Mies van der Rohe & James Stirling: Circling the Square

I recently managed the long lead communications launch of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) major new exhibition, *Mies van der Rohe & James Stirling: Circling the Square*, which open March 8. The exhibition offers a renewed examination of two iconic architectural schemes proposed for the same site in the City of London. Commissioned by architectural patron and developer Lord Peter Palumbo, Mies van der Rohe’s unrealised Mansion House Square project will be explored alongside its built successor, James Stirling Michael Wilford & Associates’ newly listed No. 1 Poultry.

In early December I visited the RIBA archive store in Fulham, South West London, to see the exhibition team unpacking and inspecting the detailed site model of the Mies scheme that had just arrived with us - one of the most impressive architectural models ever made.

I arranged for the Evening Standard photographer to have exclusive access to the team where he captured the conservationist re-assembling the site model, which will be on display in the exhibition, for the first time in over 30 years.

I then issued the press release more widely to other newspapers and magazines. We were very pleased to see coverage in the Evening Standard.
Presented together for the first time, the exhibition offers a unique opportunity to draw comparisons between the design methods of two of the most highly recognised architects of the 20th century, and to trace the continuity in purpose and approach that unites two seemingly dissimilar architectural creations.

The design history of the two schemes spans three decades of the mid-20th century, a highly transitional period in the history of architecture where the movements and influences of pop art, high modernism and postmodernism co-existed and collided. Intended to replace an eclectic block of listed buildings, both schemes became subjects of passionate debate, and high-profile inquiries. This debate distracted attention from the architectural ideas and ambitions of both architects and patron.

Mies van der Rohe & James Stirling: Circling the Square runs at the Architecture Gallery, RIBA, 8 March 2017 – 25 June 2017
The Architecture Gallery at RIBA is open from 10am – 5pm Monday to Sunday and until 8pm every Tuesday. Free entrance. RIBA is at 66 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AD. Nearest tubes are Oxford Circus, Regent’s Park and Great Portland Street.

The exhibition is part of a RIBA season of wide ranging events and workshops, designed for all ages and experience levels. For further information go to www.architecture.com/whatson

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