

Today's News - Thursday, September 18, 2014

- Heathcote and Brussat weigh in on what Scottish independence could mean for Scottish architecture: would it make a difference (for better or worse)?
- Merrick, meanwhile, fears that the masterplan for the sweetly-named, 3,500-home Ipswich Garden Suburb "will produce a business-as-usual legacy of mediocre housing and amenities."
- Anderton's lively Q&A with L.A.'s City Architect Mulder re: "what a City Architect does, the kind of temperament that suits public work (calm!), and the projects she never expected to work on."
- Finch makes a case for why "architects and planners can't and shouldn't be blamed for society's woes": design "can make a profound difference," but "there are the many obstacles placed in the way of anyone building anything at all, rarely having anything to do with design quality."
- Wainwright is woeful about the University of Greenwich's Heneghan Peng-designed library and academic building (housing the architecture school): "a good building that could have been a truly great one"; sadly, "UNESCO guidelines have drowned the design in a vat of heritage syrup."
- Hodges brings us cheerier news from Detroit, where developers are "suddenly" restoring or re-creating lost architectural detailing that, not too long ago, would have been considered too expensive: "Much of this new interest in architectural authenticity boils down to economics" (of course).
- Flint cheers the Lawn on D Street, Boston's new "wildly successful" temporary park: "what's happening on the waterfront is somewhere between traditional planning and guerilla urbanism. The more adaptive, slightly on-the-fly approach is being embraced in cities across the country, or should be" (we want those swings!).
- Litt, meanwhile, delves into "the brief life and rapid death" of the Horseshoe Casino's Dice Park proposal: it may have "had the best of intentions," but Clevelanders "won't tolerate flat-out bad design - it was less a work of Pop Art than a piece of roadside kitsch."
- On a much brighter note, PARK(ing) Day 2014 is tomorrow in cities around the world (Rebar may have closed its doors, but the Day is still theirs - and yours).
- Best news today: a "new, reimagined" (and beautifully restored) Rainbow Room atop Rockefeller Center is about ready for its close-up after being closed for five years (we've missed our favorite NYC spot!).
- Citizen scientists are turning the spotlight on bright night-time lights in big (and not-so-big) cities, gathering data "to both raise public awareness and to furnish information that might prove useful to scientists" (and data could prove useful in lobbying for smarter night lighting).
- Meanwhile, SunBeamers "could radically change how we light (and live in) tall buildings" by piping real sunlight into shadowy spaces.
- Studio Mumbai's Jain "takes a collaborative approach to sustainable building," but "dismisses questions about what message architects working in the West can take away from his ideas and designs - whether it's about social justice or the response to climate change."
- The Getty Foundation's Keeping It Modern initiative grants conservation funding to 10 modern architectural gems around the world.
- A look at how 3D printing saved FLW's gem of a chapel at Florida Southern College that "will serve as a prototype for the restoration of textile blocks around the country."
- Eyefuls of the winning proposals for a Baltic Thermal Pool Park in Liepaja, Latvia.
- One we couldn't resist: "Cards Against Urbanity" is a new card game that "pokes fun at new urbanists but also aims to teach a serious lesson."
- Call for entries: Architects and Designers: Show Us Your Baldwin contest.

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[The architecture of Scottish independence: Country has struggled in recent years to build on its rich history: A Yes vote would...entail the construction of new buildings for government departments and institutions and perhaps a period of self-conscious reflection on the nature of an architecture of national character...But if Scotland hasn't yet shown an inclination to earn a place among those nations with the richest architectural cultures, would independence make a difference? By Edwin Heathcote -- Charles Rennie Mackintosh; Enric Miralles; Reiach & Hall; RMJM; Page|Park Architects; Gareth Hoskins - Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Scotland back to its roots or nae: Whatever it decides...its cultural hegemony over its own appearance will remain as much at risk as that of most other nations...I'm not sure which vote, yes or no, would promote a Scotland more eager to defend its traditional culture, its roots...But it is vital that all nations assert themselves to rout the forces of ugliness, callousness and homogenization that are represented by modern architecture. One way or another, Scotland can lead the way. By David Brussat -- Charles Rennie Mackintosh; Enric Miralles; Steven Holl - Architecture Here and There](#)

[Jay Merrick casts a critical eye over the Northern Fringe masterplan: ...fears \[it\] will produce a business-as-usual legacy of mediocre housing and amenities: ...Council is expected to approve the 3,500 home development masterplan for a vast swathe of open countryside...The scheme has a fine title - Ipswich Garden Suburb - and the town's need for new housing is obvious and uncontested...But... -- David Lock Associates - East Anglian Daily Times \(U.K.\)](#)

[DnA/Frances Anderton: L.A. Designer: Miriam Mulder, City Architect \(Los Angeles\): ...what a City Architect does, the kind of temperament that suits public work \(calm!\), the projects she never expected to work on, and why 3rd Street Promenade, turning 25 this month, was such a pivotal project for the increasingly pedestrian-friendly city. - KCRW \(Los Angeles\)](#)

[Architects and planners can't and shouldn't be blamed for society's woes: Recent examples have included crime, punishment, physical fitness, well-being and ageing...design...can make a profound difference to many aspects of our lives...we should argue for high standards and should never forget the price we may pay as a result of poor design...there are the many obstacles placed in the way of anyone building anything at all, rarely having anything to do with design quality. By Paul Finch - Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)

[Too many cooks spoil Greenwich University's £80m new building: ...new campus hides its architectural punch behind a 'compromise' beige facade. Unesco guidelines have drowned the design in a vat of heritage syrup...a good building that could have been a truly great one...Thankfully, once inside, the original intentions have not been so compromised... By Oliver Wainwright -- Heneghan Peng architects \[images\] - Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[New lion heads for Detroit's Whitney Building are a sign of times: ...a sign of where Detroit real estate is going these days. Developers...are suddenly willing to re-create lost architectural detailing...that just a few years ago would have been dismissed as too expensive...Much of this new interest in architectural authenticity boils down to economics. Helping to make things doable as well is the National Park Service's historic tax credit... By Michael H. Hodges -- Daniel Burnham \(1915\); Kraemer Design Group; Glassline \[images\] - Detroit News](#)

[Wait Your Turn for the Swings at Boston's Adult Playground: The wildly successful Lawn on D Street is a temporary park that took no tedious city planning...what's happening on the waterfront is somewhere between traditional planning and the chair-bombings and overnight parklets of guerilla urbanism...The more adaptive, slightly on-the-fly approach is being embraced in cities across the country, or should be. By Anthony Flint -- Sasaki; Utile; HR&A Advisors; Høweler + Yoon Architecture / MY Studio \[images\] - CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

['Dice Park' fiasco holds lessons about rising expectations for civic design in Cleveland: The brief life and rapid death of the Horseshoe Casino's concept...may have set a speed record for the public condemnation of a weak design idea...Clevelanders won't tolerate flat-out bad design, and they'll let you know if they feel insulted by a throwaway concept...Rock Gaming could turn this situation around... By Steven Litt \[images\] - Cleveland Plain Dealer](#)

PARK(ing) Day 2014: an annual worldwide event where artists, designers and citizens transform metered parking spots into temporary public parks...Rebar Art & Design Studio has closed its doors. But ... PARK(ing) Day continues! Friday, September 19 -- Matthew Passmore/Morelab; John Bela/Blaine Merker/Gehl Studio- Rebar Group

The New, Reimagined Rainbow Room Is High Tech, Familiar: The views alone are worth the wait. A previously unused terrace - 950 square feet of wraparound grandeur - is just one of several new additions to the iconic event space, which has been closed for the past five years. -- Michael Gabellini/Gabellini Sheppard Associates [slide show]- Bloomberg News

Measuring the Bright Lights of a Big City: Citizen scientists collect data to take on light pollution...the idea is to both raise public awareness and to furnish information that might prove useful to scientists. In some cases, as in Encinitas, communities might try to use the data to lobby for or against specific proposals. By Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow - Next City (formerly Next American City)

These Sun-Tracking Devices Pipe Real Sunlight Into Shadowy Buildings: ...in Berlin...startup SunCentral unveiled one of its first high-profile projects: A retrofit to the Canadian Embassy...SunBeamers...could radically change how we light (and live in) tall buildings. By Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan -- KPMB Architects; Gagnon, Letellier, Cyr, architectes; Smith Carter Architects + Engineers [images]- Gizmodo

Bijoy Jain: building architecture that 'contains the life' of its environs: The founder of Studio Mumbai takes a collaborative approach to sustainable building, emphasizing local materials, techniques, builders...He dismisses questions about what message architects working in the West can take away from his ideas and designs, however, whether its about social justice or the response to climate change. [images]- Guardian (UK)

Getty Foundation launches effort to conserve modern architectural gems: 10 famous structures received funding from a new conservation initiative called Keeping It Modern...to conserve 20th century architectural gems through grants... -- Jørn Utzon; Frank Lloyd Wright; Ray and Charles Eames; Hilario Candela; Louis Kahn; Alvar Aalto; I.M. Pei; Max Berg; Dov Karm; Le Corbusier [slide show]- Los Angeles Times

How 3D Printing Saved This Frank Lloyd Wright Classic: ...Annie Pfeiffer Chapel at Florida Southern College...National Historic Landmark, with its jewel box design, was under threat. When an affordable 3D printer became available to make molds for the blocks, this changed...will serve as a prototype for the restoration of textile blocks around the country. By Matt Shaw -- Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects [images]- Architizer

Baltic Thermal Pool Park Results Announced: competition focused on Liepaja Seaside Park (Liepaja, Latvia)...winning proposals. -- Nikole Bouchard; Thomas van Gaver/Julien Hubert/Audrey Thomas/Charlotte Habib; Alexandre Grignon/Noémie Marechal [images]- Homemade Dessert

"Cards Against Urbanity" is exactly as hilarious as you'd expect: The card game, designed by a bunch of DC planners and architects, pokes fun at new urbanists but also aims to teach a serious lesson. -- GreaterPlaces.com; DoTank DC - Elevation DC (Washington, DC)

Call for entries: Architects and Designers: Show Us Your Baldwin contest; deadline: October 31- Baldwin Hardware



"House in Motion": Danish artist Jes Fomsgaard has worked with architectural motives - inspired by the principles of modern city planning...Architect Anders Abrahamsen has been exploring the field between art and architecture in both theory and praxis for years...a first time collaboration between the two; at the Danish Architecture Center, Copenhagen [images]

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