

## **Women, The Built Environment and The Professional Perspective, In Relation to Women Chartered Surveyors in Britain**

*Clara H. Greed  
Faculty of the Built Environment  
Bristol Polytechnic,  
Coldharbour Lane, Frenchay  
Bristol BS16 1QY  
England*

### **Résumé**

Les écrits, toujours plus nombreux, sur les femmes et l'environnement bâti dans une perspective féministe peuvent être classés sous deux titres: les écrits universitaires qui cherchent à cerner les effets de la reproduction des rapports sociaux dans l'espace et les écrits plus appliqués de femmes architectes et urbanistes, qui présentent de nouvelles approches à l'aménagement de l'habitation, des voisinages, des services et des villes dans leur ensemble. L'auteure souligne l'importance d'une troisième voie, l'étude des professions de l'aménagement, parce qu'elles ont un tel rôle clé dans la négligence ou la promotion des besoins spécifiques des femmes dans l'environnement construit. En se fondant sur une recherche sur la place des femmes dans la profession d'arpenteur-géomètre (surveyor) en Angleterre, l'article examine la place et le rôle des femmes dans les structures professionnelles. Il cherche à démontrer l'influence des idées et attitudes de la sous-culture de cette profession, majoritairement masculine, à l'égard des femmes sur la reproduction des rapports sociaux de sexe dans l'espace. Les "symptômes" des problèmes actuels montrent que tout n'est pas rose, en dépit de la montée du féminisme urbain depuis quelques années. En conclusion, les conditions qui permettront aux femmes de faire une différence et d'opérer des changements font l'objet d'une réflexion.

### **Summary**

The growing amount of literature written on women and the built environment from a feminist perspective has fallen into two main categories: firstly, academic material seeking to study the evidence of the reproduction of social relations over space; and secondly, practical material, from women architects and town planners, presenting alternative ways of creating and designing housing, neighbourhoods, facilities, and whole cities, which take into account women's needs. A third key dimension must be emphasized: namely the study of the land-use professions themselves, because they have such a key role in blocking or promoting the needs of women, vis-à-vis the built environment. Based on a research on the position of women in the surveying profession in Britain, this article examines women's place and role within professional structures. The influence of the profession as informed by the assumptions and attitudes towards women manifested by its overwhelmingly male professional subculture in the reproduction of gender relations over space is discussed. Symptoms of the current problem demonstrate that all is not well, in spite of the growth of urban feminism

in recent years. In conclusion, the conditions under which women would make a difference, and other changes, are considered.

## 1. Introduction: Is There Still a Problem?

There has been a growing amount of literature written on women and the built environment from a feminist perspective. This has fallen into two main categories: firstly, academic material, issuing from women geographers and planners, seeking to study the evidence of the reproduction of social relations over space - that is the imprint of gender on the built environment (McDowell, 1983); and secondly, practical material, from women architects and town planners, presenting alternative ways of creating and designing housing, neighbourhoods, facilities, and whole cities, which take into account women's needs (Matrix, 1984). A third key dimension must be emphasized: namely the study of the land-use professions themselves, because they have such a key role in blocking or promoting the needs of women, vis-à-vis the built environment. Using my recent research (Greed, 1991) on the position of women in the surveying profession in Britain as an illustrative case study, women's place and role within professional structures will be examined.<sup>1</sup>

The built environment professions are still overwhelmingly male dominated, especially at the more senior levels. Much feminist work is still marginalized, and treated as a special category outside the mainstream. Women and men from the same professional bodies, frequently attend quite different types of conferences, and move within separate peer groups. Conferences organized to deal with issues concerning women and the built environment, in Britain at least, only attract, a sprinkling of males. Nevertheless in public, the mainstream land-use professional male has now learnt he must pay lip service to the existence of women, leading to strange anomalies of speech which suggest their apparent understanding of gender issues is based on head-knowledge rather than heart-experience. A recent past President of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) commented in a public speech, to the effect that "we must listen to the worker in heavy industry, who wants to relax and play football and go to the pub after work, and find out what his or her housing needs really are." Such faux pas are common amongst the property fraternity, although the RIBA Council has now established recommendations to end discrimination against women. Some women architects have labeled these as "simplistic, inadequate and tokenistic" and "offered without timescale, budget or priorities" (WEB, 1990). Likewise the RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) has pronounced on equal opportunities, especially in relation to planning education; but many women are not convinced that these initiatives can be policed effectively. Some of the lecturers who now pride themselves on being "new men," are the very same people who made earlier generations of women students lives a misery (blighting their potential careers) ten or fifteen years ago.

<sup>1</sup> For this study, I adopted a qualitative, broadly ethnographic methodology combined with the use of open unstructured interviewing techniques. Three main approaches were used. Firstly, I undertook an ethnographic study of the educational situation, in my own Polytechnic Department of Surveying. In addition, I visited a variety of other colleges in order to develop a broader educational perspective on the situation as one has to account for the fact that all colleges have their own idiosyncrasies. Also, I visited a representative selection of professional practices. Altogether including both group discussions and individual interviews I contacted around 250 women. Thirdly, since I am a woman in surveying myself, retrospective ethnography was used to develop sensitising concepts from my own life experience.

**Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Membership Figures\***

Key:

LA = Land Agency;

BS = Building Surveying;

GP = General Practice (Housing is an option within this division);

LS = Land Surveying;

MS = Minerals Surveying;

PD = Planning and Development;

QS = Quantity Surveying.

(Source: RICS Records Data Base).

Table I: Total Membership of RICS According to Grade and Rank

Grade	LA	BS	GP	LS	MS	PD	QS	TOTAL
Fellow	2146	1408	11498	340	152	616	7422	23'582
Pr.Associate	2002	3251	14886	562	382	740	14553	36'376
Probationer	378	1131	4114	494	145	191	4468	10'921
Student	162	1805	3721	240	127	332	4285	10'672
Others	6	0	29	2	4	0	10	51
Total	4694	7595	34248	1638	810	1879	30738	81'602
Under 33**	819	1350	6216	76	91	175	4781	13'508

Table II: Female Membership of RICS According to Grade and Rank

Grade	LA	BS	GP	LS	MS	PD	QS	TOTAL
Fellow	5	4	72	0	0	8	15	104
Pr. Associate	77	98	1230	11	1	61	265	1'743
Probationer	72	75	873	31	5	30	284	1'370
Student	28	134	840	24	6	39	404	1'475
Others	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	11
Total	182	311	3026	66	12	138	968	4'703
Under 33**	68	69	865	9	1	37	201	1'250

Table III: Male Membership of RICS According to Grade and Ranks as Percentages of Totals

Grade	LA	BS	GP	LS	MS	PD	QS	TOTAL
Fellow	99.8	99.7	99.3	100.0	100.0	98.7	99.8	99.5
Pr. Associate	97.2	97.0	91.8	98.1	99.8	91.8	98.2	95.2
Probationer	81.0	93.4	78.8	93.8	96.6	84.3	93.7	87.5
Student	82.8	92.6	77.5	90.0	95.3	98.3	90.6	86.2
Others	100.0	--	63.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	78.5
Total	96.2	96.0	91.2	96.0	98.5	92.7	96.9	94.2
Under 33**	91.7	94.9	86.1	88.2	99.0	79.0	95.8	90.8

\*\* Total corporate members under 33, i.e. Fellows and Prof Associates

\* Tables from Greed (1991).

Out in practice, especially in local government planning and "technical" departments, equal opportunities posts have been established to "advise and monitor policy." In reality, an individual woman may be appointed for such a job (often, on a low status, low salary post, with no back up) and be expected - all on her own - to make sure the men toe the line (compare Foulsham, 1990, 244-258). But the next generation of women urban professionals appear lulled into a false sense of security, struggle appears no longer necessary.<sup>2</sup> In reality, many people in power already know what the problem is (arguably they created it) and have a vested interest in perpetuating women's disadvantaged position in the built environment and urban society, and do not want things to get better for women. This is reflected in the value-systems, and male-cultures of the professional bodies concerned with the built environment.

## 2. Women's Place in the Surveying Profession

In Britain, the work of the surveyor is not limited to land surveying, but comprises all aspects of the development and management of land and what is built upon it, and thus makes a major contribution to the shaping of the built environment. Therefore, many of the issues discussed in this article may be applicable to a wider range of professional bodies in other countries where the professional cake is divided up somewhat differently. The main professional surveying body, the RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) has over 80 000 members and is the largest land-use related professional body in Britain. Less than 6 percent of fully qualified members are women, but women now comprise over 20 percent of all surveying students.

The last ten years have been marked by increasing numbers of women entering traditionally male-dominated professions such as law, management and accountancy (Spencer and Podmore, 1987), engineering (Carter and Kirkup, 1989) and architecture (Lorenz, 1991). The reasons for this growth are complex. They may partly be accounted for by the changing aspirations of the women themselves, and the overall societal effects of second wave feminism. However, the men have also welcomed, indeed encouraged, this trend in view of the manpower crisis which is affecting Britain owing to the declining numbers of school leavers, young people making up a small proportion of the population. In spite of the growth in the numbers of women, many aspects of the profession have remained virtually unchanged, with women existing as an "add-on" within what remains a strongly patriarchal professional structure. It is simplistic to assume that quantitative change will be accompanied by commensurate qualitative improvements in surveying education, employment structures, or individual women's career prospects.

### 2.1. *Horizontal Distribution*

Surveying is not one profession but many, comprising within its scope many different specialist sections (called "divisions") practising within a diversity of professional fields (Tables I-III). Although a surveyor is often seen by the general public as a man standing at the side of a motorway, wearing an orange anorak, and holding a surveying pole or theodolite, this is a totally false but significantly male image. Such

<sup>2</sup> As a town planning lecturer, I am dismayed when my students imagine that all that is required is for them to identify, and become personally conscious of "the problem," and then come up with "the solution" for it to be solved..

men are more likely to be surveying technicians. The surveying spectrum (Greed, 1991) extends from technological areas where few women are found (for example there are only six women in minerals surveying in the whole of Britain) through to the quasi-technological areas such as quantity surveying in which about 3 percent of practitioners, and 7 percent of students are women; and across to the more up-market, commercial areas such as estate management where over 25 percent of students, and nearly 10 percent of practitioners are women. A high proportion of women are also found in residential estate agency work (realtors) within the private sector, many of whom are not professionally qualified, this being seen as a low status area by many surveyors. At the other end of the spectrum, the smaller, more socially-orientated areas of practice are found, such as housing management (chiefly of social housing) where up to 50 percent of students are likely to be women. Significantly there is considerable debate amongst surveyors as to whether housing managers count as "real" surveyors.

## *2.2. Vertical Distribution*

### *2.2.1. Private Sector*

Eighty percent of all surveyors work in private practice. Surveying firms come in two main types. Firstly, there are the large prestigious firms, mainly located in London, which have as many of 50 to 100 partners (with an inner sanctum of very senior partners) and below this a vast pool of associate partners, and below that again numerous young surveyors of whom around 15 percent will be young women nowadays. Forty-two percent of all women surveyors are located in London, and the South East, as against around 36 percent of men surveyors. Also there are some medium-sized, prestigious, provincial practices, which are in the same elite league as those in London. Secondly, there are hundreds of smaller firms throughout the country, predominantly with male partners, and frequently manifesting rather traditional patriarchal attitudes towards women employees and clients. Many of these smaller practices have a strong estate agency component. Both large and small firms tend to be structured like a pyramid with little room at the top. However, some of the larger firms are now going over to a corporate, rather than a partnership structure, which some women welcome as they believe it will, hopefully, enable promotion to be based on formalized evaluation, and offer a greater range of senior posts, rather than depending on "grace and favour" or "for elderly partners to die before upward movement occurs." Some of the smaller firms are being taken over by larger national group partnerships, which creates a bigger pond for smaller fish to swim in. Larger national monopolies are developing in estate agency, and some predict a situation similar to that in the United States of America where estate agents (realtors) are dominated by one large company, in which many of the franchise holders are women.

Even allowing for the fact that around 70 percent of all qualified women surveyors are under the age of 30, and in fairly junior positions, there are a considerable number of older women who have failed to reach the levels of seniority to which they feel they were entitled. There are only 82 women at full partnership or higher management levels in 1989 (compared with 36 in 1983) (RICS Records Office, 1989). Many of the women have reached associate partnership level, which in surveying provides a pool of possible talent from which further promotion to full partnership is made. A log jam is building up as the new wave of women surveyors reach their thirties and are not promoted further but are left at this lower management level, whilst men pass them on the fast track. Many feel that men are likely to be groomed for

partnership earlier, whereas women after an initial climb upwards are shunted horizontally into specialist areas rather than continuing vertically. Ironically in the later stages of doing the research, there have been a few spectacular appointments of women to senior partnership levels, but it is noticeable that some older women who by rights should have been taken first, have been ignored and, somewhat capriciously, younger women have been chosen. Also, a small number of women have set up in practice on their own, but this may be a sign of exasperation rather than equality.

### *2.2.2. Public Sector*

Eighteen percent of all surveyors, but significantly 37 percent of women surveyors are found in central and local government agencies and other government bodies and industries. In particular, many local authorities have equal opportunities policies, and up to 30 percent of their young surveyors will be women. Many young surveyors consider that anyone who had gone into public service must be a failure because they were not good enough for the private sector. In fact, many of the senior jobs in the public sector are potentially powerful posts and are still reasonably well paid; they are predominantly occupied by men. Such men in town planning departments have a significant part to play in the reproduction of gender relations over space through planning law on development control, zoning and transportation policy. Many women are very cynical of the so-called equal opportunities in local government, in which there is much rhetoric but little real opportunity for advancement. Women described numerous incidents and issues which come under the umbrella of sexism, which occurred both in the private and the public sector. However, significantly, some of the worst accounts related to local government authorities who, on the surface, appear to be supporters of the rights of women, black people and other minorities. There are very few black people in surveying at all, and those that are in it are likely to be at the surveying technician rather than surveying professional level. However, interestingly there are more black women surveyors than black men apparently because black women are seen as less threatening and more "decorative" (sic) about the office. In spite of these prevalent attitudes I came across one very senior black woman in the public sector, and a scattering of younger black women mainly in local authority housing departments (compare Rao, 1990), plus a few commercially-orientated women of high caste Asian origin in private practice.

### *2.2.3. Surveying Education*

One aspect of the public sector is education. One percent of all surveyors, but 2 percent of women surveyors are lecturers and/or researchers in surveying education. The percentage of women lecturers varies considerably from college to college, from around 1 percent up to 10 percent, and one cannot generalize as there are women teaching across the full range of surveying areas of specialization, but relatively speaking more are found in town planning and valuations than other areas of specialization. Nonetheless there are some women construction and technology lecturers too, some of whom seem to be far more qualified than the men in these areas of specialization. Several women students were of the opinion that older women in surveying education were of a totally different calibre than the men. Therefore it is not surprising that at least three women in surveying education are at head of department level (out of 30 colleges with surveying departments), or is it? Many surveyors were of the opinion that because of

the demand for surveyors out in practice, only women will be left in surveying education as teachers. This is the opposite of many areas of higher education where to be an academic is the main, and only career, and there is no professional practice career alternative. None of this should be taken as meaning that the women are likely to have a feminist influence on surveying education, as many would distance themselves from such attitudes, and subscribe the values of the world of surveying, which are predominantly male, although some might disclaim "I'm not a feminist but ...," and then proceed to make some very feminist observations.

Women students held their own in terms of grades and class position, but then they had to be fairly determined to go into surveying in the first place and may have over-estimated the level of difficulty in examinations. One of the biggest problems for women is knowing of the existence of surveying as a career possibility in the first place, because of inadequate schools careers information, and a general "mystification" of the image of surveying in the media. However once in, there did not seem to be any quantitative evidence of discrimination. The fact that the figures were the same did not mean that the women experienced surveying education in the same way as the males: the mechanisms of control were subtle not overt. One can end up with the same result through a variety of different factors. The fact that women got good grades did not mean they liked surveying education. There was a strong feeling that academically marginal men were always given the benefit of the doubt, whereas women were expected to work twice as hard to get the same credit. From a feminist perspective, much of surveying education may be seen as a missed opportunity to deal with professional issues more relevant to women.

### 3. The Surveying Subculture

Originally I sought to investigate the objective issues of the structure of the surveying profession, and the spatial factors of the effect of surveyor's professional decision making on the built environment. Gradually my emphasis shifted to looking at the aspatial (social) processes (Foley, 1964: 37) and mechanisms at work within the profession, which seem to encourage the ideas and promote the careers of some, and exclude and block others. It seemed that the views and ideas of some men received a disproportionate amount of respect, whilst those of others, especially women, were completely ignored. In comparison with architecture, why have the ideas of Le Corbusier had so much influence even beyond the grave? Clearly he was the right type of chap, the ideal rational European male; no woman could attain this degree of veneration in any of the land-use professions. Increasingly, I listened to the personal accounts of women in the profession to get below the surface, to observe the mechanisms and attitudes at work within professional structures, to find out what was really going on. Although there was a number of older women already in the profession, their influence and seniority did not appear to be commensurate to their numerical presence. As indicated, I became increasingly fascinated with the dynamics and attitudes at work within the profession that determined which sort of people reached decision making positions, who would thus have the power to shape the future of the profession and ultimately the nature of the built environment itself. It was helpful to see the world of surveying as possessing its own professional subculture, that is its own set of cultural traits, beliefs, and lifestyle peculiar to surveying. One of the most important factors seemed to be the need for a person to fit in to this subculture. Gender is a major factor in understanding who receives what sort of treatment. Women as outsiders

have been particularly conscious of these mechanisms being used against them, but their experience has often been dismissed as too personal and of little importance.

The need for identification with the values of the subculture would seem to block out the entrance of both people and ideas that are seen as different. The concept of "closure" as discussed by Parkin (1979, 89-90), that is the process of powerful occupational sub-groups protecting their status and territory from outsiders became a key theme. This is worked out on a day to day basis at the interpersonal level with some people being made to feel awkward, unwelcome and "wrong"; and others being encouraged, "sponsored", and welcomed into the subculture, and being made to feel comfortable (Gale, 1989). It is a major hypothesis of this study that one should not see all the "little" occurrences of everyday life (i.e. the encouragements, discouragements, nicenesses, nastinesses, and of course innuendo, harassments) as being trivial, "fun," or irrelevant; but rather as the very building blocks of the whole subcultural edifice. I collected vast amounts of data in this respect, and there is no doubt that "all the little things" do have a strategic impact on women's career paths and personal lives.

Martin Joseph (1978), in a study which is the only other study from a sociological perspective of the professional socialization of surveying students, described the main characteristics of the subculture - without any emphasis on gender. Joseph identified four key concepts of the subculture, which were defined as practicality, success, professionalism, and freedom to organize one's own time and business. I will briefly discuss "practicality" as it has major implications for (against) women. "Practicality" means dealing with "real" issues, and a desire to get the job done. This marginalizes "social" issues, and even students see such issues as too abstract or "waffly" to be of interest to them: and as we all know "women's issues" are often labeled "social." In fact, much of the work of the surveyor is not particularly technological or practical, and has much in common with the work of the ordinary business manager, accountant, or lawyer. The marginalization of social issues has major implications for the town planning and housing dimensions of surveying in setting a narrow agenda defined for the need to come up with the most "practical" solution, which really means "getting the best financial return for the site for the client." In describing the practical ethos, Joseph highlighted the "peoplelessness" of surveying. The emphasis on "Land" (which is the most sacred word within the subculture) precludes the mention of people, let alone mere women. The world is populated by sites, buildings, and land values, and directed by the needs of the market and the cost factor apparently without any human or state intervention (in fact powerful men direct operations behind the scenes). In town planning matters, surveyors tend to favour the "obvious," solution which is, in fact, highly gender biased, and, in a nutshell, based on a world view in which, like themselves, "everyone has a car and plays rugby."<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Women's Role in the Profession

Within this cultural context, three aspects of surveying practice are considered to be particularly suitable for women. Of course men are in majority in all these situations too, but their contribution to the same work is often viewed and rewarded differently. Firstly, anything which has an element of "prettifying" in the worst sense whether it be in relation to conservation, landscaping or simply creating an attractive

<sup>3</sup> The effect of the surveyors' world view on different types of land uses and developments is discussed in Greed, 1991: chapter 10.



image in the office by their very presence seems to be reserved for women. Secondly, anything that has to do with residential development is seen as a woman's area. Even women who have chosen the more technological areas of surveying may find they are roped into housing: for instance, a woman building surveyor reported being asked to investigate construction defects in housing for the elderly because this was seen as a caring role. Many women avoid "resy" (residential) because it has a low status as quasi-professional. This is unfortunate as many urban feminists are concerned about housing as a woman's issue. In spite of housing being the one area of the land-use professions where women are a sizeable majority, the bulk of top jobs in this area are occupied by men (Levison and Atkins, 1987).

The third area that women are seen as fitting into is anything which has an element of "helping", enforcing their "natural" nurturing role. For example, women are seen as eminently suitable for what is known as "property management" - not management in the executive sense, but in the sense of "caring for" property almost as an extension of the traditional housewife. For example, such women will be responsible for keeping the tenants happy in a shopping complex development, dealing with rent reviews, servicing contracts, and public relations. Men surveyors who deal with structural defects and problems in buildings may describe themselves as "development doctors" whereas the women are seen as "development nurses!" Also, women may appear to be working in the centre of the very technological areas of surveying, but may in fact be involved in legal contract work, or cost management as "back-up" staff rather than in the building process itself. Likewise, in surveying education, women lecturers are often given pastoral roles, or assistant roles to more senior staff. Surveying education is strongly practical assignment orientated, with an emphasis on group work. Women students often found that they were assigned the role of "secretary" in group projects, and were not always seen as equal members of the team. However, interestingly, others did seem to be treated the same as the male students. One cannot make too many generalizations as the personality of the individuals concerned, and the levels of cultural capital (Delamont, 1990) and know-how which different women brought to the course varied considerably.

In none of these areas of specialization are women directly involved in planning, building, designing, or making development happen, nor in large scale investment and risk-taking activities. Many women would welcome this both as a personal challenge and in order to have the power to shape the built environment to the requirements of women. Another "helper role" is for women to be involved in property research. Such women, who are much brighter than the average man surveyor, use their considerable expertise and intelligence in the service of male policy making, over which they have very little influence and which is not necessarily in the best interest of women in society as consumers of the built environment. Other women were involved in the process of property development more directly as facilitators and negotiators. They appeared to have little quarrel with the world of men, and little knowledge of feminism. They might be seen as "safe women" who were motivated by a desire for personal success rather than radical change, and therefore were not going to rock the boat. However, some were subsequently radicalized when they experienced what they saw as a betrayal of trust, when they were passed over for promotion.

## 5. Opportunities for Change

One might imagine that, since more women are entering the professions, everything is going to be all right for the future. But, "more does not necessarily mean better" (Greed, 1988) because of the male majority's perception of women both as fellow professionals and as members of society. This influences the roles assigned to women in surveying, and determines their progression and place within professional structures. Consequently, if they are unable to reach the senior positions in the profession, at which level professional decision-making contributes to the shaping of the built environment, their presence in the profession will have little influence on what is built, whatever the extent of their initial conviction and enthusiasm. As was seen earlier, considerable levels of segmentation, even segregation, of women into quite specific areas, both horizontally and vertically within the employment structures of the profession were found (cf. Crompton & Saunders, 1990). Women surveyors are often marginalized, and channelled into areas of specialization that keep them off the main pitch.

### 5.1. *Changes in Education*

Larger proportions of young men and women are going to college in Britain, and professional courses are increasingly popular, but, not everyone will have the same destination as a result of participating in the same education, and gender is still a determinant of who ends up where. Different countries have widely different numbers of young people in higher education, but surprisingly similar numbers and types of people in the land-use professions. Expansion and structural change is also occurring out in practice, and the nature of the surveyor himself is altering. Increases in the numbers of women entering surveying, and changes in professional organizational structures (for example from partnership to corporate structures), although potentially to the advantage of women, should not necessarily be equated with greater equality. Rather, it suggests surveyors are regrouping and creating new ways of expressing divisions and hierarchies within the profession to accommodate a greater range of types and levels of surveyors. At present they are still sorting out their strategy regarding women and "caprice" reigns, but as men get more adept at directing women into suitable areas, a more institutionalized and stable gender hierarchy may emerge. This is not a foregone conclusion: there is a significant number of women in the land-use professions who are actively striving to change both their individual life chances, and professional and societal structures.

Although more female students are entering professional courses, higher education is still based on a model designed to accommodate the lifestyle of male school-leavers (compare, Acker, 1984). Provision for women should not be seen as a "special" extra, but a necessary and integral part of student services and staff support. Childcare and more flexible working approaches can benefit women as well as men, if only to avoid further falling school rolls in twenty years time. Attendance hours need to be reconsidered on a day to day basis to help women lecturers and mature students with families, to enable children to be taken to and from school, and to allow for other household tasks, shopping, and essential administrative visits to be undertaken to clinics, banks, government offices, etc.: and the same applies out in practice. There is a need to reassess the utility of the typically British solid three year undergraduate route into the professions, anything else often being seen as lowering the standard (although paradoxically both North American and many European professional courses are at graduate school level). Many women students resent losing their youth and early

childbearing years playing at being students alongside, what they often see as "immature semi-adolescent boys in college whose lives revolve around sport and drinking whilst real life passes them by." The present government is reducing the levels of student grants, and replacing them with loans. There have been suggestions of moving towards the North American model of students "working their way through college," which might actually "free up" the traditional system to women's advantage, but would also potentially create a double burden for women. This is a particular problem with lengthy courses; it takes seven years to qualify as an architect in Britain and many women drop out.

There is a need to introduce a woman's perspective and dimension throughout the syllabi. This is virtually impossible because of the factual, technical, and peopleless nature of much of the material. The vast majority of lecturers and students are still men. Some say it is not the women, but the men lecturers who should be taking this on board - as they caused the problem in the first place - others argue this is playing into the hands of patriarchy, and that no man can adequately deal with these issues because he has never experienced them as women have. Nevertheless, guidelines could be set as to use of non-sexist language, and methods of learning to create a more welcoming environment. The examples used in technological subjects may be made more relevant to women. Also less emphasis should be put on the competitive, aggressive "crit-sessions" (in which students work is ritually criticized by the lecturer in a student group setting) which are a characteristic of architecture, planning and surveying courses. To make this work, there is a need for in-service re-training of men lecturers.

Knowing about surveying in the first place is one of the biggest problems for women. There is a need for more liaison with schools careers teachers to show them what surveying really is. Surveying firms need to reconceive their own public relations material, and the nature of their advertisements, and application forms (which often ask specific questions about sport whilst leaving no space for women's other interests). Would more women come into surveying if there were no men around? There has been one experiment (which ran for three years) of a one year, women only, pre-degree surveying course in England funded by the European Community. Many women surveyors are horrified at this idea, because studying (with) men is half the education. Likewise there are now a few small women-only surveying practices, but these were set up because of business expediency rather than feminist principles, but nevertheless they provide an alternative model. Indeed some women students say they want more choice, and would like some subjects taught as "women only," and others taught jointly. Also a greater emphasis needs to be put on induction courses for women students, which would show them what to expect, whilst their male counterparts were given basic training in gender awareness and non-sexist behaviour. There is also a need to change the nature of textbooks, urban academic theory, and professional literature as these shape the nature of professional practice. Ideally, a gender perspective should be integral and normal not a special add-on.

### *5.2. Changes in Surveying Practice*

In the past, women were not allowed to be surveyors. Nowadays, it would seem that they cannot be surveyors and women, and possibly mothers, at the same time, without considerable, unnecessary difficulty. One of the main issues which everyone mentions is that of childcare, or rather lack of it. The whole question of financing and facilities needs to be looked into, both at the national level (Britain has one of the

lowest levels of provision in Western Europe) and within the profession itself, possibly using the proposals in the report produced by women solicitors as a basis for discussion (Law Society, 1988). There are special problems in the surveying profession: because it is not a nine to five job, women often have to travel widely, and those in technological areas may have to work on building sites. One woman building surveyor tried to take her baby on site with her, but found the whole atmosphere problematic, and just plain dangerous and polluted. There are additional problems for those women who have delayed having children until they are in their thirties and are at associate partner level, as their work schedule can be highly demanding; also as partners in private practice they are not covered by the normal employee maternity leave and benefits (minimal though they be). The women solicitors suggest that deeds of partnership of professional practices should be redrafted, so that women's special needs should be paid for out of the fee-earning structure of the whole partnership (as against the income of individual women).

Ideas such as career breaks and part-time work are not particularly attractive to women surveyors as they feel they will lose touch with what is going on, lose status, and a rung on the career ladder, and be worse off. Many women need the money, desperately, because divorce is seen as the greatest occupational hazard for women surveyors (presumably more so that heavy machinery on building sites). Many women surveyors want tax allowances for childcare costs as exist to some extent in the U.S.A. Women surveyors prefer the idea of private childcare to more communal or state provision, but there have been some experiments with shared creche facilities in the central business district. But it is generally considered that it would be highly impractical to take small children and babies through the London rush hour, if there were work place based creches in central London professional offices. Maybe the answer is to decentralize the offices, but that would be unthinkable to many traditional professional men.

Many women favour a more flexible approach to work itself, so that they are trusted to work at home, or to block their work hours in a more convenient way. One of the marks of the surveyor has always been his freedom to get out and about, make site visits, and go gallivanting and socializing "to cultivate business contacts," but woe betide the woman who tries to do the same when it is known she has small children at home. Professional work necessitates working in teams or being in the office when the important client calls, but this can be solved by good management and should not be used as an excuse why work cannot be more flexible. Both students (and ex-lecturers) who are used to the less structured college situation - where there are no fixed hours, but where everything is based on completing project work in time -, find it unnatural and unproductive to be suddenly expected to work on fixed hours, particularly if they are doing relatively intense or creative work. Many women would prefer full-time work which is based on task achievement rather than hourly attendance. Such women do not want an easy ride, and many work much harder than conventional male clock-watchers. Public sector employers seem to be particularly awkward about attendance although, paradoxically, some have now introduced a rather bureaucratic form of flexitime which is not necessarily to women's advantage, as it may involve putting your name down for particular hours months ahead. The private sector is seen as relatively more flexible by women. Also, if women leave, they are often encouraged to take on a consultancy role, and become self-employed and then sell their services back to their previous employer. This sounds rather up-market but is chiefly to the em-

ployer's advantage, and has much in common with part-time and irregular short-term contract working.

Many men seek to employ women to meet short-term professional workforce demands, but do not seem to realize that in order to attract more women, they have got to convince them that the surveying profession offers a secure future to women. Many young women surveyors have every intention of working all their lives and see themselves attaining senior partnership level, and remaining in the profession when they are old and grey (like the men). The reality may prove somewhat different, because of inflexible organizational structures within professional practice, and outdated assumptions about women's role, and "shelf-life" within the profession. At present men are expecting a great deal from the women but giving little of long-term value in return. Indeed, whilst the increase in the admission of women has benefited the professions, not least in providing hard workers and energy, many are concerned that this solution, unless coupled with fundamental organizational changes, is going to create an even greater crisis in the future. Some men still do not seem to realize that women surveyors are not just some convenient minority reserve labour force to draw on in times of pressure, but rather they are becoming a substantial sector of the body of the profession itself and, if they individually have to leave because of inflexible and unsupportive employment structures, may take with them irreplaceable expertise and experience, thus "eating into the very fabric of the profession" (sic).

Many surveyors seem to have a very static picture of the woman surveyor. For example, there has been much talk of getting more women into engineering and this has affected recruitment in the more technological and civil engineering related aspects of surveying. Men seem to be able to imagine the attractive young woman engineer, wearing a hard hat standing bravely out on the building site. But is there any future in this role for the woman herself? Quite apart from all the inevitable harassment and "trouble" women still get on site, women are also aware that this can be a dead-end job. Many women felt that they were left out there, "out in the cold", whereas for equivalent men this appeared to be a temporary phase, before they were called back into the central office for a desk based management job, after this outdoor initiation period was over. In contrast, women were given the impression that their technological expertise made them indispensable where they were, and therefore actually disqualified them from further promotion. It seemed as if the men assumed women would be satisfied with limited success and it was never envisaged that they should progress further, or grow older in the profession.

There is a need to develop clear life-long career paths for women which are not based on the mono-dimensional model of the professional gentleman, but which allow for women's "different" life patterns, without penalizing them either financially or status-wise. Women's "different" attributes need to be taken into account and valued as criteria for promotion. Conversely some of the money-consuming, time-wasting male attributes, such as competitiveness, aggression, and empire building, might be downgraded in value. The organizational structures of surveying firms, and public sector bodies need to be re-organized to allow more people to achieve and hold senior posts. This might involve creating a flatter less hierarchical and less pyramidal structure, in which "the jam" is spread more thinly. Some women favour a more co-operative approach to management altogether. Qualitatively, many women want better conditions of employment, which allow more flexibility and more opportunity to re-integrate work and home commitments. This does not necessarily mean less work would be

done per person, as people might be more productive if they had more control over their work patterns and felt valued as individuals; overheads and wastages might actually be lower.

## 6. Towards Cultural Change in the Profession

There has been much emphasis on how women must learn how to fit in, be more assertive, and more organized, which is all remarkably one-sided. How we get the men and the profession itself to change is another matter. Surveyors would benefit from gaining a wider world view of the possibilities by having more contact with other professional groups outside the property world. This might be achieved by means of involving them in conferences organized with aligned professions which have greater numbers of women within the ambit of management policy (RTPI, 1988). At a time of "man" power shortages, the profession must do all it can to enable, and not deter, women to participate fully in the profession and stay in. The economic and efficient use of "human" resources through enlightened and sensitive management actually saves money, that is, it reduces the cost factor at all stages of the development process. It is not just a costly luxury for the benefit of women, it is good business sense for the whole surveying practice. But some men imagine they do not discriminate and genuinely do not realize; in these cases, awareness training within the ambit of continuing professional development sessions<sup>4</sup> might be utilized. More drastic legal enforcement of equal opportunities legislation may be required. But, unlike in North America, measures such as quotas, class action equality litigation, and positive discrimination have rarely featured on the agenda as a means of improving professional women's lot, possibly fearing a backlash.

More fundamentally, in order for women to make a difference there needs to be a change in the cultural values of the surveying profession which would result in the acceptance of women as normal beings and not oddities. Simply being there, acting a role model, being an alternate voice, and seeking to influence proceedings are all important strategies in bringing this about; albeit hard work for the women themselves. A change in culture should ultimately be reflected in the accommodation of women's needs for more flexible career structures, childcare requirements, and the valuing of their management style and less combative, caring, more co-operative approach to professional practice as positive attributes and not as evidence of weakness, lack of seriousness, and therefore, unsuitability for promotion. In particular a change in culture might lead to a reconceptualization of what is seen as practical within the subculture with a greater emphasis being given to the practical requirements women expect from built environment design, which have previously been marginalized as belonging to the private female realm, or being too "sentimental," non-profit making, or trivial, and thus of no importance to professional men.

Such cultural and organizational changes would in turn result in changes in the way that the built environment was perceived and planned. In Britain, the statutory town planning authorities have the role of ameliorating the worst effects of the private property market by means of exercising development control on the design of development, and the inter-relationships between land uses and their location. A more positive approach would be to seek to convince surveyors that it would actually be finan-

cially more profitable if they took into account the needs of the other 52 percent of the population, particularly when developing retail centres because 80 percent of shopping is undertaken by women, for whom questions of design, location, and provision of support facilities such as public lavatories, creches and disabled facilities (Cavanagh and Ware, 1990), might be primary in determining whether they give their custom to that centre or not. In fact, women town planners, architects, and some surveyors are working hard at trying to alter the whole nature of land use patterns in a most pro-active manner, in particular to change zoning patterns which rigidly separate work and home at great inconvenience to working women; to ensure that local facilities, shops and amenities are an integral part of residential developments, and to improve public transport. However, opportunities to implement such changes are limited being dependent on favourable interpretation of the legal framework, political will from statutory authorities, and a realization from private developers that it is actually good business to plan for women. However, it should not always be assumed that women surveyors are necessarily any more socially aware than the men of the problems in a profession in which the main aim is to achieve the best financial return for the client. It is a matter of personal perspective and motivation as well as gender. Quantitative increases in the number of women surveyors must be accompanied by qualitative measures to create the conditions under which change would be possible.

## 7. The Future: Moving the Carpet Beneath our Feet?

Surveying is an especially English professional monopoly which developed to serve the needs of the landed and property interests in society (Thompson, 1968). In other countries, surveying is divided up in different ways between civil engineers, architects, town planners and property investment brokers. Many women in Britain, in their various professional bodies, have been working hard to establish their position and implement change in their own domain. But, the men of Europe are about to "move the goal posts and redraw the pitch", and much of what was gained may now be lost. Consultations are underway to enable the harmonization in 1992 of all the professional bodies in Europe concerned with the built environment. There is talk of developing a new creature, the Euro-surveyor (the "EurGeo"). Women who have established a foothold in specialist professional organizations concerned with housing, town planning, architecture, and estate management may soon find themselves "harmonized" with hordes of civil engineers, project managers, and construction surveyors (who are predominantly male) and totally swamped in a much larger pond.

The government has appointed the Construction Industry Standing Conference (CISC) to act as the lead body for a mapping exercise which intends to set out the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the construction industry to enable comparability with European qualifications, and to set clearer educational achievement levels for the future nationally.<sup>5</sup> The CISC speaks for all the land-use professions including surveying, architecture and planning, but its agenda appears to be set by the more specifically building-related professions, all of which have much lower percentages of women members than architecture, town planning, and general practice surveying bodies.

<sup>5</sup> From a feminist perspective there is already concern about the emphasis on including elements of prior learning accreditation which women are less likely to possess, and also measures of competence based on industry-related, activities as assessed by the employer. This could actually be a step backwards from the far-from-perfect, traditional, college-based forms of qualification.

Having been one of the few women involved in consultations on this mapping exercise, I find it alarming as a feminist that once "construction" and "the building industry" become key words, the whole professional agenda becomes surprisingly alien; and matters which I assumed to be of obvious importance throughout Europe become marginalized. When talking to one of the leaders of this exercise recently, I enquired as to why gender issues had been completely left out of much of the consultative material, I was met with speechless puzzlement as if it had never even occurred to him that gender could be of any importance in mapping out policies for the future of the construction professions. In conclusion, never take anything for granted; we have to be constantly watchful to keep what we think we have already won, as well as seeking further amelioration of the position of women in the land-use professions.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ACKER, S. (1984), Women in higher education: what is the problem?, *Is Higher Education Fair to Women?* (Acker, S. & Warren Piper, D. Eds.) (National Foundation for Educational Research, Nelson, Slough).
- CARTER, R. & KIRKUP, G. (1989), "Women in Engineering" (Macmillan, London).
- CAVANAGH, S. & WARE, V. (1990), "At Women's Convenience: A Handbook on the Design of Women's Public Toilets" (Women's Design Service, London).
- CROMPTON, R. & SANDERSON, K. (1990), "Gendered Jobs and Social Change" (Unwin Hyman, London).
- DELAMONT, S. (1989), "Knowledgeable Women: Structuralism and the Reproduction of Elites" (Routledge, London).
- FOLEY, D. (1964), An approach to urban metropolitan structure, *Explorations into Urban Structure* (Webber, M. et al Eds.) (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia).
- FOULSHAM, J. (1990), Women's needs and planning: a critical evaluation of recent local authority practice, *Radical Planning Initiatives: New Directions for Urban Planning in the 1990's* (Montgomery, J. & Thornley, A. Eds.) (Gower, Aldershot).
- GALE, A. (1989), Women in the British construction professions, *Gender and Science and Technology*, 5th International Conference (GASAT, Haifa & Jerusalem).
- GREED, C. (1988), Is more better?: with reference to the position of women chartered surveyors in Britain, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 11, (1988) 3, 187-197.
- GREED, C. (1991), "Surveying Sisters: Women in a Traditional Male Profession" (Routledge Chapman and Hall, New York).
- JOSEPH, M. (1978), Professional Values, a case study of professional students in a Polytechnic, *Research in Education*, (1978) 19, 49-65.
- LAW SOCIETY (1988), "Equal in the Law: Report of the Working Party on Women's Careers" (The Law Society, London).
- LORENZ, C. (1990), "Women in Architecture: A Contemporary Perspective" (Trefoil, London).
- LEVISON, D. & ATKINS, J. (1987), "The Key to Equality: The Women in Housing Survey, Women in Housing Working Party" (Institute of Housing, London).
- MATRIX (1984), "Making Space: Women and the Man Made Environment" (Pluto, London).
- MCDOWELL, L. (1983), Towards an understanding of the gender division of urban space, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, (1983) 1, 59-72.
- PARKIN, F. (1979), "Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique" (Tavistock, London).
- RAO, N. (1990), "Black Women in Public Housing, London Race and Housing Unit with the Blacks" (Women in Housing Group, London).
- RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) (1989), Records Office, London.
- RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) (1988), "Managing Equality: The Role of Senior Planners", Conference Papers (RTPI, London).
- SPENCER, A. & PODMORE, D. (1987), "In a Man's World: Essays on Women in Male-dominated Professions" (Tavistock, London).
- THOMPSON, F. & Michael, L. (1968), "Chartered Surveyors, the growth of a Profession". (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London).
- WEB (Women and the Built Environment) (1990), Simplistic, inadequate, tokenistic, *Women and the Built Environment*, (1990) 17, 3.