

Today's News - Tuesday, April 29, 2014

- Sacs pens an in-depth look at how cities we build from scratch could actually bite us back: "As they mature, some of the world's most heralded eco cities may suffer from a few sustainability alligators in their sewers."
- Renne ruminates on the arrival of a new era of transit-oriented development and "networked livable communities."
- Does history prove that the current spate of record-breaking skyscrapers is a sign of economic doom?
- A fascinating look at how and why some developers are "cherry-picking some of the UK's better practices to transform our urban wastelands and unloved spaces" (they get the value of good design - what a concept!).
- NYT's (terrific!) Cities for Tomorrow Conference is now online - and well indexed, so you can watch who/what you're most interested in (fab line-up of speakers).
- A lively conversation between Lopate and Goldberger re: the new residential towers going up in Midtown Manhattan.
- Wainwright offers his wickedly witty take on the 10 worst London skyscrapers: one has "three Eyes of Sauron," another looks like "it had a fight with a gigantic porcupine, and the porcupine won."
- Hill thinks "defending the skyline against barbarians is important, but the damage they are doing is far greater than just spoiling a view."
- King cheers the scuttling of plans for the Warriors' waterfront arena as "the best thing that has happened to San Francisco's waterfront in years - not because of what is gone, but what now could be."
- The Police Married Quarters in Hong Kong is now a hub for local design talent: "The 1950s housing project was once the antithesis of creativity" - now, it is "a major test case" on how the city "conserves and revitalizes historic buildings."
- Shipping containers are making their mark in Auckland on two prominent city sites.
- Some disturbing statistics in the RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey (nearly two-thirds of practices don't have a business plan?!?!?).
- Bozikovic profiles KPMB and how it "became Canada's big-city visionaries of architecture (who sweat the small stuff, too)."
- Hadid is a hit in Hong Kong and helping to shape the future of the mainland China, a "land of opportunity," she says of the building boom and shifting social ambitions."
- Byrnes brings us eye-fuls of bomb shelters in Sderot, Israel, transformed by a city initiative, with artists turning them into "something less foreboding" and "a little more inspirational. Though they still serve an all-too-serious purpose."
- Till takes on the Designs of the Year 2014: how can one "make judgments based on puff and nonsense" (though "there are many interesting ideas hiding under the puff").
- Winners all in the European Prize for Urban Public Space 2014.
- The SAH 2014 Publication Awards make an interesting, informative, and inspiring reading list.

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[Ecocity versus Duplicity: If certain elements of masterplanning are not carefully chosen—and their impacts not carefully explained to final decision makers—then there runs great risk that the cities we design from scratch perform worse than the cities we already have...As they mature, some of the world's most heralded eco cities may suffer from a few sustainability alligators in their sewers. By Ian Sacs - PLANetizen](#)

[The Next Century of Sustainable Communities Will Be Organized Around Transportation: The era of transit-oriented development and "networked livable communities" has arrived...transportation's focus will shift to a sustainable transport paradigm of managing existing infrastructure \(as opposed to building new roads\) and improving accessibility. By John L. Renne/TOD Index/TOD Group - The Atlantic Cities](#)

[Record-breaking skyscrapers a sign of economic doom? 40 Wall Street, Empire State Building construction coincided with onset of financial downturns...Saudi Arabia is expected to begin work on the Kingdom Tower next week...568 feet taller than Dubai's Burj Khalifa...But it isn't just the world's tallest building we should be looking at. -- Skyscraper Index- The Real Deal \(NYC\)](#)

[Why architects are working for property developers: ...developers...cherry-picking some of the UK's better practices to transform our urban wastelands and unloved spaces. This new breed appears to enjoy and understand the value of architecture and design. -- AHMM; Stiff & Trivillion; Duggan Morris; DSDHA; Hugh Broughton; Sergison Bates; Hawkins\Brown; BuckleyGrayYeoman; Bennetts Associates; Piercy & Co; Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands; Squire and Partners; Studio Egret West; Shedkm; David Chipperfield; Lynch Architects; Henley Halebrown Rorrison \[images\]- DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine \(UK\)](#)

[New York Times Cities for Tomorrow Conference: Smart. Resilient. Sustainable. \[video\]- New York Times](#)

["Too Rich, Too Thin, Too Tall?" Residential Towers in Manhattan: Paul Goldberger discusses the new residential towers going up in Midtown Manhattan. - WNYC.org / The Leonard Lopate Show](#)

[Horror storeys: the 10 worst London skyscrapers: From St Paul's to the Gherkin, London's skyline is full of history – and character. Will the new tower frenzy spoil all that? Oliver Wainwright lists his top 10 worst upstarts...built and imminent... -- Robin Partington; UNStudio; Make & Darling Associates; PLP; Broadway Malyan; Stock Woolstencroft; BFLS; Rafael Viñoly; CZWG; SPARRC \[images\]- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[London's skyline is less important than the people living in it: Aesthetic objections to skyscrapers often fade over time, but whether the buildings serve the majority matters so much more...Defending the skyline against barbarians is important, but the damage they are doing is far greater than just spoiling a view. And, after all, they do create a few good ones too. By Dave Hill- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[How Warriors' Piers 30-32 exit is the best thing for waterfront: The Golden State Warriors' decision to scuttle the team's proposed arena...is the best thing that has happened to San Francisco's waterfront in years - not because of what is gone, but what now could be. By John King- San Francisco Chronicle](#)

[Can revamped Police Married Quarters succeed as a hub for local design talent? Turned into a showcase for local design talent, much is expected...In an almost perfect instance of architectural irony...The 1950s housing project...was once the antithesis of creativity...PMQ is seen as a major test case on how Hong Kong conserves and revitalises historic buildings. - South China Morning Post](#)

[Auckland embraces ship-shape option: Shipping containers are being put to new uses as builders make inroads on two prominent city sites...Part of their appeal is their strength and security...traditional construction methods can't compete with the strength and affordability... -- Royal Wolf; Architettura \[images\]- New Zealand Herald](#)

[Architects 'dangerously reliant on single sector': Most practices earn more than 40% of fees from one sector or client, warns RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey: There is no correlation between success at winning work and profitability, suggesting practices are chasing and winning projects at fees that are too low or that they are doing large amounts of unpaid](#)

speculative work...Nearly two-thirds...do not have a business plan and only 15% plan more than a year ahead.- BD/Building Design (UK)

How KPMB became Canada's big-city visionaries of architecture (who sweat the small stuff, too): ...has assumed an important place in Canadian culture, as city builders, mentors and advocates. But nothing about their work or their career has been simple. By Alex Bozikovic [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Zaha Hadid's distinct style is a hit in Hong Kong and on mainland: ...distinctive neo-futuristic style has brought her worldwide fame and is helping shape the future of the mainland...she believes a lack of confidence is the major reason for the dearth of women at the highest levels of architecture, and is hopeful that can change...."China became the land of opportunity," she says of the building boom and shifting social ambitions. [images]- South China Morning Post

In Israel, Turning Bomb Shelters Into Art: Sderot has about 200 shelters. A city initiative tries to turn them into something less foreboding...many city residents, especially children, show symptoms of PTSD. To help address the problem...artists turn these shelters into something a little more inspirational. Though they still serve an all-too-serious purpose... By Mark Byrnes [images]- The Atlantic Cities

Don't judge Designs of the Year 2014 at face value: Should I, and then you, really be expected to make judgements based on puff...and nonsense...If all we have are the rhetorical statements of the author-architect, and some static images, then what is a perpetuated is a culture of disengagement and spectacular display. Issues of use and experience are suppressed...Overall, there are many interesting ideas hiding under the puff. By Jeremy Till- The Conversation

European Prize for Urban Public Space 2014 Prize winners: 25 finalists, amongst which it has awarded two ex aequo prizes and four Special Mentions...Renovation of the old port/Vieux-Port, Marseille, France; "The braided valley," Elche, Spain. -- Michel Desvigne Paysagiste MDP, Foster + Partners, Tangram, INGEROP, AIK; Francisco Leiva Ivorra, Marta García Chico, Antoni Baile Jiménez, Prócoro del Real Baeza [images]- Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)

SAH 2014 Publication Awards: John Harwood: "The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945–1976"; Corinne Bélier, Barry Bergdoll, Marc Le Coeur: "Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light"; Jeffrey M. Chusid: "Saving Wright: The Freeman House and the Preservation of Meaning, Materials, and Modernity"; Louise A. Mazingo: "Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes"; Christopher Klemek: "The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin" - Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)

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