

Today's News - Tuesday, February 1, 2011

- Weinstein cheers a rediscovered Pevsner manuscript that reveals the architectural historian "as neglected urban designer. His commitment to the picturesque aesthetic for buildings and towns is as urgently needed as ever."
- Hertsgaard's fascinating 2-parter that digs deep into Seattle's urban climate change survival tactics that other local governments are beginning to copy + Will Chicago or NYC "win the climate change preparation smackdown?" (and the difference between prevention and resilience).
- Zeiger's first of a 4-parter to create "The Interventionist's Toolkit" highlighting "provisional, opportunistic, ubiquitous, and odd tactics in guerilla and DIY practice and urbanism."
- Lewis extols the virtues of Berkeley's experiment in backyard cottages as "a potentially cost-effective, sustainable densification strategy for existing communities" - the challenge will be overcoming NIMBYists (read King's thumbs-up in ANN 01.14.11).
- Saffron on the sad saga of Philly's Family Court project: "yes, it's nice in these lean times that the state will save \$60 million...But the price of this debacle on Philadelphia's physical fabric? That's incalculable."
- Russell cheers the "Bedouin curves" and "glorious sound" of Gehry's New World Symphony building (to bad West 8 "ruined a great idea by planting the park with giant faux Gehry ice cream cones in tubular metal").
- King encounters "grandeur at an almost surreal scale" as he strolls the newly restored Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco: "Palace 2.0 reminds us that architecture can put us in our place - and make us like it."
- The too often over-looked 2012 Olympic velodrome "threatens to give London games a good name...Here is something of genuine beauty, an elegant example of form following function."
- Melbourne's Pixel Building is "a simple glass and concrete box filled to its gills with green features" - but with a colorful façade that doesn't signal "here stands Australia's greenest building" (and could get tired very soon).
- A Denver architect builds a plastic house as emergency dwelling for Haiti and elsewhere that "may turn out to be his greatest design" (but his neighbors would like him to dismantle it soon).

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Book Review: "Visual Planning and the Picturesque" by Nikolaus Pevsner. Edited by Mathew Aitchison: A rediscovered manuscript unveils a portrait of the famed architectural historian as neglected urban designer. His commitment to the picturesque aesthetic for buildings and towns is as urgently needed as ever. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

Why Seattle Will Stay Dry When Your City Floods: Exports from the Rainy City: Microsoft, Starbucks, and...urban climate change survival tactics? ...local governments across the U.S. and around the world were beginning to copy..."We have to get past the question of who's making money on things and do what's right for the community as a whole." By Mark Hertsgaard -- Ron Sims - Mother Jones

Chicago's Smog-Eating Cement vs. NYC's Fancy Flood Maps: Which city will win the climate change preparation smackdown? "We have to get people to understand the difference between prevention and resilience." By Mark Hertsgaard- Mother Jones

The Interventionist's Toolkit (Part 1): The great recession...inspiring a wave of creativity...provisional, opportunistic, ubiquitous, and odd tactics in guerilla and DIY practice and urbanism...produced by emerging architects, artists and urbanists working outside professional boundaries but nonetheless engaging questions of the built environment and architecture culture. By Mimi Zeiger [images, links]- Places Journal

Berkeley tests concept of backyard cottage: ...a study funded by the University of California Transportation Center...envision infill accessory dwellings as a potentially cost-effective, sustainable densification strategy for existing communities...anywhere in the United States. But as logical and beneficial as the strategy seems, scaling it up for widespread implementation faces legal, technical, economic and political obstacles. By Roger K. Lewis -- Karen Chapple- Washington Post

\$60M cheaper, still no bargain: Philadelphia deserves better than a courthouse based on a fire-sale design...yes, it's nice in these lean times that the state will save \$60 million on the Family Court project. But the price of this debacle on Philadelphia's physical fabric? That's incalculable. By Inga Saffron -- EwingCole [image]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Miami's Gehry Concert Hall Gets Bedouin Curves, Glorious Sound: ...played pastry chef...topping an entrance canopy of the \$160 million New World Symphony building with a dollop of whipped cream in white metal...irregular shapes line halls congenially wandering like medieval streets...(Sad to say, Dutch landscape architect West 8 ruined a great idea by planting the park with giant faux Gehry ice cream cones in tubular metal.) By James S. Russell -- Yasuhisa Toyota/Nagata Acoustics [images]- Bloomberg News

New sense of power at restored Palace of Fine Arts: ...grandeur at an almost surreal scale. There's little hint of the "modified melancholy" that Bernard Maybeck strove for in 1915...Palace 2.0 has existed for almost as long as the original that it aped with rigid devotion...it reminds us that architecture can put us in our place - and make us like it. By John King -- Hans Bauldauf; Carey & Co.; RHAA [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Olympic velodrome threatens to give London games a good name: There is so much noise surrounding other permanent facilities that the success of the velodrome is in danger of being overlooked...Here is something of genuine beauty, an elegant example of form following function. -- Hopkins Architects [image]- Guardian (UK)

Pixel Building: This little building...is an incubator for all things green...ticks just about every "green" box imaginable...concealed behind a colourful facade...here lies the problem...serves mainly to screen what you could argue is a piece of non-architecture, a simple glass and concrete box filled to its gills with green features...For all its theatrics, there's nothing in this facade to signal...here stands Australia's greenest building. -- Studio 505 Architects; Umow Lai [image]- The Age (Australia)

Architect thinks plastic house could shelter poor Haitians, others: Stuart Ohlson has a 60-year career in architecture to look back on, but "Humanitarian House" built by his own weathered hands may turn out to be his greatest design...should cost less than \$1,000 per unit, weigh about 500 pounds..."It could be packaged and carted on the back of a donkey, if necessary"- Denver Post

Designers of the Year: Q&A with Verda Alexander and Primo Orpilla of Studio O+A: Today Contract magazine named Verda Alexander and Primo Orpilla of San Francisco's Studio O+A Designers of the Year. We asked them about their experiences during the high and low points of the dot-com era and the ways high-tech continues to influence office design today.- ArchNewsNow

- BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group: Waste-to-Energy Plant, Copenhagen, Denmark
- MVRDV: Balancing Barn, Suffolk, UK

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