

GILLISSEN COLLECTION
Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

GILLISSEN, Albert

SERIES 324

BIOGRAPHY

Albert Gillissen, architect and academic, was born in The Netherlands on 7 September 1921. During World War Two he was a member of the resistance movement and between 1944 and 1946 he worked as an interpreter for the Allied units in Holland, Germany and Austria. After that, in October 1946, he moved to Indonesia where he was employed as an immigration officer. In 1950 he joined the Dutch Merchant Navy and two years later, in 1952, he emigrated to New Zealand to work as a milking hand on a dairy farm and to take up other jobs. Deciding to become an architect, aged 31 he enrolled in architecture and town planning at the University of Auckland, graduating with honours in 1958. He received numerous grants and awards, including the University Prize for Excellence in Architecture (1956), an Honours Grant (1957), the NZ Universities Travelling Scholarship in Architecture (1959) and a Dutch government study grant.

While studying, Gillissen worked in architects' offices. In December 1959 he travelled to London where he was employed in the architectural design section of Ove Arup & Partners, engineers for the Sydney Opera House, and in 1960 he took up his Travelling Scholarship. After a further year of studies and research in European architecture he returned to Auckland where he worked in architectural offices and tutored at the University. During this time he was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Town Planning. He was appointed Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Adelaide in 1963.

Gillissen continued to practice as an architect after he came to Adelaide. His commissions included a feasibility study and master plan for accommodation on a 32-hectare site owned by the Lutheran Church at McLaren Vale as well as designs for a housing complex for the Kent Town Homes for the Aged. His study leave from the University of Adelaide in 1977 included a period as Visiting Professor at the Universiti Sains Malaysia. During 1981-82 he was Visiting Fellow at the National University of Singapore. He retired from academic life in 1986.

He was a foundation member of the committee established to form the University of the Third Age (U3A) in South Australia and lectured in various groups from 1987 to 2006. From the 1980s he was involved, on a voluntary basis, with the revival of the home silk weaving industry in Isan, in north east Thailand and with the planning, development and design of several hectares of land with work studios and associated structures and housing.

He designed his own eco-friendly timber house in Aldinga Beach where he lived from 1991 to 2007. Gillissen was made a Life Fellow of the RAIA SA Chapter in 2001.

SOURCES

Adelaidean, 'Commentary: Albert Gillissen on Architecturing across cultures', vol 8 no10, June 28, 1999: 2, 6.

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‘NZ University Graduates 1870-1961’. Online at <http://shadowsoftime.co.nz/university10.html>. Accessed 23 November 2010.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Research materials gathered by Albert Gillissen related to Victorian architect Harold Desbrowe Annear, includes card index of references, tapes, interviews, slides, correspondence. The collection also includes Albert Gillissen’s student notebooks from 1953-1954, including Prac. Maths, Structural Mechanics I, Structural mechanics II, Studio, Physics Lab, Physics, Architectural Construction, Construction III, Structural Mechanics Lab Book, Descriptive Geometry.

SERIES LIST

<u>Series No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
S324/1/1-	Research materials related to Harold Desbrowe Annear, includes card index of references, tapes, interviews, slides, correspondence
S324/2	Albert Gillissen’s student notebooks from 1953-1954, including Prac. Maths, Structural Mechanics I, Structural mechanics II, Studio, Physics Lab, Physics, Architectural Construction, Construction III, Structural Mechanics Lab Book, Descriptive Geometry.