

# 1920s: Australia and Spanish Style architecture

*We should turn to the Mediterranean, which is the cradle of some of the finest architecture ever produced, with the exception of the great Gothic work of Northern France and Europe. We should turn to Italy and to Spain, particularly to Spain, and also across the Pacific to California and Mexico.*

—Leslie Wilkinson, ‘Domestic architecture’, *Building*, 1921.<sup>1</sup>

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*It is hard to typify houses as belonging to a certain style, although it has become a habit to refer to any cream house as being ‘Spanish’ and the red brick type to ‘bungalow’ ... Too much stress cannot be given to the importance of laying out the garden in conjunction with the house, and also the preservation of trees. Nature can do far more towards beautifying the house and environments than man.*

—John R. Brogan, *101 Australian homes designed by John R. Brogan*, 1935.<sup>2</sup>

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*As the present century advanced into the ‘twenties and ‘thirties, new devices for the dissemination of popular culture continued to draw Australia steadily into the American sphere of influence, reinforcing the effects of the printed word and picture ... Hollywood became the glamorous world capital of the movies while Sydneysiders settled into their pseudo-Pasadena bungalows. California! ... it seemed to be everything that southeastern Australia might one day become, given more people, more money and more dynamic enterprise.*

—Richard Apperly, ‘Sydney Houses 1914—1939’, 1972.<sup>3</sup>

Across the Pacific, in the eucalypt’s native environment, the adaptation of Mediterranean styles of architecture and Mediterranean-inspired landscape design—the styles that in California incorporated so many Australian trees and other flora—followed a different aesthetic trajectory. Ironically, the gum tree and other native plants played a much smaller part in the ‘Mediterraneanising’ process. While Australians did not have the direct example of the California missions or proximity to Mexico and Spanish America to justify as clearly a symbolic adherence to Hispanic American/Mediterranean styles, Australians in the 1920s still looked directly to Southern California, at least on a popular level, for many of their markers of modernity. Through magazines, posters and films, they

were aware of the popular manifestations of the Hispanic and Mediterranean-inspired modes showing up everywhere on the other side of the Pacific. In the hands of many Australian architects and builders, these fashionable adaptations had as much to do with California—and, in its final manifestations, with Hollywood—as it did with any direct appropriation of the building forms of the Mediterranean region.

In such ‘lifestyle’ publications as *The Home* and *The Australian Home Beautiful*, reproduced images presented to the middle-class public a popularised kind of modernity and stylishness in art, architecture and garden design which by the end of the decade focused most frequently on a Mediterranean look. These ideas, manifested in the images these magazines and books reproduced of Southern Californian *haciendas* and their landscaped grounds, also led Australians to begin to modify their feelings about the native Australian landscape and its flora as a source of aesthetic pleasure in gardens. Even more so than with the California bungalow, Australian architects and designers found in Spanish Style houses and Mediterranean gardens an aesthetic attitude that could impart a sense of these Pacific regions’ shared climate, geographical similarities and an informal outlook to life and culture.

Despite ongoing communication and cultural exchange between the two Pacific coasts, Australia in the 1920s was a very different place than exuberant, rapidly growing, California. The country’s losses in World War I were devastating to the Australian economy and to their confidence as a nation. The experience of the ANZACS at Gallipoli and elsewhere may have ‘forged a national identity’,<sup>4</sup> but it also shattered much of Australia’s sense of independence. Many communities retreated into a greater dependence on their ties to the British Empire.

As the writer David Malouf put it, ‘Through most of the 1920s and 1930s we seem to have been too stunned to take any sort of initiative ... We drew in behind our ocean wall and sulked. We turned our back on everything foreign or new or contemporary.’<sup>5</sup> In this kind of national atmosphere, the ‘Americanisation’ of popular culture was considered by many a danger to morality and to true Australianness.<sup>6</sup>

Despite such a gloomy economic and psychic outlook, the rise of a jazzy popular culture emanating out of America and transmitted through new forms of communication could not be stopped.<sup>7</sup> The appearance in Australia of American magazines, illustrated books, films, radio programs and gadgets led to enormous changes in the country’s social and cultural life. From the beginning of the century, and especially after World War I, modern mass media and technology were adopted enthusiastically throughout the country. Artistically, creative subcultures in the cities did produce a semblance of ‘Roaring Twenties’ bohemianism and artistic society, most clearly linked to literary and aesthetic developments in Europe, but aware as well of the literary figures of San Francisco’s Bohemian Club and artists at colonies such as Carmel.<sup>8</sup> Publisher Sydney Ure Smith (1887–1949) in Sydney promoted modern art and sophisticated taste in all forms in his publications *Art in Australia* and especially in *The Home* (1920–1942). Described as a ‘taste-maker for a modern lifestyle in Australia’,<sup>9</sup> this latter journal was geared toward an upmarket clientele, emulating such American publications as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, with great emphasis on modern design, fashion photography and ‘tasteful’ cover art. Ure Smith’s friend and associate Charles Lloyd Jones (1878–1958), proprietor of Sydney’s leading department store David Jones, was also an active patron of the arts, providing an art gallery in his elegant Elizabeth Street store, where some of the first exhibits of modern

art in Australia were held.<sup>10</sup> Jones was particularly aware of the latest American trends in advertising techniques and applied his creativity to commercial designs for the store and in publications. Interestingly, then, these important purveyors of 'high culture' in this period came from the worlds of publishing, retail and advertising rather than the academy or artistic life.

As a 'new' young society in a sunny clime that embraced modern technology, Australians were ready in this decade to be up-to-date with all the modern conveniences. By 1920, they had taken to the automobile with as much fervour as Californians. The Royal Automobile Club of Australia was founded in 1903. Its magazine, *The Open Road*, while not as graphically ambitious as The Automobile Club of Southern California's *Touring Topics*, nonetheless promoted motor tourism and compared Australia's highways and roadside conveniences with those in the United States. Commercial radio began broadcasts in Sydney in 1924, and in 1927, radio stations were already transmitting programs from Britain. By 1929, the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) was formed, reaching national audiences by 1932 when it was nationalised. Particularly prized by those who lived in the vast expanses of the country's outback, these services brought access to a world of music, information and sophistication that lifted them out of cultural isolation and connected them to urban Australia in a way that had never happened before.<sup>11</sup>

Most importantly in terms of an absorption of popular aesthetic images, Australians became the most enthusiastic moviegoers in the world. A thriving homegrown film industry in the early years of the century was by the 1920s nearly entirely eclipsed by Hollywood films through the American studios' control of distribution and movie houses.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, features about Hollywood film stars and their

glamorous lives and surroundings in California became a major part of the lifestyle magazines that also highlighted in their pages overseas architecture and home decor.

While these popular Australian magazines would by the middle of the 1920s take up Spanish modes as an appropriate style for small suburban houses and gardens, the first significant impetus for 'Mediterranean' architecture appeared in the country in more suitably sophisticated applications.<sup>13</sup> In 1918, only a few months before the end of World War I, a 35-year-old Englishman arrived to take up a chair at The University of Sydney as the country's first Professor of Architecture. Leslie Wilkinson (1882–1973) was already a well-established architect who had studied at the Royal Academy and travelled extensively throughout Europe, especially in France, Italy and Spain. He was a brilliant draftsman who had in the early years of the new century spent his time on a travelling scholarship measuring and drawing Renaissance buildings. He produced beautiful watercolours and drawings of his favourite monuments in southern Europe. The church of Santa Maria della Salute in Venice, which he rendered in pencil and wash in 1906, remained one of his favourite buildings throughout his life.

Wilkinson, then, was well-steeped in the aesthetics of Mediterranean architecture and attracted to its classical simplicity by the time he came to Australia. Most importantly, his experience in the warm climate of southern Europe taught Wilkinson the importance of an architecture appropriate to the country's landscape and levels of light. This conviction led him from the beginning of his time in the antipodes to champion Mediterranean style as the most sensible choice for home building, as well as for public structures, in the salubrious sunshine of the Australian continent.

Wilkinson's implementation of a classically inspired, traditional architecture was not

rigidly dogmatic nor purist in its final appearance. While adhering firmly to a romantic's resistance to modernist developments—he maligned the 'Bolshevistics' of most contemporary architectural developments<sup>14</sup>—Wilkinson was not averse to other architects' work, nor was he inflexibly English or European in his approach to building. He admired, for example, the classical simplicity and landscape design of such Americans as the Bostonian Charles A. Platt (1861–1933). He had even gone to Boston to visit Platt when he travelled through America en route to Australia. Once in Australia, according to his grandson David, Wilkinson prized his copy of *Monograph of the work of Charles A Platt*:<sup>15</sup> 'it was referred to from time to time when he was designing major residential projects'.<sup>16</sup>

Wilkinson's first building in his new city was his own residence on the Sydney Harbour in Vaucluse, named 'Greenway', in honour of Australia's early Georgian architect Francis Greenway (1777–1837). Here he incorporated many Mediterranean features that would characterise his most successful houses: groin-vaulted arcades, loggias, French windows, wooden-beamed ceilings, facades and surfaces painted in light colours, and classic proportions.

Most importantly, Wilkinson considered every aspect of the house's physical location to take advantage of the natural contours of the land. As David Wilkinson has written, 'it is a house in harmony with its setting, with the rocks and trees of the original site left undisturbed'.<sup>17</sup> He even chose the colour for the house's exterior walls to match the pink of the native angophora trees on the property. In his consideration of views from his buildings and its proper setting amidst natural surroundings, Wilkinson was indebted to the landscape design of Platt. Platt's formulations about Italian gardens had appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1893 and in a



compilation of the articles in 1894; they were also discussed in the monograph on Platt that Wilkinson owned.<sup>18</sup>

But Wilkinson's most obvious inspiration was the Australian landscape itself. His colleague George Molnar later provided a revealing anecdote about his choice of colours for his houses:

The Prof picked up some gumtree bark. 'What a pleasant colour. Pink-brown. A building among

**Fig. 7.01 Leslie Wilkinson** (arch.), Greenway, Vaucluse, Sydney, New South Wales, 1923. Photograph: courtesy of Anne Higham, RAlA (NSW).

trees should either be contrasting, standing out, or it should be part of the colour scheme of the trees. Some people paint their houses green, but that is wrong. Brown-pink. I will have my next house painted that colour.' And so he did. The following year a great number of the harbourside villas, formerly white, pink or cream, turned slowly gumbark colour.<sup>19</sup>

Wilkinson's elegant solutions to building on Sydney's harbourside lots and in the newly established exclusive suburbs such as Bellevue Hill endeared him especially to the city's upper classes. These clients were seeking appropriately grand houses that would demonstrate their affluent yet casual lifestyle. He built several of these houses in and around Sydney from the 1920s into the 1960s, each displaying his adaptation of Mediterranean proportion

and a concern for the surrounding gardens and natural vegetation.

The Dowling family home on Rose Bay Avenue in Bellevue Hill (1924) is exemplary of his approach as it appeared in his first years in Australia. Interestingly, this house was completed in collaboration with a young John D. Moore. Moore was the architect who had worked with Bertram Goodhue in New York and had travelled in Mexico in the 1910s.<sup>20</sup> In the same year he worked with Wilkinson on the Dowling House, he wrote a memorial appreciation for Goodhue in Sydney's *Architecture* magazine<sup>21</sup>—evidence that at least through conversations with Moore, Wilkinson would have been aware of Goodhue's architectural ideas. With its pergola covered in bougainvillea and its views to Rose Bay, the residence reveals Wilkinson's

**Fig. 7.02 Leslie Wilkinson and John D. Moore** (archs), Dowling House, Rose Bay Avenue, Bellevue Hill, Sydney, New South Wales, 1924. Photograph: courtesy of David Wilkinson, Melbourne.





characteristic Mediterranean stylings, as well as his penchant, in the manner of Charles Platt, for integrating the structure with the garden (see Fig. 7.02 on page 297).

Wilkinson applied these same principles to apartment buildings such as Carinya (1934), with its lightly coloured walls sitting amidst all the dark brick of neighbouring buildings.<sup>22</sup> He also created several bucolic country estates, including Shadowood (1927, now San Michele) in Bowral in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales that he so loved. The house with courtyard appears, in early photographs by the great Sydney photographer Harold Cazneaux, to sit in its bush environment, surrounded by trees, as if it were 200 years old. Its sprawling single-storey plan and arched entrance to the courtyard, as well as the use of red roof tiles, makes Shadowood appear strongly reminiscent of the houses being built at the same time at

Rancho Santa Fe in San Diego (see Fig. 6.20 on page 275).

Wilkinson was also at times able to persuade the notoriously conservative bureaucrats of The University of Sydney to allow him to apply these Mediterranean principles to some of the buildings he designed for the campus. He had conceived integrated plans for the campus in its entirety—plans that never materialised. Wilkinson would have an often rocky relationship with the university administration over aesthetic and professional differences; nonetheless, as much because of his many pronouncements on the subject as for actual building projects, he was soon considered an authority on campus design.<sup>23</sup> His buildings along Science Road for the campus, never completed as Wilkinson had initially proposed, and his finished Physics Building on Physics Road presented most dramatically



**Fig. 7.03 Leslie Wilkinson** (arch.), Shadowood, Bowral, NSW, 1928. Photograph: Harold Cazneaux, 1933. Courtesy of National Library of Australia, Canberra.



About this house one finds the most charming and reposeful corners.

**Fig. 7.06 Peddle, Thorp, & Walker** (archs), house for L. Waterhouse, Sydney, New South Wales. Photograph: Harold Cazneaux in *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 7 June 1926, p. 15. Courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney.

Just as Californian architects were inspired by the past in their search for modern styles suitable for their unique landscape and sunny climate, so did ambitious Australians welcome the efforts of Wilkinson and others who looked to ‘foreign’ models to create an appropriate mode of building for their own country.

Wilkinson’s position of authority as the nation’s first Professor of Architecture began to have an impact nationally, thus spreading the Mediterranean ideal across the continent. When the University of Western Australia in Perth sought to implement a comprehensive design plan for its fledgling campus in 1926, Wilkinson served as advisor. An international competition for design of the campus in 1914—inspired by a similar and well-publicised competition in 1899 for the Berkeley campus in California<sup>30</sup>—had selected Melbourne architect Harold Desbrowe-Anneer as the designer of the campus. Anneer was one of the leading voices for a ‘modern’ approach to an Australian architectural style. He, too, wrote an essay for the 1919 special architecture issue of *Art and Australia* where Wilkinson and Hardy

Wilson expressed their views on future architectural directions. His ideas for Perth strongly incorporated ‘a landscape sensibility’<sup>31</sup>, but the war and death of the university’s Chancellor and main supporter of the campaign, John Winthrop Hackett (1848–1916), caused the plan to languish. By the mid-1920s, a new initiative led the university to call for another competition. At this point Wilkinson’s advice was sought to create an overall campus plan. Here he strongly advised integrating landscape aspects into the design from which the winners of the competition would work. His greatest contribution in this plan was that he simply elaborated on Anneer’s original scheme to enhance the natural setting along the Swan River.

The winners of the second competition were the Melbourne architects Rodney Alsop (1881–1932) and Conrad Sayce (1888–1935).<sup>32</sup> Informed by Wilkinson and Anneer’s opinions about the site and by the opportunity to implement their own ideas concerning the appropriateness of Mediterranean elements for Australia’s climate, Alsop and Sayce created by the early 1930s an eclectic set of buildings that have been variously described as Moorish/Renaissance,<sup>33</sup> ‘Inter-War Romanesque’<sup>34</sup> and ‘essentially Mediterranean’.<sup>35</sup> Of greatest importance is that these buildings set the standard for future development of the Western Australian campus, ‘arguably the nation’s most beautiful’,<sup>36</sup> in which the landscaping became an integral factor. Wilkinson’s role in emphasising the importance of landscape elements, along with Alsop’s own adherence to Mediterranean ideals, influenced this important and coherent architectural statement—one in which the references to California are particularly cogent.

It cannot be entirely coincidental that the university’s ‘signature building’, Winthrop Hall (see Fig. 7.08 on page 303), completed in 1931, bears a decided resemblance to Royce



Hall, the first building at the new campus of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Built at precisely the same time (1928–1929) by the Los Angeles firm of Allison & Allison,<sup>37</sup> its style was described as ‘the Lombardian type of the Italian Romanesque style’ (see Fig. 7.09 on page 304).<sup>38</sup>

Architects and administrators at both campuses took seriously the design of the landscape as important to the symbolic intentions that the university was to express. As Charles Moore wrote about UCLA, the designs for the grounds by Ralph Cornell and others ‘transcend the limits of a botanical garden; the whole campus comes off as a genuinely bountiful California landscape’.<sup>39</sup> Further, the development of Westwood Village around the UCLA campus was considered as an integral part of the university’s design, and its buildings and the accompanying landscaping were meant to evoke a ‘Spanish style and especially of the type known as Monterey’.<sup>40</sup>

Landscape architect Christopher Vernon emphasises the same landscaping effect in Perth, based on Wilkinson’s initial 1927 conception, when he writes that ‘[u]nlike campuses elsewhere in the nation, the University of Western Australia’s “signature” is inscribed not by individual buildings, but by a sense of the collective campus landscape’.<sup>41</sup> (See Fig. 7.10 on page 305.) The frequently repeated comparisons between the ‘feeling’ of Perth and Californian cities originate in these symbolically resonant Mediterranean styles created in both places in the 1920s.<sup>42</sup>

Part of UCLA’s ‘bountiful California landscape’ included famous stands of eucalypts—ones that still occupy a significant place on the edges of the campus and in the hearts of many Angelenos (see Fig. 7.11 on page 306). In Perth, while some native plants are incorporated into the overall vegetation, its Mediterranean references are more appropriately tied to the planting of cypress trees and



other imported species (although architectural historian Robin Boyd maintains that Perth was the most likely place for native Australian plants to be used ornamentally).<sup>43</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, most Australians were not yet entirely ready to embrace their native flora as picturesque or appropriate for grand landscaping designs, and Mediterranean gardens did not usually incorporate Australian plants. Despite Wilkinson’s admiration for the colours of the tree, the eucalypt, then, was not tied to a Spanish Style aesthetic as had serendipitously happened in California at this time. Whereas the gum tree in California initially appeared

**Fig. 7.07 William Hardy Wilson** (arch.), corner of a garden at Eryldene, Gordon, New South Wales, 1930. Photograph: E. O. Hoppé. © E. O. Hoppé Estate, Curatorial Assistance, Inc., Los Angeles, California.



**Fig. 7.08 Alsop & Sayce**  
(archs), view of Winthrop  
Hall from the south,  
c. 1933. University  
of Western Australia  
Archives. Courtesy of West  
Australian Newspapers  
Ltd.



‘exotic’ in the landscape and thus appropriate for a Mediterranean design, in Australia, the tree’s ubiquity contributed for a long time to its relegation to a role as an aesthetically monotonous plant.

In his famous book *Australia’s home*, Robin Boyd (1919–1971) wrote ‘[n]o decorative fashion of the twentieth century owed as much to one man as did the Spanish Mission to Professor Leslie Wilkinson of the University of Sydney’.<sup>44</sup> This single sentence reveals several aspects of the debate about architectural ‘eclecticism’ in the 1920s that has hampered a true appraisal of the decade’s influences and accomplishments. Writing at a time when modernism reigned in architecture—International Style-brand modernism

arrived in Australia in the late 1940s and early 1950s—Boyd downplayed Wilkinson’s and others’ earlier attempts to create an appropriately Australian style as mere ‘decorative fashion’. (Freeland, too, in his book dismisses most of this work as superficial and eventually debased.)<sup>45</sup> Further, Boyd applied the misleading and inaccurate term of ‘Spanish Mission’ to the Professor’s work. Wilkinson never created anything that could rightfully be labelled as ‘Mission Style’, nor did his architectural followers. More than anything, his brand of Mediterranean-style house has been accurately defined as ‘a regionalisation of Georgian domestic architecture’,<sup>46</sup> in keeping with the ideas that he and people like Hardy Wilson had expressed in their 1919 essays.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the inaccuracy of the ‘Spanish Mission’ term, its frequent use by Australian writers, both at the time and subsequently, indicates that the *assumed* source for the entire gamut of these stylistic elements was California, or at least Spanish America, rather than the Mediterranean region itself. Indeed, very little true Mission Style ever appeared in the antipodes,<sup>48</sup> although some stylistic elements associated with the Californian examples—a scalloped parapet, quatrefoil windows and low-pitched tile roofs—were incorporated into the more popularised Spanish styles in the cities (see Fig. 7.12 on page 307).<sup>49</sup>

Even more so than happened in California, the confusion and misinterpretations surrounding the use of architectural terminology to describe Mediterranean and Spanish American-influenced styles prevailed in the Australian popular press, although

many Australian writers were aware of the distinctions and went to some lengths to delineate the differences. Boyd’s summation of Wilkinson’s work as ‘Spanish Mission’ does at least raise the important point that even such a serious, European-trained, architect as Wilkinson was seen to be inspired during the 1920s by the examples of Mediterranean/Hispanic adaptations originating on the American West Coast.

In the ‘Special Number’ of *Art in Australia* titled *Domestic architecture in Australia* (1919), Wilkinson wrote a chapter, along with fellow architects Hardy Wilson, Desbrowe-Annear, W. S. Bagot (1880–1963) and R. S. Dods (1868–1920). Describing in this issue his opinions on how to develop an Australian style—apparently written only months after arriving in the country—Wilkinson acknowledged straight away that adaptations of the



**Fig. 7.09 Allison & Allison** (archs), Royce Hall, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, 1928–29. Thelner Barton Hoover (UCLA 1930) and Louise Brown Hoover (UCLA 1930) Photographic Collection, UCLA University Archives, Los Angeles, California.

**Fig. 7.10 Alsop & Sayce**  
(archs), University of  
Western Australia campus  
aerial view, Court of  
Honour, Perth, Australia,  
1935. University of  
Western Australia  
Archives. Courtesy of West  
Australian Newspapers  
Ltd.



Mediterranean styles rather than a continued reference to England offered the most logical source of inspiration, as Australia's Pacific Rim neighbour had already recognised:

From a brief study of domestic architecture in Australia it is evident that the trend of development has followed closely that of English work. All are there, the good and bad. In addition there has latterly been added a manner of home building showing influences from both sides of the Pacific ... Although it is generally granted that most English domestic work reaches a high standard, the climatic and other conditions here are such that considerable modifications must be made in adapting it to these new circumstances. And is it certain that it is wise to attempt to follow Northern methods of building under conditions so dissimilar? Geography suggests

that the shores of the Mediterranean may be richer in suggestion, or the Californian coast manner so largely derived therefrom.<sup>50</sup>

Wilkinson's source for such knowledge would have been the books and journals, both American and Australian, that depicted these villas and country estates, as well as conversations with colleagues who had travelled and studied in the western United States.

Another intriguing example of Mediterranean elements appearing in significant Australian buildings in the 1920s centres on the nation's newborn capital, Canberra. Here, too, Wilkinson eventually had a hand in the final appearance of some of the early buildings; indeed, Robin Boyd considered his style to have served as the 'unofficial design' for the new town's domestic architecture.<sup>51</sup>





*Ready for UCLA elementary school 4-25-1936*

**Fig. 7.11** *Ready for UCLA Elementary School, 4-25-1936*, photographic view toward Royce Hall, UCLA campus, Los Angeles, California. Thelner Barton Hoover (UCLA 1930) & Louise Brown Hoover (UCLA 1930) Photographic Collection, UCLA University Archives, Los Angeles, California.

The American designer of the city, Walter Burley Griffin, caught up in endless political battles for artistic control of the city's plan, left Canberra having constructed no buildings for the new city.<sup>52</sup> The final layout of the city nonetheless derives essentially from Griffin's plan, and some of the earliest residences and hotels demonstrate a clear connection to the Chicago architect's Prairie School and Arts & Crafts influences. These structures were largely the work of J. S. Murdoch (1862–1945), the government architect who had been one of Griffin's greatest supporters at the time of the international competition.<sup>53</sup> But the nascent civic structures were the product of the Chairman of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee, the venerable Sir John Sulman (1849–1934), along with his assistant J. H. Kirkpatrick.<sup>54</sup>

Sulman had come to Australia from England in the 1880s already knowledgeable of William Morris, with whom he was acquainted, and a strong advocate of the Garden City Movement.<sup>55</sup> He had travelled throughout Europe and as early as the 1870s had absorbed elements taken from Italian architecture. He became an influential figure in Sydney architectural circles by the 1880s. Even before travelling to America to examine their architectural schools in the 1890s, Sulman had written articles about elements of verandahs and loggias as they appeared in American country houses, referring to examples published in *Century Magazine*, a publication readily available in Australia at that time.<sup>56</sup>

Much earlier than Wilkinson, Sulman was



deeply concerned with the question of an 'Australian Style' of architecture, one that he thought must draw upon the past to produce a kind of 'progressive eclecticism', and that would be appropriate to its climate.<sup>57</sup> Not surprisingly, Sulman and Wilkinson became close colleagues, resulting by 1924 in Wilkinson's appointment by Sulman to the National Capital Planning Committee where he assessed several competitions for Canberra buildings.<sup>58</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Sulman's greatest interest was in the new field of town planning, about which he wrote numerous articles and in 1921 a book, *An introduction to the study of town planning in Australia*. He was President of the Town Planning Association of New South Wales from 1913 to 1925; and from 1921 to 1924, once Griffin was gone, Chairman of Canberra's Federal Capital Advisory

Committee. In 1924 Sulman was appointed by the Commonwealth and State Governments to attend the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association Conferences in Paris and Amsterdam. On this same trip he represented Australia at the Royal Institute of British Architects meeting in Oxford (along with *Building* magazine's Florence Taylor and Sydney architect Alfred Spain—the latter the one who so enthusiastically collected photographs of Los Angeles architecture). He was also knighted at this time for his services to the Commonwealth as part of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee.

This trip also included a tour to North American cities to study 'Commission Government', a project Sulman had requested to undertake for the Australian Government. According to the report he submitted upon his return to Canberra in 1925, he travelled

**Fig. 7.12** Mission Style residence at New Farm, Brisbane. State Library of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland.





**Fig. 7.13 Bakewell & Brown** (archs), Pasadena City Hall, 1927. Author's photograph.

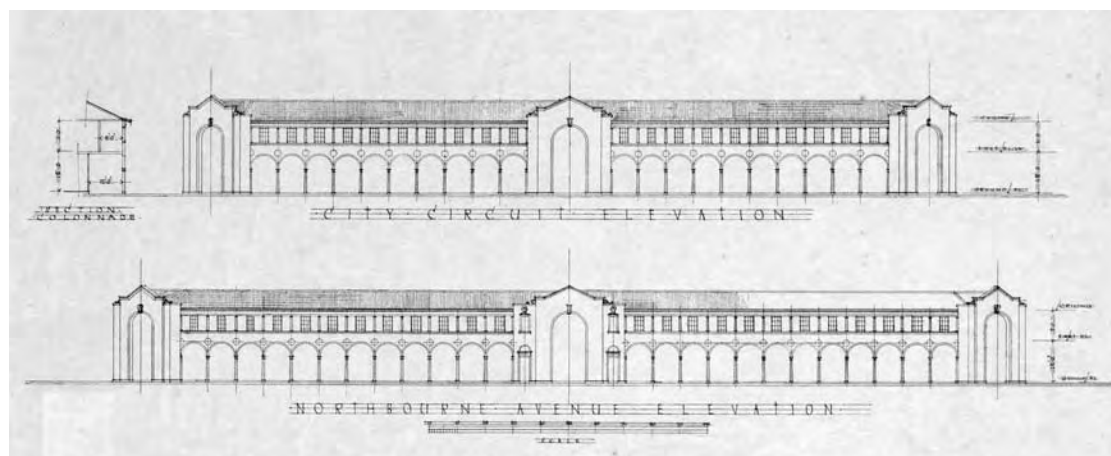
to cities in Canada and on the American east coast, then ended his tour by visiting the Pacific coast cities of Seattle, Washington; and San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pasadena and Stockton, California.<sup>59</sup> He was in Pasadena in October 1924, and later wrote about its civic projects enthusiastically:

[T]he satellite city of Pasadena (population, 70,000) is as charming a place as can be found in the length and breadth of the land, and its development reflects the highest credit on its citizens, more especially as it possessed no natural beauties to start with, except that it has the fine background of the Sierra Madre Mountains just beyond its borders. The way in which dry creeks and other defects have been utilised to form beautiful recreation centres is a lesson to all town planners. At the time of my visit, buildings were being pulled down to make

space for a civic centre, of original and most artistic design, comprising a new City Hall, an Auditorium and a Public Library, which the authorities say they will have ready to open in two years' time; and I expect they will do it. With its tree-planted streets, well-designed dwellings, and beautiful gardens, it is the ideal garden city realised.<sup>60</sup>

While visiting these California cities, Sulman would have seen the many Mediterranean-style buildings being erected everywhere. From the praises heaped on Pasadena, he must also have seen the plans for the civic centre then under construction. Given his later contribution to the architecture of Canberra, and his long-professed interest in arcades, he would have looked with interest at the arcaded shopping areas created in such places as Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Barbara and Ojai. Once he

**Fig. 7.14 John Sulman**  
(arch.), drawing for  
Melbourne and Sydney  
buildings, Canberra Civic,  
c. 1925. Map Section,  
National Library of  
Australia, Canberra.



returned to Canberra and had submitted his report to the Commonwealth Government, Sulman resigned as President of the Town Planning Association and spent a little more time on designs for Canberra before retiring from architectural practice in 1928.

One of Sulman's last designs, and amongst the first buildings constructed in Canberra, was the arcaded commercial structures, the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings, for the town's civic centre. These buildings remain an aesthetically defining aspect of Canberra to this day.<sup>61</sup> Writers point to the very obvious references made by Sulman to Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence (1424) and some critics acknowledge that the colonnaded walkways were Sulman's response to his oft-cited aversion—his 'personal hobby horse', to quote one critic—to the usual verandahs of Australian towns' shopping streets.<sup>62</sup> Rarely does anyone dig deeper to explain the architect's conscious choice of Mediterranean motifs for the civic centre of the new national capital.<sup>63</sup>

Wilkinson's presence in Sydney and on the National Capital Planning Committee provided some impetus for this direction. 'The Mediterranean' was certainly in the air and in the pages of the mass media and trade publications. Sulman could also have been directly

inspired by similar civic projects in California. Requa's arcaded city center for Ojai, restoration work on El Paseo in Santa Barbara, the arcades of Venice and many projects in Pasadena and Los Angeles—all would have furthered Sulman's ideas in 1924. His Canberra buildings offered a final opportunity for the architect to express his aesthetic hopes for contemporary Australian architecture, to champion a style appropriate to the country's climate and that moved away from the British architectural models that Sulman and many others saw as ill-suited to a new Australian city.<sup>64</sup>

Not surprisingly, given that the Sulman buildings were the first conspicuous public structures in the new town, this Mediterranean vision of Canberra served as the most inspiring motif for the first graphic representations of the city, the tourist campaign to sell the place to the public (see fig 0.02 on page 16). In 1933, by which time Canberra's Parliament House had also opened, and some people had begun to arrive in the fledgling settlement and to settle into the first residential neighbourhoods, the newly formed Australian National Travel Association, looking for ways to promote the town, sent leading commercial artist James Northfield (1887–1973) to Canberra. Northfield was to produce a poster

to be distributed throughout Australia and internationally.<sup>65</sup>

As his central iconographic focus for selling the city as a tourist destination, Northfield chose Sulman's Mediterranean arches. In his image, two fashionably dressed people stand next to the arch's column; they are depicted as elegant and modern, identified as tourists by their binoculars. They aim their gaze out across a sunny landscape, filled with bulbed flowers (a garden element uncommon in Australia, and so emphasised as an inviting aspect unique to Canberra). In the middle ground, amidst the carefully laid out streets of the town, and most prominently displayed, is a red-roofed building, behind which one can see smaller red-roofed buildings and a mountain range bathed in light.<sup>66</sup> The poster's lettering is in the most modern font, a sans-serif red. The message, then, was clear: 'Come to Canberra, a sunny place with Mediterranean architecture, elegant, modern, and with an attractive landscape.' Most significantly, there was nothing British about this image at all. Its romantic mood, in fact, was reminiscent of other tourist posters for the French Riviera and for California. Finally, the pictorial trope of red roofs in the distance, and pier and archway in the foreground looking across an expansive sunlit landscape with a mountainous background, is strikingly similar in mood to the standard motifs from California's ubiquitous fruit-box labels (see Fig. 0.03 on page 17). More than in any other medium, the illustrative modes in magazines, books and posters used to sell Australia to the world wedded the Mediterranean style to a vision of a Pacific modernity, emphasising a new way of living more closely aligned to the other side of the ocean than to southern Europe.

This illustrative mode along with photographs reproduced in the pages of Australia's magazines offered the most convenient and accessible opportunity

to spread this new Californianised ideal. Here Californian examples were most frequently presented as the source of Spanish/Mediterranean style architecture and landscape design appropriate for modern Australia. The term 'Spanish Mission' takes on at this point its most pervasive (and misunderstood) use, applied to the design of small houses in Australia and its popularisation as a suburban style.

Just as the forms of the California bungalow were championed in the 1910s by publications such as *Building*, now more elegant magazines such as *The Home*, and especially *The Australian Home Beautiful*, focused most exuberantly on Hispanic modes throughout the 1920s, and into the early years of the 1930s, before the Depression put an end to most ambitious building projects. What is most apparent in these articles is that the majority of illustrations depicting the style are American rather than European. In some cases, they include photographs of houses in Florida—which, of course, was constructing in the 1920s its own tropical Mediterranean image based on its own connections to a Spanish past.<sup>67</sup> Some magazines even included occasional reproductions of buildings from Spanish America. The most frequently reproduced examples and the articles that accompanied them nonetheless depicted Southern Californian buildings.

The Taylors in *Building* magazine had already reproduced illustrations of many so-called 'Mission Style' buildings gleaned from their own travels and from the many American magazines that were their main illustrative source from the beginning of the journal's long run. The couple never seemed as enthusiastic about these Spanish directions as they had been about the bungalow out of California or the work of the Chicago architects. Their trip through America in 1914 resulted inevitably in the publication of many



Californian examples that already revealed Mediterranean approaches, including some of the buildings from the Panama–Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the ‘Spanish Style’ work at Stanford University (which they incorrectly attributed to Richardson rather than Richardson’s pupil Charles Allerton Coolidge [1858–1936]).<sup>68</sup> They were particularly delighted by the appearance of the Santa Fe Railway stations throughout the south-western United States, which they described in the May 1915 issue of the magazine as ‘The Most American of Architectural Types’.<sup>69</sup>

As the decade progressed, and Mediterranean styles became more prominent in Australian suburbs, the Taylors occasionally depicted representative examples, some American and some Australian. In 1927, they reproduced Bertram Goodhue’s Churrigueresque doorway for the Coppel House in Pasadena, finding it to be ‘of considerable artistic taste’, and included captions to other houses from Texas and South America.<sup>70</sup> By the end of that year, they included, if still somewhat ambivalently, Australian adaptations of the ‘Spanish–American’ style, such as those by Sydney architect H. V. Vernon. Always ready to offer their own critiques and explanations of what aspects were essential to any style, they included under the illustrations of Vernon’s Quamba in Wahroonga, New South Wales, the statement that ‘the tiled roof, white walls and green foreground are not only a necessary combination but are in accordance with the traditions of the style’.<sup>71</sup>

The January 1928 issue of *Building* included a drawing for a Spanish façade reprinted from *Architectural Forum*<sup>72</sup> and a photograph of another of Vernon’s Sydney houses ‘determined by the Latin American architecture’.<sup>73</sup> This issue was the last one produced under George Taylor’s editorship, for he drowned in his

bathtub at the end of that month.<sup>74</sup> Despite this distressing loss, his wife Florence Taylor, herself an architect, kept the magazine going under her own hand without missing a single issue. The publication’s graphic style never modernised and although always rich in illustration, continued to the end to appear as if it were a trade journal.

Despite Florence Taylor’s hesitations about this ‘alien’ direction, the popular fashion for Spanish-inspired building by this time had reached such a height in Australia that *Building* was compelled to examine the style’s effects on the domestic architectural scene more deeply. In October 1928, the lead article in the magazine was entitled ‘The Spanish–American influence in Australia: Will the colourful style be transitory?’<sup>75</sup> The illustrations included not only American monuments such as Reginald Johnson’s Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara, but also a variety of Australian buildings.


Taylor’s descriptions vacillate between resigned acceptance of the appearance of this ‘foreign’ style and an outright rejection of its faddishness as inappropriate for Australia. She acknowledged that ‘Australia, being a comparatively new country with a constant demand for new buildings, has seized upon this new decorative expression for domestic architecture’, pointing out that it was only logical that such a new country would look to America, ‘which undoubtedly at the present date leads the world in architectural development’.<sup>76</sup> Just as categorically, she then shifted allegiances to dismiss these directions, saying that the ‘style lends itself to cheap modern construction’; she believed ‘one may as well go straight to Spain for the right inspiration as turn to America to be misled’.<sup>77</sup> Such inconsistencies in tone marked much of *Building*’s outlook in the 1920s and in the last years of its publication. As late as 1931, Florence was still able to praise ‘the delightful little town of Santa Barbara’, calling it ‘a unique

architectural city',<sup>78</sup> but this enthusiasm for a Californian town adopting Spanish Style architecture as its organising mode did not transfer to examples of this style adapted to Australia. The Taylors' moment, when they championed the California bungalow, Walter Burley Griffin and other American architects as offering the best inspiration for Australians to follow in their development of a national style, had passed.

When it first appeared in 1925, the graphic appearance and philosophical outlook of *The Australian Home Beautiful* could not have differed more dramatically from *Building's* stodginess.<sup>79</sup> Growing out of the realtors' and builders' publication *Real Property Annual* (1912–1922; known as *Australian Home Builder* 1922–1925), *The Australian Home Beautiful* (hereafter called *Home Beautiful*) modelled itself visually on American publications such as *Ladies' Home Journal* (1883–present) and the Hearst publication *House Beautiful* (1896–present). It was unabashedly geared to the newly emerging suburban dwellers looking for handy tips on home improvements, and examples of fashionable house style and gardening plans that could help them construct their own home and create their personal quarter acre of green space. It was clearly a 'lifestyle' magazine, extolling an up-to-date stylishness that was attractive to a younger Australian audience. While at times it did highlight public buildings and grander estates by leading architects, increasingly its articles focused on suburban houses, both architect- and builder-built, and the design needs of the middle class.

As early as 1923, when the magazine was still called *Australian Home Builder*, the Melbourne architect Percy Everett included in its pages references to the new Californian styles that could be used to inspire an "Auspano" treatment;<sup>80</sup> and Leslie Perrott, an expert in concrete construction, also used

February 1, 1928.
THE AUSTRALIAN HOME BEAUTIFUL
13



## A Spanish House that is True to Type

First of a New Series of Studies of Notable Australian Homes.

Description by RUTH LANE-POOLE.
Photographs by NASH-BOOTHBY.

**T**HERE is no term so overworked or misapplied in the Australian architectural vocabulary as "Spanish," occasionally expanded to Spanish Mission.

Take any building which is rough dashed and boasts of two or three ill-proportioned arches at its entrance porch, cordova tiles on its roof, and possibly an iron grille at the hall door, and you will find its designer dubbing it "Spanish architecture."

If you are sufficiently courageous to enter through the arches, you will find the illusion ends in a sudden and somewhat unpleasant manner, for you will find yourself walking into what is nothing more than a suburban villa, with the usual 16 x 14 drawing room, and off that the still smaller dining room, a kitchenette in close proximity, and a back garden which by no stretch of the imagination can we believe has its prototype in Granada.

If we are going to build Spanish houses in Australia, and it must be acknowledged that the conditions in many of our States are particularly suited to this style of architecture, then we must employ

architects who have intimate personal knowledge of the country whose architecture we wish to emulate.

Not only must the exterior be reminiscent of Southern Europe, but the best points adapted to our needs and requirements must be reproduced in the interior.

While the courtyard house so frequently met with in Italy and Spain makes its appeal, yet it would be a costly form of architecture in Australia, and one which is hardly suited to our cold wet winters—but—the house for the climate like ours, in which a semi-outdoor life can be led, may well be adapted from those of the South of Europe—and this Mr Rodney Alsop, the well-known Australian architect, who is also a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, has most successfully achieved in his own house in Tintern avenue, Toorak, Victoria.

Following an irregular sloping flagged path, bordered on either side with cottage flowers, we come upon an almost typical Southern European two-storied white-washed house.

There is nothing forced or artificial looking in its appear-



The entrance holds a pair of beautiful wrought-iron Florentine gates that Mr Alsop brought from Italy.

the *Home Builder* in 1925 to spread the word of his 'Mission Style' findings on his trip through California.<sup>81</sup> Construction in concrete is an important aspect of the Australian consideration of Mediterranean styles in home building. It seemed the perfect material with which to reproduce the look of adobe brick buildings, so the style provided a convenient form on which to give the sales pitch about concrete's functional advantages.

From its first years, then, *Home Beautiful* knew of Californian trends and took up the cause of Spanish/Mediterranean modes with

**Fig. 7.15** 'A Spanish house that is true to type' (Rodney Alsop's Toorak House), in *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 1 February 1928, p. 13. Courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney.

the enthusiasm of the true convert. In the June 1926 issue, staff writer Nora Cooper highlighted a 'Spanish Mission' house designed for Mrs. L. V. Waterhouse by none other than Peddle, Thorp, & Walker (see Fig. 7.06 on page 301).<sup>82</sup> Fashionable Sydney photographer Harold Cazneaux provided the photographs—indicating that the magazine's Editors were interested in home-grown graphics in modern design as part of the message they wanted to convey. The author was particularly taken with the house's simplicity and 'the delightful informality of the garden'.<sup>83</sup>

From this date until the mid-1930s, Spanish Style dominated the pages of the magazine. 'Without doubt the architecture best suited to our sunny Australian climate is the Spanish type', an article declared in 1927, present-

ing with approval some recent examples of apartment houses constructed in Melbourne in this fashion.<sup>84</sup> The style was in full swing in these few years before the Depression, presented as adaptable to all Australian conditions in every region. Whether Rodney Alsop's own house in Toorak, Victoria,<sup>85</sup> or 'A "Little Bit of Old Spain" on the shores of Sydney Harbour' in Clifton Gardens<sup>86</sup>, the style was lauded in many magazines as a happy architectural solution to the special needs of a warm country, where the outdoor surroundings were as important to the aesthetic environment as the residence itself.

Particularly striking about *Home Beautiful's* championing of Spanish Style was that this preference affected the entire graphic appearance of the magazine as well as its articles and photographs. The

**Fig. 7.16** 'Casa di Lucia: A "little bit of Old Spain" on the shores of Sydney Harbour', in *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 2 December 1929, p. 13.



central figure in the implementation of the magazine's colourful style of illustration was F. Hedley Sanders (b. 1902), an American-trained illustrator whose first cover for the magazine appeared in 1927. As Peter Cuffley describes him, Sanders was 'the man who captured, with pencil, pen and brush, the Australian ideals of house and home'.<sup>87</sup> His cover for August 1927 depicted, in colour, Bruce Manor, the Prime Minister's newly built home in Frankston, Victoria (see Fig. 7.17 on page 223). The image epitomises the graphic style that would identify *Home Beautiful* as a modern magazine: stylised trees surrounding the Mediterranean façade of the building. Here was as well one of the official models for all those red-tiled-roof houses that came to identify Canberra and the suburbs of other Australian cities.

For many years Sanders' graphic style set the tone for *Home Beautiful's* version of Australian modernity, at least as it was envisioned by Australia's middle classes. His rendering for the 'Small House Number' in August 1928 extended the artist's command of pleasing architectural illustration, again with a cosy stuccoed house surrounded by abstracted trees whose forms mirrored earlier renditions of sinuous eucalypts. The same issue included an article by Melbourne architect G. A. Soilleux on 'The small home in California', complete with vignette drawing of El Caralo, a new Spanish building in Santa Barbara, drawn by Soilleux. The article included photographs of homes in Pasadena, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.<sup>88</sup>

Although some attempts were made in this and other Australian periodicals' articles to delineate what constituted 'Spanish' design, the use of the term 'Mission'—adopted from its earlier application to Craftsman furniture and the introduction into Australia of the California bungalow—referred now generally to any vaguely Spanish style inspired by

examples from the other Pacific coast. Writer Easter Soilleux, in the 2 December 1929 issue of *Home Beautiful*, pointed out this generalised use of terms:

So many houses are labelled Spanish these days that the term is in danger of becoming discredited ... The Spanish houses that are genuinely true to type are few and far between in Victoria, although those that are incorrectly called so are legion.<sup>89</sup>

Soilleux went on to say that the 'true Spanish house, which should have walls that are feet, instead of inches, thick, a complete absence of eaves and their attendant spoutings, and with its rooms built around an inner courtyard, is suitable for this climate'. The importance, then, of the Spanish Style house in Australia was tied directly to its relation to a sunny landscape and nature surrounding the house. In this same article, Soilleux points to an appropriately adapted house in East Malvern, Melbourne, stating that it is successful because of its setting, in what she describes as a 'delightful old-world garden'.<sup>90</sup>

This connection to the garden continued to be a focus of *Home Beautiful* articles. John R. Parry in 1929 lucidly outlined the elements necessary for a true Spanish garden, from the inclusion of tiles, fountains and benches to the desired effects of plants placed against coloured walls. The eucalypt and other Australian natives were still not regularly integrated into the concept of a Mediterranean garden, but the plantings around Spanish Style houses were usually less formal, less English and more colourful than earlier Australian efforts. The outlook about gardens presented in *Home Beautiful* in these years had much to do with bringing about a change in Australian planting practices and the public's attitudes toward not only the home garden, but the native Australian landscape itself. Central to this





**Fig. 7.18** The Victim, 'The house a man built to please his wife', *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 2 September 1929, p. 18. Courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney.

change was Edna Walling (1896–1973), the most important figure in Australian landscape design in this crucial period, who wrote the gardening column for *Home Beautiful* from 1927 until 1948.<sup>91</sup>

Increasingly the magazine's articles emphasised Australian builders' adaptations of Spanish Style and Mediterranean elements, indicating the most popularised versions of what Australians had gleaned from reading, travelling to California and Europe, and, most significantly, from what they saw in films out of Hollywood. One writer, described humorously as 'The Victim', and entitling his article 'The house a man built to please his wife', recounted how a Melbourne couple's train trip through California, 'from San Francisco to the Mexican border', inspired them to build their own Spanish home once they returned home.<sup>92</sup> The photographs of the house that resulted from this California tour reveal a 'do-it-yourself' mishmash of stylistic elements far removed from any legitimate adaptation or imitation

of true Mediterranean forms. Advertisements by builders in the same magazines show a similar bastardisation, adding a few curlicue columns, Mission parapets and red-tile roofs to otherwise ill-proportioned boxes. Robin Boyd's declaration of Spanish Mission as mere 'decorative fashion' pertain to these houses, signalling the style's acquiescence to the contractors' market, in which Hollywood Spanish Revival as it appeared to Australians in magazines and in films triumphed over more considered architectural choice.<sup>93</sup>

These adaptations of Spanish Style derived from theatrical Californian versions are nowhere more clearly evident in Australia than in two quintessentially modern forms of popular public building types: the movie house and the service station. The 'picture palace' era hit Australia in the 1920s and borrowed all of the extravagances of the American prototype. In Sydney, Melbourne and even Perth, 'atmospheric theatres', some of them built from designs of the great exponent of these fantasy buildings in America, John Eberson (1875–1964), included ornate decorations, special effects such as twinkling stars in the ceiling and painted or stuccoed murals of villages, and enormous Wurlitzer organs that came up out of the orchestra pit. Almost all of these 1920s theatres, built for the most part by two chains, Stuart Doyle's (1887–1945) Union Theatres and Frank Thring's (1882–1936) Hoyts Theatres, were in some way alluding to Italianate, Hispanic or Mediterranean/Moorish styles in their ornamentation and architectural forms.

The Regent Theatre in Melbourne (see Fig. 7.19 on page 316), Thring's grandest project, was (according to Thring) inspired by the grandiose New York projects of Thomas W. Lamb.<sup>94</sup> Designed by Melbourne architect Cedric Ballantyne (1876–1951)—the same architect who built many bungalows and other structures throughout the Melbourne



**Fig. 7.19 Cecil Ballantyne** (arch.), interior, Regent Theatre, Melbourne, 1929. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria.

region—the theatre actually contained two venues, the 3300-seat Regent, and below this immense auditorium, the smaller Plaza Theatre. Ballantyne made a study tour to the United States before he designed these and other Regent Theatres around Australia, and Thring sent his ‘theatre man’ A. B. ‘Bert’ Cowen to America to purchase furnishings and mechanical equipment.<sup>95</sup> Both theatres were elaborately Spanish in their interiors. The Plaza particularly included ‘Spanish period furnishings’ such as a model galleon and Churrigueresque plaster ornamentation. According to accounts of the time, including an article in *Home Beautiful*, the foyer was meant to simulate a Spanish courtyard.<sup>96</sup> The Plaza’s ceilings, incomprehensibly labelled as ‘Aztec’, were painted with colourful heraldic ornaments, reminiscent (at least in intention

if not authenticity) of the ceilings done by Giovanni Smeraldi for California buildings such as The Atheneum at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, and in Los Angeles at The Biltmore Hotel and The Jonathan Club.<sup>97</sup> While the exterior of Ballantyne’s Regent Theatres (he produced others in other Australian cities) never took on a full-blown Spanish Revival style like so many of the ‘atmospheric’ California picture palaces did, the interiors displayed extravagantly ‘Hollywood Mediterranean’ medievalism in some form or another.

The same could be said for the equally ornate theatres of Thring’s main competitor, Stuart Doyle, under whose command the largest cinemas were built throughout Australia.<sup>98</sup> The greatest of these was Sydney’s State Theatre, seating 4000 and built in a very short time to



**Fig. 7.22 Elmer Grey**  
(arch.), Pasadena  
Playhouse, Pasadena,  
California, 1925. Courtesy  
of The Huntington Library,  
San Marino, California.

of the Moon on Mornington Peninsula, described as ‘a residential development along with entertainment facilities that would entice the holiday maker’.<sup>103</sup>

In the bayside suburb of St Kilda in Melbourne, apartment buildings ‘in a style direct from Westwood, Los Angeles’ began to appear.<sup>104</sup> The Belvedere on The Esplanade, very near the amusement park Luna Park, completed in 1928, with curlicue colonettes in the tiled bathrooms, Spanish ironwork, Juliet balconies and decorative rafters, is one of the most ambitious examples. The references were unashamedly inspired by Hollywood as absorbed from films and illustrations in popular magazines. Other Australian builders, from Brisbane to Perth, cashed in on the fashion for all things Californian and seen at the movies, building houses sometimes attempting to be true to period styles, and sometimes not.<sup>105</sup>

At least one Australian public building of

the period exhibited architectural aspirations more in keeping with the aims of serious American architects using Mediterranean elements. The Roxy Theatre in Parramatta near Sydney, one of the Hoyts chain, was built by L. F. Herbert and E. D. Wilson, and opened in 1930 (see Fig. 7.21 on page 224).<sup>106</sup> As Hamann points out, Herbert and Wilson’s references to a ‘Spanish colonial church’ seems more inspired by John D. Moore’s American mentor Bertram Goodhue’s work for the 1915 San Diego Exposition than by Hollywood picture palaces. Hamann acknowledges Goodhue’s popularity among Australian architects: ‘... his fusion of blank masses with intense bursts of ornament in stylised gothic or Spanish colonial was seen then as a genuinely modern architecture’.<sup>107</sup> In its layout, with a central tower entrance flanked by side arcades, The Roxy is also reminiscent of other Southern California



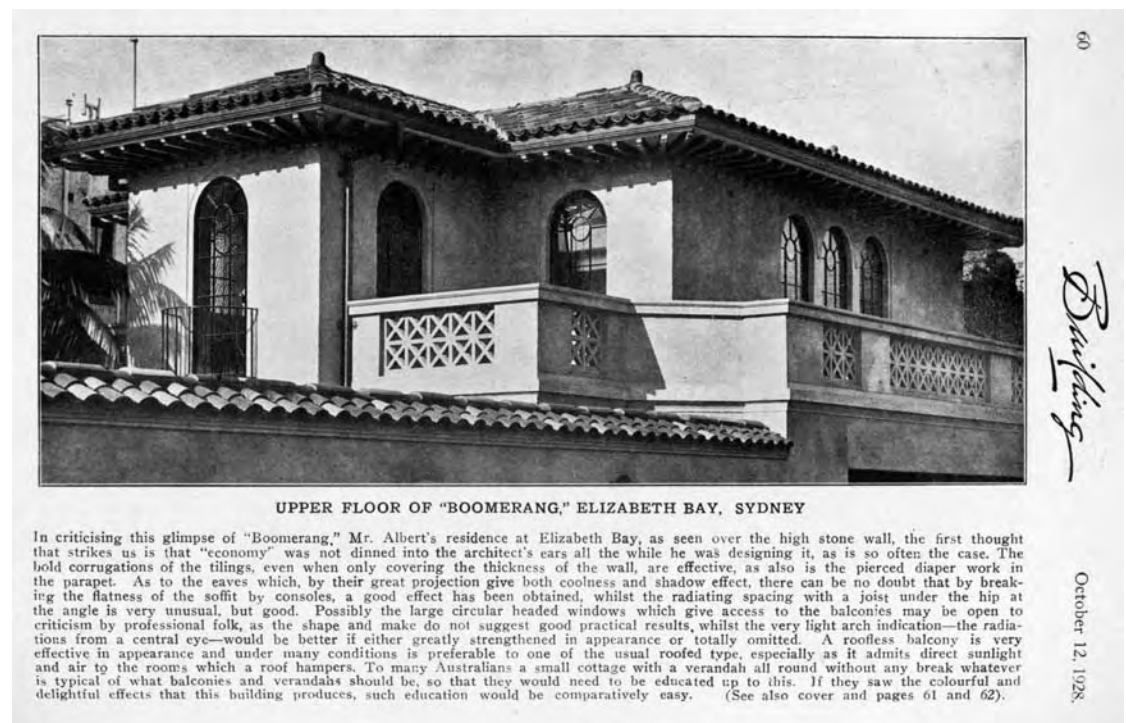
theatres of the time in a Spanish Style, such as Elmer Grey's Pasadena Playhouse. While these Australian urban theatres were never as richly landscaped as most Californian examples, reference to the 'exotic' sometimes appeared in the landscaping around the picture palaces in the form of an occasional palm tree or planting of ferns.

That Hollywood rather than more traditional architectural sources, Mediterranean or otherwise, provided inspiration for some of the flashiest Australian constructions in the 1920s is most exuberantly exhibited in Boomerang, completed in Sydney in 1926 for music publisher and entertainment entrepreneur Frank Albert (1874–1962).<sup>108</sup> By far the most extravagant residence ever built in the city, combining high theatricality with a modicum of architectural integrity, this enormous harbourside villa was the work of English-born Neville Hampson (1873–c. 1928), a relatively unknown architect working in Sydney who had previously produced Arts & Crafts-style

homes, primarily on the city's North Shore.<sup>109</sup> The owner of the estate, Albert was the proprietor of Australia's largest music business, selling both sheet music and musical instruments (especially harmonicas). Since the 1890s, the company's products carried the name and logo 'Boomerang'; so it was no surprise when Albert chose the name for his luxury home, especially considering that an earlier residence on his harbour site had also been designated Boomerang.<sup>110</sup>

In 1919 Albert travelled to the United States and sent Hampson to California as well, to see how American moguls were living.<sup>111</sup> When they returned from America, Albert pulled out all the stops in his orders to his architect, telling him to make the house like 'the best of Hollywood'.<sup>112</sup> Boomerang was always meant to be a flagrant symbol of wealth and prestige, in keeping with Albert's position in the entertainment industry (he went on to be a director of the ABC and ran a chain of suburban movie theatres and radio

**Fig. 7.23 Neville Hampson** (arch.), Boomerang, Sydney New South Wales, 1926–29. *Building*, 12 October 1928, p. 60.





stations). It cost an estimated 60,000 pounds to build, an enormous sum for the time—and this was a figure that Albert gladly fed to the newspapers and magazines.<sup>113</sup>

As its current Heritage Office listing describes it, Boomerang exemplifies ‘the Hollywood derived taste for the Spanish mission style in a pastiche of palms, splashing fountains and “Spanish” architectural details: perforated screens, rough stucco, collonades, grilles, loggias and barley twist columns’.<sup>114</sup> Three storeys high, the residence included a 40-seat cinema, more than 30 rooms, numerous marbled bathrooms, pools, Wunderlich tiled roofs and one of the most spectacular garden settings on several acres leading down to Elizabeth Bay’s harbour waters. The house was the talk of all the lifestyle magazines and newspapers and came to epitomise Sydney’s obsession—even in the 1920s—with glamorous real estate. As for the correct label for this type of domestic architecture, everyone knew that it looked vaguely Mediterranean and ‘exotic’, although no-one was quite sure what to call it. Nora Cooper, one of the columnists then currently enthusing about Spanish Style homes in *Home Beautiful*, summarised it best: ‘Just what is the style of this house? It is hard to say. Spanish Mission, perhaps, but Spanish Mission come into a fortune.’<sup>115</sup>

Aside from its continuing prominence in Sydney’s favourite parlour game of ‘most expensive real estate’, one of Boomerang’s most intriguing aspects in terms of its impact on future architecture and design in Australia concerns the gardens. At the time of the construction of the house, Albert hired as his landscapist Max Shelley (1895–1954), a young man already writing about garden design for magazines such as *Home*.<sup>116</sup> Shelley must have been thrilled to receive such an ambitious commission, especially given the symbolic implications of Albert’s lot on the harbour. His property incorporated a large segment

of the 54-acre original estate of Alexander Macleay (1767–1848), the most famous scientist in nineteenth-century Australia, a member of the Linnean Society and renowned for his introduction of rare plants into the colony.<sup>117</sup> Albert’s site had been the home of Macleay’s Linnean Hall, a museum of plants and insects, as well as his famous gardens. Many of Macleay’s plants were still on the property when Shelley began his designs for the grounds of Boomerang, including one of the first avocados in the colony and several stands of rare palms.

Shelley feasted on this lush legacy, creating appropriately Mediterranean gardens that incorporated these plants, with special focus given to the palms. He added Mediterranean cypress as well as Australian natives (although no eucalypts in ornamental placings) amidst ‘crazy paving’ walkways, fountains, tiled pools and ‘square Moorish concrete and multicoloured ceramic tile planter tubs’.<sup>118</sup> The house and its extravagances were well out of the range of nearly every Australian, except as a source of voyeuristic spectacle to be consumed in the pages of the lifestyle magazines. But the appearance of Shelley’s densely designed landscaping, clearly visible from the harbour, must have inspired many do-it-yourself gardeners to consider alternatives to the cottage and formal English gardens that had so long dominated Australian landscaping. While Australian native plants were not yet as enthusiastically adopted into this landscape aesthetic as they were in California, most builders adopting the Mediterranean style in domestic and public architecture now recognised that they needed to consider a Mediterranean approach to the garden as well. Inevitably, this approach led to more tropical plantings and native plants entered more naturally into the landscaping decisions of both professionals and amateurs.

Frank Albert’s Boomerang offers the most grandiose example of Hollywood Style applied



**Fig. 7.24** Shell service station, advertisement, *Touring Topics*, September 1928. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

in Australia, but other public structures of a much more mundane function also give evidence of a theatrical flair emanating originally from the other side of the Pacific. Inspired by examples viewed in American magazines, and on an even more modest scale, the humble service station—the quintessential exemplar of architectural modernity on the most vernacular of levels—became the perfect place to evoke a particularly accessible aesthetic form, in which fantasy could be given full reign.

America had by the 1920s already been applying all sorts of Revival styles to its petrol stations, largely dependent on ideas of regionalist forms.<sup>119</sup> Even well-known architects of wealthy houses such as Los Angeles's Roland Coate (1890–1958) applied their hand to 'filling station design',<sup>120</sup> including his 1927 Orientalist fantasy for a Calpet station on fashionable Wilshire Boulevard.<sup>121</sup> But in California, and the south-west United States in general, Mission Style and *hacienda*-like forms became the most logical motifs to be used for the service station, just as this style had been adapted for earlier railroad stations. Texaco Oil, for example, applied the red-tiled roofs and whitewashed walls to most of their stations across the south-west. These were the structures illustrated artistically in the company's advertisements in *Touring Topics* and *Sunset*, fitting in seamlessly with the magazines' overall regional aesthetic of missions, palm trees, sunshine and open spaces. Just as Lillian Rice had created an 'Hispanic' filling station for Rancho Santa Fe, other architects in other California communities created an illusionistic atmosphere of Old Spain even in this most commercially functional of roadside structures.

As part of the highway landscape that tourists and travellers would have seen in California, and as part of the iconography of the Pacific Rim presented so relentlessly in the California magazines readily accessible even to Australians who never went overseas, the appearance of Spanish Style service stations was just as inevitable to seaside Australia as was the Hollywood Style 'atmospheric' theatre. In a September 1927 issue of *Building* magazine, the Taylors considered the significance of the architecture for such a prominent aspect of the modernised world. 'This state of things is responsible for a demand for a number of filling stations', they wrote, 'and as these must necessarily stand in prominent positions near



**Fig. 7.25** The former Auckland Garage, cnr. Gilbert and West Promenade, Manly. Photograph: Ian Kirk. Courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney.

the road, their design should be well considered and made as attractive as possible'.<sup>122</sup>

The service station illustrated above this caption, in Chatswood, Sydney, was a functional brick structure of little perceptible aesthetic quality. A few months later, the same magazine illustrated a service station in Coogee, near the beach, which was thoroughly Mediterraneanised. The Taylors found its form entirely appropriate:

The design would appear to be of American inspiration, but loses nothing on that score. The light color of the building is very suitable for its purpose and it is distinguished by a desirable lack of gaudy advertisement which usually is the chief disparagement of such places. It is pleasing to note that a building, which must necessarily be a prominent feature of the street frontage can be sufficiently attractive in appearance and still advertise its commercial use in an efficient and artistic manner.<sup>123</sup>

Soon other stations of like design began appearing in every city in Australia. Nelson's Garage in Wollongong (1930), for example, evokes the same red-tiled iconography as a California Shell station or the others so

stylised in advertisements in *Sunset* and *Touring Topics*. While most service stations continued to be built by builders rather than architects, some notable architects in Australia began to gain commissions to build substantial service stations, just as had happened in California. Intriguingly, and unlike anything that occurred in California, a number of these structures in Sydney combined petrol stations with a block of flats, apparently envisioned as the epitome of modern living and convenience.<sup>124</sup> The most ambitious example of this type was 'The Broadway', which appeared on a fashionable corner of Bellevue Hill, created by Emil Sodersten (1899–1961), later to be the architect of Canberra's War Memorial and, along with his partner Bruce Delitt (1898–1942), one of Australia's leading exponents of the Art Deco style.<sup>125</sup> A three-storey building rounding the intersection's corner, with 12 flats above, and six shops, full garage and service station below, the façade demonstrates one of the most accomplished examples of the Mission Style in Australia.<sup>126</sup>

While this combined form of residential and commercial building seems to have been confined to Sydney, other service stations throughout Australia in this period

**Fig. 7.26 Emil Sodersten** (arch.), The Broadway, apartment and service station, Bellevue Hill, Sydney, New South Wales, 1928–30. Photograph: courtesy Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney.



often included ornamental references to the Mediterranean fashion, with red-tiled roofs, Mission parapets and/or baroque curlicue columns. A Victorian example in this vein was the Kellow Falkner Car Showroom (also called Badenach House, 1929) in South Yarra, once again stylish commercial architecture associated with the automobile and built by leading Melbourne architect Harry Norris (1888–1966). Covered in Goodhue-like terracotta ornamental friezes and Wunderlich roof tiles, this still extant building was one of the earliest custom-built motor showrooms in Victoria. According to its National Trust entry, it ‘housed large bronze-framed show windows displaying American motor cars’.<sup>127</sup>

For a brief moment in Australia, then, the evocation of Hollywood and all things Californian appeared on the most popular level in buildings, landscape designs and graphic

illustration with references to ornamentation, forms and stylistic elements originally associated with the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish America. These fashionable applications, consciously alluding to a media-generated concept of Pacific modernity and stylishness, were bound to be short-lived, as fashions changed on both sides of the ocean. More significantly, the economic effects of the Great Depression and then the hardships of World War II cut short any further Australian development of these decorative directions. Once the war ended, the hegemony of International Style modernism put an end to any frivolous experimentation with period revivalism as expressive of national identity or modernity.

Still, the considered efforts of Leslie Wilkinson and other prominent architects to introduce Mediterranean architectural forms to Australia were successful in presenting



an alternative to the climatically inappropriate English styles that had previously been the most prominent source of inspiration for Australian builders. That these new styles were taken up with such alacrity at all levels of society and in all aesthetic forms owes as much to Australia's neighbour on the Pacific as it does to any high-minded architectural pronouncements. California, seeking its own form of modern architecture and an aesthetics that would represent a unique sense of its place on the Pacific, presented Australia, through reproduced illustrations and experienced examples, with the most alluring iconographic possibilities.

#### NOTES

1. Leslie Wilkinson, 'Domestic architecture', *Building*, 12 September 1921, p. 64.
2. John R. Brogan, *101 Australian homes designed by John R. Brogan*, Building Publishing Co. Ltd., Sydney, 1935.
3. Apperly, 'Sydney Houses', vol. i, p. 98.
4. As John F. Williams wrote: 'Their national image had changed in four years from that of a rather self-deprecating people into one of a people who had been encouraged to believe they'd almost won the war single-handedly. It is not helpful for a small, new nation to have to deal with a press-inspired sense of national superiority; for its most logical consequence, apart from insularity, is almost certainly complacency ... This overdone and, ultimately, self-defeating propaganda had little basis in fact and played no small part in the malaise of the 1920s.' In '1914–19: Gilding battlefield lilies', *Quarantined culture: Australian reactions to modernism 1913–1939*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1995, pp. 80–81.
5. Malouf, p. 94.
6. See White, pp. 141–43.
7. Williams, *Quarantined culture*, p. 11.
8. See White, *Inventing Australia*; Tony Moore, 'Australia's bohemian tradition: Take two', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 58, 1998, pp. 56–65; and Peter Kirkpatrick, *The sea coast of bohemia: Literary life in Sydney's Roaring Twenties*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992.
9. Nancy D. H. Underhill, *Making Australian art 1916–1949: Sydney Ure Smith, patron and publisher*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 154. On Ure Smith, see also Underhill, 'Smith, Sydney George Ure (1887 – 1949)', *ADB*, vol. 11, pp. 662–63.
10. On Lloyd Jones, see R. M. Thompson, 'David Jones' in War and Peace', BA (Hons) thesis, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1980; and Thompson, 'Jones, Sir Charles Lloyd (1878–1958)', *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 507–08.
11. *Australian encyclopedia*, 1956, vol. ii, pp.136–56.
12. 'So popular had a visit to the flicks become that Australians were said to be among the keenest filmgoers in the world. By 1921 picture shows dominated entertainment tax receipts with more than sixty-eight million admissions. The theatre and horse racing came next but between them they shared less than sixteen million attendances.' Diane Collins, 'Two shopfronts and picture showmen: Film exhibition to the 1920s', in *A century of Australian cinema*, Australian Film Institute, South Melbourne, 1995, pp. 40–41.
13. Some elements of Mediterranean styles were appearing in Australian architectural designs prior to Leslie Wilkinson's arrival in the country, most notably amongst those architects who had already been in the United States or who were directly influenced by their contacts with American architects. See for example the design by John Burcham Clamp for 'Residential Flats, Macquarie Street, Sydney', illustrated in *Building*, 12 December 1913, p. 101.
14. Leslie Wilkinson, 'Domestic architecture', in Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds), in collaboration with W. W. Hardy Wilson, *Domestic architecture in Australia*, Special Number of *Art in Australia*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1919, p. [4].
15. *Monograph of the work of Charles A Platt with an introduction of Royal Cortissoz*, The Architectural Book Publishing Co., New York, 1913.
16. David Wilkinson, email correspondence to Trevor Howells, 31 July 2007.
17. David Wilkinson in Sue Falkiner (ed.), *Leslie Wilkinson: A practical idealist*, Valadon Publishing, Sydney, 1982, p. 40.
18. Charles A. Platt, 'Italian gardens', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, July and August 1893, pp. 165–80; and *Italian gardens*, Harper's, New York, 1894. According to Royal Cortissoz, on page iv of the introduction to the 1913 Platt monograph, Platt 'published a series of chapters in "Harper's Magazine" and afterwards gathered them together in a book, "Italian Gardens," which was brought

- out in 1894, the forerunner of all those innumerable volumes which have since, in England and America, made the subject more familiar’.
19. George Molnar, ‘The Prof’, in Falkiner, p. 102.
  20. Moore wrote in a letter to Goodhue, in a discussion about North African illustrations they had shared, ‘I’ve a weakness for that particular variety of architecture, for I’m a sun worshipper and they stand for sunlight and color for me.’ John D. Moore, letter to Bertram Goodhue, [c. August 1917], Goodhue Papers, The Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, New York (Box 6: 19 [M]).
  21. See John D. Moore, ‘Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue: An appreciation’, *Architecture: Proceedings of The Institute of Architects of New South Wales*, vol. 13, no. 9, September 1924, pp. 8–11.
  22. Wilkinson himself recounted later: “‘White-wash” they used to call me when I first came here in 1921. People thought I wanted to paint every building on the Sydney foreshores white. In fact I like any weathered pastel—green, blue, pink—like the buildings in Italy. White can sometimes be too staring.’ Quoted in Falkiner, p. 40.
  23. See *ibid.*, Chapter 3, ‘Leslie Wilkinson at Sydney University’, pp. 53–87.
  24. *ibid.*, p. 46.
  25. On Waterhouse, see Michael Waterhouse, ‘Waterhouse, Bertrand James (1876–1965)’, *ADB*, vol. 12, pp. 388–89; and *From Nutcote to Elwatan: The art and architecture of B. J. Waterhouse*, exhibition catalogue, Mosman Art Gallery, Mosman, New South Wales, 4 September–17 October 2004.
  26. See Nora Cooper, ‘New ideas allied to Old-World Styles’, *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 7 June 1926, pp. 14–19.
  27. W. Hardy Wilson, ‘Building Purulia’, in Smith and Stevens (eds), *Domestic architecture in Australia*, 1919, pp. 13–14.
  28. Paul Hogben and Stanislaus Fung, ‘Landscape and culture, geography & race: Some shifts in Australian architectural commentary’, *Voices: The Quarterly Journal of the National Library of Australia*, vol. 7, no. 2, Winter 1997, p. 8.
  29. John D. Moore, letter to Bertram Goodhue, France, [August 1917?], in Goodhue Papers, The Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, New York (Box 6: 19 [M], pp. 3–5).
  30. On the design process for the Perth campus, see Christopher Vernon, ‘Landscape (+) architecture at UWA’, *Architecture Australia*, July–August 2001, viewed 9 August 2007, <<http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:3MyZDQFREDcJ:www.architectureaustralia.com/aa/aaissue.php%3Fissu eid%3D200107%26article%3D8%26typeon%3D2+university+western+australia+architecture+wilkinson&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us>>; Gillian Lilleyman and George Seddon, *A landscape for learning: A history of the grounds of the University of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Perth, 2006; and Ian Tyrrell’s review of Lilleyman and Seddon’s book, ‘Environment, landscape and gardening in Australia’, *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 38, no. 130, October 2007, pp. 339–447.
  31. Vernon, ‘Landscape (+) architecture’.
  32. On Alsop, see George Tibbits, ‘Alsop, Rodney Howard (1881–1932)’, *ADB*, vol. 7, 1979, pp. 47–48. On Sayce, see ‘Wikipedia’, viewed 24 September 2007, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad\\_Sayce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad_Sayce)>.
  33. Vernon, ‘Landscape (+) architecture’.
  34. Apperly, *A pictorial guide*, p. 194.
  35. The ‘Australian Heritage Database’ entry for Hackett Memorial Buildings, University of Western Australia, Mounts Bay Rd, Crawley, Western Australia, viewed 13 August 2007, <<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/>>.
  36. Vernon, ‘Landscape (+) architecture’.
  37. On the work of Allison & Allison, see Sally Sims Stokes, ‘In a climate like ours: The California campuses of Allison & Allison’, *California History*, vol. 84, no. 4, Fall 2007, pp. 26–65, 69–73.
  38. *California of the Southland: A history of the University of California at Los Angeles*, The University of California at Los Angeles Alumni Association, Los Angeles, 1937, p. 35. See also Moore, *Los Angeles*, p. 200. Stokes calls Allison’s design ‘Lombard Romanesque’, p. 52.
  39. *ibid.*
  40. *California of the Southland*, p. 52.
  41. Vernon, ‘Landscape (+) architecture’.
  42. Western Australia had its own eccentric source for Spanish Style architecture, the outback priest John Cyril Hawes (1876–1956), who constructed several Spanish-inspired cathedrals, including the masterful St Francis Xavier Cathedral (1916) in Geraldton, Western Australia. See Freeland, *Architecture in Australia*, pp. 233–35. I thank Harriet Edquist, RMIT, for reminding me of this important figure.
  43. ‘The fashion of sympathetic garden treatment was received with the greatest enthusiasm in Perth. Native trees and shrubs had always been accepted in this lately developed city; imported deciduous trees were hardly known. Now spare young white gums,

- handsome red flowering-gums and mauve-flowering, lacy jacarandas grew thickly in front gardens and on wide lawn side-walks.' Robin Boyd, *Australia's home: Its origins, builders and occupiers*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1961, p. 79.
44. *ibid.*, p. 81. In his *Architecture in Australia*, Freeland repeats the same sentiment, p.233: 'Almost singlehandedly Wilkinson was responsible for making the Spanish Mission style popular in all the eastern states of Australia.'
  45. *ibid.*, p. 233.
  46. Richard Apperly more correctly labels Wilkinson's work as 'Inter-War Mediterranean' and comments, 'Buildings in the Inter-War Mediterranean style are often pleasant and useful elements in the built environment, and they seem to have relatively little trouble surviving the passing parade of architectural fashions.' *A pictorial guide*, pp. 172–73.
  47. Evidence of Wilkinson and Wilson's shared aesthetic based on a climatically appropriate style is evident in one of Wilkinson's first articles in *Building*: 'It is a thousand pities that the chaos of mid 19th Century Europe was allowed to influence this country, and interrupt the fine lines on which Australian architecture was started by Governor Macquarie. The comfortable and beautiful homesteads, which the older settled parts still retain, show a logical development of the Georgian, from which they sprang; but later we see the slum terraces, the pretentious villas and all the incorrect horrors of contemporary work in England.' In 'Domestic architecture', p. 63.
  48. One of the purest examples of an adaptation of Mission Style appears in Auckland, New Zealand. The Auckland Grammar School, an Anglican school completed in 1916 by Richard Atkinson Abbott (1883–1954), employs a pebbly surface to give an effect of adobe walls. See Peter Shaw, *A history of New Zealand architecture*, Hodder Moa Beckett, Auckland, 1997. Shaw also suggests that Abbott may have seen photographs of George Costerisan's Long Beach High School of 1898. I am grateful to Walter Cook, librarian, The Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, for providing me with this reference.
  49. For the best definitions of the various Spanish styles, see Winter and Gebhard, *Architecture in Los Angeles*.
  50. Wilkinson, 'Domestic architecture', p. 3.
  51. 'The best qualities of Wilkinson's work were appreciated by other architects. In the next few years the style developed in the upper-middle class houses of Sydney and Melbourne, and by 1927 growing Canberra had adopted it as an unofficial design'. Boyd, *Australia's home*, p.81.
  52. One of the best summaries of the political intrigues surrounding Griffin's experience in Canberra is Roger Pegrum, 'Canberra: The bush capital', in Pamela Statham (ed.), *The origins of Australia's capital cities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 1989, pp. 317–40. See also Apperly, 'Walter Burley Griffin: The Canberra controversy', in his 'Sydney Houses', pp. 178–84.
  53. On Murdoch, see D. I. McDonald, 'Murdoch, John Smith (1862–1945)', *ADB*, vol. 10, pp. 621–22.
  54. On Sulman, see particularly John Phillips, 'John Sulman and the question of an "Australian style of architecture"', *Fabrications*, no. 8, July 1997, pp. 87–116; and Robert Freestone, 'Sunlight, space and suburbs: The physical planning ideas of Sir John Sulman', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 8, part 2, December 1995, p. 139.
  55. See Percival Serle, *DAB*, vol. ii, p. 392.
  56. See John Sulman, 'Verandahs and loggiae ii', *Australiasian Builder and Contactors' News*, 21 May 1887 and 'Verandahs and Loggiae iii', *Australiasian Builder and Contactors' News*, 28 May 1887.
  57. Quoted in Phillips, 'John Sulman', p. 98.
  58. See Peter Proudfoot, 'Canberra: The triumph of the Garden City', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 77, part 1, 1991, pp. 20–39; and Paul Reid, *Canberra following Griffith*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2002.
  59. See also Zeny Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman, 1849–1934', PhD thesis, 3 vols, University of Technology, Sydney, 2007.
  60. John Sulman, 'Town planning in Great Britain, Europe and America', Legislative Assembly reports from International Town-Planning Conference, Amsterdam, July 1924, NSW Parliamentary Papers, 1925, no. 1, pp. 151–61. I am most grateful to Robert Freestone, Professor, Planning and Urban Development Program, School of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales, Sydney, for providing this information.
  61. In a talk at the National Archives of Australia in Canberra in 2002, Walter Burley Griffin expert and Professor of Architecture James Weirick stated that the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings, with their Renaissance references, set the 'tone' of Canberra as something different and grander than Australian country towns. From transcript of talk, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 12 August 2002,

- pp. 18–19. I am grateful to Chris Bettle, Canberra, for providing this transcript.
62. Reid, p. 157.
  63. The Taylors' first reproduction of the 'Commercial Centre at Canberra' in *Building* appeared in the 12 October 1927 issue, p. 76. The illustration included a caption, calling the buildings 'happy in appearance', but then, in typically eccentric Taylor fashion, stating that 'the structure seems to require a campanile, or a similar structure, in its proximity to give it balance'.
  64. Robert Freestone points out that in his 1926 diary, about a motor trip to Canberra, Sulman expressed displeasure with the final result of his design, which had been completed by Kirkpatrick: 'Civic Centre shops dreadful combination of light Italian Renaissance arcades and heavy Georgian centres and corners.' As Freestone states, 'I have never quite been able to reconcile this comment with his own involvement; maybe he was displeased with the detail design by Kirkpatrick.' In email note to the author, 17 August 2007.
  65. See Hetherington, *James Northfield and the art of selling Australia*, 2006.
  66. According to John Phillips, Sulman was 'one of the first architects in Sydney to employ the red Marseilles pattern tile ... on the roofs of his buildings'. In 'John Sulman', footnote 57, p. 116.
  67. On the 'invention' of Florida's Mediterranean Style architecture, see Beth Dunlop, 'Inventing antiquity: The art and craft of Mediterranean Revival architecture', *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, vol. 23, 1998, pp. 191–207. W. A. Drummond travelled to Florida in 1927; his own photos in Florida are used in 'Spanish Style in home building: Australian architect explains advantages', *The Australian Home Beautiful (AHB)*, 1 February 1928, pp. 28–29, 53.
  68. *Building*, 12 February 1915, p. 99.
  69. *Building*, 12 May 1915, p. 104.
  70. *Building*, 12 September 1927, p. 101.
  71. *Building*, 12 November 1927, p. 89.
  72. *Building*, 12 January 1928, p. 119.
  73. *ibid.*, p. 57.
  74. See Florence M. Taylor, 'A tribute to the late George A. Taylor', *Building*, 13 February 1928, pp. 44–46.
  75. *Building*, 12 October 1928, pp. 57–64.
  76. *ibid.*, p. 59.
  77. *ibid.*, p. 63.
  78. *Building*, 13 April 1931, p. 35.
  79. See Julie Oliver, *The Australian Home Beautiful: From hills hoist to high rise*, Pacific Publications, McMahon's Point, NSW, 1999.
  80. Percy Everett, 'Architectural tendencies', *The Australian Home Builder*, August 1923, n.p.
  81. Leslie M. Perrott, *The Australian Home Builder*, May 1925, p. 25. See also Perrott's *Concrete homes*, G. W. Green, Melbourne, 1930; and Richard Apperly's discussion of these developments in his thesis, 'Sydney Houses', pp. 98–114.
  82. Nora Cooper, 'New ideas allied to Old-World Styles', *AHB*, 7 June 1926, cover, pp. 14–19. An example of Peddle, Thorp, & Walker's use of Mission Styles appeared earlier in *Distinctive Australian homes* in a house designed in Edgecliffe in 1925, 'covered in Medusa Waterproof Cement in salmon chrome and ... roofed with Spanish tiles'. See John R. P. Adams, *Distinctive Australian homes*, Sydney, 1925, p. 55.
  83. *ibid.*, p. 16.
  84. 'Some of Melbourne's notable flats', *AHB*, 1 April 1927, pp. 14–17.
  85. Ruth Lane-Poole, 'A Spanish house that is true to type: First of a new series of studies of notable Australian homes', *AHB*, 1 February 1928, pp. 12–19.
  86. Nora Cooper, 'Casa di Lucia: A "little bit of Old Spain" on the shores of Sydney Harbour', *AHB*, 2 December 1929, pp. 13–16.
  87. Cuffley, p. 6.
  88. G. A. Soilleux, 'The small home in California: Its lesson and a note of warning', *AHB*, 1 August 1928, pp. 16–18. Soilleux apparently worked in the 1950s on the building of the United Nations headquarters in New York City. See 'Cheops' architect', *Time*, 22 September 1952, p. 2; viewed January 2009, <[www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,822508,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,822508,00.html)>
  89. Easter Soilleux, 'A notable modified Spanish home', *AHB*, 2 December 1929, p. 19.
  90. *ibid.*
  91. On Walling, see Margaret Barrett (ed.), *The Edna Walling book of Australian garden design*, Anne O'Donovan, Richmond, 1980; *Edna Walling's year*, Anne O'Donovan, South Yarra, Victoria, 1990; Trisha Dixon and Jennie Churchill, *The vision of Edna Walling: Garden plans 1920–1951*, Bloomings Books, Hawthorn, Victoria, 1998; and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Cinemedia and State Library of Victoria, 'The Edna Walling Website', Tantamount Productions, 2001, viewed 4 January 2009, <<http://www.abc.net.au/walling>>.
  92. The Victim, 'The house a man built to please his wife', *AHB*, 2 September 1929, pp. 18–22.



93. Richard Apperly maintains that the 'architectural profession never abandoned the Spanish Mission Style to the speculative builder as it had abandoned the California Bungalow', but many advertisements in *Home Beautiful* depict Spanish Style homes that builders in Melbourne and Sydney could construct along with other styles that might appeal to the middle-class owner. See 'Sydney Houses', vol. i, p. 108.
94. See Frank van Straten and Elaine Marriner, *The Regent Theatre: Melbourne's palace of dreams*, ELM Publishing, Melbourne, 1996; and Louise Blake, 'Rescuing the Regent Theatre', *Journal of the Public Record Office Victoria*, no. 4, September 2005, pp. 2–6, viewed 10 September 2007, <<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/provenance/no4/RescuingTheRegentTheatre2.asp>>. On Thring, see J. P. Holroyd, 'Thring, Francis William (1882–1936)', *ADB*, vol. 12, Melbourne University Press, 1990, pp. 221–22.
95. Van Straten and Marriner, p. 13.
96. *ibid.*, p. 18; and *AHB*, 1 April 1929, p. 63.
97. *ibid.*, p. 19. On Smeraldi, see Robert Winter, *The architecture of entertainment: LA in the Twenties*, Gibbs-Smith, Salt Lake City, 2006; and 'Genius—and art', in *Ars gratia artis: The story behind one of the West's historical and artistic masterpieces, The L.A. Biltmore Hotel*, n.d., in Pasadena Public Library, California artists' biographies notebook.
98. On Doyle, see Graham Shirley, 'Doyle, Stuart Frank (1887–1945)', *ADB*, vol. 8, Melbourne University Press, 1981, pp. 337–38.
99. 'The rise of the new State Theatre: A marvel of modern building and engineering skill', *AHB*, 1 February 1929, pp. 60–62.
100. *ibid.*, p. 61.
101. Conrad Hamann, 'Five heralds of free enterprise: Australian cinemas and their architecture from the 1900s to the 1940s', in *A century of Australian cinema*, p. 101.
102. See Caroline Bowdon-Butler and Charles Pickett, 'Homes in the sky', *Architecture Australia*, May–June 2007, viewed 10 September 2007, <<http://www.architectureaustralia.com/aa/aaissue.php?issueid=200705>>.
103. Entry at 'Aussie Heritage' website for Gardens of the Moon, Arthurs Seat, Victoria, viewed 10 September 2007, <<http://www.aussieheritage.com.au/>>.
104. Richard Peterson, 'No. 10: The Esplanade (formerly Belvedere)', *A place of sensuous resort: Buildings of St Kilda and their people*, St Kilda Historical Series, no. 6, St Kilda Historical Society, Balaclava, Victoria, 2005, viewed 11 September 2007, <<http://www.skhs.org.au/SKHSbuildings/buildings.htm>>.
105. In an article on Spanish Mission Style in Brisbane, architectural historian Graham de Gruchy comments: 'If the spaciousness and rich decorative qualities of the Spanish Mission style in the U.S.A. suffered in the transplantation process—even with local architects in control—then the small speculatively built house ... was no more than 'skin deep' in style. A few of the basic characteristics were applied to the façade to stamp the small house as Spanish Mission revival in flavour but that was about as far as it went.' In 'The Spanish Mission Revival Style in Brisbane: An outline of the development of the style in the 1920s and 1930s', *SAHANZ 87: Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand. Papers*, Fourth Annual Conference, Adelaide, 9–10 May 1987, p. 30.
106. Apperly, *A pictorial guide*, pp. 176–77.
107. Hamann, pp. 99, 101.
108. On the fascinating life of Frank Albert, see 'Albert, Michel François (1874–1962)', *ADB*, vol. 7, pp. 27–28; and Richard Guilliat, 'Old gold', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Spectrum', 8 April 1995.
109. Biographical information, RAIA files; and *Salon: Journal of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects*, vol. 2, no. 7, February 1914, pp. 430–431; and vol. 2, no. 9, April 1914, p. 543.
110. NSW Heritage Office, Parramatta, New South Wales, Heritage Item listing for Boomerang, viewed 17 September 2007, <<http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au>>, (file no. S90/01684 & HC 32046).
111. See Jahn, p. 115.
112. '\$22 million Boomerang returns as a rich man's residence', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 February 2002. As Richard Apperly has written, '[h]is architect, one feels, must have worked hard to earn the substantial fee which a job the size of "Boomerang" would have commanded'. See 'Sydney Houses', vol. i, p. 113.
113. Julie Huffer, '\$20m Boomerang back on the market', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 2005.
114. NSW Heritage Office listing.
115. Nora Cooper, 'Boomerang', *AHB*, April 1930, p. 13.
116. See Stuart Read, 'Shelley, Max Robert', in Richard Aiken and Michael Looker (eds), *The Oxford companion to Australian gardens*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2002, p. 548; NSW Heritage Office listing; 'Early twentieth century landscape designers in NSW', *The News: The Twentieth*

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