

Today's News - Tuesday, September 24, 2013

- Tributes to a young, inspiring Australian/British architect gunned down in Nairobi siege.
- We lose van Sweden, whose landscape architecture "celebrated the seasonal splendor of the American meadow while promoting its inherent ecological and sustainable values."
- Eyefuls of Collective-LOK's winning design in the Van Alen Institute's Ground/Work competition.
- Who wasn't at Friday's TEDCity2.0 conference in New York (with link to their talks)?
- A firm known for its towers of steel and concrete, SOM joins the "movement to construct tall buildings largely with wood as an environmentally friendlier alternative."
- RMIT's Ware cheers the NewActon precinct on Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin that offers a "fine-grain deviation from the Griffins' monumental master plan."
- It's a health-minded sort of day: Researchers at UC Berkeley set out to find out if smart growth planning principles shape activity and health: "Kids in the smart growth neighborhood showed local activity levels that were 46% higher than those of kids who resided in the ticky-tacky suburbs."
- Grabar reports on some "amazing" new studies that "show nature reduces aggression, fights depression, improves mental function" - with "provocative implications for architecture and urban design."
- A Detroit neighborhood partners with a university urban planning program to transform itself into "one of the greenest neighborhoods in the city" by creating complete streets and a more walkable environment, with a clinic for uninsured residents and a farmers market included.
- Yale students are bringing a prefab house to "an economically challenged neighborhood" in New Haven.
- Wainwright weighs in with some woebegone tales of what it's like to live and work in past Stirling Prize winners that include "leaky roofs, sweltering space-bubbles, windows that won't open - and playgrounds you can't play in."
- Betsky looks at the problems with modernizing old museums: the Yale University Art Gallery and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are both "superb examples of making the old shine, though they also make apparent the problems inherent in old buildings."
- Hatherley hails the listing of the Preston bus station as "a spectacular victory for a conservation campaign for the sort of building that conservationists used to oppose bitterly"; too bad the Birmingham central library can't celebrate as well.
- Pogrebin brings us more details on the battle of the blue-bloods swirling around plans to replace porta-potties with a small pavilion at the Breakers, the Vanderbilt family's "cottage" in Newport, RI (Brussat is for the new this time).
- Bey has a few reservations about the DePaul arena in Chicago, but on the whole, the "building as depicted doesn't seem like an architectural afterthought. If it has to be built, at least the makings of a bright, transparent, urban-sensitive building are there."
- Dixon revisits a 1955 P/A Award winner, Saarinen's Milwaukee War Memorial Center "that later sprouted an addition by Santiago Calatrava - which is seen by some as a worthy complement to Saarinen's work, and by others as an ostentatious rival."
- One we couldn't resist (Trekkies that we are, how could we resist!?!): "a wonderfully retro new book" that renders all 80 original "Star Trek" episodes as movie posters.

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Tributes paid to British Australian architect murdered in Nairobi siege: The London-based, Australian-born architect Ross Langdon – who previous worked for John McAslan and David Adjaye – and his pregnant partner Elif Yavuz were among 62 hostages killed...was completing an HIV centre in Uganda...and was about to start work on a fossil museum in Kenya... -- Regional Associates; Mangera Yvars Architects - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Obituary: In Memoriam: James van Sweden, 78: ...an innovative designer and prolific author...He and the late Wolfgang Oehme created the "New American Garden"...The style celebrated the seasonal splendor of the American meadow while promoting its inherent ecological and sustainable values. -- Oehme van Sweden & Associates [images]- The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)

Van Alen Institute Announces Ground/Work Competition Winner: Collective-LOK Selected to Design New Venue for Architecture and Urbanism Nonprofit [images]- Van Alen Institute

What "City2.0" Could Look Like: Speakers at Friday's TEDCity2.0 conference in New York discussed the issues involved in designing modern cities. -- Jeff Speck; Janette Sadik-Khan; Enrique Peñalosa; Christopher Downey; Lance Hosey [link to videos]- Architect Magazine

Towers of Steel? Look Again: The movement to construct tall buildings largely with wood as an environmentally friendlier alternative to steel and concrete has received a boost from an unusual source — a leading architectural firm known for its towers of steel and concrete. -- William F. Baker/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); MGA | Michael Green Architecture; Andrew Waugh/Waugh Thistleton Architects - New York Times

New Acton Precinct: On Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin, the NewActon precinct mixes community art and gardens, retail and hospitality with residential apartment buildings set amidst gardens. Dr SueAnne Ware of RMIT welcomes this fine-grain deviation from the Griffins' monumental masterplan. -- Walter Burley Griffin; Marion Mahony Griffin; Oculus; hungerford+edmunds; Fender Katsalidis Architects [images]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Bad Urban Planning Is Why You're Fat: What you put in your mouth can make you fat. But so can the way your neighborhood is designed: University of California, Berkeley, researchers wanted to see if...smart growth planning principles...could shape activity and health...Kids in the smart growth neighborhood showed local activity levels that were 46% higher than those of kids who resided in the ticky-tacky Chino suburbs... By Sydney Brownstone - Fast Company

Parks make us smarter — science proves it! Amazing new studies show nature reduces aggression, fights depression, improves mental function: ... has provocative implications for architecture and urban design...environmental psychology exists to evaluate how people perceive and interact with their surroundings. Architects, too, have been trying to integrate neuroscience into their work... By Henry Grabar -- University of Edinburgh; Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture- Salon

The promise of the Joy-Southfield community: West Side neighborhood embraces healthy living practices, including a clinic for residents without insurance and a farmers market...partnered with Wayne State University's Master of Urban Planning program to produce..."Going Green for Growth"...transforming itself into one of the greenest neighborhoods in the city by attracting green industry...and creating complete streets and a more walkable environment. - Model D (Detroit)

Yale School of Architecture brings renowned student building project to West Campus: ...a single-family house in an economically challenged neighborhood in New Haven...prefabricating the structure at Yale's 136-acre West Campus. [images]- Yale News

I'm in a Stirling prize winner ... get me out of here! It is the most coveted award in British architecture. But what's it like to live or work in a building that won it? ...a story of leaky roofs, sweltering space-

bubbles, windows that won't open – and playgrounds you can't play in: Scottish Parliament; Accordia housing; Laban Centre; Lord's media centre; MAXXI; Evelyn Grace Academy... By Oliver Wainwright -
- Enric Miralles Benedetta Tagliabue/EMBT; Herzog & de Meuron; Squire and Partners; Zaha Hadid
[images]- Guardian (UK)

The Problems with Modernizing Old Museums: The awkward moments in the renovations at the Yale University Art Gallery and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts: Both are superb examples of making the old shine, though they also make apparent the problems inherent in old buildings. By Aaron Betsky --
Ennead Architects; Foster + Partners; Louis Kahn; Egerton Swartwout; Guy Lowell- Architect Magazine

Preston bus station: a sublime choice for grade II listing: English Heritage had tried before to have the brutalist building listed. Luckily, commercial lobbying didn't get in the way this time: ...a spectacular victory...Birmingham central library was also recommended...for listing more than once, and refused more than once. By Owen Hatherley -- Building Design Partnership/BDP (1969); John Madin-
Guardian (UK)

Squabble Disrupts a Refuge for the Rich: The Vanderbilt family's "cottage" in Newport, R.I., draws 400,000 visitors a year. A proposal to build a visitors center on the grounds is raising hackles...would be built to the left of the Breakers entrance, where a tent and portable toilets have been for the last decade..."I don't know of any museum that makes you go to the bathroom in a port-o-john..." By Robin Pogrebin -- Epstein Joslyn Architects [images]- New York Times

Design, architect approved for new South Loop arena: McPier hopes design makes arena a better neighbor: ... McCormick Place Event Center that will double as home for the DePaul University Blue Demons basketball program...The building as depicted doesn't seem like an architectural afterthought. If it has to be built, at least the makings of a bright, transparent, urban-sensitive building are there. By Lee Bey -- Pelli Clarke Pelli [images]- WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

A Landmark With Growth Potential: Eero Saarinen's Milwaukee War Memorial Center [1957] included an art museum that later sprouted an addition by Santiago Calatrava...which is seen by some as a worthy complement to Saarinen's work, and by others as an ostentatious rival. By John Morris Dixon [image; 1955 P/A Award]- Architect Magazine

All 80 Original "Star Trek" Episodes Rendered As Movie Posters: What if some of the top designers of the '60s got a chance to make movie posters for each episode? That is the conceit of "Star Trek: The Art of Juan Ortiz," a wonderfully retro new book... [images]- Fast Company / Co. Design

Book Review: "Never Built Los Angeles" by Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin; foreword by Thom Mayne: The contradictions and challenges of Los Angeles as a metropolitan conceit of perpetual promise continue. By Sam Hall Kaplan- ArchNewsNow



-- Tham & Videgård Arkitekter: Summerhouse, Lagnö, Sweden: a restrained yet contrast-filled reinterpretation of the Swedish gabled boat houses.

-- Tadao Ando: He spent his early years as a professional boxer and truck driver, until he...taught himself architecture and eventually became one of the Great Fathers of contemporary architecture.

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