

OK, let's start with a few background details. The stadium was designed by Herzog and de Meuron, a firm of architects from Switzerland. They studied Chinese ceramics, er, plates, cups and bowls, to get inspiration. The stadium is actually two structures, which are completely ⁽¹⁾ from each other. In the middle there's the seating area, which was ⁽²⁾ designed for 100,000 spectators, but this had to be reduced to 90,000. Around this area is the frame, which is made of 110,000 tons of steel in horizontal ⁽³⁾ and vertical columns. The architects wanted the roof to open and close, but they changed it because it could have been dangerous if there was an earthquake. The big advantage of changing it was that it reduced the cost by several million dollars, although the building still ⁽⁴⁾ an incredible \$423 million.

So, what makes this stadium such an amazing building? Let's start with the general ⁽⁵⁾ it creates. For this, the best place to look at it is from a distance. Why from a distance? Well, that's where you'll really get an impression of what it looks like and how big it is. You'll also notice how it really ⁽⁶⁾ in its surroundings. This is not just because of its size – and it is big – but also because it stands on a low hill which helps make it higher than any other buildings in the area. Then there's its ⁽⁷⁾ shape, which has helped to give it its nickname of the Bird's Nest. The unusual shape of the stadium also does something else. You see, if you ⁽⁸⁾ at it for long enough, you also get the impression that this structure isn't ⁽⁹⁾, that it's moving in different directions, almost like it's a living, breathing creature. This is especially true at night, when the stadium is ⁽¹⁰⁾ up from inside with lights that continually change colour.