

Albury Art Deco Walk

The following walking notes are based on the work of Jan Hunter, long term Albury resident and author of 'Building the Neighborhood.'

The notes were developed for a bus tour, an extension of the highly successful Art Deco exhibition in 2010 at Albury Library Museum, held in conjunction with the Albury & District Historical Society's History Week, 2011 and adapted for a walking tour by the Border Bushwalking Club in 2020.

Albury was a little slower than the cities to take up the new ideas from the Jazz Age, however by the thirties the motifs of the Art Deco designs were being used by architects and builders here.

The terms Modern and Moderne will be used, covering changes which began in the 1930s. No more Federation styles or Californian bungalows, but a simpler, smoother look, either sharply squared off or definitely rounded and far fewer decorative touches.

The full walking tour starts and finishes at Billson Park, but many walkers would prefer doing the tour in smaller stages.

393 Perry Street

On the right is The Scots School, formerly Albury Grammar School with its tower, class rooms and administration buildings. Built in 1948, it was designed on the latest Norwegian lines, and cost £25,000. A feature is the ambulatories or cloistered walks set on either side of class rooms. Architect Mr L McCredie. Builder, F W Lemcke of Albury.

369 Tribune Street

Built for Alex Sellars and family, headmaster of Albury Grammar School, in 1942. Note the streamlined parapet above the verandah, matching the rounded verandah walls typical of Art Deco.

748 Vine Street

This house has some of the earliest steel framed windows in Albury and wrought iron fencing. Note the relaxed chevron chimney decorations, instead of the sharp lines of the ziggurat. Built 1946. Thought to be for Les Ahearn, builders were Humphrey and Beechy.

756 Vine Street, corner of North/Mate Streets

This elaborate house was built for H R Hanel, a local transport businessman. Rounded rooms are the main feature, contrasting with the square lines of

the verandah. This house was much talked about at the time because of its size and the luxury of gold-plated taps in the bathroom. The double glass doors into the lounge room are etched with the Hume Weir. Note that the bricks are smaller than usual, two-inch, and that the low original fence was in the same bricks as the house. Built in 1949, by S & E Gordon, designed by S J O'Halloran and Associates, headed up in Albury by Bill Purtell.

816 Mate Street, corner of Bellevue Street

This house called "Gainsborough" is an example of modifying a practical Spanish Mission design to a decorative purpose, with curved parapets and tapestry bricks. Built for the Rowston family in 1949.

Continue on the east side of Mate Street to appreciate the next building from over the road.

869 Mate Street

The DLG Glass shop front, previously F A Stow & Co, is an excellent example of Art Deco. The building has a concrete eyebrow or projection over the top storey windows and the smooth curved lines of the façade are echoed in the shop front windows. This building was erected around 1946, replacing a more modest factory in Buckingham Street.

F A Stow came from an extremely poor back ground and had little education. When he went overseas in World War I he took a little dictionary so he could write proper letters to his sweetheart. Later he came to Albury to work for Logan's. One of his jobs was the ceiling of the Regent Theatre. Stow built many houses before concentrating on joinery and timber sales. He was to the forefront in using up to date design trends and a significant contributor to the domestic landscape in Albury.

349 Fallon Street

This is another F A Stow building; the factory front has the waterfall lines of the Art Deco period.

415 Bellevue Street, corner of Frauenfelder Street

This is former All Saints Church. Whilst not really Art Deco, its history is interesting. Built in 1938 the combined church and hall was the centre of social activities in the neighbourhood for many years. All Saints closed in 1997 and the property was sold in early 2000. The church hall had an arched extension when it was sold and the present owners have extended to the west, adding an extra floor. It's difficult to see but the end wall repeats the church design.

438 Bellevue Street at end of Park Avenue.

One of the first architect designed houses in North Albury, it has features of the Moderne style with semi rounded front rooms and steel window frames. There are echoes of the Art Nouveau period with the stonework around the front door. This house of double cement brick has been altered inside, but the tapestry brick fire place, the leadlighted front door and the double glass doors off the hallway remain. Designed by James Wallace Sproule in 1947, it was built for Mrs Ada Marks and Mr Ralph Marks, a community minded business couple.

806 David Street, on the corner of Bellevue Street

Another Moderne house. Note the flat roof, emphasized by a narrow concrete eyebrow, rounded corners and glass panels either side of the double front doors. Built by Harold Arthur Pearsall in 1946.

798 David Street

This house is good example of the fence matching the house design. Flowing waterfall lines in the fence echo the curved walls and strong concrete lines under the windowsills. Built 1946 by Dick Garwood.

791 David Street

Another ring in, not Art Deco however important; it is said to be the oldest house remaining in Albury. Frauenfelder Cottage was built in 1857 for a German family brought to Albury to help establish the first vineyards.

788 David Street

This was built for a Stow workman in the late thirties and the feature here is the porch.

428 North Street.

The neighbours thought this Moderne house was going to be a castle when it was being built in 1946. Note the parapet obscuring the roof, the rounded front rooms and matching fence. Off the interior hall, through 4 glazed doors is a lounge room, big enough for a large table setting and a grand piano. Designed by local architects A C & C H Macknight & Co, built by L F Chick for local business couple, Carl and Maree Farrah.

431 Tribune Street

Another Stow house with concrete eyebrows, square porch and tapestry brick decorations. 1933.

724 Macauley Street, corner Tribune Street

These were very early flats in Albury. We see the curved walls lines emphasized by lines of tapestry bricks. These insertions were originally white. The flats were built for Miss E Cary and Stow was the builder in 1938.

717 Jones Street

By 1952 Dick Fielder has kept up with the times and pared down his style. This house is plain. The double glass front doors have simple art deco graphics and the upstairs bathroom has a chute down to the laundry, a very modern touch of the time.

720 Jones Street

The house was built by Dick Fielder, a well-known bricklayer. He specialized in tapestry brick decorative touches both inside and out and this is a good example of his work, not only on the chimney but on the walls. Also scallop decorations on the cantilevered verandah. This house was built in 1948.

753 Jones Street

A 1955 house, using the ziggurat motif to great effect on a small home, this house is unique in Albury. There have been extensive renovations made inside but the outside silhouette remains the same.

Architect J W (Wal) Sproule was registered as a NSW architect number 640 in 1924. He designed many buildings in Queanbeyan before coming to Albury in 1937. We will see a wonderful example of his domestic work later. As his sons became builders and bricklayers, Wal Sproule built more houses in Jones Street. Jones Street is the best street in Albury for leadlight windows. As you return down Jones Street look both sides as you walk along. Some of these windows may have come from the Albury Leadlight Company of Kiewa Street, run by the Styles family. Logans also had a glass shop. We will return to Jones street at the end of the walk to see the southern half.

636 Sackville Street

An excellent example of a Moderne house. We will see the rear elevation from Jones Street when we return there later in the walk.

638 Edmondson Ave, corner of Lindsay Avenue

A wonderful 1939 example of the square style. The brick massing emphasises the strong angular shape. There is an understated brick string line below the parapet, but the almost brutal façade is relieved by a feathered serpent motif projecting above the parapet. The geometric pattern in the balustrade railing matches the gates. The house was built for Mrs J B Barklamb in 1939. The architect was John F Parsons. Barklambs were

living in Melbourne at the time the house was built. Mr Barklamb was listed as a sculptor and did work in Albury as a monumental mason.

The 1920s were a golden age of archaeology in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Central America. Art Deco designers drew on ancient Egyptian and Aztec motifs.

615 Lindsay Avenue

A famous house; it turns up in magazines and books on art deco housing. It was designed by J W Sproule for Mrs A D Roberts. The builder was Otto Sproule.

It has all the features that we associate with the art deco movement: bold curves and strong straight lines, concrete eyebrows and a roof hidden by the parapet. The sweeping entrance stairway borrows from the earlier art nouveau style. The most striking feature is the stylised serpent motif. The vertical shaft leaps above the parapet and the wings are sharp projections that cast strong shadows on to the wall above the entry.

607 Lindsay Avenue

The third house in the style. The waterfall façade spread across the block and is visible from as far as Thurgoona Street. The deep eyebrow projections painted in mint green emphasise the way the house unfolds. The steel framed windows provide slim horizontal and vertical lines. It was built in 1950 by owner builder A Abikhair.

600 Lindsay Avenue

Built in 1939 it is the third house in Lindsay Street making a feature of brick work. Merv Ried was a meticulous planner who kept up with design trends. His son still has his many design books and magazines.

644 Wyse Street corner of Thurgoona St

This is another Merv Ried designed and built house from 1938. This house, built for chemist Willson White, makes a feature of the ziggurat or stepped designs.

The following 5 houses are part of the Forrest Hill Estate. When it was subdivided in 1929 it was a prestigious place to live. The blocks were wider than normal, houses had to be above a stipulated value and no house could be the same as another in the street.

663 Forrest Hill Avenue

No notes.

667 Forrest Hill Avenue

Designed by George Drummond and Louis Harrison, well known Albury Architects. They designed the Ambulance Station and the Monument. The builder was E Griffin, 1933.

671 Forrest Hill Avenue

1930 more elaborate house. Harrison and Glasken were the Architects and John Deacon the builder.

677 Forrest Hill Avenue

Designed by the owner, Horrie Harrison, and the architect was H Vivan Taylor, 1936. Taylor was to the forefront of design trends in eastern Australia and for a time in the thirties and had an office in Albury. Working for this firm was architect Nell Grant, one of the few qualified women architects in Australia, who supervised the building of the Wool Exchange and Commercial Club and Hoyts Theatre, an art deco style theatre formerly in Olive Street.

681 Forrest Hill Avenue

This house was also designed by Horrie Harrison and its owner Stan Jackling, in 1937 however the work was carried out by the architect S S Oxenham and builder Preston Carkeek. The Harrison house is another clinker brick house designed to look old, when new, and the Jackling house makes a feature of decorative brick work.

601 Corner Edmondson Street, corner of Fellowes Cres

Look to the left on the top corner. Porch is emphasized again with brick ziggurat or stepped design. A 1937 Stow house, architect Alan Bogle of Melbourne.

614 Edmondson Street

An excellent example of the style - ziggurat chimney. The designer and builder was Merv Ried, built in 1937 for George Heriot. We'll see more of Merv Ried's work at 644 Wyse Street and Lindsay Avenue.

742 Forrest Hill Avenue

Note the metal awning over rounded room echoes the Art Nouveau period.

639 Yambla Street

An unaltered house from 1951, builder Ron Hurst.

Walk over the Monument via Roper Street

460 Gulson Street

This is a 1979 house in traditional Moderne style, the Architect was Nicholas Day of Melbourne.

868 Padman Drive *(not included on the walk but worth a look)*

This unusual house has been cement rendered in a pattern. Note its flat roof and square lines. There was a small shop attached to the building in the fifties.

471 Thurgoona Street

Set into the hill opposite the Botanic Gardens this house is white plastered of Moderne design built in 1953 for J Wilson. No builder or designer is known.

598 Englehardt Street

Build for S V Sharp, a carpenter from a brickmaking and bricklaying family, its square lines are offset by the portholes and curved concrete eyebrows. S J O'Halloran was the architect, 1950.

624 Wyse Street

This has a rounded parapet with decorative vents above the rounded room. It also has concrete eyebrows, curly pillar and steel framed windows. A 1953 home built by and for J Sautner, S J O'Halloran & Assoc. were the architects.

Walk up Jones, over the foot bridge and just past the bunch of shops, look back at the rear view of 636 Sackville Street.

662 Kiewa Street, corner of Crisp Street

This has a Spanish Mission porch and the rising sun motif in tapestry bricks. Originally painted white, the fence and garage are all part of the design. It was built for the Dynan Family, clothing retailers in 1940 by Les Chick to a design of Percy Polkinghorne, an accountant with a passion for planning houses. Note the waterfall chimney and tapestry brick rising suns. The original fence was in keeping with the house design. Steel pickets have been added in the last ten years.

502 Crisp Street at the end of Olive Street

This house is the first example of the Moderne movement. It has two rounded windows under a parapet with decorative concrete bands and a concrete cantilevered verandah. The front fence matches the house and is an important part of the overall look. The original glass front door has been replaced by the current owners for more privacy.

The interior has a large foyer opening into other rooms through double glass doors etched in this case with a small pattern.

This style of house used to be known as a Mae West. Owner, businessman Clarry Nolan, stipulated clinker or burnt bricks for the house and fences.

Locally designed by Clem Hogan in 1945, built by W Meary.

494 Nathan Avenue, "Karooia"

Although built in 1877, well before Art Deco, this heritage listed house is worth a visit just to enjoy walking up the lane from Crisp Street realising you are walking up the original front drive to the Villa Residence. Gordon and Sheppard, the first architects in Albury designed the house for H A Allen.