Today's News - Tuesday, July 29, 2014

- Sad news from opposite ends of the globe: Heathcote and many others pay tribute to Richard MacCormac, who was "never cynical and always open to new ideas. But the BBC experience bruised him. It was a painful and undignified end to a generous and public-spirited career" and he was "a cherubic gigolo".

- A "farewell to a legend of Australian architecture," Blair Wilson, who headed "Australia's longest running architecture dynasty."

- A great debate among some of our faves re: whether starchitects are ruining cities' skylines: "Starchitects aren't the problem," says Arieff; "Here's to the demise of star architects," says Willis (Chakrabarti and Borrego Cubero weigh in, too).

- King parses Foster's plan for San Francisco's second-tallest tower: it "needs to go on a diet" - its scale is "more daunting than dynamic. It needs to be uplifting, not overstuffed."

- Meanwhile, Hughes delves into Foster's "New York moment," with four Manhattan buildings in the works: "His buildings might not be the tallest, priciest or zaniest. So what's fueling the current Foster fad?" (being a starchitect has something to do with it).

- Heathcote comments on "Room for Debate: Are the 'Starchitects' Ruining Cities? Are superstar architects ruining city skylines?" It's "an attempt to create a language that melded modernism and tradition in a manner that was less brash than the excesses of postmodernism – and less tongue-in-cheek. Never cynical and always open to new ideas...But the BBC experience bruised him. It was a painful and undignified end to a generous and public-spirited career."

- Tributes pour in for Richard MacCormac, former RIBA President and founder of MJP Architects -- Stephen Hodder/RIBA; Catherine Croft/Twentieth Century Society; Ricky Burdett/LSE Cities/Urban Age Programme; Chris Dyson/Chris Dyson Architects; "A fine, fiercely intelligent architect, passionate, and a cherubic gigolo." - Hugh Pearman - The Architects' Journal

- Tatum to announce architects for waterfront museum..."star-studded team, a surprise given Lucas' penchant for traditional design...If the architects produce a design gem that upgrades the landscape of the Museum Campus, the cluster of shoreline museums to which the Lucas Museum would belong, it could soften, or at least blunt, opposition. By Blair Kamin - Heatherwick Studio - Chicago Tribune

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- Can a Frank Gehry design help change the dynamic of Watts? - has signed on to design a campus for the Children's Institute, Inc. (CII), a social services not-for-profit...If all goes according to plan...will represent an intriguing architectural addition to a neighborhood best known for...Iconic Watts Towers - as well as some pretty dour institutional architecture...the scale of this project may be small. But in some respects it’s as important as anything he’s built in Bilbao."

- Bjarke Ingels Group: The BKG founder broke the competition rules to win the Danish Maritime Museum in Helsingør. But the finished project, an "invisible icon" mostly concealed behind the walls of a dry dock, suggests that the notorious architectural
prankster may be growing up. By Owen Pritchard [images]- Icon (UK)

Edifice Complex: Architecture Leaps From Commodity to Collectible: Crystal Bridges acquisition reflects an increasingly popular attitude toward architecturally significant homes among private collectors. Such buyers now see that historic homes can be collected, preserved, and appreciated much like fine art. By Anna Kats -- Bachman Wilson House/Frank Lloyd Wright; Lawrence and Sharon Tarantino; Farnsworth House/Mies van der Rohe- Artinfo

An ode to the humblest building on Wacker: The squat gray office building at 110 N. Wacker Drive won't win any beauty contests or architectural awards...I've come to appreciate its individuality and perseverance as its surroundings change...Perhaps [it] is on its way out. On the other hand, it has beaten the odds before...the little building has staying power. By Joe Cahill -- Graham, Anderson, Probst and White (1956)- Crain's Chicago Business

Revive City West? The recently-opened retail complex combines fashion, high culture, and a resourceful spirit to reinvent the shopping experience...housed in a landmarked Modernist building called Bikinihaus...the centerpiece of Bikini Berlin, a doggedly hip shopping and design hub...pursuits to a scrappy authenticity, what is called the "Berlin attitude" and shorthand for the city's seedy-chic, poor-but-sexy ethos. -- SAQ Architects - Metropolis Magazine

Shipping containers to activate the city: Canberra's West Side Story: A new pop-up venue for arts, sports and culture by Stomping Grounds Collective..."Westside @ Acton Park"...to better connect CBD to Lake Burley Griffin...to get residents to experience the waterfront...Steering away from the traditional stereotype of a "quiet, clean and tidy Canberra"...space will be "real" and "grungy." -- Cox Architecture [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Resurrecting Königsberg: Russian City Looks to German Roots: The Allies bombed the Prussian city into the ground in 1944. Residents of what is today the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, a desolate Soviet landscape, are considering rebuilding the city center to reflect some of its historical German architecture...Fishing Village isn't historically accurate, it's based on Fyodorov's vision of a German place. It also turned out very kitschy. -- Alexander Popadin/Heart of the City; Vyacheslav Genne; Arthur Sarnitz [images]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

How To Keep Our Buildings From Making Us Fat: Central stairs, slow elevators, smaller waistline...when a staircase is designed to compete with an elevator, both in terms of style and location, walking can beat riding...By Eric Jaffe [images]- Fast Company


Post Tower in Bonn, Germany, Wins CTBUH 10-Year Award: Completed in 2002, it remains one of the world's lowest energy-consuming tall buildings. Paved the way for the next generation of high-performing tall buildings. -- Murphy/Jahn Architects; Heinle, Wischer und Partner [link to details + finalists]- Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH)

Call for entries: Lisbon Open Room competition for students and young graduates: design a unique, flexible pavilion for multiple uses; cash prizes; early registration deadline (save money!): September 15 (submissions due October 31)- ArchMedium

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