

Looking to the future, Pollie is keen to safeguard the independent ethos of Fusion Building Consultancy



Successful Fusion of work and being a mum

John Mellor talks to a working mother who enjoys making a difference in the world independent building surveying

Pollie Jelfs is the first to admit that being a working mother is hard, but for her it's the best of both worlds and it's clear that she loves her role at Fusion Building Consultancy.

It was in 1995, following the completion of an honours degree in building surveying at Bristol's University of the West of England that Pollie moved to Birmingham to join its burgeoning property scene.

"I love this city," says Pollie, who was born in Ross on Wye and now lives in Worcestershire with her husband and two-year-old son. "When I moved here from university, it certainly felt like the right place to be."

Before joining Fusion, Pollie enjoyed a six-year tenure at CB Richard Ellis where she was an associate director, working on flagship projects such as Star City and Five Ways Leisure.

Set up in March 2002, Fusion provides the full range of specialist property

services such as project management, due diligence, cost consultancy, building surveys, dilapidations and planned maintenance. Clients include owner-occupiers, landlords, tenants, investors and commercial property developers.

Since 2002, Fusion has been growing steadily and the ten-strong team now occupy newly-refurbished offices on Ludgate Hill.

Was the decision to leave a large agency such as CBRE and join a firm of independent building surveyors a difficult one?

"Not at all. There is an opportunity to steer my own ship here and really make a difference," answers Pollie.

"The fascinating thing is that when I talk to people now they are very interested in what a company like Fusion has to offer.

"Being independent gives you the opportunity to provide top-quality, personal service to clients with full day-to-day interaction from directors.

"As we have come from larger practices, we know all the consultants and contractors in the market and we feel that we are much more flexible and responsive than our competitors.

"To date, all of our business has come via recommendation, so we must be doing something right."

Pollie has recently completed a £3 million internal and external refurbishment of office premises in Edgbaston and is now overseeing a further internal fit-out of offices premises in Birmingham city centre.

As well as undertaking project work Pollie also undertakes professional roles such as due diligence, development monitoring, surveys and cost advice.

It's clear that Pollie relishes every aspect of her job, but where did the interest in surveying originate?

"My grandfather was a land surveyor," explains Pollie. "So there may be some far-off genetic predisposition there. But it was actually my physics teacher at school who suggested that it would be an interesting career and, after looking into it, I decided to go for it."

When asked whether there have been any barriers to Pollie's rise through the property ranks as a female building

surveyor, her natural modesty becomes apparent.

"People didn't take me seriously when I first started out and, as a major part of the job is going on site, chairing meetings and issuing instructions, this did create something of a challenge," she recalls.

"But I haven't experienced any such problems for a long time now. In fact, I think that being a female is a distinct advantage. People always remember me and that's great."

Outside work Pollie enjoys spending time with her family especially her two-year-old. "At that age, my son already loves mixing concrete and building walls," says Pollie, "so the big question everyone already asks is will he become a builder or surveyor?"

Of her plans for Fusion, Pollie is keen to emphasise her and her co-directors' wish to retain the company's independent ethos.

"Whilst we are ambitious for the company, we feel it is vital to retain the personal touch that gives us our main differentiator," she says.

"Clients like the day-to-day contact with directors and through this approach we can maintain a high quality of service and advice, so at the end of the day we can walk away and always know we have given each job our best."

There is an opportunity to steer my own ship here and really make a difference

**Pollie Jelfs,
Fusion Building
Consultancy**