

Press release

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Foster + Partners with Aston Martin win joint first prize in competition to design a new bus for London

The joint submission by Foster + Partners and Aston Martin has won first prize, alongside Capoco Design, in Transport for Londons competition to design a new bus for the capital. The two iconic British brands worked together to challenge preconceptions of bus design with a vehicle that is environmentally sensitive, accessible, convivial and reinvents a much-loved symbol of London for the modern era.

After an intense period of research which included canvassing opinion from passengers, drivers and conductors, the two parties worked in close collaboration to design a new bus from the inside-out. In doing so, consideration was given to a wide range of issues including layout, use of materials, motive power, passenger experience and the bus impact on the streetscape and the environment of the city. The bus is designed to navigate the dense and varied streets of London, employing innovative technologies to allow for greater manoeuvrability and energy conservation. Optimising safety, the driver's cabin provides panoramic views as well as incorporating screens to supervise CCTV images and radio communications with the on-board conductor.

Much like a car or a building, the design evolved in response to the needs of its users. The layout, lighting and wooden floors are conceived to encourage a spirit of warmth and community. The arrangement of the decks is driven by comfort and particular consideration is given to the selection of reconstituted leather upholstery to create a

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tactile living room feel, especially in the saloon-like lower deck.

The new bus is zero emissions ready, accessible for all and will set new standards for sustainable public service vehicles. Passengers benefit from views from the top of the deck through a glazed roof which incorporates solar cells to generate energy and filter daylight to control the temperature inside.

The bus design re-introduces the rear open access platform that made London's Routemaster bus so popular up until its withdrawal from general service. This is supplemented by a side door to facilitate access for the mobility impaired and families with young children.

Lord Foster said:

I am delighted that we have won joint first prize with the Aston Martin/Foster + Partners design. This project has really captured my imagination. London's buses are so much a part of the essence of this city functionally, symbolically and geographically. They help us draw a mental map their destinations are London's historic places, often green: Shepherd's Bush, Islington Green, Hampstead Heath, Green Park. Our design seeks to combine contemporary innovation with timelessness. Like the original Routemaster which was ahead of its time and consequently endured a new bus for London should establish a whole new travel experience that espouses 21st century aspirations, while celebrating the memory and the experience of the original.

Director of Design for Aston Martin, Marek Reichman said: "This unique project has been a great experience for the Aston Martin team and has allowed us to showcase the considerable and diverse design competence of our team, while affording us the opportunity to apply elements of our design language to entirely different concept.

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We are delighted to have had the opportunity to work alongside Foster + Partners to reinvent a true British icon in the Routemaster bus and being selected to win joint first prize by the Mayor of London provides further evidence that great British creative talent remains at the cutting edge of design."

Notes to editors:

Foster + Partners, founded by Chairman, Norman Foster, is based in London with offices worldwide. The practices work has helped to reshape the capital over the past four decades with masterplans, infrastructure, museums, civic buildings and landmarks projects such as Wembley Stadium, the Millennium Bridge and 30 St Mary Axe (the Gherkin). Internationally, the practices major commissions have included the Millau Viaduct, the worlds largest and most technologically advanced airport terminal in Beijing and the transformation of the Reichstag in Berlin.

Aston Martin is acknowledged as one of the worlds most prestigious sports car manufacturers. A strong heritage coupled with exceptional design, quality and craftsmanship has kept Aston Martin at the forefront of sports car manufacturing and racing for more than 90 years. Every model, from the 2005 V8 Vantage to the V12-engined DBS debuted in 2008 is produced at the brands award-winning factory in Gaydon, Warwickshire by a skilled workforce that combines traditional hand-finishing with high-tech manufacturing techniques. In December 2007, a new purpose-built design studio opened to house the companys design team, led by Marek Reichman.

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