

Today's News - Monday, December 21, 2009

- We lose the visionary master planner behind Reston, VA, and Battery Park City who "had all the fire of a creative person without the appalling ego that some of them have."
- Sparks begin to fly around Barangaroo's grand plan in Sydney and a "tradition in English-speaking countries of wrecking competitions": mincing no words, Thalís is ticked off that he won the competition, but Rogers gets the nod.
- An eye-opening look at why the Barangaroo bungle has many branding a former prime minister "Australia's Prince Charles for his swiping of the profession."
- Hume takes issue with a Canadian politician's attitude "to hire an architect and get on with it, not to waste time and money on design competitions for what are essentially utilitarian buildings."
- Berlin debates the revitalization of its own "bleak" city center (and some ideas from a handful of notable architects).
- Cincinnati has its own high hopes that a new downtown casino will be a good neighbor and an economic boon (developer promises to listen to the people - what a concept!).
- Appelbaum has an "uninhibited" (and sometimes amusing) discussion with Duany and Speck re: "The Smart Growth Manual."
- Dery delves into the future of dead malls: "the post-mail, post-sprawl suburbs could be exuberantly heterogeneous Places That Do Not Suck" (or can they?).
- Hawthorne offers a powerful (if somewhat depressing) review the decade: "the notion that architects had suddenly acquired more power than ever before, as opposed to more visibility, opportunity or cachet, turned out to be hollow."
- His "Top 10 architecture moments of 2009" is not all about buildings (and is much more positive).
- Ouroussoff reviews '09 and finds "a few triumphs" that are not only "splendid" pieces of architecture, but that infuse "drab, lifeless" neighborhoods with "a sense of joy."
- Davidson reviews NYC's "most effervescent period of architectural ferment in decades" - his Building of the Decade is the new TKTS booth, "a work of exuberant uselessness and brilliant urbanism."
- Moore cheers Piano's raiding the paint box for a new London building "vibrant as a row of casseroles in a Conran shop" (the architect wanted to "to make a building that smiles" - looks like he did).
- Hume on Canada's two most important buildings: KPMB's Manitoba Hydro HQ "heralds a new design era and might even heal our eco-black eye" and "is also an exquisite piece of architecture"; and Predock's Human Rights museum is "iconic...if human rights ever needed a beacon, this is it."
- Greensburg, Kansas, progresses with plans for Big Well Museum that will encompass the EF-5 Tornado and building the Green Model City.
- Shuttleworth comes up with an "octopus" office block to do double-duty as an eye-catching gateway to London.
- An in-depth look at what's going into restoring Mumbai's Taj Mahal Hotel after the 11/26/08 attack: "the process has not been easy" (but it sounds like it will have been worth it).
- Richard Moe rallies behind saving the Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium in Honolulu.

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Obituary: James Rossant, Architect and Planner, 81: ...helped design the planned city of Reston, Va., and developed the 1966 master plan for lower Manhattan that led to the building of Battery Park City... - New York Times

Grand slam for Barangaroo's grand plan: The State Government is poised to waive planning rules so a developer can fill in part of the harbour to build the city's biggest hotel in what critics have dubbed the worst of "Dubai architecture" -- Hill Thalís Architecture; Rogers Stirk Harbour [image, audio] - Sydney Morning Herald

Storming the headland: How Paul Keating single-handedly overturned the winning plan for Barangaroo...a scheme many architects and planners have derided...branded [former prime minister] Australia's Prince Charles for his swiping of the profession...He was never going to tolerate the winning design... -- Hill Thalís Architecture; Rogers Stirk Harbour; Australian Institute of Architects - Sydney Morning Herald

Good design sets a city up for success: It was one of those statements that...revealed much about why our cities aren't better. "Our practice is to hire an architect and get on with it...not to waste time and money on design competitions for what are essentially utilitarian buildings"...what exactly is the utility of architectural excellence, a well-planned city or urban beauty? By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

Patching the Scars of Communism: Berlin Debates Revitalization of City Center...Rathaus Forum, the bleak area located in front of city hall. A handful of prominent architects have submitted their own ideas...for redeveloping the 14-hectare (35-acre) space... -- Kiefer; David Chipperfield; Graft [images] - Der Spiegel (Germany)

Uncommon Expectations: A Broadway Commons casino is raising hopes of an economic boon. Will that happen? Will the new casino be designed as a cohesive part of a bigger downtown draw? Or will it be isolated...a casino will never please everyone... "We'll end up with a better project if we listen to people" -- Bergman Walls & Associates - Cincinnati Enquirer

Q&A: Andres Duany and Jeff Speck on "The Smart Growth Manual": That's 'the' guide to repurposing American land use, not 'a' guide...An uninhibited discussion, with stirrings of a sequel... "I can see the beginnings of the next book: The public process is essential — the citizen-planner, actually." By Alec Appelbaum - Metropolis Magazine

Dawn of the Dead Mall: The landscape is littered with the giant carcasses of failed retail emporia. Ideas for what's next are no less visionary. But are they any more practical? The more visionary ideas sound a lot like... "architecture fiction," somewhere between Greg Lynn and Silent Running, Teddy Cruz and Ecotopia...the post-mail, post-sprawl suburbs could be exuberantly heterogeneous Places That Do Not Suck... By Mark Dery -- Victor Gruen; Stoner Meek Architecture; Forrester Fulton; B3 Architects [images, links] - Change Observer

Notes on the Decade: Star architects emerge, but even they find limits. Real power remained elusive...Along with producing so many terrific individual pieces of architecture, what the decade did repeatedly...was to give the profession a cold look at the limits of its influence...two camps...are likely to spend the next decade battling to shape a new definition of what architecture is, means and can do. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Minoru Yamasaki; Daniel Libeskind; Michael Arad; Peter Walker; Frank Gehry; Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Rem Koolhaas/Ole Scheeren/OMA; Jean Nouvel - Los Angeles Times

Top 10 architecture moments of 2009: Not every year is a great one for individual buildings. But in...still-developing or densifying cities, other kinds of design excellence are arguably more meaningful to the life and future of the metropolis. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Atelier Bow-Wow; Diller Scofidio & Renfro; REX/OMA; Fred Fisher; Safdie Rabines Architects; Janette Sadik-Khan; Field Operations; Ball-Nogues Studio; Herbert Muschamp; Paul Goldberger [slide show] - Los Angeles Times

A Few Triumphs Pierce the Clouds of a Bleak Time: What all of these projects share, besides being splendid architecture, is an ability to infuse a drab, lifeless neighborhood...with a sense of joy. Like much great architecture, they create a sense of place — of collective identity — where there was none. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Zaha Hadid; Jean Nouvel; Toyo Ito; High Line; Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Frank Gehry; Steven Holl [slide show] - New York Times

When the City Became a Stage: Exposing drama on every corner...New York has just experienced its most effervescent period of architectural ferment in decades...it also plays the hero of an open-ended drama, a picaresque tragicomedy of

development + 5 buildings we'll still be talking about in 2020. By Justin Davidson -- Daniel Libeskind; David Childs; Joseph Urban (1928); Foster + Partners; Frank Gehry; Jean Nouvel; Richard Meier; Thom Mayne; Rem Koolhaas; Thomas Heatherwick; Choi Ropiha; Perkins Eastman; Studios Architecture; Sanaa - [New York Magazine](#)

The high rise of coloured buildings: ...just off New Oxford Street...You might also have once said the area was grey, but not any longer...now you will see a series of slabs of colour...vibrant as a row of casseroles in a Conran shop...Central St Giles...by Renzo Piano...There are, quite simply, no other buildings in London, of any period, that use colour with quite this much punch, at this scale. By Rowan Moore [\[image\]](#) - [Evening Standard \(UK\)](#)

Canada's most important building: Manitoba Hydro's HQ heralds a new design era and might even heal our eco-black eye...the first large office tower in Canada to deal seriously with the complexities of the 21st century...By the way, [it] is also an exquisite piece of architecture... By Christopher Hume -- Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB); Smith Carter Architects; Transsolar [\[image\]](#) - [Toronto Star](#)

Soaring design tells human rights' tale: In its own way, every building tells a story. But few are told with as much drama as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights...extraordinary structure serves many purposes...iconic, though much overused, feels entirely appropriate here...a building, perhaps an architecture, that manages to embody a narrative...telling a story...if human rights ever needed a beacon, this is it. By Christopher Hume -- Antoine Predock [\[image\]](#) - [Toronto Star](#)

Progress continues on plans for Big Well Museum: ...one of the Eight Wonders of Kansas...Three thematic concepts...are the Big Well, the EF-5 Tornado, and building the Green Model City. -- BNIM Architects; Project Explore; Ralph Appelbaum Associates - [Pratt Tribune \(Kansas\)](#)

First the Gherkin, now meet The Octopus! ...could soon be the sight that greets visitors to Chiswick...would provide a 'sculptural landmark or gateway to London'...'an interesting and possibly attractive character' and could 'enliven a very dismal and ugly site' -- Ken Shuttleworth/Make [\[image\]](#) - [Hounslow Chronicle \(UK\)](#)

Phoenix Rising: A year after 26/11, the Taj Mahal Hotel is not just reclaiming a past, but also creating a new identity - room by room...first reaction to the attacks was to just restore what was damaged...took this opportunity to restore the entire heritage wing...But the process has not been easy. -- Archetype Group; James Park Associates; Lissoni Associati; Rockwell Group Europe; LTW; James Park Associates; BAMO - [Forbes India](#)

Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium deserves to be saved: ...long-neglected landmark, has historic significance...Mayor Hannemann's recently announced plan to demolish [it] to create a beach will rob the city of Honolulu, the state of Hawai'i and the nation of a significant piece of our shared heritage. By Richard Moe/National Trust for Historic Preservation - [Honolulu Advertiser](#)

Book Review: How to Make Versions of the Past Present: "Robert A.M. Stern Buildings and Projects 2004-2009": Stern might just be "the squarest of the hip, and the hippest of the squares." That might also imply that he is one of the sanest and happiest people in the profession. For that and more, this book warrants our appreciative attention. By Norman Weinstein - [ArchNewsNow](#)

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