

Today's News - Tuesday, June 30, 2009

- A serene, art-filled urban oasis arrives in the heart of St. Louis's Gateway Mall.
- Another much more massive project could take shape in the city; some cheer, some remain suspicious.
- Chicago preservationists give up the battle to save Michael Reese Hospital campus buildings.
- Kamin pays tribute to Ezra Gordon, one of the campus architects, and his "career characterized by quiet buildings and a strong social conscience."
- Morgan bemoans the stalling in preserving an "American engineering marvel" - a 1923 bridge on the 2009 list of America's Most Endangered Historic Places.
- Two urban experts take on the Great Vancouver vs. Seattle Debate: Is the civic grass greener on the other side of the border? + watch them call it as they see it.
- Correcting the shortcomings in the American Clean Energy and Security Act must become a top priority.
- A new study finds that wind power "could harness enough power to supply more than 40 times the planet's present-day levels of electricity consumption" (so why isn't it happening faster?!?).
- In Houston, a landscape architect offers a way to make a usually ugly necessity beautiful - a flood-control plan that the neighbors love.
- There's a possibility that an "invisibility cloak" could hide buildings from earthquakes, storm waves, or tsunamis.
- Tacoma Art Museum names shortlist for museum plaza redesign.
- CABE cautious over Koolhaas' Commonwealth Institute plans.
- Blowin' in the wind: Heatherwick's 2010 Shanghai Expo UK pavilion (60,000 7.5m-long acrylic "hairs" included).
- A new crown for Wren's Westminster Abbey - maybe.
- Woodman wonders whether the £10 million is justified: "perhaps."
- Dwell and Marmol Radziner's prefab Skyline series: will it sell? Time will tell.
- Maltzan takes Rudy Bruner Foundation Gold Medal Award for Urban Excellence - but the big winner: students of his Inner-City Arts project.
- Young Toronto firm takes Canada's Prix de Rome in Architecture to study housing for northern climates.

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A City's Artful Heart: In St. Louis, two formerly vacant downtown blocks on the Gateway Mall have been given new life as Citygarden, a serene urban oasis in the heart of the city. -- Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects; studio|durham architects [images]- ArchNewsNow

The New Neighborhood: Massive new project planned for historic North St. Louis wards...to encompass 500 acres, with 4.5 million square feet of new office and retail space and 10,000 new homes...McEagle Properties is first tackling an explanation of its secretive process of property acquisition... [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Preservationists no longer battling to save Michael Reese Hospital campus buildings: Site slated to be turned into athlete's village if Chicago wins 2016 Summer Olympics -- Walter Gropius; Ezra Gordon-Jack M. Levin & Associates- Chicago Tribune

Obituary: Ezra Gordon, 1921-2009: socially-conscious architect and educator; designs include urban renewal projects and hospital building threatened by Chicago's Olympics plan. By Blair Kamin [images]- Chicago Tribune

Spanning History: Deferred Maintenance Threatens Landmark Piscataqua River Structure: The World War Memorial Bridge linking Kittery, Maine and Portsmouth, N.H., opened in 1923...rescue project has been stalled...hesitant in tough times to commit funds to something seemingly as ephemeral as an old bridge...this American engineering marvel... By William Morgan [images]- Hartford Courant (Connecticut)

The Great Vancouver vs. Seattle Debate: Is the civic grass greener on the other side of the border? Two urban experts each make the case for the others' home town...The gist for architects, planners, policy-makers, and citizens is that, as Robert Burns said, seeing ourselves as other see us is a gift that helps us question cherished assumptions. -- Peter Steinbrueck; Gordon Price- Crosscut (Seattle)

Seattle vs. Vancouver: The Great Urban Debate: Gordon Price and Peter Steinbrueck call it as they see it [video link]- Via Architecture

Next on Climate: Improve Waxman-Markey Innovation Provisions in Senate: Few aspects of the cap-and-trade bill matter more than the insufficient degree to which it applies future revenue to clean energy innovation. Quite simply, the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES) makes only a modest start...Correcting that shortcoming must become a top priority...- Brookings Institution

Can Wind Power Get Up to Speed? A new study...assessed the global capacity for wind power...and found that current technology could harness enough power to supply more than 40 times the planet's present-day levels of electricity consumption...The energy is there, on the breeze — it just needs to be tapped. - Time Magazine

Letting bayous be bayous: Landscape architect Kevin Shanley found a way to make a necessity beautiful...revolutionized Sims Bayou when he pitched a then-radical idea to have the bayou meander like a river...It's a flood-control plan that the neighbors love — for reasons other than keeping their furniture dry. -- SWA Group [image]- Houston Chronicle

Invisibility cloak could hide buildings from earthquakes: ...could render objects "invisible" to destructive storm waves or tsunamis.- New Scientist

Tacoma Art Museum announces shortlist for museum plaza redesign - BCRA; E. Cobb Architects/Alchemie/Arup; Johnson Architecture and Planning; Mithun; NBBJ; Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen/Charles Anderson Landscape Architecture- Tacoma Daily Index (Washington)

CABE cautious over Koolhaas' Commonwealth Institute plans: ...design watchdog supported the proposals...and the general disposition and high quality of the architecture proposed...had reservations over the 'detailed geometry of the site layout' and the treatment of the ground plane... -- Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) [image]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Heatherwick unveils final design for £13.2 million UK pavilion at 2010 Shanghai Expo pavilion: ...will feature 60,000 7.5m-long acrylic "hairs" which will move with the wind, and have seeds from Kew Garden's millennium seed bank embedded in the ends. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Plan to crown Westminster Abbey with £10m new roof: RIBA will run competition to design crown-shaped new roof if proposal wins public support...exhibition and public consultation on the plans opens in the Abbey's chapter house on 30 June and will run until September. -- Christopher Wren- Building (UK)

Westminster Abbey: Is spending £10 million on a feature that will dramatically alter the abbey's appearance justified? Perhaps...the number of architects who have shown an aptitude for designing in the Gothic language is not large...if none proves adequate to the task, then it is to be hoped that the abbey has the grace to leave things as they are. By Ellis Woodman -- Christopher Wren- Telegraph (UK)

Dwell and Marmol Radziner's Slick Prefab House, but Will It Sell? The Skyline series offers six floor plans...Meant as an "urban retreat"...Time will tell if the partnership, which always looked brilliant on paper, bears out. [images]- Fast Company

Michael Maltzan's Inner-City Arts project wins excellence award: Rudy Bruner Foundation Gold Medal Award for Urban Excellence...The center serves up to 16,000 at-risk students per year at no cost to the students or their families...award comes with a \$50,000 prize that will go toward arts instruction programs for ICA students. -- Nancy Goslee Power and Associates [image, links]- Los Angeles Times

Professional Prix de Rome in Architecture winners to study housing for a northern climate: Toronto architecture firm RVTR, formed in 2007, was named winner...by the Canada Council for the Arts...plan to study the methods used by mass-customized prefabrication industries in Japan.- CBC (Canada)

"Avenue of Light" as Urbanism: Soaring, illuminated sculptures by Cliff Garten Studio anchor major redevelopment efforts in the Ft. Worth's historic district [images]- ArchNewsNow



-- Studio Pei-Zhu: Xixi Wetland Art Museum, Hangzhou, China
-- Renzo Piano Building Workshop: The Modern Wing, Art Institute of Chicago

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