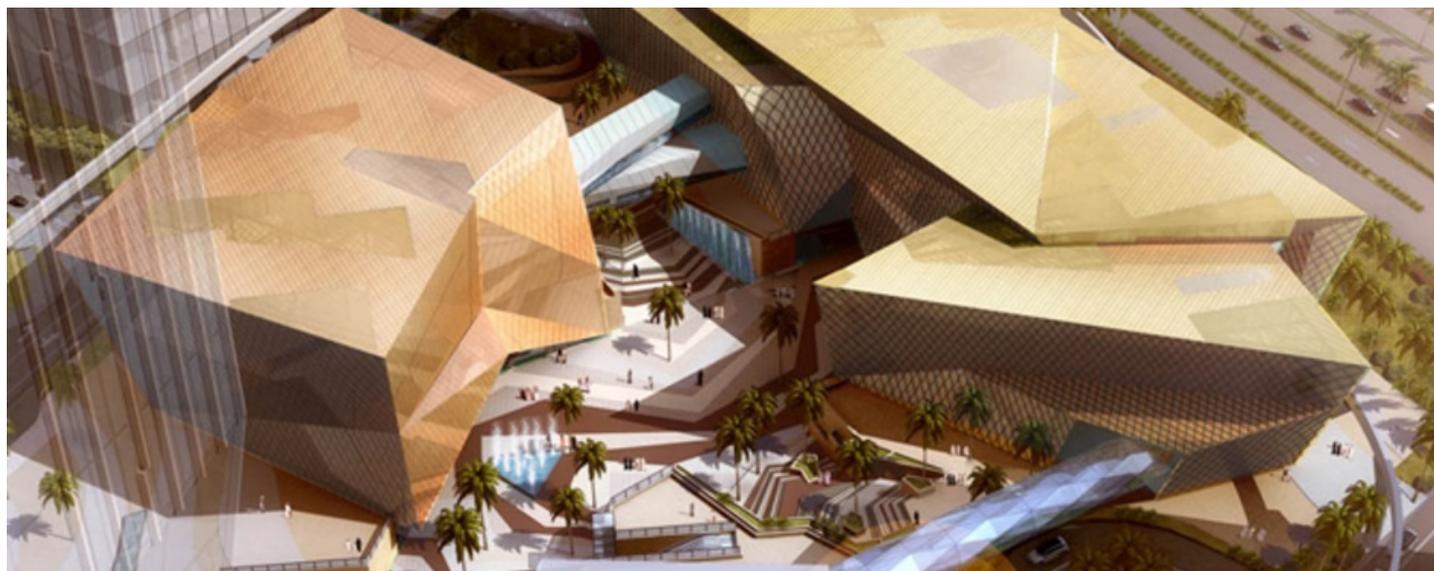


# Session Spotlight: Extreme Building Envelope Design in Saudi Arabia

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KAED Geo-Science Centre by Cambridge Seven Associates. (Photo credit: C7A)

Picture this: It's 115°F outside. There's a dust storm sweeping through the city and it hasn't rained in weeks.

Now: Design an optimally performing building.

Where are you? Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, where three leading architecture firms have tackled building envelope design for the King Abdullah Financial District. Marc Rogers, Principal, Cambridge Seven Associates Inc.; Heidi Blau, Partner, FXFOWLE Architects; and Louis Becker, Principal/Partner, Henning Larsen Architects; are leading a session at [Greenbuild](#) entitled "[Extreme Building Envelope Design in Saudi Arabia](#)" where they'll outline how they created successful designs in a challenging climate.

We caught up with session speakers Rogers & Blau, below, to get the scoop on their extreme session.

## What makes you an expert in this area?

**Marc Rogers:** I have been working in the Middle East for over 15 years and in that time I have had the opportunity to work on many very large-scale architectural projects. Most of the clients I have worked with in the Middle East had a desire for some level of sustainability without the understanding and knowledge of what that meant. That gave us the opportunity over the years to experiment with materials, building systems and fenestration to develop understanding of what works environmentally and culturally. With the design of the Science Museum for the King Abdullah Financial District (KAED), I was able to bring all of that experience to a new level of understanding of how to develop building shape, form and facades for Saudi Arabia's very hot and dusty environment.

**Heidi Blau:** My role as Principal-in-Charge on the recently completed projects at Lincoln Center - The Juilliard School Expansion, Alice Tully Hall as well as the public spaces - provided unique opportunities to integrate technically complex facades into the overall building design. The expertise garnered on cultural projects such as these has helped inform our current work for the Museum of the Built Environment, part of the King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

## Why is the topic of your session important?

**MR:** We are seeing the Middle East as a critical test bed for building design in extreme environmental conditions. As climatic changes happen and global temperatures rise, the architectural experimentation and engineering development that is taking place in the middle East will have an important influence on future building design around the world.

**HB:** Developing facades capable of responding to context, climate and program pushes the boundaries of sustainable design.

## Why should Greenbuild attendees attend your session specifically?

**MR:** This session will feature principals from three award-winning international architectural firms presenting current work and thinking about facade design in the new city for King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Currently, KAED is the largest sustainable development in the world providing housing for 350,000+

in the new city for King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Currently, KAID is the largest sustainable development in the world providing housing for 350,000 people and office towers ranging to 100 stories. Our panel will provide a view into how some of the buildings are dealing with the incredible and harsh environment of Riyadh. How can you afford to miss out?!

**HB:** This session highlights the ways in which our three firms addressed building envelope design in the desert climate. Focusing on sustainability and using advanced computer integration, the resulting designs showcase the dramatic developments in facade research and building form.

**What's the most interesting experience you've had in the green building/sustainability world?**

**MR:** My first job out of high school in the early '80s was working for Louis McMillan, partner of Walter Gropius, installing a solar hydronic system on the roof his house...At the time, he was 80, and he said to me, "It's not about getting as much solar energy as I can, it's all about how little I will need."

**HB:** Working as the leader of the multi-faceted Lincoln Center project team was a wonderful opportunity to reshape a valuable and venerable institution as well as improving the urban experience for all New Yorkers.

**What's the most interesting non-green building related fact about yourself?**

**MR:** I'm left handed.

**HB:** I enjoy scheduling regular activities outside the office - especially playing (and watching) tennis, which helps recharge.

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