

Peter Overman

(*Building*, vol.5, no.1, 1985, p.7)

**Pieter (Peter) Carel Dominicus Overman** (1931-2000) was born 2 March 1931 at The Hague in the Netherlands. He spent much of his childhood in the Dutch colony of Bandung, at West Java. After time spent in a prisoner of war camp under Japanese occupation during the Second World War, and then caught up in the struggle of Indonesia's independence fighters in 1945, Overman and his family were eventually repatriated to Holland. Peter's secondary schooling was at a Catholic College in Breda, Holland from 1946 to 1950, followed by tertiary education at the Academy (Hogere Technische School) in Tilburg, Holland from October 1950 until May 1955. Overman was able to enjoy a student excursion to Paris, Rome and Florence in 1954.

Overman's parents decided to follow a close family friend to Western Australia, and with the diagnosis of his father's terminal illness, Peter moved to Perth shortly after in 1955. Following arrival in WA, Overman worked for the State Housing Commission 1955-1956, Cameron Chisholm & Nicol architects 1956-1957, and then as a designer for Corser Homes from 1957 until 1967. Overman noted that it was Syd Corser who gave him the opportunity to see his housing design philosophy become a reality. The 1960s partnership of Peter Overman and Corser Homes in WA had a relationship akin to Ken Woolley with project home builders Pettit & Sevitt on the east coast of Australia. Following a visit by Corser to Pettit & Sevitt, Overman's ideals for more open plan kitchen-dining-living areas were adopted in Corser Homes's work, along with split-levels, brighter spaces and a clearer expression of raw materials.

Overman passed the Architects Board of Western Australia examination in 1967, allowing his registration as an architect in WA (no.525), and soon shared offices with developer Graeme Robertson at Mill Point Road in South Perth. For Overman's first solo project he worked with Robertson on his initial Walkabout Motel at Port Hedland. This led to further Walkabout commissions at Geraldton, Newman, Karratha, and Gove in the Northern Territory. Robertson recalls Murray Middleton as a talented draftsman working for Overman who was able to greatly assist in the repetitive portions of the Walkabout documentation. Builder brothers Colin and Derek Pearce, who also worked with Robertson on the Walkabout developments, were in adjacent offices and Overman soon designed neighbouring houses for the Pearce Brothers at 34-36 Portree Way in Ardross.



Pearce Houses, Portree Way Ardross (*The Architect*, March 1969, p.39)

Overman was joined in business by Fred Zuideveld in 1968. In 1971 Overman noted that he ... “looked at his life as an art form of sorts. I will always try to make everything nice. I like atmosphere, cosiness and clean lines. I am, at heart, very much a European and I like things to be complete.”

The practice won a large number of awards for residential design work, including for Peter's own family house at Applecross in 1978, for the Williams House & Duplex at Applecross in 1982, and for the Naughton House at Mosman Park in 1987. Peter retired from his practice in 1994, but in the later years of that decade worked with his stepson Mark Rietveld, enjoying ‘a re-ignition of enthusiasm and creative spirit’.

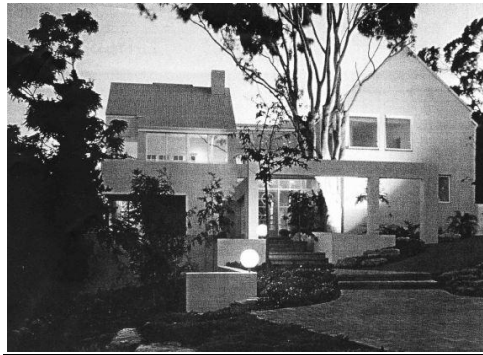


23 McNeil Street Peppermint Grove (Fritz Kos photo 1981, 218871PD)



57 Matheson Road Applecross triplex (Fritz Kos photo 1982, SLWA 222333PD)

Peter Overman won the Architects Board of Western Australia Award in 1995. A highly-respected architect in his adopted country, he died 17 December 2000, and was cremated at Karrakatta. Peter had married Josephine Catherine Rietveld in 1959. At his death he was survived by his wife Lia who he had married in 1973, daughters Monique and Lizette, stepchildren Michelle, Jeff and Mark and five grandchildren. Graeme Robertson, who had been introduced to his soon-to-be wife by Overman in the 1960s, read a eulogy at the funeral. The Australian Institute of Architects (WA) have in recent years named the Peter Overman Award for Residential Architecture – Houses (Alterations and Additions).



Naughton House Mosman Park (*The Architect*, Autumn 2001, p.10)

References:

- 'Builder's House', *The Architect*, March 1969, pp.39-41 (2 houses for the Pearce Brothers).  
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'Overman Residence', *The Architect* 19 (1979/2), p.16 (71a Matheson Road, Applecross).  
'Peter & Lia Overman Residence', *The Architect* 23 (1983/2), p.12 (71a Matheson Road).  
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