

# BUILT

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# PERTH

DISCOVERING PERTH'S ICONIC ARCHITECTURE  
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FREMANTLE PRESS

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In the relatively short space of time since the Swan River Colony was established, Perth has transformed from a group of tents into a thriving and diverse city. Architecturally, it has faced the challenge of breaking free from the early British-inspired colonial works and developing an identity of its own, specific to the city's unique climate and location. Today, Perth plays host to many exceptional architects and architectural studios, delivering nationally and internationally acclaimed buildings. The city also boasts a high number of important heritage works, and though many of these older buildings have been lost over the years, the state's Heritage Council has worked hard to provide protection for those that remain.

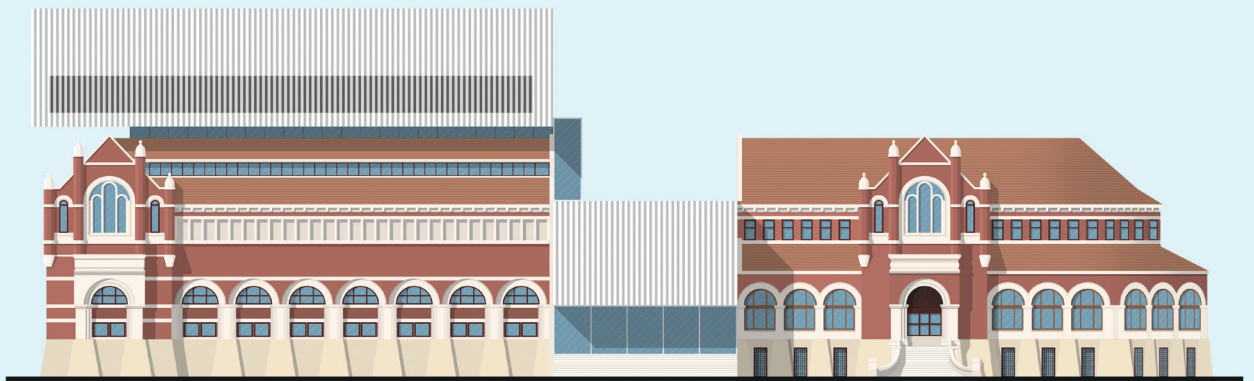
*Built: Perth* is a celebration of architecture in Perth, both new and old, parading the city's most prized architectural works and showing the exciting direction the built environment is taking. For those visiting the city, it provides a selection of noteworthy buildings, from Perth's humble beginnings in convict-built structures, through to innovative modern-day designs. For those living

in Perth, the book is a gentle tap on the shoulder, a finger which points upwards and provides a reminder of the great buildings which surround us, in a city whose architecture has often faced criticism, but which is now pushing forward and turning heads in the world of design.

On the following pages, you'll find 50 of what we believe to be the city's most iconic works of architecture, each one represented in the form of a lovingly crafted illustration. The accompanying text provides key insight into the buildings' histories, uncovering some of the lesser known secrets of the structures of Perth, the clients who commissioned them, the architects who designed them and the various obstacles and triumphs they faced along the way. For each entry, we have included details of the designers, clients, completion dates, costs and styles of the buildings where they are known. Especially with the older buildings, many additions and significant restorations have been done over the years, so this information reflects only the original or most significant contributions. The costs are as accurate as possible, but

can only serve as a guide because many of the records are incomplete or not public information.

To produce a 'Top 50' of the best buildings on offer in Perth is a near impossible task, and in *Built: Perth* we do not seek to accomplish any such goal; rather it is a showcase of the vast array of exciting architecture within the coastal city. Whittling the selection down to 50 worthy buildings to research and illustrate turned out to be a harder task than first imagined – we felt spoiled for choice. Firstly, our selection was based loosely on the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter for determining cultural significance, being that each building must have aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past or present generations. Secondly, we wanted to capture a variety of architecture, in terms of buildings' use, style and age. Lastly, we chose architecture that we love and felt excited to write about, illustrate and share with you. We believe that all are important and have earned their place on the pages of *Built: Perth*.



# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

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PERTH CULTURAL CENTRE, NORTHBRIDGE

Built in 1856 and originally fronting Beaufort Street, the diminutive form of the Old Perth Courthouse and Gaol set a precedent for its future neighbours, which would also be shaped by some of the state's most renowned names and push architectural boundaries of their time. Richard Roach Jewell designed the limestone jail to show a level of detail and sensitivity not previously seen in colonial architecture, given the basic materials available. After serving its purpose of housing convicts, the building was established as a geological museum in 1891, before being renamed as the Perth Museum the following year.

The prosperity of the gold rush prompted a design to be drawn up for the first dedicated building to house the state's library, art gallery and museum. Famed architect George Temple Poole was to design the scheme, originally envisioning the building to run the full length of the block. Unfortunately, the only portion of his design to ever come to fruition is the Jubilee building on the corner of James and Beaufort streets. The following years saw new homes built for both the art gallery and the library, located in and around their

previous location. The Victoria Library lay to the west of the Jubilee building until its demolition in 1985 and a gallery, designed by John Grainger and Hillson Beasley, provided a new frontage to Beaufort Street. While the new gallery followed an aligned material palette, Poole was critical of both buildings for their deviation in style from his original work. Beasley's later design of Hackett Hall in 1913 shares many of the characteristics of the Jubilee building; though due to a falling out between the two architects, it was built deliberately off-centre and short of Poole's work. The gap was filled in 1999 with a modern steel and glass foyer.

Running in the theme of architectural all-stars, Perth now welcomes in the \$395.9 million museum addition, a collaboration involving world-renowned architecture firms OMA and HASSELL. The enormous development, floating around and above the existing buildings, unites the site's current heritage works and increases the current museum size fourfold. The bold design seeks to further ignite the already thriving Perth Cultural Centre, with expansive internal galleries to provide a fitting home for the state's treasures.



## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

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### ARCHITECT

George Temple Poole (Jubilee building); HASSELL and OMA (new addition)

### CLIENT

Government of Western Australia

### YEAR OF COMPLETION

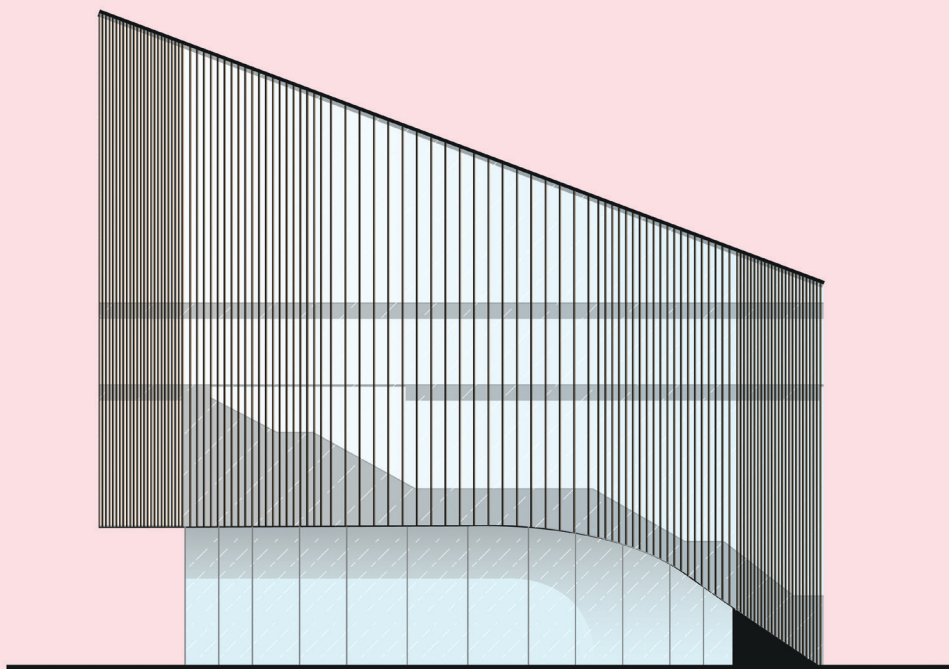
1897; 2020 (est.)

### COST

Unknown; \$395.9 million (est.)

### STYLE

Federation Romanesque;  
Twenty-first Century  
Postmodernist



## CITY OF PERTH LIBRARY

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573 HAY STREET, PERTH



## CITY OF PERTH LIBRARY

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The first civic building to be constructed by the City of Perth since the Perth Concert Hall in 1973, the City of Perth Library was awarded the coveted George Temple Poole Award in 2016 alongside the neighbouring State Buildings.

The outcome of a national competition, the design of the library complements the composition of the heritage buildings that make up the Cathedral Square precinct and balances them visually. There is a certain poetry in the juxtaposition of the chamfered cylindrical library, the ornate rectilinear Treasury buildings, the pointed facades of the cruciform of St George's Cathedral, and the perfectly manicured landscape that separates them, as if the area had been arranged by Kandinsky himself. The four kilometres of vertical granite-clad 'cassettes' that make up the facade are a superbly contemporary application of an ancient material that

might have been used to build the library a century earlier. The entrance foyer and interior are covered in Australian timbers – blackbutt, southern blue gum, spotted gum and Victorian ash – all of which create an interior that is warm and comforting. The sensation of standing inside the library is truly unique: 360 degrees of natural light bathes the timber-laden circular atrium, at the top of which lies the mural *Delight and Hurt Not* by local artist Andrew Nicholls, depicting the final scene of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The fairytale at the city's 'lounge room' is topped off by 'the tree of knowledge', a large, live weeping fig on its top floor. With 360 degrees of windows offering priceless views of the nearby heritage buildings to settle next to, the library is an achievement in creating an invaluable sense of community within an urban setting.

**ARCHITECT**  
Kerry Hill Architects

**CLIENT**  
City of Perth

**YEAR OF COMPLETION**  
2016

**COST**  
\$60 million

**STYLE**  
Twenty-first Century Organic/  
Contemporary



## PERTH TOWN HALL

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CORNER HAY STREET AND BARRACK STREET, PERTH





## PERTH TOWN HALL

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With a 38-metre fairytale tower, the Perth Town Hall was built on the highest point in the centre of town, on the approximate location that the first tree was felled nearly 50 years prior to mark the foundation of the colony. It is unlike any other Australian capital town hall, its design akin to public buildings of fourteenth to sixteenth century European villages: a marketplace beneath a hall and clock or watch tower. It is the only town hall in Australia to be built by convicts, with tales long told of subtle nods to the workforce made by the architect in the broad arrow-shaped windows on the tower (a symbol used on convict uniforms) and an architrave in the shape of a hangman's rope. Though it makes for a good yarn, the broad arrow was probably used as it was a symbol that denoted government property.

In the days when the correct time was a privilege affordable only to the

wealthy, clock towers were critical to prosperous towns and traditionally placed in the north-west corner of the building with faces in the directions of the compass to help travellers orient themselves. The Perth Town Hall clock has been lovingly cared for by the Ennis family since 1931, who have personally ensured the clock chimes at midnight each new year and that it falls silent for the eleventh hour every Remembrance Day.

The Town Hall's undercroft has provided a setting for a number of uses over time: a market for its first few years, an early fire brigade for the city and shops from the 1920s. The arches were largely removed in favor of steel beams to form shopfronts in the 1920s, before being reinstated nearly 80 years later in 2005. Today the main hall hosts a range of public events from balls and fundraisers to weddings and concerts.

### ARCHITECT

Richard Roach Jewell with James Manning

### CLIENT

British War and Colonial Office

### YEAR OF COMPLETION

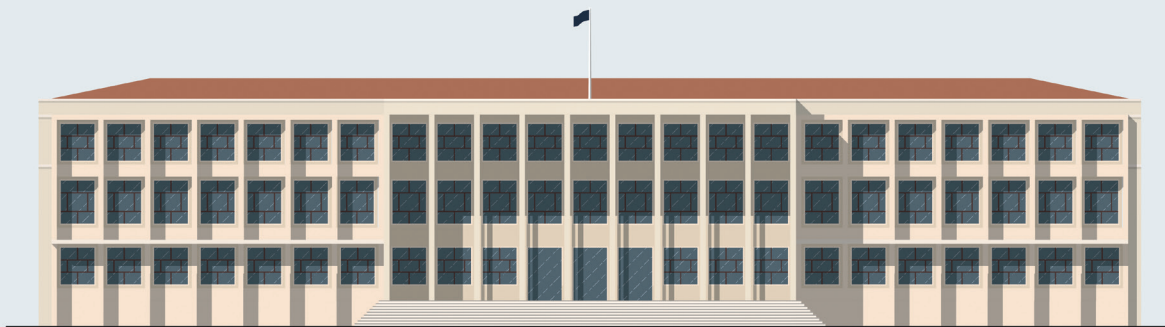
1870

### COST

£4,600

### STYLE

Victorian Free Gothic



# PARLIAMENT HOUSE

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4 HARVEST TERRACE, WEST PERTH

The foundation stone for Parliament House was laid in 1902 at the north-eastern corner of the site and, though part of the building was completed in 1904, the stone would remain the sole reminder of the site's original intentions for some sixty years. This tale of two buildings began with a national architectural competition for the design of Perth's Parliament House at the turn of the century. The chosen adjudicator of the competition never selected a winner from the entries, but the project eventually fell to the Public Works Department's chief architect – John Grainger. Grainger's original design underwent a hefty cost-cutting exercise, resulting in a very modest reflection of the intended building. Aside from the legislative assembly and legislative council chambers, the original building contained little else.

While the 1902 design catered for the requirements of parliamentary meetings, by 1950 the need for additional space for staff had become a major issue. Another ongoing point of contention with the design was its orientation, facing west, away

from the city, while its eastern facade consisted of a rather inadequate combination of brick and corrugated metal. When Queen Elizabeth II had to be escorted through the tradesmen's entrance to attend a garden party during her visit in 1954, it became clear that it was time to tackle the unrealised eastern wing. In 1964, the east-facing facade, comprising of some 1,500 tonnes of Donnybrook stone, was finally completed at a cost of £416,000. The addition was not designed with grandiose Victorian characteristics as originally intended, instead taking on a more contemporary Stripped Classical style, giving Parliament House its two-faced personality. Aside from providing additional space and modernising the building, the true merit of the new work was that it reoriented the building to face the city so that it now stared straight down St Georges Terrace. This long-awaited focal adjustment was summed up perfectly by an article in the *Sunday Times* featuring the headline, 'A Real Front Door at Last!'



## PARLIAMENT HOUSE

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### ARCHITECT

John Harry Grainger (original building); E.H. Van Mens (1964 addition)

### CLIENT

Government of Western Australia

### YEAR OF COMPLETION

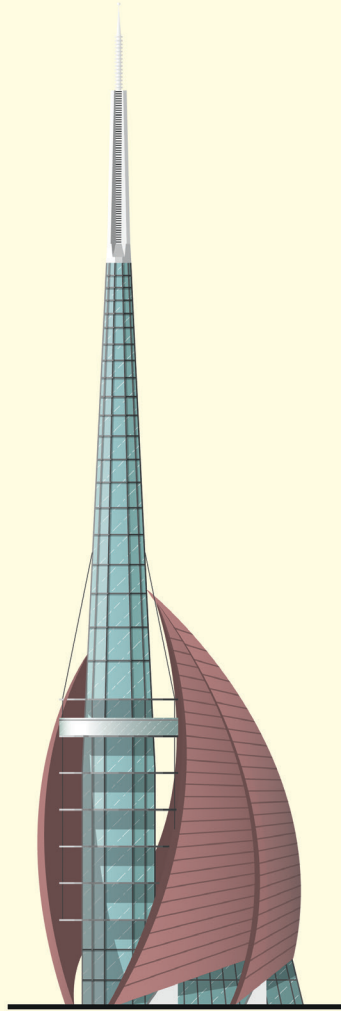
1904; 1964 (further additions made in 1978, 2002)

### COST

£35,600; £416,000

### STYLE

Federation Classical; Late Twentieth Century Stripped Classical



## THE BELL TOWER

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BARRACK SQUARE, RIVERSIDE DRIVE, PERTH

The image of the 82.5-metre Bell Tower sitting serenely on the bank of the Swan River has become synonymous with Perth. The story of the tower's inception is a somewhat turbulent one, beginning with a gift from England in the form of some very large and very old bells.

In the late 1980s, Western Australia was gifted the twelve bells of St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, London, where they had been rung for many historic events over hundreds of years. Unfortunately Western Australia had no buildings large enough to house the bells, so they were put into storage where they would remain for the next ten years. Some in England didn't think much of their ancient gift being treated in such a way, sparking a petition in the early 1990s to have the bells brought back to the motherland. This public pressure resulted in a competition for a millennium project as part of the Barrack Square redevelopment to give the bells a permanent home.

A public works project as important as the Bell Tower required a vision for

the future, which many people at the time did not share. The initial design came under huge public scrutiny for being both a waste of money and an architectural eyesore. Construction workers reported that in the early stages of the project, cars would stop at the site to provide some well-considered words about the building.

As the tower took shape, the public's criticism died off and their focus could turn back to the design of one of the world's largest musical instruments. The site on Barrack Street was formerly a place of boatbuilding, and the tower heavily reflects this nautical theme. The large copper sails are not only a testament to Perth's connection with the water, but also with the state's mining history. The historic bells sit comfortably at precisely the same height they were once hung in London. Above them is the tower: lightweight, modern and technologically advanced, designed to showcase the engineering capabilities of Western Australia and encapsulate the feeling of a state looking to the future.



## THE BELL TOWER

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**ARCHITECT**  
Hames Sharley

**CLIENT**  
Government of Western Australia

**YEAR OF COMPLETION**  
2000

**COST**  
\$6.8 million (estimated)

**STYLE**  
Deconstructivist