

Don Bailey c.1991 (*Architecture Australia*, Special Edition 2006, RAI Gold Medalists, p.17).

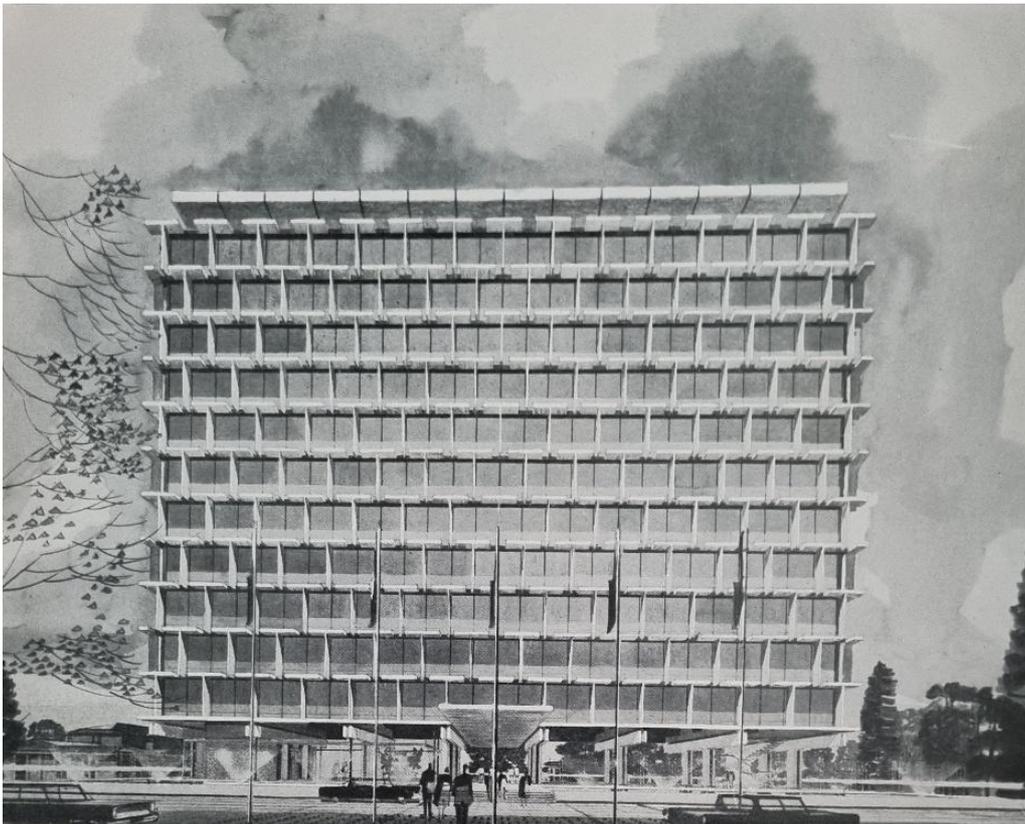
**Donald Campbell Rupert Bailey** (1927-2025) was born 1 October 1927 at Dunstaffnage Hospital, Warrigal Road, Burwood, Victoria to Rupert Arthur and Irene Victoria (nee Bond) Bailey of High Street Road, Burwood. Don's parents had been married in February 1924 at the Wyclif Congregational Church in Surrey Hills, and had also been blessed with a daughter June Irene, born in 1925. Some of Don's primary schooling was gained north-west of Melbourne at rural Maldon, and then at Castlemaine High c.1939-1944.

Don Bailey received his initial architectural training at the Royal Melbourne Technical College, and graduated from Melbourne University in 1949. Other 1949 graduates with Don of future prominence included Rex Patrick (1927-2017), Phyllis Slater-Murphy (1924–2025); and Peter McIntyre (1928-).

After graduation Bailey worked for architects Stephenson & Turner before spending four years abroad. He toured in Europe and worked in England for architects Ramsay Murray White & Ward, London, and then at Toronto with John B. Parkin Associates - one of Canada's most influential modernist architectural firms of the Twentieth Century. In his travels, Don met the convivial air hostess Janet Slade, and the couple were married at Vancouver in 1955.

Don joined architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon (BS&M) upon returning to Melbourne in 1955, where he observed that office's first wave of fast-track, multistorey steel frame curtain wall construction, including the former ICI House, then the country's tallest office tower at 21 stories high. At BS&M, he met Jeff Howlett (1928-2005) who joined the practice in 1956.

It was from Melbourne that Jeff Howlett and Donald Bailey won an Australia-wide competition in 1960 for the design of a new City of Perth administration building. This project brought the two young architects to Western Australia, where Jeff had worked previously, and the firm of Howlett & Bailey (H&B) was established. In December 1960, Howlett re-registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (ABWA reg no 239), at the same time that Don Bailey was registered in the State (reg no 349). Don and Jeff set up their practice in Perth, and took on the appointment as architects for the new civic offices. The third architect joining the firm from the BS&M Melbourne office was Edward 'Lindsay' Waller (1929-2020) - who described himself as the 'nuts and bolts man.' During 1956 and 1957, Waller had been the visiting project architect in Perth for BS&M (with Hawkins & Sands) during the construction of the MLC building at St George's Terrace. Lindsay duly registered with ABWA in 1962 (reg no 387).



Council House at St George's Terrace Perth (*The Architect*, 1961 vol 4 no 2, p.41).

The City of Perth's Council House was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in March 1963. The civic building became a point of reference for modern optimistic Perth, which was about to embark on the process of redeveloping large parts of the CBD with the 1960s mineral boom in WA.



Jeffrey and Kath Howlett, Jan and Don Bailey at the opening of Council House in Perth on 25 March 1963 (50 Years, Council House 1963-2013, p.23).

H&B soon won another competition in mid-1962, for the Reserve Bank in Canberra, judged the best of 131 submissions. The Reserve Bank of Australia Building at 20-22 London Circuit Canberra ACT is now heritage-listed. It was built from 1963 to 1965 by Civil & Civic, and added to the Australian Commonwealth Heritage List in 2004.



1965 Reserve Bank of Australia Building, Canberra in 2009 (Wikipedia 2025).

The innovative Beatty Park Pool kiosk and manager's house was designed by H&B for the 1962 Empire (Commonwealth) Games at Perth. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1993, at a time when the City of Perth was also considering the removal of Council House. Other 1960s H&B projects included the Channel 9 television studios at Nollamara, a series of very fine Modernist houses, the Onslow Street South Perth townhouses, St Columba College at The University of Western Australia, and a Century Batteries warehouse.

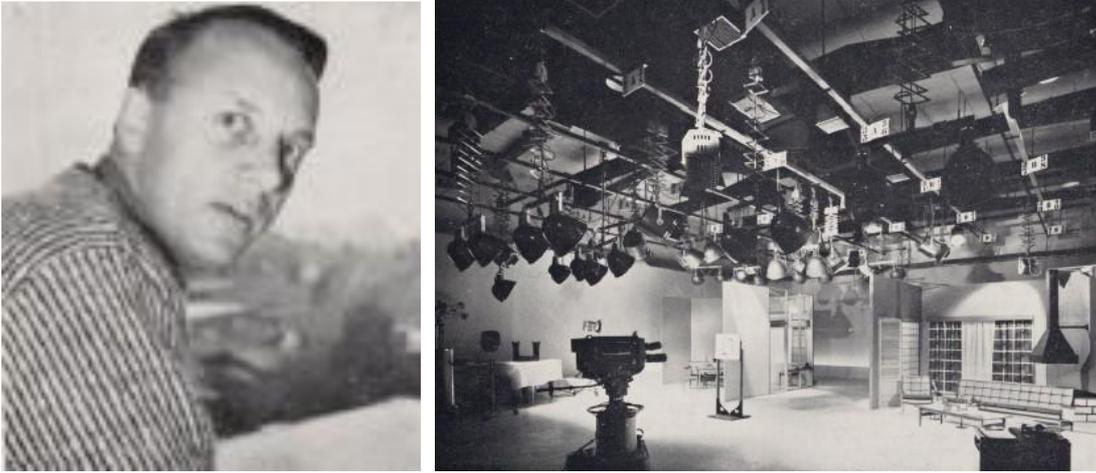


Interior of 1962 Beatty Park manager's house and kiosk (*An Unfinished Experiment in Living - Australian Houses 1950-65*, p.320).

In the 2000s prominent English émigré architect Peter Parkinson (1925-2014) made note of some H&B projects during his time with the firm in the early 1960s. One of their larger projects was the mill for Australian Paper Manufacturers at Phoenix Road Spearwood in 1964. With his characteristic sense of humor, Parkinson recalled Don Bailey's administrative strengths in the business at that time: *'The office staff consisted of Jeff who did the design, Don who did the worrying, Lindsay who did the work, and myself who did the prints ...'*



APM mill at Phoenix Road Spearwood from a distance; the APM office building in foreground with mill behind; both photos of November 1965 (Fritz Kos, SLWA 340765PD & 340766PD).



Don Bailey in 1965 and the Channel Nine studios at Nollamara (*The Architect*, September 1965, 'Contributors', p.34; 'Swan Television Limited - Studio Building Nollamara', p.55).



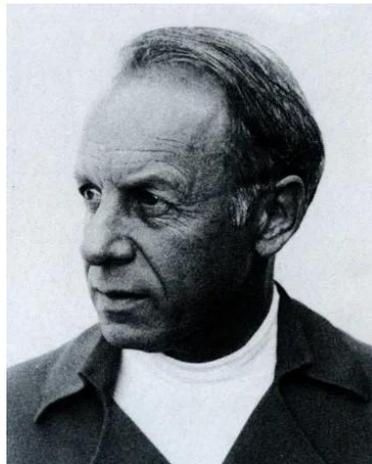
Warehouse for Century Storage Battery Co Ltd at South Street O'Connor (*The Architect*, December 1966, p.42).

A series of larger Perth CBD developments undertaken by H&B in the 1970s included the Law Chambers in Hay Street adjacent to St George's Cathedral, and Mount Newman House on St George's Terrace. The 1970s design work was ordered and axial, demonstrating an interest in classical principles - whilst definitely Modernist in appearance. The Perth Concert Hall was opened in 1973 on a site a little further to the east of Council House along St Georges Terrace. University of WA academic Geoffrey London so aptly noted: *'The grand building, with its solid opaque interior, giant projecting roof, and use of white off-form concrete, forms a counterpoint to the transparent filigree of Council House'*. Renowned for its acoustic properties, in 2016 the Concert Hall received the Australian Institute of Architects National Award for Enduring Architecture.



1972 Law Chambers Building near St George's Cathedral Perth (Fritz Kos, SLWA 160126PD); 1972 Mount Newman House, 200 St George's Terrace (Perth - The Building Challenge, 1987, p.23); 1973 Perth Concert Hall, 5 St George's Terrace Perth (Wikipedia 2023).

Don Bailey departed from H&B in 1974 to become national director of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), a position he held for 17 years. At the RAIA his administrative qualities combined with many years in architectural practice provided excellent guidance to the rapidly-evolving Institute. In addition, Don and Jan became wonderful hosts to many who joined Institute functions.



Don Bailey in 1985 (ArchitectureAU)

In 1991 Bailey was awarded the RAIA Gold Medal, the Institute's highest award, and in his A.S. Hook Memorial Address, Bailey reminisced about the years of change he saw as Director General of the Institute, the people who helped him, and the future he envisaged for the profession. Demonstrating his desire and research to understand the development of architecture and the Institute, Bailey cited Professor Max Freeland on various themes, documented in the book 'The Making of a Profession', which Don claimed was 'required regular reading for all RAIA office bearers and staff'.

In his nomination for the award, Immediate Past President Ronald Bodycoat provided a summary of Don's career and achievements:

*'Donald Bailey has been chief executive of the RAIA since his appointment in 1974. As National Executive Director, or Director General (as the title became in 1989), Donald has made service to the Institute his full-time career. Operating from RAIA Headquarters in Canberra, he has not only worked to fulfil the requirements of his role as Chief Executive, but without compromise has represented, defended, fought for, and proclaimed the art and the practice of architecture, and the wellbeing of the professional body which was established to advance architecture and to watch over, protect and promote the interests of the profession.'*

*'I know of no other architect, or employee of the Institute, who has aligned his life's work so absolutely to the principles of the profession, or has expended his energies so entirely for the general good of its membership and the promotion of a fitting professional standing for it in the community. Donald has announced his intention to retire from the Institute in July 1991. This is a fitting moment to recognize his distinguished service, not only in designing and executing buildings of high merit, but also in his role as Director General, whereby he has brought distinction to the Institute and to the profession of architecture.'*

Writing for *Architecture Australia*, another Gold Medalist, Peter Johnson, gave insight to the more personal character of Bailey:

*'There is a strong component of whimsy in his makeup which has delighted some, irritated others, but has indicated to all that here is someone who does not simply conform to the conventional notion of a chief executive. At times in the past, to shock people out of their lethargy, or to plant an element of the absurd into proceedings in danger of becoming too somber and serious, he has been known to don a rubber mask and suddenly to appear like the 'phantom of the opera' in the midst of a formal assembly. Nowadays the comic in him mostly emerges on less formal occasions such as staff social functions, where he may bring out either his piano accordion or his portable organ and lead those present in the singing of songs appropriate to the occasion.'*

Bailey was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2005 for his service to the profession. An outgoing, ebullient man, Donald Bailey AM LFRAIA died 27 October 2025. Jan had passed away in the early 2000s. In his later years Don was cared for by the family of the late Noel Collins, who had been a very

close friend, supported by Noel's wife Iris and godson Guy Collins. Guy recalls that Don remained very proud of a hole-in-one at the prestigious Lake Karrinyup Country Club in 1971, retaining a certificate celebrating the feat.

Recognised for the prominent and refined modernist designs of the Howlett & Bailey practice from 1960 until 1974, and then for his administrative and guidance work with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects until 1991, Don Bailey remains a leading figure of the Australian architectural scene in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

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 Pers. comm. Don Bailey (re H&B, Jeff Howlett, and Lindsay Waller), February 2025.  
 Pers. comm. Guy Collins, December 2025-January 2026; Malcolm Steel January 2026.

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