

Today's News - Tuesday, May 4, 2010

- Kennicott's eloquent objection to the decision to close the Supreme Court's main doors: "By a thousand reflexive cuts, architecture loses its power to mean anything. We are becoming a nation of moles...the court has neutered its building, insulted the public and yielded to fear" (a must-read).
- Davidson on why NYC should allow Nouvel to "build every inch of his arrogant tower": the "skyline must keep acquiring new peaks because the day we consider it complete and untouchable is the day the city begins to die."
- What does Nouvel think? He tells Davidson: "Why is Manhattan, of all places, afraid of heights?" (he also looks "in need of a nap").
- Brussat gets the translation of French architects' protest to the Americanization of Paris (it "was worth the wait").
- Shanghai World Expo 2010: What are these buildings really saying? For starters, the U.S. "put about as much effort into designing its pavilion as it would a Walmart" - designed by a Canadian, no less (amusing/disturbing slide show essay).
- Betsky travels to Hangzhou, China, and finds "by far the most imaginative set of buildings I have seen in a long time...it teaches by being."
- Ouroussoff finds Meier's plans for a Newark's Teachers Village "the most dramatic example yet of what is shaping up to be a significant and hopeful trend in architecture" - a "commitment to elevating the lives of ordinary people."
- Russell takes in Meier's musings on just about everything: "I have a lot to do, I hope."
- Foster's Vancouver tower "provides some welcome hope for the city aesthetic - NIMBYISM notwithstanding."
- Litt on the Londoner's taking on the Cleveland Clinic's 20-year master plan.
- King cheers Oakland Museum of California's renovation: it "looks more revolutionary now than when it opened in 1969" - its virtues "are vital again."
- Dickinson offers no high praise for a number of new New Haven projects, including Yale University Health Services' new building: "at best, passive-aggressive and at worst perversely ad hoc" with a dash of "unrelenting Darth Vader" (ouch!).
- Boston comes up with a master plan for the Kennedy Greenway: "I've heard so much praise for this plan. And that's a man-bites-dog story right there."
- City planners just might find some serious solutions to urban ills offered in IBM's new, very serious video game, CityOne.
- A pick of America's Top 10 eco-friendly, energy-efficient planned communities.
- AIA picks 18 winners for the 2010 Housing Awards (excellent presentations, too).

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Closing main doors to the Supreme Court sends troubling message: ...like so many mindless decisions attributed to security concerns, is a grand affront - architecturally, symbolically, politically...not just another front door lost to paranoia. It is the loss of what may be the nation's most important portal. By Philip Kennicott -- Cass Gilbert (1935)- Washington Post

The Point of the Skyline: Why they should let Jean Nouvel build every inch of his arrogant tower, and other thoughts on what makes a cityscape great...The skyline must keep acquiring new peaks, because the day we consider it complete and untouchable is the day the city begins to die. By Justin Davidson - New York Magazine

Colossus: Jean Nouvel's Tower Verre was going to be the biggest thing to hit the midtown skyline since the Empire State Building. Then the city told him to chop off 200 feet. Scoffs the French architect: Why is Manhattan, of all places, afraid of heights? By Justin Davidson - New York Magazine

A French look at the Americanization of Paris: ...translation of article "Le Grand Paris to become a New New York!" by architects and town planners David Orbach and Isabelle Coste and Denis Dessus, vice president of the Professional Association of Architects of France...very much worth the wait... By David Brussat - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Decoding the Pavilion Architecture of Shanghai World Expo 2010: In the design of each, there's not supposed to be any politics...But really?...What are these buildings really saying? -- Thomas Heatherwick; Clive Grout; Buchner Bründler Architects; Mass Studies; Bjarke Ingels Group/BIG; Miralles/Tagliabue EMBT; Carlos Couto; +Arkitektur [slide show essay] - Fast Company

The Architecture of China, Hangzhou Division: Amid the high-rises marching to the horizon and the housing projects eating up acre after acre...we suddenly find something great: the China Academy of Art...by far the most imaginative set of buildings I have seen in a long time...it teaches by being. By Aaron Betsky -- Wang Shu/Amateur Architecture Studio [images] - Architect Magazine

By the Architects, for the People: A Trend for the 2010s: Richard Meier's plans for a Newark mixed-use development...Teachers Village, takes [him] back to his roots...when he devoted as much energy to subsidized housing as to beach houses...the most dramatic example yet of what is shaping up to be a significant and hopeful trend in architecture...onetime commitment to elevating the lives of ordinary people. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Annabelle Selldorf; Michael Maltzan; Steven Holl; José Luis Sert; Peter Eisenman [images] - New York Times

Creating environments for great architecture: Richard Meier, 75, is tall, patrician and hard-working, with a thick head of long grey hair, and no plans to retire..."I have a lot to do, I hope." By James S. Russell - The Australian

Skyline is looking up: It's hard to believe, but Arthur Erickson might be proven wrong after all...that Vancouver's skyline was getting much too "blah"...37-storey Jameson House...provides some welcome hope for the city aesthetic...something of a breakthrough, representing new possibilities for international architecture here...NIMBYISM notwithstanding. By Derek Moscato -- Foster + Patners - Metro News Vancouver (Canada)

London architect to design 20-year Cleveland Clinic growth plan: ...while...embarking on the master plan, the clinic has sent queries to architecture firms seeking qualifications to design the structures...will seek ways to "create a feeling of calmness, a better experience for everyone who comes there" By Steven Litt -- Spencer de Grey/Foster + Partners; Peter Walker - Cleveland Plain Dealer

Oakland Museum of California's demure visage gets a face-lift: In our age of architectural pyrotechnics...looks more revolutionary now than when it opened in 1969...\$58 million renovation that makes the ambitiously demure structure more inviting than ever...strikes a rare balance of dignified grace, and its virtues today are vital again. By John King -- Kevin Roche; Dan Kiley (1969); Mark Cavagnero Associates [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

A building's first impression is written all over its face: Sometimes high intentions can have the unintended consequence of conceptual misfit - and in architecture, those consequences can impact an entire neighborhood for a long time. By Duo Dickinson -- Becker + Becker; SLAM Collaborative; Scogin, Elam and Bray/Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects - New Haven Register (Connecticut)

Help me, Dr. Obi-Wan Kenobi! The new Yale University Health Services building is almost finished...early reviews of the building's design fall considerably short of a clean bill of health. -- Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects [image]- Yale Alumni Magazine

Seeding the Greenway: Boston masterplan to guide development along new park...with an emphasis on regulating building heights and density..."I've heard so much praise for this plan. And that's a man-bites-dog story right there." -- UTILE [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

IBMs CityOne Is Like Sim City, Except the Solutions Are Real: A "serious game" that lays out the problems facing modern cities - and the solutions required to solve them...plops you into the role of being a city planner, trying to solve the sorts of business and environmental problems that grip today's modern cities. - Fast Company

America's Top 10 Best Green-Built Neighborhoods: ...eco-friendly, energy-efficient planned communities...strive for responsible construction and promote sustainable living. - Natural Home

AIA Selects 18 Recipients for the 2010 Housing Awards -- Office of Jerome King, FAIA; Miller|Hull Partnership; Remson | Haley | Herpin Architects, APAC; Gund Partnership; Lorcan O'Herlihy; Pugh + Scarpa; William Rawn; Rose + Guggenheimer Studio; KieranTimberlake; Rogers Marvel; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; VJAA; Johnsen Schmalig; Terry & Terry; Joeb Moore + Partners [link to images, info]- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

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