

Today's News - Wednesday, August 28, 2013

- China's "skyward aspirations have inspired incredulity tinged with hostility," with the planned 202-story Sky City (to be built using prefab modules) becoming "the lightning rod for criticism of the trend."
- Ransford issues a rallying call for Vancouver "to launch the mother-of-all collaborative planning processes" for a city-wide master plan for the future.
- Meanwhile, Vancouver's Acton Ostry Architects pays heed to both NIMBYs and YIMBYs to design "a more nuanced and richly textured approach to high density that reflects a neighborhood's character."
- Across the Big Pond, the British government considers scrapping the Code for Sustainable Homes; needless to say, the UKGBC has "accused the government of lacking a vision for sustainable homes and throwing away years of hard work."
- Hawthorne gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Corner's pair of parks in Santa Monica: though he may have played it "a bit too safe," they are still "unquestionably a rare example of farsighted urban planning - which may in the end be its most important legacy."
- St. Petersburg, FL, voters sink Maltzan's competition-winning Lens pier project; they didn't buy the argument that it "would be an icon that would help brand the city internationally."
- Saffron gives thumbs-up to the "elegant redesign" of Philly's Franklin Court complex: the "dire warnings of architectural Armageddon" didn't pan out as "both Franklin's memory and Venturi's iconic design were well-treated."
- A young New York firm gives a Beirut department store a face lift: "pretty is as pretty does - the real test of the building's success was whether the investment would pay off on the sales floor. So far, so good" (great pix).
- A battle is brewing over a proposed façadectomy for "one of Scotland's best post-war buildings" on Edinburgh's St. Andrew Square.
- A fascinating look at how architectural renderings are used as "weapons" in real estate wars: their "most important mission is to gin up enthusiasm for a project, or to incite resistance."
- For powerful proof, check out a sampling of some of the renderings by starchitects on the shortlist to design the World Expo 2017 exhibition in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- Bernstein parses the U.S. State Department's request for proposals for the U.S. pavilion at the 2015 World Expo in Milan: the RFP is not a design competition, so renderings not required, but must include plans for raising \$25 to \$45 million to build, run, then raze the pavilion - September 15 is "a seemingly impossible deadline for any firm without deep pockets and expo experience."
- Litt reports on "renegade bicycle enthusiasts" bringing the "illegal practice of 'guerrilla striping'" to Cleveland; while "the city will investigate the striping and 'take appropriate action,'" a "steady stream of bicyclists used the lanes - and motorists generally respected the stripes."
- Nigeria and India look to take steps to stem the tide of architectural "quacks."
- A good reason to be in Amsterdam next week: inamsterdam World Interiors Event 2013 "will highlight the historic, cultural, artistic, and economic importance of interior architecture and design."

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Across China, Skyscrapers Brush the Heavens: ...home to 60 of the world's 100 tallest buildings now under construction...skyward aspirations...have inspired incredulity tinged with hostility...202-story "Sky City" is supposed to be assembled in only four months from factory-built modules...set off a burst of national introspection...about whether Chinese municipal leaders and developers have gone too far in their increasingly manic reach for the skies...Sky City...has become the lightning rod for criticism of the trend. - New York Times

Evolving neighbourhoods need master plan: Vancouver is all about change - and we all know change is one thing we can count on, so we'd better be ready to adapt as necessary...We have a collection of neighbourhood visions and parts of plans, but we don't have one city-wide master plan...it is time to launch the mother-of-all collaborative planning processes... By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

Developers build-in a community voice: For many architects, the community planning process can be a daunting one...can often produce dubious aesthetic results..."The more certainty there is around community values and desires the better"...What the architects came up with was a more nuanced and richly textured approach to high density that reflects the [Mount Pleasant] neighbourhood character. -- Acton Ostry Architects; PwL Partnership Landscape Architects [image]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Code for Sustainable Homes could be scrapped: The UK Green Building Council immediately accused the government of lacking a vision for sustainable homes and throwing away years of hard work. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Nature sinks its roots into Santa Monica's new parks: ...James Corner of High Line fame creates an urban refuge that plays it a bit too safe...Still, the project [Ken Genser Square and Tongva Park] is unquestionably a rare example of farsighted urban planning...which may in the end be its most important legacy. By Christopher Hawthorne -- James Corner Field Operations; Frederick Fisher and Partners [slide show]- Los Angeles Times

St. Petersburg voters reject Lens project: ...the city will have to start over with plans to either replace or refurbish the aging inverted pyramid pier...Lens supporters argued the dramatic design would be an icon that would help brand the city internationally...Ultimately, voters didn't buy it. Most who rejected it said they think the design was a bad fit. -- Michael Maltzan Architecture- Tampa Tribune (Florida)

An elegant redesign for Ben Franklin - and Venturi: Franklin Court complex...reopened last week, after three years of planning, construction, and dire warnings of architectural Armageddon. Just as the experts predicted, everything is different. But different is also better. Actually, much that is important remains. By Inga Saffron -- Venturi & Rauch (1976); Quinn Evans; CassonMann; Robert Venturi; Denise Scott Brown [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Face Lift: A New York architecture firm creates a new skin for an established department store in Beirut, Lebanon, giving it a younger, more fashion-forward look...pretty is as pretty does...For ABC Dbayeh Department Store the real test of the building's success was whether their investment would pay off on the sales floor. So far, so good... By Jessica Dheere -- Eric Bunge/Mimi Hoang/nARCHITECTS [slide shows]- Architectural Record

Edinburgh referred to ombudsman over 'scrapbook facadism' plan: Malcolm Fraser joins conservationists fighting to save..."one of Scotland's best post-war buildings"...CDA has submitted plans to replace the Scottish Provident Institution on St Andrew Square and two neighbouring buildings...proposing to partly rebuild the facade of the grade B-listed SPI. -- Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul (1966) [image]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Idealized or Caricature, Architectural Renderings Are Weapons in Real Estate: An architectural rendering is a premonition of sorts...But its most important mission...is to gin up enthusiasm for a project, or to incite resistance. So the real purpose...is not to predict the future. Their real goal is to control it. -- Craig Copeland/Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects; Michael Devonshire/Jan Hird Pokorny Associates; Handel Architects; Robert Moses [images]- New York Times

Zaha Hadid, UNStudio and Snøhetta compete to design World Expo 2017 exhibition in Astana, Kazakhstan: ...among the 45 architects shortlisted... some of the proposals could be combined to form a "symbiosis project." -- Safdie Architects; Coop Himmelb(l)au; J. Mayer H; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture; Massimiliano and Doriana Fuksas; Mecanoo; HOK; Stefano Boeri; GMP Architekten; Serie Architects [images]- Dezeen

Call for entries: U.S. Seeks Proposals for 2015 World Expo Pavilion: ...hoping to make a strong showing in Milan...Proposers are expected to include plans for raising the projected \$25 to \$45 million cost of building, running, and then razing the pavilion...drawings are not required—the RFP is not a design competition...Proposals are due on September 15...a seemingly impossible deadline for any firm without deep pockets and expo experience. By Fred A. Bernstein [link to RFP]- Architectural Record

'Guerrilla stripers' add bike lanes to Detroit Avenue in Cleveland to protest slow city action: Renegade bicycle enthusiasts installed makeshift "bike lanes"...over the weekend, bringing to Cleveland the illegal practice of "guerrilla striping"...A steady stream of bicyclists used the lanes...and motorists generally respected the stripes. By Steven Litt- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Stamp Out Quacks With Reduction Of Charges: The federal government has advised architects and other professionals in the building industry to review their charges...to discourage people from patronizing quacks who design buildings that easily collapse...appealed to the Nigeria Institute of Architects to creatively proffer new solutions that will address the nation's housing challenges.- Channels Television (Nigeria)

Quack, quack! Whither genuine architects? It's high time we prioritised what we expect of architectural profession, had full clarity about each profession's roles and assumed full responsibilities...With such a large volume of construction underway...have we pondered how the professional responsible for the same — the architect — is selected? By Yatin Pandya/Footprints E.A.R.T.H.- DNA/Daily News & Analysis (India)

Amsterdam World Interiors Event 2013: will highlight the historic, cultural, artistic and economic importance of interior architecture and design, bringing together 1000-1200 professionals from over 45 countries. September 5-7- Dutch Association of Interior Architects BNI

- Estudi D'arquitectura Toni Gironès: Transmission Space for Megalithic Dolmen of Séro, Artesa de Segre, Spain
- "Eastern Promises: Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia": shows us why architecturally interested heads should turn toward East Asia in the coming years; MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna
- OMA is Rem Koolhaas. Rem Koolhaas is OMA...one should not make the mistake of equating the two.
- SANAA: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
- Eduardo Souto de Moura: Viana do Castelo Multipurpose Pavilion, Viana do Castelo, Portugal- ArcSpace

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