

SMITH, Louis Laybourne COLLECTION
Architecture Museum, Adelaide University

SMITH, Louis Laybourne

Series 204

BIOGRAPHY

Louis Edouard Laybourne Smith (1/4/1880–13/9/1965) was a prominent South Australian architect who established South Australia's first School of Architecture. Architecture was his profession, his hobby, indeed his obsession: he died at his office desk.

Laybourne Smith was born at Unley and his primary and secondary education were undertaken at Whinham and Way Colleges. Initially articled to A.A.E. Dancker in Kalgoorlie, WA, he studied mechanical engineering at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries (School of Mines) when he returned to Adelaide in 1898, gaining an Associate Diploma in 1902. Between 1901 and 1904 he was articled to Edward Davies and in 1908 graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Adelaide.

He initially worked as a draftsman and in 1903 lectured in mechanical engineering at the School of Mines; from 1905 to 1914 he was Registrar of the School of Mines. In the absence of a course in architecture at either the University of Adelaide or the School of Mines, in 1905 he initiated his own, with the course being formalised in 1906 as a part-time Diploma in Architecture.

In 1914 he joined one of Adelaide's most influential architectural firms, Woods, Bagot and Jory, becoming a partner of Woods, Bagot, Jory and Laybourne Smith in 1915. In 1930 James Irwin was made partner and the firm became Woods, Bagot, Laybourne Smith and Irwin (Herbert Jory established his own practice). Laybourne Smith remained head of the architecture course at the School of Mines until 1951, when his former pupil Gavin Walkley took over on a full-time basis. Laybourne Smith continued his association with the school until his death at 85.

His architectural designs included his own house at Northgate Street, Unley Park (1911), considered 'startlingly modern when it was built', the Hosking residence, Hawker's Road, Medindie (1924) and the Wardle residence, West Terrace, Kensington (1927). His ecclesiastical commissions included a chapel for the Dominican Cabra Convent at Goodwood (1914), St Cuthbert's Church of England, Prospect (1914) and the rebuilding of St Paul's Retreat, Glen Osmond (1920s). Other work included the design of buildings at Calvary Hospital, North Adelaide, the original Students' Union Building and cloisters (1927) at the University of Adelaide, and the red brick Bonython Jubilee Building at the School of Mines (now University of South Australia), Frome Road, Adelaide (1937). He collaborated with Walter Bagot and Sydney sculptor Rayner Hoff in the design of the South Australian National War Memorial on the corner of North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide (completed 1931).

Laybourne Smith was renowned for his contribution to the profession. He was an Associate of the South Australian Institute of Architects (SAIA) from 1904, Fellow from 1907. Elected to the SAIA Council in 1909, he served in various capacities including President from 1921 to 1923 and 1935 to 1937. He was integral to the formation of a national body of architects and was a founding member of the Federal Council of the Australian Institutes of Architects (President, 1919 to 1922). He was a Councillor of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) (1933 to 1944) and President (1937 to 1938) and was awarded the RAIA's Life Fellowship in 1944; his professional achievements were recognised nationally in 1961 with

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the RAIA's Gold Medal. He was appointed a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1939 and made a Life Fellow in 1944. He was awarded the CMG in 1948. He advised on the drafting of the *South Australian Building Act* 1923, described as a 'revolutionary' piece of legislation, and contributed to the framing of the *Architects' Act* 1939. He served as a member of the administering body for the Act and of the Architects' Board of South Australia and was Architectural Advisor to the South Australian Committee of the War Damage Commission in 1944.

This is an abridged version of: Christine Sullivan (2008) 'Louis Laybourne Smith', *Architects of South Australia database*, online at http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=27

SOURCES

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Freeland, J. (1971) *The Making of a Profession: A History of Growth and Work of the Architectural Institutes in Australia*, Angus and Robertson in association with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Sydney.

Irwin, J.C. (1988) 'Smith, Louis Laybourne (1880–1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol.11: 656–57.

Page, M. (1986) *Sculptors in Space, South Australian Architects 1836–1986*, RAIA SA Chapter, Adelaide.

Walkley, G. (1976) *The Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture & Building: A History, 1906–1976*, South Australian Institute of Technology, Adelaide.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Louis Laybourne Smith collection is comprised of architectural drawings and plans, newspaper clippings, correspondence from acquaintances, colleagues and clients.

Series 204 Correspondence, architectural drawings and plans

See [Special List](#)

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Series No.	Description	Date
S204/1/1	Letter from G Walkley	27/2/77
S204/1/2	Laybourne Smith to Opening of Whyalla Campus	11/3/65
S204/1/3	Laybourne Smith, Personal Letter regarding Journey To Albany and Coolgardie when a Child	ND
S204/1/4	Correspondence to Louis Laybourne Smith from various people	1963-65
S204/1/5	Death Notice for W H Bagot, Presentation of RAIA Gold Medal, Bust of Louis Laybourne Smith, Photo of Louis Laybourne Smith. All Newspaper Clippings	1958, 1961, 1963
S204/1/6	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1963
S204/1/7	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1962
S204/1/8	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1961
S204/1/9	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1960
S204/1/10	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1957-59
S204/1/11	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1954-56
S204/1/12	Various Louis Laybourne Smith Correspondence	1952
S204/1/13	Receipt for £50 For Enlargement And Alterations to House of Assembly By E.J. Woods, Signed by G. Light, Architect	1875
S204/1/14	Various Letters to Louis Laybourne Smith, including some from Walter Bagot on his travels (Note: *The State Library Of South Australia holds Collections of Letters in the woods Bagot collection which may relate to these letters received)	1914-52
S204/2	Residence in Northgate St, Unley Park. Louis Laybourne Smith, F.A.S.M., Architect. 1 Blueprint	N.D.
S204/3	Bonython Metallurgical Laboratory, Sketch Plan and Amended Design. Pencil, Ink And Washes On Drawing Paper. For SA School of Mines & Industries. Louis Laybourne Smith, Architect.	January 1906
S204/4	Caretaker's Lodge. 2 Identical Sheets of Elevations, Plans, Sections And Details. For SA School of Mines & Industries, Architecture Department. Louis Laybourne Smith, Architect. Donation By Woods, Bagot, Laybourne Smith And Irwin.	No date
S204/5	Perspective Sketch of Cottage For R.J. Legoe Esq. at Callendale	Sept 1928