

Today's News - Tuesday, January 5, 2016

- Moussaoui offers a fascinating look at how a social housing project Winnipeg went wrong, despite being "designed by one of Canada's most talked about architecture firms" - it wasn't just the architecture (but "maybe we're too idealistic").
- On a brighter note, a new study shows that "beautiful urban architecture boosts health as much as green spaces."
- Yesterday we had Kimmelman's take on why architects should think about sound; today, Davidson ponders: "Why don't architects listen to their buildings?" and basks in "one of the most acoustically pleasing spots in New York" - Grand Central.
- Bernstein has mixed feelings about SANAA's Grace Farms: even though The River is "stunning," it "challenges environmentalists, such as me, who love inventive architecture - let's hope its programming justifies its financial and environmental costs."
- Heathcote, on the other hand, hails Dow Jones's restoration of Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields in London that "reconnects it with its surroundings" and the "quiet, thoughtful conversion of its depths as a place of gathering for people."
- Welton weighs in on "lofty ambitions" in Raleigh, NC: "From a distance, the building will assume an iconic presence. Up close, it's about place-making - a 21st-century precedent for the buildings that follow."
- Hawthorne x 2: he offers a most thoughtful take on the "ad-hoc tent cities" of the homeless "cropping up along, above and under freeways, a phenomenon that is upending how we think about the biggest and most conspicuous kind of infrastructure."
- He's no less thoughtful about what to do with an elevated stretch of freeway that "snakes through a remarkably beautiful natural landscape - keep it intact as a huge platform for new open space and housing."
- Dovey looks at some projects that made 2015 a big year for ambitious parks from Houston to Beirut.
- A new documentary about Roche, "The Quiet Architect," is in the works that aims to "show how his buildings have stood the test of time."
- Evans-Cowley gives us her annual round-up of some of the best planning apps "that support our communities."
- The 2015 Faith & Form/IFRAA Religious Art and Architecture Awards go to 16 winners.
- Theaters in Chicago, U.K., and Quebec garner USITT's 2016 Architecture Honor Awards.
- Call for entries: NYC Aquarium & Public Waterfront international open ideas competition + A' International Design Award & Competition.

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Crime in the community: when 'designer' social housing goes wrong: How did innovative Winnipeg social housing, designed by one of Canada's most talked about architecture firms, become a haven for drink and drugs? "Maybe we're too idealistic"...What went wrong [in Centre Village] was not just about architecture... By Raja Moussaoui -- 5468796 Architecture; Alejandro Aravena - Guardian (UK)

Beautiful urban architecture boosts health as much as green spaces: A stroll around St Paul's Cathedral could be just as beneficial to health as a walk in the countryside, say researchers at the University of Warwick: "Our findings imply that simply introducing greenery, without considering the beauty of the resulting environment, might not be enough." [link to report "Quantifying the Impact of Scenic Environments on Health"]- Telegraph (UK)

Why Don't Architects Listen to Their Buildings? A room's sound is a subliminal quality that we only rarely notice but that produces a visceral reaction...I asked Raj Patel, an acoustical engineer at...Arup, to join me in the Main Concourse of Grand Central Terminal, one of the most acoustically pleasing spots in New York. By Justin Davidson -- Victoria Cerami [images, audio]- New York Magazine

Grace Farms: SANAA has added yet another curved-glass building to its portfolio...a minority evangelical Christian church and 'sanctuary' in rural Connecticut: ...no matter how ethereal, a 7,700 sq m building isn't open space...a substantial carbon footprint...challenges environmentalists, such as me, who love inventive architecture. The River is stunning; let's hope its programming...justifies its financial and environmental costs. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Kazuyo Sejima; Ryue Nishizawa; Olin [images]- DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine (UK)

Christ Church Spitalfields, London: 'A site for good in the city': The restoration of the 18th-century church...reconnects it with its surroundings: ...restoration concentrates on the more productive aspect of the architecture itself and the church's significance as a piece of public infrastructure...quiet, thoughtful conversion of its depths as a place of gathering for people. By Edwin Heathcote -- Nicholas Hawksmoor (1729); Dow Jones Architects - Financial Times (UK)

Lofty ambitions in Raleigh's warehouse district: New 17-story Dillon building ushers in era of building up. Design takes ground-level cues from surrounding buildings: From a distance, the building will assume an iconic presence...Up close, it's about place-making...a 21st-century precedent for the buildings that follow... By J. Michael Welton -- Duda Paine Architects [image]- News & Observer (North Carolina)

What those homeless camps along L.A.'s freeways mean for a public space once above it all: ...ad-hoc tent cities...are cropping up along, above and under freeways, a phenomenon that is upending how we think about the biggest and most conspicuous kind of infrastructure...freeway encampments - like the tent cities along the Los Angeles River...suggest a significant shift in the role played by the region's large-scale public-works projects. By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

Transforming the end of the 2 Freeway could be the beginning of a new L.A.: ...cities are demolishing stretches of highway, turning them into parks or boulevards. Los Angeles has an opportunity to do something even more dramatic: to close a piece of elevated freeway to traffic but keep it intact as a huge platform for new open space and housing...snakes through a remarkably beautiful natural landscape... By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

City Park Design Is Getting More Ambitious: From Houston to Beirut, 2015 was a big year for parks. They were crowdfunded and data-mined, envisioned as strange, subterranean spaces, and designed to bolster public health...This is by no means a comprehensive list...But these are the big picture parks... By Rachel Dovey - Next City (formerly Next American City)

Wavelength Pictures producing film about Kevin Roche: London-based film company...plans to come to Columbus to conduct interviews and film some of the buildings he designed or had a hand in creating...One purpose of "Kevin Roche: The Quiet Architect" is to show how his buildings have stood the test of time..."really fine buildings that have been recognized beyond Columbus, Indiana" - The Republic (Columbus, Indiana)

The Best Planning Apps for 2016: Every year, I survey a cross-section of planners to develop a comprehensive list of some of the most unique, useful, and the most ubiquitous mobile apps for planners...I invite you to participate...All in all it has been a great year for planning and apps that support our communities. By Jennifer Evans-Cowley - PLANetizen

This Is The Best Religious Architecture Of 2015: What makes a space sacred? ...16 winners of the 2015 Faith & Form/IFRAA Religious Art and Architecture Award. -- Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects; Hacker; Ford, Powell & Carson Architects; Finegold Alexander Architects; etc [images] - Huffington Post

Chicago, UK, Quebec Theatres to Get Top Architecture Honors: The Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago; the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool, U.K.; and the Salle de Spectacles de Mont-Laurier in Quebec, Canada, will receive USITT's 2016 Architecture Honor Awards...Performing Arts Center at the State University of New York Potsdam and Norway's Stavanger Concert Hall recognized with Merit Awards. -- Pelli Clarke Pelli; Haworth Tompkins; Les Architectes FABG; Pfeiffer Partners Architects; AIX Arkitekter - Sightlines (United States Institute for Theatre Technology/USITT)

Call for entries: NYC Aquarium & Public Waterfront international open ideas competition; cash prizes; earlybird registration deadline (save money!): February 14 (regular registration/submissions due April 4) - arch out loud

Call for entries: A' International Design Award & Competition to recognize the best design works in all countries and in all creative disciplines; deadline: February 28 - A' Design Award & Competition



Coop Himmelb(l)au: Dalian International Conference Center, Dalian, China: A multi-functional "small city within a city" with conference and event rooms for 7,000 visitors. A landmark for the prospering harbor city. By Kirsten Kiser -- Wolf D. Prix

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