



## **2021 Year in Review: Ambar Margarida, Spacesmith LLP**

December 28, 2021 - Spotlights



Name: Ámbar Margarida, CID, IIDA, Assoc. AIA, LEED GA, WELL AP

Job Title: Principal

Company Name: Spacesmith LLP

What was the biggest lesson you learned while working during the pandemic?

I learned how to build a project out of sequence! So many things were delayed that we had to be creative when overseeing construction.

I learned that we are all connected and our actions impact others directly and indirectly.

I learned that the jobs we consider essential are underpaid.

I learned that while most work can get accomplished from anywhere nothing replaces face to face interaction and the social fabric that is woven between people in the in-between spaces such as warming up and cooling down after and in-person meeting.

I learned my neighbors' names, their histories, and interests. I gained lifelong relationships.

How has your working environment changed over the last year?

We have a big office with around 100 desks, meeting rooms of various sizes and an incredible view of New York Harbor. It doesn't feel very good to visit an empty office, energetically, but it feels great when there's a nice buzz and many people are in. Right now, we are encouraging our team to come in two to three days a week. We've found that a big part of Spacesmith's success is our ability to share knowledge in both a structured and unstructured manner. If we know how to do something we don't let someone newer to the field struggle with it on their own. Being in-person allows us to recognize when someone might be stuck and step in to help when guidance could be useful even if the person hasn't thought to ask for help. Being online takes more intention, for example scheduling the quick check-in with people outside your direct teams as opposed to having a quick chat in the office.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2021?

I'm very proud of the work we did with New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), helping them do two things that might seem at odds: Reducing their office space by half, while keeping the same headcount and increasing the number of essential spaces like client intake rooms, meeting rooms and shared social spaces."

What are your predictions for your industry in 2022?

If I've learned one thing, it's that I, personally, can't predict the future—but I do think we have to listen to the experts and their predictions of the future, especially when it comes to climate change. For example, scientists are predicting New York City will have three to five extreme rain events annually where we receive 2-4 inches of rain, starting by the year 2050. We already experienced the harm this causes on September 1st when hurricane Ida dumped 3.15 inches of rain in the course of one hour, causing 13 New Yorkers to drown. I know that I am focusing on making sure that both my personal and professional work focuses on the myriad of ways we need to change in order to alleviate the impending situation. Also, I think we all need to start getting comfortable with the idea of consuming less of everything in general, building less, and retrofitting more. But I know this is the opposite of what we've been taught as consumers, and goes against the very fabric of the myth of the American Dream.

What is the best advice you received in 2021, and who was it from?

When you get anxious about a current situation or the future, be mindful of where you are right now. If you are eating an apple, focus on the apple, think of the people who took good care of the orchard, harvested the fruit, packaged it carefully so it could get into your hands and feed you. Be thankful and mindful...This is from my mom!

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540