• Christchurch is seeing some new redevelopment even without a new city plan finalized - one that many see "as a wish list reflecting naivé public aspirations for design and layout of a reborn central city."

• Bradbury and Bogunovich put forth the notion that perhaps Christchurch and Auckland should reconsider the rush to density in their CBDs: "low-density cities can assume a coherent urban form."

• King bemoans the downsizing or disappearance of "almost every public feature" in the revised plan for Transbay Tower: "it might be good for the bottom line, but it undermines one of the most ambitious projects in the nation."

• Crosbie bemoans a "dinosaur in the desert" (a.k.a. the Burj Khalifa): "there is no question that it is an elegant object, glistening on the skyline...But the bigger question is: ‘Should it be done?’"

• Humre ponders whether Toronto condo towers are vertical slums in the making: as towers grow ever taller, apartment sizes grow ever smaller, and "the prospect of a new sort of slum tower looms ever larger."

• Benfield x 2: an overview (and links to) some very useful tools to help cities and towns guide green development.

• He cheers Williamson and Vaterlaus’s "very appealing conceptual demonstration project" to retrofit failing suburban big-box stores into a green showcase: "if the site isn't ripe for a new concept yet, it's just a matter of time" (useful links here, too).

• The Dirt offers a synopsis of Nordhaus’s “blow by blow” rebuttal to global warming skeptics re: why they’re wrong - he's "obviously pleased that his research has been misused" by them as well (with link to very lengthy but well worth reading original).

• NYC’s CoolRoofs program gets two thumbs-ups from NASA/Columbia University study that "quantifies the true beauty of white roofs."

• Russell roams around Rudolph’s Orange County Government Center to see for himself if it deserves a reprieve: “It’s not an easy call,” but it does "make a powerful case for itself" with an "intricacy of spatial gymnastics" that "entices without overwhelming" (and fab photos to prove it).

• New York's White Roofs Prove They're Cool: A new study quantifies the true beauty of white roofs — dramatically cooler surfaces that reduce discomfort, cooling costs, and a tad of global warming...DIY method is being promoted by the city's CoolRoofs program...Worldwide, interest in the benefits of increasing urban albedo is growing among city planners. - Miller-McCune

• Handful of new property developments rising in Christchurch: There have been 62 commercial rebuild consents...have proceeded in spite of developers awaiting the approval of the new city plan...regarded by many property professionals as a wish list reflecting naivé public aspirations for design and layout of a reborn central city...It contains many restrictions that developers say are unrealistic. - National Business Review (New Zealand)

• Opportunity in Christchurch tragedy: ...flight from the CBD has often been presented as a terrible problem. But what if it was actually a tremendous opportunity? Christchurch was founded as the ‘garden city’...Auckland aspires to become the ‘most liveable city in the world’. Both cities owe their lifestyle to being close to nature...What is the problem with low-density cities? ...with strict protections in place...low-density cities can assume a coherent urban form. By Matthew Bradbury and Dushko Bogunovich - New Zealand Herald

• Are Toronto condo towers slums in the making? As residential towers grow ever taller, and living units ever smaller, the prospect of a new sort of slum tower looms ever larger...The issue is less height than apartment size...The fight over height is a NIMBY sideshow that’s largely irrelevant at this point. When building places for people to live, not just stay, it’s size that matters. By Christopher Humre - Toronto Star

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• Today’s News - Tuesday, March 20, 2012

• City Creek Center Cascades design, engineering feat: …took six years of planning and design, 275 massive boulders and
more than 600 live trees to recreate the center’s namesake within its boundaries...flows across two city blocks...and cutthroat trout inhabit the meandering creek. -- Ross Nadeau/SWA Group [images, video]- KSL News (Salt Lake City, Utah)

In New Office Designs, Room to Roam and to Think. With offices designed by NBBJ, the Gates Foundation and Russell Investments embrace the idea that less space per worker can enhance the working environment, not degrade it. [slide show]- New York Times

Banham’s America: Reyner Banham...the Englishman who fell for Southern California and famously learned to drive “to read Los Angeles in the original”...a look at his travels in America in the lively tradition of European travelers from de Tocqueville and Dickens to Alastair Cooke and Stephen Fry, whose observations tell us Americans “something important about ourselves.” By Gabrielle Esperdy [images]- Places Journal

Memorable fiascos of Seattle’s 1962 world’s fair: As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Seattle World’s Fair, it’s time to remember some of the crimes and blunders that went along with it. Some even launched new industries...it’s worth remembering that...every civic endeavor has its share of challenges and screw-ups, whatever the century. By Knute Berger-Crosscut (Seattle)

Call for entries: CTBUH Best Tall Building Awards 2012; deadline: April 30- Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH)

Call for entries: New Economy Class Layout: propose a new seat layout for the coach and economy class sections of commercial airplanes that will make the flying experience more pleasant and comfortable; cash prizes; free registration deadline: March 22 (fee applies thereafter)- Rivalation


Carrilho da Graça arquitectos: School of Music, Polytechnic Institute/Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

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