

Today's News - Tuesday, September 1, 2009

- A look at how some cities are taking charge of their streets with design manuals - and how they're working.
- NYC issues "Age Friendly New York," with initiatives that "might even mean a nicer city for the rest of us, not to mention some much need work for the city's designers."
- Peter Hall takes on U.K.'s hand-out of funds to turn empty shops into community amenities: "culture on the high street" could be "our renaissance art" (there are skeptics, of course).
- Vietnam Architects Association takes on restoration of Hanoi's ancient streets.
- Dyckhoff's take on heritage: it's not "about what we preserve, but why we preserve it. It isn't just about architecture."
- With 2,000 old bunkers in Germany, two architects are making a career out of transforming them into modern, affordable apartments.
- Russell on a Brooklyn development to house the homeless, the wealthy, and a ballet school: "This is architecture good enough to put most market builders to shame."
- An iffy future for an ambitious and highly-lauded Pugh + Scarpa affordable housing project: "We're as off that job as you can be off a job."
- A knight-errant of those made homeless by disasters in Taiwan and mainland China: his "open" method involves 'less architecture, more participants, and more ancestors.'"
- Hawthorne cheers Anaheim's rail hub (with a few caveats): "the most prominent piece of green architecture in Orange County and one of the most prominent in Southern California."
- Meanwhile, "in a campaign of demolition by neglect," it looks like San Francisco's "vital and lively" 1939 Transbay Transit Terminal will bite the dust (and nobody seems to care).
- Hume x 2 - from Oslo: its "reinvention as a chic waterfront town" (including its "dazzling new opera house") "leaves Toronto in the dust."
- Foster + Partners wins competition to design Incheon, South Korea's very green master plan.
- Good news! Historic Tempelhof airport to become Berlin's largest park by next summer; and Israel's largest garbage dump to be a 2,000-acre park - 50,000-seat amphitheater included (though not by next summer).
- At Gazprom Tower hearings today, protesters object to efforts to change zoning laws so tower can reach 400 meters (UNESCO objects, too).
- Alsop's troubled The Public finally opens to the public - and they like it!
- Bad economy hits Battersea Power Station owner, who claims "there is no doubt whatsoever that the power station will be developed" (we hear they're looking for a partner on the £4 billion project).
- Kensington Palace portico plans rejected as too "twee."
- Ending on a good news note: the National Building Museum names Christopher Alexander as the 11th Vincent Scully Prize Laureate.

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[Rethinking the Street Space: Toolkits and Street Design Manuals: Cities are taking charge when it comes to their streets...with manuals and toolkits to guide their design...\[a\] look at some of the emerging street design manuals and how they're working.](#) By Amber Hawkes and Georgia Sheridan/Torti Gallas and Partners [images, links]- PLANetizen

[Good Old New York: ...the city released a report "Age Friendly New York"...roughly 40% of the 59 initiatives deal directly or indirectly with issues of equal concern to architects and planners...it might even mean a nicer city for the rest of us, not to mention some much need work for the city's designers.](#) [links]- The Architect's Newspaper

[Op-Ed: Shops may be our renaissance art: Communities secretary John Denham is giving £3 million to 57 councils...to turn empty shops into community halls, or fill them with art galleries, cafes...British Retail Consortium \(BRC\)...is sceptical about the plan. But what else to do? ...culture on the high street could be one answer.](#) By Peter Hall-Regeneration & Renewal magazine

[Hanoi to restore ancient streets to mark its 1000th anniversary: The Vietnam Architects Association has recently begun a project to restore the Hang Dao – Hang Dau streets to preserve the special character of Hanoi architecture, as well as returning the ancient streets pictured by painter Bui Xuan Phai.](#) - Sai Gon Giai Phong Newspaper (Viet Nam)

[Heritage: from chocolate box to concrete box: Heritage has democratised and rightly even includes pig-ugly buildings...Ever since it was invented, this cosy idea...has been whittled away by those it excluded...We now know that heritage isn't so much about what we preserve, but why we preserve it. It isn't just about architecture.](#) By Tom Dyckhoff- The Times (UK)

[Old bunkers get new life as flats in Bremen: Rainer Mielke has made a career out of transforming old bunkers into modern, affordable apartments. Out of these dilapidated buildings, Mielke and his partner Klaus Freudenberg create unexpectedly airy spaces that marry the old with the new.](#) [link to images]- The Local (Germany)

[Schermerhorn Mixes Homeless, \\$2 Million Townhouses, Ballerinas: This is architecture good enough to put most market builders to shame, but the deeper story is how architecture and a proven program survive in the face of an infuriating, overcomplicated financing process...](#) By James S. Russell -- Susan Rodriguez/Polshek Partnership; Rogers Marvel; Common Ground [image, links]- Bloomberg News

[Fuller Brushoff: Pugh + Scarpa tossed from LA's ambitious Fuller Lofts affordable housing project...Scarpa \[said\] his firm is no longer associated with the Lofts, citing contractual differences...as a major cause of the firm's exit. "We're as off that job as you can be off a job"...](#) [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

[Knight-Errant of the Homeless: Activist-architect Hsieh Ying-chun lives his ideals by creating eco-structures and empowering earthquake victims in Taiwan and mainland China to rebuild homes....Hsieh's "open" method involves "less architecture, more participants, and more ancestors." -- Atelier-3](#) [images]- Taiwan Review

[Anaheim's rail hub: ...trains have also become a key component of efforts by young planners, architects and politicians to re-imagine or revivify American urbanism...Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center, or ARTIC...the most](#)

prominent piece of green architecture in Orange County and one of the most prominent in Southern California. By Christopher Hawthorne -- HOK; Parsons Brinckerhoff [images]- Los Angeles Times

Transbay Transit Terminal in the way of progress: 30 years ago, the [terminal] was a vital and lively building...Cal Trans and the City of San Francisco have deliberately allowed this building to deteriorate in a campaign of demolition by neglect...The craze has now overtaken...the public...as they now seem to be uncritical of the plan. Another historical monument soon to be demolished. -- Timothy L. Pflueger (1939) [image]- Bay Area Public Transportation Examiner

Urban Envy: Oslo's reinvention as a chic waterfront town leaves Toronto in the dust: immense oil wealth has given this Hamilton-sized city a unique opportunity -- its leaders are running with it...an urban centre that has everything you want in a city -- and less. By Christopher Hume -- Snøhetta; Jensen & Skodvin Architects; Space Group- Toronto Star

Opera house embodies Oslo's new look: Dazzling structure interacts fruitfully with both visitors and its setting...a city in a rush to reintegrate with its waterfront. By Christopher Hume -- Snøhetta- Toronto Star

Foster & Partners wins Incheon, South Korea, masterplan: 300 sq km masterplan is intended to create a centre for green and sustainable industry and serve a population that is expected to increase tenfold to nearly 350,000 residents and commuters. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Tempelhof to become enormous city park: The airfield of Berlin's historic Tempelhof airport will become the German capital's largest park by the summer of 2010, city officials announced on Monday.- The Local (Germany)

50,000-seat amphitheater planned for Israel's garbage mountain: ...planned for Hiriya, formerly Israel's largest garbage dump and now the site of the 2,000-acre Ariel Sharon Park...Besides serving as a green lung for Gush Dan...will serve as a floodplain. Its planners hope it will put an end to the winter flooding that typically affects certain neighborhoods in south Tel Aviv and in Holon. -- Latz + Partner; Broida-Maoz; Moria Sekely- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Gazprom Guards, Protestors Clash Over St. Petersburg Skyscraper: ..."shame on Gazprom" for seeking to change the city's zoning laws so work on the 400-meter tower can continue...UNESCO...said last week that...306-year-old historic city center may be stricken from its World Heritage List... -- RMJM- Bloomberg News

Troubled arts centre in West Bromwich finally opens to The Public: ...West Bromwich's much derided £63m arts centre, has finally opened in full and appears to have won over its main critics -- the residents of the West Midlands town. -- Will Alsop- Guardian (UK)

Battersea Power Station owner in debt crisis: Future of London landmark in doubt again...after it emerged that the Irish property company that owns the site is struggling for survival..."There is no doubt whatsoever that the power station will be developed." - Rafael Vinoly- Guardian (UK)

Council rejects Kensington Palace portico as 'twee': "The application will be approved if the applicant excludes the loggia element"..."decoratively over-elaborate and almost embarrassingly 'twee...one could easily imagine its being replicated one day in a garden furniture catalogue." -- John Simpson & Partners- The Times (UK)

2009 Scully Prize: Christopher Alexander named eleventh Vincent Scully Prize Laureate: ...being recognized for his seminal books such as A Pattern Language and The Nature of Order An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe as well as his efforts toward inspiring students to be more thoughtful design practitioners.- National Building Museum

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