

A Guide to the Archival Care of Architectural Records, 19th–20th Centuries. MAYGENE DANIELS and DAVID PEYCERÉ, eds. Paris: International Council on Archives, 2000. 112 p. No ISBN.

Building is a fundamental human need, and therefore architecture becomes critical to societal memory because nothing is more compelling or held more sacred by society than the built monument. The collection of architectural material is crucial to the preservation of that societal memory, but the acquisition, organization, preservation, and provision of access to architectural records is a complex process, and institutions that undertake the challenge need to take into account a vast number of issues that are unique to this type of material.

A Guide to the Archival Care of Architectural Records, 19th-20th Centuries, produced by the Architectural Records Section of the International Council on Archives, combines the collective knowledge of an international archival community that specializes in the care and preservation of architectural records. A wealth of experience is brought together, and it is apparent that the authors of this guide not only have a deep understanding of the nature of these records and how to care for them, but also have a critical understanding of why they are important historically. This book provides a basic introduction to the care of architectural records, and while it does not claim to have all the answers, it does supply a careful examination of the circumstances that make such records unique, as well as insight into characteristics they share with other types of archival records.

Divided into seven chapters, this volume is written by a variety of authors and arranged in an order that is completely consistent with describing both the architectural and archival processes. From the creation of the architectural records by the architect to their examination by the researcher in the archival repository, this manual provides a description of how records are created, acquired by archival institutions, appraised, arranged and described, preserved for future generations, and made accessible. Because the authors represent an international community, the information presented is sometimes only germane to a particular country, but it is also of general interest. The Canadian content, provided by the renowned Canadian architectural archivists, Louis Cardinal and Robert Desaulniers, was a welcome addition.

Andrée Van Niewenhuysen and David Peyceré describe the different types of architectural records, which is particularly useful in laying the foundation for understanding the nature of the material by describing who creates it, how it is created, and why. They also provide a fairly comprehensive description of the stages of the design and building process, as well as a description of the types of media and materials used by architects to create records. In addition, descriptions of the different drawing techniques and how and why they developed add an interesting dimension (for example, the introduction of the aerial perspective because of the influence of aviation during the First World War).

Cardinal's description of acquisition principles, criteria, and methodology clearly states that the collection of architectural records by an institution should not be haphazard but should result from a comprehensive and carefully considered collection policy. This policy should take into consideration established archival principles, international, national, and regional collection strategies and mandates, as well as the evidentiary nature of architectural records in understanding societal trends, government activities, architectural styles, innovations, and prototypes, and other considerations derived from the interdisciplinary nature of this material. This chapter is of particular use in providing a checklist that archivists should consider in order to plan for the acquisition and handling of architectural material, as well as questions that archivists should both ask a donor and be able to answer.

Desaulniers presents a general but helpful definition of what appraisal is and the importance of retention and disposition decisions. Of special interest is that he deals with the organization of architectural material in an architect's office, as well as in an archival context. He gives a complete review of the values assigned to architectural records and what selection criteria should be applied to them. The impact of the sheer volume of material generated by modern architectural practice is discussed throughout the chapter, as is the observation that volume makes appraisal decisions and the criteria on which they are based especially critical.

Maygene Daniels describes the principles involved in the arrangement and description of architectural records and the benefits and problems that may result from elements that are unique to this type of material. The need for architects and architectural firms to organize and manage their records for their own use means that they have created an organizational system that can be easily understood and adapted by the archives that later collect their work. But the large volume and diversity of format, size, and material make for interesting problems in obtaining intellectual and physical control over architectural fonds. These factors are also considerations in the conservation and storage of architectural material, as well as how access to it is provided.

Cardinal's chapter on the conservation of architectural records provides a substantial amount of information on causes of deterioration, as well as practical information on storage conditions, rooms, storage cabinets, and shelving. He also provides an answer to the age-old question of "rolled versus flat."

In the final chapter, Peyceré describes the many uses of architectural archives and access conditions that may exist in individual institutions. This chapter also touches on aspects of access that pertain solely to architectural records, such as potential threats to privacy, personal safety, public safety, and terrorism that may result from providing public access to the plans of private residences and public buildings.

An obvious criticism of this volume is that, while purporting to deal with nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural records, it concentrates mainly

on those created in the twentieth century. In addition, there is very little information on dealing with computer generated design and the complications that preserving this type of material will represent. But its greatest flaw is that, as a manual, it lacks basic indexing and pagination that would allow users to find specific information quickly and easily. Although it is well written and well organized, some information would be better presented in tables, and while well illustrated, some of the illustrations could be clearer and more comprehensive. Obviously designed to be regularly updated, its packaging (which lacks a spine and binding) makes it difficult to use and it is therefore less likely to be used with any regularity. However, as a basic manual, it provides useful information for North American and European archivists with little experience in dealing with architectural records. For more experienced archivists it can provide a basis for further study. This book would also prove to be highly useful for institutions that are considering collecting architectural material, as it provides a clear description of the nature of architectural records, their similarities and differences from other archival records, and the problems and rewards that will result from caring for this type of material.

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An Ounce of Prevention: Integrated Disaster Planning for Archives, Libraries, and Record Centres, second edition. JOHANNA WELLHEISER and JUDE SCOTT with the assistance of JOHN BARTON. Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow Press, Inc and the Canadian Archives Foundation, 2002. 304 p. ISBN 0-8108-4176-2.

Disaster planning for any business enables continuing service to clients by avoiding or minimizing losses. Many resources are available in the jargon-rich area of emergency response planning/business resumption planning/disaster contingency planning, but a resource directed specifically at archives and similar organizations provides a useful filter for this information.

This is the second edition of *An Ounce of Prevention: A Handbook on Disaster Contingency Planning for Archives, Libraries, and Record Centres*, edited by John Barton and Johanna Wellheiser and published by the Toronto Area Archivists Group Education Foundation in 1985. In spite of its modest design, the original *An Ounce of Prevention* proved a highly significant contribution to disaster planning literature. At a time when disaster planning for organizations with cultural property was focused on training in collections salvage and recovery procedures to be carried out by conservators, the authors incorporated disaster planning concepts and strategies developed for