Guide to the John W. Davis papers

Collection number: MC 16

Sacramento Public Library
Sacramento Room
Sacramento, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: John W. Davis papers
Dates: 1945-1987
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1946-1954)
Collection number: MC 16
Creator: Davis, John W.
Collection Size: .5 linear ft. (1 archival box)
Repository: Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento Room
Sacramento, California 95814

Abstract: John W. Davis, a Sacramento architectural designer, worked for many years in partnership with local developer Jere Strizek to design and construct Sacramento's Town and Country Village shopping center and affordable homes in the Town and Country community, both located in the Arden area. The bulk of his papers consist of correspondence, plans, photographs, and clippings documenting his design work between 1946 and 1954.

Physical location: For current information on the location of these materials, please contact the Sacramento Room.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], John W. Davis papers, MC 16, Sacramento Room, Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento, California.

Biography

John W. Davis was born to John O. and Mary C. Davis on August 22, 1910, in Illinois. He received his B.S. degree in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1934 and served as an officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the Second World War. Following the war, Davis was engaged as a private designer and construction coordinator with partner Jere Strizek, a noted Sacramento developer. The two designed Town and Country Village shopping center and homes in the Town and Country community, both located in the Arden area in Sacramento.

Built in 1946, the Old West-themed Town and Country Village was one of the first shopping centers in the region and was modeled after a center of the same name located in Palo Alto, California. The nearby Town and Country community advertised low-cost family homes. Town and Country houses became known for Davis' distinctive "flat top" design and were featured in a number of publications, including Parents' Magazine, which awarded one of the 3-bedroom, 2-bath designs with a merit award in 1951. In addition to homes in the Town and Country developments, Davis designed original furniture for Town and Country Village.
After his partnership with Strizek ended, Davis worked briefly with the firm Dreyfuss and Davis (1956-1958), and then as a general contractor from 1958-1961. In 1962, he became general manager of Associated Development Co. Davis retired by the mid-1960s.

John W. Davis, his wife Charlotte and their three children lived for many years in a home on Gwen Drive in the Town and Country community.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is primarily comprised of the professional papers of John W. Davis, the bulk of which consists of correspondence, plans, photographs and clippings documenting his design work between 1946 and 1954. Project Files were compiled by Davis and include sketches, photographs, correspondence and printed material on individual design projects - the Chuck Wagon restaurant, May Shurr Antiques, Town and Country Village Signs, and his application for the Parents' Magazine merit award (1951). Correspondence concerns Davis' application for the Parents' Magazine merit award, and includes letters from William J. Sheick, president of the National Research Council's Building Research Advisory Board. Photographic prints comprise interior and exterior views of new homes in the Town and Country community and many images of Town and Country Village shopping center, including views taken during construction and interiors and exteriors captured over the subsequent decade. Plans include plot master plans for Santa Anita Village and floor plans for the Town and Country Modern Personality Home design. Clippings and printed material consists of both ephemeral publicity material for Town and Country Village and articles written about Davis' projects, including the Town and Country Village and Town and Country homes.

This collection is organized into six series:

• Series 1. Project files
• Series 2. Correspondence
• Series 3. Photographs
• Series 4. Plans
• Series 5. Clippings and Printed Material
• Series 6. General

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Shopping centers -- California -- Sacramento.
Sacramento (Calif.)
Davis, John W.
Architectural design -- California -- Sacramento.
Architects -- California -- Sacramento.

Series 1. Project files 1946-1952

Physical Description: 5 folders
Series Scope and Content Summary
The project files in this series were compiled by John W. Davis and contain sketches, correspondence, plat designs, and other documentation for individual design projects.

Box 1: 1 The Chuck Wagon 1946
Box 1: 2 May Shurr Antiques 1947
Box 1: 3 Town and Country Signs 1947-1948
Box 1: 4-5 Parents' Magazine Merit Award 1950-1952
Box 1: 6 Series 2. Correspondence 1946-1951

Physical Description: 1 folder
Series Scope and Content Summary
The bulk of the correspondence consists of letters to William H. Scheick of the Building Research Advisory Board and Parents' Institute regarding Davis' application for the 1951 Parents' Magazine merit award. This series is organized alphabetically by correspondent name.
Series 3. Photographs 1946-1960

Physical Description: 7 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary
This series consists of nearly 100 images, the bulk of which are b&w photographic prints with views of the Town and Country Village and Town and Country homes.

Box 1: 7-8 Homes in Town and Country community and Roseville, CA 1951-1953
Box 1: 9-11 Town and Country Village 1946 - ca. 1960
Box 1: 12 Aerial views of Town and Country 1954, n.d.
Box 1: 13 Family ca. 1945 - 1955

Drawer M


Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary
This series includes a master plot plan for Santa Anita Village Unit 4 (1960) and plans for the Town and Country Modern Personality Home (n.d.)

Series 5. Clippings and Printed Material 1947-1965

Physical Description: 4 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary
This series is comprised of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and ephemera documenting Davis' design projects: Town and Country Village, Town and Country homes, and a Sears & Roebuck building in Sacramento.

Box 1: 14 Town and Country Village ephemera ca. 1950
Box 1: 15 Newspaper clippings ca. 1945-1955
Box 1: 16 Magazine articles 1947-1955
Box M Articles regarding Town and Country Village 1947-1987

Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary
This series includes a card and letters regarding the Dreyfuss & Davis firm (1956-1958) and John W. Davis' resume (1961)