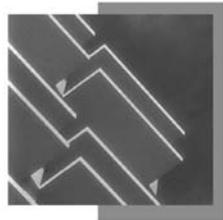


Inventory of the Garrett Eckbo Collection, 1933-1996, (bulk 1945-1980)
Collection Number 1990-1



College of
Environmental
Design

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Date Completed:

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: Garrett Eckbo Collection

Collection Dates: 1933-1996, (bulk 1945-1980)

Collection Number: 1990-1

Creator: Eckbo, Garrett (1910-2000)

Extent : 23 cartons, 37 manuscript boxes, 6 shoeboxes, 12 slide boxes, 1 card file box, 6 flat boxes, approximately 30 flat file drawers

Language: English

Repository

Environmental Design Archives
University of California
Berkeley, California, 94720-1820

Administrative Information

Access Statement

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be directed to the Curator of the Environmental Design Archives.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], Garrett Eckbo Collection, (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

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Biographical Note

Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000) was born in Cooperstown, New York. Eckbo received his education in a variety of cities, including Chicago and Alameda, CA. In 1929, Eckbo spent six months studying in Oslo, Norway, where he “acquired both ambition and direction”¹. Upon his return, he worked at several jobs before attending Marin Junior College in 1932. One year later, he began studying landscape architecture at UC Berkeley.

When Eckbo graduated from Berkeley in 1935, Professor John Gregg helped him obtain his first architectural job as a garden designer for Armstrong Nurseries in Los Angeles. During his first year on the job, Eckbo designed almost one hundred gardens for various clients. In 1936, Eckbo's submission to Harvard University's Graduate School of Design won him a first prize scholarship. Eckbo and his classmates Dan Kiley and James Rose led the “Harvard Revolution,” ushering in the Modern period in landscape design. Following his graduation in 1938, Eckbo worked as a landscape architect for Norman Bel Geddes on the General Motors Pavilion for the 1939 World's Fair in New York and for the Farm Security Administration, planning new communities and designing housing developments, first for migrant workers, later for war workers.

In 1937 he married Arline Williams and by 1939 Eckbo had published his first articles in the journals *Pencil Points* and *Magazine of Art*. In 1942 Eckbo formed a business partnership with his brother-in-law, Edward Williams, to form the firm of Eckbo & Williams. Following World War II, they were joined by Robert Royston, thus expanding the practice. The reputation of the firm grew, and Eckbo, Royston, & Williams oversaw the design and construction of gardens for hundreds of residential, religious, and educational buildings in the newly-developed edge cities and suburbs of Los Angeles and beyond. During this period Eckbo also served as an associate professor at the University of Southern California (1948-1956).

After the 1953 dissolution of Eckbo, Royston, & Williams, Eckbo's work changed to include projects that required large-scale design and master planning. While continuing to design various commercial and educational projects, Eckbo began teaching in UC Berkeley's Department of Landscape Architecture, serving as Chair from 1965-1969.

Eckbo received the 1975 American Society of Landscape Architects' Medal of Honor, and in 1978 became Professor Emeritus at UC Berkeley. He continued to publish books and essays on landscape architecture and environmental design, in addition to working on various international projects. His publications include *Landscape for Living* (1950), *The Art of Home Landscaping* (1956), *Urban Landscape Design* (1964), *The Landscape We See* (1969), and *People in a Landscape* (1998).

Firm History:

1942-1945	Eckbo & Williams	San Francisco
1945-1953	Eckbo, Royston & Williams	Los Angeles and San Francisco
1953-1973	Eckbo, Dean, Austin & Williams	L.A., S.F., Berkeley, Honolulu, Minneapolis
1979-1983	EckboKay Associates	San Francisco
1983-1990	Garrett Eckbo & Assoc.	San Francisco/Berkeley

¹ Treib, Marc & Imbert, Dorothee. *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 4.

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Sources:

Treib, Marc & Imbert, Dorothee. *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Garrett Eckbo typed biography, 1984.

Arrangement note

The collection has been organized into eight series (detailed below), which have then been further arranged into subseries in accordance with the guidelines published in the *Standard Series for Architecture and Landscape Design Records* (2000, Kelcy Shepherd and Waverly Lowell). Within each subseries, the folders have been arranged alphabetically by project name, following the precedent of the collection's original order. The project names and dates were derived from the material in the files themselves, where available. Project locations have been noted to the neighborhood level (e.g. "Wonderland Park, Los Angeles, California") where applicable. A container list for each series is available from the Archives, as is a project index detailing the physical location of each item in the Project Records series. For reasons of preservation, sizeable drawings on tracing paper or other stable media have been flattened and rehoused in flat files, while smaller drawings, blueprints, diazo prints, and sepias – even those with original drawings over the reprographic medium – remain folded in the project files. Please note that photographs are physically located in two places in the collection: within the project records as part of the project files themselves, and a "master set" of professional photographs (some of which were published) in the office records series.

Scope and Contents Note

The Garrett Eckbo Collection spans the years 1933 to 1995 [bulk 1945-1980], and includes files created by Eckbo and the numerous firms with which he worked. The collection is organized in eight series: Personal Papers, Professional Papers, Faculty Papers, Office Records, Project Records 1939-1969, Project Records 1970-1995, FSA/National Housing Authority/Defense Housing Records, and Additional Donations. (Where the bulk of a project was completed after 1970, such as in the case of the University of New Mexico, the records are housed in the Project Records, 1970-1995 series.) Within these series original order has been maintained wherever it is evident; however, much of the material arrived with no evident order. In these cases, an order has been imposed by the archivists. Please see the Colophon at the end of this document for further information about decisions made regarding appraisal and arrangement.

This collection is extensive and contains a wide range of materials documenting Eckbo's long, innovative and productive career as a designer, planner, and author. The Personal Papers contain biographical material, personal correspondence, student work and travel photographs, as well as portraits and family photographs. Biographical information contained in this series includes several oral histories and interviews by architectural historians as well as Eckbo's autobiography. His student papers include class notes, plant identification sheets, drawings for numerous student projects, and comprehensive records for "Contempoville", his master's thesis at Harvard. Some writings, poems, and open letters are also included in this series.

Eckbo was an active and committed member of the landscape architecture profession. A reflection of this, the Professional Papers series includes correspondence with other members of

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the profession, many awards, and a mixture of records that include correspondence and presentation notes related to professional organizations, committee work, and juries. Eckbo was also a prolific author who published seven books and innumerable articles. The subseries “Writings” includes correspondence with publishers, notes gathered for articles and monographs, copies of articles and lectures, manuscripts, illustrations, and proofs for *Urban Landscapes*. Of particular note is a large quantity of material pertaining to his book *People in a Landscape*, as well as notes and correspondence for an issue of the Japanese serial *Process Architecture* devoted to his work. The large subseries “Subject Files” – largely unaltered from its original order – contains clippings and other reference material for his writings that Eckbo collected.

The Faculty Papers contain material related to Eckbo’s teaching experiences at a number of educational institutions, as well as his chairmanship of the Department of Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley. Primarily, this series contains official correspondence with other members of the UC Berkeley Landscape Architecture faculty and course materials from classes taught by Eckbo (at USC, UCB, University of Osaka, and UVA).

The Office Records include promotional literature for Eckbo’s firms, including proposals and portfolios for potential projects, slides and photographs of residential and non-residential projects, and scrapbooks of magazine and newspaper clippings relating to Eckbo projects. Eckbo also wrote a number of accounts of his time with and departure from his firm, EDAW; those accounts are located in this series. *Please note that project photographs are physically located in two places in the collection: within the project records as part of the project files themselves, and a “master set” of professional photographs (some of which were published) in the office records series.*

The voluminous Project Records are comprised of drawings, site plans, correspondence, plant lists, and photographs. Large projects such as the Fresno Mall, the American Falls at Niagara, and Shelby Farms (among others) also include sets of bids, specifications, and reports. The project records include files generated by Eckbo’s different firms, beginning with his San Francisco office in 1939, continuing through to his retirement in 1990, and concluding with some residential and consulting projects in 1995.

Some of the projects documented extensively in these records include: planning (and planting) for communities such as Bellehurst, Ladera, Mar Vista Homes, Lakewood, and Reseda (all in California); educational projects at Long Beach (CA) City College, Ambassador College, several campuses of the University of California, and the University of New Mexico; regional environmental planning for American Falls, Mission Bay Park in San Diego, freeway corridors in Minnesota and Iowa, and Shelby Farms in Memphis; and the ALCOA Forecast Garden and various other garden designs for iconic Modernist houses in the Wonderland Park section of the Laurel Canyon neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The records document a wide spectrum of Eckbo’s large- and small-scale projects, including pedestrian malls, civic centers, waterfronts, public parks, churches, playgrounds, freeway systems, botanic gardens, cemeteries, office buildings, resorts, residences, and corporate campuses throughout the West and beyond. The project records also include records related to various projects for which Eckbo served as a consultant, such as the Peace Garden proposal for Washington, DC, the city of São Paulo, Brazil, and the Ministry of Agriculture in Kuwait. Most

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of the project records do not contain detailed financial information, though a number of the residential project files do include accounting sheets. For the most part, the records do not include detailed correspondence with contractors, clients, or architects. After 1965, Eckbo seems to have done away with his former system of assigning a job number to each project. The type of material contained in the project records itself changes after 1965, reflecting Eckbo's growing interest in planning large-scale projects and collaborating with municipal and regional governments.

The Farm Services Administration series documents Eckbo's work with the National Housing Authority and, later, the military to design landscape masterplans for farm and defense worker housing in California, Nevada, Arizona, and other western states.

The Additional Donations include a number of drawings, photographs, and artifacts which were donated to the Archives by another donor several years after the primary collection had been accessioned.

The bulk of the collection was donated in 1990, with additional materials being transferred from the donor in 1998, and additional donations being received in 2000.

Series Description

I. PERSONAL PAPERS

Boxes 1-5, 45, 47, 50

Arranged chronologically.

- A. Biographical Information
- B. Correspondence
- C. Student Work
- D. Travel
- E. Writings
- F. Portraits and Photographs

Contains interviews and oral histories of Eckbo; several drafts of an autobiography; general correspondence; correspondence regarding the donation of Eckbo's professional papers; student work including plant identification sheets, the manuscript of "A History of Landscape Design", and drawings for his master's thesis, "Contempoville"; travel sketches; poems and other various writings; and photographs and snapshots of Eckbo, family, and friends.

II. PROFESSIONAL PAPERS

Boxes 6-21 (15 cartons, 1 flat box)

Subseries A arranged chronologically; all others arranged alphabetically.

- A. Correspondence
- B. Writings
- C. Presentations
- D. Associations and Committees

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- E. Awards
- F. Reference Files
- G. Juries

Writings include several drafts of Eckbo's "People in a Landscape", as well as a large roll of the publisher's negatives for printing the manuscript. The voluminous reference files are arranged alphabetically by subject and consist of clippings, articles, and other material collected by Eckbo for his own use. The Juries subseries consists of material written or collected by Eckbo while he served on various design juries.

III. FACULTY PAPERS

Boxes 21-23 (2 ½ mss. boxes)

Arranged chronologically.

- A. Administrative
- B. Course Materials

Includes correspondence from time spent at the University of Southern California and UC-Berkeley; retirement correspondence and writings; course materials for classes taught at UC-Berkeley and the University of New South Wales; and a very small sample of his students' work.

IV. OFFICE RECORDS

Boxes 24-44; 96-100 (22 1/2 mss. boxes (6 containing photos; 11 ½ containing slides), 3 flat boxes of scrapbooks, 2 shoeboxes nitrate negatives, 2 shoeboxes safety negatives, 1 small box copy positives)

Arranged alphabetically.

- A. Administrative and Correspondence
- B. Public Relations
- C. Clippings and Scrapbooks
- D. Reference Negatives
- E. Photographs
- F. Slides
- G. Negatives

Consists of printed promotional material relating to Eckbo, the firm, and specific projects, as well as photographs and slides of finished projects. Scrapbooks contain drawings, photographs, and clippings. Unrealized proposals are included in this series (proposals resulting in a commission are located with the project files in the Project Records series).

V. PROJECT RECORDS, 1939-1969

Boxes 46-80; flat files (29 mss. boxes + portions of shoeboxes)

Arranged alphabetically by project name.

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A. Project Lists

Lists compiled by Eckbo's firms, Eckbo himself, and Eckbo's student assistants. Note that not all projects in these lists are documented in the project records.

B. Project Files

Drawings, site plans, correspondence, plant lists, and financial records spanning Eckbo's career and documenting residential gardens, campuses, recreation landscapes, large-scale planning projects, and a range of public spaces. Project documentation of residential gardens often includes minimal financial records.

VI. PROJECT RECORDS, 1970-1995

Boxes 81-93; flat files (12 cartons)

Arranged alphabetically by project name.

A. Project Files

Drawings, site plans, correspondence, plant lists, and financial records spanning Eckbo's career and documenting residential gardens, campuses, recreation landscapes, large-scale planning projects, and a range of public spaces. Project documentation of residential gardens often includes minimal financial records.

B. Bids, Specifications, and Reports

VII. FSA/NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY/DEFENSE HOUSING RECORDS, 1938-1945

Boxes 46, 49, 51, 101; flat files (incl. ½ shoebox copy positives, ¼ shoebox nitrate and safety negatives; ¼ shoebox photos)

Arranged alphabetically by location.

Drawings and prints documenting Eckbo's work in California, Oregon, Arizona, and other western states commissioned by the Farm Security Administration and, later, by the National Housing Authority. Building types include migrant worker housing, housing for defense industry employees, enlisted servicepeople, and "resettlement camps".

VIII. ADDITIONAL DONATIONS

Boxes 102-103 (1 flat file, 2 flat boxes)

Contains material donated several years after the primary collection was accessioned.

Related Collections

Robert Royston/Royston, Hanamoto, Alley & Abey (1999-12), Environmental Design Archives Eckbo, Garrett. Interview, Regional Oral History office, The Bancroft Library

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Colophon

The Garrett Eckbo collection was processed by Betsy Frederick-Rothwell, an assistant archivist with an M.Arch and extensive experience in processing other Modern architecture collections at the EDA; Meredith Hall, a master's student in landscape architecture; Kari Holmquist, a master's student in information systems; April Hesik, a master's student in urban design; and me (MSI, University of Michigan, 2002) according to the arrangement guidelines published in the *Standard Series for Architecture and Landscape Design Records: A Tool for the Arrangement and Description of Archival Collections*. Betsy began by working on the parts of the collection that were to become the "writings" series; I began with the project records; Kari processed the bids, specifications and reports as well as the subject files; and April and Meredith flattened and reboxed drawings for preservation, as well as identified countless previously unidentified FSA projects. Projects were selected for digitization by Betsy, me, and Dayna Holz (consulting archivist and EAD specialist), who also created metadata for these projects to make them searchable in the Online Archive of California.

The papers came to the Environmental Design Archives in two different accessions, one from Eckbo's office at EckboKay Associates, which was his last professional practice, and one from his home office at 1008 Cragmont Avenue, where he continued to write and consult until his death in 2000. These accessions have been subsequently merged into one coherent collection, as the writings in particular overlapped greatly in content and type of material.

One theory about the creation of the collection is that Eckbo hand-selected files that he wished to continue working with after his retirement. These folders, and his additions to them, comprise the second accession of material that we received. Though mostly in folders when we began, the files were exceedingly disorganized and most of the order of this collection in its current state has been imposed. Many of the project files came to us in "lettered" series, each with its own container list written by Eckbo, his former student Walter Hood, or another party. The differences between the series were negligible and the overlap sufficient enough for us to combine several series chronologically. Therefore, the "A" and "B" files have been combined to form the Projects 1939-1969 series, and the "C" and "D" files were combined (and, in some cases, dispersed) to form the Projects 1970-1995 series, as well as interfiled, as necessary, into the Writings and Professional Papers series. The folder of handwritten container lists has been retained as part of Series V.

We also discovered that oftentimes the same article or piece of writing was included in a number of folders – as though Eckbo had attempted a form of cross-indexing within his own file system. In these instances, we have removed the multiple from all folders but one, indicated its removal with a note in the folder itself, and noted the removal on the container list. Should a researcher wish to "reconstruct" Eckbo's original filing system, the notes in the finding aid will facilitate the task.

Another arrangement decision that we made was to maintain the two sets of photographs in the collection as they had originally come in to the Archives. The photographs within the project records were taken both during construction and after completion, by the clients, by Eckbo, or by professional photographers. The photographs in the office records series are predominantly professional photographs which, in many cases, do not exactly duplicate the photographs within

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the project records. There are, however, a large number of duplicate photographs in the collection, many of which Eckbo printed and reprinted, annotating with crop marks and measurements, in anticipation of their possible publication.

In the course of processing this collection, we also removed approximately three boxes of materials and designated them for destruction. The vast majority of this material was duplicate. Since we discovered that there was not a great deal of documentation for many of the projects, we made the appraisal decision to retain all information about each project, including clippings, which often provide valuable insights into the project or client.

-- Laura Tatum, December 2003