

Press release

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First project in Latin America - The Aleph

The redevelopment of Dresden Station, with its striking new 30,000-square-metre translucent roof, has been officially opened. One of the most impressive nineteenth-century railways termini in Europe and one of the very few major buildings to survive the air raid of 1945, the station's original structure has been exposed and restored to its former grandeur. The teflon-coated glass fibre skin allows daylight to flood the station, significantly reducing the energy demands of artificial lighting. At night, light reflects off the underside of the roof canopy, creating an even wash of illumination, while from outside the whole structure radiates an ethereal silvery glow. Part of a wider masterplan to revive the surrounding area, the project includes the restoration of the historic reception building containing the Travel Centre, shops and restaurants.

Dresden Station was built in 1898 to a design by Ernst Giese and Paul Weidner. Severely damaged during World War II, it deteriorated further due to poor maintenance in the post-war period. The original roof was partially glazed, but after the war it was covered with timber, admitting little daylight. Faced with this crumbling structure, Foster and Partners removed various additions and alterations made to the building over the last hundred years in order to restore the integrity of the original design. The new roof is supported by the nineteenth-century station arches, with only minimal reinforcement, drawing attention to the fine detailing of the existing structure.

Like a grand basilica, the reception building contains a cruciform arcade, crowned by a 34-metre high square glass cupola. Previously hidden, the dome's glazing has been replaced and a new movable transparent foil cushion beneath it allows light to fill the space and facilitates natural ventilation. Historic waiting rooms form a Travel Centre and restaurant area, with shops lining the arches of the arcade. Circulation within and through the station has been rationalised. Design allows for the future expansion of the station by extending the barrel-vaulted membrane roof over the outer platforms by 200 metres, providing a cover for the new high-speed trains, which are almost twice the length of the old platforms.

Attending the ceremony Lord Foster said: "Our redevelopment of Dresden Station represents a true celebration of the 19th century original through the means of our times. The dramatic roof structure has been specially engineered to rest comfortably on the original station arches revealing the fine historic detailing while flooding the space below with natural light, reducing energy consumption and reinventing the station for the 21st century."

The project has been completed in time for the 2006 800th anniversary of Dresden.

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