

AJ WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE 2013

FOOTPRINT

Hattie Hartman and Laura Mark
present 20 women who are leading
the way in sustainable architecture



The 20 women who appear in this first annual AJ Footprint list of women who

are influencing sustainable architecture include eight practitioners (this means they are working primarily as architects), six academics (most are architects but they are primarily teaching), three environmental campaigners (all non-architects), two consultants and a property developer. As with male colleagues, there is a fair amount of crossover, with practitioners also teaching, academics practising, and so on.

The determining word here is influence, a word chosen by AJ technical reporter Laura Mark, who together with me has curated this list. From Lynne Sullivan at the policy level to Cany Ash promoting 'meanwhile uses' in Canning Town, these

individuals are all change-makers. Without exception, they are actively engaged with promoting the uptake of green skills throughout the profession: speaking at conferences, writing books and, most importantly, teaching the next generation. These skills cannot be acquired overnight: they demand not only a new way of working but also detailed technical knowledge.

The journey of Anne Thorne Architects, a practice that has been designing with sustainability in mind for more than two decades, is revealing. A series of four children's nursery projects in the 1990s prompted extensive research into non-toxic materials, a long-standing interest of co-founders Anne Thorne and Fran Bradshaw.

'The built environment is primarily man-made and women have not been sufficiently involved in designing and

making it,' Thorne told me recently in an interview which marked the practice's 20th anniversary. She continued: 'Working in mainstream practice, we found that when we raised issues such as toxic materials, or warmth, or livability, they were frequently dismissed. It was quite difficult for women architects to state what they thought was important [...] It's not necessarily that we think we can do it better, but we think finding a voice is really important, and space for a voice is very often not there in mainstream practice.'

Often working with local authority clients on tight budgets, the practice also constantly grapples with the longevity of materials, a frequently overlooked aspect of sustainable design.

The need for architects to skill up in sustainable design is by now widely acknowledged. Earlier

this month, Fran Bradshaw (along with Prewitt Bizley's Rob Prewitt) presented Building Physics and Retrofit in Exeter, the first of a dozen such RIBA CPD events which the duo are scheduled to undertake between now and December.

Open-City's Green Sky Thinking, another initiative aimed at promoting professional knowledge-sharing, will take place in April this year, no longer piggy-backing on September's OpenHouse.

Lucy Pedlar's Green Register continues to offer top quality CPD, and the UK-GBC offers a range of courses in this area aimed at the broader industry.

So what's next?

There is still a long way to go before these skills become mainstream. Knowledge sharing and collaboration are key. It is encouraging to see so many dynamic women leading the way.

ABOVE IMAGE BY GARETH GARDNER

SARAH LEWIS

DIRECTOR, BERE:ARCHITECTS



Sarah Lewis is a director at bere:architects, where the ethos is focused on low-energy and Passivhaus design. She has a strong interest in how sustainable practices can be incorporated into all types of architecture. Lewis became qualified as a certified Passivhaus designer after completing Camden Passivhaus.

At bere:architects she leads a team of certified Passivhaus designers and has special responsibility for planning and co-ordination of Building Performance Monitoring and Evaluation projects.

Lewis has lectured and been a guest critic at a number of architecture schools and has spoken at many conferences, including the International Passivhaus Conference in Innsbruck, 2011. Lewis is well known for her work on developing uptake of Passivhaus construction in the UK. She is writing a book for RIBA about using the Passivhaus Planning Package. bere.co.uk

FRAN BRADSHAW

PARTNER, ANNE THORNE ARCHITECTS

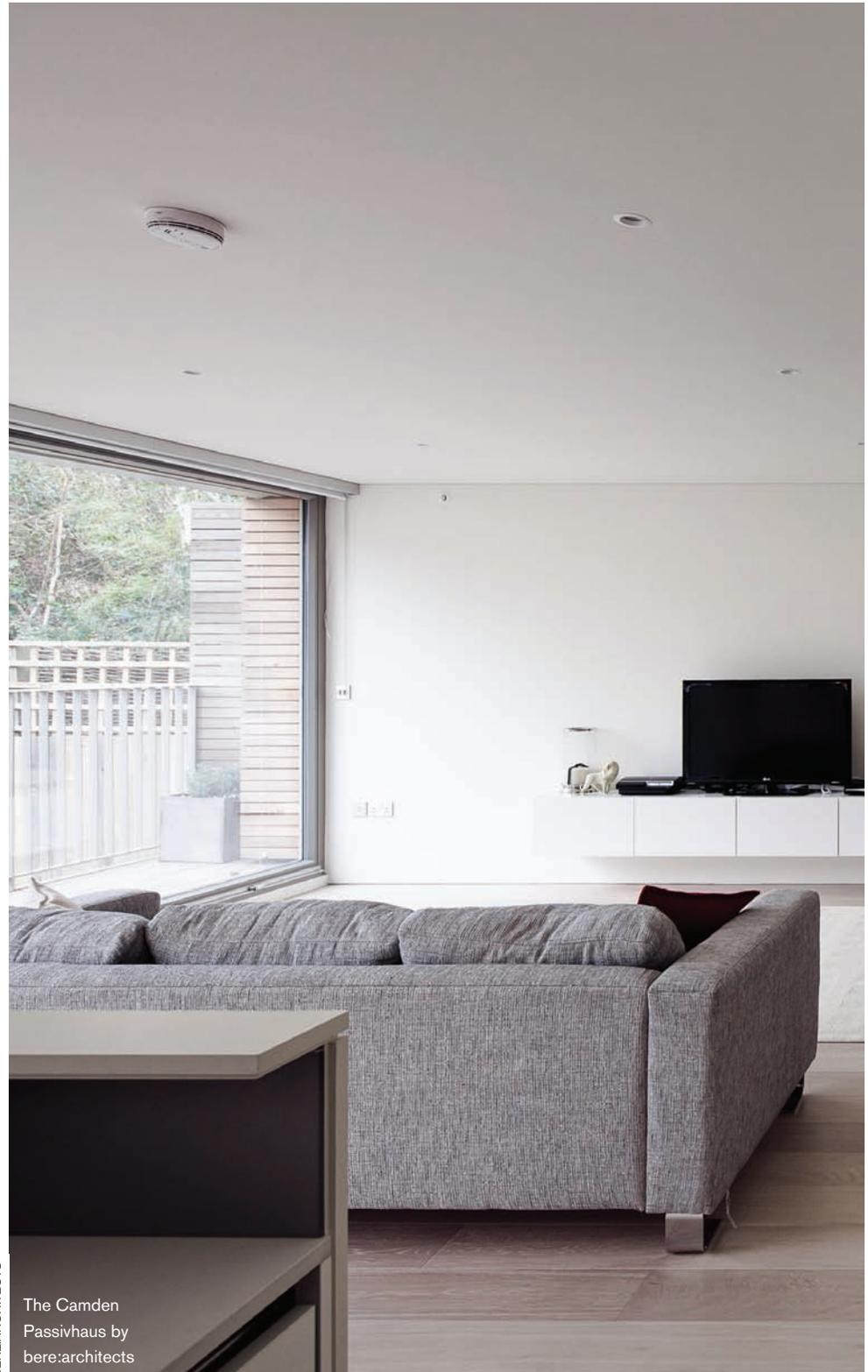


Fran Bradshaw is a partner at Anne Thorne Architects, which designs new and retrofit sustainable projects and advises clients on low-energy design. The small practice is known for

having a majority of women on staff; currently the practice has five female partners.

Over the past 20 years the practice has built up a reputation for site and user-specific projects that enhance the value of places, specialising in participatory, low-energy, sustainable design and detailing. Anne Thorne Architects has a preference for using natural materials and designing to the Passivhaus standard. Partners at the practice have given numerous talks on sustainable building and regularly present at the UK Passivhaus conferences.

Bradshaw said: 'We like people – that's why and how we design. Together we can make buildings which are both a pleasure and practical to live in, and which use the earth's resources carefully and imaginatively.' annethornearchitects.co.uk



BERE:ARCHITECTS

The Camden Passivhaus by bere:architects

