Today's News - Tuesday, February 11, 2014

- The fascinating tale of Torrance, CA, that is "largely a story of failure" of a planned utopia of small, modern workers' homes that "proved to be too ahead of their time."

- IIT College of Architecture launches the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize and the MCHAP for Emerging Architecture - two biennial prizes that come with healthy purses.

- Eyefuls of the three concepts in the running to revamp Mies’s Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, DC.

- Davidson gives thumbs-up and -down to two new Manhattan academic buildings: the New School's University Center “brings the school's brand of sensitive boldness” to the neighborhood, while Cooper Union "got a brooding, elegant, sharply folded office building that looks utterly foreign" to its nabe.

- Cheers to girl power! Mecanoo's "confident but humble" Houben "crowned" AJ Woman Architect of the Year + Ph.D. candidate King is "truly inspiring" as AJ Emerging Woman Architect of the Year.

- Jeers to sexism in architecture: Fairley asks, "Awards aside - what is there, really, to celebrate?"

- Chambers "can't pinpoint seeing female students discouraged or bullied" when he was in school, "but if I'm honest, some glaring examples start to jump out at me."

- Meanwhile, "Dallas's favorite overpaid architect" (a.k.a. Calatrava) is ordered to hand over €3 million to a Spanish developer for "shortcomings in the implementation of the work" at the Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos Ciudad de Oviedo.

- Brussei tackles the "power of the planning language" that is "in constant need of re-evaluation. Take the meaning of the word 'planning.'"

- Australia's Association of Consulting Architects takes issue with findings in a recent report on the value of architecture degrees (see ANN, Jan. 23): "The reportage, and the ‘research’ on which it is based is alarmist, but not alarming."

- Pfau offers an architect's perspective on school curriculums "incorporating new concepts of ‘design thinking’" that "may help schools shed the ‘rat race’ of teaching to the tests."

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"Zaha Hadid + Suprematism" by Charlotte Douglas, Hans Ulrich Obrist, et al. portrays another side of the London-based architect...

"Will it Sustain?" Danish Architecture Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark: three wonderful international exhibitions, all under one roof!

Rudy Ricciotti Architecte: MuCEM (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations), Marseille, France. By Kirsten Kiser

Bigger and Better: MoMA is right: Diller Scofidio + Renfro’s expansion shows every sign of being sensitive and lively, a fact that has been lost in a debate about corporate insensitivity... That no one has come to the defense of the DS+R expansion speaks volumes about the envy and pettiness that dominate American architectural practice, journalism, and criticism.

It's Time to Bury Frank Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial: The decisive blow is Congress' 2014 budget...Critics and pundits have been nearly unanimous in their opposition to the design. And virtually none of Gehry's friends have come to his defense. They have left him flapping in the breeze... (all that's missing is a grinning emoticon).

Santiago Calatrava Ordered to Pay €3 Million For Faulty Design, Continues Run of Being Awesome: ...Dallas' favorite overpaid architect is being ordered by the court to pay a Spanish developer for "shortcomings in the implementation of the work" of The Palace of Exhibitions and Congresses in Oviedo, Spain. By Justin Shubow/National Civic Art Society

Why Definitions Are Less Important than Discussions: To be pedantic, or to participate, is the question: The power of the planning language ranges from intensely personal to global in scale...Given the stakes, the jargon and buzzwords and legal terms and hot buttons of the planning conversation are in constant need of re-evaluation... Take the meaning of the word “planning”... By James Brasuell-PLANetizen

Francine Houben crowned Woman Architect of the Year: Founding partner of Mecanoo...was described by the judges as...
Julia King named AJ Emerging Woman Architect of the Year: Sole practitioner and PhD candidate...described by the judges as "truly inspiring"...has already designed and built a sewer for 322 low-income houses in New Delhi and is regenerating the Taj East drain which runs through slum areas near the Taj Mahal... - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Sexism in architecture: Remember what Kathryn Findlay said? 'Women, don't be put off by the aggression of men': As the best UK female architects pick up coveted industry awards, new statistics show discrimination against women in the industry is rising. Josephine Fairley asks why...awards aside - what is there, really, to celebrate? What we all have to hope for is that women continue to be inspired to build on the successes of the Hadids and the Findlays... -- Julia King; Francine Houben; Ushida Findlay... - Telegraph (UK)

Big Men on Campus: Two academic interlopers...could almost be opposing characters in a two-person play. One school tends to its neighborhood...the other treats property as a bank account...The New School's University Center...brings the school's brand of sensitive boldness to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 14th Street...Cooper Union...neighborhood got a brooding, elegant, sharply folded office building that would be the pride of midtown and looks utterly foreign to the East Village. By Justin Davidson -- Roger Duffy/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Fumihiko Maki... - New York Magazine

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Design Ideas Released: Three concepts for renovating Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's only library..."concepts are meant to judge the architect's ability and will by no means be the final design of the library..." -- Studios Architecture/Freelon Group; Patkau Architects/Ayers Saint Gross/and Krueck + Sexton Architects; Mecanoo/Martinez+Johnson Architecture... - Architect Magazine

Olympics deja vu: Sochi's Fisht Stadium vs. AT&T Stadium: If something seems vaguely familiar...don't worry, it's not a figment of your imagination. Fisht Olympic Stadium...bears some resemblance to our very own Cowboys Stadium...What it appears not to share...is the sensitive way Cowboys Stadium hits the ground...Fisht is a lot more ham-fisted... By Mark Lamster -- Populous; Brian Trubey/HKS Architects... - Dallas Morning News

IIT's College of Architecture Launches the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize: ...and the MCHAP for Emerging Architecture...two biennial prizes will "recognize the most distinguished built constructs of the North and South American continents..."...recipients will be awarded $50,000 [and] $25,000... -- Wiel Arets; Dirk Denison... - ArchDaily

The Rise and Fall of One Architect's Modern Torrance Utopia: ...largely a story of failure...A series of small, modern workers' homes in Torrance proved to be too ahead of their time, as was often the case with Gill himself. -- Frederick Law Olmsted; Irving J. Gill... - Curbed Los Angeles

ANN Feature: Nuts + Bolts #8: Best Friends Don't Make the Best Partners: For the successful partnership, it's all a matter of balance. By Michael M. Samuelian, AIA, AICP... - ArchNewsNow