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The Woman's Building Records, Conference, "Women in Design: The Next Decade," 1975

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ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN ARCHITECTS — SAN FRANCISCO, BAY AREA HISTORY

On November 4, 1972, twelve women working in the field of architecture gathered at the home of Wendy Bertrand to talk about the issue facing women in the profession. These twelve women were Wendy's friends or friends of her friends and so it was not by intent, but by accident that they also represented a cross section of women in architecture, ranging from recent graduates to licensed architects with 10-15 years of experience.

The discussions stretched until late at night and it became apparent that there was an interest and desire to form a group in the Bay Area which will work toward the betterment of the position of women in the architectural profession and their acceptance by the profession as equal members.

The program for the future work of this group was divided into three major sections:

- Education and professional upgrading
- Employment
- Public relations and communications with other groups and organizations.

Before proceeding with the implementation of this program we felt we should reach as many women as possible working in the field of architecture in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Since then our original list of 12 names has expanded to 135. Out of these 135 women who have been notified about our meetings, 80 have attended at least one meeting and 5 others have indicated their support, but have not been able to attend.

Our organization meets once a month, on the first or second Thursday. Because geographically we cover such a large area, we alternate the location of our meetings between San Francisco and the East Bay.

At our meeting on February 8th, by general vote it was decided the name of our group would be: Organization of Women Architects (OWA).

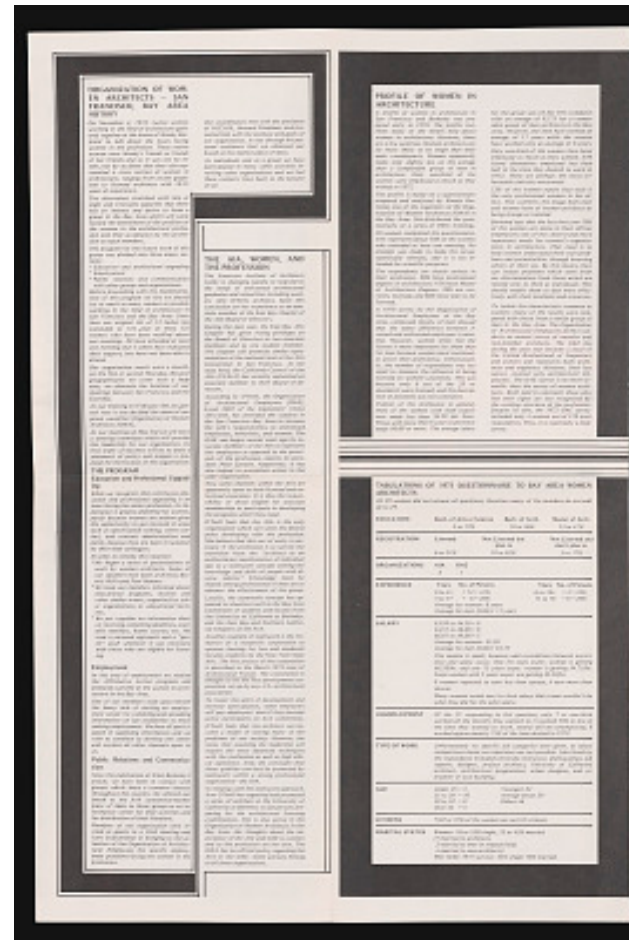
At our meeting on May 3rd we will elect a steering committee which will provide the leadership for our organization. Its first order of business will be to draft a statement of policy and prepare a proposal for the by-laws of the organization.

THE PROGRAM

Education and Professional Upgrading

While we recognize that continuous education and professional upgrading is an issue facing the entire profession, its importance is greatly amplified for women, partly because women are seldom given the opportunity to get involved in areas such as specification writing, client contact, and contract administration and partly because they are kept in isolation by their male colleagues.

In order to remedy this situation:



- We began a series of presentations of work by women architects. Some of our speakers have been architects Beverly Willis and Fani Hansen.
- We keep our members informed about educational programs, lectures and other similar events, organized by other organizations or educational facilities.
- We put together an information sheet on licensing containing deadlines, available seminars, home courses, etc. We used a personal approach and a "gentle" push whenever it was necessary with those who are eligible for licensing.

Employment

In the area of employment we studied Affirmative Action programs and prepares a profile of the women in architecture in the Bay Area.

One of our members took upon herself the heavy task of starting an employment center for compiling and spreading information on job availability to those seeking employment. We have all participated in supplying information and we wish to continue to develop the center and explore all other channels open to us.

Public Relations and Communications

Since the publication of Ellen Berkeley's article, we have been in contact with groups which share a common interest throughout the country. We offered our booth as the AIA convention-market place of ideas to those groups as an information center for their activities and for distribution of their literature.

Members of our organization we invited as guests to a OAE meeting and were instrumental in bringing to the attention of the Organization of Architectural Employees the specific employment problems facing the women in the profession.

Our coordinators met with the president of NCCAIA, Howard Friedman, and presented him with the purpose and goals of our organization. It was through his personal assistance that we obtained our booth at the market place of ideas.

As individuals and as a group we have participated in many other activities involving other organizations and we feel these contacts have been to the benefit of all.

THE AIA, WOMEN, AND THE PROFESSION

The American Institute of Architects(AIA) is changing rapidly to respond to the needs of unlicensed architectural graduates and minorities including women. Ann O'Neill, architect, bases this conclusion on her experience as an associate member of the East Bay Chapter of the AIA Board of Directors.

During the past year, the East Bay AIA Chapter has given voting privileges on the Board of Directors to two associate members and to

one student member. The chapter will promote similar representation at the national level at the AIA Convention in San Francisco. At the state level, the California Council of the AIA(CCAIA) has recently appointed an associate member to their Board of Directors.

According to O'Neill, the Organization of Architectural Employees(OAE), Local 2001 of the Carpenters' Union AFL-CIO, has provided the catalyst in the San Francisco Bay Area to increase the AIA's responsiveness to unlicensed employees, minorities, and women. The OAE was begun several years ago by associate members of the AIA to represent the employees as opposed to the principals of the profession, reports its president Peter Epstein. Apparently, it has also helped to precipitate action in the older organization.

Now some channels within the AIA are apparently open to both licensed and unlicensed associates. It is thus the responsibility of those eligible for associate membership to participate in developing the programs which they need.

O'Neill feels that the AIA is the only organization which can unite the diverse poles developing with the profession. She believes that this sort of unity is necessary if the profession is to survive the transition from the "architect as an authoritarian manifestation of individual ego to a teamwork concept uniting the knowledge and skills of people with diverse talents." Knowledge must be shared among professionals if they are to advance the effectiveness of the group. Locally, the teamwork concept has appeared in situations such as the Bay Area Committee of students and faculty from the University of California at Berkeley, and the East Bay and Northern California Chapters of the AIA.

Another example of teamwork is the formation of a nonprofit corporation to sponsor housing for low and moderate income residents by the New York State AIA. The first project of the corporation is described in the March 1973 issue of Architectural Forum. The corporation is thought to be the first development corporation set up by any U.S. architectural association.

To foster the spirit of development and increase participation, some employers will pay employees' dues if they become active participants on AIA committees. O'Neill feels that the architect can become a leader in solving many of the problems of our society. However, she notes that assuming the leadership will require the most advanced techniques with the profession as well as high ethical aspiration. And, she concludes that these qualities can best be promoted by teamwork within a strong professional organization-the AIA.

In keeping with the teamwork approach, Ann O'Neill has organized and promoted a series of seminars at the University of California at Berkeley to aid persons preparing for the architectural licensing examinations. She is also active in the Organization of Women Architects in the Bay Area. Her thoughts about the importance of the AIA and OAE to women and to the profession are her own. The OWA has no official policy regarding the AIA or the OAE. Some persons belong to all three organizations.

PROFILE OF WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE

A profile of women in architecture in San Francisco and Berkeley was prepared early in 1973. The profile confirms many of the beliefs held about women in architecture. However, there are a few surprises. Women architects are far more likely to be single than their male counterparts. Women apparently make only slightly less on the average than a comparable group of men in architecture. Only one-third of the women were employed as much as they wished in 1972.

The profile is based on a questionnaire prepared and analyzed by Wendy Bertrand, one of the organizers of the Organization of Women Architects (OWA) in the Bay Area. She distributed the questionnaire at a series of OWA meetings. 29 women completed the questionnaire. This represents about 50% of the women who attended at least one meeting. No attempt was made to make the survey statistically relevant, and it is not intended for scientific purposes.

The respondents are clearly serious in their profession. 80% have professional degrees in architecture; 45% have Master of Architecture Degree. 20% are currently licensed, and 60% more plan to be licensed.

A 1970 survey by the Organization of Architectural Employees of the Bay Area, composed mostly of men showed that the salary difference between licensed and unlicensed employees is minimal. However, women often feel the license is more important for them than for men because women must continually prove their proficiency. Unfortunately, the number of respondents was too small to measure the influence of being licensed on women's positions. This was because only 6 out of the 29 respondents were licensed, and the description of positions was not consistent.

Typical of the profession in general, most of the women with little experience made less than \$4.50 per hour. Those with more than 6 years experience made \$6.00 or more. The average salary for the group was \$5.20. This compares with an average of \$5.75 for a comparable group of men architects in the Bay Area. However, the men have worked an average of 11 years while the women have worked only an average of 6 years. Only one-third of the women have been employed as much as they wished. 27% found themselves employed less than half of the time they desired to work in 1972. these are perhaps the most unfavorable statistics uncovered.

53% of the women report that each is the only professional woman in her office. This confirms the image both men and women have of women architects as being strange or isolated.

Bertrand says that the fact that over 50% of the women are alone in their offices emphasizes one of the clearest and more important needs for women's organizations in architecture. That need is to help women understand their own problems and potentialities through knowing others of their sex. By this means, they can isolate problems which stem from sex discrimination from those which are related only to them as individuals. This should enable them to deal more effectively with their problems and resources.

To isolate the characteristics common to women, many of the results were compared with those from a similar group of men in the Bay Area.

The organization of Architectural Employees (OAE) conducts an annual survey of member and non-member architects. The OAE has during the past year become a local of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and represents both architects and engineers. However, their last survey covered only architectural employees. The OAE survey is no more scientific than the survey of women architects. Both tend to represent those who feel their rights are not recognized by the existing structure of the profession. Despite its title, the 1972 OAE survey included only 4 women out of 129 total respondents. Thus, it is essentially a male survey.

TABLULATIONS OF 1973 QUESTIONNAIRE TO BAY AREA WOMEN ARCHITECTS

All 29 women did not answer all questions, therefore many of the numbers do not add up to 29.

[[4 columned table]]

|---|---|---|---|

EDUCATION	Bach. of Arts or Science	Bach. of Arch.	Master of Arch.
	5 or 17%	10 or 36%	13 or 47%

REGISTRATION	Licensed	Not Licensed but plan to	Not Licensed and don't plan to
	6 or 21%	18 or 62%	5 or 17%

ORGANIZATIONS	AIA OAE			
	3	1		

[[/table]]

[[2 column table]]

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EXPERIENCE	Years	No. of Persons
	0 to 2+ = 12	= 41%
	3 to 5+ = 6	= 20%
	6 to 10+ = 3	= 10%
	11 to 16 = 6	= 20%

[[/table]]

Average for women: 6 years

Average for men (OAE): 11 years

SALARY

\$3.50 to \$4.50 = 8

\$4.51 to \$6.00 = 8

\$6.01 to \$8.00 = 5

Average for women: \$5.20

Average for men (OAE): \$5.75

The sample is small, however odd correlations between experience and salary occur. One 2 1/2 years exper. woman is getting \$6.50/hr. and one 15 years exper. woman is getting \$4.75/hr. Some women with 5 years

exper. are getting \$5.50/hr.

8 women reported to earn less than spouse, 4 earn more than spouse.

Many women noted next to their salary that a man wouldn't do what they did for the same salary.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Of the 21 responding to this question, only 7 or one-third worked all the months they wanted to. 5 worked 50% or less of the time they wanted to work, several still are unemployed, 8 worked approximately 75% of the time desired in 1872.

TYPE OF WORK

Unfortunately no specific job categories were given, so salary comparisons based on experience are not possible. Jobs listed by the respondents included university instructor, draftswoman, job captain, designer, project architect, University of California architect, architectural programmer, urban designer, and remodeler of own building.

AGE [[2 columned table]]

Under 25 = 3	Youngest 22
25 to 29 = 10	Average about 29
30 to 32 = 8	Oldest 46
Over 32 = 5	

CITIZENS

7/22 or 31% of the women are not US citizens

MARITAL STATUS

Women: 16 or 55% single, 13 or 45% married
(7 married to architects
2 married to men in related fields
4 married to non architects)
Men (OAE 1971 survey): 24% single; 76% married

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