



C o m p a n y P r o f i l e

W h a t W e D o

Services

- Consultation and feasibility studies
- Site analysis and passive solar design
- Full architectural service schematic design to construction documents
- Project management
- Helping client navigate the permitting process
- Bidding and negotiations
- Alternative building methods and natural building consulting
- Education through presentations and classes/workshops
- Project development
- Community building
- Budget analysis



Design Principles

- Highly functional layouts;
- Budget-driven design;
- Energy efficiency; and
- Passive solar and cooling techniques

Core Values

- Focus on high-performance, responsible design;
- Create low-carbon and regenerative building solutions;
- Build holistic architecture systems; and
- Advance natural building and permaculture through architectural design, education and construction

Licensing and honors

- [South Carolina Department of Licensing, Labor and Regulation](#): April Magill, architect #8216; Root Down Designs, LLC, #100879
 - April Magill is an adjunct professor with the [American College of Building Arts](#) and an advisory board member for [TERRA Collaborative](#), a 501(c)3.

E m p l o y e e s

APRIL MAGILL: Principal and Architect

Magill graduated with a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech. During her studies in Europe, she became inspired by the organic architecture of Gaudi and of the ancient world. Her desire to be surrounded by old, well-kept architecture led her to live and create in Charleston, S.C. During the past 13 years, she has worked for three of Charleston's architecture firms and became a licensed architect and project manager. In 2011, she embarked on her adventure by starting Root Down Designs.

Recognizing that an architect can not exist only in the world of theory, she began to explore materials with her hands. As she continued to experiment with building materials in the Carolinas, she also began traveling the world in search of ancient, earthen



building techniques, still in use today, and learn the principles of permaculture.

Magill is a leading voice in the advancements of alternative, natural and healthy building methods and has been a pioneer in the advancement of alternative building methods in the Southeast. She has

worked with multiple building jurisdictions to help clients obtain building permits for alternative materials.

Magill's conventional background allows her to excel in project management, and she has led large teams through the conception of an idea through the end of a project, always with the client's budget at the forefront of her mind. Her diversity of project types extend from backyard yoga huts, small homes, custom residential to large commercial eco-resorts.

Whether the materials are conventional or alternative, Magill helps clients define their true project goals and deliver a project based on their individual needs.



GINA IACOVELLI: Design Associate and Interiors

Iacovelli attended Marywood University, receiving a degree in interior architecture. Afterward, she worked with Amish wood shops to design artisanal furniture and cabinetry. In Charleston, S.C., she worked for local firms on high-end homes and has been featured in Charleston Magazine and Charleston Home + Design. Iacovelli has since joined forces with April Magill to re-introduce natural building to the Lowcountry.



I n t h e n e w s

Local media

The Post and Courier

[“Old building method becoming new again,”](#) May 22, 2015

[“Old is new again: Ancient rammed earth construction gets a modern twist on Johns Island,”](#) April 15, 2016

[“Building from the past to the future: American College of Building Arts students learn ancient techniques,”](#) Nov. 5, 2017

Charleston City Paper

[“Controversy heats up over clay oven in Cross, SC,”](#)
Feb. 29, 2012

[“Charleston’s permaculture movement arrives at the drafting table,”](#) April 12, 2016

[“COAST Brewing announces expansion,”](#) Oct. 30, 2017

Natural Awakenings

[“Putting the Earth back in Earth](#)

[Day,”](#) April

2018, p.

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Other media

The Last Straw (journal)

[“A South Carolina Architect’s Journey to Natural Building and Rammed Earth,”](#) May 21, 2015

Abundant Edge (podcast)

[“Reviving rammed earth and hybrid natural buildings with April Magill of Root Down Designs,”](#) Oct. 12, 2018

Buildings Are Cool (blog)

[“Architects in a cafe getting beer: April Magill,”](#) Oct. 16, 2016
[“Rammed Earth Architecture with April Magill,”](#) Oct. 16, 2016

Pecha Kucha (video)

[“Charleston Pecha Kucha: 13 - April Magill,”](#) March 2012



Community service

Community service

American College of the Building Arts

In 2017, Magill started teaching a “Sustainable Masonry” course at the American College of the Building Arts as an adjunct professor. Since then, Magill has been able to teach dozens of students, through lectures and hands-on projects, about natural building history and methods, including adobe, rammed earth, cob, clay plasters and more. She’s glad that the president of this unique and important college recognizes the importance of this kind of building. And Magill is thrilled that she can be a role model to the many female students who are hoping to step into a male-dominated industry.



Community service

MUSC outdoor kitchen

Root Down Designs was happy to collaborate with the Medical University of South Carolina staff and the American College of the Building Arts to build a cob oven on the grounds of the MUSC Urban Farm over the course of five Fridays in the fall of 2018. Magill designed the cob oven, and volunteers from the hospital and the college participated in its molding. The hospital staff is developing programming surrounding the issue of fresh food and cooking to take advantage of their new outdoor oven.



CARTA bus stop

As Charleston’s population grows, so has the need for reliable and safe public transportation. The focus of this eight-hour community workshop, sponsored by Charleston Moves, Enough Pie and Grow Food Carolina, was to create a visually stimulating CARTA (Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority) bus stop. Magill and her team designed a simple, resilient rammed-earth bench to withstand annual flooding and a simple wood awning to shield riders from the harsh summer sun.

Community service

Romney Street urban garden

The residents of Romney Street joined forces with the Historic Charleston Foundation to turn a blighted dead end area into a fruitful space for the community to enjoy. Magill organized a community workshop of about 20 people to build a wood-fired oven. Many children from the community helped with the building process. Today, there are raised garden beds and a pizza oven where many events are held, including a recent bread baking workshop.



Fresh Future Farm

Root Down Designs led a community build project for Fresh Future Farm, an urban farm and food store in North Charleston. Volunteers built a chicken coop made from shipping pallets packed with light-straw-clay and finished with clay and lime plasters. They also made a cob oven for wood-fired meals.



Community service

Women's Carpentry 101

Magill organized a one-day Women's Carpentry 101 intensive course where a group of 15 women learned basic carpentry skills by building their own wooden toolbox. The class was taught by local carpenter Gwen Watt and assistant teacher Patricia Willis, who was also an American College of the Building Arts student at the time.



