

# Building Research

## How to Research a New York City Building

### Look up the building in Pratt Cat

- Search under the name of the building OR
- Search under New York (N.Y.) plus the name of the building OR
- Search using alternate names of the building OR
- Search using a spelled-out form of the address OR
- Search with a broader category search in Subject Browse
  - e.g. New York (N.Y.) – Churches
  - Apartment Houses – United States – New York (N.Y.)

### Look up the building in online and print indexes

(See listings below)

### Architects and architectural firms

- Search in Pratt Cat
- Search in online and print indexes
- Browse biographical dictionaries for leads (see titles below)
- If the architect or firm name is unknown look up the building in the *AIA Guide to New York City* or in another guide book.

### Landmark buildings & districts

- Keyword search using the name of the historic district
  - e.g. Fort Green
- Subject Browse using the following searches:
  - Historic buildings – New York (N.Y.) – Conservation and restoration
  - Architecture – New York (N.Y.) – Conservation and restoration
  - Brooklyn – (New York, N.Y.) – Buildings – Conservation and restoration
  - New York (N.Y.) – Buildings – Conservation and restoration

### Buildings that no longer exist

- Try searching in older guidebooks (see titles below)
- Look for historic photographs (see NYPL note below)
- Look for published news reports and articles
  - e.g. Try the *New York Times Index* and microfilm collection

## Drawings, plans & archival materials

- Browse the COPAR research guide, *Architectural Research Materials in New York City and the Five Boroughs*, for archival collections elsewhere in the city. This guide also includes information about using the Department of Buildings (see listing below) files in each borough. Call# 720.72 C734A

## To find a block and lot number

- For a Manhattan Building, consult the *Sanborn Manhattan Land Book* (at the circulation/reserve desk, call# 912.74 S198).
- For a Brooklyn Building, consult the *Sanborn Building and Property Atlas of Brooklyn, New York* (on the map shelf, call# 912.74 R868BR).
- For a Queens Building, consult the *Sanborn Building and Property Atlas of Queens, New York* (1<sup>st</sup> floor info ref. reading room, call# 912.74 R868Q).

## Keywords

If searching an architectural style, period, type of building, or geographic area:

- Try a General Keyword search
- Try using Subject Browse

*Note: Please see a Librarian for more advanced search techniques*

## Resources

- Books
- Journals
- Databases
- Websites

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## BOOKS

### **Guides:**

*The Landmarks of New York III.* By Barbaralee Diamonstein. NY: Abrams, 1998. **720.97471 D537L Info Ref Reading OR Stacks**

*Guide to New York City Landmarks.* By Andrew S. Dolkart. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1998. **720.97471 D664G Info Ref Reading OR Stacks**

*Living It Up: A Guide to the Named Apartment Houses of New York.* NY: Atheneum, 1984. **728.31 N888 Info Ref Reading**

*AIA Guide to New York City.* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. By Elliot Willensky and Norval White. NY: Harcourt Brace, 2000. **720.97471 A512A4 Stacks; Info. Ref. Reading Room; Info. Ref. Ready Ref.; Pratt Manhattan Campus Library.**

*The Iconography of Manhattan Island: 1498-1909.* Stokes, Isaac Newton Phelps. New York, R. H. Dodd, 1915-28. 6 vols. **974.71 S87 Rare Books/Ask at Ref. Desk**

*King's Handbook of New York City.* King, Moses. Boston, MA: 1893. **917.471 K53K Rare Books/Ask at Ref. Desk**

*WPA Guide to New York City.* Whyte, William H. New York: The New Press, 1992. **917.471 W2 Stacks 2M**

### **Dictionaries and Encyclopedias:**

*Dictionary of Architecture & Construction.* Ed. By Cyril M. Harris. New York : McGraw-Hill, c1993. **720.3 H313D Info Ref Reading Rooms**

*Dictionary of building preservation.* Ed. by Ward Bucher; Christine Madrid, illustration editor. New York : Preservation Press, J. Wiley, c1996. **720.3 D5542 Info Ref Reading Rooms**

*Encyclopedia of architecture : design, engineering & construction.* By Joseph A. Wilkes, editor-in-chief, Robert T. Packard, associate editor. New York : Wiley, c1988-c1989. **720.3 E565 Info. Ref. Reading Rooms, OR Manhattan Center\ Reference**

*Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture.* By Burden, Ernest E., [New York] : McGraw-Hill, c1998. **720.3 B949 Info. Ref. Reading Rooms**

### **Biographical Sources:**

*Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900.* By Dennis S. Francis. New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989. **720.6 A6727 Info. Ref. Reading Rooms OR Special Collections/Ask at Ref. Desk**

*Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940.* By James Ward. New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1980. **720.6 A6728 Info. Ref. Reading Rooms**

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## JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

### **Print Indexes:**

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature (1890 – present)

Poole's Index to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Periodicals (1802 – 1906)

New York Times Index (1851 – present)

Some = 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Some = 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Reference, Index Tables

### **Online Indexes (Databases):**

#### Art Full Text

Art Full Text is a bibliographic database that indexes and abstracts articles from periodicals published throughout the world. Full-text coverage for selected periodicals is also included. Periodical coverage includes English-language periodicals, yearbooks, and museum bulletins, as well as periodicals published in French, Italian, German, Japanese, Spanish, Dutch, and Swedish. In addition to articles, Art Full Text indexes reproductions of works of art that appear in indexed periodicals. Indexing coverage begins 1984; abstracting coverage begins with January 1994. The abstracts range from 50 to 300 words and describe the content and scope of the source articles. Full-text coverage begins in 1997.

#### Art Index Retrospective

Art Index Retrospective is a bibliographic database that cumulates citations to Art Index volumes 1-32 of the printed index published between 1929-1984. The database cites articles from periodicals published throughout the world. Periodical coverage includes English-language periodicals, yearbooks, and museum bulletins, as well as periodicals published in French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Dutch. In addition to articles, Art Index Retrospective indexes reproductions of works of art that appear in indexed periodicals.

#### Art Bibliographies Modern

Abstracts of journal articles, books, essays, exhibition catalogs, dissertations and exhibition reviews with comprehensive bibliographic coverage of modern and contemporary art, architecture, design and photography. The time period coverage includes the 19th and 20th centuries. Covers literature published since 1974. A [list](#) of periodicals indexed is available. Updated monthly.

#### Bibliography of the History of Art

The Bibliography of the History of Art indexes and abstracts articles, art-related books, conference proceedings, dissertations, and art exhibition and dealer's catalogs. This extensive and comprehensive index covers European and American art from late antiquity to the present.

### Avery Index

Most comprehensive listing of journal articles on architecture and design, history and practice of architecture, landscape architecture, city planning, historic preservation and interior design and decoration. Indexes articles from nearly 800 US and foreign architectural journals published worldwide, 75% of which are not indexed in any other source. Includes articles from previous electronic version as well as records converted from Avery Library card file, with records dating from the 1860s to the present. A [list](#) of periodical titles indexed is available.

### EBSCO Master File Select

Contains full text and citations for articles from over 750 journals and newspapers in all subjects. A [list of titles](#) covered is available.

### EXPANDED ACADEMIC ASAP

Indexes approximately 5 million articles in over 1600 general interest and scholarly journals in all disciplines published since 1980. Full text is available for the contents of approximately 750 journal titles. A list of journals indexed is available. Updated daily.

### Grove Dictionary of Art

Contains over 41,000 articles on the art and architecture of Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Pacific, with links to images and further information in museum and other art-related web sites. Help is available

### RIBA Catalog

The online catalog of the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Indexes articles from over 300 architecture journals as well as books, multimedia, and architects' biographies. A [list](#) of journals indexed is available. Covers early 1980's-present. Updated daily.

### Wilson Select Plus

Full text articles in science, humanities, education and business. Includes US and international professional publications, academic journals, and trade magazines.

### WorldCat

Use WorldCat to search for information about books, periodicals, and other materials held in OCLC member libraries worldwide. Updated daily. Place Interlibrary Loan requests electronically through WORLDCAT.

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## WEBSITES

### Selected Bibliography

#### New York Historical Society

An online guide to conducting architectural research at the New York Historical Library. Both print and online resources are discussed. Additional contact information for other resources in New York City are included. For further information visit their website: [www.nyhistory.org/library/research.html](http://www.nyhistory.org/library/research.html). Or call: 212.873.3400 ext. 8, 10am – 5pm for simple questions like “who lived in my building and the adjacent ones in 1910?”

#### Department of Buildings

Records include construction applications, building permits, architectural drawings and plans. All research must be done in person. Call ahead or visit their website for additional information:

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/collections/collections\\_dob.s.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/collections/collections_dob.s.html).

Manhattan:	60 Hudson Street, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor	212.312.8904
Brooklyn:	210 Joralemon Street, 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor	718.802.3693
Bronx:	1932 Arthur Avenue	718.579.6920
Queens:	126-06 Queens Blvd.	718.520.3401
Staten Island:	Boro Hall	718.816.2315

#### Register's Offices

Documents relating to building ownership (deeds, mortgages, etc.) can be found at these offices. All research must be done in person. Call ahead for information.

Manhattan:	31 Chambers Street	212.788.8528
Brooklyn:	210 Joralemon Street	718.802.3590
Bronx:	1932 Arthur Avenue	718.579.6821
Queens:	144-06 94 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	718.298.7000

#### Municipal Archives

Every building in the five boroughs was photographed between 1939 and 1941 as part of an appraisal project. Prints of these black and white photographs can be purchased (download order form. Cost is \$30.00 per print, plus a \$3.00 mailing charge). Please call 212.788.8580 or go online:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/about/archives.shtml>.

#### Landmarks Preservation Commission

All changes and repairs to designated landmarks and historic buildings and districts are recorded and overseen by this organization. In addition they maintain reports for some historic districts and some individual buildings. Call them at 212.487.6800 or visit them online:

[www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/home.html](http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/home.html). Also, check out the LPC website for “A Guide to Research Resources in New York City”: <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/html/designation/faq3.html>.

#### New York Public Library

*The Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, 42<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 121.*

This division includes two important photographic collections. 1) Photographic Views of New York City, 1879s to 1970s, and 2) the Lloyd Acker Collection of New York City Photographs 1935-1975. The first is indexed by address, subject and building name. The second is indexed by address. Please call 212.930.0828 or visit them online: [www.nypl.org/research/chss/lhg/genea.html](http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/lhg/genea.html).

Other Important Addresses:

Brooklyn Historical Society  
128 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
718.222.4111

Brooklyn Public Library  
Grand Army Plaza  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
718.230.2100

Municipal Archives  
31 Chambers Street, Suite 103  
New York, NY 10007  
212.788.8577

Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10029  
212.534.1672

New York Historical Society  
2 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10024  
212.873.3400

New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Science Library  
Fifth Avenue and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10018  
212.930.0830

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Please forward questions and comments to [libref@pratt.edu](mailto:libref@pratt.edu)