

Today's News - Wednesday, February 24, 2010

- Not too many pundits left to weight in on KieranTimberlake's U.S. Embassy in London win (sorry Mayne, Meier, and Pei):
- Hawthorne says it "takes diplomatic architecture into fresh territory" by making "a noticeable effort not to turn away from urban life."
- Kennicott agrees: it's exactly what the State Department wanted: "a modern, open and secure" building "sensitive to London's architectural context."
- Pearman was skeptical that the competition would "yield much of merit" given the constraints, but "it is brave and imaginative of the winning practice to make a virtue out of this."
- Glancey calls it "cool, remote and far from subtle" that "may well prove to be a sound, if unexciting, choice."
- Merrick calls it a "David and Goliath moment," considering "the behemoths KieranTimberlake was competing against" (but it still "epitomizes the post-9/11 bunker-mentality").
- Ouroussoff is a bit more disdainful: it "is not inelegant," but "has all the glamour of a corporate office block" (what if there had been more visions from a generation of languishing talents to choose from?).
- Jurors Rogers and Palumbo "fought to the death" to block a winning design for being "not world class" and "unfit to represent the US in Britain" (and because Mayne's design was "touched by genius").
- Meanwhile, starchitecture lives! An eyeful of Hadid house of culture and arts in Amman, Jordan (check out the flythrough!).
- Amman's master plan has a slogan: "A livable city is an organized city, with a soul" - "a subtle way of describing what Amman does not want to be, which is Dubai" (cue landscaped sidewalks and benches).
- In Cairo, a 14th-century mosque in Cairo is restored for - and by - locals, thanks to AKDN prioritizing "the city's human assets over its enduring monuments."
- How much longer can shopping malls survive? "The most lucrative 'will be the last ones to die.'" (a most excellent read).
- An eyeful of the "fascinating and bizarre works of MVRDV," and its "progressive ideal for our urban future...the rest of the world is finally catching up to its way of thinking."
- Profiles of three emerging firms who "are gutsy and creative enough to reassure us that American architecture will continue to thrive post-downturn."
- A decrepit brick powerhouse in a tough Chicago neighborhood is transformed into an oh-so-green (and much-needed) charter high school.
- An Australian group has a plan for 100% renewable energy by 2020 using technologies that are available now (but lots of hurdles to overcome).
- If you couldn't make Yale's four-day (starchitect-studded) Architecture after Las Vegas symposium, "Learning from 'Learning-from'" is definitely worth checking out.
- WWCOT and DLR join in merger mania: "maybe there will be one giant firm running all of architecture the next time we check?"
- What's next for the National Trust for Historic Preservation now that Moe is stepping down? (if it stays on course of "decolonizing the movement" - all things good).
- Libeskind to chair Belfast's Andersonstown barracks competition, with high hopes "his involvement will attract world-class architecture and design teams."

To subscribe to the free daily newsletter [click here](#)

The new U.S. Embassy in London: ...takes diplomatic architecture into fresh territory...suggests that, rather than standing in for certain American virtues, what a contemporary U.S. embassy should be doing is behaving virtuously...putting an emphasis...measurable behavior rather than symbolic gestures...makes a noticeable effort not to turn away from urban life. By Christopher Hawthorne -- KieranTimberlake [images] - Los Angeles Times

KieranTimberlake to design new U.S. Embassy in London: ...design suggests that the more open process has yielded exactly what the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations was looking for: "a modern, open and secure" building that was sensitive to London's architectural context. By Philip Kennicott -- Pei Cobb Freed; Morphosis; Richard Meier - Washington Post

The second Tower of London: KieranTimberlake's design for the American Embassy in the UK capital...I'm not sure that any building placed on a defensive island...is all that welcoming, but once again the architects have solved the problem by the simple expedient of not trying to avoid it...it is brave and imaginative of the winning practice to make a virtue out of this. By Hugh Pearman [images] - HughPearman.com (UK)

New US embassy is cool, remote and far from subtle: The winning design by KieranTimberlake reflects the US political process: nominally open to all, yet, in practice, tightly controlled...may well prove to be a sound, if unexciting, choice. By Jonathan Glancey - Guardian (UK)

For its new English home, America builds a castle: Despite features designed to convey international confidence and architectural brio, the winning design...epitomises the post-9/11 bunker-mentality...It was a David and Goliath moment...KieranTimberlake is widely admired...but is hardly perceived as internationally "hot" compared to the behemoths it was competing against... By Jay Merrick -- Richard Meier; Morphosis; Pei Cobb Freed - Independent (UK)

A New Fort, er, Embassy, for London: The design...is not inelegant by the standards of other recent American Embassies, but it has all the glamour of a corporate office block...as a whole, however, is a fascinating study in how architecture can be used as a form of camouflage...More vexing, though, is how few visions there were to choose from. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- KieranTimberlake; Mayne/Morphosis; Richard Meier; Pei Cobb Freed; Preston Scott Cohen; Daly Genik; Greg Lynn Form [images] - New York Times

Ambassador, you are spoiling our view of the Thames with this boring glass cube: ...two British members [Rogers and Palumbo] of the seven-strong design jury "fought to the death"...in a failed bid to block a winning design which they argued was not world class and was unfit to represent the US in Britain...they considered Thom Mayne's design to be "touched by genius." -- KieranTimberlake; Morphosis; Pei Cobb Freed; Richard Meier - Guardian (UK)

Zaha Hadid reveals designs for a showpiece performing arts and cultural centre in the Jordanian capital of Amman...King Abdullah II House of Culture & Art...inspired by the ancient city of Petra. [images, flythrough] - BD/Building Design (UK)

Sidewalks, and an Identity, Sprout in Jordan's Capital: Sidewalks and benches are seen as powerful tools, helping a city bereft of an identity develop a sense of place...not one-time projects...Amman's master plan has a slogan -- "A livable city is an organized city, with a soul" -- a subtle way of describing what Amman does not want to be, which is Dubai. -- Gerry Post/Amman Institute for Urban Development; Rami F. Daher - New York Times

Spirit of Community: 14th-century Aslam al-Silahdar mosque in Cairo is restored for - and by - locals: Al-Azhar Park has surpassed all expectations. Built by the Aga Khan Development Network on top of an ancient dump, the miraculously lush 74-acre park is...the linchpin of an extensive historic-preservation and community-development effort in Al-Darb al-Ahmar...the greatest thing AKDN has done is to prioritize the city's human assets over its enduring monuments. [images] - Metropolis Magazine

How Much Longer Can Shopping Malls Survive? Anyone wishing to undo the worst mistakes of American postwar planning, whether urban farmers, New Urbanist architects, or enlightened developers...will have to crack the financing code to make it happen...the most lucrative "will be the last ones to die."...the lifestyle center has been refined to the point where it approaches actual urbanity, but...In the end, Steiner can only build what the banks will let him, and those are malls. By Greg Lindsay [links] - Fast Company

The Fascinating and Bizarre Works of MVRDV: No one has better embraced a progressive ideal for our urban future...In the past 18 months, the firm has been winning design competitions, getting projects green-lighted, and breaking ground on its urban climbing utopias, meaning the rest of the world is finally catching up to its way of thinking. [slide show]- Fast Company

New Practice/Un-Practice: As traditional jobs vanish, startups bloom: Jobs are scarce, so many young designers are choosing to strike out on their own...three emerging firms...are gutsy and creative enough to reassure us that American architecture will continue to thrive post-downturn. -- XChange Architects; PRE/Office; Hyperform Design Co-op- Architect Magazine

Charles H. Shaw Technology and Learning Center: Farr Associates transformed a decrepit brick powerhouse in Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood into a sustainable charter high school. [slide show]- Architect Magazine

Australia Group Rolls Out Plan for 100% Renewable Energy by 2020: A report...finds that Australia can use solar and wind power to produce 100% of its electricity in 10 years using technologies that are available now. -- Beyond Zero Emissions- SolveClimate

Learning from "Learning-from": On Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, and the Recent Yale "Architecture after Las Vegas" Symposium on their Works and Writings: ...there are at least four major lessons in "Learning from Las Vegas" that are relevant, especially today...they have set the bar very high. [images]- Archinect

WWCOT to DLR: Merger Mania: ...will be known as DLR Group WWCOT...follows AECOM's purchase...of Ellerbe Becket...RMJM's purchase of Hillier, and Arcadis' purchase of RTKL...According to a 2009 survey...71% of...firms plan to conduct a merger or acquisition in the next five years...maybe there will be one giant firm running all of architecture the next time we check?- The Architect's Newspaper

Futures of the Past: With its longtime leader about to step down, what's next for the National Trust for Historic Preservation — and the movement it represents? ...forces that are reshaping preservation play well into Richard Moe's strategy for decolonizing the movement...He has seen the trust become a mainstay in areas he hadn't thought possible, playing decisive parts in social and economic issues...- Architect Magazine

Libeskind to chair Andersonstown barracks [EXPO West] site competition: ...his involvement in the competition will attract world-class architecture and design teams...[he] is committed to building a thriving and confident Belfast and to involving the local community in design proposals for their area."- Archiseek (Ireland)



GRAFT: Hotel Q, Berlin, Germany

Note: Pages will open in a new browser window.
External news links are not endorsed by ArchNewsNow.com.
Free registration may be required on some sites.
Some pages may expire after a few days.

[Yesterday's News](#)

© 2010 ArchNewsNow.com