

Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library  
Department of Drawings & Archives  
Columbia University

FINDING AID FOR THE  
EMERY ROTH & SONS  
ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS AND PAPERS  
1906-1996 (bulk 1951 - 1994)

2006.013

<b>Collection Dates:</b>	1906-1996 (bulk 1951 - 1994)
<b>Size:</b>	245 linear feet of papers 34,175 drawings 1,906 photographs (433 rolls, 245 Paige boxes, 5 print boxes)
<b>Physical Characteristics of Materials in the Collection:</b>	Correspondence, typescript papers, carbon typescript papers, holograph papers, printed papers, photographic prints, film negatives, photographic transparencies, architectural reprographic prints, mixed media drawings, product samples.
<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	Emery Roth & Sons architectural records and papers, Department of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	This collection was a gift from Higgins Quasebarth & Partners, 2006.013.

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- Location:** The bulk of this collection is stored in off-site storage and will be retrieved with advance notification only.
- Processing Information:** This collection was processed by Vanessa Cameron, Emery Roth & Sons Project Archivist, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Department of Drawings and Archives, 2007 - 2008 with the assistance of Hollyamber Kennedy, Bibliographic Assistant. Additional support was provided by Mellon Graduate Interns Lindsay McCook and Teresa Harris. Processing was funded by a generous grant from the E.H.A. Foundation.

**Finding Aid  
Preparation:** Finding aid written by Vanessa Cameron for the Department of  
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## HISTORICAL NOTE

Emery Roth & Sons (1938-1996) was a family-run architecture firm that had a major influence on the post-war development of Manhattan. In 1938 the architect Emery Roth (1871-1948), renowned for upscale Manhattan apartment buildings like the Beresford and the San Remo, renamed his practice Emery Roth & Sons to reflect the inclusion of his sons Julian and Richard as partners. Julian (1901-1992) specialized in construction costs and building materials and technology, while Richard (1904-1987) was named the firm's principal architect. In the early 1960s, Richard Roth's son, Richard Roth, Jr. (b. 1933) became the third generation to join the firm, eventually rising to chief architect and shareholder. As the firm expanded and diversified over six decades, it remained a family business through the 1990s. Richard Roth's children, Robyn Roth-Moise and Richard Lee Roth, both worked for the firm and its subsidiaries.

Emery Roth & Sons continued to design high-rise apartment buildings in Manhattan, as Emery Roth had, but shortly after World War II the firm began to shift its focus to high-rise office buildings. As they became increasingly specialized in commercial space, they worked closely with real estate developers such as the Uris Corporation, Tishman Construction, Diesel Construction, the Durst Organization, and Helmsley-Spear, Inc.

Significant examples of their work in New York include 55 Water Street, 300 Park Avenue, the Palace Hotel, 546 Fifth Avenue, and 600 Lexington Avenue. Emery Roth & Sons frequently collaborated with other architects on large projects for which they were the architects of record. These projects included the World Trade Center (Minoru Yamasaki), General Motors Office Building (Edward Durell Stone), 1585 Broadway (Gwathmey Siegel & Associates), 7 Hanover Square (Norman Jaffe), the Portland Municipal Building (Michael Graves), 375 Hudson Street (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), and the Pan Am Building (Walter Gropius).

Over the years the firm consistently provided marketable designs that maximized the net rentable area, a feature highly prized by real estate developers. Writing of the firm's work in a 1957 article, Richard Roth remarked "The entire endeavor in our office is to create the best that can be produced within the restrictions that are placed upon us; and these restrictions are seldom those of our client, but rather of lending institutions; economics; and municipal authorities' laws" (*Progressive Architecture* June 1957).

The promotion of the Texas-based architect Robert Sobel (b. 1931) to principal in the late 1970s marks a shift in their focus from Manhattan office buildings to mixed-use properties in Texas and overseas. Beginning in the 1970s, possibly in reaction to New York City's fiscal crisis, and continuing through the 1990s, the firm expanded and diversified its operations into several related entities. In the 1980s they took advantage of the Texas oil boom, establishing the office of Sobel / Roth that was based in Houston. Notable examples of their work outside of Manhattan include Houston's Alliance Tower, Beijing's China World Trade Center, and the Taman Tuk Abdul Razak Center in Malaysia.

In 1993, Richard Roth Junior sold all of his issued and outstanding shares of Emery Roth & Sons and all of its affiliated and related entities to Robert Sobel. In 1996, the firm ceased to operate, apparently because of financial distress.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection primarily contains architectural drawings, correspondence, business records, and a small number of photographs related to the projects of Emery Roth & Sons and its subsidiary entities. A large portion of the entities are represented only in the Office Records series and are identified as such. Some projects on which Emery Roth & Sons acted as architect of record are not represented in this collection, most notably the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

Also received in the first gift is a small group of correspondence to and from Lyman Sturgis, a writer and literary agent for the Beacon Syndicate in New York City. This material relates to literary matters and dates from 1931 and 1932.

## **ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT NOTE**

This material is organized in two series: Project Records and Office Records.

Within the Project Records series, materials are organized in the following subseries: Drawings, Files, Photographs, and Specifications.

Within the Office Records series, files are organized into the following subseries: Administrative, Correspondence, Financial Records, and General.

The further arrangement of material within each level is described at the beginning of each series and subseries.

## RELATED MATERIAL

Emery Roth & Sons was the architect of choice for the real estate developers Uris Brothers. Materials pertaining to their Emery Roth & Sons projects can be found in the Percy and Harold D. Uris Papers

[<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/avery/da/uris.html>], also held by Avery Library's Department of Drawings and Archives.

Additionally, the Department of Drawings & Archives also holds the Emery Roth Architectural Drawings and Biography collection [<http://clio.cul.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBRecID=6916750&v2=1>].

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clausen, Meredith L. *The Pan Am Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.

Ruttenbaum, Steven. *Mansions in the Clouds: The Skyscraper Palazzi of Emery Roth*. New York: Balsam Press, 1986.

Shachtman, Tom. *Skyscraper Dreams: The Great Real Estate Dynasties of New York*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.

## INDEX TERMS: Buildings

2 World Trade Center (New York, N.Y.)  
300 Park Avenue (New York, N.Y.)  
320 Park Avenue (New York, N.Y.)  
350 Park Avenue (New York, N.Y.)  
375 Hudson Street (New York, N.Y.)  
55 Water Street (New York, N.Y.)  
7 Hanover Square (New York, N.Y.)  
7 World Trade Center (New York, N.Y.)  
A&S Plaza (New York, N.Y.)  
Baruch Houses (New York, N.Y.)  
Bronx High School of Science (New York, N.Y.)  
CBS Building (New York, N.Y.)  
Chelsea Piers (New York, N.Y.)

Citicorp Center (New York, N.Y.)  
Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center.  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Government Center (Boston, M.A.)  
Consolidated Edison Company of New York, inc. -- Buildings  
General Motors Building (New York, N.Y.)  
Hungary. Consulate (New York, N.Y.)  
International Business Machines Corporation Building (New York, N.Y.)  
Lycée Français (New York, N.Y.)  
MetLife Building (New York, N.Y.)  
Morgan Stanley Building (New York, N.Y.)  
PanAm Building (New York, N.Y.)  
Portland Building (Portland, Or.)  
Ritz-Carlton Hotel (New York, N.Y.)  
St. Moritz Hotel (New York, N.Y.)  
Tudor City (New York, N.Y.)  
United States. Drug Enforcement Administration -- Buildings.  
United States. Internal Revenue Service -- Buildings  
United States Postal Service -- Buildings.  
Villard Houses (New York, N.Y.)

**INDEX TERMS: Subjects**

Architecture --New York (State) --New York.  
Architecture --United States --Designs and plans.  
Buildings --New York (State) --New York.  
Commercial Buildings --New York (State) --New York.  
Family corporations --New York (State) --New York  
High-rise apartment buildings --New York (State) --New York.  
Hotels --New York (State) --New York.  
Real estate development --New York (State) --New York --History --20th century.  
Skyscrapers --New York (State) --New York.

**INDEX TERMS: Additional Creators (Personal Names)**

Belluschi, Pietro, 1899-1994.  
Durst, Joseph.  
Graves, Michael, 1934-  
Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969.

Helmsley, Harry.  
Jaffe, Norman.  
Manerias, J.C.S.  
Matsui, Yasuo  
Merrick, Frederick I.  
Roth, Emery, 1871-1948.  
Roth, Julian.  
Roth, Richard, 1904-  
Roth, Richard, 1933-  
Ruderman, James.  
Rudin, Samuel, 1896-1975.  
Silverstein, Larry A., 1933-  
Stone, Edward Durell  
Viñoly, Rafael.  
Yamasaki, Minoru, 1912-  
Zukov, Nikita.

**INDEX TERMS: Additional Creators (Corporate Names)**

Cesar Pelli and Associates.  
Cosentini Associates.  
Cross & Cross.  
Diesel Construction Co., Inc.  
Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.  
Durst Organization.  
Edward Durell Stone & Associates  
Emery Roth & Sons.  
Fox & Fowle Architects  
Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects.  
Helmsley Hotels, Inc.  
Helmsley-Spear, Inc.  
Hugh Stubbins and Associates.  
Hurley & Farinella.  
Lee Harris Pomeroy Associates.  
Magnusson Architecture and Planning.  
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)  
New York (N.Y.). Board of Education.  
New York City Housing Authority.

Otis Elevator Company.  
Pei Partnership.  
Pelli / Viñoly Architects.  
Peterson and Brickbauer.  
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.  
RTKL Associates.  
Shah Alam Properties.  
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.  
Syska & Hennessy.  
Tishman Realty & Construction Co.  
Tishman Speyer.  
Trammell Crow Co.  
United States. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.  
United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. New York District  
United States. National Park Service  
Uris Buildings Corporation.

## **SERIES I: PROJECT RECORDS**

### **Subseries 1: Drawings**

*Arrangement:* Drawings are arranged alphabetically by state/country and city, and therein alphabetically by project title. Materials without locations are listed at the end of the inventory in alphabetical order.

A complete inventory of these drawings may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1\\_1\\_ERS\\_drawings\\_final\\_pub.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1_1_ERS_drawings_final_pub.xls)

### **Subseries 2: Files**

*Arrangement:* Files are arranged alphabetically by state/country and city, and therein alphabetically by project and folder titles. Materials without locations are listed at the end of the inventory in alphabetical order.

A complete inventory of these files may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1\\_2\\_ERS\\_files\\_final\\_pub.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1_2_ERS_files_final_pub.xls)

### **Subseries 3: Photographs**

*Arrangement:* Photographs are arranged alphabetically by state/country and city, and therein alphabetically by project title. Materials without locations are listed at the end of the inventory in alphabetical order.

A complete inventory of these photographs may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1\\_3\\_ERS\\_photos\\_final\\_pub.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1_3_ERS_photos_final_pub.xls)

#### **Subseries 4: Specifications**

*Arrangement:* Specifications are arranged alphabetically by state/country and city, and therein alphabetically by project and specifications title. Materials without locations are listed at the end of the inventory in alphabetical order.

A complete inventory of these specifications may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1\\_4\\_ERS\\_specs\\_final\\_pub.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/1_4_ERS_specs_final_pub.xls)

#### **SERIES II: OFFICE RECORDS**

*Arrangement:* Materials are organized into the following subseries: Administrative, Correspondence, Financial Records, and General Files.

A complete inventory of these files may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/2\\_0\\_ERS\\_officerecs\\_final\\_pub.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/2_0_ERS_officerecs_final_pub.xls)

#### **APPENDIX: LIST OF PROJECTS**

A complete inventory of all projects found in this collection may be found in the following Excel spreadsheet:

[https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/3\\_app\\_ERS\\_all\\_proj\\_list.xls](https://wcm2.cul.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/8897/3_app_ERS_all_proj_list.xls)