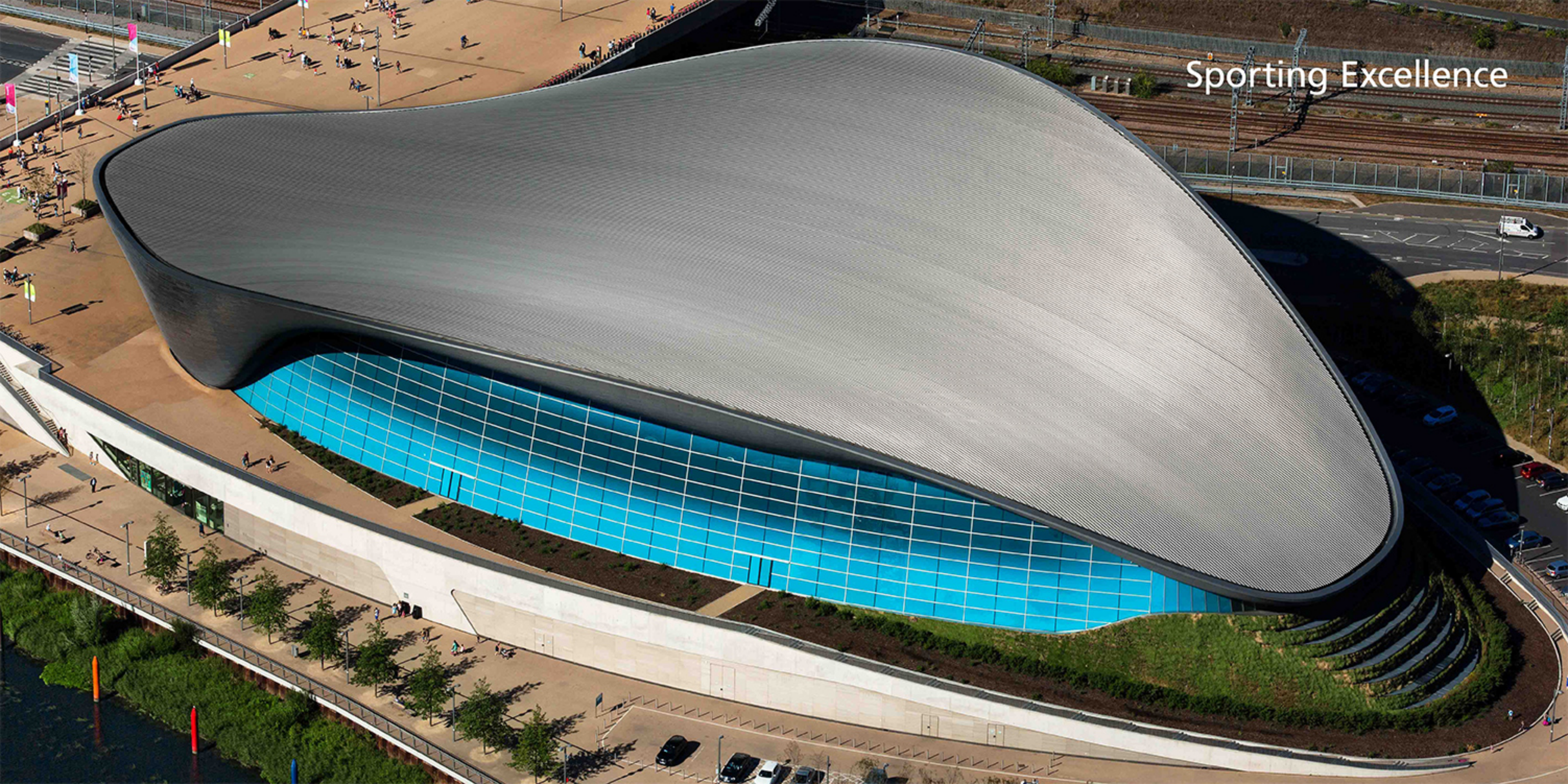




**Hampton Court Palace Gardens** are laid out in the grand style of the 17th century and are again an echo of Versailles. First opened to the public by Queen Victoria in 1838, highlights here include a 250-year-old vine tree, the oldest in the world. Jean Tijou, the French Huguenot ironworker, created the garden's magnificent wrought iron gates and many of the railings and screens between 1689 and 1700. In 1992 William III's private garden was replanted with topiary hollies and yews.



Sporting Excellence





**The Shard and London eastwards**

The Italian architect Renzo Piano's masterpiece is a 95-storey skyscraper standing 309.6m (1,016ft) tall. From the viewing platform on the 72nd floor there are breathtaking 360-degree panoramic views of the capital. Down below is HMS *Belfast*, a Town-class light cruiser which escorted convoys to the Soviet Union during 1943 and took part in Operation Overlord and the Normandy landings in June 1944.







**London Aquatics Centre**, (left) Stratford, located in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, was designed by the celebrated late architect Dame Zaha Hadid for the 2012 Olympics. Originally it had two wings for increased seating capacity. These were removed after the Olympics. It has two 50m (164ft) pools and a 25m (82ft) diving pool, which altogether hold 10 million litres (2.2 million gallons) of water.



**Lee Valley VeloPark**, Stratford is a cycling centre located in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The VeloPark was one of the permanent venues for the 2012 Olympics and has a velodrome, a BMX racing track, a road course and 8km of mountain bike trails. The giant Pringle-like structure was designed by Michael and Pattie Hopkins. The 250m track was constructed with 56km (35 miles) of Siberian pine, held in place with 350,000 nails.