
Today's News - Friday, July 20, 2012

- Baillieu on the "real Olympic effect": the "real test, and the real work, is still to come."
- Siegel offers an in-depth - and fascinating - history of a French town that has turned itself around by replacing modernist housing projects with neo-traditional development (perhaps Paris should stop "importing starchitects who design look-at-me buildings" and revive "the French tradition of designing great urban places").
- A heritage advocate decries "hideous design is a byproduct of haste" to rebuild Christchurch: "Owners need to look closely at what stamp they intend to leave when entrusting architects with their rebuilds...or we will end up looking as soulless as Australia's Canberra."
- Neustein has a lively Q&A with de Botton during his visit to Australia: Why is beauty so important to you? "Partly, I use it politically because it's a taboo word for architects - it makes them twitchy, and I quite enjoy that."
- Brussat bristles over Bruno's take on Pingyao's "plight": what those "who hate historic beauty above all do not want to admit is that the best way to prevent places from becoming 'history museums' (a muted way to say Disneyesque) is to move into modern times...without sacrificing the old buildings, and without confronting them with new buildings that undermine the city's historic character."
- He gives thumbs-up - and down - to the revamped Providence Performing Arts Center Square: the redesign "is undermined by its confused aesthetic," but at least "there are chairs and tables beckoning. This is progress. Yet the vital lesson of beauty remains to be learned."
- Saffron is a bit disappointed in the plans to expand a Philly synagogue: "The designers, unfortunately, have concentrated so much energy on solving the knotty functional and historic problems that they seem to have forgotten about making memorable architecture."
- High hopes soar for a long-empty historic post office with plans to make it the home of AIA Miami Center for Architecture & Design.
- Hatherley looks at the history of the BBC as told by its buildings: "The route from the Ministry of Truth to MediaCityUK is a checkered and complex one."
- As Sydney sees its tallest and thinnest tower about to rise, Moore ponders: "Are we aiming too high? When is 'tall' tall enough?"
- RISD names Pradeep Sharma as Dean of Architecture and Design.
- MASS Design Group and Atelier d'architecture autogérée garner the 2012 Zumtobel Group Award for Sustainability and Humanity in the Built Environment hail from the U.S. and France.
- Weekend diversions:
 - Maes's "The Future of Yesterday" is "a clever curatorial scheme" at the Nelson-Atkins Museum: "Visitors must first acknowledge one legacy of World's Fairs - decaying, forgotten, and wholly lonesome architecture - before exploring their other legacy, as the birthplace of modern pop culture."
 - "The Harlem Edge" at NYC's Center for Architecture offers an eyeful of entries in ENYA's ideas competition to repurpose an abandoned waterfront garbage depot into a food, farm and ferry hub.
 - Filler offers a most thoughtful take on "modern architecture's dark side" found in the pages of Cohen's "Architecture in Uniform," and "The Future of Architecture: Since 1889" (the best comprehensive history of modernism to appear in a generation").
 - Webb cheers Anderton (who "may be a reincarnation of Reyner Banham) and her "Grand Illusion: A Story of Ambition, and Its Limits, on LA's Bunker Hill" - though the student proposals presented "seem as disconnected from the real world as the planners they are challenging. It's a disappointing conclusion to an otherwise informative and provocative urban study."
 - Zandberg cheers "Arcadia: The Gardens of Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zur" that "details the work of the top landscape architects of Israel's founding generation...a comprehensive and pioneering effort of unparalleled importance."
- One we couldn't resist: a U.S. DJ launches a series of "tech-house" songs inspired by his favorite architects - first up: Zaha (not our musical taste, but hey...).

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The real Olympic effect is only just beginning: The Olympic Park is an extraordinary achievement, but even more impressive will be the slow regeneration of east London...what the Games has shown is we can move mountains if we need to...the legacy has the potential to change our approach to regeneration...the real test, and the real work, is still to come. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

Le Plessis-Robinson: A Model for Smart Growth: Since 1989...adopted plans to replace the modernist housing projects with neo-traditional development...a model of how attractive architecture and urbanism can revitalize a city...teaches us that nothing is as outdated as yesterday's avant-garde...By Charles Siegel -- Francois Spoerry; Joseph Belmont; Alluin-Mauduit; Mark and Nada Breitman; Xavier Bohl [images, links]- PLANetizen

Hideous design a byproduct of haste: Architects need to move away from concrete boxes with glass fronts and give back to Christchurch a present-day take on its architectural heritage...Owners need to look closely at what stamp they intend to leave...when entrusting architects with their rebuilds...or we will end up looking as soulless as Australia's Canberra...Safety does not have to be put up as a smokescreen for minimalistic boxes masquerading as the new tomorrow. By Rodney Laredo/ICONIC- The Press (New Zealand)

Alain de Botton: "Don't let the free market decide": In Australia to promote "Religion for Atheists: A Non-Believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion," he was invited to respond to his critics...Why is beauty so important to you? "Partly, I use it politically because it's a taboo word for architects - it makes them twitchy, and I quite enjoy that." By David Neustein- Australian Design Review

More false choices for China: Pingyao...attracted the attention of Debra Bruno...writes about the city's "plight"...What she and the proponents of preservation who hate historic beauty above all do not want to admit is that the best way to prevent places...from becoming "history museums" (a muted way to say Disneyesque) is to move into modern times via changes in purpose...without sacrificing the old buildings, and without confronting them with new buildings that undermine the city's historic character. By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Providence Performing Arts Center Square and the lesson of beauty: ...high material quality of the pavements and street furniture at PPAC Square is undermined by its confused aesthetic...at least the traffic flows both ways, and there are chairs and tables beckoning...This is progress. Yet the vital lesson of beauty remains to be learned. By David Brussat [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Synagogue [Rodeph Shalom] expansion brings challenges: The designers, unfortunately, have concentrated so much energy on solving the knotty functional and historic problems that they seem to have forgotten about making memorable architecture...The contrast of styles isn't a big issue; the proportions are. Inga Saffron -- Simon & Simon (1927); KieranTimberlake [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Downtown Miami post office gets new lease on life: The historic landmark will be revived as the American Institute of Architects' Miami Center for Architecture & Design...the circa-1912 building is about to get a new tenant befitting of its stature on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. - Miami Herald

The story of the BBC, as told by its buildings: The BBC's journey from paternalistic bureaucracy to cowed pseudo-business can be charted in the buildings it has occupied. The route from the Ministry of Truth to MediaCityUK is a

chequered and complex one. By Owen Hatherley -- George Val Myer (1932); MacCormac Jamieson Prichard; Wilkinson Eyre; Fairhursts; Chapman Taylor; Ralph Tubbs- [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Plans for Sydney's Tallest Tower Released -- Are We Aiming Too High? ...115 Bathurst Street...expected to be not only be the tallest, but also the thinnest on the Sydney horizon...when is 'tall' tall enough? Is the goal to continue to develop strategies, materials and tools that allow us to create record-breaking buildings? By Tim Moore -- [Kannfinch \[images\]- DesignBuild Source \(Australia\)](#)

RISD/Rhode Island School of Design appoints Pradeep Sharma as Dean of Architecture and Design: Most recently...Head of the Bath School of Art and Design at Bath Spa University in England...- [Art & Education](#)

2012 Zumtobel Group Award for Sustainability and Humanity in the Built Environment winners: pioneering Butaro Hospital project in Rwanda, and R-URBAN, an integrated research project in a socially deprived suburb of Paris. -- [MASS Design Group; Atelier d'architecture autogérée \[link to images\]- Zumtobel](#)

Forgotten But Not Gone: Pictures Of The Aftermath Of The World's Fair: ...commissioned by the Nelson-Atkins Museum in support of their sweeping exhibition..."Inventing the Modern World"...Ives Maes's "The Future of Yesterday" is a clever curatorial scheme: Visitors must first acknowledge one legacy of the fairs - decaying, forgotten, and wholly lonesome architecture - before exploring their other legacy, as the birthplace of modern pop culture. [\[images\]- Fast Company](#)

Farming ideas for abandoned garbage depot: Architects imagine food, farm and ferry hub for abandoned 135th St. Marine Transfer Station..."The Harlem Edge: Cultivating Connections"...an international ideas competition...two dozen of the top entries...on display at Center for Architecture through October -- [Linearscape Architecture; AJANY; Emerging New York Architects \(ENYA\)- NY Daily News](#)

Modern Architecture's Dark Side: "Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War"...Jean-Louis Cohen establishes one big, awful, inescapable truth: the full potential of 20th-century architecture, engineering, and design was realized...through technologies perfected during the two world wars..."The Future of Architecture: Since 1889" is the best comprehensive history of modernism to appear in a generation...attention does not always signal approval. By Martin Filler - [New York Review of Books](#)

Street Sweeping: USC Pamphlet book "Grand Illusion: A Story of Ambition, and Its Limits, on LA's Bunker Hill" edited by Frances Anderton...introduces many voices...proposals, the students seem as disconnected from the real world as the planners they are challenging. It's a disappointing conclusion to an otherwise informative and provocative urban study. By Michael Webb -- [Frank Gehry \[images\]- The Architect's Newspaper](#)

Changing Israel's landscape, in a very literal sense: "Arcadia: The Gardens of Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zur" details the work of the top landscape architects of Israel's founding generation...a comprehensive and pioneering effort of unparalleled importance. By Esther Zandberg- [Ha'aretz \(Israel\)](#)

Roger Sanchez immortalises Zaha Hadid in 'tech-house' song: US DJ plans series of tracks inspired by his favourite architects...including Frank Gehry, Frank Lloyd Wright, IM Pei, Tadao Ando and Gaudi. [\[link\]- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence Marks 25 Years: New Director Anne-Marie Lubenau, AIA, reflects on the past, looks to the future. - [ArchNewsNow](#)



-- Park Associati: The Cube, London, UK...a nomadic, stateless and cosmopolitan piece of architecture, a pavilion designed to host a small, temporary restaurant.

-- Gabriela Gomes: Shelter ByGG, Guimarães, Portugal...a mobile, sustainable and itinerant sculpture installed in a public space.

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