

Today's News - Tuesday, August 12, 2014

- ArcSpace continues its 10 Worth Seeing series - this week it's eye-fuls of stunning libraries.
- Fedarko minces now words about two development plans for the Grand Canyon: "landscapes that fall to development will never return" (our fingers are crossed that neither happens).
- O'Sullivan reports on Amsterdam's "weird culture war" between those who "want to power-wash" the "dirty, filthy, and too full" city - but "many people don't think it's true."
- Jacobs x 2: she delves into the "poor door" conundrum: "developers may look like the villains in this morality play," but "instead of being horrified when they play the cards they've been dealt, maybe we should be playing a whole different game."
- She ponders whether NYC's \$20-billion Hudson Yards can really be a "buzzy neighborhood" built from scratch: "The towers look like the skyscrapers architects would crank out for clients in Dubai," but "what may prevent this development from feeling canned is the quality of the design at ground level."
- Heathcote has an interesting take on how, "in London's architectural renaissance, money is in the shadows, and it is the architects who are soaking up the daylight."
- King considers the Port of San Francisco reconsidering the city's waterfront's future that has to take into account sea-level rise and voter-imposed height limits: "Several alternatives are offered for how best to seek voter blessings."
- Schumacher offers a most thoughtful take on "the successes and missteps of placemaking in Milwaukee": it's "a term that's become a panacea for some and a profanity for others. Suspicions run especially high when placemaking is driven by economic development interests, what's often dubbed 'creative placemaking.'"
- Kamin cheers "a new architectural game in town" that he's dubbed "sliced minimalism": "It's the latest show - and a good one - in Chicago's ever-fascinating skyline drama."
- Office space is now Chicago's "final frontier," with a "growing tech sector is transforming entire neighborhoods and breathing new life into some of the city's oldest buildings," but the biggest obstacle for those who "want to stay in neighborhoods with funky, old buildings is their own success."
- Knelman parses revised-for-better plans for the Mirvish/Gehry King Street West development in Toronto: "city planners are now smiling and burbling with praise instead of recoiling with fear about future shock," but "the potential hurdles are far from over."
- Eye-fuls of the almost-completed Shanghai Tower, set to be China's tallest and the world's second-tallest building.
- Lubell has a fine time exploring Mexico City's architecture guided by "two talented, famous 40-somethings who represent a new guard of starchitects in Mexico" (lucky him!).
- Dana Goodyear spent a lot of time with, and pens a lengthy take on Ban: the "architect of the dispossessed meets the 1%": "to many in the field, he represents a conundrum. You can live in a house designed by Ban only if you are recently homeless or exceedingly wealthy" - and he always gets his own way (a great read!).
- Millar, meanwhile, puts the spotlight "rebel architects" you may have never heard of, but who "are trying to improve people's lives in tough areas," sometimes "working on the fringes of the law."
- San Francisco architect Downey tackles his first design project since going blind six years ago, and what tools have allowed him to see his design (sighted architects should pay heed).
- Wainwright wonders about BIG's plans for a cage-free zoo in Denmark: the "'zootopia' reverses the role of captor and captive. But will Givskud zoo become a feral version of the Hunger Games?"
- Crabb gets a kick out of the controversy swirling around Sydney's latest public art projects: she revels in crabby people offering "witty denunciations - the outcry itself forms a rippling, messy and thoroughly enjoyable comet-trail behind the beleaguered creation."

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10 Libraries Worth Visiting: The library is fighting for its survival... Luckily, a number of contemporary projects seem determined in wanting to ensure the continued relevance of the library as an institution and societal focal point. -- OMA; Sou Fujimoto Architects; Snøhetta; Toyo Ito & Associates; Renzo Piano; schmidt hammer lassen architects; COBE + Transform; Dominique Perrault; Gehry Partners

Op-Ed: A Cathedral Under Siege: Two Development Projects Threaten the Grand Canyon: Buried within the Tusayan and tramway proposals is the belief that a tiny circle of entrepreneurs has the right to profit at the expense of everyone else by destroying a piece of the commonwealth... landscapes that fall to development will never return. By Kevin Fedarko - New York Times

Amsterdam's Weird Culture War: Conservatives want to power-wash the city of its intrinsic character - which includes pot shops and sex shows, but also a uniquely Dutch balance: Amsterdam is "dirty, filthy, and too full." Such is the damning verdict of Wim Pijbes, director of the city's Rijksmuseum... This is all fighting talk, but there's a problem with it: Many people don't think it's true. By Feargus O'Sullivan - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

The Real Scandal In NYC Real Estate? Not Enough Poor Doors: Outrage over separate entrances for low-income residents ignores a bigger design crime: ... developers may look like the villains in this morality play, but the real culprit is a decades-old determination to extract the "public" from public housing... maybe the real problem here is the game... Instead of being horrified when developers play the cards they've been dealt, maybe we should be playing a whole different game. By Karrie Jacobs - Fast Company

Inside NYC's \$20 Billion Quest To Build A Neighborhood From Scratch: Can you create that buzzy neighborhood feel in 17.4 million square feet and 28 acres? Manhattan is about to find out: The Hudson Yards towers look like the skyscrapers architects would crank out for clients in Dubai... What may prevent this development from feeling canned... is the quality of the design at ground level... By Karrie Jacobs -- Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); David Childs/SOM; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Rockwell Group; Dattner Architects; Nelson Byrd Woltz; Thomas Heatherwick [images] - Fast Company

Lords of the London skyline vie for design supremacy: Foster and Rogers have transformed the physical fabric of the city: Van Alen, Severance, Lamb... are all but forgotten, largely eclipsed in New Yorkers' consciousness by the patrons whose power and wealth they projected above the city streets. But in London's architectural renaissance money is in the shadows, and it is the architects who are soaking up the daylight. By Edwin Heathcote -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Foster + Partners; Rafael Viñoly - Financial Times (UK)

Port of San Francisco: Time for a new view of the S.F. waterfront's future: ... pressures such as sea-level rise and voter-imposed height limits make it time to re-examine how business is done... Several alternatives are offered for how best to seek voter blessings. By John King - San Francisco Chronicle

Charting the successes and missteps of placemaking in Milwaukee: ... the dialogue about "placemaking," a term that's

become a panacea for some and a profanity for others, has gained traction here...the stakes are high and it's still anyone's game...Suspensions run especially high when placemaking is driven by economic development interests, what's often dubbed "creative placemaking"... By Mary Louise Schumacher- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Chicago's sliced high-rises make a bold statement: ...there's a new architectural game in town. It's a game of subtraction, not addition...Let's call it "sliced minimalism." It's the latest show — and a good one — in Chicago's ever-fascinating skyline drama...wags have dubbed Optima Chicago Center "The Fridge." I'd say it's just plain cool...skillfully navigates the difficult art of the simple...OneEleven...the task was anything but simple. By Blair Kamin -- David Hovey; Gary Handel/Handel Architects; Solomon Cordwell Buenz [slide show]- Chicago Tribune

Chicago 2.0: Office space, the final frontier: Chicago's growing tech sector is transforming entire neighborhoods and breathing new life into some of the city's oldest buildings...radically transforming the largest downtown office market west of Manhattan...River North neighborhood has changed from gritty to glitzy...The biggest obstacle for startups that want to stay in neighborhoods with funky, old buildings is their own success.- Crain's Chicago Business

David Mirvish has lots to look forward to at 70: His Mirvish + Gehry Development is back on track...have reduced the scope of King Street West...city planners are now smiling and burbling with praise instead of recoiling with fear about future shock...the potential hurdles are far from over. By Martin Knelman -- Frank Gehry- Toronto Star

Shanghai Tower Enters Final Stage of Construction: ...will soon be China's tallest and the world's second tallest building...632-meter (2,073 feet) spiraling tower is now set to be completed in 2015... -- Gensler; Marshall Strabala/2DEFINE Architecture [images]- ArchDaily

Seeing Mexico City, Guided by Architects: My entire itinerary would be shaped by two talented, famous 40-somethings who represent a new guard of architects in Mexico... to give me a sense of what stands out to Mexico City architects when they turn their gaze toward home. By Sam Lubell -- Fernando Romero/FR-EE/Fernando Romero Enterprise; Michel Rojkind/Rojkind Arquitectos; Arturo Chavez Paz; Luis Barragán; Alberto Kalach; Tienda de Comercios; Pedro Ramírez Vázquez; Enrique Norton/TEN Arquitectos [images]- New York Times

Paper Palaces: The architect of the dispossessed meets the one per cent: In a profession often associated with showmanship and ego, Ban's work appears humble, and appropriate to a historical moment that celebrates altruism...To many in the field, though, Ban represents a conundrum....You can live in a house designed by Shigeru Ban only if you are recently homeless or exceedingly wealthy. By Dana Goodyear -- Dean Maltz - New Yorker

Rebel architects: building a better world: Working on the fringes of the law, rebel architects are trying to improve people's lives in tough areas. From floating homes to disaster-proof houses and bamboo domes...the men and women building for their communities. By Aaron Millar -- Santiago Cirugeda; Kunlé Adeyemi; Yasmeen Lari; Vo Trong Nghia [images]- Observer (UK)

How a San Francisco Architect Reframes Design for the Blind: Though Chris Downey has consulted on other architects' projects since going blind...Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco community center is the first space he's designed since losing his sight six years ago...Designing Visually Accessible Spaces (DEVA)...could ultimately create a bridge between scientific research into visual impairment and the architects who can make use of that research in the real world. By Lamar Anderson -- Dwight Ashdown/Ashdown Architecture; Design Partnership; SmithGroup; Pelli Clarke Pelli-Curbed

Denmark's cage-free zoo will put humans in captivity: Bjarke Ingels Group's 'zootopia' reverses the role of captor and captive to let animals roam free, while humans are hidden from view. But will [Givskud zoo] become a feral version of the Hunger Games? ...the architects have a higher goal... By Oliver Wainwright -- BIG [images]- Guardian (UK)

Sydney's new sculpture: symphony in steel or giant franger? The witty denunciation of an expensive work of public art or design...is there any act more richly, aggrievedly pleasurable? ...the ones that bring together people who hate them are exactly as successful as the ones that everybody loves...the outcry itself forms a rippling, messy and thoroughly enjoyable comet-trail behind the beleaguered creation, often saying more about the population than the artwork itself...I think the sculpture [Cloud Arch] is beautiful. But if I hated it, I'd still be having fun. By Annabel Crabb- Sydney Morning Herald

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