

## Today's News - Thursday, April 14, 2011

- Neustein takes on Ban's "paper-thin humanitarian ethos" by questioning whether it's "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."
- Ouroussoff 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."
- Lubell reflects on the future of home building: "mass produced housing stock has become, with a few welcome exceptions, architecturally, urbanistically, and morally bankrupt."
- DS+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.

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A paper-thin humanitarian ethos: As Shigeru Ban responds to the Japan earthquake with a new prototype for paper shelters...could be more about branding than functionality...he is a pioneer in humanitarian architecture...But what I question is how much of this work is humanitarian, and how much of it self-promotional...If he is genuinely interested in achieving widespread progress, he profits little by discrediting the enterprising work done by his contemporaries. By David Neustein- Australian Design Review

Is China's Architectural Ambition Leaving Its Own Talent Behind? In an era of larger-than-life buildings and high-profile commissions...where have all the Chinese architects gone?...the discipline has yet to fully recover from the effects of Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. -- Rem Koolhaas; Paul Andreu; Norman Foster; Zaha Hadid; Herzog & de Meuron; PTW Architects/China Construction Design International; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Jiang Huancheng (1994); Yansong Ma/Yosuke Hayano/MAD; Urbanus; Tao Zhu [slide show]- Time Magazine

To Renovate, and Surpass, City's Legacy: New Orleans seeks to attract a federal grant as a way to overhaul its Iberville public housing complex and neighboring areas...if the money doesn't come through...it will also short-circuit a promising new model for housing the poor in cities across the country...a chance to undo a legacy of injustice. By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Choice Neighborhoods Initiative; Department of Housing and Urban Development/HUD; Congress for the New Urbanism/CNU- New York Times

Tulane architect and Treme actress plea for Wheatley school preservation: ...a 1950s design by Charles R. Colbert...slated for demolition...Some believe the old Modern structure -- a radical design in its time - should be renovated and incorporated into the new school construction. -- John P. Klingman; Francine Stock; Phyllis Montana-LeBlanc [video]- The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)

The odd challenge for Detroit planners: Marja M. Winters...deputy director of the city's planning and development department, finds herself in an utterly unexpected role...sorting out how to help her hometown shrink, by working through difficult decisions that will determine which neighborhoods can be saved and which cannot. - Public Works Magazine

Rebuilding Downtown From the Ground Up: Quincy, Mass., plans to raze its downtown area and completely rebuild it...a reversal of the traditional urban development model, in which municipalities pay for public improvements before the private sector starts construction. And it could be a template in an era when state and federal agencies are retreating from ambitious redevelopment projects. - New York Times

The Nostalgia Trap: In Brooklyn and London, the future is losing to the past: Battersea Power Station on the Thames [and] Domino Sugar Refinery in Williamsburg...have several things in common. Chief among them: Rafael Viñoly...In charge of the master plan in both cases...he doesn't think too highly of either gem he's been handed...the civic debate about setting preservation standards offers mostly shifting sands on which to try to construct something, before popular sentiment shifts yet again. [images]- The Atlantic

End the city's decade of "creativity": ...the Route 195 relocation project could again showcase urban planning at its nimble best...with no plan yet adopted...the Ship Street Canal concept remains feasible...poor design of buildings erected nearby might undermine the district's urbanism, much as modern architecture undermined the urbanism of Waterplace Park - the tarnished jewel of Capital Center. By David Brussat -- Paul Pawlowski/SERA Architects; Perkins+Will- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

A Corporate Campus Made to Mirror Facebook: In renovating its new headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., [it] is going for collaborative, inclusive and just a little bit gritty...will resemble an urban streetscape...But if the campus will be a microcosm of a city, it's not clear that the real city around the campus -- including the largely Mexican-American neighborhood of Belle Haven -- will benefit from Facebook's presence. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Roman and Williams; Gensler- New York Times

Squaring off in Tel Aviv: The plaza he designed next to the Habima Theater has not even been dedicated yet, but Dani Karavan already has a litany of complaints about City Hall, and the contractors and architects involved in the project - who have returned fire...Some people wonder why the design was entrusted to him and not an architect. By Noam Dvir -- Ram Karmi- Ha'aretz (Israel)

We told you so: The report by a UNESCO advisory panel, published here for the first time, points to irregularities in the

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; Marmol 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 Schmalzing 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 fesitval 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

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