

FRYER *Folios*

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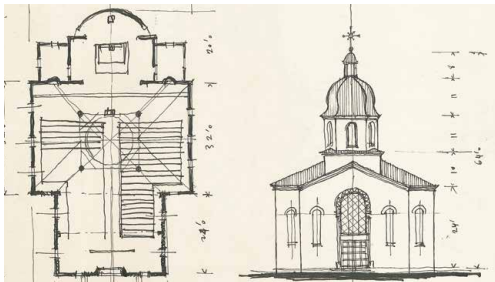
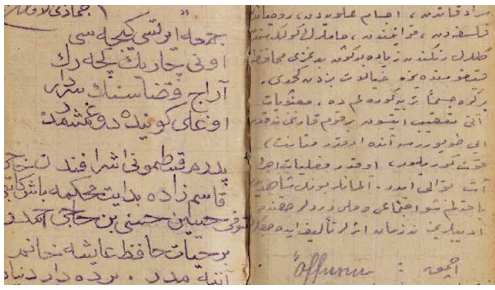
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FEBRUARY 2016



FRYER *Folios*

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Front cover: Map of a railway line from Berlin to Adrianópolis. In 'Diary of a Turkish Soldier who fought at Gallipoli', F592, Fryer Library, University of Queensland Library.

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ROMAN PAVLYSHYN РОМАН ПАВЛИШИН architect : patriot

DON WATSON



Above: Pavlyshyn's Caboolture Post Office completed in 1959. Photograph held in The John Oxley Library in 6523: Royal Australian Institute of Architects Photographs and Plans, State Library of Queensland, Image Number 6523-0001-0032.

Right: Roman Pavlyshyn in Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter, *Chapter News*, August 1985.

Opposite page

Top right: Reduced scale drawing of an apartment block. Roman Pavlyshyn Collection, 110127, Box 1

Bottom right: Health and Welfare Building, Brisbane CBD, as completed in 1965. Roman Pavlyshyn Collection, 110127, 6.3.2, Box 1

After World War II, Queensland architecture was transformed by talented European migrants. The most influential were Karl Langer and Roman Pavlyshyn whose paths crossed soon after the war. Their contributions were exceptional, but unlike Langer, Pavlyshyn's architectural career is little known, despite his award in 1988 of an Order of Australia Medal for service to architecture and the community, and publication of a detailed tribute written by his son Marko.¹ Pavlyshyn may be Queensland's best *unknown* architect, but with his donation to the Fryer Library of an unusually comprehensive collection, this will change.

Roman Pavlyshyn was born in Western Ukraine, the son of Osyp Pavlyshyn and Thekla Holub, both teachers. Under the Treaty of Riga (1921) Ukraine had been divided, with Western Ukraine absorbed into Poland and Eastern Ukraine within the Soviet Union. As a former officer in a Ukrainian military unit, Osyp was denied employment in Poland and imprisoned twice, but in the village where they settled the Pavlyshyns emerged as community leaders. In 1933 they moved to Ternopil where Roman enrolled at a Ukrainian grammar school. When the USSR occupied Western Ukraine in 1939, Osyp, by then a manager of a co-operative society, was again imprisoned, but Roman and his mother escaped to Germany where he worked as a draftsman. After completing his schooling in 1941, when Germany invaded the USSR, Roman joined one of the so-called 'expeditionary groups' of young



West Ukrainians who hoped to rebuild Ukrainian cultural and civil life in what had been Soviet Ukraine. He then enrolled at the Technische Hochschule, Vienna.² The course continued through the war but shortly before he submitted his final assignment, the University closed when Russia invaded in March 1945. Pavlyshyn fled to Germany and enrolled in the Technische Hochschule Darmstadt, which reopened in damaged buildings. With credit for his studies in Vienna, he was only required to complete the winter-summer semesters 1945-46. The technical and aesthetic approach in both Vienna and Darmstadt was similar. Teaching was based on the rural and regional architecture of Germany

and Eastern Europe, which was an eclectic combination of classicism and traditional architecture. After graduation, he worked for Ludwig Doelger, an architect in Aschaffenburg, where at a Displaced Persons Camp Roman met Alexandra Chushak, another Ukrainian. They married in 1947. Remarkably, Roman's student submissions at Darmstadt and his work for Doelger survive.

At Darmstadt, Pavlyshyn's lecturers included Karl Gruber and Ernst Neufert. Most influential was Gruber who was an architect, town planner, architectural historian and conservationist. A leading professor of the school was Neufert, author of *Architects' data*, (already an indispensable reference work), and long associated with the Bauhaus, but also acquainted with both Antonio Gaudi and Frank Lloyd Wright. Neufert was Pavlyshyn's final examiner. Preoccupied with prescribed practical work, Pavlyshyn missed lectures but, knowing Neufert's interests, passed with a proto-modernist apartment block and questions on solar inclination. Neufert later offered him an assistantship in the school, but by then the Pavlyshyns had decided to join Alexandra's mother at Mackay where she migrated before the war.³ They arrived in November 1948.

Town planner for Mackay was pre-war Austrian émigré Karl Langer.⁴ He had studied at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, and thus came from a different tradition of architectural education than Roman. Pavlyshyn moved to Brisbane to work for Langer who introduced him to modernism. Among buildings Pavlyshyn documented were the Sugar Research Station (now heritage listed) and an exquisite and beautifully sited crematorium (unbuilt), both at Mackay. But with no likelihood of a partnership and having qualified for professional registration, Roman resigned in 1951 to work for the Commonwealth Works Department where in the Brisbane branch office his designs were not initially palatable. His butterfly-roofed post-office at Caboolture was not only ultra-modern but also acknowledged in an aboriginal-styled mural the Kabi people's name for the locality: *place of the carpet snake*.

Through Pavlyshyn's involvement in the Ukrainian community, he met David Longland, then in charge of immigration for the Queensland Government, who recognised his ability. By 1958, Longland was head of the Department of Public Works and in need of a





Above: Perspective view from Ann Street and North Quay of FDG Stanley's Supreme Court building for which a design remained undocumented. With no prospect of promotion at the Commonwealth, Pavlyshyn was co-opted and rapidly designed a modern, multi-storey slab block, elevated on *pilotis* along the George Street alignment with underground parking. This would satisfy the functional shortfall and leave untouched the exterior of Stanley's Courts while providing access to its garden, now uncluttered with cars. The interior was sympathetically reworked.

The scheme proved unacceptable⁵ and Pavlyshyn was obliged in 1962 to find an alternative site. This design was rejected as too remote,⁶ and in 1963, he designed a replacement for Stanley's Supreme Court.⁷ The tragedy was not over. After the design was approved and construction of the first stage commenced,⁸ the government belatedly approved the extension of Adelaide Street to North Quay through the proposed Magistrate's Court, forcing its relocation to a speculative office building on North Quay.⁹

Concurrently in 1958, Pavlyshyn sought to overcome a shortfall of Government offices by a similarly modern addition to the former State Bank, counterbalancing a comparable extension to the State Library on the opposite side of Queen's Gardens. Difficulties with the Library project probably jeopardised Pavlyshyn's proposal.¹⁰ Otherwise his schemes were successful, including a new morgue in the Domain, another project which had been languishing, and documentation, with a redesigned façade, of a building for the Health Department. Longland finally had an architect on whom he could rely, ensuring Pavlyshyn's rapid advancement; however his appointment as Chief Architect incurred the enmity of some staff.

capable architect, not least to resolve an intractable problem, the future of FDG Stanley's Supreme Court building for which a design remained undocumented. With no prospect of promotion at the Commonwealth, Pavlyshyn was co-opted and rapidly designed a modern, multi-storey slab block, elevated on *pilotis* along the George Street alignment with underground parking. This would satisfy the functional shortfall and leave untouched the exterior of Stanley's Courts while providing access to its garden, now uncluttered with cars. The interior was sympathetically reworked.

erected in Queensland. When it was successfully completed, the partnership was without further work¹¹ and in July 1966, Pavlyshyn rejoined the Works Department.

Over the next two decades, he presided over the largest program of public architectural patronage ever seen in Queensland. Best known is his methodical and successful completion of the Queensland Cultural Centre. Following previous proposals for sites in the Domain and Roma Street, Pavlyshyn undertook selection of a new site for the Art Gallery, a site not self-evident in the early 1970s, before running a successful two-stage architectural competition won by Robin Gibson. With documentation for the gallery proceeding, the Liberal Party and Gibson surreptitiously devised a plan for the entire cultural centre, a concept already envisaged by Pavlyshyn and others. Undeterred by this subterfuge, Pavlyshyn oversaw the staged completion of the complex to great acclaim.

Pavlyshyn was involved with other major projects: construction of his Courts complex (recently demolished) and, more contentiously, the continued development of offices in lower George Street. The Executive Building was designed while Pavlyshyn was in private practice. After he rejoined the Department, the master plan for two additional towers was abandoned in favour of a low-rise, socially and environmentally sympathetic scheme. Concurrently the architect and town planner John Wheeler oversaw early official instances of heritage conservation,¹² well intentioned and predating the Burra Charter (1979). Bruised by the failure of his attempts at preservation, Pavlyshyn received conflicting advice from the architectural and urban design consultants¹³ as to the merit and feasibility of retaining the Bellevue Hotel and other historic structures on the intended site. The appointment

Despite confirmation of the appointment, Pavlyshyn's position was untenable and he resigned.

Previously on Pavlyshyn's recommendation, Hugh Beck, a former colleague with Langer and the Commonwealth, undertook work in Brisbane for General Motors. After leaving the Works Department, Pavlyshyn entered partnership as Beck & Pavlyshyn to work on a new assembly plant for GMH at Acacia Ridge, the largest industrial building yet

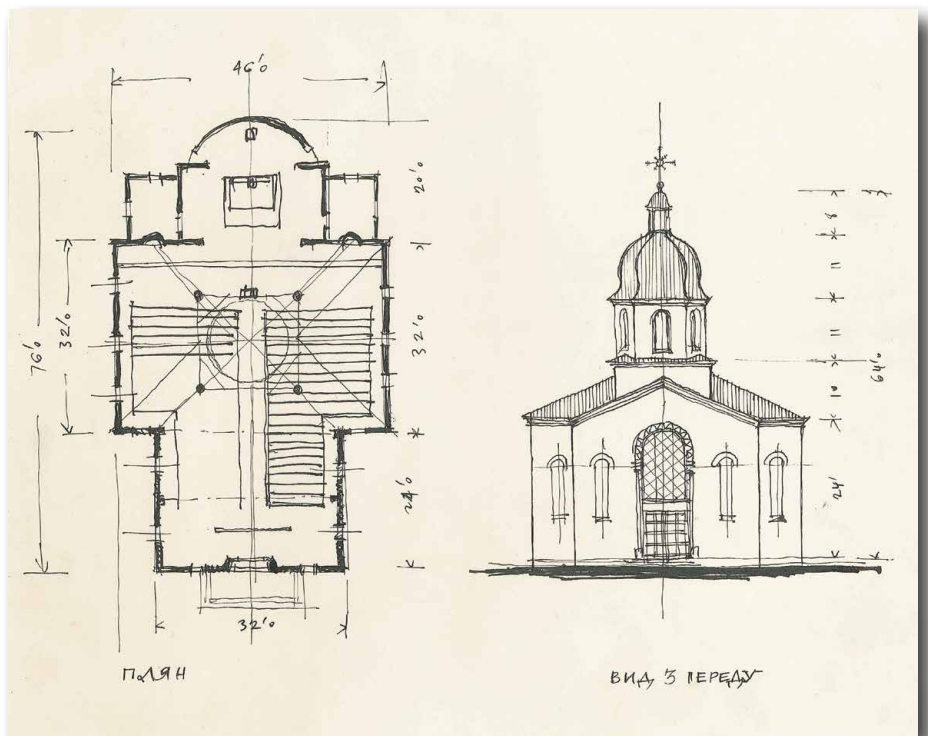
of Skidmore Owings & Merrill, a pre-eminent US firm of architects, failed to resolve this conflict, leading eventually to defacement and demolition of the Bellevue. Before Pavlyshyn's retirement in 1985, SOM's design was revised, retaining both the Mansions and Harris Court. The resulting State Works Centre won awards and its recent fall from favour and impending demolition is ill-judged.

On arrival in Brisbane Pavlyshyn emulated his father in becoming a leader of the Ukrainian community. He was a long-serving president of the Ukrainian Association and their architect, preparing plans for their hall and church as well as those of Ukrainian communities elsewhere in Australia. Pavlyshyn's awareness of his own heritage made him conscious of that of his adopted homeland—an inheritance often less well understood in Brisbane.

In 1959, *Cross-Section*, a lively advocate of modern architecture, favourably published Pavlyshyn's Caboolture Post Office, and later, his morgue. But when his Ukrainian Catholic Church,¹⁴ Romantic-Nationalist in style, was illustrated two years later, it was without comment and critically juxtaposed against a modern Ukrainian Church.¹⁵ In the next issue, Pavlyshyn defended his design: 'To the people who worship, the church is a symbol not only in the religious and spiritual sense. This also is a symbol of their homeland, of their past ... a visible link with the beloved they left behind ... a bridge to their new existence ...' Ironically, by then, Pavlyshyn had lost a battle to save an important part of Brisbane's heritage, a battle that continues.

REFERENCES

1. Marko Pavlyshyn, 'Roman Pavlyshyn b.1922' in M Brändle (ed.) *The Queensland experience: the life and work of 14 remarkable migrants*, Phoenix, Brisbane, 1991, pp. 208-32.
2. Ukrainian Peter Prystupa, later Pavlyshyn's colleague in the Queensland Works Department was a fellow student. His collection is also held in the Fryer Library.
3. In 1936, Anna Czuszak migrated to Australia to marry Eustachy Antoniszyn, a Ukrainian who was living at Mackay. A residence for the tropics (almost a Fijian bure) apparently drawn in 1946 by Pavlyshyn may have been intended for his future in-laws.
4. See Ian Sinnamon, 'Langer, Karl (1903-1969)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 15.
5. The abrupt juxtaposition of old and new was then a shock. Also, from George St, the new block obstructed a postcard view of Stanley's building, but not the main access through what was architecturally the back door of Stanley's Courts. The 'main' entrance from North Quay was unaffected.
6. Ironically, this site was on the opposite side of George St to the recently completed Supreme Court.
7. When the design was eventually developed during a phase of government economic stringency its pared-back form was unpopular.
8. Roman Pavlyshyn's design is in the Fryer Library. Design development and documentation was undertaken by Bligh Jessup & Bretnall. The decision to develop the original site predated a famous fire in Stanley's Supreme Court. Construction of the District Courts had already commenced, although the fire was subsequently used to justify the demolition.
9. The full saga is covered in Don Watson, "A tolerably imposing



pile" *The Brisbane Courts of Law 1857-1981*, *Supreme Court History Program Yearbook 2010*, pp. 46-121.

10. The constructionally complex addition to the Library, on a tight site with difficult access was designed by EJA Weller and others including Ury Stukoff, AJ Wheeler and David Davies. Its delayed completion and the unpopularity of Lindsay Edward's competition-winning mural, effectively ended Weller's career.
11. Apart from a new office at Tennyson for JC Taylor & Sons, contractor for the GMH Assembly Plant.
12. Including the Commissariat Store, Wolston House, Old Government House, and St Mary's Convent, Cooktown.
13. Lund Hutton Ryan Morton as architects, and UDPA (Melbourne) as urban designers. Fryer also holds John Morton's records relating to this work.
14. 36 Broadway St, Woollongabba. The plans for the church and its elaborate furniture and fittings (all designed by Roman Pavlyshyn) are held by the Fryer Library, as are plans for other Ukrainian churches elsewhere in Australia, also designed by him.
15. *Cross-Section*, no. 75 (January 1959), p. 3; no. 81 (July 1959), p.1, and no. 117 (July 1962), p. 3.

Above: Preliminary sketch of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Woollongabba, Brisbane. Roman Pavlyshyn Collection, 110127, 7.2.3.44, Box 6

Background: Photograph of the Ukrainian Catholic Church Woollongabba, Brisbane. Roman Pavlyshyn Collection, 7.2.3, Box 6

DR DON WATSON is a nationally awarded architect and historian and is the co-author with Dr Judith McKay of *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940* and *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century: a biographical dictionary*. He is continuing this research with his current project, *Queensland Architects of the Twentieth Century: a biographical dictionary 1900-1950*.

Alongside a distinguished career at the Queensland Department of Public Works, Don has taught at Queensland University of Technology and The University of Queensland where he is an Adjunct Professor. While lecturing at UQ Don worked with the Fryer Library to establish the Queensland Architectural Archive to which the plans of Roman Pavlyshyn have been added.