

Today's News - Tuesday, December 14, 2010

EDITOR'S NOTE: We woke up yesterday morning wishing it was Sunday only to find we had no Internet, phone, or cable connections for most of the day (proving be careful what you wish for - those pesky technology gods just might oblige). Apologies for missed posting...

- ArcSpace brings us a thoughtful renovation and expansion of a church in Tampa, Florida.
- Rochon has never been more riveting: Architects "can't stop bullets," but in the right architects' hands, "buildings can nudge people to take a measure of their lives" (makeover of Toronto's Regent Park could prove her case - hopefully).
- Architects and planners don't see a fairy tale ending for Tata's massive Camelot development; it's a "danger to the city's skyline and would violate the edict of Chandigarh" and could lead to "massive uncontrolled urbanization."
- U.K.'s Localism Bill: is it a "people power" bill "allowing neighborhood democracy to flourish," or will it lead to "intransigent local protest groups" blocking "necessary development and much-needed new housing"?
- Glancey says bring it on: "Dull cul-de-sacs may benefit from local people making planning decisions" - with some reservations (though sometimes a shark diving through a roof is not a bad thing).
- Edwards offers his own caveats: the "Localism Bill is radical but fraught with difficulty": it "can be easily hijacked by nimbyism."
- Ideo offers up examples that prove "powerful individualism is often what leads to strong communities."
- Proof the opposite can be true: Columbia University wins its eminent domain battle and can move ahead with \$6.3 billion expansion plans (shades of Kelo and not all are pleased).
- Could a serious battle be brewing over bike lanes in NYC? (we hope not, though we cheer plans for "a major advertising campaign featuring celebrities who would warn cyclists 'to stop riding like jerks'").
- Heymann's 3rd installment of "Landscape with Buildings": "where once site was seen as setting, now it is seen as source" and a "primary form-driving factor in current architectural design" (great pix).
- Kamin's promised "dubious design moves of 2010" (ouch!).
- Moore makes his picks for the best of 2010 (and a turkey or two - including localism).
- Gardner bemoans Gehry's 8 Spruce Street (a.k.a. Beekman Tower): it "seems so thoroughly sad and unimpressive" and "depressing in the spectacle of this lionized star...thoroughly defanged and declawed by the forces of dullness."
- Kamin on Stern winning the 2011 Driehaus Prize for Classical Architecture: he's a "pluralist" who manages to upset both modernists and classicists.
- Skurman receives France's Chevalier des Arts Medal for Architecture: the classical architect has earned "the respect and admiration of the Beaux-Arts community."
- Nathaniel Kahn feels his father's spirit as he tours the Trenton Bath House, now restored.
- The newly-minted Middle East AIA Chapter hopes "to increase the ethics and design standards in the region" and sees the building slowdown as "a chance to discuss issues that were ignored in the frantic construction pace of recent years."
- Amit blasts the sad state of American design schools, lamenting the "lackluster quality of job applicants" who "seem to have a sense of entitlement that has no place in reality."
- Lui rakes design school rankings over the coals.
- On a brighter note, the Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University in Hyderabad, India, launches a masters degree course in conservation planning "to educate students about ways of planning and developing cities without compromising on its heritage and environment."

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[Alfonso Architects: Tampa Covenant Church Addition & Renovation, Tampa, Florida](#)

[Architects: They can't stop bullets, but they can create hope: Architecture is only as great as the aspirations of its society. If they are high, you can achieve gradual healing...The citizen architect cannot do it alone. Neither can she stop bullets from flying. But watch for the ways buildings can nudge people to take a measure of their lives. By Lisa Rochon - Samuel Mockbee; Patkau Architects; Diamond + Schmitt Architects; Hariri Pontarini Architects - Globe and Mail \(Canada\)](#)

[Architects to appeal to Ratan Tata against Camelot project: Prominent architects and town planners from Punjab and Chandigarh have joined hands...19 towers, some as high as 35 storeys...would defy town planning norms...posed danger to the city's skyline and would violate the edict of Chandigarh. -- Indian Institute of Architects - The Tribune \(India\)](#)

[Communities take charge under 'people power' bill: ...local residents will have a say in everything from town hall salaries to where new houses are built...Localism Bill...allowing neighbourhood democracy to flourish....But business leaders and planning experts warned it would let intransigent local protest groups block necessary development and much-needed new housing. - Daily Mail \(UK\)](#)

[Spice up the suburbs with the help of the localism bill: Dull cul-de-sacs may benefit from local people making planning decisions. But such power requires education too...My concern is less that local communities lack the will to compromise over building matters, but that we lack the expertise to do so. By Jonathan Glancey - Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[The Localism Bill is radical but fraught with difficulty: Its central theme is decentralisation...But there lies its biggest danger. For localism can be easily hijacked by nimbyism...What is welcome is that the Bill does not seek wholesale changes to the planning system but the changes that are to be made may prove to be the most profound since 1947. By Martin Edwards - Building \(UK\)](#)

[Ideo: Six Remarkable Communities, Built by Fostering Individualism: Putting the "I" in online and real-life communities can result in a stronger feeling of "we"...powerful individualism is often what leads to strong communities. Many of the most successful communities are created when people are empowered to take ownership and have a voice. - Fast Company](#)

[Columbia University's Expansion Allowed by U.S. Supreme Court in Eminent Domain Case: ...can move ahead with plans for a \\$6.3 billion expansion of its Manhattanville campus..."The court of appeals decision is a terrible precedent regarding eminent domain and the rights of property owners in New York." - Bloomberg News](#)

[City Council Hears Sides of Bike Lane Battle: ...the first formal questioning of the city's transportation commissioner...about the cycling network she has been overseeing...Advocates argued that the lanes encourage a safer, more environmentally friendly mode of transportation...Opponents lamented the loss of parking spaces and traveling lanes for automobiles... -- Janette Sadik-Khan - New York Times](#)

Site, Ascendant: ...where once site was seen as setting, now it is seen as source...a primary form-driving factor in current architectural design...3rd of a series on landscape and buildings...from architect David Heymann's "Landscape with Buildings: Essays on Site Design." -- Robert Irwin; James Turrell; Tadashi Kawamata; Gordon Matta-Clark; Ralph Rapson; Tod Williams Billie Tsien; Mitchell/Giurgola; Alvaro Siza; Rafael Moneo; Maya Lin; Zaha Hadid; Peter Zumthor; Herzog & de Meuron; Frank Gehry; Rem Koolhaas/OMA [images, links]- Places Journal

Dubious design moves of 2010: From the Wrigley Building's icebox facade to the Chicago Spire hole. By Blair Kamin -- Gensler, Lucien Lagrange [images, links]- Chicago Tribune

The best architecture of 2010: ...impressed by Zaha Hadid's Maxxi and saddened by the loss of Hastings pier...the year of the pop-up...government has added to the confusion by ripping up existing planning structures in the name of localism, without putting anything very convincing in its place... By Rowan Moore -- Herzog & de Meuron; Thomas Heatherwick; Jean Nouvel; Kazuyo Sejima; MVRDV; 6a Architects; Caruso St John; Carmody Groarke- Observer (UK)

Gehry undone: Spruce Street building billows to nowhere: New York City is where the world's most daring architects come to complete their dullest projects...there is something depressing in the spectacle of this lionized star on the international scene thoroughly defanged and declawed by the forces of dullness that in Gotham always, or nearly always, carry the day. By James Gardner- The Real Deal (NYC)

The pluralist: Robert A.M. Stern wins the 2011 Richard H. Driehaus Prize for Classical Architecture: ...non-ideological approach has managed to upset both of architecture's camps—the modernists, who accuse Stern of shaping a stage-set historicism, and the classicists, who claim he takes liberties with cherished archetypes. By Blair Kamin [images]- Chicago Tribune

Andrew Skurman Receives Chevalier des Arts Medal for Architecture from France: ...classical architect awarded Médaille des Arts et des Lettres (Medal of Arts and Letters) for his contribution to the promotion of French culture... "dedication to architecture and to the defense and illustration of the French Classical Style...has earned him...the respect and admiration of the Beaux-Arts community..." - ArtDaily.org

"I Feel Him Here": Nathaniel Kahn Returns to His Father's Restored Bath House...little resembled the decrepit near-ruin he had filmed eight years earlier..."It will stand as an extraordinarily important example of what can be done with limited resources and enormous attention and care." -- Louis Kahn; Anne Tyng; Farewell Mills Gatsch [images]- Preservation Magazine/National Trust for Historic Preservation

US architect group opens Middle East chapter: The founders of a new Middle East chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) hope to increase the ethics and design standards in the region...slowdown in the market provides the industry with a chance to discuss issues that were ignored in the frantic construction pace of recent years -- Thierry Paret/AECOM; Hisham Youssef/Gensler- The National (UAE)

American Design Schools Are a Mess, and Produce Weak Graduates: Gadi Amit laments the lackluster quality of job applicants and their portfolios and wonders: Are design schools failing their students? ...The quality of recent grads has stagnated or even diminished...students lately seem to have a sense of entitlement that has no place in reality. -- NewDealDesign- Fast Company

The Mathematics of the Ideal Education; Debunking the DesignIntelligence Best Architecture & Design Schools Rankings...In nation-wide rankings, it is already hard to believe that a single set of indicators speak for what all students want. By Ann Lok Lui- Archinect

Varsity launches M.Tech in conservation planning: ...Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University, Hyderabad, has introduced a masters degree course...first of its kind in the country...to educate students about ways of planning and developing cities without compromising on its heritage and environment. - Times of India

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