

Today's News - Tuesday, November 3, 2015

- A rather grumpy news day: Williamson's blistering take-down of starchitects: "The 'starchitect' is almost always and everywhere the enemy of the public good, but American public planners have a terrible weakness for celebrity architects and public grandiosity" - and let's not forget: "global-warming hysteria has been sustained by celebrity much more than by science" (somehow Emma Watson, Lena Dunham, and politics have a hand in it).
- Capps offers his own take-down of Williamson: "'Starchitect' has become a partisan dog-whistle well outside its context in design. Conservative voices are welcome and needed. But be wary of a coded term meant to cut the debate short."
- Hosey has issues about "why architecture isn't art (and shouldn't be)" - who are we to argue when he quotes Frank Zappa?
- Heathcote x 2: he delves into "the bad, the ugly and the dysfunctional" in design, and why "the power of the brand has led to many designs that do not work but remain desirable" as "a signifier of taste and wealth - contemporary design culture does not judge through the lens of function."
- He says the absence of a glitzy/elaborate/over-the-top "Bond Villain's Lair" aesthetic in the latest James Bond flick "reveals the disconcerting state of London's corporate architecture."
- It's Jheh vs. Dunnett re: whether Spence's Hyde Park Barracks should come down: "it was the Walkie Talkie of its day - a dubious and damaging misalignment of architectural belligerence and contextual insensitivity" vs. it "introduced a new kind of 'townscape.'"
- Betsky ponders Jahn's Thompson Center and United terminal, each "with disparate futures" - neither "is beautiful in either the classical or the modernist sense. They are raw, jaunty, and very much present. Their architecture makes you find your own way and make up your own mind."
- It's green space vs. mass transit re: what to do with a sunken, long-abandoned freight-rail line in the South Bronx: "The conflict rekindles a long-running debate about what to do with old rail corridors."
- A call for NYC (as elsewhere) to allow micro-apartments: "A shift from subsidizing affordable housing to downsizing apartment sizes would help house young workers and low-income seniors."
- A small rural school in Wyoming "with an explosive view of the Teton Mountains" (and moose stopping by) "gets a rugged weathering steel skin" (very cool).
- Sessa sizes up the "4 edgiest architects designing around the world": their styles, star projects, and where you'll see them next.
- A good reason to plan to be in Brisbane: 8th International Urban Design Conference: "Empowering Change: Transformative Innovations and Projects."
- Eye-fuls of the 28 winners of the 2015 New Zealand Architecture Awards.
- One we couldn't resist: Stott parses "150 weird words that only architects use - this isn't a list of words you should immediately stop using; simply be aware of who you're talking to."
- Call for entries: FIGMENT NYC Minigolf 2016: "Mini is the New Big" on Governors Island + 2016 Coverings Installation & Design (CID) Awards + LAGI 2016 Youth STEAM Prize for middle and high school students.

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An Awful Enthusiasm: Toward the separation of celebrity and state: The "starchitect" is almost always and everywhere the enemy of the public good, but American public planners...have a terrible weakness for celebrity architects and public grandiosity...global-warming hysteria has been sustained by celebrity much more than by science. By Kevin D. Williamson -- Santiago Calatrava; Frank Gehry- National Review

Leave Starchitects Alone: It's time to abandon the buzz-word, which has become a partisan dog-whistle well outside its context in design: National Review issued its latest broadside...Architectural elites are bad for America...conservative critics love to hate the "starchitect"...The objection to starchitects is dressed up in Culture Wars theatrics...Conservative voices are welcome and needed...But be wary of a coded term meant to cut the debate short: starchitect. By Kriston Capps - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Why Architecture Isn't Art (And Shouldn't Be): "Architecture is art, nothing else," Philip Johnson once declared...Richard Meier claims that architecture is in fact "the greatest of the arts"...If architecture is art, what is "art," anyway? Ironically, the most celebrated architects actually use evermore exotic geometries for the opposite purpose - to broadcast their personal interests...And this is exactly why architecture is considered art...As Frank Zappa put it, "Art is making something out of nothing and selling it." By Lance Hosey -- Patrik Schumacher; Zaha Hadid; Frank Gehry- Huffington Post

Design horrors: the bad, the ugly and the dysfunctional: The influence of modernism and the power of the brand have led to many designs that do not work but remain desirable: The question "what is good design?"...The answer, almost invariably, was some combination of usefulness and simplicity. But that answer is no longer enough. Bad design can, conversely, prosper...design to demonstrate that you appreciated design, a signifier of taste and wealth...contemporary design culture does not judge through the lens of function... By Edwin Heathcote -- Marc Newson; William Morris; Dieter Rams; Philippe Starck; Ron Arad- Financial Times (UK)

Spectre Architecture: The absence of a "Bond Villain's Lair" aesthetic in the latest installment in the James Bond franchise, reveals the disconcerting state of London's corporate architecture: ...stretch of London's South Bank, with the new US Embassy boasting its own moat and a prickly skyline of dim towers, is becoming a sub-Bond set realised at urban scale. By Edwin Heathcote- Icon (UK)

Why Hyde Park Barracks deserves to be demolished: The campaign to save Basil Spence's lowering landmark ignores the building's utter failure to engage with its urban context: ...consistently controversial brutalist landmark...developers are circling this lucrative piece of prime real estate...for its redevelopment...few are likely to mourn it...it was the Walkie Talkie of its day - a dubious and damaging misalignment of architectural belligerence and contextual insensitivity that attracted derision well before it was built... By Ike Jheh [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

You might as well knock down the London Eye as demolish Hyde Park Barracks: Basil Spence should be celebrated for his efforts to give people access to "light, space, greenery": Conservatives have never been able to get their heads round the idea that the modern movement introduced a new kind of "townscape"... By James Dunnett [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Helmut Jahn in Chicago: Aaron Betsky opines on two Jahn buildings with disparate futures: Neither the Thompson Center nor the United terminal is beautiful in either the classical or the modernist sense. They are raw, jaunty, and very much present. Their architecture neither recedes nor tells you what is right, but instead makes you find your own way and make up your own mind. [images]- Architect Magazine

Green space or mass transit? A forgotten South Bronx rail line is suddenly the center of attention: Competing visions emerge for abandoned tracks...An idea to transform a sunken freight-rail line into a park is gaining traction with elected officials. But the same trench has long been eyed for use as a transit line connecting to Queens and Brooklyn. The conflict rekindles a long-running debate about what to do with old rail corridors.... - Crain's New York Business

Editorial: Micro-apartments are a big solution to one of the city's most vexing problems: A shift from subsidizing affordable housing to downsizing apartment sizes would help house young workers and low-income seniors: With modern technology and design, builders are now providing even greater efficiency and comfort in small spaces. The first step should be to eliminate the 400-square-foot minimum.... - Crain's New York Business

Rural mountain school in Wyoming gets a rugged weathering steel skin: Kelly Elementary School offers an unforgettable place for kids to learn...A quiet country building with an explosive view of the Teton Mountains...Unfortunately, the school had leaky walls and hemorrhaged energy after years of extreme weather took their toll...The 9,627-square-foot school currently teaches 46 students, K-5. -- Ward + Blake Architects [images]- [Inhabitat](#)

The 4 edgiest architects designing around the world: The firms. The looks. Star projects. See them soon. By Andrew Sessa -- Oualalou+Choi (formerly KILO architectures), Paris and Casablanca; Pitsou Kedem Architect, Tel Aviv; Cincopatasalgato, San Salvador; Vo Trong Nghia Architects, Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi [images]- [New York Post](#)

8th International Urban Design Conference: "Empowering Change: Transformative Innovations and Projects" will focus on inspirational changes in urban environments; Brisbane, 16 to 18 November- [Urban Design Australia Conference](#)

2015 New Zealand Architecture Awards revealed: ...a total of 28 prizes were handed out... -- New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA); Stevens Lawson Architects; Sheppard & Rout Architect; Patterson Associates; Bull O'Sullivan Architecture; Jasmx; Warren and Mahoney Architects; Mitchell & Stout Architects; Architectus; Athfield Architects; etc. [images]- [Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

150 Weird Words That Only Architects Use: ...learning the architectural lexicon is one of the most mind-bending processes involved in becoming a designer...there's a difference between talking to other architects and talking to people outside the profession...this isn't a list of words you should immediately stop using; simply be aware of who you're talking to... By Rory Stott- [ArchDaily](#)

Call for entries: FIGMENT NYC Minigolf 2016: "Mini is the New Big": design a minigolf hole for the Minigolf Course on Governors Island; deadline: March 1, 2016- [FIGMENT/ENYA/AIANY/SEAoNY](#)

Call for entries: 2016 Coverings Installation & Design (CID) Awards (international) for the use of tile and stone in residential, commercial, international and sustainable projects; no fee; deadline: January 18, 2016- [Coverings](#)

Call for entries: LAGI 2016 Youth STEAM Prize (international): Middle School and High School students invited to design public artworks that integrate renewable energy technologies that power a sustainable city; cash prize; deadline: May 15, 2016- [Land Art Generator Initiative \(LAGI\)](#)



OMA: A new art space for Fondazione Prada located in a former industrial complex [in Milan] may sound like the cliché of the 21st century gallery. It is, however, anything but: ...it is undoubtedly the zenith of the collaboration between the two cultural powerhouses...Totally open to the city and rooted in the existing fabric of the site...a provocative and totally new kind of art space... By Nina Tory-Henderson [images]

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