

## APARTMENTS DOWNTOWN

52 Alexander Street

Constructed in 1937 to a design by prominent Melbourne architects Hugh and Arthur Peck, this striking moderne block of ten flats in red brick features was purpose-built as rental accommodation. It has curved walls punctuated with contrasting lines and a flat roof. It represented the latest in European styling. The block also featured a row of garages on the boundary - an indication of sophistication in interwar Burnie.



Originally known as Cromer Court, the block was commissioned by Mr Bullings. The builder was Frederick Parsons. It was extensively renovated sympathetically to the era in the 1990's and now operates as a four star boutique hotel.

## FIRE STATION

Jones Street

Reflecting the increased importance of the commercial centre of Burnie, a new fire station was constructed in 1940. Although re-built at a later time, the original lettering survives.

## AKS

Alexander Street

A post WWII design, originally finished in red brick, with vestiges of modernist styling in the entrance and the windows.

## GOODYEAR

Corner Alexander & Wilmot Streets

In 1936, Carter & Peace constructed this building for the Dunlop Rubber Co. It later became the showroom for General Motors cars, and accommodation for visiting salesman was added to the rear. A distinctive feature is the pair of squared-off towers.

## LG HOOKER

20 Alexander Street

Features of this two-storey commercial/residential building include an exaggerated eyebrow lip and subtle stepping in the window recesses. It was constructed as a private residence by Mr A. P Best (known to all as Abbie, described as a lovable larrikin). The Bests lived upstairs and their daughter, Mrs Rita Hughes, ran a hairdressing salon in the downstairs section. When the Bests eventually moved out, Mrs Hughes and her husband Cecil occupied the upstairs.

## HOTEL REGENT

North Terrace

A blacksmith occupied this site until 1951, when the hotel was constructed for Mrs Tucker, who then ran it for twelve years before selling it to the Tasmanian Brewery. They leased it to licensee Dick Jones and later to Max Green, prominent footballer with the Cooea Football Club.

The hotel was designed by the prominent architects Roy, Smith and Willing from Launceston and was built by the owner's son, Tom Tucker, who carried out most of the concrete construction on his own in an era before ready-mixed concrete. Major accent is on the horizontal, accentuated by the lines at the roof level. The façade is punctuated by an inset balcony with wrought iron railings above the front door.

Tom Tucker, Mrs (Ma) Tucker

## ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH HALL

Mount Street

The Hall (in Mount St.) dates from 1938. The stylish entrance extends to the first floor, finished in traditional wooden shingles. The building firm of Carter & Peace extended it in 1956 by adding a kindergarten. Design was by Tranter Kemsley & Ass., architects.

The original church dates from 1884 and was extensively rebuilt in 1959 by Carter and Peace.



## THE ADVOCATE

Mount Street

Following the destruction by fire of the original Advocate building, the two-storey symmetrical building was purpose-built for newspaper production in early 1920s. Further additions were made in 1950 under direction of the architect Albert Freak from



Devonport. The large entrance was replaced with a series of small windows and a smaller entrance, which in turn has been re-located.

## H & R BLOCK

Mount Street

The façade of this two-storey block of shops and offices includes a number of Art Deco features at the first floor level, including vertical fins, extended horizontal eyebrows and speed lines across the width.

## THE LIGHT HOUSE BUILDING

Corner, Wilmot & Mount Streets

The Lighthouse is a two-storey commercial building, characterised by a distinctive stepped window treatment.



## JEANS WEST

27-29 Wilmot Street



## LINCOLN HOUSE

30 Cattley Street

An outstanding example of streamlined design. Vertical fins rise above the roofline at one end, finished in shiny fawn terracotta. On the first floor façade, two sets of speedlines are incised and run along the length of the building. It was designed by the prominent architect A. Lauriston Crisp in 1940, and commissioned by local solicitor Charles Roberts Thomson (pictured). The interior office space on the first floor is an intact example of the styling of the era.



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## DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS OF BURNIE.

Burnie was fortunate to have the services of a number of high-quality building firms during the interwar period. The most prominent was **Carter & Peace** who operated from the 1920s to the 1970s, occupying a site in Wilson St. next to the Beach Hotel. They built many of the prominent commercial buildings in the CBD and many local houses. The firm had also built the original Burnie Town Hall in Cattley St. Tom Carter's son recalled that its demolition in 1976 caused his father much distress as he watched on. The construction premises used by the firm (including a sawmill, joinery and building yard) is now occupied by Toyworld. Numerous local builders served their apprenticeship with the company, including **Lou Stubbs** who went on to establish **Stubbs Construction**. Local builders **Aubrey Keane**, **Pat Streets**, **Les Clark**, **Roy Preece** and **John Vincent** were also apprentices of Carter & Peace in the 1930s.

In other parts of Australia, builders also designed many buildings. Whilst this may have occurred in Burnie, many local interwar buildings were designed by prominent architects, from Tasmania and the mainland. Hobart-born **Colin Philp** is regarded as "one of the entrepreneurial leaders of Modernism in Tasmania". He designed the original Wrest Point Hotel in Hobart and a number of buildings in Launceston, whilst in Burnie he was responsible for a large house in Wilson St. (Arden), and a number of commercial premises.

The architect, **A. Lauriston Crisp**, designed the stylish Lincoln House in Cattley St., whilst **Roy Smith & Willing** worked on the Beach Hotel. As the key architect for the Tasmanian government, **Sidney W T Blythe** designed a series of impressive schools throughout Tasmania, including the Burnie Technical School. Now known as Portside, it was designed in 1941 but WWII delayed its construction until 1946.

A number of commissions were undertaken by Melbourne firms, such as the leading modernists, **Seabrook & Fildes**, who updated the interior and sections of the exterior of the Beach Hotel. As is often the way with hotels, a later upgrade of the premises in 1960 removed much of the previous design. The apartment block called Cromer Court in Alexander St. (now known as Apartments Down Town) was designed by **Peck & Peck**.

Many of Burnie's Art Deco buildings reflect the trend in other Australian cities for stylish and elegant designs, provided by architects who applied an appreciation of the latest trends and use of materials to their commissions.

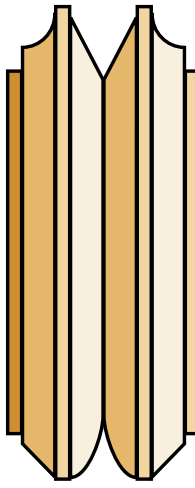
GMH dealership - Cattley St, Town Hall and Burnie Institute - Cattley St, old Burnie Primary School - Alexander St, Star Theatre - Mount St, W & G Gender - Mount St, BPA - Marine Pde, Ford Dealership - Mount St, Van Diemen's Land building - Marine Pde. Images Courtesy of the Burnie Pioneer Museum.

## ART DECO BUILDER'S TRAGEDY

Some of the most striking examples of residential Art Deco were built in Burnie by Mr Frederick Parsons. Parson's had a reputation for being a "quality builder... on a par with Carter and Peace, although he generally took on smaller works"?. In 1935, Frederick started to scale back his involvement in the family business after a joinery accident left him without three fingers. On April 12, 1936, just one day before their 30th wedding anniversary, Frederick and his wife Hilda boarded the ship Nairana, on what they told their family was to be a "second honeymoon". They travelled with their daughter, Jean, a fully qualified nurse, to Melbourne where she would take up a midwifery training post. They planned to visit their son Keith, who had joined the RAAF in Sydney, before returning to Melbourne for a niece's wedding. After a particularly calm Bass Strait crossing, a freak wave hit the Nairana early Sunday morning, sweeping all three members of the Parson's family overboard. Frederick's brother Ernest moved to Burnie from Launceston to continue on the family business. The couple's eldest daughter Elsie was left to look after the younger members of their seven children.



Frederick and Hilda Parsons with their children Keith, Aubrey, Elsie, Jean, Wilbur, Ralph, and Leonard.



# Burnie

## ART DECO TRAIL

### A walking tour of Burnie's Art Deco History



[www.artdecotasmania.com.au](http://www.artdecotasmania.com.au)

## GHOSTS

Buildings from Burnie's Art Deco past



TSS Nairana



One of the last Parsons commissions - house for K Button.

## MCLEAN MCWENZIE & TOPFER

41 Cattley Street



Originally built for Crisp Hudson and Mann Barristers and Solicitors. Entry was through a single door at the left. It was later re-modelled and windows replaced by a new doorway. The different levels on the façade are accentuated by a contrasting paint scheme. At one stage this building housed a dance hall and lending library.

## COASTAL RADIO

Ladbroke Street

## FLOOR WORLD

Corner, Ladbroke & Wilson Streets



Large two-storey commercial building which wraps around the corner and includes a lip over the doors and windows.

## TRUSTEE HOUSE

23 Cattley Street

In the early 1920s, this substantial double-storey building on a prominent corner was occupied by the The Union Bank of Australia and later the Launceston Bank for Savings. In 1957 it was modified for use as a store, and again renovated in early 1990s.

## BEACH HOTEL

North Terrace

The original hotel on this site dates from 1880's and was reconstructed in 1901. In 1939, modifications to the internal areas and the door on North Terrace were made by leading modernist architects, Seabrook & Fildes, from Melbourne. These updates were lost when it was sold to Tasmanian Brewers in 1961, and extensively modified under direction of Philp, Lighton, Floyd & Beattie from Sandy Bay in Hobart.

## RIVERS

Corner, Wilson & Mount Streets

The Maples Furniture chain constructed stores in Moderne style throughout Australia, including this store in 1939. The builders were Carter & Peace and it was reported that the plate glass windows were the largest ever fitted in Tasmania. It is strikingly similar to Subway, on the opposite corner, and it is likely that they were designed by the same architect. A major external feature is a vertical fin - structurally, the first floor was supported by a number of very slim circular columns clad in polished stainless steel. The first floor became a discotheque in 1994 and the building has been severely compromised by changes for retail purposes.



## SUBWAY CORNER

Corner, Wilson & Mount Streets

This stylish grouping of shops and offices remain intact on the exterior and illustrate the smooth rounded form of streamlined design. They present a consistent whole as they step up the hill. Exterior features include curved glass, metal-framed windows and flat roof. The building was constructed by Carter & Peace in 1940 and commissioned by a local merchant called Mace and his accountant, Wardlaw, who occupied offices in the building. Long term tenants include the Charles Davis store and Guy Jones Furnishings.

The building was modified in 1969 under the direction of Philp, Lighton, Floyd & Beattie, and it is likely that Colin Philp was the original architect.

## 11 - 15 CATTLEY STREET

Cattley Street

## MCGRATH & CO.

3 Cattley Street

Designed in a striking geometric form, with recessed windows and rectangular lip over doorway. Constructed by Herbert Woods in the 1880's, it was originally Fairthorne's chemist shop. It remained as a pharmacy for many years until occupied by Dr. John McGrath as a surgery. It was totally re-modelled in Art Deco style and further modified in 1957 under direction of architects Kemsley & Co., who practiced in Melbourne & Launceston. It now houses the legal practice of McGrath & Co.



## BURNIE RAIL

Off Marine Terrace

This delightful Art Deco train is typical of the DP13 and DP14 motor rails which used to be owned by Tasmanian Government Railways and were built in 1934. This train was refurbished by Classic Rail Tours as a charter operation and purchased in 2001 by the Burnie City Council. Volunteers from Don River Rail restored the train for Burnie Rail and operated it in partnership with the council. It has recently been used for pleasure journeys along the seafont between Burnie and Penguin, especially as a tourist expedition to the Penguin markets.



## CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY

Marine Terrace

The highly-symmetrical design features a stepped roofline and central vertical section divided into three by fins. The building began life in 1938 as the Vogue Theatre, constructed by Len Frith - in competition with the Star Theatre in Mount Street. It was updated in 1941 and closed in the 1960s and was then used as the Police Citizens Boys Club.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

32-34 Marine Terrace

The building was constructed by M M Smith from South Burnie in as a butter factory for the Northwest Co-operative Dairy Co. Note the rounded building edges, extended vertical windows and extensive use of glass bricks - the latest styling at the time. Changes were made in 1956 and the building is currently used by the Dept. of Transport.

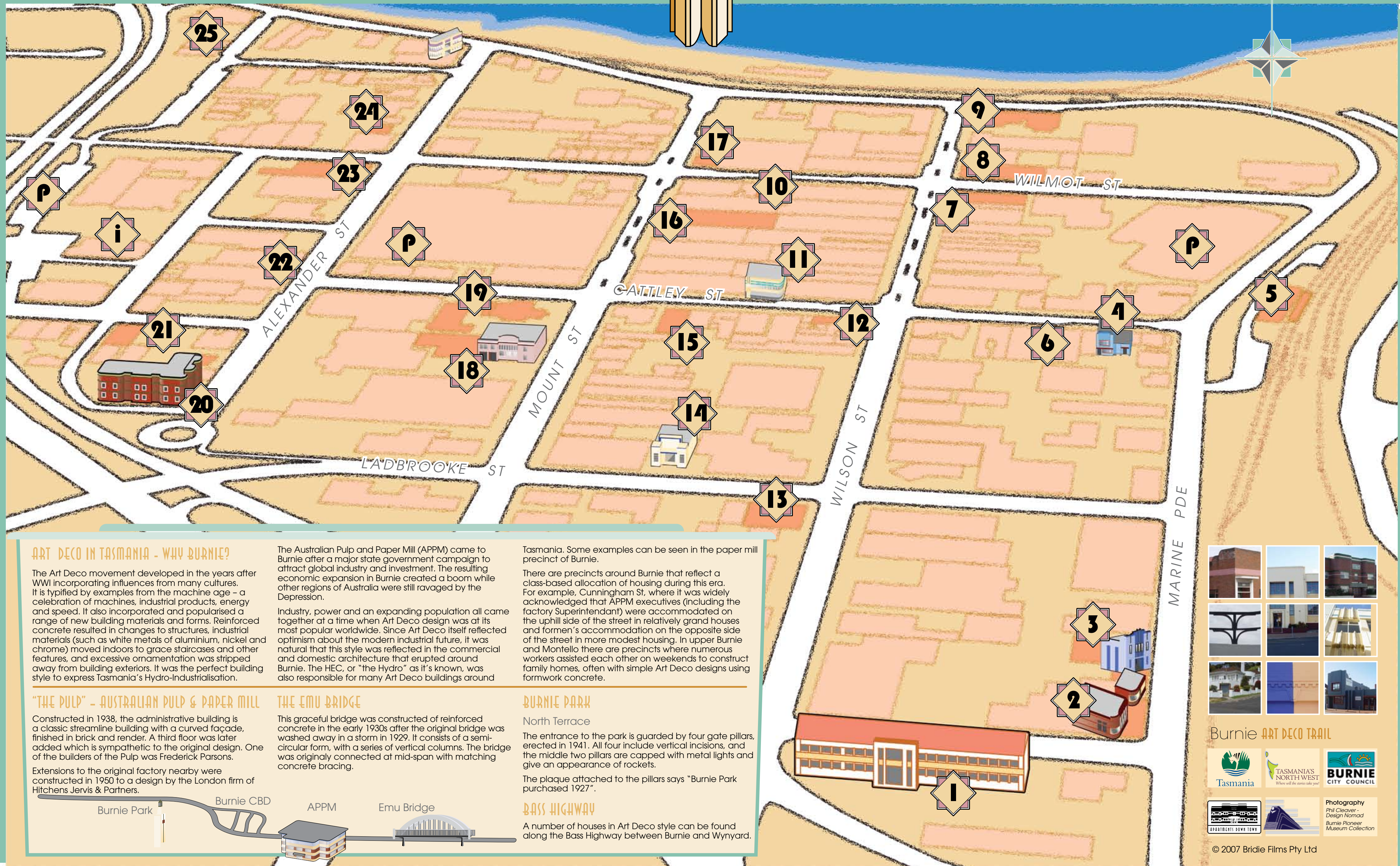
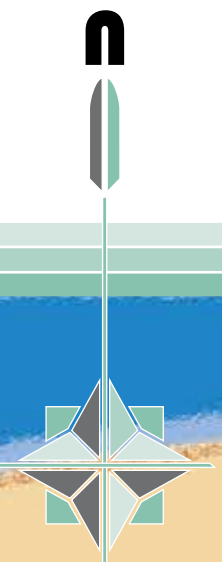
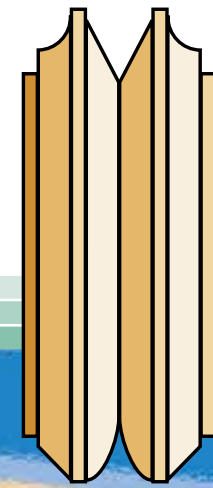
## PORTSIDE

Spring Street

Constructed in 1946, the former Burnie Technical School was one of a number of outstanding designs by the main architect from Tasmania's Public Works Dept., Sydney Blythe. During construction, human remains were disturbed and bones removed, and it was later realized that it was on the site of one of Burnie's original graveyards. In 1959, a motor mechanic workshop was erected by Stubbs Construction linking the adjacent saw-tooth roof building at 1-3 Spring St.







## ART DECO IN TASMANIA - WHY BURNIE?

The Art Deco movement developed in the years after WWI incorporating influences from many cultures. It is typified by examples from the machine age - a celebration of machines, industrial products, energy and speed. It also incorporated and popularised a range of new building materials and forms. Reinforced concrete resulted in changes to structures, industrial materials (such as white metals of aluminium, nickel and chrome) moved indoors to grace staircases and other features, and excessive ornamentation was stripped away from building exteriors. It was the perfect building style to express Tasmania's Hydro-Industrialisation.

## "THE PULP" - AUSTRALIAN PULP & PAPER MILL

Constructed in 1938, the administrative building is a classic streamline building with a curved façade, finished in brick and render. A third floor was later added which is sympathetic to the original design. One of the builders of the Pulp was Frederick Parsons.

Extensions to the original factory nearby were constructed in 1950 to a design by the London firm of Hitchens Jervis & Partners.

The Australian Pulp and Paper Mill (APPM) came to Burnie after a major state government campaign to attract global industry and investment. The resulting economic expansion in Burnie created a boom while other regions of Australia were still ravaged by the Depression.

Industry, power and an expanding population all came together at a time when Art Deco design was at its most popular worldwide. Since Art Deco itself reflected optimism about the modern industrial future, it was natural that this style was reflected in the commercial and domestic architecture that erupted around Burnie. The HEC, or "the Hydro" as it's known, was also responsible for many Art Deco buildings around

Tasmania. Some examples can be seen in the paper mill precinct of Burnie.

There are precincts around Burnie that reflect a class-based allocation of housing during this era. For example, Cunningham St, where it was widely acknowledged that APPM executives (including the factory Superintendent) were accommodated on the uphill side of the street in relatively grand houses and foremen's accommodation on the opposite side of the street in more modest housing. In upper Burnie and Montello there are precincts where numerous workers assisted each other on weekends to construct family homes, often with simple Art Deco designs using formwork concrete.

## THE EMU BRIDGE

This graceful bridge was constructed of reinforced concrete in the early 1930s after the original bridge was washed away in a storm in 1929. It consists of a semi-circular form, with a series of vertical columns. The bridge was originally connected at mid-span with matching concrete bracing.

## BURNIE PARK

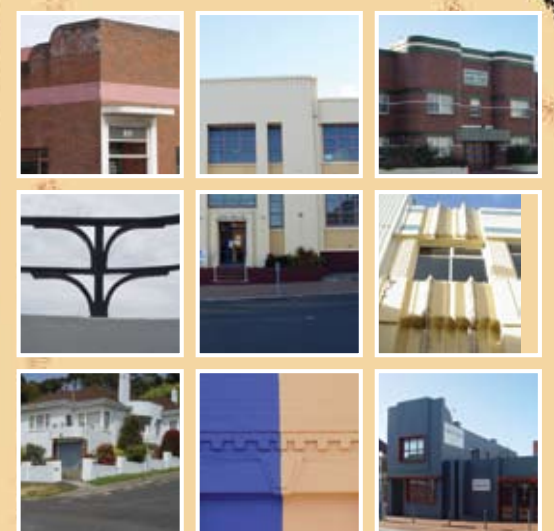
North Terrace

The entrance to the park is guarded by four gate pillars, erected in 1941. All four include vertical incisions, and the middle two pillars are capped with metal lights and give an appearance of rockets.

The plaque attached to the pillars says "Burnie Park purchased 1927".

## BASS HIGHWAY

A number of houses in Art Deco style can be found along the Bass Highway between Burnie and Wynyard.



## Burnie ART DECO TRAIL

