

Today's News - Monday, February 14, 2011

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of BIG's big Greenland gallery, and Grimshaw's train station in Wales.
- Meanwhile, BIG's Bjarke meets Manhattan's Community Board 4 re: his proposed W57 tower: so, "what can you offer the community besides iconic architecture that could be plopped down in Milwaukee or Santa Fe?" (a home for the International Center for Photography, perhaps?).
- Kaufman thinks the Whitney's Breuer building would be a perfect home for the ICP, as opposed to Stern's idea of turning it into an architecture museum: "It's a lovely idea, but there are practical and fundamental problems" (like having a collection - and an audience).
- Campbell ponders Boston's ponderous problems when developers want to build bigger than zoning laws allow: to get the deal, they "can't help stripping quality from the building. It gets bigger and the architecture gets dumber...It's one of the reasons we don't build a better world."
- Rogers Stirk Harbour's Barangaroo in Sydney is shrinking: "developers have slashed back the original plans" including building heights and pier length (to the cheers of many).
- More on the possible demise of the already-under-construction, €100m LVMH "cloud" museum in Paris: Nouvel said Gehry "was outraged by the selfishness, lack of civic pride and ignorance" of a wealthy Parisian residents' group."
- Meanwhile, Russell riffs on Gehry's rippling Manhattan tower: instead of "the dumb, boxy towers clad in murky glass that have defaced New York City's skyline, he has produced a gawky beauty that captures the open-ended energy of the city. It fascinates rather than ravishes."
- Merrick marvels at Sir John Soane's Museum, "one of the world's most sumptuous architectural treats...a solidified architectural pipe-dream" - and cheers the team assigned to its restoration.
- Mays takes on Rybczynski (see ANN, Jan. 13): while he agrees that "times and the fortunes of architecture have changed," he doesn't see it as change for the better - "the new post-crash sobriety - or timidity - among the clients...could set back design 20 years or more."
- Schwarz and Elfers take on Thackara and his disdain for the word "sustainism" (see ANN, Feb. 11): it "deserves more than a discussion about what we (dis)like about nomenclature."
- MacCash on rebuilt public housing in New Orleans: there's a "meteoric metamorphosis" in architectural vocabulary "as the drawing-board idealism of an earlier era is erased and revised"; some cheer, others find it a "new faux-historical aesthetic" of "disconcerting 'Disney-scale' miniaturization" (with slide show, so you decide).
- On a brighter note, Gould offers a Q&A with Grove and Maimon about the goals, lessons, and promise of Make It Right's "living laboratory growing in a once ravaged New Orleans neighborhood"
- Big plans for San Francisco's largest public affordable housing site should augur well for local talent.
- There are some very disgruntled residents and preservationists as London's 1970s Heygate housing estate makes way for £1.5bn regeneration scheme (sparks fly in the comment section!).
- Hatherley sees Heygate's demise as "a classic example of state-sponsored, de-greening gentrification... marked by the infantile, jolly aesthetic that so often accompanies acts of class-cleansing today."
- What can Australia's Building the Education Revolution program teach the U.K. about template-based school design? "The role of the architect in all of this is absolutely minimal" (isn't that just the cheeriest).
- We couldn't resist Walker's take on a "wacky, \$250m old folks' community for gays" (and other "creative boomers") in Palm Springs being designed by 10 hot firms from NYC to Slovenia.
- Call for entries: Experimental Crowd-derived Combat-support Vehicle Design Challenge (not an offensive fighting vehicle - intriguing? does DARPA sound like mysterious project on "Lost"?).
- Happy Valentine's Day!!!

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-- BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group: New National Gallery, Nuuk, Greenland -- TNT Nuuk; Ramboll Nuuk Arkitekti
-- Grimshaw Architects: Newport Station, Newport, Wales

Community Board 4 Welcomes Bjarke to New York: ...board pressed their tripartite concerns of contextual sensitivity, affordable housing, and green space..."What can you offer the community besides iconic architecture that could be plopped down in Milwaukee or Santa Fe?" -- BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group [images, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Whitney's Breuer Building Should Become the New International Center of Photography: Justin Davidson wrote a piece...advancing the suggestion of Robert A.M. Stern that the building should become a museum of architecture. It's a lovely idea...But there are practical and fundamental problems with the idea. By Jason Edward Kaufman -- Skyscraper Museum; AIANY Center for Architecture- Artinfo

How high can developers jump? Boston's buildings suffer in the process: To generate the money, the developer can't help stripping quality from the building. It gets bigger and the architecture gets dumber...a message that the money that could have been spent on architecture was spent somewhere else...I do not have a solution...I'm just stating the problem. It's one of the reasons we don't build a better world. By Robert Campbell- Boston Globe

Barangaroo is shrinking - city tower is cut down to size: Critics slammed the latest office tower to hit NSW Planning desks, a 42-storey goliath, for being too broad and bulky...Developers have slashed back the original plans, paring back the pier length from 150m to 85m, the hotel height from 213m to 159m, and the number of commercial towers from four to three. -- Rogers Stirk Harbour [image]- Daily Telegraph (Australia)

Parisian residents halt Gehry building: The city of Paris has appealed. If the appeal fails, the partly built €100m (£86m) museum and gallery for...LVMH will have to be torn down...Jean Nouvel, speaking on Gehry's behalf, said the architect was "outraged by the selfishness, lack of civic pride and ignorance" of a wealthy Parisian residents' group...- Independent (UK)

Frank Gehry's \$875 Million Tower Ripples High Above Brooklyn Bridge: 8 Spruce Street...In contrast to the dumb, boxy towers clad in murky glass that have defaced New York City's skyline during the past decade, [he] has produced a gawky beauty that captures the open-ended energy of the city. It fascinates rather than ravishes. By James S. Russell -- Swanke Hayden Connell [images]- Bloomberg News

A home fit for a genius: The restoration of Sir John Soane's Museum offers an enticing new view of one of the world's most sumptuous architectural treats...To enter Soane's masterpiece...is to walk straight into the mind of a genius...to this day, it challenges preconceptions about internal perspectives and thresholds...a solidified architectural pipe-dream... By Jay Merrick -- Julian Harrop; Caruso St John- Independent (UK)

Stifling architectural creativity brings no joy: I have no problem with Rybczynski's assertion that times and the fortunes of architecture have changed...But I strongly object to his conclusion that this change is for the better...the new post-crash sobriety - or timidity - among the clients...could set back design 20 years or more. But I refuse to be happy about it. By John

[Bentley Mays -- Enrique Norten; Daniel Libeskind; Santiago Calatrava; Frank Gehry; Zaha Hadid; Thom Mayne \[images\]-Globe and Mail \(Canada\)](#)

[Like the Word or Not, the Era of "Sustainism" Is Here: The idea of sustainism deserves more than a discussion about what we \(dis\)like about nomenclature...encompasses much more than just green practices...To put it simply, sustainism is where connectivity, new forms of localism and sustainable life styles meet. By Michiel Schwarz & Joost Elffers -- John Thackara-Design Observer](#)

[The architecture of New Orleans' rebuilt public housing gets mixed reviews: ...the architectural vocabulary...is undergoing a meteoric metamorphosis...as the drawing-board idealism of an earlier era is erased and revised...some hail the transformation, others question the new faux-historical aesthetic...disconcerting "Disney-scale" miniaturization... By Doug MacCash -- Michael Willis \[slide show\]- The Times-Picayune \(New Orleans\)](#)

[Learning from New Orleans: A living laboratory grows in a once ravaged neighborhood where everyone benefits from an intense collaboration. Q&A with Katherine Grove/William McDonough + Partners and Richard Maimon/KieranTimberlake about the goals, lessons, and promise of Make It Right. By Kira Gould \[images\]- Metropolis Magazine](#)

[SWA Group To Redesign 1700-Home Sunnyside Public Housing Community in San Francisco: ...first phase of the 50-acre community which is undergoing a complete replacement of dilapidated circa-1941 housing...has initiated schematic landscape designs for a set of residential buildings by local architects. -- Van Meter Williams Pollack; Merrill Morris Landscape Architects \[image\]- BusinessWire](#)

[Anger surrounds demise of 1970s housing estate: Residents of Elephant and Castle's Heygate complain they were 'picked off' to make way for £1.5bn regeneration scheme...critics acknowledge that the flats themselves were well-designed and spacious with fine views of London..."It doesn't look pretty and it is architecture of a type that has a real stigma...But as a way of housing a lot of people, it has an elegance and simplicity." -- Twentieth Century Society- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[After the Heygate estate, a grey future awaits: The proposed demolition of the inner-city housing estate is a classic example of state-sponsored, de-greening gentrification...The regeneration that aims to erase it is marked by the infantile, jolly aesthetic that so often accompanies acts of class-cleansing today. By Owen Hatherley- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Lessons from Down Under: What can Australia tell us about template-based school design? Q&A with Matthew Turner/Makingbuildings.com re: how the programme has been delivered in New South Wales...What about the quality of the projects? "Here is the million dollar question...Two things are for sure: a robust template doesn't develop over-night, yet is crucial; and...the role of the architect in all of this is absolutely minimal." -- Collard Maxwell Architects; Reid Campbell Architects - BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[BOOM! Palm Springs Plans a Wacky, \\$250m Old Folks' Community for Gays: ...banking on the fact that hundreds of aging, creative boomers are looking for something different when they retire...10 firms...contributing to the project...None...had done work around aging before, insuring fresh ideas...there are some issues with designing what's essentially a theme park for gay retirees. By Alissa Walker -- Hollwich Kushner/HWK; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; J. Mayer H.; LOT-EK; Arakawa + Gins; L2 Tsionov-Vitkon; Sadar + Vuga; Joel Sanders; Bruce Mau \[images, links\]- Fast Company](#)

[Call for entries: Experimental Crowd-derived Combat-support Vehicle \(XC2V\) Design Challenge: a vehicle to transport items and/or people around quickly and efficiently in a potentially hostile but mobile environment \(not an offensive fighting vehicle\); cash prizes; deadline: March 3- Local Motors / Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency \(DARPA\)](#)

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