



## Swensen Say Fagét

**Specialty:** Structural engineering

**Principals:** Gary Swenson, Dan Say, Paul Fagét, Scott Gilberts, Gary MacKenzie, Nic Rossouw, Blaze Bresko, Ellen Southard

**Year founded:** 1995

**Headquarters:** Seattle

**Current projects:** John A. Cherberg Building rehabilitation, Olympia; Bargreen site mixed-use development, South Lake Union; Newberry Square mixed-use development, Lynnwood; 60th & McKinley project for the Tacoma Housing Authority; Broadview and Magnolia libraries; Bush School, Seattle; Seattle Country Day School

**H**ow long will mixed-use remain hot? That's a question people are asking at Swensen Say Fagét.

The structural engineer is busy with the \$50 million Bargreen site complex at 1275 Mercer St. in South Lake Union that will include 427 apartment and condominium units and 5,000 square feet of retail.

Such projects have been driving a lot of the firm's work, said principal Ellen Southard, but other parts of the country are seeing a drop-off.

"We don't want to keep ramping up on mixed-use if it slows down (here)," she said.

"I think we're in this isolated pocket where housing growth is still fairly strong. But there's some uncertainty with what's going on right now."

### Branching out



Image courtesy BCRA

**Swensen Say Fagét is the structural engineer and BCRA the architect for The Commencement, a 60-unit luxury condo under construction on the Ruston waterfront.**

The firm is hedging its bets by pursuing a wide range of projects, including historic rehabilitation, education, office and government.

Among its most high-profile recent projects was the \$118.5 million state Capitol renovation and seismic upgrade. Swenson Say Fagét is also involved in the renovation of another Capitol campus building, the John A. Cherberg Building, which began work in September.

"We do a lot of state work and the state biennium (budget) looks good for us," Southard said. The firm also plans to pursue more port work, and has joined the Washington Public Ports Association.

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***-- Ellen Southard,  
Swenson Say Fagét***



Its forensics team, too, has been busy with residential rehab work, mostly for water-damaged buildings from the late-1980s and 1990s.

### **More 3-D modeling**

Southard has observed a number of industry trends affecting the firm, including more sustainable design and an increasing reliance on 3-D modeling, driven by demand from architects and contractors.

Software such as Autodesk Revit can enable design teams to build more efficiently, but for engineers, it can mean having work taken out of their hands.

"Some of the detailing may get done by other professionals," Southard said. "It very well could change or have an impact on fee negotiations."

"As much as people would like to see it go away, it is not going away."

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