

BYERA HADLEY (1872-1937)

Michael Bogle

Introduction

Byera Hadley's career as an architect and teacher has been overshadowed by his bequest establishing the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship administered by the NSW Architects Registration Board. [He was] of a retiring nature," a friend recalled, "he was not easy to know intimately [...]."¹ Hadley did very little self-promotion, preferring to remain a sole practice as "B. Hadley, Architect" and to lecture and later to lead the architecture programme at the Sydney Technical College.

Although Hadley had only arrived in Sydney in 1887, by Australia's Centennial year, he enrolled in the Sydney Technical College's (STC) architecture programme, taking first-year course in Model Drawing (awarded 1st grade) and Freehand Drawing (honours).² The first-year awards suggest that he possessed considerable talent in drawing. STC first-year students took courses in Building and Construction; Planning and Designing and the History of Architecture.

By 1899, Hadley was working for the STC as "assistant lecturer, architectural classes" and that same year, he was elevated to "assistant teacher of Architectural and Trades Drawing".³ The Sydney Technical College course in architecture is the forerunner of the Faculty of the Built Environment's architecture programme at UNSW.

B. Hadley, Architect.

With his schoolwork behind him, the comfort of a part-time salary from a STC teaching appointment could supplement his income and support the founding of a practice. By 1897, he was soon advertising for tenders under the name of "B. Hadley, Architect". Based on a search of *Sydney Morning Herald* notices, it appears his private practice was founded in 1897.⁴ Continuing to construct his career, he also became a Fellow of the Institute of Architects NSW in 1899.⁵

By 1899, the 28-year old architect was celebrating the Earl Beauchamp's well-publicised opening of the Hadley-designed Botany Town Hall described in the press as "...a Town Hall which seems to have been well designed, and is a decided architectural feature of the borough. The building, which is in the Early Italian Renaissance style, occupies a site on the main road. [...]"

¹ "The Late Mr Byera Hadley." *Atelier*. July 1938, p.13.

² "Board of Technical Education." [annual examination reports]. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Monday 23 January 1888, page 5.

³ Notices. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 24 January 1899, page 7, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Jan 1899, p.6.

⁴ Other dates are cited. Hadley's "Application for Registration as an Architect" dated 1923 states that he commenced practice in 1893. NSW Architects Registration Board files.

⁵ NSW RAlA biographical files. He was on the Institute of Architects NSW Council from 1897-1906.

Following his commercial-scale commissions, Hadley's office began to receive substantial civic works including the three-storey Sydney United Friendly Societies Dispensary and Medical Institute building in "Macquarie Street-south" (commemorative stone laid in 1902); the commission for the Willoughby Town Hall (opened by the Premier of NSW Sir John See) completed in 1903 and the Baumann Café (1904) in Pitt Street, opposite the entrance to the Strand Arcade next to Washington Soul's drug store.

By 1905, Hadley was fluent in a number of 19th and early 20th century period revival styles and generally reserved his Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival vocabulary for ecclesiastical work; employed variations of the Renaissance Revival for medium scale commercial work; and used a more assertive Classical Revival expression for large-scale commercial commissions for the urban warehouses to the west of George Street in the city.

His most grand ecclesiastical work, on the other hand, is typically drawn from the Gothic Revival style and is exemplified by the original wing of the Wesley College, Sydney University (designed in 1916) and its 1919 chapel.^{6 7} His more modest commissions such as the 1900 Greenwich Congregational Church (Carlotta Street); the 1919 "George Smith Memorial Hall" (Newcombe Street) of the Paddington Uniting Church, 395 Oxford Street and the 1928 Wesley Hall (Dover Road), Rose Bay.

Lecturer-in-Charge

While Hadley's practice expanded, he maintained his part-time teaching associations with the STC. In 1914, a career opportunity emerged. The Superintendent of the STC, Mr. J.W. Turner fell ill and Byera Hadley's former classmate James Nangle (1868-1941) was appointed Acting Superintendent. The retirement of Turner, followed by Nangle's advancement, left the architecture Lecturer-in-Charge position vacant and Hadley advanced to the leadership of the architecture course.

From the 21st century, it is difficult to assess the breadth of Hadley's contribution at the STC. His obituary in the STC publication *Atelier*, states "Under Mr. Hadley's able and enthusiastic direction the school rapidly increased the range and efficiency of its teaching until finally [...] [it was] acknowledged as one of the finest schools of architecture in the Empire". Hadley established the formal five-year architecture course at the STC by 1918. Eric Daniels notes that "... the new course was designed to fulfill the requirements of [...] [the forthcoming Architects Registration] Act...".⁸ Hadley is also credited with gaining Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

⁶ "New Wesley College." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 29 January 1916, page 17.

⁷ "Wesley College. A New Chapel." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 2 June 1919, page 10.

⁸ Eric Daniels. *A History of the Faculty of Architecture*. UNSW, 1989, p.2-3, citing Peter Spooner. *History of the School of Architecture and Building*. 2:3, 1957.

recognition of the STC course diploma. This gave post-1923 STC-trained architects exemption from RIBA examinations.⁹

Hadley and his Advisory Board also supported the publication of the first Sydney Technical College School of Architecture Year Book 1928.¹⁰ The heavily illustrated volume (selling for two shillings) featured reproductions of student works from 1926 and 1927. Subsequent volumes appeared in 1929, 1930 and 1931. The STC's Year Book celebrated, publicized and affirmed the status of the first generation of graduates of the five-year education programme. They also generously illustrate the earliest student works of the interwar generation of NSW architects.

Retiring from the STC in 1927, Hadley maintained his architectural practice until his death in 1937.¹¹ Major commissions arising after his STC appointment included the Methodist Girls School, Bowral (The Annesley School) (1923); the Colonial Mutual Building, 74 Pitt Street (1924); the Vickery Memorial Chapel (1926), Leigh College, Newington (1927) and the Wesley Hall (1929), Rose Bay.^{12 13 14}

Hadley's greatest contribution to NSW architecture remains his insistence on the importance of travel in Australian architectural training. His involvement appears some years before his formal bequest for the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarships.

When Hadley died in 1937, his will provided an annuity for his wife while establishing a travelling scholarship [Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship] bequest of £10,000 for graduates of the Sydney Technical College and Sydney University to be administered by the Board of Architects NSW [now expanded to NSW universities]. The news of the scholarship bequest excited considerable national attention.

Byera Hadley's wishes have been satisfied by the Board's desire to select architects based on their ability for "profiting most" from the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship". The notable achievements of the award winners from the first, Bryce Mortlock (1951), to the recent winners, speak for themselves.

Some years after his death, Hadley's some of his lecture notes, exercise books and photographs have made their way into the UNSW archives. Most of these photographs have identified and catalogued and in some instances, they provide rare images of a lost cityscape and in some cases, early images of interiors now radically altered or destroyed. A number of mystery unidentified photographs remain in the collection and any information on their subject matter would be

⁹ Eric Daniels. *A History of the Faculty to Architecture*. UNSW, 1989, p.2-3, who is paraphrasing Peter Spooner's *History of the School of Architecture and Building*. 2:3, 1957.

¹⁰ *Year Book*. 1928. Being a selection of the work of students of the School during the years 1926 and 1927. The School of Architecture, Sydney Technical College. STC Architectural Club, 1928. Hadley is described in the *Year Book* as *Emeritus*.

¹¹ Eric Daniels. *A History of the Faculty to Architecture*. UNSW, 1989, p.3.

¹² "A Girls High School." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 21 November 1923, page 11.

¹³ "Tenders." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 9 April 1924, page 8.

¹⁴ "Leigh College. Ebenezer Vickery Memorial Chapel." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 10 May 1926, page 12 and "Leigh College." *Sydney Morning Herald*. 16 July 1927, page 9.

gratefully received.

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