

Today's News - Tuesday, September 3, 2013

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of Karatzas' stunning architectural photography, an Oslo church, SANAA, and Siza.
- Calthorpe says there is hope for China's ghost towns: "Fortunately, Chenggong is experimenting with a new model of urban planning."
- Kotkin says the Great Lakes states, which "have been the sad sack of American geography," has a future that "may be far brighter than many think" - if the region focuses on its "human assets - instead of chasing hipsters."
- Bwalya says only time will tell if Zambia's Ndola City "is either the patient on his way to recovery or he has come back to say goodbye before he finally packs up."
- King delights in San Francisco's Dolores Heights: its "context, like the context of the city as a whole, is a tapestry that only grows more intriguing as new elements are added to the weave."
- Moore is more or less positive about Mecanoo's Birmingham's new library: "The goldy-glittery exterior is a bit Vegas, but it stays this side of trashiness"; while it's "a good building, it is a sketch, or a pixilation, of a great one."
- Heathcote puts the library into a larger context: "If the library is a metaphor for the city itself, it can play just as profound a role in creating the image of a nation" (as in Medellín and Baghdad).
- Saffron gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Temple University's new "deluxe" dorm: it "excels at connecting its occupants to the city from on high. Making them part of the city at ground level remains the challenge Temple still has to master."
- Wainwright uses this year's Carbuncle Cup winner that "plumbed new depths of awfulness in standards of student housing" as a jumping-off point to round up his top 10 picks of projects that prove "university digs don't have to be mean, windowless sheds" (not many are recent).
- Kamin's fall preview leads with university buildings and apartment towers - the "fall architecture scene promises to be one of the most lively since the recession's onset in 2007."
- Hawthorne weighs in on the prison design debate that "has exposed the facilities, and details of their architecture, to new scrutiny" that is "shedding some of that carefully managed anonymity."
- Litt has high hopes for a new transit station that "could heal one of the ugliest underpasses in Cleveland," and could be "a victory for the public realm."
- Hull's new Scale Lane Bridge "is a destination in itself - a thoughtfully-designed piece of urban space" (great pix).
- Green sees great potential in parks that can pop up just about anywhere because they're formed by swarms of bicycles (adorable dog not necessarily included).
- Metcalfe offers a round-up of some of the "grippier," "highly original," and "whacked-out designs" that are finalists in the Draw Up a Chair competition for NYC's Battery Park.
- Reports and Q&As with RIBA's new president and his agenda for the future.
- One we couldn't resist: move over, tower-that's-roasting-Dallas's-Menil-Collection - Viñoly's "Walkie Talkie" tower in London is melting Jags (and vans and people's eyeballs)!
- Call for entries: Suburbia Transformed 3.0: Exploring the Aesthetics of Landscape Experience in the Age of Sustainability.
- EDITOR'S NOTE: just a reminder that if you're in NYC this evening, please do stop by the Center for Architecture for the opening reception of "Coverage: 75 Years of Oculus" (6:00-8:00pm).

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-- Fine art architectural photography, by Pygmalion Karatzas
-- Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor: Mortensrud Church, Oslo, Norway
-- SANAA designs highly aesthetic and experimental buildings...
-- Álvaro Siza: Porto School of Architecture, Porto, Portugal

The Real Problem with China's Ghost Towns: Flawed financial incentives, poor phasing of services, amenities, and jobs have led to massive building projects empty of people: ...this urban pattern isolates people in huge impersonal landscapes...We demolished a generation of social housing built on this model, and I believe the Chinese eventually will too...Fortunately, Chenggong is experimenting with a new model of urban planning. By Peter Calthorpe/Calthorpe Associates - Metropolis Magazine

Rust Belt Chic And The Keys To Reviving The Great Lakes: Over four decades, the Great Lakes states have been the sad sack of American geography...Yet despite these problems, [the] future may be far brighter than many think...the region needs to focus on its human assets...Instead of chasing hipsters... By Joel Kotkin - Forbes

Ndola City on Recovery Path: When a patient...suddenly starts to show signs of recovery with unexpectedly high levels of energy...it is either the patient is indeed on his way to recovery or he has come back to say goodbye before he finally packs up. And so it is with Ndola City Council, but we can only wait and observe. By Dixon Bwalya - Times of Zambia

Dolores Heights architecture is like a tapestry: Even as they coexist with ease, what the houses share is a sensibility rather than a preordained style...The context of Dolores Heights, like the context of the city as a whole, is a tapestry that only grows more intriguing as new elements are added to the weave. By John King -- George Homsey/EHDD; Craig Steely Architecture [slide show] - San Francisco Chronicle

Library of Birmingham: Birmingham's striking new £189m library lacks a lone architect's vision that can make a good building great: The goldy-glittery exterior is a bit Vegas, but it stays this side of trashiness. The interior of atrium and escalators could be like a shopping mall, but it isn't...a good building. It is a sketch, or a pixilation, of a great one. By Rowan Moore -- Mecanoo [images] - Observer (UK)

A new chapter for libraries: A reflection on the changing face of a pivotal urban institution...Library of Birmingham...an unmissable landmark and its exuberance has...enlivened the sparse plaza...If the library is a metaphor for the city itself, it can play just as profound a role in creating the image of a nation...the library parks of Medellín, Colombia...the planned library for Baghdad. By Edwin Heathcote -- Mecanoo; Dominique Perrault (1996); AMBS - Financial Times (UK)

Temple grows up: How will students living in Temple University's deluxe new Morgan Hall dorm ever be able to concentrate? ...first grown-up work of architecture since it began transforming itself into a major university in the 1990s...excels at connecting its occupants to the city from on high. Making them part of the city at ground level remains the challenge Temple still has to master. By Inga Saffron -- MGA Partners; Olin [images] - Philadelphia Inquirer

The world's best student housing: Following the disastrous Carbuncle Cup winner, here are 10 inspiring student accommodation blocks from around the world - showing that uni digs don't have to be mean, windowless sheds...From India to Denmark, Italy to America... By Oliver Wainwright -- Alvar Aalto; Giancarlo de Carlo; Josep Luís Sert; Denys Lasdun; Powell & Moya; James Stirling; Louis Kahn; Kónz-Molo; Lundgaard & Tranberg; Bogevischs Büro [images] - Guardian (UK)

All eyes on school projects this fall: With university-related buildings and apartment high-rises leading the way, the fall architecture scene promises to be one of the most lively since the recession's onset in 2007. Here's a preview. By Blair Kamin -- Valerio Dewalt Train Associates; FGM Architects; Pelli Clarke Pelli; John Ronan Architects; Krueck + Sexton Architects; Ross Barney Architects; Grimshaw Architects; OMA/AMO Architecture; Perkins+Will; Goettsch Partners; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture; Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch; Balsamo, Olson & Lewis; Jeanne Gang; etc. - Chicago Tribune

Prison design faces judgment: Amid the proliferation of prisons, debate over their future has exposed the facilities, and details of their architecture, to new scrutiny...thanks to a growing number of factors — some within the architecture profession, some political, others in pop culture — prison design is shedding some of that carefully managed anonymity. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Raphael Sperry; Joe Day - Los Angeles Times

City Architecture's new Little Italy RTA Rapid station could heal one of the ugliest underpasses in Cleveland: ...will bring light, safety, public art, new paving and better drainage to a pathetically awful pedestrian environment. The project has strong potential to be a victory for the public realm... By Steven Litt -- Leni Schwendinger Light Projects [images] - Cleveland Plain Dealer

It's Swing Time: A new bridge in Hull to hang-out on: The new Scale Lane Bridge by McDowell+Benedetti in Hull isn't satisfied with just being a connection between A and B. It is a destination in itself...a thoughtfully-designed piece of urban space... [images] - Uncube magazine (Germany)

Park by Swarm: What if communities formed new parks when they needed them? What if these parks could be formed by swarms of bicycles? ...Parkcycle Swarm...four small mobile parks for the Participate public arts festival in Baku, Azerbaijan. By Jared Green -- John Bela/Rebar; Tim Wolfer/N55 [images] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

The Quest to Design the Ultimate Public Chair for Battery Park: Should New York's newest outdoor furniture look like a pretzel, a folded-up newspaper, or Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase? Among the 50 finalists are some highly original and whacked-out designs. Here are a few of the grippier ones... By John Metcalfe -- Ed Kopel Architects; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; FJA Architecture; Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects; Noa Younse; University of Toronto; Bartosik [images] - The Atlantic Cities

New RIBA president to boost client relationships: Stephen Hodder launches range of initiatives, including full review of design competitions run by the body, in effort to 'cut wastage' [link to interview] - Building (UK)

Hodder: The big agenda item for the next few years is 'RIBA for clients': Stephen Hodder succeeds Angela Brady to become the 75th RIBA president. Richard Waite interviews the first-ever Stirling Prize-winner on how he will approach the role - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Reflected light from London skyscraper melts car: Never mind the traffic, car owners in London have a new hazard to worry about: ...developers of the 37-floor "Walkie Talkie"...said they were taking the issue of light reflecting from the building seriously. -- Rafael Viñoly - CNN

Call for entries: Suburbia Transformed 3.0: Exploring the Aesthetics of Landscape Experience in the Age of Sustainability - 3rd international design competition/exhibition for built and visionary (unbuilt) residential landscapes in professional and student categories; registration deadline: February 18, 2014 (submissions due: March 20, 2014) - James Rose Center for Landscape Architectural Research and Design

Exhibition Celebrates 75 Years of Oculus Magazine: ...the Center for Architecture, located in Manhattan's Greenwich Village...is hosting an exhibition titled "Coverage"...opens tonight with a reception... By Murrye Bernard - Contract magazine

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