

Ep #168: Improving Inclusivity, Accessibility and Sustainability in Design-Build with David Supple



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 168.

Welcome to the *Design You* podcast. A show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth and joy, here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hello friends. How are you? I'm so, so good. I feel like I'm getting so much done this week. I hope you're feeling that way too. It's been a good one. Today I got a lot done because I recorded two back-to-back episodes of the *Design You* podcast starting with this episode and my guest, David Supple.

So David is the CEO of New England Design and Construction which is one of Boston's leading luxury architectural design build firms. And in the episode we'll tell you exactly what that means. And it's a firm who has a focus on sustainable homes which is something that I'm super interested in more than ever these days. David is a Tufts alumni. He's a speaker. He's an author. He's a humanitarian. And I think that you will enjoy this episode, especially those of you who are in the design or home industry, lots of interesting conversation.

So I'm not going to prolong this intro. I'm going to get out of the way and let you hear our fascinating conversation. And I'll catch you on the other side with a few things that I don't want you to forget, okay? But right now enjoy this great episode with David Supple.

Tobi: Hey David, welcome to the *Design You* podcast. I'm really excited you're here today.

David: Thank you, Tobi, me too.

Tobi: So good. And you have such a lovely podcast voice. I wish I had that, I mean it's deep and perfect. I'm kind of jealous of people that just have the good voice.

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David: I love your voice, so I love the southern voices. I imitate them just because I like it.

Tobi: So by the end of the call you're going to be saying, "You all."

David: I do. I do. It just takes 10 seconds.

Tobi: Perfect, okay. So why don't you tell everybody if they haven't heard of you or known your work, why don't you give everybody some insight into who you are and what you do. And then we're going to get into some really interesting conversations today.

David: Awesome. So I consider myself a design builder. And my company does residential remodeling, typically higher end work in the Boston area. And the way I got into that is I trained as an architect. I want to be an architect. I graduated and I started practicing as an architect and I realized, hey, I don't know what I'm doing. I have no idea what I'm doing. I attribute it to going to school to be a chef or going to school to be a musician. But you never played an instrument or you never cooked anything. But then your job is to write the recipes or write the music.

And actually the way an architect is trained today does not make any sense. And so I felt completely insecure, completely deficient. And so around that time I learned, and I'm interested if you knew this, that the derivation of the word 'architect' is actually master builder. It's Greek. It goes back to ancient Greek times. And it means master builder. Somebody told me this. And I'm like, "That makes so much sense", because that was what I was lacking, the actual hands-on experience.

So I actually then worked as a carpenter just to fill that void. And I did that until I got fired basically. I never made it to be an elite carpenter. And then I didn't have a job and I started this company and that was in 2005. And I love what I do. I'm extremely passionate about bringing the architect and builder back together again. I consider it the natural approach.

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Tobi: What I love about this so much is I think there are a lot of companies out there that call themselves design build because they work on plans and then they construct the thing, the home, the whatever structure which is obviously I mean that's what design build is. But clearly it's so much more than that which is why you're here today to talk about that. And you've discovered all sorts of things besides just this kind of the meaning of the word 'architect' that you're going to share with us today.

I think it's going to be really interesting for people to truly understand what a, I guess what you maybe would call a true design build experience is and what all goes into that, right?

David: Yeah, totally. I mean the history of it is fascinating. It blew me away. But just as you said, it's a catchphrase now, everybody's using it. Contractors who have no design experience whatsoever are throwing it out there. And it can almost be a degrade, in some circles and in some countries even, design build is pooh-pooed because it means basically build design, the opposite. But really true design build is really just the architect of old.

And bringing a skill set of design at a very high level but then just taking responsibility and being accountable for the execution. That's not the way it's set up, that's not the way it's taught today. But it actually, if you think about it, it doesn't make sense to have it separated because it leaves the client in the middle. It leads to a whole slew of issues that we have in this industry.

Tobi: Yeah, because I can think of already several things as an interior designer that frustrate me so much on both sides of that coin like you're talking about. When I'm working with someone who's just hired a builder and they don't want to hire an architect. There's so much more difficulty in that project. And I really love to work as a team with all three.

But at the same time one of my frustrations in working with architects is a lot of times that they sort of get to relieve themselves from any

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responsibility especially when it comes to things like cost. Because we'll be in a conversation and I'm like, "You know this client thinks they're building this house for 700,000 and it's really a million and a half." We both know that. And they're kind of like, "Well, that's not really my problem. That's sort of the builder's issue. That'll come out in the estimates."

Which is so frustrating to me because I'm such a truth teller, that I always want to go into a project with a client, well, also self-serving. I don't want a client thinking it's a \$700,000 house and being really upset when halfway through the project we find out it's twice that. And they have to make some really difficult changes decisions and be really frustrated and unhappy with the result. So I love what you're saying because I've never really thought of this before. But now that you're saying it, it's like I have put on the goggles and I can't imagine seeing those things separated.

David: Yeah. It's become totally normal to have it be separated. But it makes no sense when you actually confront it. It's one of those things where it's just engrained into society. People don't even think about it. Just like people are below ignorant, it's just totally normal and that's the way it is. But in my opinion if you are not a design build firm and bringing all those components together yourself, you should be a huge advocate as you are to having a collaborative approach.

And when the client hires the architect, that's the time to bring on the builder, that's the time to bring on the interior designer so that you have a team because if you're not, if you don't, there are things that are not being factored. If you go straight to the builder it could be not the right project. There could be things that you wish you had reconsidered or thought through a little bit more. And then on the other side if you're just starting with the design it can be an exercise where you end up with plans that are useless. They're not going to get built.

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It's like literally we get calls, "Hey, we went through this process with an architect, we're twice our budget, literally three times our budget." It is not uncommon.

Tobi: Yeah, I agree with you. Okay, so let's get into this really interesting history that you discovered which is rooted in racism, white supremacy, I'm sure all sorts of other problematic things. I would be completely shocked if it wasn't patriarchal. There's all kinds of stuff in there that you've discovered. And I want you to talk about that because I've never really heard this before. You did a lot of deep research and you said you kind of discovered it by accident. But it's given you a whole new lens to also see the work you do through. So can you tell us about that?

David: Yeah, good set up. And I'm going to just go off now but no, I went to school to be an architect. You look at a lot of pictures of buildings, well known buildings throughout the world. You go through a sequence. You kind of go through this history of architecture on this planet. And I'm going to come back to that. But I became very interested of how did this happen? How did I go to school for four years, graduate and have no concept of effectiveness in my work, how did that occur?

And I started to look into it and I found I knew this thing; the derivation of the word is 'master builder'. So they used to build. When did it change? And really it didn't change until around the middle of the 1800s. Even though it's been made to appear back in Roman times and the renaissance, it was totally separate. That is not true, not at all. But if you look in an English dictionary in the 1800s, even up to the end of the 1800s, early 1900s, you look up builder and you look up architect. They are synonyms. The words are used to define each other in fact.

And so at that time there was a group of the best builders, architects, the same thing at this time, who were trying to solve a problem. And the problem they were trying to solve is that they could not make it into the elite class of gentlemen. And at that time that came from England. Americans

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were English. And that was the top of the food chain in terms of statuses was gentlemen. But per the definition of a gentleman, you could not partake in physical manual labor and kind of a problem when you're building.

And so they started, the American Institute of Architects, with their stated purpose was to raise their social status. That was the stated purpose. And the way they did that basically was to separate themselves from the building trades from which they came, all of them, pretty much every single one of them was an apprentice, mason, carpenter. That's where the master comes from. It's, you start off as an apprentice, then you're a journeyman and then you're a master. And you still have master electricians, master plumbers. It's the same thing. It comes from the same thing.

So these guys got together a bunch of white guys in the middle 1800s and they changed the rules of the game. They made it so only they can call themselves architects, they then got it institutionalized, licensed and put it in, in force basically. And then they got it into universities. That's what really messed things up because then they started to change the history books, because who writes the history books? The universities. And they started with MIT, Harvard, prestigious universities that added a lot of clout to this whole area and raised their prestige.

And so, I have been studying this, researching this, writing a book essentially on this for quite a while. The thing I just stumbled upon which literally was by accident was I wrote an article about Tuskegee University which is a predominantly Black college in Tuskegee, Alabama. And they actually started the first design build curriculum in America. And I wrote this article about it, Booker T. Washington did at the end of 1800s, phenomenal. We need to get back to that.

But somebody challenged one of my sources, was like, "Hey, you got that from the wrong source." His name is Melvin Mitchell. And he wrote a book and basically I got a source that got it from him. And so I started reading his

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book. And it's called Black Architects, I believe it's called. And in that he has a picture of an Egyptian temple. I had never seen before. I have seen – this goes back to the art history class, I've seen a lot of buildings. I had never seen it. It is completely classical architecture. And I was like, "How did I not see this?"

So I just started looking into it. And what I found is that every single aspect of classical architecture comes from Africa, the columns, its basis in the divine, in the human body, the fact that it's modular, that the column size, height is based on the circumference of the column itself. All of this came from Egypt. And I show in the book visually because pictures don't lie. And these guys, they not only changed the history of the architect to make it seem as if it was always split, like the architect and builder world is split.

They also changed it, pre 1800s it was more openly communicated that yes, the Greeks and the Romans got it from the Egyptians, Black Egyptians, Africans. And so they changed the history books. They literally started to change the history books to make it, to come to today when no one knows this. And it should be completely common knowledge.

Tobi: And is this primarily the history books in America or it's everywhere, it's European?

David: Well, America is the main influence of the world.

Tobi: Yes, totally.

David: So if you looked in any language in any part of the country, like when Japan adopted it, when Asia adopted it, when Australia adopted it. They didn't have a word to define an architect, is solely a designer. So America kind of brought this, England, America kind of brought this separation everywhere. And those I would say also university wise, those are probably the two biggest influences of the world.

Tobi: Yeah. We seem to have a habit of whitewashing history in all sorts of ways in America, don't we?

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David: It's incredible. And for me, I grew up in a pretty diverse area, never considered myself a racist. But man, I went through some, so I cried several times writing this book, just incredibly amazed at how it changed me as an individual because truth is powerful. And I had been confronted with my life and inundated with false images to make me conditioned a certain way. And that left me to a great degree writing this book because I got to the truth. And I got that the truth is that the great architecture of the world came from Africa, without a doubt, conclusively that is truth.

And the thing about architecture is you can see it. You know what I mean? It's not medicine. It's not science. It's not philosophy. But I can show you a picture and be like, "Hey, this is this date." In 2,000 years, I'm talking 2,000 years ahead of the Greeks they were. And it all lines up, the information is there, it's just never been shown visually. So I'm extremely excited to release this information.

Tobi: Yeah, it's so fascinating. And just for everybody who's listening, because you're not looking at us. I'm a white girl, white as can be from the south. And you consider yourself...

David: Yeah. I mean my mother is Puerto Rican. My father is Irish. I'm very proud of my heritage on both sides.

Tobi: But you identify as a white guy?

David: Yeah, I'm a white guy.

Tobi: Yeah, okay, perfect. So that gives context to what we're talking about because what you're saying is the reason you were so emotional about this is you were seeing all of your own internal biases that you had taken this as we do, education at face value. We trusted the people teaching us these lessons, this history. And then all of a sudden it's sort of like, wait, everything I base my entire identity and business on is a total lie. And now I have to sort of reconcile all of that and what that means for me and how I think and where my biases are, right?

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David: Yeah, completely. And it's just incredible how that could have happened. You know what I mean? Completely oblivious to it and so...

Tobi: It's so fascinating. So now that you have this new lens to look through how has that changed the work that you do in the world?

David: That's a great question. We were always very active in the community. I do have a new viewpoint on just the subject of empowering the Black community. Because the way I look at it, this is part of what I looked at while writing the book is, you take the Germans. They killed six million, seven million Jews. They have done some atonement. When you go to Germany, they have memorials. It is like, "Hey, we messed up." But in America where do you see that? Where is the atonement? Where have we made up for it?

And I'm not one to be like, "Hey, let's", you know, I believe in production. And I believe in capitalism. But I just want people to know the truth because I think that in itself makes a difference and so yeah.

Tobi: I think you're right. I don't remember exactly. I've read so many books especially in the last year to 18 months as so many people have around antiracism and other things. And one of the books that comes to mind based on what you were just saying about Germany. And I'm not sure if it was in this book or in one of the many others, but the book, Caste by Isabel Wilkerson.

David: Yeah, I've read it, that's where I got it from.

Tobi: It's so good. And I think it's in that book where she talks about in Germany it's actually illegal to use some terminology that's very sensitive. I mean they take it very seriously.

David: Yes. But in America was kind of like, "Oops. Yeah, everything's good now. It's all good."

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Tobi: Yeah. And even a lot of times probably not oops because it's more like I think your facts are wrong, that's not what I heard, that's not what I was told. And we argue about it and deny it.

David: It's washed under the table.

Tobi: Yeah, so interesting. Okay, so amazing, thank you for sharing that with me. It's definitely something I would not have known. I'm going to look into it more. I can't wait to. And tell us, when does your book come out that you're referencing?

David: It will come out this year. It's called Rebuilding the Architect: Africa's Legacy, Restoring Africa's Legacy in the Built Environment.

Tobi: Okay, so interesting. So now that this is your perspective let's talk about the actual design build work you do and even you're equally passionate about sustainability, and wellness, and other parts of the built environment. So let's talk about that. Talk to us about some of the other things you're doing that are life changing that maybe a lot of people aren't thinking about when they're doing their projects.

David: Yeah. I mean I think from a consumer viewpoint it's confusing. You don't really know where to start. And you mentioned the design build firm might not really be the best fit. You need to know what goes into a project. And it's not actually so much the design and construction coming together. It's really thinking with execution while you're designing. That's really what it is.

So that's why you could have a separate builder and you could have a separate architect as long as they're working together because neither of them have all the information that is needed. It's a design process. Cost is not just a construction. It doesn't just come up in construction. It is created by the design. So that's kind of the issue because architects don't build they are not really responsible for the impact of the space that they are creating in the physical form.

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So that's really the beauty of design build done correctly is really just thinking with all the execution while one is designing. So not only design which can – and there's a lot in design, let alone. The design impacts cost and schedule. So it's like a triangle.

Tobi: And I think what's coming into my mind real quick, don't forget your next point. But what's coming to my mind when you're saying that is I consider myself, well, for one I'm very direct with my speaking, with my approach to conversation and truthfulness. But I would also consider myself practical in a lot of ways, or at least commonsense. My husband might laugh when he's like, "Yeah, practical, those \$700 shoes you like are super practical."

So it's not necessarily that I'm just focused on something that's being utilitarian. But one of my probably judgments of some architects is that we get so focused on some of the sort of beautiful rules of architecture.

David: Yeah, it's like pretentiousness.

Tobi: Symmetry, and you can't put that room there because it'll throw off the line that runs down through the whole building and it has to be proportionate. And I love proportion and I love balance. But at the end of the day we also have to talk about the people living there and their budgets and how we're going to create quality of life. And so I love what you're saying because I think that yes, putting the execution piece into the architecture conversation does take a lot of the pretentiousness away.

And it gets down to brass tacks about what are we trying to achieve here? And what are the resources we have to do it in? And how can we make that work? And I love that conversation. It's so much more straightforward and commonsense, yeah.

David: Totally. But the thing that's I think misinterpreted or taken out of context is somebody will take what you just said and be like, "Well, you're

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just negating great design. And you just care about cost.” But that’s the problem is that it’s like there’s this or their approach.

Tobi: Yes, binary, black and white, either or.

David: Yes, you can’t just have it all. But you can have it all. Do you know what I mean?

Tobi: Yeah, right, it can be both and, not either or, right?

David: Yes, totally. You do not need to sacrifice. They can all be done at the highest level. Because if you just go, you know, if you negate these components and you’re not thinking with them the project’s not going to happen. It’s going to go back and be redesigned once those things are discovered which is what often occurs. The design process has gone through, the client has a certain budget, architect, goes out to bid. Oops, two times the budget. Okay, well, we’re going to go back and now redesign the thing.

Tobi: Yeah, or lop off a whole bunch of square footage that you actually wanted or things that you needed to be functional.

David: The cool stuff, yeah.

Tobi: And it’s like, yeah, we’ll just cut all that out first, yeah.

David: Yeah. And you’re going to go redesign it and it’s inefficient. It’s really just very inefficient. And so it makes a lot of sense to have all these components be factored with at the same time while one is designing. So in our design process that’s what we do. It’s very similar to a typical architect’s process where you have phases, gradually building. But at the end of each phase we’re also going over numbers so that it’s a control point for the client.

Because if it’s not presented with those options and one is just making decisions solely on aesthetics and spatial and whatever, you are heading down a road where you’re asking for it to come down. And that’s why

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architects primarily serve the affluent because, that's why. But architecture is shelter. It's a necessity of life. But the reason the architectural community primarily serves the affluent is because they're the only ones that can afford the, you know, I don't know if you swear or say naughty words, the BS, the process...

Tobi: We occasionally say, now, in my own personal life, yeah, all day long curse like a sailor. We're not one of those shows that you're hearing F-bombs dropping all the time. But they have definitely shown up on the show. And so you don't have to be super guarded. Just go for it.

David: Okay, cool. So they're the only ones that can get through that process and do it anyway, they still have the means. Most folks are like, "No, I can't do that."

Tobi: It's so interesting. Kind of related but not, I don't want to go off in left field but it's so interesting. I was just having a conversation this very morning with my own DEI coach that I've worked with for over a year that I love, Trudi Lebron.

And we were talking about how in coaching, in life coaching, and helping people, and self-help industry it's kind of essentially the same thing. And that a lot of the core needs of trauma informed coaching and some real human needs that need to be addressed are kind of ignored even in the coaching space because nobody really wants to do that because it's uncomfortable. Those are difficult conversations. And so we just then just go, "Okay, let's gloss over this, let's make it super fun and let's just put it up there for the people who can actually pay for it."

And we see that happening and that's what's coming to mind when you're talking about that. I have a friend who lives in D.C. and she does mostly low income housing. But I mean it literally, she does this thing when she's giving a talk, because an interior design, NCIDQ certified, very well educated, great at what she does. And she works with – she's Black, she

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works with mostly Black developers who will work with her. And it's so fun because she'll give a talk even to a room full of white architects.

And she'll put one of her projects up next to something else and she does this kind of test where she's like, "Okay, we're going to go through some rooms and you all tell us, do you think this is a...?" And she'll give them three choices, low income housing, luxury hotel or whatever. And they get her work wrong every single time. And she's like, "I want to tell you that it is possible at every price point, at every budget, for every human being to create wellness, beauty, luxury, function, material."

David: Yeah, sustain comfort, yeah.

Tobi: Yeah. And she's always like, "Why are we putting plastic laminate in affordable housing instead of quartz or something that's going to last for a long time? Why are we not having these conversations where function meets price, meets design?" And so that's coming into mind too as you talk. And I love that you're saying this and so yeah.

David: Totally. I mean the future, whether I wrote this book, whether we talk about this subject or not, things will get back to design build because it is the inherent natural approach. And I'll give you an example. Any firm that is actually on the advent of technology and innovation, you take SpaceX. Do you think somebody's going to get in a plane and go to Mars and they're going to colonize and there's going to be a separate architect and a separate builder? No. There has to be accountability because it's a life and death scenario.

And it just comes out in that way. It's just more efficient. So your friend is able to create that impact because she is thinking with all aspects of a project. And it's just more efficient, it's just much more efficient.

Tobi: Yes. And she's working with developers who are also mindful of all of the same things, like you're saying it's a more holistic approach. It's believing things are possible at all budgets. This is inclusive and it can

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happen no matter what type or level of project. So good, I love that so much. So when people are thinking about that, when they're thinking about good design being accessible to everyone, what are the main things people are missing? Just people don't want to put their money into it? How do we start to create a more universally accessible approach?

David: I think the issue is the professional to be honest. And if you go back, okay, well, where does that come from? It comes from the educational system. There's a lot of universities have a construction management degree, architecture degree, engineering degree. They are completely segregated, completely, even different. We have a ton in Boston. And they're different colleges within this university. Students don't mix, professors are different. Curriculum is totally different.

And so it's actually we're training the future workforce like myself into this separation, and segregation, and lack of collaboration, and inefficiency. And so for me I really look at it high level. That's where I really have a strong – the book culminates with starting an organization to reunite the industry. And then it does start with making folks aware of the truth. And hey, this is the natural approach to building.

And then it goes into educating the future generations in the correct way in a way that makes them a professional who can think with all aspects of a project and really serve their clientele efficiently. It's hard to find somebody now who can do all [crosstalk].

Tobi: Totally. I mean I live in Arkansas, I can tell you, I couldn't find that, I mean maybe Dallas five hours away would be the closest area that I could even consider finding, or Atlanta eight hours away to even larger areas that I could even find somebody remotely thinking in this way, yeah.

David: And we talked a little bit about sustainability. And that's obviously a big focus of ours and the world at large. And design build really lends itself to sustainability because there's this issue now where the architects, the ones in the universities studying architecture are the ones that are learning

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about it, they actually know. But it's very theoretical. They don't have the means to put it into play, whereas the contractor world is a bit defensive about it or like, "Hey, we don't do it that way." Do you know what I mean?

So there is actually this issue in the implementation of these ideas. And so design build, if you look at a lot of the leading sustainability frontline folks, they are design build or they espouse design build or what's called an integrated approach because they need it. They know they need it to be successful.

Tobi: Yeah, that's so good. That's actually where I was going to go next and say just like what you're talking about with accessibility. The thing that keeps people from designing sustainable buildings is also the cost of it as well, the frontend cost. And I recently last year took the WELL AP exam which is wellness in the built environment as you probably know. And I'm currently – I never was that interested in getting LEED certified because I do mostly residential homes in Arkansas. There's not a lot of LEED projects here. But I decided last year to go ahead.

And so now I'm studying for the first level which is the LEED Green Associate I think is what it's called, just for my own knowledge. And also because of how it aligns with my own values about how I care about the climate, even my politics. And I wanted that whole kind of perspective or lens to be able to look through the knowledge of understanding sustainability. But you have done some incredible things, including something called a passive home, that's totally next level sustainability.

Can you talk to us about that? And how can we start seeing more of this, is it awareness, is it knowledge, is it education of the consumer? If there's that disconnect between the architect and the builder, how do we make this more mainstream so that we can really start believing that it's possible?

David: Well, that's why I started this organization.

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Tobi: Yeah. You're like, just follow me, Tobi; I'm trying to lead you there, yeah.

David: But I mean there isn't really a resource there that I'm aware of. I mean you can do your own research and search a lot of stuff. But a passive house is kind of the next level, the epitome of sustainability. And the word 'passive house' comes from the fact that it can be conditioned without mechanical means. It can be heated and cooled and be a comfortable indoor temperature passively, meaning body temperature, appliances, sunlight. It is so tight, and insulated, and oriented, taking into consideration the amount of glazing, orientation to the sun, overhangs.

And so it has to meet extreme criteria to be a certified passive house. We're doing our first retrofit passive house which they're more common as new construction because they're easier to do. But we're doing a passive house retrofit right now. And yeah, we're very excited about it. And one of the main things I don't think it talks about enough, I mean definitely more so now is indoor air quality in health. Because you can control the indoor air quality to a much higher level with these homes and folks have more attention on that.

And you don't need to go to that level. It's not all our projects do. But one thing that you can do which we do on pretty much all our projects, whether they're looking to do some sort of energy retrofit or not, is a blow door test with an infrared scan. And a blow door test is basically you take your home, you close all the doors and windows, you put a fan in your front door and you suck all the air out of the house. So that a negative air pressure is created. You then can walk around with an infrared camera and see the largest culprits of energy efficiency.

And it then gives you an approach to tackle it because you hear about, "Should I replace my windows? Should I insulate, should I?" You don't really know where to start. But this gives you, really lets you hone in on the largest culprits of inefficiency to address.

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Tobi: Yeah. I think when you first, you or whoever approached me about you being on the podcast, they sent over a lot of information on your work. And I read about maybe the first passive home that you did. And while I was reading that I was thinking it was actually more related to what I studied in the WELL AP exam even than in the LEED stuff because so much of WELL is about air quality, water quality, wellness in the environment.

It was talking about the system, I think it was the HVAC or where the heat rises and goes out of certain areas. And it had a certain name but it has escaped me. But I was like this is so fascinating because it really is about wellness. And the WELL AP which is part of the International Green Building, that whole group, I actually tonight have my first meeting. I was put on their advisory board for residential projects for the wellness because they're just starting it because it's only been so many things. It was only regulated in the commercial industry.

And so they're just starting this work on wellness in the residential space and multifamily spaces. And so I loved that you're doing that work because it was connecting all those dots for me and really showing me some of what's possible. And I think so many people listening to this podcast are residential interior designers. And we think that stuff is important to a degree but it's not regulated, it's not required by code. So it's so easy to opt out of it especially when we see the cost line item associated with it. And we're like, "Well, we'll think about that later." Yeah.

David: You just brought up a great point which is it's not regulated. Outdoor air quality is actually regulated but indoor air quality is not. And I'm not saying it should be but it's not. And so that's something that anybody, right now you can Google – you can actually get a monitor that measures indoor air quality for your home. And so that's something we're starting to do on our projects just so people have more awareness and control over it.

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Tobi: Yeah, because there's so many long term health implications we don't even understand that are coming from that and all kinds of things, yeah, it's so interesting. Okay, this has been so fascinating. Anything we haven't covered because we've covered a lot, that you think is really important that you would like to talk about?

David: Yeah, thank you. I mean I'd like to plug a non-profit that we're about to start a project on that's really incredible. Can I do that?

Tobi: Absolutely you may, yes.

David: Okay, awesome. So this non-profit is called G Code. And Bridgette Wallace is the founder. She's a Black woman, graduated from the same university as me. We didn't know each other.

Tobi: Which is Tufts?

David: Tufts University, yeah. And she started this non-profit with the purpose to teach underprivileged women of color, tech. And she does it in a way by housing them, so giving them habitat, somewhere to live. And then on the same facility they train in tech and then they help them get internships and jobs in the tech world, which is completely in the future this will be brilliant. And so we're super excited. We're going to start – we've started to design.

Tobi: The housing?

David: Yeah.

Tobi: So cool.

David: Yeah, phase one of the project, and so it's G Code, it's in Boston if you look it up and it's definitely an organization we're supporting.

Tobi: That is incredible, thank you for sharing that. Okay, so if people want to – until your book comes out, which is later, if they want to connect with you, follow you, read about the passive house, which we can link to that

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too, but where is the best place for them to find you, follow you, see your work, all of that stuff?

David: Yeah. So Instagram, my company page is NE Design Construction, NE as in New England. And then Design Build Movement is my kind of personal passion page which I've put out content regarding the truth on the history of the architect and builder. And so yeah, that's where to kind of connect.

Tobi: Incredible. Well, thank you so much. When I saw your story and what's your passion about I knew that you had to come onto the podcast because I knew, definitely something I'm not hearing anybody else talk about. Something that's truly important to me, so thank you for being here and thank you for sharing that. I really enjoyed it.

David: My pleasure. Thank you, Tobi.

Okay. Did you learn a lot? I thought this was a very educational episode, for me at least it was, things that I didn't know around the research David's done, some really interesting things about the sustainability work he's doing. So if you have interest in any of that then definitely head over to the places he said you can find him and check him out. And we'll link all of that in the show notes for you today. So thanks for being here and I'll see you back really soon with another great episode of the Design You podcast. Bye for now.

Thank you so much for listening to the *Design You* podcast, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my *Design You* coaching program today. You can get all the details at TobiFairley.com.