

Empire State Building

The Empire State Building is the second tallest skyscraper in the Americas (surpassed only by Chicago's Willis Tower) and the 11th tallest in the world. It is also the 4th tallest freestanding structure in the Americas. The Empire State building is currently undergoing a \$120 million renovation in an effort to transform the building into a more energy efficient and eco-friendly structure. The Empire State Building has been named by the American Society of Civil Engineers as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World. The building and its street floor interior are designated landmarks of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, and confirmed by the New York City Board of Estimate.

The present site of the Empire State Building was first developed as the John Thomson Farm in the late 18th century. At the time, a stream ran across the site, emptying into Sunfish Pond, located a block away. Beginning in the late 19th century the block was occupied by the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, frequented by The Four Hundred, the social elite of New York.

The longest world record held by the Empire State Building was for the tallest skyscraper (to structural height), which it held for 42 years until it was surpassed by the North Tower of the World Trade Center in 1973. With the destruction of the World Trade Center in the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Empire State Building again became the tallest building in New York City, and the second-tallest building in the Americas, currently surpassed only by the Willis Tower in Chicago. When measured by pinnacle height, the Empire State Building is currently the fifth tallest freestanding structure in the Americas, surpassed only by the CN Tower, the Willis Tower, Trump International Hotel and Tower and the John Hancock Center

Unlike most of today's skyscrapers, the Empire State Building features an art deco design, typical of pre-World War II architecture in New York. The modernistic stainless steel canopies of the entrances on 33rd and 34th Streets lead to two story-high corridors around the elevator core, crossed by stainless steel and glass-enclosed bridges at the second-floor level. The elevator core contains 67 elevators.

The lobby is three stories high and features an aluminum relief of the skyscraper without the antenna, which was not added to the spire until 1952. The north corridor contains eight illuminated panels, created by Roy Sparkia and Renée Nemorov in 1963, depicting the building as the Eighth Wonder of the World, alongside the traditional seven.

For many, the Empire State Building and its history, location, and legacy embodies all that is New York---from its industrial beginnings, to its excitement and romance, to its depiction in all manner of American popular culture. This exciting landmark should be part of any New York travel itinerary, as it will leave a lasting imprint of itself and the beautiful city it overlooks.