



### **Edward Herbert Dean Smith**

(*Illawarra* portrait c.1893 & at Keane's Point c.1900 courtesy Pickering Brook Heritage Group; obituary portrait in *WAMBEJ*, 5 May 1906, p.18)

**Edward Herbert Dean Smith** (1860-1906) was born at Hull in England, son of contractor William Smith. Dean Smith received his training in England, practiced in Sydney from c.1886, and worked during 1888-1894 for engineer Edward V.H. Keane, contractor for the Midland Railway. As Keane's architect for many railway related buildings, it is highly likely that Smith also designed Keane's fabulously-sited residence *Cappoquin*, completed in early 1892 on 'Butler's Hump', later Keane's Point, at Peppermint Grove. The design of the house overlooking the Swan River, now severely altered and forming the nucleus of Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club, is often incorrectly attributed to Sir J.J. Talbot Hobbs.

During his time with Keane, Smith became acquainted with Keane's brothers-in-law Edward and Lionel White. In 1891, while moving around the upper Darling Range the brothers felt that it was an ideal spot for fruit growing, and they formed a partnership with Dean Smith to buy a parcel of land and start an orchard. This was the birth of *Illawarra* orchard, still well-known in the Darling Ranges, upon which Smith built a residence for himself - although his main home in later years was at Tryphena Terrace, off the top of Mount Street, Perth. The orchard partners eventually invited an experienced fruit grower, Thomas Price, to join the project as manager. With his knowledge and assistance a successful venture resulted. In 1900 Smith's nephew, Frank Laverack arrived from England and started work at *Illawarra*, soon settling in the district.

Smith entered into a partnership with Clarence Harold Wilkinson for 1895-1900. In late 1894, Smith was the successful competitor in a competition for additions to the Presbyterian Church, Perth, which was to be carried out under the name of the new firm - Wilkinson & Smith. Individually and together, Wilkinson and Smith designed numerous buildings of note. Their residential work involved many of the first houses in Peppermint Grove, including magnate Neil McNeil's landmark timber framed residence *The Cliffe* in McNeil Street; *Minnawarra* for Walter James (later enlarged by Hobbs, Smith & Forbes) at 57 Leake Street; and *Chanonry* for E.S. Barker at 147 Forrest Street.

It appears that for a short time during a very busy period, Wilkinson & Smith took on a third partner. In September 1899 *The West Australian* advised the public of the dissolution of a Wilkinson & Smith partnership with George Anketell Wright Wilson - carrying on business as architects at Fremantle.

After the dissolution of the partnership with Wilkinson in 1900, Smith continued his own impressive work, including the expansion of Talbot Hobbs' 1891-92 design for the Weld Club, the remarkably detailed *Surrey Chambers* for McNeil on the corner of St George's Terrace and Howard Street, Perth, and many high-class commercial buildings in Perth and Fremantle. Although *Surrey Chambers* has been demolished, a good number of excellent Wilkinson & Smith and Dean Smith designs remain in the Howard Street, Perth and west end of Fremantle areas. As an indication of their respective stature in the building industry, in 1903 the leading architects Hobbs and Smith were appointed by the State Government to a special Public Buildings Committee in Perth. The report of the committee dealt with the Supreme Court buildings, Parliament Houses, Government Geologist's Department building, and the Public Library building.

Smith's contact with Hobbs, and mutual admiration for the work that their practices had completed, led to the consideration of a partnership. The exact reasons are not discoverable, although it is probable that discussion regarding the Weld Club work was a part-instigator of their negotiations. With previous contact as fellow Freemasons in Perth during the early 1890s, with both being foundation members of the West Australian Institute of Architects in 1896, and with appointment to the Public Buildings Committee in 1903, the two men had firm opportunity to get to know each other and to cement mutual respect for

previous respective architectural achievements in the metropolis. Eventually all was agreed, and an announcement to publicise the new partnership was placed in various building journals during June and July of 1904:

*Messrs. E.H. Dean Smith and J. Talbot Hobbs, architects of Perth, West Australia, have decided to amalgamate their business from the first of July. Mr Forbes, who is well known in architectural circles and has been for a long time with Mr Smith, will be a member of the new firm, which will be carried on under the name of Hobbs, Smith and Forbes. The reputation of all the members of the new firm is a guarantee that the combination will be successful in every way.*

Dean Smith may not have been a well man in 1904, and perhaps this was a reason for considering easing his personal burdens by joining with Hobbs in business. Smith was placed on the supernumerary list of the Weld Club in March 1905, travelling overseas to Canada and the United Kingdom, and returning to Perth in December 1905. Smith married Ethel Elizabeth Somerset at Winnipeg in early 1905, so the overseas trip was, at least in part, a 'honeymoon' with his new bride. Just twelve months later, on 25 April 1906, he passed away in Perth aged only forty-five years. Reports noted that Smith had been suffering from 'Bright's Disease', a term that described ailments of the kidney. *The West Australian Mining Building and Engineering Journal* informed the public:

*Great regret was expressed in the city at the death of Mr. E.H. Dean Smith, architect of the firm of Messrs. Hobbs, Smith and Forbes. The deceased gentleman carried out extensive works throughout the State for a number of years in partnership with Mr. C.H. Wilkinson. He afterwards practised his profession alone, and later joined Mr. Hobbs in the firm of Messrs. Hobbs, Smith and Forbes. The invariable courtesy and fairness of the deceased gave him hosts of friends, both in private and business circles. ...*

Smith's will left his Perth and *Illawarra* houses to his wife, with Waldie Forbes the recipient of other architectural documents and instruments not bound by the Hobbs Smith & Forbes partnership. One of the most talented designers of his time in WA, Smith has previously been largely unrecognised in architectural history, in part due to his early demise.

## References:

- 'News and Notes', *The West Australian*, 18 June 1892, p.4, and 3 January 1895, p.4.
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 9 March 1894, p.8 (Wilkinson's design of bungalow residence & stables Peppermint Grove for Neil McNeil).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 21 January 1895, p.8 (residence Peppermint Grove ES Barker).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 27 March 1895, p.8 (residence Peppermint Grove W. De Lacey Bacon, residence Mount Street Alfred G. Hassell).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 13 July 1895, p.8 (residence Peppermint Grove GE Law).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 15 January 1896, p.7 (Residence, Cannington; 2 houses Ellen Street for H.W. Sholl MLA; Residence, Claremont; billiard room and additions for Neil McNeil; Lockeridge Hotel, West Guildford).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 13 February 1896, p.7 (large block of offices Barrack Street Perth, joint architects with George R. Johnson).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 13 March 1896, p.8 (Manager's residence Stirling St for the Perth Ice Co., additions to residence Peppermint Grove for Horace Sholl).
- 'Bank of Australasia - Proposed New Premises', *The West Australian*, 29 July 1896, p.6.
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 10 August 1896, p.8 (school buildings, Subiaco).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 12 September 1896, p.2 (3 stone residences Forrest Street Peppermint Grove; 2-storey weatherboard house Leake Street Peppermint Grove).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 19 September 1896, p.6 (2 storey stone house Irvine Street Peppermint Grove; 2-storey weatherboard house Leake Street Peppermint Grove).
- 'WA Cricket Association', *The West Australian*, 10 October 1896, p.2 (pavilion at WACA).
- 'Havelock Street Presbyterian Hall', *The West Australian*, 24 December 1896, p.5.
- 'News and Notes', *The West Australian*, 3 October 1896, p.4 (opening of West Guildford Hotel).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 16 January 1897, p.6 (Members' stand for the WACA, 1<sup>st</sup> class villa residence at Peppermint Grove).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 February 1897, p.6 (stone residence Forrest Street Peppermint Grove; stone residence St Leonard's Street, Buckland Hill; block of offices Wellington Street Perth for Metropolitan Waterworks Board).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 March 1897, p.6, (residences Perth Claremont & Fremantle; large block of offices Barrack Street for Messrs McNeil and Leake).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 19 June 1897, p.3 (Agricultural Hall, Gooseberry Hill; school at Mount Barker; block of offices Barrack Street for Neil McNeil).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 27 July 1897, p.3 (terrace of 5 houses Hill Street, Perth; school buildings at Cottesloe).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 20 August 1897, p.3 (school & quarters, Drakes Brook; stone residence, Irvine & View Streets Peppermint Grove; wharf & goods shed etc for Swan River Shipping Co, Perth).
- 'The Proposed Queen's Hall', *Western Mail*, 3 September 1897, p.14.
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 11 September 1897, p.3, (2 storey villa Irvine St for Drummond)

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 September 1897, p.3 (Large hall, Church offices, 21 shops, warehouses, Sisters' Home etc, William & Murray Streets Perth for Trustees of Wesley Church).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 25 September 1897, p.3 (Agricultural Hall, Mundijong).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 8 November 1897, p.7 (Hotel Cliff St Fremantle, National Bank of Australasia St George's Tce, Perth).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 22 August 1898, p.1 (2 storey house cnr Adelaide Tce and Lord St [Victoria Avenue] Perth for George Parker; 1st part of Institute for Blind Maylands; WA Trustees Offices Barrack St Perth).

'Victoria Institute for Blind', *Western Mail*, 23 December 1898, p.23.

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 29 April 1899, p.1 (residence Mount Eliza [EHD Smith's?]; WA Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, Cottesloe).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 14 June 1899, p.1 (*Minnawarra*, Peppermint Grove).

'Partnerships', *The West Australian*, 14 September 1899, p.6 (W & S dissolution of partnership with George Anketell Wright Wilson).

'Partnerships', *The West Australian*, 3 August 1900, p.8 (30 June dissolution of partnership).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 16 September 1901, p.7 (additions to Agricultural Hall Gooseberry Hill; wine cellars at Armadale).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 October 1902, p.5 (shop and dwelling Midland Junction for WH & J de Burg Morrison).

'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 20 March 1903, p.3 (cottage Midland Junction for DE Castle; adds & alts to residence Claremont for Alfred Sandover).

'Surrey Chambers', *Western Mail*, 19 December 1903, p.26.

*The West Australian Mining Building and Engineering Journal (WAMBEJ)*, 25 June 1904, p.18.

*Building, Engineering & Mining Journal*, 12 July 1904, p.182.

'On the Terrace', *WAMBEJ*, 4 March, p.19, 11 March 1905, p.20, 23 December 1905, p.19.

'Death of Dean Smith', *The West Australian*, 26 April 1906, p.4; *WAMBEJ*, 28 April 1906, p.18.

Probate file for Edward H D Smith at State Records Office of WA, Cons 3403, Item 109 of 1906.

'Two Well-Known Orchards – Illawarra & Rokewood', *The West Australian*, 27 July 1932, p.10.

Pascoe, Robert, *Peppermint Grove, Western Australia's Capital Suburb*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983.

John Taylor Architect, *Conservation Plan for The Weld Club Perth*, November 2002.

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Smith's connection to Illawarra Orchard, <http://pickeringbrookheritagegroup.com/timber1.html> accessed 7 March 2012.

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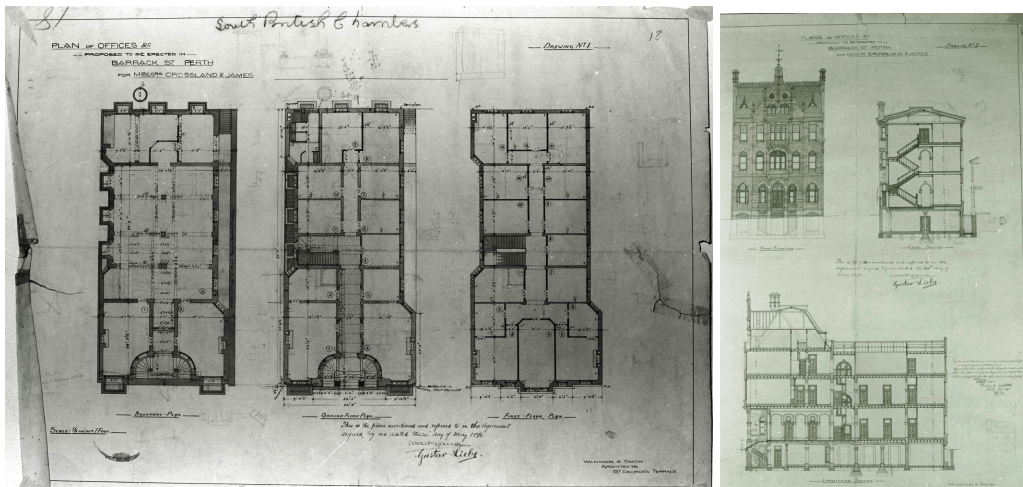
#### **Citation details:**

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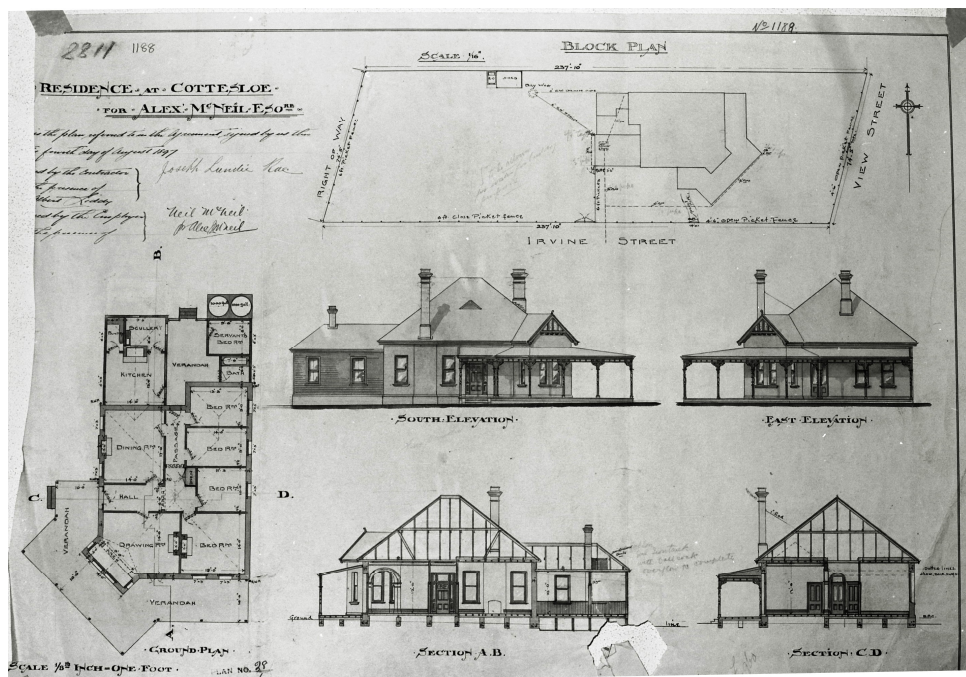




1891-92 Edward Keane's residence *Cappoquin* on 'Butler's Hump', later Keane's Point, at Peppermint Grove (courtesy Veronica Elmitt).



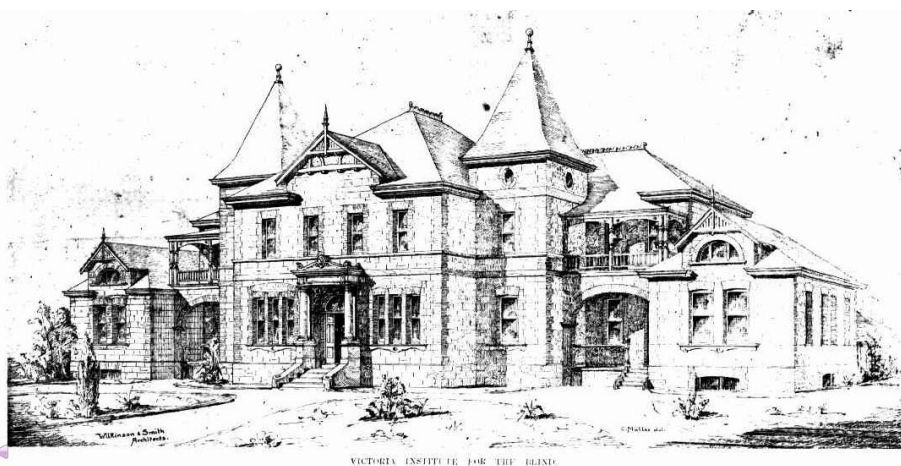
1896-97 offices for Crossland & James, later *South British Chambers*, Barrack Street, Perth (Muhling Collection)



1897 residence north-west corner View and Irvine Streets, Peppermint Grove for Alex McNeil – brother of Neil McNeil (Muhling Collection)



1897-98 Neil McNeil's Chambers, immediately south of Moir's Chambers by Talbot Hobbs in Barrack Street, Perth (007480d cropped)



Victoria Institute for Blind, Maylands (*Western Mail*, 23 December 1898, p.23)

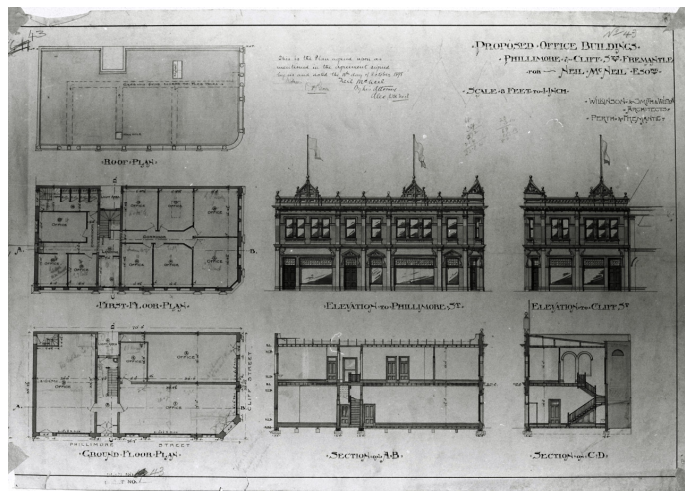


1898 Queen's Buildings and Queen's Hall, south-west corner William and Murray Streets, Perth. Another floor was added in 1924 to the design of Thomas Anthoness. (SLWA 006430D)





1898-99 Hotel Fremantle on the north-east corner of High and Cliff Streets, Fremantle (John Taylor 2008)



1898-99 office buildings for Neil McNeil on the south-east corner of Phillimore and Cliff Streets, Fremantle (Muhling Collection)



1898-99 office buildings for Neil McNeil on the south-east corner of Phillimore and Cliff Streets, Fremantle, with the Talbot Hobbs-designed Dalgety Buildings behind (John Taylor 2008)

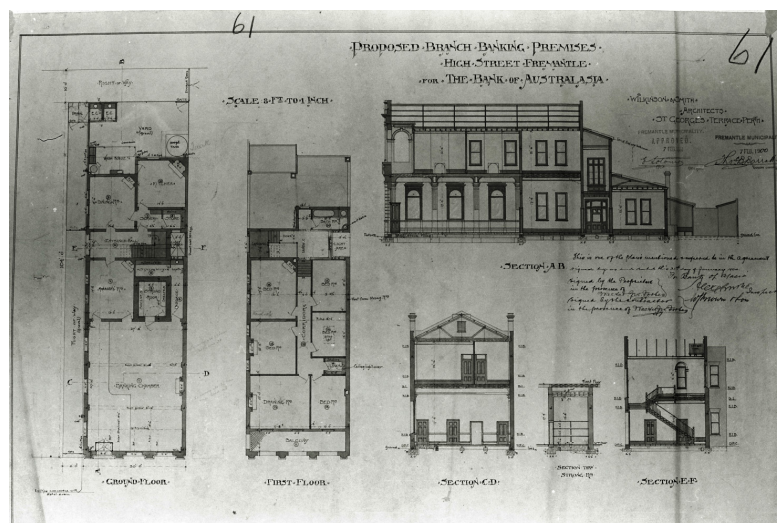




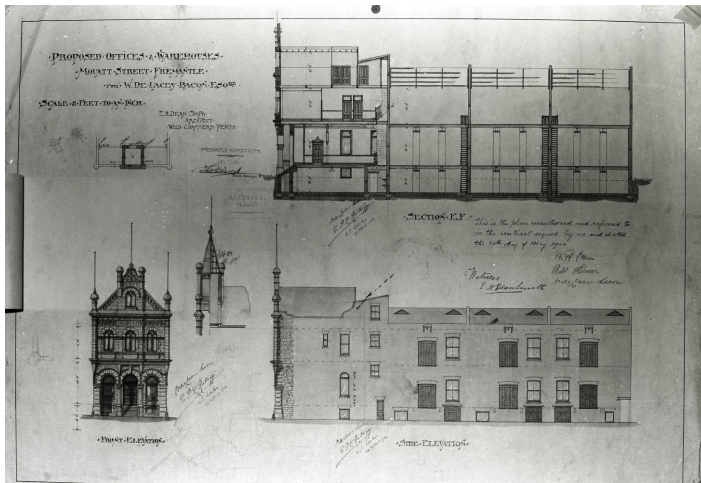
1898-99 office-warehouse (later Dock Buildings) for EH Dean Smith, 13-15 Phillimore Street, Fremantle (John Taylor 2008)



1899 Bank on the south-east corner of High and Cliff Streets, Fremantle; 1900-1901 three-level building, 8 High Street, Fremantle for Frank Graig, later Tannatt Chambers (John Taylor 2008)



1900-1901 Bank of Australasia at 18 High Street, Fremantle (Muhling Collection)

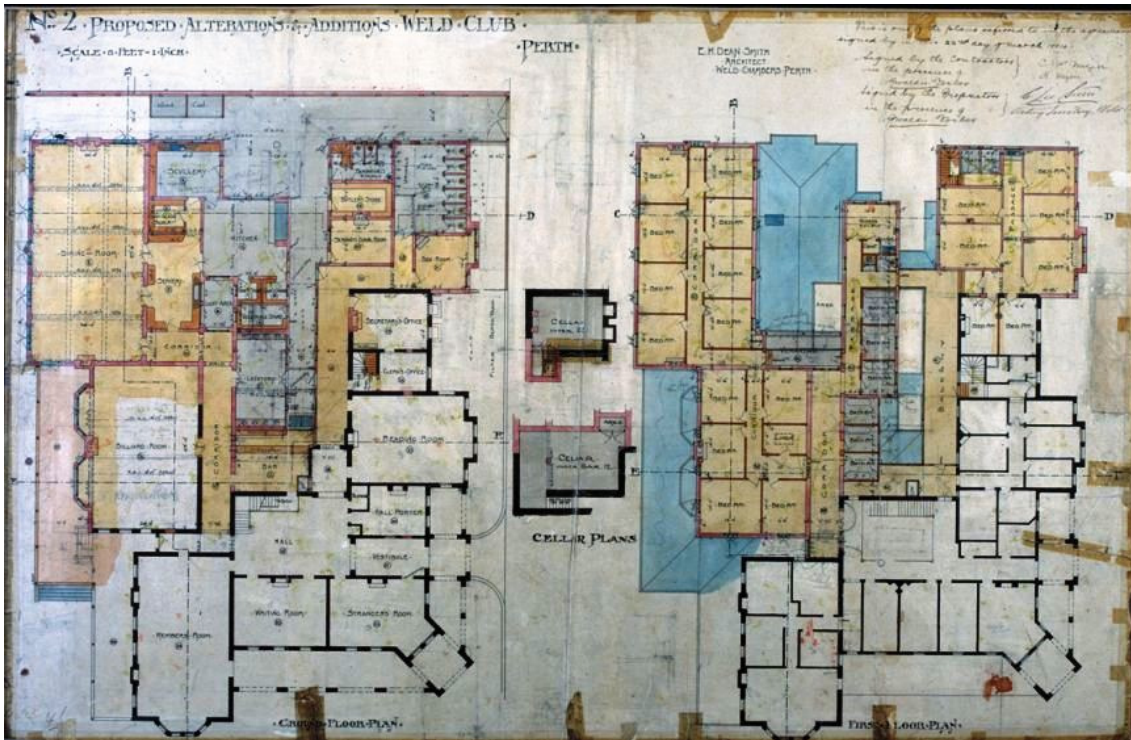


1902 offices and warehouses 5 Mouatt Street, Fremantle for W. De Lacey Bacon; later Norddeutscher-Lloyd Building, later Tarantella Night Club (Muhling Collection, John Taylor 2008)



Surrey Chambers (now demolished) for Neil McNeil on the south-west corner of Howard Street and St George's Terrace, Perth (*Western Mail*, 19 December 1903, p.26)





Dean Smith's drawings illustrating the 1904 enlargement work at the Weld Club, virtually doubling the size of the building (courtesy Weld Club).



Laying of the foundation stone of New Zealand Insurance Building (now demolished) in St George's Terrace, 10 January 1905. Forward of the seated gentleman at the table, Talbot Hobbs is to the left and Dean Smith to the right (in boater hats), with John Forrest, in pale coloured top hat behind (*Western Mail*, 28 January 1905, p.27).