

## Today's News - Tuesday, November 9, 2010

- The New Urbanist vs. Landscape Urbanist debate continues as Krieger answers Duany: "Your rumored coup at the Harvard GSD is greatly exaggerated...let me assure all those concerned about the 'coup,' that Urban Design at Harvard is alive and well."
- Welton on the winning goods the U.S. has for export to China: architecture - "Americans bring to the table a sense of place with know-how about great urban spaces, tall buildings" (but look for China to start catching up).
- The "emotional debate" re: height limits in Washington, DC, has "a small tribe of developers, architects and urban experts" questioning the rules, and preservationists very wary (though it's all academic - it would take an act of Congress to change things, so don't expect any changes any time soon).
- Jersey City residents want their own High Line; a developer wants apartments (with green space included, but residents aren't buying it).
- Kamin is glad a Chicago plaza got a much-needed facelift, but because there was no architect or landscape architect involved, the "outcome is predictably prosaic" and "falls flat in its quest to become a civic gathering place."
- Perhaps they should all check out NYU-Poly's Betaville digital tool that allows all the stakeholders in a project to participate.
- Gellner takes on Modernist glass boxes: "as much as architects adore" them, "they simply don't work as buildings."
- A Winnipeg architect calls for the city to pay heed to its (mostly unsung) Modernist treasures as one of its most important examples faces "impending demolition."
- Bey offers a visual sampling of what's been lost since the bulldozers began rolling at Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital complex (so many!).
- Peck gives Gehry's Ruvo Center a mixed review: "it is indeed full of surprises" (good ones, that is), but "patients get the short end of the stick, design-wise" (apparently there's also a pesky dead bird problem, too - yuck).
- Campbell sings high praise for the interior of a Brookline church chapel, "one of Boston's best architectural spaces" (though the exterior leaves much to be desired).
- Litt cheers Holzman's "eye-catching, thoughtful, almost subversively inventive" addition to Kent State University that is "a tour de force and a delightful rebuke to the anti-design mood at KSU."
- An eye-ful of OMA's first cultural building in France; move over Seattle - it's a library.
- The U.K.'s AHMM "hits pay dirt" in Oklahoma City with 12(!) projects: "the city is posed to become a model of European-style urban planning in the U.S."
- Lubell cheers why Architecture's "makeover magic" that turned an old Venice, CA, WPA-era power plant into an art gallery that "makes the old feel alive."
- Of architects and good deeds: Lasky looks deep into why "socially responsible design is a whole lot harder than it looks" + Bryan Bell urges activism in design because architecture and the design professionals "have 'a superhero ability to see things that aren't there,'" and "can harness these skills to improve the community" + Walker cheers designNYC's apparently very successful pairing of designers with nonprofits (but will pro bono work lead to paying gigs?).
- The UN measures nations' quality of life: Norway tops the list, with Australia, New Zealand, U.S., and Ireland filling out the Top 5.

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Krieger to Duany: Your rumored coup at the Harvard GSD is greatly exaggerated...the assumption that we will now abdicate the study of the North American city to the "landscape/ecological urbanists," as he puts it, is, well, a sign of uncharacteristic insecurity on his part...as my mail box fills with panicked "Is it True?" queries, let me assure all those concerned about the 'coup,' that Urban Design at Harvard...is alive and well... By Alex Krieger -- Andres Duany; Emily Talen- Metropolis Magazine

Fifty Cities in Twenty Years: Low-cost Chinese goods may flood U.S. markets and the balance of payments might tip favorably toward Beijing, but America still exports planetloads of one commodity eastward: Architecture...Americans bring to the table a sense of place with know-how about great urban spaces, tall buildings and complexes... By J. Michael Welton -- HOK; Kohn Pedersen Fox; SOM; Duda Paine- Huffington Post

In the Capital, Rethinking Old Limits on Buildings: In 1910, Congress passed an act limiting the heights of buildings in Washington, DC...on the act's centennial, a small tribe of developers, architects and urban experts are questioning the orthodoxy of the rule's application. A modest change, they argue, would inject some vitality into the urban scene...It is an emotional debate... -- Shalom Baranes; Christopher Leinberger; Dorn C. McGrath Jr.; Roger K. Lewis- New York Times

Sparks Fly Over a 'High Line' Park in Jersey City: Clashing with residents who want green space, the developer who owns the old rail line embankment...wants to build apartments on the six-acre property...has produced designs that could also accommodate up to four blocks of open space. But the coalition remains committed to the idea of a park... -- Dean Marchetto Architects; A. Neessen Associates [images]- New York Times

Fixed but not finer: Renovated Plaza of the Americas solves practical problems yet fails to soar as a public space...did not hire an architect or landscape architect because they considered the project a renovation, not a redesign. The outcome is predictably prosaic...falls flat in its quest to become a civic gathering place. By Blair Kamin [images]- Chicago Tribune

Urban Planning Meets Online Gaming: NYU-Poly Introduces Betaville, Digital Tool to Revolutionize Public Planning...may revolutionize the way public environments are designed and built...allows all stakeholders in a development project - from architects and builders to neighborhood residents - to participate in and influence the end result. [links]- PR Newswire

A window into 'glass box' flaws: For occupants, form fails function test...The trouble is that, as much as architects adore glass boxes, they simply don't work as buildings...for any kind of life beyond the vegetal, the typical modernist glass box is the least functional form possible. By Arrol Gellner -- Walter Gropius; Joseph Paxton; Mes van der Rohe; Philip Johnson; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- Boston Globe

Modernist buildings have a story to tell: Winnipeg [is] less well known as home to one of the finest surviving collections of modernist architecture in Canada...impending demolition of a building that has contributed more to [the city's] historic narrative than almost any other, is causing some to evaluate the importance of placing modernist buildings under the protective wing of the heritage preservation movement. By Brent Bellamy/Number Ten Architectural Group -- GBR Architects (1964); LM Architectural Group (1959.); Stantec Architecture- Winnipeg Free Press (Canada)

Despite earlier prognosis, city to terminate Michael Reese Hospital: So what has been lost at Reese since the bulldozers began rolling? Just a sample... By Lee Bey [images]- WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

Brain Health: Frank Gehry's Ruvo Center gets a mixed review: I was struck at first glance by more a sense of intrigue than of shock...and it is indeed full of surprises...From the healthcare design standpoint...I'd have to say that the clinical area falls just a tad short...patients get the short end of the stick, design-wise. By Richard L. Peck [images]- Metropolis Magazine

A home for light, music, God, and children: Brookline church chapel sings...One of Boston's best architectural spaces has just opened...Korean Church of Boston...exterior...hasn't been a unanimous hit with the neighbors. But I can't imagine anyone failing to fall in love with the chapel interior... By Robert Campbell -- Brian Healy [image]- Boston Globe

Malcolm Holzman brings life to Kent State University with additions to Roe Green Center: ...an eye-catching, thoughtful, almost subversively inventive pair of additions to its Music and Speech Center...a tour de force and a delightful rebuke to the anti-design mood at KSU, which has effectively suppressed individual expression or creativity among the architects who designed previous buildings on campus. By Steven Litt -- Holzman Moss Bottino Architecture [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

why Architecture's Makeover Magic at L&M Arts: An old WPA-era power plant finds new life as an art gallery...it manages to

combine old and new in a way that "makes the old feel alive," said wHY partner Kulapat Yantrasast...it's a huge step for a community that, while rich in artistic talent, has few world-class galleries to show for it. By Sam Lubell [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

OMA Makes Inroads Into France With Caen Library: ...the firm's first cultural building in the country...will meet the Haute Qualité Environnementale, a standard for sustainable building in France. [slide show]- Architectural Record

UK Firm Hits Pay Dirt in Downtown OKC: London-based Alford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) lands 12 separate projects to reinvent Oklahoma City sites...some of the city's most dilapidated downtown neighborhoods...the city is posed to become a model of European-style urban planning in the U.S. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

The (Limited) Power of Good Intentions: Socially responsible design is a whole lot harder than it looks...An obvious reason we see utopian design schemes going nowhere is because of the sheer number of schemers... By Julie Lasky -- Mariana Amatullo/Designmatters; David Stairs/Designers Without Borders; Cameron Sinclair/Architecture for Humanity; Lee Davis/NESsT; Project H Design; Design Corps [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Loeb Fellow Urges Activism in Design: Architects are recognizing their responsibility to use their skills in community projects...taking on a greater number of issues, and embodying a greater scope of roles. Designers, who have "a superhero ability to see things that aren't there," can harness these skills to improve the community... "Architecture and the design professions have so much unrealized potential... -- Bryan Bell/Design Corps - The Harvard Crimson

designNYC Pairs Designers With Nonprofits: ...12 projects launched...earlier this year...ranging from new lighting and landscaping for upper Broadway, to a healthy eating program...to a guide that helps residents understand how to reduce energy consumption...the impact of many of these concepts still have yet to be seen, as issues like maintenance and community acceptance come into play. By Alissa Walker -- Robin Key Landscape Architects; Andre Kikoski; Sohbr Studio [images, links]- GOOD Magazine

Norway Tops Nations in Quality of Life: ...on top once again in the UN's annual rankings of global wealth, health and education...Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Ireland took the following places in the top five. - Discover Magazine



Toyo Ito & Associates: Za-Koenji Public Theatre, Suginami-ku, Tokyo, Japan

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