

Today's News - Monday, February 6, 2012

- ArcSpace brings us an eyeful of Ennead Architects' (beautiful) Natural History Museum of Utah.
- Menking on the making of the most excellent GSA Design Excellence program - and a call to save it from political unmaking.
- An interesting look at how some dying (and defunct) malls are taking steps in creative placemaking and becoming "the downtowns that the suburbs never had."
- Lerner cheers those "taking city planning into their own hands and creating pedestrian-friendly blocks via pop-up urbanism" with "up-from-the-sidewalks initiatives."
- Doig delves into "seven culprits" conspiring "to keep American mass-transit projects in a state of perpetual limbo...listed roughly in order of guilt."
- King x 2: he finds it "hard to see just one vision" in the state-mandated Plan Bay Area, but hopes it will "forge a vibrant urbanism as distinct as the natural setting. Not a region where one size of development fits all."
- He gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Legorreta + Legorreta's colorful Salesforce.com campus plans - and worries it "could it be too much of a good thing"; but "it's a roll of the dice, and an experiment to watch."
- An impressive design team named for £1.3 billion mixed-use Olympic International Quarter in Stratford City, with many hoping it "will be a game-changer; not just for London but for Europe."
- "It is tempting to imagine the demise" of the home of "the father of modern Chinese architecture" as Beijing's "Pennsylvania Station moment"; alas, "there is little reason to expect any change in the status quo." - Buchanan's second "Big Rethink: Farewell to modernism's inherent lack of sustainability" (it's Charles-Édouard Jeanneret vs. Corbu, a long read - and well worth it).
- Rosenbaum tools around Piano's "brash industrial-looking addition" to the Gardner Museum: "I arrived with misgivings but came away convinced that this was an appropriate solution to a pressing problem."
- Paul cheers the winning entry in the pavilion design competition for the Nelson-Atkins's upcoming World's Fair exhibit (it's oh-so-green).
- Lessons to be learned in an ingenious solution to transform a (rather grim) affordable housing tower in Paris into a light-filled, modern building - without dislodging the residents.
- Maltzan as Game Changer: he's created "a new paradigm for social housing" while designing multimillion-dollar homes: "Architecture has the ability to speak very loudly about what our responsibilities are."
- Dvir talks to Safdie about shutting down his Jerusalem office and why his eyes are on Eastern horizons.
- Field finds out why Pawson is worried about his white walls for the Design Museum: "the thought of the predicted 500,000 visitors a year running their grubby hands over his pristine creation causes him to pause."
- Urbach heads back to the East Coast to take up the mantle of Executive Director of the Philip Johnson Glass House + short Q&A with Bernstein re: the move: "I can't tell you how exciting it will be to occupy one of modern architecture's hallowed grounds."
- University of Technology, Sydney School of Architecture has two openings (added perk: offices in Gehry's first Australian project).

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[Ennead Architects: Natural History Museum of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah](#)

Editorial> Keeping Up the Good Fight: William Menking on the rise of Design Excellence in federal architecture: This GSA policy...is exactly the type of federal program that current groups like the Tea Party are itching to axe from the Federal budget. Let's hope this will not happen. - The Architect's Newspaper

How About Gardening or Golfing at the Mall? Malls across the country are being converted into new gathering places out of vast lots with empty buildings...as though they were upholstering polyester chairs from the 1960s with Martha Stewart fabric, urban planners and community activists are trying to spruce up and rethink the uses of many of the artifacts..."building the downtowns that the suburbs never had"... -- Ellen Dunham-Jones - New York Times

Street Makeovers Put New Spin on the Block: How community activists are taking city planning into their own hands and creating pedestrian-friendly blocks via pop-up urbanism...Those who undertake such up-from-the-sidewalks initiatives call them by various names: tactical urbanism, pop-up urbanism, urban acupuncture... By Jonathan Lerner -- Macro Sea; PARKing Day; Jason Roberts/Andrew Howard/Better Block; Mike Lydon/Street Plans Collaborative; Aurash Khawarзад/DoTank/Brooklyn- Miller-McCune

Should it take decades to build a subway? It's too easy to slow down urban mass transit improvements...several factors that conspire to keep American mass-transit projects in a state of perpetual limbo. Here are seven culprits, listed roughly in order of guilt. By Will Doig - Salon

Hard to see just one vision for growing Bay Area: Shifts of this magnitude...means blurring the line between cities and suburbs as we grow, focusing new development along (improved) bus routes and light-rail lines...My vision...would be that in the decades to come we strive to forge a vibrant urbanism as distinct as the natural setting. Not a region where one size of development fits all... By John King - San Francisco Chronicle

Salesforce campus could be too much of good thing: There are so many positive aspects to the fast-moving plans...that architectural nitpicking might seem, yes, picky. But...the bold emphatic buildings come with one red flag...The success or failure of an open urban campus will resonate in boardrooms as well as Mission Bay. It's a roll of the dice, and an experiment to watch. By John King -- Ricardo Legorreta/Legorreta + Legorreta; Tom Leader Studio; Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Design team named for Olympic International Quarter: BDP, Gensler, Pringle Brandon Drew, TP Bennett and Woods Bagot have been chosen to design the new £1.3 billion commercial district on the edge of the Olympic Park in Stratford City...one of the UK's largest mixed-use developments..."will be a game-changer; not just for London but for Europe." [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

In Beijing's Building Frenzy, Even an 'Immovable Cultural Relic' Is Not Safe: ...the destruction of 24 Beizongbu Hutong, once home to famous architects who championed historic preservation, was a cruel irony...of 533,000 landmarks documented by the National Bureau of Cultural Relics last year, 44,000 had already disappeared...It is tempting to imagine the demise...as Beijing's Pennsylvania Station moment...But judging by the pessimism...there is little reason to expect any change in the status quo. -- Liang Sicheng; Lin Huiyin - New York Times

The Big Rethink: Farewell to modernism's inherent lack of sustainability: In an emerging epoch based on a vision of a 'living, organic universe', architecture must start again to mediate our relations between nature, place and community...Let's start by comparing a pre-modern work of architecture with a modern one...by the same architect in different phases of his career... By Peter Buchanan -- Charles-Édouard Jeanneret; Le Corbusier [images] - Architectural Review (UK)

Gardner Wander: The New, the Old, the Glass Bottleneck in Between: ...Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's sparkling new entrance pavilion...brash industrial-looking addition...has landed in its park-like surroundings like a creature from another planet...I arrived with misgivings but came away convinced that this was an appropriate solution to a pressing problem...interiors are functional, simple and appealing. By Lee Rosenbaum -- Renzo Piano [images, video]- Huffington Post

Design for Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art pavilion combines art and interaction: Solar-powered "Sun Pavilion" to be built for the museum's World's Fair exhibit..."Inventing the Modern World: Decorative Arts at the World's Fairs: 1851-1939"... By Steve Paul -- Generator Studio; Brightergy; Tim Gratkowski [images]- Kansas City Star

Intelligent architecture for current times: An exceptional peripheral extension for social housing...Bois-Le-Prêtre tower in Paris...without dislodging the residents...adaptable solution to the problem which many European cities face. By Gonzalo Herrero Delicado and María José Marcos/DOT Agency for Architectural Affairs -- Raymond Lopez (1962); Tecteam (1990s); Lacaton & Vassal Architects/Frédéric Druot [images]- Domus

Game Changer | Michael Maltzan: His work for the homeless in Los Angeles is a new paradigm for social housing...has judiciously managed a career that...switches between multimillion-dollar homes for high profile clients, institutional projects, and housing for the homeless..."Architecture has the ability to speak very loudly about what our responsibilities are." By Jade Chang [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Eastern promise: With his biggest projects now in Asia, Moshe Safdie, the best-known Israeli architect in the world, is shutting down the office he opened in Jerusalem in 1970. The future, it seems, is in China...The Khalsa Heritage Center in Punjab is one of four major projects Safdie has unveiled in recent months. It is a "harvest" - his word - of a decade of strenuous labor in the international arena. By Noam Dvir [images]- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Designs on an icon: John Pawson is worrying about his white walls. The famously fastidious architect is showing me the plans for his latest project, an £80m scheme to move the Design Museum...to the remodelled Commonwealth Institute...the thought of the predicted 500,000 visitors a year running their grubby hands over his pristine creation causes him to pause. By Marcus Field -- Terence Conran; Deyan Sudjic; OMA/Rem Koolhaas [images]- Evening Standard Magazine (UK)

Henry Urbach Appointed Executive Director of Philip Johnson Glass House: In April 2011, Urbach abruptly left his position as curator of architecture and design at SFMOMA [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art] after a five-year tenure...previously ran a namesake art and architecture gallery in New York. - The Architect's Newspaper

Newsmaker: Henry Urbach: ...will be moving to New Canaan, Connecticut. He has just been named director of the Glass House, the Philip Johnson estate..."I can't tell you how exciting it will be to occupy one of modern architecture's hallowed grounds." By Fred Bernstein- Architectural Record

University of Technology, Sydney School of Architecture seeks professor of architecture: UTS will be the site of Frank Gehry's first project in Australia...advertising two senior academic positions for architects...Professor of Architecture...and Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor...application deadline: March 16- Architecture & Design (Australia)

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