

The Broad Scope of Design Records

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It is with immense pleasure that I address you today, journal readers. The last time that *American Archivist* offered a section focused on articles about design-centric records was in 1996, volume 59, number 2. At that time, the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Design Records Section was the Architectural Records Section; that issue's articles, therefore, were suitably focused on architectural records. As the section name-change implies, the section has since broadened its focus measurably.

This issue of *American Archivist* is the culmination of several years of planning and the efforts of many contributors. In February 2018, Christopher "Cal" Lee, former *American Archivist* editor, issued the call for any member of the Editorial Board to serve in the role of guest editor. He invited board members to indulge in their special archives interests with the ultimate goal of focusing an issue, or a segment thereof, on a particular subject. At that time, I was a member of the Editorial Board, serving in that capacity from 2016 to 2020. Before that tenure of service, I was a peer reviewer of *American Archivist* articles, and today, I still serve in that capacity.

Knowing how long it had been since the journal focused on design records, and given the broader scope of the Design Records Section, and considering my own dedicated archives practice in this subject area, I raised my hand in that 2018 meeting and volunteered to take on this exciting role.

Over many months and after a number of calls for author and reviewer participation, we have accumulated what I think is an engaging and useful array of content. All that considered, the most profound message my collaborators and I want to send to you, the readers of the journal, is that many, if not most, archivists will manage design records of some sort and at some point in their careers. Whether the records are blueprints, floorplans, built environment

system diagrams, fashion or costume illustrations, interior design schemas, or patterns of various creations, these creative aspects or elements of the human experience will be made evident in—and find themselves a part of—the archival record, probably your records.

In this special section, you will discover scholarly narratives reflecting a wealth of archival practice as seen through the creative and often beautiful lens of their peers who manage design records. You will explore how the built environment at the University of California, Santa Barbara, informed the social evolution of the campus. In addition, you will be exposed to digital collections management of unusual complexity and learn how born-digital design records enhance visual literacy skills. Archives instruction, outreach, and appraisal are also discussed at length.

In fact, we elected to make the most use of the new online format and leverage its advantages. Perhaps of special interest are the downloadable templates that accompany “Design Records Appraisal Tool,” bringing a wonderful dynamism to your reading experience.

I would like to thank Cal Lee, former *American Archivist* editor, for the invitation to be a guest editor and the valuable and necessary tutoring he gave to me. I would also like to thank the current *American Archivist* editor, Amy Cooper Cary, who continued my editor instruction; Abigail Christian, *Archival Outlook* editor and SAA production coordinator; and Teresa Brinati, SAA director of publishing, for their most able and generous assistance along this marvelous journey.

So, welcome, readers, to volume 84, number 2 of *American Archivist*. My collaborators and I hope you enjoy and use the content in a capacity equal to the joy we experienced in bringing it to you.

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