

Today's News - Thursday, November 5, 2009

- An interesting (and amusing) report from Cityscape 2009 re: wacky banking + wacky buildings: "Never trust a bank with property or a developer with money. It is time for architects and planners to show real solutions rather than changing the wrapping paper on old ones."
- British property magnate espouses on what developers want from architects: "Quality, context, social awareness...we are looking for inventiveness" (we can only hope that's true).
- CTBUH reports at least 50 tall buildings around the world now on hold (except, where else but China).
- Kamin coos over Gang's Aqua tower: Chicago's "boldest - and best - new skyscraper" is "a stunning presence" that "takes us in dazzling new aesthetic directions yet still manages to respond to both its urban environs and to the environment (great pix, too!)."
- Finalists in Auckland's Queen's Wharf competition disappointed (and a little miffed) that plans are put on hold because of "lackluster" and "mediocre" results.
- An eye-ful of RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award shortlist of 11 (but "Scottish architecture is in rude health," says Olcayto).
- Not all are thrilled that Calgary wants another "designer" pedestrian bridge following the "public furor" over Calatrava's Peace Bridge.
- Fractals reign: an architect challenges current methods of testing the value of sustainable architecture and landscapes: "Are they actually providing us with enhanced well-being?" - and urges the use of "natural design" and "brain-mind analysis."
- Brussat cheers Salinger's fractal future for sustainable design and why nature nurtures tradition: he "is Moses offering wisdom from on high (whether that of God, science or Christopher Alexander)."
- Birnbaum offers an eloquent tribute to Halprin and his "love of design, people, nature, the shaping of cities and spaces."
- 2010 London Festival of Architecture will (hopefully) feature zero-carbon water- and solar-powered wheelchair lifts.
- New cutting edge laser technology "promises a world kept as if in amber. A virtual past that never dies."
- Gundersen builds with whole trees - and "may revolutionize the building industry."
- Videos of presentations by a who's who from the Future of Design conference are well worth a look.
- More than 700 Passive Houses across Europe are opening their doors for 3 days.
- Call for entries: Pilot projects for the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

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Wacky banking + wacky buildings: One of the most enjoyable things at Cityscape 2009 World Architecture Congress was the erudite and droll presence of Peter Rees, city planning officer for London... "Never trust a bank with property or a developer with money. It is time for architects and planners to show real solutions rather than changing the wrapping paper on old ones." -- James Long; FxFowle - ConstructionWeekOnline (Dubai)

What developers want from architects: Ex-CABE chairman and property magnate Stuart Lipton talks about the start of "a new period of architecture"...the quantity-over-quality approach of the last ten years is over... "Quality, context, social awareness...so we produce interesting buildings...With the background of social change, we are looking for inventiveness." - The Architects' Journal (UK)

At Least 50 Tall Buildings Now on Hold...according to the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH): Though the tall-building blahs have hit the Americas, Europe, and many parts of the Middle East, the building boom in China "has not stopped"... -- Calatrava; Arup; Gensler; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Woods Bagot [slide show] - Architectural Record

Waves of creativity: Aqua, the world's tallest building designed by a woman, is one of Chicago boldest - and best - new skyscrapers...a stunning presence...a building that takes us in dazzling new aesthetic directions yet still manages to respond to both its urban environs and to the environment as a whole. By Blair Kamin -- Studio Gang Architects [images] - Chicago Tribune

Architects disappointed Queen's Wharf redesign halted: ...finalists whose...designs were accepted...as the cream of the crop were frustrated to hear today that the council has canned the \$47 million project for now...Judging panel...described the designs as "lacklustre"...plans would be put on hold to avoid a "mediocre" redesign. -- Andrius Gedgaudas; Field Landscape Architecture; Konstrukt/SVB; Tasman Studio; Williams Architects; Jasmax/Architectus; Water-shed [link to images] - National Business Review (New Zealand)

Doolan Prize 2009: ...11-strong shortlist vying for the largest cash prize contest in UK architecture - this year's RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award... "The message...is clear: Scottish architecture is in rude health...International recognition will surely come, but only when Scotland's best firms abandon thoughtful modernism," says Rory Olcayto -- Allan Murray; Archial; Cameron Webster; Elder and Cannon; McKenzie Strickland; Malcolm Fraser; Page|Park; JM Architects; Reiach and Hall; RMJM Scotland [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Calgary's West Village blueprint features designer bridge: ...suggests a twin-arch Bow River crossing...although design and construction might not occur for another two decades, or more...public furor over the city's \$24.5-million Peace Bridge by Calatrava has spilled over into anger at the mere suggestion of more elaborate river crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. [image] - Calgary Herald (Canada)

Human Responses to Green Design: Frederick Marks...on the varied human responses to green design...focused on recent developments in testing the value of sustainable architecture and landscapes, and asked: "Are they actually providing us with enhanced well-being?"...urged the use of "natural design"...calls for "brain-mind analysis"... -- AC Martin; Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Here's why nature nurtures tradition: Someday, people will realize that they can demand better buildings and cities, and they will do so... "Algorithmic

Sustainable Design" by Nikos Salingaros...is Moses offering wisdom from on high (whether that of God, science or Christopher Alexander). His stone tablets must be popularized... By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Lawrence Halprin: a pathbreaking modernist landscape designer...A love of design, people, nature, the shaping of cities and spaces, and the blurring of lines between his personal and professional life energized Larry. By Charles A. Birnbaum/Cultural Landscape Foundation [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Firm takes steps for wheelchairs: Matthew Lloyd Architects is working with the Corps of Royal Engineers to design temporary water- and solar-powered wheelchair lifts at the Duke of York steps in central London...zero-carbon lifts, which are part of next year's London Festival of Architecture, will only be in place for two weeks... Architecture-InsideOut; RIBA [image]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Scots Aim Lasers at Landmarks: ...making laser scans of old monuments may not sound special, but a Scottish team has achieved unprecedented levels of sophistication...destruction held out for midcentury Modernists the prospect of a new urbanism...The new cutting edge of laser technology offers instead a means to preserve and restore whole cities exactly as they once were. It promises a world kept as if in amber. A virtual past that never dies. -- Glasgow School of Art; CyArk [slide show]- New York Times

Building With Whole Trees: Roald Gundersen is an architect who may revolutionize the building industry...a vision developed after spending three years as a project architect on Biosphere 2...a whole, unmilled tree can support 50% more weight than the largest piece of lumber milled from the same tree. -- Whole Tree Architecture and Construction [slide show]- New York Times

Future of Design conference hosted by Dean Monica Ponce de Leon: 30 designers, critics and provocative thinkers brainstormed how design is evolving across disciplines including architecture, landscape architecture, interactive, industrial, and interior design. -- Stan Allen; Will Bruder; Preston Scott Cohen; Maurice Cox; Ned Cramer; Jeanne Gang; Greg Lynn; Gregg Pasquarelli/SHoP; Susan Szenasy; Marc Tsurumaki/Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis (LTL); Adam Yarinsky/Architecture Research Office (ARO); Meejin Yoon/MY Studio/Höweler + Yoon; etc. [link to videos]- University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Experience the Passive House yourself: 6th International Passive House Days: More than 700 Passive Houses opened Europe-wide November 6, 7 and 8- Informations Gemeinschaft Passivhaus Deutschland" (IG Passivhaus)

Call for entries: Pilot projects to test first national rating system for sustainable landscapes in Sustainable Sites Initiative...projects will be selected to ensure a broad range of project types, sizes, budgets, geographic diversity and phase of development; deadline: February 15, 2010- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

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



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

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