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REVISIONS TO THE CHICAGO SPIRE

The building that could be the USA's tallest is undergoing some design changes. Developer Shelbourne Inc. said the building that originally was to be called the Fordham Spire and now referred to as the Chicago Spire will not have a broadcast tower on top or a hotel, as initially planned. Instead, it will be all condominiums. A source said the changes are intended to make the building more financially sound.

http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/local_story_341071323.html

The proposed "drill bit" skyscraper has lost its point but gained some heft. The developer of the twisting spire, which would be the nation's tallest building, has overseen a top-to-bottom redesign that seeks to make the much-ballyhooed project financially feasible, and he will submit his revised plans to the city Friday, people close to the project told the Tribune. Designed by renowned Spanish architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava for Dublin-based developer Garrett Kelleher, the tower no longer has a 400-foot broadcast antenna at its top or a hotel at its base. It is now all condominiums, 1,300 of them. The portion that modern-day cliff dwellers would live in has grown taller and wider, doubling the amount of sellable space to about 1.8 million square feet, said people associated with the project. "It's all in the service of getting it built," said Kelleher's spokesman, Chicago lawyer Thomas Murphy. "If you're not going to have the broadcast tower, what are you going to have up there?"

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-0612070161dec07.1.6840740.story?coll=chi-news-hed>

The new design of a twisting skyscraper proposed for Chicago's lakefront seeks to make it more financially feasible, but opinions about that seem to range from skeptical to dismissive. "It's financial suicide," Donald Trump, developer of a luxury condominium-hotel project going up not far away on the Chicago River, said Thursday of Shelbourne Development's plan to enlarge its proposed condominium tower on the river's north bank at Lake Shore Drive.

But James Loewenberg, whose Magellan Development LLC is building Lakeshore East near Millennium Park, said, "It's a great project if they can pull off the numbers," referring to quickly selling the 1,300 luxury units for at least \$1,000 a square foot. Magellan has sold 1,350 of the 2,500 condos it is building at Lakeshore East for \$350 to \$650 a square foot.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/chi-0612080145dec08.0.4850514.story?coll=chi-business-hed>

GAZPROM SKYSCRAPER COMPETITION, RUSSIA

Russian oil and gas company Gazprom has plans to crown its position as one of the country's biggest multi-nationals with an ambitious but controversial competition to build a new headquarters in St Petersburg. The scheme features entries from six of the leading architecture firms in the world - Studio Daniel Libeskind, Herzog & De Meuron, RMJM, Rem Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture, Jean Nouvel and Fuksas Associates. Despite the wide variety of entries on offer the competition has hit heavy flak from some quarters. St Petersburg is a largely historical city that was massively rebuilt in its original form after World War 2. Also, the prominent riverside site that Gazprom have chosen for their new headquarters is right next to an untouched UNESCO World Heritage Site.....

<http://www.skyscrapernews.com/news.php?ref=770>

Public Voting.....

<http://www.gazprom-city.info/opros>

INTERNATIONAL SNIPPETS.....

AND FINALLY ... A LIGHT-HEARTED THOUGHT TO END THE YEAR – THE 'SKYSCRAPER CURSE':

Hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese have been taking to the streets of Taipei in recent months to oust their president, prompting observers to wonder what gives. Corruption is behind the protests, many will say. Prosecutors have been questioning President Chen Shui-bian over a series of scandals. Others point to his unsteady handling of relations with China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province. I'm wondering if it might make more sense to look at the skyline. Standing out amidst the tangle of skyscrapers is the 1,671-foot (509 meters) Taipei 101, which is currently the world's tallest building. Its presence, coupled with a worsening political crisis that could trip up the economy, reminds one of the ``Skyscraper Curse." A bizarre suggestion, perhaps, and certainly an unscientific one. Yet history shows an uncanny correlation between tallest building projects and financial crises. Be it in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, Chicago in 1974, New York in 1930 or the biblical Tower of Babel long ago, mankind's penchant for architectural overreach is a strangely reliable omen of troubles.....

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&sid=aL2801n.YHhg&refer=home>

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