

Today's News - Tuesday, January 11, 2011

- Q&A with an architect who explains how Low Impact Development can be an environmental, economical, and aesthetic alternative for those who lack the resources to pursue LEED certification.
- The fascinating tale of a Port-au-Prince landmark that "has become a lone bright spot in Haiti's stalled reconstruction" (link to McAslan site for great images).
- Merrick on what's in store for 2011: "Brute bigness will be a defining feature" (even the master of "anti-bling architecture Chipppo bigs it up" - oh joy).
- Czech architects launch the For a New Prague initiative to move beyond construction projects "guided by politicians' short-term and individual interests" to "provoke a dialogue" between city government and citizens.
- The massive Royal Mecca Clock Tower "appears to have delivered the final blow to Mecca's architectural dignity."
- Boston's newest skyscraper, "probably be the last large property built on the downtown side of the city's waterfront for some time," is ready for its close-up - with BSA as one of its tenants.
- Calculating the social and economic ROI on green, affordable housing (it's pretty impressive!).
- Kennicott, inspired by Gatje, bemoans the lack of great public squares in Washington, where urban design is "all about views, vistas and open sight lines."
- Hume fumes as a Toronto gem falls to fire, calling it "demolition by neglect" by an owner who saw it as "an obstacle to profitability."
- Heathcote wonders if clients and architects today "think in terms of their houses becoming a part of our future heritage."
- As an almost lost London Victorian gothic treasure is about to re-open, the "building's real saviors go unmentioned - and uninvited to glitzy parties for its reopening."
- Davidson gathers an impressive (and amusing) mixed bag of "arguers" to debate what NYC's greatest building is.
- An eyeeful of Room for London competition entries for a single room atop the Southbank arts centre (we'll take at least one!).
- How could we resist a true tale about Texas and architecture that ends with: "They buried her in a martini shaker" (a truly Texas way to go).

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Q&A with James Anderson, LEED AP re: Low Impact Development: LID is an alternative, cost-effective method for those who want to be sensitive to sustainability, but lack the resources to pursue LEED certification. - ArchNewsNow

A Symbol of Hope for Haiti, a Landmark Again Stands Tall: The Iron Market [Marché en Fer], a landmark in Port-au-Prince, has been rebuilt and is to be inaugurated, a rare bright spot in Haiti's reconstruction after last January's devastating earthquake. -- John McAslan + Partners [images, links] - New York Times

The supersize skyline: Why 2011 will be the year architecture takes a giant leap upwards: From London's 'Cucumber' skyscraper to the New Mexico space station, buildings dazzling in size and ambition are set to transform the global landscape...Brute bigness will be a defining feature... By Jay Merrick -- RMJM; Aecom; Robin Partington; Wilkinson Eyre; SOM; Rogers Stirk Harbour; Ken Shuttleworth/Make; Jean Nouvel; Rem Koolhaas; Rafael Viñoly; Renzo Piano; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); David Chipperfield; Dixon Jones; Eric Parry; Caruso St John; Lynch Architects; Maccreeanor Lavington; Dow Jones; John McAslan/Arup; Zaha Hadid; Foster + Partners [slide show] - Independent (UK)

Czech architects call for concept of Prague's development: ...initiative For a New Prague, in which they say...construction activities are guided by politicians' short-term and individual interests...aim of the initiative is to provoke a dialogue between representatives of the city and citizens on further development. -- Dan Merta; Miroslav Masak; Eva Jiricna; Alena Sramkova; Jan Kasl; etc. - Prague Daily Monitor

Luxury Architecture in Mecca: Now nearing completion, the 'Royal Mecca Clock Tower' which is one of the tallest buildings in the world and resembles London's Big Ben, appears to have delivered the final blow to Mecca's architectural dignity...a rather gigantic reminder that the egalitarian spirit of hajj is diminishing in favour of capitalist-style luxury. [image]- ILLUME magazine

Focusing on Fort Point: 31-story Atlantic Wharf...With its sail-shaped design, Boston's newest skyscraper is a 31-story invitation to the city's newest gathering spot on the water...The Boston Society of Architects' 15,000 square feet of offices will be three times its current space... -- CBT Architects; Howeler + Yoon Architecture [slide show] - Boston Globe

The Social ROI of Green, Affordable Housing: How do you make affordable housing as sexy as cleantech? We calculated that for each dollar of grant, with the right green design and services, approximately \$10 of social value would be returned to society, in the form of such things as reduced health care bills...and reduced energy consumption and carbon emissions...- GreenBiz.com

Where is Washington's great public square? It's a bit dispiriting, as a Washingtonian, to listen to a lecture on great public squares. We have none...the pieties of Washington urban design thinking...are all about views, vistas and open sight lines...Life in a square is both public and bounded, freewheeling and safe. By Philip Kennicott -- Robert Gatje - Washington Post

Heritage remains a burning issue in Toronto: Call it demolition by neglect: The past may belong to us all, but not the buildings in which it unfolded. The difference was made painfully clear this week when the 122-year-old building at Yonge and Gould burned to the ground...The public never wanted it to go away. But to its owners...it was an obstacle to profitability. By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

How to build heritage: ...do clients and architects today think in terms of that future, of their houses becoming a part of our future heritage? "You can't second guess what values will be in the future and architects would be better employed refining their work rather than trying to ensure their own legacy." By Edwin Heathcote -- 6a; Tom Kundig; Ben Pentreath - Financial Times (UK)

The Midland Hotel: 'Without us, this masterpiece would have been lost for ever': Jane Fawcett, now 89, recalls the 1960s campaign in which she and John Betjeman saved one of the glories of London's Victorian gothic architecture -- the soon-to-reopen Midland Grand Hotel...The building's real saviours go unmentioned -- and uninvited to glitzy parties for its reopening. -- Gilbert Scott (1868); Victorian Society; Nikolaus Pevsner [slide show] - Independent (UK)

The Greatest Building: "If I Had To Pick One Tower, It Wouldn't Be the Empire State Building" And it's not the Chrysler Building, either. The Arguers: Justin Davidson; Winka Dubbedam/Archi-tectonics; Bernard Tschumi; Rosalie Genevro/Architectural League of New York; Robert A.M. Stern; Barry Bergdoll/Museum of Modern Art/MoMA; Vin Cipolla/Municipal Art Society of New York; Gregg Pasquarelli/SHoP - New York Magazine

Architects reveal Room for London competition entries for a temporary apartment to be built on Queen Elizabeth Hall's roof in the Southbank arts centre. -- Ström Architects; Raw Architecture Workshop; Studio Octopi; Robin Monotti Architects; Feix & Merlin Architects; Moxon Architects; Project Orange; Eidy Architects [slide show] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

What Passes for Beauty: A Death in Texas: ...to a few who know about both Texas and architecture (I am thinking here of the late "Texas Ranger" John Hejduk), it is a sort of myth...As most stories do, this story has an ending, and the ending is so strange that I will break with convention and reveal it now: They buried her in a martini shaker ... and a Dixie-cup. By Jim Williamson- Places Journal

Book Review: "Cities for People" by Jan Gehl: Copenhagen's urban-space guru explains the principles, practices, and priorities that make cities more livable - beginning, but not ending, with dethroning King Car...He's clearly earned his increasing influence, which this masterful book will help spread and cement By Bill Millard- ArchNewsNow



-- Gwathmey Siegel & Associates: Teel Family Pavilion, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California
-- Reiser + Umemoto (RUR): Port and Cruise Service Center, Kaohsiung, Southern Taiwan, ROC

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