
Alfred C. Williams Collection 2006-10

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Title: Alfred C. Williams Collection

creator: Williams, Alfred C., 1906-2006

Identifier/Call Number: 2006-10

Physical Description: 9 Cubic Feet -2 boxes, 8 flat files, 3 flat boxes, 1 tube

Date (inclusive): 1926-1991

Date (bulk): 1926-1948

Abstract: This collection consists of publications, drawings, photographs, and a smattering of correspondence relating to the architectural career of Alfred C. Williams. It includes a fair sampling of his student work, his travel sketchbooks, and project records relating to his work in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. The collection contains no records of his work outside the architectural field. The collection is organized in three series: personal papers, professional papers, and project records.

Access Statement

Collection is open for research. Many of the Environmental Design Archives collections are stored offsite and advance notice is required for use.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], Records of Alfred C. Williams, (2006-10), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Biographical Note

Alfred C. Williams, (1906-2006)

Alfred Charles Williams was born on June 25, 1906 in San Francisco, California, shortly after the 1906 earthquake destroyed his parents' home. He attended Mission High School in San Francisco, where he ran track and was editor of the student paper. He then earned a BA in 1928 and an MA in 1932 from the University of California, Berkeley School of Architecture. He worked as a draftsman for Archie T. Newsom of Oakland, CA; Gehron & Ross of New York; Frank H. Holden of New York; and William Wilson Wurster of San Francisco, CA. He also spent six months traveling through Europe.

Williams worked in Oregon in 1933 and returned to California in 1934. During World War II, Williams was employed as a project planner by the Federal Public Housing Authority. He designed some commercial and industrial structures, including department stores, but focused on designing modern houses. He developed a series of designs for modern living using contemporary materials (concrete masonry and interlocking block).

In 1949 Williams resigned from the AIA and ceased his formal practice of architecture. In 1956 - 1957, Williams was a student at the Quaker study center Woodbrooke College in England, studying international politics and philosophy. He devoted the rest of his life to advocating for world peace and international law, though he designed a few structures in later years. He died January 22, 2006 at the age of 99.

Sources:

AIA/SF Records (2001-7), Membership Files, Williams, Alfred C.

Obituary provided by family.

Williams, Alfred C. (2006-10), Autobiography, May 1962, Box 1 Folder 1.

System of Arrangement

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

Scope and Contents

This collection, which spans the years 1926-1991 (bulk 1926-1948), consists of publications, drawings, photographs, and a smattering of correspondence relating to the architectural career of Alfred C. Williams. It includes a fair sampling of his student work, his travel sketchbooks, and project records relating to his work in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. The collection contains no records of his work outside the architectural field. The collection is organized in three series: personal papers, professional papers, and project records.

The personal papers consist primarily of his student drawings and his sketchbooks from his travels through Europe. Noteworthy in both of these is his emerging interest in modern architecture, demonstrated by two student drawings of modern buildings based on the classical orders and by his sketches of modern buildings in Europe. Motifs from his European sketches can be found in his later residential designs.

The professional papers include a small amount of correspondence but consist primarily of an assortment of his published articles and designs. Noteworthy among these is his 1944 article "In Support of Post-War Planning—Now," which includes designs and photographs of a number of his modern residences. Also of note is a 1991 letter by Williams to the resident of 661 Caldwell Road in Oakland, CA, whose home burned in the 1991 Oakland hills fire. This Oakland residence was designed by Williams in 1941 as his own home and office, and photographs and a plan of this residence was featured in Williams' article "In Support of Post-War Planning—Now." As an attachment to the letter, Williams provided copies of the original floor plan drawings for the rebuilding of the home.

Williams's publications include:

- "A Sketching Trip to Morocco and North Africa." *The Architect and Engineer*. July 1932.
- "The Book of Low Cost Houses." N.D. 74.
- "Department Store Architecture." *The Architect and Engineer*. November 1933. 25-32.
- "House in Berkeley, California." *Architectural Forum*. November 1942. 73-75.
- "House in Oakland, California." *Architectural Forum*. April 1939.
- "In Support of Post-War Planning—Now." *Architect and Engineer*. Vol. 158. No. 1. 7.1944. 14-36.
- "Model Kitchens as Submitted in the Frigidaire Competition." N.D. 36.
- "Random Sketches in Spain and Italy." *The Architect and Engineer*. June 1932. 37-42.
- "Rome and a Town in Spain." *The Architect and Engineer*. February 1934. 18-19.
- "What About the Modern House?" *The Architect and Engineer*. Vol. 109. No. 2. May 1932. 13-17.
- "50 Small Homes." August 1937. 30.

The project series includes drawings for his own home, the homes of several other clients, a few commercial and industrial designs, several entries in architectural competitions, and numerous residential designs. Of note is Williams's interest in small, modern homes. In 1948 he produced a pamphlet, with corresponding plans and elevations, for *Twenty Designs for Modern Living in Concrete Masonry Homes*. His intent was to sell sets of plans for the residences in the pamphlet. There is also a collection of designs entitled "A Portfolio of Small Houses." Several of his residential projects are featured in his publications in the professional papers series. The project series includes a number of photographs of completed houses. Williams's later interest in peace and international law is reflected by a 1974 design for a U.N. Plaza Fountain in San Francisco.

Related Collection

For related materials to the items in this collection, please see the following finding aid: Said Collection of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Division, School of International Service at American University, University Library.

Project Index

The following is a list of architectural projects from the Alfred C. Williams Records. For more complete information about collection contents for each project download the complete **Project Index** in an Excel spreadsheet format by going to [Alfred C. Williams i-Page](#) . 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]

- 5966 Zinn Drive House (Oakland , CA ; 1942 ; Residential) [Ms]
- "Belmont Country Club Properties Four Residences" (Belmont , CA ; 1945 ; Residential) [Dr]
- Benson, Dr. Kenelm W. (Berkeley , CA ; 1951 ; Residential) [Dr]
- "Big Double Y Project Youth For Service and YWCA" (San Francisco , CA ; 1963-1965 ; Recreational) [Ms, Dr]
- Brockhoff, C.W. (San Carlos , CA ; 1949 ; Residential) Collaborator: "Leo J. Sharps and Irving F. Brown, Associate Architects" [Ms, Dr]
- Brown, Wallace Holmes, The Uplands (Berkeley , CA ; 1951 ; Residential) [Dr]
- Building Industry Center (San Francisco , CA ; 1944 ; Commercial) [Dr]

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- Competition: A Design for a Model Kitchen as submitted in the Frigidaire Competition (n/a ; n.d. ; Residential) [Ms]
 - Competition: American Home Architectural Contest (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Competition: Oakland National Housing Exposition House Competition (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Competition: Pencil Points Competition, Design for an Eight-Room House (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Competition: Pencil Points, Flat-Glass Industry Architectural Competition (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: 3 Bed Rms--8 Closets--View--Montclair Highlands (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: 3 Houses on Caldwell Road (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: 5 Room House in Oakland (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Book Dept., 1st Floor (unknown ; n.d. ; Commercial) [Dr]
 - Design: Country Estate (Prescott Hills , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Duplex Residence (unknown ; 1966 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Four Room Dwelling with Attached Garage (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Four Room Residence (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Four Room Residence Attached Garage (unknown ; 1939 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Plan #10, Schemes A, B, C, D (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Possible Magazine Entry (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Six Room Suburban Home (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Design: Untitled (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Eberhart, Howard Berkeley View Terrace, Fairlawn Drive" (Berkeley , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Edward Sommarstrom and Son Builders (unknown ; n.d. ; "Residential- multi") [Dr]
 - Groezinger, Seacliff Project, O'Brien Lot (Seacliff , CA ; ca. 1939 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - House in Alameda (Alameda , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) Collaborator: "G. Reagan, Contractor" [Ph]
 - "Kaplan, Walter, Alterations and Additions Green Street and Pierce Street" (San Francisco , CA ; 1937 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Koenig, Max Apartments " (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; "Residential- multi") [Dr]
 - "Larson, Charles E. Green Oaks #2 in Lindenwood, Wisteria Way" (Atherton , CA ; 19(?)8 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Logan Residence (San Francisco , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) Collaborator: "Fracchia & Trufelli, Contractors" [Ph]
 - "Mechanical Floor Plan Three Bedroom Duplex Unit" (Kern County , CA ; n.d. ; Governmental) [Dr]
 - Morgan, D.W. (Berkeley , CA ; 1951 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Porta, Raphael (San Francisco , CA ; 1960 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Portfolio of Small Houses (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Proposed ""Up-and-Down"" Duplex Cooperative Improvement Company" (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Railton, Richard Terrace Shelter, 6 Hazel Road" (Berkeley , CA ; 1951 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Residence in Berkeley (Berkeley , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) Collaborator: "Walter H. Anderson, Contractor" ; Photographer: "Max Heinegg, photographer" [Ph]
 - Residence in Oakland (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) Collaborator: "George Hastings, Contractor" [Dr, Ph]
 - Richardson, George J., Rio Del Mar (Santa Cruz , CA ; 1937 ; Residential) Collaborator: "Hays McClellan, Builder" ; Photographer: unknown [Ms, Dr, Ph]
 - "Silven, Arthur C. Addition, Millbrae Circle" (Millbrae , CA ; 1939 ; Residential) [Ms, Dr]
 - SM Co. Spec., four houses (unknown ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Stone, Paul Rear Garden Additions" (Berkeley , CA ; 1952 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Thiel, A. A. (Piedmont , CA ; "1937-1938, 1971" ; Residential) [Dr]
 - "Twenty Designs for Modern Living in Concrete Masonry Homes and in Mortarless Interlocking Block Homes" (n/a ; 1948 ; Residential) [Ms, Dr]
 - UN Plaza Fountain, Suggested Design (San Francisco , CA ; 1974 ; Civic) [Dr]
 - Valencia Gardens, SF Housing Authority (San Francisco , CA ; 1941 ; Governmental) [Dr]
 - War Housing, CAL_4891N (San Bruno , CA ; 1944 ; Governmental) [Dr]
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- "Williams, Alfred C., 2711 Woolsey Street, Additions and Alterations" (Berkeley , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Williams, Alfred C., 525 Arlington Road (Redwood City , CA ; 1945 ; Residential)
 - "Williams, Alfred C., 6391 Hillegass Avenue Deck Loggia" (Oakland , CA ; 1975 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Williams, Alfred C., 661 Caldwell Road (Oakland , CA ; ca. 1941 ; Residential) Photographer: "Max Heinegg, photographer" [Ms, Dr, Ph]
 - Williams, Alfred C., One Hazel Road (Berkeley , CA ; 1950 ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Williams, George A., 126 Florence Avenue (Oakland , CA ; 1941-1942 ; Residential) [Ms]
 - Williams, H. J. (Oakland , CA ; n.d. ; Residential) [Dr]
 - Williams, Robert E., Broadway Terrace (Oakland , CA ; 1938 ; Residential) Collaborator: "Archie Waring, Contractor J. H. Piatt, Surveyor" [Dr, Ph]

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Architects--California.

Architects -- California -- San Francisco Bay Area.

Architecture, Modern--20th century--California--San Francisco Bay Area.

Williams, Alfred C., 1906-2006

SERIES I. PERSONAL PAPERS 1926-1991

Physical Description: 2.5 Cubic Feet -Boxes 1, 3, 4, 5, Flat File 1, Tube 1

Scope and Contents

Consists primarily of his student drawings and his travel sketches, which focus on Germany, Italy, and Spain. Also includes clippings collected by Williams, a copy of his obituary, and a photograph of Williams as a young man.

A. Biographical Information

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Alfred C. Williams Obituary 2006 |
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Alfred C. Williams Photograph n.d. |
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Misc. professional envelopes and businesscard n.d. |
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Autobiography 1962 |

B. Student Work

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|-----------------|--|
| Box 4, Folder 1 | Pencil Drawings of Classical Orders 1929 |
| Box 5, Folder 1 | Ink Drawings of Classical Orders 1926 |
| Flat-File 1 | Student Drawings: Ink, Pencil, Watercolor ca. 1927-1932 |
| Tube 1 | Student Drawing: Ink, Pencil, Watercolor n.d. |

C. Travel

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Box 3, Volume 1 | Sketchbook, Europe n.d. |
| Box 3, Volume 2 | Sketchbook, Europe n.d. |
| Box 4, Folder 2 | Sketches, Europe n.d. |

SERIES II. PROFESSIONAL PAPERS 1932-1991

Physical Description: 2 Cubic Feet -Boxes 1, 2, 4, 5

Scope and Contents

Consists of a small amount of correspondence and a collection of articles and designs published by Williams. Also of note is a 1991 letter by Williams to the resident of 661 Caldwell Road in Oakland, CA, whose home burned in the 1991 Oakland hills fire. This Oakland residence was designed by Williams in 1941 as his own home and office. Research materials include industry information on concrete construction techniques. The publications focus primarily on modern residential design and were published in the mid-1930s to 1940s.

Box 1, Folder 2
Box 1, Folder 2a
Box 1, Folder 3
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 7
Box 1, Folder 8
Box 1, Folder 9
Box 2, Folder 7
Box 2, Folder 8
Box 2, Folder 9

Professional Correspondence 1944-1991

Correspondence Related to Concrete Construction Research 1948

Publications ca. 1932-1944

Twenty Designs for Modern Living 1948

Publication Drafts ca. 1943-1944

Office Records ca. 1950-1955

Class Notes - Engineering, Science, and Management Defense Training 1942

Concrete Construction, Manufacturer's Data and Research ca. 1928-1948

General Reference ca. 1928-1948

Public Housing Authority Reference 1946

SERIES III. PROJECT RECORDS ca. 1937-1975 1937-1948

Physical Description: 3 Cubic Feet -Boxes 1, 2, 5, Flat Files 2-9

A. Photographs

Scope and Contents

Consists of photographs of completed residential projects; the photographs are primarily of his own house at 661 Caldwell Road, Oakland, CA.

See Also

Project Index

B. Drawings

Scope and Contents

Consists primarily of drawings for residential projects, some completed but many simply designs. Of primary interest are his plans and elevations for "Twenty Designs for Modern Living." Also included are designs for a few commercial, industrial and public structures and for several competitions.

See Also

Project Index