

Edwin Summerhayes

(Battye, J.S., *Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol.1, 1912, p.625)

Edwin Summerhayes (1868-1944) was born in London on 6 March 1868. Educated at Christ College, London, at sixteen years of age he accompanied his parents to Australia. In 1885 he commenced articles with James Hill in Adelaide, and completed them under William Pitt of Melbourne, with whom he remained until 1893. With economic recession on the east coast, in 1894 Edwin moved to seek opportunity in gold-boom Western Australia.

Proceeding to Coolgardie, Summerhayes established himself in practice at the goldfields, at times in partnership with Geoffrey Moline, Geoffrey Hawkins and William Ford. Concerned with establishing his credentials in WA, and in the absence of a local institute of architects at the time, in 1895 Edwin wrote from Coolgardie regarding fellowship of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, but was informed he was ineligible at the time. None-the-less Summerhayes was successful in business, and soon responsible for various important premises including the Coolgardie Town Hall (1898) and the Coolgardie Mining Exhibition Building (1898), even though he was spending more time in Perth whilst running joint offices in the capital and at the goldfields.

Edwin married Florence May Camm at the Wesleyan Church, Brunswick, Melbourne in April 1896. The couple moved to Perth, had a son Reginald in 1897 and a daughter Dorothy in 1906, both born at their home in Bernard Street, Claremont which Edwin designed and built in 1896. In 1899 he was the architect of the Claremont Municipal Chambers, later serving in them as a councillor, and in 1922 designed the nearby First War memorial. There must have been some uncertain times for the young family, as in April 1900 Edwin took up employment with the Public Works Department as a lowly second class draftsman at a salary of £234, but was retrenched by October in the same year.

The patronage of the Piesse family businesses appears to have marked a resurgence in Edwin's fortunes. He designed shops and offices for F. & C. Piesse in Austral Terrace at Katanning (1901), the grand residence Kobeelya at Katanning for F.H. Piesse (1902), a large produce mart, store and offices in Wellington Street, Perth for F. & C. Piesse (1903), two houses for Piesse at 8-9 Clive Street, Katanning (1905), and shops and offices for Piesse at Wagin (1906). Other work in the area followed from the Piesse connections, and he designed a large residence at Broomehill (1910), St Andrew's Church Hall in Katanning (1911) and St George's Hostel, Katanning (1913).

Summerhayes was responsible for developing his own residential street with two semi-detached two storey villas and three houses in 1903. In 1905 he designed four shops valued at £1,100 and a £2,200 hotel for Southern Cross. Another of his business connections was made with the Zimpel family. In 1903 Edwin completed a factory, store and showroom in Hay Street, Perth for Austrian-born furniture manufacturer and importer William Zimpel. *Pine Lodge*, an expansive residence at John Street, Cottesloe was built for Zimpel in 1909.

Summerhayes' most important work in Perth was the fine Forrest Chambers in St George's Terrace, which he designed for Sir John Forrest in 1904. Edwin also claimed responsibility for the erection of Forrest's city residence *The Bungalow* in Hay Street, but this work may have been major addition works to modernise the home in 1908. He designed public buildings for bodies at Katanning, Wagin, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, amongst many homesteads in other parts of regional Western Australia. Admitted as a Fellow of the West Australian Institute of Architects by at least 1903, in 1907 Summerhayes was also recognised as a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

A busy sole practitioner, Summerhayes was rarely able to take a vacation, but with Andrew Oswald Wilson looking after his architectural work, in March 1910 he left for two months in Papua, returning from New Guinea in early June. In 1912 Edwin formed the partnership of Summerhayes and Boas with Harold Boas, and they were listed together until 1918, although Major Summerhayes embarked from Fremantle for 'Great War' service with the AIF in June 1916, returning to Australia in 1917, and Boas was also in England at these times.

The Rechabite Hall of 1924 in William Street and Ancient Order of Foresters Building of 1925 in Francis Street, Perth are perhaps the last of the major works designed by Edwin on his own account. He was joined in practice by his son Reg in 1926, and they worked together until Edwin's retirement in 1934. Grandson Geoffrey Edwin Summerhayes was born in 1928. With Edwin, Reg and Geoffrey form one of Western Australia's most distinguished architect families, rivalling the twentieth century influence of the Hobbs, Cohens, Fitzhardinges, Parrys and Chisholms. Edwin Summerhayes died aged 76 years on Christmas Day of 1944, and was buried at Guildford Cemetery.

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'Coolgardie', *Western Mail*, 16 December 1898, p.73 (Exhibition Building).

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WAMBEJ, 28 November 1903, p.18 (Piesse Wellington Street).

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WAMBEJ, 9 November 1907, p.19 (Presbyterian Church at Maylands).

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THE PROPOSED COOLGARDIE TOWN HALL.

Coolgardie Town Hall (*Western Mail*, 22 April 1898, p.31)

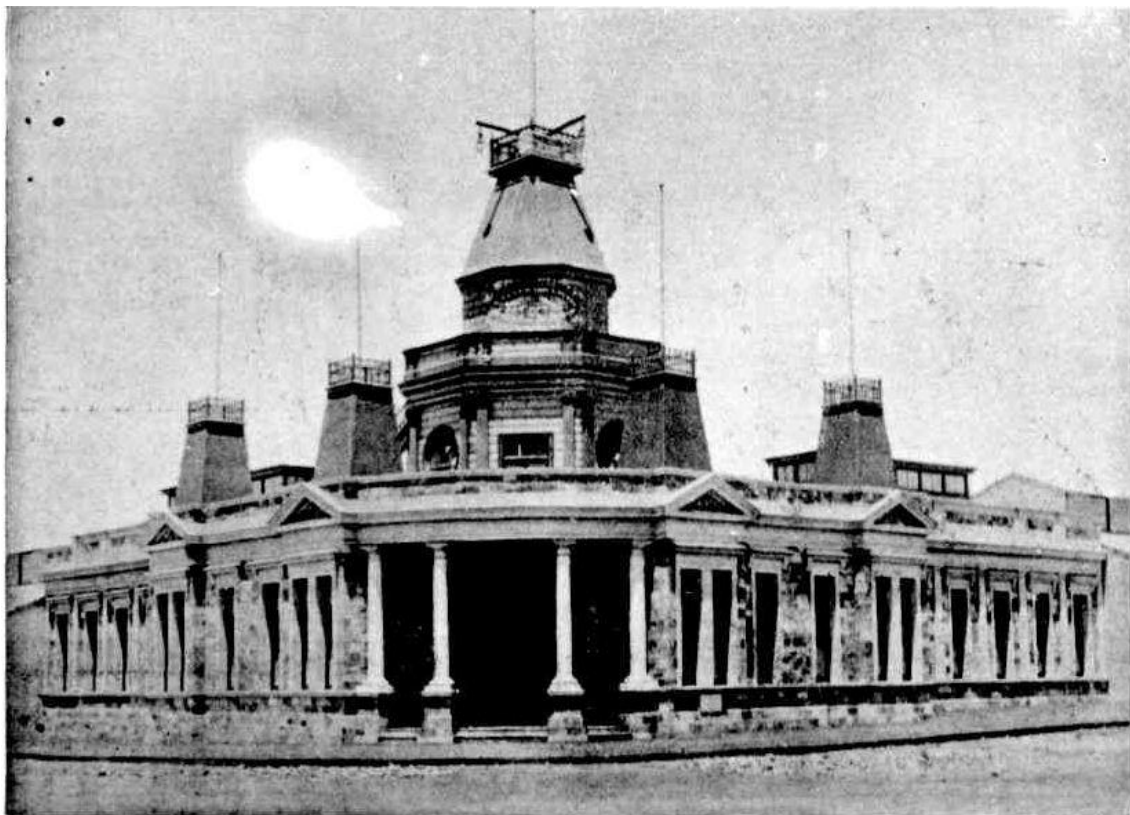


Photo by A. S. Green.

COOLGARDIE EXHIBITION BUILDINGS.

Coolgardie.

Coolgardie Exhibition Building, (*Western Mail*, 16 December 1898, p.73)



Kobeelya at Katanning of 1902 (SLWA 009321PD)



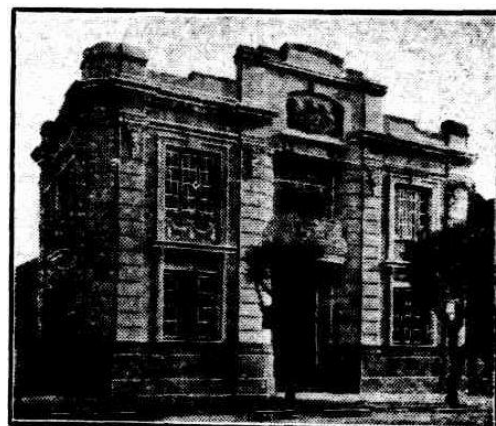
Forrest Chambers, St George's Terrace, Perth (*Western Mail*, 22 April 1905, p.32)



City Mutual Building [Forrest Chambers], St George's Terrace, Perth 1970 (Muhling Collection)



Pine Lodge, John Street, Cottesloe of 1909 (SLWA 001627D)



NEW PREMISES FOR ANCIENT ORDER OF FORESTERS.

Rechabite Hall, William Street, Perth of 1924 (John Taylor 2008); Ancient Order of Foresters Building, cnr Francis & Museum Streets, Perth of 1925 (*The West Australian*, 16 May 1925, p.9)