

## 8 stunning buildings due for completion in 2012

Since man first learned how to make the natural elements of the Earth work for him, building things has become a product of form and function. From the Lighthouse of Alexandria to the Great Pyramids, the production of inspirational and useful structures has stood as a beacon of human achievement. Here are 8 more awe-inspiring structures that will be completed in 2012.

1) Shard London Bridge - Upon its completion in May of 2012, Shard London Bridge will be the tallest building in the European Union. Located in Southwark, London, the 1017 foot, irregular triangle structure will be entirely encased in glass. The architect for this mega-structure, Renzo Piano, used an advanced form of glazing that gives the building a different appearance in the changing weather and seasons.

2) Marlins Stadium - The Miami Marlins (formerly the Florida Marlins) are going to be playing baseball in their new stadium starting in the 2012 season. In terms of a baseball stadium, it is small, but what makes this building stunning is the dome shaped retractable roof and the nearly 15,000 square feet of retractable, transparent panes that allow for the stadium-goer to have an amazing view of the vibrant Miami skyline. Further adding to the flair will be the two seawater tanks behind home plate that will feature various forms of local sea life. The stadium is designed for the casual fan to have a fantastic experience that will be unrelated to the game itself.

3) Tokyo Sky Tree - Located in the Sumida Ward of Tokyo, Japan, this 2080-foot structure is the tallest artificial structure in Japan even before its completion and also doubles as the tallest tower in the world. In July 2011, Japan ceased all analog broadcasts for televisions. The Tokyo Sky Tree was built, in large part, to serve as the digital broadcast antenna for the country. It will also feature restaurants and observation decks and serve as a disaster prevention broadcast signal.

4) Ryugyoung Hotel - Located in Pyongyang, North Korea, this 1080-foot mountain-shaped structure is far and away the tallest building in North Korea. The hotel has the 4th largest amount of floors of any building in the

world, 105, and doubles as the 40th tallest. The original completion date was set for 1989, but due to the fall of the Soviet Union, the supply of raw materials dwindled and construction was stopped in 1992. Since 2008 construction has been restarted and 2012 is a tentative date for this long-awaited hotel.

5) Lycee Jean Moulin High School - A high school, you say? Designed by OFF Architecture, this Revin, France school is built into the contours of the land. From above, the school appears to be nothing more than a terraced landscape on a rolling hill. With its vegetative and green roof, this sustainable building has many tiers and represents some of the newest designs in green building.

6) London Olympic Complex - With most of the major work done, only the finishing touches are left for the grandest sporting stages. From the Olympic Stadium, where the roof design was inspired by the form of the human muscle, to the Aquatic Center with its dramatic, S-shaped roof, many of the buildings stand on their own, in terms of form and function. As a collective group, the Olympic complex is truly fit for a celebration of the world's greatest athletes.

7) Museum of Natural Sciences - One of the centerpieces of the revitalization of Trento, Italy, this museum is built on the site of a former Michelin Tire plant. This is another excellent example in form from Renzo Piano, but what really sets this building apart is its sustainability. With roof panels for electricity production, a geothermal system for heating and cooling and a rainwater collection system for a 50% reduction in water usage, the Museum of Natural Sciences seems to be a look into the future of major sustainable building projects.

8) Delanoe Tower - This 50-story building will be the first skyscraper in Paris. Mayor Bertrand Delanoe was able to overturn Parisian law limiting buildings heights to under 37 meters. Also known as Projet Triangle, the office and residential building was designed by the Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron, and will use solar and wind power. Delanoe Tower resembles the Dancing Towers in Dubai and is so slim that it casts virtually no shadow.

With a continuing desire and determination to push into uncharted territories of building, in both form and function, 2012 will see the opening of some of the most stunning buildings in the world. They are tributes to the

ideas and intrepid spirit of humanity.