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Trump to sign maker: You're hired!

By: [Micah Maidenberg](#) By: [Ryan Ori](#)

February 21, 2014



A rendering of the planned "TRUMP" lettering on the tower.

Never one to shy from publicity, celebrity developer Donald Trump is set to stamp his name in 20-foot letters on Chicago's second-tallest skyscraper.

Shiny, illuminated letters spelling "TRUMP" will be added "very shortly" to the south, river-facing side of the 92-story Trump International Hotel & Tower, Mr. Trump confirmed today.

The stainless-steel letters will be 20 feet tall — slightly less than half the size of the 45-foot-tall letters on the famous Hollywood sign — and will be back-lit with white LED lighting, according to the sign permit application approved by the city.

Mr. Trump said workers will install them just below the 16th-floor terrace of the hotel and condominium tower at 401 N. Wabash Ave., which was completed in 2008.

"We just felt that people love the building, so we decided recently to put it up," he said. "It's part of the architecture of the building, and the people in the building love it as an identifier."

Yet Mr. Trump's decision to splash his name across the tower promises to fuel debate about whether such branding adds a garish element to the downtown skyline, detracting from the city's architecturally significant buildings.

'POTENTIAL TO BE QUITE UGLY'

"It is a slippery road we may be coming to here, to add graphics at the lower section on a large scale," said Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago, a building preservation advocacy group. "That has the potential to be quite ugly."

Christine Carlyle, a principal at Chicago-based architecture firm Solomon Cordwell Buenz & Associates Inc., said 20-foot-tall letters go "way beyond" mere readability.

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"It's a little super-scaled," she said.

The city granted a permit for the lettering in October. The sign will be on a part of the building occupied by air-conditioning vents and other mechanicals and will not restrict any views, Mr. Trump said.

"It would have been up already if not for the weather," Mr. Trump said. "We think it will be beautiful."

After **slow going** during the recession, Mr. Trump had sold all but 15 of the building's 486 residential condos at the end of 2013, compared with 36 unsold units a year earlier, according to Chicago-based Appraisal Research Counselors.

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 **Frank G.** 37 days ago

Should be interesting during sunny days how natural sunlight reflects off such letters and possible "blinding" effect.

Frank Glickman

0

 **STEVE L.** 40 days ago

Who cares. Let him do what he wants. It's a brand and no different than if it said HYATT or HILTON or MARRIOTT.

0

 **PAUL O.** 40 days ago

I guess the City of Chicago has no standards any more -- even if it is below the roof line. He couldn't do this in New York City.

+1

 **JOHN C.** 37 days ago

Much like President Obama, Trump does not think much of the American people.

0

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MICHAEL B. 40 days ago

Rather than putting it up facing the River...can it be in the River?
I live in the buildingand this would be an embarrassment.

Reply

+1



Richard J. 40 days ago

We DO love the building; we'd just prefer it didn't have a 20-foot eyesore name on it.

Reply

+5



john r. 40 days ago

Actually James C. take a look at the numbers Chicago has more than twice the GDP as Hong Kong, and every economic study I have seen puts Chicago ahead or on par with Hong Kong in terms of most economically powerful cities take a look for yourself. In terms of skyline my friend that's always a matter of opinion but I have yet to meet a person who doesn't think Chicago is among the finest in the world. Chicago has it's share of problems and is far from perfect but no need to hate just because someone doesn't like signs on the top of buildings.

Reply

+5



Robert K. 40 days ago

Well, that is one good outcome of this brutal winter, and a reason to hope the bad weather continues.

Reply

+6



JAMES T. 40 days ago

I think it's great!!

Reply

+1



ANITA W. 40 days ago

He has confused liking the building with liking him or liking seeing his name smeared across it.

Reply

+2



JAMES C. 40 days ago

We should be more concerned about cleaning up the muggings, wildings and robberies on North Michigan Avenue than Trump's name on a building. Let Trump go for it. Let us crack down on the crime. THAT is the real unnecessary eyesore on Mag Mile.

And the comment by Patrick about Hong Kong - you WISH Chicago was half the economic engine that Hong Kong is. The skyline is Hong Kong's signature - and they write with a much more expensive pen than Chicago ever will.

Reply

+2



JAMES M. 40 days ago

By your logic: A) The Trump sign makes the neighborhood look like a ghetto so crime will increase. B) Trump should take the lead in resolving the crime issues by using the money for the unnecessary sign and it's lighting expenses and contribute to causes that reduce the woes you mention. Afterall, that's more important, right? But then: He's a rich private individual, it's not his problem--it's the common people and government's problem. He gets to make signs. Crime is our problem. And when one of his businesses go BK, we have to bail him out.

To people who say one shouldn't be concerned about signage: All this branding by corporations does indeed diminish the community. And you say we shouldn't be concerned about aesthetics? By all means, take the lead. Start wearing sack cloth, live a plain concrete block house and eat rice and beans. Everyone should just do the minimum to survive.

Reply

+4



FIYAZ K. 40 days ago

Chicago's GDP: \$574 billion

Hong Kong's GDP: \$300 billion

I'd say our pen is pretty expensive buddy

Reply

+7



PATRICK W. 40 days ago

Thanks for the backup!

Reply

+2



RUSHIM B. 39 days ago

Well put, Fiyaz

Reply

+2



JOHN C. 37 days ago

Patrick is more interested in political correctness than jobs and prosperity.

Reply

0



STEVEN N. 40 days ago

Let's add an orange-ish neon swirl on the roof that evokes images of his comb over. He built it and got city approval for the sign. What can you say?

Reply

+3



KAREN M. 40 days ago

Isn't that nice. He's putting up a a vanity sign for the people in the building. Not for himself!!

Oh NO.

Why didn't the city scale down this monstrosity/

Reply

+3



PATRICK W. 40 days ago

At least it's not at the top of the building and ruining the skyline. Just look at Hong Kong to see how bad a skyline can look with signage everywhere.

Reply

+2