

Today's News - Thursday, March 31, 2011

- In Shanghai, "there's every sign that forward-thinking (and upward-rising) Western-inspired architecture" (by starchitects, of course) will continue to shape the city's "urban cool."
- Q&A with urban planner Sorensen re: rebuilding challenges in Japan: it might be better off relocating cities to higher ground - "you need a new kind of settlement system."
- Q&A with architect and urbanist Ramati re: plaza bonuses, street life, and the legacy of NYC's Urban Design Group: "One thing that worries me is the branding of architecture."
- Brussat bristles with the same concern, wishing there was a way to make traditional and modern architecture more compatible: it "can be conceived, but a way to bring architects of all stripes to embrace it is difficult if not impossible to imagine."
- High hopes that Lower Manhattan's Water Street ends up with "that Park Avenue feel."
- Your chance to make that happen: NYC issues an RFP for a Water Street Feasibility Study.
- California taps 36 firms - from established names to small but well-regarded offices - to modernize 50 new state courthouses of all sizes.
- Glendale, CA, hopes "to boost fortunes downtown" with plans for an arts and entertainment district to include nightclubs and bright architectural lighting + Adding to the glow will be a "transformative new building" (carved out of two empty storefronts) to house the first permanent home for the Museum of Neon Art (looks like fun!).
- A former JC Penny store almost ready for its close-up as the new Sioux City Public Museum.
- 3XN and William McDonough + Partners team up for "one of Europe's first and most ambitious Cradle to Cradle projects" on an island in Denmark.
- "Marcel Breuer and Postwar America" at Syracuse University "illuminated unfamiliar dimensions of the great architect's legacy. The old man looks good" (the show closed this week, but the pix are terrific).
- Plans for an Anne Frank museum near Ground Zero "would be more evidence that lower Manhattan is becoming a Mecca for religious and cultural groups of all stripes."
- RIBA's Reed and Rich at odds only add to a continuing list of ruffled feathers and discontent: "It is the worst period of RIBA politics in my generation."
- In Korea, Samsung uses corporate clout in a "lopsided legal battle" with companies with similar names - most notably the 40-year-old architectural firm that actually designed Samsung's Hoam Art Museum in 1982.
- James Dyson claims "Chinese students are infiltrating British universities to steal technological and scientific secrets."
- Ending on a brighter note: Dutch architect Nanne de Ru takes home the Rotterdam-Maaskant Prize for Young Architects 2011.

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Starchitects shape Shanghai's urban cool: Given fresh impetus by last year's World Expo, there's every sign that forward-thinking (and upward-rising) Western-inspired architecture will continue to shape Shanghai's urban topography... "All of this city is a World Expo now"... -- Norman Foster; Michael Graves; Richard Rogers; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Paul Andreu; Gensler; Steven Holl; Zaha Hadid/Patrik Schumacher; A00 Architecture- Asia Times

Urban Planner André Sorensen Discusses Rebuilding Challenges in Japan: ...chose Japanese city planning in the early 1990s as his academic niche...if his area of study once seemed fairly obscure, it has suddenly taken on new relevance...Japan might be better off relocating cities to higher ground..."you need a new kind of settlement system."- Architectural Record

A Conversation with Raquel Ramati: ...about plaza bonuses, street life and the legacy of NYC Department of City Planning's Urban Design Group..."New York is a pioneer...A lot of cities have copied us. Not design-wise, not architecture-wise, but urban-design-wise, in the sense of getting developers to engage in certain ways...One thing that worries me is the branding of architecture..." [images]- Urban Omnibus

There's a "middle way" in architecture: Modernist streetscapes, or streetscapes that mix modernist and traditional buildings, old or new, create cacophony, never symphony. The best that can be said of modern architecture is that, at its least exciting...[it] bores us to tears...I (continue to) hang tough with beauty over novelty. By David Brussat -- Frank Gehry; Kieran Timberlake; Thom Mayne [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

New Flow Seen for Water Street: Lower Manhattan's Water Street could be next on the list of city thoroughfares slated for a major overhaul...Downtown Alliance is hoping that the street ends up with "that Park Avenue feel."- Wall Street Journal

Call for entries/Request for Proposals/RFP: Water Street Feasibility Study; submit questions and/or request clarifications by April 8; deadline: April 25- New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)

City welcomes nightclubs and bright architectural lighting: The Mann Theatres could be reborn as nightclubs as the city ramps up plans for a downtown arts and entertainment district...as an economic driver to boost fortunes downtown.- Glendale News-Press (California)

California Court Appeal: Modernization drive adds 50 new state courthouses with a modern twist...from one-courtroom buildings high in the Sierras to a 71-courtroom facility in San Diego. The selection of architects is equally wide-ranging, with 36 firms ranging from established names...to small but well-regarded offices... -- HOK; Richard Meier; SOM; Mark Cavagnero Associates; Safdie Rabines Architects; AECOM; Nacht & Lewis; RossDrulisCusenbery [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Glowing Future in Glendale: City Council approves Museum of Neon Art for busy Brand Avenue... potentially transformative new building...that will display an eclectic collection of neon art, ranging from beer signs to roadside billboards. -- Shimoda Design Group; AECOM [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

New Sioux City Public Museum will open April 23: ...under construction in the former JC Penny building in downtown...represents an extensive public-private partnership that began in 2005... -- Neumann Monson Victor Architects; Hilferty & Associates; Monadnock Media- Sioux City Journal (Iowa)

3XN Enters Innovative Cooperation with William McDonough + Partners: ...to develop one of Europe's first and most ambitious Cradle to Cradle® projects; the Green Solution House on the island of Bornholm, Denmark...a key element in Bornholm's 'Bright Green Island' vision... [links]- ArchDaily

Breuer, Baby! With its focus on lesser known works..."Marcel Breuer and Postwar America" [at Syracuse University] illuminated unfamiliar dimensions of the great architect's legacy...The old man looks good. By Jonathan Massey -- Barry Bergdoll; PARA-Project; Cheng+Snyder [images, slide show]- Places Journal

Imams' girl next door: Anne Frank museum to be Ground Zero mosque neighbor: The windows of the 1 million-square-foot office tower [at 100 Church St.] overlook Park 51...took out ads last year seeking a larger home in order to re-create the "secret annex"...The move would be more evidence that lower Manhattan is becoming a Mecca for religious and cultural groups of all stripes. - New York Post

Ruth Reed in failed bid to oust Harry Rich: RIBA president has failed in a bid to oust chief executive through a vote of 'no confidence'...News of the top-level debacle came to light just days after the institute announced an embarrassing U-turn on its policy to scrap the RIBA Trust..."It is the worst period of RIBA politics in my generation." - The Architects' Journal (UK)

A lopsided legal battle for companies named 'Samseong': Samsung uses corporate clout to root out long-established companies with the same name...Samaseong Architects, one of the oldest architectural firms in South Korea...changed its name from Samseong...even Samoo Architects and Engineering, which is viewed in the architecture world as a virtual subsidiary of the Samsung Group, chose the name "Samoo" mindful of Samsung. - The Hankyoreh (Korea)

Chinese students steal secrets: James Dyson has warned that Chinese students are infiltrating British universities to steal technological and scientific secrets...said he had evidence that the bugs were left by postgraduates to ensure the thefts continued after they had returned home. [via The Sunday Times]- The Australian

Nanne de Ru of Powerhouse Company Awarded Maaskant Prize for Young Architects 2011 - Dexitner

Book Review: "Immaterial World: Transparency in Architecture": Marc Kristal crystallizes increasingly complex notions of transparency with a light touch...invites additional research, reflection, and architecture. By Norman Weinstein -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Alejandro Aravena; Toyo Ito; Christian de Portzamparc - ArchNewsNow.com

A Tale of Two Pools: Q&A with Paulett Taggart: It was the sunniest of pools, it was the foggiest of pools, but the architectural approach is similar: there is nothing unnecessary. -- Paulett Taggart Architects; Mark Cavagnero Associates [images]- ArchNewsNow



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