

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION:  
A FEMINIST CRITIQUE AND RECONSTRUCTION**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the relationship between built environment education and the discourse which focuses on women in the built environment. It critiques the major built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada, from a feminist art teacher's perspective, showing, with one minor exception, that the spatial and structural needs of women are not taken into account; it presents an overview of the literature concerning women in the built environment; and finally, it demonstrates how community-based women-centred initiatives and issues, as documented in the literature, can, and should be incorporated into built environment elementary and secondary school programs.

The principal argument of this dissertation is that the built environment exists predominantly as the expression of an ensconced and inequitable social order. As such, the built environment has resulted, and continues to result in the oppression and subordination of women. By not including the spatial and structural needs of women, within a community-based curriculum, and thereby denying the special circumstances of female students, most built environment education programs reproduce and entrench these exclusionary practices.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1: Personal Introduction/Ground

I am a white, post-middle age art teacher of working class origin. I am also a self-defined feminist who is aware of the complexities and problems of such a label. I call myself a feminist because I assert that patriarchal spatial and structural creations subordinate women and other marginalized populations. I contend that community-based women-centred initiatives and issues concerning women and the built environment as documented in Canadian, American and British literature must become the integral framework for constructing built environment education programs.

I straddle two worlds. In one world, I am active in various women's communities focusing much of my energies on women's relationship to the built environment. Through my active involvement, I experience first-hand the important work carried out by women's groups in Vancouver, British Columbia, such as Women in Search of Housing Society (WISHS), Women in Housing, Women in Architecture, and Women in Planning, all of which are struggling to define and gain a rightful place for women in the built environment. In my other world as an art teacher who focuses on built environment education, I visit schools and observe teachers involved in built environment activities, or I study documents relating to built environment education in Canada, the United States and Britain.

In my experience, these two worlds are vastly separated: there is no connection between built environment education and women's struggles to appropriate space in the physical environment. I came to recognize this problem when I started searching for information within built environment education programs that related to my reading and research on women's struggles in the built environment and to my work with women's community groups.

In my work with WISHS I witness the anger, frustration and hopelessness experienced by mature women who do not have adequate access to urban spaces and structures, for instance, something as basic as proper housing. These women, along with most other older women, live far below the poverty level and therefore experience a sense of alienation, dependency and powerlessness in the settings of their every day lives. This disempowerment is also felt spatially. The danger and difficulty that members of WISHS experience in public spaces is clearly evident when the women discuss the problems they have attending meetings or other events. Many will not venture out after dark unless accompanied by another person. The built environment is not theirs to inhabit in a positive light: as women grow older they are more and more disenfranchised.

Women's struggles in the built environment and built environment school programs are, after all, both concerned with urban spaces and structures, but no link seems to exist



between the two. Inevitably I realized how disengaged and segregated most built environment school programs are from the real world of women's community struggles. This led to the understanding that built environment education should include women's design concerns and concurrently, the study of community-based women-centred initiatives. The adult lives of most female students will be directly affected by their ability or inability to appropriate spaces and structures. This crucial fact should not be neglected by built environment studies. Female students should be sensitized to their future needs and challenges. Communicating women's experiences and contributions to female students must be a responsibility of built environment education since knowledge is the first step towards autonomy.

If built environment education is not anchored in relations connecting it with women's struggles in the built environment (here I use some of Dorothy Smith's [1987] sagacious words), if it is "not articulated in relations creating linkages outside and beyond the ruling apparatus" (p. 225), the process becomes an "alienated mode of knowing society" (p. 224) expressing the standpoint of the dominant class and perpetuating the oppression of women. Thus, this dissertation critiques built environment education programs from a feminist art educator's perspective, with the objective of problematizing the lack of connection between community-based women's issues in the built environment and built

environment education programs. My assumptions are based on the belief that women, of differing class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or level of (dis)ability, must have the opportunity to live autonomously and productively in the built environment. I argue that built environment education programs should focus on efforts being undertaken by women-centred communities to appropriate space. If access to space is related to status and power, then change in appropriation of space could result in change in society (Weisman, 1992).

Although this study is a feminist critique, it is difficult to situate myself firmly within a particular feminism. Since radical feminism (which has always enticed me, along with an eclectic mixture that recognizes issues of class and ethnicity) is being disputed by other feminisms, it is troublesome to admit my identification with it because I perceive its shortcomings. For example, initially, it did not include issues of class and ethnicity. The many critiques against it, in all its various and complex forms, have raised numerous and valid philosophical questions. Despite the critiques, I believe that women, in all our diversity, must work together, apart from men, at least at some level of our lives, in order to reclaim a history and a culture, and thereby, an identity. This process, whatever the label, has been my mainstay over the past thirty five years.

### **1.2: Background to the Study**

This study deals with Canadian, American and British

built environment education programs designed for elementary and secondary schools and teacher education between 1966 and 1992. Most of my commentary can be applied generally to all these levels because program design does not vary radically from grade level to grade level. The particular programs were selected for discussion and analysis because they have gained status and popularity in the world of art education in Western English-speaking countries. As a result of the energetic efforts of program organizers, thousands of teachers use these programs. Some of the programs themselves are easily accessible in book or kit form. Teachers are made aware of programs through newsletters, advertisements in journals, manuals, booklets, brochures, posters and the like, as well as workshops, and sometimes conferences.

It is not possible to explore all the factors which impinge upon a feminist view of the built environment. Scholars are in the process of exploring this field, and thus continuing to influence its development. However, there can be little doubt that the apertures through which many women view the built environment differ from those through which many men view it (see Franck, 1989). How much of this difference in perception is based on bio-functional and anatomical differences? (see Erikson, 1963, 1972). Does the feminine concept of the relation between environment and people differ from the masculine because of women's assigned role as child-bearer and their societally assigned role as

child nurturer? How much of the difference in perception could be due to women's isolation from the sources of social and institutional power? In other words, how much of the counter-modelling women develop is traceable to their experiences as women?

These questions re-introduce the circuitous nature-versus-nurture (inheritance versus conditioning) argument and although they deserve examination they may represent an unresolvable dichotomy. While women's needs in design are now being defined, the framing of a women's aesthetic remains speculative. It cannot be pragmatically proven that elements of "connectedness" (the combining of private and public space) and "inclusiveness" are inherently female, or that architecture and urban design will reflect these values when and if women are equally represented in the professions (Nelson, 1993c). But the possibility exists. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that male-centred models have reached the limits of their social relevance.

These issues, however important, are beyond the purview of this study, which is based upon the premise that built environment education needs to be about the struggle for human justice and social transformation, and that for many students this can be understood through feminist practices, that is, through *inclusive* visions of communities. Like much of Western education, built environment education has a narrowly-defined vision reflecting dominant patriarchal values. Thus

it obscures vast areas relating directly to the lives of a majority of students. The integration of women's experiences and contributions cannot be overemphasized given the profound impact the built environment has on people's lives.

The principal argument of this dissertation is that the built environment must be understood as playing a key role in the subordination and subjugation of women. Other marginalized groups are also subordinated within the built environment, however the scope of this study is centred on planning and design issues concerning women. This study shows that by not including the spatial and structural needs of women and thereby denying the special circumstances of female students, and by not emphasizing that curriculum be community-based, most built environment education programs reproduce and entrench exclusionary practices.

The conceptual framework of my analysis is based on the notion that spaces and structures are socially created and that their arrangements reflect and support the formation of gender, race, age, and class relationships. In particular, the conceptualizations in the works of Dolores Hayden (1986) and Leslie Kaner Weisman (1992) have informed this analysis. Both women argue that architecture exists fundamentally as the idiom of an established social order. Both assert that patriarchy constructs an architecture of exclusion. They also argue that some women design and evaluate structures and spaces with values and concerns different from those of men

(for example, that women are more socially oriented). Their view is that if new ideas are to be implemented, the conceptual disadvantage created by ensconced social and architectural practices must first be acknowledged and overcome. Hayden and Weisman assert that within the social context of built space, feminist criticism and activism have a key role to play in challenging forms and values embodied in the man-made environment and supporting transformation of the sexist and racist conditions which have shaped the built environment and our experiences within it.

### **1:3 Feminism**

"Feminism" encompasses a range of discourses and practices committed to the political, economic and social equality of women and to a doctrine of social transformation which aspires to establish a world for women beyond rudimentary equality (Humm, 1992). Feminism can be seen as a diverse collection of movements which attempt to gain power for women in sexual and economic spheres through political expression. Feminism identifies and opposes the ways in which patriarchal culture oppresses women on many levels: physical, sexual, interpersonal, social, political, legal, economic, artistic, and educational.

Feminist scholarship and theory began predominantly as a criticism of patriarchy and challenged dominant white male perspectives (Hume, 1992). As a reaction to the conflicts and complexities in women's lives, early feminist scholarship

amassed, analyzed and contextualized these experiences and explicated the social processes which constructed them. Feminist scholarship is now in a difficult but exciting phase; its perspectives and techniques for critical evaluation and analysis are many, and there is thus no single, overriding feminist worldview. For instance, some forms of feminism are viewed as limited because they do not adequately reflect the complexities of women's lives and the multiple strategies required to bring about change (cf. Hennessy, 1993; Spelman, 1988). Despite the flux in feminist perspectives, the following feminist schools of thought have been conventionally identified as liberal, radical, socialist, and postmodern.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, women's greater entry into the labour force produced a liberal feminism (see, for example, Friedan, 1963) which advocated legal equality between the sexes, equal employment opportunities and equal pay for equal work within the capitalist system. Thus, most liberal feminists reject radical alterations in social and political institutions to achieve complete equality (Kramarae & Treichler, 1985; MacKenzie, 1984; Warren, 1980).

Other feminists argued that the "equal rights" of liberal feminists were conceived mainly in the public sphere and had little relationship to the overlapping of women's public and private worlds. For most working-class women, "employment opportunities" meant earning low wages and enduring financial insecurity in female job ghettos. This was coupled with a

second shift of demanding domestic work in their own homes. As these facts became apparent, two major streams of feminist thought arose: radical and socialist feminism (MacKenzie, 1984).

Radical feminists argue that conflict between women and men is the principal historical and social conflict, one which has psychological roots reinforced by social practice (Koedt, Levine, & Rapone, 1973; MacKenzie, 1984). Radical feminist analysis is centred on understanding the creation and perpetuation of the concept of gender as an oppressive force. Radical feminists struggle against male power and the social institutions which reproduce and reinforce it. Although radical feminism has evolved into a number of forms since the 1970s (cf. Daly, 1978, 1992; Hawk, 1979; Rich, 1980; Walker, 1983), traditionally, it focuses on the roots of male domination, claiming that all forms of oppression are extensions of male supremacy, with patriarchy the defining characteristic of society. The central thesis of radical feminism is the belief that the personal is political (a phrase now taken up by all feminisms) and that woman-centredness can be the basis of a future society (Humm, 1990). Radical feminism contributes to feminist theory in several ways. For example, it brings into focus the gender-based structure of society, reconceptualizes reality from a feminist standpoint, develops woman-positive cultural institutions that generate social change, and reveals the masculine bias of



traditional knowledge and traditional political theory (Humm, 1990).

In contrast to radical feminism, socialist feminists (whose ideas grew out of Marxist feminism), argue that the emphasis on gender oppression confines or restricts the question of women's oppression to a psychological or biological level. They assert that radical feminist analysis overlooks the relation of gender oppression to other forms of oppression based on class, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation, which many women sense simultaneously (Harding, 1987; Hartsock, 1979; Mackenzie, 1984; Mitchell, 1984; Rowbotham, 1979). They contend that their analysis arises out of an attempt to broaden theories of social change in the materialist tradition by focusing on the institutions and social practices of capitalism (Mackenzie, 1984). "Political strategy is directed at collective confrontation with these institutions and practices in such a way as to challenge the capitalist system as a whole, and set in motion a transition toward a non-sexist socialism" (MacKenzie, 1984, p. 5).

Recent socialist feminist theory (for example, Hennessy, 1993; Hirsch & Keller, 1990; Spelman, 1988) argues that the term "woman" is problematic since women do not constitute a homogeneous group and do not share the same experiences and material conditions. In any inquiry involving women equal attention needs to be paid to class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability. This approach affirms both the

diversity of women and the relationship between gender oppression and other forms of oppression, which cannot be separated in the experiences of many women. The connections between these variables are the subject of ongoing debate within feminist circles (see, for example, Humm, 1992).

Postmodern feminism, a complex, eclectic movement, raises questions regarding the notion of women as a universal construct (Spelman, 1988); engages in self-criticism (Nicholson, 1990; Roman, 1992); attempts to refine feminist concepts (Nicholson, 1990); claims that nature is constructed, not discovered (Haraway, 1991); and examines the unequal female/male power balance within textual discourse (Smith, 1987). Modleski (1991) argues that much of postmodern feminism with its repudiation of reality as a social construct (this includes women's reality) undermines the goals of traditional feminism, that is, that much of postmodern feminism negates the critiques and theories of traditional feminism thus delivering feminism back to a pre-feminist world. Each form of feminism has its own politics for constructing research problems and its own purpose in analyzing data, and although the literature points to a fundamental incompatibility among the divergent feminisms, it could be argued that they share an ultimate purpose, namely a commitment to women's equality and to an ideology of social transformation.

The implications of the different feminisms for built

environment education programs mean that educators will have to be aware that feminism evolves into progressively new identities of "woman" and that they (educators) may be moving from one "feminism" to another: from the first wave which is principally concerned with equality in the material sense, to the second wave which uses women's *differences* to oppose a patriarchal world (Humm, 1992). And although fundamentally incompatible, educators can utilize strategies from among the different strands of feminism. For example, from liberal feminism educators can incorporate the traditional emphasis on equal opportunities (more women in architecture, planning, construction, engineering, etc.), the importance of female role models, and the necessity of gender sensitive language. From socialist feminism they can include a recognition of issues associated with class and race (the "ghetto greening" concept). From radical feminism, they can integrate women's ways of knowing and seeing; the creation of a distinct women's history and culture; and the conception of a woman-based society for survival. And from postmodern feminism, they can introduce the theory/perception of dominant/subordinate discourse and the argument that subjectivity is ultimate.

#### **1.4: Research Questions**

The fundamental assumption that a feminist-based built environment program educates all students to honour human differences and to recognize their capacity for community action, is grounded in the literature that focuses on women

and the built environment. If the literature were synthesized and used to help formulate a feminist-based built environment education program, two key overlapping principles would emerge: an emphasis on the diversity of women which leads to self-understanding and determination, and a community-based approach which stresses strong civic involvement to transform social relations of power. To facilitate the process of restructuring built environment education these principles will need to be incorporated.

Thus the primary research questions are:

1. Do existing built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada represent women in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability?
2. Are existing built environment education programs community based, and do they emphasize active public participation?
3. What are the major themes in feminist discourse concerning the built environment?
4. What are the implications, problems and prospects for a feminist-based built environment education?

Six "descriptors" serve to characterize whether or not programs represent women's diversity and if programs are community based: "stated and described", "stated", "stated but vague", "implied", "vague", and "not apparent". The rationale for the selection of six descriptors derives from the need to

present a range of responses. In other words, the six categories describe the extent to which programs respond, to a greater or lesser degree, to the questions asked of them.

### 1:5 Description of Terms

In this study, the terms "**built environment**", "**architecture**" and "**urban structure**" are used broadly and interchangeably, to include the design, construction and existence of buildings and communities. "**Architecture**" also refers to the profession of designing buildings and communities. The terms "**planning**" and "**environmental design**" refer to the planning and design of communities and the profession of planning and designing communities.

The phrase "**spatial and structural needs of women**" refers to women's priorities in the built environment in regards to urban spaces and structures. The words "spatial and structural" are concrete concepts used in the field of design. In this study I intersperse the "spatial and structural needs of women" with sociological values and synthesize them into a new theory of design and concern.

The term "**gender**" in the study signifies a historical construction, a definition of the social and physical capabilities and appropriate activities of women and men, and of the nature of femininity and masculinity at any point in time. The gender category "woman" or "man" is formed and reproduced through the activities of women and men, and is altered as they alter their activities (Klodawsky & Mackenzie,

1987). Gender is thus socially constituted and historically alterable; "sex", on the other hand, is defined by biological differences. Butler (1990) and Haraway (1992) argue that "sex" refers to the woman/man contrast, whereas gender could and does refer as much to woman/woman contrasts and not a binary woman/man contrast. Butler (1990) goes so far as to argue that not only are there no true gender differentiations but that we should not assume that there are biologically defined sexes. She critiques the notion of fixed gender identities said to be rooted in nature, bodies, or compulsory heterosexuality. Instead, a number of different options for human behaviour, a "gender-blending", should be recognized.

The phrase "**gender-equitable curriculum**" refers to a remedial approach to conventional curriculum which compensates for the traditional Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, male-centred approach to the choice of subject matter, the selection and processing of data and their interpretation (Eyre, 1989). Bryson and de Castell (in press) argue that such a curriculum would analyze "gender" and the categories of "woman" and "man" as expressions of inequitable socio-political arrangements, and would attempt to clarify the ways in which traditional mainstream curricula entrench that inequality.

The concept of equity (or equitability) faces major philosophical hurdles before it can be accepted because it counters three icons of Western thought: individuality, merit, and equality. It is ahistorical and even hypocritical to

invoke individuality in arguing against equity precisely because women and certain minorities have for so long been treated, not as individuals, but as a group. The concept of merit assumes that people start out with the same opportunities which they can then exploit to the limit of their capability. Obviously, members of groups that have been discriminated against or oppressed cannot, as a group, have acquired the same degree of competence as the dominant members of society. Therefore, they require special compensatory treatment. Just as important in the consideration of merit is, whose standards are being used? Historically, dominant societal groups define competence and merit in terms of their own attributes and outlooks, a process which confirms and tends to maintain their position of dominance. Raising the point about equality is also ahistorical and impractical. It assumes that people start the race from the same point and without imposed handicaps.

In brief, because gender-equitable curriculum is compensatory, it cannot be "equal". It recognizes the historical unequal treatment of the sexes and marginalized groups. It acknowledges that women have not been dealt with on the basis of individual potential or merit, but as a group, and therefore it compensates them as a group, while at the same time, recognizing their diversity. According to Kenway and Modra (1992) and Lather (1991), a gender equitable curriculum is characterized by negotiation and reciprocity

allowing students to recognize their capability for action, and to thereby gain a sense of self-understanding and esteem.

"Feminist pedagogy" attempts to subvert gendered classroom interaction, to bring different voices into educational settings, and to implement a non-racist approach (Luke & Gore, 1992). Within the postmodern oxymoron, feminist pedagogy advocates an educational style which would free students from hierarchical constraints. As a critique of cultural authority it advocates self-definition and self-determination. It probes "below hegemonic meaning systems to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge, knowledge intended to challenge dominant meaning systems" (Lather, 1991, p. 129). Emancipatory education has important implications for women and others involved in unequal power relations (Lather, 1991). An emancipatory classroom contests and re-configures differences in class, sexuality, and ability (Luke & Gore, 1992). Luke and Gore (1992) argue that not only do we need to challenge inequality in the classroom, but we need to move beyond classroom practice and contest the foundations upon which society is built.

#### **1.6: Background Information**

Architecture and environmental design have a place in art education. In 1982, 32 percent of American elementary school teachers, 29 percent of junior high school teachers and 22 percent of senior high school teachers included a unit on architecture (Chapman, 1982). "Built environment education",



as it became known, has strong advocates. Laura Chapman (1978), a prominent art educator, asserts that in terms of daily lifelong impact on the quality of living, architecture and environmental design are among the most important art forms to be considered in the education of young people. Alan Sandler (1989), Director of Education Programs for the American Institute of Architects, reinforces Chapman's claim, stating that architecture is one of the most important forces affecting the environment and that "no other art form so completely pervades our daily lives" (p. 13). David Baker (1988), former editor of School Arts, stresses the critical need for teachers to give attention to architecture and environmental design and to address architectural issues because "dwellings and . . . environments affect not only our disposition, but also our social behaviour, energy and conceptual growth and development" (p. 4). Chapman (1978) sums up this perspective by declaring that "in few other art forms is the problem of encouraging awareness so acute or the need for thoughtful response greater" (p. 339).

Despite the above views, built environment education as part of art education seldom *strongly* encourages awareness or thoughtful response to social concerns associated with architecture and environmental design, concentrating instead on styles and aesthetics (Neperud, 1991). Those few programs which integrate design elements with social concerns *rarely* accord priority to the latter. Some art educators may,

consciously or subconsciously, reinforce the notion that built environment studies should avoid social concerns and concentrate solely on styles and aesthetics (Avery, 1989). According to art educator Stuart Richmond (1990), "overtly social and political concerns can be addressed in social studies" (p. 10). But social concerns cannot remain unconnected from design decisions. Political and economic forces form the matrix out of which design decisions are made. Social concerns arise from the consequences of those decisions.

Canadian visual arts curriculum guides that include aspects of social issues associated with the built environment treat the issues superficially. The Ontario Ministry of Education's Visual Arts Guide for Teachers of Primary and Junior Divisions (1985) recommends a three-dimensional construction activity that explores ways to reduce pollution through vehicle design. Students are asked to design practical and responsible vehicles, but they do not discuss why polluting cars continue to be manufactured or what political steps could stop their manufacture. In the intermediate and senior's divisions 1990 Viewing Art Resource Guide a lesson on architecture recommends that students design their own public building and develop an understanding of the aesthetic need for a successful marriage between the building and the site, while ignoring the political and social nature of public buildings and who it is that designs most public

buildings.

The Quebec curriculum guide for secondary schools, Visual Art, General Education (Volume II), 1988, includes an extensive section on Quebec's architectural heritage, some comments on its modern architecture and some architectural history. An attempt is made to link historical and contemporary issues with architecture. Contemporary issues, however, are treated superficially, for instance, when discussing suburban development the guide states:

The American-style bedroom suburbs which sprawl around cities and towns bear witness to the desire of every family to have its own home: a house "with all the modern conveniences" and a bit of green space around it, providing everyone with a place he [sic] can call his [sic] own.

Living in the suburbs often involves a good deal of travelling -- commuting to work or school and driving to recreational facilities and shopping centres -- in order to maintain the purely residential character of the suburb. It is almost essential for a family to have at least one automobile if the train station or bus stop is far from their house or if the area has no public transportation. (p. 39)

It goes on to state that the modern suburb has led to a certain uniformity in housing and that "this homogeneity leaves little room for originality except in interior

decoration and landscaping, where the tastes and imagination of the occupants can have free rein" (p. 39). There is no mention that the suburban single family dwelling is out of reach for most low-income people, most of whom are women; that it makes grossly inefficient use of natural (and human) resources; that it is usually situated inconveniently away from paid work, public services and transit; and that it isolates women who do not have a car. There is also no mention that suburban development misguidedly assumes that everyone belongs to a nuclear family. No social issues are included in the units' objectives, which include "to name some modern architects and their work"; "to describe the characteristics of these works"; and "to compare . . . the characteristics of modern architecture with those of traditional architecture" (p. 146). Examples relating to the objectives are strictly stylistic. No women are mentioned among the several examples of architects and their work.

The only statement in British Columbia's Elementary Fine Arts Curriculum Guide (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1985) that touches on a social issue associated with the built environment is the suggestion that students "describe what different buildings are used for and how they make you feel" (p. 57). The guide also suggests that students question "if some buildings are old and wrinkled" (p. 57). For lesson enrichment, it recommends that students "relate facades of buildings to faces" (p. 57). The guide does not explain why

it suggests these trivial pursuits (nor does it state why it denigrates old age). In the Secondary Art Guide (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1983), the only mention of a social issue is the suggestion that students "recognize the role of sculpture in today's consumer society in the areas of architecture" (p. 168). There is no elaboration of this confusing recommendation.

However, the British Columbia Secondary Art Media Resources Guide (1983), which provides information on films, videotapes and other teaching aids for the secondary art curriculum, integrates some social issues. Within the theme entitled, "Main Street and the Built Environment", recommended video tapes investigate harmonious, functional human shelter, examine if buildings have been designed for human needs, and explore the question of what contributes to well-planned, attractive spaces for community living. But how many teachers have ordered these tapes? And why are these issues not mentioned in the guides themselves?

Since social issues in the built environment are not given priority in the elementary or secondary art guides of British Columbia, no forum exists for exploring one of the major social issues in current education debate: gender and sexual discrimination. Eliminating gender and sexual bias in built environment education entails (a) stressing women's diversity and discussing their spatial and structural concerns, (b) incorporating a feminist perspective in

historical and contemporary architectural and planning studies, (c) introducing women architects and planners and presenting their design and planning contributions, and (d) producing non-sexist models of communities utilizing community-based women-centred initiatives as teaching examples. Although the issue of gender is acknowledged in British Columbia's Year 2000, the 1989 curriculum draft does not delineate it in the visual arts section of the fine arts strand.

There are no Canadian art textbooks that integrate women's spatial and structural issues. American art education textbooks dealing with the built environment also fail to mention women's design concerns (see for example, Approaches to Art in Education [Chapman, 1978] and Art, Culture and Environment [McFee & Degge, 1980]). To date, art education journals have not run articles on women's spatial perspectives. Moreover, there are no examples where teacher education or inservice programs have integrated the issues.

A strong feminist movement does exist however to eradicate gender bias in education. In Canada the movement started in the early 1970s when women's groups at the federal, provincial and local levels addressed the problem of sexism in education. In 1971, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) began a two year study on the status of women in education. The investigations revealed a problem serious enough to warrant the institution of a BCTF Status of Women

program. At the provincial level, an Advisory Committee on Sex Discrimination in Education was set up, and the Department of Education created a position to address issues related to sexism. In 1975 the United Nations declared International Women's Year and numerous women's groups and national organizations were asked by the Federal Government to participate in planning Canadian activities. The involvement and concern of the BCTF, the Ministry of Education and the Federal Government helped to create an awareness of the need for Canadian-produced, non-sexist curricular material for classroom use (Hurst, Pedersen, Shuto, 1981).

Feminist revisionism has attempted to enter art education (cf. Garber, 1990; Hagaman, 1990; Hicks, 1990). Two feminist art educators, Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell (1984), focused on gender-related biases in art education in Women, Art, and Education. One of the more scholarly art education journals, Studies in Art Education, devoted an entire edition to gender-related issues (Volume 32, Issue 1, Fall, 1990). As far back as 1974, women art educators founded the Women's Caucus of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). An official position statement, adopted in 1976, declares that "The National Art Education Association's Women's Caucus exists to eradicate sexual discrimination in all areas of art education and to support women art educators in their professional endeavours" (Collins & Sandell, 1984, p. 128). The Women's Caucus began to hold its own program sessions at

the NAEA conventions in 1976. Presentations and workshops since then have focused on stereotypes in art, women's history and political issues, and women artists past and present. The Canadian Society for Education Through Art Convention (1991) included a special symposium on women's issues in art education titled "Through Whose Eyes: Equity and Art Education in Canada". Papers included topics on gender and imagery and feminist teaching models and practices. Feminist efforts at revisionism in art education have led the way toward a feminist critique of built environment education.

It is within a feminist context that built environment education programs are discussed in the next chapter. Do programs recognize women's diversity and do they integrate the spatial and structural concerns of women? Do they include examples of community-based women-centred initiatives? Efforts to achieve integration will open a wide door of social and ethical issues that challenge cultural assumptions about the worth and appropriate treatment of women and marginalized people.

### **1.7: Methodology**

This study uses "analytical design", a qualitative research design which, in contrast to experimental research, derives its descriptions and interpretations from a compilation of selected documents and/or oral testimonies (Coombs & Daniels, 1991; McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). The purpose of analytical design is to understand an event,



movement or problem, by careful detailed description and analysis. The researcher identifies, studies, and then strictly synthesizes the data to provide an understanding of events that may not have been directly observable. This information is then carefully interpreted and an attempt is made to provide explanations and clarification of the collective educational meanings that may underlie current practices and issues (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). In other words, analytical research seeks to provide concrete interpretations of the concepts we use to formulate curricular studies and programs. McMillan & Schumacher (1989) claim that analytical studies suggest generalizations, or syntheses of "facts", about events, and state explanations, or interpretations of generalizations. Examples of analytical research include concept analyses, concept interpretation, conception development, and conceptual structure assessment (Coombs & Daniels, 1991; McMillan & Schumacher, 1989).

In the case of feminist critique, the researcher upholds a value position while analyzing a concept. Thus this particular study commences from a feminist value position which influences the methodology. However, given social sciences' current need to assert itself as a legitimate science (the demand for quantification is an example of positivist imperative in scholarship), some elaboration or *legitimization* of the methodology used in this dissertation is necessary. While self-corrective techniques which carefully

check the validity and reliability of data and minimize the distorting effect of personal bias are necessary, as Lather (1991) states, censoring the subjective (in this case, feminist) aspect of methodology and interpretation can conceal important qualitative aspects of phenomena.

Feminist literature is pointing to problems and contradictions implicit in any literal documentary analysis. According to Dorothy Smith (1987) those who insist on "scientific" *objective* data may be naive. Smith contends that since documents are constructed within institutional frameworks, they must meet the expectations of that institution, and therefore cannot be impartial. Documents are also used to construct a particular reality which is then accorded the status of truth. Certain meanings are institutionally sanctioned, and certain texts that are intended to be critical or politically challenging are mitigated or "contained" by the institution in which they are housed.

Any document, for example an academic paper, or a doctoral dissertation, carries with it the values of the institution in which it is created. Progressive documents created within mainstream institutions reflect the inevitable contradiction that is faced by the activist academic: being ensconced within the very paradigm in which change is sought. By the same token, because this present document is also situated within an institutional structure, it will

necessarily reflect the values of that institution in some way, and in doing so, cannot fully maintain its original, critical stance.

In this study the sources related to built environment education programs and women's spatial and structural issues include books, journals, manuals, reports, newsletters, newspaper articles, brochures, theses, dissertations, curriculum guides, bibliographies, video tapes, posters, personal correspondence, and oral and written testimonies from select individuals.

### **1.8: Outline of Chapters**

The study is divided into four chapters: Chapter 1, the rationale for the critique, discusses feminism, the research questions, description of terms, the background to the problem, and the methodology.

Chapter 2, "Background, Critics and Programs in Built Environment Education", is divided into four parts. It (a) offers background information on the origins of built environment education; (b) discusses the concerns critics have expressed about this field; (c) describes 26 British, American and Canadian built environment education programs, questioning both their representation of women and their capacity to encourage community action; and (d) reports major findings, drawing conclusions based on a critical feminist analysis.

Chapter 3, "Feminist Discourse About the Built Environment: An Overview", scans a diverse range of literature

and classifies it under certain themes: (a) feminist guidelines for research and analysis; (b) gender assumptions which contribute to women's subordination and alternatively women's spatial and structural priorities; (c) the position of women in architecture and planning which encompasses the reasons behind the dearth of woman architects as well as feminist approaches to planning and design; and (d) grass-roots and professional feminist advocacy and activism.

Chapter 4, "Conclusion: The Integration of Feminist Discourse in Built Environment Education", focuses on feminist pedagogy and its implications for practice, theory and research. It (a) explores the possibility of a collaboration of feminist art teachers, architects, planners, and community women to develop a feminist-based program and addresses possible viewpoints that may be held by teachers who regard the inclusion of women's spatial and structural issues as problematic; (b) discusses the views some feminists hold regarding feminist pedagogy and its implications for theory and practice; (c) explores its implications for research; and (d) offers a discourse on the affirmation of the rights of students within art education, and explains how the inclusion of a feminist-based built environment program serves to actualize the potential for action of female and other marginalized students.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND, CRITICS AND PROGRAMS

#### IN BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

This chapter presents an overview of built environment education in Britain, the United States and Canada. It examines background information relating to the origins of built environment education, considers the views of critics, evaluates, from a feminist perspective, the major programs past and present in the three countries, brings together the findings, and discusses the hegemonic implications of built environment education programs.

#### **2.1: Background: The Origins of Built Environment Education**

**Britain.** Martin and Wheeler (1975) claim that the environmental education movement, forerunner of built environment education, originated in nineteenth century Britain at a time when industrialization threatened to alienate women and men from nature. During this period the manufacturing of industrial materials, powered by steam, caused cities to grow at an unprecedented rate. By the mid 1800s living conditions for the working classes in Britain were deplorable. Patrick Geddes (1854-1933), a Scottish Professor of Botany, began to focus on this urban crisis. Repelled by the horrors created by the industrial revolution and displeased with school and university pedagogy, Geddes committed himself to the improvement of both environment and education. In 1889 he established an urban study centre, the

Outlook Tower, in Edinburgh. He saw a close connection between the quality of education and the quality of environment, and argued that children brought into contact with the profound realities of their environment would not only improve academically, but would also develop a creative attitude toward their surroundings. Human life could prosper, he posited, only if citizens turned their cities and towns into beautiful and functional living places (Martin & Wheeler, 1975). As early as 1910, as an "advocate planner", he expressed the need for civic education and citizen participation in the design of the physical environment and claimed that through citizen participation "the essential harmony of all the interests involved in the city are satisfied" (Antoniades, 1980, p. 176). Geddes was to become known as the founding father of environmental education but after his death his ideas were somewhat misrepresented by groups focusing largely on rural conservation concerns (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

During the inter-war period, British educators John William Adamson and Sir John Adams, along with American John Dewey, perhaps under the influence of Friedrich Froebel, were persuading British teachers that learning for young children took place through contact with the environment -- using concrete rather than abstract situations and fostering observations of the real world. George Joseph Cons' and Catherine Fletcher's book, Actuality in the School: An

Experiment in Social Education, (1938), dealt with bringing individuals from the community into the classroom, so that children could learn about their lives and their work. This approach added a new dimension to the ideas about social education and served to balance what had become the more dominant "nature" focus in environment studies (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

In Britain, the term "environmental studies" became part of an overall progressive teaching strategy advocated by the post- 1945 teacher training colleges. No one at that time, however, foresaw environmental studies as a potential threat to capitalism. The late 1960s in Britain were crucial years for the evolution of environmental education and marked the joining together of the apolitical, naturalist practices of environmental studies and the committed activism of environmental education (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

**Environmental education.** During the 1940s conservation was becoming a focus for British rural advocacy groups. The Nature Conservancy, instituted in 1949, recommended to government an educational policy to protect the countryside, and in 1958, the Council of Nature was formed to popularize the problems of wildlife. In 1965, a conference held at the University of Keele brought together for the first time representatives of various academic disciplines concerned with landscape, agriculture, forestry, and nature conservation. It was agreed that "environmental education" should "become an

essential part of the education of all citizens, not only because of the importance of their understanding something of their environment but because of its immense educational potential in assisting the emergence of a scientifically literate nation" (Martin & Wheeler, 1975, p. 7).

Another conference was held in 1968 at the City of Leicester College of Education, with the goal of bringing together teachers interested in developing environmental studies in schools and colleges. The environmental problems that today are recognized as critical, had then not received global recognition, and participants came looking backwards to rural conservation rather than forward to the environmental problems in the world around them. Even though the guest speaker promoted environmental studies as the most revolutionary form of educational study within living memory, the focus was on method, using the environment as a tool or starting point to teach other subjects, rather than as subject matter itself. The conference did however recommend the formation of a Society for Environmental Education (SEE) to work towards teaching for the improvement of the environment (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

Identifying the exact nature of environmental education's relationship to environmental studies and academic disciplines was difficult at the time. Some of this confusion came from the tendency of academics in various disciplines to assign the word "environmental" to their own subject, whether it was



ecology, geography, architecture, or rural studies. Some stressed the educational value of using the biological and physical environment as a basis for studies, while others were concerned with the need to promote a sense of personal responsibility for the environment. The use of the term "environmental studies" as a synonym for environmental education, or to describe a method of study within particular disciplines, and also as the name of a new and developing subject in its own right, further contributed to the confusion (Carson, 1978; Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

The year 1968 is regarded as the time when the concept of environmental education made its first real impact on the thinking of teachers. In 1970, the British Schools Council developed "Project Environment" to investigate the relationship between rural studies and environmental education. From 1968 to 1970, the number of environmental studies courses in colleges almost doubled. By 1971 the environmental education movement had gained momentum and the field of geography was now changing its focus from the man-land relationship to the techniques of "spatial analysis". As teachers started to teach environmental studies, geographers developed techniques for teaching about the human environment, such as simulation games, perception studies and issue-based enquiries (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

The growth of the environmental education movement in the 1960s was spurred on by what Max Nicholson (1970) more

generally called the "Environmental Revolution", which put a new emphasis on the concern for lives and landscapes. Ecologists and conservationists formed the strongest pressure groups, but were quickly joined by economists like J. K. Galbraith who raised the question of why some societies enjoyed so much private wealth in the midst of public squalor. In Britain, the first publication to popularize the concept of "environmental quality" in urban areas was Colin Buchanan's 1964 report, Traffic in Towns (Martin & Wheeler, 1975). Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) had also been influential in both Britain and North America. In the United States, Anne and Paul Ehrlich (1970) and Barry Commoner (1970), were introducing ecology as a buzz word in the environmental debate.

**Development of urban studies.** During World War II, the improvement of living standards for the vast working class became a major concern of the British public. Urban planning became not only an administrative activity but also a political activity when the prospects for post-war reconstruction reached expression in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. As planning legislation increased and as planners exercised increased control over the environment, conflict at both local and national levels intensified (Martin & Wheeler, 1975). This intensification, plus the development of urban studies, which came about during the late sixties in Britain when the environmental revolution took a new twist,

became major influences on built environment education.

Due to the unpopularity of decisions made by planners, especially around unwanted urban developments, it became evident that planning was not operating in accord with democratic procedures. In 1969, the Government published the Skeffington Report, People and Planning, which recommended creating structures for public participation in planning and the teaching of planning in schools. It states that:

. . . education about town planning should be 'part of the way in which all secondary schools make children conscious of their future civic duties', that it should be 'part of their liberal and civic studies within places of further education', and that the training of teachers should include 'a similar emphasis on civic studies, including the philosophy of town and country planning.'

(Adams & Ward, 1982, p. 13)

In 1970 the Department of Environment was created and the word "environment" was expanded to include not only the natural but also the "built" environment. With the publication of the Skeffington Report, the "revolution" became a search to find methods of involving the working class in questions of environmental policy. A new urban-proletariat influence, having its origins in the thinking of Geddes, Kropotkin and Marx, emerged (Martin and Wheeler, 1975).

The next important educational development in Britain, was what Martin and Wheeler (1975) called "education for

environmental participation" a step which perhaps had the greatest influence on the formation of built environment education. This development occurred when the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), a voluntary environmental pressure group, appointed two teachers, Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson, to initiate an education unit. Before training as teachers, Ward had been involved in architecture, had edited environmental journals, and had written several books on urban environmental concerns; Fyson had studied geography at Oxford and had been involved in town planning. Both men reflected the values of a radical populist culture which had started to take hold in the late sixties. It was their belief that the TCPA's role should be to promote education for community control of the environment and that the skills to manage the environment be accessible to all people and not only to an articulate minority. Under the rubric of "streetwork" (see Ward & Fyson, 1973), they advocated an "issue-based" or "problem-oriented" approach to the environment, and developed techniques and facilities, including town trails, simulation games and urban studies centres, for active environmental learning.

The TCPA Education Unit met three objectives: it published a monthly Bulletin of Environmental Education (BEE), established town trails in urban areas, and campaigned for the setting up of urban study centres. These activities were motivated by the work of Patrick Geddes, up-dating and

focusing on his concept of education for citizenship and duplicating his idea of the urban study centre. The radical educational philosophy of Paul Goodman and de-schooler, Ivan Illich, was promoted as an educational strategy in the pages of BEE (Martin & Wheeler, 1975).

In May 1971, the first issue of BEE ran an article by Michael Storm titled "School and Community, an issue-based approach" which the TCPA Education Unit used as a "manifesto". Storm asserted that an issue-based curriculum would not resemble the courses then being called environmental studies, but rather that students in this new program would be more interested in advocacy/lobbying tactics and the mechanics of environmental decision-making than with the recording of existing land use. Based on the educational recommendations of the Skeffington Report and a conflict-centred curriculum for environmental studies, the TCPA Education unit focused on understanding community issues in an urban context (Martin & Wheeler, 1975; Storm, 1971).

BEE proved to be an influential medium for introducing planning and architecture education into the school curriculum. The views and trends expressed in BEE were sanctioned by the Government report on the human habitat, "How Do You Want to Live?". The report was presented at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, and recommended that environmental education and the exercise of citizenship go hand in hand -- that it promote

public participation in decision-making and aim at developing a critical, moral and aesthetic awareness of surroundings (Martin & Wheeler, 1975). Built environment education was further advanced in Britain with the Department of Environment's (DOE) report of 1979 titled "Environmental Education in Urban Areas" which stressed that such a study should assist people to understand, analyze and improve their local environment (Adams, 1990).

Although similar movements arose in the United States and Canada to parallel those of Britain over the last century, the British example offered a strong model for the emergence of built environment education.

**United States.** In the United States, the committed activism of environmental education grew out of ideas of George Perkin Marsh (1801-1882), who, in 1864, documented the degree to which the earth's resources were being depleted. He predicted that such exploitation could not continue without ultimately exhausting the "bounty of Nature". Marsh's warning was heeded in the United States (but not in Europe), as vast areas of forest and prairie had already been ravaged. Conservation was thus supported in the United States, which became the first industrialized country in the world to take seriously the preservation of its natural environment and to introduce conservation studies in schools (Martin and Wheeler, 1975).

The work of Barry Commoner (1970) and Anne and Paul

Ehrlich (1970) to put ecology on the national agenda resulted in the growth of several environmental organizations. By 1970, inspired mainly by ecological considerations, demands for school curricula oriented towards environmental education objectives were increasing in the United States.

The term "environmental education" has had a long history in the United States; nearly all the life science curriculum meetings since the 1900s had promoted it. In 1970, when other countries were just starting to develop environmental education programs, the United States passed an Environmental Education Act, defining officially the term "environmental education" for the first time. Although the term stressed ecological concerns, it covered a broad spectrum including urban studies. The United States Code, Congressional and Administrative News (1970, Volume 3), defined environmental education as:

. . . an integrated process which deals with man's interrelationship with his natural and man-made surroundings, including the relation of population growth, pollution, resource allocation and depletion, conservation, technology, and urban and rural planning to the total human environment. Environmental education is a study of the factors influencing ecosystems, mental and physical health, living and working conditions, decaying cities, and population pressures. Environmental education is intended to promote among citizens the

awareness and understanding of the environment, our relationship to it, and the concern and responsible action necessary to assure our survival and to improve the quality of life. (p. 4706)

Thus the Act reintroduces the "Geddes link" between environmental education and planning. Specifically, the functions of the act were to administer grants and contracts to "institutions of higher education, State and local agencies, regional educational research organizations, and other public and private educational institutions (including libraries and museums) to support research, demonstration, and pilot projects, and to support operational programs" (United States Code, 1970, Volume 3, p. 4707).

The Act was designed to provide Americans with the knowledge and insight to develop their resources in a non-destructive manner. All levels of education, from preschool through adult and continuing education were included. Teachers and other educational personnel were encouraged to use it to expand the learning experiences of their students, to release themselves from the confines of the school building and to enter into and work with the local community. The Act postulated that children should learn about their community environment by "being in it, and from their direct experience in it" (United States Code, 1970, Volume 3, p. 4705). It strongly emphasized supporting teachers "in their quest to develop and refine their capabilities to comprehend the



ecological cycle and to use the community, be it natural or man made, as a classroom" (United States Code, 1970, Volume 3, p. 4705).

**Canada.** In Canada early influences on what has become built environment education, were seen in four areas: (a) nature studies, (b) the establishment of planning schools, (c) the formation of environmental groups, and (d) the creation of interdisciplinary environmental studies degree programs. The earliest environmentalists in schools in Canada were those teachers interested in rural education and natural history. A tradition of relating children's education in school directly to personal experience outside the classroom began as early as the 1890s, mainly through field study related to natural history and elementary science (Sutherland, 1976). When progressive educators James Wilson Robertson, Loring W. Bailey and J. W. Gibson promoted nature studies in schools by taking students out of doors, in a sense, they pioneered environmental education in Canada (Sutherland, 1976). Like Dewey, who followed them, they believed that learning for young people took place through contact with the environment and encouraged teachers to use concrete situations rather than abstract ones for learning. However, field studies remained isolated from other educational thought and activity, even among biologists and geographers in schools (Carson, 1978). Although these early Canadian educators did not deal directly with the built environment, they did encourage teachers to

foster involvement in the world outside the classroom (Sutherland, 1976).

Schools of Community and Regional Planning were established after World War II, in response to the federal government's post war planning program. The Marsh Report of 1944 dealt with Canada's expected post-war housing problems and asserted that housing should deal not only with shelter but with community issues. The report helped to establish the link between community and regional planning and social concerns.

In the 1960s and 70s, environmental groups such as the Sierra Club and the Canadian Nature Federation (an offshoot of the Audubon Society), inspired by their United States counterparts, began to form in Canada. Awareness of environmental issues began to spread to institutes of higher education. Interdisciplinary degrees for the study of environmental problems were introduced into the universities starting in the late 1960s. Initially, these programs were seen mainly as "environmental science" with an emphasis on natural sciences, particularly ecology. Environmental studies, which followed, had a greater emphasis on socio-economic content. York University established the Faculty of Environmental Studies in 1968 in response to a need for new approaches to deal with environmental problems and issues. This was the first environmental studies program established in Canada, and from the start the faculty adopted a

comprehensive holistic approach. The program took into account the totality of interacting factors which influenced the behaviour of individuals, groups and communities. The overall objective of the program was to promote an appreciation of the complexity of relationships within and among environmental systems, an understanding of the processes of environmental change, and the search for more effective means of managing human activities. Studies encompass organizational and social environments as well as built and natural environments. Planning, design and management of built environments remains the major interest of students.

Environmental studies at Canadian universities have grown to include a wide range of topical concerns including health, energy, environment and behaviour, waste management, impact assessment, and, in the case of York University, women's issues. Research and curriculum development reflect ongoing experimentations with new models of action research and analysis, as well as with new approaches to the acquisition, development and application of knowledge. In parallel, there is a closer examination of value and ethical perspectives.

In what way do these activities apply to the study of the built environment in elementary and secondary schools? Are some of these topical concerns reflected in school programs in Canada, the United States and Britain? Documentation reveals that most programs do not acknowledge new models of action research and analysis, nor do they strongly examine value and

ethical perspectives. The reason for these omissions may be that individuals specializing in environmental studies, both in and out of universities, do not become directly involved in education. Or, conversely, art education programs in Canadian universities may not encourage an interdisciplinary approach, and thus students preparing to become art teachers remain isolated from other related disciplines. The insularity of art education is a serious and pervasive problem. The next section presents the discourse of critics on art education, as it relates to built environment education, and on built environment education itself.

## **2.2: Critics Voices: Problems and Possibilities**

Starting in the late 1970s, a few critics began to voice their concerns regarding built environment education. Among them was one of the leading proponents of built environment education, art educator Eileen Adams (1977, 1990). Her arguments, voiced over a decade and a half ago, are still relevant today. Another British critic, Brian Goodey (1978), also had concerns which apply to current programs, and a third, American Ronald Neperud (1991), repeats arguments similar to those of Goodey's.

**Conceptions of art teachers and subject matter.** In 1977, Eileen Adams expressed serious concerns about what she saw as a precarious relationship between art education and built environment education. She contended that the study of the built environment was not easily incorporated into art

curriculum in a coherent way because, (a) traditionally, disciplines were isolated from each other, and (b) art teachers were not open to new concepts and ideas. Accusing art teachers of elitism, Adams claimed they were more interested in exotic subject matter than in the visual and other sensory ideas that comprised their environment. She described how her colleague, Colin Ward, roused teachers into acknowledging the subject by provoking them. In his workshops he would declare that art education had nothing to do with the built environment, in the hope that teachers would attack him for his shortsighted view. Despite his prodding, they were not provoked. Many teachers were confused about the purposes of art education and therefore found it difficult to relate to built environment education. Although art education was supposed to be a method for communicating response to the environment and a means of identifying and transmitting cultural values, teachers did not connect these concepts to the study of the built environment. When art teachers were asked to define their philosophy none included social content. The closer the art activity was to what was considered "fine arts", the greater its relevance and legitimacy. The built environment was sometimes considered as reference material for making art products but rarely as a comprehensive study in its own right.

Some commentary regarding teachers' attitudes is required here because the apparent inability to relate art education to

built environment education may reflect the widespread conditioning, particularly within the pedagogic community, of distinct (and confining) disciplines. This has a strong ideological basis in the traditional Western model of departmentalization and specialization. Moreover, teachers may lack confidence in integrating material from sources beyond their specialization. The unease many teachers feel in eradicating self-imposed boundaries may rest on the formidable, if not impossible, challenge to "know everything" in related fields. What has to be accepted, therefore, to achieve the integration of built environment education into art education, is the fact that broadening the context will enrich the discipline.

The goal of "Art and the Built Environment Project", which Adams helped develop, was to define the relationship between environmental study and art education. It provided a comprehensive rationale for the inclusion of the built environment in art education and it defined the contributions that art teachers could make to built environment education. Adams was convinced that art teachers could contribute more than other teachers to an affective approach to the study of the built form. This approach permitted alternative ways of perceiving and learning and provided a necessary complement to the objective scientific study of towns.

But Adams was sceptical about the willingness of art departments to integrate activities on visual appraisal and

critical analysis. She concluded on a pessimistic note, saying that there was a bias in art education that stressed the importance of art and craft, the making of art products, and traditional working methods, relying heavily on the use of "expressive" media which favour the expression of internal feelings. She claimed there was a place for "impressive" media in art education, which favour the expression of external forms. Since art and craft was given priority in most British schools, such subjects as visual education, graphicacy, design education, and conceptual art, were not well integrated. In built environment education, Adams argued, the above art-related disciplines share equal value. Hence, her main point was that Art and the Built Environment was a holistic study and allowed for a more integrated approach than have traditional art education methods.

Since 1977 Adams has continued to write about the linkage between art, design and urban environmental concerns. In a 1990 article she is more optimistic about the future relationship of art, design, built environment studies and curriculum development. By then, she had promoted and witnessed almost two decades of built environment education in Britain. She now believes that teachers may see the built environment as an ever-present resource to be explored, that they view it in critical or design terms, and that they may require students to make value judgements about environmental quality and put forward proposals for change. In this article

she also presents a critical analysis of the importance of design study in built environment education, claiming that it intensifies experience and influences perception. It also emphasises analysis and criticism and initiates activities in which students conceptualise possibilities for change.

These ideas bear close scrutiny, says Adams (1990), but they will be short-lived unless there are attempts to institutionalise them. She claims this has been taking place in several ways, for example, through curriculum development initiatives such as inter-professional working parties, and school examinations. However, the study of the built environment must be specifically acknowledged by, and included in, the British National Curriculum in at least three areas: art and design, technology and geography. Since the study of the built environment is multi-disciplinary, it can provide one of the most useful means of connecting subject areas in an educational system newly committed to cross-curricular activities. Adams concludes with a focus on the need for a collaboration between art educators and architects, what she calls the inter-professional partnership. Individual contacts between architects and teachers should continue to be encouraged whenever possible, not just through official projects but through informal contacts, architecture workshops and urban studies centres.

Adams continues to play a major role in built environment education, as educator, advocate, author, and critic. Her



contribution to this field is worthy of special praise. Perhaps more than any other individual in Britain, she has brought an awareness of the importance of built environment studies.

Further issues in built environment education are raised by other critics. Brian Goodey (1978) critiques the manner in which the built environment is integrated in British schools. His intention is not to explore education through the environment, but to examine education *about* the built environment and *in* the environment. There are a number of approaches to built environment education which include the study of (a) the planning process, (b) building conservation, (c) social geography (the human condition in urban areas), and (d) socially-concerned urban issues. According to Goodey, there are flaws in each of these methods mainly because there is a lack of direct involvement with existing communities. Although the topic of human conditions in urban areas tends to be too controversial for most curricula, the whole point in teaching urban studies is the two-way flow of information between school and community, each a major resource for the other. Like Ward and Fyson (1973), and Adams (1977; 1990), Goodey stresses the need for human interaction and recommends community-related projects with practical outcomes and involving environmental professionals such as planners, architects, surveyors, and even developers. Goodey argues that it is more important to study planning processes in the

urban system rather than visual attributes. While discussing "values" in environmental education, he raises salient questions: Are children trained as observers of the local scene or as participants? Are they encouraged to accept existing power distributions or to upset them? In the same vein as Ward and Fyson (1973), he claims that the school can serve as a valuable, and relatively neutral, information agency for the community. But he warns such a role requires rigour and effort which seem to be beyond the wishes of some teachers. A similar point is made regarding issue-based projects, those based on environmental conflicts which arise locally and are the subject of a public debate. An issue can be integrated into a variety of school programs, but often a hasty student exploration may not provide a true representation of the facts. The preparation and cooperation required in planning issue-based projects involving the community are seldom as contained as they appear. According to Goodey, it is better to consider activities that relate to, or are a part of, a larger scheme, that is, less immediate issues, and raise them as part of a well-designed program.

His criticism is also aimed at "futures" projects which often revolve around the planning and designing of an ideal city or community, an "end state" solution, which seems to be typical of all educational levels. Planning and designing for the future is the ultimate goal of most built environment education programs, and it is the role of the planning

profession. However, according to Goodey, in an education setting these techniques encourage a science fiction view of the world in which the best of modern technology is applied to current conditions at a stroke. Promoting this way of thinking does not introduce students to the political process necessary to alter the built environment. Built environment studies tend to overlook the importance of politics, sociology, economics and psychology, the four social sciences which hold the key to an understanding of the processes which change the urban fabric.

Goodey brings up more points to bear in mind. While practical work challenges the persistent barrier between school and community, the examination of community issues in the classroom may cause concern within the community itself. Other considerations are: subject breadth and information provision; inter-relatedness of community issue-based projects; age-appropriateness; and finances (economic constraints make this type of study an easy target for cut-backs). But built environment education *should* be approached from an integrated perspective, and Goodey ends on an optimistic note -- the local community remains, and with it the resources, text and workshop for the development of such a study.

Ronald W. Neperud (1991) found that in the United States current built environment curriculum is dealt with largely from an aesthetic and stylistic focus, that is, as a study of

the formalistic elements. In his examination of the content of environmental studies in a number of American States, he concludes that they fail to address social concerns and may not develop sympathetic views of surroundings. He argues that a study of architecture focusing solely on the formalistic elements is similar to other discipline-based art education which neglects social and cultural contexts. Neperud maintains that environmental education must start with engaging very young children in understanding how surroundings affect them and how their actions affect their surroundings. Reiterating the other critics before him, Neperud contends that today, more than ever, there is a need for environmental education based on a socially aware interactive relationship between individuals and their surroundings.

The views of the three critics cited are worth noting; all describe problems inherent in the study of the built environment. For example, the view of teachers that the subject is not an essential element in art and design, that the integration of built environment education does not involve the community in a coherent way, and that built environment education has tended to focus on aesthetic and design concerns while overlooking the socio-political reality. However, what these critics have failed to recognise is the relationship between the planning and design of the built environment and spatial cognition within the context of gender socialization and oppression (discussed in Chapter 3) and thus

the parallel in built environment education .

Advocacy and activism issues. Another problem that neither Adams nor Neperud raise -- Goodey mentions it in passing -- (which this study elaborates in the following chapters) relates to advocacy and activism issues in built environment education. There appears a point where built environment education programs come to a halt in art classrooms, and that point is usually when the "implementation stage" warrants discussion. As evidenced in the documentation in the following section, programs seldom encourage raising questions on how solutions, using *realistic* political strategies, can be implemented into existing communities, let alone making real attempts at implementation. Although political activism is often aired, for instance in the following statements by four major American programs, there are no clearly stated and described examples where this has taken place:

GEE! (Group for Environmental Education) maintains that one approach to the study of the built environment is through "real" world problems. The group claims that eventually every teacher is drawn toward the problems confronting the community and that learning to work with real life problems and alternatives is the final goal. The Built Environment Education Program (BEEP) argues that the objective in teaching built environment education is to raise the consciousness of individuals so that they take an active role in the

development of physical forms of society. BEEP contends that their field trips provide an opportunity to relate what has been taught in the classroom to the actual elements that exist in the "real" world and to make students aware of the applicability of their education to the "real" world. The program also contends that students exhibit a higher enthusiasm for learning when the learning environment has been made more "real", and when students can take an immediate active role in the exploration, observation, identification and contribution to what is being examined. The Center for Environmental Design Education encourages teachers to develop in students the critical link between classroom education and the community life surrounding them. In City Building Education, students take on the roles of City Hall, zoning offices, the banking system and so forth. The exercises in designing structures and public policy are supposed to expand students' capabilities and understanding of the way things work, and lead to reflection on the way things should work.

Reflecting on the way things should work is a necessary component in the study of the built environment. However, do the above programs lead *only* to reflections that take place in the classroom? Or do they lead to a *strong emphasis* on responsible action? As shown, several programs recognise the importance of community involvement and responsible action, but no cases of student political action are apparent in the programs studied. The programs do not appear to be *decidedly*

action oriented, and seem to avoid controversial issues.

It is interesting to note a contradiction in the United States' Environmental Education Act of 1970. It stresses that educational activities related to environmental education should include involvement in the community, that the learning experience derives from community involvement, and that "responsible action" is "necessary to assure our survival and to improve the quality of life" (U.S. Code, 1970, Volume 3, p. 4706). It goes on to state, however, that the term "educational activities" should not "include any kind of political activities" (U.S. Code, 1970, p. 4707). It also states that the Commissioner for the Office of Environmental Education, in selecting grantees or contractors for environmental education funding, "will distinguish between educational activities and activities of a political nature" (U.S. Code, 1970, p. 4707). Such a statement implies that action taken to improve the quality of life in the built environment should in no way be "political" -- a rather impossible request. Surprisingly, the contradiction in these statements has not been brought to public attention.

If the purpose of built environment education is to encourage young people to become visually literate regarding their surroundings, and to participate at some level in the planning and decision-making processes, then programs would need to include social and political contexts. As Adams (1977) states, built environment education should involve not

only a knowledge of the physical world, but be concerned with attitudes and values: how people feel about their environment, how they relate to it, how they affect it. Logically, built environment education should function in a matrix of technical, aesthetic, social, and political considerations. Programs must be grounded in an understanding of the spatial and social needs of individuals and communities: any action taken from such a perspective is by nature, political.

If built environment education is a tool for achieving environmental change, then a *total* view of the community needs to be introduced, both in and out of the classroom. This total view, like life itself, will include conflict. As Ward and Fyson (1973) maintain, controversy and conflict are what make a subject interesting and relevant to students. Currently, built environment education programs may give the misguided impression that the built form is constructed in a completely conflict-free socio-political environment and that everyone's physical and aesthetic needs are recognized and met. Moreover the built environment is primarily presented as though it was independent of political and economic influences.

Built environment curricula at all levels, and particularly in teacher education programs need to introduce students to the manner in which decisions are made in their community, and to encourage students to learn how they can take part in the decision making process. Bernard Crick



(cited in Ward & Fyson, 1973), argues that civic education must be aimed at creating citizens, and that educators can start with the real issues of the moment. Laurie Hicks (1990), a feminist art educator, contends, like Goodey (1978) before her, that if art education only offers students enough knowledge and skills to be appreciative consumers of the cultural mainstream then it is only serving to maintain the status quo rather than teaching students to critically analyze their physical and social environment.

The integration of an issues-based approach with a political advocacy and activism component will be complex and challenging and may not appeal to many art educators. They may not be interested in local community conflict or in activities of a political nature. Encouraging this particular approach is a colossal task because Canadians live in a well-entrenched system which functions according to a particular ideological bias. Our living and working environments serve a gender-biased, capitalist, corporate society which promotes consumption over self-determination. Fully supportive and life-enhancing environments will be achieved only when members of upcoming generations decide that they want such environments, and are equipped with the means to create them.

What follows in this chapter is a brief description and assessment of past and current built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada, the purpose of which is to help determine if and in what ways programs

promote supportive and life-enhancing environments inclusive of all people. The last section of this chapter brings together the findings, discusses the omissions in the programs, and presents a conclusion.

### **2.3: Description and Discussion of Programs**

The discussion in this section stems from a feminist view point which advocates that programs, (a) focus on the spatial and structural needs of women in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and levels of (dis)ability, thereby encouraging self-worth and self-determination in all students, and (b) encourage a community-based approach that emphasizes the importance of active public participation thereby transforming social relations of power. The assumption is made that women's spatial perspectives and community-based women-centred initiatives should be an integral part of the learning process.

A page is devoted to each major built environment education program and three entries take place: First, a description of the program is presented. Second, two research questions are asked and one of six observations serves as an answer: "stated and described", "stated", "stated but vague", "implied", "vague", and "not apparent". Third, some brief commentary is offered. The discussion begins with the pioneering British programs, followed by American and Canadian programs. Also discussed are the contributions of certain Canadian and American individuals.

## Programs in Britain

### **Front Door Project**

In 1974, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) joined the Royal College of Art at Pimlico School in London as part of the research on Design in General Education. This became known as the Front Door Project, and from 1974 to 1976, a pilot scheme was conducted to bring architects and art teachers together in a working partnership to develop a program of architecture and design studies based on an investigation of the local area. Eileen Adams, the art teacher who would become one of the strongest advocates of built environment education, was employed by the ILEA to coordinate the project. Colin Ward, of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) was also involved. The Front Door Project led the way to what became an innovative nation-wide program, the Art and the Built Environment Project.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated by vague*

Although this program is based on an investigation of the local area, it is not apparent if there was an emphasis on the diverse population. Given the progressive nature of the organizers, this may have been the case.

### **Art and the Built Environment Project (ABE)**

The term "built environment education" gained popularity in Britain in 1976 when Colin Ward and Eileen Adams developed Art and the Built Environment (ABE), a curriculum development project based in the Education Unit of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) from 1976 to 1980, and in the Design Education Unit at the Royal College of Art from 1980 to 1982. The aim of the Project was to develop "streetwork" techniques and materials to enhance students' environmental perception. Conferences, courses and BEE (Bulletin of Environmental Education) introduced teachers to the concepts and in 1980 a nationwide network of teachers, architects and planners was set up to promote the Project. When funding ended in 1982, ABE became a self-perpetuating activity. The Project established the study of the built environment as a normal part of art curriculum.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Implied*

Since "streetwork" was advocated it could be assumed that aspects of community-based involvement occurred. But the focus was still on what places looked like and how their appearance could be improved.

### **Design Education Unit**

The Design Education Unit at the Royal College of Art was founded in 1978 as a result of a research project into the state of design education in secondary schools. An extension of the Art and the Built Environment Project, it was concerned with "design" in the broadest sense -- adapting the environment to the individual and the community's physical needs. Coordinated by Eileen Adams and Ken Baynes, starting in 1980, the aim was to expand the range of art teaching in the area of critical awareness and to develop design studies through the direct study of the urban environment. This was accomplished nationwide by the establishment of inter-professional curriculum development groups (see Art and the Built Environment Project). The Unit provided a national focus and support system for the work through in-service, conferences, courses, and publications.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated but vague*

Although the aim was on adapting the environment to meet physical needs, there is no direct statement concerning the spatial and structural needs of women. The amount of firsthand community involvement is not clear.

### **Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Architects-in-Schools Program**

In 1984, as a result of the popularity of the ABE Project and the Design Education Unit (Eileen Adams had made concerted efforts to involve registered architects), and because the need for a formalized architects-in-schools program was identified, British architects entered the school system. In 1985 the RIBA established its first full time post to co-ordinate and develop its educational interests. In 1987 the "Architects-in-Schools" program was initiated. The RIBA's publication Architects-in-Schools, (1987) contains reports of the first year of architect residencies throughout England and Wales. According to the Institute, their education program is the pinnacle of success. The Institute played a leading role in organizing the International Conference on Built Environment Education held in Cambridge, England, in 1992.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

The RIBA subsidizes individuals to conduct series of workshops in schools. This is a reformist rather than a reconstructivist approach. It's goal appears more concerned with the formalistic aspects of the built environment.

### **Building Experiences Trust (BET)**

The Building Experiences Trust (BET), a collaboration of professionals within the construction industry was established in 1990 in London to help develop initiatives in the field of built environment education. The Trust has an international outlook and believes its mission is to play a significant role as promoter of built environment curriculum in the school system in all countries throughout the world. The Trust instigated the International Built Environment Education Conference in Cambridge in 1992, which brought together educators, designers and those in the construction industry, with the objective of establishing a global network. Publications to date are linked to National Curriculum in the area of Design and Technology, for example, Design Technology and Built Environment (Record & Frost, 1990), a teacher's handbook for using the built environment.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

A question that remains unanswered, and one that needs to be raised, is the motive behind the industry's involvement in built environment education. Of the 21 Trustees, only one is a woman.

### **Built Environment Education Project (BEEP)**

Established in 1991, the Built Environment Education Project (BEEP) is a triangular partnership of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) in the city of Birmingham, a local education college, and local primary schools. The CITB intends, ambitiously, to establish a national network of fifty curriculum centres that will provide facilities for schools wishing to use construction as a basis for cross-curricular learning. BEEP's objectives include enhancing children's awareness of their own local environment and fostering positive attitudes toward the role played by the construction industry. An unique emphasis on women, girls, ethnic and racial minorities, and people with disabilities, and positive action to counter stereotyping and its effects, forms an important area of the Project's work. BEEP is working towards implementing anti-racist practice in all planned projects.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Stated and described*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated but vague*

This is the **only** program in Britain, the United States or Canada that mentions implications for women. Although all activities have an equal opportunities element it is not clear if women's spatial and structural perspectives are presented.



### Programs in the United States

#### **GEE! Group for Environmental Education**

The formation of the Group for Environmental Education (GEE!) in 1966 launched built environment education in the United States. GEE!'s genesis was precipitated by a joint project of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Philadelphia School District and by an increased professional concern with the need for educational programs related to the urban environment. The group's conceptual goals were to develop the individual's awareness and understanding of the urban environment, to instill confidence in the individual's judgments of the environment and to enable the individual to control and change the environment. GEE! attempted to establish these goals in two main areas, teacher training and creative publications. In 1972 GEE! marketed its work nationally and internationally.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated but vague*

Although the Group was composed of architects, planners, educators, and media specialists, there is not a strong emphasis on community-based initiatives. Rather the built environment is treated in a more generalized context.

### **Architects-in-Schools Program**

In 1976, the architecture component of the Artist-in-Schools program of the National Endowment for the Arts placed architects in residencies in elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. Called the Architects-in-Schools program, the sponsors subsequently published Architects-in-Schools Planning Workbook, a resource guide designed for the architect in residence. The program was instigated and coordinated initially by Aase Eriksen, an architect trained in Sweden. Her contribution was an important one and the program had a tremendous impact (see Eriksen, undated, 1974, 1977, 1979; Eriksen & Wintermute, 1983). She was also editor of Built Environment Education, a quarterly similar in format to BEE. Many of the built environment education programs presently in use in the United States followed from this program.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

By the early 1970s the concept of involving architects in education was gaining popularity in the United States. However, despite the women's liberation movement, gender-bias in the built environment had not become an issue.

### **Foundation for Architecture, Architecture in Education (AIE)**

The Foundation for Architecture, established in 1980 as a non-profit organization by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, saw as its mission the incorporation of the study of the built environment in education. In 1981, in a joint venture with the Philadelphia School District, the Departments of Architecture at University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and local architecture firms, the Foundation developed an architectural program for the Philadelphia public school system. Called Architecture in Education (AIE), the program aims to encourage the appreciation and understanding of the architectural environment, its heritage, and its relationship to other civilizations and cultures. The AIE basic program, administered by Rolaine Copeland, utilizes a team of trained architect volunteers, architecture students, and teachers.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

Although the program also includes the relationship of the built environment to human needs, the main foci appear to be architecture history, structural principles and the interaction of the natural and built environments.

**Built Environment Education Program (BEEP)**

The Built Environment Education Program (BEEP), a project of the California Council, [of] The American Institute of Architects (CCAIA), advocates that teachers and architects work together in the classroom with a focus on the relationship between the built environment and the natural environment. The program claims to focus on stimulating observation and awareness, group interaction and technological exploration. As such, students learn to think analytically and to use problem solving skills. BEEP's cross-curricular structure implies that subjects such as mathematics, geography, social studies, and English are integrated into the curriculum. The program is supposed to acquaint students with "real life" decision making, and that a heightened understanding of architectural elements helps them build a stronger perception of the environment.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

Despite the fact that the goals of the program include learning the skills necessary to influence the quality of the environment, stress does not appear to be on empowering women or using community-based initiatives as learning tools.

### **American Institute of Architects (AIA): Learning by Design**

Starting in 1966, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the national organization of the architectural profession, has been involved in elementary and secondary education across the States in an effort to integrate human-designed environmental concerns into the classroom. In its perceived role as education catalyst the AIA lobbied at government levels for effective legislation dealing with architectural education. In 1980, the organization developed a primary and secondary education program, "Learning by Design" and that same year the first Sourcebook of curriculum and resource information was published. A second edition, entitled The Sourcebook II: Learning by Design was published in 1988. Like its original, it was compiled by architects and educators, and is a collection of educational resources designed for use by architects and teachers.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

Although the goal is to develop in every student the skills to design a quality human environment, the program does not appear to be strongly community-based nor is there a focus on the spatial and structural needs of women.

## **Architecture + Children**

Architecture + Children was created in 1987 by Anne Taylor, program director for the Institute of the same name, in Seattle and Albuquerque. The Institute, a non-profit organization, develops built environment education curriculum for students at every age level, runs teacher training programs and organizes exhibitions. Taylor, who also teaches at the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning and is director of the Institute of Environmental Education, Albuquerque, believes that as a "connector" the study of architecture and design, using the natural, built, and cultural environment, can be the key to the integration of all subject areas. Taylor is keenly interested in Native American and Hispanic cultures and cosmology, particularly the way these cultures view, plan, design, and construct their communities. The program is being adopted in cities in Japan.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Implied*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Implied*

A multicultural and spiritual tone permeates Taylor's work. Her holistic approach is unique in the field of built environment education. She has chosen to focus on cultural aspects as a route towards change.

### **Institute for Environmental Education**

Situated at the University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque, under the directorship of Anne Taylor, the Institute for Environmental Education combines academic research, teacher training, professional development, and community service in its objective of quality environmental design and improved environmental understanding. Interdisciplinary studies, which integrate the fields of architecture, planning, education, and environmental psychology are offered. Incorporating the Architecture + Children curriculum, students are guided through a series of design experiences that mirror the design studio, focusing on problem solving and aesthetic judgement-making. The Institute has conducted studies and design projects on alternative environments that enhance learning opportunities for young and disabled persons, and for specific cultural groups such as Native Americans and Hispanics.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Implied*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Implied*

This program plus Architecture + Children, the Center for City Building Education (following page), and the British BEEP are the only built environment education programs mentioning design that relates to disabled persons or ethnic minorities.

### **Center for City Building Education**

The Center for City Building Education is a non-profit educational corporation with support from the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Office of Education, participating school districts, and private donations. The program has been a main-stay of environmental education since 1969, through the efforts of founder and director, Doreen Nelson. The Center boasts several publications under the rubric of "The City Building System", an urban design curriculum, which links traditional subject areas and includes spatial skills and three-dimensional decision-making. Center consultants organize planning sessions with teachers and work in the classroom as resource persons. The system is used in elementary, secondary, university, and adult education. Classes are designed to accommodate disabled, immigrant and gifted persons.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated but vague*

Since classes are designed to accommodate disabled, immigrant and gifted persons it can be assumed that community-based initiatives form a part of the program. This may or may not include community-based women-centred initiatives.



### **Center for Environmental Design Education**

The College of Environmental Design and the School of Education at California Polytechnic University, through the Center for Environmental Design Education, provide curriculum training (courses and degree programs) in City Building Education, under the guidance of Doreen Nelson, to students before, during, and after they become school teachers. Training is also available within the university's Liberal Studies Program and the General Education Program. The Center is in the process of developing a curriculum for educators that will focus on the critical link between classroom education and the existing community. Also planned are a magistral degree program, offered in both The School of Education and the College of Environmental Design, and a series of other institutes, seminars, and presentations targeted to reach 1000 school educators each year.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Stated but vague*

Although it is not clear if there is a direct focus on representing women, there is acknowledgement of the critical link between the existing community and the education system. It is not evident if this link stresses public participation.

### **Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE)**

The Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE), located in Prairie Village, Kansas, with art historian Ginny Graves as director, introduces teachers to what it believes are the basic concepts, methods and materials needed to teach built environment education. CUBE has approximately 30 different curriculum packages available for sale, all of which were prepared in collaboration with design professionals and teachers. The program offers a workshop called "Box City", where students collaborate and create buildings out of boxes, giving them an opportunity to debate how their communities should be shaped. CUBE publishes an "archiSources" catalogue which lists publications, audio visuals, toys, and so on, and, together with an international network of architecture educators, publishes archiNEWS, which offers notices of courses and workshops, and teacher networks.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

This is an energetic program which manages to reach hundreds of teachers across the United States. Although it debates how program participants' communities should be shaped, issues of gender, class and ethnicity appear to remain in the background.

### **The Architectural Awareness Project for Buffalo (TAAP)**

The Architectural Awareness Project for Buffalo (TAAP) is a non-profit educational organization which provides a variety of programs and guided walking tours of Buffalo's architectural heritage to schools and community groups. TAAP, founded in 1979, is sponsored by an outreach group known as the "Friends of the School of Architecture and Planning" of the University of Buffalo. The organization assists the School in carrying out activities that involve and serve the community. TAAP offers a wide range of topics: neighbourhood perspectives, design concepts, architectural history, and historic preservation. Many of the programs are specifically designed for children aged 7 to 12 years. The organization boasts that a broad interdisciplinary context is presented and that the program can be used in art, social studies, industrial arts, and home economics.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

The program claims to involve and serve the community and present neighbourhood perspectives. However it is unclear whom it involves and serves and whose perspective is offered. No claim is made that it serves the needs of community women.

### **Project Archi-Teacher**

Project Archi-Teacher, the educational wing of Olsen and Associates, Architects, based in Champaign, Illinois, is a design education program that offers a series of workshops to equip teachers with the information needed to integrate the study of design and architectural history. The workshops include instruction in aesthetics, architectural history, and city planning. Participants receive teaching manuals and visual aids that are designed to integrate architecture with core curriculum areas; lessons in architectural history are tailored as extensions of the existing history curriculum. The program promotes the recognition of architectural styles and the identification of characteristics of buildings constructed in particular historical periods. During classroom hands-on sessions, architect-consultants supervise students' designs for site plans and buildings.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

It is unclear if the city planning component -- the site plans and architectural designs -- take into consideration the spatial and structural needs of women. Social and political questions are not mentioned.

### **Textbooks and a Conference**

Two significant art education textbooks and a conference have aspired to incorporate the study of the built environment into art education. June King McFee's and Rogena Degge's book, Art, Culture, and Environment: A Catalyst for Teaching, published in 1980, became a benchmark in art education because of its particular focus on the cultural and physical environments. The book attempts to incorporate a holistic approach to art and the built environment by extending the range of what is considered art -- studying art as cultural communication. The text is concerned, in particular, that children become aware of their role in shaping culture and the built form. The key teaching strategy is the exploration of the children's environment -- taking children out of the classroom and into the world surrounding them, and offering them first-hand experience at seeing and sensing. One of the chapters specifically focuses on "Art and Environmental Design", and in particular on how cities evolve. Although it overlooks women's spatial and structural needs, and only indirectly suggests active public participation, as an art education textbook, and as a reference guide for beginning art teachers, this has by far the most comprehensive introduction to the built environment.

The well-used textbook, Approaches to Art in Education, by Laura Chapman (1978), introduces teachers to the study of the built environment in the chapter on "Architecture and

Environmental Design". An important influence on art education, the book demonstrates that architecture and environmental design are important art forms in the education of children. Although it does not specifically mention women's design perspectives, or directly stress the importance of public participation, the book does discuss how the environment and the structures within it affect behaviour. Together with Discover Art (1985), another of Chapman's publications, the book also offers teachers ways to overcome inadequate feelings about presenting architectural and environmental concepts to children. It does this by introducing ideas for studying architectural heritage, analyzing architecture in society and encouraging personal expression within architectural forms.

A built environment education conference, initiated by Joanne K. Guilfoil, art educator at Eastern Kentucky University, took place in 1990 at Shakertown. Kentucky middle school teachers of art, history, social studies, and science attended. Workshops, which partnered architects with teams of teachers, offered a basic understanding of the history of American and Kentucky architecture, examined the principles of architectural practice, and scanned built environment education programs being used in the United States. Although literature on women's issues in the built environment was not included, a concise "Annotated Bibliography on Environmental Design Education" was produced for the conference.

## Programs in Canada

### **Heritage Canada**

In 1982, Heritage Canada and the Canada Council sponsored a workshop in Quebec on youth education and the built environment. Called "Heritage Canada Symposium, Youth and Education", it was organized by planner Chantal Quintric Leveille and heritage advocate Judy Oberlander. The Canadian, American, British, and French participants compared their achievements in their respective countries and defined what constitutes youth heritage education. They also discussed how to sensitize youth to the built environment and how to best integrate the topic area into education. A recommendation was made that the director of Heritage Canada hire a special coordinator to promote built environment education and to make it a focus for Heritage Canada. Unfortunately funding for the recommendation was lacking and the goal was never achieved.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

During the workshop the Canadian participants discussed the promotion of built environment education on a national level however "sensitizing youth" in specific issues of gender, class and ethnicity did not enter into the discourse.

### **Ministere des Affaires Culturelles**

Based in Quebec City, and directed by Suzanne Bernier, the Ministère des Affaires culturelles for the province of Quebec funds several organizations and activities to raise awareness of the built environment. Instead of an education office, which the Ministry believed was unnecessary, it developed a number of projects geared to school age children. Included are: **Architectural Landscape Analysis** and **A Neighbourhood on the Waterfront: A Walk through Old Quebec**, which enable students to understand the establishment, development and evolution of a village and neighbourhood, and as a corollary, to identify the age and function of buildings in their own village, neighbourhood or street. La Randonnée de découverte: Une initiation à l'environnement urbain offers guidelines for teachers who wish to create a walk through a neighbourhood or other urban area.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

Although these activities enable students to understand the development of the urban form over time and thereby there would be discussion about political and social implications, the focus appears to be on what environments look like.



**Centre d'interpretation de la vie urbaine de la Ville de  
Quebec (Urban Life Interpretative Centre of Quebec City)**

Begun in 1987, the Centre d'interpretation de la vie urbaine de la Ville de Quebec was founded by the then Mayor of Quebec and supported by the city council. Now administered by Christine Bardou, activities include: Archibus (see description next page) and exhibitions on architecture, landscape architecture, history of design, and urbanism. The Centre's education program is focused around their varied exhibitions; its urban games, which also relate to the exhibitions, have been developed around the history of design, urbanism and the natural environment. Funded by the City of Quebec, the non-profit society employs three full-time staff including an educator, six part-time educators and eight to ten volunteers. Of the corporate sponsors, McDonald's Restaurants is the most conspicuous.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Vague*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Vague*

Other corporate sponsors include Bell Canada, Ultramar Oil Company and the Bronfman family. One can speculate on the motives of the sponsors and if these sponsorships have any input on what is included or not included in program content.

### **Archibus Quebec**

Sponsored specifically by McDonald's Restaurants, Archibus Quebec offers young people throughout the province an introduction to town planning and architecture through bus tours and visits to sites in different sections of Quebec City. Organizers believe that by making comparisons with Quebec City the young visitors gain a better understanding of their own city, small town or village. The tours, the result of a collaboration between the Conseil des monuments et sites du Quebec and the Centre d'interpretations de la vie urbaine de la Ville de Quebec, are aimed primarily (but not exclusively) at students in the intermediate grades of elementary school. Tours include: "The Architecture of Leisure in Quebec City", "Public Buildings in the Twentieth Century", "The Heart of a City", "The Quartier Saint-Roch", and "The Quartier Montcalm".

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

Tours are conceived by historians who carry out the research, write the scenarios, and plan the routes. They are assisted by architects, town planners, and professional artists. Gender, class and ethnicity are not primary issues.

### **Vancouver Environment Education Project (VEEP)**

Built environment education appeared on the west coast of Canada in 1971 with the formation of the Vancouver Environment Education Project (VEEP). Founded by educator C. J. Anastasiou, of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, the project's goal was to produce environmental education materials for the schools of British Columbia, written by local teachers, in order to make students aware of, and appreciate, the natural and built environment. Starting in 1972, a series of manuals on the built environment were published, for example, Vancouver Houses (1972), Shopping Centres (1972), Community Studies for Primary Children (1973), and B.C. Urban History: Discovering the Past in the Present (1974). Distribution of the manuals, both nationally and internationally, was through the British Columbia Teachers' Federation Lesson Aids Service.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and did it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

This project went on to receive international recognition and was featured in the British journal Bulletin of Environmental Education (BEE), however the visual aspect of places remained the major focus.

### **School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)**

Only one school district, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, in the lower mainland of British Columbia has made a concerted effort to initiate built environment education on a district wide level. Under the initiative of teacher Stan Thomson, the British program Art and the Built Environment and the American program Architecture in Education (AIE) have been adapted for use by primary and secondary schools. The Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) education committee (see following page) is currently working with the district to establish a program. The first Architecture and Children Workshop was conducted in the winter of 1992 for teachers and architects. Emphasis is on students' participation in studio and field work and on the integration of theory and practice. Displays of students' work are often held in community settings.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

Thomson has managed to bring the built environment to most schools in this district and students' models are clearly impressive. However, like most programs, his deals mainly with the physical and visual aspects of the built form.

**Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)**

In 1991, the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) conducted a research study on architectural education in public elementary schools. The purpose of the research was to examine programs developed by the architectural profession in other locations, and to conduct background research into opportunities for developing links between the Institute and elementary and secondary schools in British Columbia. The AIBC has since embarked on an education program and initial steps linked architects with educators. Its current focus is the placement of architects in schools. The goal of both the Institute's elementary and secondary school program is to make students and the general public aware of the breadth and creative problem-solving skills architects bring to issues ranging from urban design to structural innovation. The ultimate aim is to raise the architectural quality of cities.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

Although this program attempts to give youngsters the "tools" they will need to effect positive changes to their environments, there is no apparent discussion that centres around the empowerment of women.

### **Heritage in Education**

In 1992, the Heritage Society of British Columbia launched an education program to raise local heritage awareness. To this end, a kit was published titled Heritage in Education, promoting the development of lessons and activities especially for teachers. Efforts are being made by the Society to work with the Ministry of Education and to incorporate the kit in schools. An umbrella organization for heritage groups in the province, the Society includes heritage advisory committees, preservation and historical societies, museums, and aboriginal groups. Originally the regional coalition of Heritage Canada, the organization is especially concerned with the preservation of structures that best reflect the culture. The Society conducts seminars, workshops and an annual conference; one of the goals is to produce more educational materials for schools.

**Does the program represent women (in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and [dis]ability)?** *Not apparent*

**Is the program community-based and does it emphasize active public participation?** *Not apparent*

This program's priority is the preservation of a built environment which it sees as diminishing rapidly. There is no apparent interest in historical studies dealing with women in the built environment.

### Canadian Publications

An innovative Canadian publication, Practical Suggestions for Environmental Design Education, by art educator Graeme Chalmers (1978), is a concise set of lesson plans, aids and activities produced for art and general classroom teachers. Although it does not directly represent women, a section in the manual suggests active public participation. Chalmers, of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, has been a major force in inaugurating built environment education in both Canada and the United States. He was also instrumental in publishing a series of workbooks designed to acquaint students with the architectural features of classical and pseudo-medieval buildings in their community (see Chalmers, 1979; 1980), as well as co-producing a transatlantic annotated bibliography on built environment education resources (see Taylor, Chalmers, & Purser, 1981).

Two books, written by Chantal Quintrie Leveille, an urban planner in Quebec and educator at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and published by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Heritage Montreal, contributed to the promotion of built environment education in Canada: Le sentier du patrimoine (1981), features a walk through old Montreal which focuses on the city's heritage buildings, and This Building is also a Museum (1982), suggests ways of exploring the Museum that concentrates on architecture rather than on works of art. There is no recognition of women's issues in the publications.

### Summary of Built Environment Education Programs

	Represents women	Community action
<b>BRITAIN</b>		
FRONT DOOR PROJECT	Vague	Stated, vague
ART AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Vague	Implied
DESIGN EDUCATION UNIT	Vague	Stated, vague
ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS		
ARCHITECTS-IN-SCHOOLS PROGRAM	Not apparent	Not apparent
BUILDING EXPERIENCES TRUST	Not apparent	Not apparent
BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION PROJECT	Stated, described	Stated, vague
<b>UNITED STATES</b>		
GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	Vague	Stated, vague
ARCHITECTS-IN-SCHOOLS-PROGRAM	Vague	Vague
FOUNDATION FOR ARCHITECTURE,		
ARCHITECTURE IN EDUCATION	Vague	Vague
BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION PROGRAM	Vague	Vague
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS:		
LEARNING BY DESIGN	Vague	Vague
ARCHITECTURE + CHILDREN	Implied	Implied
INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	Implied	Implied
CENTER FOR CITY BUILDING		
EDUCATION	Vague	Stated, vague
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN		
EDUCATION	Vague	Stated, vague
CENTER FOR UNDERSTANDING		
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Vague	Vague
THE ARCHITECTURAL AWARENESS PROJECT		
OF BUFFALO	Not apparent	Vague
PROJECT ARCHI-TEACHER	Not apparent	Not apparent
<b>CANADA</b>		
HERITAGE CANADA	Not apparent	Not apparent
MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES CULTURELLES	Vague	Vague
CENTRE D'INTERPRETATION DE LA VIE		
URBAINE DE LA VILLE DE QUEBEC	Vague	Vague
ARCHIBUS QUEBEC	Not apparent	Not apparent
VANCOUVER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION		
PROJECT	Not apparent	Not apparent
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.42	Not apparent	Not apparent
ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF		
BRITISH COLUMBIA	Not apparent	Not apparent
HERITAGE IN EDUCATION	Not apparent	Not apparent

No program **clearly** states and describes that it represents women in ways that recognise diversity, nor does it **clearly** state and describe that it is community-based and emphasizes an active public participatory process. Of the 20 active programs in Britain, the United States and Canada, only five appear to have the intention: **Built Environment Education Project, Architecture + Children, Institute for Environmental Education, Center for City Building Education, and Center for Environmental Design Education.**



#### **2.4: Overview of Built Environment Education**

The overview in this section, first, brings together some shared characteristics and other general information about the programs just described. Second, it attempts to identify certain omissions in the programs and links these omissions to the dominant mode of thinking out of which present program goals and strategies arise. Third, it explores the leadership role of women in built environment education. Finally, it draws a conclusion based on the analysis.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study uses an analytical research design (Coombs & Daniels, 1991; McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). The method is applicable primarily, but not exclusively, to researching phenomena which do not lend themselves to strict quantitative analysis. There is, therefore, an inferential aspect to qualitative research in which the data are synthesized to provide an understanding of events not accessible by empirical observation. This type of research is used to provide an interpretation of the concepts and strategies used to formulate built environment curricular studies, and of the hegemonic assumptions implicit in those concepts. The analysis acknowledges particular feminist values guiding the selection of analytical criteria and the interpretation of concepts, and therefore this study admits to a certain degree of partiality.

**Shared program characteristics.** The majority of built environment education programs in Britain, the United States

and Canada are not systematically different from one to another. The language used to describe goals, objectives and curricula is similar in both tone and content. Most of the programs include an aesthetic component (how to improve the look of the structure, site or space) a field experience module, and a heritage or history segment.

Unlike most education curricula, the majority of built environment education programs are initiated outside the education system. Architectural institutes or other groups or individuals create the programs and then attempt to interest schools or school districts to accept them. For instance, the first American program, GEE!, was initiated by the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA; Project Archi-Teacher was organized by architects; the Architectural Awareness Project for Buffalo (TAAP) was founded and sponsored by "Friends" of the School of Architecture and Planning; and Heritage in Education was created by a heritage society.

In Britain, the construction industry is currently playing a leading role in initiating built environment education programs. Of the three existing major programs in that country, two are organized by the industry: the Building Experiences Trust (BET) and the Built Environment Education Project (BEEP). The BET went so far as to organize the International Built Environment Education Conference in Cambridge in the spring of 1992 and is presently carrying on a vigorous campaign to promote built environment education

throughout the world.

In Canada, school districts or Ministries of Education do not play a major role in the introduction of built environment studies, although there is occasional mention in some visual arts curriculum guides. Only one provincial government initiated and continues to sponsor a built environment education program: the Ministère des Affaires culturelles, for the province of Quebec. This omission on the part of ministries of education and curriculum developers could be due to a lack of awareness or conceivably a lack of interest. An attempt by this author to acquire funding from the Ministry of Education in British Columbia for a built environment program focusing on women's perspectives was refused on the grounds that the subject was too narrow in scope, too advanced for elementary or secondary students and too specialized for a place within the curriculum.

There are a few examples of initiative by individuals within education or other academic fields. Two programs that are currently running were initiated by art teachers: Anne Taylor's Architecture + Children and Doreen Nelson's Center for City Building Education. One Canadian program, in School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, B.C.) was initiated by an elementary school teacher, Stan Thomson. The Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE) was created by art historian Ginny Graves.

Five American programs, the AIA's Learning by Design,

Architecture in Education (AIE), Architecture + Children, Built Environment Education Program (BEEP), and Center for City Building Education, are similar in four key aspects: they take an interdisciplinary approach; use a collaboration of teachers and architects in both planning and teaching; provide intensive teacher-training programs; and publish teacher guides.

But other characteristics that many built environment education programs share are in the form of serious omissions: The experiences and contributions of women in the built environment are not included in most programs in the three countries studied, nor is there a *strong* focus on community-based education encouraging public participation.

**Program omissions.** The majority of built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada adhere to a format and approach which does not specifically integrate an awareness of issues affecting women. Since women's experiences are diverse by nature, this omission includes issues associated with gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability. Despite a growing body of work on women and the built environment, published since the 1970s, this documentation is not yet being read or used by the majority of teachers and curriculum developers or architects and planners involved in education. Even those educators, architects and planners who have or should have an awareness of issues associated with women and the built

environment may believe that they do not belong in built environment education. For example, when a proposal for an interdisciplinary course (involving Art Education, the School of Architecture, the School of Planning, and Landscape Architecture) at the University of British Columbia was submitted, a unit on "Gender Issues in the Built Environment" (which would have included issues concerning marginalized groups) was rejected by the School of Architecture on the grounds that it was inappropriate for such a course. When a suggestion was made to the Architectural Institute of British Columbia that their education program establish a sub-committee to focus on women's spatial and structural issues, the proposal was rejected outright by an officer. As mentioned, the Ministry of Education in British Columbia also rejected a proposal which would have focused on women's spatial perspectives.

Another glaring omission is that the majority of the programs examined do not appear to provide sufficient attention to a model of community participation which acknowledges the primacy of local decision-making. Since decision-making in public life often excludes marginalized groups, the integration of this topic would necessarily include issues associated with class and ethnicity.

All built environment programs studied appear to have been designed and initiated by individuals of Western European decent, which may account for the lack of a multi-racial

approach. There is little documentation that suggests that the majority of programs are attempting to integrate gender-equitable multi-racial methodology. Most continue to be taught from a Western Eurocentric perspective and, in fact, when analyzing the programs, one gets the impression that the world is mostly male, white and middle class. The majority of programs tend to focus on a process of acquiring technical skills and knowledge geared to the dominant culture. Thus, they may not be addressing the experiences of non-white or non-mainstream children and adolescents.

Only five programs appear to *explicitly* attempt to integrate certain social, cultural and political concerns: The British BEEP, Architecture + Children, the Institute for Environmental Education, the Center for City Building Education, and the Center for Environmental Design Education. BEEP attempts to incorporate a non-mainstream approach by including implications for women, the disabled and minorities; it is the only program which contains the word "women" in its literature. While this program demonstrates sympathy towards social issues, it may be unrealistic to expect a program designed, organized and sponsored by the construction industry to demonstrate a natural sensitivity in these areas. Of the other four programs which include aspects of social and cultural issues, Architecture + Children introduces Native American and Hispanic cultures and cosmology; the Institute for Environmental Education conducts studies and design

projects on alternative environments that enhance learning opportunities for disabled persons as well as specific cultural groups such as Native Americans and Hispanics; the Center for City Building Education offers classes designed to accommodate disabled and immigrant persons; and the Center for Environmental Design Education is developing a curriculum for educators that will focus on the critical link between classroom education and the existing community.

Many of the other programs claim to examine the relationship between architecture and human needs and aspirations, for example the American BEEP, CUBE, Learning by Design, BET, and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Architects-in-Schools program; but whether this relationship is a primary focus is not clear. It is also not clear *whose* needs and aspirations are examined. The AIE program alleges that it explores social and technological issues, but which issues in particular are not stated. While this program maintains that it encourages the appreciation and understanding of other civilizations and cultures, it is not evident whether this means past cultures or non-mainstream contemporary cultures.

**Goals.** All the programs strive for visionary and inspired goals in their mission statements. But do the goals relate to practice? An analysis shows that programs aim to assist students to: (a) develop an awareness and understanding of the urban environment, (b) acquire a sensitivity toward the

built environment, (c) cultivate discriminatory skills to appraise critically the built environment, (d) gain confidence in judging the built environment, (e) obtain techniques to design a quality human environment, and (f) take part in the creation and management of the environment. Genuinely inclusive programs however, need to look at historically marginalized communities. All of the above stated goals are commendable if they can also take into consideration women's experiences of the urban landscape, and the experiences of others who are not traditionally represented in urban theory planning and design. By *whose* standards, we must ask, do we critically appraise the built environment, and by *whose* definition do we understand and appreciate a "quality" environment?

Present normative methods of education cannot yield a successful model for a radical set of pedagogical systems. It can be speculated that built environment programs are resistant to change for a number of reasons: lack of awareness; denial; fear of the unknown; inertia; or vested interests. Denial here refers to the hegemonic myth that life and social configurations are as they should be, "natural" and just. Fear of the unknown could be another barrier: the benefits of change often are not understood until after change has been made.

*Cui bono*, who benefits, is the key to understanding the maintenance of the built environment education system or,



indeed, any system, which, in the context of the greatest good for the greatest number, has apparently outlived its usefulness. In the case of built environment education, including feminist precepts would be an additional challenge to an already threatened patriarchal system. At stake are position, status, and power, and these are not likely to be relinquished easily, regardless of any real or alleged understanding of the feminist movement.

**Strategies.** Even if built environment education program goals were not at issue, an analysis of the strategies employed is needed to determine how they affect programs. Often two opposing strategies appear in built environment education: The first is the volunteer team approach advocated by the early British ABE Project and the Design Education Unit. This approach encourages teachers, architects and planners to collaborate and to plan and teach jointly. It is concerned with community issues, and its goal is education for participation: to create links between school and community, and teach students how to participate effectively in shaping the environment. Unfortunately, neither of these programs are still in existence. The second approach, advocated by the RIBA, the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, and other programs, places architects in schools to conduct architectural workshops on the formalistic aspects of architecture.

The two approaches invariably come into conflict. In

Britain, the volunteer community-oriented team approach advocated by the ABE Project has been superseded by the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) Architects-in-Schools residency program in which architects are paid to conduct classroom sessions. Such a change in presentation significantly alters the educational content. Most architects are not, as professionals, trained in the social issues that a built environment program would need to incorporate. Their focus, understandably, is on formalistic, aesthetic, and technical considerations, and *not* on an analysis of where their particular set of judgements and values comes from, or whom those judgements affect. The change in orientation in Britain is untimely since the first approach appears to be far more conducive to meeting stated program goals.

It would appear then, that an architect-in-schools program, by reinforcing a kind of professional superiority or mystique, could hinder rather than promote citizen participation in the built environment. Teaching from a strictly formalistic perspective probably does more to maintain the status quo than to critically analyze it. It is the purpose of this dissertation to demonstrate the need to progress to a new level of educational programming. It is asserted here that this may take place only if those involved in built environment education acquire a grass-roots feminist perspective. In community-based women-centred initiatives we find areas where women are developing an awareness and

understanding of the built environment, gaining confidence to critically appraise the built environment, and cultivating the skills required to design a quality human environment.

**Visibility of women in built environment education.**

Women have had considerable influence on built environment education and continue to be in the forefront of the movement. They have contributed to the field by developing programs and textbooks and organizing conferences. Some programs have been initiated by female art teachers while other women play major roles in administering programs. The dominant leadership comes from eight women: British art educator Eileen Adams, Canadian planner Chantal Quintric Leveille, and six American women: Aase Eriksen (now working in Denmark), Anne Taylor, Ginney Graves, Rolaine Copeland, Doreen Nelson, and Joanne K. Guilfoil. The two major Canadian projects, the Ministère des Affaires culturelles' program, and the Centre d'interprétation de la vie urbaine de la Ville de Québec, are administered by women, Suzanne Bernier and Christine Bardou, respectively. The only art education textbooks that deal with the built environment in any significant manner come from three women: June King McFee, Rogena Degge and Laura Chapman.

The active leadership demonstrated by women raises some questions: do some women educators share a common experience that causes them to focus on built environment education? Do their programs differ in any way from those initiated by men? Will the presence of women in leadership positions eventually

facilitate the integration of spatial and structural issues concerning women? Questions such as these, although important, may not serve a useful purpose at this time. To conceive of differences is extremely problematic given the gender bias that is consciously and unconsciously structured into almost all aspects of the built environment. To escape the pervasive effects of this type of socialization and posit methods of resistance to the hegemonic constraints of patriarchal capitalist culture requires a certain amount of critical distance -- a distance that is difficult to achieve (Armstrong, 1993). Female art teachers will have to develop a feminist critical practice before their programs differ from those of men. Nevertheless some aspects of their programs reflect this leaning.

From the descriptions in the literature and personal correspondence, it appears that women focus more on non-aesthetic issues. Eileen Adams stresses community involvement, and her publications, geared specifically to teachers, are an engaging mix of social and political issues, often concisely expressed in the form of innovative comic strips. She is calling for changes in teaching methods and in basic attitudes, and stresses that study of the built environment is a cross-curricular activity that breaks down barriers and opens new possibilities. Anne Taylor, who organized a built environment education conference in the spring of 1993, which brought together educators and designers

from around the globe, believes in a cross-cultural approach and brings to it spiritual and metaphysical expressions. June King McFee also advocates cross-cultural awareness in design and the built form. She was stimulated to write her textbook after visiting the riot-torn areas in American cities during the 1960s and early 70s where she was strongly disturbed by the political decisions that destroyed environments, particularly ethnically developed low-income neighbourhood communities. She is a supporter of equal opportunity and an ecologist. Laura Chapman argues that students have the right to know that the built environment is a product of multi-layered decision-making and as citizens, they can be participants in the process of shaping the built environment. Chapman was influenced by post-World War II's construction boom, witnessing the consequences of misplaced priorities in large and small scale projects. Her travels introduced her to a sense of locale and culture and she believes that inconsiderate or ill-conceived aesthetic design have social and cultural consequences well beyond the immediate locations in which they are found. Ginny Graves asserts that lack of design literacy is destroying cities and therefore she is bringing "art" to built environment education, but in a much broader context and in a more "real life" situation. She contends that once people are aware of the issues and challenges of the built environment, they begin to make better choices, accept responsibility for, and make an impact on

their environment in meaningful ways. Joanne K. Guilfoil, one of the few art educators acknowledging publicly issues of gender in the built environment (she recently wrote a review of Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment [1992], by Leslie Kanes Weisman), states that the politics of public space belongs on the art education agenda as much as it does on the feminist agenda and that built environment education should play a role in forming attitudes that honour human difference. This role should include developing in students an understanding of the influence architecture has on human social behaviour.

### **2.5: Conclusion**

The analysis presented indicates that most current built environment education programs in the three countries studied do not represent women's diversity nor are they *strongly* committed to community action. Furthermore, most programs do not cover the total range of integratable educational knowledge. The overview of the discourse on women's spatial perspectives in the following chapter testifies that there is a vast amount of overlooked material available for teacher use. Thus, this study demonstrates that systemic inequities occur in the majority of built environment education programs. They ignore the spatial and structural concerns of women and concomitantly issues of gender, ethnicity and class.

Built environment education in Canada, the United States and Britain reflects, for the most part, a one sided male

Eurocentric view. Like much of Western education it is therefore a miseducation of the majority. Minnich (1988) argues that the majority of humankind has been excluded from education and the creation of knowledge: built environment education is no exception. The failure of most programs to consider aesthetics *and* gender, ethnicity and class at a theoretical as well as an empirical level, implies that there is an immense need for new educational research to look at spatial design and cognition in the context of socialization and oppression.

To conclude this chapter, the following points must be made: There are tremendous gaps in built environment education; there is little, if any, research being done in Canada in this field and subsequently no grants to support such research. There is no central data source and the ERIC source is minimal (less than 12 entries). Committees need to be formed at all levels of the education system to explore the integration of issues concerning women and the built environment. The following chapter presents these issues as they appear in the discourse focusing on women and the built environment and describes some community-based women-centred initiatives.

## CHAPTER 3

### FEMINIST DISCOURSE ABOUT THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

#### AN OVERVIEW

Having examined the omissions in most existing curriculum in built environment education, what can we learn about the built environment from feminist discourse? Since feminist literature identifies diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability it affirms the inherent worth and capacity for self-determination of all women. Any built environment education program that represents women will need to make use of this discourse. Where and when did the discourse begin? What are the major themes?

#### 3.1: Introduction

Feminist discourse concerning the built environment intensified in the United States in the mid 1800s when a few rural and urban feminists insisted that the design of communities and housing did not serve the needs of women. The single family home was condemned as both oppressive and isolating for women because excessive demanding domestic work could not be shared. The goal of these early feminists was to plan, design and build communities and housing that ended the confinement of women to household labour. Rural and urban communal and cooperative facilities which socialized domestic labour and allowed women to gain economic independence were both envisioned and developed (Hayden, 1981).

As feminist views on housing and other aspects of society



began to spread, a backlash began. In 1903, the editors of an American architectural journal asserted that the cooperative apartment house was the most dangerous enemy that American domesticity had ever encountered (Hayden, 1981). Post World War I, post-Bolshevik Revolution anti-communist hysteria activated an attack on American feminists by red-baiters who equated communal and cooperative living arrangements with communism (Hayden, 1981; Papachristou, 1976). Fuelling this fire, "The Woman Patriot", a bi-monthly American publication based in Washington, D.C., "Dedicated to the Defense of The Family and The State AGAINST Feminism and Socialism" ran an article in 1923 titled "How Reds are Organizing Women" (Papachristou, 1976, p. 200). By the end of the 1920s, many politicians and business men insisted that economic growth and prosperity depended upon keeping women out of the labour force and in the home (Hayden, 1981).

World War II ushered in an extraordinary transformation in both gender roles and spatial organizations. During this period, the American government's construction of wartime housing communities in regions involved in arms manufacturing created unique changes to the built form. For the first time, communities were designed and constructed to serve the needs of women. Although these communities were short-lived, they demonstrated that the American government, in conjunction with housing developers, urban planners and architects, had the economic and ideological capacity to restructure the built

environment to better suit the needs of working women (Hayden, 1981).

However, during the postwar period of the 1940s the expanding capitalist economy targeted the home as a market for manufactured consumer goods. Capitalist developers launched huge campaigns to sell small suburban homes purchased with government-subsidized mortgages. Subsequent suburban sprawl had detrimental effects on working women by separating them from areas of paid work, services and cultural life (Hayden, 1981). This isolation, induced by powerful political and economic interests, helped to silence the women's movement for over 25 years.

The 1960s saw a re-emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement. This was a time of change: The job market opened up (partly as a consequence of the space race and Viet Nam War military spending); the anti-war and civil rights movements were activated; contraception became more widespread; and urban life resurged. In this milieu women, once again, began to articulate their dissatisfaction with the built environment and this articulation provided the initial basis for a rapidly growing body of work. Research continues to be carried out in disciplines such as architecture, planning, urban geography, sociology, anthropology, environmental studies, women's studies, and architectural and urban history.

Three dominant themes have appeared in the research. First, studies which focus on women's lives and constraints in

the built environment. These include historical research establishing links between the development of suburban environments based on single-family home ownership and the development of capitalism, as well as research on the spatial and structural needs of women. Second, historical and contemporary studies based on women's experiences and contributions in the architectural and planning professions; these include research that examines the existence of a feminist approach to design and planning. Third, reports on political advocacy and action developed and organized by feminists.

The overview in this study is divided into four sections. The first section examines guidelines for feminist analysis and research in the built environment. The second, third and fourth sections explore the major themes in the literature: (a) the inter-relationship between gender and the construction of urban space and the architectural changes that would be required to alleviate gender discrimination, (b) the status of woman architects and planners and the question of a feminist design sensibility, and (c) the current trends in feminist organizations and lobbying efforts.

### **3.2: Guidelines for Feminist Analysis and Research**

In her paper, "Is there a Feminist Analysis of Architecture?" Jos Boys (1984a) stresses the need for an exploration of the way a "male-defined" world constructs and perpetuates one particular set of meanings in space through

"architectural" examples. She suggests that while architecture does not control women's lives, it acts in conjunction with other social and economic factors to keep women in their "place". Male-defined ideas about appropriate localities for homes and work places are related to appropriate behaviour for women in these two locations. Boys explicates the paradoxical male desire to categorize women in two entirely incompatible ways: as pure unsullied beings in the home and as readily available sex objects in the work force. Thus, in a male-defined view of the world, women's sexuality can be defined by the place in which she is situated. Ascribing these two categories to women requires a split in the sphere of home and work and therefore one of the major themes of contemporary feminism has been the rejection of the separation of private and public space in women's lives.

Since public space traditionally belongs to men, many women view it as the site of dangerous and uncontrollable events. Boys (1984a) argues that the architectural and planning professions have failed to recognize the mechanics by which women's fears are constructed and the differences in space usage between women and men. This failure brings to light the urgent need for a feminist analysis of architecture. According to Boys, feminist methods of analysis of architecture are based upon an understanding that environments are not neutral, that there is a relationship between

architecture and a sexist social structure. In many cases, feminist work develops from a strong dissatisfaction with current architectural and planning practice, in both process and product and from a personal sense of dislocation.

Most feminist work exposes the ways in which the world is male-defined and demonstrates how women's social experience has been kept notably absent. Boys (1984a) asserts that through a feminist critical assessment of architectural history, the hegemonic meanings beneath a man-made world are revealed. Feminist architectural practice is therefore about producing more "appropriate" environments for women: socially, spatially and symbolically. Any feminist analysis of architecture should take into account the contradictions between architectural theory and women's material conditions. Feminist research should evolve from an appreciation of the diversity of women's experience. It should critically analyze women's subjugation in society and it should look at architecture as the physical embodiment of a set of political, social and economic priorities. A feminist analysis can confront a multiplicity of issues simultaneously, beginning with the way in which the physical composition of the built environment disallows women equal access to resources. Secondly, it can explicate the way in which the built environment legitimizes and naturalizes this inequality. Finally, it can demonstrate how architects consistently construct their own socialized experience as "the norm".

Although Jacqueline Leavitt (1980a) addresses the same questions as Boys (1984a), she does so from the position of a feminist planner. In her essay, "Research Needs and Guidelines on Women's Issues: Planning, Housing and Community Development", Leavitt reviews and recommends approaches to research about women and planning. She identifies women's issues and demarcates problems that affect groups of specific women such as female-headed households or battered wives. Leavitt stresses that in any research dealing with women and the built environment variables such as class, ethnicity and age should be taken into consideration and feminists should attempt to build coalitions across these class and ethnic lines. Leavitt warns that middle-class bias and false universalization are not automatically offset by female feminist planners. Just as issues surrounding women have been identified largely with the white middle-class women's movement, (although this is changing), most women planners are also white and by education and income belong to the middle-class. Those biases may inform their findings. Leavitt is also critical of the research practice gap which occurs when an academic approach does not offer solutions the practitioner can apply or when what is produced by the community-based planner is too site-specific. For Leavitt, it is crucial to have theory that relates to practice and vice versa.

Leavitt (1980a) proposes the development of research

guidelines which could provide a comprehensive framework and help bridge the research practice gap. These guidelines, which parallel Boys' (1984a), recognize (a) that while patriarchy affects all women, household organizations should be analyzed by class, sex, age, and ethnic group, and (b) that identification of women's issues in planning should relate to feminist theory and feminist history since they are critical to understanding underlying patterns in planning. The historical focus of planning on suburban development helped to create conditions that perpetuated women as domestic stereotypes, incorporated into current planning. Only with an increase in the number of feminist planners, and impetus from feminists outside planning, is it possible to deconstruct stereotypes and present realistic images of women both historically and currently.

Leavitt (1980a) contends that even after acceptance of the basic research guidelines, patriarchal barriers make it difficult to come to terms with women's issues in planning, for example, the organization of planning and the disjuncture between the public nature of planning and private needs. These external variables affect both research and policy implications. Patriarchal assumptions in housing include the presumption that a male will be present or that female-headed households are either temporary or involve deviant females. Planning continues to be organized around physical categories rather than social and economic issues. Because there has

been a *de facto* assumption that everyone belongs to a nuclear family, special groups have been ignored; for example: older women, disabled women, lesbians, women of colour, and single mothers. Given the functional nature of planning, feminist research which focuses on gender and the built environment is critical. The following sections examine the three major themes in the discourse.

### **3.3: Women and the Built Environment**

The first major theme that is evident in the literature focusing on women and the built environment is the interrelationship between gender and the construction of urban space. This theme both examines how urban spatial and structural arrangements discriminate against women and reinforce their inequality and alternatively the kinds of spaces and structures that would serve to facilitate women's needs.

#### **Spatial and Structural Discrimination**

**Female as full-time housewife; male as breadwinner.** For the last five decades most North American housing consisted of single-family suburban dwellings designed for predominantly white nuclear families with prescribed roles and activities for women and men. This rigid gender system determines the design and location of dwellings and places of work; in turn, these settings support the ideologies that generated them. For many women, however, the ideological construct of "woman" has lost its connotations of full-time nurturing and has



instead become associated with the dual roles of juggling domestic work and paid work. For these women the cities and suburbs in which they live no longer fit their lives; rather their environments have become another set of problems to confront (Andrew & Milroy, 1988; Bowlby, 1984; Boys, 1984a; Franck, 1985; Hayden, 1986; Kjellberg Bell & Sayne, 1990; Klodawsky & Mackenzie, 1987; Klodawsky & Spector, 1988; Leavitt, 1980; Mackenzie, 1988; Saegert, 1985; Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1992; Wekerle, 1980, 1985).

In Canada, by the early 1960s, the dominance of two-parent families began to decline, while mother-led, single-parent families and elderly households increased (Klodawsky & Spector, 1988). Statistics Canada (1991) reveals that the fastest growing family type is now the mother-led single-parent, that the majority of women with dependents have taken on some form of wage earning work, and that women with preschool age children constitute a population with one of the largest employment growth rates. These demographics, however, are seldom taken into consideration by the architectural, planning and building professions.

The Montreal-based Standing Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works (1989) asserts that city planning and development in Montreal have remained "asexual" reflecting little concern for the status and needs of women; a view which is emphatically echoed by many women. Gerda Wekerle (1979-1980) argues that because there are few women in the

architectural and planning professions, Canadian cities are planned by men for men. House design, neighbourhood planning and the organization of transit systems, reflect the fallacy of the predominance of the nuclear family and perpetuate the domestic isolation of women.

Historically, the "ideal" family life had a function. Socially created male and female roles affirmed men's dominance in the public realm of work and politics and women's isolation in the private realm of the home. This gender-based division of labour reinforced women's and men's social, political and economic relationships (Hayden, 1986). Dolores Hayden (1986) claims that in the United States post-war segregation of roles by gender was so pervasive that it was extended to justify housing which segregated the poor, minorities and the elderly. A spatial prototype for married suburban bliss concealed economic deprivation and racial and age segregation. Hayden asserts that post-World War II cities mark the triumph of an "architecture of gender" on a national scale, the end result of which is housing, neighbourhoods and cities designed to constrain women physically, socially and economically. This issue was explored in a project organized by women planners in Toronto. Taking their lead from Women Plan London (Taylor, 1985), Women Plan Toronto brought together various women's groups who described discrimination in (a) zoning and building regulations, (b) housing, (c) transit, and (d) public space. Research confirms this

discrimination.

**Zoning and building regulations.** Saegert (1985), Wekerle (1980), and Wheeler (1990) point out that in North America residential zoning by-laws and building regulations have been based on male defined activities. Residential zoning by-laws require the segregation of home and work, preventing home-based businesses, thereby making it more difficult for women to combine career and family roles. Zoning limits the location of childcare facilities forcing women to either forgo childcare or seek it outside of their neighbourhoods. Zoning ordinances which necessitate the construction of single-family homes on large lots and which bar moderate and low-cost multifamily and extended family units discriminate against low-income women (Wekerle, 1980). Furthermore, zoning ordinances which place a narrow restrictive interpretation on the term "family" make it illegal for single parents, older women or lesbians to share a house in a single family neighbourhood. Cooperative living and group homes, such as transition houses for battered women, are often consigned to transitional neighbourhoods with urban problems (Wekerle, 1980).

**Housing.** Almost two decades of Canadian studies have documented how the needs of women have been ignored in the planning and design of housing. Surveys and hearings carried out in the mid 1970s showed that women often experience severe discrimination in housing (Wekerle, 1980). This topic was the

focus of the Fall, 1990 volume of Canadian Woman Studies in which journal contributors, Novac (1990), Amana (1990), Other (1990), Wheeler (1990), and LaDuke (1990) reiterate that single women on low and uncertain incomes, single parents, elderly women, lesbians, women of colour, aboriginal women, and women with disabilities, face extreme difficulty in obtaining housing. In her investigation of Canadian housing policy, Novac argues that access to housing is still regulated by false and discriminatory concepts of the realities of people's lives. Amana shows that women living in non-traditional families such as lesbians are liable to be ignored or discriminated against. Wheeler stresses that because housing is directly connected to wealth, the housing and land development industries have not focused on what makes housing work for women and children. LaDuke clearly illustrates how poverty is a woman's issue with emphasis on the lives and experiences of women of colour, particularly aboriginal women marginalized by lack of control over their living conditions.

A conference entitled "Older Women and Housing: Challenges and Choices", (co-sponsored by Women in Search of Housing Society [WISHS] and Simon Fraser University) took place in Vancouver in the spring of 1993. The primary objective of the conference was to articulate the colossal problems faced by mature women. Conference proceedings demonstrated how securing housing is a critical issue

especially for older women because they may be disadvantaged as a result of physical or mental disability and/or poverty, retirement, or death of a spouse.

Organized by Montreal's municipal Standing Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works (1989), a conference on "Women and Urban Spaces: Living in Montreal Everyday", also revealed critical housing issues. The conference report, called "Women and the City", showed that poor women experience housing discrimination in a number of ways: typically, they are tenants frequently paying excessive rents and living in inadequate conditions with insufficient control over their environments. Another report, produced in Vancouver, B.C. by the Non-Profit and Community-Based Housing Network (1992) found that women make up the majority of social housing users. A study by Klodawsky and Spector (1988) found that mother-led families with income levels well below those of other family types are predominantly renters. In 1982, approximately 68 percent of mother-led families rented in comparison to just over 26 percent of other families with children.

Is action being taken to resolve the housing problem of mother-led families? When considering the lack of availability of low-income housing for women, Jowsey (1984) expounds on how government, private developers and architects are "dragging their feet" in their approach to affordable housing solutions for women. Indifference is only part of the problem. Architects, like developers, are profit-motivated

and prestige-hungry and therefore housing solutions for women do not have high ranking priority. To compound these problems, women often do not have a strong voice in housing matters. According to the Non-Profit and Community-Based Housing Network (1992), equal representation by women does not exist on design panels, in managing and developing housing or in the management levels of housing administration. These situations are not confined solely to Canada or the United States. According to British housing activist, Sheila Button (1986), the low priority given women's housing needs is a result of women's lesser involvement in the design and construction of housing. Male clients hire male architects, who in turn, hire male construction workers, who are guided by male contractors.

A disturbing trend has appeared alongside the awakening awareness of women's housing and social service needs. Vancouver developers are constructing residential towers that contain units as small as 280 square feet (the smallest in North American and roughly the size of two parking stalls). The builders defend their actions by asserting that the prospective female tenants are far more concerned with location and social amenities than suite size (Appelbe, 1990a, 1990b; Magee, 1992) but there is no evidence that women were consulted about or participated in these design decisions.

**Transit.** Studies beginning in the late 1970s show that women are the majority of public transit users, yet little

effort has been made to provide adequate transportation for them (Wekerle, 1979-1980). METRAC (The Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children) (1989-1990c) found that women constitute 58% of all Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) users as well as 66% of "transit captives" (those who have no driver's license, car, or access to a car). Klodawsky and Spector (1988) correspondingly report that roughly 47 percent of mother-led single-parent families in Canada have no access to a car and are forced to rely solely on public transit. Further studies focus on the mobility constraints imposed upon women because of their travel patterns and dependence on public transit. For instance, childcare responsibilities incline women to confine themselves to a much smaller work-preference area than men, which diminishes their chances of successfully competing in the job market, and limits them to lower-paying local jobs (Fox, 1983; Klodawsky & Spector, 1988; Michelson, 1973; Pickup, 1984; Rosenbloom, 1978; Wekerle, 1979-1980).

**Public space.** A number of studies demonstrate that discrimination against women often occurs in public space. Hayden (1986) and Wekerle (1980) show how attention must be paid to the nature of this space and how it inhibits women's participation in public life. Historically, women's changing relationship to the private and public realms and the diminution of women's public roles occurred with the industrial revolution and urbanization (Boulding, 1976).

Sennet (1974) describes how "public" came to mean a life spent outside the family, a quality bolstered by the proliferation of public spaces for men and the designation of the home as a refuge from the world. Women were not considered stalwart enough to associate with strangers in the cafes or clubs or to partake of the pedestrian parks which emerged in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the public sphere was defined as an immoral domain where women were at risk and the mere presence of women in public spaces was sufficient to provoke anger and violence (Sennett, 1974). Franck (1985), Hayden (1986), Loyd (1975), Rapoport (1982), Tognoli (1979), and Weisman (1992) report that there is a long standing cultural expectation that the public world is men's domain.

The notion that certain spaces in the built environment are gender determined, some belonging to men and others to women, has devastating implications for women. Boys (1984b) describes how this notion is reinforced in the early education of girl children. Restrictions on the use of spaces are systematically taught to young girls. Female children are socialized to stay off the street through an implanted fear of strangers and by restrictions on street games and activities. Girls learn to take up as little space as possible on the street, whereas boys are encouraged and learn that they can exercise their power by taking up space.

These gender-related responses remain ingrained and



manifest themselves in the fears and restrictions that women experience in the built environment. In "The City: Off Limits to Women," two French urbanists, Enjeu and Save (1974), argue that the city consists of an endless series of "keep out" signs for women. For example, women lounging in bars, eating alone in restaurants or strolling alone in public parks still meet with marked social disapproval. Wiedermann (1985), in "How secure are public open spaces?" asserts that within cities, women are limited in their use of parks. Through interviews with 160 women in Berlin, Wiedermann found that many women feel threatened in public parks because they are often sites of sexual violence.

In a report, entitled "The City for Women: No Safe Place", MacLeod (1989) found that 56 percent of Canadian women are afraid to walk in their own neighbourhoods after dark. Read (1990), Rebick (1992) and Pickup (1984) found that women often stay home, keep their children home, distrust neighbours, shop and eat out less, fear using underground parking and fear getting into an elevator with a lone man already on board. Fear of sexual harassment or physical assault also prevents many women from going out unaccompanied or from using public transit. Similarly, Lofland (Cited in Jowsey, 1984), reveals that women's fear of urban public space not only denies them the pleasures of the "street" but by dissuading their presence, actually increases the danger and the inhospitality of the "street". Hayden (1986) describes

how access to public space is especially difficult for older women and may even cause some women to withdraw from public life.

Results of a study conducted in 1982 by the City of Toronto reveal a correlation between urban development practices and violence against women. A large number of assaults against women took place in an "empty space" of the urban system, vacant lots, parking lots or spaces between apartment buildings. Assaults were also linked with the use of public transit and often occurred in the proximity of a bus or metro stop. METRAC (1989-1990a) maintains that in Canada, the sexual victimization of women and children is pervasive and is only nominally discouraged; a fact that is statistically confirmed. In Canada a woman is raped every 17 minutes or subjected to some form of sexual assault every 6 minutes (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1985). In spite of these statistics, the threat of violence against women has not been a topic in open-space planning. Stressing that women's fear of violence *is* a valid planning issue, the Standing Committee (1989) argues that since urban development defines the use of the city, it is unacceptable that there are still sites or sectors that women fear.

Feminist research continues to explore how women are given the message that they are "out of place" (see Spain, 1992). Hayden (1986) and Weisman (1992) demonstrate the effects of sexist and violent advertising in public space.

Billboards, bus and bus-stall poster images of women, pornography shop window displays, department store mannequins, and magazine covers in stands demoralize and depersonalize women as objects. Nelson (1993b) and Weisman (1992) show how many structures in cities alienate women. Towers and skyscrapers visually and spatially dominate the cityscape and assert their own symbolic masculine presence. With their imposing height and internal hierarchical spatial organization these structures represent "barometers of male achievement" (Nelson, 1993b, p.5), forming a constructed backdrop of power and dominance designed to intimidate (Nelson, 1993b). Research is also examining women's actual use of public space and facilities in attempting to formulate the kinds of changes that would make women feel "in place" in the urban environment (cf. Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1992). What specifically are women's urban spatial and structural priorities? The following discourse explicates and envisions the kind of urban environment women are demanding.

### **Spatial and Structural Priorities**

**General issues.** Much of the current research on the architectural and planning needs of women arises from the perspective of women as users of the urban environment. Studies that document the housing and neighbourhood needs of mother-led families as well as those of the elderly call attention to the critical link between housing and services and between neighbourhood environment and community support

(Ahrentzen, 1985; Anderson-Khlief, 1981; Berheide, Banner, & Greckel, 1981; Gutowski, 1981; Hayden, 1986; Hitchcock, 1981; Klodawsky, Spector, & Hendrix, 1983; McClain & Doyle, 1984; Lawton & Hoover, 1981; Roberts, 1991; Wekerle & Mackenzie, 1985). Empirical work on the needs of single mothers, mothers in the labour force and elderly women found that supportive neighbourhood environments included a wide range of housing options, for example, cooperative and social housing, single-parent housing and "granny flats" (Hayden, 1980, 1986; Saegert, 1985; Wekerle, 1985). Brown (1978), Rothblatt (1979) and Weiss (1980) in their research on the neighbourhood needs of single mothers found that facilities within walking distance, accessible public transit and close proximity to home, work and community services were critical (cited in Wekerle, 1985). They also found that a supportive neighbourhood is one which accepts the single parent and her children, is safe and has other single parent families. The needs of women in the labour force are similar to those of single mothers: a neighbourhood environment that includes services such as childcare, jobs, commercial facilities, and good access to public transit. For elderly women a neighbourhood environment that incorporates these elements allows them to live independently instead of moving to institutions (Wekerle, 1985). Newcomer (1976) found that for low-income elderly women, distance from a given service is the single most important issue. The study suggests that on-site

locations are needed for senior centres and laundromats, a one-block radius for public transit, a three-block radius for outdoor areas, and a three-to six-block radius for basic services such as shops, banks, and so forth.

**Housing.** In their discussion on single-parent family housing in Canadian cities, Klodawsky and Spector (1988) recommend ten assessment criteria for evaluating the adequacy and amenability of family housing. These include affordability, accessibility (close to services, schools and employment), availability (sufficient units suitable for family rearing), security of tenure, appropriateness of facilities for children, household maintenance (at a reasonable level of repair), opportunities for sharing and support (community-based support and information facilities), privacy, suitability for transition (flexible financial and housing arrangements in both the short and long run), and cost-effectiveness in the use of public and private funds to create the most effective mix of public, private, and third sector housing.

The Standing Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works (1989) recommended a specific set of design guidelines for single-parent family housing: well-insulated, sound-proofed units with direct access to the exterior; units preferably on the first floor or at most the second floor to minimize activity constraints with strollers and parcels; units with a back yard or a sufficiently large balcony for use

by children and supervising adults; and units with large multi-purpose rooms for children and parents. France (1985) and Leavitt (1982, 1984, 1985) also explore certain features of housing planned especially for single parents which included permanent, nonprofit, cooperative housing projects and philanthropic projects targeted at mother-led families. France and Leavitt also address the need for short-term (three to six months) second-stage housing for battered women and their children. The Standing Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works (1989) similarly concurred with the urgent need for housing for battered women.

**Childcare.** Wekerle (1979-1980) insists that zoning by-laws should require childcare spaces in all housing developments and public buildings. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) (1990), under its "Regional Actions" plan, agreed with this view and requested that the federal and provincial governments participate both in policy invention and funding for an experiment in cross jurisdiction planning. The Children's Advocate (1990) of Vancouver maintains that affordable, licensed, quality childcare facilities for children of working parents are crucial.

The Civic Childcare Strategy (Planning and Social Planning Departments, 1990) of Vancouver identified work site daycare for infants and toddlers as a top priority. Statistics confirm this critical need for childcare preferably at work sites: The Planning and Social Planning Departments of

the City of Vancouver, report that in 1986 the majority of women in British Columbia with preschoolers were in the labour force. Similar statistics were revealed at the national level in 1988 by the Canadian National Childcare Study. A 1990 report entitled Childcare in the City of Vancouver, emphasized that it is expedient for the City to implement a comprehensive approach to its role in the creation of childcare facilities.

**Children's issues.** As well as raising the issue of childcare facilities, the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works (1989) stressed that children have a right to the city and that the urban environment should be redeveloped in a way that recognizes the place of children. The Committee offered an extensive set of planning guidelines dealing with recreational and ergonomic standards: (a) recognizing children's need for playgrounds, recreational facilities and places of rest; (b) developing play areas and parks with high safety standards to minimize the risks of accidents and assaults; (c) consulting with residents regarding the need for play areas, parks and schools; (d) evaluating alleyways as potential sites for play areas; (e) planning the activities of municipal recreational services based on the working hours of parents and on school holidays and summer vacations; (f) establishing ergonomic standards for interiors and exteriors of buildings to solve the problems of strollers in revolving doors, metro escalators, metro doors, and the step-up to buses; and (g) developing spaces in both women's and men's

public washrooms to accommodate infants.

**Park safety.** METRAC (1989-1990b) along with other women's groups in Toronto reported on factors that needed attention in public parks. These included lighting, visibility, entrapment possibilities, movement predictors such as pathways, sign information, visibility of park staff/police, public telephones, assailant escape routes, maintenance levels (for example, replacing damaged lights and signs in neglected areas) and parks programming information. Seven recommendations were correspondingly made to the city of Toronto: (a) research the limitations on women's use of parks, (b) train all staff in women's safety issues, (c) improve signs so that women know their location in the parks and their nearest exit points as well as the nearest likely access to other users and to park staff, (d) consider events and programming which would increase use of the park thereby reducing isolation, (e) improve lighting and provide more (illuminated) telephone and washroom facilities, (f) encourage greater police visibility in the park, and (g) improve safety at TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) points.

**Support services.** In addition to the more common support services, women need "women centred" political, social, economic, and medical spatial structures. These include the need for women's resource centres, ethnic cultural centres, lesbian support centres, lesbian adult care homes, mature women's support centres, media-watch service centres, feminist



educational centres, women's presses, bookstores, bars, spiritual centres, credit unions and banks, midwife-run birth centres and women's health care and abortion clinics (Birkby & Weisman, 1975; Weisman, 1981, 1992). Women in crisis need rape crisis centres, storefront legal services and, as mentioned earlier, battered women's shelters (in 1980, at least one Canadian woman in five was battered by her spouse [Standing Committee, 1980]). Emergency housing for victims of rape, and halfway houses for women prostitutes, alcoholics, addicts, and prisoners are also required (Jowsey, 1984; Weisman 1981, 1992; Wekerle et al., 1980). The glaring need for these facilities evidences women's oppression and disenfranchisement within patriarchal capitalist society (Weisman, 1981, 1992).

**The non-sexist androgenous city.** A number of feminist architects and writers (Gilman, 1979; Hayden, 1980; Hayden, 1986; Saegert, 1985; Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1992) have given considerable thought to the concept of the creation of a non-sexist androgenous city.

In "What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like?" Hayden (1980) speculates that the conventional home would function for, not against the employed woman and her family as it would not be removed from shared community space and community services. The proposed program for a non-sexist city would involve small participatory groups of women and men which Hayden calls "HOMES" (Homemakers' Organization for a More Egalitarian

Society). Hayden asserts that the program must involve men on an equal basis in the unpaid labour associated with housekeeping and childcare. The establishment of experimental residential centres with innovative design concepts would also be a necessity. Spatial and structural arrangements would offer supportive services which reinforce women's economic and social independence while maximizing their personal choices about childrearing.

In "The Androgenous City: From Critique to Practice," Saegert (1985) offers some feminist guidelines or "feminist planning" to correct the masculine biases seen in cities and communities. She suggests accessible cooperative programs that provide affordable housing for women and the integration of housing development, economic development and social services. The key to such integration lies in making resources available to women through programs which require them to exercise leadership and authority. The purpose of such programs would be to move toward community environments that serve the needs of women rather than perpetuating urban forms and services that are biased against them.

**Summary.** The physical form of urban environments and the policies that govern the creation and use of such environments have traditionally been based on patriarchal male defined values, goals and activities. Zoning by-laws and building regulations which prevent the integration of home and work, housing policies which prevent the construction of low-cost

housing or the sharing of single family dwellings by unrelated individuals, public transportation systems which are hostile and inadequate, and public spaces which are conceived as dangerous, all demonstrate that design and planning issues are women's issues.

The gender dichotomy of work/home public/private which arose out of industrial capitalism requires the over-consumption of goods induced by separate suburban households as well as a strict division of labour along gender lines: male as breadwinner, female as housewife. In reality, women are a majority in the paid labour force, they use public space, and the sanctuary identified with the suburban home is an outdated myth. Demographic changes including women's need to earn an income, the delaying of marriage, rising divorce rates, and gay and lesbian relationships all spell the demise of traditional gender roles. Corporations moving to the suburbs bring service jobs with them and the restructuring of industries means that more people will be working part-time or working out of their homes (Hayden, 1986; Nelson, 1993a). Although gender roles are being challenged and the urban-suburban scene is becoming obsolete, women's positions may not be improving. The literature stresses that women require urban spatial and structural creations that are "women centred": that combine affordable housing, jobs, service facilities, good public transit, and safety.

Do women lack "women centred" spaces and structures

because there are few women involved in design and planning? The following literature raises this question but it also examines the context in which women architects and planners work and presents examples of women's architectural visions.

### **3.4: Women in Architecture and Planning**

A second major theme in the literature on women and the built environment centres around women in the architectural and planning professions. These writings can be divided into three categories: first, discussions of historical and contemporary conditions for women in the professions, second, historical studies describing the achievements of women, and third, an analysis of the impact of women on the design of structures and spaces.

**Why so few women architects?** Only 9 percent of the total registered architects in Canada are women (Klowdasky, 1985). At the beginning of 1992, 7 percent of the architects registered with the Architectural Institute of British Columbia were women. Out of a total of 502 architectural firms in B.C. only 13 list woman architects as major shareholders.

Carolyn R. Johnson (1974) states that women have always represented a small percentage of the number of practising architects. The traditional assumptions that architecture is a "man's profession" and that women lack the technical intelligence, stamina and the practicality in business matters necessary to become competent architects has been firmly

entrenched from the advent of the profession (Johnson, 1974). Ortrude B. White, Chair of the American Institute of Architects' Women in Architecture Committee, writes that when she was a student the belief that architecture was an unsuitable career for women was reiterated many times by her school principal, guidance counsellor and numerous others (American Architectural Foundation, 1988).

To this day, women still face extraordinary obstacles in the architectural field as a result of these prejudices. Difficulty in finding employment, lower salaries than men and lack of promotional opportunities are only a few of the problems women encounter (Johnson, 1974; Women in Architecture, 1992). Women's advancement is further hindered by a limitation clause which stipulates that architects need to accumulate three years of approved work experience and register as practising architects within a five year period: a "five year window". This restriction plus the high fees involved in registration make entry into the profession difficult for those women who have chosen to work part-time. Moreover, once architects establish architectural firms, additional fees are required. Because women often have less money than men due to their part-time employment and wage discrepancy, they may have difficulty in starting their own firms. An additional discriminatory factor is that part-time employment is difficult to find in the field. In order to overcome the bias structured into the profession many women

architects have expressed the need for a personal exception policy, for example, maternity leave (Women in Architecture, 1992).

**Historical discrimination.** Sexual discrimination against women has been pervasive throughout the history of the architectural profession. When women have managed to become architects, they often faced insurmountable prejudice. Ellen Perry Berkeley (1980) points out that woman architects of the nineteenth and early twentieth century excelled in domestic architecture but were disallowed any professional credibility by a ruling handed down in an 1876 editorial in The American Architect and Building News, 1:1, stating "the planning of houses is not architecture" (p. 205). Thus women were often relegated to the fringe of the profession because of this bias against domestic architecture (Gwendolyn Wright, 1977).

Early Canadian woman graduates of architecture in the 1920s and '30s found entry into the male-dominated architectural field particularly onerous. For some women this discrimination coupled with the economic depression of the time, was insurmountable. Jean Hall, who graduated from the University of Toronto in 1923, is responsible for what is believed to be the first building designed by a Canadian woman (a four-plex, built in Toronto in 1925). After this commission however, the only job she could find was processing medical claims. Marjorie Hill, the first female to graduate in architecture from the University of Toronto in 1920, had to

take up weaving and glove-making during the '30s and did not receive an architectural commission until 1940 (Grafton, Grierson & Clark, 1986).

There are no heroines in modern architectural studies, however it could be argued that a number of women deserve this status. Julia Morgan, for example, designed over 800 buildings, but in traditional architectural history she is viewed as more of a phenomenon than an architect (Kampen & Grossman, 1983). The discrimination that Morgan encountered in her career has been documented by Sara Boutelle (1981, 1988), Cary James (1990), Natalie Kampen and Elizabeth G. Grossman (1983), Ginger Wadsworth (1990), and Gwendolyn Wright (1977). At the University of California at Berkeley, where Morgan was the first woman to graduate as an engineer, male students resented her taking mathematics and science. In a studio in Paris preparing for architectural entrance examinations to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, she was physically and mentally harassed. Although she was graded harshly by entrance examiners, instructors were astonished at her intelligent work. When she received her certificate, it was anticipated that she would confine her work to design since inspecting buildings under construction was seen as too hazardous for women. After Morgan returned to the United States, her employer John Galen Howard boasted that although he had one of the most talented designers, he did not have to pay her a decent salary because she was a woman (James, 1990;

Wadsworth, 1990). When Morgan quit her job shortly after hearing this, she continued to face various types of discrimination. Boutelle (1981) reports that she was given less credit than the contractor for a bell tower she designed in 1904. It was also believed she was not capable of understanding the concept of reinforced concrete, yet **all** of Morgan's work withstood the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Wright (1977) describes how critics called the domestic strain and scale of her work a sign of weakness, claiming that she stayed with a few safe, small types without moving on to large-scale projects. Towers were not on Morgan's agenda because her clients were mostly women who did not demand such projects.

Marion Mahony Griffin, who was one of Frank Lloyd Wright's top designers, is another woman who deserves architectural recognition, according to Natalie Kampen and Elizabeth G. Grossman (1983). But in the views of two male critics, she is an uncreative figure, lacking imagination, dependent first on Wright and then on her husband, Walter Griffin. In one study, the critic claims that she adopted Griffin's style just as she had adopted Wright's, developing it with a "fanciful" touch. He argues that she was capable only of decorative elaboration and that consistent architectural invention was beyond her (Kampen & Grossman, 1983). In contrast however, feminist critics believe that Mahony may have created many of the drawings that were later



credited to Wright, and that her book of drawings may have had an influence on the Bauhaus school in Germany (Berkon, 1977).

Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, chief architect, designer and decorator for the Fred Harvey Company, (the developer of hotels and restaurants for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad), faced similar discrimination to that of Marion Mahony (Kampen & Grossman, 1983). A reviewer in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (March, 1982), questions Colter's decorative approach to design and calls her earlier work overt eclecticism. The harsh criticism of her work was unjustified because for almost fifty years, from 1902 to 1948, Colter designed hotels and restaurants which affirmed travellers' romantic vision of Native American and Spanish culture (Grattan, 1980; Kampen & Grossman, 1983).

A recent example of sexism targeted at women architects comes from Denise Scott Brown (1989), an architect in partnership with her husband Robert Venturi. She states that her experience of discrimination continues at the rate of about one incident a day and that journalists who approach their firm only want to "deliver Venturi" (p. 244). (Venturi was invited to submit a design for the new public library in Vancouver, but not Brown). She contends that the battle for turf and the race for status among critics still means that women's work is marginalized. Many projects which have been attributed to Venturi are in fact Brown's.

**Schools of Architecture.** A tremendous barrier which

prevented women in Canada and the United States from becoming architects was the fact that before 1916 they were neither encouraged nor even allowed to enter schools of architecture. Prior to this time, women usually worked their way up through apprenticeships and faced the difficulties both in studios and on-sites that this entailed. It was considered improper for women to work under the "harsh" conditions (climbing ladders, mingling with mechanics and labourers) that the job demanded (Wright, 1977; Berkeley, 1980).

Some of these difficulties were partially alleviated when the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture was established in 1916. As the first institution to offer formal training in architecture and landscape architecture exclusively to women, the Cambridge School was a milestone in the history of architecture. More than 400 women graduated with certificates or degrees during the quarter-century in which it operated. In 1938 Smith College appropriated the School because university affiliation became a requirement for architectural schools. Despite its success and the laudable practices of its graduates, the School was forced to close its doors in 1942 due to a supposed financial deficit (Anderson, 1980).

In Canada, the University of Toronto established the first architectural school in 1890, but for almost thirty years the School had no female students. McGill's architectural school in Montreal was established in 1896,

however no women were permitted entry until 1937 (Crafton, Grierson, & Clark, 1986). The teaching of architecture at the University of British Columbia started in 1946 and one year later the school admitted two women, Jane Ellerton Best and Pamela Charlesworth nee McTaggart-Cowan, both of whom graduated in 1952. For a decade following their graduation, there were no other women students. The School hired its first female faculty member, Catherine Wisnicki in the mid 1960s and she remained the only full-time female instructor for 18 years. In fact, for a number of years, she was the only full-time female faculty in a school of architecture in Canada. Several more Canadian universities have established Schools of Architecture but female faculty remain under represented.

**Planning.** Canadian women have been employed longer and more prominently in planning than in architecture (Klowdasky, 1985). Fran Klowdasky (1985) states that although women are concentrated among the less experienced members of the profession this tendency is not quite as pronounced as in architecture. In 1981, 19 percent of Canadian planning practitioners were women (Klowdasky, 1985).

Jacqueline Leavitt (1980b) explores the American planning profession's influence on woman planners and the profession's rebuttal of feminism. By 1980, even though women were entering the planning profession in greater numbers (15 percent of American planners were women), salary

discrimination was still evident and women's issues as part of planning content were largely ignored or stereotyped. Leavitt traces planning's bias against women to the period from 1890 to 1920 when planning developed as a profession. Middle-class women were instrumental in promoting city planning through the cooperative housekeeping movement, club work and civic improvement activities in the public sphere. A campaign against these women was launched to re-emphasize women's "proper" place in the home resulting in few women entering the planning profession.

Leavitt (1980b) claims that from about 1930 to 1970 the small number of women practitioners performed the same planning functions as men, and were indistinguishable as a subset of planners. However, in the seventies, probably as a result of the woman's liberation movement, women planners surfaced as a distinguishable group. This was most evident within the national membership organization, the American Planning Association. In March of 1979, the APA Board approved the establishment of the technical division "Planning for Women". Remarkably enough, one year later, in 1980, the Planning and Women division had become the largest of the 13 technical divisions.

As the number of woman planners grew, it could be assumed that women's issues in planning would become prominent, but Leavitt (1980b) asserts that by 1980 this had not occurred. At this time, planners could choose from among three

approaches: to ignore gender distinctions, to consider gender distinctions as a technical problem or to include feminist advocacy in their work. Leavitt's interviews with planners emphasize what is evident in planning journals and conference papers, that the neglect of gender discrimination was succeeded by some analysis of gender distinctions from a technical perspective.

Leavitt (1980b) considers why so few planners have chosen the third approach, feminist advocacy. She explains that the dismissal of this approach can be understood by examining the structure and history of the profession, the strength of male domination in society and particularly in planning. Male domination is duly evident in the reading list recommended for preparation for the American Institute of Certified Planners' (AICP) exam. The literature is overwhelmingly written by men and either reflects stereotypes of women or ignores them along with other marginalized groups. Given this discriminatory milieu, woman planners have abstained from raising non-traditional planning issues preferring to be distinguished as planners rather than as women. Leavitt contends that in search of authenticity, planning has affiliated itself with mainstream ideology disregarding women and other non-mainstream groups. Leavitt's prognosis is thus bleak. She maintains that the profession will largely disregard substantive issues raised about women and gender relations in the home, the workplace, in planning, and in society as a

whole.

**Women's structures, women's visions.** In relatively small numbers, Canadian women are graduating as architects, entering the architectural workforce and successfully practising architecture. What kinds of structures do these women architects design? Do they design space differently from men and do they share a collective vision?

Margrit Kennedy (1981), a practising architect, argues that the form architecture might take in response to female priorities and values cannot be described with the same certainty as male-dominated architectural forms simply because there are fewer examples of female architects' work. Kennedy maintains, however, that there are some examples of anonymous architecture, remnants of settlements of matriarchies (cf. Lobell, 1989) and built examples from female architects which suggest that there are significant differences between an environment shaped mainly by feminine values and one shaped by masculine values. She goes on to say that although it is impossible to define clear and exclusive categories for female and male architecture, it may in fact be possible to distinguish female and male priorities in architecture. For example, Kennedy sees the female principle as more user-oriented (an emphasis on functional issues) and more socially-oriented, whereas the male principle is more designer-oriented (an emphasis on formal issues) and more profit-oriented. She argues that women may be better prepared

to be architects because they have been conditioned during childhood to be person-oriented, emotional, and later trained to be rational and logical. In contrast, male architects are seldom offered an education which includes affective and social learning. Kennedy's view was confirmed in a workshop organized by Women in Architecture (WIA), a Vancouver based group, the purpose of which was to establish objectives. The women chose "social concerns" as having top priority.

Architect Doris Cole (1973), claims that because women have rarely been part of the organized architectural profession, they have used their architectural skills indirectly to improve the social and physical character of the environment. Sue Cavanagh (1987), like Kennedy and Cole, sees a relationship between women and a socially responsible architecture. Cavanagh asserts that women's experiences of working and bringing up children give them valuable insights into urban spatial needs, and that woman architects may offer what is presently lacking in the profession -- a better understanding of the physical problems within the urban fabric and a particular knowledge and understanding of children's needs.

By contrast, socialist feminists have a different view. Nunzia Rondanini (1981), an architect, claims it is not possible to derive an exclusively female architectural style. She believes that women do not have a different architectural sensibility but rather they share a common history of

oppression. She stresses that women architects should not assume their imagination is free until their condition is also free. Rondanini contends that the goal of architects should be to seek an alternative to a capitalist, racist and sexist use of architecture by working towards fundamental economic and political change.

The all-women British design group, Matrix Feminist Architectural Co-operative, espouses a radical feminist perspective. Matrix (1992) claims that a feminist approach to the design of buildings and space is one that aims at re-shaping power relationships between the expert and the layperson, allowing women clients to be involved in every step of the design process. Matrix (1984) argues however, that architects who are women and/or come from a working-class background acquire an outlook similar to that of middle-class male architects which is why buildings designed by women should not be expected to possess qualities distinct from those designed by men. Matrix speculates that these expectations may change as women architects become more aware of feminist issues.

Two American feminist architects, Noel Phyllis Birkby and Leslie Kanes Weisman (1975) agree with Matrix, contending that women in architectural schools are forced to adopt male-defined processes and criteria, which discourage a feminist analysis of architecture. This point is reiterated in Lesley Gibbs article entitled, "Who Designs the Designers?"



(1987). Gibbs cites Elsie Owusu who maintains that women architects often succumb to the all-pervasive patriarchal attitudes as soon as they begin their architectural training. She claims that women forget their pragmatic approach in support of a male-intellectualized detachment that has no connection with the eventual user of their buildings. What is not clear in this argument however, is whether a feminist analysis of building can come only from women outside the profession or whether a feminist perspective among women in schools of architecture can emerge through political struggle.

Using a more ideological value-laden perspective, Karen Franck (1989) claims that the traits that distinguish women's ways of knowing and analyzing appear in social architectural inquiry conducted by women, in alternative communities proposed by women and in architectural projects designed by women. However, she cautions that the existence of such qualities and their differentiation of women from men are perhaps suggestive. On the other hand, Franck argues that since women's and men's experiences differ, so will their ways of knowing and analyzing. If women's relationship to the world is one of connection while men's is one of separation, the definition of femininity (self-in-relationship) and the definition of masculinity (denial of connection) have important implications for architecture. Franck summarizes feminist literature that identifies feminist ways of knowing and analyzing into four characteristics which she uses to

present a feminist approach to urban planning and design:

**Connectedness and Inclusiveness, Ethic of Care and Value of Everyday Life, Value of Subjectivity and Feelings, and Value of Complexity and Flexibility.**

According to Franck (1989), **Connectedness and Inclusiveness** is the integration of categories and posits an alternative to dualistic thinking. In designing, connectedness takes on three forms: a close relationship between designer, client and user, the desire for closer connections between spaces and the integration of opposite types of spaces. Feminist research develops more inclusive, complex domains and rejects oppositional and hierarchical dualisms such as the dualisms of public/private, city/suburb, work/home, production/reproduction, men/women. These dichotomies are applied in traditional theory and practice as if they were separate and unrelated. The ideology of separation makes everyday activities more difficult to pursue precisely because of the spatial distances that the ideology generates. In exposing the existence and consequences of dualisms, feminists call for a closer spatial connection between prevailing segregated activities. For example, in Dolores Hayden's redesign of 40 suburban houses into a community, she connects social activities, wage work and home life through the provision of on-site jobs, good public transportation and shared services and facilities. Suzanne Mackenzie, Jacqueline Leavitt, Susanna Torre and Matrix also

integrate services with housing as a way of reducing private and public domains.

The **Ethic of Care and Value of Everyday Life** are the dominant characteristics of women's social and architectural research, women's design work and women's proposals for alternative communities. Historically, these ethics appeared in the housing reforms of Catherine Bauer, Edith Elmer Wood and in the work of Elisabeth Coit. Coit was particularly concerned with the daily lives of families in her surveys of conditions in New York public housing between 1938 and 1940. Jane Jacobs' priority is the support and enhancement of daily experience. In her work she shows how these experiences are being disregarded by the large-scale, single-use superblock developments in urban renewal. Clare Cooper Marcus and Dolores Hayden take similar approaches, concentrating on the everyday lives of residents and equating these with the aims of architects. Troy West and Jacqueline Leavitt illustrate a concern for the needs of different kinds of family structures in their design for the new American House and architects in the Matrix group draw upon the experiences of their clients to produce a more functional architecture (Franck, 1989).

The **Value of Subjectivity and Feelings** allows for personal experience to be a source of information for design. Examples of this occurred as early as 1929 when Eileen Gray denounced modernism because it exaggerated technology and lacked emotion and intimacy. Many of Jane Jacobs's insights

were drawn from her own experience of living on Hudson Street in Greenwich Village. Clare Cooper Marcus investigated the deep-seated meanings of home by using Gestalt techniques where participants role-play their own homes (Franck, 1989).

The **Value of Complexity and Flexibility** is associated with multiple use and the need for flexibility and transformation. Eileen Gray argued that modern design lacked intimacy because it over emphasized simplicity. Women architects have continued to voice their desire for greater complexity. Margrit Kennedy includes complexity among her female principles in architecture while Jane Thompson advocates an architecture that comprises both the aesthetic of the industrial age, valuing simplification and the earlier aesthetic embodied in religion and magic which valued complexity. Multiple use of space and transformation of space were primary in Troy West's and Jacqueline Leavitt's new American House (Franck, 1989).

Although Franck's (1989) discourse follows earlier feminist thinking in architecture and other fields, it is still only part of a new effort to outline a feminist approach to architecture. Franck claims that there are other qualities that could be explored as well: cooperation and collaboration, organic systems of spatial organization and form-making and metaphors based on hearing and touching used to balance the exclusive reliance on the metaphor of vision in Western architecture. Because Franck's discourse draws entirely upon

literature from Western industrialized capitalist society, she admits that the concerns and examples described may be true only for some women in this society. One way for women to express their desire for greater and different forms of connectedness however, is to examine the concerns of older women, lesbians, women of colour, disabled women and women in other societies and other circumstances.

Karen Keddy (1992a), a Canadian architect who incorporates Franck's concepts, explores the redesigning of institutional buildings from a feminist point of view. She focuses on the Technical University of Nova Scotia School of Architecture in Halifax where she completed her degree in architecture. She argues that the goal of feminist theory in architecture is to create environments which reflect, support and respond to women's experience, challenge accepted approaches to design, assign different priorities to design issues, and give equal importance to issues considered marginal or irrelevant in mainstream architecture. Keddy's feminist critique of the School of Architecture questions the existing programmatic layout, the spatial and formal qualities, organization of spaces, and the lack of attention to female students' or staff members' experience and perception. She points out two facts that have been overlooked in the design process: firstly, that women experience a sense of vulnerability at night when they enter, walk through and work in a building and secondly, that the

traditional enclosed division of space establishes a hierarchy of importance. Keddy's critique calls for a cooperative team approach to design (which would produce non-hierarchical spaces more conducive to growth and learning) rather than an ego-generated approach. She particularly questions the hierarchical duality of categories that exist in the design of educational institutions: public/private, faculty area/student area and intimate/monumental.

Influenced by Franck (1989), Keddy (1992a) offers five "Feminist Principles" with accompanying examples of "Design Allies" (where these principles can be found). Like Franck, Keddy's first principle is **"connectedness"**, a quality expressed by closer spatial and visual connection, integration of opposite types of spaces, overlapping of spatial domains and interdependency between spaces and multiple use. The allies are Susanna Torre's conceptual model entitled "House of Meanings", a matrix organization that allows opposites, inside/outside, public/private to interact and Maya Lin's Vietnam War Memorial because the human scale coexists with the monumentality of the memorial itself. The second principle, **"flexibility"**, acknowledges change, transformation and adaptability. An ally is Susanna Torre's "House of Meanings" which responds to growth and change occurring within families. Allies for the third principle, **"attention to everyday activities and daily experience as a source of design ideas"**, are Eileen Gray's interior house design/furniture because her

beds have clocks and reading lights built into the headboards and Lilly Reich's furniture because her chairs were designed in the modern style but with backs contoured to the body. The fourth principle is the **"non-hierarchical organization of space"** the ally of which is Lilly Reich's open plan apartment design with equally divided spaces that allow rooms to be multifunctional rather than having a hierarchical fixed function organization. Finally, the fifth principle, **"giving higher priority to interior design"** acknowledges the importance of textures, colours and furnishings that are used to create spaces. An ally is Margaret Helfand Adlersberg's apartment where large furniture is designed to create "rooms" within larger rooms, with each side of the piece addressing a different room. For example, one side contains a bookshelf holding items for the livingroom whereas the other side contains a desk and bookshelf for an office.

Keddy (1992a) contends that within the design process, an overlay of decisions is arrived at by considering several different factors simultaneously. This represents an inclusive approach to design rather than the top-down theory/method/product strategy. The design is situation and site-specific and does not employ a universal formula to inform the theory. For example, the process involves taking many small ideas and weaving them into one cohesive whole rather than creating undesirable compromise by having one "big idea" imposing rules on the design. Keddy suggests basic

criteria for creating a dialogue between existing buildings and "feminist" intervention: expressing feminist architectural principles and using counterpoints rather than creating an "argument" between the redesign and the existing building. For instance, she stresses that her architectural program emphasizes greater building security for women by creating circulation routes to improve the connections between spaces. She claims that once feminist principles are understood and merged with existing fundamental principles of architecture, a more inclusive expression of designing for all human beings will be brought to the design challenge.

**Planning.** Jacqueline Leavitt (1980b) argues that there are negative forces, both in the planning profession and in graduate training schools which prevent women planners from initiating feminist approaches or principles through their planning work. Most graduate training does not prepare female planners with the research background or confidence to develop feminist precepts or methods. Feminist planning principles are at the fringe of the profession, a fact that Leavitt substantiates with her surveys of research in professional journals. She questions professional accrediting exams, the make up of panels at professional conferences, courses in planning schools, the shortage of women faculty members who can bring a sensitized view to feminist issues, and a lack of funds for women's projects. Nevertheless, Leavitt states that with the emergence of "Planning and Women" within the American



Planning Association there exists a countervailing force that may positively affect female practitioners and by extension, their planning approaches.

**Feminist research in aesthetics, art/architecture criticism, history, and production.** Another body of feminist research that relates to the built environment focuses specifically on design-related disciplines. In spite of a diversity of approaches, feminist research in aesthetics, criticism, history, and production has developed a pattern of consistency. In their early first generation studies, feminist scholars researched the "lost woman" in each discipline, striving to include them and their work. The second generation questioned the disciplines, identifying and examining critically underlying assumptions about the relevance of subjects, methods of data collection, kinds of questions guiding research, and interpretational bias. They argued that not only should the study of the disciplines be opened up to include women but that the disciplines themselves should be reconstructed to provide feminist epistemology (Hagaman, 1990). What follows is a brief overview of the challenges posed by feminist research to those canons of design which relate to built environment education.

**Aesthetics:** Traditionally, aesthetics is considered gender-neutral, with no basis for sexist content. Feminist philosophers, however, contend that aesthetics is value-laden and its alleged universals reflect gender, class, and

culturally specific ideologies based largely on the experience of Eurocentric male theorists. Feminist philosophers vigorously deny the possibility of a neutral, unbiased view on any philosophical issue. Rather, they insist that all knowledge is based on experience and contend that the point of view forming the basis for conventional knowledge is grounded in the male experience which is then universalized as *the* human experience (Hagaman, 1990).

**Criticism:** Feminist architecture critics claim that formalist criteria can not provide objective standards (Kampen & Grossman, 1983). The importance of the context within which women lived and worked and the utilitarian as well as decorative characteristics of their work, led to an investigation of the differences with which women and men perceive and comprehend reality (cf. Cole, 1973; Franck, 1989; Kennedy, 1981) and the attribution of these differences to social conditioning rather than biological determinism (cf. Birkby & Weisman, 1975; Rondanini, 1981; Weisman, 1992).

**History:** Feminist research shows that information about women architects is lacking in traditional texts, including those used in art teacher training programs (cf. Gombrich, 1989; Janson, 1987). Even the most recent editions of standard texts are devoted almost exclusively to male architects, providing contemporary students with a version of history little changed from the traditional model (Hagaman, 1990). Some feminists believe that male assumptions about

architecture are so thoroughly institutionalized it may not be possible to interpret the female experience. Advocating a methodology in which the concepts of gender, class, and ideology are understood as historical processes, feminists view the eponymic method of attributing developments to "genius" or "great architect" as reflective of male tradition (Kampen & Grossman, 1983).

**Production:** As mentioned earlier, feminists argue that environments shaped by feminine values would differ from those shaped by masculine values. Although strict definition and categorization of female and male architecture is not possible currently, it may be possible to distinguish female and male priorities (Kennedy, 1981). Some researchers claim that the consciousness of women architects in the past reflected the state of the women's movement at large. Recent growth in awareness of feminist issues, approaches and principles may then offer a new potential for feminist design and education (Franck, 1989; Keddy, 1992a, 1992b; Matrix, 1984; Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1992).

Many points can be drawn from an overview of feminist research in aesthetics, criticism, history, and production. Hagaman (1990) contends that the most forceful are the clear relationships of concerns and criticism across the four disciplines. In each area, feminist scholars have attempted to claim a place for the work of women and to uncover biases inherent in women's representation within the disciplines.

Feminist scholars have adopted a deconstructive stance, challenging the very frameworks and processes of these disciplines (Hagaman, 1990). Aesthetics, criticism, history, and production should be an integral part of built environment education. Integrating a feminist perspective changes attitudes and practices, thus it "decenters" the disciplines.

**Summary.** Sexual discrimination towards women in the architectural and planning profession exists, both historically and currently, a fact which may account for the scarcity of women architects and planners. Some feminists argue that a feminist approach to architecture and planning exists and appears in the "values" or "qualities" inherent in the work of some women. A body of research dealing with the disciplines of aesthetics, criticism, history, and production also postulates a feminist "pattern". Although negative forces surface in the planning profession, the formation of the women's division within the American Planning Association constitutes a "countervailing force" that supports feminist perspectives. How can this "force" be intensified and expanded to reach more woman architects, planners and women in general? What strategies should be undertaken to encourage more women to become actively involved in shaping the built environment at both the professional and grass-roots level? The following literature addresses these questions and includes examples and situations where women have strengthened their role by creating structures and spaces to meet their

needs.

### **3.5: Feminist Advocacy and Activism**

A third major theme in the literature on women and the built environment focuses on feminist political activity. Several feminist critics argue that more feminists must become architects and planners while more architects and planners must become feminists (Berkeley, 1980; Cavanagh, 1987; Gibbs, 1987; Klowdasky, 1985; Roberts, 1991; Spain, 1992; Weisman, 1981, 1989, 1992; Wekerle et. al., 1980).

They suggest a number of possible strategies: (a) promote a feminist analysis of how design and planning decisions are made and how they adversely affect women, and advocate that existing decision-making processes include more input and control by women users; (b) raise gender issues in the built environment in existing women's groups and promote this topic in women's studies and other programs; (c) encourage more women to enter the architectural, planning and building professions; (d) ensure that more girls receive career advice in school on future employment in these professions; (e) support scholarship and practical research about women and the built environment; (f) pressure architecture and planning schools to incorporate knowledge based on feminist discourse; (g) establish all-women's professional schools of architecture and planning; (h) encourage women architects and planners to network and to establish independent group practices that cater to grass-roots women's organizations; and (i) strengthen

the economic base and skills of women so they have the resources to create their own spaces and structures, and promote attempts by women to become producers of alternative architectural environments.

Some of these recommendations have been and are being implemented. Starting in the 1970s, women architects and planners organized to challenge the bias against women in the professions and in the built environment. Their concern with urban spatial and structural arrangements led them to become more active within the academic world, within the community at large and in self-help movements (Boys, Ainley, & Farish, 1989; Kampen & Grossman, 1983; Leavitt, 1980b; Weisman, 1989). The following are examples of women's organizations that focus on the built environment in Britain, the United States and Canada.

### **Britain**

In the 1970s, women architects in London established **Matrix Feminist Architectural Co-operative**, an all-woman, multi-racial cooperative, the first of its kind in Britain to specialize in working with women. Each member is both an employee and a director of the company with an equal voice in its operation. Matrix starts from the premise that a building belongs to the client and/or the users, thereby it developed strategies to involve the client in the design process. The cooperative has designed a Black women's centre, an educational resource centre for Asian women, a children's

centre, housing cooperatives and a school. Feasibility studies include a lesbian centre and a women's alcohol treatment centre (Matrix, 1992). The group is also involved with design and construction education. Publications include: Making Space: Women and the Man-made Environment; Building for Childcare - Making Better Buildings for Under-Fives; and A Job Designing Buildings.

**Women's Design Service** (WDS), also London-based, was established in the '80s especially for women who had been overlooked by mainstream design and planning decisions. WDS offers information and resources on women's issues relating to the design and planning of the built environment. The organization identifies themes, researches, publishes and distributes their findings. Several booklets have been published to date along with a quarterly journal, WEB. Newsletter of Women in the Built Environment. Additional resources include an extensive library and a travelling exhibit. Further feminist advocacy was developed by women members of the Faculty of the Built Environment at South Bank Polytechnic who organized conferences, seminars and workshops addressing issues relating to women's experience in the built environment (Boys, Ainley, & Farish, 1989).

Focusing on the housing needs of low income women, **Housing for Women (HFW)** is an umbrella organization which represents [the merging of] two women's groups: **The Over Forty Association for Women Workers** and the **Mary Curzon Housing**

**Trust.** The organization provides accommodations for single-person households and single parents; a particular focus is on women of colour, disabled women, lesbians, and women with AIDS. At present, HFW concentrates on the London area, where it has 600 properties in management and another 100 being developed. Outside London, and especially in south Wales and the Midlands, sister organizations are being formed.

### **United States**

In the 1970s, American women architects and planners began to challenge their second-class status and to establish alternative professional organizations (Kampen & Grossman, 1983; Martin, 1986; Torre, 1977). Their aim was to expose the prejudice and discrimination against women in the professions, to challenge the definition of what constitutes "good" design and to build alternative environments designed with the needs of women in mind (Kampen & Grossman, 1983).

One such group, the Cambridge-based **Women Architects Landscape Architects and Planners (WALAP)** proposed changing the very structure of the design professions (Torre, 1977). WALAP advocated for the creation of an all-women's practice as a nonhierarchical, cooperative venture and also argued for work-related schedules that related to women's lives (Martin, 1986).

Another feminist organization focused on the needs of its members. Founded during the middle 1970s and based in New York, the primary goal of the **Alliance of Women in**



**Architecture (AWA)** was professional development emphasizing individual achievement within the system. The organization held a symposium on "Sexual Politics and Design" and created a task force to study discrimination in the profession resulting in the AIA Affirmative Action Plan of 1975 (Kampen & Grossman, 1983; Martin, 1986).

The need for an all-women's academic institution was recognized by a group of women architects and planners who started the **Women's School of Planning and Architecture (WSPA)**, the first and only school to be completely founded, financed and run by women for women. From 1975 to 1981, WSPA ran four summer programs on college campuses. Courses and topics were designed to meet the needs of the participants, for instance: "Transitions: Designing the Future as if Women Mattered" (Martin, 1986; Weisman, 1989, 1992).

Within the architectural profession, the **Women in Architecture Committee, of the American Institute of Architects (AIA)** pressured the AIA to adopt affirmative action by increasing membership and participation of women, promoting employment policies that assured women equitable pay and implementing programs to address the needs of women in the profession. The committee urged schools of architecture to increase women faculty, advised secondary school teachers and guidance counsellors that architecture is a career option for women and heralded the contributions that women architects have made to the built environment (Policy Statement, EX-97).

### **Organization for Women Architects and Other Design**

**Professionals** is an independent women's group based in the San Francisco region. Organized by architect, Mui Ho, there are 300 members drawn from the San Francisco region. A non-hierarchical group with a rotating chair, their meetings (which alternate between San Francisco and Berkeley) are open to anyone in the design field and activities range from changing legislation to social events. Similar groups exist in Los Angeles and San Diego.

**Planning For Women** arose out of the American Planning Association in 1979. Member's objectives included raising feminist issues in the planning and development of communities, cities, regions, states, and the nation, promoting professional growth and competence of persons interested in these issues and fostering the examination of these issues in both government and educational institutions (Leavitt, 1980b).

The **Women's Development Corporation**, begun by women architects and planners, is an independent all-women's group practice based in Rhode Island that caters to grass-roots women's organizations. Opening up economic development possibilities for non-professional women is a priority and attempts have been made to train and/or hire women plumbers, carpenters and electricians. The Corporation's first program was located in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood where more than half of the residents were single, widowed or divorced women.

It included planning cooperative housing that provided means for women to gain housing-related skills and jobs, such as building construction, maintenance and housing management (Atrim, Aitcheson, Forrester Sprague, 1981).

In response to the growing number of women entering architectural and planning schools, some institutions have implemented curricula focusing on issues relating to women. Among these institutions are Lawrence Institute of Technology, the University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin (Martin, 1986).

### **Canada**

Like their British and American counterparts, Canadian women have established organizations to advocate the interests of women in the built environment. Many of these initiatives have taken place in three Canadian cities: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

### **Toronto, Ontario**

**Women Plan Toronto (WPT)** is a community planning and advocacy group which focuses on safety, transportation and housing. The organization has carried out safety audits, initiated housing action groups, formed a board with WITCH (Women in Toronto Creating Housing) and OWN (Older Women's Network) to develop cooperative housing, and established a housing circle which produced a Woman's Directory listing architects and engineers. The organization pressured the

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to accommodate women with strollers and to stop cut-backs in night transit. It has also worked with Transaction, the coalition addressing the mobility needs of the disabled (May/June 1991 newsletter).

Publications include a newsletter and booklets: Our Shared Experiences, Women Plan Toronto: Resource List, and Our Needs, Our Communities, Let's Plan: A Community Planning Manual for Women in Metro Toronto and Ontario.

An organization and a network with a feminist perspective, **Women in Toronto Creating Housing (WITCH)** acts as a support group and information source for women in the development of housing. It has been defined as a brain-storming group, a think tank, a study circle, and an incubator group (Sayne, 1990). The **Older Women's Network (OWN)** focuses on the needs of mature women, establishes links with similar groups and develops low cost housing for older women.

**Women's Perspectives on Housing and the Environment (WOPHE)** is a grassroots organization seeking to improve housing and related problems. WOPHE provides a network opportunity for women who have not had a strong influence in housing policies due to poverty, language barriers, lack of information, and other forms of isolation and discrimination. The goal is for women to work together and strategize for needed changes. WOPHE is not intended for those working primarily as specialists on housing and the environment, or

for those representing housing organizations.

**Women and Environments Education and Development**

**Foundation (WEED)** was born out of the journal, Women and Environments. The Foundation's objective is to conduct research on issues relating to women in the fields of planning, design and community development. One of its major projects was the conference, "Charting a New Environmental Course: Women and the Environment" held in 1990.

**Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Women and Children (METRAC)** was established in 1984 by the Council of Metropolitan Toronto. It involves volunteer members from a wide range of backgrounds, including urban planners, politicians, police, social workers, rape crisis centre workers, and representatives from various women's organizations. The committee has established a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention. METRAC's "Safe City" project resulted in the City of Toronto's urban safety report, Safe City: Municipal Strategies to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children.

To encourage feminist scholarship and activism some female members of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) at York University developed a graduate students' program centred around women's issues. The Faculty has since gained the reputation of offering one of the few graduate programs in North America where students can focus on women and environments.

### Montreal, Quebec

In 1989, because of pressure by women's groups, the municipality of Montreal established the **Standing Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Public Works** specifically to look at women's spatial and structural needs. In its urban planning report "Women and the City", the Committee recommended the establishment of an all-woman's committee to evaluate the impact of development projects and programs on women, to propose measures to meet the specific needs of women in urban development and to ensure that women are consulted throughout the establishment of urban plans and programs.

### Vancouver, British Columbia

**Women in Architecture (WIA)** was established in 1992 in response to the concerns of women architects. A major focus is on the architectural work environment, for example the need for part-time work and flexible work hours, parenting leave, and pay/opportunity equity (allowing part time architects to become partners in firms and granting credit for part time internship). Other issues of concern include the gender-biased language in documents and the drop-out rate of women architects. Activities include supporting the professional development of women and popularizing the work of women architects.

A group of professional women planners, the **Women in Planning Group**, organized, in 1992, a steering committee to launch a project that examines women's issues in the context

of community planning. The major objective of the project is to encourage women's active participation in the planning process. The focus is predominately on the role planners can play in involving community women.

**Women in Search of Housing Society (WISHS)** also began in 1992 and was the creation of a group of mature women, all of whom were in acute need of housing. The society's goal is to provide long term housing for single, low income women from 40 to 64 in age. The founder of WISHS had previously been successful in initiating a woman's housing cooperative named "Brambles" in Burnaby, British Columbia. This development, the first ever built especially for mature females has been hailed as a bench mark project. WISHS is currently developing a second housing cooperative in the city's West Side.

**Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society (ENF)** was founded in 1984 to provide safe and affordable housing communities primarily for mother-led families. The society has initiated a number of housing developments and presently their units are occupied by 60 - 70 percent single parents. The remainder of the units are held by two parent families, singles, couples and seniors.

Founded in 1991, the **Sanctuary Foundation** is attempting to organize long-term housing for battered women seeking refuge from abusive spouses. The Foundation is working towards the lease of an apartment building that will enable battered women to rent suites.

Fear of public space has prompted Vancouver women to organize an advocacy group to examine safety issues related to public transit. The **Transit Users Group on Safety (TUGS)** focuses specifically on Sky Train stations in Vancouver and New Westminster. Their goal is to conduct safety audits of this particular form of public transit and inform the Transit Commission of their findings.

Through the lobbying efforts of a grass-roots daycare action coalition in 1990, Vancouver is now committed to a three-year Civic Childcare Strategy. Included in the plan are a review of city-held land to produce an inventory of sites that could accommodate childcare facilities, the implementation of design guidelines for childcare centres constructed in high-density developments, the construction and equipping of childcare facilities as a condition of rezoning, and an agreement from developers to construct childcare facilities.

As a result of Vancouver's soaring housing costs a **Non-Profit and Community-Based Housing Network** was formed in 1992. Made up of both grass-roots and government subsidized housing organizations, the network formulated recommendations for the Province's Housing Commission and stressed the fact that because women made up the majority of social housing users, the Province should enact employment equity to ensure that women are employed on design panels, in managing and developing housing and in the management levels of housing



administration. Women's groups attending these meetings saw the need to network and established **Women In Housing**. The network represents 15 women's organizations who are working to meet the shelter needs of women on a multiplicity of levels.

Scanning the advocacy and activism of feminists, it is plausible to speculate that examples of their organizations could be included in built environment education curricula. Integrating community-based women-centred initiatives will be a first step in creating more inclusive programming.

### Conclusion Chapter 3

Beginning in the early 1970s, British, American and Canadian literature documented the concerns women have about the built environment. The main objective in much of this work is to point out that women's opportunities have been restricted by the organization of cities into densely settled downtowns and sprawling suburbs. The literature suggests that a very limited model of women's needs and characteristics has been assumed and that many women have been seriously affected by this oppressive model (Klowdasky, 1985). Added to the oppressive aspects of the built environment is the fact that there are few women architects and planners to advocate for or effect change on a large scale. Sexual discrimination against women architects and planners has had a long history and continues to exist to this day. Addressing these oppressive and discriminatory forces, feminist writers have pointed out a number of avenues where women are working toward progressive

changes:

. **Women as users and lobbyists:** Women's groups are participating in wide lobbying campaigns to change policies, for example, WDS, Matrix, HFW, Women's Development Corporation, WPT, METRAC, WEED, WITCH, OWN, WOPHE, WISHS, ENF, Sanctuary Foundation, Women In Housing, and TUGS.

. **Women as professionals:** Women's professional organizations are supporting both the concerns of architects and planners and promoting concepts that will help modify the built environment to better meet women's needs (Klowdasky, 1985), for example AWA, WALAP, WSPA, Organization for Women Architects and Other Design Professionals, WIA, Women in Planning Group, and the AIA's and APA's Women's Committees.

. **Women as producers:** Women architects and planners are establishing independent group practices that cater to community groups and grass-roots women's organizations (Klowdasky, 1985), for example, Women's Design Service, Matrix and Women's Development Corporation.

. **Women as educators:** Women educators are advocating changes in the education system and teaching courses on women's issues in schools of architecture and planning, for example South Bank Polytechnic, MIT, University of Michigan, University of California at Berkeley, and York University. Additional responses include the publication of books, journals, reports, bibliographies, theses, and dissertations; establishing archives; and organizing exhibits and conferences.

Feminists have a crucial role to play in the built environment. By addressing the impact that the built environment has on gender relations and by emphasizing that it is possible to alter and change policies and plans, feminists can encourage a move away from the oppressive aspects of existing urban spatial arrangements. They can develop planning and design strategies which demonstrate new ways of working, new forms of housing and new personal relations. Not only is it necessary to look at the restrictions which environments impose but also to look at the environments that feminists have created and to consider what visionary environments can offer. Feminist analysis can liberate imaginations and make new forms of living possible:

Feminists are largely responsible for resuscitating . . . 'humanity' from a static somnolence, making it evident that 'human' is an androgynous category, one which is constantly changing as women and men alter gender categories through altering their activities. We need now to join this concept of an androgynous and mutable 'human' to a concept of 'environment' which is equally active. (Klodawsky & Mackenzie, 1987, p. 31).

The issues and contributions delineated in summary form in this chapter represent the kinds of knowledge that will be valuable for built environment curriculum within art education. A valid source for illuminating these issues are feminist architects and planners who specialize in such

matters and women users of diverse age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability. Ideally, feminist art educators and other women involved in the built environment could provide information and perspectives. Thus built environment education curricula should be grounded in a pragmatic and grass-roots context and developed by a coalition of feminist art educators, architects and urban planners in collaboration with a cross section of community women. The feminist coalition could gather information which looks to new sources as guidelines, that is, sources that relate to women's lives, that present realistic visions.

While the introduction of women's spatial and structural perspectives into the education mainstream would be a progressive step, education systems do not have a history of taking progressive steps (Bloom, 1988; Hirsch, 1988). Educational institutions that fail to respond constructively to paradigmatic changes can lose their relevance to the outside social milieu. They persist but are rivalled by new emerging systems which attract social energies (Bloom, 1988; Hirsch, 1988). It is within this context that feminist pedagogy and its implications for practice, theory and research are discussed in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION:

#### THE INTEGRATION OF FEMINIST DISCOURSE IN BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

As was concluded in Chapter 2, systemic inequities occur in most built environment education programs. They reveal bias against, and/or ignorance of issues of gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability. The special circumstances of women are consistently ignored, and thus, environmental inequities remain unexamined. Moreover, most built environment education programs in the three countries studied do not cover the total range of integratable educational material. The overview of feminist discourse about the built environment testifies to a vast amount of material currently being overlooked that could be made available for teacher use.

Built environment education in Canada, the United States and Britain reflects, for the most part, a one-sided male Eurocentric view. In education in general, the concepts and theories developed and reinforced by an historically privileged elite have set the agenda, making it difficult to introduce educational imperatives that account for other significant populations: women, and people of both visible and invisible minorities. Built environment education is no exception. In its exclusion of the experiences of huge segments of the population, it misrepresents the design needs

and considerations of a much more complex and diverse community, reinforcing the value system of a minority elite.

Can this exclusive stance be altered? A desire for change may be indicated in the rising concern for the quality of city life in both North America and Britain. Campaigns for stronger community participation in political decision-making are becoming more vociferous. But the frequent failures of these campaigns force individuals and organizations to question what is essential to successful, effective participation. One answer is an innovative education movement, one that encourages people, of all genders, ages and ethnicities to take a strong stance in shaping their environment. The notion of public participation in the planning process reintroduces the "Geddes link" between planning and built environment education.

It would be unrealistic not to acknowledge that political and economic pressures within a capitalist system make built environment issues complex and problematic. Individuals and communities get caught in patterns of interdependence with economic and social forces beyond their control. Built environment education programs in Canada, the United States and Britain may not, as a whole, acknowledge the depth to which a capitalist economy structures our existence. This deficiency points to a need to question epistemological principles and practices within a patriarchal capitalist paradigm.

Built environment education should be about the existing and complex physical world. As an extension of the community, programs should teach skills and embrace and inculcate values that will serve *all* students. Traditionally, most built environment programs have avoided controversy: they have not accepted complexity and conflict as potential working models. If built environment education programs are to deal with real communities and cities, they will need to include women's concerns. Programs must make their contribution to the active community, which in large measure consists of women of diverse age, culture, and ethnicity. (A 1992 report of a study for the Advertising Council of Canada predicts that by 2000 the *visible* minority population of Toronto will be 45 percent and of Vancouver, 39 percent).

The crucial questions are: Do existing built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada represent women in ways that recognize diversity in class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and (dis)ability? Are existing built environment education programs community-based, and do they emphasize active public participation? These concepts are based on the fundamental belief that a feminist-based built environment program educates all students to honour human differences and to recognize their potential for action in the community. To this end two key principles are paramount in a feminist-based program: an emphasis on the diversity of women which leads to their self-understanding and

determination, and a community-based approach which stresses strong civic involvement. A program embodying these principles can be a model for art education curricula. Once feminist principles are understood and are integrated into built environment education, a more inclusive expression of design will evolve.

What are the problems and possibilities for feminist pedagogy in built environment education? This concluding chapter discusses implications for practice, theory and research. The first section, which focuses on implications for feminist practice, presents a visionary scenario which explores the collaborative effort of feminist art teachers, architects, planners, and community women in designing and developing a feminist-based program. It also discusses possible viewpoints that may be held by teachers who regard the inclusion of women's perspectives in built environment education as questionable or problematic. Second, it discusses feminist pedagogy and its implications for theory; third, its implications for research. Finally, it offers a discourse on the affirmation of individual rights in art education, and explains that the inclusion of a feminist-based built environment program serves to validate the experiences of female and other marginalized students.

#### **4.1: Feminist Pedagogies: Implications for Practice**

**Feminist collaboration in a built environment education program.** Since most art teachers have not had the opportunity



to study architecture and planning, they may lack both confidence and professional skills in these areas (Adams, 1990). Therefore, to develop a feminist-based program, feminist architects, planners, and community women, of diverse class, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and (dis)ability, need to become significant facilitators. Diversity in this group is essential in order to present various role models and to raise specific cultural issues to a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural school population. Some of the tasks this coalition could undertake include both curriculum development and instruction.

In designing a feminist program within art education, one of the many major hurdles this team will have to face is the incorporation of socio-political content. The main focus of art education is still predominantly on the traditional formal fine and studio arts: drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and art history. As was shown in Chapter 2, if the built environment is included, it is usually dealt with from a representational, expressive, or design aspect, and the focus is primarily on the aesthetic dimension. Streetscapes are painted, clay houses are moulded, and models of imagined future environments are planned and constructed.

Introducing a socio-political context means that, before designing a building, street, neighbourhood, or city, students will need to question the **relationship** between design and the needs of a diverse population. Key points that are pivotal to changing the urban fabric are: (a) human differences must be

honoured; special attention should be given to the needs of women, children, the elderly, minorities, and the disabled; (b) spatial and structural arrangements have a dramatic affect on everyone; they influence not only the way people interact with others, but with whom they interact, and how they experience themselves; (c) powerful political and economic interests dominate the development of the built environment and contribute to physical, social and economic deprivation; and (d) women architects and planners are seriously under-represented in their professions, a fact which suggests that women's ideas and approaches are not being incorporated in the built environment. What *specific* issues need to be addressed regarding a coalition of feminist art teachers, architects, planners, and community women who will undertake to develop an education program which is based on the above key points?

**The role of feminist art teachers.** A number of deterrents within the school structure itself present a challenge to art teachers whose interest is the implementation of a feminist built environment program. For example: (a) Schools are continually asked to accommodate new studies and programs, and the demands made on them far outstrip the limited services they were initially designed to deliver; (b) at the junior and senior secondary levels the timetable (usually made up of one-hour blocks) is not conducive to field experience; (c) the limited budgets of most schools may not provide transportation costs to sites, or other required

expenses; and (d) classrooms may lack appropriate space for large scale drawing, model building and displays.

Another major problem in instituting such a program is the greater demand on teachers' time and energy. For instance, workshops will need to explain why such a program is an essential component of the education system and concerted action will need to be taken to convince those in decision-making positions to incorporate it in the curriculum. Since schools do not usually encourage the assistance of outside facilitators, extra effort will have to be made to involve feminist architects, planners and community women.

Thus, before attempting to implement a feminist-based program the following challenges will need to be considered: (a) collaborative working relationships with a diverse group of feminist architects, planners and community women; (b) a strong, realistic, well organized program-outline that has an evaluative and disseminative component, and that meets budget guidelines; (c) support from administrators, teachers and parents; (d) flexible time structuring in school; (e) acceptance of movement and activity in and out of the school and within the community; and (f) adequate space in the school building for model-making and model displays.

**The role of feminist architects and planners.** A collaboration with feminist architects and planners will enable teachers to embark on new progressive ground. Knowledge of environments which feminist architects and

planners possess can provide teachers and students with a new vocabulary to describe their experiences within the urban setting. This type of articulation could allow a better understanding of the complex sets of relationships among spaces, structures and people, giving students and teachers the ability to understand, analyze and judge built form and space, and to deal positively with change (Adams, 1990).

By introducing the literature that focuses on women and the built environment, feminist architects and planners can inspire and motivate female students to participate in the future planning, design and management of their surroundings. Sharing their own history and position in the current status quo could help demystify the image, practices and jargon of their professions. Those who work with local governments know the political and bureaucratic decision-making process and have insights into its strengths and weaknesses. Revealing this information to students could help them to understand how the decision-making process works, assist them in formulating opinions and encourage them to question solutions. It may also reveal potential future areas for advancement. Since they bring a feminist perspective to issues, feminist architects and planners can also serve as role models for female students.

**The role of feminist community women.** The input of feminists from diverse grass-roots organizations would be essential to a curriculum grounded in women's experience.

Their involvement would help promote a link between schools and the multi-cultural communities they serve. Feminist community women could supply a list of local women's groups that need a task accomplished and encourage students to become involved at some level. Instruction in the community is consistent with general principles of education, such as the importance of engaging the learner in an active manner with the subject material (Shepherd & Ragan, 1982). This gives students opportunities for public participation, cooperative working relationships and problem-solving using real-life as opposed to simulated situations. Publications of community groups such as newsletters and reports could be used as teaching material. Thus the involvement of community women could provide alternative sources of information that relate to women's lives. Community-based, women-centred initiatives offer models for new progressive curriculum.

Returning to reality, there are difficulties which should be acknowledged in developing a feminist issue-based approach. The demands of organization and preparation are such that there are increased risks inherent with such a strategy. There is also a danger of looking at women's spatial and structural needs as small isolated units, rather than as part of a larger problem, and of choosing a series of isolated projects which will not bring about significant community change. Problems could also arise from an inter-professional/grass-roots collaboration. Feminist teachers,

architects, planners, and community women may not be compatible in approach, teaching style, or in their philosophical, social, political, and aesthetic viewpoints. Feminists, given their diversity, may not share basic principles.

However, it can be argued that the benefits that may arise out of a feminist coalition greatly outweigh the risks and problems of implementation. As Adams (1990) suggests, attitudinal change in educational practice often comes not from within a system, but from external pressure. Architects, planners and community women are the best equipped to exert pressure for change in built environment education. The design and development of a feminist-based program is a much needed, constructive and, in a more progressive climate, realizable probability. A four-way flow of information among the organizers, each an important resource for the other, could evolve into a working relationship that unites experience and results in a broad-based program.

The concept of a collaboration is not new; it goes back to, and is based on, the Art and the Built Environment Project and the Design Education Unit in Britain in the 1970s and early '80s, which maintained that a collaborative effort is essential in built environment education. The concept of an issue-based program is also not new. In the early 1970s in Britain, Collin Ward and Anthony Fyson (1973), as well as other educators such as Mog and Colin Ball (1975) argued its

indispensability to any successful program. What is new in this study is the concept of a collaboration among an ethnically and culturally diverse group of feminists that deals specifically with the creation and implementation of a feminist-based built environment program.

Nevertheless, a critical *realistic* examination of the problems inherent in program development raises more complex and challenging questions concerning a feminist program:

1. How can feminist architects, planners and community women be prompted to participate in a feminist-based built environment program? How can they be encouraged and supported to make a long-term commitment to program design and development?

2. What can be done to convince the education establishment that community-based women-centred initiatives have a critical place in general education, and offer new progressive models for curricula? What can be done to convince the bureaucracy that outside feminist professionals and community women have important contributions to make to a built environment education program?

What if *actual* attempts were made to implement a feminist-based built environment program? What would the reaction be from those within the Canadian school system? The education world can be very inward-looking and resistant to change; and teaching practices often continue long after their original need has diminished or disappeared. Consolidating

the spatial and structural needs of women in built environment education may be a colossal challenge because there are few supporters in the field of art education. What specifically may be the attitudes of those who do not support the integration of a feminist-based program?

**Obstacles in the inclusion of a feminist perspective.**

Sexist practices in schools are often clearly apparent in the overt elements of the education system: within the curricular choices that are available (or not available), or within the lesson content itself (Eyre, 1989; Hurst, Pedersen, & Shuto, 1981). In many schools, the structure and scheduling of course electives, or sometimes the teachers themselves, implicitly or explicitly channel students into courses "appropriate" to their sex; for example, home economics for girls, or drafting and carpentry for boys (Eyre, 1989; Hurst, Pedersen, Shuto, 1981). This reinforces traditional sex role stereotyping with the hidden imputation that girls are not capable of entering certain professions, for example, architecture or construction. Ironically, these notions survive along-side a strong feminist movement which has been active for over two decades.

A major consideration in the development of a built environment program which integrates women's spatial and structural perspectives is the reaction of the teachers themselves. The following is a speculative list of problems that could hinder the realization of a feminist-based program:



**. Teachers may not be feminists and may not view women's spatial and structural needs as a necessary part of the curriculum.** Many teachers do not consider themselves feminists and do not want to be seen as feminists. Some may be misogynist or threatened by a feminist perspective, and may therefore find it intimidating to implement.

**. Male teachers may not relate easily to issues specific to women.** Women's experiences of the built environment are different from those of men. It may be difficult or even troublesome for some male teachers to understand women's experiences. They may recognize only their own experiences as being normal or worthwhile.

**. Teachers may argue that the art room is not the proper place to introduce social or political issues.** Some teachers may believe a feminist-based art education program promotes partisan ideologies and political ends, or that women's issues belong solely in women's studies or social studies.

**. Teachers may contend that some students will not be capable of grasping concepts related to women's spatial and structural needs or that they may be bored by the concepts.** Women-related issues may be seen as too adult-oriented and therefore an onerous task to maintain young students' interest, particularly that of young males.

**. Teachers may see a feminist-based built environment program as too time-consuming.** Teachers are continually asked to integrate subjects without the necessary support system.

Since a built environment program from a feminist perspective demands a non-traditional approach, its implementation may be time-consuming. Teachers may not be able to incorporate yet another topic into their already over-loaded curriculum.

. Teachers may be concerned that if they introduce the topic of women's spatial needs they may not receive support, or that there may be a backlash from conservative school trustees, administrators, or parents. Since the topic is relatively new, there may not be enough initial support to carry it through. There may be resistance from parents who see it as unnecessary or too radical. A conservative administration likewise may see the topic as having no place within the school system.

. Teachers may be uncomfortable working with feminist architects, planners and community women. They may view the collaborative model as a loss of professional autonomy and control. With the exception of team-teaching, teachers have been accustomed to working alone. It may be too demanding for teachers to adjust to a teaching model that advocates a non-traditional approach.

Other serious problems pertaining to the development of feminist-based built environment studies need consideration: No commitment or interest exists within most teacher education programs, nor do schools, school districts or teacher associations present the topics during inservice workshops or conferences. How then could these studies be offered to

teachers? Should feminist-based built environment education courses seek integration in non-traditional settings, as in schools of architecture or planning or women's studies departments? But schools of architecture and planning generally do not offer education courses, nor do women's studies programs.

Ideally, feminist-based built environment education courses could be offered by collaborating faculties or departments of education, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and women's studies. But would universities be willing to offer such interdisciplinary courses? Would they be willing and able to employ a team of instructors from three or four different faculties to teach the courses? Would qualified feminist instructors be available and would they be able to work together? These kinds of questions, as well as questions related to theory and research in feminist pedagogy, as discussed in this next section, would need to be addressed prior to any kind of program development.

#### **4.2: Feminist Pedagogies: Implications for Theory**

In their discussion of feminist pedagogy in schools, Jane Kenway and Helen Modra (1992) highlight the different perspectives which exist within school-based and women's studies-based work. They suggest first of all, that feminist pedagogies comprise a diversity of voices and practices, and that they exist in a broad assortment of educational systems.

Education classes in universities, distance education, nonformal adult education, technical education, and small pockets of the public school system are places where feminists are developing curricula and teaching/learning practices.

They further suggest that communication between these pedagogical sites and perspectives is somewhat limited and that while each must attend to its own specializations, additional knowledge can be gained from the work of others. For instance, those in schools who are facing opposition to gender-inclusive curriculum, will find in the literature on progressive education theoretical frameworks that are useful in revealing the origins of such opposition. The authors are not suggesting uncritical endorsement of one discipline by another within the field of feminist educational thought. However, they point to the experience of many women's studies practitioners coming from disciplines other than education, and struggling to articulate a theory of education without the benefit of all the theoretical tools available. They assert that researching and theorizing feminism's own educational praxis and disseminating this information is one way of advancing the field.

Kenway and Modra (1992) also point out the emphasis feminist pedagogies place on how meanings are made in the educational process: both in the sense students make of information, and the specific information/material which influences their sense-making. The authors raise tough

questions: How do students receive and replay the main message systems which feminist teachers develop for them, and what part do these message systems play in shaping and reshaping their thinking? Why is it that some students are more responsive to a feminist pedagogy than others? Indeed, which feminist pedagogies draw more positive response and why? The authors admit that these kinds of questions are not new to the field. Noticeably absent from the literature, however, is a consistent effort at theory construction. In the view of Kenway and Modra, the work of Lather (1992), Lewis (1992) and Ellsworth (1992) is helpful for the practice-based theorizing which can help to prevent pedagogical prescriptions from solidifying into fixed "truths". Their reflections since 1989 return to two key issues: female authority, and dialogue in the feminist classroom. They conclude that, given the differences between and among students and teachers, dialogue is far more difficult to elicit than feminist educators ever envisioned. They stress that dialogue should be a **goal** of pedagogy and not a pre-requisite for it. Finally, they state that power, truth and authority have always been important philosophical concepts to feminist pedagogy, but that the postmodern influence on contemporary feminist theories demands a re-thinking of such concepts. Postmodern feminisms analyze power, truth, politics, and human nature from perspectives which are markedly different from the more traditional feminist pedagogies. The questions that these feminisms raise

are fundamental, and at once promising, because they are more productive than consensus, but menacing, because they may result in demoralizing discourse, prevent exchange of ideas, and split the feminist academic community into contentious blocs (Hirsch & Keller, 1990). Furthermore, postmodernism's exhaustive relativistic considerations can create frustrating theoretical stalemates. The authors finish by saying that some painstaking theoretical work is ahead for feminists, and those with a specific concern for praxis will be confronting the need for persistent and radical re-evaluation for some time.

Jennifer Gore (1993) claims that feminist pedagogy attempts to establish itself as a regime of truth, and in doing so, ignores the real needs of teachers, students and schools. As a result of this insularity, Gore argues, feminist pedagogy and discourse has clearly failed to have any wide-spread influence on educational policy and practice, or on teacher education. Gore also claims that tremendous barriers are in place for those who seek to understand new pedagogies. Many of these barriers stem from the fundamental tension that arises from having to work within the very paradigm in which change is sought. Specifically, Gore focuses on radical pedagogic discourses and questions why her own attempts to educate within a feminist framework so often felt like failures. In her analysis of feminist pedagogic practices, Gore has identified ways to move beyond the

apparent postmodern paralysis by focusing on realistic praxis that has a **direct** relevance to teachers' and students' lives.

How do the discussions presented above relate to a feminist-based built environment education program? This study, bearing in mind the observations of Kenway and Modra (1992) and Gore (1993), stresses that any theory and research focusing on women's spatial and structural needs in built environment education, must be grounded in real-world contexts -- in, for example, existing schools, teachers, and students, and concomitantly, community-based, women-centred initiatives. In this way the gap between theory, research and practice may be bridged. In order to take the suggestions out of the naive and into the "real" (that is, out of the insularity of theory and research), this discussion attempted to foresee what could take place should a feminist pedagogy, in the form of a feminist-based built environment curriculum, enter the school system.

#### **4.3: Feminist Pedagogies: Implications for Research**

There is virtually no research in Canada focusing on the integration of women's spatial and structural needs in built environment education. No Canadian policies exist to incorporate community-based women-centred initiatives or issues concerning women as documented in the literature. There is likewise no investigation of institutional attitudes associated with feminist pedagogy in the field. Nor do any grants exist to support such research.

More research in this area is necessary to add both to the knowledge base and the credibility of the subject matter. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the failure of most built environment education programs to deal with aesthetics and gender at a theoretical as well as an empirical level, suggests that there is a great need for new educational research to look at spatial design and cognition in the context of gender socialization and oppression. Research needs to be carried out at all levels of the education system, elementary, secondary and post-secondary and should include: (a) development of an interdisciplinary knowledge base, (b) feminist pedagogical teaching methods, (c) pragmatic methods of introduction, (d) the integration of Canadian content, (e) textbook content and design, and (f) the long term impact that a chronic lack of women's perspectives, knowledge, and professional representation has on female (and male) students.

The development of scholarship on the spatial and structural needs of women in built environment education also requires greater collaboration among scholars, educators and policy makers, since the topic by its very nature cuts across disciplinary lines and encourages social action. When these issues are addressed systematically better programs will develop with a greater capacity to serve all students.

#### **4.4: Prospects: Art Education Committed to Cultural Diversity and Individual Rights**

Art educator Laurie Hicks (1990) argues that the



objective of art education should not be to empower students to take their place in the development of mainstream culture, but to enable them to resist hegemonic practices which devalue and oppress them. In this context, empowerment is not conceived as a process of acquiring technical skills and knowledge, but as a process of cultural action based on the affirmation of individual rights. Art education committed to empowerment would advocate two goals: to acknowledge the cultural diversity of society, and to equip students with analytical and practical tools to transform social relations of power (Hicks, 1990).

The first goal increases students' knowledge and awareness of their own cultural backgrounds as well as of the diverse cultural traditions which make up the world. An education that stresses diversity seeks to expose the mechanisms by which diversity is minimized in the interests of the dominant culture. Feminist education empowers students by encouraging them to value the "otherness" of people, as well as of themselves. The second goal focuses attention on the contextual character of art and architecture, as well as the contextual character of all thought and interpretation. Students are encouraged to understand art and architecture as culturally defined and validated forms of communication. The inclusion of non-traditional, cross-cultural, or controversial forms of art and architecture therefore broadens students' visual frame of reference. The ability to analyze critically

and contextually enables students to resist dominant cultural constraints and power relationships and to act out of a sense of social responsibility (Hicks, 1990).

Thus, the goals of a feminist-based built environment education program are to, (a) empower female students and other students of marginalized status, (b) to critically assess the built form within a diverse contextual framework, and (c) to affirm student's presence and input in what is now a male-constructed world. A society in which women of diverse backgrounds and lifestyles can share equally with men in the design, construction and management of their living and working environments is entirely feasible.

#### **4.5: Conclusion**

This dissertation met four objectives: It (a) critiqued built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada from a feminist perspective, (b) demonstrated that most programs are not representative of women's diversity nor strongly committed to community action, (c) presented an overview of the literature on women and the built environment, and (d) illustrated why and how feminist discourse should, and can, be incorporated into built environment education programs in ways that bring a new dimension to the study of aesthetics, criticism, history and production.

A number of built environment education programs exist in the Western world and elsewhere. The International Built

Environment Education Conference, held in Cambridge, England, in 1992, and the Architecture + Children Summit in Albuquerque, U.S.A., in 1993, invited delegates from Britain, other European countries, the United States, Canada, India, and Japan. Although many of these programs are impressive in scope, and have a good deal of funding to carry out their curricula, and although there is mention of social issues associated with the built environment in some programs, they nevertheless focus mainly on formalistic criteria, that is, on what places *look* like. This is understandable given that architecture and urban design have always emphasized the aesthetics of buildings and physical spaces, to the exclusion of social issues. However, this dissertation demonstrates that such a singular focus may be problematic in built environment education, because it overlooks important social and political implications.

The primary purpose of examining built environment education programs in Britain, the United States and Canada, was to discover if any represented the spatial and structural needs of women. With one minor exception, these needs were found to be lacking in the programs of all three countries. Such an oversight could be expected given the "newness" of feminist discourses in the built environment, but this oversight now needs addressing and amending. On examining feminist discourse about the built environment, it was found that they could be classified under certain thematic topics:

(a) feminist analysis and research, (b) discrimination against women in the built environment, (c) women's spatial and structural priorities, (d) status of women in architecture and planning, (e) the question of female design sensibility, and (f) feminist advocacy and activism.

The principal argument of this dissertation is that the built environment must be understood as playing a key role in the subjugation of women. This study shows that by not including the spatial and structural needs of women, and by not emphasizing that curricula be community-based, most built environment education programs serve to miseducate students by reinforcing exclusionary practices. However, integrating a feminist perspective in built environment education may not have many proponents in the field of art education. This dissertation concluded by describing some of the many problems that may arise on taking up this challenge: sexist attitudes, administrative resistance, and resource and financial factors. It also described why facing this challenge is critical if women are to become effective in the planning and construction of the built environment.

What does it mean to be a woman in a world planned, designed and built mostly by Eurocentric men? What does it mean when this fact is not brought to the attention of students? Because schools at all levels neglect to address this question, the repercussions for many women are far-reaching: The lack of decent affordable housing, childcare,

and support facilities will continue to be ignored. Women will continue to feel out of place and fearful on the streets. Schools and institutes of architecture and planning will continue to perpetuate a male norm, and women's perspectives will continue to be overshadowed. The already tenuous foothold women have in the professions will continue to be undermined by discrimination; consequently their influence will remain minor. If women's spatial and structural issues are not raised in built environment education, women will remain disempowered in their physical surroundings.

Current normative methods of education cannot offer a successful model for the radical changes that are needed. Institutional practices need to begin considering marginal communities. Emphasis needs to be placed as much on functional systems as on formal ones: what are women doing that works? This should be a model for curriculum.

To this end, the education system could be a deciding factor, and the questions then become: How can teachers be instilled with a confidence in working with feminist issues? How can they better educate girls and boys of diverse class, ethnicity, and culture to accept differences and the heterogeneity of environments? How can a potential backlash against new progressive programs and movements be prevented? Educators cannot be expected to effect progressive change within a conservative institution. A feminist-based built environment program may not find a place in current mainstream

education, a possibility which may point to the need for a serious review of educational practices.

Incorporating and integrating the recommendations in this dissertation will be a first step in creating a non-discriminatory built environment education. This study posits that educators and all students would benefit from a feminist perspective of the built environment and that the built environment needs to be seen as "a moveable, malleable, and politically charged instrument, both analytic and strategic" (Klodawsky & Mackenzie, 1987, p. 33). Feminists in the professions and in grass-roots community groups are realizing this, and the elemental changes they are attempting to activate in this "politically charged instrument" need to be recognized by our education system. This dissertation advocates such a challenge.

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