

THERE'S A LOT HAPPENING AT CURZON STREET

by Keith Flinders

Work on HS2's Birmingham terminus did not slow down in 2025 whilst HS2's future was much debated. The budget for the year beginning this April has also been approved and progress is visible on every visit. The last piling for the station's foundations will be done by the time this is printed, that will be 1,922 piles in total! Soon to disappear from sight are the attenuation tanks. These are the enormous underground structures that store rainwater during storms and then release it gradually, avoiding flooding.

One of the biggest challenges is getting West Midlands Metro through. Eastside Metro is complete down Albert Street to a temporary tram stop called Millenium Point. Track begins again on the other side of Curzon Street station and is laid into Digbeth. Eventually this tram route will reach Birmingham Airport. A planned tram stop will be underneath the HS2's 455 metres long platforms at Curzon Street, but it may not be possible for trams to run through until March 2027.



Architect's impression of Curzon Street station from The Promenade with Metro stop under the platforms

The original Curzon Street station building from 1838 is leased from Birmingham City Council and now looks a little unloved. HS2 will make the listed building safe but it is not part of the new station. Back in 2003, it was to become the permanent home of the Royal College of Organists, which intended to build a 270 seat concert hall alongside. This is a prime site and it is more likely that the old station building will become a top restaurant or entrance building to a new hotel alongside the new station. The only other original building surviving here is the Woodman pub, worth a visit.

Work has yet to start on our other HS2 station, Birmingham Interchange, near the NEC and Airport; it's about 12 - 18 months behind Curzon Street. At the London end, work has started on Old Oak Common and there is a healthy competitive element to progress by the two building teams!

Meanwhile Campaign for Rail is very pleased to invite members to a presentation on HS2's progress at Curzon Street and to see it from the viewing platform. It will be in July and the next edition of West Midlands Rail User will have the date, time and joining instructions. It will also have the answer to this question: how many loos will the station have?