Neustein takes on Ban’s “paper-thin humanitarian ethos” by questioning whether its “more about branding than functionality” (gasp! heresy?!?!).

In China’s “era of larger-than-life buildings and high-profile commissions...where have all the Chinese architects gone?” They’re still recovering “from the effects of Cultural Revolution.”

Ourossoff takes on New Orleans’s hopes of funding for “a promising new model for housing the poor in cities across the country” - and “a chance to undo a legacy of injustice.”

Also in New Orleans, efforts underway to save a 1950s school considered “a radical design in its time” with a call to incorporate it into plans for a new school.

Detroit planners are facing “difficult decisions that will determine which neighborhoods can be saved and which cannot.”

A Massachusetts town decides to completely raze and rebuild its downtown that is “a reversal of the traditional urban development model” and could be a template for the future.

Two Viñoly projects in Brooklyn and London could be cautionary tales about not getting caught in the “nostalgia trap” (he also “doesn’t think too highly of either gem he’s been handed”).

Brussat on what could/should happen with land freed up by a road relocation project in Providence that “could again showcase urban planning at its nimble best” - if only city leaders could “be trusted to treat city building as an adult enterprise” instead of acting like “modern architect wannabes.”

Bernstein on Facebook’s own city-building and its hopes for it to be “collaborative, inclusive and just a little bit gritty” - but will the real city around its new HQ really benefit?

Two tales from Tel Aviv from Zandberg and Dvir revolve around a public square (designed by a non-architect) and the boondoggle of preservation of one of its historic buildings, the Mann Auditorium: “What else can go wrong that hasn’t already?”

Saffron gives (mostly) thumbs-down to new IRS HQ in old Philly post office: “city poobahs” may have had worthy planning goals, “but a high-security facility cannot possibly serve as a gateway to anything...To see the site today is to marvel at the bait-and-switch.”

Gardner has an amusing but serious take on Ingel’s Manhattan pyramid: will it be a “Klingon warship on the Hudson” or will the approval process turn it into something unremarkable; for now, at least “we can allow ourselves to marvel at the audacity, if nothing else.”

Lucell reflects on the future of home building: “mass produced housing stock has become, with a few welcome exceptions, architecturally, urbanistically, and morally bankrupt.”

BS+R scores another California win - this one an arts center for Stanford University.

AIA 2011 COTE Top Ten Green Projects announced (great presentations).

72 Hour Urban Action biennial goes bi-coastal in the U.S.

Call for entries: Evergreen Awards 2011 for outstanding building performance and design in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
redesign of the Mann Auditorium...This is the Habima affair times two. What else can go wrong that hasn't already? By Esther Zandberg -- Kolker-Epstein architects; Icomos Israel- Ha`aretz (Israel)

New IRS building now an even bigger barrier to uniting Schuylkill's banks: ...new, $252 million offices are being heralded by city poobahs as a great new gateway to University City...a worthy planning goal, but a high-security facility cannot possibly serve as a gateway to anything...To see the site today is to marvel at the bait-and-switch. By Inga Saffron -- Rankin & Kellogg (1930s); Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Pelli Clarke Pelli; Tim Haahs [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

A Klingon warship on the Hudson: Bjarke Ingel's West 57th Street pyramid is more striking than it is beautiful...if experience is any guide, the end result of this daring project's lengthy approval process...may well be a piece of architectural product that is as dull and unremarkable as most others...For the moment...we can allow ourselves to marvel at the audacity, if nothing else... By James Gardner -- Bjarke Ingel Group/BIG- The Real Deal (NYC)

Editorial> The Right Way: Sam Lubell reflects on the future of home building following a BetterHomeBuilding panel discussion in Culver City...mass produced housing stock...has become, with a few welcome exceptions, architecturally, urbanistically, and morally bankrupt...Architects are not a vital part of this process...have in large part “abdicated their role”... -- William Krisel; Proto Homes; Piece Homes; Warmol Radziner; Jones and Emmons; Cliff May; Eichler- The Architect's Newspaper

Stanford University picks Diller Scofidio + Renfro for arts center: The new Burton and Deedee McMurtry Building will bring together programs in such topics as art history and documentary film. By John King- San Francisco Chronicle

AIA selects the 2011 COTE Top Ten Green Projects: showcase excellence in sustainable design principles and reduced energy consumption. -- BROOKS + SCARPA (formerly Pugh + Scarpa); The Kubala Washatko Architects; BNIM Architects; Studio E Architects; Lake|Flato Architects; The Miller | Hull Partnership; Johnsen Schmaling Architects; RNL Design; LMN Architects/DA/MCM [links to images, info]- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

72 Hour Urban Action: international rapid architecture and design festival April 12-21 in NYC, Cambridge, MA, Berkeley, CA, San Francisco, Los Angeles- 72 Hour Urban Action Project

Call for entries: Evergreen Awards 2011 for outstanding building performance and design (U.S., Canada, Mexico); deadline: May 31- Eco-Structure magazine

Rafael Viñoly Architects: The Ray and Dagmar Dolby Regeneration Medicine Building, UCSF, San Francisco