

Today's News - Wednesday, June 17, 2009

- A California racetrack bites the dust to make way for a massive development; opponents fear it will only contribute to urban sprawl, "adding nothing of architectural significance to the region" (or remain a pile of dust).
- A green light for massive Thames Gateway housing project, too.
- Sudbury, Canada, hopes a new architecture school can revive its flagging downtown and creative culture (Richard Florida called upon to prove it).
- Portland ponders the price of originality in ongoing saga of the Willamette River bridge - should it soar or not: "maybe that's something for Seattle to try" (hardly encouraging, is it?).
- No soaring Calatrava in the wings for Atlanta.
- BD's News Junkie offers a round-up of coverage of "round two in the epic prize fight" Rogers vs. Charles (saves us the trouble - thanks!).
- Kennicott gives thumbs-up to D.C.'s Old City Hall expansion, including its "little black dress" of an atrium: "a rare, almost pure modernist gesture in a city where large public architecture generally tends to heaviness, compromise and bland decoration."
- Stanford White's Newport Theater to get a makeover after standing "dusty and silent" for 25 years.
- Jacobs takes to the High Line to find it actually "outperforms its hype" and "suggests unlimited opportunities for transforming eyesores into assets, for radical adaptive reuse."
- A new prefab player set to debut a net-zero home and a new business model: marketing to architects and developers rather than end users.
- A 1950s prefab (with a most interesting parentage) in L.A. restored from the ground up.
- It will be Silicon Valley meets Notre Dame if the San Francisco 49ers stadium lands in Santa Clara (meaning lots of high-tech and environmental bells and whistles mixed with "a classic football experience").
- An in-depth profile of the "elusive" Emilio Ambasz.
- An ode to FLW's Larkin Building, "a monument to an aesthetic urban consciousness in politics and society that was crying out to be born."
- Morrish takes the dean's mantle at Parsons' School of Constructed Environments.
- We couldn't resist: plans to rename Sears Tower "have blown up a storm in the Windy City."
- Invisibility cloaks may move from the realm of Harry Potter to a room near you.
- A really killer app: iPanic Limbo: compete against other out-of-work architects (and evoke fond memories of clients from Hell).

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The Finished Line: Inglewood approves massive development at Hollywood Park...one of California's few remaining thoroughbred racetracks...\$2 billion, 238-acre project... preservationists and horsing racing fans have been chomping at the bit to stop it...see the mixed-use development as contributing to urban sprawl, adding nothing of architectural significance to the region. -- Quatro Design Group; Cooper Robertson & Partners; Baldauf Catton Von Eckartsberg; Mia Lehrer + Associates [images, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Go-ahead for massive Thames Gateway housing project: The first phase of Barking Riverside -- the largest single housing development in the Thames Gateway...will provide 3,300 homes, two schools and associated infrastructure as part of the £3.5 billion, 11,000-home development... -- Maccreanor Lavington; KCAP; Sheppard Robson; Gustafson Porter [image, links]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Can A New Architecture School Revive An Aging City? ...in the Canadian city of Sudbury...planned Northern Ontario School of Architecture (NOSA)...would be Canada's first new architecture school in four decades..."would bring hundreds of people downtown, which has a direct economic impact...But most important [would be] the impact on the creative culture within the area." -- Richard Florida- Architectural Record

Soaring or boring? TriMet ponders the price of originality: Is it enough for the bridge to offer a design that's new to the Portland area and comes in on budget -- but isn't unique...Or should the region aspire to a design that would put something original on the city's skyline..."That seems to me trying to turn this into a prestige project, and maybe that's something for Seattle to try"... -- Miguel Rosales; HNTB [images]- The Oregonian

Acclaimed architect parts ways with ASO: Whatever the future may hold for the proposed Atlanta Symphony Orchestra concert hall...Santiago Calatrava will not be the designer...The orchestra and Woodruff Arts Center unveiled the Spanish architect's dramatic, \$300 million vision for Symphony Center in 2005...- Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Richard Rogers Vs. Prince Charles: Forget the rumble in the jungle, the battle for Chelsea Barracks is far more juicy...this week's coverage of round two in the epic prize fight... -- Rogers Stirk Harbour [links]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Winning on Appeal: Old City Hall's Expansion to Accommodate Courthouse Is Anchored by Modernist Atrium: ...a bit like the little black dress: elegant, never out of fashion and appropriate almost anywhere....a rare, almost pure modernist gesture in a city where large public architecture generally tends to heaviness, compromise and bland decoration. By Philip Kennicott -- George Hadfield (1820); Beyer Blinder Belle [slide show]- Washington Post

Stanford White's Newport Theater [1880] Will Get \$4.5 Million Makeover: Closed in the 1980s because it wasn't bringing in enough money to sustain itself, the forest-green Shingle Style building has stood dusty and silent for a quarter century. By Mike Di Paola -- Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels Architects [links]- Bloomberg News

Beyond the Hype: The High Line...suggests unlimited opportunities for

transforming eyesores into assets, for radical adaptive reuse...Maybe it's time to look at ugly, damaging infrastructure with new eyes...The High Line outperforms its hype because it says something simple and profound: Anything is possible. By Karrie Jacobs -- James Corner/Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Renzo Piano; Polshek Partnership; Gehry; Nouvel; Shigeru Ban; Annabelle Selldorf; Neil Denari [slide show]- Metropolis Magazine

New San Francisco prefab player to show its wares: Zeta (which stands for Zero Energy Technology and Architecture) aims to build market-rate, multi-unit homes that produce as much energy as they consume, also known as "net-zero" homes...business model is based on marketing itself to architects and developers... [image]- San Francisco Chronicle

Prefab home gets ground-up restoration: Modular housing may seem like a new trend, but a 1950s house under renovation shows just how long L.A. has dreamed of its potential. -- Walter Gropius; General Panel Corp.; Konrad Wachsmann; Rudy Wolf; William Merzbach; Thorne Howard- Los Angeles Times

Silicon Valley meets Notre Dame in proposed 49ers stadium design in Santa Clara: ...still five years from reality — if it happens at all. But in the two years that the city and the team were figuring out how to finance the \$937 million project, a building that tries to blend a Northern California tech/environmental ethic with a classic football experience has been taking shape on architects' computers. -- HNTB [images]- Mercury News (California)

The Elusive Mr. Ambasz: Green architects see him as a spiritual father of the sustainability movement, and any designer would envy his resume...Despite these accomplishments, Emilio Ambasz remains a figure of mystery, largely unknown outside the profession. [images]- Architect Magazine

Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece, the Larkin building, was a victim of the times: ...was the ultimate modern office building of its time...demolished a mere 46 years after it was built...classic building was a monument to an aesthetic urban consciousness in politics and society that was crying out to be born.- Buffalo News

William Morrish has been appointed dean of the School of Constructed Environments at Parsons: Nationally recognized urban designer...was previously at the University of Virginia...- Architect Magazine

The Brits are coming: Chicago's Sears Tower renamed: Plans for the UK insurance firm Willis to lend its name to North America's tallest building have blown up a storm in the Windy City- Guardian (UK)

Magic carpets hide objects in plain sight: So called "carpet cloaks" are the first technology to succeed in hiding objects by deflecting light across a range of wavelengths. [images, video]- New Scientist

iPanic: Limbo app: \$21.99 – Compete against other out-of-work architects to design projects that will never be built. Limbo keeps skills sharp and employees occupied by simulating the conditions of real-life commissions, evoking fond memories of former causes for complaint, including permit-approval processes, preposterous budgets and clients from Hell.- New York Times

Engaging Students in Smart-Building Design: Illinois Institute of Technology New Student Residence Halls: Performance-calibrated building design and student-centric spaces will give students control over their environment and generate performance data to be shared with university and architectural communities beyond the IIT campus. -- Dirk Denison Architects [images]- ArchNewsNow



-- Allied Works Architecture: University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), Ann Arbor
-- Competition winner: BIG & Michel Rojkind: Museo Tamayo, Atizapan, Mexico

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