AUSTRALIAN ROMANESQUE

A History of Romanesque-Inspired Architecture in Australia

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In Australia there are four Catholic cathedrals designed in the Romanesque style (Canberra, Newcastle, Port Pirie and Geraldton) and one Anglican cathedral (Parramatta). These buildings are significant in their local communities, but the numbers of people who visit them each year are minuscule when compared with the numbers visiting Australia's most famous Romanesque building, the large Sydney retail complex known as the Queen Victoria Building. God and Mammon, and the Romanesque serves them both.

Do those who come to pray in the cathedrals, and those who come to shop in the galleries of the QVB, take much notice of the architecture? Probably not, and yet the Romanesque is a style of considerable character, with a history stretching back to Antiquity. It was never extensively used in Australia, but there are nonetheless hundreds of buildings in the Romanesque style still standing in Australia's towns and cities. Perhaps it is time to start looking more closely at these buildings?

They will not disappoint. The heyday of the Australian Romanesque occurred in the fifty years between 1890 and 1940, and it was largely a brick-based style. As it happens, those years also marked the zenith of craft brickwork in Australia, because it was only in the late nineteenth century that Australia began to produce high-quality, durable bricks in a wide range of colours. But good brickwork requires good bricklayers, and this was also a period when Australia was blessed with many artisan bricklayers, often paid at a rate which was completely incommensurate with their skill. A study of the Australian Romanesque is thus also a study of fine brickwork of a quality which we are unlikely to see again.

Architectural history is not just a history of the design of buildings. The story of the Australian Romanesque is also the story of those who made decisions to build in this style and the forces that guided that choice. It is the story of the emotions which the Romanesque stirred in Australian Christian parishes and clergymen (and they were all men). It is also the story of the architects who prepared the plans and guided the clients in their final choices. It is the story of businessmen (and again, they were almost all men) and bureaucrats who selected secular versions of the Romanesque for particular commercial buildings, schools, court houses, etc. And of course it is also a story of the people who used those buildings and of their response to them.

Such a history can only be written by studying in detail the stories behind the hundreds of Romanesque buildings in Australia, and that is beyond the scope of the present work. However a start can be made by identifying the buildings themselves, and the architects who designed them, and then assembling that data into some sort of coherent narrative. That has been the modest aim here. With luck, this short history will stimulate others to embark on the more detailed case studies which will, in time, give us a better understanding of the Australian Romanesque.
Methodology

This study is based on a database of about 650 Romanesque-inspired buildings throughout Australia, some of them never built, some of them long demolished. The buildings were identified from many sources, including standard architectural histories, the contemporary building and architectural press, heritage databases, and newspaper databases. Of course the buildings identified are only a fraction of the total, but it is hoped that they are sufficiently representative to give an accurate picture of the whole.¹

The choice of buildings for inclusion in the database was often problematic. Which characteristics identify a building as "Romanesque-inspired"? The standard guide to Australian architectural styles, by Apperly, Irving and Reynolds,² has been invaluable, but it still leaves some grey areas unilluminated. Many decisions must remain a matter of personal judgement, but in selecting buildings for inclusion, the guiding principle has been that the building must exhibit at least two of the standard Romanesque motifs which are described in Chapter Two.

The present history aims to condense the information contained in the database into a manageable form. It begins, in Chapter Two, with a description of the main motifs of the Australian Romanesque, because it is essential to understand these before one can look intelligently at the buildings. Chapter Three provides an Australia-wide overview of the topic, to create a broad-brush summary and provide a context. The remaining chapters are devoted to individual states, giving a more detailed account of local manifestations of the style.

As to the dating of buildings, it should be understood that the dates given are normally the year(s) during which the buildings were constructed. This has been done for the practical reason that this information can often be established with reasonable accuracy. Of course the architect's original design will pre-date the construction of the building.

On the question of terminology, it must be remembered that some Australian architectural historians deplore the use of the term "Romanesque Revival," on the grounds that there was never a medieval Romanesque architecture in Australia, and therefore it was never revived. Others object to such quibbling over well-established and well-understood terms. To avoid controversy, in the present study the term "Romanesque-inspired architecture" has generally been preferred, or more simply, "Australian Romanesque."

¹ A version of the database will be published online, under the title: A Checklist of Romanesque-Inspired Architecture in Australia.
Acknowledgements

My greatest debt is to the many Australian architectural historians on whose work I have drawn and from whose knowledge I have benefited. I am particularly grateful to those who have created the directories, databases and encyclopedias which are the indispensable tools which so greatly facilitate the work of the modern architectural historian.

Although some of the architects whose work is examined here have been the subject of significant investigation, little if anything has been written about many of them. On the Australian Romanesque in general, the pioneering scholars have been the late Phillip Kent and Anne Neale, whose writings have been of great assistance to me.

Many diocesan archivists, parish secretaries and parish priests have kindly responded to inquiries about specific buildings, and have often provided photographs as well. I am sincerely grateful to them for their time and assistance.

A study like this depends on an enormous amount of pictorial material. It would not have been possible to complete it without access to the work of many photographers, living and dead, named and unnamed, from whose labours and skills I have benefited. Because of the quantity of pictorial material assembled during this project, I made a decision at an early stage not to attempt to record the names of the photographers whose work I was using. This was a pragmatic decision, taken to save time, but I am very conscious that it is hard to justify. I hope that those whose work I have used without attribution will forgive me.
Chapter 2: The Romanesque Style

The Medieval Romanesque

If style concepts are by their nature only loosely defined, among them the one called Romanesque is especially elusive. This is because, more than most style labels, it is lacking in contexts: it is not defined with a particular people, dynasty or historical period, and there is only restricted evidence that it was recognized at the time.¹

It is impossible to make any serious study of Romanesque-inspired architecture in Australia without having a basic understanding of the historical models on which it was based. However, as the above passage from a recent history of Romanesque architecture demonstrates, the term "Romanesque architecture" is hard to define precisely. There is wide divergence of opinion as to the dating of the Romanesque. A traditional view regards it as the architecture of the Latin Church (i.e. Western Europe) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but some authorities discern its origins in the Carolingian period (around 800) and still others trace it back to the final years of the Roman Empire in the west. There is general agreement that it was supplanted by the more elaborate Gothic style, with its pointed arches, which emerged at the end of the twelfth century.

The term "Romanesque" first appeared in print in 1819. It was coined by a British art historian, William Gunn, to describe a style which emerged in the later years of the Roman Empire. This was a style in which

the arches spring from the abacus of the capital … This innovation once sanctioned was never afterwards abandoned … it by degrees obtained the general preference, so that in edifices constructed subsequently to the reign of Constantine, it became their prevailing character, and which, as expressive of the architecture from which it is a vitious deviation, I shall denominate Romanesque.²

"Romanesque" was thus originally a derogatory term employed to describe a style which was seen as a degenerate version of classical Roman architecture. As this style persisted in use throughout the era popularly known as the Dark Ages, it inevitably carried an aura of crudity and barbarism. In this simplistic narrative, the re-emergence of civilised art during the high Middle Ages led to the replacement of Romanesque with the more elegant pointed Gothic style, which would in turn yield to the classical styles of the Renaissance, and so return full-circle to the architecture of the Roman Empire.

As Gunn's exposition makes clear, it was, from the first, the round arch which distinguished Romanesque architecture. However round arches are not the beginning and ending of Romanesque architecture. During the centuries when it was in use throughout much of Europe, Romanesque architecture was influenced from many sources and developed regional variants. The two local versions of the style which had most influence on Australian architecture were the Norman and the Lombardic.

**Norman Romanesque**

The Romanesque of north-western France had begun to influence English architecture even before the Norman conquest of 1066. Thereafter it rapidly became the dominant style in England, and would remain so until it was replaced by the pointed Gothic style around 1200. It was a style of massive solidity and simplicity. The earlier Norman churches were almost completely unadorned, but later buildings displayed a distinctive form of sculptural decoration, based mainly on geometric forms, possibly owing something to the earlier traditions of Anglo-Saxon architecture.

To the early English settlers of Australia, the Norman style was familiar from many a village church. Although acknowledged to be a primitive style, it still possessed the charm of antiquity and benefited from its association with a key period in English history. It was therefore attractive to at least some of the clergy and laity of the Anglican Church in the antipodes.

**Figure 2.1. Drawing of an early twelfth-century doorway in Lincoln, England**

(From Augustus Pugin's *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, 2nd ed., 1823)
**Lombardic Romanesque**

The Romanesque style of northern Italy was lighter and more decorative than the Norman Romanesque. Pilasters, applied shafts, arcading and arched corbel tables were used for external decoration. Construction was often in brick, which produced richer colour effects than stone. The lofty bell-tower (campanile) was also typical of this style.

Few of the early settlers of Australia had been fortunate enough to study the Lombardic Romanesque at first hand, but it was known from illustrations. As an Italian style, it carried something of the reflected glory of ancient Rome. There was also a popular belief in nineteenth-century Australia that Italian architecture was of particular relevance to the Australian colonies, because of similarities in climate between Italy and parts of Australia.

![Figure 2.2. Perspective drawing of the twelfth-century Basilica of San Zeno, Verona, Italy](From Henry Gally Knight's *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy*, 1844)

**The Romanesque Revival**

When architects in Europe and elsewhere rediscovered the Romanesque style in the early nineteenth century, they seized upon those features which they found most attractive, and mixed them liberally with aspects of other styles, to create a wide variety of buildings which we now regard as Romanesque-inspired. The Romanesque Revival took different forms, from the elegant *Rundbogenstil* buildings of Munich, to the large and forbidding churches in the East End of London, to the imposing museums of South Kensington and Washington.
Late in the nineteenth century, the American architect Henry Hobson Richardson created a new variation on the theme, which became known as the Richardsonian Romanesque. Further developed by other American architects, this style enjoyed huge popularity in the United States—and briefly in Australia—in the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

Figure 2.3. Austin Hall, Harvard University
(Henry Hobson Richardson, 1881)

The present study is concerned with the history of Romanesque-inspired architecture designed in Australia, for Australian conditions. The Australian Romanesque is but one variant in the complex history of the Romanesque Revival. While drawing inspiration from medieval precedents and from contemporary developments overseas, the Australian Romanesque inevitably developed some peculiarities of its own.

It is not easy to specify exactly which Australian buildings can properly be described as Romanesque-inspired. Ultimately this is a matter for personal judgement, but it is indisputable that the building must demonstrate at least some of the standard features of medieval Romanesque architecture. In nineteenth-century Australia, many small churches and chapels were built with round-arched windows, and these buildings are often classified as Romanesque. In the absence of further Romanesque stylistic indicators (for example, an arched corbel table or a wheel window), this designation is very questionable. It is easy to fall victim to the lazy assumption that any pre-1945 building with round-headed windows is Romanesque. This is of course too simplistic.
The semi-circular arch (often with an enlarged keystone) was used in several nineteenth-century architectural styles in Australia, including the Victorian Italianate style. The latter style had its roots in primitive rural Italian buildings, which in turn owed something to the simple architecture of the early Middle Ages. It is therefore not surprising that the Victorian Italianate style in Australia is sometimes confused with the Romanesque, all the more so as both styles often featured a tower with a low-pitched pyramidal roof.

Medieval Romanesque architecture was closely related to Byzantine architecture. As a result, nineteenth-century Romanesque Revival buildings were sometimes described as "Byzantine," before the term Romanesque came into general use. Australian architects in the nineteenth century were notoriously eclectic, and they produced a number of buildings which can legitimately be described as both Romanesque and Byzantine.

When the new American Romanesque style reached Australia in the early 1890s, it introduced a further variation, one which was strikingly modern and had very little in common with medieval architecture. This creates yet more problems of definition for the architectural historian.

Then in the 1920s, when the "Mediterranean" styles became popular in Australia, most notably in the form of the Spanish Mission style, the boundaries of the Romanesque became blurred again. This was because the Romanesque had its origins in Italy, so it too was a Mediterranean style. Some Australian architects, with cheerful eclecticism, mixed Romanesque motifs with Baroque Spanish Mission motifs, thus creating buildings which straddle both styles.

So it can be seen that there are considerable methodological problems in defining and delimiting the Romanesque-inspired architecture of Australia. It is not fruitful to devote excessive effort to wrestling with questions of classification; it is however useful to consider the main features which are associated with the Australian Romanesque. Buildings which prominently exhibit some of these features can legitimately be described as Romanesque, even if they can equally be assigned other stylistic labels.

It must be stressed that the present study is concerned only with exteriors. The Australian Romanesque is a style of façades. There is no such thing as an Australian Romanesque interior. The interiors of Romanesque buildings in Australia reflect the requirements and fashions of the time. The architects who adopted the Romanesque never attempted to recreate the gloomy and cavernous interiors of medieval Romanesque churches. Thus the interiors of the buildings discussed in this study often have little in common. Certainly the interiors of Romanesque Anglican or Catholic churches may bear some resemblance to their medieval antecedents, and thus to each other. On the other hand, the interiors of Romanesque churches built for nonconformist groups such as Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists are much more diverse, reflecting as they do the different needs of those groups. And when the Romanesque style was applied to banks or post offices or schools, its influence on the interior design of those buildings was negligible.
Romanesque Motifs in Australian Architecture

The following section is intended as a guide to the external structural and decorative features which are most commonly found in Romanesque buildings in Australia. It refers mainly to what might be called mainstream Romanesque, i.e. buildings which draw their inspiration from medieval Romanesque architecture. A subsequent section deals with those buildings which could be described as American Romanesque.

Windows

In medieval Romanesque architecture, windows were usually small. Glass was rare and expensive. Furthermore, window openings weakened a wall, and the flying buttress had not yet been developed to counteract this problem. When designing windows, Australian architects working in the Romanesque idiom had to balance the desire for authenticity with the need for light and ventilation.

However in those regions of Australia where high temperatures coincide with low humidity, the small windows and thick masonry walls of the medieval Romanesque were seen as one of the practical advantages of this style. By contrast, in regions of Australia where the summers are very humid, Romanesque churches were sometimes built with wide doors in the nave walls, which could be opened to permit maximum cross-ventilation.

The round-headed window is the most commonly recognised feature of Romanesque architecture. Narrow windows (sometimes incorrectly called lancets) are typical of the medieval Romanesque.

A common motif in the façade, usually above the doorway, is the wheel window. This is a large window with the tracery arranged like the spokes of a wheel, radiating from a central point. The wheel window is an authentically Romanesque motif, although it is much more prevalent in Romanesque Revival architecture than in the medieval original.

During the high middle ages, as the Romanesque gave way to the Gothic, masonry skills improved and elaborate rose windows began to appear in Gothic churches and cathedrals. The rose window is thus a post-Romanesque motif, but it occurs widely in Australian Romanesque buildings, but usually with quite simple tracery, in keeping with the general simplicity of the Romanesque style.

The oculus window, a small, round window, often without tracery, was sometimes used in medieval Romanesque architecture and is common in the Australian Romanesque.
Figure 2.4. Arcading, wheel window, corbel tables, tiled parapet, campanile
Chapel of Christian Brothers' Training College (now Australian Catholic University), Strathfield, NSW (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1925)

The biforate window, where a central column divides the window into two separate round-headed openings, is a medieval motif which is commonly found in Australian Romanesque buildings. Sometimes the biforate window is surmounted by an oculus window. This is a combination which is more Gothic than Romanesque, but it is commonly found in Romanesque Revival architecture in Europe and Australia.

Figure 2.5. Biforate windows with oculus
South Australian Museum, East Wing, Adelaide (C.E.O. Smyth, 1908-15)
The triplet window was a particularly popular motif in the Middle Ages, designed to pay homage to the Holy Trinity. It is widely found in Australian Romanesque buildings, most often as three tall, narrow windows, side by side, with the central window taller than the others, to create a stepped effect.

Medieval windows were often surrounded by mouldings, a continuous band of carved stone that followed the round head of the window and frequently extended down the sides as well. Often there were multiple lines of moulding, and in such cases each line might have a separate profile and decorative scheme. Each line of moulding is called an order, so a window with three parallel lines of moulding is said to have three orders. (The sculptural ornament which was sometimes applied to the orders will be discussed separately below.)

The upright sides of the window were often filled with small columns called colonettes. Like a full-size column, they have their own base and capital (head-piece), the latter sometimes carved. These colonettes are sometimes called jamb shafts. Where the colonette in enclosed on two sides, it can be called a nook shaft. Where the decoration was particularly elaborate, multiple colonettes might be clustered on each side of the window.

![Image of triplet window](image_url)

**Figure 2.6. Windows with chevron moulding, colonettes, label moulds label stops and a corbel table below**

St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Parramatta, NSW (James Houison, 1852-55)

In the 1920s, twisted colonettes (barley-sugar colonettes) began to appear in Australian Romanesque buildings. Although an ancient architectural form, this motif was not commonly used in medieval Romanesque architecture. Australian architects probably borrowed it from Baroque architecture, via the Spanish Mission style.
The stones which form the arch of a window, door or other opening are called *voussoirs*. The central voussoir, at the top of the arch, is the *keystone*. Although it was common in medieval Romanesque architecture to decorate the voussoirs with sculpture, it was not normal practice to distinguish the keystone from the other voussoirs in any way. During the Renaissance, the enlarged (*exaggerated*) keystone became a common architectural motif, and it often appears in Australian Romanesque buildings. However Australian architects striving for an authentic Romanesque effect shunned the exaggerated keystone. The voussoirs could be decorated in other ways, for example by working them in different colours (*polychromy*) or by using a material for the voussoirs (e.g. cement or rock-faced stone) which was different from the rest of the wall.

**Doors**

Many of the observations made above concerning windows apply equally to doors. Romanesque doors are invariably *round-headed*, often surrounded by several *orders* of *moulding*, and often with *colonettes* at the sides of the door.

The semi-circular area between the door lintel and the round arch is called the *tympanum*. In medieval buildings, this area was often decorated with sculpture. In Australian Romanesque architecture it was frequently decorated, but usually in a fairly simple manner, perhaps with mosaic tiles or patterned brickwork or with some form of moulded cement ornament.

![Figure 2.7. Tympanum with terra cotta diaper work](image)

Art Gallery Building (now part of Western Australian Museum), Perth (Hillson Beasley, 1907-8)

**Porches**

The door is often sheltered by some form of *porch*. In Australian Romanesque buildings based on English Norman models, the porch is often a substantial stone "dog-kennel" structure, usually with its own moulded doorway and windows.
However where the building is modelled more on Mediterranean lines, a common feature is the *Lombard porch*. This is an arched covering, normally capped with a triangular pediment. The sides are open, with supporting columns, which usually have carved capitals. In some cases the Lombard porch is reduced to little more than a triangular pediment attached to the wall above the door.

Where the porch is entered through a row of columns, it is more correctly termed a *portico*. The portico may be a projecting structure, or it may be contained within the building so that the columns are flush with the front wall. The columns are often designed so as to create a triple-arched entrance.

Only a few Australian Romanesque churches were built with a *narthex*, a low, enclosed structure, something like a porch, which spans the whole width of the frontage.

![Figure 2.8. Lombard porch, triplet window, brick diaper work](image)

Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Nundah, Qld  (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1925-26)
Walls

Large expanses of unbroken wall surface are a fundamental characteristic of the medieval Romanesque. Dressed stone was the most common building material, although brick was used in areas where good building stone was hard to obtain. In Australia, many Romanesque buildings were erected in stone, especially in South Australia, but brick increasingly became the building material of preference, especially as locally produced bricks improved in quality towards the end of the nineteenth century.

In medieval Romanesque buildings it is often the case that the front wall rises to a triangular summit, or gable, which supports the pitched roof. This is also true in the Australian Romanesque, and the edge of this gable, or cornice, is frequently decorated in some way, perhaps with a corbel table (see below) or with decorative brickwork. From the 1920s onwards, it became increasingly common to cap the cornice with a decorative line of tiles. This tiled parapet was a feature borrowed from the Spanish Mission style, which was then becoming popular in Australia.
A **string course** is a continuous horizontal band of masonry set in the wall for purely decorative purposes. It is a common feature of both the medieval and the Australian Romanesque.

A string course will sometimes link together the *label moulds*, which are the stone projections which surround the upper part of a window or door to deflect rainwater away from the opening below. Label moulds are sometimes called *drip moulds* or *hood moulds*.

The *corbel table* is one of the most distinctive features of the Romanesque style, and was widely used (sometimes almost to the point of parody) in the Australian Romanesque. A corbel is a projecting piece of masonry, designed to support some structure above it. A line of corbels is called a *corbel table*. Corbel tables appeared at the top of walls early in the Romanesque period, apparently to help support the weight of the vaulted roof. However they were later employed as a decorative device under the eaves and along the gables. The corbels were often connected to each other by a small arch, and the resulting *arched corbel table* is the form most commonly found in the Australian Romanesque. Where the arched corbel table rises and falls along the sides of a gable, it is sometimes called a *raking arched corbel table* or, more simply, *raking arches*.

When the Romanesque style was revived in the nineteenth century, the arched corbel table became confused with another medieval architectural feature, the *machicolation*. The latter word derives from two Old French words meaning "crush the neck." Machicolations were corbels supporting a battlement at the top of a fortified wall. There were openings between the corbels, through which projectiles could be directed at assailants below. This feature was copied in various revival styles during the nineteenth century, and became indistinguishable from the arched corbel table. The two terms are thus often used interchangeably and it is common for Romanesque Revival buildings to be described as having machicolations.

However the term machicolation is clearly a misnomer when applied to buildings, such as churches, which were never intended for defence. It is particularly inappropriate where the "machicolations" are raked along the sides of a gable, or tucked under an eave, where they could not conceivably be used for defensive purposes. For this reason, the term "arched corbel table," although less picturesque, will be preferred in the present study.

A simpler way to decorate the cornice was by use of *dentillation*, a series of small, square blocks set along the top of the wall. This is a motif which dates back to the architecture of Ancient Greece.
Large buttresses were built against the walls of medieval buildings to support them and help bear the thrust of the roof. Buttresses are also a feature of the Australian Romanesque, although as constructional techniques and materials improved, their role sometimes became purely decorative.

Less solid than a buttress, a pilaster was a masonry pier which projected slightly from the wall surface. Although primarily structural, it also served a decorative purpose and, like a string course, helped to break up the large expanse of the wall surface. Pilasters are a standard feature in the Australian Romanesque.

In Australia, where rubble masonry was often used to construct the walls, it became common to use large dressed stones, or quoins, to provide strength at the corners. These quoins often became a decorative, as well as a structural feature. They were sometimes executed in brick.
The round-arched opening is so fundamental to the Romanesque style that it was common in medieval architecture to apply it to the walls, even where no opening was required. These blind arcades of arches supported on columns were attached to walls as a decorative device. The interlaced (or intersecting) arcade is a related feature, where the arches overlap each other. Both motifs occur frequently in the Australian Romanesque.

However arcades could also be free-standing. In Australia, such arcades were used as cloisters and verandas in buildings such as convents, schools and hospitals.

Polychromy (the use of multiple colours) was a feature of both medieval and Australian Romanesque. In Australia it was sometimes achieved by contrasting different materials (e.g. brick with stone, or brick with cement), but it more often involved using bricks of differing colours, sometimes placed randomly, sometimes banded in contrasting courses, and sometimes in elaborate patterns called diaper work.

Figure 2.12. An influential early use of polychromy
Collins Street Independent (now Uniting) Church, Melbourne (Reed & Barnes, 1866-67)

Towers

Towers played an important part in medieval Romanesque architecture. The church tower was the most visible feature of the structure and it also housed the bells, whose role was more than purely liturgical. Towers, such as the Tower of London, were also significant as military structures.

Towers are also a major feature of the Australian Romanesque. It is important to remember that more towers were designed than built. If the building budget was tight, the tower was always an optional extra which could be omitted until funds became available. Towers were designed not only for churches and convents, but also for secular buildings such as schools, fire stations, post offices and even large residential buildings.
The solid, square Norman tower, familiar from many an English parish church, is common in Australia. The battlements (crenellations) which were frequently added to the top of such towers are really a post-Romanesque motif, but in the public mind they were an indispensable part of such a building.

![Norman Tower](image)

**Figure 2.13. Norman tower**  
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Riverton, SA (architect unknown, 1857-58)

The Celtic round tower is an authentic feature of Irish Romanesque architecture, and a couple of examples can be found in Catholic Romanesque churches in Australia.

However the most typical tower of the Australian Romanesque is the Lombard campanile, the familiar Italianate bell tower, with an arcaded top stage where the bells are housed. The tower is capped by a low-pitched pyramidal roof.

Many other tower forms occur, often borrowed from the Gothic or later periods. Steeples are common, although high steeples were probably unknown in the medieval Romanesque period. And where there was no prospect of finding money to build a church tower, a modest bell-cote would often be substituted.

**Roofs**

As the Italian Romanesque was such a popular model for Australian architects, it is not surprising to find that many Australian Romanesque buildings have tiled roofs. The curved Cordova tile was the most historically authentic roofing material to be used, but the oblong terra cotta Marseilles tile, introduced to Australia in 1888, proved far more popular. The simple shingle tile is sometimes found.
Slates (often imported from Britain) were commonly used for roofing in Australia in the nineteenth century, and produced a suitably authentic effect, especially when the medieval model being followed was northern European rather than Italian. Architects were sometimes forced to resort to the cheap and completely anachronistic expedient of corrugated iron.

The dome was a standard feature of Byzantine architecture, and it was sometimes adopted by medieval Romanesque architects. It is found sparingly in the Australian Romanesque, usually sited above the crossing in cruciform (cross-shaped) churches. Cupolas were sometimes used to cap towers and turrets.

Apse

The apse is a semi-circular, or polygonal, extension added at the east end of many medieval churches. In smaller churches it often housed the altar and sanctuary, while in larger churches it provided space for additional chapels. This feature was frequently adopted in the Australian Romanesque, but it should be remembered that, as with towers, more apses were designed than built. The main body of the church (nave) would often be built first, with a temporary wall and altar at the sanctuary end and a pious hope that the building would be completed in due course.

![Figure 2.14. Polygonal apse, arched corbel tables, dentillation, Cordova tiles](image)

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Woolloongabba, Qld (Eric Ford, 1930)

Transepts

Many medieval Romanesque churches were cruciform (cross-shaped) in their ground plan. The extensions which form the arms of the cross are called transepts. To Christians there was of course symbolic significance to the cruciform design, but it also served the practical purpose of extending the capacity of the building, without extending the distance across which the preacher had to project his voice. Transepts are widely found in Australian Romanesque churches.
The point at which the transepts meet the body of the church is called the crossing. A tower above this intersection is called a crossing tower.

Sculpture

It was a fundamental principle of the medieval Romanesque that sculptural adornment was part of the structure, and subordinate to the shapes of the structural elements to which it was applied. The arches and jambs of doors and windows, or the capitals of the columns, were considered the appropriate location for sculpture.

Many of the architects of the Australian Romanesque were aware of this convention and attempted to follow it, but sometimes they had to compromise to meet the expectations of their clients. For this reason there are some Australian Romanesque Catholic churches which have statues of saints on the façade, whether recessed within niches or standing on corbels, in a distinctly un-Romanesque manner. Some architects managed to compromise by attaching low-relief sculpted plaques to the exterior walls. Other forms of low-relief adornment became common in the late nineteenth century, as patterned panels of terra cotta or cement became widely available, and they are often found as a decorative motif on external walls in Australian Romanesque buildings, despite the lack of any medieval precedent.

In Australia’s bright sunlight, low-relief sculptures, along with other low-relief features such as string courses, label moulds, corbel tables and pilasters, can create attractive shadow effects on the external surface. Architects and their clients came to appreciate this as one of the distinctive features of the Australian Romanesque style.

Figure 2.15. Foliated capitals
Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia, Perth (Alsop & Sayce, 1928-32)

It should be remembered that sculptural adornment was only possible where skilled masons and considerable funds were available, and both were frequently lacking in Australia.
However later in the nineteenth century it became possible to cast a wide range of sculptural forms in Portland cement, and these much cheaper cement ornaments or cement dressings became very popular.

The capitals on top of columns and colonettes were sometimes carved as simple cushion capitals, which is a basic cubic form, rounded off at the base. However more elaborate foliated or Corinthian capitals, which use leaf forms for decoration, were also used.

Small sculpted figures or shapes were sometimes placed at the end of the label moulds around windows. These features are known as label stops.

The mouldings around doors and windows have already been discussed. These mouldings were sometimes sculpted, usually following the English Norman practice of using repeating simple forms, such as the billet moulding (a series of rectangular or cylindrical projections), the chevron moulding (a zigzag form), or the dog-tooth moulding (a form with four leaf-like projections).

Figure 2.16. Richly sculpted doorway in Norman style
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ballarat, Vic. (C.D. Cuthbert, 1862-64)
The American Romanesque

The American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) was one of the pioneers of the Romanesque Revival in the United States. However where others had been content to design churches in a more or less faithful reproduction of medieval Romanesque, Richardson developed the Romanesque for use in a wide range of institutional and commercial buildings.

![Figure 2.17. Marshall Field Wholesale Store, Chicago](image)

Typically these were large, solid structures, with exaggerated round-headed arches which often sprang from short, squat columns. Rock-faced stonework, with the blocks separated by deep joints (rustication) was another of the distinctive features of the style (see Figure 2.3). One of his most influential designs was the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago (1885-87), with massive lightly decorated walls, large windows and signature round arches. After Richardson's death, the style was developed and popularised by other American architectural firms, and reached Australia in the early 1890s, where it became commonly identified as the "American Romanesque" style.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Richardsonian Romanesque, as adopted in Australia, is the use of arched bays spanning more than one floor. The bays of the façade are typically separated by large pilasters, which are topped by round-headed arches. This motif is sometimes referred to as "continuous pier and arch," and is found both in retail warehouses, with large windows in each bay, and in storage warehouses (such as wool stores), where the window openings are much smaller.

Often the ground level of these buildings is faced in stone, frequently rusticated. The main doorways often adopt Richardson's trademark round arches rising from a low springing line. The arches are often carried on short, squat columns. The voussoirs of the arches are often exaggerated and constructed in rock-faced stone. The upper floors are normally constructed in brick.
Figure 2.18. American Romanesque storage warehouse
Edwards Dunlop Warehouse, 414-418 Kent Street, Sydney (Robertson & Marks, 1897)

Figure 2.19. American Romanesque retail warehouse
Sargood, Butler, Nichol & Ewen Warehouse (now Ross House), 247-257 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (Sulman & Power, 1898-99)
Sometimes the facades are only lightly ornamented, possibly by use of terra cotta panels (especially in the spandrels below the windows), but some Australian architects could not resist the more elaborate cement dressings which had become so popular in boom-style architecture. Elements of the contemporary Art Nouveau style sometimes found their way into the decoration.

The top floor often references more traditional Romanesque architecture, with small round-headed windows, or blind arcading, possibly with an arched corbel table above. The parapet might be simple or elaborate, sometimes topped by turrets.

As in medieval Romanesque architecture, polychromy was often employed, by using either bricks of varying colours, or bands of cement dressing.

In current Australian architectural terminology, many of the buildings constructed in the American Romanesque style are subsumed under the classification of Federation Warehouse. It must be remembered that in the nineteenth century the term "warehouse" was used not only for a large building where goods were stored (as in current usage), but also for a large building where goods were sold. The terms "storage warehouse" and "retail warehouse" will be used to distinguish between these two types of building.

Although use of the American Romanesque was not restricted to large commercial buildings, such buildings are certainly the most visible remaining examples of the American Romanesque in Australia.

Figure 2.20. A non-commercial example of the American Romanesque
Court House, Bairnsdale, Vic. (A.J. MacDonald, 1892-94)
Chapter 3: Australian Romanesque: An Overview

This chapter will trace the main currents in the history of the Romanesque style in Australia. Buildings and architects mentioned here will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

From the Beginnings to 1890

Ecclesiastical Architecture

The earliest British settlers in Australia, exiles in a strange and hostile land, naturally felt the need to rework their bewildering new environment into something which resembled, however slightly, the familiar world which they had left behind. As nothing was more quintessentially English than the village church, the construction of new churches was an important task for the civil and religious authorities in the Australian colonies. Some of these new churches reflected the latest in architectural practice in the home country, but others were exercises in pure nostalgia, a deliberate recreation of centuries-old buildings, hallowed by time and history.

The Norman-style English churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were one of the models which were followed. These solid stone buildings, with their square towers, simple round-arched windows and doors, and very limited sculptural adornment, were comparatively easy to recreate in the Antipodes. To be sure, they were not considered sophisticated enough for the main towns, but they were sometimes found suitable for rural areas. And so the history of the Australian Romanesque began with rural churches, like those designed by James Blackburn in Tasmania around 1840, carefully following English models. In Western Australia, which was in many ways the most English of the Australian colonies, Norman churches were built at Busselton (J.B. Forsayth, 1844-45) and York (R.R. Jewell, 1854-55).

Figure 3.1. St Mark's Anglican Church, Pontville, Tas.
(James Blackburn, 1839-40)
New South Wales almost acquired a Norman church at suburban Balmain in the early 1840s, but the architect Edmund Blacket, one of the great exponents of the Australian Gothic, dissuaded the minister from choosing the Norman style. Nonetheless Blacket was prepared to adopt the Romanesque for several of his rural churches, beginning at Bathurst (1848-52, demolished). In Parramatta, to satisfy the whim of a homesick vicar, local architect James Houison designed a very competent Norman church, St John the Evangelist (1852-55), with a richly moulded west door.

South Australia built its first Romanesque church, Christ Church Anglican, at North Adelaide in 1848-49. The design was apparently one of several supplied by the Ecclesiological Society, an English association formed in 1839 to improve the quality of church architecture. The Society, although normally a passionate champion of the Gothic style, realised that the simpler Romanesque might be an acceptable expedient in the colonies. They had, for example, previously supplied plans in Norman style for a church in New Zealand, conceding that

as the work will be chiefly done by native artists, it seems natural to teach them first that style which first prevailed in our own country; while its rudeness and massiveness, and the grotesque character of its sculpture, will probably render it easier to be understood and appreciated by them.¹

Further simple Romanesque churches were built for the Anglican Church in South Australia at Hindmarsh (1849-50) and Port Adelaide (1851-52), both to designs of Henry Stuckey.

In England, the Romanesque Revival was gaining momentum during the 1840s. A number of large Romanesque churches were built in the East End of London, at very modest cost and often in brick. A visiting German official commented that

most of the churches are in the so-called Norman, i.e., the pre-Gothic or Byzantine, style because it is believed that, with this [style], one has combined both ecclesiastical propriety and low cost, whereas the Gothic makes necessary a greater richness of ornament if the building is to avoid looking too stark.²

The growing popularity of the Romanesque in England inevitably had an impact on church design in Australia, although at no time during the nineteenth century would Romanesque seriously challenge the primacy of Gothic. It has been argued that the nonconformist sects favoured the Romanesque, to distinguish themselves from the Gothic buildings of the Anglican Church, and there were certainly some congregations where strong opinions were

¹ “Parish Churches in New Zealand,” Ecclesiologist 1, no. 1 (November 1841): 4-5.
expressed on this matter. Nonetheless, Phillip Kent has correctly observed that "almost all Australian denominations built mainly Gothic churches in the latter nineteenth century."

It is certainly the case that poorly resourced nonconformist groups, their members mainly workers or artisans, were often able to afford nothing more than basic chapels with round-headed windows and doors. Many of these chapels are so simple as to defy architectural classification, but there are others where the application of some modest decorative features warrants the Romanesque label. The Chilwell Wesleyan Chapel (Walter Sheridan, 1853-54, now the Noble Street Uniting Church), in the suburbs of Geelong, is perhaps Victoria's earliest Romanesque building. It was followed by others such as the Ebenezer United Presbyterian Church at South Ballarat (H.R. Caselli, 1862-63) and the Maldon Welsh Congregational Church (architect unknown, 1863). In Brisbane, the Romanesque made an early appearance with the Wharf Street Baptist Chapel (Charles Tiffin, 1858-59, demolished). In South Australia, the Congregationalists erected Romanesque chapels at Angaston (Cocking & Aggett, 1854-55, now the Zion Lutheran Church) and Kapunda (Edmund Wright, 1858).

![Figure 3.2. Chilwell Wesleyan Chapel (now Noble Street Uniting Church), Newtown, Vic. (Walter Sheridan, 1853-54)](image)

The gold discoveries of the 1850s in New South Wales and Victoria transformed the architecture of those colonies. With increased wealth it became possible to erect much grander churches, and although Gothic remained the favourite style, some substantial Romanesque churches also began to appear in the rapidly growing cities.

The most impressive and influential of these new churches was the Collins Street Independent (now Uniting) Church in Melbourne (Reed & Barnes, 1866-67), an extravagant,

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polychromatic brick building, erected on a prominent city corner. Joseph Reed had recently visited Italy, which was the source of the inspiration for this "Lombardo-Romanesque" confection. However Reed's original design used conventional Gothic pointed arches, which were converted into round arches when the design of the interior was modified to improve the acoustics. This was probably the first church in the Lombardic Romanesque style to be erected in Australia, and it did much to popularise the style and to demonstrate the possibilities of face-brick when it was left unobscured by stucco or render.

![Figure 3.3. Collins Street Independent Church (now St Michael's Uniting Church), Melbourne (Reed & Barnes, 1866-67)](image)

Other major Romanesque churches from the 1860s include St Andrew's Presbyterian, Ballarat (C.D. Cuthbert, 1862-64), Phillip Street Presbyterian, Sydney (William Kemp, 1866-67, demolished), St John's Anglican Church, Glebe (Edmund Blacket & John Horbury Hunt, 1868-70), Hindmarsh Square Congregational Church, Adelaide (George Abbott, 1861-62, demolished), and the Tynte Street Baptist Chapel, North Adelaide (James Cumming, 1869-70).

A pattern was now established which would persist for some decades. The Romanesque had been recognised as a respectable style, even for large city churches, although it would continue to be used also for simple rural churches and chapels. Interestingly, the Catholic Church was yet to embrace the style, although an early church at Queenscliff, Victoria (architect unknown, 1863-67) had paved the way, and in South Australia several Romanesque Catholic churches were erected during the 1860s. In New South Wales, J.W. Pender was a pioneer of the Catholic Romanesque, designing two buildings in the style for the West Maitland Dominican Convent (1872 and 1883-84, now part of All Saints College).
Pender was also responsible for the West Maitland Jewish Synagogue (1879). Thomas Rowe, one of the major early exponents of the Romanesque in Australia, had already designed a "Byzantine" Great Synagogue for Sydney (1875-78). Jewish congregations were generally averse to the Gothic style, "probably because of its strong association with Christianity." A Romanesque synagogue was also erected in Brisbane (Arthur Morry, 1885-86).

By the end of the 1880s, new influences were at work. The polychrome Strathfield Congregational Church (George Sydney Jones & Harold Thompson, 1889-93, now Trinity Uniting Church), in western Sydney, with its hints of the Arts & Crafts movement, and the elegant, rock-faced Presbyterian Church across the harbour at Manly (Sulman & Power, 1889-90) were strikingly innovative. In Melbourne, the Hawthorn Wesleyan Church (Alfred Dunn, 1888-89, now Auburn Uniting Church), with its banded brick walls and cement dressings was, as we shall see, the harbinger of things to come.

Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture

To the British settlers in Australia, the Norman style was not associated solely with churches. The first priority of the Norman conquerors of England had been to establish their dominion over the Saxon population, and to that end they built imposing castles, of which the Tower of London is the best known example. Thus the massive Norman style also suggested authority and power. It is in this context which we can place the Norman watchtowers which George Kingston designed for the Adelaide Gaol (1840-42).

![Figure 3.4. Redfern Public School, Sydney](image)

*Figure 3.4. Redfern Public School, Sydney*

(George Allen Mansfield, 1878-79)

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Government architecture in New South Wales during much of the latter half of the nineteenth century was dictated by James Barnet, a man firmly committed to classical models. However the architects employed by the Department of Public Instruction enjoyed more freedom, and some schools in the Romanesque style began to appear, such as George Allen Mansfield’s designs for St Leonard’s Public School (1878) and Redfern Public School (1878-79).

In Victoria during this period, practically the only government buildings designed in the Romanesque style were court houses, and there were quite a number of them, early examples being Port Melbourne (1860) and Sale (1863-64), both designed by J.J. Clark. Queensland too erected a Romanesque court house at Ipswich in 1858, designed by Charles Tiffin. In South Australia, there was probably only one significant government building designed in the Romanesque style during the nineteenth century, namely the South Australian Institute (later Museum), of which the first (western) wing was erected in 1879-84 to a design generally attributed to George Thomas Light, although probably with input from other hands as well.

In Australia, the Romanesque style was never much used in residential architecture. The one exception to this was the work of the Melbourne firm of Reed & Barnes. In Victoria’s boom years, they designed a number of large mansions in a polychrome Romanesque style, or a rock-faced Norman style, of which the most famous is Rippon Lea at Elsternwick (1868-69). The same firm possibly pioneered the use of the Romanesque for retail warehouses in Australia, with their design for the M’Arthur, Sherrard & Copeland Warehouse in Flinders Lane, Melbourne (1868-69, demolished).

![Figure 3.5. Rippon Lea, Elsternwick, Vic.](Reed & Barnes, 1868-69)

In Sydney, the Romanesque had already been used for a large storage warehouse, Mort’s Wool Store at Circular Quay (1866-70, demolished). Although nominally designed by Edmund Blacket, it appears that his young North American assistant, John Horbury Hunt, was substantially involved in the project. George Allen Mansfield and his brother also used
the Romanesque in a large warehouse for John Frazer, on the corner of York and Barrack Streets (1876, demolished).

Thomas Rowe was the most prolific architect working in the Romanesque in New South Wales during this period. His design for the Great Synagogue in Sydney has already been mentioned, and he also designed a number of churches. One of his most admired works was an early office block, Vickery's Buildings, located in Pitt Street, Sydney (1864-66, demolished), in a mixed Italianate and Romanesque style.

![Image: Vickery's Buildings, Pitt Street, Sydney](image)

**Figure 3.6. Vickery's Buildings, Pitt Street, Sydney**

(Thomas Rowe, 1864-66, demolished)

**Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)**

The period from about 1890 to the outbreak of the First World War was the heyday of the Australian Romanesque. Although the new "American" Romanesque style is the dominant narrative during these years, it is important to understand that there is also a sub-plot based around what we might call the "Traditional" Romanesque. The latter was a continuation and development of the Romanesque-inspired architecture of the preceding period, based on medieval models, and largely (but not exclusively) used for ecclesiastical work. It will be necessary to discuss these two streams separately.

**American Romanesque**

During much of the nineteenth century, the majority of Australian architects had trained in Britain, and they looked to Britain (and more generally to Europe) for inspiration and for new ideas. However towards the end of the century they became aware that new and interesting developments in architecture and building were occurring in the United States. American architectural magazines began to circulate in Australia, and Australian architects began to visit the United States to see these developments at first hand.
Late in 1890, the *Australasian Builder and Contractors' News* published an illustration of the main entrance to City Hall, Albany, New York, a building dating from 1883 which had been designed by Henry Hobson Richardson. In August the following year, the same magazine published perspective drawings of five buildings designed by Richardson. Clearly there was now interest in this new style. Sated by the fussiness of boom-style architecture, Australian architects were looking for alternatives. Ingrid Van Bremen has explained that, during this period,

the free use of Romanesque forms became an alternative to Gothic that provided the monumentality required for large public buildings such as museums … libraries and prisons … The large round arches, blocky towers and rusticated stonework were capable of providing associations of authority, security and permanence. Above all, the Romanesque was not insipid but massive, masculine and bold.

Another factor which favoured the Romanesque was that it was a style which could be built in brick, thus reducing building costs significantly. Pointed Gothic arches were almost impossible to create elegantly in brick, but the round arch was within the scope of any good bricklayer. Australian brickmaking became mechanised in the late 1880s, and the "double pressing" technology was now able to produce hard bricks with accurate faces, and a wide range of colours could be produced by manipulating the firing time.

So conditions were propitious for the adoption of the new Romanesque style, a style which was referred to, from the very beginning, as the "American Romanesque." In fact, some of Australia's innovative Romanesque buildings of the 1890s owe little to American models, but as they would probably not have been erected without the widespread interest in the new American style, it is tempting to apply the label "American Romanesque" to all the Romanesque architecture of this period, unless the model being followed was clearly a medieval one.

Enthusiasm for the new style was never universal. When in February 1891 Melbourne architect E. Wilson Dobbs read a paper arguing that the Romanesque could become the basis for a new Australian style of architecture, the response from his audience was unenthusiastic. Many years later, Robin Boyd said of Dobbs' ideas that "future generations could see no other phase in history more remote from Australian characteristics." And writing at the end of the 1890s, the former New South Wales Government Architect James

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5 *Australasian Builder and Contractors' News*, 20 December 1890, 465.
6 Ibid., 8 August 1891, 112ff.
Barnet dismissed the style in these terms: "recently from the United States has come Romanesque … and no doubt will run its crudities to seed in warehouses, stores and shops."10

The earliest American Romanesque buildings were erected in Melbourne. The young firm of Hyndman & Bates designed a retail warehouse for E.L. Yencken in Flinders Street (1889-90, demolished), with rusticated stone at the ground level, face-brick above and arched bays spanning the upper floors, which were all the hallmarks of the new American style.

![Figure 3.7. Warehouse for E.L. Yencken (later Flinders Buildings), Flinders Street, Melbourne (Hyndman & Bates, 1889-90, demolished)](image)

In the same city, both partners in the firm of Ellerker & Kilburn had recently travelled to the United States, and they tried out the new style with a couple of residential buildings, as did the young Harold Desbrowe-Annear. The Romanesque would never become a residential style in Australia, but the large, low Richardsonian arch was to become a common feature in Australian residential architecture for decades.

In Sydney, the American Romanesque retail warehouse made its debut with the Lark, Sons & Co. Warehouse in Wynyard Street (E. Jeaffreson Jackson, 1892-93, demolished), which was much praised. However the first, and perhaps the only truly Richardsonian building to be erected in the eastern colonies, was the Equitable Life Assurance Society Building at 348-352 George Street (1892-94), designed by the American architect Edward Raht. With its heavily rusticated, rock-faced trachyte exterior and huge entrance arch, springing from low columns, it is a worthy imitation of Richardson's work.

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The best known Romanesque building in Sydney (and indeed in Australia) is one which perhaps owes little to American precedents. This is the Queen Victoria Building in George Street (George McRae, 1893-98). When the Sydney City Council decided to develop a whole block for the new city markets, the City Architect provided four alternative designs for the façade. It appears that the city councillors selected the Romanesque design because it was considered to be the fashionable American style, although McRae's Romanesque design seems to draw more on Venetian or Byzantine models. The choice was controversial, and hotly debated by Sydney architects in the local press.

Another of the signature buildings of this period is the Sydney Technical College at Ultimo (1890-91), designed by the chief architect of the New South Wales Department of Public Instruction, William Kemp. Kemp had a long association with the Romanesque, starting with his work on Houison's Norman church at Parramatta in the early 1850s. In the 1890s he produced a substantial body of work in this style. The source of his design for the Sydney Technical College has been debated, but the arched bays spanning the two lower floors and the massive, rock-faced voussoirs of the triple entrance arch, rising from squat solid columns, betray the influence of the American Romanesque. The adjacent Technological Museum (1891-93) was also designed by Kemp and is in a similar style.
Arthur Blacket (son of Edmund) was another architect with a long exposure to the Romanesque, dating back to his time as a pupil in his father's office, alongside John Horbury Hunt. The wool store which he designed for a prominent site on the corner of Pyrmont Street and Pyrmont Bridge Road in Sydney (1893), with its bays of recessed brick arches, is a remarkable example of the use of the Romanesque for a large storage warehouse. This building proved to be the model for several large wool stores erected in the vicinity in the following years.

A few years later, the Sydney firm of Robertson & Marks also began to use simple Romanesque motifs in the design of large storage warehouses, beginning with the Edwards Dunlop Warehouse at 414-418 Kent Street (1897). This building has many of the distinctive characteristics of the American Romanesque: arched bays span four floors and the arches are carried on pilasters, rock-faced voussoirs are used in the arches, and rock-faced stone is used at the ground floor, with round-headed openings. In the following decade, Robertson & Marks would produce many more such designs. Some of these warehouses were retail outlets, like the Mutual Stores for A.J. Riley & Co. in Pitt Street (1898, demolished), and therefore had more decorative facades with much larger windows. There were of course other firms, such as Spain & Cosh, who began to design similar buildings, but Robertson & Marks were the acknowledged leaders in the field.

In Melbourne, the American Romanesque warehouse became popular at much the same time as in Sydney although (as we have seen) there were early examples dating back to the beginning of the 1890s. These Melbourne warehouses were mostly used for retail, rather than storage purposes, and therefore have decorated façades and large windows. Good examples are the Ball & Welch Warehouse at 172-192 Flinders Street (Reed, Smart & Tappin, 1899), the Sargood, Butler, Nichol & Ewen Warehouse at 247-257 Flinders Lane (Sulman & Power, 1899).
1898-99) and the Borsdorff & Co. Warehouse at 277-279 Flinders Lane (H.W. & F.B. Tompkins, 1907-8).

The New South Wales Government Architect throughout most of this period was Walter Liberty Vernon. Vernon visited America in 1887, where he must have seen a number of buildings in the new Romanesque style. Certainly he proved to be much more receptive to the Romanesque than his immediate predecessor, James Barnet, and one can see the influence of the American Romanesque in a number of his buildings, beginning with the Burwood Post Office (1892). The Richardsonian arches of the Surry Hills Police Station (1895-96) are particularly effective.

In Victoria, the American Romanesque style was also briefly in vogue with government architects, before a severe economic depression put an end to most government building activity. In the early 1890s, A.J. Macdonald designed a number of post offices, court houses, and even a warehouse, which have clearly been influenced by the American Romanesque, although other stylistic influences can be seen in these buildings. The Bairnsdale Court House (1892-94) is a particularly good example.

Had the 1890s not been a decade of depression and retrenchment in Australia, the American Romanesque would have made a greater impact on the architecture of the Federation period. Nonetheless, we can find examples of its use for most types of building. It was used in banks, such as the flamboyant Bank of New South Wales at George and Regent Streets,
Chippendale, Sydney (Varney Parkes, 1894), in office buildings, such as the substantial British Medical Association Building in Elizabeth Street, Sydney (John Reid, 1910-11, demolished), and in clubhouses, such as the Commercial Travellers Association Club at 190-192 Flinders Street, Melbourne (H.W. & F.B. Tompkins, 1898-99, altered).

Outside of Sydney and Melbourne, the American Romanesque had limited impact. Certainly one can see hints of it in many older suburbs and country towns, in the not uncommon two-storey shopfronts with large arched windows on the upper floor. In Newcastle, Frederick Menkens designed a number of substantial Romanesque warehouses. Brisbane, Adelaide and Hobart also saw the erection of a few large commercial premises in the fashionable new style.

In Western Australia, on the other hand, the American Romanesque was a significant feature of the architectural scene during the two decades before the First World War. While the eastern colonies were in depression during the 1890s, the west was booming with a new gold rush, so there were ample funds available for erecting new buildings in the latest styles. Unemployed architects from the eastern colonies moved to the west and were sometimes able to rebuild their careers there.

The most significant body of Romanesque work in the west was designed by the Western Australian Government Architect, George Temple Poole, in the middle years of the 1890s, just before his retirement. These are all solid, imposing buildings with the signature Richardsonian arch. Poole's Albany Court House (1897-98), although only two storeys in height, vies for the title of being the most Richardsonian building in Australia, with its base of roughly squared and coursed stones, which also form the entrance arches.

![Albany Court House, W.A.](image)

**Figure 3.11. Albany Court House, W.A.** (George Temple Poole, 1897-98)

Another important practitioner was Harry S. Trigg, who designed a range of commercial buildings in his own version of the American Romanesque, ranging from simple brick storage warehouses, to a floridly decorated hotel, as well as office-and-shop premises. An example of the latter is his own Trigg's Chambers at 39-41 Barrack Street, Perth (1896).
By the beginning of the twentieth century, new constructional technologies were overturning centuries of architectural practice. Developments in reinforced concrete were providing cheap and effective ways of spanning wide openings, so the arch was becoming obsolete as a constructional technique. In 1910 the Melbourne architect Frank Tompkins, who with his brother had designed several significant buildings in the American Romanesque style, made a tour of Europe and the United States. Miles Lewis tells us that he came home convinced "that the Romanesque was now well and truly passé." Other Australian architects were coming to the same conclusion, and the style fell out of use before the outbreak of the First World War, with just a few stragglers to be found later in regional centres.

Traditional Romanesque

If the American Romanesque was popular in the commercial and government sphere, the history of the traditional Romanesque style during this period is a history of ecclesiastical buildings. The American Romanesque had very little impact on ecclesiastical architecture in Australia. The dominant Romanesque church style of this era, especially in Victoria, was one of red face-brick, offset by cement dressings painted white. Because of the strikingly contrasted colours, this type of construction (which was not restricted to Romanesque churches) is sometimes referred to as "blood and bandages." In some of the surviving buildings, the cement dressings are now unpainted, in their natural dull grey, and it is not clear whether or not this was the original intention of the architect.

An early example of this style was the impressive Hawthorn Wesleyan Church in Melbourne (1888-89, now Auburn Uniting Church), designed by the talented young architect Alfred Dunn, who died only a few years after its completion. The façade is dominated by a large brick arch surmounting a number of window openings worked in cement. The arch and walls are banded, using bricks of contrasting colours. This model was developed by other architects in the following years, and the cement dressings became ever more elaborate.

The bichromatic arch was the signature feature of Augustus Fritsch, Victoria's foremost Catholic architect in the early decades of the twentieth century. He was responsible for many Romanesque churches, typically with an arched doorway, or an arched window in the façade above (and sometimes both), with the voussoirs alternately coloured in red and white.

Fritsch occasionally toyed with other designs, as seen in the rock-faced stone walls and central dome of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, Camberwell (1913-18), which might claim to be the last Richardsonian building to be erected in Australia.

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Only a small number of Romanesque churches were erected in New South Wales during these years, but the red-brick and cement style began to make inroads there as well. An interesting example is the Cootamundra Methodist (now Baptist) Church (1899), designed by a young Sydney architect, David T. Morrow, who would later rise to prominence in the profession. The façade and the porch are decorated with bands of white, patterned cement panels, and the angle buttresses at the front are topped with clustered colonettes. The blood and bandages style also had some impact in Tasmania and Western Australia.
Two of the most innovative Romanesque churches of this period were, surprisingly enough, built in Brisbane. The Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church on the corner of Ann and Creek Streets (G.D. Payne, 1902-5) was designed largely in face-brick, using bricks of a lightly contrasting colour for the arches, with only limited use of unpainted cement dressings. The towering brick surfaces are the dominant feature.

Impressive though Payne's church is, it is eclipsed by St Brigid's Catholic Church (Robin Dods, 1913-14), which towers above the city from Red Hill. Here again the effect is produced by massive brick walls, with very little cement work, and three bichromatic arches in the frontage. This building exemplifies one of the fundamental principles of Romanesque architecture: that the structure itself must be decorative, and that the applied ornament should play only a secondary role.

![St Brigid's Catholic Church, Red Hill, Brisbane](image)

**Figure 3.14. St Brigid's Catholic Church, Red Hill, Brisbane** (Robin Dods, 1913-14)

In 1892 the Sydney architect John Barlow observed that the earlier colonial builders had produced better buildings than those then being erected "principally because they recognized the value of shadow and left bolder and broader wall surfaces than we do." In the Payne and Dods churches, and in the Sydney wool stores which were being erected around the same time, one can see that this lesson was being taken to heart. It would prove influential in the Romanesque architecture of the inter-war period.

There were very few significant non-ecclesiastical buildings erected in Australia in the traditional Romanesque style during this period. The City Courts building on the corner of Russell and Latrobe Streets in Melbourne (George Austin, 1911-14) is an extravagant revivalist exercise in Norman architecture. With its rock-faced stone exterior, it was alternately praised for its beauty and condemned as a medieval folly. In Brisbane, G.H.M. Addison's Exhibition Building (1891) was initially designed with pointed arches, which morphed into a Byzantine-Romanesque style making extensive use of polychrome brickwork.

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12 *Australasian Builder and Contractors' News*, 10 December 1892, 283.
As a footnote, it is worth mentioning what might be called the "Industrial Romanesque" style, which was an interesting, if minor, phenomenon during these years. Because the face-brick Romanesque was an easy and economical style to construct, engineers sometimes used it when erecting buildings to house plant such as sewage pumping stations or electric power stations. Many nineteenth-century engineers had studied the basics of architecture as part of their training, and some of these buildings are remarkably attractive. The New Australian Electricity Company Power Station at Cremorne, Victoria (built in 1890, later the Richmond Power Station), was designed by the engineer R.E. Joseph in brick with polychrome banding and voussoirs and a squat Lombardic campanile.

Figure 3.15. New Australian Electricity Company Power Station, Oddy's Lane & Electric Street, Cremorne, Vic.
(R.E. Joseph, 1890)

Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

Catholic Romanesque

The history of the Australian Romanesque during the inter-war years is largely a matter of Catholic ecclesiastical buildings: churches, convents, schools, and seminaries. In 1913 the Sydney Catholic weekly, the Freeman's Journal, criticised the Gothic style "which so dominates the church builders of Australia as to become commonplace." In some dioceses at least there was a willingness to experiment with other styles.

In Victoria, A.A. Fritsch remained the towering figure of the Catholic Romanesque, and he continued to produce buildings in his established red brick and white cement style. A

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13 Freeman's Journal (Sydney), 28 August 1913, 12.
successful formula naturally had its imitators, and the Melbourne firm of Kempson & Conolly designed a number of churches in the Fritsch style, both before and after the First World War. Robert Harper was another of Fritsch's imitators.

However by 1930 new trends had emerged in the Australian Romanesque, and Melbourne architect Patrick O'Connor began to work in the new idiom, producing more academically correct Lombardic Romanesque churches, as well as churches that were clearly influenced by the fashionable Spanish Mission style. Younger Victorian architects such as Lionel San Miguel, Cyril Kelly and T.G. Payne began to produce more modern Romanesque work during the 1930s, in a style which has been described as "stripped Romanesque."

In New South Wales, a return to a more academically correct Lombardic Romanesque became apparent in the 1920s. Hennessy & Hennessy, who had been working in this idiom in Queensland, introduced it to Sydney with the additions which they made to the Christian Brothers' Training College at Strathfield (now a campus of the Australian Catholic University) between 1925 and 1931. The chapel at Strathfield is a minor masterpiece, with its fine wheel window and lofty campanile.

Clement Glancey embraced this style and made it his own, and in the process established himself in a position of dominance in New South Wales, such as Fritsch had enjoyed in Victoria. High quality brickwork, wheel windows and arched corbel tables are all typical of

![St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Arncliffe, NSW](image)

**Figure 3.16. St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Arncliffe, NSW**

(Clement Glancey, 1931-32)
Glancey's buildings, many of which were apparently designed by his talented assistant, Rosette Edmunds. St Francis Xavier, Arncliffe (1931-32) is perhaps the finest of the early Glancey Romanesque churches. However during the 1930s concessions were made to the spirit of the times and the firm began to simplify its Lombardic designs. St Christopher's Church, Manuka (1938-39, now the Canberra Catholic Cathedral) is typical of this later work, although Holy Family Church, Maroubra (1939-40) is perhaps even more successful in reconciling the old and the new.

The Sydney firm of Fowell & McConnel were bolder still in their attempts to modernise the Romanesque. Their stripped Romanesque design for St Anne's Shrine, Bondi (1933-34) won an architectural award for its simple, massive lines which are strangely disrupted by a rather conventional Lombard porch and some low-relief statuary. As Fowell, McConnel & Mansfield they designed the Jesuit church of St Mary, North Sydney (1937-38), which is both brutally modern and massively medieval.

In the Hunter Valley, Peter J. Gannon had great success in the 1920s and 1930s, working with more traditional Lombardic forms, although he was not afraid to simplify or exaggerate them for effect. Following his death, his younger brother, John P. Gannon, took over the practice and designed the modernist St Columban’s, Mayfield (1939-40). At the same time, Sydney architect Austin McKay was designing churches at Casino (1939-40) and Woollahra (1939-40) where the Romanesque detail had become highly stylised in the quest for a more modern effect.

![Figure 3.17. St Columban's Catholic Church, Mayfield, NSW](image)

(John P. Gannon, 1939-40)

In Queensland, the firm of Hennessy & Hennessy designed a very attractive church for rural Dalby (1921) by returning to medieval Lombardic models. With banded polychrome brickwork at the lower levels, a finely detailed Lombard porch and wheel window above,
arched corbel tables, blind arcading and pilasters, it was an object lesson in academic correctness. Even *Building* magazine conceded that "the whole is dignified and sober, and if it lacks the aspiring majesty of Gothic, it looks very well and can be built for a very small sum. This building cost but £7,000."14

![St Joseph's Catholic Church, Dalby, Qld](image)

**Figure 3.18. St Joseph's Catholic Church, Dalby, Qld**
(Hennessy & Hennessy, 1921)

This was a style which the firm exploited to great success in Queensland and, as already noted, exported to New South Wales. However by the end of the 1930s even traditionalists like Hennessy & Hennessy were obliged to adopt a more simplified and modernised Romanesque style, as their design for the Pius XII Provincial Seminary at Banyo (1939-41, now a campus of the Australian Catholic University) demonstrates. J.P. Donoghue, who had been a pupil and later a partner of the Hennessy firm, was a faithful imitator of their work.

In Tasmania only a few small Romanesque churches were erected during the inter-war years. However the rural Catholic parish of Cygnet decided to make a statement with their new church (1940), and they awarded the commission to the Sydney architectural firm of Moore & Dowling. The resulting simple modernist Mediterranean design has aged well.

In South Australia, the dominant firm of the Catholic Romanesque was unquestionably Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith. Herbert Jory was the partner most committed to the Romanesque, and he designed one of the firm's most impressive churches, Holy Saviour (now Sacred Heart), Hindmarsh (1924), a brick building with a simplified Lombardic façade and flanking towers in a neo-Baroque style. Jory set up his own practice in 1930, and thereafter (sometimes in partnership with Stanley Pointer) designed several Romanesque churches. Those at Prospect (1936-37) and Kapunda (1938) are notable attempts to reconcile the traditional Lombardic with modernism.

14 *Building* (Sydney), 12 March 1925, 3. The location of the church is incorrectly given as Albury.
The most interesting Catholic Romanesque work in Western Australian during these years was unquestionably that of the brilliantly eccentric priest John Cyril Hawes, who had trained as an architect before taking holy orders. Hawes worked in rural areas in the north, in a wildly eclectic style. Romanesque influences can be seen in many of his buildings, especially his masterpiece, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Geraldton (1916-18, 1937-38), of which Hawes himself said that "solidity and massiveness have been chosen rather than prettiness and elegance."\(^{15}\)

**Protestant Romanesque**

Although Catholic churches dominated the inter-war Romanesque, a number of Protestant churches (predominantly Anglican) were erected in the style.

The most significant Protestant practitioner was the well-established Sydney architect, John Burcham Clamp. He designed a Methodist church at Mosman, Sydney (1914-15) in conjunction with the newly arrived American architect, Walter Burley Griffin, with whom he was briefly in partnership. Now incorporated into the Mosman Art Gallery, it is an attractive brick church, but the design is fairly conventional, which makes one suspect that Griffin had little input to it.

With other partners, Clamp designed several more brick Romanesque churches. Most of these were commissioned by Sydney Anglican parishes, but the Manly Methodist Church (1924-25, now the Manly Village Uniting Church) is probably Clamp's most successful Romanesque design. The Methodists of New South Wales showed a distinct receptiveness to

the Romanesque, and Byera Hadley and Arthur Lanyon Clark also worked for them in this style.

![Image of Methodist Church, Manly, NSW](image)

**Figure 3.20. Methodist (now Uniting) Church, Manly, NSW**

(Burcham Clamp & Finch, 1924-25)

In Victoria there were almost no Protestant Romanesque churches erected during these years. For the Jewish community, the Melbourne architect Joseph Plottel designed a synagogue at St Kilda (1927) in a mixed Byzantine-Romanesque design.

In Queensland only a few Protestant Romanesque churches were erected between the wars. Eric Ford's design for Holy Trinity Anglican, Woolloongabba (1930) is an interesting combination of Romanesque and Spanish Mission elements. The same can be said of Lange Powell's design for Holy Trinity Anglican, Mackay (1925-26).

No Protestant Romanesque churches have been identified in Tasmania from this period, and there were only a few in South Australia. In Western Australia, All Saints Anglican, Collie (Eales & Cohen, 1915, 1928) is worth noting: the English benefactor had asked for a church in the "earlier Italian" style, and the result is a substantial building with many Lombardic Romanesque elements, including a campanile. St Patrick's Anglican, Mount Lawley (Parry & Clifton, 1936) is a massive brick building with exaggerated arched corbel tables, picked out in white.
Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture

There are very few examples of the Romanesque being used in non-ecclesiastical buildings in the inter-war period. The crematoria which Frank Bloomfield designed for several Sydney locations have distinctly Romanesque motifs, notably the tall campanile, which effectively disguised the chimneys.

There are a few examples of the Romanesque in large city office buildings. The Equity Trustees Building at 472-478 Bourke Street, Melbourne (Oakley & Parkes, 1930-31) harks back to the American Romanesque. Its portico may have been the model for the Corinthian portico of the Footscray Town Hall (Joseph Plottel, 1935-36). Hennessy & Hennessy, who had successfully designed many Romanesque churches, applied Romanesque motifs to large buildings which they designed for the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Company in Brisbane (1931), Adelaide (1934, altered), and Perth (1936, demolished).

A few government schools were designed in the Romanesque style in the 1930s, but the outstanding Romanesque educational buildings of this era are Winthrop Hall and the adjacent Great Gateway, built at the new Crawley campus of the University of Western Australia between 1928 and 1932. The design history of these buildings is complex. They emerged from competing designs of Rodney Alsop and Conrad Sayce, neither of whom was aiming for a Romanesque effect. However in the course of construction the buildings evolved into what Walter Burley Griffin described as a "Spanish-Romanesque style," and they have entered the canon of the Australian Romanesque.

Figure 3.21. Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia, Perth
(Rodney Alsop, with Conrad Sayce, 1928-32)

Late Romanesque and Post-Romanesque (1945 to the present)

In 1938, a correspondent of the Adelaide Catholic weekly the Southern Cross lamented that

> It is interesting, and, perhaps, pathetic also, to note that both styles [Romanesque and Gothic], so long deemed unsurpassable in their respective spheres, are now yielding before the assaults of the futurist and modernist in art. Possibly this generation will see the last of them.17

Architectural styles were changing under the influence of modernism, and it was becoming obvious that even Australia would not be immune from these foreign developments. When the Second World War erupted in the following year, there was a noticeable increase in church-going, and subsequently also in church-building, but by 1943 all non-essential construction was at a standstill. When the war ended, the first priority was to deal with the desperate shortage of housing, and the construction of churches did not resume for some years.

By 1950, one might have expected that the Romanesque would have been well and truly a thing of the past. However architectural taste in Australia was conservative, and especially so in the Catholic Church, and nowhere more so than in the Catholic parishes of rural Australia. This explains why occasional Romanesque churches continued to be built, and not just in rural areas.

![St John's Anglican Church, Taree, NSW](image)

**Figure 3.22.** St John's Anglican Church, Taree, NSW  
(Hubert Woodhouse, 1954-62)

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17 **Southern Cross**, 21 October 1938, 7.
In New South Wales, Nancy Davey's design for the Sydney Catholic parish of Wahroonga (1951-54) depended on simple modern lines, in which the wheel window became a large, quadripartite circular window. Stephen O'Halloran's design for the Catholics of rural Leeton (1955) was in the stripped Romanesque style which had been emerging before the war. St John's Anglican Church, Taree (Hubert Woodhouse, 1954-62) is an impressively large, modernist structure, and possibly the only post-war Protestant Romanesque church in Australia.

There were only a handful of Romanesque churches built in Victoria after the war. The most interesting is St Michael's Catholic Church, Ashburton (1954-55), designed by G.M. Hirsch's Contemporary Architectural Group (CONARG). This was a very modern church, but the massing was typically Romanesque and the brick mouldings of the façade arch, and the residual brick corbel table on the side elevations, suggest that the intention was still Romanesque.

Remarkably, South Australia witnessed the erection of a Romanesque Catholic cathedral at Port Pirie between 1949 and 1953. It was designed by Russell & Yelland in a simplified Lombardic Romanesque.

Queensland Catholics were reluctant to abandon the Lombardic. The firm of Hennessy & Hennessy was in decline, but its former pupils kept the flag flying. As late as 1957 the Brisbane parish of Ashgrove erected a church in a simplified Lombardic style, designed by Frank Cullen. The following year, rural St George was endowed with a more traditionally Lombardic church, designed by Donoghue, Cusick & Edwards. There is even an example of the style from as late as 1962 at Chinchilla, designed by Toowoomba architect Brian Hodgen.

One of the most interesting post-war Romanesque churches is to be found in the suburbs of Launceston. St Finn Barr's Catholic Church, Invermay (1953-54) was designed by the avant-garde architect Esmond Dorney. It is a building which stretches our conception of the Romanesque, with its high façade arch, recessing through a second lower arch to a round-arched entrance, all suggestive of a moulded medieval Romanesque doorway. The second arch is carried on tall metal columns, like giant jamb-shafts.

The Invermay church raises the question: when did the Australian Romanesque end? Was there a clean break, or did Romanesque influence linger on in subtle ways? Is there a Post-Romanesque trend discernible in twentieth-century Australian architecture?

It is not difficult to find churches like St Peter's Anglican, Proston, Queensland (Fowell, McConnel & Mansfield, 1937-39), where the massing and form are Romanesque, but traditional Romanesque motifs are lacking. The architects had previously worked in a more recognisably Romanesque style and it is not clear that they had entirely abandoned it when they designed this award-winning building.
Similarly, John P. Gannon's design for Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, Wingham, NSW (1953-54) cannot strictly be described as Romanesque, but the overall impression is distinctly Romanesque, and the stylised corbel table is a clear reference to a style which Gannon's firm had used extensively in the past.

An even later example is Leslie Wilkinson's design for St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Penshurst in Sydney (1959-69). Wilkinson had probably never designed in the Romanesque style in the course of his very long and varied career, and yet this is a church with Romanesque massing and a tower which could certainly be described as Romanesque.

And then, when the last embers of the Post-Romanesque had cooled, and the Romanesque was firmly consigned to the realm of "heritage architecture," it came to life again. In 2013, when the Catholic congregation of the western Sydney suburb of Rouse Hill were planning a new church, they wanted "an iconic, traditional-looking church." An architectural firm from nearby Liverpool, De Angelis Taylor & Associates, were happy to oblige, and so the church of Our Lady of the Angels was erected, probably the first Romanesque church to be built in Australia for half a century. The same firm soon had two more Romanesque churches on their drawing boards, and a new phase in the history of the Australian Romanesque had begun.

Figure 3.24. Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, Rouse Hill, NSW
(De Angelis Taylor & Associates, 2013-15)
Chapter 4: New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory

From the Beginnings to 1890

Ecclesiastical Architecture

The Norman-style English village church was the model for the earliest Romanesque buildings in New South Wales. We do not know the name of the architect of the small stone Anglican Church which was erected at Dural between 1846 and 1847, although it has sometimes been attributed to Edmund Blacket. St Jude's Church is a simple building with narrow, round-headed windows, an apse and bell-cote, and originally a shingle roof. The vestry and porch are unsympathetic later additions. Said to have been erected by convict labour, it typifies the use of the Romanesque for rural churches intended to be built with rough materials and unskilled labour.

Edmund Blacket certainly supervised the construction of All Saints' Anglican Church, Bathurst (1848-52), a plain gabled church with a sturdy square tower. It has been suggested that the design was supplied by the Ecclesiological Society in England, who are known to have produced simple Romanesque plans for rural churches in the colonies. A contemporary observer commented unfavourably on the small windows, but conceded that the Norman style was "the most suitable, perhaps, where stone is scarce and bricks principally employed." The church was later elevated to cathedral status, and the original building swallowed up in extensions (1874-75) designed by Benjamin Backhouse in a full-blown Victorian Romanesque Revival style, complete with wheel window. Structural problems caused it to be demolished in 1970.

Figure 4.1. All Saints' Anglican Church, Bathurst
(attributed to Edmund Blacket, 1848-52, demolished)

1 Sydney Morning Herald, 14 August 1848, 3.
Blacket had a distinct preference for the Gothic, but he provided a Romanesque design for St Matthew's Anglican Church, Albury, of which only the nave and the base of the tower were constructed (1857-59). The original design, with its crenellated tower, topped with a tall spire, and a strange flèche-like structure over the crossing, can only be described as "free Romanesque." The east end and the transepts were added in 1875 in a Gothic style designed by William Boles, but the tower was left incomplete. In 1991 the church was rebuilt after a fire, and the tower completed to a plain Romanesque design of Ian O'Connor.

The most successful Norman-style church in New South Wales is unquestionably James Houison's reconstruction of St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Parramatta (1852-55). A church was first erected on this site in 1799, and it was remodelled to designs of John Watts in 1818, with two large west towers. Only the towers (with modified windows) were retained by Houison, who apparently adopted the Norman style to satisfy a homesick clergyman. It was a sizable building of six bays and a chancel, with the exterior decorated in typical Norman style (see Figure 2.6) and a fine Norman door, designed on an English model by Houison's young assistant, William Kemp. The transepts were sensitively added in 1883 to designs of Edmund Blacket and his son Cyril. This church was eventually raised to cathedral status and, following the demolition of All Saints' at Bathurst, it has the distinction of being the only Romanesque Anglican cathedral in Australia.

Between 1865 and 1870, Edmund Blacket was assisted by a young and innovative North American architect, John Horbury Hunt, who would enjoy a long and controversial career in the colony. During these years, Hunt developed a short-lived interest in the Romanesque, which can be seen in two of the churches which he designed with Blacket. St John the Evangelist Anglican, Glebe (1868-70) is more sophisticated than Blacket's earlier Norman churches, but is marred by an incongruous tower added in 1911 to a design of Cyril Blacket.

Edmund Blacket and Hunt also collaborated on St Silas' Anglican Church, Waterloo (1868, demolished). The polychrome brickwork of this building may have owed something to the recently built Collins Street Independent Church in Melbourne (Reed & Barnes, 1866-67). Hunt was the supervising architect, and Freeland gives him credit for the high quality of the brickwork—and fine brickwork is certainly a hallmark of Hunt's later buildings.² The window design, including the simplified rose window, is very similar to that of the Glebe church.

William Kemp, who had worked for Houison on the Parramatta church, designed a Presbyterian Church in Phillip Street, Sydney (1866-67, demolished), which was probably the first Romanesque church in the colony to occupy a prominent central-city location. Kemp broke completely with the Norman style, producing a design which could be described as Italianate, but the small wheel window and the arched corbel table are obvious Romanesque motifs. The building was remodelled by William Munro in 1874, with a distinctly un-Romanesque spire. It was demolished in 1935 to permit the extension of Martin Place.
Thomas Rowe, one of the most successful architects in Sydney in the second half of the nineteenth century, was also the preferred architect of the Wesleyan church. Although the majority of his church designs were in the conventional Gothic, he showed an unusual interest in the Romanesque and designed a very substantial Wesleyan (now Uniting) church for Goulburn (1870-71) in a plain red-brick, Romanesque style, which owes nothing to the English Norman style. The little Presbyterian Church which he designed for Hill End (1872) is essentially Romanesque, built of irregular coursed stone, with some Norman moulding of the front windows. His Wesleyan (now Uniting) Church in Paddington (1875-77) is a much larger stone building, with round-headed openings and a doorway with two orders of moulding.

Rowe won the competition to design the Great Synagogue in Elizabeth Street, Sydney (1875-78). The local Jewish community wanted a building similar to the recently erected Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street, London. The design which Rowe produced was described at the time as "Byzantine, freely treated, with a slight introduction of the Gothic spirit."³ The round-headed openings, large wheel window, and the richly moulded doorways rising from columns with foliated capitals are all equally suggestive of the Romanesque.

³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March 1878, 3.
The synagogue which was opened in West Maitland shortly afterwards, in 1879, adopted a more unequivocally Romanesque design, with an arched corbel table on the gable and a simple quatrefoil rose window above the door. It was designed by a local architect, John W. Pender. Pender had already designed a chapel for the Dominican Convent at West Maitland (1872, now part of All Saints College), which may have been the first Catholic Romanesque building in the colony. It was a substantial red-brick building in a simple Lombardic style. Unfortunately the crenellated tower was added later, without reference to Pender's original design. Pender was also responsible for a hall-cum-dormitory block for the convent in a similar style (1883-84).

Meanwhile, Edmund Blacket was learning that designing Romanesque churches could be professionally hazardous. For rural Jamberoo, he provided a design for a simple brick Norman-style Anglican church (1865-67). It was dismissed by a local resident as "little (if anything) better than a brick barn, with round-headed windows put in the walls." The congregation agreed, and they replaced Blacket's bell-cote with a tower, and added a moulded Norman doorway.

In Bowral, Blacket's Romanesque design for St Jude's Anglican Church (1873-74) was even less popular. It was an unusual design, not in the Norman style, but solidly Romanesque, with its squat, square crossing tower. Morton Herman would later describe it as a "small gem." Ten years after its construction, the newly appointed bishop dismissed it as "simple and crude," and it was replaced with a new Gothic church. Joan Kerr has commented that, "the idea that the Norman style was only suitable for primitive societies was so ingrained that the visual evidence of Blacket's church, which was not at all primitive, was ignored."

![Figure 4.5. St Jude's Anglican Church, Bowral (Edmund Blacket, 1873-74, demolished)](image)

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4 Kiama Independent, 20 October 1864, 2.
Blacket had more success with his Romanesque design for All Saints’ Anglican Church, Tumut (1875-82). With its prominent buttresses and broach spire, it has a very High Victorian look, although the round-headed openings suggest Romanesque inspiration. The large, recessed round arch which dominates the street frontage was distinctly modern for the time.

Another practitioner of the rural Romanesque was Alberto Soares, an Anglican clergyman who had trained as an engineer in London before taking holy orders. He was parish priest of Queanbeyan for many years and designed churches for the district using rubble masonry in a simple Romanesque style. Christ Church, Queanbeyan (1859-60) was the largest of these, the others being very small country churches at Murringo (1866), Burra (1867-68) and Beloka (1871-73). Like Blacket, he encountered opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities: his bishop preferred the Gothic style.

Australian Romanesque buildings before 1890 are almost invariably inspired by English Norman models or by the Italian Lombardic. One interesting exception is the German Lutheran Church in Goulburn Street, Sydney (1882-83), designed by Thomas Chater. Chater was English by birth and training, but the particularly elaborate design of the gable suggests that the source is the Rundbogenstil, the German variant of the Romanesque Revival.

Following Edmund Blacket’s death in 1883, his sons Arthur and Cyril continued the practice, and they designed one last Romanesque church, St Saviour's Anglican, Redfern (1885-86, 1889). It is a Lombardic building, but lacking the planned tower and apse. Arthur Blacket is said to have been greatly influenced by his early contact with John Horbury Hunt, and the design of this building, with all the details finely worked out in polychrome brick, and sandstone used only for the columns and wheel window, is very reminiscent of Hunt’s work.

When one considers how prominent a role the Romanesque played in Catholic church architecture in Sydney in the first half of the twentieth century, it is surprising that it is so absent in the nineteenth century. An early hint of Romanesque can be found in St Francis of Assisi, Paddington (John Bede Barlow, 1889-90), but it is only the doorway and wheel window which are Romanesque, the rest of the nave being Gothic; the building was later completed to a classical design.

By the late 1880s, new influences were becoming apparent. The design of the Strathfield Congregational Church (now Trinity Uniting Church), designed by George Sydney Jones & Harold Thompson (1889-93), with its polychrome brickwork and flèche over the crossing, suggests the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. The round-headed openings and triplet windows are Romanesque, but this church bears no resemblance to the Norman and Lombardic designs of the previous decades.
The Sydney firm of Sulman & Power were also trying out new ideas. The Woollahra Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church (1889-90, altered) shows some familiar Lombardic features, but the face-brick with stone banding presages a new style in church architecture. The firm's design for the Manly Presbyterian Church (1889-90) was even more innovative, with rock-faced limestone walls, elaborately carved mouldings and capitals, and a lofty campanile, complete with gargoyles. The round turrets of the front elevation suggest a Celtic influence.
**Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture**

The use of the Romanesque style for non-ecclesiastical architecture was rare in New South Wales before 1890. An early example is the Sailors' Home overlooking Circular Quay in Sydney (1861-64, altered). It is further evidence of William Kemp's lifelong interest in the Romanesque, in this case in conjunction with his senior partner, William Weaver. The simple but striking design is dominated by triplet windows connected by a continuous label mould. It suggests that the architects had recognised the ability of the Romanesque to exploit shade effects in the Australian climate.

![Sailors' Home, 106-108 George Street, Sydney](image)

**Figure 4.8.** Sailors' Home, 106-108 George Street, Sydney (Weaver & Kemp, 1861-64)

Freeland has said that Weaver and Kemp used the Romanesque "almost as an 'office style'," but evidence for this is hard to locate. Kemp probably assisted Weaver with the design of Moore College at Liverpool (1857, demolished), which had round-headed windows. It is known that Weaver & Kemp's 1857 "Italian" design for the Mudgee Anglican Church was rejected by the parish in favour of a Gothic design, suggesting problems similar to those that Blacket would face in Bowral.

Thomas Rowe had a penchant for Romanesque churches, but he also experimented with the style in other areas. This can be seen in two of his designs for rural mechanics' institutes, at Mudgee (1861-62, altered) and Yass (1868-69). The latter building was described at the time as "a blending of the Romanesque and Gothic," and is remarkable for the kangaroos cast in cement which flank the pediment. There is also considerable Romanesque influence in Rowe's design for the Wesleyan College at Stanmore (1876-80, now Newington College).

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8 *Empire* (Sydney), 10 August 1857, 2.
9 *Goulburn Herald*, 21 October 1868, 4.
Rowe made effective use of the Romanesque in the window mouldings of Vickery's Buildings in Pitt Street, Sydney (1864-66, demolished, see Figure 3.6).

The only non-ecclesiastical example of the Romanesque in Edmund Blacket's work was to be found in Mort's Wool Store at Circular Quay, which he designed in conjunction with John Horbury Hunt (1866-70, demolished). This large brick building with stone dressings is difficult to classify stylistically. The motif of the biforate window with an oculus above was certainly used in the Romanesque Revival in Europe, although its origin is probably more Gothic than Romanesque. The building was extended in a similar style in 1884-86 to designs of Arthur Pritchard, and demolished in 1959.

A contemporary observed that the Mort Wool Store is "noticeable for an entire absence of florid ornamentation." 10 In this respect it conforms to much of Hunt's later work, although the extent of his involvement in this project has been questioned. This building could be regarded as an early example of the style known to architectural historians as the Federation Warehouse.

A warehouse demonstrating the more decorative use of the Romanesque was designed by George and Ralph Mansfield for John Frazer and built in 1876. It stood on the corner of York and Barrack Streets in Sydney. The architects probably regarded it as Italianate, but it had some interesting Romanesque features, especially in the round-arched bays separated by pilasters, which spanned the second and third storeys, and prefigured the American Romanesque style. The building was demolished in 1927, and should not be confused with another Mansfield warehouse for John Frazer built on the opposite corner in 1865-67, which still partially survives.

10 Australian Town and Country Journal, 27 August 1870, 16.
Just a few years later, around 1879, a large warehouse (of which the façade survives) was erected for Alfred Bennett & Co. in Kent Street, near the corner of King Street. The architect of this building has not been identified, but it is unequivocally Romanesque, with its arched corbel tables on the gables and exaggerated semi-circular label moulds over the windows.

The government buildings of New South Wales in the latter half of the nineteenth century were built predominantly in the classic style, as dictated by the long-serving Government Architect, James Barnet. The one exception is in school architecture, since many schools were designed for the Department of Public Instruction by private architects.

George Mansfield designed at least two schools which show Romanesque influence. St Leonard's Public School, North Sydney (1878) is built in rock-faced sandstone with Romanesque doors and windows, although there is nothing Romanesque about the spire. Redfern Public School (1878-79, see Figure 3.4) is more markedly Romanesque, especially with its tower, which imitates a Lombard campanile.

Charles Mayes designed the polychrome brick Darlinghurst Public School (1882-84) in a Romanesque style. The brickwork was skilfully used to create simplified corbel tables and window mouldings.

**Figure 4.10. Darlinghurst Public School** (Charles Mayes, 1882-84)
**Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)**

**American Romanesque**

About 1890 the new American Romanesque style began to appear in Sydney, and it would have a significant influence on the city's architecture during the next two decades. The American Romanesque was a style normally applied to large buildings, and for this reason it had little impact elsewhere in New South Wales, except perhaps in Newcastle.

**The Queen Victoria Building**

The Queen Victoria Building (hereafter referred to as the QVB) occupies a unique position in the history of the Australian Romanesque. Although it is the best known and most visible Romanesque building in Australia, it does not fit neatly into any current within the Romanesque movement in Australian architecture. It will be discussed here as part of the American Romanesque phenomenon, but the building's design owes little to the American Romanesque.

From the late 1880s, the Sydney City Council had been examining the possibility of replacing the old George Street Markets with a new building. When in 1892 the State Government decided to vacate a building adjacent to the markets, the possibility of developing the whole block bounded by George, Market, York and Park Streets was seized upon, without any serious consideration of the economic potential of the project. The City Architect, George McRae, prepared plans for a structure consisting of a basement (for the produce market), a ground floor for retail premises, and two gallery floors above. This layout was accepted by the Council and excavation work began on the site early in 1893, before the external design for the building had been finalised.

For the exterior, McRae prepared four alternative designs, which he labelled Romanesque, Renaissance, Gothic and Queen Anne. After considerable debate in the Council, the Romanesque design was chosen. The reasons for this choice are not altogether clear, but it seems that a majority of councillors considered that this was the fashionable new style, "now so largely employed by American architects," as a contemporary trade newspaper put it.\(^{11}\) So McRae's Romanesque design was chosen because it was thought to represent the new American Romanesque style, and yet it is hard to find in the QVB many motifs directly borrowed from that style. As Phillip Kent puts it, the QVB was "built in a Romanesque style, but one increasingly distant from the heavy forms of the 'American Romanesque'."\(^{12}\)

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\(^{11}\) *Australasian Builder and Contractors' News*, 29 July 1893, 52.

Figure 4.11. Queen Victoria Building, Sydney (George McRae, 1893-98)

The design provoked controversy in the pages of the local press, mostly generated by Sydney architects. The Victorian prejudice against the Romanesque as a "debased style" resurfaced.\textsuperscript{13} The most interesting comments came from John Horbury Hunt, who began by defending the Romanesque style, quoting Sir George Gilbert Scott's praise for its "sternness and dignity almost unearthly."\textsuperscript{14} However when he had examined McRae's design, Hunt criticised it roundly as "bastard Romanesque" because of its plate-glass shopfronts; in Hunt's opinion, a Romanesque building "must have direct contact with mother earth, its visible foundation is its very life."\textsuperscript{15}

The building was finally completed, at huge expense, in 1898. Its twenty-one copper-sheeted domes and myriad clustered colonettes became (and remain) an unmissable feature of Sydney's architecture. Commercially it was a white elephant, and as a result it was extensively remodelled internally, but to no effect, and it narrowly escaped demolition more than once. Finally a lengthy refurbishment during the 1980s returned it to something like its original state and transformed it into one of the foremost retail outlets in Sydney.

\textit{Retail Warehouses}

The QVB was the largest Romanesque retail warehouse built in Sydney, but it was certainly not the only one. The prototype was the Lark, Sons & Co. Warehouse (E. Jeaffreson Jackson, 1892-93, demolished) at 2 Wynyard Street, a brick building with arched bays spanning the four lower floors. The arches of the bays and of the entrance were heavily rusticated in Pyrmont stone. Jackson also designed the 1900 extension of this building, after which it reopened as Paterson, Laing & Bruce Ltd.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 28 July 1893, 6.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 12 August 1893, 5.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 18 August 1893, 6.
The Sydney firm of Robertson & Marks were pre-eminent in the design of city warehouses in this era. Among the retail premises which they designed in the Romanesque style were the Mutual Stores for A.J. Riley & Co. in Pitt Street, south of King Street (1898, demolished), a three-storey brick building with large plate-glass windows at ground level. The central bay was topped by a large round-headed arch, and there were additional Romanesque motifs in the blind arcading and arched corbel table.

The same firm designed a building for T.H. Mate & Co. of Albury (1899, destroyed by fire), typical of the more modest two-storey American Romanesque shopfronts which can sometimes be found in country towns. The large arches on the upper storey were the signature feature.

One of the most decorative warehouses designed by Robertson & Marks was the International Harvester Company of America building at 255 Broadway, Glebe (1905-06). The five-storey brick façade with large windows is divided into three arched bays, with rock-faced stone voussoirs in the arches. The elaborately carved round arch and lintel above the doorway survive, although the turquoise tiles in the spandrels have sadly disappeared.

After the QVB, perhaps the largest surviving American Romanesque warehouse in Sydney is the Marcus Clark Building (James Nangle, 1905), on a prominent corner site dominating Railway Square. Of eight storeys in red brick, with freestone facings, it is only marginally American Romanesque: the arched windows are contained within the bays on two levels, rather than surmounting them.

Arthur McCredie was responsible for the design of two very large retail warehouses which show Romanesque influence. The first was designed with his brother George for Henry Bull
& Co. at 111 York Street, on the corner of Market Street (1903-4, demolished). It was a soaring ten-storey building of rusticated rock-faced stone at the lower levels and face-brick above. Arched bays spanned the intermediate four levels. The large carved doorway was patriotically surmounted by kangaroos.

![Henry Bull & Co. Building, York & Market Streets, Sydney](image)

**Figure 4.13. Henry Bull & Co. Building, York & Market Streets, Sydney**  
(A.L. & G.H. McCredie, 1903-4, demolished)

The Robert Reid & Co. Warehouse at 69-75 King Street (1906-7, extended 1914) was designed by McCredie in partnership with Arthur Anderson. It is a large building, in brick with stone dressings and decorative terra cotta panels in the spandrels. The use of a darker coloured brick for the voussoirs of the arches is a not uncommon motif in the Australian Romanesque. The shopfronts at ground level originally had marble entrances.

An essential requirement for the retail warehouses of this era was good lighting. Herbert Thompson's design for Alcock Brothers Warehouse on the corner of York and Barrack Streets (1907-8, demolished) was praised for its large windows. The arched bays spanned all but the topmost floor. The doorway was possibly the most remarkable Richardsonian doorway in Sydney: the squat supporting columns were said to resemble "misplaced jardiniers."

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16 *Building* (Sydney), 12 February 1927, 129.
The stores which Morrow & De Putron designed for Anthony Hordern & Sons at 307-325 Sussex Street (1912-13, altered) are of three-storey brick, with the bays surmounted by arches with large stone voussoirs.

Storage Warehouses

The storage warehouses designed in Romanesque style during this period are particularly interesting. The label "Federation Warehouse" is often applied to these buildings, but we are concerned only with that subset of the Federation Warehouse which was inspired by the American Romanesque.

The Newcastle architect Frederick Menkens was a significant practitioner in this style. The first warehouse which he designed for David Cohen & Co. on the corner of Scott and Market Streets, Newcastle (1897, destroyed by fire) was a fine example, of four storeys, in brick, with stone and cement dressings. The bays were surmounted by large semi-circular arches, and the doorway was elaborately decorated with large polished columns of Bowral trachyte, supporting an arch with large stone voussoirs.

Menkens designed two adjacent warehouses for R. Hall & Sons at 161 Scott Street, Newcastle. The earlier western building (1899) is more elaborate, with large, rock-faced voussoirs and an arched corbel table, whereas the later eastern building (1905) is a simple brick façade, with arched bays spanning the two upper storeys.

Menkens' second warehouse for David Cohen & Co. at 50 Bolton Street, Newcastle (1901-2), is a massive five-storey building, with Romanesque arches and corbel tables, all executed in
red face-brick. The Frederick Ash Ltd building at 359-361 Hunter Street, Newcastle (1904-5) also shows Romanesque influence.

In Sydney, many storage warehouses were built in these years, and most have now disappeared. Even when the warehouses survive, it is often difficult to trace their history. Many were designed by Robertson & Marks, including the Edwards, Dunlop Warehouse at 414-418 Kent Street (1897, see Figure 2.18), one of the firm's earliest Romanesque designs. A contemporary trade newspaper described it as "an imposing pile of buildings of considerable artistic merit."17 The use of rock-faced stone at the ground level and brick above is a common feature in the American Romanesque storage warehouse. The three large arches of the façade are also executed in rock-faced stone.

Somewhat similar was the firm's design for the Gollin & Co. Building at 40-50 Clarence Street (1901, demolished), where stone was used even more extensively. The Gollin Building was given a Richardsonian entrance, with a heavy arch of large rock-faced stone voussoirs carried on squat columns, a feature which is another hallmark of this style.

Robertson & Marks were also responsible for two connected warehouses (ca 1906), one with frontage to 197-199 Clarence Street, and the other to 338 Kent Street. Both façades use the contrasting colours and textures of sandstone and brick to very good effect. The Clarence Street façade is more Romanesque, with its arched doorways carried on colonettes.

The W.S. Friend & Co. Warehouse at 113 York Street (1907-8, demolished) was another fine Robertson & Marks design, using brick and heavily rusticated freestone, with a Richardsonian doorway. An exceptionally good Richardsonian doorway can still be seen in the former Laycock, Son & Nettleton Bedding Factory at 533-539 Kent Street (architect unknown, 1902).

Figure 4.15. Doorway, Laycock, Son & Nettleton Factory, 533-539 Kent Street, Sydney (architect unknown, 1902)

17 Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand, 20 February 1897, 40.
Of course Robertson & Marks were not the only firm designing storage warehouses in Sydney at this time. The Parke, Davis & Co. Warehouse at 125 York Street (Spain & Cosh, 1908-9) follows the familiar pattern of rock-faced stone at the ground level and brick above, with stone voussoirs in the two arches which surmount the bays. The five-storey warehouse which Spain & Cosh designed for 44 King Street, on the corner of Clarence Street (1909, two floors added later) is faced mainly in brick, but the large stone voussoirs are retained to create prominent arches above the bays.

As Spain, Cosh & Minnett, the firm designed a warehouse for J.F. Utz at 352-358 Kent Street (1911-12). It was one of the last of the American Romanesque warehouses built in Sydney. As before, rock-faced stone is used at the ground level and brick above, but the treatment of the arches at the top of the bays is of interest: a polychrome effect has been achieved in the voussoirs by alternating brick with dressed stone.

Wool Stores

Among the American Romanesque storage warehouses, there is a small but significant subset of Sydney wool stores exhibiting Romanesque characteristics. The prototype was the building erected on the corner of Pyrmont Street and Pyrmont Bridge Road in 1893 to a design by Arthur Blacket. It is another example of Blacket's affection for the Romanesque and for fine brickwork, both learnt from his early mentor, John Horbury Hunt. It is a simple design, but the recessed arched bays and string courses give scope for attractive shade effects, and darker brick has been used to pick out the details. The side door is very Romanesque, if not quite Richardsonian. Indeed, it is questionable whether the American Romanesque had any influence at all on this design.

![Figure 4.16. Wool Store, Pyrmont Street & Pyrmont Bridge Road, Sydney (Arthur Blacket, 1893)](image)
Harry Kent apparently followed Blacket's lead with his designs for the Winchcombe Carson Wool Store on the corner of Wattle and Fig Streets, Ultimo (1894, extended 1910 by John Burcham Clamp) and the John Bridge & Co. Wool Store (1895), a little further along Wattle Street, on the corner of Macarthur Street. Both buildings are much fussier than Blacket's, but the massive face-brick walls and the Romanesque arches are the common factor.

Herbert Ross's design for the Co-operative Wool and Produce Co. Wool Store (1899), also in Wattle Street, on the corner of Quarry Street, is simpler and perhaps closer to the Blacket original. Like Blacket's building, it makes effective use of recessed arched bays, at least at the lower levels.

The Pitt, Son & Badgery Wool Store (John Reid, 1905-6), on the corner of Harris and Allen Streets, Pyrmont, is a simple design, with arched bays spanning all but the top floor. The arches are picked out in bright red bricks, and rise from moulded capitals at the top of the pilasters. A top floor with small round-headed windows adds to the Romanesque effect.

**Government Buildings**

William Kemp became chief architect to the New South Wales Department of Public Instruction in 1880 and held that post until 1896, when the position was abolished and responsibility for school architecture was passed to the Government Architect. We have traced Kemp's early use of the Romanesque, but he does not personally seem to have employed it in the design of schools during the 1880s. In a paper which he read in 1893, he explained how he had come to reject the traditional use of the Gothic style in school architecture:

> I was led to look for a climate approximating more nearly our own, and I seemed to find it in Italy, where I also found, in the astylar architecture of that country what seemed to me a better starting point [than Gothic] for the development of a school architecture suitable to our climate … A pointed arch of ordinary bricks is to my eye not at any time satisfactory, and there are few other Gothic details which can be produced except by purposely made bricks, and these are quite out of the reach of one who ... wishes to build cheaply.\(^{19}\)

Kemp's first Romanesque building for the Department of Public Instruction was the Sydney Technical College in Mary Ann Street, Ultimo (1890-91, see Figure 3.9). Although Morton Herman, who taught there in the years after the Second World War, described it as a "large but rather gloomy building,"\(^{19}\) it is now regarded as one of the masterpieces of the Australian Romanesque. The brickwork (polychrome, patterned, moulded) is particularly impressive. The entrance arches are quite Richardsonian, with their massive rock-faced voussoirs carried on short, solid polished stone columns. The arched bays which span the two lower floors,

\(^{18}\) *Australasian Builder and Contractors' News*, 8 July 1893, 16-17.

\(^{19}\) Morton Herman, *The Architecture of Victorian Sydney*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1964), 139.
their arches carried on carved pilaster capitals, also suggest the influence of the American Romanesque, although Kirsten Orr would dispute this.\footnote{20} The terra cotta panels, which Kemp used here under the windows, would become a common feature in the Australian Romanesque.

The Technological Museum (1891-93) stands next to the Technical College and was designed by Kemp in a very similar style. Without the impressive doorway of the Technical College it is, as Phillip Kent has said, "more tenuously Richardsonian."\footnote{21} Kemp also designed a Teachers Training College for the University of Sydney in 1891. It was not constructed, but the published designs display a very Romanesque style which seems to be based on medieval English models, rather than the Richardsonian Romanesque.\footnote{22}

Kemp's designs for the public schools at Albury (1891-92), Concord (1893) and Dulwich Hill (1893) are all unquestionably Romanesque. They show little American influence, although the arched bay is sometimes present. Face-brick and terra cotta panels are common to them all. The technical college at Newcastle (1894-96) and the smaller one at Bathurst (1896-97) were Kemp's last Romanesque buildings. They are more modest versions of the Sydney Technical College.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{concord_public_school.png}
\caption{Concord Public School (William Kemp, 1893)}
\end{figure}

\footnote{22} \textit{Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand}, 3 June 1893.
Walter Liberty Vernon was Government Architect of New South Wales from 1890 to 1911. Vernon had visited the United States in 1887, where he presumably examined some of the new Romanesque buildings at first hand. The large Richardsonian arch certainly occurs in some of his later buildings, the extreme example of which is the Nowra Court House (1895-97), where the supporting columns have been dispensed with altogether. The Surry Hills Police Station (1895-96) has three particularly fine Richardsonian arches, the centre one in sandstone, the others in red brick. The Burwood Post Office (1892) is an interesting combination of the American and Lombardic Romanesque.

Financial Institutions

In almost any period of Australian history, banks and insurance companies have been responsible for some of the largest and most impressive buildings erected. It is therefore surprising that during the Federation Period more were not designed in the fashionable American Romanesque style. This can partly be explained by the depression of the 1890s, and perhaps also by a conservative belief that only classical styles were suitable for financial institutions.

However it was not surprising that an American company, Equitable Life Assurance, should choose an American Romanesque design for its new headquarters at 348-352 George Street, Sydney (1892-94, see Figure 3.8). The company even imported a German-born American architect, Edward Raht, to design the building and supervise construction. Phillip Kent described this building as "the only truly 'American Romanesque' building in Australia," and it is easy to see why. The large, heavily rusticated blocks of rock-faced Bowral trachyte at the lower levels and the huge arch spanning the entrance are very Richardsonian. At the upper levels there are arched bays extending over three levels, with rusticated voussoirs supported by pilasters with attached columns.

Raht also designed the adjacent Bank of Australasia (1903-4) on the corner of Martin Place, which contains some Romanesque elements. Another large bank with some limited American Romanesque motifs was the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales in Martin Place (Wardell & Denning, 1904-5, demolished).

Varney Parkes designed a branch office for the Bank of New South Wales on the corner of George and Regent Streets, Chippendale (1894). It is an exuberant and highly decorative Romanesque building, which perhaps owes more to McRae's Queen Victoria Building than to any American models. In the same year, Parkes remodelled the façade of the Bank of New South Wales on the corner of George and Bathurst Streets, in a style which is perhaps more Italianate than Romanesque.

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The American Romanesque could also be applied to more modest banking premises. The Bank of New South Wales in suburban Ashfield (Thomas Hodgson, 1908-9, demolished) and the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney in rural Lockhart (Ernest Laver, 1911-12) demonstrate this.

**Office Buildings**

The economic depression of the 1890s may also explain why few large Sydney office buildings were erected in the American Romanesque style. The sprawling Dalgety Building on the corner of Bent and O'Connell Streets (J.W. Manson, 1899, demolished) had some distinctly Richardsonian doorways and some oddly placed corbel tables, but was not otherwise a strongly Romanesque design. By way of contrast, the Burns Philp Building at 5-11 Bridge Street (A.L. & G.H. McCredie, 1899-1900) is unashamedly Richardsonian, with rusticated, rock-faced stone walls and low-sprung arches resting on polished granite columns at the lower levels, and a more Italianate Romanesque above.

John Reid's design for the six-storey British Medical Association building in Elizabeth Street (1910-11, demolished) was solid and imposing, with an unusually high entrance arch and a façade of three arched bays, with an exaggerated corbel table under the parapet.
The nine-storey Castlereagh House on the southeast corner of Hunter and Castlereagh Streets (Herbert Ross, 1909-10, demolished) was perhaps the largest American Romanesque office building in Sydney. The brick façade was divided into the standard arched bays, but the arches were highly decorated. The entrances were Richardsonian, with large rusticated rock-faced voussoirs, carried on short columns of green Carrara ware.

Just nearby, at 10 Castlereagh Street, Spain, Cosh & Minnett designed Castlereagh Chambers (1911-13, demolished), an eight-storey building on a narrow frontage. It was a fairly plain design, with a central bay flanked by two arched bays which rose from arched doorways. The voussoirs were polychrome.

**Hospitals**

In the era before air-conditioning, wide arcaded verandas were a normal feature of Australian hospitals. The American Romanesque was easily adapted to such arcaded structures, as evidenced by the Lewisham Hospital at West Street, Lewisham (Herbert Wardell, 1898-1900), or the Waitara Foundling Home (J.T. McCarthy, 1902-3, demolished), or the Mount St Margaret Hospital for the Insane in Victoria Road, Ryde (J.T. McCarthy, 1904-5, now part of a retirement complex).

**Hotels**

The American Romanesque was not widely used for the design of hotels. However Herbert Ross used an elaborately decorative version of the style, rich in patterned stucco work, for the Shelbourne Hotel on the corner of Sussex and Market Streets, Sydney (1902). A less florid, but still colourful, rural example can be seen in the Kurri Kurri Hotel (James Scobie, 1903-4).
Halls and Theatres

The rather naïve Federation Hall which Morrow & De Putron designed for the Presbyterian Church in Newtown, Sydney (1911) is an interesting mixture of American Romanesque and Arts & Crafts motifs.

The solid and rather ungainly Newcastle Trades Hall (Peter Bennett, 1914-15, demolished) was a late specimen of American Romanesque, with a low, wide arch inserted on the first floor, above the arched doorways. The blind arcading of the parapet was a further Romanesque element.

Sydney City Architect, Robert Brodrick, was responsible for an interesting (but unintentional) American Romanesque design. He took the classical façade which George McRae had designed for the Belmore Market at Haymarket (1891-93), lifted it, and inserted a new ground floor to create The Hippodrome (1913-16). With the arched bays of the old market building now at the upper level, the effect is quite Romanesque. This building survives as the Capitol Theatre.

Industrial Architecture

The Romanesque style was sometimes used for industrial buildings. Just as the style had been found effective for wool stores, it was equally adaptable to large face-brick factories and power stations.

As New South Wales Government Architect, Walter Vernon designed the Electric Power House at 36-64 George Street, The Rocks (1902-4, 1908-9) with a façade of rock-faced stone and large Richardsonian arches at the ground level. The rear façade to Hickson Road is also somewhat Romanesque. Vernon also designed large brick warehouses at the Royal Edward Victualling Yard, 38-42 Pirrama Road, Pyrmont (1905-6) in simple face-brick with some Romanesque touches, of which the campanile-like water tower is the most obvious.

City Architect Robert Brodrick designed buildings for the Sydney Electric Lighting Station at 20 Pyrmont Street, Pyrmont (1903-4), which feature rusticated, rock-faced sandstone for the round arches above the doors and windows.

Sydney engineer Gustave Fischer used arched bays to decorate the brick walls of the Tramway Car and Power House at Rushcutters Bay (1894, demolished). An unknown engineer or architect used Romanesque motifs in the design of the Marrickville Stormwater and Sewage Pumping Station (1898-1900); the rock-faced sandstone voussoirs of the window arches suggest the influence of the American Romanesque style.
The Sydney architectural firm of Mansfield & Son designed a factory for Lever Brothers at 5-7 Roseberry Place, Balmain (1896-97). The high arched openings in the brick walls, linked together by a prominent string course, are probably of Romanesque inspiration.

Residential Architecture

The American Romanesque was never a significant style in Australian residential architecture, although the low, wide arch is frequently found in houses of this period. Arcaded verandas were often employed in larger houses, and one can find occasional mansions where the arcades have been given the full Richardsonian treatment. The house which Herbert Ross designed for Sir Samuel McCaughey at rural Yanco (1900, now part of Yanco Agricultural High School) is a good example, as is Glensloy, a villa which Robertson & Marks designed for suburban Turramurra (1901-2).
The Federation period saw the emergence of the first apartment buildings ("flats") in Sydney. The Albany Residential Flats at 201 Macquarie Street (George Pitt, 1904-5, demolished) were in a standard American Romanesque style, with rock-faced stone and a round-arched entrance at ground level and arched brick bays above. Craignish, nearby at 185 Macquarie Street (J.W. Manson, 1905-6, demolished), had a very Richardsonian doorway with an arched bay of balconies above.

**Traditional Romanesque**

In parallel with the new American Romanesque style, there was during this period a limited use of a more traditional Romanesque, based on medieval models. As one would expect, the buildings designed in this style were exclusively ecclesiastical.

It is probably because of Thomas Rowe that the Methodists (Wesleyans) continued to be patrons of Romanesque architecture. The Primitive Methodist (now Uniting) Church at Annandale (1891) was perhaps Rowe's last Romanesque building. The stone façade is richly decorated with moulded windows and porches. Rowe re-used sculptures from the demolished Bull's Warehouse in Pitt Street, which he had designed about twenty years previously.

![Image of Primitive Methodist (now Uniting) Church, Annandale](image)

**Figure 4.22.** Primitive Methodist (now Uniting) Church, Annandale
(Thomas Rowe, 1891)

The Cootamundra Methodist (now Baptist) Church (David T. Morrow, 1899, see Figure 3.13) was a very different building, in a new style which used red brick and white cement dressings. It is said that a senior Methodist clergyman was so impressed with this church that he chose the Romanesque style for the Lismore Methodist (now Uniting) Church (Frederick Board, 1908-9). The Lismore church is a large building with flanking towers, also built in
brick with cement dressings. The rusticated, rock-faced voussoirs over the doorways suggest a limited Richardsonian influence.

Arthur McCredie used the same brick and cement formula for the Arncliffe Methodist Church (1906-7, altered, now St Mark Coptic Church), with the addition of some undecorated terra cotta panels. As we have seen, McCredie also designed several large city buildings in the American Romanesque style, and it is interesting to observe that this church shows no influence of that style.

The Anglican Church continued to show little interest in the Romanesque. At the parish of St Jude in suburban Randwick, a substantial Sunday school and hall was erected in 1896-97 in a Romanesque style, of brick with sandstone facings, designed by Nixon & Allen. St Andrew's Anglican Church at rural Coolamon (W.J. Monks, 1905), is a simple building in the red brick and white cement idiom.

When the first Greek Orthodox Church in Australia was erected at Bourke and Ridge Streets, Surry Hills in 1898-99, it is not surprising that the architect Charles Summerhayes chose a Romanesque design. Romanesque was, after all, the Western architectural style closest to Byzantine, the traditional style of the Orthodox Church, so much so that during the nineteenth century the terms "Romanesque" and "Byzantine" were sometimes used interchangeably. The design included a triple-arcaded portico and a wheel window above. The façade was completely rebuilt in 1931 to a Romanesque design of Victor E. Woodforde.

Figure 4.23. Greek Orthodox Church, Bourke & Ridge Streets, Surry Hills
(C.R. Summerhayes, 1898-99, altered)
During this period we can detect some nascent interest in the Romanesque among Catholic congregations. The Sydney firm of Tappin, Dennehy & Smart designed a Romanesque church for Manly (1891-92), which was extended in the same style by Nangle & Nurzey in 1908-9. It was a simple gabled church in quarry-faced white freestone, with a simplified rose window above the door. Ernest R. Green designed extensions during the 1940s, which were finally executed unsympathetically in brick in 1962-63.

Frederick Menkens, who had designed large warehouses in Newcastle in the American Romanesque style, used a simple traditional Romanesque style for the large brick convent which he designed for the Sisters of Mercy at Singleton (1892, 1901-2, 1909). The exaggerated corbel tables on the gables and tower are the most obviously Romanesque features.

The Melbourne firm of Kempson & Conolly, who were beginning to design Romanesque Catholic churches in the red brick and white cement style, ventured over the border to prepare plans for the Sacred Heart Church, Temora (1907-8). It is a particularly florid example of the genre, with elaborate window tracery and a niched statue in the façade, and the buttresses rising to a multitude of white pinnacles.

Charles St Julien designed the stone church of Our Lady Star of the Sea at Watson's Bay (1909-10) in a Romanesque style. The present façade dates from the 1940 extensions designed by Clement Glancey.

Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

Catholic Romanesque

The years between the two World Wars were the heyday of the Catholic Romanesque in New South Wales. During this period, at least seventy Catholic churches or chapels in the Romanesque style were erected in the state. Prior to 1914, Catholic interest in the Romanesque style had been limited. It appears that the change of sentiment was partly a backlash against the overused Gothic, and partly a realisation that the Romanesque offered the possibility of building attractive churches more cheaply. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm for Romanesque was not evenly spread. There were some dioceses, such as Maitland-Newcastle and Sydney, where it seems to have been more popular than elsewhere.

Between the wars, the Hunter Region would become a major focus of the Catholic Romanesque, beginning with Thomas Silk's Sacred Heart Church on Campbell's Hill, West Maitland (1917-18). It is a large, solid building in unrelieved dark-red brick, and very different in appearance from the chapel which Silk would later design for the Sisters of Mercy Convent at Singleton (1923-25), in light coloured, banded face-brick.

In Sydney, Austin McKay was experimenting with the decorative possibilities of brick, as can be seen in the Dulwich Hill church of the Immaculate Conception and St Paul of the
Cross (1925-26). Here he used dark chocolate bricks, not only for the walls, but also for the mouldings. Only the wheel window defied the bricklayer's art. McKay would return to the Romanesque late in the 1930s, with designs which were even more striking.

**Figure 4.24. Immaculate Conception & St Paul Catholic Church, Dulwich Hill**
(Austin McKay, 1925-26)

One of the most notable Catholic churches of the early inter-war years was St Brigid's at Coogee (1920-21), designed by Albert Bates in a style which incorporates elements of both the Romanesque and the Renaissance. It uses the established brick and cement idiom, but the brickwork is banded in two colours, each band occupying four courses, and the cement dressings are particularly elaborate, including a large wheel window.

John Bede Barlow, although nearing the end of his life, was not afraid of the modern, and his Romanesque design for St Joachim's Church, Lidcombe (1925-26) experiments with simpler, cleaner lines in dark brick, with a "telephone dial" rose window. In complete contrast, Hennessy & Hennessy were at the same time designing a chapel for the Christian Brothers' Training College at Strathfield (1925, now a campus of the Australian Catholic University, see Figure 2.4) in an academically correct Romanesque, with a very fine terra cotta wheel window and a lofty campanile. In 1931 an adjacent juniorate building in a similar style was opened, and the two buildings, connected by an arcaded walkway, make an effective ensemble.

Back in the Hunter, Peter Gannon was embarking on a long succession of Romanesque projects. One of the earliest of these was Sacred Heart Church, Hamilton (1928-30), which would eventually become the cathedral for the Maitland-Newcastle diocese. Essentially it is a simplified version of the Lombardic Romanesque, with particularly fine patterned brickwork.
However a completely incongruous classical portico, surmounted by a large marble statue, was positioned over the entrance, considerably detracting from the Romanesque effect. It is said that the parish priest had considerable influence on the design.

Perhaps Gannon liked classical porticos, or perhaps he was just unfortunate in his clients, because Our Lady of the Rosary, Taree (1929-30) also has a classical portico in front of the doorway. In this case the statue above the doorway is less prominent, being recessed and surrounded by several orders of skilfully moulded brickwork. The exaggerated and highlighted corbel table is almost tentacular. The classical portico recurs in St Augustine's, Narromine (1932-33).

One of the most successful of Gannon's later churches was St Joseph's, East Maitland (1933-34). It is a composition in patterned red brick, with moulded black brick facings. The square towers strengthen, but do not dominate the façade, which features a large round-headed window, with tracery in a contemporary pattern. In traditional Romanesque fashion, some low-relief statuary has been applied to the tympanum over the doorway. The side elevations feature the biforate window with an oculus above, and the sanctuary end has a large, stylised rose window. St Laurence O'Toole, Broadmeadow (1933, see Figure 2.10) is a colourful, almost art deco design, with a later porch which unfortunately obscures the original Romanesque doorway.

Scott, Green & Scott were a Sydney firm who designed a number of Romanesque buildings for the Catholic Church between the wars. Blessed Sacrament Church, Clifton Gardens (1927) is an unusual building, generally striving for academic correctness, but with a strange porch, or narthex, with a skillion roof. Above this is a finely executed arcade and wheel window. The firm's later church at Cowra, St Raphael's (1938-39), is an imposing building, mostly of red brick, with a tall but rather top-heavy tower. The façade is unusual, with a miniature wheel window and an exaggerated corbel table, plus a corbelled statue.
The prolific Melbourne architect William Patrick Conolly (formerly of Kempson & Conolly) designed two Romanesque churches in New South Wales between the wars. St Mary's, West Wyalong (1928-29) is a conventional essay in the established Victorian brick and cement style. St Anthony's, Harden (1934-35), on the other hand, is a more interesting design. It uses face-brick in clean, modern lines to reinterpret the traditional Lombardic Romanesque. The shadow effects are very successful.

St Joseph's Church, Junee (1929-30), designed by Monks & Jeffs of Wagga Wagga, is one of the showpiece churches of the Australian Catholic Romanesque. It is a large brick academically correct exercise in the Lombardic Romanesque, exhibiting almost every possible motif of the style. The tall flanking towers of unequal height are unusual but impressive. Only the life-size statues which flank the entrance mar the Romanesque effect.

The pre-eminent architect of the Catholic Romanesque in New South Wales was Clement Glancey, whose firm was responsible for around twenty Romanesque churches and chapels between 1927 and 1942. Throughout that time, Glancey's staff included one of Australia's first female architects, Rosette Edmunds, who has been credited with many of the firm's Romanesque designs. 24

Virtually all of the Glancey churches were built in brick, and the brickwork is often of exceptionally high quality. Some of the parishes had limited funds and could afford only basic buildings (which sometimes did duty as the parish school during the week), but where finances permitted, Glancey produced large and impressive buildings. Generally he strove for an authentic Romanesque effect, and there are no incongruous statues attached to the façades of his churches. At the same time, there is a definite progression from the academic correctness of the early buildings to a more modern aesthetic in the later works.

One of the firm's earliest Romanesque designs was a chapel at the Mater Dei Orphanage, Camden (1927-28, now part of Mater Dei School). Described at the time as "a gem of Romanesque architecture," the stone doorway is surmounted by a panel of herringbone-pattern brickwork, with a triplet window above. The stonework of the door and window columns contrasts well with the face brickwork.

St Francis Xavier, Arncliffe (1931-32, see Figure 3.16) is perhaps the firm's best known church, because of its unusual round Celtic tower. The brickwork is virtuosic, especially the twisted columns, a motif which the firm would use again. Even in this early church there is an interesting combination of traditional elements (the wheel window and blind arcading) with more modern elements, such as the stylised corbel table. Large Romanesque churches were also designed at Taralga (1934) and Bangalow (1934-35).

St Christopher's, Manuka (1938-39, now the Canberra Cathedral) has simple modern lines but still with a strong Romanesque feel. The wheel window has evolved into a "telephone dial" rose window, which dominates the façade, and the corbel table has morphed into a sort of vertical panelling. The deep cream bricks are also an innovation, perhaps borrowed from the contemporary Mediterranean style. A synthetic stone, with low-relief decoration, was used to form the rose window and doorway. In 1972-73 Clement Glancey junior was responsible for the extension of this building and the addition of the campanile, in a slightly simplified version of the original design.

Holy Family, Maroubra (1939-40) is one of Glancey's last Romanesque designs. It has many similarities with the Canberra Cathedral, although richer colour effects have been achieved by contrasting the dominant mottled red brickwork with a large inset of paler brickwork, which forms the centre of the front elevation. The lines and massing are simple and the decoration is restrained, thus creating a bridge between the traditional forms of the medieval Romanesque and the claims of modernism.

It was of course the modernist movement which spelt the death of the Australian Romanesque, but during the 1930s some of the more progressive architects attempted to adapt the Romanesque to the new architectural trends, rather than abandon it altogether.

Fowell & McConnel won the Sulman Award for their design of St Anne's Shrine at North Bondi (1933-34). This brick church is in a stripped Romanesque style, but with a quite traditional sandstone Lombard porch. The external statuary is limited, perhaps in an attempt to satisfy both the traditionalists and the modernists. The original plan included a lofty detached campanile, which was never built. As Fowell, McConnel & Mansfield, the same firm designed St Mary's, North Sydney (1937-38). This is a more uncompromisingly modern building, and yet its brutal sandstone solidity suggests nothing so much as a medieval fortress. The almost complete absence of external decoration is at once perfectly Romanesque and very modernist.
Austin McKay cleverly sold two very similar versions of the same modernist Romanesque design to the parishes of Casino and Woollahra. Both churches were erected in 1939-40 in brick, with a triple doorway, with brick mouldings. Above the central door, the façade rises through a large, moulded, recessed window containing a statue (Casino) or a crucifix (Woollahra), to a high, stepped tower. It was clearly a winning design: a year later McKay sold a simplified version of it to the parish at Renmark, South Australia.

In the late 1930s, the firm of Agabiti & Millane used traditional Romanesque forms and massing, but with modern touches. Amleto Agabiti was an Italian architect who had settled in Australia, and he developed a signature "Byzantine Lombardic" style which used light coloured bricks, domes, and windows completely surrounded by mouldings in a contrasting colour. The chapel at the Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Kensington (1937) and the Siena Convent in Camberwell, Victoria (1939) were two important projects. After Agabiti's untimely death, his partner, Bolton Millane, was responsible for St Finbar's Convent, Sans Souci (1939, now a residential complex) in the same style.

The work of the prolific Newcastle architect Peter J. Gannon has already been discussed. After his death in 1935, the practice was taken over by his younger brother, John P. Gannon. The younger Gannon was responsible for the modernist design of St Columban's Church, Mayfield (1939-40, see Figure 3.17). The massive façade combines the verticality of tall, narrow, round-headed windows with the horizontality of the banded brickwork, in which every eighth course is recessed. The parapet is worked in vertical courses of saw-tooth brickwork, and the round-headed doorway includes low-relief decoration in the tympanum. It is a remarkable example of the Catholic Romanesque in its final stage, merging into the Post-War Ecclesiastical style.

**Protestant Romanesque**

While the number of New South Wales Protestant churches and chapels erected in Romanesque style between the wars was less than half of the Catholic tally, there were enough of them to warrant notice. The sectarian divide between Catholic and Protestant in the inter-war years was pronounced, but not to the point where Protestant denominations rejected the Romanesque wholesale as a "Popish" style.

As we have seen, the New South Wales Methodists had an association with the Romanesque dating back to the nineteenth century, and between the wars they remained the principal Protestant adherents of this style. The Mosman Methodist Church (1914-15, now part of the Mosman Art Gallery) was one of the projects of a short-lived partnership between Sydney architect John Burcham Clamp and the newly arrived American, Walter Burley Griffin. Griffin was then embroiled in controversy over his plans for the new national capital, so it is unlikely that he had much input to the design of this attractive but unpretentious brick suburban church.
Clamp, by now in partnership with Clifford Finch, also designed a church for the Methodists at Manly (1924-25, now the Manly Village Uniting Church, see Figure 3.20). This was a substantial building in dark brickwork with a very contemporary look which paid little tribute to the medieval Romanesque.

Sydney architect Byera Hadley designed at least three Romanesque buildings for the Methodists in styles which contrived to be both contemporary and historically informed. The Croydon Park Methodist (now Uniting) Church (1918) was the one which remained closest to medieval precedent, although the stylised corbel table over the triplet window of the façade adds a modern touch. The George Smith Memorial Hall for the Paddington parish is resolutely modern and colourful, but the moulded, round brick arches clearly reference Thomas Rowe's Romanesque design for the adjacent church. The little Nellie Vickery Chapel at the Waverley War Memorial Hospital (1933) was described at the time as "reminiscent of the Romanesque baptistry."  

Arthur Lanyon Clark designed a Methodist church at Campsie (1924-25, demolished) which suggested the influence of the Norman style, with its square tower and label moulds over the doors and windows. It was remarked that Clark had "built up a reputation for inexpensive church designing," which is demonstrated by his very simple design for the Merewether Central Methodist (now Uniting) Church (1926-27), which contains Romanesque elements. However there was nothing cut-price about his design for the Auburn Baptist Church (1928),

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26 Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 1933, 6.
27 Building (Sydney), 12 July 1928, 121.
a large church in dark blue brick, with many traditional Romanesque motifs, and prominent cement mouldings of the tower windows.

Towards the end of this period, Norman McPherson was attempting to design churches which combined the massing of the medieval Romanesque with spare modern details. He was responsible for the Mayfield Methodist (now Uniting) Church (1936-37) and the Wellington Methodist Church (1938, now the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress).

John Burcham Clamp was the most significant exponent of the Protestant Romanesque in New South Wales between the wars. We have already noted his work for the Methodists, but he and his partners designed several buildings for the Anglican Church as well. With Crawford MacKellar he designed modest brick churches for Cabramatta (1922-23) and Cammeray (1923). With Clifford Finch, he aimed for a modernised version of the Lombardic Romanesque in the design for St Stephen's, Bellevue Hill (1927-28). Clamp & Finch also designed St Andrew's, Sans Souci (1929), a simple but successful brick composition, with a hint of Arts and Crafts.

Probably the only large Anglican church built in Romanesque style in New South Wales between the wars was St Bede's, Drummoyne (1930-31), designed by Emil Sodersteen, who had recently won the competition for the design of the National War Memorial in Canberra. Mostly in brick, with some bichromatic diaper work on the façade, the building exhibits traditional motifs, such as the Lombard porch, the wheel window, the corbel table, string courses and label moulds, but they are all subtly modernised.

In 1928 a competition was held for the design of an Anglican cathedral in Canberra. The competition was won by Harold Crone, a suburban architect working in Sydney, who submitted a design for a large cruciform Romanesque building surmounted by an octagonal crossing tower. Funding would clearly be an issue, so Crone planned to build in ferro-concrete, with exposed aggregate and Cordova tiles. The worldwide financial crisis of the following year put an end to the project.

![Figure 4.30. Competition design for Anglican Cathedral, Canberra](Harold Crone, 1928)
The Presbyterians erected only a few Romanesque churches in New South Wales during this period. The most significant of these was St Andrew's, Wollongong (J.F. Munnings, 1937-38). It was executed almost entirely in very fine brickwork, with traditional massing and motifs, but the details modernised and simplified. There was well-deserved praise for the "light and graceful" tower.  

**Jewish Romanesque**

Two Romanesque synagogues from this period are worthy of note. Gordon Keesing designed the Bondi Synagogue (1921, demolished) in brick with tiled cornices. The triple arched portico was surmounted by a large round window with tracery in the form of the Star of David. Pepper & Jeater designed the Newcastle Synagogue (1927) in the red brick and white cement style.

![Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction](image)

**Figure 4.31. Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction**

(Gordon Keesing, 1921, demolished)

**Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture**

Following the demise of the American Romanesque style shortly before the First World War, the Romanesque ceased to play any significant role in non-ecclesiastical architecture in Australia. Nonetheless there were a few cases of non-ecclesiastical use of the style in New South Wales between the wars which are worth noting.

The most unusual of these was the series of crematoria designed by Sydney architect, Frank L'Anson Bloomfield. The New South Wales Crematorium Company sent Bloomfield on a

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28 *Building* (Sydney), 24 September 1938, 20.
study tour of Europe when he was designing Sydney's first crematorium at Rookwood (1924-25), and a Mediterranean influence is strikingly obvious in the design of this building, with its white rendered walls and tile roof. As Bloomfield himself said, "the chimney became a campanile, and Northern Italian the logical treatment for the building." Bloomfield's second crematorium design, for Gore Hill (1931), was never executed. It was described at the time as "simple Romanesque," and the inspiration seems to have been a Norman-style English village church.

The Northern Suburbs Crematorium (1933) perhaps shows the influence of the contemporary Catholic Romanesque. As Bloomfield said, "the position on top of a rocky hill with the road winding up from the valley rather suggested one of those monasteries one sees perched on the hill-tops in Northern Italy, and so the building was adapted from such a prototype." With its very Richardsonian rock-faced arched doorway below a triplet window, and the arched corbel table above, it is a markedly Romanesque design. As at Rookwood, the chimney is disguised as a campanile.

Figure 4.32. Northern Suburbs Crematorium, North Ryde
(Frank L’Anson Bloomfield, 1933)

Because of the popularity of the Romanesque in Catholic church architecture during these years, the hospitals erected for Catholic nursing orders were sometimes designed in a style described at the time as Romanesque. Often this involved little more than arcaded verandas, but the Lewisham Hospital in Wagga Wagga (Monks & Jeffs, 1927-30, now the Calvary Hospital), has a pronounced Romanesque design. The original plans called for a large wheel window above the main entrance, but this was replaced with a more conventional round-headed window, surrounded by brick mouldings, and surmounted by an arched corbel table below a tiled parapet.

29 Architecture (Sydney) 14, no. 5 (May 1925): 23.
30 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 February 1931, 6.
31 Architecture (Sydney) 23, no. 6 (1 June 1934): 127.
Similarly, some of the Catholic schools of this era were embellished with a few details which merited the Romanesque label. One of the more pronounced Romanesque designs was that of the Practising School at the Christian Brothers’ Training College, Strathfield (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1927-28, now part of St Patrick's College). However the use of the Romanesque in government schools was a rare occurrence, which makes the design of the Cessnock High School (1935-37), attributed to the Government Architect, Cobden Parkes, particularly interesting. The Romanesque motifs occur mainly in the decorative brickwork of the gabled entrance, with a moulded arched doorway flanked by triplet windows, a large triplet window above, and a parapet suggesting an arched corbel table. The stone koalas which flank the entrance are a bonus.

![Cessnock High School](image)

**Figure 4.33. Cessnock High School** (attributed to Cobden Parkes, 1935-37)

Finally, it is of interest to note that the Romanesque was still being used to add character to simple industrial structures. The electricity substations at 1A Fourth Avenue, Campsie (architect unknown, 1929) and at 134 Lennox Street, Newtown (architect unknown, 1935, altered) are good examples.

**Late Romanesque (1945 to the present)**

The Second World War, and the desperate housing shortage which followed it, created a long hiatus in the building of churches. By the time that church-building resumed, the Romanesque had largely been superseded by newer styles. However there were a few late examples of its use.

Nancy Davey took the traditional Romanesque forms and massing and modernised them for Holy Name Catholic Church, Wahroonga (1951-54), in the stripped Romanesque style of the immediate pre-war years.
Stephen O'Halloran, a Wagga Wagga architect, was possibly influenced by the pre-war Romanesque work of the local architects Monks & Jeffs (both by now deceased). For the Lewisham (later Calvary) Hospital at Wagga Wagga, he designed a chapel (1952-53) in a modernised version of Romanesque, in dark brick with a high round-headed moulded window, containing a huge brick cross decorated with white metalwork. His design of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Leeton (1955) was another exercise in stripped Romanesque, with a particularly interesting entrance, which uses dark bricks to suggest the mouldings of a medieval door, and uses vertical courses of the same bricks to link the door to a standard wheel window above.

Hubert Woodhouse was responsible for a post-war Anglican church (a very rare phenomenon), St John's, Taree (1954-62, see Figure 3.22). It is a massive brick building using traditional Romanesque massing and simplified Romanesque decorative motifs. The open-work tower is notable.

Regina Coeli Catholic Church, Beverly Hills (Hirst & Kennedy, 1962-63) in the southern suburbs of Sydney is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because it apparently represents the last gasp of the Catholic Romanesque, with very traditional massing, flanking towers with pyramidal roofs, a rose window (whose tracery seems to represent the orbit of an electron), and at the rear a polygonal apse. Despite the Romanesque forms, the building, which is executed in a pale coloured brick, has quite a modern look.

The Beverly Hills church is also of interest because it has a certain affinity with the next Catholic church to be built in Sydney, half a century later. Our Lady of the Angels, Rouse Hill (De Angelis Taylor & Associates, 2013-15, see Figure 3.24) also uses very traditional
Romanesque massing, with square towers topped by pyramidal roofs, an octagonal clerestory, a stone-clad apse, pilasters, and round-headed windows. It is built in a light coloured brick, with a darker brick trim. Unfortunately modern constructional techniques are as remote from the fine brickwork of the inter-war Catholic Romanesque as they are from the stonework of the medieval masons, so there is something disappointing about this church.

Nonetheless, the formula has proven popular with Catholic parishes in New South Wales. The same firm have designed Holy Family Church, Ingleburn (2015) in a similar, if more modest style, as well as the more ambitious Our Lady Help of Christians, Rosemeadow.
Chapter 5: Victoria

From the Beginnings to 1890

Ecclesiastical Architecture

In nineteenth-century Victoria, the ecclesiastical use of the Romanesque was confined almost exclusively to Protestant nonconformist churches. This is not to say that it was used extensively by any of those denominations; on the contrary, it was never more than an exception to the standard Gothic style. In some cases at least it was probably adopted because it was a style suitable for construction in brick—Gothic pointed arches were almost impossible to execute convincingly in brick—but it was also applied to stone buildings.

The earliest identified Romanesque building in Victoria is the Chilwell Wesleyan Chapel, Geelong, now the Noble Street Uniting Church (1853-54, transepts 1859), designed by Geelong architect Walter Sheridan (see Figure 3.2). It is a simple building in dressed bluestone, with round-headed openings. Only the small wheel window over the entrance suggests Romanesque influence.

Ballarat architect Henry Caselli used the one design for both the Ebenezer United Presbyterian Church, South Ballarat (1862-63) and the Welsh Presbyterian Church, Sebastopol (1865-66). A large triplet window (with label moulds) above the door is the most obviously Romanesque feature in both these gabled stone buildings. The South Ballarat church however has a porch, added in 1887 by Caselli’s partner, Charles D. Figgis, with an arched corbel table, which makes a more authentically Romanesque statement. Figgis and his partner Theodore Molloy were responsible for the Sabbath School beside the South Ballarat church (1892), which is also somewhat Romanesque in style.

Figure 5.1. Ebenezer Presbyterian Church and Sabbath School, South Ballarat
(Henry Caselli, 1862-63; porch by Charles Figgis, 1887; school by Figgis & Molloy, 1892)
Ballarat is also the site of the much more substantial St Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1862-64), designed by Charles D. Cuthbert. Contemporary newspaper reports tell us that a classical design was originally proposed, "but this being found too expensive, as well as somewhat inappropriate for a structure for the celebration of Christian worship," the Norman style was selected instead.¹ The Norman was a style familiar from English village churches, and thus popular with Anglican congregations. Its adoption by Scottish Presbyterians was unusual, although Norman churches were not unknown in Scotland. The doorway (see Figure 2.16) is a fine example of the Norman style, with several orders of decorated moulding. The blind arcading is also notable. Victorian bluestone was used for the bulk of the construction, but it was necessary to import a Tasmanian freestone to execute the carved dressings. The tower and spire were added in 1884 to a design of Caselli & Figgis, and the transepts (1889) were designed by Figgis & Molloy.

Ballarat had thus become something of a showpiece for the Romanesque in Victoria. It also boasts a more naïve example of the style in the design produced by Ballarat carpenter Samuel Lugg for the polychrome brick Bible Christian Chapel (1866-67) on the corner of Humffray Street North and Newman Street.

The Bendigo district also began to sprout brick chapels in a simple Romanesque style, such as the Maldon Welsh Congregational Church (architect unknown, 1863), the Kingston Wesleyan Methodist Church (Joseph Doane, 1868) and the California Gully Wesleyan Methodist Church (M'Pherson & Laurie, 1870-71). The latter building, whose architects were apparently Melbourne building contractors, was a more ambitious structure, with striking polychrome brickwork.

The most impressive nineteenth-century church of the Victorian Romanesque was constructed on a prominent corner location in Melbourne's fashionable Collins Street. The Independent Church (now St Michael's Uniting Church) was built in 1866-67 to designs of the Melbourne firm of Reed & Barnes (see Figure 3.3), although it appears that it was mainly the work of Joseph Reed. Reed had travelled in Europe in 1863, and a contemporary newspaper report explains that in Northern Italy he found a region which, like Melbourne, was "wretchedly poor in building stones, but rich in pottery and brick clays."² Soon after his return to Melbourne, Reed began to experiment with polychrome brickwork in his house designs (which will be discussed below), for which he also adopted round-headed openings. He was able to obtain good quality bricks from John Glew, a local brick maker who is credited with introducing white bricks to Melbourne.

Reed's original 1866 competition design for the Independent Church employed the polychrome brickwork and tall tower which are typical of the Lombardic Romanesque, but the openings were all in the pointed Gothic style. The church authorities were impressed with

¹ *Star* (Ballarat), 19 June 1862, 2.
² *Argus*, 6 July 1867, 6.
the design, but the minister considered the Gothic arches of the interior unsuitable from an acoustic viewpoint. Reed redesigned the interior on the basis of an acoustic circle, with the gallery and roof supported on slender iron columns rising to round arches. The external openings were then given round arches, to match the interior.

Thus this most iconic example of the Australian Romanesque became Romanesque almost by accident, and was never closely modelled on any Lombardic original. The design was initially controversial, but it soon won favour and became an Australian model both for the Lombardic Romanesque and for the use of polychrome brickwork (see Figure 2.12). Half a century later, it was still regarded as "Australia's best example of ornamental brick-face work."³

Just a few years later, the same firm designed a Wesleyan Church for the Melbourne suburb of Carlton (1869-70, see Figure 2.9, now the Church of All Nations). This bluestone building is also Romanesque, but here the model seems to be more the Norman, rather than the Lombardic Romanesque. The original design called for a tall bell-tower with a broached spire, which was never built.

The Collins Street Independent Church probably influenced the design of three substantial polychrome Romanesque churches erected in Victoria in the following years. The first of these was the Aberdeen Street Baptist Church, Geelong (Thomas Watts, 1876), which would have been a more substantial structure, had the church committee accepted the architect's original plan for two flanking towers. (Thomas Watts also designed the more modest South Melbourne Baptist Church, Dorcas Street, built in 1877, another polychrome brick building in Romanesque style.)

The Unitarian Church on Eastern Hill in Melbourne (Billing & Son, 1887, demolished) was later described as "an excellent example of the judicious and legitimate use of fancy brickwork … decorating structural features and binding them into a homogenous whole."⁴

However the most significant progeny of the Collins Street church was Alfred Dunn's Hawthorn Wesleyan Church (1888-89, now the Auburn Uniting Church), with its prominent tower. The polychrome brickwork in red and brown makes for a subtle colour contrast, while the extensive use of white stucco for the windows and other openings was a foretaste of things to come. Beneath the gables, the windows are encompassed by wide, high arches, which suggest the influence of the American Romanesque.

Although the Romanesque would be widely used in Catholic churches in Victoria in the twentieth century, it was almost unknown to that denomination during the nineteenth century. An early example can be found in Holy Trinity Church, Queenscliff (architect unknown, 1863-67), built in the primitive style of the Norman Romanesque. St Joseph's Church, Port

³ Building (Sydney), 12 February 1916, 3.
⁴ Building (Sydney), 12 January 1926, 123.
Melbourne (Hennessy & Deakin, 1876-81) is a solid bluestone building, also suggestive of the Norman Romanesque, although the original plans show a more elegant building, suggestive of Lombardic influence.

![Image of Hawthorn Wesleyan Church](image.png)

**Figure 5.2. Hawthorn Wesleyan Church (now Auburn Uniting Church)**
(Alfred Dunn, 1888-89)

*Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture*

Victoria does not possess a great amount of early non-ecclesiastical Romanesque architecture, but there are some interesting examples of the style to be found, especially in the area of residential architecture.

A series of rural court houses was erected in the 1860s in the Romanesque style, to designs of various architects. The common feature in these buildings is the fine brickwork, in some cases obscured by subsequent rendering. Perhaps a decision had been taken to use the cheaper option of brick when constructing rural court houses, resulting in the adoption of the Romanesque, a style easily executed in brick.

The prolific John James Clark was responsible for the design of two of these court houses. The one at Port Melbourne (1860) is a simple building in polychrome brick, which cleverly uses bricks to imitate a billet moulding around the doorway. The Sale Court House (1863-64) featured a stylised arched corbel table on the gable. The brickwork was rendered when the western extension in Greek Revival style (designed by J.T. Kelleher) was added in 1890. The Daylesford Court House (architect unknown, 1863) has a similar corbel table; originally in face-brick, it has since been rendered over.
The Beaufort Court House (Alfred Taylor Snow, 1864-65) is another simple brick building. The corbel table above the double round-arched entrance and the oculus window suggest Romanesque influence. The design is somewhat similar to that of the Ararat Court House (G.C. Joachimi, 1866-67), but the latter is an exuberantly polychrome brick building, and its corbel table is more explicitly Romanesque. The Eaglehawk Court House (Peter Kerr with Henry A. Williams, 1869) is a more restrained example of polychrome brickwork, again with a simplified arched corbel table worked in brick.

**Figure 5.3. Ararat Court House** (Gustav Carl Joachimi, 1866-67)

Most of the other non-ecclesiastical Romanesque buildings in Victoria from this era are the work of Reed & Barnes, whose ecclesiastical work has already been discussed. As previously explained, Reed's visit to Europe in 1863 sparked his interest in the Lombardic Romanesque. Late the following year, the firm called for tenders for a two-storey villa residence on the corner of Powlett and George Streets in East Melbourne. Canally, with its round-arched openings, polychrome brickwork, and colonettes worked in brick, is an unusual example of the Romanesque style applied to a residential building.

Soon afterwards the firm designed a more ambitious mansion in the same style for Peter Davis in Burnett Street, St Kilda (1866, demolished), enhanced with a campanile-like tower. Rippon Lea, the mansion which they designed for Sir Frederick Sargood in Elsternwick, (1868-69, see Figure 3.5), is another essay in polychrome brick Romanesque. The major additions to this building in 1894-98, including the porte-cochere and arcaded portico, were designed by Tayler & Fitts, with due respect for the original style.
Reed & Barnes were also responsible for a large rural residence in the Romanesque style at Kolor in the Western District (1868-69). However here the building material was a quarry-faced bluestone, and the resulting effect is more Norman than Lombardic. Menzies Hotel (1867, demolished), on the corner of Bourke and William Streets in Melbourne, featured Romanesque arches and arcades, although the 1896 additions designed by David Askew, while introducing a very Romanesque arched corbel table, rather ruined the effect with a new mansard roof.

Figure 5.4. Kolor Homestead, Penshurst (Reed & Barnes, 1868-69)

Reed & Barnes also employed Romanesque motifs in the large warehouse which they designed for M’Arthur, Sherrard and Copeland (1868-69, demolished) on the north side of Flinders Lane, just east of Swanston Street. It was built in rendered brick, and the overall impression was that of an Italian palazzo. It was an interesting early example of the use of Romanesque in a Melbourne warehouse.

Apart from the court houses discussed above, the Romanesque had virtually no impact on government architecture in Victoria before 1890. Lawrence Burchell, in his study of nineteenth-century Victorian school architecture, explains that round-headed brick windows could be concealed by using varicoloured bricks to elaborate the voussoirs; the upper outline of the coloured brick voussoirs could be pointed to mimic the preferred Gothic style. However a striking Romanesque example can be found in the school at Kangaroo Flat (1869-70). It was designed by the German architects Vahland & Getzschmann, who had set up a practice in Bendigo, and shows the influence of the German Rundbogenstil.

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It is also worth noting a fine example of the Industrial Romanesque. The New Australian Electric Company Power Station in Cremorne (Robert Joseph, 1890, see Figure 3.15, later the Richmond Power Station) was built in brick with polychrome banding of the walls and polychrome voussoirs. The squat tower resembles a Lombard campanile.

Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)

American Romanesque

Melbourne architects were pioneers in the adoption of the American Romanesque style in Australia. Because the style was also briefly in favour with the Victorian Public Works Department, some examples can also be found outside Melbourne.

Retail Warehouses

The young firm of Hyndman & Bates designed a retail warehouse for E.L. Yencken in Flinders Street (1889-90, demolished, see Figure 3.7), which can probably be regarded as the first significant Australian building in the American Romanesque style. At the ground level, rusticated stone framed the large glass display-windows, which were an essential requirement in a retail warehouse. The three storeys above were built more economically in face-brick. The arched bays, separated by pilasters, which spanned the upper floors, were the signature feature of the new American style.

Edward Kilburn had seen the new style at first hand when travelling in the United States in 1889. His early essays in a residential version of the American Romanesque will be discussed below, but he also designed at least one retail warehouse in the style, Mitchell's Drapery Shop in Elizabeth Street (1892, demolished). A three-storey building, with the façade divided into three round-headed bays separated by rusticated stone pilasters, it was described at the time as being "in the Romanesque style with very original treatment quite unlike anything previously seen in Melbourne."6

We have already observed that Joseph Reed had been a major pioneer of the Romanesque style in Victoria earlier in the nineteenth century. He died in 1890, but his name lived on in the firm of Reed, Smart & Tappin. They were responsible for a warehouse for Richard Allen (1897) at 164 Flinders Lane, built mainly in brick, with four arched bays spanning the façade and elaborately worked cement ornamentation at the top of the bays.

Reed, Smart & Tappin were also responsible for the large and prominent Ball & Welch warehouse (1899, altered, see Figure 3.10) at 172-192 Flinders Street. Originally of six arched bays, the façade featured a particularly large extent of glass, and was decorated with elaborate cement ornament. The firm also designed a more modest warehouse in the American Romanesque style for Sanders & Levy (1900-1) at 149-153 Swanston Street.

6 Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand, 29 October 1892, 181.
The Sydney firm of Sulman & Power were commissioned to design a huge six-storey warehouse for Sargood, Butler, Nichol & Ewen (1898-99, see Fig. 2.19, now Ross House). The façade at 247-257 Flinders Lane remains, but originally the building extended through to Flinders Street. Contemporary reports marvelled that "a large area on the western face is composed entirely of glass."\(^7\) The three arched bays of the facade are worked quite simply in brick, and capped by a colonnade. The design of a new warehouse for Beath, Schiess & Co. (Ussher & Kemp, 1904, demolished) in Flinders Lane East, seems to have owed a considerable debt to the Sulman & Power precedent.

Figure 5.5. Beath, Schiess & Co. Building, 198 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
(Ussher & Kemp, 1904, demolished)

Melbourne architect Nahum Barnet was a significant exponent of the American Romanesque, which he enriched with an Art Nouveau flair. In his design for the Melbourne Sports Depot (1902), at 55-57 Elizabeth Street, he worked the arches in terra cotta and enriched the façade with an oriel window and glazed tiles. The Paton Building (1905), at 115-117 Elizabeth Street, features a richly decorated colonnade above the two arched bays, with elaborate decoration in the window spandrels. Armstrong House (1907), at 217-219 Queen Street, is also richly decorated in the parapet, spandrels and above the arches of the three bays.

\(^7\) Argus, 30 May 1899, 10.
However the foremost practitioners of the American Romanesque in Melbourne were the brothers Harry and Frank Tompkins, who formed a partnership in 1898 as H.W. & F.B. Tompkins. The Metcalfe & Barnard warehouse (1901-2), on the corner of Flinders Lane and Russell Street, is in the familiar red-brick style, with arched bays spanning the upper floors. The spandrels and parapet above the arches are lavishly decorated and the main frontage to Flinders Lane features an oriel window.

The Tompkins brothers designed a new frontage for the Borsdorff & Co. warehouse (1907-8), at 277-279 Flinders Lane, in banded polychrome brickwork with tile and cement facings. In this building the arches have acquired a horseshoe shape. The Melbourne Sample Rooms (1907-8), at 325-331 Flinders Lane, were more simply decorated, with a colonnade above the four central arched bays.

![Figure 5.6. Borsdorff & Co. Warehouse, 277-279 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (H.W. & F.B. Tompkins, 1907-8)](image)

In the Melbourne suburbs, the Tompkins brothers designed two large retail premises in red brick with repeating arched bays: Hooper's Store (1907-8) on the corner of Sydney Road and Ballarat Street, Brunswick, and Dimmey's Stores (1907-18) on the corner of Swan and Green Streets, Cremorne.

The firm of Billing, Peck & Kemter were responsible for a late but impressive example of the American Romanesque in the Higson Building (1912-13) at 125-127 Flinders Lane. The
three arched bays of the main red-brick façade are surmounted by an arcade with an elaborate parapet above.

Many retail warehouses were erected in Melbourne during these years, and most have since been demolished. Tracing the architectural history of these buildings is extremely difficult and the preceding discussion hardly does justice to the subject.

Although the American Romanesque was a style normally applied to large buildings, some more modest examples can be found in the Melbourne suburbs and in country towns. The J.G. Johnstone & Co. building at 144 Murray Street, Colac (Alexander Hamilton, 1902) is a good example. This single-storey building has a façade of three arched bays worked in red and white bricks, with glazed tiles in the spandrels and a prominent parapet.

Storage Warehouses

The Romanesque storage warehouses and wool stores, which were a feature of the architecture of Sydney and Newcastle during this era, were less common in Melbourne.

A good example is the Queen's Warehouse (1890-91), designed for the Victorian Public Works Department by A.J. MacDonald, and still standing in the Docklands at the western end of Collins Street. It is a very plain two-storey brick building, with arched windows separated by pilasters which span the two floors. A lighter coloured brick was used to highlight the voussoirs and to create string courses to break up the façade. Further examples of MacDonald's work will be examined below.

Government Buildings

Alexander James MacDonald was an Australian-born architect who trained in Scotland before returning to Melbourne. A remarkably talented practitioner who worked in several styles, he was interested in Romanesque architecture from an early age, as evidenced by his drawings of Dalmeny Church in Linlithgowshire, one of the few Norman churches in Scotland. In August 1889 MacDonald joined the Victorian Public Works Department and over the next three years produced some impressive designs incorporating Romanesque elements. The extent to which MacDonald was influenced by the popular American Romanesque style has been debated, but it was clearly an influence in at least some of these buildings.

The Euroa Post Office (1890-91, altered) was originally entered through a wide arch rising from a low springing-line, which suggests Richardsonian influence. The moulded and polychrome bricks of the voussoirs, and the elaborate decoration of the spandrels of the arch

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8 Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand, 20 October 1888.
are striking. However it is difficult to discern any American influence in the simple design of the Omeo Post Office (1890), with its prominent round arches.

The Flemington Court House (1891-92) is an exuberantly eclectic brick building with clear Romanesque elements, especially in the triple-moulded main doorway, and in the gable above with its wheel window and arched corbel table, both designed in a highly stylised form. Here again it is difficult to detect any American influence, unless it is in the rock-faced bluestone of the base course.

Figure 5.7. Flemington Court House (A.J. MacDonald, 1891-92)

In the South Yarra Post Office (1892-93), American influence might be detected in the short columns which support the arches, and in the rock-faced base course. This building is justly famous for the panels carved in Australian faunal and floral motifs which decorate the spandrels above the arches on the ground-level frontage.

The clearest influence of the American Romanesque in MacDonald's work can be seen in the Bairnsdale Court House (1892-94, see Figure 2.20). Both the front and side entrances have large Richardsonian arches: the front arch rises from rock-faced stone courses, while the side arch incorporates large rock-faced voussoirs. The building was described at the time as "modern Romanesque … without regard to any fixed or rigid style,"\textsuperscript{10} and clearly there are other influences in the design.

The Omeo Court House (1892-93) is a more modest building. The large arches rising from a rock-faced string course suggest some influence of the American Romanesque on MacDonald's design.

\textsuperscript{10} Bairnsdale Advertiser, 26 April 1894, 2.
It has been suggested that MacDonald's work influenced the design of his colleague John T. Kelleher for the Euroa Court House (1892-93). The wide, low entrance arch, worked in moulded bricks, is clearly borrowed from the American Romanesque.

![Figure 5.8. Euroa Court House (J.T. Kelleher, 1892-93)](image)

In 1916, Melbourne architect William Blackett, when reflecting on his days as a student in the 1890s, commented that "Richardsonian Romanesque swayed the treatment of much competition work, but left few examples in constructed buildings."[11] One such unrealised design was that of Alan Walker and Alfred Johnson for the Williamstown Town Hall (1890), with a large, almost horseshoe-shaped, entrance arch. Walker would later design Romanesque buildings in Tasmania (see Chapter 9). Harold Desbrowe-Annear's unsuccessful entry for the Preston Shire Hall competition (1892) featured heavy Richardsonian arches on the ground level. A.B. Rieusset's competition entry for the Eastern Hill Fire Station in East Melbourne (1892) also featured Richardsonian arches.

The economic depression of the early 1890s brought an end to this interesting episode in the history of the Australian Romanesque. When economic conditions improved later in the decade, A.J. MacDonald had already left the profession and many of his former colleagues had been retrenched. Nonetheless there were a few late examples of government buildings influenced by the American Romanesque style.

Samuel Bindley of the Public Works Department designed the Armadale Infants School (1901) in polychrome brickwork with some large Richardsonian arches. His colleague John

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Marsden designed the Terang Post Office (1903-4), with a Richardsonian arched window and a rather Lombardic tower.

Another PWD architect, George Austin, designed two substantial buildings in the Romanesque style towards the end of this period. The first of these was the City Watch House in Russell Street (1908-9), a suitably grim-looking building with round-arched windows at the upper level, and a large arched doorway on squat columns, suggesting Richardsonian influence. Austin's other Romanesque building, the City Courts (1911-14), will be discussed below, as an example of the traditional Romanesque style.

Banks

William Blackett's comments, quoted above, on the proliferation of unrealised American Romanesque competition designs during the 1890s, is particularly true in the banking sector. It seems that in Melbourne, as in Sydney, bankers favoured a more traditional appearance for their premises.

The 1890 competition for the new Commercial Bank of Australia in Melbourne attracted at least three entries in the American Romanesque idiom. Ellerker & Kilburn, who were experimenting with the use of the style for residential architecture, submitted a design which looked like a fairy-tale palace, with Richardsonian arches top and bottom. They boldly described it as "the opening of a new style of architecture in this colony, one which—if it be introduced by competent architects—will be a great advancement on the present so-called classic architecture of our city."

Hyndman & Bates, who had already designed the E.L. Yencken warehouse in Flinders Street in the new style, submitted two alternative designs to the Commercial Bank competition. Both featured round-headed openings, but neither was particularly Richardsonian. Sydney architect G.D. Payne, who would later design an outstanding Romanesque church in Brisbane, submitted no less than three alternative designs, one of which was labelled "Romanesque American," and made repeated use of the Richardsonian arch.

Later during this period, as the American Romanesque was coming to the end of its life in Australia, it was adopted for a number of smaller banking premises in Victoria. Billing, Son & Peck designed a two-storey brick State Bank at Cremorne (1907), with American Romanesque arched windows and an Art Nouveau doorway. Beebe & Garvin's Royal Bank of Australia at Bendigo (1908) also has some Art Nouveau ornament, but the wide arch at ground level and the two arched bays spanning the upper levels are unmistakably American Romanesque.

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12 *Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand*, 26 April 1890, 147.
The State Savings Bank at Yarraville (1909-10) is a two-storey brick building with round arched openings at the ground level and Art Nouveau decoration in the spandrels. Officially designed by Smith & Ogg, it is generally considered to have been the work of Robert Haddon.

*Hotels and Clubs*

Nahum Barnet used his signature combination of Romanesque arches and Art Nouveau decoration for the two-storey Old London Tavern (1895, demolished) in Elizabeth Street. His YWCA Building (1913, demolished) in Russell Street East was a more ambitious structure of six storeys, with a Romanesque doorway surmounted by an Art Nouveau hood mould. The Commercial Travellers Association Club (1898-99, altered), at 190-192 Flinders Street, was an early work of the Tompkins brothers. A red-brick building of four storeys, it originally had a Romanesque doorway with a moulded arch on colonettes, and decorated spandrels above.
In the early 1890s, before he joined forces with his brother, Harry Tompkins was for several years in partnership with Richard Speight. Speight & Tompkins designed one of the earliest, and most distinctive, buildings of the American Romanesque in Australia. This was the Victorian Artists Society Building (1891-92) at 428-430 Albert Street, East Melbourne. The large entrance arch resting on low, squat columns is pure Richardson, and the arched colonnade above, under an arched corbel table, is suitably Romanesque. The polychrome brickwork and Art Nouveau decoration help to create a striking effect.

Harold Desbrowe-Annear's early interest in the American Romanesque style was suffocated by the economic depression of the early 1890s. When building activity resumed towards the end of the decade, he was moving in other directions. However one can see some Romanesque influence in his design for the Meeting Hall (1901-2) attached to the See Yup Society Temple at South Melbourne. This two-storey brick building has round-arched windows at both levels and a strange bracketed moulding along the gable which is reminiscent of an arched corbel table.

Tait's Concert Hall (1912-13, better known as the Auditorium Building), at 167-173 Collins Street, was another of Nahum Barnet's flamboyant designs. Built of brick with cement dressings and ornament, it is entered under a large round arch, and the six storeys above are divided into arched bays.
Figure 5.11. Auditorium Building, 167-173 Collins Street, Melbourne
(Nahum Barnet, 1912-13)

*Industrial Architecture*

The Victoria Brewery, which once occupied a whole block on Victoria Parade in East Melbourne, has a long and complex construction history. The castellated perimeter walls, with their simple Romanesque arches, were apparently designed by William Pitt and constructed in 1895-96 as part of a larger programme of extensions which included a new lager beer brewery.

A colourful example of industrial architecture can be seen in the Salvation Army Printing Works (1901) at 502-508 Albert Street, East Melbourne. Designed by Edward Saunders, a Salvation Army officer, this rather naïve red-brick building, with extensive white plaster detailing, has large round arches on the ground level, rising from courses of rock-faced bluestone.
Nahum Barnet too designed a printing works, in this case for the Anglican Church (1903). It is located at 11-19 Bank Place, off Little Collins Street, and was originally in face-brick, with large arches at the ground level and arched bays spanning the two floors above. Even in a functional industrial building, Barnet could not resist inserting some Art Nouveau decoration, which can be seen in the capitals of the ground-level pilasters and the spandrels of the windows on the upper levels.

The Hawthorn Tramways Trust Depot (Leonard J. Flannagan, 1915-16) at Wallen Road, Hawthorn, is a good example of a large industrial façade made up of Richardsonian arches. The two-storey red-brick building at 612-622 Lonsdale Street (Charles Rice, 1911) has arched bays rising from a rock-faced bluestone base course, and Art Nouveau decoration in the parapet.

**Residential Architecture**

The American Romanesque style was rarely applied to domestic architecture, although the wide, low arch can be seen in many houses from this period.

Both William Ellerker and Edward Kilburn had travelled to the United States and seen the Richardsonian Romanesque at first hand, and in their enthusiasm for the new style they designed a couple of large residences which attempted to adapt it to Australian domestic architecture. The first of these Ellerker & Kilburn buildings was the Priory Ladies' School (1890) at 61 Alma Road, St Kilda. It is a two-storey brick structure, with a very large arched window on the ground floor. The large voussoirs of the arch appear to be made of a cement imitation of rock-faced stone, and the same material is used in string courses and the pilasters of the entrance porch.

The firm also designed Cestria (1891) at 521 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. This is a large mansion of two floors and an attic, with a tower over the entrance, again built in red brick with white cement trim. Richardsonian arches with large voussoirs are used repeatedly, even in the tower. It was described at the time as "a successful attempt to get out of the beaten path of that Australian style, which, with its mock classic features and pretentious cast iron ornament, so disfigures our suburbs."\(^{13}\)

The young Harold Desbrowe-Annear, who was a great admirer of Henry Hobson Richardson's work, was also eager to experiment with the new style. He designed two semi-detached houses for Emily Mallett (1891, demolished), beside the Botanical Hotel in Domain Road, South Yarra. Wide arches with large voussoirs, carried on colonettes, were used on the ground floor, but otherwise it is hard to see much Richardsonian influence. This building, like those of Ellerker & Kilburn, reminds us that the American Romanesque was never intended for use in domestic architecture.

\(^{13}\) **Building and Engineering Journal of Australia and New Zealand**, 23 May 1891, 198.
Nonetheless, a row of three attractive terrace houses at 36-40 Park Street, South Yarra, probably built in 1899 to a design of Frank Stapley, demonstrate how the American Romanesque could influence the design of even modest suburban dwellings.

*Traditional Romanesque*

In parallel with the new American Romanesque style, Victorian architects continued to design buildings (almost exclusively churches) in a Romanesque style which drew upon medieval models. During this period, the Romanesque was used in ecclesiastical architecture much more extensively in Victoria than in New South Wales, and especially so in the case of Catholic churches.

In February 1891 the Presbyterian congregation in suburban Hawthorn held a competition to find a design for their new church. The minister at the time was a man of artistic interests, and the printed instructions for the competition specified that "The style of architecture is not to be Gothic. Church to be of dark brick with red dressings."\(^{14}\) The winning design, by George Allan, was for an octagonal building in brown brick, with bands of red brick and cement dressings which, from the evidence of old photographs, were originally painted white. The style was Romanesque but, apart from the heavily moulded doorway, the Romanesque details were simplified and modernised. Allan planned a lofty octagonal tower, which was never built. The design is unmistakably modern, but it does not seem to have been influenced by the American Romanesque.

At least two other Romanesque designs were submitted to the competition. Evander McIver submitted two versions of a design which suggested some Richardsonian influence. Henry Prokter's design was more traditional and featured polychrome voussoirs.

By the 1890s, improvements in the quality of both locally produced brick and locally produced cement offered architects a cost-effective alternative to traditional stone masonry. Romanesque was a style readily constructed in brick, and Alfred Dunn's Hawthorn Wesleyan Church (1888-89, see Figure 5.2) had already provided a very successful example of Romanesque worked in brick with white cement dressings. This was a model which would be extensively followed in the decades ahead.

Charles D. Figgis was a Ballarat architect who, as we have seen, had already had some experience of designing in the Romanesque style. The Presbyterian (now Uniting) church which he designed for Coleraine (1892) is an early example of the brick and concrete style and also featured the bichromatic treatment of the voussoirs which Dunn had used in the Hawthorn church.

A more impressive example of the new red brick and white cement style can be seen in the Presbyterian Church (1898-99, now an art gallery) which Ruck & Cummings designed for Wangaratta. The stylised treatment of the windows and corbel tables is very reminiscent of Allan's design for the Hawthorn Presbyterian Church. Sydney Smith & Ogg used a more Arts
and Crafts version of the same idiom for the Armadale Baptist Church (1898-99), as did William Beebe for the Arnold Street Wesleyan (now Uniting) Church, North Bendigo (1901).

The first Greek Orthodox church in Victoria (1901) was designed for a corner site in East Melbourne by Inskip & Butler. It is in red brick with label moulds and string courses in stone, and a small apse.

The Catholic Church was finally rediscovering the Romanesque, thanks to the innovative firm of McCrae & Toole. Their design for the second St John's Catholic Church, East Melbourne (1900-1) is a remarkably modern treatment of the medieval Irish Romanesque, complete with a round tower with a conical roof, and a large Stawell stone cross, carved with Celtic ornament, which spans the façade. The red-brick walls are relieved by bands of brick in a darker colour, and terra cotta panels decorate the gable. The same firm designed a very different red-brick Romanesque Catholic church (1903) for rural Omeo, with a distinctly Arts and Crafts bell-cote.

Figure 5.14. St John’s Catholic Church, Hoddle & Albert Streets, East Melbourne (McCrae & Toole, 1900-1)

The architect who would become the great exponent of the Catholic Romanesque in Victoria was Augustus Fritsch, Australian-born but of German heritage. He already had a well-established relationship with the Catholic Church when he designed his first Romanesque church at Surrey Hills (1902, altered). He adopted the red brick and white cement style for this building, and designed a heavily moulded Romanesque doorway, with the voussoirs
fanning outwards in alternate bands of red and white. As we have seen, Fritsch did not pioneer the bichromatic Romanesque arch, but it would become his signature.

Fritsch developed this style further in St Joseph's Catholic Church, Malvern (1907-8, see Figure 3.12). Here the bichromatic doorway arch is surmounted by a "telephone-dial" rose window with the same bichromatic voussoirs. A large statue of the patron saint stands under a pediment at the top of the gable. Fritsch was never concerned with academic correctness, and the Melbourne Catholic newspaper rightly described this as "an unusual type of Romanesque structure, and it makes a departure in church architecture in this state."¹⁵

The bichromatic voussoirs recur in the small churches at Mornington (1909-10), Drouin (1912), and Crossley (1913-14), and the more substantial churches at Rochester (1910) and Middle Park (1912-13).

Fritsch's design for the large brick church of St Mary, Bairnsdale (1913-14) is more conservatively Romanesque. The main doorway with brick mouldings on colonettes, the large wheel window above, and the high campanile with its copper dome were completed in 1936 under the supervision of Fritsch's son.

Fritsch adopted a very different approach to the church which many consider to be his masterpiece, Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell (1913-18). Here he abandoned brick for quarry-faced stone. The crossing is surmounted by a large copper dome and cupola, but the projected campanile was never built. One of the most interesting features of this building is the triple arched doorway, the arches being carried on thick, squat stone columns, which have a distinctly Richardsonian look.

![Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, Camberwell, Vic.](image)

Figure 5.15. Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, Camberwell, Vic.  
(A.A. Fritsch, 1913-18)

¹⁵ Advocate (Melbourne), 26 September 1908, 20.
The Melbourne firm of Kempson & Conolly designed a large Romanesque Catholic church for Benalla (1907-8) in the red brick and white cement style. They were even less concerned than Fritsch with academic correctness and their designs were particularly florid. They used the same idiom in a more modest version at St Stanislaus, Toorak (1911-12, demolished) and Sacred Heart, Tatura (1912).

![St Joseph's Catholic Church, Benalla](image)

**Figure 5.16. St Joseph's Catholic Church, Benalla**
(Kempson & Conolly, 1907-8)

In the few Protestant Romanesque churches erected in Victoria during the decade before the First World War, the red and white style was the dominant idiom. The Tompkins brothers, better known for their American Romanesque warehouses in Melbourne, produced two similar designs, one for the Maffra Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church (1904) and the other for the Sunbury Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church (1904). The large ogee windows above the doors of both churches are striking and completely un-Romanesque.

Two suburban Baptists churches, at Northcote (1909, the design is attributed to the builder, Joshua Bennell) and Malvern East (George F. Ballantyne, 1910), are restrained examples of the "blood and bandages" style. Both have unusual treatments of the triplet window in the street frontage.
George B. Leith was appointed architect for the Camperdown Methodist (now Presbyterian) Church (1904). It is an accomplished example of the red brick and white cement style, with some elegant Art Nouveau touches. It has been suggested that this design was really the work of Robert Haddon. This seems plausible, when one compares it with a later Leith building, the Mildura Methodist Church on the corner of Deakin Avenue and Tenth Street (1911-12). Here the brick and cement idiom has been carried to the point of parody, and the white cement banding is more prominent than the brickwork. The conservative Sydney magazine *Building* later said of this church that "trees should immediately be planted round this atrocity."  

Apart from churches, the only significant building in the traditional Romanesque style identified in Victoria from this period is the City Courts building (1911-14) on the corner of Russell and Latrobe Streets, Melbourne, which was designed by George Austin. Built in rock-faced limestone, it is an extravagant exercise in revivalist Norman architecture, the main doorway having five orders of moulding, carried on colonettes. Most of the windows have chevron moulding and colonettes. It is said that the architect's design was inspired by a visit to some of the major English cathedrals. While there were those who admired this expensive exercise in nostalgia, there were many who regarded it as folly. As one local journalist put it, "The early morning drunk opens his eyes in a Norman Gothic cell."

Figure 5.17. City Courts, Russell & Latrobe Streets, Melbourne  
(G.B.H. Austin, 1911-14)

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16 *Building* (Sydney), 12 February 1923, 135.  
17 *Table Talk*, 26 June 1913, 5.
Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

Catholic Romanesque

The Romanesque had already established itself as a popular style with Victoria's Catholics before the First World War, and this trend was only reinforced during the following decades. At least thirty-three Catholic parish churches were erected in the Romanesque style in Victoria between 1915 and 1940. An article in the Melbourne Catholic newspaper in 1929 spoke of the Romanesque as being "most suited to modern construction and materials and its features show to advantage in our sunny climate."18

Augustus Fritsch continued to design churches in his established red and white style, with bichromatic arches. St Brendan's, Flemington (1923-24) is a fine example, and would have been even more impressive if the projected campanile had been built. Unusually, the church of the Immaculate Conception, Ararat (1927-28) is in bluestone, but still with white cement dressings. For his last Romanesque church, St Columba's, Elwood (1929), Fritsch returned to red brick and white cement, but the bichromatic arch is nowhere to be seen. Here at least there were sufficient funds to erect the tower, a slender campanile with a copper dome.

Kempson & Conolly continued to rival Fritsch in the design of brick and cement Romanesque churches, with modest buildings at Ivanhoe (1915, demolished), Woodend (1916), and Heathcote (1916-17). Charles Kempson died in 1917, but William P. Conolly continued the practice very successfully on his own. He designed a substantial red brick and white cement church for Preston (1925-26) with an airy campanile. However his Romanesque masterpiece was the third St John's Church, East Melbourne (1929-30). It is in the familiar idiom of brick and white cement dressings, with a tall campanile. The triple-moulded doorway is surmounted by a large wheel window, with a blind arcade in the gable above.

Robert Harper was a Melbourne builder and architect who had worked as Fritsch's assistant at Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell. He later went on to design several Romanesque brick churches in his own right, of which Sacred Heart, Oakleigh (1923-25) was perhaps the most successful. The squat columns which carry the entrance arches seem to have been borrowed from the Camberwell church. Harper was also responsible for a Romanesque stone chapel at the Loreto Convent, Toorak (1927-28).

The large red brick and white cement church of St Joseph (1917), which Gerald Vanheems designed for Northcote, is interesting both for its "armpit" tower (located in the corner formed by the nave and the western transept) and its large narthex. Denis Healy's Sacred Heart Church, Kew (1918-21) is another large brick and cement building, notable for the prominent copper dome over the crossing.

18 Advocate (Melbourne), 20 June 1929, 22.
The parish at Balaclava were fortunate enough to be able to afford not one, but two campanili to complete the elaborate design by Charles Rose for their brick and cement church (1929). The pediment over the porch, with its exaggerated arched corbel table, is unusual. Sadly the campanili were later removed, leaving only the flanking towers.

Around 1930, new trends in church architecture began to assert themselves. The Fritsch model had been copied to the point of exhaustion, and even the notoriously conservative Catholic Church was ready for a change.

The Melbourne architect Patrick J. O’Connor was already responsible for a couple of Romanesque churches in South Australia (see Chapter 8) when he designed St Michael's, Ashburton (1932-33, now part of St Michael's School) in a simple brick Lombardic style. Soon afterwards he designed a Catholic church for the isolated rural community of Werrimull (1933-34), built of limestone in a plain, sturdy Lombardic style. He followed this up with a large brick suburban church, St Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Ascot Vale (1934-38). Here again the dominant idea is Lombardic, but it is a sleek and modern design, marred only by an incongruous stone portico supporting a large statue. It was reported that the parish priest had considerable input to the design.
O'Connor's last two Romanesque churches, St Roch, Glen Iris (1937-38) and St Columba, Ballarat North (1939-40), were both built in rendered brick and painted white. As a result, they are often described as being in the Spanish Mission style, but they could equally be described as Lombardic Romanesque. The original entrances of both churches have been obscured by extensions.

An interesting example of neo-Romanesque can be seen in St Therese's Church, Essendon (1934), designed by the young Melbourne architect Thomas George Payne, and built of mottled brown bricks with red brick facings. The massing and layout is traditionally Romanesque, but the detail has been simplified and modernised. Even in rural Mooroopna it was now possible to experiment with the Romanesque, as can be seen in Harold Hanlon's design for St Mary's Church (1935-36).

Figure 5.19. St Therese's Catholic Church, Essendon
(Thomas G. Payne, 1934)

Fritsch died in 1933, but his son Augustus Fritsch junior associated the family name with one last Romanesque church, St Fidelis, Moreland (1937-38). The design is very different from any of his father's churches, and suggests the influence of the more academically correct Lombardic Romanesque which had been practised in New South Wales and Queensland.

Melbourne architect Lionel San Miguel was responsible for one of the largest Romanesque projects in Victoria, the Sacred Heart Monastery, Croydon (1938-39). He used cream bricks and dark brown tiles to achieve a very Mediterranean effect. The chapel (unsympathetically extended in 2000) has Romanesque massing with simplified decorative detail. San Miguel's brick church of St Anthony, Alphington (1939-40) is a large stripped Romanesque building.
Geelong architect Cyril Kelly produced a design for St Joseph's Church, Chelsea (1940) which is clearly Romanesque in its inspiration and massing, but so modern in its lines as to prefigure the Post-War Ecclesiastical style.

**Protestant Romanesque**

There were only a handful of Protestant Romanesque churches built in Victoria between the wars. The choice of Romanesque for a Protestant church at this time was unusual, and each of these buildings is therefore quite unique.

Marcus Barlow's brick, stripped Romanesque design for St Agnes' Anglican Church, Glen Huntly (1924-25) seems avant-garde when compared with the Catholic Romanesque churches being erected at that time.

The Melbourne firm of Gawler & Drummond seem to have been influenced by the popular Mediterranean style in their design of the Chapel for the Deaf and Dumb Society, Jolimont (1929-30). It is in rendered brick, painted white, with brick facings and a central tower. The same firm designed a brick chapel for St Paul's Training School, Newhaven (1935). This is another modern stripped Romanesque design, with a highly stylised version of the traditional arched corbel table.

The Carlton Methodist Mission (Alec Eggleston, 1932-33, now attached to the Church of All Nations), built of brick with concrete dressings, stands next to the Romanesque Carlton Wesleyan Church (Reed & Barnes, 1869-70). The older building may have influenced the choice of Eggleston's unadventurous design.

The Melbourne architect Louis R. Williams was one of the most successful Anglican ecclesiastical architects of the inter-war years. Although he normally worked in a Gothic idiom, Judith Trimble tells us that "at least ten of the books in Williams's small library dealt with Anglo-Saxon and Norman churches, and some were heavily underscored." His simple Romanesque design for the concrete St Peter's Anglican Church (1928) in Broken Hill, New South Wales, would look more attractive if the projected campanile had been constructed.

Williams was briefly in partnership with Gordon Cockrell when the Third Church of Christ Scientist (1931) at Elsternwick was designed. It is a massive clinker-brick building in a simplified Romanesque style, with a large round arch spanning the façade, and a typically Lombardic campanile.

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For the Anglican Community of the Holy Name at Cheltenham, Williams designed a novitiate (1935-36) and a chapel (1939-40). With their white rendered walls, tiled roofs and tall campanile, these buildings are sometimes described as being in the Spanish Mission style. Williams also designed a brick Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church at Ormond (1939-40) in a stripped Romanesque style.

The Frank Paton Memorial Presbyterian Church (Scarborough, Robertson & Love, 1941; now the Deepdene Uniting Church) was another large stripped Romanesque building. The pale coloured bricks in which it was constructed were unusual for the time. The general simplicity of the design contrasts with the highly decorative freestone doorway, whose lintel, tympanum, moulded arches and voussoirs are all intricately carved.

**Jewish Romanesque**

The Sassoon Yehuda Sephardi Synagogue (1926-27) in St Kilda was designed by the Melbourne architect Joseph Plottel. Ephraim Ehrmann has convincingly argued that Plottel copied the design from Alfred S. Alschuler's Temple Isaiah Israel (1924) in Chicago. The St Kilda building is in brick, with a large central dome and two smaller domes on short towers flanking the entrance, and is generally described as Byzantine, a style which has close affinities with the Romanesque.

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Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture

Use of the Romanesque style for non-ecclesiastical architecture was very rare between the wars. Nonetheless, Oakley & Parkes incorporated Romanesque motifs into the six-storey Equity Trustees Building (1930-31) at 472-478 Bourke Street, Melbourne. The façade is very decorative, with a two-storey freestone portico whose round arches are carried on red granite Corinthian columns. The floors above are faced in tapestry brickwork and topped by a frieze in polychrome terra cotta. This design invites comparison with the Colonial Mutual Life Association Building (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1931, see Chapter 6) in Brisbane. Perhaps both should be seen as early examples of the art deco style.

Figure 5.21. Equity Trustees Building, 472-478 Bourke Street, Melbourne
(Oakley & Parkes, 1930-31)

We have already seen that Joseph Plottel was not adverse to copying buildings that he admired. The Corinthian portico of the Equity Trustees Building may well have been the model for the portico (executed in terra cotta) of Plottel's Footscray Town Hall (1935-36). This building too is faced in dark tapestry brick. The round headed windows on the upper level, with their bichromatic voussoirs, are a motif familiar from many a Romanesque Victorian church.
Late Romanesque (1945 to the present)

In Victoria, as elsewhere in Australia, the long hiatus caused by the Second World War, and its aftermath, marked the demise of the Romanesque. However rural Catholic parishes were conservative in their tastes, so it is not surprising to find a provincial architect, Geelong's Cyril Kelly, who continued to design Romanesque churches into the 1950s.

Our Lady of the Sea Church, Apollo Bay (1951-52) is in the time-honoured red brick and white cement idiom, but with the much simpler stripped Romanesque lines which had emerged in the 1930s. Kelly's design for the brick chapel at St Patrick's College, Ballarat (1953) is more conservative, with its classical portico. His St Kevin's Church, Ormond (1955) is difficult to classify stylistically, but includes some Romanesque elements.

St Michael's Catholic Church, Ashburton (1954-55) was designed by Gregore Hirsch and the Contemporary Architectural Group (CONARG), superseding an earlier Romanesque church. This large brick building is an example of the style which might be called Post-Romanesque. The massing, the large arch of the façade with its stepped "mouldings," and the residual brick corbel table on the side elevations all clearly suggest Romanesque influence in a design which is otherwise very much of its time.

Hirsch and the CONARG group were also responsible for St Anthony's Shrine, Hawthorn (1961-62). This large church in salmon-coloured brick, with its traditional Lombard porch and high tower surmounted by a copper-sheathed spire, is reminiscent of pre-war stripped Romanesque churches. It was described at the time as being in "a simplified and modified Romanesque style, incorporating modern building techniques and materials," and was a late, idealistic attempt to reconcile the medieval and the modern.

Figure 5.22. St Anthony's Shrine, Power Street & Wallen Road, Hawthorn
(CONARG, 1961-62)

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21 Advocate (Melbourne), 15 February 1962, 6.
Chapter 6: Queensland

From the Beginnings to 1890

Queensland's first Colonial Architect, Charles Tiffin, began his career in the colony shortly before its separation from New South Wales. His first major work in Queensland was the Ipswich Court House (1858-59). The frontage of the main section of the building is faced in stone, with round-headed doors at the lower level and round-headed windows with label moulds above. The gable has a small oculus window and is capped with an exaggerated arched corbel table. The one-storey flanking wings are in brick with verandas. Tiffin probably regarded this building as an Australian adaptation of the "Italian" style, but it can certainly be regarded as an early example of the Australian Romanesque.

Figure 6.1. Ipswich Court House (Charles Tiffin, 1858-59)

Tiffin designed many churches on an honorary basis. The Wharf Street Baptist Chapel (1858-59, demolished) was one of these, described at the time as a "neat stone structure in the Early Italian Style."¹ It was a simple church with round-headed openings, and the only distinctly Romanesque feature was the small triplet window in the gable.

Tiffin's successor as Colonial Architect was Francis Drummond Greville Stanley, one of Queensland's most prolific nineteenth-century architects. Stanley's ecclesiastical work normally favoured the Gothic style, but he designed the Central Congregational Church, Ipswich (1870, demolished) in the "Italian" style, with round-headed openings and triplet windows in the gable and transepts.

Richard Gailey was a Brisbane architect whose practice was predominantly commercial and residential, but he designed a Presbyterian Church (1884-85) in Warner Street, Fortitude

¹ Moreton Bay Courier, 5 February 1859, 2.
Valley in rendered brick. The round-headed triplet windows and small rose window clearly suggest Romanesque influence.

Very few Romanesque places of worship have been identified from nineteenth-century Queensland, but they confirm a commonly held belief that the Romanesque was a style preferred by nonconformist Protestant denominations and Jews. The Brisbane Synagogue (1885-86), in Margaret Street, was erected under the direction of Arthur Morry, although it is said that the design was originally the work of his brother-in-law, Edward Russell. It is a rendered brick building entered by a wide round-arched doorway flanked with colonettes. Above this is an arched corbel table and a large "telephone dial" rose window, with a central Star of David worked in segmental tracery.

![Brisbane Synagogue, Margaret Street](image)

**Figure 6.2. Brisbane Synagogue, Margaret Street** (Arthur Morry, 1885-86)

Rockhampton architect John W. Wilson designed a two-storey warehouse for G.S. Curtis (1882-83), on the corner of Bolsover and Derby Streets, Rockhampton, in rendered masonry with round-headed windows and an arched corbel table on the parapet. The doorways on the Derby Street frontage are each flanked by pilasters which rise through to the upper storey, where they are connected by a round arch, thus foreshadowing the American Romanesque storage warehouse style.

**Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)**

**American Romanesque**

The American Romanesque was a phenomenon largely confined to Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. This is because it was a style normally applied to large buildings, especially commercial buildings, and few of these were constructed in a "branch-office city" like Brisbane, especially during the lean years of the 1890s.
However an interesting example of the American Romanesque storage warehouse was designed by Richard Gailey for Walter Reid & Co. (1893-94), on the corner of Quay and Derby Streets, Rockhampton. It was of three storeys, built of rendered brick. The façade is broken up by pilasters into bays which span the three floors, each bay surmounted by an arch.

When Brisbane architect G.H.M. Addison designed the new Brisbane Technical College (1897-99, demolished) in Ann Street, he may have examined W.E. Kemp's design for the Sydney Technical College (1890-91). This would explain the Romanesque features in the Brisbane building, such as the large entrance arch, and the arched bays of the façade. The bichromatic voussoirs are reminiscent of Addison's design for the Exhibition Building (see below).

![Figure 6.3. Brisbane Technical College, Ann Street](G.H.M. Addison, 1897-99, demolished)

After the turn of the century, improving economic conditions brought a wave of new building and some late examples of the American Romanesque style. Alex B. Wilson designed a three-storey office building and warehouse for Burns, Philp & Co. (1903-4, demolished) in Mary Street, Brisbane. The rendered brick façade had round-headed openings on the ground level, and round-headed windows with label moulds on the top floor, and was enhanced by oriel windows and decorative mouldings.
In Brisbane, as elsewhere, banks eschewed the American Romanesque, but some of the other financial institutions were more receptive to the style. Eaton & Bates designed a three-storey building for the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency (1904, demolished) in Eagle Street. The two upper floors were spanned by arched bays, with decorative detail in the spandrels above the arches. The same firm designed the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building (1904-5, demolished) at 289 Queen Street. The façade of three arched bays was divided by clustered colonettes in polished trachyte, with a central oriel window and decorative copperwork.

Claude Chambers became the leading Brisbane exponent of the American Romanesque retail warehouse. The Granite Buildings (1904, demolished) for Shaw & Sons, at 249-253 Queen Street, were of three storeys divided into five arched bays. The whole façade was in rock-faced granite, which gave the building a somewhat Richardsonian appearance.

![Figure 6.4. James Campbell & Sons Warehouse, Creek Street, Brisbane](image)

Figure 6.4. James Campbell & Sons Warehouse, Creek Street, Brisbane (Claude W. Chambers, 1907-9)

The large warehouse which Chambers designed for James Campbell & Sons in lower Creek Street (demolished), was built in two stages between 1907 and 1909. Of red brick with cement facings, it was six storeys high, with a façade divided into seven arched bays. Chambers' Finney Isles Building (1908-10), at 196 Queen Street, also has a façade to Adelaide Street, both divided into five arched bays. The Adelaide Street façade was
originally built in a fairly plain face-brick, whereas the Queen Street façade has much more decorative concrete facings.

The large brick retail warehouse which Atkinson & McLay designed for McWhirter & Sons (1912), on the corner of Wickham and Warner Streets in Fortitude Valley, has features suggestive of the very late American Romanesque style. This building was later extended to Brunswick Street and given a striking art deco main entrance.

More modest examples of the American Romanesque retail warehouse can occasionally be found outside the Brisbane central business district. One of the best of these is the warehouse at 18 Gill Street, Charters Towers (1909), which Francis Stowe designed for Daking-Smith & Co. The high wide arched window in the brick façade is, as Robert Riddel puts it, a "small debt to North American Romanesque fashions."²

**Traditional Romanesque**

As elsewhere in Australia during this period, a certain number of buildings were designed in a Romanesque style which drew upon medieval precedents, rather than the new American style. While most of these buildings were churches, the best known example is a secular structure, the Exhibition Building erected in 1891 at Bowen Hills, an inner northern suburb of Brisbane. A competition to design this building was held in 1888 and the winning design was the work of George H.M. Addison, a British architect who had by then been working in Australia for several years.

Built in red brick, with bands of cream brick and bichromatic voussoirs, it has a large arched entrance with terra cotta voussoirs and terra cotta panels in the spandrels. Each of the two main entrances is flanked by two polygonal towers crowned with cupolas. Stylistically the building is difficult to classify; as Walker and King remark, "it has been described as Romanesque, Victorian, Federation, Saracenic, and Indian."³ Addison had an interest in the Romanesque, as we know from the drawings of Norman buildings which he had published in the London magazine, *The Builder.*⁴ Nonetheless, Addison's earlier perspective drawing of the design shows a building with pointed arches; perhaps it was simply for constructional convenience that he adopted round arches instead.

The earliest identified Catholic Romanesque church in Queensland is St Mary's, South Brisbane, built in 1892-93 and designed by the short-lived Brisbane firm of Simkin & Ibler. Built in rendered brick, it has a round-arched doorway with mouldings carried on colonettes, surmounted by blind arcading, with a rose window in the gable under a corbel table. The

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³ Paul Walker and Stuart King, "Style and Climate in Addison's Brisbane Exhibition Building," *Fabrications* 17, no. 2 (2007): 27
⁴ *Builder* (London), 29 October 1881, 546; ibid., 4 March 1882, 254.
projected towers and transepts were never built, although a sanctuary was added in 1929, designed by Cavanagh & Cavanagh.

Figure 6.5. Exhibition Building, Bowen Bridge Road, Brisbane (G.H.M. Addison, 1891)

St Andrew's Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church (1902-5), on the corner of Ann and Creek Streets, Brisbane, is regarded as the highpoint of the career of architect George D. Payne. It achieves much of its effect from the large expanses of almost unadorned brickwork and the large round arch of the Creek Street frontage, from which the bulging apse emerges. The design was remarkably avant-garde for Brisbane at the time and was roundly criticised by the conservative Sydney magazine, Building.5

Figure 6.6. St Andrew's Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church, Brisbane (G.D. Payne, 1902-5)

5 Building (Sydney), 12 November 1917, 46-54.
We have seen that, shortly after the turn of the century, the Brisbane firm of Eaton & Bates were designing office buildings in the American Romanesque style. The influence of the American Romanesque can be seen in the firm's design for the brick Congregational Church (1903-4), at 133 Margaret Street, Toowoomba, where large rock-faced freestone voussoirs were used for the entrance arch (carried on squat columns) and the rose window.

St Luke's Anglican Mission Hall in Charlotte Street, Brisbane (built in 1904 and briefly the Brisbane Anglican Cathedral), was designed by John Smith Murdoch, the first Commonwealth Government Architect, and shows interesting similarities to Payne's Presbyterian Church in its extensive brick surfaces, relieved only by some polychrome brickwork, and the large arch encompassing the tall, narrow sanctuary windows.

Queensland's most impressive Romanesque church is unquestionably St Brigid's Catholic Church (1913-14, see Figure 3.14), designed by Robin Dods and built on a commanding site at Red Hill in inner Brisbane. A lofty, massive brick building, its closely spaced buttresses and tall, narrow windows give it an impregnable air. The decoration is limited: bichromatic voussoirs, a moulded arch to the doorway, and the beautifully executed mottled brickwork which includes some restrained diaper work. The statue of the patron saint is unobtrusively confined within a niche high on the gable.

G.H.M. Addison's design for St Columba's Catholic Church, Wilston (1914), is in the red brick and white cement style which was then popular for Catholic Romanesque churches in Victoria. As so often in the Victorian churches, the Wilston church features a bichromatic treatment of the voussoirs of the arches, a motif which Addison had already used more than twenty years earlier in the Brisbane Exhibition Building.

The Brisbane architects Coutts & Sons designed two small rural Catholic churches in a simple Romanesque style, for Helidon (1914) and Gayndah (1914-15). The latter is of interest as being one of the first reinforced concrete churches in Queensland.

Figure 6.7. Power House, Ipswich Railway Workshops (W.H. Nisbet, 1903)
An interesting example of the Industrial Romanesque can be seen in the Power House (1903) for the Ipswich Rail Workshops. It was designed by the chief mechanical engineer of the Queensland Railway Department, William H. Nisbet. The large arched doorways with exaggerated voussoirs are particularly striking.

Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

Catholic Romanesque

In Queensland, as elsewhere in Australia, the history of the Romanesque style between the wars is largely a matter of Catholic ecclesiastical architecture.

G.H.M. Addison used the red brick and white cement idiom once more for the Church of the Sacred Heart, Rosalie (1917-18), and again with bichromatic voussoirs. The Church of the Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Cannon Hill (1921, altered) was also in brick with cement dressings. Addison died in 1922, but his son George Frederick Addison took over the firm and was responsible for the Church of the Little Flower, Kedron (1924, demolished), another brick and cement building; the façade featured a large rose window.

In Queensland, the Catholic Romanesque of the inter-war years was dominated by the firm of Hennessy & Hennessy. Originally a Sydney practice, they had established themselves in Brisbane thanks to the close friendship between Jack F. Hennessy junior and the long-serving Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, James Duhig. Hennessy was a keen exponent of the academically correct Lombardic Romanesque and he convinced his friend of the merits of this style. As Duhig told his flock in 1925, "their fathers were wedded to Gothic architecture," but styles such as the Renaissance and the Romanesque were "so much more suitable for their climate, though less ecclesiastical than Gothic." 6

The first of the Hennessy & Hennessy Romanesque churches was St Joseph's, Dalby (1921, see Figure 3.18). Beautifully constructed in brown brick, it is more polychrome than the firm's later churches, using a lighter coloured brick both for banding and to create blind arcading and corbel tables. The Lombard porch and the large wheel window would become hallmarks of the Hennessy & Hennessy style. The fact that a building such as this could be constructed for just £7,000 no doubt added to Duhig's enthusiasm for the Romanesque.

St Agatha's Church, Clayfield (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1924-25) was erected in a prosperous Brisbane suburb. It was originally planned as a cruciform structure with a dome over the crossing, but only the nave was constructed initially; a sanctuary would be added in 1957-59. Again in brown brick, the polychrome effects are achieved by diaper work using a darker brick. The façade has the mandatory Lombard porch and wheel window, under a double layer of corbel tables.

6 Daily Mail (Brisbane), 30 November 1925, 11.
Corpus Christi Church, Nundah (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1925-26, see Figure 2.8) is still one of the outstanding Catholic churches of Brisbane. This cruciform brick building has an octagonal drum above the crossing, which supports a large copper dome. It is entered through a Lombard porch, flanked by a colonnade, with a triplet window and brick diaper work above. The projected campanile was never built.

Villa Maria (1925-28) is a former convent in Warren Street, Fortitude Valley, which Hennessy & Hennessy designed for the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. It is another building in brown brick with diaper work, entered by a Lombard porch. The Romanesque style lent itself well to the round-arched verandas (now enclosed). The apse of the large chapel forms part of the rear elevation.

Around 1926 the firm produced designs for St Monica's Cathedral in Cairns. It was to be a cruciform brick building, with an octagonal lantern over the crossing and a campanile flanking the front entrance. It would have been Hennessy & Hennessy's most impressive Romanesque building, had it ever been constructed.

St Ignatius Loyola Church, Toowong (Hennessy & Hennessy, 1930) was built for a wealthy parish who could afford a fine brick building with a campanile. Below the church was a school, entered through a Lombard porch. The design of the façade makes generous use of pilasters, string courses and corbel tables to maximise the shadow effects.
The elaborate Byzantine church which Hennessy & Hennessy designed in 1930 for the Syrian Melchite community at South Brisbane never eventuated. Instead the simple brick church of St Clement was finally erected in 1936. This design suggests the influence of the stripped Romanesque style which was now emerging in the southern states. The doorway, with its five orders of moulding executed in brick, is noteworthy.

In 1938 Jack F. Hennessy fell out with Archbishop Duhig, when the latter awarded the commission to design the extension of Villa Maria Convent to Duhig's nephew, Frank Cullen, and his partner Desmond Egan. The last building which Hennessy & Hennessy would design for the Brisbane Archdiocese for many years to come was the Pius XII Provincial Seminary (1939-41) on an elevated site at Banyo, which was then on the northern outskirts of Brisbane. Built of cream bricks with a green tile roof in a stripped Romanesque style, this building shows how the firm's concept of the Romanesque was evolving in the years immediately before the Second World War.

The other prominent practitioner of the Catholic Romanesque in Queensland between the wars was Jack P. Donoghue. Born in Tenterfield, New South Wales (for which town he would later design a fine Romanesque Catholic church), Donoghue was articled to Hennessy & Hennessy in Sydney in 1912, and worked with them until he set up his own practice in Brisbane in 1926. Given this background, it is not surprising to find that Donoghue worked in the same academically correct Lombardic idiom as Hennessy & Hennessy. Together they were responsible for a remarkable body of Romanesque Catholic churches in Queensland.
Donoghue had been supervising architect for Hennessy & Hennessy during the construction of the Clayfield church. He was briefly in partnership with that firm when he designed St Augustine's Church, Coolangatta (1925-26). A brick building with a lofty campanile, sited on a hill, it was stylistically almost indistinguishable from the work of Hennessy & Hennessy, although the billet moulding in the brickwork above the Lombard porch is unusual. The two corbelled statues on the façade were the only offence against academic correctness.

As a young architect, Donoghue was pleased to accept smaller rural commissions, such as Holy Rosary Church, Marian (1927), which has a small wheel window and the vestiges of a Lombard porch. St Patrick's Church, South Townsville (1930) is built in reinforced concrete with a wheel window and a Lombard porch, the latter flanked by blind arcading. Infant Saviour Church, Burleigh Heads (1933-35, demolished) was a stuccoed building with a Lombard porch and a very colourful tiled parapet. The tiled parapet was a motif which Hennessy & Hennessy were also using around this time, apparently under the influence of the popular Spanish Mission style. St Mary's, Goondiwindi (1937) is another one of Donoghue's simple rural churches, constructed in rendered brick with a Lombard porch and a wheel window.

In 1933 Donoghue obtained the commission to design a large boarding school, Downlands College, for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Toowoomba. He produced a Romanesque design for two T-shaped buildings, with a chapel as the central feature. The first wing was erected in 1933-34 and the second in 1935-37, but the Second World War prevented the completion of the original scheme. These buildings were erected in the familiar Lombardic Romanesque style and constructed of patterned brickwork.

Figure 6.10. Original plan for Downlands College, Toowoomba
(J.P. Donoghue, 1933)

Between 1937 and 1946 Donoghue was in partnership with Charles Fulton, but there is no doubt that the firm's design for St Joseph's Church, Kangaroo Point (1939-40) was the work of Donoghue. It is in brick, with a Lombard campanile, porch and wheel window. This
building has simpler, more modern lines than Donoghue's earlier churches, although it still seems conservative when compared with the stripped Romanesque which had become popular in the southern states.

Hennessy & Hennessy and J.P. Donoghue were the dominant figures of the Catholic Romanesque in Queensland, and their work exerted a strong influence on the few other architects working in this style. The Rockhampton firm of Hockings & Palmer designed St Theresa's Church, Rockhampton (1933) in a simple brick Lombardic Romanesque, with white cement facings. The busy Mackay architect Harold Brown designed the brick St Mary's Church, South Mackay (1936) in a modernised version of the Lombardic Romanesque.

St Michael's Church, Gordonvale (1934-35) is a naïvely Romanesque building, constructed in reinforced concrete. It was designed by a Cairns priest, Joseph Phelan, in conjunction with a local builder, Michael Garvey.

The young Brisbane architect Frank Cullen had trained, like Donoghue, with Hennessy & Hennessy. We have already seen that in 1938 he and his partner obtained the commission for the additions to Villa Maria Convent, Fortitude Valley, which they carried out in a faithful imitation of the original Hennessy & Hennessy design. After his partner's untimely death, Cullen designed Sacred Heart Church, Childers (1941-42) in a stripped version of the style which he had learnt as a pupil.

![Figure 6.11. St Mary's Catholic Church, Charleville](T.R. Hall, 1915, destroyed by fire in 1959)

It is worth recalling that much of the architecture of Queensland is timber-based. The Carpenter Gothic churches of Queensland are justly famous, but there were also a few essays in Carpenter Romanesque, although no significant surviving examples have been located.
The Brisbane architect Thomas R. Hall designed St Mary's Church, Charleville (1915, destroyed by fire), a large timber building with round-headed tracery windows and flanking towers. Hockings & Palmer of Rockhampton designed Sacred Heart Church, Yeppoon (1929, destroyed by cyclone), another substantial timber building, with a crenellated porch, a round tracery window above, and a triplet window in the gable.

**Protestant Romanesque**

With the Romanesque so enthusiastically adopted by the Catholic Church in Queensland between the wars, it is not surprising that Protestant denominations avoided it. The few identified cases of its use by Protestants during these years occurred in Anglican parishes.

St Matthew's Anglican Church, Sherwood (1923) is a competent exercise in the brick and white cement Romanesque style which was popular in Victoria. It was designed by a Brisbane architect, Andrew Irving.

Atkinson & Conrad designed the red brick and white cement St Paul's Anglican Church, East Brisbane (1924) in that combination of Romanesque and Arts and Crafts which can be found in some other Anglican churches in Australia.

Brisbane architect Lange Powell designed the large ferro-concrete Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Mackay (1925-26). It is entered through a Lombard porch with twisted columns, below a large circular window, with an arched corbel table below the parapet. The original plan included a detached campanile, connected to the church by a cloister, but these were never built. Painted white, the church has a very Mediterranean appearance.

![Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Woolloongabba](image)

**Figure 6.12. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Woolloongabba**

(Eric Ford, 1930)
The finest Protestant Romanesque church of the inter-war period is Holy Trinity Anglican, Woolloongabba (1930), which occupies a commanding position on the southern approach to Brisbane. Officially designed by the firm of Chambers & Ford, it is generally accepted as the work of Eric Ford. Although today often described as Spanish Mission, the architect described it as being in "Italian Romanesque style, following strictly eleventh century lines." The rendered brickwork is painted white, and with the red Cordova tiles and high tower, the impression is distinctly Mediterranean. The sharply defined arched corbel tables, Lombard porch and wheel window are typically Romanesque.

**Orthodox Romanesque**

Atkinson & Conrad, who had designed the East Brisbane Anglican Church, joined forces in 1927 with Lange Powell, who had designed the Mackay Anglican Church. When Atkinson, Powell & Conrad produced a design for a Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte Street, Brisbane (1928-29, demolished), it too was Romanesque. The building was a modest one, painted white and roofed with Cordova tiles. The street frontage consisted of a polygonal apse under an oculus window, with an arched corbel table and bell-cote above.

**Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture**

The Romanesque style was so dear to the heart of Jack F. Hennessy junior that it even influenced some of the large office buildings which Hennessy & Hennessy designed during the 1930s, beginning with the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building (1931), which was erected beside the General Post Office in Queen Street, Brisbane. Hennessy himself described the design as "modern Romanesque." The building is faced in Benedict stone, a manufactured stone produced in Brisbane, predominantly in pink but with splashes of green. The mansard roof is of variegated Cordova tiles. The Romanesque detail is to be found in the round-headed openings and the arched corbel tables, but not in the gargoyles and attached statuary.

This building invites comparison with the contemporary Equity Trustees Building (Oakley & Parkes, 1930-31, see chapter 5) in Melbourne. Both are unusual examples of the use of the Romanesque, and both are perhaps early examples of the art deco style. The Brisbane building was the prototype for further buildings which Hennessy & Hennessy designed for the Colonial Mutual company, both in Australia and overseas, during the 1930s. The Romanesque detail in these buildings was gradually diluted until it disappeared altogether.

The use of the Romanesque in the architecture of government schools was very unusual during this period. However the design of the Tully State School (1936-38), with arched corbel tables lining the gables, brick arcing of the verandas and a round-headed doorway, is clearly Romanesque. It is attributed to the Chief Government Architect, Andrew Leven.

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7 *Daily Standard* (Brisbane), 6 October 1930, 5.
8 *Brisbane Courier*, 17 September 1930, 16.
Late Romanesque (1945 to the present)

After 1941, church building in Queensland was interrupted for many years, first by the Second World War and then by the need to deal with the acute shortage of housing and other essential civilian infrastructure, which was the legacy of the war. When the construction of new churches resumed in the 1950s, some Queensland Catholic parishes revealed a stubborn loyalty to the pre-war Romanesque style.

St Brigid’s Catholic Church, Longreach (1956-57) was designed by Rockhampton architect Ronald Corbett. It is a large brick building in a stripped Romanesque style.

Frank Cullen was still applying the lessons which he had learnt from Hennessy & Hennessy when he designed St Finbarr’s Catholic Church (1957) in the Brisbane suburb of Ashgrove. Much of the detail has been simplified, but this building is still recognisably in the Lombardic Romanesque style. However in Cullen’s design for Guardian Angels Catholic Church, Southport (1957) the Romanesque detail has been stripped back to produce a simple Mediterranean effect.

Jack Donoghue was the senior partner in the firm of Donoghue, Cusick & Edwards when they designed St Patrick’s Catholic Church (1958-59) at rural St George. This large brick
building, with its Lombardic campanile and wheel window, is almost indistinguishable from the churches which Donoghue had designed in the late 1930s.

Figure 6.14. St Patrick's Catholic Church, St George
(Donoghue, Cusick & Edwards, 1958-59)

Rural Queensland is notoriously conservative. Nonetheless, it seems incredible that as late as 1962 the Catholic parish of Chinchilla was able to erect a church in the Lombardic Romanesque style, complete with campanile and arched corbel tables. Only the simple geometric design of the tracery in the large circular window of the façade is modern. The design was the work of Toowoomba architect, Brian Hodgen.
Chapter 7: Western Australia

From the Beginnings to 1890

Western Australia was the most English of the Australian colonies, so it is not surprising to find that its earliest Romanesque architecture took the form of Anglican churches. As elsewhere in Australia, there were parishes which were happy to recreate the Norman village church as a memento of the old country. Typically these were rural or semi-rural parishes; the Norman was not considered a suitable style for prominent urban churches.

St Mary's Anglican Church, Busselton (1844-45) is an unpretentious stone building, constructed of rubble masonry with a bell-cote. The round-headed windows and doors have label moulds. It appears that it was designed by John Brabazon Forsayth, an Irish engineer and architect who had emigrated to Western Australia.

Richard Roach Jewell was Superintendent of Public Works in Western Australia for about thirty years and also had a considerable private practice. Early in his career he designed Holy Trinity Anglican Church, York (1854-55), a simple brick building with round-headed doors and windows with label moulds. The chancel and crenellated tower were later additions.

Late in his career, Jewell designed the small rubble masonry Holy Trinity Anglican Church (1882-83) for the remote community of Roebourne. The round-headed windows had brick facings and label moulds, and the simply moulded doorway on colonettes was in dressed stone. The building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1894.

Figure 7.1. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Roebourne (R.R. Jewell, 1882-83, destroyed by cyclone in 1894)
J.J. Talbot Hobbs, who would later become a prominent Perth architect and an even more distinguished military man, was still young and inexperienced when he designed St Alban's Anglican Church (1889) in the Perth suburb of Highgate. It was a small rubble masonry building, with round-headed openings and brick buttresses and dressings. Hobbs also designed the extensions of 1898, which added aisles and triplet windows.

**Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)**

**American Romanesque**

In the eastern states, the American Romanesque movement was just beginning to gather momentum in the early 1890s, when a severe economic depression stunted its growth. This was a setback from which it never fully recovered. In Western Australia, on the other hand, the new American style made no impact at all until the major gold discoveries at Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893 sparked an economic boom, which saw the rapid expansion of Perth and the construction of some of the finest American Romanesque architecture in Australia.

**Retail Warehouses**

Harry Trigg was the first native-born Western Australian architect and he developed a successful practice in Perth during the 1890s. Sholl’s Building (1896-97), at 621 Hay Street, Perth, was one of many shops which he designed. The two upper floors are spanned by two arched bays, beneath a parapet with a design suggestive of an arched corbel table. The arches are heavily moulded, and flanked by clustered colonettes.

![Figure 7.2. Sargood, Butler, Nichol & Ewen Warehouse, 569 Wellington Street, Perth (J.J. Talbot Hobbs, 1898-99)](image-url)
Talbot Hobbs was no longer a novice when he designed the four-storey Sargood, Butler, Nichol & Ewen warehouse (1898-99), at 569 Wellington Street, Perth. This building invites comparison with the Melbourne warehouse which Sulman & Power designed for the same firm at this time (see chapter 5). The brick walls are rendered with cement at the ground level, while the three floors above are divided into four arched bays, with large windows. There is some limited decoration in the window spandrels and on the capitals of the pilasters which divide the bays.

In 1904 Hobbs formed a partnership with Edward H. Dean Smith and Walter Forbes, and as Hobbs, Smith & Forbes they designed a large retail warehouse for Boan Brothers (1905-6, demolished) a little further east along Wellington Street, opposite the railway station. It was of three storeys, plus a basement, and the façade was divided into fourteen arched bays, which were separated by columns with decorated capitals.

Read Buildings (Hine & Selby, 1904) is a two-storey brick building at 929-941 Hay Street, Perth, with a wealth of cement ornament. The round-headed windows in the upper floor and the colonnade on the parapet suggest Romanesque influence. The street frontage is divided into three bays, and the building was originally constructed as three shops, with residences above.

William A. Nelson was one of many Sydney architects who moved to Western Australia in the 1890s in search of work. He designed a two-storey retail warehouse for Massey-Harris (1912), at 360 Murray Street, Perth, in pressed bricks with cement dressings. The façade is divided into three bays, with large round-arched windows and doorway, the latter originally with bichromatic voussoirs. Romanesque influence is less obvious in the shop which Nelson designed for Charles Darley at 33-35 King Street, Perth (1912-13), which has a deeply rusticated rendered façade and a low, wide arched window in the upper floor.

Joseph Allen was a Sydney-trained civil engineer who relocated to the west in search of work and moved into architecture. The two-storey row of shops which he designed for Ivon G. Lewis on the corner of Market Street and Elder Place, Fremantle (1915-16) is a richly stuccoed brick building with a plethora of clustered colonettes. It incorporates some Romanesque motifs.

Storage Warehouses

Harry Trigg designed two adjacent brick storage warehouses in King Street, Perth in a simple American Romanesque style. The first one, at 64-68 King Street, was built in 1897. The other, at 70-72 King Street, was built in 1900-1. In each case, the bays of the façade are spanned by recessed arches. As befits such buildings, the decoration is very limited.
Office Buildings

Perth once boasted some very fine American Romanesque office buildings, but sadly only a few of the smaller ones remain.

Talbot Hobbs designed the exuberant Moir's Chambers (1896-97, demolished), on the corner of St George's Terrace and Barrack Street. This four-storey building was built of brick with a mass of cement decoration, a decorative terra cotta band above the ground level, and a corner turret. The round-arched openings were particularly large on the ground level, where they rested on squat polished red granite columns.

![Figure 7.3. Moir's Chambers, St George's Terrace & Barrack Street, Perth (J.J. Talbot Hobbs, 1896-97, demolished)](image)

Harry Trigg designed the more modest Trigg's Chambers (1896), at 39-41 Barrack Street. It is a three storey brick building with cement dressings. The ground floor façade originally consisted of two round arches on squat columns. Round arches recur on the top floor, with blind arcading on the gable.

Edward H. Dean Smith's design for Surrey Chambers (1902-3, demolished), on the corner of St George's Terrace and Howard Street, may have been influenced by Hobbs’ design for Moir's Chambers. It was a three-storey brick building, with extensive cement dressings and a
corner turret. The second and third levels were spanned by arches carried on pilasters, in the American Romanesque fashion. Colonettes and corbel tables figured prominently.

Two of Smith's Romanesque office buildings survive in Fremantle. Tannatt Chambers (1900-1), at 8 High Street, is a red brick building with cement ornament, of two storeys plus basement. The very wide arch at the ground level, carried on squat columns, is the most obviously American Romanesque feature. The former Norddeutscher-Lloyd Building (1903), at 5 Mouat Street, has a façade of rock-faced stone, with a triple-arched colonnade at the ground level and round-arched openings above. Arched corbel tables decorate the gable.

Charles Oldham and Alfred Cox were two more refugees from the eastern states. They formed a successful partnership and were responsible for two large Perth office buildings in the American Romanesque style. Emanuel Chambers (1906-7, demolished), on the corner of St George's Terrace and Howard Street, was a five-storey brick building with cement dressings. It included a number of round-arched openings suggestive of Romanesque influence, mixed with some Art Nouveau decoration.

AMP Chambers (1912-15, demolished), on the corner of St George's Terrace and William Street, was another Oldham & Cox design, described at the time as "an adaptation of Romanesque, which has proved itself as eminently suitable for buildings on a large scale such as this, being essentially simple and dignified in treatment, and conveying the idea of solidity with refined and correct feeling."1 This impressive six-storey building was faced in freestone. Three of the intermediate floors were spanned by arched bays separated by pilasters.

Figure 7.4. AMP Chambers, St George's Terrace & William Street, Perth
(Oldham & Cox, 1912-15, demolished)

1 Western Mail (Perth), 6 January 1912, illustrated section, 8.
Joseph Allen designed the Strelitz Brothers building, later known as Viking House (1912, demolished) at 49 William Street. It was a five-storey brick building, with a large round-headed entrance arch carried on colonettes. The intermediate floors were spanned by narrow bays surmounted by round arches.

**Government Buildings**

Fortunately the government buildings of Perth have proved more resistant to the wrecker's ball than the city's commercial architecture. As a result, Perth still possesses Australia's finest collection of public buildings in the American Romanesque style.

The earliest of these buildings were designed by George Temple Poole, who had been appointed Superintendent of Public Works in 1885 and Colonial Architect in 1890. With the gold boom of the early 1890s, Poole's responsibilities increased rapidly. His interest in the American Romanesque style developed late in his career, and he designed buildings in the Richardsonian manner only in the last few years before his retirement from government service in 1897.

One of Poole's early Romanesque designs was for the Coolgardie Warden's Court (1896). Poole's plan featured a veranda at the lower level, arcaded in heavily rusticated Richardsonian arches on very short, thick columns. After Poole's retirement, the building was redesigned and built in a different style.

For the remote northern port of Cossack, Poole designed a Customs House and Bond Store (1896-97), a solid, one-storey building of roughly coursed stone. The Richardsonian arches on squat columns were built of dressed stone, and have been restored to their unadorned state, in accordance with Poole's plan.

Poole's most ambitious Romanesque design was for a new Art Gallery, Museum and Library in Perth, to be built in James Street. It was to be a large brick building of two storeys (plus basement), with stone dressings, the ends of the building curved in apsidal fashion. A wide arcaded veranda, or "piazza," was to gird the structure at ground level. The main entrance would be through a triple-arched doorway, deeply moulded and flanked by octagonal towers. Only the eastern section of this design, incorporating one of the secondary entrances, was erected. It was known as the Jubilee Wing (1896-98). Poole himself explained that "the style of architecture adopted is the Romanesque, which lends itself to a fine blending of the picturesque and utilitarian."^2

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^2 *Western Mail* (Perth), 3 April 1896, 27.
The Perth Mint (1896-99) was another ambitious Poole design. It is a massively solid stone building, in keeping with its function. At the ground level, the large rock-faced voussoirs of the arcades, windows and doorway are very Richardsonian. The Administration Building (1897) which forms the entrance to the Swan Barracks in Francis Street, Perth, has an even more striking Richardsonian doorway arch on very short columns, with an arched balcony above, the whole façade being executed in rock-faced stone.

However Poole's most impressively Richardsonian building is not to be found in Perth. The Albany Court House (1897-98, see Figure 3.11) was built on a base of large, roughly coursed, rock-faced granite stones, with brick walls above under a low-pitched roof. The windows are tall, narrow oblongs. The three doorways are deeply recessed under round arches made of the same stone as the base course, and the central doorway is larger and particularly striking. The asymmetrical façade curves around its corner location.

After Poole's departure, the Public Works Department showed little interest in the American Romanesque, although Robert Haddon, who had joined the westward exodus of Victorian architects, inserted a large Richardsonian arch into his design for the Subiaco Industrial School for Girls (1897, now part of the King Edward Memorial Hospital).

The Metropolitan Water Works Board building (1897) at 605 Wellington Street, Perth, was designed by Wilkinson & Smith, the successful but short-lived partnership formed between Clarence Wilkinson and Edward H. Dean Smith. It is a red-brick building with stucco detailing. The arched veranda on the upper floor and the arched corbel table under the parapet are the significant Romanesque elements in the façade.

Cavanagh & Cavanagh, the firm formed by the brothers Michael F. and James C. Cavanagh, was responsible for the design of the Central Fire Station (1900), on the corner of Murray and Irwin Streets, Perth. The rock-faced stone of the façade and the wide arches on the ground level, carried on clustered colonettes, are very Richardsonian.
Hillson Beasley had worked under George Temple Poole and in 1905 he became, in his turn, chief architect with the Public Works Department. The Museum, Art Gallery and Library building which Poole had planned remained incomplete, and in 1907 Beasley designed a new building for the Art Gallery, in Beaufort Street, adjacent to Poole's Jubilee Wing. Beasley chose the Romanesque style to harmonise with the older building, and perhaps also because of the mildly Romanesque details in the Geological Survey Building (John Grainger, 1902-3), which adjoins the art gallery at its northern end. The art gallery is a two-storey building of red brick and freestone dressings. The windows are carried within blind round-headed arcading, with terra cotta diaper work in the tympana of the arches (see Figure 2.7). The doorway is richly moulded, and the flanking colonettes have foliate capitals.

A few years later Beasley completed the complex by designing the Perth Public Library (1911-13) in James Street, on the corner of Museum Street. It is another red-brick building with freestone dressings. The round-headed windows and doors and the arcading of the James Street frontage were designed to complement the earlier buildings.

The Fremantle Post Office (1907) was perhaps the only project where Beasley independently chose the Romanesque style. Again in red brick with freestone dressings, it has large arched entrances with bichromatic voussoirs, carried on columns. The windows on the upper levels are round-headed with label moulds.
Other Buildings

The façade of the Subiaco Hotel (Harry Trigg, 1896-97), on the corner of Hay Street and Rokeby Road, Subiaco, has been significantly altered, and the steeple of its tower was removed in 1963. Nonetheless, Romanesque details are still visible in the round-headed windows under label moulds, and the clustered colonettes of the tower.

Queen's Hall (Wilkinson & Smith, 1898-99, demolished) at 91 William Street, Perth, was a large brick building with elaborate cement dressings. It was entered through a round-headed arch, carried on colonettes, with an arched corbel table above. Round-headed windows at the upper level were separated by pilasters of clustered colonettes.

The Sailors' Rest (William A. Nelson, 1899-1900) at 28 Marine Terrace, Fremantle, has been greatly altered. It was built of brick, with cement dressings, originally with a veranda on the upper floor. Some of the round-headed openings flanked by colonettes have survived.

Traditional Romanesque

In Western Australia, as in the other states, a certain number of buildings were designed during this period which were inspired by medieval Romanesque architecture, and not by the popular American Romanesque. Most of these buildings were ecclesiastical in nature. However in Western Australia the boundary between American Romanesque and traditional Romanesque was less clearly defined than in the other states, and there are some buildings which straddle that boundary.
The outstanding Romanesque church of this period is the Trinity Congregational (now Uniting) Church in St George's Terrace, Perth, built in 1893 and designed by Harry Trigg. In its use of brick with cement dressings, it mirrors the style emerging in Victoria at this time. The moulded round-arched doorways with flanking colonettes, the large wheel window above, the blind arcading of the pediment and gable are all traditional Romanesque features in this very eclectic design.

![Trinity Congregational (now Uniting) Church, St George's Terrace, Perth](image)

**Figure 7.8.** Trinity Congregational (now Uniting) Church, St George's Terrace, Perth (Harry Trigg, 1893)

Trigg's design for the Congregational Church Hall, Claremont (1895-96) includes a wide arched entrance which is unquestionably Richardsonian. This stone building with brick dressings contains a few other Romanesque elements: a small triplet window above the doorway, a stylised corbel table in the gable above, and a tower with a pyramidal roof.

As in some of the eastern states, the Catholic Church in Western Australia was very slow to embrace the Romanesque. No Romanesque Catholic churches have been identified in Western Australia from the period prior to the First World War. However the firm of Cavanagh & Cavanagh designed two Romanesque institutional buildings for the Catholic Church during this era.

The first of these was St Kevin's Industrial School and Reformatory, Glendalough (1897, now part of an aged care facility). A two-storey building of dressed rock-faced stone with brick
facings, it has large arches forming the entrance and veranda at the ground level, plus round-headed windows. Cavanagh & Cavanagh also designed the main building at Clontarf (1900-1), the Christian Brothers’ orphanage at Waterford. Also of two storeys and also built of dressed rock-faced stone with brick facings, this building too has an arcaded veranda at ground level, but the overall impression is not strongly Romanesque.

The Jewish affinity with the Romanesque can be seen in the Fremantle Synagogue (Oldham & Eales, 1902). This was an exercise in the red brick and white cement idiom which was then establishing itself in the eastern states. Unfortunately this building is now part of a retail complex and the frontage is largely obscured.

In addition to Harry Trigg's work for the Congregationalists, a couple of other nonconformist Romanesque churches were erected during this period. Hine & Selby designed the Queen's Methodist Church at 38 Piesse Street, Boulder (1903-4). This is another "blood and bandages" building, although the treatment of the façade is quite unusual, with its two narrow round-headed doorways. The single colonette between the windows above and the arched corbel table under the gable are concessions to the medieval Romanesque.

The North Perth Baptist Church (Duncan Inverarity, 1904) is a more conventional example of the red brick and white cement style. The bichromatic diaper work over the large triplet window is the most noticeable feature of the design.

Small rural Anglican churches provided the first examples of the Romanesque in Western Australia, and at least two more were erected during this period. St Mary's Church, Dardanup (Frederick W. Steere, 1906) is a small cruciform red brick and white cement building. The crenellated porch was originally in face-brick, like the rest of the building, but has now been rendered. All Saints' Church, Donnybrook (A.B. Rieusset, 1906-7) is another simple building, built of dressed and rock-faced blocks of the local stone. The windows are narrow and round-headed, some of them arranged in triplets.

A fine example of the Industrial Romanesque can be seen in the Malting House (1897-98) which Talbot Hobbs designed for the Swan Brewery complex on Mounts Bay Road at West Perth. A large two-storey red-brick building with cement facings and string courses, its façade is divided into bays of recessed arches, which span both floors and are topped by label moulds. Hobbs later designed further buildings for this site, some of which have Romanesque features. Later additions by other architects have also adopted the Romanesque theme.

In Western Australia, as in the other states, the Romanesque was rarely applied to residential architecture, but the large villa residence at 12-16 Queen Victoria Street, Fremantle (architect unknown), built about 1897 for Mrs Catherine Jackson, is an exception to this rule. Now considerably altered, it is of two storeys in coursed, rock-faced stone (now painted), with cement facings. The round-arched door and windows, and the entrance tower with its low-pitched roof, all indicate Romanesque influence.
Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

**Catholic Romanesque**

The Catholics of Western Australia did not embrace the Romanesque with the zeal of their co-religionists in the eastern mainland states. It was only late in the inter-war years that there was a flurry of Catholic Romanesque building in the west.

Nonetheless, Western Australia possesses one of the few Australian cathedrals designed in the Romanesque style, namely St Francis Xavier at Geraldton. It was built in two phases, between 1916 and 1918, and between 1937 and 1938, in rubble masonry with cement facings. The architect was the brilliantly eccentric priest, John Cyril Hawes, who had trained and practised as an architect in London before taking holy orders. He worked as a parish priest, architect, and builder for two decades in the remote north of Western Australia, and left a remarkable body of work in a unique, eclectic style. A number of his buildings incorporate Romanesque motifs. The harsh environmental conditions, the rough materials employed, and the often unskilled labour available to Hawes, in many ways mimicked the experience of the medieval architect.

Although Hawes said of the Geraldton Cathedral that "the aim of the architect has been to avoid any slavish imitation of past 'styles' … Solidity and massiveness have been chosen rather than prettiness and elegance," the exterior has many Romanesque characteristics, not least of them the "solidity and massiveness" to which Hawes referred. The design of the main entrance mimics a deeply moulded Romanesque doorway, the windows are round-headed,

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there is an imitation corbel table on the aisle walls, the dome is carried on an octagonal drum with blind arcading, and the entrance to the transept is through a round-arched portico.

Figure 7.10. St Francis Xavier Catholic Cathedral, Geraldton
(J.C. Hawes, 1916-38)

The small rubble-masonry church of St Laurence, Bluff Point (1936-37) was another remarkable Hawes design, but sadly the nave has been rebuilt. The round-headed windows, the corbel tables on the gables, and the low-pitched roof on the octagonal tower are Romanesque motifs.

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Maylands (George McMullen, 1924-25) was a substantial red-brick Romanesque suburban church, making only very limited use of white cement facings. The design of the large rose windows is unusual and the moulded doorways are worked entirely in fine brickwork.

Such a church might have invited imitation, but this did not prove to be the case. It would be another decade before the Catholic Romanesque enjoyed a brief flowering in Western Australia, beginning with an unusual chapel for the Carmelite Monastery, Dalkeith (1935-37), designed by the Perth builder, Horace Costello. It was built in red brick, with the windows and doors deeply moulded with brickwork in a dark blue colour. A large rose window and a corbelled statue dominate the upper part of the façade. The design is perhaps a little naïve, but nonetheless shows affinities with the stripped Romanesque style then appearing in New South Wales and Victoria.
Edgar Le Blond Henderson was a Catholic architect who had trained under his father in Perth. He was a late convert to the Romanesque style, beginning with St Francis Xavier Church, Quairading (1936). Built of brick and rendered in cement, this small church has simple stripped Romanesque lines, with a modest Lombard porch. Henderson produced a more elaborate version of this design for St Columba's Church, South Perth (1937), which is also of rendered brick and has a simplified rose window and a bell-tower. The Cordova tiles which cap the gables of the nave and porch suggest the influence of the Spanish Mission style. Henderson was also responsible for St Patrick's Church, Waroona (1941), a small brick church with a deeply recessed arch which spans the door and the gable above.

Reginald Summerhayes was another late convert to the Romanesque. In 1937 he produced a design for new buildings at Loreto College Swanbourne at Claremont, in a simplified Romanesque style using brown bricks and Cordova tiles. Only the administration building and chapel were erected (1937-38), and when they were demolished in 1990 the chapel's campanile was relocated to a prominent site in Northbridge. For All Hallows' Church, Inglewood (1938) Summerhayes designed a stripped Romanesque hall-church, executed in cream bricks. The porch (now altered) was however in the traditional Lombard design.

Marie Jackson was working as an articled pupil of Reginald Summerhayes when he was designing the new buildings for Loreto College. This experience possibly influenced her Romanesque design for the chapel (1940-41) at Clontarf, the Christian Brothers' orphanage which had recently been renamed Boys' Town. The chapel is a large building erected by the boys themselves in brick with cream plaster render, and incorporates a polygonal apse, a campanile, and a rose window above the door, beneath an arched corbel table.
Protestant Romanesque

Use of the Romanesque style by Protestant denominations in Western Australia between the wars seems to have been uncommon and confined to the Anglican Church.

The English benefactor who provided the funding for All Saints' Anglican Church, Collie (1915) expressed a preference for an early Italian style, and suggested that the absence of a large window in the sanctuary would be advantageous in the Australian climate. Eales & Cohen obliged with a Romanesque design for a red-brick church with cement facings and a large semi-circular apse. The bichromatic treatment of the voussoirs of the arched doorway and the bichromatic diaper work in the gables and elsewhere are reminiscent of the Romanesque churches being built in Victoria around this time. A Lombard campanile was added in 1928.

Figure 7.12. All Saints' Anglican Church, Collie (Eales & Cohen, 1915-28)

The same firm, now known as Eales, Cohen & Bennett, produced a much simpler Romanesque design for St George's Anglican Church, Bluff Point (1935). This is a small building of rubble masonry with cement dressings, on a cruciform plan, with an apse and a low tower.

The most significant practitioner of the Protestant Romanesque in Western Australia was George H. Parry, who designed three Anglican Romanesque churches in the suburbs of Perth during the 1930s. The first of these, St Luke's, Maylands (1931), is a red-brick building with unusual white cement mouldings surrounding the round-headed windows. It is not a strongly Romanesque design, but invites comparison with some of the Romanesque churches which John Burcham Clamp had been designing for the Anglicans in New South Wales.
St Peter's Anglican Church, Victoria Park (1935) is a much more conventional Romanesque design, with arcading and arched corbel tables. Built in reinforced concrete, painted white, with a red tile roof, it has a very Mediterranean appearance and may have influenced the designs of Edgar Le Blond Henderson's Catholic Romanesque churches of the late 1930s.

The Victoria Park church was originally designed by Parry in 1931, not long before he entered partnership with Marshall Clifton. Parry & Clifton designed St Patrick's Anglican Church, Mount Lawley (1936), an imposing red-brick building with a polygonal apse and a squat tower. The Romanesque detail is stylised, with unusual arched corbel tables worked in white cement. The doorway has several orders of brick moulding.

Orthodox Romanesque

The large brick Greek Orthodox Church (1936-37) which Harold Boas designed for inner suburban Northbridge is now the Cathedral of St Constantine and St Helena. It is in a Byzantine style with many features common to the Romanesque, such as the triple-arched portico, the label moulds to the windows, and the triplet windows in the transepts.

Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture

Winthrop Hall at the University of Western Australia (Rodney Alsop and Conrad Sayce, 1928-32, see Figures 3.21 and 2.15) is an object lesson in the problems involved in drawing boundaries between styles. This building has been variously described as Renaissance, Mediterranean and Romanesque. The Romanesque label was early applied by no less an authority than Walter Burley Griffin, and the building has passed into the canon of Australian Romanesque Revival architecture. Although the primary sources reveal no evidence to suggest that either of the designers was aiming for a Romanesque effect, it is now impossible to write a history of Romanesque-inspired architecture in Australia without mentioning Winthrop Hall.

In 1926-27 an international competition was held for the design of three buildings for the new university campus at Crawley, of which the largest was Winthrop Hall. Rodney Alsop was by then a well-established Melbourne architect, and Conrad Sayce was working in his office. They worked jointly on a design submitted from their office, but Sayce also submitted a personal design which was a variant of the office submission. Confusingly, both designs were submitted under their joint names. The adjudicators selected Sayce's design, but because of its similarity to the office design, the two were bracketed to receive first prize, and Alsop and Sayce agreed to work together on the project. The collaboration was not harmonious, especially when Alsop substituted an Italian campanile for Sayce's tower, and Sayce retired from the project in 1929, leaving Alsop as the sole architect.

Sayce's original design included many round-headed openings, but there is no evidence that the inspiration was Romanesque. Alsop's campanile heightened the Mediterranean appearance of the building, although in 1932 Alsop himself said that "… 'Renaissance' is the
only definite term that can be given as the style." The adjacent Great Gateway, which formed part of the project, is a massive structure which also incorporates Romanesque motifs.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 7.13. Conrad Sayce's competition entry for Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia (1927)**

We have seen that Reginald Summerhayes developed an interest in the Romanesque in the late 1930s. He was perhaps influenced by his experience working as local partner to Hennessy & Hennessy on the design of the twelve-storey Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building (1936, demolished) on the corner of St George's Terrace and Sherwood Court, Perth. As in the earlier Brisbane CML Building, the facade incorporated some distinctly Romanesque motifs, notably the round-headed openings in the lower and upper floors.

A rare example of the domestic use of the Romanesque can be seen in The Maisonettes (1934) at 67 Stirling Highway, Nedlands, designed by Perth builder Horace Costello, who was later responsible for the Carmelite Chapel at Dalkeith. The round-arched doorway, with five orders of moulding executed in brick, is remarkable.

**Late Romanesque (1945 to the present)**

Considering that the Romanesque was not warmly embraced by the Catholic Church in Western Australia between the wars, one would not expect to find any belated examples of post-war Romanesque churches. Surprisingly, at least one exists: St Joseph's Catholic Church (1953-55) at rural Manjimup, was a final Romanesque offering from Reginald Summerhayes. It is very similar to his pre-war Inglewood church, with the same unusual rose window and a slightly smaller Lombard porch.

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4 R. J. Ferguson, *Crawley Campus: The Planning and Architecture of the University of Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1993), 25.
A very late example of the Romanesque can be found in St Mary's Chapel (1962) at the Christian Brothers' Agricultural School at Tardun. It is a white building with a polygonal apse and prominent arched corbel tables. The design has been attributed to the immigrant Italian builder, Pio Sinicco.
Chapter 8: South Australia

From the Beginnings to 1890

The early architecture of South Australia was stone-based; more so than in any of the other Australian colonies. South Australia is rich in building stones, and rubble masonry was a common form of construction for many decades after European settlement. When buildings were erected in rubble masonry, brick dressings were often used to form the doors, windows and quoins, and brick adapts itself easily to the round arches of the Romanesque style.

The history of the Romanesque in South Australia began with George Kingston's design for the Adelaide Gaol (1840-42). He planned a series of Norman watchtowers for the perimeter wall, of which the south-east tower was completed and the north-east tower partially built. They are constructed of rubble masonry with stone dressings, and the south-east tower is capped in dressed stone crenellations. The windows are round-arched, with label moulds. As Donald Langmead writes of this building, the Norman style "was widely thought appropriate for prison design because of its weightiness and air of foreboding."

As in Western Australia, much of the pioneer European population of the colony were English free settlers, and as in the western colony, this resulted in the construction of some early Anglican churches in the Norman style. The first of these was Christ Church, North Adelaide (1848-49), a cruciform church with a semi-circular apse, built of rubble masonry with stone and brick dressings. The source of the design is unclear, although Brian Andrews suggests that it was provided by the Ecclesiological Society in England, who considered the Norman style "appropriate in colonial missionary fields due to its simpler construction methods and lesser details." The nave was extended in 1855, possibly to a design of Edmund Wright, and further renovations in 1872-73 were designed by Daniel Garlick.

The nave of All Saints' Anglican Church, Hindmarsh was erected in 1849-50 in a simple Norman style. This building was apparently designed by Henry Stuckey, who died soon after it was completed, and it is built of roughly coursed stone with brick dressings. The chancel was added in 1872-73 to designs of a local businessman. The front elevation was significantly altered around 1926 when a porch was added.

Stuckey was certainly the architect of St Paul's Anglican Church, Port Adelaide (1851-52, demolished). It was also of rubble masonry with brick facings, and included a semi-circular apse. It was extended in 1861 in a similar style to designs of Edmund Wright, who turned the existing church into the transept of a larger building.

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3 The church is attributed to Stuckey by his obituarist, see South Australian, 10 June 1851, 3.
Figure 8.1. Christ Church Anglican, North Adelaide
(architect unknown, 1848-49)

The small church of the Anglican mission at Poonindie on the Eyre Peninsula was built in 1854-55 of local rubble and hand-made bricks, to a simple Romanesque design. The architect has not been identified, although the design has been attributed to Matthew Blagden Hale, later an Anglican bishop, who was in charge of the mission at the time.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Riverton (architect unknown, 1857-58, see Figure 2.13) is a small but solid Norman church in roughly coursed stone with stone facings, with a square crenellated tower and a polygonal apse. The triplet window in the apse was designed by William John Woodcock, Anglican archdeacon of Adelaide.

We have already noted some of the work of Edmund Wright, who took over the practice of Henry Stuckey following the latter's untimely death. Wright designed Christ Church Anglican, Kapunda (1857), a substantial building of dressed stone, with a tall tower and spire. The design is simple and not particularly Romanesque, but the doors and windows are round-arched, sometimes with label moulds. The chancel and transepts were added in 1868.

The small Anglican church at Balhannah in the Adelaide Hills was built in 1865-67 and designed by R.R. Page, a local builder and architect. It is of rubble masonry in a somewhat Norman design. The brick facings are skilfully executed and dentillated.

Use of the Romanesque style in nineteenth-century South Australia was by no means confined to the Anglican Church. The Congregationalists were early adopters of the style, as evidenced by the naïve Angaston Congregational Chapel (1854-55, now the Zion Lutheran Church), designed by the Adelaide builders Cocking & Aggett. Of roughly coursed stone with soapstone dressings, it has a simply moulded doorway with an unusual dentillated course above. The Kapunda Congregational Chapel (1858) is a more assured building, of
rubble masonry with stone facings. Probably designed by Edmund Wright, it is of almost Georgian simplicity, with label moulds over the round-arched doors and windows.

However these modest rural churches were completely overshadowed by the Hindmarsh Square Congregational Church (1861-62, demolished) in Adelaide, which was designed by George Abbott. It was a large stone building with a triple-arched portico beneath a rose window. The domed octagonal flanking towers gave the building a Byzantine appearance.

Figure 8.2. Hindmarsh Square Congregational Church, Adelaide
(George Abbott, 1861-62, demolished)

Other nonconformist denominations occasionally adopted the Romanesque. The Tynte Street Baptist Chapel, North Adelaide (James Cumming, 1869-70) is a large city church which defies stylistic classification, although there are certainly some Romanesque elements in the design. Cumming also designed the Wesleyan Church at 14-16 Commercial Road, Strathalbyn (1873-74), a smaller building in coursed rubble with stone facings. The triplet windows in the porch and gable are the most obviously Romanesque features.

Daniel Garlick and William McMinn were responsible for the Wesleyan Chapel (1869) at 240 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Built of coursed Glen Osmond stone, it has dressings of both cement and freestone. The entrance arch is carried on colonettes, beneath a gabled pediment, with a wheel window above and an arched corbel table below the parapet. It is possibly the earliest Lombardic Romanesque building in South Australia. Garlick also designed the Primitive Methodist Chapel (1872, demolished) in Morphett Street, Adelaide, which had triplet windows and an arched corbel table.

The City Mission Hall (1877-78) at 67-71 Light Square, Adelaide, was a joint enterprise of several nonconformist churches. The hall is a gabled building in coursed rubble with brick
dressings, with a triplet window in the gable. It was designed by Henry Brown, a partner in the building firm of Brown and Thompson, who erected the building. The moulded brickwork around the door and windows is finely executed.

Even the Catholic Church showed some interest in the Romanesque. Edmund Wright formed a partnership with Edward Woods, and they designed St Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Kapunda (1865-66, demolished). This was a large building of coursed rubble with stone facings. The impressive square tower had biforate windows in the belfry. Wright was deceased when the chancel was added in 1890 to a design of Edward Woods.

Edward Hamilton had been colonial architect for a few years before going into partnership with his brother. He designed Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Kadina (1865-66), which was never intended to be the permanent church of the parish, and is now a parish hall. Another simple rubble-masonry building, it has brick facings and a triplet window in the porch.

In 1866 Edward Hamilton joined the partnership of Wright & Woods. As Wright, Woods & Hamilton they were responsible for Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Virginia (1865-66), another rubble masonry building with brick facings. Above the porch there is an arched corbel table and an oculus window. The firm's design for Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Wallaroo (1867, demolished) was more adventurous. The limestone rubble was faced with brick, but the brick was bichromatic in red and white. This bichromatic decoration was applied also to the voussoirs of the doorway and the facings of the large triplet window above.

![Figure 8.3. Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Wallaroo](image)

(Wright, Woods & Hamilton, 1867, demolished)

In 1876, and some years after the dissolution of the partnership of Wright, Woods & Hamilton, Edward Woods became architect to the South Australian Council of Education. In
this capacity he designed the Kapunda Model (now Primary) School (1877-78, altered) in a simple Romanesque style. The walls were of coursed rubble and the round-arched facings of the windows and doors were executed in cement. The wooden bell turret over the entrance (now demolished) added to the Romanesque appearance.

The most prominent Romanesque building erected in South Australia during the nineteenth century was the west wing of the South Australian Institute in North Terrace, Adelaide, which is now the Jervois Wing of the South Australian Museum. It was constructed between 1879 and 1884. This building had a long gestation and the history of its design is obscure. Robert George Thomas, William McMinn and Edward Woods have all been named as having some responsibility for the design, but it was erected under the direction of the then Architect-in-Chief, George Thomas Light.

The building is of two storeys in Sydney freestone, with bands of red dolomite. The biforate windows, with an oculus window above, and the arched corbel table under the parapet are motifs typical of the Romanesque Revival, but the mansard roof spoils the Romanesque effect. In 1908-15 an East Wing was built in the same style, under the direction of the then Superintendent of Public Buildings, C.E. Owen Smyth, who was also responsible for the North Wing (1892-93, altered), a lower brick building built as a temporary measure, but still in a distinctly Romanesque style, with biforate windows and moulded doorways.

Figure 8.4. West Wing, South Australian Institute (now Jervois Wing, SA Museum)  
(George Thomas Light, supervising architect, 1879-84)
American Romanesque

The American Romanesque style was a phenomenon largely restricted to Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, and it had little impact in South Australia. Nonetheless, a few examples can be found.

Alfred Wells was one of the most successful architects in Adelaide in the decades around the turn of the century. He was responsible for the Brookman Buildings (1896-97, demolished), an office building in Grenfell Street, Adelaide, originally of three storeys, built of brick on a base course of rock-faced granite. The three large arches of the ground floor suggested the influence of the American Romanesque. The Richardsonian influence was more obvious in another Wells design, the Australian Mutual Provident Building (1898, demolished) in Mt Gambier, where the ground floor was built of rock-faced stone, with a wide entrance arch, rising from a very low springing level.

English & Soward were an old-established Adelaide architectural practice who also showed some interest in the American Romanesque. They designed a large storage warehouse of three storeys, plus basement, for Wilkinson & Co. at 101-107 Grenfell Street, Adelaide (1898-99). Built of brick on a plinth of rock-faced stone, it has a wide entrance arch with large voussoirs of picked stone. The corbel table above the second level, and the low arcade under the eaves add to the Romanesque effect. The Robert Reid & Co. Warehouse (1901, demolished) in Stephens Place, Adelaide, was a brick retail warehouse of three floors, plus basement, also designed by English & Soward. The large glazed bays spanned all levels of the façade, surmounted by segmental arches beneath an arched corbel table. Contemporary reports explained that "the firm's desire to secure as much evenly-distributed light as possible for showing their goods has been met by the adoption of the continuous pier and arch principle of construction."4

English & Soward were responsible for an interesting example of the Industrial Romanesque, namely the Municipal Tramways Trust No. 1 Converter Station (1908) in East Terrace, near the corner of Pirie Street, Adelaide. Built of brick on a base course of rock-faced stone, the large voussoirs of the doorway and windows are also in rock-faced stone. The window bays are surmounted by a corbel table.

The Fowler Factory (Frank Counsell, 1905-6) at 73-78 North Terrace, Adelaide, is another example of the Industrial Romanesque. Built in brick, of two storeys plus basement, the design seems to have been influenced by the Robert Reid & Co. Warehouse. The bays rise to segmental arches under an arched corbel table. The eastern section of this building was demolished in 1966.

4 Advertiser (Adelaide), 13 July 1901, 10.
Traditional Romanesque

If the American Romanesque made little impact in South Australia, the traditional Romanesque did not fare much better during the two decades before the First World War.

We have seen that in the early 1890s C.E. Owen Smyth was designing a temporary North Wing for the South Australian Museum in a Romanesque style, an experience which may have influenced his design for the East Wing (Flinders Wing) of the Adelaide Hospital (1892-94, demolished). This two-storey building featured an arcaded entrance portico with an arcaded veranda above, the round-arched arcades carried on large columns and piers, all executed in brick with decorative brick voussoirs. The piers and columns had foliated capitals.

Albert Conrad was a locally born architect who trained under Daniel Garlick and C.E. Owen Smyth before setting up his own practice in 1893. He produced a number of designs which are generally regarded as Romanesque in style, but the only obviously Romanesque motif in these buildings is the biforate window with an oculus window above, which is common to them all. The buildings in question are: St Peter and St Paul Catholic Church, Gawler (1897-98), of coursed stone with red brick facings; the Reynolds Memorial Chapel, St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, Millswood (1898, now part of Tabor College), also of stone with red-brick
facings; the Kuhnel Warehouse (1898, altered) at 136 Rundle Street, Adelaide, in brick with cement dressings; and the chancel and nave of St Raphael's Catholic Church, Parkside (1905), in the red brick and white cement style which was then popular in other parts of Australia.

The new façade and tower which Mt Gambier architect Thomas Hall designed for St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Penola (1906-7) is a colourful pastiche in a mixture of styles and building materials, with a predominantly Romanesque flavour.

We have already noted some of the Romanesque work of Edward Woods and his early partners. In 1905 Woods formed a partnership with Walter Bagot, which was the genesis of one of Australia's largest architectural practices, and one which would be a significant exponent of the Romanesque style in South Australia. Woods & Bagot designed St Rose's Hall (1908-9) for the Kapunda Catholic parish, a small building with a triplet window under a label mould, with a stylised corbel table above, all skilfully executed in brick. Woods & Bagot also designed Holy Angels Catholic Church, Farrell Flat, near Clare (1911-12), erected in local stone roughly coursed, with superb brick facings and detailing.

John Henry Norton, Catholic bishop of Port Augusta from 1906 to 1923, had trained as an architect in Ballarat before taking holy orders. His design for St Agnes Catholic Church, Booleroo Centre (1912) is of Georgian simplicity, executed in white freestone with cement dressings. The round-headed windows with exaggerated keystones are not particularly Romanesque, but the triplet window in the gable suggests Romanesque influence.
Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)

Catholic Romanesque

The firm of Woods & Bagot was expanded in 1913 to include Herbert Jory, and when Louis Laybourne Smith joined them in 1914, the firm became Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith. Over the next fifteen years, they would design a significant body of Romanesque work in South Australia.

Walter Bagot was supervising architect for the remodelled façade of St Raphael's Catholic Church, Parkside (1916-17). This impressive Lombardic design, with academically correct porch, wheel window, corbel tables and two flanking campanili, mainly executed in brick, sits very uncomfortably in front of Albert Conrad's 1905 nave and chancel. Louis Laybourne Smith is credited with the design of Cabra Convent Chapel, Cumberland Park (1917, now part of Cabra Dominican College), a substantial building in a simpler Romanesque design, built of bluestone with red brick dressings.

Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith were also responsible for St Joan of Arc Catholic Church, Victor Harbour (1920), a commanding building of stuccoed stone and brick. It has a very Mediterranean look, which is enhanced by the campanile. The Lombard porch has unfortunately been replaced by a modern structure. The firm also designed the much simpler Catholic Church of St Margaret Mary, Edithburgh (1923), in rubble masonry with brick facings; the projected campanile was never built.

Figure 8.7. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Hindmarsh
(Herbert Jory for Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith, 1924)
Herbert Jory was supervising architect of Holy Saviour (now Sacred Heart) Catholic Church, Hindmarsh (1924). This impressive red-brick building with its domed flanking towers shows Jory already experimenting with modern interpretations of the Romanesque, as can be seen in the "telephone-dial" rose window and the exaggerated arched corbel table. The large expanses of the brick walls are decorated only by low-relief terra cotta panels and the patterns created by the use of lighter-coloured bricks.

Jory was also responsible for St Joseph's Catholic Church, Penola (1924). The arched bays of the nave and porch and the arched corbel table of the gable were an effective means of creating shadow effects on the rendered surface. This church was considerably extended in later years and a tower was added.

Louis Laybourne Smith designed the Passionist Fathers' Monastery, Glen Osmond (1928-29), including the Church of St Paul of the Cross. These stuccoed Mediterranean Romanesque buildings suggest the influence of the Spanish Mission style, which was then becoming popular.

For the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Alberton, Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith produced one last Romanesque design in 1929. It was a modern reinterpretation of the Lombardic Romanesque, with pronounced vertical lines in the blind arcading of the flanking towers, the Lombard porch, the arcading of the two campanili and the exaggerated corbel tables. It was never built; no doubt it fell victim to the onset of the Great Depression.

Although Woods, Bagot, Jory & Laybourne Smith were the dominant firm of the Catholic Romanesque in South Australia during the 1920s, they did not have the field entirely to themselves. Daniel Garlick was long dead, but his name lived on in the firm of Garlick & Jackman, who designed the Sacred Heart College Memorial Chapel, Somerton Park (1922-24). It is a large building of coursed bluestone with cement dressings; the domed flanking towers and the clerestory give it an imposing profile.

Patrick J. O'Connor was an enterprising young Catholic architect who maintained offices in both Adelaide and Melbourne. In the 1930s he would design some significant Romanesque churches in Victoria (see chapter 5), but he cut his teeth on St James Catholic Church, Jamestown (1928-29), a large building in dressed Gladstone stone. It has a fairly traditional Romanesque design, with a triple-arched portico beneath a large wheel window. The flanking towers and gable are decorated with exaggerated arched corbel tables. The niche above the wheel window was clearly designed for a statue which did not however eventuate; instead, two larger than life-size statues stand atop the towers, in blatant contravention of all the rules of Romanesque architectural propriety.

St John's Catholic Church, Laura (1929) was another O'Connor design. This is a smaller, but still sizable building, also built of dressed stone. The exterior is much more simply decorated than the Jamestown church, with a modest wheel window and exaggerated arched corbel tables on the gables of the nave and porch.
Herbert Jory set up his own practice in September 1930, at the height of the Great Depression. In 1935, as economic conditions began to improve, he took Stanley Pointer into partnership. Jory & Pointer were responsible for St Canice's Catholic Church, Snowtown (1935-36). Built of red brick with white cement dressings, this building is somewhat reminiscent of the earlier "blood and bandages" style, but has simpler, more modern lines.

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, Prospect (Jory & Pointer, 1936-37) is a large brick suburban church with the massing of a Romanesque hall-church. Traditional Lombardic forms are present in the wheel window and arched corbel tables, but the decoration is simplified, approximating the stripped Romanesque which was now appearing in the eastern states.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Naracoorte (Jory & Pointer, 1937) is, by contrast, an essay in the Norman Romanesque style of an English village church. Built of coursed Mount Gambier stone, with a steeply pitched roof and a small rose window in the gable above the porch, it incorporates modern features in the filigree windows and concave buttresses.

Jory was again practising on his own when he designed a new building to replace Wright & Woods' St Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Kapunda. It was built in 1938 (see Figure 3.19) and is another large brick hall-church, and perhaps Jory's Romanesque masterpiece. Here again he used traditional motifs (Lombard porch, wheel window, blind arcading) combined with simple modern lines. The Sydney magazine Building commented that "the long narrow window openings, infilled with cast cement grilles, the design of which has an Eastern
flavour, are an interesting innovation.” Jory had already used this motif in the Prospect and Naracoorte churches and would use it again at Walkerville.

While Jory was cautiously attempting to reconcile the medieval with the modern, an Adelaide family firm of architect-builders, John McDonough & Son, produced a boldly modern design for the chapel of the Christian Brothers' Rostrevor College, Woodforde (1938-39). In dressed freestone on a bluestone base, the front has little decoration apart from a wheel window encompassed by a recessed and moulded arch which spans the façade.

The Sydney architect Austin McKay produced another very modern design for St Therese's Catholic Church, Renmark (1941-42). It was a scaled-down version of the stripped Romanesque design which he had already developed for the Catholic churches at Woollahra and Casino in New South Wales. Built entirely of red brick, the façade rises from a moulded, round-arched doorway to a large niche statue which stands atop a very high parapet above the gabled roof.

**Protestant Romanesque**

The Romanesque style was rarely used by Protestant congregations in South Australia between the wars. Only a few examples have been identified.

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5 *Building* (Sydney), 24 March 1941, 13.
The Adelaide architect Alfred Wells, who had occasionally used the American Romanesque style in his designs for office buildings in the 1890s, used more traditional Norman Romanesque forms in his design for All Souls Anglican Church, St Peters (1915-16). Built of brick with cement facings and detailing, it has a squat square tower and a polygonal apse. Darker brick was used to create diaper work and exaggerated corbel tables.

The Central Methodist Church, Port Pirie (James F. Jenkins, 1922, destroyed by fire) was built of brick on a cement base. The façade featured a moulded, round-arched doorway beneath a triplet window.

The first section of the Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, Plympton was built in 1925-26. It was designed by a young Adelaide architect, Dean Berry. It is a fairly simple Lombardic design, with a round apse and a campanile.

The Congregational Church on the corner of Carlton Parade & Huntriss Street, Torrensville (1935) was designed by a well-established Adelaide architect, Hubert Cowell. It is a small brick building; the gable is decorated with an exaggerated arched corbel table and a tiny wheel window.

Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture

The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building (1934), on the corner of King William and Hindley Streets, Adelaide, was designed by the Sydney firm of Hennessy & Hennessy, following the model of an earlier building erected in Brisbane. The architectural style was described as "modern Romanesque." As in the Brisbane building, Romanesque features appear both at the lower levels and in the upper levels of the façade, creating a rare example of the use of the Romanesque in a non-ecclesiastical building between the wars. In proper Romanesque fashion, the windows were narrow, with deep reveals. The architects explained that "this method of window planning … greatly reduces the amount of direct sunlight admitted and prevents the overheating of rooms in the hot summer months." In later years, when air conditioning had become the norm, the windows of this building were replaced and enlarged.

Late Romanesque (1945 to the present)

As elsewhere in Australia, there are a few belated post-war examples of the Catholic Romanesque to be found in South Australia.

The most interesting of these is the Catholic Cathedral of St Mark, Port Pirie (1949-53), designed by the Adelaide firm of Russell & Yelland. One of the few Romanesque cathedrals in Australia, it is a large cruciform building, built of cement-rendered stone. The elevations

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6 *News* (Adelaide), 17 December 1934, 3.
7 *Building* (Sydney), 12 January 1935, 17.
are rather severe, with little adornment. The triple-arched entrance is carried on double colonettes, and a large wheel window and some arched corbel tables complete the decoration of the façade.

Figure 8.10. St Mark's Catholic Cathedral, Port Pirie
(Russell & Yelland, 1949-53)

Herbert Jory made one last attempt to reconcile the Romanesque with modernism in his design for St Monica's Catholic Church, Walkerville (1952-53). In red brick with white cement dressings, it has the massing of a gabled Romanesque church. There is a large round window, with simple geometric tracery, above the porch and a simple brick tympanum over the door. The white cement verticals of the façade are a faint memory of pilasters and colonettes.

St Brigid's Catholic Church, Kilburn (George Parker, 1953-54) is a red-brick church with a high gable. Here again a large round window with simple geometric tracery surmounts a round-arched doorway. Both window and door are contained within a protruding arched bay, executed in cement, with several orders of simple moulding.
Chapter 9: Tasmania

From the Beginnings to 1890

The history of the Australian Romanesque begins in Tasmania. And it begins auspiciously, with four superb small rural churches designed by James Blackburn around 1840. Blackburn's early career is obscure, but he had some experience in the building industry before a conviction for forgery resulted in transportation to Van Diemen's Land in 1833. In Hobart he was employed by the government as an engineer and architect until he was pardoned in 1841. Thereafter he practised privately in Hobart and later in Melbourne.

There is no doubt that Blackburn's Romanesque designs were derivative, but that does not detract from their quality. As Brian Andrews has observed in his study of Gothic Revival architecture in Australia, "without the art of proportion the pattern book approach had its pitfalls,"¹ and Blackburn's churches are beautifully proportioned. All four are built of stone. The decoration is necessarily limited—because the convict masons who constructed these buildings were rarely skilled sculptors—but sparse decoration is not incompatible with the Romanesque style.

Urban sprawl has surrounded some of Blackburn's churches, but St Mark's Anglican Church, Pontville (1839-40, see also Figure 3.1) still stands remote on a rural hillside, a perfect setting for a small stone Norman church. It was built of the local white freestone and is a simple gabled church with flanking, truncated towers, and between the truncated towers is a very unusual portico. Jane Grove has established that the design is based closely on that of a chapel near Cardiff, which was illustrated in The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal in 1838.²

Figure 9.1. St Mark's Anglican Church, Pontville
(James Blackburn, 1839-40)

¹ Brian Andrews, Australian Gothic: The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s (Carlton South, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2001), 47.
The sources of the design for St Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Glenorchy (1839-41) have not been identified. The asymmetrical placement of the simply moulded Norman door shows that this is no mere copy of a medieval original. The three unusual octagonal corner turrets make an interesting contrast with the much larger square tower on the other corner.

Figure 9.2. Blackburn's original design for the Glenorchy Presbyterian Church (1839)

Grove has located the source for Scots Church, Sorell (1840-42) in one of the illustrations published in George E. Hamilton's *Designs for Rural Churches* (1836). The centrally placed square tower with its corner stair-turret and blind arcading are clearly derivative. The decorative detail (see Figure 2.11) is simple and not beyond the skills of a convict mason.

The design of the New Town Congregational Church (1842) is perhaps more Italianate than Romanesque. It has a tall campanile with a pyramidal roof. The narrow colonnade which rises with the front stairs is reminiscent of the Pontville design.

Although Blackburn's Romanesque churches are much admired today, and considered to be among the earliest Romanesque Revival churches in the world, it is unlikely that they enjoyed similar esteem at the time when they were constructed. To Blackburn's contemporaries they would have been competent simple country churches, and nothing more. Holy Trinity, the church which Blackburn designed for a prominent hilltop location in Hobart, was of course in the Gothic style.

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3 Ibid., 19.
This being the case, it is not surprising to find that these churches had no impact on later church design in Tasmania. Indeed, the only other nineteenth-century Romanesque church that has been identified in Tasmania is the Union Chapel at 106 Bathurst Street, Hobart. It was built in 1864 of brick with freestone detailing, and was designed by Henry R. Bastow, who would later become the Victorian Government Architect. The design is unusual: the triple-arched portico is surmounted by a large triplet window, and both are contained within a large recessed, dentillated arch, carried on pilasters.

**Romanesque Ascendant (1890-1914)**

**American Romanesque**

The American Romanesque style was a phenomenon largely restricted to Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, but several examples of the style can be found in Tasmania.

When the Launceston firm of Corrie & North adopted a Romanesque style for the upper floor of the Australian Mutual Provident Society Building (1891-92) at 66 Cameron Street, Launceston, it is not clear whether or not they were influenced by reports of the new American Romanesque style which had recently appeared in Melbourne. Certainly there is nothing Richardsonian in the moulded round arches, carried on colonettes, which were used in this building. Following Leslie Corrie’s departure to Queensland, Alexander North went into partnership with William H. Dunning. North & Dunning designed a new façade for the Temperance Hall (1894-95, demolished) in York Street, Launceston. The doors had round arches supported on very short colonettes, suggesting the influence of the American
Romanesque. Both buildings featured polychromatic banding and a carved parapet frieze depicting Australian flora, these being signature motifs of Alexander North’s work.

Thomas Searell was a Hobart architect whose design for the Gaiety Theatre, Zeehan (1898) is predominantly Romanesque. There is an arcaded veranda on the upper level, and the façade at the lower level consists of a sequence of five large arches, three of them with the low, wide form of the American Romanesque.

Some examples of the American Romanesque warehouse can still be seen in Hobart. The A.G. Webster Building (1906-7), at 60 Liverpool Street, is a two-storey brick building of seven arched bays. The arches are carried on pilasters with carved capitals, and there is an arched corbel table under the parapet. The spandrel above the main entrance (in the centre bay) has a large low-relief sculpture of merino sheep, reflecting the principal business activity of the proprietors. The design of this building was the work of Hobart architect Rudolph Koch, although his father, J.A.B. Koch of Melbourne, and the Hobart firm of Huckson & Hutchison also had some involvement.

![Figure 9.4. A.G. Webster Building, 60 Liverpool Street, Hobart](Rudolph Koch and others, 1906-7)

The five-storey Dehle, Bennison & Co. Building (architect unknown, 1914) at 172 Collins Street, on the corner of Victoria Street, is another large red-brick American Romanesque warehouse. It too has the standard façade of recessed arched bays carried on pilasters, which span all floors. The decoration is very limited and includes a corner tourelle and a bracketed parapet.

The most significant practitioner of the American Romanesque in Tasmania was Alan Cameron Walker. Born and trained in Hobart, he undertook further study in London, where he developed an early interest in the Romanesque, as evidenced by his drawings of the small
Norman church at Barfrestone in Kent, which were published in the London magazine, *The Builder* in 1886. The magazine's editors commended him for coming to England to study architecture, and deplored the fact that "the Australians … have no architecture except bald repetitions of modern Renaissance work." Between 1889 and 1890 Walker worked for the Melbourne firm of Ellerker & Kilburn, at the time when they were pioneering the American Romanesque style in Victoria. Mention has already been made of the competition design which Walker and Alfred Johnson submitted for the Williamstown Town Hall, Melbourne (see chapter 5).

While still practising in Melbourne, Walker won the 1892 competition to design the new state school building in the Launceston suburb of Sandhill (later renamed Glen Dhu). The design incorporated Richardsonian arches above the doors and also above the triplet windows of the gables. Tasmanian government architects greatly simplified the design before the building was finally erected in 1895.

Walker returned to Hobart in 1895 and established a very successful practice. Richardsonian arches reappeared in his design for the three-storey YMCA Building (1907-8, demolished) in Murray Street, Hobart. The arches were located on the ground floor and executed in stone with large voussoirs. The upper levels were in brick, with three arched bays of varying width. A decorative frieze over the door, and sculptural work in the spandrels, capitals and parapet, completed the façade. Walker's design for the Commercial Travellers' Association Club (1910-12, demolished) in Charles Street, Launceston, employed rock-faced stone at the ground level, with Richardsonian arches on either side of the doorway.

![Figure 9.5. YMCA Building, Murray Street, Hobart](Alan C. Walker, 1907-8, demolished)

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*Builder* (London), 6 December 1890, 443.
In 1911 Walker formed a partnership with Archibald Johnston. One of their early projects was the Bank of New South Wales (1911-12, demolished) opposite the General Post Office in Elizabeth Street, Hobart. The two-storey façade was executed entirely in rock-faced stone, with large voussoirs in the arches. The treatment of the doorway was unusual: the sunrise voussoirs of the arch were flanked by clustered colonettes. The Sydney magazine Building said of this design that "the sturdy features of Romanesque architecture are here happily introduced to symbolise a solid foundation on which the bank, as an institution, is founded.”

Walker had been a pupil of the Hobart architect Henry Hunter at the time when Hunter was designing the Australian Mutual Provident Society Building (1884) on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets, Hobart. Walker & Johnston designed an additional floor for this building and two wide entrance archways at the ground level, with ornately sculpted spandrels. These were constructed in 1913. The Elizabeth Street archway, which sprang almost from the pavement, is particularly Richardsonian. When this building was demolished in 1968, the Elizabeth Street arch was relocated to the Hobart Botanical Gardens.

Some notable examples of the Industrial Romanesque survive from this era. William Eldridge, a former Tasmanian Government Architect, designed the Johnstone Brothers Woollen Factory (1898-99) at 40-50 Molle Street, Hobart. It is a fairly simple three-storey building, of red brick, which has been rendered at the ground level. The Glasgow Engineering Company factory (William Laidlaw, 1904), at 60 William Street, Launceston, is a two-storey red-brick building, with a façade of arched bays, and minimal decoration.

Figure 9.6. Glasgow Engineering Company, 60 William Street, Launceston (William Laidlaw, 1904)

Traditional Romanesque

It was perhaps inevitable that the red brick and white cement style of church architecture, which became so popular in Victorian Catholic parishes after 1900, would eventually make its way across Bass Strait. The Devonport architect Stephen Priest adopted it for the large Catholic Church of St Brigid, Wynyard (1911-12). A local newspaper said of this building

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5 Building (Sydney), 12 July 1920, 93.
that "the style will be Romanesque, which is quite new in Tasmania." Like the churches of A.A. Fritsch, it is not an exercise in academic correctness. The domed tower and the "telephone dial" rose window in the sanctuary demonstrate the eclectic approach of the architect.

![St Brigid's Catholic Church, Wynyard](image)

**Figure 9.7. St Brigid's Catholic Church, Wynyard**
(Stephen Priest, 1911-12)

Priest also designed Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Devonport (1913-14), which is now the Catholic parish hall. It is also in the blood and bandages style, with an incomplete tower.

**Mainly Ecclesiastical (1915-1945)**

The enthusiasm for the Romanesque which can be discerned in many Catholic parishes of the eastern mainland states between the wars found little resonance in Tasmania.

Stephen Priest designed a small Catholic church for Sheffield (1921-22) in the familiar brick and cement style. A much more impressive essay in this idiom can be seen in St Finn Barr’s Convent School (1926-27), Invermay, which was designed by the Launceston architect Thomas Tandy. It is a two-storey building, with a portico of four arches, flanked by two projecting gabled wings. The white cement mouldings are unusually elaborate, particularly in the gables; the upper floor windows are biforate, each with an oculus above.

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6 *Examiner* (Launceston), 29 May 1911, 7.
Hubert East was another Launceston architect, but one who had spent much of his professional life overseas. His design for Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Stanley (1930-31) is reminiscent of some of the Anglican Romanesque churches being erected elsewhere in Australia at this time. It is built almost exclusively in brick. The doorway has several orders of brick moulding and the rose window above has geometric tracery. The bell-cote which surmounts the gable gives an Arts and Crafts touch to the design.

Alan Walker died in 1931, but his business partner of many years, Archibald Johnston, subsequently produced one last Romanesque design for the firm of Walker & Johnston. This was St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, South Hobart (1932-33), a red-brick gabled church, which seems to have been influenced by the more academically correct Romanesque style which was then popular in New South Wales and Queensland. Both the main entrance and the side porch are surmounted by richly moulded brick arches, which in turn are crowned with a sculpted cement band. The windows are recessed within panels of a mottled blue brick.

Moore & Dowling were a prominent Sydney firm who, as Wardell, Moore & Dowling, had designed a large Romanesque chapel (1930-31) for Mount St Margaret Hospital in the Sydney suburb of Ryde. Throughout the 1930s they were experimenting with more modern styles, and this is reflected in their design for St James Catholic Church, Cygnet (1940). A low, gabled church in rendered brick, with a square tower surmounted by an octagonal belfry, it has a distinctly Mediterranean appearance. The external decoration is very simple, and happily the statue which was planned for the gable seems never to have been executed.

Figure 9.8. St James Catholic Church, Cygnet
(Moore & Dowling, 1940)

No twentieth-century Protestant Romanesque churches have been identified in Tasmania.
Esmond Dorney was the most avant-garde architect in Tasmania during the post-war years. He designed three Catholic churches in the state, including St Finn Barr, Invermay (1953-54, see Figure 3.23). This brick church stands immediately beside the imposing Romanesque school designed by Thomas Tandy thirty years previously (see above). Although Dorney's design is uncompromisingly modern, it appears that he was referencing the venerable neighbouring building. There is an element of the Romanesque in the façade, with its sequence of diminishing round arches under a high gable. The intermediate arch is carried on tall metal columns, which suggest giant jamb-shafts. The arches of the nave windows are picked out in lighter coloured bricks which suggest label moulds.