

Today's News - Wednesday, November 2, 2011

- Heathcote hails Foster's Thames transport hub as "a genuinely innovative and radical plan" + Waite offers lots of images.
- An Auckland architect says "it is worth noting the rhetoric of fear used by those who oppose densification" in the city.
- Manhattan's density is about to increase as plans for the first tower (1.7 million square feet!) for long-stalled Hudson Yards move ahead - which is good news for the long-in-doubt future of the last leg of the High Line.
- Lopate looks long and deep into the pre-history of the High Line: will its "present magic" survive the real estate development that its success is sure to inspire?
- The 84-mile "Low Line" Farmington Canal Trail will soon carve its way through Yale's campus.
- Berg reports on new initiatives to turn empty plots of urban commercial land into parks that could give a big boost to the real estate market in many cities: "they don't have to remain scars and victims of the recession."
- Bostwick digs parklets popping up around San Francisco (not all are pleased).
- Hume waxes philosophical about the Occupy Toronto camp at St. James Park: it "has created a stage as well as a model community, a demonstration of a kinder, gentler world" (even if "it's not pretty").
- Initiatives in NYC are turning empty spaces into cultural pop-ups, creating a win-win-win for artists, landlords, and the city.
- An eyeful of CZWG's oval Maggie's Centre in Nottingham: "The building is almost perverse in its symmetry."
- Bernstein minces no words about housing disparity and "the gap between the closet-sized houses of the poor, and the house-sized closets of the rich."
- A Glasgow riverside restaurant and leisure development gets the go-ahead despite "heavy criticism" that "branded the pavilions 'heavy and ungainly'" (from images, we just might agree).
- Kamin reports on a "heralded" Chicago firm breaking up, with assurances that it was an "orderly" and "entirely amicable" separation (still, sad news).
- Tips on how to get into and what to see at Corbu's Capitol Complex in Chandigarh that is both "visionary" and "a tribute to his eccentricity."
- Our friends at Architectural Review are celebrating the re-design and re-launch of the magazine by taking it out from behind its pay wall for the month (definitely worth checking out!).
- An online petition has launched to reinstate Venice Biennale chairman Paolo Baratta.
- World Architectural Festival 2011 launches today in Barcelona with a stellar line-up (wish we could be there!).
- Call for entries: American Architectural Foundation 2012 Accent on Architecture Community Grants.

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Foster plan would transform infrastructure: "Thames Hub"...could lead to the most radical overhaul of Britain's transport, logistics and communication network since the building of the railways...a genuinely innovative and radical plan...short on architectural aesthetics - partly deliberately... By Edwin Heathcote -- Foster + Partners - Financial Times (UK)

Foster reveals self-funded proposal for a four-runway airport in the Thames Estuary: Foster + Partners has unveiled its vision for a £50 billion transport hub..."We have to have the courage, political will, intelligence and the common sense to invest now in our infrastructure. If we don't, then we are denying future generations." By Richard Waite [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Don't be scared of denser housing: The debate surrounding the intensification of Auckland...Without delving into the language of affordability, sustainability and economics that now influence this discussion without much critical thought, it is worth noting the rhetoric of fear used by those who oppose densification. By Mathew Brown/Unitec, Department of Architecture - New Zealand Herald

Related to Start 51-Story Hudson Yards Skyscraper for Coach by Mid-2012: ...the first tenant for the 13 million square-foot development "kick-starts" the project...The High Line train trestle...is incorporated into the bottom of the building. -- Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) [images]- Bloomberg News

Above Grade: On the High Line: Phillip Lopate traces the pre-history of the project, and ponders the inevitable preservation conundrum: will its "present magic" survive the real estate development that its success is sure to inspire? -- James Comer Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro - Places Journal

New Haven "Low Line" to celebrate regional history: The Farmington Canal Trail...will soon carve its way through Yale's campus...communities have been converting the Farmington Canal Railroad into a walking, jogging and biking trail for over a decade, architects are only now turning their attention to the portion that runs through Yale's campus. -- Dean Sakamoto Architects [images]- Yale Daily News

Could Building Thousands of Parks Fix the Real Estate Market? A new initiative aims to work with cities to reimagine empty plots of commercial land as a network of open spaces, taking commercial properties in the red and turning them into parks...they don't have to remain scars and victims of the recession. By Nate Berg -- Redfields to Greenfields; Speedwell Foundation; City Parks Alliance [links]- The Atlantic Cities

Life in the Slow Lane: Mini-parks built atop parking spaces are cropping up throughout San Francisco. The trend is spreading to other cities, as well...reclaiming street for feet...Technically temporary, they're designed to slip through city bureaucracy. By William Bostwick -- Rebar; Boor Bridges Architecture; Pavement to Parks [slide show]- Architectural Record

Why we're preoccupied with being occupied: The Occupy Toronto camp at St. James Park is a city-within-a-city; no wonder it feels so familiar...has created a stage as well as a model community, a demonstration of a kinder, gentler world...True, it's not pretty...what's unfolding here has the utopian cast of an ideal community. By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

No Vacancy: Turning Empty Spaces Into Cultural Pop-Ups: Nonprofit groups and for-profit projects have found that transforming these empty spaces into unusual, temporary artistic creations presents a viable solution that works equally well for artists, landlords and the city as a whole. -- Chashama; Smart Spaces; Swing Space; No Longer Empty [images, video]- PBS

CZWG Maggie's Centre opens in Nottingham: The £1.45 million building covers 360sqm and has an interior designed by Paul Smith..."The building is almost perverse in its symmetry...The conceit is that the elevations are all ovals and they interlock like a Canadian log house." -- Piers Gough [images, video]- BD/Building Design (UK)

America's Mega-Mansions and Micro-Cribs Grow Farther Apart: There is a lot of talk about wealth disparity, but the numbers can be hard to grasp...Easier to see the housing disparity, the gap between the closet-sized houses of the poor, and the house-sized closets of the rich. By Fred Bernstein -- Michael Maltzan; George Suyama/Suyama Peterson Deguchi Architects; Max Levy; Johnsen Schmalzing - Huffington Post

'Ungainly' Glasgow riverside pavilions win go-ahead: GD Lodge Architects has won planning permission for a £10 million, four-pavilion restaurant and leisure development...came in for heavy criticism from design watchdog Architecture + Design Scotland (A+DS), which branded the pavilions 'heavy and ungainly'. [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

In building bust's wake, heralded architectural firm splitting in two: DeStefano Partners becoming units that, respectively, will focus on domestic, international projects: The firm's breakup has been "orderly" and "entirely amicable"... By Blair Kamin – Lothan Van Hook DeStefano Architecture- Chicago Tribune

Chandigarh: India's modernist marvel: Le Corbusier spent the 1950s bringing concrete to Chandigarh and 'the City Beautiful' now celebrates its creator...often described as a visionary, yet the north Indian city is also a tribute to his eccentricity. -- Pierre Jeanneret; Maxwell Fry; Jane Drew [slide show]- Independent (UK)

Postmodernism never quite died, but does it still have the stamina to re-engage with new ways of thinking about buildings and cities?- Architectural Review (UK)

Online petition launched to reinstate Venice Biennale chairman Paolo Baratta: ...gains more than 4,000 signatures and support from leading arts figures. - BD/Building Design (UK)

WAF 2011 opens: ...showcases responses to "Difference" and "Disaster": Today marks the beginning of the fourth World Architectural Festival...this year examines the themes of "making a difference" and „esponding to disaster." -- Paul Finch; David van der Leer/Guggenheim Museum; Michael Sorkin; Sou Fujimoto; David Mackay/MBM Architects; Sangay Puri; Pauline Nee/John McAslan and Partners - World Architecture Festival (WAF)

Call for entries/applications: American Architectural Foundation 2012 Accent on Architecture Community Grants; projects should increase awareness, appreciation, and understanding of architecture and design among K-12 students; to 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations; deadline: December 1, 2011- American Architectural Foundation (AAF)



Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Island of Malta: To protect the 5,000-years-old temple ruins against further deterioration, engineers developed two special membrane roof structures, which now cover and protect the archaeological excavation. -- Walter Hunziker Architekten; formTL

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