



**Christine West
Green Building**

Age: 39
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“Thermostats just aren’t sexy. People’s eyes glaze over when you talk about insulation,” says Christine West of some of the simple but unglamorous fixes to make buildings more efficient. She should know: as a Principal at Kite Architects, she is at the forefront of energy-efficient design, working on the East Side to build the state’s first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) home targeting platinum status, the highest certification level for green design. She’s also working with Crossroads RI on a multi-family project in North Kingstown that will be the first LEED certified affordable housing in the state, and another project with the West Broadway Neighborhood Association and Spurwink RI on a future home for the Urban Greens food co-op.

For West, green building is the way to repair crumbling urban landscapes and leverage the tremendous level of talent that is one of the state’s latent resources. She believes that Rhode Island’s industrial design and manufacturing infrastructure doesn’t get enough credit for innovating and adapting its business model accordingly. “That’s not typical,” she says. “People take it for granted here.”

To that end, West is working with Matt Grigsby (also on this list) to design customizable, affordable, multifamily and mixed-use housing that can fill in the cityscape. “Using existing infrastructure is one of the greenest things you can do,” she notes. They plan to launch the project this year. By late spring, her LEED Platinum house should be complete, which will serve as a model for environmentally responsible building. Also in 2010, she will continue working on a Wellness and Fitness Center at URI and live-work lofts in the West Side’s old Lawton Storage building.

In addition, West is President-Elect of the American Institute of Architects, Rhode Island chapter, and on the board of the Providence Revolving Fund, an organization that helps transform neighborhoods while still preserving their architectural heritage. With West firmly in a leadership role in the city’s architecture community, we can count on more forward thinking, environmentally-friendly building – and better thermostats.