Architectural Records Roundtable
Annual Report
2013

Date: 15 November 2013
Name of Section/Roundtable: Architectural Records Roundtable

Officers:

● Sherrie Bowser, Virginia Tech, (Co-Chair) 2011-2013
● Dana Lamparello, Illinois Institute of Technology (Co-Chair) 2012-2014
● Kate Rogge, Franklin County Historical Society (Web Liaison)

Report from annual meeting:

Number of attendees: 25

Election results:

Katie Pierce Meyer
Junior Co-Chair
August 2013-August 2015
Doctoral Student, University of Texas at Austin

Sherrie Bowser
Steering Committee member
August 2013-August 2015
Special Collections Archivist, Virginia Tech University Libraries

Wendy Hagenmeier
Steering Committee member
August 2013-August 2016
Digital Collections Archivist, Georgia Tech Archives

Nathaniel Parks
Steering Committee member
August 2013-August 2014
Assistant Archivist, Ryerson & Burnham Archives at the Art Institute of Chicago

Summary of meeting activities:

Meeting agenda and minutes are attached.
A substantial part of the Roundtable meeting was spent in an open discussion with the attending members regarding the recent member survey results and the future direction of the CAD/BIM Taskforce. Overall, the group believes that ARR should be doing more to engage the architecture and design community, especially in recommending best practices for born-digital design records collecting and management. The group also agreed that we need to improve our outreach to a more general archivist audience through education sessions and better overall visibility. The final half of the meeting was devoted to short presentations by a number of Roundtable members on the topic, “Access to Architectural Records.” We asked our members to be creative in interpreting “access” and encouraged them to present projects at any stage of development. Below is a list of the projects presented. The Roundtable is grateful for audiovisual support from SAA, which greatly enhanced the value of these presentations. Because architectural collections are largely comprised of visual materials, these projects are much more easily reported on and discussed when we are able to view images.

a. "Chicago Collections Consortium: planning a local web portal"
   Nathaniel Parks
   Assistant Archivist
   Ryerson & Burnham Archives
   Art Institute of Chicago

b. “British Architectural Library Outreach/Archives Updates”
   Kurt G. F. Helfrich
   Chief Archivist and Collections Manager
   British Architectural Library
   Royal Institute of British Architects

   Betsy Baldwin
   Project Archivist, Mohamed Makiya Archive
   Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture Documentation Center
   Massachusetts Institute of Technology

   Dana Lamparello
   Archivist for Architectural and Visual Materials
   Chicago History Museum

e. “Documenting Modern Living: Digitizing Miller House and Garden”
   Jennifer Whitlock
   Archivist
   Indianapolis Museum of Art

f. "Confronting complexity: Understanding and visualizing Charles W. Moore at the Alexander Architectural Archives"
   Katie Pierce Meyer
   Doctoral student, School of Information
   Project Processor, Alexander Architectural Archives
The University of Texas at Austin

g. “Dedicated and Rededicated: Architecture and the Archives at the
University of Arkansas”
Joshua Cobbs Youngblood
Special Collections, University of Arkansas

Completed projects/activities:

● The ARR bylaws were drafted in 2013 and approved at our annual meeting on August 14, 2013. SAA Council approved the bylaws on September 30, 2013.

● Kate Rogge helped the co-chairs consolidate content found on the old and new ARR websites. The old website was removed from the Web and all updated content can now be found in one place: http://www2.archivists.org/groups/architectural-records-roundtable. We also added new sections related to the CAD/BIM Taskforce and our bylaws.

● In an effort to better understand and meet the needs of ARR members, the co-chairs designed a brief member survey using survey monkey. The survey ran through May 2013 and we received approximately a 10% member response rate. Please see the attached member survey report for further details.

● Our endorsed session proposal for the 2013 SAA Annual Meeting, “OMG There Are So Many of Them: Designed Tools for Access to Visual Materials” (Waverly Lowell, chair), was rejected for being “too niche” and not having a broad enough draw. The members of ARR feel strongly that this is not true of architecture-related topics, and the co-chairs expressed these concerns on their behalf to the incoming SAA vice/president/president elect, Kathleen Roe. In an email, we asked for her help in spreading the word about how ubiquitous the issues surrounding architectural records really are. To date, we haven’t yet received a response.

● Taking into consideration the feedback we have received from the program committee in previous years, the new co-chair made the final decision to endorse two sessions that are relevant to our members but that also have value to the broader SAA audience:
  ○ "Software preservation network: ensuring long-term access to proprietary file formats” is a well-organized submission that points to scalable solutions. Proprietary file formats is an issue of major concern in the architectural records community, but one that is shared with many communities within SAA.
  ○ "Archivist! Data Librarian! Asset Manager! Do the differences really matter?” brings together information professionals in an effort to share insight and collaborate across institutional and professional boundaries in ways that are important to provide access to materials.

● The co-chairs arranged for an ARR member tour of the Historic New Orleans Collection on August 14, 2013. The program included an introduction to the Williams Research Center (WRC) and its adjacent campus of buildings, a “show and tell” of the architectural record collections held in the HNOC, and a brief demonstration of the architectural inventory known as the Vieux Carré Survey, which was recently converted to a digital database. Members were invited to a lunch at the Chartres House following the tour.
**Ongoing projects/activities:**

At our 2012 meeting, ARR members organized the CAD/BIM Taskforce to document current practice in the field for ingesting and preserving CAD and BIM digital objects. Twenty-five Roundtable members volunteered to serve on the task force. Inés Zalduendo, Special Collections Archivist, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Special Collections, Frances Loeb Library and Aliza Leventhal, MIT Museum and Simmons College, continue to serve as co-chairs. Attached is the Taskforce’s year one report. In the coming year, the task force plans to build upon the bibliographic resource to include references that address curatorial and legal issues, as well as plan to connect with the 3D printing community, whose work regarding interoperable file formats may be useful to managing born-digital design records.

**2010-2013 Strategic Priority - Technology initiatives:**

- Encourage member involvement with CAD/BIM Taskforce.
- To provide an effective online mechanism to share news and information about existing or developing best practices and standards, the ARR is creating a wiki for members to share information specifically on architectural records and archival practice. It is an online space to contribute best practices and report on developments at other conferences and in related communities. One section of the wiki will be devoted to the CAD/BIM Taskforce.
- The ARR encourages members to develop and share their technology expertise and actively participate in other communities to learn from their experience with digital records, including GIS and gaming communities.

**2010-2013 Strategic Priority - Advocacy/Public Awareness initiatives:**

- Through endorsements of sessions that are relevant to our members but that also have value to the broader SAA audience, we aim to bring architectural records archivists into conversation with others in related fields. The goal is to examine common problems and share knowledge across professional boundaries, which we believe will help develop ways to express the value of archives to broader audiences.

**Initiatives associated with the new 2013-2018 Strategic Plan:**

- In order to understand and meet our members’ needs, the ARR conducted a survey in May 2013. In response to results from the members survey and feedback from members in the annual meeting in August, the ARR is exploring ways to engage architectural practitioners, advocate for value of architectural materials, and guide best practices for the collection and preservation of architectural archives. An online resource was suggested that would allow members to contribute and stay abreast of the work of their colleagues and we are constructing a wiki that will be a collaborative tool for members to share information. The goal is to create an opportunity to enhance the professional growth of ARR members by providing information and an place for members to participate in advancing the field.