

Charlie: [00:00](#) Hi everyone. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I've got a LEED fellow with us who's also a fellow yellow jacket, my Alma mater, and I just want to say welcome to Kim Lombard coming to us from Virginia. Kim, how you doing?

Kim: [01:14](#) I'm great. Thank you so much, Charlie, for having me.

Charlie: [01:17](#) Oh, you're welcome. I know we're both fired up of the recent Greenbuild conference and just can't wait to talk a little more about, where's the industry going? But I always like to start Kim with that origin story. So where did you grow up and where did you go to school?

Kim: [01:33](#) Sure, sure. So I grew up in the mountains of Southwest Virginia, small town called Salem, Virginia. I was just right outside of their run-up Valley area, a few little towns clustered together there. And I started out with a business degree and I ended up in property management. I was managing apartment communities for a decade or so in my early life and kind of realized I wanted to make a change wanting to make a shift. And the company I was working for Properties in Atlanta and I went there and was working up on Beaver Run Road there for a while and we were doing a major renovation and the sides of the building we were taking those off and doing some interior vetting work and to the wall, the exterior wall. Then I really got interested in how the building was put together and what it took to put a building together. I'd never really seen a building like that before from that perspective and at that time I was ready to make a change and I decided to go back to school and Georgia Tech was the most logical choice for me at the time to pursue architecture. And that was great. It was very life changing for me to be around and I suggest for anyone that wants be surrounded by 20 somethings when you're mid thirties, it will definitely change your perspective in life and your priorities. But while I was there, I already had a business degree, so I was working on a four year degree at Georgia Tech and also working at now Bolton there in Atlanta. That was really great and fun story from that during Greenbuild I ran into Ray Kimsey with now Bolton, who hired me 20 years ago.

Kim: [03:16](#) That was a nice reunion for a few moments there, but after graduation from Georgia Tech, I did a little moving around, I went up to Connecticut for awhile and worked for a firm that dealt with historic libraries which was very enlightening and there are a lot more libraries in the Northeast part of the country than anywhere else that I've ever experienced. And they all have benefactors and they're all historic and they all

need a little bit of work to them. So that was great. And then I was ready to come home and I was able to get a job with the time HSMM [inaudible] matter to matter. And then now we're AECOM here in Roanoke.

- Charlie: [04:01](#) Big, big company. We'll get to more of what you've been doing in this green building movement of it. I've kind of go back to when you were in school, you went back and Georgia Tech architecture and so was sustainability part of the programming them and full disclosure, I took some building construction and some business classes when I was a tech. I wasn't in the architecture on the studio side, but maybe lead was just now coming out. But you know, what was sustainability like there as you were getting your architecture degree?
- Kim: [04:29](#) You're exactly right. It was just coming out. So I remember very vividly, and I shared this with someone recently about it kind of reminded me, my roots of sustainability. And it was a professor by the name of Lane Dunkin. And I remember very clearly one spring day, we were all, he took us and we had one of those wonderful outdoor classes and we all sat out on the lawn and he said, now there's this new thing. And he was explaining it to us. We're all just kind of looking at him like what in the world is he talking about. So that was my first taste of what lead was. And he was telling us how it was a movement. And there wasn't really a lot of definition on it just yet. But when I think back, that was my very first exposure to lead. And then from there, you know, it grew and grew until I got to AECOM.
- Charlie: [05:21](#) Gotcha. No, that's so neat. Well tell us along the way, did you have any kind of aha moments about sustainability though? Cause you know, if you fast forward to today, you're a lead fellow. Critically, we talk about some amazing projects you've worked on, but you know, how'd you know you wanted to lean towards the green building side of things?
- Kim: [05:37](#) You know that is a really interesting question because I think it found me, I don't know that I found it. It was one of those that you kind of don't know you're doing it because there's really no one there showing you how to do it and you just kind of get in and you start moving forward, you get through your first project. And my first project was pretty special. A lot of our work is with DOD clients, federal clients. And the first one I had was a very large building for the Army at Fort Benning, Georgia. And this was called the Maneuver Center of Excellence. And it was a combination classroom how to become a soldier type building was about 500,000 square feet. It was a large building, you know, no problem. First lead project, no big deal.

- Kim: [06:28](#) You don't know what you don't know kind of sometimes. But it had a very enthusiastic owner client and really cut my teeth on the right project and said, wow, this is really something special. This is really what I want to do and what I want to keep going at. And didn't really know at the time, but that could be a career, that could be a path and it's really just kind of come into its own in the last two years as far as, Oh Hey, this is going to keep me busy. There's really not time for other things.
- Charlie: [06:58](#) And you ended up and you've made a lot of change in the green building movement. So was there anyone though that had some extra influence any mentors along the way? Anyone that maybe opened some doors or just someone else you looked up to?
- Kim: [07:10](#) I think about mentors. I think a lot about the people that are involved with me here in Roanoke. We've got a sort of, I don't want to call them a green team, but a green ladies forum or something where we've got some folks in town now, Monica and Starlyn, they're all just my touch there and every time I need to kind of think through something and we sort of do that with each other and I think we're each other's mentors. I think that's a good way to say it. We were having that time, and at this half Greenbuild when Monica was presenting, I was getting my lead fellow and Starlyn we were all there together with now. And it really was a very special time for us.
- Charlie: [07:48](#) It's amazing. Really like to hear that. So let's talk a little bit more about, along the way any cool projects you've worked on and what other kind of achievements if you look back on the highlight reel a standout?
- Kim: [08:02](#) Sure. So projects that we've completed that we've been through and gotten the certification on, they range from a lot of our federal clients, as I mentioned before, but also to some of our NASA clients. I mean they're federal, also our NASA clients. Really great projects. I love working with those guys because they are all scientists and they get it and they're all in on it. So they're very interested in how we achieve projects. And we usually on those projects in achieving a little more than we set out to just because everyone's cooperating, everything is going the right way. A lot of my projects are projects that the client needs maybe to be convinced that this is what we need to do and that they have requirements to do this. So they don't always come to lead or sustainability because they want to, but because they have to, and it's my job to make them understand.

Kim: [08:58](#) And you know, it works different. Every client is different and a lot of our busy clients, they really respond to the resiliency of sustainability and that gets their attention every time. We have some projects that are definitely threatened by sea level rise and we have to talk about that and how that's going to work out. So it's all interesting. Projects for them, I mentioned the Fort Benning project, NASA did some work at Goddard, did some work at Langley. Those are just great projects to be involved with. Right now I've got one that's in full construction and just about finished up is the Eisenhower Memorial in D.C. And that one's pretty special. Clark Construction is our general contractor for the project and we're partnered with Gary architects, so that's a very special project. It's a four acre site. It's going to be honoring obviously Dwight D. Eisenhower, our 34th president and the really big sustainability story on that project is the 97,000 gallon cistern.

Charlie: [10:08](#) Oh wow. That's a lot.

Kim: [10:10](#) Yeah, it is a lot. We're doing all of our toilet flushing with collected rain water, collected treated rain water along with the irrigation and the four acre site is the park. It's the first memorial that has been built in the 21st century. So it's really pretty cool. If you haven't seen anything about it, look it up. The park service has some of our renderings and the images coming up already on their site. The hard opening for that is May of 2020. So it's coming down to it right now.

Charlie: [10:43](#) Those are some really neat projects. And I think what would help the listeners here, Kim, if you could tell us a little more about AECOM. You've spent most of your career there. It's really a big firm, definitely known for its engineering, but I think over 80,000 employees. So paint a picture for us of AECOM where we need to know and then how you get access to some of these military and infrastructure projects. Is that what you're known for?

Kim: [11:06](#) I've been lucky enough to work on a lot of those. And then I have a few of the other ones like the Eisenhower Memorial and some of the other projects. With each project it's a little different as far as level of access. But for AECOM, I sit in the Roanoke, Virginia office. I have a counterpart in DC, I have counterpart in New York. So there are many of us scattered throughout the company that do primarily sustainability. And we get together and we chat and we converse this is what's going on or if we need to share work or QC work for each other so that's pretty cool. We get to see what each other's doing. My

teams typically are out of the Roanoke office, sometimes DC, sometimes Norfolk, but occasionally I'll be working with someone from another country halfway around the world or you know, time zones. One of our projects right now we're working on with the Army is an Army family housing in Vicenza. And so that one is lead for home. And the time zones are very, very different. We're about seven hours I think difference, so there's a lot of moving parts quite honestly.

Charlie:

[12:17](#)

Yeah. I'm sure it's a lot to juggle just across the global projects, big team, but it's good to know that you're on a sustainability team that's smaller and you really stay in regular contact. I'm sure that's important within a big, big company. The biggest company I worked for had just about 2,500 employees Opus way back. So I have no idea what it's like to work with such a big company. But you've got resources and it's good that they're invested in the sustainability team. But to just kind of talk a little more about your lead fellows, so clearly you've worked on a tremendous amount of green building projects, but what does that mean for you, Kim, and, and where do you think our industry is at right now? And I know you just got back from Greenbuild pre fired ops. So tell us more about what it means for you to be a lead fellow.

Kim:

[13:02](#)

Sure. For me, one of the things with AECOM is that it is a big company and sometimes those wheels do move a little slower than other companies. And huddling for me has been an issue. So with the lead fellow with me now that gives me a little bit of my credential and gives me more of a credential. Just say "Hey I know what I'm doing here." I've got this, trust me, it's good. I do also help a lot with the mentoring as far as folks that are getting credential just had a young lady have her first LEED exam, her lead green associates two weeks ago. So I was very happy about that. At the executive breakfast, Mahesh challenged us to get two people to sign up. I've already took one, so I'm ready to get the second one. We'll see how that goes.

Charlie:

[13:51](#)

No, I love where you're going with that it's just within the company and then you've got lead fellows. So what has it done for you? It just, that validation that look, you really are, you have accomplished a lot and you've more to do. But I love to hear about the mentorship within a large company. And I'm a big fan as you know, if people pass in their lead and well exam. So it's good that the company supports that. So now you definitely answered the question about lead fellow what is meant to and just to celebrate that big win. And it's kind of a good segue that here is your green building career and that's what we do on the podcast. We kind of unpack some of your

stories, but I've got to ask this question. Kim, if you had a crystal ball, what's around the corner? What are you excited about? What should we be reading up on here in this sustainability movement?

Kim: [14:37](#) Right. So I'm going to relate this back to my [inaudible] to Atlanta. I did get a few minutes late on Friday to wander over to Georgia Tech campus and I did tour the Kendeda building and I don't know if you've been over there, but wow, I was so impressed with that. The net positive aspects of the building are just amazing. It was late on Friday. It was still daylight and I went in and most people had already gone out of the building. There might've been five people in the building, but it was all open. You can just walk in. And one of the caretakers was in the building when I walked in the door, very, very cheerily said, Hey, you want a tour? And I said well, I'll just sit here and talk to you for a few minutes.

Kim: [15:22](#) I talked to that lady for an hour. She was so excited about her building and all the great things and sustainability that it was doing. She told me about the toilet. She told me about the roof garden. I mean, I went and looked at all these things for myself, but it was just, wow, I was so impressed that this woman that probably have cared less, you know, I was going to talk to her about green house keeping and that kind of thing. And then she was taking off and telling me about ceiling fans and 62 fans in the building. And no, they don't have air conditioning, they have air movement, but it's not really air conditioning. So there's a lot for me to learn about that building. It was very interesting.

Charlie: [16:01](#) Wow. We had Shauna Aurora on the podcast. Well and I've not seen the finished product. I'm right here in Atlanta, so I will go see it soon. Everyone just keeps talking about it and, and you're right, that's the future is something that's been weighing on me lately. Kim, let me know if you'd agree there's, what should we do and then what could we do, and it's kind of like, you know what, you can shoot big and try to get a net zero net positive ability and hey, here's some proof. So that's really neat. I'm glad that inspired you.

Kim: [16:29](#) Yeah, absolutely. I mean a building in Atlanta without air conditioning, I'll commend That right there says it all.

Charlie: [16:38](#) And you spent time on that campus, so you know, hot and humid and you spent some time. So hey for those lists thing Atlanta, if you can deal with the humidity late summer, early fall and the traffic. Other than that we've got a wonderful city here.

Kim: [16:51](#) Yeah. Yeah.

Charlie: [16:53](#) Well that is inspiring. I mean anything else? Any other takeaways from either the conference or just something else you're reading up on that you and your team are excited about coming up?

Kim: [17:02](#) You know, we've got a couple projects running right now in lead before, so that's great. I'm also looking at a lot of the V 4.1 crossover substitution and really get into the meat of those that it might be a little old news, but for me it's still pretty fresh. It's in the federal world a lot of things move a little slower sometimes. So the 4.1 has been a very good substitution for us. I think there was one or two credits that we were in. Well we'll just stay where we are right now. So for the most part they were really great. We're getting ready to start a police department headquarters and that'll be very interesting because it'll be one that they really want to incorporate a lot of wellness into their building and I'm ready to pull out all those features and aspects.

Charlie: [17:50](#) Yeah, that's what I've seen also as you can pull forward some credits, you don't have to go all in yet and just, it's more accommodating in some areas and still raises the bar and others. Right. Like with the energy performance side of it. But it's good to hear that it's been helping on some of your projects. So let me ask you this. What's your special tier gift? What are you best at?

Kim: [18:12](#) I thought about that. I think my ability to just talk to people a lot of times, you know, a lot of times I'm dealing with engineers and all the engineers out there, I apologize now, but God love you, I'll cover my head.

Kim: [18:29](#) And, a lot of times it's perfectly clear to them but it's not to me and I can pretty much hang with most of them now and they are really good about explaining things to me like an ice system or how chillers work and all those things and I haven't got it all yet and I'm certainly not ready to sit from a PE but I think I can be relatable to people and I can talk to them and help break down some of those barriers of sometimes the technology is very high end and we have to break it down for our clients sometimes and for me, I mean for us and make sure that everybody on the team is talking the same language because a lot of people don't always come to lead or to any of our sustainability initiatives on the same platform. They don't come at the same [inaudible] and I find that a lot when I can start [inaudible] an internal one. And

not everybody's with me all the time, so we have to kind of take a step back and maybe meet with people at their desk, but on their terms and then, then we all kind of come together.

Charlie: [19:33](#) Yeah, no, you're right. Everyone's coming at it for different reasons and what centered for them and what we all have a common goal. Hopefully it's good. Do you have any kind of pro tips, any rituals, routines that help you stay on point, stay successful?

Kim: [19:46](#) Well, professionally I'm a list person. I'm a list maker. I'm the person that will write something back on the list of the [inaudible]. I've done it. If it wasn't on the list to start with. I love my list and I try to keep those rolling forward because I'm juggling eight to twelve projects at a time so it can get a little crazy. And then when I leave work, I don't take work home with me unless it's a deadline and I'm way behind. Which doesn't happen too often, but occasionally that does happen. I usually try to unplug particularly on the weekends, make sure that I have some downtime just so I'm ready to go Monday morning. And then I guess the other thing on the personal side is I keep my hobbies. I keep my hobbies going. I love photography. I have volunteered at our local animal shelter for about five years and taking pictures for their website. That's a lot of fun. Shout out to their Granite Valley SPCA, but adopt, don't shop all that good stuff. So that's an important part of the community and I think when you find something you love, I think it's important that to support that in whatever way possible.

Charlie: [20:53](#) I love it. Those hobbies are so important. Let's talk about the bucket list, Kim. As we get to know each other. I'm actually a fan of a bucket list. I've got over 110 items on mine. I tried to do five or so a year and hey, we've got a little time, hopefully, but what about you? You have one or two things you could mention that might be on your bucket list?

Kim: [21:12](#) Sure. I still want to get out to the Grand Canyon. I've not been to the Grand Canyon and it's something I definitely want to do on a photography level, but also, just to be in nature. And I know about hiking down to the bottom and back, but I definitely want to go there and see that. And then my husband and I have a garden every year and our tomatoes have turned South on us this year. I don't know what's going on, but I think we need to take a break on our tomato planting this year. And, my goal is one of those monster pumpkins, that is my goal. I'm looking for something, something big, something like 400 pounds plus in a pumpkin. And that might be a little bit of a tall aspiration.



- Charlie: [21:55](#) I don't know if that one's going to be a GMO and a non GMO and organic. But yeah let's see what you can do.
- Kim: [22:02](#) Well I would hope it would be organic. I mean, we do our leaves on the garden every year and get them crunched in there. So we've got a rain barrel. We keep it all on the sustainable side. So we'll see.
- Charlie: [22:14](#) I don't have a great green thumb, but I know one tip. So my mom is in landscaping, has a plant nursery. My dad always had a great garden fish emulsion as your fertilizer. You want to keep it organic. You can go get that from the hatcheries in your area. But fish emulsion, you'll have some crazy good garden plants and some big pumpkins. So there's the tip. Let's talk about books. Not sure if you'd like to listen to books or pick up a good, hard copy, but is there a book or two you'd recommend?
- Kim: [22:43](#) Right now I don't have anything on my nightstand, but one of my books that would be a really good gift for any of your architect friends out there. It's one of my favorite books, a little older book, but it's still one of my very favorite ones is Palladian Days. Clark is the last name and it's about a couple from Atlanta. And that's why I think I related to it and I thought it would be fun to go to Italy and buy a Villa and fix it up. And they would say they got hold of one of Andrea Palladio's 16th century villas. It was called Villa Cornaro. And they go through a lot of trials and tribulations, but I have to say I've learned to cook risotto from that book. So it's worth the whole thing is just getting good risotto and I think about that passage every time I make it.
- Charlie: [23:34](#) Oh, we're going to check that out in the podcast show notes. We'll put a link to that book. Thank you. Well as we come to a close here, two questions, one is, is there anything you wish you'd known earlier in your green building career?
- Kim: [23:45](#) There are so many things, but particularly as it relates to green building. So, when I was new here at AECOM, I had the video managers and everybody said, well Kim, you know, people would come up to me and ask me a lot of questions about inability about LEED. I was kind of the go to person for a long time and they would kind of say, wow, don't get yourself pigeonholed into that. Now you want to be an architect, you don't want to do this sustainability. And I said, well, maybe we'll see, and I did get my architecture license, so that was good. But I'm really happy that I work exclusively in sustainability. And it kind of evolved into a career path before anyone knew that it was a career path. So I think for me, that has provided

consistency for our team and it helps me be successful on our projects.

- Kim: [24:36](#) And I think for the, the second thing, if I had, another thing would be that if you're listening to this podcast and you're thinking, wow, no one understands what I'm going through. The engineers don't get it, the client doesn't get it. Nobody gets it. Go to a Greenbuild or at least be active with your local chapter or somewhere around your network of a greenie because we are out there and I think it was my first Greenbuild was Chicago many, many years ago and I was just like standing up on the balcony and just looking at all these people that were like me. All of a sudden I was like, Oh my God, there they are. It was a really awakening moment. When you look around and you see that there are people doing what you're doing and there are people that believe what you believe and making it work.
- Charlie: [25:25](#) That's super encouraging and you're right, whether it's your local chapter, your local meetups, or a place like the Greenbuild conference once a year. It's just there's a lot of likeminded green building professionals out there. Even if you're not getting it, you know, in your normal day to day or even with certain clients, it's like, Hey, go. They're out there. So Kim, great, great encouragement there. Congratulations on your, your LEED fellow and it's exciting to have a fellow yellow jacket on the podcast and I just want to say thank you for sharing some of your stories. It's been a lot of fun.
- Kim: [25:57](#) All right, well thank you very much for having me and go Jackets.
- Charlie: [26:01](#) I just want to 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 are 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 want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you.
- Charlie: [26:27](#) Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast @gbes.com our mission is to advance the green building movement to best-in-class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to [gbes.com/podcast](https://gbes.com/podcast) or 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.