

## Press release

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**Foster and Partners projects in 'Tall Buildings' exhibition at MoMA**

Marking an overdue reappraisal of building tall, *Tall Buildings* is an examination of 25 recent schemes and an exploration of the issues fuelling the contemporary debate on skyscrapers. MoMA's current exhibition heralds the latest high-rise soul searching that has ensued since the destruction of the Twin Towers. With technology, sustainability and human safety channelling a current sea-change, this exhibition looks up at a new breed of tower.

When Foster and Partners Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank appeared in MoMA's 1983 exhibition, *Three New Skyscrapers*, it was an exciting opportunity for the practice to reveal a new pioneering strategy for building tall. Twenty years later, 30 St Mary Axe and the World Trade Center are projects that sit at the crest of a learning curve. They are represented with large-scale models, drawings, and photographs and described as exemplars of the technological innovation, sensitivity to urban context and design flare that defines the genre for the twenty-first century.

Organized by Terence Riley, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art, and Guy Nordenson, Structural Engineer, New York, and Associate Professor of Architecture and Structures, Princeton University, the exhibition is the second in a series of five exhibitions presented by The Lily Auchincloss Fund for Contemporary Architecture. The exhibition runs until 27 September 2004.

<http://www.moma.org/exhibitions>

**30 St Mary Axe**

30 St Mary Axe is London's first environmental skyscraper. Located in the heart of the City of London, its distinctive form is an instantly recognisable addition to the skyline and has already become a landmark in Europe's leading financial centre. The tower embodies a highly progressive environmental strategy, with its aerodynamic shape maximising the amount of natural lighting and ventilation to significantly reduce the building's energy consumption. It is a bold intervention in the urban landscape and is set in a generous public plaza that encourages a lively mix of urban life with shops, cafes and a restaurant.

**World Trade Center**

Foster and Partners' scheme for the World Trade Center proposed that the destroyed Twin Towers would be replaced with two new crystalline towers. In excess of 500 metres, they would be the tallest towers in the world, the safest towers in the world, and the most socially and ecologically progressive towers in the world. Considerably informed by issues of human safety, the crystalline tower was based

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on triangular geometries cross-cultural symbols of harmony, wisdom, purity, unity and strength. Its two halves kissed at three points, creating public observation platforms, exhibits, cafs and other amenities. These links also had a safety benefit, as escape routes from one tower to the other. They broke down the towers scale into village-like clusters, each with its own atrium.

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