



From Sprawl to Tall

With sprawl reaching its breaking point, at least for the time being, California's largest cities—LA, San Francisco, San Diego—are about to experience an unprecedented proliferation of highrises. Each city has at least 15 new skyscrapers planned, most of them luxury condominiums. Below is a selection of the latest that have not already appeared in these pages. Many are in downtown areas, although a few are scattered in lower density zones. Of course skyscrapers, with their high overhead and corporate clients, are often unadventurous exercises in high-end branding. And some of the new projects, with their generic names, blocky forms, and derivative styles, prove that point. At the condos, luxurious interiors, and amenities like pools and roof decks are often the goal with architecture as an afterthought. However, there is some pioneering architecture, too, showing off creative manipulation of form and structure, alternative construction technologies, high efficiency energy systems, and accessibility to transit and street level retail. Viewers are by elite architects like Pei Cobb Freed, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Robert A. M. Stern, Frank Gehry, and Arquitectonica.

The influx of vertical living and working space promises to transform the entire region into a denser, more urbane landscape. But along with the promise comes new pressure on infrastructure that was never intended to support such density. That is, if these towers are built. Real estate experts appear confident that there is still room for development. But common wisdom suggests that the epic amount of construction is evidence of an overheated market that will have to contract, leaving some of these new skyscrapers partially empty until the market catches up. It's a brave new world out there, at least, for the risk tolerant.

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LOS ANGELES



CITY HOUSE
Architect: Robertson Partners Architects
Developer: The Titan Organization
Height: 60 Stories
Completion: 2010

The mixed-use, LEED Silver City House will be built with a concrete core, faced with cut-limestone from top to bottom, roofed with clay-tile and copper. The building will include a five-star hotel and commercial retail.

THE CENTURY
Architect: Robert A. M. Stern Architects
Developer: Related Companies
Height: 42 stories
Completion: Early 2010

Situated on four acres in the heart of Century City, the 140 condominiums at The Century (a LEED certified building) will be comprised of two- to four-bedroom residences and full-and half-floor penthouses and townhouses.



PARK TOWER **Architect:** Kanner Architects
Developer: CIM Group
Height: 42 stories
Completion: Unknown, in EIR phase

The building will have a double-height retail space at its base, while at its top ribbons of glass will extend from the east and west curtain walls and loop over the uppermost floor, forming a translucent roof.



717 WEST NINTH STREET TOWER
Architect: Mambo Architecture
Developer: Meruelo Maddux Properties
Height: 35 stories
Completion: Early 2009

The tower, which will offer 214 loft-style units in the South Park district, will feature a glass curtain wall system using a blue-and-green staggered pattern to resemble a cascading waterfall.



717 OLYMPIC
Architect: RTKL
Developer: The Hanover Company
Height: 26 stories
Completion: Spring 2008

Located on the northeast corner of Figueroa and Olympic, adjacent to the Staples Center and LA Live, 717 Olympic's contemporary exterior will have floor-to-ceiling windows throughout.



CONCERTO
Architect: DeStefano + Partners
Developer: Sonny Astani
Height: Two 28-story towers
Completion: 2009

While the towers will have a modern glass facade, the ground-level spaces will be built with the materials, texture, and color of the existing historical buildings in the neighborhood.



GLASS TOWER
Architect: DeStefano + Partners
Developer: Kalantari Group
Height: 23 stories
Completion: In construction documentation phase

The massing of the residential building is a simple rectangle, except at the corner where the oversized, stacked glass cubes will reflect the urban environment.



1200 CLUB VIEW
Architect: KeatingKhang Architecture
Developer: Fifield Companies
Height: 22 stories
Completion: 2009

An ultraluxury estate condominium tower comprised of 35 units over 22 stories.



VUE
Architect: GMPA Architects
Developer: Carlisle Galaxy San Pedro
Height: 15 stories
Completion: September 2008

Vue's rectangular blocks mimic the stacked containers typical of nearby port of LA. Vertical elements take their cue from cranes, and floor-to-ceiling blue-green glass symbolize the ocean and sky.

SAN FRANCISCO



MILLENNIUM TOWER
Architect: Handel Architects
Developer: Millennium Partners
Height: 60 stories
Completion: April 2009

Handel Architects designed a cool blue box and then sliced the top at opposing angles, giving the soaring tower a crystal-like quality. Aluminum fins will climb across the facades in a monumental ribbon pattern that spans over the slabs.



ONE RINCON HILL NORTH AND SOUTH TOWERS
Architect: Solomon Cordwell Buenz & Associates
Developer: Urban West
Height: 54 stories (South), 45 stories (North)
Completion: 2008 (South), 2009 (North)

The Rincon Hill pair will stand on a prominent bay-side mound. One Rincon Hill South will be taller, its height will be tempered by a bright white "grill" of multistoried openings set on the vertical.



201 FOLSOM STREET
Architect: Heller Manus
Developer: Tishman Speyer
Height: 45 stories; 35 stories
Completion: Undetermined

In accordance with the city's Rincon Hill plan, 201 Folsom has a "traditional" neighborhood-scale base from which two squarish towers will rise. The corners will break apart into double-story balconies with glass faces.

INFINTI
Architect: Arquitectonica with Heller Manus
Developer: Tishman Speyer
Height: (Spear St.) 42 stories; (Main St.) 37 stories
Completion: March 2009

Infinti's two soaring glass-walled towers and two freestop podiums will house 650 new luxury condominium residences.



THE CALIFORNIAN AT RINCON HILL
Architect: Keating Khang
Developer: Fifield Companies
Height: 42 stories
Completion: 2009

A defining moment as motorists approach the city on the Bay Bridge, the unusual tower will feature glass and balcony features on top of a town-house base.



1333 GOUGH
Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
Developer: Adco Group
Height: 38 stories
Completion: Unknown

If approved, this condo tower with retail at ground level will be on axis with the city's famous parabola-inflected St. Mary's Cathedral. Above the base would rise evanescent skin in an oval plan seemingly dematerialized towards the top.

555 MISSION STREET
Architect: KPF and Heller-Manus
Developer: Tishman Speyer
Height: 34 stories
Completion: 2008

In the vicinity of Cesar Pelli's JP Morgan Chase building, 555 Mission could be a great complement with its shiny mullions and lofty overlap of curtain walls, shearing the simplicity of the box.



INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
Architect: Patri Merker Architects and Hornberger + Worsstall
Developer: Hampshire Properties/Continental Development Corporation
Height: 32 stories
Completion: 2008

This hotel will offer about 550 rooms near the Moscone Convention Center. Reflective glass and gigantic top-to-bottom pilasters recall Las Vegas Strip architecture. Facades of wavy glass resemble rippling water.



BLU
Architect: Handel Architects
Developer: Malcolm Properties and Lennar Urban
Height: 21 floors
Completion: June 2008

The less private living areas face the front of this 21-story tower, all covered by a seemingly delicate flap of glass. The box slims down to allow sunlight into the public grounds adjacent to the project.

SAN DIEGO



ELECTRA
Architect: Chris Dikeas Architects
Developer: Bosa Development
Height: 43 stories
Completion: January 2009

Electra will be the tallest residential building in San Diego and will incorporate the original San Diego and Gas Electric company buildings at its base.



VANTAGE POINT CONDOMINIUMS
Architect: S2 Architecture
Developer: The Pointe at Balboa
Height: 42 stories
Completion: 2009

The gateway entry of the project will be identified by a plaza water feature, while the building mass will step primarily from south to north enabling views in all directions.



ONE LIBRARY CIRCLE
Architect: Austin Veum Robins Partners
Developer: Avion and Centurion
Height: 41 stories
Completion: Undetermined

This mixed-use highrise will include five stories of below-grade parking and a configuration including 124 two-bedrooms, 28 one-bedrooms, and eight three-bedrooms.



BAYSIDE AT THE EMBARCADERO
Architect: ARC Design International
Developer: Bosa Development
Height: 38 Stories
Completion date: August 2009

Located adjacent to a major transit corridor downtown, this 36-story tower is surrounded by four levels of apartments and town homes along the street front. Its slender profile will include a setback at the 29th floor for an open view corridor.



700 WEST BROADWAY
Architect: Henry Cobb
Developer: Irvine Company
Height: 34 stories
Completion: Undetermined

The 34-story modern travertine and glass office building downtown will be adjacent to the Santa Fe depot and across the street from Lane Field.



HILTON SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER
Architect: John Portman & Associates
Developer: Fortman Holdings and Phelps Development
Height: 30 Stories
Completion: Undetermined

The tower hotel will be elevated at entry level to provide views of the bay from the main lobby and to allow direct pedestrian access to the waterfront.