

Explore The architects' and engineers' plans of York



Please note that we are continuing to catalogue this collection and will add further descriptions to our online catalogue as they become available.

About the plans

This collection comprises over 10,000 drawings covering all aspects of York's built environment including: civic buildings, housing, bridges, sewers, parks, transport, the city walls, street improvements and more. Many of the drawings are works of art in themselves; others offer a new perspective on the city. Dating from 1803 to the 2000s the plans provide a unique resource for charting the changes to York's architectural heritage over two centuries.

All the plans in this collection are of buildings, structures or schemes that were owned, controlled, or in some way connected to the York City Council and its predecessor bodies. Many of the plans are 'presentation copies', drawings that were produced to promote or present a particular scheme. But the collection also includes drafts, sketches and working drawings, and a large number of plans are annotated.

Included in the collection are plans of buildings and streets that no longer exist as well as ideas for York that never materialised. Most of York's well-known civic buildings and structures are represented.

The vast majority of the plans were produced by local authority officials engaged in council business, however, there are a small number of drawings from private architects, particularly after the 1960s when councils start contracting out work.

How to search the plans

All of the plans have the prefix Y/PPT/6 in their reference number. If you wish to search within the architects' and engineers' plans only, just follow these steps:

1. Click on 'Search Catalogue' from our main website
2. Click on 'Advanced Search'
3. In the 'All these words' field type: "Y/PPT/6/*" (include the quotation marks)
4. Type your search term in the 'This exact phrase' field
5. Under Search Targets, check the Archives box then click 'Advanced Search'

Please be aware that these plans have been catalogued according to the title on the plan (where a title exists). This means that when you are constructing your search you need to be aware of any prior names for buildings or streets. For example, if you are interested in plans for Naburn Hospital you will need to search under 'City Asylum' as this is the original name of the institution, and the name that appears on the plans. It is always best to search under multiple terms in order to capture all relevant results, and to make your search term as broad as possible. For example, when searching for the City Asylum, search for 'asylum' as drawings may have the title 'York Asylum' or 'City Asylum'.

Catalogue descriptions

By clicking on an item in your search results you can view further information about the drawing. For each plan we have included, wherever possible, the following information:

- Title:** This will be the title as it appears on the plan. Where plans do not include titles we have attempted, where possible, to identify the content of the drawing.
- Dates:** This is the date as it appears on the plan. Where plans are undated we have endeavoured to provide an estimation of the date based on the content of the drawing and other contextual indicators such as names or street layouts.

Description: The description field will contain a brief summary of the document, where necessary, along with the following:

Drawing number: This the number assigned to the drawing by the architect. Not all plans will have a drawing number. This system becomes more prevalent in the mid-20th century.

Drawing type: Architectural drawings can take many forms, so we have indicated the type of drawing/s that have been executed. . For example: floor plan, site plan, elevation, detail drawing, section. Many individual 'plans' will actually be a series of separate drawings, so there may be more than one drawing type associated with each item.

Scale: A scale will be included only where this has been indicated on the original document.

Size: To provide users with some indication of the size of the plans we have adopted the following size guide:

Small = 40cm or less

Medium = between 40cm and 65cm

Large = over 65cm

Names: The names and titles of individuals responsible for creating the plans have been included here. From the mid-20th century it was common practice to include only the initials of the draughtsperson or architect responsible. If you need to identify these initials please ask a member of staff.

[See our other guide on this collection: The role of architect, engineer, and surveyor.](#)