

Lubetkin Prize Shortlist • New York, Guangzhou, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur

2012-07-26



A multistory skylight atrium of the [Solaris](#), in Singapore, designed by [TR Hamzah and Yeang](#) and [CPG](#). Photo: Albert Lim

The Royal Institute of British Architects has announced its shortlist for the 2012 Lubetkin Prize, given to a new building located outside the European Union, designed by a RIBA member firm. The winner of the award be announced on the evening of Saturday 13 October at a special event in Manchester, England.

The nominees are:

- Guangzhou International Finance Centre, Guangzhou, China, by [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](#)
- One KL, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, by [SCDA Architects](#)
- Solaris, Fusionopolis 2B, One North, Singapore, by [TR Hamzah and Yeang](#) and [CPG](#)
- Sperone Westwater, Bowery, New York City, USA, by [Foster + Partners](#)

Guangzhou International Finance Centre

Guangzhou, China



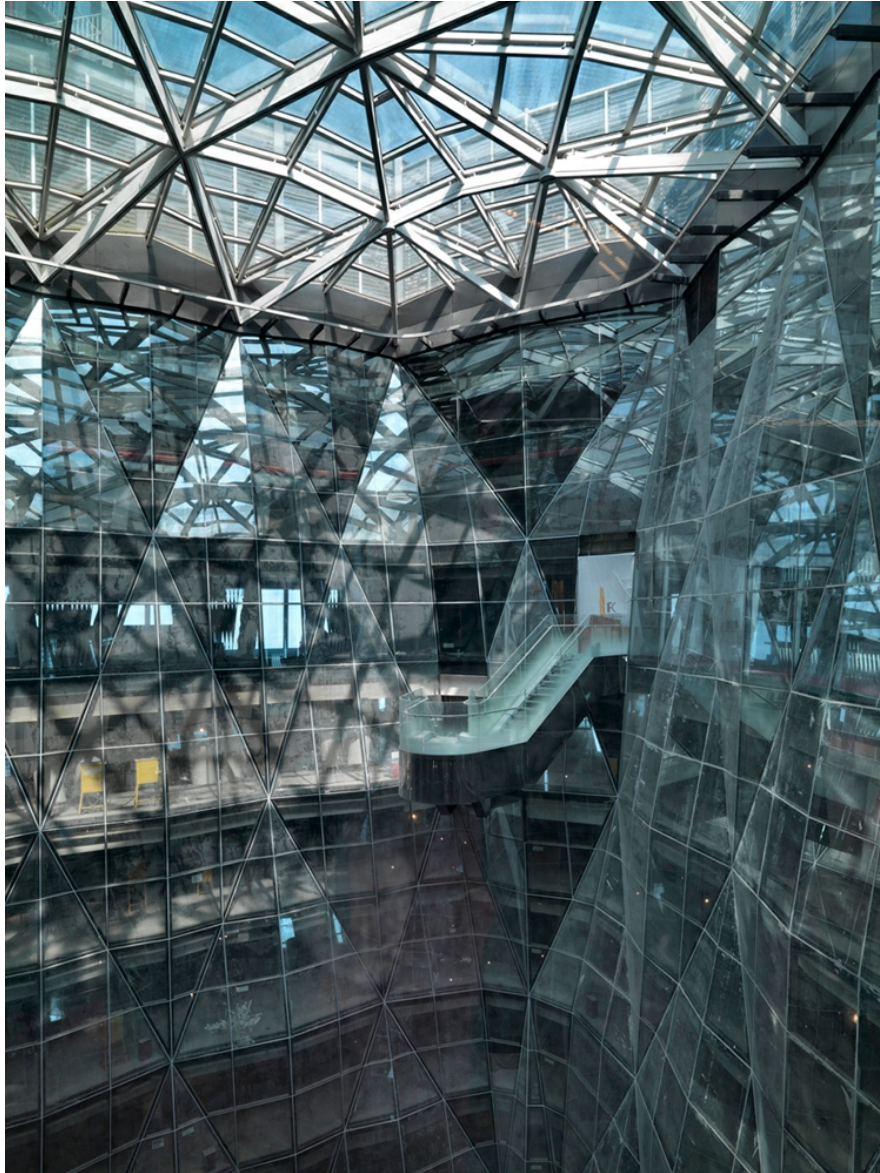
The 103-story [Guangzhou International Finance Centre](#) designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects.

Photo: Jonathan Leijonhufvud

The [Guangzhou International Finance Centre](#) is the tallest building to be designed by a British architect, anywhere in the world. [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](#) won the competition with a slender triangular mixed use tower rising to 103 stories out of a podium containing shopping and a connection to the subway system and three levels of parking, as well as two linked smaller towers of accommodation.

The main tower is 66 floors of offices and 38 floors of a Four Seasons hotel arranged around a dramatic tapering atrium. For all the smoothness of its crystalline skin, this is a building that expresses its diagonal grid structure to the world through its glazed facades and internally to the user of every office and hotel room through the presence of raked concrete-filled steel tubes that form the structure.

Originally planned as one of a matching pair of towers either side of a grand pedestrian boulevard leading to last year's Lubetkin shortlisted [Guangzhou Opera House](#) by [Zaha Hadid](#), it was also designed with a double skin. That fell victim to the client's understandable desire for more floor space (and certainly the generosity of the floorplate between core and skin is one of the building's major selling points). Instead the sun protection that a double skin would have afforded has had to be built into the glass – hence the dark grey appearance, again a distinctive merit of the finished tower.



An atrium of the Guangzhou International Finance Center. Photo: Jonathan Leijonhufvud

The beauty of the diagonal grid is its inherent stiffness, which in turn gives it its strength. Each diamond is 54 meters (117 feet) or twelve stories high, reducing the amount of steel required for the construction by a remarkable 20%.

This is a hugely complex project that appears to be extraordinarily simple, like most of the best things in life.

- Architect: [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](#)
- Client: Guangzhou Yuexiu City Construction
- Structural Engineer: Arup
- Services Engineer: Arup

- Contractor: China State Construction Corporation
- Contract Value: £600 million
- Date of completion: June 2011
- Gross internal area: 380,000 square meters (4.09 million square feet)

One KL

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



One KL, a 35-story residential building in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, designed by SCDA Architects. Photo: Albert Lim

One KL is a 35 story residential tower with a prestige to match the exclusivity of its address. Each duplex has its own pool, rectangular or L shaped depending on the location of the apartment. These mini-infinity pools are expressed on the façade with glass end-walls, making them an outward manifestation of the desirability of the accommodation within.

The tower is C shaped so as to make the best use of a tight urban site. It means that it has three fronts and three backs, the missing fourth elevation draws the wind and negative pressure, pushing it up the void and cross ventilating the structure through the cuts made by the terraces and pools. Condensation produced by the air crossing the pools also results in local cooling.

The dual aspect of each apartment has other advantages. It brings light into all the rooms and also produces what is probably architecturally the most interesting space – the void - with its dramatic escape stairs. Another space which benefits from the indoor-outdoor ambiguity is the third level slice of communal living comprising pool, gardens, gym and multi-functional space.



An open-air atrium inside One KL. Photo: Albert Lim

On the outside the architects have played with the grid, alternately sliding the apartments to the left or the right to allow for the pools and terraces, so that the units interlink, giving these elevations a rhythm that enlivens the

whole composition. Internally, the generosity of the spaces allows the interest to be continued with double and single-height spaces interlocking, so that a mezzanine corridor overlooking the living-dining spaces and joins the bedrooms. In the penthouses the device continues on up through a further two floors to a magnificent roof terrace.

Kuala Lumpur has some of the highest levels of humidity in the world – 95% being common. This building, by architects who have been working on the problem for more than a decade, have produced apartments that go far beyond the anodyne air-conditioned box.

- Architect: [SCDA Architects](#)
- Client: Waterfront Group
- Contractor: Shimizu Corporation
- Contract Value: Confidential
- Date of completion: March 2010
- Gross internal area: 45,245 square meters (487,000 square feet)

Solaris

Fusionopolis 2B, One North, Singapore



The two-building [Solaris](#) development in Singapore, designed by [TR Hamzah and Yeang](#) and [CPG](#). Photo: Albert Lim

Solaris is two big buildings, one seven, one fourteen storeys, linked by a generous daylit and naturally ventilated atrium with rooflights that close automatically when it rains and crossed by sky-bridges at high level. A rain-check glass wall made up of glazing separated by perforated panels also keeps out the rain while allowing cross ventilation.

This is a green building in every sense of the word. A narrow landscaped ramp, more like a stony country path, wraps itself round the building for 1.5 kilometers, rising from ground level up to a roof garden with dramatic views of one third of Singapore. It provides walks for the buildings' users and a habitat for birds, butterflies and even the occasional snake. Altogether the landscaping exceeds the amount of greenfield land taken up by the building by 13% - giving it an impressive Green Mark rating of 113%. Included within this figure are the sky

terraces, where the linear path broadens out into wide hard landscaped but well-planted terraces where staff can meet up – an important provision in a building whose primary function is scientific research and development.

Precisely shaped sun-shading louvres supplement the hard-working low emissivity glass, resulting in relatively cool open plan office spaces even when the air con is turned off. In the deeper plan of the two buildings, a broad light-well or 'solar shaft' runs diagonally through the section, scooping light into the heart of the building and reducing the need for artificial lighting. Rainwater harvesting stores enough water underground to irrigate the landscaping for five days.

Consequently Solaris has very low carbon emissions, just 62 kilograms of carbon per square meter (12.6987 pounds per square foot). What is more, it is designed to be easily adaptable to other uses, or its components to be almost entirely recyclable should no such alternative use be found. The result is a building that has achieved the local Building and Construction Authority's Green Mark Platinum Standard. This is a building where the organic meets the inorganic in a most satisfying and pleasing manner.

Ken Yeang's approach to designing buildings to cope naturally with extreme climates has been hugely important and his ideas disseminated in a series of influential books. But it is only when you see one of his buildings that you understand that they work aesthetically as well as they do environmentally.

- Architect: [TR Hamzah and Yeang](#) and [CPG](#)
- Client: Soilbuild Group Holdings
- Structural Engineer: Arup Singapore
- Services Engineer: CPG Consultants
- Contractor: Soil-Build
- Contract Value: £49.9 million
- Date of completion: March 2011
- Gross internal area: 51,274 square meters (551,910 square feet)

Sperone Westwater

Bowery, New York City, USA



Foster + Partners designed the 11-story [Sperone Westwater](#) gallery, located in the Bowery area of New York City. Photo: Tom Powel

A sensitive, sympathetic client, a generous budget, a program built on selling the art of some of the world's top artists in one of New York's longest established private galleries – it sounds like a dream commission. And then there is the site: just 7.6 meters wide by 30.5 meters deep (25 feet by 100 feet), a narrow slot in the Bowery, amid the second-hand kitchenware stores. In less able hands this site could have produced a curator's nightmare. Instead this is a mature, thoughtful and polished piece of work: a curator's dream.

Externally, by day this building is as tough as any in the Bowery, a slender, milled glass fortress that relates in scale to the buildings around it. By day it has the air of fine steel, by night its transparency shines through, not least in the moving room. This additional 6-by-3-meter (10-by-20-foot) gallery space is also the goods lift which can be parked at any of the four floors of galleries above the entrance level. If it is in use as an extended gallery

space, then circulation is via the lift and stair core towards the rear of the building. Only ground conditions prevented the moving room from descending to occupy the street level entry. Instead there the drama of a double-height lobby with the lift parked excitingly overhead. This leads through to a double-height long gallery. A smoothly curved mezzanine gallery overlooking the long gallery, with a beautifully detailed polished steel handrail, leads to a sculpture terrace above a secret garden 'borrowed' from the adjacent apartment block. Only its occupants can enjoy the fineness of the rear elevation and the way it melds into the cityscape, but all gallery-goers can enjoy the views of this rare wooded green space and of the public park beyond.



The Sperone Westwater includes some multistory gallery spaces. Photo: Tom Powel

The progression of galleries continues upwards, each floor subtly different in plan and feel: a conventional gallery topped with two 'his and her' floors reflecting the different styles of the two owners, Sperone and Westwater; then up again to offices (which could become another gallery) and finally a library and archive worthy of any grand villa.

This is a gallery which perfectly serves both its private and public functions: discreet rooms for conversations with potential buyers and public galleries as fine as any in New York City. This is architecture that advertises its subject and itself equally well. A little masterpiece.

- Architect: [Foster + Partners](#)

- Client: Sperone Westwater
- Structural Engineer: [Buro Happold](#)
- Services Engineer: Buro Happold
- Contractor: Sciamè
- Contract Value: Confidential
- Date of completion: September 2010
- Gross internal area: 1,858 square meters (20,000 square feet)

Source: Architecture Week People & Places Blog