

WORK-PLAY ETHIC

Shelley Penner

Director of Practice, Penner and Associates
pafurniture.ca

Shelley Penner believes sustainable interior design should be kept behind closed doors—in a sense. “People spend the majority of their time indoors, [so] I think it’s really important to have a healthy environment,” she explains. “It extends to the natural environment, and how we’re protecting that.”

Shelley’s been pushing the green envelope for years. In 1992 she formed the EcoDesign Resource Society, a non-profit organization that provided sustainable design resources to professionals and the general public. The society lasted until 1997. “I think to some degree it was before its time,” she says, laughing.

After EcoDesign, Shelley launched her own design firm. Today, Penner and Associates leads the way in sustainable interior design for primarily commercial and institutional projects, most of which seek LEED certification. Current projects of note include the Tides Renewal Centre in the Flack Block at the corner of Cambie and Hastings, a duplex on Kits Point, and a Westside organic food store. “We’re very fortunate because I think you attract the clients that you are [similar to],” Shelley comments. “And so we’re just able to work with some really amazing people.”

A fitting extension to Shelley’s interior design is the firm’s new furniture line, p+a furniture. Manufactured in Calgary and composed of non-toxic and sustainable materials, the furnishings are available online and will soon be sold in a new storefront-slash-design studio in the Flack Block.

Sure she works hard, but for Shelley, success is pure fun. “The environment that we’re creating in our storefront and our design studio is really a place to just create and play and experiment,” she says. “For me, work is play and play is work.”

—Jennifer Croll

Photography by Randall Cosco, randallcosco.com

