

Today's News - Tuesday, February 9, 2016

- Giovanni ponders the importance of Hadid's RIBA 2016 Royal Gold Medal: the Queen approved it - Prince Charles "was probably not amused" (Cook cheers the medal going to Zaha - "larger than life, bold as brass. Our heroine.").
- Hadid's Gold Medal speech: "I am very happy and honored to receive this prize, for work that has not been mainstream and remains widely misunderstood. This misunderstanding is often linked to the dismissal of my work as self-indulgent or wilful."
- Pedersen has "an intriguing conversation" with Goldberger re: his "great side job" as consultant on the Obama presidential library: "Obama was engaged and remains a very seriously interested layperson. The perfect client, in other words. 'Theoretically, yes.'"
- Heathcote x 2: he minces no words about Heatherwick's Garden Bridge: it is "wrong in virtually every way - everything about this scheme suggests a sweatily nervous attempt to brand itself a 'visionary' project. But that vision is not to achieve any purpose beyond its own existence."
- He's much more optimistic about the "resurrection of Christchurch": he is witness to "the slow, sometimes uncertain, sometimes wrong and occasionally magical resurrection of an entire city" (and finds the best espresso in New Zealand that "blows your head off - but served without any of the self-conscious bearded nonsense.").
- O'Sullivan can't find much to cheer about the "Reinventing Paris" competition: "Paris appears to have totally botched it - the poor impression it has given so far is neither promising nor, sadly, especially new."
- Lubell, on the other hand, revels in Tokyo's architectural petting zoo of high-end boutiques that have achieved "sort of mythical status," and "turned the city into a battleground for a rare, and spectacular, game of architectural one-upmanship."
- Walker has high hopes for "The Spiral," BIG's next big Manhattan tower that "has a very nice twist on the typical superskinny skyscraper - Ingels might be able to reimagine the supertall in a way that serves the city better than most proposals do now."
- Calatrava wins out over five unnamed rivals to design another sky-high tower in Dubai that carries high hopes of being an "architectural wonder that will be as great as Burj Khalifa and Eiffel Tower."
- Studio Mumbai tapped to design Melbourne's MPavilion 2016: he sees the project as "a space to discover the essentials of the world - and of oneself."
- Saffron x 2: she's cautiously optimistic about DAS Architects' "stealth" Center City tower in Philly "that gets it right - it's likely other canny developers will go the by-right route. If only all the projects could be as well-designed as this one."
- She hopes "the third time will be the charm" in reimagining 14 acres of the newly-dubbed uCitySquare: the (impressive) team of architects "will have to step carefully to ensure their buildings don't bigfoot their neighbors - essentially will be creating a mini-neighborhood out of whole cloth."
- Kamin gives a standing ovation to Gang's Writers Theatre in Glencoe: "There's a stirring performance going on - strong but delicate, fresh without lapsing into an hollow quest for novelty, very good if not quite perfect - the building is no one-liner."
- Hawthorne looks beyond the pretty pictures of Los Angeles's new football stadium: the "design is full of impressive touches," but "remains fuzzy around the edges," where it really counts. "It's easy to imagine those elements getting a whole lot less attention, investment and architectural care."
- Haworth Tompkins joins the Robin Hood Gardens makeover team + Design principals talk about their plans to replace Robin Hood Gardens: "We respect the Smithsons' legacy and are acutely aware of the controversy."
- O'Sullivan parses Paris's plans for rooftop "parasite" homes that look "vaguely like steel and glass reptiles that have scaled a wall to bask in the sun" - and "could be the future of affordable housing" in the city.
- A fascinating look at Rural Studio's 20K House that is not only cheap - it "has such innovative design that it's changing the entire housing system."
- Another fascinating look - this time back and why FLW's Baghdad Opera House (that "looked like the Jetsons meets the Sugar Plum Fairy") never came to be.
- Preservationists continue to rattle cages re: the possible demolition of Roche's Ambassador Grill and Lounge and the lobby of the One UN New York hotel.

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[Why Zaha Hadid's RIBA Gold Medal Matters: Joseph Giovanni reports from the medal ceremony about the significance of the award: ...the first woman in the institute's history to win it in her own right...Queen Elizabeth II approved the award. Prince Charles...was probably not amused...Peter Cook: "Let's face it, we might have awarded the medal to a worthy, comfortable character. We didn't. We awarded it to Zaha: larger than life, bold as brass...Our heroine." - Architect Magazine](#)

[Gold medal winner Zaha Hadid marks award with 'traditionalism' : ...said too many of London's new developments are too conservative...I am very happy and honoured to receive this prize, for work that has not been mainstream and remains widely misunderstood...But architecture is not a medium of personal expression for me. To interpret it as striving for individual expression is to misunderstand it. This misunderstanding is often linked to the dismissal of my work as self-indulgent or wilful." - BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Q&A: Paul Goldberger's Great Side Job: Consultant to the Obamas: ...advising the Obama Foundation on the selection of an architect for the presidential library...an intriguing conversation...about the more prosaic aspects of the architect selection process...Obama was engaged and remains a very seriously interested layperson." The perfect client, in other words. "Theoretically, yes." By Martin C. Pedersen- Common Edge](#)

[Troubled bridge over water: The Garden Bridge represents a fundamental misconception about what public space is: ...wrong in virtually every way...everything about this scheme suggests a sweatily nervous attempt to brand itself a "visionary" project. But that vision is not to achieve any purpose beyond its own existence. By Edwin Heathcote -- Thomas Heatherwick; Wilkinson Eyre; Marks Barfield- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[The resurrection of Christchurch: It seems strange to encourage tourism to a city so shattered. Yet \[it\] is in the middle of reimagining itself, and a visit is an opportunity to witness the slow, sometimes uncertain, sometimes wrong and occasionally magical resurrection of an entire city. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[A High-Stakes Contest to 'Reinvent' Paris Fails to Impress: The huge "Reinventing Paris" competition was the sort of opportunity most cities are lucky to get once in a generation...The impression from the results so far: Paris appears to have totally botched it...when a city-sponsored competition...bills itself as a quest to "reinvent" an entire city, then concepts with more vision are needed...This project may have been about reinventing Paris, but the poor impression it has given so far is neither promising nor, sadly, especially new. By Feargus O'Sullivan- CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

[In Tokyo, Brand-Name Stores by Brand-Name Architects: ...high-end fashion labels...have achieved a sort of mythical status...Visiting their boutiques brings with it an extraordinary reward...They provide, free of charge, a chance to experience some of the most spectacular buildings in the world...have turned the city into a battleground for a rare, and spectacular, game of architectural one-upmanship...creating sculptural symbols that are difficult to forget. By Sam Lubell -- Renzo Piano; Rem Koolhaas; Toyo Ito; Tadao Ando; Herzog & de Meuron; Stephan Jaklitsch; Future Systems; Toyo Ito; Norihiko Dan; SANAA; MVRDV; Jun Aoki \[images\]- New York Times](#)

[This Twisting Manhattan Tower Will Have a Park on Every Floor: ..."The Spiral" ...planned around the Hudson Yards development...But this building has a very nice twist on the typical superskinny glass-and-steel skyscraper...What's exciting - besides the idea of standing in a cascading garden 65 stories above Manhattan - is that Ingels might be able to reimagine the supertall in a way that serves the city better than most of these proposals do now...Let's hope the building's agenda is as progressive as its appearance. By Alissa Walker -- BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group \[images\]- Gizmodo](#)

[Santiago Calatrava wins Dubai tower contest: ...defeated five unnamed rivals...will be erected \[in\] Dubai Creek Harbour](#)

area...inspired by traditional Islamic architecture...an "architectural wonder that will be as great as Burj Khalifa and Eiffel Tower"...RTKL-masterplanned 6 million m<sup>2</sup> development is expected to feature up to 39,000 homes and 22 hotels. [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

MPavilion 2016: Indian architect Bijoy Jain/Studio Mumbai announced for project's third iteration: ...projects encompass everything from a five-star Japanese hotel to a weaving workshop in India, embraces the handmade and espouses the idea of "caring" architecture..."I see MPavilion as a place of engagement: a space to discover the essentials of the world - and of oneself." -- Amanda Levete/AL\_A; Sean Godsell - Sydney Morning Herald

A stealth Center City tower that gets it right: ...it would be rare for a project of this size and complexity to come together so quickly in Philadelphia...the Beacon was intentionally designed to avoid such scrutiny...able to fly under the radar because it conforms perfectly with the site's zoning...it's likely other canny developers will go the by-right route. If only all the projects could be as well-designed as this one...a fine job of weaving the new tower around the old structure, without trying to imitate its '20s style. By Inga Saffron -- DAS Architects [images] - Philadelphia Inquirer

University City reinvents itself - again - with apartments, offices and shops; Maybe the third time will be the charm...In restoring the two streets...[uCitySquare] attempting to undo some of the damage of the urban-renewal period...will have to step carefully to ensure their buildings don't bigfoot their neighbors...essentially will be creating a mini-neighborhood out of whole cloth. By Inga Saffron -- Ayers Saint Gross; Jeanne Gang; Olin; Erdy McHenry Architecture; Rogers Partners; ZGF Architects [images] - Philadelphia Inquirer

New Writers Theatre building in Glencoe has a flair for drama: There's a stirring performance going on...That performance - strong but delicate, fresh without lapsing into an hollow quest for novelty, very good if not quite perfect - comes from the building itself...is no one-liner...Here, architecture doesn't just contain performance spaces; it celebrates and enhances them, becoming a memorable part of the drama - and the suburban landscape. By Blair Kamin -- Jeanne Gang/Studio Gang Architects [images] - Chicago Tribune

The real challenge for Los Angeles' new football stadium is everything around it: ...one of the most anticipated pieces of architecture in the local pipeline...The design...is full of impressive - and impressively telegenic - touches...remains fuzzy around the edges. And it's really around the edges that it will ultimately succeed or fail...It's easy to imagine those elements getting a whole lot less attention, investment and architectural care. By Christopher Hawthorne -- HKS; Mia Lehrer [images] - Los Angeles Times

Haworth Tompkins lands Robin Hood Gardens role: ...brought in to work on the replacement for Alison and Peter Smithson's soon-to-be-demolished estate...joins Metropolitan Workshop Architects on the scheme - phase 2 of the estate's regeneration - which will see the Brutalist western block of the 1972 'streets in the sky' flattened to make way for around 200 homes. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

"We respect the Smithsons' legacy and are acutely aware of the controversy": Toby Johnson of Haworth Tompkins and Neil Deely of Metropolitan Workshop speak about their plans to replace the Smithsons' much-admired Robin Hood Gardens. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Rooftop 'Parasite' Homes Could be the Future of Affordable Housing in Paris. No, really: ...that's the hope of developers behind the 3BOX project...Looking vaguely like steel and glass reptiles that have scaled a wall to bask in the sun...might come as a shock inserted into the historic fabric of Paris...But if the officially sponsored developers...get their way, this project could be just the beginning. By Feargus O'Sullivan -- Stéphane Malka Architecture; Les Toits Du Monde ("Roofs of the World") - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

This House Costs Just \$20,000 - But It's Nicer Than Yours: The Rural Studio's 20K House is so cheap and has such innovative design that it's changing the entire housing system - from mortgages to zoning laws. By Adele Peters [images] - Fast Company / Co.Exist

Why Frank Lloyd Wright's Baghdad Opera House Never Came To Be: FLW said he didn't give 'a hoot' about designing an opera house in London or New York. Baghdad was a different story. But the best-laid plans...: True to his reputation as one of the 20th century's more difficult artistic personalities, he also submitted a wholesale design for the city itself...To the casual eye, [the opera house] looked like the Jetsons meets the Sugar Plum Fairy... By William O'Connor [images] - The Daily Beast

Preservationists Worry About the Future of 2 Manhattan Spaces: ...concerned about the possible demolition of the Ambassador Grill and Lounge and the lobby of the One UN New York hotel, designed by Kevin Roche..."These buildings recede. Right before they're rediscovered, people think they're worthless. The same thing happened with Art Deco. That's a dangerous moment." - New York Times

A Filtered View #4: Where is Sustainability's Flying Buttress? It may take a decade or so before photovoltaics and other energy-producing technologies find an aesthetic foothold, but for architecture to survive - they must. By Charles F. Bloszies, FAIA - ArchNewsNow.com

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