

Press release

03 octobre 2005

Groundbreaking for Hardman Square - the first Foster and Partners scheme in central Manchester

The recent groundbreaking of two new Foster and Partners office buildings marks a milestone in the regeneration of central Manchester's former judicial district. Part of the wider 12 hectare Spinningfields Development, the Foster scheme at Hardman Square is located close to the city's principal shopping area. Comprising four new commercial buildings and a public plaza, Hardman Square is the social and economic heart of Spinningfields, providing vital amenities including shops, cafes, and civic space.

The focus has been to integrate the project into the city by creating strong connections and a dynamic network of new pedestrian routes. Due to complete in 2007, the scheme will not only establish a high quality working environment for national and international businesses, but will be a destination in its own right. The landscaping will be rich with trees, high quality paving, seating, specialist lighting with water and public artwork.

The first phase of development includes the construction of numbers three and four Hardman Square. Founded on the principles of light and flexibility, the buildings will offer high quality office space for single or multiple tenants. The curved triangular plan of the larger eight-storey building is dominated by the pedestrian routes that wrap around it, and the ground floor is recessed to provide a colonnade with space for shops, that will extend the public realm. At the northern side of the plaza, a smaller five-storey building incorporates the existing Crown Court prisoner receiving bay at ground level. Both buildings have highly layered facades, utilising a system of interchangeable parts to provide sunshading and a mix of clear and opaque glass panels.

Chris Bubb, the project leader noted: The quality of our Spinningfields project will set the tone for the subsequent development of the area in the heart of Manchester. We wanted to deliver a series of highly cost-effective office buildings, which expressed the practice's long-standing interest in sophisticated building envelopes and attention to detail.

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