

Today's News - Monday, October 26, 2009

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of Bofill's W Barcelona Hotel, and Cox Rayner/Arup's Kurilpa Bridge (thanks to Bucky's tensegrity).
- Heathcote re: Abu Dhabi's Masdar City: "breathtakingly ambitious, engagingly sci-fi and, at first glance, a little absurd," it "may yet bear dividends for us all."
- Transportation planning should start with placemaking; San Francisco and Savannah are among many cities trying to lead the way.
- Litt has high hopes that Cleveland will grab a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to improve its "bleak" downtown mall; Hargreaves or Schwartz "could work wonders" (or perhaps solutions will arise from the Cleveland Design Competition).
- Ouroussoff on why the epic era of performing arts centers "is officially over" - and why some are thrilled.
- Heathcote on Dallas's newest star projects that "sit in self-satisfied isolation": while "they are far from failures in themselves," are they enough to save a city that is the "epicenter of the generic" from itself.
- Rosenbaum on the new Miami Art Museum: is it H&deM channeling Piano?
- Hume hails the Royal Conservatory's Koerner Hall, "one of the best things to happen to Toronto architecture in some time."
- Hawthorne x 2: while LAPD HQ "is not magical," it is "a surprisingly successful piece of urban design" at the pedestrian level that "salvages it as a piece of civic architecture."
- He gives two thumbs-up's to Frederick Fisher's "radical vision" at "the far edge of an architectural divide that has cleaved his generation."
- Heathcote on Chipperfield's disappointment with Britain, where planning "is called 'development control,' as if building was some kind of mad animal or disease which you have to contain."
- Glancey cheers Gang's Aqua Tower, a landmark that's broken Chicago out of its "straitjacket of right angles and smooth surfaces; her architecture promises to soar in the coming years."
- Long cheers Fretton's British Embassy in Warsaw, "what must be the most shimmeringly immaterial bomb-proof building yet built."
- U.S. wants rebate for Baghdad embassy work to make up for shoddy work, construction deficiencies, etc.; and worries it won't be able to sell London embassy for full ticket because of new landmark status.
- Meanwhile, U.K. Culture Secretary takes on Prince Charles meddling in modern architecture: "I would be worried if great schemes were being jeopardized or scuppered because of the opposition of any one individual."
- SOM wins big in Beijing.
- Winners all: a Philadelphian takes first Clem Labine Award for his pioneering work in Classicism; U.K.'s Roses Design Awards results are in; and Australian is the first non-Dane to receive the Dreyer Foundation Award "for his devotion to sustainability in building design."

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-- Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura: W Barcelona Hotel, Barcelona, Spain
-- Cox Rayner + Arup: Kurilpa Bridge, Brisbane, Australia

The greening of Arabia: ...Masdar...is breathtakingly ambitious, engagingly sci-fi and, at first glance, a little absurd...The plan is a hybrid of lessons learnt from the past...Abu Dhabi's massive backing is, for all my scepticism, a bold and confident investment...may yet bear dividends for us all. By Edwin Heathcote -- Foster + Partners - Financial Times (UK)

Reinventing Transportation Planning through Placemaking: The real point of transportation planning is to get people to places they want to go, therefore all transportation planning should start with Placemaking...in San Francisco and Savannah, where citizens are re-envisioning their city around both great streets and lively public gathering places. [images, links]- Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Medical Mart project in Cleveland could be the impetus to improve the bleak downtown Mall: ...the city's grandest public space, but that's not saying much, given that it feels dead most of the time...Cleveland has a once-in-a-generation opportunity...to finish what Burnham started. By Steven Litt -- Valerio Dewalt Train [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

An American Architectural Epoch Locks Its Doors: ...the explosion of museums, concert halls and performing arts centers that transformed cities across the country over the last decade — is officially over...who knows when there will be a similar boom. Some are thrilled. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Frank Gehry; Renzo Piano; Grimshaw; Herzog & de Meuron; Foster + Partners; Koolhaas/OMA; Prince-Ramus/REX; I.M. Pei; Edward Larrabee Barnes [slide show]- New York Times

The Dallas Syndrome: ...star projects sit in self-satisfied isolation, unrelated to each other...without being contaminated by any sense of urban life. The two new buildings try, and broadly fail, to address the problems. Yet they are far from failures in themselves...It is both unique and unsettling, a glimpse of a future in which architecture and culture are imported to save a city from itself. By Edwin Heathcote -- Koolhaas/OMA; Prince Ramus/REX; Foster + Partners - Financial Times (UK)

Miami Art Museum's Planned New Building: Renzo Piano via Herzog & de Meuron? By Lee Rosenbaum [images, links]- ArtsJournal

A brilliant beauty built to last: Royal Conservatory's Koerner Hall deftly melds old and new, intimacy and comfort...one of the best things to happen to Toronto architecture in some time...Excellence such as this may be rare in Toronto, but it can be found. By Christopher Hume -- Marianne McKenna/KPMB [image]- Toronto Star

A neighborly new police headquarters: It's not magical, but the new Los Angeles Police Department building downtown is a surprisingly successful

piece of urban design...the designers' treatment of the building at the pedestrian level...has helped salvage it as a piece of civic architecture. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Welton Becket (1955); Danna/Palacios/AECOM; Melendrez Landscape Architecture; John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects [images, links]- Los Angeles Times

Frederick Fisher's radical vision: To him, architecture has a role in resolving the complexities of culture, not necessarily dramatizing them...has positioned himself on the far edge of an architectural divide that has cleaved his generation. By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Los Angeles Times

David Chipperfield: [His] disappointment in Britain has been, and remains, less the lack of major buildings and more the lack of a serious discussion of architecture... "Planning here is called 'development control', as if building was some kind of mad animal or disease which you have to contain. In other parts of Europe, planning is seen as a positive, not a restraining thing." By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

The tower that Jeanne Gang built: With its rippling facade and vast green roof, Chicago's Aqua Tower is a revelation. It's also the tallest building in the world to be designed by a woman...a landmark that has broken out of the city-wide straitjacket of right angles and smooth surfaces -- as if Gaudi had taken up skyscraper design, or a spinning ballerina had morphed into a building. By Jonathan Glancey -- Studio Gang- Guardian (UK)

British Embassy, Warsaw, Poland by Tony Fretton Architects: ...shuns symbolism for an assured and intuitive rigour. The result is a timeless building that keeps its secrets close...Until you go there, it is hard to understand how radically, mysteriously minimal it is...creating what must be the most shimmeringly immaterial bomb-proof building yet built. By Kieran Long [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

US needs rebate for Baghdad embassy work: State Department's internal watchdog called for officials to demand a rebate of more than \$132 million from a company that built the massive new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to make up for shoddy work...construction deficiencies, incomplete and undocumented design work... (AP)- Seattle Post-Intelligencer

US sale plan spoilt as its London embassy is listed: ...had hoped to make £500 million from the sale but the figure could be far lower because redevelopment options will be limited...Whitehall officials believe that the potential market price will not be affected since the area of "special interest" lies in the exterior facade and the lobby area. -- Eero Saarinen (1960)- The Times (UK)

SOM Wins Beijing CBD Competition: ...plan calls for the establishment of three new districts anchored by signature parks and green boulevards. New modes of public transportation...[and] a pedestrian-friendly scale for development and every street would be bicycle friendly. [links to images]- Reuters

Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw warns Prince Charles on modern architecture: ...has criticised the Prince of Wales for interfering with a high-profile Chelsea Barracks housing development because he did not approve of its style of modern architecture..."I would be worried if great schemes were being jeopardised or scuppered because of the opposition of any one individual." -- Rogers Stirk Harbour; Robert Adam- Telegraph (UK)

Local Architect Wins First Clem Labine Award for his pioneering work in Classicism: ...[he] is most proud of his work in education -- teaching his students the way of Classicism to forward the tradition. -- Alvin Holm A.I.A. Architects; Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America (ICA/CA)- The Bulletin (Philadelphia)

Roses Design Awards results in graphic design and architectural design -- Reiach and Hall Architects; Roxburgh McEwan Architects; John McAslan & Partners; etc. [links]- The Drum (UK)

Architect honoured for 'odes to nature': Richard Leplastrier has been recognised for his devotion to sustainability in building design...received the Dreyer Foundation Award, the first non-Dane to receive the honour...- The Australian

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