

**Talk for Sydney Architecture Festival
Held at the Stanton Library on 27th October 2011 at 1pm**

E. Jeaffreson Jackson, Architect 1884-1908

By Ian Stapleton*

Good afternoon everyone. I am honoured to have been asked to give this brief talk on the place of Jeaffreson Jackson in Australian late Victorian and Edwardian architecture. It's great to see the Stanton Library and North Sydney Council organising events that promote architecture and the heritage places in the Municipality.

Distilling the contribution an architect makes is a challenge, as it involves an understanding of both the architect's output and the context – the work of other architects at the time – this is really the stuff of architectural history. It is one thing to know the projects and the dates, it is another to understand the motivations, the influences and the interactions.

For the late Victorian and Edwardian Sydney architect, Edward Jeaffreson Jackson, we are fortunate to have a thesis by William Tulloch¹, completed in 1982 and generally the work of Anne Higham at the Institute of Architects for information on other architects of the period. Another, frequently underutilised, source is of course looking at the buildings themselves (once they have been identified) which I do by habit.

Born in 1862, trained in London, Jackson arrived in Sydney in 1884 and worked here until 1908 making a 24 year contribution to Sydney's architecture.

¹ Tulloch, W.P., *Edward Jeaffreson Jackson*, undergraduate thesis, 1982, held at Stanton Library, North Sydney. Tulloch dates most of the buildings at the newspaper tender notice.

On arrival he was one of three architects (then called draughtsmen), working on the new medical school, now Anderson Stuart Building, at the University of Sydney **(Slide)**.

It was a boom period and in 1885 Jackson started private practice with J.S. Edwards in Bond Street, Sydney, a practice which lasted until 1888. The firm's early work included domestic work: *Kialora*, Northwood (1886); *Minimbah*, Longueville (1887); semis for William Allen, Bondi Junction (1887); commercial work of note was the London Chartered Bank, Newcastle (1888) **(Slide)** and Bank of NSW, Ryde (1887) **(Slide)**.

Jackson practised alone between 1889 to 1892 with a brief partnership with H.E. Wardell in 1890. Commissions included his own house *Hannev*, North Sydney (1891); Lark, Sons & Co. warehouse at Wynyard (1891) **(Slide)** and *Hollowforth*, Neutral Bay (1892) **(Slide)**.

From 1893 to 1897 Australia suffered an economic recession and no work by Jackson is known.

Work picked up again about 1898 and from then until 1902 Jackson worked alone from Jersey Chambers in George Street.

Early work after the recession included St Thomas's Rectory, North Sydney (1898) **(Slide)**; *Clissold*, Mosman (1898) **(Slide)**; *St Anne's*, Bondi Junction (1899) **(Slide)**; *Chalet Fontenelle*, Wentworth Falls (about 1899) **(Slide)**.

At the turn of the century, Jackson enjoyed a good domestic practice producing *Tregoyd*, Mosman (1900) **(Slide)**; *Elderbridge*, Wahroonga (1901) **(Slide)**; Memorial Hall, Shore

School, North Sydney (1902) **(Slide)**; 26 Mistral Avenue, Mosman (1901)**(Slide)**; *Isla*, Neutral Bay (1902) (with James Peddle) **(Slide)**; and other houses, mainly in North Sydney, most of which have been demolished **(Slide)**.

Between 1902 and 1908 Jackson rejoined the New South Wales Government Architects Branch lead by Walter Liberty Vernon. His two known major works are the Central Administrative Block (and wings) at Long Bay Gaol **(Slide)** and the new commercial building for Sydney University in Martin Place: Challis House (now greatly altered) **(Slide)**.

He had made a 6 month trip to England in the second half of 1900 and this may have lead to a notable private commission about 1902², the Capper house in North Sydney **(Slide)**, now incorporated into North Sydney Council Chambers.

In assessing Jackson's contribution, let's look firstly at the progression of styles over the period. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, common architecture was experiencing what we call the Boom Style, a very eclectic amalgamation of Italianate, Queen Anne and French styles. More disciplined architects were producing in the Queen Anne Revival style **(Slide)**, although for a country house, diverse styles such as Jacobethan or Scottish Baronial might be used³.

This eclecticism evaporated by 1900 into what we now know as the Federation style, most purely a bungalow with projecting turrets and gables and turned timber decoration **(Slide)**.

² Tulloch puts Capper house at c.1892 but Capper did not emigrate to Australia until c.1902

³ See Stapleton, M.A. and I.S., *Australian House Styles*, Flannel Flower Press, 1997

However, more educated architects were moving to an Arts & Crafts style, called at the time “Picturesque” via a gabled, half-timbered style that Harriet Edquist has called Old English⁴.

Jackson’s sojourn in Australia was not unusual. Many architects, including John Sulman, James Peddle, Howard Joseland and Walter Vernon came to Australia in the 1880s, some for their health and some, probably, to partake in the action created by Australia’s booming economy.

Whilst we can detect a general stylistic evolution in architecture, most architects bring with them individuality, none more than the great Victorian architect Horbury Hunt. Here is his advanced ‘Picturesque’ work c. 1890 (Slide)⁵.

Looking at the London Chartered Bank and the Ryde Bank of New South Wales (c. 1890), Jackson seems up to date but not ahead of his time. The London Chartered Bank is Queen Anne Revival with a touch of Boom Style (Slide). The Ryde Bank’s tower also seems more than a trifle eclectic (Slide).

Hollowforth (1892) is Jackson’s best known building, and although altered, still displays a wonderful and inventive eclecticism with its tower and turret Boom Style elements (Slide). Compare it with this contemporary English house (1891) I scanned from *Country Life* (Slide). The *Hollowforth* planned form is quite ordinary. But nevertheless the exuberance of its elevation with its amazing shingle work indicates a considerable talent (Slide).

⁴ Edquist, H. *Pioneers of Modernism*, The Miegunyah Press, 2008, pp. 21-24

⁵ See Highland and Spurling house in Reynolds, P., et al., *John Horbury Huhnt*, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2002

At *Chalet Fontenelle* (c. 1899), perhaps because of its country retreat/hunting lodge character, Jackson has picked up on the Old English **(Slide)**. Compare it with James Peddle's *The Meadows* at Killara (1906) **(Slide)** and John Sulman's own house *Ingleholme* at Turramurra (1896) **(Slide)**.

For this day, a picture of Jackson's own house *Hanney* (1891) in North Sydney has come to light **(Slide)**⁶. We can see here strong brickwork *a la* Sulman and Hunt and a rather awkward turret *a la* Boom style, but note also on the side elevation a large singled gable, an Arts & Crafts element reminiscent of Hunt.

There was in the mid-1890s a growing and collective interest in the Arts and Crafts style, evidenced in the work of the new Sydney Architectural Association and the 1892 Arts & Crafts Exhibition it organised and the establishment in Melbourne of the journal *Arts & Crafts* in 1895, all documented by Edquist in her book about the Arts & Crafts movement in Australia.⁷

Interest in the Arts & Crafts no doubt was assisted by the 1890s recession. When architects have no work, they tend to travel and study, trawling for new ideas.

The Arts & Crafts philosophy of design was a reaction to Victorian period industrialised production favouring hand crafting and often idealising vernacular construction and the medieval period.

⁶ Supplied by great grandson Michael Brothers via Stanton Library, North Sydney, October 2011
⁷ Edquist, loc. cit. pp. 28-31

By 1900, Jackson may well have been ahead of many other architects in promoting the Arts and Crafts. His St Thomas's Rectory (1898), although small, seems ahead of its time with its large shingle gabled roof wrapping over the first floor bedrooms **(Slide)**. *Clissold*, Mosman (also 1898) is similarly accomplished **(Slide)** and the Gullett house *Elderbridge* at Wahroonga (1901) has clearly thrown out the two levelled verandahed Victorian house form for a sweeping gabled bungalow form, reminiscent of Hunt **(Slide)**.

J.M. Freeland, in his seminal *History of Architecture in Australia* (1968), in fact, credits Jackson as the first to introduce (actually reintroduce) the bungalow architectural form to Australia⁸. By bungalow, I think he means single and two storey buildings composed under a large single, and shingled, spreading roof.

Freeland cites *Tregoyd*, Mosman (1900) as the ground breaking work **(Slide)**. At first glance *Tregoyd* is rather like *Wychwood* (also 1900) at Glebe **(Slide)**, which you can see from the street – a largish cottage. However, other illustrations seem to confirm Freeland's ambitious claim **(Slide)**.

Edquist puts Jackson down as one of the first wave of Arts & Crafts architects in Australia including George Sydney Jones and Alan C. Walker (who practised in Melbourne)⁹.

Let's look now in a little more detail at *Clissold* of which I have some good photos **(Slide)**.

In 1908, Jackson puts himself down as introducing the French aka Marseilles tile to Australia¹⁰. He means here the shaped and interlocking tile rather than the terracotta shingle

⁸ Freeland, J.M., *Architecture in Australia*, F.W. Cheshire, 1968, p. 227

⁹ Edquist, loc. cit., pp. 24-27

(Slide). He regretted that rash act, as it had spread over Australia like “scarlet fever”, akin to a rabbit plague (Slide). It seems unlikely he would have made this claim, when there were many about who could have challenged it, if it were not true. “I find the stereotyped tile too large in scale for the modern type of bungalow” he wrote “and smaller tiles not being quite satisfactory” (presumably because of their weight and labour cost) “there is nothing left but to fall back on shingles which make a cool roof, and with their silver-grey appearance and tone much better with the Australian landscape than anything I know.”¹¹

Well, if this is true, it is a legacy indeed. Freeland puts the introduction of French tiles first in the early 1890s, so it could well be true.¹²

Another perspective on the place of Jackson is John Barlow’s article in *Our Quarterly Magazine* of February 1903, which is illustrated by the works of Howard Joseland, Sulman and Power, J.A. Kethel, William Wardell, Maurice Halligan, George Pitt, G. Sydney Jones, himself, amongst others.¹³ Clearly at that time he was a leader in the profession.

Both Jackson and Barlow record that Edwardian architecture in Sydney was very American, without saying precisely what they meant. I think it was probably the profusion of fretted, slatted and turned timberwork which is decidedly missing from their work.

Jackson’s influence in the Government Architect’s work may also have been high.

¹⁰ Jackson, E.J., *Building Magazine*, 18 Feb. 1908, pp. 38-40

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Freeland, loc. cit., p. 202

¹³ Barlow, J., “Domesstic Architecture in NSW”, in *Our Quarterly Magazine*, Feb 1903, pp. 37-42

His return there may have been due to the huge volume of work available in Edwardian New South Wales, a great incentive to an architect who wants to build **(Slide)**. An idea of this is given by Tulloch's research into what Vernon's office was doing. In 1906 for instance, work included Central Railway Station (draftsmen Blair and Robinson); Police Barracks, Redfern (F.G. Castleton); Rose Bay Public School (E. Tournay-Hinde); Tweed Heads Post Office (Robert Coulter); additions to Belmore North School (Albert Sparke); Mosman Public School (John Tristram); Brewarrina Mission Station (Howard Crane); 32 houses in Windmill Street (William Foggett); Kurri Kurri Post Office (John Tait); Challis House (Mr Edward Jeaffreson Jackson); Crows Nest Fire Station (John Barr); Hamilton Police Station (Mr Searl); Rifle Ranges (Victor Wilshire).¹⁴

In 1906, no less than 3,257 plans and 1,308 specifications emanated from Vernon's office.¹⁵

Challis House and Long Bay Gaol appear to be amongst the largest commissions, possibly relating to Jackson's experience. Such work was rather unique and of limited influence.

However, looking at the Government Architect's work, who knows what Jackson had a hand in. Look for instance at this Post Office using his characteristic chimney design motif **(Slide)**.¹⁶ And one is immediately struck by the similarities between a group of a dozen or so fire stations produced in the period 1905 to 1908, with their rough cast gables, and the Capper House in North Sydney **(Slide)**.¹⁷

¹⁴ Tulloch, loc. cit., p. 283

¹⁵ Tulloch, loc. cit., p. 285

¹⁶ Post Office, Bondi Road, Bondi, photo from Tulloch, op. cit.

¹⁷ Fire Stations including Drummoyne (1909), Botany (c. 1905), Glebe (c. 1905), Leichhardt (1906), Woollahra (1906).

Jackson's influence in local architecture magazines is a little clearer. In 1905 and 1915 articles appeared using B.J. Waterhouse's sketches of *Hollowforth*, the Rectory, Capper House and other unidentified Jackson buildings **(Slide)**.¹⁸

It is of note Florence Taylor included Jackson's signature chimney design in her insightful sketch in building magazine in 1915 **(Slide)**.¹⁹

How much later Sydney Arts & Crafts architects were influenced by Jackson and how much they were influenced by local and overseas magazines is hard to say, but in the period 1909 to 1920 there was certainly a great flowering of Arts & Crafts style buildings in the mode of the Gullett house in Wahroonga.

Major proponents were in fact B.J. Waterhouse himself (mainly on the North Shore) **(Slide)**, Maurice Halligan (in the Eastern Suburbs and inner West) **(Slide)** and Edwin Orchard (mainly around Clifton Gardens) **(Slide)**.

And by about 1910 an Arts & Crafts flavour had taken over from Federation in builder's cottage work, illustrated by these two sketches from my styles book **(Slides)**.²⁰

A larger illustration in the book summarises the typical components of the style c. 1910 **(Slide)**.

¹⁸ *The Salon*, 1915, pp. 282-83; *Architecture*, Dec. 1920, p. 177; *Art & Architecture*, March-April, 1905, p.86 all quoted in Phillips, J., "Hollowforth", in *Fabrications*, June 1993, p. 26

¹⁹ *Building Magazine*, 12 Nov. 1915, p. 64a

²⁰ Stapleton, loc. cit., p. 56 and p. 61

From about 1920 onwards, the bungalow in the style imported from California finally displaced the style.

I am indebted to Ian Hoskins from Stanton Library, Mark Turnbull from my own office and William Tulloch, without whose contributions this talk would not have been possible.

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27th October 2011

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