



MENISCUS BOSTON HARBOR FERRY TERMINAL

This project proposes a new ferry terminal on the Northern Avenue footbridge in Boston, as well as a new type of infrastructure project. The waterfront was once the generator of industry and community for the city; this project seeks to continue the work done over the past two decades to reclaim the area from its peripheral role and engage with societies of multiple scales. More than a ferry terminal, it highlights the critical connections and communities served by water transportation in the region.

The Northern Avenue bridge will be reinforced for safety and maintained as a critical connection in the city to a new destination, not just for transportation but for educational activities and retail. It will serve as a link on the waterfront pedestrian pathway connecting the Fort Point neighborhood to the Greenway, Downtown Crossing and the commuter hub at South Station.

The project brings to the fore the importance of the waterfront in Boston's history, as well as the relationship between the shoreline and the rising sea level. It is both an educational demonstration of the scientific phenomenon of the tides as well as an evocative reference to the rising water level. It does not resist or control the ebb and flow of the harbor, but brings the human experience to the level of the water, allowing a corporeal understanding of the daily cycle of the tides.

The terminal is composed of three organizational and material strategies:

A solid plinth houses supporting spaces at water level. Its roof, flooded at high tide, becomes a landscape for exploring sediment and residue when the tide is out. The pool's surface is level with high tide, giving the appearance of continuity twice daily.

A stepped wooden embarkation platform floats on the water, rising and lowering with the water level. Access to the terminal is provided one wide tread at a time throughout the tidal cycle, and a mechanized dock allows the platform to interface with multiple ferries. The stepped surface provides a changing public gathering space and amphitheater.

The main public programs, including the terminal, pool, and cafe are enclosed in double-skinned iceberg-like glass prisms that appear to float when the tide is in, not tied to any urban patterns. When the water level lowers, they are understood as lodged within the base below, allowing light to enter and moderating the internal atmosphere.

The building will be the host of local educational endeavors centering on local wildlife and the diurnal cycle of the ocean. It will partner with the nearby New England Aquarium or other local universities for educational events where scientists demonstrate the importance of tides on the marine ecosystem and engage with the local schools and youth groups.

This project also brings attention to the worldwide community and the role that each person plays in the environmental crisis to come as the ice caps melt and the sea level rises. This phenomenon will have an impact on the plaza level, and the gradually shortening occupancy periods that are possible. But, uniquely, this building is designed to expose this change. Its materials embrace the weathering of the building. The crystalline forms of the large interior spaces accentuate the legibility of a floating building, and the changing relationship to the harbor.

Lying gently at the surface, the ferry terminal is a gathering place created by the integration of multiple systems, and allows for a new understanding of the tidal phenomenon: the diurnal interchange between land and sea.

