

Architectural Archives - What's In It For You?

At the Columbus Indiana Architectural Archives our mission is to collect, preserve, and promote the use of records that document the architecture, engineering, and design arts that encompass the built environment here in Columbus and Bartholomew County. We do this by soliciting materials from architects, designers, construction companies, clients, and individuals. Once materials are collected by the archives we begin collecting information from the documents to make them accessible to researchers. These researchers might be scholars, students, local building trades companies, or interested local citizens and visitors. The CIAA, located in the Bartholomew County Public Library, is open to anyone interested in gaining an understanding of the built environment in Bartholomew County.

Our primary aim is to collect enough materials to be able to tell the story of a project. What was the need for the project? Who was the building built to serve? Why was a particular architect or designer chosen and how did they arrive at the final design? How was the project used after it was built, and how is it being used today? These are some of the questions we want the records at the CIAA to answer. The CIAA collects a variety of records in order to answer these questions including: correspondence, architectural drawings, models, photographs, meeting minutes, audio-visual materials, and records associated with the construction process. The archives is also interested in proposed projects that never come to fruition.

Of course, the majority of the materials found in our collections focus on the Modern architecture here in Columbus, however, we also collect materials on commercial and historical buildings. One area that we have been searching for materials is the work of Charles F. Sparrell. Sparrell designed several buildings in Columbus such as the Old City Hall, Washington School, and several private residences. More information on Sparrell, as well as some photos of his work, visit the CIAA's website at <http://www.columbusarchives.org/Sparrell.html>.

On October 9th at 7 pm I will be presenting a program at the Bartholomew County Public Library on the CIAA regarding our mission and goals. The program will include examples of the types of materials that we have collected and wish to collect in the future. To register please call the library at 379-1266. Finally, we encourage people to come use the archives. We do ask that you make an appointment so that we can pull the records of interest in order for patrons to be able to make the best use of their time. Appointments can be made by calling the CIAA at 379-1297 or by email at archive@barth.lib.in.us.

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