

Press release

01 April 2004

Ground Breaking in Beijing - the largest in the world is also the fastest

Lord Foster joined ministers and civic dignitaries at an impressive ceremony in Beijing on Sunday 28 March to mark the start on site of the new International Terminal.

Foster and Partners were selected in November 2003, opened their Beijing office the following month, and completed the preliminary designs last month. This, the largest and most innovative airport in the world, will have been designed and built in just four years.

The new airport expansion is a response to the massive increase in traffic due to China's entry to the WTO and Beijing hosting the 2008 Olympics. Its capacity will increase from 27 to 60 million passengers per annum by 2015 and it will be larger than terminals one, two, three and four at Heathrow airport all together by a factor of 25%, all under a single 80 acre roof with a shape which evokes the poetry of flight.

The airport incorporates sustainable design concepts such as south-east oriented skylights to maximise heat from the early morning sun, as well as an integrated environment control systems minimising energy consumption and carbon emissions. If its dragon-like form was superimposed on the River Thames it would extend from Tower Bridge to the London Eye.

Exciting and colourful with the traditional Chinese colours of red and yellow it will be a new gateway to China and the city of Beijing, evoking a true sense of arrival and place.

Foster and Partners are teamed with Dutch airport planners NACO and engineers ARUP, working closely with the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design.

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