

What do you think is the most pressing issue in our built environment and what do you think the design community can do to make a positive impact on that issue?

Over the next few years, we will have to continue and increase our efforts to create a built environment that enhances community spirit and integration and that realizes the next generation of green building principles – living buildings, that ultimately will be energy and water neutral. We must do this while including the preservation of historic buildings (and conserving the carbon content and embodied energy of their existing fabric), and while developing buildings that are aesthetically pleasing and integrate with the character of their community. At the same time, of course, these buildings must be practical, workable, and economical to construct and maintain.

Seattle's design community has been a leader in pioneering this approach to a truly sustainable built environment. The next stage will involve integrating the work of the National Historic Preservation Trust and its Seattle office, proposed green building legislation expected to come to the Council shortly, and the interests of the development community with new approaches for design guidelines and design review, and creating a set of principles that will guide future development. A great first step would be to pilot both new and renovated living buildings and test their ability to perform the needed integration.

Councilmember Richard Conlin