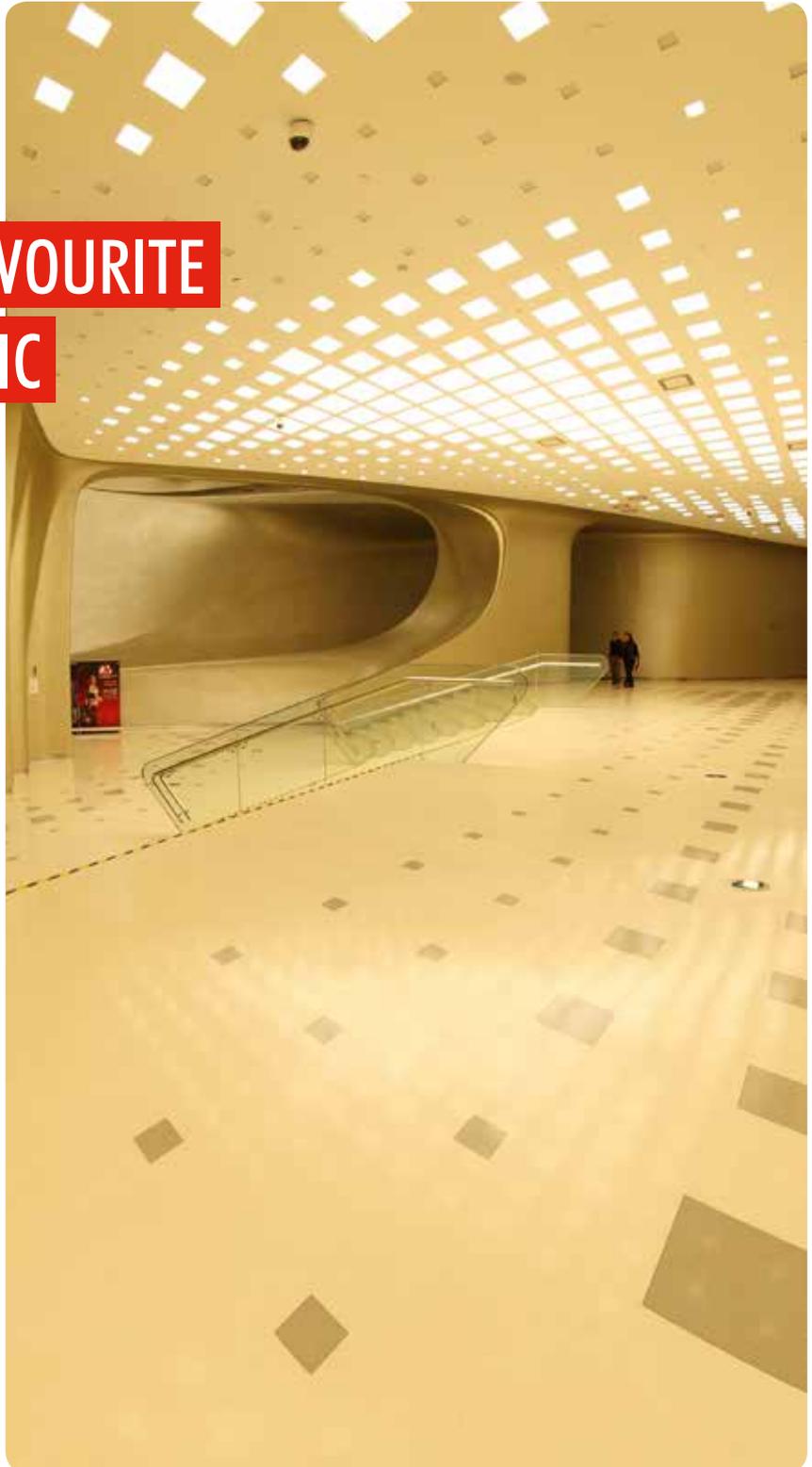
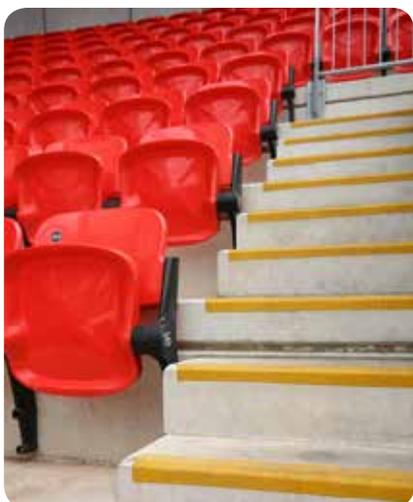
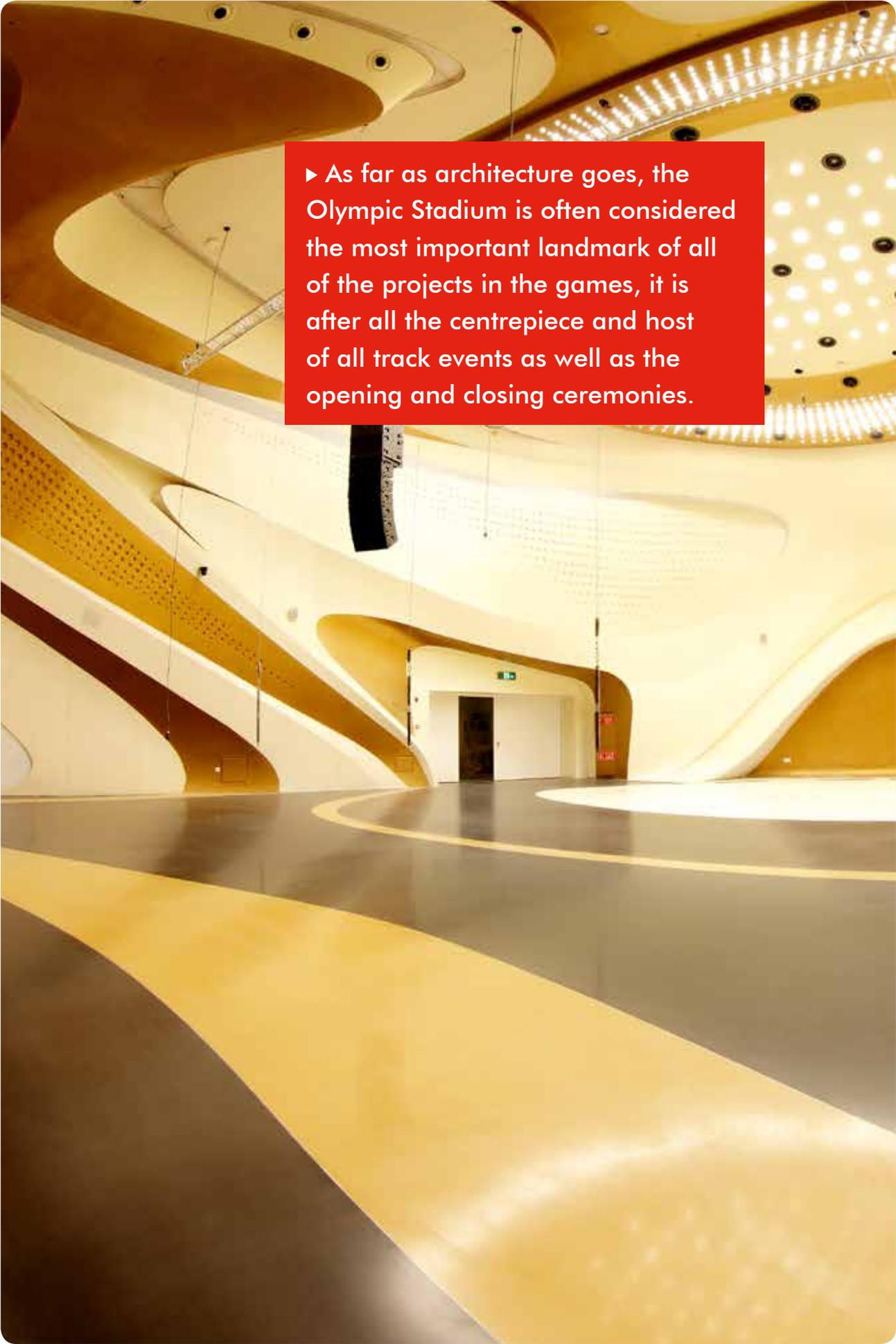




FLOWCRETE'S FAVOURITE FEATS OF OLYMPIC ARCHITECTURE

► As the biggest sporting spectacle on the planet, the Olympic Games is both a tremendous honour and a valuable opportunity for the host nation – with thousands of athletes, hundreds of thousands of visitors and millions of global viewers all focusing on one city for the few short weeks of the prestigious tournament.



The image shows the interior of a large, modern stadium with a curved, multi-level design. The walls and ceiling are primarily white and yellow, with a dark grey floor. A prominent red text box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image. The text inside the box describes the stadium's architectural significance. The background features a large, curved wall with a perforated yellow section and a dark doorway in the distance. The ceiling is high and features a grid of small, circular lights.

► As far as architecture goes, the Olympic Stadium is often considered the most important landmark of all of the projects in the games, it is after all the centrepiece and host of all track events as well as the opening and closing ceremonies.

In recent years the Games have grown so much that nearly every nation is now represented. The media exposure provided by the Olympic juggernaut is such that it can catapult unknown athletes to national and sometimes even international superstardom.

However, the Olympics also constitute an opportunity for the host city and country to showcase themselves and what they can do on a global stage. As a result of this, every Games seems to provide more and more outlandish and awe-inspiring architectural structures, as each new host attempts to outdo its predecessors. This has led to some truly spectacular designs having been born out of each host's desire to impress when the global spotlight shines down upon their nation.

STADIA

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Perhaps the most spectacular Olympic Stadium in recent years was Beijing 2008's 'Bird's Nest Stadium'. Swiss architects Herzog

& de Meuron collaborated with Chinese artist Ai Weiwei to design the building, which boasts stunning, visible support beams that encase the exterior, providing both façade and structure for the bowl-shaped arena.

It is also a little known fact that the iconic Twin Towers at London's original Wembley Stadium were initially built for the 1908 London Olympic Games. The two white concrete towers went on to become synonymous with the stadium and were a landmark recognised the world over until they were taken down to make way for the new arena in 2003.

Often referred to as the greatest Games in modern Olympic history, the Sydney 2000 tournament brought with it the largest capacity Olympic stadium ever constructed. Designed by Populous architects, the ANZ Stadium held up to 118,000 spectators during the competition. However, it now operates as a more sustainable venue with 85,000 seats. It was the first large-scale arena designed with the intention of reconfiguration after the Games.

ARCHITECTURAL ARTWORK

Few cities have taken as full advantage of their moment in the Olympic spotlight as Barcelona did in 1992. The Catalan capital reinvented itself for the occasion, overhauling its infrastructure and adding a spectacular array of new architecture along the waterfront. The most famous of which was designed by Santiago Calatrava, a striking 446-foot-high steel Communications Tower resembling an athlete carrying the Olympic torch.

London Mayor, Boris Johnson, and Olympics Minister, Tessa Jowell, decided that London 2012's Olympic Park needed something extra to truly distinguish it from its surrounding area and with the help of Turner-Prize winning artist Sir Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond of engineering firm Arup, the ArcelorMittal Orbit was born.

A stunning 376 feet tall sculpture and observation tower in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, London, the ArcelorMittal Orbit is Britain's tallest piece of public art and was built with the intention of providing a lasting legacy for the city. It affords visitors the chance to view the entire Olympic Park from two large observation platforms, each holding 150 people. ▶▶

OLYMPIC LEGACY

A sensational example of a construction providing a lasting legacy in the aftermath of an Olympic Games comes from German architect/engineer Frei Otto together with Günter Behnisch. The pair designed a sweeping tensile structure, which covered the entire Olympic Park for the Munich Games in 1972. Since then the vast tent like construction has become an attraction in itself and to this day the site continues to host sporting events and concerts.

Internationally renowned architect Zaha Hadid designed the Nanjing Youth Olympic Centre for the Youth Olympic Games in the city in the summer of 2014. The breath-taking structure, which was the city's flagship development for the games, houses a concert hall, musical hall, and conference centre as well as meeting rooms, lounges, function rooms and other amenities.

The centre has provided the region with state of the art facilities available for public use and is therefore a permanent and highly valuable legacy from the Youth Olympic Games. Not to mention that the Nanjing skyline has been transformed and reinvigorated as a result of the building's construction.

In another fine example of a legacy project, London's Olympic Stadium will soon be the new home of West Ham United FC. The capacity will be reduced from 80,000 to 60,000 and the athletics track will be retained around the perimeter of the pitch ready to host the World Athletics Championships in August 2017.

Olympic Games bring drama, passion, patriotism, international synergy and sporting excellence to our TV screens every four years without fail - but it also provides so much more to the host nation.

Incredible facilities are a fantastic bi-product of the competition, not to mention exquisite feats of architecture and legacy projects that make a real difference in the local community. The Olympics are therefore a very positive institutional force, and while much money might be spent, history dictates that wider economic prosperity is commonplace in the build up and aftermath of the prestigious tournament and certainly for the construction industry as a whole. ■



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