



Finding Aid for

DON CHADWICK PAPERS, 1972-2011 (bulk 1992-2005)

Accession 2019.148

Finding Aid Published: February 2021

Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2019.148

CREATOR: Chadwick, Don, 1936-

TITLE: Don Chadwick Papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1972-2011

BULK DATES: 1992-2005

QUANTITY: 22.60 cubic feet, including 7 oversized flat drawers, 10 oversized boxes, 35 rolls of drawings, and 3 reels of 35mm color film.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: Don Chadwick is one of the noted industrial designers on the Herman Miller team, responsible for projects like the Ergon and Aeron chairs in collaboration with Bill Stumpf, as well as the Chadwick Modular Seating system and the Ethospace system. Materials include project drawings, schematics, and reports, as well as 35mm slides and use test photographs.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The Don Chadwick Papers are open for research.
- TECHNICAL RESTRICTIONS: Use of original film contained in the collection is restricted. Access may be unavailable due to lack of appropriate software and hardware, or use copies may need to be produced unless otherwise noted. Researchers interested in this material should contact Benson Ford Research Center staff (research.center@thehenryford.org).
- COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION: Donated to The Henry Ford, 2019.
- RELATED MATERIAL: Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- Herman Miller Furniture Samples, Accession 2012.52
 - Robert Propst Collection, Accession 2010.83
 - Don Chadwick Oral Interview, Accession 2009.119
 - Bill Stumpf Papers, Accession 2009.141
 - Herman Miller Collection, Accession 89.177
 - Herman Miller periodicals, trade catalogs, and other research publications are located in the Research Library collection (<http://www.dalnet.org/henryford>).
 - Scale models of Herman Miller furniture, including the Aeron chair, are located in the three-dimensional museum storage of The Henry Ford.
- Related collections beyond The Henry Ford:
- Herman Miller Corporate Archives
 - Herman Miller Consortium collection
<https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:collection/HermanMiller>
- PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 2019.148, Don Chadwick Papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford.

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by Hilary Severyn, March 2020

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Original collection inventory list prepared by Hilary Severyn, March 2020, and published in March 2020.

Finding aid written by Hilary Severyn, March 2020.

Finding aid revised by Hilary Severyn, February 2021, and published in March 2021.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Don Chadwick graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles where he focused on design. The grandson of a cabinet maker, Chadwick credits his grandfather with his own interest in working with his hands rather than being “a numbers guy”. His interest in furniture was sparked early in his college career after attending a lecture from famed furniture designers Charles and Ray Eames. After graduation, Chadwick went on to work for architect Victor Gruen, also in southern California, where he continued to develop his signature style of structured, innovative designs that value form just as much as function.

Among Chadwick’s most well-known designs are his Modular Seating (1974), originally referred to as the “Chadwick Chair”; the Ergon Chair (1976); and the Aeron Chair (1994) which Chadwick designed in collaboration with Bill Stumpf. While many of his designs were produced in partnership with Herman Miller, Inc., Chadwick maintained his own design studio—Chadwick Studio—in Los Angeles, where he still works in 2020. Along with Stumpf, Chadwick also headed Chadwick, Stumpf, and Associates, the design firm responsible for the Aeron chair.

Chadwick has received national recognition for his designs. Even before production, the Aeron chair was collected by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Chadwick is also the recipient of several ID and IBD awards for design, including for his work on the Equa Chair and Ethospace interiors. Along with Bill Stumpf, Chadwick was awarded the Industrial Design Society of America’s award for Design of the Decade for the Aeron Chair in 2000.

Note content adapted from the following sources:

- Collection contents
- Herman Miller, Inc. Designers: Don Chadwick. Herman Miller. Accessed 17 March 2020. <https://www.hermanmiller.com/designers/chadwick/>
- Design Within Reach: Don Chadwick. Design Within Reach. Accessed 17 March 2020. https://www.dwr.com/designer-don-chadwick?lang=en_US
- The Henry Ford Museum of Innovation Stories of Innovation: Don Chadwick. The Henry Ford Museum of Innovation. 17 March 2020. https://www.thehenryford.org/explore/stories-of-innovation/visionaries/don-chadwick/#gallery-video=d5bm4zMTpGpZJQmvBO8ZPFo9z-V_yL3j
- The Collection: Donald T. Chadwick, William Stumpf. Aeron Office Chair. MoMA. Accessed 17 March 2020. https://www.moma.org/collection/works/3734?classifications=any&date_begin=Pre-1850&date_end=2020&locale=en&page=1&q=aeron+chair&with_images=1

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Don Chadwick Papers (22.60 cubic feet) are divided into two series: **PROJECT FILES**, and **FILM**. The collection is made up primarily of project files related to Chadwick's work with Herman Miller, Inc., Chadwick, Stumpf, and Associates, and Chadwick Studios. Materials span 1972-2011, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1992-2005. The collection consists primarily of project reports, including 35mm slides and photographs; large design drawings; and schematics. All materials are arranged by project title as transcribed from Chadwick's original organizational schema.

The **PROJECT FILES SERIES** (22.40 cubic feet) makes up the bulk of the collection, and is arranged into three subseries: **Major Projects**, **Small Projects**, and **Assorted Untitled Projects**. Materials include project reports, drawings, and slides and photographs.

The **Major Projects Subseries** (12.60 cubic feet) consists of projects containing more than two folders, and typically bearing a recognizable product name. Major projects include the Aeron chair, Buroplan office furniture, and the Sarah furniture system. Materials are arranged alphabetically by project title. Projects which bore more than one name during their development (e.g., the Echo system, which was eventually manufactured under the Aeron name) are filed under their manufacturing title, when known. Each project is further arranged by material type.

The **Small Projects Subseries** (3.80 cubic feet) consists of project files containing only one folder. These projects each bear a discrete title, including the Custom Choice Leg and the Quickset Office. While some of these projects are significant in Chadwick and Herman Miller history, they have been designated "Small Projects" due to their lack of representation in the collection. Projects in this subseries are arranged alphabetically. Material type has been noted where appropriate.

The **Assorted Untitled Projects Subseries** (6.00 cubic feet) consists of all other drawings, reports, and correspondence not immediately associated with a named project. Drawings cover an assortment of furniture and storage solutions. Folder titles are either derived from Chadwick's original organizational schema, or have been assigned during processing. Items in this subseries are arranged by material type.

The **FILM SERIES** (.20 cubic feet) is the smallest series in the collection, consisting of three reels of 35mm film developed for several Chadwick, Stumpf, and Associates projects.

ARRANGEMENT

Files arrived packaged in butcher-paper folders or original binders from Chadwick Studios; this arrangement was largely maintained during processing. Folder titles have been transcribed where possible; in the case of large drawings, titles were found on original handmade butcher-paper folders, while reports and 35mm slides bear the title of their respective binders. Binders and original folders were discarded following transcription. Rolled drawings have been titled based on title cards found on individual drawings, and have been maintained in rolled form.

Materials are generally arranged by size, with all large drawings and schematics housed in oversized boxes or drawers, and project reports stored in records cartons. Film has been placed in cold storage pending digitization.

PROJECT FILES SERIES

Major Projects Subseries

Small Projects Subseries

Assorted Untitled Projects Subseries

FILM SERIES

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Chadwick, Don (Donald T.), 1936-
Kelley, Jack
Stumpf, Bill, 1936-2006
Chadwick Studio
Chadwick, Stumpf, and Associates
Forms+Surfaces, Inc.
Herman Miller Research Corporation
Herman Miller, Inc.

Subjects
Chair design
Chairs (Furniture forms)
Ergonomics
Furniture
Furniture design
Human comfort
Industrial design
Office chairs
Office furniture
Office layout
Offices
Seating--Furniture
Hospitals--Furniture, equipment, etc.

Geographic

United States, Los Angeles (California)

United States, Santa Monica (California)

United States, Zeeland (Michigan)

Genre and Form

Advertisements

Blueprints (reprographic copies)

Color photographs

Color slides

Color transparencies

Correspondence

Design drawings

Drawings

Film reels

Memorandums

Photographic prints

Posters

Promotional materials

Reports

Sketches

Slides (photographs)

Technical drawings

Technical reports

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

PROJECT FILES SERIES Major Projects Subseries

Box 1

Aeron & Echo Systems
Reports
Echo System (1/2), 14 July 1992
Echo System (2/2), 14 July 1992

Box 8 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Echo Chair Technical Drawings, 1993-1994
Aeron Chair spec drawings, 1993-1995
Aeron Side Chair drawings, 1993 and Undated

Box 9 (Oversize)

Cascade Engineering: Echo Chair (B-Back); Sections; Tension Knob (1-26-94); Scketches; Tilt Housing CDA Drawings, 1993-1994

Drawer 1 (Oversize)

Side Chair/Sled Base/Echo, Undated
Echo Sled Stacker Table, Undated
Echo: Section Drawings, Undated
Echo/Equon, Undated
Aeron Drawings, Undated

Drawer 2 (Oversize)

Echo, Undated

Drawer 5 (Oversize)

Echo Drawings, Undated
Echo Chair Drawings, Undated
Echo Drawings, Undated
Echo Sled Chair, Undated
Stackable Chairs - Echo & Equa, Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Aeron Sled Base, 1993-1994

Box 1

Aeron Graphis, 1993-1995 and Undated
35mm Slides
Aeron (1/2), 1993-1995
Aeron (2/2), 1993-1995
Aeron Slides, etc. (1/2), 1991-1996
Aeron Slides, etc. (2/2), 1991-1996
Aeron Sidechair Arrio (1/2), 1996-1997 and Undated
Aeron Sidechair Arrio (2/2), 1996-1997 and Undated

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Photographs
Aeron Chair Photographs, Undated

Box 11 (Oversize)

Aeron Family photographs, 24 September 2010

Box 10 (Oversize)

Echo chair advertising, Undated

Roll 1 (Oversize)

Arcon
Project Drawings
Arcon Furniture, 1971-1972

Roll 2 (Oversize)

Arcon Furniture, 1971-1973

Roll 3 (Oversize)

Arcon Furniture, Various Designs, 1974

Roll 4 (Oversize)

Arcon Furniture, 1974

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Arcon Furniture, Fortress Lounge, Undated
Buroplan
Project Drawings
Buroplan (1/3), Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Buroplan (2/3), Undated
Buroplan (3/3), Undated
Early General Buroplan - Storage, Undated

Box 1

Photographs
Buroplan Photos of Model and Mockup (1/2), Undated
Buroplan Photos of Model and Mockup (2/2), Undated

Drawer 1 (Oversize)

C-Leg/C-Foot
Project Drawings
Assembly/C-Leg, Undated

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

C-Leg/C-Foot, Undated

Box 1

Equa and Equon
Reports
Equa New, 1993

Box 8 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Equa chair drawings & photographs, Undated

Drawer 2 (Oversize)

Equa (Oversize) (1/2), Undated
Equa (Oversize) (2/2), Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Equa Technical Drawings, 1988-1992

Box 1

Equa Lite Sketches, 1992 and Undated
35mm Slides
Equa, July 2000 and Undated
Equa Presentation Slides (1/2), Undated
Equa Presentation Slides (2/2), Undated
Equa Stacker (1/2), 1997
Equa Stacker (2/2), 1997

Box 2

Equa, Notal, Wheelchair, etc (1/2), Undated
Equa, Notal, Wheelchair, etc (2/2), Undated

Box 1

Photographs
Equon Binder, Undated
Forms+Series Work
Reports and Correspondence
Forms and Surfaces, September 1991 - June 1994

Box 4 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Forms and Surfaces Concept Sketches, Undated

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Forms and Surfaces, Undated

Roll 5 (Oversize)

Fortress Lounge System
Project Drawings
Fortress Lounge Seating System, 1972

Roll 6 (Oversize)

Fortress Lounge Seating System, 1972

Roll 7 (Oversize)

Fortress System/Tic Tac Toe, 1975

Roll 8 (Oversize)

Lounge Seating, 1971

Roll 9 (Oversize)

Lounge Seating, Fortress Table, 1971-1972

Box 1

Hanssem Children's Chair
Reports
Hanssem Children's Chair Research (1/2), 2005
Hanssem Children's Chair Research (2/2), 2005
Children's Chair, 24 September 2001
Home Office
Reports
Home Office, June 1996 - August 1996

Box 4 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Home Office (1/2), Undated

Drawer 2 (Oversize)

Home Office (2/2), Undated

Box 11 (Oversize)

Home Office Convertible Desking, 10 June 1996

Box 2

KD Project
Reports
KD Chair, etc, Undated

Drawer 2 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Stack Chair and KD Table (1/3), Undated
Stack Chair and KD Table (2/3), Undated
Stack Chair and KD Table (3/3), Undated

Roll 12 (Oversize)

Stacking Chair, 1972

Box 2

Stainless Stack Chair, February 1998
Leaf Chair
Reports
Leaf Chair Memos and Correspondence (1/2), 1988-1990
Leaf Chair Memos and Correspondence (1/2), 1988-1990

Box 2

35mm Slides
Leaf Chair Project, December 1995 and Undated

Box 12 (Oversize)

Marfa Collection
Presentation Photographs
Marfa Collection (1/2), 10 March 2010
Marfa Collection (2/2), 10 March 2010

Box 5 (Oversize)

Modular Seating
Project Drawings
Modular Seating, ca. 1973

Roll 10 (Oversize)

Modular Seating, Undated

Box 2

Monte Project
Reports
Monte Project, 11 December 2001
Monte Project, 6 August 2002
Notal
Reports
Notal Program Book, 19 October 1979
Photographs
Notal/Buroplan Seating, Undated

Box 12 (Oversize)

Project Arrow
Presentation Photographs
Project Arrow Concept, 3 July 2008

Box 13 (Oversize)

Project Arrow Concept, 2 April 2009
Project Arrow Concept, 3 December 2009

Box 8 (Oversize)

Reclining Wheelchair
Project Drawings
Wheel Chair, 1988
Model
Reclining Wheelchair articulating model, Undated

Box 2

Sarah Project
Reports
Sarah Project Memos, etc. (1/3), 1988-1990
Sarah Project Memos, etc. (2/3), 1988-1990
Sarah Project Memos, etc. (3/3), 1988-1990

Drawer 6 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Various Drawings incl. Sarah Furniture, Undated

Box 2

35mm Slides
Sarah Project Slides, January 1989 and Undated
Sarah Project Slides, January 1989 and Undated
Photographs
Sarah Use Tests, March 1990

Small Projects Subseries

Box 1

Reports
Agile Office Report, 14 April 2000

Roll 13 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Aluminum Extruded Group Tracings/Sketches, 1971

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Arrio Wire Management Tab, Undated

Roll 14 (Oversize)

Cam Chair, Undated

Drawer 1 (Oversize)

Chadwick's Side Chair, Undated

Box 11 (Oversize)

Presentation Photographs
Chair Concept, 29 September 2012

Drawer 1 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Custom Choice Leg, Undated

Box 11 (Oversize)

Dome Stool, Undated

Roll 15 (Oversize)

Extruded Tables, Molded Plywood Storage, Undated

Box 1

35mm Slides
Flip, July 2000 and Undated
"Flexible Chair" film information, 25 July 1983 and Undated

Roll 16 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
G.O. Project, 1976

Roll 17 (Oversize)

Hentz Co. Signage, 1963

Roll 18 (Oversize)

Herman Miller Sofa System, 1973-1974

Roll 19 (Oversize)

ICI Modular Case GD System, 1970

Drawer 6 (Oversize)

Kawai Organ, Undated

Box 5 (Oversize)

Kite Fan, Undated

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Laminated Wood Stacking Chair, Undated

Roll 20 (Oversize)

Lincoln Center Signage, Undated

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Mobile D, Undated

Box 12 (Oversize)

Presentation Photographs

Multipurpose Chair Family, 9 November 2007

Box 2

Reports

Quickset Office, 25 August 2000

Box 13 (Oversize)

Presentation Photographs

Rebound, 29 September 2012

Rekindle 2, 19 September 2013

Box 5 (Oversize)

Project Drawings

Sidekick Door Pull, 1995-1996

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Sidekick Vocabularies, Arrio Vocabularies, Undated

Roll 11

SMC Stack Chair, 1970

Roll 21

Soft Seating, 1972

Box 2

Photographs
Solar Lighting Project, 3 March 2011

Roll 22 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Stacking Shelf, 1972

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Stor-Shells, Undated

Roll 23 (Oversize)

Stow Davis Furniture Series, 1972

Roll 24 (Oversize)

Walker Exhibit Drawing, Equa Chair, 1983

Box 2

Winston Dolls, 24 September 2000

Assorted and Untitled Projects Subseries

Box 2

Project Reports
CSA Seating (Various), August 1981
Unidentified Projects, September 1993 - April 1994
Delta Lumbar Support Checklist, Equa Sketches, May 1994

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Project Drawings
Chair Drawings - Various, Undated

Box 5 (Oversize)

Chair Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Box 9 (Oversize)

Chair Design Drawings (Untitled), 1992-1994

Roll 27 (Oversize)

Chair Design Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Roll 28 (Oversize)

Chair Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Roll 29 (Oversize)

Chair Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Assorted Chair Posters, Undated

Roll 30 (Oversize)

Clock (Untitled), Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Desk Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Roll 31 (Oversize)

Desk Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Roll 25 (Oversize)

Flatware Set, Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Lighting, Undated

Roll 32 (Oversize)

Modular Storage (Untitled), 1971

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Modulator with Power, Undated

Modulator without Power, Undated

Roll 26

Office Furniture, Assorted, 1972-1974

Drawer 1 (Oversize)

Overhead, Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Rolltops, Undated

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Screens, Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Seating, Undated

Roll 34 (Oversize)

Seating Drawings (Untitled), Undated

Drawer 4 (Oversize)

Slab End Base, Enclosed End, Undated

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Tables (1/2), Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Tables (2/2), Undated

Box 5 (Oversize)

Table Base, 2000

Roll 35 (Oversize)

Table (Untitled), Undated

Drawer 3 (Oversize)

Tables and Chairs, Undated
Upper Bracket, Undated

Drawer 7 (Oversize)

Walls and Cord, Undated

Drawer 6 (Oversize)

Various, Undated

Roll 33 (Oversize)

Assorted Untitled Projects, Undated

Box 13 (Oversize)

Presentation Photographs
Knoll 11x17 Duplicates, Undated

Box 10 (Oversize)

Untitled Blue Chair presentation board, Undated
Untitled Green Chair presentation board, Undated

Box 2

35mm Slides
Bench (Untitled), March 1999
Assorted Untitled Chairs, 1996-1999 and Undated
Assorted Untitled Projects, 1996

Boxes 6-7 (Oversize)

12 Articulating 2-Dimensional Models, Undated

FILM SERIES

Box 3 (shelved separately)

Herman Miller 807, CSA Chair, ca. 1983

Robt. Abel & Assoc: "CSA Seating":30 W.P., ca. 1983

Untitled, ca. 1983