

Award

Hanking Center Tower Shenzhen, China Morphosis Architects

From the east and west, the 73-story Hanking Center Tower now rising in the tech hub of Chinese megacity Shenzhen almost seems to be two separate buildings: a boxy, vertical, aluminum-clad monolith and an angular torso of steel and patterned glass that juts out and up, whose sharp creases (pictured at right) give it a body-like profile as it rises. Designed by Los Angeles-based Morphosis Architects, the project is an innovative take on the skyscraper typology, relying not merely on simple formal tweaks but rather a more radical repositioning of its core.

When viewed from the east, it becomes clear that the rectangular monolith is a detached core and circulation spine for this new 1.19 million-square-foot office tower. Large diagonal braces connect the two volumes, and sky bridges offer a view of the city below as visitors filter from the elevators in the core to the offices in the tower proper.

Key to Hanking Center Tower is a robust steel frame, an almost superstructural exoskeleton that at once holds the building up and defines its shape. Its bends create a variety of sizes for the floors, making them more adaptable to different users and their spatial demands. Expanding on the tradition of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's 1958 Inland Steel Building in Chicago, the tower's division revives a classic way to define the form, from the outside in, while creating nearly open floor plates for flexible use.

At the ground level, the building's plinth extends westward over the site and contains a low-rise shopping center, a rarity in this dense, purpose-driven part of the city. A fluidly tapered atrium brings light down into the mall's internal plaza, and the concentric levels of stores tighten as they climb, directing visitor's eyes up to the sky bridges and braces connecting the high-rise portions together. Although the tower façade and plinth are marked by dynamic angles, the separation and reconnection of the building and its core are the project's highlights. —NATE BERG

"The Hanking Center challenges the spatial and structural typologies of the tower."

—Heather Roberge, ASSOC. AIA







Main building and core

West-East Section

