
Earl Nisbet collection, 2011-05

Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by Emily Vigor

Environmental Design Archives

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Title: Earl Nisbet collection

Identifier/Call Number: 2011-05

Contributing Institution: Environmental Design Archives

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 14.5 Linear feet, 6 document boxes, 1 flat box, 1 flat file drawer

Date (inclusive): 1931-2007

Abstract: A native Californian, Nisbet joined the army after high school and served in WW II. Upon return to civilian life, he enrolled in an architecture and engineering college in San Francisco, where he was inspired by the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright. He worked as a carpenter's apprentice until 1950, when he was accepted as a Fellow at Taliesin West. In 1953, he left Taliesin, and began work on his own. In 1958, following an extended stay in Tahiti, he moved to Hawaii, and established a practice there. He returned to California in the 1960s. Nisbet's beautiful drawings reflect the style and influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. This collection contains drawings of built and unbuilt projects, mostly residential, spanning the years 1950-1990.

creator: Nisbet, Earl, 1926-2013

Biographical Note

Earl Nisbet was born on June 17, 1926 in San Jose, California. Nisbet joined the army after high school and served in WWII. Upon returning to civilian life, he enrolled in an architecture and engineering college in San Francisco, where he was inspired by the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright. After college, he worked as a carpenter's apprentice and assisted in the construction of the Midglen residence in Woodside, a home that was being built by apprentices of Frank Lloyd Wright. This experience influenced him to apply for a fellowship studying with Frank Lloyd Wright and in 1950 he was accepted as a Fellow at Taliesin in Wisconsin. Nisbet spent three years at Taliesin and Taliesin West before pursuing an independent career designing homes in Northern California. In 1958, following an extended stay in Tahiti, he moved to Hawaii and established a practice in Waikiki. During this period, Nisbet built the Doo House. He returned to California in the early 1960s where he continued to design residential and commercial buildings. Nisbet's architectural drawings reflect the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright throughout his career. He passed away in Aptos, CA in 2013.

Sources: Nisbet, Earl. *Taliesin Reflections: My Years Before, During, and After Living with Frank Lloyd Wright*. Petaluma, CA: Meridian Press, 2006.

System of Arrangement

This collection is organized into four series: Personal Papers, Professional Papers, Office Records, and Project Records.

Scope and Contents Note

Personal and Professional Papers consist primarily of correspondence with friends and colleagues, as well as personal photographs. A scrapbook that Nisbet created during his life that contains numerous clippings on Frank Lloyd Wright is also included in the Personal Papers series. Office records include photographs from two exhibitions on Taliesin Fellows that Nisbet was included in, as well as publication clippings on the Doo House and Tanglewood House.

The Project Records consist of built and unbuilt projects, mostly residential. They include construction drawings of Gene Masselink's abstraction for Frank Lloyd Wright's Frank Sander House in Stamford, Connecticut, a decorative wood screen for the current owner, Erik Gavriluk. This collection also includes a drawing that Nisbet completed for Frank Lloyd Wright of a tent while at Taliesin with Wright's own sketch in the bottom right corner.

Custodial History

This collection was received from Earl Nisbet.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], Earl Nisbet Collection, [2011-05] Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Access Statement

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Curator.

[Inventory of the Olof Dahlstrand Collection, 2008-1](#)

Project Index

The following is a list of architectural projects from the Earl Nisbet Collection. For more complete information about collection contents for each project, as well as shelf location and microfilming status, download the complete **Project**

Index in an Excel spreadsheet format by going to <http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/pindex/nisbet.xls> . For instructions on interpreting the Project Index, see [The Guide to the Project Index](#). The project list below, derived from the Project Index, is arranged alphabetically by Project/Client Name and contains information, where available, about the location, date, project type, collaborators, photographers, and formats for each project in the collection.

Project/Client Name (location, date, project type) Collaborator (role), Photographer [Format - Ms=Manuscripts, Dr=Drawings, Ph=Photographs, SI=Slides]

- Baird, Robert: Hidden River Ranch (Salt Lake City , UT ; 2011 residential) [Dr]
- Blois, R.M. (Portola Valley , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Ms, Dr, Ph, SI]
- Brookside Park (Woodside , CA ; 1954 ; residential) [Ms, Dr]
- Bushea, William (Newport , OR ; 1956 ; residential) [Dr]
- Canyon House (Woodside , CA ; 1954 ; residential) [Dr]
- Design: Furniture studies ; n.d. ; furniture [Dr]
- Design: Hidden River Ranch (Salt Lake City , UT ; 2011 ; residential)
- Design: house (Woodside , CA ; 1956 ; residential) [Dr]
- Design: Maple Ave House (Sunnyvale , CA ; 1956 ; residential) [Dr]
- Design: Plexidom ; 1956 ; residential [Dr]
- Design: Small bungalow ; n.d. ; residential [Dr]
- Design: Studio Apartment ; n.d. ; residential [Dr]
- Design: Valley National Bank ; n.d. ; commercial [Dr]
- Designs: Various buildings ; n.d. [Dr]
- Doo, S.C. (Honolulu , HI ; 1959 ; residential) [Ms, Dr, Ph, SI]
- Elwood, Wayne (Palo Alto Hills , CA ; 1965 ; residential) [Dr, Ph, SI]
- Falconer, D.W. (Soquel , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Ms, Dr, Ph, SI]
- Falconer, D.W. Scheme 1 (Soquel , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Dr, Ph]
- Gores, Joseph (San Anselmo , CA ; 1978 ; commercial) [Dr]
- Hidden River Ranch (Salt Lake City , UT ; 2011 ; residential) [Dr]
- John, Harry (Oconomowoc , WI ; n.d. ; residential) [Dr]
- Larry's Snack Counter (Honolulu , HI ; 1960 ; commercial) [Dr]
- Longevar Prefab (Honolulu , HI ; 1958 ; residential) [Dr]
- McCord, Glenn (Arlington , NJ ; n.d. ; residential) [Dr]
- McNemey, Michael and Debbie light deck design ; n.d. ; furnishings [Dr]
- Meija, F. pool cover design (Santa Cruz , CA ; n.d. ; residential) [Dr]
- Moore residence (Felton , CA ; residential) [Ph]
- Newman, Jack (La Honda , CA ; 1953 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl (Anderson Island , WA ; 1990 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl (Santa Cruz , CA ; 1978 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl (Aptos , CA ; 1976 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl House Studies (Aptos , CA ; 1976 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl Scheme 1 (Aptos , CA ; 1976 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl Scheme 2 (Aptos , CA ; 1976 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl Portola Studio (Portola Valley , CA ; 1955 ; commercial) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl: Drafting Studio (Portola Valley , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl: Frank S. Sander House decorative wood screen (Stamford , CT ; 2011 ; furnishings) Collaborator: Gene Masselink [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl: Kalakawa Office (Honolulu , HI ; 1958 ; commercial) [Dr, Ph]
- Nisbet, Earl: Mini Storage Building (Santa Cruz , CA ; 1976 ; commercial) [Dr]
- Nisbet, Earl: Nisbet Associates Office (Los Altos , CA ; n.d. ; commercial) [Ms]
- Nisbet, Earl: Sunridge House (Pebble Beach , CA ; 1965 ; residential) [Dr]

- Nisbet, Earl: Taliesin Tent (Scottsdale , AZ ; 1952 ; residential) [Dr]
- Palo Alto Hills Project (Palo Alto , CA ; 1965 ; residential) [Ms]
- Pescadero Heights (Pebble Beach , CA ; 1965 ; residential) [Ms, Dr]
- Sedgwick Pharmacy (Capitola , CA ; 1955 ; commercial) [Dr]
- Smith, Roscoe (Los Altos , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Ms, Dr]
- Spade, H.V. (Alpine Hills , CA ; 1955 ; residential) [Ms, Dr]
- Tanglewood (Felton , CA ; 1953 ; residential) [Ph, Sl]
- Winn Residence (Kalamazoo , MI ; residential) [Dr]
- Unidentified architectural drawings [Dr]

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Architects--California
 Architectural drawings
 Architectural firms--California
 Architectural photographs
 Architectural records
 Architecture, Domestic--California--San Francisco Bay Area
 Architecture--California

SERIES I: PERSONAL PAPERS, 1945-2007

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: Document Box 1-2, Flat Box 3

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically

Scope and Contents note

This collection consists primarily of personal correspondence received by Nisbet, and Holiday cards that Nisbet created. Personal photographs include images of Earl at Taliesin and photographs that he took during his apprenticeship.

A. Correspondence A. 1957-2007

Document-box 1, Folder 1	Nisbet, Mary Lou correspondence, 1957-1960
Document-box 1, Folder 2-3	Correspondence received, 1952-2006
Document-box 1, Folder 4	Nisbet designed and sent holiday cards, 1987-2001
Document-box 1, Folder 5-6	Holiday cards received, 1959-2007, n.d.

B. Writings

Document-box 2, Folder 7	Essay "On Frank Lloyd Wright", n.d.
Document-box 2, Folder 8	Notes, 1957-1991

C. Travel

C. Travel

Document-box 2, **International Date Line certificate, 1957**
Folder 9

D. Photographs

Document-box 2, **Earl at Taliesin, n.d.**
Folder 10
Document-box 2, **Photographs, n.d.**
Folder 11
Document-box 2, **Portraits, 1945-1956**
Folder 12
Document-box 2, **Taliesin Photos, 1952-1953**
Folder 13

E. Awards

Document-box 2, **Dietary Services, Stanford Hospital Center, 1963**
Folder 14

F. Sketches

Document-box 2, **Drawings and sketches, n.d.**
Folder 15

G. Scrapbook

Flat-box 3 **Clippings related to Frank Lloyd Wright, n.d.**
SERIES II: PROFESSIONAL PAPERS, 1931-2003
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: Document Box 4
Arrangement note
Arranged chronologically
Scope and Contents note
The correspondence in this collection includes architects that Nisbet met while at Taliesin and correspondence from both the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and the Taliesin Fellowship and Preservation, Inc.

A. Correspondence

Document-box 4, **Alvin Badenhop correspondence, 1958-1997**
Folder 1
Document-box 4, **Chuck Bass correspondence, 1959-1988**
Folder 2
Document-box 4, **Jackson Wong correspondence, 1988-2001**
Folder 3
Document-box 4, **Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation correspondence, 1984-2003**
Folder 4
Document-box 4, **Taliesin Fellowship correspondence, 1950**
Folder 5
Document-box 4, **Taliesin Preservation, Inc. correspondence, 1987-2002**
Folder 6
Document-box 4, **Nisbet correspondence, 1998**
Folder 7

A. Correspondence

Document-box 4, **Correspondence received, 1988-1998**
Folder 8

B. Reference Files

Document-box 4, **Lecture notes on architectural perspective - George M. Allen, 1931**
Folder 9

SERIES III: OFFICE RECORDS, 1954-1995

Physical Description: Document Box 5, 7

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically

Scope and Contents note

Photographs are from the Taliesin Fellows Exhibition at the Marin Civic Center and an exhibition at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo of the Taliesin Fellows Northern California chapter.

A. Photographs

Physical Description: ** see Project Index

Document-box 5, **Taliesin Fellows Exhibition, Marin Civic Center, 1995**
Folder 1

Document-box 5, **TFNC Cal Poly Exhibition, n.d.**
Folder 2

B. Clippings

Document-box 5, **Doo House publication clippings, 1958-1965**
Folder 3

Document-box 5, **Tanglewood House publication clippings, 1954, n.d.**
Folder 4

Document-box 1, **Various projects publication clippings, 1958-1968**
Folder 5

C. Forms and Stationary

Document-box 5, **Contract forms, n.d.**
Folder 6

Document-box 5, **Construction forms, n.d.**
Folder 7

Document-box 5, **Business cards n.d.**
Folder 8

SERIES IV: PROJECT RECORDS, 1953-2011

Physical Description: Document Box 5-6, Flat Files

Arrangement note

Arranged alphabetically

Scope and Contents note

This series includes project files, drawings, and photographs of projects both completed and envisioned by Nisbet.

A. Files

Physical Description: ** See Project Index

B. Photographs

Physical Description: ** See Project

C. Drawings

Physical Description: ** See Project Index