

University of California (San Diego) Green Campus Planning with LEED Fellow Walt Kanzler | Transcript

Introduction ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry, and one of the few to be honored as a LEED Fellow. Each week Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. Settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee and get ready to find out why green building matters.

Charlie ([00:33](#)):

Hey everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. Once a week I get an interview at Green Building Professional somewhere in the world today. We've got Walt Kanzler coming to us. He's a LEED Fellow in the San Diego area, up towards La Jolla, even just past that out in Southern California. We've gotten to know each other through our LEED Fellow group and I can't wait to hear more of his story. Walt, how are you doing today, man?

Walt ([00:58](#)): Great, Charlie and thanks for inviting me to the podcast.

Charlie ([01:02](#)): You've got a great background. We've run into each other a few times here and there, and I can't wait to get to know you better. I like to ask all my podcast guests, take us back to that origin story. Where'd you grow up and go to school?

Walt ([01:16](#)):

I grew up in New Jersey, just west of New York City. I grew up around the city a lot. I lived in the suburbs, but as soon as I was probably 12 or 13 years old, I would go to New York City a lot. I love New York. I went to Montclair State University, which is about 15-20 miles west of the city. I grew up right around that area and when I was at Montclair State, I had a chance to go to Copenhagen in one of the international programs there. So I did a minor in international studies. And so that really kind of opened my eyes up to architecture and the possibilities for my career to head in that direction. I used my notepads and sketchbooks from that experience in Copenhagen to get into New Jersey Institute of Technology.

So that's where I'm an architect by trade and that's where I went to architecture school. And then I was an intern at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. I worked in the Old World Trade Center. When I was a little kid, I remember my dad used to have a shop on the Hudson River across from New York City, and I remember when they were building the World Trade Center and a lot of those things when I was a younger kid, I didn't really know I wanted to be an architect necessarily. But as I grew up and I went to this program in Copenhagen and was exposed to all those things, I did some carpentry work too when I was in college. I really liked that satisfaction of building stuff. It went pretty quick and you could see the results by the end of the day.

Charlie ([03:01](#)):

That's the origin story there. Let's connect the dots. Copenhagen had an influence working with your hands, some of the influence there in your dad shop, and then architecture, because that's what you ended up there. Tell us about those early career years. What kind of architecture were you doing? What kind of projects were you working on?

Walt ([03:19](#)):

After I graduated NJIT, I moved across the country and moved to California. My brother had moved out here right outta high school. I finished graduate school and I moved out here with my wife. We weren't married yet, but we drove across the country together. I started working for architects in San Diego. Worked with two or three different firms and then I had a chance to work in Frank Gary's office in Los Angeles. And so that was a real eye-opener just in terms of creativity and just really amazing projects. I worked on the Walt Disney Concert Hall, which was really a fun project. As an architect, I've been really fortunate in my career to work on a lot of amazing projects. Shortly after that I started working with South European and as architects and they're a pretty big firm here in San Diego now, but at the time there were only four or five people.

It was really small. And that was back in the nineties, kind of the late mid to late nineties. I worked on a big project at UCSD, it's called the Eleanor Roosevelt College. And that was one of my biggest projects. I think after working on that, I moved back to New Jersey and started working. I went back to where I went to Montclair State University and I got a job there. It was kind of interesting that I did my degree. I came out to California, I did some work and then I went back east and had this opportunity to work at a university directly, not for a private architecture firm. I've spent a lot of my career working with big institutions. Montclair State, good experience there. I actually designed and worked together with a team and built a building there that my wife ultimately went to graduate school. Projects that you have a direct relationship with and a lot of these buildings and projects over the years there's a lot of satisfaction that I feel like you can get out of it.

Being in this industry and making these projects make a difference, it's really pretty cool. And then shortly after that, while I was at Montclair State, I was involved in the New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for sustainability. And so that was right around when LEED was starting and

there was this kind of support group. We didn't have any LEED certified projects in New Jersey. I wrote a letter to my boss at the time and then we had to run that by the president of the university to get the approval to spend some additional money. When LEED first started everybody's concerned about spending money and why do we have to do commissioning and all these kinds of things. We sent the letter, I wasn't expecting to get it approved so I thought they would probably shoot it down because we were talking about almost the \$600,000 premium, but it was a 60 million project. Again, it's like these small investments and what kind of a difference it makes. It did get approved. I was very excited about that and really dove in and got to know some of the local consultants that were into sustainability. Some good old friends like Scott Criner and Frank Sherman, who Frank has since passed away. But I was really good friends with him and he had a pretty big influence in US GBC.

Charlie ([06:49](#)):

I was gonna ask, where'd you see sustainability start showing up? I know your studies, your time in Copenhagen, but now LEED is on the scene now at this part of your career, you're there at the university, you're getting this LEED project and I guess you're hooked. Everything you did from there on had a little sustainability flavor or what was next for you sustainability wise?

Walt ([07:10](#)):

I was exposed to it a little bit before LEED came around and I did, when I was in graduate school, I learned about passive solar design and I had a professor who was one of one of the chair people on Ashrae at the time. So they were talking about all these technical building systems and things and as an architect I was interested but didn't really have my head in it. But then when LEED came around, it gave me a kind of framework to really understand all the different aspects of sustainability. And I think that's been one of the great advantages of LEED over the years is it created some

structure for everybody to understand and then to move above and beyond those baselines. I got my LEED AP, I think I was the fifth or sixth person in New Jersey at the time. I was really kind of excited about LEED and got right into it.

Walt ([08:04](#)):

I remember I went to the Pittsburgh Green Build, which was I think in 2003. I think that was the second or third Green Build. And I remember driving out through Pennsylvania to go to that. It was a great location and when I was at the conferences, I felt like I was with my people. It's an unusual feeling, but I just even remember this year at Green Build, the celebrations after folks that do this work really are joyous about it. Enthusiastic, I mean feels like we're doing the right thing.

Charlie ([08:38](#)):

I Feel that. Thank you. No, it feels good. I wasn't involved at that time. So you went to the early Green Build, started getting more involved in about 2007, 2008. So that's fantastic man. I'd like to ask about mentors or anyone you looked up to, anyone that maybe opened a door for you along the way as you look back, Walt, any, anyone you would call a mentor?

Walt ([08:59](#)):

Yeah, I have a couple really good architectural mentors that I would just wanna shout out. Ricardo Revenez from South. I worked directly with him and I learned a lot about design, about understanding how to put a building together and how to do good design. And then when I worked in Frank Gary's office too, I always admired his work just for the creativity and the kind of off the wall thinking, but actually figuring out how to really make it happen. Sim Vander Duran kind of was definitely somebody that earlier that I looked up to and actually went to his office in Salsalito a couple times and met with some of the people that worked with him. And then William

McDonough and Bob Berkebile were definitely big influences. I have an interesting story with William McDonough.

Walt ([09:47](#)):

I worked on a project when I had my own consulting company with Mars Snack Foods. Mars makes M&M's, so there was a giant M&M factory in Sparta, New Jersey. They were doing a big renovation and they worked in this building that was very, it had hardly any windows. Like all the offices were interior, they didn't have windows. So the big idea with that project was to cut a big skylight right into the middle of the building and get everyone some natural light so it was a really fun project. We got free M&Ms I could bring home to my kids all the time, but William McDonough did the master plan for that site. And part of the reason that Mars Snack Foods was doing a green building was because Walmart was requiring all of their vendors to do LEED certified projects at a gold level or higher.

Walt ([10:39](#)):

And so it was kind of a big deal and I got to work with a great team, a bunch of different consultants to pull that project together. And then Bob Berkebile too, I wanted to mention, had a great chance to work with BNIM when I was at Qualcomm here in San Diego. And so Bob is the founder of BNIM, and Bob is really one of the ones who, with the committee on the environment and AIA back in the day and early folks that started Us GBC, he was really one of the founders of the Green Building movement. And I've been able to work with him directly on some projects. A lot of his colleagues were developing projects with us when I was at Qualcomm and got to know him personally pretty well.

Walt ([11:22](#)):

I mentioned to you earlier when we first were talking that I saw Bob in New Orleans at Green Build along with Jason McClellan and some of the other folks I was able to sit at the table with when he got his award. And it was just we're standing on the shoulders of giants here. I feel like when

McDonald and Bob Berkebile , they've been talking about this work since probably the eighties even, and now so many years later there's so much more still to do. Great to have mentors like that, people you directly work with that inspire you to do more than what you think is possible.

Charlie ([12:01](#)):

Oh man. Well said. You had access to some of those folks. I've heard those names over and over with some of my podcast guests, over 250 episodes and Bob's name comes up a handful of times, so that's fantastic. Let's look back one more time, Walt, what are some of your proudest accomplishments?

Walt ([12:18](#)):

I would say, and one of the things that dramatically changed my life was starting a family. When I moved out to California with my wife, we didn't have kids yet. And my daughter and my son were born out here in San Diego. My daughter was born and actually we went to a local hospital and she had some problems when she was born and she went to Hillcrest at UCSD and they pretty much saved my daughter's life. It's kind of funny. I work at UCSD now and all things happen for a reason. But my family is definitely one of my proudest accomplishments. My kids are amazing and they're both grown up and outta the house now and doing their own thing. But I would say that's kind of my number one proudest. I don't even know if I can claim that as an achievement necessarily, but just being part of the family with them both being successful and looking out on their own.

Charlie ([13:18](#)):That's great.

Walt ([13:19](#)):

I would say some of the bigger projects, like I mentioned before, the Disney Concert Hall and the university hall that I did at Montclair State where my wife went to school, that's still a great facility that the people are using 20

years later. The North Story Pines Living Learning neighborhood, we just finished a couple years ago and it's a 1.6 million square foot project here at UC, San Diego, and it's a living learning neighborhood. It has housing, it has classrooms and auditoriums and a bunch of retail and different other supporting facilities and faculty and academic space. And so that's all going for LEED Platinum right now, and we're in the final stages of getting that one certified. But working on really big projects is just something that's been part of my career since the beginning and I love doing it. I love working in the UC system because it's not only the opportunity to work on the projects, but it's all of the opportunities for education and interdisciplinary working together with all these different groups, different really smart folks in the higher education system.

Charlie ([14:28](#)):

Man, those are big projects. And we'll talk more about your current role in just a second, but congratulations on your LEED Fellow in this most recent class. It's really cool to have you in the club, man. Welcome. What has that meant for you?

Walt ([14:41](#)):

Yeah, being brought into the LEED Fellowship for me, something super meaningful. I'm really honored, and I know there's only 200 or 300, like less than 300 or maybe a little over 300 of us. And I feel like an obligation to a certain degree to continue to give back. And I think part of the reason I was accepted into the LEED Fellowship is partly due to some of the volunteer work that I did over the years as well and working with the USGBC back in New Jersey, and then the San Diego Green Building Council for several years here. I always feel like we're spreading the good word about how to make these things happen. A lot of it's about education and I think what you've done with your company is really creating those kinds of avenues for people to learn about green building.

Walt (15:34): We did start a class here at UC, San Diego called Introduction to Green Building, and our local president of the San Diego Green Building Council chapter teaches the class and just finding things like that and opportunities to, to build on it is the way that I think is the best way for us to kind of give back. By sharing and allowing the students to come to projects while they're being built or come afterwards and do tours and see what a green building is, what does it really do? Like, what's the difference? Because a lot of people walk by a building and they don't even really understand what the difference is. And then we get this opportunity to share that with them. And that's been really good,

Charlie (16:21): Your work there with these USGBC chapters and multiple regions and help me grow and get some first, so all that and more. Let's talk present day. Walt, tell us about what you do at UC San Diego, your role and what keeps you busy.

Walt (16:37): I'm the Senior Director of Project Quality Management and my role has kind of shifted recently from more of a focus on design and development to project quality management. So I manage all of our campus design standards, and then I also work with our commissioning teams on all the buildings. So I work at the intersection between the capital projects and facilities management. So it's been an interesting shift in my career. It's definitely something where I'm the right person at the right time to kind of make this connection. And working together with the teams that I work with, I still am involved in all the different projects here. We have over 4 million square feet of projects in Planning Designer Construction. So it's a huge capital program and it involves housing and research facilities and hospitals and every kind of building you can think of.

And even some there's a shake table where we have a structural design program here at UCSD. They built a shake table to test mass timber during earthquakes. Like how is mass Timber gonna react? Being in the university

setting is amazing. And one of the big moves that we're making right now is campus decarbonization, at least in terms of understanding what the real barriers and challenges are for decarbonization because as a higher education institution, we have a lot of research facilities and hospitals and so those buildings need to operate 24 7 365 days a year. We can't really have any downtime. Getting to a solution that gives us true decarbonization, but also allows for us to be up and running with that kind of commitment, it's really there. There's no silver bullet right now, but we're on a path of figuring out how that's gonna work. And probably one of our biggest challenges. But the whole UC system is actually working on that. And I do work on the Green building working group for the UC system. So I get to work with my colleagues at all the other campuses on different sustainability initiatives that we're all working on.

Charlie ([18:56](#)):

Oh man. Well it sounds like it's pretty holistic, but you get to define some additional best practices. I love the carbon, the body carbon, the commissioning over here. It sounds like you're really bringing online some awesome buildings and making sure it's for the long haul. Clearly as a university system, you need these buildings to run well, run efficiently, lower your cost and last a long time, right? And be healthy for all these students to learn. So then you get the labs and the hospital. So it's a good segue to what's next. If you had a crystal ball, Walt, what are you excited about coming up in this green building movement?

Walt ([19:32](#)):

Every time I go to Green Build, I'm always kind of amazed that it just continues to evolve. I've been at this for probably at least 20 years now. From the early two thousands until now, when LEED first started and it just continues to grow and evolve. And now some of the things I'm seeing, like I went to the sessions for ESG this year at Green Build and that's really blowing up and the expansion that's going on there, it's not just

municipalities and big organizations requiring certain kinds of green building, but now with ESG, it's almost any organization that has a financial reporting structure is getting into reporting their carbon emissions. And just so being able to understand how to measure all that. When I was at Qualcomm, I had a colleague who was directly responsible more on the energy management side of our carbon accounting.

Walt ([20:32](#)):

We did that voluntarily. But now I think what's gonna happen is, and what's already happening is all the organizations out there are gonna have to do this reporting. So just getting a handle on that, understanding the financial side of it, and even the integrity of the data. Like the good thing about LEED is the third party verification. I'm just curious how ESG is going to evolve into a system that has integrity? There's a lot of people questioning that, but I would also say Mass Timber and Embodied Carbon are two other areas that there's been a lot of focus on. I think the SE 2050 program is really making a lot of big changes with how we design our mixes of concrete and steel to reduce embodied carbon, zero carbon planning and net zero planning, which I guess people used to call climate action plans.

Walt ([21:25](#)):

But now it's all about net zero and zero carbon. And then the last couple I would say are health and wellness and resiliency. The resiliency one has more to do and just, I see on the news every day all these storms and all this crazy weather and things we're having. I'm not sure how people can still deny climate change. It really drives me crazy to have really smart people that are just kind of saying that this isn't happening or it's just a natural condition for sure. But regardless, regardless of all that kind of focusing on the solutions and the health and wellness piece is exciting to me because buildings are for people and spending most of my career on buildings, I love to see people when they come to a new project and they just are kind of excited to be there. They look around, they can see outside, there's a lot more daylight in a lot of these newer buildings. There's a lot better building

controls and all the things that we've been able to do in the built environment through LEED over the years, I think people can really appreciate it when they're in their space.

Charlie ([22:35](#)):

I think you've been doing this even longer than I have, but it's evolved a lot and all of a sudden it's much more comprehensive than 15, 20 years ago. Give us a peek into the University of California system there, are there some minimum standards, minimum certifications? Is it like LEED or equal? Like where's the bar set?

Walt ([22:58](#)):

Charlie, that's a great question. So we have a sustainable practices policy and every year it gets updated and renewed. And we have about a dozen working groups that focus on all different areas. So I'm the co-chair of the Green Building working group, but we also have a climate change working group, a zero waste working group, and all the different aspects of sustainability. And so all of that was pretty much started by one of my colleagues named Matt St. Clair. And so Matt is also a LEED Fellow, and Matt, a great colleague and somebody who was a student in the UC system, like 20 years ago, said, Hey we should do more sustainability in the system. And they actually hired him back at the time at Right Out coming outta graduate school. And he's built this whole kind of sustainable practices policy program.

Walt ([23:55](#)):

And within that there are basic standards. And last year we just updated our minimum standard from LEED Silver to LEED gold. And part of the reason we did that is because 80% of our projects in general were getting gold and platinum already, right? So, yeah, yeah, we kind of knew that it was achievable because we have a track record and we have over, I think we're getting up close to 400 LEED certified projects in the system. There are 10 campuses so we have a lot of campuses, but we have close to 400

projects. San Diego has approximately 50 projects that are LEED certified. So we have a good long backlog of success with LEED certified projects. That started definitely before I got here. And part of the thing that attracted me to working with UC is this commitment and the sustainable practices policy.

Walt ([24:50](#)):

And it covers things like, like food procurement and water quality. All the different areas that you would think of that sustainability is committed to, the policy includes. And just last year they added the health and wellness group, so now there's a health and wellness working group. We're starting to dive into that and figure out how we can make a difference with programs with offering more nutritional foods and vending machines, like simple things, just having water bottles available for students wherever they might be on campus. There's a lot of ways to make an impact with sustainability and a lot of it is just through collaboration and thoughtful planning.

Charlie ([25:34](#)):

I love the 10 working groups. You have a huge footprint in the university system. We've had Matt St. Clair on the podcast before and that's just exciting. 400 to over 400 LEED projects and you are already at the gold or higher threshold. That's what makes me laugh. It's amazing. It means you're doing good work, man. Don't let up. let's get to know you a little more, some quick questions, rapid fire questions here. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

Walt ([25:58](#)):

Well, I think career-wise, I would say managing and working with teams to deliver projects. As an architect, architects are trained to kind of coordinate and collaborate all the different parts of the building, whether it's the MVP systems or the structure, the building envelope, the roofing, how that all comes together. But then the actual delivery of the projects. Some of the

bigger projects I've worked on have upwards of 800 to a thousand workers on site any given time, right? So you can imagine the momentum that these big projects have and being able to work with people is a fundamental nature of how we get things done. I do feel that is something that I've acquired over the years is an ability to work with big teams to deliver really amazing projects and really when people are inspired and they're excited about what they're doing, the whole project has a different feeling to it.

And so we always try to work with our teams to make sure that they're not feeling like they're just caught up in all the challenges and troubles of the project, but they're inspired by what they're creating for the future, for the people that are gonna be the new Nobel Lariats that are coming outta UC, San Diego or whatever, right? I mean that's kind of we're tied to the mission, so that's a really nice aspect of it. Also say kind of always focusing on process improvements is another thing that I've developed at least over my career. I don't know if it's a specialty or a gift, but it is something that I've done some Six Sigma work with different folks and just figured out how we do this now and how can we do it even better to make it more streamlined and more efficient? And when you're doing a lot of big projects, that's a really important aspect is to not just kind of take the status quo and like, this is how we've always done it before, but reinvent how you do things in a way that makes it more efficient.

Charlie ([28:06](#)):

I think that is a specialty or gift. So many just cuz we did it that way is how we're gonna do it again. But if you literally seek out it sounds like Waldo, there's probably a little bit better way to do it. Company where I cut my teeth before I started my own business is Walt, it's called Opus. And literally there's a slogan, their motto is a better way. So just always try to find a little bit of a better way to do things. So man, thanks for sharing. Let's talk about habits or routines, rituals, anything you can share that helps keep you on point.

Walt ([28:34](#)):

I think planning in general, just planning ahead for things, whether it's in my personal life, planning a trip or just planning my day and sitting down in the morning thinking about, okay, what are the things that I need to get done today? And then I also, I do yoga pretty regularly and that's been not only for my mental wellbeing, but also for my physical well being. I used to, when I was in my early thirties, I started going to a chiropractor and I always had problems with my back. Once I started doing yoga, that was gone. I feel like it just keeps me not only physically in good shape, but mentally as well and practicing mindfulness and some meditation. Not as much as I used to, but it definitely mindfulness around just slowing down and paying attention to what's around simple things like looking out the window at nature, having lunch yesterday I was looking at the canyon outside my window and it just, it definitely calms me down and it gives me a little space to like recharge and reflect on a daily basis.

And then I do like to go biking pretty regularly too, so I like to get out there in the wind and just enjoy the local surroundings here in San Diego.

Charlie ([29:46](#)):

I could tell you while you went back to the New York City area, how to get back to Southern California and the beach there in your journey. I could tell you can benefit from all that outdoor activity and that connection to nature. That biophilia. As we get to know each other more, and this is fun for me Walt, cause we know each other a little bit, we're getting to know each other more as you'll learn, I'm a fan of the bucket list. What are one or two things maybe on your bucket list? Do you have any adventure or travel? You wanna write a book? What's on the bucket list?

Walt ([30:13](#)):

Yeah, that's a good question. And I think every architect wants to build their own home. I probably don't have an immediate opportunity to do that.

I might be able to pull off an addition, but I would like to build my own green home. I mean that's something that I think almost every architect probably would like to achieve in their life. And then just last summer we, my wife and I went to Portugal and we did a 200 mile bike ride down the coast. Traveling and doing stuff like that. When I got to go to Copenhagen when I was younger, it really changed my perspective of the world. I've been to Europe a couple times, we go to Mexico, but I do wanna go to other places and just be exposed to other life's styles, other cultures.

Walt ([31:03](#)):

To me that's kind of the richness of life and maybe New Zealand, Japan, Bali, and other places in the world, but traveling is kind of a bucket list thing. But I don't wanna wait until I retire to do all this either. So what my wife and I have been doing is trying to plan like one big trip a year every year in the summer when we have time. Those are some of the items that we're thinking about. I'm not super big on adventure. We live right by the glider port here in San Diego. I guess I'll put that on my bucket list too, is to fly on those gliders because I know I can do it tandem, but I would like to actually learn how to do it myself and just the ability to kind of fly along the edge of the coast here. I don't know, to me that's pretty fantastic.

Charlie ([31:52](#)):

But man, that's a great bucket list. I'm glad I asked. I like to talk about best practices on the podcast. Is there a book you might recommend for our audience that you really found helpful?

Walt ([32:03](#)):

I don't read a whole lot there. There's a couple really good ones that I've read that are fiction related and as an architect there, there's one that takes place in Chicago, it's called The Devil in the White City. I read that a few years ago. And it's a great book because it kind of brings together the architectural movement in Chicago during the Exposition back in the 1800s

with a kind of scary horror story about somebody who's living there at the time. And it's really well done. But I would say another set of books that I read is called *The Power of Now*. I've read a lot of those kinds of new age self-help, different kinds of books, but *The Power of Now* was really pretty powerful just because I think a lot of us get caught up in the past and the future and we really only just have right now in our lives. And so the more you focus on that, I think the more you get out of life and there's a couple podcasts that I've listened to that are pretty related to sustainability. One is called *The Energy Gang* by Steven Lacy, and it's kind of mostly about renewable energy, but they talk big picture about what's going on and they're pretty tied into politics and how that affects different situations. And Stephen Lacy and Jinger Sha moved on. I think Jinger Shaw now works in the White House related to doling out some of the money associated with the Inflation Reduction Act and some of the different programs that are associated with that. The last thing is something called *GreenBiz 350*. I don't know if you've listened to that. Joel Macau is the host and you know, they focus on green business, not only in the green building industry, but in all different walks of life and different corporations and all kinds of companies and things. I like to listen to things that aren't as narrow as the industry that we kind of live in and get outside the box and kind of think about what other people are doing that we might be able to adopt or think about in the work that we do.

Charlie ([34:16](#)):

Man, these are great recommendations. Thank you. We're gonna, in our podcast show notes to all of our listeners, I'll put some links to some of the books and podcasts that won't be mentioned. Walt, as we start winding down, two final questions. As you look back on your career, is there any career advice you wish you've known earlier?

Walt ([34:33](#)):

I would say don't limit yourself. A lot of us have a tendency to kind of see things as a limitation as opposed to unlimited possibilities. The more I open myself up to unlimited possibilities, the more things happen in my life that are better than I expected. I could say we can all be our own worst enemy. I do it to myself. I limit myself by my current circumstances, my surroundings. If you can open your mind to see it as a little bit more free to choose and follow your passion and just working hard is something that I naturally just did as part of my career and it really has paid off. But I think hard work doesn't necessarily always equal success so follow your passion, looking for opportunity wherever they might be, and not necessarily thinking that it's only in certain places that you identify.

Walt ([35:39](#)):

There's so much opportunity out there right now with the sustainability movement. It's not only in the green building area, but it's everywhere. I mean, anybody can choose a career right now that has a sustainability aspect to it. Some careers for myself, the reason I started Eco Collaborative back when 10 years ago or so was to really focus a hundred percent like you do with your business on sustainability, but wherever we practice and do our work there's opportunities. All of it contributes to reducing our impact on the environment. The more people that we have rowing, the more chances we all have of our kids and our grandkids and their kids having a safe world to live in because the way it looks now, it's almost overwhelming. We all need to be working together, to keep trying to make a difference.

Charlie ([36:38](#)):

I agree, man. So much wisdom in there. Thanks for giving us that reflection and that advice. Last question. Let's build on that. Let's say someone's listening to this podcast right now, man, they're getting super excited hearing your story. They're just now jumping into this green building movement. I've seen some reach out to me that listened to the podcast Walton, they ping me on LinkedIn, they maybe have had a career and

they're switching careers. Or maybe there's a young professional, maybe someone that's coming up and jumping in. Any words of encouragement, anyone jumping in right now?

Walt ([37:08](#)):

Yeah, I would say that the possibilities are limitless in this field right now. I already know quite a few people through my work here recently at U C S D where they either worked on projects and then got a job working for green building consulting companies or for contractors or designers. And having that filter of green building as something that's important to you, I think what that does is it kind of differentiates you from other folks that may not have that filter or don't really see it that way. And so by being a changemaker, bringing about positive change, it's just, to me, a way to strengthen your career and build on stuff. And there are a lot of young folks here at UCSD as an example that we get to work with and talk to, and they're all already just inherently committed to sustainability because they're growing up in a world where they see all these things happening and they wanna do something about it, you know? So I would just say, set your site on whatever it is that you think you wanna do and, and go for it.

Charlie ([38:24](#)):

Thank you for that encouragement. We all need more of it. We're making some progress. This whole green building movement has expanded. You've shown us that, you've taught us that. I really enjoyed getting to know you more. To all of our listeners, make sure you connect with Walt on LinkedIn. Walt, thanks for spending time with us today.

Walt ([38:41](#)): Thanks so much, Charlie.

Charlie ([38:43](#)): I just wanna say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the Green Building Matters podcast. Me and the entire team were stoked and just so glad you continue

to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we wanna make sure that you are getting straight from us, straight to you. Thank you for listening to this episode of The Green Building Matters podcasts@gbs.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbs.com/podcast for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode, and you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing guests. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much, and we'll see you on next week's episode.