

Today's News - Friday, September 5, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Beginning next week, we will be posting four days instead of five. The fifth will be a "floating" no-newsletter day, starting Monday. We'll be back Tuesday, September 9 (so we'd like to point out to you Northern Hemisphere folks to keep an eye out for the Harvest Moon on Monday!).

- ANN Feature: Field Paoli's Moore explains why the Berkeley South Branch Library is a case study of when a Midcentury Modern building is arguably best remembered and respected through photographic and historic archives rather than reuse.
- Hosey ponders the green building movement being "at a crossroads": "Will it continue to adapt, improve, and extend its reach, or will it become compromised and co-opted by the very forces it set out to battle?"
- Western Australia ponders the largest planning reforms since 1963 that "includes more engagement from architects," and possibly establishing "training program for local and State Government staff and elected members in urban design and place-making principles" (what a concept!).
- Davies is more than a bit pessimistic about the proposed development of Melbourne's Federation Square East: "Sounds like a wonderful civic enhancement, but in an election year it's all politics," and "looks more like smoke and mirrors than a realistic project."
- The U.K.'s housing minister "blasts" the Wolfson Economics Prize-winning garden city plan as "urban sprawl. We do not intend to follow the failed example of top-down eco-towns"; URBED's Rudlin hits back.
- Silverstein finds that a proposed and a built elevated cycletrack in London and Copenhagen "highlight questions at the heart of urban design: Should cities blend or separate transportation options? No easy answers..."
- Despite the ongoing (horrific) crises in Iraq, "construction on Bismayah New City project is progressing well" for 100,000 residential units to accommodate around 600,000 people.
- Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial gets tweaked again - this time sans two controversial tapestries, "but concerns remain": maybe "the columns should go up last to 'see if we can live without them'" - "unless we decide we never liked the design in the first place."
- Steinberg waxes most poetically about how "cities are all about change" - and changes of his own: to depart PennPraxis and head to Drexel this fall.
- Eyefuls of the Holcim Awards 2014 for Europe "for resilient and contextual projects" (great presentation).
- Call for entries/RFQ: National Parks Now, open to teams of young professionals internationally.
- Weekend diversions:
 - Betsky on "what architects can learn from Jeff Koons": "Architecture has latched on to, used, and abused just about every way you can make art objects, except for pop art. There is no reason that you can't make pop architecture that is comfortable, firm, and delightful."
 - Floating into view in London: "HippopoThames" by the Dutch artist who floated a giant rubber duck around the world.
 - Capps can't take the floating art thing much longer: "tragedy struck London this week" - with "HippopoThames": "This art isn't all it's quacked up to be. I'm calling fowl. Cities of a feather shouldn't flock together. Oh god - it's time for a duck hunt" (the funniest read of the week - "Moon Rabbit" included!).
 - The white sandy beaches of Sandhornøy, Norway, hosts "monumental structures" that celebrate the Arctic.
 - Kamin's "Terror and Wonder" now a free e-book! ("the images look really sharp in the digital format," sayeth the Blair).
 - "Urban Design for an Urban Century" makes "a forceful argument about both the success of today's burgeoning urban environments and the challenges posed by the current move back to the cities."
 - "The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice" not generally been "seen as incredibly timely, nor relevant," but "all that changes with the 15th edition."
 - Brussat, not surprisingly, cheers Salingaros's "Anti-Architecture and Deconstruction" that "takes a scientific approach to the modernist architectural fraud, using the metaphor of a virus, but also that of a cult."

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ANN Feature: **INSIGHT: When to Remember Not to Renovate: The story of the Berkeley South Branch Library is a case study of when a Midcentury Modern building is arguably best remembered and respected through photographic and historic archives rather than reuse.** By Avery Taylor Moore, AIA, Field Paoli Architects - ArchNewsNow

Is this the great decline of the green building movement? ...could be facing a critical threshold...To remain a movement, green building must show continual progress by adapting to new knowledge about the impacts of construction on environmental and human health...Will it continue to adapt, improve, and extend its reach, or will it become compromised and co-opted by the very forces it set out to battle? By Lance Hosey - GreenBiz

Largest planning reforms for Western Australia since 1963 includes more engagement from architects: "It is generally accepted that an increased focus on quality of urban design and place-making would be beneficial to development outcomes...Potential establishment of a training program for local and State Government staff and elected members in urban design and place-making principles." - Architecture & Design (Australia)

Is the proposed development of Melbourne's Federation Square East a con? Sounds like a wonderful civic enhancement, but in an election year it's all politics and no substance...The idea that the city can get an important civic enhancement paid for by developers might be attractive politically but it looks more like smoke and mirrors than a realistic project. By Alan Davies - Crikey (Australia)

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis blasts Wolfson Economics Prize-winning garden city plan as 'urban sprawl': "...would build nothing other than "resentment" among local people...the Government would have nothing to do with it. "We do not intend to follow the failed example of top-down eco-towns"...David Rudlin, of URBED, hit back, saying: "We have to build on the green belt, ignoring it is not an option." - Independent (UK)

Do Elevated Cycletracks Solve Problems or Just Create More? ...two designs - one proposed and one built - for elevated cycletracks...highlight questions at the heart of urban design: Should cities blend or separate transportation options? No easy answers, but these designs certainly raise plenty of questions. By Yoshi Silverstein -- London SkyCycle/Exterior Architects/Foster + Partners; Cykelslangen (Cycle Snake)/Dissing+Weitling [images] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Iraq's Bismayah national housing project progresses despite crisis: ...construction on Bismayah New City project...is progressing well...spread on a total area of 1,830 hectares and is planned to accommodate around 600,000 occupants with a total of 100,000 residential units. -- Hanwha - BCNBusiness News for Construction (United Arab Emirates/UAE)

Frank Gehry's Revised Eisenhower Memorial Loses Two Controversial Tapestries, But Concerns Remain: "We lose something if we continue to say, 'Change it, change it,'" Darrell Issa said..."I think the design is as close to as good as it's going to get, unless we decide we never liked the design in the first place." [images] - DCist (Washington, DC)

With time, comes change: Cities are all about change...making them vibrate with the frisson of being alive. It's that tension between the time-honored and the new; between the comfortable and the cutting edge; between the layered patina of age and the coruscating brilliance of a new idea. Cities are also design laboratories...I will step down as the founding executive director of PennPraxis and will become the executive director of the Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation at Drexel University. By Harris Steinberg - PlanPhilly

Holcim Awards 2014 for Europe announced: Top sustainable construction awards for resilient and contextual projects in Austria, France and Italy. -- Grupo Aranea; AutonomeForme; Muoto architects; Arenas Basabe Palacios arquitectos; TETRA architecten; DAT Pangea; etc. [links to images, info]- Holcim Foundation

Call for entries: Request for Qualifications/RFQ: National Parks Now (international): competition calls on teams of young professionals to rethink the national park visitor experience for the 21st century; \$15,000 stipend for each of 4 winning teams to participate in the six-month Research and Design Phase; registration deadline: October 10 (submissions due October 30)- Van Alen Institute / U.S. National Park Service

What Architects Can Learn from Jeff Koons: ...Whitney Museum showcase...reminded me of what it might be like to inhabit a movie like Toy Story, and then made me think we already do—we just need an artist to make us aware of that fact...Architecture has latched on to, used, and abused just about every way you can make art objects, except for pop art...There is no reason that you can't make pop architecture that is comfortable, firm, and delightful. By Aaron Betsky [images]- Architect Magazine

Giant inflatable duck artist's next big thing: Hippos: Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman is famous for taking a giant rubber duck around the world. His next project, "HippoThames"... part of Totally Thames, an annual festival that celebrates London's famous river.- CNN

The 'Rubber Duck' Artist Must Be Stopped: The inflatable spectacles of Florentijn Hofman don't belong in every harbor in the wide world. Tragedy struck London this week...The Dutch artist has just debuted..."HippoThames"...it's clear how easy it is for cities to lose sight of what makes public art really register...This art isn't all it's quacked up to be. I'm calling fowl. Cities of a feather shouldn't flock together. Oh god—it's time for a duck hunt. By Kriston Capps [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

An Architecture Festival that Celebrates the Arctic: The traveling event and installation aim to promote the cultures of the Arctic Circle: Set upon the white sandy beaches of Sandhornøy, SALT features three monumental structures that were inspired by traditional Norwegian fiskehjeller (fish racks)... -- Rintala Eggertsson Architects [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Free e-book! "Terror and Wonder: Architecture in a Tumultuous Age" by Blair Kamin- University of Chicago Press

Experts Pen Book on Rise of Urbanism and Future Challenges: "Urban Design for an Urban Century" by Lance Jay Brown, David Dixon, and Oliver Gillham marshals a series of figures and case studies to make a forceful argument about both the success of today's burgeoning urban environments and the challenges posed by the current move back to the cities...instructive to real estate professionals, policy-makers, architects, designers, students and the general public. - Commercial Observer (NYC)

Next Steps & New Models: Design/build standards at a crossroads: "The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice" is considered the definitive source for practice information. However, the 1,000-page tome has generally not been seen as incredibly timely, nor relevant, for both small and large firms alike. All that changes with the Handbook's 15th edition... By Rena M. Klein- Architect Magazine

The mathematician vs. the modernists: "Anti-Architecture and Deconstruction: The Triumph of Nihilism" by Nikos Salingaros...continues his style of pulling no punches in attacking the architectural establishment...takes a scientific approach to the modernist architectural fraud, using the metaphor of a virus, but also that of a cult. By David Brussat- Architecture Here and There

ANN Feature: Avoiding the Greenwash: Don't be swayed by eco-friendly claims. Questions to ask, and resources for answers, to help select products that will best meet green projects' - and the planet's - sustainability needs. By Cameron Forte- ArchNewsNow



OMA: G-Star Raw HQ, Amsterdam: Just like the denim that made the company famous, the notion of raw surfaces is also at the core of their new headquarters...it is often debated whether the architecture actually ends up enhancing or conflicting with the company's 'brand values'. In the case of Rem Koolhaas and the Dutch jeans company...the combination seemed like a natural fit... By Ulf Meyer -- Office for Metropolitan Architecture

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