Today's News - February 9, 2006

New RIAI chief says architects need to "get their act together" to create sustainable residential developments. — Why is wealthy Edmonton, Canada, allowing second-rate buildings? — Architects and students take on affordable housing for another Alberta town. — A model village with houses made of soil rises in Kenya. — A green conference in Miami to bring South Florida up to speed re: sustainable design. — The plug is pulled on Turner Contemporary in Margate: "It all smacks of local politics." — Koolhaas skyscraper a radical creation for Louisville (with pix to prove it). — London Library re-build the "very opposite of look-at-me signature architecture" (and that's a good thing). — Heat of de Meuron take Manhattan with luxury condos. — Some surprising treasures uncovered in Chicago theater restoration. — New life for Belgium's Atomium. — Ken Smith muses on his canyon in Orange County. — Niemeyer reminisces about his work in Algeria. — Dubai billionaire buys London Eye (the architects make out very well!). — Call for entries to transform Boston neighborhood.

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Get your act together, new RIAI chief tells architects: James Pike says his colleagues could do better in designing major residential developments. By Frank McDonald — Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI); O'Mahony Pike- Irish Times

Edmonton's beauty under siege: We all know it's awash in money. So why is the Alberta capital allowing second-rate buildings and an army of suburban box-box-stores to choke the life out of its downtown? By Lisa Rochon — Zaha Hadid; Randall Stout; Cohos Evamy Partners- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Oil town gets a makeover plan: Montreal architect sees potential in Drayton Valley downtown... affordable-housing expert Avi Friedman has brought young architects from China, South Korea, Mexico and Colombia to study at McGill University School of Architecture's affordable homes program. - The Edmonton Journal (Canada)

Houses Made From Soil: A building technology introduced from India promises strong, cheaper and beautiful residential and commercial houses made from ordinary soil and a little cement. - The Nation (Nairobi)

Tropical Green conference to stress building "green": To encourage ecologically sensitive, energy-saving "green" buildings in South Florida, architects, planners and Metropolis magazine are sponsoring a conference this week... could not be more timely. — Zyscovich; Perkins & Will- Miami Herald

Plug pulled on art gallery in the sea: It was always a bold project, a sail like building which was meant to rise elegantly out of the harbour, bringing new life to a past-its-best seaside town. (Turner Contemporary in Margate) too ambitious and too costly... -- Snøhetta and Spence- Guardian (UK)

Skyscraper to transform Louisville skyline: Radical architectural creation to house museum, condos, offices...$380 million [61-story] Museum Plaza... -- Koolhaas/Prince-Ramus/Office for Metropolitan Architecture [image]- Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY)

The library of Babel: how to extend a timewarped masterpiece...London Library is about to spend £25m on its biggest rebuild for over a century. And once that's done, it will still be all but invisible... the very opposite of look-at-me signature architecture. By Hugh Pearman -- Newworth Tompkins [images]- HughPearman.com (UK)

Living at Cool, Not Just Visiting: Forty Bond is the latest downtown luxury condominium, being whipped into shape by Ian Schragger in league with Herzog & de Meuron [images]- New York Times

Secrets uncovered at former Shubert... renamed the LaSalle Bank Theatre: Best of all, the renovation has uncovered a number of architectural details that had been hidden from public view for as much as half a century. By Kevin Nance — George Hallix/Booth Hansen [images]- Chicago Sun-Times

Restoring an Icon of Optimism: The Atomium, an eblem of Belgium's industrial boom, will prepare for its official reopening with a party celebrating a $33 million restoration... "Noguchi meets Richard Rogers." — André Waterkeyn (1958); Conix Architecten; Ingo Maurer; Vitra [image]- New York Times

Next, he'll build a canyon: With a postmodern penchant for plastic flowers and a résumé of urban park space, Ken Smith isn't the first landscape architect you'd think of to design the Orange County Great Park. — Los Angeles Times

Oscar Niemeyer, a friend of the Algerians: Part of the history of the most important architect in Brazil involves Algeria... designed various projects for the Arab country, among them the Mentouri Constantine University, in 1969. — Brazil-Arab News Agency (ANBA)

Billionaire Dubai Sheik Buys London Eye: Ownership had been split three ways between British Airways, Tussauds and the Eye's creators, Marks Barfield Architects. — Forbes

Call for entries: "inside-out - Weaving Arts into the Urban Fabric": open (U.S.) competition to transform the Tremont Street plaza and other public spaces surrounding Boston Center for the Arts; deadline: May 9- Boston Center for the Arts

Good Neighbor: Hyde Park Miriam Matthews Branch Library: A new library adds to the revitalization of a once riot-torn Los Angeles community. -- Hodgetts + Fung Design and Architecture [images]- ArchNewsNow

Alsop Architects: Sharp Centre for Design, Toronto, Canada