

Today's News - Monday, December 7, 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have early morning travel plans tomorrow, so there will be no newsletter - but we'll be back Wednesday, December 9 (and posting from a time zone two hours earlier).

- ArcSpace brings us Gehry's campus in Basel, and MVRDV's public market in Rotterdam.
- We're saddened by the loss of Malcolm Wells, the champion of "gentle architecture" and seminal to the green building movement (and much too under the radar of late).
- Rose muses on the fall of Dubai, and "mourns the eye-popping erections that should never have been commissioned" (but still just might rise).
- Ending Sydney's malaise will require looking to Melbourne and Brisbane to "find home-grown examples of where it should aim."
- Zandberg tackles the "drunken power that makes possible the architecture of occupation and settlement."
- The U.K. looks to the Netherlands to solve the housing needs of a growing, aging population.
- Chelsea Barracks selects a new team for master plan: other architects will design the individual buildings.
- A call for architects to rebrand Nigeria - a "tough job...if not impossible to find unique Nigerian designs because even our villages now have buildings that are American masterpieces."
- Campbell on Maki's "brilliant design" for MIT: "What happens when some of the world's messiest occupants move into the world's most exquisite building?" It's Snow White meets Mad Max.
- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, CO, aims to be the greenest office building in the country: unauthorized energy hogs will be unplugged (it will take "a certain ruthlessness").
- Urban vertical farming has mastered many hurdles - now the world waits "to see which city will be the first to take off-land farming seriously."
- Plantagon Greenhouse and DragonFly want to help cities combat climate change: are they zany visions or critical solutions?
- An architect says "we owe a great debt of gratitude to the hacker" who broke into the Climactic Research Unit's e-mails to expose "the global warming hoax...And a hoax is exactly what it is."
- In Bilbao, the "showiest new public work isn't another flashy building" - it's a gem of a park.
- Shortlist named for Miami's Bicentennial Park Metromover station makeover (but will anything actually be built?).
- An Oklahoma City parking garage is "an object of surprising curiosity" and "a welcome way to ease into the workday, whose start is often the act of parking."
- Chicago's Michael Reese complex might land on the National Register of Historic Places, but the city plans to continue demolition with only two buildings promised to be preserved.
- Urbahn's Vehicle Assembly Building at Cape Canaveral 40 years later: it "cuts a stark and lonely profile...it's a hyperbole - a simple, exaggerated sketch of a building."
- Canada streamlines credential approval process for new immigrants with a background in architecture and engineering.
- Call for entries: Architecture Award 2010 Passive House international competition.

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-- Gehry Partners, LLP: Novartis Campus, Basel, Switzerland
-- Construction start: MVRDV: Rotterdam Market Hall, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Obituary: Malcolm Wells, 83, Champion of "Gentle Architecture": ...something that would, as he put it, "leave the land no worse than you found it"... "As a thinker, he was a hidden jewel," said William McDonough... "In the world of what has become known as green building, [he] was seminal, actually inspirational, for some people, me included." - New York Times

Towering follies: the Dubai architecture you couldn't make up: The kilometre-high skyscraper, the underwater hotel, the cloud on stilts ... Steve Rose mourns the eye-popping erections that should never have been commissioned...here are some of the craziest highlights from a future that will probably never arrive - but, you never know, still just might. -- Woods Bagot; Atkins; Thompson Ventulett Stainback/TVS; Joachim Hauser; David Fisher/Dynamic Architecture; Jean Nouvel; Nadim Karam; Koolhaas/OMA [images, links]- Guardian (UK)

A tale of three cities: Ending Sydney's malaise will require looking south and north. It's in the experience of Melbourne and Brisbane, which no one is claiming are perfect, that Sydney will find home-grown examples of where it should aim.- The Australian

A single chain of horror: The advent of the periodical *Architext*, published by the architecture school of the College of Judea and Samaria, in Ariel in the northern West Bank, arouses an age-old dilemma: to write, or not to write...The same drunken power that makes possible the architecture of occupation and settlement, the separation fence and the checkpoints, also enables the architecture of the hulking fortress of Habima and the New Central Bus Station, the ground zero of Israeli design. By Esther Zandberg -- Ram Karmi- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Netherlands' housing in the new 'old style': As part of its research into solving the housing needs of the UK's ageing population, the government-commissioned Happi (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) visited the visionary Maartenshof scheme in the Netherlands with an apartment tower by Arons en Gelauff Architecten and community hub by Team 4 Architects. By Matthew Barac/Pollard Thomas Edwards architects [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Masterminds of Chelsea Barracks site are chosen: ...team will draw up a general masterplan, in close consultation with local residents, within which other architects will design the individual buildings. -- Dixon Jones; Squire & Partners; Kim Wilkie Associates- Evening Standard (UK)

Architects should rebrand Nigeria: The minister then requested Nigerian architects to design Nigerian houses or rebrand them with traditional designs...architects have a tough job to do...it looks very difficult, if not impossible, to find unique Nigerian designs to go back to because, even our villages now have buildings that are American masterpieces. Well, unless they want to return to buildings with toilets in the bush. -- Nigeria Institute of Architects- 234NEXT.com (Timbuktu)

MIT Media Lab aims to elevate transparency: Brilliant design appears temptingly veiled, but allows researchers to peek: What happens when some of the world's messiest occupants move into the world's most exquisite building?...maybe the impending collision of austere architect and brash researchers is the whole point. By Robert Campbell -- I.M. Pei (1985); Fumihiko Maki; Leers Weinzapfel [image]- Boston Globe

In Search of Net Zero: The National Renewable Energy Laboratory wants to be the greenest office building in the country. Here's how...It takes a certain ruthlessness...will do an outlet audit and unplug any unauthorized energy hogs. "We have to

be the police...We're introducing our occupants to the new energy culture." -- RNL; Stantec Consulting [images]- Wall Street Journal

Zany Vision or Critical Solution? Urban Greenhouses Aim to Help Cities Combat Climate Change: With its massive glass dome, the Plantagon Greenhouse wouldn't look out of place in a sci-fi movie. And if all goes smoothly, one may soon crop up in a city near you...it's not a question of if it will become reality but, rather, when. -- Vincent Callebaut/DragonFly [images]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

The High-Rise Urban Farms of the Future: Moving farms off land and into skyscrapers is on the verge of becoming reality. The main hurdle isn't technology; it's one of engineering and funding...Dickson Despommier and the rest of the world...are waiting to see which city will be the first to take off-land farming seriously. [images]- GLOBE-Net / GLOBE Foundation of Canada

It's time to lay to rest the liberal myth of global warming: ...I thought there were few like myself that had not bought into the global warming hoax. And a hoax is exactly what it is...We owe a great debt of gratitude to the hacker who was able to expose [Climactic Research Unit (CRU)] scientists. By Randy Bright/RW Bright Architects - Tulsa Beacon

Bilbao's Newest Park Is a Gem: The city better known for Frank Gehry's Guggenheim turns to city planning, with a beautiful new park...showiest new public work isn't another flashy building. It's a beautiful, faceted park. -- ACXT [images, video]- Fast Company

Architects compete to dress up Bicentennial Park Metromover station: Here's how to transform a blah station, courtesy of Miami's mold-shattering DawnTown architectural competition -- Office 24/7; See You Sunday; DoubleKatya [images]- Miami Herald

Chesapeake Parking Garage: Not Your Ordinary Concrete Lot: ...architect...selected a material that elevated the parking facility into an object of surprising curiosity...impression...may be that of a polished office space rather than a typical car park. It's a welcome way to ease into the workday, whose start is often the act of parking. -- Elliott + Associates Architects [images]- MetalMiner

A Second Act Is Proposed for Chicago Michael Reese Hospital Campus: ...should be placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a state panel recommended...The city said the panel's vote would not change its plans to continue demolition...already promised to preserve the main hospital building, designed by Schmidt, Garden & Martin, and the Singer Pavilion, designed by Walter Gropius. - New York Times

Architects Remember the Building that Helped Put a Man on the Moon: Forty years later, Max Urbahn's contribution to the space race stands tall: ...52-story Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center...cuts a stark and lonely profile...almost totally devoid of human-scaled features, it's a hyperbole - a simple, exaggerated sketch of a building. -- Richard Bergmann [images]- AIArchitect

Credential approval streamlined for foreign professionals: New immigrants to Canada with a background in architecture and engineering will be among the first foreign trained professionals to have their credentials recognized, under a new federal-provincial agreement. - Daily Commercial News (Canada)

Call for entries: Architecture Award 2010 Passive House international competition; cash prizes; deadline: March 1, 2010- Passive House Institute

WORDS THAT BUILD Tip #21: Communicating Architectural Edges: Write about meaningful circulatory patterns of light by personifying the interplay of architecture and light. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

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