

Today's News - Monday, December 1, 2014

- We are so sad, professionally and personally, to start the week with the sad news that we've lost KPF's Paul Katz much, much too soon. Giovannini and Murray pay tribute.
- Kimmelman sees 1 World Trade Center as "cautionary tale" for NYC and "its upside-down priorities": "something better was possible in Lower Manhattan. Not so bad should never be good enough."
- Stamp is not much kinder to NYC's new Fulton Center: aside from the "feat of technical virtuosity" that is the oculus, the transit hub has "the placeless feel of a shopping mall - it's a low-maintenance grime-and-graffiti-proof architecture designed to withstand the masses rather than give them something to which they can aspire."
- Leon minces no words about New York's skyscraper boom and the failure of trickle-down urbanism": this "newfound urban vitality will register proudly in postcards but flatline up close. What these buildings really reflect is the impoverished political imagination of the times."
- Goldberger talks to Bill Moyers about NYC's changing skyline, and how the "long, dark shadows of plutocracy and global wealth diminishes midtown Manhattan."
- Callahan cheers the spurt of park-building, but is more than concerned that "a hollowed-out public sector is losing its critical role" as "private wealth is taking the wheel."
- It looks like Heatherwick's Garden Bridge across the Thames will be approved, but its backers are warned that "it will lose goodwill very quickly if it gives in to 'creeping commercialization.'"
- Hartman says it's "spurious" to compare the Garden Bridge to the High Line - it's more "a bastard cousin": "its main driver is to create a horticultural visitor attraction, not a connected piece of city."
- Bentley takes a hike to check on the progress of three Chicago parks projects: they "have raised questions of equity and public investment, but also stirred excitement with inventive designs."
- Gehry defends MAD's Lucas Museum on Chicago's lakefront: "Please do not dismiss it because it doesn't look like something you've never seen before."
- Kamin, on the other hand, takes issue with the contradictions between a new riverfront sign law and embracing the Lucas museum: "Why is the riverfront, which city officials often refer to as "the second lakefront," getting more protection than the actual lakefront?"
- We couldn't resist throwing in a dollop of levity amidst a grouchy news day: it's the Kamin vs. The Donald Twitter duel! "Watching two grown men in a social media hissy fit over a building sign is actually a lot more amusing than one might think" (a "comb-over vulgarian" included).
- Heathcote has high hopes as Design Miami/ begins - "with new buildings by young, bright architects. The hint of sadness is that in its success, design seems doomed to act as a veneer of cool to attract the big brands that will ultimately displace it."
- Capps gives us some of the back-story of "the odd-couple pairing of the world's edgiest architect and its largest cultural bureaucracy": BIG's "sketches of the plan are bonkers by Smithsonian standards. The residents of the 2030s and beyond may come to thank the Smithsonian for its courage today."
- Betsky looks at BIG's Smithsonian master plan as part of the "underground museum movement": it "appears to be effective, dramatic, and very expensive," but that it "brings the idealism of modernism's allegiance with accessibility, openness, and fluidity to bear on our monuments is an added bonus."
- The five biggest "ah-ha" moments from the world's first Chief Resilience Officer Summit: #2. Cities need to reframe their problems by asking themselves better questions.
- Melbourne pays heed to its first People's Panel on the city's 10-year financial plan, unanimously accepting its document recommending "bike lanes, more open space, and increasing rates to pay for it all," anticipating it "will see the city retain its high level of livability and stay a leader in sustainability."

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**Obituary: Paul Katz, Big-Picture Architect, 57: As president and managing principal of...Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF), Katz was the mastermind of many of its major projects...an architect of wide scope who focused as much on fine detail as on the big urban picture....negotiated into existence some of the tallest mixed-use buildings in the world... By Joseph Giovannini - New York Times**

**Obituary: Paul Katz, 1957-2014: Peter Murray remembers Kohn Pedersen Fox's managing principal: He was particularly interested in architectural issues relating to urban density and the role of high rise structures...His belief in the positive impact of new architecture was infectious and unbounded. - The Architect's Newspaper**

**A Soaring Emblem of New York, and Its Upside-Down Priorities: Flawed 1 World Trade Center Is a Cautionary Tale: "It's not so bad," offered an architect...Alas, it is...implies (wrongly) a metropolis bereft of fresh ideas. It looks as if it could be anywhere, which New York isn't...something better was possible in Lower Manhattan...Not so bad should never be good enough. By Michael Kimmelman -- David Childs/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) - New York Times**

**Fulton Center: a vision of New York's cold future: While the light-diffusing Sky-Net is a feat of technical virtuosity, the transport hub is grey and glassy, with the placeless feel of a shopping mall...it's a low-maintenance grime-and-graffiti-proof architecture designed to withstand the masses rather than give them something to which they can aspire. But it will reduce train delays. And maybe that's the best we should hope for. By Jimmy Stamp -- Arup; Grimshaw Architects; James Carpenter Design Associates; Page Ayres Cowley Architects [images] - Guardian (UK)**

**On New York's Skyscraper Boom and the Failure of Trickle-Down Urbanism: ...newfound urban vitality will register proudly in postcards but flatline up close...Solving a housing crisis by building penthouses would be like trying to solve an automobile shortage by manufacturing Bentleys...Could trickle-down urbanists ever advocate meeting social challenges with equally bold ambition? What these buildings really reflect is the impoverished political imagination of the times. By Joshua K. Leon - Metropolis Magazine**

**The Long, Dark Shadows of Plutocracy: ...the changing skyline of Manhattan as the physical embodiment of how money and power impact the lives and neighborhoods of every day people. Clips: Paul Goldberger on the New York City Skyline...the logic behind residential super towers...How global wealth diminishes midtown Manhattan... - Moyers & Company (PBS)**

**Op-Ed: The Billionaires' Park: While it's hard to argue with more parks, or the generosity of donors...It's more evidence of how a hollowed-out public sector is losing its critical role, and how private wealth is taking the wheel...Now, as a citizen, you feel like a spectator to largely privatized decision making...If we want even the semblance of equity in civic spaces, new ways must be found to pay for it. By David Callahan - New York Times**

**Westminster says Garden Bridge would be thrown out if it was 'private development': Despite its 'significant harm' to views, council says it should be approved tomorrow night because it is open to public...warned the Garden Bridge Trust that it will lose goodwill very quickly if it gives in to "creeping commercialisation." -- Thomas Heatherwick/Heatherwick Studio [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)**

**The Garden Bridge is not London's answer to the New York High Line: ...comparing it to the New York scheme is spurious...What is most concerning about this bridge is that its main driver is to create a horticultural visitor attraction, not a connected piece of city...We do not need a bastard cousin of the High Line at centre stage on the Thames. By Hattie Hartman -- Thomas Heatherwick; Dan Pearson [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)**

Gardens and Rust: Chris Bentley checks on the progress of three Chicago parks projects: A mangled airfield, a crumbling parking Garage, and a defunct stretch of railroad...The 606 [Bloomingdale Trail], Northerly Island, and Maggie Daley Park...have raised questions of equity and public investment, but also stirred excitement with inventive designs... -- Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates; Studio Gang Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Frank Gehry defends MAD Architects' Lucas Museum for Chicago as judge suspends work: "I would hope that the people of Chicago take the proper time to review the Lucas Museum. Please do not dismiss it because it doesn't look like something you've never seen before." -- Studio Gang- Dezeen

Emanuel's riverfront sign law contradicts embrace of Lucas museum: ...was it right for the mayor to bash Donald Trump for slathering a monster-sized sign on his Chicago River skyscraper, then coddle George Lucas after the filmmaker proposed to erect a ridiculously overscaled mountain of a museum along Lake Michigan? Why is the riverfront, which city officials often refer to as "the second lakefront," getting more protection than the actual lakefront? By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

Tribune's Blair Kamin vs. Donald Trump: The Duel On Twitter: Watching two grown men in a social media hissy fit over a building sign is actually a lot more amusing than one might think...."You couldn't work for me for 10 seconds"... "I would never WANT to work for comb-over vulgarian like you."- CBS Chicago

Design intervention in Miami: Miami's Design District is booming and poised to glisten in that world's fickle spotlight as Design Miami/ descends this week...with new buildings by young, bright architects...The hint of sadness is that in its success, design seems doomed to act as a sacrificial layer, a veneer of cool to attract the big brands that will ultimately displace it...The question is, does it still qualify as a design district? By Edwin Heathcote -- Sou Fujimoto; Aranda/Lasch; K/R Architects (Keenan/Riley); Zaha Hadid; Cure & Penabad; Khoury & Vogt Architects; Nathan Browning; Studio Gang; Jürgen Mayer H; Nicolas Buffe; Peter Marino- Financial Times (UK)

Mall Shook Up: An Edgy Danish Architect's BIG Plans for the Smithsonian: ..the backstory does help to explain the odd-couple pairing...While the details are bound to change over the next two decades, the sketches of the plan are bonkers by Smithsonian standards...Whether the design will suit the Mall's needs in 2034 is harder to say...The residents of the 2030s and beyond may come to thank the Smithsonian for its courage today. By Kriston Capps -- BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group [images]- Washington City Paper (Washington, DC )

The Underground Museum Movement: The Smithsonian south campus master plan by Bjarke Ingels Group [BIG]...seems like a worthwhile investment in the foundation, both literal and figural, of our shared cultural heritage. To do so in a manner that brings the idealism of modernism's allegiance with accessibility, openness, and fluidity to bear on our monuments is an added bonus. By Aaron Betsky [images]- Architect Magazine

Five Lessons from the World's First Chief Resilience Officer Summit: ...the biggest "ah-ha" moments to come out of this first CRO Summit...#2. Cities need to reframe their problems by asking themselves better questions.- 100 Resilient Cities / Rockefeller Foundation (100RC)

People's panel: citizens tell Melbourne where to go: Sustainability as a key priority; roads and parking spots ripped up for bike lanes; more open space; and increasing rates to pay for it all...part of the first People's Panel on the city's 10-year financial plan. What's more surprising is the council has unanimously accepted the document in its entirety...will see the city retain its high level of liveability and stay a leader in sustainability.- The Fifth Estate (Australia)

ANN Feature: Op-Ed: Top of the Heap: Since 1931, the Empire State Building has been New York City's GPS, but with a spate of supertalls obscuring the building, it could become hard to tell Manhattan from Kowloon or Pudong or Shinjuku or Canary Wharf. By Fred A. Bernstein- ArchNewsNow

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