

Today's News - Monday, July 22, 2013

- Florida and Katz & Bradley see silver linings in post-bankruptcy Detroit: "beneath its fiscal problems lie the seeds of rebirth"; and "lost amidst the screaming headlines is that market momentum in Detroit's core is real and palpable and provides a strong foundation for future growth."
- Wainwright is more than a bit disheartened by the promised "shiny new world" of London's post-Olympics developments: "So what have we got to show for our £11bn? Lurid towers and faceless flats - brash totems are a monument to Olympian greed" (and a lot of "mean-minded silos").
- Bernstein, meanwhile, gives us the skinny on London's chief planner's skyscraper legacy: "he doesn't want to see the City become a residential enclave" (New York "will rue the day it began encouraging residential development in its financial district").
- A revised proposal to rezone 70 blocks in Midtown East Manhattan to build even taller skyscrapers "has set off a debate in urban planning circles."
- Aspden offers an interesting take on Las Vegas, which "aims relentlessly towards the future. But its past is catching up with it."
- Hollis takes a long look at civic actions to reclaim public spaces, from London to Taksim Square, and Occupy to Bangalore: "Reclamation of the city begins with the realization that 'that' place, whatever its problems, is in fact 'our' place."
- Hume cheers a Toronto street going from parking to parklets: "the war to take back the city" from the "mighty automobile" is now being waged, with "wider implications for the city, and the way we inhabit it."
- Kimmelman finds much to cheer about Newark, NJ, reclaiming its Passaic River waterfront: the former "chemical dumping ground for the area's industry can now become a point of pride" (with perhaps a touch too much orange?).
- Heathcote hails "urban warrior" Richard Rogers: "The architectural genius's tireless advocacy of civilized cities may be his greatest legacy...before he entered public and political life there was almost no discourse on urbanism."
- Mumbai-based architect-activist Das talks about juggling the two roles.
- King cheers the "most provocative new building in San Francisco - the energetic fun is disciplined by the realities of the site."
- OMA finally lands a big one in L.A. - well, Santa Monica, actually (but an outdoor ice skating rink in winter - in Santa Monica?!?!).
- Rockwell tapped to design a pop-up theater for TED2014: it "will be something audacious."
- Kamin compares Boston to Chicago: they "have sharp differences," but "both possess that elusive quality known as 'urban character,'" and "have much to learn from each other."
- Q&A with Kamin re: his Gates of Harvard Yard adventure: when he "arrived in Cambridge last August, he had no idea what his Nieman Fellowship year would bring" (an e-book coming soon!).
- Wainwright hopes Wal-Mart's \$150 tablet means One Laptop Per Child "might just be able to return to its original intentions" - and not just "relieve the tedium of life as a child in suburban America."
- Brussat bemoans the lights going out on Providence's iconic Superman Building, blaming "the building owner's stewardship deficit."

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Don't Let Bankruptcy Fool You: Detroit's Not Dead: The city's fiscal crisis is an opportunity to harness the region's economic promise...problems surely run deep. But beneath its fiscal problems, lie the seeds of rebirth...modest as they may be, are finally starting to surface. By Richard Florida [links]- The Atlantic Cities

A Growth Strategy for Post-Bankruptcy Detroit: The good news, lost amidst the screaming headlines over bankruptcy, is that market momentum in Detroit's core is real and palpable and provides a strong foundation for future growth...Detroit Future City plan provides an excellent blueprint...renewing Detroit...could help renew our nation. By: Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley- Brookings Institution

London's Olympics legacy faces early disqualification: The Olympics were supposed to regenerate London's poorest boroughs. So what have we got to show for our £11bn? Lurid towers and faceless flats...brash totems are a monument to Olympian greed...mean-minded silos of tightly packed one-bedroom flats, mostly sold overseas for buy-to-let. By Oliver Wainwright- Guardian (UK)

Letter from London: Peter Wynne Rees's Skyscraper Legacy: ...became the chief planner of the City of London in 1985...can take much of the credit for the City's hotel boom. But his most visible and controversial legacy may be the skyscrapers...he doesn't want to see the City become a residential enclave...he believes New York will rue the day it began encouraging residential development in its financial district. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners; Renzo Piano; Foster + Partners; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Rafael Viñoly- Architectural Record

Revised Plan for Taller Midtown Fails to Assuage Critics: Some find little comfort in modifications to a proposal to rezone a 70-block area around Grand Central Terminal for even taller skyscrapers...has set off a debate in urban planning circles, although all sides agree that it is unlikely to result in more than two buildings in the next decade.- New York Times

Leaving Las Vegas a heritage: The city is now old enough to have a history, and it needs to decide what that is: It is earthed in the fleshy joys of the present, and aims relentlessly towards the future, devising ever more ingenious ways of entertaining the feckless part of the human spirit. But its past is catching up with it. By Peter Aspden- Financial Times (UK)

Cities belong to us: Reclaiming the streets through civic participation does more than change the city: it creates citizens: Reclamation of the city begins with the realisation that 'that' place, whatever its problems, is in fact 'our' place. By Leo Hollis - Aeon Magazine (UK)

Church Street goes from parking to parklets: ...construction of 10 "parklets" begins in Gay Village...the war to take back the city is now being waged...The odds are against those who would depose the mighty automobile, but time is on their side...the parklets, which will cost the city nothing, have wider implications for the city, and the way we inhabit it. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Newark Revival Wears Orange Along the River: A quiet upheaval is turning the Passaic River, polluted as it may be, into a front line of reclamation...once a chemical dumping ground for the area's industry, can now become a point of pride. By Michael Kimmelman -- Lee Weintraub Landscape Architecture; Damon Rich; Adrian Benepe/Trust for Public Land [slide show]- New York Times

Urban warrior: Richard Rogers and 'Inside Out': The architectural genius's tireless advocacy of civilised cities may be his greatest legacy: His ideas on density, on the value of public space, on sustainability and brownfield regeneration and public transport have become mainstream...before he entered public and political life there was almost no discourse on urbanism. By Edwin Heathcote -- Norman Foster; Team 4; Renzo Piano; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners- Financial Times (UK)

How do we tackle urban planning? Mumbai-based architect-activist P.K. Das walks a tightrope between architecture and activism. He talks about juggling the two roles: "These notions of public spaces are oppressive to children. We are all trapped in our high-density capsules that will lead to...what I call congestion trauma."- The Hindu (India)

In the Richmond District, formidable but friendly architecture: 6-unit building stands out in its approach and in its neighborhood: The most provocative new building in San Francisco...cultural context is what makes the architectural show named 300 Cornwall worth a long second look...the energetic fun is disciplined by the realities of the site. By John King -- Kennerly Architecture [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Going Dutch in the Land of Gehry: Santa Monica chooses OMA for new mixed-use development project...defeated two teams made up of local powerhouse architects to win a one million square foot...Plaza at Santa Monica... -- Rem Koolhaas/Van Tillberg, Banvard & Soderbergh (VTBS)/OLIN; Brooks + Scarpa/Robert A.M. Stern; Koning Eizenberg/Rios Clementi Hale/RTKL [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

The making of the TED2014 theater: an early view: ...will be something audacious...a temporary, pop-up theater designed just for us by longtime TEDster David Rockwell...inside the Vancouver Convention Centre...geared toward personal connection. -- Rockwell Group [images, links]- TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design)

Boston vs. Chicago; this time in architecture: If Boston is the cradle of liberty, it is also, in many respects, a cradle that nurtured essential aspects of Chicago's cityscape, from its powerfully hewn office blocks to its stress-relieving lakefront parks...[they] have sharp differences...both possess that elusive quality known as "urban character," and that the two cities have much to learn from each other. By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

The Gates of Harvard Yard: When..Blair Kamin arrived in Cambridge last August, he had no idea what his Nieman Fellowship year would bring...the beauty of the Yard's 25 wrought-iron gates immediately struck him...class's research has now turned into an e-book, "The Gates of Harvard Yard: The Complete Story, in Words and Pictures, of a Great University's Iconic Portals" (Q&A) [images]- Harvard Magazine

Walmart's \$150 tablet aimed at children is missing the point: The XO tablet is the work of One Laptop Per Child, a non-profit set up to deliver computers to developing nations...not relieve the tedium of life as a child in suburban America...if they peddle enough of these devices to American families, One Laptop Per Child might just be able to return to its original intentions. By Oliver Wainwright -- Yves Behar/Fuseproject- Guardian (UK)

Ask Dr. Downtown: I did not see the Superman Building...What happened? Is it "lights out" for Providence? ...The golden lighting of the [1928] Industrial Trust Building at night has been extinguished by the building owner's stewardship deficit. By David Brussat [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

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