

Photo required

## Richard Hamilton

(courtesy xxx)

**Richard Malone Hamilton** (1858-1936) was born 10 August 1858 at Dampier Bay, Lyttelton, a small port adjacent to Christchurch in New Zealand. His parents, recent immigrants William John Warburton and Frances (nee Townsend) Hamilton had married at Wandsworth, London in 1855. Young Richard was educated at Christ's College Grammar School in Christchurch, and sailed for England in March 1879 to obtain further skills and experience. Hamilton was a pupil of the architect Thomas Blashill (1830-1905) in London from April 1881, where he attended University College London and West London School of Art. He also travelled through England, France, Germany and Belgium before passing the qualifying exam, becoming an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA) in 1884.

Hamilton returned to Christchurch in 1884, where he called tenders for the repair of six houses known as Hereford Terrace in 1886. By 1891 he was listed at Wellington in New Zealand, and at some time in the 1890s travelled to Western Australia. A sole tender notice in July 1897 from Hamilton is simply for fencing at Claremont, indicating that he was not working for himself in WA. At Perth in August 1897, Hamilton wrote to *The West Australian* newspaper offering support for the government architect being entrusted with the design of new parliament buildings for the State, remarking that 'he could not say that the anxiety of the [local] architects to bring about a competition shows any great amount of dignity.' By April of 1898 Richard was advertising that he had commenced practice at the Occident Chambers in High Street, Fremantle, but he does not seem to have been very successful in a highly competitive market. In May of 1898, Hamilton appears to have been acting as a real estate agent, assisting with the sale of a house at 'Claremont Heights', and he is still listed at Fremantle in Wise's Postal Directory of 1899.

Hamilton wrote an informative article on his new home titled 'The City of Perth, Western Australia' for the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* of November 1903. He provides valuable comment on the nature of the location, planning, buildings and services of the rapidly growing metropolis. Photographs accompanying the article include government-architect designed buildings such as Government House, the Astronomer's Residence & Observatory, and the Perth Town Hall. Other Perth City buildings that Hamilton considered worthy of illustration included Moir's Chambers by J.J. Talbot Hobbs, Trinity Congregational Church by Harry Trigg, and the McNess Royal Arcade by William Wolf.

Having concern for academic pursuits, Hamilton read a paper at Perth Technical School titled 'Floral Forms in Art' in May 1904. With the aid of coloured plates and plaster models, he took his audience through from Assyrian style, hence moving through the Classic, Gothic and Renaissance periods. In May 1905 it was announced that Hamilton and Fred W. Upton (c.1859-1933) had been successful in a competition for the design of a Town Hall at Midland Junction, north-east of Perth. Architect Harry Jefferis was the assessor who had been appointed to judge the designs, and George Poole took second place. Poole reversed the results in another competition just a few weeks later, his scheme for laying out 98 acres of endowment lands at Subiaco taking first place ahead of Upton & Hamilton. Upton had to withdraw from the Midland project, and Hamilton completed the work with Edgar J. Henderson (1861-1928). The Town Hall at Midland was opened by the State Premier in January 1907.

Published in November 1906, Hamilton completed another *RIBA Journal* article titled 'Domestic Architecture in Western Australia', opening with: "It may be of some interest to English architects to know what is going on in this part of the Empire in regard to the evolution in the planning of small houses, and the direction it is taking." He confines comment to vernacular homes, noting that local architecture was beginning to manifest itself with some distinctness, and that the major conditions influencing house planning were the climate and the purse! Hamilton informed his readers that the environment was influencing new inhabitants to approximate southern Europeans, spending a far larger part of the twenty-four hours outside of the house than was the habit in England.

Newspapers of 1915 carry note of Hamilton working as a draftsman for the Post & Telegraph Department's electrical engineers branch, and it appears that, with the notable exception of the Midland Town Hall, Richard Hamilton generally worked for others throughout his otherwise unremarkable career. He was clearly a talented draftsman, demonstrated in the sketches accompanying one of his *RIBA Journal* articles, which remain as astute and valuable observations on the nature of Perth and Western Australian architecture at the commencement of the twentieth century. Hamilton died at West Perth on 20 August 1936, aged 78 years.

References:

- 'Lyttelton', *Star*, 14 March 1879, p.2 (sails for London on the 2093 ton *Hydaspes*).
- 'Tenders', *Press*, 2 September 1886, p.4 (repairs 6 houses Hereford St Christchurch).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 25 July 1897, p.1 (fencing at Claremont, RH office Fremantle).
- 'New Parliament Buildings', *The West Australian*, 10 August 1897, p.3 (letter re competition).
- 'R.M. Hamilton Architect', *The West Australian*, 6 April 1898, p.1 (advertising at Fremantle).
- 'Claremont Heights', *The West Australian*, 5 May 1898, p.7 (acting as real estate agent).
- Hamilton, R.M., 'The City of Perth, Western Australia', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 7 November 1903, pp.15-20.
- 'Floral Forms in Art', *Western Mail*, 7 May 1904, p.13 (read paper at Technical School).
- 'Midland Junction Town Hall', *W.A. Mining Building and Engineering Journal*, 8 April 1905, p.20; 29 April 1905, p.20.
- 'New Town Hall for Midland Junction', *Western Mail*, 6 May 1905, p.22 (Upton & Hamilton first in competition ahead of G.T. Poole).
- 'Subiaco Endowment Lands', *The West Australian*, 24 May 1905, p.6 (Upton & Hamilton second in competition behind G.T. Poole).
- Hamilton, R.M., 'Domestic Architecture in Western Australia', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 10 November 1906, pp.20-28.
- 'Midland Junction Town Hall', *The West Australian*, 23 January 1907, p.3 (opening by Premier).
- 'Post and Telegraph Notices', *Sunday Times*, 21 March 1915, p.1 (draftsman electrical engs).
- 'P and T Department', *Sunday Times*, 5 September 1915, p.2s (draftsman Post & Telegraph).
- 'Hamilton, Richard Malone', *Daily News*, 3 October 1936, p.10 (letter of administration).
- 'Hamilton, Richard Malone', *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914*, Vol 1, A-K, 1993, p.827.

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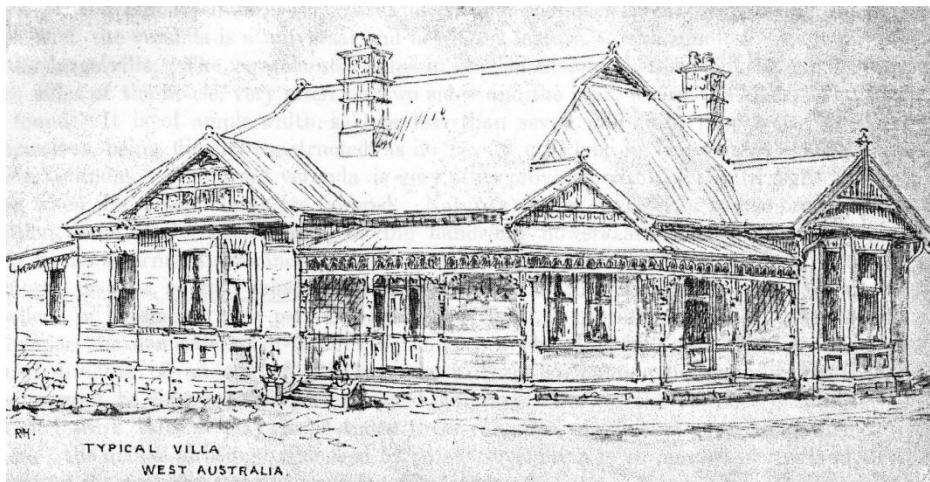
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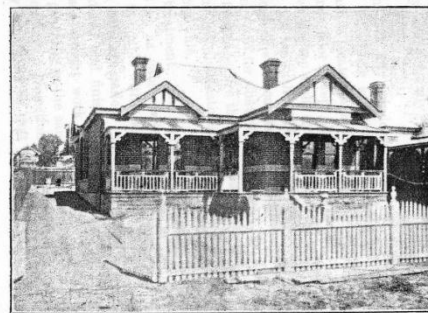
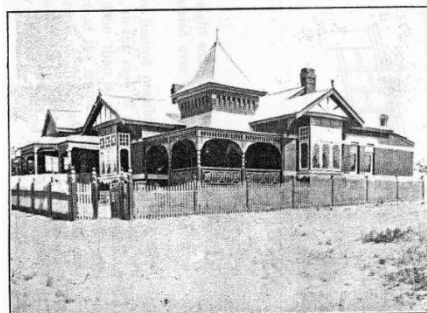
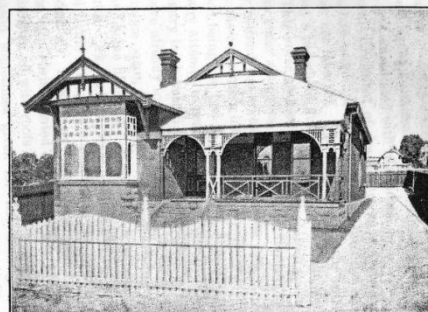
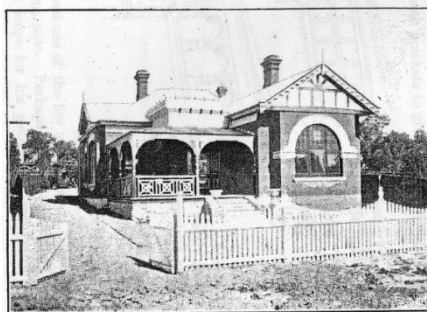
Taylor, Dr John J., 'Richard Malone Hamilton (1858-1936)', *Western Australian Architect Biographies*, <http://www.architecture.com.au/> accessed DATE.



Advertisement in the Fremantle section of Wise's Western Australian Directory (1899 p.77).

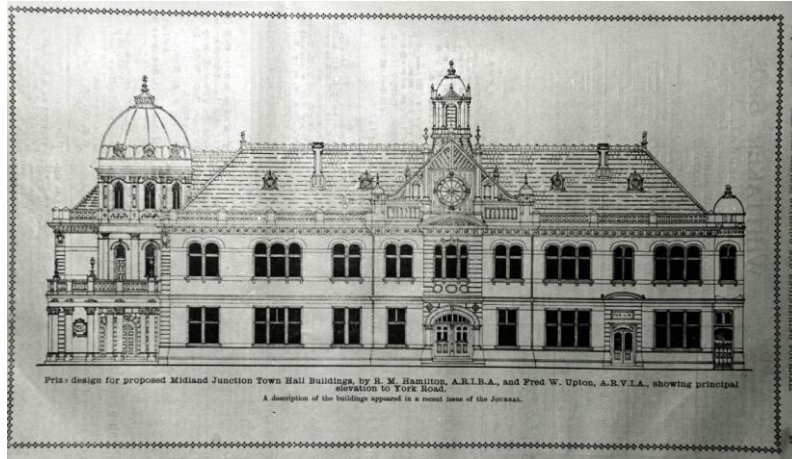


One of R.M. Hamilton's sketches that accompany his article 'Domestic Architecture in Western Australia' (*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 10 November 1906, p.20)



TYPICAL VILLAS, WEST AUSTRALIA.

Photographs that accompany R.M. Hamilton's article 'Domestic Architecture in Western Australia' (*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 10 November 1906, p.26)



Prize winning design for Midland Junction Town Hall Buildings (*WAMBEJ*, 27 May 1905, p.21)



Photo by  
**THE NEW MIDLAND JUNCTION TOWN HALL. OPENED BY THE PREMIER ON JANUARY 23.**  
H. Hebb, Midland Junction.

The recently opened Town Hall at Midland (*Western Mail*, 2 February 1907, p.25).



The oddly placed clock turret on top of the dome of Midland Town Hall was unveiled in 1923 as a war memorial, commemorating soldiers of the First World War. Not surprisingly, it is believed that the clock was originally intended for another building. (Google 2013)