

Today's News - Monday, August 24, 2009

- ArcSpace brings us everything London: "Architecture, Art and Design combined with Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Thai food...What a swell party this was :)"
- Dittmar defends the prince: he "wants to curb 'starchitects' with laws giving ordinary people the right to help shape projects" (which, of course, has starchitects "terrified").
- Ouroussoff on the New York Five: "To some, the group embodies the last heroic period in New York architecture" (i.e., all the good new work is by Left Coast, French, and Japanese architects).
- Heathcote stands in awe of Korea's Paju Book City, "one of the most extraordinary and most unsung cultural and architectural developments in the world."
- Two young architects are taking a novel approach to improving housing in India's slums (worth a trip through the links).
- Is it really "bye-bye, Dubai" time?
- A very different take in a comparison between Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
- Saffron x 2 cheers: the renovation of "Philadelphia's most influential 20th-century building" (it only looks "ordinary"); and signs of life for Kahn's Roosevelt memorial in NYC.
- We're disheartened by the news that Scotland's The Lighthouse may have to close its doors (fingers crossed it doesn't!).
- More on the battle to save Gropius in Chicago.
- Kamin on proposals that could save parts of Michael Reese Hospital complex: they may not rate gold medals, but at least some members of Chicago's architecture community are forming those plans instead of cowering on the sidelines."
- Groves on a developer's plan to save Brentwood's mid-century Barry Building: tearing it down and rebuilding three times its original size would make it the greatest "victory for historic preservation in the entire history of the city" (on what planet?).
- Not all are pleased with Stanford's children's hospital expansion design, claiming it has morphed into "not just a horse of a different color - a zebra...a big, scary box with very sharp edges."
- Webb finds Madame Tussauds Hollywood "makes a surprisingly public statement...a subtly modeled structure that is neutral yet has presence" (great views from the roof, too).
- Q&A with Michelle Kaufmann: she's back in the prefab game with bigger plans than ever.
- Despommier on why "the time is right for the world to build the first vertical farm in an urban center."
- Green thumb needed: London's first living wall dies.

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-- SANAA: Serpentine Pavilion 2009, London, UK
-- KK Letter: Architecture, Art and Design in London...Design Museum, The Tate, Trafalgar Square, Herzog & de Meuron, Jeff Koons, Richard Long, Antony Gormley, Futurism, Per Kirkeby, Jan Kaplicky, Javier Mariscal

Prince of Wales turns to Joe Public, the architect: The prince wants to curb 'starchitects' with laws giving ordinary people the right to help shape projects...the approach "contrasts dramatically with the 'starchitect'/Lord Rogers way of doing things ... They are terrified of EBD ["enquiry by design"] because it hands power to the people." -- Hank Dittmar/Prince's Foundation- The Times (UK)

As Heroes Disappear, the City Needs More: The death of Charles Gwathmey has provoked a lot of nostalgic reminiscence about the New York Five...came to represent the idea that architecture could still express and advance our values as a culture. To some, the group embodies the last heroic period in New York architecture. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Hejduk; Graves; Meier; Eisenman; Gehry; Mayne; Moss; Mangurian; Hodgetts; Lynn; Maltzan; Denari; Daly Genik; SANAA; Nouvel [slide show]- New York Times

A city dedicated to books and print: ...one of the most unexpected and remarkable architectural endeavours...Paju Book City...is one of the most extraordinary and most unsung cultural and architectural developments in the world. By Edwin Heathcote -- Architectural Research Unit; Alvaro Siza; SANAA; Foreign Office Architects (FOA); Yung Ho Chang; Xaveer de Geyter; Stan Allen; Moogyu Choi; Kim Jun-sung; Hallim Suh; Kim Byung-yoon- Financial Times (UK)

An Inspiring New Housing Strategy for the Slums of India: Two young architects are taking a novel approach...working with the community to improve its houses gradually and organically, based on design input and support from the people who live there [via Azure]. -- Filipe Balestra; Sara Göransson [links to images]- Utne Reader

Bye-Bye, Dubai: Not long ago, Dubai emerged as a symbol of crazed civic ambition, a once-quiet desert burg suddenly superheated by cheap capital. That's over...expansion was as ambitious as it was improbable. [slide show]- Fast Company

Big, bigger, biggest: ...Dubai is the epitome of gaudy. But scrape beneath the surface...It's not as synthetic as it looks...Abu Dhabi is smaller and far more reserved than its show-pony relative...it is rising like a sandy phoenix, quietly evolving into a capital of culture.- Sydney Morning Herald

Renovation keeps an icon its singular, 'ordinary' self: Guild House...has just come through its first major renovation since it opened 43 years ago...may look like just an "ordinary" building...but it's actually an extraordinary one. It holds the distinction of being Philadelphia's most influential 20th-century building. By Inga Saffron -- Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

One more masterpiece by Kahn nears reality: A memorial to FDR designed by the late Philadelphia architectural giant is almost set to be built in New York...Robert McCarter...considers the Roosevelt memorial one of the architect's "most sublime" compositions. built or unbuilt. By Inga Saffron -- Harriet Pattison; Louis I. Kahn; David

Wisdom; Mitchell Giurgola Architects [slide show]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Light dims as cash crisis hits beacon of Scottish architecture: Scotland's centre for architecture will close its doors this week unless it can secure hundreds of thousands of pounds of funding...Malcolm Fraser said the business model...has been flawed...Dejan Sudjic said: "It is important that The Lighthouse survives. It would be a travesty if it was to fail." - The Scotsman (UK)

Battle to save Chicago's Gropius architecture has preservationists and city at odds: Marked for demolition, the modernist buildings sit on a site pegged for the 2016 Olympics..."There's an emotional tug of war over buildings of this time that has been playing out nationally"... -- Grahm Balkany; Preservation Chicago; Robert Bruegmann; Blair Kamin; Illinois Landmarks - Christian Science Monitor

Alternative plans for Olympic Village emerge; they don't rate gold medals, but they advance the debate over key South Side parcel: A visit...to the city-owned, 37-acre site, formerly Michael Reese Hospital, did little to dispel the impression that everything on the campus is doomed...the most important thing is that...some members of the city's architecture community are forming those plans instead of covering on the sidelines... By Blair Kamin -- Walter Gropius; Hideo Sasaki; Landmarks Illinois; DeStefano Partners [images]- Chicago Tribune

Tear down Brentwood's Barry Building to save it? That's what developer Charles Munger contends his plan would do at the former Dutton's bookstore site...proposes to raze the building, put parking below, then construct a two-story complex in the same style but three times the size of the original. "Applicants are unable to recall any greater victory for historic preservation in the entire history of the city"... By Martha Groves -- Milton Caughey (1951)- Los Angeles Times

Stanford's Lucile Packard Children's Hospital has radically changed its expansion design: ...is so different from the original proposal that Architectural Review Board...described it as "not just a horse of a different color -- a zebra...a big, scary box with very sharp edges." -- Robin Guenther/Perkins+Will; William Pedersen/Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF)- Mercury News (California)

Crit: Madame Tussauds Hollywood: Michael Rotondi's new home for the waxworks emporium makes a surprisingly public statement...a subtly modeled structure that is neutral yet has presence. By Michael Webb -- RoTo Architects; John Ash Group [image]- The Architect's Newspaper

Q&A: Michelle Kaufmann: Prefab pioneer is back in the game, in more ways than one...finalizing details...to continue her prefabricated housing work, using new technology to make the homes available to more people...discuss the upcoming deal, the large-scale developments Kaufmann is working on, and what the future of prefab looks like. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Op-Ed: A Farm on Every Floor: With climate change and population growth threatening the viability of traditional farming, the time is right for the world to build the first vertical farm in an urban center...We have the technology -- now we need money, political will and, of course, proof that this concept can work. That's why a prototype would be a good place to start. By Dickson D. Despommier- New York Times

Amazing pictures: London's first living wall dies: The UK's first living wall in Islington, north London, has died just three years after it was built...the once green frontage...is now just a host of brown, wilted plants. -- DSDHA [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

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