Research a Building

Find Books & Articles on Specific Buildings
Most architecture books are not written about a single building. The building you are researching may be discussed in books and/or articles about:

- the architect/firm who designed the building
- the time period in which it was built
- the style of the building (and/or)
- building type

Locate books by searching Addison, the online library catalog. Use the strategies and subject words provided below.

To locate articles on your building, you will need to search an index that specializes in architectural subjects. The Avery Index is the most comprehensive index for architecture topics. Link to the Avery Index from the "articles/databases" link on the University Libraries homepage: http://www.lib.vt.edu

Here are some searching tips:

1. If you know the name of the architect or firm who designed the building, but cannot locate a single book or article on the building itself, search for books and articles about the architect or firm. If you find a book on the architect or firm, refer to its index or table of contents to determine whether or not the building you are looking for is mentioned.

2. If the architect or firm name is unknown, try searching in Addison or in the Avery Index by time period, style (i.e. Architecture -- Romanesque), or building type in a subject or keyword search:

Subject Search by Building Type:
- skyscrapers or tall buildings
- church architecture
- library architecture
- public buildings
- school buildings
- auditoriums
- college buildings

Browse the Stacks by Call Number:
NA 4100 -- Special Types of Buildings
    4100 to 4145 -- by material (e.g., concrete)
    4150 to 4160 -- by form (e.g., basilicas)
    4170 to 8480 -- by use (e.g., restaurants)

Architectural Plans  The Art and Architecture Library has a collection of over 400 architecture plan sets. To find out what plans are in the collection, search the Art & Architecture Drawings Database: http://www.lib.vt.edu/services/branches/artarch/aadd/search.php Please ask library staff for assistance with this collection.

What is…? Architecture Dictionaries & Encyclopedias Encyclopedias & dictionaries provide historical data, bibliographies and entries authored by experts in the field. Many also include photographs, plans, views, sections, elevations and details of buildings.


Dictionary of Islamic Architecture. Petersen, Andrew. London; New York: Routledge, 1996. (NA380 P461996 ART/ARCH REF) In general, entries tend to be more encyclopedic in scope with short bibliographies, cross-references and illustrations. Coverage is of Muslim cultures worldwide rather than only the Middle East and North Africa.


Glossary of Art, Architecture, & Design Since 1945. Walker, John A. 3rd ed., rev. and enl. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1992. (N34 W34 1992 REF) This is a glossary of terms in the art and design fields that includes harder to find and perhaps forgotten descriptions of movements, buzzwords and concepts such as the “Grey Organization (GO)” and “Unexpressionism”.


- **Illustrated Dictionary of Building Materials and Techniques: An Invaluable Sourcebook of the Tools, Terms, Materials, and Techniques Used by Building Professionals.** Bianchina, Paul. New York: Wiley, 1993. (TH9 B466 1993 ART/ARCH REF) In addition to a basic glossary of terms, this handbook includes several useful charts, conversion tables and other information on building and framing, lumber and plywood, hardware and electrical materials.


**Visit Some Buildings: Architectural Guidebooks** Architectural Guidebooks may offer historical background, maps of the area, walking tour itineraries, photographs, and drawings. To locate guidebooks in Virginia Tech libraries, search Addison using the following subject headings:

- Architecture -- Guidebooks
- Architecture -- country/state -- city/county - Guidebooks
- Buildings -- country/state -- city/county - Guidebooks
- Historic Buildings -- country/state - Guidebooks
- Historic Sites -- country/state - Guidebooks
- Monuments -- country/state - Guidebooks
- City(country) -- Guidebooks

**Find Images and Plans** (For more tips and resources on image searching, see the library research guide: Architecture: Images, Maps & Plans)


- **Architecture in Detail series.** Each piece in this series examines a contemporary building. Search Addison, the online library catalog for the title: Architecture in Detail to get a list of publications available in this series.

- **Cities/Buildings Image Database:** [http://www.washington.edu/ark2/](http://www.washington.edu/ark2/)


- **Emporis Research Database (VT subscribes):** [Link to the complete version of Emporis from the library's website, under “Articles/Databases”](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html). Updated weekly, this database provides data on architecture, construction, and real estate developments from all over the world. Search by company (consultancies, contractors, design firms, engineering firms, suppliers), building type, style, construction timeframe (complete, under construction, approved, proposed, demolished, visionary, on hold), exact location and address, total height, structural height, number of floors and cubical space, date of construction project, structural system, materials, etc. Contains roughly 300,000 photos of buildings.


- **Luna Insight – VT’s Digital Image Database:** Search image collections, manipulate selected images, and create image-based presentations for classroom and professional use. Individual images can also be exported for use in other presentation software, such as PowerPoint and web pages. The Insight software and digital image collections hosted on the Virginia Tech site are available for use by Virginia Tech students and faculty. [http://www.lib.vt.edu/services/branches/artarch/services_insight.html](http://www.lib.vt.edu/services/branches/artarch/services_insight.html)


- **Planet Architecture series.** A series of interactive CD-ROMs, each focusing on a specific architect or firm. Search Addison, the online library catalog for the title: Planet Architecture to get a list of CD-ROMs available in this series.


- **World Architecture Index: A Guide to Illustrations:** Indexes roughly 7,200 architectural works reproduced in 100(+) books covering architecture, engineering and planning. Provides citations to works containing reproductions of exterior and interior views, plans, elevations and sections. The titles of the works that are indexed are abbreviated. Consult the abbreviation key at the front of the index.


**Need Help?** Please consult a librarian. Heather Ball is the Art and Architecture Librarian at Virginia Tech and can be reached via e-mail: h.ball@vt.edu, or by phone: (540) 231-9272.