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Domus Proposes 30-Storey Residential Tower for Chicago's Fulton Market.

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Fulton Market, once Chicago's gritty meatpacking district, has transformed into a magnet for upscale development, with sleek office spaces and towering apartment blocks reshaping its skyline. The latest proposal comes from Domus Real Estate Group, which has unveiled plans for a 30-storey residential tower at 215 N. Racine Avenue, aiming to blend the area's industrial heritage with modern architectural flair.

Designed by Archeo Design Studio, the proposed tower will house 347 apartments, including studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and a select few three-bedroom penthouse units. The building will also feature 88 parking spaces, 350 bicycle spots, and 2,300 square feet of ground-floor retail. Unlike the ubiquitous glass-clad structures dominating the neighbourhood, this design stands out with its curved edges and stepped-back upper balconies, creating a distinctive silhouette. The lower floors will be clad in metal panelling, concealing the podium parking, while the colour scheme of rich reds and browns pays homage to the brick and rust of Fulton Market's industrial past.

In a community meeting last month, hosted by the West Central Association Chamber of Commerce, Cosmin Vrajitoru, president and founder of Archeo Design Studio, explained the vision. "We needed to honour Fulton Market's roots while embracing the modern developments reshaping the area," he said. The design deliberately avoids an all-glass facade, opting instead for materials and hues that reflect the district's history as a working-class hub.

The tower's 29th floor will house an amenity space, complete with a pool, offering residents panoramic views of Chicago's evolving West Side. Domus also plans to include approximately 70 affordable units on-site, complying with the city's Affordable Requirements Ordinance, a move that acknowledges the need for diverse housing options amid the area's rapid gentrification.

The project, however, faces hurdles. It requires approval from the Chicago Plan Commission and the City Council, a process that could delay progress. Philip Ciaccio, co-founder and principal of Domus, remains cautiously optimistic, targeting a groundbreaking in the second quarter of 2026. "The financing strategy is well underway," Ciaccio noted, acknowledging the challenging economic climate for new developments. "Securing funding hinges on completing the planned development process, but we're making solid progress."

With a projected cost of £113 million (\$149 million), the development is expected to generate around £2.3 million (\$3 million) in annual property tax revenue. Yet, the broader economic landscape raises questions about the viability of such ambitious projects. Rising interest rates and cautious lenders have made financing large-scale developments trickier, a reality Ciaccio and his team are navigating with measured confidence.

Fulton Market's evolution from a rough-and-tumble industrial zone to a trendy urban hub reflects Chicago's broader shift towards high-end urban living. Domus's proposal, if

approved, will add another chapter to this transformation, balancing heritage with ambition in a neighbourhood that's fast becoming a symbol of the city's future.