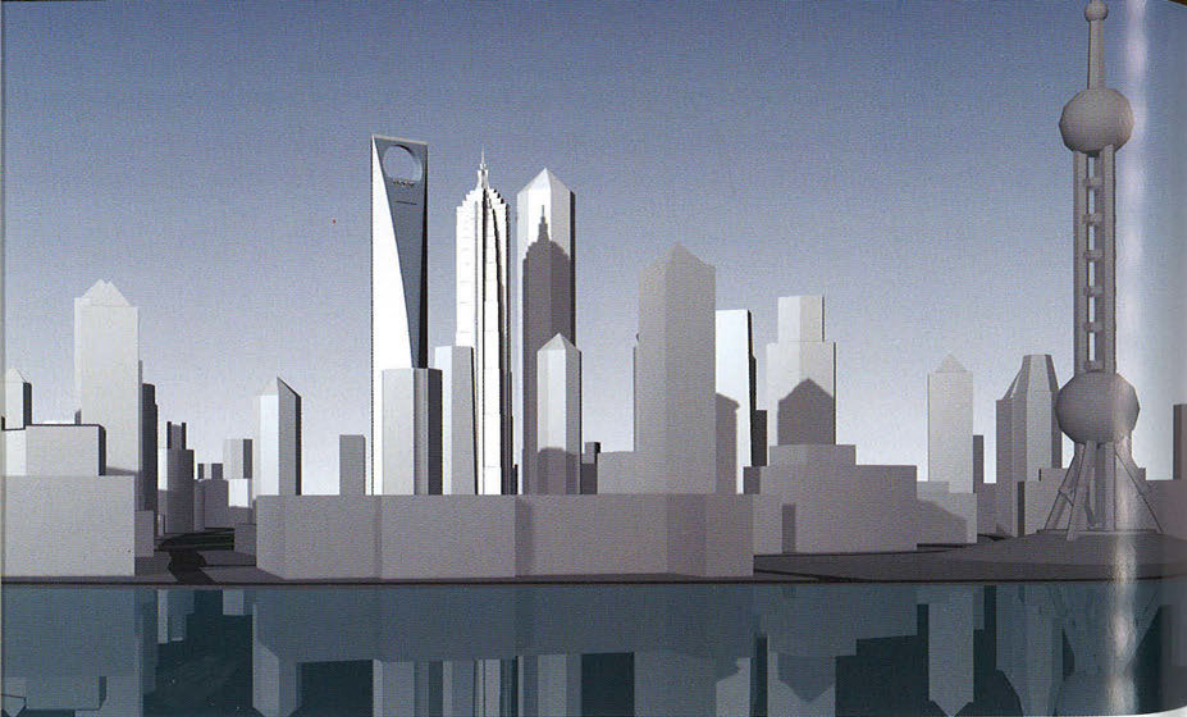




SKYSCRAPER

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SHANGHAI WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER

Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, Shanghai, 2008

The Pudong district in Shanghai is a showcase special economic zone, symbolizing China's emergence as a global economic superpower. Pudong has recently experienced an explosive building boom, making it the largest building site in the history of the world. When completed, the Shanghai World Financial Center will become the centerpiece of the district and will capture the title of the tallest building in the world. For architect William Pedersen, the design of the Shanghai World Financial Center addresses the complexities of the building's context through a gesture of "heightened simplicity," responding through "geometry in its purest form."¹

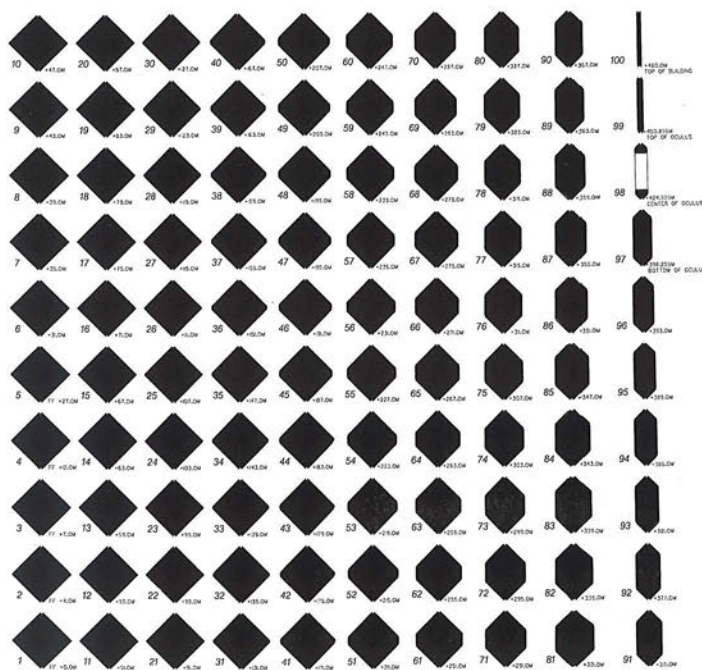
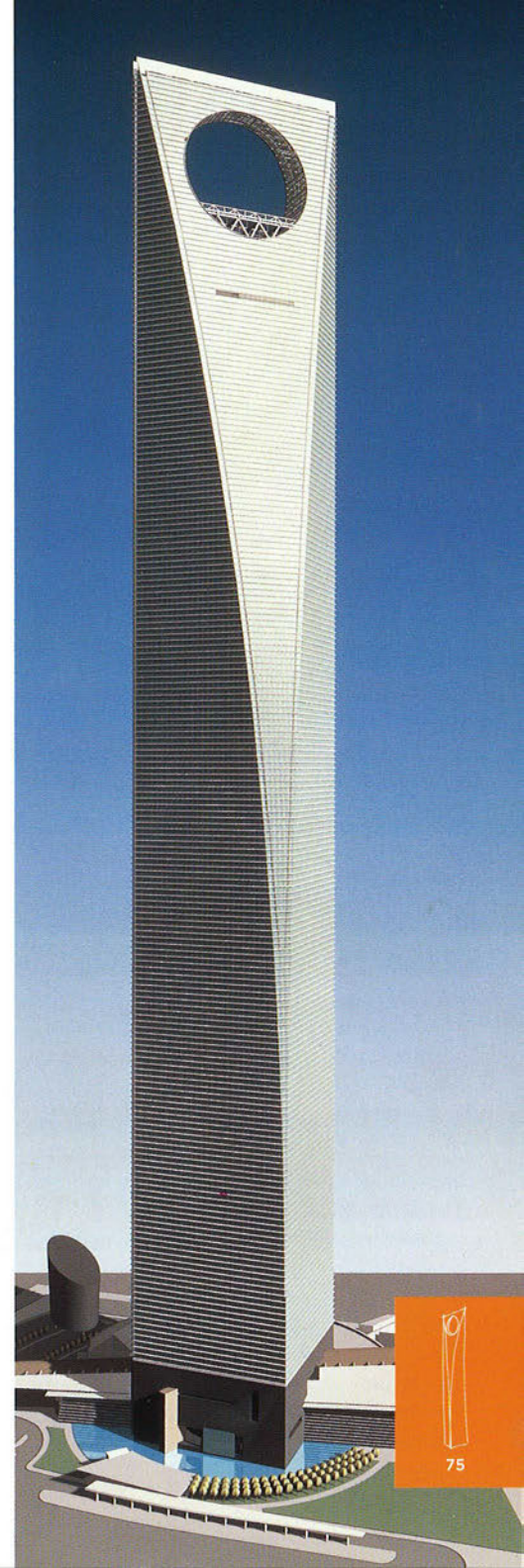
The primary form of the tower is an intersection of a square extrusion and two arcs, which taper to a single diagonal line at the apex. The gradual transformation corresponds to large office floorplates at the base, and narrow, oblong hotel floorplates at the top. The top is pierced by a circular opening, which houses an observation deck and helps to relieve wind pressure. According to Pedersen, "the tall building must relate the earth and the sky." The square plan at the base and the circular opening at the top make abstract associations to Chinese cosmology, where the earth is understood as square and the heavens represented by a circle. This abstract dialogue between two primary forms allows for multiple interpretations. Some interpreted the "window to the sky" as a Chinese moon-gate, others as the rising sun in the Japanese flag (the developer is Japanese).

The continuous transformation of the tower's form makes each floorplate entirely unique, resulting in a monolithic form of immense volumetric simplicity and great planimetric complexity. The singular gesture of its sculptural form masks the tower's multiple functions. Equally proportioned horizontal bands of reflective glass give the tower a scaleless quality.

In describing the design strategies for the Shanghai World Financial Center, Pedersen explains how the monolithic tower offers "the potential to generate a symbolic abstractness which could resonate with the place."²

¹ William Pedersen, "To Design High," in *Torri e grattacieli (Towers and Skyscrapers)*, l'Arca Plus, l'Arca Edizioni, Milan, 1997, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*



The Pudong district of Shanghai has been transformed from a low-density neighborhood opposite Shanghai's Bund to a city of towers, three of them planned to be taller than eighty stories.
LEFT: Floor plan matrix showing the variation in form as one moves up the tower.

DAEWOO TOWER 88

Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, Pusan, 1997 (designed)

The elegant Daewoo Tower 88 exemplifies the subtractive sculptural approach for the design of a monolithic skyscraper. The mixed-use complex was designed for a waterfront site in Pusan, Korea, as part of the larger master plan development to be built on landfill in Suyoung Bay. The project engages its context—cultural as well as geographical—through a sculptural language and interpretive geometry.

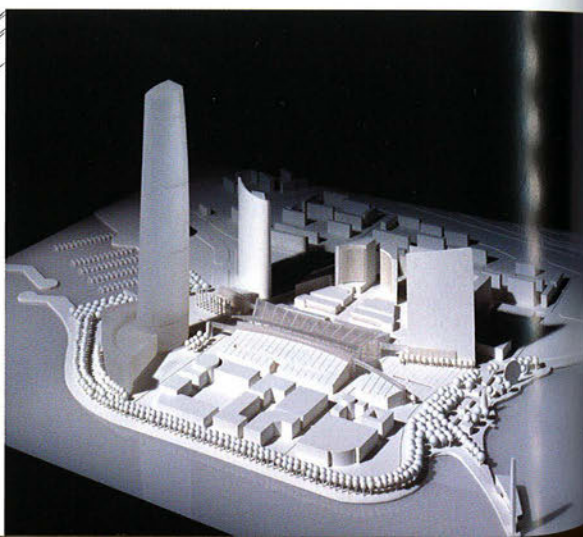
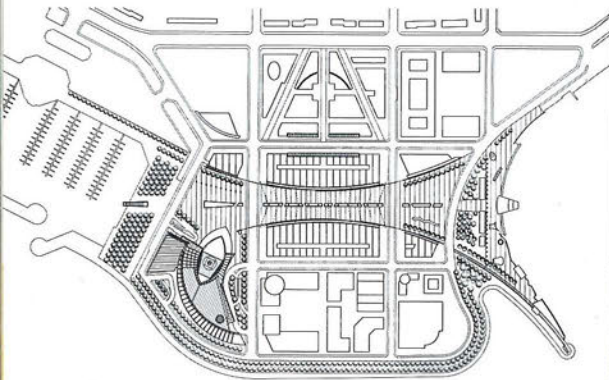
The form of Daewoo Tower 88 is derived from an eye-shaped extrusion that is intersected by two offset, curved, cutting planes, resulting in a dramatic tapered form that evolves as it rises. The dominant longitudinal axis of this form implies a connection between the sea and the mountains. The project relates to its context through an abstract language that attempts to symbolically incorporate characteristics meaningful to Korean culture, but is not limited to pictorial or image-based historical precedents.

The tower houses offices, a hotel, and serviced

apartments. Functionally, the building's larger lower levels provide flexible office space, while the smaller upper floors, hollowed by a north-facing atrium, house hotel and apartment functions. A stone base and an eye-shaped reflecting pool ground the tower. The podium, housing a concert hall, hotel ballroom and banquet facilities, retail space, and a museum, are composed as a collection of forms that seem to spiral off of the tower's curved form.

Although it is unlikely to be built, the Daewoo Tower 88 exemplifies the sculptural design strategies proposed by William Pedersen. The highly abstract language of geometrically derived forms seeks to create a bold sculptural building that resonates with aspects of the local culture. The curve of a brush-stroke or the gesture in traditional Korean dance is evoked through the gesture of the tower. The abstract geometrical language creates a new landmark that invites multiple associations.

Daewoo Tower 88 was planned as a focal point for a new neighborhood built on landfill in Pusan's Suyoung Bay, anchoring a new precinct that combines office, residential, retail, and recreational uses.



The sail-like forms of the Daewoo Tower 88 taper as they rise.

