



John Hallam c.1950s; marriage 1953 to Phyl (courtesy Jane Ajduk)

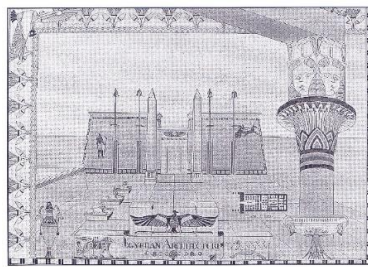
John Frampton Hallam (1927-2016) was born 3 September 1927 at Sister Anderson's Private Hospital in Subiaco. The son of John (Jack) Hallam, a well-known Perth photographer of the day, and his wife Dorothy (nee Brown), who had married in October 1926 at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth.

John and his younger brother Peter grew up in the family home at 60 Flinders Street, Mount Hawthorn. John attended Mt Hawthorn Primary School, and then completed secondary schooling at Perth Boys School and later Wesley College in South Perth, where he was enrolled as a weekly boarder before becoming a day student in his final year. Outside of school hours, John had many interests and hobbies. He learnt to play the banjo and he and a friend who played the piano formed a small band together. They spent many happy hours playing boogie-woogie music together. John also joined the Wesley Air Cadets and enjoyed time at Pearce Air base, learning about aircraft and life in the air force. He also joined the air cadets marching band and manned the big brass drum.

After leaving school John travelled to Sydney to work as a trainee engineer at WIBROC, a company run by his grandfather. However, this was not the career that John thought best suited him and he decided to return to Perth. Upon returning to WA, John applied for a placing as an apprentice with architect Robert (Bob) V. Blatchford (1918-1989). With the hostilities of the Second World War (1939-1945) finally over, Blatchford recommended that the eighteen year old John should enrol in the newly-founded (1946) five year architecture course at Perth Technical College (PTC).

Prior to the Second World War, architectural students who did not receive academic training overseas or in other States, had been obliged to train in WA under a system of indenture to individual architects. The products of this system of architectural education were trained rather than educated and clearly bore the marks of the architect who trained them. During the war it could be foreseen that great demands would be placed on the building industry when peace eventuated, and in 1946 William (Bill) Robertson (with Arnold Camerer) inaugurated the first academic architectural course at PTC.

Robertson had attended meetings of the Modern Architectural Research Society (MARS) in Sydney in the early 1940s, and through him the society's philosophies had an obvious influence on the nature of the course at PTC. The war had made housing a major consideration, and a practical objective of industrialization for the Modern Movement. Robertson was also strongly oriented to construction and practical aspects, and the curriculum he organized was accordingly a very practical one. But as has been elucidated by Geoffrey London and Duncan Richards in the late twentieth-century study *Modern Houses*, the major post-war architectural style inspiration on the west coast of Australia was derived from British (particularly London) and Continental sources, leading to a regionally distinctive form of architectural modernism.



'Egyptian Architecture', Hallam's student drawing at PTC c.1947 (Visions and Voices, p.11)

The seven fifth-year students of the PTC architecture course in 1950 were given a town-planning exercise in their final term – to design a housing settlement for a 469 acre (190 ha) site nine miles (14.5 km) north from Perth on the Wanneroo Road. Hallam and his fellows undertook a preliminary survey, assessed needs and finally tabulated a list of areas, numbers and descriptions of buildings etc. A comprehensive description of the students' work was soon published in *Phi*, the Architectural Students Assoc of WA magazine, and concluded with the optimism of the young post war architects:

“We have not only designed a housing settlement with an extremely high standard of living, but a feasible, practical scheme which should be put into operation. An environment such as this, with ample open space, would express the natural freedom of the Australian way of life. ...



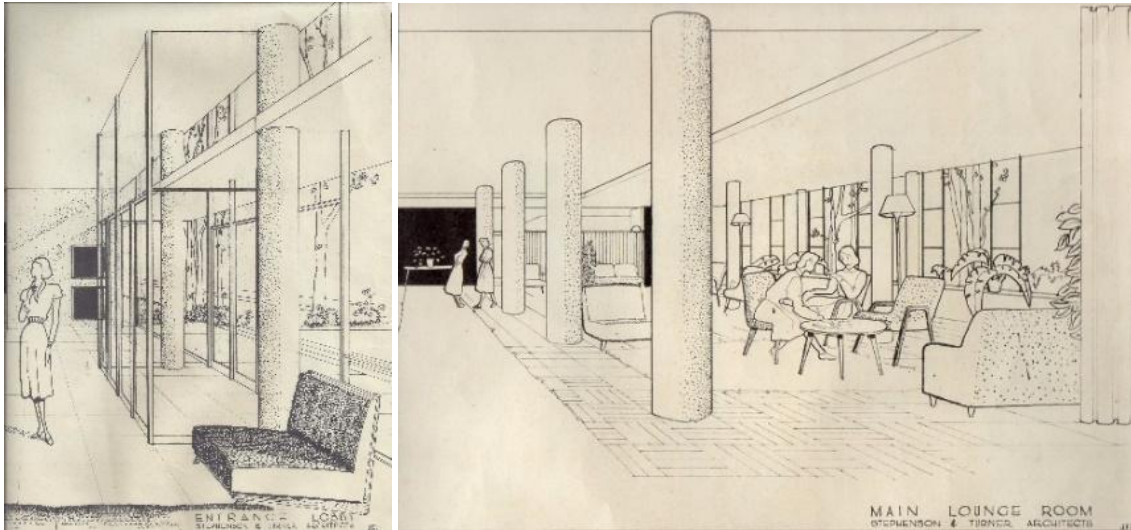
Hallam's Housing Settlement on Wanneroo Road aerial view – PTC final year project (*Phi*, Architectural Students Assoc of WA, 1950, p.16)

The results of the exams for the associateship course at PTC were announced in *The West Australian* newspaper in mid-December 1950, and the very first graduates of the course were feted by their friends as the 'magnificent seven'. Stuart Coll, Vin Davies, John Hallam, Gil Nicol, Alan Shepherd, Ray Strauss and Geoff Summerhayes had passed the final four units of the course. John soon registered as an architect with the Architects Board of WA in early 1951 (reg. no. 219) in concert with his fellow PTC graduates: Davies 215, Nicol 216, Shepherd 217, Summerhayes 218, Strauss 220, and Coll 221.



PTC students c.1948, L-R: 1 John Hallam, 2 Arthur Smith, maybe Ray Leunig, 3 Stuart Coll, 4 George John, 5 Ray Strauss, 6 Vin Davies, 7 Gil Nicol, 8 Geoff Summerhayes (Jane Adjuk).

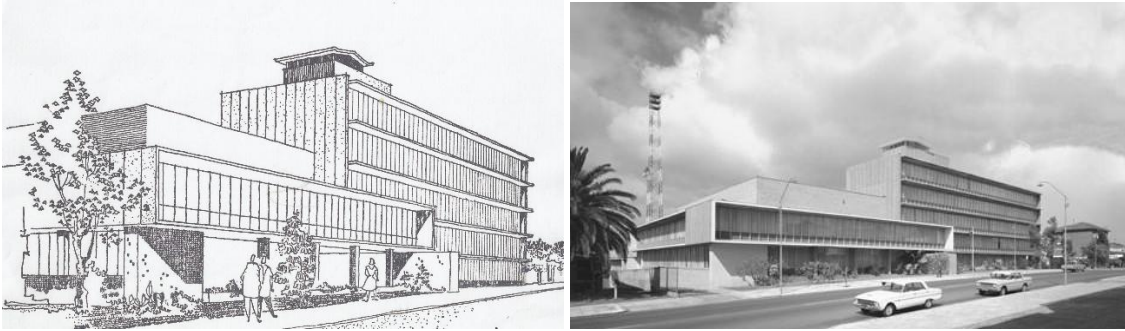
John Hallam became an Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1951, and in this period had worked for two years at the architectural firm of Parry and Parry. In 1951 John travelled to Sydney by train and commenced work with the well-known firm of Stephenson & Turner. He worked on a thirteen storey nurses' home incorporating dormitory accommodation, dining and shopping facilities.



Some of John Hallam's sketch work at Sydney with Stephenson & Turner c.1952 (Jane Ajduk).

In February 1953, John returned to Perth to marry Lorraine Phyllis Lee. The day after the wedding, John and Phyl sailed to England on their honeymoon, and what was also to be a two year working holiday. In London John worked for T.P. Bennett & Associates, established in 1921 and still in business today. He worked on a multi-storey office block for the Anglo American Corp. Later he joined James Cubitt and Partners, a firm of more contemporary architects that had been established in 1947. Here he worked on a chemical factory for the Burmese Government, a school in Kumasi and flats for the Sultan of Brunei. While in England, John travelled to various countries throughout Europe, and studied their architecture. In Italy he examined many new buildings employing advanced techniques, and visited architects who explained new methods of construction. In Holland he visited Rotterdam, noted for its modern reconstruction programme after the destruction of the Second World War. In Rotterdam and in Denmark, John was able to make a practical study of the town planning principles around high-rise apartment blocks.

Upon John and Phyl's return to Perth in 1955, he re-joined Parry and Parry. His work covered a wide range of projects, including residences, show rooms, a shopping centre and a doctor's clinic. In 1956 John joined the Commonwealth Department of Works, and in view of his overseas experience and design ability was employed by the Principal Architect in introducing contemporary design into a branch which had previously been quite traditional in its approach.



In a letter of 15 July 1960, John Hallam was praised by the ABC's State Manager E.K. Sholl for his detailed design of the ABC Studios at Adelaide Terrace, Perth (Jane Ajduk).

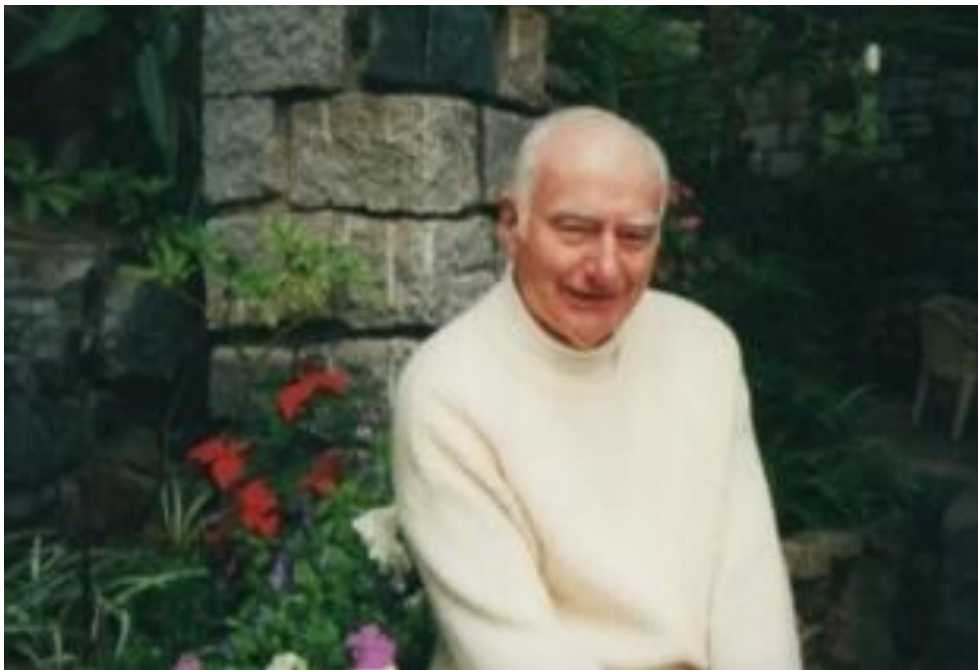
Some of his more important assignments were Branch Project Architect for the following: the ABC's Perth studios, Perth Airport Terminal Building stages 1 & 2, Pier Street Telephone Exchange, PMG Stores Branch, HMAS Leeuwin Academic Block, Bunbury and Esperance Post Offices, Port Hedland Air Terminal Building, Geraldton Post Office and Admin Building and the Archives Repository. He also did a total of nineteen months interstate service with the Department, working on Sydney and Melbourne Air Terminals.



Mosman Park Post Office c.1957; John Hallam at work (Jane Ajduk).

Working on the Perth Airport and the ABC studios entailed the design, instruction of staff and checking and co-ordination of around 150 complex architectural and engineering detail drawings, and the specifications of each project. In September 1966 he attended the Public Service Inspector's Regional Management conference in Adelaide, and in the same year accompanied the Principal Architect on an inspection tour of north-west projects in WA and subsequently prepared a report recommendation for buildings in these locations. John also engaged in part-time lecturing on building construction and architectural drawing at the Perth Technical College.

Hallam worked for the Department of Housing and Construction (as it became known) for twenty seven years. He retired in July 1983 due to ill health. Over the years he designed a few private residences to supplement income, the family home at 121 Kalamunda Road in Kalamunda (built 1961-1963), and that of his brother Peter and wife Sophie, who built in Floreat Park. After retiring John and Phyl travelled extensively throughout Australia and overseas. John also had a passion for high fidelity music. When personal computers became available he was quick to get one and would spend many hours using CorelDraw. John passed away 8 November 2016 at the age of 89 years, and was survived by Phyl, four children Jane, Mark, Paul, Lisa, and nine grandchildren.



John Hallam in later years (Jane Ajduk).

It is important to recognise that prior to the First World War, the overwhelming majority of architects in WA had been born and trained elsewhere. This gradually changed during the Inter-War years (1919-1939), as more locally born individuals studied whilst under articulated arrangements with senior practitioners. Hallam was one of the first of the new breed of architects in WA in the highly-charged post Second World War development period. Although a few still chose to develop their skills through an article system (with Architect Board examinations), and immigration brought a small number of European refugee architects, the majority of WA architects at this time were locally born and graduates of PTC. The close association of PTC graduates of the 1950s and 1960s gave this group a strong sense of familiarity and cohesion, and many soon travelled overseas together to absorb further international developments in modern architecture. They developed distinctive local domestic and commercial styles, now gaining further study and recognition.

References:

John Hallam, 'Ameliorate Your Imagination', *Phi*, Architectural Students' Assoc, 1950, pp.16-17.

Frank Platell, 'Tall Trees Surround Compact Hills Home', *The West Australian*, 3 December 1966, p.17.

Visions and Voices: Curtin University Celebrates 50 Years of Architectural Education 1946-1996, ed. Barbara van Bronswijk, School of Architecture Construction and Planning, Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, WA, 1996.

London, Geoffrey and Richards, Duncan; *Modern Houses: Architect-designed Houses in Western Australia from 1950 to 1965*, School of Architecture, UWA, 1997, pp.2-3.

T.P. Bennett Architects, <https://tpbennett.com/> accessed 5 March 2021.

James Cubitt and Partners, <https://www.jamescubitt.com/about-us/> accessed 5 March 2021.

Jane Ajduk (daughter), 'John Frampton Hallam – Architect', private paper, February 2021.

Contributing author: John Taylor

Heritage Committee meeting approval date: 20 May 2021 Last updated: 5 January 2026

Citation details:

Taylor, Dr John J., 'John Frampton Hallam (1927-2016)', *Western Australian Architect Biographies*, <http://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies.html> accessed DATE.