

Musk removes giant, flashing X sign after furor

August 1 2023, by Glenn CHAPMAN



San Francisco building inspectors had said a new 'X' sign atop the headquarters of the tech firm formerly known as Twitter must get the proper permits or be removed.

The company formerly known as Twitter removed a towering, blinking X from atop its San Francisco headquarters Monday after the rebranded tech firm tangled with city officials over the controversial sign.

The X, installed on the roof of the company's downtown office last week, was part of owner Elon Musk's bid to rebrand the troubled social media giant to the 24th letter of the alphabet.

But [local residents](#) had complained about the brilliant flashing lights emitting from the sign at night. Some also complained about safety, suggesting the sign—which had loomed over the building's edge—did not appear securely anchored to the roof.

San Francisco's Department of Building Inspection and City Planning received 24 complaints about the sign, including concerns about its "structural safety and illumination," agency communications director Patrick Hannan told AFP.

"This morning, building inspectors observed the structure being dismantled," Hannan said.

The owner of the property where X is renting offices will have to pay the cost of permits to install and remove the sign, as well as the cost of the city's investigation, according to Hannan.

A building inspector following up on a complaint first went to the tech firm's headquarters on Friday—but was not allowed onto the roof to check the sign, according to the complaint posted on a city website.

Instead, an X representative told the inspector that the structure was "a temporary lighted sign for an event," the complaint showed.

A second attempt by an inspector to check the sign was also rebuffed on Saturday, according to the city.

The city sent X a notice of violation warning that it needed proper permits for the sign.

When contacted by AFP about the complaint, X replied with an automated message saying it would respond "soon."

Backlash

Musk has brushed off the backlash to the sign and to the rebrand in general, responding with a laughing emoji to one X user's post about the [city](#) being at odds with him over the new sign.

The billionaire killed off Twitter's globally recognizable bird logo early last week as he rebranded the company he hopes to turn into a super-app inspired by China's WeChat, which would function as a social media platform and also offer messaging and payments.

Since Musk bought Twitter for \$44 billion last October, the platform's advertising business has collapsed as marketers soured on Musk's management style and mass firings at the company that gutted content moderation.

In response, he has moved toward building a subscriber base and pay model in a search for new revenue.

Workers last week were stopped while removing the Twitter sign and blue bird logo from the headquarters due to a lack of proper permits. It was also gone Monday.

A group of former Twitter employees who lost their jobs when Musk took over said in a federal civil suit filed against the [company](#) in May that the billionaire made it clear that he did not intend to pay expenses such as rent or severance packages.

An attorney for Musk was overheard crudely insulting San Francisco at one point, contending it was unreasonable for landlords to expect Twitter

to pay rent given living conditions, the suit maintained.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: Musk removes giant, flashing X sign after furor (2023, August 1) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-08-musk-giant-furor.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.