

Women's Development Corporation Records

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1979-2015



Title Statement

Women's Development Corporation Records
Ms.2016.012

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2016.012

Unit Date

1979-2015

Language

English .

Abstract

The Women's Development Corporation (WDC) is a Rhode Island based housing developer and non-profit founded by a group of architects, designers, community planners, and historic preservation professionals. These records document select activities of the WDC from 1979-2015.

Creator

Women's Development Corporation (R.I.)

Extent

8.5 Cubic Feet Three records boxes, three small flat boxes, one large flat box, one roll of drawings, one large flat folder of drawings, 16 foam board presentation panels.

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Permission to publish material from Women's Development Corporation Records must be obtained from Special Collections, Virginia Tech.

Acquisition Information

The Women's Development Corporation Records were donated to Special Collections in 2016.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Women's Development Corporation Records, Ms2016-012, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

The Women's Development Corporation (WDC) is a non-profit housing developer in Rhode Island. The WDC was founded in 1979 by a group of architects, designers, community planners, and historic preservation professionals. The founders included Susan Aitcheson (Program Director, Vice President from 1979-2012, and President from 2012-2016), Katrin Adam, and Joan Forrester Sprague. Alma Felix Green was the first Executive Director in 1980 and retired as President in 2014. The WDC designs, develops, constructs, and manages sustainable housing for low and moderate income families, individuals with special needs, and elderly residents. Between 1979 and 2016, the WDC had developed over 1600 housing units.

Additional sources: <http://www.wdchoc.org/about-wdc> <http://www.wdchoc.org/FAQ>

Content Description

These records document select activities of the Women's Development Corporation (WDC) of Rhode Island from 1979-2015. Materials include professional correspondence from WDC staff to peers, funding agencies, politicians, and clients; commendations received by the WDC; research notes and reports; administrative records, including meeting minutes and bylaws; public relations materials; press coverage by and about the WDC; project documentation, including design sketches, presentation drawings, photographs, and planning materials; audio-visual recordings; electronic records on DVD; and furniture models used in the participatory design planning process.

Separated Materials

Separated materials consist of books relevant to the firm's ideals preceding the work, with subjects covering aspects such as participatory design, guides to low-income housing design, housing for Low-Income single women, different types of households, and cohousing.

Titles:

- New Households, New Housing , Karen A. Franck, Sherry Ahrentzen
- Singular Women: Housing for Low-Income Single Women Without Dependents. Ann Forsyth
- Participatory Design. Theory and Techniques. Henry Sanoff.
- A Practical Guide to Low-and Moderate-Income Housing. Charles Edison and Bruce Lane

Keywords

International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA)

History of Women in Architecture

Women architects -- Rhode Island

Arrangement

This collection was arranged with respect to the original order and the Shepherd/Lowell Standard Series and Subseries for Architecture and Landscape Design. The collection reflects the following series and subseries:

- Series I: Photographs

- Series II: Professional Papers
- Subseries A: Correspondence related to the profession
- Subseries B: Awards, certificates
- Subseries C: Research Notes and Data Collection
- Subseries D: Files, articles, clipping, materials
- Subseries E: Women's School of Planning and Architecture
- Series III: Office Records
- Subseries A: Administrative articles, bylaws, meetings
- Subseries B: Housing Planning Group Meetings, 1980
- Subseries C: Public Relations Activity
- Subseries D: Published Materials
- Subseries E: Exercises and analysis
- Series IV: Project Records
- Series V: Participatory Design Workshop, 1990
- Series VI: Aduiovisual and Electronic Media
- Series VII: Exhibits and Artifacts

Description of Subordinate Components

SERIES I: Photographs

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Contains photographs of Susan Aitcheson's retirement, 2015.

Susan Aitcheson retires

Unit Date 2015

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

SERIES II: Professional Papers

Scope and Contents

The Professional Papers series consists of material relating WDC's great effort to gather funding and support from several organizations and institutions to fund and subsidize housing for low income women and families. This is supported by correspondence, research notes, reference files related to both the profession and the role of women in architecture. Particular attention was given to the WSPA - Women's School of Planning and Architecture, with related correspondence, publicity, awards.

SUBSERIES A: Correspondence related to the profession

Proposal 1979 + Accompanying Correspondence

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

EDA - Economic Development Administration

Unit Date January 1979

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Becky Peterson (1979) to S. Aitcheson, J. Sprague, M. Kennedy

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Congressman Fernand Germaine

Unit Date January 1979 - April 1984

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Secretary Simons

Unit Date July 1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

H.U.D. Regional

Unit Date August-September 1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Congresswoman Claudine Schneider

Unit Date November 1980 - August 1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Senator John Chafee

Unit Date July 1981 - January 1982

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Ralph Pari

Unit Date June 1983

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Elizabeth Earls - Community Mental Health Centers

Unit Date September 1993

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Deborah Pond - Women's Housing & Economic Development Corporation

Unit Date December 1998

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Don Roberts

Unit Date April 1999

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Myrna Breitbart

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14-22 (folder)

Jennifer Bramley

Unit Date August 2004

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

Correspondence Andrea Merrett

Unit Date March - April 2012

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

SUBSERIES B: Awards, certificates

Susan Aitcheson's License

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 25 (folder)

APA Awards & Proposal

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 26-29 (folder)

SUBSERIES C: Research Notes and Data Collection

Breitbart Questionnaire & Answers

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 30 (folder)

Breitbart - Some Research Notes

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 31 (folder)

Information Emily Card - HUD

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 32 (folder)

Berlin Conference

Unit Date 1981-06-24

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 33 (folder)

Housing Group Design Exercises and Questionnaires

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 34-35 (folder)

Tenant Selection

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 36 (folder)

Outline of Development process

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 37 (folder)

SUBSERIES D: Files, articles, clipping, materials

Article "Women's school ends successful summer"

Unit Date 1975-10
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 38 (carton)

Spokeswoman - Magazine Volume 10, Number 5

Unit Date 1980-05
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 39 (folder)

"Women Consumers, Women Professionals

Unit Date 1980
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 40 (folder)

"Making it ourselves"

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 41 (folder)

"Designing for the Messiness of Life"

Unit Date 1981-02
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 42 (folder)

"Sisterhood is braced for the Reaganauts"

Unit Date 1981-05
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 43 (folder)

"What an architect does - and doesn't do"

Unit Date 1986-08
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 44 (folder)

Journal of Housing & Community Development

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 45 (folder)

Progressive Architecture - Women in Architecture: Leveling the Playing Field

Unit Date 1995-11
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 46 (folder)

Sophia Smith Collection - Printed Webpage Search

Unit Date 2010
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 47 (folder)

"Cohousing" book with note

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 48 (folder)

Impacts Press

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 58 (folder)

SUBSERIES E: Women's School of Planning and Architecture

WSPA News Report

Unit Date 1975-1976

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 49 (folder)

Correspondence: Linda Moody

Unit Date 1980-06

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 50 (folder)

Correspondence: Carol Randles

Unit Date 1980-07

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 51 (folder)

Reference Files: WSPA

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 52 (folder)

WSPA

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 53-54 (folder)

Reference Files: Conference National Symposium Women

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 56 (folder)

WSPA Clipping: Kathleen McDonald's Information

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 57 (folder)

SERIES III: Office Records

SUBSERIES A: Administrative articles, bylaws, meetings

First Meeting in RI to Discuss Concepts

Unit Date 1978-11

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

CSA Recommendation

Unit Date 1979-02

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Documents

Unit Date 1979

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 3-17 (folder)

WDC Economic Development: An Affirmative Action Community Outreach Program

Unit Date 1979-04

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

A Synopsis of Villa Excelsior

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

WDC Program & Description

Unit Date 1980-06

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 20 (folder)

Final Report to TAP

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 21 (folder)

Proposed Mawney Street Cooperative

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 22 (folder)

Housing with Economic Development Description

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

Vol II - Section V - Implementation Feasibility

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

SUBSERIES B: Housing Planning Group Meetings

Unit Date 1980

Housing Planning Meetings - Notes

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 25 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - March Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 26 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - April Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 27-28 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - May Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 29 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - Boston trip

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 30-38 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - June Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 39-41 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - July Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 42 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - August Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 43 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - September Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 44 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - October Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 45-46 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - November Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 47-50 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - December Meetings

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 51 (folder)

Summary of Housing Meetings

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 52 (folder)

Transitional Housing Planning Group

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 53 (folder)

Original Housing Planning Attendance

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 54 (folder)

Spanish Meeting Announcement Original

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 55 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - January Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 56 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - February Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 57 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - March Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 58 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - April Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 59 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - May Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 60 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - June Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 61 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - August Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 62 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - October Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 63 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - November Meetings

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 64 (folder)

Boards of Directors - March

Unit Date 1982-03

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 65 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - July Meetings

Unit Date 1982

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 66 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - August Meetings

Unit Date 1982

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 67 (folder)

Text from visit to Boston with Housing Groups

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 68 (folder)

Housing Planning Meetings - Attendance

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 69 (folder)

House Planning Meetings - September 1982

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 70 (folder)

SUBSERIES C: Public Relations Activity

Ads & Info Forms

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

General Notebook: Flyers

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 2-3 (folder)

General Notebook: Flyers - Documentation related to flyers

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

General Notebook: Outreach - October to December 1979

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

General Notebook: Outreach for intro MTG - November 28, 1979 - PaceSponsor

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

General Notebook: Outreach for intro MTG -December 11th, 1980

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

General Notebook: Outreach January 1980 Presentation

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

General Notebook: Outreach May 1980

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

General Notebook: Business Interests

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

General Notebook: Introduction Meetings

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

General Notebook: Sample Forms

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

General Notebook: Building Maintenance

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

General Notebook: Workshops sponsored by W.D.C.

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

General Notebook: Senior Craft

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

SUBSERIES D: Published Materials

"American University National Symposium"

Unit Date 1981-05
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 30 (folder)

Magazine "Canadian Woman Studies Les Cahiers de la Femme"
Unit Date 1990
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 31 (folder)

"Affordable - Housing Program launched"
Unit Date 1991-03
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 32 (folder)

"A conversation with Alma Green"
Unit Date 1995-04
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 33 (folder)

"Planning New Living Spaces for the Nontraditional Family"
Unit Date 1984-09
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 34 (folder)

"City Group offers hope for families"
Unit Date 1992-06
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 35 (folder)

"Bringing Life to West End"
Unit Date 1992-07
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 36 (folder)

"Nonprofit Group well on its way to \$3 million"
Unit Date 1992-01
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 37 (folder)

"Quality housing for Women and Children" - Breitbart
Unit Date 1990
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 38 (folder)

"Female Solutions to Housing Need"
Unit Date 1990-11
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 39 (folder)

"The Cork Examiner" articles
Unit Date 1995-02

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 40 (folder)

"A best practice toolkit for historic preservation"

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 41 (folder)

"Hope resides in a historic house"

Unit Date 1995-07
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 42 (folder)

"The new Master Builders"

Unit Date 1998-07
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 43 (folder)

"More than Housing" - Joan Sprague

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 44 (folder)

"Establishing Grounds" - Myrna Breitbart

Unit Date 1995
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 45 (folder)

Magazine "Architecture" - article photocopy

Unit Date 1998-07
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 46 (folder)

Magazine "Architecture"

Unit Date 1998-07
box-folder 3 (box)
Container 47 (folder)

WDC History & Articles stapled

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 48 (folder)

"Aging in Place"

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 49 (folder)

"More than Shelter. A Manual on Transitional Housing"

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 50 (folder)

"List of WDC Publications"

box-folder 3 (box)
Container 51 (folder)

SUBSERIES E: Exercises and analysis

Design exercises

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 52 (folder)

Site selection

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 53 (folder)

Spanish Neighborhood Analysis

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 54 (folder)

Neighborhood Analysis

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 55 (folder)

SERIES IV : Project Records

List of Properties owned by WDC

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 56 (folder)

Projects In Progress and Completed

Unit Date 1998

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 57 (folder)

Developments & Properties

Unit Date 1999-02

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 58 (folder)

Projects in progress & Projects Completed

Unit Date 1999

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 59 (folder)

WDC properties

Unit Date 2003-06

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 60 (folder)

Sketched Floorplans

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 61 (folder)

Drawings and Plans

box 3

Roll-up drawings and sketches

colored drawings and sketches

box 4

Fifteenth Anniversary Portfolio Records

Unit Date 1994

box-folder 8 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Project Portfolio: Planning, Designing and Building Homes for Families and Communities

Unit Date 1980-1997

box-folder 8 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Scrapbook portfolio documenting selected housing projects and properties developed by WDC between 1980-1997. Entitled "Planning, Designing and Building Homes for Families and Communities," the portfolio explores the WDC's Participatory Planning Design exercises and prototype development from 1980-1982. Originally established for the WDC's fifteenth anniversary and expanded over time to document new projects.

SERIES V: Participatory Design Workshop

Unit Date 1980

Scope and Contents

This series comprises conceptual sketches, fabric and paint swatches, and planning activities from the WDC's original 1980 participatory design workshop with low-income women. The series also includes prototype floorplans produced by Susan Aitcheson after the workshop.

Participatory Design Activities

oversize 1 (folder)

Prototype Drawings

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 62 (folder)

oversize 2 (folder)

Fabric and paint swatch selections

oversize 3 (folder)

SERIES VI: Audiovisual and Electronic Media

Women's Development Corporation, Fall 1998 - Tapes 1,2,3

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Footage shot for Dream Builders on Home & Garden Television. Betacam SP tape.

Women's Development Corporation, Fall 1998 - Tapes 4,5

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Footage shot for Dream Builders on Home & Garden Television. Betacam SP tape.

Audiocassette, "Tent City", 2 sides

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Audiocassette, Side 1: "Vivia Victoria, 1st Nov 15, 1980" / Side 2: "Ann Kerry @ Villa Vicotira, Nov 15, 1980"

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Audiocassette, Side 1: "Alma's interview, rodie, 8/2/8/81" / Side 2: "Christmas Party - Children Singing, 12/19/83"

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Dream Builders - Women's Development Corp

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents

VHS tape

Susan Aitcheson Interview, 4-16-13

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents

DVD-R, interview conducted by Andrea Merrett, Columbia University Archives

Home & Garden Network, WDC NAHB

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents

DVD-R

Women's Development Corporation

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents

DVD, Running Time 8 min 40 sec

WDC Archive: Photos, Posterboards, Powerpoint, 9.20.15

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents

DVD+RW

WDC Archive

box-folder 6 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Scope and Contents

DVD+RW

SERIES VII: Exhibits and Artifacts

Furniture models**box 7****Scope and Contents**

Balsa wood and dyed cardboard furniture pieces used for participatory design activities.

Visual History and Timeline of WDC/HOC**Unit Date** 2015**oversize** 1-12 (folder)**oversize** 13-16 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

16 foamboard panels documenting the history of the Women's Development Corporation and its partner non-profit, the Housing Opportunities Corporation. The panels include newspaper clippings of opposition to WDC housing in its early years, a project breakdown by decade, organizational charts, lists of staff, and photographs of major projects and milestone events.