Today's News - Monday, November 5, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're b-a-a-c-k!! But not posting from home base...after hours on the road, we landed late last night in the land of electricity, heat, and running (hot!) water - with hard drive and cats in tow. There is so much to catch up with, and we'll do our best...it's just good to be online again after seven days in the dark and cold...our deepest thanks to all who e-mailed concern and good wishes.

• Catching up with ArcSpace, with projects in Cleveland, Marrakech, Park City, Utah, and Pittsburgh.
• A sad, sad day with reports on the passing of and tributes to Lebbeus Woods, Gae Aulenti, and David Resnick.
• Then there's Hurricane Sandy:
  - Davidson offers a most thoughtful assessment of how New York City "could live with the sea rather than fighting it."
  - Davies delves into a NYSERDA study from a year ago that looked at a scenario similar to Sandy: "it appears the downsides of density exceed its strengths when it comes to natural disasters."
  - An economist looks at the economic impact of the storm: it's "a big wake-up call regarding the region's vulnerability." and "should spark a vigorous debate about how to protect our infrastructure, communities and economy from flooding."
  - One bright piece of news: Sandy spared the first phase of the "Artlantic" public art project in Atlantic City, "part of an effort to transform the city's desolate public spaces."
  - In an excerpt from his forthcoming "Walkable City," Speck explains why, if we really want to stop climate change, it's time to move to the city and start walking.
  - Birnbaum explores the significance of the recent $100 million gift to Central Park, and what that means to urban parks across America: it "places the park and designed landscapes on the same plane with other philanthropic beneficiaries."
  - Badger explains how the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture’s “dream to create joint-degree programs in architecture and neuroscience seems not so far off.”
  - WSJ names its China Innovator of the Year Award in architecture to an architect who is redefining prefab, designing new buildings meant for earthquake-struck Sichuan province.
  - Kimmelman groks Brooklyn's Barclays Center: the arena itself is (mostly) a winner, but the overall Atlantic Yards project "exemplifies how the city got planning backward."
  - Good news: FLW's Phoenix house saved from the wrecking ball by an anonymous buyer who plans to preserve the "architectural gem."
  - Not-so-good news: Chicago's landmarks commission granted preliminary landmark designation to Goldberg's Prentice hospital, then (2 hours later) revoked landmark status (a convoluted, if depressing, tale well worth reading).
  - Plans to restore Havana's crumbling ballet school "raises ethical conundrum": "Is Foster going to take over the project, or will it continue to be Garatti's?"
  - Ending on a political note, Badger digs deep into Romney's "murky urban agenda: As Massachusetts governor, he was a believer in smart growth, climate change and mass transit. But the same man may not enter the White House, if he wins."
  - Vote for whoever you wish...but VOTE!!!

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A New Philanthropic Threshold: The Significance of $100 million gift to Central Park: ... places the park and designed landscapes on the same plane with other philanthropic beneficiaries -- cultural institutions...medical facilities, universities, etc. This helps elevate the understanding of landscape's fundamental role and value, and it could also spur similar acts of philanthropy for other parks in New York and around the country. By Charles A. Birnbaum/The Cultural Landscape Foundation [images, links] - Huffington Post

Corridors of the Mind: Could neuroscientists be the next great architects? ... Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture's dream to create joint-degree programs in architecture and neuroscience seems not so far off. By Emily Badger -- John Zeisel; Alison Whitelaw/Platt/Whitelaw Architects; Louis Kahn - Pacific Standard

All About the Bones: Zhu Jingxiang Redefines Prefab: The Chinese edition of The Wall Street Journal on Monday awarded [him] its China Innovator of the Year Award in architecture for his work designing new buildings meant for earthquake-struck Sichuan province...architecture isn't about making an eye-catching monument. [images] - Wall Street Journal

An Arena as Tough as Brooklyn, But Street Smart? This is two reviews, The first welcomes to town the new Barclays Center. The second, about the arena's context... gets trickier... Atlantic Yards project also exemplifies how the city... got planning backward... By Michael Kimmelman -- Pentagram; SHoP Architects; Frank Gehry; Ellerbe Becket/Aecom [slide show] - New York Times

Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home sold: An anonymous buyer has purchased Phoenix home... with the aim of preserving an architectural gem that, until last week, was threatened with demolition. - Arizona Republic

Behind the Decision to Deny Prentice Women's Hospital Landmark Status: Around 4:00, Chicago Commission on Landmarks voted unanimously to grant a preliminary landmark designation, calling it a "boldly sculptural building"... voted at 6:45 p.m. to revoke landmark status... Northwestern is preparing for a design competition in 2013 for the new research facility. -- Bertrand Goldberg [links] - Chicago Magazine

Dancer Carlos Acosta's plan to restore crumbling Cuban ballet school raises architectural-ethical conundrum: Coyula called for a definitive plan to be made public so people can judge the project on its merits rather than on rumor... urged Garatti to recognize that some change is inevitable after a half-century. (AP) -- Vittorio Garatti; Norman Foster/Foster + Partners; Mario Coyula [images] - Washington Post

Romney's Murky Urban Agenda: As Massachusetts governor, he was a believer in smart growth, climate change and mass transit. But the same man may not enter the White House, if he wins. By Emily Badger [links] - The Atlantic Cities