

Smith Mordak announced as new Chief Executive of UKGBC

2 years ago



The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Smith Mordak as the incoming Chief Executive of UKGBC. Smith will take on the role on 1 June 2023, with a handover from Julie Hirigoyen, who will be standing down after over eight years at the helm.

Over six months, the Board of Trustees conducted a rigorous and extensive search process to find the right person. They are delighted to appoint Mordak, who brings a wealth of industry knowledge, deep technical expertise, first-hand insights as a longstanding member of UKGBC, and plenty of fresh ideas to the role, at this critical moment in time.

Mordak, currently Director of Sustainability and Physics at Buro Happold is an award-winning architect, engineer, curator, and writer, working across disciplines to realise a regenerative economy and built environment.

Their career has centred on creating and implementing strategies for the transition to a healthy, fair and sustainable built environment, and has included leading roles in architecture and engineering firms including Buro Happold, Webb Yates Engineers, and Studio Weave. Mordak is also a driving force behind numerous industry initiatives, including as Board Member for the Journal of City Climate Policy and Economy and The Architecture Foundation, and as a nationally elected Councillor at RIBA. In addition, Mordak is a regular and well-respected thought leader across a range of media including Dezeen, the Architects' Journal and The Guardian.

Sunand Prasad, Chair of the Board of Trustees said:

"UKGBC is delighted to appoint Smith Mordak as our new Chief Executive. We look forward to their

leadership of the team in this critical period for taking urgent and effective action to limit and reverse environmental degradation. Smith combines a deep, science based and systemic understanding of the climate emergency with a clear sighted, principled and pragmatic approach for what needs to be done in response. From founding an innovative, award-winning design practice to helping a major international consultancy, Smith has consistently shown imagination and determination in achieving change. Along the way they have been active in significant industry initiatives to achieve an equitable and lasting transformation of the built environment to a sustainable and regenerative model.

I would also like, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to give heartfelt thanks to Julie Hirigoyen for her 8 amazing years as CEO. She has been an outstanding leader, growing consensus around the urgent need for action on the climate and biodiversity crises, building a highly effective and networked organisation equal to its critical mission, as well as steering UKGBC adeptly through times of global crisis. We wish Julie every success in her future endeavours.”

Smith Mordak, incoming Chief Executive of UKGBC said,

“I’m thrilled to have this opportunity to work with the amazing team, trustees, and membership at UKGBC. I’m looking forward to building on the charity’s extraordinary body of work and Julie’s inimitable legacy. We live in existentially challenging times. Our actions over the next few years will have an outsized impact on the Earth’s ecosystems and on many generations to come. I’m honoured that I’ll be playing my part in this crucial period as part of this powerful, change-making coalition.”

Duncan Price, Partner and Global Lead, Sustainability & Climate Change, of Buro Happold said,

“As founding members of UKGBC and Advancing Net Zero Programme Partners, Buro Happold is delighted that Smith Mordak will be stepping up to lead UKGBC at this pivotal moment for our industry. Since joining us three years ago, they have demonstrated a unique ability to couple advocacy with action. We look forward to continuing our journey together as we help clients achieve ambitious sustainability goals.”

Julie Hirigoyen, current Chief Executive of UKGBC said,

“It is with great confidence and the utmost respect that I will hand over the stewardship of UKGBC to Smith. They bring creative wisdom, technical expertise, and a deeply human-centric approach to the challenge of transforming our built environment into one where both people and planet can thrive. On behalf of everyone at UKGBC I am excited at the prospect of warmly welcoming Smith to this unique organisation.”

In view of the pivotal moment in time for UKGBC’s mission, as well as a changing political landscape, the Board of Trustees is also taking the opportunity to further strengthen the executive team. Simon McWhirter, current Director of Communications, Policy and Places will move into a Deputy Chief Executive role – with a laser focus across international, national and local policy work.