

FIVE MINUTE GRADUATE

Caroline Pidcock BSc(Arch) 84' BArch 87'

What made you choose Architecture?

I thought it might be a way of combining my interests in drawing, maths/science and what makes people tick. I nearly did engineering instead which would have harnessed my proven skills from school, but found architecture at the last moment. Thank god! I still can't believe how lucky I was to find at the age of 17 a direction that continues to interest, challenge and reward me.

What kind of student were you?

I think I was a bit diligent... probably comes from being a first born daughter (had an older brother but four younger sisters). However, I don't think I really hit my stride till after I started my own business and worked out what direction I wanted to take.

Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself as a student?

Understand that being in a place that is all about learning and discovery is a privilege that you should deeply appreciate and take advantage of while you can. What you will get from this is as much up to you as anyone or anything else.

What/who are your greatest influences?

The wonderful people in my life (especially my partner John McInerney) and the glorious power of nature, all of which energise and inspire me.

What are you working on at the moment?

I am the sole director of my own architectural practice, where I am lucky to have a number of great people helping me make this work well. We are involved in providing architectural and sustainable advice to a range of people and projects across Sydney and NSW.

My other "job" is being director of a business called Resource88 – Centre for Sustainable Practice. My aunt/mentor and I bought and renovated a wonderful building in Redfern, and are in the process of developing a community of businesses that are interested in exploring the potential of how to cooperatively work in sustainable ways.

What has been your career highlight?

Not sure I can limit that to one....

I continue to be delighted by clients who put enormous faith in me to help deliver results that address their needs, desires and aspirations.

Being the second female president of the NSW Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects was exciting, as was the reminder to many people that the president could be female!

Walking a line that has enabled me to meet and work with people such as Al Gore, Tim Flannery, Paul Gilding, Ian Lowe, Natalie Isaacs, Sam Mostyn and many others is truly wonderful!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

The current world situation – economic, environmental and social – is a pivotal time for all of us. It is the people living now who will determine whether the human experiment will be able to continue. We are uniquely placed with the challenge to urgently re-evaluate how we live in the world and where we are going. I am optimistic that we will be able to understand what is really important, and find a way forward that will be truly sustainable and – wonderful.

As most of us live in cities, I am particularly interested in how this will work in such a situation. To address this, I have chosen to live and work in close proximity (3 mins walk) in the inner city. I hope that in 10 years I will be meaningfully connecting with my business and personal relationships by way of personal and various methods of low/non-carbon forms of communication; growing much of my own food in collaboration with my neighbours; and travelling in healthy low/non carbon methods of transport. It goes without saying that we will be living in buildings that through their design connect innately with their environment to provide delightful, healthy places that not only provide their own requirements, but contribute to the general community.