

BAA Mega Terminal Planned

Just as Heathrow's Terminal 5 nears completion, the British Airport Authority (BAA) has revealed plans to build another vast terminal building on a similar scale. The proposed building will effectively replace the current Terminals 1 and 2.

With the new terminal 5 building almost complete, proving trials are due to commence later this year with plans to open to the public in March 2008. The current terminal buildings at Heathrow were designed to accommodate 45 million passengers per year although 68 million are expected to pass through the airport in 2007, hence the need for improved facilities.

Terminal 5 will be able to handle 30 million passengers per year, freeing up space which should allow for redevelopment of the other areas. Designed by the award-winning Richard Rogers Partnership, the terminal cost £4.3 billion to build and will be occupied solely by British Airways. It is also the largest free-standing building in the UK at over 40m high, 396m long and 176m wide. The new building will mean less queuing for passengers, improved baggage handling, and better on-time service.

Not everyone is enthusiastic about the ongoing development of Heathrow. Local residents fear yet more aeroplane noise and increased air pollution as the airport expands.

However, the BAA have a clear goal in mind: to make Heathrow the world's leading international airport. CEO of BAA Heathrow, Tony Douglas, added: "London is a world city, a global financial centre and needs a world class airport."

