Finding aid for the Otto Wagner correspondence, 1885-1917

Finding aid prepared by Rose Lachman.
Descriptive Summary

Title: Otto Wagner correspondence

Date (inclusive): 1885-1917

Number: 870399

Creator/Collector: Wagner, Otto, 1841-1918

Physical Description: 130.0 items

Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390

Abstract: Primarily letters sent to Otto Wagner, the Austrian architect and teacher, from other architects, artists, publishers, and students. Letters concern the work of Wagner and his correspondents, Wagner's influence, and exhibitions. Includes five letters from Wagner dated between 1902-1917.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.

Language: Collection material is in German

Biographical/Historical Note

Otto Wagner, known as the father of Vienna architects, was an architect, writer and teacher, whose followers included Josef Hoffman and J. M. Olbrich. Wagner studied architecture at the Vienna Polytechnic School (1857-1859) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (1861-1863). His writings include Moderne Architektur (1895) and his (nearly utopian) work on urban design, Die Grosstadt (1911). Wagner's architectural designs mark the change from the historical styles of the 19th century (in Wagner's early designs this meant a sober use of Renaissance forms and details), to the modernism of the beginning of the 20th century. Most of his designs consist of private and public buildings in and around Vienna. In his designs (particularly after 1890s), writings and teaching, Wagner addressed one major issue: the search for new forms best suited for modern, urban life

Access
Open for use by qualified researchers. Many of the letters have typescript copies.

Publication Rights
Contact Library Rights and Reproductions.

Preferred Citation
Otto Wagner Correspondence, 1885-1917, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Accession no. 870399.
http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa870399

Acquisition Information
Acquired in 1987.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Otto Wagner Correspondence consists of ca. 130 letters to Otto Wagner primarily from architects, artists, publishers and students concerning the work of Wagner and that of his correspondents. Also included are 5 letters from Wagner dated between 1902-1917. Letters are dated 1885-1917, the bulk between 1902-1915. Correspondents include Joseph Olbrich (18 letters, 1899-1907, mostly concerning his and Wagner's submissions for exhibitions, the Basel railroad station project, publications, and personal matters); Hermann Muthesius (2 letters, 1903 and 1905, one discussing a project to preserve historical buildings); Koloman Moser (8 letters, 1905, 1907 and 1911, mostly about his altar designs for Kirche am Steinhof and problems relating to the execution of the designs, includes sketches); and Joseph August Lux, (4 letters,1909-1914). Letters from various people discuss Wagner's church designs and the conflict between design and church dogma. Letters from students discuss their architectural work and Wagner's lasting influence. Other letters relate to a Cologne exhibition, 1906-1907, and Wagner's work as an officer of the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne.

For most of the letters there is also a typescript copy which is filed with the original.

Arrangement note
The letters are arranged in one series by date and correspondent with undated correspondence at the end. Multiple letters from one correspondent remain together and are arranged chronologically after the earliest letter. Wagner’s letters are interfiled by date.

**Subjects - Names**
Lux, Joseph Aug. (Joseph August), 1871-1947
Moser, Koloman, 1868-1918
Muthesius, Hermann, 1861-1927
Olbrich, Joseph Maria, 1867-1908
Wagner, Otto, 1841-1918

**Subjects - Corporate Bodies**
International Congress for Modern Architecture

**Subjects - Topics**
Architecture--Austria--20th century

**Contributors**
Moser, Koloman, 1868-1918
Muthesius, Hermann, 1861-1927
Olbrich, Joseph Maria, 1867-1908

---

**Folder 1**

**Hasenauer, Karl von, architect, 1885**
Scope and Content Note
- offers to give Wagner a tour of his villa in the Thiergarten (Vienna) and confirms date. Dated: 8/5/85, 8/12/85.

**Folder 1**

**Lobmeyr, L., businessman, 1894**
Scope and Content Note
- inquires whether there is still space to relocate his offices to Wagner's building in Kärnthnerstrasse. Dated 10/9/94.
Folder 2

Olbrich, Joseph M., Austrian architect working in Germany (primarily, Darmstadt), 1899-1907

Scope and Content Note


Folder 3

Feldegg, Ferdinand von, editor, *Der Architekt, Wiener Monatshefte für Bauwesen und decorative Kunst 1900-1903*

Scope and Content Note

Thanks Wagner for response to Feldegg entry in Meyer’s Lexicon and reacts to Wagner’s suggestions for changes. Dated 2/27/00. Requests approval to publish Wagner’s museum design. Dated 4/25/03.

Folder 3

Architekten-Club der Genossenschaft der Bildenden Künstler Wiens, 1900

Scope and Content Note

With several signatures including the chairman, Deputy Strauss; thanks Wagner for sending them his latest publication which included mention of the Architekten Club. Dated 12/20/00.

Folder 3

Kieber, C.Y. Louis, Secretary, *Maatschappij Tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst*, 1900

Scope and Content Note


Folder 4

Hofmann, Albert, editor, *Deutschen Bauzeitung 1902-1905*

Scope and Content Note


Folder 4

Three envelopes addressed to Wagner, 1903, 1908

Scope and Content Note

one with coat-of-arms, “D.R.G.M.”; one containing a print dated 1903 with initials GTK (possibly, Gottlieb Theodor Kempf-Hartenkampf?), one with mourning band dated 8/9/08.
Folder 5

**Austrian officials, 1902**

Scope and Content Note

Folder 5

**Otto Wagner, 1902**

Scope and Content Note
letter to the editorial office of *Die Zeit* in which he declines to answer their inquiry since he is among those petitioning the emperor for the formation of a "Kunstamt."

Folder 6

**Deininger, Julius, architect, 1902-1914**

Scope and Content Note
suspects that Wagner’s enemies will prevent him from winning a prize and believes there will be a majority and minority vote. Dated 5/28/02. Informing Wagner that he did not receive any awards, which were given instead to Schachner and Pecha. Deininger and four others submitted a minority opinion placing Wagner first and Schachner second. The majority and minority opinions will be submitted to the local council and major. Dated 6/8/02. Reply to Wagner about interest in forming a new architecture society. Dated 12/23/02. Letter about a new work and patent by Deininger. Dated 4/19/14.

Folder 6

**Swoboda, Dr. Heinrich, 1902**

Scope and Content Note
addressing lack of support by Bishops for Wagner project, Swoboda suggests contacting Josef Reich for assistance. Dated 8/12/02. Postcard telling Wagner to visit Montecassino. Date illegible.

Folder 7

**Verband der Genossenschafts-Krankenkassen Wiens (signature indistinct), 1902**

Scope and Content Note
informs Wagner of the intention to build a house, outlines the requirements and asks Wagner to consider the project. Dated 9/18/02.

Folder 7

**Haberfeld, Hugo, editor, *Die Zeit, Wiener Tageszeitung*, 1902**

Scope and Content Note
Asks Wagner to write an article commenting on a brochure from Dr. Heinrich Swoboda on the restoration of St. Stephen’s dome. Dated 10/14/02.

Folder 7

**Möhring, Bruno, architect, 1902, 1911**

Scope and Content Note

Folder 7

**Wagner, Otto, 1902**

Scope and Content Note
responding to and agreeing with Möhring but also warning of the dangers of secession at any price. Dated 10/28/02.
Folder 8  
**Reich, Maler, 1902**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
describes compositions (frescoes) teaching catechism which he prepared for the project directed by H. Swoboda in the church designed by Wagner. Dated 12/2/02. Informs Wagner of H. Swoboda's support for his project and forthcoming meeting with church leaders. Dated 12/3/02.

Folder 8  
**Wärndorfer, Fritz, telegram of congratulations, 10 Dec 1902**  
**Printed invitation card to exhibition of Austrian Secession artists, Nov/Dec 1902**

Folder 8  
**Muthesius, H., 1903, 1905**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
received documents from Wagner and will work on the project to preserve historical buildings; asks whether any of his (Muthesius's) writings have been published in Vienna. Dated 1/1/03. Letter regarding a visit to Wagner. Dated 4/8/05.

Folder 8  
**Bamberger, Gustav, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
acknowledges receipt of jury vote, with which he disagrees. Dated 1/12/03.

Folder 8  
**Société Centrale D'Architecture De Belgique (signatures indistinct), 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
thanks Wagner for his letter, which is being forwarded to the special commission. Dated 1/12/03.

Folder 8  
**Plecnik, Joze, architect, 1903, undated**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
regrets unavailable to attend the day's conference. Dated 1/14/03. Sends a quotation from a speech that criticized Wagner. Undated.

Folder 8  
**Suzor, Graf v., Russian architect, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
asks to visit Wagner. Dated 2/17/03.

Folder 9  
**VI Congreso Internacional de Arquitectos, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
(secretaries' signatures), informs Wagner that Congress will take place in 1904, requests names of Austrian architects to be included on the organization committee and reports progress on advertising for the Congress. Dated 3/7/03, 4/13/03, 5/22/03.

Folder 9  
**Anonymous letter, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
addressing the controversy between Schachner and Wagner concerning the new museum. Dated 5/18/03.

Folder 9  
**Bahr, Hermann, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
"Redaktion des Neuen Wiener Tagblatt", about theater rights. Dated 6/6/03.

Folder 9  
**Benirschke, Joh. Karl, architect, 1903**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
thanks Wagner for his acceptance and opportunities for work. Dated 7/9/03.
Folder 9  
**Koch, Alex, architect, 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
requests names of Austrian architects to publish in his publication, *Academy Architecture and Architectural Review*. Dated 8/19/03.

Folder 9  
**Wiener Werkstätte, 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
asks Wagner's approval for an inkstand sent with the delivery of this letter. Dated 8/22/03.

Folder 9  
**Frimmel, Dr. Th. v., 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
clarifies that the 9/14/03 issue of *Montagsrevue* altered text against Frimmel's wishes: he stated that Wagner's interior furnishings are more comfortable than Mackintosh's or Ashbee's. Dated 9/18/03. He appreciates Wagner's vote of confidence and asks Wagner to send him any new designs. Dated 11/25/03.

Folder 10  
**Anagnostopulo, N.G., 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
Wagner's design for a cathedral in Patras is one of seven under consideration. Dated 10/8/03.

Folder 10  
**Lampakis, Dr. G., 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
about Wagner's design for cathedral. Dated 12/29/03.

Folder 10  
**Alois Prinz Liechtenstein, 1903**  
Scope and Content Note  
confirms voting for Wagner's church project and gives his thoughts on the old and modern styles of architecture. Dated 11/22/03.

Folder 10  
**Gurlitt, Cornelius, 1904**  
Scope and Content Note  
asks Wagner to send him designs of floor plans for a handbook on country churches, which is an effort to end the routine approach to church construction. Dated 5/12/04.

Folder 10  
**Swoboda, Franz Josef, organ manufacturer, 1904**  
Scope and Content Note  
describing design for area with organ. Dated 7/4/04.

Folder 10  
**Andri, Ferdinand, 1905**  
Scope and Content Note  
asks Wagner to assist in a selection process. Dated 5/12/05.

Folder 10  
**Lenz, P. Desiderius, 1905**  
Scope and Content Note  
responds to Wagner's church project designs and states the need for artistic freedom from church dogma. Dated 5/13/05.
Folder 11  Moser, Koloman, graphic artist, 1905-1911
Scope and Content Note
expresses concern about time constraints in preparing designs [for Kirche am Steinhof] and comments on the respect they have for one another. Dated 7/15/05. Turns down an invitation to visit Wagner due to work load. Undated. Reasons for delays on design for the high altar due to its importance. Dated 9/4/05. Letter accompanying the sketches for the high altar describe the design; also requests a commission look at the designs and determine further arrangements, including size, finances, etc., so that he can continue work. Undated. Requests stipends for artists (Kolik, Feistauer, Wigele, Schiele); also requests some brochures so that someone (possibly Seligmann) will write an article about Wagner's work. Undated. Refers to problems with the project and lack of support from Dr. Swoboda. Undated. Reasons for dropping the project and the financial consequences. Dated 2/18/07. Refers to completing designs that Wagner will like in theory though the forms are still fluid. Dated 12/18/11. File includes envelope addressed to Wagner.

Folder 12  Krupp, Arthur, 1907
Scope and Content Note
thanks Wagner for his recommendation of Klimt for a family portrait. Dated 2/9/07.

Folder 12  Tate (Otto Wagner?), 1907
Scope and Content Note
about his stay in St. Petersbourg, his reception there, conditions in the city, and the exhibition he visited. Dated 5/27/07.

Folder 12  Wagner, Otto, to Mr. Kammer?, 1907
Scope and Content Note

Folder 12  Palacios, A., architect in Madrid, 1908
Scope and Content Note
thanks Wagner for assistance in a project just given to him, the Post Office in Madrid. Dated 1/15/08.

Folder 12  Berger, Hofrath von, K. & K. Ministerium des Aeussern, 1908
Scope and Content Note
arranging a meeting with Wagner. Dated 3/10/08.

Folder 12  Labò, Mario, editor, L'Arte: Decorativa Moderna, 1908
Scope and Content Note
letter to Miss ? [possibly Wagner's secretary] requesting some of the reports from the congress held in Vienna, especially the one from Mr. Bauer, as Labò could not attend. Dated 5/29/08.

Folder 12  Schuster, Dr., director, K.K. Postsparkassen-Amtes, 1908
Scope and Content Note
proposes financial matters to Dr. Gessmann and to the finance ministry. Dated 7/18/08.
Lux, Josef August, author of monograph on Wagner, 1909-1914

Scope and Content Note
regrets that Vienna does not appreciate Wagner as it should and describes how Lux was treated similarly until he left the city; he is proud to be praised by Wagner. Dated 8/24/09. Informs Wagner of his strong support to the central commission on Wagner's behalf, which was to no avail; decries the lassitude of Austrian architects. Dated 12/19/11. Hopes Wagner received copy of monograph and asks for corrections; asks Wagner to voice his support for Lux to Prof. Sturm who may influence jury which determines prize for best written drama, which Lux hopes to receive; description of play's content follows. Dated 7/1/14. Letter on Dresdener Werkstätten letterhead, describing German art movements (also in relationship to Viennese artists) and how German artists influence politics, press, industry and the public. Dated 5/16/17.

Tesar, Prof., critic, 1909

Scope and Content Note
regarding articles he wrote and suggestions made by Wagner. Dated 9/4/09.

Metzner, Franz, German sculptor of Olbrich memorial, 1909

Scope and Content Note
sends some of his notebooks at Wagner's request. Dated 11/19/09.

Rösch, Maler, Secession artist, 1910

Scope and Content Note
admires Wagner's project plans for the Karlsplatz. Dated 1/5/10.

Proclamations from various societies on Wagner’s 70th birthday, July 1911

Scope and Content Note
These include: Deutscher Werkbund, Bund Deutscher Architekten (Dresden), Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst (Amsterdam), Direktion des Wiener Stadtbauamtes, Genossenschaft der Bildenden Künstler Wiens, La Société Centrale d'Architecture de Belgique. Includes printed announcement establishing an Otto Wagner annual prize in commemoration of his birthday.

Postcard to Marcel Kammer[er?] 1911

Scope and Content Note
with greetings from Budapest, various signatures including Wagner's. Dated 12/10/11.

Geyling, Remigius, artist, 1911

Scope and Content Note
regrets inability to bring to fruition the commission for the altarpiece at the Steinhof and suggest Forstner for the project. Dated 12/22/11.

Brinckmann, Albert E., art historian, 1912

Scope and Content Note
congratulates Wagner on his pamphlet, Die Grossstadt and compares their similar approach to design for cities (in duplicate). Dated 1/27/12.

Direktion der K.K. Österreichischen Staatsgalerie, Dr. Fr. Dörnhöfer, 1911, 1913

Scope and Content Note
informing Wagner that the gold medal awarded to him at the international architecture exhibition in Rome (1911) still hasn't been officially presented and he will attempt to rectify this. Dated 3/3/13. Informs Wagner of the official presentation of the award and that this is the only golden award given to a single artist. Includes envelope. Dated 6/2/13.
Folder 16  Gesellschaft Österreichischer Architekten, 1913
Scope and Content Note
congratulates Wagner for winning competition for the plans of the Kaiser Franz Josefs Stadt Museum, "Opus IV" and hopes that the project will soon be approved for construction by the city council. Dated 5/3/13. Letter to Dr. Josef Porzer, vice-mayor of Vienna, concerning above competition, how it was conducted, why it was awarded to Wagner and urging its construction. Dated 5/7/13.

Folder 16  Magyar Építőművészek Szövetsége (Budapest), 1913
Scope and Content Note
letter to the Bundes Österreichischer Künstler expressing regret that the city council of Vienna rejected Wagner's plans for the Stadt Museum (letter states reasons for strong support of Wagner). Dated 6/27/13.

Folder 16  Bund Österreichischer Künstler, 1913
Scope and Content Note
at their first general meeting named Wagner first honorary president (Signed Gustav Klimt, President and Rudolf Jung, Secretary). Dated 6/22/13.

Folder 16  Ohmann, Friedrich, architect, 1913
Scope and Content Note
urges Wagner to comment on plans for a special school. Dated 7/1/13.

Folder 16  Direktorium der Internationale Baufach-Ausstellung mit Sonderausstellungen, Leipzig, 1913
Scope and Content Note
proclamation for Wagner receiving the Königl. Sächsische Staatspreis.

Folder 17  Fritz, Hans, former student, 1913-1914
Scope and Content Note

Folder 18  Bernt, 1914
Scope and Content Note

Folder 18  Bammery?, T., 1914
Scope and Content Note

Folder 18  N.-ö. Landes-Ausschuss Departement für Wohlfahrts-Angelegenheiten, 1914
Scope and Content Note
returning submitted photo for the Zedlitzhalle as inappropriate for planned exhibition. Dated 5/16/14.

Folder 18  Behrens, Peter, 1914
Scope and Content Note
postcard from Neubabelsberg with greetings also from Berta Zuckerkandl, Karl and Daly Scheffler, Lilli and Petra Behrens, Anna Simons. Dated 12/18/14.
Folder 18  **Düfer, Martin, architect, 1915**  
Scope and Content Note  

Folder 18  **Eisler, Max, 1915**  
Scope and Content Note  
preparing material to teach a course "Die Kunst im Wiener Stadtbild" that will include Wagner; he will look for photographs of the Hütteldorfer Nachbarvilla, which Wagner requested. Dated 5/6/15.

Folder 18  **Klopfer, Paul (Weimar), 1915**  
Scope and Content Note  
about architecture based on conservancy of previous forms. Dated 5/25/15.

Folder 18  **Vornehm, Kadett Karl, student of Wagner, 1915**  
Scope and Content Note  
about upcoming project and Wagner's support. Dated 7/21/15.

Folder 18  **Kunstverlag Anton Schroll & Co., 1915**  
Scope and Content Note  
list of organizations that were sent Wagner's work, *Moderne Baukunst*. Dated 7/28/15.

Folder 18  **Wagner, Otto to Dagobert Frey, architect, 1917**  
Scope and Content Note  
Tells of his illness, despite which, he is working. Dated 7/13/17.

Folder 19  **Zuckerkandl, Berta, art critic, undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
needs more information to comment about two Lueger designs. Includes envelope with postmark, 6/21/13? undated.

Folder 19  **W., Siegfried, undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
personal letter of invitation.

Folder 19  **Lechner?, Ödön, architect, undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
requests interview for a biography of Wagner and his school.

Folder 19  **Photocopy of a partial art bibliography, undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
only letters Schaa-Schla.