EDITOR'S NOTE: We'll be breakfasting (very early) with Contract magazine’s Interiors Awards winners tomorrow, so there will be no newsletter. We'll be back Monday, Jan. 30.

- Weinstein writes: "Writing about Architecture," Lange's "perspicacious primer": "use it often and you'll never think of the word 'critic' pejoratively again."
- Kimmelman reflects on the similarities between Manhattan’s "thriving Penn South" and St. Louis’s ill-fated Pruitt-Igoe housing projects: architecturally, the have much in common, but their outcomes were very different.
- An economist examines the results of the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: "the confidence of many economists on the prospects for a lasting economic recovery in the US borders on chutzpah." (Hong Kong, Australia, and the U.K. don't fare much better).
- Alsop returns to his controversial ("even the Arts Council has branded it 'not fit for purpose'"") The Public arts center with "Will Alsop - A box of delights."
- There's a promising initiative to rescue Moscow’s crumbling buildings: offer cheap rent in return for quality restoration - and help the city "reclaim its former glory." (Rhode Island)
- Brussat cheers the re-birth of the Providence Arcade topped by 48 micro lofts: "This sort of lifestyle could help downtown lead the city out of the economic slump.
- Boaties fear grave effect on harbour: Architects, urban designers and boaties are lining up behind Heart of the City to oppose expansion plans for the Bledisloe Wharf (there go harbor sightlines).
- An economist examines the results of the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: "the confidence of many economists on the prospects for a lasting economic recovery in the US borders on chutzpah."
- Brussat cheers the re-birth of the Providence Arcade topped by 48 micro lofts: "This sort of lifestyle could help downtown lead the city out of the economic slump.
- The Auckland Architecture Association and "boaties" get behind opposition to expansion plans for the Bledisloe Wharf (there go harbor sightlines).
- Book Review: How to be a Useful Architectural Critic: Alexandra Lange's Perspicacious Primer Points the Way: "Writing about Architecture: Mastering the Language of Buildings and Cities" - use it often and you’ll never think of the word “critic” pejoratively again. By Norman Weinstein
- State of Green Business: Sustainable Cities Take Center Stage: While national governments are struggling with economic and policy gridlock, cities are becoming the growing point for green technologies, and fertile territory for the burgeoning green economy...Leadership examples abound, from Copenhagen to Curitiba. By Joel Makower [link to full report].
- Towers of Dreams: One Ended in Nightmare: The thriving Penn South in Manhattan has much in common architecturally with Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, but its outcome is very different...both classic examples of modern architecture...so-called "towers in the park...The lesson these two sites share is to do the limits of architecture, socially and economically, never mind what some architects and planners promise or boast." By Michel Kimmelman — Minori Yamashita (1954), Herman Jessors (1962) [images] - New York Times
- Sanity is unaffordable: Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey finds that many housing markets in the US are affordable. Hong Kong is the most affordable...followed by Australia...Home prices in the UK are still seriously or severely unaffordable...the confidence of many economists on the prospects for a lasting economic recovery in the US borders on chutzpah. By V. Anantha Nageswaran [link to report] - Livemint.com [India]
- Reviving the Arcade to revive downtown: Its first-floor shops...will help revive its original appearance of 1828...Perhaps even more important are the planned 48 residential units on the two upper levels. This will be the first major project in Rhode Island featuring micro lofts...Providence is rolling the dice on a young, creative city. This sort of lifestyle could help downtown lead the city out of the economic slump...By David Brussat — Northeast Collaborative Architects [images] - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)
- The Andrew Freedman Home is No Longer Empty: The founder and the director of an organization that revitalizes neighborhoods by curating exhibitions in empty spaces discuss their process of transforming a Bronx landmark into a temporary venue for contemporary art. — Maron Stone; Naoms Hersson-Ringskog [images] - Urban Omnibus
- Squaring the circle: Keeping Kikar Hamedina a 'green lung' runs contrary to both contemporary urban planning concepts and social justice...Somebody is confused about the difference between the green tufts of vegetation scattered here and there on the plaza and durable green planning...With regard to the National Library, the architecture profession might have saved a little of its honor if it had come out against the decision to build a fancy new home for the library, rather than protest the method. By Esther Zandberg - Haaretz (Israel)

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the port company's expansion plans...Images produced by the Auckland Architecture Association show the impact of the view from the port at present and the impact from extending Bledisloe Wharf by 250m in the future. [slide show] - New Zealand Herald

Azerbaijan takes on Burj with plan for world's tallest tower: ...would surpass the Burj Khalifa by 27%...1050m [185 floors] superscraper would form part of a chain of 41 artificial islands in the Caspian Sea...at the heart of the Khazar Islands project, to be located 15 miles south of the capital Baku. - ArabianBusiness.com

Brad Cloepfil: On architecture, design in Portland, and Allied Works Architecture's first creative phase: "Clifford Still Museum...is the most complete piece of architecture we've done." - The Oregonian

Finalists Named for $15 Million in Creative Placemaking Grants: 127 organizations in 68 cities...chosen for their potential to have a transformative impact on community vibrancy. - ArtPlace

Call for entries (deadline reminder): Call for Essays: The Unfinished Grid: essays that reflect on the Manhattan street grid as paradigm, rubric or muse for urban life; deadline: February 1 - Urban Omnibus

Mash-up at Right Angles: The 1811 plan mandating an orthogonal street grid helped make Manhattan a paragon of urban form..."The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" reveals both prescience and problems in the grid’s rich history...you come away...with a powerful sense of its intelligence and resilience...at the Museum of the City of New York through April 15. By Jonathan Lomer [images] - TraceSF (San Francisco)

Will Alsop to return to controversial West Bromwich arts centre The Public which he designed: ...the building he once described as "a box of delights"...However, it sharply divides opinion closer to home and even the Arts Council has branded it "not fit for purpose"...-Will Alsop - A box of delights" January 27 - May 20 - Birmingham Mail (UK)

Karachi, Pakistan, as a microcosm for the 21st century city: Steve Inskeep explains in "Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi" how the city...reflects the developing world...a place where the best-laid plans of urban designers and social engineers, including those of Constantino Doxiadis, the Robert Moses of Karachi, tend to be overwhelmed...a celebration of what cities at their best can be and a study of the unforeseen consequences. - Los Angeles Times

Architecture of Pyongyang revealed in new publication: "The Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang"...provides a guide to the ambitious, often spectacular - and sometimes odd - structures of North Korea's capital...Kim Jong-Il...treatise On Architecture:..."Architects must accept and fulfill the leader's plan and determination not as orders and duty but as a matter of pleasure and honour." [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

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