

Press release

19 October 2012

Foster + Partners re-imagines Grand Central Terminal for 2013 Centenary

Norman Foster presented proposals for a masterplan to bring clarity back to Grand Central Terminal at The Municipal Art Society of New York's annual Summit in New York last night.

Grand Central Terminal is one of New York's greatest landmarks and contains perhaps the city's finest civic space. However, over time it has become a victim of its own success. A building designed to be used by 75,000 people per day now routinely handles ten times that number with up to a million on peak days.

The result is acute overcrowding; connections to the rail and subway lines beneath the concourse are inadequate; and the arrival and departure experience is poor. Added to that, the surrounding streets are choked with traffic and pedestrians are marginalised. The rapid growth of tall buildings in the vicinity has all but consumed the Terminal.

Within the station, the proposal creates wider concourses, with new and improved entrances. Externally, streets will be reconfigured as shared vehicle/pedestrian routes, and Vanderbilt Avenue fully pedestrianised. The proposal also creates new civic spaces that will provide Grand Central with an appropriate urban setting for the next 100 years.

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The 42nd street entrance to the south, where access is severely constrained, will be widened to fill the entire elevation by using existing openings, thus greatly easing accessibility. The access via tunnels on the northern approach from Park Avenue will be rebalanced in favour of pedestrians by creating grander, enlarged underground spaces through the Helmsley building. Lexington Avenue to the east will be tree-lined with wider sidewalks and will benefit from more prominent and enhanced tunnel access to Grand Central Terminal. The idea already mooted to pedestrianise Vanderbilt Avenue to the west would be extended. The street would be anchored to the south by a major new enlarged civic space between 43rd Street and the west entrance to the Terminal and to the north by a plaza accommodating new entrances to the East Side Access lines. Trees, sculpture and street cafes will bring life and new breathing space to Grand Central Terminal.

At platform and concourse levels where congestion is particularly acute for travellers on the 4, 5, 6 and 7 lines, we will radically enlarge the connecting public areas, to address the huge increase in passenger traffic in the last 100 years. This will transform the experience for arriving and departing commuters and passengers. A generous new concourse will be created beneath the west entrance plaza on Vanderbilt Avenue connecting directly into the main station concourse.

This visionary masterplan with its focus on pedestrians and travellers will allow Grand Central Terminal to regain the civic stature that it deserves as a major New York landmark and an appropriate twenty-first century transport hub.

"The Municipal Arts Society's call to study the Next 100 years of Grand Central Terminal in the wider context of the city and its public realm represents an important and welcome debate that will help shape the future form of the city. The quality of a city's public realm reflects the level of civic pride and has a direct impact on the quality of everyday life. With the advent of the Long Island Rail Road East Side Access, along with the plan to re-zone the district, there has never been a better opportunity to tackle the issues of public access and mobility around one of the greatest rail terminals in the World."

Norman Foster, Founder and Executive Chairman

Notes to editors:

- This study was undertaken for 'Grand Central ... The Next 100,' The Municipal Art Society of New York's design challenge for the future of the public realm around Grand Central Terminal. Three firms of architects were invited to rethink the public spaces in and around the Terminal for presentation at the third annual MAS Summit for New York City on 18 October 2012. February 2013 marks the 100th birthday of Grand Central Terminal designed by Warren & Wetmore and Reed & Stem on 42nd Street and Park Avenue
- The Municipal Art Society of New York has led New York City's livability movement since 1893. MAS's mission is to advocate for public policies, private sector practices, individual agency and community engagement for a resilient built environment that encourages our city's economic vitality, cultural vibrancy, environmental sustainability and social diversity. For more information visit MAS.org.
- This study has been informed by several projects by Foster Partners where we have

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successfully applied our philosophy for the regeneration of the public realm such as London's Trafalgar Square pedestrianisation, the extension of Hong Kong's Statue Square under the Hongkong Bank and the civic setting for the Roman temple and the Carre d'Art in Nimes. In Stockholm implementation of the Slussen masterplan to regain the balance between roads, cars and pedestrians in the heart of the city is about to begin.

- The Foster Partners study was carried out with transport consultant MIC Mobility in Chain headed by senior partner Federico Parolotto.
- Norman Foster will present our plans for the redevelopment of 425 Park Avenue for L&L Holding and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. to the MAS Summit on Friday 19 October

Links: **The Municipal Art Society of New York**