

Today's News - Wednesday, February 5, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Apologies for missing yesterday's post and tardy posting today. Snow and sleet and ice (and lions and tigers and bears - oh my!) have caused our Internet tubes to experience technical difficulties.

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of BIG's maritime museum in Denmark that is "daring indeed, but also highly sensible," and parses a tome on architecture and neuroscience, another on Zaha's complete oeuvre.
- An experimental psychologist parses "how neuroscience affects urban planning" (hats-off to Holly Whyte!)
- Hume cheers Toronto's Global Cities Institute and its "respected local data gatherers compile the information needed by cities around the world to plan a way forward."
- Rainwater rallies behind the AIA/MIT Report on the State of Health + Urbanism that recommends "using urban planning to help fight obesity by putting people on a design-based diet."
- Litt cheers Cleveland's new bike plan, "but the quality of design is far from settled" - if done well, it "would be a boon for current residents and a terrific selling point to new ones."
- In Arizona's East Valley a new mixed-use master-planned community could be a model for future suburbs "with an urbanity and a walkable center of gravity of its own."
- King x 2: the Presidio Trust "called an end to the competition for the 8-acre site on Crissy Field," but hopes to find another spot for the (lucrative) Lucas museum.
- He reminds us that Crissy Field is "no bucolic nook. It's a parking lot and a concrete building that would look at home in an industrial park"; so what might fit best would be "a modest and inviting building that isn't an icon."
- Moore is none too merry about plans to replace historic buildings in Leicester Square with "a generic, could-be-anywhere, lamely jazzed-up block - the architectural equivalent of the premium-priced vats of tepid Coke on sale in the foyers of multiplexes" (ouch!).
- Saffron is saddened that Philly's "lone survivor from Hollywood's heyday" is "doomed: The belief that the Boyd has to be destroyed to be saved has gained traction" (a strikingly similar sentiment put forth re: a certain small museum in NYC).
- de Monchaux isn't much impressed with the Kimbell's Piano Pavilion that "aims to pay homage to the original, but instead offers a kind of distant defacement" ("Seussian bureaucrats" included).
- Hawthorne wanders Eisenman's City of Culture and wonders what it says "about the legacy of its eminent designer": the "sense of vulnerability takes over the architectural experience to a degree that becomes almost unbearable...the place is a tender ruin."
- Williams wanders Fuksas's Terminal 3 at Shenzhen Airport and is rather surprised by how much he likes it: "this is a complex building and there will inevitably be teething problems, but this is tabloid-esque nit-picking."
- Webb wanders SPF:a's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts: it is "a model of adaptive re-use, and a much-needed cultural resource for Beverly Hills" (great pix).
- Six young British firms make the cut "to bid for schemes featuring 20 homes and under."
- Gorlin builds a dream house on the Nova Scotia coast built with "two foundations - bedrock and trust."
- Groves marvels at a Santa Monica house turned in a "mosaic artwork" over 13 years: it is "eccentric artistry" and "a shimmering montage that beckons the curious."
- Two we couldn't resist: eyefuls of a stunning secret sculpture garden near Chandigarh started in 1965 by a roads inspector; 10 years and 12 acres later discovered by authorities, and now a 30-acre tourist attraction - an astounding saga!
- Eyefuls of the world's ugliest monuments - a "collection of sentimental howlers and overblown statement pieces that serves as gaudy testament to overreaching creative ambition."

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- "The Architect's Brain: Neuroscience, Creativity, and Architecture" by Harry Francis Mallgrave...a thought-provoking historical commentary... By Ralph Spencer Steenblik
- Bjarke Ingels Group/BIG: Danish National Maritime Museum, Helsingør, Denmark...proposal was daring indeed, but also highly sensible.
- "Hadid - Complete Works 1979-2013" by Philip Jodidio: ...the entire body of work...is very comprehensively presented.

Cities and their psychology: how neuroscience affects urban planning: The study of metropolitan areas and how their inhabitants interact with them is key to planning our future as a species: ...a marriage of laboratory-based virtual reality simulations with real-world observations...could form the basis of a new and powerful discipline of experimental urban design... By Colin Ellard -- William H. Whyte [video, links] - Guardian (UK)

Institute tells Toronto its place in the world: Respected local data gatherers compile the information needed by cities around the world to plan a way forward: The need for this sort of data goes beyond municipal egoism...figures can be used as the basis for a more regional approach to governance. By Christopher Hume -- Global Cities Institute- Toronto Star

Rethinking Our Cities To Fight Obesity: Using urban planning to help fight obesity by putting people on a design-based diet that changes how they live and move: One of the biggest points...in the Report on the State of Health + Urbanism, is that there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer...The project is now moving into the activation phase, with three metro regions chosen for further exploration: Los Angeles, Houston, and Atlanta. By Brooks Rainwater - Fast Company

Cleveland's new bike plan is off to a good start, but the quality of design is far from settled: A 200-mile system of bike paths - if done well - would be a boon for current residents and a terrific selling point to new ones. By Steven Litt- Cleveland Plain Dealer

The Future of the Suburbs Is Unfolding in Arizona's East Valley: Developers on the eastern edge of Mesa are building a new mixed-use master-planned community [Eastmark], friendly to both residents and big businesses...with an urbanity and a walkable center of gravity of its own...- The Atlantic Cities

Presidio Trust shoots down George Lucas' plan, 2 others: ...called an end to the competition for the 8-acre site on Crissy Field...said it wants to work with Lucas to find an alternative site for his museum..."We didn't think any of them quite hit the mark." By John King -- WRNS Studio [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Crissy Field isn't hallowed ground - needs to change: ...we need to remember one thing about the 8-acre site that caused such a fuss: It's no bucolic nook. It's a parking lot and a concrete building that would look at home in a Concord industrial park...the trust can use the break to figure out what fits best...This might be...a modest and inviting building that isn't an icon. By John King- San Francisco Chronicle

Farewell, Leicester Square...: Plans to replace the Odeon West End and other historic buildings with a 10-storey hotel-

cinema complex are symptomatic of a pointless rush to keep up with 'rival' world cities...The new building...will be a generic, could-be-anywhere, lamely jazzed-up block...the architectural equivalent of the premium-priced vats of tepid Coke on sale in the foyers of multiplexes. By Rowan Moore -- Woods Bagot [images]- Observer (UK)

Boyd Theater is doomed - but plan needs rethinking: ...the city's lone survivor from Hollywood's heyday - looks done for good...The belief that the Boyd has to be destroyed to be saved has gained traction with several high-profile groups that had once stood by the theater... By Inga Saffron- Philadelphia Inquirer

Deferential, Or Deflating? In the shadow of Louis Kahn's 1972 masterwork, the new pavilion designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop aims to pay homage to the original, but instead offers a kind of distant defacement...less the result of restraint than of a finite capacity for taking pains—suggesting less the humility with which Piano's building has been credited, than a kind of smarm. By Thomas de Monchaux [images]- Architect Magazine

Coda to a Career: Peter Eisenman's City of Culture was born during Spain's Bilbao-inspired architectural boom. But as the project now languishes, what does it say about the legacy of its eminent designer? ...sense of vulnerability takes over the architectural experience to a degree that becomes almost unbearable...the place is a tender ruin. By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Architect Magazine

Air Max: Terminal 3 at Shenzhen Airport by Studio Fuksas Architetto: Completed in only six years...the latest daunting set piece to encapsulate China's economic and architectural ambitions...this is a complex building and there will inevitably be teething problems...but this is tabloid-esque nit-picking and only time will really tell how well the building weathers. By Austin Williams [images]- Architectural Review (UK)

Crit> Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts: ...a model of adaptive re-use, and a much-needed cultural resource for Beverly Hills...1933 Italian Renaissance Post Office was too good to lose...low-key facade and marble concourse...have been meticulously restored...an inspiring overture to the spaces that lie beyond. By Michael Webb -- Ralph Flewelling/Allison and Allison (1933); Studio Pali Fekete architects (SPF:a) [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Peabody names small projects winners: Six firms chosen from more than 300 entries...will now be able to bid for schemes featuring 20 homes and under. -- Adam Khan Architects; Lyndon Goode Architects; Jan Kattein Architects; Pitman Tozer; Urban Salon; Studio 54 Architecture [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Alexander Gorlin Builds a Modern Home on the Secluded Nova Scotia Coast: On a craggy peninsula, a glass-and-concrete retreat makes the most of its pristine surroundings: ...an arresting residence built with "two foundations," Gorlin says. "Bedrock and trust." [images]- Architectural Digest

Family turns its home into a mosaic artwork: It began 13 years ago with a periwinkle square. Now Aziz and Louise Famam's Santa Monica house is a shimmering montage of tiles...Motorists routinely slam on their brakes to marvel at the eccentric artistry... a shimmering montage that beckons the curious. By Martha Groves [images]- Los Angeles Times

Nek Chand's Sprawling Rock Garden, Built Illegally and in Secret: ...a roads inspector...began collecting materials from the scrap heaps, transporting them by bicycle to a forest gorge in Chandigarh's north...in 1965, he began work on his own planned city: a sculpture garden...all made from recycled debris...Authorities remained unaware of Chand's ever-expanding sculpture park until 1975... [images]- Slate

The world's ugliest monuments: Here's how not to build a monument. It turns out the line between timeless artistic statement and outsized novelty paperweight is frighteningly thin. This collection of sentimental howlers and overblown statement pieces serves as gaudy testament to overreaching creative ambition... [slide show]- CNN International

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