

Today's News - Wednesday, August 4, 2010

- A green light for Liverpool's Wirral Waters - at 420 acres, it's the U.K.'s largest planning application (that will take only about 30 years to complete).
- As for China's building boom, "megalomania is in full swing," and "doubts are taboo" - but many are warning it could go bust (which doesn't bode well for the rest of the world).
- Beijing's billionaire developer begs to differ: she's "betting hundreds of millions of dollars that the warnings of a housing crash are wrong."
- Meanwhile, Guangzhou sprouts an arts playground (a Hadid included).
- How could we resist: a solution to China's desperate need for urban public transportation: the Straddling Bus (no space for elevated station? use the ladder, please).
- Planner Palafox proposes major transformation of Manila's Laguna de Bay.
- LaBarre on Iran's plans for London embassy: "The problem: They picked the wrong place to do it. And they picked a really ugly building to do it with."
- Dunlop finds it "easy to be queasy" about Miami's rush to approve the "outlandish design" of a garage with two bigger-than-gigantic electronic billboards atop.
- An in-depth look at Boise, Idaho's turbulent history of urban renewal: as in many cities, it's "a tale of an effort progressing at two steps forward and one step back - and there was at least one occasion where it tripped and fell down the stairs."
- Debate continues to roil around towering plans for Pei's Christian Science campus in Boston (Cossutta is none to pleased).
- Istanbul sees its once-faded landmark Pera Palace return to its former glory (Garbo not included).
- A reborn town known as the "Russian Venice" will be the focus of Russia's Venice Biennale pavilion.
- Wales debuts its first carbon-free home on a mini-estate of affordable, low-energy houses (with, hopefully, more to follow).
- Q&A with Viñoly re: building in Abu Dhabi, Boston - and Brooklyn (New Domino): what's it like to build in NYC? "I always thought this is perhaps the most important urban experiment in the history of mankind."
- 2010 North American Copper in Architecture Award winners (great presentation).

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UK's largest planning application approved for Liverpool's Wirral Waters: ...£4.5 billion, 1.7 million sq m scheme...includes large projects by SOM, Glenn Howells, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) and HKR. Each architect will design a quarter within the city-sized project... [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

China's Real Estate Bubble Threatens to Burst: Many economists are warning it could burst soon, with unpredictable results for the global economy...Megalomania is in full swing...Doubts are taboo, especially now that the mood is beginning to shift, at least outside the flashy showrooms.- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Beijing Billionaire Who Grew Up With Mao Sees No Housing Bubble: ...developer Zhang Xin is betting hundreds of millions of dollars that the warnings of a housing crash are wrong. -- Soho China; Commune by the Great Wall- Bloomberg News

Arts Playground Sprouts in China: An opera house and museum - with a public library and children's arts center to come - connected by outdoor walkways and green spaces emerge amid the factories of booming Guangzhou. -- Rocco Yim; Zahra Hadid [images]- New York Times

Go go gadget straddling bus! Chinese super-buses glide over traffic: Each bus will have a capacity of 1,200 people...This is not a pipe dream -- the pilot program goes into construction by the end of this year in the Mentougou district of Beijing, where 186km of tracks will be laid. [links to images, videos]- Gizmag (Australia)

Transform Laguna de Bay to spur economic activity, supply potable water: ...Felino Palafox Jr. recently proposed the transformation...into an important conduit of economic development...envisions a lakefront of walkable and bikeable linear parks and promenades for lakeshore communities...[and] an efficient and environment-friendly, water-based mass transport system... -- Palafox Associates - Philippine Daily Inquirer

Iran's Plan for a Hideous New Embassy Enrages Londoners: Prince Charles, please save the neighborhood! Iran...wants to reinvent its image with a sleek modern embassy in London. The problem: They picked the wrong place to do it. And they picked a really ugly building to do it with. By Suzanne LaBarre -- Armin Mohsen Daneshgar [images, links]- Fast Company

Big changes with little thought: It's easy to be queasy about the proposed City Square garage with its two bigger-than-gigantic electronic billboards atop it...Even more puzzling than the garage's outlandish design is the rush by the Miami City Commission to approve a project that poses lots of questions and offers few solutions. By Beth Dunlop [slide show]- Miami Herald

Razed & Confused: Boise's turbulent history of urban renewal: From tear down and rebuild to embrace and improve...The fight to preserve Boise's historic architecture is a tale of an effort progressing at two steps forward and one step back - and there was at least one occasion where it tripped and fell down the stairs. [slide show, links]- Boise Weekly (Idaho)

Boston Reflects on Pei's Brutalist Plaza: Debate rages over addition of three new towers to Christian Science campus or its midcentury preservation...even eventual landmark status would not necessarily block the church's current proposal... "It's all workable." -- I.M. Pei/Araldo Cossutta; Elkus Manfredi; HalvorsonDesign Group; Sasaki Associates [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Istanbul landmark seeks return to glory era: On Sept. 1...Pera Palace will reopen after a two-year restoration that cost 23 million euros. Built during the imperial age, the hotel slid into decay after the Republic was founded...had been at risk of being placed on a list of endangered cultural treasures by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. -- Mehmet Karaoren/Karaoren Mimarlar Architects - Hürriyet Daily News (Turkey)

Russian project at upcoming Venice Biennale: ...restoring the town of Vyshny Volochek...known as the "Russian Venice"...team of architects...aims to achieve success and renown and see the final results of their work - a reborn town... -- Pavel Khoroshilov; Sergei Choban- Voice of Russia

Wales' first carbon-free home: ...will be launched today, alongside two others on a mini-estate of affordable, low-energy houses in Ebbw Vale. The houses were built out of locally-sourced materials in the contemporary square style of German Passivhaus, or "Passive House" on the site of the old steelworks. -- Welsh Oak Frame- Western Mail (Wales)

Brooklyn Builder: Rafael Viñoly Talks, Ambitiously, About Architecture: What's New York like as a city to build in? "I always thought this is perhaps the most important urban experiment in the history of mankind."- New York Observer

2010 North American Copper in Architecture Awards: top U.S. and Canadian projects -- The Ventin Group Architects; Lord, Aeck, & Sargent; Robertson Martin Architects; Glenn Keyes Architects; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Mark Christian Design; M+W Zander U.S. Operations; Davis Brody Bond Aedas; Page & Steele; Selldorf Architects; Ron Wommack Architect [links to images/info]- Copper Development Association/Canadian Copper & Brass Development Association



[Snøhetta: National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion, World Trade Center Site, New York, NY](#)

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