

Stockholm's new view

A new masterplan for the regeneration of a waterside quarter in Stockholm has been unveiled for public consultation, emphasising pedestrian priority and renewal. **Ella Taylor** takes a look.

The masterplan for the area of Slussen, designed by **Foster + Partners** and **Berg Arkitektkontor**, part of the **CF Møller Architects** group, was urgently needed. Last year the **City of Stockholm** appointed the team following a design competition, as it watched Slussen's infrastructure ageing and struggling to cope with ever heavier through traffic, and people declining to spend time in the deteriorating area.

At the heart of the Swedish capital, Slussen sits between the islands of Södermalm and Gamla Stan (the old town), and has historically acted as a bridging point across the archipelago of Stockholm, enabling trade. It is estimated that over 300,000 passengers currently pass through Slussen's metro station every day, making it one of the busiest transport areas in the city. However few of these people spend time in the area itself, one reason perhaps being the dominance of car users and mazes of roads.

The new masterplan aims to reverse this trend, giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists instead. A key part of this will be a new footbridge over the water, allowing people to walk between the old town and the revitalised Slussen area, and completing a chain across the whole of Stockholm.

A new transport hub will be built as part of the scheme, linking a refurbished and upgraded metro station, a new bus station and the port quayside easily and cleanly. This will be built below a naturally lit shopping mall, which will in turn be flanked by a light, transparent structure with bicycle parking, kiosks and a café.

"The City of Stockholm is taking the opportunity to transform this important part of the capital into a new destination, creating a balance between road vehicles and pedestrians while enhancing the public realm with easier access to the waterfront. The masterplan scale and grain consciously preserve the city's character at this historic location," says the Foster + Partners website.

Water Square

A new pedestrianised space also stands out in the plans. Currently named Water Square, this makes the most of its location alongside Slussen's historic lock, which connects Saltsjön Bay in the Baltic Sea to the freshwater Lake Mälaren. The lock, currently



buried underneath concrete, will be opened up, and the quayside will be realigned. Boats will be able to use the lock to pass between the lake and Saltsjön, and it is hoped that private and tourist boats will be attracted to the area as well as the traditional trading and commercial boats.

The square will contain restaurants and bars among other features. An existing lift, called Katarinahissen, will also be renovated and extended to quayside level, and a new observation deck will be built on top, overlooking the whole area.

Spencer de Grey, head of design at Foster + Partners, said: "We are proud to be a part of this ambitious project to redefine this beating heart of Stockholm. The combination of a bold civic statement together with the repair of infrastructure that is critical to the future sustainability of the city promises a richer totality.

"With vastly improved access to the waterfront and generous amounts of new public space, the development will ensure that Slussen will become a popular civic focus for generations to come."

Water is also utilised in the masterplan to mitigate flood risks from the lake. Studies have suggested that the threat of flooding in the area will increase in future with climate change, which could damage both the built environment and the drinking water supply.



At the same time, if water levels become too low then shipping and water supply again could be impacted. To help prevent this, new sluices from the locks have been created, which the architects say will increase maximum outflow from about 300m³ per second to 1,500m³ per second.

Details of individual buildings will emerge later, if and when the masterplan is approved. The design team state that they believe the area, once renewed, will make it "a magnet for the city's best contemporary architecture". They propose new blocks to complement the public squares, to be used for entertainment, culture, shops, hotels and other uses, and terraces alongside the promenades and cafés.

An exhibition of the plans is currently running in a building within the masterplan area, and will run until the consultation closes on 29 March.

► <http://www.fosterandpartners.com/Projects/1710/Default.aspx>

► <http://www.stockholm.se/slussen>