

Today's News - Thursday, February 18, 2010

- Q&A with Kunstler re: how he came to write "The Long Emergency" and why he advises: "If you live in the suburbs, you could sell your house and relocate to a place that has a future."
- McDonald chats with RIAI's new president re: an 11-point action plan for "survival, renewal and recovery," and his mantra "architecture matters."
- Rochon visits Vancouver's Olympic Village and finds it "a serious urban accomplishment" and "a test zone of urban daring" + a few Olympic additions "that inspire and impress" (Canada Pavilion not included).
- Brussat on the "hypocrisy of additions, old and new" (and - gasp - "a modernist triumph (yes, even I love it)."
- Merrick marvels at SANAA's "spectacular floating" Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne: sort of like Niemeyer's architecture "on acid" - but not really; watch out, starchitects - you now have some "serious competition." + an eyeful of what it looks like.
- Atlanta Beltline design team selected (no pix - yet).
- In Kentucky (as elsewhere), universities have to decide between operational budgets and new construction: "It is, indeed, a Sophie's Choice."
- Yale's Morse College by Saarinen will sport right angles so square tables (and radiators) will fit into the corners of its rooms.
- Holl will build again at flood-damaged University of Iowa.
- Pearman offers an amusing romp through the history of hotel typology.
- Levet's big impact in a tight setting in London "does more than capture the passing glance - it commands attention."
- Heatherwick's "seed cathedral," a.k.a. British Pavilion, for the 2010 Shanghai Expo intends to change Chinese view of Britain.
- Libeskind on his unusual career path: "My life has developed in a reverse order" + his new prefab house.
- Seattle's DKA Architecture's central tenet serves nonprofits, public agencies with its "culture of resourcefulness": it's all about making do with what you have.
- Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies 2010: DS+R and MVRDV make the Top 50 (plus a bunch more).
- SpecSimple's "Save A Sample!" goes national to create "another life" for design firms' unused resource library materials by donating them to local design schools.
- Call for entries: two-stage international competition is for the design of a children's center for the Aoibhneas Women and Children's Refuge in Dublin.

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Empire of the Stunned: James Howard Kunstler believes that what killed America's economy could make society stronger..."I think the developed nations are going to retreat back into their respective corners of the world, and life is going to become a lot more local again...If you live in the suburbs, you could sell your house, even at a loss, and relocate to a place that has a future." - Utne Reader

Good design must be central to economic recovery: Paul Keogh, the new president of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) says..."look at the place of architecture in Irish society and face up to its challenges"...11-point action plan...Its themes...are "survival, renewal and recovery - not just for architects, but for Ireland as a whole". His mantra is that "architecture matters"... By Frank McDonald- Irish Times

It took a village, but they got it right: ...when I saw it...what became clear to me was this: The Olympic Village is a serious urban accomplishment...Southeast False Creek...represents a new set of aspirations and an inspired template...a test zone of urban daring...Across Vancouver, Olympic additions that inspire and impress. By Lisa Rochon -- Larry Beasley; GBL Architects; Acton Ostry Architects; Phillips Farevaag Smallegen; Walter Francl Architecture; Nick Milkovich Architects + Arthur Erickson; Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden; Hariri Pontarini; Albertans; PWL Partnership Landscape Architects - Globe and Mail (Canada)

The hypocrisy of additions, old and new: John Carter Brown Library addition...resolved a conundrum that had bedeviled historic preservationists for decades. Here, at last, was how to insert the new into a historic context without either faking or insulting the old....Nevertheless, the practice of new buildings insulting old buildings continues unabated. By David Brussat -- Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge (1904); Hartman-Cox; Steven Semes; John Massengale; Frank Lloyd Wright; Gwathmey Siegel; Eero Saarinen- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Learning curve: Sanaa's spectacular floating Lausanne library rockets them into architecture's premier league: Rolex Learning Centre...on the campus of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne...like a weirdly stretched and twisted version of Aalto's Savoy vase. Or Oscar Niemeyer's fabulously sexy Brazilian architecture on acid. But this building is not an object or a jolly hallucination. It is...a landscape for learning...The key word is not "architecture", it is "topography." By Jay Merrick- Independent (UK)

SANAA Designs Artificial Landscape: ...Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale (EPFL) in Lausanne, Switzerland...internal topography of the new Rolex Learning Center...library and campus hub presents visitors with a concrete floor that slopes and swells like the surrounding Swiss landscape. [slide show]- Architectural Record

Atlanta Beltline design team selected: ...Perkins+Will and James Corner Field Operations to lead the design of the 22-mile Beltline Corridor...would most aptly bring to life the city's visionary urban renewal project, and incorporate the central themes of transit, trails and greenspace..."The eyes of the nation are on Atlanta's Beltline as a model for smart growth and urban redevelopment." - Atlanta Examiner

Universities' choice: bricks or bills? State universities are not likely to get enough funding to do both...Still, now is a tempting time to build with that domino effect that construction of multi-million dollar structures can have on local economies...and contractors offering better deals..."it is, indeed, a Sophie's Choice." - Lexington Herald-Leader (Kentucky)

A newer, squarer Morse: When students move back into their rooms this coming fall, they will finally be able to fit their square IKEA side tables into the corners of their rooms: Morse College will have right angles...staying true to Saarinen's vision - including the structure's iconic lack of right angles - has been a recurring challenge. -- Eero Saarinen (1961); KieranTimberlake- Yale Daily News

A Homecoming for Holl: Steven Holl Architects [in collaboration with BNIM Architects] to build again at flood-damaged University of Iowa...new design will include a campus connection to his successful Art Building West, completed in 2006. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

A Thousand and One Nights: A romp through the history of hotel typology, from Chaucer's Tabard to the Ritz, caravanserais to Fawley Towers...far from being innocent places of sojourn, hotels tell us tales about ourselves. By Hugh Pearman -- Hopkins; John Portman; Peter Zumthor; Jean Nouvel; Mario Botta; Eva Jiricna; Terence Conran; Archer Architects [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

An Act of Defiance: Amanda Levet Architects makes a big impact in a tight setting...transforming an existing commercial space off of London's shopping mecca, Oxford Street... [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Thomas Heatherwick design to change Chinese view of Britain: A 20 metre high...structure at Shanghai Expo will show

Britain at the cutting edge in design and business...with a £25m see-through "seed cathedral" [image] - Guardian (UK)

Libeskind took unusual path to an international career: Nothing is typical about his designs: zigzag-shaped floor plans, labyrinth-like rooms and slanted surfaces...has become a dazzling figure in the world of international architecture..."My life has developed in a reverse order" + his new prefab house crosses style with speed. [images] - Deutsche Welle (Germany)

African Americans and sustainability: It's all about "making do": Black-owned DKA Architecture...central tenet...one that dovetails with the needs of their clients, which are nonprofits, governments and public agencies with limited resources...Reclamation, repair and restoration for reuse - now becoming a growing industry sector - became a core specialty... By Leon Holloway/NAC|Architecture; NOMA - Daily Journal of Commerce (Oregon)

Most Innovative Companies 2010: #32 Diller Scofidio + Renfro...set the standard for how to break down the walls between public and private space; #35 Ideo; #44 MVRDV: No one has better embraced a progressive ideal for our urban future -- SHoP Architects; Shigeru Ban; Office dA; Olson Kundig Architects; Adjaye Associates; KieranTimberlake; Santiago Calatrava; James Corner; Field Operations; Rockwell Group; Pentagram; WET Design; etc. - Fast Company

SpecSimple.com's Save A Sample! goes National - Design Recycling Drive to debut in locations around the country...creates "another life" for these unused materials: fabrics, brochures and finish cards, by donating them to local design schools...This year's Save A Sample! runs from April 20 - 22, 2010. - SpecSimple.com

Call for entries: Aoibhneas Children's Centre Architectural Competition: two-stage international competition is for the design of a children's centre on the existing site of Aoibhneas Women and Children's Refuge in Coolock, Dublin; registration deadline: April 30, 2010 - Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)



Exhibition: Inigo Manglano-Ovalle: "Gravity is a Force to be Reckoned With," MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA...a half-scale, inverted version of Mies van der Rohe's uncompleted 50x50 House (1951)

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