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Company Transfer: the Architectural Dialect at the Edges of Empire

The architectural history of European colonialism tends to privilege the iconic - both building and architect/client - focussing on significant civic, administrative and domestic projects. However the development of colonies necessarily relied in large part on commerce, trade and primary production. Despite the building typologies, structures and spatial organization associated with such enterprises having a profound influence on the settlement patterns and subsequent built environment of European colonies, research in this area is limited. To what extent did trading companies, and commercial and corporate entities influence architectural development in Australian colonial settlements? By their nature many such companies operated on the fringes of colonies, which themselves were on the fringes of an empire. In the multiple transfers of ideas and processes from core to periphery, what was changed, and how were such changes manifested in the resultant architecture?

This paper focusses on one commercial, agricultural and mining enterprise - the Van Diemen's Land Company (chartered in England in 1825 and operating in far NW Tasmania until the 1990s) - making an initial survey of early built works, investigating both extant buildings and sites as well as primary documents in order to examine the scope of the company's role in the wider dissemination of 19th century European architecture. The paper will argue that many such chartered companies endorsed by colonizing powers, although principally formed for commerce and/or primary production, became lay agents, translating ideas and practices related to architecture and the built environment from the core to the peripheries of empire. It also reveals the potential for further research into the complex networks that connected a wide diversity of such colonial companies, enabling them to initiate, and continue to shape, the nature of the built environment in settlements far from the influence of established centres of architectural practice or contemporary debate.

Surveys of the period associated with the height of European imperial expansion, in examining architecture in the colonies, have tended to focus on significant civic, administrative and domestic projects privileging key buildings and architects and their clients, particularly those associated with the jurisdiction and management of the colonies and with their ruling elites. This has necessarily placed much of the focus on the architecture of the major metropolitan centres of developing colonies. In doing so there is also an implicit emphasis on the influence of colonial governments and administrators as agents for the transmission of architectural ideas and practices within colonies.

Commerce, trade and primary production, though, were intrinsic to the development of colonies. Indeed they were often the motive – covert or otherwise – for the initial establishment and subsequent expansion of colonies.¹ Of necessity, such enterprises were often located on the fringes, far from the direct influence of the colonial establishment, yet the building typologies, structures and spatial organisation associated with such enterprises had a profound influence on the settlement patterns and subsequent built environment of regional areas of many European colonies. To what extent did trading, commercial and corporate entities influence architectural development in colonial settlements, and in Australian colonial settlements in particular? Research in this area is limited. In the move towards a more globalized paradigm in historical studies of European colonisation there has been some focus on the transferral of ideas and practices via extra-administrative agencies in other disciplines, such as history, anthropology and economics.² This has been accompanied by the recognition of inter-colonial links in historical patterns of dissemination of these ideas and practices, but there is limited research in relation to architecture. What is the influence of commercial or trading networks' on the dissemination of architectural ideas and practices?

This paper outlines a preliminary examination of one British colonial chartered company operating in Australia in order to examine its role in the wider dissemination of 19th century European architecture. In doing so this examination also, and perhaps more importantly, provides many tantalizing hints of the extent to which links between colonial companies may have enabled the re-translation of architectural ideas and practices – both radially, from core to colonial periphery, and also through a diverse network of connections within and between the colonies and companies themselves. Such hints reveal the need to look more broadly for sources of architectural influence and transmission of ideas, and underline the considerable scope for further investigation into how these companies initiated, and continued to shape, the nature of the built environment in settlements, far from the influence of the established core.

Johan Lagae and Madalena Cunho Matos have pointed out that “[f]or a long time architectural historians have studied the ‘diaspora of 19th and 20th century architecture’ as the exclusive result of

1 For a discussion of this ‘informal’, as opposed to ‘formal’, aspect of imperialism see John Darwin, “Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion,” *English Historical Review* CXII, no. 447 (1997): 614-42.

2 See for example, J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Susan Lawrence, “Exporting Culture: Archaeology and the Nineteenth-Century British Empire,” *Historical Archaeology* 37, no. 1 (2003): 20-33; Zöe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45 Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005).

an export of ideals, models and practices from the 'centre', being Europe and North America, to the 'periphery':"³ This has preferred both a dominant geographical core of influence, and an influential 'core' of architects and experts. Focussing on areas beyond the geographical core, and on players outside the core of 'experts', an examination of the practices of colonial companies may provide a much deeper understanding of how ideas and practices were translated within the empire.

The preferencing of the intense and localized perspective over the wider view is revealed in many fields of Australian architectural history; the focus on the architectural histories of individual colonies, architects, or stylistic spans. It is also evident in the tendency to define these histories from the perspective of a limited cohort of agencies - the ruling elite, or the prominent architect or client. This perspectival tunnel-vision has been labelled the "'Government House verandah' point of view"⁴, a term which could be applied to many histories limited by the definition (or availability) of their primary sources, or viewed in isolation rather than in terms of their relationships to other histories. Helen Proudfoot, in her discussion on historical perceptions of Sydney's Government House, outlined how broadening the scope of archaeological and archival evidence to include hitherto unheard perspectives allowed the intricacies of inter-related viewpoints to be seen as part of a larger picture, giving a more complete understanding of the site's place in a wider context. She has maintained that in doing so, "... the view from the Government House Verandah has changed and the vantage point itself is perhaps now better understood."⁵ Julie Willis and Philip Goad also point out that the emphasis on 'fragments' of small histories in Australian architecture has resulted in an informed understanding of individual periods but has not extended or contested the broader picture of architectural evolution in Australia because such histories "... rarely manage to examine the bigger picture beyond their immediate subject."⁶

Beyond Australia there is recognition that there is still much research to be done to redress the imbalance of viewpoints in architectural history. The group called "European Architecture Beyond Europe" focusses on this explicitly, stating that its interest is in

"a more nuanced understanding of how architectural ideas, models and practices were disseminated world-wide ... and [looking] at the multiplicity of actors that shaped the transfer of European architecture overseas, ... through complex trajectories and flows across nations, colonies ... going beyond the histories of individual architects."⁷

3 See John Lagae and Madalena Cunha Matos, in COST Action, ed., *Beyond Architecture - European Architecture Beyond Europe COST Action ISO904* (COST European Co-operation in Science and Technology, 2012).

4 D. R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1971), 3.

5 Helen Proudfoot, "Attitudes and Evidence: The View from the Government House Verandah," *Shifting Views: Selected Essays on the Architectural History of Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Andrew Leach, Antony Moulis, and Nicole Sully (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2008), 58-59.

6 Julie Willis and Philip Goad, "A Bigger Picture Reframing Australian Architectural History," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* 18, no. 1 (2008), 7.

7 COST (Coordination of Science and Technology) Action (ISO904) is called "Architecture beyond Europe", the ABE group working initially in the wider Mediterranean region. See John Lagae and Madalena Cunha Matos, co-ordinators of Working Group 1: Actors and Networks of Expertise, in COST Action, 2012, *Beyond Architecture*.

In taking a similarly broad view of the sources available from players involved in the architectural development of Australia - players outside the colonial or imperial centres - the contributions of multiple agents of influence can be recognized. In this way, an examination of the architectural ideas and practices of colonial companies operating in Australia could both expand and deepen perspectives of architectural development in Australia.

To focus on one company may at first seem to be narrowing the field of research rather than enabling a wider perspective. However, the Van Diemen's Land Company (hereafter referred to as the VDL Co) is, in essence, an example of the plethora of trading companies - chartered or otherwise - operating throughout the British Empire during colonial expansion. Any scoping survey examining this company's possible influence on the architectural development of Tasmania could equally be applied to other British colonial companies. And such companies drove a significant proportion of British colonial expansion - from early pioneering enterprises such as the Massachusetts Bay Company (1629-84) and Hudson's Bay Company (chartered 1670) in North America, and transnational commercial and administrative companies such as the British East India Company (1784-1834) and the Imperial British East India Company (operating in East Africa, 1880s-1920s), to more localized entities such as the New Zealand Company (1841-1850), the Australian Agricultural Company (chartered 1824) and the VDL Co. itself. Indeed, Alex Bremner maintains that "[m]uch of the activity that sustained European imperial projects was 'incorporated' ... to some degree, whether in terms of governance, exploration, missionary endeavours, or, indeed, trade and infrastructural development."⁸ Therefore, focussing on one company may reveal the potential inherent in a far wider study of the impact that such agencies had on colonial architectural development, providing a means for us to come down from the 'veranda', so to speak, and examine the scene much more broadly.

The VDL Co. was chartered as an agricultural and pastoral company in London in 1825. Formed partly in response to industrial Britain's demand for fine wool, it was to be chiefly concerned with raising sheep, but also allowed to carry out other agricultural enterprises and mining.⁹ It continued to operate as a chartered company in far Northwest Tasmania until the 1990s, when it was sold to commercial interests from New Zealand.

In consultation with the colonial government under Lt. Governor Arthur, the VDL Co was expected to select a single block of 250,000 acres from the remote north-west quarter of Van Diemen's Land (west of areas already settled, to avoid conflict with existing landowners).¹⁰ After extensive exploration of the country available, the company's surveyors selected six separate tracts of land. The largest of these ran down to the coast at Emu Bay (now Burnie), with two other parcels centring

8 Alex Bremner and Diego Caltana, "Corporations, Corporate Identity, and Imperial Architectures?," *ABE Journal [Online]* 2 (2012), par.4, <http://dev.abejournal.eu/index.php?id=352>.

9 A.L. Meston, *The Van Diemen's Land Company 1825-1842*, Records of the Queen Victoria Museum New Series, No.9. (Launceston: The Museum Committee Launceston City Council, 1958), 13-18.

10 A.L. Meston, *The Van Diemen's Land Company 1825-1842*, 16.

on Woolnorth-Cape Grim and Circular Head in the far northwest. The VDL Co's remit had been to select from areas that, in essence, no other landholder had chosen, or would want. It therefore became a key agent in the expansion of the colony into new areas, signifying early on the company's influence on the settlement patterns of the developing colony.

In 1827, despite existing surveyed plans for a potential settlement at Port Maldon, at the mouth of the Cam River, the first company manager, Edward Curr, made the decision to erect warehouses at Emu Bay, to the east. This site, initially chosen as a convenient trading post to service the VDL Co's extensive inland holdings, eventually expanded into the key regional town of Burnie, particularly after the VDL Co built major port and railway infrastructure to service the lucrative West Coast mining boom of the late 19th century. (Port Maldon survived as the small beachside community of Somerset.)

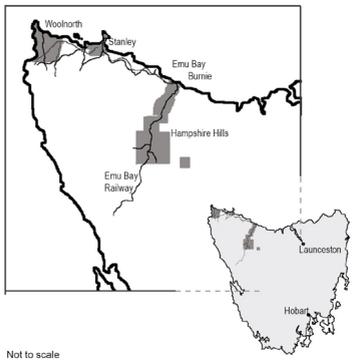


Fig. 1. Northwest Tasmania - VDL Co's landholdings with company railway and road connections.
[W. Roberts - diagram integrates information from several information sources]

Stanley, in the lee of Circular Head, on the other hand, was initially established as the company's headquarters and centre of the far Northwest districts.¹¹ This choice was deliberately considered. Even though Curr recognized that, unlike Emu Bay, the Circular Head district would not provide all the raw materials and supplies needed for a new settlement, he based his decision on the belief that the latter location was the most fitting for a managerial residence.¹² Although the Stanley settlement's initial buildings were temporary shelters of turf or salvaged board,¹³ by 1834 a new manager's house had been built for Curr. The site chosen for 'Highfield House' was on a long ridge above the settlement with sweeping views of the harbour and coast - a place from which to oversee, and to be seen. Curr's choice of house site seems dictated not by practicality - as access to the

11 Godden Mackay Ltd, *Highfield, Stanley Precinct Study* (Hobart: Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage Service, 1992), 23.

12 Meston, *The Van Diemen's Land Company 1825-1842*, 54.

13 Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment, "Highfield History," Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment, *Parks and Wildlife Service - History*, accessed 22 March, 2011, <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=2652>.

homestead was necessarily steep, and difficult in bad weather - but by an appreciation of the importance of the location as an expression of the status of the company.

Although there are detailed architectural drawings in the company records (a large proportion of which are held in the Tasmanian Archives & Heritage Office) of buildings associated with VDL Co business in the village of Stanley, Emu Bay/Burnie, and in several of the company's outlying properties, 'Highfield House' has become the representative flagship of the VDL Co's architectural occupation of NW Tasmania in more ways than one. Not only was it the deliberately intended 'face' of the company as its managerial residence, but as the most physically intact of the company's structures (albeit in partially restored form) remaining within its original context of workers' cottages and farm buildings, it is a valuable primary source from which to research the architectural practices and ideas current in a nineteenth century colonial outpost. 'Highfield House', importantly, also acts an exemplar in providing evidence of multiple agents and architectural influences operating on a single project in a region remote from established centres of ideas and practice.

The original plans of 'Highfield House' are generally attributed to Henry Hellyer, the company's first surveyor, with advice from Curr. Later additions to 'Highfield' House were designed by John Lee-Archer. None of these individual designs were fully realised in built form, rather the building became an amalgam of several concepts.

Although Henry Hellyer's authorship of the first plans has been contested,¹⁴ the Tasmanian State Archives (VDL Co Series 343) certainly contains architectural drawings signed by Hellyer, detailing 3 proposed designs for Highfield House,¹⁵ all quite different in style - though with some common elements - a two-storey linear plan, bell curved verandas, timber treillage posts, and bay window. The finished building, however, retains only a small two-storey section almost hidden behind a sweeping hipped roof over the main frontage and lower floor.¹⁶ Deviations from the intended design may have been a result of lack of funds - an argument given weight by the fact that, soon after the house was built, the attic space was converted to bedrooms, despite having no full height access.¹⁷ This first stage of the house reveals potential influences from several contemporary sources. There is evidence that Hellyer's design for Highfield House had to incorporate prefabricated building elements - windows, doors, timber mouldings and boards, for example - shipped from England.¹⁸ Detailing of some elements such as the chimneys and veranda also closely resembles styles

14 Frank Bolt, *Notes on the Architecture of Highfield and Its Outbuildings* (Unpublished, 1990), Parks and Wildlife Service Archives, Tasmania, 1.

15 Henry Hellyer, "Architectural Plans Designs for Three Alternative Houses to Be Erected for the VDL Co 3 Sheets. M.S.," June 1, 1831, Tasmanian Archives & Heritage Office: VDL343/1/568.

16 Henry Hellyer, "Plan of Highfield.," 1 August, 1831, TAHO: VDL343/1/570.

17 John Lee Archer, "To James Gibson, Esquire, JP. Chief Agent. Circular Head. From John Lee Archer. Civil Engineer.," (Letter) 25 August, 1843, TAHO: VDL175/1/2. Despatches to the Court of Directors from the manager (Burnie), 1837-1962.

18 For analysis of building elements at 'Highfield', and comparative examples of similar prefabricated elements elsewhere in Australian colonies see Miles Lewis, *RPT10734: Highfield, Circular Head, Tasmania Report on Conservation Status* (Hobart: Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania, unpublished 1986), DPIWE; and Godden Mackay Ltd, *Highfield, Stanley Precinct Study*, 23-24.

published in pattern books of the day.¹⁹ Whether this indicates a particular source of influence acting upon Hellyer's (or Curr's) stylistic choices, or is simply indicative of a general awareness of current trends in Britain, bears further investigation.

Plans for additions to the house, commissioned from John Lee Archer (formerly the colonial civil engineer and architect for Van Diemen's Land) in 1843,²⁰ show an intention to create a much more refined and substantial residence. The proposed additions created a more elegantly symmetrical layout, with the two storey section of the original house echoed in two new wings perpendicular to the main plan, and connected to create an internal service courtyard - a layout promoted in contemporary pattern books²¹. It is known that Curr had access to such pattern books²², but again, further research is needed to establish whether the design was dictated by Curr, or created independently by Lee Archer. The built form, however, was limited to a truncated version of one wing with some reorganisation of existing spaces. Rather than the elegant completeness of the proposed plan, the built structure appears obviously unfinished - its potential dignity and style only hinted at from the southern aspect.

The farm buildings and workers' cottages surrounding 'Highfield House' have been surveyed quite extensively in recent years.²³ However, in concentrating on analysis of structure and immediate context, the reports provide only passing references to possible design sources²⁴ or intentions, pointing to the potential for further research. Extensive original correspondence between the VDL Co Board in London and its managers in Van Diemen's Land (held in both Tasmanian and British archives), has yet to be fully examined in terms of identifying references to sources of ideas and details. Combining the many disparate primary sources would build a more complete picture of the architectural intentions and influences of the VDL Co. The physical buildings of 'Highfield' estate, however, remain as a visible indication of the multiple actors and sources of architectural ideas involved in its design.

Although the Highfield estate has come to publicly embody its architectural image, the VDL Co was also operating much more broadly as an instrumental influence on the settlement patterns and architecture of wide areas of the NW region of Van Diemen's Land. Unlike many private companies

19 See for example, veranda patterns in John B. Papworth, *Rural Residences Consisting of A Series of Designs for Cottages, Decorated Cottages, Small Villas and Other Ornamental Buildings* (London: R. Ackermann, 1818), 103, <https://archive.org/details/ruralresidences>; and information on chimney designs in J.C. Loudon, *An Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, New Edition (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1846), 32, <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL23358685M/>.

20 Roy Smith, *John Lee Archer* (Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 1962), 57.

21 See for example, p73 Plate XVIII „A Villa Exemplifying the proper situations for the domestic offices“ in Papworth, *Rural Residences*.

22 See Bolt, *Notes on the Architecture of Highfield and Its Outbuildings*.

23 Bolt, *Notes on the Architecture of Highfield*; Godden Mackay Ltd, *Highfield, Stanley Precinct Study*; Lewis, RPT10734: *Highfield, Circular Head, Tasmania Report on Conservation Status*; Zuzana Karla Orme, *Highfield Estate Landscape Observations and Report for Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife* (Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania, 1987).

24 See, for example, a mention comparing the “very unusual cast iron sashes” on the stables to those illustrated in Loudon's *Encyclopædia*, in Lewis, RPT10734: *Highfield, Circular Head, Tasmania Report on Conservation Status*.

and pastoral estates of the time - which were necessarily familiarly and/or geographically circumscribed - the VDL Co established a wide sphere of influences, within and between its separate landholdings. Small settlements were established in areas key to its pastoral (and later also mining), business and trade interests. Road and railway infrastructure built to service the company lay the foundations for key transport arteries between settlements, opening up a region formerly almost entirely dependent on shipping for communications. At the more remote pastoral outposts, agricultural buildings and staff and convict accommodation of utilitarian design were built. Many of these were constructed from formal architectural drawings by Hellyer, but Edward Curr also played a significant role. In some cases, despite any formal architectural training, he provided his own plans and working drawings²⁵ - simple, practical designs transferring ideas and practices with which he had been familiar in England to the wilds of NW Van Diemen's Land. At Stanley piers, warehouses and storage facilities, and later a church and school, were provided by the company, and took advantage of the availability of local stone and locally milled timber, creating a consistent architectural fabric for the developing settlement. These infrastructural developments encouraged settlers to the NW region and the isolated Circular Head district.

The VDL Co was also very active in the development of Burnie (formerly Emu Bay, and eventually the first city in the NW region). It was particularly influential from the 1850s once Burnie became the location of the company's headquarters - commissioning designs for commercial, trading and administrative buildings, housing and port infrastructure, and later creating subsidiary railway companies and infrastructure to service the booming West Coast mines (Emu Bay Railway Co, 1875, and Mt Bischoff Railway Co, 1882).²⁶ Thus, the VDL Co in its practice of employing noted colonial architects rather than relying on 'in-house' expertise, acted as a translator of contemporary architectural ideas and practices to the peripheries of the colony, areas that otherwise would have been limited by local skills and expedience to purely functional structures.

A preliminary survey of the company's architectural commissions also begins to reveal the varied networks of links influencing the architecture of the remote Northwest of Tasmania. Such links operated through inter- and intra-colonial connections between many actors; professional connections between architects, corporate connections between the various commercial and trading companies operating in Van Diemen's Land, and business and private connections between key company personnel. The presence of the VDL Co as a large corporate player in a sparsely settled region provided both a focus and a generator for many of these networks; a situation potentially replicated in similar colonial outposts on the peripheries of the empire.

Chief among the architects favoured by the VDL Co were John Lee Archer, A&E Luttrell (based in Launceston, but later to emigrate to New Zealand) and Corrie & North (Launceston). Between them they brought a wide range of influences, having worked in a variety of practices, in many geographical

25 For example: Edward Curr, "Plan of Quarters for Free and Assigned Servants. 1 Inch to 5 Ft. M.S. E. Curr.," 1 April, 1831, TAH0: VDL343/1/566, Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office.

26 Geoff Lennox, "Van Diemen's Land Company," in *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, (Centre for Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, 2006), http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history.

locations. Lee Archer (1791-1852), born in Kent, had worked in England and Ireland, including some time with engineer John Rennie. Upon his arrival in Van Diemen's Land in 1827 he was appointed as the colony's Civil Engineer and Architect working, principally in the Classical style, on many major government commissions.²⁷ At the end of this posting Lee Archer eventually settled in Stanley, bringing his experience and ideas to work commissioned by the VDL Co. Alexander North practiced with a series of partners, including Leslie Corrie from 1886, designing many distinctive buildings for the VDL Co, particularly in Burnie.²⁸ Corrie (b. Tasmania, 1859-1918) had been involved in designing schools and churches from strong Puginesque principles, when articulated to Henry Hunter in Hobart. On the other hand, North (b. England, 1858-1945) had travelled widely in Europe before emigrating, and was articulated at one stage with Robert Norman Shaw. North was very influential in architectural circles in Tasmania, having formed the first Tasmanian Institute of Architects.²⁹ He was also Patron of the local Tasmanian Arts and Crafts movement - something which was reflected in his "...recurrent vocabulary of details using banded brickwork, stone, timber and reinforced concrete of which he was an early exponent."³⁰ Through these professional connections and his built works in Tasmania, Victoria, New Zealand and Fiji, North maintained a complex network of links to a wider colonial architectural discourse. The practice of A&S Luttrell (Edgar Alfred, 1865-1924, and Edward Sidney, 1872-1932) was originally based in Launceston, but later opened a branch in Queenstown, serving the NW region and the booming West Coast mining areas of Queenstown, Zeehan and Strahan³¹ - the wider location for the VDL Co's many business interests at the end of the nineteenth century.

Many of these architects' buildings no longer exist, but the VDL Co's records (lodged with the Tasmanian State Archives) contain extensive original plans and drawings. Unfortunately not all documents contain complete provenance - dates, or authors, are not always noted - and the company record books of communications reviewed to this point have contained only infrequent (though potentially fruitful) references to influences and actions surrounding the company's built works. Further research may well reveal sufficient connections between disparate information sources to clarify many of these details.

Such sources have also been important in revealing further sets of connections influencing the transfer of ideas and practices in the colony. Not only did these architects bring their influences to bear on the VDL Co's works, there is evidence of strong networks of architectural patronage between the various companies operating in the colony. The Luttrells worked for the Mt Lyell Mining Company, designing the 'Penghana' residence (1897) for its American manager - reflecting both Alfred's interest in the

27 Smith, *John Lee Archer*.

28 Many original plans and drawings are lodged in the Tasmanian state archives. See for example, A. North, "Plans of Building at Corner of Catley and Wilson Streets, Burnie, for the VDL Co. 8 Sheets. M.S.," n.d., TAHO: VDL34 3/1/536.

29 Maidment, "North, Alexander."

30 John Maidment, "North, Alexander," *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 504.

31 Ann McEwan, "Luttrell, Alfred Edgar and Luttrell, Edward Sidney," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara the Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3116>, 6 November, 2013).

'stick' or shingle style, and possibly North American influences from the manager.³² Further commissions for the Luttrells came from the River Don Trading Company - including the company's Devonport headquarters (1899) - and from the West Coast trading company of F.O. Henry (an offshoot of the River Don Trading Co) for their manager's residence, 'Ormiston House' (1899) at Strahan. It is not unreasonable to infer that links between these companies - whether through professional networks, personal recommendations, or as part of a commercial imperative to keep pace with the 'competition' - created a climate in which architectural ideas, styles and practices were transferred between companies.

The idea of networks as a model for looking at the world of links between colonies is not new. In speaking of a strong inter-colonial culture throughout the British Empire, Miles Lewis notes that

"[f]rom the first days there had been troops and traders and administrators whose world was intercolonial. They may still have thought of England as home, but the reality was that they had long been garrisoned in Canada, or grown indigo in India, or been in government service in the Caribbean."³³

This inter-colonial culture was well recognized among participants in empire-making, and was generally referred to at the time as 'having connections'.³⁴ In describing these intricate sets of links Ballantyne used the term *web*, believing "[t]he web captures the integrative nature of this cultural traffic, the ways in which imperial institutions and structures connected disparate points in space into a complex set of networks."³⁵ Such intricate connections between companies in a small colony are not surprising, but what is surprising, is the existence of an expanded sphere of influence over the communication and transfer of architectural ideas both within and between colonies, and within and between companies.

From this initial survey it can be seen that companies played a key role in translating architectural ideas and practices and influencing the settlement patterns of more remote colonial regions. Further examination of the records, archives and remaining physical evidence of the VDL Co and other colonial companies (both within Australia and across the empire), may provide considerable material from which to establish the extent to which these companies and their networks of exchange influenced the wider dissemination of 19th century European architecture. Much of the material investigated so far suggests a complex interweaving of possible sources of architectural influence. Companies such as the VDL Co, by their very nature, were involved in trade - but traded not just in commodities, but also ideas and practices. Though they certainly maintained connections to the metropole, they were also open to inter- and intra-colonial influences through an intricate web of professional, personal and commercial links, becoming key actors in the translation of these influences to architectural production at the edges of empire, and continuing to shape the nature of the built environment far from the established centres of architectural practice and debate.

32 Anne Neale, "A. & S. Luttrell," *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 417.

33 Miles Lewis, "The Imperial Technology Cringe," in *Shifting Views: Selected Essays on the Architectural History of Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Andrew Leach, Antony Moulis, and Nicole Sully (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2008), 83.

34 Zöe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45 Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 14.

35 Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), 15.