Modernism and the Everyday: A South Australian Perspective

Architecture Museum Symposium
University of South Australia
21 February 2025

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University of South Australia | ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM

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'Modernism and the Everyday: A South Australian Perspective' Symposium presented by the University of South Australia Architecture Museum.

Convenor: Julie Collins, Architecture Museum

Event Support by UniSA Creative, University of South Australia

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10.00am	**Jet O'Rourke (Cumulus Studio)** *Among the Gumtrees: The everyday modernism of Hubertus (Huub) van der Pennen in South Australia*
10.15am	**Perri Sparnon (Forum Studio and University of Adelaide) and Will Shaw (Forum Studio)** *The City is a Large House: The Works of Brian Polomka*
10.30am	**Discussion and questions**
10.45am	*BREAK – tea and coffee and biscuits provided*
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14.00pm	**Dr Glenn Harper (University of Sydney)**
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14.15pm	**Dr Catherine Howell (Heritage SA, DEW)**
	'Far from everyday work'? Designing with injection-moulded plastics in postwar South Australia
14.30pm	**Dr Paul Mazourek (City of Whyalla)**
	Whyalla Architecture: From Tents to Streamline Moderne
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15.15pm	**Dr Louise Bird (Heritage SA, DEW and University of South Australia)**
	'That's just hideous': perspectives from a South Australian heritage practitioner in protecting Modern architecture 'the problem child of heritage'
15.30pm	**Meherzad Schroff (University of Adelaide) and Dr Amit Srivastava (University of Adelaide)**
	Burnside Community Art & Crafts Centre: Timber and Adaptive Reuse in South Australia in the 1970s
15.45pm	**Sam Rosenzweig (Swanbury Penglase Architects)**
	Conserving Modernism – Repeopling Union House
16.00pm	**Discussion and questions**
16.15	**Concluding Remarks**
16.30	**Close**

Ellis Residence, Springfield, South Australia, Russell S. Ellis, 1943. Photo by Max Dupain.

Anything but the Everyday: Adelaide Modernism: 101 Houses

Tim Reeves' new book *Adelaide Modernism: 101 Houses* reveals the city's rich history of residential modernism, bringing together for the first time in one publication 101 houses built over 35 years from 1939 to 1974. Selection was based on a key criterion relating to architectural significance, with historical or reputational significance also taken into account. Designs comprise bespoke houses but also blocks of flats as well as public and project housing, and competition entries.

Over 50 suburbs are represented, ranging from Banksia Park to Burnside, from Salisbury Heights to Springfield. Over 70 architects are represented – with nearly half their own home – including John Andrew, John Chappel, Jack Cheesman, Bob Dickson, Russell Ellis, Ian Hannaford, Peter Jansen, Jack Hobbs McConnell, Newell Platten and Brian Snowden. National practitioners include Robin Boyd, Peter Muller and Harry Seidler.

This presentation will demonstrate that the city's architects were producing work that was anything but the everyday, houses that were well on par with the rest of Australia, including the eastern states.

Tim Reeves

Tim Reeves is a historian, a graduate of the University of Adelaide and an Adjunct Research Fellow at UniSA Creative. He has published papers on Australia's first architect (1812) and architectural competitions (1826-27). His housing books are the award-winning *100 Canberra Houses: A Century of Capital Architecture* (co-authored with Alan Roberts), *Winning Homes: 75 Australian House Design Competitions* and Adelaide *Modernism: 101 Houses*. His 2022 book *The Death of Dr Duncan* has been optioned for screen adaptation.

Lynton Residence, South Australia, Hubertus (Huub) Van der Pennen, 1962. Photo by Jet O'Rourke.

Among the gum trees: The everyday modernism of Hubertus (Huub) van der Pennen in South Australia

Hubertus (Huub) van der Pennen was employed at Adelaide City Council from 1955-1991, initially as an architectural draftsperson and later as Town Building Surveyor. Born in s-Hertogenbosch Netherlands in 1933, Pennen trained as an architectural engineer, before immigrating to Australia in 1954 to avoid conscription. Under the anonymity of his earliest role at A.C.C., and stewardship of Town Clerk William Veale (who had been inspired by his own recent study tour of Europe), Pennen was entrusted with the design of projects such as *Alpine Restaurant* (1962-63) in South Parklands, and public amenities and kiosks within Adelaide's green belt.[1] In addition to these uncelebrated yet public works, Pennen also undertook a private commission *Lynton Residence* (1962), which has maintained even greater anonymity.

Pennen's *Lynton Residence* situates International Style modernism within Adelaide's southern foothills. Commissioned by June and Russian émigré husband Alexander Padarin, the two-bedroom split-level home utilised a modern pavilion typology. Alexander's own modernist exchange, inspired them to build a modern home.[2] Early meetings with Pennen included references to Harry Seidler. The analysis examines to what extent Pennen referenced the *Rose Seidler House (1950)*, and contemporaneous examples such as Nino Sydney's *Beachcomber* (1961), and John S. Chappel's *Clark House* (1961), as the concept of 'elevating a building above ground level, enabled by *piloti*, was taken up enthusiastically by many architects'.[3] The presentation argues that within the growing acceptance of Australia's natural landscape[4], the relationship between émigré client and non-architect reinforced ambition for pavilion style architecture in lieu of 'small-house modernism'[5] of the 1950s.

Jet O'Rourke

As Studio Leader for Cumulus Studio in Adelaide, Jet thrives at the intersection of creative pursuits. Formerly a professional musician and illustrator, he was drawn to architecture for its interdisciplinary approach. Jet brings extensive experience in residential alterations and additions, aspirational social housing, and nature-based tourism. Remaining actively engaged in architectural research, Jet has served as a sessional tutor at UniSA and Monash Art Design and Architecture School. During his studies, he earned the Hodgkison Graduate Prize for his Master of Architecture thesis at UniSA, and the APBSA's 2013 Travelling Prize in Architecture.

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[1] Adelaide City Council, *Oral History Interview with Mr. Hubertus (Huub) Marinus Cornelis Jozef van der Pennen*, 1999.
[2] Jet O'Rourke, Oral account by June Padarin to author, 2022.
[3] Dominic Bradbury, *Atlas of Mid-Century Modern Houses* (Phaidon, 2019), 7.
[4] Richard Aitken, *Cultivating modernism: reading the modern garden 1917-71* (Miegunyah Press, 2013), 132.
[5] J. O'Callaghan and C. Pickett, *Designer Suburbs: Architects and Affordable Homes in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2012), 48.

110 George Street, Norwood, Brian Polomka, 1954-64, Polomka collection, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia.

Perri Sparnon

Perri is a graduate of architecture at Forum Studio and tutor at the School of Architecture and Built Environment (SABE), University of Adelaide. She was previously a researcher at SABE's Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA). Perri holds a Master of Architecture (First Class Honours) from the University of Melbourne. She has published articles on Australian art and architecture, most recently in *Memo Review*, and was a founding editor of *Index Journal of Art History*. Her current research interests include Australian residential architecture, heritage and conservation.

The City is a Large House: The Works of Brian Polomka

In the early 1950s, the South Australian architect Brian Polomka (1922–2003) designed his family home at 110 George Street, Norwood (c. 1954-64). This site-responsive dwelling was composed of masonry, timber and glass, and featured a sinusoidal 'crinkle-crankle' boundary brick wall, which subtly renegotiated the line between private property and public street.

Emphasising archival research and key case studies, this presentation explores Polomka's sensitive concern for the ordinary fragments of urban and suburban everyday life. Fencing, footpaths, schools, street trees, shopfronts and supermarkets became key themes that Polomka traced as both an architect and civic leader. The presentation contextualises Polomka's concern for the 'everyday' at various scales: private dwellings, educational and commercial buildings and master plans, and finally his work in local government administration for the City of Norwood throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

If, as Alberti writes, 'the house is a small city, and the city is a large house,' then Brian Polomka's oeuvre highlights the increasingly relevant ability of the architect to work across these scales, from the design of private homes to the politics of the council chambers. Evident in the crinkle-crankle boundary wall of 110 George Street, Polomka's work demonstrates a generous design ethos that extends beyond the private property line and the typical scope of the architect, making a city of the house, and a house of the city.

Will Shaw

Will is an Architect and Associate at Forum Studio, working across urban and suburban masterplans, and residential and commercial buildings. Will is a guest tutor and lecturer in design at the School of Architecture and Built Environment (SABE), University of Adelaide. He holds a Master of Architecture (First Class Honours) from the University of Melbourne where he was the recipient of numerous awards including the Nell Norris Scholarship, and undertook study at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. His thesis project "Idle Footsteps - A New Cultural Spine for the University of Melbourne's Parkville Campus" was shortlisted for the Victorian Unbuilt Architecture Award.
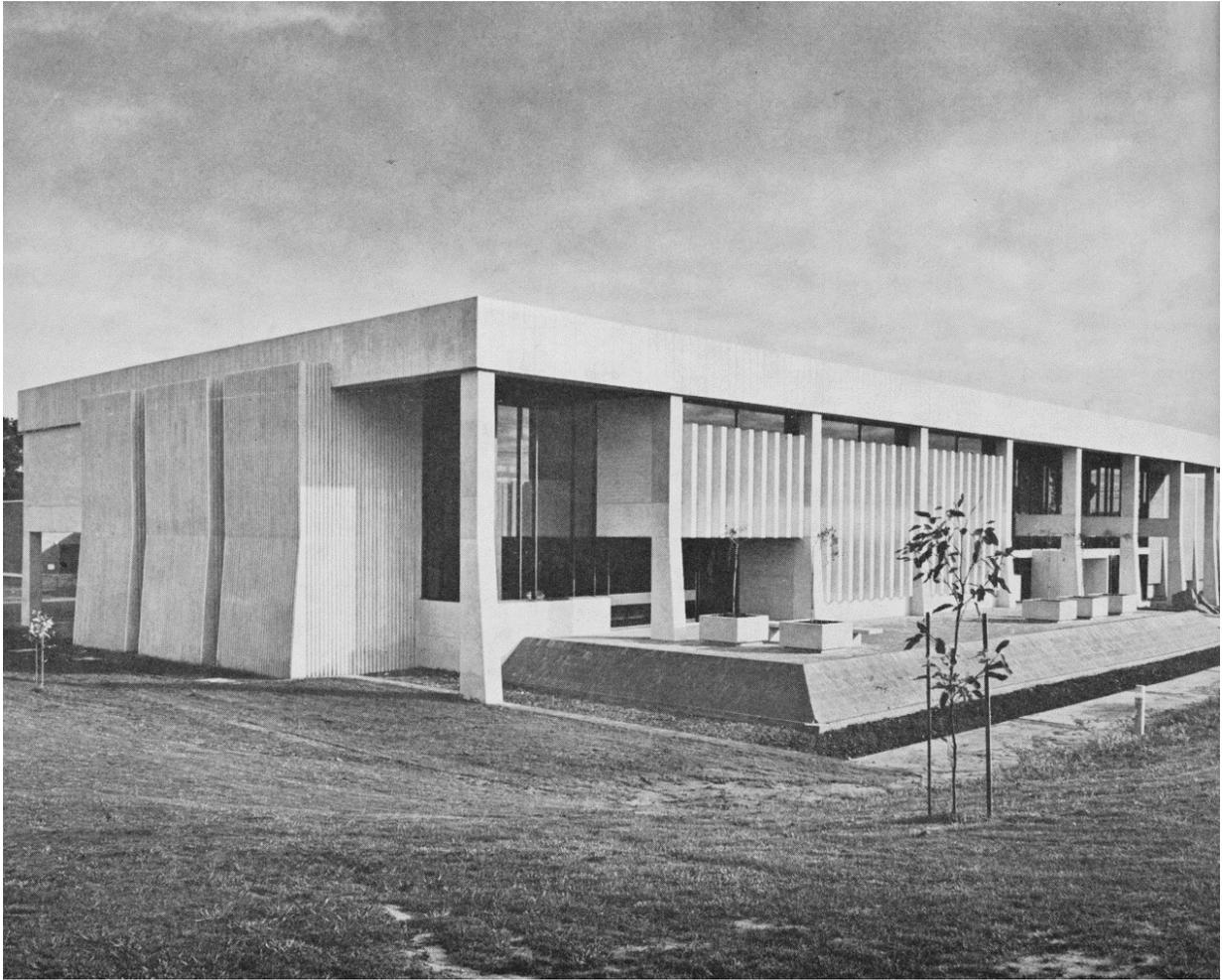
Australian Minerals Foundation, Glenside, 1971-3, *Constructional Review,* November 1973, copy held by Architecture Museum, University of South Australia.

Dr Stephen Schrapel

Stephen Schrapel is a heritage architect and Senior Associate at Swanbury Penglase Architects. Stephen has significant experience in the management of heritage places, the technical aspects of material conservation, adaptive re-use of heritage places, and a broad knowledge of South Australia's heritage. Stephen has a PhD in architectural history and is an occasional lecturer and tutor in the history and theory program in the School of Architecture at the University of Adelaide where he is an Adjunct Fellow. Stephen is a current member of the South Australian Heritage Council and a member of Australia ICOMOS.

The Everyday Innovators: Italian Migrants and Architectural Modernism in South Australia

The Australian Minerals Foundation (AMF) Building (1971-73) represents a compelling case study of how international modernist influences were adapted to South Australian construction practices and expertise. While the building's design emerged from Cheesman, Doley, Brabham, and Neighbour's study of Japanese modernism, it was transformed through collaboration with local Italian-Australian concrete manufacturers, creating a distinctive regional interpretation of modernist principles.

This paper examines how the building's distinctive construction, combining in-situ, pretensioned and precast concrete elements, emerged from a decades-long evolution of Italian migrant contribution to South Australia's construction industry. Beginning with the establishment of terrazzo companies by the Del Fabbro and Floreani families in the interwar period, these businesses successfully transformed from traditional craftwork to architectural prefabrication, influencing Adelaide's modernist character. The AMF Building represents the culmination of this technical evolution, demonstrating how migrant expertise, amongst others, shaped everyday building practices that distinguished South Australian modernism from international models.

Drawing on architectural documentation and industry publications, this paper situates the AMF Building within a broader narrative of South Australian architectural development, connecting it to projects like the University of Adelaide Law Building (1967) and the IMFC Building (1970). Additionally, through the lens of Construction History, it recognises the pivotal role of secondary agents in shaping Australia's built environment. Bringing these methodological and historiographical insights together, the paper challenges the simplistic narratives of technological progress by revealing how everyday construction practices, shaped by migrant communities, created distinctive regional expressions of architectural modernism in South Australia.

Dr Amit Srivastava

Amit Srivastava is the Director (India) for the Centre of Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA) based at the University of Adelaide. Having trained and practiced as an architect in India, Srivastava's primary work focused on the architectural and construction histories of colonial and postcolonial India. Other current research focuses on the themes of transnational exchange of materials, skills, and construction processes across the Indian Ocean world, with special interest in cases of South-South cooperation. He is also looking at Australian Architects in Asia and impacts on material culture in Australia.

Irmler, Bernhard, and Elke Nagel. "M.A.N.-Stahlhäuser: Individualisierung Als Markenzeichen Und Herausforderung Im Fertighausbau." *Architectura* 51, no. 1 (July 1, 2021): 36 https://doi.org/10.1515/atc-2021-1004.

Tin Do

A Graduate of Architecture currently completing an Honours thesis as part of transitioning into a career in academia, and to demonstrate and improve my capacity to work in this field. My interest in modernism stems from a belief that many of its tenets are worth reexamining. While the structuralist tendencies of its application in the mid-20th century require rethinking, its ethos of rationalising building in a way that synthesises form, a response to its setting and the 'mode' of material and social needs resonates today.

Prefab Dreams and the Legacy of the Thiersch/Niggemann House - A German Contribution to Adelaide Modernism

Gunther Niggemann's house is in ways both central and peripheral to the story of Adelaide Modernism. Evidence of the still-extant house's former lives exists in archived lifestyle and architecture magazines, not least of which is the Contemporary Architects' Group's guide 'Modern Houses in Adelaide' which features the Niggemann house on its cover. What is less documented is the house's role as a prototype for Functional Homes Ltd, a prefabricated home building business started by Niggemann and Graham Steen.

This enterprise produced a further three home designs in conjunction with Maurice Doley and Newell Platten. A fourth home attributed to Niggemann was submitted for local heritage consideration in Burnside, built with prefabricated parts from Maschinenfabrik Augsburg Nürnberg (MAN) Diesel in Germany. MAN Diesel, an industrial manufacturer better known in Australia for the production of trucks and heavy vehicles briefly ventured into housing to support reconstruction efforts following the Second World War; the Burnside house was only one of a few hundred that were ever produced and perhaps fewer that were successfully exported before production ceased.

A physical connection therefore exists between Functional Homes Ltd and the post-war prefabricated housing industries of Europe. Both shared an experimental approach to prefabricated construction as a complete system manufactured off site that was able to be transported great distances and established on difficult sites. Each sought to achieve a minimum dwelling footprint through economic means while still displaying sensitivity to the needs of a future occupant. While these notions were not commercially viable in their time, they continue to be of relevance and may speak to a present desire for simpler and sustainable housing. This presentation begins to build this story in light of new material from a Construction History lens, exploring existing links to the Adelaide modernist scene and potentially adding new ones.

Dr Amit Srivastava

Amit Srivastava is the Director (India) for the Centre of Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA), University of Adelaide. Having trained and practiced as an architect in India, Srivastava's primary work focused on the architectural and construction histories of colonial and postcolonial India. Other current research focuses on the themes of transnational exchange of materials, skills, and construction processes across the Indian Ocean world. He is also looking at Australian Architects in Asia and impacts on material culture in Australia.

Education Department Building, Adelaide, September 2024, Photo Joshua Nash.

Dr Joshua Nash

Dr Joshua Nash is founding editor of *Some Islands: A journal of linguistics and art*.
Photo: Joshua Nash, Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, Germany, June 2023

Adelaide Brutalism?

Brutalism is in vogue both popularly and in the academy. Some Australian studies have considered the national style as a whole. Scant work has studied regional specifics. Even less has been written about Adelaide Brutalism. Kevin O'Sullivan's work on the Government Building Precinct in Adelaide begins the documentation of large-scale brutalist projects in urban Adelaide. Stuart Symons' *Modernist Adelaide* reveals much about the Adelaide modern architectural scene generally, in which the city's Brutalism plays an integral element.

The 1970s and 1980s were heady, optimistic, and well-funded times in South Australia for left-leaning social development. More than several built outcomes exude and express such positivity and confidence. This presentation analyses a corpus of Adelaide City brutalist architecture—Forensic Science Centre, Motor Registration Building, Education Department Building, and Wakefield House—and several other building projects in Adelaide suburbs including the South Australian College of Advanced Education in Magill, the Australian Mineral Foundation Centre Building, Glenside, and Regency Park TAFE. It queries whether these projects constitute a significantly different Adelaide brutalist style suited to South Australian social and environmental conditions. Further, the research delves into the personage of modern architecture in the state, in particular the 1970s, compared to the Brutalism and architects in other Australian state at a similar time to ascertain the South Australianness of the climates in which these modernist essays were erected.

The approach taken is exploratory, deductive, and generative. The research questions for the larger project of which this presentation is a part are born from the method of creating the visual corpus itself. Several issues are: What architectural features common in Australian Brutalism are typically Australian? What architectural features common in South Australian Brutalism are typically South Australian? Is there a distinct style which can be labeled Adelaide Brutalism? How have the natural and cultural environment of Adelaide affected 1. the structures themselves, 2. the structures' use, and 3. the historical and heritage importance of the structures? The method involves archival research followed by fieldwork and the photographing of structures. Considerations include: The political and social provenance of the building, their purposes, the architects involved, the locations of particular buildings, incident climate, materials, geometry, arrangement, and employment of typography, plus the use of colour in the buildings and associated planning. The results offer a partial description of the evolution of modern architecture in Adelaide City and surrounding suburbs. These works fit within a greater history of South Australian architecture, and suggest how this state's Brutalism comprises a partial story of (modern) Australian architectural history.
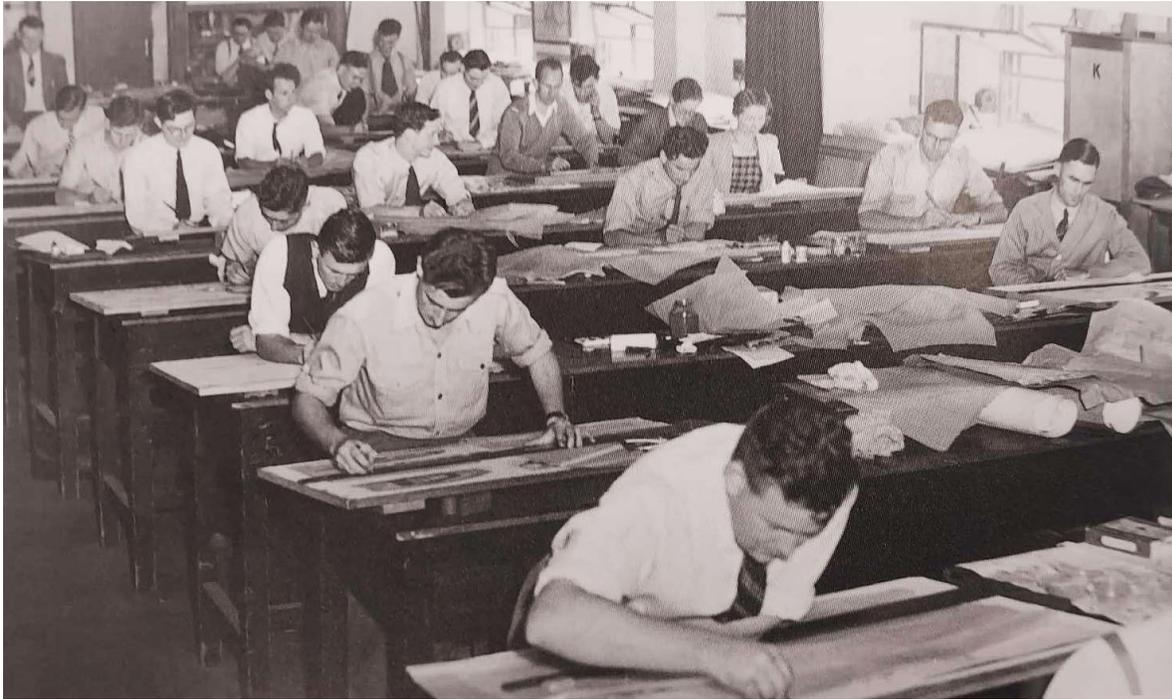
Architecture examination at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries c.1950s, and Architecture lecturer Derrick Kendrick's office, University of Adelaide.

Educational Blueprints: archiving South Australia's Modernist design pedagogy

This presentation examines how the archival collections of the University of South Australia's Architecture Museum shed light on emerging histories of modernist design pedagogy in South Australia, emphasising the critical role of educational artefacts such as syllabi, lecture notes, project briefs, and student work. These materials document the ways in which modernist principles—functionalism, social purpose, and responsiveness to local context—were integrated into design curricula, offering a distinctly South Australian perspective on the modernist movement. Through an exploration of these preserved records, the Museum reveals how educators adapted international modernist ideals to local needs, materials, and cultural influences, fostering a pedagogical approach that emphasized both innovation and relevance to everyday life.

This archival collection highlights lesser-known narratives within South Australian design education, surfacing stories of educators and students who translated modernist principles into practice within their region. By focusing on the everyday artefacts of design teaching and learning, the Museum allows us to trace the educational practices that contributed to South Australia's unique interpretation of modernism, positioning these materials as a resource for understanding both the historical and contemporary relevance of modernist pedagogy.

The Architecture Museum's archival collection positions these materials as essential resources for understanding the historical and contemporary relevance of modernist design pedagogy. By preserving and presenting these artefacts, the Museum ensures that the foundational philosophies and practices of South Australian design education remain accessible to researchers, educators, and students. This presentation underscores the significance of these archival efforts, highlighting their role in bridging the historical legacies of Modernist pedagogy with its potential resonance with design education today.

Dr Nathan James Crane

Dr Nathan James Crane is an academic and educator with over fifteen years of experience in the design industry, specialising in pedagogy, history, critical theory, and archival practices. He is Chair of the Design Institute of Australia (DIA) for the SA/NT State Council and leads archive projects that preserve key emerging Australian design histories. His research spans theory, design education, and technology's impact on spatial imagination. Nathan's current projects aim to bridge historical and contemporary practices in design education, providing educators and students with resources to critically engage with Australia's design heritage.
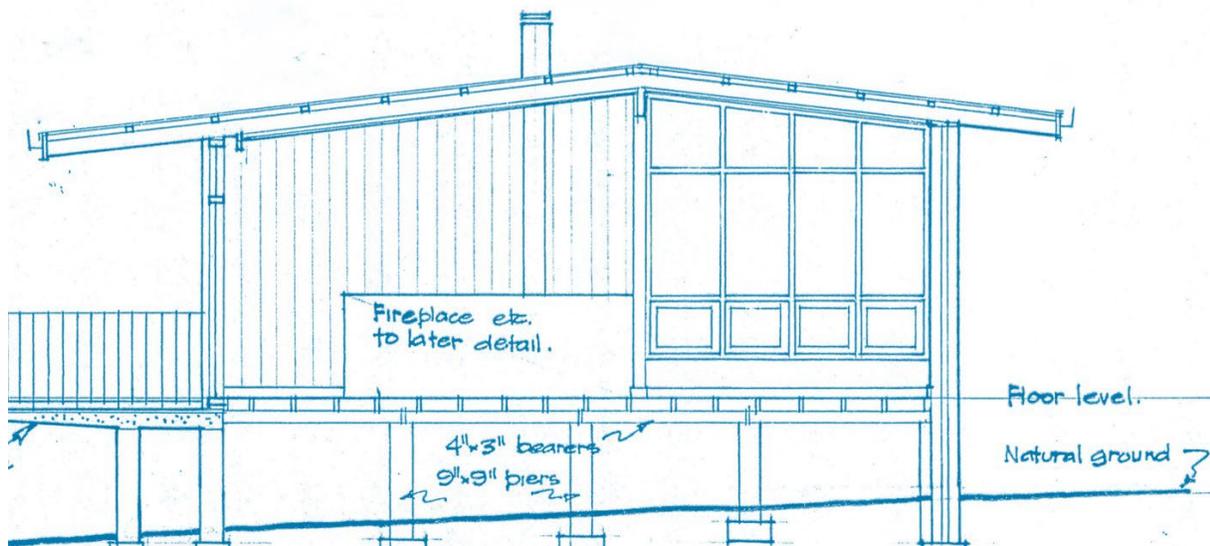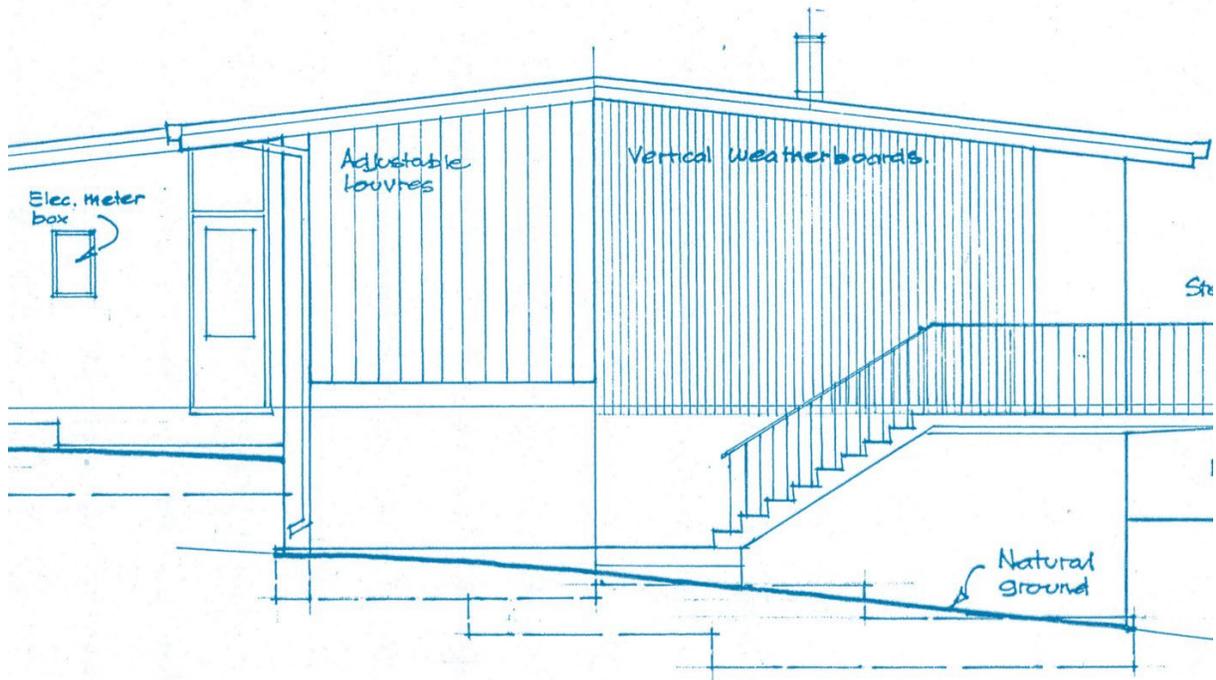
Queale House, South Australia, Architect Doug Michelmore, 1959.

Lost Modernism – fragments of my memory rooms

Growing up in a 1959 Adelaide Regional bush style house was inspiring – the outside was inside and the house was designed to be a perfect fit for our family. Plate glass windows ruled, and functional planning defined the way we lived. The suburb was littered with similar 'Australian dreams', all representing a new way of (family) life in prosperous and modern post-war suburban Adelaide.

Our foothills house was designed by Adelaide Architect, Doug Michelmore in 1959 and was home for our family for 30 years, until the bulldozer moved in. Our house even featured in John Chappel's ongoing newspaper publication of fashionable architect-designed houses of the period. My memories of a bespoke, modern lifestyle are clear, but most of the evidence was lost, with design drawings left behind when the house was sold and then demolished in the 1990s. The only extant documentation of the house remains in a newspaper. I often see fragments of our house in other houses of the period – the window catches, louvre doors or face crème brickwork – or in family photos and other ephemera. The ghosts of my memory rooms randomly haunt.

Tangible fragments of my domestic memory will be used to illustrate my view on 'Adelaide Regionalism' and domestic life in the foothills of Adelaide in the 1960s. The journey to document my past memories will also be explored. These houses should be celebrated, remembered and referenced as a way of living still relevant today.

Michael Queale

Michael has over 35 years of experience in heritage conservation in South Australia, encompassing heritage assessment, conservation of buildings and the design of contemporary buildings within historic contexts. As Principal Heritage Architect, at Heritage South Australia (DEW), Michael is responsible for heritage policy and advocacy. He also leads professional heritage advice in relation to the development of heritage places. Michael holds a Master in Cultural Heritage (Deakin) is a Visiting Fellow in the University of Adelaide School of Architecture, is Chair of the Aust Institute of Architects Heritage Committee and has been past Vice-President of Australia ICOMOS.

Small Homes Service of South Australia, *Homebuilders Handbook – S.A.*, 1958, Cheesman collection, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

The Small Homes Service of South Australia

In 1953 the South Australian Institute of Architects, with the support of the *Advertiser* newspaper, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Timber Development Association, and the SA Master Builders Association decided to put into operation a Small Homes Service (SHS) along the lines of that operating in Victoria with an aim of stimulating architectural design and hence producing better housing. The objectives of the SHS were 'to help people who would not normally seek architectural advice, and to improve the construction and design of South Australian houses.'

To achieve its aims, the SHS architects sought to produce a range of plans for small houses that home builders could purchase for a nominal fee. Newspapers were the main avenues of publicity for the SHS, and later the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine. Commonly the articles featured a perspective drawing and a plan of the house with text describing its features, occasionally with a photograph of a constructed dwelling. Further media exposure for the SHS was gained through radio broadcasts, competitions and exhibitions.

In conjunction with the media publicity, the SHS sold brochures that illustrated a selection of the house designs available. These brochures provided architectural plans and perspectives accompanied by advice on how to design a home and qualities to look for when choosing one. Once a plan had been chosen, the home builder could either order the drawings and specifications by mail or visit the office of the SHS to purchase them for £10.

Designed to appeal to the 'man in the street' the plans contributed by the SHS architects were to be simple, workable and easily understood. By 1956, the Chairman of the SHS Board, Jack Cheesman, had noted that the public had started to appreciate functional design with at least fifty per cent of clients requesting contemporary design while others 'could be talked into it'. This paper will provide an overview of the work of the SHS and its contribution to SA's Modern architecture.

Dr Julie Collins

Julie Collins is Director (Curatorial and Research) at the Architecture Museum, and Senior Research Fellow at UniSA Creative, University of South Australia. With a background in architectural history, Julie's work has focused on histories of health-related buildings, with her book, *The Architecture and Landscape of Health*, released in 2020. She is also interested in the histories of architects and interior designers and their works, particularly in South Australia. Julie was named South Australia's Historian of the Year in 2024.

Architect John Morphett AM OBE (1932-2016)

John Morphett and Architectural Collaboration: Becoming the Everyday in the Architectural Practice of HASSELL

This paper gives historic shape to 'architectural collaboration', a design method introduced to HASSELL Adelaide by the architect, John Morphett AM OBE (1932-2016). Morphett embraced the collaborative method while working in Boston with Walter Gropius, an architect who first developed the idea when he founded the Bauhaus in 1919, and would soon make collaboration synonymous with the *modus operandi* of HASSELL.

While Morphett applied this design method to his projects when he re-joined HASSELL in 1962, it was not until 1975 as a partner, that he implemented the collaborative method in all aspects of this well-established Adelaide practice. Strategically, this took place after Jack McConnell had left. In this change the office was renamed from Hassell McConnell and Partners to HASSELL and Partners, and restructured to include the disciplines of architecture, interior design, landscape architecture and planning. When the practice was renamed simply HASSELL in 1978, this adjustment not only represented the modernisation of the company but a change in the nature of their architectural projects, now underpinned by the collaborative method.

The paper will first examine the narrative of architectural collaboration. The second part of the paper, by way of example, will examine the Canberra Playhouse, Canberra (1995-1998). With Morphett's ongoing interest in designing theatres, a building type encountered with the Adelaide Festival Centre (1969-1973), the theatre plan was conceptualised by Morphett in Adelaide and was then developed by a team in Sydney. In this context, architectural collaboration, where a team of architects would contribute to resolving a complex design problem, had become the 'everyday' in a company with a national focus. While contributing to the deployment of late modern pluralism, the importance and effectiveness of collaboration for HASSELL, while representing a fundamental change in their ideology, was a design method first embraced in South Australia.

Dr Glenn Harper

Glenn researches late modernism in Australia. In 2024 he gained his PhD from the University of Sydney on "Public agency and the New Brutalism: public architecture in NSW, 1958-1988". He has co-authored *Margo Lewis No Limits* (2022), undertook two entries for *Australian Modern* (2019), and edited *Concrete Melbourne Map* (2019) and *Brutalist Sydney Map* (2017). He has worked with Peter Myers, Colin St John Wilson, Ken Woolley, and Ken Maher at HASSELL Sydney, and is tutor in Australian architectural history at the University of Sydney. Instagram: @urban_schnapps and @brutalist_project_Sydney.

Don Dunstan visiting Castalloy Limited, photograph by Ron Woolmore, Sept. 1971, State Library of South Australia, BRG 390/44/36.

'Far from everyday work'? Designing with injection-moulded plastics in postwar South Australia

This paper will investigate the diverse, yet often unnoticed practise of industrial design and its history in South Australia. It will present a case study of two South Australian product designs: the No.54 toilet cistern for Industrial Products Pty Ltd, later Caroma (c.1964), and the drinks crate produced by Castalloy Ltd and used by Coca-Cola and other beverage producers (c.1970). Both designs date from the mid-1960s to the early '70s, and they share a common basis in a single manufacturing innovation: the use of injection-moulded plastic. These 'plastic fantastic' products served different purposes and markets; but both were designed for mass production, incorporated ergonomic features, and were affordable. Importantly, the solutions they offered to design problems were not rare, expensive, artisanal or bespoke. Their modernity lies not only in their fabrication but in the degree of design attention paid to mass-produced objects intended for daily use; the visible, yet somehow invisible, work of designing for the everyday.

The concept of 'the everyday' has been problematised in recent years within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and heritage studies. Drawing on the work of critical theorists and sociologists of consumption, including Bourdieu and Adorno, and more recent work on gender, consumption, and the everyday, including by Emma Casey and Lydia Martens, we may say that the modern appeal of these plastic products -- a toilet cistern and a drinks crate -- was to interpellate consumers and workers as discerning but democratic, in the context of South Australia's increasingly egalitarian, but still markedly colonial, society.[6] Tracing the history of their development and promotion through advertising can tell us much about South Australian design and manufacturing in the postwar period and can offer insights into changing societal roles, including consumer aspirations, preferences, and needs.

Dr Catherine Howell

Catherine Howell (PhD, University of Cambridge) is Senior Heritage Officer at Heritage SA and a Postgraduate Student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning, University of South Australia. She has published articles and reviews on modernism, visual research methods, and colonial visual cultures in Public, Modernism/Modernity, Research Ethics, and Visual Methodologies, among others. Howell is an associate member of ICOMOS and the Planning Institute of Australia.

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[6] Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture,* Taylor & Francis, London, 2020; Pierre Bourdieu, D*istinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,* orig. pub. 1979, trans. Richard Nice, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984; Emma Casey and Lydia Martens (eds), *Gender and Consumption: Domestic Cultures and the Commercialisation of Everyday Life,* Routledge, London, 2007; eBook published 2016.

Hotel Bay View, Whyalla, Glover and Pointer, 1941, photograph Paul Mazourek

Whyalla Architecture: From Tents to Streamline Moderne

Whyalla's European architecture journey started with the humble industrial tents in 1901. The private and few public structures constructed in the 1920s followed the common South Australian construction and design trends of the time. The big change started in 1938/1939 with the declaration of World War Two, creating a boom in industrial expansion that went beyond the South Australian borders. It was BHP Ltd that created and owned this private company town, having joined forces with the South Australian government in its rapid urban development.

BHP Ltd, as a New South Wales based company with already established worldwide connections, promoted modernism while the South Australian government remained conservative in its outreach. Whyalla's architectural development of the 1940s, in particular, is therefore a mixture of those approaches. The two major Whyalla building styles applied were Streamline Moderne and Neo-classical Revival, thus making the place quite unique (and never repeated) within the state of South Australia. This is a presentation of the best examples of the buildings constructed in that period.

Dr Paul Mazourek

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Curator – Maritime Museum, Whyalla
President of the Australian Maritime Museums Council, 2003 - 2007
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Eagle Star Insurance Building, Grenfell Street, Adelaide, photograph Louise Bird.

Dr Louise Bird

Dr Louise Bird is the Principal Heritage Assessment Officer at Heritage South Australia, Department for Environment and Water, where she leads a team comprising historians, and a paleontologist. She is an Adjunct Research Fellow at UniSA Creative. Louise is a historian with twenty-five years' experience researching and writing about South Australian history, with a particular focus on architecture, designed landscapes and the built environment.

'that's just hideous': perspectives from a South Australian heritage practitioner on protecting Modern architecture 'the problem child of heritage'.

Described by academic Philip Goad as the 'problem child of heritage', Modern architecture has been a consistent theme in the heritage discourse for over a quarter of a century. While there have been efforts to redress everyday understandings of the importance of Modern architecture in South Australia in that time, notably through publications, exhibitions, advocacy and walking tours, this has yet to translate more broadly into public appreciation of Modern architecture and statutory protections (State Heritage listing). In South Australia, just over one percent of State Heritage listings represent places built or created after 1950, most of those listings are due to architectural merit.

The 2019 listing of the Eagle Star Insurance Building, Grenfell Street, Adelaide typified everyday perceptions of Modern architecture and its reception to State Heritage listing. Listed because it is an outstanding example of Post-war International Style architecture in South Australia, its architects, Yuncken Freeman in association with Berry Gilbert and Polomka, noted the influence of the work of Mies van der Rohe on their design. In appearance, it is a smaller version of the former Pepsi-Cola Corporation Headquarters building in New York designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and completed in 1960. Although that list of names will inspire enthusiasts of Modern architecture, 'that's just hideous' was typical of the vox pop comments recorded by ABC Adelaide when canvassing opinions about the merit of its heritage listing.

At the Scientific Symposium at the General Assembly of ICOMOS 2023, Tracey Ireland, then Australia ICOMOS President, noted that within the heritage profession there are frequently communication breakdowns between practitioners, academics, community, and politicians. Ireland further noted that it was heritage practitioners who were routinely faced with balancing the conflicting perspectives of various stakeholders and their understandings of heritage, within the boundaries of legislation. Using several case studies of recently heritage listed buildings, this presentation examines some of the challenges faced in protecting everyday Modernism in South Australia, through the mechanism of State heritage listing, from the perspective of a heritage practitioner.

Burnside Community Art & Crafts Centre, 1977, RAIA Card Index, S301, RAIA collection, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

Meherzad Schroff

Meherzad Shroff is an emerging architectural practitioner, researcher, and educator based in Adelaide, undertaking a PhD by design, focusing on Adaptive Reuse and Intangible Heritage. Meherzad is a Sessional Lecturer and Tutor at the School of Architecture and Civil Engineering, University of Adelaide. Over the past decade, Meherzad has collaborated with colleagues to design and present numerous exhibitions and installations centered on Design, Architectural History, and the Built Environment. Recently, he was involved in creating the 'Country Demapped' element, an interpretive graphic mapping of Queenstown in Tasmania, connected to the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023, Venice, Italy.

Burnside Community Art & Crafts Centre: Timber and Adaptive Reuse in South Australia in the 1970s

The Burnside Community Art & Crafts Centre, now known as the Ruth Tuck Art School, offers a valuable case study to understand the agency of Don Thompson and the Timber Development Association in the translation of an ordinary everyday structure using 'Adaptive Reuse'. Starting with a humble water tank, a simple service structure relevant to the arid context of South Australia, Don Thompson's intervention in the 1970s demonstrated the innovative use of timber to transform it into a beautiful community facility. The water tank was originally constructed in the 1870s to provide irrigation for the Simpson family's Undelcarra Estate. After the land was acquired by the Burnside Council in 1968, they engaged Don Thompson to convert the tank into a community arts facility with the aid of a State Unemployment Relief grant. The resulting building was opened in 1977 by the Premier Don Dunstan.

Through primary archival material and oral histories, this paper seeks to unpack the architectural history around this building and demonstrate early attempts to retain and reuse everyday structures. It will help position the architect Don Thompson, who served as the first director of the Timber Development Association, and the proposed innovations in the use of timber that characterised developments of that era. Additionally, the paper will aim to show how the new building acted as a catalyst for the emergence of community art spaces during the 1970s.

This case study is not only relevant in the historical context to understand the impact of Don Thompson and the Timber Development Association, but also as an early example of the emerging trend of preserving and reusing modernism. The 1970s-80s period gave rise to influential publications like *Restoring Old Australian Houses and Buildings: An Architectural Guide* by Tanner, Cox, Bridges, and Broadbent (1975) and *New Uses for Old Buildings in Australia* by Latreille, Latreille, and Lovell (1982), and the globally relevant drafting of the Burra Charter in 1979. By reading the construction of the Burnside Community Art & Crafts Centre within the context of these developments, the paper will also present it as an early example of the rising trend of 'Adaptive Reuse'.

Dr Amit Srivastava

Amit Srivastava is the Director (India) for the Centre of Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA) based at the University of Adelaide. Having trained and practiced as an architect in India, Srivastava's primary work focused on the architectural and construction histories of colonial and postcolonial India. Other current research focuses on the themes of transnational exchange of materials, skills, and construction processes across the Indian Ocean world.
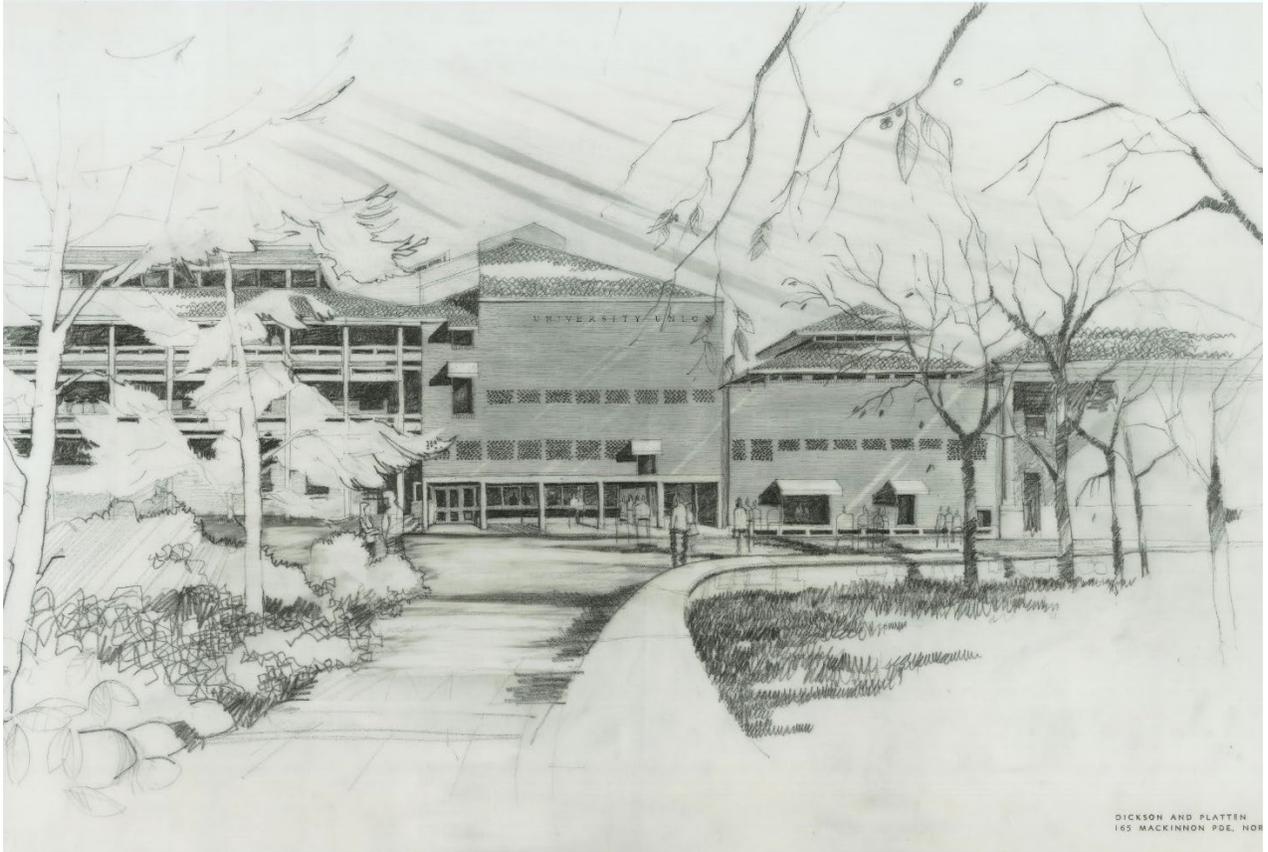
Union Building Group at the University of Adelaide, Dickson and Platten Architects, 1967-75, Dickson collection, S272, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

Conserving Modernism – Repeopling Union House

From 1967 to 1975 South Australian architectural practice Dickson and Platten designed and oversaw the expansion of the Union Building Group at the University of Adelaide. Pioneers of the 'Adelaide Regional' style, their design for Union House as part of the redevelopment reflected the 'friendly and more relaxed form of modernism' for which they were known. Dickson and Platten built on the architectural arrangement provided by the pre-existing War Memorial Cloisters designed by Woods, Bagot, Jory, Laybourne-Smith (1939); and borrowed from the forms, proportions and materiality from the adjacent Lady Symon and George Murray buildings (Woods, Bagot, Jory, Laybourne-Smith, 1929 & 1938) to inform the development of the Union Building Group without the need for replicating the earlier Georgian style which was well established at the North Terrace campus. Dickson and Platten made extensive use of raw building materials such as off-form concrete, rough-faced brick, Solomit straw ceilings and exposed timber structure in a simple but highly crafted manner.

Subsequent developments between its completion in 1975 and 2018 had subtracted from the simplicity of Dickson and Platten's vision; and with a change of student union resources and dispersion of retail activity across the broader campus, the Union Building Group lost its people. In 2018 Swanbury Penglase Architects were engaged by the University of Adelaide to masterplan and realise the reactivation of the complex. The building provided many-a-lesson to the consultant and construction teams throughout the redevelopment project. This presentation will explore the challenges and opportunities when interpreting Dickson and Platten's original intent and vision for Union House whilst integrating new amenity and functionality for the repeopling of an important modernist building.

Sam Rosenzweig

Samuel Rosenzweig is a registered architect at Swanbury Penglase Architects, where he is a member of the heritage conservation and adaptation team. Developing a broad knowledge of Australia's built and cultural history under the guidance and mentorship of Andrew Klenke and Dr Stephen Schrapel, Samuel has most recently been heavily involved in the design, documentation and construction of the Union House Redevelopment undertaken by Swanbury Penglase Architects in collaboration with the University of Adelaide, System Solutions Engineering, GAMA Consulting Engineers & SHAPE Australia.

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