

Foster beats Hadid, Koolhaas to NY commission

Four names invited to pitch for 425 Park Avenue - sadly there can only be one winner...

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Norman Foster has beaten Zaha Hadid Rem Koolhaas and Richard Rogers to win the competition to redesign 425 Park Avenue, a 55-year-old white brick office tower on a prime site, between 55th and 56th Streets in New York.

Foster's preliminary conceptual design was chosen for its provision of common areas throughout the building where occupants can gather both formally and informally. "The whole idea of office space is to have places where you can have an intersection of ideas, areas of collaboration," says David W. Levinson, the chairman and chief executive of L&L Holding Company, which expects to control the site in 2015 when reconstruction is due to begin.

As each of the four proposals evolved the decision who to award the commission apparently grew tougher and tougher. "We spent many hours with each of the firms talking about the concepts over a period of many months," Levinson said. Among the criteria applied to the winning choice was the architects' familiarity with working in New York City. Foster is, of course, the architect of Hearst Tower and of the planned 2 World Trade Center. New Yorkers will get a chance to see all four designs for the themselves when they go on show at the Municipal Art Society's Summit for New York City on October 19. You can see great building by these architects and many in Phaidon's newly published 20th Century World Architecture in the store now and worth 1250 points when you join Phaidon Club.