

Lindsay and Elva Waller in the 1950s, and 1960s at Scarborough (Mark Waller, Julie Ruiz-Avila)

Edward 'Lindsay' Waller (1929-2020) was born 2 June 1929 at Elwood in Melbourne, Victoria. Lindsay was the only child of Edward Raymond (Ray) and Marjorie Hannah (nee Tasker) Waller, who had married in 1928. In his early years Lindsay went to school at Elwood, and then on to Melbourne Boys High School, where he was always keen on drawing and top of class at mathematics. An uncle then assisted him to get a job at Vickers Ruwolt engineers c.1947, where he worked as a structural draftsman, studying civil engineering part time.

During March of 1950, *The Argus* in Melbourne carried notice of the engagement of Elva Marriott of Jasper Road, Bentleigh and Lindsay Waller of Ormond Road, Elwood. Edward Lindsay Waller and Elva May Marriott were married in 1951, and in June 1952 their daughter Julie was born at Padua House in Brighton. The couple had further children in Melbourne – Paul born in 1955 and Mark born in 1958. Lindsay's mother took her own life in December 1956 at her residence in Prescott Avenue, Dromana, this must have had significant effect on Lindsay, and over time he declined to discuss the heart-breaking loss with his family.

In 1951 Lindsay joined Marsh and Michaelson Architects and Engineers in Collins Street, again as a structural drafter, yet he found drawing their architectural projects more interesting, and at 24 years old determined he would become an architect by undertaking the Architects Registration Board examinations. Len Benny was a great mentor to Lindsay at this time, taking the young man to various project sites. Waller moved on to work with prominent architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, joining the firm as an architectural draftsman from 1956.

Later work partner Don Bailey recalled some of Lindsay's 1950s training and work: *Edward "Lindsay" Waller received his basic design and drafting experience in Ruwolt's, one of the largest engineering companies in Australia, based in Richmond, Melbourne. In the late 1950's, architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon were commissioned to design high-rise commercial office buildings when the priority given to funding post-war housing for returning service people had largely been met. BS&M recruited a large contingent of architects and draftspersons; Jeffrey Howlett, Donald Bailey and Lindsay Waller became part of this team. As there was an urgency for corporations to provide a good early return on investment, 'fast-track' steel-framed construction was employed.*

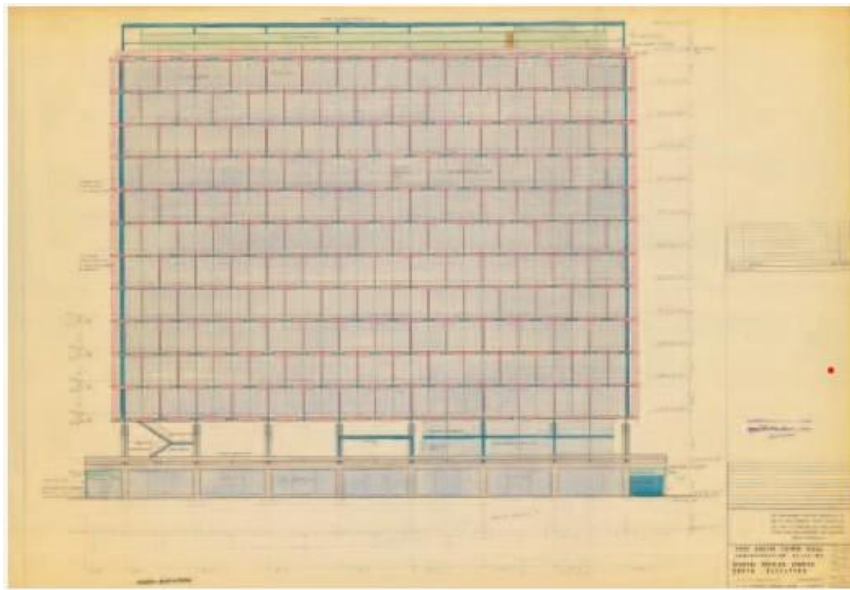
Waller decided he needed tuition in architectural design, and enrolled for three years at the Melbourne Technical College Atelier, under the tutelage of architects including Peter McIntyre and Kevin Borland. During 1956 and 1957, Waller was the project architect in Perth for Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (with Perth architects Hawkins & Sands, where Jeff Howlett had worked 1952-1953) undertaking six-weekly visits during the construction of the MLC building at St George's Terrace. This was perhaps Perth's first 'curtain-wall' office tower.



MLC Building at St George's Terrace Perth (Ian Molyneux, *Looking Around Perth*, 1981, p.71).

In late December 1960, Howlett & Bailey Architects (H&B) was established in Perth after winning a national architectural competition to design a new Perth Town Hall, to welcome international visitors to the Commonwealth Games in November 1962. The competition called for an office block and a public suite which was to contain a main hall for 2 500 people, a lesser hall for 1 000 and a banquet hall for 1 200.

The competition was open to all architects who were corporate members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) and was described as a competition for the selection of an architect rather than the final design of a Town Hall. The first prize on offer was £5 000 and sixty-one entries were received. Design No 19, ranked first, was recognized as a direct and satisfactory solution. The competition entry was by Jeffrey Howlett and Don Bailey, two young architects who had worked together at Bates Smart & McCutcheon in Melbourne and entered the competition independently from the firm.



1962 Council House Perth elevation drawing (50 Years, p.21)

Howlett and Bailey moved to Perth from Melbourne to set up the new office and take on the appointment as architects for the new building. The third architect joining H&B in Perth from the Bates Smart and McCutcheon office was Lindsay Waller - who described himself as the 'nuts and bolts man.' Bailey later noted that Lindsay Waller, with his expertise, particularly in threading air-conditioning ducts through steel beams in the 'fast-track' system, and for his skills in structural efficacy was invited to join the partnership. Thus H&B's team relied significantly on Lindsay for the 'practicality and workability' of the firm's conceptual design.

The competition design had the columns going straight down to the ground, continuing the upper structural frame, but the design was changed at a late point to allow the opening up of the ground floor. Howlett had recognized the possibility of visually linking the St Georges Terrace entrance with the proposed Public Suite to the rear of the site. Lindsay Waller recalled how the City of Perth's Town Clerk

W.A.M. Green (1896-1972) acted as the client and was prepared to make decisions on behalf of the Council. This streamlined the process considerably and, according to Waller, Green made a significant contribution to the project through his receptiveness and decisiveness.

One of the most distinctive elements of the building is the pattern of T-shaped sunshades placed uniformly against the four glazed walls of the building. According to Lindsay Waller there was only one possible dimension that would allow the Ts to go around the corner and repeat themselves. This dimension was arrived at empirically and was set out by Waller after numerous geometric experiments. The result is an apparently floating cage of Ts creating a continuous mat of a sunscreen which folds seamlessly around the corners of the building.



1963 Council House Perth (Wikipedia); 1964 Waller Residence at 282 West Coast Highway Scarborough (Julie & Sam Ruiz)

Lindsay finally registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia in 1962 (ABWA reg no 387). With Elva, they soon settled their young children by the beach at Scarborough in suburban Perth, and Lindsay designed a modernist family house in the early 1960s. Mark Waller recalls that: *We arrived in Scarborough 1961. I was 3. From memory I think dad started building in 1964. Across the road from where we rented. It was 282 West Coast Hwy. Big long rectangle on steel stilts, 2 story with floor to roof glass along the entire length. Bottom story was carports and big self-contained teenage retreat. We loved it. Upstairs open plan living. Timber floors and ceiling. Verandah the entire length. When sold a bloke transported it to Ledge Point. Mum ended buying a great beachfront unit directly where our rental was. Moved no more than 200m the whole time in Scarborough. ... Dad loved the ocean swimming most days, golf, fishing and camping. We spent a lot of holidays at Stinky Bay, Walpole and Augusta. All in the southwest.*

H&B won another competition in mid-1962, for the Reserve Bank in Canberra, judged the best of 131 submissions. The Reserve Bank of Australia Building at 20-22 London Circuit Canberra ACT is now heritage-listed. It was built from 1963 to 1965 by Civil & Civic, and added to the Australian Commonwealth Heritage List in 2004. Don Bailey recalls that Waller was instrumental in H&B 's work at the Harold E. Holt naval communication station, a joint Australian and United States base at Exmouth, first commissioned in 1967.



1965 Reserve Bank of Australia Building, Canberra in 2009 (Wikipedia 2025)

Lindsay was conscious of the need to screen the huge (55 x 8 feet) west-facing windows of the family home on West Coast Highway at Scarborough, adding woven bronze mesh sliding screens across the verandah. The house featured jarrah ceilings, and he soon designed another residence for the Clark family just two blocks away. Waller designed the modernist residence at 102 Circe Circle in Dalkeith, built in 1965 for Professor Martyn Webb. Further research into City of Nedlands records could provide Lindsay's drawings for the project.



Professor Martyn Webb house of 1965 at 102 Circe Circle Dalkeith (www.porteus.com.au)



1973 Perth Concert Hall (Wikipedia)

Don Bailey noted in a eulogy for Lindsay Waller that: 'In an age where CAD is a tool for determining the enduring form of the civic urban fabric, in recent years H&B have been bestowed by their peers the Institute's annual "Enduring Architecture Award" (to recognise achievement for design of buildings of outstanding merit which remain as high quality works of architecture, considered in a contemporary context) for each of Council House, and Perth Concert Hall. This award is in no small measure due to the personal contribution of structural knowledge and skills of Lindsay Waller.'



Lindsay Waller in the 1960s (Julie & Sam Ruiz), 1970s (Graham Sands) & 1980s (Mark Waller)

Lindsay Waller left Howlett & Bailey in 1973 to become a principal at the prominent Perth architectural firm Forbes & Fitzhardinge (F&F). F&F announced a new partnership effective from 1 July 1974, with six partners John Fitzhardinge, William Barton, Gres Cohen, Tony Brand, Mike Fitzhardinge, Lindsay Waller; and five associates Peter Wilks, Graeme Paynter, Anthony Cobley, Bruce Fell-Smith,

and Graham Bedford. With a large staff working across many complex projects, attribution of F&F design work in the 1970s and 1980s to singular persons would be unrealistic, but many of the large commercial office projects in this time would have benefited from Waller's skills and experience.

Lindsay spent time overseas in 1983-1984, running the Malaysian office of F&F. He left F&F in July 1985 and once again consulted to Howlett & Bailey and his own projects, enjoying the design and drawing, with less administrative duties. Gres Cohen (1926-2008) also 'moved-on' from Forbes & Fitzhardinge in 1985, from 1987-1992 working with Lindsay Waller as Cohen Waller Pty Ltd (ABWA reg 1201) at 4/324 Onslow Road Shenton Park.



Cohen Waller Architects' RAIA (WA) Commercial Awards entry 4.10 for the ANZ Bank's 237 Murray Street Perth redevelopment (*The Architect*, 1990 Winter edition, p.29).

Howlett & Bailey Architects merged with Cox Architects in 1995 to create Cox Howlett & Bailey Architects. In 1998 the company merged with Forbes & Fitzhardinge Woodland to form Cox Howlett & Bailey Woodland Architects, which interestingly was the combination of H&B and F&F - the two firms where Lindsay spent most of his working career. In the 1996 ABWA registration list Lindsay's office is at 1006 Hay Street Perth; 1997-1998 Lindsay Waller Pty Ltd is at 61 King Street Perth; 1999-2003 at Unit 2, 316 Onslow Road, Shenton Park; and in 2004 at 149 Flamborough Street, Doubleview – at this time he was 75 years old.

Edward Lindsay Waller died 18 August 2020 at Doubleview aged 91 years. The death notice in *The West Australian* newspaper recorded: *WALLER (Lindsay) Passed away on the morning of the 18th August 2020. Beloved partner of Geraldine, father of Julie, Paul (dec) and Mark. We loved you to the moon and back.* Elva Waller also had enjoyed great longevity, and died in February 2024 at Karrinyup aged 96 years.

Further notes from Mark Waller reveal some more of Lindsay's character, and of loss and tragedy in the family: *Loved his cars and always had a beautiful vehicle. Childhood dream to own a Maserati and got to live out that dream. A great Dad until separation in 1971. He married 2 of his secretaries but was always kind and generous to Mum. He lost one son Paul to Cancer. And 2 Grandchildren. Rachael, Paul's daughter in Gracetown cliff collapse [12yo, in September 1996] and Max my son, died in Queensland. [28yo, in June 2013]. He didn't talk about his childhood. Apart from his architecture he invested in a pig farm that Paul and I ran, and then a hotel of which I managed.*

Lindsay Waller's professional qualities were acknowledged by the conferring of the honorific titles Associate of the RAlA in 1963, and Fellow of the RAlA in 1972. Waller was a significant architect in Western Australia in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, albeit his contributions to the profession remain largely unrecognised. With the testimony of his colleagues, it is clear that Lindsay was a significant design documenter whose knowledge, skills and proficiency ensured that some of the most important architectural projects in Perth remain today for our enjoyment.

References:

'Engagements', *Argus*, 17 March 1950, p.8 (Marriott-Waller).

'Pantry Tea', *Sun News-Pictorial*, 27 August 1951, p.13 (Elva Marriott of Bentley, Lindsay Waller of Elwood to be married next Saturday).

'Ivory Satin for Bride', *The Age*, 15 June 1953, p.5 (Lindsay Waller best man for Lewis Bertram).

'Office Building for the Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Co.', *The Architect*, March 1957, pp.24-28.

'Professional Notices', RAlA Chapter News, July 1974, p.3 (F&F partnership announcement).

'Interview with L. Waller', SLWA OH2682/43, interviewed 14 June 1986.

Lindsay Waller, 'Perth Concert Hall - 25 years on', *The Architect*, Autumn 1998, pp.14-15.

Geoffrey London, 'The Building and its Controversies', in '50 Years, Council House 1963-2013', Jo Darbyshire (Project Curator), City of Perth, pp.16-29.

Donald Bailey, 'Vale — E.L. Waller, Architect, August 2020', 1 September 2020, AIA online.

Pers. comms. Mark Waller, Greg Howlett, Don Bailey, Julie and Samantha Ruiz-Avila, Jan-Apr 2025.

Heritage Committee review: 17 April 2025 Last updated: 17 April 2025

Citation details:

Taylor, Dr John J., 'Edward 'Lindsay' Waller (1929-2020)', Western Australian Architect Biographies, <http://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies.html> accessed DATE.