

# Metropolitan Tower



## Identification

<b>EBN</b>	116681
<b>Name</b>	Metropolitan Tower
<b>Alternative Name</b>	Straus Building, Continental National Insurance Company Building, Britannica Centre
<b>Construction Type</b>	skyscraper
<b>Current Status</b>	existing [completed]

## Location

<b>Continent Name</b>	North America	<b>District (1st level)</b>	Downtown
<b>Country Name</b>	U.S.A.	<b>District (2nd level)</b>	Loop
<b>State Name</b>	Illinois	<b>Postcode</b>	60604
<b>Zone</b>	Michigan Avenue Landmark District	<b>Address (as text)</b>	310 South Michigan Avenue

<b>Metro Area Name</b>	Chicago-Naperville-Michigan City Combined Statistical Area	<b>Main Address</b>	310 South Michigan Avenue
<b>City Name</b>	Chicago	<b>Side Address</b>	75 East Jackson Boulevard

## Map



## Description

<b>Structural Material</b>	steel	<b>Architectural style</b>	neo-classicism
<b>Facade System</b>	applied masonry	<b>Main Usage</b>	commercial office
<b>Facade Material</b>	limestone	<b>Side Usage</b>	mercantile
<b>Facade Color</b>	light brown		

## Spatial dimensions

<b>Height (structural)</b>	475.01 ft	<b>Width</b>	171 ft
<b>Height (tip)</b>	475.01 ft	<b>Floors (overground)</b>	37

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<b>Height (roof)</b>	475.01 ft	<b>Usable Floor Area (UFA)</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>
<b>Length</b>	160 ft		

### Years and costs

<b>Year (construction start)</b>	1923	<b>Building costs</b>	\$ 8,280,467
<b>Year (construction end)</b>	1924		

### Features & Amenities

- City landmark
- Doorman is available
- Exercise facility is available
- Light court is present
- Ornamental illumination is installed

### Facts

- The Straus Building was the first building in Chicago with 30 or more floors.
- The building was originally named after S.W. Straus & Co., a dealer of investment bonds and one of the leading financiers of major real estate in Chicago during the late 19th and early 20th century.
- A blank limestone plaque tops the center of the east base at the 4th floor level. It used to appear one floor higher with the inscription "S.W. Straus & Co."
- The previous Straus Building was a 10-story structure at the northwest corner of Clark and Madison Streets. It was demolished in 1941.
- For several years the building was occupied by Continental National Insurance, the predecessor to CNA, which built the CNA Plaza complex as a western extension of this building.
- CNA Plaza North was the first of CNA's extensions to the west, with contiguous floor connections between the two structures.
- Referred to as Britannica Centre since 1980, the building was converted into 220 luxury condominium units and renamed Metropolitan Tower on the Park.
- An open light court rises above the banking hall, directly behind the tower.

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- The 20- foot glass beehive ornament at the peak of the ziggurat holds a deep blue light, a prominent feature of Grant Park's night skyline. It is supported by four stone bisons, which symbolize industriousness, thrift, and strength.
- The beehive originally held four searchlights which shone in the four cardinal directions.
- The tower contains four bells just beneath the beehive which chime G.F. Handel's "Cambridge Quarters" on the quarter-hours.
- The carillon bells were unused for many years until they were restored in 1979 by then-owner Dino D'Angelo for the Chicago visit of Pope John Paul II.
- The original main entrance was a pair of elaborately carved bronze doors set in a marble portal flanked by bas-reliefs.
- The lobby is L-shaped, connecting the east entrance on Michigan Avenue with Jackson Boulevard on the north.
- A spacious banking hall laid out like a basilica occupied the second floor, with a 45 foot high coffered ceiling and 16 Corinthian columns.
- At the west end of the banking hall there was a large Florentine-style stained glass window depicting a 16th century full-rigged ship under allegorical figures of art and justice.
- The side arcades of the banking hall were decorated with gold medallions.
- The main entrance used to be in the center of the east side, through the largest of the archways, leading directly up to the banking hall by a grand staircase.
- The base has been altered from its original design, with rectangular window openings replacing the giant arches on Michigan Avenue and Jackson Boulevard.

**Involved companies**

*Architect.....*

**Graham, Anderson, Probst & White**

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 U.S.A.

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**Additional company data available for this building**

<b>Check Engineering</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>	<b>MEP Engineering</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>
<b>Client</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>	<b>Property Management</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>
<b>General Contractor</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>	<b>Real Estate Agent</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>
<b>Lighting Consultant</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>	<b>Structural Engineering</b>	<a href="#">Contact us</a>

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