

December 20, 2015

<http://nypost.com/2015/12/20/the-citys-pathetic-push-to-prettyfy-those-awful-sidewalk-sheds/>

OPINION EDITORIAL

## The city's pathetic push to prettyfy those awful sidewalk sheds



Scaffolding covering many buildings all over New York City.

Photo: Angel Chevestt

By Post Editorial Board

What will New York City look like in the future? It won't matter much — because all you'll see are the beams, walls and roofs of the sidewalk sheds guiding your every step.

You know the structures: the not-so-temporary block-long huts the city requires developers to place beneath the construction scaffolding that climbs high-rises like steel ivy.

City sidewalks now contains about 200 miles' worth of the sheds. They're ostensibly to protect you — from wall-scaling construction workers in Midtown or loose gargoyles on the Upper West Side.

And they're not going anywhere — because the city can't be bothered to find ways to reduce this ugliness. It could, for example, ease building-inspection regulations — massively toughened in the Giuliani years after a child was injured by falling debris.

Instead, it's trying to make the sheds less awful. Last week, the city unveiled four new shed designs in the hopes of making your stroll through the rickety tunnels a bit more pleasant — the winners of a contest run by the New York Building Congress.

Today's sheds encroach on pedestrians' room to walk while blocking views of the sky and shop windows. The new designs try to fix that:

“ScaffoldWing” has a ceiling that's translucent to let in more natural light, and angled so rainwater would run off the side instead of dripping through.

“UrbanArbor” has its own light-friendly ceiling, plus fall-foliage-colored beams to evoke the light and color of a tree-lined street.

“G-Shed” uses LED lighting and higher shed roofs to make storefronts more visible.

Finally, “Side+Ways+Shed” puts the support beams up against the building to clear more room on the sidewalk, also use LED lighting.

Synthetic lighting? It'll be like walking through Times Square at night — except it'll look like that 24 hours a day.

The big hitch is cost. How many developers will fork over the cash to make temporary cosmetic upgrades that don't yield any profit?

The smart bet, in short, is that dark, dank and cramped sheds will continue to hold New York's prime real estate hostage.