

Today's News - Thursday, October 2, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Apologies for missing yesterday's posting - we were without Internet access until yesterday afternoon (oh, those pesky Internet gods!).

- A fabulous round-up of reports from CityLab 2014, The Atlantic's summit on urban innovation (definitely worth spending some time).
- Heathcote makes the case that cities "need to design for an ageing population. So who are architects and planners designing for? The whole point of the transgenerational city is that it works for everyone."
- As L.A. plans to flatten a block holding three respected cultural institutions, Lubell makes the case of the importance of embracing them in urban renewal projects (they'll have "first right of refusal" to return, but will they?).
- How a beach is making waves in downtown Detroit, an example of "the spirit of Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" creating a positive ripple effect in the nabe.
- Ijeh accesses Allies & Morrison's Two Pancras Square, and sees it as "a good moment to assess the practice's master plan" for King's Cross Central: it "is already a huge success" and "a remarkable achievement."
- A twofor: "Why the best urban objects are mundane: it's a city's duller objects that define it" + "In praise of boring cities. Are dull cities actually doing something very right?"
- A shortlist of Russia's most creative cities: too bad they "lack is an ecosystem that nurtures creativity."
- Sardar pens an eloquent eulogy re: the "destruction of Mecca: The city is an amalgam of Disneyland and Las Vegas, reduced to a mundane exercise in rituals and shopping" (and the "obnoxious" mega-tall Makkah Royal Clock Tower hotel).
- Placemakers want to have a place at the table with a "unified voice" at Habitat III in 2016, but the challenge is defining terms such as "public space," "public places," and "placemaking" (are they really interchangeable?).
- Keeton dives deep into whether floating architecture's moment has finally arrived: while "more fully realized, just-might-actually-happen sea-based urban endeavors have emerged, it's political will and ownership issues that are holding development back."
- Architects cheer L.A. ditching its long-out-date requirement that skyscrapers have flat tops: "the sky's the limit now."
- Calatrava's Chicago Spire "may be inching back to life."
- Litt cheers the Cleveland Clinic's new Cancer Institute that "packs a subtle precision and clarity" that may not come across in the renderings: "a reminder that pretty pictures of future buildings can also fail to communicate how good they might actually be."
- Gunts reports on Johansen's Mechanic Theatre in Baltimore finally biting the dust despite desperate efforts to save it - a "preservationist was able to salvage the original letters from the building, but nothing else" (really sad pix).
- Hough appreciates good architectural criticism, "but does it have to be all about architecture? Urban design has been hijacked" - and "intelligent landscape-focused criticism remains hard to come by."
- Lange offers a "guide to making an architectural meme - six points of viral architecture. (Why six? I am told it is more viral than five.)" (ducks included).
- Deasy says it's time for the Stirling Prize to celebrate "function as well as form: It's madness to honor a building that looks great but performs badly."
- One we couldn't resist (o.k., so we're into goats): Metcalfe reports on research showing the "landscaping efficacy" of goats as "a miracle for brush-clearing" (and a "good municipal investment").

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[CityLab 2014: The Atlantic's summit on urban innovation: One Affordable-Housing Solution for Cities: True Home Rule; The Divided City; Young L.A. Is the Real Winner of LA2050; Can Light Rail Still Unite Jerusalem?; Farm-to-Table 'Doesn't Really Work'; etc. By Richard Florida, Kriston Capps, John Metcalfe, Amanda Kolson Hurley-CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

[Building a city for all ages: We need to design for an ageing population: The modern metropolis must be capable of embracing the widest possible range of needs. There is no "average" 75-year-old. So who are architects and planners designing for? The whole point of the transgenerational city is that it works for everyone. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Editorial> Demolish For Progress: Sam Lubell on the importance of embracing cultural institutions in urban renewal projects: ..plans to tear down the block...containing Woodbury University's WUHO Gallery, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibits \(LACE\) Gallery, and the Cupcake Theater in favor of a mixed-use housing development...the arts institutions will have "first right of refusal" to return..."I'm trying to be optimistic"...- The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[Placemaking's Ripple Effect: How a Beach Downtown is Making Waves in Detroit: For the second year in a row...the Beach at Campus Martius...is part of a suite of Placemaking initiatives...embrace the spirit of Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper...Something else ties many of these projects together - the power of the unexpected...a symbol of Detroit's enduring energy and spirit in the midst of its serious fiscal challenges. By Philip Winn \[images\]- Project for Public Spaces \(PPS\)](#)

[King's Cross Central and Two Pancras Square by Allies & Morrison: ...a good moment to assess the practice's masterplan...it is clear that, urbanistically, the development is already a huge success...a remarkable achievement. It speaks of the level of quality and connectivity that has been achieved in many of the completed interventions. By Ike Ijeh -- Townshend Landscape Architects; Stanton Williams; Glenn Howells; PRP; Maccreeanor Lavington; AHMM; Wilmotte & Associates; Bennetts Associates; Eric Parry; Porphyrios Associates; David Chipperfield \[images\]- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Bollards, bricks and black cabs: why the best urban objects are mundane: Far more than the famous towers or historic districts, it's a city's duller objects that define it + In praise of boring cities: Arlington is 'soulless', Zurich 'boring', Adelaide 'should be shut down'. But are dull cities actually doing something very right?- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Creative Cities Index 2014: ...shortlist of Russia's most creative cities: Moscow and St Petersburg are leading the charge and other cities are following, with former factories and mansions converted into bars, boutiques and co-working spaces...What Russian cities ultimately lack is an ecosystem that nurtures creativity...- The Calvert Journal \(UK\)](#)

[Op-Ed: The Destruction of Mecca: The dominant architectural site in the city is not the Sacred Mosque...It is the obnoxious Makkah Royal Clock Tower hotel...among the world's tallest buildings...The city is now surrounded by the brutalism of rectangular steel and concrete structures - an amalgam of Disneyland and Las Vegas...reduced to a mundane exercise in rituals and shopping. By Ziauddin Sardar \[images\]- New York Times](#)

[Placemakers Want to Make Sure They're Heard at Habitat III - 2016 UN-wide conference: Public space advocates work on a unified message...as planners, architects, city officials, academics and urban professionals from 50 nations debated, refined and explored the finer points of placemaking at the Future of Places conference in Buenos Aires earlier this month, the challenges to unifying on message and approach were apparent. Take simply defining terms, for example. "Public space," "public places," and "placemaking" were used somewhat](#)

[interchangeably...](#) - Next City (formerly Next American City)

[Has Floating Architecture's Moment Finally Arrived? Floating cities have captivated society's imagination for centuries...But it wasn't until the last decade or so that more fully realized, just-might-actually-happen sea-based urban endeavors have emerged...it's political will and ownership issues that are holding development back.](#) By Rachel Keeton -- Koen Olthuis/Waterstudio; Buckminster Fuller; Alvaro Siza; BREAD Studio; UP Projects; Aldo Rossi (1979); Kunlé Adeyemi/NLÉ - Next City (formerly Next American City)

[Los Angeles Will Allow Pointy Skyscrapers: ...will allow skyscrapers with spires or slanted roofs - revising a longstanding regulation that forced builders to make flat-topped structures...meant to ensure fire safety by requiring helicopter landing pads...Architects had bemoaned the old rule, saying it stifled creativity and prevented L.A. builders from crafting a distinctive skyline..."the sky's the limit now"...](#) - Governing Magazine

[Chicago Spire Tries to Rise Again: ...a hyper-tall condo from Santiago Calatrava that tried to soar into the record books as the world's second-tallest building, only to get mired in the recession, may be inching back to life.](#) - Architectural Record

[Design of Cleveland Clinic's new Cancer Institute packs a subtle precision and clarity: ...the factors likely to distinguish the new building don't come across in the renderings...a reminder that pretty pictures of future buildings generated by computers, which often oversell a design, can also fail to communicate how good it might actually be.](#) By Steven Litt -- Cesar Pelli (1985-1999); Foster + Partners; William Rawn Associates; Stantec [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

[Another Brutalist Wonder Bites the Dust: Johansen's Mechanic Theatre: Despite pleas for preservation from some of the nation's top architects, demolition work has begun \[in Baltimore\]...One local preservationist was able to salvage the original letters from the building, but nothing else.](#) By Edward Gunts -- John M. Johansen (1967); Shalom Baranes Associates - The Architect's Newspaper

[Where Critics Fear to Tread : Design criticism bridges the gap between the process and product of design, and the public's understanding and appreciation for it. But does it have to be all about architecture? ...multi-disciplinary practice of urban design has been hijacked...it is good planning that creates the framework for good design, and...the public realm...intelligent landscape-focused criticism remains hard to come by.](#) By Mark Hough-PLANetizen

[Six points of viral architecture: the way we consume architecture online has changed thanks to social media, creating a new genre of imagery – meme-itecture. Alexandra Lange offers her guide to making an architectural meme...six points of viral architecture. \(Why six? I am told it is more viral than five.\)](#) - Dezeen

[It's time the Stirling Prize celebrated function as well as form: It's madness to honour a building that looks great but performs badly: Imagine if the engineer and the architect collected the award, or indeed the whole team.](#) By John Deasy/Hilson Moran - BD/Building Design (UK)

[More Evidence That Goats Are a Good Municipal Investment: Goats are better than herbicides when it comes to clearing weeds: ...they're a miracle for brush-clearing...there's even more evidence of their landscaping efficacy thanks to researchers at Duke and six other universities, including one in the Netherlands.](#) By John Metcalfe-CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

[ANN Feature: What Does Recovery Look Like? The current recovery efforts in Japan following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami draw many parallels to our post-Sandy conditions in the Northeast U.S., and should temper our expectations and help illuminate realities of our road ahead. Do they have the answers we seek?](#) By Ilya Azaroff, AIA - ArchNewsNow.com



-- Foster + Partners: Vieux Port Pavilion, Marseille, France: The transformation was one of a series of projects completed in time for the city's inauguration as European Capital of Culture in 2013. By Kirsten Kiser
-- "Reprogramming The City - Opportunities for Urban Infrastructure," Danish Architecture Centre (DAC), Copenhagen, Denmark: ...investigates a new wave of urban creativity...

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