GENÈVE AÉROPORT

Press release

13 December 2021

East Wing ready for take-off on 14 December

Mainly designed for long-haul travellers, the East Wing building is sustainable, functional and elegant. The Wing will officially come into use on 14 December 2021, for a Geneva-New York flight. It took ten years of work to create the daring exoskeleton, using cutting-edge technologies that make this structure a contribution to the international influence of Geneva and surrounding region. Due to the health situation, the official inauguration of the East Wing has been postponed until spring 2022.

Fully funded by Genève Aéroport, the East Wing is a significant improvement when it comes to receiving passengers on continental and intercontinental flights, while meeting current standards. It replaces the wide-body wing, which was built for temporary purposes in 1975 and is now obsolete technically and environmentally, as well as in terms of its capacity to receive passengers.

The East Wing was carried out between 2017 and 2021, with preparations taking almost five years prior to that. With an industrial aesthetic, rectangular design and 520m long, the East Wing is able to accommodate nearly 2'800 passengers per hour at departures, and 3'000 at arrivals.

The project came about through a collaboration of companies forming the RBI-T consortium, with two architectural firms and two engineering firms involved. Graham Stirk of Rogers Stirk Harbor + Partners designed the project, leading the team from the initial ideas to completion, and handing over to Geneva with the Jacques Bugna Atelier d'Architecture. At their sides were two engineering firms: Ingerop (Paris) and T-ingénierie, based in Geneva.

A sizeable challenge

« Genève Aéroport now has an asset that is high quality, architecturally daring, aesthetically successful, built sustainably and which meets the requirements of the 21st century », noted Corine Moinat, Chair of the Board of Directors.

Above all, the construction of the East Wing has been a major technical challenge, with tarmac on one side and buildings very close by on the other (including Palexpo and the Arena), as well as height restrictions associated with the air traffic limit. In addition to this, under the building, a road allows traffic from buses and other airport vehicles at all times. All this means that the East Wing has been built on an extremely limited surface area. Competitive ingenuity was required to circumvent the space restrictions from neighbouring buildings, and to bury 200 metres of the customs road.

The cost of the East Wing sector – which amounts to CHF 610 million – includes the East Wing building, the customs road, the construction and demolition of the GP+ (for wide-body aircraft), the INAD North (for those not allowed on Swiss territory), as well as GeniLac's preparations.[1]

« My predecessors began this major project, and the new Wing embodies the most spectacular work achievement over a decade », André Schneider, General Manager of Genève Aéroport, noted with pride. « This is why we have invested in innovative, essential equipment for the intercontinental connectivity of Geneva in 2030-2040, and even beyond. »

A positive energy performance

The East Wing concept significantly improves the airport's energy performance, with the implementation of advanced technologies. Thermal insulation in the departure lounges is guaranteed, with the use of high-performance triple-glazed facades and solar protection in summer.

Electricity is produced by nearly 7'000m^2 of solar panels, with some 3'400 photovoltaic panels installed. Energy neutrality is ensured with the combination of the solar power station, extensive insulation throughout the building, and high efficiency heat pumps. These will initially produce and store thermal energy through 110 geothermal probes. The future connection to the GeniLac network will complete this 100% renewable energy source.

For architect-designer Graham Stirk of Rogers Stirk Harbor + Partners, « achieving a sustainable positive energy model has been an intense and iterative process, requiring close collaboration between specialists in facade engineering, mechanics and electrical installations. »

ORAT tests

On 11 November and 2 December 2021, Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) passenger experience tests were carried out with nearly 1'000 volunteers to check everything was functioning perfectly in terms of security systems, access and flows. This is the first time Genève Aéroport has tested one of its buildings with so many external people involved!

More information, images, videos and pdf of the work carried out for the inauguration:
https://newsroom.gva.ch/en/press-kit-east-wing/

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