

Today's News - Monday, June 30, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: After several fabulous (and exhausting) days in Chicago at the AIA convention, we're glad to be back. Apologies for tardy posting - it's taken some time to get back in the swing of things this morning. On a personal note, anyone who is in NYC this evening is invited to join us and AIANY at the Center for Architecture in a celebration of the life and work of Fred Schwartz, a dear friend and treasured colleague gone much too soon (link to details at the end of newsletter).

- PRO's Allen makes the case that "historic preservation does not inhibit urban growth," and how, from Paris to Cleveland, "preservationists and developers are working together to build better cities."
- Capps parses a study that shows why cities should reconsider greeting new or expanded cultural centers with "irrational fanboy enthusiasm" - the numbers show that an arts building boom doesn't always produce the predicted Bilbao Effect.
- King explains what Chicago did right to lure the George Lucas museum to its lake shore: San Francisco's political culture, not the Presidio Trust, is the "culprit" who chased the project out of town: "Now, Chicago power brokers are gloating."
- Kamin x 2: Lucas's museum may "face the prospect of a battle royal with lakefront advocates" - but would "transforming 12 acres from parking lots to parkland" be such a bad idea?
- He reports that revised Burnham memorial plans include renaming it View Chicago (there'll be an app for that, of course), and eliminating a statue of Burnham (whither goest the idea of an actual memorial to the master, we wonder).
- Hawthorne parses Zumthor's "dramatically revised" LACMA design that addresses concerns of potential damage to the La Brea Tar Pits: "he took the criticism seriously," and the "decision is a bold one," but "in terms of its basic architectural personality - it has been left misshapen, like a piece of taffy."
- Heathcote, Wainwright, Woodman, and Ijeh all seem to be smitten by Radic's Serpentine Pavilion: "it really is very odd"; "the weirdest ever"; a "spectacularly madcap construction" with "an animal-like quality"; "one of the most whimsical and enigmatic creations the program has ever commissioned" (they all really, really like it).
- Moore is a bit less smitten by RSH+P's British Museum extension: "There's much to like but the new exhibition space seems to have the status of a broom cupboard. The new building is delicate, refined and crafted," but it's lacking two things.
- The Villages in Florida, "a Manhattan-sized retirement village - with more golf carts than New York has taxis," is the "fastest-growing metro area in U.S. with no crime or kids" (complete with rules about how many pet fish you can keep): "You basically have a city of 100,000 people, owned by a company."
- At the opposite end of economic scale, an in-depth look at how Manchester, U.K., is designing out crime in two housing estates.
- Copenhagen and Malmo also have ambitions to drive out crime - by design.
- Litt says Cleveland's plans for a new bridge are "cause for both delight and dismay. The delight is that the excellent design is very much worth building, and could become a powerful, postcard-worthy attraction on the city's chronically underused lakefront"; the dismay is what it's going to cost and why.
- Wainwright says a proposed East London bridge across the Thames, the "subject to endless delays and inquiries" for 70 years, is now "being called a no-brainer - but is there enough fairy dust to capture the Mayor's eye?"
- Montreal gets its first look at the proposed Champlain Bridge, being "billed as one of the largest infrastructure projects in North America."
- Speaking of bridges and infrastructure, how could we resist an infographic of "Top 10 Most Impressive Engineering Projects of All Time" courtesy of Norwich University Civil Engineering folks.
- Call for entries: Architectural and Design Competition for Moscow Metro Stations Solntsevo and Novoperedelkino.

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No, Historic Preservation Does Not Inhibit Urban Growth: From Paris to Cleveland, preservationists and developers are working together to build better cities...preservation doesn't shut down dynamic urban change...[it] is often its guarantor, preventing heavy-handed architectural interventions that would lock a city's evolution in place. By Michael R. Allen/Preservation Research Office - Next City (formerly Next American City)

Why Cities Should Be More Skeptical of New Cultural Centers and Expansions: On the other side of a major U.S. arts building boom, some civic leaders still think that luring cultural centers—no matter the cost—means instant success...Cultural Policy Center report found that the museum building boom didn't bring the net benefit to communities predicted by the so-called Bilbao Effect. By Kriston Capps - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

S.F. political culture to blame for George Lucas' exit to Chicago: ...Mayor Ed Lee is painting the Presidio Trust as the culprit who chased the "Star Wars" creator out of town. Not a chance...Instead of planning ahead, City Hall of late has pinned its hopes on one overhyped project after another...Now, Chicago power brokers are gloating...the city...needs a proactive, long-range bayside plan that balances history and tradition with such 21st century realities as sea level rise and...active urban mixed-use waterfronts. If this happens, City Hall won't be stuck hoping that yet another billionaire shows up with yet another big plan... By John King - San Francisco Chronicle

George Lucas museum faces 'battle royal': ...selection of Chicago over Los Angeles and San Francisco as the site of the moviemaker's narrative arts museum...face the prospect of a battle royal with lakefront advocates...by transforming 12 acres from parking lots to parkland, the Lucas museum would meet the mandate of the Lakefront Protection Ordinance...a way to complete the Museum Campus, a lakefront greensward... By Blair Kamin - Chicago Tribune

Planned memorial to Daniel Burnham revised: ...includes an interactive, 1.6-mile walking trail stretching from Millennium Park to the Museum Campus...walls would be of glass, not granite, and a statue of Burnham has been eliminated...The project, now called View Chicago, features a mobile devices app...AIA Chicago is collaborating on the effort with the History Museum...Funding remains the key stumbling block. By Blair Kamin -- David Woodhouse Architects [image] - Chicago Tribune

LACMA redesign avoids tar pits, creates challenges: Peter Zumthor has dramatically revised his design for...Los Angeles County Museum of Art, creating a new bridge-like section of the building that would span Wilshire Boulevard...meant to address concerns that the original plan would encroach on, and potentially damage, the La Brea Tar Pits...updated design...makes clear that he took the criticism seriously...decision...is a bold one...in terms of its basic architectural personality — the design awaits refinement. By Christopher Hawthorne [images] - Los Angeles Times

Smiljan Radic's Serpentine Pavilion: The Chilean architect's strange design expresses his interests in materials, craft, and the making of architecture through eccentric means: It's a bagel, or perhaps a doughnut. Or an egg shell. Maybe a UFO...[it] is not short of metaphors...it really is very odd...If...the Serpentine can switch to introducing the unexpected — quirky designs from underexposed architects — they will be doing London a huge favour. By Edwin Heathcote [images] - Financial Times (UK)

This summer's Serpentine pavilion is the weirdest ever: Is it a giant cocoon? The site of a pagan ritual? Or a 60-tonne pebble? Chilean architect Smiljan Radic breaks new ground...it is unlikely you'll have been in anything quite like it...a careful assembly of things that are both ragged and refined... By Oliver Wainwright [images] - Guardian (UK)

Serpentine Gallery 2014: captivating...and it resembles a giant doughnut: ...spectacularly madcap construction...an animal-like quality as if it were the head of a gigantic, lumbering turtle...Seeming to belong at once to a world of science fiction and to a primordial past, the pavilion could well serve as the film-set for a post-apocalyptic drama. And yet seen in the bucolic setting...it also invites association with the use of ruins and grottoes in the 18th century English landscape garden. By Ellis Woodman -- Smiljan Radic - Telegraph (UK)

2014 Serpentine Pavilion by Smiljan Radic: Models and follies form inspiration for this year's design...every inch an architectural model writ large...offers one of the most esoteric examples yet of a coveted architectural programme famed for its avant garde experimentalism...one of the most whimsical and enigmatic creations the Serpentine Pavilion programme has ever commissioned. By Ike Jheh [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

British Museum extension: It does its job but could have been richer: There's much to like but the museum's new exhibition space seems to have the status of a broom cupboard: They've got the mall. They've got the food court. Now they've got the multiplex...There are many things to like...The new building is delicate, refined and crafted...What, if anything, is this, the public part of the new building, lacking? Two things... By Rowan Moore -- Foster + Partners (2000); Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners - Guardian (UK)

Fastest-Growing Metro Area in U.S. Has No Crime or Kids: The Villages, Florida...a Manhattan-sized retirement village - with more golf carts than New York has taxis - highlights the transformation of the world's demographic profile...has rules governing everything from how long children can visit to how many pet fish residents can keep..."You basically have a city of 100,000 people, owned by a company." - Bloomberg News

How Manchester is designing out crime in Moss Side and Wythenshawe estates: While older streets...make life easy for criminals, modern designs encourage 'natural surveillance'..."It's a challenge to planners and architects, sure, but if it's done right, there's still scope for imagination." -- Mike Craig/Design for Security; Bernard Taylor Partnership- Guardian (UK)

Designing out crime in Scandinavia: 'Cities cannot be completely safe and completely exciting at the same time': Copenhagen and Malmo share an ambition to drive out crime by injecting the ideas of an open, democratic and empathetic society into their very bricks and mortar...Some...however, fear that an attempt to design out the crime on their streets could eradicate the very reasons they live here -- its radical edge, multiculturalism and all-round funkiness. -- Bo Grönlund; John Allpass - Guardian (UK)

North Coast Harbor bridge plans are beautiful but cost rises to \$8M, thanks to lengthy review of plans: ...cause for both delight and dismay. The delight is that the excellent design...very much worth building...could become a powerful, postcard-worthy attraction on the city's chronically underused lakefront. By Steven Litt -- Miguel Rosales [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Bridge East London: could Eastenders finally get this 'crucial missing link'? Debated for the past 70 years, the plan...has been subject to endless delays and inquiries. Now it's being called a no-brainer. Is the time finally right? The latest proposal is lean and efficient -- but is there enough fairy dust to capture the Mayor's eye? By Oliver Wainwright -- HOK; Arup [images]- Guardian (UK)

Champlain Bridge proposal unveiled by Ottawa: ...bidders will have to comply with architectural requirements presented...billed as one of the largest infrastructure projects in North America. -- Poul Ove Jensen/Dissing+Weitling; Provencher Roy + Associés Architectes; Arup [images, links]- Montreal Gazette

Top 10 Most Impressive Engineering Projects of All Time [infographic]- Norwich University Master in Civil Engineering Program

Call for entries: Architectural and Design Competition for Moscow Metro Stations Solntsevo and Novoperedelkino; cash prizes; deadline: July 31 - KB Strelka

A Celebration of the Life and Work of Fred Schwartz, FAIA, at the Center for Architecture, New York City, June 30, 6:00-8:00pm: his Fred's legacy will continue to be reflected in his advocacy and activism on behalf of the profession - Center for Architecture / AIANY (NYC)

ANN Feature: Notes from the Giardini - La Biennale di Venezia 2014: "Fundamentals" is certainly not the typical way one would think of displaying architecture. By Terri Peters -- Rem Koolhaas - ArchNewsNow

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