

## Today's News - Thursday, August 15, 2013

EDITOR'S NOTE: Just a reminder that we're taking Fridays and Mondays off through August. We'll be back Tuesday, August 20. Happy Weekend!

- Wainwright x 2: he parses Alsop's The Public and the "inevitable end for the misguided arts center" that is "a catalogue of catastrophes since its inception," and "a monument to ill-conceived ambition."
- On a brighter note, he cheers the University of Limerick's new medical school and housing blocks - "a worthy contender for the Stirling Prize" that would be his pick to win, "given how radically it has reinvented two building types often consigned to dismal mediocrity."
- Henley sees cycle cities as "the catalyst for a 21st Century urban renaissance. From an architect's perspective though, the question remains: what will cycle cities be like?"
- An eyeful of 10 of the "brightest ideas" in two-wheeled transit and infrastructure (very cool!).
- St. Louis Cardinals find themselves on the defensive when it comes to Ballpark Village - critics claim such a highly subsidized development should include more than a gigantic parking lot and bars.
- An architect cheers P+W's Sprout Space, "an exciting alternative to traditional portable classrooms" providing "a healthy, conducive and beautiful environment" in which to learn.
- Speck alters and expands categories for the 2014 CNU Charter Awards, "recognizing the advances and new directions taken by new urbanists in the previous decade" (call for entries opens in November).
- A lovely tribute to Natalie de Blois: "Neither the Times nor the Chicago Tribune's stories on her death mentioned the lasting influence she had on Austin's female architects, or her many other contributions to Austin."
- She probably would have cheered the finalists in Austin's Seaholm Intake Design Competition to re-imagine a historic power plant on the banks of Lady Bird Lake.
- Weekend diversions:
- StudioKCA's "Head in the Clouds Pavilion" on Governor's Island is "part Anish Kapoor, part meteorological boon" (full disclosure: yours truly was a juror - and gave it two thumbs-up!).
- Bentley cheers "Spontaneous Interventions," a survey of tactical urbanism at the Chicago Cultural Center that "challenges conventional notions of 'vibrancy' in the urban environment."
- Walljasper explains "how to reclaim public spaces for the people who use them - and need them the most."
- PPS's Crain talks about community-oriented problem solving in the context of Leo Hollis' book, "Cities Are Good for You."
- Pearson says Chakrabarti's "A Country of Cities" delivers "a clarion call to build our cities bigger, taller, and better."
- Williams has a few issues with Lovell's "Splendidly Fantastic: Architecture and Power Games in China," but "as a non-academic treatise, it is a useful and informative pamphlet: a provocation" that "cannot help but stimulate a critical interest with the issues."
- Gallagher's "The End of the Suburb" documents "a shift in demand from suburban to urban. Or at least urban-lite" + Q&A with the author about the suburbs hitting a dead end.
- Heathcote has some fun with "Architecture on the Carpet" that suggests "particular types of toys may have influenced the way individual architects build."
- MoMA's "Young Frank, Architect" storybook is "a gorgeous example of multi-layered children's storytelling" - lots of Franks included (great video trailer!).
- Q&A with Richard J. Williams re: his new book "Sex and Buildings" and "how progressive sexual attitudes manifest themselves in architecture."
- Benford gathers "old dreams and schemes" for the 21st century in "The Wonderful Future that Never Was."

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**The Public: an inevitable end for the misguided arts centre: A catalogue of catastrophes since its inception, The Public in West Bromwich is a monument to ill-conceived ambition...an intransigent container that foretold the institution's demise in every detail of its fluorescent fabric...Whatever its future...should serve as a reminder that it's usually a good idea to think before you build.** By Oliver Wainwright -- Will Alsop [images]- Guardian (UK)

**Limerick's medical school: architecture with a scalpel: On the rolling green campus of the University of Limerick, a medical school and its housing blocks are rewriting the architectural rulebook...a worthy contender for the Stirling prize...It would be my choice to win, given how radically it has reinvented two building types often consigned to dismal mediocrity.** By Oliver Wainwright -- Grafton Architects [images]- Guardian (UK)

**Why Cycle Cities Are the Future: No longer just for bike fanatics but a healthy, efficient, and sustainable mode of transportation alternative for urban planners...cycling might just be the catalyst for a 21st Century urban renaissance...From an architect's perspective though, the question remains: what will Cycle cities be like? By Simon Henley/Henley Halebrown Rorrison (HHbR)/"The Architecture of Parking" -- Weiss/Manfredi; KGP design; MANIFESTO Architecture; etc. [images]- Metropolis Magazine**

**Graffiti & Roof Parties: 10 Ideas For Cities To Lock Down Bicycling Infrastructure: In "Cycle Infrastructure" urbanists Stefan Bendiks and Aglaée Degros have scoured the planet for the brightest ideas in two-wheeled transit. Here are some of the top tips... [images]- Architizer**

**St. Louis Cardinals Defend Ballpark Village; Alderman Scott Ogilvie Slams Project As "Total Failure": A giant parking lot...is now open...has sparked renewed criticisms...that a development benefiting from tax subsidies should include more than just parking spaces and bars..."It is literally the exact opposite of the kind of development that creates better urban environments"... - Riverfront Times (St. Louis)**

**Innovation in classroom design: While the pre-fabricated, off-site design of portable classrooms allows schools to quickly expand...interior spaces...produce an unpleasant educational environment...school administrators have an exciting alternative to traditional portable classrooms...Sprout Space...a healthy, conducive and beautiful environment to learn. By Melody L. Harclerode/Hyer Creative -- Perkins+Will [image]- Atlanta InTown**

**CNU Charter Awards Adds New Categories: Jury Chair Jeff Speck Introduces Changes for 2014...including "Best Tactical Intervention" and "Best Urban Infill"...altered and expanded the list...recognizing the advances and new directions taken by new urbanists in previous decade. - Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)**

**A Pioneer Among Women Architects: Natalie de Blois helped plan Austin's future: Neither the Times nor the Chicago Tribune's stories on her death mentioned the lasting influence she had on Austin's female architects, or her many other contributions to Austin. -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Emily Little; Jana McCann; Karen McGraw; Susan Wallace; Graeber Simmons & Cowan; Heidi Goebel; Atelier Bernard Kohn - Austin Chronicle (Texas)**

**Seaholm Intake Design Competition finalists: to create an iconic adaptive reuse of the historic Seaholm Powerplant and Green Water Treatment Plant on the banks of Lady Bird Lake. -- Gumbully; BOKA Powell + Design Workshop; Gensler Team George [link to images]- City of Austin Parks and Recreation**

**Cloud Communing: STUDIOKCA Creates Pavilion for Governor's Island: Part Anish Kapoor, part meteorological boon, Brooklyn-based Studio Klimoski Chang Architects created an 800-square-foot "Head in the Clouds Pavilion" to grace Governor's Island as FIGMENT's third annual City of Dreams Pavilion. [slide show]- Architectural Record**

Urban Guerillas: "Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good," a survey of tactical urbanism at the Chicago Cultural Center...The one unifying factor...is that they are tangible—actions, not aspirations...challenges conventional notions of "vibrancy" in the urban environment, which in the development parlance seems to exclude low-income neighborhoods almost by definition. By Chris Bentley -- Cathy Lang Ho; Institute for Urban Design; Douglas Burnham; MAS Studio; Freecell; M-A-D- The Architect's Newspaper

How to Reclaim Public Spaces for the People Who Use Them: It's time to design spaces around the communities that need them the most. -- excerpts from "How to Design Our World for Happiness" by Jay Walljasper/OnTheCommons.org - AlterNet.org

What The People Had A Hand In: Brendan Crain of the Project for Public Spaces talks about community-oriented problem solving in the context of Leo Hollis' book, "Cities Are Good for You." - Next City (formerly Next American City)

Bright Lights, Big Cities: "A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America": Architect, planner, and one-time developer Vishaan Chakrabarti asks us to imagine a United States in which government invests in high-speed trains linking high-density cities and does not subsidize suburban sprawl...delivers a clarion call to build our cities bigger, taller, and better. By Clifford A. Pearson- Architectural Record

"Splendidly Fantastic: Architecture and Power Games in China" by Julia Lovell: ...as a non-academic treatise, it is a useful and informative pamphlet: a provocation...clearly critical, or cynical, about the role of western architects in China...Fortunately, however one-sided the arguments, this Strelka pamphlet cannot help but stimulate a critical interest with the issues. In that way alone, it might improve the state of education – not just in Russia. By Austin Williams - Australian Design Review

From Suburb to City (Or Something Like It) in "The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream Is Moving" by Leigh Gallagher: ...documents a shift in demand from suburban to urban. Or at least urban-lite...Increasing numbers of people seem to prefer a more urban lifestyle (even if it's an urban-lite lifestyle, such as in a New Urbanist suburb), and that preference will likely accelerate...- Next City (formerly Next American City)

Have the suburbs hit a dead end? In "The End of the Suburbs," Leigh Gallagher argues that the suburban way of life, once the epitome of the American dream, is becoming increasingly undesirable...Q&A with Gallagher about how Americans choose to live.- Washington Post

Toytown and the city: Building sets provide a mirror for the real world of architecture. But do the kinds of constructions architects build as children really influence what they design later? "Architecture on the Carpet: The Curious Tale of Construction Toys and the Genesis of Modern Buildings" by Robert and Brenda Vale...they suggest that particular types of toys may have influenced the way individual architects build. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

MoMA releases "Young Frank, Architect" storybook by Frank Viva: ...a gorgeous example of multi-layered children's storytelling -- part showcase of MoMA's architecture and design collection, and part allegory for architectural innovation...- Archinect

"Architects always seem pretty uncomfortable with feelings": Q&A with Richard J. Williams, whose latest book "Sex and Buildings" explains how progressive sexual attitudes manifest themselves in architecture, talks about procreation, repression and why co-housing is sexy- BD/Building Design (UK)

"Future That Never Was" looked fantastic: Many of the old dreams and schemes about daily life in the 21st century didn't come true — at least not yet. Gregory Benford has gathered them — along with more successful predictions — in "The Wonderful Future that Never Was"... (AP)- Philly.com (Philadelphia)

The Blob That Could Eat Los Angeles: The history of our ill-fated Los Angeles County Museum of Art is told in "The Presence of the Past: Peter Zumthor Reconsiders LACMA": I'm a fan of Zumthor, but this building could be cool almost anywhere else. By Julie D. Taylor [images]- ArchNewsNow

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