

# Australian War Memorial

## Part B: Architectural and Social History of Anzac Hall



*Image 1: Aerial Photograph of Australian War Memorial February 2020*

Revision 1.1 November 2022 – Addition of Annex A Volunteer Guide Recollections of Anzac Hall

## Introduction

Nestled at the back of the Main Building, beneath the slop of Mount Ainslie, Anzac Hall was home to some large objects in the Australian War Memorial's collection. Designed by architecture firm Denton Corker Marshall, the construction of Anzac Hall had a budget of \$11.9 million dollars from the Federal Government and was officially opened in 2001.

(Gower 2019, 111) The Hall has been likened to a military structure, due to its dark fibro-cladded exterior resembling a large battleship. (Stead, 2001) "Designed for invisibility," Anzac Hall, though providing 3098 square metres of exhibition space, gave the impression of subtlety and restraint, so as not to detract from the iconic Main Building, with only a steel and glass linking bridge between the rear of Aircraft Hall and Anzac Hall. (Farrelly, 2001)



*Image 2: Outside ANZAC Hall 2001*

The interior of the building was home to some of the Memorial's collection of large objects, such as the Lancaster Bomber 'G for George' and a Japanese Midget Submarine, which were both part of the 'Object Theatre' technology used in the space, where objects were

accompanied with sound, light and video projections to tell the story. (FRD, n.d.)(Godden Mackay Logan 2021, 55) As well as an exhibition space, Anzac Hall also housed a café facility, a mezzanine viewing level and storage facilities and was the venue for many performances and functions. (Gower 2019, 106) In 2021, Anzac Hall was closed to the public to be demolished to make way for a larger version capable of housing even bigger objects and exhibitions, as part of the



*Image 3; Avro Lancaster Mk I Bomber "G" for George on display in the Australian War Memorial's Aeroplane Hall. Canberra, ACT. 1996.*



Redevelopment Project. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2021, 36)(AWM Our Plans, 2022)

Replacing the carpark at the rear of the Memorial, Anzac Hall was created to display some of the large objects in their collection that were previously restricted in their display due to their size. (Godden Mackay Logan 2011, 13) These large objects were previously housed in the Mitchell Repository and were for the most part, largely underutilized, with limited display and interpretation materials possible at that site. (Anzac Hall Extensions, 1, 1999) Providing 3098 square metres of exhibition space and 10 metre high ceilings, the dark grey clad building was positioned behind the Main Building and into the base of Mt Ainslie, and acted “as a backdrop to the iconic form of the main building”. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2011, 23)(Anzac Hall Extensions, 1999, 8) Originally referred to as “Technology Hall” and then “Federation Hall,” a large exhibition space was first proposed in the late 1980s, with a proposed budget of \$30 million dollars. (Gower 2019, 103)



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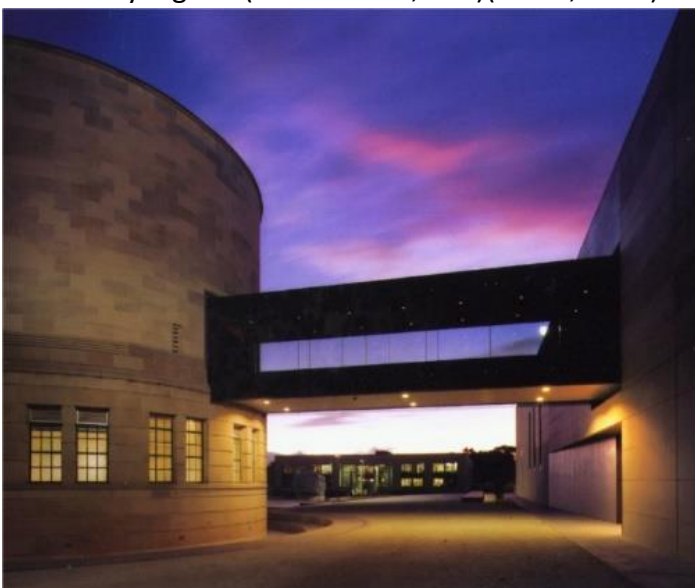
*Image 4: Aerial view of the Australian War Memorial looking from the west 1984.*

In 1998, plans for Anzac Hall were provided with \$12 million in funding from the Federal Government. (Gower 2019, 105) Architecture firm, Denton Corker Marshall were tasked with creating the scaled back version of the original design to adhere to budget constraints. (Gower 2019, 106) Their design utilized what was described by War Memorial Director at the time, Steve Gower, as having “strong symbolism drawn from tri-service

metaphors” such as the curved roof resembling the wing of an aircraft, the vertical strip windows resembling colonial forts and the grey precast wall resembling a large military ship, described as being “nearly invisible, with a whopping presence.” (Gower 2019, 106)(Farrelly, 2001) Anzac Hall was “designed for invisibility” attempting to not detract from the Main Building. (Farrelly, 2001) As well as a large exhibition space, Anzac Hall also contained a café facility, a mezzanine viewing platform, storage facilities and a large hydraulically-powered door capable of transporting the large display items. (Gower 2019, 106) It was decided that this new exhibition space would be home to emerging ‘object theatre’ technology, such as the iconic ‘G for George’ Lancaster Bomber aircraft object theatre display entitled “Striking by night”. (Gower 2019, 108)(AWM, 2020)



*Image 5: SYDNEY, NSW. 1942-06-10. JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE NO. 21 BEING RAISED BY THE BOWS FROM THE HARBOUR BY A FLOATING CRANE DURING A SALVAGE OPERATION.*



*Image 6: Glass and Steel Bridge Connection the Main Building to ANZAC Hall.*

Connecting the visitor to the new hall from Aircraft Hall and the Main Building, the glass and steel bridge was initially opposed by the National Capital Authority Board, due to concerns that the curved design of Aircraft Hall would be lost. (Gower 2019, 106) and concerns were raised regarding the Heritage impacts of penetrating the Sandstone apse to the Main Building's northern wall. The NCA Board also were in opposition to the

colour bond roof, requesting instead a copper roof, which would have increased the budget by an extra 2 million dollars, but was rejected over fears it would distract from the Main Building. (Anzac Hall Extensions, 1999, 6)(Gower 2019, 106) In the design of Anzac Hall, particular attention was paid to energy conservation measures, such as thermal stability, energy conscious lighting and water-saving bathroom facilities. (Anzac Hall Extensions, 1999, 17) Anzac Hall was opened by Prime Minister John Howard on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2001. (Gower 2019, 111) Winning the Australian Institute of Architects' Sir Zelman Cowen award for Most Outstanding Work of Public Architecture in Australia in 2005, Anzac Hall was often used to hold functions and performances such as charity and diplomatic events, with Steve Gower noting that "attendees invariably comment favourably on the stunning venue." (Denton Corker Marshall, n.d.) (Gower 2019, 114)

## Visual Description

Visually, Anzac Hall was in contrast to the Main Building, as noted by Stead, "in its massing, materials and detailing, the extension could hardly be further from the block monumentality of the original." (Stead, 2001) While contrasting the Main Building, Anzac Hall drew inspiration from the original building in design, through the fan-like pattern formed by the roof, which radiates from the Main Building's dome centre. (Stead, 2001) The building, made of fibro-cement sheets "sympathetic to its cargo of military metalwork," was nestled behind and beneath the Main Building, invisible from the land axis of Anzac Parade, and separated by a large stone wall. (Stead, 2001)(Godden Mackay Logan, 2001,



*Image 7: A picture from 2001 showing a helicopter from the Royal Australian Air Force that flew in Vietnam in 1966 being transported by truck to the then-new Anzac Hall at the rear of the Memorial. Photo: Paul Harris*

23)(Archimarathon, 2021) Kevin Hui and Andrew Maynard, of Archimarathon described the sloping roof to have a "propeller-like quality," which curved downwards around the building and was surrounded by tussock grass, furthering the modest, and low-profile nature of the exterior.

(Archimarathon, 2021) Lacking any



visitor access, other than from the glass bridge connecting the mezzanine level of Anzac Hall to the Main Building, the visitor was given the impression of an “enigmatic object.” (Stead, 2001) While the exterior of the building gave the perception of being subtle and unobtrusive, once inside, the visitor was met by a vast hall with a 10 metre high ceiling, full of large, dramatically-lit military objects, surrounded by a dark theatre-like backdrop. (Stead, 2001)(Archimarathon, 2021) As well as a large exhibition space, Anzac Hall also contained a café facility, a mezzanine viewing platform, storage facilities and a large hydraulically-powered door capable of transporting the large display items. (Gower 2019, 106)



Image 8: FAIRBAIRN, ACT. 1955. AVRO LANCASTER BOMBER AIRCRAFT (W4783) 'G' FOR GEORGE BEING DISMANTLED.

## Construction, Planning, Funding, Completion

The planned addition of Anzac Hall marked the first extension to the Memorial in 30 years (Vet Affairs, 2001, 4) a large exhibition space was first proposed in the late 1980s, with a proposed budget of \$30 million dollars. (Gower 2019, 103) In 1998, plans for Anzac Hall were provided with \$12 million in funding from the Federal Government. (Gower 2019, 105) Architecture firm, Denton Corker Marshall were tasked with creating the scaled back version of the original design to adhere to budget constraints. (Gower 2019, 106) This design paid attention to energy conservation, with energy conscious lighting, water saving bathroom facilities, and the utilization of thermal stability all being implemented. (Anzac Hall Extensions 1999, 17) Anzac Hall was approved for construction in 1999 and was opened by then Prime Minister John Howard on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2001. (Gower, 2019. 111) The building received significant praise in the architectural community, winning the Australian Institute of Architects' Sir Zelman Cowen award for Most Outstanding Work of Public

Architecture in Australia as well as the Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter Canberra Medallion Award in 2005. (Denton Corker Marshall, n.d.)

## Exhibition Design

FRD (Freeman Ryan Designs) acted as lead designers for the exhibition spaces of Anzac Hall, with the task of utilizing emerging 'object theatre' technology, where objects were paired with video projections, sound and lighting techniques to tell a story highlighting the stationary object. (FRD, n.d) This level of artefact interpretation was new for the Memorial, and allowed for the interpretation of objects in the Memorial's collection which had previously been confined to the Mitchell Repository due to their size. (Godden Mackay Logan 2011, 13)(Gower 2019, 108) FRD noted the significance of object theatre, stating "this technique has the ability to elevate the significance of the artefact and ignite excitement." (FRD, n.d.)

## Large Objects and Object Theatre

Anzac Hall housed four permanent areas, 'Striking by Night', 'Sydney Under Attack', 'Our First Naval Victory' and 'Over the Front: the Great War in the Air'. (DCWC, 2021)(Godden Mackay Logan, 2021, 55)

'Striking By Night' featured Lancaster Bomber 'G for George', along with 3 German Messerschmitt fighter aircraft, and told the story of a night bombing operation in December of 1943 above Berlin. (Striking by Night, AWM)



*Image 9: CANBERRA, ACT. 1954. JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE RECOVERED AFTER THE RAID ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 1942-05-31, ON DISPLAY AT THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL.*



Image 10: Lancaster bomber "G" for George, at Fairbairn airfield, before the aircraft was incorporated.

'Sydney Under Attack' told the story of the Japanese Naval Midget Submarine attack on Sydney Harbour in 1942 and featured a composite reconstruction of the midget submarine. (Perryman, n.d.)

'Over the Front: the Great War in the Air' highlighted five aircraft accompanied by an audio-visual presentation

directed by Peter Jackson and Wingnut Films. (McLintock,

2008)

## G for George

The popular Lancaster Bomber 'G for George' was displayed in Anzac Hall and was featured in the 'Striking by Night' object theatre display.

(Striking By Night AWM) Built in 1942, 'George' flew in 89 missions over Germany and Europe. (Defence News, 2021) The Lancaster Bomber retired from service in 1944 and was stored at RAAF Base Fairbairn until finding its eventual home at the Memorial in 1955. (Vet Affairs 2003, 4) In 1999, 'George' was dismantled and restored, which included replacing many damaged or missing screws and reintroducing the wartime paint scheme. (Vet Affairs 2003, 4) To make way for the Redevelopment Project, a team comprising of both Air Force History and Heritage and Australian War Memorial Collections Services was assembled to begin the task of disassembling the great aircraft. (Defence News,



Image 11: CANBERRA, ACT. 1949-07-19. SNOW COVERS A JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE WHICH RAIDED SYDNEY HARBOUR 31 MAY 1942, AND IS NOW ON DISPLAY OUTSIDE THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL.



2021) This project took the team 4 weeks, with 'George' now reassembled for display at the Mitchell Annex of the Australian War Memorial. (Defence News, 2021) 'G for George' was certainly a popular display in Anzac Hall, as reflected through several reviews on TripAdvisor, such as Terry D's 5 star review "A favourite was the G for George and WW1 air wars multimedia displays in ANZAC Hall." (TripAdvisor, 11 Dec 2018)

## Other Objects

Anzac Hall also was home to various significant works of art, medals and equipment. (Media Release, 2001) This included the four major works of official war artist, Will Longstaff for the exhibition entitled Will Longstaff: Art and Remembrance. (AWM Annual Report 2001-2, 8) The Hall also housed both the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded to Squadron Leader Eric Jarman, who was awarded the cross for "exceptional valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying in active operations against the enemy," as well as the artwork completed by Stella Bowen of Jarman and the 6 other crewmembers in front of the 460 Squadron Lancaster Bomber. (AWM Annual Report 2001-2, 8)(Sydney Morning Herald 2008)



*Image 12: RAF Station Binbrook. Informal portrait of 404507 Squadron Leader (Sqn Ldr) Eric George Delancey Jarman.*

The symmetry between creating a space that is both a museum and a memorial was identified in the early conception of the Memorial by Bean, aiming "for a building to be at once a museum, monument, memorial, temple and shrine." (Godden Mackay Logan 2011, 15) This balance was reflected in Anzac Hall to some visitors, with its "brilliant and thought provoking displays" recorded by one TripAdvisor contributor. (TripAdvisor, 13.2.2021) But not to others, such as Associate Lecturer in Architectural Theory, Philosophy and Cultural Studies, Naomi Stead, who believed that "the architecture has an understated industrial elegance, but, crouching in the shadow of the War Memorial, it effectively ducks the question of commemoration." (Stead, 2002)

## Decision to Redevelop

In the decision to redevelop aspects of the Memorial, various options were created and assessed based on their level of heritage impacts. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2021, 34) Four Options were identified. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2021, 34) Option one involved the removal of Anzac Hall to create a New Anzac Hall with a larger exhibition space. (Godden Mackay Logan 2021, 34) This option was seen to contain strong social heritage values, as it champions the Main Building as the focal point for visitors and provides additional 13,995 square metres of gallery and public space radiating from the “heart of the Memorial.” (Godden Mackay Logan, 2021, 34, 41) This design was submitted to Government in July of 2018, with the designs approved by the National Capital Authority on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021. (AWM Our Plans, 2022) The Redevelopment Project has faced significant attention in

the media, for the most part due to the demolition of Anzac Hall, with the Australian Institute of Architects’ “Hands off Anzac Hall” campaign being created. (Hands off Anzac Hall, n.d.) The public consultation process for the Redevelopment Project ignited 601 submissions, a record number of submissions for the National Capital Authority. (ABC, 2021) Of those 601



*Image13: Aerial view of the War Memorial during Development July 2022*

submissions, only 3 supported the project in its proposed form. (McHugh, 2021) As a result of these submissions, 50 changes were made to the designs, as stated by Australian War Memorial Director, Matt Anderson. (ABC 2021) Anzac Hall was closed to the public on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, and work on the New Anzac Hall set to be complete by 2024. (Godden Mackay Logan, 2021 36)(AWM Our Plans, 2022)

During its 20 year life, Anzac Hall housed some of the large objects in the Memorial’s collection, which were previously unable to be displayed at the Campbell site due to their size, such as the popular Lancaster Bomber, ‘G for George.’ (Defence News, 2021)(Godden Mackay Logan 2011, 13) Providing 3098 square metres of exhibition space and 10 metre

high ceilings, the dark grey clad building “acted as a backdrop for the iconic form of the Main Building.” (Godden Mackay Logan 2011, 23)(Anzac Hall Extensions 1999, 8) The building was praised for its clever, subtle design, being awarded Sir Zelman Cowen Award



*Image 14: Concept Design of the Development of the Australian War memorial.*

for Outstanding Public Architecture in 2005. (DCM, n.d.) The emerging technology of the time, ‘Object Theatre’ was utilized in the space, creating shows like “Striking by Night” and the Peter Jackson and Wingnut Films production, ‘Over the Front.’ (McLintock, 2008) As part of the larger Redevelopment Project at the Memorial, Anzac Hall was closed to the public in 2021, where construction on a New Anzac Hall is due to be completed in 2024. (Godden Mackay Logan 2021, 36)(AWM Our Plans, 2022) As noted by Memorial Director Matt Anderson, “the intrinsic value of Anzac Hall is its capacity to tell stories.” (AWM, 2021)



## **Annex A – Volunteer Guide Memories of Anzac Hall**

The guided tours of the Memorial would usually finish in Anzac Hall and were always considered “an absolute highlight on the tour.” (Buscombe, 2022) An obvious standout noted by the guides was the G for George Lancaster Bomber display. Such large scale items were considered the “wow factor” within the hall (Freeman, 2022) (McNamara, 2022). However, for some guides the hidden corners and little details of the space such as the Red Baron flying boots added interest to the Hall (Vane-Tempest, 2022). Some guides noted this highlighted the versatility of the space.

The majority of the guides noted the success and popularity of the object theatre and audio visual displays utilized in the Hall, agreeing that with various vantage points and seating options it was a great way to end the tours, with the shows on a timed rotation. (Vane-Tempest, 2022) The Mezzanine level was also agreed to be a popular spot amongst the guides as a great vantage point from which to view the audio visual displays. It was also used as a short term exhibition space often displaying interesting exhibits. (Leask, 2022) (McNamara, 2022)

Some guides reflected on the versatility of Anzac Hall as a function space, noting how special it was to be “under the wings of George” at a function, such as the 30th Anniversary of the Guides celebration in 2006. (Buscombe, 2022) (Vane-Tempest, 2022) Logistically, some guides noted the benefit of Anzac Hall and the exhibition design as the wide open spaces gave the guides the ability to see options for where the tour could go next if their planned location was occupied. (Freeman, 2022)

Architecturally, the building was regarded a “hidden gem”. Visitors would tour through the older buildings and be surprised by the grand space of Anzac Hall that was tucked discretely into the base of Mount Ainslie. (McNamara, 2022)

Thank you to the Volunteer guides who gave their time to discuss their memories of Anzac Hall.

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Image 1: Aerial Photograph of Australian War Memorial February 2020. Page 1

Image 2: <https://www.dwc.com.au/projects/australian-war-memorial-anzac-hall-canberra>  
Outside ANZAC Hall 2001. Page 2

Image 3: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C363169> Avro Lancaster Mk I Bomber "G" for George on display in the Australian War Memorial's Aeroplane Hall. Canberra, ACT. 1996.  
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Image 4: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C397284> Aerial view of the Australian War Memorial looking from the west 1984. Page 3

Image 5: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C255995?image=1> SYDNEY, NSW. 1942-06-10. JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE NO. 21 BEING RAISED BY THE BOWS FROM THE HARBOUR BY A FLOATING CRANE DURING A SALVAGE OPERATION. Page 4

Image 6: <https://hindmarsh.com.au/project/anzac-memorial/> Glass and Steel Bridge Connection the Main Building to ANZAC Hall. Page 4

Image 7: A picture from 2001 showing a helicopter from the Royal Australian Air Force that flew in Vietnam in 1966 being transported by truck to the then-new Anzac Hall at the rear of the Memorial. Photo: Paul Harris. Page 5

Image 8: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C243436> FAIRBAIRN, ACT. 1955. AVRO LANCASTER BOMBER AIRCRAFT (W4783) 'G' FOR GEORGE BEING DISMANTLED. Page 6

Image 9: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C206241> CANBERRA, ACT. 1954. JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE RECOVERED AFTER THE RAID ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 1942-05-31, ON DISPLAY AT THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL. Page 7

Image 10: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C56103> Lancaster bomber "G" for George, at Fairbairn airfield, before the aircraft was incorporated. Page 8

Image 11: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C253023> CANBERRA, ACT. 1949-07-19. SNOW COVERS A JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE WHICH RAIDED SYDNEY HARBOUR 31 MAY 1942, AND IS NOW ON DISPLAY OUTSIDE THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL. Page 8

Image 12: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C80766> RAF Station Binbrook. Informal portrait of 404507 Squadron Leader (Sqn Ldr) Eric George Delancey Jarman. Page 9

Image 13: Aerial view of the War Memorial during Development July 2022. Page 10

Image 14: <https://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/news/australian-war-memorial>. Concept Design of the Development of the Australian War memorial. Page 11