

## Today's News - Wednesday, January 6, 2010

- Baley bashes Dubai's burj (but ever so eloquently) as "a subprime Great Pyramid built for vainglory rather than for purpose...queasy nostalgia for a version of the future that looked old-fashioned a generation ago" (ouch!).
- Thumb's up and thumb's down from Germany: the Burj Khalifa is "much less a symbol of hubris and much more one of a small Arab state that has dared to be different; from German architects: "Nobody knows where the planning hubris of the sheikhs will lead" (and it's a bad example for Europe).
- Kamin goes in search of Dubai's Swiss Cheese building (a.k.a. 0-14) and finds "an entire district of unfinished buildings - a ghost city...for the most part, eerily quiet."
- Q&A with Nadel re: what changed in security and building design over the last decade.
- Planners, developers, and policymakers look for new ways to sustain growth and rising demand amid diminishing resources "after the Age of Infrastructure."
- U.K.'s Chester Zoo redevelopment could include a biodome larger than the Eden Project.
- King cheers the early blooms of good design in San Francisco's Mission Bay.
- A special report on NYC's endangered historic buildings facing quiet neglect and in desperate need of attention.
- Meanwhile plans to redevelop the Domino Sugar refinery on the Brooklyn waterfront head for review: cheers for the unusually large percentage of the apartments that would be set aside for low- and moderate-income families, but "it's not going to be an easy sell."
- Cheers and challenges to plans to add "pizzazz" in converting a 1912 Portland State University building into an arts center.
- Kimball Art Center considers University of Utah students' ideas for remodel - with hopes to hire an architect this year.
- A Toronto firm combines architecture and activism with "socially conscious projects in often challenging neighborhoods."
- The results of a design competition offer the "possibility of a brighter tomorrow for Filipinos" with hopes that "young designers can find, and their older counterparts can rediscover 'their sense of purpose as future nation builders.'"
- Q&A with Bons Obiadi, an American-trained architect and town planner, re: why he returned to practice in Nigeria - he "bares his mind on sundry issues."
- An interesting angle in reviewing the decade: design details of British architecture (it's not all ETFE).
- A good reason to head to Seattle in February: 9th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities.
- Call for entries: Affordable Housing for the Future in Abu Alanda, Jordan.
- Wanted: Design Director for the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Burj Dubai: The new pinnacle of vanity: For all the ambition of its construction...Burj Khalifa is a frightening, purposeless monument to the subprime era...the ultimate expression of [Fazlur Khan's] audacious, lightweight design philosophy...at the extreme outer limits of our understanding of structures...built for vainglory rather than for purpose. Vast in size but small in meaning, Burj is a lot more stuff, but less idea. By Stephen Bayley -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [slide show, video]- Telegraph (UK)

Dubai Tower "Will Become Symbol of Arab Adaptability": German commentators see the building as a symbol of both the emirate's ability to weather financial blows and its success in merging Western liberalism with Islamic social structures...much less a symbol of hubris and much more one of a small Arab state that has dared to be different. - Der Spiegel (Germany)

World's tallest building draws criticism of excess from German architects: "Nobody knows where the planning hubris of the sheikhs will lead" ...Burj Khalifa a bad example for Europe -- DAI/German Architects' Association; Christian Baumgart; Meinhard von Gerkan; Adrian Smith- Deutsche Welle (Germany)

In the heart of Dubai's real estate crash -- in search of the Swiss Cheese building: In Chicago, we get bent out of joint because two supertall towers...are unfinished because of the real estate crash. But...Business Bay is the crash on a whole different order of magnitude...I counted at least 20 unfinished towers, and they came in every different shape and size... By Blair Kamin -- Reiser + Umemoto RUR Architecture [images]- Chicago Tribune

Security and Building Design: What Changed in This Decade: Building security design barely made the radar screen of most architects a decade ago. But as architect Barbara A. Nadel explains, the last decade brought the issue front and center- CSO

Water Planning After the Age of Infrastructure: ...[the] era of infrastructure-enabled growth is over, leaving planners, developers and policymakers looking for new ways to sustain growth and rising demand amid diminishing resources.- PLANetizen

Revealed: Larger biodome than Eden Project: Proctor and Matthews Architects has submitted plans for this whopping £90 million, 34m-tall biodome at Chester Zoo...huge EFTE-clad structure, known as the Heart of Africa Biodome...part of the wider £225 million 'Natural Vision' redevelopment proposal...overseen by AECOM and Barton Willmore... [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Good design starts to bloom in Mission Bay: San Francisco's 303-acre rail-yard-turned-redevelopment district was filling up with buildings mostly boxy and bland, sterile and safe. Public spaces had a stilted, empty feel. Now, nearly a decade after construction began, things are starting to get interesting. By John King -- Kwan Henmi; Arquitectonica; Tom Eliot Fisch; SB Architects; PWP Landscape Architecture; David Baker + Partners [slide show]- San Francisco Chronicle

Endangered NYC special report: The city's crumbling past...New Yorkers have watched their city transition from urban blight to a center of starchitecture...But all too often, historic buildings, often protected by the city, face quiet neglect...buildings in desperate need of attention. -- C.B.J. Snyder; William Field; Henry Bayard/John C. Tucker; Rapp & Rapp; Thomas W. Lamb; Augustus Hatfield; Oscar Bluemner; Renwick, Aspinwall & Owen [link to images]- amNewYork

Big Plans for Old Sugar Refinery Face Review: ...beginning a public review of a proposal for a \$1.5 billion 11-acre residential project in and around the old Domino Sugar refinery...An unusually large percentage of the apartments, 30 percent, or 660 units, would be set aside for low- and moderate-income families... -- Rafael Viñoly; Beyer Blinder Belle- New York Times

Converting Portland State University building into arts center poses challenges: What's the best way to add pizzazz and a brand-new entrance to a distinctive 1912 building that turns its back on one of downtown's busiest streets? -- Boora Architects [image]- The Oregonian

Blueprints for the New Year: Kimball Art Center considers students' ideas for remodel: ...aspiring architects from the University of Utah unveiled their proposed designs for a renovated facility, a project the board has been contemplating for several years...will likely combine elements from each design to come up with guidelines for an architect. - Park Record (Utah)

At the intersection of architecture and activism: Firm enriches the 'weft and weave' of the city with socially conscious projects in often challenging neighbourhoods...a desire to remove barriers that isolate people and boost public engagement while respecting the city's built heritage. -- Kearns Mancini Architects; Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB); Montgomerly Sisam- Globe and Mail (Canada)

New year, new villages, new life: One of the few bright spots...The Designer Village Challenge campaign "to provide the 'Best Designs for the Least of Society'"...hope that with this challenge, young designers can find, and their older counterparts can rediscover..."their sense of purpose as future nation builders." [images]- The Philippine Star

Q&A with Bons Obiadi: You've to be an architect to practice architecture in Nigeria ...as in law, medicine...American-trained architect and town planner left his base in the United States to settle and practice his profession back home in Nigeria...bares his mind on sundry issues...- Champion Daily Newspaper (Lagos, Nigeria)

The decade in detail: Recent British architecture is notable for its finesse in detailed design...some practices emphasised craftsmanship, skillful workmanship and sound construction, whereas others pursued finesse, refinement and delicacy. For others, ecology was paramount. Many designers combined these three approaches... -- Grimshaw; Toyo Ito; Arup; Cecil Balmond; Glenn Howells Architects; Heatherwick Studio; Caruso St John; Allies and Morrison; Foster + Partners; Rural Design; Zaha Hadid; Hopkins [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

9th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities, February 4-6, 2010 in Seattle; register for the conference by January 15 to avoid late fees - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) / Local Government Commission (LGC)

Call for entries: Affordable Housing for the Future Competition: A Call for Innovative Ideas for the Design of a Model Water- and Energy-Efficient Low-Income Apartment Building in Abu Alanda, Jordan; cash prizes; registration deadline: January 26, 2010- Center for the Study of the Built Environment (CSBE)

Job posting: Wanted: Design Director, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); open to U.S. citizens and nationals; initial cut-off deadline for applications: January 15, 2010- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)



-- David Chipperfield Architects: Anchorage Museum expansion, Anchorage, Alaska  
-- Dominique Perrault: Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, Korea

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