

Today's News - Tuesday, December 6, 2011

- While the healthcare may be one of the few fairly prosperous A/E sectors, an architect explains why the growing trend in hybrid operating rooms requires a new design approach for architects.
- After Liverpool gets the news it's in danger of losing its world heritage site status, UNESCO inspectors check out developments around the Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster with concerns about the skyscrapers (like the Shard) rising around them.
- Russell sees promise in Salt Lake City's pilot efforts in the Sustainable Communities program: "With proximity to a new light-rail line, suburbs can build to traditional urban densities."
- Meanwhile, New York State gets with the Complete Streets initiative; now it's the law.
- Some of Toronto's satellite cities are waging a big boxitox battle by "banking on culture to fight big-box sprawl" to revitalize their downtowns.
- Chaban cheers much of what Kimmelman and Garvin had to say in the NYT (see yesterday's news), but takes issue with a few points.
- Berg reports on the growing dark sky movement "to transform cities and communities into better places to observe the night sky" (we're for that!).
- Kamin has high hopes for Chicago's Navy Pier shortlist: "the real story here is pier officials' fundamentally sound emphasis on constellations of talent, not starchitects; and on the urban landscape, not a 'look at me' aesthetic object."
- In Florida, the stellar shortlist of three in the St. Petersburg's Pier competition offer a wave, a lens, and an eye: "Wow seemed to be the word of the day" (with an eyeful of the proposals).
- Diamond + Schmitt tapped to give the "inelegant rear end" of Canada's otherwise "wonderfully evocative" National Arts Centre a "posterior for posterity."
- The U.N. teams up with Cucinella to build 20 green schools in Gaza that will "fuse Islamic architecture and sustainable design" (and make education "less vulnerable to the politics du jour").
- Doig x 2: if urban bicyclists want to change cities (and not to be considered "elite snobs"), they need a new attitude.
- He offers a thoughtful (yet amusing) take on why almost all city rankings are "bogus" - but at least "they can get people talking about issues."
- Meanwhile, the Mercer most livable city survey puts Vienna, Zurich, Auckland, and Munich at the top.
- Lamster and Lange's 2nd Annual Year-End Awards with some very amusing categories (and another most amusing read!).
- United States Artists names six architects and designers USA Fellows (with a nice purse to match).
- Hertzberger to receive the RIBA 2012 Royal Gold Medal for Architecture.
- Our heartiest welcome to ArchitectureBoston's new editor Renée Loth (formerly of the Boston Globe), and our heartiest good wishes to founding editor Elizabeth Padjen in her next grand adventure.
- Two we couldn't resist: Rürger's stunning photos of a former Soviet military HQ in East Germany that capture its haunting, "silent charm" + We wonder what architects might do with a new material based on the nanostructure of a butterfly's wing that traps both air and light.

If you could hand your business card to one person in the world, who would it be?

**ArchNewsNow / MOO Competition (it's fun!)
Deadline: December 15**

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INSIGHT: At the Intersection of Medicine, Technology, and Design: Hybrid Operating Rooms: Technology has enabled the transformation of classic operating rooms into dynamic, multi-purpose environments - requiring a new design approach for architects. By Ross A. Cole, BAM Architecture Studio- ArchNewsNow

After Liverpool, the capital's heritage site is being inspected: Unesco's inspectors are in London...to check out developments around the Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster...concerned their status as prized buildings of world importance is being damaged by the building of skyscrapers. - Guardian (UK)

Walk, Bike to Work in Salt Lake's Answer to Suburban Nightmares: ...piloting a federal program called Sustainable Communities...With proximity to a new light-rail line, suburbs...can build to traditional urban densities...Daybreak and City Creek got built in sync with a regional planning effort...called Wasatch Choice for 2040. By James S. Russell- Bloomberg News

'Walkable' Steps Into Spotlight: The goal of more walkable communities, with village centers close to mass transit, is being pursued statewide by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who in August signed "Complete Streets" legislation to make roads safer and more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users. -- Vision Long Island; Walkscore.com; CEOs for Cities- New York Times

Banking on culture to fight big-box sprawl: Around the Golden Horseshoe, a slew of new theatres are being built by municipalities hoping to revitalize their city core...locations - set squarely downtown in cities that have suffered from big-box development on their fringes - suggests that music, drama and dance are being asked to deliver a shot of vitality to urban centres. -- Diamond + Schmitt Architects- Globe and Mail (Canada)

We Need More Zoning: Like a temperamental child, builders and landlords do not always know what is best for them. By making the space surrounding their buildings more appealing, the buildings themselves will rise in value. By Matt Chaban -- Michael Kimmelman; Alexander Garvin; Mitchell Moss; SHoP [links]- New York Observer

Darker Cities, Brighter Stars: ...a growing number of advocates are behind a movement to transform cities and communities into better places to observe the night sky. By Nate Berg -- International Dark Sky Community; International Dark-Sky Association- The Atlantic Cities

Navy Pier design competition: The team, not the star, is what counts; promising contest brings together a spectacular array of finalists...loaded with talent...the real story here is pier officials' fundamentally sound emphasis on...constellations of talent, not starchitects; and on the urban landscape, not a "look at me" aesthetic object + Who's who among the five teams. By Blair Kamin -- AECOM/BIG/WET Design/Speirs + Major; Aedas Architects/Martha Schwartz/Solomon Cordwell Buenz/Hoerr Schaudt; James Corner Field Operations/Bruce Mau/nARCHITECTS/Patrick Blanc; !melk/HOK/UrbanLab/Terry Guen Design Associates; Xavier Vendrell Studio/Grimshaw Architects/Harley Ellis Devereaux/Schuler Shook- Chicago Tribune

Public gets glimpse of finalists in St. Petersburg's Pier design contest: A wave. A lens. An eye. All are design concepts vying for the title of the city's new \$50 million icon...aiming to create the likes of the next London Needle or Sydney Opera House...Wow seemed to be the word of the day. -- BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group; West 8; Michael Maltzan Architecture [slide show]- St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

A posterior for posterity: The NAC's [National Arts Centre] inelegant Elgin St. rear end is a maddening shortcoming of a wonderfully evocative building. Fixing it requires a deft, but not delicate, hand...will take imagination and more than a bit of re-engineering...Diamond + Schmitt should prove an excellent choice. By Rhys Phillips -- Fred Lebensold/Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Sise (1969); Diamond + Schmitt Architects- Ottawa Citizen (Canada)

Gaza's Green Schools Fuse Islamic Architecture and Sustainable Design: United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has teamed up with architect Mario Cucinella to build 20 solar and geothermal-powered schools using local materials...Not only will this project blaze a new path in sustainable development, but education in the Gaza Strip will also become less vulnerable to the politics du jour. [images, links]- Green Prophet (Middle East)

Are urban bicyclists just elite snobs? As cycling's popularity rises, the cyclists are despised. If riders want to change cities,

they need a new attitude...The bicyclists-as-gentrifiers trope turns out to be more perception than reality...If we want to improve the image...we need to start with ourselves. If we're successful, the concept of the elitist bicyclist will one day seem as silly as, well, driving in Manhattan. By Will Doig- Salon

Why city rankings always get it wrong: Happiest cities, most livable cities, loneliest cities -- the Web's filled with lists. Almost all of them are bogus...the most value these lists probably have is that they can get people talking about issues. By Will Doig- Salon

Mercer Quality Of Living Survey: Canada Slides Slightly On Liveable Cities Index: Vienna appears to be the current undisputed winner...In second place came Zurich, followed by Auckland, New Zealand, and Munich, Germany.- Huffington Post

Lunch With The Critics: Second-Annual Year-End Awards: How will 2011 be remembered in architectural history? The last hurrah of starchitectural extravagance? After long deliberation... By Mark Lamster and Alexandra Lange -- Michael Kimmelman; Paul Goldberger; Esther Zandberg; Preston Scott Cohen; Philip Kennicott; Moshe Safdie; Brad Cloepfil; Neutlings-Riedijk/Tod Williams Billie Tsien; Shigeru Ban; Jeanne Gang/Studio Gang; Architect Barbie; Foster + Partners; Nicholas de Monchaux; Brian Lehrer; Metropolis Magazine [links]- Design Observer

Architects and Designers Named USA Fellows – Each Receives \$50,000 for Artistic Excellence -- Elena Manfredini/Atelier Manfredini; J. Morgan Puett/Mildred's Lane; Jenny E. Sabin/Jenny Sabin Studio; Ada Tolla/Giuseppe Lignano/LOT-EK; Mabel O. Wilson/6Ten Studio- United States Artists

Herman Hertzberger to Receive the RIBA 2012 Royal Gold Medal for Architecture: One of his major influences on 20th century architecture was to challenge the early modernist belief that 'form follows function'...'has transformed the way we think about architecture, both as architects and people who use buildings'... -- Architectuurstudio HH [images]- Dexitner

The BSA welcomes Renée Loth as the new editor of ArchitectureBoston: ...founding editor Elizabeth Padjen, FAIA, is stepping down after...14 years.- Boston Society of Architects/BSA/AIA

Glimpses of a Forgotten, Forbidden City: The town of Wünsdorf near Berlin was once the headquarters of the Soviet military in East Germany and home to some 50,000 soldiers. But after the Red Army's departure in 1994, the buildings were left to crumble. Photographer Jörg Rüger explored the grounds, and was fascinated by their silent charm. [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Butterfly wings inspire design of water-repellent surface: Mimicking the many-layered nanostructure of a butterfly's wing, an international team of researchers have created a silicon wafer that traps both air and light.- EarthSky

Call for entries: ArchNewsNow / MOO Competition: If you could hand your business card to one person in the world, who would it be? (It's fun!)- ArchNewsNow



Dominique Perrault: Arganzuela footbridge, Madrid, Spain

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