

For Immediate Release

NEWLY INAUGURATED NORMAN FOSTER FOUNDATION FEATURES INNOVATIVELY DESIGNED PAVILION FOR EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

MADRID, 19 June 2017—The Norman Foster Foundation, which officially opened its headquarters in a heritage-listed residential Palace by Joaquín Saldaña in Madrid on 1 June, has opened a new pavilion in its courtyard that will show a changing display of objects and images that have, over the years, been personal references for Foster. The flexible space will also be the setting for talks and discussion groups, and features a façade that can open to the courtyard for outdoor events.

The new building resolves the irregular geometry of the outdoor area with a roof shaped like the wing of an aircraft. This is supported by a hidden steel structure cantilevered over a structural glass façade without any visible means of support so the roof seems to float over it. The result is an architecture that seeks the ephemeral qualities of light, lightness and reflections. Elements are reduced to an essential minimum with a mirrored ceiling and fascia that further dissolves the volume of space to emphasise its contents.

The courtyard and the entrance façade of the pavilion are shaded by a canopy created by Spanish artist Cristina Iglesias. This work, *The Ionosphere (A Place of Silent Storms)*, is composed of interlocking light carbon fibre panels with patterns generated from text that appears in Arthur C. Clarke's *The Fountains of Paradise*. It frames the view of the courtyard from the pavilion and bathes it in dappled light.

From its innovative but understated use of glass, steel and composite materials, the pavilion is a further exploration of techniques that Norman Foster has pioneered during more than five decades. The wide glass panel to the courtyard next to the entrance is itself a massive door, weighing 2.7 tons and measuring 6 metres long. When this portal is opened, the interior and exterior worlds are united into one flowing space for Foundation gatherings.

By working closely with craftsmen in metal and glass, it has been possible to develop a combination of slim, beat-blasted stainless steel sections welded together and mirror-polished edges that dematerialise the bulk of supporting structures.

The contents of the pavilion are an eclectic selection of objects, models, photography and sculpture from the worlds of art, architecture and design, embracing aircraft, cars and locomotives. For Norman Foster, these are not separate worlds but are interconnected with a special emphasis on his passion for flight. The display is also an opportunity to acknowledge the importance to Foster of other architects, engineers and mentors from the past as well as the present.

An important and historic car is displayed for the first time—the newly restored, original 1927 Avions Voisin C7 that was owned by Le Corbusier and has been featured in photographs of his early works. The car was very advanced in its time, as it used aviation technology pioneered by Voisin for his flying machines. Because of its large expanse of glass, echoed in the new architecture of its age, it was called the Lumineuse. Gabriel Voisin was also a patron of Le Corbusier, who named his radical proposal for Paris The Voisin Plan.

The pavilion was realised through detailed design and construction in six months. This was made possible by prefabricating all of the elements, which avoided excavation on the site and disruption to neighbours. The high thermal performance of the glass building envelope, radiant heating and cooling through the floor, generous external shading and the latest generation of LED lighting are all part of its sustainable agenda.

The Norman Foster Foundation is separate from the practice of Norman Foster - the architects for the pavilion are a design studio based within the Madrid foundation and led by Foster, for whom it was important to employ local workers and materials; nearly all of the consultants, contractors and suppliers were from Spain.