British Architectural Library

Guide to using the online catalogue
Welcome to the online catalogue

Use the online catalogue to search and locate material from the collection of over four million books, journals, articles, drawings, archives, photographs and other architectural objects held by the British Architectural Library at the RIBA.

Type in a keyword - the name of an architect, a building, book title or subject - and the catalogue will provide a list of items matching that keyword from the collections.

The catalogue is accessible 24-hours a day and includes tools allowing users to renew books and links to more information about Library services. This guide will help anyone get started with the catalogue and shows the different ways to search the Library collections.

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A. Where to find the catalogue

The catalogue can be accessed online at two locations:

Online catalogue
The catalogue homepage can be found at: http://riba.sirsidynix.net.uk/uhitin/webcat

RIBA Library website
From the RIBA homepage (architecture.com) go to ‘Library, drawings and photographs’ where there will be guides and links to the catalogue:
www.architecture.com/LibraryDrawingsAndPhotographs
B. Simple searches

A simple search is the quickest way to get results from the catalogue. Entering one keyword is enough to begin a search, though adding optional shortcuts (2) or specifying a collection (3) will help to narrow down a search. To finish, press the ‘Search’ button (4) and a list of search results will be displayed automatically on a new webpage.

If too many results are produced or they are too general, use the ‘Advanced Search’ option to narrow down the results, which is explained in the next section, C.

Navigate to previous pages using the ‘Go Back’ button (1).

Online catalogue homepage: the ‘Quick Search’ box
1. ‘Go Back’ button: When using the catalogue avoid using the browser ‘back’ button. Always use the ‘Go Back’ button on the left of the catalogue toolbar.

2. Keywords: A keyword can be a term, subject, author, architect, architectural movement, building, or part of a book title. There is no limit to the number of keywords that can be used for each search. Try different spellings to yield alternative results. Using shortcuts with keywords can make for a more targeted search:

**Shortcuts**

**AND**
Use ‘AND’ between two keywords to search for entries containing both keywords.
Search ‘George Grey Wornum AND 66 Portland Place’ for entries containing the name of the architect and a specific project.

**OR**
Add ‘OR’ between two keywords to search for entries with either keyword.
E.g. ‘Lubetkin OR Tecton’ for entries containing the name of either the architect or their firm.

**ADJ**
Add ‘ADJ’ between two keywords that should be adjacent or linked to each other.
E.g. search ‘London ADJ Bridge’ for entries only on London Bridge, not entries about London or about Bridges.

**$**
Add ‘$’ to truncate a keyword in order to broaden a search.
E.g. search ‘Construct$’ for results on construction, constructing, constructed, construct, etc.

3. ‘collections’ menu: Refine a search further by specifying a collection from the ‘collections’ drop-down menu. The options are:

- **All**
Searches the whole catalogue

- **Archives**
Restricts searches to the collection of written materials, personal papers, and manuscripts of architects, architectural firms, and the RIBA

- **Articles**
Search results will be limited to the collection of periodicals, journals, and magazine articles (useful for contemporary subjects)

- **Biog entries**
Biographical folders containing primary source material, nomination papers, and newspaper clippings.

- **Books**
Published books, printed materials, and audiovisual material

- **Drawings**
Drawings, paintings, and models

- **Photographs**
Photographs, prints, negatives, and transparencies

4. ‘Search’ button: Press ‘Search’ to get a set of results based on the selected options and keywords in the ‘Quick Search’ box.
C. Advanced searches

Where searches need to be specific or more targeted, use the ‘Advanced Search’ - a link can be found at the bottom of the ‘Quick Search’ box of the catalogue homepage.

An advanced search can be manipulated in several ways: by classifying (5) or excluding keywords (6), or by specifying details about the items you are looking for (7). There is no need to fill in every box, but the more information that is entered, the more accurate the search results will be. Once keywords have been entered and options chosen, the search of the catalogue can begin by pressing ‘Search’ (8).
5. **Classifying keywords**: In ‘Advanced Search’, keywords are still used, but refine a search by entering them under author, title, subject, architect, building, or journal.

6. **Excluding/including keywords**: Hone searches by excluding or combining certain keywords. Use the ‘And’ drop-down menu on the right for a list of options.

7. **Specifying item details**: Specify the collection, language, format and publication year of the items being searched for. Sort results by publication date in the ‘sort by’ drop-down menu.

8. **‘Search’ button**: Once the appropriate options have been selected, commence the search of the catalogue by pressing ‘Search’, or start again by clearing all the fields using the ‘Reset’ button. The results will be displayed automatically on a new webpage.
D. How to use the search results

Once a simple or advanced search has been made, the catalogue will produce a list of items most closely related to the chosen keywords or criteria. To the left of each item are two options: ‘Details’ and ‘Select’.

Press the ‘Details’ button to view the details and location of each item (9). The results are usually listed in order of publication date, with the most recent first (10). Use the ‘Select’ button to save the information about the item for later (11). These saved results can be viewed together, emailed, or printed by pressing the ‘Selected’ button (12).

A list of results from a search of the catalogue
9. ‘Details’ button: To find out more about an item from the search, click on the ‘Details’ button. A new webpage will open about the chosen item, and the information displayed will be divided into two parts (an illustrated example can be seen on page 10 of this guide):

- ‘Catalogue Record’ will have descriptive information. This may include: author, provenance, medium, notes, date of publication or production, title, and links to similar items in the Library.

- ‘Location in RIBA Library’ will indicate where the item can be accessed.

10. Ranking: Results are normally ranked in order of publication date, with the most recent items first. In the ‘Advanced Search’ mode this order can be reversed.

11. ‘Select’ button: Save the information about the relevant items from the search results by pressing the ‘Select’ button next to each entry. Saved items can be viewed later and aggregated with others from different searches during the same session on the catalogue. Once selected, the button will change name and turn from blue to grey – press ‘Remove’ to remove the item from the saved selection.

12. ‘Selected’ button: View all the selected items by pressing ‘Selected’ at the top of the catalogue’s blue toolbar. From there, the saved selection can be viewed in detail, edited to remove unwanted items, printed, or sent to any email address.
E. Other catalogue tools

There are a range of other tools for users who are more familiar with the catalogue. The search results from the catalogue are linked to RIBA Bookshops (13), and the images on RIBApix (14). Navigate between webpages using the blue toolbar (15). Members of the Loan Library can renew their books through 'My Account' (16) in the grey toolbar or by entering their user ID below the 'Quick Search' box on the catalogue homepage.
13. **Additional searches:** When the record of an item from a search is brought up, on the left hand side is a list of links to related searches:

- **Buy this item now**
  This is a link to RIBA Bookshops and will appear on some book-related searches.

- **Find more by this author**
  This will produce a new set of search results from the same author.

- **Find more on these topics**
  All items are classified under several topics. Click on this option and a new set of search results will be produced based on these topics.

- **Nearby items on the shelf**
  Browse the shelves virtually and find what items are shelved nearby physically in the Library. Please note that most items in the Library are held in closed storage and may not be accessible to visitors.

14. **RIBApix:** Go to RIBApix to view images of objects, drawings, documents, and photographs from the Library collections. The link next to the search results will open a page to RIBApix with images related to the original search. The images can be downloaded for educational use or purchased.

15. **Blue toolbar:** Use these options to navigate through the catalogue:

- **Limit Search**
  This option appears if too many search results are produced. It is a link to a search box to conduct another, more detailed search.

- **New Search**
  Starts a new search from the catalogue homepage.

- **Previous**
  Goes to the previous item or page of search results.

- **Next**
  Goes to the next item or page of search results.

- **Logout**
  Closes the catalogue and redirects visitors to the Library website.

16. **Grey toolbar:** Links to some useful Library services and information:

- **e-Library**
  Links to other libraries and to free e-journals.

- **Notice Board**
  Reference lists of the past presidents of the RIBA and the winners of major architectural awards.

- **Library Information**
  Opening hours and FAQs from the Library.

- **My Account**
  Members of the Loan Library can login through ‘My Account’ and see what books they have out, when they are due and to renew those books online. One of the benefits of membership of the RIBA is use of the Loan Library, which is part of the RIBA Library and located at 66 Portland Place.

**Order copies**
Information on the Library’s photocopying and photographic services for items from the collections.