

INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTION



The San Diego Historical Society began actively collecting architectural records in the 1930s. Since then, thanks to many generous donations and the diligent work of staff and volunteers, the collection has gradually grown to become one of the largest and most extensive in San Diego County. The records consist of media related to the architectural design processes, including bluelines, blueprints, brownlines, blacklines, sepia diazo prints, diazotypes, ink and pencil drawings on tracing paper, presentation drawings and photographs. The overall date range of the collection is 1881 to the present, with the bulk of the collection dating from the 1910s to the 1960s. The volume of the collection is tremendous, measuring 1,104 cubic feet. Approximately eighty-five percent of this has been preserved according to archival standards. The collection documents a total of 2,737 projects, and of these 1,469 have been fully cataloged. The collection offers researchers an exceptional resource related to the study of architectural design and development in San Diego. This guide is a comprehensive listing of all the architectural records currently held by the Society. It was created to facilitate better access and use, and also to provide an overall description of the collection.

The Architectural Records Collection represents a broad sampling of architectural design projects in San Diego over the course of the last century. It contains the design records for numerous building types, including homes, resorts, stadiums, churches, hospitals, elementary schools, libraries, universities, military bases, hotels, apartments, city parks, banks, high rise office buildings and memorials. It also represents a range of styles, from the picturesque styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to the modern styles of the post World War II era. These include Queen Anne, Italianate, Mission Revival, Craftsman, Romanesque, Classical Revival, Spanish Revival, Art Deco and International styles. Lacking from the collection are representative works of modern and post-modern high rise office buildings, hotels, apartments and condominiums.

Many of the well known twentieth century San Diego architects and their works are significantly represented in the collection, including Irving J. Gill, Louis J. Gill, William Sterling Hebbard, Hazel Wood Waterman, Richard S. Requa, Herbert L. Jackson, Bertram G. Goodhue, Frank W. Stevenson, William Templeton Johnson, Lilian Rice, Samuel W. Hamill, Frank L. Hope, Lloyd A. Ruocco, Sim Bruce Richards, Robert Mosher, Roy Drew and Hal Sadler. The collection also includes the works of lesser known architects, Herluf Brydegaard, Arthur A. Kunze and George B Leidy, to name a few.

The research uses for the collection are many. Architects involved in historic restoration projects, or seeking to understand a particular style or body of work by another architect, will find the collection invaluable, and so will architects and homeowners looking to create an addition to an historic home in the same design style. The records are also often necessary to secure approval for local, state and national registers of historic places. The collection also provides an exceptional source for historians seeking to study various aspects of development and architectural design in the region, as the following article will illustrate.