

Coin Street Redevelopment



Place/Date
London, England 1979—1983

Client
Greycoat Commercial Estates Ltd

Gross Area
128,000m²

Architect
Richard Rogers Partnership

Structural Engineers
Ove Arup and Partners

Service Engineers
Ove Arup and Partners

Quantity Surveyor
Gardiner and Theobald

Traffic Engineer
W.R. Davidge and Partners



Crucial to the development is the correct balance of overlapping activities enclosed in an architectural framework, in order to achieve a renaissance.

With the Pompidou Centre complete and Lloyd's under way, Rogers seemed the obvious choice as the architect for a mixed development on the south bank of the Thames, close to the West End and the City. The site was an area of mostly cleared land close to Denys Lasdun's National Theatre and to Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges. In the event Rogers' proposals for Coin Street fell victim to a fierce planning battle and were abandoned. This must be reckoned as one of the great unbuilt schemes of modern London.

Drawing strongly on the architectural language of the Lloyd's building, Rogers proposed to connect Waterloo station to the City with a lofty glazed pedestrian arcade and a new footbridge across the river. The great glazed arcade was inspired by the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan – full of light and shade and a vibrant meeting place appropriate to the changeable British climate. Pontoons were to house bars,

restaurants and other amenities. Rogers proposed a mixed scheme – 92,500 m² of offices, 18,500 m² of housing, 6,500 m² of leisure facilities and 10,500 m² of retail and restaurants – all intended to bring new life to the South Bank. Ground level space was largely public. Rogers offered a vision of a new London, where public and private domains were well balanced – commercial profit combining with public benefits on a huge site and against a taut political backdrop.

RRP's drawings for the scheme look forward to the practice's proposals for London's Paternoster Square, Berlin's Potsdamerplatz and even the ambitious scheme for Shanghai. Within a few years, the good sense of Rogers' proposals became obvious as London's Docklands were sacrificed to a planning philosophy which largely ignored the general public interest in favour of unchecked commercial development.

