

**Reg Summerhayes**

(*The Western Mail*, 1 April 1937, p.28; RAIA WA c.1960)

**Reginald Summerhayes** (1897-1965) was born 19 February 1897 at Bernard Street in Claremont, son of London-born architect Edwin (1868-1944), and Florence (nee Camm) Summerhayes. With economic recession on the east coast, in 1894 Edwin had moved from Melbourne to seek greater opportunities in gold-boom Western Australia. Reginald attended high school at Scotch College in Claremont, where he was dux in 1913 and, achieving his matriculation, entered the University of Western Australia (UWA) to study engineering – there being no architecture course in WA at the time.

Following examinations at UWA, in 1914 Reg won the Neil McNeil Scholarship in engineering, followed with a distinction in 'Engineering Drawing & Design' during 1915 exams. Reg then interrupted his studies for patriotic duties, serving in France during the 'Great War' with Royal Engineers from 1916 to 1919. Summerhayes was awarded a Military Cross, presented at Buckingham Place on his twenty-first birthday in 1918. Resuming at UWA, whilst passing exams in 1920 Reg achieved further distinctions in 'Engineering Drawing & Design' and 'Materials & Structures'. Summerhayes was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from UWA in April 1921, *in absentia*, as he had departed for Singapore on the *Minderoo* in early February.

Joining the firm of Swan and Maclaren as an assistant architect in Singapore, Summerhayes subsequently became managing architect of the Malay States branch at Kuala Lumpur until 1925. Swan and Maclaren continues today, perhaps the oldest architectural firm in Singapore, with a portfolio dating from the late nineteenth century, including the famous Raffles Hotel. Reg returned from a 'carefree bachelor existence in the tropics' to Perth, joining his father in practice at the Colonial Mutual Chambers 53 St George's Terrace in 1926, and they worked together until Edwin's retirement in 1934.

The practice enjoyed a varied workload but was primarily engaged in domestic work, with all business soon to be considerably slowed by the Great Depression. Adopting the Inter-War Old English idiom in much of their work at this time, a highly visible E. Summerhayes & Son design is the 'Georgian' residence on the corner of Birdwood Parade and Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith completed for Malcolm Plaistowe in 1929. Complementing the early 1930s revivalist design at 2 Hill Terrace Mosman Park, Reg Summerhayes' design for Mrs I.B. Rowley's house *Interlaken* at 5 Hill Terrace was built in 1936.

Reginald Summerhayes married Sheila Kathleen Durack at St Patrick's Church, Havelock Street West Perth in November 1927; they had twins in September 1928, Eve and Geoffrey. To allow for the new family, in 1929 Reg designed and built their own house on high ground at the southern corner of Stirling Highway and Wilson Street in Claremont. With his father retired and the effects of the Depression wearing off in the mid-1930s, a self-confident Reg soon began to secure larger public and commercial commissions. Designed by Reg Summerhayes and A.R. Baxter Cox as architects in association, the Physics and Chemistry Science Building at UWA was opened in 1935. A tender for new Council Chambers at Claremont was accepted by the Council in February 1935, allowing Reg to replace his father's work of 1899.

With his office tenancy at Colonial Mutual Chambers, Summerhayes was able to secure the role of supervising architect for the replacement Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society (CML) Building built in 1936. Now demolished, the CML Building at Perth was designed by Sydney architects Hennessy, Hennessy & Co and reflected the style of a number of CML buildings built around Australia in the 1930s, only a few of which still remain. Located on the southern end of Sherwood Court in Perth, the eleven-storey Lawson Flats was constructed in 1937 by Colonial Mutual as a companion piece to the nearby CML Building. Reg Summerhayes was again commissioned with Hennessy, Hennessy & Co as architects in association.

In 1936, Summerhayes' joint design with sculptor Edward Kohler (1890-1964) won a national design competition for an equestrian statue of King George V, to be erected outside Brisbane Town Hall, bringing national recognition. Further competition success occurred in March 1937, when Reg's design for a

crematorium at Karrakatta Cemetery was selected from twenty entries submitted by West Australian architects. Alternative designs entered by Summerhayes secured both first and third prizes of £30 and £10 respectively.

Reg had been active in professional matters and in Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia (RIAWA) affairs for some time, and at the RIAWA AGM held in March 1937 he was elected President, succeeding A.D. Cameron. Reg's designs at Loreto Convent, Claremont were built in 1937, but subsequently have been demolished for housing, with only the Convent tower rebuilt in William Street Northbridge, overseen by son Geoffrey during 1992. As a note of other commissions, in a 1937 publication Reg was noted as having *'been successful in numerous architectural competitions, including the large block of flats and professional chambers for the University of WA, Wagin Town Hall, Perth Dental Hospital, Science Building of the University, Lake Karrinyup Country Club, residences, factories, municipal offices etc.'* ...

Summerhayes and Marshall Clifton acted as architects in association for the design of the Highway Hotel at Claremont, Civic Hotel at Inglewood and the Swanbourne Hotel, all built in 1940. Reg undertook non-active war service in Australia as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army through the Second World War of 1939-1945. Returning to architecture and post-war materials shortages in 1946, Summerhayes gradually re-established the workload of the business. The practice grew sufficiently to become Summerhayes & Associates in 1952, the year in which Reg was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects - by special resolution of the council in recognition of his services to architecture in WA. With the practice in the able hands of the 'Associates', Reg was able to enjoy an eight month tour of England and the Continent in 1954. With Reg as senior partner, but with diminishing overall responsibility, the practice continued to be successful throughout the 1950s and beyond.

Reg's son Geoffrey Edwin Summerhayes (1928-2010) became an architect, and following extended study in the USA, joined his father's firm in 1953. 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. Reg died on 28 November 1965 at Cottesloe, aged 68 years; Sheila lived till 85 years and passed away in 1989.

## References:

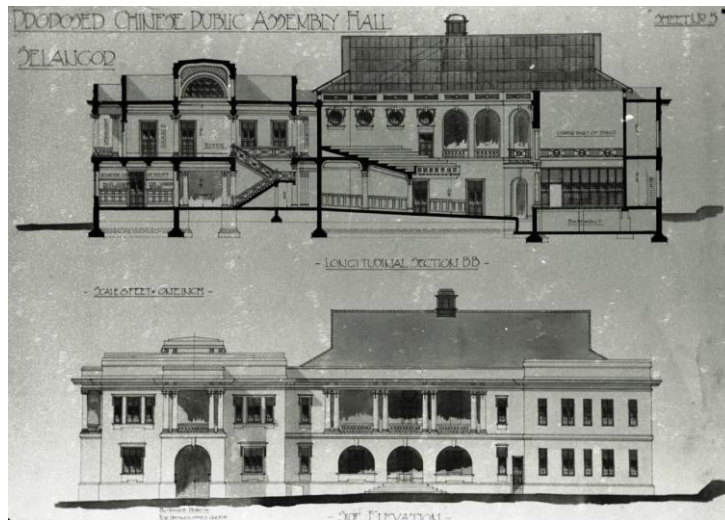
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- 'Marriages', *Western Mail*, 24 November 1927, p.40 (marriage to Sheila).
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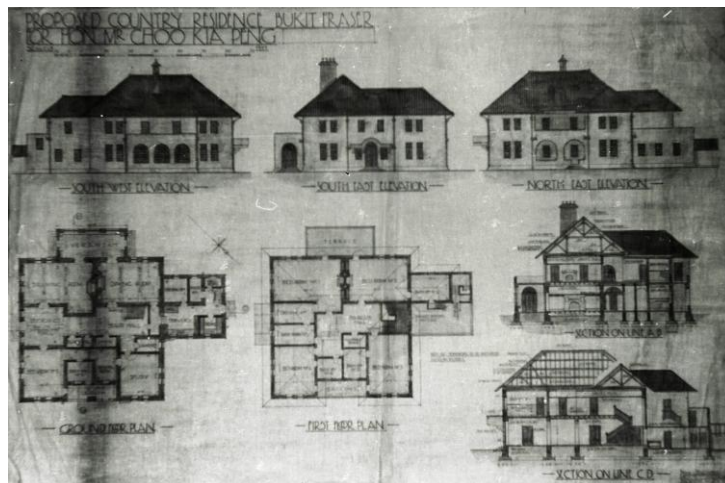
Heritage Committee meeting approval date: 8 August 2013 Last updated: 8 August 2013

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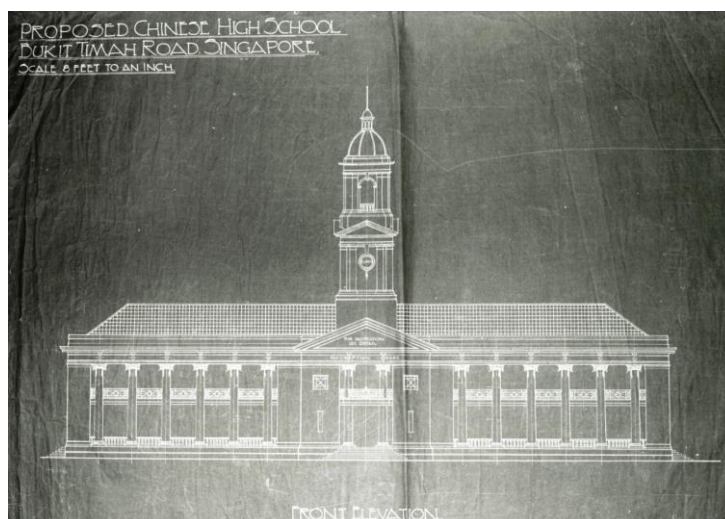
Taylor, Dr John J., 'Reginald Summerhayes (1897-1965)', *Western Australian Architect Biographies*, <http://www.architecture.com.au/> accessed DATE.



Section and elevation of 'Proposed Chinese Public Assembly Hall, Selangor'. As this and the two following drawings were kept by Summerhayes on his return to WA, it is assumed that he had some input into documentation of the projects during 1921-1925 (Muhling Collection).



Plans, sections and elevations of 'Proposed Country Residence Bukit Fraser for Hon. Mr Choo Kia Peng' (Muhling Collection).



Elevation of 'Proposed Chinese High School Bukit Timah Road Singapore' (Muhling Collection).

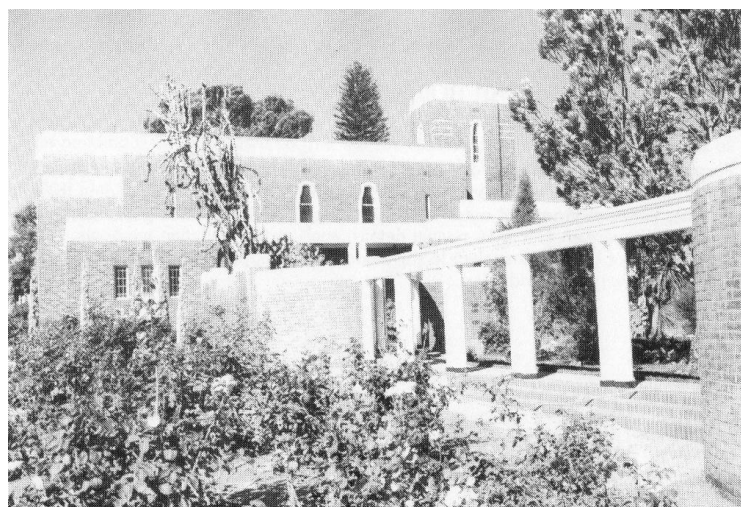




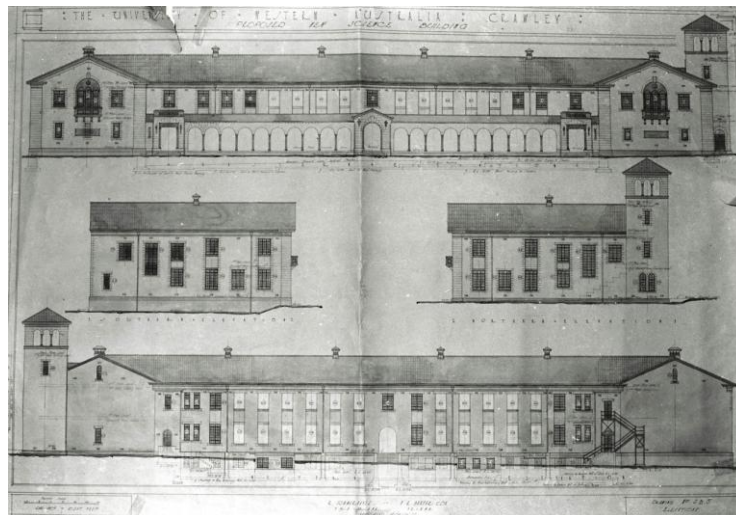
Stewarts & Lloyds Building, 959-61 Hay Street Perth completed in 1932 (SLWA 095528PD).



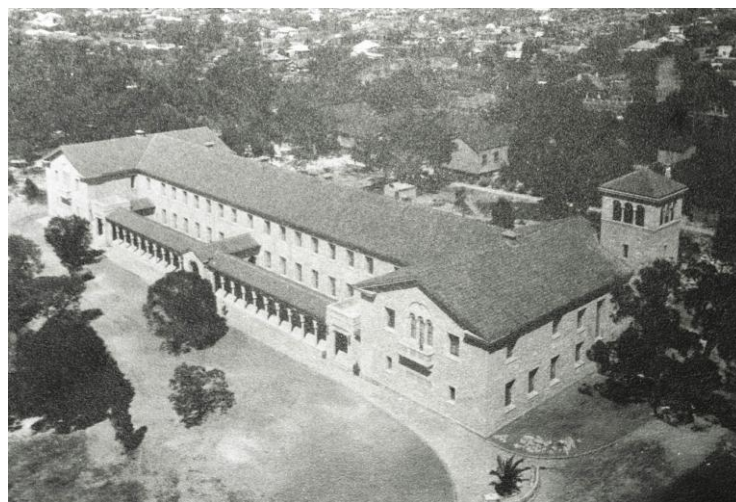
23 Mount Street Perth c1932 (*Looking around Perth*, p.57).



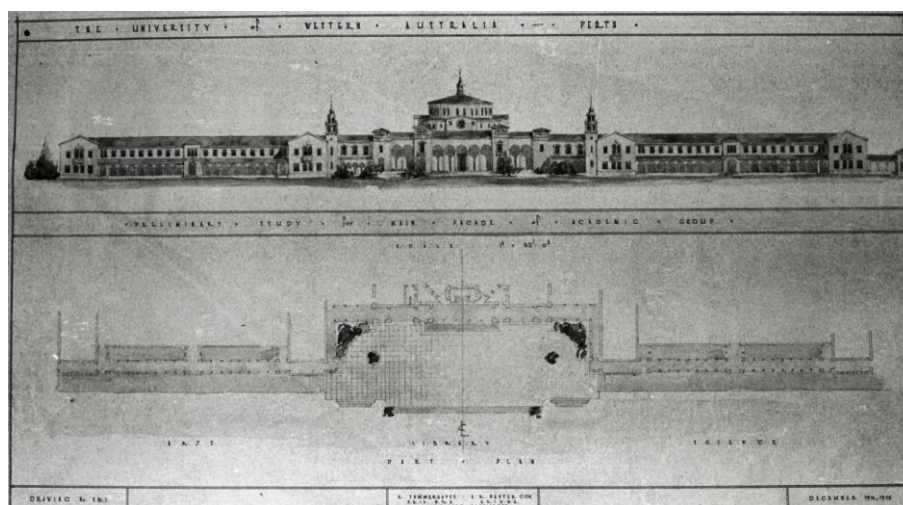
The Karrakatta Cemetery Crematorium, completed in early 1938, achieved great acclaim, but has been demolished. (*Looking around Perth*, p.57).



Designed by Reg Summerhayes and A.R. Baxter Cox as architects in association, the Science Building at UWA was opened in 1935 (Muhling Collection).



The Science Building at UWA pictured from the tower of Winthrop Hall (Muhling Collection).



'Preliminary Study for Main Facade of Academic Group' – an unrealised scheme for UWA with an Arts building at left, a Library central, and the Science building at right. R. Summerhayes and A.R. Baxter Cox drawing dated 19 December 1935 (Muhling Collection).



2 Hill Terrace Mosman Park 1933 (*Looking around Perth*, p.58).

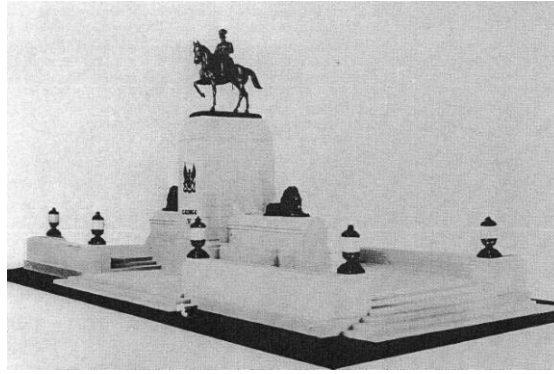


'Interlaken' built in 1936 at 5 Hill Terrace, Mosman Park for Mrs I.B. Rowley (SLWA 046668PD)



Claremont Council Chambers of 1935, pictured in 1954. The building was significantly damaged by fire in November 2010, but is planned to be rebuilt. (SLWA 102605PD)

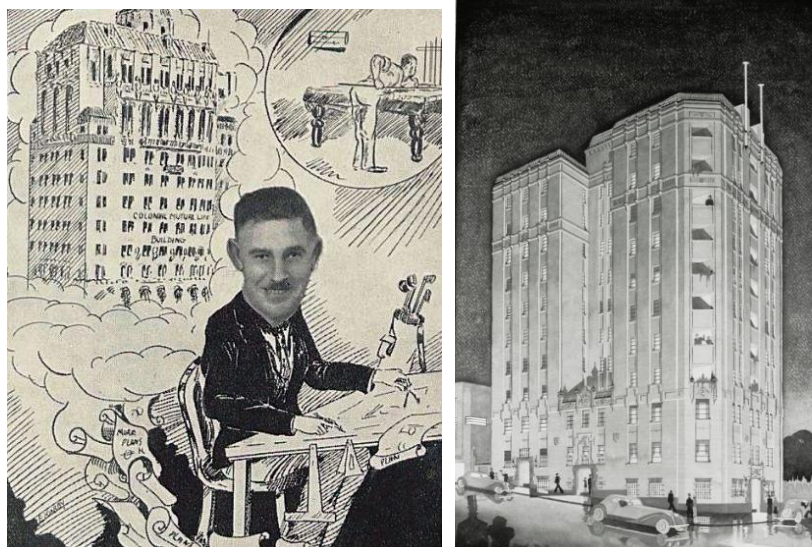




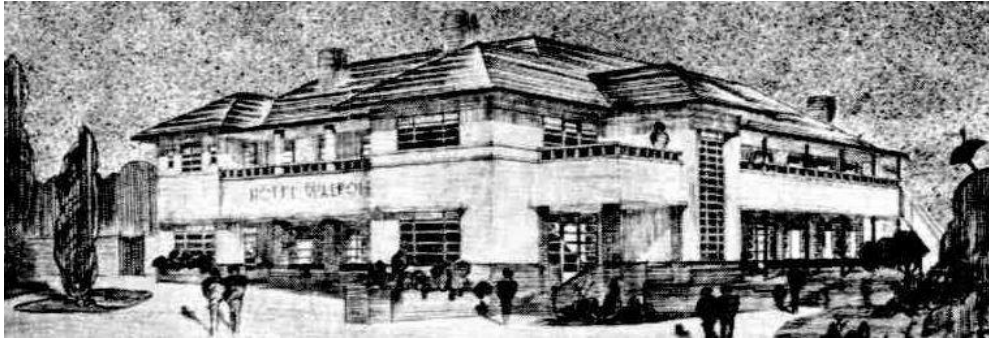
Summerhayes' and Kohler's 1936 design model for the King George V Memorial in Brisbane (Taylor, R., 'Edward F. Kohler, Perth sculptor, 1890-1964', p.10).



Colonial Mutual Life Building, St George's Terrace Perth built in 1936, knocked down in 1980 during Perth's rabid demolition period (Muhling Collection; SLWA 227242PD).



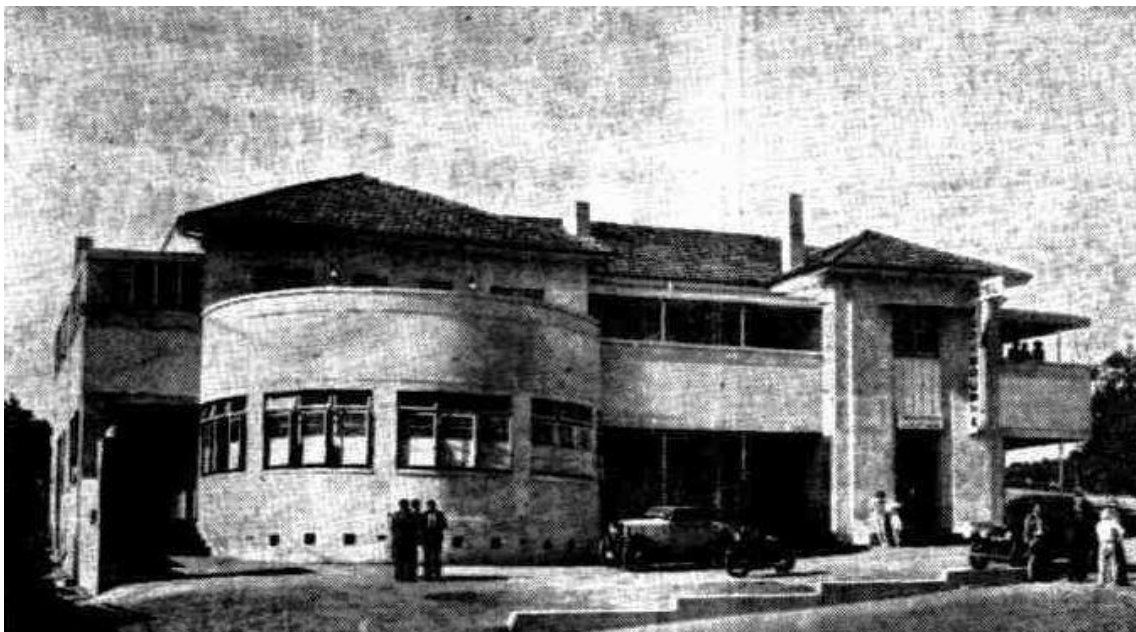
Caricature of Reginald Summerhayes (*Men of Western Australia*, 1937, plate 97); Lawson Flats on the corner of Sherwood Court and the Esplanade, constructed in 1937 as a companion piece to the nearby CML Building (Muhling Collection).



Proposed Hotel Walpole for T.H. Swarbrick (*The West Australian*, 13 May 1939, p.8).



Highway Hotel, cnr Bay Road and Stirling Highway Claremont 1940 (*The West Australian*, 16 November 1940, p.12).



Swanbourne Hotel, cnr Claremont Crescent and Franklin Street, Swanbourne 1940. The hotel has been demolished for unit housing (*The West Australian*, 14 December 1940, p.15).