

UK

Landmark for London - Western Europe's tallest building is inaugurated

Western Europe's tallest building, The Shard, will be formally inaugurated in London today by Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabor Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and HRH the Duke of York KG. The event marks the physical completion of the exterior of the building which is fast becoming one of the most recognisable London skyline silhouettes.

The inauguration represents the culmination of a 12-year journey to build a significant new landmark on the London skyline. Designed by renowned master architect Renzo Piano and developed by Sellar Property, The Shard stands at 310m (1,016 ft). The Shard's 95-stories will become a 'vertical town' comprising office space, residences, restaurants and the five-star Shangri-La Hotel. The building will also house the capital's highest public viewing gallery, The View from The Shard, which will offer 360° views of London stretching for over 40 miles and opens on 1 February 2013.

The Shard is the highly visible landmark at the heart of London Bridge Quarter, a 2m sq ft gross mixed-use development which, once complete, will create more than 12,000 jobs. London Bridge Quarter is a key part of the regeneration of this part of London and benefits from access to one of London's key transport hubs, London Bridge Station. The development has transformed London Bridge Station delivering a new bus station and train station concourse, and this will be linked by a central plaza which will open in 2013. This plaza will also link The Shard to its' sister building The Place, a new 17 storey HQ building due to complete in Spring 2013.

The Shard is owned by LBQ Limited, comprising the State of Qatar (the majority shareholder) and Sellar Property, with non-equity funding by Qatar National Bank.

The inauguration will also be marked by a spectacular light and laser show, where lasers will reach out from The Shard to other major landmark buildings across the capital; including the London Eye, the Gherkin and Tower Bridge at approximately 22.15 (BST) on the evening of 5 July. This will be streamed live at www.the-shard.com.

Commenting on the inauguration, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Saoud Al Thani, Governor of Qatar Central Bank and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Shard Funding Limited and London Bridge Quarter, said, "Standing at almost 310 metres, The Shard will be one of the tallest buildings in Western Europe. For me however, the height of the Shard is only secondary. What is special is the solid and continuing relationship between two nations - Qatar and Britain - which has been an important factor in completing this project."

He added, "The Shard has already become an important symbol for London - a symbol of our close relationship - rooted in the foundations of economic growth, social development and mutual trust and goodwill."

Irvine Sellar, Chairman of Sellar Property and partner of LBQ Limited said, "Today marks the

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physical completion of The Shard. It is a major step towards the ultimate realisation of our vision for London Bridge Quarter - a new dynamic district for our city with The Shard at its centrepiece."

Ali Shareef Al-Emadi, QNB Group Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of the Shard Funding Limited, said, "Qatar National Bank and The State of Qatar have backed London Bridge Quarter since 2009, after other banks withdrew from funding in the wake of the credit crunch. This is because we strongly believed in its potential as a key regeneration project on London's South Bank and wanted to see this landmark project realised. For us The Shard and all it represents, is a symbol for Qatari investment here in London."

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said, "The Shard is more than just an amazing feat of engineering, it is a towering illustration of London's determination to beat the recession and spur economic growth. This iconic, sparkling new addition to the capital's skyline will act as a huge commercial magnet, pulling in scores of new businesses and offering vital employment opportunities for thousands of people."

Internal work is continuing on The Shard and it will be open to the public in 2013.

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