Changing the Landscape of Architectural Records Processing

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Project

Proposed
2-year, CLIR-funded project to arrange, describe, and make available six modernist architect and landscape architect collections:
40,000 original drawings + project files
Approximately 1,200 linear feet

Accomplished
Year 1: Processed all six of the proposed grant collections, which measured 1336 linear feet
Year 2: Processed 43 additional collections measuring 1089 linear feet, for a 2-year total of 49 collections and 2425 linear ft.

Goals
1. Streamline methods of collecting and recording data and of creating finding aids.

2. Improve the physical processes of moving and storing collections.

Methods

(1) Consulted with potential users about which metadata are most important to them.


(3) Described material at project level.

(4) Had student workers collect information as they re-housed drawings and files

(5) Collected and used information from a variety of sources, especially donors and, in one case, an appraiser.

(6) Improved storage of architectural collections.

(7) Collaborated with digital libraries staff, who created a script that allowed us to be much more efficient in creating container lists and thus, finding aids.

(8) Collaborated with building services staff, who built a cart that allowed us to move large drawings more easily and safely

Challenges and benefits of processing architectural collections

Benefits
• These collections are critical to understanding the environment in which people live, work and define their community
• They have wide appeal and research value beyond the field of architecture
• They document professional activity and are artistic artifacts

Challenges
• Architectural drawings are large and therefore require a great deal of space for both processing and long-term storage
• Architectural collections tend to be large as practicing architects are required to save materials for legal purposes
• Large amounts of supplies are required for most architectural collections and the supplies themselves are large
• Cost of processing large collections of large materials

For further information

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