

# U.S. EMBASSY LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

## GROUND BREAKING

### FACT SHEET

NOVEMBER 2013



KIERANTIMBERLAKE

**Architect** KieranTimberlake

**American General Contractor** BL Harbert International, Inc.

**UK Major Subcontractor** Sir Robert McAlpine

**Site** 4.9 acres

**Building Size** Approximately 54,000 gross square meters

## BACKGROUND

- In 2006, the Department of State determined that a new Embassy building would be required to meet U.S. diplomatic needs and provide a safe, secure, modern, and functional Embassy in London.
- After careful consideration of over 50 properties, the U.S. purchased a 4.9-acre site in the Nine Elms Opportunity Planning Area to locate the new Embassy.
- The Nine Elms area on the Thames River is situated less than a mile upstream from the Houses of Parliament. This industrial district of the South Bank has undergone a wholesale transformation to a brand new residential and business quarter right in the heart of London.
- Anticipating new residences for another 30,000 people, the revitalized area will include two new Tube stations and a new linear park sweeping right through the district from east to west.

## DESIGN COMPETITION

- The Department of State hosted a design competition to select the project architect.
- A total of 37 architectural submissions were accepted in the first round. Through the competition process, these submissions were narrowed to four finalist firms.
- KieranTimberlake of Philadelphia was selected by a distinguished jury of both American and British leaders in the fields of architecture, academia, and diplomacy to advance the challenge of designing a landmark building to represent the long standing relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom.

## PROJECT

- The new Embassy is being constructed with proceeds from the sale of other U.S. government property in the United Kingdom, including the former Chancery in Grosvenor Square.
- The new U.S. Embassy will enhance the urban fabric of London and demonstrate exceptional American architecture, technology, and sustainability.
- BL Harbert International, Inc. was issued the construction contract award and notice to proceed with the early site works in April 2013.
- Over 800 American and British workers will be involved in the construction.
- Completion of the new U.S. Embassy is anticipated in 2017.

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## SITE



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## DESIGN & LANDSCAPE

- The design places the Embassy building at the center of the Nine Elms site and develops the surrounding area into an urban park that honors the English tradition of urban parks and gardens as the context for civic buildings.
- The paving about and within the Embassy site utilizes the familiar limestone in many London walks and parks. London Plane trees provide shade and form at the perimeter and along Nine Elms Lane, as well as the walk to the south that connects the site to Vauxhall Station, the nearest Tube stop.
- Trees near the pond are to be North American species, such as the Weeping Willow and the Bald Cypress. Others, while native to North America, were long ago brought to England and are now common to the English landscape.
- The form of the landscape is expressed through grading walks and plantings in a way that simultaneously opens out to the city beyond, spirals inward as it envelops, and then moves up into and through the Embassy building.
- The chancery is a pure, simple and transparent crystalline cubic form atop a colonnade.

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## EXTERIOR



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- As pure geometry, the cube represents an open and inviting presence on the London cityscape. The design is a hallmark of the many innovations in the project – a landscape without any visible barriers, fences or walls; opening of the inside space to the outside; solar harvesting and sun shading in the design of the crystal-like ethylene-tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) scrim.
- A four-sided colonnade forms the base of the building. Through both custom and the openness and accessibility of their sheltering form, colonnades have long evoked the architecture of diplomacy.
- Six interior gardens create spaces of meeting and repose that also create a vertical path up and through the building. The interior design features high performance and highly flexible work spaces. Public events can be held in a multi-level series of spaces that adjoin an event lawn, all with views over the pond and garden.

## SUSTAINABILITY

- The design of the new facility demonstrates exceptional environmental leadership that is at the leading edge of practice. The design team established sustainability aspirations that include carbon neutrality, a self-sufficient water system, optimization of daylighting and occupant control of systems, as well as minimum goals for certification at Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Excellent.
- The first step toward achieving carbon neutrality is to use energy reduction strategies and technologies to minimize consumption. These strategies will allow for the Embassy to contribute energy back to the grid when producing more than needed.
- Water management strategies include a deep well aquifer to provide self-sufficiency in potable water; on-site wastewater treatment plant that collects waste from flow and flush fixtures and treats it to a level that can be reused in flush fixtures; as well as roof rainwater collection and property storm runoff reuse for cooling systems and irrigation.

- A ground level pond will be used for heat ejection, reducing the need for conventional cooling towers.
- Daylighting is a key driver in the building design and will be utilized to minimize the need for electric lighting.
- The Embassy's cubic form will be wrapped on three sides in a transparent polymer, or ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE), that has been optimized to shade interiors while admitting daylight and framing large open view portals to the outside. Its pattern visually fragments the façade while it intercepts unwanted solar gain and transforms it into energy by means of thin film photovoltaics positioned in the ETFE foils.
- Energy and environmental design issues have been balanced with the overall project goals of openness, diplomacy, functionality, security, value, and will reduce costs and increase operational efficiency.

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## INTERIOR



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## ART

- The art collection will feature works and commissions by contemporary artists from the United States and the United Kingdom to reflect our cross-cultural dialogue.
- The collection will comprise objects in a variety of media which will be installed in the Chancery and on the grounds of the Embassy.
- A theme for the collection is "Poetry of Place."

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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