

## Kurt Neiswender, AIA, LEED

Principal Architect, Founder, Urban Colab Architecture, L3C  
Assistant Professor of Practice, Lawrence Technological University  
1007 East Fork Drive, Flint, MI 48503  
[kurt@urbancolab.design](mailto:kurt@urbancolab.design) | 810-824-8414



## Professional Experience

**2020 - Present**

**Urban Colab Architecture, L3C., Flint, Michigan**  
Owner, Principal Architect

Leads community-driven projects in sustainable housing and adaptive reuse, including Gray Street Apartments, Orchard Grove and Manor, and the Avalon Village Community Kitchen, advancing energy-efficient design and equitable development across Flint.

**2018 - Present**

**The Coffee Sketch Podcast, Flint, Michigan / Austin, Texas**  
Co-Founder, Co-Host

Co-created a global design podcast with 190+ episodes and listeners in 80+ countries, featuring conversations on architecture, creativity, and technology that bridge professional insight with accessible storytelling.

**2012 - 2020**

**Sedgewick + Ferweda Architects, Flint, Michigan**  
Project Architect

Managed design and documentation for significant projects including The Grand Apartments, Crossover Ministries, and Phoenix Haus, the first PHIUS Certified Passive House in Michigan, setting new standards for energy-efficient design.

**2010 - 2012**

**MainStreet Design Build, Birmingham, Michigan**  
Director of Architecture

**2007 - 2010**

**OJMR Architects, Los Angeles, California**  
Project Architect

**2005 - 2007**

**Gruen Associates, Los Angeles, California**  
Project Designer

**2004 - 2005**

**Togawa & Smith Architects, Pasadena, California**  
Project Designer

**2003 - 2004**

**James Schettino Architects, New Canaan, Connecticut**  
Project Designer

## Mayoral Appointments

**2022 - Present**

**City of Flint Building Board of Appeals**  
Mayoral Appointment

**2018 - Present**

**City of Flint Building Historic District Commission**  
Vice Chair, Mayoral Appointment

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## Professional Registrations

**2009 - Present**

**State of Michigan**

Registered Architect #1301056647

**2012 - Present**

**United States Green Building Council**

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)  
Legacy LEED Accredited Professional

**2008**

**United States Green Building Council**

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)  
LEED Accredited Professional

## Education

**Southfield, Michigan**

9/1/2010 - 12/12/2014

**Lawrence Technological University**

**College of Architecture and Design**

Master of Urban Design with Distinction

**New York, New York**

9/1/2003 - 12/12/2003

**Columbia University**

**Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation**

Post Professional, NY/Paris Program

**Los Angeles, California**

9/1/1998 - 5/16/2003

**University of Southern California**

**School of Architecture**

Bachelor of Architecture

## Business Grant Awards

**2025**

**Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance**

\$10,000 Small Business Hub Grant

**2024**

**General Motors Moving Flint Forward**

\$5,000 Round 2 award used to expand XR/VR design equipment

**2023**

**General Motors Moving Flint Forward**

\$10,000 Round 1 award used to acquire 3D Printing and XR/VR equipment

## Professional Recognition

**2018**

**Building Design + Construction Magazine 40 Under 40**

"Flint Crusader"

**2018**

**Flint Economic Alliance**

Art of Achievement Award, Young Professional of the Year Award

**2016**

**Green Light Flint**

Business Plan Competition, Finalist

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## AIA Awards

- 2025** **AIA Flint Honor Award**  
Sustainable Design Award for Crossover Outreach, Flint Michigan
- 2018** **AIA Flint Honor Award**  
Sustainable Design Award for the Satori Haus in Manistique, Michigan
- 2017** **AIA National Young Architect Award**  
The Young Architect Award honors individuals who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the architecture profession early in their careers.
- 2015** **AIA Michigan Young Architect Award**  
To recognize proficiency and exceptional accomplishments in, and contributions to the profession by an architect
- 2013** **AIA Flint Honor Award**  
Honor award for urban design pop-up installation in Downtown Flint

## AIA National Leadership

- 2019 - 2021** **AIA Small Firm Exchange**  
*Board of Directors*  
Kurt contributes to this mission through national leadership, peer collaboration, and advocacy for innovative, equitable business models that strengthen small firm practice.
- 2017** **2017 AIA Practice Innovation Lab**  
*Invited Attendee*  
Kurt was one of 60 professionals competitively selected to attend a three-day national summit at the 1776 Incubator, where he co-lead one of ten teams developing innovative business models.
- 2017** **2017 AIA/NCARB Experience Advisory Joint Committee, Co-Chair**  
Kurt was appointed by President Thomas Vonier, FAIA. This committee plays a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness and appropriateness of NCARB's experience-related policies and providing input for the development and implementation of the Architectural Experience Program (AXP).
- 2014 - 2016** **AIA National Resolutions Committee**  
*2016 Chair*  
Kurt was appointed by President Helene Dreiling, FAIA. National Resolutions Committee plays a vital role in the organization's governance, acting as a filter and facilitator for formal proposals from its members to the Board of Directors.
- 2013 - 2016** **AIA National Young Architects Forum**  
*Young Architect Regional Director*  
The YAF provides resources and opportunities for young architects to hone their skills and take on leadership roles within the profession and their communities.

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## AIA Regional Leadership

**2026 - 2029**

### **AIA Michigan Secretary**

*Executive Committee, Board of Directors*

Kurt was elected to become the 2026 Secretary to the AIA Michigan Board of Directors. This Executive Committee Position is the first on the ladder to 2029 AIA Michigan President.

**2025 - 2026**

### **AIA Michigan Director**

*Board of Directors*

Kurt was elected to serve as Director for AIA Flint and AIA Mid-Michigan Components, also by Presidential Appointment to serve on the Strategic Plan and Archifusion Planning Committees

**2021 - 2022**

### **AIA Michigan Director**

*Board of Directors*

Kurt was elected to serve as Director for AIA Flint and AIA Mid-Michigan Components. Also, by Presidential Appointment to serve on the Strategic Plan

## AIA Component Leadership

**2020 - 2021**

### **AIA Flint Past President**

*Board of Directors*

Kurt led the component strategic plan during repositioning and board realignment.

**2018 - 2019**

### **AIA Flint President**

*Board of Directors*

Kurt led the component through national repositioning and board realignment.

**2016 - 2018**

### **AIA Flint Vice President**

*Board of Directors*

## AIA Awards Juries

**2020**

### **AIA Iowa - Juror**

Kurt was invited to be a juror for the Young Architect Award and the Educator of the Year award for the Iowa State Component

**2019**

### **AIA New Jersey - Juror**

Kurt was invited to be a juror for the Young Architect Award, Associate Award, and Design Awards categories for the New Jersey Component.

**2016**

### **AIA Michigan - Juror**

As a past recipient of the AIA Michigan Young Architect Award, Kurt was invited to be a juror for the Young Architect Award and Associate Member Award categories.

**2015**

### **Engineering Society of Detroit Future City Competition- Juror**

500 Michigan middle school student competition to explore STEM based design thinking to reimagine the world of tomorrow.

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## Publications by Nominee

### **"Passive House Part Deux"**

*YAF Connection*, Young Architects Forum, November 10, 2014

### **The Coffee Sketch Podcast**

185+ Episodes, Co-Founder, Co-Host, 2018 to Present

### **Vacant Lot Cookbook**

C.S. Mott Foundation, UM-Flint Economic Development Authority, September 30, 2018

### **A Guide to Flint Architecture**

AIA Flint, Michigan Architectural Foundation, May 1, 2018

### **"Riverbank Park Demolished"**

*The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, April 20, 2018

### **"A Great Lakes Water Problem"**

*YAF Connection*, Young Architects Forum, February 2, 2016

### **"Interview: Donna Sink, AIA"**

*YAF Connection*, Young Architects Forum, February 2, 2016

### **"Passive House The Craft of the Next Gen Residential Technology"**

*YAF Connection*, Young Architects Forum, January 5, 2014

## Invited Podcast Appearances

### **"Service to Society"**

*The EntreArchitect Podcast*, Episode #630, October 19, 2025

### **"Ask Me Anything (AMA) with Coffee Sketch Podcast"**

Practice Disrupted with Evelyn Lee, FAIA, Episode 144, February 15, 2024

### **"Developing Projects in Flint"**

*Empty Lots Podcast*, Episode #5, October 4, 2021

### **"The End of Disposability"**

*E3: Energy, Environment, with Emily Podcast*, Season 3 Episode #26, July 6, 2021

### **"Water Treatment"**

*Spaces Podcast*, Season 3 Episode #66, August 9, 2022

### **"What is a Passive House"**

*Talking Home Renovations with the House Maven*, Episode #20, July 5, 2020

### **"The Power of Sketching"**

*The EntreArchitect Podcast*, Episode #283, August 9, 2019

### **"Flint Water Crisis"**

*AIA Small Firm Exchange*, Episode #2, May 15, 2019

### **"Planting Your Roots in a New City"**

*The Young Architect Podcast*, Episode #32, September 29, 2017

### **"Dispatch from Flint"**

*Architect Sessions Podcast*, Episode #54, February 22, 2016

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## Publications and Media

### **"Communities First Considers Downsizing Plan for Live-Work Development Downtown"**

*The Flushing View*, Lania Rocha, July 10, 2025

### **"Flint's Immigrant Communities"**

*Stateside with April Baer*, April Baer, Michigan Public, July 8, 2025

### **"Communities First to Host Job Fairs for Flint Housing Project"**

*Flint Beat*, Ramona Watson, April 26, 2025

### **"Good Laundry: A Flint Church's Answer to Hygiene Poverty"**

*C.S. Mott Foundation*, web, September 9, 2024

### **"Bridging the gap between community and culture with Queens' Provisions"**

*Flintside*, Xzavier Simon, August 28, 2024

### **"Genesee Co. Housing Project to Receive Grant Funding to Clean Up Property"**

*WNEW Channel 5*, Emily Keinath, June 14, 2024

### **"Queens' Provisions offers wine and cheese for Flint-area residents"**

*WEYI*, Sydney Broadnax, May 7, 2024

### **"Crossover Outreach reopens for client services in their new facility"**

*ABC 12 News*, April 24, 2024

### **"\$25M Apartment Developments Break ground in Flint-Area"**

*MidMichigan NOW*, April 11, 2024

### **"Project Underway for 74 Unit Apartment Complex in Flint"**

*WNEW Channel 5*, Emily Keinath, April 10, 2024

### **"Communities First, Inc. Breaks Ground on \$25M Apartment Developments in Flint Area"**

*MLive*, Fuad Shalhout, April 9, 2024

### **"Crossover Outreach in Flint gives community opportunity to tour new facility"**

*Mid-Michigan NOW*, April 9, 2024

### **"Crossover Outreach reopens in new building in Flint's Grand Traverse District"**

*East Village Magazine*, Canisha Bell, April 9, 2024

### **"Crossover Outreach reopens for client services, donations in new facility"**

*MLive*, Jake May, April 6, 2024

### **"Crossover Outreach Fully Open In New Building on Court Street" *FLINT Our Community, Our Voice*, Tiffany**

*Sommers*, April 1, 2024

### **"Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis in Flint and Genesee County"**

*AND Magazine*, Beth McKenna, March 11, 2024

### **"Communities First receives grant money to renovate two Flint buildings"**

*MLive*, Kevin Craft, January 2, 2024

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## Publications and Media

**"Queen's Provisions opens new wine, charcuterie shop in Flint"**

*ABC 12 News*, Ryan Jeltema, September 8, 2023

**"New business offers charcuterie, wine and board games at Flint's historic Berridge Hotel"**

*MLive*, Fuad Shalhout, August 4, 2023

**"Communities First Holds Groundbreaking for \$16M Mixed-Use Development"**

*MLive*, Fuad Shalhout, July 26, 2022

**"Crossover Outreach breaks ground on new building in Flint to better serve residents"**

*Flint Beat*, June 18, 2022

**"Crossover Outreach breaks ground in Flint to celebrate an exciting future"**

*MLive*, Jennifer Veloso, June 16, 2022

**"Several historic homes in Flint's Carriage Town district get a new lease on life"**

*ABC 12 News*, Kevin Goff, March 5, 2022

**"Urban Renaissance Center A Vision for the Future"**

*My City Magazine*, Peter Hinterman, November 1, 2019

**"25 Must See Buildings in Michigan: The Capitol Theater"**

*USA Today*, December 8, 2018

**"Flint Flat Lot's Floating House Draws Criticism"**

*The Architect's Newspaper*, Chris Bentley, September 25, 2013

**"Two Islands Wins Inaugural Flint Flat Lot Competition"**

*Arch Daily*, Karissa Rosenfield, May 9, 2013

**"Flint's Flat Lot Competition Winners Announced / Two Islands to Build Summer Pavilion"**

*eVolo.us*, Marija Bojovic, April 28, 2013

**"Flat Lot Competition Winners Get Ready to Come to Flint from London and Madrid"**

*MLive*, Scott Atkinson, April 4, 2013

**"Floating House Wins Flat Lot Competition in Michigan"**

*Interior Design*, Jennifer Nalawicki, April 2, 2013

**"Two Islands' Floating House Wins Flat Lot Competition"**

*designboom.com*, Danny Hudson, March 24, 2013

**"Flint, Michigan Flat Lot Winners Announced, Floating House Arrives in June"** *The Architect's Newspaper*,

Chris Bentley, March 21, 2013

**"Flint Flat Lot Competition Has Its Inaugural Winner"** *Archinect.com*, Alexander Walter,

March 21, 2013

**"Crossover Outreach reopens for client services, donations in new facility"**

*MLive*, Jake May, April 6, 2024

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## National Speaking

### **"Launch, Build, and Thrive: Starting Your Own Firm"**

AIA25 AIA National Conference, Panelist, June 5, 2025

### **"AIA Trust: Starting and Operating Your Own Firm"**

AIA25 AIA National Conference, Panelist, June 4, 2025

### **"In Conversation with Evelyn Lee, FAIA"**

*Design x Technology* Lawrence Technological University, Interviewer, February 11, 2025

### **"Design Challenges for Net Zero Building Principles"**

Net Zero Build Summit, Panelist, September 28, 2020

### **"The Art of Execution"**

Texas Society of Architects Annual Convention, October 24, 2019

### **"Incremental Design for Flint Housing"**

Incremental Development Alliance, Design Advisor, November 13, 2018

### **"Public Interest Design: Brennan Park Masterplan"**

ARCC Structures for Inclusion Conference, April 12, 2015

### **"Net Zero Community Design"**

ARCC Spring Research Conference, April 10, 2011

## Regional Speaking

### **"New Housing Opportunities in Flint"**

Building Michigan Communities Conference, May 15, 2025

### **"AI Assisted Design Practice"**

Archifusion, AIA Michigan Regional Conference, November 7, 2024

### **"GEN AI: Using Vitras AI for Energy Modeling"**

Lawrence Technological University Symposium, September 16, 2024

**"Using Prefab to Optimize Schedule and Build Accurately"**, Building Michigan Communities Conference, May 14, 2024

### **"AIA Flint in Experience"**

Regional Leadership Conference, AIA Michigan, October 10, 2019

### **"Pop-Up Retail in Emerging Markets"**

Michigan Regional Economic Development Authority, UM-Flint EDA Center, October 4, 2019

### **"Pop-Up Retail Cookbook"**

Michigan Regional Economic Development Authority, UM-Flint EDA Center, October 30, 2018

### **"Community Design Charrette"**

Detroit Design Festival, Design Core Detroit, September 18, 2018

### **"The Power of People and Place"**

Michigan Regional Economic Development Authority, UM-Flint EDA Center, October 24, 2017

### **"New Vision: Mott Park Recreation Area"**

Regional Planning Conference, Michigan Association of Planning, February 12, 2016

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## Regional Speaking

**“Strengthening Community Through Urban Design”**, *Regional Planning Conference*, Michigan Association of Planning, February 14, 2015

**“Emerging Professionals in Architecture”**

*Regional Leadership Conference*, AIA Michigan, January 10, 2014

**“Building Systems Integration”**

*ARE Prep Seminar*, AIA Michigan, June 19, 2013

## Local Speaking Engagements

**“LTU Integrated Design Studio Report”**

*International Center of Greater Flint*, January 21, 2025

**“Historic Lansing Architects”**

*Community Forum*, St. David’s Episcopal Church, November 17, 2024

**“Running Your Own Practice”**

*Fireside Chats*, AIA Detroit Emerging Professionals, November 9, 2024

**“The Journey to Becoming an Architect”**

*Career Fair*, Richfield Academy, November 11, 2019

**“Computational Design in Architecture”**

*Tech Meetup*, Factory Two Flint, September 9, 2019

**“Principles of Passive House Design”**

*Science on Tap*, UM-Flint, November 8, 2018

**“Principles of Net Zero Energy Buildings”**

*Guest Lecture*, UM-Flint, Randall Repic, PhD., October 16, 2018

**“The Case for Incremental Housing in Flint”**

*Flint SOUP*, Community Forum, May 10, 2016

**“The Pathway to Becoming an Architect”**

*Career Fair*, Davison High School, April 27, 2016

**“The Pathway to Becoming an Architect”**

*Career Fair*, Davison Middle School, January 22, 2016

**“Urban Design, Resilience, and Legacy Cities”**

*Guest Lecture*, UM-Flint, Victoria Morckel, PhD., November 3, 2015

**“The Business Model of L.3.C.”**

*Arts, Tech, Biz MashUp*, UM-Flint, July 31, 2015

**“What is an EP?”**

*Young Architects Forum*, SmithGroup, June 2, 2015

**“The Future of the Profession”**

*Panel Discussion with Mickey Jacob*, FAIA, AIA Michigan, April 9, 2013

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## Academic Appointments

**2020 - 2021**

**Lawrence Technological University, College of Architecture and Design**  
Adjunct Faculty

**Courses Taught:**

ARC 3423 - HVAC and Water Systems, Undergraduate Lecture Course  
ARC 4443 - Acoustics, Electrical, and Illumination Systems, Undergraduate Lecture Course  
ARC 4126 - Comprehensive Design Studio, Undergraduate Design Lab  
ARC 5413 - HVAC and Water Systems, Graduate Lecture Course  
ARC 5443 - Acoustics, Electrical, and Illumination Systems, Graduate Lecture Course

**2013 - 2019**

**University of Michigan - Flint, Geography, Planning & Environment Dept.**  
Lecturer I

**Courses Taught:**

ESS 140 - Healthy Planet Healthy People  
ESS 360 - Renewable and Sustainable Energy  
GEO 297 - Special Topics in Sustainability I  
GEO 299 - Special Topics in Sustainability II  
URP 111 - Introduction to Urban Geography and Planning  
URP 212 - Urban Design and Design Tools for Planners  
URP 310 - Reading the City: Urban Planning History, Theory, and Law  
URP 498 - Internship Course

**2014 - 2015**

**University of Michigan - Flint, Art and Art History Department**  
Lecturer I

**Courses Taught:**

ART 141 - Two Dimensional Design  
ART 371 - Community Design Studio

## Student Recognition

**2025**

**Michael Gerace**  
Metropolis Magazine Future 100

**2024**

**Emily Bigelow**  
Metropolis Magazine Future 100

**2025**

**Maya Dandachli, Carlos Loya Miranda, Michael Gerace**  
Lawrence Technological University, Dean's Award for Design Portfolio

**2024**

**Shaikha Alkhazim, Kendall Hands, Kerry Greene**  
Lawrence Technological University, Dean's Award for Design Portfolio

**2022**

**United States Green Building Council**  
Midwest Sustainable Design Competition  
1st Place: Peter Arton  
2nd Place: Daniel Kagan  
3rd Place: Courtney Gadzik  
Honorable Mention: Allyza Danica-Valino

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## Academic Service

2024 - Present

**Lawrence Technological University, College of Architecture and Design**  
Curriculum Committee

Contributed to the review and development of undergraduate and graduate architecture curricula, advancing integration of technology, sustainability, and applied practice within design education to strengthen alignment with professional and accreditation standards.

2024 - 2025

**Lawrence Technological University, College of Architecture and Design**  
Tenure Track Search Committee

Served on the recent faculty search committee that successfully recruited four new tenure-track and tenured members, strengthening the College's expertise in design technology, sustainability, and professional practice.

## International Juried Exhibitions

2025

**Designing with Intelligence: an AI Collection of Speculative Objects,**  
UNESCO Detroit Month of Design, Detroit Institute of Arts

2024

**Constructing Futures, Hybrid Landscapes**  
UNESCO Detroit Month of Design

2023

**Hybrid Landscapes 01**  
Buckham Gallery, Small Works Exhibit

## Grant Funded Research

2020

**Pop-Up Retail Mapping Research**  
\$10,000 UM-Flint Provost Applied Research Fund

2018

**2018 - Pop-Up Retail Cookbook Research**  
\$10,000 UM-Flint Provost Applied Research Fund

2018

**2018 - Neighborhood Design Support**  
\$1,000 UM-Flint *Healthy Flint Research Center*

2017

**2017 - Pop-Up Retail Development Research**  
\$20,000 UM-Flint Provost Applied Research Fund