



ADVERTORIAL

The Protected Tax Status of the Home – A Misguided Concession?

Introduction

A review of the Explanatory Memorandum to the 1986 bill introducing, with effect from 20 September 1985, capital gains tax on most things, devotes little more than a page out of 160 pages to the exemption of the home from such a tax and says nothing as to why the exemption exists¹.

A review of different capital gains tax regimes around the world reveals that most exempt the family home, but usually with demanding residence requirements and/or repurchase requirements. Commonwealth countries such as the U.K., Canada and Australia have the most generous exemptions, although notably New Zealand has no capital gain tax at all². The largest economy in the world, the United States, provides no family home capital gains tax exemption³. South Africa, with one of the most recently enacted capital gains tax regimes, exposes family homes to capital gains tax where values exceed 2 million rand⁴.

So, on the face of it at least, there does not appear to be any particular rhyme or reason to the capital gains tax regimes applied around the world other than in general such regimes being a response to a deterioration of revenue receipts and perceived egregious income tax avoidance where no such regime existed, such as in the U.K. shortly after World War II⁵.

A Brief Consideration of a Comprehensive Model of Property Taxation

The application of full capital gains tax on the family home could only equitably take place in the context of a comprehensive income tax regime⁶. This means that in addition to the broadening of the capital gains tax regime, an income tax deduction would need to be allowed for mortgage interest and all holding costs and the value of imputed rent would need to be included in assessable income. Interestingly enough, Australia actually had a system of imputed rent between 1915 and 1923, assessing the value of the imputed rent at 5% of the capital cost of the property⁷.

Whilst the inclusion of imputed rent in a property owner's assessable income whilst allowing the deduction of holding costs and fully taxing capital gains (whilst allowing an adjustment for the loss of purchasing power over time) would theoretically achieve neutrality between owners and renters and as to the tenure of property ownership, thus offering an equitable solution to housing affordability in particular and the allocation of scarce resources to housing more generally, the report cited above found that in practice it is difficult to accurately tax imputed rent over time.

That is, whilst a fairly accurate measurement may be made initially, the capture of value becomes less and less accurate over time, and this also affects the fairness of any allowance of deduction for holding costs

as these costs tended to be related to the capital value of the property.

So, aside from any political difficulty in implementing a comprehensive taxation solution, it seems that the present quality of data relating to property values, income and costs is not sufficiently accurate and/or reliable to base a taxation regime on it.

Perhaps an effort should be made to improve the quality of such data. It is interesting to note that the UK is conducting research into imputed rent⁸, and that South Africa has effectively implemented a capital gains tax regime along the lines of what the Australia Institute advocated earlier this year⁹.

Whilst relating to capital gains tax generally rather than housing in particular, one thing that the report cited below was able to gain clear evidence on was that the post 1999 scrapping of indexation and introduction of the general discount moved the capital gains tax regime further away from a true accrual system of capital taxation and thus increased the distortion of taxation of income versus capital generally.

Conclusions

One might draw a number of conclusions from the above discussion, namely:-

1. the home maintains a privileged tax status amongst most taxation regimes internationally and Australia's regime is perhaps only marginally generous in that regard;
2. any change in the status quo is politically difficult not least because historical empirical data indicates that theoretically superior taxation treatments do not work well in practice and become progressively less equitable over time;
3. lack of quality data makes revenue projections inherently inaccurate and thus equity measures largely unpredictable as to effect; and
4. lack of modelling means behavioural responses to changes are not well understood.

Given the above, and given that the residential property market at approximately \$6 trillion is one of the most significant markets within the Australian economy and is the source of significant taxation revenue for Federal, State and local governments, it would seem prudent to embark on a fundamental review of the system as an extension and update of the 2009 study and with a truly international focus so that we may arrive at a comprehensive property taxation system governed not by political accident but rather rigorous and objectively based design.

1 Income Tax Assessment Amendment (Capital Gains) Bill 1986 – Explanatory Memorandum

2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_gains_tax

3 Ibid.

4 ABC of Capital Gains Tax for Individuals (Issue 8) – South African Revenue Service 15 April 2015

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_gains_tax

6 Housing Taxation and Transfers: Final Report- Research Study for the Review of Australia's Future Tax System

– 8 December 2009

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 <http://www.news.com.au/finance/economy/the-australia-institute-wants-the-rich-to-pay-capital-gains-tax-on-their-family-homes-to-help-the-federal-budget/news-story/01e75027a6f4d4fe838e063f8a6c6b9>

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DYMOND FOULDS & VAUGHAN

Suite 5, 1st Floor, 200 Victoria Road, Drummoyne NSW 2047

T: (02) 9181 4747 F: (02) 9819 7823 john@dfv.net. dfv.net.au



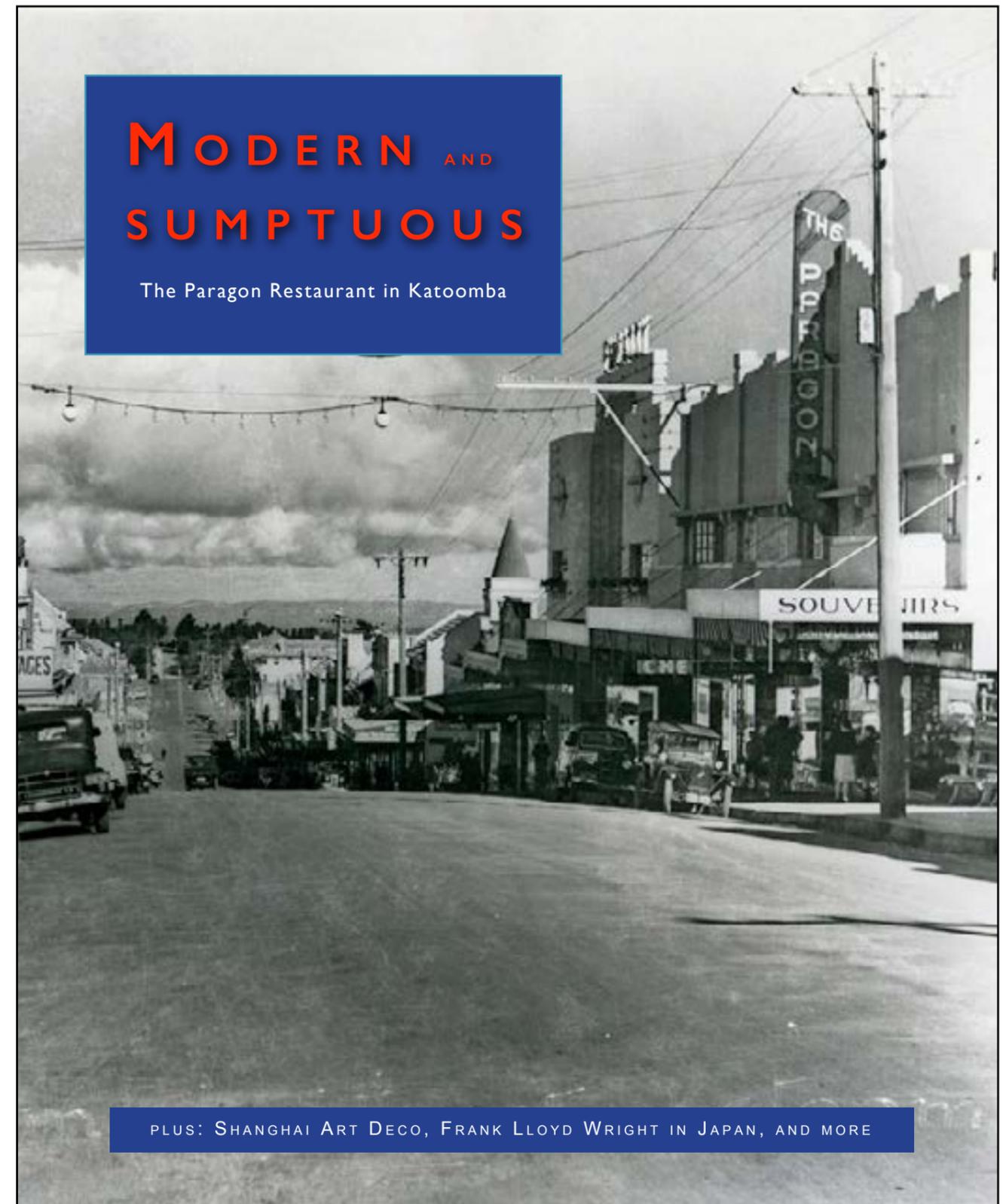
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MODERN AND SUMPTUOUS

The Paragon Restaurant in Katoomba

PLUS: SHANGHAI ART DECO, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT IN JAPAN, AND MORE



FROM THE EDITOR

It is indeed a pleasure to bring you a bumper edition of the News filled with a number of feature articles looking at different issues from around the world.

In particular, we have a report from our 2015 World Congress representatives Gail Conder and Raymond Lane which not only reports on World Congress activities but provides us with a comprehensive discussion of Art Deco architecture and its continuing significance to the built environment in Shanghai. This feature article begins on page 18.

One of the delights of a visit to the Blue Mountains is to experience an evening at the Paragon. I had the pleasure of celebrating a friend's birthday there recently and I was delighted to see that good use is still being made of the dining room and the ballroom – definitely a must see when one is in the area.

Our esteemed president Roy Lumby has prepared a wonderful feature article which provides a detailed history of Katoomba Street generally and the Paragon Café in particular. It is pleasing to know both that the current proprietor Robyn Parker is committed to the property and that she has had success in having it listed in the State Heritage Register. Read all about the Paragon in Roy's feature article at page 10.

For Frank Lloyd Wright fans – and I count myself as one, following my tour of the extraordinary Robie House in June last year (and see my article in the Spring 2015 edition!) – Larisa has produced a fascinating feature article outlining Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Japan and his influence in introducing modern Japan to the world. This insightful essay begins at page 4.

This year has been very busy and whilst the tremendous effort put into submitting a bid for a World Congress in Canberra was sadly unsuccessful, nevertheless this year has started with very successful walks and talks, in particular the recent presentation by Claudia Chan Shaw on the Art Deco style in jewellery and fashion which certainly captured the imagination of all who attended.

Our redoubtable Vice President, David de Rozenker-Apted has set out an impressive schedule of upcoming events for the rest of the year on page 3.

Conservation is one of the important elements of the Society's work and so when a local resident approached the Society seeking assistance in supporting the retention of Bidura Children's Court building in Glebe we quickly became involved. Roy Lumby's letter to the City of Sydney, which has been personally acknowledged by the Lord Mayor and Councillors, is reproduced at page 17.

Your intrepid reporter is known to travel long distances for a quenching ale and so was delighted to make the journey, even in the summer heat, up the hill from Circular Quay to enjoy rest and recreation at the Cumberland Hotel with members and friends of the Society to celebrate at the Society's now famous annual Christmas Party. A tremendous time was had by all who made it and it is an event not to be missed! The complete inside story is revealed here, starting at page 25.

Just a reminder that the Society has embraced technology in organising its events and these are now listed and administered through Eventbrite, a superb web based facility specifically geared to the running of group events like ours.

The website address is www.twentieth.eventbrite.com.au and from this web site you can keep track of all Society events and keep right up to the minute as to the latest developments affecting you as a Society member. You can also book online and pay online for any Society event, thus securing your place for even the most popular of activities. Keep an eye out too for eNews, a snappy one or two page publication which sets out upcoming events over the next few months.

We have been able to provide you with an outstanding bumper 28 page newsletter due to the devoted contributions of a few of you. We encourage contributions of any sort from all of you and on page 27 we explain how to submit text and/or pictures.

We are also happy to have news of upcoming events etc., so please feel free to contact us. The next edition is sure to be something special, so why not be part of it?

John Dymond



FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Sadly this newsletter has taken far too long to bring to the Members however we trust that you will enjoy its contents.

Whilst we do appreciate our commitment to publishing regular newsletters as part of Membership Benefits we have been beset by circumstances beyond our control and the difficulty of encouraging contributors to provide copy.

As a result of our recent Management Committee Meeting special arrangements were put in place to ensure all future issues of The News will be published on a regular basis of at least 3 or 4 each year.

I encourage any Member – who may have decided not to renew because of the lack of the newsletter – to reconsider, and continue your valuable contribution to our Aim & Objectives.

Building on a very successful 2015 events programme of Heritage Walking Tours and Academic Talks, we are offering Members, Friends & Associates many illuminating events, including our signature regional tour during the October Long Week End.

David de Rozenker-Apted



Under Threat: Bidura Children's Court, Glebe – see page 17.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For the latest updates visit twentieth.org.au

On Friday 24th of June we were treated to an impressive talk on "The Art Deco Style" presented by well known multi media personality Claudia Chan Shaw of The Collectors fame and much more. Claudia focused on jewellery, encompassing Bakelite, other plastics and pieces created by Cartier, "definitely not in plastic" but how can one leave them out. The fashion focus crossed over into the look and feel of films of the day.

Please note the following balance of events for 2016. A new programme is in train for 2017 and will be released to you in the coming months so that you can commit the dates to your diary.

Table with 3 columns: Date, Event, Venue. Contains event details for July, August, November, and December.

- NB: 1. After talks we invite all attendees to enjoy a glass of Red, White or Sparkling wine and a light Supper provided by our Catering Sub Committee, meet the Guest Presenter and other Members & Friends. 2. Whilst circumstances have held up the booklets for the past two walks, we will provide Victoria Street & Lavender Bay booklets just as soon as possible. Subsequently, future walks will have the illustrated, full colour walk booklet containing notes on all the buildings discussed, provided to all booked attendees.

AUTUMN 2016

Table listing articles: Designing for creatures great and small – Frank Lloyd Wright in Japan (4), Modern and Sumptuous – The Paragon Restaurant in Katoomba (10), Bidura Children's Court, Glebe (17), World Congress on Art Deco 2015 (18), Christmas Party 2015 (25), Society Information (27).

Cover: The epitome of 1930s Moderne - the Embassy Theatre and Paragon Restaurant, Katoomba. PHOTO: BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY LIBRARY

DESIGNING FOR CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT IN JAPAN

BY LARISA SARKADI



Preserved part of the Imperial Hotel

In October 2015, before attending the International Congress on Art Deco in Shanghai, China, we spent a week in Japan looking at its twentieth century architecture.

It was my second visit to the country, and ancient Japan was truly covered during my first visit. This time we were on the trail of the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright whose work in Japan coincided with the entry of the country into the age of modernity. Besides Tokyo, of course, we visited Nagoya, taking in the must-do bullet train experience on the way.

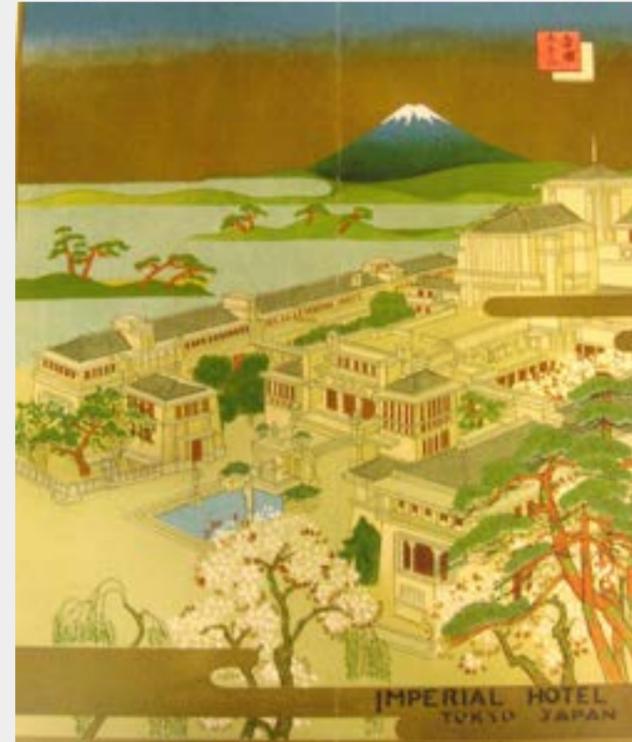
The last quarter of the 19th century marked the end of country's self-imposed isolation and the beginning of modern Japan. Seen for the first time at international exhibitions, Japanese works of art and traditional crafts triggered a new aesthetic wave in the decorative arts of the western world. Japan, on another hand, viewed itself as a backward, technologically inferior country. To speed up the process of modernisation, western scientists and engineers were encouraged to come and work in Japan.

Arguably one of the most important exponents of modern architecture, F L Wright (1867-1959) had a special relationship with this country, having fallen earlier under the spell of its ancient art of woodblock printing on paper. On his first trip to Japan in 1905,

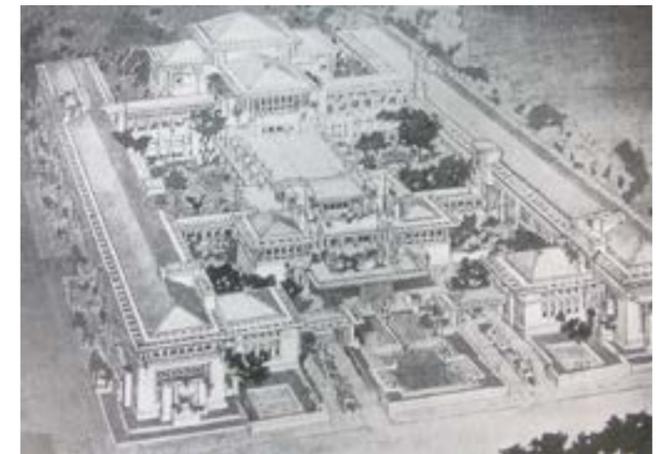
the architect actually travelled to see the country as well as to purchase woodblock prints for his art collection. From then on, both Japanese aesthetics and philosophy influenced Wright's work as well as his writings. In his autobiography he wrote that "modern architecture seemed to have more affinity with Japanese architecture in principle than with any other because of the great honesty of its traditional architecture".

On his second trip in 1913, Wright travelled to Japan to obtain the commission for the design and construction of the new Imperial Hotel to replace the outdated, by the way German-built, old Imperial Hotel in the centre of Tokyo. During this visit he was promised the commission, with the official contract for construction of the hotel awarded in 1916. Margo Stripe writes in her contribution to the monograph devoted to FL Wright's work in *Europe and Beyond* that "the first aerial perspective of the hotel design was exhibited in April 1914 at the Art Institute of Chicago".

This undertaking marked the period of the architect's close association with the country which ended with his final departure in 1922. During this period, Wright designed 14 projects for Japan: 6 were built, with only 2 of them still surviving. Unfortunately, the Imperial Hotel is not one of them, well, not any more. Of



Advertising brochure c1935 in a style of woodblock print (Archival image)



Perspective drawing of the Imperial Hotel c1914 (Archival image)

those that remain, the first one is a former Yamamura private residence constructed in 1918 in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, and presently operating as a Yodoko Guest House. The second one is Jiyu Gakuen Myonichikan - a Christian school for girls, constructed in 1921- 1927 in the Mejiro district of northern Tokyo. The others, mainly private residences for several Japanese politicians and businessmen, have fallen victim to earthquakes and American bombardment during WW II.

The commission for the Imperial Hotel could not have come at a better time for the architect. By 1914 the so-called Prairie School – the rambling, Midwest-born style of architecture that established Wright's professional reputation – had largely lost its following among potential clients and its practitioners in the United States of America. For Wright at that time it was impossible to overestimate the importance and prestige of the Imperial Hotel project. Located just across the park from the Imperial Palace itself, on a prime site in the centre of Tokyo, the complex was to function as a guest house for important state visitors to Japan, including dignitaries and royalty.

The construction project with a seemingly unlimited budget was to be financed by a board consisting of five wealthy entrepreneurs with a substantial stake held by the Imperial household.



Detail of the front entrance



Reception lobby of Imperial Hotel

The largest stakeholder and owner of the site, Baron Kihachiro Okura (1837-1928) of Okura & Co, would become one of the architect's strongest supporters. A self-made man from a peasant background, Okura went on to build one of the largest family-owned financial conglomerates in Japan. With the title of Baron bestowed on him in 1915 for his philanthropic work in the preservation of Japanese art, he was highly respected by the Imperial administration.

The proposed design of the hotel was in the Mayan Revival style, although Wright later denied its being the direct influence. In common with buildings from the Mayan era, the hotel's exterior walls did feature horizontal cornices and richly carved stone blocks. Other elements, such as prominent roof overhangs, were from Wright's "forte" - Prairie School vocabulary. The temple-like monumentality of the structure was to convey assured authority. In common with Prairie style, the concept of the intimate relationship between a building and nature was intended to appeal to the Japanese interpretation of a private habitat. The Imperial Hotel was planned in an approximate shape of a capital "H"; its lobby and public spaces were located along two horizontal bars joining two identical bedroom wings on both sides. The site of the hotel, 500 feet long, occupied a whole city block with extensive gardens created within its grounds, not unlike those found in the administrative and religious complexes of ancient Japan.

Rising to seven storeys in its public areas and to three storeys in its residential wings, the hotel's design, in common with both Mayan and Prairie Styles, had visual emphasis on horizontal lines. Wright used the same materials - brick and local, easily-carved tuff from Oya - for both the exteriors and interiors of the hotel. The architectural team bought a pottery kiln for manufacture of specially-shaped elongated bricks, and an Oya tuff quarry



Interior with furniture designed for Imperial Hotel



China designed for Imperial Hotel

near Nikko, north of Tokyo, to ensure supply of stone blocks.

Wright's vision for the Imperial Hotel called for an extremely labour-intensive task with nearly every block of Oya tuff to be carved into various shapes and patterns. All visible structural elements were fashioned out of that greyish, mottled stone: base of walls, column buttresses, staircases, fireplaces, rails of balconies and ornamental urns.

Wright lived for over three years in Japan during the construction period which commenced in 1919. The architectural team for most of the time included only two foreigners: one was the architect himself and another was an expert builder from Chicago, the rest were all locals. Among the latter were about eighteen architectural students from various Japanese universities, several of them trained in Wright's studio in Wisconsin USA during the plan-drawing period, and more than a hundred stone carvers. Including labourers, the number of men working on the four year-long project would reach six hundred.

As well as its almost two hundred and forty-five guest rooms, the hotel plan included a main lobby, dining room, five hundred seat auditorium, banquet hall and cabaret. As well as the structure,



Taking tea on the terrace in 1930s (Archival image)

Dining room of Imperial Hotel (Archival image)





Main building of the Myonichikan



Classroom

Wright was given the freedom to design the internal fixtures and furnishings of the Imperial Hotel. The latter included wall murals, almost fifty designs for 1200 carpets in total, silver cutlery and two patterns for the hotel's china. The total cost of construction of the hotel on completion was US\$ 3 million - an exorbitant amount at the time.

The Imperial Hotel was to be erected in an area of constant seismic activity. To combat the ever-present threat of earthquakes, Wright came up with a revolutionary design to split the foundations into sections and float them on concrete piles driven into the soft mud below. "Why fight the quake? Why not sympathise with it and out-wit it?" he later wrote. The whole building had a low centre of gravity, with the concrete core of its brick-faced walls tapering towards the top. Light-weight copper was used for roof cladding instead of heavy ceramic tiles. All carved ornaments were made integral to the structural elements of the building. To further protect the building from damage during a quake, all its plumbing and wiring was laid in covered trenches within the hotel's basement. A long reflecting pool in front of the main entrance and smaller pools elsewhere within the hotel's gardens were to provide water in case of fires caused by an earthquake. Wright departed Japan in the summer of 1922 leaving his assis-

tant and the project's young Japanese draftsman from the Wisconsin period, Arata Endo (1889-1951), to complete the second residential wing of the hotel. On the day of the official opening of the Imperial Hotel, just before noon on 1st September 1923, all those safety measures were put to the test as Tokyo was struck by the worst earthquake in its history – the Great Kanto quake. Amid the chaos of devastation, with 70% of buildings in Tokyo destroyed by the quake and ensuing fires, the Imperial Hotel stood barely damaged. As the violent shocks ruptured the town water supply, hotel boys formed a line passing buckets of water fetched from its pools to keep flames away from timber window frames. Immediately after the earthquake the Imperial Hotel provided accommodation for hundreds of families who were left homeless. For Wright the fact that his hotel withstood the quake was a matter of great pride in later years, as well as some justification of its extraordinary construction costs.

The Imperial Hotel, the first modern hotel in Japan, was a national symbol and the centre of the social life of its capital for the next forty-five years. For residents of Tokyo, the hotel's tranquil atmosphere was an island of respite within their hectic city. By all contemporary accounts, the Imperial Hotel was the most intriguing building, delighting its visitors with an exquisite variety of visual experiences. It was a great loss to Japan's cultural heritage when the owners of the hotel made the decision to close it in 1967. Amid numerous angry protests, the building was demolished in 1968. It was replaced by a generic high-rise with a few Wright-style ornaments decorating its public spaces.

The pressure of rising land values in the centre of Tokyo was only one of many reasons for its demise. The only preserved parts of Wright's Imperial Hotel – the main reception lobby with its porte cochere and the reflecting pool in front of it - were moved to Meiji Mura, an outdoor architectural museum north of Nagoya. On our visit there, my personal overall impression of the hotel's interior was that of an exquisitely formed cave.

The exorbitant building costs of the Imperial Hotel were in stark contrast to the modest funds available for the construction of Jiyu Gakuen Myonichikan, with Wright, uncharacteristically for him, working on the school project within the given budget.



Exterior detail of the Myonichikan



Light fittings in the Myonichikan's dining hall

Jiyu Gakuen Myonichikan, the "House of Tomorrow" was built as a junior/senior school for girls. Construction of the school complex commenced in 1921, with the last stages being finished after the architect's departure and under the supervision of the same Wright collaborator from the Imperial Hotel team, Arata Endo. It was commissioned by Yoshikazu and Motoko Hani who were friends of Endo. The sprawling plan, low-pitched roof and striking geometry of window frames of the school's building had a lot in common with Wright's Prairie style houses. Generously appointed interiors featured timber beams, purpose-designed light fittings and scaled-to-children-size furniture. The school's design included an assembly hall, a dining hall, five classrooms and a library. Wall bases of the school's buildings, as well as fireplaces and ornaments, were all carved from the same Oya stone. The roof of the complex was covered by a copper cladding. Myonichikan, too, survived the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the American bombing of Tokyo during WWII.

Myonichikan is no longer a working school, after enrolments exceeded the space capacity and the teaching campus was relocated elsewhere in 1934. In 1997 the original Myonichikan complex was designated the status of an Important Cultural Property

Myonichikan students and staff with Wright c1921 (Archival image)



Window in the main hall of Myonichikan

and restored during 1999-2001. At present the building is open to the public as a museum and used mainly for alumni activities. It also stages programs of lectures and is available for seminars, concerts and other functions.

The Imperial Hotel and Jiyu Gakuen Myonichikan projects perfectly book-end the Japanese period of Wright's career. F L Wright's legacy in Japan influenced generations of its young architects, but the overall impact of his work was limited. His designs, the majority of them on an individual, human scale, could not meet the needs of this land-starved country. The only solutions for Japan's future development lay in urban growth and increased density of habitat within its coastal cities.

Unless stated otherwise, all photographs are by Larisa Sarkadi. Archival images courtesy of publications as follows: **References and Sources:** Alofsin, A (ed). *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California. 1999; James, C. *The Imperial Hotel: Frank Lloyd Wright and the architecture of unity*. Charles Tuttle Co Inc, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan. 1968; Lind, C. *Frank Lloyd Wright's furnishings*. Pomegranate Artbooks, San Francisco, 1995; Pfeiffer, B B. *Frank Lloyd Wright, 1917-1942: the complete works*. Taschen, Kolin, 2010; Sennott, R S (ed). *Encyclopedia of 20th century architecture*. Taylor & Francis Books Inc, New York, NY, 2004; Stewart, D B. *The making of modern Japanese architecture: 1868 to the present*. Kodansha International, Tokyo and New York, 1987; wrightinJapan.org

MODERN AND SUMPTUOUS

BY ROY LUMBY



Portion of a Rose Series postcard of Katoomba Street showing the block of buildings at 63-69 Katoomba Street, circa 1918. The Paragon is second from the right.

The Paragon Restaurant in Katoomba holds a special place in the minds of so many people. Its contribution to the rich heritage of the Blue Mountains and the state was at last recognised when it was included in the Heritage Council of NSW's State Heritage Register in March 2015, thus acknowledging the great aesthetic, historical, technical and social significance that is embodied in this much loved institution. The Paragon mirrors the important social history of Katoomba and the Blue Mountains during the first half of the twentieth century while also reflecting the invaluable contributions made to NSW by migrants. 2016 is the Paragon's centenary year.

The Blue Mountains area came into its stride as a popular tourist resort during the first decade of the twentieth century, reaching a peak during the 1920s. The site of the Paragon, however, has a longer history. It was originally part of land granted to James Henry Neale on 10 October 1877 under the provisions of the Volunteer Forces Act of 1867. Neale was a master butcher and politician - a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1864 until 1874 (representing Hartley from 1869 to 1872, East Sydney before and after) and a member of the Legislative Council from 1883 until 1890. Neale's acquisition was both speculative and personal, for he built a country house known as "Froma" on part of the land. However, in 1881 he began selling off his land and over a period of five years it was all purchased by Ashfield alderman and wool merchant Frederick Clissold.¹ Not that he

owned it for very long. Clissold proceeded to put the property on the market and after a couple of transactions, three lots on Katoomba Street were sold to Sydney contractors Henry and Edwin Phippard at the beginning of 1899.² In 1909 a man by the name of William Newlind constructed four shops on part of the land acquired by the Phippards.³

As for Froma, Clissold sold it to Sydney merchant Michael Metcalfe in 1883. He and his family used the house as a summer residence until 1911. The house was then resumed by the Department of Public Instruction, which initially thought it might be suitable for a teacher's residence, but it was demolished in late 1912 or 1913 to make way for a new school building.⁴

In the middle of 1909, Newlind's shops and a right of way were sold to John Frazer Sydney Russell, rector of St Hilda's Anglican Church, which is situated on the other side of Katoomba Street.⁵ One of the shops became tea rooms. The shop's lease was taken over in 1916 by a young man by the name of Zacharias Simos.

Zacharias Theodore (Jack) Simos was born on 15 August 1897 at Kousounari on Kythera, a Greek island lying opposite the south-eastern tip of the Peloponnese peninsula. He was the eldest of four children of farmer and cooper Theodore Zachariou Simos and his wife Areanthe. In 1912 Zacharias migrated to Sydney with several other Kytheran youths, disembarking on

² LTO Volume 1268 Folio 175.

³ Ian Jack, "The Paragon Café, Katoomba", Blue Mountains History Journal, Issue 5, December 2014, p.3.

⁴ State Heritage Inventory database entry for Site of Froma.

⁵ LTO Volumes 1845 Folios 140 and 141, Volume 1982 Folio 136.

13 May with little money and minimal English. Over the next four years he worked in Greek cafés in Sydney and Tenterfield before setting up in business at Windsor serving meals of ham and eggs next door to a skating rink and selling fruit and vegetables door-to-door.⁶ After Simos moved to Katoomba he entered into a short partnership with Demetrios Sophios and became a fruiterer and a confectioner before taking over the lease of the tea rooms at 65 Katoomba Street. By the middle of September 1916, the Paragon Café and Oyster Palace was up and running.

It was by no means the first establishment run by Kytherans in

⁶ John Low, "Simos, Zacharias Theodore (Jack) (1897-1976)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simos-zacharias-theodore-jack-13195/text23889>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 23 June 2015.



Interior of the Paragon, circa 1921. Source: theparagonhistory.com.au/gallery-2/historical-images-2

Katoomba. In 1912 John Comino (trading as Comino Bros) established an oyster bar on Main Street, Katoomba. Comino had a great deal of experience behind him. His brother Athanassio arrived in Sydney in 1873 and by 1878 was running an oyster saloon on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. He endeavoured to raise his own oysters with varying degrees of success. Athanassio was joined by John in 1884. Athanassio reached a prominent place in the oyster cultivating industry but died in December 1897, leaving his estate to John and to nephews and nieces. John also inherited Athanassio's title, "Oyster King." He was naturalized in 1898 and with several others was responsible for raising funds to erect the first Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, Holy Trinity Church in Surry Hills, where he married Anna Phocas at Holy Trinity on 6 September 1901. As migration brought more Kytherans, John became a mainstay of the Greek community in New South Wales. He was located at the centre of a complicated web of family and business activities, owning and supplying restaurants, oyster saloons and fish shops. Around the year 1906 he entered into partnership with three other large oyster merchants, Frederick John Gibbins, Charles Edward Woodward and John Moriarty, and their firm dominated oyster marketing in New South Wales.

Around the beginning of 1912 John Comino established the Cosmopolitan Café, promoted as the paragon of Mountain Cafés and the Epicure's Rendezvous, on Main Street. The café later became rather more prosaically Comino's Oyster Bar. In 1919 he took over the Acropolis Café down the road. The building in which the café was located was owned by one T.H. Timbrell, whose drapery store occupied the premises until 1916. It was

then leased for a couple of years to a Greek called G. Critharis, who opened the Acropolis in 1917. After taking over the café, Comino promptly renamed it the Niagara. John Comino was a victim of the Spanish influenza pandemic, dying in June 1919. By this time he was associated with oyster saloons bearing the Comino name in Parkes, Maitland, Armidale, Gunnedah and Moree as well as Katoomba.

The management of the Oyster Bar and the Niagara was taken over by James and Peter Georgopoulos, or Poulos (who were also from Kythera), by the beginning of 1920. It is perhaps no surprise that some of their newspaper advertisements for Poulos' Oyster Bar and the Niagara were virtually the same as those placed by Comino in previous years. In 1922 Timbrell sold the property to the Poulos brothers.

The Oyster Bar and Niagara were certainly not without close competition, however, as the Paragon Café was not all that far away. Although rivals in business, it would seem the Simos and Poulos families remained good friends over the years.⁷ As he prospered, Zacharias Simos began to improve the establishment and during 1921 found time to become an Australian citizen. A private supper room at the Paragon was opened in the middle of December 1921.⁸ Almost three years later, around the beginning of November 1924, Simos purchased 65 Katoomba Street and an adjoining shop from the Reverend Russell, who by this time was attached to St James Church in Sydney. The local press pointed out that "Mr Simos the new owner has already expended a large sum of money on fitting out his shop, and it compares more than favourably with anything of its kind in Sydney."⁹ But more was to come in the near future, when the Paragon was transformed.

In May 1926 local architect and sometime agent Harry Lindsay Blackwood (1864-1950) was reported to be Zacharias Simos' architect for "extensive alterations ... to the Paragon Hotel [sic] at Katoomba."¹⁰ It has been claimed for a number of years that the major early twentieth century cinema architect Henry White was responsible for these works.¹¹ There is always the possibility that the Paragon works were documented in Henry White's office and supervised by Blackwood, although one would have expected an architect of White's stature to be given full credit in the press.¹²

The Blue Mountains Echo, 15 September 1916.



⁷ Jack, p.5.

⁸ "The Paragon Sundae and Candy Shop" Advertisement, Blue Mountains Echo, 16 December 1921, p.5.

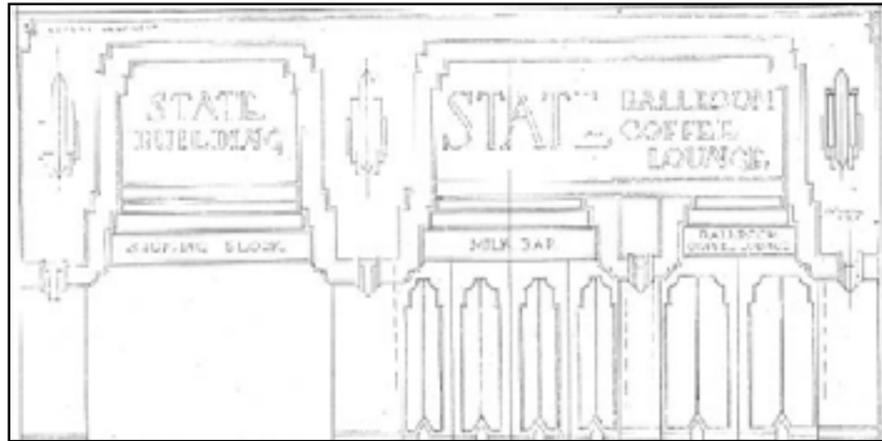
⁹ "Big Property Deal", The Katoomba Daily, 7 November 1924, p.1; LTO Volume 3261 Folio 45.

¹⁰ Construction and Local Government Journal, 19 May 1926, p.18.

¹¹ For instance, National Trust of Australia (NSW) and Australian Heritage Commission listings.

¹² Harry Blackwood was a son of portrait painter and photographer Olaf William Blackwood. His address for some years was 110 Katoomba Street. Buildings designed by Blackwood listed as heritage items in the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan include: James Building, 1-13 Katoomba Street, 1925; Additions to Eldon, Lurline Street, Katoomba, 1927; Mitchell's Ridge Monument, Mt Victoria, 1932; Wattle Café, Great Western Highway, Blackheath (attributed); Palais Royale, Katoomba Street, Katoomba; Wood Coffill Funeral Parlour (alteration to earlier building), Cascade Street, Katoomba; Rectory,

The alterations cost in the order of £5,000, a substantial amount of money at the time. The “ultra-modern design”¹³ in fact conformed to the all-pervading Free Classicism of the 1920s, enhanced by Adamesque embellishments. The shop was doubled in length, separated by a “handsome grille, standing on Greek pillars.” Amongst the features of the enlarged space was a marble soda fountain served by refrigeration equipment on the first floor. Polished maple fittings elsewhere were complemented by “artistic plaques” framed in gold. A new supper room was located at the rear of the shop. Beyond it was the stair



Elevation drawing of the Market street frontage to the State Ballroom and Coffee Lounge and Milk bar

to the first floor and a modern and efficiently designed kitchen served by a cool room (also served by the first floor refrigeration equipment), a store-room for urgently required food supplies and a “special tin-lined room for the storage of cakes and similar food-stuffs.” A dumb waiter linked the ground floor to the cake room on the level above. Apart from the refrigeration room and cake room, the first floor contained a store room for the storage of the ice cream made on the premises, a comprehensively equipped bakehouse and “one of the most important items” in the Paragon, the sweet factory where chocolates and candies were made. The rest of the first floor was devoted to Zacharias Simos’ residential apartment.¹⁴ The shop fitout and shopfront, if not other works, are credited to the firm of H & E Sidgreaves, which carried out a great deal of this type of project during the interwar period. Formed in 1917 to undertake retail fitouts, Sidgreaves’ perhaps most celebrated effort is the streamlined shopfront for G A Zink and Son of 1938 in Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. The company is still trading. Much of what was done at the Paragon in this period survives, as does a large amount of the confectionery making machinery.

The manufacture of the Paragon’s celebrated chocolates was already well underway before the luxurious refurbishment took place. By the middle of 1920, Jack Simos let everyone know that all the Paragon’s confections and chocolates were made and sold on the same day.¹⁵ Later that year, men were cautioned that “The lips that you love, they love the ‘Paragon’s’ freshly made chocolates”¹⁶ while on another occasion they were warned of the one who “Lost his girl, for not taking her round a box of The Paragon Chocolates.”¹⁷ “Waratah” sweet plain chocolate was made in-house for the Paragon Sundae and Candy Store,¹⁸ but chocolate production received a boost after Zacharias’ brother George, reputedly a master confectioner, arrived in Australia during 1921. For a time chocolates were manufactured in the basement of Soper’s Chambers, built by real estate agents Soper Brothers and designed by no less an architect than Sir

Emmanuel Church of England, Lawson.

¹³“Local Enterprise. Improving the Paragon. Modern and Sumptuous”, Blue Mountain Echo, 4 June 1926, p.2.

¹⁴“Local Enterprise. Improving the Paragon. Modern and Sumptuous”, Blue Mountain Echo, 4 June 1926, p.2.

¹⁵ Blue Mountain Echo, 28 May 1920, p.5.

¹⁶ Blue Mountain Echo, 20 August 1920, p.5.

¹⁷ Advertisement, The Katoomba Daily, 14 November 1921, p.2.

¹⁸ Blue Mountain Echo, 28 January 1921, p.5.

Charles Rosenthal in 1923.¹⁹ The building, across the road from the Paragon, was completed the following year. A hygienically clean factory, all painted white, was set up in its basement to produce the confectionery. The public was invited to inspect the factory during working hours.²⁰



George Newton Kenworthy, architect of the Paragon Ballroom and Supper Room

Zacharias Simos left Katoomba towards the middle of 1929 to return to Kythera. He spent about a year in Europe, where he caught up with the latest trends. While on Kythera he met and courted Maria (Mary) Panaretos, who was born in Elkton in Maryland, roughly halfway between New York City and Washington DC, in 1912. Her parents were café proprietors and regularly spent their summer months on Kythera. The couple were married in America in June 1930 and travelled back to Katoomba later that year.²¹ It is quite possible that Mary exerted some positive influence over what was to follow during the next few years.

Despite the Depression, Jack Simos managed to enhance and improve the Paragon. At the end of 1932 he opened a “branch department”, a modern soda fountain on the corner of Froma Lane. In summer it could be thrown open to the street but sliding doors were a safeguard against inclement weather. So too was a new awning.²² The following year H & E Sidgreaves undertook work to interior fitments of what was termed the Paragon “sundae shop”, possibly the soda fountain.²³ However, far more exciting things were shortly to happen.

On 1 May 1935 the title to 63 Katoomba Street, next door to the Paragon, was transferred from jeweller Louis Goldstein to Jack Simos, who took out a mortgage on the property shortly afterwards.²⁴ He exploited the opportunity offered by the purchase and commissioned architect George Kenworthy to design a spacious new addition at the rear of No. 63 that would serve the

¹⁹ “Tenders”, Sydney Morning Herald, 26 September 1923, p.11.

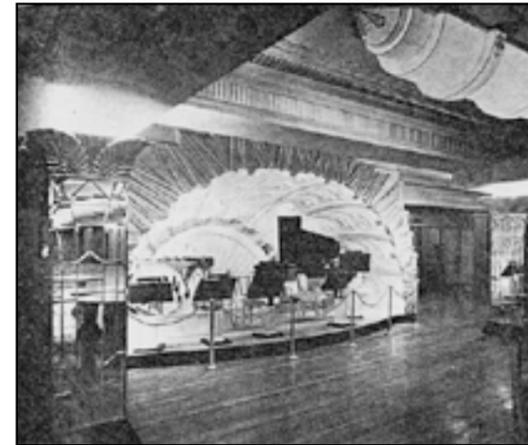
²⁰ “The Paragon”, Blue Mountain Echo, 1 May 1925, p.4.

²¹ Jack, p.8.

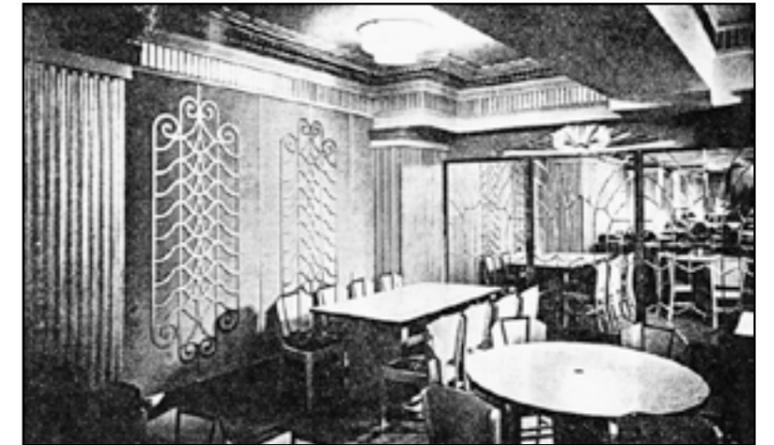
²² “Courageous Enterprise”, The Katoomba Daily, 16 December 1932, p.6.

²³ “Encouraging Outlook”, Sydney Morning Herald, 15 August 1933, p.4.

²⁴ LTO Volume 3261 Folio 27.



Two views of the State Ballroom, which shared similar detail elements with the Paragon Ballroom – note the capitals on the mirror-lined column and the tracery on the wall behind the table and chairs. Reproduced in *Decoration and Glass*, 1 May 1935 and *Building*, 24 June 1942.



Paragon both as ballroom and supper room.²⁵

George Newton Kenworthy (1885-1954) was born in England and studied at Victoria Arts School in Lancashire, South Kensington College in London and Liverpool University. He is understood to have migrated to Australia around 1910 and worked in the NSW Government Architect’s Branch between 1912 and 1924, followed by a stint in the office of prominent theatre architect Henry White from 1925 to 1929. He rose to become the Managing Architect of White’s office but resigned and established his own practice at the beginning of September 1929.²⁶ Kenworthy specialised in the design of cinemas, the best known of which is the much altered and expanded Cremorne Orpheum (1935).²⁷ Of course, Kenworthy designed other building types as well, including broadcasting studios, blocks of flats and houses. In addition he lectured in architecture at Sydney Technical College, served on the Board of Architects of NSW and the Royal Institute of British Architects, and was a councillor of the NSW Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects during the 1930s and 1940s.

George Kenworthy already had some experience with the design of ballrooms and cafés, having recently been responsible for the glittering new ballroom, coffee lounge and milk bar at Sydney’s prestigious State Theatre in Market Street. Kenworthy’s documents for these works were approved by the City Council in December 1934, the whole of the works being completed within four or five months. This would have given Zacharias and Mary Simos ample time to enjoy and perhaps draw inspiration from them. There are certainly some similarities in the detailing of the State Ballroom and the Paragon’s ballroom cum supper room.

The works associated with the ballroom at the Paragon were carried out by local builder R Hughan. The decorative scheme

²⁵“The Paragon. New Supper Room and Ballroom”, The Katoomba Daily, 21 June 1935, p.2. Notwithstanding Kenworthy’s role in the ballroom, as with the 1920s works at the Paragon it has for many years been regularly credited to Henry White. However, White closed his office during the early years of the Depression and, apart from a few unbuilt schemes from the second half of the 1930s, did not continue the practice of architecture.

²⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, 9 September 1929, p.4.

²⁷ Other examples include the Rialto Cinema at Manly (1933, demolished), the Rio Cinema at Lane Cove (1933), Savoy Theatre at Hurstville (1937, demolished), Regent Theatre, Mudgee (1935) and Enfield (1938, altered), the New Empire Theatre at Cessnock (circa 1939, demolished), Strand in Singleton (1937) and the Globe and World Newsreel Theatrettes in George Street, Sydney (1941; demolished).

was the work of Arnold Zimmerman²⁸ and the ceiling was executed by Cooper Bros. The ballroom was officially opened by Mayor William Soper (one of the Soper Bros) on the evening of 12 December 1935. Formally attired guests crowded the dance floor on the opening night, accompanied by an orchestra organised by Mrs Bailey (presumably the wife of Alderman W H Bailey). The “artistically shaped bowls”, filled with masses of marigolds, enhanced the whole setting. The event was broadcast on the local station 2KA, while funds raised by it were donated to the Junior Red Cross Home at Leura known as “Shuna.”²⁹

The local press described it as a “triumph of modern design” (it is now regarded as a triumph of Australian Art Deco) and fulsomely enumerated its many innovations and marvels:

One’s sense of values is bewildered by the many features which have been made to blend into such pleasing harmony. The colour scheme is beautiful in its rare delicacy, and is heightened by the indirect Neon lighting effects. But there are so many features to describe!

Business enterprise has never been lacking with the Paragon management, but, in this instance, public spirit has had much to do with a fine accomplishment. “It has been my ambition,” Mr J Simos informed us, “to provide a room in keeping with Katoomba’s importance as the leading tourist resort – something that may be proudly identified with the town, and spoken of by visitors wherever they may go. And,” he concluded ... “I think that ambition has been realised.”

Let us start with the superb dance floor to describe, in brief, some of the numerous features. It is of tallow-wood, highly polished, and with every board intricately cut and fitted. A new system in springing - these are placed at intervals of one foot [300 millimetres] – makes for easy dancing and the elimination of fatigue.

The walls, of an ivory toning, are textured in fascinating design by leading city experts, and fluted panels provide a pleasing variance.

Twelve recesses in the walls, with artistically-shaped bowls for the display of flowers, are further embellished by as many bevelled gold and silver mirrors. Larger mirrors of similar type are

²⁸ Arnold Zimmerman was involved with the State Theatre Ballroom and possibly the associated coffee lounge.

²⁹ “The Paragon. Luxurious Dance-Room Opened”, The Katoomba Daily, 17 December 1935, p.3.



affixed to the walls, and intensify the beauty of the room.

Mr Simos is especially gratified with the ornate frieze which surrounds the room. It is largely a result of his suggestions, the intricate pattern being exquisitely tinted. Hidden behind it are the Neon tubes of green and orange, which may be used separately or conjointly. The ordinary lighting is by three amber-coloured lamps of unique shape, and by smaller lights which are bracketed onto the fluted panels. All are costly fittings, for it is not Mr Simos' idea ever to spoil the ship for a hap'orth of tar.

The ceiling, of curved design, is in itself a work of art, into which green, ivory and silver colourings are skilfully harmonised. Here again one is forced to appreciate the art of the master craftsman. At one end is the orchestral platform, with its attractive background of musical symbols, on either side of which are doors of veneered maple. There are no panels or glass in these, and they are swung on chrome-coloured fittings. The main entrance is guarded by a double door of singular beauty, and a Chinese rug covers the floor of the lobby to which they give admittance. Ventilation is assisted by two electric fans. Six luxurious lounges provide the seating accommodation. They are sprung with Dunlopilla, and are covered in moquette in harmony with the colour scheme of walls and ceiling. The other articles of furniture are in keeping with the environment.

"During my trip abroad a few years ago," remarked Mr Simos ... "I was on the alert for new ideas, and I can truthfully say that I saw nothing better than The Paragon's new apartment."³⁰

The Ballroom became the setting for many birthday and wedding celebrations, as well as the weekly gathering place for the Katoomba Rotary Club, of which Zacharias Simos was a founding member.³¹ It also became the setting for annual dinner-dances, which raised funds for charity³² and even musicales for the local organ fund.³³

Apart from Kenworthy's fine interior, the first floor facade of the building is a reasonably good example of commercial Art Deco architectural design. It is thought to have been altered at this time and remains an important architectural element within Ka-



³⁰ "Elaborate Interior Decoration. The Paragon's New Room A Triumph In Modern Design", The Katoomba Daily, 13 December 1935, p.2.

³¹ "The Paragon. One of Katoomba's Leading Enterprises Flourishes", The Farmer and Settler, 27 October 1938, p.17; Low

³² "Dinner Dance Brings £30 for 'Shuna' and Crippled Children", The Katoomba Daily, 11 December 1937, p.2.

³³ "Lets Go Gossiping", The Katoomba Daily, 19 March 1938, p.2.



The Paragon Ballroom set up for a formal banquet, circa 1938. Source: theparagonhistory.com.au/gallery-2/historical-images-2

GRAND OPENING
OF THE
"Paragon" Ballroom
By His Worship the Mayor.
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 8 p.m. to 12.
The whole of the Proceeds to be given to "Shuna."
Tickets 5/-.
Mrs. Bailey's Orchestra, with other exciting artists.
Mrs. Super, Organist.
The management of the "Paragon" promises you an evening to remember, amongst luxurious and pleasant surroundings, perfect service of legitimate, Swiss coloured effects, and a spring from the feet of the kind in the Commonwealth - that you could not resist dancing on. Lots of other novelties, and a "Paragon" supper. Limited number of tickets. Book by ringing the "Paragon" Bell. 205.

Katoomba Daily, 12 December 1935

toomba Street. Indeed, the entire establishment is a rich encyclopaedia of interwar commercial architecture.

The "modern soda fountain" on Froma Lane was replaced, refurbished or augmented when the Embassy Milk Bar opened around the end of April 1937. The milk bar was perfectly placed right next to the entrance of the Empire Theatre, just a few doors down from the Paragon. The Empire Theatre, which first opened its doors in January 1915, closed in the middle of June 1937 for extensive remodeling to the design of prominent cinema architects Guy Crick and Bruce Furse. These architects had already left their thumb-print on Katoomba as they were responsible for the Savoy Theatre on Katoomba Street, which was officially opened in December 1936. The transformed Empire re-opened to the public as the Embassy on 17 December 1937.

Once again Zacharias Simos brought something new to the locality. Behind the glistening black Vitrolite and stainless steel of its ultra-chic shopfront,

Queensland maple, highly polished, will be the principal panel fittings, and it will be the first milk bar to be fitted in this manner. The whole of the designing and work was carried out by Sidgreaves, shop fitting specialists, of the city. The drink fountain is of the latest design, and incorporates the very latest ideas in hygienic service to the public. The fountain will be the first of its kind in Katoomba. Four cubicles will be at the service of the public, and the design and panelling is something different. Theatre clients can depend on expeditious service during interval. 'The Paragon' chocolates and sweets manufactured by the firm



The epitome of 1930s Moderne - the Embassy Theatre and Paragon.



will also be available.³⁴ In fact the shopfront of Simos' milk bar, if not the fitout, is understood to have been designed by Crick & Furse, who let a contract to H & E Sidgreaves for a shopfront at the Empire Theatre in February 1937.³⁵

The highly successful ballroom and the popular milk bar were followed only a couple of years later by the construction of a separate banquet or supper room after Zacharias Simos purchased 67 Katoomba Street, around the middle of 1938. He leased the front of the premises for many years as a chemist shop.³⁶ However, history was repeated as the space behind the building was put to good use, again under the capable direction of George Kenworthy.³⁷

The new supper room first came into use in the middle of February 1939 when the Rotary Club staged a "Daughters' Night" there, attended by 19 club members' daughters and others. There was a celebratory ceremony marking this inaugural event and Simos donated the proceeds of the evening to the Club's charity fund.³⁸ It was almost an anti-climax after the fanfare attending the opening of the ballroom. The sleek supper room, with concealed lighting, curved corners and light-toned timber veneer wall linings is an outstanding example of the Inter War Functionalist style. It is in marked contrast to the Art Deco exuberance of the ballroom, demonstrating how architectural fashion quickly evolved during the second half of the 1930s.

In the early post World War II period, Danish-born sculptor Otto Steen was engaged to embellish the walls of the main café. Steen had established a reputable practice over the years. After extensive training and study in Copenhagen, he migrated to Australia during 1927 and studied for some years under the influential English-born sculptor Rayner Hoff at the East Sydney Technical College. Along with a number of other students, Steen assisted Hoff on the complex program of sculpture associated with architect C Bruce Dellit's Anzac Memorial, located at the southern end of Hyde Park, between the years 1932 and 1935. He then managed to support himself as a full-time sculptor from



1935 onwards and was able to earn a living from his art until his death in September 1981. Such a circumstance was exceptional for an Australian sculptor. Many of his commissions enhanced architectural projects, among them the sculptural relief panels depicting dancers from around the world embellishing the Trocadero dance hall in George Street, Sydney, which opened during April 1936,³⁹ and the AWA

Building in York Street, Sydney (1939). Steen also produced delightful relief sculptures for the dining room at Everglades, Leura,

³⁴ "The Paragon' Extends", The Katoomba Daily, 20 April 1937, p.3.

³⁵ Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February 1937, p.5.

³⁶ LTO Volume 4951 Folio 204.

³⁷ Archived drawings held at Blue Mountains Library in Springwood. Kenworthy is also thought to have designed a large Functionalist style house at Echo Point for Zacharias and Mary Simos, which was built around 1940.

³⁸ "Daughters' Night at 'Paragon.' New Dining Room Used For First Time", Blue Mountains Daily, 18 February 1939, p.1.

³⁹ "A Triumph of Architecture in Glass", Decoration and Glass, May 1936, p.14. The panels each measured 10 feet by 8 feet (3 metres by 2.4 metres) and were coloured in "pastel tones".



along with an equally delightful fountain in its grounds. For the Paragon, Steen carved and painted twelve engaging wooden relief panels depicting a variety of characters from Greek mythology.

Apart from all of this, Mary and Zacharias Simos managed to have a life of their own. In the first half of the 1940s they built a stylish Functionalist style home near Echo Point, which was reputedly designed by George Kenworthy. The house is fittingly known as "Olympus."

According to the entry for Zacharias Simos in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, outside of the Paragon "he devoted many hours to his garden—the Paragon always had fresh flowers—loved music, played the violin and was a keen fisherman and backgammon player. Enjoying travel, he visited Europe, the U.S.A. and Kythera several times."⁴⁰ He died on 15 November 1976 in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Mary Simos continued to manage the Paragon until 1987 and died on 15 May 2001. The Paragon was sold the year before, and has changed hands several times since then.

Robyn Parker has been the proprietor of the Paragon since May 2011 and is working hard to regain its original splendour. She played an important role in having the place listed in the State Heritage Register.

⁴⁰ John Low, 'Simos, Zacharias Theodore (Jack) (1897–1976)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simos-zacharias-theodore-jack-13195/text23889>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 20 April 2016.

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ABN: 60 266 825 591

The Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW Inc.

The General Manager
City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001

14 February 2016

Via: council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

**BIDURA CHILDREN'S COURT
357 GLEBE POINT ROAD, GLEBE**

I am writing on behalf of the Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW in support of the retention of the 1983 Bidura Children's Court Building in Glebe, which is the subject of a development application that proposes its demolition.

We believe the building, which is substantially intact, to be a fine example of the Brutalist style and an accomplished example of the work of the NSW Public Works Department's Government Architect's Branch. The building was constructed at a time when the Government Architect's Branch was undertaking major projects across the state. This building bears favourable comparison with outstanding Brutalist works in the City of Sydney such as the Sydney Police Station in Surry Hills, which was designed by the Government Architect's Branch, and the Sydney Masonic Centre in Goulburn Street, designed by Joseland & Gilling.

Buildings in the City of Sydney that share some of the Bidura Centre's outstanding architectural qualities include the Sirius Apartments building in The Rocks, which is under consideration for inclusion on the State Heritage Register and is classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW), and the former Reader's Digest Building in Surry Hills, which is listed as a heritage item by the City of Sydney. There are few examples of this important architectural idiom within the City of Sydney, which has seen the attrition of many notable buildings of state and even national architectural significance that were designed and constructed during the second half of the twentieth century.

It is noted that the building is identified as a contributory item on Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 Building Contributions Map sheet 008 and is included in the State Heritage Inventory database entry for 357 Glebe Point Road. Here it is described as having aesthetic significance - "a well executed and relatively intact example of late 20th century institutional architectural design." Its architectural quality, successfully fulfilling a challenging brief, was certainly recognised when the building was completed in 1984.

The building is also identified in the SHI database entry as contributing to the social significance of the site - "The site is of social significance for its lengthy association with community service institutions since the latter decades of the 20th century." Bidura Children's Court has undoubted social significance for Aboriginal and European communities. In addition to this, the building is identified as having historical significance as part of the ongoing use of the Bidura site for child welfare purposes.

Bidura Children's Court fits unobtrusively into the surrounding urban fabric because of its well modulated form and careful detailing. It contributes to the architectural richness and diversity of Glebe. The architectural, historical and social significance of the building, along with its potential for ongoing adaptive reuse, are strong arguments for its retention, which we strongly encourage.

Yours faithfully
The Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW Inc

Dr Roy Lumby B Arch, M Arch, PhD., RAIA. M. ICOMOS
President

Under Threat: Bidura Children's Court, Glebe

A very concerned local resident, who has a passion for heritage issues, approached the Society to consider writing to the City of Sydney to support retention of this significant Brutalist-style building and its immediate environs.

After historical research our President wrote to the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

We are pleased to advise that Clover Moore and Councillors all personally acknowledged our letter.

This is an ongoing situation, there is more to come and we will keep you posted.



SHANGHAI ART DECO

WORLD CONGRESS ON ART DECO 2015

WORLD CONGRESS ON ART DECO 2015

PHOTO-ESSAY BY
GAIL CONDER AND RAYMOND LANE



Rong Desheng Residence 1939. Architect: Alexandre Leonard



Grand Duche of Luxembourg Embassy circa 1925



The cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing are closely intertwined with the political history of twentieth century China. The arrival of foreigners a century ago “unpacked a whole new fascinating way of life”. This included new technologies, modern designs (Art Deco) and radical ideas on social structures including Christianity and the role of women. The narrative of the Song (sometimes spelt Soong) sisters demonstrates the profound changes within China during this period. Their father was educated by American Methodists and consequently he sent his three daughters to be educated in America.”

‘It was the hope of the father that these women would come back from the West with the knowledge that they can change China, the fate of the people, the role of the women and eventually themselves’ says Mabel Cheung, director of a film about the Soong sisters.”

It is said in China that Song Ailing married for money. Song Qingling loved China and Song Meiling married for power. Ailing eventually became one of the wealthiest women in the world and lived in America. Qingling married Sun Yat-sen, who became the President of China after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in

1912. After Sun Yat-sen’s untimely death in 1925, the revolution split into two camps: the Fascist Chiang Kai-shek and Communist Mao Tsetung who tussled for the control of China. Meiling eventually married Chiang Kai-shek and when defeated in the civil war regrouped in Taiwan. Qingling became an important member of the communist party.

The pre-congress trip – Beijing

Beijing was a study of “Dynasty to Republic”: the Forbidden City and Great Wall of China to Tian’anmen Square. Our infectious guide Lars Ulrik Thom relived the tense period of the “boy emperor” Puyi and his life in the Forbidden City as China went from Dynasty to Republic. We visited the former residence of Song Qingling in the heart of the Old City.

A walk through hutongs led us to question how could we survive having to share a public toilet with 65 other families in the middle of the night? Or do you know which wire is connected to our room?



Lars introduced architect Kurt Rothkegel who redesigned the Southern Gate of Beijing in Tian’anmen Square in 1915. He excitedly explained how Art Deco arrived in Beijing and we visited the Grand Duche of Luxembourg Embassy circa 1925 which has been beautifully restored.

It was the contrast in transport, from cart to very fast train (300km+), and the movement of people and materials that fascinated us.

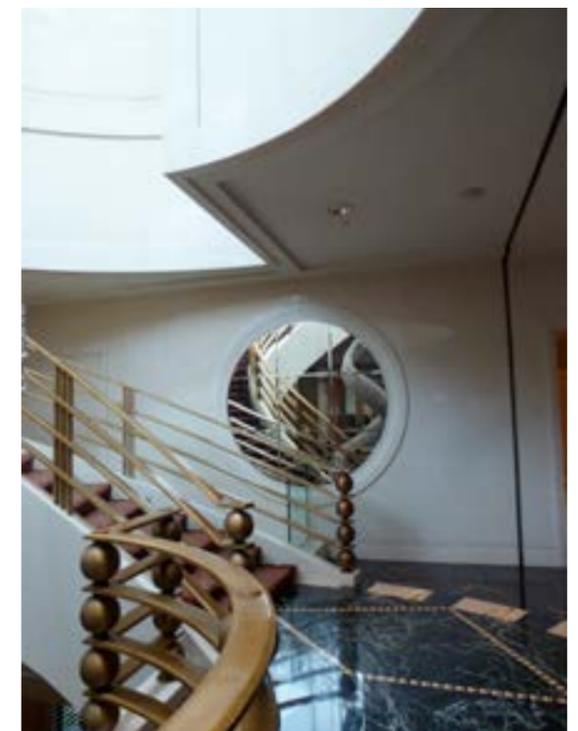
The Congress – Shanghai

The Congress in Shanghai included talks, walks and classic dinners designed for participants to appreciate why Shanghai was called the “Paris of the East” during the 1920’s.

The talks and walks introduced us to the significant architects, buildings and designs of the period. Architects like Hungarian Laszlo Hudec, who designed over sixty buildings in Shanghai from 1918 to 1945 and French Architecture group Leonard, Veyseyre and Kruze.

Chinese background architects like Liu Jipiao, Poy Gum Lee, and Robert Fan who all designed some of the iconic buildings in Shanghai. The walk booklets were a fount of information.

At night we dined in classic style. Who can forget some of the





Now who are these dapper revellers?



Wing On Department Store New Tower. Architect: Elliott Hazzard



Chinese YMCA now a Metropolo Hotel 1934. Architect: Poy Gum Lee



participants who often dressed in elegant 1920 outfits?

The opening night cocktail party was held at the Pei mansion built in 1934 for the family of architect I.M. Pei. Not even the rain could dampen our spirits.

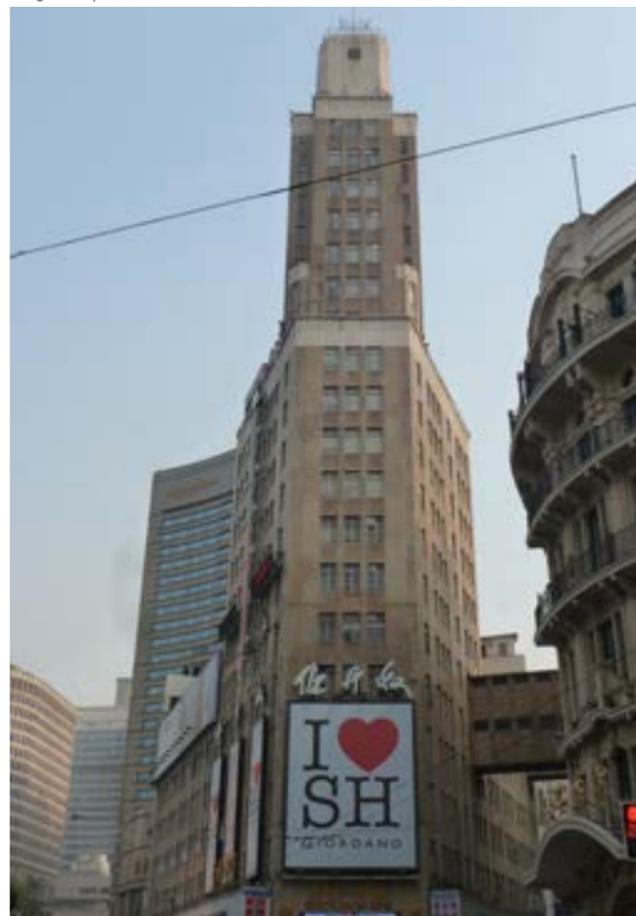
The Congress venue was the Peninsula Hotel opened in 2009. It is Art Deco in design, inspired by the glamour of the 1920's and 30's. It is the first building constructed on the Bund for decades and is located on the grounds of the former British Consulate.

So many interesting buildings, but it is the Art Deco motifs, even in the lintels that really spark one's interest: metal gates, entrance doors, patterned lintels and finials, terrazzo floor patterns and stairwells.

Around every little corner there was a treasure to discover. We could not stop snapping!

A night at the Chinese Opera: now who are these performers? Are they the highly trained Opera performers or are they members of the Congress dressed up?

Housing developments are interesting. During the Cultural Revolution there was a housing crisis. Old Mansions in the former international settlements like the French Concession were converted into multiple dwellings.



This courtyard house in the Old City has been subdivided into a number of separate apartments with an open area common kitchen in the courtyard.

Modern apartments are built on every available spot to house the 24 million who live there. That does not include the number of tourists staying in the over 4000 listed on TripAdvisor! Oh a very busy and modern city.

The final night gala summed up the elegance of the Congress participants. It was held in the Peace Hotel or Sassoon House or Cathay Hotel.

Post Congress tour – Nanjing

Nanjing was the Art Deco Republican era Capital. Here we stayed in the seventh tallest building in the world!

Nanjing has had a very sad history. This is where the Republic was lost during the Civil war. It is located inland along the Yangzi River and has more than eight million residents.

Nanjing University, in particular the Ginling Women's College was opened in 1915 and was the first establishment in China to grant bachelor degrees to women.

The offices of Chiang Kai-shek in the Republican era buildings located in the Presidential Palace grounds. Details of floor and





Grosvenor House 1934. Architect : Palmer and Turner



The Green House named after the hue of the glazed tiles 1938 (thanks to Larisa secretly taking this photo). Architect: Laszlo Hudec

highlights above the door are just delightful.

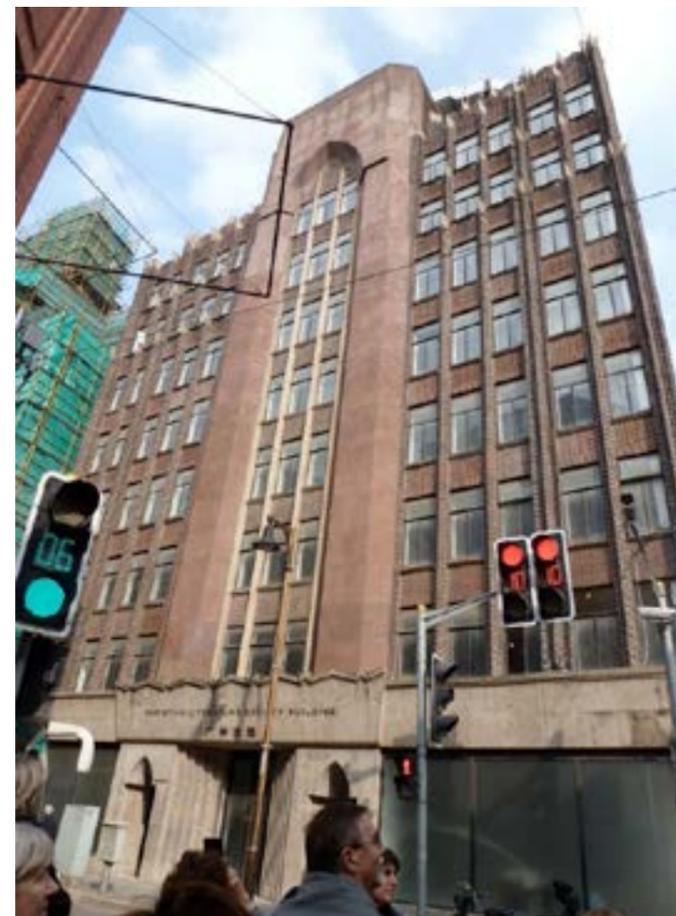
As stated, this trip is interwoven with the politics of modern China and the Art Deco designs as expressed in Meiling's Mansion and the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum demonstrate this.

The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum was completed by Poy Gum Lee in 1929. Everyone was here to visit but the gates were closed on Mondays.

Linggu Temple Pagoda was designed by Henry Murphy and built in 1929, as a memorial to soldiers who lost their lives. Speeches made by Sun Yat-sen and epigraphs of Chiang Kai-shek are inscribed on the tower

We learnt so much about China and Chinese political history on this trip.

We thank the following for their informative notes: 1. Bespoke Travel Company, China ,as their organisation was flawless and their itinerary notes invaluable ; 2. Shanghai Art Deco Society, especially the walking booklets and website; 3. Shanghai Architecture , by Anne Warr a constant reference to identify all our photos; 4. The reading list put out by the Shanghai Art Deco society especially the crime fiction novels by Qiu Xiaolong. It was the fictional Inspector Chen who introduced me to many of the places we visited including some interesting restaurants and life in the ilongs; 5. www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19910975 as a reference for the overall introduction and the importance of the Song sisters to understanding our trip.



Commercial Bank of China 1936. Now Shanghai Municipal Police Department. Architect: Davie, Brooke and Gran

China Land Bank 1933. Now municipal offices. Woodwork and tile entrance Architect: Atkinson & Dallas



This building was designed by American Architect Henry Murphy. In 1937, the buildings were home to 10,000 refugees.

When the Imperial Japanese Army invaded there was six weeks of carnage known as the Rape of Nanjing.

The events are recorded in the diaries of the Principal, Minnie Vautrin. This university was also the home of author Pearl Buck.



The offices of Chiang Kai-shek in the Republican era buildings located in the Presidential Palace grounds. Details of floor and highlights above the door are just delightful.



CHRISTMAS PARTY 2015

BY JOHN DYMOND



Roy and David relax with Society stalwarts, from left: Scott Carlin, Mark James, Pamela Taylor and Narelle Lambert.

It was with great anticipation and some caution that your intrepid reporter climbed Cumberland Street from Circular Quay in search of that heritage icon of exotic beverages and unique pizza dishes, the Australian Hotel.

The anticipation came from the joy of catching up with Society members – to relax after a hectic year of activities and the caution arose from the need to navigate this function and a succeeding one on the same day!

Such is the penalty for wickedness – no rest!

Coming upon the above-mentioned icon in 2013, I commented:-

Approaching the hotel from the Quay under clear skies, the hotel stands out like a welcoming beacon as one rises gently from sea level.

Again it was a sight for sore eyes and my pace quickened as I considered both the culinary and libational possibilities.

The weather being warm and the libations extremely attractive, it wasn't long before your reporter was enjoying a beer and was pleased to catch up with our esteemed President Roy Lumby and redoubtable Vice President David de Rozenker-Apted and thank them for their hard work throughout the year.



Your intrepid reporter downs tools for a quick beer with the Vice President.

The Australian Hotel looked not a day older than in 2013.





Julia Tomkinson and Joy Burrell look well pleased with another highly successful Society Christmas Party



David de Rozenker-Apted was delighted to see Joy Burrell looking fit and well at the Christmas Party

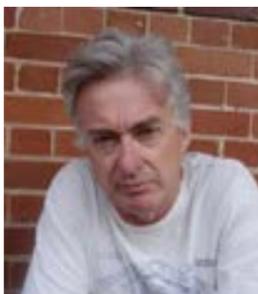


A good turnout filled four tables along Gloucester Street

It was good to see Joy Burrell at The Christmas Party after some ill health during the year and your reporter spotted our Vice President showing his delight.

Matt Stone ponders just what will be in the upcoming issue of The News!

Your reporter was late arriving and the mood was buoyant if not effervescent by the time he arrived. Society members dominated Gloucester Street and there was indeed a large and lively congregation.



The Australian's unique offerings again attracted and this reporter was



Your reporter again marvels at the idea of putting kangaroo and emu on the one pizza!

again drawn towards the idea of demolishing an edible form of the coat of arms of the Commonwealth.

As is traditional, your reporter sought out Matt Stone for insights as to what will fill the upcoming Summer issue of The News.

Again Matt was inscrutable and your reporter was in awe at Matt's capacity to maintain an air of mystique about just what will emerge as the next big thing to feature in our beloved newsletter.

It should be borne in mind at this point that it is indeed *our* newsletter and you, dear reader, may contribute! Details are set out on page 27.

The Society's Christmas Party in mid December is indeed a splendid gathering of members and friends where there is ample opportunity to catch up, contemplate the activities of the Society over the year, catch the ear of a Society office bearer or just enjoy good company.

If you haven't yet been to one or it's been a while, I thoroughly recommend it!



The Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW, Inc.

P.O. Box Q1072, QVB Post Office,
Sydney NSW 1230, Australia.

Phone: + 61 2 9878 2511

Email: info@twentieth.org.au

www.twentieth.org.au

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Any contributions should ideally be focused on people, design, art, landscapes and allied topics within, or by someone associated with New South Wales & the ACT in some way. Our Aims and Objectives are focused on raising awareness; so that conservation will enable us to continue enjoying heritage items and places in our own backyard.

We do welcome contributions that are not to do with New South Wales or the ACT however they should either be papers or articles relating to what a Member, Friend or Associate has personally experienced of Twentieth Century items & places whilst in other states or overseas. Articles that compare design or aspects of conservation overseas (e.g. how preservation works in Britain compared to New South

Wales) are also worthwhile, as are articles that examine impacts of overseas design or artefacts on New South Wales.

Authorship for all contributions, whether whole articles, or citations within an article, will be acknowledged. All sources and images must be credited.

Submissions may be sent to the Editor, John Dymond, at john@dfv.net.au.

You can send your text as an email attachment in any common word processor format such as .doc, .docx or .pages etc. Submit your images as .jpeg, .tiff, .png or .pdf.

Opinions expressed within this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher

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DYMOND, FOULDS & VAUGHAN
Suite 5, 1st Floor, 200 Victoria Road,
Drummoyne NSW 2047

Telephone: 02 9181 4747 Fax: 02 9819 7823
Email: john@dfv.net.au Web: www.dfv.net.au