

Plans approved for National Railway Museum's Central Hall

August 5, 2022



Plans have been approved for the National Railway Museum's new building called Central Hall, which will transform this major attraction and herald the start of delivering the York Central development.

City of York Council's planning committee approved the National Railway Museum's reserved matters application at a meeting on Thursday 4 August.

The new development will help the museum realise its potential as the cultural heart of York Central and unite the museum for the first time.

Central Hall will be a new welcome space and gallery located between the museum's Great Hall and Station Hall. It will connect the existing museum buildings and is a cornerstone of Vision 2025 – the museum's journey to transform its offer and become the world's railway museum.

It is a condition of the Stopping Up Order for Leeman Road that it will not be stopped up until the alternative highway routes are in place – pedestrian, cycle and vehicle. Construction is already underway on these routes.

This exciting vision also includes *Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery*, an interactive gallery aimed at inspiring children to think like engineers through experience, interactivity and play.

Central Hall itself will feature a Railway Futures Gallery showcasing the latest innovations in rail technology, a café overlooking the new museum square, a shop, flexible event space and new visitor facilities.

Sustainability is at the heart of the Central Hall design, with environmentally friendly design principles and materials which are in-keeping with York's rich railway history and the surrounding area.

Judith McNicol, Director of the National Railway Museum said: "We are very pleased the planning committee has approved the Central Hall plans which will have transformative benefits for York and the wider region. This approval will allow the museum to realise its potential as the 'world's railway museum' by improving our offer, welcoming more visitors, and helping us to inspire the next generation of engineers and problem-solvers.

"The museum aims to be the cultural heart of York Central and this decision brings us a step closer to realising that ambition. We remain on track for opening Central Hall in Autumn 2025, in time for the Museum's 50-year anniversary. As we move towards construction, we will continue to engage with residents and visitors to ensure that the world-class museum we are creating can act as a true community resource for our evolving neighbourhood."

The Central Hall plans form an early stage of the delivery of York Central, the 45-hectare regeneration site which is a partnership with Network Rail, Homes England, City of York Council and the museum.

Work is expected to start in early 2023 with completion in time for the celebrations in 2025.

Feilden Fowles designed the new building and Montagu Evans acted as heritage consultant. GRAHAM has also been appointed to deliver pre-construction services for Central Hall.

Neil McFarlane, Strategic Projects Director at GRAHAM, said: "We are delighted to have been appointed as the preferred bidder for the National Railway Museum's Central Hall Project. We understand the significance of this project for the Science Museum Group (SMG) and recognise their aspirations for Central Hall to become the gateway to the transformed museum.

"Our highly experienced team has a strong track record of working to deliver shared project goals. We will be responsible for ensuring key project milestones are achieved under the Pre-Contract Services Agreement."

Photo credit: National Railway Museum/ Feilden Fowles