

Burj Dubai

VISITORS TO THE CONSTRUCTION site of the tallest building in the world, typically awe-struck by its sheer height, often miss the larger vision for the entire Burj Dubai development. The tower's relationship to its region and ground-level neighborhood is equally instructive for future developers and planners who, no doubt, will eventually create projects that will surpass the Burj in height.

Dubai has already gained recognition as an emerging world-class city, and Burj Dubai thrusts it more boldly onto the global map as the world's tallest building. It contains the most floors at 160 stories and climbing, already exceeding the number in Taipei 101 in Taiwan; it is also the highest manmade object on earth, most recently logged at 2,257 feet (687.93 m), eclipsing Toronto's CN Tower. Not expected to be completed until this September, the building's final height remains a well-kept secret.

Owner/developer Emaar Properties PJSC and its design team have approached the project with a long-term objective to build a lasting world-class destination—a sleek and contextual tower that fits in with the surrounding community of mixed-use properties, parks, a central lake, and a walkable retail-flanked street on a par with Paris's Champs-Élysées, New York City's Park Avenue, and Barcelona's Ramblas.

While offering a fresh new look, the building's architecture also relates uniquely to its locale. Unlike towers that could be plopped down almost anywhere—and often are—Burj Dubai is grounded in its setting and origins, and arguably would not belong elsewhere.

Principal architect Adrian Smith, who designed the flowering, three-lobed shape of Burj Dubai while with SOM Architects, incorporated patterns from traditional Islamic architecture and also drew inspiration from a lily widely cultivated in the region, the *Hymenocallis*.

This towering iteration of the *Hymenocallis* has three distinct “petals,” each a wing of the plan that juts out from the center. A virtual city in the sky, the Burj has a host of mixed-use services to provide for its inhabitants. Its three largest components will include offices, residential space, and a luxury hotel designed by the Armani Group, one of that brand's first hotels. The flowering elements take on a changing, three-dimensional form as the structure rises, evoking the organic shapes of the plant.

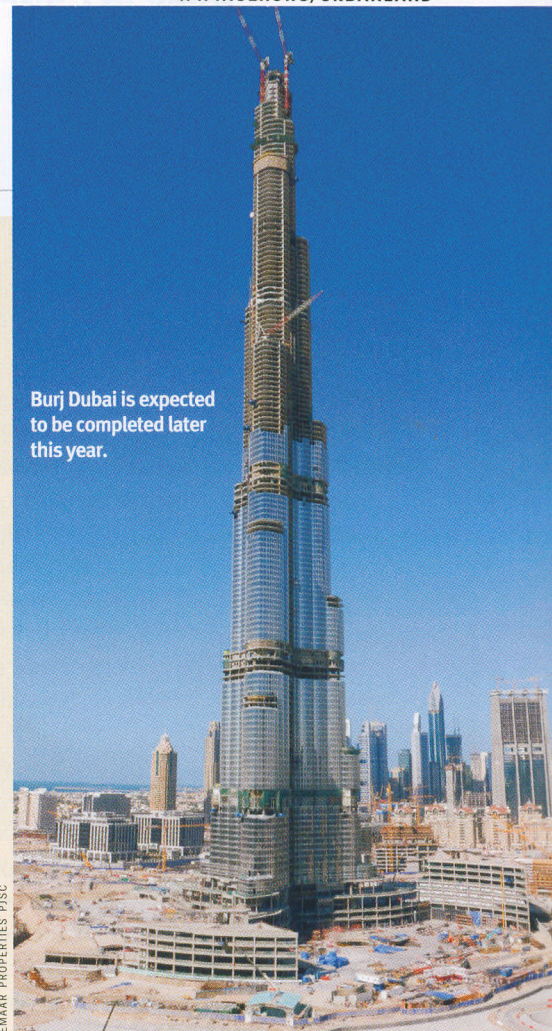
Burj Dubai also evokes the region's architectural heritage. “The tower goes up in steps in a spiraling way,” Smith told a Turkish newspaper in 2005. “In Islamic architecture, this symbolizes ascending toward the heavens.”

The environs of Burj Dubai are expansive yet human scale. The community being created around the high-rise building—dubbed Downtown Burj Dubai—covers more than 500 acres (202 ha) and will consist of the Burj Dubai Mall, the lake, two parks—Tower Park and Island Park—and the Old Town District, which features residences, hotels, and shops, along with a variety of new urban mixed-use structures.

In collaborating with architects at SOM, SWA Group—a landscape architecture, planning, and urban design firm with offices in California, Texas, and China—was retained by Emaar Properties to develop a distinctive landscape and urban design for downtown and the Burj Dubai tower. The design objectives included connectivity, comfort, visual interest, and simplicity.

One of the design challenges involved the region's extreme temperatures, which can vary from 95 to 118 degrees Fahrenheit (35 to 48 degrees Celsius), resulting in hot and often humid afternoons similar to weather in south Florida, southern Spain, and other coastal areas a few latitudes north of the equator. As is the case in other regions, Dubai residents enjoy

Burj Dubai is expected to be completed later this year.



EMAAR PROPERTIES PJSC

the afternoons and evenings outdoors and are expected to be drawn to the walkability of Downtown Burj. While the climate limits the range of outdoor activities in the public realms, the use of green, shaded, and cooling landscape elements make a distinct difference.

The landscape design for Burj Dubai, for example, includes sidewalks, a series of open and shaded plazas, courts, paseos, a lake promenade with an island park, and the tower park at the base of the structure. The tower park is designed with many sustainable features including shaded outdoor seating, outdoor dining, lookouts, a forest grove, play areas for children, recreation game courts, and major water terraces and gardens. Adjacent to Burj Dubai, the island park offers great vantage points from which to view the high-rise building and a large fountain in the lake.

Linking all the elements of Downtown Burj Dubai is the Emaar Boulevard, a 2.2-mile (3.5-km) common thread designed to be one of the world's premiere streets for people to promenade along and meet others. It

is also intended to attract the highest of upscale retail, such as that found in Paris, London, and New York City. Emaar Boulevard features a formal double row of tightly spaced date palms for shade, and connects visually with car park access from below the boulevard, tram stations, café kiosks, news/flower stands, fountains, custom-designed boulevard furnishings, special collections of public sculptures, and luxury shops and cafés along the pedestrian-oriented sidewalk. The boulevard's six major intersections will be paved in intricate patterns of stone cobbles to stimulate visual interest and to relate this area to the tower, which stands tall in the background.

Sought-after urban destinations require a delicate balance of human scale integrated with large-scale development. Inside the Burj Dubai, visitors can ride the world's fastest elevator at 40 miles (64 km) per hour to reach record heights, while outside they can take a leisurely stroll along the lake or a walk along palm-lined retail promenades. The views and experience at either altitude will be memorable.

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