

Rotch Travelling Scholarship

2013 COMPETITION



A WATER TRANSIT STATION IN BOSTON

The water understands
Civilization well;
It wets my foot, but prettily,
It chills my life, but wittily,
It is not disconcerted,
It is not broken-hearted:
Well used, it decketh joy,
Adorneth, doubleth joy:
Ill used, it will destroy,
In perfect time and measure,
With a face of golden pleasure,
Elegantly destroy.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

As an effort to advance more sustainable commuting practices, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, City of Boston, and towns along the coast are spearheading efforts to increase commuter, tourist, and water taxi programs that take advantage of the watersheet for transportation and tourism. To facilitate this program, a new ferry terminal is proposed at the mouth of Fort Point Channel—a central location for daily commuter traffic coming from the Financial District to the west and the growing Innovation District to the east. This new terminal will replace the current Federal Courthouse docks with a new building featuring expanded services and facilities. Previously considered for uses as galleries, markets, and retail, the site is directly over the mouth of the channel. It is connected to land via the Northern Avenue Bridge.

The proposed program and location present an opportunity to create a landmark building for mass transportation in the heart of Boston's shifting commercial, business, and cultural districts. Yet it does so without impacting the existing city fabric. The water transit station has the potential to link the city's public transportation initiatives with its disappearing heritage as a seafaring community and an active port. The future of urban transportation and environmental stewardship requires cities to encourage their populations to shift to alternative modes of transportation. Reduced budgets typically mean that transit will need to be provided

without significant infrastructural improvements. Modes like Bus Rapid Transit or bike sharing programs have been popular options because they capitalize on existing infrastructure to reduce costs. The watersheet offers a widespread "soft" infrastructure already in place to connect Boston's neighborhoods with the wider coastal region. In essence, water transit can return Boston to its past (where bikes and boats were important modes of transit) in order to solve current environmental and economic problems.

Building over the water has a long history in Boston. Most of the city's waterfront was created through back-filling the harbor and areas such as the Back Bay. Infrastructure has long been considered a viable and necessary addition to the city's edge, from the nineteenth-century wharfs to twentieth-century airport runways and roadways. The late 1960s saw a megastructure-like proposal commissioned by the BRA for a new neighborhood over portions of Boston Harbor. Such initiatives have rarely been ecologically sensitive. This project's occupation of the water's edge should present a new model for urban expansion in an era of rising sea levels.

The final phase of the 2013 Rotch competition challenges each candidate to address these urgent questions of urban growth, transit needs, and ecological sensitivity through the design of the water transit station. It is likely the harbor will rise to levels that threaten our city as it stands today. The committee

is seeking imaginative and innovative proposals that speculate on the possibilities of a future where the water's edge is challenged in thoughtful ways. Some of the key issues to consider are:

- Establishing links between ecology and transportation.
- The relationship between infrastructure, civic space, and public life.
- Boston's history of seafaring, port activities, and a constantly reshaped water's edge.
- The poetic relationships of water and landmass, city and harbor.
- Tidal swings, sectional conditions of the harbor, and direct engagement of the public with the water.
- Tectonic qualities of the architecture and public spaces.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program envisions a major symbolic center and transit hub for an expanded network of water-based transit in Boston. The material, experiential, and formal qualities of each intervention should enhance the quality and efficiency of Boston's transit network. The program may be organized into a single building or a series of structures. Consider the nature of moving from land to water in the development of sequences, circulation patterns, and public environments. Designs are encouraged to celebrate the poetic experiences of maritime transit. Please note that all square footages are approximate. The facility must be accessible according to ADA standards by providing the appropriate methods of vertical circulation between the bridge level and the boat access points (via elevators or ramps).

TICKET CENTER AND PASSENGER CONCOURSE

2,500 SQUARE FEET TOTAL (INCLUDING NUMBERS BELOW)

Ticket counter (100 linear feet), three administrative offices (100 sf each), workroom (200 sf). Seating for 100 people, ample room for circulation and queuing. Interior and exterior spaces for waiting.

PUBLIC OBSERVATION DECK AND PERFORMANCE SPACE

3,000 SQUARE FEET (OUTSIDE)

The public deck must overlook the waterfront and significant features of the harbor. It maybe connected to outdoor spaces for the bar and café, but must be on an upper level (or levels) to provide views. This space should, in part, provide seating for 250 people in a concert/performance format with a stage. It should also be flexible enough to be used informally by the public or for events like weddings, parties, and other gatherings.

SUPPORT SERVICES

2,000 SQUARE FEET TOTAL (INCLUDING NUMBERS BELOW)

Crew lounge (400 sf), workroom (200 sf), and crew restrooms (4 WCs per sex); public restrooms (12 WCs per sex, 1 WC for unisex family restroom).

CAFÉ AND BAR WITH INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SEATING

2,000 SQUARE FEET INSIDE (INCLUDING NUMBERS BELOW)

1,000 SQUARE FEET OUTSIDE SEATING

This facility must be publicly accessible, visible and connected to major pedestrian routes along the bridge. Preparation kitchen (400 sf) and bathrooms must accompany the café and bar. The spaces must be able to operate independently from the terminal, while still connecting to the main passenger concourse.

RETAIL SPACE

1,500 SQUARE FEET

This facility must be publicly accessible, visible, and connected to major pedestrian routes along the bridge.

PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL

5,500 SQUARE FEET (INCLUDING NUMBERS BELOW)

This facility must be publicly accessible and connected in a meaningful visual or experiential way to the harbor. It may be an indoor or outdoor facility, or one which can open and close to the environment around it. The pool should be operable independent of the passenger terminal. It should conform to the 25 meter length of international competition, and should be four lanes wide (2.5 meters per lane). The pool's format should be adjustable for leisure or competitive swimming. Provide locker rooms with showers and bathrooms as well as deck space for leisure activities adjacent to the pool itself. Provide an office for lifeguards and storage for services (400 sf each).

CIRCULATION, MECHANICALS, STORAGE

30% MULTIPLIER

Provide circulation, mechanical space, storage, and other support functions as necessary to serve the facility.

DOCKING PLATFORM

AS REQUIRED

The docking platforms must support one large craft (100 feet long) and two smaller craft (under 50 feet each). They must accommodate the ten-foot tidal shifts in Boston Harbor via floating platforms and adjustable rampways.

PROJECT SITE

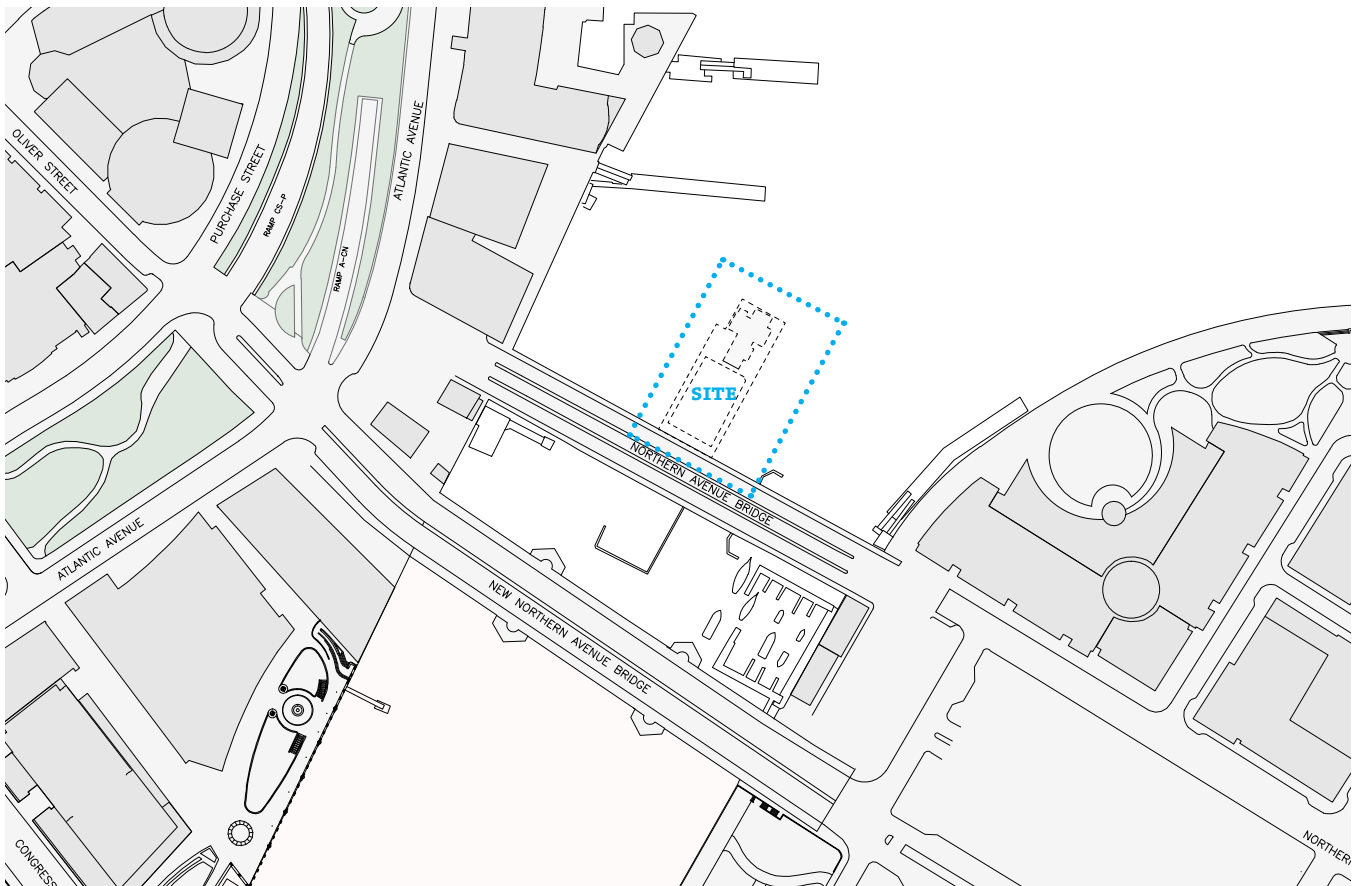


The site is located to the north of the Northern Avenue Bridge, a rare 1908 example of an operating steel bridge. The site footprint occupies the space above piles from a defunct pier extending to the north of the bridge. All access to the site will occur via the bridge. Plans call for raising the structure by nearly nine feet in order to eliminate the need for rotation (see diagram, you are to use the raised version for your proposal). This modified site can accommodate new uses as outlined on the previous page.

Proposals should create a multidimensional urban environment, layered with activity and strengthened by the building's engagement with the public realm, especially the bridge and extended route of Boston's Harbor Walk. Public access must be provided between the bridge and the water using ramps and/or elevators. The proposal should reflect the prominence and centrality of the site at the mouth of Fort Point Channel where it meets Boston Harbor.

In seeking an integrated architectural and urban solution, projects may modify the bridge as necessary to create a pedestrian realm and transit facility that work in tandem with one another. Technical details on the site are as follows:

- Zoning regulations need not be considered in the proposal; beyond the footprints given in the site plan, there are no limits or height restrictions to which the project must comply.
- Projects must acknowledge the ten foot tidal variation in Boston Harbor.
- As part of preservation efforts envisioned by the BRA, the bridge will no longer operate. To accomplish this while meeting Coast Guard requirements, the entire structure will be lifted by 8 feet 8 inches. This will create 16 feet of clearance below to match clearance of the Moakley Bridge to the south. See diagram.
- Your proposal must provide access for a boating lane under the bridge on the south-east side (see elevation).



SITE PHOTOS



AERIAL VIEW FROM BOSTON HARBOR

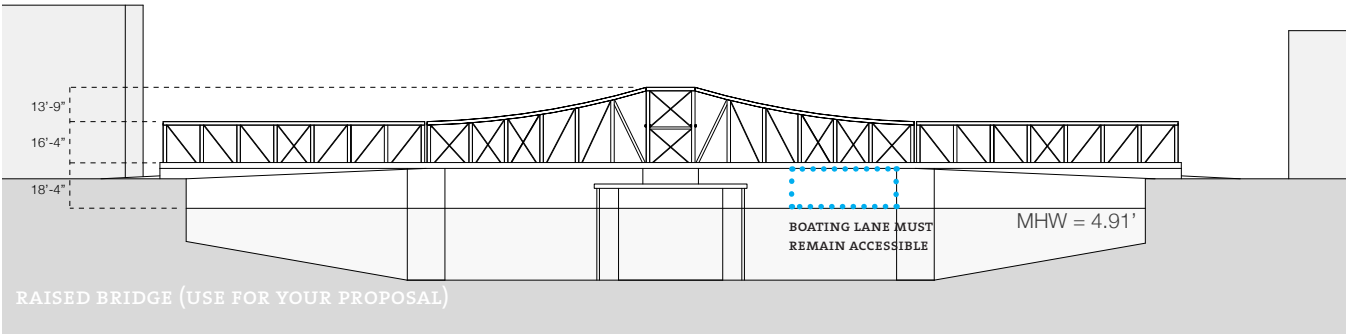
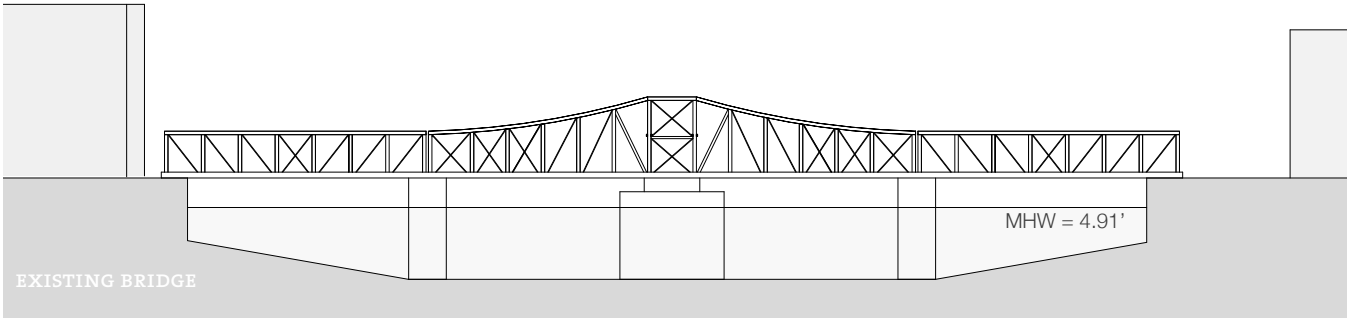


VIEW FROM DOWNTOWN BOSTON



VIEW FROM SEAPORT DISTRICT

BRIDGE SECTION (USE RAISED VERSION)



SITE INFORMATION

The following information is available for download: site photos, site plan, and a bridge elevation diagram (in AI and PDF formats). Please refer to the invitation email for instructions on where to access the zipped folders of these files.

RESOURCES

For digital maps and base models of the site and Boston, see the following sources:
www.mapjunction.com/bra
www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/maps/southstation.pdf
www.googleearth.com
www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/BRA_3D_Models/Index.html
(For 2D: CAD layers can be found under building footprints, streets, and city blocks)

RESEARCH REFERENCES

Information on proposed plans for the Northern Avenue Bridge:
<http://fortpointchannelboston.com/northern-avenue-bridge/>
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/PlanningPublications/NorthernAveBridge-081113.pdf>

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submissions will be evaluated by the jury according to the following criteria:

CULTURE

Celebration of the water transportation as a positive force for the environment and a method of efficiently connecting urban cores to outlying districts.

URBANISM

Development of an imaginative public realm for pedestrians and public activities in relation to transit infrastructure and Boston's waterfront.

ARCHITECTURE

Sophisticated handling of program, from functional concerns to the poetics of experience; thoughtful development of the project's architectural image and tectonic expression.

REPRESENTATION

Evidence of the ability to communicate ideas visually; production of high quality diagrams, orthographic drawings, three-dimensional renderings, and graphic layouts.

REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should include four 30" x 36" vertical format boards featuring the following drawings, each of which should contain a graphic scale and a north arrow (where appropriate). Orient plans with north pointing generally upward on the board.

- Written explanation of design intentions (200 words maximum, brevity is encouraged, short descriptive captions may be used on drawings in addition to the main text).
- Site/urban context plan showing main floor level, including major public space design elements and the surrounding urban context to the extent possible (1/50-inch scale).
- Building floor plans as needed.
- Detailed section through major spaces (1/8-inch scale).
- Diagrams: circulation (building and urban), public space and urban strategies, program configuration.
- At least three exterior renderings from eye level illustrating your proposal and its major design elements. Where appropriate, show the existing context and projected activities. One perspective should be from the bridge or land and one as viewed from an arriving boat.
- At least one interior perspective of the passenger concourse and one of the swimming pool area.

Boards must lay flat, nothing may project or be mounted to them beyond the thickness of a sheet of paper. The Rotch reserves the right to use any submitted material in publications or on websites. Your name should appear on each board in small typeface in the lower right corner.

QUESTIONS

Questions about the project brief must be submitted by 10:00 am on Saturday, March 2 to to: abey@architects.org. Responses will be shared with all participants within twenty-four hours.

HOW TO SUBMIT

To follow are the step-by-step instructions on submitting your proposal:

1. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS

Email a digital copy of your boards in a PDF format. Boards may be submitted in more than one email, but each email must be smaller than 15MB. You are welcome to use FTP services such as: www.yousendit.com, www.sendspace.com, www.dropsend.com

Due by 10:00 am (EST) on Monday, March, 11, 2013. Email to:
abey@architects.org

2. PRINTED BOARD SUBMISSIONS

The submitted boards must EXACTLY match digital submissions. Absolutely no edits will be permitted. Any projects with edited boards will be disqualified.

Due by 4:30 pm on Friday, March 15, 2013

Ship or drop off to:
The Rotch Travelling Scholarship
c/o Boston Society of Architects
290 Congress Street, Suite 200
Boston, MA 02210

3. PRESS AND WEB MATERIALS

For press announcements and website updates, you need to submit five key images from your boards as JPEGs or PDFs and a headshot of yourself.

Due by 4:30 pm on Friday, March 15, 2013. Email to:
abey@architects.org

JURY PRESENTATION

You are required to present your submission to the jury for the final competition on **Thursday, March 21, 2013** in Boston (location to be announced). Please note that travel expenses are the responsibility of the finalist. You will have a twenty-five minute period for your presentation. Since the jurors may wish to ask questions, please prepare your presentation with at least ten minutes for questions.

NOTE TO COMPETITORS

The statement of sole authorship must be submitted along with your final printed boards.

STATEMENT OF SOLE AUTHORSHIP

I hereby assure the Rotch Committee that I am the sole author of my submission for the 2013 Rotch Competition. I have not received criticism, suggestions, or help of any sort other than through the use of books and other published literature.

SIGNED

PRINT NAME
