



Captain Bill Fitzhardinge in the early 1940s (Chris Fitzhardinge)

David Moreton Berkeley (Bill) Fitzhardinge (1920-1996) was born 7 May 1920 at St Ronan's Private Hospital in Manly, Sydney, son of Berkeley Ross and Lucy Monica Mary (nee Morgan) Fitzhardinge. The couple had married at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney in 1910. Their first child, John Berkeley, was born 1911 at Barraba, in northern New South Wales. By 1912 Berkeley and Lucy had moved to Manly where over the next thirteen years a further seven children were born: Roger Francis Berkeley 1912, Lucy Margaret Berkeley 1913, Kathleen Clare Berkeley 1915, Theodore Berkeley 1916, Basil Berkeley 1918 (died after only a few days), David Moreton Berkeley 1920, and Judith Anne Berkeley 1922.

Bill's first schooling was at Manly Superior Public School. Bill's father was an accountant with the Bank of NSW, and in 1929 the family transferred to Western Australia with his work. Berkeley and Roger travelled by train to WA, with the remainder of the family voyaging on the *SS Karoola*, disembarking at Fremantle in June 1929, and they soon found residential property to rent in suburban Perth. In 1933 Bill was at Perth Boys' School; he then moved on to Perth Modern School where he was a Prefect and notable sportsman. A widely talented scholar, he sat for his Leaving Certificate in 1937, passing seven subjects with a Distinction in Drawing A and B. Tragically, Bill's mother Lucy died in December 1937.



Bill Fitzhardinge won the Perth Modern School open high jump in 1937, and was also a State Champion in the event (Chris Fitzhardinge - *The West Australian*, 9 October 1937, p.11).

Bill's eldest brother John Berkeley Fitzhardinge (1911-2008), had joined the Perth architectural firm of Eales Cohen & Bennett, struggling through the Great Depression years of the early 1930s. After passing the examinations of the Architects Board of WA in 1934, John was registered as an architect in the State (reg no 150) during 1935. W.G. Bennett (1896-1977) left the partnership in 1935, and John became a partner in the firm of Eales Cohen & Fitzhardinge (EC&F) during 1937. Eustace Cohen (1881-1938) died at only 56 years of age in January 1938, and Bill Fitzhardinge joined his brother at EC&F in that year.

John Fitzhardinge served in the Second World War (1939-1945) from 1940 in the Army, and Bill Fitzhardinge also enlisted in 1940, at that time he was living with his family at 28 Alvan Street Mount Lawley. Bill's extensive war service included time in the Middle East before returning to Australia in 1942, hence working as a Flak Intelligence Officer in New Guinea and the Pacific. Family understand that Bill was on the *USS Missouri* when the Japanese surrender was signed in September 1945, as part of the staff of Admiral Vian of the British Fleet, before demobilising and returning to civil life in Perth from February 1946.

Following the deaths of senior figures Talbot Hobbs in 1938 and Waldie Forbes in 1939, the leading Perth-based firm of Hobbs Forbes & Partners (HF&P) gradually dissolved, and two powerful new Western Australian firms developed after the war - Hobbs Winning Leighton, and Forbes & Fitzhardinge. It appears that the two new firms split the record and drawing holdings up between them, and both kept a portion of the J. Talbot Hobbs Architect (1887-1904), the Hobbs Smith & Forbes (1904-1933), and the Hobbs Forbes & Partners (1933-1945) documents. One portion of the records was retained by Waldie Forbes' son Bill, and became, with EC&F's papers, a vital asset to Forbes & Fitzhardinge.

After Japan had entered the war, Bill Forbes left WA to join the navy in 1942. Both EC&F and HF&P are listed at St George's Terrace, Perth on the second floor of the WA Trustees Building in 1939. They were listed together there, practicing in association with few staff and little work under the guidance of the elderly J. Herbert Eales (1864-1957) until January 1946, when they merged as Forbes & Fitzhardinge. Bill Fitzhardinge passed the UWA Art Certificate in 1946, a portion of the examination requirements for registration by the Architects Board of Western Australia (ABWA), which he finally achieved in 1949 (reg no 203).

Bill Fitzhardinge married Betty Joyce Hancock in 1946, and the couple subsequently had two sons, Gregory Berkeley born in 1947, and Roger David in 1954. In 1948 Bill was President of the Architectural Students' Association and the winner of the E.G. Cohen Medal. He bought a block for £400 at 44 Minora Road Dalkeith and built a modest house in 1948 to his own design for £400. When Roger was born, another bedroom was added - for £400 !



Bill and Betty c.1946, and the young architect c.1949 (Greg Fitzhardinge; *Phi*, 1950, p.19).

A major industrial expansion in the State of WA took place with the construction of the British Petroleum (BP) oil refinery at Kwinana in 1952-1953. Forbes & Fitzhardinge were commissioned to erect all the buildings on the site, an early example of the commercial prominence the practice achieved in WA during the second half of the Twentieth Century. There were many continuing clients, in the earlier twentieth century working with Talbot Hobbs, Waldie Forbes, Herbert Eales and Eustace Cohen, that continued with post-war patronage of Forbes & Fitzhardinge. These included industrial companies such as the Swan Brewery, Dalgety & Co, Fremantle Cold Storage Co, Peter's American Delicacy Co (later Peter's Ice Cream), Harris Scarfe & Sandover, and Boans. No doubt with some connections from their family's activity in the sector, John and Bill Fitzhardinge were responsible for the design of numerous banks, including many rural premises across the State. In the 1950s and 60s Forbes & Fitzhardinge grew with the development of WA, retaining earlier clients who had deferred building due to previous restrictions on materials and available funds. As the State's industrial base grew, the firm designed plants for Vickers Hoskins, Brisbane & Wunderlich, Bell Bros, Union Maltings and the BP Kwinana refinery. Plants followed these for BHP and Alcoa. They experienced growth in office buildings, retail stores, hospitals and aged care.



South British Insurance Building 23 Barrack Street Perth (1958 SLWA 239839PD; 2024 Google)

After J.H. Eales had retired, in 1954 Bill Fitzhardinge and William M. Barton (1913-2006) were admitted to Forbes & Fitzhardinge partnership. Eustace Cohen's son Gres Cohen (1926–2008) became a partner in 1959, with A.G. (Tony) Brand joining in 1964. In later years Michael Berkeley Fitzhardinge (1939-1999), son of John and Bill's brother Roger, was to become a partner in the firm.



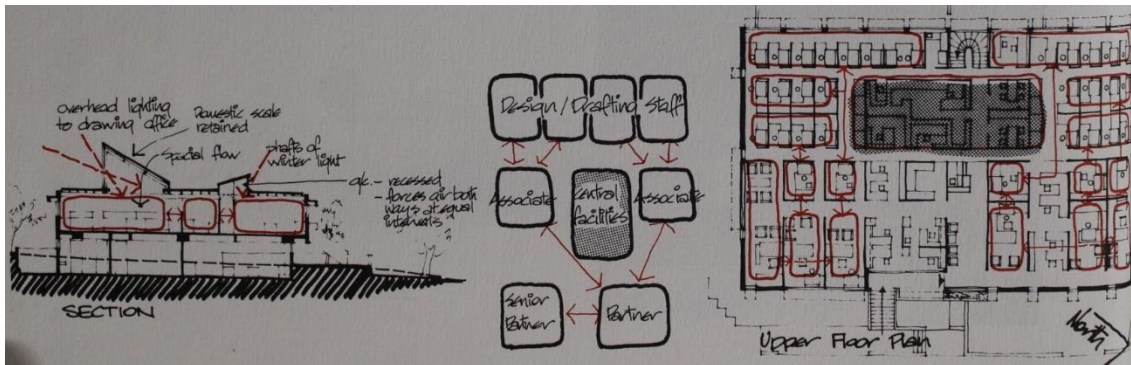
T & G Building of 1961 at 37 Barrack Street, Perth (SLWA 114950PD, 004143PD)

The firm was responsible for one of Perth's earlier high rise buildings, the 14 storey T&G building of 1961, on the south-west corner of Barrack Street and St George's Terrace. With city planning regulations ensuring that prime Perth properties were more valuable when heavily developed, the T&G was one of many 1960s and 70s office towers for banks and insurance companies in St George's Terrace, a good number designed by Forbes & Fitzhardinge. Unfortunately the people of Perth at this time held little understanding of the value of their forebears' quality Federation-era designs, unfashionable at the time, and the T&G building replaced a landmark Talbot Hobbs design of 1897.

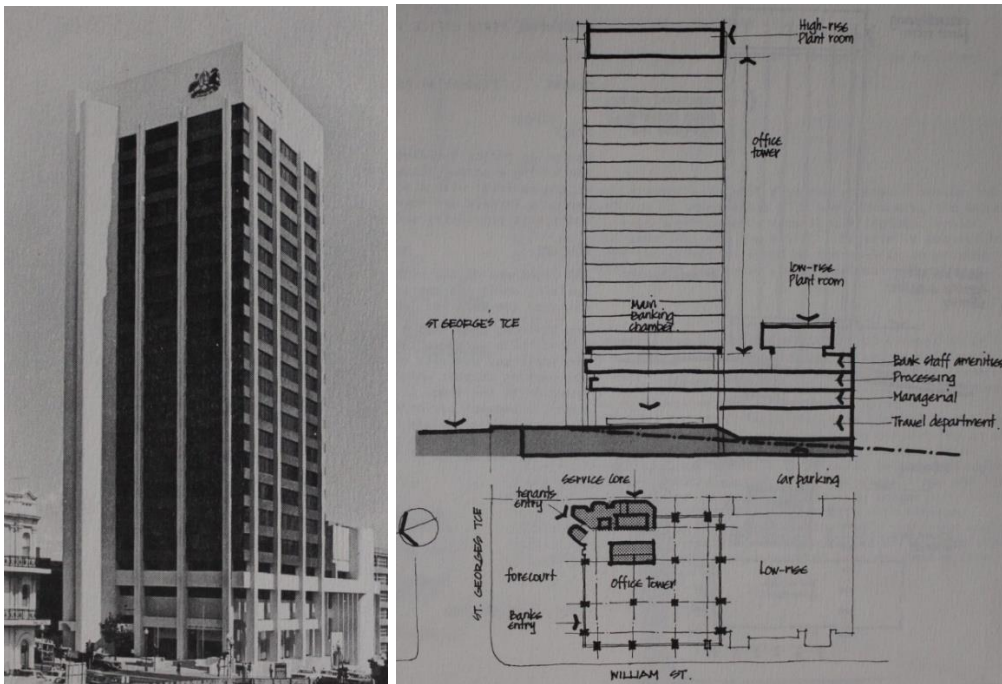


ANZ Bank Building 84 St Georges Terrace, Perth (SLWA 342623PD)

The T&G was followed by high rise buildings for the ANZ Bank at 84 St Georges Terrace, and the Prudential Building constructed 1968-1970 on the south-west corner of Howard Street and St George's Terrace, replacing Dean Smith's 1903 *Surrey Chambers*. A client retained from earlier years was the Salvation Army, and in the early 1960s Forbes & Fitzhardinge designed for them one of the earlier multi-storey residential complexes in Perth, the Railton Temperance Hotel. With ongoing business success, and documentation-staff numbers growing steadily in the 1960s, Forbes & Fitzhardinge designed their own premises at 1 Ord Street West Perth and moved there in 1967.

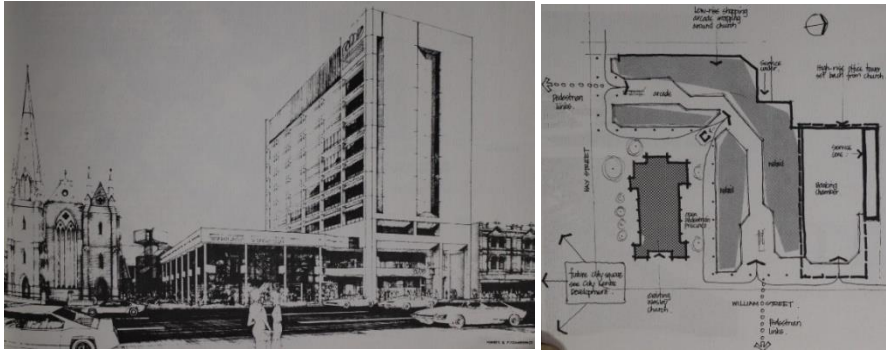


1967 Forbes & Fitzhardinge Offices at 1 Ord Street, West Perth (1971 photo Fritz Kos, SLWA160055PD; section and upper floor plan F&F Brochure 1975, p.2).



1968-70 Wales Centre St George's Terrace Perth (F&F brochure 1975, pp.8-9).

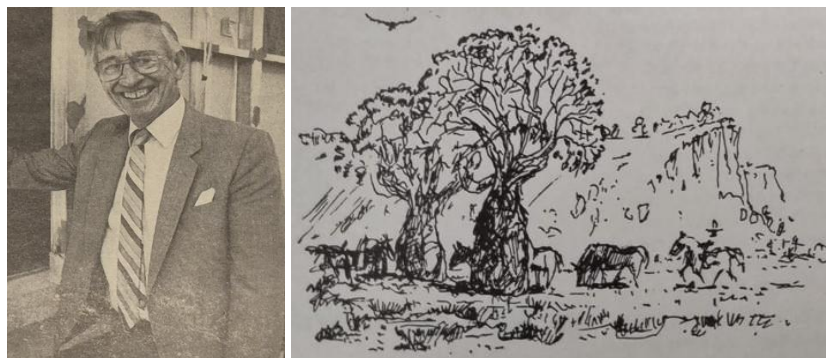
Another large office project by the practice was the Wales Centre on the south-east corner of St George's Terrace and William Street in Perth, built 1968-70. By 1969 the partners at Forbes & Fitzhardinge remained as Bill Forbes, John Fitzhardinge, William Barton, Bill Fitzhardinge, Gres Cohen, and Tony Brand.



1972-74 Wesley Centre William Street Perth (F&F Brochure 1975, pp.14-15)

One of the companies that Bill looked after was Coles, and he became firm friends with each of the successive State Managers. Bill's son Greg recalls that his father was involved in the design of the first K-Mart store in WA, which opened in November 1969 at Morley. A creative and productive individual, Bill Fitzhardinge had grown tired of the machinations of a large architectural practice by 1974, and he 'retired' to set up his own small office in an adjacent building at 3 Ord Street West Perth. Forbes & Fitzhardinge hence announced a new partnership effective from 1 July 1974, with six partners John Fitzhardinge, William Barton, Gres Cohen, Tony Brand, Mike Fitzhardinge, Lindsay Waller; and five associates Peter Wilks, Graeme Paynter, Anthony Cobley, Bruce Fell-Smith, and Graham Bedford.

After Bill left Forbes & Fitzhardinge, he began a second and equally important phase of his brilliant career. Over the next 18 years he spent most of his time working as a sole practitioner for Catholic Education and Bishop John Jobst in the Diocese of Broome, designing fifteen schools for Aboriginal communities ranging from Balgo Hills and Lake Gregory on the fringes of the Great Sandy Desert to Lombadina and Beagle Bay on the coast.



Bill Fitzhardinge in 1985; a sketch in the Kimberley (*Intercom*, Catholic Education Office WA, November 1985; *Beads*, Easter 1992, p.7).



In 1985 Bill designed additions to St Theresa's Church at Balgo-Wirrimanu (John Taylor, 2003).

Bill also designed three churches, the latest being St Vincent Pallotti Church at Kununurra (1991), whilst also doing some work for the Royal Flying Doctor service.



St Vincent Pallotti Church Kununurra of 1991, pictured in 2024 (www.churchesaustralia.org).

With Bill's significant early input, Forbes & Fitzhardinge produced a large share of Western Australia's finest buildings up until the 1990s, then evolving into Forbes & Fitzhardinge Woodland. Later partner Steve Woodland married one of Mike Fitzhardinge's daughters, but the Fitzhardinge name finally disappeared in a merger as the company name changed to Cox Howlett & Bailey Woodland. Fortunately, many of the early drawings that were formerly with Forbes & Fitzhardinge have been deposited with the Battye Library.

Like his brother John, Bill was a keen yachtsman and won State titles in the Moth and Thunderbird classes. At Royal Perth Yacht Club, it seems most likely that Bill was involved in a 1981 rebuild, around the time he was Vice Commodore. Bill was also a keen painter and in later years, as well as yachting, played golf at Royal Perth Golf Club with his brother Theo and then at Nedlands Golf Club with son Greg. Achieving success from a relatively modest upbringing in the 1920-1930s, his career severely interrupted by the difficulties of the Second World War, Bill Fitzhardinge's long-serving and significant contributions to practice in WA may gain greater study and recognition over time. His professional qualities were acknowledged by the conferring of the honorific titles Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) in 1951, and Fellow of the RAIA in 1970. Bill Fitzhardinge died 29 November 1996 at Dalkeith, aged 76 years, and his wife Betty Fitzhardinge passed away in March 2010 at Wembley aged 93 years. Family note that Fitzhardinge Street in Exmouth is named after Bill Fitzhardinge.

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