

Richard Spanney listed his recreations in 1937 as 'art, swimming, motoring, and reading' – captured in a Percy Cannot sketch including Spanney's St John's Lutheran Church of 1934-36.

(*Men of Western Australia*, 1937, pl. 95).

**Rudolph Richard Spanney (Spangenberg)** (1884-1948) was born 27 July 1884 at Hansborough, near Kapunda in South Australia. Richard was the first child of German-born teacher Hermann Wilhelm Spangenberg, and Olga Martha Spangenberg. He had six siblings - Clara Otilie (1886-1965), Alma Alvira Caecilia (1888-1944), Hermann Arthur (1891-1896), Oskar [Oswald] Wilhelm (1893-1966), Alfred Otto (1896-1958), and Hertha Isolde (1899-1989). Richard initially served an apprenticeship as a carpenter, joiner and cabinet-maker at Tanunda. The Spangenberg family departed South Australia for Western Australia in 1906, crossing the Great Australian Bight by steamer, and in 1907 Hermann Spangenberg is listed as a dairy farmer at Gosnells.

Biographical notes that Richard provided in 1937 suggest that he won a scholarship to the Perth Technical School. Newspaper records do confirm that he won a carpentry scholarship in 1908, allowing a year of free fees at the next tuition level. In 1910, he was articled to Oldham & Cox, Architects. Richard stated that from 1913 to 1922, "he continued his architectural studies in the United States of America, at the San Francisco Architectural Club, the California School of Arts and Crafts, the Boston Architectural Club, Massachusetts

Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania, where he was Gold Medallist, 1920-1921 Senior Class. He was also awarded second place in the New York State Public Library Competition. Having gained experience in the USA, and having travelled widely in England and Europe, in 1923 he returned to Western Australia, where he set up his own professional practice as an architect.” Richard’s return to WA may have been prompted by concerns for the health of his parents – as his father died in January 1923, and his mother passed away in June 1923, both at 50 Queens Crescent Mount Lawley. Another event that may have prompted a return was the fact that his younger brother Alfred was married at St George’s Cathedral in January 1923.

Richard appears to have changed his name from Spangenberg to Spanney soon after arrival back in WA, as letters from him in late March 1923 were signed Spangenberg, and those written in late April 1923 were signed Spanney. The change was almost certainly prompted by continuing antagonism shown to people with German names by some sections of the Western Australian community in the post First World War period. Cemetery records suggest that of Richard’s sisters, Clara (Clare) changed her surname to Spanney, Alma (Cecilia) used Spanney as an alias, whilst Hertha (Hatty) resolutely retained Spangenberg, despite a Second World War prisoner of war camp in Germany having the same name.

It newspaper advertisements of 1923 calling tenders for his designs, Richard was careful to call himself a designer, not an architect, as he had not yet obtained registration as an architect in WA – required by the relatively new *Architects Act* of 1921. Spanney presented his qualifications to the Architects Board of Western Australia for consideration, and he was duly registered (no.83) as an architect in Western Australia on 25 February 1924, the same day as his brother Oswald Spanney of Mt Lawley [reg at Wyndham in 1926] was registered (no.82). It had been noted at a March 1917 meeting of the West Australian Institute of Architects that O. Spangenberg, a student member of the WAIA, was serving in the First World War. From this note we can deduce that Oswald had followed in his somewhat older brother’s footsteps, training under an articulated arrangement in Perth to become an architect.

From 1925 to 1927, Spanney's office was in the Lafayette Buildings, at 79 Barrack Street in Perth. From 1928 to 1932 he was working at the Moana Chambers, 614 Hay Street Perth. *Wises Directories* also list O. Spanney as an architect at Perth 1928-1930, and it is possible that 'Ossie' was working with Richard in this busier period prior to the onset of the Great Depression.



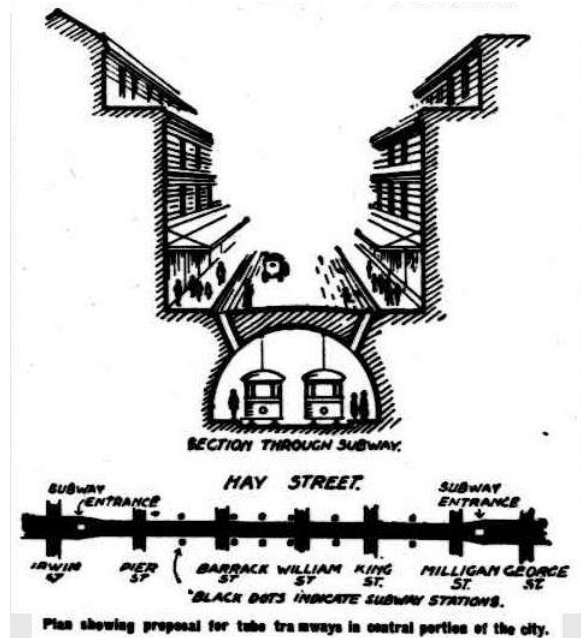
Shaftesbury Theatre Beaufort Street (*Sunday Times*, 9 March 1924, p.8).



41 Thomas Street Nedlands for Edward Joseph Hocking of 1924-25 (Google 2019)

In the later 1920s, Richard Spanney was responsible for the design of many suburban residences, particularly in Mount Lawley and Nedlands. Projects of note included the Westminster private hospital at Adelaide Terrace in Perth, well-known businessman Cecil Breckler's residence at 63 Clotilde Street Mount Lawley of 1927-28, the East Perth Picture Theatre for the East Perth Progress Association in 1928, and a shop (Hoile's Pharmacy) / residence at the corner of

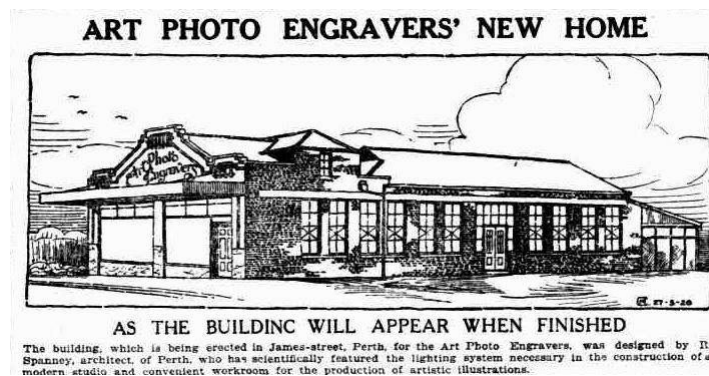
Meriwa Street and Stirling Highway in Nedlands in 1929. The insightful Spanney provided a number of insightful commentaries in the press, including a suggestion for an underground tramway in the City of Perth, and for residential street treatments based on his experiences in the USA.



Schematic for underground tramway Hay Street Perth (*The West Australian*, 18 May 1925, p.8).



Spanney's observations in California are evident in his design for the Westminster private hospital at 246 Adelaide Terrace Perth (*The West Australian*, 7 November 1925, p.8).



Art Photo Engravers James Street Perth (*Sunday Times*, 11 April 1926, p.10).



26 Kingsway Nedlands for Albert Ernest Weston of 1926 (Google 2019)



Spanney designed this impressive residence at the corner of Quarry Road and Wingfield Avenue in Crawley, built by Nedlands builder J.O. Clough in early 1927 for L. Butler, headmaster of the North Perth State School (*The West Australian*, 2 April 1927, p.8).

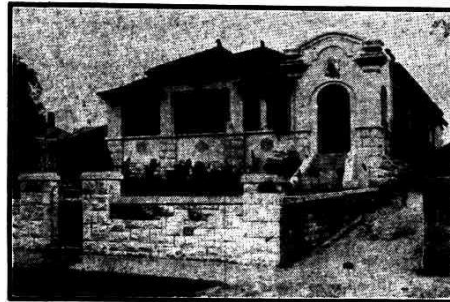
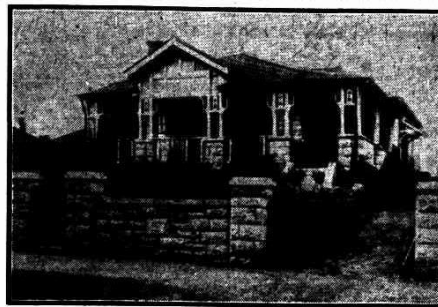


Perspective drawing of theatre and shops to be built at East Perth for the East Perth Progress Association.

Theatre and shops for East Perth Progress Association at the south-west corner of Wittenoom and Hill Streets (*The West Australian*, 18 February 1928, p.4).

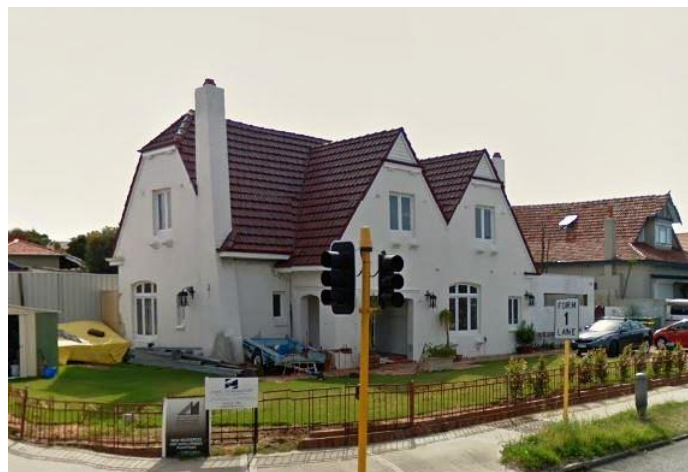


Shop (initially Hoile's Pharmacy) and residence at 33 Stirling Highway cnr Meriwa Street  
Nedlands of 1929 (Google 2018)



An example of house remodelling. Top: A residence in Mt. Lawley erected several years ago. Below: The same house with the front remodelled to the design of Mr. R. Spanney.

Example of house remodelling in Mount Lawley by Spanney, from Federation to Inter-War style  
(*The West Australian*, 24 May 1930, p.6).



Spanney designed 89 Harborne Street cnr Grantham Street Wembley for the Lee family in 1931  
(Google 2019)

It is likely that Spanney was a member of the Lutheran Church congregation of Perth. In the late 1920s Spanney drew plans for the Rev. R. M. Graebner for a proposed Lutheran Church at Perth in the Inter-War Free Classical style. However, these were not implemented. In 1928-29, Spanney designed additions and a garage for Rev. Graebner's residence at Clotilde Street in Mount Lawley. In 1934, Spanney again drew plans for a new Lutheran Church and an adjoining assembly hall, to be located on a site in Aberdeen Street, near the junction with Museum Street. The church design was for an Inter-War Gothic style church. The nave was designed without side aisles, and intended to accommodate 200 worshippers. Features of the church were a chancel, sanctuary, organ chamber, font alcove, sacristy and 'an attractively detailed bell tower, with the main entrance at its base'.

Opened in 1936, St John's Lutheran Church at Perth features the innovative use of Darlington stone for the walls, and this appearance was so well regarded that Spanney soon secured another commission utilising the same material, for The New Church of 1939 at 176 Adelaide Terrace in Perth. Both of these churches are now on the State Register of Heritage Places in WA.

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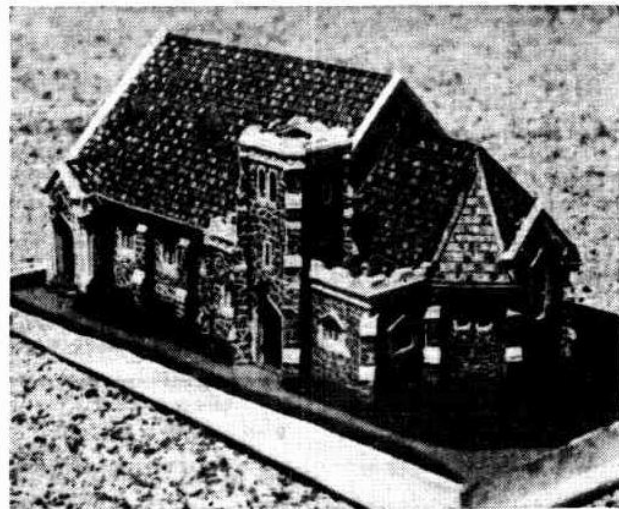
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Scale model in pasteboard of the Lutheran Church, Aberdeen-street, Perth. The architect is Mr. R. Spanney, and the model was executed by Mr. A. A. Webbe.

St John's Lutheran Church of 1936 at 16 Aberdeen Street Perth (*The West Australian*, 6 June 1936, p.8; 13 March 1937, p.9 model).



Darlington stone walls feature at St John's Lutheran Church, 16 Aberdeen Street Perth (HCWA)



Darlington stone walls were also used at The New Church of 1939, 176 Adelaide Terrace Perth (Google 2019)

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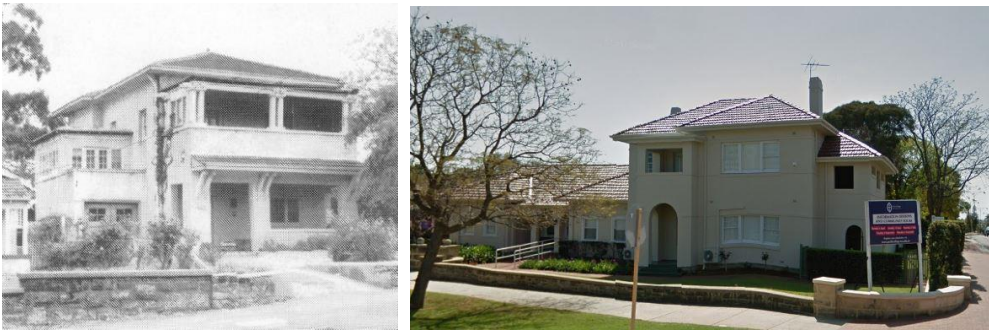
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House at Strickland Street South Perth for Des Dease (*The West Australian*, 21 May 1938, p.4)



From 1936 to 1941 Spanney's office was in the recently built Airways House, at 88 St George's Terrace in Perth, and in 1940 he was listed as a member of the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia. Although his father was naturalised in 1900, and Richard was Australian-born - apparently maintaining an American accent following his time in the USA, with the onset of the Second World War (1939-1945) he may have again faced scrutiny due to mistrust of those with German origins. Spanney's experience of discrimination parallels that of Gus Creightmore [Kreitmayer] (1910-1949), another Australian-born architect of German descent who practiced in WA during the Inter War period.



Richard Spanney's home at 703 Beaufort Street Mount Lawley was demolished c.1980 for the expansion of Perth College (Molyneux p.52). The nearby 34 Lawley Crescent (cnr Beaufort Street) Mount Lawley is attributed to Spanney by Ian Molyneux (Google 2019).

Spanney lived at 703 Beaufort Street in Mount Lawley from at least 1925, which was likely to be of his own design. Brothers Ossie and Alf both married and had two children each, whereas Richard and his three sisters did not marry. Cecelia died in January 1944, and it appears she had been living at the same house as Richard. Clare had been the principal of Spanneys Pianos, but the 1920s-1930s business was eventually wound up and both she and Hatty may also have resided at the large Beaufort Street residence over time.

Spanney is not listed as an architect in *Wises Directories* after 1941. A death notice reveals that 'Dick' Spanney was working at the Department of Works and Housing in 1948. It is likely that with Second World War austerity, he had taken on a government position in order to maintain an income, prior to retirement. Family memories recall that Dick suffered from diabetes, and as a pedestrian had been hit by a motor vehicle in his later years. Spanney died 15 April 1948 aged 63 years, and after a private service by Rev. Graebner, was buried in the Lutheran section at Karrakatta Cemetery.

References:

- 'School Board', *Kapunda Herald*, 8 April 1884, p.3; 6 May 1884, p.3; 9 September 1884, p.4.
- 'Inspection of District Schools', *Kapunda Herald*, 16 May 1884, p.3.
- 'Port of Fremantle Arrivals', *Western Mail*, 18 August 1906, p.22 (5 Spangenberg's on Kyarra).
- 'Personal', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 27 December 1906, p.4 (a Spangenberg on Kyarra from Adelaide).
- 'Inward Passengers', *Western Mail*, 5 January 1907, p.22 (a Spangenberg on SS Kyarra).
- 'Scholarship Winners for 1908', *Western Mail*, 16 January 1909, p.45 (winner in carpentry).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 20 July 1923, p.3 (residence Lot 71 Everett Street Nedlands for E.J. Walker) [no. 27].
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 24 August 1923, p.13 (alts and adds to residence 126 Coghlan Road Subiaco for F. Cullen).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 8 August 1924, p.16 (residence Lawley Cr Mt Lawley for M. Morris).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 26 August 1924, p.1 (residence Braeside Road Mount Lawley).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 7 November 1924, p.3 (residence for E.J. Hocking Lot 257 Thomas Street Nedlands).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 11 November 1924, p.1 (Four wood and roughcast residences Richmond Street Leederville).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 4 April 1925, p.1 (residence Farnley Street Mount Lawley).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 28 January 1925, p.4 (weatherboard residence for Mrs H. Heale Swanbourne Terrace Cottesloe).
- 'Hay Street Tube Trams', *The West Australian*, 18 May 1925, p.8 (suggestion for underground tramway Hay Street Perth).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 17 August 1925, p.13 (residence Paddington Street North Perth for H.W. Atkinson).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 28 November 1925, p.14 (residence Glenroyd St Mt Lawley).
- 'Tenders', *Daily News*, 26 February 1926, p.10 (Art Photo Engravers James Street Perth).
- 'Tenders', *Daily News*, 1 March 1926, p.8 (two storey residence Nedlands for A.E. Weston).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 26 March 1926, p.16 (residence Woodroyd Street Mount Lawley for A.J. Gobby).
- 'Read and McKinley', *The West Australian*, 17 April 1926, p.8 (art photo engravers 100 by 30 foot building James Street Perth).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 22 July 1926, p.14 (small residence Beaufort Street Maylands).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 December 1926, p.1 (residence The Avenue Nedlands).
- 'The City Beautiful', 26 January 1927, p.10 (Spanney citing examples of USA street treatments).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 14 June 1927, p.10 (residence Nedlands for J. Vander Velde optician) [demolished – house was at 30 Stirling Highway].
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 26 November 1927, p.6 (residence Clotilde Street Mount Lawley for Cecil Breckler).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 24 January 1928, p.11 (residence for J. Masel).

- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 27 January 1928, p.1 (extensions to Miss Clothier's Victor Dance Hall 142A Barrack Street Perth for Mrs Fanny Breckler).
- 'East Perth Theatre', *The West Australian*, 18 February 1928, p.4 (theatre and shops for East Perth Progress Association).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 28 February 1928, p.16 (East Perth Public Hall cnr Hill and Wittenoom Streets).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 August 1928, p.1 (remodelling two storey residence into 3 apartments 40 Queens Crescent Mount Lawley).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 8 September 1928, p.13 (brick residence Cottesloe).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 6 February 1929, p.12 (shop and residence Nedlands).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 7 June 1929, p.12 (shop and residence Perth-Fremantle Road between Nedlands and Claremont).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 6 December 1929, p.1 (residence Fitzgerald St Mount Lawley).
- 'Wooden Houses. Architect Urges Adoption', *The West Australian*, 19 April 1930, p.6 (states merits of timber houses based on Californian experience).
- 'Two-storey Residence', *The West Australian*, 6 Dec 1930, p.9 (Pangbourne Street Wembley Park, semi-Spanish type).
- 'Fine Home at Wembley', *The West Australian*, 28 March 1931, p.6 (cnr Grantham and Harborne Streets Wembley for Mrs P.G. Lee).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 31 January 1935, p.1 (St John's Lutheran Church Perth).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 20 March 1935, p.10 (two storey residence Harborne Street Wembley).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 March 1935, p.3 (block of four flats Adelaide Terrace).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 18 January 1936, p.23 (brick and tile residence Mount Lawley).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 27 February 1936, p.1 (extensions to Frank Daniels Printing).
- 'Dedication of Lutheran Church', *Daily News*, 5 June 1936, p.3 (St John's Lutheran Church).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 March 1937, p.11 (two shops and residences North Perth).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 24 August 1937, p.1 (two storey English home South Perth).
- 'Men of Western Australia, representative of the public, professional, ecclesiastical, commercial and sporting life of Western Australia as existant (sic) in the years 1936-1937'; V.H. Colless, 1937, private edition.
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 19 February 1938, p.9 (two storey residence City Beach).
- Molyneux, Ian, *Looking Around Perth - A guide to the architecture of Perth and surrounding towns*, RAlA (WA), Wescolour Press, East Fremantle, 1981, pp.52, 53, 61.
- 'The New Church', HCWA Register of Heritage Places Assessment, 27 February 2004.
- 'St John's Lutheran Church', HCWA Register of Heritage Places Assessment, 14 Dec 2007.
- NAA Spangenberg, Hermann Wilhelm - Memorial of Naturalisation, Item A711, 3861, 1900.
- NAA Spangenberg, O; age 22; address - Perth WA; Item MT1486/1, 1916.
- NAA Spangenberg, Alfred Otto; age 21; address - Perth WA, Item MT1486/1, 1917.

'Rudolph Richard Spangenberg', accessed 18 July 2019 <https://www.geni.com/people/Rudolph-Spangenberg/6000000043005540168>; 'A history of 760,000 people in South Australia', accessed 18 July 2019 <https://worldconnect.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=SHOW&db=sabmd&recno=636101>

Pers. comm. Ronald and Helen Spanney of Attadale WA 6156, 17 and 29 July 2019; noting that Alfred Spanney married in 1923 and had 2 daughters Lorna and Betty; Oswald Spanney married in 1929 and had 2 sons Ronald and Kenneth.

SLWA, 'Richard Spanney papers', 1923-1951 [manuscript], Call numbers: ACC 1184A, 1081A. These include sketches of unidentified buildings 1923-1939 and drawings for:

Picture garden and community centre for Morley Park Progress Assn. 1945-1946.

Proposed residence for Mr. F. Lee : for corner Harborne & Grantham Sts. Wembley 1930.

Proposed alterations and additions to 46 Duncan St Victoria Park for Mrs. T. Jeske 1946.

Proposed residence, additions: Fifth Ave. Maylands : for W.C. Brear Esq 1946.

Proposed residence for W. Pierce Esq. : Lot 56, Morley St., Maddington 1941

Proposed jarrah & asbestos residence: Lot 168 Plan 1711 Swan Location 34 Belmont : for A.J. and M.A. Hardy, 74 Guildford Road, Rivervale [194-?]

Proposed jarrah & asbestos residence for G. Frizzell Esq. : Lot 10 Keymer St. Belmont [194-?]

Proposed iron roofed weatherboard and asbestos residence for E. Greenhaigh, Gregory St Rockingham 1946

Proposed rearrangement and renewal of office fittings for Curran and Corser Barristers and Solicitors : Padbury Buildings, Forrest Place, May 1946

Proposed residence for M.D. Gray at North Cottesloe, Lot 71 Kathleen St: 1940

Johnson, J.H. South Perth [194-?]

Proposed jarrah & asbestos residence for Mr. G. Treherne: Lot 9 Surrey Rd, Rivervale [194-?]

Proposed residence for M. G. Best: Elden Parade, Bassendean: jarrah and asbestos [194-?]

Proposed residence jarrah/asbestos for A. Swanson: Lot 14, Guildford Rd, Bassendean [194-?]

Proposed residence for Mrs V.M. Rourke: Lot 11, Raymond St, Tuart Hill [194-?]

Proposed jarrah/asbestos residence for Mr Walkenden: Lot 13 Second Ave Bassendean [194-?]

Proposed residence for Mrs V.L. Matthews: Lot 946 Bridgets, Doubleview [194-?]

Proposed residence for E.G. Croyle: Lot 30, Lalor St., Scarborough [194-?]

Proposed residence for G.W. Wilson: Lot 49, Branksome Gardens, City Beach [194-?]

Proposed shop and dwelling for Mr. S. Bercove of 79 Lawley Crescent, Mt. Lawley: to be erected on Lot 95 : Dep. Plan 692, Beaufort St., Mt. Lawley [194-?]

Residence for F.W.G. Liebe: proposed for erection on town Lot D8, 202 Adelaide Tce [193-?]

Contributing author: John Taylor

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