

Today's News - Tuesday, June 24, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: We head to Chicago tomorrow for the AIA convention and (very) early-morning keynotes by some (very) notable folks, so we won't be posting again until Monday, June 30 (hence today's news is a bit longer than usual).

- ANN Feature: Peters parses the Venice Biennale: "Fundamentals" is certainly not the typical way one would think of displaying architecture.
- Medina offers a thoughtful (and often amusing) guide the Biennale's hits, misses (ouch!), and surprises.
- Kamin reports plans for the launch next year of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, "a nod to the prestigious Venice Biennale" that boosters hope will be "the Davos of architecture."
- Brake descends into the "somber" 9/11 Memorial Museum: it is "a powerful project of documentation for future generations" that "shows humanity at its most depraved and its most noble - few will forget what they have seen."
- Bevan, on a lighter note, is having a fine time in Radic's Serpentine Pavilion: "Like a giant egg or a Stone Age spaceship, it is a symbol of hope and something more mysterious...a more playful, childlike approach to building than most architects will allow themselves" (if only they'd let the grass grow wild).
- Russell explains why the Rebuild by Design effort "could radically alter our relationship with the water's edge" and "deserves a chance to show that it can save us from such top-down folly" as federal "inertia and hidebound policies."
- A fascinating look at how the development of two decommissioned military bases in the Chicago area "wound up having divergent fates - one soared, and the other staggered," and "each illuminates some contemporary lessons in mixed-use planning."
- Wainwright weighs in on Heatherwick's proposed garden bridge in London: "Take one vogueish designer and one icon-hungry mayor and what do you get - can anyone actually say what the £175m bridge is for?...there is a niggling feeling that it is a spectacular solution to a problem that doesn't really exist."
- Murg reports that Gehry's Fondation Louis Vuitton, originally set to open in 2010, has finally set an opening date for the "contemporary art-filled cloud of glass - an articulated nimbostratus" hovering over a swath of Paris's Bois de Boulogne.
- Meanwhile there seems to be a Catch 22 gumming up plans to resurrect Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace: "the council wants more detail on the plans before they sign off, but the developer wants the land deal secured before they put more money into developing the plans."
- Hadid proves sometimes coming in third in a competition pays off in the end as she inks deal to design the Iraqi parliament, even though no one is quite sure what the design looks like (and considering current events, things are most likely to remain pretty iffy).
- Hawthorne pens a most thoughtful, thorough profile of Julia Morgan: "Her quietly revolutionary architecture is finally earning its due" with a posthumous AIA Gold Medal; "her consistency, her distaste for self-promotion, the obstacles she faced as a female architect don't fully explain why her work was admired rather than celebrated for so long" (a great read and great pix, too!).
- The National Trust's list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places for 2014 includes a Frank Lloyd Wright house and the New Jersey Palisades (and keeps an eye on the possible demise of Federal Historic Tax Credits).
- UNESCO adds 26 sites to the 2014 World Heritage List.
- Toronto hands out its 2014 Pug Awards for the city's best and worst new buildings (architects of the "worst" are not named).
- Weekend diversions:
- Lange cheers Nakaya's "Veil" that "enshrines" Philip Johnson's Glass House in a layer of mist: it "manages the difficult trick of creating a new frame for a familiar architectural monument while leaving only a spatter of raindrops on the landmark."
- Vienna's MAK turns an exhibit into a posthumous tribute to Hollein, opening tomorrow.
- Heathcote gives two thumbs-ups to McGuirk's "Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture": it is a "fine and timely book. None of the ideas solve all the problems but together they present an intriguing picture of an activist urbanism and architecture that has made a real difference."
- A fascinating excerpt (and fab photos!) from Rohan's "The Architecture of Paul Rudolph" that explains why "Rudolph's sense of monumentality and urbanism were better suited to the public realm."
- Schumacher cheers Thorne-Thomsen's "Frank Lloyd Wright for Kids": "I wouldn't be at all surprised if this book were responsible for putting a few architects into the world."
- Speaking of children, Lange picks her four favorite building toys that still get played with in her house almost every day + Mini Arch's new toys to "turn children into budding architects."

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ANN Feature: Notes from the Giardini - La Biennale di Venezia 2014: "Fundamentals" is certainly not the typical way one would think of displaying architecture. By Terri Peters -- Rem Koolhaas - ArchNewsNow

Biennale Breakdown: A Guide to the National Pavilions: All the highlights, misses, and surprises from architecture's biggest event: "Fundamentals" is a self-styled assault on prevailing architectural culture...not only are things not alright, they are rapidly falling to bits. By Samuel Medina -- Rem Koolhaas [images] - Metropolis Magazine

Chicago plans global architectural expo for 2015: City strives for tourism and cachet like the vaunted show in Venice: The upstart exhibition...will be called the Chicago Architecture Biennial, a nod to the prestigious Venice Biennale...but the event faces a crowded field...will be "the Davos of architecture"... By Blair Kamin -- Sarah Herda; Joseph Grima - Chicago Tribune

Crit> 9/11 Memorial Museum: Alan G. Brake descends into Davis Brody Bond's somber museum...Given the subject matter, the architecture is almost beside the point...The experience is immersive...a powerful project of documentation for future generations...shows humanity at its most depraved and its most noble. Some may be unsure of the purpose of evoking such horror, but few will forget what they have seen. -- Michael Arad; Peter Walker; Snøhetta; Fisher Marantz Stone; Thinc; Local Projects; Layman Design [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

The Serpentine Pavilion has landed: Like a giant egg or a Stone Age spaceship, Smiljan Radic's pavilion is a symbol of hope and something more mysterious...it is a more playful, childlike approach to building than most architects will allow themselves... By Robert Bevan [images] - Evening Standard (UK)

Creating resilience against natural disaster: A federal design competition could radically alter our relationship with the water's edge: Strangled by inertia and hidebound policies, the federal government underwrites most of the rebuilding that occurs again and again in places of known danger. The Rebuild by Design effort, in seeking local and agile ways of dealing with coastlines, deserves a chance to show that it can save us from such top-down folly. By James S. Russell -- Scape; Interboro Partners; MIT; OMA; Henk Ovink - Al Jazeera America

Why one suburban development soared, and the other staggered: Two decades ago, the Chicago area collected...vast tracts of land beneath what had been the Glenview Naval Air Station and the U.S. Army's Fort Sheridan...The sites wound up having divergent fates...analysis of each illuminates some contemporary lessons in mixed-use planning. - Crain's Chicago Business

London's Garden bridge: "It feels like we're trying to pull off a crime": Take one vogueish designer, one national treasure and one icon-hungry mayor and what do you get? A floating forest across the Thames. But can anyone actually say what the £175m garden bridge is for? "It's basically just two big planters"...there is a niggling feeling that...it is a spectacular solution to a problem that doesn't really exist. By Oliver Wainwright -- Thomas Heatherwick; Dan Pearson - Guardian (UK)

Frank Gehry-Designed Fondation Louis Vuitton Set for October Opening: Once upon a time, LVMH honcho Bernard Arnault announced his grand plan...would hover over a 2.5-acre swath of Paris's Bois de Boulogne like a contemporary art-filled cloud of glass...it would be open by - 2010...opening day is finally in sight...an articulated nimbostatus in the leafy Jardin d'Acclimation...coincide with the architect's first European retrospective...at the Centre Pompidou. By Stephanie Murg [image]- UnBeige

Delays hit high-profile competition to resurrect Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace: ..."negotiations are stuck in a bit of a catch 22...the council wants more detail on the plans before they sign off...but the developer wants the land deal secured before they put more money into developing the plans." -- David Chipperfield Architects; Grimshaw/FutureCity; Haworth Tompkins Architects; Marks Barfield Architects; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Zaha Hadid Architects/Anish Kapoor- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Zaha Hadid topples winner to land Iraqi parliament: Architect came third in original competition: ...the deal has been shrouded in secrecy with leading Iraqi architectural critic Ihsan Fethi complaining that he has yet to see what Hadid's design looks like...The competition was originally won by a team led by 10-year-old London practice Assemblage...with Capita Symonds second... [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Julia Morgan: Her quietly revolutionary architecture...is finally earning its due: ...prolific output is one reason it has taken so long for her work to win the sort of national notice symbolized by the AIA Gold Medal, which has never before gone to a woman...those qualities—her consistency, her distaste for self-promotion, the obstacles she faced as a female architect—don't fully explain why her work was admired rather than celebrated for so long. By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Architect Magazine

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places: Frank Lloyd Wright's Spring House, Florida; The Palisades, New Jersey; Shoccoe Bottom, Virginia (of "12 Years a Slave" fame); Watch Status: Federal Historic Tax Credit; etc. [links to images, info]- National Trust for Historic Preservation/NTHP

In 2014, the World Heritage Committee added 26 sites to the World Heritage List. - UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Winners of 2014 Pug Awards announced: The 10th annual Pug Awards invited all Torontonians to cast their votes for the best and worst new buildings from a field of 43... -- Saucier + Perrotte Architectes/ZAS Architects; Stantec Architecture/KPMB Architects/HDR Architecture/Diamond Schmitt Architects/Maintain Architects; Ventin Group/E.R.A. Architects; Core Architects - Canadian Architect

Glass House Stages Fujiko Nakaya's "Veil" exhibit: Nakaya's artwork enshrouds Philip Johnson's landmark in a layer of mist, to striking effect: ..manages the difficult trick of creating a new frame for a familiar architectural monument...while leaving only a spatter of raindrops on the landmark. "It alters it greatly but only momentarily"... By Alexandra Lange -- Henry Urbach [images]- Architect Magazine

MAK turns exhibit into tribute to Hans Hollein: The Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna will be turning their planned retrospective on the late architect into a posthumous tribute..."Hollein"...June 25 through Oct. 5- Austrian Times

"Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture" by Justin McGuirk: ...offers lessons for an urbanising world...fine and timely book...takes a road trip to seek out not only the problems caused by rapid growth but also the most radical and influential ideas to have emerged in response over the past couple of decades...None of the ideas...solve all the problems but together they present an intriguing picture of an activist urbanism and architecture that has made a real difference. By Edwin Heathcote -- Alejandro Aravena; Teddy Cruz - Financial Times (UK)

Scenographic Urbanism: Paul Rudolph and the Public Realm: Of all the various building types, Rudolph most wanted corporate commissions, especially skyscrapers; but he was least successful in this field...Indeed, Rudolph's sense of monumentality and urbanism were better suited to the public realm. adapted from "The Architecture of Paul Rudolph" by Timothy M. Rohan [images]- Places Journal

Children's book strikes all the (Frank Lloyd) Wright notes: What makes "Frank Lloyd Wright for Kids: His Life and Ideas" by Kathleen Thorne-Thomsen...quite smart is its simple trust of kids...I wouldn't be at all surprised if this book were responsible for putting a few architects into the world; it's really a book about culture, nature, geometry and American history as well as architecture and Wright. By Mary Louise Schumacher - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Four Building Toys for the Ages: We have a lot of building toys. When you are an architecture critic, married to an architect, people tend to give you one set after another...four that still get played with almost every day. By Alexandra Lange -- Lego Duplo; Tubation; Magna-Tiles; Zoob - AlexandraLange.net

Mini Archi toys turn children into budding architects: The popular series of toys for design-conscious children is expanding..."Mini Box" is a modular construction game built from natural wood..."Modular House" is a contemporary construction with minimalistic lines... - The Star (Malaysia)

2014 Venice Architecture Biennale: To move away from the notion of 'starchitects' was one of the primary goals of Rem Koolhaas...And the concept works very well...The overall effect is impressive, but it is also bordering on the banal - or even depressing - as it seems to illustrate the diminishing influence of the architect. By Ulf Meyer [images]- ArcSpace

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