Finding aid for the John Fitchen papers, 1927-1989

Finding aid prepared by Teresa Morales.
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
Open for use by qualified researchers.

Publication Rights
Contact Library Rights and Reproductions.

Preferred Citation
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 Other files contain material for unpublished projects, including his manuscript "Plot, plan and perspective."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
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

Physical Description: 7 boxes
Scope and Content Note

Box 1, Folder 1-6
- **Gothic Cathedrals**, ca. 1954-1981
  - Research notes, ca. 1954-1959
  - Drafts, 1954-1958
  - Original drawings for ms, n.d.
  - Correspondence with publisher, 1957-1960
  - Miscellaneous correspondence, 1958-1960

Box 2, Folder 1-3
- **Gothic Cathedrals**, n.d.
  - Manuscripts, n.d.
  - Manuscript, appendices, n.d.
  - Manuscript, notes, n.d.

Box 3, Folder 1-3
  - Notes & draft, 1965-1968
  - Manuscript text, n.d.
  - Correspondence after publication, 1965-1975

Box 4, Folder 1-6
  - Sketches. See also drawings of American barns in sketchbook, Box 9., 1963
  - Miscellaneous photos (negatives placed in cold storage, box 10), n.d.

Box 5, Folder 1-6
- **Manuscript figures**, 1976
  - Illustrations (n.b., post-its), n.d.
  - Reviews, correspondence, ca. 1987

Box 6, Folder 1-4
- **Illustrations for manuscript**, n.d.
  - Paper mechanicals for manuscript, 1964

Box 7, Folder 1-31
  - Notes, 1954-1967
  - Drafts, 1973-1976
  - Manuscript, 1983-1985
  - Manuscript figures, 1976

Box 8, Folder 1-4
  - Illustrations (n.b., post-its), n.d.

Box 9, Folder 1-4
- **Building Cheops’ Pyramid**, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (JSAH) 1978

Box 10
- Negatives (2), pulled from Box 4, f.4, 1982-1986, n.d.

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
- **Papers: Lectures, manuscripts, offprints, correspondence**
  - "Premier of Baseball," lecture 1989;
  - "English vs. French Vaulting," lecture 1985;

Box 7, Folder 5
- "Early Timber Framed Construction in America," lecture, 1972

Box 7, Folder 6
- "New World Dutch Barn," lecture, 1971

Box 7, Folder 7
- Why Not Fountains in Winter? 1970

Box 7, Folder 8
- Vitas, grant applications, etc; 1967-1985

Box 7, Folder 9
- "New York State Dutch Barns," lecture, 1965

Box 7, Folder 10
- Architecture, the Optimistic Art, AIA Journal proofs 1964

Box 7, Folder 11
- "Masonry Techniques of the Middle Ages," lecture, 1963

Box 7, Folder 12
- Untitled miscellaneous articles, 1961

Box 7, Folder 13
- Erection of French Gothic Nave Vaults, Gazette offprint, 1960

Box 7, Folder 14
- Plot, Plan and Perspective, manuscript, 1959

Box 7, Folder 15
- Changing Face of the Riviera, 1959
Box 7, Folder 16

Box 7, Folder 17
   Comment on Flying Buttresses, Gazette offprint, 1955

Box 7, Folder 18
   Draftsman to Architect, manuscript, 1951-1952

Box 7, Folder 19
   Architectural Subject Matter, 1949

Box 7, Folder 20
   Introduction to Art, manuscript, 1937

Box 7, Folder 21
   Student drawings, Harvard, 1927-1928

Box 7, Folder 22
   "The Roof," manuscript

Box 7, Folder 23
   Problem of Ventilation

Box 7, Folder 24
   Principles of Architectural Construction

Box 7, Folder 25
   Notes on Female Architecture

Box 7, Folder 26
   Medieval Scaffolds

Box 7, Folder 27
   "Here Once Stood a House," manuscript,

Box 7, Folder 28
   "First Book on the Moon," manuscript

Box 7, Folder 29
   Dealing with the Inexplicable

Box 7, Folder 30
   Miscellaneous designs & drawings by Fitchen

Scope and Content Note
See also Box 9 for sketchbook.

Box 7, Folder 31
   Miscellaneous

Box 9*
   Fitchen sketchbook, n.d.

Scope and Content Note
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
   Correspondence

Box 8, Folder 1
   James Acland, 1956-1966

Box 8, Folder 2
   Frank Brown, 1957

Box 8, Folder 3
   Francois Bucher, 1967

Box 8, Folder 4
   George Collins, 1964-1968

Box 8, Folder 5
   Kenneth Conant, 1955-1962

Box 8, Folder 6
   James M. Fitch, 1956, 1970

Box 8, Folder 7
   John Harvey, 1954-1962

Box 8, Folder 8
   Jacques Heyman, 1965-1971

Box 8, Folder 9
   Walter H. Horn, 1958

Box 8, Folder 10
   Thomas Hubka, 1980

Box 8, Folder 11
   Lewis C. Jones, 1963-1967

Box 8, Folder 12
   Christine Kaplan, 1977, 1984

Box 8, Folder 13
   David Macaulay, 1981

Box 8, Folder 14
   Harley McKee, 1955, 1961

Box 8, Folder 15
   Adolf Placzek, 1961

Box 8, Folder 16
   Paul E. Szarmach, 1976, 1981

Box 8, Folder 17
   Robert L. Van Nise, 1963-1978

Box 8, Folder 18
   William C. Wachs, 1962-1972

Box 8, Folder 19
   Ben Weinreb, 1964-1971

Box 8, Folder 20
   Miscellaneous, 1955-1984