

Today's News - Thursday, June 25, 2009

- An "Avenue of Light" lights up tonight as an anchor to major redevelopment efforts in Ft. Worth's historic district.
- An in-depth look at what happened to U.K.'s plans for eco-towns and who killed them (and which might be safe bets or dead ducks).
- The good - and bad - sides of "self-service" cities "becoming robotized and retro at the same time."
- Kennicott on why the "history of security and public architecture is generally one of catastrophic failure followed by architectural excess."
- Not only is the Sears Tower going green, it may get a little sister: a 50-story, net-zero hotel.
- A Long Island laboratory expands - underground; above, buildings that reflect the whaling village that used to be there.
- Hadid's 'spaceship' library in Seville might not take flight.
- It looks like the Paul R. Williams/A. Quincy Jones shopping center in Palm Springs is about to bite the dust (to make way for a road, what else?).
- We thought we'd sworn off any more Chelsea Barracks banter, but how could we resist Jenkins ("No modern architect reads Jane Jacobs any more"); Farrelly ("Rogers scheme is actually quite charming"); and Letts ("Is the term 'architecture critic' at present an oxymoron?").
- Farrelly and Fortmeyer (we're glad he's back!) take on the NSW Architecture Awards - a 'whopping' 44 winners: "Is it possible that NSW alone could have produced so many buildings of excellence?"
- Meanwhile, even recently rising AIA Architecture Billings Index doesn't bode all that well: more inquiries could mean "clients are playing the competitive field against itself for greater savings."
- Taking stock of East German department store shelves 20 years later uncovers some colorful surprises (great slide show).
- Call for entries: WPA 2.0: Working Public Architecture seeks innovative, implementable proposals to place infrastructure at the heart of rebuilding our cities.

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"Avenue of Light" as Urbanism: Soaring, illuminated sculptures by Cliff Garten Studio anchor major redevelopment efforts in the Ft. Worth's historic district [images]- ArchNewsNow

Whatever happened to eco-towns? The government's plan for carbon-neutral new towns is dead. Architects, planners and developers alike are asking: who killed them? ...how did the idea of fast-tracking these greenfield developments ever gain credence in the first place? -- HTA Architects; Conran Architects - The Architects' Journal (UK)

The Self-Service City: The last century saw the flowering of the City Beautiful movement...This century...has brought the self-service city - shrunken, less personal and meaner on one level, more neighborly on another...we have cities doing by default what urban planners could never do. Greener cities, yes. More open spaces in what were once ruined neighborhoods. Healthier, perhaps.... - New York Times

The Built-In Response to Terrifying Moments: The history of security and public architecture is generally one of catastrophic failure followed by architectural excess...Not every building can be absolutely safe...and the reaction to extremists should never dignify their ideas with a permanent mark on the social and architectural landscape. By Philip Kennicott - Washington Post

Lofty 'green' renovation for Sears Tower: ..."going green" while keeping its attire of basic black...makeover detailed Wednesday calls for giving the tower a new neighbor, a 50-story hotel...would feature "net zero" use of energy...the tower itself will cut its appetite for electricity by 80%. -- Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM) [slide show]- Chicago Sun Times

Long Island Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory's Expansion Hides in (and Under) Six Buildings: ...designed to reflect the small whaling village that once occupied the site...Visitors looking for the new state-of-the-art 100,000-square-foot science lab might be excused for asking, "Where is it?" -- Centerbrook Architects [image]- New York Times

Zaha Hadid's 'spaceship' library fails to take off in Seville: ...council had hoped that the space-age design might do for the sleepy Andalusian capital what Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum did for Bilbao...A neighbourhood association saw it differently...would encroach on the Prado de San Sebastián, a green area that gives many Sevillanos a chance to escape the summer heat, and swallow up 8% of the area. - The Times (UK)

Council denies historic designation: Ruling allows Town & Country Center shopping center to be torn down...despite pleas from preservationists who said mid-century modern buildings help draw tourists to the town...The move allows the owner to apply...to tear down the buildings to build a road that would connect his proposed renovation of the Desert Fashion Plaza to the Palm Springs Art Museum. -- Paul R. Williams; A. Quincy Jones [image]- The Desert Sun (Palm Springs)

After the Chelsea barracks banter, can we get back to the brief? For all the sound and fury over the prince, the architectural lord and the Qatari royal family, the site is still there, languishing and wretched... No modern architect reads Jane Jacobs any more. By Simon Jenkins -- Rogers Stick Harbor; Quinlan Terry - Evening Standard (UK)

The pushy philistine formerly known as prince: Even if one supports the Prince Charles' general "Luftwaffe" abhorrence of modernism, the results of his own interventions - Field Farm in Shepton Mallet or Poundbury in Dorset - have such a queer, deathly feel, like a scene from The Prisoner - that on balance you'd probably stick with the Luftwaffe. But this particular Richard Rogers scheme is actually quite charming. By Elizabeth Farrelly - Sydney Morning Herald

Scribes' huffing and puffing won't blow down royal house: Prince Charles's glorious pond-dipping of Richard Rogers...has brought tantrums from modernists and republicans. Amid all the shrieking, London's architecture critics have been left looking like powerless chumps...Is the term 'architecture critic' at present an oxymoron? By Quentin Letts - Daily Mail (UK)

Design Down Under: All Quiet on the Awards Front: The Royal Australian Institute of Architects [now Australian Institute of Architects/AIA] lavished its annual awards for NSW Architecture on a whopping 44 projects...I'm certainly not the only person who might wonder if a state like New South Wales...has more than 44 projects each year that merit this sort of attention. By Russell Fortmeyer -- fjmt (Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp); Woods Bagot; Hecker Phelan Guthrie; Neeson Murcutt Architects [links] - Architectural Record

Everyone wins as kids divide lollies: This year's crop of architecture awards is a classic example of what happens when a jury, suffering a serious attack of the postmodern pluralisms, simply cannot make up its mind...Is it possible...that NSW alone...could have produced so many buildings of excellence? If so, where are they? By Elizabeth Farrelly - Sydney Morning Herald

Stuck in the Doldrums: AIA Architecture Billings Index shows the rapid recovery seen two months ago has begun to stagnate...higher level of inquiries could actually be a negative indicator, as it means clients are playing the competitive field against itself for greater savings, driving down prices for architectural work as a result. - The Architect's Newspaper

East Germany By Design: The ABCs of Communist Consumer Culture: Many in the West still think of communist East Germany as a consumer wasteland, devoid of attractive products. Two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall...take stock of GDR department store shelves and...uncover a lost world...Now, it is a lot easier to see the little bit of color that made the ubiquitous gray...a little less gray. [slide show] - Der Spiegel (Germany)

Call for entries: WPA 2.0: Working Public Architecture - Whoever Rules the Sewers Rules the City...open to designers and students with innovative, implementable proposals to place infrastructure at the heart of rebuilding our cities; cash prizes; registration deadline: July 24 - cityLAB / UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design

Market Research Strategies in Uncertain Times #1: Now More Than Ever: Why market research is so critical to a firm's success. By Frances Gretes - ArchNewsNow

A Company of Generalists: An Interview with Joe Valerio of Valerio Dewalt Train [images] - ArchNewsNow



-- Exhibition: Green Architecture for the Future, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark
-- Nearing completion: Eric Owen Moss Architects: Art Tower, Los Angeles

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