

Application form

Heritage

Removal of a place from the Queensland Heritage Register

Use this form to make an application to have all or part of a State Heritage Place considered for removal from the Queensland Heritage Register under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992.

Before completing this application form:

- read the *Application Guide: Removing a State Heritage Place from the Queensland Heritage Register* available at www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/
- call 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and discuss this application with the Applications Co-ordinator, Heritage Branch

1. Applicant details

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| APPLICANT NAME/S BEN LIST | TITLE MR |
| ORGANISATION NAME (if applicable) JDA Co. | |
| | |

2. Applicant consent

Ticking YES in the box below means you give consent to the department to publicly disclose your name with this application. At no time (whether you tick YES or NO) will your personal contact details be made public during processing and assessment of this application. The department removes contact details (i.e. address, email and telephone numbers) from all copies of the application except those provided to the Queensland Heritage Council.

| | | | |
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| Applicant consents to personal information being released | | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE | | | |
| PRINT APPLICANT'S NAME BEN LIST | DATE SIGNED 03/03/2026 | | |

Removal of a place from the Queensland Heritage Register

3. Place details

| | |
|---|---|
| NAME OF PLACE AND / OR QUEENSLAND HERITAGE REGISTER PLACE ID NUMBER Main Roads Department Building (former) | |
| STREET ADDRESS 477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill | |
| LOT/S ON PLAN/S 477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill 4000: 0000SP275676 0SP275676 2SP275676 3SP275676 4SP275676 5SP275676 6SP275676 7SP275676 8SP275676 9SP275676 487 Boundary Street, Spring Hill 4000: 4RP10457 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill 4000: 13RP10457 0000SP289814 10SP289814 11SP289814 12SP289814 13SP289814 0000SP275677 601SP275677 602SP275677 603SP275677 604SP275677 605SP275677 606SP275677 607SP275677 608SP275677 609SP275677 610SP275677 611SP275677 612SP275677 613SP275677 614SP275677 615SP275677 616SP275677 617SP275677 618SP275677 | LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA/S Brisbane City Council |

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6. Description of the place

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

Using the description provided in the Queensland Heritage Register entry as a starting point add detail that supports your removal application

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15 storey, reinforced concrete office building in a Modernist style that stands on a prominent site on Boundary Road, Spring Hill, Brisbane. Totalling almost one hectare, the rectangular site is bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north. Small scale commercial and residential development adjoins the western boundary. The sloping terrain is terraced into large, flat platforms by concrete retaining walls. As well as a landscaped garden setting, the building comprises: a front portico; tower; service core; rear podium; and rear carpark. The building structure is a reinforced concrete grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs.

For more detailed description please see attached assessment report

7. Statement of cultural heritage significance

Explain why the place (or part of it) does not fulfil the significance criteria listed in its entry in the Queensland Heritage Register. Write 'not applicable' against the criteria that are not relevant to your application.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>CRITERION A the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history</p> | <p>Please see attached report for detailed assessment against criterion A</p> |
| <p>CRITERION B the place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Queensland's cultural heritage</p> | <p>Not applicable</p> |
| <p>CRITERION C the place has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Queensland's history</p> | <p>Not applicable</p> |
| <p>CRITERION D the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places</p> | <p>Please see attached report for detailed assessment against criterion D</p> |
| <p>CRITERION E the place is important because of its aesthetic significance</p> | <p>Please see attached report for detailed assessment against criterion E</p> |

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| CRITERION F the place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period | Not applicable |
| CRITERION G the place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons | Not applicable |
| CRITERION H the place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history | Please see attached report for detailed assessment against criterion H |

8. Site plan showing area of current boundary proposed for removal

Attach a site plan to this form. Any plan/s and map/s in the register entry for the place can be used as base drawings. Tick to confirm:

- the site plan is drawn or sketched to scale
- all key elements of the place are shown and clearly labelled in their approximate locations (particularly those elements identified in the register entry)
- the existing heritage boundary is shown, along with the area proposed for removal (all or part)
- the cadastral (lot on plan) boundaries of the place are shown

9. Photographs

Attach photographs to this application that show the place in its current state. Number all photographs and complete the index table below adding more rows if needed.

If submitting an electronic application, submit the photographs in a digital file attached with the application form. Maximum file size for digital images attached to this form is 250kb each.

If submitting an application in hard copy, submit the photographs as an electronic file saved onto a CD or USB and attach one hardcopy print out of images to this application form.

| | |
|---|---|
| DATE AND TIME TAKEN 16/01/2026 | PHOTOGRAPHER Salman Muhammad |
| COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS <i>By law copyright of material submitted is subject to conditions set out in the copyright licence for that material.</i> <i>Please enter licensing details in the metadata for each image/file requiring copyright.</i> <i>A copyright licence may be obtained free of charge from Creative Commons at www.creativecommons.org. Creative Commons licence 'Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works' is recommended. This licence maintains author copyright but allows others to copy and distribute work provided the author is given credit (in a way specified by the author) and the work is not changed in any way and is not used commercially.</i> | |

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| IMAGE NUMBER | FILE NAME | DESCRIPTION |
|--------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Western Garden 1 | View 1: from Wedd Street – looking south |
| 2 | Western Garden 2 | View 2: Concrete retaining wall and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park) |
| 3 | Western Garden 3 | View 3: Concrete retaining wall, stair and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park) |
| 4 | Western Garden 4 | View 4: Concrete retaining wall, stair and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park) |
| 5 | Western Garden 5 | View 5: Concrete retaining wall and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park) – looking northwest |
| 6 | Western Garden 6 | View 6: View of middle terrace – looking southwest |
| 7 | Western Garden 7 | View 7: View of middle terrace – looking south |
| 8 | Western Garden 8 | View 8: View of middle terrace – looking southeast |
| 9 | Western Garden 9 | View 9: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking south |
| 10 | Western Garden 10 | View 10: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking southwest |
| 11 | Western Garden 11 | View 11: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking southeast |
| 12 | Western Garden 12 | View 12: View of concrete pavement, retaining wall and stair on middle terrace – looking southeast |
| 13 | Western Garden 13 | View 13: View of concrete pavement, retaining wall and stair on middle terrace – looking southeast |
| 14 | Western Garden 14 | View 14: View of concrete stair |
| 15 | Western Garden 15 | View 15: Stair connecting middle terrace to upper terrace – looking south |
| 16 | Western Garden 16 | View 16 (RHS): View of concrete pavement on middle terrace – looking north |
| 17 | Western Garden 17 | View 17: View of upper terrace and concrete retaining wall – looking southeast |
| 18 | Western Garden 18 | View 18: View of middle terrace – looking east |
| 19 | Western Garden 19 | View 19: View of middle and lower terraces – looking northeast |
| 20 | Western Garden 20 | View 20: View of upper terrace – looking northwest |
| 21 | Western Garden 21 | View 21: View of concrete pavement in upper terrace – looking north |
| 22 | Western Garden 22 | View 22: View of concrete pavement and drinking fountain in upper terrace – looking north |
| 23 | Western Garden 23 | View 23: View of concrete pavement and stair in upper terrace – looking north |
| 24 | Western Garden 24 | View 24: View of concrete pavement and stair in upper terrace – looking north |
| 25 | Western Garden 25 | View 25: View of concrete pavement and drinking fountain in upper terrace – looking south |
| 26 | Western Garden 26 | View 26: Concrete steps connecting upper terrace to footpath along Boundary Street |
| 27 | Western Garden 27 | View 27: View of middle and lower terraces – looking northwest |
| 28 | Western Garden 28 | View 28: View of concrete retaining wall between upper and middle terraces – looking west |

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| 29 | Western Garden 29 | View 29: View of upper terrace – looking southwest |
| 30 | Western Garden 30 | View 30: View of concrete pavement and fence on upper terrace – looking south |
| 31 | Western Garden 31 | View 31: View from Boundary Street – looking north |
| 32 | Western Garden 32 | View 32: Fence on southwestern corner |
| 33 | Western Garden 33 | View 33: Fence along Boundary Street |
| 34 | Western Garden 34 | View 34: Fence on southeastern corner |
| 35 | Western Garden 35 | View 35: Fence on southwestern corner |

10. Lodgement

All sections of this form must be completed and attachments prepared (in particular the site plan showing the proposed heritage boundary and photographs of the place) before an application is lodged. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted.

Send one copy of the completed form and attachments to:

Email:

heritage@des.qld.gov.au

OR

Post:

Applications Coordinator
Heritage Branch
Arts and Heritage
Department of Environment and Science
GPO Box 2454
Brisbane Qld 4001

Further information

- email heritage@des.qld.gov.au
- call 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and ask to speak to the Applications Coordinator, Heritage Branch
- visit www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/

JDA Co.



Main Roads Department Building (former)

477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill
Stage heritage place

Assessment report on removal of a part (487 Boundary St) from Queensland Heritage Register

Client: Zen Group Pty Ltd.

Date Issued: March 2026

Issue B

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Qld 4101

P +617 3392 3753
E studio@jdaco.com.au



Last Modified:
03 March 2026

Documentation control

| REVISION | DESCRIPTION | ISSUE DATE | PREPARED BY | REVIEWED BY |
|----------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| A | Assessment report, Final Draft | Feb 2026 | SM SH DG | DG |
| B | Assessment report, Final | Mar 2026 | SM SH DG | DG |



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This assessment has been prepared to consider the proposed removal of part of the place from within the current heritage boundary, specifically the portion known as the *Western Garden* at 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill from the Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) entry for the Main Roads Department Building (former), located at 477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill (see **Figure 1**). The assessment has been commissioned by Zen Group Pty Ltd.

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15-storey reinforced concrete office building designed in the Modernist style and prominently situated along Boundary Street in Spring Hill, Brisbane. The nearly one-hectare site is rectangular in form and bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north, with small-scale commercial and residential properties adjoining its western edge. The steeply sloping terrain is arranged into substantial, level terraces supported by concrete retaining walls.

The Main Roads Department Building (former) (**Place ID 602830**) was entered into the Queensland Heritage Register on 13 June 2014, meeting thresholds under Criteria A, D, E, and H.

The heritage listing comprises two components:

- **477 Boundary Street**, containing the former Main Roads Department Building (now adapted as *The Johnson Hotel*), and
- **487 Boundary Street**, the site of the former ‘Western Garden’, historically associated with the building and its designer, Karl Langer. This lot is now mostly cleared but contains some remnants and evidence of the former garden.

Note: As per Brisbane City Council (BCC) City Plan 2014, the ‘Western Garden’ lot (487 Boundary Street) proposed to be removed from the QHR heritage boundary of the Main Roads Department Building is divided into two lots with following details:

- **487 BOUNDARY STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 4 on RP10457** (see **Figure 3**)
- **40 WEDD STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 13 on RP10457** (see **Figure 3**)

This assessment is to consider if the site at 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill still meets the thresholds for entry in the QHR, on the basis that the site in its current state has now been mostly cleared and contains only minimal physical fabric/ evidence connected to the former ‘Western Garden’ setting of the building and the designer Karl Langer. The current existing physical fabric and evidence does not match the description in the Queensland Heritage Register entry. This brings into question the ongoing inclusion of this site in the listing boundary.

Based on an assessment of the Queensland Heritage Register’s statement of significance for the Main Roads Department Building, the removal of the former ‘Western Garden’ portion at 487 Boundary Street/ 40 Wedd Street from the heritage boundary will not affect the place’s ability to meet the thresholds for entry in the QHR.





Figure 1: 2017 aerial photograph of the Main Roads Department Building in Spring Hill. (Source: Nearmap)

1.2 Map showing the heritage place and the extent of the area to be removed from the QHR

The Main Roads Department Building (former) is entered on the Queensland Heritage Register (**QHR602830**), and all elements are subject to the provisions of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* and the *Planning Act 2016* (see **Figure 2**). Development is regulated to avoid or minimise the loss of cultural heritage significance.

The subject site is also included on the local heritage register of Brisbane City Council (BCC). As per BCC City Plan 2014, the 'Western Garden' lot (487 Boundary Street) proposed to be removed from the QHR heritage boundary of the Main Roads Department Building is divided into two lots with following details:

- 487 BOUNDARY STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 4 on RP10457 (see **Figure 3**)
- 40 WEDD STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 13 on RP10457 (see **Figure 3**)



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Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the heritage boundary (black dashed outline) of Main Roads Department Building. Lot proposed for removal at 487 Boundary Street from QHR boundary is labelled and infilled with light green colour (Source: QLD Globe)



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1.3 Boundary description

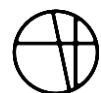
As per Brisbane City Council (BCC) City Plan 2014, the former 'Western Garden' lot proposed to be removed from the QHR heritage boundary of the Main Roads Department Building is divided into two lots with following details:

- **487 BOUNDARY STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 4 on RP10457** (see dashed red line below)
- **40 WEDD STREET, SPRING HILL 4000: Lot 13 on RP10457** (see solid red line below)



Figure 3: Aerial photograph showing the current QHR heritage boundary (yellow infill) of Main Roads Department Building.

As per BCC City Plan, lots proposed for removal from QHR boundary are labelled and marked with red outlines (Source: BCC City Plan)



2.0 Understanding the heritage place

2.1 Brief history

The following excerpts on the Main Roads Department Building (former) are taken from the QHR.

The former Main Roads Department Building was built in 1967 to accommodate, consolidate, and modernise the department during a period of extensive expansion and upgrade of Queensland's road network. It housed the department until 2012. Designed by important Modernist architect, Dr Karl Langer, the substantial office building is an excellent, intact illustration of his commercial work and is a good representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise.

In the early 1960s the Main Roads Department (MRD) faced a major task in modernising Queensland's road network. Prior to this, the department saw itself only as a rural roads authority responsible for the provision and maintenance of main roads connecting Queensland settlements.[1] The decentralised nature of Queensland, with its scattered population and small tax base for local governments, was not conducive to systematic road building, and until the mid-twentieth century railways dominated long-distance transport.

.....

... [for more detailed history of the place, refer Section 3.3 and QHR Entry] ...

2.2 Description of the part of the heritage place to be removed from QHR

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15 storey, reinforced concrete office building in a Modernist style that stands on a prominent site on Boundary Road, Spring Hill, Brisbane. Totalling almost one hectare, the rectangular site is bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north. Small scale commercial and residential development adjoins the western boundary. The sloping terrain is terraced into large, flat platforms by concrete retaining walls. As well as a landscaped garden setting, the building comprises: a front portico; tower; service core; rear podium; and rear carpark. The building structure is a reinforced concrete grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs.

.....

... [for more detailed description of the place, refer Section 3.4 and QHR Entry] ...

2.3 Statement of Significance

The QHR citation contains the following Statements of Significance:

Table 1. Cultural Heritage Significance (Source: Queensland Heritage Register)

| CRITERION | DESCRIPTION | STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE |
|-------------|---|---|
| Criterion A | The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history. | <i>The former Main Roads Department Building (1967) is important in demonstrating the Queensland Government's response to the rise in mass motoring in the second half of the twentieth century. Purpose-built to consolidate and modernise the department's activities associated with expanding and upgrading the state's road network, it was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland at the time of its construction, illustrating the importance of Main Roads operations and contribution to the state's economic advancement. The place is also important in demonstrating the evolution of Queensland architecture as a good, intact example of a substantial, architect-designed building in a Modernist style adapted to suit local conditions.</i> |
| Criterion D | The place is important in demonstrating the principal | <i>The place is a good, intact and representative example of the work of architect, Dr Karl Langer, and is important in demonstrating the principal</i> |



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| | <p>characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.</p> | <p><i>characteristics of his work. Most notably, it: displays a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; features characteristic simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements and a restrained use of high-quality materials; is sited and its form is manipulated for optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation of the interior, and; is designed to be fit for purpose. As the largest commission of his career, it is a rare illustration of Langer's principles applied on a large scale. The place is a good, intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise office building in Queensland. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of this type, including: notable height to footprint ratio; expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; refined treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.</i></p> |
| Criterion E | <p>The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.</p> | <p><i>Notable for its landmark attributes and expressive architectural qualities, the place is important for its aesthetic significance. The former Main Roads Department Building is highly visible from the surrounding suburb and maintains an imposing streetscape presence. Modernist in style, the building's simplified sculptural form is distinguished through a variety of treatments, including off-form textured concrete, stone spandrel panels, facebrick, egg-crate screening and breeze blocks. The abstract, graphic layout of the forecourt and side gardens, including pond and entrance bridge, and; the use of high-quality Queensland materials and artworks in the public reception areas complete the design.</i></p> |
| Criterion H | <p>The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.</p> | <p><i>Designed to accommodate the department and to express its work, the place has a strong and special association with the Main Roads Department, which had a crucial influence on the economic and social development of Queensland during the twentieth century. It served as the head office for the department for 45 years.</i></p> |



3.0 Historical research

3.1 Background

The Main Roads Department Building was entered in QHR in 2014 shortly after it was sold by the Queensland State Government. Soon after, a Heritage Agreement was entered into to support the adaptive reuse of the site for hotel and apartments. (Note: Although the agreement refers to the whole of the heritage-listed site, the development appears to not to have included 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Lots 4 & 13, being the former western garden section. These two lots were also not included in the group titling of the remainder of the MRD site.)

The development application for lots 4 & 13 in 2018 (BCC A004892414) included considerable opposition to the development including an appeal (discontinued). In 2021, the decision to effectively approve the development of the tower included the demolition of the former western garden with the Boundary Street section of the garden to be 'reconstructed' based on the original Langer scheme. (The approval came into effect 2022 following issue of notice of discontinuance in submitter appeal) The conditions included some from SARA regarding the the garden and demolition / archival recording.

Following the sale of 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street (Lots 4 & 13,) in 2023, the new owner of the site initially sought a minor change to the 2021 approval, but then lodged a new application (BCC A006290146) which effectively staged the earlier approval. Stage 1 included demolition and the 'reconstruction' of what was called the 'Langer Garden' (and other infrastructure) and Stage 2, the tower.

From photographs, demolition of the 'Langer Garden' (former western garden) was undertaken sometime after November 2024 presumably pursuant to the BCC approval. It is not known if archival recording was undertaken prior to this demolition.

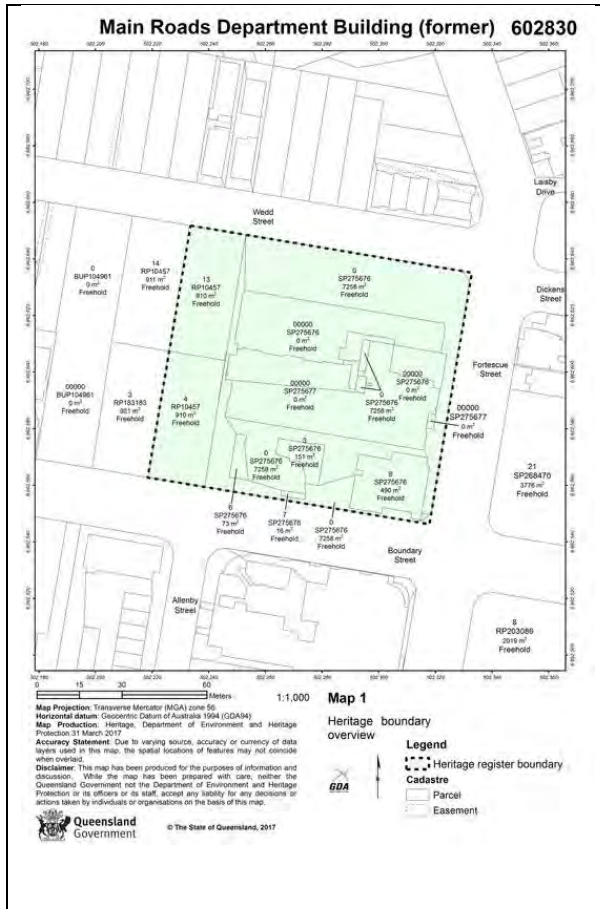
The DA approval effectively approved the removal of much of the former western garden but is conditioned on the 'reconstruction' of the Boundary Street section of the garden.

3.2 Overview of the site

Note lots 4 & 13 (the former 'western garden') form the western edge of the heritage listed site. The remainder of the site was group titled as part of the c2015 hotel/apartment development. Aerial images from QHR are c2017.



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Source: Queensland Heritage Register (QHR602830)



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3.3 History of the place

Note lots 4 & 13 (the original 'western garden') form the western edge of the heritage listed site. The remainder of the site was group titled as part of the c2015 hotel/apartment development. Aerial images from QHR are c2017.

This historical overview draws on the history from the QHR Entry prepared c2014 with some new material added particularly related to the western garden area and/or material post 2014. The new material includes a number of images—notably photographs and drawings from the Karl Langer collections. Sections quoted from the QHR are shown as indented. (Other quotes are footnoted) For readability some headings have been added. The original referencing for the QHR section is retained and shown as endnotes. Where required the material which has been added is footnoted (rather than endnoted). As required by the DETSI Guideline, the history is broadly chronological in form.

The Main Roads Department Building

The former Main Roads Department Building was built in 1967 to accommodate, consolidate, and modernise the department during a period of extensive expansion and upgrade of Queensland's road network. It housed the department until 2012. Designed by important Modernist architect, Dr Karl Langer, the substantial office building is an excellent, intact illustration of his commercial work and is a good representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise.

The Main Roads Department

In the early 1960s the Main Roads Department (MRD) faced a major task in modernising Queensland's road network. Prior to this, the department saw itself only as a rural roads authority responsible for the provision and maintenance of main roads connecting Queensland settlements.[1] The decentralised nature of Queensland, with its scattered population and small tax base for local governments, was not conducive to systematic road building, and until the mid-twentieth century railways dominated long-distance transport. Although the Colonial (later State) Government was responsible for main roads and roads on Crown Lands open for selection, elsewhere local authorities had to finance their own roads; or where there were no local authorities, local landholders could form road trusts and receive government grants. Queensland's road system developed in a piecemeal fashion until 1920 and even after it remained a secondary government spending priority to railways, which spread rapidly in the early twentieth century to service agricultural areas.

Although railways were the priority, the rise of the motor car increased the need for an expanded and improved road network. The *Queensland Main Roads Act 1920* provided for responsibility for roads and bridges to be shared between state and local authorities. The mission of the Main Roads Board, formed by this Act, was to develop a cohesive network of 'main roads' partly funded by the state. Local authorities would fund half the cost, and would be the construction and maintenance authorities where possible.[2] The priority for road construction was to join towns not linked by railways; to link farming areas to existing railways; and to build developmental roads to open Crown Lands for closer settlement.

The interwar period saw a massive increase in car registrations and the revision of the Main Roads Act. By mid-1923 nearly 17,000 cars were registered in Queensland (rising to nearly 92,000 by 1934). As more people took to the car, the need for serviceable roads for motor vehicles became apparent.[3] *The Main Roads Acts Amendment Act 1925* abolished the Main Roads Board and formed the Main Roads Commission (MRC), and the board was replaced by John Kemp (formerly the Board's Chairman) as the Commissioner.

World War II (WWII) also stimulated road building efforts. During the war the MRC carried out a wide range of defence works, mostly for, and under the direction of, the Allied Works Council (AWC). Although the MRC increased its equipment during the war years, after WWII it faced resource shortages and a continued rise in car ownership, plus demands to seal more of the state's roads with bitumen.[4]



After WWII, roads increasingly competed directly with railways. Vehicle numbers rose from 129,126 in 1945 to over 282,594 by 1954.[5] By 1960, Australia was second only to the United States in terms of car ownership per head of population.[6] In 1951, the MRC became the MRD. The MRD was responsible for the planning, survey and construction of state highways and of main, developmental, secondary, mining access, farmers' roads, and tourist roads and tracks, as well as bridges and related works.[7] The department was under an increasing work load, brought about by the 'explosion' in vehicle ownership and Queensland's buoyant economic expansion.[8]

The MRD's Annual Report of 1955 noted that 'Queensland is passing out of the earlier phase of road construction ... just sufficient to keep traffic moving. The State has entered a second phase where construction must provide for the traffic of to-day and the traffic of to-morrow in such a way that roads and bridges will carry in safety bigger volumes of traffic, comprising vehicles which move much faster and carry much more heavier loads...'[9]

A new head office

The push for a new head office for the MRD started around 1955. In December that year the Main Roads Commissioner, AR Williams, wrote to the Minister for Transport, JE Duggan, advising that at no stage the MRD ever had a building designed and constructed for them. Williams stated that the MRD did not have close contact with the public, apart from registration, and 'Motor vehicle registration activities require that the location be ... away from the heavily trafficked streets'.[10] Other requirements included garaging for departmental vehicles and a full size basement for record storage.

Prior to the construction of their new building at Spring Hill, the MRD was accommodated in buildings 'scattered throughout the city'.[11] The intention of the new building was to provide better working facilities and amenities for an increasing staff in an efficient and productive environment.[12] The department was performing a major role with private industry and commerce in Queensland's development and the new building would reflect this.[13] Not only would it be an impressive place for people to register their vehicles, it would be the co-ordinating centre for the planning, survey, design and construction work of the MRD.

The Queensland Government acquired 16 allotments, totalling almost one hectare, at the corner of Boundary and Fortescue Streets, Spring Hill, between 1959 and 1961. At the time this area comprised primarily older detached housing.



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The Main Roads site comprised a number of residential allotments, here seen in 1960, not long before the first site preparations began. Although the Spring Hill neighbourhood was somewhat mixed, the surrounding townscape was predominantly small scale residential.

Source: QImagery. Detail from QAP1060-60 26 September 1960.

In June 1959 Leo J Feenaghty, Secretary of the MRD, wrote to Brisbane-based, private architect and town planner Dr Karl Langer, confirming that the government had decided to retain him as the architect for the new head office building.[14] Langer's earliest designs for the MRD's 'New Head Office Building' date to late 1959 with at least eight further iterations between 1959 and 1963. Early designs were discussed with the Acting Government Architect, EJ Weller, at the Department of Public Works Architectural Branch in September 1959. Although generally satisfied, Weller was concerned that the building would 'include some features that will set a precedent and to that extent will have an effect upon provision in Government Buildings generally'.[15]

Karl Langer—architect, planner & landscape architect

Born in Vienna in 1903, Langer had studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and in 1928 he was employed by pioneer German Modernist designer Peter Behrens to run his Vienna office. In 1933 Langer was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy for his thesis 'Origins and Development of Concrete Construction'. In 1939 Langer immigrated to Australia with his wife, (Dr) Gertrude Langer, bringing direct experience of the European Modern Movement to Queensland. He gained temporary employment with architects Cook and Kerrison in Brisbane and from 1940 Langer lectured part time in architecture and architectural design at The University of Queensland, publishing *Sub-Tropical Housing* in 1944. This booklet explored issues related to modern house design and town planning in a sub-tropical climate and influenced many Australian architects working in the post-WWII era.[16]



Modernist architecture developed in pre-World War I Europe and gained popularity in Australia post-WWII. It is notable for a rationalisation of planning, emphasising clarity and simplicity of form and detailing.[17] American and Scandinavian influences were strong in the style's employment in Australia.[18]

From 1945 Langer was employed as an assistant town planner in the Brisbane City Council and also was commissioned to work on a range of town planning projects for Darwin, Ingham, Toowoomba, Yeppoon, Kingaroy, Mount Isa, and Mackay, and for the National Capital Development Commission, Canberra. Concurrently, he completed a wide variety of architectural projects including small, economical domestic work and large commercial and institutional work.

Influenced by classical Greek and contemporary Modernist architecture, Langer developed a sophisticated hybrid of classical and modern design principles.[19] With his civic designs, Langer explored the idea of the conjunction of landmark and landscape and his designs typically incorporated a harmonious setting for the architecture. Inspired by Queensland's flora, fauna and climate, his designs worked with the context in complementary ways and his work on climatic design in architecture has been called 'pioneering'.[20] Fundamental to his designs, he sited buildings and outdoor spaces for optimum orientation, ensured interiors had high levels of natural daylighting and ventilation, and incorporated gardens of Australian plants for the occupation and enjoyment of the users. His designs were typified by modern, highly-functional spaces that were fit for purpose, yet, had a degree of flexibility of use. Langer set new standards for design in Queensland.[21]

The Main Roads Department

The work of the MRD was a major influence on the shaping and development of Queensland settlements, especially Brisbane,[22] and also on the increasing prosperity of the state during the second half of the twentieth century. In January 1960 (Sir) Charles Barton was appointed Commissioner of Main Roads. Barton made a major push to modernise the existing road network into an extensive metropolitan highway and intercity freeway network and to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the department.[23] Based on studies by leading transport specialists following American precedents, the department drafted and implemented long term programs of road upgrades and freeway construction.[24] These programs expanded and the department grew to become a primary division of the Queensland Government with considerable authority.[25]

On 1 July 1963 the first Road Plan of Queensland, a 20 year plan to build and upgrade roads to ensure no town was too far from a declared main road, encouraging social and economic development of rural areas, came into effect. The plan was visionary and required a well-organised and highly-functional department.

Further road planning was facilitated by Queensland Government transport studies for major centres in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Brisbane Transportation Study, jointly commissioned in 1964 by the MRD and the Brisbane City Council, and undertaken by American transport planners Wilbur Smith and Associates, recommended a series of freeways, expressways and bridges, although only some of these were built. Under Barton, the MRD was also reshaped. Through operational and attitudinal changes he introduced a 'private sector' business mode to achieve efficiency.[26] He also increased decentralisation, appointing an Assistant Commissioner and Divisional Engineer each at Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane, and a Divisional Engineer at Toowoomba.

A 'sculptural' landmark

Aerial photographs reveal that by June 1961, the site had been effectively cleared.





Source: QImagery. Detail from JFP0005-122 11 June 1961.

Site preparation for the new MRD head office at Spring Hill began on 15 July 1963.[27] Approximately 15,300 cubic metres of earth was excavated and a reinforced concrete retaining wall up to nine metres high was built around three sides of the excavation to create a level platform on the sloping site.[28]

The government decided that Brisbane architect Colin Tesch would be responsible for construction documentation and administration of the contract. In June 1964 Queensland's State Government Insurance Office (SGIO) agreed to purchase the land from the MRD, pay for construction, and then lease the building back to the MRD for a 40 year term. [29]

CP Hornick & Son Pty Ltd, the largest privately-owned construction company in Queensland at the time, constructed the building.[30] To deal with the MRD's ongoing accommodation shortage during construction of its new head office, a nearby partially-erected building on Dickens Street was purchased and completed to MRD requirements, for occupation in late 1965.

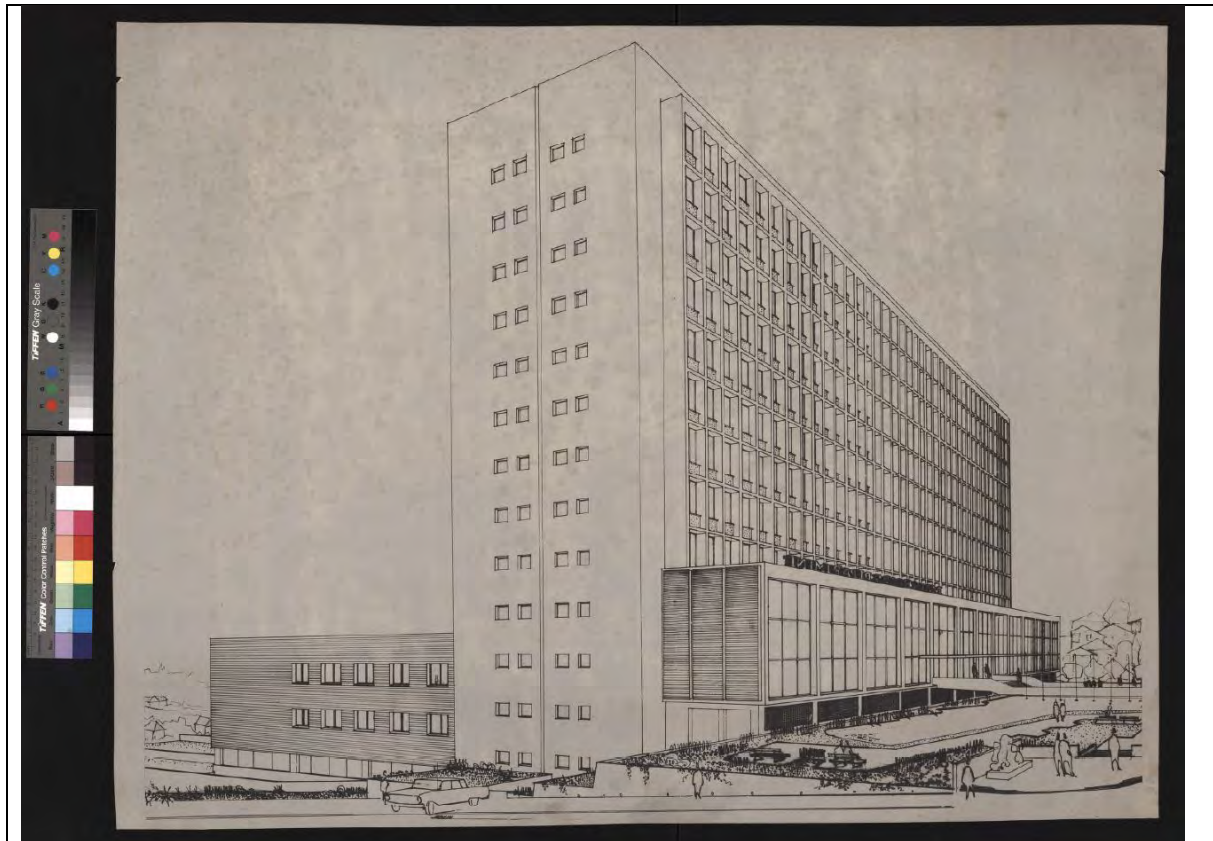
Construction of the new head office commenced in July 1965.[31] By this time the number of vehicles registered in Queensland had risen from 363,878 in 1958, to 541,198 in 1965.[32] To deal with this rise in vehicle registrations, the counter section of the new head office was designed to have ten times more public space than the old Albert Street office.[33]

Langer's design for the MRD building, the largest of his career, expressed his architectural principles. He described it as being a 'sculptural' landmark.[34] Others described at the time as vast and imposing.[35] Yet, he employed techniques so that it would 'fit' within its context, including stepping the building back from its boundaries so that it would not cast shadow onto the adjacent allotments[36] and not overwhelm them with its scale, an extensive landscaping treatment around the building, and a 'delightful'[37] screen of custom-designed breeze blocks facing Wedd Street to conceal the basement car park.

The building included an expansive public forecourt on Boundary Street, a typical characteristic of Langer's work. Approximately 21m wide by 72m long, it included lawns, gardens with Australian plants, and a large pond with fountain jets to cool the surrounding air. Langer envisioned the forecourt as an important public space for visitors to Spring Hill and to the building.[38]



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An undated perspective shows the proposed building and its various parts stepped to the front and the rear with the main plaza to Boundary Street. At this stage of the scheme's development the ramped access to the carpark under the building appears to have been located to the west of the building on part of what became the western garden, with a terraced garden located between the drive and the tower.

Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158



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Perspective dated October 1963 gives a sense of the contrasting scales of Langer's scheme for the Main Roads Building and the surrounding Spring Hill townscape. The front garden / plaza allowed the building to be set back from Boundary Street. To the west the building was similarly set back from its residential neighbours. The scheme for the Western Garden is not yet developed. The Boundary Street section is however shown as treed indicating this area between the ramped entrance to the carpark and neighbouring timber cottage was intended as a 'green screen'.

Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158

A recurrent inclusion in Langer's works, the building featured a modern allusion to a classical, grand colonnade at the primary entrance. Across the width of the ground floor and encompassing the ground and first floors, the rhythmic verticals and lintel of the concrete structural frame was expressed, smooth finished and painted white, contrasting with the dark glazing adjacent.

The building's structure and materials were modern, rational, and 'honest', consistent with Langer's principles. The structure comprised a grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs, freeing the floor plan from loadbearing partitions, which maximised the flexibility of interior layouts.[39] The vertical circulation, toilets and shower rooms, tea rooms, and other shared facilities were grouped in a central core. In this way, the floor plan was sensible and efficient and was repeated up the building. Principal materials were self-finishing, expressing their inherent character and beauty, with a noticeable use of Queensland-sourced materials for a 'natural', decorative effect. Where practical, Langer eliminated suspended ceilings from the design.[40]



Langer typically exploited passive lighting and ventilation in intelligent and uncomplicated ways and for the MRD building he included simple methods to achieve this. Parallel to the street, the long, narrow plan form (approximately 71m by 16m) was oriented with its long sides facing north-east and south-west.[41] These elevations were highly-glazed, comprising a grid of large, double-glazed, operable windows. A critical requirement for the drafting work of the department, this created interiors that were naturally well-lit and well-insulated, and allowed passive ventilation. The glazing was sheltered by a projecting 'egg-crate' of concrete. The northern side had a deeper projection to block direct sun, reducing heat gain and glare. The west and east elevations were predominantly windowless to occlude the harsh, low sun and were built of concrete to provide a thermal mass quality. In contrast, the photographic and computational spaces that required highly-controlled light and ventilation conditions were located in the basement levels, which had deep floor plans and limited fenestration.

The western garden

The original plans for the Main Roads Building included designs for the forecourt to Boundary Street with the western side of the site noted as a park.¹ Over time the location of the ramped drive from Boundary Street to the carpark under the building also seems to have changed from running down the western side of the building to entering under the SW corner of the building (see for example Langer's perspective sketches above). By 1963, with the carpark driveway in its final location, drawings show the western edge of the site as treed.

The detailed scheme for the western garden was developed as the building came to completion. In April 1967, the supervising architect Colin Tesch wrote to Karl Langer confirming that the Department of Main Roads had requested Langer prepare plans for the landscaping of the area.²

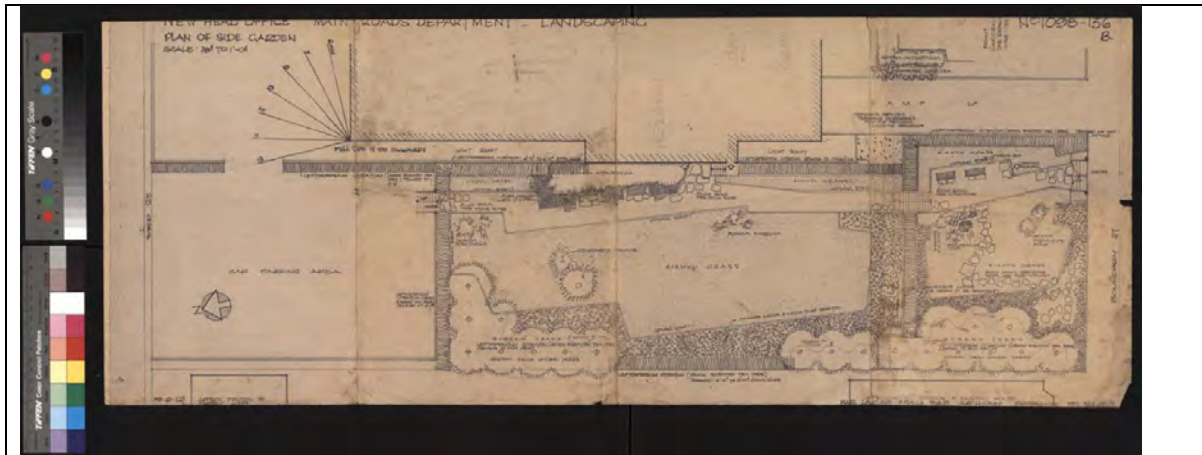
Surviving drawings for the scheme prepared by Langer held in the Fryer Library and in the State Library of Queensland are reproduced below.

¹ Urbis, Heritage Impact Assessment p 9.

² Urbis p9 from letter from Colin Tesch to Karl Langer 18 April 1967 held UQFL 158.

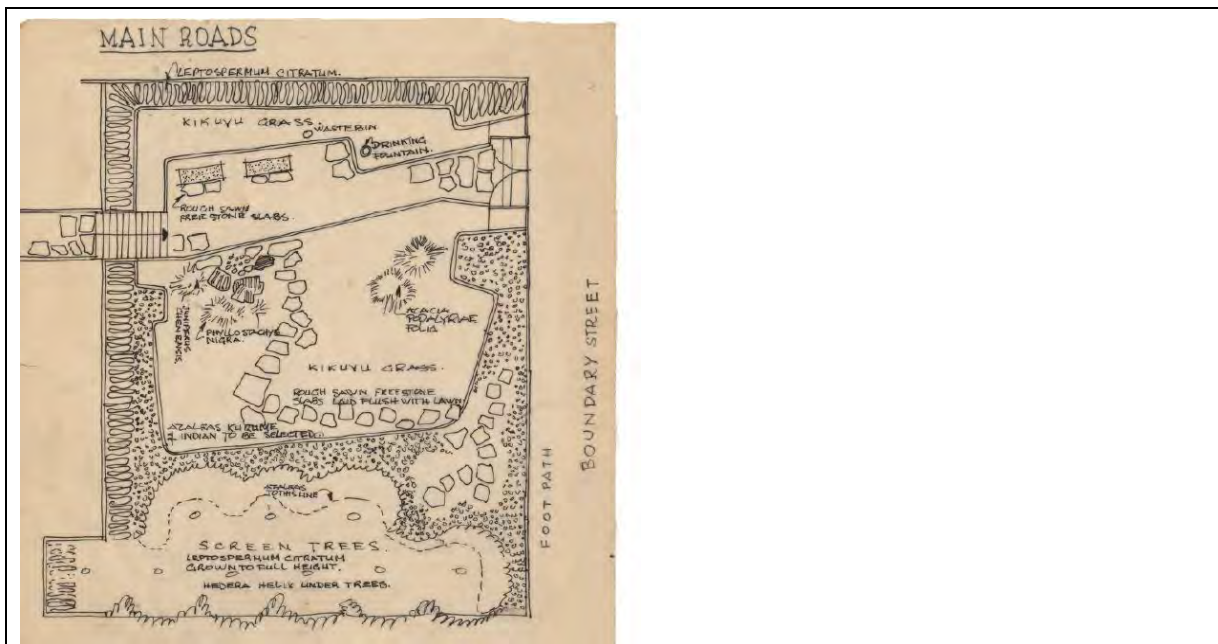


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'New Head Office Main Roads Department – Landscaping. Plan of side garden.' Plan dated 19 June 1967 shows scheme for the whole of the western section of the site between Boundary Street and Wedd Street. To the rear the car parking area adjoining Wedd Street took up approximately 1/4 of the area; the remaining ¾ was formal gardens. The west garden ran along the western edge of the building protecting light shafts at the NW and SW corners and at the front Boundary Street section was separated from the front garden / plaza by a ramp. The site for the new building was adjoined by residential lots along the western edge with the western garden providing an important buffer between the MRD site and the timber cottages located close to the site boundaries. *Leptospermum citratum* (lemon-scented tea trees now called *Leptospermum petersonii*) were used extensively as hedging (trimmed to between 4 and 6' according to the slope) with large areas of grassed with kikuya, specimen trees and underplantings of *Hedera helix* (ivy) and azaleas. Paths were of 'rough sawn free stone slabs'. The section to Boundary Street included the same elements but was conceived as a courtyard garden set a few steps down from street level.

Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158

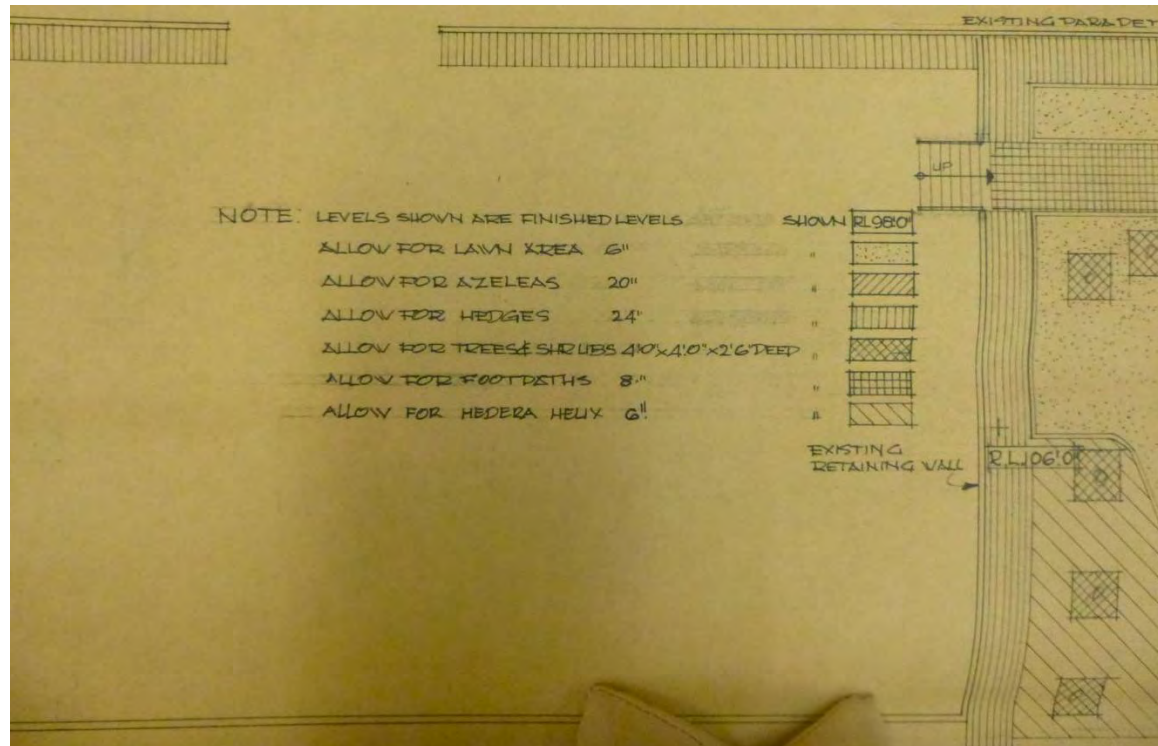
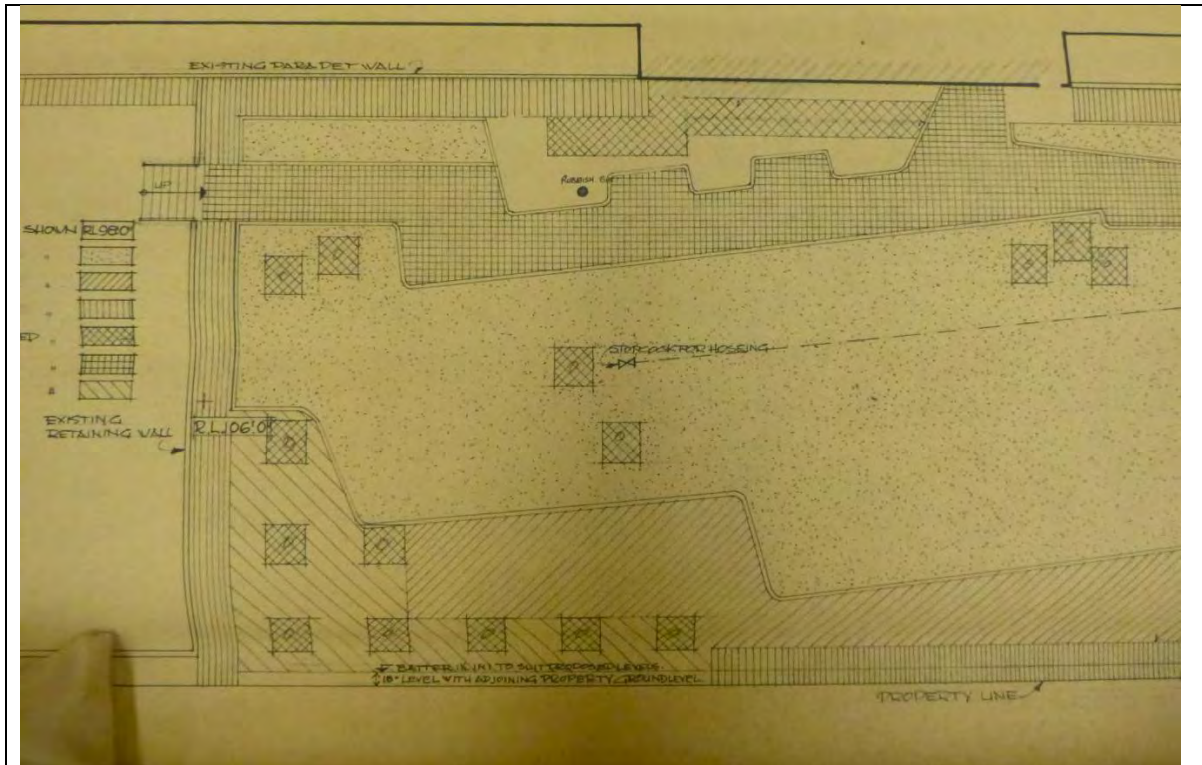


Undated (c1967) hand drawn plan shows the upper terrace or Boundary Street section of the western garden as a courtyard garden accessed from gated stairs from Boundary Street or stairs from the lower mid-section of the garden. Plantings include *leptospermum citratum* (lemon-scented tea trees now called *Leptospermum petersonii*) to the east and north edges (possibly hedged) with the same species used as 'screen trees' to the western edge but 'grown to full height' with an under story of *hedera helix* and azaleas to the front edge; central area grassed with kikuya with some specimen trees and snaking pathways of 'rough sawn free stone slabs laid flush with lawns; some seating (also 'rough sawn free stone slabs') and a drinking fountain.

Source: UQ eSpace Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158



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Undated landscape plan c1967 held as part of the SLQ Langer collection reproduced in Urbis report in four parts commencing with the Boundary Street section of the garden as top image.

Source: Karl Langer Collection, SLQ in Urbis pp10-11



The heritage impact report prepared in 2018 by Urbis describes Langer’s scheme:

The side or western garden was designed in three distinct parts to accommodate the topography – an area of gentle slope to Boundary Street at the southern end of the site, an area off Wedd Street at the northern end of the site at grade, and an area in the middle formed by two retaining walls to effect the level changes which sloped from south to north.

This western garden was fenced from Boundary Street and featured a bi-fold gate to the street. A pathway extended from this gate on Boundary Street to the north through most of the site. The pathway was formed with low concrete edging that featured similar geometric and abstract patterns to the forecourt design. A drinking fountain was located near the Boundary Street footpath. To the western side of the garden and the site boundary further concrete edging (also in an abstract pattern) created an area for grassed lawn (Kikuyu grass) to the pathway, and an area for screen trees to the site boundary (lemon scented tea trees as noted on the plans). The plans show rough sawn freestone slabs placed in the lawn, and some feature trees (acacias and junipers).

The ground sloped gently down from Boundary Street to a concrete retaining wall and stairs, which allowed for the grade change through to the mid-level. The low concrete edging and aggregate path continued from the staircase towards Wedd Street, with the same abstract design continued – aggregate pavement, grassed lawn and screen trees to the site boundary (defined by abstract low concrete edging). Some feature trees were planted in the lawn area as before.

A second retaining wall and stairs led to a paved area at the Wedd Street level which was used as carpark.

The aggregate pathway and all hard and soft landscaping finished at the second retaining wall. This area was not formally landscaped and was finished with an impervious surface (assumed to be concrete) for the car park.³

Works to the western garden appear to be underway in 1967 with an aerial photograph of the site taken about the time of the opening of the building in 1967 clearly showing the formation of the three sections of the garden.

³ Urbis pp9-10. Note: The Urbis report does not appear to have accessed the drawings held at UQFL, but does reference the Langer drawing held at SLQ.



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Detail from aerial view 1967 shows the completed building with works to the western garden, which would separate the site from its residential neighbours, underway. The three sections—the Boundary Street section, mid-section, and carpark to Wedd Street—are clearly visible.

(Source: UQFL in *Karl Langer* p104)

The 'highrise office building'

An upturn in the city's economy and a modernising of the building codes that included a removal of building height limits in 1964 saw a considerable increase in the construction of highrise office buildings in Brisbane.[42] Between 1950 and 1965 few office highrise buildings were constructed in Brisbane. These included: Mutual Life & Citizens (MLC) Insurance Building (1955); Friendly Society Building (1957), and; Taxation Building (1961).[43] However, by the middle of 1964, 20 highrise office buildings were in the course of construction in the Brisbane CBD.[44] The number of buildings constructed between 1965 and the end of 1970 far exceeded the previous 15 years. These included: Pearl Assurance Building, Eagle Towers, and Commonwealth Savings Bank Building (1966); Manufacturers Mutual Insurance (MMI) Building, and Main Roads Department Building (1967); Temperance & General (T&G) Insurance Building (1969), and; Westpac Bank Building, and Mount Isa Mines (MIM) Building (1970).

Highrise office buildings designed and constructed between c1950 and c1970 are a specific type of architecture that evolved under particular circumstances. The type clearly represents the excitement, prosperity, and vision of Australia and indicates the economic rationalism and progress in the period. Indicating their status, they were often ceremoniously opened by important dignitaries. In cities nationally and internationally, Modernist architects were unencumbered by traditions when designing this new type, challenging aesthetic and symbolic values, and the provision of public and private amenity. Their impact was unprecedented and it was not until critical analysis of tall buildings in the late 1960s that the approach to



highrise development changed. Designed in a time when Australia was little concerned about the ethics of energy consumption, typical highrises exploited this abundance. Orientation and shading was generally dismissed and windows were inoperable, relying on mechanical air-conditioning. Floor plates were vast, relying on artificial light. However, some architects designed intelligent buildings that were connected to the traditions of architecture and were better attuned to their environment.[45] Sophisticated in its design, Langer's MRD Building is representative of the better designs in Queensland of the period.

The principal characteristics of highrise office buildings designed and constructed in the 1950s and 1960s are: remarkable height to footprint ratio; an expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; a 'glamorous' treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; an urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.

The new head office for the Main Roads Department possessed these principal characteristics. The 50 metre tall building comprised three large basement levels, a generously-proportioned ground level with a mezzanine, a tower of nine levels, and a roof-level caretaker's flat. The building had a huge gross floor area of 33,000 square metres and upon completion was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland.[46] The principal public function of the building, vehicle registration, occupied the ground and mezzanine floors within impressive, robust, and dramatic spaces. The double-height main reception area was well-lit through 'immense' glazing onto the forecourt and featured striking marble, timber, and terrazzo surfaces.[47] Artworks commissioned for the building were prominently displayed.[48] Designed as a showplace for the Queensland Government, the building and grounds were floodlit at night.[49]

'Purpose-built'

As well as occupying pre-existing buildings, the Queensland Government constructed purpose-built buildings to accommodate its administration and departmental offices in Brisbane. These buildings were reflective of the circumstances of the government and illustrate its operations over time.

The Main Roads Department building was purpose-designed, accommodating the Main Roads Department's diverse uses in repetitive and rationalised floor plates. Although offices and administration areas comprised the majority, the building also included: basement car parking; food facilities for the staff - a large cafeteria with kitchen, kiosk for snacks, and lunch room; staff training facilities - a large, double-height auditorium with the latest projection equipment; a technical and recreation library; a room for displaying models of major Main Roads projects, and; a large air-conditioning plant and a caretaker's flat. The building was designed to incorporate modern office technology. The department's technical and commercial electronic data processing divisions were accommodated in the basement, including their state of the art computer, the largest in Queensland at the time.[50] The computer was serviced by a special, independent air-conditioning system, designed to keep the computer room at a constant temperature and humidity[51], with the heat generated by the computer absorbed by the ornamental ponds at the front of the building.[52] A system of vacuum message tubes connected all sections of the building[53] and there were telephones and a master clock system, CCTV, a teleprinter system, a Xerox machine, and a dumbwaiter for the movement of files between floors.[54]

Opening

The building was completed in August 1967. In September the MRD moved more than 1250 personnel, from eight offices, into its new \$4.5 million head office. The building was officially opened on 6 November 1967 by GFR Nicklin, Premier of Queensland, who stated that 'this new building, with its modern appointments, the latest business equipment - including a computer - research and design facilities, will greatly enhance the department's work and its world-class reputation'.[55]



The new head office was commended at the time. It featured in the 7 September 1967 edition of *The Queensland Master Builder*, which detailed the building's construction techniques and highlighted its modern technology. According to the MRD's magazine *Queensland Roads*, there were hopes 'that the construction of this building with its landscaped gardens and surroundings in the old Spring Hill area of Brisbane, [would] provide an incentive for other businesses and developers to follow the example of the Main Roads Department.'^[56] Commissioner Barton viewed the MRD as 'a giant consulting engineers and construction organisation', and stated 'why should a department like Main Roads be any different from private business ... [W]e hope that when our officers are dealing with people they will get the idea that we are here to do business just as efficiently and effectively as anybody else in the community'.^[57] The *Courier-Mail* added that 'the building design, layout of office space and staff facilities, gives the Main Roads Department an air of big business, not the traditional Government department organisation', while the Mines and Main Roads Minister, RE Camm, claimed that the new building 'would be one of the most effective ways of organising Main Roads personnel and facilities for a bolder attack on the problems of the future'.^[58]

The new 'luxury' head office was only part of the MRD's building program. By the end of the 1960s the department had also constructed new buildings to accommodate its new regional offices in Rockhampton, Cloncurry, Barcaldine, Toowoomba, Mackay, and Warwick, which had responsibility over their local main roads.^[59]

In c1969 the artwork *Communications* by important Queensland sculptor, Leonard Shillam, was installed at the MRD building in Spring Hill. It was commissioned for the building in 1968, made in cast aluminium over painted concrete, and depicted a bas relief map with a rural area and urban area connected by a road.^[60]

Langer's legacy

Langer died in 1969. As an architect and town planner, he had a pronounced impact upon the built environment of Australia, especially in Queensland. Having a deep belief in community responsibilities, particularly in cultural matters, he had been active in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects; first president (1952) of the Queensland division of the Royal Australian Planning Institute; a founder and chairman (1966-68) of the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects; and a member (1963-69) of the National Trust of Queensland. Important examples of his architectural work include the Langer residence at St Lucia [QHR 600317] (1950); Mackay Sugar Research Station [QHR 602642] (1953); Lennon's Hotel Broadbeach (1957, demolished) and Lennon's Hotel Toowoomba (1957); St John's Lutheran Church, Bundaberg [QHR 602815] (1960); Kingaroy Town Hall and Civic Square (1963); Assembly Hall at Ipswich Girls Grammar [QHR 600565] (1964); and St Peter's Lutheran College Chapel [QHR 602816] (1968). He was responsible for notable urban ideas of the 1950s and 1960s, including choosing the sites of the Sydney Opera House and Federal Parliament House; the pedestrian shopping mall in Queen Street, Brisbane; and the first canal development of the Gold Coast.^[61] After his death, both The University of Queensland and The Queensland Institute (later University) of Technology with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects established annual student prizes in memoriam. His body of work is a clearly-distinguishable exploration of a sub-tropical modernism and is important in the evolution of Queensland architecture, with Langer described as 'arguably the most influential architect of the 1950s'.^[62]

Main Roads 1970s-

From the head office, the MRD administered its important work. Motor vehicle ownership continued to rise and the highway network in Queensland was expanded substantially in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s and 2000s the department's work became more sophisticated to cope with increased traffic. By the end of the 2010s the department was responsible for the state's largest built community asset - the Queensland state-controlled road network, worth over \$46 billion and carrying more than 85% of the state's traffic. Examples of major main roads projects co-ordinated from the head office include: the Southeast Freeway



(1972), the Beef Roads and Developmental Roads schemes of the 1970s, the Bald Hills to Burpengary Deviation of the Bruce Highway (1977) and many subsequent upgrades and extensions of the highway, the Gateway Arterial Road and Bridge (1986), and the Pacific Motorway (2000).[63]



Main Roads Department Head Office complex, c1970s.

Source: TMR

Changes

Over time the head office building was altered. In c1974 the fountain jets of the forecourt pond were altered to stacked boulder waterfalls.[64] The building was also altered internally to accommodate different office fit-outs. In 2006 the forecourt of the building was remodelled to a design by architects, BAC Group to provide building code compliant pedestrian access to the front entrance. This work included replacement of the original awning with a modern, steel and glass awning, adding two concrete ramps to the entrance bridge, altering the forecourt gardens and ponds, and installing the sculpture The Red Cube [65] at the front of the building.

While the building was being painted in 2007 it was identified approximately 6% of the render on the northern sun hoods needed repair. The hoods were investigated by structural engineers, no sign of structural distress was identified, and trial repairs of the render were undertaken in 2008.[66]

In March 2009 the MRD merged with Queensland Transport to form the Department of Transport and Main Roads, which continued the control of the state's main roads. In 2012 the department vacated the MRD building. It was sold to Asian Pacific Group Pty Ltd in December 2013.



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History since 2014

Heritage listing

The Main Roads Department Building was entered in the QHR in 2014. The site was described in the Entry at that time (refer QHR Entry for full description):

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15 storey, reinforced concrete office building in a Modernist style that stands on a prominent site on Boundary Road, Spring Hill, Brisbane. Totalling almost one hectare, the rectangular site is bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north. Small scale commercial and residential development adjoins the western boundary. The sloping terrain is terraced into large, flat platforms by concrete retaining walls.

The ‘landscaped garden setting’ included the garden forecourt / plaza, the western garden area and eastern garden area.

The former western garden was described in 2014 as follows:

The western garden is terraced into level areas, retained by concrete walls and linked with concrete stairs. It retains the original abstract layout and also contains mature trees, shrubs, grassed areas and original concrete benches.

The 2014 description appears to broadly accord with 1950s drawings of the western garden area. Whilst some details are not recorded e.g. the species of trees and shrubs is not identified and the stone paving shown on 1950s drawings is not mentioned, the ‘original abstract layout’ is described as being retained and a number of elements shown on the drawings (including terracing, retaining walls, concrete stairs, grassed areas, plantings (although species not identified), and benches) are extant. (See also the 2018 description in the Urbis report discussed later in this section, which confirms that a number of elements remained in place until relatively recently.)

Aerial photographs of the site, whilst not recording all details, similarly indicate that Langer’s landscape plan was broadly adopted and remained in place until c2025. Google streetview records the garden in existence as November 2024. See below for a collation of images documenting the western garden from the 1960s.



Detail from 1967 aerial view shows the formation of the three sections of the western garden cascading down from Boundary Street. Note north in this image to bottom of image.

Source: UQFL in Urbis p12



Detail from aerial view 20 April 1969. Boundary Street section of western garden in part shadow but 3 sections visible. North point to top of image.

Source: QImagery. QAP1939-71



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Detail from aerial view 30 July 1978. Boundary Street section of western garden again in part shadow but some plantings visible including perimeter hedging, specimen trees and lawns.

Source: QImagery. QAP3458-9766



Detail from aerial view 5 June 1980. Mature trees visible in Boundary Street section with mid-section of western garden now clearly shown as mainly lawn with hedging to perimeters.

Source: QImagery. QAP3728-3549

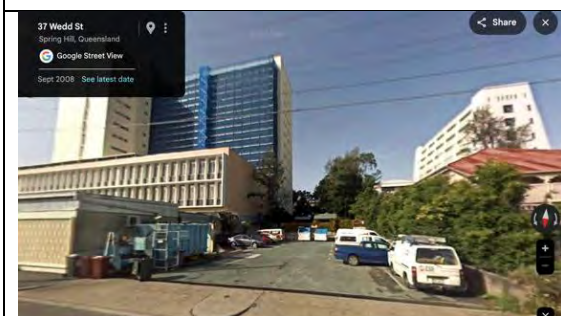


Detail from aerial view 4 March 2007. By this time both the Boundary Street section and the mid-section of western garden shaded by mature trees.

Source: QImagery. BCC0114-40



View from Boundary Street, November 2007 shows Boundary Street section of garden fenced to street. Path with mature trees either side visible. Source: Google Streetview



View from Wedd Street, September 2008 shows garden wall along western boundary with perimeter plantings in place. Beyond the mid-section of the garden is visible including a small, roofed structure.

Source: Google Streetview



View from Boundary Street, March 2013 shows Boundary Street section of garden.

Source: Google Streetview 2013

Note: DETSI in c2014 describe the garden as ‘terraced into level areas, retained by concrete walls and linked with concrete stairs’ retaining ‘the original abstract layout’ as well as ‘mature trees, shrubs, grassed areas and original concrete benches’.



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View from Boundary Street, April 2015 shows Boundary Street section of garden.

Source: Google Streetview



View from Boundary Street, December 2015 shows Boundary Street section of garden now fenced as part of hotel development site.

Source: Google Streetview



View from mid-level to Boundary Street section of western garden, 2018. Formed path, stairs and plantings still in place. Refer also Urbis description.

Source: Urbis 2018



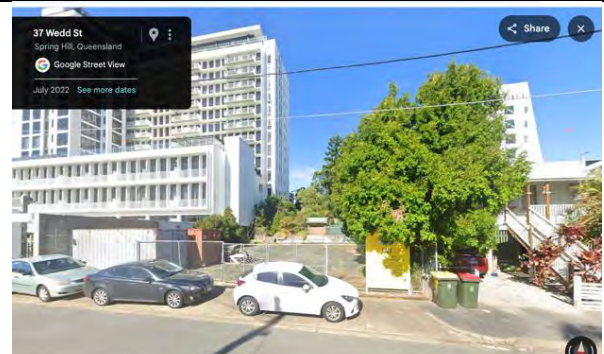
Path through mid-level, 2018.

Source: Urbis 2018



View from Wedd Street, September 2020 shows garden wall along western boundary with perimeter plantings still in place and hard stand area to Wedd Street. Beyond the mid-section of the garden is visible.

Source: Google Streetview



View from Wedd Street, July 2022 shows garden wall along western boundary with perimeter plantings still in place. Beyond the mid-section of the garden is visible. For sale sign to fence.

Source: Google Streetview

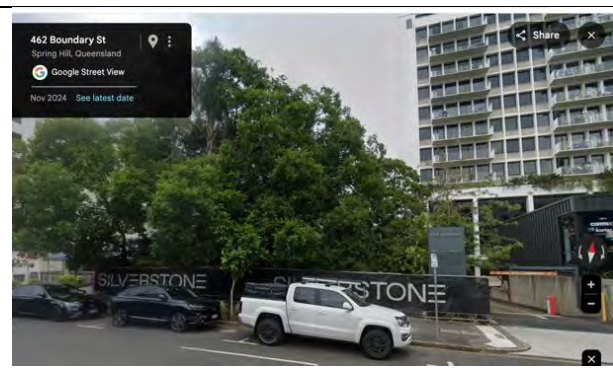


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View from Boundary Street, July 2022 shows Boundary Street section of garden still in place. For sale sign to fence. Extent of former garden (hard and soft landscape elements) is not clear.

Source: Google Streetview



View from Boundary Street, November 2024 shows Boundary Street section of garden still in place. Builders fence to street suggests works being undertaken at this time.

Source: Google Streetview

Heritage Agreement

In October 2014, a heritage agreement was entered into between the department and Asian Pacific Group on behalf of Glenferrie Road Trust. The purpose of the heritage agreement was to establish ‘development parameters’ that would ‘allow the former Main Roads Department Building to operate and evolve as a hotel/accommodation/retail venue without adversely impacting on the heritage significance of the place’. It allowed the owners Asian Pacific Group (APG), ‘to make all changes necessary for the adaptive reuse of the property as a hotel/accommodation/retail venue while maintaining the design intent of the architect Dr Karl Langer’ which was ‘core the heritage significance of the place’. Langer’s design intent was described in the document as including both built and landscape elements:

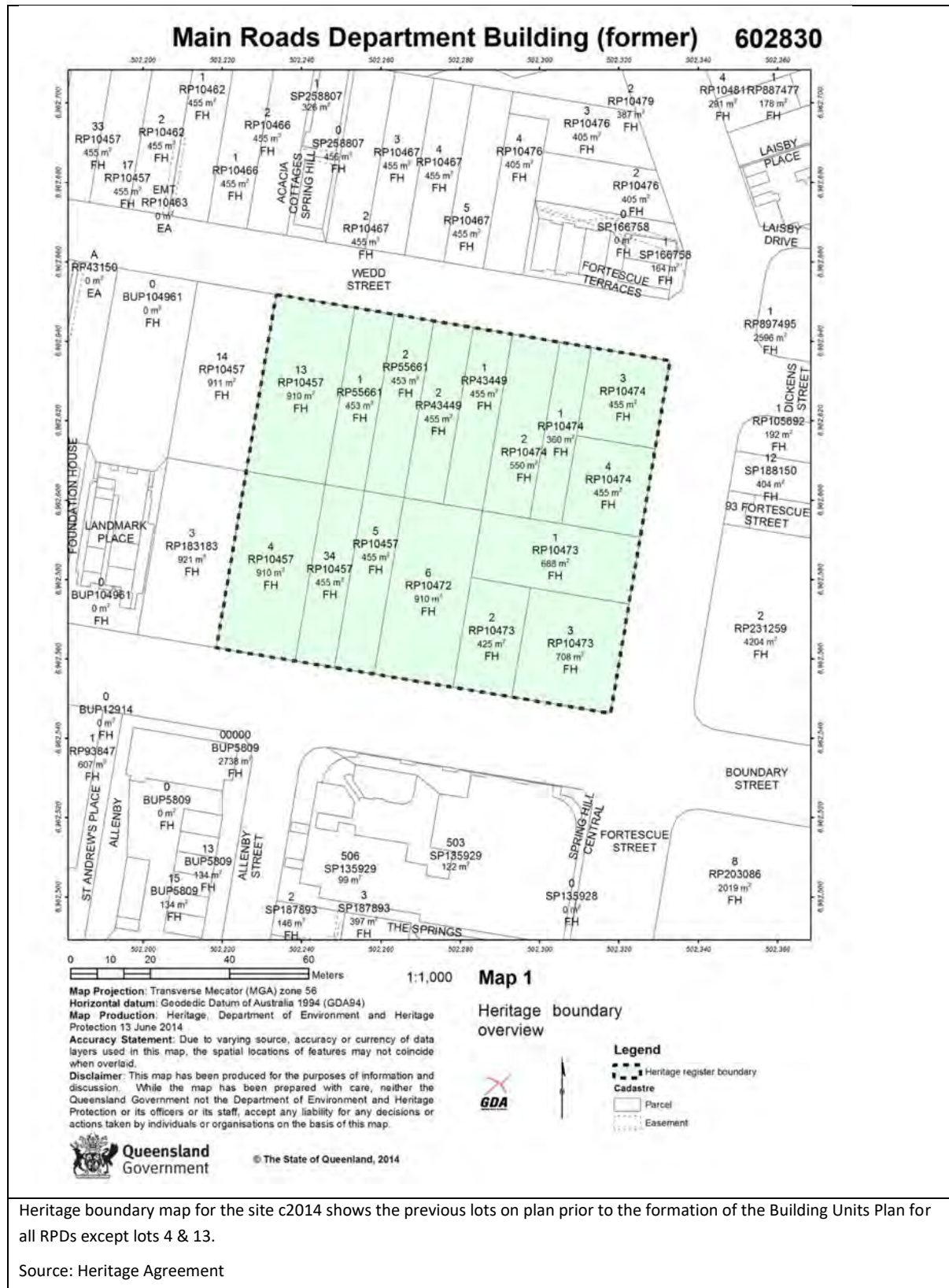
The architectural philosophy of Dr Karl Langer, an architect of importance in the evolution of Queensland architecture, is expressed in the design of the former Main Roads Department Building. This manifests in the built fabric and landscape elements, spatial arrangements, materials, high quality of work and siting of the building to respond to climate and orientation.

Under the agreement, Exemption Certificates were developed to guide the redevelopment according to those parameters.

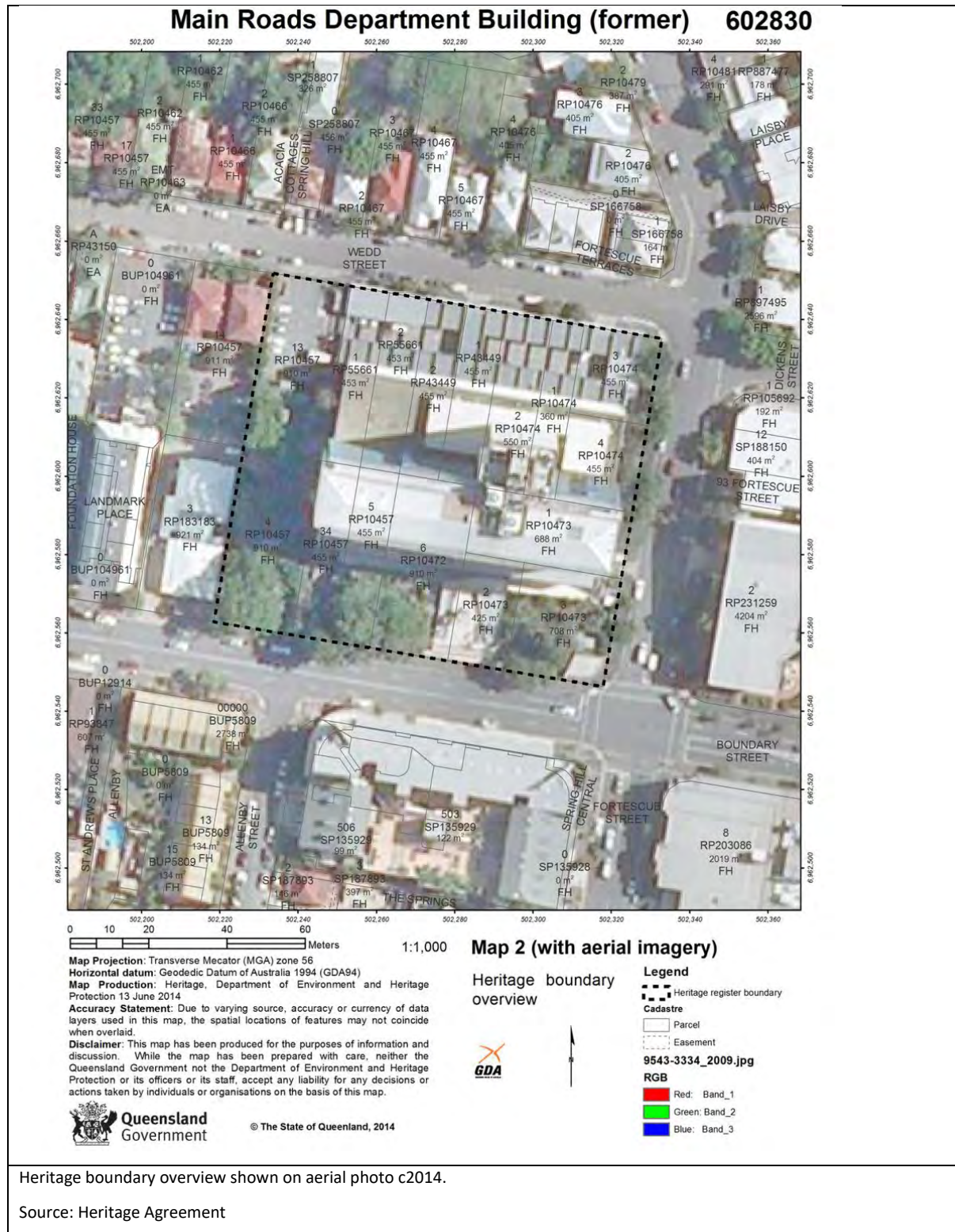
Although the heritage agreement was attached to the whole of the site (then described as lots 4, 5, 13 & 34 RP10457, 6 RP10472, 1, 2 & 3 RP10473, lots 1, 2, 3 & 4 RP10474, lots 1 & 2 RP 43449 and lots 1 & 2 RP55661; refer heritage boundary map below) and although the landscape elements were included, the drawings for the hotel development attached to the heritage agreement (prepared by Woods Bagot), suggest that the development at this time included the front plaza and eastern garden, but not the former western garden (lots 4 & 13 RP10457). The former western garden (lots 4 & 13 RP10457) is not included in the heritage agreement.



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By 2016 the Johnson Hotel was opened and the residential apartments, which shared the facilities of the hotel were complete. The group titling of much of the heritage-listed site was apparently completed at this time. This included all the previous lots on plan apart from lots 4 & 13 RP10457 i.e. the western garden lots. The ownership of those lots is believed to have been retained by the Asian Pacific Group.

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Development applications 2018 & 2023

In 2018 a development application was lodged over lots 4 & 13 RP10457 i.e. the western garden area (including the Wedd Street carpark). The development proposed the destruction of the western garden, the construction of a new 15 storey tower for student accommodation a new garden to the Boundary Street frontage drawing on Langer’s 1960s scheme. (See BCC A004892414 application to carry out building work & material change of use)

The Heritage Impact Report prepared by Urbis described the western garden area at this time:⁴

The original Langer design for the garden remains extant in part. Original elements of fabric of hard landscaping that remain in-situ include the low concrete edging that forms the footpath through most of the site, the aggregate paving to the footpath, the concrete drinking fountain, the two concrete retaining walls and two sets of concrete stairs.

There is no evidence surviving of the low concrete edging that defined the lawn area and the screen trees to the site boundary; it is not known if this edging was ever constructed.

The site is largely contained across three levels, reflecting the change in grade from Boundary Street in the south to Wedd Street in the north. From Boundary Street, the site features a low concrete edged aggregate pathway, grassed areas and plantings, which gently slopes to a retaining wall and concrete stairs to effect the level change to the mid-level of the site. At this level, the low concrete edged and aggregate pathway continues, with grassed areas and plantings to the far western side of the site. This mid-level features a concrete pad for a barbecue area with a skillion roof with modern sheeting. This element is a later addition to the overall site.

The site slopes gently again to another concrete retaining wall and concrete stairs, which lead to the concrete car parking area at the Wedd Street grade. This area is accessed from Wedd Street and is still used for carparking ...

The 2017 site plan submitted with the DA records some of those elements recorded by Urbis (see below). The Urbis report also includes a number of photographs of the site (pp15-17).

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| View from Boundary Street, 2018. Source: Urbis | View from Wedd Street, 2018. Source: Urbis | View from mid-level to Boundary Street section of western garden, 2018. Formed path, stairs and plantings still in place. Refer also Urbis description. Source: Urbis 2018 | Path through mid-level, 2018. Source: Urbis 2018 |

⁴ Urbis pp13-14



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Boundary Street section of the western gardens) and other conditions related to demolition on the site and archival recording.⁵

Circa 2023 the lots were acquired by a new owner. In June 2023, Urban Strategies (on behalf of the new owner) wrote to BCC requesting a ‘minor change’ to the 2021 approval under s81 Planning Act 2016 related to staging the approval—

Stage 1 to comprise the ‘reconstruction’ of part of the ‘Langer Garden’ (the first 16.9 m to Boundary Street), stormwater upgrade works, general clearing of vegetation and improvements within the site

Stage 2 to comprise construction of rooming accommodation tower

According to the request the proposed staging allowed for ‘critical stormwater works and the heritage benefit of the project to be delivered upfront, allowing community benefit of the project to be expedited’ as well as allowing for ‘preliminary works (such as general clearing of the site) as a precursor to the construction of the Rooming Accommodation tower, to allow for the timely embolization of construction processes at such a time as market conditions are appropriate to commence construction.’

A new application was subsequently lodged (BCC A006290146) to carry out building work & material change of use. The application submitted 6 June 2023, decided 27 September 2023 appears to effectively replicate the previous decision but with staging included.

Some demolition of the former western garden appears to have taken place since November 2024. From available photos and information, the extent of demolition is unclear but it appears to include removal of trees, plantings and some hard landscape elements (seats, garden edges and pathways).

The site was purchased by Progeny Properties 3 Pty Ltd on November 25th, 2025.

References to QHR history

- [1] Krosch, Allan, History of Brisbane's Major Arterial Roads - A Main Roads Perspective, in 'Queensland Roads' ed. 7, March 2009, p.12.
- [2] Nissen, J. May 2008. 'Contextual History of Roads & Bridges in Queensland', report for the EPA, Nissen Associates Pty Ltd, p.48.
- [3] 'North Coast Roadside Rest Areas', QHR 602698.
- [4] For example, to complete the sealing of the Brisbane to Cairns highway. Nissen, 'Contextual History of Roads & Bridges in Queensland', p.83.
- [5] The number of persons per vehicle in Queensland also dropped from 7.61 in 1946 to 4.82 in 1952; compared to 3 people per vehicle in America, and 14 per vehicle in the United Kingdom. 'Queensland Main Roads Department. Thirty-Third Annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year ended 30 June 1954', Queensland Parliamentary Papers, Session of 1954-55, Vol. 1. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp.881-883.
- [6] By 1960 there were 3.63 people per vehicle in Queensland. 'Queensland Main Roads Department. Thirty-Ninth Annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year ended 30 June 1960'. (Provided by TMR Library), p.79.
- [7] Queensland State Archives Agency ID192, 'Main Roads Department I'. Farmers' roads were a class of road that existed between 1943 and 1959, when they were reclassified as secondary roads. (Nissen, 'Contextual History of Roads & Bridges in Queensland', p.78).
- [8] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.3.

⁵ Langer Garden Landscape Concept prepared by Qld Govt 21 Dec 2020; DWG 001 & rev C; demolition and reinstatement of hardstand and landscape elements in accordance with demolition plan by Ellivo 18 June 2020 drawing DA-AO-013 and rev 2 ... 'demolish all hardstands and landscape elements across the site with 'retaining wall, stairs and pavement' in Boundary Street section to be 'reinstated to match existing once basement has been constructed' etc.



- [9] Cited in Nissen, 'Contextual History of Roads & Bridges in Queensland', p.91.
- [10] Queensland State Archives, Item 602186, Series 1173 (Department of Public Works, General Correspondence), 'Main Roads Department Building, Brisbane'. AR Williams to JE Duggan, 20 December 1955.
- [11] Official Opening of the Main Roads Department Building pamphlet, 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [12] Official Opening of the Main Roads Department Building pamphlet, 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [13] Official Opening of the Main Roads Department Building pamphlet, 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [14] Queensland State Archives, Item 602186, Series 1173 (Department of Public Works, General Correspondence), 'Main Roads Department Building, Brisbane'. LJ Feenaghty to Dr Karl Langer, 3 June 1959.
- [15] Queensland State Archives, Item 602186, Series 1173 (Department of Public Works, General Correspondence), 'Main Roads Department Building, Brisbane'. Weller to the Under Secretary, DPW, 28 September 1959.
- [16] Wilson, Andrew (ed.), *Hayes & Scott post-war houses*. St Lucia, Qld: UQP, 2005. p.5.
- [17] Apperley, Richard, Robert Irving, Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.281.
- [18] O'Callaghan, Judith, The Australian Interior: The Importance of Being Contemporary in *The Australian Dream: Design of the Fifties*, p.172.
- [19] Sinnamon, Ian, Karl Langer in Queensland (paper presented to the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand Conference on Modernism, Perth, 1993).
- [20] Riddel, Robert & Susan Hill, 'Significant Queensland 20th century architecture: A report', 2005, p.14.
- [21] Riddel, Robert & Susan Hill, 'Significant Queensland 20th century architecture: A report', 2005, p.14.
- [22] Krosch, Allan, History of Brisbane's Major Arterial Roads - A Main Roads Perspective, in 'Queensland Roads' ed. 7, March 2009, p.23.
- [23] Biography of Sir Charles Newton Barton, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barton-sir-charles-newton-12182>, accessed 30 January 2014.
- [24] Krosch, Allan, History of Brisbane's Major Arterial Roads - A Main Roads Perspective, in 'Queensland Roads' ed. 7, March 2009, p.7.
- [25] Krosch, Allan, History of Brisbane's Major Arterial Roads - A Main Roads Perspective, in 'Queensland Roads' ed. 7, March 2009, p.22.
- [26] Biography of Sir Charles Newton Barton, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barton-sir-charles-newton-12182>, accessed 30 January 2014.
- [27] 'Queensland Main Roads Department. Forty-Second Annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year ended 30 June 1963'. (Provided by TMR Library).
- [28] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.4.
- [29] Queensland State Archives, Item 602186, Series 1173 (Department of Public Works, General Correspondence), 'Main Roads Department Building, Brisbane'. Recommendation to Cabinet by TA Hiley, Treasurer, 16 June 1965.
- [30] About Hornick Constructions <http://www.hornick.com.au/about-hornick-constructions.html> accessed 27 March 2014.
- [31] Main Roads Department Building Progress Report, 13 June 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [32] *Queensland Main Roads Department Annual Reports, 1958-1965*.
- [33] 'Treated as sculpture', *The Courier Mail*, 6 November 1967, p.11.
- [34] Langer's design for Lennon's Hotel in Broadbeach and Toowoomba (both six storeys) are comparable but are under half the size. *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.5.
- [35] 'It's on schedule', *The Courier-Mail*, 6 April 1967, p.3 and *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.5.
- [36] Report on the Landscaping and Treatment of the Grounds Around the Proposed New Head Office, by Karl Langer, dated 11th January 1960, within the Karl Langer Collection, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.



- [37] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.7.
- [38] Report on the Landscaping and Treatment of the Grounds Around the Proposed New Head Office, Karl Langer, dated 11th January 1960, within the Karl Langer Collection, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.
- [39] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.9-12.
- [40] Queensland-sourced materials included clear-finished North-Queensland timber veneers and Ulam marble (Rockhampton). *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.9,10. Although manufactured in Surfers Paradise (*The Courier-Mail*, 6 November 1967, p.13.), the material source of the quartz and slate spandrel panels was not identified. *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.5, 9.
- [41] The building is angled approximately 9.5 degrees east of north.
- [42] Cole, John R. *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925 - 1985*, 1984, p.239.
- [43] Jennifer Taylor *Tall Buildings Australian Business Going Up: 1945 - 1970*, 2001, p.83.
- [44] Cole, John R. *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925 - 1985*, 1984, p.240.
- [45] Webber, Peter in Jennifer Taylor *Tall Buildings Australian Business Going Up: 1945 - 1970*, 2001, p.10-13.
- [46] Main Roads Department Building Progress Report, 13 June 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [47] Main Roads Department Building Progress Report, 13 June 1967, JOL SLQ.
- [48] *Queensland Roads*, Vol.6 No. 12, 1967, p.34.
- [49] 'It's on schedule', *The Courier-Mail*, 6 April 1967, p.3 and Report on the Landscaping and Treatment of the Grounds Around the Proposed New Head Office, Karl Langer, dated 11th January 1960, within the Karl Langer Collection, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.
- [50] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.8. The MRD had been using the GE 225 computer, installed in 1962 at the University of Queensland, before it called for tenders for its own computer, to design roads and deal with vehicle registration, in July 1964. An International Computers and Tabulators Australia Pty Model 1905 was ordered in November 1964, while the government ordered a similar computer for Treasury. ('Queensland Main Roads Department. Forty-Fourth Annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year ended 30 June 1965'. (Provided by TMR Library), pp.6-7.) The computer was temporarily installed in the Treasury Building, before being installed on floor B1 at Spring Hill in September 1967. (*Queensland Roads*, Vol.7 No. 14, 1968, p.35.)
- [51] *Queensland Roads*, Vol.7 No. 14, 1968, p.36.
- [52] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.8.
- [53] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.11.
- [54] *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.14.
- [55] 'Premier opens Main Roads 'giant'', *The Courier Mail*, 7 November 1967, p.10.
- [56] *Queensland Roads*, Vol.6 No. 12, 1967, p.34.
- [57] 'A Big Building for a Big Job', *The Courier Mail*, 6 November 1967, p.11.
- [58] 'A Big Building for a Big Job', *The Courier Mail*, 6 November 1967, p.11.
- [59] 'Premier opens Main Roads 'giant'', *The Courier Mail*, 7 November 1967, p.10, *The Queensland Master Builder*, 7 September 1967, p.15. The office in Bundaberg moved into a modern building leased by the department.
- [60] Cooke, Glenn R., Leonard and Kathleen Shillam: Chronology and exhibition history, p.22.
- [61] Sinnamon, Ian Biography of Dr Karl Langer, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/langer-karl-10783> accessed 29 April 2014.
- [62] Riddell, Robert Susan Hill, 'Significant Queensland 20th century architecture: A report', 2005, p.14 and 'Australian Institute of Architects Nationally significant 20th-century Architecture', http://www.architecture.com.au/docs/default-source/qld-notable-buildings/05_qld-langer-house-citation-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2 accessed 28 April 2014.
- [63] History of Queensland's Roads, <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Research-and-education/Heritage-centre/History-of-queensland-roads.aspx#year1970> accessed 2 May 2014.



[64] QSA Item ID 602186, Series 1173 (Department of Public Works, General Correspondence), 'Main Roads Department Building, Brisbane'. 5 September 1973, 3 January 1974, 24 April 1974, 11 June 1974.

[65] Created by Australian artist Ken Reinhard and commissioned by construction company Transfield to commemorate the opening of the Gateway Bridge.

[66] GHD Main Roads Department, Report for Spring Hill Offices, Render Delamination Investigation, November 2008.

3.4 Description of the place

Main Roads Department Building c2014

This description is taken from the c2014 description in the QHR Entry i.e. before the development of the Johnson Hotel and apartments and the more recent destruction of the western garden.

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15 storey, reinforced concrete office building in a Modernist style that stands on a prominent site on Boundary Road, Spring Hill, Brisbane. Totalling almost one hectare, the rectangular site is bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north. Small scale commercial and residential development adjoins the western boundary. The sloping terrain is terraced into large, flat platforms by concrete retaining walls. As well as a landscaped garden setting, the building comprises: a front portico; tower; service core; rear podium; and rear carpark. The building structure is a reinforced concrete grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs.

The building retains design elements characteristic of the work of its architect, Dr Karl Langer, such as: employing a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements; a restrained use of high-quality materials; and careful siting and manipulation of form to achieve optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation.

The garden forecourt is a flat public space fronting Boundary Street. The garden is laid out in sharp and dynamic lines of concrete, defining contrasting flat areas of mature trees, grass, paths and water to create a bold, abstract effect. A wide entrance path from the street bisects the garden, bridging across a pond and stepping up to the front portico entrance. The Red Cube, a large metal sculpture, stands on the path in front of a marble slab engraved to commemorate the opening of the building.

The western garden is terraced into level areas, retained by concrete walls and linked with concrete stairs. It retains the original abstract layout and also contains mature trees, shrubs, grassed areas and original concrete benches. The eastern garden is narrow and defined by a series of terraced boulder retaining beds and also retains original concrete benches.

... [for more detailed description of the elements of the building, refer QHR Entry] ...

Elements that are not of cultural heritage include: the building's ramps, awning, and doors at the main entrance portico; lightweight partitions and suspended ceilings throughout; kitchen and store room fitouts; and steel shelters of the garden and roof deck.

The former Main Roads Department Building stands prominently on a ridge of the folding terrain of Spring Hill. It is highly-visible from the surrounding suburbs and has extensive views from the office spaces within. The gardens and open spaces are conspicuous within the immediate streetscape and contribute to the character of the area.



4.0 Photographs of the place – Western Garden

The following section provides a photographic record of the existing fabric and its condition within the former ‘Western Garden’ (487 Boundary Street) at the Main Roads Department Building. These photographs illustrate the elements that remain extant and assist in identifying which original features of the former Western Garden are still present.

The site at 487 Boundary Street includes the following remnants of the former ‘Western Garden’ including:

- Two former concrete stairs
- Concrete retaining walls between lower, middle and upper terraces
- Sections of concrete pathways at upper and middle terraces
- A concrete drinking fountain

These elements appear to be part of the former Karl Langer design for the former ‘Western Garden’ and have been photographed below.

4.1 Aerial showing photographs indicators

Below aerial photograph of the heritage place showing the photo indicators of the photographs capturing the location and direction of views listed in **Section 4.4**.



Figure 4: Aerial photograph of the heritage place showing the photo indicators. White dashed outline represents QHR heritage boundary of the Main Roads Department Building. Lot proposed for removal at 487 Boundary Street (former ‘Western Garden’) from QHR boundary is infilled with light green colour (Source: Nearmap/JDA Co.)



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4.2 The Western Garden – Original design

The site at 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill was the former ‘Western Garden’ and setting for the former Main Roads Department Building.

The original garden, designed by Karl Langer, was terraced down from Boundary Street over two levels, leading down to a carpark at Wedd Street. The landscape design for the site included:

- Two terraced levels
- Open lawn areas
- 4 stairs
- Pathways linking the 4 stairs
- Trees, hedges and low plantings
- Rough free stone slabs
- 4 seats and bin
- One concrete drinking fountain

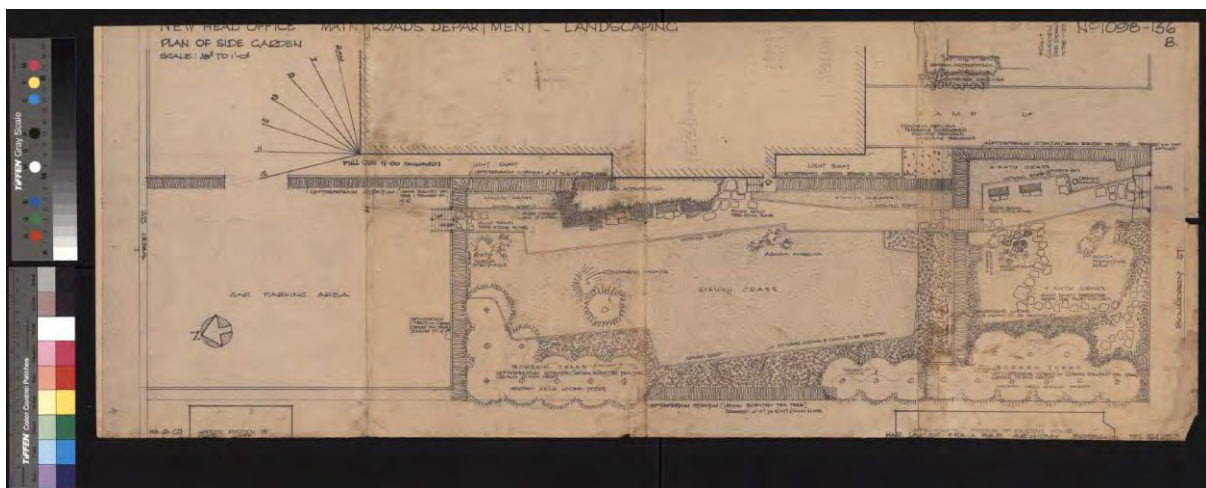


Figure 5: Original site plan showing the proposed scheme for the ‘Western Garden’. (Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158 – JDA Co. Overlay)

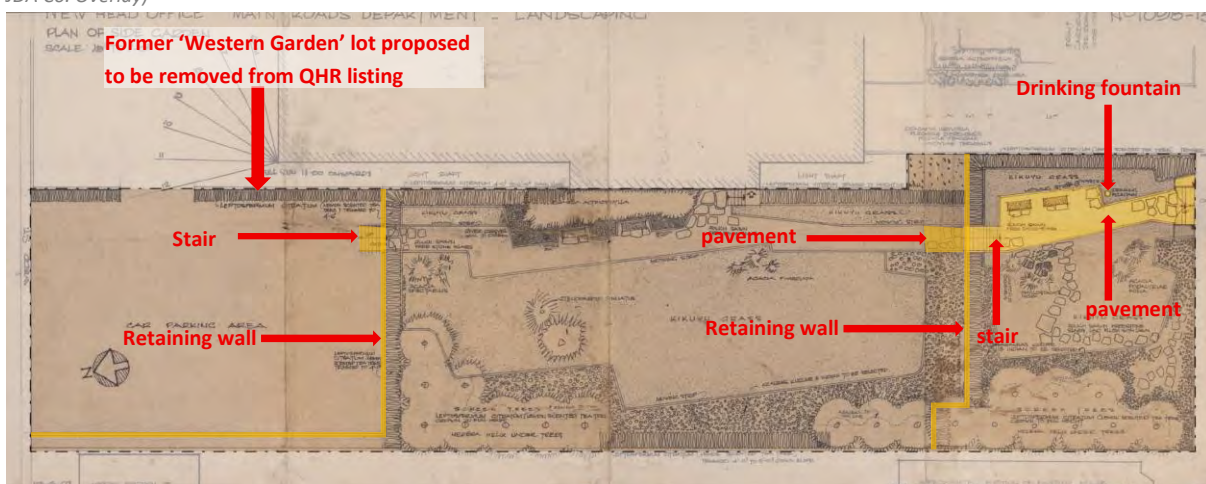


Figure 6: Original site plan for the ‘Western Garden’ showing the extent of remaining original fabric (labelled and infilled yellow) within the context of the site is demonstrated by the above diagram. Note the seats and stone pavers are not existing (Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158 – JDA Co. Overlay)

Lot proposed for removal at 487 Boundary Street (Western Garden) from QHR boundary is labelled and shown with dashed outline.



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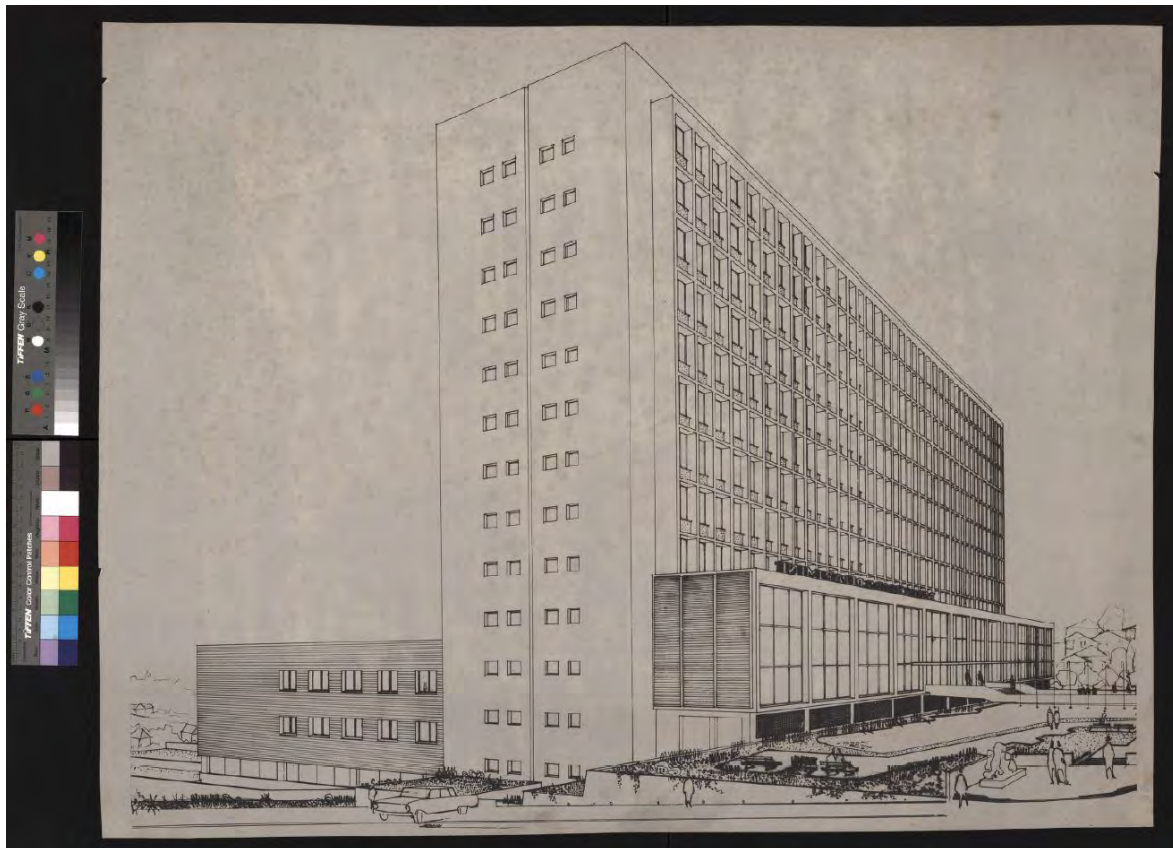


Figure 7: Sketch showing terraced garden. (Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158)

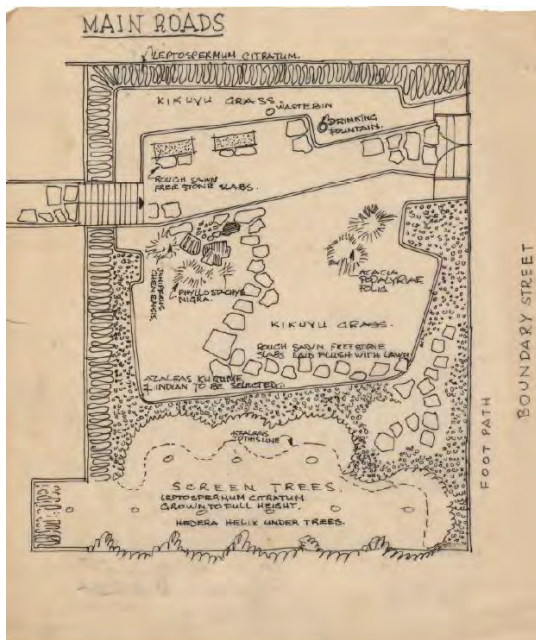
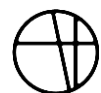


Figure 8 (LHS): Site plan showing upper terrace of garden. (Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158)



Figure 9 (RHS): Sketch showing side garden in less detail. (Source: UQ eSpace, Karl Langer Collection, UQFL158)



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Figure 10: Main Roads Department Head Office complex, c. 1970s (Source: TMR)

4.3 Schedule of extant significant elements

The Queensland Heritage Register heritage citation for the heritage site does not provide a list of significant elements. The following schedule lists the remaining elements in the former western garden considered significant by JDA Co:

Table 2. Schedule of significant elements (Source: JDA Co.)

| ELEMENTS | SIGNIFICANCE RANKING |
|--|----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concrete stairs; • concrete retaining walls; • water fountain; • pavement/path. | SOME |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General sightlines to building from Wedd and Boundary Streets | HIGH |



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4.4 Photographic survey

To assist with the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) assessment of the potential changes arising from the proposed removal of the part of from the QHR boundary, the following photographs provide the site context and the condition.

Note: All photographs in this report by JDA Co dated 2026 unless otherwise identified.



Figure 11: Aerial photograph of the former 'Western Garden' showing the photo indicators. White dashed outline represents QHR heritage boundary of the Main Roads Department Building. Lot proposed for removal at 487 Boundary Street (former 'Western Garden') from QHR boundary is infilled with light green colour (Source: Nearmap/JDA Co.)



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View 1: from Wedd Street – looking south



View 2: Concrete retaining wall and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park)



View 3: Concrete retaining wall, stair and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park)



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View 4: Concrete retaining wall, stair and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park)



View 5: Concrete retaining wall and boundary wall on lower terrace (car park) – looking northwest



View 6: View of middle terrace – looking southwest

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View 7: View of middle terrace – looking south



View 8: View of middle terrace – looking southeast



View 9: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking south

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View 10: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking southwest



View 11: View of concrete retaining wall on middle terrace – looking southeast



View 12: View of concrete pavement, retaining wall and stair on middle terrace – looking southeast

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View 13: View of concrete pavement, retaining wall and stair on middle terrace – looking southeast



View 14: View of concrete stair



View 15: Stair connecting middle terrace to upper terrace – looking south



View 16 (RHS): View of concrete pavement on middle terrace – looking north



View 17: View of upper terrace and concrete retaining wall – looking southeast



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View 18: View of middle terrace – looking east



View 19: View of middle and lower terraces – looking northeast



View 20: View of upper terrace – looking northwest

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View 21: View of concrete pavement in upper terrace – looking north



View 22: View of concrete pavement and drinking fountain in upper terrace – looking north



View 23: View of concrete pavement and stair in upper terrace – looking north



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View 24: View of concrete pavement and stair in upper terrace – looking north



View 25: View of concrete pavement and drinking fountain in upper terrace – looking south



View 26: Concrete steps connecting upper terrace to footpath along Boundary Street

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View 27: View of middle and lower terraces – looking northwest



View 28: View of concrete retaining wall between upper and middle terraces – looking west



View 29: View of upper terrace – looking southwest

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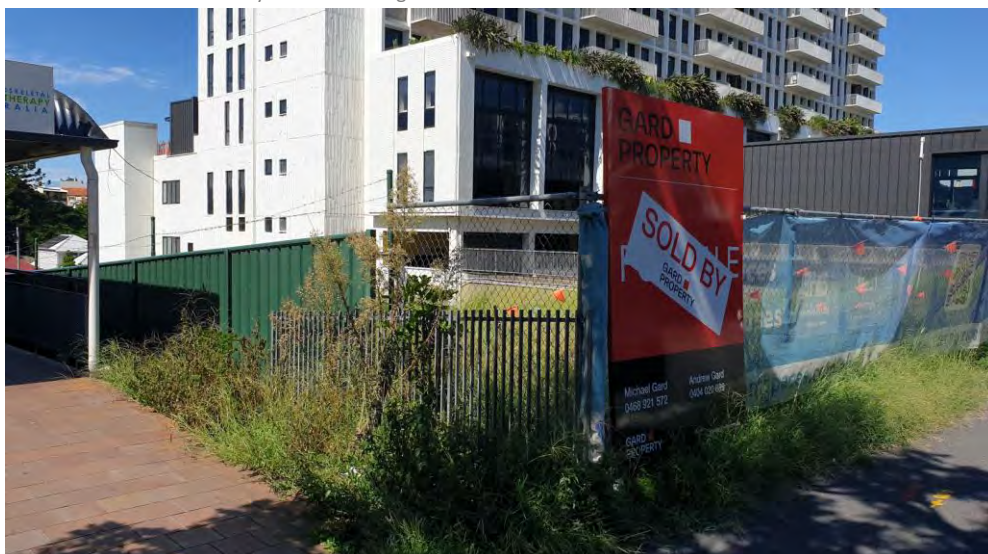
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View 30: View of concrete pavement and fence on upper terrace – looking south



View 31: View from Boundary Street – looking north



View 32: Fence on southwestern corner



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View 33: Fence along Boundary Street



View 34: Fence on southeastern corner



View 35: Fence on southwestern corner




5.0 Discussion on cultural heritage significance

5.1 Assessment of part (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill) proposed for removal against the heritage significance and threshold indicators for Criterion A, D, E and H

The following assessment utilises the methodology provided in the DETSI publication guide *“Assessing cultural significance using the cultural heritage criteria”*. The assessment applies the significance and threshold indicators for each of the four Criterion A, D, E and H, and assesses if the criterion are still satisfied for 487 Boundary Street – lot proposed to be removed for the QHR boundary of the Main Roads Department Building.



Table 3. Assessment against QHR Heritage Significance Criterion A (Source: Queensland Heritage Register and JDA Co.)

| QHR Criterion A | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| <p>Criterion A: The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.</p> <p><i>The former Main Roads Department Building (1967) is important in demonstrating the Queensland Government's response to the rise in mass motoring in the second half of the twentieth century. Purpose-built to consolidate and modernise the department's activities associated with expanding and upgrading the state's road network, it was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland at the time of its construction, illustrating the importance of Main Roads operations and contribution to the state's economic advancement.</i></p> <p><i>The place is also important in demonstrating the evolution of Queensland architecture as a good, intact example of a substantial, architect-designed building in a Modernist style adapted to suit local conditions.</i></p> | <p>Determining whether a place satisfies criterion (a) is the process of identifying what aspects in the history of a place and in its contextual history are important in helping us to understand how the past has shaped the present and how well the place demonstrates the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history. This is achieved by applying significance and threshold indicators.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the product, result or outcome of an event, phase, movement, process, activity or way of life that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of development of our society or of our environment • is an example of a process or activity that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of development of our society or of our environment • was influenced by an event, phase, movement, process, activity or way of life that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of development of our society or of our environment • has influenced an event, phase, movement, process, activity or way of life that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution | <p>The western garden at 487 Boundary Street was part of the Karl Langer designed garden setting for the Main Roads building, albeit secondary to the garden forecourt.</p> <p>Criterion A includes;</p> <p><i>The place is also important in demonstrating the evolution of Queensland architecture as a good, intact example of a substantial, architect-designed building in a Modernist style adapted to suit local conditions.</i></p> <p>In reference to Criterion A and the significance indicators, the landscape setting is an example of a modern movement garden setting for a public building that contributed to the evolution of Queensland Architecture with the design of new public buildings integrating with their landscape settings.</p> <p><i>The western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact. It is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator.</i></p> | <p>Earliness This can be an important threshold indicator for satisfying criterion (a). Places associated with the early settlement of Queensland are important in demonstrating the pattern or evolution of Queensland's history. They illustrate both the transplantation of predominantly European culture to an ancient land and culture and the way in which non-Indigenous culture was modified (or not) by contact with Indigenous culture and with the Australian climate and topography.</p> <p>Representativeness Places may satisfy criterion (a) because they represent, or are a good example of, an aspect of our past that has been important in shaping our present. That is, they may be important in illustrating a key historical theme in Queensland's history. To 'exemplify' or 'represent' implies a place will demonstrate a reasonable degree of intactness and integrity.</p> <p>Regional importance Places with regional historical significance can be important to our understanding of the development of a state as vast and as diverse in topography,</p> | <p>The western garden remnant may satisfy the threshold indicator for rarity and exceptionality as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p><i>However, again as the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, it is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator.</i></p> |
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| QHR Criterion A | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>or pattern of development of our society or of our environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the site of, or is associated with, an event or activity that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or development of our society or of our environment • has a symbolic association with an event, phase, movement, process, activity or way of life that has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of development of our society or of our environment. | | <p>climate, vegetation, land use, population and social custom as is Queensland.</p> <p>Distinctiveness/exceptionality Other places may satisfy criterion (a) because they hold a highly distinctive or exceptional place in Queensland’s history.</p> <p>Rarity Phrases such as ‘the last surviving’, ‘the only remaining’, ‘important surviving evidence’, and ‘rare early evidence of’ are often employed in statements of historical significance, when a place is significant because little else survives to illustrate a particular aspect of Queensland’s history.</p> | |
| | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The former Western Garden as designed was clearly an example of a modern movement garden setting for a public building that contributed to the evolution of Queensland Architecture with the design of new public buildings integrating with their landscape settings. It is noted that the former western garden was secondary to the main forecourt in terms of the hierarchy of spaces that formed the landscape setting.</p> <p>However, the former western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact. The remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator for Criterion A.</p> | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The western garden as designed satisfied the threshold indicator for rarity and exceptionality as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p>However, the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, The remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator for Criterion A.</p> | |



Table 4. Assessment against QHR Heritage Significance Criterion D (Source: Queensland Heritage Register and JDA Co.)

| QHR Criterion D | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| <p>Criterion D: The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.</p> <p>The place is a good, intact and representative example of the work of architect, Dr Karl Langer, and is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of his work. Most notably, it: displays a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; features characteristic simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements and a restrained use of high-quality materials; is sited and its form is manipulated for optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation of the interior, and; is designed to be fit for purpose. As the largest commission of his career, it is a rare illustration of Langer's principles applied on a large scale.</p> <p>The place is a good, intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise office building in Queensland. It is</p> | <p>Determining whether a place satisfies criterion (d) is the process of identifying to which class of cultural places a place belongs, how well the place demonstrates the characteristics of this class and if the place is significant to our understanding of this class as part of Queensland's heritage. This is achieved by applying significance and threshold indicators.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a way of life that has made a noticeable contribution to the pattern or evolution of Queensland's history Often places demonstrating this quality include complexes where more than one building or structure survives, often with associated furniture, fittings and other objects. • a custom that has made a noticeable contribution to the pattern or evolution of Queensland's history, 'custom' being defined as: custom noun 1. a habitual practice; the usual way of acting in given circumstances. 2. habits or usages collectively; convention... 5. Sociology a group pattern of habitual activity usually transmitted d from one generation to another...17 <p>Custom generally relates to social practice, such as ways of burying or honouring the dead, or memorialising significant events in the history of a community. To satisfy criterion (d), these customs should be evident in the fabric, which may include the place layout. Cemeteries illustrating particular burial practices, or memorials to the war dead or to heroes or events, can be important evidence of social customs.</p> | <p>The western garden at 487 Boundary Street was part of the Karl Langer designed garden setting for the Main Roads building, albeit secondary to the garden forecourt.</p> <p>Criterion D includes;</p> <p><i>The place is a good, intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise office building in Queensland. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of this type, including: notable height to footprint ratio; expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; refined treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.</i></p> | <p>Intactness/integrity A place that satisfies criterion (d) should be able to demonstrate cultural heritage significance in its fabric and be representative of its type or class of cultural places. The degree of intactness of a place therefore is an important threshold indicator of this criterion. Usually, to be of state heritage significance, a high level of intactness must be demonstrated for a place to be important in illustrating the principal characteristics of its type.</p> <p>Earliness The earliness of a place may be an important threshold indicator when considering whether a place satisfies criterion (d). This may be particularly relevant if the class of cultural places is extensive—such as detached houses.</p> <p>Rarity/uncommonness Sometimes the rarity or uncommonness of a place can make it important in illustrating the principal characteristics of its class of cultural place, especially where the class was once common in Queensland.</p> <p>Exceptionality A place that is exceptional in illustrating the</p> | <p>As for Criterion A, the western garden remnant may satisfy the threshold indicator for rarity and exceptionality as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p>However, again as the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, it is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator.</p> |



| QHR Criterion D | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of this type, including: notable height to footprint ratio; expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; refined treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of an ideology, value or philosophy on Queensland’s history Many places, particularly institutional places such as schools, churches, hospitals and gaols, demonstrate in their fabric the impact of an ideology, value or philosophy. • a process that has made a strong contribution to the pattern or evolution of Queensland’s history A process may be industrial, agricultural, extractive or some other type of activity and the principal characteristics of the process may include elements of the landscape, buildings, structures and associated furniture, fittings, machinery and other artefacts that survive at the place. • a land use that has made a strong contribution to the pattern and evolution of Queensland’s history and heritage • a function that has been an important part of the pattern of Queensland’s history • variations within, or the evolution of, or the transition of, the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places • the work of a designer who made an important contribution to Queensland’s built environment. The body of work of an architect/builder/ engineer/artist or other designer may constitute a class of cultural | <p>In reference to Criterion D and the significance indicators, the landscape setting is an example of the work of Architect Karl Langer, a designer who made an important contribution to Queensland’s built environment. This includes the design of the landscape spaces for the Main Roads building as the urban and public space setting for the building. The with organic edges, the connecting pathways, stairs, integrated seating and water fountain and the layout of the soft landscape planting and trees</p> <p><i>The western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer intact. It is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator.</i></p> | <p>particular characteristics of its class of cultural places meets the threshold for state heritage significance in terms of criterion (d). This exceptionality may take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outstanding quality of the original design or workmanship or materials or construction technique • an outstanding degree of present intactness and/or integrity • sustained use of the place for its original purpose • some other characteristic of the place. <p>The continued use of a place for the function or activity for which it was established can be a useful indicator of exceptionality, particularly where the class of cultural places is extensive. Sustaining the original use of a place is a measure of its integrity that goes beyond fabric. For example, a place such as a school, church or courthouse that sustains its original use, demonstrates better its intended function than a similar place that has been converted into another use, such as offices or a residence. However, demonstrating exceptionality, including sustained use, should not be considered</p> | |



| QHR Criterion D | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>places. If particular buildings and structures are important in illustrating the principal characteristics of a designer’s work, then they may satisfy criterion (d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principal characteristics of a form that has made an influential or noticeable contribution to the evolution of Queensland’s built environment form noun 1. definite shape; external shape or appearance considered apart from colour or material; configuration. 2. the shape of a thing or person.¹⁸ • an architectural style that has made an influential or noticeable contribution to the evolution of Queensland’s built environment • a construction technique or particular use of materials that has made a conspicuous or early contribution to the evolution of Queensland’s built environment. | | | |
| | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>In reference to Criterion D and the significance indicators, the landscape setting is an example of the work of Architect Karl Langer, a designer who made an important contribution to Queensland’s built environment. This includes the design of the landscape spaces for the Main Roads building as the urban and public space setting for the building. The with organic edges, the connecting pathways, stairs, integrated seating and water fountain and the layout of the soft landscape planting and trees</p> | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>As for Criterion A, the western garden remnant may satisfy the threshold indicator for rarity and exceptionality as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p>However, again as the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, it is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator.</p> | |



| QHR Criterion D | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>The western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact. It is argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator.</p> | | | |



Table 5. Assessment against QHR Heritage Significance Criterion E (Source: Queensland Heritage Register and JDA Co.)

| QHR Criterion E | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| <p>Criterion E: The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.</p> <p><i>Notable for its landmark attributes and expressive architectural qualities, the place is important for its aesthetic significance.</i></p> <p><i>The former Main Roads Department Building is highly visible from the surrounding suburb and maintains an imposing streetscape presence. Modernist in style, the building's simplified sculptural form is distinguished through a variety of treatments, including off-form textured concrete, stone spandrel panels, facebrick, egg-crate screening and breeze blocks. The abstract, graphic layout of the forecourt and side gardens, including pond and entrance bridge, and; the use of high-quality Queensland materials and artworks in the public reception areas complete the design.</i></p> | <p>Determining whether a place satisfies criterion (e) is the process of identifying the significant aesthetic attributes of a place and determining the importance of these. This is achieved by applying significance and threshold indicators.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beautiful attributes These might emanate from the formal qualities of closure, cohesion, legibility, completion, symmetry, or a degree of unity of scale, form, materials, texture and relationships between components, or from the juxtaposition of components. • natural beauty or other natural aesthetic quality A place that can be demonstrated to have been valued for its natural beauty or other natural aesthetic quality by a community over a period of time, may be of aesthetic significance. • picturesque attributes Picturesque attributes emanate from experiential contact with a place, unfold from a number of viewpoints and rely on the composition, silhouette or texture to provoke a strong emotional response. Having picturesque qualities implies that a place holds a sense of mystery, intrigue or complexity. • evocative qualities Evocative qualities are those that inspire an emotional response such as awe, wonder, astonishment, reverence, pleasure, tranquillity, peacefulness, seclusion or remoteness, or a particular type of recognised emotive aesthetic response such as the 'romance of ruins'. It is well accepted that some places simply by virtue of their | <p>The western garden at 487 Boundary Street was part of the Karl Langer designed garden setting for the Main Roads building, albeit secondary to the garden forecourt.</p> <p>Criterion E includes;</p> <p><i>The abstract, graphic layout of the forecourt and side gardens, including pond and entrance bridge, and; the use of high-quality Queensland materials and artworks in the public reception areas complete the design.</i></p> <p>In reference to Criterion E and the significance indicators, the landscape setting is an example of the high quality modernist design (the work of Architect Karl Langer). As a total complete design the western garden may have met the significance indicator for beautiful attributes (<i>with clear cohesion, legibility, completion, symmetry, or a degree of unity of scale, form, materials, texture and relationships between components, or from</i></p> | <p>Intactness</p> <p>One of the issues particularly affecting the assessment of aesthetic significance will be the degree to which the place is intact, bearing in mind that intrusions to the place (i.e. additions and alterations) may be of aesthetic interest themselves. Also the degree to which intrusions are temporary may have a bearing on their impact on aesthetic significance.</p> <p>Generally, places that have aesthetic significance because they are beautiful would need to exhibit a high degree of intactness. The qualities that contribute to that beauty, such as cohesion, legibility, completion and the degree of unity of scale, form, materials, texture and relationships between components, should be clearly evident in the fabric of the place.</p> <p>Integrity</p> <p>Cultural landscapes and places of natural aesthetic beauty generally require a high degree of integrity to satisfy criterion (e)</p> <p>Degree of deterioration</p> <p>In places that exhibit strong picturesque or evocative qualities, the level of deterioration or ruin may determine</p> | <p>The western garden remnant may satisfy the threshold indicator for setting and location context as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p><i>However, again as the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, it could be argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator.</i></p> |



| QHR Criterion E | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>age have aesthetic value, generated in manifestations of age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expressive attributes These include symbolism, metaphor or associations that reinforce the character of the place and are often associated with particular styles and classes of cultural places. <p>In Queensland’s history there has been fairly wide acceptance that particular styles of architecture suggest or elevate the character of buildings. Examples of this are the use of gothic style for churches and schools, classical or renaissance styles for banks and insurance offices and government buildings; and Romanesque style for gaols. These styles evoke particular aesthetic responses. Places that demonstrate a high degree of expertise in generating this aesthetic response are likely to possess aesthetic significance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> landmark quality This refers to the presence of a place in a vista or townscape inspiring an emotional response, usually created by the combination of particular evocative qualities with recognition. The juxtaposition of various aesthetic codes may also contribute to the distinctiveness or landmark quality of the place. streetscape contribution | <p><i>the juxtaposition of components).</i></p> <p>In its complete form these attributes were represented through the complete design with the organic edges, the connecting pathways, stairs, integrated seating and water fountain and the layout of the soft landscape planting and trees.</p> <p><i>The western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer an in-tact and complete design. It could be argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator of beautiful attributes.</i></p> | <p>the level of aesthetic significance. Places that are little more than archaeological deposits no longer possess sufficient ‘romance of the ruinous’ to satisfy criterion (e), but places in a ruinous condition have the ability to reveal some characteristics of their former structure and may engender an emotive response that does satisfy criterion (e).</p> <p>Setting and location context</p> <p>Often we include views both in and out of a place as part of its cultural heritage significance, particularly its aesthetic significance. Although not part of the fabric of the immediate place, the context of the location or the juxtaposition of natural and built elements may determine the degree of aesthetic significance.</p> <p>Demonstrated representation</p> <p>Places, which can be demonstrated through representations in art, literature, or photography or by inclusion in tour guides and brochures or by some other means, to be highly valued for their aesthetic quality, are likely to satisfy criterion (e).</p> | |



| QHR Criterion E | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>Places that contribute to a streetscape can have strong aesthetic significance. They do this by contributing an important component to the streetscape through consistency of form, scale and materials. They may contribute to a hierarchy of structures or as a response to topography. They may contribute to the range of uses; range of eras, forms and styles; or range of socio-economic factors shown in the streetscape.</p> <p>• symbolic meaning. Places having a strong symbolic meaning usually inspire a particular emotive response. War memorials are obvious examples of places that have a symbolic quality, representing great human sacrifice, and inspire emotive responses such as awe or reverence</p> | | | |
| | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>In reference to Criterion E and the significance indicators, the landscape setting is an example of the high quality modernist design (the work of Architect Karl Langer). As a total complete design the western garden may have met the significance indicator for beautiful attributes (<i>with clear cohesion, legibility, completion, symmetry, or a degree of unity of scale, form, materials, texture and relationships between components, or from the juxtaposition of components</i>).</p> <p>In its complete form these attributes were represented through the complete design with the organic edges, the connecting pathways, stairs, integrated seating and water fountain and the layout of the soft landscape planting and trees.</p> | | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The western garden remnant may satisfy the threshold indicator for setting and location context as one of few remaining gardens associated with a Karl Langer Public building and as Karl Langers largest public commission.</p> <p>However, again as the western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer in-tact, it could be argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this threshold indicator.</p> | |



| QHR Criterion E | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | <p>The western garden remnant is only a very small proportion of the original garden which is no longer an in-tact and complete design. It could be argued that the remaining fabric is not sufficient evidence to satisfy this significance indicator of beautiful attributes.</p> | | | |



Table 6. Assessment against QHR Heritage Significance Criterion H (Source: Queensland Heritage Register and JDA Co.)

| QHR Criterion H | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| <p>Criterion H: The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland’s history.</p> <p>Designed to accommodate the department and to express its work, the place has a strong and special association with the Main Roads Department, which had a crucial influence on the economic and social development of Queensland during the twentieth century. It served as the head office for the department for 45 years.</p> | <p>Determining whether a place satisfies criterion (h) is the process of identifying its special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland’s history and assessing the significance of association. This is achieved by applying significance and threshold indicators</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a special association with a person who has made an important or notable contribution to the evolution or development of our society or of our physical environment. • has a special association with a group of people that has made an important or notable contribution to the evolution or development of our society or of our physical environment. • has a special association with an organisation that has made an important or notable contribution to the evolution or development of our society or of our physical environment | <p>The western garden at 487 Boundary Street was part of the Karl Langer designed garden setting for the Main Roads building, albeit secondary to the garden forecourt.</p> <p>The significance indicators for Criterion H are not relevant to western garden remnant and this has not been assessed</p> | <p>Importance of the person, group or organisation in Queensland’s history The importance of the contribution of the person, group or organisation to the evolution or development of our society and physical environment needs to be established. Importance is a relative term, determined by factors such as history, locality and community perception.</p> <p>Degree or extent of the association The association of a place with a person, group or organisation can be manifested in a number of ways. Some places contain fabric that is a direct result of that person’s life or a group’s or an organisation’s work. Others may possess a special association with a person, group or organisation because of the retention of furniture, fittings, paintings, implements, household goods, personal items and other ephemera. The extent of demonstration of the association in the fabric or artefacts must be substantial.</p> <p>Length of association In general the association between a person, group or organisation and a place needs to be either of considerable duration or particularly significant in the person, group or organisation’s productive life. The association between individuals and their residences, for example, are generally more pronounced the longer the duration of that association.</p> <p>Influence of the association The association between a person, group or organisation and a place, may have influenced significantly the evolution and development of our society or our physical environment.</p> | <p>The threshold indicators for Criterion H are not relevant to western garden remnant and this has not been assessed</p> |



| QHR Criterion H | Satisfying Criteria | Significance indicators and assessment | | Threshold indicators and assessment | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | Significance indicators | Response to Significance indicators (Assessment) | Threshold indicators | Response to Threshold indicators (Assessment) |
| | | Recommendation | | Recommendation | |
| | | The significance indicators for Criterion H are not relevant to western garden remnant and this has not been assessed | | The threshold indicators for Criterion H are not relevant to western garden remnant and this has not been assessed | |



5.2 Final assessment against the QHR criteria for Criterion A, D, E and H

The following table lists assessment against the QHR criteria as how the part (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street) of the heritage place proposed for removal does not satisfy each of the relevant cultural heritage criteria.

| QHR Criteria | Assessment on removal of a part (487 Boundary St and 40 Wedd Street) from QHR |
|---|--|
| <p>Criterion A: The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland’s history.</p> <p><i>The former Main Roads Department Building (1967) is important in demonstrating the Queensland Government’s response to the rise in mass motoring in the second half of the twentieth century. Purpose-built to consolidate and modernise the department’s activities associated with expanding and upgrading the state’s road network, it was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland at the time of its construction, illustrating the importance of Main Roads operations and contribution to the state’s economic advancement.</i></p> <p><i>The place is also important in demonstrating the evolution of Queensland architecture as a good, intact example of a substantial, architect-designed building in a Modernist style adapted to suit local conditions.</i></p> | <p>The former Western Garden as designed was clearly an example of a modern movement garden setting for an architect-designed public building that contributed to the evolution of Queensland Architecture with the design of new public buildings integrating with their landscape settings. It is noted that the former western garden was secondary to the main forecourt in terms of the hierarchy of spaces that formed the landscape setting.</p> <p>The remnant landscape elements situated within the portion of the site proposed for removal (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street) do not contribute to the building’s historical role in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland’s architectural history. The original designed landscape in the former western garden has been substantially lost and the remaining fragments do not illustrate or reinforce the attributes recognised as historical significance.</p> <p>The surviving landscape fragments within former western garden do not satisfy cultural heritage criterion A and its removal would not diminish the historical significance of the former Main Roads Department Building.</p> |
| <p>Criterion D: The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.</p> <p><i>The place is a good, intact and representative example of the work of architect, Dr Karl Langer, and is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of his work. Most notably, it: displays a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; features characteristic simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements and a restrained use of high-quality materials; is sited and its form is manipulated for optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation of the interior, and; is designed to be fit for purpose. As the largest commission of his career, it is a rare illustration of Langer’s principles applied on a large scale.</i></p> <p><i>The place is a good, intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise office building in Queensland. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of this type, including: notable height to footprint ratio; expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; refined treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.</i></p> | <p>The attributes described in criterion D largely refer to the principal characteristics of the work of architect Karl Langer and are directly associated with the building itself. These include its hybrid use of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices—such as the forecourt and stylised colonnade front—along with its simplified forms, restrained decorative treatment, considered spatial arrangements, and the selective use of high-quality materials. The siting and manipulation of the building’s form to optimise natural light and ventilation are also defining characteristics. Together, these features illustrate the principal characteristics for which the place is recognised under cultural heritage criterion D.</p> <p>While criterion D acknowledges that the place is an intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth-century high-rise office building in Queensland, it also refers to the surrounding public spaces that contribute to the setting of the building. In addition to the intact public spaces around the main building, the former western garden—now proposed for part removal—is noted as one of these spaces that forms part of the setting. However, although some remnants of the original landscape scheme remain in the western garden, most of the elements that once contributed to its intended overall design vision are no longer extant.</p> <p>By contrast, the primary public spaces associated with the building, including the principal forecourt, remain somewhat intact and continue to demonstrate the characteristics relevant to criterion D. These intact setting and landscape spaces contribute materially to understanding the place as a representative example of a mid-twentieth-century high-rise office building. The landscape scheme within the former western garden, however, has been substantially lost, and the remaining fragment lacks the</p> |

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| QHR Criteria | Assessment on removal of a part (487 Boundary St and 40 Wedd Street) from QHR |
|---|---|
| | <p>integrity, completeness and the visual legibility required to support or reinforce the criterion D values of the heritage place.</p> <p>Accordingly, the surviving landscape fragment within the portion proposed for removal from the Queensland Heritage Register does not satisfy cultural heritage criterion D, and its removal would not diminish the principal characteristics for which the former Main Roads Department Building is recognised.</p> |
| <p>Criterion E: The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.</p> <p><i>Notable for its landmark attributes and expressive architectural qualities, the place is important for its aesthetic significance.</i></p> <p><i>The former Main Roads Department Building is highly visible from the surrounding suburb and maintains an imposing streetscape presence. Modernist in style, the building's simplified sculptural form is distinguished through a variety of treatments, including off-form textured concrete, stone spandrel panels, facebrick, egg-crate screening and breeze blocks. The abstract, graphic layout of the forecourt and side gardens, including pond and entrance bridge, and; the use of high-quality Queensland materials and artworks in the public reception areas complete the design.</i></p> | <p>It is acknowledged that the aesthetic significance criterion for the Main Roads Department Building refers to the side gardens, including the former western garden that is proposed for part removal. While some remnant features of the original landscape scheme remain evident, most of the original elements that once contributed to the garden's overall aesthetic intent – such as the organic edges, the connecting pathways, stairs, integrated seating and water fountain and the layout of the soft landscape planting and trees – are no longer extant.</p> <p>The relevance of the aesthetic significance described in the applicable criterion is largely dependent on the attributes directly associated with the building itself—such as its high visibility within the surrounding suburb, its imposing streetscape presence, and its characteristic modernist architectural expression. These attributes include the simplified sculptural form, off-form textured concrete, stone spandrel panels, face brickwork, and distinctive sun-control devices such as egg-crate screening and breeze blocks. These elements collectively demonstrate the aesthetic characteristics for which the place is recognised under cultural heritage criterion E.</p> <p>In contrast, the remnant landscape elements situated within the portion of the site proposed for removal (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street) do not substantially contribute to the aesthetic significance of the place as defined in the Queensland Heritage Register entry. The original designed landscape of the former Western Garden has been largely lost, and the remaining remnant space lacks the integrity, completeness, and visual legibility needed to illustrate or reinforce the aesthetic values identified for the heritage place.</p> <p>Accordingly, the surviving landscape fragment does not satisfy cultural heritage criterion E and its removal would not diminish the aesthetic significance of the former Main Roads Department Building.</p> |
| <p>Criterion H: The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.</p> <p><i>Designed to accommodate the department and to express its work, the place has a strong and special association with the Main Roads Department, which had a crucial influence on the economic and social development of Queensland during the twentieth century. It served as the head office for the department for 45 years.</i></p> | <p>The relevance of the criterion H is largely dependent on the association of the Main Roads Department with the building which served as their head office for 45 years.</p> <p>The remnant landscape elements situated within the portion of the site proposed for removal (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street) do not contribute to the associative attributes of the Department with the building as head office. The original designed landscape in the western garden has been largely lost.</p> <p>Accordingly, the surviving landscape fragment in the former western garden does not satisfy cultural heritage criterion H and its removal would not diminish the associative significance of the former Main Roads Department Building.</p> |



6.0 Conclusion

Based on the assessment of criteria A, D, E, and H, the part (487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street) proposed for removal from Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) does not contribute to the cultural heritage significance of the former Main Roads Department Building as presently listed. The remnant landscape in the *Western Garden* lacks integrity, completeness, and the ability to demonstrate or support the cultural heritage values for which the place is included in the Queensland Heritage Register. Removal of this portion of the site from the QHR is justified and will not diminish the cultural heritage significance of the place.

In conclusion, following the detailed assessment and analysis of the significance and threshold indicators, it is recommended that the Queensland Heritage Council (QHC) remove part of the place contained within the current heritage boundary (specifically the portion known as the *Western Garden* at 487 Boundary Street and 40 Wedd Street, Spring Hill) from the Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) entry for the Main Roads Department Building (former), located at 477 Boundary Street.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 QHR Citation





Queensland Government home >For Queenslanders >Environment, land and water >Land, housing and property >Heritage places >Queensland Heritage Register >Search the register >Main Roads Department Building (former)

Main Roads Department Building (former)

- Place ID: 602830
- 477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill

General



[More images...](#)

Classification

State Heritage

Register status

Entered

Date entered

13 June 2014

Type

Government administration: Government offices

Themes

4.3 Working: Working in offices

7.2 Maintaining order: Government and public administration

Architect

Langer, Karl

Builder

Hornick, CP

Construction period

1967, Main Roads Department Building (former)

Historical period

1940s-1960s Post-WWII

Style

Modernism

Location

Address

477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill

LGA

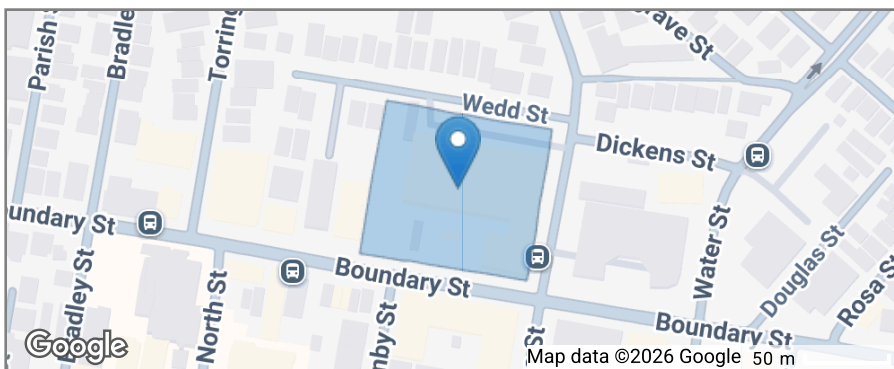
Brisbane City Council

Coordinates

-27.46012003, 153.02303762

Map

- [Enlarge map](#)



Street view



Photography is provided by Google Street View and may include third-party images. Images show the vicinity of the heritage place which may not be visible.

Request a boundary map

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Significance

Criterion A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.

The former Main Roads Department Building (1967) is important in demonstrating the Queensland Government's response to the rise in mass motoring in the second half of the twentieth century. Purpose-built to consolidate and modernise the department's activities associated with expanding and upgrading the state's road network, it was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland at the time of its construction, illustrating the importance of Main Roads operations and contribution to the state's economic advancement.

The place is also important in demonstrating the evolution of Queensland architecture as a good, intact example of a substantial, architect-designed building in a Modernist style adapted to suit local conditions.

Criterion D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

The place is a good, intact and representative example of the work of architect, Dr Karl Langer, and is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of his work. Most notably, it: displays a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; features characteristic simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements and a restrained use of high-quality materials; is sited and its form is manipulated for optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation of the interior, and; is designed to be fit for purpose. As the largest commission of his career, it is a rare illustration of Langer's principles applied on a large scale.

The place is a good, intact and representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise office building in Queensland. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of this type, including: notable height to footprint ratio; expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; refined treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.

Criterion E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.

Notable for its landmark attributes and expressive architectural qualities, the place is important for its aesthetic significance.

The former Main Roads Department Building is highly visible from the surrounding suburb and maintains an imposing streetscape presence. Modernist in style, the building's simplified sculptural form is distinguished through a variety of treatments, including off-form textured concrete, stone spandrel panels, facebrick, egg-crate screening and breeze blocks. The abstract, graphic layout of the forecourt and side gardens, including pond and entrance bridge, and; the use of high-quality Queensland materials and artworks in the public reception areas complete the design.

Criterion H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.

Designed to accommodate the department and to express its work, the place has a strong and special association with the Main Roads Department, which had a crucial influence on the economic and social development of Queensland during the twentieth century. It served as the head office for the department for 45 years.

History

The former Main Roads Department Building was built in 1967 to accommodate, consolidate, and modernise the department during a period of extensive expansion and upgrade of Queensland's road network. It housed the department until 2012. Designed by important Modernist architect, Dr Karl Langer, the substantial office building is an excellent, intact illustration of his commercial work and is a good representative example of a mid-twentieth century highrise.

In the early 1960s the Main Roads Department (MRD) faced a major task in modernising Queensland's road network. Prior to this, the department saw itself only as a rural roads authority responsible for the provision and maintenance of main roads connecting Queensland settlements.[1] The decentralised nature of Queensland, with its scattered population and small tax base for local governments, was not conducive to systematic road building, and until the mid-twentieth century railways dominated long-distance transport. Although the Colonial (later State) Government was responsible for main roads and roads on Crown Lands open for selection, elsewhere local authorities had to finance their own roads; or where there were no local authorities, local landholders could form road trusts and receive government grants. Queensland's road system developed in a piecemeal fashion until 1920 and even after it remained a secondary government spending priority to railways, which spread rapidly in the early twentieth century to service agricultural areas.

Although railways were the priority, the rise of the motor car increased the need for an expanded and improved road network. The *Queensland Main Roads Act 1920* provided for responsibility for roads and bridges to be shared between state and local authorities. The mission of the Main Roads Board, formed by this Act, was to develop a cohesive network of 'main roads' partly funded by the state. Local authorities would fund half the cost, and would be the construction and maintenance authorities where possible.[2] The priority for road construction was to join towns not linked by railways; to link farming areas to existing railways; and to build developmental roads to open Crown Lands for closer settlement.

The interwar period saw a massive increase in car registrations and the revision of the Main Roads Act. By mid-1923 nearly 17,000 cars were registered in Queensland (rising to nearly 92,000 by 1934). As more people took to the car, the need for serviceable roads for motor vehicles became apparent.[3] The Main Roads Acts Amendment Act 1925 abolished the Main Roads Board and formed the Main Roads Commission (MRC), and the board was replaced by John Kemp (formerly the Board's Chairman) as the Commissioner.

World War II (WWII) also stimulated road building efforts. During the war the MRC carried out a wide range of defence works, mostly for, and under the direction of, the Allied Works Council (AWC). Although the MRC increased its equipment during the war years, after WWII it faced resource shortages and a continued rise in car ownership, plus demands to seal more of the state's roads with bitumen.[4]

After WWII, roads increasingly competed directly with railways. Vehicle numbers rose from 129,126 in 1945 to over 282,594 by 1954.[5] By 1960, Australia was second only to the United States in terms of car ownership per head of population.[6] In 1951, the MRC became the MRD. The MRD was responsible for the planning, survey and construction of state highways and of main, developmental, secondary, mining access, farmers' roads, and tourist roads and tracks, as well as bridges and related works.[7] The department was under an increasing work load, brought about by the 'explosion' in vehicle ownership and Queensland's buoyant economic expansion.[8]

The MRD's Annual Report of 1955 noted that 'Queensland is passing out of the earlier phase of road construction ... just sufficient to keep traffic moving. The State has entered a second phase where construction must provide for the traffic of to-day and the traffic of to-morrow in such a way that roads and bridges will carry in safety bigger volumes of traffic, comprising vehicles which move much faster and carry much more heavier loads...'[9]

The push for a new head office for the MRD started around 1955. In December that year the Main Roads Commissioner, AR Williams, wrote to the Minister for Transport, JE Duggan, advising that at no stage the MRD ever had a building designed and constructed for them. Williams stated that the MRD did not have close contact with the public, apart from registration, and 'Motor vehicle registration activities require that the location be ... away from the heavily trafficked streets'.[10] Other requirements included garaging for departmental vehicles and a full size basement for record storage.

Prior to the construction of their new building at Spring Hill, the MRD was accommodated in buildings 'scattered throughout the city'.[11] The intention of the new building was to provide better working facilities and amenities for an increasing staff in an efficient and productive environment.[12] The department was performing a major role with private industry and commerce in Queensland's development and the new building would reflect this.[13] Not only would it be an impressive place for people to register their vehicles, it would be the co-ordinating centre for the planning, survey, design and construction work of the MRD.

The Queensland Government acquired 16 allotments, totalling almost one hectare, at the corner of Boundary and Fortescue Streets, Spring Hill, between 1959 and 1961. At the time this area comprised primarily older detached housing.

In June 1959 Leo J Feenaghty, Secretary of the MRD, wrote to Brisbane-based, private architect and town planner Dr Karl Langer, confirming that the government had decided to retain him as the architect for the new head office building.[14] Langer's earliest designs for the MRD's 'New Head Office Building' date to late 1959 with at least eight further iterations between 1959 and 1963. Early designs were discussed with the Acting Government Architect, EJ Weller, at the Department of Public Works Architectural Branch in September 1959. Although generally satisfied, Weller was concerned that the building would 'include some features that will set a precedent and to that extent will have an effect upon provision in Government Buildings generally'.[15]

Born in Vienna in 1903, Langer had studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and in 1928 he was employed by pioneer German Modernist designer Peter Behrens to run his Vienna office. In 1933 Langer was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy for his thesis 'Origins and Development of Concrete Construction'. In 1939 Langer immigrated to Australia with his wife, (Dr) Gertrude Langer, bringing direct experience of the European Modern Movement to Queensland. He gained temporary employment with architects Cook and Kerrison in Brisbane and from 1940 Langer lectured part time in architecture and architectural design at The University of Queensland, publishing Sub-Tropical Housing in 1944. This booklet explored issues related to modern house design and town planning in a sub-tropical climate and influenced many Australian architects working in the post-WWII era.[16]

Modernist architecture developed in pre-World War I Europe and gained popularity in Australia post-WWII. It is notable for a rationalisation of planning, emphasising clarity and simplicity of form and detailing.[17] American and Scandinavian influences were strong in the style's employment in Australia.[18]

From 1945 Langer was employed as an assistant town planner in the Brisbane City Council and also was commissioned to work on a range of town planning projects for Darwin, Ingham, Toowoomba, Yeppoon, Kingaroy, Mount Isa, and Mackay, and for the National Capital Development Commission, Canberra. Concurrently, he completed a wide variety of architectural projects including small, economical domestic work and large commercial and institutional work.

Influenced by classical Greek and contemporary Modernist architecture, Langer developed a sophisticated hybrid of classical and modern design principles.[19] With his civic designs, Langer explored the idea of the conjunction of landmark and landscape and his designs typically incorporated a harmonious setting for the architecture. Inspired by Queensland's flora, fauna and climate, his designs worked with the context in complementary ways and his work on climatic design in architecture has been called 'pioneering'.[20] Fundamental to his designs, he sited buildings and outdoor spaces for optimum orientation, ensured interiors had high levels of natural daylighting and ventilation, and incorporated gardens of Australian plants for the occupation and enjoyment of the users. His designs were typified by modern, highly-functional spaces that were fit for purpose, yet, had a degree of flexibility of use. Langer set new standards for design in Queensland.[21]

The work of the MRD was a major influence on the shaping and development of Queensland settlements, especially Brisbane,[22] and also on the increasing prosperity of the state during the second half of the twentieth century. In January 1960 (Sir) Charles Barton was appointed Commissioner of Main Roads. Barton made a major push to modernise the existing road network into an extensive metropolitan highway and intercity freeway network and to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the department.[23] Based on studies by leading transport specialists following American precedents, the department drafted and implemented long term programs of road upgrades and freeway construction.[24] These programs expanded and the department grew to become a primary division of the Queensland Government with considerable authority.[25]

On 1 July 1963 the first Road Plan of Queensland, a 20 year plan to build and upgrade roads to ensure no town was too far from a declared main road, encouraging social and economic development of rural areas, came into effect. The plan was visionary and required a well-organised and highly-functional department.

Further road planning was facilitated by Queensland Government transport studies for major centres in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Brisbane Transportation Study, jointly commissioned in 1964 by the MRD and the Brisbane City Council, and undertaken by American transport planners Wilbur Smith and Associates, recommended a series of freeways, expressways and bridges, although only some of these were built. Under Barton, the MRD was also reshaped. Through operational and attitudinal changes he introduced a 'private sector' business mode to achieve efficiency.[26] He also increased decentralisation, appointing an Assistant Commissioner and Divisional Engineer each at Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane, and a Divisional Engineer at Toowoomba.

Site preparation for the new MRD head office at Spring Hill began on 15 July 1963.[27] Approximately 15,300 cubic metres of earth was excavated and a reinforced concrete retaining wall up to nine metres high was built around three sides of the excavation to create a level platform on the sloping site.[28]

The government decided that Brisbane architect Colin Tesch would be responsible for construction documentation and administration of the contract. In June 1964 Queensland's State Government Insurance Office (SGIO) agreed to purchase the land from the MRD, pay for construction, and then lease the building back to the MRD for a 40 year term. [29]

CP Hornick & Son Pty Ltd, the largest privately-owned construction company in Queensland at the time, constructed the building.[30] To deal with the MRD's ongoing accommodation shortage during construction of its new head office, a nearby partially-erected building on Dickens Street was purchased and completed to MRD requirements, for occupation in late 1965.

Construction of the new head office commenced in July 1965.[31] By this time the number of vehicles registered in Queensland had risen from 363,878 in 1958, to 541,198 in 1965.[32] To deal with this rise in vehicle registrations, the counter section of the new head office was designed to have ten times more public space than the old Albert Street office.[33]

Langer's design for the MRD building, the largest of his career, expressed his architectural principles. He described it as being a 'sculptural' landmark.[34] Others described at the time as vast and imposing.[35] Yet, he employed techniques so that it would 'fit' within its context, including stepping the building back from its boundaries so that it would not cast shadow onto the adjacent allotments[36] and not overwhelm them with its scale, an extensive landscaping treatment around the building, and a 'delightful'[37] screen of custom-designed breeze blocks facing Wedd Street to conceal the basement car park.

The building included an expansive public forecourt on Boundary Street, a typical characteristic of Langer's work. Approximately 21m wide by 72m long, it included lawns, gardens with Australian plants, and a large pond with fountain jets to cool the surrounding air. Langer envisioned the forecourt as an important public space for visitors to Spring Hill and to the building.[38]

A recurrent inclusion in Langer's works, the building featured a modern allusion to a classical, grand colonnade at the primary entrance. Across the width of the ground floor and encompassing the ground and first floors, the rhythmic verticals and lintel of the concrete structural frame was expressed, smooth finished and painted white, contrasting with the dark glazing adjacent.

The building's structure and materials were modern, rational, and 'honest', consistent with Langer's principles. The structure comprised a grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs, freeing the floor plan from loadbearing partitions, which maximised the flexibility of interior layouts.[39] The vertical circulation, toilets and shower rooms, tea rooms, and other shared facilities were grouped in a central core. In this way, the floor plan was sensible and efficient and was repeated up the building. Principal materials were self-finishing, expressing their inherent character and beauty, with a noticeable use of Queensland-sourced materials for a 'natural', decorative effect. Where practical, Langer eliminated suspended ceilings from the design.[40]

Langer typically exploited passive lighting and ventilation in intelligent and uncomplicated ways and for the MRD building he included simple methods to achieve this. Parallel to the street, the long, narrow plan form (approximately 71m by 16m) was oriented with its long sides facing north-east and south-west.[41] These elevations were highly-glazed, comprising a grid of large, double-glazed, operable windows. A critical requirement for the drafting work of the department, this created interiors that were naturally well-lit and well-insulated, and allowed passive ventilation. The glazing was sheltered by a projecting 'egg-crate' of concrete. The northern side had a deeper projection to block direct sun, reducing heat gain and glare. The west and east elevations were predominantly windowless to occlude the harsh, low sun and were built of concrete to provide a thermal mass quality. In contrast, the photographic and computational spaces that required highly-controlled light and ventilation conditions were located in the basement levels, which had deep floor plans and limited fenestration.

An upturn in the city's economy and a modernising of the building codes that included a removal of building height limits in 1964 saw a considerable increase in the construction of highrise office buildings in Brisbane.[42] Between 1950 and 1965 few office highrise buildings were constructed in Brisbane. These included: Mutual Life & Citizens (MLC) Insurance Building (1955); Friendly Society Building (1957), and; Taxation Building (1961).[43] However, by the middle of 1964, 20 highrise office buildings were in the course of construction in the Brisbane CBD.[44] The

number of buildings constructed between 1965 and the end of 1970 far exceeded the previous 15 years. These included: Pearl Assurance Building, Eagle Towers, and Commonwealth Savings Bank Building (1966); Manufacturers Mutual Insurance (MMI) Building, and Main Roads Department Building (1967); Temperance & General (T&G) Insurance Building (1969), and; Westpac Bank Building, and Mount Isa Mines (MIM) Building (1970).

Highrise office buildings designed and constructed between c1950 and c1970 are a specific type of architecture that evolved under particular circumstances. The type clearly represents the excitement, prosperity, and vision of Australia and indicates the economic rationalism and progress in the period. Indicating their status, they were often ceremoniously opened by important dignitaries. In cities nationally and internationally, Modernist architects were unencumbered by traditions when designing this new type, challenging aesthetic and symbolic values, and the provision of public and private amenity. Their impact was unprecedented and it was not until critical analysis of tall buildings in the late 1960s that the approach to highrise development changed. Designed in a time when Australia was little concerned about the ethics of energy consumption, typical highrises exploited this abundance. Orientation and shading was generally dismissed and windows were inoperable, relying on mechanical air-conditioning. Floor plates were vast, relying on artificial light. However, some architects designed intelligent buildings that were connected to the traditions of architecture and were better attuned to their environment.[45] Sophisticated in its design, Langer's MRD Building is representative of the better designs in Queensland of the period.

The principal characteristics of highrise office buildings designed and constructed in the 1950s and 1960s are: remarkable height to footprint ratio; an expressive and all-encompassing Modernist aesthetic; reinforced concrete construction; a 'glamorous' treatment of the ground floor/primary entry; an urban, public space used as setting for the building; rationalisation and repetition of the floor plan; and integration of state-of-the-art office technology and staff facilities.

The new head office for the Main Roads Department possessed these principal characteristics. The 50 metre tall building comprised three large basement levels, a generously-proportioned ground level with a mezzanine, a tower of nine levels, and a roof-level caretaker's flat. The building had a huge gross floor area of 33,000 square metres and upon completion was the largest reinforced concrete office building in Queensland.[46] The principal public function of the building, vehicle registration, occupied the ground and mezzanine floors within impressive, robust, and dramatic spaces. The double-height main reception area was well-lit through 'immense' glazing onto the forecourt and featured striking marble, timber, and terrazzo surfaces.[47] Artworks commissioned for the building were prominently displayed.[48] Designed as a showplace for the Queensland Government, the building and grounds were floodlit at night.[49]

As well as occupying pre-existing buildings, the Queensland Government constructed purpose-built buildings to accommodate its administration and departmental offices in Brisbane. These buildings were reflective of the circumstances of the government and illustrate its operations over time.

The Main Roads Department building was purpose-designed, accommodating the Main Roads Department's diverse uses in repetitive and rationalised floor plates. Although offices and administration areas comprised the majority, the building also included: basement car parking; food facilities for the staff - a large cafeteria with kitchen, kiosk for snacks, and lunch room; staff training facilities - a large, double-height auditorium with the latest projection equipment; a technical and recreation library; a room for displaying models of major Main Roads projects, and; a large air-conditioning plant and a caretaker's flat. The building was designed to incorporate modern office technology. The department's technical and commercial electronic data processing divisions were accommodated in the basement, including their state of the art computer, the largest in Queensland at the time. [50] The computer was serviced by a special, independent air-conditioning system, designed to keep the computer room at a constant temperature and humidity[51], with the heat generated by the computer absorbed by the ornamental ponds at the front of the building.[52] A system of vacuum message tubes connected all sections of the

building[53] and there were telephones and a master clock system, CCTV, a teleprinter system, a Xerox machine, and a dumbwaiter for the movement of files between floors.[54]

The building was completed in August 1967. In September the MRD moved more than 1250 personnel, from eight offices, into its new \$4.5 million head office. The building was officially opened on 6 November 1967 by GFR Nicklin, Premier of Queensland, who stated that 'this new building, with its modern appointments, the latest business equipment - including a computer - research and design facilities, will greatly enhance the department's work and its world-class reputation!'.[55]

The new head office was commended at the time. It featured in the 7 September 1967 edition of *The Queensland Master Builder*, which detailed the building's construction techniques and highlighted its modern technology. According to the MRD's magazine *Queensland Roads*, there were hopes 'that the construction of this building with its landscaped gardens and surroundings in the old Spring Hill area of Brisbane, [would] provide an incentive for other businesses and developers to follow the example of the Main Roads Department'.[56] Commissioner Barton viewed the MRD as 'a giant consulting engineers and construction organisation', and stated 'why should a department like Main Roads be any different from private business ... [W]e hope that when our officers are dealing with people they will get the idea that we are here to do business just as efficiently and effectively as anybody else in the community'.[57] *The Courier-Mail* added that 'the building design, layout of office space and staff facilities, gives the Main Roads Department an air of big business, not the traditional Government department organisation', while the Mines and Main Roads Minister, RE Camm, claimed that the new building 'would be one of the most effective ways of organising Main Roads personnel and facilities for a bolder attack on the problems of the future'. [58]

The new 'luxury' head office was only part of the MRD's building program. By the end of the 1960s the department had also constructed new buildings to accommodate its new regional offices in Rockhampton, Cloncurry, Barcaldine, Toowoomba, Mackay, and Warwick, which had responsibility over their local main roads.[59]

In c1969 the artwork *Communications* by important Queensland sculptor, Leonard Shillam, was installed at the MRD building in Spring Hill. It was commissioned for the building in 1968, made in cast aluminium over painted concrete, and depicted a bas relief map with a rural area and urban area connected by a road.[60]

Langer died in 1969. As an architect and town planner, he had a pronounced impact upon the built environment of Australia, especially in Queensland. Having a deep belief in community responsibilities, particularly in cultural matters, he had been active in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects; first president (1952) of the Queensland division of the Royal Australian Planning Institute; a founder and chairman (1966-68) of the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects; and a member (1963-69) of the National Trust of Queensland. Important examples of his architectural work include the Langer residence at St Lucia [QHR 600317] (1950); Mackay Sugar Research Station [QHR 602642] (1953); Lennon's Hotel Broadbeach (1957, demolished) and Lennon's Hotel Toowoomba (1957); St John's Lutheran Church, Bundaberg [QHR 602815] (1960); Kingaroy Town Hall and Civic Square (1963); Assembly Hall at Ipswich Girls Grammar [QHR 600565] (1964); and St Peter's Lutheran College Chapel [QHR 602816] (1968). He was responsible for notable urban ideas of the 1950s and 1960s, including choosing the sites of the Sydney Opera House and Federal Parliament House; the pedestrian shopping mall in Queen Street, Brisbane; and the first canal development of the Gold Coast.[61] After his death, both The University of Queensland and The Queensland Institute (later University) of Technology with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects established annual student prizes in memoriam. His body of work is a clearly-distinguishable exploration of a sub-tropical modernism and is important in the evolution of Queensland architecture, with Langer described as 'arguably the most influential architect of the 1950s'.[62]

From the head office, the MRD administered its important work. Motor vehicle ownership continued to rise and the highway network in Queensland was expanded substantially in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s and 2000s

the department's work became more sophisticated to cope with increased traffic. By the end of the 2010s the department was responsible for the state's largest built community asset - the Queensland state-controlled road network, worth over \$46 billion and carrying more than 85% of the state's traffic. Examples of major main roads projects co-ordinated from the head office include: the Southeast Freeway (1972), the Beef Roads and Developmental Roads schemes of the 1970s, the Bald Hills to Burpengary Deviation of the Bruce Highway (1977) and many subsequent upgrades and extensions of the highway, the Gateway Arterial Road and Bridge (1986), and the Pacific Motorway (2000).[63]

Over time the head office building was altered. In c1974 the fountain jets of the forecourt pond were altered to stacked boulder waterfalls.[64] The building was also altered internally to accommodate different office fit-outs. In 2006 the forecourt of the building was remodelled to a design by architects, BAC Group to provide building code compliant pedestrian access to the front entrance. This work included replacement of the original awning with a modern, steel and glass awning, adding two concrete ramps to the entrance bridge, altering the forecourt gardens and ponds, and installing the sculpture The Red Cube[65] at the front of the building.

While the building was being painted in 2007 it was identified approximately 6% of the render on the northern sun hoods needed repair. The hoods were investigated by structural engineers, no sign of structural distress was identified, and trial repairs of the render were undertaken in 2008.[66]

In March 2009 the MRD merged with Queensland Transport to form the Department of Transport and Main Roads, which continued the control of the state's main roads. In 2012 the department vacated the MRD building. It was sold to Asian Pacific Group Pty Ltd in December 2013.

Description

The former Main Roads Department Building is a 15 storey, reinforced concrete office building in a Modernist style that stands on a prominent site on Boundary Road, Spring Hill, Brisbane. Totalling almost one hectare, the rectangular site is bounded by Boundary Street to the south, Fortescue Street to the east, and Wedd Street to the north. Small scale commercial and residential development adjoins the western boundary. The sloping terrain is terraced into large, flat platforms by concrete retaining walls. As well as a landscaped garden setting, the building comprises: a front portico; tower; service core; rear podium; and rear carpark. The building structure is a reinforced concrete grid of concrete columns supporting concrete floor slabs.

The building retains design elements characteristic of the work of its architect, Dr Karl Langer, such as: employing a hybrid of subtle Classical allusions and Modernist architectural devices including a forecourt and stylised colonnade front; simplified forms, decoration and spatial arrangements; a restrained use of high-quality materials; and careful siting and manipulation of form to achieve optimum orientation for natural light and ventilation.

The garden forecourt is a flat public space fronting Boundary Street. The garden is laid out in sharp and dynamic lines of concrete, defining contrasting flat areas of mature trees, grass, paths and water to create a bold, abstract effect. A wide entrance path from the street bisects the garden, bridging across a pond and stepping up to the front portico entrance. The Red Cube, a large metal sculpture, stands on the path in front of a marble slab engraved to commemorate the opening of the building.

The western garden is terraced into level areas, retained by concrete walls and linked with concrete stairs. It retains the original abstract layout and also contains mature trees, shrubs, grassed areas and original concrete benches. The eastern garden is narrow and defined by a series of terraced boulder retaining beds and also retains original concrete benches.

The front portico is a rectangular block attached to the tower that, on approach, gives the impression of a grand colonnade across the width of a tall ground floor. This is formed by a rhythmic series of white, smooth-rendered,

rectangular concrete columns topped by a low parapet. This is in-filled with large panels of dark aluminium-framed inoperable glazing. The main elevation is symmetrical except for the entrance doors, which are placed off-centre. The windowless side elevations (east and west) of the portico are pale yellow facebrick walls in stretcher bond. The portico has a concealed flat roof clad with metal rib and pan sheeting.

The tower is the major component of the building, comprising 14 levels (B3 to L10) and a rooftop plant room and caretaker's flat (L11). The tower is a tall, narrow, rectangular block with a concealed timber-framed hipped roof clad with metal pan and rib sheeting. It is oriented with its long sides (the front and rear) facing north and south. These elevations are highly-glazed with an external grid of white-painted, concrete sun hoods forming a shading 'egg crate'. The hoods on the northern side project further than the south. The windows are large, double glazed aluminium framed casements and have spandrel panels inset with a chunky, white quartz aggregate. The window hardware has been removed from the sashes. The side (eastern and western) elevations are painted concrete, finely-articulated with off-form-patterned panels. Largely windowless in comparison to the north and south, the eastern and western elevations have four columns of small, square aluminium-framed windows with opaque glass.

The service core projects from the rear (northern side) of the tower with walls of painted concrete with off-form-patterned panels. The core fenestration is minimal, contrasting with the ample glazing of the adjacent northern elevation of the tower. The east and west elevations of the core have long, narrow ribbons of windows with high sills, and the north elevation has a column of small windows with a high sill and a spandrel panel of quartz aggregate. On the roof of the service core and the tower is a large, facebrick plant room and air-conditioning machinery.

Abutting the northern side of the tower is the rectangular rear podium, which stretches the width of the building and comprises four levels (G, B1, B2, and B3) and a roof top deck (L1). The side elevations are pale yellow facebrick in stretcher bond with rhythmically-placed square windows. The northern elevation has an egg crate of white-painted, concrete sun hoods sheltering large, aluminium-framed windows. The windows have spandrel panels featuring dark slates.

The rear carpark stands behind the rear podium, accessed from the lowest level of the building (B3) and from Wedd Street at the rear. It is one-storey with a flat, steel-framed roof clad with metal pan and rib sheeting, pierced by large, rhythmic openings to the sky. A decorative lattice wall of painted concrete breezeblocks lines the Wedd Street boundary, screening the car park.

Internally, the former functions of the building are clearly-defined, with public entry and reception in the front portico; offices in the tower; vertical circulation, toilets, and other shared facilities in the core; offices and a semi-enclosed carpark in the rear podium; and car parks and store rooms in the rear car park.

The public entry and double-height reception area are intact and feature black and white terrazzo floors, and marble-clad walls, columns, reception desk, planterbox and window sills. An original wall-mounted bronze artwork depicting the historical evolution of the wheel is retained in the entrance foyer. Within the front portico, L1 is a mezzanine level retaining original balustrades: iron near the southern glazing and battened timber above the reception area. Mounted on the end wall of the lift foyer facing the front entrance is *Communications*, a large artwork by Leonard Shillam.

The tower levels (L1 - L9) each comprise long, open floor plans with later lightweight partitions. Window sills are black terrazzo. Small services cores bookend each floor, on the east and west sides of the tower. These contain fire stairs, service risers, store rooms, and kitchenettes. Some levels retain original black bean veneer fire doors. The top level of the tower (L10) contains two large auditoriums. The larger of the two, named the Charles Barton Auditorium, is double-height and has a raised stage with a proscenium arch, velvet curtains, wings spaces either side, and a backstage area with changing rooms. Under the stage is a storage area accessed via original, battened

timber doors. The auditoriums are serviced by a single projection room on a mezzanine between the rooms, accessed via a narrow timber stair.

On the roof of the tower is a caretaker's flat, accessed via a narrow concrete stair. It is a modest, timber-framed, three-bedroomed apartment, concealed behind the tower parapet and sheltered under the main roof. It has pale yellow facebrick walls and aluminium-framed windows with original hardware (sliding and double-hung sashes). The front door addresses a generous, north-facing, roofed patio area, paved with square concrete pavers. The layout of the flat is original; however, all ceiling linings have been removed. The kitchen, bathroom, and laundry fitouts are early and it retains early electric monitor boards used by the caretaker to supervise the building.

The service core contains service risers and shared facilities, including lifts, a fire stair, dumb waiter for office files, tearooms, and large toilet and shower rooms. The fire stair in the service core retains original finishes, including black and white terrazzo stair treads and risers, black-painted metal balustrades with black plastic handrails, textured stair undersides, and vinyl tile clad walls with contrasting inset floor numerals.

The rear podium levels (B3 - G) each comprise large, open floor plans with later lightweight partitions. Window sills are black terrazzo.

Early floodlights survive mounted to the exterior of the building.

Elements that are not of cultural heritage include: the building's ramps, awning, and doors at the main entrance portico; lightweight partitions and suspended ceilings throughout; kitchen and store room fitouts; and steel shelters of the garden and roof deck.

The former Main Roads Department Building stands prominently on a ridge of the folding terrain of Spring Hill. It is highly-visible from the surrounding suburbs and has extensive views from the office spaces within. The gardens and open spaces are conspicuous within the immediate streetscape and contribute to the character of the area.

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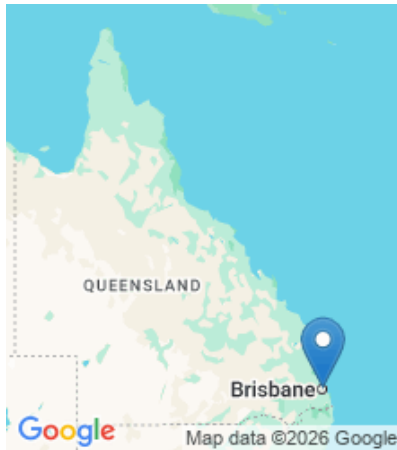
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Image gallery



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