• Sevcik on why the creative class can't save cities: "Poor Richard Florida - his theory is very right but it was then misused for short-term thinking" (*Archi-porn* and counting on the Bilbao Effect is no guarantee of success).

• Warren Berger offers a four-step dance to be truly innovative (going backwards or sideways is not always a bad thing).

• Neustein's report on Gehry's dog-and-pony show in Sydney (the most amusing must-read of the day): his UTS Business School is not a "crumpled 'brown paper bag';" and "if quirky and exuberant costs less than rational and sober, he asks, why wouldn't you hire me?"

• Rosenbaum (among others) offers a glide through Piano's "brave new Whitney" with a clip "produced despite Renzo Piano's usual distaste for fly-throughs."

• Saffron is mostly disappointed in Philly's "latest pile of bricks to land on Independence Mall": The President's House, though "once you step into the belly of the memorial, the project begins to redeem itself."

• The new Dutch embassy in Amman is Jordan's first LEED building: will it help placate ancestors who "would be horrified at our present waste of resources?"

• Pearman on what went wrong with the Stirling/Wilford 1976 Runcorn housing estate: if it had "survived and been upgraded, it would have a very different reputation today" (the opening tale is a hoot).

• Bornstein cheers Rosanne Haggerty and Common Ground (among our faves) and the 100,000 Homes Campaign: "It's the human welfare equivalent of NASA's race to put a man on the moon," proving "when cities make a concerted effort to reduce chronic homelessness, "they succeed."

• Berlin receives a €120 million ($160 million) Christmas present, now all the city needs to do is build a new museum to house it.

• "Tis the season for the year-in-reviews: Anderton's impressive panel finds it "wasn't all bad" in L.A.

• Rinaldi cheers "high ambition" that drove the best designs, even in a tough year.

• The best from Dallas (this felt a bit thin to us).

• AIA's ABI report reaches highest score since 2007, but it will take "several months in a row of increasing demand" before "we can feel safe saying we have entered a recovery phase."

• Canadian Architect hands out its 2010 Awards of Excellence (alas, no images).

• Call for entries: NEA's "Our Town" grants for "creative placemaking" projects (just a heads-up - guidelines coming soon) + BSA's Rotch Travelling Scholarship.
Architecture Billings Index [ABI] Reaches Highest Score Since 2007: Business conditions continue to vary by sector and region..."Once we see several months in a row of increasing demand we can feel safe saying we have entered a recovery phase. Until then, we can expect continued volatility in business conditions." - American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Canadian Architect 2010 Awards of Excellence winners announced -- Patkau Architects; Cannon Design; 5468796 Architecture; Smith Carter Architects; Atelier Big City; Baird Sampson Neuert Architects; Kongats Architects; Provencher Roy + Associés Architectes; Cardinal Hardy | Labonté Marcil | Eric Pelletier Architectes, Architectes en Consortium - Canadian Architect magazine

NEA Creative Placemaking Grants: The National Endowment for the Arts announced a new set of "Our Town" grants for "creative placemaking" projects that contribute to the livability of communities and put the arts at their core...grant guidelines will be posted January 13, 2011. [links]- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Call for entries: Rotch Travelling Scholarship: $35,000 or more to travel and study abroad for a minimum of eight months; open to U.S. citizens under the age of 35 with a professional degree working in a Massachusetts firm or with a professional degree from an accredited Massachusetts school of architecture; application deadline: January 11, 2011 - Boston Society of Architects/BSA/AIA

Gehry Partners: Dr. Chau Chak Wing Building, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia