

THE COURT HOUSE.

by P.N. Hewett.

Despite the efforts of various pressure groups, Historical Societies, and the National Trust, the 1960's have been marked in Western Australia by many types of historic vandalism ranging from the opening of "time capsules" that are all of 25 years old, to the removal of old buildings to make way for modern earth and concrete works of doubtful importance. However, there is an awakening in progress and the small Court House in a corner of the Supreme Court Gardens appears to be safe for the future.

The Beginnings

The Swan River Colony had a small Court in the very early days but this was not a substantial structure and the Civil Engineer drew up a specification, dated 3rd February 1836, for the construction of a new Court. The original specification has been preserved and, like its modern counterpart, varies from careful detail to broad simplicity e.g.

"All sand used for the mortar shall be got from a sufficient depth to be coarse and free from vegetable matter and dirt."

"The three architraves of the porch shall be double being formed of two seven by thirteen pieces bolted together with half inch screw bolts mitred at the angles and having the inner ends cogged into a wall plate and loaded with the superincumbent wall".

"The roof shall be well and tightly shingled overall."

The contract was let for the sum of \$1396 plus \$77.50 for the gallery, and the first court sitting occurred on January 2nd, 1837. The building was designed for use as a Court and as a Church, and besides being (probably) the oldest building in Perth, it is the only example in Perth of Georgian architecture.

The History.

The Court House was used for many things since the shortage of halls, etc was apparently as great in the 1840's as it is in the 1960's and in many respects it was almost a Civic Centre.

From the 20th of September 1847 until 1850, it was used as the first home of Perth Boys School, and since it was still in use for legal purposes at that time, the school continued in the gallery whilst the Court convened in the main portion.

The Immigration Department used the Court House from 1856 to 1863 and then it reverted to Court use again until 1879. From 1879 to about 1900 the building housed the Government Gardener, and then in 1901 the first Arbitration Court was held in it.

The building remained the centre of Industrial Arbitration - until the creation of the Arbitration Commission in 1964, and it is now occupied by the

Legal Aid Society.

The Press.

The Colonial press in this State was never backward when offered the opportunity to criticize the Government, and most West Australians will have heard of the bitter attacks on the Goldfields Water Scheme. Similarly, the old Court House came under fire at regular intervals with comments about the high temperatures and their effects on Legal minds, and some sharp witticisms about the judge (circa 1870) who had to be protected from the leaky roof by an umbrella held by a clerk.

Apparently the ventilation was not very effective as will be seen in this extract from the "Inquirer" on Wednesday, March 25th, 1874. The Court House was said to be

"---- an edifice constructed without any reference to foul air, as a visit to it when court is in its criminal jurisdiction, will speedily convince the most skeptical."

The Renovation.

The Court House is still owned by the W.A. Government, and the Architectural Division of the P.W.D. has recently commenced to restore the building to its original condition. A major part of this work involves re-shingling the roof.

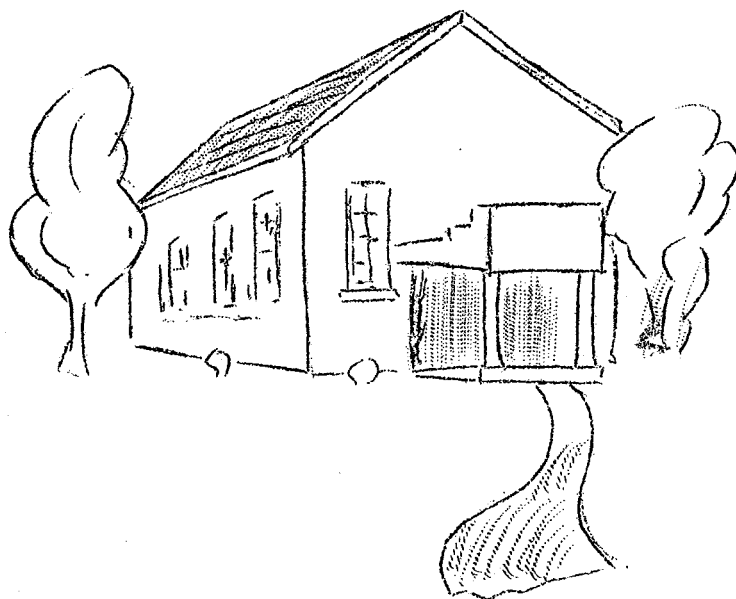
The original shingles and battens were She-oak, each shingle being approximately 10" x 4" and tapering in thickness from $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ ". The writer has one of these original pieces which is remarkably well preserved and which is still attached to a piece of batten by a single, hand made nail.

The new roof is very similar to the original and She-oak is again used as shingles. It is understood that Bunning Bros. supplied the material from Kojonup and from Albany. The shingles are sixteen inches long, tapering in thickness from $\frac{5}{8}$ inches to $\frac{5}{16}$ inches and in random widths from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Each piece is nailed to battens with a single galvanized nail placed about half an inch below "top dead centre". The shingles are two thirds overlapped which means that every nail is covered by two other boards and every exposed surface is underlain by two thicknesses.

There is unlikely to be a rush from new home builders for shingle roofs, but there is no doubt that a very pleasing effect can be achieved by roofing of this kind.

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providing much of the background material for this note.



A TRANSPLANTED EUCALYPT LIGNOTUBER
by L.D. O'Grady.

An unexpected result with a Eucalypt seedling transplant may interest other foresters.

A seedling established in my garden, (it looks like a Eucalyptus citriodora) was accidentally cut off while hoeing. All that was left was the stem approximately 12" high with an attached lignotuber approximately 1" in diameter but no roots.

This was planted about 9" deep with stem protruding 3", the ground kept moist, and in 12 months I have a tree 5 feet high. It appears certain that the lignotuber produced new roots to enable the plant to survive. Incidentally another lignotuber approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter has formed at ground level.

The point arises in my mind, which no doubt some forester can answer, is whether a lignotuber is a complete plant, i.e. we know it has buds which develop into stems and now apparently buds which can also produce roots. Therefore has the lignotuber the growth properties of a potato ?
