As the World Summit for Sustainable Development draws near, the issues and challenges of urban planning are coming more and more into focus. Hopefully, Summit participants will exploring what the IHT calls an "alternative model to the one that is invading most of the inhabited world today: an unstoppable blight called urban sprawl, affecting rich and poor countries alike." The Observer looks at our love/hate affair(s) with tall buildings, and concludes: "Because as long as the sky's the limit, Babels will be built." Jim Chappell, president of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), offers lessons to be learned from Paris. Chicago is doing its best - or at least trying - to revitalize neighborhoods. Brownfields in the UK are slowly (or quickly?) becoming affordable housing sites. Jonathan Glancey takes a look at Peter Smithson's council housing. One man's garbage is another man's castle in Earthships - homes made from trash. A Bahamian architect calls for more respect for the profession. A Washington architect has plans to turn a nuclear reactor into "an attraction to rival the likes of Los Alamos' Bradbury Science Museum or the World War II Memorial." An LA architect designs his dream house, and another creates a Wonderland from trinkets. There's not much building getting done in Kuala Lumpur since Indonesians were banned from the construction industry - but that is about to change. Tadao Ando adds his magic to an island. Ergonomics for astronauts holds lessons for earth-bound products... and much, much more.

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