SIMS & ASSOCIATES,

THE REAL DEAL
NEW YORK REAL ESTATE NEWS

May 4, 2026
https://therealdeal.com/magazine/may-2026/how-to-build-in-2026/

Ranking: New York's most active architects

Top players in alterations, new development emphasize the ability to adapt

By Jake Indursky Research by Matthew Elo

May 4, 2026, 7:00 AM EDT

After years of post-pandemic instability, 2025 brought more solid ground to New York City's top architects.

Developers have digested legislative and zoning changes — 99-unit building, anybody? — and return to office has gone from a question mark to an unquestioned resurgence.

The residential market soared, with tight inventory and unfettered demand spurring fresh plans, like office-to-residential conversions, as developers continue to evaluate the best use of their properties.

The stability laid the groundwork for architects to take on ambitious office projects like JPMorgan's bold addition to the Manhattan skyline at 270 Park Avenue, high-end residential projects like Legion Investment Group and Nahla Capital's 1122 Madison Avenue. The city has some noteworthy pivots with some of the largest conversions in the country, like the office-to-residential work underway at the old Pfizer building at 235 East 42nd Street.

The Real Deal ranked the market's most active architects using data from permits filed with the Department of Buildings from March 1, 2025, to March 1, 2026. Familiar names and faces won out, with Gensler at the top of the

NYC'S TOP ARCHITECTS FOR NEW BUILDING PROJECTS

RANK	ARCHITECT	TOTAL BUILDING SQ. FT.	NO. OF PERMITS
1	S. WIEDER ARCHITECT	2,815,559	26
2	SLCE ARCHITECTS	2,707,248	9
3	AUFGANG ARCHITECTS	2,255,914	12
4	S9 ARCHITECTURE	1,948,967	5
5	FOGARTY FINGER	1,697,446	7
6	DATTNER ARCHITECTS	1,630,754	6
7	HOK	1,623,099	2
8	HILL WEST ARCHITECTS	1,592,714	8
9	PERKINS EASTMAN	1,503,935	5
10	BEYER BLINDER BELLE	1,493,432	4
11	CETRARUDDY ARCHITECTURE	1,439,030	5
12	GENSLER	1,412,760	2
13	ISSAC & STERN ARCHITECTS	1,304,687	10
14	JFA ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS	1,274,201	13
15	HAMISH WHITEFIELD ARCHITECTS	1,202,019	7
16	NIKOLAI KATZ ARCHITECT	1,136,077	28
17	COOKFOX ARCHITECTS	1,095,791	4
18	KOHN PEDERSEN FOX	972,787	2
19	URBAN ARCHITECTURAL INITIATIVES	963,207	7
20	GLUCK+	832,767	3
21	FXCOLLABORATIVE ARCHITECTS	789,725	2
22	BERG MOSS ARCHITECTS	777,004	1
23	MAGNUSSON ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING	776,116	4
24	KSS ARCHITECTS	743,161	2
25	DENCITYWORKS ARCHITECTURE	719,855	3

SOURCE: *TRD* ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DOB NOW SYSTEM. IT INCLUDES ALL FIVE BOROUGHS. THE PERMITS WERE ISSUED BETWEEN MARCH 1, 2025 AND MARCH 1, 2026. NEW BUILDING PERMITS INCLUDE THE LATEST ISSUED AND RENEWAL/RE-ISSUE PERMITS WITH THE PERMIT TYPE INITIAL FILINGS (I1S ONLY) WHERE THE REGISTERED ARCHITECT IS LISTED AS THE APPLICANT. TOTAL BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE IS GREATER THAN 10,000 SQUARE FEET. ALL FIRMS WERE CONTACTED

alterations list and S. Wieder Architect PC vaulting into first place on the new buildings from third last year.

NYC'S TOP ARCHITECTS FOR ALTERATION PROJECTS

RANK	ARCHITECT	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	NO. OF PERMITS
1	GENSLER	$1,752,946,667	249
2	CTA ARCHITECTS	$853,746,643	90
3	PERKINS & WILL	$396,827,296	43
4	SLM ARCHITECTURE	$360,328,527	135
5	AAI ARCHITECTS	$359,474,498	9
6	CETRARUDDY ARCHITECTURE	$355,968,105	21
7	KOHN PEDERSEN FOX	$303,824,294	25
8	STANTEC ARCHITECTURE	$223,853,697	21
9	NADASKAY KOPELSON ARCHITECTS	$211,919,279	14
10	AUFGANG ARCHITECTS	$199,578,237	102
11	SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL	$180,894,169	10
12	TPG ARCHITECTURE	$168,765,427	158
13	HOK	$156,649,543	28
14	ARCHITECTURE PLUS INFORMATION	$123,126,686	28
15	SURFACE DESIGN	$122,285,263	22
16	CURTIS + GINSBERG ARCHITECTS	$120,235,719	72
17	OCV ARCHITECTS	$115,874,800	63
18	HLW INTERNATIONAL	$107,496,694	30
19	PERKINS EASTMAN	$107,005,362	35
20	DESIGN REPUBLIC	$102,754,383	37

SOURCE: *TRD* ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DOB NOW SYSTEM. IT INCLUDES ALL FIVE BOROUGHS. THE PERMITS WERE ISSUED BETWEEN MARCH 1, 2025 AND MARCH 1, 2026. ALTERATION AND MAJOR ALTERATION PERMITS INCLUDE THE LATEST ISSUED AND RENEWAL/RE-ISSUE PERMITS FOR THE INITIAL FILING WHERE THE REGISTERED ARCHITECT IS LISTED AS THE APPLICANT. ALL FIRMS WERE CONTACTED, NOT ALL PARTICIPATED.

"One of the things that helps us is that we have great clients that come back year after year," said Hill West founding partner Stephen Hill, whose firm was eighth in the new building rankings. "It's very rare that we do one project for a developer and that's it."

As one-time inflationary shocks have become a common occurrence, from tariff scares to energy-supply shortages from the war in Iran, architects have been pushed to adapt.

"What I've noticed is we've actually learned to adjust faster," Joseph Lauro, managing director and a principal at Gensler's New York office said. "People [are] making better and smarter decisions, so what I found is the community is reacting by being much more agile."

City of "Yes!!"

With a full year of City of Yes in effect, architects could reap benefits like added density bonuses for affordable housing, loosened parking minimums and upzoning throughout the city.

"City of Yes really sort of got its legs," Aufgang principal Ariel Aufgang said of the period. "Everyone's starting to understand it better."

Small changes, like evaluating the distance of windows between neighboring buildings, now allow for denser construction, according to Aufgang. The updates also incentivize more

“humane” building like providing density bonuses for when developers expand access to light and air, according to Skidmore, Owings & Merrill managing partner Julia Murphy.

“Some of the harsh realities of a high land value city are mitigated when you can more easily have a little more access to light and air,” she said. Murphy also said she expects that updated Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Requirements should “be driving change in terms of truly mixed-income communities in a way that hadn’t happened in previous eras and iterations.”

What continues to be a mixed bag for architects is the 485x tax abatement, which has been directly responsible for the proliferation of 99-unit buildings by including a prevailing wage requirement for buildings over 100 units.

“I hope that they find ways to modify those regulations so people can make a living wage,” Aufgang said. “We cannot curtail the size of buildings, because larger buildings are more efficient to build and more affordable.”

The office market has also proven to be fertile ground, both for landlords looking to build new office spaces or upgrade existing ones, and for conversions to residential apartments, which Gensler’s Lauro said continue to improve in quality as architects learn the idiosyncrasies of turning commercial buildings into residential ones.

“The quality of the conversions that we’re moving forward with has been inspiring,” he said.

Public opportunities

The city and state remain major sources of opportunities for architects, exemplified by the frenzy of activity after the city granted three new casino licenses, including one at Metropolitan Park in Queens, where SLCE is the architect of record and has been working on securing approval for the past two years, according to principal Saky Yakas.

The New York City Housing Authority also continues to spend money through its Permanent Affordability Commitment Together program on rehabbing its existing buildings. The housing authority “has a lot of work to do and a lot of money to spend, so we’re expecting that to pick up,” said CTA principal Craig Tooman, whose firm is overseeing a large rehabilitation project of over 1,200 units in Manhattanville.

The wildcard for architects remains how Mayor Zohran Mamdani’s administration will affect the industry, but many see another mayor who seems to be laser-focused on housing.

“Everyone’s talking like they’re very pro-housing, and we’re hoping that we don’t let ideological concepts get in the way of sheer production,” said Aufgang.