

St. John's Terminal

Overview

Located on New York City's West Side, St. John's Terminal has epitomized an entirely new generation of nature inspired design in high-performance, tech-enabled, modern workplaces with a focus on employee health and happiness.

In 2018, Oxford acquired the St. John's Terminal development site highlighting the historically significant freight terminus of the High Line. We saw opportunities in its epic scale and reimaged its industrial past and immense historic infrastructure as an opportunity to facilitate the evolving needs of a more functional, holistically collaborative and effectively biophilic workplace. We believed its legacy as an anchor of New York City would stand as a foundation for its future.

The best workplaces enhance performance, instigate innovation, and support the whole person while attracting and retaining the world's best talent. St. John's Terminal's original structure enabled this, and our team's commitment to future-forward design evolved it to a new place, uniquely positioned to disrupt – and weather disruption to – the traditional office experience. So it's no surprise that the site attracted one of the world's most innovative companies, Google, to sign their largest lease in history – the largest lease ever, in Manhattan – and ultimately, to exercise its option to purchase the building in Q4 of 2021.



The details

St. John's Terminal is adjacent to some of New York City's most desirable neighbourhoods, where Hudson River Park, the West Village, SoHo and Tribeca meet. For decades, developers have coveted the site but, given its complexity and scale, with an existing historic structure taking up two city blocks, none were able to unlock a solution.

Our team envisioned the potential for St. John's Terminal immediately and worked feverishly to acquire the site from the existing landowner. We engaged the community to learn what was important to locals and business owners, and helped them understand our vision of how this long, low, historical building could facilitate an elevated sense of community. A "landscaper", mimicking a campus environment in its ability to drive innovation, would create wide-spread social and economic value while also preserving the neighbourhoods "authenticity factor".

We then partnered with COOKFOX Architects to help bring our vision to life. COOKFOX's innovative approach to designing commercial, cultural and community buildings – coupled with their progressive understanding of human-focused design, biophilia and sustainability – made them the ideal partner for the development.

Leaning in to the existing 100,000-square foot floorplates and 15-foot high ceilings, the design was based on progressive principles that prioritize occupant health and well-being. Public gardens at grade and three planted terraces above blur the boundaries between indoors and out. Biodynamic lighting, highly filtered outside air, and end-of-trip facilities that encourage commuting by foot or bicycle do the same. A location overlooking the Hudson River and Hudson River Park extend the smart design to the building's surroundings: it's simply steeped in access to nature and the outdoors, which are uniquely performance enhancing.

The building's technology is as contemporary and performance oriented as its design. Sensors, beacons and an integrated operating system combine to enable real time smart operations and customized experiences. And thanks to some of the best fiber connectivity in the city, everything at St. John's Terminal will keep pace with the needs of the most progressive businesses.

St. John's Terminal stands in a category of one.

The takeaway

Our vision for St. John's Terminal was bold and progressive, and we knew the right team would be able to create something extraordinary and distinctly resilient.

We partnered with COOKFOX Architects to bring their trademark biophilic, human-focused design principles, and with Gensler to optimize the interiors for maximum flexibility, productivity and workplace experience. We leveraged Oxford's global design and construction experience and paired it with the unique understanding of the West Side our local team has built through the development of Hudson Yards. And we brought in long-standing partner CPPIB with a 50% non-managing interest in the project knowing they share our focus on building long-term sustainable value.

We stayed true to our vision for the site and the opportunity to transform the future of work. Our conviction paid off with tremendous occupier interest and culminated in a new NYC home for one of the world's most innovative companies.