

## Today's News - Thursday, June 7, 2012

- An in-depth (fascinating - and sad) look at how Curitiba, Brazil, "once a model of sustainable planning," is losing its edge: "the discrepancy between its flawless image and reality is growing."
- Farrelly x 2 re: developers, politics, and NIMBYism (both great reads): "Ever get the sense the bad guys are winning?" + Beware the "greenwars" over green space and density: it's time "to lose the 'me' from urbanisme."
- NYC has its own greenwars brewing (and other cities should take heed) as NYU's 2 million-square-foot expansion plans in Greenwich Village get a green light (with some modifications) + A new coalition of real estate and labor organizations take on the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission by arguing that "the growing number of landmark buildings and historic districts are hampering the city's economy and stymieing development."
- On a brighter note, a once-blighted industrial area in the South Bronx offers a "lesson in dedicated collaboration" that "sets a high bar" for creating public spaces.
- Malaysian developers win bid for the Battersea Power Station, and want "to take forward Viñoly's master plan."
- Lewis revisits a 1950s planned community that remains "a happy experiment in modernity"; former resident Sorkin says is "the kind of community so many modernists dreamed of."
- A master-planned community outside of Houston is a poster child for such developments, taking the sustainable route that eschews "perfect lawns and golf courses to embrace the wild," where "residents there don't feel like they are raping Mother Earth."
- Rochon raves about four houses by Canadian architects "that ignite an instant connection to place and the outdoor world" with their "superb design."
- Brussat is refining his rant about Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial: it "carries forward a longstanding battle": it's "simplicity vs. complexity," and "Exhibit A in why our society, by abandoning simplicity, has suffered a failure to thrive."
- Rosenbaum and Kennicott weigh in on the "desperate gambit to rescue a foundering" Corcoran Gallery of Art in D.C.: "This is at best amputation, and very likely euthanasia, except euthanasia is supposed to be painless."
- A stellar Danish/British team wins Copenhagen arena project that "promises to be yet another stunning element" in the city's skyline.
- A good reason to head to Barcelona later this month: the 2012 ACSA International Conference.
- One we couldn't resist: "15 fictional spacecrafts we'd like to call home. Maybe Richard Branson has the right idea after all!"

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Has South America's Most Sustainable City Lost Its Edge? Brazil's Curitiba was once a model of sustainable planning. Now, it's struggling with a slew of urban problems...with the highest ratio of automobiles per inhabitant...failed to integrate its growing suburbs into a coherent regional plan...most of the planning interventions [it] is known for...are not accessible to...suburban (and usually lower-income) residents...the discrepancy between its flawless image and reality is growing. By Flavie Halais -- Jaime Lerner [images, links]- The Atlantic Cities

Developers show their stripes all over town: Ever get the sense the bad guys are winning? Our planning system...seems increasingly geared to screw the little guys while rich douchebags suck it dry...It's that old "no means yes" developers' mantra. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

Less of 'me' in planning would help rest of us: Call it, if you prefer, urbanisme...a mere jousting of self-interests...it's hardly new - except that me-ist planning...could split green thinking asunder. Greenwars...the fight over green space, and the fight over density...will pit old, agrarian, hippie-based green-think against urbanists like Edward Glaeser. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

NYU expansion gets important green light: The city's planning department approves a proposal for a controversial 2 million-square-foot multi-building expansion in Greenwich Village after trimming it by 300,000 square feet and eliminating a planned hotel...Opponents are still hopeful that the expansion can be stopped. -- Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP)- Crain's New York Business

The War on Landmarks Moves to Defcon 2: Big Real Estate Forming Big Coalition to Challenge Landmarks Preservation Commission: ...made up of a number of influential real estate and labor organizations...will argue that the growing number of landmark buildings and historic districts are hampering the city's economy and stymieing development. By Matt Chaban- New York Observer

A Lesson in Dedicated Collaboration: Hunts Point Landing on the South Bronx Greenway: This almost exclusively industrial part of the city will now have one of the newest public spaces in its backyard...long-term goals...are extensive, yet simple...the first phase...sets a high bar for the type of infrastructure that is to be developed -- Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects [images]- ArchDaily

Malaysians chosen as preferred bidder for Battersea Power Station: Team wants to take forward Rafael Vinoly's masterplan...puts an end to Chelsea FC's plans...for which KPF had drawn up early proposals. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Fairfax County's Hollin Hills is a happy experiment in modernity: The landscape, as much as the architecture, imparts a strong, community-wide sense of unity and harmony...Former resident Michael Sorkin summarized the legacy. "[It] is one of the truly happy experiments in modernity, a place that...remains the kind of community so many modernists dreamed of..." By Roger K. Lewis -- Charles Goodman; Dan Kiley (1950s)- Washington Post

Little boxes no more: Master planned communities go away from perfect lawns and golf courses to embrace the wild: Cross Creek Ranch, a 3,200-acre community...decided to go sustainable in its landscaping, land development and water usage...Residents there don't feel like they are raping Mother Earth. -- SWA Group [images]- CultureMap Houston

Finding sanctuary in superb design: ...four houses (three of them just completed) by Canadian architects that ignite an instant connection to place and the outdoor world. By Lisa Rochon -- Omer Arbel; D'Arcy Jones; MODERNest; Susan Fitzgerald Architecture- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Is it curtains for Frank Gehry's Eisenhower? The debate over the Eisenhower memorial carries forward a longstanding battle over definitions of progress. Simplicity versus complexity tracks the past century's revolution in art and architecture...its design strikes many as Exhibit A in why our society, by abandoning simplicity, has suffered a failure to thrive. By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Desperate Gambit to Rescue a Foundering D.C. Museum: The Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design's newly announced "plans to ensure its long-term stability"...seem anything but...plans to "consider relocating to a purpose-built, technologically advanced facility"...space could be in D.C., Maryland or Virginia. By Lee Rosenbaum [links]- ArtsJournal

Corcoran's proposal to leave its historic quarters is laden with questions about leadership: Are things really so bad that the institution has no choice but to leave the center of Washington, sell off a building that is both a prize and a symbol of its collection...and focus on its art school? This is at best amputation, and very likely euthanasia, except euthanasia is supposed to be painless... By Philip Kennicott- Washington Post

3XN with British team bags Copenhagen arena jackpot: According to the contest jury, the [£120 million indoor arena]

scheme had a 'distinct Nordic identity'...promises to be yet another stunning element in the Copenhagen skyline... -- HKS Architects; Arup; Planit-IE [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

2012 ACSA International Conference: CHANGE, Architecture, Education, Practices, June 20-22, Barcelona, Spain; co-chairs: Xavier Costa, Northeastern University + Martha Thorne, IE University; keynoters include Bjarke Ingels/BIG, Odile Decq, Joan Busquet- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)

15 Fictional Spacecrafts We'd Like to Call Home: ...check out the best of livable design in places not on this Earth. Maybe Richard Branson has the right idea after all! [images]- Flavorwire

The Geeky Side of Design: "Architects are often phenomenal at connecting us to the outdoors, but horrible at disconnecting us when it's necessary. And that is the fundamental problem with architecture today," says the sometimes irreverent but always straight-talking Joe Lstiburek, Ph.D., P.Eng. By Wendy Ordemann- ArchNewsNow



-- Jan Kaplický/Future Systems; Andrea Morgante: Enzo Ferrari Museum, Modena, Italy  
-- Grimshaw Architects: Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, Miami, Florida

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