

Norman Foster to design landmark Midtown tower at 425 Park Avenue

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Norman Foster, the Pritzker Prize-winning British architect behind Hearst Tower, has been chosen to design a block-long office tower at 425 Park Avenue.

Foster's firm, Foster + Partners, was chosen by L&L Holding Co. and Lehman Brothers Holding Inc. for the development between East 55th and East 56th streets. The tower will be the first full-block office project in Midtown Park Avenue in almost 50 years, according to the site owners. Foster + Partners beat out several other renowned architecture firms, including Rem Koolhaas' OMA and Zaha Hadid Architects, Crain's reported.

The development is scheduled to break ground in 2015 and be finished by the end of 2017. Foster's design will replace the current 32-story 650,000-square-foot building. The new tower will be 687 feet tall and have the same square footage as the pre-existing 370-foot structure through creative zoning, according to the New York Observer.

"I have a personal connection with New York, which has been a source of inspiration since my time at Yale, when the new towers on Park Avenue and its neighborhoods were a magnet for every young architect," Foster said in a statement. "Seeing first-hand the works of Mies van der Rohe, Gordon Bunshaft, Eero Saarinen and Philip Johnson was tremendously exciting then – I am delighted to have this very special opportunity to design a contemporary tower to stand alongside them."

L&L Holding chairman David Levinson said he and Foster will present the concept design during the Municipal Arts Society's third annual Summit for New York City on Oct. 19.