

Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach Archives and Library
Collection Development Policy
Updated December 2024

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I. Overview

The Collection Development Policy outlines the ways that the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach will collect and preserve collections based on the rich history of Palm Beach. This policy will provide an overview of the library and archives' current collections, and define the scope of our new collecting areas. By focusing on the growth of our collections, this document will also outline the donation process and provide the acquisition policy and goals of the archives. Staff may consider acquisitions outside of these goals in the future in response to new exhibit or program planning.

II. Mission

The Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach advocates, educates, and invests in the community to protect the architectural, botanical, and cultural heritage of Palm Beach.

The mission of the Preservation Foundation's Archives and Library is to collect, contextualize, preserve, and provide access to historically significant records that document Palm Beach's architectural, environmental, and social heritage, fostering knowledge and promoting scholarship.

III. Current Collections:

Primary archive collections:

Architectural Collections: The Archives maintain the architectural collections of four prominent Palm Beach architects: Marion Sims Wyeth (1889-1982), Belford W. Shoumate (1903-1991), Henry K. Harding (1904-1984), and John L. Volk (1901-1984). These collections contain over 45,000 original renderings and approximately 4,000 historic images that document the progress and completion of these projects. In addition to these main architectural collections, the Foundation holds additional architectural and design-related collections from architects Eugene Lawrence and Maurice Fatio and interior designer Polly Jessup. Similarly, these collections contain original drawings and blueprints, images, and paper materials.

Architectural Image Collection: The Architectural Image Collection is comprised of two smaller collections containing historic photographs, slides, and negatives. The Barbara Hoffstot Image Collection was donated in the late 1990s and includes over 200 original photographs from the publication of *Landmark Architecture in Palm Beach*. These images are interfiled in the Property Files Collection and arranged by address. In 2017, Patrick Montgomery donated over 2,000 photographic negatives taken by society photographer Bert Morgan and his son Richard. The images found in the Bert Morgan Image Collection document Palm Beach's architectural and social history from the 1930s-1970s.

Property Files Collection: The Archives house over 3,000 property files that document vital information about the built environment of Palm Beach. The collection is arranged by address and contains real estate brochures, photographs, newspaper clippings, historic designation reports, and other relevant property information.

Additional archive collections:

Postcard Collection: The Postcard Collection is composed of two major donations: one from Leslie Robert Evans in 2000 and another from Olive Gowen in 2006, supplemented by several smaller contributions. The collection, consisting of approximately 1,200 postcards, has been digitized and is arranged by subject or address. These postcards provide a vivid portrayal of early hotels and the resort lifestyle of Palm Beach, with many postmarked during the 1920s and 1930s, offering an insightful glimpse into life during that era. In 2001, the Preservation Foundation published a selection of postcards from its collections in *Palm Beach—The Way We Were*.

Periodical Collection: The Periodical Collection encompasses a variety of newspapers and magazines spanning the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The highlight of the collection is the *Palm Beach Life* series (1930-1990) which is fully digitized and hosted on Internet Archive. The collection includes other notable publications such as *Palm Beach Daily News*, *Brown Wrapper Paper*, *Social Spectator*, and *Palm Beach Pictorial*, among others. These periodicals collectively document the local history, society events, and community life of Palm Beach. The materials are organized by publisher to facilitate accessibility.

Map Collection: The Map Collection is comprised of various atlases, maps, and plat maps of South Florida, Palm Beach County, and Palm Beach. Of the most significant are the Plan of Palm Beach from 1929 and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The collection documents the area's development, land use, and urban planning over time.

Individual Papers Collection: The Individual Papers Collection features records from significant individuals who played key roles in the development, scholarship, and preservation of Palm Beach and its historic landmarks. This collection encompasses a variety of materials including correspondence, memos, reports, and clippings from influential figures such as Barbara Hoffstot, Christina Or-Cahall, Hope Annan, Robert Grace, and LeBaron Willard.

Institutional Records Collection: The Foundation's Institutional Records Collection preserves extensive records that chronicle the organization's inception in 1980 and its evolution over decades. These archives include foundation documents, meeting minutes, detailed reports, newsletters, and correspondence that capture the organization's early history and growth. Additionally, the collection provides comprehensive information on the Foundation's town-serving projects, including the restoration of Sea Gull Cottage, the revitalization of Bradley Park, and the preservation of Little Red Schoolhouse. The collection also highlights the Foundation's educational and environmental initiatives, such as the Heritage Education program and the development of Pan's Garden.

Research Library

The *Robert M. Grace Library*, named in honor of a founding member of the Foundation, is home to approximately 1,600 fiction and nonfiction publications on Palm Beach, architecture, horticulture, and Florida history. The books are organized according to subject dictated by the Library of Congress Classification system. In addition, the Foundation has a small collection of non-circulating rare books on Florida history and Palm Beach architectural history that is stored separately in a climate-controlled area. The collection can be accessed on [LibraryCat](#).

IV. Acquisition Policy

Scope

The Archives aims to expand its collections with materials of permanent and enduring historical value, focusing on Palm Beach's social, architectural, botanical, and cultural history from its development in the late 1800s through the mid-1900s. Accepted material formats include: architectural drawings or blueprints, photographs, slides, manuscripts, maps, and electronic records (such as CDs, hard drives, audio tapes) in non-obsolete formats.

Collecting Areas

Our collecting priorities include:

1. Architectural collections specific to Palm Beach, including those by prominent architects or with clearly labeled addresses in the Town of Palm Beach.
2. Images of Palm Beach architecture, specifically images ranging from the 1930s-1980s
3. Records and materials related to influential Palm Beach figures.
4. Rare books with subjects relating to: Florida history, Palm Beach, Architecture, and prominent Florida Architects.
5. Other records relating to: Palm Beach architecture, architects, horticulture, history, and preservation.

Materials Not Accepted

Donated materials matching any of the descriptions below will not be accepted:

- Materials not clearly labeled
- Damaged, moldy, or pest-infested materials (negotiable if materials are extremely rare or valuable)
- Materials requiring permanent or very lengthy restrictions
- Digital records that are stored in media that is permanently inaccessible due to obsolescence
- 3D objects or other materials that cannot be accommodated within the Foundation's existing storing and/or shelving
- Collections where large portion of related materials are held by another institution

Donation Guidelines

If interested in donating collections to the Foundation, please reach out to the archivist with information and photos of your collection and its history. If the Foundation is interested, an informal consultation will follow. Materials donated without prior consultation are unable to be accepted by the Foundation due to a lack of legal and contextual information.

Prior to accepting acquisitions into the archives, donors must:

- Be able to present legal ownership and title to the materials in the collection they are donating.
- Have sufficient information about the collection, including provenance (where the collection came from), and context (information surrounding the materials in the collection), to allow for archivists to assess historic/research value.
- Review collection materials for any privacy concerns that may impact both the donor and any third party affiliated with the materials. The mission of the Foundation is to preserve and provide access to materials based on their historic value, so if significant access restrictions are required due to privacy concerns, the materials may not be accepted.
- Understand that acquisition of collections is based on a donation system; the Foundation allocates a highly restrictive budget for the purchase of collections. Therefore, acquisition of collections via sale are extremely limited and only come after significant consultation between the archivist and Foundation executives.

Following this understanding, the donor will be asked to sign a Deed of Gift Agreement (see Appendix) at the point of acquisition into the archive to transfer the collection into the care of the Foundation. The archive is not currently accepting any materials on a loan basis, and will not accept collections that cannot be legally and ethically transferred to the collection via a Deed of Gift Agreement. The Foundation will provide a copy of the Deed of Gift Agreement to the donor for tax purposes, if requested.

Processing

In accordance with our mission of providing continued stewardship and access to our collections, the Foundation will process all materials that enter the archives. Processing includes assessing materials for content and condition, rehousing materials in archivally-safe enclosures, rearranging, and creating descriptive records through finding aids and inventories. Following processing, digital copies of collection finding aids will be made publicly available on [ArchivesSpace](#), and collections will be available for research request, barring any access restrictions.

Deaccessioning

Collections will be re-evaluated by the archivist periodically to ensure all collections are in a stable condition and continue to align with the Foundation's collecting scope. At the discretion of the archivist, materials deemed to be outside the Foundation's scope and mission will be deaccessioned. In the event of deaccessioning materials, the donor will be contacted, and steps will be taken to ensure the materials are transferred to a more appropriate repository. Materials may be deaccessioned due to one or more of the following reasons:

- Materials cover a topic no longer within the Foundation's collecting scope
- The Foundation has multiple copies of identical materials, and will need to deaccession certain duplicates due to limited storage capacity
- Materials are significantly degraded or damaged, to the point where they are no longer viable for research, or have the capacity to cause harm to other collections or staff

Legal and Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure ethical and legal transfer of materials from donors to the Foundation, the Foundation requires all donors to sign a Deed of Gift Agreement. Deed of Gift Agreements are legally binding documents that involve the transfer of legal ownership, copyright, and title to the physical and intellectual property housed within the collections donated to the Foundation. For a sample of the Foundation's Deed of Gift Agreement, see Appendix B.

While archives staff can provide appraisal of materials in regards to whether or not they fit the scope and collecting mission of the Foundation, they cannot provide appraisals of archival materials for financial, inheritance, or tax purposes. If donors wish to obtain a monetary or tax-deductible valuation of their collections, they must do so at their own discretion, and are financially responsible for any fees incurred. Donations of materials, in specific circumstances, may be tax-deductible for the donor; donors are encouraged to discuss this with their personal accountants or attorneys. If the donor has fiscal valuation of collections, it can be added to the accession documentation upon acquisition, at the donors' request. Archivists are unable provide contact information for individual appraisers, and donors are encouraged to consult websites of local organizations for lists of those available in our region.

Privacy

The Foundation recognizes that some materials donated may include private or sensitive information, and has an ethical duty to protect the donor and any third party affected by this information via access restriction or not accepting certain materials. Donors are responsible for reviewing and assessing the privacy concerns of the materials prior to donation, and discussing any restrictions or sensitive material with the archivist upon accession into the Foundation's collections.

V. Preservation and Care

Preservation

In alignment with current best practice and industry standard, the Foundation, upon receiving materials, will house all objects in archivally-safe enclosures, including: acid-free folders and boxes for paper and object materials, and non-reactive sleeves for photographic materials including images and film. All materials are housed in archive-specific shelving and storage units, and are stored in climate-controlled rooms. All archive spaces are regularly monitored for temperature and humidity, and there is

a robust disaster management plan in place to protect and salvage collections in the event of an emergency. For more information about how we preserve collections, please contact our archivist.

Digitization

The Foundation engages in digitization of most materials within our collections for internal use. While the majority of digitized materials are only available upon researcher request, some materials, particularly those included in exhibitions, will be made publicly available online. Oversize materials and those found to have low research value will be digitized upon request from researchers.