

## Farrells develops £1 billion Chinese business hub in London docklands



British architect Terry Farrell's firm is onboard to masterplan a £1 billion business hub in London's docklands for Chinese and Asian businesses.

The Mayor of London's office has announced its plan to transform a 14 hectare site at the Royal Albert Dock, a stretch of land near London City airport, into a gateway for Far Eastern businesses looking to establish their headquarters in Europe.



Farrells, which has offices in London, Hong Kong and Shanghai, is creating the masterplan for the £1 billion development, which will comprise around 230,000 square metres of office space as well as shops, apartments and leisure facilities.

The first phase of 55,000 square metres is due to open in 2017, subject to planning permission, with work on the site intended to be completed by 2022.



The Royal Albert Dock is one of a number of developments currently planned on the banks of the Thames, including three residential towers by Foster + Partners and plans to slot a glazed extension over the brutalist concrete architecture of the Southbank Centre – see all London architecture.

Earlier this year the firm's head Terry Farrell was selected to lead an independent review of the UK's architecture policy, working with an 11-strong advisory panel of architects and designers.

Other Farrells projects we've featured include the 442-metre Kingkey 100 skyscraper in Shenzhen and a proposal to convert London's Battersea Power Station into a park – see all architecture by Farrells.

Here's the press release from the Mayor of London's office:

---

### **Mayor announces £1bn to transform Royal Albert Dock into capital's next business district**

- » ABP to create state of the art business port aimed initially at Chinese and Asian business
- » Estimated 20,000 jobs to be created
- » Development to be worth £6bn to the UK economy when complete

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, has announced details of a £1bn deal to transform London's historic docklands into the capital's next business district, forging new trade links with China and other economies in the Asia-Pacific region and securing billions of pounds of inward investment in the UK economy.

Owned by the Greater London Authority and situated in the heart of Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, the 35-acre site at Royal Albert Dock is set to be transformed by ABP China (Holding), a successful commercial developer, into a gateway for Asian and Chinese business seeking to establish headquarters in Europe as well as other businesses wanting to set up in the capital.

Historically the trading heartland of the capital, the deal will re-instate the Royal Docks as a commercial and trading centre for the 21st century, delivering around 20,000 full-time jobs and boosting local employment in Newham by 30 per cent. When complete the site will become London's third business district and, according to initial projections, be worth £6bn to the UK economy, generating £23m in business rates annually and acting as a catalyst for further development in the area.

The largest development of its kind in the UK, the state-of-the-art business district will act as a platform for financial, high-tech and knowledge driven industries looking establish and drive forward their business in UK and European markets. The deal represents one of the first direct investment by a Chinese developer in London's property market and will eventually be home to over 3.2 million square feet of high quality work, retail and leisure space, including 2.5 million square feet of prime office space, creating a new, vibrant 24/7 district on London's waterways.

An experienced developer in China, this is ABP's first development project in Europe. With a track record of investing in and transforming large areas in need of regeneration, the company specialises in delivering projects of significant scale. ABP have recently completed a large development of around 15 million square feet in Beijing, while their Shenyang project in north-eastern China is even larger, with plans for 75 million square feet when complete.

Working with UK developer Stanhope and architects and masterplanners Farrells, ABP have a commitment to developing a minimum of 600,000 square feet in the first phase, with strong interest for office space already being shown by Chinese

companies, including some of the country's top banks. The first occupiers are due to move in in 2017.

The deal is a key part of the Mayor's on-going commitment to regenerate London's docklands, bringing jobs and homes back to the capital's waterways and builds on the momentum of the development of the Olympic Park and Stratford City. It is the latest in a string of investments in the area including the Siemens Crystal Centre, the Emirates cable car, and new homes at Great Eastern Quay, as well as upcoming developments at Silvertown Quays and the plans to create the UK's largest floating village at Royal Victoria Dock.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: "For centuries the waterways of east London were the throbbing arteries of UK trade and commerce. This deal symbolises the revival of that great era, continuing the re-invention of this once maligned part of the capital into a 21st century centre of trade and investment. Creating a third financial district in the capital, this development will act as a beacon for eastern investors looking west, bringing with it tens of thousands of jobs and billions of pounds of investment for the UK economy."

Chairman of ABP, Mr Xu, said: "I am very pleased and very proud that my company ABP has reached this agreement for the Royal Albert Dock with the Greater London Authority. This project will be hugely significant for both the Chinese and UK economies. My vision is to develop a world class international business district which will initially target Asian businesses to help them secure a destination in London, which in China is seen as the gateway to both the United Kingdom and the wider European economy. Our plans aim to strengthen trade between east and west, provide new local jobs and deliver benefits for the wider London and UK economy."

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said: "Enterprise Zones are creating new local jobs and stimulating business ventures through significant tax incentives, simplified planning and super fast broadband that will support our economy."

"This is a significant investment deal for London and will boost employment and growth in the capital. I am delighted that the benefits of Enterprise Zone status are attracting foreign investment to the country and strengthening our trade relations with major international players like China."

Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham said: "The Royal Docks Enterprise Zone offers an unrivalled investment opportunity and this deal further strengthens Newham's growing reputation as an ideal destination for international business."

"We welcome ABP's ambitious vision for the Docks which are already home to London City Airport, the University of East London, the Siemens Crystal and the Excel. ABP's proposals will bring further investment from abroad and unlock future development. It will also create benefits for local people by providing thousands of new jobs and further enhancing the waterfront for people to enjoy."

"Newham will work closely with ABP and their UK development partner, Stanhope, to ensure that as many of these jobs as possible are accessible to local residents. Our successful Workplace jobs brokerage scheme is ideally placed to ensure this happens."

Situated in the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, the Albert Dock site, when complete, will have some of the best transport links in the capital, with direct access to central and western London via the new Crossrail station coming in 2018. It also benefits

from close proximity to the University of East London and City Airport, providing direct links to Europe's key business destinations.

Source: <http://www.dezeen.com/2013/05/30/farrells-masterplan-royal-albert-dock-london-docklands/>