



WHITEHALL FERRY TERMINAL

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc. in association with Anderson/Schwartz Architects and TAMS Consultants, Inc.

Location: New York, NY

Client: New York City Economic Development Corporation

Area: 160,000 (appx.)

Construction Budget: \$85,000,000

Completed: 1995 (preliminary design)



Competition scheme exterior and interior

In an era when civic space has been supplanted by shopping centers, the new Whitehall Ferry Terminal is an unparalleled opportunity to create a civic setting that celebrates New York City and enhances the daily routine of 70,000 commuters.

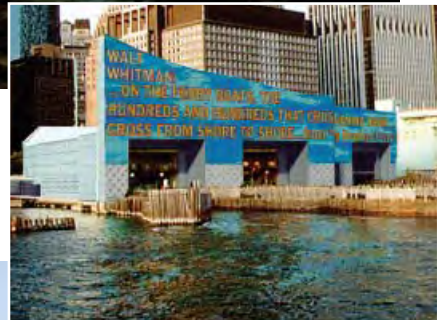
Because opinions differed over the design for the Terminal, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates ended up creating multiple design schemes for the project. The competition-winning design was publicly condemned by representatives of Staten Island, and soon after the mayoral election of 1993 the city government severely reduced the project. A new design was developed based on the new budget, and also on a new requirement to accommodate vehicular traffic onto and off of the ferries.



Revised design

The building became lower and simpler, with an upsweep toward the north to frame the immediate view of Lower Manhattan from the inside, and a parapeted, flag-shaped electronic billboard on the water-facing south facade. The wavy curves of the profile of the facade prevent it from looking like a billboard and work also to contrast it with the rectangle-dominated composition of its skyline “backdrop.” Its electronic LED images change and move, and can include ornament, pattern, information and color, though the predominant image is of a waving fragment of a flag, perceived from afar across a bay. This scheme was also rejected by the city and VSBA withdrew from the project.

The final design differs from the initial entry design, where VSBA proposed an architectural and symbolic gateway to the city. The design acknowledges the terminal as the first and last building on Manhattan Island and accommodates, at the same time, the diversity of its context—social, cultural and architectural. A giant clock was chosen as a classic symbol of civic architecture on the harbor façade; its generous size in scale with the towering skyline behind it (in the second design, the city government required the the clock’s removal from the initial design).



Sequence illustrating changable LED facade



Approach on the Ferry

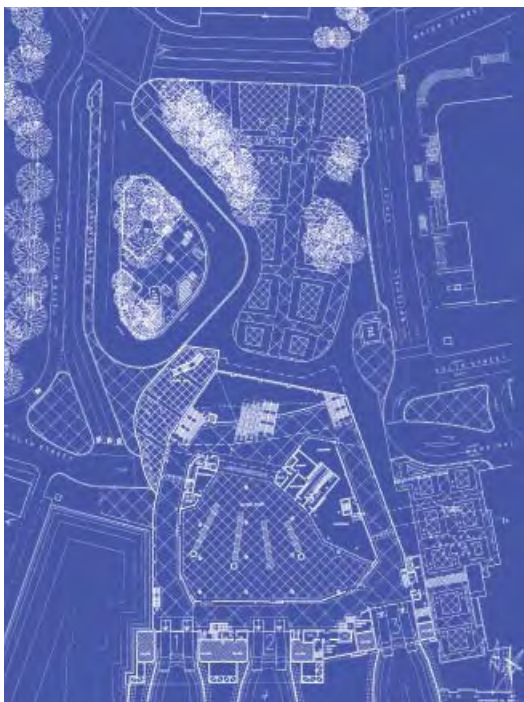
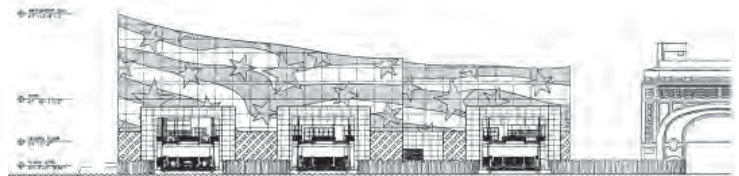


The barrel-vaulted hall extending from the rear of the clock promotes civic monumentality via its scale and directional space via its form, and symbolizes gateway via its arched elevation. A large-scale programmable video screen spans the wall behind the great clock, and the glistening glass and dynamic rhythm of the curtain wall add interest at night, with the glowing interior visible within.

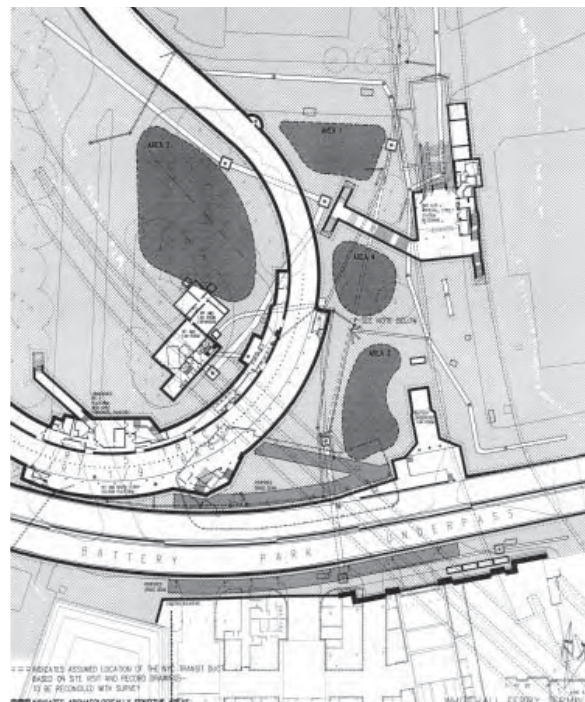
On the city side of the terminal, Peter Minit Plaza, in contrast to the more generally recreational urban spaces characteristic of Battery Park and the River Esplanade at Battery Park City, is an urban transportation place. The paved granite parterre accommodates crowds and acknowledges the diagonal flow of the majority of commuters across the plaza. The hour glass-shape also accommodates three bus lines terminating at the site and gives vehicles room to queue before boarding the



Northeast and south elevations

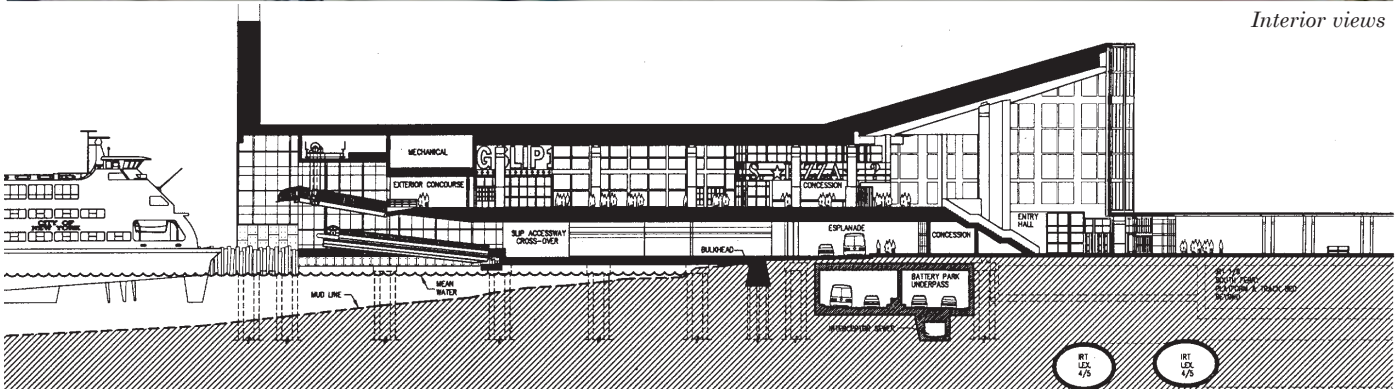


Ground floor and subsurface plans





Interior views



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