

July 4th, 2011

Mr. Rafael Leon, Chairman
Commission on Chicago Landmarks
c/o
Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development
33 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mr. Leon,

I am both a practicing Structural engineer (President of CBM Engineers) and a Professor of Architecture at the University of Houston.

I started my Professional career at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in Chicago in 1965 and became familiar with the work of Bertrand Goldberg through his Marina towers project in downtown Chicago. Many years later I was involved in an aborted project to renovate the lower part of the same building.

In this encounter, and in future research for teaching my classes at the Univ. of Houston I followed up on his other projects such as the Prentice Hospital and the Good Samaritan Hospital in Arizona. This investigation heightened my knowledge of his contributions to the use of concrete in building design and construction. He was a pioneer in the use of exposed concrete in the facade and reduced the costs of the project by using the concrete both as structure and architecture. Thereby he reduced both first costs and operating costs. Moreover, his artistic abilities and knowledge led to curved concrete facades which are aesthetically pleasing and very strong in resisting wind pressure. He also pioneered the use of round windows which once again are stronger in wind resistance.

I understand that there is a proposal to tear down this building. It would be a calamity if this were to be carried out. It would be a loss to our Architectural heritage as a nation and a disaster for Chicago's heritage of great architecture created by Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Bertrand Goldberg and firms such as Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

I would like to raise my voice in opposition to the destruction of Prentice Hospital.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joseph P. Colaco
President, CBM Engineers
Professor, Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
University of Houston

JPC/gw

Cc:

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