Today's News - Tuesday, November 9, 2010

- The New Urbanist vs. Landscape Urbanist debate continues as Krieger answers Duany: "Your rumored coup at the Harvard GSD is greatly exaggerated...let me assure all those concerned about the 'coup,' that Urban Design at Harvard is alive and well."

- Welton on the winning goods the U.S. has for export to China: architecture - "Americans bring to the table a sense of place with know-how about great urban spaces, tall buildings" (but look for China to start catching up).

- The "emotional debate" re: height limits in Washington, DC, has "a small tribe of developers, architects and urban experts" questioning the rules, and preservationists very wary (though it's all academic - it would take an act of Congress to change things, so don't expect any changes any time soon).

- Jersey City residents want their own High Line; a developer wants apartments (with green space included, but residents aren't buying it).

- Kamin is glad a Chicago plaza got a much-needed facelift, but because there was no architect or landscape architect involved, "the outcome is predictably prosaic" and "falls flat in its quest to become a civic gathering place."

- Perhaps they should all check out NYU-Poly's Betaville digital tool that allows all the stakeholders in a project to participate.

- Gellner takes on Modernist glass boxes: "as much as architects adore them, "they simply don't work as buildings."

- A Winnipeg architect calls for the city to pay heed to its (mostly unsung) Modernist treasures as one of its most important examples faces "impending demolition."

- Brey offers a visual sampling of what's been lost since the bulldozers began rolling at Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital complex (so many).

- Peck gives Gehry's Ruvo Center a mixed review: "It is indeed full of surprises" (good ones, that is), "but patients get the short end of the stick, design-wise" (apparently there's also a pesky dead bird problem, too - yuck).

- Campbell sings high praise for the interior of a Brookline church chapel, "one of Boston's best architectural spaces" (though the exterior leaves much to be desired).

- Litt cheers Holzman's "eye-catching, thoughtful, almost subversively inventive" addition to Kent State University that is "a tour de force and a delightful rebuke to the anti-design mood at KSU."

- An eyeful of OMA's first cultural building in France; move over Seattle - it's a library.

- Lubell cheers wHY Architecture's "makeover magic" that turned an old Venice, CA, WPA-era power plant into an art gallery that "makes the old feel alive."

- Krieger answers Duany: "Your rumored coup at the Harvard GSD is greatly exaggerated...the assumption that we will now abdicte the study of the North American city to the "landscape/ecological urbanists," as he puts it, is well, a sign of uncharacteristic insecurity on his part...as my mail box fills with panicked "Is it True?" queries, let me assure all those concerned about the 'coup,' that Urban Design at Harvard...is alive and well... By Alex Krieger -- Andrea Duany; Emily Talen - Metropolis Magazine

- In the Capital, Rethinking Old Limits on Buildings: In 1910, Congress passed an act limiting the heights of buildings in Washington, DC...but the act's centennial, a small tribe of developers, architects and urban experts are questioning the orthodoxy of the rule's application. A modest change, they argue, would inject some vitality into the urban scene...It is an emotional debate... -- Shalom Baranes; Christopher Leinberger; Dorn C. McGrath Jr.; Roger K. Lewis - New York Times

- Fifty Cities in Twenty Years: Low-cost Chinese goods may flood U.S. markets and the balance of payments might tip favorably toward Beijing, but America still exports plane tickets of one commodity eastward: Architecture...Americans bring to the table a sense of place with know-how about great urban spaces, tall buildings and complexes... By J. Michael Welton -- Don't build a glass box, plants say... By Arrol Gellner-- Walter Gropius; Joseph Paxton; Mies van der Rohe; Philip Johnson; Frank Gehry - New York Times

- A window into 'glass box' flaws: For occupants, form fails function test...The trouble is, that as much as architects adore glass boxes, they simply don't work as buildings...for any kind of life beyond the vegetal, the typical modernist glass box is the least functional form possible. By Arrol Gellner -- Walter Gropius; Joseph Paxton; Mes van der Rohe; Philip Johnson; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill - Chicago Tribune

- Brain Health: Frank Gehry's Ruvo Center gets a mixed review: I was struck at first glance by more a sense of intrigue than of shock, and it is indeed full of surprises...From the healthcare design standpoint...I'd have to say that the clinical area falls short. By Richard L. Peck - Metropolis Magazine

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- Modernist buildings have a story to tell: Winnipeg [is] less well known as home to one of the finest surviving collections of modernist architecture in Canada...impending demolition of a building that has contributed more to [the city's] historic narrative than almost any other...is causing some to evaluate the importance of placing modernist buildings under the protective wing of the heritage preservation movement. By Brent Bellamy/Number Ten Architectural Group -- GBR Architects (1964); LM Architectural Group (1959); Stantec Architecture - Winnipeg Free Press (Canada)

- Despite earlier prognosis, city to terminate Michael Reese Hospital: So what has been lost at Reese since the bulldozers began rolling? Just a sample... By Lee Bey - WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

- A home for light, music, God, and children: Brookline church chapel sings...One of Boston's best architectural spaces has just opened...Korean Church of Boston...exterior...hasn't been a unanimous hit with the neighbors. But I can't imagine anyone falling to fall in love with the chapel interior... By Robert Campbell -- Brian Healy - Boston Globe

- Malcolm Holzman brings life to Kent State University with additions to Roe Green Center: ...an eye-catching, thoughtful, almost subversively inventive pair of additions to its Music and Speech Center...a tour de force and a delightful rebuke to the anti-design mood at KSU... -- Dean Marchetto Architects; A. Nelessen Associates - Chicago Tribune

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- The U.K.'s AHMM "hits pay dirt" in Oklahoma City with 12(1) projects: "the city is poised to become a model of European-style urban planning in the U.S."

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combine old and new in a way that “makes the old feel alive,” said wHY partner Kulapat Yantrasast...it’s a huge step for a community that, while rich in artistic talent, has few world-class galleries to show for it. By Sam Lubell [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

OMA Makes Inroads Into France With Caen Library: ...the firm’s first cultural building in the country...will meet the Haute Qualité Environnementale, a standard for sustainable building in France. [slide show]- Architectural Record

UK Firm Hits Pay Dirt in Downtown OKC: London-based Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) lands 12 separate projects to reinvent Oklahoma City sites...some of the city’s most dilapidated downtown neighborhoods...the city is poised to become a model of European-style urban planning in the U.S. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

The (Limited) Power of Good Intentions: Socially responsible design is a whole lot harder than it looks...An obvious reason we see utopian design schemes going nowhere is because of the sheer number of schemers... By Julie Lasky -- Mariana Amatullio/Designmatters; David Stairs/Designers Without Borders; Cameron Sinclair/Architecture for Humanity; Lee Davis/NESsT; Project H Design; Design Corps [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Loeb Fellow Urges Activism in Design: Architects are recognizing their responsibility to use their skills in community projects...taking on a greater number of issues, and embodying a greater scope of roles. Designers, who have “a superhero ability to see things that aren’t there,” can harness these skills to improve the community...“Architecture and the design professions have so much unrealized potential...” -- Bryan Bell/Design Corps - The Harvard Crimson

designNYC Pairs Designers With Nonprofits: ...12 projects launched...earlier this year...ranging from new lighting and landscaping for upper Broadway, to a healthy eating program...to a guide that helps residents understand how to reduce energy consumption...the impact of many of these concepts still have yet to be seen, as issues like maintenance and community acceptance come into play. By Alissa Walker -- Robin Key Landscape Architects; Andre Kikoski; Sohbr Studio [images, links]- GOOD Magazine

Norway Tops Nations in Quality of Life: ...on top once again in the UN's annual rankings of global wealth, health and education...Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Ireland took the following places in the top five.- Discover Magazine

Toyo Ito & Associates: Za-Koenji Public Theatre, Suginami-ku,Tokyo, Japan