



Photo by Marchello74. Image courtesy of Getty.

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Architecture Marvels to See During the Chicago Biennale This Fall

The Windy City's Architectural Biennale and EXPO Chicago kick off in mid-September—don't miss these spots while in town

By Eva Fedderly

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Chicago has long led the way in America's history of building and design, and today is known for its wealth of architecture and innovation. On September 19, the Chicago Architecture Biennale returns with this year's theme, "...And Other Such Stories," bringing together the world's leading architects, experts, critics, and enthusiasts to celebrate the field. But when not at the biennale, visitors have a wealth of architectural marvels at their feet to explore. The Chicago Architecture Center, a nonprofit cultural organization with tours, exhibitions, programs, and events for all ages, also offers information on everything related to the city's breathtaking architecture.

Chicago Architecture Center's "Open House Chicago" Program

various locations

openhousechicago.org



The Forum, located in Bronzeville, part of the Open House Chicago program.

Photo by Eric Allix Rogers. Image courtesy of Open House Chicago.

"This is a choose-your-own-adventure approach, as opposed to a guided tour," says Adam Rubin, the Chicago Architecture Center's director of interpretation. "It's in the spirit of an open house." CAC's Open House Chicago program selects various hidden architectural gems in off-the-beaten path neighborhoods around Chicago and posts the participating sites [on their website](http://openhousechicago.org) starting October 19. Open House Chicago Program Manager Eric

Rogers says, "It's a massive, citywide, totally free event for people to get out and explore and visit sites that are architecturally significant, but also places that are culturally or historically significant." The program allows locals and visitors alike to explore neighborhoods such as Bronzeville, the historic epicenter of black Chicago, and the Northwest side of Chicago focusing on Irving Park, Jefferson Park, and Portage Park, which host a bevy of architectural marvels.

Willis Tower

233 South Wacker Drive

willistower.com



Image courtesy of Getty images.

Formerly known as the Sears Tower, this modernist structure was completed in 1974 by architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Located in the Loop neighborhood, this was the tallest building in the world for nearly 25 years after its completion, standing at

110 stories tall. Emblematic of Chicago, the building's black aluminum and bronze-tinted glass exterior are structurally innovative and established a precedent for tall buildings being built today.

The Chicago Athletic Association Hotel

12 South Michigan Avenue

chicagoathletichotel.com



Photo by Thomas Hart Shelby. Image courtesy of Chicago Athletic Association.

Formerly a private athletic club in an 1893 Venetian Gothic landmark, this space is now a boutique hotel resting at the foot of Millennium Park. "This is a great adaptive reuse of a former private club," says Open House Chicago Program Manager Eric Rogers. The elite club was open to men only until 2007, and officially relaunched as a 241-room hotel in 2015.

Rookery Building

209 South LaSalle Street

therookerybuilding.com



FUTURE LIGHT. Photo by Future Light. Image courtesy of Getty images.

Frank Lloyd Wright redesigned this 1888 building in 1907, sheltering it with a glass ceiling and maximizing the amount the building's light and air. Considered to be one of the finest office buildings in America at this time, the structure's façade is reminiscent of late Roman, Moorish, Venetian, and medieval-European architecture. The two-story

lobby and open-air public-use space is surrounded by piers, with moldings clad in white marble and gold geometric patterns, which was an element of Frank Lloyd Wright's redesign that hid the original copper-plate ironwork.

The Wrigley Building

400-410 North Michigan Avenue

www.architecture.org/wrigley-building



Photo by Sebastian Condrea. Image courtesy of Getty.

Now a Chicago landmark, The Wrigley Building was designed in 1924 by architectural firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White with a Spanish Colonial Revival design. Located in the Near North Side neighborhood, the structure was built to be the headquarters for chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. It's an icon of Chicago's main strip, the Magnificent Mile, and was inspired by the Giralda Tower cathedral in Seville, Spain.

St. Jane Hotel

230 North Michigan Avenue

architecture.org/carbide-and-carbon-building



Photo by Eric Allix Rogers. Image courtesy Chicago Architecture Center.

Formally the Carbide and Carbon Building, this Loop neighborhood site is now the luxurious St. Jane Hotel. Completed in 1929 by the firm Burnham Brothers with an Art-Deco design style, the building's façade is composed of polished black granite, green and gold terra-cotta, and gold leaf with bronze trim. The lobby has frosted glass fixtures and Belgian marble. As a landmark, the building underwent a \$106 million restoration in 2004.

Richard J. Daley Center

50 West Washington Street

thedaleycenter.com



Image courtesy of Chicago Architecture Center.

Named after Chicago's longtime mayor, this landmark building is the city's civic center. An outstanding example of engineering, this structure is made in the International style of architecture. Across the street is the quintessential Chicago construct, the James R.

Thompson Center, built by Helmut Jahn in the '80s. Rogers says, "This is at great risk of being sold by the state and demolished. It's an active preservation fight at the moment." Down the block, City Hall is another architectural masterpiece worth taking the time to see.

Historic Water Tower

806 Michigan Avenue

architecture.org/chicago-water-tower



Photo by Anne Evans. Image courtesy of Chicago Architecture Center.

An 1869 Gothic Revival, the Historic Water Tower, designed by architect William W. Boyington, was the only iconic structure to remain after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Serving as a water receptacle for the city, Boyington designed the pumping works building and the Water Tower, using the yellow Joliet limestone for both.

Marina City

300 North State Street

architecture.org/marina-city



Image courtesy Chicago Architecture Center.

Marina City was architect Bertrand Goldberg's urban experiment designed to draw middle-class Chicagoans back to the city after they'd fled for the suburbs. Completed in 1967 in the Near North Side neighborhood, one can see the influence of Ludwig Mies van

der Rohe, Goldberg's teacher. Goldberg's own idea held that no right angles exist in nature, thus none will exist in architecture. Today, the mixed-use complex has residential towers, an office building, a theater, and car and boat parking.

875 Michigan

875 North Michigan Avenue

875northmichiganavenue.com



Photo by Henryk Sadura. Image courtesy of Getty.

Formerly the John Hancock Center, this 1,499-foot skyscraper's engineering allowed skyscrapers to betray their traditional rectilinear shape. Completed in 1969 with a modernist design, the building resembles a tapered rectangular tube. The space is today used as residential apartments, retail and office spaces, and a 94th floor observatory offering a breathtaking 360-degree view of the Windy City.

The Merchandise Mart

222 West Merchandise Mart Plaza

themart.com



Photo by Ele Si. Image courtesy of Getty.

The Merchandise Mart, also known as theMART, is an Art Deco–style building built in 1930 by architectural firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White. The building stretches 2.5 city blocks and was one of the largest buildings in the world, serving as department store Marshall Field’s warehouse. The structure is made of limestone, terra cotta, and bronze, with recessed vertical windows, rows of decorative chevrons, and diagonal towers. The façade is now used to project permanent public digital art installations.