Good Stewards, Big Footprints: Helping Corporate Clients Go Green with Steven Jones | Transcript

00:02
Speaker 1
Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cicchetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a lead 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. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why. Green building. Green Building Matters.

00:33
Speaker 2
Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. I've been doing this a long time. I get access to amazing guests. And today we've got Stephen with us with NBL Architecture there in Arkansas. Can't wait to just get into the work they're doing and more about his career. So, Stephen, welcome to the podcast. How you doing, man?

00:51
Speaker 3
Great, great. Thank you for having me.

00:54
Speaker 2
Yeah, we got connected and I looked more into your firm. I told you, we're starting to do a little work with my startup schema with some companies there in your region. So I'm just learning more about just that area and all these great projects. It's another reason I want to get connected, but for our listeners and for me, take us back. So where did you grow up and go to school?

01:11
Speaker 3
Oh, I actually grew up here in northwest Arkansas, Springdale specifically. I mean, what's interesting about when I was in School, the two counties had 100,000 people in population, but now we have, like almost 600,000. So it's like grown drastically from more of a, like, rural community to something more urban and the growing things that go along with it. But I went to the school, undergraduate school, University of Arkansas School of Architecture, you know, where we learned, you know, Steady Jones was like a key part of it. So it's like, it's got to embed it into our, like, culture here architecturally. And then later on in life, I got a master's degree, master of science in Advanced Architectural Design from Washington University in St. Louis.

01:59
Speaker 2
Okay, so back to back degrees, architecture. I mean, did you always know you wanted to be an architect or where'd you get that inspiration? Okay, tell us that story now.

02:09
Speaker 3
I mean, actually, what's interesting about it, when I first graduated high school, I went to Hendrix College to major in math and science. That wasn't quite as fulfilling for it, even though at the same time my dad was always saying I was like, oh, you should. You'll be a good architect. I was like, yeah, whatever. And eventually I Transferred to the University of Arkansas and didn't go straight into architecture to eventually made it to the architecture school, but even before that, I think that's really probably what the key to a lot of how I do things. Specifically, it's like my parents commissioned a local architect named James Lambent to do their house like in the 1970s, and his kind of way approach is like passive solar. You know, it's that time was like energy embargo going on.

02:55
Speaker 3

So everybody's trying to figure out how to save energy. So the building down in the house is like all open towards the south, a big glass wall, so it's sorts of heat and re. Radiates it back out at night. So I really think that's kind of built into. It's like how I do things, but also how kind of northwest Arkansas worked at the time too. The connection to the land, connection to like, you know, the. The parks, you know, for example, like the Buffalo national river, you know, what's nearby the Ozarks. So, you know a Jones, of course, you know, with his organic architecture.

03:31
Speaker 2
Yeah. And for those that haven't been to northwest Arkansas, I'm starting to really fall in love with it. We've got a company we're doing some work with out there, and I learned it's the mountain bike capital of the US and you just have all these beautiful opportunities there. And for those that aren't familiar with Fay Jones, Right.

03:48
Speaker 4
He.

03:48
Speaker 2
He worked under Frank Lloyd Wright and just had a big influence there in northwest Arkansas, the architecture school. So just. Just love those connections. Okay, now I get it. Made a little change, pointed, went after architecture. Did you have any mentors along the way? A mentor could be someone that you read their material. You know, they influence you. It sounds like Faye Jones some. And then other mentors maybe meet with you in person, challenge you, open doors. I don't know. As you look back, have you had some mentors?

04:14
Speaker 3
I mean, you know, kind of what I was missing for James Lamb when I was a little kid, he was like, kind enough to like when I graduated to just like talk me, show me around some of his projects and things like that, you know, plus, you know, even. Or from our office or started with Steve Miller, who was a professor at the University of Arkansas. That kind of brought me in to Miller Moscas. It was Miller Vasquez Lack. And, you know, he's retired, but, you know, Adi Lack and Roger Boskas are other principals here that, you know, have a big influence.

04:44
Speaker 2
Okay, those are some key mentors. How about sustainability, though, Stephen, when did that start showing up in your career?

04:50
Speaker 3
Like I said earlier, passing solar design like that, you know, you know, it's always been kind of part of it, you know. Now how do we. How. You know, we school, like considering organic architecture, but, you know, more specifically in MBL in around. I think it was 2008, you know, were starting to do more projects and like, projects for, like the University of Arkansas where they requiring lease certification. You know, were new at it. Nobody had lead accreditation, so Roger Boskinos and Audi Lacks sent me to Chicago for a seminar to prepare to take my exam so I could get lead accredited.

05:28
Speaker 2
Okay, and what year was that when you got your lead AP?

05:32
Speaker 3
I think it was 2008.

05:33
Speaker 2
Oh, wow. That's when I got mine, actually. So early days. Yeah, for listeners, definitely early days lead, you know, while it first got the first lead projects got certified in the year 2000, I mean, it really took, you know,

until. To mid to later 2000s to really gain a lot of traction, especially lead for new construction, followed by, oh, there's interiors and there's existing buildings. So it was great at that point to start evolving. So, okay, so you got your lead ap, you're starting to see these certifications come up. Anything else there with your early green building experience?

06:05
Speaker 3
Just basically I'm kind of learning on the job with the lead and figure.

06:10
Speaker 2
Out how to do it.

06:10
Speaker 3
But when you. With that, we kind of started developing our kind of our own approach on it, like where, you know, we would see. Some of our clients wouldn't necessarily want to do the full documentation, but they wanted to show that they're making an effort. So that's where we kind of one of our specific clients kind of called it like sensibly green, where it's like, you know, what made sense financially for them and, you know, and how they can, like, market it. So, I mean, that was kind of the key to, I mean, even learning that, you know, it's like, how can you bend it? How can they benefit from it financially? Was actually kind of help us sell the whole process.

06:52
Speaker 2
Yeah, because early days, you had to kind of convince the people, like, look, we could do this, but this is maybe what we should be doing. Here's how it can help you in the marketplace. And green can still make good business since, you know, I started building my lead career literally around the same time as you have here. And, you know, it was a competitive advantage at first. Maybe there were some mandates, certain types of projects, but later on it's like, oh, we're going to save money, we're going to save energy. This building's going to be more durable and less warranty calls. And the benefits. People started studying, oh, it's a good thing we started doing that stuff called leed.

07:23
Speaker 2
So what kind of buildings were you kind of designing there from maybe that 2008 into the 2010s, and then we'll get to present day in just a minute.

07:32
Speaker 3
So, I mean, old building, like I said, started with university architecture. Some of the projects we had there that were specifically leed, but on the other side of it, we do a lot of work with JB Hunt Transport, who's another local large company, where they're the ones that specifically didn't want to do lead. The documentation, go all the way through it. But they want to show that they're being good stewards and being sustainable, considering they have, as a trucking company, a very large carbon footprint. So they were like, it was important to market that for. To, you know, to the world, but also, like, retain employees and like, do it. It's like a good example. Yeah, it was really about that time. It was like we did a. We were doing maintenance cities all over the country for them.

08:21
Speaker 3
And we did one in outside of Atlanta, Douglas County, I guess it's Lithia Springs.

08:26
Speaker 4
Sure.

08:27
Speaker 3
Pretty much is where it is. And then some of the other ones were. We help them create exhibits. It's basically the

lead criteria, like, oh, it's like a heat island effect or we're using this type of oil. This is much recycled content we have in this building. Here's where we reuse the materials that are already on site and just highlight it. And that's continued even today with that.

08:54
Speaker 2
That's exciting. And you're right. Some of those customers, those clients, they'll stick with you for a long haul. And. And sometimes we want the full plaque, sometimes we want to be lead certifiable. And then just who knows where it could go. All right, so one more look back and then we'll talk present day. What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

09:11
Speaker 3
Well, specifically, sustainability and lead wise is like, you know, every. I'm going to say I'm qualified almost. Except for one project. Every project that we have is in leed, gold or higher.

09:22
Speaker 2
Oh, wow, that's awesome.

09:23
Speaker 3
Certification. You know, we do have wine that. Yeah, it was. It went up silver. And University of Arkansas required their buildings at least be silver, but we have most of ours gold or better. Yeah. And then that, like Right now, three or three buildings on Walmart's home office campus are platinum, man.

09:42
Speaker 2
All right, so you've got the Midas touch. Gold, Platinum. And I can tell you take it seriously. Gosh, that one silver one, even though that was the minimum.

09:50
Speaker 1
Yeah.

09:50
Speaker 2
Anything else, though? As you look back, not just on career, but life, I like to hand my podcast guests just an opportunity. So, you know, here's some other things that I'm really proud of. Maybe it's a different project. Maybe it's a community project, some volunteering. Why don't you riff on that just for a minute?

10:05
Speaker 3
I mean, I guess I'm. I mean, I'm proud of the projects that, you know, wind up being just successful for, you know, for, like, all around. Like a project that just like, you know, there's an example of addition we did to, you know, the local Catholic church where it just, you know, everything went smoothly, it worked really well, and try to just like. And create buildings that, you know, that people enjoy that are special for them and.

10:34
Speaker 2
And do you get that feedback? Do you get a go to the projects, do kind of a postmortem and. Or do you visit? I kind of curious. As an architect, you know, sometimes you put all this into it and you set it out in the world, you build it.

10:47
Speaker 3
I don't know.

10:47

Speaker 2
What's your feedback loop look like sometimes?

10:50
Speaker 3
It depends. I mean, yeah, you sometimes, like, you. You know, sometimes you do revisit, sometimes you may never make it back. You know, it's like, been doing it so long. You also get to the ones that are, like, have, you know, been demolished already and live their useful life, but, you know, it's just part of the process. Okay.

11:10
Speaker 2
All right. All right. So that's on the highlight reel. Now let's talk present day. So if you would, Stephen, tell us more about MBL as an architecture firm and more about your role and what you work on.

11:21
Speaker 3
Right. At mbl. I mean, we. We, you know, mainly work with commercial type projects, but we have a wide variety of apologies. We work with, you know, we have, from master planning, corporate campus, which, like, were, you know, at the beginning of Walmart and kind of helped that process along, which, you know, led to a lot of the platinum buildings because of how they did it with the campus as a whole. You know, we do that. We have, you know, commercial corporate office buildings, emergency services, like one of our big division where we do a lot of fire stations and other type of public buildings and community, like, community centers are a big part of that also. And then a whole other side of it. We do have a whole other division to MBL called block. Right.

12:10
Speaker 3
That does mainly like urban planning type projects and more residential types of things that. And over there we've done some pretty big projects with the, as you mentioned, the mountain bikes, the Razorback Greenway, which is like this bike trail that connects all the major cities through northwest Arkansas. And they're working with a project now looking at like how you bring. Right. Kind of area design hubs for like housing and other things that are adjacent to it to kind of encourage alternate forms of transportation.

12:40
Speaker 2
All kinds of neat projects. Are there certain types of buildings you like to work on or are you like each. Each new project, new challenge.

12:48
Speaker 3
Yeah, each project is a new challenge in relationship. I mean, you know, I like the challenge sometimes is with small projects and even one where you do have some constraints. But I mean the big corporate, like Walmart projects we did, the complexity of them are really interesting. But those go on for years. But it's like this. Yeah. I don't think I really have a specific point. It kind of comes down to like, you know, maybe it's, you know, it's the side, maybe it's the specific client. The ones that, you know, they just become a joy.

13:19
Speaker 2
Yeah, it's. That's great. Well, I mean, how about green buildings and sustainability? Not every project goes for a lead plaque or equal. So do you like to bake in certain green best practices or what's your stance? Stance on. This is the minimum. This is how we do things.

13:35
Speaker 3
I mean, I think it's just basically our approach on it. You know, we try to be mindful of the siding, the building and like, you know, orientation, sun orientation. You know, we always want to have make sure daylights and views are ample in each and every design. And you know, that's like in how we write our specifications. It's kind of built into like making sure we have good, durable materials that aren't going to have to be replaced very quickly. And the, you know, and the. Well, yeah, just like the. It's kind of. It's more like kind of go back to that

idea of the sensibly greenhouse. Like I like to say that any project we do, we. It could be LEED certified. It just matter if you follow the doc and you want to go forward with the documentation on it. So it's like.

14:20
Speaker 3
I think it's a little bit of everything. It's just kind of growing up in northwest Arkansas and the Ozarks and Like, you know, even our principals and you know, being from here also, it's like just kind of part of how we do things.

14:34
Speaker 2
Yeah, totally makes sense. And that it kind of comes back to that nature too. And just to our listeners, I've been out a few times now to northwest Arkansas. I'm going out again soon. And, and the people there, Stephen, and I mean this because I'm in Georgia, I think there's Southern hospitality. People are nice.

14:52
Speaker 3
Right.

14:53
Speaker 2
The people in and around Bentonville and Fayetteville are just generous. Like, I don't have any other way to explain it. Like, you know, I'm building our tech startup, me and my colleagues, and the first time I meet someone at One of your 500 coffee shops is, Charlie, how can I help you? And they're like, oh, I know someone to introduce you to. And they do it right there. They literally say, hold on a second. And they do it instead of, well, let me get back to it and send me. It's just a very generous community and I'm just kind of inspired by that. So I just want to make sure you know that as someone who's only been a few times to your northwest Arkansas neck of the woods, one of my colleagues went to John Brown University there too.

15:31
Speaker 2
And, and so he's given me some guidance. Okay, so that's a little more about the firm. Yeah. So why don't we talk about, you know, what's next? What's next in this green building movement, this architecture movement. We could talk a little bit maybe about technology. What, what are you reading up on or what do you predict next?

15:49
Speaker 3
What's the. Kind of pretty big for us lately is just adaptive reuse. I mean, obviously that's like kind of the best approach is like if you could reuse something and then try to reduce like the transportation costs and the carbon footprint by instead of throwing it in the landfill. I think that's the best way to go. I mean, we have a couple buildings, like one under construction right now. Is. Was an existing building in like a pre engineered metal building that's about 25 years old, which, you know, pre engineered buildings are almost, you know, excuse me saying, kind of disposable in a way.

16:30
Speaker 4
Sure.

16:31
Speaker 3
So we're reusing the structure of the building and the concrete slab and just kind of like re skinning it to, you know, more efficient, like, you know, the insulation values and like sealing up the walls and like redoing the roof, opening it up more to have more natural light come into the Space and you know, every. Yeah, and, but you know, what's done's benefit is like it's saved considerable money up front.

16:57
Speaker 2
Well, like you said, there's already the embedded carbon. Right. So adaptive reuse, you know, there's no greener building than an existing one. So you're right. Let's get really good at adaptive reuse. And so I'm hearing you on

that, I guess, you know, sure. Some might say, well, you got a different conditions, who knows what we'll get into. But if you're on the math on it should cost a little less unless you run into some big abatement. But that embedded carbon, that's worth something, right? We don't have to go get all these new structural materials. So are you seeing some of that or is it only certain types of clients that might say, you know, I really want you to do life cycle analysis, calculate the carbon. How's that conversation go? Or maybe we wish more were asking those questions and it's coming soon.

17:39
Speaker 2
I don't know.

17:39
Speaker 3
Yeah, that's probably the better way. Do we wish they had more? I mean, we're being mindful of it and we're like moving forward. A lot of the times where we do the life cycle analysis is on. It comes to the bigger projects and not much bigger clients where. And there's, you know, we know where we need to hire consultants also to help us with these things specifically like that. I wish like, you know, that project I was mentioning is a much smaller project that, you know, it's just like it, you know, it kind of goes back to the financials of it. It's like reusing it is good, but it also, at the same time it's, you know, it's saving money on it. So that, yeah, we haven't actually done a lifecycle analysis of that one.

18:20
Speaker 2
Yeah. And there's tools out there to do it. But I, I think there's going to be a lot more of that. I, I'm a big believer. I spent 20 years in green buildings and LEED buildings. Now I'm focused on technology for the built environment. Stephen. But I think there's going to come a time soon, even here in the US that when you go to get a building permit, you need a total carbon foot plan. It's not just how efficient will the building be operating carbon, but no, it's, let's look at everything, let's look at embodied carbon too. Let's look at even the construction site and just, you know, what's the Carbon impact while you're building.

18:50
Speaker 2
So this is happening in a couple parts of the world, but I think one day, you know, we will need a total carbon plan in order to go get a building permit. There'll be a certain allotment for that building type and that square footage. And so I think it all is coming to where that's going to be the case, in my opinion.

19:06
Speaker 3
I agree. I would like to see that.

19:08
Speaker 2
Yeah. All right, well, let's keep doing what we're doing so we're ready for it, and so your clients. My clients are ready for that too. And let's make an impact along the way.

19:18
Speaker 4
You spent months, maybe years earning that lead certification. Don't let it go unnoticed. Building Plaques creates custom lead recognition plaques that tell the story of your project sustainability achievement and put your design or operation team's work front and center. Their online plaque designer lets you build a fully customized plaque in under 10 minutes. Just enter your lead project number and you're off. Plaques are made from architectural grade anodized aluminum using sustainable materials and subsurface printing. So they're built to last as long.

19:53
Speaker 2
As the building itself.

19:55
Speaker 4

Recognize the work, educate the visitors, show the world what green building looks like. Check them out@buildingplaques.com all right, so that's.

20:05
Speaker 2
A little bit of what's next. Love to get to know you more here. This part of the interview is kind of more the rapid fire. So let's just, you know, ask a little bit about. What would you say is your specialty or gift? What are you really good at?

20:15
Speaker 3
Like, looking at the big picture. I mean, trying to understand how everything comes together and actually figuring out how the sustainability of architecture becomes part of the design. You know, it's not just like, how, you know, the spaces work, which are very important too, but just like how it blends with its context and is mindful of surroundings.

20:36
Speaker 2
Absolutely. So any tips or tricks there? Do you have a certain place you go? You go on a nature walk or a hike or a certain chair, and you just think, like, how do you. How do you recommend for someone to zoom out and actually look at the big picture when you need to?

20:50
Speaker 3
That's really good question. You know, it's like you. And you've been doing this for a long time too, so you just kind of like, oh, you just do it, right?

20:58
Speaker 2
Yeah, yeah. It's instinctual. But, you know, I guess the question is you've got your way to do it, but maybe someone like me or a listener, how would you recommend? Sometimes we Stop. Zoom out a little bit. Any tips?

21:11
Speaker 3
I mean, I think it's important to, yeah, just kind of zoom out and kind of just look at everything around it as a whole and like really listen and collaborate with your clients and who you're working to. I mean that's, I think that's still the most important thing is, you know, is what we, you know, we take pride in doing is understanding like if it's a business, their business, how they work, what their needs are and give them what they, what works best for their so for their project. So it's like I think it's a little bit of time getting to know people, you know, understanding the site, understanding the context, understand where they come from and understanding their goals. So it's a little bit time where it's more like you're not necessarily drawing. It's kind of listening and paying attention.

22:00
Speaker 2
Okay, I like that. So zoom out. What are the real goals, objectives here? Try to keep it simple and then be willing to say, well, what's the next step on that? So thanks for sharing those tips. You know Stephen, do you have any good habits, routines, rituals that help you stay on point?

22:16
Speaker 3
I mean it's like consistency, it's like, you know, however, I mean, I guess that's the definition of routine, isn't it?

22:24
Speaker 2
Yeah. Is it just a certain discipline? You expect a certain amount of productivity from yourself. No excuses. How you do anything is how you do everything. Is it you also. So for some people it's maybe that connection to nature or fitness or they might have a certain way they do a to do list. I don't know any tips on how that works for you?

22:43
Speaker 3
You know, a lot of it is, you know, it is consistent. You know, like I get started at the same time every day, have my espresso and like, but also take time to, you know, be. Get inspiration. You know, whether it be. Yeah, it's like we take our dog for a walk every single day, you know, for about a mile. Like walking through the woods, you know, it was like kind of relaxed. But also. Yeah, that we have our local art museum, like Crystal Bridges and like, you know, things like that and just make, try to see the world and like, and get inspiration. So right at the same time as you're like dealing with the day to day stresses of, you know, architecture and construction like that.

23:25
Speaker 2
Actually the downtown Binville area is for the listeners. I know I'm really touting it up. I'm just, I really do like what I've discovered Here is as.

23:33
Speaker 4
Right.

23:33
Speaker 2
The art museum's arguably as good as the Smithsonian, and I understand the Walton family helped donate towards that. And then you have like the farmer's market there downtown and some good food places. It's just a really neat little downtown Bentonville area. And I know you're not too far away, right towards Fayetteville and the university. So it's just interesting these two towns that are growing so well. I've got to ask, do you mountain bike? Because you're in the mountain bike capital of the world. So how's that go?

24:01
Speaker 3
No. No.

24:02
Speaker 2
Okay. That's okay. I was just curious.

24:05
Speaker 3
I have a bike, but I do. I, I actually, I, I don't. So.

24:10
Speaker 2
All right. Sorry to put you on the spot there. But you get out to nature other wise.

24:15
Speaker 3
Yeah, we have some land where we like. Yeah, we've created. During the pandemic, we created a bunch of trails on it. So, you know, we decorate our walk and we get, you know, nice see the animals and try to like, keep the, keep it viable for like wildlife and other things like that. So that's kind of. To me, that's a better answer.

24:35
Speaker 1
It is.

24:36
Speaker 2
Now that's what you do to connect with nature and that's how you preserve and. Thanks for sharing. So just a few more things here as we get to know each other more. I'm a fan of the bucket list. Not everybody has the bucket list, but, you know, for some people it's adventure or travel or write a book. I don't know. What are a couple things on the bucket list?

24:55
Speaker 3
Being on this podcast.

24:56
Speaker 2
All right. Yeah. First time you said, that's great. All right.

24:59
Speaker 3
That was the first time. So to be on the podcast, it's like, you know, I'm happy to be there, but it's like. Yeah, a lot of the things. Yeah, a lot of things I like to do is travel. And there's some places I love to. Haven't made it to. Yeah, it was like Angkor Wat, you know, like archaeological sites, like around the world. And it's kind of like the. My main interest outside of architecture.

25:22
Speaker 2
Okay. I love that. I mean, is there a certain city or country though you gotta go to? I mean, like, this is the one.

25:29
Speaker 3
I've been to a lot of places, so I'm trying to think of someplace I miss that like is really up there. Yeah, we travel a lot, you know, like, you know, I especially all over Mexico, invented to Europe. I'm Trying to think, is there anyone that I miss that I'd like to make it to? I have answer. I can video edit this. I don't know. We just. I like to go everywhere. You know, there's not something specific. The opportunity arises, like, you know, like I said, it'd be, you know, I haven't been to Asian yet. It'd be as interesting to go to like, Japan, you know, in areas like that, or like Angkor Wat, you know, Australia. Be nice. But yeah, nothing is just like, I have. I'm in. Right. Ready to go with it?

26:11
Speaker 2
Okay. Yeah, maybe.

26:12
Speaker 3
Maybe. I said, I guess maybe I do have a better answer. Just now I thought of that I could throw in there if this helps.

26:20
Speaker 2
Sure.

26:21
Speaker 3
So actually next week I'm going to Redwoods National Parks, Northern California. So it's like never been to that specific area. So it's like, yeah, that's kind of something been wanting to do for a while.

26:33
Speaker 2
And look at that podcast. One week, Redwoods next week. You're just bucket listing this year. That's good. And then, you know, as. As you maybe do consider going to Asia, I was fortunate two years ago to go to Japan with my family, and I think you'd love it, especially as an architect. So hopefully you get there. I think that'd be fun. Cool. All right, just a few more things for our listeners. Is there a book you'd recommend? It doesn't have to be about buildings. If not a book, Stephen, a podcast, a documentary, just something you got something out of you want to recommend.

27:02
Speaker 3
Yeah, I mean, some of the books that influenced me over the years has been like, there's a Louis Sullivan's

autobiography of an idea where I just always thought that was interesting how he, like, just trying to create a truly American architecture style for like, kind of the burgeoning country that was, you know, that's based on, like, the natural environment and like, and, you know, how we're tied to the land. Then the unfortunate Columbia Exposition that kind of fostered everything towards neoclassicism pushed him out. Wow. Yeah. And then another one. It's always been some. A book that I read several over and over is actually Peter Zumthor's Thinking Architecture, which the phallic, how you think about it and how spaces work and can relate to the people that occupy or use this, but very cool.

28:03
Speaker 2
All right, some good recommendations. I'm going to put those in the podcast show notes so everybody can check out your book recommendations. Thank you, Stephen. All right, last two things we're Starting to wrap up here. Loving our conversation. Look forward to hanging out hopefully in Arkansas. As you look back on your career, is there anything you wish you'd have learned earlier or maybe some career advice you wish someone would have shared with you earlier?

28:25
Speaker 3
Yeah, I think kind of the key is like, it's the, what you might learn in school too is like the details make the whole, you know, it's all part of one thing. Everything you do is like whether it's sustainability or it's like the specific materials do it. That's what, you know, makes the building, it makes the architecture, makes it meaningful for other people who enjoy.

28:48
Speaker 2
That's great. Yeah. Just that reality check earlier. This is another reason you're doing this. Okay, last thing. Let's say someone's listening. They're getting real excited about your story and just, you know, just how you got to where you are and they're just now jumping into the green building movement and, or maybe architecture. Any words of encouragement, Stephen, for someone that's just now jumping in as we come to a close.

29:12
Speaker 3
Be open minded to everything. I mean it's like there's different ways of looking at it. You know, it's like architectural even in sustainability. It's like, it's like, you know, there's creative ways to do better, to make sure we're being aware of our environment and like how we like side of building. You know, like it was like how every, everything is connected to it and be empathetic to your clients.

29:41
Speaker 2
That's great. Shoot. I've been hearing more about your firm. We got connected. I've been coming out to Arkansas, so I just, I'm glad that we got your story out on a podcast. You did great for your first podcast. So thank you for sharing your time. And yeah, if you ever need to talk green buildings, if you ever need to talk technology and AI, I'm your guy for our listeners. Make sure when this comes out and make sure you connect with Stephen on LinkedIn and keep tracking the good work that NBL is doing. So Stephen, thanks for being on the podcast today.

30:09
Speaker 3
Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

30:13
Speaker 4
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