

## Today's News - Tuesday, August 12, 2008

- We lose a visionary much too soon.
- Brussat tosses barbs at the Bird's Nest (and the rest).
- Part 2 of Kamin's skyscraper wars: "for all the comforting similarities between America and Asia, there are marked, often controversial, differences."
- A New Zealand developer opines that "restrictions on expanding into urban peripheries are responsible for the significant lack of affordable housing."
- A planner praises eco-town plans.
- Calys on the "ripe and raucous" zoning battle about to launch in San Francisco.
- In Saint John, Canada, "this dog needs new design guidelines - and fast" (blame it on poor planning).
- If people were expecting the first phase of Ottawa's "filed of dreams" (a.k.a. LeBreton Flats) to be landmark architecture - it's not.
- Downtown Toledo ready for revitalization: "urbanity seems poised to swoop into the proverbial front door left open by a cul-de-sac nation" (but key components still missing).
- Zandberg on an "ambitious, optimistic, naive and activist international festival-happening" and an alternative master plan for an Israeli village.
- An amusing minute-by-minute account of "Kevin McCloud and the Big Town Plan."
- New Ground Zero security plans: will they put a damper on creating a new neighborhood teeming with life?
- PennPraxis report finds problems with Philadelphia's casino plans.
- Kamin and Hume on the battles between pedestrians and traffic in Chicago and Toronto.
- Two takes on Venice, California's plan to pave over big-name artists' enclave.
- Another expert challenges claims that argument that Robin Hood Gardens "fails as a place to live."
- de Botton: "Nice buildings don't always make us better people."
- "Soft City" (1974) author Raban finds "cities have become harder, less humanly plastic in the past 30 years" (with sidebar review of the "era of urban visionaries" by Heathcote).
- Call for entries: Flood Design International Competition.

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[Obituary: Terry Brown, Mushroom House Architect, 53: People often commented that his work was like nothing they had ever seen. His projects were controversial, but he was respected by critics and revered by students. \[slide show\]](#)- Architectural Record

[China's barbed-wire 'Birds Nest': I can ooh and ah with the best of -em at the engineering prowess and the design audacity of modern architecture...I still think that modern architecture is deforming not just Beijing but the world, sterilizing civility and civilization. By David Brussat -- Herzog & de Meuron; Ai Weiwei; Koolhaas](#)- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

[Skyscraper wars, part two: ...for all the comforting similarities between America and Asia, there are marked, often controversial, differences that attend the art of skyscraper-building in the two places. By Blair Kamin -- Kohn Pedersen Fox \(KPF\); Adrian Smith; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill \(SOM\); Helmut Jahn/Murphy/Jahn; Pei; Pelli](#)- Chicago Tribune

[The Housing Bubble: The Planner's Role and Lessons Learned: Restrictions on expanding into urban peripheries are responsible for the significant lack of affordable housing in the U.S., U.K., Australia and New Zealand, argues Hugh Pavletich, co-author of the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey.](#)- PLANetizen

[New mayor 'backtracking' on London's environmental progress: Boris Johnson is making long-term decisions that are in danger of making London less green, environmental and social campaigners say. "...adopting or considering a number of policies that are likely to increase London's carbon footprint...."](#)- Guardian (UK)

[Op-Ed: In Praise of Eco-towns: the planner's defence: ...it's time for boldness on Eco-towns, not retreat...Is the wider need for new communities sufficient to outweigh local opposition and if so, is the eco-towns programme the right one? The answer to both has to be yes. By Robert Shaw/Faber Maunsell](#)- Building (UK)

[Neighborhoods in flux: Zoning policy is hardly ever glamorous...there is no place more ripe and raucous for a zoning battle than San Francisco...That's why the so-called Eastern Neighborhoods Plan looks to be a doozy...most...feel that the plan is a workable compromise. But this is San Francisco, where the "perfect" is often the enemy of the good. By George Calys](#)- San Francisco Examiner

[This dog needs new design guidelines - and fast: Too much of Saint John looks like a dog's breakfast. Oddities of architecture and other eyesores are so common, they depress property values in the nice spots...Blame it on poor planning...One important way to discourage the uglification and depopulation of cities is to enforce good urban design guidelines... -- Bob Boyce](#)- Telegraph-Journal (Canada)

[Building on the field of dreams: ...as the first phase of a housing development meant to be the heart of the revitalized LeBreton Flats takes shape...Those who were expecting a landmark of architecture on this historic piece of land feel](#)

[disappointed...on the most prized real estate in Ottawa, where one would expect to find buildings that are world class in design and conception.- Ottawa Citizen \(Canada\)](#)

[Toledo primed for revitalization, but key components still missing: ...downtown is on the cusp of becoming a popular place to live again...With suburbia floundering...and baby boomers looking to downsize, urbanity seems poised to swoop into the proverbial front door left open by a cul-de-sac nation.- Toledo Blade](#)

[Heart and soul: The atmosphere...in the village of Ein Hud in the Carmel forest, was positive and full of optimism for the future...the ambitious, optimistic, naive and activist international festival-happening "One Land and Platform Paradise" ...August 28 until September 7...culminates four years of work...to prepare an alternative master plan for the village... By Esther Zandberg -- Malkit Shoshan/Foundation for Achieving Seamless Territory \(FAST\)- Ha'aretz \(Israel\)](#)

[Kevin McCloud and the Big Town Plan: a minute-by-minute report: "Grand Designs" supremo tried his hand at televised regeneration, visiting the West Yorkshire town of Castleford...A fantastic moment. A coach load of considerably-young looking designers arrive in Cas from London. -- Sean Griffiths; Mark Whitby; Renato Benedetti/McDowell + Benedetti; Martha Schwartz- The Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)

[Police Want Tight Security Zone at Ground Zero: Planners seeking to rebuild the World Trade Center have always envisioned a new neighborhood teeming with life, but the Police Department's latest security proposal entails heavy restrictions.- New York Times](#)

[PennPraxis report says casinos don't jive with city planning: ...designs are too large to work. That stood in stark contrast to the discussions held last week by a PennPraxis-picked panel of experts, who found design problems but riverfront opportunities in the proposed casinos. -- Harris Steinberg- Philadelphia Daily News](#)

[Park activists aim to bridge fountain, Queen's Landing for pedestrians: Grant Park is sending some very mixed messages to pedestrians—"the foot people," as...Jane Jacobs called them...the city's Band-Aid solution made the car king and transformed "the foot people" into second-class citizens. By Blair Kamin -- Gehry; Muller + Muller; Renzo Piano- Chicago Tribune](#)

[Pedestrians, traffic jockey for space along main drag: Yonge St. may be Toronto's main drag but you'd never know it...more highway than main street...we're at the point now where the city will have to make some very hard choices about whether Toronto is for drivers or pedestrians. We need both, but in balance. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star](#)

[Asphalt or Artists? Which Way, Venice? The Value of Ed Ruscha and Laddie John Dill Should Be Considered in the Parking Lot Debate: Gain a parking lot, lose your artists. That's Venice mediocre future...Must we rush so quickly to mediocrity?- Venice Paper \(California\)](#)



[Economic Realities Press on Artists- Outdoor Eden: A parking lot may cost the artists Laddie John Dill and Ed Ruscha their longtime studio...in a city where parking is more fervently debated than air quality, it seems almost too predictable that the City of Los Angeles wants to tear down the fence, pave the space and, yes, put up a parking lot.- New York Times](#)

[Housing expert Dickon Robinson hits out at English Heritage argument that Robin Hood Gardens "fails as a place to live"...called EH's arguments on its suitability as housing "selective and misleading"- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Nice buildings don't always make us better people: ...people who love beautiful things often make the huge claim that if you gather together a sufficient amount of beautiful things and put them in beautiful surroundings, people will become better. It is a lovely argument, but I do not think it is actually true. By Alain de Botton- Independent \(UK\)](#)

[My own private metropolis: ...I can make the city up as I go along, shaping it to my own habits and fancies...cities have become harder, less humanly plastic in the past 30 years...One essential element of soft-citydom remains unchanged: just as you're free to create your own unique paths through the honeycomb, so you can create your own community. In suburbia, you're stuck with your neighbours... By Jonathan Raban- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Call for entries: Flood Design Competition: international open competition for the design of a flood proof house for the future; cash prizes; deadline: September 19- Norwich Union / RIBA](#)



- [Frank Gehry: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2008, London, UK](#)
- [architecture53seven: Egan-s Coffee Bar & Roof terrace, Portlaoise, Ireland](#)
- [Book: Olympic Architecture 2008, Introduction by Guoxin Ma](#)

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