

Today's News - Monday, June 8, 2015

- Just when we thought there couldn't be anything more to say about Piano's new Whitney, Panero weighs in: outside, it's an "aggressive, purpose-built pastiche of blight"; inside, it's "a giddy, irrational space for spectacle - a case of form following social function and punk disregard."
- Davidson hopes preservationists in NYC "will take a good hard look at the puny battles they are fighting [Frick, Four Seasons] - these are causes unworthy of the passions they have aroused," and they should "redirect their ardor to defending a city that sometimes needs to be rescued from its own energy and greed."
- Greenberg and Arredondo pen a paean to a Classical revival in America: "While the contagion of 'global architecture' is turning cities into bland collections of interchangeable buildings, we now have voices offering a fresh choice: classical architecture."
- Brussat couldn't be happier with that sentiment: "The classical revival emphasizes grassroots opposition to politicians who allow developers to hire modernist architects. What's that great sucking sound? It's modernism sucking the character out of our built environment."
- Burg cheers Detroit's "architectural revival - with the rebirth of some of its most historic structures" (even small ones).
- Dittmar totally disagrees with some notable names, penning essays in "Designing Democracy: How designers are changing democratic spaces and processes," suggesting that the British seat of government should move into new, modern, transparent digs (we're with Hank on this one).
- Boxer pens an eloquent eulogy to Tokyo's Okura hotel (with "Oedipal insult to injury" thrown in): "almost surreal in its beauty," it seems (sadly) that "protesters' battle cry is almost inaudible" because "there are more important and interesting battles out there" (i.e. Hadid's Olympic stadium).
- Paul parses Modernism's "struggle for respect" in Kansas City: "the local landscape has lost several notable modern structures," but the question that needs to be asked is "whether buildings can be made better with modern alterations" (he dubs it "evolutionary modernism").
- Lange lines up 7 big-name architects who "defend the world's most hated buildings" - but will they change anyone's mind? (great read!).
- Campbell considers what makes a good tower - "the urban equivalent of a punk's spiky haircut" - as Boston "is about to sprout a lot of tall - very tall - new towers"; the two basic types he calls "the Diva and the Dagwood."
- Misra digs deep into the dilemma of the "mushrooming highrises" in Mumbai: "In the scramble to grow, builders have cut corners with respect to ethics, safety, legality, and transparency - harming residents and the future of the city."
- Li on the skyscraper of the future: "There's something inherently absurd about skyscrapers Why do they have to be so tall? Because cities need more space - and plenty of bragging rights" - but the next ones "may not look like skyscrapers at all."
- Wilson explains how Gensler is redesigning Mecca to accommodate an estimated 5 million pilgrims by 2020; a major challenge: "many of the architects would need to design a solution without ever setting foot on the Muslim-only holy grounds" (fascinating read + great pix!).
- Li has high hopes for the replacement of two "tired-looking 1950s shopping centers with what amounts to a new downtown" in Shaker Heights, Ohio: "What's missing is the lovability, authenticity and specialness to be expected of a new town center designed for one of America's best-planned early 20th-century residential suburbs."
- Hatherley ponders "what happened to the social conscience of architecture," and cheers Assemble for showing "how architects can go beyond 'serving the rich' and help wider society" by working with "a group of activists, rather than with developers."
- Nicholas feels much the same way: "Assemble's Turner Prize nomination is recognition of the role public art and storytelling are increasingly playing in placemaking."
- Bernstein offers a most interesting take on buildings "serving as inspiration for logos, as architecture and marketing merge. Sometimes, even a little-known building can give way to a handsome doodad" (and some really miss the mark).
- Louisville sells a 23-acre stretch of abandoned riverfront land for \$1 in hopes that a new botanical garden will grow - "a low-cost purchase for an expensive project" (it'll take "luck and a lot of fundraising" to make it happen, though).
- As the debate over what will replace the much-maligned term "intern," Sisson takes a look at how some earlier (and most notable!) interns and mentors "have shaped the field."

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Hard not to see: Whitney Museum, designed by Renzo Piano: ...new exterior is not a holdover of industrial blight but the aggressive, purpose-built pastiche of blight...the inside...is nothing if not ingratiating...it is not so much a new museum of art at all but a giddy, irrational space for spectacle...a case of form following social function and punk disregard...Has the Whitney become this entertainment center out of confidence or self-doubt? By James Panero [images]- The New Criterion

Fiddling With the Frick While New York Burns: Preservationists all over the city must be nursing Champagne hangovers these days...I hope that those who care about fusing this city's history and its future will take a good hard look at the puny battles they are fighting...these are causes unworthy of the passions they have aroused, especially at a time when vast swaths of New York's fabric and history are under more urgent threat...redirect their ardor to defending...a city that sometimes needs to be rescued from its own energy and greed. By Justin Davidson- New York Magazine

American Architecture's Classical Revival: ...an irony of the architectural world: the avant-garde is now composed of classical architects...While the contagion of "global architecture"...turning cities into bland collections of interchangeable buildings, we now have voices offering a fresh choice: classical architecture based on local traditions and ideals. By Allan Greenberg and Colette Arredondo/Allan Greenberg Architect -- Thomas H. Beeby/Hammond Beeby Rupert Ainge; Duncan G. Stroik Architect; Franck Lohsen McCrery Architects; Robert A.M. Stern; Peter Pennoyer [images]- City Journal/The Manhattan Institute

Allan Greenberg's classicism: ...it is clear that modernism was a big mistake...The classical revival...offers a potential way out, one that emphasizes politics at the local level -- and grassroots opposition to politicians who allow developers to hire modernist architects to rip apart the fabric of our cities and towns. What's that great sucking sound? ...it's modernism sucking the character out of our built environment. By David Brussat -- -- Thomas Beebe; Duncan Stroik; James McCrery; Peter Pennoyer - Architecture Here and There

What's Old Is New Again: Inside Detroit's Architectural Revival: The desire to live, work and invest in the rebounding city is growing, along with the rebirth of some of its most historic structures...smaller-scale buildings...are being swept up by the momentum of the historic preservation movement. And that's good news for everyone. By Natalie Burg- Forbes

Don't scrap the Palace of Westminster: The idea that we should build a new, literally transparent parliament is simplistic and learns nothing from recent history: It should be possible to evolve the parliamentary estate to meet the needs of a more digital, mediagenic and security-conscious age without sacrificing the powerful symbols of continuity... By Hank Dittmar- BD/Building Design (UK)

The End of a Treasure in Tokyo: The Okura, almost surreal in its beauty...will be demolished to make way for new towers...protesters' battle cry is almost inaudible...there are more important and interesting battles out there, such as Zaha Hadid's Olympic stadium...The hotel's blend of Japanese and modernist design might be one of the reasons it is not on the lucky list of cultural properties worthy of preservation. By Sarah Boxer -- Yoshiro Taniguchi; Yoshio Taniguchi [images]- New York Times

Modernism struggles for respect in the Kansas City streetscape: ...the local landscape has lost several notable modern structures...projects raise questions about what makes a building "historic"...Preservation is one thing, but a carefully considered permissiveness might not be so unappealing. The question that ultimately has to be asked is whether buildings can be made better with modern alterations - better for their users and their neighbors and the visual and social landscapes. I think so. By Steve Paul- Kansas City Star

Seven Leading Architects Defend the World's Most Hated Buildings: Can [they] change the way we think about a doomed housing project in Naples or the most abhorred skyscraper in Paris? Allow them to try. As told to Alexandra Lange -- Daniel Libeskind/Eugène Beaudouin, Urbain Cassan & Louis Hoym de Marien; Zaha Hadid/Paul Rudolph; Annabelle Selldorf/Harrison & Abramovitz; Ada Tolla/LOT-EK/Franz di Salvo; Norman Foster/Ernst Sagebiel; Amanda Levete/AL_/Eric Bedford & G.R. Yeats; Vincent Van Duysen/Richard Rogers & Renzo Piano - [New York Times](#)

What makes a good tower? It's the urban equivalent of a punk's spiky haircut. The once conservative city of Boston is about to sprout a lot of tall - very tall - new towers...two basic types of urban high-rises. I'll call them the Diva and the Dagwood. By Robert Campbell - [Boston Globe](#)

The Long Shadow of Mumbai's Mushrooming Highrises: In the scramble to grow, builders have cut corners with respect to ethics, safety, legality, and transparency - harming residents and the future of the city...informal slums (which make up 41% of the city's housing stock) and their residents (which make up 62% of the city's population) are displaced or bought off. By Tanvi Misra - [CityLab](#) (formerly [The Atlantic Cities](#))

The Skyscraper of the Future: The push to build a new kind of tower has begun: There's something inherently absurd about skyscrapers...They beg the question: Why do they have to be so tall? Because cities need more space - and plenty of bragging rights...the next skyscrapers may not look like skyscrapers at all...they'll take whatever form necessary to best provide for their occupants. By Shirley Li -- Russell Gilchrist/Gensler; Devon Patterson/Solomon Cordwell Buenz - [Architizer](#)

Redesigning Mecca: The ancient holy city had reached capacity. Gensler's solution? Redesign the infrastructure, without changing the ceremony: ...yet many of the architects would need to design a solution without ever setting foot on the Muslim-only holy grounds...to remove bottlenecks and increase Mecca's capacity...took the highway metaphor to its ultimate conclusion, adding exit ramps and overpasses for people on foot...The result almost looks like they planted the Guggenheim in the middle of Mecca. By Mark Wilson [images] - [Fast Company](#) / [Co. Design](#)

Van Aken project in Shaker Heights needs to be lovable and authentic: It's not often that a Cleveland architecture firm gets to shape a new town center from scratch...replacing a pair of tired-looking 1950s shopping centers with what amounts to a new downtown...What's missing...is the lovability, authenticity and specialness to be expected of a new town center designed for one of America's best-planned early 20th-century residential suburbs...Expectations are high. By Steven Litt -- Bialosky + Partners Architects [images] - [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#)

What happened to the social conscience of architecture? Ten houses in Toxteth show how architects can go beyond 'serving the rich', do their duty on dereliction and help wider society: Assemble appears to have moved from a whimsical portfolio of 'follies', pop-ups and public realm to work of serious political importance...has shown that a firm...could actually work with a group of activists, rather than with developers. By Owen Hatherley -- [Assemble - The Architects' Journal](#) (UK)

Using art to breathe communities into life: Assemble's Turner Prize nomination is recognition of the role public art and storytelling are increasingly playing in placemaking: ...has become a communal amenity...Some would argue that culture is being co-opted in processes of regeneration - but perhaps it is public art that is thinking about its public. By Fabienne Nicholas/Contemporary Art Society -- Muf Architecture/Art; Ooze Architects - [BD/Building Design](#) (UK)

Visualizing Architecture: More and more, it seems, buildings are serving as inspiration for logos, as architecture and marketing merge...If a building is controversial, it's not logo material...Sometimes, even a little-known building can give way to a handsome doodad. By Fred A. Bernstein [images] - [Design Observer](#)

Louisville OKs \$1 Land Deal for Multimillion-Dollar Botanical Garden: Once a neighborhood destroyed by flood. Then a trash dump. Soon to be (with any luck and a lot of fundraising) a botanical garden...The City has agreed to sell a 23-acre stretch of abandoned riverfront land to garden group Botanica for \$1...a low-cost purchase for an expensive project. -- Perkins+Will [images] - [Next City](#) (formerly [Next American City](#))

The Rich History of Architectural Internships: Architecture has an intern problem...the importance of internships, mentorships and first jobs has shaped the careers of many famous architects...As the debate over how to name and quantify the position continues...a look at how previous mentors have shaped the field. By Patrick Sisson -- Frank Lloyd Wright; Louis Sullivan; Richard Neutra; Mies van der Rohe; Peter Behrens; Bjarke Ingels; Rem Koolhaas; Renzo Piano; Louis Kahn - [Curbed](#)

Nuts + Bolts #12: The Importance of Mentorship: Debunking Mentoring Myths in the AEC Industry: Mentoring can help anyone make meaningful professional connections, and it should be considered rewarding and an honor for everyone involved. By Donna Maltzan - [ArchNewsNow.com](#)

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