

ART DECO

IN MACKAY

A celebration of the early decades
of the 20th Century

Art Deco in Mackay

The Art Deco style was not limited to a particular type of buildings, it was used for picture theatres, shops and hotels. Mackay's architecture is unusual when compared with that of other cities in Queensland. Although settled in the 1860s, the majority of buildings in the city centre were designed and constructed within the first three decades of the 20th Century thus making Mackay has the best collection of art deco buildings in Queensland.

The two most prominent architects in Mackay were Harold V.M. Brown and Edwin R. Orchard. Brown designed 13 buildings in the city centre between 1930 and 1940, including: the Pioneer Shire Council Office (1935); Chaseley House (1937); Friendly Societies Dispensary (1930); Black's Building (1935); Imperial Hotel (1940-1942); Holy Trinity Parish Hall (1938); Belmore Arms (1939); Hotel Mackay (1939) and the Prince of Wales Hotel (1940).

Builder William Guthrie established a building company in 1921 and constructed a large number of commercial and residential buildings during the following decades, including: the Masonic Temple (1924); the Daily Mercury Building (1923); the QN Bank (1922); Taylor's Building (1933); Black's Building (1935); Pioneer Shire Council office (1935); Taylor's Hotel (1936); Wilkinson's Hotel (1938) and the Australian Hotel (1940).

Mackay Regional Council is committed to preserving the heritage and character of our city.

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1. Cominos Building
7 Wood St.



2. Aroneys Building (1938)
84 Wood Street



3. Tick Tock Jewellers
121 Victoria Street



4. AFS Pharmacy (1933)
66 Sydney Street



5. Chaseley House (1937)
7 Sydney Street



6. Post Office (1940)
35 River Street

Mackay has an outstanding collection of Art Deco architecture constructed early in the 20th Century.

What is Art Deco?

Art Deco is an art style which was popular throughout the world from the 1920s until the 1940s and was derived from the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes, held in Paris as a celebration of the modern world. The style influenced the form and detail of buildings, furniture, household goods and jewellery.

Decorative elements commonly used included sunbursts and fountains which represent the dawn of a new age; symbols of speed, power and flight representing the exciting new developments in transport and communications and geometric shapes representing the machine and technology age which was thought would solve all future problems. Oddly enough, there was a fascination with the ancient cultures and civilisations of Egypt and Central America.



7. Pioneer Shire Office (1935)
3 Wood Street



8. CWA Building (1938)
43 Gordon Street



9. Australian Hotel (1940)
83 Victoria Street



10. Hotel Mackay (1940)
179 Victoria Street

Architecture in Mackay

There was a construction boom in the early 20th Century due to a series of unrelated events which combined to transform the appearance of the city. These included:

- the fires in 1915 and 1916 which destroyed many shops in Victoria Street
- the devastating cyclone in 1918 which destroyed 80 per cent of the buildings in the city
- a policy of the council at the time to replace all timber commercial premises with masonry structures for safety reasons
- a population explosion that made Mackay the second fastest growing city in Queensland for more than a decade
- the economy of the city was made buoyant by steady sugar prices and co-operatively owned sugar mills which led to money being retained within the community.



11. Coleman's Tailors (1930s)
147 Wood Street



12. Palace Hotel (1940)
82 Victoria Street



13. Ambassador Hotel (1937)
2 Sydney Street



14. Wide Bay Australia House (1942)
73 Victoria Street