

Today's News - Monday, February 8, 2010

- ArcSpace brings us Morphosis's Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pasadena.
- Rebuilding in Haiti: replacing tents with simple structures - but will they be "garden sheds" or shanties?
- A Floridian offers up "Little Haiti House Project"; others offer fiberglass domes, plastic water containers made into bricks, and shipping containers turned into houses.
- U.S. 2011 budget shows signs of "a greater understanding of the need to integrate what different agencies do to create great places to live and work...a welcome commitment to choosing what's effective for places over what's easy."
- After 50 years of housing policy "about as ugly as HUD headquarters," it has new regional planning grants that "reflects radical changes in how federal urban policy gets made."
- New Urbanists' "SmartCode" zoning manual for guaranteeing the integrity of newly-built neighborhoods is all well and good, but the challenge is making density more profitable (and/or some enlightened developer-type souls).
- Urban planner O'Toole warns Wichita its downtown revitalization plan is not all that likely to work: it's too "car-hostile" with a focus on publicly subsidized high-density housing and "walkability" that has failed almost everywhere else.
- Heathcote cheers Miami's reinvention as a design capital (including Hadid's "sticky, stretched chewing gum intervention") rising from "a swamp of sprawl."
- The paradox of public parks relying on private money: it amounts to "giving away some public good in order to realize some other public good" (and takes a lot longer).
- King sees optimism (with a slight sense of potential dread) re: "San Francisco's biggest gamble in high-stakes urbanism."
- Some Canadian architects "are appalled" by Canada's Olympic pavilion: "it's embarrassing"; "it's sad."
- Kamin and Bey cheer Gang's Columbia College Chicago new media production center: it's "a serious work of architecture, but it is also playful, even joyful; it "doesn't visually scream across the intersection, yet it will hardly be ignored."
- Sudjic cheers Ron Arad's Design Museum Holon: it manages to be "both rational and a bravura piece of architecture...too carefully controlled a piece of architecture to be reduced to the banal status of an icon."
- It "will be interesting to see whether Design Museum Holon will have the wisdom to acknowledge" that "most Israelis are still far from consuming designer products that were not bought at IKEA."
- Calys reports SFMOMA is evaluating an international list of architects for expansion; the winner "will need to be part therapist, part evangelist, and part magician, too."
- Thumbs-up and thumbs-down for University of Limerick president's new home: it's either "progressive" and an "inspiration to young architects studying there" or too "lavish" and "extravagant" and "should be sold and funds reinvested in education."
- Docomomo stops demolition of Paris's Cité des Poètes ghetto, and the residents are none to happy: "If the architects had to live here, they might change their minds."
- Lubetkin's daughter issues appeal to save the 1937 Finsbury Health Centre; others claim it is too expensive to refurbish.
- On a happier note, a whimsical 1962 Polynesian-themed condominium complex in Palm Springs is designated a historic district.
- We couldn't resist: campaign on to pick Barbie's next job: an architect! (so she can make sure buildings are "safe, sturdy, and cool-looking" - vote now, vote often!)

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[Morphosis: Cahill Center, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California](#)

[Rebuilding Effort in Haiti Turns Away From Tents: ...under the current best-case situation, Port-au-Prince...will soon be blanketed with hundreds of thousands of simple structures that designers describe as "garden sheds" and others see as shanties.](#) - New York Times

[Hotelier Harris Rosen wants to send houses to Haiti: ...built to resist hurricane-force winds and earthquakes — is a prototype of the "Little Haiti House Project"...one of several ideas from Americans...Others include fiberglass domes, plastic water containers made into bricks and shipping containers turned into houses.](#) [image]- Orlando Sentinel (Florida)

[Budget 2011: Creating Quality Places: ...shows some movement...towards a greater understanding of the need to integrate what different agencies do to create great places to live and work...a significant signal that comprehensive regional planning is valuable and will be rewarded...a welcome commitment to choosing what's effective for places over what's easy.](#) - The New Republic

[As suburbs reach limit, people are moving back to the cities: Shaun Donovan...announce \\$100 million in new regional planning grants, a program that reflects radical changes in how federal urban policy gets made...Over the last 50 years or so, the federal government's housing policy has been about as ugly as HUD headquarters.](#) - Seattle Post-Intelligencer

[A Chronicle of New Urbanism and Exurban Decay: ...New Urbanists' greatest innovation is "SmartCode," their rigorous zoning manual for guaranteeing the integrity of a newly-built neighborhood...we will either have to change the underlying conditions to make density more profitable, or find someone enlightened who can work within the existing system.](#) By Greg Lindsay- Fast Company

[Urban planner criticizes parts of Wichita's downtown revitalization: ...focus on publicly subsidized high-density housing and "walkability" has failed almost everywhere...is not all that likely to work here..."pedestrian-friendly" development...usually means car-hostile...more than 200 cities followed a fad of downtown pedestrian malls and almost all of them have been reopened to auto traffic.](#) -- Randal O'Toole/Cato Institute- Wichita Eagle (Kansas)

[Miami's reinvention as a design capital: ...stage-set architecture of the city is proving a compelling backdrop...highlights shine in a swamp of sprawl. But the fruits of those booming booms are as ripe and sweet as architecture anywhere.](#) By Edwin Heathcote -- Architectonica; John Marquette; Zaha Hadid; Philippe Starck; Morris Lapidus; Herzog & de Meuron; Frank Gehry; Enrique Gutierrez- Financial Times (UK)

[When Parks Must Rely on Private Money: ...Brooklyn Bridge Park...embroiled in issues of money and control...arriving piecemeal as it awaits fresh infusions of money..."The paradox is that it's always amounting to giving away some public good in order to realize some other public good." The tradeoff has provoked fights in many cities.](#) -- Michael Sorkin- New York Times

[Trinity Plaza offers optimism, and some dread: San Francisco's biggest gamble in high-stakes urbanism...a 4-acre site...for a daunting 1,900 apartments...first tower...has a genuine presence, overscaled but energetic. The dread? The pieces still to come...becomes a forbidding megablock where architecture is irrelevant...it's an experiment worth keeping an eye on.](#) By John King -- Bernardo Fort-Brescia/Architectonica [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

[Our house isn't a very, very, very fine house: While Ontario, Quebec and Alberta put the finishing touches to Olympic](#)

pavilions designed with flair and distinction, the host country is preparing to welcome the world in a structure that is little more than a large, white, square-boxed tent. And some of Canada's foremost architects are appalled..."It's embarrassing," Bing Thom said. [image]- CTV (Canada)

Lights, camera, architecture - Jeanne Gang's vibrant new media production center at Columbia College Chicago inspired by cinema: The design is a serious work of architecture, but it is also playful, even joyful. Already, students have affectionately nicknamed it the "Film Kids Discovery Zone." By Blair Kamin [images]- Chicago Tribune

Columbia College Media Production Center: ...a nice piece of work by Jeanne Gang, of Chicago's Studio/Gang Architects, that doesn't visually scream across the intersection, yet it will hardly be ignored. By Lee Bey [images]- WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

When is a museum not a museum? When it's a Möbius strip...: Ron Arad has finally got round to making a building – Design Museum Holon, in his native Israel – and it is a remarkable success...manages, intriguingly, to be both rational and a bravura piece of architecture...too carefully controlled a piece of architecture to be reduced to the banal status of an icon. By Deyan Sudjic [image]- Guardian (UK)

"A small miracle": ...the most important exhibit at the new design museum in Holon...is the museum building itself...most Israelis are still far from consuming designer products that were not bought at IKEA. It will be interesting to see whether Design Museum Holon will have the wisdom to acknowledge these audiences as well... -- Ron Arad; Asa Bruno- Ha'aretz (Israel)

SFMOMA to select architect for major expansion: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art...will begin evaluating an international list of architects...will ultimately house the Fisher collection...asked what architects were on the museum's list..."Right now, all of them"...that architect will need to be part therapist, part evangelist, and part magician, too. By George Calys -- Mario Botta (1995)- San Francisco Examiner

University of Limerick chief's home defended as "progressive" and "exciting" ...others have termed "lavish" and "extravagant" in the current economic climate..."It will be an inspiration to young architects studying there"... "should be sold and funds reinvested in education." -- Shelley McNamara/Grafton Architects- Limerick Leader (Ireland)

Docomomo stops demolition of Cité des Poètes ghetto: ...residents have only one wish — to see the estate demolished and rebuilt under a €42 billion plan to regenerate France's violent, drug-ridden suburbs...stymied by an association of architects which is hailing the bleak, concrete landscape as an historic monument worthy of protected status. -- Jeronimo Padron-Lopez (1980s)- The Times (UK)

Berthold Lubetkin's daughter: Save the 1937 Finsbury Health Centre my father designed with love...[his] favourite building, "timelessly beautiful... and much admired all over the world...the most complete expression of his profound conviction that architecture should serve the people"...now faces closure by its owner, NHS Islington, which claims it is too expensive to refurbish.- Islington Tribune (UK)

Tiki-themed condo complex gets historic designation; ...Royal Hawaiian Estates in Palm Springs...whimsical 1962 Polynesian-themed condominium complex...designated a historic district... -- Donald Wexler; Richard Harrison [image]- The Desert Sun (Palm Springs)

Architecture professor builds case for Barbie as architect: ...more than 120 careers. But she's never been an architect...leading a campaign to drum up enough votes to ensure that architect is victorious in the Mattel "I Can Be" online competition that will pick Barbie's next job. -- Despina Stratigakos - Buffalo News

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