

1121-056-GSM-gau (USMARC)

City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia [GSG (OCLC/LYRASIS)]

Record Series #: 1121-056

Name: Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A.,
Architects

Dates: 1965-1994, no date

Extent/Size: 1 document case (0.5 cubic feet)

Language: English

Name of Creator(s):

Eric Meyerhoff of Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects

Administrative History:

The Riverfront Urban Renewal Project spans a half-mile section of the Savannah riverfront along the Savannah River. Completed in June 1977, just two years after the 1975 groundbreaking, the \$7.33 million project was a unique public-private partnership that leveraged Urban Renewal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds, an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant, as well as City of Savannah funds to transform a dilapidated area of the City into a thriving community riverfront park that has attracted millions of visitors to Savannah since. Once the site of the Port of Savannah, Savannah's riverfront had become rundown and neglected after the Port moved upriver following World War II. This project revitalized the riverfront by creating a 30 acre waterfront plaza with a pedestrian emphasis, accented by focal points at the terminus of each ramp leading down from Bay Street to the waterfront. Significant features include recessed parking lots, a continuous bike path, consideration for handicapped accessibility, and a new bulkhead extending the plaza over the river to create a total width of 60 feet.

Leaders and principals of the project included Savannah City Manager Arthur A. "Don" Mendonsa and Savannah City Mayor John Rousakis, as well as Eric Meyerhoff, Project Architect, of Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects, Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung, Engineers, Eric Hill Associates, Inc., Consulting Engineers, and Bellamy Brothers, Inc., General Contracting. The riverfront project received the Governor's Award by the Georgia Arts Commission for the best design of an urban area in 1979, and an award for Cultural Achievement from the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1980.

The firm of Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects was established in Savannah in 1957 by Eric Meyerhoff and Robert "Bob" Gunn who had attended the University of Florida together and become friends. Meyerhoff graduated from the University of Florida in 1948, served two years in the military, and began his professional career in Miami, Florida. Meanwhile, Gunn graduated in 1953 and began working professionally in Savannah for a local firm. In 1957, the two started their own firm and began working in the Savannah area. During their partnership, the firm helped preserve numerous buildings and outdoor areas in Savannah's Historic District, including the 1963 restoration of Troup Square and the renovation of the Central of Georgia Railroad Station into the Savannah Visitors Center. Meyerhoff helped draft Savannah's Historic Zoning Ordinance and both served on Savannah's Historic Review Board. Their original designs include the Palmer and Cay Building, the Fahm Street Post Office, and the Marine Education Center at Skidaway Island.

Record Series 1121-056, Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects, 1965-1994, no date

In 1995, Patrick O. Shay joined the firm, now known as Gunn Meyerhoff Shay Architects. Gunn died in 1995 and Meyerhoff retired from active practice in 2002. Since then, Meyerhoff has continued to be active in the community, including designing the World War II Monument "A World Apart," dedicated on River Street in 2010.

Scope & Content:

The Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects (1965-1994, no date) includes one-half a cubic foot of materials collected by project architect Eric Meyerhoff during the course of the Savannah Riverfront Urban Renewal Project, including 433 photographs and negatives documenting the transition of the Savannah riverfront from a derelict and abandoned waterfront to a revitalized urban waterfront park. Of particular interest is a series of images taken by Eric Meyerhoff in August 1973 documenting River Street from end to end, including portions of Factors' Walk and the connecting ramps, in a "before" condition, as well as images of the completed project in 1977.

System of Arrangement & Ordering:

The Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects (1965-1994, no date) is arranged chronologically by date of creation into seventeen folders. Please see the attached inventory.

Conditions Governing Access:

None; The photographs and negatives have been fully digitized and are available electronically by request.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

Please read carefully the statement on copyright below. ***Permission to reproduce does not constitute permission to publish.*** Researchers who plan publication are asked to discuss this with the archivist first for written permission. While most of the Library & Archives collections are public records and in the public domain, not all are, and the Library & Archives may not be the owner of copyright for all its archival materials. Researchers are responsible for obtaining any necessary permission to publish from the holder of copyright. In the event that the Library & Archives becomes a source for publication, a copy of the publication is requested for the Library & Archives.

NOTICE: WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve a violation of copyright law.

1121-056-GSM-gau (USMARC)
City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia [GSG (OCLC/LYRASIS)]

Record Series 1121-056, Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects, 1965-1994, no date

Existence & Location of Originals:

For those items indicated in the inventory as reproductions, the originals remain in the private collection of the donor, Mr. Eric Meyerhoff.

Related Collections:

MS 1682, Gunn Meyerhoff Shay (Savannah, Ga.) architectural drawings, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Access Points:

Factor's Walk (Savannah, Ga.)
 Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects
 Gunn, Robert Donald, ca. 1928-1995
 Historic preservation--Georgia--Savannah.
 Meyerhoff, Eric, b. 1929
 Public spaces--Georgia--Savannah.
 River Street (Savannah, Ga.)
 Riverfront--Georgia--Savannah.
 Urban beautification--Georgia--Savannah.
 Urban renewal--Georgia--Savannah.
 Waterfronts--Georgia--Savannah.

Preferred Citation:

1121-056, Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects.
 City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Processed by:

L. Spracher, 20 February 2014.

Record Series 1121-056, Riverfront Urban Renewal Project designed by Gunn & Meyerhoff A.I.A., Architects, 1965-1994, no date

Inventory (arranged chronologically):

Box 1121-056-1

- Folder 1: Alternative River Street Proposal, Convention Center, 1965 (reproduction)
- Folder 2: Harbor Lines, Savannah Harbor, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, June 1970 (11 sheets)
- Folder 3: Riverfront Photographs, Eric Meyerhoff Photographer, August 1973, pre-construction (reproductions; digital copies available) (37 items)
- Folder 4: Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) Annual Reports, 1974, 1975, 1977 (reproductions; digital copies available)
- Folder 5: Construction Photographs, September 1, 1975 (15 items)
- Folder 6: Construction Photographs, October 6, 1975 (32 items)
- Folder 7: Construction Photographs, October 27, 1975 (24 items)
- Folder 8: Construction Photographs, Robert Heriot Photographer, December 1, 1975 (25 items)
- Folder 9: Construction Negatives, 1975 (August, October, November) (43 items)
- Folder 10: Construction Negatives, 1976 (January-June) (89 items)
- Folder 11: Construction Negatives, 1976 (July-December) (89 items)
- Folder 12: Construction Negatives, 1977 (January, March, April) (55 items)
- Folder 13: Savannah Electric & Power Company River Plant, West River Street, Willhoit Photography, May 9, 1977 (2 items)
- Folder 14: Riverfront Photographs, Eric Meyerhoff Photographer, 1977, post-construction (reproductions; digital copies available) (20 items)
- Folder 15: Riverfront Photographs (tugboat and anchor features), no date, post-construction (2 items)
- Folder 16: Proposal for a Downtown Economic Market Analysis & Development Plan, Economic Research Associates with Gunn & Meyerhoff, 1980
- Folder 17: Riverfront Urban Renewal Project Summaries, Awards, Articles, etc., 1982, 1994, no date (reproductions)