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Top 10 buildings that remain just a dream - or a nightmare

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Jonathan Glancey
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[The Guardian](#)

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The Illinois, Chicago, 1956

Frank Lloyd Wright, greatest egomaniac of his profession, proposed a mile-high skyscraper. Wright's radical steel and aluminium structure - nearly four times taller than the Sears Tower - was to use nuclear-powered lifts. A no-hoper after September 11.



Great Model design, St Paul's Cathedral, 1675

The St Paul's Christopher Wren dreamed of. Supremely elegant. Sadly, the Church commissioners, Wren's clients, branded it too Italian (read too Catholic). See the model upstairs in St Paul's.



Hammersmith Interchange, 1979, west London

Norman Foster's late-1970s project combined tube and bus stations, shops and public spaces, but was rejected for a bland US-style postmodern schlock.

In this section

Monument to Isaac Newton, 1784

Architectural fantasist Étienne-Louis Boullée designed Brobdingnagian monuments to French ambitions: the national library one, the Newton another. The 500ft sphere (the universe)

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was to be pierced with small holes giving the illusion of stars inside. Newton's sarcophagus would have been at the centre.

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Grossehalle, Germania (Berlin), 1937

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Albert Speer's hall for Hitler love-ins after the planned Nazi victory of 1948. Sixteen times the size of St Peter's, engineers thought that when it was filled with 180,000 jubilant Nazis, clouds would appear under the dome and would make it rain inside. Thankfully unbuilt. Best visited in nightmares.

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Hospital, Venice, 1965

[In brief](#)

The last Le Corbusier project, a deeply civilised hospital in Venice designed as much for contemplation and retreat as a fully equipped hospital. It may have changed hospitals forever.

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No 1 Poultry, City of London

[Pentagon to boost special forces teams on ground](#)

Over two decades developer Peter Palumbo tried to convince the City to let him build this high-quality office tower by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Son of the Seagram Building (1958) on New York's Park Avenue, conservationists saw it off. Hope these smug fogeys are happy with the absurd postmodern confection eventually built.

Tour Sans Fin, 1989, Paris

A master of filigree, translucent buildings, Jean Nouvel wanted this tower for La Defence, the brutal Parisian office complex and dark star of Godard's Alphaville. The idea was for a rival Eiffel Tower that would appear to vanish into the ether as it rose heavenwards.

Palace of the Soviets, 1931, Moscow

The winner of an international contest for a homage to Stalin, this temple of communist kitsch by Iofan, Gelfreikh and Shchuko was to have been topped with a 100-metre statue of Lenin. At 415 metres high, it would have been the world's tallest. Alexander III's Cathedral of the Assumption was dynamited to clear a space - only for the hole to become a swimming pool.

National Valhalla, Westminster, 1880s

A stirring Gothic home to British heroes, this spikey Gormenghast vision was to have loomed over Barry and Pugin's Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey. Perhaps it might be revived now that Britain is in sabre-rattling mood once again out on the old North-West Frontier. Or, perhaps not.

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