

Today's News - Monday, April 9, 2012

- Sam Hall Kaplan (he's back - yay!) explains why this really is "the best of times for the planning profession," considering that the "planning and design consciousness" of more people and communities is "discernibly on the rise."
- Hume might take issue with that, as he takes on the "sell-off" of the public realm to the private sector: "we might want to think twice about our unseemly haste...But it may already be too late."
- Lackmeyer might disagree as well: while he cheers plans for Oklahoma City's Core to Shore park, and its impressive shortlist, he bemoans the final selection process that won't include a city planner or the city's park department "because that's always the way it's been done."
- Rochon finds inspiration in Lebbeus Woods, who "offers hope amid the globe's ruin and rubble."
- Quirk offers an elegy to architectural criticism - sort of: "criticism hasn't died...It's just been changed beyond recognition. And frankly, for the better."
- Lewis calls for a rethink of the Eisenhower Memorial, having "nothing to do with aesthetic style": an open, national competition would be one way to go (though perhaps "unfeasible economically and politically") - or ask Gehry "to come up with scheme B to correct the flaws of scheme A."
- Kamin reconsiders Graves's Humana Building and postmodernism in general: it "deserves a more sophisticated reappraisal, one that carefully separates its masterpieces from its mediocrities and clarifies its contributions to the long-term arc of design."
- Brutalism (and Rudolph in particular) in the spotlight: Pogrebin ponders "architecture's ugly ducklings" that "may not get time to be swans" ("It's one of the great public relations failures of all time," says Bergdoll).
- Arieff, Brown, Renn, and Vasudevan debate: Are Some Buildings Too Ugly to Survive?
- Jana chimes in with her own take, asking "when is a landmark building too ugly to preserve? While taste and historical context does matter, ultimately, economics may matter more."
- While Warren and Mahoney "were the vortex around which the modernist movement...the Christchurch Style - swirled," many of their buildings are either gone (by earthquake) - or going (via a wrecking ball): "It was a brave world, but it wasn't a pretty one," but "the fashion of the period is coming back."
- Dvir on the sad state of Israel's own 1930s Glass House (an apartment building, actually): "it reflects a rare architectural avant-garde," and even though it's been declared a conservation site, "the Haifa municipality isn't rushing to fix the problem."
- Hinshaw minces no words about what he thinks of "messing with a park designed by a landscape master" with "a clunky intrusion of sculpture meant to honor a donor."
- On a brighter note, new renderings of the SEPTA Spur phase of Philly's Reading Viaduct could be a High Line moment in fundraising and "a make-or-break opportunity to complete the larger project."
- A good reason to head to Chicago this week: the Architecture and Design Film Festival Chicago will present over 31 films from 13 countries.
- Calys (making us blush!) reports on ArchNewsNow's 10th ANNiversary fete last week (we'll be posting our own pictorial report shortly).

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For Planners: The Best of Times, The Worst of Times: Is this really the best of times for the planning profession? Actually yes, if you consider as I do that the planning and design consciousness of more people and most communities everywhere are discernibly on the rise, spurred on by the increasing awareness that the shaping of spaces can aid the mental and physical health of people and where they live. By Sam Hall Kaplan- PLANetizen

The great public sell-off continues: As public agencies scramble to deal with budget cuts, the private sector stands to make a killing...we might want to think twice about our unseemly haste to surrender those few corners of town that remain unfranchised, non-retail and commercial-free. But it may already be too late...the public realm can simply be sold off. But once that happens, it no longer belongs to us. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Will engineers decide the future of Oklahoma City's Core to Shore park? ...planning is still perceived...as taking a backseat to public works. Witness the process under way for the hiring of an architect for a planned \$120 million park...A city planner won't get a say...Nor...the city's park department...because that's always the way it's been done. By Steve Lackmeyer -- Hargreaves Associates; Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates; James Corner Field Operations; Design Workshop- The Oklahoman

Architect offers hope amid the globe's ruin and rubble: With his provocative imaginings of war-torn cities, Lebbeus Woods points the way to a bold rethinking of post-traumatic architecture...All too often, city-building is about brutal, unfettered demolition...his "War and Architecture" drawings...were never intended to rob local architects of managing the necessary rebuilding...To me, they contribute importantly to an ongoing and still-unfinished story about how to rebuild the postwar city. By Lisa Rochon -- Kenzo Tange; Peter Zumthor; Steven Holl- Globe and Mail (Canada)

The Architect Critic Is Dead (just not for the reason you think): Good riddance. Because criticism hasn't died...It's just been changed beyond recognition. And frankly, for the better...It means the critic must be a reporter. And an activist one at that...The "critic" may be dead, but the conversation is only just beginning. By Vanessa Quirk -- Paul Goldberger; Ada Louise Huxtable; Michael Kimmelman; Nicolai Ouroussoff; Alison Arieff; Alexandra Lange [links]- ArchDaily

Frank Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial design needs to be rethought: ...the real problems...have nothing to do with aesthetic style...the Eisenhower Commission could...hit the reset button and start over by sponsoring an open, national competition...But this could prove unfeasible economically and politically...[or] Ask the designer to come up with scheme B to correct the flaws of scheme A. By Roger K. Lewis - Washington Post

A postmodern gem, reconsidered: Michael Graves' Humana Building, which once drew mixed reviews, now a fixture on Louisville skyline: Much has happened to the art of skyscraper design in the 30 years since...not the least of which is that postmodernism itself fell into disrepute...But [it] deserves a more sophisticated reappraisal, one that carefully separates its masterpieces from its mediocrities and clarifies its contributions to the long-term arc of design. By Blair Kamin -- Philip Johnson; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Norman Foster; Ulrich Franzen; Cesar Pelli; Helmut Jahn [images]- Chicago Tribune

Architecture's Ugly Ducklings May Not Get Time to Be Swans: A Brutalist building faces demolition in Goshen, N.Y., raising questions about the future of unfashionably Modern midcentury structures...Orange County Government Center...has always been something of a misfit...A similar debate is going on in Chicago..."Brutalism was supposed to bring back all sorts of things like craft...It's one of the great public relations failures of all time." By Robin Pogrebin -- Paul Rudolph (1967); Bertrand Goldberg (1974); Edward Durell Stone (1964); Barry Bergdoll; Nina Rappaport/Docomomo; National Trust for Historic Preservation - New York Times

Room for Debate: Are Some Buildings Too Ugly to Survive? Should we raze buildings that are unloved but may be "important"?: Atrocities Should Be Eliminated by Anthony M. Daniels; Art Deco Once Faced the Wrecker's Ball by David J. Brown/National Trust for Historic Preservation; The Value of Finding Value in What's Unusual by Allison Arieff; Cost Matters, but So Does History by Aaron M. Renn/Urbanophile; Weighing Costs of Demolition or Preservation by Raksha Vasudevan/National League of Cities - New York Times

When is a landmark building too ugly to preserve? The Orange County Government Center...is either an important example of...Brutalism or a brutal assault on the eyes, depending on your point of view...Could preservationists make a case...by publicizing its cultural value? ...While taste and historical context does matter, ultimately, economics may matter more.- SmartPlanet

Earthquake destroys architects' legacy: Warren and Mahoney brought a brave new look to Christchurch...what does it mean that most of those iconic representations of that period...are gone, or going? Sir Miles Warren doesn't want to answer questions like that..."we believed in architecture for the masses, architecture solving all the problems of society." It was a brave world, but it wasn't a pretty one...and the fashion of the period is coming back. [images]- [The Press \(New Zealand\)](#)

Haifa's Glass House - transparent, but still an Israeli mystery: Glass bricks are atypical...because of their high cost and unsuitability to the climate. Still, architect Theodor Menkes went ahead in the 1930s and put up Israel's Glass House: ...it reflects a rare architectural avant-garde...But typical for buildings in Israel that set an architectural precedent, the structure is in dismal condition....has been declared a conservation site, but that's about it...the Haifa municipality isn't rushing to fix the problem. By Noam Dvir [images]- [Ha'aretz \(Israel\)](#)

Messing with a park designed by a landscape master: Counterbalance Park...is the last work by architect Robert Murase. It deserves better than a clunky intrusion of sculpture meant to honor a donor....Several things are going on here that are quite dismaying. By Mark Hinshaw [images]- [Crosscut \(Seattle\)](#)

Spur to Action: Philly Brings Elevated Park Plans into Focus: Studio Bryan Hanes and Urban Engineers, two firms collaborating on the design of the SEPTA Spur phase of Philadelphia's Reading Viaduct, have released new images...a crucial component of fundraising efforts...could represent a make-or-break opportunity to complete the larger project. [images]- [The Architect's Newspaper](#)

Architecture and Design Film Festival Chicago will showcase over 31 films from 13 countries, April 12-16- [Architecture & Design Film Festival](#)

Ten years after: In the internet/blogosphere/social media universe, anything that lasts ten years is rare. And websites with good architectural news and commentary are equally rare. So, when an architecture website is around for ten years, that's cause for celebration. That's just what happened last Thursday, when over 200 friends and fans of ArchNewsNow gathered at New York's Center for Architecture to recognize a decade of achievement. By George Calys - [San Francisco Examiner](#)

Book Review: Advancing Windswept Design: Pointers from Art Nouveau, Zaha Hadid, and Charles Sowers: New books and installation art highlight breezy refinements in wind-inspired design. By Norman Weinstein - [ArchNewsNow](#)

Colombia: Transformed / Architecture = Politics: The curators of the exhibition making its world debut in Chicago this week throw the spotlight on five Colombian architects who leverage brick, concrete, and glass forms to improve the lives of ordinary people. By Vladimir Belogolovsky and Fernando Villa, AIA, LEED AP - [ArchNewsNow](#)

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