Today's News - Monday, August 31, 2009

- Cities weigh green features vs. expense: "The question is, should you spend more up front if it saves money in the long term?"
- USGBC ramps up efforts to be sure green buildings really are green (racking up LEED points with bike racks just won't cut it anymore).
- Giant carbon-eating fly swatters and algae-growing buildings could be important weapons in the climate change war - or are they only "painfully expensive ideas to give us a few more years of safe CO2-spewing"?
- A more probable weapon: ink-thin solar cells that can be spray-painted onto just about anything.
- Some Connecticut communities are planning ahead for mixed-income housing, with hopes to "short-circuit" the usual Nimby concerns about affordable housing down the road.
- Jones calls for the word "heritage" to be consigned to history as "a dismissive and patronizing word that smother's great art in deadening nostalgia."
- MAK Vienna wins one for Rudofsky in Spain.
- Evidence abounds that good parks are good for the economy (even in hard times).
- Add to the list the U.K.'s Kielder Water and Forest Park and its six new shelters by five firms.
- Saffron takes to the tree tops in Philadelphia's Morris Arboretum - and likes the view from an architecture of "imagination, whimsy, and style."
- The Standard straddles the High Line with "grim muscularity and determined assertion"; inside, "a feeling of lightness and spacious Barbarella whimsy" (with shades of Monica Vitti).
- A British architect breaks the silence on payment problems in Dubai that "will probably cross his name off many Dubai developers' list. But he appears not to care."
- Kamin's take on Chicago's newest lakefront "gem": it "elevates the ordinary to something special" (though many comments beg to differ).
- Calys gives (mostly) thumbs-up to the newest addition to San Francisco's Japantown: "a pleasant, although not architecturally great, addition to the streetscape... it begins to lift the spirit of what was once a vibrant ethnic enclave."
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architecture. Others make you see the world in a new way...the creators of "Out on a Limb"...do more than simply bring us up to the level of the treetops. They apply time-honored architectural tricks to enhance nature's drama... By Inga Saffron -- Metcalfe Architecture & Design [images] - Philadelphia Inquirer

Chicago lakefront gains a gem; architect thinks beyond box for DuSable Harbor Building: Unglamorously named and utterly prosaic in function, [it] elevates the ordinary to something special, in the finest tradition of Chicago architecture. By Blair Kamin -- David Woodhouse [images] - Chicago Tribune

Standard Deviants: Voyeurism and Design Above New York's High Line: It's a beautiful statement...rare in contemporary New York...From the outside, an impression of grim muscularity and determined assertion. From the inside, a feeling of lightness and spacious Barbarella whimsy. By Lawrence Osborne -- Polshek Partnership Architects; Shaun Hausman; Roman and Williams [images] - The Faster Times

New People: new investment in SF Japantown: ...the retail side of Japanese pop culture (or as those in the know call it, J Pop)...a pleasant, although not architecturally great, addition to the streetscape...Together with its neighbor, the renovated Hotel Tomo, it begins to lift the spirit of what was once a vibrant ethnic enclave. By George Calys -- Torafu [image, links] - San Francisco Examiner

My Dubai hell: David Marks breaks the silence on payment problems: Many UK firms are owed money by Middle Eastern developers, but few are willing to talk about it...one man...prepared to break the silence...Marks' decision to tell his story will probably cross his name off many Dubai developers' list. But he appears not to care: "I would think very hard about working in Dubai again; it has done us a lot of damage." -- Marks Barfield - Building (UK)

The Lighthouse 'failed to spark creative professions': ...alienated the very professions it was designed to champion and promote, according to industry figures. Architects and designers have used [its] plight to highlight the need for a new institution in Scotland, suggesting the building be turned into a private members' club for the creative industries, or that the brand should re-emerge as a leaner architectural champion. - Sunday Herald (Scotland)

Keep The Lighthouse shining: Glasgow’s Lighthouse may be in difficulties but it's the only real architecture centre we have...This is something that other cities have failed to emulate. While New Labour thinks architecture centres are there to act as a rather feeble form of community consultation, the Scots grasped that they need to have serious cultural content too; RIBA must retain Stirling’s fairness. By Amanda Baillieu - BD/Building Design (UK)

Revealed: Leaked images of Mackintosh shortlist: ...drawings and images submitted by the six finalists in the competition to design a new £50 million building for the Glasgow School of Art -- Elder & Cannon; Francisco Mangado Architects; Grafton Architects; Hopkins; Benson + Forsyth; John McAslan and Partners/Nord Architects; Steven Holl Architects/JM Architects [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Liverpool Ferry Terminal wins Carbuncle Cup 2009: ...a shining example of bad architecture and bad planning. By Amanda Baillieu -- Hamilton Architects; Make; Dyer Associates [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)