



2023 Women in Construction: Jen Stencel, Magnusson Architecture and Planning P.C.

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What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? This past year we started construction on Wakefield Apartments, a sustainable retrofit project and the first in the HPD-NYSERDA Electrification Retrofit pilot program. The work has influenced the new HPD Design Guidelines for Preservation and is a model for Local Law 97 compliance. The 54-unit building houses families previously in the shelter system. We are retrofitting that with an energy efficient electric heating and cooling system, adding an elevator and an accessible entrance. There are changes to apartment layouts; kitchen and bath renovations; new windows; increased roof insulation; and new exhaust and ventilation to improve indoor air quality.

What advice would you offer to other women getting into the construction industry? There are so many ways to be involved in the industry, but probably the most exciting is by staying on top of the rapidly changing set of building materials, technologies and new regulations in front of us. Sustainable development efforts like changing energy codes, Local Law 97, NYSERDA incentives programs, advances in building systems/methods is driving seismic shifts in our work. I'd encourage anyone currently in the industry and those considering joining to be up to speed with these changes. Embracing these new ways of designing can absolutely be a competitive advantage.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Architecture can offer amazing opportunities to make a positive impact on the world. And getting to see your ideas become a reality is quite fulfilling, especially when you know that something you designed is going to provide a real benefit for the people who use it. Knowing that your thoughtfulness and expertise has improved someone's daily experience is a remarkable feeling.