

## Today's News - Tuesday, January 31, 2012

- Jacobs finds herself on the outskirts of Austin in the world of a mixed-use "lifestyle center" that, like others, is a "genuine urban place...a conscious remix of the 20th-century mall and the postwar subdivision, for a generation that wants absolutely nothing to do with either."
- In Houston, a "cathedral of light and sound" and a place of "sublime beauty" is discovered underground - which could be the city's next great public space (this is very cool - with pix to prove it).
- Badger looks into environmental graphic design and the "complex art of urban wayfinding" that "fits a unique niche somewhere in between building and landscape architecture, between the small scale (street signs) and really large systems (whole cities)."
- Kamin cheers "a promising new plan" for Grant Park's Daley Bicentennial Plaza now that the Chicago Children's Museum has given up trying to build its ill-conceived underground "bunker" and stay at Navy Pier.
- Pedersen sits down with Darden, executive director of Brad Pitt's Make it Right Foundation, re: "the background of this seminal project, its unforeseen challenges, and its potential for global impact."
- Higgins has a most informative (and oft amusing) conversation with Rogers, Stirk, and Harbour re: £140m penthouses, Prince Charles's strange ideas about architecture, and more.
- KPMB tapped to create new HQ for the Globe and Mail in Toronto (no pix yet).
- AIA ABI shows non-residential construction seems to be bouncing in the right direction: "Pretty solid readings in November and December suggest some modest improvement" may be afoot.
- Three we couldn't resist - and so worth checking out: an eyeeful of NASA's "groovy" 1970s concepts for space-based neighborhoods (could these have inspired Gingrich?) + FLW's Heller House, an "astonishing 6,100 sq. ft. of outrageous opulence," can now be yours for a mere \$2.5 million (lots of fabulous photos) + an amazing slide show of "the Russian Banksy" creating some really eye-catching works around Moscow (locations are intriguing).

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Say What? The word "urban" is in the midst of a cultural makeover: The Domain, like other recent mixed-use developments...is a conscious appeal to an emerging desire for urbanity...While not replacements for real cities, they are genuine urban places...a conscious remix of the 20th-century mall and the postwar subdivision, for a generation that wants absolutely nothing to do with either. By Karrie Jacobs -- Brad Nelsen/Nelsen Partners - Metropolis Magazine

Buffalo Bayou's dark secret: "Do you have an air monitor?"...This was not...how encounters with sublime beauty usually began. But then, I'd never gone hunting for sublime beauty in an underground reservoir...In 1927 the City of Houston built its first underground drinking-water reservoir...roughly the size of one and half football fields...[it] was drained, and for years it sat unused..."it's a cathedral of light and sound"... [images] - Houston Chronicle

The Surprisingly Complex Art of Urban Wayfinding: Why some signs help you get where you're going while others get you lost...Enter the urban wayfinding expert...environmental graphic design - fits a unique niche somewhere in between...building and landscape architecture, between the small scale (street signs) and really large systems (whole cities). By Emily Badger -- Sue Labouvie/Studio L'Image [images] - The Atlantic Cities

With Chicago Children's Museum plan for Grant Park officially dead, a promising new plan emerges: ...would be quieter and more pastoral than spectacle-filled Millennium Park, yet it would still pack enough punch to be a destination in and of itself...But there are plenty of risks...the fight to preserve Grant Park's sacred open spaces from well-meaning intruders is never done. By Blair Kamin -- Michael Van Valkenburgh [images] - Chicago Tribune

Q&A: Tom Darden: 75 up, 75 to go: a conversation with the executive director of the Make it Right foundation...about the background of this seminal project, its unforeseen challenges, and its potential for global impact. By Martin C. Pedersen -- Kiernan Timberlake, Shigeru Ban, Graft, Morphosis; Frank Gehry; Tim Duggan - Metropolis Magazine

Havana: Bracing for a Boom: In February, architects from around the globe will meet in Havana to discuss a master plan that aims to preserve the city's rich cultural heritage..."while also creating new urban and economic opportunities"... -- Julio César Pérez; John Pilling; Jeffrey Heller/Heller Manus Architects - Architectural Record

Havana Urban Design Charrette: Cuba, February 19-25 + Tour of Havana, February 26 - March 3: International architects and planners are invited to join Cuban experts and local communities for a one-week charrette to develop proposals for the regeneration and development of the waterfront area of Centro Havana. - INTBAU Cuba / INTBAU Scandinavia (International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism)

Hospitality Begins at Home: ...a digital exhibit by Maya Zack, on the theme of Jewish life in prewar Berlin, and...the In-House Festival in Jerusalem, which evoked the salon culture created there by European emigres...probe the spatial and political dimensions of journeying from one's homeland, a space of family and citizenship, to a foreign land, where one is a stranger, perhaps a refugee. -- By Deborah Gans/Gans Studio [images] - Places Journal

SITES Announces First Certified Sustainable Landscapes: ...first three projects to be recognized for their sustainable land practices from among 150-plus pilot projects that began the certification process in summer 2010. -- SWT Design; Schrickel, Rollins & Associates; James Corner Field Operations [images, links] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Interview: Richard Rogers, Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour: ...discuss £140m penthouses, John Prescott's ministerial 'flair' and Prince Charles's strange ideas about architecture..."You need good design to solve the problems of dense spaces." By Charlotte Higgins -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners - Guardian (UK)

Canada's national newspaper announces plans to build a new headquarters: The Globe and Mail's new home in Toronto is being designed by award-winning Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB) - Canada NewsWire (CNW)

Construction Rises as Architects Show U.S. Nonresidential Bounce: American Institute of Architects Architecture Billings Index held at 52 last month, a sign of expansion..."Pretty solid readings in November and December suggest some modest improvement" may be afoot...office vacancies fell [to] the lowest since 2009... - Bloomberg News

NASA's Groovy Concept Art for the Orbiting Cities of the Future: Not content with putting a man on the moon in 1969, the aeronautics agency once aimed to create an entire space-based neighborhood...all the usual creature comforts of home - shopping, swimming, hang gliding and even a trip to a zoo. [images] - The Atlantic Cities

Own a piece of the American Dream: Stunning Frank Lloyd Wright house goes on market for \$2.5 million: Isodore H Heller House in Chicago's Hyde Park...astonishing 6,100 sq ft of outrageous opulence... [images] - Daily Mail (UK)

Moscow's Banksy: the street art of P183 - in pictures: A Russian street artist who created a giant pair of spectacles from a streetlamp has been dubbed 'the Russian Banksy'...creates eye-catching works around Moscow. [slide show] - Guardian (UK)

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 - ArchNewsNow.com



Winning Design: Michael Maltzan Architecture/Tom Leader Studio: "The Lens," St. Petersburg Pier, Florida

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