

## CONRAD GARGETT



Left: ANZ bank branch at Surfers Paradise, n.d. [Image no. 6523-0001-0515](#)

Right: View of Block 8 of the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, Queensland, 1970. Photograph by E&J Bowman. [Image no. 6523-0001-0542](#)

Conrad Gargett, the result of multiple partnerships and mergers, is one of Queensland's oldest architectural practices. First established in 1890 by Henry Atkinson when he won the competition to design a new Head Fire Station in Brisbane. Charles McLay became a partner in 1907 and they became Diocesan Architect to the Anglican Church designing several school and church buildings in south east Queensland, including Church of England Grammar School and the Southport School. When McLay died in 1918, Arnold Conrad joined the firm which was renamed Atkinson and Conrad. The practice became well-known for its use of the distinctive Spanish Mission style in projects such as Brisbane Boys' College and Tristram's Factory at West End. During this period they were also commissioned by various hospital boards to deliver major projects at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, South Brisbane Auxiliary Hospital (now the Princess Alexandra Hospital), Prince Charles Hospital and Gold Coast Hospital. Lange Powell joined the firm as a partner in 1926.

At the beginning of the Second World War the practice became AH Conrad & TBF Gargett after Thomas Brenan (Bren) Gargett joined as a partner. The firm survived thanks to its relationship with hospital boards and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. In the post-war building boom the firm became prominent designers of commercial office towers in Brisbane's CBD, most notably the SGIO building with its legendary SGIO Theatre and head offices for three of the 'big four' banks. The MLC building, designed in 1955 with the firm Bates Smart, was the first office building in Brisbane constructed in the 'modern' style. Some of Conrad Gargett's more renowned projects during this time include Bishopsbourne, the Archbishop of Brisbane's private chapel (1963) and the state government Executive building (1971). When Bren Gargett died in 1975, his son Peter joined the firm.

From the 1980s Conrad Gargett completed many conservation projects as well as their continuing commercial work, including work for Old Parliament House (1982), The Mansions (1983), Customs House (1995) and Brisbane City Hall (2004). Major interstate projects include the State Library of Victoria redevelopment (2006) and the refurbishment of Queen Victoria Building in Sydney (2010).

Following the abolition of hospital boards in Queensland in the early 1990s the practice experienced a downturn. This was soon corrected by the boom in the growth of the tertiary education sector with the firm designing buildings for University of Queensland and Griffith University, as well as some defence and ecclesiastical work.

In 2012 and 2013 Conrad Gargett Architecture became Conrad Gargett following a series of mergers with Riddel Architecture and Ancher Mortlock Woolley and is now a multi-disciplinary practice

specialising in health, education, defence and heritage work. Major projects undertaken in recent years include Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, with Lyons, in 2014, the new Rockhampton Museum of Art and Thomas Dixon Centre in West End (both 2022).

## Collection resources

- [OM78-61 Conrad Gargett and Partners records 1957-1967](#)  
These papers, including correspondence, specifications and plans, relate to three projects at Royal Brisbane Hospital: the nurses' swimming pool and plant; accommodation for the Department of Surgery; alterations to Ward 16 and the Red Cross area.
- [P720.9 CON Conrad & Gargett Pty Ltd, Architects](#)  
This monograph, published in 1990, celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the practice.
- [J720 CON Conrad Gargett Architecture: 120 years](#) (limited edition)  
Monograph published in 2010 to celebrate 120 years of the practice.
- [Queensland Cultural Centre Conservation Management Plan \(2016-2017\)](#)  
Commissioned by Arts Queensland, this plan for the ongoing conservation of the Robin Gibson-designed QCC, aims to provide 'a framework for the conservation and best practice management of the precinct's heritage values'.
- **Images** from 6523 Royal Australian Institute of Architects photographs and plan:
  - ANZ Bank branch at Surfers Paradise, n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0515](#)
  - Façade of the ANZ Queen Street branch in Brisbane, Queensland, 1956. Image no. [6523-0001-0501](#)
  - Interior of the ANZ Queen Street branch in Brisbane, Queensland, 1956. Image no. [6523-0001-0427](#)
  - Waiting lounge inside the Queen Street branch of the ANZ Bank in Brisbane, Queensland, 1956. Image no. [6523-0001-0508](#)
  - Bank building for the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in Charleville, Queensland, 1958. Image no. [6523-0001-0363](#)
  - Nurses' Quarters at the South Brisbane General Hospital, Woolloongabba, Queensland, 1958. Image no. [6523-0001-0319](#)
  - Sir Leslie Wilson Pavilion at the Gabba cricket ground [built 1958], Woolloongabba, n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0160](#)
  - Metropolitan Fire Brigade Head Station in Brisbane, Queensland, 1964. Image no. [6523-0001-0500](#)
  - Archbishop's Chapel [Bishopsbourne] in Hamilton, Queensland, 1965. Image no. [6523-0001-0622](#)
  - NSW Government Tourist Bureau in Brisbane, Queensland, 1965. Image no. [6523-0001-0579](#)
  - Psychiatric centre at the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, Queensland, 1965. Image no. [6523-0001-0001](#)
  - Science block at St Hilda's School at Southport, Queensland, 1968. Image no. [6523-0001-0631](#)
  - St Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church in New Farm [655 Brunswick Street, built in 1968-69], Queensland, n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0568](#)
  - Residence of Dr L.A. Kelley in Toowoomba [built 1969], Queensland, n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0450](#)
  - Interior of Dr L.A. Kelley's residence at Toowoomba [built 1969], Queensland, n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0531](#)
  - View of the SGIO Theatre from Turbot Street, Brisbane [built 1969], n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0169](#)
  - National Australia Bank at Mt Gravatt, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0535](#)
  - Interior of the National Australia Bank at Mt Gravatt, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0556](#)
  - Man walking past the National Australia Bank at Mt Gravatt, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0563](#)

- View of Block 8 of the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0542](#)
- Block 8 of the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0457](#)
- Laboratory inside Block 8 of the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, Queensland, 1970. Image no. [6523-0001-0416](#)



Left: Archbishop's Chapel [Bishopsbourne] in Hamilton, Queensland, 1965. Image no. [6523-0001-0622](#)

Right: View of the SGIO Theatre from Turbot Street, Brisbane [built 1969], n.d. Image no. [6523-0001-0169](#)

### Other resources (video)

- [SGIO Building with Alice Hampson](#) (2014)  
This digital story was produced to complement State Library's major exhibition *Hot Modernism*. Architect, writer and architectural historian Alice Hampson discusses the significance of the former SGIO building, designed by Conrad Gargett and built in 1971, at the intersection of Albert and Turbot Streets in Brisbane's CBD.
- [Game Changers series – in conversation with Bruce Wolfe](#) (2016)  
In this video Bruce Wolfe, managing director of Conrad Gargett Architecture, discusses the firm's masterplanning, design and delivery of the Queensland Children's Hospital and some of their other projects.