Today’s News - Wednesday, July 11, 2012

• Russell gives a mixed review to London Olympics “conflicted architecture” (ArcelorMittal Orbit - “image of industrial apocalypse”), but it does seem to be "tightly focused on leaving an extraordinary legacy for a part of east London that’s seen little investment" (great slide show!).
• Byrnes ponders whether the very expensive, large, and "fancy" Olympics Media Center was worth it: "Its post-Olympics future has been a cause for concern - with its size and public cost seemingly too high to secure a healthy long term future."
• Olympic architect "psychogeographer" says Olympics architects "should retrain as dentists, where they would find a more suitable outlet for their sculptural skills” (reference to veneers, "lickspittle," and snake oil included).
• Olcayto bemoans plans that “could ruin UK’s finest gridiron townscape will lazy urban design," but at least "residents have thankfully chosen the least bad option.”
• Clark takes a long look at the "evolution of our increasingly privatized cities": are non-profit community development corporations doing a better job running things?
• Anderson examines the "data revolution" in the built environment that "could transform marketplace dynamics, but what does this data mean and how much is it worth?"
• From Down Under, Australia's AIA unveils images of its six installations for the Venice Biennale intended to "challenge traditional perceptions of what it is to be an architect."
• A new online forum "aims to address a wide range of issues that affect women architects" both in Australia and internationally.
• McAllen, Texas, boasts the largest library in the country - carved out of a cavernous space of a former Wal-Mart store.
• Chaban on the starchitect-studded shortlist to make over 425 Park Ave. (nary a Gehry - or any American architect - in sight).
• Bernstein cheers Rogers Marvel hitting its stride (so do we!).
• Pearson gives kudos to San Francisco's latest and "among the most ambitious" parklets (but swarms of comments are bitterly biting, which surprises us).
• Berger basks in a "playground renaissance" in Seattle parks, "but are we going too far with privatized zip lines?"
• Maurice Cox named director of Tulane City Center and new associate dean for community engagement at the university's School of Architecture (lucky Tulane!).
• We couldn’t resist: photographer Rüger rambles through another deserted Soviet base near Berlin (stunning slide show).
• Call for entries: 2012 Cleveland Design Competition: re-imagine the abandoned lower streetcar level of Cleveland's Detroit-Superior Bridge as a dynamic public space.

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A playground renaissance arrives at Seattle parks: ...playgrounds offer much more than before, but are we going too far with privatized zip lines? Despite our love of parks, they are also sources of sore controversy: ...if we can make kids' playgrounds better, we surely can figure out ways to add some spice for bigger kids. But good ideas work if they're in the right places. By Knute Berger - Crosscut (Seattle)

Maurice Cox named director of Tulane City Center: ...as well as the new associate dean for community engagement at the Tulane University School of Architecture in New Orleans. ...A co-founder of the national SEED (Social, Economic, Environmental, Design) Network, he served as design director of the National Endowment for the Arts from 2007-2010. - Tulane University

Germany's Vogelsang Ruins: A Visual Journey through a Deserted Soviet Base: When the Soviet troops withdrew, they left behind a vast military base in the forest near Berlin. Almost two decades later, photographic images show a haunting beauty, and reveal that nature is slowly taking over. By Jörg Rüger [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Call for entries: 2012 Cleveland Design Competition: Transforming The Bridge: re-imagine the abandoned lower streetcar level of Cleveland's Detroit-Superior Bridge as a dynamic public space, performance venue and pedestrian experience; cash prizes; Registration deadline: September 10; Submission deadline: October 5- Cleveland Design Competition


-- Toyo Ito & Associates: Ken Iwata Mother and Child Museum, Imabari City, Japan
-- Exhibition: "Show Me Your Model" - Danish Architecture Centre/DAC, Copenhagen, Denmark
-- Steven Holl Architects: Daeyang Gallery and House, Seoul, Korea

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