

Today's News - Tuesday, July 13, 2010

EDITOR'S NOTE: Just a reminder that we're three hours behind home base for the next two weeks, so newsletter will be arriving a bit later than usual.

- Can Asian cities change how they build "before it is too late for all of us"?
- Wesseler visits one of Shanghai's One City, Nine Towns projects and finds a "shabby and depressing" ghost town - great for Muzak and wedding photos, but will it - and the rest - ever become living communities?
- Herron's 3-parter Borderland/Borderama/Detroit: "it persists in a death-in-life existence," perhaps a symbol of "the cost Americans pay for being who we are" (intense and thoughtful - plan to spend some time with this).
- Glancey on what might have been if Lord Foster had kept his ermine robe "to campaign for a more intelligently designed country. Instead he let the opportunity go to waste."
- Nigeria's vice president credits his training and career as an architect as a major impact on his vision of public service.
- Meanwhile, the president of the Nigerian Institute of Architects calls on the government to take "urgent measures" to curb the incursion of foreign architects that could 'spell doom for local practitioners.'
- A Colombian architect who has created bamboo structures "that defy the imagination" - and was convinced to lend his talent to India's Shanghai Expo pavilion (amazing pix!).
- An architect who envisions transforming parking lots into Solar Groves; a few are popping up, though getting them to "full market acceptance is a very long trip."
- Eliasson's Harpa concert hall in Reykjavik is "exhibit A" that "architects have everything to gain by his interest in architecture."
- High hopes on hold as Libeskind's partially built Warsaw tower may be "derailed by bureaucratic obstacles" that send "a discouraging signal to international investors."
- An "angry dispute" swirls around calls for complete demolition of the Nazi-era German Pavilion on the Venice Biennale fairgrounds.
- King is wowed by the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, but is not sure he buys "into all it represents" (edifice complex included) + Ohtake's slide show tour.
- Schumacher x 2: a "remarkably concise and articulate structure made to make a point" + are we ready for these micro concepts? "My guess is no, we're not. Not even close."

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Asia's alarming cities: How Asian cities are built will determine the prospects for global carbon emissions. Oh dear: ...you wonder how Asia can change its habits - energy consumption grew by 70% in the ten years to 2008 - before it is too late for all of us. -- Harrison Fraker - The Economist (UK)

Shanghai Imports European Cities, Finds Them Lacking: ...many of the new developments remain virtual ghost towns...construction quality is consistently poor, making the brand-new towns seem shabby and depressing...it's not clear what will become of towns like Luodian that were completed before the One City, Nine Towns program's dissolution. By Sarah Wesseler - Assembly Journal

Borderland/Borderama/Detroit Parts 1, 2, 3: Detroit looks just like a city, except it's not one any more. But instead of vanishing...it persists in a death-in-life existence...this mix of rot and revival, violence and reinvigoration, is a condition inherent to ourselves that the city only exacerbates. Maybe Detroit is the cost Americans pay for being who we are. By Jerry Herron [images, links] - Places Journal

Norman Foster in the Lords: what might have been: ...could have used a role in politics to campaign for a more intelligently designed country. Instead he let the opportunity go to waste... By Jonathan Glancey -- Foster + Partners - Guardian (UK)

How Architecture Has Impacted My Public Service Performance: Vice President Mohammed Namadi Sambo...extolled the virtues of architecture as a profession, insisted the profession "gives a wide exposure of knowledge, which is second to none...our training as architects is very rich and important for our participation in politics." - This Day (Nigeria)

Nigerian Architects Seek Curb On Foreign Counterparts: Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA)...said the federal government should take "urgent measures" to curb the incursion of foreign architects in the country's building industry...if unchecked, "it might spell doom for local practitioners." -- Olatunji Bolu/NIA President, - Wall Street Journal

An enduring love affair with bamboo: Simon Velez's creations have been an eye-opener on the use of this giant grass as building material...has been designing and making bamboo buildings in Colombia for the past 30 years...has created structures that defy the imagination...architect Pradeep Sachdeva...convinced him to help build the Indian pavilion for the Shanghai Expo 2010. By Ramu Katakam [images] - Frontline (India)

The Parking Lot as 'Solar Grove': 1,000-square-foot canopies that shade parking lots while generating clean power from an array of photovoltaic panels...still years or even decades away..."The distance between a new idea and full market acceptance is a very long trip" -- Robert Noble/Envision Solar - New York Times

Olafur Eliasson in Iceland: ...he's put his stamp on it by collaborating with Henning Larsen on the new concert hall in Reykjavik named Harpa. Architects have everything to gain by [his] interest in architecture and this new concert hall might be exhibit A...not shy about attribution and this plays well into building trust on joint ventures. [images] - Huffington Post

High hopes on hold: The fate of Zlota 44, the Daniel Libeskind-designed skyscraper which currently stands incomplete in the very heart of Warsaw, hangs in the balance after a recent court decision kept construction from moving forward...scheme may in the end be derailed by bureaucratic obstacles sends a discouraging signal to international investors. - Warsaw Business Journal (Poland)

Calls for demolition of 'Nazi' pavilion in Venice: ...a prime example of Nazi design...an angry dispute has erupted over demands that the German Pavilion be razed to the ground because it is an unpalatable reminder of past tyranny and an embarrassment to today's democratic Germany. -- Ernst Haiger (1938); Arno Sigward Schmid - Independent (UK)

New Bay Bridge span dazzles as it takes shape: ...not sure I buy in to all it represents...Already, though, we can sense the scale of the \$6.3 billion project...The capabilities of an age are focused on the task at hand, romance the outgrowth of rigor. Not so with the new eastern span, where our tower-to-come is an architectural affectation. By John King -- T.Y. Lin/Moffatt and Nichol Engineers; Donald MacDonald Architects [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Inside the New Bay Bridge: a deep-access tour of the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. By Miyoko Ohtake [slide show essay] - Dwell

Tiny house, big questions: ...some of the most extraordinary architecture being made in the world today are small, adventurous structures...these pocked-sized projects, sometimes called "micro architecture," do more than set standards for sustainable practices. They challenge the way we live. One such project is the EDGE (Experimental Dwelling for a Greener Environment)... By Mary Louise Schumacher -- Revelations Architects [images, video] - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Tiny house, more questions: ...the world of micro architecture is a big one. It's a critical area of experimentation...there seem to be enough micro concepts to go around...So, the question is, are we ready for them? My guess is no, we're not. Not even close. But when it comes to green living and sustainable practices, scale should be a chief concern. By Mary Louise Schumacher -- Revelations Architects [images, links]- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Barry Elbasani, FAIA, 1941-2010: The architect known for plans and buildings that revitalized American cities passed away last week at 69. A recent conversation with the gruff optimist and realistic urbanist about his history, inspirations, and aspirations. By Kenneth Caldwell- ArchNewsNow



Mikou Design Studio: Bailly School Complex, Saint-Denis, France

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