

Today's News - Friday, October 2, 2009

- A new report concludes building denser cities would do little to reduce CO2 emissions, but reducing the weight of vehicles would.
- A possible future for strip malls: turn them into "community-owned hubs that generate capital within their neighborhood and keep it there."
- Baillieu calls for political will to change the course of NIMBYism: "new ways to 'engage with the community' are not going to solve the problem"; and Alsop's move to RMJM is a smart one (better than being "unhappily yoked to Archial").
- Archial wins green light to raze an RMJM "post-modern gem" (a bit of unintended sweet revenge perhaps?).
- Farrelly on the "hungry rats" circling Sydney Harbor: "It's all so breathtakingly daft it makes you suspicious...It wouldn't be the first time rats have gnawed our harbour."
- Russell on the cautionary tale of Seattle Art Museum's "Faustian tower deal" (is MoMA following suit?).
- King on Dallas's new "edifice complex": will its starchitect-studded Arts District bring the city what it so desperately wants?
- San Francisco's new Walt Disney Family Museum "is a chance to see what architects and designers can get away with inside the historic sanctum" of the Presidio.
- An eyeful of BD's 2009 Young Architect of the Year shortlist of five.
- Weekend diversions:
 - Harvard celebrates civic architect J. Max Bond Jr.
 - "Visual Acoustics" documentary traces Julius Shulman's career, but "his personal world remains opaque"; while in Pittsburgh, "Palm Springs Modern: Photographs by Julius Shulman" is "an opportunity not to be missed."
 - In Berlin, Thomas Demand's paper architecture is "a surprising exploration of German identity" with a "significance beyond his deliberately imperfect replicas."
 - Page turners: "The Freedoms of Suburbia" celebrates suburban life, but the obvious "distaste for modernism means there is no mention of attempts to expand the design options" for suburban dwellers.
 - "The Secret Lives of Buildings": while "one cannot disagree with much of what Hollis has to say, the way in which he says it can be irritating" (but still worth reading).
 - "Design Revolution" celebrates inventions that "boost habitats, humanity, health, and happiness."
 - In "Change by Design, IDEO's Tim Brown "is kind of right and kind of wrong."
 - Q&A with Hagberg re: "Dark Nostalgia," style, memory, and nostalgia's curiously bad rap: "we have become nostalgic for a time that never existed."
 - "Artists' Studios" by MJ Long celebrates "the act of making art with the details."

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Forget Curbing Suburban Sprawl: Building denser cities would do little to reduce CO2 emissions, a new National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report concludes...an immediate 0.1% reduction in the weight of all vehicles would be 10 times more effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions than an immediate 0.1% increase in housing density nationwide. - MIT Technology Review

Creating Neighborhood Capital from Strip Malls: ...they're rarely an important part of...cities. Ava Bromberg says they can be. Her idea is to turn strip malls into community-owned hubs that generate capital within their neighborhood and keep it there. - PLANetizen

This is in all our back yards: Political parties must address the fact that nimbyism is a symptom of a failing planning system...what is never discussed is why people are so hostile...But incentives and new ways to "engage with the community" are not going to solve this problem; Will Alsop at RMJM has a rather more convincing ring to it than when he was unhappily yoked to Archial. By Amanda Baillieu - BD/Building Design (UK)

Archial wins green light to raze RMJM's post-modern gem: 1985 Balfour Stewart House office block in Edinburgh is to be flattened to make way for a 72-home housing scheme...finally spelling the end for the 'obsolete' Post-Modernist structure in the city's West Murrayfield Conservation area. [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Hungry rats eye harbour delights: Consider. A global design competition hijacked...by one of the jury, an ex-prime minister, no less...Add the handing of Sydney's most glamorous development opportunity ever to a motley "delivery authority"...It's all so breathtakingly daft it makes you suspicious...It wouldn't be the first time rats have gnawed our harbour. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Lend Lease/Richard Rogers; Thalix - Sydney Morning Herald

Subprime Mess Topples Seattle Art Museum's Faustian Tower Deal: The lure of a "free" addition damaged the museum in a lasting way...ended up with too many cramped levels...That's why curators hate vertical museums...MoMA looks ready to repeat its mistake with a bloated wedge of zoning exploitation...The lesson of [Seattle's] debacle is that it's time to expand cultural institutions another way. By James S. Russell -- Brad Cloepfil/Allied Works Architecture; NBBJ; Jean Nouvel - Bloomberg News

The Dallas Edifice Complex: The Winspear Opera House and the Wyly Theatre will change the face of downtown, but will they bring Dallas what it so desperately wants? ...an intellectual treat. But an arts district does not a city make—especially [one] trying hard to be anything but the city around it. By John King -- I.M. Pei (1989); Renzo Piano (2003); Koolhaas/Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA); Prince-Ramus/REX; Foster + Partners; Michel Desvigne/JJR; Kendall/Heaton; Mayne/Morphosis; Edward Larrabee Barnes (1984); BGO Architects; Peter Walker; Sasaki [images] - D Magazine (Dallas)

The House the Mouse Built: New Walt Disney Family Museum treads lightly on picky Presidio...From the design standpoint, the \$110 million project is a chance to see what architects and designers can get away with inside the historic sanctum... -- Page & Turnbull; Rockwell Group - The Architect's Newspaper

YAYA 2009 shortlist announced: Five firms have made the shortlist for BD's 2009 Young Architect of the Year award -- David Kohn Architects; Duggan Morris Architects; Glowacka Rennie Architects; Osa/KHBT; Prewett Bizley Architects [links to images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

"Practice, Education, and Activism": Harvard celebrates civic architect J. Max Bond Jr...a colorful timeline of photos and architectural models — is on display at Gund Hall...“He carved the path for so many in our profession, and his determination, wisdom, and guidance will continue to inspire all who knew him.” -- Mohsen Mostafavi; Davis Brody Bond Aedas - Harvard Gazette

The Lens That Loved Modernism: "Visual Acoustics" traces the architectural photographer Julius Shulman's career and the rise of the Modernist movement to which he's linked...As the film makes clear, [he] wasn't simply an architectural photographer but a lifestyle propagandist...his personal world remains opaque, at least in the film. - New York Times

"Palm Springs Modern: Photographs by Julius Shulman" [at Carnegie Museum of Art's Heinz Architectural Center] ncludes photos of buildings by...John Lautner, A. Quincy Jones, Paul Williams, E. Stewart Williams, Albert Frey, William Cody, Donald Wexler and Palmer & Krisel...majority of the images have never been previously shown, making this an opportunity not to be missed. - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Thomas Demand's Paper Architecture: ..."Nationalgalerie" in Berlin...addresses an event or subject matter that has shaped

German history over the last century...a surprising exploration of German identity...the scenes tend to have a narrative or significance beyond his deliberately imperfect replicas...Architecture is one of the artist's abiding concerns... [images]-
Blueprint Magazine

Book review: Semi-precious: "The Freedoms of Suburbia": There's plenty of special pleading in Paul Barker's new book celebrating suburban life...his blanket distaste for modernism, means there is no mention...of attempts to expand the design options for dwellers in suburbia — whether in the 1950s/60s schemes...or more recent proposals... - BD/Building Design (UK)

Book review: "The Secret Lives of Buildings: from the Parthenon to the Vegas Strip in 13 Stories" by Edward Hollis...While one cannot disagree with much of what Hollis has to say, the way in which he says it can be irritating. One cannot always be sure in his whimsical narratives where history ends and fantasy begins. - Telegraph (UK)

Book review: 16 Inventions That Boost Habitats, Humanity, Health and Happiness: "Design Revolution: 100 Products that Empower People" by Emily Pilloton/Project H...features 115 solutions that range from high-tech prototypes from industrial design firms to DIY hacks that originated in the developing world. [slide show]- Fast Company

Book review: Redefining a Profession: "Change by Design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation" by Tim Brown... "What excites the best (design) thinkers today is the challenge of applying their skills to problems that matter." He's kind of right and kind of wrong...he avoids the trap of presenting design thinking as a panacea...charts its failures as well as successes... - New York Times

Rooms With a View to the Past: Eva Hagberg's "Dark Nostalgia"... explores 25 contemporary spaces that have been designed with an eye to the past..."we have become nostalgic for a time that never existed"...[she] talks about style, memory, and nostalgia's curiously bad rap. - The Faster Times

Book review: "Artists' Studios" by MJ Long: ...a wonderful insight into the repackaging of everyday households into spaces that are compact, but large enough for an artist's studio...every project, Long was celebrating the act of making art with the details... - Blueprint Magazine

Design Fall 2009: Cozy, Communitecture, Teutorial [images, videos]- New York Times Style Magazine



-- Zaha Hadid Architects: Cairo Expo City, Egypt
-- Richard Meier & Partners: ECM City Tower, Prague, Czech Republic

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