





CCTV Tower

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The high-rise CCTV Tower is located in the eastern part of Beijing and stands out thanks to its unique construction, which symbolises China's rise on the world stage. Due to its futuristic look it has garnered in the eyes of the public the nickname "Big Boxers".

After China became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2002 and simultaneously won the bid to sponsor the summer Olympic Games for 2008, very quickly modern architecture began to flourish. In light of these events, even Chinese state television started to look for a place for a new headquarters and in 2002 sponsored an architecture contest. The winner was atelier OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture), whose founder is the renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. Famed architect Ole Scheeran also took part in the project's design. Construction began on 22 September 2004, and the grand opening was originally planned for 1 January 2008 to coincide with the Olympic Games to be held in Beijing. This deadline, however, was not met, and the skyscraper was opened in 2012. Total construction costs climbed to EUR 600 million and the project was realised by engineering company, Ove Arup.

The building is comprised of two vertical towers and four horizontal parts, which together form the shape of an L. At 160 meters up, the two towers are connected by a 70 meter right-angle protrusion, in which there are 14 floors. Unlike a classical high-rise building of this type, this concept of a closed loop saves on the height parameters and concurrently adds floor space. An interesting aspect of this project may be considered the fact that the two towers differ in height. The higher tower called Tower 1 has a total of 54 floors and measures 234 metres, with a circumference parameters of 40x60 meters. The lower tower (Tower 2) is only 210 meters tall and has 44 floors, with measurements of 40x50 meters. Both towers are inclined towards each other at a 6 degree angle and each has been given a unique function. Tower 1 is used for office work and editing and Tower 2 is for news coverage. The total floor space of this building is 473 square meters. Chinese state television takes up administrative space here, facilities for personal, multi-purpose spaces and areas for production and airing. Inside the building is also a parking lot for 2,700 cars, a hotel, visitors centre and a large theatre, 15,000 square meters in size.

Construction of the building was a tremendous technical challenge from the very start. Construction work took place simul-

taneously on both towers and the final connecting of the top parts had to be worked on early in the morning because of the deferring thermal expansivity in sections of the building. Also, because of strong seismic activity in the Beijing area, the whole construct had to be reinforced through a system of beams, which were imbued into segments of the façade. The resulting silver-grey colour of the façade is not as susceptible to pollution and fits in well with the overall panorama of Beijing. Another interesting fact is that the CCTV-Tower, at 234 meters, is twice as tall as the similarly designed La Grande Arche building in the Paris neighbourhood of La Défense.

The author of this Chinese skyscraper, architect Rem Koolhaas, said about the building that the Chinese would not have come up with such a project, and Europeans would not have built it. It was in light of the Beijing Olympics that extravagant buildings began springing up and the CCTV-Tower joined the ranks of some of the boldest buildings in China, alongside Beijing's national stadium nicknamed "Bird's Nest" and Hotel Sheraton that is shaped as a donut. At present, however, the Chinese government has in place a ban on the construction of bizarre buildings, by which it seeks to officially end the trend of futuristic architecture. The main reason stated by Chinese president Si Tin-pching was that it did not show anything from traditional Chinese architecture, but merely copied various world famous projects. According to the new directive, buildings must blend in with their surroundings and should not in any way draw attention to themselves. For ambitious architects, this is without a doubt bad news.

CCTV Tower in numbers

234 m	tall
473 000 m²	of total floor space
EUR 600 mil.	are the total construction costs
54	floors
2 700	parking spaces in the building
10 000	is the number of employees of Chinese state television, which has its headquarters in the building
6	degrees is the angle at which both towers are inclined towards each other
15 000 m²	is the total floor space of the theatre