within the Rocks Resumed area. In conjunction with the rebuilding of the adjacent wharves by the Sydney Harbour Trust, this was the largest project of its type undertaken anywhere in Australasia. From 1914 onwards the City Council began to undertake urban renewal, building model workers housing and widening the main streets that fed traffic into the city.

Carefully designed for reasons of continued public health, the urban renewal of The Rocks and Millers Point was designed to create a pleasant and healthy townscape for the benefit of those who lived and worked there. Sydney’s workers now benefited from an

environment that had been consciously designed. In the internal layout, form and overall townscape of the workers’ housing, shops, warehouses and factories in The Rocks and Millers Point can be seen the characteristic concern of the Arts and Crafts Movement designer for the quality of environment in which a person lived and worked. As Morris had long advocated, public architecture in NSW was now an art for the people.

A New Style of Architecture for the Resumed Areas

In contrast to the housing designed by the Sydney Harbour Trust, which was all of a similar scale and character, the GAB designed a range of buildings within the resumed area in the Free Style manner: terrace houses, tenements, model factories and shop houses. John Burcham Clamp, Joseland and Vernon, Halligan and Wilton and Spain, Cosh and Minett followed the lead set by the Government Architect and by 1908 these architects were employing the Free Style when designing new buildings for slum areas of Sydney recently resumed by the state government and the city council. Dods, who would replace Minett as a partner in the firm of Spain and Cosh in 1913
had already been working in this manner in Brisbane. In their design for the Crane Warehouse in Harrington Street, Spain and Cosh followed the Free Style architectural vocabulary that the Government Architect had set for the Rocks Resumed Area. In addition to the new commercial and factory buildings designed by the GAB, the new headquarters for the Resumed Properties section, built on the corner of Cumberland Street and Charlotte Place (Grosvenor Street), clearly showed that buildings within the resumed area were to be Free Style. The design was by Vernon’s former staff member, W. H. Foggitt. (figure 11.24)

The Free Style was widely adopted for multi-storey commercial buildings in Sydney with examples such as Bosch Barthel & Co. of 1909 in Castlereagh Street, the additions to Farmers (now part of Grace Brothers) in Pitt Street and Wyoming in Macquarie Street (1909) by Clamp surviving. It was also the style adopted within the slums resumed by the Sydney City Council. The Strickland Buildings in Chippendale, designed by the City Architect Robert H. Broderick in 1913-1914, following an architectural competition, shows the Free Style applied to workers’ housing (figure 11.23).  

Nearby the Free Style was applied to the new brewery buildings constructed from 1910-1912 as a result of the slum clearance and street widening in Irving and Balfour Streets. The Administration Building and the Carlton bottling plant were designed by Spain and Cosh had been collaborating with Spain and Cosh since 1912.

Photographs of the 1910 slum clearance and street widening in the vicinity of Balfour Street, Chippendale can be found in the SCC Demolition Books (SCC Archives).
Cosh and Minett, the substantial Irving Brewery was by Halligan and Wilton (figure 11.25).\footnote{The Administration Building was substantially altered by Robertson and Marks in the 1930s. The Irving Brewery has been considerably altered internally and externally to suit changes in brewing. The Carlton Street Bottling Plant has recently been demolished (September-October 2008). A number of these changes in configuration are outlined in the 1991 Conservation Management Plan for the site by Conybeare and Morrison.} Following the widening of Oxford Street a series of Free Style commercial buildings and public houses were constructed to the northern side of the street.

**Dacey Garden Suburb (Daceyville)**

The year of paid leave Vernon had been granted by Parliament that followed his retirement allowed him to continue to be involved with the planned improvement of Sydney and the planning of the new Federal Capital of Canberra. Vernon also acted as a judge in the design competition for the different types of houses for the garden suburb to be built at Daceyville. The visiting advocate of the Garden City, New Zealand-born Charles Reade criticised the overall layout, his suggestion that the 'opinion of a modern English town planner on the proposal' be sought was ignored.\footnote{Harrison, *Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect*, p. 54} The initial scheme was prepared by Vernon’s successor George McRae in 1912 and the site levelling and drainage of the swampy land adjacent to Gardeners Road was commenced by the Resumed Properties branch. In late 1912 the project was transferred to the recently created NSW Housing Board.

Sulman, John Hennessy and John Fitzgerald (the chairman of the Housing Board) amended the initial design. This amended version and the version eventually adopted by the Housing Board are both
included by Sulman in his study of Australian town planning (figure 11.26). As had occurred at Letchworth, design competitions were held for the individual building types, of which one variant was built. The remainder of the housing was designed by W. H. Foggitt of the NSW Housing Board. Foggitt had extensive experience in designing workers’ housing, having already worked on the design of Windmill Terrace in Millers Point.

Samuel Thorp’s success in three of the competition categories resulted in his requesting James Peddle to return from Pasadena to assist with the detailed designs. His design for a pair of dwellings,

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Sulman notes that the scheme that he, John Henessy and John Fitzgerald produced was the original scheme, however it has since been identified as being the second plan. The series of plans have been included in the DCP for Daceyville by Botany Council.

47 The competition designs were published in *Salon November-December 1912*, pp. 141-143. Daceyville Garden Suburb Grouped cottages, Semi Detached, Cottages and Single Cottage. S. G. Thorpe was successful in each category.
one of which was two storey, the other single storey, was built and was known simply as the Prize dwelling (figure 11.27). Daceyville remains public housing today, and examples of the standard designs by Thorp and Foggitt survive, although the interiors have been upgraded. The garden suburb model would continue to be the model for workers’ housing until the late 1930s when higher density blocks were introduced in inner suburbs such as Erskineville.Both Vernon and Sulman continued to advocate the garden suburb and it was this model, rather than higher density housing, which was widely adopted throughout Australia after the Great War.

Unfortunately Vernon did not live long enough to hear that two projects that he had been involved with, the garden suburb at Daceyville and the urban renewal in inner Sydney, had been discussed in the session on Town Planning & Garden Cities and Suburbs at the Imperial League Health Conference held in London in 1914. The keynote speaker was the noted architect and town planner Raymond Unwin. In The Rocks and Millers Point, the Australian delegate noted,

> The government paid the cost of it, bought it from the owners and demolished the buildings, and are rebuilding practically another city. Sydney is doing now what is advocated here by the Victoria League.

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48 The Erskineville Housing Scheme, a series of walk up flats designed by Morton Herman, was built on land resumed from the Oval. The housing continues to be used as public housing today.

49 The published record lists the construction of workers cottages at Daisyfield that is presumably Daceyville. W. C. Adams comments at the conference session on Town Planning & Garden Cities and Suburbs, Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial League Health Conference held at the Imperial Institute, London May 18th to 21st 1914.

W. C. Adams continued, informing the delegates of Australian achievements.

When you have town planning schemes under consideration you must not forget the element of beauty. Everyone has heard of the beautiful harbour in Sydney, which is one of the finest sites in the world and the buildings are certainly some of the finest architecture in the world and I believe that when the new Federal Capital is completed it also will be one of the finest cities in the world.\footnote{51}

The Model City Of Canberra

In 1901 in Melbourne ‘Questions relating to the Laying Out and Building of the Federal Capital’ were discussed.\footnote{52} The buildings of the new capital would, G. S. Jones, hoped, ‘be essentially Australian [and] not slavishly copy the art of past dead centuries.’\footnote{53} Vernon served on the Advisory board and was part of the panel that formulated the conditions for the design competition. He assessed the suitability

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\footnote{51} W. C. Adams comments Victoria League, Report of the Proceedings of the Imperial League Health Conference 1914

\footnote{52} Robert Freestone, \textit{From City Improvement to the City Beautiful}, in Stephen Hamnett and Robert Freestone, \textit{The Australian Metropolis, A Planning History}, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 2000 p. 27.

\footnote{53} George Sydney Jones quoted in Harrison, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect}, p. 4
of the proposed sites, investigating whether or not suitable building materials were available locally (figure 11.28).54 The intention to create a model city, surrounded by garden suburbs, bears Vernon’s stamp and he advocated a site with hills and valleys. In his analysis he notes that55

The site offers no opportunity for the visionary to design a theoretical city, either on the ‘cobweb’ or ‘chess board’ plan but, like all European capitals and cities, that rightly lay claim to beauty of situation and appropriateness of combination of city and surroundings, this one provides a similar opportunity to be followed, for while level and gently rising sites are available for Governmental, Commercial and Industrial requirements…the residential suburbs must find a home on the wooded foothills and valleys encircling the main site in all directions.56

The materials proposed for the city were brick and sandstone, the palette of materials employed in Free Style buildings in the urban renewal of the resumed areas in metropolitan Sydney.57

Although he had been involved with the planning of Canberra since 1900, and had assisted in developing the brief, Vernon was not selected as a competition judge. George Taylor lobbied for him to be included, submitting a testimonial in his favour signed by 206 of his

54 Walter Liberty Vernon, Report by the Government Architect Respecting the Local Supply of Building Materials, NSW Parliamentary Papers, 1907
Vernon papers ML MSS 6571/4
55 The area between Lake George and Yass was occupied by a series of substantial pastoral stations including the Campbell’s Duntroon and Yarralumla.
56 Sulman preferred to use the term spider’s web to describe the radiating plan he had long been advocating.
Walter Liberty Vernon, Reports respecting proposed sites at Mahkoolma, Canberra and other sites in the Yass (Lake George) District, Sydney, Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers, 15 June 1906.
57 Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon, Architect 1846-1914, p. 150
architectural colleagues, however the manipulative Kirkpatrick was chosen instead. Vernon only learnt that he had been passed over when he saw the press release. He requested that the Minister would cause me to be informed if this circumstance is to be taken as an intimation that you no longer require my service in connection with designing of the Capital City.\(^5\)

This was to be the case. Shortly before his death Vernon received an honorarium paid in recognition of services rendered.\(^6\) Although no longer officially involved, Vernon continued to play an important role in ensuring that the Griffin’s prize-winning design was implemented. The competition had been fraught with difficulties, the Australian Institutes of Architects had called for a boycott, a boycott that Vernon disagreed with, but which RIBA agreed to.\(^6\) Many believed the brief to have been too prescriptive; Taylor commented that:

\(^5\) Telegram from Vernon to O’Malley, 14 February 1912
\(^6\) Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon Architect 1846-1914, p. 170-71
\(^6\) Vernon gives his view on the boycott in 1913 in his A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia, contained in Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. Melbourne Meeting 1913, pp. 548-565
The men who ignored it won first and second prizes, the first prize going to Walter Burley Griffin, of Chicago, the second prize to E. Laarinen [Saarinen] of Finland; whilst the third prize went to Dr. Agache of Paris.\(^6^1\)

Canberra was not the only city plan by Saarinen, he also prepared schemes for Budapest (1911), Tallin (1911-13), Munkkiniemi-Haaga near Helsinki (1915) (figure 11.29), and after World War I, Greater Helsinki, (1918) Chicago (1923-24) and Detroit (1923-24).\(^6^2\) Saarinen had long been working a regional variant of the Arts and Crafts. Architects in a number of countries where Ruskin and Morris’ writings appeared in translation, including Germany, Hungary and Scandinavia, were employing forms and materials drawn from the local vernacular. Saarinen's country retreat at Hvitträsk, one of three houses designed in 1901-1903 by Saarinen, Herman Gesellius and Armas Lindgren in the forest near Helsinki, shows the careful consideration of the landscape and the artistic use of traditional details. Described as ‘a magical place linked to the past by its roots in land and myth’, these *Finnische Landhäuser* were known internationally, having been included by Muthesius in his study of country houses.\(^6^3\) The schemes by Agache and Saarinen were very European in character; whereas the Griffins showed perspectives of large, monumental buildings, a lower scale city and the type of grid planning used throughout the new world.

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61 The Finnish entrant was Eliel Saarinen. Taylor, *Town Planning For Australia*, p 47


63 Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, pp. 222-23
Harrison believes the Griffin’s scheme for Canberra to be a complete demonstration of Griffin’s talents for the design of a total domestic environment. The combination of landscape and architecture as complementary disciplines directed towards the creation of a coherent scheme for community living was a significant landmark in his career.  

To Sydney’s missionaries of sunlight the design of not only residences, but also the surrounding suburb, was nothing new. One of the first activities held by the newly formed Town Planning Association was an exhibition of town plans by its members. In November 1913 Vernon and Joseland’s design *Rus in Urbe* described as ‘an interesting print of the original plan for the Kensington Estate’, was exhibited alongside the design for Canberra in the Sydney Town Hall (figure 11.30).

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64 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect, p.23
11.31). Schemes for the improvement of Sydney and Newcastle, Sulman’s layouts for garden suburbs of Daceyville and Rosebery and plans of ‘continental cities’ were also shown. The exhibition proved so popular that it was extended. The inclusion of *Rus in Urbe* may have been to show the Griffins, who continually promoted their subdivisions as a new type of suburban layout, that the garden suburb had long been known about in Australia. The regulation of building materials, laying out the roads to follow the contours, orienting buildings to the view, providing green spaces and the use of indigenous species can all be found in the Neutral Bay Estate.

Rather than appoint the Chicago-based Griffins, O’Malley decided to select the best features from the prize-winning designs and combine them. Yet again, Sulman noted, the government expected ‘capable, busy professional men to spend a large amount of time and money on getting a premium without further employment’. The Government

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65 Town Planning Association of NSW, *Display Catalogue*, Sydney, 1913
66 Sulman’s comments are quoted in Jones, *Walter Liberty Vernon*, p. 161
purchased the favoured local entry for 400 pounds and used this as the basis of what has become known as the ‘Departmental Plan’. Elements of the Griffin’s plan were also included. R. Charles Coulter, one of the three designers of the preferred local entry was on the staff of the GAB. He knew the area around Yarralumla well, having prepared the watercolours of each of the proposed sites, including the coloured panorama included in the competition brief (figure 11.28). The Departmental Board of the Australian Department of Home Affairs (including Charles Roberts Scrivener and the NSW architect in charge of Commonwealth Public Works, George Oakeshott) prepared the plan (figure 11.30). Amongst the architectural fraternity there was considerable opposition to the Departmental plan. George Taylor recalled that

A conference with Colonel Vernon convinced me that this awful ‘built up’ plan was impractical. That public-spirited gentleman was good enough to prepare sections showing the difference between the departmental design and that by Griffin. I remember the tragedy of l’Enfant and the interference with his plan for Washington. I remembered the millions that had to be paid as a result of that interference and for three months I pleaded with Colonel Vernon for permission to place his sections before the public.

He hesitated. He felt public criticism might hurt the feelings of the officers with whom he had worked for so long; but to his

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67 A copy of the plan can be found in Eric Nicholls papers at the NLA. nla.pic-vn3699709
eternal credit he felt that the national call was greater, and almost reluctantly let me proceed. Even when I had drawn up the great petition of Australian Architects, asking that the departmental design be discarded, the grand old man had a feeling of regret that I had gone so far. To Colonel Vernon must ever be given the glory that Canberra got fair play. I write this knowing.

…His name will ever be associated with the planning of Canberra, because of the manner in which he fought for the adoption of the right plan and the rejection of that almost foisted on people. He had all the essentials of a town planner - breadth of vision, patriotism, foresight, the artistic soul, and that democratic impulse that makes men who need no aid from men help those men who need. But Vernon Hill will always keep his name at Canberra.68

Vernon eventually went public, writing an article that Taylor published, that attempted to soften criticisms in the English Town Planning Review, seeking a return to the ‘finer conceptions of Mr. Griffin.’69 Patrick Abercrombie believed the Griffin’s design contained ‘obvious defects’ but at least the designer ‘possessed an artistic grasp of town planning’.70 It was mooted that Thomas Mawson, by now Professor Mawson of the Department of Civic Design in Liverpool, be invited to consult. This was not to be the case and Griffin was appointed to further develop the winning design.

68 Taylor, Town Planning For Australia, pp. 57-58
70 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect, p. 28-29
Personally Vernon ‘regarded the Canberra site selection and his subsequent advice on the planning of the Capital, as the most important achievement of his career’. In the design for Canberra the ideals that Vernon had long been implementing in institutional complexes could be applied to an entire city: to government and business areas, to industrial areas and to the surrounding garden suburbs. His role in the initial stages of the design of Canberra, particularly his input into the competition brief ensured that the competition attracted world class designers, designers with an understanding of the newly emerging discipline of town planners, designers with a far reaching vision for the new city.

It is no wonder that Vernon, a committed missionary of sunlight, believed the design for the Federal Capital to be his finest work. Today the layout of Canberra still reflects the ideals of the English Garden City movement. Australia could

…watch the city of Canberra rise, a city well and truly built. A city beautiful to look upon, and a city beautiful to live within. A world’s centre of civic beauty and health.  

Unfortunately Vernon did not live to see the construction of a model city. He died in January 1914 the results of complications from injuries sustained whilst still in office. Today Vernon’s involvement in the planning of Canberra has largely been forgotten, although his memory is commemorated in Vernon Circuit (figure 11.32). After Vernon’s death Sulman established the annual Vernon Memorial lecture at the newly established School of Town Planning of the University of Sydney, intended to reflect the long standing interest of both men in designed environments and townscape.

The idea of designing the entire environment that can be seen in the layout of hospitals and asylums designed by the GAB and in the initial planning for Canberra was also applied to the design of educational campuses. Following on from the work of Olmstead in America, campus layouts were designed to take into account the contours of the land, creating a picturesque townscape. The design of educational buildings had only been a very small part of Vernon’s role when he took on the position of Government Architect, however the responsibility for the design of primary and secondary schools and technical colleges were progressively added to his portfolio from 1895 onwards. These buildings are discussed in the following chapter.

72 Taylor, Town Planning For Australia, p. 10
73 In his review of the twin professions Vernon describes the proposed new Federal Capital as a model city. Vernon, A Review of the Existing Conditions of the Twin Professions in Australia.
74 Jones, Walter Liberty Vernon Architect 1846-1914, p. 189
CHAPTER 12   EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS 1902-1912

This chapter continues the discussion of the institutional complexes designed by the GAB under Vernon’s guidance, showing how the progressive ideas that had been applied to model factories, housing, hospitals and asylums were applied to the design of educational buildings across the state. To maintain the health of the pupils and the teachers, educational buildings were designed to maximise natural light and airflow.

A broader concern was emerging regarding the ‘inferior health of town dwellers’ and lack of physical strength of the Australian workforce. A noticeable lack of physical strength in army recruits had been observed during the Boer War. Sulman commented that this poor health

for a country of wide spaces, healthy climate, and
prosperous conditions for a mass of the people is not satisfactory.

A healthy environment in cities would provide both a strong workforce and a higher percentage of fit recruits. The poor light levels in schools built during the mid nineteenth century was having a detrimental effect on the eyesight of both pupils and teaching staff, threatening their future livelihood. The Knibbs-Turner Royal Commission into Education in NSW, held

1 Sulman quotes figures regarding the health of recruits in England during the Boer War and New Zealand, England and Queensland during World War I. Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 34 (including footnotes).

2 Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 35
in 1902-03, required changes in the design of schools throughout the state, improving light levels and ventilation in both classrooms and corridors.³

Until 1902 the NSW Department of Public Education maintained its own architectural branch, designing schools and technical colleges, however the workload was such that private architects were often engaged to design individual schools. Following the precedent set by the London by the School Board, substantial multi-storey classroom blocks were built, allowing the remainder of the site to be utilised for playgrounds. After the depression of the 1890s the existence of two architectural offices designing educational buildings was seen as an extravagance. The Colonial Architect had previously designed University buildings, whilst the Department of Public Instruction designed primary and secondary schools. The two offices were eventually combined under Vernon; by 1905 all of the staff had been transferred or had retired. Work at the University had been limited during the 1890s however some generous bequests allowed for the building program to be resumed in 1901.

The University of Sydney

Vernon made a substantial contribution to the character of Sydney University, continuing the Gothic Revival style and Blacket’s original intention of a quadrangle by adding the south range, the Fisher Library (now MacLaurin Hall) and the bookstack.⁴ He would have recognised the similarity in the Blacket’s design for the clocktower with A. W. N. Pugin’s designs. Blacket had incorporated similar

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³ Knibbs-Turner; Interim Report on Certain Parts of Primary Education, Sydney, NSW Government Printer; 1903
⁴ The Great Hall and the East range were the only components of the Main Quadrangle completed under Blacket’s guidance.
Vernon admired Blacket’s Great Hall, placing it in a sequence with the English examples recorded by Pugin.

This type of hammer beam roof is purely the product of English soil, nothing on the continent being comparable with it. The most beautiful and wonderful in the long series of this type of roof is that of Westminster Hall, the original meeting place of the British Parliament [figure 12.1]. It was erected by Richard the Second in AD 1397 and remains untouched and without alterations to the present time. Pugin gives the following dimensions of the principal roofs of this type in Great Britain to which are added those erected at the University of Sydney.\(^5\)

Vernon also clearly admired traditional exposed timber roofs; his book collection included a copy of Brandon’s drawings of Open Timber Roofs and Auguste Pugin’s Examples of Gothic Architecture.  

\(^5\) Reproduced in the section on the search for a new style in Elizabeth Anscombe, Arts and Crafts Style, London, Phaidon, 1991, p. 17
W. N. Pugin repeated the turret details of Westminster Abbey in the design of the Houses of Parliament opposite. In the design of the Fisher Library, Vernon repeated the similar Puginesque turrets that Blacket had employed in the Clocktower of the University of Sydney. Vernon’s London Office had been just around the corner from the Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall. His photograph collection shows that he was also familiar with Salvin’s mid nineteenth century work in Cambridge. Salvin followed the existing architectural vocabulary; at Trinity College two new courts were added in ‘Salvin’s most economical Tudor style’ and at Trinity Hall the eastern wing was rebuilt after a fire ‘in a classical style complementary to the rest of the college buildings’.7

Vernon’s work at the university likewise complemented the existing buildings, noting that his choice of the Gothic for the Fisher Library ‘admits much individuality and rich effects not obtainable in the colder and more unbending lines of the pagan classical’.8 Written in 1909, his comments reflect Ruskin’s description of the ‘rigid formalism, perfect finish and cold tranquility’ that set the Renaissance apart from the Gothic.9 Over half a century after its publication, The Stones of Venice was still influencing architectural thought. After the Great War the Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney, Leslie Wilkinson, promoted a different opinion of the Blacket’s work.

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7 Allibone, Anthony Salvin, Pioneer of Gothic Architecture 1799-1881, p. 136
8 Walter Liberty Vernon, The Fisher Library in Hermes, October 1909
The Great Hall at Sydney University is a lovely thing, but it is a living lie. The University started in 1850, and this is a beautiful fifteenth century building.\(^\text{10}\)

Today it is understood that both the Great Hall and the Fisher Library are Gothic Revival buildings. Vernon and the GAB acknowledged the Gothic tradition within which they worked, to which they added modern fireproof materials. In the lecture rooms, main library and laboratories at the University open framed roofs were employed, following on from Blacket’s design for the Great Hall (figure 12.2). Wardell had also followed Blacket in employing both the Gothic Revival for the design for St Johns College built on the ridge on the western side of Orphan School Creek. The initial buildings, the Great Hall, the Medical School and St Johns were all built on the ridge, intended to be viewed from a distance. As the University expanded the slopes and the low lying areas also had to be utilised. Although there was a plan to extend the main quadrangle to the west and build a series of additional quadrangles, the slope of the land was too great. Individual schools were built instead, the design of each varying considerably.

The Science Schools

The London based Arts and Crafts Guilds deliberately revived the crafts associated with traditional English buildings. Sedding’s lecture *The Handicrafts in the Old Days*, delivered before the Whitechapel Guild of Crafts in 1890 requested that his audience

Think what a home of the handicrafts the old house was! The great gates of hammered iron as you enter the courtyard: the charmingly devised stack-pipe heads to the eaves: the lead water-butt by the door, covered over with stamped patterns of oak leaves and acorns, not to keep the water sweet, merely for eye-delight: the sturdily framed door, with its mouldings and wrought iron straps.  

Rainwater heads, door hinges and latches and window catches were all handmade by members of the Art Workers’ Guild. Similar elaborate metalwork was employed in the series of new science schools at Sydney University designed by the GAB from 1902 until 1914, indicating a familiarity with the output of the London-based guilds, and the traditional leadwork to country manor houses upon which the designs were based (figure 12.3). John Barr, the GAB’s ‘Gothic specialist’, detailed all the schools at the University and many of his exquisite drawings survive (figure 12.4 & 12.6).  


12 Hitchmough, C. F. A Voysey, Plates 14, 17, 18 and 19.

13 The Sydney University Archives contains a number of the watercoloured linen drawings of the Fisher Library (MacLaurin Hall, the Medical School, the Peter Russell Nicoll School of Engineering (now the English faculty), the School of Agriculture, the Veterinary School and the first stage of the Student Union. Some of the drawings were lithographed and included in a supplement to Building, 12 January 1912. Vernon kept a set of the Fisher Library drawings. ML MSS 6571 Box 4 and ML PXD 834 Folios 12-15.
Barr’s detailed working drawings for the Fisher Library show Art Nouveau style vents similar to Archibald Knox’s metalwork designs for Liberty’s of London. The elaborate light fittings of the Fisher Library, although designed many years later, also show similarities with Burges’ somewhat ornate interiors at Cardiff Castle, an eclectic combination of stenciled motifs, painted murals, statuary, inlaid stonework, and tiles (figure 12.5). Vernon’s interiors are characteristically more restrained; he avoided the use of stenciled or painted decoration, preferring to employ truthful materials that Lethaby describes in detail. In the interiors designed by the GAB truthful materials that required a high degree of craftsmanship were employed: leadlight windows, mosaic tiled floors, marble and plain tile fireplaces and wrought iron balustrades. Pattern, other than the pattern formed by the geometric arrangement of the tiles or glazing bars, was noticeably absent.
Figure 12.6
NSW Government Architect, Fisher Library, University of Sydney, 1902-1910
This is one of John Barr’s detailed drawings of the Fisher Library (now MacLaurin...


Stile Liberty

Although there is no archival record of Vernon having met the designers employed by his cousin Arthur Liberty, his family connections, as well as his personal interest in the decorative arts, ceramics and antique metalwork, make it highly possible that he did. Rather than sell imported wares, Liberty began to commission English designers. Archibald Knox, Baillie Scott, Arthur and Rex Silver and Voysey designed textiles, carpets, wallpapers, furniture, jewelry, clocks and tableware for sale in Liberty’s. The English strand of the Art Nouveau was so closely associated with Liberty’s that in Italy the style is known as Stile Liberty. Adolf Loos in his 1898 Review of Applied Arts gives two principle examples of a new emerging style: Bing’s L’Art Nouveau in Paris, after which the style is generally known, and Liberty’s of London.

In addition to visiting his cousin’s Regent Street store, Vernon would have seen the Art Nouveau style interiors when he visited the Colonial Exhibition at Tervuren, near Brussels. Prominent Belgian designers Paul Hankar, Georges Hobé, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy and Henri Van de Velde all contributed style Congo furniture (as the Art Nouveau style was initially known in Belgium) to furnish the grand exhibition halls (figure 12.7).

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14 RIBA holds many of Voysey’s drawings, including 208 designs for textiles and wallpapers, 260 designs for furniture and 206 graphic designs. A series of drawings, including many decorative designs selected by Voysey in 1913 were presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Hitchmough, C. F. A Voysey, p. 230
Baillie Scott had been designing wallpaper for Liberty since 1893. Calloway, Liberty of London, Masters of Style and Decoration, p. 92

15 Arwas, Victor, Archibald Knox Silver and Jewelry, in Martin, Archibald Knox, p. 44

16 Adolf Loos, A Review of Applied Arts, written in 1898 in Loos, Ornament and Crime, Selected Essays, p. 134

17 The Exhibition Building at Tervuren survives today and is a museum. The interiors of the exhibition halls have been altered and no longer contain the furniture and interiors designed for the Colonial Exhibition.
The English did not consider their work to be Art Nouveau, disliking the excesses of their European colleagues; the Victoria and Albert Museum were criticised for purchasing and exhibiting European Art Nouveau furniture.\textsuperscript{18} These critics did not appear to harbour the same concerns about the Celtic and plant motifs used by Knox and the other British designers. It was largely this English variant of the Art Nouveau, that emerged out of the Arts and Crafts Movement, that can be found in NSW. The distinction between the European Art Nouveau and the work of the English designers was most evident in the design of furniture. Stickley commented in the \textit{Craftsman} in 1911 that

\begin{quote}
In Mr. Parker’s furniture one is occasionally reminded in line and finish of the Art Nouveau development in France. But it is a subdued Art Nouveau, shorn of pretence and whimsicality; an Art Nouveau humbled and purified.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

This analysis describes exactly what Vernon did to Art Nouveau

\textsuperscript{18} Service, Edwardian Architecture, A Handbook to Building Design, 1890-1914, p. 102

\textsuperscript{19} Gustav Stickley quoted in Hawkes, Modern County Homes in England, the Arts and Crafts Architecture of Barry Parker, p. 27

Figure 12.7
George Hobé, The Hall of the Great Cultures, Colonial Exhibition, Tervuren near Brussels, 1897

Vernon visited this exhibition during his study tour
motifs, restrained flowing lines and curves appeared in both metal and timber work following his return. In the work of the GAB it was generally the motifs popularised by Liberty that were employed, with occasional traces of the more elaborate European style of Art Nouveau adopted by Victor Horta or Hector Guimard. The sinuous curves employed by the Belgian designers ‘were transposed from wood to iron, from craft to technology, from the traditional to the modern by Horta’.  

The turned timberwork found in the GAB’s Queen Anne Revival style designs for country NSW vanished in favour of the cut-out motifs and curved timberwork that Voysey used. The GAB’s designs were more stylised than the plant motifs used by Clamp at Wyoming and more restrained than the verandahs in Haberfield, where the Art Nouveau style began to be overlaid onto the Federation Style villas around 1911.

The differences between the interior decoration of Penshurst, Vernon’s first house and his second house, Wendover, mirrors Liberty’s transition from promoting the Aesthetic Movement and Oriental wares to promoting the English strand of Art Nouveau. The wallpaper at Wendover, possibly designed by either Voysey or the Silver Studio, appears to date from around 1904 or 1905, well after the construction of the house and Vernon’s study tour, indicating that

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20 Klaus Jurgen Sembach, Art Nouveau, Utopia: Reconciling the Irreconcilable; Cologne, Taschen, 2000 p. 45

21 The 1911 examples are Flosamail, 29 O’Connor Street and Atina, 39 Stanton Street, Haberfield. The architect employed by the developer Richard Stanton during this period was John Spencer Stansfield. The Art Nouveau style timberwork to the verandahs of the houses in Haberfield are illustrated by Vincent Crowe in his Tours of Haberfield, Past and Present, Part Two, published by the author, 2007.
the ordering of goods from Liberty’s continued. The redecoration of some of the rooms co-incides with Vernon moving permanently to Thornleigh (figure 12.8).

The influence of Archibald Knox’s designs for Liberty is particularly apparent in the metalwork designed by the GAB. Knox began to work for Liberty in 1897, having initially worked for Christopher Dresser. He produced over 5,000 designs for Liberty, continuing to send designs after he had returned to his homeland, the Isle of Man. Some similarities exist between the stylised leaf motifs Knox used to ornament belt buckles and jewelry and the metal work and

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22 The curator of the Silver Studio Archives, MODA advised that the pattern may well be a Silver Studio print, and that although they were not able to identify the pattern, similar c.1904 patterns survive. Selections of the patterns in the archive is available on their website.

23 Working drawings for a number of Knox’s designs are held by the Victoria and Albert Museum. The catalogues he compiled of his jewelry are now held by Manx National Heritage. A number of the designs in the Silver Studio archive are believed to be by Knox as traditional Manx names were used. Mark Turner, Archibald Knox and the Silver Studio, in Stephen A Martin, Archibald Knox, pp. 31-37.

24 Martin, Archibald Knox, p. 13
carved ornament of Sydney University buildings. Other Sydney architects also adopted stylised leaf motifs; the carvings to Wyoming, designed by Burcham Clamp in 1909 (figure 12.9), are also similar to Knox’s designs.

Art Nouveau style metal work was used in the vent covers and the door and window furniture of the faculty buildings designed between 1906 and 1912, including the School of Engineering, the School of Veterinary Science and the School of Agriculture. The latter was designed following Vernon’s retirement; however his design philosophy for the series of schools lining Science Road was continued. A block plan prepared by the GAB in 1910 shows the proposed Science schools (figure 9.7). The faculties also have elaborate rainwater heads, similar to those designed by Voysey, but based on traditional rainwater heads such as those illustrated in *The Manor Houses of England* that appeared in 1910.

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25 The working drawing of the leaf buckle is held in the Silver Studio Archive. Knox’s drawing and a worked example are include in the plates in Martin, Archibald Knox, p. 118 & p. 139 (worked example made in Birmingham for Liberty & Co.)

26 The University of Sydney retains a sequence of campus plans by the GAB, the Griffins and Wilkinson in its archival collection.

illustrated the traditional details of manor houses that were employed by the Arts and Crafts architects: the examples he included are all characterised by their hand workmanship. Some of the detailed illustrations are of Bramall Hall and Parham Park, buildings that Vernon had collected photographs of.

The School of Engineering (1906)

The School of Engineering is the first of the science schools to be constructed (figure 12.10). Built to the south of the temporary Physics and Chemistry Laboratories, the School of Engineering marked the start of the construction of the series of permanent science faculties, designed in the Free Style manner, lining Science Road. The building was designed on a sloping site, a feature utilised to provide double height lecture theatres expressed externally by the curved wall.28

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28 The School of Engineering no longer houses the engineering students, rather it now contains the English faculty, however the external configuration of the workshops and the fine, tapered chimney have been retained.
The School of Engineering was built with a working courtyard. The workshops and chimney to the west were a later addition (figure 12.11). The building has subsequently been extended to the south, obscuring the original southern elevation, however photographs of the original configuration survive. The facades employ chequer board decoration, of two different self-coloured materials, similar to that used by Lethaby at Avon Tyrrell. In this case the characteristic materials employed by the GAB for the Free Style in Sydney, brick and sandstone, are used.
This plan shows the original layout of the first floor, with its single loaded corridor.
The Veterinary School (1910)

The Veterinary School, as the School of Veterinary Science was originally known, was designed in 1910, with the detailed drawings prepared by John Barr (figure 12.12). Barr had been detailing the university buildings since the commencement of the Fisher Library in 1901 and would spend over 20 years working on the design of new buildings for the University. Like the earlier School of Engineering and the School of Biology (formed by major additions to the temporary Chemistry Laboratory), the Veterinary School was built in the valley, terminating Science Road (figure 12.13). Vernon’s initial design was intended as the first stage, the initial plans making provision for an extension. The extensions did not however occur in the manner or location that Vernon intended.29

29 The Government Architect Cobden Parkes designed a substantial extension to the southern end of the building in 1939, with a second extension to the northern end of the building by Moore, Walker and Croaker added in 1959. Later additions to the rear of the building have obscured the original intention of Vernon’s design, infilling the single loaded corridor and verandah to the rear and blocking the light to the stair well. This final addition could not be further removed from the original intention of the design, it contains rooms with no external windows.
In its original layout, the Veterinary School contained the major teaching spaces, the laboratories and the dissection room at one end of the building and the lecture theatre and museum at the other. The central section contained the professor’s office and a single-loaded corridor that looked into the rear court. The semicircular room over the main porch was the library. The position of the lecture theatres and teaching laboratories is evident on the external elevations. The plan is similar to both the library buildings designed by Richardson in America and the educational buildings in England funded by the philanthropist Passmore Edwards, indicating a familiarity with contemporary educational buildings. Had the building been extended as intended then the rear yard would have formed a court or cloister around a sunken garden. Wilkinson’s Horse Dissecting pavilion is located at the centre of the garden however the sunken areas have been filled in.

Much of the original internal character of the Veterinary School remains evident, although the main corridor is no longer lit by natural light. The main dissection laboratory retains its observation gallery, its skylights, the system of hoists, and tile lined walls, although the windows of the dissecting room have been turned into doors or infilled. The professor’s rooms and teaching spaces included fireplaces; the original function of the room is evident in the detail of the chimneypieces. A simple stone surround was employed in the teaching areas, with the hearth and recess lined with plain glazed tiles. The professor’s offices had a timber chimneypiece, detailed with the flowing lines of the Art Nouveau and lined with plain glazed tiles (figure 12.14). In his domestic designs of the 1880s Vernon
used decorated tiles. In his institutional interiors designed after his return from London plain tiles were always used. Voysey’s design for a fireplace, with plain glazed tiles, exhibited at the 1896 Arts and Crafts exhibition, had been much admired by his colleagues.30

Motifs drawn from the Passmore Edwards Library, designed by Henry Hare in 1898, and the Mary Ward Settlement by Smith and Brewer, designed in 1895, appear in the design of the Pyrmont Post Office, the Pyrmont Fire Station and the Medical School, Science Faculties and Student Union at the University of Sydney. Vernon did not see either of these philanthropically funded buildings completed although members of his staff probably did. Oakeshott visited London in 1899; E. J. Jackson visited London in 1901 and Barr is believed to have visited in 1904. Barr’s joinery details for the series of faculties designed from 1902 until World War I at the University are very similar to surviving drawings of the Mary Ward Settlement, as is the use of skylights over the main stairwell in the Veterinary School (figures 12.15, 12.16 & 12.17). The details employed by the GAB are drawn from the design as built, not the competition design that was much altered.

30 Hitchmough, C. F.A.Voysey, plate 15, p. 61
The first stage of the Union Building, now the Holme Buildings, was designed under Vernon, with detailing by Barr. In 1913, following Vernon’s retirement, murals were added to the Library, painted by Norman Carter; ‘the motif being an ideally treated landscape imbued with the warm glow of a summer afternoon.’ Photographs of interiors of the Union show the rooms had the character of the London Settlements, educational institutions established by philanthropists. Hugh Vernon undertook additions to the Union, and the design of a separate building for the women.

Following the Great War style once again became the main preoccupation. The next generation of architects lacked the inventiveness of the Arts and Crafts Movement designers. One has only to compare the impractical plan of Wilkinson’s School of Physics with the compact plan of Vernon’s Veterinary School. Both buildings have the major teaching spaces at each end. Wilkinson’s concern was with the elevational treatment, the galleries in the main laboratories pass in front of the windows and for most of their length the corridors are double loaded.

31 The original interiors and alterations are illustrated in Holme Sweet Holme, a history of the Student Union published by the Union.
At the University of Sydney the picturesque townscape created by irregular arrangement of buildings that could be found at Oxford, Cambridge and at Salamanca in Spain was abandoned in favour of American campus layouts prepared by Walter Burley Griffin around 1914 and Wilkinson around 1920. Vernon’s intentions for a series of faculties stepping down Science Road were not completed; Wilkinson drastically altered the character of a number of the buildings designed by the GAB at the University in the 1920s. Florence Taylor devoted a whole supplement of Building to the architectural heritage of the University of Sydney in August 1925, criticising Wilkinson for his attempts to change the campus, giving it a more Mediterranean flavour. She believed the group of Gothic Revival buildings at the university to be amongst the finest in the country.

Technical Colleges

The improvements in design of educational buildings, particularly the use of daylight in teaching spaces, was also applied in the design of technical institutes, many of which continue to be used to this day. The technical college and museum at Broken Hill was constructed in the midst of the group of public buildings in Argent Street, a group that already contained the court house, the post office and the police station and the ornate High Victorian town hall (figures 12.20 & 21). The similarity between the sandstone picnic shelters in the Domain and the technical college at Broken Hill, designed by the GAB, and H. H. Richardson’s work indicates that one of the senior designers may have visited railway stations and public libraries in Massachusetts whilst en route to England. If they had not visited the buildings, they

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32 Florence Taylor in August 1925 devoted a whole issue of Building to Sydney University; she considered Wilkinson’s whitewashed additions to be insensitive. She reproduced lithographs of the GAB’s working drawings for the University faculties prepared prior to World War I.
Figure 12.18
William Kemp, Architect of the Department of Public Instruction, Sydney Institute of Technology, Ultimo, 1890-94
Buildings A, B & C at the Sydney Institution of Technology. Building A is the main block fronting Mary Anne Street, (RHS)
Building B contains Turner Hall and Building C was built as the Technological Museum (LHS)

Figure 12.20
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Technological College and Museum, Broken Hill, 1901

Figure 12.19
Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Government Architect, Technological College and Museum, Broken Hill, 1901
Detail of the arch forming the main entrance
had certainly seen the monograph on Richardson’s work, published shortly after the architect’s death, in which both the railway stations and the libraries were illustrated.33

Although influenced by Richardson’s designs, the Broken Hill technical college and museum is less ornate than the Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in at the Sydney Institute of Technology in Ultimo (Turner Hall and the former technological museum) (figure 12.18) and at Bathurst and Newcastle designed by William Kemp, the architect of the Department of Public Instruction in the early 1890s. Rather than employing carved ornament, the technical college at Broken Hill exhibits highly crafted brickwork, the details enlivening the composition. This building shows the transition in the work of the GAB from the use of carved ornament on public buildings to the use of highly crafted details, a transition that was evident in country towns across the state as well as in Sydney.

Kemp’s use of flora and fauna for the buildings in Ultimo also recalls the work of Alfred Waterhouse however in their form and internal planning, particularly the placements of the main staircases, his technical college designs are Richardsonian in derivation. Waterhouse utilised internal courts surrounded by corridors, a typical feature in Victorian public buildings. Kemp and later Vernon used E, H or T shaped buildings with the principle rooms located in the projecting arms. Richardson planned a number of his educational buildings in a similar manner; the compact plan of the Law School at Harvard has three principle chambers, with a hall and office in the centre.34

34 Van Rensselaer, Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works, p. 84
Goulburn Technical College is a fine example of the series of multi-storey Free Style educational buildings designed by the GAB after 1900. Its composition makes use of its corner location, with additional light provided to the studios on the upper floors. This building, although not located within the main commercial centre of Goulburn, is an urban composition, with a hard edge to the street, anticipating a scale of surrounding urban development that did not occur. Here Vernon’s Gothic Revival training is evident, the scale and character of the building is reminiscent of James Brook’s austere designs for church and school complexes in the East End of London. In Kemp’s technical college designs there was no consideration given to climate or particular lighting requirements for individual functions within the building, the same type of window was employed to each elevation. In Free Style compositions the different room uses are always evident by their pattern of fenestration.

The Design of Schools in NSW

Wardell had designed a number of educational buildings for the Roman Catholic Church, including a primary school in North Sydney (1883), in the Gothic Revival manner however his commissions for educational buildings were rare. George Allen Mansfield also used the
Gothic Revival for the series of primary schools designed in Sydney in the 1870s including Blackfriars, Darlington, Newtown, Paddington, and Sussex Street. Although most of the buildings survive and are used for educational purposes, they are no longer used as primary schools. The surviving photographs show that Mansfield’s schools were beautifully detailed buildings. The use of slim lancet windows, supplemented by double hung windows on the lesser elevations meant that the classrooms lacked light. The classroom arrangement placed the windows behind the teacher and behind the pupils, an arrangement that had also been used in the National Schools.

For a number of years private architects designed suburban schools on behalf of the Department of Public Instruction. By 1900 the schools designed by private architects between 1876 and 1883 such as Erskineville Public School by Parkes and Blackmann were ‘regarded as unsuitable’. Private architects, Vernon believed, simply did not have suitable experience in designing school buildings. The substantial schools built in the years leading up to World War I were designed, not by the architects who had transferred from the Department of Public Instruction, but by the existing senior designers within the GAB. As had occurred in London substantial multi storey schools were built in metropolitan areas and Sydney’s inner suburbs due to lack of space.

That Australia possessed slums was well known, and there had long been calls for urban improvement.

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35 PWD, A collection of photographs of buildings and views in New South Wales, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1873 ML PXD 557 3 vol
If Australia is to take her place amongst the vigorous nations of the future, if her civilisation is to be productive of more that material wealth, and skyscrapers, high rents and industrial upheavals on the one hand, or civic lethargy, slothfulness and artificial amusements on the other, then clearly the environment of cities and suburbs must give way to something finer, something more efficient than not only the squalor of a Petersham in Sydney or a Wickham in Newcastle, but also the suburban desolation and anarchy of recent years that has been experienced by most towns in the Commonwealth.  

While the condition of the housing may not have been improved greatly, the conditions within the schools certainly had been and in Petersham and Wickham substantial modern schools had been built. James Sven Wigram designed the Crystal Street School in Petersham (now Petersham TAFE), which opened in 1902, shortly before his enforced transfer to the GAB. Following his transfer Wigram identified where school buildings were required and what facilities were needed, submitting requests to the Government Architect for designs. The sketch designs were prepared by the senior designers already within the GAB, who drew on the detailed knowledge of planning school facilities possessed by Wigram and the other staff who transferred into the GAB.

Peter Tonkin has studied the architecture of Sydney’s metropolitan schools in detail, noting that the palette of truthful materials used by Wigram is similar to that employed by Shaw at Bedford Park and

[37] Australia’s Civic Awakening in Salon, January 1916, p. 142
by Parker and Unwin in their designs undertaken between 1895 and 1900.\textsuperscript{38} He does not however consider the classroom blocks designed by Wigram post 1900 to be Free Style, stating that their ‘plainness derives from economy rather than choice’.\textsuperscript{39} The change in the design of schools in NSW from Romanesque buildings inspired by the work of Richardson to buildings that utilise details drawn from the English vernacular was a deliberate aesthetic choice, mirroring contemporary public architecture in London and the recent work of the GAB in NSW (figures 12.22 & 12.33). The classrooms, offices and storerooms are clearly identified by their pattern of fenestration. Small round windows were used for storerooms where high light levels were not required, larger windows were employed in the classrooms.

The use of the traditional building arts in the design of schools in Sydney was not simply a matter of cost cutting; it reflected the growing use of Free Style for public buildings across NSW. The transition from the Queen Anne Revival and Richardson Romanesque schools

\textsuperscript{38} Tonkin, School Buildings, Volume II, 1880-1908, p. 183
\textsuperscript{39} Tonkin, School Buildings, Volume II, 1880-1908, p. 181
of the early 1890s to the simpler, Free Style buildings would soon be an official requirement for schools in NSW.

Under Vernon’s guidance the larger and more austere brick metropolitan schools built between 1904 and 1908 at Glebe in Sydney and at Wickham and in Newcastle East were deliberately astylistic, utilising details drawn from the English vernacular. Characteristically there is no applied ornament; careful attention has been paid to the detail of the brickwork, wrought iron work and timber brackets. The exception to this is where the architectural vocabulary had already been set. In the additions to the Queen Anne Revival style North Newtown Public School traces of the style can still be found, however the detail of the addition is simpler. By 1909 Vernon was able to report that

The general system of State education has been, within the last few years, practically revolutionised, and is still in a transitional state. Better classification of scholars is adopted, and teaching is given to smaller numbers, and in separate classrooms, instead of, as formerly, in the aggregate and large single rooms with long forms. Special accommodation and appliances are now in many cases provided for the teaching of science and technical industries, while the question of hygiene, sanitation and the preservation of eyesight are fully provided for in the new buildings, and so far as is possible, by means of alterations and additions in those of older type.
It may generally be stated that money formerly spent in the more obsolete school buildings in the erection of towers, turrets, Gothic windows, and elaborate details &c is now expended in the above mentioned more practical direction.40

Under Vernon there was no sacrifice of sunlight in the design of NSW schools. The standards set by the Knibbs-Turner report were rapidly implemented across the state, continuing to be used by successive Government Architects well into the 1930s. The scale of the classroom windows makes the classrooms designed after the release of the Knibbs-Turner report easy to identify. Knibbs and Turner required that three large windows, generally 10’ by 4’ (3m by 1.2m), be provided in each classroom, resulting in over a third of the external wall being glazed.41

To reduce glare the light was to come from the left-hand side of the teacher; the preferred orientation of windows was to the northeast. The required large areas of glazing can be seen in the additional classrooms added to the Glebe Public School in 1906 and in the new infants block at Burke Ward, Broken Hill designed the same year. Many of the educational buildings designed by the GAB continue to be used, however not all continue to be schools, a number have been converted for other institutional uses.


41 A ratio was developed, 1 square foot of glazing to each 4.8 square feet of floor area. (0.3 m2 to 1.22 m2)
The S H Ervin Gallery on Observatory Hill, The Rocks (originally the Fort Street National School) is of the older classroom layout, the curved apse with windows located behind the teacher. The adjacent classroom (now the cafe) added by the Government Architect in around 1904 features both a skylight and large windows (figure 12.24). The room could be divided into two teaching areas by partially glazed screens. The skylight provided additional light to these areas that were used for the teaching of embroidery and other manual skills.

Single loaded corridors were recommended, so that the corridor could be naturally lit and ventilated, resulting in U or E shaped planning. Floor space requirements and air volume per student were set to ensure adequate ventilation. The commissioners traveled for a year, studying schools in Great Britain, Europe and America. European

41 The sequence of alterations to the former Fort Street School has been outlined in the National Trust Centre Conservation Plan by Otto Cserhalmi & Partners, 1999. The dividing wall between the two original classrooms has been removed to create the S H Ervin Gallery.

42 16 square feet and 225 cubic feet recommended, 200 cubic feet was considered to be the absolute minimum in hotter areas of NSW.
examples, particularly Swiss schools, were greatly admired. Vernon was already familiar with the use of the single loaded corridor; having admired the amount of daylight in the corridors and stairwells of New Scotland Yard. The light-filled, single loaded corridor and stairwell had long been used in the planning of residences by the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Mackintosh’s Scotland Street School, Glasgow (1906), the stair towers are flooded with light however the corridors are double loaded (figure 12.25).

Knibbs and Turner set colour schemes, requiring white plaster ceilings with eau-de-nil coloured walls, resulting in a much brighter interior than the dark walls and dados favoured during the Victorian era. Gothic Revival style windows and tinted or obscured glass were prohibited as these blocked light. The earlier Mansfield-era schools were characterised by their use of narrow lancet windows.

44 Tonkin, School Buildings, Volume II, 1880-1908, p. 196
45 Vernon, Report Submitted By, in Connection with his recent visit to the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe, p. 5
Figure 12.26

NSW GAB, Plan of the Wickham Public School, 1904
Metropolitan Schools

The two substantial metropolitan schools built in Newcastle, the Wickham Public School of 1904-06 and the Newcastle East Public School of 1905-1908, are both large-scale urban schools, anticipating the growth of the city. These schools were built in the slum area referred to in the article on Australia’s civic awakening mentioned earlier. The designs incorporate Knibbs-Turner’s recommendations for an increased amount of floor space per child, larger windows to provide natural light and the single loaded corridors are cross ventilated.46 A staff room and offices for the senior staff were included in the Newcastle schools: such features not included in the schools in country areas where staff were provided with a residence.

The Wickham School is constructed entirely of brick, with a liver-coloured brick used for stringcourses and window heads (figure 12.27). Rubbed bricks form the heads of the gable vents. The plan is once again U shaped, with a naturally lit corridor to the inner

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court (figure 12.26). The classrooms all have the required three large windows generally to the left of the teacher. It was customary to separate the boys from the girls, hence the separate gates into the schoolyards, separate entrances to the building and the separate staircases.

The curved canopies to the twin entrances of the Wickham School, and wrought iron gates with a heart motif, a motif repeated in the fence to the street, are motifs drawn from contemporary English architecture (figure 12.28). Voysey used such curved canopies in his domestic architecture, a form traditionally found over the front doors of Georgian houses. The heart was one of his preferred motifs, used in the furniture he designed for Liberty's and in the door furniture manufactured by the Art Workers Guild in London and these motifs were consistently used by the GAB following Vernon's return. The heart motif could also be found in Robin Dod's work in Brisbane following his return from London.

The Newcastle East Public School is located adjacent to the court house designed by Barnet that terminates Bolton Street. The school functions have been transferred and the building is now an annex of the court. The design of the school in Newcastle East reflects the need to provide separate playgrounds, hence its central placement. The main elevation does not reveal its original purpose by twin entrances, as only half of the composition was built. The building was intended to be extended, the toothing shown on the drawing survives today in the north elevation. Bolton Street slopes down towards the harbour; and the slope has been utilised in the composition; the lower portions are buttressed (figure 12.29)
entrance porch, screened by wrought metal work, is located beneath the main gable. The design for the Newcastle East Public School was altered considerably between the sketch design stage and the final building. The Free Style sketch design is somewhat more conservative than the final design, and is similar to the substantial school at North Annandale in Sydney. The planning of the original scheme is similar to the single storey infants block at the Burke Ward Public School in Broken Hill, with the classrooms arranged in a U. In the Newcastle example a single loaded corridor could not quite be achieved, as a sixth classroom was included in the plan.

Vernon approved the final design, prepared by E. L. Drew, the Assistant Architect. The orientation of the classroom drove the external elevations, with small high-level windows to the back of the classrooms and larger windows to the left of the teacher. The form of window has been altered from the Glebe and Wickham schools, with a separate small window above a double hung window, a configuration that forced air circulation, a configuration also used in the design of hospitals. This form of windows was practical; the upper level windows could be left open without causing a draught at desk level. The surviving architectural drawings show the complex

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47 The sketch designs and the final designs are in the Schools Bundle for Newcastle East Public School held at the NSW State Records.
Figure 12.31
NSW GAB, Elevation to the East, East Newcastle Public School, Newcastle, 1905

Figure 12.32
NSW GAB, Ground Floor Plan, East Newcastle Public School, Newcastle, 1905
arrangement of vents and air circulation (figure 12.31 & 32). Fresh air ‘trunks’ beneath the first floor hat room and corridor supplemented air within the classrooms, which was extracted at ceiling level. The details were all carefully thought out, the hat room had gutters to drain dripping clothes.

The two classrooms per floor could be opened into one room by folding back the doors and a portable blackboard was designed. London schools of the period also contained rooms that could be subdivided into three by folding screens.48 The main stair through the building is concrete, as were the staircases in the science faculties at the University of Sydney. The position of the staircase is expressed externally in the form of a gable (figure 12.30). A number of the highly crafted original details survive including the wrought iron grilles to the gable, the tessellated paving and internally the small tile-lined fireplaces.

Barry Maitland and David Stafford have aptly described the design as

An excellent example of the Federation Free Style, based on the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, with its love of natural, well crafted materials, free from the stylistic dogmas of the past.49

In the design of schools the omission of ornament was an official requirement; the Commissioners had commented that

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49 Maitland and Stafford, A Guide to Newcastle Architecture, 1997, p. 113
In many countries, the public school, though rarely ornate, is noble in its architectural character, and beautifies the city of town in which it is found.\textsuperscript{50}

Their analysis of European examples describes buildings with similar characteristics to the London Free Style already widely adopted by the GAB.

The Swiss schools have a noble appearance, due largely to their simplicity of outline [and] the absence of meretricious ornament.\textsuperscript{51}

The 1906 additions to the Glebe Public and Infants School exhibit an urban scale and character, similar to the schools built within the housing estates by the LCC (figure 12.33). In contrast to the ornate blocks adjacent, the 1906 building at Glebe is carefully detailed, using the characteristic truthful materials: face brick with sandstone sills, widely employed in Free Style work in Sydney. To the playground side the internal planning can be read, in the smaller windows to the stair and larger classroom windows. A high wall separates the

\textsuperscript{50} Knibbs-Turner, \textit{Interim Report on Certain Parts of Primary Education}, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1903 p. 413

\textsuperscript{51} Quoted in Tonkin, \textit{School Buildings}, Volume II, 1880-1908, p. 199
schoolyard from the street, with gate piers capped with sandstone. The wall is relieved by the inclusion of wrought iron work. When adding the classroom block Vernon chose to work in the Free Style as there was no over riding architectural character. One of the two blocks designed by the Department of Public Instruction is very similar in scale and detail to the Queen Anne Revival Board Schools, the other block, dating from the 1880s, has a high degree of carved stone ornament which Vernon would have considered unnecessary.

**Country Schools**

The continued use of the colonial vernacular is evident in the country schools designed by the GAB. Verandahs were used in preference to separate shelter sheds in country schools. The sketch designs of new infants departments for the Burke Ward Superior School in Broken Hill, prepared by the GAB in 1906 at Wigram’s request, survive.\(^{52}\) This design had previously been attributed to Wigram however the surviving correspondence on the file records his request to Mr. Cook for a sketch plan. Arthur Stanton Cook was one of the longstanding members of staff of the GAB. Whilst working in London, Cook had ‘gained experience in the offices of the London School Board’ and in the office of E. R Robson.\(^{53}\) Robson was one of a number of architects who designed schools for the Board, and for a time was on their staff. His series of designs, published as *School Architecture, Being Remarks of the Planning, Designing, Building and Furnishing of School-Houses*, included a number of Board Schools, and was influential throughout the colonies.\(^ {54}\)

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52 The watercoloured sketch plan is signed by George McRae on behalf of the Government Architect. State Records - School Bundles - Burke Ward
53 Anon, *The Cyclopeda of N.S.W.*, section on Architecture, p. 425
Figure 12.34

NSW GAB, New Infants School, Burke Ward Public School Broken Hill, 1906
The new classroom block for infants at the Burke Ward Infants School, like the two earlier classroom blocks on the site designed by Wigram, was designed to combat the oppressive heat of the outback. A long sweeping roof extended across the verandahs, with skylights let in to the verandah roof corresponding to the position of the classroom windows (figures 12.34, 12.35 & 12.36). The combination of materials drawn from the vernacular that could often be found in Vernon’s work was employed, with roughcast above a face brick base used on the main elevation. Roughcast was also employed in the gables and to the tall, tapered chimneys. The front porch has the restrained Art Nouveau style timberwork employed in verandahs and porches designed by the GAB following Vernon’s return from London. The design of the Infants department at Burke Ward School, like the earlier Free Style designs for Wagga Wagga and Bourke Court Houses, combines motifs from the work of Voysey with forms drawn from the colonial vernacular.

55 The face brickwork has unfortunately been painted blue.
In plan the Infants Department at the Burke Ward Public School is U shaped, with each classroom having the required three large windows, although not always in the recommended wall. The central room was the kindergarten or babies room. The partitions separating this area from the two side passages were moveable, and the room could be enlarged to form an assembly hall. Such moveable glazed partitions survive at the former Fort Street School in Sydney mentioned earlier. In 1909 the body of the wall of the classrooms at North Broken Hill was painted in ‘light green’, as recommended by Knibbs Turner, although a brown dado was still used.56 Small fireplaces were shown located in the corners of the room, similar to the plain tile lined alcoves that survive in the Newcastle East Public School and the Veterinary School at Sydney University. In 1906 Wigram explained the design of the new Infants Department at the Burke Ward Public School

The design has been prepared both to suit the conditions of the climate and the local material available and comprises five classrooms.

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56 NSW State Records - School Bundles - Burke Ward
Estimate for Painting, Jobling and Son, Painters and Decorators April 1908
four being devoted to ordinary class-work and one for Kindergarten; this last room is divided from the side lobbies by moveable partitions, so that the whole space may be thrown into one fair sized assembly room 49 feet by 21 feet. The building will be protected on all sides likely to receive the sun’s rays by verandahs, portions of which will be set aside for reception rooms, lavatory, hat rooms and porches. Due attention will be paid to light and ventilation.57

Yet again there is no mention of architectural style or ornament, the needs of the inhabitants drove the internal planning of all educational buildings in NSW.

**Experiment Farms**

From the mid 1890s a series of experimental agricultural stations, known as experiment farms, were set up across the state, intended to provide examples of suitable farming methods and agricultural building construction and also accommodate the agricultural trainees. The term ‘experiment farm’ had long been in use in NSW to describe farms where attempts were made by the colonial elite, such John Macarthur and the King family, to acclimatise exotic plants and animals for agricultural purposes.

The first two state-run experiment farms were established in 1895 at Wagga Wagga and Bathurst and have now both been incorporated into Charles Sturt University. At Richmond, near Sydney, the Hawkesbury Agricultural College was established at the same time. Substantial farm building programs did not take place until after 1900,

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57 NSW State Records - School Bundles - Burke Ward. Minute Paper by James Wigram, 1st Class Assistant Architect in Charge of Colleges and Schools. 22 August 1906
Figure 12.37
NSW GAB, Quarters, Grafton Experiment Farm, Grafton, 1902

Figure 12.38
NSW GAB, Farrer Barn, Cowra Experient Farm, 1906

Figure 12.39
Attributed to the NSW GAB, Fruit Packing Shed, Glen Innes, circa 1910-1912.

This view, dating from 1921, shows the original dark colour scheme, with white windows.
with the construction of agricultural buildings at Bathurst and the clearing of land for the Grafton Experiment Farm occurring in 1902 (figure 12.37). Experiment farms were then set up across the state at Cowra, Condobolin, Temora, Trangie and Wollongbar. Each farm was intended to trial and acclimatise crops for the locality.

As had occurred with the design of post offices, police stations and court houses, timber was used in the timber-producing areas such as Grafton and Wollongbar on the north coast, whereas brick was used for the larger complexes at Bathurst, Cowra, Glen Innes, Richmond and Wagga Wagga. Local vernacular techniques were also employed, the Farrer barn was constructed using unfinished saplings as posts and rafters and rammed earth (pisé) (figure 12.38). Pisé construction was relatively common in the central west of NSW, used in the construction of residences, schools and the substantial two-storey hotel at Trundle.

A number of building forms were repeated at the experiment farms, particularly small workers’ cottages, larger superintendent’s residences (figure 12.40), fruit-packing sheds and the substantial two-storey barrack or dormitory building. At Yanco in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA), Bathurst and Glen Innes identical fruit packing...
sheds were built (figure 12.39). The timber residences and the fruit shed are no longer part of the farm at Yanco, but were relocated to the surrounding town and further afield to Leeton when more substantial facilities were constructed in the 1930s.61

The Department of Agriculture intended that the accommodation at the experiment farms would provide farmers with an example of what they could successfully build for themselves. The designs for most of the buildings have been attributed to the NSW Government Architect.62 These farm homesteads, specifically designed to suit the Australian climate, were based on the traditional colonial homestead, with its wide wrap around verandah. The colonial Georgian origins of the design were evident in the symmetrical elevation. The surviving early farms houses of the Cumberland Plain, some of which date

61 The RAIA inventory of Twentieth Century buildings identified a church in Leeton that is identical to the fruit packing sheds at Grafton and Bathurst. This is likely to be one of the relocated farm buildings from Yanco.

62 The Section 170 Register prepared for the Department of Education lists the designer of the Experiment Farms as being the Government Architect’s Branch.
from the late eighteenth-century, may have served as a model. The sketches by Conrad Martens and his daughter Rebecca of country estates, such as Philip King’s farm at Dunheved, show this type of residence in detail (figure 12.41). A number of Lionel Lindsay’s sketches, including his 1914 sketch of Elizabeth Farm at Parramatta and his sketch of Old Government House at Windsor (figure 8.6) show a colonial Georgian farm house with a broken back roof.

The idea of exhibiting whole houses as an example was not new and had been a feature of a number of the international exhibitions. At the New Zealand International Exhibition held in Christchurch in 1906-07 model workers’ cottages, including an example designed by Seager and Wood, could be visited (figure 12.42). Three of the Seager and Wood’s designs for model workers’ housing, strictly designed to meet the provisions of the New Zealand Workers’ Dwellings Act of 1905, were adopted. Cottage No.1 by Seager and Wood is very similar to cottages designed for Letchworth Garden City. To stay within the Cheap Cottages cost restriction even the leading London-based Arts and Crafts architects resorted to designing timber houses.

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63 Many of the houses that the Martens sketched have been demolished, including the King family farm at Dunheved, St Mary’s commenced in 1806. Two very early examples: Elizabeth Farm (1793) and Experiment Farm (1798) survive at Parramatta.

64 Lindsay, Lionel, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, 1914, NGA Accn No: NGA 83.445

65 The model dwelling was relocated to 52 Longfellow Street, Christchurch. Barbara Fill, Seddon’s State Houses. The Workers’ Dwellings Act 1905 and the Heretaunga Settlement, Monograph No. 1, Wellington Regional Committee, NZHPT, 1984. The completed Cottage No. 1 is illustrated on p.11, the drawing is on the back cover.

66 Barbara Fill, Seddon’s State Houses. The Workers’ Dwellings Act 1905 and the Heretaunga Settlement, p.11

67 Illustrated in Standish Meacham, Regaining Paradise, Englishness ad the Early Garden City Movement, Yale University Press, Newhaven, 1999 plate 32.

68 Smith and Brewer’s second prize winning design is illustrated in Richardson, Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement, plate 127
competition designs for the Cheap Cottages exhibition; his cousin Arthur was one of the patrons.

In NSW the initial full sized examples of housing were not suburban, but were erected in rural areas to assist settlers in the areas being opened up for closer settlement. A form appropriate to rural NSW, the single storey colonial Georgian farmhouse with a wide verandah was selected for the experiment farms. At Yanco the Superintendent’s Residence, and the well-tended crops, were once visible from the railway line leading into town. This placement was deliberate, intended to show new arrivals what could be achieved with irrigation and good farm management. In the surviving experiment farm buildings at Grafton and Bathurst and in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area the restrained use of colonial forms remains evident.

At the Bathurst Agricultural Station many of the farm buildings survive. Construction of the complex commenced in 1902 with the construction of the cannery, the woolshed and barn followed by the construction of the residential facilities including the manager’s residence, quarters (figures 12.46 & 47), dining hall and kitchen (figures 12.48 & 49), all of which had been completed in 1908. In layout the complex resembles a military barracks rather than a school, as it lacks extensive classroom areas; the teaching was practical. Two substantial blocks designed by the GAB survive, the Administration Building and the Barracks (figure 12.44 & 45), as does the front carriage loop and the landscaped courtyard to the rear.

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69 The institution has now been divided in half, the agricultural buildings continue to operate as an experiment farm. The trainee accommodation became a teacher’s training college, the Mitchell College of Advanced Education, and is now part of Charles Sturt University.

70 The complex was photographed in September 1908. ML GPO1 stills 28955-28961
with its central dining hall. The site was carefully chosen, the main buildings are situated on a rise looking over the ovals and driveway.

The Dining Hall (now the Little Theatre) (figures 12.48 & 49) located in the courtyard to created by the two blocks of quarters, is a single storey building with roughcast to the gable, raked brick buttresses and small paned timber windows. The roof contains both dormers and a long lantern, providing additional daylight to the dining room and the working areas in the kitchen. The GAB often used light from above in working areas, over demonstration benches in lecture theatres and in university dissection rooms, hospital operating theatres and institutional kitchens. The staff quarters has simple Art Nouveau style timberwork, with curved timber brackets to the verandahs and Voyseyesque metal brackets to the eaves. Evidence of the care taken with the detailing of the building can be seen in the elegant detailing of the metal weathervane. The single storey manager’s residence, to the side of the main group, also has restrained Art Nouveau detailing.

At Bathurst the Cannery complex also survives. The Fruit Packing Shed was constructed of weatherboards with the wide eaves supported on brackets to shade the walls. These sheds, found at Yanco, Bathurst and Glen Innes, were specifically designed to meet precise functional requirements, daylight for the workers, and good ventilation for the storage of fruit. Photographs of the recently completed packing shed at Glen Innes survive that show the slats that provided the ventilation (Figure 12.39).71 The internal photographs

71 Photographs of the interior and exterior of the packing shed at the Glen Innes Experiment Farm can be found in the Government Printers Collection. ML GPO1 Department of Agriculture series
Figure 12.44 & 12.45
NSW GAB, Barracks Bathurst Experiment Farm, 1906-08
Recent view of the staff quarters (LHS) and a view of the complex taken shortly after completion.

Figure 12.46 & 12.47
NSW GAB, Manager's Cottage, Bathurst Experiment Farm, 1906-08
Recent view (LHS) and a view of the complex taken shortly after completion.

Figure 12.48 & 12.49
NSW GAB, Dining Hall, Bathurst Experiment Farm, 1906-08
Recent view (LHS) and a view of the complex taken shortly after completion.
show the packing sheds to have been well lit. The colour scheme employed lighter colours, colours intended to improve light levels and, as in the design of schools, protect the eyesight of the workers. A porte cochere was located at the front, in order that fruit could be unloaded under cover.

The wide eaves occurred to all four sides of the fruit sheds, shading the simple slatted vents in the wall and the windows. The wide bracketed eaves are not a common Australian vernacular detail; a verandah is more commonly employed however the form could have been derived from meat storage rooms. Patent ventilators in the roof extracted hot air from the ceiling, a detail more commonly found in halls. Skylights were included over the central packing area. As with the roofs to Vernon’s court houses, the simple fixed louvres to the gambrel replaced ornament and vented the roof.

Pisé, or rammed earth, was employed for the Farrer barn at Cowra (figure 12.38). The colonial broken back roof and extensive wrap-around verandah protects the rammed earth walls of the barn. Pisé is a typical method of construction used in the dry central west of NSW, around Parkes, Narromine and Trundle, where supplies of stone and timber for building were limited. The use of a vernacular technique for the construction of the Farrer Barn indicates a detailed knowledge of the local vernacular and conscious attempt to continue to use traditional methods. The use of the technique by the GAB indicates a detailed knowledge of the farm buildings of rural NSW.

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72 Miles Lewis has traced the use of nineteenth century building techniques in Australia in his comprehensive survey: *Australian Building Techniques, A Cultural Investigation* and in his publications including *Victorian Primitive*. www.abp.unimelb.edu.au/staff/milesbl/australian-building/index.html accessed February 2004
For this form of construction to have been attempted, skills in constructing in this manner must have survived in the local area.

The design of the experiment farm buildings shows both the familiarity with the Australian colonial vernacular and the characteristic concern with light, and fresh air found in the public buildings designed during Vernon’s term in office. Carefully detailed farm buildings designed by the GAB were also constructed at the country mental hospitals, most of which have vanished. The NSW examples of the use of the colonial vernacular are far less prestigious buildings than the Nurses homes, hospital ward pavilions and private residences for which Dods employed colonial forms. The English Arts and Crafts architects also designed carefully crafted farmyard buildings based on traditional forms, however such designs are rarely published.

Vernon may not have lived to see the healthy city of Canberra constructed, however under his guidance educational buildings embodying these same ideals were constructed in some of the most disadvantaged suburban and urban areas of NSW. It was not until after 1900 that reforms in public architecture began to influence daily life. The well-lit and well-ventilated buildings of the 1890s housed public servants, hospital patients, prisoners or asylum inmates. After 1900 these same high standards were applied to schools and public housing in an attempt to improve the general health of the population.
The architectural vocabulary and the planning innovations of the schools designed in the years leading up to World War I continued to influence the design of schools in NSW well into the 1920s. The educational buildings designed by the GAB have been less altered than their other Free Style work, primarily as the buildings are still in use for the function that they were designed for. Each of the major educational buildings was a unique composition, reflecting the site and the building program. The internal planning, with light filled stairwells and corridors, remains evident and the exteriors still reflect the internal layout. Many of the details survive, including the tile-lined fireplaces, joinery and door and window furniture. Under Vernon, there was no sacrifice in sunshine in the design of the state’s educational facilities.
CONCLUSION

THIS ATTEMPT AT BETTER THINGS SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

In conclusion, the NSW Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon, changed the course of public architecture in NSW, producing highly crafted, socially responsible public buildings designed with the health and welfare of the users in mind. He freed public architecture from the tyranny of Palladio and institutional hierarchies, employing the Free Style to develop a more informal public architecture, an architecture for the people that drew on English and colonial building forms and materials to produce a distinctly Australian architecture. The traditional English building arts were combined with practical colonial forms, reflecting the character of the site, climatic extremes and locally available building materials. Drawing on the existing architectural vocabulary, buildings were carefully inserted into an existing townscape. New institutions were planned so as to create a picturesque landscape, rather than the rigid, symmetrical institutional layouts that characterised the Victorian era.

When trying to best determine how to perpetuate his memory, Henry Gullet noted that

He gave Sydney a standard of architecture that assisted others engaged in similar work to achieve the dignified and the beautiful. Colonel Vernon was not only a distinguished designer but he was, in addition, an artist; and in this connection his influence was priceless. Colonel Vernon has set the younger school of architects an example that ought to be closely followed.1

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1 Henry Gullet, How to perpetuate the memory of W.L. Vernon? SMH 12 February 1914
CONCLUSION

At the time of his death it was widely known that his work in NSW embodied ‘good sound building and truthful expression in ornamentation’. ² Under Vernon’s guidance public architecture in NSW was no longer ‘forms and grandeur, but buildings, honest and human, with hearts in them’.³

His concern with urbanism is reflected in his interest in town planning and in the extensive urban renewal undertaken in the Rocks and Millers Point, Australia’s first attempt at town planning.⁴ When built there were few international precedents for interventions of this scale and character, or for the designs that embodied the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, whilst retaining the character of the Georgian townscape. The NSW Housing Board, Oakeshott and Sulman continued to provide a designed environment for the state’s workers. Vernon would have approved of Sulman and Oakeshott’s designs for the garden suburb of Littleton; worker’s housing for the Lithgow Small Arms factory that formed the model for the housing in Canberra.

Vernon’s term in office is also significant for the use of passive environmental control, implementing proven forms drawn from the colonial vernacular. It was in public architecture in Queensland, Western Australia and NSW that a re-interpretation of colonial forms occurred, employing forms that had developed as a response to the extremes of the Australian climate, a trend particularly evident in the design of hospitals. Of the architects

² The Technical Gazette of NSW, Volume 4, Part 2, 1914 pp. 19-21
⁴ Freeland, Architecture in Australia, A History, p. 226
working in the Arts and Crafts manner in Australia, few used forms
and motifs drawn from the colonial vernacular, most preferring to
use an English palette of materials, their only concession to climate
being the verandah.

Many of the younger designers employed by Vernon continued to
work in the Arts and Crafts manner; having developed an affinity with
the traditional arts of building whilst in the Government Architects
Office. Of his staff, John Barr; Gorrie McLeish Blair; Frank l’Anson
Bloomfield; Arthur Stanton Cook; Edward Drew; Edward Jeaffreson
Jackson; William Moyes; George McRae; George Oakeshott; Herbert
Ross, William Truefitt and Bertrand Waterhouse, most left to work in
private practice. Only Blair; Cook, Oakeshott and McRae remained
in the public sector for the remainder of their career.

McRae, who joined the Government Architect's Branch in 1897,
followed the lead set by Vernon, a lead he continued once Vernon
had retired and he was appointed Government Architect. Oakeshott
continued to use the same palette of materials and vernacular details
employed by Vernon in the country post offices and the buildings
designed for the Quarantine Station at North Head. With the
outbreak of war Oakeshott simply did not have the opportunity to
design the substantial Free Style urban buildings that characterise
Vernon’s work following his return from London.

As NSW Government Architect, Vernon was involved in debates
regarding architectural education, believing that the apprenticeship
system was the best. Until recently the GAB took on cadets, a
remnant of Vernon’s attempts to ensure the office remained a design office. The arrangement of the GAB as a hierarchy of designers was continued until the major restructure by Cobden Parkes in the late 1930s, a restructure based on the structure of the architect’s branch of the LCC.

With the establishment of the School of Architecture at the University of Sydney came a return to the preoccupation with architectural style and the various orders. The architectural grand tour was revived; students were no longer interested in the anonymous vernacular. Although he was trained in the Arts and Crafts manner, Leslie Wilkinson abandoned his training, teaching students that ‘style and external form were all important’. In his pursuit of a Mediterranean character, Wilkinson went to great lengths to alter the character of many of the Vernon-designed buildings the University of Sydney. For many years the belief fostered by Moreton Herman, that the buildings by Blacket and Wilkinson were architecture, and the rest were merely buildings, persisted.

Vernon’s term as Government Architect marked the start of an interest in Colonial Georgian architecture and in the work of Francis Greenway. Successive Government Architects have maintained this interest in the state’s historic public buildings. The GAB has continued to have an involvement in the design of the government precincts in country towns and continues to design new facilities within state government controlled institutions.

5 Ian & Maisie Stapleton, Bruce C. Dellit 1900-1942 and Emil Sodersten, 1901-1961 in Tanner ed. Architects of Australia, p. 121
6 Herman, The Blackets, An Era in Australian Architecture, p. 46
Many of the state’s institutions have become redundant and are progressively being sold. The extensive landscaped grounds of hospital and asylums are under threat from redevelopment, the original intention of the GAB’s masterplans and the careful placement of the buildings within the landscape, as well as the careful consideration of daylight and natural ventilation, is not generally understood and is being lost. I am hoping that this thesis will redress the balance and that it will foster a greater understanding of the revolutionary institutional layouts designed by the GAB before World War I.

When Vernon advised the Minister for Public Works in 1897 that his branch could hold their own with their London colleagues when it came to the design of police stations he was not exaggerating. By 1910 New South Wales had an unparalleled collection of public buildings, institutional layouts and urban renewal projects. The same high standard of design was applied across the board, in country towns as well as in metropolitan Sydney and a large proportion of the public buildings designed during Vernon’s term in office continue to be used, many for the purpose for which they were designed. This applies in particular to the educational buildings and the court houses.

It was Sulman, Vernon’s long-standing friend and colleague who ensured his memory lived on, delivering the biennial Vernon Memorial Lecture Series from 1917 until 1926. The lectures were to be on the subject of Town Planning, and although both Sulman and Vernon had been architects, it was through the School of Town Planning that their views on planning model suburbs and
the improvement of cities were promoted. Their promotion of the garden suburb ideal influenced the pattern of suburban development in NSW during the remainder of the twentieth century. Even today the suburban model is preferred to higher density forms of living.

The only mentions of Vernon’s work by Freeland in his *Architecture in Australia, A History* are *Rus in Urbe* for Kensington and the redevelopment of The Rocks and Millers Point. Jahn redressed this balance considerably with his architectural guide to Sydney’s architecture, including the Art Gallery of NSW, the Banco Court, the Central Police Court, Central Station, Darlinghurst Fire Station, Glebe and Pyrmont Fire Stations, the Health Board Building, the Mining Museum, two of the Naval Stores in Jones Bay and the Registrar General’s Department.7

The range of public buildings designed during Vernon’s term as Government Architect remains unparalleled in Australia and in England. His work is an important regional variation of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and should included in architectural histories. Sulman’s comments on the *Rus in Urbe* masterplan for Kensington can equally well be applied to the output of the GAB during Vernon’s term in office: ‘this attempt at better things should not, however be forgotten’.8

7 Jahn, Sydney Architecture, biography on W. L. Vernon and entries 123, 223, 244, 307,315, 316, 323, 325, 331, 332, 340
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Figure 12.37  Quarters, Grafton Experiment Farm, Grafton,
ML GPO 1 still 30986

Figure 12.38  NSW GAB, Farrer Barn, Cowra Experient Farm, 1906
State Heritage Register Listing, NSW Heritage Office

Figure 12.39  Packing Shed, Glen Innes, 1921
ML GPO 1 still 40037

Figure 12.40  Manager's Residence, Yanco Experiment Farm
ML GPO 1 still 34250

Figure 12.41  Dunheved, St Mary's,
Conrad Martens, 1838,
ML DG SSV/5

Figure 12.42  Cottage No. 1, Seager and Wood,
New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-07
Barabara Fill, Seddon's State Houses. The Workers’ Dwelling Act 1905
and the Heretaunga Settlement,

Figure 12.43  Timber cottage, Cheap Cottages exhibition
Letchworth Garden City, 1905
Bennett and Bidewell, Cornes, Modern Housing in Town & Country.

Figure 12.44  Quarters, former Bathurst Experiment Farm,
now part of Charles Sturt University, Bathurst campus
photographed by the author in 2004

Figure 12.45  Officer's Quarters, Bathurst Experiment Farm,
ML GPO 1 still 28956

Figure 12.46  Manager's cottage,
now part of Charles Sturt University, Bathurst campus
photographed by the author in 2004

Figure 12.47  Manager's Cottage, Bathurst Experiment Farm,
ML GPO 1 still 28955

Figure 12.48  Little Theatre (former Dining Hall),
now part of Charles Sturt University, Bathurst campus
photographed by the author in 2004

Figure 12.49  Dining Hall and Kitchen, Bathurst Experiment Farm,
ML GPO 1 still 28956
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DESIGNED OR ALTERED BY THE NSW GAB UNDER VERNON 1890-1910

1889-90
COURT HOUSES
Bingara Court House
Bulledelah Court House
Central Police Court
Copeland Court House
Dubbo Court House
Junee Court House
Kiandra Court House
Newcastle Court House
St. Leonards Court House

GAOL
Darlinghurst Gaol, Additions (building not confirmed)

HOSPITALS
Gladeville Hospital, individual building not identified

OFFICES
Government Printing Office

POLICE STATION
Aletown Police Buildings
Alma Police Station
Dalton Lock Up
Deep Water Police Buildings
Kiandra Police Building
Louth Police Station
Urana Police Officers Quarters
Woollongong Lock Up
Yass Lock Up

From the list compiled by Gibson and McKenzie extracted from the expenditures listed in the Annual Reports of the NSW PWD.

1889-90
POST OFFICE
Cobargo Post and Telegraph Office
Coolaman Post and Telegraph Office
Otford Post and Telegraph Office
St Leonards Post & Telegraph Office
Yerong Post and Telegraph Office

RESIDENCE
Admiralty House, possibly only additions

UNIVERISTY
Chemical Laboratory

1890-91
COURTHOUSE
Berry Court House
Crookwell Court House
Juigong Court and Watch House
Obley Court House
Ulmarra Court House

OTHER
Baths for M. S. S. Vernon

POLICE STATION
Bombala Lock Up
Bushgrove Lock Up
Cassilis Police Barracks
Cudgen Police Building
Emmaville Police Barracks
Menindie Police Barracks
1890-91
Peak Hill Police Station
Tingha Police Station
Uralla Lock Up
Wellington Police Station
Woolgoola Police Buildings

POST OFFICE
Ashfield Post and Telegraph Office
Cobaki Post and Telegraph Office
Eden Post and Telegraph Office
Granville Post and Telegraph Office
Hillgrove Post and Telegraph Office
Hunters Hill Post Office
Marrickville Post and Telegraph Office
Mittagong Post and Telegraph Office
Newtown Post and Telegraph Office
Stuart Town Post and Telegraph Office

RESIDENCE
Gate Lodge to Centennial Park

SCHOOL
East Maitland High School

1891-92

COURTHOUSE
Hay Court House
Maclean Court House
St. Albans Court and Watch House

GAOL
Albury Gaol
Goulburn Gaol

HOSPITAL
Coast Hospital
Gladesville Hospital for the Insane

1891-92
Irwin House (part of the Newington State Asylum)

OFFICES
Stamp Office

OTHER
Meroe Trackers Hut
Museum
University
Urinal

POLICE STATION
Bathurst Police Barracks
Bourke Police Station
Byron Bay Police Station
Minmi Lock Up
Port Macquarie Police Station
Riverstone Police Station
Terrawingie Police Station
Wanaaring Lock Up

POST OFFICE
Broken Hill Post and Telegraph Office
Croydon Post and Telegraph Office
Cudgeon Post and Telegraph Office
Kogarah Post and Telegraph Office
Moss vale Post and Telegraph Office
Picton Post and Telegraph Office
Sutherland Post and Telegraph Office
Temora Post and Telegraph Office
Woollongong Post and Telegraph Office
Wyong Post and Telegraph Office

RESIDENCE
Pilots Cottage [location not listed]
1892-93

COURTHOUSE
Hillgrove Court House
Macksville Court and Watch House
Nelligen Court House
Tocumwall Court and Watch House

FIRE STATION
George Street North Fire Station (demolished)

GAOL
Grafton Gaol

OFFICES
Crown Law Offices
Lands Office
Public Works Office

POLICE STATION
Berrigan Police Station
Bowna Police Station
Corowa Police Quarters
Kempsey Police Station
Police Buildings
Michelago Lock Up
Warilda Lock Up
Yerong Police Station

POST OFFICE
Adaminiby Post and Telegraph Office
Burwood Post and Telegraph Office
Carrathol Post and Telegraph Office
Central Post Office
Cundleton Post and Telegraph Office
Harden Post and Telegraph Office
Maclean Post and Telegraph Office
Mulawa Post and Telegraph Office

1893-94

RESIDENCE
Boatmen’s Cottages

TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Technical college, School of Mines
Unknown location

1894-95

HOSPITAL
Rookwood Benevolent Asylum
(Lidcombe Hospital)
Rydalmere Hospital for the Insane
Sydney Hospital (additions)

OFFICES
Offices Moree Lands Office
Offices Royal Mint

COURTHOUSE
Bowral Court House
Broken Hill Court House
Court House (Banco Court)
Katoomba Court House
Parramatta Court House
Redfern Court House

GAOL
Maitland Gaol
[additions]
APPENDIX

1894-95
OFFICES
East Maitland Lands Office
Public Works and Colonial Secretaries Office

PARKS
Shelter Pavilion (Vernon Pavilion), Garden Palace Ground (now the Botanic Gardens)

POLICE BUILDINGS
Argyle Street Police Station
(conversion of a hotel)
Jindera Police Station
Kogarah Lock Up
Mathowra Court House and Lock Up
Moruya Police Station
Penrith Lock Up
Rockdale Lock Up
Singleton Lock Up
Surrey Hills Lock Up (former Bourke Street Police Station)
Tarago Police Station and Lock up
Wilsons Downfall Police Station

POST OFFICE
Adamstown Post and Telegraph Office
Albion Park Post and Telegraph Office
Annandale Post and Telegraph Office
Balmain West Post and Telegraph Office
Camperdown Post and Telegraph Office
Enmore Post and Telegraph Office
Five Dock Post and Telegraph Office
Homebush Post and Telegraph Office
Minmi Post and Telegraph Office
Parramatta North Post and Telegraph Office
Robertson Post and Telegraph Office
St. Peters Post and Telegraph Office
Woodburn Post and Telegraph Office

COURTHOUSES
Barmedan Court House
Boggabilla Court and Watch House
Drake Court House and Lock Up
Greta Court House
Kempsey Court House
Lismore Court House
Marsden Court House and Lock Up
Milton Court House
Nowra Court House
Parkes Court House
Supreme Court [Banco]
Tibooburra Court House
West Maitland Court House
White Cliffs Court House

GAOL
Dubbo Gaol
Mudgee Gaol
Rylstone Lock Up
Singleton Lock Up/gaol

HOSPITAL
Callan Park Hospital for the Insane
(Kirkbride), Convalescent cottages?
Newcastle Hospital for the Insane

OFFICES
Offices, Customs House
1895-96
Design for new houses of Parliament

OFFICES
Dubbo Lands Office
Hay Lands Office
Walgett Public Buildings

OTHER
Cycle Pavilion, Centennial Park
Memorial to Governor Duff

POLICE STATION
Broken Hill Police Barracks
Darlinghurst Police Station
Daviesville Police buildings
Dundas Police Station
Fernmount Police buildings
Forbes Police Barracks
Gloucester Police Buildings and Lock Up
Humula Police Station
Jindera Police Buildings
Junee Police Station
Lismore Police Buildings
Maclean Lock Up
Mullumbimby Police Station
Murrumbarrah Police Building and Lock Up
Nowendoc Police Station
Sofala Lock Up
Tumut Lock Up
Tweed River Heads Police Station
Walla Walla Police Station
Wee Waa Lock Up
Wyalong Lock Up

POST OFFICES
Bungendore Post and Telegraph Office
Byron Bay Post and Telegraph Office
Coolamon Post and Telegraph Office
Glen Innes Post and Telegraph Office
Lawrence Post and Telegraph Office
Parramatta Post and Telegraph Office
Petersham Post and Telegraph Office
Randwick Post and Telegraph Office

1896-97  NO REPORT
The Government Architect was overseas

1897-98
COURT HOUSE
Malparinka Court House
Peak Hill Court and Watch House

GAOL
Berrima Gaol [additions?]
Wilcannia Gaol
Young Gaol

HOSPITAL
Liverpool Benevolent Asylum
Additions?

OTHER
Clyde Metallurgical Works
Twin residences, Domain
Wagga Wagga Experimental farm

OFFICES
Forbes Land Office
1897-98

POLICE STATION
Burwood Police Station
Castle Hill Police Station
Trundle Police Station
Warren Police Station
Wyalong Police Station

POST OFFICE
Alexandria Post and Telegraph Offices
Carrington Post and Telegraph Office
Concord Post and Telegraph Office
Drummoyne Post and Telegraph Office
Howlong Post and Telegraph Office
Moree Post and Telegraph Office
Warren Post and Telegraph Office

RESIDENCE
Boatmen’s Quarters

TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Bathurst Technical College

1899

COURTHOUSE
Adaminiby Court House
Bourke Court House
Moulamein Court House
Wyalong Court House

OFFICES
Newcastle Water and Sewerage Board Offices
Tamworth Lands and Survey Office

OTHER
Herbarium, Botanic Gardens
Jenolan Caves House (Accommodation House)

1898-99

POLICE STATION
Balranald Police Station
Broke Police Station
Captains Flat Police Station
Collie Police Station
Coolamon Police Station
Coramba Police Station
Dubbo Police Station
Fernmount Police Station
Gladstone Police Station
Gulgong Police Station
Gunning Police Station
Jerilderie Police Station
Koorwatha Police Station
Major’s Creek Police Station
Moonbi Police Station
Mungindi Police Station
Parkes Police Station
Swamp Oak Police Station
Wardell Police Station
Wentworth Police Station
Wollongong Police Station

POST OFFICE
Manly Post and Telegraph Office
Peak Hill Post and Telegraph Office
Taree Post and Telegraph Office
West Wyalong Post and Telegraph Office

RESIDENCE
Centennial Park Rangers Cottage
1899-1900

COURTHOUSE
Burwood Court House
Mulgindi Court House
Narrandera Court House and Police Station Group
the group comprises courthouse, police station/residence with outbuilding, former police station, police
residence and cell block.

FIRE STATION
Ashfield Fire Station

POST OFFICE
Narrandera Post Office

OTHER
Art Gallery, Sydney University
Unknown location

1900-01

COURT HOUSE
Collarendabri Court House
Condobolin Court House and Lock Up
Cumnock Court House and Lock Up
Junee Court House
Nymagee Court House
Wauchope Court House

HOSPITAL
Kenmore Hospital for the Insane
Medical Officers Quarters
Gladeville Hospital,
Parramatta Hospital for the Insane
Nurses Quarters (Jacarnada House)
Rydalmore Hospital for the Insane
Female Wards

OTHER
Avaries, Botanic Gardens
Decorations and Illuminations for the Federal
Celebrations
Decorations and Illuminations for the Royal
Visit
Entrance Gates Centennial Park
Kurnell Accommodation House

POLICE STATION
Acacia Creek Police Station
Bora Creek Police Station
Bourke Police Buildings Superintendents
Quarters
Broken Hill Police Buildings Officers Quarters
Bulyeroi Police Station
Eden Lock Up
Kunopia Police Station
Nymagee Police Station
Royal Agricultural Showgrounds Police
Buildings
Wauchope Police Station
Wisemans Ferry Police Station

POST OFFICE
Berrigan Post and Telegraph Office
Hillgrove Post and Telegraph Office
Malparinka Post and Telegraph Office
Pyrmont Post and Telegraph Office
Tibooburra Post and Telegraph Office
Ultimo Post and Telegraph Office

TECHNICAL COLLEGES &c
Broken Hill Technical College
School of Biology, Sydney University
1901-02

COURTHOUSE

Alstonville Court House and Lock Up
Braidwood Courthouse
Cobargo Court House
Cootamundra Court House
Darlinghurst Courthouse
Additions (building not confirmed)
Kangaroo Valley Court House and Lock Up (former)
Lockhart Police and Court Buildings
Milton Court House
Moree Court House
Nyangar Court House
Temora Court House
Wagga Wagga Court House

GAOL

Parramatta Gaol additions
Prison for Females and Penitentiary
(Long Bay Gaol?)

HOSPITAL

Burrowa Hospital
Callan Park Hospital for the Insane (Kirkbride)
Visitors Room (location not determined)
Grafton Hospital
Hospital, North Sydney (now Royal North Shore)
Parramatta Hospital for the Insane
building not confirmed
Prince Alfred Hospital (Royal)
Victoria and Albert Pavilions
Stockton Quarantine Station

OTHER

Electric Light substation,
Experimental Farm, Bathurst
[Bathurst Agricultural Research Station
Mitchell College of Advanced Education]
Fruit Fumigation Chamber
General Depot for Stores
Shelter sheds for Waterside Workers
Shelter Sheds, Mt. Kosciusko
Tramshed

POLICE STATION

Blackheath Police Station
Bombala Police Station
Bowring Police Station
Wolumla Police Station
General Post Office [Additions]
Hornsby Post and Telegraph Office
Lewisham Post and Telegraph Office
Newcastle Post and Telegraph Office
Woonona Post and Telegraph Office

TECHNICAL COLLEGE &C

Fisher Library (Maclaurin Hall) Sydney University

1902-03

COURTHOUSE

Helensburgh Court House
Milton Court House

OFFICES

Law Offices
OTHER
Hawkesbury River Inebriates Home
Wooloomooloo Baths

1903-04
Central Railway Station
Offices for the Police and Prisons Department

1904-05
SCHOOLS
Annandale Public School Buildings
Bathurst College
Enmore Public School Buildings
Glen Innes College

FIRE STATIONS
Glebe Fire Station
Woollooloo Fire Station

1905-06
OTHER
Royal Edward Victualling Yard Main Warehouse and Naval Stores Building

SCHOOLS
Glebe Public School and Infants School
Warrawee Public School
School Wickham Public School

1906-07
COURT HOUSE
Abelare Court House
Albion Park Court House
Coroners Court and Morgue
Cowra Court House
Kyogle Court House
Mullumbimby Court House

FIRE STATION
Pyrmont Fire Station

1906-07
HOSPITAL
Waterfall Hospital for Consumptives (Garrawarra Hospital)

OFFICES
Broken Hill Savings Bank
Royal Naval House
Caves House
Hotel [location not listed]
Mitchell Wing, State Library

POLICE STATION
Annandale Police Station
Attunga Police Station
Bathurst Police Station
Bimbi Police Station
Boggabilla Police Station
Cobar Police Station
Curlewis Police Station
Emu Plains Police Station
Pallamallawa Police Station
Raymond Terrace Police Station
Redfern Police Barracks
Somerton Police Station

WALTER LIBERTY VERNON
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APPENDIX

POST OFFICE
Bondi Post Office
Canterbury Post Office
Challis House Telephone Exchange
Edgecliff Telephone Exchange
Newtown Telephone Exchange
North Sydney Telephone Exchange
Waverly Telephone Exchange
William Street Telephone Exchange

1906-07
RESUMED AREA
32 model dwellings,
Observatory Hill Resumed Area [Windmill St]
9 model dwellings, Observatory Hill Resumed Area
Eight Shops, [George Street North, Resumed area?]

SCHOOL
Arncliffe Public School
Bective Public School
Broken Hill Public School
Cessnock Public School
Cobbity Public School
Dorroughby Grass Public School
Drummoyne Public School
Greghamstown Public School
Howlong Public School
Kogarah Public School
Kurri Kurri Public School
Lithgow Public School
Manildra Public School
Nowra Public School
Paddington Public School
Parkes Public School
Tempe Public School
Tintinbar Public School
Tweed Heads Public School
Wallendbeen Public School
Waratah Public School
West Maitland Public School
School of Engineering, (Peter Russell Nicoll), Sydney University

1907-08
COURTHOUSE
Corowa Court House
Dubbo Court House [alterations?]
Hunters Hill Court House
West Wyalong Court House

FIRE STATIONS
Alexandria Fire Station
Auburn Fire Station
Canterbury Fire Station
Kogarah Fire Station
Liverpool Fire Station
Penrith Fire Station
Randwick Fire Station

GAOL
Reformatory for Females
Long Bay Gaol

HOSPITAL
Additions to Callan Park Hospital
for the Insane (Kirkbride)
Additions to the Darlinghurst Reception House
Hospital Administration Block
(Visitors Block)
Parramatta Hospital for the Insane
Gladesville Hospital for the Insane,
Additions
Granville General Hospital
Kenmore Hospital Microbiological Station, Milson Island
Morriset Hospital for the Insane
Rydalmere Hospital for the Insane New Quarters

1907-08

OTHER
Additions to the Parliamentary Buildings
Additions to the Australia Museum
Caves House, New wing to the accommodation house

POLICE STATION
Annandale North Police Station
Attunga Police Station
Canbelego Police Station
Dungog Police Station
Harwood Island Police Station
Newcastle Police Station
Summerton Police Station
Tambar Police Station
Wanaaring Police Station
Waverly Post Office

SCHOOL
South Goulburn Public School

TOURIST
Tourist Hotel, Mt Kosciusko

1908-09

FIRE STATION
Arncliffe Fire Station
Bexley Fire Station
Darlinghurst Fire Station
Drummoyne Fire Station

Granville Fire Station
Neutral Bay Fire Station
Rozelle Fire Station

GAOL
Long Bay Pententiary

HOSPITAL
Kenmore Hospital for the Insane, Convalescent Blocks

OTHER
Art Gallery of NSW
Australian Museum
Additions
Electric Power Plant
Homebush Bay Abbattoirs
Mining Museum
Registrar General’s Department Offices

POLICE STATION
Auburn Police Station
Canterbury Police Station
Hornsby Police Station
Hurstville Police Station
Murwillumbah Police Station and Court House Group

POST OFFICE
Chatswood Telephone Exchange
Glebe Post and Telegraph Office
Kogarah Telephone Exchange
Manly Telephone exchange
Paddington Telephone exchange
Redfern Telephone exchange
APPENDIX

RESUMED AREA
Ten Shops
State Clothing Factory
Warehouse

SCHOOL
Campsie Public School
Greenwich Public School
Picton Public School

1909-1910

HOSPITAL
Parramatta Hospital for the Insane
[ numerous buildings including the Visitors Block, Admissions
Complex, staff facilities &c ]

SCHOOL
Bondi Public School, New Boys School,
Little Coogee Public School
Naremburn Public School, new school for infants
Maitland Technical College