

## Women in architecture

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*The article emphasizes the women's role in architecture and the dominant features of the women-designed houses.*

Architecture is a male-dominated profession. Prestigious awards such as the Pritzker Architecture Prize rarely go to women, and women architects don't often receive headline-grabbing commissions like the World Trade Center buildings. Where are the women?

The most common opinions on this topic are: «Most women has fairy fantasies and never land their ideas» or «Those women that graduate architecture schools never persist to obtaining their license, the reason could be the conflict of family and work pressures» and «Architecture shows cold hard pragmatism of the built environment, which is nearly exclusively male».

### ***How Women Became Designers (History)***

While men built skyscrapers and monuments, some of our most intimate buildings - the homes we live in - have been shaped by women. In 19th century America, it wasn't unusual for women to design and publish building plans for their homes and barns. Women have always played a role in home design, but their contributions are seldom recorded. However, during the 19th century a new custom swept through rural parts of the United States: agricultural societies offered prizes for farmhouse designs. Turning their thoughts from pigs and pumpkins, both husband and wife sketched simple, practical plans for their houses and barns. The winning plans were displayed at county fairs and published in farm journals. Some have been reprinted in reproduction pattern catalogues and contemporary books on historic house design. Women-designed houses had such features as:

- Dominant Kitchens. Kitchens were placed on the ground

level, sometimes even facing the road. How crude! "Educated" architects scoffed. For a farm wife, however, the kitchen was the control center for the household. This was the place for preparing and serving meals, for producing butter and cheese, for preserving fruits and vegetables, and for conducting farm business.

- **Birthing Rooms.** Women-designed houses tended to include a first floor bedroom. Sometimes called the "birthing room," the downstairs bedroom was a convenience for women in childbirth and the elderly or infirm.
- **Living Space for Workers.** Many women-designed houses included private quarters for workers and their families. The workers' living space was separate from the main household.
- **Porches.** A home designed by a woman was likely to include a cool porch that served double-duty. In the hot months, the porch became a summer kitchen.
- **Ventilation.** Women designers believed in the importance of good ventilation. Fresh air was considered healthy, and ventilation was also important for the manufacture of butter [1].

### ***Women-Architects Nowadays.***

In the world of architecture, the role of women is often overlooked. Nevertheless, many women have overcome obstacles, established highly successful architecture careers and designed landmark buildings. The most admirable women-architects are: **Zaha Hadid.** Born in Baghdad, Iraq in 1950, Zaha\_Hadid is the first woman to win the Pritzker Architecture Prize. Her work experiments with new spatial concepts and encompasses all fields of design, ranging from urban spaces to products and furniture. She holds an architectural design firm 'Zaha Hadid Architects', which has over 250 employees. In 2008, she ranked 69th on the Forbes list of "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women". **Maya Lin.** Trained as an artist and an architect, Maya Lin is best

known for her large, minimalist sculptures and monuments. When she was only 21 and still a student, Lin created the winning design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. Many people criticized the stark, black monument, but today the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is one of the most famous monuments in the United States. Currently, Maya Lin has a design studio in New York City where she lives with her husband and their two children [2].

### ***Female shapes in architecture***

Some architecture critics believe that "female" architecture is architecture that seems to express femininity. There is something womanly about the building's shape, size, proportions, color or texture. It may be curved, round shaped, having some natural associations set in the project, richly detailed, etc. In brief, we can appraise the situation of women in architecture thus: definitely, being a worthy and adequate architect is a hard duty — not many men can handle it, to not say about fragile women. Nevertheless, there do exist honorable women-architects and women-designers, their sharp mind allowed them to build miraculous and unique buildings with a structure that can be created only by women.

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