HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11. 1. AESTHETIC VALUE *

Dumas House is a good example of the Post-War International style exhibiting some of the principle tenets of the modernist aesthetic. The design of the building (steel-framed with glazed infill panels) and the open piazza raises the bulk of the building above the ground, enabling a sense of transparency and lightness in the external walls. (Criterion 1.1)

Dumas House has considerable landmark value. The building is significantly taller than surrounding developments and combined with its location on an elevated site, the place is clearly visible from many points around the city and wider metropolitan area. (Criterion 1.3)

Located at the intersection of King's Park Road and Malcolm Street and opposite the Fraser Avenue entry to King's Park, *Dumas House* contributes to the aesthetic and landmark qualities of the city environment. (Criterion 1.3)

Although not as tall as some of the commercial building in St George's Terrace, *Dumas House* contributes to and defines the western edge of the urban skyline when viewed from a distance. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Dumas House was built during a period of prosperity when the State was experiencing extensive industrial development and mineral boom. At the time of construction, *Dumas House* was seen as a symbol of the growth and prosperity of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.1)

Dumas House represents the physical manifestation of the long-held Government aim to centralise all Government departments in the Parliament House precinct. Planning for the site arose out of the 1955 Stephenson-Hepburn Report and the place was the first of five multi-storied buildings planned for the site; the remaining four were not built. (Criterion 2.2)

Dumas House was designed by PWD architects G. Finn, E. Van Mens and P. Maidment, who won an Australia wide competition to design the master-plan for five office buildings on the Mount Eliza site. (Criterion 2.3)

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* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* , Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

Dumas House was named after Sir Russell Dumas, who was Director of Works and Buildings, Public Works Department, from 1941 to 1953. (Criterion 2.3)

Dumas House has been associated with the State Government of Western Australia since its construction in 1966, providing office accommodation for various Government departments and Ministers. (Criterion 2.3)

At the time of construction, *Dumas House* was well received as a good example of modern office accommodation. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Dumas House demonstrates a development in building technology in the use of passive sun control devices to reduce thermal loads on the large expanses of panelled glazing. The use of horizontal projecting slabs illustrates a development of earlier environmental control such as the external T-shaped forms at *Council House* (1963). (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Dumas House contributes to the Perth community's sense of place, sited as it is on a prominent landscaped area beside a busy thoroughfare, and comprising a viewing promenade from which to overlook the city. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Nothwithstanding extensive internal modifications, *Dumas House* is a rare example of a multi-storied, steel-framed building with infill glazed panels, constructed in Western Australia in the 1960s. Other examples include MLC Building (1957) which has been radically remodelled; the T&G Building (1960) and SGIO (1958) which have been reclad; and R&I Bank (1961) and Commonwealth Bank (1962) which have been demolished. While Council House (1963) displays a greater refinement of construction, *Dumas House* remains a more intact example of a building of the period. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Dumas House is representative of the Post-War International style exhibiting some of the principle tenets of the modernist aesthetic. These include the planning of the building on a modular grid; the lightweight glazed panelling and the open piazza raising the bulk of the building above the ground, which enables a sense of transparency and lightness in the external walls. (Criterion 6.1)

Dumas House is representative of the adaptation of International style of architecture to the Australian environment. Glassy surfaces were typical of an international architectural idiom having European and American antecedents, which were less suited to the Australian climate. The projecting horizontal slabs at *Dumas House* demonstrate a progression in the adaptation to local conditions, from earlier examples such as the external forms at Council House (1963). (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Dumas House is in good condition and has been well maintained since construction.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Dumas House has moderate integrity. The place continues to operate as offices for Government departments and ministers. Although the Caretaker's Quarters and tourist observation desk are no longer occupied or in use, they retain many of their original finishes.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Dumas House has moderate authenticity, with the basic form and exterior of the place unaltered. Alterations have been made to interior layouts of the office space to accommodate changing Government requirements and asbestos has been removed from the ceiling; however, these have had negligible effect on the structure or form of the place. The recent fitout of a telecommunications studio in the west end at the ground floor level reduces some of the effect of transparency of the piazza; nevertheless, this could be removed.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian, with additional research by Jacqui Sherriff, HCWA. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Graduate Architect.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Dumas House is a fourteen storey public office building constructed 1963-1965, in Post-War International style.[1] It was built for the State Government of Western Australia and has been occupied continuously by various Government departments.

From the late 1920s, it had been an aim of Government planning in Western Australia to create a 'central government office complex on a landscaped site which would enhance the amenity and beauty of the City of Perth.'[2] Government reports in 1927, 1931, 1935 and 1940 made various recommendations, but nothing was done due to the insecurity and shortages during and immediately following World War II.[3] The issue was again considered in 1955, when the Stephenson-Hepburn Report was published. Included in the Report, which covered a variety of planning issues and directions for future works, was a recommendation for a Government office complex on a site on Mt Eliza. The site extended from Kings Park Road in the south, to Hay Street in the north, and from Harvest Terrace in the east to Havelock Street in the west.[4] The land was set aside under an interim order in September 1956.[5]

Due to the increased economic prosperity experienced in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as a result of growth in the manufacturing and mining industries, the State Government could begin to act on the recommendations of the Stephenson-Hepburn Report. Construction projects commenced on the

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1 Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* , Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, pp. 214-17.

2 Le Page, J.S.H. *Building a State: the story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829-1985* Leederville, Water Authority of WA, 1986, p. 528.

3 *PWD Spokesman*, vol. 6, no. 39, February-March 1966, p. 3.

4 Le Page, op. cit., p. 528.

5 *PWD Spokesma*n, op. cit., p. 3.

Narrows Bridge and Mitchell Freeway and subsequent development of the area around Parliament House. As part of these projects, the old Barracks building, which was the home of the Public Works Department and the Metropolitan Water Board, was to be demolished.[6] Construction during this period heralded the advent of the Modern Movement in Western Australian architecture, where a 'less is more' philosophy produced a crisp, simple manner of design reflecting scientific rationalism.[7] Progress and development also meant that old was often replaced with new.

In April 1960, Premier David Brand authorised the preparation of a master-plan for the progressive development of the Mount Eliza site for Government offices. The site was reduced to 16 acres (6.5 ha), terminating at Parliament Place to the north, rather than Hay Street.[8]

In May the following year, the Government announced an Australia-wide competition for the design of a group of office buildings, as recommended by the Stephenson-Hepburn Report. Already occupying the site were the Observatory (1896-99) and the Hale School buildings (1910).[9]

The competition brief for 'The design of Public Office Buildings at Perth for the Government of Western Australia' required a master plan for the site and details of the first building. The Government envisaged these buildings would provide office facilities for its departments to 2000. Making reference to the over-crowded and shabby conditions at the Old Barracks, the *Civil Service Journal* welcomed the Government's plans to provide improved facilities for workers:

> One of the real sore points with public servants through-out Australia is the sub-standard office accommodation provided for them by the various State Governments...The decision of the West Australian Government to invite designs for a group of public office buildings...will therefore be applauded by members of the [Civil Service] Association. The £5,000 first prize will ensure the best possible design. The Government and its advisers have displayed a positive, progressive approach to the matter by the inclusion in the design of air conditioning, canteens, female rest rooms, recreation rooms and car parking facilities.[10]

Sixty-seven entries were received and first prize of £5,000 was won by Public Works Department (PWD) architects, G. Finn, E. Van Mens & P. Maidment.[11] Second prize went to Melbourne firm Leslie M. Perrot & Partners, and third prize to Jeffrey Howlett & Don Bailey.[12] The PWD reported:

> Although it meant the loss of three of our top Design Architects, the Department's prestige was enhanced by Messrs. Finn, Van Mens & Maidment winning the

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6 'Creating the Public Realm: Public architecture in Western Australia, 1890-2000,' catalogue of an exhibition at Alexander Library, 1994, presented by LISWA and the BMA, p. 18. The Barracks Building, completed in 1866, had been the home of the Public Works Department and the Metropolitan Water Board since 1900.

7 Molyneux, Ian, 'Building in Western Australia 1940-1979,' in Morison, M. P. & White, J. (eds) *Western Towns and Buildings*, Perth, UWA Press, 1979, pp. 134-161.

8 The site, part of Perth Lot 822, was designated Reserve 26741, for the purpose of 'Use and Requirements of Government and Parliament' in 1963. *West Australian Government Gazette*, 15 August 1963.

9 In 1963, the Observatory transferred its operations to a new complex at Bickley. Hale School moved to larger grounds in Wembley Downs in 1961. *Trust News*, op cit, 149th edition, August 1987, p. 6.

10 *Civil Service Journal: the official organ of the Civil Service Association WA (Inc)*, vol. 41, no. 598, June 1961, p. 1.

11 *Architecture Australia*, vol 58, no. 3, June 1969, pp. 479-482.

12 *The West Australian*, 3 March 1962, p. 2.

Australia-wide Architectural Competition for the design of the new Government Offices.[13]

Gordon Finn was the project architect. He was educated at Perth Modern School and entered a cadetship with the PWD Architectural Division in 1926. In 1936, he went to England and worked under various architects there before travelling to America and spending time with Frank Lloyd Wright and others, examining the work they had done. He returned to Perth in 1939, and worked on the PWD's reconstruction of Royal Perth Hospital. His work on the Nurse's Quarters at King Edward Memorial Hospital was awarded the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Bronze Medal in 1956. He also designed Mount Henry Women's Home, the UWA Engineering School, Armadale High School, and extensions to Perth Modern School.[14]

The design submitted by Finn, Van Mens & Maidment required the land to be cleared of all existing buildings and the sloping site filled and levelled. While five buildings were included in the master plan, only the first was to be built immediately. The master plan allowed for progressive development of the site, which meant that total clearance was not necessary for construction of the first building.[15] The Government took advantage of the vacated Observatory and Hale School buildings and occupied them as additional offices; however, the smaller structures associated with the Observatory were demolished.[16]

Alterations were made to the winning design, including a complete redesign of the external treatment and the addition of an extra basement for car parking. The resulting fourteen storey building also included two basements, a plaza level, a plant/machinery level, twelve floors of office space and an amenities floor containing cafeteria and kitchen, caretakers quarters and a promenade deck. The building was designed with steel frame, concrete floors and glazed panelling.

Construction of the Government office building, begun in late 1963, was completed in 1965. The place was built by private contractors, Civil & Civic Pty Ltd. Other contractors included Bristile & Wunderlich Ltd (aluminium walling and glazing, ceramic veneer, aluminium sun fins, partitions, ceilings, sinks, etc), J. H. Wilberforce & Co. (Spandrill panels for walling), Brownbuilt Ltd (copper decking), Johns & Waygood Ltd (supplied and installed six Selectomatic Mark IV control lifts) and Wilmar Furniture and Harding and Halden Pty Ltd (office furniture and fittings).[17]

Total cost of the building with fittings was $4,900,000.[18] Known as 'Government Building, the place was the third building of its type constructed in Perth, the others being the MLC building and Council House, both in St George's Terrace. At the time of construction, the Government office building was the tallest building in Perth, due in part to its elevated site.[19]

The new Government Building was officially opened by Premier David Brand on Friday, 4 March 1966. Several speeches were made at the well-attended ceremony. The Minister for Works, R. Hutchinson, spoke of the extensive

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13 Department of Public Works, *Annual Report*, 1961/62, p. 10.

14 Rippingale, Kelly, 'Modernity Fading' catalogue for G.W. Finn: Architectural Photographs and Projects Exhibition held at UWA 5 January-3 March 1995, pp. 6-9.

15 *Architecture Australia*, op cit., pp. 479-82.

16 MWSSDD Sewerage Plan, Sheet 7, 1954.

17 *PWD Spokesman*, vol. 6, no. 39, February-March 1966, pp. 3-14.

18 ibid.

19 *The West Australian*, 3 March 1962, op cit.

planning which had gone into the first stage of the project and paid tribute to the 'excellent work' of the architects, contractors and workmen whose 'labour resulted in such a magnificent edifice'.[20]

Premier David Brand spoke at length on the importance and symbolism of the new Government office building:

> It is a big building, and I think a handsome one. But this is not the important point at today's ceremony. As I see it, this building is important not only because it provides essential office accommodation of a good standard essential for workers but because it is a symbol of a great era of progress for Western Australia. It is one of the signs of the beginning of a new age of development - aided by science, aided by an unprecedented inflow of capital funds, aided by great enthusiasm for the harnessing of our enormous resources and spurred on by the enterprise of thousands of people, partnerships, groups and companies from one end of the State to the other. I believe history will look back on the 'sixties as one of the landmarks in the story of our State.
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> ...sooner or later, growth brings with it accommodation problems, and quite often we find that existing facilities have to make way for new ones. All over Perth today, and in many country towns, the old is making way for the new. Buildings are being taken down and buildings are rising...Out of buildings like this one will come plans for more dams, more harbours, more water systems, more schools, more hospitals, more roads, more power supplies - all harnessing the State for the progressive development of private people.[21]

The Premier clearly saw the new Government Building as a symbol of the progress and development of the State, something in which all Western Australians could share and take pride in. He also made the point that the Government Building was a 'mere speck in the ocean' when compared to the overall expenditure on new buildings throughout the State. In 1965, $100,000,000 was spent on new buildings, reflecting a rise of more than 50% since 1960.[22]

Staff moved in over the following long weekend.[23] The first occupants of the Government office building were the 1,300 employees of the Public Works and Country Water Supply Department and the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board.[24]

The new building was also well received in the press and civil service newsletters. The *PWD Spokesman* commented on the 'beautiful garden setting', and the quality of the office accommodation:

> ...the effective use of colour, indoor plants and an abundance of light, produces an air of bright and friendly efficiency.[25]

Both the passenger lift and telephone systems were identified as being the most advanced of their kind in Western Australia.[26] *The West Australian* also saluted the quality of the building, commenting on the improved facilities, impressive views across Kings Park, Perth Water and Melville Water and the landscaping.[27] The landscape design had been undertaken by PWD architects,

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20 *Civil Service Journal: the official organ of the Civil Service Association of WA (Inc)*, vol. 46, no. 653, March 1966, pp. 5-6.

21 Premier David Brand, as quoted in ibid.

22 ibid.

23 *The West Australian*, 2 March 1966, p. 9.

24 ibid.

25 *PWD Spokesman*, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

26 ibid., pp. 8-9.

27 *The West Australian*, 2 March 1966. p. 9.

and the expansive area allowed for a pleasant green belt of trees and sweeping lawns around the place.[28]

The following extract from the national architectural magazine, provides a description of the building form and structure:

> The seventeen storey building, 300 feet [91.4 metres] long and 72 feet [21.9 metres] wide, provides for two basement floors, an open ground floor piazza, twelve office floors (total of 189,600 sq ft), [16,614 sq. metres] an amenities floor containing recreation, cafeteria and kitchen facilities and an Upper Floor for Machine Plant, Caretaker's Quarters and Tourist Observation area. The total space available for office use on each typical floor is 15,800 sq ft [1468 sq. metres]. This area includes corridor circulation which varies from floor to floor, depending upon the type of office subdivision. The building has been planned around a central service core in such a manner to provide two types of office space. A large amount of shallow depth space at the centre suitable for sub-division into enclosed individual offices, and large open spaces towards the ends of the building, suitable for drawing offices and clerical areas.
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> A 5 ft 8in [1.73 metre] planning unit has been adopted for partition and ceiling sub-division, both of which are fully demountable. All services, such as lighting, power, telephone and airconditioning are integrated within the planning module, thus permitting complete flexibility to meet changing conditions of the occupancy.
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> A composite structure of steel frame with concrete floors and concrete enclosing shafts to lifts and stairs has been adopted. The perimeter columns to the main north and south facades are external to the recessed enclosing glazed curtain wall treatment, thereby providing 5ft 6in [1.68 metre] projecting hoods for sun protection and window cleaning. Externally the columns are encased with black reconstructed granite slabs and the faces of the horizontal projections hoods with fine white quartzite exposed aggregate members.
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> The east and west end walls are faced with black ceramic structural blocks, between the white horizontal floor members. Anodised aluminium framed curtain walling enclosed the north and south facades. The ground floor piazza is paved with grey vitreous floor tiles and the central service core walls, which are faced with polished black marble, are enclosed with an anodised aluminium framed and polished plate glass curtain wall. This enclosure forms the main entrance foyers to the building. Typical office accommodation has vinyl tile flooring, demountable aluminium framed partitions with veneered timber and glass infill panels, and a removable sheet steel pan acoustic ceiling incorporating flush fluorescent lighting fixtures.[29]

The Government granted Legacy the right to operate a public lookout on the 14th floor; adults were charged a 20¢ entry fee and children 5¢. Premier Brand commended the views from the top of the building at the opening ceremony and relished the fact that members of the public would have access to it:

> On the top floor, 352 feet above sea level, local people and visitors to our State can take in a magnificent vista from every direction...and I am sure that this will become one of the major tourist attractions in Perth...The view from this building is unique- the highest lookout in Perth - and I am sure that it will be a source of great public enjoyment in the years ahead...[30]

The promenade deck on the 14th floor became an instant tourist attraction and money raised from visitors provided 'an unequalled source of revenue

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28 Department of Public Works, *Annual Report*, 30 June 1966.

29 *Architecture Australia*,, op. cit., p. 480.

30 Premier David Brand, as quoted in *Civil Service Journal*, op. cit., March 1966, p. 6.

for charity.'[31] The promenade deck became popularly known as 'Legacy Lookout.'

In mid-1966, the Public Works Department reported on the benefits of the new building:

> The movement of the offices to the new location was entrusted to th[e Architectural] Division and this move, the largest single shift in the history of Perth, was carried out most efficiently... The appreciation of the occupants of the new offices is reflected in the general increase in efficiency, lifting of staff morale, and air of satisfaction at the high standard of office accommodation provided...The extreme working conditions and lack of amenities of the old Barracks contrast sharply with those in the new building and appreciation of the conditions and especially the amenities provided is shown by their popularity and use and the resultant improved staff relations.[32]

In July 1968, *The West Australian* reported that the State Government had scrapped the plans to continue with the development of the site. The remaining four office buildings were not to be built.[33] The original concept for the site was seen as undesirable for two reasons. Firstly, Parliamentarians felt that five large buildings on such a prominent site overlooking Parliament House would give the appearance of 'dominance by the bureaucracy - a "big brother" complex.' Secondly, traffic was proving to be a problem with only one building. Five such buildings would make the situation untenable. Further construction on the site did not go ahead and subsequent development of government offices has proceeded on a more decentralised basis.[34] This decision also meant that the Observatory and the Hale school buildings were no longer under threat of demolition.

On 24 February 1978, the Government office building was named *Dumas House* in honour of Sir Russell Dumas (1887-1975) former Public Works Department Director of Works and Buildings.[35] Born and educated in South Australia, Dumas trained as an engineer. He served in World War One and, in 1925, moved to Western Australia with his family to take up a position with the MWSSDD, as resident engineer on the construction of Churchman Brook Reservoir. He was appointed chief engineer of the department in 1932, and director of works and buildings in 1941. He believed in large-scale development for Western Australia and was involved in many projects, among them the Ord River scheme, and industrial developments at Kwinana. He was also chairman of the North-West Development Committee. He was appointed CMG (1950), KB (1959) and KBE (1964).[36]

The 1980s saw the relocation and reduction of various government departments. Some Government departments relocated to alternative sites, while other departments moved into *Dumas House*. Several Government Ministers took up office in Dumas House, due to its close proximity to Parliament House. These rearrangements necessitated modification of the building's internal fitout to suit changing office needs. In 1985, the Observatory was vacated and transferred to the National Trust for occupation as its headquarters.[37]

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31 Department of Public Works, *Annual Report*, 30 June 1966.

32 ibid.

33 *The West Australian*, 2 July 1968, p. 8.

34 Le Page, op cit, p. 531.

35 Plaque in the foyer of Dumas House, unveiled 24 February 1978, by Premier Sir Charles Court.

36 *Australian Dictionary of Biography 1940-1980*, MUP, 1996, vol. 14 pp. 46-47.

37 *Trust News*, National Trust of Australia (WA) 157th edition, December 1988, pp. 1-3.

In January 1987, Reserve 26741 was reduced by 6,701sqm, this area being made up of Lot 972 on which is sited the Old Observatory.[38] Reserve 26741 now consists of 5.974ha. In March 1994, a HCWA Memorial was lodged over Lot 972, which was gazetted Reserve 39892.[39]

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Dumas House is a fourteen-storey government office building, with a plaza level and two basements, constructed in the Post-War International style.[40] The building is located on a prominent, elevated site at the intersection of King's Park Road and Malcolm Street and opposite the Fraser Avenue entry to King's Park. The site is bordered by Havelock Street to the west and Harvest Terrace to the east. Although separated from Parliament House by Harvest Terrace, the proximity of *Dumas House* to the state parliament creates a precinct of government buildings. The free standing *Dumas House* towers above the immediate environment and has extensive views across the city, Swan River, Kings Park and wider metropolitan area and is clearly visible from a great many locations.

The building is a prominent structure in the city skyline by virtue of its elevation. The site around the building has a considerable fall to the west, from a peak at the location of the *Old Observatory* (1897). The area of open space and landscaping around the building serve to accentuate the stand-alone nature and compact density of the urban form. Landscaping features include some mature planting, park furniture and paving. A low circular structure with a mesh cover providing air intake to the underground levels stands in the garden to the south of the building.

The building illustrates the principal characteristics of the International style, in the curtain walled, regular form, modular construction and flexibility in office layout through the use of partitioning. The use of these qualities at *Dumas House* was not particularly innovative and had been explored in previous structures in Perth such as MLC Building (1957), T&G Building (1960), R&I Bank (1961) and Council House (1963). Of this group, *Dumas House* remains the most intact example, the others having been demolished or remodelled.

The rectangular form approximately 90 metres long by 20 metres wide, is sited with the long sides facing due north and south. In the initial competition entry, the building was aligned with Kings Park Road but the modification in orientation was considered necessary to improve thermal performance. A smaller rectangular form housing the lift motor room rises above the roof terrace. The window walls of the north and south elevations contrast with the solid east and west end walls and illustrate an approach to thermal control in the design of curtain-walled, multi-storey buildings in Australia. Early examples, such as the MLC Building (1957) in Perth, relied entirely on mechanical means to counter the high responsiveness of the lightweight cladding to temperature change. By the 1960s, external devices were being applied to the building form to modify the high temperatures resulting from sun falling on large expanses of glass. The external T-forms at Council House (1963) illustrate this development, demonstrating an achievement in thermal control without compromising the desired aesthetic of a transparent form. Later developments saw the introduction of horizontal slab projections as an

38 *West Australian Government Gazette*, 23 January 1987, p. 191.

39 DOLA Certificate of Title Vol. 3062 Fol. 661, HCWA File 3849.

40 Apperly, et. al., op. cit., pp. 214-217.

integral extension of the structure, such as at *Dumas House*.[41] These not only shaded the glazing but also served as a platform for window cleaning. The east and west elevations could not be shaded effectively by projecting forms, hence the solid end walls.

As the site rises towards the eastern end, the piazza is level with the ground but the fall of the site means that the western end is considerably above street level which accentuates the impression of a building sitting above its environment. This impression is reflected in the upper levels where the projecting horizontal slabs have the appearance of floating platforms. The pedestrian approach from Havelock Street is via a series of stairs broken up by terraces. Concrete block planters are located at regular intervals in the centre of the stairs. Vehicular access is also from Havelock Street with ramps to the two levels of basement parking and unenclosed ground level parking to the north of the building. Alternative pedestrian access is provided along level paving from King Parks Road to the eastern end of the building.

The footprint of the building at ground level reinforces the platform impression by virtue of the small but deliberate step up from the surrounding paving of the piazza. The paved area is partially enclosed with a balustrade and shallow, moat like channel at the outer edge.

The 1969 description of the building from the *Architecture Australia* journal, as quoted in Section 13.1 Documentary Evidence, remains mostly current as there has been little significant alteration to the fabric since the building was officially opened in March 1966. The more significant changes to the building fabric include a relocation of the entry doors to the centre of the north face of the ground floor, c.1992. The original doors still remain at the east and west ends but the new location provides a more convenient point of access from the public and visitors' carpark, directly into the lift lobby. The ground floor service core now includes a Disabled WC. An honour board commemorating Public Works personnel who served and those who were killed during the Great War and a plaque reflecting the re-naming of *Dumas House* in 1978 have been positioned immediately inside the north entrance on the foyer walls. A cafeteria now occupies the eastern end of the ground floor piazza and 'Westlink Studio', which accommodates audio-visual facilities, is situated at the opposite end.

Floors 10 to 13 have been refurbished and are now occupied by ministerial offices. Part of this refurbishment included the construction of ensuite facilities. A progressive programme of asbestos removal from the ceilings was completed c.1994. The tourist observation deck and caretaker's quarters at the roof level are no longer occupied but retain finishes and fittings reflective of the era of construction. There have been numerous changes to the fitouts of office spaces to accommodate the requirements of government departments with new ceilings, partitions and floor coverings evident throughout the building. Externally, ponds have been removed from the garden to the south of the building.

The building is well maintained and under the management of a full-time property officer. Consideration is currently being given to an overhaul of the original lift system and it is believed tinting to the north facing glazing would improve the thermal performance of the building. The two main chillers of the air conditioning system are original, although the fire system has been

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41 The initial competition winning scheme incorporated inverted T forms similar to those used at Council House. These were amended during the re-design as a result of suggestions of the competition assessors and altered client requirements.

upgraded. Leaks are experienced at the roof level and through the ground floor membrane. Some of the tiling at the piazza level needs to be replaced.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Architecture Australia, Vol. 58, No. 3, June 1969, pp. 479-482.

13. 4 FURTHER RESEARCH
