

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

521 Glenferrie Road

TYPE

- Single Residence
- Shop
- Office
- Landscape feature
- View
- Multiple Unit Res.
- Outbuildings
- Industrial Building
- Public building
- Other

TITLE

"Cestria"

EXISTING DESIGNATION

HBR [] GBR [] AHC [] NT [] VAS []

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

1 [] 2 [x] 3 []
SIGNIFICANT [] SIGNIFICANT [x]
STREET TREES KERB & GUTTERS

GRADING

A [x] B [] C [] D [] E []
KEYNOTE BUILDING []

RECOMMENDED FOR

HBR/GBR [x] AHC [x] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [x]
VAS [] PLANNING SCHEME PROTECTION [x]
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [] OTHER []

SURVEY DATE Nov. 91.
NEG FILE 67.15-18

Title
Vol.
Fol.

THEME

- Early Settlement
- Mansions
- Victorian Garden Suburb
- Municipal dev.
- 1870s growth
- Garden villas
- Working enclaves
- Commercial Centres
- Edwardian Prosperity
- Interwar Housing
- Flats and Offices

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Date 1891.
Architect E. G. Kilburn.
Builder
Elements -
House and garden.



- Contributing garden
- Landmark tree
- Original or early hard landscape layout
- Original or early fence

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY	Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONDITION	Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>		Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>		Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden []

521 GLENFERRIE ROAD
"CESTRIA"

History

In 1890, the architects, Ellerler and Kilburn's additions to "The Priory" at St. Kilda were hailed as "American Romanesque inside and out".¹³ In the following year, Kilburn's design for the biscuit manufacturer, T.B. Guest's "Cestria" in Hawthorn (on a property previously owned by politician, Michael O'Grady) in the American Romanesque style was praised for being "well suited to the requirements of the Australians and their climate".¹⁴ An article in the *Building and Engineering Journal* included a sketch of the spectacular exterior of "Cestria" and another of its staircase hall.¹⁵ One of the chief features of this American Romanesque house was the mahogany and American walnut staircase described as "thoroughly American in feeling".¹⁶

"Cestria" has been judged recently as "the first and greatest American Romanesque Revival house in Australia" and "a blow against the stucco and cast iron Italianate and eclectic work of the past".¹⁷ It remains of considerable architectural significance for the survival of many interior features, especially the woodwork of the entrance/stair hall with its "Abacus like screen". The large west dining room is also substantially intact with wallpapers and decoration from the time of the first owner.¹⁸

Description

A tour-de-force in the Romanesque revival style for dwellings - in this case a huge dwelling, amongst the largest mansions in Hawthorn. Executed in red brick with rendered dressings and slate roof, the designing is a three storey "L" shape form with the centre filled in with a two storey abutment to the four stage tower. The ends of the "L" are gabled, the top floor being contained within the roof and given light by grouped openings in arcade form. The eaves are heavily bracketed to the gable ends and to the hipped roof of the tower. Grouped arcade elements are also used on the first floor of the tower in the extended abutment, and four square headed openings under a single large arch are the terminating feature of the top stage of the tower. At ground floor level access is gained via a giant half circle arch under the tower. The roof is simply executed in gabled form with slate^{and} terracotta ridging. Tall grouped chimney stacks in red brick and render rise out of the roof, to further emphasise the vertical qualities of the overall composition.

The mansion is prominently located on the peak of the hill close to the road and set in substantial grounds.

13. ABCN 19 July 1890.

14. BEJ 25 May 1891.

15. Ibid., exterior view reproduced in Terence Lane and Jessie Serle, *Australians at Home*, O.V.P., 1990, p.50.

16. Ibid, p.226.

17. National Trust of Australia (Vic)., FN. 5044.

18. Ibid.



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Assessment

In 1890 Ellerler and Kilburn brought the American Romanesque style to Melbourne following Ellerler's visit to America. In the commercial arena, Speight and Tompkins undertook a prominent example at the Victorian Artists Society Building of 1891 in East Melbourne. Kemp continued the style in New South Wales and Sulman and Power transferred it back to Melbourne's commercial building in its giant order form, with 247-251 Flinders Lane in 1898. Both Beverley Ussher and Henry Kemp were separately pursuing a course towards the development of the peculiarly Australian version of the Queen Anne house from the late 1880s. They also experimented with expression of the plan on the elevation, and honesty of materials (red brick and render) as seen in this Romanesque design. Their designs were sometimes for large two storey houses, but also included single storey designs. The style which they developed with Walter Butler, Christopher Cowper and others, dominated the domestic field from the mid 1890s, and the associated Romanesque, and earlier Italian Modern, took second place.

There are few Romanesque revival houses in Melbourne. The style's inspiration comes from the giant of American architecture M.H. Richardson, who interpreted the Romanesque styles of Italy, France and Spain in a new American form in the 1870s and 1880. The massive heavy designs which were an essential byproduct of the style were well suited to commercial buildings and extensively used for the same. But few houses could accommodate the size and massive scale required. Comparative examples include 28 Toorak Road, South Yarra.

"Cestria" is a rare example of the style used in Melbourne. It probably just post-dates the Artists Society buildings but remains amongst the earliest in Melbourne. The design is clearly influenced by Ellerler's visit to America. Its form is more literal in the use of the French Romanesque (particularly for the tower) than the more highly interpreted commercial style of the turn of the century, ably represented in Flinders Lane. It was influential in the red brick movement involving the Queen Anne, Italian Modern, and Romanesque styles.

The mansion is a major landmark in Hawthorn.

Significance

State

1. One of the earliest uses of Romanesque Revival in Melbourne, and a rare mansion house in this style.
2. "Cestria" has significance as one of the first and arguably the greatest American Romanesque Revival house in Australia. It is of architectural significance for the survival of many interior features, especially the woodwork of the entrance/stair hall with its mahogany and American walnut staircase. The large west dining-room is also substantially intact with wallpapers and decoration from the time of the first owner.

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3. An important work from the architect Kilburn.
4. Historically significant for its associations with its first owner/occupier, the biscuit manufacturer, T.B. Guest. It is a splendid example of the substantial mansions, often architect-designed, built for wealthy Hawthorn residents during the boom years and early 1890s, particularly on prominent hills.

