

Today's News - Wednesday, August 10, 2011

- The U.K. riots: Sennett, Rykwert, Till, de Botton and Tavernor on why Britain is burning (special thanks to AJ for taking this out from behind its payroll!).
- Ijeh and Inglis weigh in on the London riots: "The message for architects, planners and developers is a chastening one" and "The importance of the built environment to people's investment in their communities is consistently underestimated."
- City planner Hornick weighs in with a (very) meaty analysis of what Rybczynski and Edward Glaeser are missing in their otherwise excellent tomes: "In proposing how to revitalize modern cities, both books underplay the critical role of the government" (this is much, much more than a book review!).
- Reinmuth ruminates (at length) about the way cities are being made that "has drastically altered the context for architects" and "it's time for architects to stop acting like victims"; the answer is with architecture schools - but they seem to be "reluctant or incapable of addressing" the issues to "reconfigure the profession, so the architect re-appears in a central role in city-making."
- Jordan's "crazy" (\$1.5 billion!) Star Trek Park "does have an eco upside" (let's hope so, anyway).
- Long cheers on AHMM's makeover of the Angel Building: does it deserve to win the Stirling Prize? "Probably not. But it certainly deserves to be a benchmark for quality as the city rebuilds buildings from the 70s and 80s that are coming to the end of their lives."
- A sequel in store for a historic Queens movie palace that's been an eyesore for 25 years.
- Here's to serious architectural goals for new recreation centers in Edmonton, including creating "a more walkable, integrated community."
- Geoffrey Bawa Award winner Thanapathy talks about what moves him as an architect, and why young professionals should not "get carried away with social prestige, wealth and ambition."
- Queensland's new government architect Middleton talks about the flood rebuilding process, working in China, and where the potential for urban design lies in the sunshine state.
- Kamin on the win/win of Lagrange joining VOA: "The move appears to have benefits for both sides."
- Greg Lynn digs into the mathematical roots of architecture.
- Devlin delves into a mathematical equation to explain the essence of the architecture of the U.K.'s University of Cambridge.
- Finalists are named in Energy Star's 2011 National Building Competition, Battle of the Buildings to test which has achieved the greatest percent reduction of energy use (some impressive results).
- Architecture Center Houston launches its first film fest on Friday + ArchCH gives grant for documentary film to advocate for the preservation of the city's mid-century modern architectural heritage.
- We couldn't resist: in Paris, the answer to the question of what to do with soon-to-be obsolete CDs: 65,000 of them make for very shiny artificial knolls (and we mean shiny!).
- Call for entries: Calgary Mayor's Urban Design Awards + San Francisco's Center for Architecture + Design's "Architecture Is..." 3 minute video contest (architecture can be anywhere).

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Riots: Richard Sennett, Joseph Rykwert, Jeremy Till, Alain de Botton and Robert Tavernor on why Britain is burning: "Locking up cowed hoodies in overcrowded prisons won't solve anything. We need to think about public housing and public space - quickly." - The Architects' Journal (UK)

The UK riots: Is architecture irrelevant? What, if anything, can architecture do to address the social ills at the heart of London's recent unrest? ...the riots have exposed curious anomalies about the relationship architecture maintains with society...The message for architects, planners and developers is a chastening one...there is only so much architecture, however well intentioned, can do. By Ije Ijeh - Building (UK)

The destruction of Tottenham's buildings isn't just a sentimental loss: The importance of the built environment to people's investment in their communities is consistently underestimated...I hope the people left homeless, without their premises or injured by the riots are soon back on their feet, both physically and financially. But the urban fabric is not unimportant and its loss shouldn't be neglected, no matter how lowly. By Lucy Inglis - Guardian (UK)

The City and the State: American Urban Planning and the Role of Government: "Makeshift Metropolis" by Witold Rybczynski and "Triumph of the City" by Edward Glaeser celebrate the ever-changing American urban experience. In proposing how to revitalize modern cities, however, both books underplay the critical role of the government. By Sandy Hornick - Foreign Affairs magazine / Council on Foreign Relations

Building the future with the next generation of architects: ...the way cities are being made...has drastically altered the context for architects...it's time for architects to stop acting like victims. The profession must change...Architecture schools should be the place where the transformation of (or recovery of) the profession should be addressed. However, they...have appeared reluctant or incapable of addressing these issues...We need to reconfigure the profession, so the architect re-appears in a central role in city-making. By Gerard Reinmuth - The Conversation (Australia)

Jordan's Crazy Star Trek Park Will be a Cleantech Showcase: ...will be a sprawling 74 hectare development, but it does have an eco upside...\$1.5 billion project in the port city of Aqaba that, unlike the UAE's absurd Global Warming Park, will be a "23rd century" showcase of renewable energy. -- Callison [image] - Green Prophet (Middle East)

Nice day at the office in Angel? The Angel Building is one of the less glamorous projects to make it on to the shortlist for this year's Stirling Prize...Does it deserve to win...Probably not...But it certainly deserves to be a benchmark for quality as the city rebuilds buildings from the Seventies and Eighties that are coming to the end of their lives. By Kieran Long -- Elsom Pack Roberts Partnership (1970s); Allford Hall Monaghan Morris/AHMM; J&L Gibbons [images] - Evening Standard (UK)

RKO Keith's sequel: \$160M job on landmark is slated to start in 2012: A Queens movie palace that became a pockmark on downtown Flushing will begin its transformation into a high-rise..."It's an eyesore for 25 years"...plans to restore the theater's landmark lobby, gutted two decades ago... -- Jay Valgora/STUDIO V Architecture [image] - NY Daily News

Architectural goals for Edmonton's new rec centres: ...to make a more walkable, integrated community...hope to draw different cultural and socio-economic groups...stress the connections between interior and exterior spaces. -- ATB Architecture; Teeple Architects; Group 2 Architecture; Shore Tilbe Perkins+Will [image] - Edmonton Journal (Canada)

Modern yes, but not exhibitionism: Holding strong views against crass commercialism, Thisara Thanapathy, winner of the Geoffrey Bawa Award 2010/2011 for Excellence in Architecture discusses what moves him as an architect..."Young professionals entering the field get carried away with social prestige, wealth and ambition...They forget that they must use their education for the development of the country." - The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka)

In Profile: Malcolm Middleton: ...recently appointed Queensland Government architect, has over 30 years experience in the industry...speaks about the flood rebuilding process in Queensland, working in China and where the potential for urban design lies in the sunshine state. - Architecture & Design (Australia)

Lagrange joining VOA Associates: He's back...last year shut down his firm in the wake of the building bust...The move appears to have benefits for both sides: It gives VOA a star designer and it gives Lucien Lagrange a corporate base and firm financial footing. By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

Greg Lynn on calculus in architecture: ...talks about the mathematical roots of architecture - and how calculus and digital tools allow modern designers to move beyond the traditional building forms. A glorious church in Queens (and a titanium tea set) illustrate his theory. - TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design)

"Nova Cantabrigiensis" by John Devlin: ...obsessed with discovering the secret to "the Cambridge essence"...over 360 illustrations - dream-like sketches of redesigned collegiate-style buildings on an imaginary island...a semi-mathematical equation which he calls "The King's Constant"... "I am presently cautiously concluding that this ratio is 5:10:1." [images]- Wallpaper*

Finalists in Energy Star's 2011 National Building Competition: Battle of the Buildings: From a pool of 245 buildings nationwide...12 have achieved the greatest percent reduction of energy use within the individual building categories they represent. - Eco-Structure magazine

Architecture Center Houston Announces First Annual Film Festival, August 11-13: ...will feature "Citizen Architect: Samuel Mockbee and the Spirit of the Rural Studio," "Regular or Super" examines a Mies van der Rohe-designed gas station, and "VDL Research House: Richard Neutra's Studio and Residence"; also short films by students at the Rice School of Architecture and the University of Houston College of Architecture- Houston Press

High-powered filmmakers advocate for Houston preservation in new documentary: the Architecture Center Houston Foundation has awarded a \$25,000 grant to fund a feature-length film about the city's mid-century modern architectural heritage...to Sam Wainwright Douglas.... "I think a lot of folks just don't have any idea what gems are out there." - CultureMap Houston

A Rippling, Metallic Moonscape Made of 65,000 CDs: What to do with CDs in the age of Spotify, iPods, and the collective realization that CD sound totally sucks? ...Elise Morin and Clémence Eliard [turned] them into "WasteLandscape"...that shows off CDs' best (and arguably only) asset: They sure are shiny! ...artificial knolls at Le Centquatre, an art space, in Paris. [images, video]- Fast Company

Call for entries: Mayor's Urban Design Awards: ...biennial awards acknowledge the important contribution that urban design, landscape design and architecture make in improving the quality of life in Calgary (open to all, projects must be in Calgary); deadline: September 15- City of Calgary (Canada)

Call For entries: Center for Architecture + Design's "Architecture Is..." 3 minute video contest: what does architecture mean to you and your community; winners will be shown during the 2011 Architecture and the City Festival Film Series (open, no fee); deadline: September 8- Center for Architecture + Design / AIA San Francisco



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