

Museums and Collections Projects Program 2021

University of Melbourne

Architecture, Building and Planning Library: Rare Materials Collection

Project Description

Collection Management – Cataloguing project, Parkes Postcard Collection

Project

This project involves assisting with the cataloguing of the Parkes Postcard Collection which forms part of the Rare Materials Collection in the Architecture Building and Planning Library. This project will help facilitate future digitisation of these collection materials and aid accessibility, long-term preservation, storage and appreciation of the collection.

Background

The [Rare Materials Collection](#) in the Architecture and Planning Library comprises of 19th and 20th century material; seminal architectural texts; collections of major local architects and planners; original drawings, sketchbooks and scrapbooks; objects from the University's architectural atelier and theses. Pre-19th century material from the collection is housed with the Special Collections at the Baillieu Library.

The Parkes Postcard Collection comprises of several thousand black and white postcards of European architecture collected by the Rev James William Parkes (1896-1981). As a child, Parkes already had a great interest in architecture and so commenced collecting the postcards around 1906. He was educated at Elizabeth College, Guernsey, and Hertford College, Oxford, on an open classical scholarship between 1919 and 1923. Ordained by the Church of England in 1926, through his work with the International Student Service and the Student Christian Movement as early as the 1920s he campaigned against the rise of racist nationalism in Europe. Parkes is known for his work fighting against anti-Semitism and for rescuing Jews during the 1930s. The Parkes Postcard Collection was to have been gifted to the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. However, when that Faculty wound up, a new home was sought for the collection and in 1975 was found at the University of Melbourne.

Details

Working in consultation with the Liaison Librarian, the primary focus of this project will be to catalogue postcards in the Parkes Postcard Collection. A catalogue for the collection exists, but it is unclear how comprehensive or accurate this database is; therefore, the initial project task will be to reconcile the catalogue with the collection items to review its breadth and accuracy. Once determined, as this is a large collection, the student will utilise a spreadsheet with abridged relevant cataloguing fields and will focus on a smaller, thematic sections of the collection. The student will ideally have a basic understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of museum objects (progress towards a relevant degree and/or previous volunteer experience with an Archive, Museum or Historical Society is desirable), and an interest in architectural history. Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of objects is required as is a methodical, prudent approach with a keen eye for detail.

Benefits

Opportunity to work closely with one of the UoM's extensive cultural collections and for professional development through experience gained in collection management procedures and practice. Satisfaction gained from working closely with the ABP Library's Rare Materials Collection and contributing to make the University's cultural collections more accessible, facilitating their interpretation and assisting in their long-term preservation.

Supervisor

Sarah Charing, Liaison Librarian – Research Support, Architecture, Building and Planning

