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## **Finding aid for the John Fitchen papers, 1927-1989**

Finding aid prepared by Teresa Morales.

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## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** John Fitchen papers

**Date (inclusive):** 1927-1989

**Number:** 910018

**Creator/Collector:** Fitchen, John

**Physical Description:** 4.0 linear feet(10 boxes)

### Repository:

The Getty Research Institute

Special Collections

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100

Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688

(310) 440-7390

**Abstract:** American architect and architectural historian. Most of the research materials relate to three of Fitchen's books: *Construction of Gothic Cathedrals*, *The New World Dutch Barn*, and *Building Construction Before Mechanization*. Other papers include designs, drawings, and sketchbooks, as well as correspondence with numerous architectural historians, primarily on the subject of medieval architecture.

**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 English

### Biographical/Historical note

John Fitchen, American architectural historian and architect, is the author of several works, among them, *Construction of Gothic cathedrals* (1961, 1981), *New World Dutch barn* (1968), and *Building construction before mechanization* (1986). He attended Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, where he studied with Kenneth John Conant and developed an abiding interest in medieval construction techniques.

### Access

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### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

John Fitchen papers, 1927-1989, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Accession number 910018.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa910018>

### Processing History

Teresa Morales processed the collection in 1996.

### Scope and Content of Collection

The Fitchen papers comprise research materials, manuscripts, correspondence, photographs and reviews for his publications, especially for his 3 books: *Construction of Gothic cathedrals*, *New World Dutch barn*, and *Building construction before mechanization*. Manuscripts and printed materials document numerous articles and lectures by Fitchen. Other files contain material for unpublished projects, including his manuscript "Plot, plan and perspective." Sketches and drawings document Fitchen's designs for bookplates and buildings, including some done as a student. A sketchbook contains drawings of American Dutch barns. Correspondence with more than a dozen architectural historians centers largely on the subject of medieval architecture and construction.

### Arrangement note

The papers are arranged in 3 series: Series I. Research for major publications, ca. 1927-1986; Series II. Student work, manuscripts, lectures, drawings, ca. 1927-1989; Series III. Correspondence, ca. 1954-1984

### Subjects - Names

Fitchen, John

### Subjects - Corporate Bodies

Ayasofya Müzesi

Harvard University. Graduate School of Design

Washington Cathedral

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**Subjects - Topics**

Architecture  
Architecture, Gothic  
Architecture, Gothic--History  
Architecture, Medieval  
Architecture, Medieval--History  
Architecture--Historiography  
Barns--Netherlands  
Barns--United States  
Building materials--Europe--History  
Building--Europe  
Building--Europe--History  
Cathedrals  
Cathedrals--Europe  
Church architecture  
Church architecture--Designs and plans  
Church architecture--Europe--History  
Church architecture--Themes, motives  
Civil Engineering  
Vaults (Architecture)  
Vaults (Architecture), Gothic

**Subjects - Titles**

*Building construction before mechanization Construction of Gothic cathedrals New World Dutch barn*

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Architectural drawings--United States--20th century  
Photographic prints  
Photographs, Original

**Contributors**

Bucher, François  
Conant, Kenneth John, 1894-  
Harvey, John, 1911-1997  
Heyman, Jacques  
Horn, Walter William, 1908-1995  
Hubka, Thomas C., 1946-  
Macaulay, David  
McKee, Harley J.  
Placzek, Adolf K.  
Szarmach, Paul E.  
Van Nise, Robert L.  
Wachs, William Carl

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**Series I. Research for major publications, ca. 1954-1987, n.d.**

**Physical Description:** 7 boxes

**Scope and Content Note**

Primarily research materials, manuscripts, correspondence, printed matter and photographs related to Fitchen's three books: *The construction of Gothic cathedrals* (1961, 1981), *The New World Dutch barn* (1968), and *Building construction before mechanization* (1986).

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Box 1, Folder 1-6	<b>Gothic Cathedrals, ca. 1954-1981</b>
Box 1, Folder 1	<b>Research notes, ca. 1954-1959</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>Drafts, 1954-1958</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>Original drawings for ms, n.d</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Correspondence with publisher, 1957-1960</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>Miscellaneous correspondence, 1958-1960</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>Reviews &amp; letter in response to both, 1960-1962, 1980</b>
Box 2, Folder 1-3	<b>Gothic Cathedrals, n.d.</b>
Box 2, Folder 1	<b>Manuscripts, n.d.</b>
Box 2, Folder 2	<b>Manuscript, appendices, n.d.</b>
Box 2, Folder 3	<b>Manuscript, notes, n.d.</b>
Box 3, Folder 1-3	<b>Dutch Barns, 1963-1975, n.d.</b>
Box 3, Folder 1	<b>Notes &amp; draft, 1965-1968</b>
Box 3, Folder 2	<b>Manuscript text, n.d.</b>
Box 3, Folder 3	<b>Correspondence after publication, 1965-1975</b>
Box 4, Folder 1-6	<b>Papers &amp; photographs: Dutch Barns, ca. 1963-1986, n.d.</b>
Box 4, Folder 1	<b>Sketches. See also drawings of American barns in sketchbook, Box 9., 1963</b>
Box 4, Folder 2	<b>Miscellaneous photos (negatives placed in cold storage, box 10), n.d.</b>
Box 4, Folder 3	<b>Miscellaneous plates, n.d.</b>
Box 4, Folder 4	<b>Photographs for Netherlandish barns, 1982-1986, n.d.</b>
Box 4, Folder 5	<b>Illustrations for manuscript, n.d.</b>
Box 4, Folder 6	<b>Photo mechanicals for manuscript, 1964</b>
Box 5, Folder 1-4	<b>Papers &amp; photographs: Building Construction, ca. 1954-1985</b>
Box 5, Folder 1	<b>Notes, 1954-1967</b>
Box 5, Folder 2	<b>Drafts, 1973-1976</b>
Box 5, Folder 3	<b>Manuscript, 1983-1985</b>
Box 5, Folder 4	<b>Manuscript figures, 1976</b>
Box 6, Folder 1-4	<b>Papers &amp; photographs, ca. 1984-1987, n.d.</b>
Box 6, Folder 1	<b>Illustrations (n.b., post-its), n.d.</b>
Box 6, Folder 2	<b>Illustrations (n.b., post-its,), n.d.</b>
Box 6, Folder 3	<b>Reviews, correspondence, ca. 1987</b>
Box 6, Folder 4	<b>Translation, 1984-1988</b>
Box 10	<b>Negatives (2), pulled from Box 4, f.4, 1982-1986, n.d.</b>

Series II. **Student work, manuscripts, lectures, drawings, ca. 1927-1989,**

**Physical Description:** 2 boxes

**Scope and Content Note**

Series comprises papers related to Fitchen's publications (other than those referenced in Series I), his lectures, student work at Harvard, and drawings and designs.

Box 7, Folder 1-31	<b>Papers: Lectures, manuscripts, offprints, correspondence</b>
Box 7, Folder 1	<b>"Premier of Baseball," lecture 1989;</b>
Box 7, Folder 2	<b>"English vs. French Vaulting," lecture 1985;</b>
Box 7, Folder 3	<b>"Visual Impact of the Gothic Cathedral," lecture, 1979</b>
Box 7, Folder 4	<b>Building Cheops' Pyramid, <i>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)</i> 1978</b>
Box 7, Folder 5	<b>"Early Timber Framed Construction in America," lecture, 1972</b>
Box 7, Folder 6	<b>"New World Dutch Barn," lecture, 1971</b>
Box 7, Folder 7	<b>Why Not Fountains in Winter? 1970</b>
Box 7, Folder 8	<b>Vitas, grant applications, etc; 1967-1985</b>
Box 7, Folder 9	<b>"New York State Dutch Barns," lecture, 1965</b>
Box 7, Folder 10	<b>Architecture, the Optimistic Art, <i>AIA Journal</i> proofs 1964</b>
Box 7, Folder 11	<b>"Masonry Techniques of the Middle Ages," lecture, 1963</b>
Box 7, Folder 12	<b>Untitled miscellaneous articles, 1961</b>
Box 7, Folder 13	<b>Erection of French Gothic Nave Vaults, <i>Gazette</i> offprint, 1960</b>
Box 7, Folder 14	<b>Plot, Plan and Perspective, manuscript, 1959</b>
Box 7, Folder 15	<b>Changing Face of the Riviera, 1959</b>

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Box 7, Folder 16	<b>An Old House of Laminated, Solid Wood Walls, <i>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)</i> 1957</b>
Box 7, Folder 17	<b>Comment on Flying Buttresses, Gazette offprint, 1955</b>
Box 7, Folder 18	<b>Draftsman to Architect, manuscript, 1951-1952</b>
Box 7, Folder 19	<b>Architectural Subject Matter, 1949</b>
Box 7, Folder 20	<b>Introduction to Art, manuscript, 1937</b>
Box 7, Folder 21	<b>Student drawings, Harvard, 1927-1928</b>
Box 7, Folder 22	<b>"The Roof," manuscript</b>
Box 7, Folder 23	<b>Problem of Ventilation</b>
Box 7, Folder 24	<b>Principles of Architectural Construction</b>
Box 7, Folder 25	<b>Notes on Female Architecture</b>
Box 7, Folder 26	<b>Medieval Scaffolds</b>
Box 7, Folder 27	<b>"Here Once Stood a House," manuscript,</b>
Box 7, Folder 28	<b>"First Book on the Moon," manuscript</b>
Box 7, Folder 29	<b>Dealing with the Inexplicable</b>
Box 7, Folder 30	<b>Miscellaneous designs &amp; drawings by Fitchen</b>
	<b>Scope and Content Note</b>
	See also Box 9 for sketchbook.

Box 7, Folder 31	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Box 9*	<b>Fitchen sketchbook, n.d.</b>
	<b>Scope and Content Note</b>
	Includes measured sketches, most showing the construction of American Dutch barns.

Series III. **Correspondence, ca. 1954-1984**

**Physical Description:** 1 box

**Scope and Content Note**

Correspondence between Fitchen and other architectural historians, primarily dealing with the structure of medieval buildings. Letters include discussions of work in progress and critiques of publications.

Box 8, Folder 1-20	<b>Correspondence</b>
Box 8, Folder 1	<b>James Acland, 1956-1966</b>
Box 8, Folder 2	<b>Frank Brown, 1957</b>
Box 8, Folder 3	<b>Francois Bucher, 1967</b>
Box 8, Folder 4	<b>George Collins, 1964-1968</b>
Box 8, Folder 5	<b>Kenneth Conant, 1955-1962</b>
Box 8, Folder 6	<b>James M. Fitch, 1956, 1970</b>
Box 8, Folder 7	<b>John Harvey, 1954-1962</b>
Box 8, Folder 8	<b>Jacques Heyman, 1965-1971</b>
Box 8, Folder 9	<b>Walter H. Horn, 1958</b>
Box 8, Folder 10	<b>Thomas Hubka, 1980</b>
Box 8, Folder 11	<b>Lewis C. Jones, 1963-1967</b>
Box 8, Folder 12	<b>Christine Kaplan, 1977, 1984</b>
Box 8, Folder 13	<b>David Macaulay, 1981</b>
Box 8, Folder 14	<b>Harley McKee, 1955, 1961</b>
Box 8, Folder 15	<b>Adolf Placzek, 1961</b>
Box 8, Folder 16	<b>Paul E. Szarmach, 1976, 1981</b>
Box 8, Folder 17	<b>Robert L. Van Nise, 1963-1978</b>
Box 8, Folder 18	<b>William C. Wachs, 1962-1972</b>
Box 8, Folder 19	<b>Ben Weinreb, 1964-1971</b>
Box 8, Folder 20	<b>Miscellaneous, 1955-1984</b>