

Construction completed on Chicago Skyscraper of the Year

on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 23:06



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Construction has been completed on Aqua, a 82-story skyscraper on North Columbus Drive in Chicago. The building was begun in February 2007 and was named Skyscraper of the Year by Emporis, an international building database, which praised the precision of the construction as well as the structure's green design innovations.

The 874-foot mixed-use tower includes condominium, apartment, retail and hotel space. Aqua received international attention for the undulating waves of concrete that make up its balconies. The waves are designed to diffuse Chicago's winds and provide shade from the sun, reducing energy use. The exterior even garnered an award from animal rights group PETA, as it deters birds from hitting the building.

Aqua's tower sits on an eight-story pedestal base that will provide public spaces for a planned hotel. The base will be topped by an 80,000-square-foot terrace with amenities such as gardens, pools, running track and fire pit. The hotel portion of the building will be housed in its first 18 floors. Apartments will make up floors 19 through 28 and condominiums from floors 29 through 82.

James McHugh Construction was the general contractor. Loewenberg Architects were the architect of record. Design architecture was by Studio/Gang/Architects.

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