

= Council House , Perth =

Council House is a 13 @-@ storey office building on St Georges Terrace in Perth , Western Australia . Located beside Stirling Gardens and Government House in the city 's central business district , the 47 @. @ 9 @-@ metre (157 ft) building was designed by Howlett and Bailey Architects and opened by The Queen in 1963 , after Perth hosted the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games . For most of its history , it has served as the headquarters for the City of Perth .

Built in a modernist style , the building has been the subject of vigorous public debate about its heritage value . Some parties , such as the Royal Australian Institute of Architects , consider the building to be an important example of modernist architecture in the city , whilst others consider it ugly . These conflicting views led to animosity in the 1990s , when the State Government refused to heritage list the property , and instead recommended its demolition . Despite this , the City of Perth opted to renovate the tower and keep it as its headquarters . Following this , the building was admitted to the State 's Heritage Register .

= = Prior site history = =

The site was originally home to the Colony 's governing Legislative Council in a building which came to be known as the Old Government Offices or Public Offices . The building was designed by Acting Civil Engineer Henry Reveley in August 1836 after he was asked to prepare plans for public offices on the site . A call for tenders was made , and the tender accepted was for £ 1 @, @ 833 , well above the £ 1 @, @ 200 maximum specified in the call for tenders . Payment was delayed until February 1839 .

The Public Offices stood 10 metres (33 ft) back from St Georges Terrace . The Legislative Council occupied the building until 1870 , when it moved to a chamber adjoining the new Perth Town Hall . The Legislative Council returned to the building in 1890 after the newly formed Legislative Assembly took over that chamber . In the 1890s , the building became a Post Office , before being taken over by the Department of Agriculture , and the building continued to be used as public offices until 1961 . Additions to the building in the 1930s included a second storey , which contained a Legislative Council room and offices for senior public servants . Showing its age , the building eventually became what was described as a " rat @-@ infested hell @-@ hole " .

The Perth City Council had been based from 1871 in the Perth Town Hall , then in 1925 moved to offices in Murray Street . The site of the Public Offices on St Georges Terrace was chosen as the site for a new home for the Perth City Council in 1954 . Immediately south of the Public Offices building stood the Soldiers ' Institute building . This building was taken over from the Returned Soldiers ' League by the ABC in 1937 for its 6WF radio studio .

= = Competition and construction = =

With the news that Perth would be hosting the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games , Perth City Council in 1959 launched an international competition to design its new building . The brief in the competition was to design a " creative building that marked where Perth was at the time " and have the building ready in time for the opening of the Commonwealth Games .

There were 61 designs entered into the competition , including one by Jeffrey Howlett and Don Bailey from the Melbourne architectural firm Bates , Smart and McCutcheon . The jury assessing the competition entries , which included architect Harry Seidler , described the Howlett @-@ Bailey plan as " a remarkably simple solution to a complex problem " and declared them winners of the competition .

The ABC moved to new premises on Adelaide Terrace in 1960 when the Council House site was taken over by the Perth City Council for construction to begin . Both the Public Offices and Soldiers ' Institute buildings were demolished to make way for the redevelopment .

Excavations for construction of the building 's foundations started in October 1961 and the first concrete pour occurred in November 1961 . The building was not completely finished by the time

Perth hosted the Commonwealth Games in November 1962 , however the builders rushed to finish the ground , eighth , and 10th floors in time so that foreign dignitaries could be entertained in the reception areas . Following the Games , the fit @-@ out of the building was finished in March 1963 , and on 25 March 1963 Queen Elizabeth II officially opened Council House , unveiling a 2 @.@ 4 @-@ metre (7 @.@ 9 ft) tall ceremonial plaque set in granite from the original 1817 Waterloo Bridge in London .

Construction of Council House was performed by J. Hawkins and Son Pty Ltd , and cost £ 1 @.@ 5 million . It was the first building in Perth to use complete window walling . In order to reduce the heat entering the building through these full @-@ height windows , the building used internal blinds and external sun @-@ breakers . When the building was opened , all Perth City Council activities were moved there .

Part of Howlett and Bailey 's plans for the complex included the extension of Terrace Road westwards across the sites of the Old Court House and the Supreme Court , but this was never done . Also part of their plan was the construction of an elliptical auditorium called the " Public Suite " behind Council House ; the plan to build this was dropped after the completion of Council House , with the design reformulated by Howlett and Bailey and the building eventually built on the opposite side of Government House as the Perth Concert Hall .

= = 1990s refurbishment and heritage listing = =

The building continued to serve as the headquarters for the Perth City Council from its completion until 1994 , when it was vacated to allow for the removal of asbestos which had been used to insulate the building 's steel frame . The Council moved to office space in the Westralia Square building .

In 1994 , Commissioners appointed by the State to oversee the break @-@ up of the Perth City Council voted to demolish the building . At the time , refurbishment costs were estimated to run to \$ 42 million . The State Government 's plan was to demolish the building and extend Stirling Gardens right across the site to beside Government House , as part of a broader plan entitled " Perth - A City for People " which also included the Northbridge Tunnel , the sinking of Riverside Drive , and the housing of Supreme Court and District Court under the one roof . The State Government suggested that the Council move into the Old Treasury Building across St Georges Terrace , for which they offered an incentive of \$ 30 million .

Significant public debate ensued about whether the building should be kept . Those prominent in the fight to save the building included Bill Warnock , architect Ken Adam , and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects . Others said it was " out of date , unattractive , and out of step " with the older heritage buildings which surround it . Heritage Minister Graham Kierath also refused to place the building on the WA Register of Heritage Places , despite calls from the Heritage Council and the National Trust to do so . This decision " stunned " the Institute of Architects .

Despite the recommendation for demolition , in late 1995 , the Councillors of the newly formed City of Perth had a feasibility study carried out into whether Council House could be refurbished . This feasibility study was carried out by Architects Cox Howlett and Bailey , of which one of the partners was the son of original designer Jeffrey Howlett , and cost \$ 100 @,@ 000 . The study indicated that the building could be economically refurbished , and in December 1996 the Council unanimously agreed to press ahead with refurbishment plans , removing its asbestos and building an underground car park at the rear of the site . The decision to refurbish was helped by the fact that interest rates at the time were so low that it was cheaper to service a loan than to pay rent . At the time , the refurbishment was expected to cost around \$ 26 million .

The new 95 @-@ bay car park at the rear of the building required the removal of a New Zealand Kauri Pine estimated to be up to 150 years old , and was described by Opposition MLC John Cowdell as a " disgrace " which would undermine the heritage value of the precinct . There was also some concern expressed that the refurbishment might cause the building to lose heritage value through the updating of its interiors .

The contract to refurbish the building was won by John Holland Group , the construction company

of Janet Holmes à Court , on 29 July 1997 , at a price of \$ 25 @. @ 3 million . The architect for the refurbishment was Geoffrey Clough of Peter Hunt and Daryl Jackson Architects . The building was " stripped back to bare bones " and the tiny tiles coating the building 's distinctive " T " -shaped fins were removed , repaired , and re @-@ glued to the surface . The refurbishment also involved the construction of a new " Lord Mayoral space and reception area " on the eleventh floor (formerly a plant level) , the full enclosure of the ground floor (which had previously been partially open to the elements) and the replacement of gold Venetian blinds which had been a feature of the building in the past .

The City of Perth moved back to Council House in February 1999 and placed three unused floors of Council House for lease . The refurbishment was widely considered a " qualified success " , with the building " handsomely restored " .

The Western Australian state election of 2001 had resulted in a change of government , including a change of Heritage Minister . The restored building was finally placed on the interim heritage list by Heritage Minister Michelle Roberts on 5 March 2006 . Former Heritage Minister Graham Kierath , who had resisted the nomination in the 1990s , attacked the decision to list the building as pandering to left @-@ wing supporters . The Heritage Council of Western Australia recommended on 17 November 2006 that the listing of the building go ahead . The building was entered as a permanent entry on the Heritage Register on 8 December 2006 .

= = Design and reaction = =

Council House is constructed from concrete @-@ encased steel frame , with lifts and service rooms located at its eastern end and a fire escape stairwell at its western end . Level 9 houses the distinctive circular Council Chamber , which features wood panelling and has been restored to largely its original state in the 1990s refurbishment (by contrast to most of the other levels of the building) . The building is almost completely clad with glass , which led to criticism about its excessive air conditioning costs . The glass exterior of the building has T @-@ shaped white sunbreakers superimposed in an alternating pattern across the building , coated with fine mosaic tiles . With the newly enclosed top floor , the building now has 13 levels above ground .

The building , which was the favourite creation of its designer Jeffrey Howlett , has been called the most important example of modernist architecture in Perth and " one of the State 's modernist icons " . The building has been described as demonstrating " modernist aspirations " from the Bauhaus school , exuding " brutalist warmth " . Stephen Neille , the Chair of Architectural Design at Curtin University , described it as reflecting Perth of that time : a city " brimming with confidence and consciously promoting itself to the world as a modern city " . Adrian Iredale , from architects Iredale Pederson Hook , described the building as " simultaneously elegant and heavy and introducing poetry through the repetitive system of sun shading , the big Ts that hover in front of the facade on all sides . "

The building has divided the public over the years , with some branding the building an " eyesore " and a " hideous folly " , whereas others considered it a " classic example of 1960s architecture and an important reminder of Perth 's past " and a " unique building " . It has been suggested by Associate Ralph Hoare from the Australian Institute of Architects said the building should never have been built on St Georges Terrace , having been built in the " wrong place " .

= = = LED lighting = = =

The outside of the building was fitted with over 22 @, @ 000 LED lights which was officially turned on on 7 April 2010 . The LEDs located on the roof , " T " window structures , and bulkheads are able to be individually computer controlled and coloured . The lights were installed at a cost of \$ 1 @. @ 08 million .