

PROMONTORIO

RAFAL LIVING TOWER

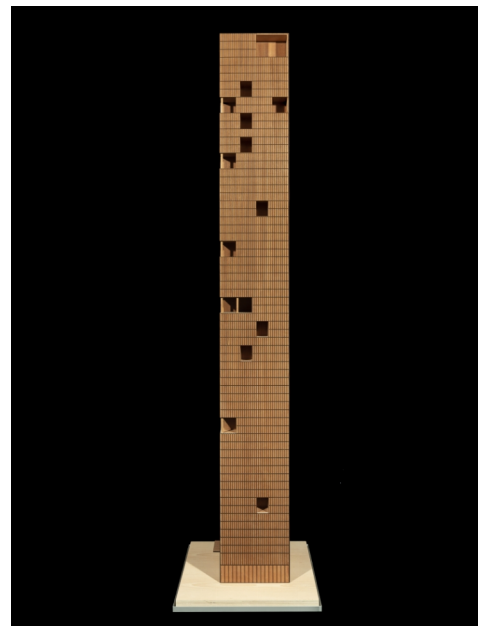
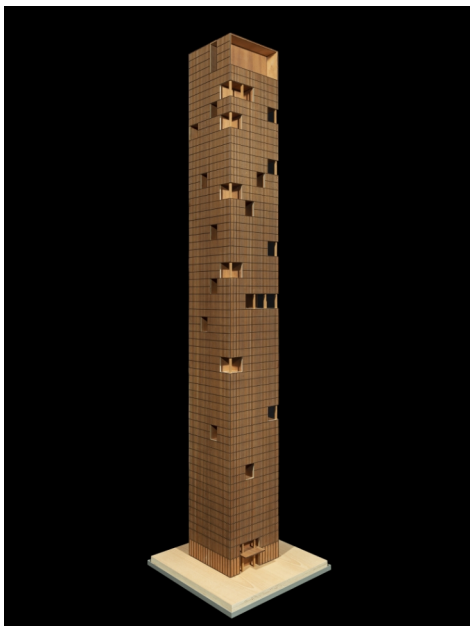
RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

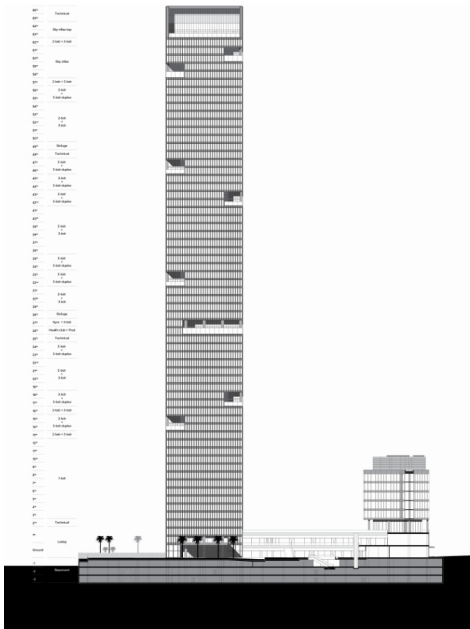
2025–2014

The ensemble consists of a 66-storey residential tower, in addition to a retail plaza and a small office building. It is located on the east side of the busy King Fahd Road, Riyadh's central axis, and next to a major junction with King Abdullah Road.

The concept of the tower assumes the premises of a prototypical 1960s glass skyscraper, with a slim and classical silhouette, reminiscent of towers like the Seagram Building by Mies van der Rohe or the Lever House by SOM/Gordon Bunshaft. Following this model, slots are randomly subtracted, thereby creating a series of iconic sky patios that intensify the sculptural form while retaining a highly efficient floor plate. Given the historical development of curtain-wall technology and the corresponding popularity of flush glazing systems bonded with structural silicone, the introduction of a vertical mullion cap is a paradoxical yet deliberate anachronism in today's world, justified only as a romantic allusion to modern-era skyscrapers.

The retail plaza at podium level is an open-court galleria that aims to capture the relaxed spirit of Tahlia Street — Riyadh's busy dining hub — and comprises a two-storey shaded area conveniently accessible from the street. Devised as a cascading amphitheatre open to Riyadh's main axis, it is shaded by a system of tree-like, free-standing pergolas. Design-wise, and contrasting with the severe monumentality of the tower, the plaza echoes the organic curves of the Brazilian landscapes of Roberto Burle Marx, bringing a tropical lightness to the podium. The small office building occupying the far northern corner of the plot is conceived almost as if it was a vertical extrusion of the swaying curves of the plaza, creating an undulating façade towards King Fahd Road.





Location: King Fahd Road, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Client: Rafal Real Estate Development Co. (Muhaidib/Aramco/Abunayyan)
Scope of services: Architecture and landscape architecture
Project brief: Mixed-use with 66-storey residential tower, 9-storey office building and 2-storey retail podium
Plot size: 1.3 ha
Gross floor area: 69,100 sq. m (plus 30,300 sq. m underground parking)
Construction cost: SAR 400m
Project status: 2014 (competition, 1st prize) – 2025 (estimated completion)
Model: Norigem
Photography: Bruno Lopes (model), Promontorio