

Today's News - Tuesday, March 29, 2016

- ArcSpace brings us Studio Gang's Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership that "embodies the ideas of social justice - an inclusive building encouraging equality, openness and conversation."
- Riddel bemoans plans for a 47-story tower that threatens Brisbane's Customs House "from being seen as it was intended to be - neither a new problem nor unique to Brisbane."
- Saval parses Google and Apple's new HQs, and ponders why they are "spending billions to build offices that look lifted straight from the 1960s - in the form of impregnable corporate campuses for the future-plotting, world-dominating, 'don't be evil' tech industry" (oh, those "high-tech hippies").
- Bozikovic has high hopes for BIG's low-rise "ziggurat" in Toronto that is "vastly more interesting than a skinny point tower" and recalls "the utopian form-making of 1960s modernists - if it is realized, the effect would be magical."
- Pogrebin x 2: she reports that TWBT's planned renovation of Charles Moore's Hood Museum is attracting some vociferous detractors: "Moore deserves far better than this aggressive, ill-designed, shallowly considered project" (ouch!).
- On a brighter note, she reports that the Frick has decided to keep its gated garden, and is now considering an invited shortlist of 20 (unnamed) to rethink and revise the museum's renovation plan.
- Shaw wonders why SHoP was picked to design the new SITE Santa Fe that "does not do its incredible context justice," and "leaves a lot to be desired" (a mash-up of a Manhattan super-tall "cropped on the corner to look like L.A.'s Broad Museum" - double-ouch!).
- Fabiao offers a fascinating take on Calatrava's Museum of Tomorrow: "The massive museum appears as a ship or a whale that has come to the busy beach of Rio de Janeiro, bringing with it a history of otherness, colonialism, and resource extraction."
- Heatherwick embroiled in holy row about the "bizarre" church pews he designed at Worth Abbey that "have become so disfigured that staff have been forced to use masking tape to cover cracks."
- Saffron is all for fighting Philly's food deserts, but plans for "yet another sprawling shopping center" in a predominantly Latino neighborhood will create an "asphalt wasteland" - a concept that is "well past its sell-by date."
- A sampling of innovative efforts that are "small templates" for "how architects can fight urban food deserts."
- Peters reports on how the Van Alen/NORA Future Ground competition is tackling a turn-around for urban blight in New Orleans.
- Last Thursday, we ran a story about an artist transplanting a derelict Detroit house to Rotterdam; now we find out the neighbors are none too pleased that the "naked shell of the home still stands in the middle of a healthy block," leaving them "living next to blight they say is worse than when the house was simply abandoned."
- Hawaii's plan for a massive elevated rail project is struggling to keep from becoming a "boondoggle": critics' concerns "have turned out to have merit."
- Brussat is more than a bit disappointed to learn that plans to replace an aging highway in Providence with a landscaped boulevard have "morphed into the Biggest Little Dig."
- Another Madin building in Birmingham is "granted immunity from listing" and now faces extinction; preservationists are none too happy.
- Menking mourns what's left of Johansen's Mummers Theater, now nothing but an empty lot with "a large water-catching hole. Have a look and weep."
- Harvard GSD names a shortlist of four now vying for the \$100,000 Wheelwright Prize.
- Eyefuls of the 2016 eVolo Skyscraper Competition (we consider ourselves open-minded - but these things are scary!).
- One we couldn't resist: remember the fresco in Spain that became "Beast Jesus" after a botched amateur restoration? Now it has its own cultural center that celebrates its "journey from little-known artwork to viral meme" (t-shirts available).

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[Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, Kalamazoo, Michigan: Studio Gang's Arcus Center embodies the ideas of social justice - an inclusive building encouraging equality, openness and conversation...continuously considered how they could use their agency as architects to address issues of social justice themselves.](#) By Nina Tory-Henderson [images]

[How can a city keep its character if its landmark views aren't protected? ...inappropriate development is placing one of Brisbane's most important landmarks in danger. A proposed 47-storey tower threatens Customs House...from being seen as it was intended to be....Such developments are neither a new problem nor unique to Brisbane.](#) By Robert John Riddel [images]- The Conversation

[Google and Apple: the High-Tech Hippies of Silicon Valley: Why are the two companies spending billions to build offices that look lifted straight from the 1960s? It comes, transfigured, from the wrecked dreams of...back-to-the-land utopias, of expanding plastic spheres and geodesic domes...Now those same undulations have found their way back to us, in the form of impregnable corporate campuses for the future-plotting, world-dominating, "don't be evil" tech industry.](#) By Nikil Saval -- BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group; Thomas Heatherwick; Foster + Partners [images]- New York Times

[A ziggurat for King West: Toppling Torontonians' expectations of towers, BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group has imagined a community of 'pixellated' modules...the proposal...vastly more interesting than a skinny point tower...It fuses the utopian form-making of 1960s modernists, like Moshe Safdie's Habitat...The horticultural and logistical challenges...would be significant...if it is realized, the effect would be magical.](#) By Alex Bozikovic -- PUBLIC WORK; Ken Greenberg [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

[Hood Museum Renovation Causes a Split: A plan for this museum in New Hampshire expands the space, but detractors say its architects are stepping on the legacy of the institution's designer.: "It's almost as if they were getting revenge for what MoMA did to their Folk Art Museum"... "Charles Moore deserves far better than this aggressive, ill-designed, shallowly considered project."](#) By Robin Pogrebin -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien [images]- New York Times

[Frick Collection Will Revise Renovation to Preserve Garden: Preservationists can rest easy on at least one score...will be keeping its gated garden. Other than that, details are still to come...The field has been narrowed to 20 architects...](#) By Robin Pogrebin -- Davis Brody Bond- New York Times

[Respecting the SITE: Matt Shaw wonders why New York mega-firm SHoP Architects was picked for a small arts institution in New Mexico: ...does not do its incredible context justice. The building is essentially the fourth and fifth floors of a Midtown Manhattan super-tall luxury building, cropped on the corner to look like L.A.'s Broad Museum...the new SITE Santa Fe leaves a lot to be desired.](#) [image]- The Architect's Newspaper

[Comment> Solange Fabiao: The Museum of Today: On Santiago Calatrava's Museum of Tomorrow: The massive museum appears as a ship or a whale that has come to the busy beach of Rio de Janeiro, bringing with it a history of otherness, colonialism, and resource extraction...has to be striking! It has to be gigantic! It has to be objective; it has to be honest! And it](#)

is...the museum of today has to scream loudly. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Olympic designer in row over holey pews: Thomas Heatherwick...embroiled in a £1m legal battle after the "bizarre" church pews he designed for a Benedictine monastery began falling apart within months of being installed...at Worth Abbey...have become so disfigured that staff have been forced to use masking tape to cover cracks...- The Sunday Times (UK)

Creating asphalt wastelands in the name of fighting food deserts: ...yet another sprawling shopping center...\$16 million Plaza Allegheny...touted as an economic engine that will bring jobs to the predominantly Latino neighborhood. But the idea that any supermarket is better than no supermarket is well past its sell-by date. By Inga Saffron - Philadelphia Inquirer

How Architects Can Fight Urban Food Deserts: ...architects can bring two unique attributes to any endeavor - imagination and vision...on display in these innovative efforts...They are but the first steps – small templates – in a movement rapidly gaining momentum...architects and designers making intentional choices about design to promote the ongoing wellness of communities. - AIA / ilookup.org

New Orleans Is Trying To Turn Around Its Blight With These Smart Designs: Vacant land is a big problem...but it could be an even bigger opportunity: In a design competition called Future Ground...three teams each spent six months coming up with new ways [the city] can deal with blight. By Adele Peters – Van Alen Institute; New Orleans Redevelopment Agency; Stoss; NOLEX, PaD (Policy as Design); DARCH [images]- Fast Company / Co.Exist

Artist takes abandoned Detroit home, leaves mess behind: Six months after artist Ryan Mendoza's team finished stripping the facade off...the naked shell of the home still stands in the middle of a healthy block...has become a tangled web of lofty artistic intentions, unintended consequences and broken promises, leaving neighbors living next to blight they say is worse than when the house was simply abandoned. [images]- Detroit Free Press

Hawaii Struggles to Keep Rail Project From Becoming a Boondoggle: From the start - when Honolulu officials began talking about building a 20-mile elevated train line...there were concerns...have turned out to have merit...it could have the distinction of being, on a per-capita basis, the most expensive transit project in the country's history...- New York Times

Big Dig redux in Providence? ...proposed 6-10 connector alternative to rebuilding the aging highway was to replace [it] with a surface boulevard...Imagine my surprise reading...that the "boulevard" concept had morphed into the Biggest Little Dig...new plan to "entomb Route 10 in concrete walls with a roof covered in dirt"... By David Brussat - Architecture Here and There

Anger as another John Madin building set for demolition after listing refusal: Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1960) granted immunity from listing...an "undervalued masterpiece", said the Twentieth Century Society, greeting the news with "extreme disappointment"...Historic England's decision not to list it...would be its "death knell". - BD/Building Design (UK)

Not OKC: Whatever happened to the Mummers Theater? Have a look and weep: Though the theater was Oklahoma City's most distinguished work of architecture, the city seemed like it was in a rush to destroy it...Now the site - which once had one of this country's most adventurous buildings - is a vacant, fenced-in lot featuring a large water-catching hole. By William Menking -- John Johansen (1970); Alissa Bucher [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

2016 Wheelwright Prize Finalists Announced: Harvard GSD announces four candidates for its \$100,000 travel-based architectural research grant: ...jury reviewed nearly 200 applications from 45 countries and selected four finalists, who hail from Italy, Spain, and Chile. -- Samuel Bravo Arquitecto; Matilde Cassani; Anna Puigjaner/MAIO; Pier Paolo Tamburelli/baukuh architects - Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD)

Winners 2016 eVolo Skyscraper Competition: ...3 winners and 21 honorable mentions..."New York Horizon" proposes a continuous horizontal skyscraper around the full perimeter of a sunken Central Park. -- Yitan Sun/Jianshi Wu; Hadeel Ayed Mohammad/Yifeng Zhao/Chengda Zhu; Valeria Mercuri/Marco Merletti [images]- eVolo Magazine

With Its Own Arts Center, Beast Jesus Rises Again: It was inevitable: Beast Jesus is getting its very own arts center in its home of Borja, Spain...to help the town continue to attract up to 30,000 annual visitors...the center will celebrate [its] journey from little-known artwork to viral meme... - Hyperallergic

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