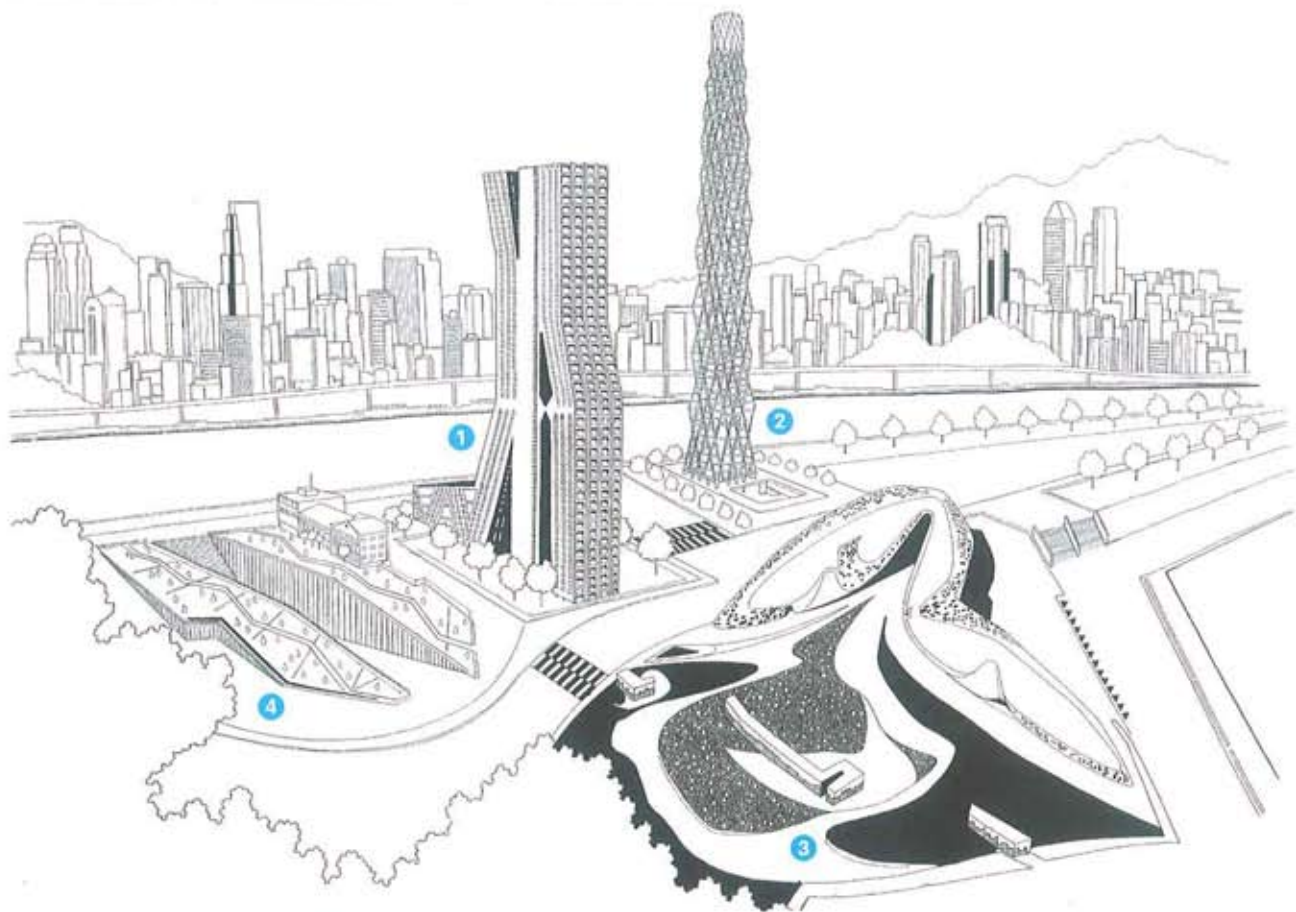


OVERVIEW: SEOUL

Building up to be World Design Capital in 2010, Seoul is hoping the label sticks

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If you were in Seoul for its recent 2008 Design Olympiad events, you must already know the South Korean capital has big plans for its design future. Seoul is constantly growing, and seeking to put its stamp on to world architecture as it does so. The Olympiad was only a taste of what Seoul has to offer in terms of architecture and design, but in 2010 everyone will know – the city will officially become the next World Design Capital for two years, succeeding Turin.

Heading towards 2010, several major projects all over the city are reaching completion. Young architecture practice Mass Studies is centre stage with a number of projects in the capital – the S-Trenue tower complex being among the more daring. 'It is an officitel,' Mass Studies partner Kisu Park jokingly explains, describing the mixed-use office and residential tower.

S-Trenue is, in essence, three slim towers merged into a single building: two zigzags linked together by a straight tower, all sitting on top of an L-shaped podium. The 36-storey towers are connected with 32 bridges, and with the shell now complete, the interiors are being readied for clients to move in this summer. The complex is located in Yeouido, the city's financial area, which aims to develop into an international business district in the next few years, extending across the river Han to include the upcoming, mixed-use Yongsan 'Dream Hub' Development.

SOM is also working on not one, but two towers in the South Korean capital, both designed

SEOUL

Mass Studies (1)

Mass Studies' S-Trenue tower for office and residential spaces features a balcony garden on each interconnecting bridge.

SOM (2)

The sky-high Lotte Super Tower by SOM is also eco-conscious, and uses natural light distribution and ventilation.

Zaha Hadid Architects (3)

The park and plaza by Zaha Hadid is set to be a platform for design, education and debate.

Dominique Perrault (4)

Dominique Perrault designed the EWha Womans University campus centre to create a whole new urban landscape.

Rogers Stirk Harbour

The Parc 1, Yeouido complex, by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, will include a retail mall, two office towers and a luxury hotel.

De Stefano + Partners

The Eunpyeong sculptural commercial complex, currently in design by De Stefano + Partners, will be located in Seoul's northwest gateway, and was inspired by Korean culture.

Kim In-Cheurl + Archium

Kim In-Cheurl + Archium is behind the unusual perforated concrete Urban Hive Tower, completed in late 2008.

following the highest sustainability standards. The slightly higher of the two, Lotte Super Tower, is a mixed-use scheme located in the southeastern part of the city and features a distinctive diagonal grid from ground level to the 555m-high top. Digital Media City, also a mixed-use tower with a hotel and retail, office and condominium spaces, is set to change the city's northwestern skyline.

Other works, connected to the World Design Capital countdown, are already under way. These include the highly anticipated Dongdaemun Park and Design Plaza by Zaha Hadid. Due to finish in 2010, the project will bring together a public park, shops, restaurants, and exhibition and performance spaces, loudly announcing the city's ambition to become an international design hub.

Meanwhile, the first wave of new architecture is already here. Dominique Perrault's low and green EWha Womans University campus centre, weaving together building and landscape, opened in mid 2008, as did the brand-new elegant glass box of the Nam June Paik Art Centre in the city's outer suburbs.

Of course, local South Korean practices are a big part of the game, too. Firms such as IROJE, led by respected South Korean architect H-Sang Seung, and Kim In-Cheurl + Archium, are already involved in bigger and smaller projects around town. Bringing together the best of local talent, as well as well-known international firms, have no doubt, Seoul is one to watch.

For the complete gallery, see www.wallpaper.com ✪