

A Finding Aid for  
Architectural Records for the First Unitarian Church,  
Rochester, New York, 1959-1967, Louis I. Kahn, architect  
in  
The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

February 19, 2002

## Archival Description

### Descriptive Summary

Title: Architectural Records for the First Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York, 1959-1967, Louis I. Kahn, architect.

Coll. ID: 208.

Origin: First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester, fl. 1829-, client.

Extent: Architectural drawings 29 sheets (8 originals, 21 prints - some with annotations and rendering;  
Architectural model 1 model.

Repository: The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania  
102 Meyerson Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6311  
(215) 898-8323

Abstract: The collection comprises eight original drawings, 21 prints, and one architectural model documenting the First Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York, designed by Louis I. Kahn, architect. The drawings and model that form this collection, some of which are annotated and rendered by Kahn, were presented to the Church's Building Committee at various times during the design process (1959-61). This unique body of material reveals Kahn's design of this building as it was shaped through months of dialogue and collaboration with the Church's Building Committee.

Indexes: This collection is included in the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project, a searchable database of architectural research materials related to architects and architecture in Philadelphia and surrounding regions:  
<http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org>.

Cataloging: Collection-level records for materials in the Architectural Archives may be found in RLIN Eureka, the union catalogue of members of the Research Libraries Group. The record number for this collection is PAUP02-A4.

Publications: Portions of the following are based on research in this collection.

Goldhagen, Sarah Williams. *Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism*.  
New Haven: Yale University Press, c2001. (1 drawing reproduced)

Brownlee, David Bruce and David G. De Long. *Louis I. Kahn, in the Realm of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli ; Los Angeles : Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991.

**Biographical/Historical Sketch**

The First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester, New York was established in 1829. In 1959 the Congregation commissioned architect Louis I. Kahn (1901-1974) to design what would become its fourth home. The new church and school was dedicated on November 18, 1962. A later addition, also designed by Kahn, was completed in 1969 to house additional meeting rooms for the church's school.

**Scope and Content Note**

The materials in this collection were preserved and given to the Architectural Archives by the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester, New York. The collection comprises twenty-nine drawings (eight original drawings and twenty-one prints) which were presented to the church's Building Committee at various times during the design process (1959-1963) and one architectural model, ca. 1967. Some of the drawings are annotated and rendered by Kahn, and this unique body of material reveals Kahn's design of this building as it was shaped through months of dialogue and collaboration with the Building Committee. The model includes Kahn's later addition to the school, but the collection contains no drawings for the addition.

The collection is arranged in two series:

- I. Architectural Drawings.
- II. Architectural Model

### **Access Points for Indexing**

First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester, New York, fl. 1829- .  
Kahn, Louis I., 1901-1974.

### **Administrative Information**

Restrictions on access: This collection is available for research by appointment only.

Preferred citation: First Unitarian Church Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Acquisition: Gift of the First Unitarian Church, Rochester, 1999 (aup.1998.080).

Processing: The collection was processed and the finding aid prepared by William Whitaker, Nancy Thorne and Emily Cooperman.

## Container list

### Series I. Architectural Drawings.

Extent: 5 folders (8 originals, 21 prints - some with annotations and rendering).

Arrangement: Arranged by project in chronological order.

Call#	Descriptive Title
208.1	First Unitarian Church; presentation and site documentation drawings, dated 12/1959 (13 prints - some annotated or rendered by Kahn). Note: sheets individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Sheet numbers include A1-A10.
208.2	First Unitarian Church; presentation drawings, dated 3/25/1960 (2 prints - rendered by Kahn). Note: sheets individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Sheet numbers include B1-B2.
208.3	First Unitarian Church; presentation drawings, dated 8/1960 (5 prints - one annotated and rendered by Kahn). Note: sheets individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Sheet numbers include C1-C4.
208.4	First Unitarian Church; presentation drawings, mounted on board, dated 4/1961 (5 originals - one signed and dated by Kahn, 1 print). Note: sheets individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Sheet numbers include D1-D5.
208.5	First Unitarian Church; presentation drawings of tapestries for interior of assembly room, mounted on diazo-type prints, dated 6/3/1963 (3 originals). Note: sheets individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Sheet numbers include F1-F3.

### Series II. Model.

Extent: 1 item (1 model).

Call#	Descriptive Title
208.6	First Unitarian Church; presentation model, ca. 1967 (1 model). Note: item individually numbered by the Congregation prior to donation. Item number G1.