

**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

November 5, 2015

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO THAT
CHICAGO LANDMARK DESIGNATION BE ADOPTED FOR**

MARINA CITY

Including the Following Address Ranges (even/odd addresses):

**300-340 N. State St. (evens);
301-351 N. Dearborn St. (odds)**

Docket No. 2015-03

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago:

Pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago (the “Municipal Code”), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the “Commission”) has determined that Marina City is worthy of designation as a Chicago Landmark District. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of Marina City, the Commission has found that it satisfies the following five (5) criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code:

1. *Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*
4. *Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.*
5. *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, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*
6. *Its representation of an architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other theme expressed through distinctive areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, or other objects that may or may not be contiguous.*
7. *Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for Marina City began on July 9, 2015, when the Commission approved a preliminary landmark recommendation (the "Preliminary Recommendation") for Marina City as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission found that Marina City meets five (5) of the seven (7) criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code, Section 2-120-580 *et seq.*). The Preliminary Recommendation, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, initiated the process for further study and analysis of the proposed designation of Marina City as a Chicago Landmark. As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission identified the "significant historical and architectural features" of Marina City as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of Marina City's buildings, including the exterior of the bridge level and marina level, visible from public rights-of-way and the Chicago River.
- The driveways and open plaza areas between Marina City's buildings.
- The one-story restaurant building located at the southeast portion of Marina City and built in 1998 is not considered a significant feature for the purpose of this proposed landmark designation. The glass-enclosed parking attendant structure at the south end of Marina City is not original to the plaza and is also not considered a significant feature for the purpose of this proposed landmark designation.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated July 9, 2015, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

At its regular meeting of August 6, 2015, the Commission received a report from Patricia A. Scudiero, Managing Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, stating that the proposed landmark designation of Marina City is consistent with the City's plans and policies for the surrounding neighborhood and is consistent with the City's other governing plans and policies. This report is incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit C** (the "DPD Report").

In a letter dated August 14, 2015, the Commission officially requested the consent to the proposed landmark designation from the owners of property at Marina City. As of September 28, 2015, the end of the request-for-consent period, no consent forms have been returned to the Commission by owners of property at Marina City. It should be noted, however, that one consent form was returned by House of Blues Chicago Inc., which crossed out references to "owner" on the consent form and instead identified itself as "occupant/lessee." This form indicated non-consent to the proposed landmark designation of Marina City.

Upon the end of the request-for-consent period, as required by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance, the Commission notified owners of properties within Marina City in a letter dated September 29, 2015, of a public hearing on the proposed designation scheduled for October

16, 2015. Notices of the time and date of the hearing were (a) posted on signs placed in the public rights-of-way bounding Marina City, and (b) published as a legal notice in the Chicago *Sun-Times*, as required by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance. A notice was also posted on the Department of Planning and Development's web site.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

The hearing was convened, as scheduled and noticed, on Friday, October 16, 2015, at 9:30 a.m. at City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St., Rm. 1103. Commission member Carmen Rossi served as Hearing Officer, assisted by Lisa Misher, Senior Counsel of the Real Estate and Land Use Division of the City's Law Department, as legal counsel to the Commission, and Eleanor Esser Gorski, Director of the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Planning and Development. The hearing was conducted in accordance with the Commission's Rules and Regulations, specifically Article II regarding the conduct of public hearings for landmark designation.

The Commission staff's presentation recommending the proposed landmark designation was given by Matt Crawford, Coordinating Planner.

Attorney Mariah DiGrino of the law firm DLA Piper, representing LaSalle Hotel Properties and LHO Chicago River, L.L.C., owners of property at Marina City, requested party status. When called upon to make her presentation as a party, Ms. DiGrino stated that she merely wanted to make a statement, discussed below, on behalf of her clients and was therefore not requesting party status.

The hearing then proceeded with statements from property owners and members of the general public regarding the proposed landmark designation.

- LaSalle Hotel Properties and LHO Chicago River, L.L.C., owners of property at Marina City, were represented by Ms. DiGrino. She stated that her client was "not prepared to consent or object, but continues to evaluate the effect of the designation on its hotel and commercial operations," and that her client looked "forward to continuing to work with the Landmarks Division on future requests for approvals for the hotel and commercial spaces as they arise."
- Bonnie McDonald, President of Landmarks Illinois, expressed her organization's support for the designation.
- Ward Miller, President of Preservation Chicago, expressed his organization's support for the designation.
- One member of the public expressed support for the designation.

The transcript (the "Hearing Transcript") and related exhibits from the public hearing are attached hereto.

III. FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code, the Commission shall determine whether to recommend the proposed landmark designation to City Council within 30 days after the conclusion of a public hearing; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code, the Commission has reviewed the entire record of proceedings on the proposed Chicago Landmark designation, including the Designation Report, the DPD Report, the Hearing Transcript and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of Marina City; and

WHEREAS, Marina City meets the five (5) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Sections 2-120-620 (1), (4), (5), (6) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, Marina City is an icon of Chicago urban planning. This “city within a city” was the first of its kind to layer residential, commercial, and entertainment uses into a dense high rise complex in the center city; and

WHEREAS, Marina City was the most ambitious and forward-thinking post-war urban renewal project in Chicago in an era defined by ambitious urban renewal projects; and

WHEREAS, Bertrand Goldberg’s comprehensive vision for Marina City introduced new ideas about form and structure and novel solutions for living and working in an urban environment. Although Marina City remained an anomaly for decades, its success as a dense high-rise residential development anticipated the later transformation of downtown Chicago from a nine-to-five business district to a thriving and bustling residential and commercial community. The development’s use of the Chicago River as an amenity was also years ahead of its time; and

WHEREAS, at the time of its construction, Marina City was the most ambitious and innovative real estate development in the city. The project was the first planned development project in Chicago, and the first and largest federally-insured downtown housing project in the country; and

WHEREAS, Marina City was the brainchild of William Lane McFetridge, president of the Building Service Employees International Union, and real estate developer Charles Swibel. McFetridge was one of the most influential labor leaders in the Midwest after World War II, and Swibel later rose to become head of the Chicago Housing Authority. Their idea to invest union funds into middle-income housing as a way to revitalize urban centers and create more jobs for members was a significant departure from other union-funded housing projects in the country, which were built to provide low-cost housing for members; and

WHEREAS, the residential towers, theater building, and office tower within the Marina City complex are all excellent and varied examples of the Expressionist style, a stylistic reaction against the rigidities of the International Style within the context of the modern movement in architecture during the second half of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, Marina City marks the first built-example of Bertrand Goldberg's use of the cylindrical form, which would become a hallmark of many of his subsequent designs. Goldberg's design for the residential towers, which featured the repeated use of curving, petal-like shapes around a central cylindrical core, was unlike any design ever built in Chicago, and the buildings remain among the most distinctive structures in the city; and

WHEREAS, in his design for Marina City, Bertrand Goldberg pioneered the use of concrete in high-rise construction. Goldberg had attempted to create a cylindrical design using steel framing before Marina City, and was disappointed in the limitations of the material. Using concrete allowed for a more efficient and cost-effective construction of the desired form. When they were completed, the residential towers at Marina City were the tallest reinforced concrete structures in the world; and

WHEREAS, Marina City showcases Goldberg's ability to create evocative large-scale architecture that also addressed the constraints of the site and budget, the functions of each component of the development, and the needs of the people who would live and work in the complex. The cylindrical shape of the residential towers was visually striking, but it also allowed for the highest ratio of floor area to exterior skin, reducing wind loads and stresses on the building, and shortening the length of supply and return runs for the utilities. The petal-shaped plans of the apartments were designed to maximize a feeling of expanding space within very modest square footage. The rounded shape and lead sheathing of the theater building were used to improve the acoustics of the interior, all while creating a form that is as distinctive as that of the towers; and

WHEREAS, the form, materials and siting of the individual buildings at Marina City were carefully designed so that the office, residential, entertainment and parking functions work together effectively as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Bertrand Goldberg, the designer of Marina City, is a significant architect in the history of Chicago architecture, combining both technical brilliance and humanistic values in ways exemplified by his architectural designs. Marina City was Goldberg's first large-scale commission, and brought international attention to his firm; and

WHEREAS, Bertrand Goldberg possessed an exceptional understanding of materials and new building and design technologies, but also believed that these physical aspects of architecture must serve humanity; he was also an urbanist, but one who often found inspiration from structures found in nature. The fusion of these qualities led to Goldberg's highly individual buildings found in Chicago and across the nation, and is most completely exemplified in the Marina City complex; and

WHEREAS, Bertrand Goldberg was one of the few Americans who studied at the Bauhaus, an influential avant-garde art and design school in Weimar-era Germany that flourished between the two world wars. Goldberg credited his time at the Bauhaus for his interest in the human and social aspects of design and his interest in mass-produced and prefabricated structures; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Bertrand Goldberg designed the Raymond M. Hilliard Center for the Chicago Housing Authority. This complex is regarded as one of the most socially successful public housing projects in the nation, attributed largely to Goldberg’s design, which successfully balanced community amenities and the individual needs of residents; and

WHEREAS, Marina City was a bold response to the threat of suburbanization and disinvestment in Chicago’s downtown in the decades following World War II. The complex served as a microcosm of urban life within five interconnected yet distinct structures, all contained within a single 3-acre lot within the city’s center; and

WHEREAS, the structures within the Marina City complex were designed to sustain one another to create what Goldberg called the “24-hour city.” The residential towers provided the captive population needed to support the retail, office, and entertainment buildings, while these same spaces made living downtown feasible for the complex’s residents; and

WHEREAS, Marina City remains an iconic presence in downtown Chicago nearly 50 years after its completion. The residential towers, with their distinctive shape and rhythmic pattern of curved concrete balconies, are the focal points of the complex. The complex’s location along the Chicago River only serves to heighten the visual impact of the towers; and

WHEREAS, Marina City—and the residential towers, in particular—have been featured in television shows, films, advertisements, and album covers. As early as 1964, a Chicago Tribune article noted that Marina City had become a symbol for Chicago as a modern city, citing the use of its image in advertisements for everything from cars to cigarettes. This image of the buildings still resonates with many artists and designers, as well as the general public; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, Marina City has a significant historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value, the integrity of which is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; now, therefore,

THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS HEREBY:

1. Adopts the recitals, findings and statements of fact set forth in the preamble and Sections I, II, and III hereof as the findings of the Commission; and
2. Adopts the Designation Report, as revised, and dated this 5th day of November 2015; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report, DPD Report, the Hearing Transcript and the entire record before the Commission, that Marina City meets the five (5) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4), (5), (6) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

4. Finds that Marina City satisfies the "integrity" requirement set forth in Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code; and
5. Finds that the significant historical and architectural features of Marina City are identified as follows:
 - a. All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of Marina City's buildings, including the exterior of the bridge level and marina level, visible from public rights-of-way and the Chicago River.
 - b. The driveways and open plaza areas between Marina City's buildings.
 - c. The one-story restaurant building located at the south east portion of Marina City and built in 1998 is not considered a significant feature for the purpose of this proposed landmark designation. The glass-enclosed parking attendant structure at the south end of Marina City is not original to the plaza and is also not considered a significant feature for the purpose of this proposed landmark designation.
6. Recommends that Marina City be designated a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (8-0).



Rafael M. Leon, Chairman
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: November 5, 2015

