

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER • 78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

TEL: (312) 744-2400 • FAX: (312) 744-2359 • TTY: (312) 744-2947

Contact: Karen Vaughan
312.744.2390
kvaughan@cityofchicago.org

"NO LITTLE PLANS": ARCHITECTURE IN CHICAGO

Visitors from around the world come to Chicago, the birthplace of the modern building, to view its architectural marvels. From historic landmark buildings to contemporary technological masterpieces, Chicago is home to unique and innovative designs that have shaped American architecture.

Daniel H. Burnham, creator of the famous Chicago Plan of 1909, counseled city leaders with an important view of the future: "Make no little plans, for they have no magic to stir men's blood... Make big plans. Aim high in hope and work." Burnham helped chart the future of the city that gave the world its first skyscraper, developed the iron skeleton and the floating foundation, created the "Prairie" style of design, and became the site of one of the tallest buildings on earth.

The Hotel Burnham --formerly the Historic Reliance Building, one of Chicago's most significant architectural landmarks-- is a premier product of Daniel H. Burnham's architectural style known as "the Chicago Style." The Hotel Burnham is a 122-room European-style hotel located at 1 W. Washington Street (at State Street).

Today, thanks to the genius of Burnham, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Helmut Jahn, and hundreds of others, Chicago is a living museum of architecture. To fully appreciate the rich foundations of design on which Chicago was built, take one of the many guided tours which include architectural and historical information. Several companies offer narrated bus tours of the city, most of which include architectural attractions.

A view of the city's buildings by boat offers a unique perspective. Visitors to Chicago may take one of many architectural river cruises to experience the preservation of ageless architectural styles in classic and modern structures along the Chicago River.

For a more detailed look, the Chicago Architecture Foundation offers more than 50 walking or bus tours, conducted by knowledgeable guides. Located in the historic Railway Exchange Building at 224 S. Michigan Avenue, the foundation's bookstore and gift shop and the Chicago ArchiCenter, which is designed to raise public interest in Chicago's magnificent architecture, heighten the architectural experience for visitors.

For those who prefer a self-guided tour, visitors can pick up a free street map at one of the official Visitor Centers or stop by the Chicago Architecture Foundation to purchase a map of Chicago buildings featured on its tours. Visitors can also purchase one of the many guidebooks to architecture and landmarks at local bookstores or newsstands. A self-guided tour might begin by marveling at the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe at the Federal Center and Plaza (Jackson Boulevard and Dearborn Street). A few blocks away, the 1886 Rookery Building (LaSalle and Adams Streets) designed by Burnham and Root with a lobby remodeled by Frank Lloyd Wright is a Chicago landmark. An excellent example of Wright's Prairie School of architecture is the Robie House (5757 S. Woodlawn Avenue), near the University of Chicago.

The Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington Street), completed in 1897 and designed by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, serves as Chicago's free-admission public center for culture. Designed in the Beaux-Arts style, the Cultural Center recalls several periods of classical architecture. Lush detailing is present throughout the interior, particularly in the two intricately constructed domes, each made of richly colored glass, including the world's largest Tiffany dome. Free tours of the Cultural Center are offered weekly, departing from the Randolph lobby on the first floor.

The 1889 Auditorium Building (Michigan Avenue and Congress Parkway), designed by Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, is still visited by many Chicagoans and visitors because it houses the Auditorium Theatre, which ranks as one of the city's finest performance spaces. Sullivan's penchant for ornamentation can be seen in the grillwork on the Carson Pirie Scott store (1899), 1 S. State Street. Ornamentation from the Art Deco era is on display at the must-see Chicago Board of Trade Building (LaSalle Street and Jackson Boulevard), a 1930 work of Holabird and Root. William Le Baron Jenney designed the world's first "skyscraper" in Chicago in 1885: the Home Insurance Building, which was at the northeast corner of LaSalle and Adams Streets. Jenney's technology, in which a thin outside skin was applied to an iron-and-steel frame, made possible the structures that make Chicago home to three of the world's ten tallest buildings.

Sears Tower (bounded by Wacker Drive, Jackson Boulevard, Franklin Boulevard and Adams Street) is one of the world's tallest buildings, topping off at 1,450 feet. Designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and opened in 1974, Sears Tower consists of black aluminum and bronze-tinted glass on a structural steel frame, and it encompasses 101 acres of floor space. The skydeck, which was renovated in 2000, offers a multi-media presentation and spectacular view of Chicago and beyond.

Chicago's second highest building is the 80-story AON Center, formerly the Amoco Building (200 E. Randolph Street), which also opened in 1974. Designed by Edward D. Stone with Perkins and Will, the slender building stands out on the skyline and dwarfs its neighbor, the Prudential Building. The John Hancock Center (875 N. Michigan Avenue), another Skidmore, Owings and Merrill project, opened in 1969 and is distinguished by the steel cross-braces which make huge X's on each side. Three states, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, are visible from the observatory on the 94th floor.

Chicago never stops building or challenging the architectural world and the public. One of the boldest of the city's newer structures is the spectacular James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph Street, which has won both praise and criticism for architect Helmut Jahn. The massive red and blue, glass and granite structure houses 50 departments of state government and one of the most dazzling atriums found anywhere. Riding on the building's glass elevator to the top floor is a must. An Illinois Artisans Shop and numerous restaurants are also found here.

The Harold Washington Library Center (400 S. State Street), one of Chicago's many public libraries, was designed by Hammond, Beeby and Babka and opened in 1991. This building encompasses all that is unique to Chicago architecture within a single structure. Combining the grid patterns of the early Chicago skyscrapers, the neoclassical details of the great white structures of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and references to Daniel Burnham's grand plan, the library is a lesson in Chicago architecture. The Harold Washington Library houses approximately two million books and includes the world's largest children's library, a public restaurant and a winter garden.

Opened in July 2004, Chicago's new Millennium Park is an award-winning center for art, music, architecture and landscape design that has become one of the City's most popular destinations. The result of a unique partnership between the City of Chicago and the philanthropic community, the 24.5-acre park features two works by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry – the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, an outdoor music venue that seats 11,000 people, and the BP Bridge, a winding, serpentine footbridge that crosses Columbus Drive. The BP Bridge is Gehry's first.

Other remarkably conceived modern buildings include the NBC Tower, designed by Adrian Smith; 190 S. LaSalle Street, by Philip Johnson; 333 W. Wacker Drive, by William Pederson; the serpentine River City, by Bertrand Goldberg; the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies (610 S. Michigan), designed by Krueck and Sexton; and 900 N. Michigan Avenue, housing Bloomingdale's and a shopping mall, also by William Pederson.

In the coming years, Chicago will welcome several high-profile new buildings by internationally acclaimed architects. In 2009, the Art Institute of Chicago's new Modern Wing and Nichols Bridgeway, both designed by Renzo Piano, are scheduled to open. Construction on Santiago Calatrava's Chicago Spire began in June 2007 and will be completed in 2011. Situated on a 2.2 acre site where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan, The Chicago Spire will be the world's tallest residential building

Even as the future is planned, so the past is being preserved. Architecture buffs will want to visit the restored (1836) Henry B. Clarke House (Chicago's oldest), and the (1887) John J. Glessner House. Both buildings are located in the Prairie Avenue Historic District south of downtown. Oak Park, just west of Chicago, is the site of Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio, along with many homes he designed. Excellent tours are available. Buildings listed here constitute only a tiny fraction of what captures the attention and imagination of Chicago's visitors and residents.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.explorechicago.org. Brochures and information on Chicago's exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.