

Today's News - Monday, August 23, 2010

- ArcSpace's working vacation in Beijing includes installation of the first Frank Gehry exhibition in China (and a lot of sightseeing!).
- Germany comes to terms with its ugliest buildings: "some architects say we should learn to embrace these eyesores to find hidden charms in the otherwise charmless" - perhaps a "cash-for-clunkers program for offensive architecture"? (scary and inspiring slide shows).
- Iconic architecture might make skylines grand, but the real test of an impressive design is if it's "loved by the people who live and work in them" (and some mince no words).
- Big plans for a sustainable community and eco-resort in Oman is "a gorgeous vision," but is it a "scam or sustainable dream?"
- In Oregon, the LEED-certified (and only 10-year-old!) Marion County Courthouse Square is placed on the official list of dangerous buildings: is it unfixable?
- Hosey on the word "sustainability": it's "more than 'design-speak'."
- Tacoma faces a design dilemma on its Foss Waterway: does the city really want to settle for a "two-star cityscape"?
- Hume x 2: a huge Hines/Pelli TOD project bodes well for Toronto and its waterfront.
- And a new firefighter training center is "elegant, exciting yet supremely practical...an architectural tour de force" (proving sometimes being a "post-apocalyptic playground for grownups" is a good thing).
- Hawthorne re: the buzz about Broad big Grand Avenue plans in L.A., but "an edgier and more interesting downtown has been emerging" - will his (as yet unnamed) architect and advisors tap into it?
- Kamin x 2: a thumbs-down (a WWTT moment) and a thumbs-up for the same firm: its plaza façade renovation on the Wrigley Building "has all the warmth and charm of a refrigerator"; on the other hand, the Fourth Presbyterian expansion plan "strikes the right balance between old and new...the modern elements serve as accents to the historic ones."
- As three biggies vie for the massive West Kowloon Cultural District, officials promise it "will not be a mishmash of incoherent elements" - there can be only one winner (though don't rule out "bright ideas from the other two designs" making the cut as well).
- Viemeister on NYC's Robin Hood Foundation Library initiative: he said it couldn't be done; then he - and so many others - made it happen.
- Macmillan on Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "Over the River" project: "If Christo is forced to scrap this project because of public opposition, the snub could give Colorado a cultural black eye - a reputation for provincialism that could take years to repair."
- Another Lautner is very, very close to demolition despite preservationists' efforts (the owner "has run out of patience with the home and its fans").
- A formerly dull Chicago garage now spruced up with stylish design, including some very cool-looking wind turbines.
- Studio Mumbai is not the usual architectural office.

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KK Letter: Work and time off in Beijing: ...working on the installation of the first Frank Gehry exhibition in China...an opportunity to combine work with a short vacation...We will be back on September 6th. -- Foster + Partners; Kengo Kuma; Arata Isozaki; Paul Andreu [images]

Living with Sin: Germany Comes to Terms with its Ugliest Buildings: ...while many would like to see the ugliest edifices torn down, some architects say we are stuck with the buildings and that we should learn to embrace these eyesores to find hidden charms in the otherwise charmless. -- Turit Fröbe; Albert Speer, Jr.; Merlin Bauer; Dana Kurz [slide shows]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Living in the dreams of starchitects: Every city loves an iconic building that attracts attention. But the truly impressive designs are those loved by the people who live and work in them. -- Frank Gehry; Louis Kahn; Foster + Partners; Geoffrey Copcutt (1956); O'Donnell + Tuomey; Le Corbusier; etc.- Irish Times

A Manmade Oasis: Scam or Sustainable Dream? An ambitious plan to create grassy knolls and running water in the desert...the Khawr Awqad project, a sustainable residential community and eco-resort designed for Salalah, Oman...It's a gorgeous vision. But where, exactly, is all this luscious green land coming from? -- Klingmann Architects [images]- Fast Company

Marion County Courthouse Square Defects: Engineers blame design, concrete for problems with Courthouse Square building + Salem, Oregon, has added Courthouse Square to its official list of dangerous buildings + Is [it] unfixable?- Statesman Journal (Oregon)

What's in a Name: Sustainability is more than 'design-speak': For architects to discuss green as though it's confined to construction alone hampers our ability, even our motivation, to find the broadest avenues toward innovation...Architects, however, could spend less time trying to own sustainability and more time trying to understand it. By Lance Hosey- Architect Magazine

Design dilemma on Tacoma's Thea Foss Waterway: ...proposed \$17.5 million Marriott Residence Inn...while environmental and union concerns have been dealt with, the architecture remains: a block-like building to be built in the middle of what some consider the face of Tacoma. -- David Murphy/Murphy Varey [image]- The News Tribune (Tacoma, Washington)

Bayside will be right at home on the lake: Giant US developer plans to transform one of the bleakest stretches of the waterfront into a 21st-century transit-oriented development community...\$800 million scheme prepared by the Hines/Pelli team bodes well for the future of the city and its waterfront. By Christopher Hume -- Cesar Pelli/Pelli Clarke Pelli; Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Kuhn; Adamson Associates [image]- Toronto Star

Firefighter training centre deals with burning issues: ...the Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute...is one of the most compelling examples of contemporary architecture to appear in some time...elegant, exciting yet supremely practical...an architectural tour de force, a demonstration...of how design can make the world a more interesting if not a better place. By Christopher Hume -- Kleinfeldt Mychajlowycz Architects - Toronto Star

A tale of two downtowns: As Eli Broad pushes a lofty Grand Avenue revival...an edgier and more interesting downtown has been emerging, the product of patient investment and organic cultural growth...The question now is to what extent Broad, his architect and his advisors...will tap into or promote a conversation with that other downtown - and in the process learn something... By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

A renovation from Mars? The plaza facade renovation on the Wrigley Building has all the warmth and charm of a refrigerator...If an architect...can't precisely replicate that building's original design...expected to sharply differentiate the new

from the old...This approach is supposed to save us from weak echoes of the past and other Disneyesque fakery. But it is not - nor should it be - the only way to go. By Blair Kamin -- Gensler; Laurence Booth/Booth Hansen [images]- Chicago Tribune

An expansion plan done right: Fourth Presbyterian plan strikes the right balance between old and new...At the Wrigley Building renovation, Gensler's metal and glass first-floor façade looks cold, clinical and utterly out of place. But in this case, the modern elements serve as accents to the historic ones. By Blair Kamin [image]- Chicago Tribune

"No mishmash on cultural hub": The final shape of the long-awaited West Kowloon Cultural District will not be a mishmash of incoherent elements..."We will choose only one design"...did not rule out incorporating bright ideas from the other two designs into the development. -- Foster + Partners; Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA); Rocco Design Architects [images]- The Standard (Hong Kong)

How Designers Banded Together, to Remake New York's Libraries: The roots of an influential project that involved hundreds of architects and designers... By Tucker Viemeister/Rockwell Group -- Library Initiative; Robin Hood Foundation [images]- Fast Company

Colorado's arts community fears cultural setback if Christo's "Over the River" project is rejected: ...the notion that the state might send them packing is unsettling - even embarrassing - to many in the region's arts establishment...if Christo is forced to scrap this project because of public opposition, the snub could give Colorado a cultural black eye - a reputation for provincialism that could take years to repair. By Kyle MacMillan- Denver Post

John Lautner's Shusett House close to demolition despite preservationists' efforts: The longtime owner of the Beverly Hills home has run out of patience with the home and its fans, who are hoping it can be saved and renovated. -- Escher GuneWardena [image]- Los Angeles Times

Windy City's Gusts Supply Power to Stylish Turbines: In Chicago, Greenway Self-Park uses urban wind power and sleek architectural design to spruce up the dull city garage. -- HOK [images]- Fast Company

A crafty practice: Design, craftsmanship, aesthetics, liveability. Architect Bijoy Jain's belief in synergy is paying off with a show at the Victoria and Albert Museum and an opening at the 2010 Venice Biennale...Studio Mumbai is not the usual architectural office... - Business Standard (India)

INSIGHT: Save What's Left: Architects as Stewards of Our Planet: We need to develop a new design culture of responsibility, one that seeks in every instance to do as little damage as possible to natural systems. By Peter Gisolfi, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP - ArchNewsNow

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