

Built Heritage

GUIDE TO ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND TYPOLOGIES

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The purpose of this document is to provide background information, historical context and assistance in understanding the key characteristics of common built heritage architectural typologies within the Wyndham City Local Government Area.

Please note, this guide is not an exhaustive list of all architectural styles/eras that may be of heritage significance within the City of Wyndham. Further, the Exterior Characteristics provided are general and do not include all architectural elements that may contribute to a heritage place's significance or representativeness.

Victorian/Edwardian (1840s-1910s)

Mid-Late Victorian



(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)



(Image Source: RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants)

The Victorian period was a transformative phase in the development of modern Australia. Within a single generation, the continent was reshaped from a minor outpost on the far edge of the British Empire into a major element of the wider imperial economy.

During this time, Victorian architecture across the British Empire represented confidence, material progress, prosperity, and the idea of survival of the fittest. These concepts were intertwined with themes of morality and respectability. There were two main architectural styles during this era: the Classical stream, which replaced earlier Georgian designs with high renaissance and mannerism; and the Romantic stream, which embraced Gothic revival architecture.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the gold rushes brought a rapid increase in population and introduced free immigrants, effectively changing the image of Australia from its transportation-era perception. The rising population and wealth led to a greater demand for more elaborate styles of residential architecture. The demand was met by the development of Victorian filigree and Boom-style architecture. These designs heavily utilised cast-iron elements and aimed to showcase the success and luxury of the homeowners of the public. The intricate lace-like detailing on these Victorian houses has since become recognised as distinctly Australian.

As a result, between the 1870s and 1890s, numerous ornate terrace and single-storey houses, adorned with filigree, were constructed by speculative builders in the growing cities of towns, including the early town of Wyndham.

Exterior Characteristics:

- Rectangular frontages and plan form.
- Cast iron lace to verandahs and balustrades.
- Often double-fronted with large double hung windows.
- Heavy panelled front doors with side lights.
- Typically constructed of weatherboard or brick with earlier examples featuring bluestone or sandstone.

Edwardian 'Federation' Houses



(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)

Edwardian or 'Federation'-style is a term referring to a particular period of housing in Australia between 1890-1920. The collection of styles symbolise a distinctly Australian 'search' for a national architecture, against the backdrop of the Commonwealth's Federation in 1901.

While comparable to the preceding Victorian style, a new generation of Australian architects sought a more relaxed and 'romantic' design ethos that focused on showcasing natural materials in a genuine way. Through rejecting the stuccoed walls and galvanised iron of the Victorian period, these Australian architects sought inspiration from England and America to explore new directions in architecture.

In England, they encountered a debate between the 'Arts & Crafts' and 'Queen Anne' styles, while in America, they were influenced by the emerging 'Shingle' style prevalent on the American East Coast. The resulting 'Federation' architecture incorporated all three of these styles, reflecting a fusion of influences from various design movements.

As a representation of Australia's emerging national identity, Edwardian houses were predominantly ornate timber buildings adorned with decorative elements such as Australian flora, kangaroos and emus. In instances where these houses lacked overt national symbols, their architectural design would often convey a sense of Australian national sentiment through other stylistic means.

Exterior Characteristics:

- May incorporate characteristics of Queen Anne, Arts & Crafts or Shingle styles.
- Typically built of weatherboard (sometimes incised to look like brick) or red earthen brick with galvanised wooden fretwork/ornate timber brackets.
- One or two wings project from the front of the house to the side.
- Bull-nosed verandah roofs are common.
- Lead-light glass windows and L-shaped verandahs are also common.

Interwar Bungalows (1920s-1940s)

Arts & Crafts/California Bungalows



'Federation' bungalow



'Arts & Crafts' bungalow

(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)

The concept of the bungalow originated in India and other British colonies, as a 'refuge' from challenging jungle environments. This design and concept later made its way to Britain, where the Industrial Revolution had given rise to a new middle class. With newfound wealth that allowed for some luxury spending, the early Indian or 'British' bungalow fulfilled the needs of a new British middle class who sought simple, affordable seaside getaways.

The evolution of the bungalow house in Australia was twofold. In the first instance, 'British' or colonial bungalow designs began to arrive in Australia from 1908 onwards. These early 'Federation' bungalows were largely inspired by the new nationalism of the Federation era and other earlier colonial precedents in other British dominions. Their construction cost was also cheaper when compared to other Edwardian homes.

A modified North American version of the original British colonial-inspired bungalow also emerged in the suburbs of Los Angeles before World War I. The 'Californian Bungalow', incorporated distinctive features now associated with the style, including sleep-outs, pergolas and breezeways, along with the low-pitched roofs and overhanging eaves of traditional British and 'Federation'-era bungalows. The widespread use of the design in the United States and perceived commonalities between Australian and Californian culture led to a high level of popularity in Australia from World War I to the Great Depression. Not only was the inherent charm of the California Bungalow acknowledged, but the cost-effective use of materials helped address severe housing shortages. By the time of the Great Crash in 1929, the California Bungalow surpassed the former 'Federation' Bungalow by sheer weight of numbers.

In the Wyndham region, other styles of interwar bungalows, such as Arts & Crafts bungalows, are also visible (pictured left).

Exterior Characteristics:

- Low-pitch roofs (predominantly gabled) with wide overhanging eaves and barges.
- Deep front verandah.
- Verandah roofs supported by large pylons, sometimes with squat colonettes or grouped timber posts.
- One projecting bay with a gabled roof.

Spanish Mission Revival



The interwar period also saw the growth of Spanish Mission Revival architecture in Australia. The style drew inspiration from the southern states of the United States which had inherited a distinct architectural legacy from the era of Spanish colonisation. These buildings combined elements of the Spanish baroque style with a strong, simple appearance, reflecting the use of local materials and unskilled labour.

Between the 1880s and 1920s, the somewhat deteriorating Spanish mission buildings were romanticised, associated with a glamourised past by American architects, and popularised by Hollywood.

Australia's interest in Californian culture and Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s influenced Australian architects and homebuilders to adopt and modify the style to suit the Australian context while designing homes throughout the interwar period.

Exterior Characteristics:

- Stuccoed exterior wall surfaces with simulated handcrafted textures.
- Triple arched 'loggia', or exterior galley, to the front.
- Geometric red brick patterning.



(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)

Post-war (1950s-1970s)

Post-war Project Housing



After the end of World War II, favourable economic and social conditions led to almost full employment and a significant rise in home ownership. This resulted in a high demand for housing and construction.

The housing styles of the Post-war era emerged during a period of increasing prosperity and a societal focus on family and home life. However, due to a lack of skilled labour, equipment, and materials following the war, homes were often mass-produced by speculative housing-building companies.

The origin of this form of project housing can be traced to the Small Homes Service. Established by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1947, the Small Homes Service (SHS) provided prospective homeowners with plans and specifications for two- or three-bedroom houses in brick veneer or timber for £5. Following the success of the SHS, a variety of housing companies emerged offering distinct designs.

Designed for families, Post-war homes were typically larger than earlier styles and featured interconnecting rooms, laying the foundation for open plan living. These homes were typically single-storey, had a triple-fronted design, and were clad in cream, light red, or brown wire-cut brick veneer. Additionally, as personal vehicle ownership increased, many homes began to include garages.

Exterior Characteristics:

- Typically triple-fronted with a staggered façade.
- Exteriors clad in timber or brick veneer, most commonly in 'cream brick', light red or brown.
- May incorporate elements of the 'waterfall' Art Deco style.
- Medium pitched roofs with concrete tiles used towards the end of the style in the late 1960s.
- Minimal use of decorative features.
- Some examples include the incorporation of a garage.



(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)

Mid-century modern



(Image Source: Lovell Chen Pty Ltd)

Modernist architecture emerged in the early twentieth century as a departure from historical architectural styles, prioritising functionality and simplicity. The movement emphasised buildings being purposeful in design, embracing minimalism, and rejecting excessive ornamentation. Styles such as Art Deco, Art Nouveau, and Bauhaus were early examples of Modernist architecture.

'Mid-century modern' initially developed in the United States as a post-war interpretation of Modernism. This variant of Modernism aimed for informality and simplicity, making it suitable for residential suburbs. The style aimed to 'bring the outdoors in' through using 'walls of glass' and accommodated the needs of the average family through open floor plans.

In Melbourne, the concept of a regional interpretation of Modernist architecture first surfaced in Robin Boyd's *Victorian Modern*. Melbourne Regional Modernism aimed to create an architectural language to reflect the modern environment that was understandable to the average person. The style aimed to provide south-eastern Australia with a homegrown form of modern architecture that contrasted with the imposing presence of heavily ornamented Victorian-era buildings. In response, Melbourne's modernist architecture aimed for simplicity, brightness, and unpretentious elegance.

Exterior Characteristics:

- Low-pitch gabled or flat roofs.
- Widely projecting eaves.
- Long, unbroken roof lines.
- Large areas of glass with regularly spaced steel or timber mullions.
- Rectangular or curved building forms.
- Minimal use of decorative features.

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