

## Today's News - Thursday, April 10, 2014

- It's a towering kind of news day: Davies counters criticism that apartment towers are ruining city centers, but "that's not to say there aren't the inevitable downsides."
- Goldberger digs deep into the "tsunami" of super-thin, super-tall towers rising in Manhattan: their "saving grace is in their very slenderness" - they "at least make for a striking skyline, and they cast thinner shadows...The even more troubling shadow these buildings cast, however, is a social and economic one."
- Davidson is distressed over plans for a "groaner" of a "giant new building" about to overshadow NYC's St. John the Divine, and wishes the city would step in and negotiate - at least there would be "a chance to demand that the architects (different architects, ideally) produce a design worthy of its site next door to one of the New York's finest monuments."
- Kimmelman minces no words about plans for LG's new HQ on the Hudson's Palisades, which he calls the company's "public shame," while Samsung's new building planned for San Jose, CA, is "thoughtful" and "a boon" to its city.
- Chinese investors have towering plans (designed by unidentified Chinese architects) for a new city about 30km from Nairobi, Kenya, to "match the splendor of Dubai" (comments section is very interesting).
- The U.S. "may yet boast the world's tallest skyscraper made from dead trees" with the launch of a USDA competition "to demonstrate the viability of a new generation of wooden 'plyscrapers.'"
- Byrnes examines the redevelopment plans for Cabrini-Green, "Chicago's most infamous public housing project" ("affordable" may be relative).
- A Seattle developer "is testing the conventional wisdom" that "affordable housing isn't profitable" by building three Mithun-designed projects.
- Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games chiefs are taking a second look at the "contentious plan" to flatten the Red Road flats as part the opening ceremony, leaving "the door open for a climb-down."
- Heathcote [hearts] the transformation of Madrid's former meat market into an arts center by "thoughtfully reviving a fine existing place through the work of young, under-employed but hugely talented architects using cheap industrial materials and infinite care" (London's Smithfield developers should pay heed).
- Hatherley reports from Kiev and the "square that sparked Ukraine's insurrection - an extremely Soviet set piece built to glorify revolution. The great irony, of course, is that this sort of planning originated as a way of deterring revolution."
- Campanella says there's much to learn by studying how Bourbon Street has thrived "without the benefit of a corporate structure, a team of experts, a board of directors or a marketing branch."
- NYC's once-grand, Depression-era bathhouses "may return to glory under ambitious revitalization plans."
- Weizman defends RIBA's decision to call on the UIA to suspend the Israel Association of United Architects.
- Meier condemns RIBA's Israel motion.
- Donoff explains why it's high time for a Pritzker-like prize for lighting design: "Is lighting doomed to always be the bridesmaid to architecture's bride? I say: No."
- Russia fires "a respected architecture critic" as commissioner of the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale Russian pavilion, perhaps because of "his vocal criticism of Russia's annexation of Crimea"; his replacement is "one of many museum directors and cultural figures who signed a letter in support of Putin's policy on Ukraine."
- It's down to three finalists in the competition to develop the master plan for the IFC/International Financial Center in "New Moscow."
- One we couldn't resist: eyefuls of Babina's portraits of 33 architects "in which the faces and the expressions are made of their architecture."

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Are apartment towers ruining our city centres? They're frequently criticised, but high-rise apartments in the city centre save on infrastructure costs, improve sustainability, and help keep housing costs down across the rest of the metro area...That's not to say there aren't the inevitable downsides. By Alan Davies - Crikey (Australia)

Too Rich, Too Thin, Too Tall? ...new condo towers racing skyward in Midtown Manhattan are breaking records for everything...If there is any saving grace to this tsunami of towers, it is in their very slenderness...thin buildings at least make for a striking skyline, and they cast thinner shadows...The even more troubling shadow these buildings cast, however, is a social and economic one. By Paul Goldberger -- Rafael Viñoly; Christian de Portzamparc; Richard Meier; Herzog & de Meuron; Frank Gehry; Jean Nouvel; Robert A.M. Stern; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Deborah Berke; SHoP Architects - Vanity Fair

The Giant New Building That Is About to Overshadow the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine — And How the City Ought to Step In: ...a developer to slap a pair of 14-story rental buildings against its uptown flank. It sounds like a groaner...There's a better way: negotiate...the city would get a chance to demand that the architects (different architects, ideally) produce a design worthy of its site...next door to one of the New York's finest monuments. By Justin Davidson -- Handel Architects - New York Magazine

Sticky Business on the Palisades: Opposition Keeps Mounting to LG Project on the Hudson: While LG's new headquarters would mar views of the New Jersey Palisades, Samsung's new building is a boon to its city, San Jose, Calif...The LG project will turn off countless customers by despoiling a cherished landmark...The project in San Jose is thoughtful. LG's is a public shame. By Michael Kimmelman -- NBBJ; HOK [images] - New York Times

China to put up Sh65bn 'Dubai' in Machakos: ... about 30km from Nairobi...A design by Chinese architects...proposes the building of at least 20 skyscrapers...unclear how the Kenya-China Economic Zone will coexist with the proposed Konza Techno City and Machakos City... [image] - Daily Nation (Kenya)

Wooden skyscrapers: Barking up the right tree: America may yet boast the world's tallest skyscraper made from dead trees...US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a \$2m competition to demonstrate the viability of a new generation of wooden "plyscrapers"...tallest contemporary wood building in the world...Wood Innovation and Design Centre in Prince George, British Columbia..."It's only public perception and emotion trumping science that stalls us moving higher." -- Michael Green Architecture [image] - The Economist (UK)

The Future of Chicago's Most Infamous Public Housing Project: The Chicago Housing Authority has unveiled its redevelopment plan for Cabrini-Green: ...anticipates a variety of new buildings, retail, and green space...Despite concerns, the planning process still depends on community input. By Mark Byrnes [images] - The Atlantic Cities

Seattle Builder Aims Low: ...most new apartment buildings are geared to the higher end of the market; building and operating affordable housing, many developers argue, isn't profitable...Spectrum Development Solutions is testing the conventional wisdom...spending nearly \$70 million to construct three apartment buildings...will target people below the area median income. -- Mithun - Wall Street Journal

Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games chiefs review Red Road flats plan: ..."looking at" the contentious plan to demolish the flats during the opening ceremony...appeared to leave the door open for a climbdown when he indicated that the plan was not yet a done deal. - The Scotsman (UK)

Matadero Madrid, Spain: The transformation of the former meat market and abattoir into an arts centre continues: ...slowly and thoughtfully reviving a fine existing place through the work of young, under-employed but hugely talented architects using cheap industrial materials and infinite care...If the developers behind London's Smithfield want to see how this kind of thing

should be done, it's difficult to think of a place that does it better. By Edwin Heathcote -- Arturo Franco/José Antonio Roldán; Alejandro Virseda/José Ignacio Carnicero/Ignacio Vila Almazán; Churtichaga + Quadra-Salcedo; Antón García Abril- Financial Times (UK)

Architects of revolt: the Kiev square that sparked Ukraine's insurrection: The overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich took place in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) – an extremely Soviet setpiece built to glorify revolution: The great irony, of course, is that this sort of planning originated as a way of deterring revolution. By Owen Hatherley [images]- Guardian (UK)

Hating Bourbon Street: ...geographer Richard Campanella thinks we have much to learn by studying how Bourbon Street has thrived "without the benefit of a corporate structure, a team of experts, a board of directors or a marketing branch." Never mind the politics of authenticity...Bourbonites "measure success the old-fashioned way: by the millions." [adapted from "Bourbon Street: A History"]- Places Journal

The People's Palaces at the Beach: Bathhouses built during the Depression, once grand structures that drew thousands of bathers a day in the New York area, may return to glory under ambitious revitalization plans. [images]- New York Times

Israeli architect defends RIBA's motion: Eyal Weizman has defended the decision to call on the International Architects Union (IAU) to suspend the Israel Association of United Architects (IAUA): ...one of 65 academics, cultural and political figures backing the RIBA's stance. Comment in full.- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Richard Meier condemns RIBA for Israel motion: "I thought the RIBA was an extremely honorable institution," says Pritzker winner: "I and many other architects here in New York condemn this action and sincerely hope that it would be reversed."- BD/Building Design (UK)

Comment: Does Architectural Lighting Design Need a Pritzker-Like Prize? Is lighting doomed to always be the bridesmaid to architecture's bride? I say: No. Establishing an award for lighting design that recognizes a living person's body of work would be a way for the profession to take a step forward as it matures as a design discipline. By Elizabeth Donoff- Architectural Lighting magazine

When architecture and politics don't mix: The commissioner of the Russian pavilion at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale has been fired...Grigory Revzin, a respected architecture critic...speculated that the cause was his vocal criticism of Russia's annexation of Crimea...has been replaced...by Semyon Mikhailovsky...one of many museum directors and cultural figures who signed a letter in support of Putin's policy on Ukraine.- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Finalists of the competition to develop the master-plan for the IFC/International Financial Center in Rublyovo-Arkhangelskoye announced. -- Team Moscow: ASTOC/HPP; TPO Reserve - Maxwan; KCAP Architects&Planners/De Architekten Cie./Buro Happold/Karres and Brands Landscape Architects/MLAB/Fakton/Prosperity Project Management [images]- Architectural Council of Moscow / Archcouncil of Moscow

The Latest Illustration from Federico Babina: "Archiportrait": ...an artistic representation of 33 architects, in which the faces and the expressions are made of their architecture. [images]- ArchDaily

ANN Feature: Crowdsourcing Design: The End of Architecture, or a New Beginning? Why the criticism that crowdsourcing design sites like Arcbazar are taking jobs away from architects doesn't wash. By Michael J. Crosbie- ArchNewsNow

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