

*The Alexander Architectural Archive  
The University of Texas Libraries  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Guidelines for Handling Archival Material*

Materials in the AAA include many formats including: drawings, specifications, manuscripts, photographic materials, models, etc. The following set of rules has been adopted as minimal guidelines for the handling of archival records. We ask your cooperation in adhering to these rules. **If at any time you have questions about the handling of materials, please do not hesitate to ask.** Also, if you come across an item that needs care, please bring it to the attention of a staff member.

The AAA takes special care in housing collections to insure their preservation by deterring their deterioration. Although the AAA maintains a controlled environment with respect to archival standards, whenever objects are removed from their housing, they are exposed to light, pollutants, changes in temperature and humidity, the oils of human hands, and the risks involved with movement. To minimize damage, objects should be handled as little as possible. To that end, collections should not be browsed.

The following rules must be observed:

Many items in the Alexander Architectural Archive require special attention when moved or viewed. AAA staff will conduct all moving of material, unless otherwise specified.

Archival material must be kept in the order in which they are found. If the material appears to be out of order, do NOT rearrange them. Any problems should be reported to AAA staff.

Wash your hands frequently. Human hands carry dirt and natural oils. Often a fingerprint is not seen at the time of contact, but will appear later etched into the surface of the document.

When handling documents, avoid touching their surfaces more than is absolutely necessary. Gloves must be worn upon request. Hands should also be free of other objects, such as pencils.

Keep the material flat on the table at all times.

Do not write, lean, or place any object on the surface of any materials.

Do not stack materials.

Before moving material make sure the path to the destination is clear, as well as the table top.

Material should always be lifted **slowly** and with **both hands**.

Keep both viewing and work stations clean at all times. Dust off the table top periodically with a camel hair brush.

Blueprints and other photographically processed items must be kept in their housing, or face down when not in use to prevent fading.

Oversized material should never be moved without assistance. It will put both the mover and the material at risk. When moving drawings, place them flat on a large piece of cardboard or other backing. Large sheets of paper will often tear by their own weight when lifted. Always keep objects as level as possible.