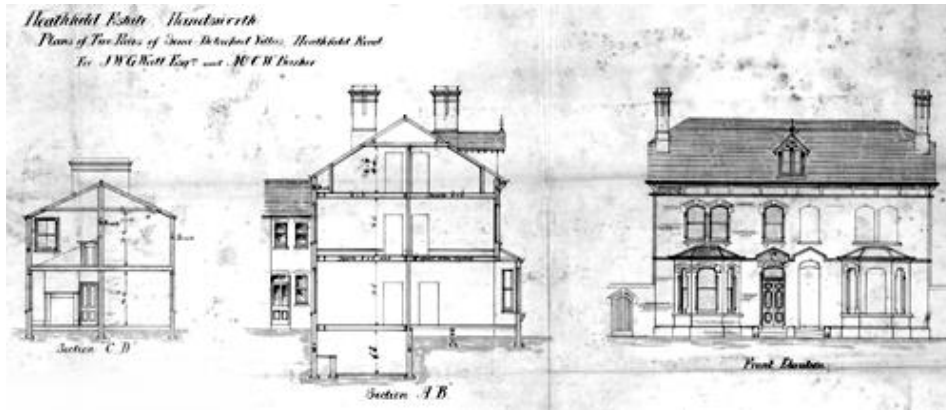


Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections

Architectural and House History



This guide is intended as an introduction to some of the main archive sources for research in architectural and house history. It is a starting point rather than an exhaustive list of collections and further sources will be found by checking the online catalogues, the Wolfson Centre paper catalogues and card indexes. Printed sources (e.g. annual reports of institutions and charities) will also be found in the local studies catalogue.

To access the Archives & Heritage online catalogue and information about our services go to <http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com> or access the printed paper catalogues in the Wolfson Research Centre. The printed catalogues are easier to use as you can see the overview and structure of the whole collection.

Points to remember:

- Very few architectural/building plans survive before 1875
- House plans will not give details about property boundaries

The history of houses

You need to know the date it was built to try and trace the plan.

The building plans for all areas of Birmingham are largely chronological so it is important to know at least approximately the date that the property you are looking for was built (or date of alteration).

Sources for dating buildings:

- Trade directories
- Electoral rolls
- Census
- Maps
- Rate books

We have plans relating to most of the areas which form the modern city of Birmingham. However the city boundaries have changed over time so you may need to consult separate indexes depending on which area of the city you need. Major boundary changes took place in 1911 and 1974 and others at different times.

From 1948 onwards you can check the Planning Online index which will give you details of local authority planning applications. Later entries have full details of plans included online.

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningonline>

Be aware - there are errors and omissions in this database.

Before 1911 many of Birmingham's suburbs had their own separate authorities and have separate sets of building plans (as well as other records). For example Billesley was in Yardley Rural District Council before 1911 and Solihull Rural District Council before 1894 etc.

To search for earlier planning applications you will need to use the manual indexes.

The card indexes are in alphabetical order by street name -there is a separate drawer for Harborne building plans.

In general, volumes are arranged chronologically, one volume per year and, within, each volume is in rough alphabetical order by street, i.e., all the 'A's are together, all the 'B's are together, and so on.

Planning Authority	Dates	Indexes and location
Aston/Aston Manor	(1897 – 1913)	3 volumes, Wolfson Centre
Birmingham	(1876 – 1898)	card index, Wolfson Centre
Birmingham	(1898 – 1959)	volume format, Wolfson Centre
Birmingham	(1969 – 1973)	card indexes
Birmingham	(1973 – 1983)	card indexes
Erdington	(1895 – 1911)	1 volume, Wolfson Centre
Halesowen*	(1897 – 1907)	red folder, Wolfson Centre
Handsworth	(1875 – 1911)	red folder, Wolfson Centre
Harborne	(1865 – 1891)	card index, Wolfson Centre
Kings Norton & Northfield	(1875 – 1911)	folder, Wolfson Centre
Perry Barr	(1895 – 1928)	red folder, Wolfson Centre
Solihull*	(1883 – 1930)	red folder, Wolfson Centre
Sutton Coldfield	very few before 1974, earlier plans kept at Sutton Library	
Yardley	(1895 – 1911) (new buildings) (1901 – 1905) (completed buildings)	

* not the whole borough

The later indexes are not on open access but can be checked by staff in the Wolfson Centre.

Guide to existing Birmingham building plans and their indexes

<u>Years</u>	<u>Plans</u>	<u>Indexes</u>
1876 - 1959	Yes	Yes (in searchroom)
1960 - 1965	Yes (microfilm)	No (destroyed)
1966 - 1968	Yes (microfilm)	Yes (ask staff)
1969 - 1980	very few, major schemes	Yes (ask staff)
1981 - 1983	Yes	Yes (ask staff)
1983 - 1991	Yes	Yes (ask staff)
post 1991	Please contact Building Consultancy: Acivico (Building Consultancy) Limited, PO Box 2062, 3rd Floor, 1 Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7DY Building Consultancy General Enquiries: Tel. 0121 675 7006	

Points to remember: BBP (Birmingham Building Plan) numbers 48171 – 72663 are on microfilm.

Building plan survival

The indexes are contemporary with the plans and this means many of the plans do not survive. Furthermore many of the plans are in such poor condition that even when they survive they cannot be viewed. There is no way of knowing if a plan does not survive or cannot be served without going to check the box.

Condition of building plans

The building plans have been produced on a variety of different materials, including paper and linen. Linen plans tend to age well, and so are usually fit to serve. Paper plans, on the other hand, do deteriorate at a faster rate, and the earlier ones in particular suffer from yellowing, brittleness and cracking. Serving of plans is at the discretion of the Duty Archivist or Wolfson staff.

Church architecture

A great deal of information is available about church architecture in secondary printed sources (see below). Architectural plans for churches do not appear in the main building plan sequence as (in common with certain other buildings) a planning application was not required. There are some plans included as part of our architectural collections. Information relating to alterations, stained glass windows etc can be found in the series of church faculties (ref BDR/C/6/) in our Diocesan Papers.

Council houses

For the most part plans of council houses are not included in the main building plan sequence but there are plans of council estates and information about council estates in our council records (ref BCC).

Major schemes

A “complete” sequence of building plans exists up until 1968 but after this only plans for major architectural schemes survive, including the Rotunda, the old Bull Ring Centre, the Big Top site, ATV Centre (Alpha Tower) and the Central Library. The plans private houses mostly do not survive for this period.

Major architects collections

We have a number of architects collections including the following practices:

MS 891 J A and P B Chatwin

MS 1338 'Kenrick' Architectural Drawings

MS 1421 Records of Daniel Rowlinson Hill and Daniel Shenton Hill

MS 1442 Papers of H. Buckland and Partners

MS 1460 Records of H.R Yeoville Thomason

MS 1531 Work Books of Thomas Rickman (microfilm copy)

MS 1542 Records of Bateman and Bateman

MS 1567 Records of McKewan and McKewan

MS 1703 Charles Edge and Charles A Edge

MS 1737 Plans deposited by Messrs. Buckland & Heywood

MS 1536 Drawings of W Alexander Harvey for George Cadbury now forming part of the Bournville Village Trust

Further information

A biographical dictionary of British architects, 1600-1840 - Howard Colvin (4th edn 2008) ref **720.92241**

Pevsner architectural guides: Birmingham - Andy Foster (2005) ref **720.942 FOS**

Building Plans of Note

REF. NO.	TITLE	CONDITION
BCC Plan 40	All Saints Lunatic Asylum	Unknown
BCC Plans 127-132	All Saints Lunatic Asylum	Unknown
BBP 187964	Alpha Tower and ATV Network Centre	Unknown
BBP 192366	Alpha Tower and ATV Network Centre	Good
BBP 187469	Aston University	Good
BCA Aston Manor Building Plan AM 686	Aston Villa Football Ground	Good
BBP 70460	Baskerville House	Good
BCC Plans 88, 94-95	Baskerville House	Unknown
MS 1261/34-99	Big Top Site, New Street	Good
BBP 18934	Birmingham City Football Club Grounds	Do not serve
MS 1338/12	Birmingham Children's Hospital, Steelhouse Lane	Unknown
BBP 14693	Birmingham Children's Hospital, Steelhouse Lane	Unknown
MS 1460/45	Birmingham Council House	Unknown
MS 1367	Birmingham Council House	Unknown
BCC 184, 217-218	Birmingham Victoria Law Courts, Corporation	Unknown
MS 1338/7-8	Birmingham and Midland Institute, Paradise Street	Unknown
BBP 13902	Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street	Unknown
MS 1460/56	Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery	Unknown
MS 1703/81	Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Clock Tower	Unknown
MS 1338/9-10	Birmingham Reference Library, Ratcliffe Place	Unknown
BCC Plan 118	Birmingham Reference Library, Ratcliffe Place	Unknown
BCC Accession 1995/030	Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square	Good
BBP 4138/83	Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, including B/Store and Library Theatre [1983]	Unknown
MS 1703/15	Birmingham Town Hall	Unknown
MS 617/2	Birmingham Town Hall	Unknown
BCC Plans 201-216, 222	Birmingham Town Hall	Unknown
BBP 140680	Bull Ring Centre	Good
BBP 55070	Central Fire Station	Good
BBP 16744	Custard Factory [A. Bird and Sons] n.b. 1902 additions	Good

BBP 34142	Hall of Memory	Unknown
MS 1338/3	Highbury Hall, Kings Heath	Unknown
BBP 2769	Hippodrome Theatre, Hurst Street	Unknown
BBP 37099	Hippodrome Theatre, Hurst Street	Unknown
HC HO/2/2/1-28	Hollymoor Hospital	Good
MS 1703/12	Key Hill Cemetery	Good
MS 617/1	King Edward's School	Good
BBP 15221	Methodist Central Hall, Corporation Street	Do not serve
BBP 14528	Moseley School of Art	Good
BBP 44983	New Street Cinema [Odeon], 1929	Good
BBP 65312	New Street Cinema [Odeon], 1936	Good
BBP 889/88	Novotel Hotel	Unknown
BBP 140680	Pallasades	Unknown
BBP 18560	Paradise Forum and Paradise Circus	Unknown
BBP 1190/90	Paradise Forum Shopping	Unknown
BBP 3589/85	Pavillions Shopping Arcade, High Street	Unknown
BBP 1010/86	Perry Barr Greyhound Stadium, Aldridge Road	Unknown
BBP 7481/88	Perry Barr Greyhound Stadium, Aldridge Road	Unknown
BCC Plans 31, 44, 49	Post Office, Pinfold Street [1885-1906]	Unknown
MS 1261/3-29	Rackhams, Corporation Street [1931-1957]	Unknown
BBP 143772	Rotunda	Good
MS 891/53-55	Royal Institution for the Blind	Unknown
BBP 15220	Ruskin Chambers, Corporation Street	Unknown
MS 891/25-27	St Martin's Church, Bull Ring	Unknown
MS 891/30-32	St Philip's Cathedral Church, Colmore Row	Unknown
MS 681	Winson Green Prison	Unknown
BCC Plans 89-90, 154-157, 228	Winson Green Prison	Unknown
BCC Plans 99-100, 103, 106, 116, 166-168	Witton Cemetery [1860s]	Unknown
BBP 2217/85	City Plaza [Main building], Cannon Street	Unknown