

## Today's News - Friday, May 30, 2014

- Kimmelman takes us on a fascinating tour of urban renewal in San Francisco - bulldozers not included: tech firms, "like hermit crabs living off whatever's around, have colonized auto-body shops, Victorian mansions and vacant and formerly unloved 1970s office buildings. But this is the Nimby capital of America."
- King takes a tour of a 3-D model of the San Francisco skyline of 2017 via some "cool-gadget geekery."
- Lewyn's Theory Behind NIMBYism, Part 3: zoning and homeowners fears deter the creation of new - and much-needed - rental housing.
- Three tall building experts who back the AJ/Observer Skyline campaign propose practical ways forward for planning in London.
- Capps makes the case for cities to bid for Olympic gold: "What Western cities are bidding on is not merely glory but the temporary political purchase to pursue massive internal improvements. Several of those cities could use the boost that only the Olympics can deliver."
- Litt cheers the latest plans for Kent State's new architecture school building that "show a project still on track for excellence. If a university can't get the design right with its architecture school, it would undermine the credibility of that particular department, if not the entire institution."
- Hill offers a (very cool) interactive tour of TWBTA's LeFrak Center at Lakeside in Brooklyn's Prospect Park.
- Markham digs deep into conflicts between gentrification and community gardens, which are started with good intentions, but tend to become "pawns" in the real estate game: "If young home buyers like chickens and goats and kale, developers and real-estate agents like them even more."
- Some urban agriculture ventures in Detroit are moving beyond the city lot and into buildings: "We're buying into something equivalent to a McDonald's franchise" (said "with a hint of irony").
- A look at how Soleri's Arcosanti "foreshadowed current themes such as urban farming, New Urbanism, and smart growth ("elegant frugality" included).
- Taylor-Hochberg's Q&A with Tssui re: his outsider status "in the shifting waters of architectural discourse, his unlikely inspirations from teaching architecture in China, and the trials of being a dissenting voice."
- Harvard GSD launches a course in design competitions: "Competitions are going to be an increasing part of architectural work lives, for better or for worse," says Kayden.
- Friedman understands "there's nothing worse than losing a competition that you thought your firm would win. Except for failing to find out why."
- Weekend diversions:
- Bevan parses the London Festival of Architecture (launching this weekend): it celebrates architects from other countries and the "diversity of influence" they bring to the city, but "there is the danger that it is already passing its peak" (for some disturbing reasons).
- Betsky basks in the art of Liu Wei and Lebbeus Woods: "The works of these two artists represent cities, beautifully unhinged and unstable."
- Flint cheers Stern's "Paradise Planned": "The gambit is to rescue an august planning tradition 'tragically interrupted' by 20th century modernism" and "to blend town and country all over again - a welcome addition to the discourse."
- Filler gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Saval's "Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace": it is an "impressive but substantially flawed study of the modern office - as with all other architecture and design, the way we make our offices offers an accurate reflection of our values, and not a formula for improving them" (though "his grasp of architectural history" is not quite up to snuff).
- Mogilevich cheers a collection of James Corner's essays that "chart new and exciting territory" in landscape architecture: "Always in tension are the landscapes of the mind and the site. But he seeks to defy and transcend these distinctions."

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**Urban Renewal, No Bulldozer: San Francisco Repurposes Old for the Future: ...tech firms...like hermit crabs living off whatever's around, have colonized auto-body shops, Victorian mansions and vacant and formerly unloved 1970s office buildings...But this is the Nimby capital of America...the challenge is obvious: more people, inadequate transit, too little housing and too many obstacles to new architecture.** By Michael Kimmelman -- Cathy Simon/Perkins+Will; David Baker; Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects; Rem Koolhaas; Jeanne Gang [slide show] - New York Times

**S.F. skyline of future rises today from 3-D printer: The San Francisco skyline of 2017 is a work in progress - except in the precise resin forms on a newly printed 3-D model of 115 downtown blocks where the dust and noise of today's construction boom is nowhere to be seen...presents a downtown free of such blemishes as traffic jams and crowded sidewalks...cool-gadget geekery...that can be updated in a day...** By John King -- Autodesk; Steelblue [images, video] - San Francisco Chronicle

**The Theory Behind NIMBYism, Part 3: From a utilitarian perspective, should cities give neighborhood preferences weight in deciding what gets built where? It depends...Zoning clearly deters the creation of new rental housing...homeowners fear rental housing and use government as a tool to keep it out. Otherwise, neighborhoods would be rezoned to allow apartments, and supply would keep pace with demand.** By Michael Lewyn - PLANetizen

**How can we improve London's emerging Skyline? Three leading tall building experts who back the AJ/Observer Skyline campaign propose practical ways forward for planning in the capital. --** Chris Wilkinson/Wilkinson Eyre Architects; Ian Simpson Architects; Andrew Beharrell/Pollard Thomas Edwards - The Architects' Journal (UK)

**Why Some Cities Shouldn't Give Up on the Olympics: Dictators and democracies bid to host the Olympic Games for different reasons...It's easy to forget what good the Olympics can do for cities after the disaster of Sochi 2014...What Western cities are bidding on is not merely glory but the temporary political purchase to pursue massive internal improvements. Several of those cities could use the boost that only the Olympics can deliver.** By Kriston Capps - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

**The latest plans for Kent State University's new architecture school building show a project still on track for excellence: ...a 21st-century landmark in its new \$43 million building for its College of Architecture and Environmental Design. And that's appropriate. If a university can't get the design right with its architecture school, it would undermine the credibility of that particular department, if not the entire institution.** By Steven Litt -- Weiss/Manfredi; Richard L. Bowen & Associates [slideshow] - Cleveland Plain Dealer

**Interactive Tour: LeFrak Center at Lakeside: ...replaces a winter-only rink and comfort station in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, that was built in the 1960s...fits to the original design of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.** By John Hill -- Joel Sanders; Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects - A Daily Dose of Architecture/Archidose

**Gentrification and the Urban Garden: Many community gardens are started with the intention of supporting lower-income communities...But once they are built, "the real-estate companies...use the property value to displace poor people of color. The community-gardening people may be well meaning, but they don't always understand that they're pawns in the game"...If young home buyers like chickens and goats and kale, real-estate agents like them even more.** By Lauren Markham - The New Yorker

**Grown in Detroit, but not in the ground: The next evolution of urban agriculture: Some urban agriculture ventures in Detroit are moving beyond the city lot and into buildings...a pair of ventures are raising crops and fish indoor..."We're buying into something equivalent to a McDonald's franchise," says Jeff Adams with a hint of irony.** - Model D (Detroit)

**Paolo Soleri's Vision of Sustainable Cities: ..."the city is the necessary instrument for the evolution of humankind"...design**

principles as demonstrated at Arcosanti foreshadowed current themes such as urban farming, New Urbanism, and smart growth. [images]- [Sourceable](#)

Cutting Room: Talking architectural dissent and climate-proof buildings with Eugene Tssui, subject of Kyung Lee's "TELOS: The Fantastic World of Eugene Tssui" documentary...tries to understand what Tssui's outsider status means in the shifting waters of architectural discourse...Q&A touches upon his unlikely inspirations from teaching architecture in China, and the trials of being a dissenting voice within architecture's dominant discourse. By Amelia Taylor-Hochberg [images, video]- [Archinect](#)

To win a contract, win a contest: New GSD class probes age-old question of how to triumph in an architectural design competition: If anything oils the wheels of architecture and planning, it is the design competition...architects and planners face an "even insatiable" pool of contests which gobble time and resources with no guarantee of remuneration. "Competitions are going to be an increasing part of architectural work lives, for better or for worse." -- Jerold Kayden; Donald J. Stastry- [Harvard Gazette](#)

Mastering the Post-Loss Debrief: There's nothing worse than losing a competition that you thought your firm would win. Except for failing to find out why. By Rich Friedman- [Architect Magazine](#)

London Festival of Architecture 2014: a world of design in one city: Architects from other countries want to work in London and the capital benefits from the diversity of influence they bring on the grand and domestic scale, which is why this year's LFA is celebrating them. By Robert Bevan- [Evening Standard \(UK\)](#)

From Liu Wei to Lebbeus Woods: Tectonic Landscapes: The works of these two artists represent cities, beautifully unhinged and unstable. By Aaron Betsky- [Architect Magazine](#)

Why the 'Garden City' Is Making an Unlikely Comeback: "Suburbs are like cholesterol," says Robert A.M. Stern — there's good and there's bad, all to be sensibly calibrated."...12-pound, 1,000-page "Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City"...The gambit is to rescue an august planning tradition "tragically interrupted" by 20th century modernism...to blend town and country all over again...a welcome addition to the discourse.By Anthony Flint- [CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

The Road to the Zombie Office: "Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace" by Nikil Saval: ...impressive but substantially flawed study of the modern office over the past 200 years...Regrettably, his grasp of architectural history is not nearly as secure...What has not changed much throughout the two centuries...as with all other architecture and design, the way we make our offices offers an accurate reflection of our values, and not a formula for improving them. By Martin Filler- [New York Review of Books](#)

"The Landscape Imagination: Collected Essays of James Corner, 1990-2010": His writings on representation and landscape urbanism chart new and exciting territory for the field...Always in tension are the landscapes of the mind and the site. But Corner seeks to defy and transcend these distinctions... By Mariana Mogilevich -- James Corner Field Operations- [The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\)](#)

INSIGHT: Anonymous Cities: The Erosion of Urban Identity: If we embrace the special characteristics of our American cities, we could begin to construct new projects that enhance the sense of place within the distinctly different urban settings that still exist. By Peter Gisolfi- [ArchNewsNow](#)



-- Travel guide: Barcelona: There is no city like it. It's a place of colourful contrasts. Of culture and nightlife. And truly spectacular architecture.

-- The Camera: Q&A with Thomas Mayer: How did you start being involved in architectural photography? "In fact, I always was addicted to architecture."

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