

Skyscrapers

Learning from the original skyscrapers

Every major city in the world has one - the instantly recognized skyline. We see the whole but the image represents the collective and individual design efforts of a myriad of architects. They house the individual companies, institutions and dwelling units which make all cities pulse with that unique energy. However, often these giants of the city stand on their own with little connection to the greater landscape, other than to furnish real estate taxes and use the common infrastructure (communications, power, water & sewers). Which brings me to the world's first skyscrapers.



photo credit: Google Images

continued on page two

Earth Day

Gaylord Nelson, while a Wisconsin Senator in 1969, created the first Earth Day in part as a response to the massive oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara that year and the burning industrial water way of Cleveland's Cuyahoga River.

We too celebrate Earth Day this year on April 22nd by acknowledging the connection, importance and balance a good architect understands between his/her natural environment and a client's needs.

april 2015 contents

Skyscrapers	pg 1
Earth Day	pg 2
April 13th	pg 1
Arch-fact	pg 1
Archi-quote	pg 2
Arch-speak	pg 4
About	pg 4

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Archi-fact:

Construction of the historic and beautiful Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, as with all houses of worship, large and small, was a labor of love. Work began on the structure in the year 1506AD, continued over 100 years, and finally reached completed in the year 1612 AD.

Skyscrapers

continued from page one

Last month, during a break from an architectural conference Design M Group attended in Las Vegas, we headed out into the wide open desert spaces of the Southwest to visit Zion National Park, UT. Entering the valley floor of this geological marvel we witnessed firsthand the majesty of what can only be described as

Archi-quote:

"The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization" -

Frank Lloyd Wright



*photo credit:
National Parks Service
US Department of the
Interior*

the world's first skyscrapers. But rather than standing alone, each mountain or cliff, with its own individual identity and aesthetic, complimented the others around them. A wonder of design and function.

Unlike most of our city skylines, which can excite and confuse us with their energy - natural monuments calm, and help revitalize and refuel our commitment to, and appreciation of beauty, design, ourselves, and the larger world we inhabit.

As an architect these natural monuments inspire and strengthen my passion not only towards my profession but to the world I inhabit as a dweller in the US's largest and most exciting city. Every day at Design M Group we strive to bring these qualities into every building, and for every client and occupant.

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continued on page 3

April 13th

April 13th ushers in the 272nd birthday of Thomas Jefferson, a date, we as Americans have good cause to celebrate! Despite the inevitable controversy which follows all historic figures, once people realize their all too common human failings - one still marvels at his contributions and accomplishments - Principal author of the Declaration of Independence, philosopher, statesman, and the main instigator of the Louisiana Purchase which doubled the size of the US and launched the adventures of Lewis and Clark. And - most importantly for this newsletter, the only President who was an architect!

His bust graces the front of the US two dollar bill and US Nickel. The reverse side of the nickel had his home which he designed, Monticello which is in Charlottesville, Virginia.



photo credits: Google



However for a few years when the US Mint had issued commemorative coins the style of Jefferson's bust was changed and the reverse side was not graced with the drawing of Monticello. After a few years the US Mint restored the drawing of Monticello to its rightful place on the reverse side of the nickel in honor of the architect President Jefferson and as a celebration of the art of architecture in America.

Skyscrapers

continued from page two

In closing a bit of a background on "skyscrapers"...

The word skyscraper originally referred to a type of sail on a sailing ship.

A skyscraper is held together by a steel skeleton (usually) of vertical columns, horizontal girder beams and often diagonal beams for extra support. This structure distributes the immense weight in a way that ensures the integrity and safety of the building.

The Empire State Building in New York was the first building to have over 100 floors and was the tallest building in the world from 1931 until 1972.



photo credits: Google Images

The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, are the world's tallest twin buildings, standing at a height of 452 meters (1483 feet).

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About

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President



photo credit: Jenna Glatzer

Marcus Marino, RA, AIA is a leading architect in New York City. He received a Bachelors of Architecture from the prestigious Pratt Institute and Masters in the Science of Architecture and Urban Design from Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation. He received his license to practice architecture in New York State in 1981 and is licensed in a number of other States. Presently he serves as the Vice President of Public Advocacy of the New York State American Institute of Architects.

Archi-speak



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- PARK
- ZION
- NEEDS
- EMPIRE
- REVIEW
- OPTIONS
- PETRONAS
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- MONTICELLO
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