

Today's News - Tuesday, November 3, 2009

- Weinstein's Words That Build Tip#20: open a door to dialogue rather than "hook" another into compliance with your message (it entails thinking about the architecture of Zanzibar).
- Stephens digs deep into starchitecture and sustainability: could "an ethic of sustainability" be the "final echo of the collapse of Modernism?" (he gets some surprising responses - a must-read!).
- MoMA picks teams to tackle New York's rising waters.
- Ouroussoff ogles "Intersections: The Grand Concourse Beyond 100" competition winners: perhaps a bit "naïve," but perhaps "the problem is not so much the innocence of planners and architects, but our own indifference and lack of political will" + an eyeful of the winner and finalists.
- Russell minces no words re: the skyscraper to house "the masters of the universe" of Goldman Sachs (it has little to do with architecture and everything to do with the architects' pay packages that "would be laughed off Wall Street").
- Chelsea Barracks developer is surprise buyer of Saarinen-designed U.S. embassy in London (so much for worrying that new landmark status would hinder sale).
- Newest neighbor for Dallas's downtown cultural arts district: a revamped mega-church campus (green space included).
- Less cheery news for the city's Calatrava bridge over the Trinity River (oh those pesky earthen levees).
- Russian billionaire has big plans for an arts center in Kiev: he wants a design competition among the "most important architects in the world"; though he won't say who, "you know their names."
- Dorment and Bayley give four thumbs-up's to Mather's Ashmolean: a "£61 million achievement" that "is money well spent; and "a different, and rather wonderful, sort of alchemy has taken place in Oxford" (Atlanta's Hyatt Regency atrium comes to mind?).
- King cheers thoughtful design guidelines for Yosemite where "the overarching goal is that nothing new should make you look twice."
- Could Chicago's landmarked Three Arts Club building be transformed into "dorms for the dead"? (the neighbors might not be too thrilled).
- Obama names Thom Mayne (and a bunch of other famous folk) to serve on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Rose queries Alsop about his "going off to paint" line: "He smirks when I ask him to explain himself" (and other amusing bon mots).
- The first Jakarta Architecture Triennial launches tomorrow: "Our theme is affording architecture, not affordable architecture...It's not a question of expensive or cheap, but whether it's good or bad."
- One we couldn't resist (our jaws dropped in disbelief): need further proof that U.K. is a nanny state? Parents have been banned from supervising their children in two public playgrounds because they have not undergone criminal record checks (puhleezee!).

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WORDS THAT BUILD Tip #20: The aim of an opening statement is to open a door to dialogue rather than to persuasively "hook" another into compliance with your message. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

Starchitecture and Sustainability: Hope, Creativity, and Futility Collide in Contemporary Architecture: Egoism aside, architects' hesitancy to embrace an ethic of sustainability may be the final echo of the collapse of Modernism. By Josh Stephens -- Mayne/Morphosis; Douglas Kelbaugh; Eric Owen Moss; Robert A.M. Stern; Foster + Partners; Renzo Piano; Zaha Hadid; Gehry; Koolhaas; Steven Holl; Viñoly; Pelli; Antoine Predock; Duany Plater-Zyberk; Peter Calthorpe; etc. - PLANetizen

Design Surge: MoMA/P.S. 1 commissions teams to tackle New York's rising waters: ..."Rising Currents: Projects for New York's Waterfront" pairs four teams of designers with four sites...will develop designs for "soft infrastructure" to mitigate high storm surges...teams will join , initiated the project... -- Lewis.Tsurumaki. Lewis (LTL); nArchitects; Matthew Baird Architects; SCAPE Studio; ARO; Guy Nordenson; Catherine Seavitt [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Grand Visions for a Faded Bronx Boulevard: "Intersections: The Grand Concourse Beyond 100" at the Bronx Museum of the Arts...However naïve...all conceived at a manageable, human scale...Eventually you begin to feel that the problem is not so much the innocence of planners and architects, but our own indifference and lack of political will. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Design Trust for Public Space; Angus McCullough; EDAW/AECOM; Nadau Lavergne Architects - New York Times

An Eco-Pump Clamped to the Major Deegan Takes Prize in international ideas competition: "Intersections: Grand Concourse Beyond 100" exhibition at The Bronx Museum of the Arts. -- Dongsei Kim/Jamieson Fajardo; EDAW/AECOM Design + Planning; Angus McCullough [links to images]- Design Trust for Public Space / Bronx Museum of the Arts

Goldman Sachs Architect Has No Pie in the Sky Payday: ...I stood before the \$2.5 billion 43-story skyscraper...As I contemplated this edifice at 200 West Street, a block from Ground Zero, some numbers came to mind...the architects...pay packages would be laughed off Wall Street. By James S. Russell -- Pei Cobb Freed & Partners; Adamson Associates - Bloomberg News

US Embassy in shock sale to Qatari Diar: State Department has sold its Eero Saarinen-designed Grosvenor Square embassy to...developer involved with the contentious Chelsea Barracks scheme in west London. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

First Baptist Church of Dallas announces \$130 million renovation project: ...to revamp its six-block campus near the downtown cultural arts district...glass-front worship center would seat 3,000..."We will be adding an acre of green space to downtown Dallas" -- Beck Group [image]- Fort Worth Star-Telegram (Texas)

First Dallas Signature Bridge Could Initially Go Nowhere: The problem is a deep layer of "sand"...around the pilings could create a "soft spot" that would allow water to seep through the earthen levees...could have a \$120 million bridge that no one can cross...R-I, or resistivity imaging technology...can determine the extent of sand...starting at the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. -- Santiago Calatrava- KERA, North Texas Public Broadcasting

Hirst Collector Victor Pinchuk Plans New Arts Center for Kiev: ...he's speaking to the "most important architects in the world" and wants to hold a design competition... "you know their names." - Bloomberg News

Rick Mather's redesign of the Ashmolean, Oxford's 300-year-old university museum, is stunning: Everything I admired about the new Ashmolean museum is symbolised by the reopening of the massive front doors...£61 million achievement. It is money well spent. By Richard Dorment -- Charles Cockerell (1845); Metaphor [images, links]- Telegraph (UK)

The Ashmolean Museum: ...the transformation of Oxford's once-forbidding museum: I stood in the impressive atrium and found myself thinking of the Hyatt Regency hotel in Atlanta. But that's just to say that successful modern museums are in the entertainment business. So, a different, and rather wonderful, sort of alchemy has taken place in Oxford. By Stephen Bayley -- Rick Mather Architects; Metaphor - Observer (UK)

Yosemite upgrades natural by design: ...design ethos where the overarching goal is that nothing new should make you look twice...Fitting in has been the stated goal all along. By John King -- Douglas Nelson/Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey; Randy Fong; George Homsey/EHDD; Lawrence Halprin [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Dorms for the dead: A plans calls for the Three Arts Club building in the Gold Coast to become a columbarium, a vault for cremated remains. And this may be a way to keep the landmark in use during a real-estate recession, but will the neighbors like it. -- Holabird & Roche (1912); Bill Bickford/DePree Bickford Associates [video]- Crain's Chicago

Obama names architect Thom Mayne, other arts notables to serve on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities -- Morphosis - Chicago Tribune

Will Alsop returns to architecture: Three months ago [he] said he was giving up architecture for painting. Now he says that was all a ruse...It turns out that the "going off to paint" line was just a ruse to throw his previous employers, Archial, off the scent, while he did some behind-the-scenes manoeuvring. By Steve Rose -- Will Alsop at RMJM- Guardian (UK)

City architects to hold inaugural convention Nov. 4 to 22: ...the first Jakarta Architecture Triennale (JAT) in a bid to increase public awareness of the importance of good design for Jakarta's environment..."Our theme is affording architecture, not affordable architecture...It's not a question of expensive or cheap, but whether it's good or bad" -- Association of Indonesian Architects (IAI)- The Jakarta Post

Council bans parents from play areas: Parents have been banned from supervising their children in public playgrounds, because they have not undergone criminal record checks...Only council-vetted "play rangers" are now allowed to monitor youngsters in two adventure areas in Watford...It will further fuel concerns over a growing nanny state...- Telegraph (UK)

Book Review: "Gunnar Birkerts: Metaphoric Modernist" by Sven Birkerts and Martin Schwartz: A major architect in the history of Modernism finally receives recognition - and sundry asides about why Modernism never exited. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



-- Santiago Calatrava: Liège Guillemins TGV Station, Liège, Belgium
-- Book: Catherine Corman: "Daylight Noir: Raymond Chandler's Imagined City"

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