The outset of the 21st century launched a “perfect storm” of societal and technological challenges and opportunities that stand to affect the way architects will design and builders construct in the next decades. In a society that is becoming increasingly aware of its toll on the environment, common architectural design and construction practices are being re-examined to lessen their impact. At the core of those challenges lies the recognition that the world’s natural resources are depleting faster than the earth’s ability to renew them. Heightened awareness of and the need to respond to the negative effect of global warming shifted architectural priorities to some degree to favour buildings that consume fewer natural resources. Having sustainable buildings is regarded to be vital to lower carbon dioxide emissions, a leading cause of climate change.

Reducing consumption of non-renewable energy sources such as fossil fuels has led to energy-efficient construction, net-zero design, passive solar gain strategies, active power-generating systems such as photovoltaic panels, and water harvesting and recycling methods. It has also led to the introduction and use of green roofs and use of products made of recycled materials to name a few.

With new government and educational initiatives, public awareness of society’s environmental vulnerability has significantly increased, and more people are making purchases that aim at reducing their environmental footprint. New objectives and policies, such as the qualification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), act as a yardstick through which newly introduced projects are evaluated and guide the direction for innovations in building methods. The increasing effort to promote buildings with reduced environmental footprints is further evident in programs such as BREEAM, the EnerGuide Rating System, and ENERGY STAR for new structures. These trends and standards are an indication that commonly accepted design norms are changing. The need to develop innovative HVAC technologies, healthy indoor materials, and water-efficient systems is clear.

A growing phenomenon that has affected design was the outcome of the digital revolution. The rise of telecommuting and the popularity of live-work arrangements are known to have economic, environmental, and social advantages which were expressed during the recent pandemic. The need for residential settings that combine live-work functions and reduce the need for office space is expected to further grow in the coming years.

Contemporary advancements in technology have provided more efficient mechanisms to design and construct but also to better communicate with clients. The digital revolution has had a significant effect on design which adopted the use of 3D modeling and BIM (Building Information Modeling) software over the last decade. These methods and technologies allow integration of innovative designs and products and allow one to effectively connect with the client to reduce the cost of design and construction, making the design process cost-efficient.

From the above descriptions, it seems that circumstances in architecture are changing globally to force the parties involved to be innovative and think “outside the box”. Those changes also point to the fact that things will continue to evolve rapidly for which we must be ready.
The above-mentioned subjects and consideration made me interested in the position of Editor-in-Chief of Architecture Journal. I realized that the pressing circumstances affecting architecture will lead to global change of the profession and force designers to be innovative and think “outside the box”. Those changes also point to the fact that things will continue to evolve rapidly to which we must be ready.

I invite scholars and designers to use the journal as a podium for sharing their research with the wider scholarly community.

Conflicts of Interest: I am the principal of Avi Friedman Consultants Inc. Yet, nothing in my activity represents any conflict of interest about the content of the material sent to me for consideration or the people whose work I am to review.

Short Biography of Authors

Avi Friedman received his bachelor’s degree in Architecture and Town Planning from the Israel Institute of Technology, his Master’s degree from McGill University, and his Doctorate from the University of Montréal. In 1988, he co-founded the Affordable Homes Program at the McGill School of Architecture where he teaches. He also holds a Visiting Professor position at Lancaster University in the U.K. Avi is known for his housing innovation and in particular for several demonstration projects. He is the author of 25 books and a columnist for several media outlets. He is the principal of Avi Friedman Consultants Inc. and the recipient of numerous awards including the Manning Innovation Award, Lifetime Achievement Award from Sustainable Buildings Canada, and the World Habitat Award. He was named by Wallpaper magazine as 1 of 10 people from around the world “most likely to change the way we live”.
