

2016 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Project: **Interpreting the Drawings and Career of Architect John P. Pedersen**

In late October 2012 the volunteer inventory team of John Powell, Bram Livingston, and Konstine Shaw first unpacked, sorted, and began documentation of the more than 360 sets of architectural drawings, renderings, and photographs constituting the John P. Pedersen Architectural Papers. The collection dated from 1907 to 1968. To place the Pedersen collection within its deeper southern California context, additional research was conducted throughout 2013 and 2014 to document the larger architectural community active in Beverly Hills during a clearly identified "period of significance," circa 1928. The Certified Architects Association of Beverly Hills had been organized that year. The expanded biographical context confirmed that the Pedersen holding is one of the very few Beverly Hills architectural drawing collections from that 1928 period to have survived, nearly intact, to represent that notable group of early-day Beverly Hills architects, architectural designers, and a prominent design-build construction firm partnership. A third and final phase of critical research continued until December 2015, resulting in the discovery of additional privately held collections of historic architectural drawings associated with the career of John P. Pedersen.

The resulting statistical and descriptive profiles were then distributed to the Getty Research Institute; the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; the California Architectural Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; the Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley; and the newly dedicated Historical Research Center at Walter Stiern Library, California State University Bakersfield. A principal project objective had been to notify these California architectural archives of this long-lost historic Beverly Hills collection and its regional and statewide significance. An associated goal had been to assure the donation of the collection to a research institution for availability to students, scholars, preservationists, and architects for a broad set of historic preservation benefits.

In March 2015 the sole heir to the Pedersen estate donated the collection in its entirety to California State University Bakersfield. During the academic year 2016-2017, the University will begin offering an undergraduate history degree with an emphasis in public history. New courses will be offered in public history, archives and special collections (including digitization and photo-documentation procedures), and oral history methods. The degree program will utilize the John P. Pedersen Architectural Papers through the Walter Stiern Library digital conservation lab. Additionally, data from the Pedersen papers has been shared with the Beverly Hills Cultural Heritage Commission, and the Beverly Hills Public Library Historical Collection, as well as local preservation groups.

The successful transfer of the John P. Pedersen Architectural Papers to California State University Bakersfield brought to formal culmination this all-volunteer grassroots effort stretching from May 2012 through December 2015, thereby assuring the long-term conservation of this significant regional California architectural drawing collection.