

= 108 St Georges Terrace =

108 St Georges Terrace or South32 Tower ( formerly known as Bankwest Tower , the Bond Tower and the R & I Tower ) is a 50 @-@ storey office tower in Perth , Western Australia . Completed in 1988 , the building measures 214 metres ( 702 ft ) to its roof and 247 metres ( 810 ft ) to the tip of its communications antenna . It was the tallest building in Perth from its completion in 1988 until 1992 when it was overtaken in height by Central Park . As of 2012 , it remains the third @-@ tallest building in the city . The concrete tower has a distinctive profile , with a triangular plan .

The site occupied by the tower was home to the Palace Hotel , and organised opposition was formed to try to save that building from demolition to make way for an office tower . The site was subsequently acquired by businessman Alan Bond and the tower was approved and constructed in a plan that would retain much of the Palace Hotel . The tower then remained the headquarters of Bond 's companies until their collapse . The tower has also been the headquarters of Western Australia 's state bank , Bankwest ( formerly known as the R & I Bank ) , between its completion and 2012 .

= = History = =

= = = Pre @-@ 1978 = = =

The tower 's prime location at the corner of William Street and St Georges Terrace was the site of the first licensed premises in Perth from the 1830s . The then @-@ opulent Palace Hotel opened on this corner in 1897 during the days of the Western Australian gold rush , and developed a " colourful " history , hosting numerous celebrities of the time . The plot was purchased by the Commonwealth Banking Corporation , which announced in 1972 that it planned to redevelop the site as high @-@ rise offices . During the 1950s and 1960s , many of Perth 's older buildings had been demolished to make way for modern developments , which led to wide criticism of the Perth City Council for approving such redevelopments . In this atmosphere , wide public protest resulted and a lobby group of concerned citizens calling themselves " The Palace Guards " worked to save the historic building . This outcry led to condemnation of the plans and heritage listing of the property by the National Trust , and forced the Commonwealth Bank to ask the Federal Government to take the property off its hands . The property was subsequently purchased from the Commonwealth Bank by businessman Alan Bond in 1978 along with the adjacent Terrace Arcade .

= = = Bond Corporation and construction : 1978 ? 1988 = = =

In 1980 , Bond unveiled new plans for the redevelopment of the site . These plans made some effort at preservation of the Palace Hotel , by retaining the facade and main foyer area of the building . However , the construction of the modern office tower at the site 's north @-@ eastern corner required demolition of Terrace Arcade , the eastern accommodation wing and the hotel 's renowned dining room . The rationale given for the works required was that extensive renovations to the Palace Hotel in 1915 and the 1930s had weakened its structure significantly , as well as problems controlling white ants in the structure . The development exceeded the acceptable plot ratio in the town planning scheme , however the Perth City Council pre @-@ approved the plans nonetheless , on the condition that Bond Corporation kept the Palace Hotel operating as a hotel .

Demolition of parts of the site commenced in August 1981 , and by August 1983 construction had completed on the tower 's foundation and three levels of underground parking . However , there were continuing doubts about the viability of the building , slowing the pace of the development . This changed on 7 September 1984 when R & I Bank Chairman David Fischer signed a joint venture agreement over the development with Austmark International , a subsidiary of Bond Corporation . The bank , which was at the time wholly owned by the Government of Western Australia , consulted then @-@ Premier Brian Burke in deciding whether to invest in the project .

Following the investment in the project by the bank , the developers successfully sought modification of the original planning approval by the Perth City Council to allow the use of the Palace Hotel as a bank , rather than remaining as a public hotel . With this permission , construction of the development by Multiplex proceeded , and floor space was leased rapidly ; by October 1985 only four floors of the building remained for lease and it was expected to be fully let before completion . With construction finally proceeding once more , the Palace Hotel closed in June 1986 . In April 1987 , while the tower was still under construction , five men were arrested after illegally entering the site and parachuting from the top of the tower in the early hours of the morning . Construction proceeded at the rate of about one floor every eight to ten days .

The construction of the tower took three years to complete , with the first occupants moving into the tower in July 1988 . The tower was officially opened in October 1989 . Construction of the building cost A \$ 120 million , up from the 1984 estimates of \$ 100 million . Upon its completion , the building was the 55th @-@ tallest building in the world , the third @-@ tallest in Australia and the tallest in Perth ( overtaking St Martins Tower ) . It was also the eighth @-@ tallest concrete skyscraper in the world . However , at this time there were already plans to build a taller building on the site of the former David Jones department store between Hay Street and St Georges Terrace , which became Central Park .

= = = After completion : 1988 ? 2012 = = =

The top three floors of the building were occupied by Alan Bond 's private investment company Dallhold Investments , which owned a majority stake in Bond Corporation . In November 1987 , Alan Bond bought the Vincent van Gogh painting *Irises* and unveiled it in a purpose @-@ built secure art gallery on the 49th floor of the tower on 23 December 1988 . Amidst a worsening financial situation for the Bond companies , Bond Corporation sold its half share in the building to R & I Bank for \$ 108 million , making R & I Bank its outright owner . In 1991 amid the collapse of the Bond empire , Bond shifted his offices out of the tower , leaving the top three floors vacant . These floors then remained vacant for almost a decade .

From when it opened , the tower was referred to as both the Bond Tower and the R & I Tower , owing to the presence of both logos on the building 's exterior . The Bond Corporation logos were later removed from the tower , and by the end of 1994 , the signage on the building was updated to match the new name and logo of its owner and head tenant , Bankwest .

Bankwest sold the building in November 1994 for \$ 146 million to Jetcloud Pty Ltd , which was majority owned by the AMP Society . However , Bankwest retained the head lease over the building , and in 2000 the Bank occupied around 20 floors in the building . In 2002 , Valad purchased a half @-@ share in the tower for \$ 92 @. @ 5 million , which it then sold to Stockland in early 2007 . Meanwhile , Multiplex acquired its half @-@ stake in the tower from its merger with Ronin Property Group which was proposed in late 2004 . Brookfield Multiplex put its half share in the building up for sale in early 2008 , however an offer for the tower by Luke Saraceni fell through and the half share in the tower was taken off the property market .

Bankwest announced in 2006 that it would not renew its occupancy lease , instead moving to a new tower proposed for Raine Square . Due to delays with the Raine Square development , the Bank was forced in November 2009 to seek a 5 @-@ year renewal of its lease in the Bankwest Tower , the remainder of which will be taken on by Raine Square property developer Saracen Properties . Saracen Properties announced in May 2009 that they would not seek to renew their lease , and would vacate at the termination of their lease in November 2009 . It was also revealed that the 50th floor office space once occupied by Alan Bond was still in the same condition as when he left in 1991 , with Bond 's former chair , desk and boardroom table available as part of the lease .

It was announced in January 2015 that base metal and mining company South32 would sign 10 ½ -year lease for 8 @, @ 300 square metres ( 89 @, @ 000 sq ft ) of office space , starting from May 2015 . The company also took up the naming and rooftop signage rights for the tower .

= = Design = =

The tower was designed by architects Cameron Chisholm Nicol . The major parameter given to them in the planning of the building was that " all office areas should face the excellent views that exist of the Swan River " . Working within this brief , they selected a triangular cross @-@ section of the tower because it lent " itself to open plan office layouts " by allowing natural light to reach most parts of the working floors . Also , the stepped front of the building maximised the number of corner offices on each floor . The eastern and northern sides of the building are slip @-@ formed concrete shear walls , and have fewer windows . These sides house the services of the building , including the lift shafts and stairwells . Some difficulty was encountered in the design stage with how to execute the diagonal slopes forming the top of these walls alongside the top five floors of the building , since a standard concrete pour was not possible . Instead , reinforced concrete panels were prefabricated elsewhere and subsequently attached to the structure .

The floor plates of the tower are constructed from conventional reinforced concrete beams and slabs . The building 's 14 passenger lifts are divided into three zones : low @-@ rise ( floors G @-@ 17 ) , mid @-@ rise ( 18 ? 29 ) and high @-@ rise ( 30 ? 51 ) , thought to be the first building in Australia to use such a configuration .

The foyer of the tower was originally planned to be an open @-@ air forecourt between the building and the remains of the Palace Hotel , however extensive aeroelastic wind testing of the structure by the Institute of Environmental Sciences at Murdoch University forced this area to be covered with a glass canopy . Mocks of the curtain walls to be used in the tower were also tested to 1 @.@ 5 times the proof load to ensure they could withstand cyclone @-@ force weather and seismic shocks . The building is clad with green @-@ tinted double @-@ pane glass on windows , with the service core and structure of the building covered with aluminium sheeting skin coated with a light grey fluoropolymer paint .

Upon completion , the mass of the building above ground was 66 @,@ 000 tonnes ( 146 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 lb ) . The building rests upon 43 belled concrete and steel piles , of average length 30 metres ( 98 ft ) , which go " through 3 layers of swamp " to solid siltstone bedrock . These piles range in diameter from 2 @.@ 5 metres ( 8 ft 2 in ) to 2 @.@ 9 metres ( 9 ft 6 in ) . The basement of the building has a depth of 16 metres ( 52 ft ) , and has a 0 @.@ 5 @-@ metre ( 1 ft 8 in ) thick diaphragm wall to prevent water ingress .

While the building was under construction , on 21 September 1987 the Perth City Council approved the addition of a 48 @-@ metre ( 157 ft ) spire to the top of the tower to house television and radio antennas , microwave antennas , navigation lights and surveillance cameras . However , when asked about the surveillance cameras , the R & I Bank 's development spokesman Terry Pilbeam denied any knowledge about what any cameras would be used for . The spire was also approved by the Department of Transport and Communications , which said the spire would cause no air traffic problems , and the spire was added to the building upon completion .

= = Gallery = =