In an effort to better understand and meet the needs of the Architectural Records Roundtable’s (ARR) diverse members, as well as to give ARR’s newly elected steering committee some direction, co-chairs Sherrie Bowser and Dana Lamparello conducted a brief member survey using Survey Monkey in May 2013. The survey, comprised of nine questions in total, was sent to members via the ARR listserv on May 6, 2013 and closed on May 31, 2013. Out of 376 members, 36 people responded, which is roughly a 10% response rate—the average rate for most external surveys. The following report summarizes the survey results.

**QUESTION 1**
Please specify which working environment best describes your setting:
- **Academic Archive** - 33.33% / 12 responses
- **Museum or Museum Archive** - 19.44% / 7 responses
- **Private Special Library or Archive** - 11.11% / 4 responses
  - Membership Institute with library and archives collections)
- **Government Archive** - 8.33% / 3 responses
- **Business, Organization, or Design Firm Archive** - 5.56% / 2
  - Technically 3 – one “other response” wrote Corporate Archives
- **Independent Consultant** - 0%
- **Non-Archival or Library setting** - please specify below - 2.78% / 1 response
  - Small college library
- **Other** - please specify below / 6 responses
  - Physical plant of a university
  - Non-profit Religious Archive
  - Database Vendor
  - Public Library
  - University Facilities Library (records management)
  - Private collection

It is interesting to note that the majority of ARR members come from an academic archive, but the results do indicate that members span a fairly wide variety of environments, some not so obviously related to architectural records such as a religious archive and private collection.

**QUESTION 2**
In relation to your position’s total workload, what percentage of your time is spent working with architectural materials?
The average time reported by Roundtable members was 43%. However, the overall responses ranged from 0% to 100% indicating that we have a diverse membership in terms of interaction with architectural records and this will need to be considered when crafting future Roundtable strategic plans and in generating reference and resource materials.

**QUESTION 3**
In your particular setting, what is your greatest need related to the management of architectural records? (Some examples may include better climate control, more room for storage, or digital preservation education.)
All 36 people responded to this question. The most common answer was space and storage (in terms of both climate and housing), but all sorts of digital issues like digital preservation, born-digital appraisal, and digital access (including cataloging, digitization, management) ran a close second. Staff, time, and eliminating backlog
were also identified as significant needs. Two respondents mentioned needing reliable vendors for supplies, which the co-chairs believe could be added as a section on the ARR website or new wiki. Other interesting responses included the following:

- “There is still too large a focus on the design portion of architectural records. My greatest needs are resources surrounding construction/assembly and modern use studies of project records.”
- “…Retention policy laws; risk management as it relates to architectural drawings; digital management and versioning of drawings”

The richness of these responses will allow the new steering committee to better plan the future direction of ARR and educational programming.

**QUESTION 4**

If applicable, please list your top 3 e-resources (blogs, twitter feeds, websites, listservs, etc.) related to architecture or architectural materials. Non-academic (but professionally executed) suggestions are welcome!

Websites, listservs, and blogs are the primary e-resources (receiving a combined 75% of the vote) that the Roundtable membership uses to stay current on architecture or architectural related materials. Some examples include, HAARGIS (Illinois Historic Architectural and Archaeology Resources Geographic Information System), Library of Congress: the signal (not architectural, but informative in realm of digital preservation), CFTA listserv, Modernica (http://blog.modernica.net/), 99% invisible podcast by Roman Mars (http://99percentinvisible.org/), The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, and Curbed Chicago (for current local architecture, development and urban design news). Other examples mentioned the ARR website and listserv, indicating that the ARR website continues to be a valuable tool for Roundtable promotion and resource distribution. Non e-resources also exhibited a strong presence with other professionals/networking and printed literature receiving 16% of the vote reminding us that not everything is digital.

**QUESTION 5**

SAA is now allowing sections and roundtables to use social media. Would you like to see the Architectural Records Roundtable create any of the following accounts to increase our visibility and means of sharing information?

Select all that apply:

- Blog - 61.29% / 19 responses
- None - 35.48% / 11 responses
- Facebook account - 32.26% / 10 responses
- Twitter account - 19.35% / 6 responses

While blogs seem to be the clear winner, it is telling that “none” was the second highest response. Many of the respondents commented that any social media initiative that ARR undertakes needs to be well executed. A neglected or half-effort blog is not worth doing.

**QUESTION 6**

What architecture-related topics would you like to see covered in SAA’s pre-conference educational workshops?

- More Product, Less Process (MPLP) for architectural and other visual materials
- Digital preservation for architectural and other visual materials
- Architectural collection appraisal and assessment
- Architectural material format identification
- Physical preservation for architectural and other visual materials
- Other (please specify)
Out of the 5 provided choices, ‘Digital preservation for architectural and other visual materials’ received the majority of the votes while the other choices ‘More Product, Less Process (MPLP) for architectural and other visual materials,’ ‘Architectural collection appraisal and assessment,’ ‘Architectural material format identification,’ and ‘Physical preservation for architectural and other visual materials’ finished roughly even with one another. Indicating that there is a need for education in both basic architectural records archival practice and the big unanswered question in profession ‘What do we do with born digital architecture files?’ These findings echo back to Question 2’s results regarding the diversity of Roundtable membership between those who devote a portion of their time to architectural records versus those who work with architectural records full time.

QUESTION 7
Are you satisfied with the level of engagement the Architectural Records Roundtable has with outside communities such as architecture and design practitioners? YES/NO

- Yes - 56.67% / 17 responses
- No - 43.33% / 13 responses
Most comments were “I don’t know”

QUESTION 8
If not, who should we be engaging more and what could we be doing differently?

A follow-up to question 7, this question prompted confusion because the majority of respondents were not sure about our level of engagement with outside communities and it turns out that the survey creators weren’t either. We did receive some good feedback, however, and some potential outreach partnerships include architectural firm’s records managers and staff, architecture museum groups, and other architectural organizations such as AIA, AIA regional groups, RIBA, ICAM, and ICA-PAR.

QUESTION 9
Finally, what would you like to see the Architectural Records Roundtable accomplish in the future?

This open-ended question yielded 22 interesting responses. Most comments centered on best practices regarding born-digital records and advocacy for architectural records care in general. The two most enlightening comments, however, are as follows:

- “I would like to see ARR become an invaluable source of information on the appraisal, use, and preservation of architectural records. Processing (arrangement/description) architectural records is not so radically unique that we should devote any more time to it. Increasing best practices for architectural records appraisal, informed by use and increased knowledge of the entire AEC record, will facilitate much smoother processing and will result in better, more accessible collections. Facilitating and encouraging the study and reporting of use data is essential to archives, but I have seen little regarding users of architectural records especially in the last 10 years or so. Perhaps an initiative to facilitate a multi-institutional architectural records usage study would be something ARR could accomplish? Perhaps assisting in creating standardized tools for recording/reporting institutional use metrics? Finally, while there have been and continue to be quite a few resources on preserving physical architectural records there is still a finite amount of information on preserving digital records. The CAD/BIM taskforce is doing an excellent job of assembling what exists currently, but it would be helpful to see more examples of what is realistically doable if you don't work at Harvard, Oxford, LC, MIT, etc. Possibly soliciting case studies on how your average repository has been able/unable to implement these recommendations would be a useful addition?”

- “I'd like to see ARR be more engaged with 'generalist' archivists, offering its expertise as a resource, and not be limited to a roundtable of practitioners who specialize in architectural records. I personally am not an 'architectural' archivist and when I was faced with processing a collection of 19th-century drawings, I desperately sought resources to guide my work. There wasn't much available...anywhere. I feel that ARR could be a great leader for other archivists to look to when facing similar circumstances.”