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Unveiling the winning design (l to r): James Timberlake, Adam Namm and Ambassador Susman

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Embassy News

Ambassador Louis Susman unveiled the winning entry of the design competition for the new US Embassy in London February 23.

Along with Acting Director of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Adam Namm, he announced that the design by KieranTimberlake of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania had met the criteria of creating “a modern, welcoming, timeless, safe and energy efficient embassy for the 21st century”.

Mr Susman called it “an exciting moment in the history of the U.S. Embassy in London”. The new Embassy

will be “a landmark building in a city known for landmarks”, replacing the current Embassy which has become “over-crowded, does not meet modern office needs and required security standards, and after 50 years is showing signs of wear and tear.”

The State Dept. has only held four such competitions in the past, for the Embassies in Berlin, Beijing, London, and now London again, proving, said Mr Namm, how important the relationship is between the US and UK.

Security and sustainability were major factors in the choice. The new

building is designed to be a net exporter of energy and is expected to exceed the Mayor of London’s 2019 energy guidelines. The design had to be a timeless and iconic representative of the United States. From an initial 37 submissions, the Bureau shortlisted nine firms. A jury of American and British leaders in the fields of architecture, academia and diplomacy selected four, the eventual winners along with Morphosis Architects, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, and Richard Meier & Partners. These worked for nearly a year and made final presentations to the jury which then recommended the winning design. In London, the planning process will involve the Mayor’s office, the Wandsworth Borough Council, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, and local residents.

KieranTimberlake’s crystal cube – “The most efficient use of space”, James Timberlake told us – is set upon a colonnade faced with an ever-changing light art installation and will be surrounded by gardens that spiral up to the main building. These consist of a pond, a meadow and an area of woodland. The overall look is open and friendly, the all-important security is afforded by the landscape itself. The Embassy aims to be ‘good neighbors’ with the residents and businesses in the area. The anticipated ground breaking will be in 2013 with construction completed in 2017.



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