

FORT MASON CENTER

2012-2012, San Francisco, USA





Fort Mason Center is a unique piece of San Francisco's waterfront collection, with a rich multi-layered history as a coastal defense battery during the Civil War and as the headquarters of the San Francisco Port of Embarkation during World War II. Fort Mason is currently a community destination, and has the potential to expand its role as a regional cultural destination. Today, however, it is an underutilized part of the waterfront.

The winning conceptual plan produced by Team West 8 is an outcome of the 2012 design competition; it presents the key recommendations for connecting, activating, and revitalizing Fort Mason Center into a leading arts and culture destination. By no means a master plan, this vision is meant as an early, conceptual framework for future planning and ongoing development.

From the outset, Team West 8 has always felt that the panoramic view from Fort Mason Center is the cultural equivalent of the view at Yosemite Valley – a vista that is owned by nobody but should be experienced by everybody. It is this premise that has informed the development of the conceptual design for Fort Mason Center. The design vision calls for design strategies, which strike a balance between innovation and historic preservation as opposed to focusing on a single solution, allowing Fort Mason Center the flexibility to evolve over time.

The plan devotes attention to a facility that's nearly 100 years old and contains some very unique and iconic infrastructure. Infrastructure, which must be upgraded in order to not only preserve Fort Mason Center as an historic resource but also transform it into a cultural commodity. Through deliberate programming and public space design, Fort Mason Center will cultivate a unique culture that reflects the heart and spirit of San Francisco. The programming of the piers and warehouse buildings will be expanded and integrated with a lively cultural plaza. With a well-curated events calendar Fort Mason Center will be home to a new Art-El (art-oriented hotel), a selection of excellent restaurants cafes, creative enterprises and a number of renowned cultural institutions.

A pedestrian scale environment is emphasized throughout the site. The new granite-paved plazas will trace and emphasize the historic rail tracks. Wooden platforms glide across the old rail tracks to serve multiple functions in the plaza—as furnishings, for display, and as stages—which are flexible for many types of programs.

Visitors wanting to get close to the water can play and experience a world class waterfront with the implementation of stepped platforms into the existing boat slips. Three wooden floating pontoons each have a different design expression: a viewing dock, a series of stacked boxes and a modular hill. The renewal of the primary waterfront will create innovative places for public enjoyment, which are in harmony with the natural ecology. Fort Mason Center will be a new public space embedded in the vibrant cultural fabric of San Francisco that is inspirational, educational and relevant to audiences within the region, the country and throughout the world.

client

Fort Mason Center in partnership with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA)

partners

Bionic Landscape, Scaleshift, Jensen Architects

consultants

Architectural Resources Group INC, HR&A Advisors, Impark LLC, Langdon Associates, Magnusson Klemencic Associates, Moffat & Nichol Engineers

awards

Competition winning entry

team

Adriaan Geuze, Jamie Maslyn Larson, Daniel Vasini, Maria Castrillo, Juan Figueroa Calero, Lydia Franken, Nick Glase, Pieter Hoen, Tanyi Huang, Rachel Laszlo Tait, Perry Maas, Lauren Micir, Taehyung Park, Attilio Ranieri, Jessica Rossi Mastracci, Harrie van Oorschot