

Today's News - Thursday, June 28, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're still experiencing major Internet problems in (sweltering) Arizona - hence yesterday's missed newsletter. Hopefully, things are getting better...

- Siza seizes the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement (with lots of pix that prove why).
- From London: Liverpool set for a showdown with UNESCO over possible loss of World Heritage Site status: some believe it's "a price worth paying in pursuit of the development."
- Moore bemoans Bomber Command Memorial's "amnesiac classical" style: it's "a work of wishing away, of ignoring time, place and moral difficulty" that "reveals a jarring lack of sensitivity."
- It looks like preservationists have lost the battle to save Minneapolis's Peavey Plaza from demolition (though new design does retain water elements).
- Two reports from Moscow re: threats to the city's cultural heritage includes a call to restore the 90-year-old Shukhov radio tower that has influenced any number of contemporary architects.
- A look at why China is producing "a plethora of ugly buildings."
- Chan finds "a stunning declaration of the future of affordable housing" in the Bronx's "radiant" Via Verde housing complex.
- Sharoff revisits Chicago's Schiff Residences public/affordable housing project five years later: it "set the sustainability bar high but fell a little short...It might not have changed the world, but it has changed a lot of lives."
- Also from Chicagoland: Kamin reports on Mag Mile's first high-rise in many years: it "is too competent to be bad but not inspired enough to be good"; it is a case of "architectural taxidermy" that "has turned out better than expected. Yet..."
- Bentley considers two major developments on the Chicago River that offer the opportunity to "reflect on what a new model for sustaining live/work communities downtown might look like."
- King x 2: the design of San Francisco Airport's new "torch-like" control tower: "keep this simple phrase in mind: Flair follows function."
- He hopes the Golden State Warriors might reconsider plans for an arena on the Embarcadero: "images released so far are as substantial as cotton candy...purely for show. The team hasn't hired an architect."
- Chan is not so cheered by Stern's Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia: it's "an attempt to "Imagineer" visitors back into history."
- An eyeful of DS+R/Gensler's 14-story tower for Columbia University Medical Center that "will become a major landmark in the skyline of northern Manhattan" (looks pretty cool to us!).
- Ethiopia's new National Stadium will be "a fusion of both international and cultural design elements" that pay tribute to the country's heritage.
- Baillieu hopes Dame Zaha stands up for what she believes in: "how will she use her new prefix?"
- One example: Hadid minces no words about the word "austerity": it's "a cliché to hide behind" as an excuse for low-quality housing.

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Álvaro Siza Wins The Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement: "It is difficult to think of a contemporary architect who has maintained such a consistent presence within the profession...without the slightest hint of the overt professionalism and promotion that has become part of the contemporary architect's machinery...he always seems to be out in front, seemingly untainted and undaunted..." -- Paolo Baratta; David Chipperfield [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Bomber Command Memorial: If it had to be built, you might hope for some nuance, some recognition of moral complexity, some regret, some invitation to reflection. Unfortunately [it] offers none of those things...Its tone is defiant and triumphant...Its style is amnesiac classical...a work of wishing away, of ignoring time, place and moral difficulty. By Rowan Moore -- Liam O'Connor Architects [image]- Observer (UK)

Liverpool set for heritage showdown: Unesco's objections to Liverpool Waters could see the city lose its world heritage status...£5.5 billion proposed development by Chapman Taylor, is the source of the problem...some believe Liverpool's world heritage status is a price worth paying in pursuit of the development. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Drained: Peavey Plaza preservationists lose on appeal in Minneapolis, demolition to follow...The new design retains large water elements, while bringing the recessed plaza closer to grade..."the city has been quick to demolish something and then later we wish we hadn't." By Christopher Bentley -- M. Paul Friedberg (1975); Thomas Oslund/Oslund and Associates; Charles Birnbaum/The Cultural Landscape Foundation [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Moscow's monuments under threat: The destruction of the Russian city's architectural heritage has contributed to recent anti-government protests...Dynamo Stadium and Detsky Mir children's store... -- Arkady Langman and Lazar Cherkover (1928); Erick van Egeraat; David Manica Architecture; Alexey Dushkin (1950s)- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Moscow's Shukhov radio tower could be lost forever: Restoration is urgently needed to save the avant-garde masterpiece, says the architect's great-grandson: The 90-year-old Shukhov tower...has influenced contemporary architects including Norman Foster. -- Vladimir Shukhov- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Subjective beauty or just ugly? Some experts see the ugly buildings in China as a manifestation of its power aesthetics while others see it as a result of a lack of domestic architectural culture...the pursuit of size and speed has created a vicious cycle...has created a plethora of ugly buildings. -- Cao Xiaoxi/China Architecture Design and Research Group; Fang Zhenning; Wang Shu; C.Y. Lee; Meng Jianmin- Global Times (China)

Can the Bronx's Radiant Via Verde Housing Complex Revive Socially Conscious Architecture? ...the latest and most dazzling installment of the ongoing revival effort...a stunning declaration of the future of affordable housing...an active participant in a larger, still-unfolding urban agenda. By Kelly Chan -- Dattner Architects; Grimshaw Architects [slide show]- Artinfo

Not easy being green: The Helmut Jahn-designed Schiff Residences set the sustainability bar high but fell a little short...was Chicago's great green hope—a state-of-the-art public/affordable housing project...a building that succeeds almost in spite of the conflicting agendas that attended its birth. It might not have changed the world, but it has changed a lot of lives. By Robert Sharoff- Crain's Chicago Business

Flawed Ritz-Carlton Residences, Magnificent Mile's first high-rise in more than a decade, delivers marketable but middling po-mo : ...is too competent to be bad but not inspired enough to be good...this architectural taxidermy has turned out better than expected. Yet... By Blair Kamin -- Lucien Lagrange- Chicago Tribune

Editorial> Points of Interest on the Chicago River: Christopher Bentley calls for major developments to lead the way in creating a sense of place in downtown Chicago...the time is ripe to reflect on what a new model for sustaining live/work communities downtown might look like...River Point and Wolf Point deserve great scrutiny. -- Pelli Clarke Pelli [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

New SFO control tower will have a torch-like air: As the new control tower at San Francisco International Airport takes shape during the next two years, keep this simple phrase in mind: Flair follows function. By John King -- HNTB [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Warriors' arena - Is Embarcadero the right place? It's not enough to talk grandly of icons and legacies: The team must craft a detailed proposal that shines within the larger context...images released so far are as substantial as cotton candy...purely for show. The team hasn't hired an architect. By John King [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Robert A.M. Stern's Conservative Museum of the American Revolution Design Snuffs the Revolutionary Spirit: ...an attempt to "Imagineer" visitors back into history...Unless serious revisions are made, the "Spirit of '76" will come packaged in a building that denounces the fundamental notion of revolution. By Kelly Chan [image]- Artinfo

DS+R Designs Columbia's Medical and Graduate Education Building: Columbia University Medical Center 14-story tower will become a major landmark in the skyline of northern Manhattan...will house the four schools of CUMC along with the biomedical departments of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Gensler [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Ethiopian Stadium Takes Cultural Inspiration to New Levels: In order to be seen as culturally significant, the building must complement the country's heritage and offer visual cues – symbolic or otherwise – that show these connections...LAVA and JDAW showed a strong understanding of this concept and maximised it to its full potential...for the 'National Stadium + Sports Village' in Addis Ababa... [images]- DesignBuild Source (Australia)

Dame Zaha should stand up for what she believes in: Zaha Hadid's overbudget Aquatics Centre brought her a long overdue honour. Now both of them must prove their staying power...[she] is now very much part of the British Establishment — but how will she use her new prefix? By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

Zaha Hadid says austerity is not an excuse for low-quality housing: ...says use of the word austerity is a cliché to hide behind which would end up being disastrous for the public...the skyline of many of the UK's cities were "made horrible" by developments in the 1960s because they government "wanted to be cheap". - Guardian (UK)

Albert Barnes Offers Critical Response to Placement of New "Barnes": He agrees to talk with fellow Central High School of Philadelphia alum after 61 years of silence, but only on the condition that his remarks remain unedited. This transcript respects his requirement. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group + FREAKS freearchitects: The MÉCA, Bordeaux, France

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