

## Today's News - Monday, April 16, 2012

- Scruton and Grenfell add to the cacophony surrounding Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial: "Starchitects do not build for people - they build to shock" (instead of being "conscious contributors to a shared public space") + "If this higgledy-piggledy array of disparate objects spread over four football fields doesn't resemble sprawl, it certainly doesn't resemble good urbanism" (hence "Rybczynski is wrong").
- Doig delves into some of the dilemmas arising from landmarking historic districts: it "not only cements a city's best sections as enclaves for the rich, it has wider anti-urban reverberations."
- Brussat takes on Rudolph and Gehry: "Modern architecture is flawed not because so many of its buildings leak but because modernism sets itself against the human spirit."
- Protests force a Ukrainian developer to scrap plans for "a glitzy business center" Kiev's best-known tourist spot (but not before the bulldozers rumbled through): he promises to "return the original look to the destroyed facades" (now that's historic).
- Seattle is trying to find a compromise for Counterbalance Park where a sculpture honoring a wealthy benefactor has preservationists and landscape architects up in arms.
- Not holding an open competition for Australia's Venice Biennale Pavilion is a lost - and "wasted" - opportunity.
- Farrelly, on the other hand, thinks otherwise: "There are three good buildings in the Venice Giardini. Three out of 29. Now...there'll be a fourth; DCM's Australia Pavilion."
- She's not quite so upbeat about the Museum of Contemporary Art's "blocky new" Mordant Wing in Sydney: "It does it well, in its shoulder-padded, faux-brutalist way. But I wanted the enchanting, the sophisticated, the sublime - and it's not that."
- Campbell gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Leers Weinzapfel's copper-clad medical museum for the otherwise massive (mostly gray) Massachusetts General Hospital: "in the hands of inventive architects," the "tiny building succeeds in its goal of grabbing your attention, inciting your curiosity, and inviting you in."
- Taniguchi is very pleased with his new Asia Society Texas Center: "This is likely Houston's most perfect building," but "he was more pleased to see the energy of 1,000 guests moving through its airy spaces."
- BIG's "twisty tower" proposal "could be turning point for 'Vancouverism.'"
- A new tower in Cebu "is way more than just another soaring edifice" and "will surely paint a smile on Mother Earth's face."
- Pearman makes his way through the mud to cheer a new visitor center overlooking the Thames Estuary wetlands: "Hovering literally and visually over a reclaimed waste tip," it is "intriguing without being intrusive."
- Birmingham University finally gets its fourth dome, "creating a world-class rehearsal space in the worst form for one."
- Goldberger in conversation with Gehry (most amusing: the off-camera remarks at the start about the flower arrangement: "Where is Aalto when you need him?").
- (Re) Stitch Tampa design competition ends with an international shortlist of three (no pix to be found - yet).
- We couldn't resist: an eyeful of the "world's highest and longest valley suspension bridge" (in China, where else?!?) - oh...pedestrians welcome (unless you have acrophobia).

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Monumental Egos: "Starchitects" like Frank Gehry do not build for people - they build to shock: Architects, who once were...conscious contributors to a shared public space, have rebranded themselves as self-expressive artists, whose works are not designed to fit in to a prior urban fabric, but to stand out as tributes to the creative urge that gave rise to them. By Roger Scruton -- Daniel Libeskind; Richard Rogers; Norman Foster; Peter Eisenman; Rem Koolhaas - *The American Spectator*

Rybczynski is wrong on the Eisenhower memorial: Ike deserves better than Frank Gehry's disturbing tribute to the former president: If this higgledy-piggledy array of disparate objects spread over four football fields doesn't resemble sprawl, it certainly doesn't resemble good urbanism. By Milton Grenfell/National Civic Art Society - *Better! Cities & Towns* (formerly *New Urban News*)

Preserving history, or the 1%? New historic districts seem less interested in saving a neighborhood's character than driving up property values...Restricting development in pricey neighborhoods, the new thinking goes, not only cements a city's best sections as enclaves for the rich, it has wider anti-urban reverberations...pushing the usually planning-oriented New Urbanist crowd toward unlikely allies... By Will Doig -- Jane Jacobs; Edward Glaeser; Roberta Brandes Gratz; Jeffrey Chusid [[links](#)]-*Salon*

To demolish, or not to demolish? Whether to tear down buildings like the Orange County Government Center is part of a conversation larger than...the need to preserve history. Modern architecture is flawed not because so many of its buildings leak but because modernism sets itself against the human spirit that had animated architecture for three millennia - until it was almost totally snuffed out by modern architecture. By David Brussat -- Robin Pogrebin; Paul Rudolph; Frank Gehry [[images](#)]- *Providence Journal* (Rhode Island)

Akhmetov pulls development plans after protests: Ukraine's richest man has been forced to scrap plans to build a glitzy business centre at a historic tourist site in Kiev...a picturesque cobbled street and one of Ukraine's best-known tourist spots...But the protests came too late to stop bulldozers from destroying at least one 19th century building..."I promise that SCM will return the original look to the destroyed facades. We will also help the town restore Andriyivsky Descent." - *Kyiv Post* (Ukraine)

New sculpture pits Uptown Alliance against fans, family of renowned architect: ...took the initiative...to create a sculpture honoring a wealthy benefactor..."Counterbalance Park is about to be vandalized, and not by skateboarder or graffiti vandals"...was the final design work done by Robert Murase, who died in 2005...Seattle Parks and Recreation is currently working on a compromise... -- *Murase Architects* [[images](#)]- *KOMO News* (Seattle)

Op-Ed: Venice Biennale Pavilion: done, but not dusted: In the wake of Denton Corker Marshall's (DCM) recent win...would the Australia Council have achieved the same outcome with a truly open competition? ...in the case of a public, government-commissioned building of international significance, the fact that a diversity of responses was not generated is a wasted opportunity. By Christine Phillips and Tania Davidge [[images](#)]- *Australian Design Review*

Pavilion reflects a 'grown-up' Australia: There are three good buildings in the Venice Giardini. Three out of 29. These are Takamasa Yoshizaka's Japan Pavilion (1956), Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion (1962), and James Stirling's bookshop (1991). Now...there'll be a fourth; DCM's Australia Pavilion. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Denton Corker Marshall; Philip Cox (1988)- *Sydney Morning Herald*

Spatial delight gets lost at MCA: The best thing about the Museum of Contemporary Art's blocky new Mordant Wing is that at last you can believe there might actually be some contemporary art, down there at the Quay...It does it well, in its shoulder-padded, faux-brutalist way...But I wanted the enchanting, the sophisticated, the sublime - and it's not that. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Sam Marshall/Architect Marshall- *Sydney Morning Herald*

MGH museum gets design right, inside and out: It's unlikely that anyone has ever thought of Massachusetts General Hospital as a warm, delightful work of architecture...it sprawls, it's confusing...That's what's intriguing about the new Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation...MGH is trying for the first time, at least in recent years, to present a likable, interesting face to the world. By Robert Campbell -- Leers Weinzapfel; Brown Sardina [[image](#)]- *Boston Globe*

Asia Society Texas Center's design more than just lines, space: Yoshio Taniguchi said he is pleased with the new Center,

but not for the reasons some may expect...This is likely Houston's most perfect building...he was more pleased to see the energy of 1,000 guests moving through the building's airy spaces... - Houston Chronicle

Tower proposal could be turning point for 'Vancouverism': Danish designer wants to diversify the city's architectural footprint...took the challenge of working around the Granville Bridge to new creative heights. The twisty 49-storey tower begins as a triangle, ends as a square..."this project is standing on the shoulders of the previous generation of Vancouver architects and taking that experiment one step further"... -- Bjarke Ingels Group/BIG [image]- Vancouver Sun

More than apple of the eye: Architecture is more than just aesthetics...The proposed 17-floor Apple One Tower soon to rise in the Cebu Business District is way more than just another soaring edifice...the mixed-use (office and residential) building will surely paint a smile on Mother Earth's face. By Karl A.E.F. Cabilao, UAP -- Michael Torres/Archiglobal- Sun.Star (Philippines)

Hide and seek: Stealthily overlooking the Thames Estuary wetlands, van Heyningen and Haward's visitor centre for Essex Wildlife Trust is taking unobtrusive shape. Hovering literally and visually over a reclaimed waste tip...nestles into this new, man-made landscape in its fortress-lookout way, intriguing without being intrusive. By Hugh Pearman [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

Striking the right note: Bramall Music Building: Over a century after Birmingham University was built the final piece – a fourth domed faculty...has been completed. Visually it matches its mates but the construction beneath is definitely of its time...Creating a world-class rehearsal space in the worst form for one. By Jan Carlos Kucharek -- Aston Webb (1907); Glenn Howells Architects [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

Paul Goldberger in Conversation with Frank Gehry- Yale University

(Re) Stitch Tampa, an architectural and design competition yields architects' ideas for different downtown: Of the more than 40 submissions, about half came from outside the United States...chose three winners. -- Michael Chaveriat/Group Han (NYC); Luis Mola/Mola & Winkelmueller Architect (Berlin); Christopher Webb (Mumbai)- Tampa Tribune (Florida)

Heads up: The bridge that suspends belief: World's highest and longest valley suspension bridge opens in China...Aizhai bridge cuts down the journey time between two cities from several days to just 8 hours. [slide show]- Independent (UK)

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