

Today's News - Tuesday, August 9, 2016

- Hawthorne weighs in on Zumthor's latest renderings of LACMA: "the great gray mass could still succeed as a bracingly alien presence - but only if tempered with blasts of color, inventive landscape design and appealing, richly detailed public space at ground level" (fingers crossed!).
- Kamin has higher hopes for Gang's revised design for the towering Wanda Vista in Chicago that "has moved from disappointing to very promising."
- It's an Olympics kind of day, with several must-reads, beginning with Berg at his best in comparing London and Athens, "two contrasting examples of what cities can get from hosting the Olympics."
- Wainwright x 2: a serious (and also humorous) take on London's Olympic legacy: "a suburb on steroids, a cacophony of luxury stumps" - with a sprinkling of "steroidal fairy dust fertilizing muscular slabs of ever more luxurious investment units - as if the athletes weren't the only ones doping."
- His take on Rio's Olympics: "The buildings are as cheap and not-so-cheerful as you would expect - mostly designed to be dismantled to make way for luxury residential development" (but there is the ever-cheerful "yellow cat-cum-monkey" mascot!).
- Peters looks at Rio Olympic venues designed "to have a more helpful future. Whether they are actually repurposed is, of course, an open question."
- Giovannini gives two thumbs-up to "archmodernist" Perrault's "elegant" new, underground visitors' center at Versailles - he "resolved, bravely, 'to bring the present inside, knowing he faced the guillotine of public opinion for any undiplomatic moves."
- Cholke reports that Obama Library officials have finally "explained why Jackson Park bested Washington Park" - but the losing park will still benefit (and Friends of the Parks will not challenge the project).
- Lamster considers what a President Hillary Clinton library might look like - except there already is a Hillary library "tucked away on six lush acres of restored forest and wetlands" in Little Rock. "It is definitely 'on the wrong side of the tracks'" (and that's a good thing).
- Saffron cheers University of Pennsylvania's new-old Perry World House by 1100 Architect: it "is both a thrilling and deeply thoughtful work of architecture" that "isn't preservation as we know it" ("preservation diehards aren't going to like" it).
- Efforts to save Sydney's 1979 Sirius building that "was influenced by Safdie's Habitat 67" fail to win heritage protection.
- O'Sullivan reports on Birmingham's fight to save its Brutalist architecture: such buildings "testify to the optimism of post-war Britain. Right now, we need reminders of that optimism more than ever."
- Meanwhile, before the ink was dry on court ruling allowing demolition of Liverpool's 1912 Futurist cinema, bulldozers were already at work - a "further black mark" as UNESCO considers whether the city will lose its world heritage status.
- On a brighter note, Bunshaft's 1963 masterpiece, the Beinecke Library at Yale, is ready for its renovated close-up.
- Grimshaw's Middleton explains why he chooses optimism over pessimism re: Brexit: "Now more than ever is the time for positive pragmatism. We need to be agile, innovative and entrepreneurial."
- Gumasyan, meanwhile, finds "a certain resonance to Trump's campaign slogan. Architecturally, America isn't great anymore - because we can't build anything anymore" (blame it on red tape and building regulations).
- AJ Student Survey 2016 "unearths a worrying landscape of stress-related illness" that is taking a "shocking toll on the mental health of the next generation of architects."
- Williams's reply to AJ's survey findings: "let's have a grown-up conversation about this situation, but the terms of the debate are shifting dangerously towards perceiving of ourselves as mentally damaged, passive individuals rather than people who can deal with and resolve problems."
- Call for entries: RFP: Fitzgerald Revitalization Project in Detroit + EOI: New Building for the Shepparton Art Museum in Australia.

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Latest details on Peter Zumthor's new LACMA building: ...the new building will hold fewer square feet than the existing ones...that will be razed...the great gray mass...could still succeed as a bracingly alien presence...but only if its imposing forms and severe palette are tempered with blasts of color, inventive landscape design and appealing, richly detailed public space at ground level. By Christopher Hawthorne -- William Pereira (1965); Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer (1986); Robert Irwin; Spurlock [images]- Los Angeles Times

Jeanne Gang does better in second version of new skyscraper: "Big Wanda" tower has moved from disappointing to very promising...Several changes...make the tower appear more fluid, less creased and less clunky than it did in its previous iteration. Wanda Vista would be a skyline standout...Further refinements might even make her a worthy skyline gal-pal for "Big John," the X-braced John Hancock Center. By Blair Kamin -- Studio Gang Architects; Olin [images]- Chicago Tribune

The urban games: For Olympic host cities, wins and losses last forever: ...the Olympic Games result in choices, plans, and projects that can affect a city for generations - for the better and, more often, for the worse...two contrasting examples of what cities can get from hosting the Olympics...London is a city that used its Olympics to pursue a long-sought project, the regeneration of East London. Athens is a city that allowed the conceptual framework behind its Olympics to slowly fall apart. By Nate Berg [images]- Curbed

London's Olympic legacy: a suburb on steroids, a cacophony of luxury stumps: That London has a lasting physical inheritance from its two-week £12bn jamboree is indisputable, but what kind of place is the promised Legacy-land turning out to be? So far, it's an odd one...Compared to the desolate wastes left by many other Olympics, it might be judged a roaring success, but as a new piece of London we can be proud of, it can still do so much better. By Oliver Wainwright -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; PRP; Make; Sheppard Robson; Studio Egret West; Allies and Morrison; O'Donnell + Tuomey [images]- Guardian (UK)

On your marks: is Rio's Olympic architecture a success or failure? After the 'worst ever' preparations, how are the park, arena and athletes' village holding up? The buildings are as cheap and not-so-cheerful as you would expect for this shoestring games, mostly designed to be dismantled...to make way for luxury residential development. By Oliver Wainwright -- Aecom; Lopes, Santos & Ferreira Gomes; AndArchitects [images]- Guardian (UK)

These Olympic Venues Are Designed To Transform Into Schools After The Games: Hosting the Games can leave a city full of largely useless athletic facilities. Some of Rio's new buildings are designed to have a more helpful future: Whether they are actually repurposed is, of course, an open question. By Adele Peters -- AECOM [images]- Fast Company / Co.Exist

How Do You Add to Versailles? Bravely: The archmodernist Dominique Perrault went underground to create an elegant new visitors' center that he calls a hyphen between centuries: ...added much-needed room to a huge museum that, paradoxically, lacked space for visitors who were never anticipated...[He] resolved, bravely, "to bring the present inside," knowing he faced the guillotine of public opinion for any undiplomatic moves. By Joseph Giovannini [images]- New York Times

Why Jackson Park For Obama Library? It Will Draw More Tourists: Library officials for the first time explained why Jackson Park bested Washington Park...planning process will include coming up with ideas to make sure Washington Park still benefits from the library...Friends of the Parks said it would not challenge the library's construction... By Sam Cholke -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects - DNAInfo Chicago

What might a Hillary Clinton library look like? (Hint, there already is one.): ...as both a work of architecture and a reflection of the political values she claims to champion, it is a considerable success...tucked away on six lush acres of restored forest and wetlands. It is definitely "on the wrong side of the tracks"...[in Little Rock, Arkansas] By Mark Lamster -- Reese Rowland/Polk Stanley Wilcox [images]- Dallas Morning News

On Penn's campus, a new-old building isn't preservation as we know it: Preservation diehards aren't going to like [the] new Perry World House...is both a thrilling and deeply thoughtful work of architecture...challenges some of our most basic assumptions about what it means to preserve a building. The Sloan cottage now exists in an odd middle ground, neither saved nor destroyed. By Inga Saffron -- David Piscuskas/1100 Architect [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Sydney's Sirius building loses fight for heritage protection: NSW Environment and Heritage Minister...has rejected calls to heritage list [the 1979 building] in Sydney's The Rocks...design was influenced by Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67 in Montreal...If the building is demolished, Sydney will be left with only one other example of Tao (Theodore) Gofers's brutalist-style architecture for social housing... [image]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Britain's Second City Fights to Save Its Brutalist Architecture: But is it worth preserving? The Brutiful Birmingham Action Group...is fighting an uphill struggle...when Birmingham shed some of its post-war chaff, it lost some real plump grains of wheat in the process...irmingham's Brutalist buildings testify to the optimism of post-war Britain...Right now, we need reminders of that optimism more than ever. By Feargus O'Sullivan [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Liverpool criticised for 'pre-emptive' demolition: Futurist cinema destroyed hours after court victory: While Save considered an appeal to the Supreme Court, bulldozers went in the same afternoon and demolished the landmark's 1912 façade...speedy demolition was likely to be seen as a "further black mark" when Unesco considers whether to strip the city of its world heritage status. -- Broadway Malyan [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Yale's renovated Beinecke Library to reopen September 6: Completed in 1963, [it] is considered Gordon Bunshaft's masterpiece. Its exterior grid of granite and Vermont marble panels are one of the most recognizable designs of that era, and remain both inspiring and inimitable. -- Hammond Beeby Rupert Ainge Architects; Newman Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Brexit: All the reasons I can think of not to despair: Like many I was very disappointed by the result and fearful about the ramifications...It is very easy to be pessimistic...I for one have chosen optimism instead. Now more than ever is the time for positive pragmatism. We need to be agile, innovative and entrepreneurial...I am energised by these words..."When nothing is certain, everything is possible." By Mark Middleton/Grimshaw - BD/Building Design (UK)

Make architecture great again: Red tape and building regulations are job killers: ...strictly from my point of view as an architect, there is admittedly a certain resonance to Trump's campaign slogan. Architecturally, America isn't great anymore. And that's because we can't build anything anymore, thanks to a regulatory morass and skills shortage that have eroded our ability to conceptualize and construct projects. By Garo Gumusyan/GGA Architecture- Crain's New York Business

Mental health problems exposed by AJ Student Survey 2016: ...unearths a worrying landscape of stress-related illness...The pressures of architecture education are taking a shocking toll on the mental health of the next generation of architects. By Richard Waite and Ella Braidwood- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Mad, bad and dangerous: The media reports that more than a quarter of architecture students in the UK have reported mental health issues. This reply points the finger at where the real lunacy lies...by all means, let's have a grown-up conversation about this situation, but we need to realise that the terms of the debate are shifting dangerously towards perceiving of ourselves as mentally damaged, passive individuals rather than people who can deal with and resolve problems. By Austin Williams - Future Cities Project (U.K.)

Call for entries: Request for Proposals/RFP: Fitzgerald Revitalization Project: a new initiative led by the City of Detroit to stabilize and strengthen the neighborhood...focused on 100 vacant buildings and 257 vacant lots; deadline: August 26- City of Detroit

Call for entries: Expressions of Interest/EOI: New Building for the Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) on a site adjacent to Victoria Park Lake, Shepparton, Australia; Stage 1 deadline: August 31- Shepparton Art Museum (Australia)

Alcoholic Architecture: No this post isn't implying that architectural design is aided by a few drinks...the beautiful result when wine-makers and architects team up...six of the best... -- Renzo Piano; Foster + Partners; PLANT - Atelier Peter Kis; Santiago Calatrava; Mario Botta; Herzog & de Meuron [images]

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