

OFFICE TOWERS



Comparison of World's Tallest Structures (detail)

Newark Renaissance Center, Grant USA Tower Network Corporation, 1986

Courtesy of The Newark Public Library

The creation of tall structures can be traced to ancient civilizations in Africa and the Middle East. Their design and use were largely dependent on available building materials and techniques. The first modern towers, known as skyscrapers, originated in Chicago and New York in the 1870s and 1880s. Today, the two tallest buildings in Newark are 36 stories high, but during the last century skyscrapers with up to three times as many stories were envisioned on the city skyline.

In 1916, the Prudential Insurance Company proposed a 45-story tower. It came at a time when insurance companies in major U.S. metropolitan areas were demonstrating their financial might by constructing office buildings two and three times the height of neighboring buildings. The Prudential Headquarters plan included an underground pedestrian walkway, connecting the tower with the city subway system. The plan was never realized due in part to World War I and the changing business climate of the 1920s.

In 1983, Stanley Winters of the New Jersey Institute of Technology proposed a Newark Eiffel Tower as a tourist attraction. Three years later he advanced the idea that Donald Trump be approached to build his 92-story tower in Newark rather than Chicago. That same year developer Harry Grant proposed a 121 story tower and international hotel (left) in downtown Newark, one block away from City Hall.