

**THE Art Nouveau** (French for new art) movement began about 1880 as a reaction to the classical, academic art of the 19th century.

It is characterised by organic, especially floral and other plant-inspired motifs, as well as highly-stylised, flowing curves.

Art Nouveau is an approach to design according to which artists should work on everything from architecture to furniture, making art part of everyday life.

What are regarded as the most outstanding examples of the style are to be found in Riga, Latvia and in Brussels, Belgium.

The townhouses in Brussels, the work of Victor Horta, were included on UNESCO's World Heritage List, as works of human creative genius and outstanding examples of Art Nouveau architecture brilliantly illustrating the transition from the 19th to the 20th century in art, thought and society.

While the style spread worldwide, it largely bypassed Bendigo.

However there are a few outstanding examples of this architectural style: the former Royal Bank building on View Point, the former Denderah on the corner of View and Valentine Streets and Verona at 159 Forest Street.

Verona, which was built in 1909 for local barrister, Lawrence J. Murphy, is perhaps the best example of this style.

The design of the cast-iron balustrade introduces freedom to this most rigid of materials and the curves of the woodwork inside the house break the rigid horizontal and vertical lines of the ceilings and walls.

The style is best captured

in the lettering of Verona above the entrance.

Denderah, now called Cooloch House, was bought by George Victor Lansell in 1910, and was redecorated by William Beebe in the art nouveau style.

Of particular interest are the windows for their shape, the coloured glass, the turned and carved woodwork and plaster ceilings.

The house was named after the Egyptian archaeological site visited by the Lansells on their honeymoon.

The former Royal Bank building, with its art nouveau influences, was designed by architects Beebe and Garvin and built in 1908. It stands in contrast to the other fine buildings on View Point.

The bank was formed at the height of the Land Boom in the 1880s, but unlike many others, it survived the crash of 1893.

The foundation stone of this branch was laid by the Premier of Victoria, Sir Thomas Bent, himself a survivor of the land deal scandals. The building is now a restaurant.

Thus, while many people come to Bendigo to admire the classical 19th century buildings, there are some buildings which exhibit different styles such as Art Nouveau and even the later Art Deco style, the latter being the subject of an exhibition to be held at the Bendigo Art Gallery in September this year.

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Research inquiries: Would readers please note that research and other inquiries for the Bendigo Historical Society Inc. should be sent to: [info@bendigohistory.com](mailto:info@bendigohistory.com). Please note also that there is a charge for research.



**CONTRAST:** The former Royal Bank building on View Point (now Whirrakee)

## Historical society to hold its AGM

THE annual general meeting of the Bendigo Historical Society will be held on Friday, August 1, in the R.L. Campbell Theatre, starting at 2pm.

Advertiser editor Peter Kennedy will conduct the election of office bearers and speak on the role of the newspaper in the history of Bendigo.

While only members may vote at the meeting, members of the public are welcome to attend as observers.

For more information, phone 0437 199 432.