

CHENOWETH, Max COLLECTION
Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

CHENOWETH, Max

Series 193, 194, 195, 196

BIOGRAPHY

Max Chenoweth (born 1917) made a considerable contribution to both the repair and the design of homes in South Australia through his self-help books and advice columns in the print media.

Chenoweth attended Westbourne Park Primary School and then Goodwood Technical High School. He left after only two years because of the Depression and completed a building course that qualified him for a builder's licence. During World War Two he worked in the drawing office at General Motor's-Holdens, becoming a staff senior. In 1944 he began work as a builder in the Adelaide suburbs and in rural areas of South Australia.

He completed a two-year course in architecture through the International Correspondence School (South Australia) that had been set up for those who had been unable to finish their education due to the Depression or the Second World War, excelling in the course even though he was still working full time. In 1954, after a damaging earthquake in Adelaide, he was employed as an assessor by the London Insurance Co (Adelaide), making all decisions on claims. In 1955 he beat 55 applicants to become manager of Frank Humphreys' Adelaide office; Humphreys was an architect in Melbourne who had set up a print media service for home builders around Australia through *The Women's Weekly Home Plans Service* based at Grace Bros, Broadway, NSW. Mail order plans were sold as 'standard' (as presented in the booklets or the papers) to a client's own design, or modified to suit any block or location.

Between 1957 and 2001 Chenoweth wrote a weekly advice column in the Sunday newspapers throughout Australia under the heading 'Home Hotline' in which he responded to letters from homeowners with building problems. The Western Australian *Sunday Times* weekly papers were read widely, and his plans were copied in Kuala Lumpur, New Zealand, Germany, Britain and other countries.

In an office in John Martins' department store Chenoweth operated an advice service for home builders between 1957 and 1962. During these years he published seven books to advise home builders, and employed architects and draftsmen to assist him. Some of these architects were young students who needed to fulfill a practical aspect of their architectural course, others were given practical architectural work to assist them in their final year of studies.

From 1963 to 1973 Chenoweth ran the Myer Home Plan Service that gave advice to ordinary South Australians who could not afford the services of an architect; he was then the Proprietor/Manager of this operation throughout Australia. In 1967 he opened his own building consultant's office in Gawler Place, Adelaide and employed other architects and draftsmen to continue the service to the public. From 1970 to 1990 he had offices in the Adelaide CBD. He semi-retired in 1990 but in 2001 still wrote for the *Sunday Mail* and the *Advertiser* newspapers in Adelaide and carried out site inspections. At the age of 83 he had embraced the new electronic media, giving free advice to the public through two sites on the web.

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SOURCES

Archival Papers of Max Chenoweth, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Chenoweth collection consists of Max Chenoweth's publications which were titled 'Home Plans of Australia' and published by Max Chenoweth's firm, Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. and the full size plans, presentation plans and working drawings which are related to the plans in booklets. Also within this collection is correspondence to and from Max Chenoweth, cuttings from newspapers, building regulations and booklets of plans not drawn by Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. Published magazine. Photographs of the built houses accompany some house plans.

Publications

This series consists of Max Chenoweth's publications.

Series 181

See Special List

Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd Working Drawings

This series consists of full size plans kept in the plan drawers. These plans are related to the plans in booklets published by Max Chenoweth's firm, Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. The public, if they saw a plan they liked in the booklets ordered working drawings for the house. Copies of these working drawings are held in the plan drawers.

Series 193

See Special List

Home Plans of Australia drawings

This series consists of the original plans used for the booklets/magazines from Max Chenoweth's firm, Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. The books were titled Home Plans of Australia

Series 194

See Special List

Correspondence and papers

This series consists of correspondence to and from Max Chenoweth, cuttings from newspapers, building regulations and booklets of plans not drawn by Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd.

Series 195

See Special List

Published magazine presentation plans

This series consists of the plans drawn by Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd employees that were hand tinted or published in colour in magazines. Photographs of the built houses accompany some house plans.

Series 196

See Special List

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Special List

Series 181

Publications

This series consists of Max Chenoweth's publications.

Series No.	Description	
S181/1	Vol.1 Home Plans of Australia	1966
S181/2	Vol.2 Home Plans of Australia	1967-8
S181/3	Vol.3 Home Plans of Australia	1968
S181/4	Vol.4 Home Plans of Australia	1968
S181/5	Vol.5 Home Plans of Australia	1968
S181/6	Vol.6 Home Plans of Australia	1968
S181/7	Vol.7 Home Plans of Australia	1968
S181/8	Vol.8 Home Plans for Leisure, Series 1	1969
S181/9	Vol.9 How to Build & Save Money by Subcontracting, Republished in 1981	1978
S181/10	Vol.10 Max Chenoweth's Building Guide	1980
S181/11	Vol.11 How to Cut Building Costs	1986
S181/12	Vol.12 How to Sell or Buy a Home	1993
S181/13	Vol.13 How to do Building Repairs	1996
S181/14	Vol.14 Cracks & Salt Damp	1998
S181/15	Vol.15 Max Chenoweth's Questions & Answers on Home Repairs, Cracks, Salts, Stormwaters: Sunday Mail	2001

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Special List

Series 193

Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd Working Drawings

This series consists of full size plans kept in the plan drawers. These plans are related to the plans in booklets published by Max Chenoweth's firm, Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. The public, if they saw a plan they liked in the booklets, contacted the office or the Myer Plan Service and ordered working drawings for a builder to construct the house, and specifications etc for submission to the local council and other building authorities. Copies of these working drawings are held under Series 193 in the plan drawers. This service was particularly applicable to country areas where the services of an architect were not readily available. Most of these buildings were not supervised by Max Chenoweth and list the builder on the plan. A notation was made on the plan if Max Chenoweth was to act as supervisor of the project. A special list in the card system lists each drawing. (Note: There is also a copy of plans by Garlinghouse Plan Service, Topeka, Kansas).

Series No. Description

Series No.	Description
S193/2-24	Various (see hard copy card list in Architecture Museum)

Refer to Missing Items List for missing items.

(Note S193/1 missing)

(Note S193/15-18 missing)

(Note S193/11/6-10 missing)

(Note S193/11/11 omitted).

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Special List

Series 194

Home Plans of Australia drawings

This series consists of the original plans used for the booklets/magazines from Max Chenoweth's firm, Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd. The books were entitled Home Plans of Australia and consisted of paperback booklets with numbered plans and their perspectives from which prospective builders, both commercial and amateur, could choose a plan for a house, flat or office. The booklets sold for 50 cents each and were produced during the 1966-69. For definite dates see list of publications.

The booklets are entitled Home Plans of Australia, Vols. 1 to 5. There is no Vol. 6 but there is a Vol. 7. A slimmer booklet entitled Home Plans for Leisure was also produced. All booklets contain the legend 'As featured in The News, South Australia and the Sunday Times Western Australia'. A relationship existed with Myers Home Plan Service, or Myers Emporium (SA) LTD as these organizations are listed as a source for sets of plans. Plans from the booklets could be altered for \$3.50 per square. Sets of plans for the houses shown in the booklets were available for \$30 a set. This included 6 plans and 4 specifications. The plans were guaranteed as being acceptable to councils, banks and builders etc.

The unique number for each plan in the booklets is annotated on the original and has been faithfully kept in the series list. IE Plan no W26 in the booklets is listed in the series as S194/W26. NB 'W' is for West Australian Times Home Owners, 'A' is for Adelaide Plan Co.

Some plans were republished under another notation. This changed notation has been recorded on the plans and on the envelopes in which the plans are stored. IE S194/W452 was from A.P.C. 78 (Adelaide Plan Co) and C. 30. This was notated on the plan and on the envelope in which it is stored.

Most of the plans are ink on butter paper. Some have been processed onto a plastic film that has discoloured the butter paper it has been stored against. Polypropylene envelopes to prevent further transfer of colour and/or chemicals between the two now separate these items.

A copy of the booklets is kept with the plans in the archive boxes as an index. The box is notated as containing the index.

Architecture students contributed to the plans while employed by Max Chenoweth. Many plans are signed only with a given name, Debbie Steinert, Dianne, Kathy Wilson, Anthea Smith & Ross Bateup. Sample numbers for those identifiable to more fully named students are;

Langhorne, Jess	W47, H3
Smith, Anthea	W496
Nimanis, O	W125
Barratt, R	W393
Hall, W	W297
Paynter, Graham	W63, W52
TAB	W34, W7, W52 (Town Clerk at Pt Pirie 1970-80s)

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Series No.	Description
S194/1	Various home plans W1-79.
S194/2	Various home plans W80-159. Includes Index.
S194/3	Various home plans W160-279- some numbers have prefixes S194/S/W
S194/4	Various home plans W280-379- some numbers have prefixes S194/S/W
S194/ 5	Various home plans W380-499, 8820 - some numbers have prefixes S194/S/W
S194/6	Various home plans P1-100, AP1-9, X1-2, H1-3.
S194/7	Various home plans APC1-188.
S194/8	Various home plans C/S1, C20-85, A87-139.
S194/9	Various home plans A140-273.

Refer to Missing Items List for missing items and numbering discrepancies.

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Special List

Series 195

Correspondence and papers

This series consists of correspondence to and from Max Chenoweth, cuttings from newspapers, building regulations and booklets of plans not drawn by Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd.

Max Chenoweth wrote columns of advice under the heading of Home Hotline for homeowners with problems, in response to their letters. This published advice has been collected into scrap books and spans the period 1979 to 1985 in 'The Advertiser', and 1979 to 1990 in 'The Sunday Mail'.

The clippings have been attached to the pages by sticky tape, which deteriorates over time and sticks facing pages together. To offset this, a buffer of tissue paper has separated each set of two pages. These large books are wrapped and stored in the over size shelves as S195.

Series No. Description

S195/2/1	Various Building Regulations ranging from 1966 to the mid 1970s, War Service Homes Schedule, Cement and Concrete Association of Australia Publication, S.A. Industrial Safety Code Handbook. stored in archive boxes
S195/2/2	Blank Specification and subcontract forms
S195/2/3	Building contract between Tumby Bay Caravan Park P/L and Roger Tucker, 1980
S195/2/4	'How to Build and Contract Your Own Home'. Larry Eisinger. ND
S195/2/5	'Contemporary & Traditional Homes' Harris Publications P/L, NY. Spring 1984
S195/2/6	'Max Chenoweth's Building Guide' Max Chenoweth, 1980
S195/2/7	'How to Cut Building Costs' Max Chenoweth, 1986
S195/2/8	'Owner Builder Guide', Michael Wilkin, ND
S195/2/9	Salt Damp Research Committee Report, Adelaide, Dec 1978
S195/3/1	Correspondence from Max Chenoweth to Archivist re corrections to lead in history of records.

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Series 196

Published magazine presentation plans

This series consists of the plans drawn by Adelaide Plan Pty Ltd employees that were hand tinted or published in colour in magazines. Photographs of the built houses accompany some house plans. They had then been stuck onto A2 size card and placed in an album for prospective clients to look through. The album was pulled apart and the pages are stored in the plan files. The plans are arranged as:

Series No	Description
S196/1/1-6	4 Bedroom homes
S196/2/1-13	3 Bedroom homes
S196/3/1-12	Split level homes
S196/4/1-7	Units and Holiday Homes
S196/5/1-14	Australian Ranch and Spanish Styles