

# DIGEST

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## CHIPPERFIELD: 'THE UK DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO RUN COMPETITIONS'

David Chipperfield has hit out at UK-run architecture competitions and urged the RIBA to do more to police them.

His criticism came during a discussion about museum design at the Royal Academy of the Arts during a London Design Festival event on Saturday (19 September).

He said: 'We don't know how to run competitions over here. The RIBA has been weak and pathetic in loosening protection. Architecture competitions should be monitored by the RIBA – but they aren't.'

He also hit out at the UK's market-led culture and its effect on architecture. He said: 'In England there isn't a healthy culture of architectural patronage. We are market-led.'

'Museums are the last refuge of the architect. They are the place where architecture grows better than elsewhere. Architects have been pushed into these protected territories.' *LM*

## FOSTER: 'DRIVERLESS CARS AND DRONES WILL CHANGE OUR CITIES'



Norman Foster has said that new technology, including drones and self-driving cars, will inevitably transform cities and architecture.

The architect was speaking at the star-studded topping out ceremony yesterday (17 September) of Foster + Partners' and engineer AKTII's new European headquarters for media company Bloomberg in the City of London.

Foster (*pictured, with Michael Bloomberg*) told the AJ: 'In the future drones will allow us to carry any cargo safely, taking congestion off the roads. It will mean we can bring back the civic realm. Life in a city and the architecture of the city is directly related to the civic realm.'

When asked what other technologies could change the way architects design, Foster listed self-driving cars, mobile phones, robots and materials that can harness energy.

The 80-year-old architect added: 'Driverless cars will also change the way we design cities. We won't need as many motorways and our journeys will turn into leisure time. We'll be able to read the newspaper in the car on the way to work. It is all part of doing more with less. Drones are part of that.' *LM*

**Philip Bixby Reads very much like another dose of 'Technology is the answer! Now, what was the question?' - us architects do like our technological solutions... :o/**

**Chris Rogers Foster praises cars and planes working on autopilot? Hmm, judging from much of his recent work, he's way ahead of the curve on that.**

## RIBA LAUNCHES CONTEST TO FIND ARCHITECT FOR £100M LSE BUILDING

The RIBA has launched an international competition for a new £100 million building for the London School of Economics.

The proposed Paul Marshall Building will replace 44 Lincoln's Inn Fields, an eight-storey post-war office complex purchased by the university two years ago.

The development is expected to feature a new faculty, a nursery, staff accommodation and sports centre.

The competition is the third run by the RIBA for the prestigious



London university. O'Donnell + Tuomey's contest-winning £21.5million Saw Swee Hock Student Centre was shortlisted for last year's Stirling Prize and a competition-winning £120 million Global Centre for Social Sciences by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (*pictured*) is currently on site.

Six teams will be shortlisted following an open prequalification round. The finalists – due to be announced before the end of the year – will each receive an honorarium and be invited to compete in the contest's design phase, starting in January.

The deadline for requests to participate is 19 October. *MF*

## 'CHIEF ARCHITECT ROLE WON'T WORK', QUINLAN TERRY TELLS LORDS

Neoclassical architect Quinlan Terry has told a House of Lords committee that creating a national chief architect to promote good design is not feasible because of the subjective nature of architecture.

Ministers were said to be considering a new chief architect within government to complement the roles of chief planner and chief construction adviser, as recommended in last year's Farrell Review.

But, giving evidence to the House of Lords select committee on the built environment, Terry said the role would not work.

He said: 'There's a huge tension in architecture between good-quality traditional building and Modernism.'

'If you made me chief architect, I'd have a field day, if you made Richard Rogers chief architect, he'd do the complete opposite.'

'Don't trust architects,

because they're very opinionated people and you really want the clients to say what they want.'

Speaking at the same session, former RIBA president Sunand Prasad said it would be possible for a chief architect to play an impartial role.

He said: 'I could imagine a chief government architect whose role was not to arbitrate over one style of building or another. It would be about process.' *JD*

**@DhruvSookhoo Being a Chief Architect shouldn't be about promoting a certain style, but be about promoting a context for better places?**

## MECANOO TAKES OVER FROM FOSTERS ON NY PUBLIC LIBRARY JOB

Mecanoo has been brought in to revamp the New York Public Library's existing estate after Foster + Partners was dropped from the job last year.

The UK's biggest practice had been appointed to work on the £208 million overhaul of the library's flagship Fifth Avenue building but the company's proposals were shelved following mounting criticism.

Among those to have attacked Foster's proposals was Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, who, in one of her last published articles before her death in 2013, said the plans had been 'devised out of a profound ignorance of, or wilful disregard for, not only the library's original concept and design, but also the folly of altering its meaning and mission.'

Now Mecanoo, the practice behind Birmingham's new library, has been appointed to rework the main New York Public Library branch – known as the Stephen A Schwarzman Building – and to refurbish the library's Mid-Manhattan building.

The Dutch practice has been asked to increase space at the site by 42 per cent and will collaborate with local firm Beyer Blinder Belle on the \$300 million scheme to revamp the existing library. Construction is due to begin in 2017 and is expected to be completed in 2019. *LM*