

Today's News - Tuesday, March 24, 2015

- Davidson pens one of his best re: the "rise of the mile-high building" (a.k.a. "Hubris Tower"): "the megatall tower is really a new species. What we need is a new ethics of the skyline."
- Hawthorne talks to Zumthor re: his yet-again revised plan for LACMA that "has become noticeably more angular and muscular" (and now includes white or light-gray concrete): "I cannot do the whole museum in black. It gets too heavy."
- Moore digs deep into regeneration plans for London's Tottenham that includes new homes, shops (and a new stadium, of course): it may sound great, but developers are overlooking - and even demolishing - "the best of what's already there. This sort of regen-babble is suspect at the best of times" (good architecture - and planning, for that matter - "is about walking and chewing gum at the same time").
- NPR has a long conversation with Piano re: Europe's suburbs: they are not beautiful or well treated. "But they are the future of the city; or they are the city of the future," and "must be developed not by expansion, but by implosion; by transforming what's already available" (are you listening, Tottenham?).
- Webb and North dig into the Australian Government's Intergenerational Report, and are concerned by "the largely overlooked [but critical] issue of affordable housing for older Australians."
- Meanwhile, in a Melbourne inner suburb an affordable housing project "takes a communal approach" that may not be "a transcendently beautiful work of architecture in the Pevsner mould," but "it has already proven to be transformative" for its residents (beehives and blackboards included - we could live there!).
- A group of young entrepreneurs in Malmö, Sweden, is using a "crowd-sourced living room to break down walls between communities and power": "This citizen-driven approach has become an antidote to hardcore modernist planning."
- Litman lays it on the line about what advocates, planners (and architects) of public transit and transit-oriented development need to do to better communicate the benefits and overcome the nay-sayers: "It's time to channel Don Draper."
- A new study "tests whether Jane Jacob's ideas ring true for predicting pedestrian vitality in Seoul" (basically, they do ring true).
- Olcayto makes the case for good school design, as AJ launches a collaboration with Hawkins\Brown "to investigate how the profession can design better schools. Your input and feedback is most welcome."
- Marks Barfield's new University of Cambridge Primary School "combines cutting-edge design with educational theory - a mix of dreams and tough limits."
- Nelson Jones on why the design of U.S. Steel's new HQ in Pittsburgh shouldn't look like it could be anywhere: "What an irony that the corporation that almost defines this city would be paying rent in a yawner of a building."
- Betsky is glad the well-planned and designed company town of Pullman, IL, is being preserved, but is "bothered by the fact that there is little recognition that the place is a monument to oppression and violence" - as a National Park, it "has enshrined injustice, not labor history."
- Angell Brown takes a fascinating look at the "surge of interest" in modern house museums: "Once upon a time, they had the reputation for being architecture's ugly stepchildren. Not any more."
- de Graaf clarifies some misunderstandings about OMA's position re: the Nine Elms bridge competition: "The statement that we did not expect to win never meant to imply that we did not try" (but it was still "a wasteful exercise in political lobbying" - paid for by architects).
- Bernstein has a most interesting Q&A with Driehaus re: "bad architecture, foiling Frank Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial, and the 'Hershey's Kiss' Lucas Museum" that will surely have some cheering, others fuming.
- Yudelson "has made a sudden exit" from his leadership role with the Green Building Initiative.
- Daas is leaving Ball State to take over as dean of Kansas University School of Architecture, Design and Planning.
- Call for entries: 2-stage competition for the restoration and expansion of the Wien Museum in Vienna (big cash prizes, too!).

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The Rise of the Mile-High Building: ...if there is some ceiling beyond which nobody will ever build, engineers haven't found it yet. "I don't see a limit other than people'schutzpah - arrogance, actually"...the megatall tower is really a new species...What we need is a new ethics of the skyline - a way to wrestle with the question..."Whom does the sky belong to?" By Justin Davidson -- Ken Lewis/William Baker/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill/SOM; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Kohn Pedersen Fox/KPF; Rafael Viñoly- New York Magazine

Peter Zumthor's plan for LACMA undergoes makeover: Once a free-flowing, biomorphic design...has become noticeably more angular and muscular...now features double-height galleries made of white or light-gray concrete..."I cannot do the whole museum in black...It gets too heavy"...In part the modified design is a reflection of a largely conceptual design bending to reality... By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Los Angeles Times

After the riots, the regeneration: Tottenham's new stadium, franchise shops, 10,000 new homes... It sounds great, but Tottenham's distinctive character is at risk, say objectors, as developers overlook -- or even demolish -- the best of what's already there...This sort of regen-babble is suspect at the best of times. By Rowan Moore -- Arup; John McAslan; Landolt + Brown- Observer (UK)

Renzo Piano: The Future Of Europe's Cities Is In The Suburbs: ..."the periphery of the cities are not beautiful, of course; they are not well treated. But they are the future of the city; or they are the city of the future"...says peripheries must be developed not by expansion, but by implosion; by transforming what's already available... - National Public Radio (NPR)

Suitable, affordable housing is key to our population ageing well: In the wake of the Australian Federal Government's Intergenerational Report, Eileen Webb and Gill North examine the largely overlooked issue of affordable housing for older Australians, a critical factor in both the health and economic prosperity of the nation.- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Better together: The Commons: An apartment building takes a communal approach to bring liveable, affordable housing back to Melbourne's inner suburbs: ...isn't a transcendently beautiful work of architecture in the Pevsner mould. By engaging with considerations typically seen as outside the purview of the discipline, though, for the lives of its residents it has already proven to be transformative. By Maitiú Ward [images]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

A glimpse into the future of city halls? Malmö's crowd-sourced living room aims to break down walls between communities and power...young entrepreneurs in Sweden -- called the Connectors -- have trailed a very direct form of co-creation that could serve as inspiration..."The whole point is to create a system where urban planning is really with the people who live here"... "This citizen-driven approach has...become an antidote to hardcore modernist planning." By Lars Eriksen -- Kristoffer Lindhardt Weiss/Wallner Weiss; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group- Guardian (UK)

Communicating Transit Benefits: We Can Do Better: Planners can do a better job communicating the benefits of high quality public transit and transit-oriented development. We can learn from marketing professionals - it's time to channel Don Draper. By Todd Litman/Victoria Transport Policy Institute- PLANetizen

Death and Life in Seoul: A new article in the Journal of Planning Education and Research tests whether Jane Jacob's ideas ring true for predicting pedestrian vitality in Seoul...largely confirms her theory of urban vitality as related to environments that promote pedestrian oriented communities. - PLANetizen

Few can argue against good school design: Whether you can measure the benefits or not, well-designed schools

are simple common sense: ...focusing on whether we can empirically measure and prove the positive impact architectural design can have misses the more obvious point...we're collaborating with Hawkins\Brown to investigate how the profession can design better schools...Your input and feedback is most welcome. By Rory Olcayto - The Architects' Journal (UK)

How to design a primary school where learning has no limits: The new University of Cambridge Primary School combines cutting-edge design with educational theory...a mix of dreams and tough limits... By Lucy Ward -- Marks Barfield [image] - Guardian (UK)

No room for blandness with new U.S. Steel site: ...it looks like it could be anywhere...What an irony that the corporation that almost defines this city, a superstar of our mighty legacy, would be paying rent in a yawner of a building...It should at least look like its designers understand the importance and spirit of the site. By Diana Nelson Jones -- Forum Studio [image] - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

To What Will Pullman Be a Monument? I am glad that the town...is being preserved, but I am bothered by the fact that there is little recognition that the place is a monument to oppression and violence, not just to urban planning with coherence and a certain measure of benevolence. The place, quite simply, looks too good...Now that Pullman is a National Park, you can't touch it...has enshrined injustice, not labor history. By Aaron Betsky -- Solon Beman [images] - Architect Magazine

Age of the Modern Home: New England's modern house museums experience a surge of interest: Once upon a time, modern houses had the reputation for being architecture's ugly stepchildren...Not any more. Interest in modern houses (especially those by celebrated architects) has reached an all-time high. By: Marisa Angell Brown -- David Fixler/EYP Architecture; Docomomo; Gropius House/Walter Gropius; Frank Lloyd Wright/Zimmerman House; Glass House/Philip Johnson; Iconic Houses Network - Art New England

OMA chief: 'We were serious, but the Nine Elms contest wasn't': Reinier de Graaf on why he thinks the Nine Elms bridge competition is a wasteful exercise in political lobbying: The statement that we did not expect to win never meant to imply that we did not try. It certainly did not mean that we were not taking our own proposal seriously. [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Newsmaker: Richard Driehaus: The Driehaus Prize founder talks bad architecture, foiling Frank Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial, and the "Hershey's Kiss" Lucas Museum: Why are there, in your opinion, so many bad buildings? "Well, because architects build for themselves and build for the publicity. They don't really care what the public thinks." By Fred A. Bernstein - Architectural Record

Jerry Yudelson Steps Down from Green Globes: After just over a year at the helm of the Green Building Initiative, he has made a sudden exit...Vicki Worden...has again taken the reins at GBI, where she will serve as executive director...Yudelson took "tremendous steps" for GBI but wished to return to the speaking circuit and green building consulting. - BuildingGreen.com

Kansas University names new dean for the School of Architecture, Design and Planning: Mahesh Daas, professor and chairman of the Department of Architecture at Ball State University...will succeed Dean John Gaunt, who has led the school more than 20 years. - Lawrence Journal-World (Kansas)

Call for entries: Wien Museum NEU (Vienna) restoration and expansion - 2-stage open design competition: cash prizes; Stage 1 deadline: May 18 - Wien Museum Projekt



-- The Camera: Yiorgis Yerolymbos: ...a leading figure in architectural photography in Greece.
-- Bookshelf: "Double Dutch: Dutch Architecture since 1985" by Bernard Hulsman; "The Future of Architecture in 100 Buildings" by Marc Kushner; "Copy Paste: Bad Ass Copy Guide" by Winy Maas; "The Inevitable Specificity of Cities" by ETH Studio Basel; "Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture" by Sonja Dümpekmann, John Beardsley

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