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THE ACCIDENTAL SKYLINE

Hot off the press is the Municipal Arts Society's third in a series of reports on New York City's accidental skyline. The Municipal Art Society (MAS) is a venerable organization founded in 1893 as an advocate for the enhancement of the built environment through excellence

in urban planning, architecture and preservation.

The current report quantifies the "unprecedented boom in as-of-right, out-of-scale development" which has created a more random skyline. The more traditional taller avenue buildings and lower scale cross street of the Manhattan grid have given way to super-tall mid-block high rises and frenzied development on the waterfront. The MAS report carefully examines this phenomenon by presenting detailed shadow projections, air rights maps and endangered view corridors. It proposes a package of ten reforms aimed at empowering the City by leveling the playing field between private development and the public interest.

It should come as no surprise that half of the reforms involve zoning and environmental review. MAS calls for strengthening regulations that control bulk and heights together with clarifying zoning regulations and definitions. For example, the supertall luxury residential tower at 432 Park Avenue added 19 additional floors of mechanical and structural voids which resulted in an additional 313 lineal feet of height. Not only are these areas exempted from floor area calculations, they served to make the building the tallest in the country while providing sought

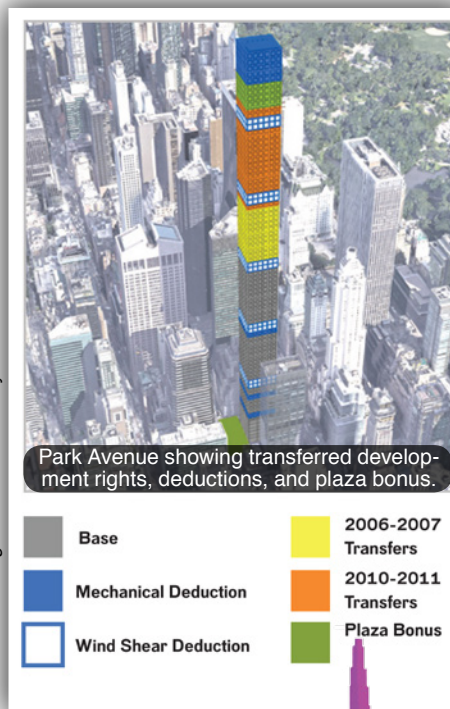


Photo: ©2017 Google Earth. Modified by MAS



Photo: ©2017 Google Earth. Modified by MAS

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Photo: ©2012 Flickr - MET Roof, Phil Davis. Modified by MAS to show proposed development.

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Deadline for submission to the Pylon is the second Wednesday of each month. Articles or notices may be submitted to the Editor by e-mail, fax or on disc. Material printed in the PYLON is for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon nor acted on as legal opinion or advice.

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TAX REFORM: WHAT IT MAY MEAN FOR YOU

The tax reform "framework" that the White House and Congressional Republicans released at the end of September proposed reducing the tax rates on individuals and businesses and making the tax code simpler. The bills in the House and the Senate largely follow the path established in the Framework. On the House side, the plan would compress the current seven tax brackets to five. For corporations, the plan would lower the rate from the current 35 percent to 20 percent. On the Senate side, the seven tax brackets are kept but rates are lowered for both businesses & consumers.

To pay for this, both plans would eliminate a large number of tax incentives. They also predict strong economic growth to help increase revenue to the government.

The devil, of course, is in the details. And that is where the biggest impacts may lie, particularly for architecture firms that organize as pass-through entities like S Corporations. The Framework proposed creating a new, lower maximum tax rate for these type of firms. However, both the House and Senate proposals exclude professional services companies, such as architecture firms, from tax relief.

The House Ways and Means Committee has approved its version of the bill, which now goes to the House for a vote. Meanwhile, the Senate Finance Committee introduced its draft proposal on November 9. It began marking up the bill Monday, November 13. Both versions will need to be reconciled and sent to the President. The White House and Congressional Republicans hope to get a bill signed by the end of the year.

The good news is that the legislation specifically calls out several building-related incentives for keeping, notably the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Mortgage Interest Deduction.

The bad news is that other incentives, like the Historic Tax Credit, energy tax incentives like 179D, and others, are on the chopping block.

Losing financing tools like the Historic Tax Credit combined with potential tax increases on small architecture firms would be a double whammy on the profession.

In 2013, AIA adopted three broad principles:

- Support comprehensive tax reform that lowers marginal tax rates for individuals, pass-through entities, and corporations, while broadening the tax base and simplifying the tax code.
- Tax policies aimed at strengthening small businesses, including tax policies that maintain the ability of businesses to choose pass-through forms of entities, should be preserved.
- Tax policies should provide incentives for innovative, economically vibrant, sustainable, and resilient development that creates jobs and will revitalize our nation's buildings and infrastructure.

Join AIA's Legislative Action Network (LAN) and receive up to date information on this and other key issues. You also can make your voice heard now by sending a letter to your members of Congress to urge them to protect the Historic Tax Credit and the 179D green building tax incentive, ensure tax rate fairness for architecture firms.

– Ian McTiernan

AIA's Legislative Action Network (LAN):

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7PL552R>

Historic Tax Credit:

179D green building tax incentive:

(both are the same web address)
<https://app3.vocusgr.com/WebPublish/controller.aspx?SiteName=AIA&Definition=ViewIssue&IssueID=9589>

THE QUOTES CORNER

"I hate vacations. If you can build buildings, why sit on the beach?"

– Philip Johnson

"A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines."

– Frank Lloyd Wright

"The Sun does not realize how wonderful it is until after a room is made."

– Louis Kahn

October 19, 2017

QUESTIONS EMAILED PRIOR TO MEETING:

Q 1. *What are the new requirements for TPP1 as per Int. No 936-A (see attached)? Specifically, how should we address item "3. Health requirements. Specification of means and methods to be used for control of dust, disposal of construction debris, pest control..." Shouldn't the means and methods fall under the direction of the contractor and not the Architect signing and sealing the TPP1?*

A 1: The Mean, Methods, Technics and Schedule of Construction for a TPP are the responsibility of a licensed design professional.

Attendees suggested the TPP become a separate filing or possibly a separate special inspection item.

Q 2. *What scope of work would be considered partial demo? The replacement of an interior staircase within the existing opening?*

A 2: The replacement of an interior staircase is partial demolition since it is structural.

DEMOLITION. Full or partial demolition.

Full demolition. The dismantling, razing or removal of all of a building or structure, including all operations incidental thereto.

Partial demolition. The dismantling, razing, or removal of structural members, floors, interior bearing walls, and/or exterior walls or portions thereof, including all operations incidental thereto.

Attendees disagreed and stated that if the staircase was replaced within the existing opening and no structural components are removed that would not constitute partial demolition. Commissioner Gluckman will discuss at the next Commissioners' meeting in Manhattan and advise examiners of the outcome..

Q 3. *Plumbing inspector objection issue. Plumbing inspector raised objection for shower in cellar of two-story and cellar detached office building (all floors are U.G. 6, incl. cellar) located in R-4-1/C2-3 district, not a flood area –*

Plumbing objection: "APPROVAL FROM BOR-

OUGH COMMISSIONER FOR 1 STALL SHOWER INSTALLATION IN CELLAR REQUIRED".

When I met with the inspector he insisted that there is a document allowing showers for medical and executive offices, however nobody in the Plumbing division was able to specify the document.

I have few questions:

- a) Why do they act without knowing the specifics and what should I do then?*
- b) If such document exists why isn't DOB providing a convenient search system so that their staff and public can access it?*
- c) Why has it become common for Plumbing inspectors to govern architectural plans like in this case?*

A 3: Need more info to answer this question. Attendees raised multiple questions related to plumbing inspections and Schedule B. Attendees requested the Chief Plumbing Inspector attend the next Industry meeting.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

New L2 application: NRV – No relation to violation will no longer be accepted for single ownership buildings, only exceptions are co-op and condo.

Commissioner Gluckman introduced many new Local Laws, check DOB website for access to the latest Local Laws.

QUESTIONS AT THE MEETING:

Q 4. *How long does re-assignment take?*

A 4: A couple of days, staff is backlogged.

Q 5. *The C of O division is requesting copies of the initial TR1 and TR8 at time of Letter of Completion submission along with the final TR1 and TR8. The initial TR1 & TR8 are already accepted in the required items and are already B Scan, why are we being asked to submit copies?*

A 5 : Commissioner Gluckman will inquire with the C of O division.

- John Hatheway, AIA

LONG ISLAND'S ARCHI AWARDS

Brooklyn was well represented last night at Long Island's Archi Awards given last night. Giuseppe Anzalone, AIA, AIA Brooklyn's past president was one of the jurors pictured here along

with directors from the Long Island chapter as well as members from the Queens Chapter and members of the AIA New York State Chapter Board.
– Giuseppe Anzalone, AIA



Photo courtesy of Willy Zambrano AIA VP of Knowledge at AIANY.

WELCOMING A NEW AIA BROOKLYN MEMBER



In order to get to know our new members a little better, we asked them some questions. Welcome **Joshua Gerber, AIA.**

Q. What motivated you to become an architect?

A: I can trace my interest in Architecture back to a book my parents purchased for me in elementary school - *David Macaulay's Castle*. The book contained detailed illustrations and cross sections of what seemed like imaginary structures - it really captured my imagination. Eventually I went on to study Art History, which overlapped into Architecture a great deal.

Q. What type of work are you most interested in?

A: At the moment I enjoy workplace design, and the direct impact it has on so many New Yorkers' daily lives. There is an immediacy in the work, and the fast turnover makes projects exciting in the short term, and satisfying in the long term.

Q. What has been your biggest challenge since becoming an architect?

A: Finding a balance between technical knowledge, design expertise, and project experience. Because I'm still relatively new to the career.

Q. What did you like best about architecture school?

A: Camaraderie between classmates is not only beneficial and vital. The rigor of a graduate architectural program can take a toll.

Q. Any criticisms of the architecture educational process?

A: I do wish my program had spent more time on technical, or practical experience. Some graduate programs facilitate the actual construction of student designs. I feel it'd be beneficial to strike a better balance between design and technical knowledge.

Q. What are your professional goals?

A: In a broad sense - to become vital to the create and completion of a project. I have a wide range of skills - both intellectual and practical - and finding an avenue to use both is important to me.

Q. Who do you consider to be some of your favorite architects?

A: I find the grandeur and material innovation of Herzog & DeMeuron inspiring. The craft and minutiae of Kieran/Timberlake speaks to me in a different way.

Q. Do you have a favorite building or city?

A: I also studied French as an undergraduate, and would be remiss to say that Paris never ceases to amaze me - the perfect mixture of urbanism, style, and croissants. On a smaller scale - the medieval city of Uzès in Provence captures the imagination that few remaining places in Europe still do.

Q. What do you hope to get out of your AIA Brooklyn Chapter membership?

A: To meet some like-minded folk with a passion for design, history, and Brooklyn's architectural future/heritage.

- Pamela Weston, Assoc. AIA

THE ACCIDENTAL SKYLINE CONT.

continued from page 1

after palatial apartments that look down on the rest of the city. The use of a structural void is the 2017 equivalent to the floor area bonus plaza of the 1970's and 80's.

Similarly, the Domino Sugar project initially called for a new park, a school and 2200 resi-

was approved in the 2005 Environmental Impact Statement. At Hudson Yards dozens of separate land use applications have been approved since the initial rezoning. Some were subject to environmental review and have resulted in bulk waivers or floor area increases. The result was an increase of the equivalent

In 2016 the City Planning Commission classified changes to the LSRD as "minor" which exempted the plan from a ULURP, the review process for Urban Renewal area. The minor change includes four towers with 2.5 million sf of residential space and 600 new residents. The exemption from ULURP is extremely disturbing in



Photo: ©2017 Google Earth. Modified by MAS

dential units, of which 660 were affordable. When the project was purchased by a second developer, the affordable units were reduced to 440. To keep the original 660 affordable units, the City allowed an increase in heights to the buildings, thereby giving the developer an additional (and very valuable) 200,000 gross square footage atop the floor area that had been approved in the 2010 rezoning. MAS is also critical of the environmental review processes which too often underestimate impacts and, in the case of Hudson Yards do not reflect the full amount of development that



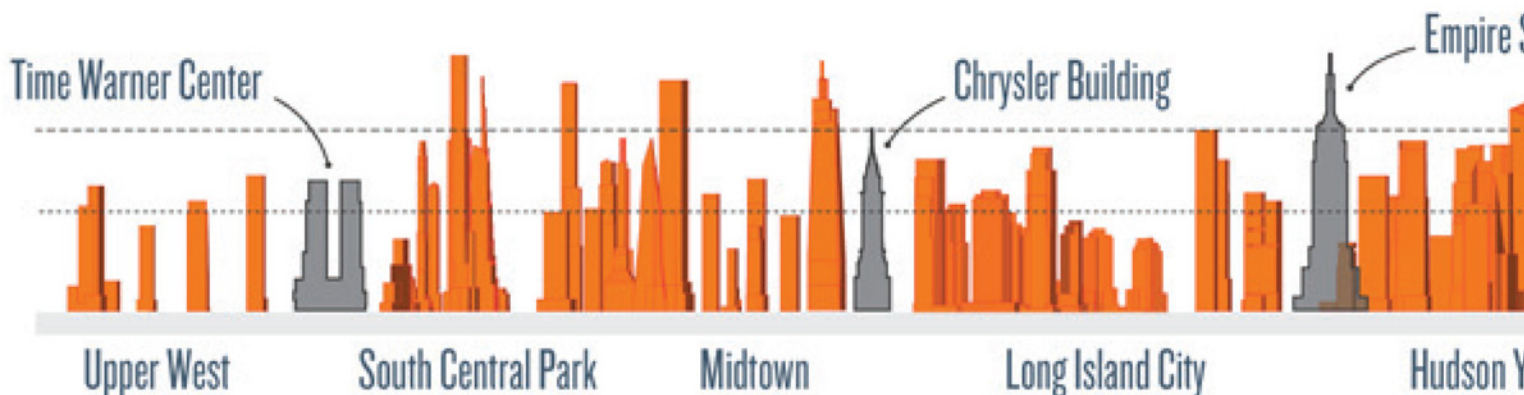
Photo: ©2017 Google Earth. Modified by MAS

of three Chrysler Buildings. In downtown Brooklyn, approximately one million square feet of recent development was not evaluated in the 2004 EIS. The resulting traffic congestion, public school over-crowding and lack of recreational space in downtown Brooklyn is not being addressed by developers or government.

The circumvention regulations established by Urban Renewal Areas (URA) and Large Scale Residential Development (LSRD) is nowhere more blatant that at the Two Bridges LSRD area in the Lower East on the East River.

the context of City Planning's rejection of *The Plan for Chinatown and Surrounding Areas: Preserving Affordability and Authenticity*, a community based plan that was "too expansive" and not sufficiently nuanced on a block by block basis.

The Accidental Skyline report is critical of the City's on-line resources which do not sufficiently alert the public about real estate transactions and land use actions until the development planning process has been completed. There is no way to obtain information on non-discretionary actions



such as zoning lot mergers and transfers of development rights.

Real estate development and architectural design in New York City have been transformed during the last decade. The maximization of floor area has been pushed aside in the pursuit of height. The cost of building structural void spaces and oversized mechanical areas is paid for many times over with the sales of the upper most floors.

at Herzog & de Meuron's Jenga-like tower sold for \$47 million this year.

In short, The Accidental Skyline makes a persuasive case for change. Height and bulk regulations need to be strengthened and enforced, zoning and building laws need to be clarified, floor area bonuses evaluated, and mitigation requirements of environmental review should be made meaningful. The public must be part of the process by

community planning boards" so that communities could have a voice in what was being built in their neighborhoods.

As architects, we need to join the effort to make the City and developers accountable to the public interest.

- Jane McGroarty AIA

For the full report: www.mas.org/pdf/accidental-skyline-report-10-15-2017-web.pdf

Views of Lower Manhattan, comparing 2013 (this photo) and proposed development modeled in orange for 2025 (photo below).



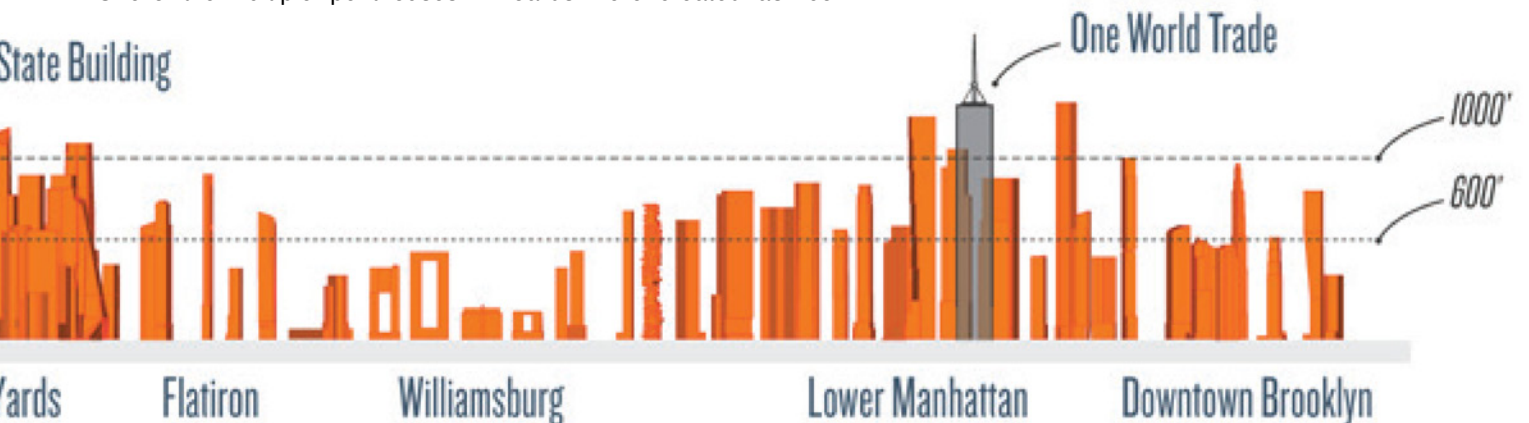
Photos: ©2013 Wikimedia Commons - NYC Skyline from Statue of Liberty, Matthias Mullie. Modified by MAS to show proposed development.

Examples of extremely expensive apartments abound: the 83rd floor at 432 Park Avenue recently sold to a Hong Kong billionaire for \$65 million or the 88th floor double height penthouse at

15 Hudson Yards with a sale price of \$32,000,000. Prices for downtown apartments are also soaring. One of the multiple 'penthouses'



increasing resources and opportunities for community planning. Keep in mind that Community Boards were created as "com-





THE AIA BROOKLYN CHAPTER MEMBERS ARE FOREVER CHANGING

OUR CHAPTER'S NEWLY LICENSED MEMBERS!

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David Theisz, AIA

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Jamie Cardinale a 2017 Brooklyn Architects
Scholarship Foundation scholarship recipient.

LOOKING AHEAD

REGULARLY SCHEDULED CHAPTER MEETINGS

Unless otherwise noted,
all meetings are scheduled at:

Committee Meetings: 5:30 PM
Dinner: 6:00 PM
Program: 6:15 PM

General Meeting

Wednesday,

December 13, 2017

AIA Holiday Party

6:30pm - 10:30pm

Liberty Warehouse,

260 Conover Street, Bklyn, NY 112311

You can purchase tickets @

www.AIABrooklyn.org

Executive Meeting

Wednesday,

December 6, 2017

AIA learning unit credit and certificates towards
NYS mandatory continuing education
will be given for each program.

LAST PRESENTER MONTH

Many thanks to the
past month's presenter ...

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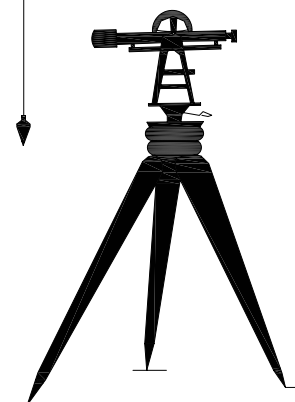
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P Y L O N N E W S L E T T E R



UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

Dec Holiday Party
Jan. 17, 2018

EVENTS CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

AIA BROOKLYN HOLIDAY PARTY

December 13, 6:30pm - 10:30pm

Liberty Warehouse.

260 Conover Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231

Buy tickets at:

www.AIABrooklyn.org/01-2/

Questions - 718.797.4242 or

AdminDirector@AIABrooklyn.org



LIVING IN AMERICA: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, HARLEM, AND MODERN HOUSING

*Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery,
Columbia University, 615 West 129 Street
Through December 17*

"Living in America" part of a manifesto that was written on wooden panels traveling with the model of Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1929–58), evokes a question that preoccupied architects and planners throughout the mid-twentieth century.

NEVER BUILT NEW YORK

Queens Museum

September 17 w- February 18, 2018

Never Built New York, invites visitors to discover the New York City that might have been through original prints,

drawings, models, installations, and animations. While it may be impossible to re-imagine New York, Never Built explores a city where you could catch a football game in Manhattan, travel via a floating airport, and live in an apartment also acting as a bridge support.

FROM FULTON FERRY: BUILDING DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

September 28, 2017 - Spring 2018

New York Transit Museum

*Boerum Place & Schermerhorn St,
Brooklyn, NY 11201*

Traces the roots of Downtown Brooklyn all the way back to 1642, when the first commercial ferry slip between Long Island and New Amsterdam opened at the end of Old Fulton Street. Using archival photographs and objects from the Museum's extensive collections

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

October 12, 2017 - February 11, 2018

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors, an exhibition stretching all five boroughs, by artist and human rights activist, Ai Weiwei. The citywide art installation transforms a security fence into an artistic symbol of the international migration crisis and the current geopolitical landscape.

Includes over 300 sites across New York City including flagpoles, lampposts, and bus shelters. Here are 10 places you can view the various installations:

10. Gilded Cage in Central Park
 9. Arch at Washington Square Arch
 8. Circle Fence at the Unisphere
 7. Five Fences at The Cooper Union
 6. Exodus at Essex Street Market
 5. Bowery Fence at 248 Bowery
 4. Chrystie St. Fence at 189 Chrystie St.
 3. 7th Street Fence at 48 East 7th St.
 2. Banner 2 on 56th Street
 1. Harlem Shelter 1 at 110th Street
- www.publicartfund.org/ai_weiwei_good_fences_make_good_neighbors

GORDON MATTA-CLARK: ANARCHITECT

November 8, 2017 - April 8, 2018

*The Bronx Museum of the Arts
1040 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York 10456*

Best known for his monumental cuts, holes, apertures, and excisions to the facades of derelict homes and historic buildings in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, and abroad, Gordon Matta-Clark's work conveys a potent critique of architecture's role vis-à-vis the capitalist system. Taking as a point of departure the pivotal series of "cuts" produced in the Bronx in the early 1970s that led to his further exploration of the city as a field of action.