EDITOR’S NOTE: Apologies for late arrival of today's news - we've been suffering power outages all morning (something to do with the 15 inches of white stuff we see outside our window!).

- Saffron wonders how the modern glass cube of KieranTimberlake’s U.S. Embassy will go over with the U.K.'s "traditionalist camp"; in environmental terms, "the embassy will be everything America aspires to but barely achieves."
- The embassy will change a swath of land in Nine Elms area - designed by British architects.
- Farrelly remains skeptical that "old guys can change their spots" and actually make Barangaroo a "from-scratch creation of a genuine, pulsing city precinct" (especially "beneath this daisy chain of pocket-plinths").
- Woodman on H&deMs VitraHaus: "Flash and vogueish it may be" (or "freakish landmark"?), it is still "a building that responds with real intelligence" to its setting and brief.
- Meanwhile, their Met Opera sets range "from a forest picnic of sorts to post-apocalyptic-looking ruins (hopefully not the remnants of some failed project)" - with pix to prove it.
- LMN wins big in Cleveland.
- Rothstein re: new African Burial Ground Visitor Center in Manhattan: it "makes the past seem like an excision, a resurrection of an alien time and place, a reminder of what lies deep underfoot."
- Walker is wowed by 21 billboards in L.A. given over to art (great pix).
- Weekend diversions: Filler offers an insightful (and thoroughly amusing) review of "Koolhaas Housewife."
- Ivy cheers "Sacred Spaces: the Architecture of Fay Jones," a new DVD that is "a cogent appreciation of the man's life and work, all neatly combined in one presentation."
- Don't leave Yale yet: the unusual "Compass and Rule" show includes a jolt: "the idea that architecture didn't exist before the 16th century" (and "there will be math").
- In NYC, Snelhettas's ascendance is on full display; its work "supports the notion that more of the egalitarian and global architectural competitions...could allow architecture to transcend" the many challenges that "so often undermine its potential to uplift cities."
- Q&A with Candido at Cooper Union re: his "The Great White Whale is Black" retrospective, his "fascination with spatial relationships and the relationship between cities and their surroundings."
- "Lewis's Fifth Floor: A Department Story" captures the faded beauty of the "eerily evocative time-warp" still on display in London's long-closed department store (great pix).
- Grimshaw's sketchbooks are a big draw at the Edinburgh College of Art.
- In Pittsburgh, "Imagining Home: Selections from the Heinz Architectural Center" reveals ways in which the home has been envisioned over the last 200 years.
- Landscape architecture students create "METROmorphosis - Transforming the Urban World" at the Philadelphia International Flower Show to "show simple, tangible ways of bringing living ecosystems into our day-to-day urban living."
- Bruegmann gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Duany and Speck's "The Smart Growth Manual": "proponents and critics will find much to engage them in its pages."

Three books look at NYC "from wartime grit to modern soullessness."

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Phila. firm will design U.S. Embassy in London: ...it is unclear how KieranTimberlake's modern glass cube will go over with the traditionalist camp...For serious, urban-minded architects, designing an American embassy in these tense times is almost sure to lead to regret...That said...light, shimmering cube that is a vast improvement over the recently opened embassy in Berlin...In environmental terms, the embassy will be everything America aspires to but rarely achieves... By Inga Saffron -- Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Pei Cobb Freed; Richard Meier [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

UK firms to design area around US embassy: ...6ha site within the Nine Elms area..."The big thing about the US embassy is that it will trigger regeneration. It will change a swathe of land in that area." -- Farrells; Feilden Clegg Bradley; AHMM; Flacq BD/Building Design (UK)

Now for the hard part: public spaces of quality not quantity: if architecture were like Olympic snowboarding...what Lend Lease and Richard Rogers are attempting at Barangaroo would approach a perfect 10...if we accept the rhetoric...Barangaroo...still reads as the modernist dream...Until they can reverse this mindset, I'll remain sceptical as to whether these old guys can change their spots, even if they want to. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Rogers Stirk Harbour -- Sydney Morning Herald

Herzog & de Meuron's VitraHaus: ...puts domestic forms to unsettling use...As an exercise in the kind of spectacle that Gehry's building pioneered, this is - for the foreseeable future - the last word...Flash and vogueish it may be... nonetheless a building that responds with real intelligence both to its physical setting and to the requirements of a very particular brief. By Ellis Woodman [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Pritzkers Take the Stage: Herzog & de Meuron, like many of their starchitect brethren, have not had an easy time of late in New York...just got their big break, as they say in the theater: a debut at the Met...the set for a new production of Verdi's Atilla...from a forest picnic of sorts to post-apocalyptic-looking ruins (hopefuly not the remnants of some failed project). [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

LMN Architects chosen...to design medical mart and convention center...named conceptual designer of what Cleveland hopes will be the nation's first medical mart and a rebuilt convention center...decision marks a major milestone for the long-delayed project...means that Valerio Dewalt Train...originally hired...to conduct due diligence in earlier stages...will not get the big job. By Steven Litt - Cleveland Plain Dealer

A Burial Ground and Its Dead Are Given Life: African Burial Ground Visitor Center...[its] creation becomes, in the show, a consummation, a posthumous
excited such violent antipathy among many architects...reflects a curiously static view of history and urban change...proponents and critics will find much to engage them in its pages. By Robert Bruegmann- Architect Magazine


GRAFT: Hotel Q, Berlin, Germany