



Full Program and Speaker Bios

Get It Built! Navigating Policy, Practice, and Technical Translation

Date: November 7, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, New York, NY 10012

Session 1: Breaking It Down to Build It Back Up (Theme: Design for Deconstruction and Circular Construction)

1. While some building products specified remain installed for 50 yrs or longer, many have much shorter lifespans. Attendees will learn about which products should be targeted for circularity, in terms of both ease of removal and for high-value recycling and reuse, given the high probability of removal in a shorter time span.
2. Significant practical barriers exist to comprehensive deconstruction. Attendees will learn about the current state of demolition/deconstruction efforts on Commercial Office buildings in NYC. They will also learn about the significant barriers and levels of effort required to reclaim and divert materials into closed loop options, as high value feedstock for new products, and for reuse
3. Design Professionals play a significant role in the success of reuse, reclamation, deconstruction, and specification of building products and furniture. Attendees will learn about the specific actions design professionals can take to support a circular economy for the built environment.
4. Understand how adaptive reuse is also a core strategy to implement circularity through the use of reuse of existing buildings in part or whole that aims to conserve material resources and reduce the environmental impact of construction
5. Understand the benefits and challenges of material reuse through case studies and also appreciate how new construction implemented using principles of designing for deconstruction allows future-proofing of buildings while reducing material use in subsequent building life-cycles.
6. Understand how both these strategies complement each other and can be combined to maximize environmental benefits for a project.

SPEAKERS

Sydney Mainster, AIA, LEED AP, VP of Sustainability and Design Management, The Durst Organization



Sydney Mainster brings over two decades of professional and academic architecture, design, and construction experience to Durst. As Vice President of Sustainability & Design Management, she oversees the company leadership's vision for sustainability in ground-up development projects, existing building renovations, and building management. Working cross-functionally with departments throughout the company, Mainster develops strategies for implementing guidelines, setting targets, and maximizing tenant engagement. She defines and refines design and construction sustainability criteria utilizing data from green building rating systems; health research and chemical red lists; sustainability best practices in energy, water, indoor environmental quality; and circular product manufacturing, use, and disposal. Mainster works closely with design consultants, construction teams, and manufacturers to ensure product selection, procurement, and installation all meet design, performance, and sustainability criteria—not only to achieve outcomes on current building projects, but also to improve environmental standards and innovation in the industry. Mainster is a board member of the NYLCV, is a registered Architect, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from UC Berkeley and a Master of Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Ben Martinson, AIA, Associate Principal, Facades, Buro Happold

Ben Martinson joined Buro Happold in 2019 and has collaborated on a wide array of facade projects in the US and abroad. He started his career in full-service architecture, and in his 17 years of experience, has worked across multiple scales, from high-end residences to multi-building institutional projects. His portfolio reflects his architectural design background, and he has a special interest in working with architects to maintain aesthetic design intent while integrating rigorous technical solutions ensuring the building envelope meets high-performance standards. In addition, recent work includes significant investment in the development of tools to evaluate both operational and embodied carbon impacts from the building envelope. Ben specializes in envelope detailing, specifications and architectural graphics and digital representation. He holds a Master of Architecture from The Pratt Institute, where he is currently an Adjunct Associate Professor of Architecture.

MODERATOR

Nicole Spina, VP of Climate Innovation, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)

At NYCEDC, **Nicole Spina** leads innovation programs to address NYC's most pressing climate challenges and help shape a NYC economy that is more inclusive and sustainable. Her portfolio focuses on de-risking and accelerating climate solutions that decarbonize buildings and construction, develop a renewable energy system, and enable low-carbon alternatives in transportation. She was an author of NYCEDC's Circular Design & Construction Guidelines and drives industry development efforts to support circular construction at scale in NYC.

Session 2: Affordable, Zoned, and Technically Built (Theme: City of Yes & Affordable Housing – Implementation Realities)



SPEAKERS

Carmel Pratt, CPHC, Founder and Principal, ZAZNRG

In her role as Senior Technical Advisor, **Carmel Pratt** provides expert guidance on building performance and sustainability for ground-up new construction and rehabilitation projects. She specializes in Sustainability Services, including Certifications, Energy Modeling, and Building Decarbonization Consulting. Pratt supports high-impact projects that require deep technical expertise, drawing on her extensive experience to inform design decisions and ensure best practices are applied. She also mentors emerging professionals and contributes to the development of innovative service approaches. Throughout her career, she has actively volunteered with industry groups to advance policy, program development, and open-source resources.

Howard Slatkin, Executive Director, Citizen's Housing and Planning Council (CHPC)

Howard Slatkin joined CHPC in January 2023 after over two decades of government service at the intersection of housing and planning in New York City. His career has been guided by a commitment to innovative public policy and practical problem-solving. As Deputy Executive Director for Strategic Planning at the New York City Department of City Planning, Howard oversaw long-term planning and policy development and a range of citywide initiatives to promote housing supply, affordability, economic development, and sustainability. Howard has also directed neighborhood planning initiatives that have produced tens of thousands of units of mixed-income housing alongside open space and other public improvements. Among the zoning initiatives Howard led at DCP was Zoning for Quality and Affordability, a set of reforms to promote housing production that was prompted by CHPC's research. As DCP's first Director of Sustainability, Howard led Zone Green, a set of zoning and legislative changes that promoted green buildings.

Nicole Vlado Torres, AIA, NOMA, Director of Capital Projects, Public Housing Community Fund

Nicole Vlado Torres is an affordable housing architect and advocate. After founding Shakespeare Gordon Vlado Architects in 2017, Nicole pivoted from traditional practice to support New York City's public housing residents as the Director of Capital Projects at the Public Housing Community Fund. In her role at the Fund, she supports the creation of open space and community center projects across NYCHA's portfolio. Nicole also co-chairs the AIANY Housing Committee, the nycoba|NOMA Cultural Facilities committee, and serves as an adjunct faculty member teaching Professional Practice at the Cooper Union.

John Woelfling, FAIA, LEED AP, CPHT, Partner, Dattner Architects

John Woelfling is committed to creating sustainable and resource-efficient designs, using a holistic approach that reduces impacts on the environment and positively affects the health and comfort of building occupants. He leverages his broad experiences working across project typologies, from education and recreation to healthcare and infrastructure, to inform his leadership of the firm's mixed-use residential projects. A recognized Passive House expert,



John's focus on sustainable design practices is guided by proactive education of evolving green technologies and incorporating them into his design work.

Session 3: Case Study, NYU Rubin Hall EnerPHit Historic Retrofit (Theme: Passive House, Energy, Retrofitting)

SPEAKERS

Tim Hanna, LEED AP, Assistant VP, Mechanical Engineering

Tim Hanna is an Assistant Vice President, Mechanical Engineering with WSP. He brings specialized experience in healthcare infrastructure and historic renovations. With a career defined by technical excellence and strategic leadership, Hanna has led and contributed to a range of high-profile projects, including the Yale Schwarzman Center renovation, the Trinity Church Master Plan renovation, and the High Line Maintenance Building. His work reflects a deep commitment to innovation, sustainability, and reliability in both modern and historic contexts.

Jena Rimkus, AIA, LEED GA, Senior Associate, FXCollaborative

Jena Rimkus is a Senior Associate at FXCollaborative. She is a registered architect with experience across all phases of the architectural process from design through construction administration, specializing in large-scale projects with complex integrated systems. Focusing on projects that have wide influence—such as multi-family residential, projects for educational institutions such as New York University and Columbia University, and urban projects that impact diverse populations—Jena appreciates the ability to make a positive difference through architecture. She enjoys the balance of the artistic and the technical, and the unique challenges that each new project brings.

Aris Tsiopoulos, PE, Project Consultant, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc.

Aris Tsiopoulos is a professional engineer specializing in building envelopes. He has experience in new construction and historic renovation projects, providing services from conceptual design through construction administration. He has designed, tested, and reviewed Passive House projects, including landmarked Rubin Hall which received EnerPHit pre-certification for its retrofit. Aris is proficient in using various computer software packages for building enclosure simulations, including structural, hygrothermal, and energy analyses. He actively contributes to building performance discussions, presenting at Passive House conferences and exploring suggestions to progress industry codes and standards.

Session 4: Energy Codes in Motion (Theme: Energy Regulations & Implementation Challenges)



Energy regulations are evolving rapidly, with overlapping codes, local laws, and voluntary programs reshaping how buildings are designed, constructed, and operated. This session will explore the current landscape of energy codes and policies—covering NYC and NYS requirements, ULEB zoning requirements, and touching on the influence of voluntary programs such as LEED v5, Passive House, and WELL. Panelists will examine the growing complexity of aligning timelines, compliance paths, and policy goals, and discuss how these regulations affect both new and existing buildings, the challenges of enforcement, and whether we are reaching the limits of efficiency gains. The conversation will extend beyond operational energy to emerging priorities such as embodied carbon, energy storage, electrification, and net-zero readiness. Using examples like Local Laws 92/94, 97, and 154, the session will highlight implementation challenges, lessons from other regions, and opportunities for collaboration among policymakers, designers, and building owners.

SPEAKERS

Gina Bocra, LEED Fellow, VP of Building Energy and Climate Solution, WSP

Gina Bocra is a Vice President with the Built Ecology team at WSP, bringing 30 years of experience in sustainability. Throughout her career, Bocra has been a champion for high-performance, safe, and resilient buildings that contribute to the health and wellbeing of their occupants. For over a decade, Bocra previously led NYC Department of Building's team of architects and engineers tasked with implementing and enforcing New York City's sustainability laws regulating buildings, including Local Law 97, NYC's landmark carbon emissions law.

Louis Koehl, AIA, CPHD, Senior Associate, Director of Sustainable Design, Handel Architects

Louis Koehl is the Director of Sustainable Design at Handel Architects. He is responsible for advancing the firm's mission of industry leadership in sustainable design by supporting strategic initiatives focused on aspirational goals. Koehl's projects include some of the world's largest certified Passive House buildings. Koehl is a registered architect in the State of New York and a Certified Passive House Designer. He is co-chair of New York Passive House policy working group and a member of the NYC Commercial Energy Code Technical Advisory Committee.

Danielle Manley, Associate Director of Policy, Urban Green Council

Danielle Manley is responsible for advocacy, collaboration, and analysis on Urban Green's policy initiatives to decarbonize buildings in New York City and State. Her work covers Local Law 97, Local Law 154, benchmarking, zoning, the energy code, and CLCPA climate targets for buildings. She previously worked at Columbia University's Earth Institute where she served as project manager for the Third New York City Panel on Climate Change Report. Prior to NYC, she worked for environmental non-profits in Buffalo. She holds a Master's Degree in Climate and Society from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies from the University at Buffalo.

MODERATOR



Cheryl Saldanha, Senior Project Manager, Building Science Lead, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc.

Cheryl Saldanha leads SGH's Building Science and Passive House practices and specializes in designing and evaluating building enclosures for new construction projects and existing building enclosure renovations. Her experience includes rainscreen facade, curtain wall, roofing, and waterproofing systems on a range of building types. Saldanha is adept at using multiple computer software packages to simulate building systems and details for thermal, condensation, and whole-building energy and daylighting analysis. She is a member of the AIA New York Building Science Committee and the NYC Commercial Energy Code Technical Advisory Committee.

Session 5: Embodied Carbon in Practice — From Policy to Project Specs (Theme: Embodied Carbon & Policy Translation in Practice)

JJ Beasley, Structural and Sustainable Design Consultant, WPM

JJ Beasley is a structural designer with Walter P Moore in New York City. His work spans a wide range of project types, from rationalizing support steel for geometrically complex facades to designing deep foundation systems for major sports stadiums. With a strong focus on sustainability, he collaborates closely with architects and contractors to deliver projects that lower their environmental impacts to serve their communities responsibly. He leads Walter P Moore's internal embodied carbon tracking initiative and currently co-leads the Carbon Leadership Forum New York City Hub's Policy Working Group to promote sustainable designs at every scale, from materials to buildings to society at large.

Lucile O'Callaghan, PE, Senior Structural Design Specialist, Turner Construction Company

Lucile O'Callaghan is a Senior Structural Design Specialist with the Turner Engineering Group at Turner Construction Company. She advances low-carbon design through structural optimization, innovative materials, and lifecycle analysis (LCA), and serves on the ASHRAE/ICC Committee developing Standard 240P. Before joining Turner, she practiced at Guy Nordenson and Associates in New York, contributing to award-winning projects including the Kimbell Museum of Art, the Corning Museum of Glass, and the International African American Museum.

Jeremy Shiman, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Senior Associate, WRNS Studio

Jeremy Shiman is a Senior Associate at WRNS Studio, where he is a Senior Project Architect and Building Performance Specialist. Shiman leads WRNS Studio's Performance Modeling Tools Group and has worked alongside the WRNS Green Team to help deliver LEED Platinum, Zero Net Energy, Zero Carbon, and AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE) Top Ten projects. He began tracking embodied carbon on projects at WRNS over a decade ago and is responsible for WBLCA's on over 50 projects. Committed to making sustainable design easier for all practitioners, Shiman was instrumental to the development of WRNS Studio's Feather



Tool for envelope embodied carbon analysis. He has also contributed to the AIA Framework for Design Excellence and the OpenAir Collective's Low Embodied Carbon Concrete Policy Toolkit, among others. Jeremy is an active member of the New York architecture community, serving as co-chair of the Carbon Leadership Forum's New York City Hub, as co-chair of the AIANY COTE's Decarbonization subcommittee, and a member of Urban Green Council's Monthly Programs Committee.

MODERATOR

Joshua Plourde, AIA, LEED AP, Architect + Sustainability Consultant, Roanoak

Joshua Plourde is an architect with 18 years of experience and 3.6 million square feet delivered, focused on sustainability, carbon strategy, and the intersection of design, performance, and finance. At Atelier Ten he led decarbonization strategy for major owners, covering operational and embodied carbon, incentives capture, portfolio roadmaps, and green pro forma modeling. At Nabr he led core and shell systems for productized multifamily housing, and at Google R+D he drove prefabrication, generative planning, future of work, and served as Project Architect at BIG for Charleston East. Earlier he spent nine years at Foster + Partners on Apple Park and other landmark projects. He holds a B.Arch from Pratt, is an MBA candidate at the Presidio Center for Sustainable Solutions, and runs Roanoak, a decarbonization and project development consultancy.