

Allan Green (1947 RAIA WA Exhibition Catalogue, p.11).

William Allan McInnes Green (1896-1972) son of Thompson Green, boilermaker, and Margaret (née Kelly) Green was born 24 January 1896 at Kilkenny, an inner north-western suburb of Adelaide, South Australia. Allan's father was at various times a member of State Parliament in SA and a Mayor of Thebarton for four terms. Educated at Adelaide High School, Allan joined the South Australian Railways in March 1914 as a draftsman. Following patriotic duty, the twenty year old 'draftsman and surveyor' of Torrensville enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces for the First World War (1914-1918) in March 1916, and served on the 'Western Front' in France from early 1917, where he was wounded. Allan was fortunate enough to survive the war, and following discharge from the army at Adelaide in February 1920, resumed his former employment, whilst studying part time at the South Australian School of Mines & Industries, and at the University of Adelaide. Allan obtained a Bachelor of Engineering degree in 1928.

Resigning from the railways in 1928, Green joined the Adelaide City Council. He was associated with the design of many large works, assisted in the reconstruction of the city's markets and baths, and provided advice on amending the State's building codes. In April 1932 he married Edyth Irene Thomas at the Stow Memorial Church, Adelaide. An associate member (1932) of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, and an Associate (1934) of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Fellow 1945), he moved to Tasmania in 1934 as assistant-engineer, architect and building surveyor to the City of Launceston where he designed a number of public buildings and remodelled the town hall. Allan's elder brother, journalist Henry Thompson Green, who had lost an arm whilst serving on the Western Front in 1916, died of pneumonia at Adelaide in 1934.

On 17 May 1937 Green was appointed building surveyor to the Perth City Council, and was appointed city architect soon afterwards. Allan was registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (reg no 170) by examination in May 1941, and was a Board Member 1941-1947. In October 1945 he formally succeeded W.E. Bold as town clerk at Perth. Public criticism of Bold's administration had culminated in 1938 in a royal commission which found that Bold had grown careless in his responsibilities. Green's appointment was intended to restore credibility to the office of town clerk and to revive the spirit of planning in the State.

The outbreak of the Second World War (1939-1945) had a major impact on West Australians, the architectural profession and the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia (RIAWA). During the early period of the war the Institute assumed it would continue to operate more or less as normal. Throughout 1940 and early 1941 an Institute committee (A.E. 'Paddy' Clare, Allan Green and Harold Boas) were occupied with the preparation of a set of model by-laws. With the twenty or so local government authorities in the metropolitan area at that time each having different by-laws (a situation described as 'farcical and uneconomical') it was hoped the model by-laws would be adopted by all local authorities and thus bring a measure of uniformity to the situation.

Unlike the situation during the First World War, when the architectural profession and the Institute had continued to function more or less normally, the effects of the 1939-1945 conflict were significant and severe. By the end of 1942, it was claimed that 90% of all architects were directly involved in the war effort. With the profession facing the serious challenges of war and few members available to attend to Institute matters, it was informally agreed that a long and ongoing debate about amalgamation of the RIAWA with the national body, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), should be set aside until the end of the war. However, while in Sydney on war related work during June 1942, Vice-President of RIAWA Harold Boas took the opportunity to discuss amalgamation with Professor A.S. Hook, secretary of the RAIA. Both men were confident that the difficulties standing in the way of amalgamation could be resolved. Seizing the moment, Boas wrote to RIAWA President Paddy Clare recommending that the RIAWA should join forces with the RAIA as soon as possible.

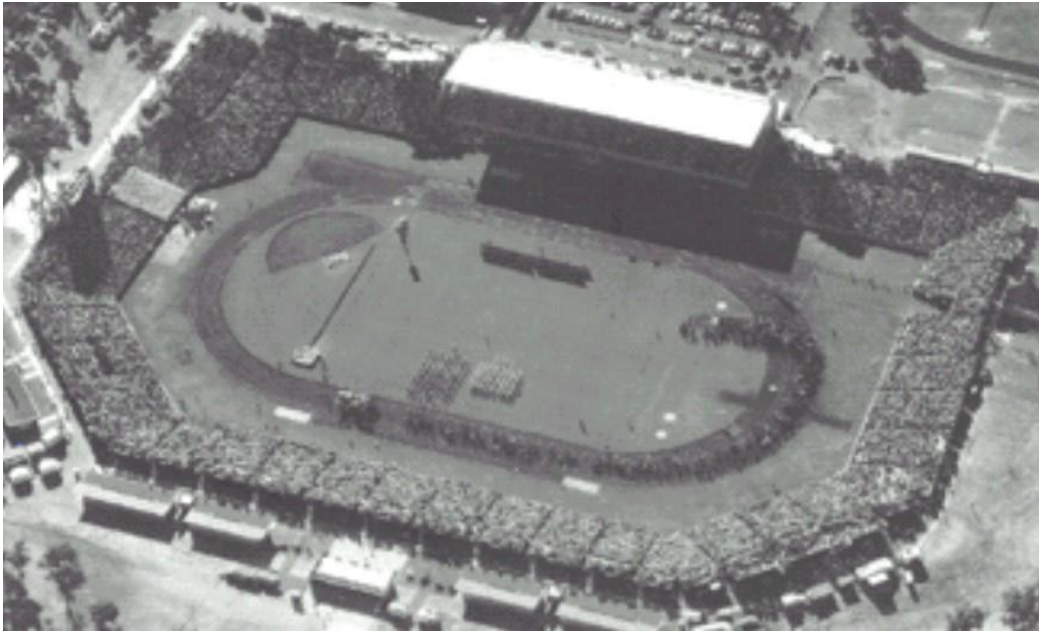
Following consideration by the RIAWA Council, a decision was taken later that year to submit a formal application for all members of the RIAWA to form the WA Chapter of the RAIA. Following approval of this proposal by the Council of the RAIA, the terms of the agreement were forwarded to Perth and considered at a special meeting of RIAWA Council on 5 January 1943 and at a special general meeting of members on the next day. With their agreement, the Council was authorised to proceed with the merger of the RIAWA with the RAIA. The public announcement of the formation of the WA Chapter of the RAIA appeared in the March 1943 edition of *The Architect*. With Paddy Clare and Harold Boas, Allan was one of the senior members of the Institute who remained active in WA during the very difficult war years, and he was elected as the third President (after A.E. Clare 1943-1944 and A.B. Winning 1945-1946) of the relatively newly-formed WA chapter of the RAIA for 1947-1948.

It is likely that Allan made return visits to visit family in Adelaide when possible. With the death of his father in 1945, the press noted that Thompson Green had four surviving children: Mrs WL Sellars (Erindale), Mrs RS Scrutton (Port Pirie), Messrs W Allan Green (town clerk of Perth) and DM Green (Reade Park). In 1952 he toured Europe and North America, and saw for himself what could be done by decisive civic action. With Green's encouragement, Professor Gordon Stephenson and Alistair Hepburn prepared an ambitious exercise in regional planning: published as an advisory plan in 1955, their report formed the basis of the Perth Metropolitan Region Scheme of 1963.



Allan Green c.1960s (RAIA WA); Council House Perth, which resulted from the City of Perth's 1960 architectural competition, and was completed in 1962-1963 (SLWA 000063D)

Meanwhile, it was Green's confidence that the City could build the basic sporting venues - a stadium, a swimming pool and a residential village - that made Perth's bid for the 1962 Commonwealth Games a successful one. He then took a leading role in marshalling the City's resources, in co-ordinating and supervising the works programme, and in advising on the design of Perry Lakes Stadium, the Beatty Park Aquatic Centre, and the Games Village at Floreat Park.



The 30 000 seat Perry Lakes Stadium of 1962 (<https://www.austadiums.com/stadiums/perry-lakes-stadium>).



Beatty Park Aquatic Centre of 1962 (SLWA 257146PD).



Entrance to the 7th British Empire and Commonwealth Games Village (SLWA 340448PD).

Geographer-Professor Martyn Webb (1925-2016) had a long-term interest in metropolitan planning in Perth, and wrote of his admiration for Green: *As town clerk and Perth's chief executive-officer, Green was renowned for his ability to master long and complex agendas. It was said that his will lay behind every important decision. Green was generally inaccessible to the press. He argued that, since he could always make his views known to the Perth City Council, there was no need for him to be in the public eye. The absence of overt party politics in local government in the council favoured his no-nonsense, straightforward approach. As an engineer he was quick to grasp essentials, as an architect he had a flair for seeing things as a whole, and as an administrator he believed in thorough preparation and research. He was either the designer or the adviser for practically every building constructed by the city council between 1944 and 1966. In 1963 he was appointed C.M.G. His appointment was extended to 1966, by when he was three years beyond the stipulated age for retirement. He was Western Australia's most experienced, qualified and versatile local government officer. ... Green was a kindly, perceptive, articulate and resolute man who, in serving the city council to which he was devoted, found a congenial place in which to develop and practise his talents.*

Allan Green died 5 September 1972 aged 76 years, and his ashes were dispersed at Karrakatta Cemetery. His wife and two daughters survived him. Edyth Irene Green died 2 February 1998 at Nedlands aged 87 years.

References:

NAA: B2455, Green William Allan McInnes : SERN 5334 : POB Kilkenny SA : POE Adelaide SA : NOK F Green Thompson.

'Obituary Late Mr H.T. Green', *Advertiser*, 23 August 1934, p.11 (Allan's brother Henry).

'Deaths', *Chronicle*, 30 August 1934, p.45 (pneumonia - brother Henry Thompson Green).

'Perth's Town Clerk', *The West Australian*, 4 August 1944, p.4.

'Mr Thompson Green Dead', *Chronicle*, 5 July 1945, p.30.

Local Government Journal of Western Australia, 1972, p.14, SLWA 350 [MUN].

Pitt Morison, Margaret and White, John (eds) *Western Towns and Buildings*, University of Western Australia Press, 1979, p.249.

Martyn Webb, 'Green, William Allan McInnes (1896–1972)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1996.

Elizabeth Burns-Dans, Alexandra Wallis, Deborah Gare, *A Century of Service*, Architects Board of Western Australia, 2022, p.84.

'A brief history of the Saint Andrew Society of Western Australia', Famous Past Presidents (Chieftains), <https://saintandrew.org.au/famous-past-presidents-chieftains/>

Heritage Committee review: 18 April 2024 Last updated: 18 April 2024

Citation details:

Taylor, Dr John J., 'William Allan McInnes Green (1896-1972)', *Western Australian Architect Biographies*, <http://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies.html> accessed DATE.