

Alice Moncaster Civil and Structural Engineer

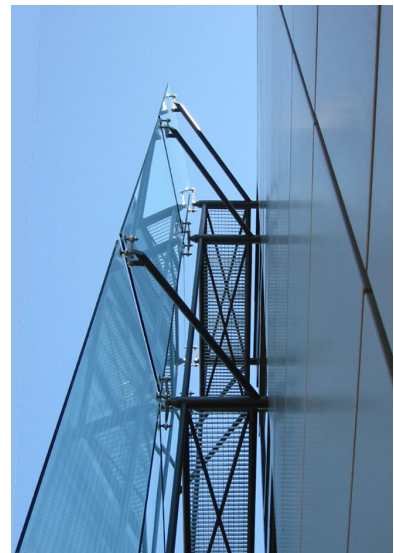
I am a structural engineer who, after several years of working in the construction industry, is hugely enjoying a period of research at the Centre for Sustainable Development at Cambridge University. I am also working on a PhD at The University of East Anglia in Norwich, on low whole life energy buildings for schools.



I enjoyed my work as part of a team designing and building new structures and refurbishing historic buildings. However, I made the move to academia because I found very little time to develop my understanding of sustainable construction while meeting project deadlines and budgets. I'm now loving having the chance to read and think about things – it feels such a luxury! And I have to say that the construction sector isn't great for work-life balance; I have two children and have worked part-time and the experience of being the first part-time worker - or mother - at some firms is.....interesting!

Academia is far more flexible, and more accepting of women. At the moment I can take my children to school most mornings and collect them two days a week, working in the evenings to make up time; this makes a huge difference to family life.

I'm not sure where I will go from here – it depends on so many things once you are part of a family. I hope that whatever I do, I will be able to keep an element of flexibility, and maintain the joie de vivre that I feel at the moment!



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