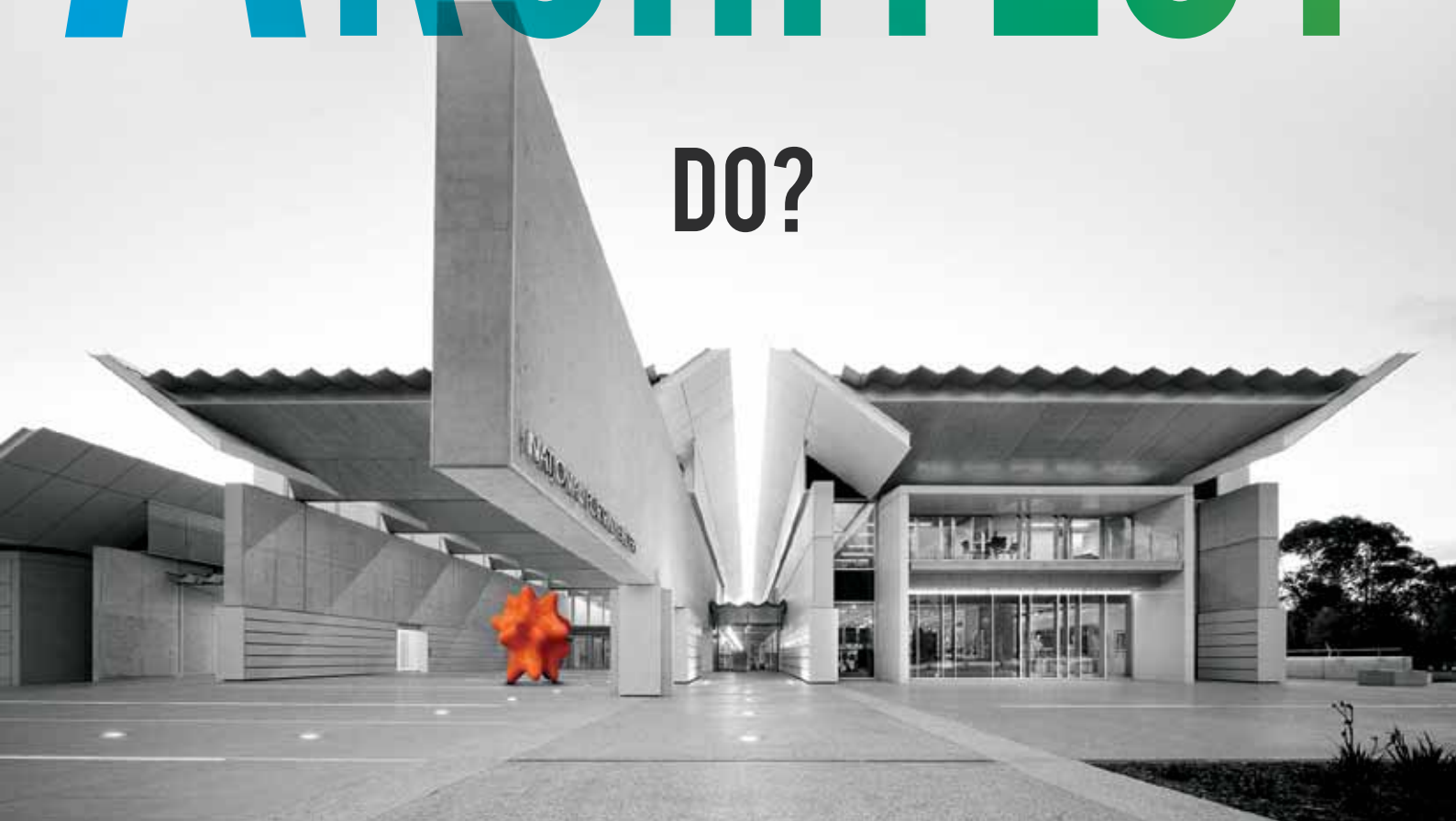


WHAT DOES AN ARCHITECT DO?



Cover

Project Name National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Architect Johnson Pilton Walker

Photographer John Gollings

What is this resource about?

This resource is aimed at future or aspiring architects and members of the public who are interested in knowing more about what an architect does. The resource provides a broad picture of the diverse roles architects have within the profession, capturing examples from a range of age groups, office models, and areas of expertise.

As a child I'd always been interested in making things ...and then in year 9 in my art class, we had this activity which was to design a house and it was a lot of fun...so from then I knew that's what I wanted to do.

RACHEL NEESON



Project Name Prince Alfred Park Pool

Architect Neeson Murcutt Architects, Rachel Neeson and Nicholas Murcutt

Photographer Brett Boardman



See Rachel's [site](#) and [interview](#)

...through architecture you make something...you can have a very fulfilling and content experience, a career and your efforts, your labours will result in a building being built at the end of it and that stays...you feel like you've left something behind that's going to mean something in some miniscule way and that makes me feel good.

SHAUN CARTER

What is an architect?

An architect is a trained, accredited and registered professional.

Architects in Australia provide professional services in connection with the planning and the design, construction, enlargement, conservation, restoration or alteration of a building or group of buildings. These professional services include, but are not limited to, planning, strategic and land-use planning, urban design, provision of preliminary studies, design, models, drawings, specifications and technical documentation, coordination of technical documentation prepared by others as appropriate and without limitation (consulting engineers, landscape architects and other specialist consultants), construction economics, contract administration, monitoring of construction and project management. (www.aaca.org.au)

While other practitioners may provide building design services, architects must be registered with the Architects Registration Board in the state or territory in which they want to practise.



See Shaun's [site](#) and [interview](#).



Project Name The Brise Soliel House, Balmain
Architect Shaun Carter
Photographer Brett Boardman

After completing a degree in architecture, graduates are required to undertake a period of professional experience prior to being able to register. A graduate is not legally permitted to call him/herself an architect until he/she has successfully completed the registration process and registered as an architect. Once you have completed your period of professional experience and gained the necessary experience, you can apply to register as an architect.

The registration process involves submitting a statement/logbook of experience, passing both a written examination set by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and a verbal interview and then applying to join the register.

Once registered an architect is required to undertake Continuing Professional Development annually in order to maintain their status as an architect. CPD ensures architects keep up with changing trends, developments and legal requirements for the industry.

If you would like to know more about registering as an Architect in NSW, further information is available from the NSW Architects Registration Board:
www.architects.nsw.gov.au

Before I left university I started working with a sole practitioner architect... When I left university I was working full time with her and then after registration I started taking on my own projects and building my practice while still working within her practice. She was very supportive of me going out on my own, very supportive of registration, very much expected me to get registered as soon as I really could within the requirements of the time that you need to log in order to sit the registration exam. She was very much a mentor for my professional career and still is...

TRICIA HELYAR

Awareness of aesthetics, and of composition, and of how one thing relates to another thing. I think that's what architecture is about; it's about putting things together.

TIM WILLIAMS



See Tim's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Architecture's something that will drive the way you think, the way you interact with people. If you let it in to that extent, it becomes something that's very nurturing and fulfilling...there's a lot of joy to be had in architecture...a profession that helps you always learn...you're always experiencing new things in new ways...you're also making great things...it's really satisfying... It teaches you to look at world in a particular way – in an enquiring way, in an acquiring way as well – because you're always taking on new impacts, new influences, new dimensions which I find really exciting.

PETER POULET

What does an architect do?

Architects are primarily involved in the design and documentation of building projects. The role of an architect is very broad and includes a variety of other types of work within some very diverse types of projects. The architect may undertake contract administration, team organisation, collaboration and communication, product research, specification writing, brief development and many other related activities depending on the nature of the project and the architect's expertise.

Architectural projects vary in duration from only a few weeks or months to a number of years. The architectural process can be undertaken anywhere from briefing, strategic analysis, planning and project procurement to design, documentation and construction and into post-occupancy evaluation.

The architect may be involved in all, some or just one of these areas in any given project. Some architects offer a broad range of services, whilst others specialise in one area. Projects can vary greatly in complexity and scale, from exhibitions, furniture and joinery, interior refurbishments, alterations and additions, residential, commercial, public buildings, to infrastructure and urban design. If you would like to explore some architectural projects in detail, the NSW Architects Registration Board's website, Architecture Insights, offers an insight into the architectural process undertaken on a range of different projects. You can access the project pages here: www.architectureinsights.com.au

What I enjoy most about architecture, just seeing something that started out as a rough sketch on a piece of butter paper actually turn into something on site...I love construction sites. I love seeing the designs fulfilled.

DEAN EARL



See Dean's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Architects can work alone or in various sized groups. Architectural firms vary in size from sole practitioners, to medium sized architecture firms, to large multidisciplinary firms with employees undertaking a range of professions in the building industry.

Architects working in larger firms can hold many different types of positions within the organisation. Some architects take on a broad role undertaking a range of tasks, whilst others take a more specialised role where they can develop expertise in a particular area of architecture. Roles may include: project architect, design architect, Associate, Director; urban designer; interior or landscape architect; team leader; contract administrator or project manager etc.



See Peter's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Although I'm basically a one man band, a sole practice... keeping it small and keeping it under control means you have a little bit more flexibility...that sort of free range to be able to jump from one thing to another...it allows you a little bit more freedom for different opportunities.

PETER COLQUHOUN

Project Name Naumann Residence
Architect Gioia Gianniotis
Photographer Samantha Leah



Who do architects work with?

An architect works with a diverse range of collaborators who cover a variety of areas of expertise including builders, engineers, landscape architects etc. There are many different people involved in an architectural project, other than the architect him/herself. The architect becomes part of a larger team of people in order to complete a project, sometimes also taking on the role of team leader. Communication and collaboration are important skills an architect must have.

Good buildings don't accidentally happen. They happen because of good clients, and they happen because people invest in the ideas, but you need good people along the whole way.

SHAUN CARTER

Project Name House Forest Lodge
Architect Shaun Carter
Photographer Brett Boardman

What other work might an architect do?

As an architectural education includes a broad spectrum of subjects, architects may also go on to work in other areas related to architecture, but not specifically taking an architectural role. Studying architecture develops a number of different skills related to design, problem solving, construction and communication which are useful in a range of different careers. These might include professions such as: artist; exhibition designer; government or local council representative; academic; building contractor, media personality and many more.



Project Name Concrete Tectonics 11
Architect Kirsten Orr
Photographer Natalie Nicholas



See Kirsten's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Getting into academia was a bit of an accident. I started doing some tutoring about a year after I finished at uni and then one thing led to another...I had young children and I said why don't I come on board as a point 3 fraction and I'll start a PhD...I'm a registered architect and I think that's had a big impact...I teach architectural design but I also teach at an undergraduate level in construction... and I can do that confidently because of my time practising.

KIRSTEN ORR

I was always following an arts/architecture direction... I was just one of those children who were obsessed with lego... we did quite a lot of sailing and boat building and making things. We had a full workshop underneath our house for making stuff.

DREW HEATH



See Drew's [interview](#)



Project Name Tir na nÓg (Otherworld)

Architect Drew Heath

Photographer Brett Boardman

Becoming an Architect

Do I have the skills to become an architect?

Do you enjoy undertaking creative projects in your spare time? Do you imagine redesigning the spaces you live in or visit regularly? Many architects began their passion for the built environment or design from a young age, enjoying building or creative pursuits as part of childhood play such as drawing, Lego, wooden blocks or playdough; or watching building projects progress with particular interest. Aspiring architects might enjoy rearranging their own spaces, imagine redesigning their own home, or have a talent for problem-solving.

As an architect you need to be continually revising your knowledge, in terms of every aspect of practising architecture. Being an architect also opens up many different avenues, so students should be aware that if you study architecture there are many opportunities.

GIOIA GIANNIOTIS

With private work you have an intimate relationship with your client, and with the public work your efforts are having greater impact. I think architects bring a whole lot of value to the public domain in the way we think about things. I think it's really important that architects get involved in as many public issues as possible.

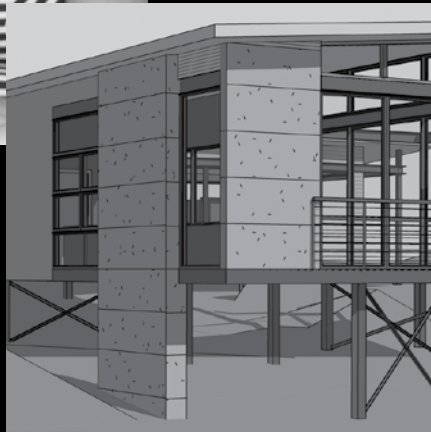
RACHEL NEESON

Definitely attend the information days that are held at the universities. We have 4 schools of architecture in NSW and they're all accredited, but they are all quite distinctive in what they have to offer, so it's really worth your while to shop around...They also have end of year exhibitions and they give a really good snapshot of the sort of work that's going on inside the school.

KIRSTEN ORR



See Gioia's [site](#) and [interview](#)



Project Name Hawkins Residence
Architect Gioia Gianniotis
Photographer Concept Perspective

What subjects should I study at high school if I want to study architecture?

Architecture is a broad ranging discipline based upon a large body of design, technical and professional knowledge. As the architecture program at university is a broad course, offering a number of different subjects, a range of high school subjects will be relevant for entry to the university degree. Although not mandatory for undertaking an architectural degree, some high school students interested in studying architecture select subjects such as technical drawing, engineering, design and technology, digital design etc.

You should contact individual architecture schools to check if they have any pre-requisites before selecting your Year 11 subjects and before applying to a program, as this may change over time and differ between schools.



See Nicole's [site](#) and [interview](#)



See Antoinette's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Originally I had an interest in art, and also maths/science, and it just seemed like a really good blending of those two disciplines and so it was a logical choice – something in a design field that had a bit of a technical background...it wasn't like it was always a childhood dream, but I also saw it as a really good grounding in design and I knew already that a lot of architects go into other things.

ANTOINETTE TRIMBLE

Ever since I was probably about 9 years old/10years old, and when I found out and I understood what an architect did, that's what I wanted to do. I think I was quite fascinated with arranging spaces and I would look at the real estate plans in the newspaper and critique them...I took art and design in high school and that had an architecture focus in my final year at school.

NICOLE GARDNER

Those considering a future career as an architect might develop their early interest in the profession through: travelling and/or looking at buildings in their own area; visiting an architectural firm for work experience; visiting universities' end of year exhibitions; or drawing/sketching buildings in a sketchbook.

Students considering undertaking an architecture degree may have an interest in art and design, and/or an interest in maths and engineering. Many feel their academic strengths are broad or split between sciences and humanities, and feel that architecture allows them to pursue both areas. Architecture can suit people with a wide range of skills.

If you have an interest in design, enjoy problem solving, and are a confident communicator, then this might be the profession for you.



See Adrian's [site](#) and [interview](#)



Project Name Pyrmont Bay Park
Architect Johnson Pilton Walker
Photographer John Gollings

When I was 13 years old I wanted to be an architect... perhaps because I was interested in art and I was interested in science.

ADRIAN PILTON

Where can I study architecture?

In New South Wales, there are currently four universities offering accredited architecture programs, each with its own distinct style of education:

UTS: www.utsarchitecture.net

University of Sydney: www.sydney.edu.au/architecture

UNSW: www.be.unsw.edu.au

Newcastle: www.newcastle.edu.au/school/arbe

More information on the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia accredited courses can be found at: www.aaca.org.au/architect-registration/recognised-architecture-qualifications/

Prospective students might wish to visit the schools prior to applying to university to get a feel for the different focus of each school.

The architecture degree obtained at NSW universities, and other Australian Universities, is a postgraduate Masters of Architecture, which follows a relevant bachelor degree. Courses may vary in duration, but the 2 degrees typically take around 5 years to complete.

Completion of an accredited architecture program is the first step on the path to registration as an architect.



Project Name Newtown Attic Conversion

Architect Daniel Beasley


Photographer Daniel Beasley



I came from a very broad education... and was encouraged to work across the spectrum in all different disciplines...and always liked the idea of working to weaknesses as opposed to strengths and specialising, and so I thought Architecture'. Rather than it being a burning passion to build things, it was more a chance to continue my development and keep broadening my mind.

DANIEL BEASLY

See Daniel's [site](#) and [interview](#)



I went down an engineering path, and then discovered travel, and knew it was never right, and started this process of coming back to architecture...I wanted to make buildings, so engineering fed into building and I had this idea in my mind that I'll learn how to build buildings and I'll just design them and build them, and that got me into construction.

SHAUN CARTER

I have pretty much stepped out of traditional architectural design practice and I focus on helping clients, and mainly corporate clients, redesign the way that they work. So that has a few different aspects, one of which is the physical environment and that's what ties in with a lot of my experience through architecture.

ANTOINETTE TRIMBLE

What other pathways are there?

Other pathways towards an architecture degree can begin by undertaking a range of relevant TAFE courses such as Building, Construction, Design and Architecture Technology Courses, from where you can transfer into a university architecture degree (contact each architecture school individually to discuss their transfer process).

Although the most common pathway to becoming an architect begins by undertaking a university degree in Architecture, some architects begin their careers in other related building and design fields and progressed gradually into architecture. There is no one path into an architectural career.

Project Name Kings Avenue Bridge, Canberra
Architect Johnson Pilton Walker
Photographer Brett Boardman

What does a career as an architect offer?

I thought I would do architecture because it allowed me to do everything that I wanted to do, to keep my options open...I was always going to do something creative and architecture seemed to be setting the bar as high as I could.

TIM WILLIAMS

Many architects describe architecture as a life-long passion, a journey that they continue to enjoy for many years. Each new project offers you a chance to expand your knowledge and skills, as each project is unique and requires an individualised solution. New tools and technologies are constantly being developed and new collaborators offer new services to combine with architecture. A career as an architect can be very rewarding.



It's a very fulfilling career when you get to realise individual family's dreams and hopefully building houses that they live in for a long time... to work very closely and work collaboratively to get an end result that suits their family's needs now and in the future.

TRICIA HELYAR

See Tricia's [site](#) and [interview](#)



Project Name Wilson Terrace
Architect Tricia Helyar
Photographer Elsee Photography

Where to find out more

NSW Architects Registration Board:

www.architects.nsw.gov.au

Architects Accreditation Council of Australia:

www.aaca.org.au

Universities

UTS: www.utsarchitecture.net

University of Sydney: www.sydney.edu.au/architecture

UNSW: www.be.unsw.edu.au

Newcastle: www.newcastle.edu.au/school/arbe

Australian Government Department of Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations' Job Guide:

www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au/occupation/Architect

Australian Institute of Architects: www.architecture.com.au

Architecture Insights: www.architectureinsights.com.au

Archiparlour: www.archiparlour.org

As a 5 to 10 year graduate, I was lucky enough to win a couple of projects that took me on a typological journey...one of them was a small airport project...and that enabled me to do more projects of that sort of public infrastructure...so I now work on projects that are ranging from airports, railway stations, public and urban spaces that sparked an interest in the city and the architect in the role of the city...you become proficient at certain types of projects and you tend to focus on those...for mine it's always been at that nexus being city making and public architecture.

DAVID HOLM



See David's [site](#) and [interview](#)

Try and find the things that interest you as they will guide you and your principles...in architecture, that can become very divergent roles and areas of interest... It's important to find out the things that really inspire your creativity...you have to be passionate about it...architecture is a lifestyle so it's something you have to embrace very fully.

DAVID HOLM



Project Name Sydney Airport Forum
Architect David Holm
Photographer John Gollings

A



See Peter's [site](#) and [interview](#)

I always thought I would be designing buildings all my life. However, I realised a while ago that to actually achieve good design and interesting urban form, you need to often play in spaces other than just raw design. You need to understand politics, you need to understand people, and you need to understand drivers that influence outcomes well beyond the specifics of the profession.

PETER POULET

Credits

The NSW Architects Registration Board would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of all involved in the preparation of this resource and to the architects who volunteered their time to be interviewed about their role.

Architects

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[Daniel Beasly Architecture](#)

Shaun Carter

[Carter Williamson Architects](#)

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[Colquhoun Media](#)

Dean Earl

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Gioia Gianniotis

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Rachel Neeson

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