

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Pittsfield Building

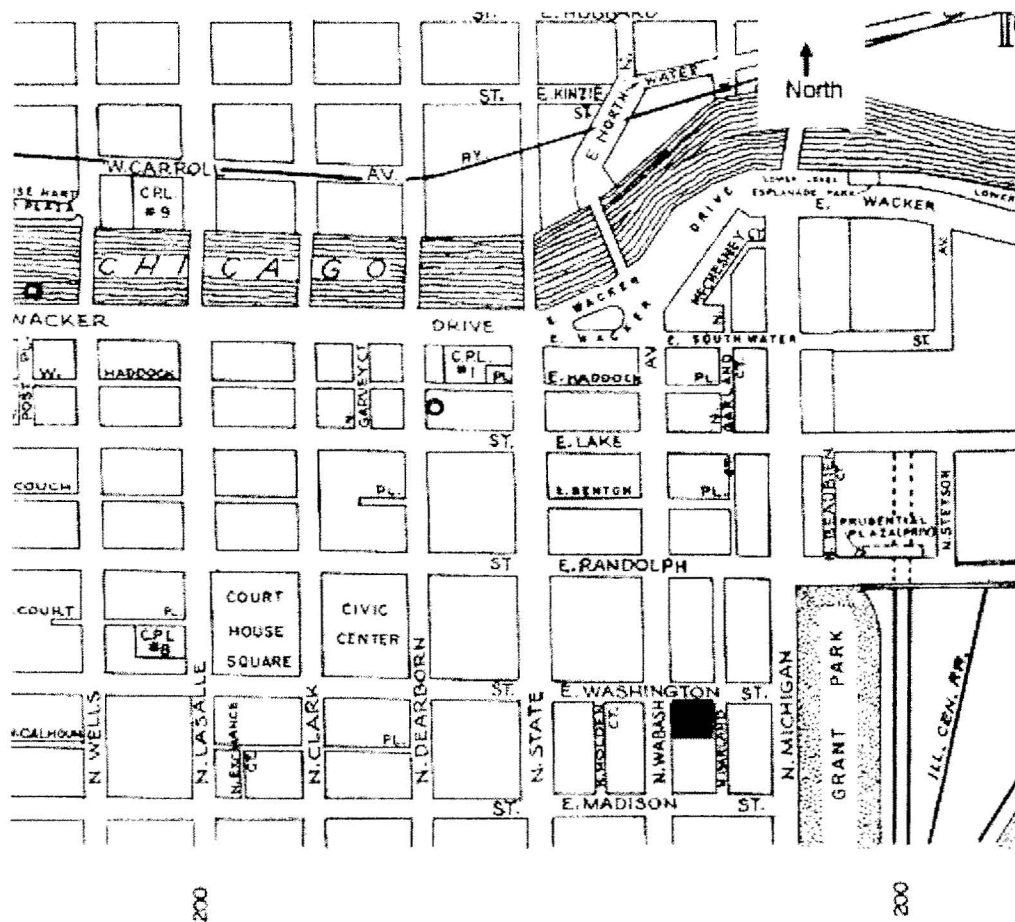
55 E. Washington

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by
the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, December 12, 2001



CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner



Cover: On the right, the Pittsfield Building, as seen from Michigan Avenue, looking west. The Pittsfield Building's trademark is its interior lobbies and atrium, seen in the upper and lower left. In the center, an advertisement announcing the building's construction and leasing, c. 1927.

Above: The Pittsfield Building, located at 55 E. Washington Street, is a 38-story steel-frame skyscraper with a rectangular 21-story base that covers the entire building lot—approximately 162 feet on Washington Street and 120 feet on Wabash Avenue.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web site, <http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS IN DECEMBER 2001

PITTSFIELD BUILDING

55 E. WASHINGTON ST.

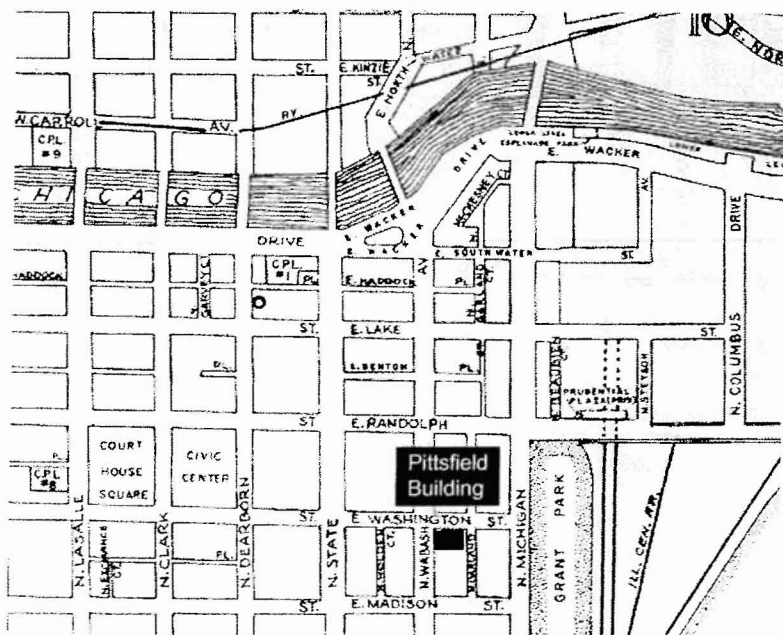
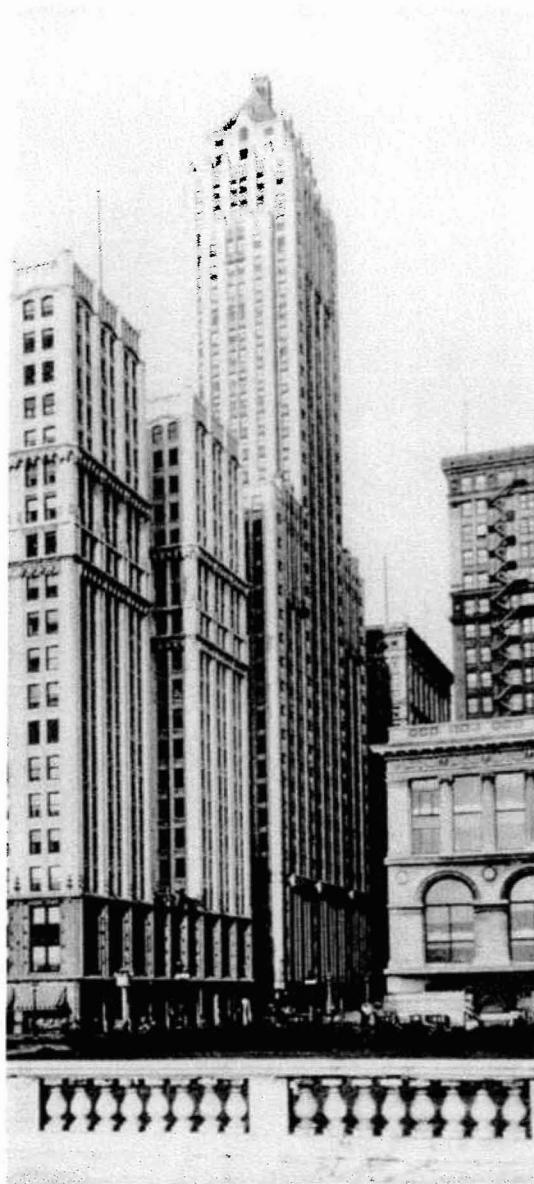
BUILT: 1927

ARCHITECTS: GRAHAM, ANDERSON, PROBST AND WHITE

The Pittsfield Building is one of Chicago's finest 1920s-era skyscrapers, built during the decade when the city's distinctive tower-pierced downtown skyline first began to take shape. Designed by the preeminent Chicago architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, the Pittsfield Building reflects the influence of the city's 1923 zoning ordinance, which mandated skyscrapers with setbacks. This 38-story professional office building exhibits the major characteristics of the firm's mature work—assurance of overall form, luxurious building materials, finely detailed Art Deco and Gothic Revival ornamentation that synthesizes traditional and “modern” decoration, and outstanding craftsmanship.

The Pittsfield Building was hailed at its completion in 1927 as an architectural triumph, and it remains virtually unchanged from that time. Located at the southeast corner of the busy Loop intersection of Washington Street and Wabash Avenue, it is still home to the same type of tenants—doctors, dentists, and jewelers—that it has served for 75 years.

The Pittsfield Building's trademark is its interior lobbies and atrium, called “one of the loveliest ever designed by the firm” by architectural historian Sally Chappell. Five stories high and surrounded by balconies and shop windows on all sides, the great atrium space is embellished by glowing marbles, gleaming brasses, and carvings in a Spanish Gothic Revival style.



The Pittsfield Building at its completion in 1927 (top left) and today (top right). It was Chicago's tallest building at the time of its completion. Its overall design, consisting of a broad base topped by a slender tower, reflects the importance of the city's 1923 zoning ordinance, which mandated setback designs for skyscrapers.

Left: The Pittsfield Building is located in Chicago's Loop on the southeast corner of Washington Street and Wabash Avenue.

BUILDING AND SITE DESCRIPTION

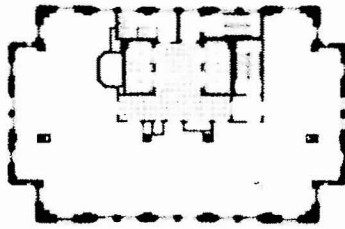
The Pittsfield Building is a 38-story steel-frame skyscraper with a rectangular 21-story base that covers the entire building lot—approximately 162 feet on Washington Street and 120 feet on Wabash Avenue. At its base, the Pittsfield Building is a large rectangular block with a central light court maximizing the amount of light in offices. The 17-story tower atop the base rises to 557 feet above the ground out as part of the sheer north face along the Washington Street facade. The east and west sides of the tower are set back at the 35th and 38th floors, providing a symmetrical silhouette against the skyline.

The facade of the Pittsfield is clad with polished black granite on its ground story and gray terra cotta on its upper stories. Gothic-style ornamentation is concentrated at the lower five stories, the parapets of each of the three setbacks, and at the top of the tower itself. Continuous vertical projecting piers are placed at regular intervals between recessed double-hung windows. Spandrels are also recessed and are ornamented with an Art Deco-style geometric pattern. Bronze frames define building entries and storefronts, and are embellished with a hard-edged foliate ornament.

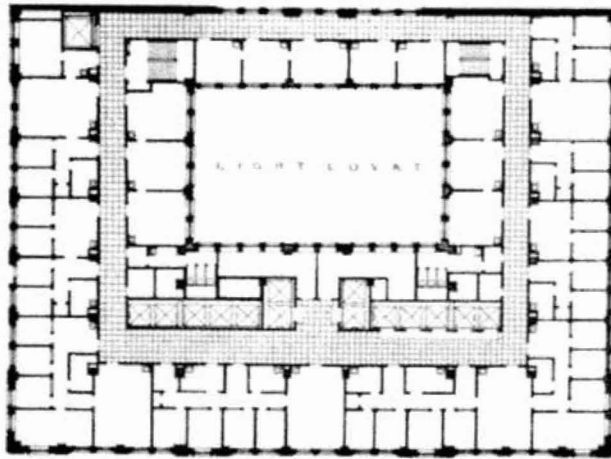
Both the main Washington Street and secondary Wabash Avenue lobby entrances are detailed with red Verona marble. Both entrance lobbies retain original Spanish Gothic Revival-style ceilings with hexagonal coffers highlighted with gold, turquoise, and coral paint, and both lead into the open five-story rotunda, or atrium—one of the most striking features of the building, although not a true atrium in that it does not have an open ceiling. In the atrium the first-floor stores open directly into the space, while shops on the upper four floors of the atrium open onto balconies overlooking the space. The floor of the atrium is made of Pink Tennessee marble tile with Dark Pink Diamond “C” Tennessee at the perimeter, the latter is also used as the wall base. The walls themselves are clad with Italian Botticino marble. The same general treatment is continued throughout the first-floor corridors, elevator lobbies, and stairways. For the lower arcade and the upper floors, the corridors and elevator lobbies have Alabama Cream “A” marble for die and elevator trim, with floors of Pink Tennessee and a base of Greek Tinos marble.

The marble, the deeply coffered ceilings, and intact bronze fittings of the building’s principal public interior spaces create an elegant retail area designed to attract the patients of the doctors and dentists in the building. The rich setting of the atrium and the lobbies is made more so by the elaborately designed lights and other historic fixtures, including a letter box, building directory, elevator lights, and an illuminated sign that announces the “Tobacco Shop.” The huge chandelier that hangs suspended in the center of the atrium casts light on the niches filled with flowering plants. On the south side of the atrium, a wide marble staircase leads to the lower arcade, over which an illuminated bronze-framed sign announces “To Arcade Shops,” “To Barber Shop,” and “Basement Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge.”

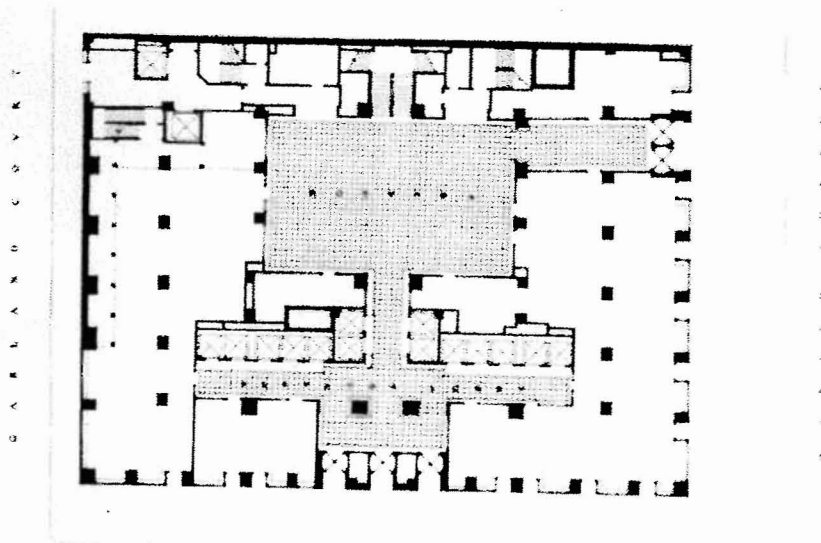
The location of the Pittsfield Building determined its design and intended occupants. The Estate of Marshall Field owned the busy corner lot previously occupied by the Tobey



TOWER FLOOR PLAN



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Floor plans of the Pittsfield Building, taken from *The Architectural Work of Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White*, privately printed by the firm in 1933.

Furniture Company store, torn down in 1926 when the company moved to its new home at 200 N. Michigan. The Estate developed the Pittsfield property as a building housing shops and professional offices because of its location in Chicago's preeminent shopping district, centered on State Street and Wabash Avenue, and its proximity to other buildings housing similar uses.

To the northeast, across Wabash, was the Marshall Field and Company Department Store. Directly west was the Marshall Field Annex which contained the Marshall Field store for men on the lower floors and dentist and doctor offices on the upper floors. South of the Annex was the Stevens Building, housing a specialty clothing store on the lower floors and small retailers and purveyors of personal services on the upper floors. To the north was the Garland Building and to the east, across Garland Court, was the People's Trust and Savings Bank Building, both with a large proportion of doctors and dentists among their tenants. To take advantage of its location, the Pittsfield's first five floors were built for specialty shops, and the floors above were designed to be occupied primarily by jewelers and medical and dental professionals.

The original concept has endured. The interior street and lower arcade levels contain businesses almost identical to those 75 years ago, including a travel bureau, hair dressers and barbers, a cigar and cigarette shop, clothing stores, a drugstore, cleaners, and a flower shop. Shops in upper floors of the atrium still sell furs, shoes, hats, lingerie, clothing, perfume, and jewelry. The remaining 33 floors of the building still house mainly dentists, doctors, jewelers, and related support businesses. In all, the building contains approximately 340,000 square feet of rentable space. Typical of the professional office buildings of its day, the Pittsfield Building has comparatively shallow offices, with a maximum depth of about 22 feet. Most columns are on 16-foot centers; office sizes range from 3,600 to 15,000 square feet.

In recognition of its busy clientele of patients and shoppers, the Pittsfield Building has 14 passenger elevators in three separate elevator banks. One set of elevators runs from the street level to floor 13, one set from floor 13 to floor 21, and one from the street level to floor 38. Two of these sets once also provided access to the lower arcade, where the elevator frame identifies it as made by "The Flour City Ornamentation Co." of Minneapolis. In addition, there are two freight elevators in the loading area on Garland Court.

HISTORY

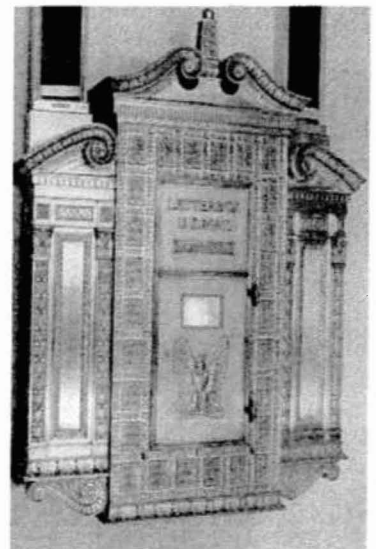
The Pittsfield Building was built in 1927 as one of four major construction projects designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White and commissioned by the Estate of Marshall Field, Chicago's well-known department store tycoon. The building was named after the town of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where Field began his business career in 1856, serving five years' apprenticeship in a general store there. The scale and style of the building was intended to provide "fitting recognition to the far-seeing vision of the New

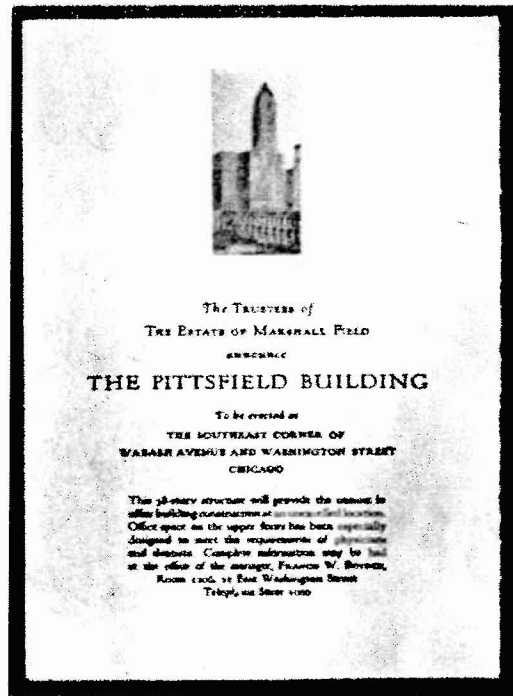


Top: The Pittsfield Building's main entrance, from Washington Street.



Left and bottom:
The building's elevator lobby is richly ornamented with marble and bronze fittings, including elevator doors and mailbox, and a coffered ceiling.





Left and top left: The Pittsfield Building's proximity to the Marshall Field & Company department store and other retailers along State Street and Wabash Avenue led the building's original owner, the Estate of Marshall Field, to include a five-story atrium, richly detailed with marble and Spanish Gothic Revival ornament, that was intended for small shops. The atrium remains largely unaltered from its original appearance as seen in these photographs from 1927.

Top right: Since the building's construction, the Pittsfield's upper floors have housed a variety of professional offices and specialty shops, and the building has been well-known for its concentration of doctors and dentists.

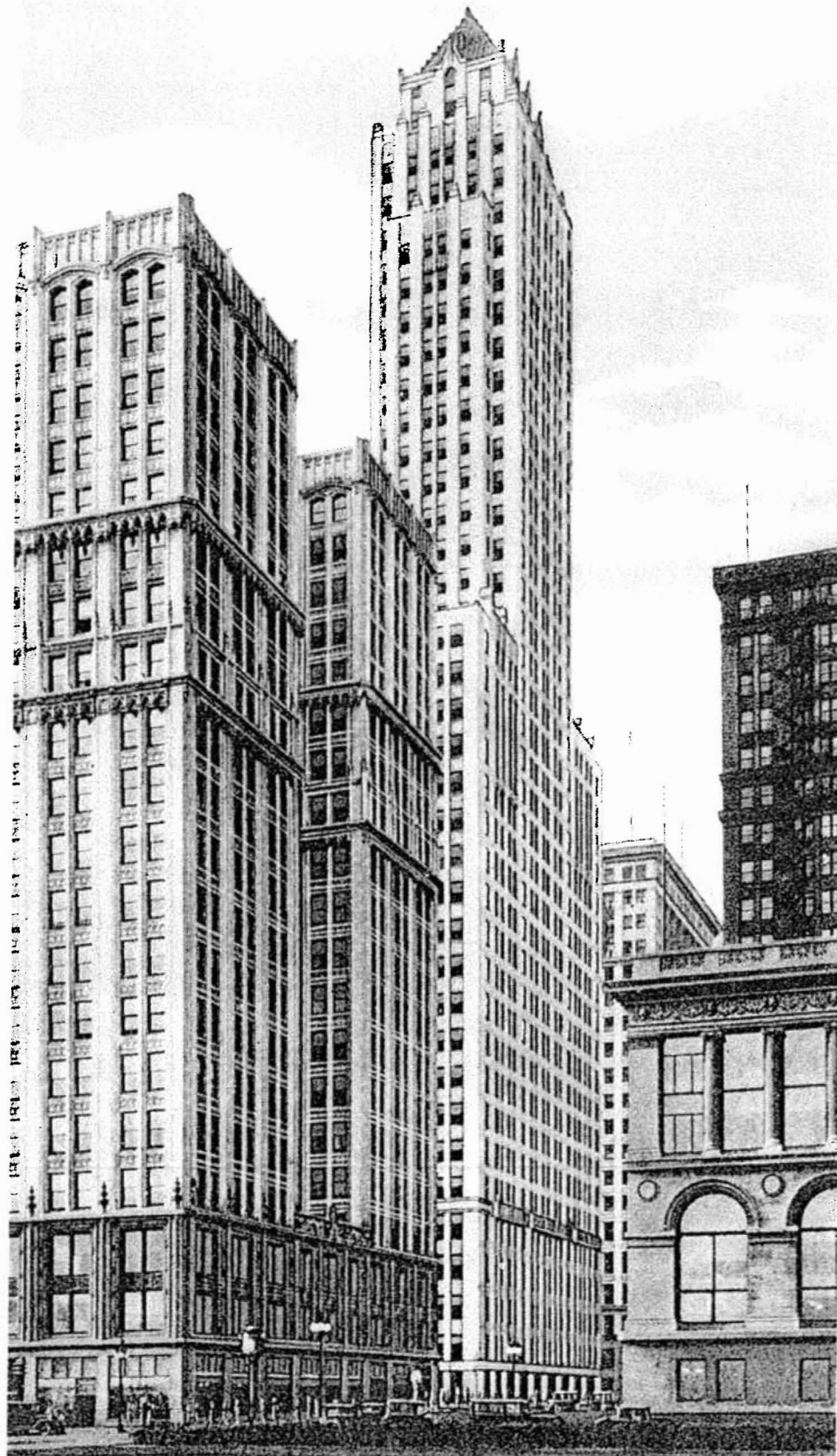
England boy, who, in realizing that vision, was destined to play no small part in the . . . life of Chicago” (Karl, quoted in *Architecture and Planning of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 1912-1936*). The other buildings built by the estate were the Conway Building (1912-1915), listed on the National Register of Historic Places and located on the southwest corner of Washington and Clark; the Merchandise Mart (1928-1930) along the Chicago River between Wells and Franklin; and the Field Building (1931-1934), a designated Chicago Landmark, at LaSalle and Adams. The Conway, later known as the Chicago Title and Trust Company Building, was named after Conway, Massachusetts, the small rural community where Marshall Field was born.

The development of the Pittsfield Building was typical of the “professional office” building type significant to Chicago architectural history in general, and the history of the Loop in particular. This building type combined retail space on lower floors and rental offices on upper floors. Professional office buildings such as the Pittsfield Building were built near department stores on State and Wabash so as to draw clients from the shoppers who patronized the stores. Other professional office buildings near the Pittsfield Building in the Loop included the Reliance Building at State and Washington and the Chicago Building at State and Madison (both designated Chicago Landmarks), plus the Mallers Building at Wabash and Madison and the Mentor Building at State and Monroe.

Retail spaces in the first floors of professional office buildings such as the Pittsfield generally had direct access to the street, while separate street-level lobbies and banks of elevators served upper-floor tenants. Steel-frame construction provided small floor plans and abundant natural light, qualities desired by the doctors, dentists, manufacturers’ representatives, small businesses, and small-scale providers of personal services, including tailors, beauticians, and masseurs that occupied the upper floors. Display cases often lined both elevator lobbies and upper-floor corridors, emulating street-level storefronts. Jewelers, silversmiths, hat and glove dealers, dressmakers, and notions shops were typical small shops found in these buildings.

The Pittsfield Building was initially planned to be only 21 stories, with elevators located along the south wall, similar to the elevator arrangement in the Marshall Field Annex across the street. A 1923 change in Chicago’s zoning ordinance altered the planned design of the Pittsfield Building, just as the ordinance altered the city’s skyline through the early 1930s. During that time, the total volume of office space more than doubled in Chicago. Under the 1923 changes, a building could rise to 264 feet at the sidewalk, with habitable towers above that which occupied no more than 25 percent of the lot size or one-sixth of the cubic area of the main building—a formula which encouraged skyscrapers with multiple setbacks. With this new option, it was decided that the Pittsfield Building should rise much higher than planned, with the base rising 21 stories high and the tower rising 17 more stories from the Washington Street facade, with setbacks at the 22nd, 35th, and 38th stories.

The new design required the addition of four more elevators, which ran directly from the elevator lobby on the ground floor to the 38th floor at the top of the tower, taking



A postcard view of the Pittsfield Building, circa 1927. The building is an excellent example of a 1920s skyscraper combining both Gothic and Art Deco detailing.

advantage of a provision of the Chicago zoning law that allowed direct special express elevator service to higher floors without transfer from other elevators. The location of the three banks of elevators near the Washington Street entrance of the building marked a significant change from their customary position on a rear or side wall in a more traditional “hollow-square” building with a central light court that rose the entire height of the building.

Although this elevator configuration meant the loss of some rentable space, it was offset by the added income derived from having a tower and the “greater beauty and individuality” of the building, according to the building manager until 1933, Francis W. Boyden, as quoted in *Buildings and Building Management*, a trade journal. Boyden’s experience in managing the nearby Marshall Field Annex convinced him that a closed light-court structure would be more suitable for medical and dental occupancy because it would be quieter, without street sounds reverberating through it. Also involved in the building’s design were George Richardson, representing the trustees of the Field Estate, and W. S. Pye, manager of the Field Estate’s Conway Building. Henry Ericsson was the contractor.

To accommodate the specialized needs of dentists and doctors, conduits providing natural gas, compressed air, and electricity are located at every interior column, and there are three meter closets on each floor. For the large number of jewelers located in the building, an elaborate security system was installed that included alarm buttons that set off a siren, stopped the elevators, and alerted building guards to lock the doors leading out of the building. This, in addition to the plainclothes security patrolling the lobby, allowed the Pittsfield Building’s insurance rates to be the lowest of any building in the country. In addition, according to one source, the lower arcade once housed, among other things, two private clubs—the Chiselers, intended for the medical profession (presumably dentists), and the Jewelers Club.

The completion of the Pittsfield Building was heralded by the building trade journals of its day. The National Association of Marble Manufacturers called it “another great edifice of decided distinction,” adding that it is “a great and beautiful structure, expressive of its purpose, a joy to its occupants and an adornment to the city.” When the building was completed, it was the tallest building in Chicago at 557 feet above ground, “which, it will be observed, is two feet higher than the Washington Monument, the long-recognized measuring stick of structural height.”

Today, the building is a contributing building to the Loop Retail Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and was documented as a significant building by the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Several recent books on Chicago architecture have featured the building, including Saliga’s *The Sky’s the Limit*, Willis’ *Form Follows Finance*, Sinkevitch’s *AIA Guide to Chicago Architecture*, and Chappell’s *Architecture and Planning of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 1912-1936*.

In 1944, the Field Estate gave the Pittsfield Building to the Chicago Natural History



The Pittsfield Building's tower is one of Chicago's most distinctive with its multi-gabled top floor and pyramidal roof of bright green copper.

Museum, which sold it in 1960 to private investors. The building has changed owners several times since then.

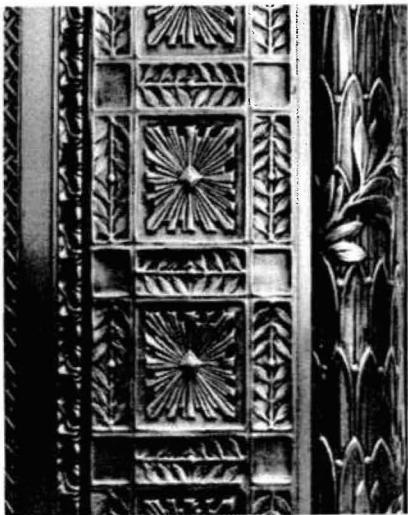
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The Pittsfield Building was built in 1927 at the height of the post-World War I building boom and was the tallest skyscraper in Chicago at the time of completion. The design of the Pittsfield Building is credited to Alfred Shaw, who had recently become an important designer for the office of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White. Shaw's challenge was to incorporate contemporary Art Deco imagery and ideals into the more conservative Classical Revival and Gothic Revival designs for which the firm was known. His success made the Pittsfield Building, with its distinctive tower, one of the highlights of the downtown Chicago skyline.

The exterior of the Pittsfield Building, with its elongated height, vertical emphasis, and setbacks, epitomizes the popular image of the modern skyscraper of the late 1920s—here “modernizing” Gothic Revival forms and detailing through simplification and abstraction. Gothic Revival ornament on the building's base and tower emphasize its vertical character, as do the recessed banks of windows, projecting piers, and the lack of projecting cornices. The building's distinctive exterior design, reminiscent of French Gothic buildings, has been described as “chateau-roof vertical Gothic,” referring to its pyramidal crown of weathered green copper.

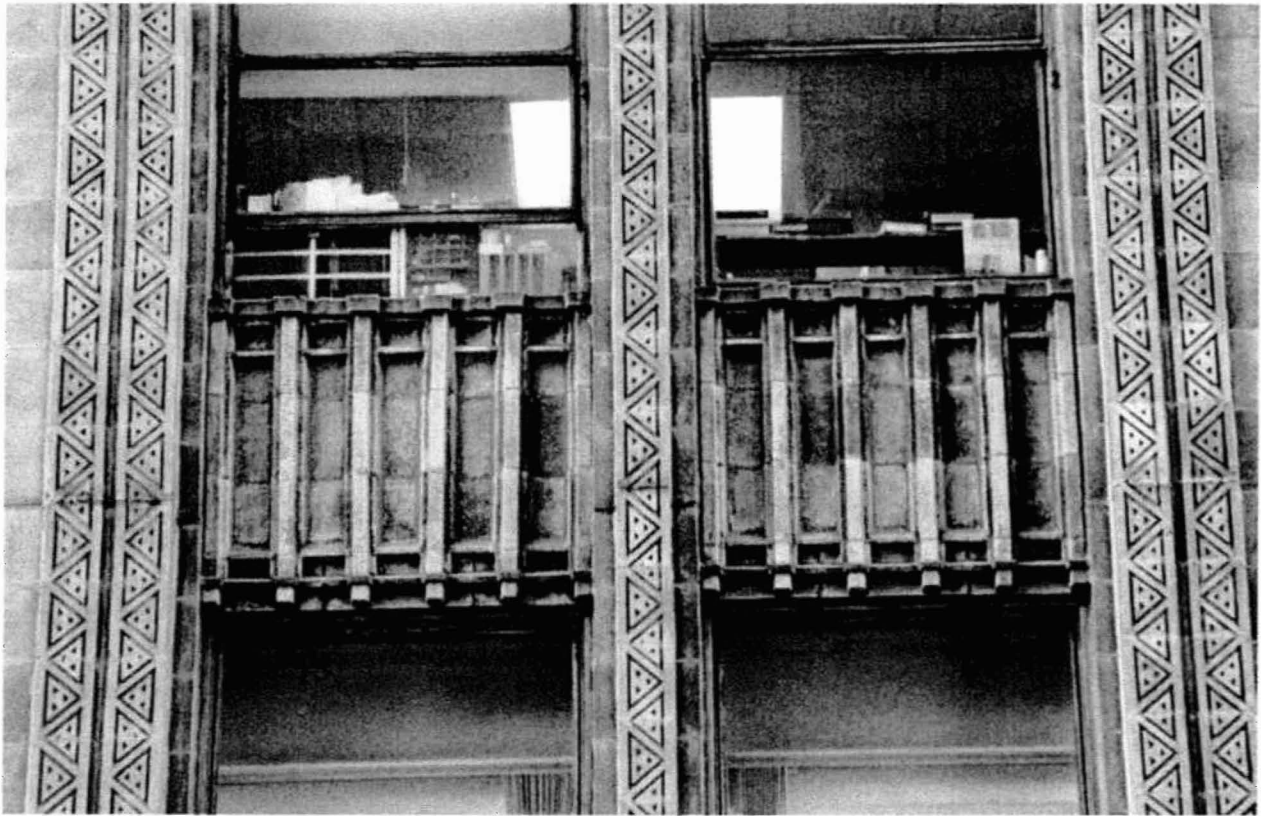
The interior of the Pittsfield Building extends this Gothic Revival motif, but with a harder, more geometric, design verging on Art Deco. Gothic-style corbels, screens, coffering, and other details are used throughout the atrium and main building lobbies, but the elaborate light fixtures, signage, designs over the elevator doors and entrances show both Art Deco and Classical Revival touches. The building's ground floor facade, with its polished black granite facing, has much in common with the more starkly modern style of the Field Building, designed by Shaw several years later in 1929. This use of granite, generally associated with the Art Deco style, was one of the earliest on a Chicago skyscraper.

The Pittsfield Building's design reflects the development of skyscrapers in Chicago in the wake of Eliel Saarinen's second-place entry in the Chicago Tribune Tower competition of 1922, which combined setbacks, verticality, and Gothic-style ornament. Besides the Pittsfield Building, many significant Chicago skyscrapers owe their design to Saarinen's influence. They range from the Mather Tower (1928, Herbert Hugh Riddle), which uses more traditional Gothic-style ornament for an impressively slender and vertical tower, to the Palmolive Building (1929, Holabird & Root), which combines setbacks and verticality with a more modern palette of Art Deco-style ornament.



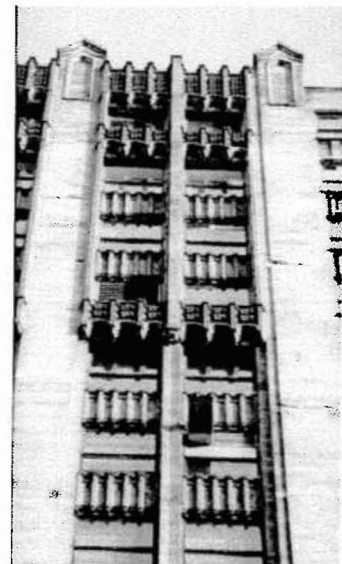
The Pittsfield Building's ground floor is clad in sleek-looking black granite, adding an Art Deco-style look to the building. Building entrances and storefronts also are accented with bronze ornament rendered in a hard-edged Gothic style.





Top and bottom: The upper floors of the Pittsfield Building are clad with gray terra cotta in a variety of ornament, both geometric and foliate, that combines both Gothic and Art Deco influences.

Left: The south facade of the Pittsfield is ornamented with the building name executed in terra cotta.



GRAHAM, ANDERSON, PROBST AND WHITE

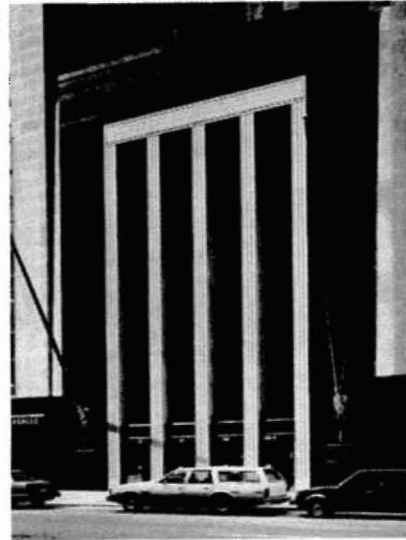
The architectural firm responsible for the Pittsfield Building—Graham, Anderson, Probst and White—is one of the most distinguished architectural firms in Chicago history. The office has its beginnings in the firm of Burnham and Root, which was instrumental in the development of the Chicago School of architecture. With world-renowned buildings such as the Rookery, Monadnock, and Reliance to its credit, the firm's founding partners, Daniel Burnham and John Wellborn Root, explored the use of structural steel frames and curtain walls with extensive glazing decades before “modern architecture” was recognized as such.

With the death of Root during the planning of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, Daniel Burnham established D. H. Burnham and Company, which built upon the office's earlier accomplishments with such notable commissions as the Flatiron Building in New York and Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and stirred the nation's imagination with master plans for Chicago and San Francisco. When Burnham died in 1912, his practice was taken over by sons Daniel and Hubert and by **Ernest Robert Graham (1866-1936)**, who had been made a partner by Burnham in 1894. Graham had trained at Coe College in Iowa and at the University of Notre Dame and was Burnham's principal assistant in overseeing construction of the 1893 Exposition. Graham and Burnham's sons formed Graham, Burnham and Company, but this partnership lasted only five years, and in 1917 the Burnham brothers and Graham dissolved the firm. The Burnhams formed Burnham Brothers and Graham partnered with Pierce Anderson, Edward Probst, and Howard Judson White, forming the architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White.

Pierce Anderson (1870-1924) had a B. A. from Harvard University and a graduate degree in engineering from Johns Hopkins. He joined D. H. Burnham and Company in 1900 after attending the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, the world's leading architectural school of the day. Soon he rose to be Burnham's chief designer and head of the design department, a role he fulfilled for the new firm. He is particularly associated with the commissions the firm received outside of Chicago, most notably Union Station in Washington, D. C. Anderson served on the Capitol City's Fine Arts Commission in the company of Frederick Law Olmstead and Augustus St. Gaudens, an appointment given to him in 1912 by President Taft when Burnham's death created the vacancy.

Edward Probst (1870-1942) and **Howard Judson White (1870-1936)** each worked for other Chicago architects before joining Burnham. Probst worked for Peter B. Wight until 1893, and in 1908 Burnham gave Probst responsibility for the supervision of work plans. A resident of River Forest, he was a prominent member of the Illinois Society of Architects, serving a two-year term as its director. Howard White entered the firm in 1898 and in 1905 became Graham's assistant, responsible for letting contracts and supervising construction.

Under Graham's leadership, the office became one of the largest and most prestigious in the United States. The firm was noted for its Classical Revival-style architecture and its



Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White was one of Chicago's leading architectural firms during the late 1910s and 1920s. Three of their prominent office buildings are the Field Building (top), commissioned (as was the Pittsfield Building) by the Estate of Marshall Field; the Wrigley Building (left); and the Civic Opera Building (bottom), which also houses the grandly-scaled and detailed Civic Opera House.



refinements of Burnham's early advancements in the design of large office buildings and department stores. After Anderson's untimely death in 1924, some of the firm's design work was the product of noted younger men in the firm, especially **Alfred Phillips Shaw (1895-1970)**, Charles F. Murphy, and Sigurd Naess, all of whom were associated with the firm by 1930. It was Alfred Shaw who was credited with the use of more contemporary Art Deco forms and details for the firm's late 1920s and 1930s designs, including that of the Pittsfield Building, and he was made a junior partner in 1929. After Graham's death in 1936, Shaw, Murphy, and Naess formed a firm that lasted for about 10 years, after which Shaw left and formed another firm, Shaw, Metz and Dolio.

Known for its skillful adaptation of Classical and Gothic forms to modern requirements, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White was Chicago's leader in the creation of corporate headquarters throughout the 1920s and early 1930s and an important designer of banks, railway stations, stores, and other major commercial structures. In addition to the Pittsfield Building, the firm's other tall Chicago office buildings include the following: the Wrigley Building (1922, addition 1925), listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the Michigan Wacker Historic District in 1978; the Straus Building (1924), part of the Michigan Avenue streetwall; the Chicago Civic Opera (1929), designated a Chicago Landmark in 1998; and the Field Building (1934), designated a Chicago Landmark in 1994. The Field Building was designed by the Pittsfield Building's designer, Alfred Shaw, who also designed the Merchandise Mart (1929-1930), originally built as the Marshall Field wholesale store. Among the firm's prominent institutional buildings in Chicago are the Field Museum (1921), listed on the NRHP in 1975 and the Shedd Aquarium (1929), listed in 1987. The firm's Chicago banks include the Federal Reserve (1922), the Illinois Merchants (1924), and the Foreman State National (1930).

Outside of Chicago the firm's work ranged from the United States Post Office (1914-1934) in Washington, D. C., to the Mount Wilson Observatory (1914-1917) in Pasadena, California, as well as numerous Federal Reserve Banks, post offices, and large office blocks in nearly every major American city. At least a dozen of the firm's buildings are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

With the passing of the final partner in 1942, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White was incorporated. As its first president, Edward Probst's son Marvin oversaw the development of the firm's expression of International Style architecture. During this time period the firm produced a number of unique and monumental corporate headquarters for such clients as Morton International, Washington National Insurance, and Rand McNally. In 1956, the Graham Foundation was created by a bequest from Graham (some twenty years after his death) to provide a creative public dialogue concerning architecture and the built environment through research grants and lectures. In addition, the Ernest R. Graham Study Center for Architectural Drawings houses a distinguished collection of more than 130,000 architectural sketches and drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago.



Two other significant designs by Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White are the Merchandise Mart (top), originally commissioned by Marshall Field and Company as its wholesale store, and Union Station (above), Chicago's grandest remaining railroad station.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated “criteria for landmark designation,” as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission in determining whether to recommend that the Pittsfield Building be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Pittsfield Building is one of Chicago’s most handsome examples of a 1920s-era skyscraper, combining a distinctive, copper-clad, pyramidal-topped tower with decorative terra-cotta cladding and bronze ornamentation that utilize both Gothic- and Art Deco-style motifs.
- The Pittsfield Building represents an important and creative response to the 1923 Chicago zoning ordinance that encouraged skyscrapers with setback towers.
- The Pittsfield Building is one of the best Chicago examples of the “professional office” building, a Loop building type that combined shops with offices marketed to medical professionals and suppliers of personal services.
- The Pittsfield Building exhibits fine craftsmanship and detailing in its use of materials, including gray terra cotta, polished black granite, red marble, exterior bronze detailing, and bronze and marble interior fittings, including elaborate light fixtures.
- The atrium of the Pittsfield Building has been called “one of the loveliest ever designed” in Chicago (Chappell, p. 186). Five stories high, surrounded by balconies and shop windows on all sides, the finely-scaled and proportioned space is embellished by glowing marbles, gleaming brasses, and carvings in a Spanish Gothic Revival style.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Pittsfield Building is an excellent and distinctive work by a significant Chicago architectural firm, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White.

- The successor firm to Burnham and Root and to D. H. Burnham and Company, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White designed many of Chicago’s most important buildings, including the Wrigley Building, Union Station, the Merchandise Mart, the Civic Opera Building, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Field Building.
- The architectural firm also designed many important buildings throughout the United States, including the United States Post Office in Washington, D. C., and the Mount Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, California.

Integrity Criterion

Its integrity is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value.

Today the Pittsfield Building retains excellent integrity and has experienced few changes to its exterior or its interior public spaces, especially the lobbies and atrium. It remains a key building for the same commercial activities—dentist and doctor offices and jewelers—characteristic throughout its history. The only interior changes to the historic configuration of the atrium are the removal of its central fountain (the outline can still be discerned) and the addition of a five-booth pay telephone stand. The atrium maintains its original light fixtures, windows, and doors, as do the lobbies and the lower arcade.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the Pittsfield Building, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- all exterior elevations and rooflines of the building;
- the first-floor entrances and elevator lobbies;
- the five-story atrium, including all upper-story corridors and balconies opening onto the space; and
- light fixtures within these interior spaces.



The Pittsfield Building retains excellent physical integrity, changing little in the almost 75 years since its construction.

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CITY OF CHICAGO

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner

Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Landmarks

Project Staff

Nancy Hanks, research, writing, and layout

Terry Tatum, editing and layout

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From "A Five-Story Rotunda Features This Building," *Through The Ages*: p. 6 (top).

From Chappell, *Architecture and Planning of Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White*: p. 6 (bottom right), 7 (top left).

From "The Pittsfield Building, Chicago," *Buildings and Building Management*: p. 7 (top right).

From Curt Teich Postcard Collection: p. 9.

Bob Thall: p. 16 (top right), 18 (bottom).

From Ericsson, *60 Years a Builder*: p. 32 (left).

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web site, <http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

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33 N. La Salle Street, Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60602

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