

New Urbanism

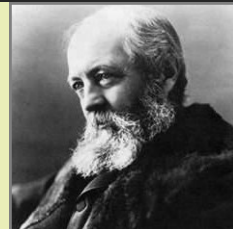


Places Everyone!

Newsletter Date: Nov. 28, 2012

Memorial Issue

A Case for Better Places.



Frederick Law Olmsted

Volume 5 Special Memorial Edition

*Give us this day,
our daily
discount outlet
merchandise...*

*Raise up the
multiplex and we
will make a
sacrifice...*

*Who remembers
when it all began
out here in no
man's land...*

*Before they
passed the
master plan...
Here in no man's
land. -Billy Joel*

No Man's Land
Goodnight, My Angel
River of Dreams
Sony Music
Entertainment 1993

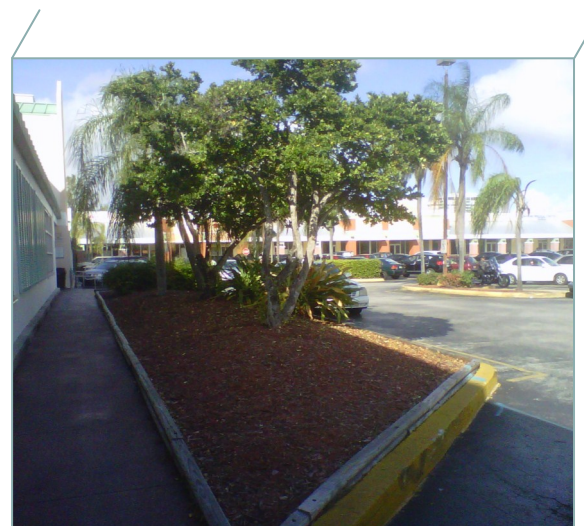
Olmsted's Legacy

When most urbanist's and planners think of places they begin by seeing the big picture (the region, then the cities, towns, villages, neighborhoods, and the transportation networks and modes that go along with them.

Just as important is that places are to be designed around people, since they are in fact human settlements. Although most urbanist's will argue that the reality is more contrary to this—that places have been designed around cars. For the most part in suburban America this is true, hence we have "miles and miles of parking space" as the lyrics from Billy Joel's song express. Until we see a major paradigm shift in planning of our regions, cities, and towns, parking lots will remain a key component our landscape for years to come.

Yet another key component I care to introduce is that places are also for animals—all of God's creatures, including our pets, among them dog's, and wild life habitats for birds of every kind, squirrels, frogs, turtles, and butterflies.

Not to be misunderstood, we are not advocating that your local big box retailer add a petting zoo anytime soon, but we are pointing attention to the fact that all of these places were at one point natural habitats for some kind of creature or plant growth prior to developments and parking lots that came with them. As we have advocated in the past, in "Pavements to Parks: The Parkmart" we believe there is always a place set aside for natural environments and habitats that can co-exist with those of human's.



Gardens for Wildlife

The photo above is a large planter area in front of a supermarket in North Miami, Florida. Although placed in front of the stores entrance vestibule its intended use may have been to serve as nothing else than a simple landscaping feature or to keep cars from parking directly in front. Never the less we see this as great potential to serve as an example for what could be a adapted for all stores and shopping centers everywhere.—a place for a natural habitat.

The Ped-Dog Walk

Any Where, USA

So who cares about animals, plants and trees?

Natural environments and animals play important roles in our lives whether we are pet lovers and outdoor lovers or not.

As a pet owner and dog lover, I personally have come to know how personally fulfilling and gratifying an experience it is to feel such a close bond and relationship with a pet (a family member). Most who share this sentiment would tend to do everything possible in making the best life possible for their family member.

As any dog lover knows, and I have come to realize is the importance of the dog walk. Taking your dog for a walk is not only a daily routine but a necessary activity that is just as beneficial for the owner than to the dog.

This leads us to think about that fact that where humans walk, so do dogs. Just as humans are “wired” or predisposed to walk in straight line paths so are dogs in following their masters behavioral patterns.

This is not rocket science, but many forget the simple need for walking

and on straight paths— safe from encumbrances and traffic.

Too often many of our “human settlements” designed and built for cars neglect that simple necessity to walk by not providing sidewalks or safe zones (enclaves) to walk safely.

Although many parks in urban centers and towns provide adequate places for people and their dogs (sidewalks, and dog runs are abundant) this is not always the case in suburban settings.

Although road engineers have identified humans as “peds”, a **de-humanizing** word, I also encourage the design of streets and places for people and their pets who share our world with us wherever we go.

Consider introducing the word “people” and “pets” as we are all creatures of God.



“Your brain is drawing connections between place and memory, even if you don’t realize it.”
-Jonas Salk on the subject of “biophilic” design.”



Courtesy Google Earth

Lake County does it again.

Sidewalks to nowhere: Absurdity at a Grand Scale.

The ridiculous notion that people walk in serpentine paths as opposed to straight paths should only be relevant while being shot at in movies with Gene Wilder. The creative “genius” who conjured this is a testament to the fact that wiggly lines on a drawing don’t account for much logic in reality on the ground.

Riverside Park, New York City

The “upper level” that functions like a esplanade, runs along Riverside Drive in this part of the upper west side of Manhattan. The narrow strip accommodates many functions and activities for people and dog walking apart from being a picturesque scenic park and street.



Sol Architecture + Partners LLC

Javier F. De Juan R.A., NCARB, MBA, CNU-a

Co-Founder and principal of Sol Architecture + Partners—NCARB certified Florida registered architect and urbanist with over 20 years of experience in Florida in a variety of public and private architectural projects.

SAP LLC is a Florida native practice offering a full range of professional architectural and interior design services including planning and urban design.

Our Vision: “To serve our communities and support them by advocating and developing sustainable, livable, walkable, and diverse compact mixed-use neighborhoods, towns, and streets.

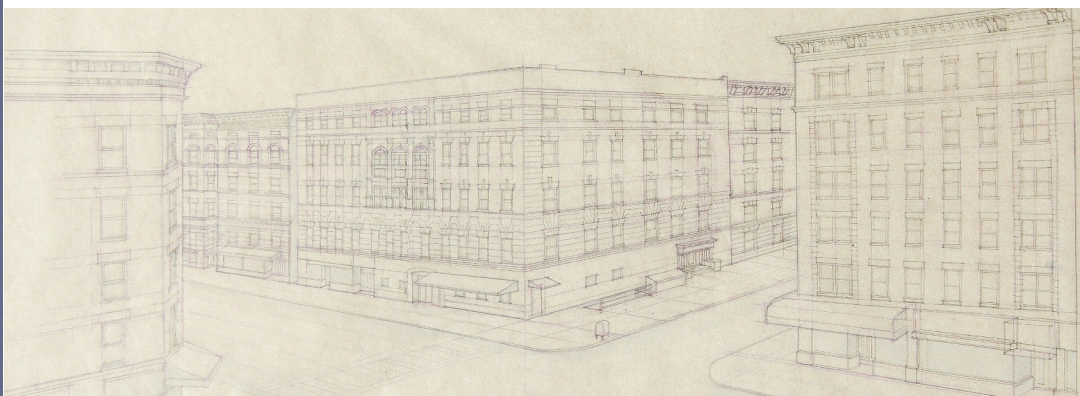


Illustration: Javier De Juan

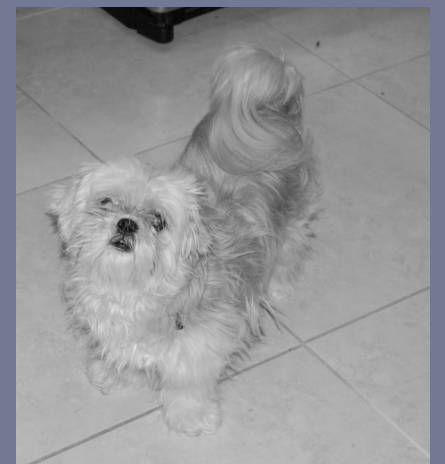
ACT NOW! Support better places and streets. Expect more.

Donate and Learn more:

The Congress for the New Urbanism CNU.org

SmartGrowthAmerica.org

National Wildlife Federation nwf.org



IN MEMORY

JOSIE “CHOPI” DE JUAN

Dedicated to our beloved Josie “chopi” - we miss you. You will always be in our hearts for the rest of the days our lives. We love you.

November 28, 2012.