

Tower in Shanghai named “Best Tall Building”

The Council on Tall Buildings and the Urban Habitat has named the Shanghai World Financial Center the 2008 “Best Tall Building Overall.”

Designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) and completed last year, the building was chosen from among four “Regional Tall Building” winners, including The New York Times Building by Renzo Piano Building Workshop with FXFOWLE, London’s 51 Lime Street by Foster + Partners, and the Bahrain World Trade Center by Atkins.

The Shanghai World Financial Center, which boasts the high-

est occupied floor in the world, was chosen as the winner for “its revolutionary structural design and inspirational symbolism,” according to the council.

Formed out of a square prism intersected by two “cosmic arcs,” the building includes a distinctive, multistory trapezoidal aperture at its upper floors. The design was inspired by two Chinese burial symbols: “a square prism essentially representative of the earth, and a heaven symbol – a circular disc with a circular aperture cut through it,” says KPF’s Bill Pedersen, FAIA. “We

wanted to do a building that was a genuine expression of the relationship between the earth and the sky,” he explains, “and also that could be connected to the culture within which it is placed.”

The tower’s tapering form is more than an aesthetic move – it also allows the building to maximize floor-plate and material efficiency. Structural innovations by the engineering firm Leslie E. Robertson Associates succeeded in increasing the building’s volume by 20 percent while retaining its original weight, thereby minimizing its total embodied energy. And the range of floor plates that the design’s unique

geometry creates allowed KPF to “negotiate the different program necessities” of the building’s office, hotel, and retail components, according to Pedersen.

Though the building is replete with unusual features, Pedersen singles out one as particularly important: The tower houses a seven-story observatory and two sky walks on the 97th and 100th floors, thereby opening its most spectacular spaces and best views to the public. “One of the things we’re most proud of in this building,” says Pedersen, “is that the top 262 feet are devoted to functions that everyone can go in and enjoy.” *Anya Kaplan-Seem*