



Harry Jefferis at Latham c.1917, at Albany 1936

(Courtesy Alan Horridge; *Western Mail*, 9 July 1936, p.6s)

Jeffervis, William Harry (1867-1947) was born 11 April 1867 in Adelaide, the son of an English Congregational Minister who came to Australia for health reasons. The Jefferis family moved from Adelaide on to Sydney, and when Harry's mother became ill, back to England, where he commenced schooling at Bristol. The family returning to Sydney to aid his father's ailing lungs, Harry attended Newington College, but left school at an early age owing to deafness caused by scarlet fever.

The youngster initially worked at *Warrah*, a sheep station north of Sydney on the Liverpool Plains, before moving to New Zealand for four years to work as an 'offsider' on a South Island property. The sale of the landholding induced a return to Sydney, where Jefferis received initial architectural training with Harry Chambers Kent, later to marry one of Harry's sisters. After serving four years of articles, Jefferis again travelled to London, where he worked for two years in the office of Potts, Sulman & Hennings; then four years on the staff of renowned architect Thomas Edward Collcutt, working on important commissions including the Imperial Institute at South Kensington and P. & O. Offices in Leadenhall Street. During this time Harry passed the qualifying exam and became an associate of the Royal British Institute of Architects in 1894.

Before returning to Australia via a sketching tour in Europe, Jefferis submitted an original design as a competitor for the annual Soane Medal, open to the profession throughout the British Empire, and was awarded a medallion for third place. Harry's family had returned to South Australia, and he came from there to gold boom Perth to superintend the erection of the Hay Street premises of G. & R. Wills for Adelaide architect Edward Davies FSAIA, opening his own practice by March 1896.

In 1897 Jefferis formed a successful partnership with Edgar Jerome Henderson at the Austral Chambers in Barrack Street, Perth. Through Henderson, the firm secured a great deal of Roman Catholic work, and their buildings included the first portion of St John of God Hospital; Christian Brothers School and Brothers quarters at Fremantle; Highgate Hill School and Convent; and Convent, School and Bishop's Palace at Geraldton. Other jobs included the Bayswater and Claremont Hotels; a block of shops for financier Samuel W.

Copley; *Ivanhoe*, the Victoria Avenue residence of Sydney Stubbs, Mayor of Claremont; and one lot of 27 houses for gold magnate William G. Brookman.

The joint practice was dissolved as from 1 January 1906, and both parties then carried on business on their own account in Perth. The split may have been amicable, as it was advertised that 'if desired by clients' all works in progress and any future works could be 'carried out as joint architects'. Jefferis was still working with Henderson on the Congregational Church at Claremont in 1906. In May 1906 he designed a brick and stone 'Tropical House' at the Zoological Gardens in South Perth, in 1907 a hotel at Black Range (Sandstone), and in 1908, a residence at 2 Altona Street West Perth.

Other Jefferis designs following 1906 include the Shenton Park Hotel, the first portions of the YMCA and of the Jewish Synagogue, and a 'fair share of private commissions'. In Albany he erected the Empire Theatre, and wool show floors for Dalgety and Co, Elder Smith and Westralian Farmers. In the period 1909 to 1912, Harry produced some joint works with architect John Selby, including the YMCA in Murray Street Perth, 116 Heytesbury Road Subiaco and the Baptist Church in North Perth.

Harry married Minnie Cowen in July 1899 at St Mary's in South Perth, the first marriage celebrated in that church. The bride was given away by her architect brother-in-law, Duncan Inverarity. The Jefferis family subsequently lived at *Yelkie* on the corner of Lyall Street and Labouchere Road, South Perth, and grew steadily with the birth of Kathleen (Kay) in 1900, Vernon (Bill) in 1902, Mamie in 1904, Jim in 1909 and Ken in 1910.

Jefferis was an active member of the West Australian Institute of Architects, serving as treasurer from 1908 through to March 1911, when he felt compelled to hand in his resignation owing to relinquishing practice. The WAIA Council of the time 'placed on record its appreciation of the past services' rendered by Jefferis, and noted that 'the treasurer's statement showed that the financial position of the Institute was sound'.

With his background work experience on the land and perhaps a yearning for change, in 1910 Jefferis took up 3 000 acres of wheat belt land at Latham, 315 kilometres north of Perth, naming his farm *Warrah* after the station in NSW. Consisting of 2 200 acres of forest country and 800 acres of scrubby land, he cleared and put in 30 acres of crop in 1911 - unfortunately the season was a complete failure throughout the district. Harry continued with his practice for a short period, finalising designs for a Catholic cathedral at Geraldton and church at nearby Moonyoonooka in 1910-1911, neither of which were built.

Harry's lack of success with the church work may have hastened the young family's move to Latham, settling into rather primitive housing at the farm around 1913. Jefferis persevered with little success at Latham until the early 1920s. He later noted that 'spent a

life's savings in clearing and cropping ... and then ended up chucking up the sponge and leaving the farm'. Declaring that he had 'not the heart or the money to pick up the ropes again in Perth', he moved to Albany, successfully resuming architectural practice. The *Architects Act of Western Australia 1921* received formal assent in 1922, and Jefferis duly registered with the Architects Board of WA that year.

An *Albany Advertiser* article of 1934 stated that 'during the last ten years Mr Jefferis has built the hotels at Cranbrook and Denmark, WA Worsted and Woollen Mills and Power House, Church of England and Hall at Mt Barker, the Grandstand at Centennial Oval, brick chimney stack at Two People Bay, and several utility works for the Albany Council, as well as many residences in Albany and at Middleton Beach and throughout the South-West. Works at present in hand include the new Butter Factory at Albany, Dr Morgan Richards' house at Middleton Beach, residential flats in Grey Street, and alterations to the old home of the Hassell family, *Hillside*.'

Having made a long and lasting contribution to Western Australian architectural practice, Harry died at 80 years of age in Albany on 7 September 1947. Other places credited to Jefferis on the Heritage Council of WA database include halls at Cunderdin and Boyup Brook. A study of newspaper tender notices would reveal many more of his design works.

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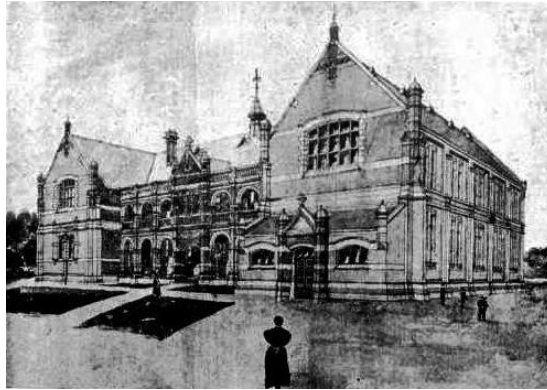
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Heritage Committee meeting approval date: 10 June 2010

Last updated: 9 March 2014

Citation details:

Taylor, Dr John J., 'William Harry Jefferis (1867-1947) ', Western Australian Architect Biographies, <http://www.architecture.com.au/> accessed DATE.



Sacred Heart Convent and School, Highgate of 1898 (*Western Mail*, 16 December 1898, p.151).



Bishop's Palace at Geraldton, built in 1900 for Bishop W.B. Kelly (Diocese of Geraldton)



Claremont Hotel and 3 residential shops of 1901 (*Western Mail*, 1 July 1937, p.14; Aug 1984 slwa_b3654729_2)



Shenton Park Hotel of 1907 (November 1985 slwa_b3699214_1)