



Architects named for second phase of £1bn Asian Business Port

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A raft of prominent architects has been appointed to provide detailed design work for the second phase of London's newest business district in the Royal Albert Docks.

Buckley Grey Yeoman, Fletcher Priest, Cartwright Pickard, Maccreeanor Lavington and Panter Hudspith are working on concepts for the next stage of the £1 billion Asian Business Port which has been masterplanned by Terry Farrell.

Backed by Chinese developer Advanced Business Parks, the detailed first phase of the scheme - which has also been drawn up by Farrells - was given planning permission by Newham Council's Strategic Development Committee last week (23 July).

Outline planning permission for the remaining 374,000 m² of the site was granted at the same meeting.

The overall aim of bringing the new architects on board has been to show the potential variety and design direction of the later phases of the docks.

The initial masterplan by Farrell has been devised to create a new business district focussing on Asian and Chinese companies by Chinese developer ABP and UK company Stanhope. The total site covers an area of 35 acres with both phases expected to be complete in 2023.

Speaking about the scheme Terry Farrell said: 'Historically the trading heart of the capital, this development will re-instate the Royal Docks as a commercial and trading centre for the 21st century. The masterplan creates a state-of-the-art business district for financial, high-tech and knowledge driven industries which will act as a catalyst for the transformation of the wider Royal Docks and East London continuing the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics.

'This will be a place buzzing with activity during the day, in the evenings and at weekends with over 3 million square feet of high quality work, living, retail and leisure space with over a kilometre of activated waterfront. Running from East to West there will be a new waterside promenade, lively new high street, eight new London squares and an ecological corridor acting as a buffer to the main road.'

The new business district was unveiled by the Mayor of London in May last year, and will include 256,000m² of office space and up to 845 new residential units and eight new public squares.

Previous story (AJ 29 05 2013) AJ exclusive: Farrell's £1bn Asian Business Port in Royal Docks

Terry Farrell has revealed plans for a massive £1 billion business park for Chinese companies in Royal Albert Dock, east London

The low-rise, 14 hectare office scheme is to be built on long-redundant land in Newham in the enterprise zone by London City Airport and is being billed as a 'mini-Canary Wharf'.

Chinese developer Advanced Business Parks (ABP) and development manager Stanhope have signed an agreement with the Greater London Authority to take forward the project which insiders expect to create a wealth of new work for practices.

Known as Asian Business Port, the first phase will deliver 63,000m of offices and, subject to planning consent, could complete by 2017.

Airport safeguards preclude any buildings higher than 10 storeys.

Early stages also included a new 'central square' and a dock edge walkway. As well as plans for a new pedestrian bridge into Beckton Park, the project backers intend to create a series of 'meanwhile uses' during construction.

Delivery of the whole project, which is expected to create 300,000 sq m of commercial space, 'is tentatively scheduled' for 2023. More than £56 million will be spent on infrastructure.

Terry Farrell said: 'This crucial component of the Royal Docks, almost 40 acres of local and national opportunity, [acts] as a missing connection in the re-invention of the east side of London.'

Lee Mallett, urban regeneration adviser at Urbik, said: 'It is excellent news that land which has lain fallow for decades - after nearly 80 masterplanning attempts - is to become economically productive again thanks to Chinese interest in London's economy. [Although] you can't help feeling that the public sector's role in this has not been as productive as it might have been... at last something is happening and London is realising its eastern promise.'

However not everybody has welcomed the proposals. Peter Rees, city planning officer at the City of London said: 'Looks like the out-of-town business park concept isn't dead after all.'

Ben Paul of East End-based practice Neu Architects added: 'We don't want to see another privately owned swathe of London being developed without any long-term connection to the local community.'

<http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/daily-news/architects-named-for-second-phase-of-1bn-asian-business-port/8666305.article#>