



## Office-to-Residential Conversion Symposium: Design and Technical Considerations

November 22, 2024

### About the Speakers:

**Bruce Redman Becker, FAIA, LEED AP**, is President of Becker+Becker, an integrated sustainable architecture and development firm in Westport, Connecticut. Becker designs buildings with transformative social and environmental value. His notable projects include the historic rehab of Hartford's Bank of America tower into a 285-unit LEED Platinum community, the redevelopment of 360 State Street in New Haven, and the adaptive reuse of Norwich's Wauregan Hotel for affordable housing. He also restored the Octagon tower on Roosevelt Island and transformed New Haven's Pirelli building into Hotel Marcel, the first Passive House certified hotel in the U.S. Becker is a Fellow of the AIA, LEED Accredited, and a Certified Passive House Designer. Appointed by President Biden to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in 2024, he also serves on the board of the Passive House Network. He holds degrees from Amherst College and Yale University and frequently lectures on architecture and sustainability.

**Wendi Shafran, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, is a Principal at FXCollaborative, where she provides leadership to many of the firm's residential and mixed-use projects. Shafran's specialty is in creating inspirational and socially conscious spaces that address specific community needs for housing and amenities, while responding to local context. A lifelong New Yorker, she believes that built environments have a dual environmental and community impact, and when designed well, can help reshape our cities as more diverse, sustainable, and equitable places. Shafran is a registered architect in New York and holds a Master of Architecture degree from Columbia University. She recently served on the Mayor's Office Adaptive Reuse Task Force and holds leadership roles in several industry organizations with a focus on housing, social equity, and mentorship.

**Jeffrey Rios, PE, LEED AP**, is Partner and Co-director of AKF's Energy + Performance team. He specializes in increasing energy efficiency within new and existing buildings. He is highly valued for his 20+ years of experience as a mechanical engineer and his expertise in energy-modeling platforms. Rios has shared his expertise at Greenbuild on WELL Building, at Urban Green on NYC Energy Codes, and as a continuing lecturer at Cooper Union. Additionally, he serves as a member of the ACEC Metro Region Energy Code Committee, as well as the NYC DOB Energy Code Advisory Committee. He has been named a Notable Leader

in Sustainability by Crains NY, a New York Construction Idol by NY Build, and a Power Player in Climate, Energy, and Sustainability by PoliticsNY.

**David Jacoby y, PE, P.Eng. (AB, BC, ON), FSPE**, is a Principal and Division Head of the Fire Engineering Practice for Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc. Jacoby has more than 25 years of experience in fire protection engineering, is a licensed professional engineer and has 20 years of firefighting experience. He is an active member of code committees including NFPA 101 and the NYC code revision Use, Occupancy, Construction and Egress Committee. He has worked on a broad range of projects from historic preservation and adaptive reuse to large infrastructure projects including airport terminals.

**Joseph Jebran, RA, DPLG**, is a Principal and the International Group Director at CetraRuddy with more than 35 years of experience working in design, construction, and real estate. Jebran brings unique expertise and resourcefulness to local and international development having led small and large projects in both urban and non-urban environments. His managerial experience directing and overseeing complex projects, particularly large-scale commercial-to-residential conversions, enables him to assemble teams suited to the task at hand, a key component to any operation's success. His proficiency in managing large-scale, multifaceted projects has proven to be instrumental in achieving his clients' goals.

**Edward T. McCune, PE**, is a Principal at FMC Engineering and an HVAC Design Engineer with 38 years of hands-on experience in mechanical engineering and project management. He specializes in the design and coordination of mechanical and electrical trades for high-rise residential buildings, commercial-to-residential conversions, large corporate office spaces, and commercial projects. McCune holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from SUNY Buffalo University, earned in 1986.

**Benson Gillespie** has been involved with, and overseen, the design and construction of innovative enclosure systems throughout the United States and South America since the founding of the firm in 2013. His work includes both the assessment and renovation of historically sensitive facades and the development of new enclosure systems, with a focus on the use of parametric software to evaluate complex façade geometry, structural glass and an extensive range of cladding materials. He has experience in all phases of project delivery, from evaluating sketches during schematic design to assisting in the bid process and ultimately monitoring shop fabrication and on-site installation. Having worked as both a technical façade designer and subsequently a façade consultant over the past decade, Gillespie has a unique perspective that benefits the relationship between the Designer, Architect and Client. He is a Registered Architect in the States of New York, Massachusetts, Florida & Hawaii, and a LEED Accredited Professional.

**Nina Rivas, LEED AP BD + C**, is a Senior Associate at FXCollaborative. She holds expertise in developing and building large scale residential and mixed-use projects by focusing on integrating technology and sustainability. The breadth of her expertise is spread throughout the US with millions square feet of construction and thousands of residential apartments designed, developed and built under her watch. Originally from Venezuela, Rivas spent most of her childhood in Brasilia, Brazil, which made her cognizant of how particular spaces and cities made her feel. These sensibilities led her to study architecture in her native Venezuela at La Universidad Central de Venezuela, Architecture School before starting a career as an architect in the US. Rivas's natural enthusiasm extends beyond official duties and into extra-curricular activities, where she is involved with numerous women's and DEI leadership initiatives. She is currently a committee member of Latinos in Design and Chair of FXC's Gallery Committee.

**Alexander B. Jacobs, AIA, LEED AP**, is an architect with over 35 years of experience, specializing in the renovation and restoration of buildings, particularly those of historic significance. He has designed and managed hundreds of renovation projects, including residential buildings, schools, offices, and public facilities. Notable projects in his portfolio include the restoration of the Long Island City Courthouse, the Sloan Mansion, the Indonesian Mission to the United Nations, and 70 Pine Street. In addition to project management, Jacobs provides leadership on numerous public sector projects for agencies such as the NYC School Construction Authority, the NYC Housing Authority, and the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services. He has coordinated complex project aspects and navigated regulatory agencies to facilitate intricate approval processes. Jacobs is also actively involved in various professional and community committees, serving on Building Code Committees for the NYC Department of Buildings.

**Tess McNamara, AIA**, is a Senior Consultant in Arup's New York office with the Climate and Sustainability Team. A licensed architect, she is an expert in decarbonization, whole life carbon, and integrated sustainable design. McNamara has written sustainability masterplans for academic institutions, published on the carbon implications of office to residential conversions, and developed comprehensive decarbonization plans for airports, buildings, and Fortune 500 companies alike. Her research and writing have been featured by *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Architectural Digest*. McNamara holds both a Master of Architecture from the Yale School of Architecture, and a Master of Environmental Management from the Yale School of the Environment. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and a Certificate in Environmental Studies from Princeton University. McNamara currently sits on the faculty at the Yale School of Architecture where she teaches a course titled "Bad Buildings: Decarbonization through Reuse, Retrofit, and Proposition."

**Robert Fuller, AIA, LEED AP**, is a global leader of Gensler's Residential practice area. With a background in architectural design, as well as city and regional planning, Fuller leads a studio in the firm's New York office that specializes in large, complex projects that include planning and urban design, new buildings, building repositioning, office-to-residential conversion projects, and mixed-use developments. His thoughtful, holistic approach comes from a keen understanding of both macro- and micro-level issues and perspectives. Whether imagining a new greenfield development, repositioning a building, master planning a town, or adapting an older building to deliver value and new purpose, Fuller guides his clients toward informed and creative solutions, making him a trusted advisor to developers and corporate clients alike. A registered architect, Fuller earned his Bachelor's of Architecture from the Pratt Institute.

**Sevinc Yuksel** is the Senior Vice President and Head of Design & Construction at Rudin Management Company, overseeing all design and construction within Rudin's commercial and residential portfolio. With over 15 years of experience, Yuksel has successfully led the preconstruction and construction of various asset types, including high-rise offices, hospitals, academic facilities, laboratories, and aviation projects. Before joining Rudin in 2023, Yuksel was Vice President of Construction at Related Companies, where she led the construction of 50 Hudson Yards, a 2.9-million-square-foot development, one of New York City's largest commercial office buildings since its opening in 2022. Prior to Related, she was a project manager and lead preconstruction engineer at Turner Construction, working on notable projects such as the 1271 Avenue of Americas repositioning, Columbia University's Northwest Science Building, JetBlue's Terminal Extension at JFK, and Columbia Business School. Yuksel serves on the New York Building Congress Board of Directors and was recognized by the New York Real Estate Journal as a "2023 Woman in Commercial Real Estate." She graduated cum laude from Columbia University with both bachelor's and master's degrees in Civil Engineering, and is a member of Tau Beta Pi, the international engineering honor society.

**Rob Holbrook** has served in New York City government for 19 years as a land use planner at the Department of City Planning and New York City Economic Development Corporation. At NYCEDC, he served as the senior policy technical advisor and land use planning department director. During his tenure at EDC, he delivered environmental review and land use approvals for major economic development projects, including the citywide NYC Ferry system, Kings Theatre, Flushing Commons, the Peninsula, and Willets Point. In 2022, he served as the executive director of the Building and Land Use Approval Streamlining Taskforce, which produced the "Get Stuff Built" plan. He has now joined the Mayor's Office of Planning and Policy to implement the Get Stuff Built initiatives. Holbrook also leads the Office Conversion Accelerator, assisting building owners with navigating the NYC

permitting process when adapting office buildings to residential use. The New York State Association for Affordable Housing awarded Holbrook their 2023 Advocate of the Year Award for Excellence. He received a Master of Public Administration from Georgia State University and a Bachelor of Arts from St John's College.

### **About the Moderators:**

**David F. Brand** is a reporter covering housing for New York City public radio station WNYC and news site Gothamist. Brand was previously deputy editor at City Limits, where he covered housing and homelessness in New York City. He was also the co-host of "City Watch," a live weekly news program on WBAI 99.5 FM, and managing editor of the *Queens Daily Eagle*. Before his career in journalism, Brand worked as a licensed social worker in supportive housing and homeless services.

**David Farnsworth** is a Principal with Arup's New York Office and has a depth of experience in the design and management of projects both locally and globally. Farnsworth leads Arup's Americas Property Market and Tall Buildings Business with property and high-rise design experience encompassing all program types, construction materials, and modern methods of tower construction. He has designed some of the world's most iconic tall building structures including the towers at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, Northeast Asia Trade tower in Incheon Korea, & the Citic Tower in Beijing. Farnsworth has a proven history of innovation—he drove the digital fabrication on Little Island at Pier 55 and invented high rise volumetric modular construction systems for projects in New York and California. Farnsworth is currently working on a number of office-to-residential conversions and co-authored a paper investigating the life cycle carbon impacts of meeting New York's housing needs through conversions rather than new building construction.