

Today's News - Tuesday, March 16, 2010

- We lose Modernist master Der Scutt, architect of 5th Avenue's Trump Tower and much more.
- An Australian government report says its cities better begin dealing with rising sea levels and a growing, aging population: "If we don't get this right ... all hell breaks loose, or our cities break down."
- The ShakeOut Scenario calculates the potential financial damage of an earthquake in Southern California (and real estate investors are paying heed).
- Parman takes issue with tower plans adjacent to San Francisco's Transamerica Pyramid: he says it's "a case study in what not to do" and that "it's time to get nuanced about density."
- Lewis says it's time to get serious about public funding for affordable housing: "Density bonuses and the private sector alone can never get the job done."
- A Connecticut town puts a moratorium on affordable housing while it tries to get its act together: "We're amateurs, so what we needed was some breathing room. This is kind of like calling a truce while we figure out which direction we're going in" (the judge didn't buy it).
- Historic preservation advocates "have shifted into survival mode" with news that it's losing its federal funding - a measly \$30 million/year that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has made go a long, long way + a call to take action.
- Glancey praises plans to raise the Euston Arch and "get railway architecture back on track": it "might just be one of the finest adventures in urban planning, design, engineering and conservation" that Britain has seen since the arch was demolished nearly 50 years ago.
- A Deep Throat has leaked six of the eight "heavy hitters" on shortlist for SFMOMA expansion (we were unable to confirm, but it's an impressive list).
- Chipperfield wins theater re-design in Perm, Russia.
- Merrick meanders the transformed Jewish Museum in London: the "design supports a mingling of the serious and the playfully humane" (with only one misstep).
- Heathcote has an amusing lunch with Herzog: neither he nor de Meuron had a burning desire to be an architect: "Architecture just sounded as if it was a lot of things we liked. It was a totally naive decision."
- Gehry's Signature Theater on West 42nd Street may not be the \$700 million showstopper he'd planned for Ground Zero, but at \$60 million, it's more affordable, with intimate, casual spaces and craftsmanlike elements: "In a way, it's back to my architectural roots of materials."
- Krueck muses on the restoration of Mies on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive (great images).
- Litt offers a peek at plans for Cleveland's Perk Park that are (finally) getting under way: it isn't a question of will it be better, "but how much better."
- A panel of experts discusses true green vs. greenwashing when it comes to building products.
- RPI/SOMs CASE wants to turn office windows into multifaceted solar power generators (a great idea, but not all are convinced).
- A good reason to head to Richmond, Va., at the end of the week: Design Forum IX: An Architecture of Necessity with Adjaye, Eizenberg, Freear, and Cruz.
- The Guggenheim auction: "like eBay, for wealthy architecture nerds" - though some bargains may be had (Thursday is the last day to bid).

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Obituary: Der Scutt, Modernist Architect, 75: ...designed several of the most prominent buildings in Manhattan...In recent years...became a specialist in recladding existing buildings, replacing their masonry facades with metal-trimmed glass curtain walls... By Fred A. Bernstein- New York Times

Australian cities must transform for population growth: Australia circa 2050, population 35 million...rising sea levels have flooded the Gold Coast...apartment blocks are now used to grow food and people commute in monorail pods above the sea...future prosperity may be threatened by a growing, aging population, according to an Australian government report..."If we don't get this right ... all hell breaks loose, or our cities break down"....- Reuters

Earthquakes Spur Interest in Seismic Risk for Properties: A new report calculates the potential financial damage of an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale along the southern San Andreas Fault in California...at \$212 billion...seismic report, The ShakeOut Scenario, a project for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).- National Real Estate Investor (NREI)

Comment: Urbanity, Not Just Density: San Francisco's 555 Washington is a case study in what not to do...For far too long smart growth has meant density über alles...The result is a dog's breakfast...much of which has little to do with walkable urbanism and nothing to do with urbanity. It's time to get nuanced about density. By John Parman -- Heller Manus- The Architect's Newspaper

Affordable housing needs some public funding: ...to achieve affordable housing objectives, Fairfax County and other jurisdictions - along with federal and state governments - eventually must change their policies, raising and committing funds publicly. Density bonuses and the private sector alone can never get the job done. By Roger K. Lewis- Washington Post

In Connecticut, a Moratorium on Affordable Housing: Town of Oxford planning and zoning officials say the moratorium is intended to give them time to write affordable-housing regulations, which are required under a state statute...has ignored that requirement for years..."We're amateurs, so what we needed was some breathing room. This is kind of like calling a truce while we figure out which direction we're going in."- New York Times

Grants that saved historic relics, sites now endangered: ...grant program...that helped restore...hundreds of sites throughout the country is on the current administration's chopping block..."It was like being hit by a truck"...Advocates of historic preservation have shifted into survival mode...calling on friendly ears on Capitol Hill... -- National Trust for Historic Preservation- Columbus Dispatch (Ohio)

Take Action: Tell Congress to Restore Preservation Funding: ...historic preservation programs matter now more than ever - not only because they protect our national heritage, but because they serve as economic development engines and job creators in the thousands of communities they serve.- National Trust for Historic Preservation

Raise the Euston Arch - and get railway architecture back on track: Plans to redevelop the London station could include the resurrection of its much-missed Doric gateway. Let's hope so...might just be one of the finest adventures in urban planning, design, engineering and conservation...that

Britain has witnessed since Macmillan and his ruthless fellow modernisers condemned the much-missed arch nearly 50 years ago. By Jonathan Glancey -- Philip Hardwick (1838); Foreign Office Architects (FOA); Allies and Morrison; Terry Farrell [links]- Guardian (UK)

Architect Shortlist for SFMOMA's Expansion Goes for Heavy Hitters: ...David Adjaye, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Steven Holl, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Snøhetta, and Renzo Piano. (The remaining two were unknown to our Deep Throat...)- Curbed San Francisco

David Chipperfield has won the competition to re-design the Tchaikovsky Theatre in Perm, Russia- The Architects' Journal (UK)

History with room to breathe: The transformation of the Jewish Museum in London has been achieved with a sensitivity that allows the exhibits to take centre stage...design supports a mingling of the serious and the playfully humane...architecture takes a considerate back seat to these cultural montages...a properly unfussy gravitas. By Jay Merrick -- MJ Long/Long & Kentish [images]- Independent (UK)

Lunch with the FT: Jacques Herzog: Neither had a burning desire to be an architect...."Architecture just sounded as if it was a lot of things we liked. It was a totally naive decision...I don't see any connection between our biographies and our architecture...Fame can be useful but it can also lock you in...But of course it is flattering when people listen to what you say, especially about planning and life in cities" By Edwin Heathcote -- Herzog & de Meuron- Financial Times (UK)

New Signature Theater, Close to the Old: ...new home [on W. 42 St.], designed by Frank Gehry, won't be as grand as the one planned for the World Trade Center site, but it is more affordable...has used plywood to create intimate, casual spaces with craftsmanlike elements..."In a way, it's back to my architectural roots of materials," Gehry said... By Robin Pogrebin -- Arquitectonica [image]- New York Times

Less is More on Lakeshore: ...Ron Krueck about his firm's restoration of Mies van der Rohe's towers at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, better known as the Lake Shore Drive apartments. -- Krueck + Sexton [video]- The Architect's Newspaper

Transformation of Cleveland's Perk Park...is under way: The design, first conceived in 2003...had languished for lack of funding...work started late last year...The question now is not whether Perk Park will be better, but how much better. By Steven Litt -- Thomas Balsley; James McKnight [image]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

How Do You Know If Green Building Products Really Are Green? "We can eco-geek out on the manufacturing process, but another question to ask is: Does the end consumer really care?" -- Kirsten Richie/Gensler; Nadav Malin/BuildingGreen; Gwen Davidow/World Environment Center; Ken Langer/Architectural Energy Corporation- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Solar power in office windows: Centre for Architecture Science and Ecology [Case]...wants to turn office windows into multifaceted solar power generators..."they have the largest surface areas, typically, in buildings - especially in tall, urban buildings"...Heliopix window units will cost more than planting some photovoltaic cells on the roof. But...claims the payback time is sooner. -- Anna Dyson; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI); Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- News24 (South Africa)

Design Forum IX: An Architecture of Necessity Features Adjaye, Eizenberg, Freear, Cruz: ...presented by the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects in Richmond, Va., March 19-20 -- Rural Studio; Clay Risen- Earthtimes.org

Like eBay, for Wealthy Architecture Nerds: The Guggenheim contemplates the void, then auctions it off...through March 18...About half of the 178 items up for auction have yet to receive any bids... [images, links]- Metropolis Magazine



Kengo Kuma & Associates: The Opposite House, Beijing, China

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