

Today's News - Monday, January 31, 2011

- ArcSpace brings us eye-fuls of BIG's big plans for a waste-to-energy plant in Copenhagen (we're thinking it might be worth learning how to ski!); and MVRDV's Balancing Barn for de Botton's Living Architecture.
- Neyfakh does a very neat job in an exhaustive report on the New Urbanists vs. Landscape Urbanists debate - a must-read if you've been following all the froth and spittle ("What you're seeing is the New Urbanism about to swallow the landscape urbanists," Duany says).
- Rogers calls for the merger of CABE with the Design Council "or Britain's quality of life will suffer."
- LaBarre on SOM's "ambitious master plan" for Hanoi's first green-tech corridor (and hopes it really will be as green as claimed).
- Heathcote cheers a "rash" of new business schools "by the starriest of 'starchitects' breaking out...creating a compelling landscape of academic architecture quite different from anything we have seen before" (great slide show).
- Ouroussoff cheers a Holl library that will be "a haunting presence on the waterfront" in Queens, reminding us that "a library is part of a bigger collective enterprise. It's a lovely idea, and touching in its old-fashioned optimism."
- Moore ruminates on Piano's London Shard: the "building doesn't dither"; it's "startling, part-graceful, part-clunky, impressive, slightly nutty...a true monument to the city that made it" (from the pix, it's really, really big!).
- Kamin is thrilled GSA is putting big bucks behind giving "a big boost to Mies' Chicago Federal Center" (and work for lots of architects!).
- King has high hopes (and a few reservations) about plans for San Francisco Police Department's big plans in Mission Bay: it "could provide a needed gravitas" to the area, but "scale is a challenge."
- Freelon envisions "Celebrate Freedom" as the theme for a makeover of Houston's Emancipation Park, with hopes it will also spark local development.
- It seems "architects are being written out of the government's plans for school building" as the U.K. turns to a handful of pre-approved "flat-pack" templates "already being drawn up by construction companies."
- Campbell cheers two of his favorite Boston buildings winning his two favorite architectural prizes.
- The (very interesting!) story behind the "pioneering" Elisabeth Scott, Stratford's Royal Shakespeare Theatre original architect, "who paved the way for other women to join the profession" but in the end, was "the victim of her own success."
- One we couldn't resist: an eye-ful of what some 20th-century visionaries and planners saw as NYC's future (draining the East River may sound like folly - unless you remember a plan called Westway).

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-- BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group: Waste-to-Energy Plant, Copenhagen, Denmark
-- MVRDV: Balancing Barn, Suffolk, UK

Green building: Are cities the best place to live? Are suburbs OK? A fight grows in urban planning, with Harvard at the center...landscape urbanism... "specifically" and "explicitly" meant to dislodge the New Urbanists from their perch in the American planning world...Proponents of the New Urbanism have not been taking the accusations of obsolescence sitting down. By Leon Neyfakh -- Andres Duany; Charles Waldheim; Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk; Mohsen Mostafavi; Pierre Bélanger; Michael Mehaffy- Boston Globe

Richard Rogers appeals to government to save Cabe: Allow the proposed merger with the Design Council to take place or Britain's quality of life will suffer, architect argues...said the possible winding up of Cabe at the end of March would jeopardise the country's "fledgeling urban renaissance." - BD/Building Design (UK)

SOM to Make Hanoi into a Green Tech Oasis: But will it really be green? ...an ambitious master plan to produce Hanoi's first green-tech corridor...includes clear ideas for slashing the district's carbon footprint...by selling redevelopment on eco-friendly claims, the city insures itself against potential critics. Even smarter, of course, is actually implementing those changes. By Suzanne LaBarre -- Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill [images]- Fast Company

Outside the box: new architecture for business schools: Unlucky to coincide in their late-20th-century genesis with the nadir of the dumb corporate box...future business leaders emerged from the dimmest of buildings...A rash of new buildings by the starriest of "starchitects" is breaking out...creating a compelling landscape of academic architecture quite different from anything we have seen before. By Edwin Heathcote -- Norman Foster/Foster + Partners, David Chipperfield, David Adjaye and Frank Gehry; Dixon Jones; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Archimedia/FJMT; Grafton Architects; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Moore Ruble Yudell; Ian Simpson; Robert A.M. Stern [slide show]- Financial Times (UK)

Civic Engagement Trumps 'Shhh!': Steven Holl's Hunters Point community library design in Queens is meant to be a monument to civic engagement as much as a place for quiet contemplation...It's a lovely idea, and touching in its old-fashioned optimism. By Nicolai Ouroussoff [images]- New York Times

The Shard: a symbol of towering ambition...even in its incomplete state, is already dominating London's skyline...This building doesn't dither...whether it is a stab in the heart of London's scenery is debatable...startling, part-graceful, part-clunky, impressive, slightly nutty...a true monument to the city that made it. By Rowan Moore -- Renzo Piano; Broadway Malyan [slide show]- Observer (UK)

Stimulating modernism: The feds give a big boost to Mies' Chicago Federal Center: ...with little fanfare, the federal government is pouring more than a quarter of a billion dollars into four projects..."The mantra became: What would Mies do?" By Blair Kamin -- Mies van der Rohe; OWP/P Cannon Design; 4240 Architecture; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Ghafari Associates [images]- Chicago Tribune

SFPD's Mission Bay building could set design tone: ...neighborhood has never won praise for architecture of dignified heft. Now that might change, courtesy of an unlikely source: the city's Police Department...No matter how humane, modernism at this scale would be out of place in many neighborhoods. Here, though, it could provide a needed gravitas...Scale is a challenge... By John King -- HOK; Mark Cavagnero Associates [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Freedom vision: Philip Freelon pictures an international destination in the Third Ward's Emancipation Park: ...Houston's oldest park...will be a catalyst for local development..."It could be the trigger of revitalization..."...the park's theme, "Celebrate Freedom," inspired by the area's historic Juneteenth celebrations. -- The Freelon Group; Studio Thinkwell- CultureMap Houston

'Flat-pack' schools will make architects redundant: Architects are being written out of the government's plans for school building...To save money, schools will be 15% smaller and based on one of half a dozen pre-approved templates...already being drawn up by construction companies...- BD/Building Design (UK)

Two very different buildings are honored: Awards to Hancock Tower, Cambridge Public Library are long overdue: Two of the best buildings in Greater Boston have been honored with my two favorite architectural prizes. By Robert Campbell -- AIA Twenty-Five Year Award; BSA Harleston Parker Medal; I.M. Pei/Henry N. Cobb; Van Brunt and Howe (1888); William Rawl Associates; Ann Beha Architects - Boston Globe

A stage of her own: As the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford opens again after a major facelift, Gillian Darley uncovers the story of its pioneering architect Elisabeth Scott, who paved the way for other women to join the profession...In the end the only loser was Scott herself, unable to live up to her perceived early promise, the victim of her own success. -- Maurice Chesterton; John (Jock) Shepherd; Alison Sleigh- Guardian (UK)

The City's Future That Never Was: Planners and visionaries of the 20th century offered lofty plans, many of which never came to fruition, for their projections of what New York City should be. By David W. Dunlap -- W. Parker Chase; Regional Plan Association; Robert Moses [slide show]- New York Times

Designers of the Year: Q&A with Verda Alexander and Primo Orpilla of Studio O+A: Today Contract magazine named Verda Alexander and Primo Orpilla of San Francisco's Studio O+A Designers of the Year. We asked them about their experiences during the high and low points of the dot-com era and the ways high-tech continues to influence office design today.- ArchNewsNow

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