Wilkinson Lumber Company Architectural Drawings
Ca. 1935
DADA 044

Title: Wilkinson Lumber Company Architectural Drawings

Creator: Wilkinson Lumber Company

Inclusive Dates: ca.1935

Extent: 142 pages of drawings (0.2 cu. ft.)

Containers: 1 manuscript box

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

Preferred Citation:
Wilkinson Lumber Company Architectural Drawings, Drawings and Documents Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries.

Biographical Note:
The Wilkinson Lumber Company was named for Indianapolis businessman Allen A. Wilkinson. Wilkinson attended a business college in Glens Falls, New York, as a teenager before moving to the Midwest with his parents. He started his business career in Muncie, Indiana, in 1882. Ten years later, he and his wife moved to Indianapolis, where he became secretary-treasurer of S. L. Greer Lumber Co., a business owned by his brother-in-law. Eventually, he gained an ownership interest in the business, which became Greer-Wilkinson and then, in 1906, the Allen A. Wilkinson Lumber Co. By the time of his death in 1929, he had opened 36 branch locations and had built a massive woodworking and joinery shop at 907 E. Michigan St. in Indianapolis.

Anna Greer Wilkinson assumed control of the business upon Allen’s death and ran it through the late 1930s. About 1946-47, the name of the firm was changed to Midland Building Industries. The building on Michigan St., then known as the Midland Building, remained actively used for lumber purposes into the 1970s. It exists today as Midland Antique Mall.

Drawings in the collection show that the Wilkinson Lumber Co. offered design services to potential customers at least during the 1930s. This was a widespread practice; several lumber companies offered similar services, and many do so today. No available documents show when
the Wilkinson Lumber Company’s design service was initiated or how long it lasted. Indianapolis city directories of 1940 and later note that the firm offered “wholesale lumber, sash, doors, trim and finish” but do not mention design.

Scope and Contents:
The collection consists of 142 pages of drawings, evidently created as a design service by employees of the Allen A. Wilkinson Lumber Co. about 1935. The sheets are typically 8.5 x 11 inches and represent designs for 51 houses and one boat dock. Typically there are floor plans and either an exterior perspective rendering or a rendered front elevation for each house. Most of the drawings are in pencil or colored pencil on tracing paper; five are photo-mechanical reproductions (blueprints, sepia, and black line prints). Numbers penciled in the margin on most sheets are apparently plan numbers. Several sheets are marked for punching holes so that copies (prints) would fit a standard three-ring binder.

Only one sheet, for plan #551, is identified as to client, location, and date. It shows three perspective renderings of a large, Tudor Revival house and is labeled “W. B. Guthrie Residence / Erected year 1935 on Gobbler’s Knob / near Turkey Run State Park, Marshall, Indiana / Designed by the Service Bureau of / Allen A. Wilkinson Lumber Co., Indianapolis, Ind.”

The style of the other houses seems consistent with a date around 1935.

Conditions Governing Access:
This collection is open for research.

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Custodial History:
The Wilkinson Lumber Company Architectural Drawings were received by Drawings and Documents Archive as a donation from Paul C. Diebold on 2004/11/9.

Accruals: No additions are expected.

Processing Information:
Collection processing completed
Finding aid created 2005/4/28 by Daniel Hartwig; revised 2012/3/8 by Carol Street.

Arrangement:
The Wilkinson Lumber Company Architectural Drawings are arranged chronologically.

Controlled Access Headings:
    Architecture, American
    Drawings, architectural (visual works)
    Elevation drawings
Architecture--Designs and plans--Presentation drawings
Blueprints
Houses--Indiana--1930s
Bungalow
Buildings, residential
Boathouses
Allen A. Wilkinson Lumber Company