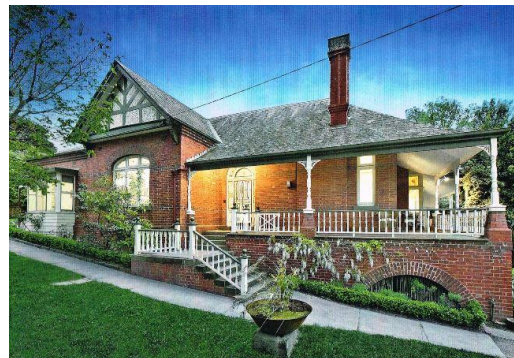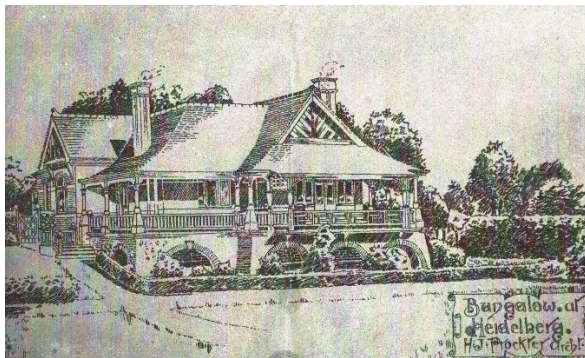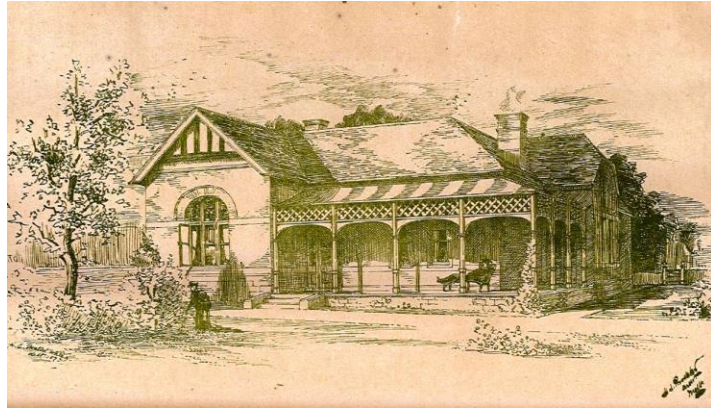**Henry Prockter**
(Battye, J.S., *Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol.1, 1912, p.634)

Henry James Prockter (1863-1941) was born at Stoke Newington, London on 19 November 1863, the son of Edward Cornelius and Susanna Prockter. After completing his scholastic studies, Henry was articled to Charles Martin Muller of Cheltenham, England, and his indentures completed, sailed for Tasmania. Crossing to the mainland shortly afterwards, he settled in Melbourne and joined the staff of W.S. Law, architect, with whom he continued for a time. In 1886 he started in practice on his own account in Melbourne, from 1887-1891 listed in the partnership Prockter & Ruck, and from 1893-1896 on his own at 80 Swanston Street, Melbourne, designing the College of Pharmacy (1894, now demolished) and a very large residence for Edwin Millar, of Millar's Karri and Jarrah Timber Company. In 1890 he was elected a member of the RVIA, and by 1891 was married, residing at *Charlton* in Riversdale Road, Hawthorn.

79 Banksia Street, Eaglemont, Victoria of c.1891 (Tony Moodie, Miles Real Estate 2011).

The text accompanying this sketch of 1894 notes: "This cottage was recently erected at Hawthorn Grove, Grace Park, Hawthorn, Victoria. The walls are of red brick, relieved with dark bricks, half timber and rough casting in gable, with rough cast and cement cove. The roofs are covered with green American slates, with tile ridging and finials. The architect is Mr H.J. Prockter, A.R.V.I.A., of Victoria Buildings, Swanston Street, Melbourne, and the contractors Messrs. Goss and Libby, of Hawthorn." (*Australasian Builder and Contractor's News*, 11 August 1894, p.55). An internet search using Google 'Street View' suggests that this house may be located at 35 Hawthorn Grove.

With economic depression in Victoria, in 1896 Prockter moved to seek greater opportunities in gold-boom Western Australia and soon established himself in Perth. In November 1896 *The West Australian* reported that he had won a competition for a new town hall for Northam. The town council of Northam had called a competition for the project, and nine sets of designs were sent in. Conducted under conditions issued by the West Australian Institute of Architects, Michael Cavanagh was appointed professional assessor of the competition, aiding the council in selecting the most suitable design. That selected by Cavanagh and unanimously accepted by the council was a design in the 'Italian Renaissance style', sent in under the *nom de plume* of *Westralia*, the architect being Henry Prockter ARVIA.

Northam Town Hall
(http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Attraction/Northam_Town_Hall/9010518)

Prockter called tenders in February 1897 for the town hall at Northam, and his success with this project led to other commissions in the town including the Freemasons' Hall, and at least three hotels (1902-04). Other prominent designs by Prockter in Western Australia include the Mechanics Institute Hall South Perth (*Old Mill Theatre* 1899), Brookman's Building (*Bon Marché Arcade* 1901) in Barrack Street Perth, the Municipal Chambers at Northam (1902) and many warehouses and private residences in town and country.

Mechanics Institute Hall completed in 1899 (now known as the *Old Mill Theatre*) South Perth
(South Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory place MPt5)

Brookman's Buildings (*Bon Marché Arcade*) in Barrack Street, Perth were opened in 1901
(*Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*, 1901, p.413; John Taylor July 2008)

Prockter was at one time Secretary to the Roads Board Association of Western Australia. It was probable that through this position Prockter established a professional relationship with solicitor Richard Septimus Haynes, Chairman of the Roads Board Association. Prockter designed the first North Perth Town Hall (now known as the Lesser Hall), and Haynes' residence *Windsor Hall* at 36 Queens Crescent, Mount Lawley during the period Haynes was Mayor of North Perth (1902-1903). In Federation Free Style, both places are State Heritage listed, as is *Uralia* built as a residence at Northam in 1902-03 for G. Lionel Throssell, later used as a hostel and a maternity hospital.

Windsor Hall (1903) at 36 Queens Crescent, Mount Lawley (Google 2013)

Active in other country centres, Prockter called tenders in late 1902 for two brick shops and a brick cottage at Narrogin for W. Cornwall, and in early 1904 produced plans for a hotel at Narrogin for Cornwall (Bertram Dods has also been noted as an architect involved with the Cornwall Hotel). Prockter called

tenders in March 1903 for a large three storey drapery warehouse, extensive alterations and additions to premises in Hay Street, Perth for Charles Moore & Co. Other work in 1903 included two brick shops at Narrogin, brick shops at Northam, alterations & additions to a private hospital in Perth, and a further terrace of shops at Narrogin. He produced documents in late 1906 for a brick and stone pharmacy building at York for George Throssell; and in 1907 for further business premises, also at York.

In 1910 Prockter was the joint architect for a new Town Hall at North Perth. Tender notices up until the year 1913 indicate that Henry remained successful in domestic design work.   In 1912 it was noted that in addition to his professional work Prockter cultivated an orchard at Kalamunda, and found recreational respite in this employment. He was twice married, his first wife being Annie Eliza Hogarth who died aged just 34 at Kalamunda in June 1905. Prockter married second wife Elizabeth Mary Walter in December 1907 at All Saints Church in Margaret Street, London – the iconic patterned brick and polychrome William Butterfield design. His advertisements confirm that he resumed practice in Perth by March of 1908. Elizabeth returned to England for the birth of a son at 'The Gables' in Lingfield, Surrey in December 1910, and the *Cyclopedia of Western Australia* notes that by 1912 Prockter's family included three sons and two daughters. However, Prockter endured family tragedy - a son Alfred died at only one day old in 1901; older son Charlton born in December 1891 at Hawthorn, Victoria was killed in action and buried at Shell Green, Gallipoli during August 1915.

Prockter is listed in *Wises Directory* as an architect at Perth up until 1913. When Charlton joined the Australian Forces in late 1914, his father's address was noted as Lingfield, Surrey. This confirms that Henry Prockter moved back to England to live around 1913 or 14, and further study would be required to establish his working achievements beyond this time. A researcher in England notes three births that are registered under the name of Prockter where the mother's maiden name is Walter, all in Godstone district of Surrey (close to Lingfield): in 1915 Jack Prockter; in 1920 Joan Prockter; and in 1922 Peter Prockter. This information suggests that the Prockter family may have become quite large! Henry Prockter died in Surrey during early 1941, aged 77 years.

References:

'New Town Hall for Northam', *The West Australian*, 17 November 1896, p.4 (wins competition).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 February 1897, p.6 (Town Hall and offices at Northam).

Northam Advertiser, 30 August 1902, p. 3.

'Defended Cases', *The West Australian*, 12 August 1899, p.10 (fees J Kelly hotel at Mundaring).

'Births, Deaths', *The West Australian*, 14 August 1901, p.4 (birth and death of son).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 October 1902, p.5 (2 brick shops and a cottage at Narrogin for W. Cornwall).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 20 March 1903, p.3 (large 3 storey drapery warehouse, extensive alterations and additions to premises Hay Street, Perth for Charles Moore & Co).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 15 January 1904, p.2 (3 storey hotel Narrogin for W Cornwall).

'Local Court', *The West Australian*, 25 June 1906, p.7 (fees S.J. Cameron building at Wagin).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 15 November 1906, p.3 (pharmacy York for Hon. G. Throssell).

'Social Notes', *The West Australian*, 24 January 1908, p.2 (marriage to second wife in England).

'Deaths', *The Western Mail*, 1 January 1910, p.31 (death of father at Kent, England).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 26 August 1910, p.4 (North Perth Town Hall joint architect with Wright Powell & Cameron)

'Births', *The West Australian*, 19 December 1910, p.1 (birth of son at Lingfield, Surrey).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 25 February 1911, p.8 (large stone residence for J Snook Beebering Hill [near Meckering] & roofing cottage at Kalamunda).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 29 May 1911, p.3 (Bungalow residence Esplanade South Perth for FW Strother).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 16 August 1912, p.2 (Bungalow Hardy St South Perth).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 6 January 1913, p.4 (villa cnr East St & Central Ave Maylands).

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