Julius Elischer (*The Architect*, September 1965, p.34).

Julius William Elischer (1918-2004) was born 5 September 1918 in Budapest, Hungary, to parents Gyula Elischer (1875–1929) and Ágota [Agathe] Petschacher (1881-1964). Julius' father died when he was just eleven years old, with his uncle supporting his further upbringing. His secondary schooling was completed at Budapest's prestigious Fasori Gimnázium in 1936. In 1937 he commenced a five-year course in architectural engineering at Palatine Joseph University for Technical and Economic Studies at Budapest, receiving scholarships for design study abroad, and obtaining his degree in 1942. Elischer served as a reserve officer in the Hungarian Army during the Second World War (1939-1945), taking part in the invasion of the Soviet Union. He was part of a reconnaissance unit, one of the first Hungarians to cross into Soviet territory.

During the Siege of Budapest in late 1944, Elischer was a leader of the student battalions that defended the city. On 28 December 1944, Elischer and about twenty members of his inexperienced troop were sent to relieve a German unit in the defense of Budapest. Soon after their arrival, Elischer was hit by Soviet sniper bullets in the shoulder and near the spine, hence evacuated to hospital. Consequently, Elischer lost a lung. Following the war, he was actively involved in the Pan-European unification movement and was influential, as its International Youth Secretary, in promoting a European Common Market. In his early career as an architect in Germany he was involved in design work for the post-war reconstruction of the country, and in 1949 he worked with architect Ferdinand Streb (1907-1970), who spent almost his entire professional life in Hamburg. With Bernhard Dexel (1919–2000), Elischer won a competition for a West German Sports Headquarters at Hamburg in 1950.

In 1951 Elischer emigrated to Melbourne, where he worked for the architectural firm of Frank Heath before opening his own business in which he was able to experiment with building technology. In 1957 the Stramit company invited Elischer to develop a modular building system in Perth, where he remained. Elischer married Beverly Barber in 1958 and the couple subsequently had four children - Julian, Nicole, Francesca and William.

From 1959 he was employed in the Perth offices of Eric Moyle (1924-2001) and Reg Summerhayes (1897-1965) as a draftsman, as he was not at that time registered in Australia as an architect.   The local profession was conservative and predominantly 'anglophile' in nature, and although migrants such as Elischer would later be considered to have made significant contributions to Western Australian architecture, they were not initially accepted into the establishment. Following a brief period teaching architecture at Cornell University in 1963, Elischer established his own architectural office in Perth. Elischer was eventually registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (reg no 461) in February 1965, by then living at 28 Kingsway in suburban Nedlands.

Foulkes-Taylor showroom of 1964 at 33 Broadway Nedlands in December 2005 (John Taylor).

Julius Elischer's buildings played an important role in the adoption of international Modernism in WA's post-war architecture. Two of his notable early designs are the former Foulkes-Taylor showroom at Nedlands of 1964 (now housing offices of the WA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects and the Architects Board of WA); and the 1965 Wollaston Anglican Chapel at Mount Claremont. The

Foulkes-Taylor showroom has similarities to his design of St Philip's Anglican Church at Cottesloe, which employs a similar abstract arrangement of windows.
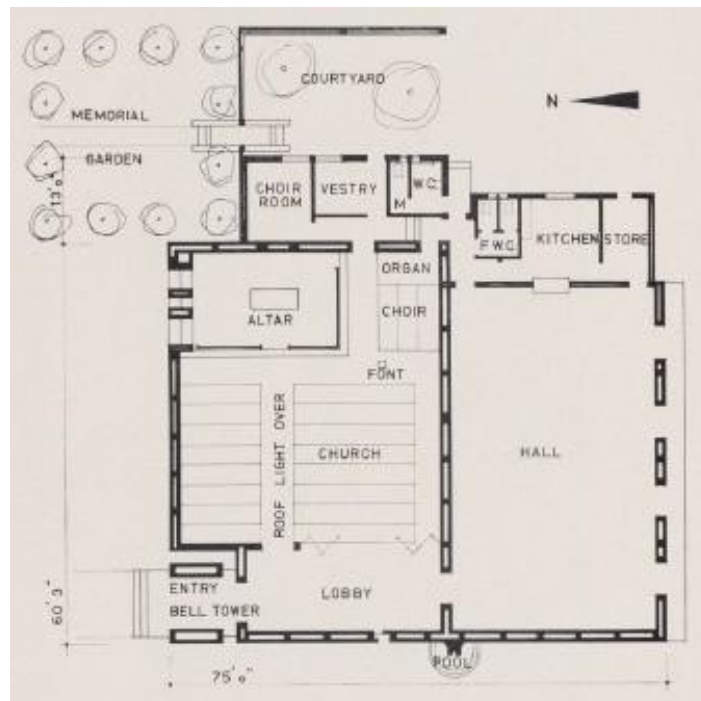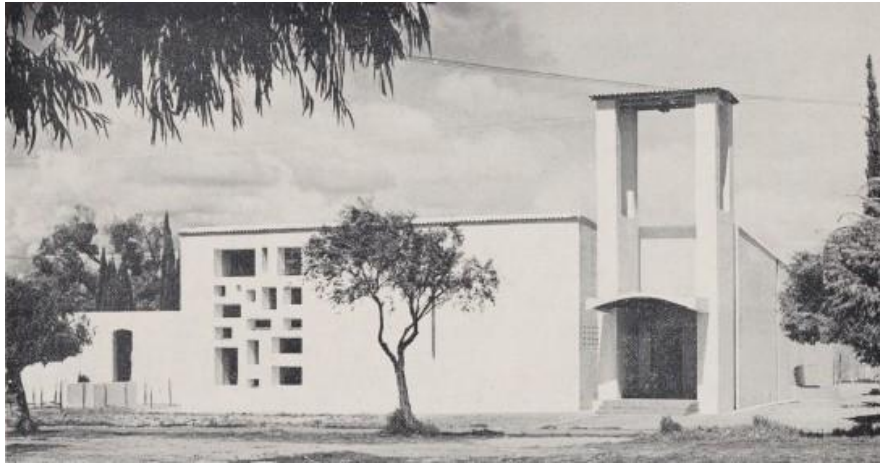
St Philip's Anglican Church and Hall, Cottesloe - north elevation and plan (*The Architect*, September 1965, p.50).

Modern Australian architecture in the 1950s and 1960s was derived from European and American journals; also brought back by local architects who travelled and studied overseas, and by immigrant architects, which latter group included Elischer. He was involved in project home design in the 1960s, and provided designs for many low-cost housing projects, including flats and retirement homes, as well as one-off buildings, which included churches, chapels, halls, school libraries, offices and factories. He developed a reputation for producing designs that could be economically built to a high standard.

1969 Elischer Studio (fmr) at 97 Broadway Nedlands pictured in the 1970s (Nicole Elischer); and in 2021 after the placement of roof-top telecommunications pylons, which Julius strongly objected to - as he was worried about both aesthetic and radiation concerns (John Taylor).

Julius' home on 28 Kingsway Nedlands was designed to be linked at the rear by a small bridge to his office-studio at 97 Broadway, built in 1969. Elischer encouraged his family to be in his workplace, especially when the children were young, and the architectural offices reflected a practice that would have had all the related professions 'in house'. For the design of both 33 and 97 Broadway Nedlands, the Wollaston Anglican Chapel, and St Philip's Anglican Church, Elischer has drawn influence from the work of celebrated Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965).

1979 Aged Persons Housing Group at Alfred Road & Lisle Street in Mount Claremont (Molyneux 1981, p.90).

St Augustine's Congregational-Presbyterian Uniting Church at Mangles Street, Bunbury (demolished) won a citation in the judging of the 1971 Bronze Medal Award of the RAIA (WA Chapter). Elischer designed a small number of ecclesiastical buildings in the Late Twentieth-Century Perth Regional style including: Presbyterian-Uniting Church (1974) on The Strand, Dianella; St Michael's Anglican Church (1975) in Mt Pleasant; and the Anglican Church (1978) on Bernier Road, Shelley.
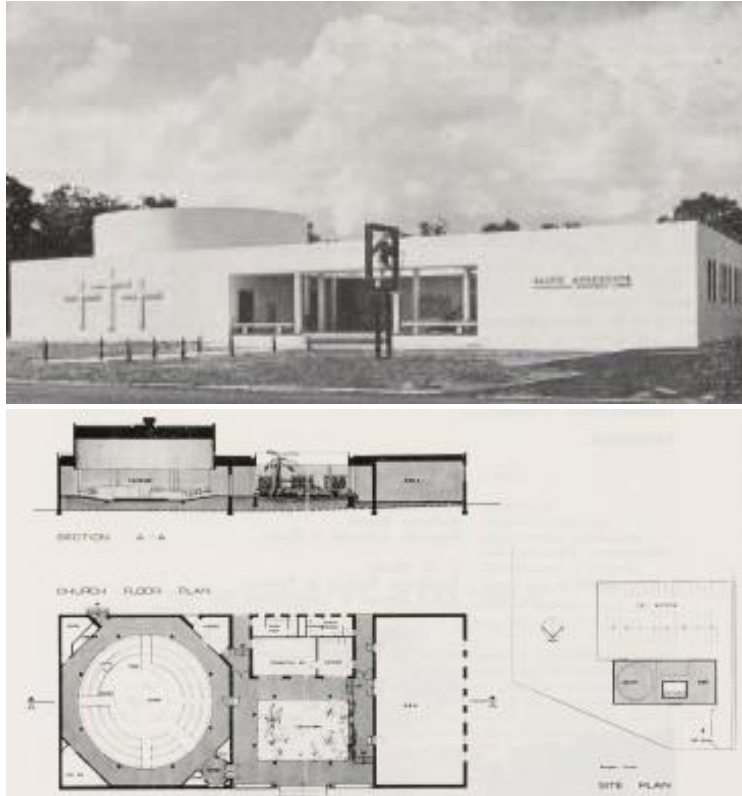
St Augustine's Congregational-Presbyterian Church, Bunbury - section, floor plan, and site plan
(The Architect, September 1972, pp.30-31).

The now-demolished Demar Showrooms (1974-1980) designed by Elischer at the corner of Cambridge and Kimberley Streets in Leederville, had similarities to 33 Broadway Nedlands. The simple rectangular form and sheer masonry walls incorporated similar devices to the earlier Foulkes-Taylor showroom, for filtering natural light from the east and west and through a skylight in the roof. Internally, the planning and structure of the display space showed consideration for flexibility and employed mezzanines and bridges with reinforcing mesh balustrades.

Some of Elischer's residential developments include: Landall's Mediterranean Village (1966), five low-cost project homes at the corner of Albany Highway and Beckenham Street in Cannington; Aitken House (1970), Patula Way Coolbinia; and retirement units, Lisle & Leaweena Lodges (1978-87) at the corner of Alfred Road and Lisle Street in Mount Claremont. El Caballo Blanco (1973-on), a Moorish-themed hotel and equestrian centre at rural Wooroloo, was an unusual commercial commission. He was responsible for numerous projects in the City of Nedlands, including extensions to the Council Offices corner Smyth Road and Stirling Highway (1976); and Melvista Lodge - Nursing Home on Melvista Avenue facing Masons Gardens (1973).

1969 Branchi House, City Beach (Michael Bradshaw).

Not one to shy away from confrontation, Elischer was an occasional vociferous commentator on architectural practice and urban design issues. From the later 1970s through to 1981, as a teaching fellow Elischer delivered initial architecture units at the Faculty within the University of Western Australia, with Ernst Neufert's *Architects' Data* one of his most favoured text books. First-year students could find Julius intimidating, and he provided a direct authoritarian manner to students whom he suspected lacked the attributes to become an architect. Julius retired from architectural practice in 1986, although his staff continued to operate the office until 1991.

Julius Elischer c.2002 in front of portrait of his paternal grandfather; like Julius' father he was also a physician (Nicole Elischer).

An exhibition of a selection of Julius' projects was held at the Cullity Gallery, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Visual Arts, University of Western Australia in September 2003 – only shortly before he died, 12 February 2004 at Nedlands, aged 85 years. Archival drawings in the Elischer series at the J.S. Battye Library of Western Australia History Collection remain to provide a comprehensive documentation record of his works.

A practitioner, an educator, and a critic; Elischer is recognised as one of Western Australia's more influential architects of the 1960s and 1970s. With the likes of Robert Sheldon (Bertl Schläfrig), Iwan Iwanoff, Antoni Solarski, Kazimierz (Charles) Sierakowski and Tadeusz Andrzejaczek, Julius was one of a number of architects who had trained overseas and eventually arrived in WA due to the disruptions of the Second World War, bringing European ideas and perspectives to local practice. In his honour, the WA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) created the Julius Elischer Award for Interior Architecture.

2023 AIA WA Enduring Architecture award - Wollaston College Chapel (Emma Van Dordrecht).

In 2023 the WA Chapter of the AIA awarded Elischer's 1965 Wollaston College Chapel the Richard Roach Jewell Award for Enduring Architecture.

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