

PHILPOT, Arthur

SERIES 354

BIOGRAPHY

Arthur Philpot engaged passionately with many facets of life and described himself as a 'Christian, humanitarian, architect, teacher and mentor in design, invention and presentation', a view endorsed by his peers (Chappel, 1984:16).

Arthur Alfred Philpot was born 16 December 1915 at Toodyay, in the district of Northam, Western Australia, to newly arrived English emigrants, Ernest Sidney and Annie Eliza (née Hutchings) Philpot (Page: 204; One Great Family). In 1936, at the age of 21, Philpot was indentured to the Western Australian architectural firm of Eales, Cohan and Fitzhardinge for a period of four years. J. Herbert Eales was one of the founders of the Western Australian Institute of Architects and its Board of Education, and was, according to Philpot, 'considered by many to be the doyen of architecture in that state'. Fitzhardinge, too, was well known throughout the profession. In 1940, Philpot sat for the Board examination for the ten prescribed subjects, gaining five passes and a credit in design. World War Two delayed the completion of his examinations. He moved to South Australia in 1941 and finally completed the remaining four subjects under the supervision of Louis Laybourne Smith in 1944 (Philpot Collection S354).

Philpot had come to South Australia in the reserved occupation of architect for the Commonwealth Department of Works. He was involved in munition factory design and supervision at the complex being built at Salisbury, remaining with the Department until 1947 (Page: 192, 204). On February 4, 1943, Philpot married Fanny Olive Thorpe, niece and adopted daughter of Mr and Mrs W. Trowse of Tusmore, at Scots Church, Adelaide (Advertiser 1943: 6). They had two children, Christopher (Ross) and Joy.

Philpot worked in the same office as Jack Cheesman for four years and became a partner with Evans, Bruer & Partners in 1947, the same year in which he became an Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA). He later became an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1953, and a Fellow of the RAIA in 1970. In 1953, the practice, then known as Evans and Bruer, Philpot & Partners (although Evans had died in 1948), took on Eric von Schramek, Christopher Bruer and Robert Dawes ('Public Notices', 1953). It was during this time in the 1950s that Philpot undertook ecclesiastical commissions for which he is best remembered: Ernabella Presbyterian (1952), Clearview Presbyterian (1954), Tusmore Presbyterian (1956, later Tusmore Park Uniting) and most notably, The John Flynn Memorial Church in Alice Springs (1956).

Arthur Philpot was asked to design The John Flynn Memorial Church to specifically reflect the life and achievements of John Flynn, a Presbyterian minister and one of the founders of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The foundation stone was laid by the Prime Minister, Mr. R.G. Menzies, on 26 June 1954 and was opened by the Governor-General and dedicated by the Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church in Australia on 5 May 1956. Constructed of pink and white marble and red sandstone sourced from Central Australia, it was 'intended to interpret and express history, the history of Flynn and the Inland; to speak of Flynn, with a message not only for the worshipper, for every inlander, for tourist and townsman alike' (Philpot, 1956: 6). The wide ranging symbolism was embedded in a structure responsive to

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the climate and environment of Alice Springs. The church is listed on the Northern Territory Government's Heritage Register.

From 1957 to 1959, Philpot worked as a salaried architect with the London firm of Beard Bennett & Wilkins. Upon his return to Adelaide he became a lecturer in architecture within the School of Architecture and Building at the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT). He covered architectural design in all years including final theses, and lectured specifically in Fine Arts and Aesthetics, Landscape, Free Drawing and the History of Architecture and Construction. He also worked towards a new course in Design and Invention as a General Studies elective subject at SAIT (Cheesman Collection).

Philpot's interests and skills extended beyond architecture and artistic pursuits. After a varied career, Philpot died on 4 February 1984. A Memorial Window to Arthur Philpot installed in the Tusmore Park Uniting Church where he was a member, included these words: 'He always had a pencil in his hand' (Philpot Collection).

This is an abridged excerpt from: McDougall, Alison, 'Philpot, Arthur Alfred', Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2015, Architects of South Australia: [http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=134]

SOURCES

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

Chappel, J. 'Obituary: Arthur Philpot', *Building and Architecture*, Vol 11, No.3 1984: 16.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Philpot collection comprises clippings, copies of biographical material and colour photographs.

SERIES LIST

Series	Description
S354/1	Biographical material on Arthur Philpot, includes correspondence regarding job applications
S354/2	Photograph of Arthur and Olive Philpot at their home, 37 Northumberland Ave, Tusmore, SA
S354/3	Photocopy of 'Intention and Performance: Creativity – Design and Creation' by Arthur Philpot, typescript and handwritten
S354/4	Photocopies of items relating to John Flynn Memorial Church, including excerpt from book by Richard Woldendorp and Roger McDonald (1994) <i>Australia's Flying Doctors</i> ; and axonometric drawing of church exterior
S354/5	List of architectural works by Arthur Philpot
S354/6	Photographs of Tusmore Park Uniting Church
S354/7	Photographs of St Andrews, Naracoorte
S354/8	Photographs of Arthur Philpot and family members with musical instruments including the Potterphone
S354/9	Australian Inland Mission Journal "Frontier News" Dec 1955 Vol 40
S354/10	Leaflet – The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs

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S354/11	Photo of Olive and Arthur Philpot
S354/12	Booklet – “A Memorial in the Heart of Australia” Vol 41 AIM Frontier News
S354/13	Five black and white photos The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs
S354/14	Two Christmas cards - The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs
S354/15	Four photo copies 5/5/56 - The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs
S354/16	Three photos – model The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs (2 photos interior and exterior - The John Flynn Memorial Church Alice Springs
S354/17	Newspaper article – “Water Lilies for Church” 31/10/53 Advertiser
S354/18	Newspaper article – “Inland Cathedral a shrine to Flynn” 19/6/54 Advertiser
S354/19	Newspaper article – “New Approach to Church building”
S354/20	Newspaper article – “Flynn Memorial Church Progress”
S354/21	Newspaper article – “Flynn Memorial Church begun”
S354/22	Newspaper article – “Memorial will symbolise Flynn’s achievements”
S354/23	Newspaper article – “Big tribute to Flynn by Menzies”
S354/24	Newspaper article – “Big day at Alice: PM lays Stone” 26/6/54 News
S354/25	Newspaper article – “PM to lay Stone”
S354/26	Newspaper article – “Wild scenes as train arrives at Alice Springs” 26/6/54 Advertiser
S354/27	Newspaper article – “Young patient flies south for health”
S354/28	Newspaper article – “Modern Ghan” 28/6/54
S354/29	Newspaper article – “If John Flynn had been an architect” 21/4/56 Sunday Mail
S354/30	Letter from PWE Culley to A Philpot re church 25/8/61
S354/31	Copy letter to AIM from Evans & Bruer Philpot & Partners 3/7/57 re John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/32	Copy letter 5/6/57 re John Flynn Memorial Church work to Rev A Grant
S354/33	Letter re John Flynn Memorial Church brochure 29/1/57 to Rev A Grant and notes on brochure
S354/34	Group of notes and letters re brochure John Flynn Memorial Church Sept 1956
S354/35	Journal AIM Frontier News Sept 1954
S354/36	Booklet Flynn’s Mantle of Safety, The Story of Adelaide House and its history
S354/37	Photo interior of a church
S354/38	Three programmes 5/5/2006, 7/5/2006, 7/5/2006 and hymn sheet 7/5/2006– Memorial Services John Flynn Memorial Church and Adelaide House Anniversary
S354/39	People Magazine – 8/9/54 – article re Arthur Philpot
S354/40	Original painting and copy by A Philpot 1943 coastal scene
S354/41	Reference letter re A Philpot from JD Cheesman to Winston Churchill Memorial Trust 15/7/71
S354/42	Three page summary of A Philpot’s philosophy in teaching architecture
S354/43	Patent search “Supporting panels in frames”
S354/44	Index page ‘building architecture’ Vol. 11 No3 April 1984 “Arthur Philpot Dies”

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S354/45	Book "St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Naracoorte SA – The Story of the First One Hundred Years 1856-1956"
S354/46	Two colour photo copies "A Chapel is built stitch by stitch" Woman's Day 24/20/66 (Congregational Church, Glenelg)
S354/47	Copy thanksgiving service for symbol of the fish and the canopy (Congregational Church, Glenelg)
S354/48	Photo Kent Town Health Care building – 32 Fullarton Road, Kent Town (large old house)
S354/49/1	Two Ernabella Newsletters, Dec 1952, March 1953
S354/49/2	Leaflet "Men of the Mulga" Ernabella
S354/49/3	Notes on visitation to Ernabella for opening of new church 20/8/52
S354/49/4	Four black and white photos of new Ernabella church November 1952 (Presbyterian)
S354/49/5	Black and white photo of Ernabella Hospital Nov 1952
S354/49/6	Two black and white photos Ernabella breakfast Nov 1952
S354/50	Documents re house at 48 Sydney Street, Glenside by A Philpot 12/9/70
S354/51	Two copies specifications for the John Flynn Memorial Church Jan 1954
S354/52	Folder – correspondence with builder John Flynn Memorial Church 1953/54
S354/53	Folder – correspondence with builder John Flynn Memorial Church 1955
S354/54	Folder – correspondence with builder John Flynn Memorial Church 1956
S354/55	Trans Air Vol 7 no 4 April 1956 – article John Flynn
S354/56	Copy letter 23/11/55 re progress payment on John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/57	Group of rough pencil sketches re church
S354/58	Central Australia leaflet
S354/59	Copy article "Memorial will symbolise Flynn's Achievements" Age 24/6/54
S354/60	History of John Flynn- Dr G Simpson 9/12/56
S354/61	Programme for unveiling Flynn Commemorative Cairn 27/8/53
S354/62	Group of rough notes re John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/63	Letter 8/7/54 to "Arthur" from Jim Richards re glass design John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/64	Newspaper article – photo John Flynn Memorial Church News 28/4/56
S354/65	Newspaper articles – "Memorial Church at Alice and "Interest mounts at Alice and "Flynn of the Inland" 1/5/56 Advertiser
S354/66	AIM Frontier News Col 39 Sept 1954 re Flynn's grave and Foundation stone
S354/67	Draft and copies of letters Sept 1956 re design John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/68	Four colour postcards John Flynn Memorial Church, one of Flynn's grave
S354/69	TAA map of Australian air routes
S354/70	Architectural competition drawings for the Sydney Opera House. It is unclear if these were designed by Philpot himself or with others in the practice of Evans and Bruer, Philpot & Partners who included: L. Greg Bruer, Eric von Schramek, Christopher Bruer and Robert Dawes as well. The successful entrant was announced in 1957 to be Jorn Utzon.
S354/71/1-5	Architectural Drawings for John Flynn Memorial Church
S354/72	Folder – Australian Government Task Force to investigate Modern Housing Techniques
S354/73	Folder- Profile of A Philpot for Probus Newsletter 1984
S354/74	Folder – Partnership Agreement Evans & Bruer

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S354/75	Folder – Cross House at Carrickalinga
S354/76	Folder – Various house plans including Campbell, Nall & Sons, Jarrett, Ryan, Westerman Manse
S354/77	Folder – House – Nitschke & Slade
S354/78	Folder – Tusmore Presbyterian Uniting Church
S354/79	Folder – Clearview Presbyterian Church
S354/80/1	Folder – Inventions and Patents and documents
S354/80/2	Folder - Inventions and Patents and documents
S354/80/3	Folder - Inventions and Patents and documents
S354/80/4	Folder - Inventions and Patents and documents
S354/81	Folder – Woodroffe sketches
S354/82/1	Folder – Manuscript of book – creativity theory
S354/82/2	Folder - Manuscript of book – creativity theory
S354/82/3	Folder - Manuscript of book – creativity theory
S354/82/4	Folder - Manuscript of book – creativity theory
S354/82/5	Folder – ED Research
S354/83	Folder – musical instruments inventions
S354/84	Folder – John Flynn Memorabilia
S354/85	Folder – London employment 1957