

# Voices from the Past: Letters from 1970s Women Architects

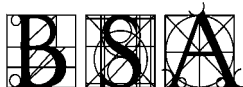
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In the early 1970s, approximately sixty letters were received from women architects in response to a request for comments, opinions, and observations on women's experiences in the profession of architecture. The writers were all established, registered professionals from around the United States who offered insights into their training, professional development, goals, and their perceptions of gender discrimination. Their personal letters, never before published, chronicle careers that spanned from the turn of the twentieth century through two World Wars and into the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Our research proposes to bring to light the personal observations and accomplishments of these women, to identify similarities and differences in attitudes and experiences, and to examine the social and cultural context(s) of the letters. Respondents from the early 1970s will be contacted (where possible) and asked to comment on their original letters and reflect on the ensuing thirty years.

New, contemporary observations will also be solicited. Following a thorough analysis of the original methodology and an examination of the issues considered important both then and now, a new request (substantially similar to the original) will be sent out asking for feedback from current female practitioners.

Visual representations of the professional work of the respondents (from both the 1970s and the 2000s) will illustrate the letters and provide another means of appreciating how these women view(ed) their roles in the profession. Statistical data and surveys (e.g. - percentage of women architects, relative pay scales, etc.) from government agencies and professional organizations will also be used to provide a general background to the discussions.

The results of the project will be presented in the form of a monograph as well as through a public lecture / dramatic performance. By presenting and analyzing oral histories and personal anecdotes from women architects, past and present, this project is expected to be a unique contribution to the discourse on the roles and experiences of women in architecture.



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