



# Skyscrapers: Structure and Design

*By Matthew Wells*

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## **Skyscrapers: Structure and Design** By Matthew Wells

Ever taller and more dramatic, skyscrapers are being built everywhere. This book looks at contemporary examples, from the perspective of both their architecture and their engineering. The author explains the structural principles behind the creation of tall buildings and how they are designed to withstand earthquakes, high winds, fire and terrorist attack. An introduction covers the architectural and cultural history of the skyscraper, using choice examples to illustrate key engineering developments and the variety of basic design types. The main part of the book then analyzes 29 of the most interesting recent skyscrapers from around the world. Each project is illustrated in full colour, while the text, architects' drawings and details show how the each is constructed and what innovative design features it incorporates. Featured architects include Foster & Partners, Renzo Piano, Jean Nouvel and Zaha Hadid.

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## **Skyscrapers: Structure and Design** By Matthew Wells Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4544129 in Books
- Published on: 2005-06-13
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 12.32" h x 1.02" w x 8.62" l, 1.10 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 192 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

At first, the title seems broad. And, well, it is; there are plenty of skyscrapers out there. But only 30, some of which are still under construction, receive detailed treatments by Wells, a practicing structural engineer. Wells dedicates most of his text to construction principles, which architecture and engineering buffs will appreciate. The text is supplemented by lively photos as well as architectural plans and blueprints. Behind the visual comprehensiveness, though, is a downside: the language is often stilted. For instance, in the write-up of the Swiss Re building in London, Wells writes, "The striking silhouette records how a design process that draws together the ideas of disparate thinkers and inventors, identifying their essences and then reconciling these with tested methods to make a new whole, can create a radical-looking building while remaining within an essentially conservative remit." Such roundabout language, unfortunately, is used throughout the book. Still, even without the verbal finesse, the book's worth a look for its technically sound and well-presented information. 75 b/w and 175 color illustrations.

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From [Booklist](#)

Drawing from construction in the past decade, Wells critiques 29 notable new skyscrapers, including a ski jump in Austria and a spirelike tower in Dublin, Ireland. Exhibiting no dominant aesthetic or engineering trait (except in East Asia, where the title for world's tallest building is avidly contested), the collection of structures draws Wells' analysis of each edifice's distinctive features and its compatibility with its neighborhood. He discerns a trend, however, in several designs' application of aerodynamics to lessen wind loads; one radical building (the Wing Tower in Glasgow, Scotland) freely pivots, behaving like a weathervane. Another curvy shape in London (the Swiss Re<sup>B</sup> Headquarters) looks like an artillery shell crossed with a Faberge egg. An office building, it at least has a practical purpose, something lacking in one outright folly Wells describes. Go to Las Vegas and see the Stratosphere Tower, which, crowned by a roller coaster, seems to symbolize its own artificiality and that of the city it bestrides. Whatever statement contemporary buildings make, Wells' generously illustrated album translates it for architecture fans. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

." . . a tour of twenty-nine case studies. . . All are fun to look at and contemplate."--"Virginia Quarterly Review"

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Edward Thompson:**

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**Richard Mason:**

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