

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEILDEN FOWLES WINS NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM CENTRAL HALL DESIGN COMPETITION

Proposal persuades Jury with elegant rotunda,
new exhibition gallery and ambitious energy strategy



Image © Feilden Fowles.



The National Railway Museum and competition organisers Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) today [26 March 2020] announced that the team led by Feilden Fowles has won the international design competition to create the museum's new Central Hall.

Feilden Fowles' team beat 75 others to the commission for an iconic Central Hall that will transform the visitor arrival experience and integrate the museum's estate in time for its 50th anniversary in 2025.

The Jury (details below) praised the winning team's design concept for its elegance, its ambitious energy strategy and its intriguing new visitor journeys.

Inspired by the site's former uses, the design concept references the history of locomotive roundhouses and railway turntables with its central two-storey rotunda, which is clad with recycled patinated copper and lit with high clerestory glazing. An intriguing illuminated form that will attract visitors approaching from York Station and the wider city to the south, the rotunda also unifies the diverse buildings that make up the existing site.

On entering this new welcome and orientation space, the visitor's gaze will be immediately drawn upwards to the engineered ceiling, stitched together with radials of UK-sourced Douglas Fir, described by the Jury as a spectacle. A first-floor balcony offers views of York, while at ground level five different portals will lead to different parts of the museum.

A generous double-height gallery, the new Exhibition Hall will use the same grid as the existing Station Hall and celebrate its brick arched openings.

The design concept expresses the team's low-tech philosophy, dramatically reducing reliance on concrete and steel to lower embodied carbon through a beautifully crafted timber frame structure. A combination of passive design principles and active systems are proposed to reduce the site-wide operational carbon footprint by 80 per cent. Fully recycled copper and local York stone are also suggested as part of this strategy.

In response to the brief, the team also propose further enhancements to the adjoining museum buildings to make the overall ensemble more inviting and harmonious.

Feilden Fowles' design concept was developed with fellow team members, Max Fordham as Building Services Engineers and Price & Myers as Structural and Civil Engineers.

The proposal was popular with the public, who were able to see the finalists' schemes in a free exhibition and online gallery.



The museum, part of the Science Museum Group, is poised to become the cultural anchor for York Central, one of the largest city centre brownfield regeneration projects in the UK and Europe.

Judith McNicol, Director of the National Railway Museum, said:

‘Feilden Fowles demonstrated a real sensitivity to the site’s railway heritage and to the historic character of the city of York. The building will play a vital role in linking the museum and will provide a focal point for the wider York Central development. We were delighted to share all the finalists’ design concepts both online and at the museum; this gave us a real sense of the incredible enthusiasm the public have for our vision to become the world’s railway museum.’

Karen Livingstone, Science Museum Group Director of Masterplan and Estate, said:

‘The winning proposal has presence and a confident identity, but also humanly-scaled spaces that balance the more industrial character of the museum’s Great Hall and Station Hall.

‘This early design concept shows an understanding of railway heritage through a contemporary museum aesthetic that also refers to classical museum design, where large circular orientation spaces enliven the visitor’s journey through the collection.

‘We’re very excited by the prospect of working with this talented team to deliver a building of outstanding quality.’

Malcolm Reading, Competition Director, said:

‘This competition attracted significant interest; we welcomed entrants from 19 countries and a global audience from 129 countries visited the website.

‘The finalist schemes were of a particularly high quality and the competition offered an almost perfect case study in terms of variety of form and materiality.

‘We would like to thank all of the competitors for entering.’

Award-winning practice Feilden Fowles has a reputation for delivering exemplary projects in highly sensitive and challenging historic settings, and recently completed the Stirling Prize-shortlisted new visitor centre for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

They are currently working with Max Fordham and the National Trust on a new building for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.



Max Fordham are working on the Network Rail Depot in Holgate and completed the Music Research Centre for the University of York with Price & Myers in 2004. Price & Myers also have many projects in Yorkshire, notably the York Theatre Royal and York Mansion House.

Fergus Feilden, Director of Feilden Fowles, said:

‘We’re thrilled to win this nationally significant competition. The brief combined three of our passions – museum architecture, great railway architecture of the 19th century and working in Yorkshire.’

‘Central Hall is both a tremendous challenge and a unique opportunity to create a new face and connected experience for the museum. We can’t wait to start work with such a fantastic client.’

Seventy-six teams comprising 241 firms from 19 countries entered the competition, which launched in September 2019.

Other finalists, who were shortlisted in November 2019, included:

- **6a architects** (UK) and **OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen** (Belgium)
- **Atelier d’Architecture Philippe Prost** (France)
- **Carmody Groarke** (UK)
- **heneghan peng architects** (Ireland)

In February 2020, the teams were interviewed by a Jury chaired by **Dame Mary Archer DBE**, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Science Museum Group; and comprising **Sir Ian Blatchford FSA**, Director and Chief Executive, Science Museum Group; **Gitta Gschwendtner**, Director, Gitta Gschwendtner Design Consultancy; **Zoe Laughlin**, Director, Institute of Making; **Karen Livingstone**, Director of Masterplan and Estate, Science Museum Group; **Judith McNicol**, Director, National Railway Museum; **Michael Squire**, Senior Partner, Squire and Partners; and **Malcolm Reading**, Competition Director.

An honorarium of £30,000 will be paid to each shortlisted team with the conclusion of the competition.

The competition was run by Malcolm Reading Consultants in accordance with EU procurement guidelines and UK Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The National Railway Museum is ranked amongst the most popular attractions in the UK and welcomed 782,000 visitors in 2018-19. Located at the centre of York, the museum sits within a larger industrial site that was originally developed in the mid- to late-19th century by the North Eastern Railway Company. Surrounded by the remnants of this industry, the museum is today dominated by railway heritage and infrastructure.

However, York Central — a vast 45-hectare redevelopment comprising of a series of new city centre residential and business neighbourhoods — will transform the surrounding disused railway estate. This wider development has already achieved outline planning consent, including an envelope for the new Central Hall.

For more information please visit the [competition website](#).

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IMAGES

Images can be downloaded here:

dropbox.com/sh/xsaxfmjs1fufEAU/AADi9KXFpuuD3kUBRI-MNvGGa?dl=0





NOTES TO EDITORS

Feilden Fowles

Feilden Fowles is an award-winning London-based architecture practice, founded in 2009 by Fergus Feilden and Edmund Fowles.

The practice specialises in delivering socially and environmentally sustainable buildings across a variety of sectors, and aims to make architecture that is rich in character and distinct in identity. The projects often interpret historic, cultural or vernacular references to generate clear concepts with a legible diagram. Structural integrity and tectonic expression drive the detailed design process to deliver buildings that are at once robust and well-built.

Built works to date include arts and cultural buildings, educational projects, heritage, workplace and residential. Examples include 2019 Stirling Prize finalist The Weston visitor centre and gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield; Charlie Bigham's Food Production Campus, Somerset; The Lee Centre, an Applied Learning Centre at Ralph Allen School in Bath; the Fitzjames Centre, Hazlegrove School; and Waterloo City Farm, where the practice's award-winning studio is located.

feildenfowles.co.uk

About the National Railway Museum

The National Railway Museum in York has the largest collection of railway objects in the world and attracts more than 750,000 visitors per year. The collection includes over 260 locomotives and rolling stock, 600 coins and medals, as well as railway uniforms, equipment, documents, artwork and photographs.

The museum forms part of the Science Museum Group, along with the Science Museum in London, the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester, the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford and Locomotion in Shildon. Admission to the National Railway Museum is free.

railwaymuseum.org.uk



**RAILWAY
MUSEUM**

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About Malcolm Reading Consultants

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic architectural consultancy that helps clients to imagine and define contemporary environments; MRC is the leading global specialist in devising and managing international design competitions.

Since 1996, we have developed an extensive global network of contacts, an outstanding portfolio of completed projects, and an international reputation for fairness and transparency. MRC believes in the power of design to act as an inspiration.

Recent work includes competitions for Houston Endowment (US); MK:U (UK); the Powerhouse Precinct at Parramatta (Australia); the Cambridge to Oxford Connection (UK); University College Dublin (Ireland); Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C., US); Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre (Lithuania); the Royal College of Art (UK); the V&A (UK); the Mumbai City Museum (India); and new buildings for the UK's New College, Oxford and St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

malcolmreading.com